

DRAGON WARRIORS

COLD FURY



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Those who forget the past
are doomed

Contained in this grimoire of ancient knowledge are quests that will lead those who dare to crumbling temples, labyrinthine tombs, sand-swept pyramids and dragon-haunted caverns. Here are demons and gremlins, ghosts and traitors, the ways and means to reach fabled islands and mayhap escape with your life. Will you rise up or be cast down to drown in the briny depths?



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DRAGON WARRIORS

Gold Fury



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DRAGON WARRIORS: COLD FURY

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For more information on the *Dragon Warriors* game and game-world, its creators, forthcoming products for it, and other exciting games and game-related books, visit the Serpent King website at <http://www.serpentking.com>

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INTRODUCTION

COLD FURY is something of a chimera, containing most of the adventures from its predecessor *In from the Cold* and adding the previously not available in print *Fury of the Deep*. We've removed the adventure *The Key of Tirandor* (White Dwarf 49 & 50) and the article *Dealing With Demons* (White Dwarf 44, 45 & 46). Why you ask? Mostly because the material from *Dealing With Demons* is now fully covered in the *Players Guide* and we wanted to avoid duplication in this publication. *Fury of the Deep* is a marvellous adventure filled with intrigue and set in far flung lands and we really hope you enjoy its first print incarnation.

Aside from *Fury of the Deep* the adventures in this book originally appeared in the pages of White Dwarf magazine, most of them over the course of a single year: from August 1983 to August 1984. This was in the heyday of White Dwarf, the period often referred to as its golden years. Although these articles appeared under a variety of authors' names including Phil Holmes and Liz Fletcher and were written for RPG systems including AD&D, Runequest and Empire of the Petal Throne, they were all, bar one, the work of Dave Morris, and all display the fantasy sensibility which a year later would reappear in the first books of the *Dragon Warriors* series, at the heart of the Lands of Legend.

We've converted them from the systems they were originally written for, re-siting them within Legend, and adding new text when the original seemed to have been constrained by the tight word limits of White Dwarf.

The Articles

A BALLAD OF TIMES PAST: (White Dwarf 51) was written by Dave Morris and Yve Newman, originally for AD&D. While its flavour is unmistakably *Dragon Warriors*-esque, it needs to redefine some of the rules of magic in order to work—see the Special Notes section below.

THE SERPENT'S VENOM: (White Dwarf 52) was written by Dave under the pseudonym 'Liz Fletcher', an irregular alter-ego whose White Dwarf career up to that point had mostly involved doing AD&D conversions of the monsters from 'Dealing with Demons'.

TEMPLE OF THE LOST GOD: (White Dwarf 54) originally appeared as 'Temple of the Doomed Prince', an adventure for the Empire of the Petal Throne RPG by 'Phil Holmes', another one of Dave's pseudonyms. The Doomed Prince is a specific deity within the world of Tekumel so we thought it best to change the name and resite the adventure to Mungoda, where it fits extremely well.

THE UNQUIET GRAVE: (White Dwarf 55) was Phil Holmes's second and last contribution to White Dwarf. Originally written for Runequest, it works as a way to make sure that undead retain their supernatural chill in your games. As such it's an excellent fit for *Dragon Warriors*.

A BOX OF OLD BONES: (White Dwarf 71) is the exception to the introduction above. It originally appeared in November 1985, and was the only *Dragon Warriors* adventure that the magazine ever published. It's been out of print ever since, though clandestine copies have been circulating among the game's fans. Not only is its action set in the middle of Baron Aldred's fief, at the heart of many cam-

paigns—Osterlin Abbey is marked on the map on page 219 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook—but it also gives important insights into the organisation and workings of the True Faith, particularly its institutions such as abbeys and monasteries. We're glad to see it properly back in print at last.

It must be said that these were not all the articles that Dave Morris wrote for *White Dwarf* in this time, they are just the ones that had the biggest cross-over with *Dragon Warriors*. In fact the main reason for the existence of Liz Fletcher and Phil Holmes was to disguise quite how much of the magazine's content he was responsible for each issue—and that despite being a freelancer, not a member of staff. Now at last these pieces have been brought together, carefully re-engineered to fit with Dave and Oliver's own RPG rules and game-world, and we hope you enjoy the result.

Special Notes

'A Ballad of Times Past' is set in a place that is not an established part of the Lands of Legend. The adventure is set in Beorsca, a country that is superficially much like the Lands of Legend, particularly the kingdoms of Ellesland, but differs from them in one respect.

There are various ways that you can integrate this strange new land into your existing version of the Lands of Legend. It could simply be *terrae incognitae*, unknown lands—think how little of our world was known to the people of the Middle Ages. There are any number of ways to get a group of PCs to this new location, from a demon's curse or a horribly mis-cast Astral Gate spell to having the characters set out on an epic journey of many thousands of miles across the world, and encounter Beorsca along the way.

'A Ballad of Times Past' could easily take place in the history of Legend. Perhaps the PCs have activated an ancient and arcane trap that throws them back through time to the moment the trap itself was set, and only a boon from Talionis will restore them to their proper era. Alternatively you could run it as a one-off, with ancestors of your group's usual PCs as the adventuring party. An inventive GM could use

that to set up all kinds of interesting story threads for characters in the present day... and of course Talionis may still be alive.

Another solution is for the player characters to be on a sea-voyage and caught in a strange storm that blows them weeks off course, finally stranding them on the distant shores of an unknown country - Beorsca. (Perhaps they previously offended a local weather-spirit, or demon, or fairy lord, or went against a local superstition, or were cursed.)

Ultimately, so long as you're having fun then however you choose to play *Dragon Warriors* is the right way.

ADVENTURE I

THE LONG & LEVEL SANDS

An adventure for 4th–5th rank characters

Overview

THE ACTION BEGINS in Ta'amar, a teeming desert town on the border between the Sultanate of Opalar, the Nomad Khanates and the Caliphate of Zhenir.

Ta'amar's wealth comes from trade; it's technically just outside the borders of both Zhenir and Opalar, and unclaimed by any Khans, so it can trade officially with the nomads and Opalar, as well as semi-officially with Zhenir. Opalari merchants use Ta'amar as a base to get goods between all three kingdoms, though officially anything going from Zhenir to the Khanates or vice versa must first travel over the border into Opalar. Ta'amar is still a hotbed of intrigue and smuggling, though.

Players' Introduction

'Be it known to you that in the earliest days the great families of the Kaikubrans lived as nomad tribes in the desert lands west of where now stands the city of Sardonyx. The gods were high above them then, not yet ready to raise the Ancient Kaikubrans to the heights of their power, and each tribe carried with it its totem spirit,

guardian deities who intermediated between the tribes and the celestial powers which guided their lives. In later years, as the tribes unified into the Ancient Kaikubran Empire, built their mighty civilization and finally began the slow fall into the decadence they know today, these totem spirits became degraded into mere demon-lords. Akresh, Tsienra, Eldyr and the others—now they seal bargains of eldritch power with those mighty enough to summon them, but once they were deities themselves and the greatest among them remember those days with anguish and rage at the infidelity of the Ancient Kaikubran Race.'

This scroll fragment from the one of the great temples in Deliverance is shown to you by Astragard, a wandering sorcerer you met three days ago in the Lying Monkey bar in Ta'amar. He explains his plan: to travel south and enter the tomb of an Kaikubran noble called Gutheron of the House of Org. Gutheron was a pure-blood descendant of the tribe which worshipped Akresh in prehistoric times, and Astragard hopes to loot his tomb of many treasures relating to Akresh's powers. You ask about your share? Astragard laughs and claps a meaty hand down on the table—'All the gold you can carry! There is vast treasure for the taking, and in a few months we will all return to Ta'amar town wealthy men!'

You have a few days to buy whatever standard items you need at Astragard's expense. One lunchtime you are joined by one of the wizened old men who seem ubiquitous in Ta'amar. If you are the ones employed

by Astragard,' he says through toothless gums, 'I have a parchment which you may want. Only give me a few coins for it so I can buy some food for my old belly.' After haggling he lets you have it for thirty florins, and wanders off into the pressing crowd in search of wine and opiates. The parchment is very, very old, written in ancient Kaikuhran. You get it translated at a stall in the bazaar for five florins:

As I die, I leave a testament of my faithlessness. We built our master's resting place in the desert west of the great city, I and the venerated Koram, chief architect of Lord Gutheron of the House of Org. Above it we set a likeness of She in the Sky, so that She might look down into the place's depths. In the final chamber we put reverently the living statue of Thunder-in-the-Mountain—let not Lord Eldyr's son find it! Koram and I it was who saw to it that our fellow builders slept the righteous sleep next to our lord; after Nepthe's phial Koram slit their throats—but none feigned, all were in the Pleasant Garden already. Climbing then to the top of the place we blocked forever the ascending way so none will ever disturb our master's repose. We returned through the dreadful place of sacrificed bones, protected by our lord's gift, the sign of Man, through the place of mirrors where the shadows yet kept at bay, held by the Lady's light that

we then shut out forever. With our sleeping friends we stood at last, our hearts beating fast as we thought on the journey to come, the phials in our trembling hands.

"Drink now," Koram said, "and let us lie forever over the gateway of death, my comrade", and so saying drank his draught to the dregs, but a fatal stay fell on my hands and the phial fell from them as my dying friend watched me betray my lord's faith. At last Koram slept in the Garden with our lord, but life in me still reigned. I took a torch, my writing scrolls and left that place. Yet by the demon whose eye I passed through I lost my way in the desert, parched by the Lady's now-merciless eye.'

Pity my bones, dear friend, and bury them under the drifting sands...

The translator will, for a further 3 florins, explain that the script is written in a style typical of about 1000 to 1500 years ago, and will suggest that the 'great city' is probably Sardonyx, capital of the Ancient Kaikuhrans, and the allusions to 'Thunder-in-the-Mountain' and 'Lady in the Sky' refer respectively to the demon lord Akresh and the Kaikuhran goddess Cotalqueh.



GM's Introduction

The parchment above reappears at the back of the book, as a handout for you to give to the players.

Gutheron died 1200 years ago. He used his sorcerous and demonological powers to devise bindings to place on Akresh. He planned to use a holy relic of his ancestors to channel his powers against the demon lord and make himself invincible and immortal, but the relic was in the possession of Lord Eldyr's half-human son (the man who now calls himself Astragard, widely known as the Black Serpent then), and Gutheron's agents recovered it too late. Gutheron died, then, and was buried. Astragard intended to loot the relic from the tomb at once, but then decided to leave it safely where it was while he searched the length and breadth of the land for the spells which would enable him to activate the relic's power. At last, after twelve centuries of study and preparation for this single moment, he believes himself ready. If he is correct, he has only to reach the holy relic, recite the arcane formulae and the unimaginable powers of a demon lord will be his to command.

ASTRAGARD
HALF-HUMAN SON OF LORD ELDYR,
6TH-RANK DEMONOLOGIST

Attack	16, two-handed sword (d10, 5)
Defence	10
Armour Factor	3
Movement	10m (20m)
Evasion	6
Magical Defence	23
Stealth	17
Perception	7 (darksight)
Reflexes	18
Health Points	11
Magic Points	21

TREASURE: +1 padded armour; The Ring of Negation; eucalyptus oil; 2 doses of strong poison (for bargaining with Sraim); miscellaneous components for summoning demons; possession talismans for Engala and Tsienra; +1 two-handed sword with a

gem in the hilt that allows the wielder to Teleport (as the Mystic spell) once per day; The Key of the Dark Labyrinth; Crystal of Sraim Summoning (one use; automatically summons a Sraim when shattered, with no need to match MAGICAL ATTACK against its MAGICAL DEFENCE to summon it).

Astragard has special knowledge of history, language, theology, and myth. Given a few minutes to converse with someone, he can attempt to *Enslave* them (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 85) at no Magic Point cost.

Astragard, the son of the demonic Lord Eldyr and a human woman, is a tall young man of almost androgynous beauty, but can appear in a number of illusory guises, usually as a hearty, middle-aged sorcerer with a huge red beard. He has demonic good luck, making him immune to harm from gremlins and allowing him to re-roll one die roll per day (though he must accept the result of the re-roll). He will not voluntarily handle silver (although it does not harm him); his true form is reflected in any silver mirror. He can see in the dark (darksight). Lord Eldyr would react favourably to him if summoned but Astragard has sworn to his mother that he will never do this. Astragard is several thousand years old, and may be naturally immortal, in that he will not die of old age.

Astragard plans to go to Gutheron's tomb and there summon a Sraim to locate the relic he seeks.

Astute player-characters may realise from this that Astragard must once have owned the relic himself. He believes he can use the relic to bind Akresh. Astragard, sadly for himself, failed his Demonology skill roll and so miscalculated the magic formulae involved—the relic will not allow him to control Akresh, as he is simply not powerful enough.

KEESHA
CAT FAMILIAR

Attack	13, bite (d6, 3)
Defence	10
Armour Factor	0
Movement	12m (25m)
Evasion	7
Magical Defence	4
Stealth	19
Perception	16 (elfsight)
Reflexes	15
Health Points	10
Rank-equivalent	3

Keesha is a demon cat about the size of a lynx. Keesha serves Astragard by virtue of the latter's demonic parentage; he is both larger and more powerful than the typical demonic familiar. He grants Astragard the same benefits as any other demonologist familiar. If he bites a victim and inflicts any damage, he can match his MAGICAL ATTACK against their MAGICAL DEFENCE. If successful, he drains 1d6 Intelligence from them; this recovers at the rate of 1 point per hour, but if the victim is reduced to 0 intelligence he becomes unconscious.

The Journey to the Tomb

A week-long journey through a great flood plain leads to a 15m bluff with a narrow wadi snaking its way up to a plateau. An encounter should be rolled for now and once more before the adventurers reach the tomb complex; use the Desert Encounter Table (see *Bestiary*, p. 12), but assume that any Adventurers rolled are in fact Bandits (3d6 in number).

The plateau is the Wastes of Gizen. It consists of enormous sand dunes, some as much as 20-30m high. No tracks are visible; the sun beats down remorselessly. From now on the party will consume water rations at four times the normal rate—around two waterskins' worth of water per person per day.

Note the party's water supplies, and if the water supply runs out, subtract the following per character per day for days without water:

- ♣ - 2 Strength
- ♣ - 2d4 Health Points
- ♣ - 2 Intelligence

A character reduced to 0 Strength or Intelligence by this will become unconscious. A character reduced to negative Strength or Intelligence will die.

The Tomb Complex

Two days' journey into the wastes is a broad pavement constructed of jagged stones. A mile further on, it disappears into the side of an enormous dune, with a gigantic head 15m up its side. To the right of the pavement lies a low ruined building surrounded by a ruined colonnade, disappearing into the dune.

1. The Oasis

To the left of the pavement is a shallow puddle of stagnant water surrounded by stunted palm trees. No recent footprints can be seen.

ENCOUNTERS: (only if water is taken from the oasis)

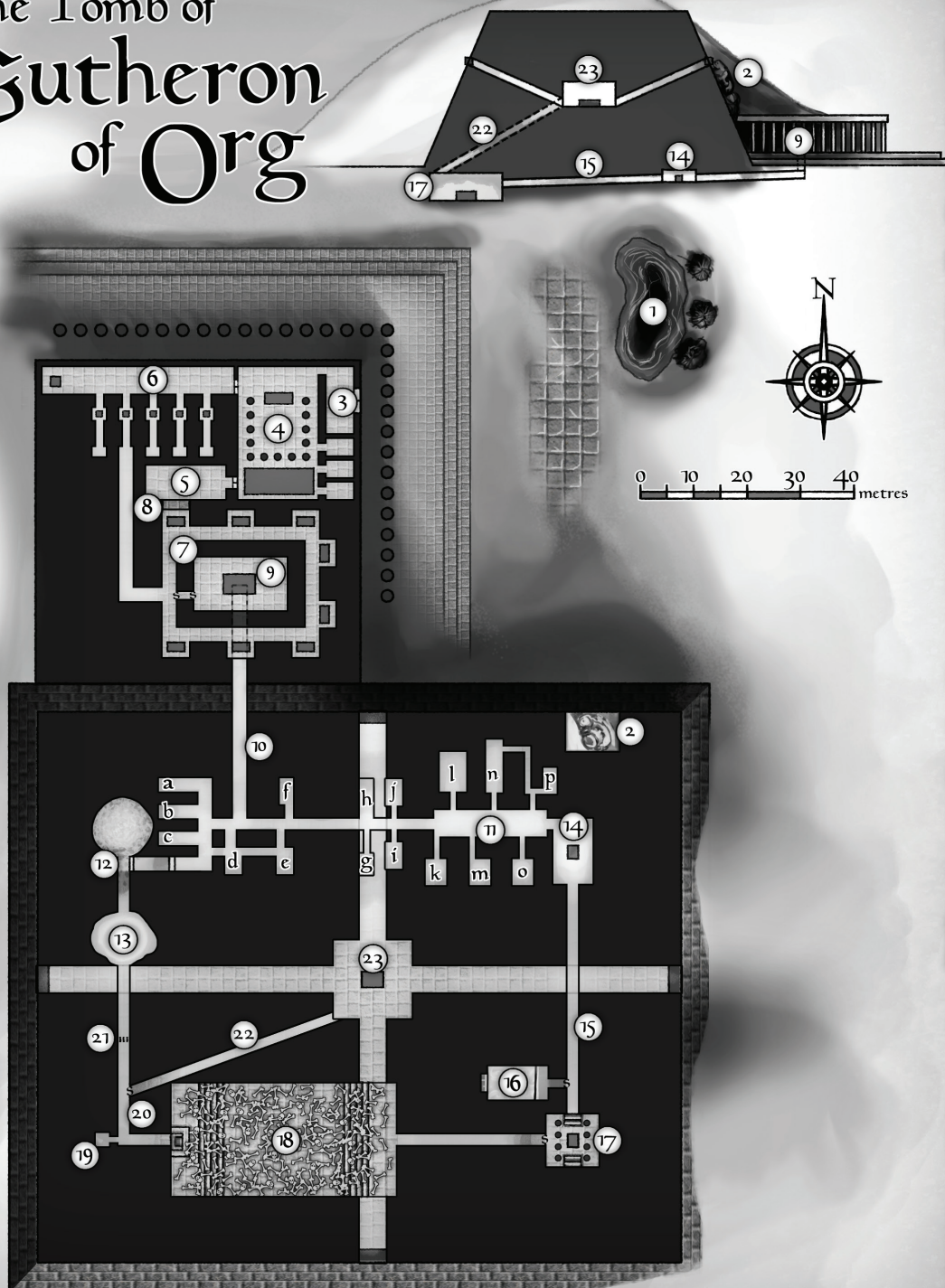
- ♣ Daytime: 25% Amorph (see *Players Guide*, p. 132; 35 Health Points), reroll every 15 minutes of game time
- ♣ Night-time: 100% Amorph

In the sludge underneath the water lie numerous human and animal bones. A 30-minute search may reveal a silver sceptre worth 155F with curious arcane inlays that increase its antique value to about 500F. Because of the rotting corpses, treat the water as a medium-strength poison. Anyone who drinks has a 10% chance of catching Wasting Fever (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 126).

2. The Colossal head

The head is the tip of a 15m statue of the Goddess Cotalqueh; only highly knowledgeable characters (having a background of Priest, Scribe or Professor; or perhaps a particularly scholarly and/or local Sorcerer or Mystic) will recognise her. The climb up to the head because of the shifting sand is quite

The Tomb of Gutheron of Org



hazardous (Difficulty Factor 15). However, because of the cushioning effect of the sand, subtract 4 from falling damage.

The eyes (a type of sapphire, about 500F) of the statue glitter in the sunlight and can be prised out after about two hours' labour. However, any weapon (unless magical) used to extract the eyes will become very blunt (-1 to Damage and Armour Bypass Roll). No light will reach room 14 if they are removed, as they focus the sunlight.

3. The Mortuary Temple

The single entrance in the east wall leads to a vestibule, the floor of which is covered with drifts of sand and the imprints of many feet, some human and some of an odd cloven shape.

A melech will be encountered here (see *Players Guide*, p. 133; 18 Health Points). The melech appears as an old hermit. Its orders when bound were: *'Misdirect strangers and allow none to pass through the bronze double doors.'* It may ask characters to bring it a drink from the oasis, and if they succeed it will be better disposed towards them—though it must follow its orders to the letter. If Astragard suspects it is a demon (give the PCs a chance to spot this first) he will try to banish it at once. The melech always keeps in the shadows, as its own shadow would reveal its true shape.

4. The Open Courtyard

The two double doors in the west wall are solid bronze. The northern door is embossed with a swirling pattern decorated with battling demonic bodies. The southerly one is embossed with a skull and the sigil of the Ancient Kaikuhran god Nebrovolent (Astragard will recognise it). They are unlocked.

Behind the middle of the three wooden doors on the east wall lie two desiccated corpses in a state of perfect preservation, in leather armour, seemingly cut by a sword in several places (actually the melech's sword). They have swords, javelins, shields and about 20F scattered about. The melech will try at all costs to stop the adventurers from entering this room, although it will let them in the other two (empty). Knowing that if the player-characters discover the corpses he is likely to be slain and his servitude finished, he has clawed a riddle in the Ancient Kaikuhran tongue on the courtyard wall: *'To find that*

which you desire seek out misfortune.' It refers to the gremlin statue in 6, which the adventurers must pass to reach the tomb complex proper. The pool here is now dry.

5. Nebrovolent Shrine

Set into the south side is a 1.5m high altar. In front of it is a large pewter plate with an offering of extremely dessicated meat. A thin layer of dust covers everything. There is script in Ancient Kaikuhran etched into the plinth of the altar. *'Lay yourself, human, as a sacrifice on Nebrovolent's altar.'*

The wall behind the altar is hollow (8) and is a cavity filled with a hermetically sealed gas cloud (strong poison); it is quite viscous, and will only affect player-characters actually standing on the altar; others will have time to move away. Survivors may move through 8.

6. The Demon Passage

Long and unlit. Five slits just wide enough for a large human to wriggle through stand about 2.5m up on the south wall. Behind each slit stands a statue of a demon associated with the tomb complex. They are the b'krath, the rult, the stalker, the gremlin and Akresh himself. Behind the statues, apart from the gremlin, a narrow passage leads to a tiny offering room in which gifts appropriate to each demon have been placed. There is no offering behind the gremlin's statue; in fact, a corridor leads off to 7. None of these gifts are necessary for the binding of the demon; they are of merely ceremonial significance.

Statue	Gift
The b'krath	A gold-covered wooden figurine of a panther.
The rult	A skull made of mosaic tiles.
The stalker	A flute made from a human thigh-bone.
Akresh	Plates of precious metals, worth 850F.

A large statue (3m high) stands at the end of the demon passageway of a warrior in ancient armour wielding a war mace over the body of a fallen foe. An inscription at its base (in Ancient Kaikuhran) reads: *'The Lord Gutheron of the House of Org'.*

As the player-characters pass the gremlin statue a real gremlin will slip out of a concealed cubby hole at the back and follow them doggedly through the complex, keeping as well concealed as possible. Originally there were two gremlins, but one of them followed the hapless architect (whose death note the adventurers may possess,) and caused him to lose his way in the desert.

GREMLIN

(see *Players Guide*, p. 136)

Attack	14, claw (d6, 4)
Defence	9
Armour Factor	2
Movement	12m (15m)
Magical Defence	6
Evasion	7
Stealth	25
Perception	14 (darksight)
Reflexes	11
Health Points	11
Rank-equivalent	2

TREASURE: Ring of Dark Madness. This ring allows the wearer to cast a *Benight* spell (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 105) once per day with a **MAGICAL ATTACK** of 13.

7. Corridor of the Sleeping Ones

Unlit with plain granite walls. The eight granite sarcophagi are open, with 3-4 desiccated corpses piled one upon another in each. Empty phials are littered around each sarcophagus, and each of the corpses' throats has been cut. These are the builders' graves mentioned in the player's Ancient Kaikuhran script. The character with the highest **PERCEPTION** score will discover the hinged granite slab that leads to 9.

8. hollow Wall

Gas-filled cavity. See area 5 for effect.

9. Koram's Wraith

In here is a basalt sarcophagus with a phial of amber-coloured strong poison. Inside is a corpse in magisterial robes, an empty phial in one hand, and an ornately covered dagger blackened with what appears to be dried blood in the other. Its throat has not been cut, and a horrible rictus grin is frozen on its desiccated face.

ENCOUNTERS: Koram's Wraith at all times.

KORAM

(see *Bestiary*, p.86)

Attack	-
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
Movement	15m
Magical Attack	1d10 per Combat Round attack is delayed
Magical Defence	11
Evasion	4
Stealth	10
Perception	13 (darksight)
Reflexes	11
Health Points	15
Rank-equivalent	5

HIDDEN SPOTS: The bottom of the sarcophagus is a granite slab that can be prised up to reveal a shaft leading 6m downwards into the darkness with room for only one average-sized humanoid at a time. A mouldered bit of rope hangs from a metal stanchion and disappears down to 10. If the old rope is used for the descent it has a 10% chance of snapping (roll separately for each character using it), increased to 15% for any character wearing armour of AF4 or AF5. Remember that the gremlin will alter the chance of falling if present.

10. Funeral Corridor

Totally unlit. The light of torches or lanterns will reveal bas-reliefs etched on the walls—a large funeral procession making its way towards a vast, truncated pyramid across a desert. Some mourners wear cloaks made of birds feathers, others masks

that resemble the faces of desert creatures such as jackals and hyenas. Bas-reliefs further down the corridor depict various ceremonies being performed on a corpse by purple-robed figures. Over the corpse as if hovering in mid-air is depicted a squatting, rotund figure, its head surrounded by black clouds and thunderbolts; in each hand he holds the top of a mountain.

Scholarly characters, or those from the local area, will recognise the pyramid structure as a typical ancient Kaikuhran noble tomb, the purple-robed priests as priests of Nebrovolent, the ancient Kaikuhran god of death. Demonologists will recognise the mountain-shaking demon as Akresh (see *Players Guide*, p. 141).

TRAPS: a *Shadowbolt* spell will leap from a black gem set in the wall and strike anyone who walks within 2m of the Akresh relief.

11. The Gallery of Offerings

The arches off the central corridor lead to rough-hewn chambers where gems and precious metals glint in the torchlight. If any of the side chambers are entered, as the first character steps through an arch, translucent grey hands thrust down, out of the stone ceiling and into his skull. At the same moment, a terrible shriek will be heard which affects anyone who hears it with a *Weaken* spell (MAGICAL ATTACK 18). The character attacked will suffer a strength 8 Fright Attack, after which the ghostly hands dissolve into thick acrid smoke. If still alive, the character may be blinded by the fumes (treat as a weak poison. If the roll is failed, he is blinded for 2d4 hours rather than killed. If the roll is successful, there is no effect). Each treasure niche will have this effect only once, and a *Dispel Magic* will suppress the defence for two minutes.

The side chamber contents are as follows:

- a. A mahogany figurine of Gutheron on horseback, armed for war. Artistic merit but no intrinsic value.
- b. A jewelled fan, worth 200F. Anyone fanning themselves for more than one minute will enter a trance-like state for one hour. This trance is intended as a psychedelic diversion, typical of Ancient Kaikuhran amusements, but is also quite refreshing and enables the character to regain 2d4 Magic Points (if he has any).
- c. A gold statue of Gutheron hunting, worth 2000F.
- d. An alabaster sceptre. This functions as both a +1 Mace, and a Periapt.
- e. A bronze coffer with gold and gems worth 5000F.
- f. A bust of Gutheron's wife, Yashara, in blue marble streaked with white.
- g. A gold pectoral (worth 2500F) with an Ankh of Osiris set into it.
- h. A rosewood throne set with gems and silver inlays, total value of 12000F. Note: this item is very heavy.
- i. Fourteen grey candles set in a vortex pattern. When lit these summon one of Gutheron's ancestors back from the vortex of Nebrovolent (treat as a Wight; see *Bestiary*, p. 85), which will attack any intruders immediately. The candles lose this power if moved.
- j. Gutheron's favourite bow, and a quiver with ten arrows. The arrows are all +2 arrows.
- k. A number of staves of office, apparently all solid gold but in fact merely wood covered in gold leaf.
- l. A large shield with Nebrovolent's symbol inscribed upon it. This gives the user +2 DEFENCE.
- m. A silver mask inlaid with sapphires and jet, worth 3500F
- n. A large obsidian statue of Akresh, represented as a muscular and heavily armoured warrior.
- o. A silver truncated pyramid about two feet high. This is hollow and when opened will be found to contain gold and gems worth 6000F
- p. An 8' tall statue of a bulbous, roughly humanoid warrior with spiked clubs in place of hands. There is no *Weaken*/Fright Attack effect in this chamber, but the moment anyone enters the statue animates.

ANIMATED STATUE

Attack	18, club (d6+2, 5)
Defence	13
Armour Factor	4
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	-
Magical Defence	-
Evasion	4
Stealth	10
Perception	13 (panoptical)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	22
Rank-equivalent	6

The animated statue is unaffected by direct-attack spells, and so has no MAGICAL DEFENCE score. When there are no living creatures in the Pit of the Night Demons (16), the statue will de-animate.

EXITS: Through 12. In addition, the character with the highest PERCEPTION will notice that one of the granite blocks of the walls is slightly protuberant compared to the rest of the wall. If this is prised away, a low passageway will be seen leading to 14. There will also be a faint glimmer of light.

12. The False Door

Like the other alcoves in 10, a *Weaken/Fright Attack* will be made on anyone attempting to pass under the archway of this niche.

The adventurers will see a small snake slither away through a crack in the far wall. This wall is of thin plaster, and if broken down leads to a 10m-long passageway. At the end is an ornate wooden portal with skull bas-reliefs carved into it. It surrounds double doors with life-size statuettes of strange cult priests protruding from them. They open inwards.

When the first door is opened a complex pulley system within the first statue is activated, a slab of stone will drop down a slot behind the party in the north wall, and a cascade of loose pebbles will fall from an overhead shaft upon the backs of anyone in front of the double doors (speed 12). Anyone struck by the pebbles will receive d6 +3 damage, and must roll Strength or less on 3d6. If this roll is failed the character has been swept down a steep passageway

behind the doors to 13. Two more rolls (this time rolling Strength or less on 4d6, or 5d6 for the last one) are allowed before the character is swept into a pit full of quicksand (13). There is about 3m between the quicksand and the lip of the pit.

13. Quicksand Pit

A stalker (see *Players Guide*, p. 134; 24 Health Points) hides here. It will not come forth until the adventurers reach 21. The pit is about 10m across; on the other side of it an ascending passageway disappears into the darkness (see 21 and 22).

14. Summoning Room

A glimmer of reddish light comes from an opening 6m up the north wall which is a shaft about 30cm square leading to the eye gems of the statue at 2. If these have been removed the light will be very dim. A thin layer of dust covers a chalked pentangle that encloses the marble plinth in here. On it is a brass hand-bell with sun symbols on it. It has no clapper inside it. Instead a precious gem lies underneath (1500F). If the eyes of the statue at 2 are still in place then the gem, if left on the plinth, will focus light down gallery 15, illuminating its entire length so it can be seen. A few specks of what appears to be gold dust may be seen to sparkle in the sunlight or from the light of torches.

This room was used to summon the b'krath that stalks 15. The summoner, however, nervous of failure, arranged some protection for himself through his light focusing mechanism. The gold-dust on the floor is the remains of a supply the summoner had ready in case he had to strike a bargain.

15. The Corridor of Mirrors

The entire length is covered by wall-mirrors. Characters looking at their images will find them diminishing into infinite regress. It is frequently difficult to recognise oneself in the images; it is as if they were being subtly distorted. There is a slight downward gradient.

The door to 17 is made of wood and engraved with serpentine forms, some of them patterned as if in an ornate script. A mirror (2m × 2m) hangs over the door lintel reflecting the whole length of the corridor. It is made of enchanted silver (value 3000F) and will reflect Astragard's true form (that is, if the other play-

ers notice in the confusion of the b'krath attack). It will also reveal such things as stolen items concealed on players, any disguises they may have assumed, for example, invisibility. It is linked with the sky goddess Cotalqueh, who in the ancient world was a goddess of seeing the truth, among other things. This symbol is engraved on its back. The mirror will continue to reveal hidden secrets even if removed from its present location. The script on the door in Ancient Kai-kuhran and reads: *'The last resting place of Gutheron and the Thunder-in-the-Mountains, beware lest men of deceit accompany you'.*

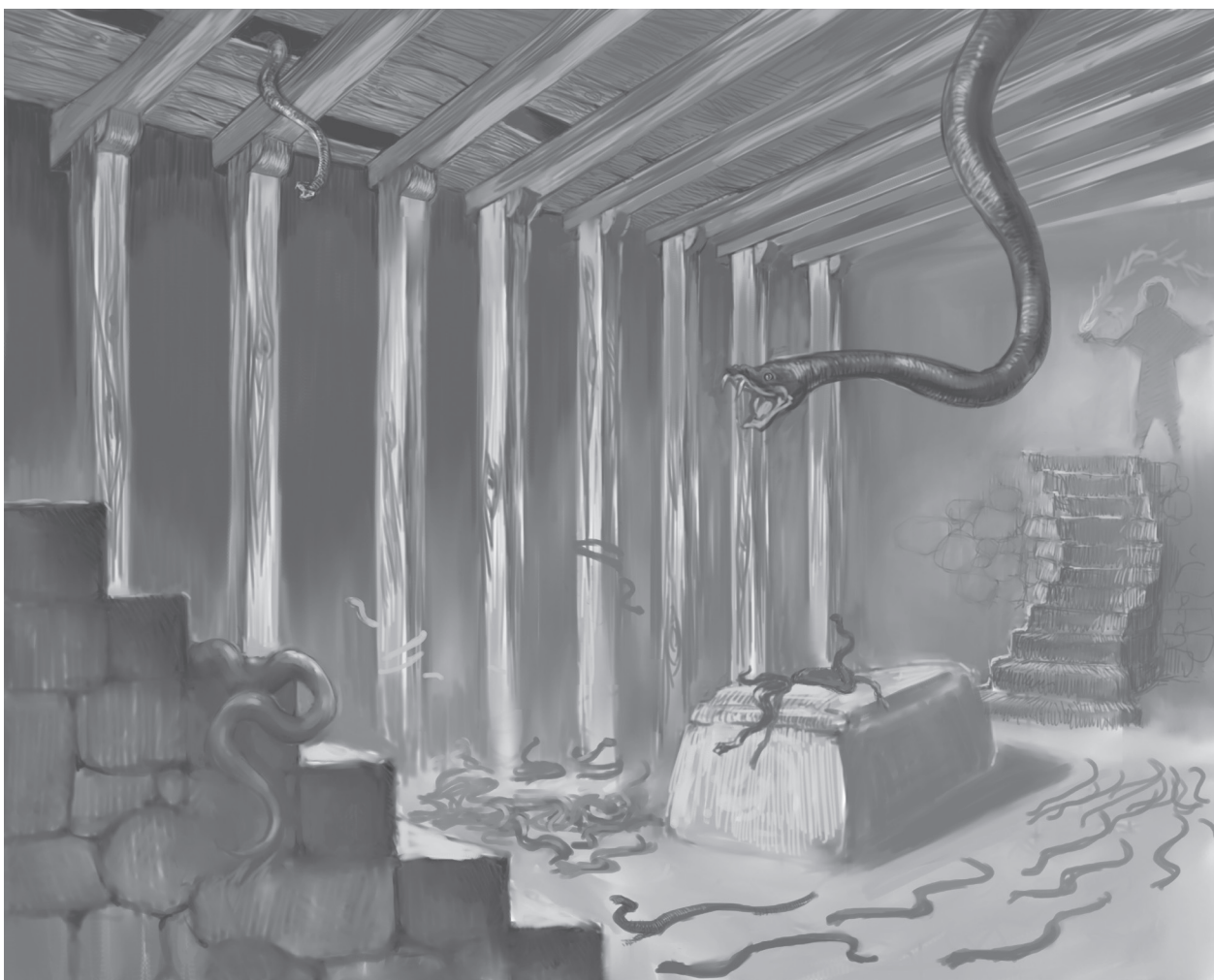
ENCOUNTER: B'krath at all times (see *Players Guide*, p. 132; 24 Health Points), but it will attack with less efficiency if corridor is lit by the prism in room 14.

HIDDEN SPOTS: One of the mirrors towards the end of the corridor swings in to reveal room 16.

16. Pit of the Night Demons

Just past the entrance is a 3m-wide marble platform. The rest of the room is a 4m-deep pit full of swirling mist, so that no pike, spear etc., can touch the bottom from the platform. The mists muffle the sound of anything thrown into them. Within the mists dwell minor spirits. Anyone immersed more than a foot into the mist will be subject to a **MAGICAL ATTACK** of 17; if effective, this attack causes 2d6 damage, which appears as livid bruising under the character's armour. The attacks will continue each round until the character leaves the mist.

In a niche on the other side of the pit is some jewelled armour. It is black with a cobalt blue decoration and a three-pointed star symbol in sapphires on the chest. It counts as +2 mail armour, with the sapphire working as an Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence.



This was Gutheron's famed Harmonic Armour. It is enchanted so that it follows the actions of whoever wears the matching helmet. Normally this meant that Gutheron would wear the helmet and armour together, thus effectively augmenting his strength in combat because the armour follows the helmet-wearer's actions with its own strength of 19 (+2 to Armour Bypass Rolls and damage). The helmet is presently on Gutheron's mummified body (see 23).

JUMPING: because there is very little landing space at the other side of the pit, leaping across it is tricky (roll under Reflexes on 2d10).

17. Room of the Cobras

If the player-characters stop to listen, they will hear a pronounced hissing noise coming from this room before they enter it.

The steep flight of steps leads down into the low, false burial chamber intended to fool plunderers. A large unopened granite sarcophagus stands at the foot of the steps. Other steps lead upwards on the other side of the room to a wall painting. The high ceiling is loosely rafted with cedarwood, and large areas of disturbed rafters are visible. The roof is supported by cedarwood pillars. Thousands of hissing snakes cover the floor, stairways, pillars and rafters.

The wall painting shows Gutheron with his back to the chamber actually holding the sun in his right hand. A tracery of fire stretches over his head to his other hand. The sun in his right hand may possibly indicate the only other exit to the room, a movable granite block high up in the western wall (6m). A heap of smashed wood lies in one corner of the room; this used to be the ladder to this door, but was smashed practically beyond recognition by Koram and his accomplice.

ENCOUNTERS: Vipers, everywhere. Giant Vipers hidden in the rafters will drop on anyone inspecting the sarcophagus.

VIPERS

Attack	12, bite (d3, 1), poison
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0
Movement	12m
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	3
Stealth	19
Perception	8 (normal)
Reflexes	17
Health Points	1d6+3
Rank-equivalent	1

Vipers are small snakes, typically no more than 1m long, but quite venomous.

GIANT VIPERS

Attack	13, bite (d3, 2), treat as a strong poison
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0
Movement	15m
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	2
Stealth	18
Perception	9 (normal)
Reflexes	15
Health Points	10, 10, 11, 12, 13, 13, 14
Rank-equivalent	2

The sarcophagus holds the desiccated corpse of a man dressed in antique robes. He holds an idol in one hand. It is made of wood and depicts a squatting, malevolent-looking god or demon.

Naturally it will not deceive Astragard, who knows just what he is looking for. The idol will detect as strongly magical but is in fact useless.

18. The Judgement Room

The room is carpeted with human bones and skulls, in most places to a depth of nearly a metre. A throne stands in the middle of the west wall on the dais. Large bas-reliefs, apparently of Ancient Kaikuhuran gods, cover the walls on either side.

ENCOUNTER: A rult (see *Players Guide*, p. 134; 19 Health Points) will manifest itself through the bones along with four Skeletons with shortwords.

SKELETONS

Attack	11, shortsword (d8, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0 (2 vs stabbing weapons)
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	7 (gloomsight)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	5, 6, 7, 7
Rank-equivalent	1

The rult's orders were: *'Kill any who enter this chamber after the tomb is sealed'*. Whenever the rult teleports it appears to dissolve into a grey fog and merge with the body it is teleporting through.

The throne bears an inscription in Kaikuhuran script: *'Let no one sit here but Gutheron, who Judges the People, Death will come to the usurper.'*

The whole throne is in fact a trap. Anyone sitting on it will activate a catch which will swing it around activating a flight of javelins concealed at 19. There are six of these, each of which will target a randomly determined party member with a speed of 18. The mechanism will operate silently and a replica throne with an identical inscription will appear in its place on the far wall. This is the only way the player-characters can reach 19 from here; by operating the trap.

19. Alcove

Small alcove with six empty (or full if the PCs approach from 13) arbalests on a frame. A cord attached to the throne runs back down the corridor.

20. Ceiling Entrance

Concealed in the ceiling of this long corridor is the way up. It is a large granite slab, 5m up, almost identical to the others that line the ceiling. The character with the highest PERCEPTION score will spot it, if the ceiling is examined.

21. Portcullis

This will be dropped by the gremlin at this point, trapping any PCs descending the corridor. He will also cast his *Benight* spell using his Ring of Dark Madness. The portcullis itself is made out of incredibly hard stone and will require one man one week to break through. The stone to either side of it is softer and could be removed in 3 days, without magic.

ENCOUNTERS: At some stage the stalker will rise out of the pit (13), though it will conceal itself from the party at first.

The stalker's orders were *'Pursue any who loot the tomb and slay them individually, then return'*. It may thus attack survivors of the party after they have returned to Tamary and (they think) safety.

22. Ascending Corridor

Bas-reliefs on the walls of this gallery depict a number of creatures—in progression; jaguars, snakes, spiders, eagles and scorpions. An enchantment causes anyone walking along the gallery to lose one point from, in turn, Strength, Looks, Intelligence, Psychic Talent, and Reflexes as they pass each of the five creatures depicted. If the character walks up and down the gallery he/she will lose points each time. These characteristics later recover at the rate of one point per hour. A *Dispel Magic* will suppress the gallery's enchantment for two minutes, making it safe to traverse.

The passageway is blocked by a plaster wall. If this is pierced a large granite block will begin sliding down the corridor. Total the party's Strength; they must roll under this on 12d6 to stop the block. If there are three failures by the party, assume that the block is now moving so swiftly that it cannot be stopped. Do not forget to deduct further Strength if the party are forced back past the jaguar glyphs. The block will push any player-characters through 20. Anyone sur-

viving the fall of 6m may be crushed (and instantly killed) by the block when it falls at a Speed of 12, unless they evade it.

23. The Burial Chamber

A sarcophagus rests in the exact centre of the room. Ramps 4m across disappear into the darkness at the four cardinal points. They slope steeply upwards and have large round blocks lying at their ends. The sarcophagus lies open. In it lies a human skeleton with a jade sceptre in its right hand and wearing a helmet of black metal, like 17. A squat rock idol of a monstrous god/demon stands at the head of the sarcophagus. A Kaikuhran inscription is etched into the side of the sarcophagus: '*Stand firm even in the grip of death, O servitor of Akresh*'. Anyone lifting the idol will cause the following to happen:

- There will be a roar as if of distant thunder drawing swiftly near.
- The blocks plugging the ramps will give way at exactly the same time and come hurtling down the ramps. Characters can attempt to evade them (Speed 10), dying if they fail. Characters who remain firm will find themselves merely enclosed in a neat frame as the round blocks meet with a crash and come to rest in a cloud of dust. The blocks are about 3m high and can be vaulted easily. Sand will begin coursing down the ramps, and as soon as the sand clears from the top of the pyramid, sunlight (or starlight) will be shining into the tomb chamber through the holes left by the blocks in the outer casing.
- Gutheron's skeleton will rise up as a mummy and attack with a horrible cry of rage.

GUTHERON'S CORPSE MUMMY

(see *Bestiary*, p.81)

Attack	19, sceptre (d8+1, 4)
Defence	13
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (15m)
Magical Defence	9
Evasion	4
Stealth	15
Perception	12 (darksight)
Reflexes	12
Health Points	20
Rank-equivalent	17

Although retaining his former intelligence, Gutheron does not retain full awareness of his condition. He will fight single-mindedly to destroy those who invade his tomb, and his primary aim will be to protect the sacred relic. He recognises Astragard (whom he knows as the Black Serpent) in any guise, and will treat him as the principal foe.

If Gutheron is wearing the helmet for his harmonic armour (and he will be, unless the characters have removed it), then the character wearing the armour will immediately find the armour duplicating Gutheron's own movements with an effective Strength of 19. The link between helmet and armour can be broken for two minutes with *Dispel Magic*.

TREASURE: Idol for summoning of Akresh (see *Players Guide*, p.139). This relic negates Akresh's MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses against summoning and binding, and reduces Akresh's MAGICAL DEFENCE against the wielder by -2. Astragard has made some fatal miscalculations, though, believing that the relic would enable him to easily bind the demon prince, it would in fact, take centuries to master the formulae needed to operate the relic.

EXITS: Four ramps give onto the dune covering the top of the pyramid.

ADVENTURE 2

A BOX OF OLD BONES

An adventure for six characters of 1st–2nd rank

GM's Introduction

THE LIFE OF AN ADVENTURER is constantly threatened by the powers of evil and darkness, and the advantage of owning a relic is obvious. Relics—the bodily fragments or personal effects of saints—possess sacred power, and are physical evidence of the truth and history of the religion. Monasteries prize these items for another reason, however. Possession of a relic gives the monastery status and prestige. Still more mundanely, a monastery that owns a renowned relic is more likely to attract notice, and to receive the rich endowments that nobles hand out in their pious moments. Men (even holy men) being what they are, this means that fake relics abound, and monasteries vie for ownership of the authentic ones with a zeal that is often all too secular.

This, then, is a tale of human greed.

Osterlin Abbey houses a priceless relic: the mortal remains of Saint Giles. Great lords and ladies come from far away to venerate the relic, often bringing lavish gifts for the Abbey's coffers. The monks of Osterlin live well as a result.

Recently, a knight called Notker of Balcorn was engaged by the monks of a rival abbey who wish to obtain the relic. They had already sent one of their number to join Osterlin as a novice and thus have

a spy within the abbey walls. Their spy had assessed the lay brothers whose job it is to guard the relic. When the time was right, he bribed those he deemed most venal so they would allow Notker to enter the church at dead of night and substitute the bones of some nonentity for those of the famous saint.

The plan is for Notker to visit the abbey for a few days. One of the travelling-chests of his entourage will contain a skeleton which he can switch for the true relic on the last night of his visit. The theft should not be detected until he is long gone—if indeed it ever is.

But this elegant plan has developed a fatal flaw at its outset. The spy misjudged the character of one of those he tried to bribe; as soon as he pocketed the money, this man went secretly to the abbot and told him what had happened. Seeing a means to embarrass the local monks, weed out untrustworthy lay brothers, and even pick up a little cash from the bribes the spy was offering, Father Eorwin instructed him to give no indication that anything was amiss. *'Accept further bribes as they are offered, invent difficulties for which you will need even more. Breathe no word of this to any other lay brother, for others may not have your own exemplary nature.'*

As the lay brother left (perhaps happily contemplating the advancement which he had surely secured for himself), the abbot began to make plans of his own. Calling the monks together in the Chapter



House, he told them the whole story. Many were outraged, demanding immediate expulsion of the guilty lay brothers, and some form of action against the rival order. Eorwin lifted his hand for silence. 'But if they want our relic so badly,' he said with a smile half saintly and half rather devilish, 'we should allow them to steal it...'

The relic was quietly removed to the abbot's house for temporary safekeeping. Thus, unbeknownst to Notker and his accomplices, they will merely be switching their skeleton for another that is no less sacred.

Players' Introduction

You have often heard travellers mention Osterlin Abbey, famous for the bones of St Giles the Martyr that are kept in a reliquary in the church there. The hospitality shown to wayfarers is scarcely less famous and perhaps this is why, on your way to Hesard's Ford (or any other destination), you consider it worth a slight detour to visit the abbey.

It is late in the afternoon as you approach. Sunlight sparkles off the brook that provides the monks with drinking water and a plentiful supply of fish. A few peasants in shabby rags wander in a line through the meadows. They have just collected pork and grain from the abbey's almonry. Lay brothers have been hard at work tending the fields, but now they are hurrying back for vespers.

You are met by a slightly built monk who seems to be the guest-master. 'Alas!' he says, shaking his head as you approach. 'We cannot take you in. Sir Notker of Balcom and his retinue presently occupy the larger of our guest houses, while the other must be kept ready for a group of pilgrims who will be arriving shortly. I am sorry.'

'What are you saying, Giraldu?' calls out an elderly monk who has been helping pass out the alms. 'Would you have these good people sleep in the fields, with this cold wind coming down from the north? There are a few pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory, I'm sure.'

Brother Giraldu complies at once. As he leads you away towards the lay brothers' dormitory, he tells you that the elderly monk was Eorwin, the abbot.

The Abbey

1. Smaller Guesthouse

The guest-master, Brother Giraldu, and two assistants occupy a room here. The other rooms are empty, awaiting the arrival of a pilgrim group on the morrow.

2. Larger Guesthouse

This is where Notker and his companions have been staying.

3. Well

4. Almonry

5. Stables

6. Fishpond

7. Orchard

There are apple and pear trees here, and a number of beehives clustered by the cellarium.

8. Lay Brothers' Dormitory

This occupies the top floor of the building above the cellarium (store room) and lay brothers' frater, or living quarters. The player characters will be sharing it with the menials from Notker's entourage, and with fifty lay brothers and novices. Apart from Cadric, all the NPCs here are normal men with no combat experience.

9. The Cloister

The hub of monastic life. The section adjacent to the church constitutes the scriptorium. Here, in bays called carrels, monks spend part of each day reading and copying manuscripts.

10. Water-Trough

This stone bowl has running water for the monks to wash their hands before dinner.

11. Kitchen

12. Dining hall

13. Calfactory

A fire burns here throughout the day in winter, so that any monk who gets too cold while working in the scriptorium can come to warm his hands.

14. Monks' Dormitory

The dormitory is over the monks' frater (common room), and extends above the chapter house and library right up to the south transept of the church. From here, the night stairs (24d) lead down into the church. There are some twenty-five monks usually resident in the dormitory, and none of these have more than basic fighting skill.

15. The Abbot's Lodging

This is Father Eorwin's private house, usually also occupied by a couple of monks or lay brothers who act as his secretary and servant.

16. Reredorter, or Latrine

An ingenious sewage system leads underground into the stream.

17. Chapter house

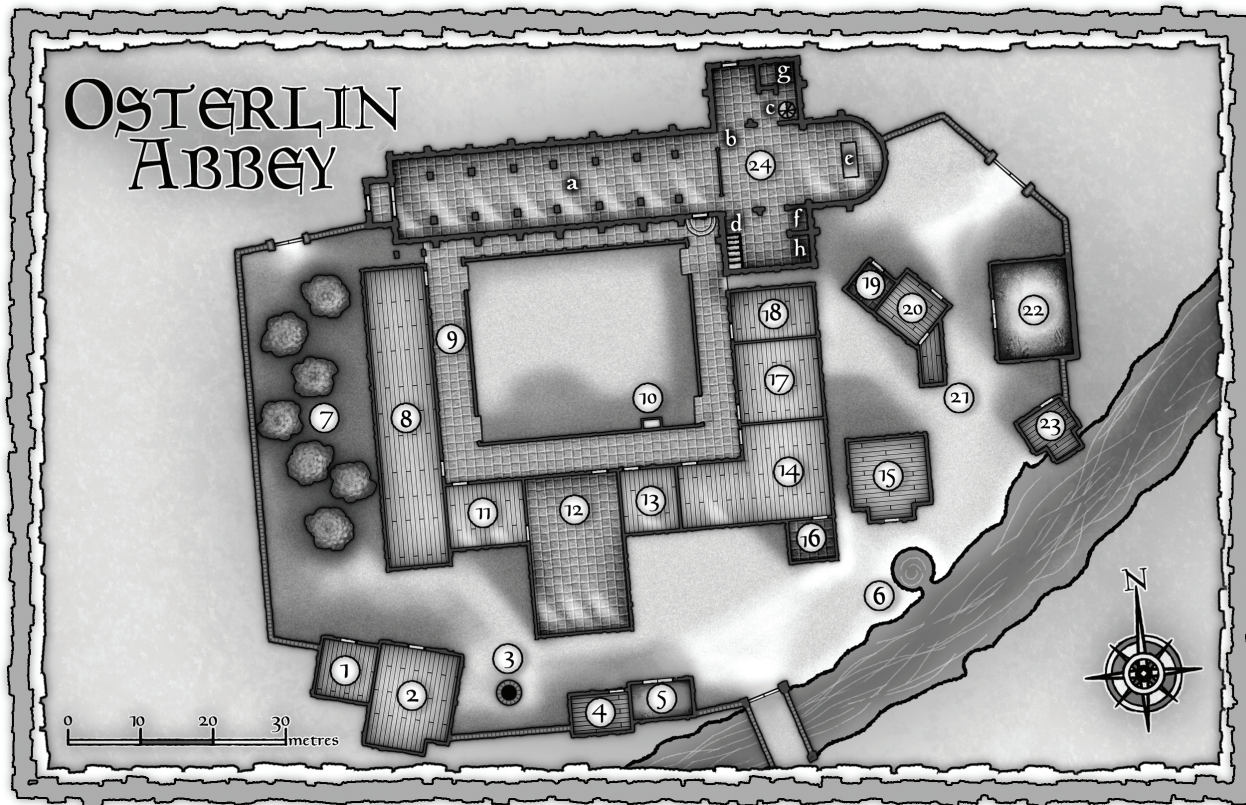
This is on the ground floor, under the monks' dormitory. The monks assemble here daily to discuss the running of the abbey and other secular business.

18. Library

This houses about two hundred scrolls and five hundred books—many of the latter chained up. Even if they could gain access (it is kept locked and only the librarian, claustral prior and Father Eorwin have keys) most adventurers would find the contents rather boring.

19. Chapel

This small place of worship is attached to the infirmary.



20. Infirmary

This is for the treatment of of sick and elderly monks. The infirmarian here is Brother Odilo, a jovial fellow whose cheeks are often flushed with drink. He sees to all medical treatment as well as the blood-letting which every monk enjoys twice yearly. In these tasks Odilo substitutes enthusiasm and goodwill in place of medical skill.

21. Infirmary Kitchen

22. Barn

23. Mill

24. The Church

By night this is an eerie place, illuminated only by the red glare of the sanctuary lamp and the moonbeams streaming through stained glass windows. The first service of the day, consisting of Nocturns and then the Lauds of the Dead, takes place a half-hour after midnight. The various parts of the church are:

- a. The nave.
- b. Rood screen: a large carved and painted screen surmounted by an ornate crucifix.
- c. A newel stairway that leads up to the belfry and down to the undercroft. Several abbots and prestigious benefactors are buried in the undercroft, while others are in the graveyard outside.
- d. Night stairs down from the monks' dormitory. When the PCs come upon Notker *et al*, the stairway will be occupied by the ghostly manifestation of Adamnan's magic Whispering Hat.
- e. Chancel with altar and decorated with ornate panelling.
- f. Sacristy.
- g. Chantry chapel bequeathed by Gefmund, father of the present baron.
- h. Reliquary chapel. The cause of all the trouble is kept here in a silver casket inlaid with mother-of-pearl and supported by two partly gilded silver angels. Tonight, of course, the remains of St Giles reside elsewhere and the bones of an old peasant are accorded a temporary honour.

The Adventure: Timeline

Evening

The player-characters and any companions they have with them are given pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory. This is certainly unusual for persons of any standing (presumably some of the characters, at least, will be knights), but is sometimes necessary at important abbeys such as this, which may have to accommodate several groups at once. If any of the group are wizards of any type, they would know to keep quiet about it. Such folk, often thought pagan, are rarely welcome at a monastery.

Many of the lay-brothers were taken in by the monks at a very early age and have spent their whole lives around the cloister. Some were freemen who joined in later life but these are still for the most part young men. One is of the gentry—Cadric (see p.29); he is still learning to be humble and may become very belligerent if the characters try to treat him in an overbearing manner.

Along with the lay brothers, they are sharing the dormitory with the menials from Notker's entourage. If they care to question these menials they will soon discover they are not peasants from Notker's manor (as might be expected) but were hired at a good rate from the village of Ashmore. Ashmore lies some three days journey away on the far side of Hel-fax Wood. It seems that when Notker first arrived there he was travelling with a group of monks.

If the characters are beginning to show an interest in their tale the menials will expect a few silver pieces for the last tidbit: the monks who were with Notker were not from Osterlin Abbey.

Supper

Supper follows vespers. Everyone, including guests and lay brothers, eats together. The characters sit at Father Eorwin's table along with Notker and his retinue, but no talking is permitted as one of the monks is reading aloud from Barnabas's Life of St Giles. The long tables are a flurry of motion as the monks converse in sign language, while the abbot and his guests sit in quiet dignity.

Their first impression of Notker is of an intense, hard-faced knight in early middle age. He seems always alert, watching like a hawk, assessing everything and everyone with sharp intelligence. Not a man to cross. With him are four men and a woman. Three of the men are obviously knights, while the fourth—a short, pudgy fellow with short grey hair—may be Notker's personal priest. The woman may be a nun, for she wears the black robes worn by nuns or widows.

Supper is frugal for all but the abbot and his guests—but this is after all one of the more luxurious monasteries. Most serve only one meal a day. The meal over, the brothers and lay brothers file off to the church for the short service of compline. Most will then retire gratefully to their dormitories, exhausted from their long day, though a few may walk a while in the cloister, or spend half an hour chatting in the parlour.

Father Eorwin, with Giraldu the guest-master and the claustral prior Willibrord, take all the guests to the abbot's lodgings. They are offered some of the fine minty liqueur that the monks prepare, and there is the chance for a little conversation. Astute characters may notice a certain coldness between Adamnan (the grey-haired tubby priest) and Lady Marianna (the nun). Notker himself talks distractedly, as if preoccupied. The three knights—Einhard, Grest and Denchille—are glum military types who keep themselves to themselves and seem uncomfortable with small talk, though they can be drawn into enthusiastic discussion on such subjects as campaigning, warhorses, jousts and the finer points of swordplay.

Before very long, Notker gets to his feet. He thanks the monks for their hospitality and, noting their tiredness, bids them goodnight. All the guests see this as the cue to turn in. Willibrord shows the characters back to the lay brothers' dormitory.

Night-time

You can approach this sequence in two ways: you can simply tell a PC of your choice what happens, or you can role-play through it, as they wake in the middle of the night with a feeling of dread. Whichever you choose, try to create a sense of strangeness, of the world not being quite right, as if the character is still half in a dream—perhaps the residual effects of the Hand of Glory, or something more sinister.

One of the characters comes awake to see a grotesque shadow looming over his pallet. He sits bolt upright, but manages to stifle a cry of alarm when he sees that it is just a shadow cast by one of the stone figures that adorn the cloister roof. Sweating, he gets up and goes over to the window to breathe in the fresh night air. The stone figure squats outside the narrow window. Whimsically following its gaze, he sees a strange thing: a man in a large cloak steps furtively from the dark cloisters into the courtyard below. Starkly visible for a moment in the light of the moon, he dips his hand into the water-trough and brings out a small item that was concealed there. After a quick glance about, he darts back into the enveloping shadows of the cloister.

The GM should select a responsible and responsive player-character for this—one who will realise that something suspicious is afoot and wake his companions. Attempts to wake the lay brothers will be mostly unsuccessful. This is because Adamnan the sorcerer is using his Hand of Glory, an occult talisman which holds 0th-rank characters in deep sleep. If they go around the whole dormitory, they will be able to awaken only Cadric, Gondris the spy and three others whose monastic discipline makes them equivalent to a ranked character. Of course, if Gondris is woken then he will slip away at the first opportunity and hurry straight to the church to warn Notker.

Trying to wake the lay brothers would cost the player-characters time that they may not wish to waste. The same can be said of armouring up, and in fact only the most wretchedly uncouth of characters would don heavy armour in the monastery without a very good and proven reason. The GM may allow a boorish and timorous barbarian to pull on a mail shirt if he insists on doing so, but others barely have time to put on leather jerkins.

After descending the stairs to the cloister, the characters will notice a flicker of lantern light beyond the scriptorium. This is quickly cut off by a heavy door closing. Someone is in the church—and there is no sign of the four lay brothers who should be standing guard on the church steps.

Interlude: Notker's Plan

By means of his bribes Notker has ensured that the church keys would be secreted in the water trough where he could easily obtain them. The four lay brothers who should have been guarding the church have been paid off. At Notker's signal they fetched out the two monks who normally stand watch directly in front of the reliquary chapel, claiming they had seen intruders crossing the lawn between the infirmary and the graveyard. The monks (who were pleased to go along with this diversion) took two of the lay brothers on a tour of the abbey grounds. The remaining two guards waited until they saw Notker approaching and then hurried off towards the orchard. If anything goes wrong with the theft, they can later claim to have gone looking for the others.

At this point it is about a quarter to midnight—almost an hour before the monks are due to come down to sing Nocturns. Notker's intention was to enter the church, have Adamnan place the Whispering Hat (q.v.) at the bottom of the night stairs so no sleepless monk would overhear anything, then quickly substitute his bag of bones for what he thinks is the true relic.

He has nearly accomplished this when a complication arises. A monk called Cedric has been travelling from Clyster Port for the last few weeks and has returned at this late hour. He is accompanied by a man he met on his journey, Ruttgur of the Knights Capellars. Both men being extremely devout, they have entered the church by the porch door at the west end of the nave (normally locked of course, but Cedric has a key) in order to say a short prayer before retiring. Thus neither knows anything about Notker's theft, or Father Eorwin's plan to turn the tables on him. As they round the rood screen they come face to face with Notker and his group. With the gate of the reliquary chapel open and the keys in his hand, they have caught Notker in the act of committing the crime.

The player characters should arrive on the scene around this point in time.

Dramatis Personae

The Villains

Notker of Balcom intends to divest the abbey of its great relic, the bones of St Giles. With him are three trusty retainers—Einhard, Grost and Denchille. His monastic employers hope for a smooth and uneventful robbery which may not be detected for many months, but just in case anything goes wrong they have provided two magical helpers in the form of Adamnan the sorcerer and Lady Marianne. If anything should upset the plan (as Ruttgur, Cedric and the player characters hopefully will) Adamnan's *Astral Gate* scroll should allow for a dramatic exit. (Remember that it will take Adamnan four rounds to prepare this spell if he needs it: one to take out the scroll and three to visualize his destination—an ancient stone circle near the village of Ashmore.)

NOTKER OF BALCOM

4TH-RANK KNIGHT

Formerly a knight of the most chivalrous and noble sort, Notker became embittered by the atrocities he witnessed on the Crusade. In middle age he has become a sometime adventurer and agent for anyone who can pay him to do their dirty work. This is more out of world-weariness than greed or bad character. He has no desire to see anyone hurt, and his sword has remained sheathed until the point where Ruttgur attacks him in church. Years of adventuring have taught Notker to think on his feet—he can change his plans quickly and cleverly. If things are going very badly, he will abort the mission (probably escaping through Adamnan's *Astral Gate*) rather than struggling on to the bitter end.

Attack	18, sword (d8, 4)
Defence	12
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	6
Stealth	14
Perception	6
Reflexes	15
Health Points	16

TREASURE: Shielding charm

ADAMNAN

3RD-RANK SORCERER

A small, fat man who is impressive more for the magical items he possesses than for any personal power. He is timid, and in any confrontation will keep well out of danger. His face is often damp with perspiration and his eyes may be a little watery from too much drink. The latter, combined with his reluctance to use sorcery on consecrated ground, gives him a 10% chance of miscasting any spell.

Attack	10, dagger (d4, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	17
Magical Defence	7
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	5
Reflexes	12
Health Points	7
Magic Points	12

TREASURE: The Whispering Hat, Hand of Glory, Scroll of *Astral Gate*, Casket of Fays

THE WHISPERING HAT: (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 180.)

HAND OF GLORY: (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 173.) Note that Adamnan carries a vial of blood with which to extinguish the Hand. He made the Hand himself, and could be forced or persuaded to reveal the secrets of manufacturing more Hands of Glory, if captured.

SCROLL OF ASTRAL GATE: This fine parchment contains an *Astral Gate* spell. It was scripted by a sorcerer in Beltayn and obtained for Adamnan's use in this specific mission at considerable expense to his employers. It is designed for affording a rapid escape route if anything should go wrong.

THE CASKET OF FAYS: (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 170.) This is Adamnan's most extraordinary item, though he does not fully understand its workings. Adamnan believes that it may be used twice a day, but if opened a third time all the fays would escape and its power would be gone. Actually he is mistaken: the

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Casket may be opened any number of times without draining its power, though eventually it will be retrieved by its makers.

MARIANNE

3RD-RANK MYSTIC

A slender, imperious woman in early middle age (about thirty). She affects the sombre habit of a nun or genteel widow, though she belongs to neither category. The reality is that she is a Mystic. She was hired, like Adamnan, to provide magical back-up on this mission: the two of them maintain a vitriolic rivalry.

Attack	12, unarmed (d3, 2)
Defence	7
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	17
Magical Defence	6
Evasion	3
Stealth	14
Perception	8
Reflexes	10
Health Points	10

EINHARD, GROST AND DENCHILLE

2ND-RANK KNIGHTS

These three stalwarts have been with Notker for years. He paupered himself to get the four of them to the Holy Land, and they have been doggedly loyal to him ever since. They are very unimaginative except in matters military and for the purposes of this scenario they may be treated as average in all characteristics (including Reflexes of 11)

Attack	14, sword (d8, 4)
Defence	8
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	4
Evasion	4
Stealth	13
Perception	5
Reflexes	11
Health Points	12, 14, 11



Others

The other two NPCs who will definitely become embroiled in the adventure are Ruttgur and Cedric. They will be fighting against Notker's group—probably, but not certainly, alongside the PCs. One of the lay brothers, Cadric, is also detailed here as he may get involved. Other monks should be treated as untrained normal men, if needed.

RUTTGOR 4TH-RANK KNIGHT

A tall, broad-shouldered warrior who recently returned from the Crusade. His white tabard with eight-pointed indigo cross on the chest marks him out as one of the Knights Capellars, a fighting order formed in the last few years to protect pilgrims and settlers in the Holy Land. Unlike most people, Ruttgur has no reservations about spilling blood in a church or anywhere else. He is a violent fanatic, and behaves in just the way that a good Capellar is supposed to behave.

Attack	18, two-handed sword (d10+1, 6)
Defence	12
Armour Factor	4
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	7
Evasion	5
Stealth	9
Perception	6
Reflexes	13
Health Points	15

BROTHER CEDRIC

Cedric, an intense dedicated man, has been absent from the abbey for over a month. Consequently he knows nothing about the plot and counter-plot. If the player-characters side with Ruttgur then he may leave them and run to wake the monks. Remember that he will have to pass through the shadowy figure formed by the Whispering Hat in order to reach the night stairs, and he has no way of knowing that it cannot hurt him. If the player characters throw in

their lot with Notker, Cedric will have to take up his staff and wade in—he will not leave Ruttgur to fight them alone, and the Capellar will not retreat.

Attack	12, quarterstaff (d6, 3)
Defence	6
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	-
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	4
Stealth	14
Perception	5
Reflexes	14
Health Points	7
Rank-equivalent	1

CADRIC 1ST-RANK KNIGHT

A young gentleman who recently joined the abbey as a lay brother. He has a quick temper which he is trying to curb. He occasionally guards the relic though not tonight; and for this purpose he keeps a heavy iron-shod crucifix by his pallet. In the event of trouble, this serves very effectively as a mace.

Attack	14, mace (d6, 4)
Defence	7
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	4
Stealth	11
Perception	5
Reflexes	9
Health Points	9

GONDRIS

Gondris is the lay brother who has been acting as Notker's cloister spy. At the first hint of trouble he will try to warn Notker, if this seems possible without jeopardising his own safety. After that he will make his getaway over the orchard wall.

Epilogue

The scenario should allow for a talked-out solution or a denouement with drawn swords, according to the tastes of the gaming group. But PCs who prefer a subtle approach, and would rather offer Notker a chance to give himself up, will have their hands full calming Ruttgur down.

Notker is a fast thinker, and if the PCs are not wary he will draw his sword and gesture at them—‘Aha, you villains, we have caught you in the very act of stealing the bones of Saint Giles! Surrender in the name of the Church!’ Ruttgur and Brother Cedric may take a little convincing that it is the PCs who are the guilty party here, but Notker will demand that they watch over the alleged robbers, and before they can argue will go outside to raise the alarm.

His hastily made plan is to cause a diversion (most likely by locating some alert monks and reporting that a barbarian and a thief disguised as a priest are trying to steal the relic from the church, but are being guarded by the valiant PCs), and in the confusion he and his men will grab the bones and flee. If the PCs further heighten the confusion by getting into a fight with Ruttgur, Cedric and the guards then so much the better. The inhabitants of the Abbey will recognise Cedric and will believe whatever he tells them is happening, but Cedric himself is not exactly sure. If the Abbot is raised then he can clarify matters, but Notker will try to make his escape as quickly as possible.

What happens after the point where the player-characters encounter Notker, Ruttgur and Cedric depends entirely on you and your players. If Notker escapes with the skeleton, Father Eorwin may offer the characters the job of going after him. This is only for the sake of appearances—he doesn’t care about getting the bones back, but the rival monks would be suspicious if no force was sent out to retrieve the ‘relic’. Eorwin wants them to put their stolen skeleton on show with all pomp before he reveals it to be fake. This alternative leads to the player-characters becoming innocent dupes of course—the pawns in a game played by far more influential men—but any grudges they develop against the NPCs in question can only be good for the long-term campaign.

The similarity in name between brother Cedric and the former knight Cadric is a coincidence that you should exploit for dramatic and comic potential, as people shout at each other down echoing stone cloisters and deaf old priests mis-hear instructions.

If Notker is caught, or at least prevented from accomplishing his theft, the characters should expect some gratitude from the monks. Some, but not much—they may have acted from the very best of motives, but in effect they only blundered in and spoiled a perfectly good bluff. Small consolation comes from the fact that they now have firm friends in Brother Cedric and Ruttgur, who might have been in for a long spell in the infirmary if they hadn’t come along when they did.

Characters who try something crazy like teaming up with Notker or dashing through the *Astral Gate* after him will not benefit much from the adventure. They should get a few experience points, and Notker will soon manage to lose them.

Continuing the Adventure

If Nokter or any of his group get away with the relic, there are a number of directions you can take 'A Box of Old Bones' from here. Having the abbot tell them of the scheme may be amusing and will fit some campaigns, particularly if you plan to bring Nokter back as a recurring adversary, but for groups who demand adventure and glory it isn't enormously satisfying. Here are three possibilities.

Denouement

The morning after the theft, Father Eorwin reveals his subterfuge to the PCs. What he now needs is a group who will publicly reveal that the thieves have the wrong bones, but who can't be traced back to him or Osterlin. What he has done is to conceal a parchment within the cracked thighbone of the false skeleton. It reads: *'These are the bones of Tiberus Ash, a good and holy man, stolen from Osterlin Abbey by thieves who believed them the relics of St Giles. Please bury Tiberius appropriately.'*

How the PCs reveal the existence of this parchment is left to them, though it is likely the relics will be unveiled in their new setting in a grand public display. Whatever they do, it seems likely that unless they act carefully they will become embroiled in a feud between the two abbeys for years to come.

Hidden Agenda

What Father Eorwin knows but has not told anyone is that the rival monastery's reason for stealing the relics of St Giles is not as simple as mere rivalry and greed. After all, if they were to put a recently stolen saint's skeleton on display, it would be fairly obvious it had been acquired in a manner hardly befitting a holy establishment.

Notker's patron is in fact a demonologist who has been using ancient texts in the other abbey's library to further their dark researches. He intends to use the relic to summon a Hellion (see *Players Guide*, p.134). However, with the false bones instead of the actual ones this summoning will go catastrophically wrong—which is Father Eorwin's intent. However he knows only a little of demons and does

not realise what damage a Hellion in the form of a senior member of a major religious institution could potentially do.

Eorwin learns too late of the chain of events he has set in motion, and now sends the PCs out to stop the impending disaster—either by intercepting Notker, or interrupting the summoning, or by any other means. But if word of his meddling gets out his career in the True Faith will be finished, so they must act alone.

Traditional Climax

This one needs a bit of revision to what has gone before. The abbot is aware of Notker's plot and swaps the skeletons as previously described. He had heard from nearby monasteries and abbeys that a band of thieves have been stealing their relics, three have been stolen in the last few months. One of the raiding party was caught when their last mission went wrong and confessed that he and his fellows had been paid by a 'witch' to steal the bones to use in some kind of spell. He either did not know or would not say any more than that.

Notker gets away, either alone or with his group, and with or without the skeleton. For reasons left to the GM, Adamnan's *Astral Gate* scroll is unavailable.

It is night and the party can just make out the shadowed form of Notker stumbling up and over a hill, fleeing in the direction of the mountains. Notker is panicked and weary so the PCs are able to gain ground on him but only if they run. The PCs are also tired and are at a -1 to Strength and Reflexes unless they take a ten-minute rest. They see Notker disappear behind a large tree next to the sheer rock face of the mountain, and when they have caught up they see no sign of him in the vicinity.

Success on a PERCEPTION check will discover footprints dead-ending at the rock face. Success on a second PERCEPTION check will discover that there is a door-sized crack in the rock and disturbed soil at the base.

GM: Get the entire party to roll either PERCEPTION, Intelligence or Luck, whichever is highest, against a difficulty of 13. On a success they will find a small lever which opens the doorway. Alternatively the rock door will shatter after taking 50 points of damage. If the PCs take a ten-minute rest here they will not suffer the penalties of the pursuit.

The Mountain

As the door swings almost noiselessly into the mountain, your eyes adjust slowly to the dim light. A narrow tunnel, around sixty meters in length stretches before you and curves to the right so you cannot see its end. The tunnel is low-lit with candles in tiny alcoves at ten meter intervals. You have to walk single file and slightly hunched to get through without banging your head.

GM: The end of the tunnel opens up into a small chamber, roughly five meters by seven. This chamber is also lit with candles and at the far end is an arched double doorway. Standing before the doorway are 5 skeletons. You see Notker issuing orders to the skeletons and disappearing through the doorway. The chamber is otherwise empty.

SKELETONS

Attack	11, 2 x sword (d8, 4), 2 x mace (d6, 4), 1 x morning star (d6, 5)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	7 (gloomsight)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	4, 4, 5, 5, 6
Rank-equivalent	1

Having killed the skeletons the PCs move to the door. It is locked but the catch looks rusty. A single hit with a sword will shatter the lock with no need to roll. The PCs can rest here if needed: if they did not rest before entering the mountain, recommend that they do it now to restore the -1 to Strength and Reflexes.

Through the door is another short passage, a little wider and taller than the last and lit with candles. As the PCs walk through the passage it opens up into a chamber roughly ten meters square. The room is luxuriously decorated with thick tapestries adorning the walls, patterned rugs on the floor and large, ornate furniture dotted throughout. The right-hand side of the door appears to be used as a work space, with a wide desk and chair, a cauldron and dozens

of tiny vials, pouches and crystals stacked on shelves. Here there is also a bird cage and a ragged-looking raven sits on a perch. On the desk can be seen three small chests (the PCs may know from the abbot that there have been three thefts of ancient relics in the past few weeks.)

Standing in the centre of the room is a slight, dark-haired woman in a long blood-red dress. Her face is beautiful but looking upon it for too long starts to give the PCs an inexplicable feeling of unease, so much so that they cannot look at her for more than a few seconds without having to look away.

Nalis, a 4th-rank Demonologist, is talking to a breathless and pleading Notker. She knows he has failed her and she does not take failure lightly. Seeing the PCs enter, Nalis looks up from the grovelling Notker and gives them a smile that makes them shiver. With a wave of the hand she dismisses Notker who scurries away and disappears through a previously unseen passageway on the left-hand wall of the chamber.

Nalis turns to the PCs and greets them. If the PCs wish they can enter into conversation with her. She has stolen the bones from various monasteries and abbeys to complete the summoning ritual of a Demon Lord she refuses to name. She asks if they can supply her with the bones of St Giles in return for a boon from her infernal lord. If they decline, she sternly requests them to leave now or face the consequences. If they do not, she will attack the closest member of the party with a *Dragonbreath* spell (see *Dragon Warriors* p. 80). Nalis will also use the *Inflict Wound* spell (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 80) on the party and attack with her +1 staff.

NALIS
4TH-RANK DEMONOLOGIST

Attack	12, staff (d6+1, 3)
Defence	6
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	18
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	3
Stealth	14
Perception	9
Reflexes	10
Health Points	10

ITEMS: Staff of Night Vision (+1), Amulet of the Blue Scarab.

TREASURE: Three chests full of the bones of relics, four tapestries worth 100F each but very heavy to carry, 2 potions of healing, 1 potion of strength, 1 vial of smoke and one pouch of Amianthus dust. There are gems and gold worth 600F dotted around the room. There is also a book of demonology on the desk.

PCs can leave Nalis's chambers the way they came in or can attempt to follow Notker. They will not find him, and instead will come out on the other side of the mountain. If they bring the chests of relics back to the abbot, they will be rewarded with 150F each.

ADVENTURE 3

THE UNQUIET GRAVE

The Return of the Dead

LOST ON THE BARREN MOORS of north of the Hourla Hills after nightfall, you have little hope of surviving to see another dawn. You have trudged through the freezing mud for hours but finally you stumble and sink to your knees, your iron will no longer a match for your weariness. You bow your head and compose yourself to meet your god. Your only regret is that you did not die in battle.

Through the closing haze of darkness you seem to see a light, and dully you turn your head to watch it approach. An old man stands before you holding a lantern aloft. When, in later years, you think back to this moment it seems that you recall vividly the look of quiet strength in his grey eyes, and the sound of his cloak as the gale snaps it around his frail body.

Beckoning you to follow, he turns and walks away. Somehow you find the strength to rise and stagger after him. Holding the bobbing lantern up to guide you, he leads the way to a small cottage where a welcoming light shines from latticed windows. A few more steps would take you to the cottage door, but your fatigue is too much and you pass out. Barely conscious, you sense yourself being lifted up and carried towards the cottage. As in a dream, you abstractly wonder at the strength in the old man's arms. He takes you inside and lays you on a pallet beside the fire. Your last recollection is of thick fur blankets being drawn up around you.

It is noon before you awaken. At first you remember little, but as fragments and tatters of memory return from the previous night you are amazed to find your-

self in a dusty, derelict cottage. There is no sign of your rescuer and there does not seem to have been a fire in the grate in the recent past. Outside, the bleak landscape lies bathed in cold, winter sunshine. You see smoke rising from beyond a wooded hill and head in that direction.

An hour's walk brings you to the village of Hobvale where you quickly seek out an inn and treat yourself to an ample and warming repast. Then, sitting by the fire with a cup of mulled wine in your hand, you relate the events of the previous night to the innkeeper.

'An extraordinary tale,' he says, 'but one which I have in fact heard once or twice before from other travellers like yourself. Some years ago an old monk called Alaric lived in a hermitage out on the moors. Anyone who came to his door would receive shelter, and he often went out with his lantern when a sudden storm or blizzard might have caught wayfarers unawares.'

'Why, then, clearly this was he.' You are on your feet at once. 'Come man, I am no churl. Tell me where he lives now and I shall go to thank this monk and reward him for his kindness.'

The innkeeper shakes his head and waves you back to your chair. 'Hah! I cannot think you would care to undertake the journey. He took in a stricken traveller some ten years past and then died himself when he braved the storm to fetch the man a doctor. So you see, he resides now in Heaven!'

For thousands of years people have enjoyed ghost stories. A dip into the folklore and literature of any country will uncover dozens of variations on the theme. Unfortunately this rich vein of imaginative material is all too often reduced to absurdity by the need to frame everything in simple game-terms. How impoverished and inadequate the modern horrors of adventure gaming can seem when compared to the originals from which they were derived (Grendel, Dracula, the Green Knight, the Balrog, *et al.*)

The problem in part comes from trying to define things exactly, for this can also limit them. It would be very difficult to create anything like Macbeth in a standard adventure, say. Banquo's ghost would either have to be a genuine *Dragon Warriors* ghost with a 1d12 Fright Attack, or a figment of Macbeth's guilt-ridden imagination (which can be established if the PCs have some way of detecting spirits or the undead when the ghost next shows). Storytelling allows ambiguity whereas games enforce the tedious certainty of Aristotelian logic.

I am not suggesting that creatures should not be defined at all in game-terms, however. But there should certainly be a shift away from the present rules-and-stats approach which makes it all too easy to roll hosts of uninspired random encounters. There must be a sense of (and fear of) the unknown when encountering fantastic creatures, particularly ghosts and undead. Player-characters should not think of such things as standard, nor should they ever feel that they or anyone else in the world knows very much about them.

To help deal with the problem, here is a new term for GMs to use: **relict**. A relict is anyone who returns from the dead—whether in physical form, as an apparition, or as an ambiguous and undefined combination of the two. There is no one set of stats for all relicts, because they are not all of one nature; some you can fight, some you can banish with magic, but many can only be dealt with by discovering their particular weaknesses.



Alaric's relict could be thought of as a sort of 'psychic residue'. It could not harm a character, nor be harmed. It could not be pigeonholed as a standard *Dragon Warriors* ghost, because it was not a conscious and reasoning entity, it was a part of this honourable man which did not fade from the world when his body died and his soul passed on. Relicts like this will appear in scenarios as a means of giving the characters clues to past events, assisting them, hindering endangering them or simply to create an eerie effect.

Relicts may be brought into existence when a person dies as a result of gross injustice, or with a task or duty still to complete. This is the nebulous and inconstant magic of the human psyche, there is no 'Create Relict' spell!

If you left a companion to die then his relict might pursue you with a view to evening up the score. Maybe he can only be laid to rest if you go back, find his body and give it a decent burial. Or maybe you will have to fight the relict because it will only be satisfied by your death. Possibly the relict will depart if you can merely fool it into thinking you are dead. Scenarios involving a relict will thus often revolve around finding out what it wants and then accomplishing this with minimal unpleasantness to yourself!

Relicts are a useful way of keeping powerful PCs on their toes; the characters might be able to defeat ghosts and spectres with their hands tied behind them, but they will just have to rely on their wits when facing a relict which inconveniently ignores all the usual tricks for dealing with undead.

Any powers that a relict possesses should be counterbalanced by specific vulnerabilities. These could relate to the way the relict arose, so if a person died in a fire, his/her relict could manifest itself in a form mutilated by horrible burns, becoming able to utilise flame-related attacks and be harmed by almost any Water Elementalist spell.

When you're devising a relict, start by deciding on its 'life' history and how you're going to bring it into the scenario, and only then work out its stats and powers (if any)—let your imagination take the lead and make the rules run to catch up!

Second, take great care in the way you play a relict. Supposing you have a relict which wants a character dead; it might make repeated attacks night after

night, but it would not plan its attacks as would a human assassin. Relicts are isolated fragments of a psyche, and they lose their qualities of awe and strangeness if made to act like rational living beings.

Scenario Outlines

The High Priest of Nebr'volent

After discovering the pyramid of a wealthy Ancient in Opalar, a High Priest in times long past, the characters return home with a fortune in tomb treasures. Shortly afterwards, a succession of deaths among the NPCs who accompanied them alerts the player characters to the danger they are in. The next night, one of the PCs is visited in a dream by the High Priest's relict. In the dream, the character finds himself running, parched and weary, across the desert sands. In the moonlight, he sees an oasis and heads for it. As he cups his hands to drink, however, his relief turns to dread—for reflected in the water he sees a terrible apparition standing behind him. It is the mummified corpse of the Ancient, dressed in its priestly finery. It reaches for him with claw-like hands but he cannot move or turn to defend himself. The water in his hands turns to dust and he awakes in a cold sweat. The dream recurs every night, and each morning the character finds he is getting weaker. (In game terms, he is losing a Health Point every four nights.)

Consulting local sages, the player characters are told by the most well-read sorcerers and exorcists that someone must sit with the character while he sleeps and cast *Hold Off The Dead* the moment that it seems the dream is beginning. This course proves partially effective—it drives back the relict until the next time the character goes to sleep—but the sorcerers are charging a great deal each time they are called on to cast the spell...

The other PCs probably realise it is their turn once the haunted character is dead, so they do everything possible to keep him alive.

In desperation (and after a gentle hint from the GM) the character goes down to the docks and seeks out a notorious sorcerer who lives there. This fellow consults his books, charts and astrological devices

and then explains that the tomb was cursed. He tells the character that he has only one hope (choose the solution which fits best into your campaign):

1. For long-term campaigns

The characters must gather together the priestly regalia they stole and return it to the tomb. The problems arising from this are that they possibly do not have enough cash to buy back some of the items, or a collector who bought one of the items refuses to part with it. Once they manage to get back all of the items and set off for the tomb, the haunted character loses no more Health Points—but he doesn't recover the Health Points he's already lost until all the items are safely back and the tomb sealed.

2. For episodic campaigns

The sorcerer knows of a way to help the character fight back: he must go to sleep clutching a pile of salt in his left hand and an antique jade shortsword (provided by the sorcerer) tied to his right with a silk cord. When the relict appears behind him in his dream he is able to throw the salt up into its face and then, with its gaze momentarily averted from the pool, he is freed from his paralysis and able to turn and fight it. This is a straight 'physical' battle; no spells can be used.

The character and the relict are closely matched, and neither has armour. The relict wields a mace of mauve stone. If he defeats it, he wakes to find he is back to full health. If he doesn't defeat it then he never wakes up, and the next PC will have to pay the sorcerer for his services.

A Noble Knight

This is intended as a sub-plot to run alongside whatever 'main' adventure the characters are on at the time. A number of strange events occur over a period of several days—e.g. a golden hawk leading the characters to a companion who has fallen in the hills and broken his leg, a lion which silently approaches when they are lost in the mountains at night and guides them to safety. Mention enough of these that the player-characters have a sense of something significant in the offing, but keep them busy enough with the main adventure that they don't have time to analyse it all.

Eventually, while traversing a mountain pass, they are ambushed by bandits. Things look bad for a while until the sudden intervention of an armoured knight on horseback saves the day. The knight turns out to be an uncommunicative sort, though he does reveal his name (Helveas) and seems very pious. He walks with a slight limp. At the next town the characters lose him, but he meets up with them when they continue their trek into the mountains in search of whatever tomb or treasure trove they are after. Helveas accompanies them when they enter a cavern complex infested with monsters, and several times steps into mêlée to save a character's life as the party fights on towards its objective.

Finally, after a pitched battle in the main cavern chamber, the characters look around to find Helveas gone. But while gathering the treasure, they discover the corpse of a knight in the shadows under a shelf of rock to one side of the cave. Mystics with the party can tell that he died of a wasting infection—probably caught from the monsters when they took him prisoner. His left leg was broken. Although his armour was rusted over the years, the characters can still recognise the heraldic design on the breastplate. A golden eagle on a red sun—Helveas's coat-of-arms. His relict has helped the adventurers reach his body so that they can administer the proper funeral rites.

Recommended sources

Films: *The Fog*; *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean*; *High Plains Drifter*; *Rashomon*; *Don Giovanni*.

Books: *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* by M R James; *Dracula* by Bram Stoker; *British Folktales and Legends* by K Briggs; *The Room in the Tower* by E F Benson; *The Bull and the Spear* by M Moorcock

Not all of these are strictly concerned with relicts, but they are valuable as inspirational material.

ADVENTURE 4

THE SERPENT'S VENOM

An adventure for 1st–3rd rank characters

Players' Introduction

FINDING THEMSELVES somewhat impoverished, the player characters enter the town of Overdale in the north of Albion, one cold evening, and are forced to make do with only a meagre supper of bread and cheese at the Black Rose inn. Naturally, then, they are quick to accept when a tall, slender blonde in robes of green and grey approaches and invites them to dine with her.

'I am Galadria the Gifted,' she says, 'I know what it is to be down on one's luck, so I extend this charitable hand to a group of fellow adventurers.' The charitable hand in question glitters with a number of heavy gold rings. She sweeps gracefully between the benches where the common patrons of the inn sit drinking, and leads the characters to one of the partitioned tables off to one side of the room. She orders stew and mulled wine for them, all before explaining that she is an elementalists who has been looking for a party of suitable adventuring companions to help her deal with an awkward situation.

As the food is brought, there is a brief lull in the conversation, and the characters cannot help overhear something of what is being said by the group at the next table. The word 'treasure' is mentioned several

times. Discreetly listening at the thin wooden partition, they hear snatches of discussion—the other group are also adventurers, planning to explore and loot an abandoned temple a day's ride to the north, in the foothills of the Pagan Mountains. The temple appears to be located in an underground complex hidden beside a lake surrounded by weeping willows. Galadria whispers that she knows the lake, having recently passed that way—it is called Willow Lake. Suddenly one of the men at the next table rises to leave. Galadria and her player characters immediately pretend to be chatting to one another. The man who has risen says goodbye to his friends and leaves. At the door, he turns and calls back: 'I'll get some horses and see you back here in two days, then!' before walking into the night.

Galadria leans forward and speaks in hushed tones, glancing from time to time at the next table as if to reassure herself that the eavesdropping has not been detected. 'Luck has delivered us an excellent opportunity, or so it seem. If this group aren't planning to depart for another two days, we can steal a march on them. I hope that none of you consider this dishonourable—they do look rather disreputable types themselves, and honour must go by the board when one's pocket is almost empty of gold.'

GM's Background

This has actually been a con, an elaborate charade enacted to dupe the player characters. Galadria is the accomplice of the men at the next table. She and they are worshippers of the evil god Balor (see *Prince of Darkness*, p. 28). The abandoned temple to the north was their own, but it was attacked almost a year ago by a knightly order. Galadria and the others were the only ones to escape. They would like to retrieve the idol of Balor and the coffers from the temple, but have been unable to do so because several of the skeleton guards of the temple were not destroyed by the knights and now patrol parts of the complex following their original orders: to attack anyone not accompanied by a full Priest of Balor (a Balor-worshipping elemental of at least 5th-rank).

For some time, Galadria and the others lured several adventuring parties to the temple in order to whittle down the number of undead guards without risking themselves. Then events were complicated by a group of orcs moving into the abandoned temple. Their leader, a human sorcerer, instructed the orcs to board the skeletons into one section of the complex. Although many orcs died in the attempt, this was achieved, and the skeletons do not have the orders or the intellect to dismantle the barricade.

The remaining worshippers of Balor know about the orcs. They have evolved new tactics. Galadria will take the player characters into the temple and make a drive straight for the main shrine in order to get the sacred idol. On the way out, Vargus and the others plan to mount an ambush—whereupon Galadria will reveal her true colours and (they intend) the player characters will be slain.

GALADRIA

3RD-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST,
SUBSIDIARY ELEMENTS: FIRE, WATER

Attack	11, staff (d6, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	17
Magical Defence	7
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	5
Reflexes	12
Health Points	9
Magic Points	9/3/3

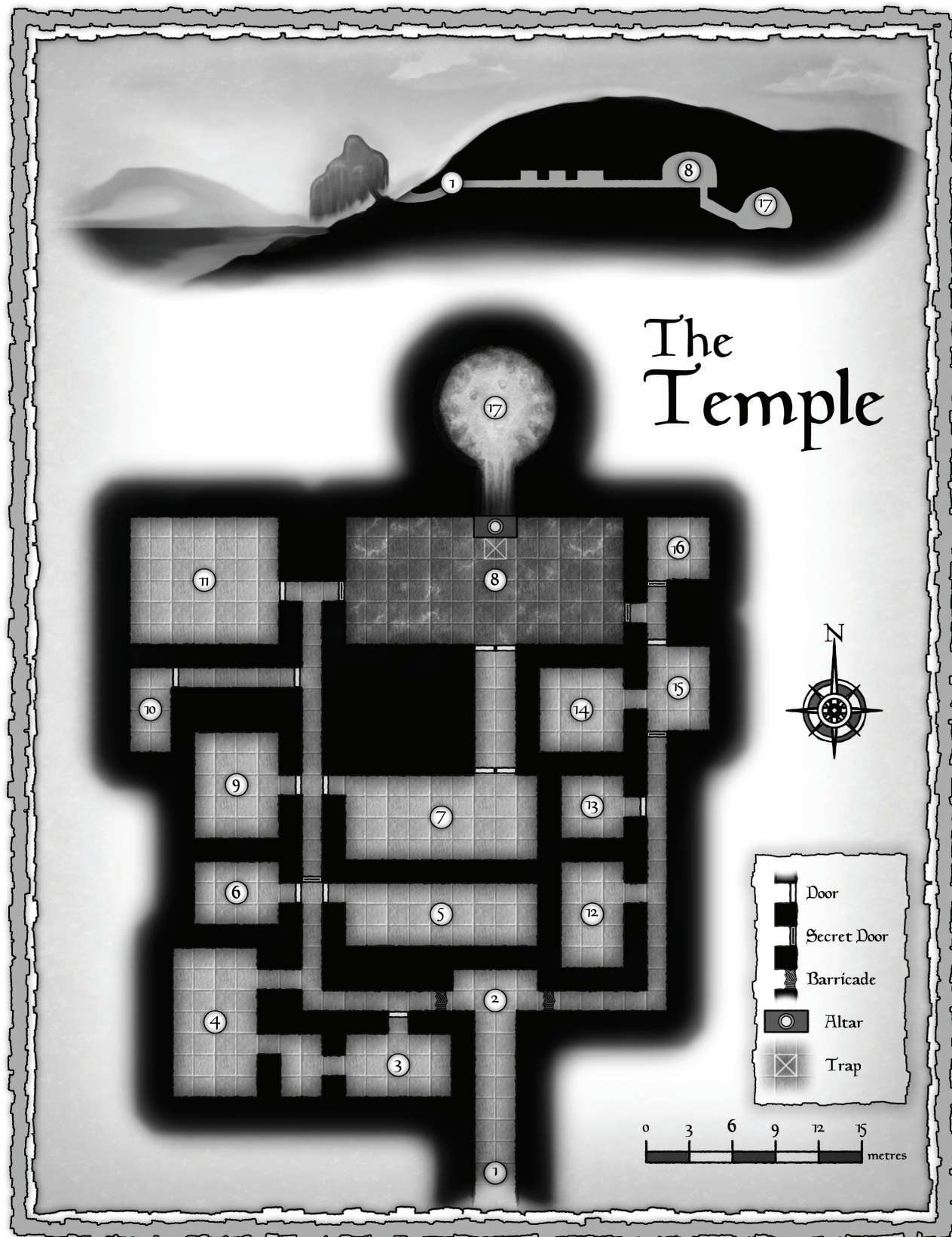
TREASURE: 13 florins, quarterstaff, dagger, lantern, tinderbox, padded armour, Orb of Darkness, the Eye of Foreboding, Vial of Smoke.

The Journey to the Temple

The ride north takes the characters through rolling green countryside, through vales and gentle hill, past small hamlets and farms where peasants till the fields. The terrain gradually becomes more craggy and less populous. At one point they espy a sombre black chapel or monastery across the valley. Even at a distance it is easy to see that it is deserted and overgrown.

GM: This chapel was the home of the knightly order that raided the Temple of Balor. So many were slain in the endeavour that the wounded who returned decided to deconsecrate their chapel and move south. As a consequence, it is deserted.

Finally their objective is in sight. As the PCs ride towards the lake, however, they are suddenly attacked by a party of five orcs who are out foraging.



ORCS

Attack	12, shord sword (d8, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	3 (mail hauberk)
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	9
Perception	4 (darksight)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	5, 6, 7, 7, 9
Rank-equivalent	1

These orcs will not attempt to reach the temple (if they try to escape, it will be into the wilderness) because they know that the look-out there will have seen the characters approaching and will have given the alarm, so the way in will be barricaded (see below). Galadria will try not to use her spells unless absolutely necessary. She does need at least three of the player-characters to carry the idol out of the temple, however, so she will bear this in mind. The entrance to the temple is a cave mouth on the lake shore. This is concealed behind the trunk of a weeping willow but Galadria will soon 'stumble across' the entrance if the characters don't spot it. Once inside the temple, her aim will be to lead them directly to the major shrine and the temple treasury. This will involve Galadria 'noticing' several secret doors and although she will try to pretend that she is just doing this by luck, her eagerness to complete the mission may make her find the secret doors suspiciously quickly.

The Temple Complex

1. Entrance Passage

Crudely hewn steps lead up about six feet behind the willow tree. The passage then levels out and carries on for another five feet or so—just more than the range of torchlight.

2. Entrance hall

Barricades to the left and right block the exit passages from this room. Sturdy ropes lead across from behind the left barricade and are secured to the other. As the characters enter, they can see several orcs peering out from the left-hand barricade.

Suddenly the ropes go taut and the right-hand barricade is pulled down. There is a noxious tittering from the orcs as four skeletons advance through the collapsed barricade and attack the characters. There is a total of nine skeletons in the temple complex, previously trapped in the passage to rooms 12, 13 and 14; they will issue forth to attack the characters at the rate of 1-3 a round until all have been killed. They will also attack Galadria, even though she is a worshipper of Balor, because she is not accompanied by a priest of the god.

SKELETONS

Attack	11, 5 maces (d6, 4), 4 spears (2d4, 4)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0 (2 vs stabbing weapons)
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	7 (gloomsight)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 7
Rank-equivalent	1

The barricades are made of logs and branches. The left-hand one must be broken down for the characters to reach the orcs. This will take 4-6 combat rounds, with the orcs sniping at the adventurers all the time. Galadria will prefer to take the party this way even if all the skeletons haven't been destroyed, because she knows about the skullghast guarding the armoury and regards it as the safer of the two routes.

The orcs and their leader occupy the section of the complex covering rooms 3, 4, 5 and 6. Their leader is Althalos, a sorcerer. He regards the temple complex predominantly as a convenient base from which to raid and perhaps eventually take over northern Albion. Though he reveres no gods, he does also

think there's a possibility he may be able to tap into whatever dark sources of magical power were once associated with this place.

ORCS

Attack	12, 3 maces (d6, 4), 3 shord swords (d8, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	3 (mail hauberk)
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	9
Perception	4 (darksight)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	4, 4, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9
Rank-equivalent	1

TREASURE: The orcs with swords also have shields; those with maces or shortwords also have slings. The slingers are the ones who will snipe at the player-characters. Between them, the orcs also have small change and trinkets, amounting to a value of 7F.

ALTHALOS

4TH-RANK SORCERER

Attack	12, staff (d6, 3)
Defence	6
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	18
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	4
Stealth	15
Perception	6
Reflexes	11
Health Points	12
Magic Points	15

TREASURE: Scrolls of Warding and Shadowbolt; 43F.

3. Storeroom

This was originally the temple storeroom. Some game hangs from hooks in the ceiling for a banquet the orcs were planning. The smaller chamber off to the end is where the food is prepared.

4. Refectory

There are plain wooden benches and a table.

5. Dormitory

This is where the lower-ranking worshippers slept (Galadria, Vargus and the others). It is now the orcs' dormitory, of course. One orc lies in bed here. He has Swamp Fever (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 126), and could not join his fellows in defending their lair. Anyone who touches him has a 5% chance of contracting the disease.

6. Outer Shrine

There is a black bas-relief of a muscular red-eyed demon on the opposite wall. Originally the room was hung with tapestries and was a place for solo rituals devoted to Balor. It is now Althalos's private chamber, and he uses the tapestries for his bedding.

7. Robing Room

Several black robes with a stylised eye design in white over the abdomen hang on hooks around the room. A wooden cupboard contains six black iron crowns, with tines in the form of rough, icicle-like spikes. There are five mouldering corpses in the room, two of which wear rusting armour. (Roll a d20; on a 1, the player-character with the highest PERCEPTION will notice that Galadria is unusually disturbed by the sight of these corpses. The three unarmoured ones were priests of the temple; the other two were knights slain in the attacks.)

8. Major Shrine

This is a large chamber of black marble veined with quartz. On the altar stone there is a solid onyx idol to Balor, with eyes of red gold and a leering forked tongue, this is the idol Galadria wants. (Note: as a worshipper of Balor, Galadria should perform a genuflection as she crosses the threshold of this chamber. She won't actually do this because it would

be an obvious giveaway, but from that point she will be at -1 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, MAGICAL ATTACK, MAGICAL DEFENCE, STEALTH, PERCEPTION, and EVASION, until ritually absolved by a priest of Balor.)

There are two traps on the idol that even Galadria doesn't know about. Firstly, if touched anywhere except behind the head, it will shoot out its forked tongue (speed 19, damage 3, normal poison) to strike any character standing directly in front of the altar stone (unless they have taken specific precautions against this). Armour will not help, unless the player has specified that the character is wearing a full-face helmet, or has his visor down, in which case the tongue will have no effect.

Secondly, a 5' x 5' trapdoor will open directly in front of the altar, dropping anyone standing there down a sloping chute to room 17 unless they can evade its Speed of 16. The idol is worth 450F and radiates a palpable aura of evil.

9. Priests' Dormitory

There are five beds with decaying linen. There are two corpses here—it seems that an armoured knight slew one of the sleeping priests but was then struck down from behind.

10. High Priests' Room

Two decomposing bodies lie together on the floor. The armoured knight thrust his sword through the High Priest, but the latter locked his hands around the knight's throat and choked him even in death. The knight's sword has not rusted, unlike his armour. A black pentangle amulet hangs on the far wall. The High Priest was trying to reach his Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence when the master of the knightly order caught up with him. The knight's sword is +1.

When the characters have been in this room for two combat rounds, a shadowy form will rise from the High Priest's corpse. It will attack anyone except a worshipper of Balor. It is the High Priest's spirit, now a wraith. The strength of Balor's magic in this place, and the High Priest's fanaticism, are such that the he was able to become a wraith in far less time than usual.

WRAITH

Attack	(see <i>Bestiary</i> , p. 86)
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
Movement	15m
Magical Attack	1d10 / Combat Round attack is delayed
Magical Defence	11
Evasion	4
Stealth	10
Perception	13 (darksight)
Reflexes	12
Health Points	9
Rank-equivalent	5

If this wraith is struck with the knight's sword it will be destroyed immediately because some of the knight's virtue has remained in this weapon which was the cause of the Priest's death.

11. Library

Shelves around the room are stocked with numerous books, all of which deal with the revolting and terrible rituals of the priesthood of Balor. Any character of the True Faith who reads one of these books through completely will be subject to a MAGICAL ATTACK of 16, permanently losing a point of Intelligence if affected.

12. Barracks

A bare room. This is where the skeletons remained when 'off duty'.

13. Tomb Chamber

Two sarcophagi contain the mortal remains of earlier High Priests of this temple.

14. Cells

Manacles hang from the walls. There is a decayed corpse chained here. This is where victims were kept awaiting sacrifice to the deity.



15. Armoury

A skullghast guards the special weapons of the temple. The skullghast will attack anyone except the High Priest, so Galadria knows better than to enter the room.

The skullghast will not leave this room, even to pursue intruders, as its orders were to stay and guard.

SKULLGHAST

Attack	16, flame (d10, 3)
Defence	15
Armour Factor	0 (see <i>Bestiary</i> , p.66)
Movement	flying 30m
Magical Attack	8
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	7
Stealth	15
Perception	12 (panoptical)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	10
Rank-equivalent	4

The special weapons and armour are a +1 morning-star; a +1 mail hauberk; two +1 shields.

16. Treasury

The temple coffers contain 328 florins, guarded by two zombies.

ZOMBIES

Attack	10, maces (d6+1, 5)
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0
Movement	6m
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	1
Stealth	5
Perception	4
Reflexes	3
Health Points	17, 19
Rank-equivalent	1

17. A Dank Chamber

Contains the temple's special guardian, which will attack any who fall down the chute into its lair. It is a nargut (see *Bestiary*, p. 42). It usually subsists on small creatures such as rats and moles which burrow into its lair (the priests used to feed it regularly). A human should provide quite a feast!

NARGUT

Attack	16, acid bite (d10, 3), claw (d8, 5)
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	6
Evasion	2
Stealth	14
Perception	7 (darksight)
Reflexes	6
Health Points	22
Rank-equivalent	6

Leaving the Temple

As the characters leave the complex, they are ambushed by Vargus and the other worshippers of Balor. The player-characters will almost certainly recognise them from the overheard conversation in the inn; this may allow them to work out what has happened, if not immediately then later on. Galadria will turn on the party now, if she hasn't been killed in the temple.

Since the sacking of their temple by the knights, these remaining worshippers have devoted their efforts to recovering the idol and the temple coffers. Losogon, although but an acolyte, is their spiritual leader now but he is not a leader of men, so it is Vargus, as an officer of the temple guard, who gives the orders.

Galadria, by virtue of her intelligence and personal power, wields much influence, but the others do not see her as leader because most Balor-worshipping fighting men would not take orders from a female elemental.

VARGUS

2ND-RANK KNIGHT

Attack	15, sword (d8+1, 4)
Defence	8
Armour Factor	4
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	4
Evasion	4
Stealth	9
Perception	5
Reflexes	11
Health Points	12
Treasure	Shield, 23F

NOTES: Streak of white hair in beard

DRAGON WARRIORS

LOSOOGON

1ST-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST,
SUBSIDIARY ELEMENTS: FIRE AND EARTH

Attack	11, morningstar (d6, 5)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	15
Magical Defence	5
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	5
Reflexes	10
Health Points	7

TREASURE: fig-wood staff carved in snake-form,
worth 50F

ANABAT

1ST-RANK BARBARIAN

Attack	14, two-handed sword (d10, 5)
Defence	6
Armour Factor	3
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	5
Stealth	10
Perception	5
Reflexes	11
Health Points	12
Treasure	Gilded dagger worth 25F.

NOTES: Scar over left eye

RISH

1ST-RANK ASSASSIN

Attack	13, sword (d8, 4)
Defence	6
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	5
Stealth	19
Perception	8
Reflexes	14
Health Points	8

TREASURE: Sword with serpentine hilt, worth 10F.

ADVENTURE 5

TEMPLE OF THE LOST GOD

An adventure for five to eight characters of 4th–6th rank

GM's Introduction

THE TEMPLE OF the Lost God is set deep in the dark continent of Mungoda. The eastern edge of the Thanagost peaks and the foothills and jungles for many miles around are occupied by the brutal yet sophisticated Tochel Empire, ruled with an iron fist by Queen Tiacapan. Tiacapan is an absolute ruler who claims to be immortal. Certainly it is said that she remains strikingly, terrifyingly beautiful, despite having been queen for many decades.

The Tochel practise human sacrifice. Though foreigners may regard this as morally repugnant, it is a matter of course here, and those sacrificed are thought of as highly honoured. Slaves are often sacrificed, since by being given to the gods, they may end their sordid, pointless existence by being transmuted into a higher, more spiritual substance. The slaves, of course, may disagree.

'Temple of the Lost God' is designed to be used when the characters first arrive in these lands, guided here by an ancient scroll discovered during the course of their other adventures in the south of Mungoda, near the great river (for example).

The Tochel people will welcome the characters as Pale Gods from a distant land, thinking they may amuse the queen, or perhaps be used against her.

Intrigue is rife in these lands, with every village chieftain and high priest having some kind of angle, some kind of agenda.

The Tochel language is just one step removed from Ancient Kaikahuran, as some of the founders of the Empire, many thousands of years ago, were exiles from that land. Adventurers will have at least some chance to learn the tongue, particularly if they already know Ancient Kaikahuran, from whatever southern Mungodan guides or boatmen they have employed to take them upriver. One or two of the Tochel villagers will be able to speak a little Nascérine, which is a useful trade language for many travellers in Mungoda.

The Worship of Echcatl, the Lost God

Echcatl, the Lost God, Lord of the Four Winds, He of the Two Masks, Mover of Sun and Moon, is an ancient god, said to be one of the very creators of the World. He has been lost from Tochel and the world for generations, after he fell in love with a human girl, Mayael. The adoration of a god was too much for her mortal frame, the magical force of his love slaying her outright and scattering her corpse into seven pieces. It is said that Echcatl has been searching the three worlds for her ever since. His worshippers became obsessed with death and

the Undead, believing that if they could find all the Seven Fragments that once made up Mayauel's body, and clothe it once more in flesh, their god might return to them. In the years since Echcatl's disappearance, many priests became more interested in life, death, and undeath than in returning Echcatl per se, though some remain devoted to finding the Seven Fragments and bringing Echcatl back to his rightful place as ruler of Mungoda's gods.

The priesthood of Echcatl is very highly organized and secretive. Though their fascination with the undead would make them social pariahs in any other society, most of the priests are not evil, but are simply dedicated men and women of learning, often being respected scholars and physicians. They wear strange, double-faced masks and swirling robes of pale blue.

Yxtab, the Doomed Woman

Yxtab is the Goddess of Suicide and Despair. She is worshipped only by a few Darkness Elementalists and similar evil cultists, though few of the cults last long. A typical pattern would be for a cult to arise in an isolated village, spreading through the villagers till there are enough of them to murder their neighbours, then massacre another nearby village or two before turning on each other and themselves in a frenzy of self-destruction.

Players' Introduction

By chance, one of you discovered some information concerning a temple to the Lost God, Echcatl, located high in the easternmost Thanagost peaks. The records you have looked at show that the temple was founded two hundred years ago. Another brief reference, from a hundred years ago, states that the temple was abandoned just before that time, and that the priests' exodus was apparently so hurried that most of the temple relics and treasures had to be left behind. You set out at once.

Your journey north has brought you nearly five hundred miles along a tributary of the Mungoda river, into lands that pay homage to the much-feared Queen Tiacapan, sometimes referred to as Witch Queen or Vampire Queen, though never when her spies might hear. You left

the river two or three days ago and travelled due north, seeing the jungle give way to light forest as you head into the mountain range known as the Thanagost Peaks. Through a pass you have come to the village of Mandir, at the foot of impressive cliffs. Somewhere beyond, only a few miles away now, lies your goal.

GM's Notes

GMs should feel free to adapt or expand the Players' Introduction above to fit their own games.

The Village of Mandir

The sun is low over the western mountains as the party approach Mandir. In the north, storm clouds gather. The village consists of about thirty houses—low wooden buildings with many-sided totemic pillars at each corner supporting roofs of black tile.

The party are greeted formally by Tulkesh Nraga (preferably in Tochel, but in Nascérine if necessary). Tulkesh, a slightly built man about forty years old, is village headman and a worshipper of the local cult of Echcatl, to which more than three-quarters of the villagers belong. He is quite affable towards strangers—particularly if the party suggests they are interested in converting to the worship of Echcatl—and will invite them to dine with him and stay for a few days. No payment is expected unless the party presume too much on the villagers' hospitality.

Also at dinner is a strange young man called Nomi-karu Teteli, the local priest of Echcatl. As soon as the meal has begun he starts to chew a local hallucinogenic weed and becomes by turns either vague or abstractly argumentative. He was once a high-ranked priest in a major temple, who fell out with the temple elders and now chafes at his demotion to lowly village priest.

Tulkesh will freely answer any questions. Mandir was settled by pioneers from the west two hundred years ago. The temple that the player-characters are interested in was founded at about the same time, but it appears to have become deserted less than a century later. Tulkesh is not sure of the details—just that the priests abandoned the place after a number of unexplained events. One story he has heard is that

the priests were later attacked and killed by outlaws as they made their way back toward the village, so a full report was never made. From time to time since then there have been mysterious disappearances, and nowadays people try to give the temple a wide berth. Nomikaru adds that there are probably wights and grave gaunts (see below) guarding the temple compound, and will relish describing these creatures to the ignorant. The party may choose to look around the village before heading for the temple.

Getting There

The trail from Mandir leads up through the cliffs and foothills. It is steep and overgrown, and now quite arduous after a recent storm. There is a steady, grey drizzle and the skies threaten further storms, for this is Shapru, the month of rains.

The whole trek takes about seven hours for a moderately burdened party. This assumes ten-minutes' rest each hour. The last part of the journey involves trudging up a particularly steep and muddy path, and characters who don't take a ten-minute break at the bottom will fight at -1 ATTACK for the next hour owing to fatigue.

The Abandoned Temple

Although the temple was founded ostensibly as a centre of worship for the people of Mandir, its major value to the priesthood of Echcatl must have been as a spiritual retreat; an isolated monastery where priests could conduct their studies and research without disturbance from the factional disputes common within city temples. A number of wights and grave gaunts were provided by the founders of the temple.

Unbeknownst to the temple founders, the caverns below the shrine were used millennia ago by devotees of Yxtab. In fact this was the root cause of the troubles at the temple, as will become clear.

As the party approaches, the temple's ruined state becomes clear. Some time in the past the gatehouse was shattered by lightning, charred, and then rotted

by the elements. The stone wall around the temple compound has collapsed at several points. The paving stones within are cracked and subsided, the buildings are tangled with vines and in disrepair.

Dominating the temple is the twenty-foot pyramid on which stands the shrine dedicated to Echcatl. Just as the party passes through the ruined gate, dark, winged shapes rise up from here and the colonnade below, soaring aloft and then swooping down on the adventurers...

These are grave gaunts (see *Bestiary*, p. 79), guardians of the temple. There are seven of them.

GRAVE GAUNTS

Attack	16, spear (2d4, 4)
Defence	9
Armour Factor	1
Movement	8m (flying 90m)
Magical Defence	9
Evasion	7 in flight, 3 on ground
Stealth	13
Perception	6 (darksight)
Reflexes	13
Health Points	11, 12, 13, 14, 14, 15, 16
Rank-equivalent	4

The Library

The roof has fallen in at the western end—many of the books are rotten and worm-eaten, but three sealed bronze chests have preserved the most important books in excellent condition. There is also a scroll of interest to demonologists, concerning the intersection between the Infernal Realms and the magic of necromancy and undeath.

The real find, though, is the temporal codex of the temple—the daily record of events. The entries of interest deal with a month or so, just over a hundred years ago, and are written in the Tochel tongue.

(These codex entries are also given as a hand-out for players, on pages 115–116.)

Day 1

In the midst of preparations for the coming ceremony, two priests who had climbed down to the forest to collect *glabeg* flowers for the festivities went missing. One crawled back into the temple compound in the early hours of this morning, bloodied and tattered. His tongue had been ripped from his head. Ministrations proved ineffective and he died without providing an account of what had befallen.

Day 3

The Festival of the Sorrow of Echcatl was commemorated. The celebration was more muted than in previous years owing to the absence of four of the six slaves prepared for sacrifice. These four must have escaped just a few hours before dawn, but their means of egress from the temple precincts is by no means apparent. None of the other slaves seems to have witnessed the escape—a story which they maintain even under diligent torture. It remains a mystery.

Day 15

Senior Priest Ishankoi Reshlan has disappeared—spirited away, so to speak, in the middle of the night. Magical means have been employed in an effort to contact him, to no avail. His Holiness the Archpriest has sent word via Mandir to the Imperial Palace. Ishankoi has always seemed a stable fellow, and it is difficult to believe him capable of such dereliction of duty as to go missing only hours before the Ceremony of the Sifting of Hell.

Day 17

Those of us who thought ill of Ishankoi have had cause to revise our judgement since his mutilated form was found in the Lower Shrine shortly after lunch. Who can have performed this horrible deed? Recalling the fate of Shrakan and Elvaru earlier this month, one is forced to the conclusion that some monstrous being has come up from the forests. In spite of the heavy rainfall, Yugao Ludum insisted on taking another message to the runner in Mandir.

Day 23

The heavy storms of the last few days continue unabated. Tekketal Kuroda has gone missing. One can only hope he has not suffered the fate of Ishankoi. Yugao Ludum suggested at dinner that these strange events result from an incursion of Shunned Ones from the forest, and is himself preparing a note to this effect to send to the Omnipotent Legion in the capital—though some of us believe it would be more seemly to first inform the Temple at Arelu.

Day 26

Tekketal's corpse has been located in the wight pit, mutilated even more gruesomely than Ishankoi. To some extent this was due to several of the wights having mistaken his body for an exotic item of their diet.

Further, two acolytes have gone missing.

Day 28

Goduku Raitlan has now vanished, along with his personal servant. On the orders of His Holiness, Yugao Ludum used his magic to communicate our troubles to the High Temple at Coyol. We are assured that investigators have been despatched.

Day 29

Like one who is infected with the eggs of the gnaw-worm, we have suffered from a traitor within! Yugao Ludum has been uncovered as the source of our woe! Along with two young acolytes he has been worshipping at an ancient shrine to the terrible goddess Yxtab in the caverns below our temple. After a few minutes of careful questioning he lapsed into a ghastly calm which he retained even when flayed alive. After this his heart was cut out and the corpse flung into the catacombs where he had his shrine. The acolytes were similarly treated, but spoke freely of a baleful influence which called them to the caverns. They died utterly insane. Our troubles are at least now at an end.

Day 30

After the Celebration of the Wandering Prince, His Holiness the Archpriest was found to be missing. A thorough search of the catacombs uncovered his butchered form, treated not unlike that of Yugao. No magic could revive him. Moreover, there was no sign of the carrion deposited in the catacombs only yesterday.

Day 31

Two more were found dead, and those who remained have been forced to evacuate the temple. Apart from a few slaves only I remain, for I am too infirm to travel far. I and the slaves keep to the library now. I have released the wights and the grave gaunts into the temple precincts, with instructions to attack even those robed as priests of our Supreme Lord. The grave gaunts accommodate themselves to such orders with relish, of course, but the wights seemed dully reluctant. It is tempting to think of this as a sort of loyalty, but I know that the spark of true reason has faded from their dead minds and it is only the illusion of thought that I perceive in them.

The rain is a heavy curtain in the courtyard. Once or twice I thought I glimpsed a figure out there.

Day 32

There is food for only two more days, but I do not think it will come to that. I have had an idea for a treatise on the ethology of the wights. A pity I will never get the chance to write it.

The Pyramid

The Shrine

The roof of the shrine is of a sturdy, black-lacquered wood which has suffered little from time and the elements. There are steps up the south side of the pyramid. The doors are locked.

1. The Outer Shrine

There is an altar stone of blue marble against the north wall, under a double-headed snake mask—one of the insignia of Echcatl.

2. Side-chapel

Behind a locked bronze grille is a small shrine to Ecoatl, Cunning Cadaver, the aspect of Echcatl to whom this temple was particularly dedicated. There is a small gold statue of the skeletal snake, Ecoatl. This is worth up to 6000F, although it would be considered an act of terrible sacrilege if anyone less than a high priest of the priesthood of Echcatl were to remove it from the shrine.

3. Steps lead down within the pyramid

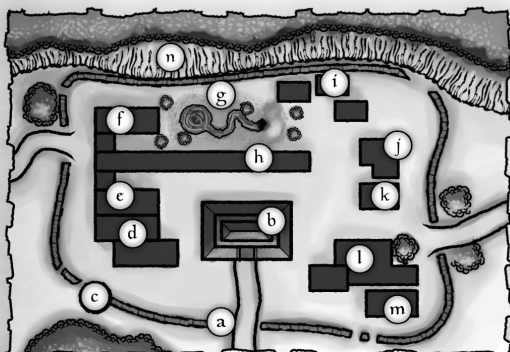
4. A Landing

The steps continue down and there is an archway to the east, from the chamber beyond which issue forth four wights:

ECHCATL WIGHTS

Attack	17, spear (2d4, 4)
Defence	10
Armour Factor	2 (see <i>Bestiary</i> , p. 85)
Movement	12m
Magical Attack	20
Magical Defence	10
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	11 (darkvision)
Reflexes	10
Health Points	16, 18, 18, 19
Rank-equivalent	7

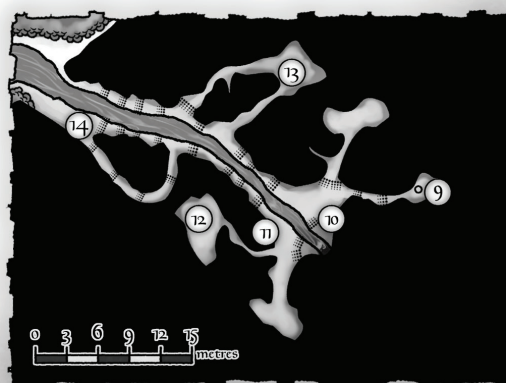
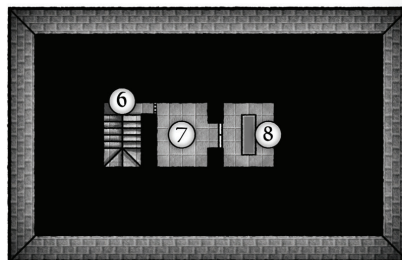
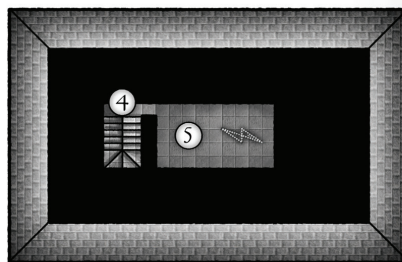
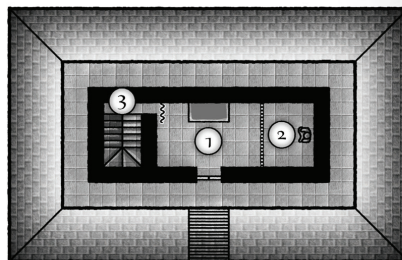
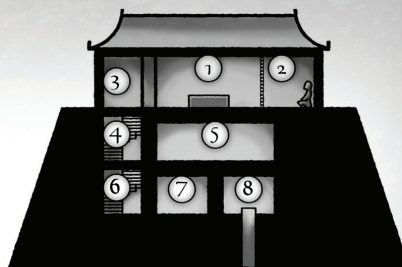
These huge (2m) undead warriors are sometimes used by the priests of Echcatl as temple guards but only in the lower catacombs, as they cannot stand the light of day. As might be expected, they look somewhat different to the usual run of wights, being large, muscular, and savage, in contrast to the gaunt, bleak glory characteristic of wights of northern lands. Their armour is made from tanned jaguar skins, reinforced with thick beads of bone.



- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Ruined Gate | h. Colonnade |
| b. Shrine on Pyramid | i. Misc. Storehouses |
| c. Tower for Temple Gong | j. Animal Pens |
| d. Living Quarters | k. Slave Pens |
| e. Refectory | l. Library |
| f. Kitchens | m. Administrative Office |
| g. Temple Gardens, now wild. | n. Cliff, forest 60m below |

Temple of the Lost God

- Stairs
- Door
- Curtain
- Bronze Grate
- 1.5m Slope Down



5. The Lower Shrine

A chamber of black stone, intended for the more sacred and secret rituals. There is a lightning-flash symbol inlaid in polished quartz shards into the floor.

6. The stairs end

A locked bronze grille bars the way.

7. Antechamber to the Inner Shrine

Each of the double doors to the east bears a serpent skull emblem on a great panel of beaten silver.

8. The Inner Shrine

An effigy of Echcatl, carved of black wood and masked with gold, lies on a couch studded with blue mosaic. He holds a silver staff topped with a large sapphire cut to resemble a serpent's head. The whole room is faced with black marble.

The mask is worth about 200F; the staff, 10,000F. The same applies as with the statuette of Ecoatl in the side-chapel above.

A search of this room will reveal lines of faint scratches on the floor running between the couch and the east wall. If the couch is lifted up slightly it can be slid aside to reveal a pit. This requires a combined strength of 30.

The Caverns below the Pyramid

These caverns were a centre of worship for the sect of Yxtab centuries before the western pioneers colonized the area and built their temple to Echcatl.

The only worshipper here now is Yugao Ludum, the treacherous priest of Echcatl mentioned in the extracts from the temporal codex.

YUGAO LUDUM

8TH-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST

MINOR ELEMENTS AIR AND EARTH

Attack	13, mace (d6, 4)
Defence	7
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	23
Magical Defence	13
Evasion	4
Stealth	15
Perception	7
Reflexes	10
Health Points	14
Magic Points	24/8/8

EQUIPMENT: Shield, mace, Amulet of Sovereignty against Violence.

Though he looks undead, Yugao is not quite dead yet, though it is something of a moot point. His life-force has been sustained all these years by the power of his goddess. He presents a grisly spectacle, still in the state that his erstwhile comrades left him—flayed to the waist, his skin hangs like a kilt leaving an upper torso of raw flesh and sinew, a skull-like mask of a face with lidless, staring eyes. There is a gaping hole where the priests tore his heart out. Outside the caverns Yugao's life would ebb away at the rate of one health point per combat round.

Besides Yugao the caverns hold another danger—the Jalush, a creature which has guarded the Goddess's fane for hundreds of years. The Jalush may be a unique, demonic creature or it may be the last survivor of an extinct species. It has six limbs,

walking on the back four and using the forelimbs for grasping and striking. It has an outer integument, smooth and ivory-pale, with sharp clusters of spines at its joints. It stalks with the slow, precise movements of a praying mantis and strikes with a scorpion's vicious speed; any NPC of 4th rank or less has a 15% chance of fleeing in terror if suddenly confronted by it.

JALUSH

Attack	24, claw (2d6, 5)
Defence	8
Armour Factor	5
Movement	12m (25m)
Magical Defence	14
Evasion	5
Stealth	22
Perception	13 (panoptical)
Reflexes	16
Health Points	26
Rank-equivalent	8

Any character hitting the Jalush with a mêlée weapon will automatically be struck by its poisonous spines, which act as a weapon (d6, 2) and deliver a strong poison. Even a character who succeeds in his Strength roll against the poison loses one health point permanently, as well as taking the usual damage.

The Jalush has keen senses and moves almost silently despite its size: it surprises the party on a roll of 1-3 on d6.

For any encounter in the caverns, roll d6:

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Result</i>
1-3	The Jalush
4-5	Yugao
6	Yugao and the Jalush

Of course, Yugao is always somewhere in the caverns. Have the party encounter him in the Goddess's fane if they haven't run into him before then.

9. Low chamber

There is a drop of about twenty feet from the floor of the Inner Shrine down a narrow shaft which opens into the roof of this cave. The climb down is not difficult. A tunnel slopes gently downwards from the south-west part of the chamber. The sound of running water can be heard.

10. Underground stream

This dries up in summer, but at the moment is in full flood. The stream is 1m at its deepest point.

11. Secret passage

A boulder conceals the narrow passage. It takes a combined strength of 20 to roll it back.

12. The Goddess's Fane

This cave is taller than most of those here and seems to have been enlarged by excavation at some time in the past. The walls have been stained white and covered with squarish crimson designs. There is a rough altar—a natural table of rock—to the south-east. On this is a rough, pitted idol of light grey stone, depicting a thin-lipped woman slashing her own throat with an obsidian blade.

Anyone touching the idol will receive a fleeting but horrible vision: a tall, unsmiling woman dissolves into the repulsive apparition of a torn, rotting monstrosity—the woman's head, shoulder and right arm—flying through illimitable darkness towards the viewer. She wields a great ceremonial mace and seems to be shrieking in rage with her hair streaming as if in a wind. However, there is no sound.

After a moment this vision fades; the idol will not affect a character more than once. Removed from the fane, it loses this power.

13. The Bone Chamber

Skulls and broken bones—the Jalush's victims over the years. There is a 1m-wide shaft in the floor of this chamber, set with many razor-sharp chips.

If a character manages to get down the shaft he will feel a sense of tremendous premonition, as though on the verge of a great discovery. Rather than merely telling the player this, the GM should try to create a mood, to heighten the sense of significance—

describe the dank air at the bottom of the pit, the rasping of the character's own breath in the stillness, the rough wood of the torch in his hands, its heat on his face. There at the bottom of the shaft lies a desiccated hand, carefully wrapped in decayed bandages of fine silk and wearing a heavy gold ring. If he picks up the hand, it feels almost icy cold, and remains so even if heated. It cannot be damaged in any way.

This is one of the Seven Fragments of Mayauei required to free Echcatl, presumably concealed here by one of the followers of Yxtab. It cannot be detected as such by magical means, and only a great scholar could identify it for certain. Nonetheless, anyone who sees it will have some kind of 'sixth sense' as to its importance.

14. Cave entrance and waterfall

The stream emerges from the cliff face. The forest is 30m below. From here characters can see a great lake stretching to the west and, mistily through the continuing drizzle, the great mountain peaks in the north. There are a number of ledges and handholds which make the cliff an easy climb.

After the adventure

For those who like to loot, there's about 900F in cash distributed around the temple—mostly in the bursary strongbox in the administration building, but some also in the private quarters.

If the player characters take the temple relics (the statuette of Ecoatl, etc.) then they had better be careful about where they sell them if they don't want the priests of Echcatl as enemies; the priests have eyes and ears far beyond Tochel (though not beyond Mungoda). Even if they return the relics to the priests, the latter may still view the removal of these items from the temple as questionable or even sacrilegious. The optimum course would be to leave the relics in place and inform the Echcatl cultists in Mandir, who will call in their superiors from deeper within the Empire. The priests of Echcatl will give about 25% of the relics' value as a reward to their discoverer.

If the party show the Fragment to Nomikaru Teteli, back in Mandir, he may try to get it from them so that he can take it himself to the priesthood. This is not to say that Nomikaru will recognize it as being one of the Seven Fragments, merely that it is an interesting artefact which could help him to ingratiate himself with his superiors.

ADVENTURE 6

A BALLAD OF TIMES PAST

An adventure for about eight players of 4th–5th rank

GM's Introduction

THE ADVENTURE is set in Beorsca, a small kingdom in a land very like much of Ellesland. However magic users are very scarce in this world: all sorcerer, elemental, warlock and demonologist spells above 2nd level require, as the material component, a pinch of dragon dust made from the powdered shell of an unhatched dragon's egg (in hatching, the fledgeling drains the magic from the shell). As this would involve getting past a protective mother dragon, both the dust and magic users are very rare. One whole eggshell would provide 100 pinches of dust.

Players should be told that spellcasters (other than mystics) are almost unknown, but not why. They can be knights, barbarians (retainers of King Athelred involved from the start), mystics and assassins (from the local abbey and minstrel troupe respectively, who join in as indicated in the text). Mystic spells do not require dragon dust, but in this world there are no mystic spells above 3rd level. If generated specifically for this adventure, all player characters begin at 5th rank.

Background to the Adventure

The 42 year-old King Athelred rules Beorsca from Hreod Castle. The first of his line, Athelred deposed the previous king when barely 21. He is a capable and fairly popular ruler, still strong despite his years. Under him, priests of the True Faith have gradually prevailed against the callous Old Gods, whose worship is now reduced to a very few.

NOTE: This scenario should be read to the players virtually as written. All the text that appears in italics is intended to be read out loud. Information not to be read to the players is and marked 'GM'.

First Part: In the Great hall

It is the second night of the midwinter feast. In the Great Hall of the castle, roaring fires and tankards of mulled ale soon drive away all thoughts of the bleak, snow-covered lands outside. The king and his retainers, seated at tables forming a large U around the Hall, dine, drink and watch the entertainers who have flocked to the feast. There are jugglers, actors, acrobats, wrestlers, story-tellers musicians and animal-trainers. Eventu-

ally, when the ale-dazed warriors are content to sit back and listen to a ballad, Skuli, one of a minstrel troupe from across the seas, steps forward and sings this poem:

*It was a time of hardship,
and everywhere the anger of the dragon
was seen in gutted barns and barren fields.*

*Then two close companions, worthy hall-heroes,
came hard against the walls of the welkin,
scaling high peaks to put an end to terror.*

*One, golden-haired with eyes of grey,
his comrade, with blue eyes burning;
they advanced to face their foe.*

*But three drops of blood sufficed to win that battle,
and parley and word-play were the only sounds
while steel remained sheathed and shields unlimbered.*

*Soon the heroes' labours won peace,
and when the dragon's pool ran clear
it was a time for the giving of gifts.*

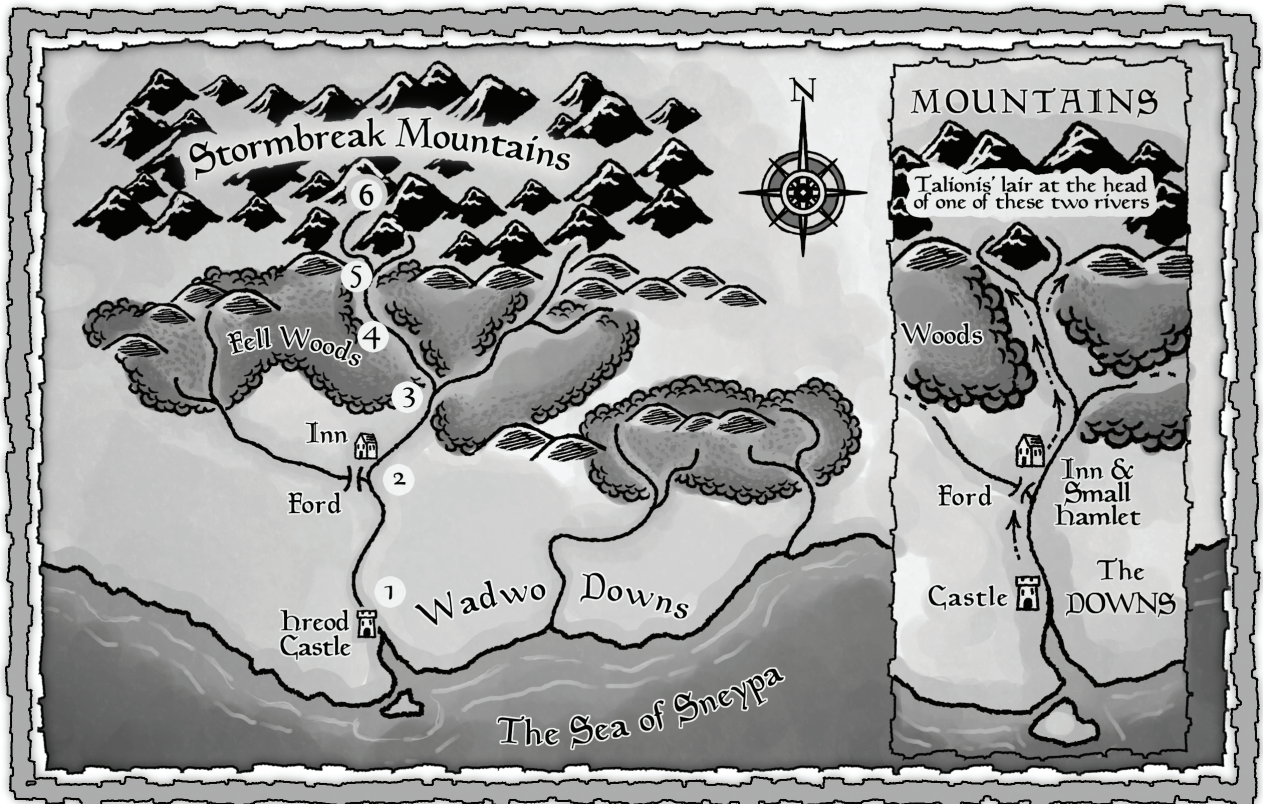
*The golden one savoured but a sip from
that spring—
waters where he glimpsed and grasped his destiny.*

His friend favoured a future drawn in dust.

During Skuli's ballad, Athelred's usual gusto and ebullience slip away. By the end, he is listening intently, sombre-faced and sober. There is silence. The bemused Skuli makes way for some tumblers while Athelred rises shakily and leaves the hall on the shoulder of his eldest son, Osríc. The best and most stalwart of the king's warriors (including any PC knights and barbarians) also rise and file out.

GM: Outside the king's chamber, the warriors are met by Queen Gudrun and the royal advisor, an old monk named Hengist. (Hengist is an accomplished sage with expertise in history, languages, legends and theology and some knowledge of astrology and dweomercraft.) Gudrun tells the warriors, 'Your liege is troubled and has retired to his chambers. If the king needs you I will send for you.' Hengist, realising that something of great import is in the offing, sets about gathering men with skills to complement those of the king's warriors. A messenger is sent to the nearby abbey. He returns with any PC mystics; if none, then one NPC Mystic.

As the others return to the castle, Hengist and Osríc remain in the minstrel camp enquiring after any brave men with the skills that minstrels have. (any remaining PCs enlist at this point.)



After a few hours' sleep, the party takes a light meal and prepares to depart. Because there are few horses at the castle, the time of year, and the terrain which lies ahead, the journey will be on foot. Characters may have any armour up to mail armour (AF4) and any standard weapons and shields. Hengist gives to Osric two items he has cherished for many years: a sealed blue bottle containing a Potion of Strength, and a tiny clay pot containing six applications of Healing Potion in the form of a salve. (Osric is unlikely to use them himself, preferring to bestow them on any characters he considers particularly needful or worthy.)

Hengist also tells of something he has read in one of his books: 'Those who are true of heart need fear no harm from the dragon's inferno....' The book was penned by Ulrich, a monk, by whose advice Hengist sets great store. Finally, he hands the party a rough map which he helped the king to prepare; but Athelred warns that years have passed since he took this route, and the map is uncertain in places.

Second Part: Waylaid at the Inn

In the early evening of the first day, you reach the junction of two rivers. There are a few cottages, an inn, and three boats down by the river, which is not frozen over. Osric suggests stopping at the inn, and also enquiring there about hiring a boat.

The low-ceilinged inn is murky with smoke from the fire in the grate, but gloriously warm. One or two figures sit drinking at crude wooden benches. The innkeeper, Owain, greets you, observing that you are not the peasants or impoverished travellers he usually caters for. Osric does not introduce himself, but orders cups of mulled wine.

As the wine arrives, two of the other patrons leave. But another figure you hadn't noticed sits alone in the shadows away from the fire. He is dressed in a rough garment like a monk's habit, with the cowl pulled over his head. His face is not visible, but with a sudden tension you feel sure he is watching you. Abruptly, he straightens and raises his clenched right hand. You stare directly into his eyes; clear, sky blue, and alive with glittering malice. He begins the words of some invocation. A sparkling dust falls from his fingers...

GM: Anyone who says they're diving for cover at this point automatically evades Caedmon's *Death-light* spell. Osric is quick-witted and will have done this. Other characters will need to roll as normal.

With a crack like thunder, an incandescent white bolt leaps from the wizard towards you. Utter confusion follows. After you pick yourselves up, the wizard has gone; the door bangs open in the wind.

GM: If the characters follow, they see Caedmon getting into one of the boats, a hooded figure (Erik Iceheart) already at the oars. The boat moves off upriver. The other two boats have been sabotaged. Any character with a bow has time to fire 4 arrows before they're out of range. The first two will miss automatically as the archer adjusts for the wind. The remaining shots are at -4 to hit. If hit, Caedmon will retaliate by Enslaving one of the party who will then try to stop his friends from firing.

Inside, Owain is inspecting the damage. Several beams are charred and a few stones around the fireplace are cracked. Shrugging, he begins to set the scattered stools upright. You spot a very small leather pouch on the floor near where Caedmon was sitting. It is empty but for one or two grains of golden dust.

GM: Since he seems relatively unperturbed, Owain may be suspected of having known Caedmon's intentions. But the innkeeper will maintain (truthfully) that Caedmon, a regular if infrequent visitor, has used his sorcery often enough for Owain not to be startled by it. If asked about the pouch, he will add that Caedmon always wears a number of such pouches at his belt, but on this visit he seemed to have only four. The pouch they have found contained the dragon dust used to cast the Deathlight

Third Part: The Vough

The next day is even more bitterly cold. You trudge through sparse woodland under a bleak, grey sky. Snow threatens. You spy a splash of red ahead, gleaming against the snow. A wild rose. More are scattered along in a winding trail, though there is no sign of footprints. Examination reveals that the roses have been cut rather than plucked.

GM: It is up to the player-characters whether they investigate this. Osric will go along with the majority decision.

The trail of flowers leads to a stagnant pond in a small copse. The pond is iced over—black, with a powdery sprinkling of freshly fallen snow. It is eerily quiet. As you watch, a cold wind swirls the snow in patterns across the ice. Slowly the patterns coalesce and rise into the silver, spectral image of a beautiful woman. Her hair is long and black; her skin, like alabaster. The only colour is the rubies set in tarnished silver links about her pale throat. Her expression is infinitely sad.

GM: If anyone has collected a rose, she drifts towards them, holding out her hands, imploring. If anyone reaches out to her (perhaps to hand her a rose), she matches her MAGICAL ATTACK against their MAGICAL DEFENCE; if she is successful, they are drawn onto the ice, which has a 15% chance of breaking per person on it. If no one reaches out, she pauses at the edge of the pond for a few moments, then starts to fade. Suddenly (automatic surprise), the ice shatters and a rotted crone, clad in decaying rags, mud and tangled weeds, leaps from the black waters. Her dread shriek chills the blood; match her MAGICAL ATTACK against each character's MAGICAL DEFENCE, with success meaning that the character stands stock-still, paralysed with terror, for 2d4 combat rounds.

THE VOUGH

Attack	16, touch (see below)
Defence	8
Armour Factor	4
Movement	7m (15m)
Magical Attack	19
Magical Defence	19
Evasion	3
Stealth	13
Perception	10 (panoptical)
Reflexes	8
Health Points	2d4 + 10 (this has 16)
Rank-equivalent	6

This foul undead being can create *Illusion* (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 82) at will. Her chilling touch works in exactly the same manner as a wraith's (see *Bestiary*, p. 86). She takes no damage from the first hit on her struck by each opponent, but takes double damage when hit by anyone who bears a holy relic of any kind. If slain, she rapidly decomposes into muddy slime.

If she is slain, any roses collected by the party or left lying in the snow will have vanished.

Fourth Part: In the Heart of the Forest

At nightfall, having gathered fuel, you sit around your fire devouring stew. A lone peasant comes into sight gathering wood. He greets you and asks to share the fire for a while. He is fairly young, below-average height, and wears dark green garments of coarse wool.

GM: If questioned, he says he will tell a tale of past and present, a tale of a dragon. Any who listen (Osric and any NPCs will) will fall asleep. The next thing they know will be when they awaken beside the burnt-out fire under a cold afternoon sky. Any player who says their character is turning his attention to anything else as well as, or instead of, listening to the tale will notice the others dozing off. If he asks, he should be told that he feels drowsy himself but can jerk himself back to wakefulness to see a premature smile of triumph on the face of the



young 'peasant'(actually a faerie creature). A single shout will rouse those asleep, but the faerie will have vanished completely, without a trace.

If the party succumb to sleep, they will lose six hours, waking early the next afternoon. This must be made up by pushing on quickly and perhaps even marching on after nightfall. Characters will fight at -1 ATTACK and DEFENCE, and be down 1-3 Heath Points, through fatigue after such exertion, until they get a full night's sleep.

Fifth Part: The hermit's Cottage

Shortly after midday (or late afternoon if trapped by the faerie storyteller), you reach the edge of the forest. A few hundred yards on the river forks in two. A low cottage with a blue wisp of smoke curling from its squat stone chimney stands on the river bank, a woodpile beside it and a small boat beyond.

GM: Erik Iceheart waits inside the cottage for the party. He and Caedmon arrived hours ago, murdered the trapper who dwelt here, and hid his body in the woodpile. They left the woods some way to the west. Their footprints, now partially obscured by fresh snow, will be found only if the party specifically scouts around. Caedmon has gone on to Talionis' lair alone, leaving Erik to deal with the pursuers.

You are some 50m from the cottage when a man wrapped in thick furs emerges from it. Approaching you, he introduces himself as Jorundr the trapper and gruffly

warns you that if you mean to rob him he will put up a good fight. He pushes away his cloak, revealing his scab-barded greatsword.

'We intend you no harm, good fellow,' says Osríc. 'We are the king's men, on a mission most holy for our liege. We must cross the river here, and I ask only that you lend us your boat.'

Jorundr grumbles, but eventually accedes. 'The boat only holds three,' he points out, 'I'll row the last two across so I can bring the boat back afterwards.'

GM: Erik's plan is to wait until the last two are about to cross, and then attack them. After putting them down, he will then take cover in the cottage to avoid any arrows the others may shoot at him from the far bank. After waiting for the party to leave, he will track them and pick them off. If the party decide not to cross the river here, for some reason, he'll misdirect them and follow the latter tactic. If at any stage Erik thinks he is in serious personal danger, he'll either flee or bargain for his life with information. He is very canny, remember and will demand a holy oath from the party that he goes free and unharmed if he keeps his side of the bargain.

The party's map shows that the dragon's lair is at the head of one of the two branches of the river, but which branch? A close look will reveal that the western branch is faster-flowing and slightly warmer. This is because it flows through the heat of the lair at its source. The eastern branch will be found to be frozen over half a mile upstream.

The Final Part: Into the Dragon's Lair

It is now late on the night of the winter solstice. Stars glitter in the sky like hoarfrost. You have followed the river into the foothills. The river is considerably warmer here, melting the ice and snow on its banks. Trudging up a steep slope, you see where the river gushes from a fissure. After stooping to pass through, you light torches to reveal a winding passage through which the river flows. You are on a rock ledge barely wide enough for two to walk abreast. The other wall, some 20m away, holds a still narrower ledge on that side of the river.

GM: The ledge is slippery. Traversing it takes 4 Combat Rounds and each character must check each round to see if he slips. Treat this exactly like a climb with a Difficulty Factor of 10. Anyone who slips will get one final chance to roll reflexes or less on 1d20 to grab the edge before sliding into the river. If they were nearer the wall, they also bowl anyone alongside them into the water as well. Up to three characters can grab a falling companion, needing to roll reflexes or less on 1d20 to get a good grip. If at least two people can grab him, the character is saved otherwise he is swept away and drowns.

After what seems like hours of tortuously traversing the ledge, you round a bend and enter a cavern through which the river flows. There is more space now, at least 6m between the wall and the water, and you may quickly reorganise your battle order before advancing. It is much warmer, and you throw off your heavy furs.

The river issues from another passage about 12m ahead. Beside this is a pile of fallen rocks—and something else, something gleaming like ivory. The bony corpses of several long dead warriors. Their bones are very white: cobwebs veil their eyeless sockets; tattered flesh hangs from their limbs; their weapons and scraps of armour gleam bright and clean. You feel your skin crawl as the skeletons rise from the dust and move out to block your path.

As you prepare for combat, a slight form resting on an oak staff emerges from the shadows of the passage ahead. He brushes some dust from his fingers. There are only two pouches at his belt now. He gives you a last look of mingled amusement and regret, and turns back into the darkness.

GM: Caedmon has used his Reanimate the Dead spell on some fighters slain by Talionis over the years. The number of zombies is one more than the number of the party, up to a maximum of six:

ZOMBIES

Attack	10, two-handed swords (d10+1, 6)
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0
Movement	6m
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	1
Stealth	5
Perception	4 (gloomsight)
Reflexes	5
Health Points	17, 17, 18, 18, 19, 19
Rank-equivalent	1

For a moment you survey with horror the grisly forms of your fallen foes, then remember the urgency of your mission and press on. After another 10m or so, the tunnel opens into a chamber. The river flows from a vivid blue pool over which hangs a soft mist. Deep below its clear waters, you can make out the bones of old dragons. Another tunnel going deeper into the mountain leads from this chamber...

GM: This is the Pool of the Wyrms' Ancestors from which the king drank. One sip will give the drinker fleeting images of the future—nothing very specific, and not of the immediate future. A second sip at any time has a 50% chance of causing insanity (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 124); and any further sips guarantee insanity. The water loses this magical property, and its colour (why the river isn't blue) five seconds after leaving the pool, so it is of no use if taken away for later use.

The party will have no time to investigate the pool now. If they help Talionis against Caedmon, she will offer them each a sip later, and warn them that they must never take more than one sip. The vision each character has is up to the GM. It should be something that will be of use to the character. For example, 'You see robbers lurking in some bushes, about to waylay a lone rider. It is spring, judging by

the flowers and leaves. The rider comes closer and you recognize yourself!' The character is thus forewarned of an ambush.

There is a stillness in the air. The passage winds on another 18m and then seems to end abruptly, but shadows dancing across the glistening rocks make it clear that the tunnel does not end here but snakes sharply to the left. Turning the corner, you find your way blocked by a wall of flame. From beyond it you hear the roar of a great beast and a human voice speaking in an unknown tongue.

GM: Hengist's advice was correct—anyone of the True Faith, as well as pagans who live an essentially virtuous and honourable life, can walk through the flames unharmed. Characters such as demonologists, darkness elementalists, or others who have performed wantonly evil acts, will take 4d6 damage on walking through the flames—but if their intention is to aid Talionis, the damage taken is the minimum possible (ie, 4 points). They may attempt to leap the flames to avoid the damage (roll reflexes or less on 5d6, or be damaged anyway).

You step from the fire into a huge cavern. The dragon's golden egg is on the far side, cloaked by protective flame. Caedmon and Talionis are 18m away, squaring off for their final battle. Neither has noticed you. Talionis rears up, spreading her great wings to the cavern walls. Caedmon's flesh is coated with a bizarre ashen powder, as though he had already been burned by the dragon, but coruscating tongues of eldritch white flame lick around him too, unlike any dragon-fire.

Raising his hand, he shouts a spell just as Talionis unleashes her fiery breath. White lightning arcs over red-gold flames. Talionis shudders as the wizard's Deathlight bolt sears her; but it seems that Caedmon must be defeated as for several seconds he is engulfed in the dragon's awesome inferno.

However, the flame dies and the wizard stands barely harmed; safe in his coating of Amianthus Dust. He smiles at the damage his bolt has done, and raises his staff. Then, as though some sixth sense has warned him, he turns and flashes a cobalt glare at you...

GM: The party's arrival means some quick rethinking for Caedmon. His bolt wounded the dragon severely, so he should be able to finish her off with the power in his Ring of Red Ruin. But he must

manoeuvre so as to catch the party with his bolts as well; or else try to slay Talionis quickly and reach the egg before the party can stop him.

He has not long before his Amianthus Dust and Ring of the Burning Halo subside, and he'll need 1 combat round with the Dust still working, to get through the egg's protective flame. He is out of dragon dust, but has his Rings and his 1st- and 2nd-level spells. Remember that Talionis is protecting her egg. She realises that the party want to help her, but that will not prevent her from breathing on Caedmon if they are in the firing line.

If the party and Talionis defeat Caedmon, she will invite them to spend the solstice celebration with her. Her fledgeling hatches at midnight and takes an immediate liking to his soul-brother Osric. (Dragons in this world spend 18 years in the egg listening to the voices of their ancestors before hatching. The young dragon, Protervus, is almost adult, therefore.)

Talionis herself keeps calling Osric by his father's name—it seems to her such a short time since she saw her old friend!

You may decide to let PCs choose an item from her treasure hoard. Talionis will remember them in the future, and may be able to provide boons or ancient wisdom, becoming a powerful if reclusive patron and even instigator of future adventures.



The Cast

OSRIC

4TH-RANK KNIGHT

Attack	17 (d10, 5)
Defence	10
Armour Factor	4
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	7
Evasion	4
Stealth	14
Perception	6
Reflexes	12
Health Points	16

TREASURE: Two-handed sword; dagger; mail armour; 2 javelins (plus potions from Hengist—see p. 57).

Osric, the heir to the throne of Beorsca, is not quite 18 years old. A tall and handsome youth, he is probably the sort of warrior his father would have liked to be, for although Athelred has remained doggedly true to the new religion, he never has the effortlessly pure heart of his son. Osric's long golden hair and grey eyes make him much like a younger version of his father, though he has not the king's full beard or battle scars.

CAEDMON

9TH-RANK SORCERER

Attack	13
Defence	8
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Attack	25
Magical Defence	15
Evasion	5
Stealth	15
Perception	8
Reflexes	12
Health Points	13

TREASURE: (at the start of the adventure) Four pinches of dragon dust; gnarled oak staff; the Ring of the Burning Halo; the Ring of Red Ruin.

In his youth, Caedmon was a close friend of Athelred. When they befriended the dragon some 20 years ago, Caedmon was given 50 pinches of dragon dust. He now chafes at the fact that his former friend went on to win a kingdom while he lives in his tower in bitter and lonely seclusion. This resentment eventually drove him both mad and evil. He wants enough dragon dust to have a chance of taking over the kingdom, but failing that he will settle for enraging the dragon into causing widespread destruction.

Caedmon has not borne his 42 years as well as Athelred. He is frail and bent. His hair is sparse, and his complexion is unhealthily sallow. Only his eyes reveal the hidden energies within, for they are a clear and most startling sky-blue.

ERIK ICEHEART 6TH-RANK BARBARIAN

Attack	22, two-handed sword (d10+3, 8)
Defence	11
Armour Factor	2
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	6
Stealth	15
Perception	7
Reflexes	12
Health Points	20

TREASURE: Two-handed sword (see below); dagger; padded armour; bow and arrows

Erik is a slightly built man in his early thirties. He is of medium height with a handsome face and short, golden brown hair. A travelling mercenary, he came to Beorsca six years ago and fell in with Caedmon. He intends to help the wizard get the dragon dust (hopefully with minimum risk to himself) and eliminate him once they have won the kingdom from Athelred.

Erik is utterly cold-blooded, and quite willing to dispatch anyone in the way of his plans, hence his nickname.

Erik's sword, Ymir's Fang, is a +2 two-handed sword. The sword has been passed down in Erik's family for generations, but it cannot be possessed by an outsider. If Erik is slain and Ymir's Fang examined, it will be found to be made of murky ice! It will then melt to a puddle of dirty water within minutes.

TALIONIS THE DRAGON

Attack	25
Defence	20
Armour Factor	5 (immune to non-magical weapons)
Movement	15m (25m) (flying 150m)
Magical Defence	12
Evasion	5
Stealth	8
Perception	19 (panoptical)
Reflexes	12
Health Points	37
Rank-equivalent	15

The dragon is 10 metres long with coppery-red scales along her body. She is only interested in guarding the egg she laid 18 years ago, which is now about to hatch. She can speak, is fully intelligent, if a little slow on the uptake, and can breathe flame.

ADVENTURE 7

FURY OF

THE DEEP

An adventure for 4th–6th rank characters

Introduction

FURY OF THE DEEP is an essentially self-contained adventure, and is designed for a group of adventurers between 4th and 6th rank. A party of mixed professions will have the best chance of surviving, but there is no reason that a group of simple Knights or Barbarians could not brave the challenges of the island of Xathos and survive.

The adventure could easily be slotted into any ongoing campaign that takes place in and around southern Coradia, and whilst it is designed to start in the great city-port of Ferromaine, there is no reason why—with some little adaption—it could not begin in any port that borders the Coradian Sea, such as Mantla, Achtan, Feldalium or Teleos; or even further afield.

Accounting for its start-location and player-character rank, the authors suggest that this adventure could even act as a suitable linking episode from the conclusion of the scenario ‘Sins of the Fathers’ (from the campaign book *Sleeping Gods*) to more exotic scenarios, such as the events of ‘Mungoda Gold’ (see *Sleeping Gods*) or perhaps even more mysterious lands.

In common with other *Dragon Warriors* adventures, those sections of text given in italics may be read aloud to the players, or paraphrased by the Games

Master. However, some text may only apply in certain circumstances and those instances are indicated as such in the Games Master notes.

Synopsis

This scenario is located in and around a waterlogged ruin on an isolated Emphidian island. The companions are contracted by a wealthy sponsor to travel from Ferromaine in search of the long-forgotten treasure vault of an Emphidian god-king from the Golden Age.

Upon arriving, the companions are faced with a choice of two approaches to the vault—either via coast or land—and subsequently become trapped within. Amongst the dangers they may find are rockfalls, an evil demon-spawn, animated statues and a booby-trapped hoard of priceless treasure. To escape the vault, they must find the only way out—via a sewer and the lair of fearsome huge eels—to a maze of water-filled tunnels and caverns that extend beyond.



Background

History of the Temple of Xathos

GM: Background information to the adventure is detailed below, some of which—marked in italics—may be passed on to the companions by Voula the Weaver and Alexandros the Vinter after the adventurers have reached the island.

Long millennia ago, during the early days of the Golden Age of Emphidor, it is said there dwelt amongst men the offspring of the gods. Born with the divine gifts of their parentage, they created wonders and beauty the likes of which have not been seen since.

In time they began to vanish from the world. Some are said to have joined their parents in the heavens, some turned against each other and were slain in great battles which shook the pillars of the earth, and others were slain by the very men they ruled over. Sionus, the favoured son of Poseidos—supreme God of the Seas—was one of the wisest of the god-kings; he foresaw the oncoming doom of his kind and sent his greatest architects and craftsmen out to a hidden sanctum on the island of Xathos.

There, he placed his most precious treasures and artefacts. He bade his followers to construct a mighty temple complex there and with them he sent his most trusted priests, servants and guardsmen to watch over the site and await his coming. So that none would learn of their location, he ordered that their ships be scuttled.

But Sionus waited too long, for he was slain by his own son Pliades as he prepared to leave for Xathos. Pliades sought to take his father's place, but underestimated the titanic anger of his grandfather Poseidos; when Pliades boarded a ship bound for Xathos, it was sucked down into the blue abyssal depths with all hands, and with it the knowledge of the settlement on Xathos perished.

On Xathos the worshippers and servants of Sionus waited. The temple they built was mighty and filled the entire floor of the hidden valley it occupied; thousands of tons of marble were quarried out of the valley walls to build the sprawling edifice and they dwelt there for many years. As the decades wore on, many of them finally accepted that their master would never return and having little choice they made the best of life that they could; there were plentiful grapes and figs within

the valley, fish in the ocean and the goats and horses that they had brought with them soon adapted to the confines of the valley.

GM: However, some of those on Xathos could not accept that they had been abandoned. The head priest Acherades spent decades sending sacrifices to Poseidos of wine, goats, horses and even—some whispered—newborns. But his sacrifices were in vain; the primordial Titan of the Oceans had turned his face away from the world with the death of his favoured son.

In his desperation, Acherades is said to have sacrificed his own wife and child, cutting their throats and drowning them in the sacred pools, but it was all to no avail. Thenceforth, he locked himself away in the darkness of the temple vaults. What happened within those dank chambers is unknown, but what is certain is that those above continued to send food and drink to him and those who remained in servitude.

Some time later a great earthquake shook the island, sending great slabs of mountainside crashing down into the valley floor devastating most of the buildings and rendering the temple to ruins. Though the vaults fared better, their entrances were buried under rubble and forgotten in the panicked aftermath of the cataclysm.

And so the few survivors endured and slowly rebuilt their lives as best they could—the vaults beneath them remaining long ignored. Since then, they have endured their isolation for another millennium, until finally a crippled Asmuli merchant vessel, desperate to find food and water, identified a path through the treacherous reefs that surround Xathos to the secluded cove and took the ancient tale of Xathos back to Ferromaine and the eager ears of the treasure-hungry Guarcias Iniguez...

The Set-up

GM: The city-port of Ferromaine is distinguished by its magnificent canals, marble edifices and the profusion of footbridges and tiny alleyways that thread their way through the great city. The metropolis is dominated by the ostentatious compounds of the merchant families, whose infamous intrigues and fortunes, both mercantile and political, are the lifeblood of the city-state.

The companions are approached while staying in Ferromaine by a group of armed men:

Standing before you are six lightly armed young men in blue-green tabards over maille hauberks, each possessing dark-hair, a beard and a muscular stature. Although they do not speak, one of them appears to be a leader, of sorts, and he simply grins a very toothy grin before handing over a sealed parchment message to you.

GM: No matter what the companions may say or do, the strangers will not speak and remain entirely silent throughout the encounter. Any adventurer with the ability to discern sorcery will be able to tell that (a) the strangers exude a magical aura; and (b) the message is a plain piece of parchment. The red wax seal on the message bears the imprint of a wolf's head. Once opened, the sealed message reads as follows:

I wish to convey an opportunity for you to accompany myself on a sea voyage which will prove quite profitable. Meet me on the docks at daybreak in two days time.

*Yours sincerely,
G. Iniguez.*

GM: After delivering their message the strangers will quickly leave, as silently as they arrived.

Once in the open air the strangers will begin running away. If the companions attempt to give chase, then they will find that they are easily out-paced; the strangers are incredibly agile and fleet-of-foot, able to run at 25 metres per combat round—for reasons that will become clear later—and will lose the companions in the maze of alleys within Ferromaine. Any adventurer that tracks the strangers will find that their trail ends at the edge of grimy water-filled canal and there is no sign of where the strangers may have disappeared to.

If the companions enquire about their job offer among their Ferromani contacts, they will discover that Guarcias Iniguez is thought of variously as an arrogant but wealthy merchant, a noble fop with a temper (and deep pockets), or an indelicate but straightforward business man. He is currently residing as a guest of the DeMarco family, who maintain a large and powerful trading fleet. Guarcias has purchased one of their vessels—the *Artiglio*—and the service of its crew for his latest venture. The captain of the *Artiglio* is one Giorgio Ferrucci, renowned as a stern and highly respected ship's master.

The Iniguez Expedition

You find yourselves on the docks of Ferromaine, standing in the pre-dawn chill amongst sailors and dock hands. Bales of wool and barrels of wine and olive oil are piled against the sides of the warehouses waiting to be loaded on board vessels tied to the wharfs. Old sailors crouch about braziers, warming their hands against the cold.

A number of swarthy men approach you, and one speaks out: 'Buongiorno, Masters (and Mistresses). Your quarters aboard have been cleared. My name is Dario, I'll be yours aboard the Artiglio. If there's anything you need, just ask me. Can I help with your bags?'

Dario leads you down the dock to an immaculately maintained vessel; it is broad across the beam with high sides and a tall steeped mast. The hull is brightly painted with white and green geometric patterns and the bow is dominated by two large blue bulls-eyes.

A tanned and leathery man in black velvet and purple hose greets you at the gang plank. 'I am Captain Ferrucci, master of the Artiglio, I will have you people behave yourselves whilst aboard my ship. I am paid to transport you, not to put up with any foolishness. So get aboard and keep out of the crew's way until we get you to this bloody island.'

A large, heavily built man in rich robes reclines on the deck surrounded by a dozen armed men among whom you see those who delivered the missive two days earlier. He looks up at you with heavy eyes. 'Ah, welcome. Do you like my ship? I am your employer... if you so choose. I have recently received word through somewhat unorthodox channels that some ruins have been discovered on the island of Xathos. There is an item said to be hidden within these ruins that will enable me to become a true force to be reckoned with amongst the merchant fleets. And I have chosen you to be involved. This is a great honour for you. We find this item, it is mine. Any other gold or treasures, we divide—half to me and the crew, half to you.'

The cabin you are shown to is sparse but clean, new blankets are piled in one corner and there is a woven rug covering the wooden boards.

GM: Dario will keep the companions entertained in their cabin with various snippets of shipboard gossip and questions about the companions' past activities.

This is actually a ruse by Guarcias in order to keep the companions out of the way until the Artiglio is well out to sea.

Guarcias Iníguez

Guarcias claims to be a merchant and deposed member of a noble family in the south of Algandy; though in truth he spends a great majority of his time travelling the trade-roads of Asmuly with his 'court' and imposing himself upon unsuspecting landholders and minor nobility. Guarcias is, obviously, not who or what he appears. Although he is from Algandy he is not of noble birth, nor is he a young man; he is actually a vile and loathsome scoundrel of foul and unnatural hungers.

He usually travels in a richly appointed coach bedecked with coloured glass and gilt finery, and drawn by four huge white horses. He is often accompanied by 12 'knights' dressed in rich tabards and maille... which look a little too clean and smart for road wear. The men are surly, seem fierce and are not known to speak; Guarcias waves this away with an airy 'They are ignorant men, they know only the blade and the dialect of the mountains where my family rule.' His 'knights' fight as hot-bloods but any wounds caused by their weapons will, on closer inspection, appear to be ragged bite marks.

He is also accompanied by a slight young girl, his 'daughter', who is quite short and always heavily wrapped in furs and a hooded cloak no matter what the weather.

Ten years ago, Guarcias was leading his band of cut-throats as they raided coastal villages to the south of Algandy when he came across a hidden grotto where the elders and fishermen were making offerings at a shell-bedecked shrine. There was a fierce battle and half his men were slaughtered like the pigs they were, but they managed to kill the villagers and seize the unconscious object they were protecting. When Guarcias saw what he had captured he set about securing her for himself; he poisoned his remaining men's rum that night and wrapped her in cold iron chains which burnt and scoured her flesh. He beat and tore her until she acquiesced to his wishes and cloaked him in a powerful glamour. She summoned a wolf pack for him and wove them into men, a group of oxen and a hay cart became a royal

coach and river pebbles and leaves became jewels and gold. Thereafter, he left Algandy immediately and departed for far shores.

Over the years Guarcias has carved his name into the girl, he has tortured her mind and body and sates himself upon her whenever the mood takes him. If the cloak and furs are ever removed one may gaze upon a ruination of innocence. The nereid is slight, bird-like; her skin is pale as snow from too many days without sunlight and covered in a patchwork of welts, burns and scars. Her teeth are chipped and broken and her ears have been clipped away from her head... to human eyes she is a child, but there are aspects of a woman about her and one cannot look too long without feeling a dread uneasiness overtaking the revulsion at has been done to her form. Her eyes are large and the colour of autumn skies, and there is thunder and wrath within them which speaks of ancient dawns and a coming doom. This fay-creature is, in fact, far older than her appearance suggests and if the companions unshackle her then they may be playing with fire; will she thank them or instead scour them from the earth because they are mortal—like her captor? Or will she simply heal herself and leave, seeing the entire experience as a mildly strange interlude in her long existence?

More information is given about her on page 107.

The captain of the ship that originally discovered the lost settlement owes Guarcias a considerable debt, due to Guarcias having certain information that pertains to the drunken murder of one of the Doge's third cousins. He came straight to Guarcias in an attempt to put an end to the Algardian's blackmail, but it is only a matter of time before word gets out. The difference is, although others may be interested in exploring the ruins based on rumour, Guarcias' captive described to him the legend of Sionus and the famed treasures he concealed within the Temple—especially a unique sorcerous artefact; the Compass of the Eternal Sea, which would revolutionise Guarcias' ship-based merchant trade. She did not, however, mention any of the dangers that lie in wait within the Temple, knowing full well that Guarcias' greedy nature would ensure that he would not trust others to such vast wealth and that he will venture there himself... hopefully to his death.

APPEARANCE: Guarcias is 5'7" tall, and heavily built. He appears to be about 25 years old and dresses extremely richly—to the extent that he is usually

regarded as something of a fop. He has an extremely arrogant manner and fully enjoys the good things in life, often at the expense of others. He claims to be a devout follower of the True Faith and will have no truck with sorcerers and the like, going so far as to refuse to spend the night under the same roof as one.

Note that Guarcias' necklace is hidden below his tunic at all times; this sick trophy consists of the nereid's severed triangular ears threaded onto a length of leather.

GUARCIAS INIGUEZ
NORMAL HUMAN

Attack	12, hand (d3, 2)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	3
Stealth	12
Perception	4
Strength	15
Reflexes	9
Intelligence	13
Psychic Talent	9
Looks	12
Health Points	8
Rank-equivalent	1

EQUIPMENT: Wolf-seal ring, nereid-ear necklace

NOTE: The survival of Guarcias and his captive nereid are vital to the plot of this adventure. It is highly recommended that neither of them be allowed to die unless specifically instructed in the GM notes. For example, if the companions become so enraged by Guarcias' attitude and demeanour that they threaten to slay him then he will bargain for his life; offering large amounts of money and power to the companions in order to save his own neck. If they still insist on slaughtering him, then so be it... perhaps one of the companions will pick up his necklace and suffer the same miserable fate that is intended for Guarcias in Area 52?

Wolf Knights

The twelve 'knights' that guard Guarcias use the same statistics as for wolves—as that is what they truly are.

ENSORCELLED WOLF

Attack	15, 'shortsword' (d4, 5)
Defence	3
Armour Factor	0
Movement	12m (25m)
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	3
Stealth	16
Perception	11 (elfsight)
Health Points	5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10
Rank-equivalent	1

The Artiglio

The *Artiglio* is one of the newest ships in Ferromaine; a type of small cog called a 'coccha'. It relies less on oars and its primary means of propulsion is a large square-rigged sail. The ship is clinker-built and whilst less manoeuvrable than many of the other vessels in the region it can carry more cargo and yet requires a smaller crew.

Optimum crew	1-2 officers; 12 sailors
Further passengers/cargo	60 men/15,000kg
Ship Points	17
Cost to buy	17,500 florins

Distances covered under sail and oar are the same as for a standard cog (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 215).

The Crew

CAPTAIN GIORGIO FERRUCCI

Captain Ferrucci has worked for the DeMarco family almost all his life. He appears as a tanned and rather bristly bearded man in his late forties. A bluff and plain-speaking man, Ferrucci is extremely annoyed at having been contracted out to help some 'vain-glorious Algardian dog and his hangers-on' go on a fools journey when there are bales of wool sitting idle on the docks. However, he is despite all that a highly professional seaman and will do all in his power to keep safe his charges.

DINO RICCI

FIRST MATE AND HELMSMAN

Dino is Captain Ferrucci's most trusted officer. He is in his early forties, bearing a deep scar across his face and shoulder from an errant line during a storm when he was younger. Though he exhibits a friendly and easygoing nature to his friends, he will only make one single attempt at pleasantries to newcomers—if he is rebuffed he instantly classifies the individual as not worth his time or effort. He is tall and thickset.

SAILORS (12 MEN)

The hard-working crew of the *Artiglio* mainly hail from Ferromani and Asmuli coastal towns. Mostly in their twenties, they spend their time consumed with chores and have little time for pleasantries. If necessary, their names are Rodrigo Mancini, Vincenzo Lombardi, etc.

The two sailors detailed below are the youngest—and most expendable. It is for this reason that the captain sends them to accompany the companions.

DARIO MALAMO

SAILOR

A young man in his late teens, Dario is average in all ways—his easy going manner and somewhat incautious nature may lead him and his companions into danger.

Attack	13, shortsword (d8, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	4
Stealth	9
Perception	3
Strength	11
Reflexes	9
Intelligence	10
Psychic Talent	8
Looks	11
Health Points	9
Rank-equivalent	1

EQUIPMENT: Air-bladder, sling, dagger, waterskin, 10 sling stones.

ALESSANDRO SAMIRA

SAILOR

Tall, strong, and far too sure of himself, Alessandro sees himself as a ladies' man and dashing hero. Indeed, it may be that the captain has sent him along with the companions in the hope that an accident might befall the cocky young man.

Attack	14, shortsword (d8, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	1
Movement	10m (20m)
Magical Defence	3
Evasion	4
Stealth	9
Perception	3
Strength	16
Reflexes	9

Intelligence	10
Psychic Talent	12
Looks	16
Health Points	9
Rank-equivalent	1

EQUIPMENT: Air-bladder, waterskin, dagger, cudgel.

Air Bladder

A strange device somewhat reminiscent of the clan pipes of Cornumbria and Thuland, the air bladder recently emerged from the workshops of the Doge of Ferromaine. In construction it is an ox stomach sealed and oiled with layers of fish-glue and tuna oil, and is inflated by means of a wooden stop sealed into an opening. Whilst it is unknown what original use was envisaged for the air bladder, it has become popular on board small vessels as a floatation aid for sailors or to assist with drift fishing.

A fully inflated bladder is the size of two men's heads and will keep a man afloat for up to 3 hours. After this time the salt water's effect on the fish glue and oiled surface will cause the bladder to begin to leak... not only this, but the pungent glue and oil will mix with the water and draw the attentions of large predators well before the air finally gives out.

It is possible one may be able to use the bladder to draw breath from beneath the water, but it would be tricky to do so and the air would be rank with the smell of the bladder.

Spare air bladders can be found in the ship's stores and Dario will advise the companions to equip them at a cost of 4 florins each.

The Voyage Out

The Journey

Shipboard life is deeply boring, broken only by evening banter with the sailors and watching dolphins cruise the bow-wave. Occasionally an island is sighted—often-times with a few small white-daubed huts and a tiny fishing skiff dragged up on the beach. The ship's goats bleat questioningly at the odd passing ship. The sailors

are an experienced and professional group, keeping the ship tightly on the course dictated by Captain Ferrucci, who glowers at the horizon as he directs the steerage.

GM: After departing from Ferromaine, the trip to the island of Xathos takes approximately two weeks in moderate winds. Once it is out of sight of land there are few landmarks by which to guide the ship, and though the crew is used to sailing by the stars and sun these are not the most accurate of guides in the current age. During this time, Guarcias spends quite a lot of the journey within his cabin 'conversing' with the one he describes as his daughter and emerges from these discussions at regular intervals to give the Captain course corrections. This strangeness causes no little muttering among the crew, as rumours of witchcraft and the like abound. However, in spite of this unusual navigation the ship makes good progress and is guided directly to the mysterious island of Xathos.

If Guarcias is questioned about the ruins on Xathos, he will relate some of the little information he knows; merely that the ruins contain the treasure vault of an ancient Emphidian king called Sionus and that it has lain undisturbed for many hundreds of years. However, Guarcias will pointedly avoid and refuse any discussion of the specific 'item' that he seeks until he is actually inside the ruins.

The captive nereid has overplayed her hand somewhat in divulging the story of the vault and its treasure to Guarcias. He suspects that she may have a possible means of escape on the island—which is actually correct—and has therefore decided to leave her bound and locked at all times in his cabin on board the ship, guarded by six of his loyal wolf-knights.

The sea voyage is largely uneventful, though the following encounters may occur:

A Tense Stand-off

Guarcias is jostled by one of the sailors as he ventures across the deck whilst the Captain attempts to tack against the wind. He pushes the man away violently, almost cracking his skull on the mast and there is suddenly the threat of spilt blood as the ship's crew face off against Guarcias' men. The Captain and his first mate will petition the companions to assist them as negotiators between the two groups in order to get the situation back under control.

The Rock Spur

The ship chances upon an uncharted small spur of rock projecting up above the ocean surface. Tucked beneath an overhang is a small iron box that has almost rusted away. It contains a piece of rose quartz and a faded piece of parchment. The parchment has been ruined by salt and is illegible.

The Shoal

A rocky shoal scrapes the side of the ship when underway with a strong wind in the sails. There are no reefs marked on the charts at this location, and the Captain asks the companions' assistance in determining their position before they are too far away so he can add the danger to his charts.

Dario's Ordeal

After the Captain has retired for the evening, Guarcias tries to get Dario to accompany him to his cabin for the night. The young lad protests but Guarcias coldly insists that the boy is under his employ and his to do with as he wishes. At this, the ship's first mate—Dino—attempts to assign night-watch duties to Dario to keep him out of harm's way, but is firmly rebuffed by Guarcias. In his desperation, Dino secretly implores the companions to intervene.

A Rotting Corpse

A skiff crewed by two young fishermen pulls alongside to trade fish for whatever they can. They will be quite outspoken about the beauty and grace of any female PCs—no matter how plain they might actually appear. They will tell of a strange corpse which washed ashore on their island recently. The bloated dead man had skin of darkest ebony and teeth filed to points. Eventually they will leave the ship and sail back to their island.

The Unceasing Noise

Late one evening, there can be heard a very loud continuous scraping against the hull which does not cease; the companions and the lookout will be unable to see what is causing the mysterious noise and it will continue throughout the dark hours, stopping anyone from getting any sleep. Shortly before daybreak the next morning the noise will

stop. When the sun rises the sailors will examine the bottom of the ship, discovering that the hull is completely free of barnacles and also that there are shallow gouges in the painted wooden planking.

The Castaways

The voyagers encounter a small fishing vessel crewed entirely by young boys. The children have a donkey penned at the back of the boat's deck and a large green cricket hangs in a wicker-work cage from the mast. Despite their situation, the boys seem to be in good spirits and are happy to continue on their way in their small craft.

The Sea-beast

A fearsome battle rages between a pod of cachalots and a huge kraken-like beast several hundred metres away, causing the sailors to fear the ship may be swamped. When the battle is over the sea is littered with parts of the kraken—reeking of ammonia.

Landfall

After a long sea voyage, the sailors finally sight the island of Xathos on the horizon. The captain orders the ship to anchor in the lee of a rocky promontory and then calls Guarcias over:

'I will not risk this ship to that rocky cove—you must row the boat ashore instead.'

He points to the ship's wooden boat, which the sailors are already man-handling across the deck and over the side. Ready yourselves—along with Guarcias, six of his knights and two of the crew—you all board the very cramped 8-man boat and begin rowing out to shore. After sculling around the promontory, the boat starts to pitch and yaw amid the increasingly choppy rock-strewn waters, making you grip the edges of the boat tighter. Then you hear a loud rasping as the bottom scrapes against submerged rocks.

Finally you make landfall on the beach, where you all leap out into the briny waters and haul the boat up the sandy shore, above the tidal mark. Sodden from the waist down, you stop to gather your bearings in the bright sunshine. The secluded beach is composed of chalky white-and-cream coloured sand, littered with seashells and dry kelp. It nestles amongst the dark rocky

cliffs, with large clusters of darker rock projecting from the rear of the beach and in small outcrops all along it, leading to a wide sea-cave that undercuts the sheer cliff-face. Almost hidden amid the boulders, you also spy a well-trodden path that meanders through the cliff rocks before ascending up into what may be a valley above.

GM: The actual approach to the beach is quite simple if one knows the way—a small longboat could easily make the journey if it had the correct maps. Indeed, this is how the livestock were originally landed, but now there are none who know the reef's secrets.

The six wolf-knights that accompany Guarcias to shore will become less and less responsive to his orders the longer they are away from the enslaved nereid; they will turn and run from the first supernatural encounter and return immediately to the surface where they will mill about in confusion, whining and scratching at the earth... and eventually they will run off into the valley and help themselves to a tasty goat. Meanwhile, Guarcias will seem unconcerned by their abandonment: 'See? Useless wretches! But you are made of sterner stuff, I am sure...'

Beyond the Beach

GM: The companions face a choice of two possible routes to the temple:

1. A trek up the cliffs towards Area 1, followed by a hike through the valley and a long and arduous excavation of the Temple's central stairwell.
2. A dangerous venture through the sea-cave next to the beach at Area 11. Travelling through a sundered rock wall, the companions will encounter the flooded caverns beneath the temple.

The Island of Xathos

Key

1. Path
2. Ruins
3. Shrine of Poseidos
4. Temple of Xathos
11. Sea-cave



The Temple Of Xathos

1. A Steep Ascent

The ascent up from the beach is steep, but the going is relatively easy; many years of use have worn a solid path amid the scrubby trees and through a gap in the forbidding cliffs. Overhead, seagulls caw and swoop, angry at your intrusion. Emerging from the topmost treeline you suddenly find yourselves on a slight rise overlooking a lush, green and verdant valley extending quite far into the distance, surrounded on either side by huge cliff walls that reach into the sky.

Ahead, the remains of a massive marble temple complex dominates the closest part of the valley, giving way to a series of olive groves and grape trellises behind. To your left you see the ruins of a large number of tumbled stone buildings, which must surely be uninhabitable. At the rear of the valley, massive cuttings in the stone walls form great square-sided alcoves in which building materials have been stored.

GM: Guarcias seems to disregard all of the strange sights and sounds of the valley. He regards the few elderly inhabitants of the valley as he does the goats and horses, though he will pay close attention at any mention of the vault below. He will not assist with the excavation or any other manual chores and will make occasional 'encouraging' comments to those working. Though he does not divulge this to the companions, the nereid has told him that the Compass is hidden deep within the vault and in order to find it he needs several 'keys' to unlock the 'secret doors'. His obsession with the Compass knows no bounds and he is eager to find it as soon as possible—and at any cost to those around him.

From this location the companions can explore the ruins at Area 2, the shrine at Area 3 or the temple at Area 4.

2. The Ruins

Even in its destroyed state, you can see that the ruins were clearly built by people of ancient prowess and craftsmanship; great avenues of columns and delicate carvings of caryatids, sea nymphs and horses grace every surface. Fleecy goats gambol and climb upon the piles of

broken marble, while great powerful horses crop the grass nearby, seemingly unworried by your presence. Many of the intact buildings show signs of intensive habitation, with incongruous sights such as woollen cloaks drying on a line strung between two great stone statues.

GM: The valley is almost two kilometres long and 500 metres across at its widest point, with much of the area taken up by the tumbled ruins of a massive marble building complex surrounded by wide areas of trees and grass. The ancient remains of some simpler buildings exist as piles of rubble dotting the verge. Further down the valley are some small fields and groves of trees, and a pile of perished fishing nets is hanging over the wall of a fallen guardhouse.

The bulk of the population has departed with their 'rescuers' but there are still a number of elderly residents living among the ruins who will be pleased to chat with visitors and relate all they know about the island, the ruins and their history. Among their number are Voula the Weaver and Alexandros the Vinter. Either of these two ancients will be able to relate a great deal of the history of the island, Sionus etc. though the GM is free to have their accounts vary or contradict each other—in truth neither knows why Sionus did not arrive, but they have different theories as to why, and one of them may even be correct!

Horses of Xathos

The horses of Xathos are an ancient breed that long ago vanished from the mainland and are distinguished by a heavy musculature and small vestigial toe on their hind legs. Despite being only slightly larger than a modern riding horse they possess the same statistics as Warhorses and—having never known a rider—they will react violently to anyone attempting to mount them.

If at a later stage, after the adventure, the companions make plans to ship the horses back to the mainland for purpose of sale or breeding it is possible to arrange for them to be taken off the island. An expert navigator could get a small longboat or trireme to shore or brave men could swim them out to a cog where a team might hoist them on board. However, it is fair to say that there will need to be a lengthy period of acclimatisation for either of these plans to be successful. The horses would fetch perhaps an extra 500 florins compared to a normal warhorse simply due to novelty but they also require

forage and water to a far lesser degree, thus allowing them to be kept on a budget that is only slightly larger than a mule's.

However, the horses would need to be bred with other bloodlines as only the blessing of the Lord of Horses has kept their blood pure and that blessing no longer applies away from Xathos itself. After several generations the horses will be indistinguishable from any other breed, becoming yet another of the lost treasures of Xathos.

WARHORSE OF XATHOS

Attack	17, bite (d8, 4)
Defence	4
Armour Factor	0
Movement	15m (30m)
Magical Defence	4
Evasion	4
Stealth	10
Perception	6
Health Points	1d6 + 16
Rank-equivalent	1

From here, the companions can explore the shrine at Area 3 or the temple at Area 4. Alternatively, they could go back to the cliff-top at Area 1.

3. Shrine of Poseidos

The largest of the ruined monuments draws your attention. Entering through a collapsed doorway, you find a large rough-stone altar, carved with swirling patterns that have been stained red with long-dried libations and the remains of dried flowers.

GM: This was a holy shrine of Poseidos, where the villagers made votive offerings to the great Sea-God. Apart from the altar, there is nothing else of interest here. The stains are wine stains, not blood.

Anyone touching the altar feels a profound sense of grief for a moment, which then passes quickly.

Anyone attempting to desecrate or destroy the altar is apparently unaffected. However, they are secretly subject to a curse with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 24 which will cause any horse which comes within 10 metres of them to be struck with a homicidal fury

centred upon the adventurer—for Poseidos is the Lord of Horses. This curse will last until the afflicted makes penance or touches a saintly relic.

From here, the companions can explore the ruins at Area 2 or the temple at Area 4. Alternatively, they could go back to the cliff-top at Area 1.

4. Entrance to the Temple

The monolithic remnants of this structure clearly suggest that the tales were true; this is indeed the long-lost Temple of Xathos. It stands eerily silent—even the goats seem to stay away from this imposing building. There appears to be no obvious entrance, until—having circled the great complex of sundered marble—you find a large stone stairway that leads down into the ruined temple. However, it is choked with huge blocks of broken marble which fell from the balustrade overhead. The blocks must have lain here for a very long time, as they are covered in a profusion of grape-vines and moss which has overgrown them.

GM: The marble blocks weigh about 1,000 kg each, although the smaller chunks weigh substantially less. It would take about 30 man-hours to clear a safe path through the jumbled blocks to the dusty stairs beneath. If the companions clear the rubble then read the next passage to them:

As the hours pass by you slowly excavate a small path through the rock-fall, behind which you finally uncover a stairway of smoothly finished marble slabs that extends down into the darkness...

GM: The stairs descend down to Area 5. Alternatively, the companions can explore the ruins at Area 2, the temple at Area 4 or hike back to the cliff-top at Area 1.



The Vaults

Sea-cave, Caverns and Tunnels

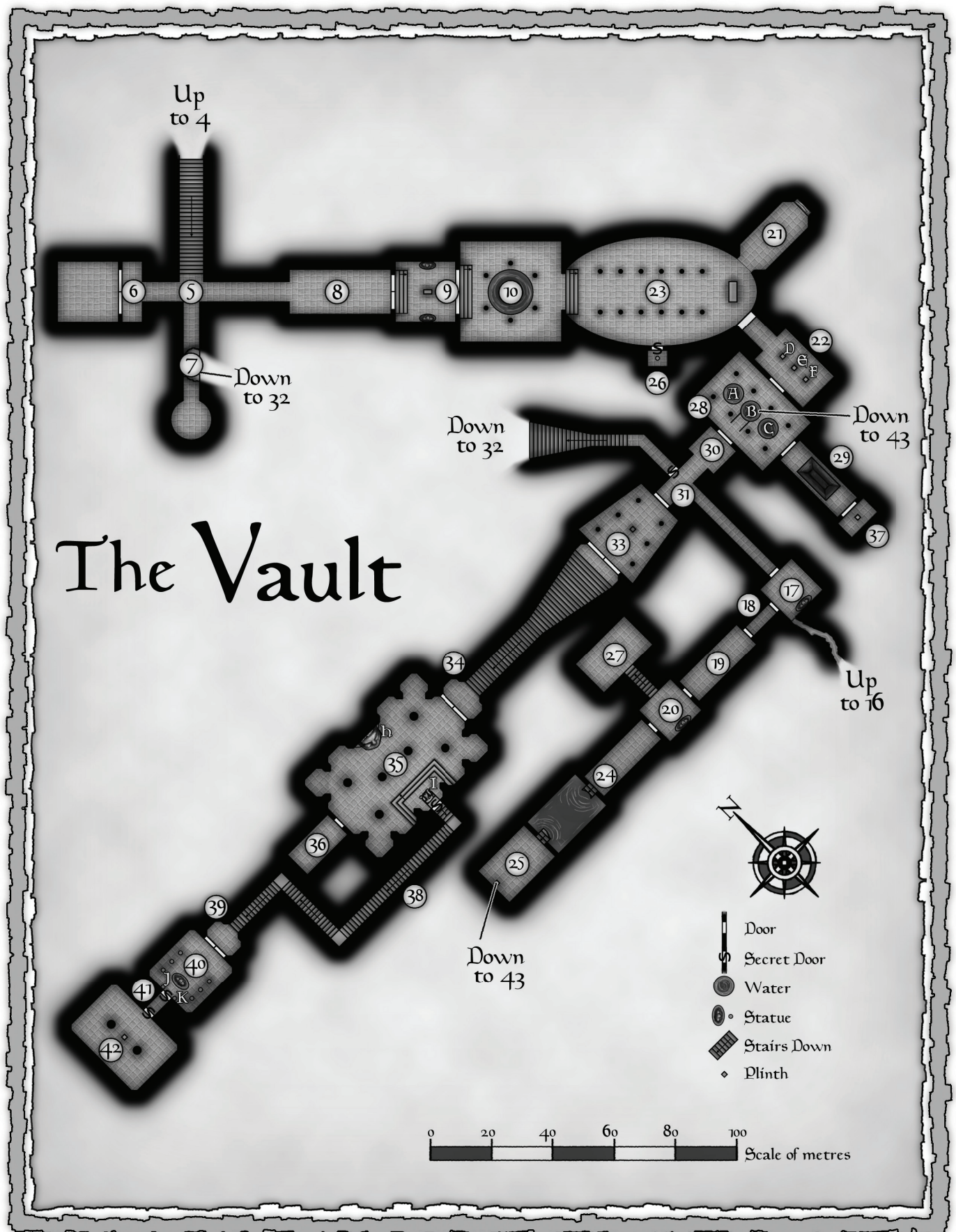
Key

5. Decisions, Decisions
6. A Cracked Roof
7. Rubble Trouble
8. The Sculptured Hall
9. Poseidos Watchmen
10. A Pool of Purity
11. The Sea Cave
12. The Grotto
13. The Dark Lake
14. The Black Shore
15. A Long Way Round
16. Falling Rocks
17. The Sanctum of Sionus
18. A Small Corridor
19. The Hall of Figures
20. The Sanctum of Anteus
21. The Arch of Amphitra
22. Chamber of Three Wonders
23. An Altar Blasphemed
24. A Passage Broken
25. Ladies' Chambers
26. A Secret Test
27. The God-Deceiver
28. Chamber of Three Pools
29. The Forbidden Hall
30. Ante-Chamber
31. T-Junction
32. The Cavern of Lost Hope
33. The Hall of Penitents
34. Mirrored Doors
35. The God-King's Audience Chamber

36. The Hall of Shadow
37. Chamber of Oceanos
38. A Hidden Stairway
39. Brass-etched Doors
40. The Idol Room
41. Passage to the True Tomb
42. The Vault of the Ocean
 - A. Pool of Oceanos
 - B. Pool of Poseidos
 - C. Pool of Amphitra
 - D. Flame Chest
 - E. Shield Chest
 - F. Bronze Chest
 - G. Island and Altar
 - H. Face of Poseidos
 - I. Dais and Throne
 - J. Horse Urn
 - K. Dolphin Urn

During the scenario, several events may occur that will significantly alter the layout and description of the underworld. Most importantly, rockfall events are necessary to trap the companions inside the vault and force them to search for an alternative exit. GMs should keep a track of these events, as follows:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Trigger</i>
Area 7	Rockfall	Failed excavation of Area 7
Area 22/23	Rockfall	Attempted opening of door between Area 22 and Area 23
Area 15	Rockfall	Opening of door at Area 33
Area 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42	Flooding	Attempted removal of treasure from Area 41



5. Decisions, Decisions

You cautiously descend into the ruins. Several minutes later the stairs finally end in a cramped cross-roads, from which three dark passageways lead off to your right, left and straight ahead.

GM: Each passageway continues for a distance of roughly 30 metres.

The western passage leads to Area 1, the southern passage leads to Area 7, and the eastern passage leads to Area 8. The stairs lead back up to Area 4.

6. A Cracked Roof

This passageway finally ends in a long room of marble tiles and granite walls that lie below a high vaulted ceiling which rises some twenty feet above. In the darkness you can make out many dusty cobwebs, and a pair of doors constructed from fig wood and marble lie before you.

GM: A successful Perception check (Stealth 8) will reveal that the stones making up the ceiling are badly fitted and cracked in comparison to the rest of the stonework in this room.

If the doors are opened the pressure change will be enough to drop the ruined ceiling onto anyone beneath. Poking or otherwise touching the roof with any force will also trigger a collapse. Anyone within the room will be caught in the collapse.

The collapsing ceiling has a Speed of 12, and will deal 4d20 Health Points of damage. The roof collapse completely fills the room with debris, including an ancient podium and columns from the room above that are also pulled down into the void as well.

It will take 20 man-hours to dig any survivors out, and a further 200 man-hours to clear the way to the buried doorway.

Beyond the doors is a storeroom filled with long-dissolved foodstuffs, perished wooden shelving and piles of cloth that have long-since turned to threads and dust. There is nothing further here.

The only way out is back to Area 5.

7. Rubble Trouble

The corridor ends after about thirty metres—it is blocked by a massive pile of stone and earth that appears to be the result of an ancient rock-fall.

GM: Digging through this blockage will take approximately 40 man-hours. If the companions attempt to excavate the rock-fall then they face a 75% chance of digging through into a void above Area 32 and triggering a total floor collapse; the ground beneath the companions feet disintegrates and plunges them down into the water-logged cavern below—unless they can make a successful Reflexes check against a difficulty of 14.

If the companions persevere and manage to find a way through without falling into the abyss below, they will discover a circular room another 20 metres further on. This room contains the perished remains of cloaks and dust-covered bottles of debased oils. In the centre of the room is the ancient grinning skeleton of a man. Judging by the gnawed torch and sandals that lie beside him, he must have starved to death over a number of weeks. There is nothing further here.

If anyone is able to read Ancient Emphidian there is a scratched message on the west wall which reads, 'The key is in the pool'.

If the rockfall is triggered, then a chasm leads down to Area 32. Otherwise, the only exit is back to Area 5.

8. The Sculptured hall

Perhaps fifty metres on, the corridor empties into a wide hall. The walls are carved with intricate marble relief sculptures upon which vibrant paints have been daubed; they are still as bright as the day they were painted. The colourful sculptures depict nymphs and hippocampi in procession, with dolphins and great seashells. Dust coats the floor, through which you can make out a striking mosaic of tiles forming the image of a trident against a crashing wave. At the end of the corridor is a set of double doors that appear to be constructed from fig wood and thin bronze plates. The plates are stamped with imprints of conch shells.

GM: The doors are not locked or otherwise secured, and they can swing open easily onto Area 9, while the corridor leads back to Area 5.

9. Poseidos' Watchmen

Two huge statues of Tritons, each 3 metres tall, stand on either side of the room. In the centre is a small plinth that is carved to resemble a pair of dolphins. Beyond it lie two massive stone doors with veins of black that run throughout their surface, barring your way forward.

GM: The plinth is set on a hydrostatic channel of water which runs under the floor to a pressure plate under the massive piebald stone doors. The plinth will lower slightly if anything is placed upon it. It was on the plinth that offerings were laid by worshippers to judge whether they were deemed worthy; if the item was heavy enough to compress the water column then the huge stone doors would swing open under their own weight.

Any attempt to physically destroy the doors is both difficult and dangerous. Whilst the heavy doors can be smashed down with 12 man-hours of work, the slabs of marble are held up by relatively weak hinges and breaking through their bases will send a quarter ton of marble slicing down like a runaway guillotine, with a Speed of 14 and damage of 2d10 Health Points.

The stone doors lead to Area 10, while the passage leads back to Area 5.

10. A Pool of Purity

The walls of this large chamber reach high into a vaulted ceiling covered with bright blue paint, which is somewhat patchy and faded now. In the centre of the room you can see a large shallow pool of fairly clear water, surrounded by six slim marble pillars. Extending around the perimeter of the room, a number of torch brackets dot the walls at regular intervals. A strange smell hangs in the air. At the far end of the hall is a dark archway, hung with tatters of long-perished cloth.

GM: If someone inspects the pool they will note that it appears empty other than a few patches of ceiling tiles, but occasionally the water ripples and and swirls strangely. There are two abalone shells on the lip of the pool.

If anything other than one of the abalone shells are placed into the pool, the water will boil up suddenly into a huge man-like form which says 'You must drink the sacred waters to purify yourselves before entering the inner sanctums.' Which would be fine if any of the companions spoke fluent Ancient

Emphidian. Those who speak modern Emphidian will pick out the words for 'water', 'drink', 'inner' and 'enter'.

The Water Elemental will allow anyone who drinks water from the abalone shells to continue their journey. Those who do not drink from the shells, or who attack the elemental will be met with deadly force—apart from Guarcias who is protected by his ear-totem necklace (though the companions will not know that).

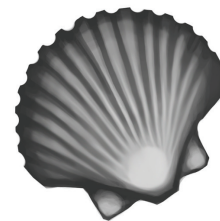
WATER ELEMENTAL

Attack	19, elemental power (d10, 6)
Defence	14
Armour Factor	0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
Movement	15m
Magical Defence	8
Evasion	4
Stealth	10
Perception	14 (panoptical)
Health Points	26
Rank-equivalent	6

GM: If any companions drink the water from the shells, then read the following aloud:

As the water runs down your throat you feel refreshed, you fancy you can hear waves crashing in the distance, which slowly grow fainter.

GM: Entering the archway brings the companions to Area 23, while the doors lead back to Area 9.



11. The Sea Cave

To your right, a deep sandy channel snakes through the hazardous reefs and cuts across the southern edge of this small cove, passing beneath the large overhang of the sea-cave. At the mouth of the sea-cave, the beach narrows and hugs the left-hand side of the cave and is then covered by a stretch of seawater, which separates it from a wide, high sandbank further inside. Beyond, you can see that another, larger stretch of water separates the sand-bank from the far wall of the cave.

GM: Entering the sea-cave from the beach requires the companions to easily wade across a knee-deep stretch of water to a sandbar and then cross another waist-deep section of the flooded cave. Although crossing the waist-deep section is straightforward, there is actually a steep drop-off on the right-hand side into a dangerous deep-water channel, where a fast-moving strong current can—depending on the time of day—sweep any swimmers out into the depths of the cave complex or out to sea.

When the companions reach the back wall of the sea-cave, read the following aloud:

Just before you reach the back of the cave, the sand beneath your feet gives way to a slippery, rocky plateau that lies strewn with smooth boulders, pebbles and rock-pools full of shore-life. The deep, dark waters of the channel beside you funnel waves down through the cave entrance that wash over scattered rocky outcrops before disappearing through a huge crack in the rock-face which has been eroded by the power of the sea. At the edge of the jagged chasm you can make out a thin, kelp-strewn rock ledge that follows alongside the channel into the gloom.

GM: As long as the companions move at normal speed on the ledge they will be fine, but if attempting to move fast they must make a Reflexes check or pitch into the fast-flowing channel.

The ledge leads on to Area 12, while anyone caught in the deep-water channel will be swept on and out over the waterfall at Area 13.

12. The Grotto

Stepping cautiously along the ledge, you enter a chamber of glistening granite that surrounds a deep wide pool of clear seawater which is connected to the channel through a small gap in the rock. The fish and crustaceans that swim in the depths of the pool dart quickly underneath fronds of seaweed at your appearance. The ledge con-

tinues on a circuitous route around the edge of the pool before it rejoins the channel on the other side and disappears into the depths of the sea-cave.

GM: The grotto is a simple natural granite chamber some 15 metres wide. The small fish and creatures in the pool are normal coastal marine animals that have entered the pool via the channel.

Here the slippery ledge ends at a high boulder, but a way ahead seems feasible by jumping over to the opposite side of the deep channel, then continuing for a while before crossing back across to a rocky plateau that you can dimly make out in the gloom ahead.

GM: Reflexes check at climbing difficulty 12 is required at each crossing attempt.

The rocky plateau and the deep-water channel both lead to Area 13, while the slippery ledge leads back to Area 11.

13. The Dark Lake

GM: If the companions have entered here from the Grotto at Area 12, then read the following aloud:

The last vestiges of light from the cave entrance fade away behind you, leaving you dependant on your torches to see the way ahead. The noise of falling water steadily increases as you proceed deeper into the cave, and then the short rocky plateau that you are standing on ends abruptly. To your right, the channel spills out over a sheer drop into a pitch-dark chasm before you. Beyond the plateau you cannot see a roof nor walls in the darkness ahead, but at the very edge of your torchlight you can make out—and hear—a large body of water below, into which the channel pours.

GM: The height of the rock plateau is 30 metres, but descending down into the dark, water-filled cavern is fairly easy if the companions have a rope. However, if the companions attempt to climb down into the cavern, they will find that the rock walls are wet and slippery, requiring a Reflexes check versus a climbing difficulty of 12, for every 5 metres of the descent.

The dark black lake in the cavern is chest-deep and weed-choked. Falling into the water is not dangerous, although it will require a successful Reflexes check for the adventurer to inhale some air before they spend a few rounds underwater orientating

themselves. However, it would be better not to fall at all, as the splashing sounds may attract unwelcome attention.

Once the companions enter the waters of the lake, read the following aloud:

Extending out into the darkness, the murky, slimy lake is choked with a foul rotting weed and the numerous crustaceans and molluscs that thrive upon it. Underfoot, you can feel a soft silty sand mixed with the dissolved remains of the weed.

GM: The Dark Lake is approximately 100 metres across. Wading across the lake is at ½ normal speed. Any adventurer that wishes to try and charge across risks losing their footing and taking in a mouthful of foetid stinking water.

ENCOUNTERS: Roll for every 2 minutes spent in the lake water. Add +2 to the roll if anyone falls, splashes or yells out.

1d20	Result
1-6	Conch Shell (harmless).
7-12	Large Crab (harmless).
13-15	Cone Shell. Exudes a strong poison if picked up with bare hands (see <i>Dragon Warriors</i> , p. 122).
15-17	1-2 Sentinel Crabs (see below).
18	1-3 Large Moray Eels.
19-20	1-2 Huge Conger Eels.

SENTINEL CRAB

Attack	14, each pincer (d4+2, 3)
Defence	5
Armour Factor	5
Movement	12m (20m)
Magical Defence	2
Evasion	3
Stealth	12
Perception	5 (darksight)
Health Points	1d6+4
Rank-equivalent	2

LARGE MORAY EEL

Attack	13, bite (d3, 2), weak poison from bacterial infection
Defence	5
Armour Factor	0
Movement	7m (15m)
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	2
Stealth	18
Perception	9
Health Points	1d6+8
Rank-equivalent	2

HUGE CONGER EEL

Attack	16, bite (d8, 6)
Defence	9
Armour Factor	2
Movement	5m (10m), swimming 10m
Magical Defence	1
Evasion	6
Stealth	6
Perception	13
Health Points	1d10+12
Rank-equivalent	3

GM: Wading eastward eventually leads to Area 14, while climbing back up the waterfall leads to Area 12.

SPECIAL NOTE: If the companions have endured the terror of the Worms' Lair and are now making their final journey out of the caverns, then proceed to Chapter 5 for the final act of this adventure.

14. The Black Shore

As you approach the opposite shore, the dim light reveals that the rock ceiling descends sharply to meet a beach of black sand and dried black seaweed.

GM: When the companions set foot on the beach, read the following aloud:

You finally reach the far side of the filthy, stinking lake and emerge onto slick black sands that slope upward. In the dim light ahead, you can make out the narrowing walls of the cavern's rock-face, which lead eventually to a jagged cleft in the rock.

GM: The cleft in the rock leads upwards in a rough, undulating climb through Area 15. Wading westward leads back to Area 13.

15. A Long Way Round

After a long hike through the twisting rubble-strewn tunnel, you eventually spot a large opening in the wall to your left, which overlooks a chamber full of dark filth. Meanwhile the tunnel continues straight ahead.

GM: The chamber is the vault's sewer outflow. It is a dead-end, with both the original exit tunnel and the sewer having been sealed long ago by huge rockfalls and detritus. The area is unstable and any excavation by the companions will only result in more rocks sliding down to fill any holes they have cleared.

The northern route leads to Area 16, while the southern route leads back to Area 14.

16. Falling Rocks

GM: If the companions have entered via the long tunnel in Area 14, then read the following aloud:

After ascending upwards through several jagged sloping tunnels that are covered with stones and pebbles underfoot, you find yourselves in a large natural rock chamber. Huge boulders and rubble litter the floor and deep fissures line the walls. As you enter, you hear some small rocks occasionally tumbling from the fissures.

GM: However, if the companions have triggered a rockfall by opening the doors at Area 33, then read the following aloud:

The narrow cleft in the rock comes to a sudden and completely end. A recent rockfall has sealed this tunnel with a profusion of great stone boulders and earthen rubble.

GM: This location holds no danger for the companions... unless, of course, one of them is standing here when the rockfall is triggered! Any attempt to excavate the rockfall will only lead to more rubble falling down from above to take its place.

The northern route leads to Area 17, while the southern route leads back to Area 15. If the rockfall has been triggered, then the southern route is completely blocked.

17. The Sanctum of Sionus

You have entered a large chamber of glistening white marble, where every surface is covered with a light film of dust that sparkles in the dim light. In the centre of the room you see an enormous marble statue of a naked muscular humanoid carrying a shepherd's crook with a single eye in the centre of his forehead. At the statue's feet are three bronze figurines of large rams, with eyes formed from large opals. Two dark doorways lead out of this room, but you can also make out a large crack in the southern wall, which seems as if someone could squeeze through it.

GM: This statue is an animated guardian created by the sorcery of the high priest Acherades. The statue will not take any action, however, until the sheep are touched, at which point it will immediately attack anyone in the room, starting with the adventurer who touched them.

A plaque at the base of the statue reads in Ancient Emphidian; 'Polthus, Beloved Son and Shepherd of our Lord, Blinded by the Accursed One'.

STONE CYCLOPS

Attack	24, crook (d6+3, 7)
Defence	15
Armour Factor	5 (stone)
Movement	N/A
Magical Defence	11
Evasion	6
Stealth	4
Perception	12 (panoptical)
Health Points	52
Rank-equivalent	12

GM: The statue is too large to be able to exit via the doors and appears to have been assembled within the room itself.

The brass rams are not animated and their eyes contain a total of six black opals, worth 100 florins each.

The western doorway leads to Area 18, while the northern doorway leads to Area 31. The cracked southern wall leads to Area 16.

18. A Small Corridor

Beyond the doorway extends a corridor that is lined with walls of black and grey granite. You can see another doorway—identical to the one you have just entered—at the other end of the corridor.

GM: Companions can only walk single file in this corridor. The western doorway leads to Area 19, while the eastern doorway leads back to Area 17.

19. The hall of Figures

You enter a long corridor constructed from grey granite. Upon the walls are painted strange primitive figures in black that depict men, horses and giants.

GM: The western doorway leads to Area 20, while the eastern doorway leads back to Area 18.

20. The Sanctum of Anteus

You emerge into a large granite room and see directly before you a huge, granite statue—perhaps 18 feet tall—of a rough-featured and heavy-set naked man. A door is set in the opposite wall, while a bronze door is set in the wall to your right.

GM: A plaque attached to the statue reads in Ancient Emphidian: ‘Anteus, Son of our Lord, Slain by the Thunderer’s Bastard’.

Opposite the statue, the bronze door is jammed tight into the wall and requires a combined Strength of 25 to force open.

The bronze door leads to Area 27. The western door leads to Area 24, while the eastern door leads back to Area 19.

21. The Arch of Amphitrua

Stepping through the archway, you enter a large hall. its floor is a bright mosaic of blue and green tiles that depicts a lithe female form draped in seaweed and surrounded by large crabs and dolphins. A rivulet of salty water runs from a spring in the centre of the room and through an oddly shaped blue-green stone archway at the other end that can only be described as somewhat

like a rounded lozenge. The space beyond the archway is obscured by a swirling veil of mist which smells of sea-spray.

GM: The archway is an ancient device of great power. It is sacred to the ancient Emphidian female personification of the ocean, Amphitrua.

If an adventurer extends an object (such as a rope or pole) through the arch in either its veiled or clear states, they will be able to pull the object back without damaging it. However, the object will be cold, drenched with seawater and—if it contained air—flattened.

If an adventurer extends an arm through the arch, it will feel icily cold, combined with the sensation of being painfully crushed. At the last moment before they pull it back they will feel a feather-light touch on their hand.

Anyone entering the archway will die within 2 combat rounds from drowning and crushing due to high pressure. As they die they will see hazy figures of young female forms surrounding them.

If an item is pushed through the archway, there will be a disruption to the mist a minute or so later and a different object will be pushed back through from the other side. The object pushed back will depend on what the companions have sent through. This will only happen a maximum of three times.

- ♣ A minor item will be replaced with a mother-of-pearl comb or a coral hairpin.
- ♣ A weapon will be replaced by a smooth brass target shield. The shield will not tarnish and is as strong as steel.
- ♣ A valuable item will be replaced with unearthly-looking gold jewellery that is dotted with large black pearls (worth 800-1800F).
- ♣ Any adventurer attempting to grasp or capture the unseen individual or group on the other side of the portal will be in for trouble; the archway will begin to leak water in an increasing torrent for 6 rounds, after which the equivalent of a tsunami will burst out of the archway and through the chamber and beyond. Six rounds after this the archway will return to normal.

Any unsecured adventurer will be washed away through Area 23 and past the stairs into Area 10, where the water will drain away through small gaps around the walls and also at the base of the fountain. They will take 1d4 damage from the rough ride.

The only way out is back to Area 23.

22. Chamber of Three Wonders

A brass and tin mosaic, encrusted with abalone and scallop shells, adorns the walls, floor and ceiling of this chamber. Before you in the darkness you can see three brass chests on the floor. Each is marked with a glyph; the first a flame, the second a shield, and the third a dolphin.

GM: The chamber is 30 metres wide. Engraved in a stone set before the chests are the words in Ancient Emphidian; 'Wonders forged in honour of our Lord'.

Each chest is made of brass. All of the chests are about 1m long and half a metre wide.

Flame Chest (D)

This chest contains three fist-sized glass objects. Each of these ancient globes contain a highly potent mixture of magnesium, methane and saltpetre. If shattered, the globes will explode with the same effects as a *Dragonbreath* spell that strikes everyone within a ten metre radius. These globes are incredibly delicate; anyone carrying them on their person is taking a terrible risk.

Shield Chest (E)

This chest contains a brass wrist-guard that has been worked into the likeness of fish-scales. If worn it will add +1 to the wearer's armour class and will also allow the wearer to move at 2 × his normal movement rate in water.

Dolphin Chest (F)

Opening this chest reveals a small dolphin-shaped mother-of-pearl brooch that is inlaid with silver. If the brooch pin is used to draw the wearer's blood while submerged in saltwater, they will take the form of a dolphin for two hours.

If an adventurer who has not drunk from the pool or otherwise paid homage to Poseidos touches the wonders, then there is a sudden surge of energy about the room and the strange mosaic unravels from the wall and forms into a spindly crab-like

animated creature which attacks. The creature is an ancient fore-runner to guardians such as Gatekeepers and the like.

GUARDIAN OF THE WONDERS

Attack	19, claws (d8, 5)
Defence	13
Armour Factor	4 (brass and tin)
Movement	10m
Magical Defence	9
Evasion	5
Stealth	14
Perception	8 (panoptical)
Health Points	15
Rank-equivalent	6

GM: Any attempt to brute-force the northern door will cause a non-harmful slow-motion roof collapse, which buries the door and half of this room. The rockfall is unstable and any further excavation by the companions will only succeed in cascading more rocks down from above to fill the hole they have cleared.

The only exit from this room is back to Area 28.

23. An Altar Blasphemed

You have entered a large oval room formed from marble and black granite, which rises up into a decorated dome inscribed with the patterns of crashing waves. Twin colonnades of beautifully fluted marble focus your attention down towards the far end of the room where, on a large platform raised two metres off the floor, sits a low altar decorated with scallop shells upon which a small bronze horse and a number of clay flasks can be seen. Beside the altar there are two archways; one to the left and one to the right. Knelt on the floor before the altar is a hunched figure clad in a voluminous grey robe. As you approach it appears to be stirring.

GM: As the companions approach the altar they will note that it appears to be run through with veins of black and that it seems for a moment as if these veins are throbbing; as if alive. Approaching will also cause the figure sat on the floor to begin rocking faster and faster. If they get within 2 metres of the figure, read the following aloud:

Suddenly, the figure turns and hurls itself towards you! You can see that he is an emaciated man dressed in a filth-stained robe. His skin is torn in many places and his loosely hanging jaw exposes a mouth full of rotted teeth. He reeks of death and despair, and his eyes burn with madness.

ACOLYTE OF ACHERADES

Attack	19, cursed touch (d8, 5)
Defence	13
Armour Factor	0
Movement	10m
Magical Defence	9
Evasion	5
Stealth	14
Perception	8
Health Points	18
Rank-equivalent	4

GM: This ragged remnant is all that remains of the last of the acolytes that served Acherades in his descent; as the high priest fell into corruption he cursed all those who accompanied him.

As the acolyte dies, an expression of peace comes over his torn features and with his final breath he exhales in Ancient Emphidian, ‘The golden shell...’

A strange depression is set into the wall next to the door in the southern archway. If anything is prodded or placed into it there is a heavy thud from behind the stone wall but nothing else appears to happen, at least not immediately. In fact the oil required to work the door’s closing mechanism dried up millennia ago and unfortunately, without that lubrication the activation of the mechanism snaps a thin column of marble that supports the latch mechanism.

The broken latch in turn exerts far too much pressure on the already-fractured ceiling, which begins to crumble alarmingly and causes a non-harmful slow-motion roof collapse, forcing the companions to retreat and either fall down through Area 7 or go back to the cove and through the sea-cave if they wish to progress any further. Any attempt to excavate the rockfall only succeeds in sending more rocks down in a similar manner.

A search of the southern wall reveals a small recessed mosaic of a nautilus. If the nautilus carving is pressed firmly there is a grating noise from behind the wall. The wall section to the left slides back and to the right.

If the companions attempt to brute-force the secret door by any means, then it will cause a non-harmful slow-motion roof collapse that buries the door and half of this room. The rockfall is unstable and any further excavation by the companions will only succeed in cascading more rocks down from above to fill the hole they have cleared.

The eastern archway leads into Area 21, while the secret door leads to Area 26. The western archway leads back to Area 10.

24. A Passage Broken

You are in a long passage constructed from granite blocks. Crossing the passage, you can see a dark doorway at the opposite end that overlooks a deep, dank chamber. A raised stone staircase starts to lead down through the darkness below, but after just a few feet the stairway comes to an abrupt halt and drops off into darkness.

GM: This staircase once led to private chambers but it collapsed long ago during the ancient earthquake, when water flooded through from the lake into the recess below. There is now a 10-metre drop from the broken staircase down to the bottom of this chamber.

If the companions jump off or climb down the broken staircase, read the following aloud:

Descending into the darkness, you find yourselves in knee-deep murky water, surrounded by rubble that appears to be the remnants of the collapsed staircase. All the surfaces are encrusted with glistening salt crystals. Amongst the debris, you suddenly notice a cluster of skeletons that are propped against one of the walls next to the fallen remains of the staircase.

GM: The skeletons are dressed in the rotted remains of simple tunics and light jewellery. Someone with a knowledge of anatomy would conclude they are the bodies of 2-5 adolescent females.

When the earthquake shook the temple, the virgins were trapped in their quarters. For almost four weeks they survived before the weakest of them died from starvation; the others were faced with a terrible dilemma...

If the companions attempt to wade across the chamber, read the following aloud:

As you wade through the dark water into the middle of this chamber, the water both in front and behind you starts to ripple and splash. Suddenly, a skeletal arm covered in white crystals shoots out of the water in front of you and then quickly disappears back beneath the murk, while the splashing intensifies.

GM: These two ghouls were once the last of the virgins, who lived on into undeath because of the fateful decision that they made. Both ghouls are almost entirely skeletal and are covered in a thick layer of salt-crystals.

The ghouls will take 2 combat rounds to pull themselves out of the silt before scrabbling to attack the companions.

2 GHOULS

Attack	17, hands (d3, 3)
Defence	13
Armour Factor	0
Movement	12m (25m)
Magical Defence	7
Evasion	4
Stealth	15
Perception	9 (darkvision)
Health Points	12
Rank-equivalent	4

GM: If the companions defeat the ghouls, then they will find that the opposite end of the broken staircase stands only a metre off the ground, and leads through a doorway into Area 25.

The low-set western doorway leads to Area 25, while the high-set eastern doorway leads back to Area 20.

25. Ladies' Chambers

The sparse dormitory-type conditions here are in stark contrast to the rest of the temple. Several large perished piles of wasted wood and scraps of material cover the floor.

There are a number of small brass boxes beside these piles and a large burnished mirror takes up most of one wall. A mosaic covers another of the walls, which portrays a handsome man clothed in blue dress wearing a

large elaborate collar of yellow jewellery. Marble shelves hold long-abandoned jars of powders and unguents, ivory hair combs and other feminine accoutrements. The floor at the far end of the room appears to slope gently downwards towards a collapsed wooden screen. Jutting from the end wall, you see a large stone trough of scummy water.

GM: Formerly the virgins' living quarters, the piles of wood were once several simple cots. This room contains little of value except for some white powder (mercury-rich make-up), some oils that were once rose-scented and a pair of pearl earrings that lie beneath one of the collapsed cots (worth 15F).

At the top of the mosaic there can be seen some text, which translates as 'Beloved Acherades' in Ancient Emphidian.

A stone grating is inset within the floor at the rear of this room, half-covered by the wooden screen. The stone grate served as the drainage for the maids shower and privy.

If the companions open the grate then read the following aloud:

Under the grating, you can see a drop of about 8 feet into a passageway covered with turgid black liquid.

GM: The grating leads to Area 44, while the doorway leads back to Area 24.

26. A Secret Test

Beyond the secret door you spy a small room with rounded edges and a series of gargoyle-like sea-creature statues mounted high above on the walls. In the centre of the room, stands a metre-tall delicately carved statue of a young nymph, fashioned out of serpentine and brass.

GM: If the companions enter the secret chamber, then read the following aloud:

The statue suddenly becomes animated and starts to dance an exquisite ballet upon its podium. For a moment you stare in wonder, until suddenly, a stone slab slams down behind you, sealing you inside the room! The pretty statue stops its merry dance, cocks its head on one side and rests its hands on its hips. As one, you all hear a cheery voice inside your head pronounce; 'Kiss Oceanos to prove your love for him!'. At this, salt-water suddenly starts to pour into the chamber from the gargoyle's mouths....

GM: If any of the companions look at the ceiling, then read the following aloud:

In the centre of the ceiling, above you, is a mosaic depicting a stern bearded face with crab claws emerging from his brow like horns.

GM: This chamber was used as a final test for acolytes, who each received a token of Acherades' favour as a reward for passing.

Escaping from this trap is quite simple. If the companions are able to tread water then they can wait until the water gets to the ceiling and kiss or other wise apply gentle pressure to the carving of Oceanos's face. This will release a valve in the floor allowing the water to drain out. Striking at the face does nothing, only a gentle pressure will activate the release valve correctly.

When the water drains out, the automaton will kneel before the companions and retrieve a brooch in the shape of a nautilus from within her mouth.

The automaton will defend herself if attacked.

NYMPH AUTOMATON

Attack	25, hands (d4+1, 4)
Defence	19
Armour Factor	5 (serpentine and brass)
Movement	10m
Magical Defence	N/A
Evasion	6
Stealth	15
Perception	19 (panoptical)
Health Points	31
Rank-equivalent	13

Nautilus Brooch

Anyone wearing this brooch will find that they are literally unsinkable. They will float on the surface of any body of water and will be able to support the weight of three grown men in such a manner.

The only way out is back to Area 23.

27. The God-Deceiver

Beyond the door you can see a set of dark stone stairs that descend into a darkness that is filled with cobwebs and dust. After about 15 metres, the stairs end in a long chamber. A bed, stools and basin are arrayed around the room along with a number of perished wooden caskets. On the far wall of this chamber can be seen an elaborate frieze, which depicts a beautiful woman and several children, alongside an unknown central figure that has been defaced. However, your attention is drawn to a strange writhing shape that lies in the centre of the room, which appears to be covered with a large, heavy tapestry. The chamber is lit by a bright blue flame that dances in the air directly above the shape and causes wriggling shadows to play on the walls.

GM: The figures painted on the wall are that of Acherades, his wife and children.

If the companions advance towards the shape then read the following aloud:

You become aware of an acrid smell of ammonia. Before you can do anything else, the wriggling shape unfolds itself from beneath the tapestry, revealing a tall dark-haired man with a closely shaved head atop a long, lean body. He is dressed in a stained white robe, but keeps the tapestry held about his shoulders as if it were a cloak. The figure stands motionless and stares directly at you.

GM: If the companions speak to the figure, then it will make a strange strangled sound before replying in whichever language he was addressed in. He claims to be the high-priest Acherades, preserved and kept unharmed by his faith in his god-king, Sionus. He is now ready to make his way back to the surface and see the sun once again.

If the companions are not convinced by the claims of 'Acherades' then he will attempt to explain away those things that contradict his tale, or simply dismiss them as being of no consequence.

However, this creature is not Acherades—but rather the malignant being that answered his fevered prayers and shielded him from harm when the fury of Poseidos shook the island to its core. This being is a thing from a far more ancient world than even Acherades knew. In his vain attempts to reach his Lord via sacrificial rituals, Acherades unwittingly awoke this evil entity and pulled part of its essence back into the mortal world. This creature is, in fact, one of the least of the Phorcydes, children of the elder titan Phorcys, Father of Echidna.

The Phorcydi was entrapped behind the bronze door by Acherades himself, who realised that the Phorcydi wished to get to the surface so that it could spread its malign influence and grow far more powerful. If there are any female companions, then once the group reaches the surface the Phorcydi will attempt to seduce them if it can get them alone. Failing that, it will attempt to isolate the companions; killing the male members of the party one-by-one and attempting to breed with the female companions.

If the companions attack this evil god-thing then read the following aloud:

Suddenly, his face contorts into a violently evil grimace and he bares his teeth in a hissing animalistic snarl. His eyes roll back in their sockets and you are shocked to witness russet-coloured spines rip out of his face, while the white robes and tapestry that hang about his torso are torn asunder by even greater spines that grow from his body. His arms and legs swell and their pallid skin splits completely asunder with a sickening noise, sloughing off to the floor in great swathes which reveal a pair of clawed lobster-like arms and a long lamprey-like tail. Finally, its facial skin tears apart, revealing eyes like pitch-dark black pits and the terrifying jaws of some deep-sea horror.

GM: Upon witnessing this horrific transformation into the Phorcydi's true form, the companions are subjected to a Fright Attack of 18, after which the Phorcydi leaps to the attack!



PHORCYDI

Attack	18, large claws (d6+3, 10), or bite (d4+3, 8)
Defence	10
Armour Factor	5 (3 vs magical or bronze weapons, 2 vs magical bronze weapons)
Movement	30m / 60m swimming
Magical Defence	6
Evasion	9
Stealth	12
Perception	18 (darksight)
Health Points	44
Rank-equivalent	10
Immune to cold attacks	
Breathes under water	
Immortal (returns to Phorcys if killed, may not walk the earthly plane again for 800 years).	

Within the remains of the wooden caskets that litter this room can be found the following items:

- ♣ A golden ritual crown that is studded with sapphires (worth 250 gold pieces).
- ♣ A replica conch shell made from gold (worth 500 gold pieces).
- ♣ A large serpentine box (worth 5 gold pieces). This coffer contains 6 sealed clay flasks, each marked with Poseidos' glyph. The flasks all contain healing potions.
- ♣ A small stone box with a corroded brass lock that contains nothing save for a finely engraved recess in the form of a scallop shell; whatever it once contained, the box is now empty.
- ♣ The only way out of this chamber is back to Area 20.

28. Chamber of Three Pools

GM: If the companions have entered via the antechamber at Area 30 then read the following aloud:

You enter a large chamber built entirely of white marble, speckled with silver flecks. Rows of columns run the length of the room, while between them sit three deep pools of water. Each pool seems to glow with a strange

blue luminescence. The centre pool has a low ramp that leads down to it. In the opposite wall is you see a brass door, while a bronze door is set in the right-hand wall.

GM: However, if the companions traversed here from the sewer at Area 43 then read the following aloud:

You emerge gratefully into the air, gasping for breath.

There is a shallow ramp running down into this pool which allows you to lever yourself out. You are in a large chamber built entirely of white marble which you recognise from earlier as being the room with three sacrificial pools.

GM: All three pools are 20 metres deep and filled with sea water. This is a sacrificial chamber with each pool dedicated to a different ancient Emphidian deity:

Pool of Oceanos (A)

The pool dedicated to Oceanos contains a large number of broken oars weighted down with lead.

Pool of Poseidos (B)

The centre pool is dedicated to Poseidos, and contains the remains of dozens of horses—their yellowed skeletons picked clean and sightless skulls staring up at the surface. Unlike the others, a slight current can be detected beneath the surface of the centre pool. At the bottom of the pool lies a bronze opening wide enough for a man that is completely clogged with dirt.

Pool of Amphitra (C)

The pool dedicated to Amphitra contains a large number of bronze and mother-of-pearl depictions of seahorses and dolphins. Anyone looking into Amphitra's pool will note a small golden object lying amid the other offerings. Diving down to it will require some preparation but is by no means impossible—especially so if an air bladder were used. It is a golden scallop shell, inscribed with a prayer to Poseidos. The other offerings in Amphitra's pool are worth between 2-4 florins as curios, but anyone removing them will have to resist a MAGICAL ATTACK of 18 (rolled in secret) or be cursed to fall overboard the next time they step on board a boat or ship. Removing the scallop shell, however, does not trigger this curse.

Golden Scallop Shell

This palm-sized replica of a scallop shell has been exquisitely crafted from solid gold. It is actually the key to the secret door in Area 41.

The eastern brass door leads to Area 22, while the southern bronze door leads to Area 29. The western door leads back to Area 30. Poseidos' pool leads down to Area 43.

29. The Forbidden hall

This hall is made from smooth blocks of grey stone and carved with decorative scrolls and shells along the edges where it joins the ceiling. It extends for some forty metres before ending at a set of grey stone doors.

GM: Half-way along the hall lies a pit that is 10 metres long by 2 metres deep. It is covered only by a thin layer of delicately buttressed slate that is dressed to look almost exactly like the rest of the stone floor. There is ample room to edge around the pit if it is discovered. Roll for a Perception check against a Stealth of 10.

If any adventurer steps on the slate, then read the following aloud:

Suddenly, your leading foot falls straight through the floor—which shatters without resistance—and before you realise what is happening you have already toppled forwards through a wafer-thin material that you had mistakenly assumed was solid stone! At the bottom of this cunningly disguised pit, you crash upon the all-too-real floor and walls, which are lined with razor-sharp coral, anemone spines and sharpened razor-shells...

GM: The pit will inflict 1d6 Health Points of damage to anyone that falls into it. A further 1d4 Health Points will be lost per round as they struggle to escape. Reduce the damage incurred by the adventurer's Armour Factor.

Once the companions have progressed south past the pit, read the following aloud:

This grey stone door is decorated with carvings of crabs and conch shells. The handles are made from serpentine and alabaster.

GM: The southern door leads to Area 37, while the northern door leads back to Area 28.

30. Ante-Chamber

The door opens inward, revealing a richly furnished room, lined with columns and decorated with friezes of nereids and dolphins. There is a solid-looking stone door on the other side of the room. Once, long ago, the benches at the walls might have been richly upholstered leather and sandalwood... but they are now nothing more than ruined scraps.

GM: The eastern door leads to Area 28, while the western door leads into Area 31.

31. T-Junction

Three passageways meet at this junction. A large carving of a bright red crab adorns the wall here.

GM: Pressing the crab's shell causes the wall to swing outward, revealing a secret passage.

The secret passage leads north to Area 32, while the southern passage leads to Area 17. The western passage leads to Area 33, while the eastern passage leads to Area 30.

32. The Cavern of Lost Hope

GM: If the companions have entered the cavern via the secret door in Area 31, then read the following aloud:

A short flight of stone stairs leads down and fans out to meet a large natural cavern where a strange mist covers the ground to knee-height. The air is chill and fresh here, with the smell of salt-water. As you enter, a short series of strange chirrups and squeaks echo out of the gloom. Amid the mists, you fancy that you can see the near-shore of an underground lake that extends out into the darkness.

GM: However, if the companions have just fallen through the abyss at Area 7 then read the following aloud:

Time seems to run in slow-motion as you flail helplessly through the air into a pitch-dark high chasm, your ears deafened by the roaring stone and earth around you that dashes against your body. A glimpse of fog below you fills you with fear and then you plunge through it...

Mercifully, your fall is broken by cold, frigid waters that lie beneath the mist, though rocks and earth erupt the surface of the water above you and—miraculously—you swim, stagger and stumble out of harm's way alive.

Groggily, you stand in the mist-covered waters and pant for breath, while your ears ring from the shock of the rock-fall.

GM: The cavern is 40 metres high, but the lake is mostly shallow—between waist and chest-height at most—and the water is clear and without plant life.

The Island (G)

Those members of the party who are wading across the cavern will eventually come within sight of the island, at which point read the following aloud:

As you wade on through the eerie mist-shrouded lake you begin to make out the shape of an island in the darkness ahead.

GM: If the companions continue onwards, read the following:

A chill scene confronts you as you step upon the island, and rise above the mist. The dessicated, skeletal body of a man is slumped before a large, smooth lump of granite marked with black stains, and atop the boulder lies a long green-black dagger. The body appears to be dressed in rich blue robes that have long-since been reduced to tatters and wears a number of pieces of bronze jewellery, engraved with images of horses and sea shells. Beyond the dead figure, you spy a large number of sticks that jut out above the grounded fog.

GM: If the companions inspect the sticks then read the following aloud:

As you near the sticks, you suddenly reach a horrendous realisation. They are not sticks at all—they are, in fact human bones, and you are walking among the remains of many bodies. Some are adults, but worst still most are the leering grins of children and infants.

GM: This cavern is where Acherades performed those terrible sacrifices he did not want others to know about. His wife and his infant daughter lie here, as do a number of infants which 'died at birth' and were 'buried in the catacombs'. It was these sacrifices which led to the destruction of the temple when Poseidos turned his eyes back upon the world, and it was these blood-lettings—along with the fervent rites and prayers of Acherades—that drew the attention of the ancient demon-god Phorcys and called forth his spawn; the Phorcydi. Acherades tricked the Phorcydi into accompanying him 'to the

surface' and trapped the spawn within his chambers; then he returned to this cavern and killed himself in despair at what he had wrought.

Xathosedge

A viciously curving brass dagger that has tarnished over the centuries. Anyone picking up this accursed weapon receives a short-lived but harrowing vision of themselves as Acherades, plunging the blade deep into the struggling figure of his own son and feeling an overwhelming sense of impotent rage and hopelessness as they witness the gruesome murder. The adventurer who grasps the dagger is subjected to a Curse with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 15; roll 1d100 divided by 2 on the Curse table (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 123).

While in possession of the blade they will occasionally hear an evil laughter at the edge of their hearing, which appears to emanate from any nearby human remains. However, regardless of whether the afflicted adventurer still possesses the dagger, they may also retain some small fraction of Acherades' knowledge after the original vision has past; kindly GMs may pass on pertinent knowledge about aspects of the ruins and its inhabitants as momentary flashbacks if they so wish.

The only way out is back via Area 31.

33. The hall of Penitents

Before you stands a broad hallway of simple granite and two rows of high marble pillars. At the far end of it—perhaps thirty metres away—stands a pair of elaborately carved massive brass double doors. The doors hang off their hinges at a strange angle and every inch of them is covered in a weaving pattern of concentric whorls. A jagged crack runs horizontally across this room, splitting it almost in half. Half-way along the hall lies a small stone plinth.

GM: The great brass doors are precariously balanced and any attempt to open or move past them will bring down both the doors—in much the same way as in Area 9. Opening this door triggers a rockfall at Area 15, sealing it and forcing the companions to find the only other way out—through the sewers.

Engraved on top of the plinth is a scallop shell held in crab claws. The carving represents the seal of Oceanos, the plinth being previously a place for penitents to place offerings as they moved along the hall, and nothing more.

The doors lead to Area 34, while the passage leads back to Area 31.

34. Mirrored Doors

The long, narrow stairs lead down to a small, compact room that is utterly dominated by a large double-door of finely wrought polished bronze set in the opposite wall.

GM: The doors lead to Area 35, while the stairs lead back to Area 33.

35. The God-King's Audience Chamber

As the bronze doors part, they reveal a huge chamber criss-crossed with massive marble columns and huge buttresses. These great fluted columns are a pale cream colour with black basalt bases and crowns. The floor is tiled with glazed ceramic slabs in blue and white that echoes a matching high-vaulted ceiling some sixty feet overhead. A great carved face of a stern bearded man—obviously that of Poseidos—juts impressively from the centre of the right-hand wall. Against the opposite wall is a majestic marble dais and a huge throne; clearly once the domain of a great and mighty monarch.

Face of Poseidos (H)

GM: This enormous 10-metre wide carving of the great titan has a gap between its teeth, in which a gold necklace has been jammed. The necklace is worth 8 florins. Acolytes used to place their hands in between the teeth to swear an oath and the last acolyte hid the necklace here during the earthquake, hoping to come back and retrieve it at a later date. There is no danger from the carving and one may take the necklace without fear. Perhaps once upon a time Poseidos watched oaths taken here, but no longer.

Dais and Throne (I)

As the companions approach the dais along the southern wall of this chamber, read the following aloud:

Contrasting starkly with the blue and cream-coloured hall, you approach the imposing dais of white marble that rises along the wall here, topped with a towering throne of exquisitely sculpted brass and a dozen large decorative scallop shells sculpted from deep purple quartz arrayed around it. Upon the throne, you see a large trident and an ornate wreath constructed from sea shells.

GM: An inspection of the throne will reveal three small holes, close together in a straight line in the stonework on one side. This is a lock that controls the secret door that is contained in the back of the throne. However, the companions will not know that the secret door is there—no matter how hard they search. The key to this lock is the trident replica.

Shell Wreath Replica

This is a facsimile of the Shell Wreath that is hidden in the secret treasure vault in Area 42. This replica is only worth about 20 florins as a curio.

Trident Replica

This is a facsimile of the Trident of the Fallen Reef, which lies in the secret treasure vault in Area 42. This trident is hollow and worthless as a weapon. If the Trident is placed into the holes in the throne, then a secret door in the back of the throne sinks down into the floor, revealing a 2 metre-wide passageway behind it.

If the companions approach the southern wall, read the following aloud:

Before you lies a doorway of granite and basalt, covered in elaborate carvings of dolphins and horses.

GM: The western basalt door takes the companions into Area 36, while the secret door leads to Area 38. The eastern brass doors lead back to Area 34.

36. The hall of Shadow

As you step through the door you emerge into a long, dark hall. The walls and floor are formed from black basalt and the entire hall is pitch black.

GM: This hall was once used as a punishment cell for wayward acolytes and virgins, who were locked in here for a day or two at a time. A temple virgin was locked in here when the earthquake occurred and she was forgotten in the ensuing panic. She endured for two weeks before she perished; her fear and panic attracting the attentions of a Nightmare that still dwells within. Her skeleton lies at the far end of the room curled into a fetal position.

Half-way across the hall, the door will begin to close behind them. If the companions allow the door to close they will find that there is no handle or lock on this side. Though a troop of hardy adventurers will be able to break the heavy bronze door down given time (2–3 hours), the Nightmare will take advantage

of the distraction to begin plaguing them with fears and visions and attempt to overwhelm their minds, such as a loud rumbling earthquake that sends deep cracks splintering across the walls and threatens to bring the whole of the stone ceiling down on top of the hopelessly trapped companions.

Nightmare

The Nightmare cannot be detected because it has no physical presence in the real world (see *Bestiary*, p. 71). If any companions possess an Eye of Foreboding it may (60% chance) flicker here. The Nightmare will try to put all the adventurers to sleep, matching its Magical Attack against their Magical Defence. Having entered their sleeping minds, the Nightmare takes control of their dreams, though it will not allow them to know they are dreaming, as it can make its dream-images utterly realistic.

This particular Nightmare will subject the companions to a horde of weird and disturbing experiences, beginning with the delusion that a powerful earthquake is sending deep cracks through the walls and ceiling, threatening to crush the hopelessly trapped companions in the dark chamber. In the midst of this, they are suddenly rescued by Dino—who is actually the dream-form of the Nightmare—that which the companions must kill in order to destroy the Nightmare.

If an adventurer dies in the dream (or suffers a similarly conclusive fate such as maiming, insanity or imprisonment) he must roll to wake up. He rolls 1d20, adds his rank, and must exceed his Psychic Talent score. Failure to make the roll means that the adventurer suffers in reality whatever befell him in the dream—a slain adventurer never wakes, an adventurer chained in the Nightmare's dungeon becomes catatonic, and so on. At the same time, all other adventurers trapped in the dream get to roll to see whether their companion's fate shocks them into waking up; a roll of under Intelligence on 2d20 is needed for this.

NIGHTMARE

Magical Attack	19
Stealth	infinite
Perception	20 (darksight)

The only way out of this chamber is back to Area 35.

37. Chamber of Oceanos

Beyond the door you find a small white temple-chamber, carved with representations of Tritons and crabs. It features four large round Doric columns and a central dais on which is set a conch shell.

GM: If the conch shell is blown here, a brief sea-breeze blows through the room and the companions will find they have been healed of 2d6 Health Points worth of wounds. The horn only works within this room and only once per day.

The only way out is back to Area 29.

38. A hidden Stairway

The two-metre wide stairway that extends downwards beyond the secret door is paved with polished tiles. After a few steps the stairs turn abruptly right at a small landing.

GM: If the companions continue their descent, read the following aloud:

You follow the stairs down to the right, after which the stairs continue for about sixty metres before bearing right once more. Ahead, the stairs proceed thirty metres further down, then another landing turns back towards the left.

GM: If the companions continue their descent, read the following aloud:

Pressing on, you continue your descent even further and round the landing. Another twenty metres below you, the stairs appear to finally end in a small chamber.

GM: The stairs lead down to Area 39 and also back up to Area 35.

39. Brass-etched Doors

At the bottom of the stairs, you reach an ante-chamber with two large brass doors, elaborately decorated in images of cavorting Nereids and horses... some images bring a blush to even the most worldly of you.

GM: These doors are built of solid brass, 2 feet thick, and are powerfully enchanted. Only one who has pledged to one of the three ancient Emphidian gods or made an offering of some sort in the temple may open the doors. Any other adventurer attempting to do so is struck with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 24—if they do not resist they will find themselves obsessively intrigued by the carvings and struck with las-

civious urges of a hippophilic nature. They will then attempt to leave the temple at the first opportunity and act upon these urges. This compulsion will wear off after three hours.

The doors lead to Area 40, while the stairs lead back to Area 38.

40. The Idol Room

The huge doors swing inwards to reveal a magnificent high-walled chamber of white marble inlaid with shining gold. Six statues of Nereids stand in a row to both left and right—as if standing guard—before a truly gigantic twenty-metre tall figure of Poseidos worked in marble, serpentine, and gold which looms at the far end of the chamber. Behind the huge statue you can see two massive marble urns.

GM: The companions will get the distinct impression the statue is scowling down at them as they approach, this is due to the artisan's skill rather than any magic.

Both of the huge urns are attached to the floor.

Horse Urn (J)

One of the urns is covered in images of white horses and contains a large number of worked brass and mother-of-pearl tokens, each of which has a prayer inscribed upon its back.

Dolphin Urn (K)

The other urn is illustrated with dolphins and contains a large number of bone and marble fish hooks, some of which still pierce faded pieces of leather.

If the companions successfully search the wall behind the statue—in between the two urns—they will find a small catch recessed into the stone. Pushing the catch will cause a small wall-section to slide down, revealing a short stairway that leads down.

The stairway leads down to Area 41, while the brass doors lead back to Area 39.

41. Passage to the True Vault

This hallway is a long, straight granite passage with a curved roof but no other ornamentation of any kind. Torch brackets hang at regular intervals along the hall. You can see that the hallway comes to a dead-end a scant ten metres away. In the center of the wall is a depression the shape of a scallop shell.

GM: The wall indentation is in fact a lock, and the key is the golden scallop shell from Area 28. If the companions place the golden shell into the indentation, then read the following to them:

The rock wall before you suddenly begins to tremble, and then a large section of it cracks and falls outward, leaving a roughly triangular entry to a chamber beyond.

GM: The triangular secret door leads to Area 42, while the rectangular secret door leads back to Area 40.

42. The Vault of the Ocean

You step through the secret door into a great chamber of white marble, carved with hundreds of ornate representations of the sea and marine animals upon its walls and ceiling, which is supported by two wide pillars. The floor is crowded with arrays of golden statuary, pots and urns sealed with wax. In the middle of this vault, circled around a huge marble sculpture of a conch shell, you see a mass of open bronze caskets, which appear to contain bars of serpentine, aquamarine and a large number of pearls. A formidable array of ancient weaponry and armour hangs upon the walls.

GM: Though doubtless impressed by the haul of priceless wealth on display and pocketing several handfuls of jewels for himself, Guarcias will immediately demand that the companions must 'Find the Compass!' as his obsession with it overflows.

The Treasure

GM: In the pile on the floor, the companions may find:

- ♣ Countless examples of ancient Emphidian statuary (worth 2,500 gold pieces in total).
- ♣ Sealed pots of rare spices and fragrant oils (worth 10,000 gold pieces in total).
- ♣ 970 pearls (worth 10 florins each).
- ♣ Countless serpentine jewels (worth 1,000 gold pieces in total).
- ♣ A multitude of aquamarine gemstones (worth 2,500 gold pieces in total).
- ♣ An extremely rare black opal (worth 50,000 gold pieces in total).
- ♣ **Wavecutter:** A bronze shortsword with a mother-of-pearl hilt. This is an enchanted +1 blade that will never rust, tarnish or dull.

♣ **Gullscry:** A large bronze and leather shield of classical Emphidian design. This enchanted shield confers a +4 bonus if worn as the only form of armour, otherwise it merely affords a +1 bonus.

♣ **Kelpwrack:** A large black-stained javelin with a wickedly barbed head, this enchanted +1 javelin subjects all those it hits to a curse with a **MAGICAL ATTACK** of 19. If successful, the curse induces a phobia; the fear of water.

Sionus' secret treasury is within the great marble conch shell which lies at the centre of the room. There is no way to reach it without physically breaking through the marble sculpture, which would take 9 man-hours.

Inside the stone conch are the following artefacts:

♣ **The Shell Wreath:** The wearer of this necklace becomes immune to any mind-affecting sorcery with a **MAGICAL ATTACK** below 21.

♣ **Trident of the Fallen Reef:** This is an enchanted +2 triple-pronged spear, which confers a +3 bonus versus Kappa.

♣ **The Compass of the Eternal Sea:** This impressive artefact can guide a ship's captain to any place that he desires with pin-point accuracy. However, it will only function correctly for a direct descendent of Sionus's bloodline.

If the Compass is found, then Guarcias will immediately take possession of it.

The only way out is back through the triangular secret door to Area 41.

The Water Trap

The companions may think that their worries are over, but they are in for a most unwelcome surprise; the fabulous treasures of Xathos are booby-trapped! The instant that any adventurer carrying any item from the vault exits the Idol Room (Area 40), read the following aloud:

As you cross the threshold of the doorway, you suddenly hear a loud rumbling, grinding noise from far above, which stops after a few seconds. You hesitate for a second and then... an unceasing torrent of water crashes round the landing above you and starts cascading down the stairs towards you!

GM: When Acherades died, the sacred rite that permits the safe removal of treasure from the vault was also lost. The enchanted Idol that stands guard over the Vault has seen the companions' thievery and opened sluice gates in the secret staircase, just below the throne room at Area 38. Seawater is now pouring in and within 15 combat rounds the whole of the space from Area 38 right through to Area 42 will be flooded. The companions are now faced with a mad dash and swim back up the staircase to the throne room in order to avoid drowning. The air-bladders that the sailors are carrying may prove to be very useful here!

Assuming that the companions have escaped drowning, they will attempt to leave—and should be alarmed to discover that there is no obvious way out of the vaults; they are trapped! Instead, they will need to find one of the entrances to the sewer—either via Poseidos' pool at Area 28 or the virgins' living quarters at Area 26.

The Caverns

43. A Filthy Sewer
44. Diversion
45. The Worms' Lair
46. Run for Your Life!
47. Tight Spaces
48. Twilight Zone
49. Dive Time
50. The Sparkling Cavern
51. Under Pressure
52. A Vision in Bluescale
53. A Lady Scorned
54. Lost Time

43. A Filthy Sewer

The turgid, crusty mush that your feet squelch into is quite revolting. Ahead, the sewer quickly ends in a dead end, but behind you the tunnel stretches on into inky blackness.

GM: The only way onward is to follow the sewer northwards. If the companions do this, then read the following aloud:

After a while the sewer branches; the conduit that you are in continues straight ahead, but on your right another section joins at right-angles. Filthy water runs towards you along the sewer and then flows to your right, along the new passage.

GM: At this junction, the way forwards lies to the south. However, if the companions choose to ignore this and continue eastward instead, then read the following aloud:

The wet, muck-ridden sewer is very long and straight, and eventually turns left, then some time later it winds back to the right. Finally, the sewer ends at a dead-end, at the base of which you see a large bronze channel from which water trickles out. The channel seems to be blocked with ages-old detritus and from the edges of the channel large cracks extend the length of the wall.

GM: The southern sewer leads on to Area 44, while removing the detritus in the eastern sewer allows the companions to gain access to Poseidos' water-and-bone-filled pool in Area 28. The western grating leads back to Area 25.

44. Diversion

Ahead, the sewer is blocked by a mass of ancient filth, rocks and rubble. A jagged crack runs almost the entire length of this tunnel towards the rockfall, while another fissure in the right-hand wall seems just large enough to walk through.

GM: Any attempt to excavate the rockfall will fail—more debris will fall down into the sewer. Feel free to imply that continuing may cause a cave-in.

If the companions continue onward through the fissure, then read the following aloud:

The narrow rocky tunnel zig-zags downwards, progressing quickly through two small rock-strewn natural chambers before it finally dips down and empties out into a very large cavern up ahead.

The Caverns



The southern rock fissure leads on to Area 45, while the northern sewer leads back to Area 43.

45. The Worms' Lair

As you step forward into this broad cave, your feet enter a lake of knee-deep earthy water that extends on into the blackness. In the middle of the gloomy cavern, there sits a low mound of rocks while away in the darkness you hear some faint splashes.

GM: This 50 metre-wide cavern is full of murky brown water and small 'rocks' that will brush against the companions' feet as they wade onwards. The water quickly deepens to roughly waist-depth.

The cavern is the lair of many Huge Grey-White Moray Eels—each almost 5 metres long—which are lying in wait beneath the surface of the water. The companions should occasionally see a momentary glimpse of something large and white on the surface of the water in order to keep the tension up. The mound and the 'rocks' are actually a huge number of animal bones.

If the companions discover the bones or reach half-way across the lake, then read the following aloud:

Suddenly, enormous white jaws attached to a couple of huge writhing white bodies burst from the water and leap towards you!

GM: The eels attack in three pairs, and after one combat round each pair swim away under the murky water for two combat rounds. In total there are eighteen eels; as each one dies have the companions see another new eel snake through the water from the eastern side of the cavern to take its place. The aim here is not to kill the companions but scare them—the companions should be left in no doubt whatsoever that fighting the eels is a hopeless task and that their best option is to flee this killing ground as fast as possible. Wading across the cavern is at ½ normal speed.

After the first combat round, read the following aloud:

Guarcias suddenly reaches up to his neck and removes a curious necklace from beneath his tunic. It consists of two very oddly shaped white triangles on a length of leather cord. He rips it off and brandishes it at the eels—who momentarily shy away from it—while he swiftly wades off into the gloom.

GM: Guarcias has decided to abandon the companions to the eels and is making off into Area 47 by himself.

If the Phorcydi is still alive, then it horrifically mutates into its true form (see Area 27) before entering into a titanic battle with the eels.

6 HUGE GREY-WHITE MORAY EELS

Attack	15, fangs (d8, 5)
Defence	7
Armour Factor	2
Movement	5m (12m), swimming 12m
Magical Defence	2
Evasion	5
Stealth	11
Perception	6 (Blind. Treat as Darksight within the caverns and lake; they know their lair well and have an enhanced sense of smell.)
Health Points	14
Rank-equivalent	3

The southern tunnel leads to Area 46, while the western tunnel leads to Area 47. The northern tunnel leads back to Area 44.

46. Run For Your Life!

If the companions have entered via the tunnel from Area 45, then read the following aloud:

The waist-high water in the tunnel finally transitions to a knee-deep layer of viscous mud studded with rocks that covers the whole floor. The slick mud sucks at your legs while behind you the voracious eels burst from the water and pursue you at speed across the mud!

GM: If the companions have entered via the scree slope from Area 47, then read the following aloud:

The loose rocks suddenly give way beneath your feet and you lose your footing, sliding uncontrollably down the steep slope! You tumble helplessly amid the stones, before falling a further 5 metres straight down through a small opening at the bottom into an intersecting mud-filled tunnel that leads left and right. To your left you hear the ominous rasping and deep hissing of several voracious huge eels as they slither towards you down the tunnel!

GM: An ascent up the loose scree slope is treacherous and has a Difficulty Factor of 20. The western tunnel continues to slope ever upward and wading through this knee-deep muddy passageway is at ¼ normal speed, with a –1 penalty to all Evasion rolls. Though the adventurers are severely hampered by the deep mud underfoot, the eels can snake over the top of it at ½ normal speed.

The eels begin 8 metres behind the adventurers and will slowly close that gap down. The companions can attempt to simultaneously run away and throw rocks or other heavy items at the eels in an attempt to stun them; a critical hit will stop the eels in their tracks for one combat round while the adventurers wade onwards.

If the companions decide to make a stand against the eels or attempt to head eastward to Area 45, then the eels will press their attack. Use the advice given in Area 45 to run the encounter... the companions will find that there is nothing to gain by fighting the eels except pain and death.

After following the meandering tunnel for approximately 125 metres, the companions will encounter a small side-tunnel in the right-hand side of the main passageway that stands one metre off the ground and then plunges steeply downwards. The eels will not follow the companions through this precarious crevice. This perilous descent leads down to Area 48.

The main tunnel continues weaving for a further 25 metres, after which read the following aloud:

The tunnel suddenly empties out onto a narrow ledge in the centre of a sheer precipice. Around you is a vast swathe of dark nothingness that vanishes into a silent abyss below. Behind you, Guarcias Iniguez suddenly races into view, fear writ large in his face as you all hear the monstrous eels closing rapidly.

GM: The companions are faced with a stark choice: either they jump, or they fight the eels to the bitter mortal end.

If the companions jump, then read the following aloud:

Your heart skips a beat as you plummet head-long down through the dark air, while above you hear the hissing eels slither quickly out of the cave exit, falling close behind you into the pitch-black void below... For what seems like an eternity you hang in the pitch-darkness, wind rushing past and then... you plunge into a large body of chest-high liquid. Breaking back to the surface

you choke on the foetid salt-water—as the dreaded eels crash down into the stinking brine just metres behind you!

Almost immediately the scummy water broils and seethes as a scene of deafening carnage erupts all around you; the very water seems alive as marine animals fight, swim and leap into the air in utter mayhem.

GM: The companions have jumped into the filthy infested waters of Dark Lake. Refer to Area 13 for more information on the lake and its inhabitants. The high tunnel outlet that the companions left from cannot be seen from the Dark Lake itself.

If Guarcias is still alive at this point then read the following aloud:

Guarcias suddenly surfaces from the brine, his mysterious necklace floating away as he coughs up scummy water. The gaping maw of a huge Grey-White Eel swiftly follows and clamps over his head with a sickening bone-crunching ‘crack’ and writhes him back beneath the foaming waters.

GM: Please note that this is an alternative death-scene to that depicted in Area 52, in the eventuality that the companions have failed to visit that location. Guarcias Iniguez dies here, torn apart by the voracious eels.

Meanwhile, chaos reigns as the Huge Eels fight it out with everything else. With the Huge Eels preoccupied, the companions are able to make a fighting escape out across the Dark Lake towards the waterfall. As the companions retreat, they will encounter an assortment of hostile lake creatures that attempt to take a bite out of the companions before swimming away; roll a random encounter from the table at Area 13 for each of the next 2d4 combat rounds, after which the adventurers will be free to wade across the Dark Lake as normal.

The water that the companions may jump into is the vast Dark Lake at Area 13, while the steep descent via the side-tunnel leads to Area 48. The treacherous scree slope leads up to Area 47, while the eastern tunnel leads back to the Worms’ Lair at Area 45.

47. Tight Spaces

GM: If the companions have entered via the Worms’ Lair at Area 45 then read the following aloud:

Eventually, this tunnel starts to slope upwards and gives way to a knee-deep layer of viscous mud that saps your strength. Shortly ahead, you see that the tunnel stops at a narrow near-vertical shaft that leads above. Suddenly, the eels burst from the water behind you and continue their pursuit!

GM: The 10-metre climb up the rock shaft has a Difficulty Factor of 13. Luckily for the companions, the eels are unable to climb the shaft.

Once the companions reach the top of the shaft, read the following aloud:

Ahead, you can see a profusion of tiny tunnels and chambers that weave throughout the heavily weathered rocks. The gaps between the rocks are extremely tight and it appears unlikely that you could make your way through the small crawlspaces fully encumbered as you are. The walls appear to be strong sheets of calcite, occasionally dotted with small cracks or vents in the walls of the crawl spaces—though they seem far too small to permit egress. Perhaps you might become lost down here in the inky blackness for all time...?

GM: This area is a small, unmappable maze which is designed primarily to induce fear and uncertainty in the companions. It consists of several numbered micro-areas, which are termed 'Sections'.

Within each Section, the adventurers should be given several vague horizontal directions that are restricted to the Area boundary as marked on the caverns map (see p. 98). The adventurers then decide which direction in which to travel. However, to determine where the companions really end up, secretly roll 1d4 and add (even number) or subtract (odd number) that to the current Section. For example, if the companions are at Section 47.5 and a 3 is rolled, then the next Section would be 47.2. Regardless of the die roll, the Section must always change by at least 1; for example, if the companions are at Section 47.1 and a 3 is rolled, then the next section would be 47.2.

Keep a note of which Section the companions are currently occupying and also their previous Section. If the companions attempt to retrace their steps in this maze, then they should be permitted to return to their last Section but will be too disorientated to retrace their steps any further; secretly roll for a new Section instead.

In order to make any progress through the tiny tunnels in this Area, the companions are required to leave their backpacks, two-handed weapons and armour behind. A select number of smaller items can, of course, be pushed in front of the companions through the passageways. Crawling through these tiny crawlspaces is at just 10% of normal speed, with an effective Evasion score of 0.

The companions risk becoming stuck in these tiny crevices. Roll 1d20 for an Intelligence check every time an adventurer moves into a new section; if they fail then they will succumb to hysteria and experience a severe panic attack that lasts for 5 minutes, during which time they will shiver uncontrollably and be unable to move. Any adventurer that experiences three such episodes in successive Sections will become permanently afflicted by claustrophobia (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 125).

While they traverse this area, the companions will occasionally observe the menacing sight of the Huge Eels stalking the adventurers through the small gaps in the tunnel walls.

If the companions entered via the Worms' Lair at Area 45 then start at Section 47.1, otherwise, if the companions entered via the Twilight Zone at Area 48 then start at section 47.9. If the companions entered by levitating up via the scree slope at Area 46, then start at Section 47.5.

If the companions attempt to exit this maze back down the vertical shaft at Section 47.1, then the ravenous eels will confront them and stop them in their tracks. Refer to Area 45 for guidance on how to run this encounter.

Eventually, the companions will arrive at either Section 47.5 or Section 47.9, where exits from this maze can be found.

47.1 Several cramped water-logged tunnels and a small vertical shaft converge at this point. Loud rasping and hissing echoes from the vertical shaft.

GM: The small vertical shaft leads eastward to Area 45.

47.2 A stream of water courses out of the wall here, flowing away into dozens of partially submerged crawlspaces that surround you.

GM: The water is seeping through fissures in the rock floor and is at a stable depth.

47.3 *Your clothes scrape on the damp tunnel's ceiling and floor as you crawl onwards through the tightly twisting tunnels.*

GM: Reduce each adventurer's Intelligence check by -2 during this Section.

47.4 *The narrow tunnel sharply bends back and forth here, making it very difficult for you to negotiate through it.*

GM: Reduce each adventurer's Intelligence check by -4 during this Section.

47.5 *Shortly ahead, the wet tunnel floor dips sharply down and is replaced by a loose scree slope that descends steeply into darkness.*

GM: The scree slope leads down to Area 46.

47.6 *You arrive at a pool of water which forms the confluence of several water-logged crawl-ways.*

GM: The water in the pool is rank and contains the leering bleached skeleton of a young moray eel.

47.7 *The tunnel is almost fully submerged here, forcing you to take gulps of air in the few air pockets you can find.*

GM: Reduce each adventurer's Intelligence check by -2 during this Section. Any adventurer that possesses an air bladder may breathe air within to ignore this modifier.

47.8 *You push on through deep water-filled tunnels and hope that you reach an air-pocket.*

GM: Reduce each adventurer's Intelligence check by -2 during this Section. Any adventurer that possesses an air bladder may breathe the air within to ignore this modifier.

47.9 *A number of small water-filled tunnels meet here at the top of a steeply sloping cliff.*

GM: The high cliff leads westward to Area 48.

GM: The scree slope at 47.5 leads down to Area 46, while the high western cliff at 47.9 leads to Area 48. The small eastern vertical shaft at 47.1 leads back to the Worm's Lair at Area 45.

48. Twilight Zone

You hurriedly clamber down the treacherous rock-face, constantly losing your footing and sliding ever deeper into the caverns. The air becomes cold and all the rocks here are slick with moisture. After some time the stone beneath your feet levels out somewhat and you find that you are in a strange twilight world of stalactites and stalagmites, where small saltwater springs leak from the walls and ceiling, leaving crystalline trails down into the pools that dot and occasionally fill the bewildering tangle of caverns ahead. The huge eels, meanwhile, are nowhere to be seen.

GM: The companions have entered an unmappable maze which hides the entrance to an enchanted faerie realm and its elusive inhabitants. In contrast to the desperate phobia-inducing antics at Area 47, this maze evokes an eerie atmosphere. It consists of several numbered micro-areas, which are termed 'Sections'.

Within each Section, the adventurers should be given several vague horizontal directions that are restricted to the Area boundary as marked on the caverns map (see p. 98). The adventurers then decide which direction in which to travel. However, to determine where the companions really end up, secretly roll 1d4 and add (even number) or subtract (odd number) that to the current Section. For example, if the companions are at Section 48.6 and a 3 is rolled, then the next Section would be 47.3. Regardless of the die roll, the Section must always change by at least 1; for example, if the companions are at Section 48.19 and a 4 is rolled, then the next section would be 48.18.

Keep a note of which Section the companions are currently occupying and also their previous Section. If the companions attempt to retrace their steps in this maze, then they should be permitted to return to their last Section but will be too disorientated to retrace their steps any further; secretly roll for a new Section instead.

If the companions have not already encountered the nereids at Area 52, then secretly roll a d6 each time that they move to a new Section, excepting Section 48.9. On a roll of 1 or 2, a random adventurer glimpses a humanoid figure at the very edge of their vision, at which the figure quickly and silently dodges away out of sight. On a roll of 3, the figure throws a small sea-shell at the companions before

retreating. The character will not be able to tell much about the figure in the gloom other than it is a darkly coloured humanoid with a long head of hair.

Meanwhile, a random adventurer with a Psychic Talent score of 13 or higher will experience the sensation that they are being watched and will also 'hear' a young woman call out their name in a hushed voice. Any companions that attempt to follow or track the humanoid will find that the trail leads one Section towards 48.9 before stopping, either in mid-chamber or at a rock-face; the figure is not bound by normal physics and is able to walk on the walls and ceiling in order to escape the companions. The companions are, of course, being shadowed by one of the inquisitive nereids from Area 52.

While they navigate this maze, the companions will occasionally be alarmed by the sight of harmless but startling pale worms, glass-like shrimps and crabs that inhabit the caves in this Area. The creatures are blind but have very sensitive hearing.

If the companions entered via the tunnel at Area 46 then start at Section 48.1, but if they entered via the crawlspaces at Area 47 then start at Section 48.3. If the companions entered via the flooded sinkhole at Area 49 then start at section 48.18. Otherwise, if the companions entered via the sparkling cavern at Area 50 then start at section 48.9.

Eventually the companions will arrive at either Section 48.1, Section 48.9 or Section 48.18, where exits from this maze can be found.

48.1 *A number of rough passageways meet at the bottom of an upward-sloping tunnel.*

GM: The steep easterly slope leads up to Area 46. The slope has a climbing difficulty factor of 9.

48.2 *In the centre of this dark tunnel you see a small pool of what appears to be water.*

GM: The rocks here are dark red and although the water is clear and harmless it tastes of rusty iron.

48.3 *Many tunnels converge here at the bottom of a high cliff that ascends into pitch darkness.*

GM: The 45 metre-high easterly cliff leads up to Area 47. The cliff has a climbing difficulty factor of 13.

48.4 *Strangely shaped channels twist their way throughout the dark floor of this cave.*

GM: The channels are approximately one metre high.

48.5 *Although this chamber carries on ahead, it slopes away sharply at an odd angle.*

GM: The 15 metre-high slope and walls have a climbing difficulty factor of 11.

48.6 *You find that you are surrounded by a profusion of stalactites, stalagmites and rock pools.*

GM: The water in the pools is shallow, clear and harmless.

48.7 *Stacked on the floor of this small rock chamber, you can see several piles of brightly coloured sea-shells.*

GM: The shells are nothing more than decorative playthings for the nereids. However, under one pile of shells lie three intact oyster shells, each containing a large white pearl (worth 300-800 florins).

48.8 *This cavern is filled with many great stalactites and stalagmites, some of which form huge columns from ceiling to floor.*

GM: Regardless of any die roll, the companions will encounter the humanoid figure here, as described above—unless they have already been to Area 51.

48.9 *High columns of rock form a maze of passageways in all directions while, water pools in between their massive frames.*

GM: If the companions have yet to descend the enchanted shaft at Area 50, then they will also see a shimmering light that emanates from a rocky archway; this is the enchanted entrance to a sparkling faerie cavern which will be otherwise completely concealed and totally undetectable—even to sorcerous magic. The archway leads to Area 50.

48.10 *In this cave, large stalactites and stalagmites can be seen all around you. The floor is covered in water.*

GM: Regardless of the die roll, the companions will encounter the humanoid figure here, as described above—unless they have already been to Area 51. The water is shallow and clear.

48.11 *Moisture drips from the ceiling of this chamber into a pool of water that covers most of the floor.*

GM: This deep pool is formed of clear water and inhabited by a great many of the strange albino creatures that populate this underworld, as described above.

48.12 *A low overhang requires you to crouch down beneath it as you push onwards through these passages.*

GM: Passing through this Section is at ½ normal speed. This Section loops back to earlier in the maze; roll 1d10 for the exit roll and re-roll any even numbers.

48.13 *This chamber consists of a large void in the rock, the floor of which is littered with a considerable amount of rubble. Your footsteps echo in the still air.*

GM: This unstable cavern is approximately 30 metres across. In this section there is a 40% chance of 1d10 small boulders falling from the ceiling as a result of a very loud noise or damage to the rock-face.

48.14 *You see that the side of this cave drops sharply away before ascending back up again at the other side. A pool of water covers the floor.*

GM: The 20 metre-high walls in the cave have a climbing difficulty factor of 11. The waist-deep pool is full of harmless clear water.

48.15 *The damp walls and floor of this chamber are completely covered by some sort of strange yellow-brown moss. A faint trickling of water reaches your ears.*

GM: The moss is mildly toxic and should be treated as a weak poison (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 122).

48.16 *You emerge into a cavern where a small stream of flowing water cuts across your path and through a low rock formation.*

GM: The rock formation is a head-height natural bridge above the stream and has a climbing difficulty factor of merely 4. The stream consists of harmless clear fresh-water that disappears into very small cracks in the rock-face on either side of the cavern.

48.17 *The passage meanders back and forth, moisture trickling down the walls to the rock-strewn floor all the while.*

GM: Companions with a Perception score of 13 or more will notice that several small smooth-grey stones appear to be slowly moving. They are actually a peculiar form of harmless local crustacean.

48.18 *A large smooth-sided tunnel diverges into an array of smaller rock passages at this point.*

GM: The large tunnel leads westwards to Area 49. The northern archway leads to the enchanted cavern at Area 50, while the smooth western tunnel leads to the flooded sinkhole at Area 49. The steep easterly slope leads back up to the tunnel at Area 46, while the high easterly cliff leads back up to the small maze at Area 47.

49. Dive Time

The sloping tunnel twists steeply up and around for quite a long while before finally looping back down a short distance, at which point you begin to hear the noise of gently swelling water. The smell of salt-water fills your nostrils as you emerge at the top of a small chamber that encloses a large pool of water, which brims with all manner of marine plant and animal life.

GM: The chamber is formed of natural granite approximately 15 metres wide. The pool is a tidal sinkhole connected via an underwater passage to the Grotto Pool at Area 12. It is, of course, full of salt-water and normal coastal marine animals that have entered the pool via the Grotto.

To reach the Grotto and regain their freedom, the companions will have to jump down into the sinkhole and make a final desperate 75-metre underwater swim. Even worse, however, the sinkhole is occupied by a very large and very old Octopus, which will attack them on sight.

LARGE OCTOPUS

Attack	18 per individual arm, beak (d8, 8), tentacles (see below)
Defence	8
Armour Factor	1
Movement	2m (5m), swimming 40m
Magical Defence	4
Evasion	7
Stealth	16
Perception	10
Health Points	40 for the main body, with an additional 5 points on each of the 8 individual arms
Rank-equivalent	8

TENTACLES: (d6, 5) Damage is from crushing damage applied the round after the tentacle hits. If more than two tentacles hit—regardless of whether they pass through armour—the adventurer will be pulled towards its beaked maw and attacked by that two combat rounds later.

GM: If any of the companions begin to drown during this encounter, then one of the nereids from Area 52 will suddenly swim into the underwater passage and join the companions, whereupon any companions within 20 metres of the nereid will suddenly find that they are temporarily able to breathe underwater. The octopus will not attempt to attack the nereid—no doubt due to the mystical powers of the sea-nymph—and it will instead shy away into the darkest corner of the passage that it can find, leaving the companions free to swim onwards to safety.

Once past the octopus, the underwater passage narrows and eventually empties into the dark kelp-choked depths of the Grotto Pool at Area 12. This secret passage is not visible from the Grotto itself. The nereid—if it has made an appearance here—will stay within the underwater passage and refuse to swim up into the Grotto Pool. However, the octopus will take advantage of this opportunity to follow the adventurers inside the pool, attacking them again just as they break the surface.

The flooded sinkhole leads to the Grotto at Area 12, while the northern tunnel leads back to Area 48.

50. The Sparkling Cavern

The way ahead opens out into a small cavern lined with long seams of sparkling quartz. Roughly hewn rock stairs spiral downwards around the edge of a large circular opening in the middle of the chamber, which is surrounded by various scattered sea-shells.

GM: The sea-shells that cover the floor once belonged to both normal sea creatures and also the albino creatures found elsewhere in this Area. The shaft's enchantment absorbs any noise from further down below—including echoes.

If the companions have already traversed the enchanted shaft at Area 51, then once the companions leave this cavern they will never be able find it again, no matter how long they search for it—such is the power of its faerie magic.

The rough-hewn stairs descend into the deep shaft at Area 51, while the archway leads back into the maze at Area 48.

51. Under Pressure

The rough-hewn steps lead you ever further down into the damp and deathly silent gloom. Above and below you, the shaft is pitch-black. Slowly, the atmosphere begins to change—it gets even colder and you start to hear a high-pitched whining noise in your ears.

GM: The companions are descending towards a high-pressure chamber that lies many hundreds of metres below, and they will suffer a great deal of discomfort as the air pressure builds. The air pressure in the shaft is regulated by an aeons-old enchantment that not even the greatest of human sorcerors could hope to fathom or affect.

Proceeding down the deep spiral stairs slowly makes the companions' symptoms worse; commencing with the adventurer possessing the lowest Strength score, the companions will progressively experience earaches, migraines, sudden nosebleeds, blurred vision and finally nausea.

However, just as the companions start to become fearful for their lives, have them suddenly sight the bottom of the shaft; a faint blue glow that spills out from a side-tunnel down in the darkness. At the same time, they will hear echoing up from the tunnel several strange and enchanting voices that sing like the 'murmured whispers of angels'. If they push on downwards to the tunnel, then read the following aloud:

As you draw nearer to the blue light below, the pain and sickness that has been ailing you slowly begins to clear. The beautiful singing seems to call out to you, though you cannot understand what it means. Finally, bathed in the strange blue glow, you see a smooth rock surface at the bottom of the deep shaft and stare ahead into a shimmering blue tunnel that leads forward.

GM: This passage has been carved from a dark rock and is streaked with many long seams of brightly luminous blue crystals that sparkle on the damp walls. The blue crystals are enchanted by faerie magic, which is the source of their light. If the companions press onwards, then read the following aloud:

The eerie 'music' gets louder as you follow the tunnel until it eventually ends at another downward-leading spiral staircase that jinks first right and then left, cut this time with smooth precision from the glowing rocks.

GM: The luminous blue tunnel leads to the Faerie Cavern at Area 52, while the stairs lead back up to Area 48.

52. A Vision in Bluescale

The staircase winds its way out into the middle of a large cavern in the glowing blue rocks. At the far side, a large body of very dark water reflects light from the glowing ceiling and walls back all round the chamber. The remainder of the cavern has a floor covered in a smooth 'beach' that is broken at intervals by glowing rocks, large clusters of translucent blue crystals and a myriad of sea-shells.

You are immediately transfixed by the sight of several enigmatic and completely naked women that are watching you carefully and appear flawlessly beautiful to your eyes. They possess dappled blue skin, triangular ears and long dark hair that frames their exquisitely smiling faces. Your heart skips a beat as you spy several of them reclining on the cavern floor while others swim and bob in the water.

GM: A powerful faerie glamour is present both within this cavern and its eight mysterious inhabitants. Immediately subject all companions to a modified form of the *Enslave* spell with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 24 (spell expiry roll does not apply). Furthermore, in every subsequent round, any adventurer that is not yet enslaved is again subject to the same spell.

This enchanted faerie-realm is populated by mysterious nereids—the enigmatic nymphs of the ocean depths—and their combined glamour has overwhelmed the companions. To the *Enslaved* adventurers, this whole encounter will seem like a hazy dream over which they have little control. Nereids are very inquisitive, and they will giggle as they approach the transfixed companions. These faerie creatures are passionate beings of simple needs and wants, caring nothing for intricate artifacts and other petty mortal concerns. The companions are little more than toys for the nereids to play, caress and cavort with. Water Elementalists and those with the highest Looks scores will receive the most attention from these amorous ladies.

Despite their lack of conversation, the companions will note a resemblance in the way the nereids speak to the few muttered words that they have heard issuing from Guarcias' cabin during the sea-voyage from Ferromaine.

The environment in the cavern is protected by an ancient enchantment that covers the extremely high-pressure seawater beyond. Any adventurer that approaches within 5 metres of the water will find that their symptoms from Area 51 will return with a vengeance and will immediately lose 1d6 Health Points. If any adventurer is foolish enough to press on and enter the icy water itself, then they will find that it will crush and kill them within 2 rounds due to high pressure.

If Guarcias is still alive, then after some time read the following aloud. Note that any adventurer possessing the ear-totem necklace will receive a similar fate.

In your dream-like euphoria you suddenly notice that Guarcias has also entered the cavern and is standing beside you, completely enraptured. A nereid approaches him and starts to caress him before suddenly noticing his necklace, which she carefully removes from his tunic. Hanging from the necklace is the horrific sight of what appears to be two white triangular ears, and you notice that they are strikingly similar in shape to the nereid's own blue ears. The very air seems to freeze as all the faerie creatures gaze in apparent horror at the severed ears before fixing Guarcias in an intense stare as an air of cold menace fills the cavern.

With Guarcias still enraptured, the nereid facing him uses one hand to lift him aloft by his throat—seemingly without any effort—as the air in the cavern becomes charged with static electricity. He chokes and gags in the vice-like grip but does not struggle.

GM: The powerful influence of the nereids is now overwhelming all the *Enslaved* companions; if they attempt to help Guarcias then they must roll 1d20 for a Psychic Talent check. If they succeed, they find that although they can move, their actions are so treacle-slow that the other nereids easily disarm them, and any magic-users will fail to have any clear spell-casting thoughts. Adventurers that fail the check are simply unable to move; they can only watch as events unfold in front of them.

If any non-*Enslaved* adventurers try to intervene, then they will be met with the full spell-casting abilities of the seven nereids.

After perhaps a minute, the nereid hurls Guarcias thirty metres straight through the air into the cavern wall, where he strikes it head-first with a sickeningly loud 'crack'. The lifeless body of Guarcias falls to the floor, trailing large swathes of blood all over the rock-face.

The beautiful faerie creatures turn their attentions back to you. Your intensely pleasant dream has suddenly been transformed into a waking nightmare.

GM: Guarcias Iniguez dies here in a pool of his own blood. However, please note that if the companions fail to visit this location, then an alternative death-scene is depicted in Area 48.

Each nereid now takes hold of an *Enslaved* adventurer's face and peers deeply into their eyes. Though the companions do not know it, their lives hang in the balance... the nereids are in actuality delving deep into the adventurers' souls to determine whether they are worthy of living. Subject all companions to a Magical Attack of 24 and hand a private note to each player who succeeds, which informs them that they are able to feel the nereid inside their mind and that it knows everything that their adventurer can see and feel. They are not permitted to share this information with any other players. All companions, in ascending order of MAGICAL DEFENCE, must then recite out loud a short flashback from their adventurer's most memorable past encounter with either (1) a nereid; (2) a mermaid; (3) a whale/dolphin, or (4) any other large sea-creature.

Once all the flashbacks are complete, the nereids will react. If any adventurer has cruelly harmed a nereid, mermaid, whale/dolphin or any large sea creature in a way that cannot be justified (e.g. an unprovoked attack on a walrus) during their flashback then the nereids will mete out a proportionate fate on the helpless adventurer, which may even include death! However, if they showed kindness to the creature then they will be rewarded—firstly with a very warm and passionate embrace and then with a rare necklace made from sea-shells seamed with quartz crystals. Each necklace would be highly prized by a Water Elementalist; as it allows the Elementalist to call upon an extra 5 Water-aspected Magic Points once per month. The remaining companions will now find that they are able to move once again.

By sifting through the companions and Guarcias' memories, the nereids have become aware of their captive sister on the *Artiglio*. If the companions have discovered the Compass then the nereids will remove it from Guarcias's still body and place the ear-totem inside before finally handing it to the 'kindest' of the companions. If not, then the nereids will simply hand over the ear-totem.

Finally, the nereids will make it abundantly clear that the companions must leave immediately and return to their ship.

NEREIDS

Attack	15, hands (d3, 2)
Defence	9
Armour Factor	0
Movement	15m (30m), swimming 85m
Magical Attack	24
Magical Defence	12
Evasion	6
Stealth	25
Perception	15 (elfsight)
Health Points	21
Magic Points	25
Rank-equivalent	7

Nereids appear as voluptuous and highly athletic human females, though their skin may vary from pale-blue to blue-black in colour and is dappled with lighter green and aquamarine. Their features tend towards classical exotic beauty—perhaps what humans might think to be Mungodan and Minjian in form—and they possess neat pointed ears which conceal a small set of gill slits. They can swim mercurially fast within their own aquatic domain, and are fleet of foot even when on land.

The elusive nereids are, according to legend, the daughters of the great Sea God, though other traditions paint them as fay creatures that are as much mistresses of the briny depths as the Elves and their kin are to the forests of the land. Whatever their mysterious origins, they usually dwell deep beneath the waves in the company of mermaids, dolphins and the great whales, rarely coming into contact with the world of mortals—so much so that they have long since vanished from the memories of most

mortal inhabitants of Legend. However, on occasion a nereid might venture to shore—particularly if there is a pleasant grotto where she can spend her time listening to the words of the strange mortal folk that the waves bring to her ears.

Like mermaids, nereids are highly intrigued by all beautiful objects and creatures, which they find intensely fascinating, until their short-lived curiosity fades and the object of their playful ardour is cast aside... which is not a particularly healthy outcome if said object is an unfortunate sailor who has been brought down to their glittering caverns among the reefs and ravines of the abyssal deep.

These fay creatures have the considerable powers of a 7th-rank Water Elementalist specialising only in the water element—including Raw Power—and often manipulate tidal currents, storms and the like for whimsical entertainment or simply to express their emotions. Nereids also possess an uncanny ability to *Enslave* other creatures in a manner that is similar to the spell used by White Ladies but is not subject to a Spell Expiry Roll, though it may be lifted at the nereid's whim. Furthermore, they also have the ability to read the thoughts of those that they have *Enslaved* if they gaze directly into their eyes at short range.

They can also cast *Illusion* at will, which may be maintained by the nereid's will and life force and remain in effect indefinitely or until dispelled. Also, air-breathers within a 20-metre radius of a nereid will find they can breathe underwater without difficulty, although this only lasts for as long as the nereid is within 20 metres of the individual.

Like other faerie, the nereids share certain mystical fay traits such as having no soul, an extremely long lifespan and the ability to hide in their natural environment—in this case water—and not be seen by any non-nereid of below 5th rank if they so wish. Furthermore, they possess an allergy to iron—which prevents nereids from accessing their powerful magical abilities if bound by that metal, unless ordered to do so by the one who bound them.

Killing a nereid is said to bring down the wrath of the very sea itself upon the killer, which takes the form of a *Curse* with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 24. Any sea-going vessel that an afflicted adventurer is aboard must roll three extra times on the Ocean encounter table for every voyage, and even worse, if the adventurer immerses himself in the sea then

all manner of poisonous, betoothed and generally unpleasant aquatic denizens within a 100m radius will converge on his location. Even dolphins will turn savagely upon the hapless individual. There is also a 75% chance that the next time the adventurer goes swimming that a sudden rip tide will drag him out to sea. This curse may be lifted by sacrificing a high-value weapon or item that the character owns at a consecrated shrine dedicated to a sea deity or saint associated with the ocean.

The spiral stairs and tunnel lead back to Area 51.

Wrecking of The Artiglio

Dealing with supernatural faerie creatures is always fraught with danger—and nereids are no exception. At this point, there are two possibilities for the final act, and the companions will only be able to experience one of them:

If the companions have not encountered the nereids at Area 52, then proceed to Area 53.

- ♣ However, if the companions did encounter the nereids at Area 52, then proceed to Area 54.
- ♣ Note that in both of the above cases, the following information still holds true:

The six wolf-knights on board the *Artiglio* have no qualms about allowing the companions to approach Guarcias's cabin and will allow the companions to enter, as his final orders to the wolf-knights before leaving in the rowboat only involved barring 'sailors' from entry. The door will swing open easily to reveal a sparse room with a number of large chests and a garderobe. Shackled in the corner in heavy iron chains they will discover Guarcias's secret prisoner; a small slight figure dressed in a dirt-streaked voluminous cloak, chained by irons to the corner of the room. For a full description of the captive nereid, see p. 107.

If the nereid is released from her chains then the six wolf-knights on board the *Artiglio* will be released from their glamour and revert to their true form—wolves—pacing around the deck of the *Artiglio* in confusion. After a minute or so the companions will hear distant wolf howls from the island—in response all the wolves aboard ship will leap overboard and begin paddling out to shore.

Refer to Area 52 for a full description of nereids and their abilities.

An inspection of Guarcias's quarters reveals some trunks full of rich clothing and several small chests piled high with gold and jewelry. If any of these items are touched then the clothes will transform into dried, reeking bullkelp and seawrack, the gold to polished beach stones and the jewellery to sea-shells and driftwood. There is not a single item of value to be had.

53. A Lady Scorned

Emerging from the darkness of the caves, you find that it is an eerie moonlit night, where the white sand of the beach glows in the darkness. You spot the Artiglio gently bobbing on the rolling swell and the ship's boat on the shore where you left it.

If the companions ready the boat and set off for the ship, then read the following aloud:

Clambering aboard, you push off in the rowboat. As you pull for the Artiglio through the treacherous channels, you begin to hear calls from the sailors aboard ship.

GM: The sailors will help the companions back aboard the *Artiglio*, where Captain Ferrucci immediately enquires as to the whereabouts of Guarcias—as well as Dario and Alessandro, if they are also not with the companions.

The nereid's past experience at the hands of Guarcias has been an ordeal, to say the least. Once her shackles are removed the companions will have only a few seconds to explain themselves before she begins to vengefully re-enact her captor's crimes on anyone who happens to be present (casting *Inflict Wound* every round). She will start furiously screaming at an incredibly high pitch, continuing to do so as she fights and casts spells. Three combat rounds after being released from her shackles, the abused nereid will destroy the cabin door in an explosion of splinters and stalk onto the deck. One combat round later, six of the beautiful nereids from Area 52 will surface in the waters around the ship, drawn by their sister's earlier cries.

A wise group of companions who cease any combat, or any adventurer who shouts out that Guarcias is dead or throws Guarcias's ear-totem necklace at the abused nereid, will cause her to suddenly cease her spell-casting onslaught and allow them to speak their piece. After they have spoken she will cock her head as if listening to music that only she can hear, then grin a smile of utter euphoria and dive

off the ship into the sea to join her sisters, disappearing beneath the foaming waves in a scattering of pearlescent scales.

However, whether the abused nereid is calm or not the fate of the *Artiglio* has already been sealed, as the other nereids summoned a great sea-storm when they heard her screams of distress; read the following aloud:

A high wind springs up as if from nowhere and quickly transforms into a howling gale. Static electricity courses through the nereid's limbs, discharging into the air around her while overhead, lightning and thunder cracks and lashing rain fills the air. Within seconds the rain increases to a torrent and a raging tempest ravages the Artiglio, heaving it to-and-fro on high-crested waves that drive it headlong towards the jagged reef that fills the bay.

The ship suddenly convulses and lists heavily to port, throwing everyone on board around like skittles as you hear shouts of distress from the sailors, while the fearful sound of splintering timbers confirms your fears—the bottom of the ship is being torn asunder on the rocks. And yet, the doomed Artiglio crashes ever onward through the tumult.

GM: The *Artiglio* has foundered on the reef; it immediately loses 12 Ship Points and begins taking on water. The storm will take another five minutes to run its course, but the *Artiglio* will eventually capsize in just 3d6 combat rounds, so the crew and the companions will have to abandon the ship in short order. All on board the ship will be instantly released from any faerie glamour.

Any companions that are foolish enough to continue the fight will bring down the full combined fury of all seven nereids; their spell-casting powers will summon fearsome waterspouts, huge waves and savage rip tides that pound the *Artiglio* mercilessly. The ship will be forced ever onwards through the rocks, causing a further 1d4 Ship Points of damage every combat round.

If the *Artiglio* is reduced to 0 Ship Points then it will completely break up, whereupon all aboard are pitched into the rolling sea and the nereids will dive away. In this case, those that roll under their Reflexes will avoid drowning and wake up later on the beach, while all those that possess air bladders will automatically drift their way safely to shore.

NOTE: Proceed to Beyond Xathos page 110.

54. Lost Time

You move through the caves, threading your way past the sea channel, your skin is scoured and scratched raw and salt sea-spray stings your eyes and irritates your wounds. As you finally wade out into the open air you realise that night has fallen, and you look up to see the eerie cold light of the moon and stars bathing you in their cold pale light.

Looking out to sea, you are unable to locate the Artiglio. After some moments you turn your eyes towards shore only to discover with a shock that the ship has been wrecked and lies partially submerged on the treacherous reef.

GM: Though they are completely unaware of it, almost a month has passed while the companions were inside the enchanted nereid cavern at Area 52. During that time a great storm has dashed the *Artiglio* upon the rocks, despite Captain Ferrucci's best efforts to prevent it. To the confused companions, however, the experience in the nereid cavern will appear to have lasted merely minutes.

The graves of three sailors that died in the shipwreck are now visible on the cliff top at Area 1. After the wrecking, Captain Ferruci, Dino and the six remaining sailors have taken up residence in the valley. They have moved into the old guardhouse and have almost finished converting the ship's boat into an ocean-going vessel. Ferruci and his crew will be extremely surprised to find that the companions are still alive after all this time. First-mate Dino will tell the companions that six of Guarcias's crazy guards are still on the wrecked ship, guarding the girl in Guarcias's cabin.

When the companions decide to inspect the shipwreck, read the following aloud:

You make your way through shallow waters, climbing carefully over sharp coral and weathered stone towards the wreck. The side of the ship closest to shore is heavily buckled, and appears easy enough to climb.

GM: Climbing the side of the ship has a Difficulty Factor of 7. If the companions board the ship, then read the following aloud:

You clamber over the gunwhale. The six knights lie on the deck in a heap but they raise their heads as one and stare at you with fierce eyes—though their faces are gaunt with hunger and their bodies thin as smoke. They

do not stir as you cautiously make your way on board the waterlogged remnant of the Artiglio in the bright moonlight.

GM: Everything of value on the *Artiglio* has already been looted by the sailors.

Once the companions free the captive nereid she will embrace the adventurer who had the most contact with the nereids at Area 52 and deeply smell their clothes. This will probably be one possessing the Compass and/or the ear-totem, unless one of the other companions took the nereids up on other more 'earthly' offers. The nereid's joy at rediscovering her sisters will dispel any thoughts of vengeance on mortals.

The nereid will channel her unrestrained power and run her hands over her body, old scars and tortured tissue falling away to the floor as fish-scales, until she appears completely unmarked from her long captivity. Any Sorcerers amongst the companions may realise that the shed nereid scales, if collected, are highly sought-after ingredients in Potions of Water Breathing.

The companions will then be permitted a short audience with her, wherein she will relate the full truth about the vile Guarcias. Once satisfied, she will walk out onto the deck, where she will cock her head as if listening to music that only she can hear, then grin a smile of utter euphoria and dive gracefully off the ship into the sea, disappearing beneath the waves. All on board the ship will be instantly released from any faerie glamour.

Beyond Xathos

Essentially this is the end of the adventure. Without the *Artiglio*, the companions are now marooned on this remote waterlocked rock along with the remains of the ship's crew.

Having endured a rather unpleasant experience with humans, the nereids on Xathos will be reluctant to have any more dealings with mankind for quite some time to come. If the companions attempt any further contact with the nereids via the Arch of Amphitra then they will receive no response. Similarly, if the companions attempt to search the twilight caves then they will be unable to find the enchanted shaft that leads to the deep-sea faerie cavern.

Fortunately for all, there is plentiful food, water and shelter on Xathos for the companions and crew to rest and heal their wounds, but their next objective is surely to return to the mainland.

For their part, the old Xathosians—including Voula the Weaver and Alexandros the Vinter—are contented on their homely island and will not be interested in leaving. The former crew of the *Artiglio*, however, have no such qualms and are eager to return to any friendly sea-port as soon as possible. Captain Ferrucci and Dino, if they are alive, may be the only people capable of navigating the companions back to the continent and they will drive a hard bargain with the weary treasure-laden adventurers in exchange for their services.

If the companions have encountered the Phorcydi, then its actions will, in the coming weeks, lure several other infernal demons to the island—in this case small gremlins—which will plague the adventurers with forbidding portents and ill fortune, eventually following the luckless adventurers across the sea (see *Players Guide*, p. 136).

Several suggestions for commencing this fateful journey home are discussed below:

The Others

Another Ferromani ship moors at the island after three months or so. Word has finally filtered through to others of the island's hidden valley; the Knights Capellars have hired freebooters who make landfall and 'ask' that the companions act as guides, using brute force if necessary. This may well prove

an opportunity for the companions to either sign on with the Knights Capellars or seize the new ship for their own. The Capellars' landing party would consist of perhaps one 6th-rank Knight, two 3rd-rank Knights and 6 Sailors/Hotbloods (see *Friends or Foes* and *Dragon Warriors*).

The Watcher

After several weeks, and apparently by sheer good fortune, a powerful and inquisitive 'sorcerer' chances upon the island while scrying and offers to 'rescue' the companions via a mystical portal... but why? Who, or perhaps more importantly, what is this seemingly benevolent entity? Perhaps it is a malignant lesser demon that has been drawn to Xathos by the awakening of the Phorcydi, who is tempting them with an offer of escape (see *Players Guide* p. 131)? Where exactly does the strange portal lead and what high price will the 'magician' exact from the unwary adventurers if they accept? This is likely to be a false opportunity; a brief sorcerous sojourn that merely leaves the companions stranded back on Xathos, perhaps poorer both in spirit, health and wealth.

The Damned

Months later, a sturdy but seemingly abandoned longship of Coradian manufacture drifts slowly past the island on the tide. If the companions board the vessel, they will find it eerily silent and empty, but nonetheless it is sea-worthy and has sails in good working order. If the companions' commandeer the vessel then it will serve them well... for a time.

Before long, however, the ship will become lost and becalmed under strange stars and even stranger mist-shrouded seas. All those aboard will begin to see and hear events that seem completely real but actually have no basis in reality; instead they are reliving the echoes of traumatic past events that befell the original crew of this cursed vessel and its psychotic war-mongering captain. Schizophrenia and paranoia will surely follow as the companions begin to re-enact the roles of the previous occupants and turn on each other, eventually arriving at a desperate conclusion; that they must flee the possessed ship before they murder their friends.

A Speck on the Ocean

Other opportunities notwithstanding, in the meantime the companions and the sailors will likely have to make the best of their unfortunate situation and convert the ship's boat into an ocean-going vessel that can brave the savage sea and reach the mainland.

However, embarking on such a journey in a small boat with limited rations will be fraught with danger, not least of which are the large sea-borne predators that will surely stalk the mariners. Can the boat survive the stormy seas intact? Will the sailors and the companions turn on each other as thirst and hunger take their toll?

Wrapping Up

At the mercy of wind and tide, the legendary blood-soaked odyssey that awaits the companions on their perilous sea-voyage home—especially if they have been foolish enough to murder a nereid or board the Ship of the Damned—might well see them blown many hundreds of leagues off-course and wrecked weeks later on unknown foreign lands; perhaps to the dark and dangerous continent of Mungoda, or the secluded kingdom of Beorsca or the strange and elusive hidden-realm of Tirandor or possibly even farther, far across the great western ocean to a mysterious new continent where many more wonderful spectacles await, yet to be discovered.



APPENDIX

PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handouts for The Lone & Level Sands

Scroll fragment

'Be it known to you that in the earliest days the great families of the Kaikuhrans lived as nomad tribes in the desert lands west of where now stands the city of Sardonyx. The gods were high above them then, not yet ready to raise the Ancient Kaikuhrans to the heights of their power, and each tribe carried with it its totem spirit, guardian deities who intermediated between the tribes and the celestial powers which guided their lives. In later years, as the tribes unified into the Ancient Kaikuhran Empire, built their mighty civilization and finally began the slow fall into the decadence they know today, these totem spirits became degraded into mere demon-lords. Akresh, Tsienra, Eldyr and the others—now they seal bargains of eldritch power with those mighty enough to summon them, but once they were deities themselves and the greatest among them remember those days with anguish and rage at the infidelity of the Ancient Kaikuhran Race.'

Parchment acquired in the marketplace of Ta'amar

'As I die, I leave a testament of my faithlessness. We built our master's resting place in the desert west of the great city, I and the venerated Koram, chief architect of Lord Gutheron of the House of Org. Above it we set a likeness of She in the Sky, so that She might look down into the place's depths. In the final chamber we put reverently the living statue of Thunder-in-the-Mountain—let not Lord Eldyr's son find it! Koram and I it was who saw to it that our fellow builders slept the righteous sleep next to our lord; after Nepthe's phial Koram slit their throats—but none feigned, all were in the Pleasant Garden already. Climbing then to the top of the place we blocked forever the ascending way so none will ever disturb our master's repose. We returned through the dreadful place of sacrificed bones, protected by our lord's gift, the sign of Man, through the place of mirrors where the shadows yet kept at bay, held by the Lady's light that we then shut out forever. With our sleeping friends we stood at last, our hearts beating fast as we thought on the journey to come, the phials in our trembling hands.

"Drink now," Koram said, "and let us lie forever over the gateway of death, my comrade", and so saying drank his draught to the dregs, but a fatal stay fell on my hands and the phial fell from them as my dying friend watched me betray my lord's faith. At last Koram slept in the Garden with our lord, but life in me still reigned. I took a torch, my writing scrolls and left that place. Yet by the demon whose eye I passed through I lost my way in the desert, parched by the Lady's now-merciless eye.'

Pity my bones, dear friend, and bury them under the drifting sands...'

Handout for Temple of the Lost God

Temporal Codex

Day 1

In the midst of preparations for the coming ceremony, two priests who had climbed down to the forest to collect glabeq flowers for the festivities went missing. One crawled back into the temple compound in the early hours of this morning, bloodied and tattered. His tongue had been ripped from his head. Ministrations proved ineffective and he died without providing an account of what had befallen.

Day 3

The Festival of the Sorrow of Echcatl was commemorated. The celebration was more muted than in previous years owing to the absence of four of the six slaves prepared for sacrifice. These four must have escaped just a few hours before dawn, but their means of egress from the temple precincts is by no means apparent. None of the other slaves seems to have witnessed the escape—a story which they maintain even under diligent torture. It remains a mystery.

Day 15

Senior Priest Ishankoi Reshlan has disappeared—spirited away, so to speak, in the middle of the night. Magical means have been employed in an effort to contact him, to no avail. His Holiness the Archpriest has sent word via Mandir to the Imperial Palace. Ishankoi has always seemed a stable fellow, and it is difficult to believe him capable of such dereliction of duty as to go missing only hours before the Ceremony of the Sifting of Hell.

Day 17

Those of us who thought ill of Ishankoi have had cause to revise our judgement since his mutilated form was found in the Lower Shrine shortly after lunch. Who can have performed this horrible deed? Recalling the fate of Shrakan and Elvaru earlier this month, one is forced to the conclusion that some monstrous being has come up from the

forests. In spite of the heavy rainfall, Yugao Ludum insisted on taking another message to the runner in Mandir.

Day 23

The heavy storms of the last few days continue unabated. Tekketal hi-Kuroda has gone missing. One can only hope he has not suffered the fate of Ishankoi. Yugao Ludum suggested at dinner that these strange events result from an incursion of Shunned Ones from the forest, and is himself preparing a note to this effect to send to the Omnipotent Azure Legion in Khirgar—though some of us believe it would be more seemly to first inform the Temple at Mrelu.

Day 26

Tekketal's corpse has been located in the wight pit, mutilated even more gruesomely than Ishankoi. To some extent this was due to several of the wights having mistaken his body for an exotic item of their diet.

Further, two acolytes have gone missing.

Day 28

Goduku Raitlan has now vanished, along with his personal servant. On the orders of His Holiness, Yugao Ludum used his magic to communicate our troubles to the High Temple at Coyol. We are assured that investigators have been despatched.

Day 29

Like one who is infected with the eggs of the gnaw-worm, we have suffered from a traitor within! Yugao Ludum has been uncovered as the source of our woe! Along with two young acolytes he has been worshipping at an ancient shrine to the terrible goddess Yxtab in the caverns below our temple. After a few minutes of careful questioning he lapsed into a ghastly calm which he retained even when flayed alive. After this his heart was cut out and the corpse flung into the catacombs where he had his shrine.

The acolytes were similarly treated, but spoke freely of a baleful influence which called them to the caverns. They died utterly insane. Our troubles are at least now at an end.

Day 30

After the Celebration of the Wandering Prince, His Holiness the Archpriest was found to be missing. A thorough search of the catacombs uncovered his butchered form, treated not unlike that of Yugao. No magic could revive him. Moreover, there was no sign of the carrion deposited in the catacombs only yesterday.

Day 31

Two more were found dead, and those who remained have been forced to evacuate the temple. Apart from a few slaves only I remain, for I am too infirm to travel far. I and the slaves keep to the library now. I have released the wights and the grave gaunts into

the temple precincts, with instructions to attack even those robed as priests of our Supreme Lord. The grave gaunts accommodate themselves to such orders with relish, of course, but the wights seemed dully reluctant. It is tempting to think of this as a sort of loyalty, but I know that the spark of true reason has faded from their dead minds and it is only the illusion of thought that I perceive in them.

The rain is a heavy curtain in the courtyard. Once or twice I thought I glimpsed a figure out there.

Day 32

There is food for only two more days, but I do not think it will come to that. I have had an idea for a treatise on the ethology of the wights. A pity I will never get the chance to write it.

handouts for The Ballad of Times Past

Skuli's Ballad

*It was a time of hardship
and everywhere the anger of the dragon
was seen in gutted barns and barren fields.*

*Then two close companions, worthy hall-heroes,
came hard against the walls of the welkin,
scaling high peaks to put an end to terror.*

*One, golden-haired with eyes of grey,
his comrade, with blue eyes burning;
they advanced to face their foe.*

*But three drops of blood sufficed to win that battle,
and parley and word-play were the only sounds
while steel remained sheathed and shields unlimbered.*

*Soon the heroes' labours won peace,
and when the dragon's pool ran clear
it was a time for the giving of gifts.*

*The golden one savoured but a sip from
that spring—
waters where he glimpsed and grasped his destiny.*

His friend favoured a future drawn in dust.

Skuli's Ballad (the second part)

*The passage of years sits heavy on men's shoulders,
but counts for little in the dragon's unblinking eye.
In such a time, the tide of treachery can rise.*

*Blue eyes now glint with greed;
hatred dwells in the heart.
He who had been a hero, a sinister sorcerer now,
seeks to steal and shatter the dragon's shell.*

*With the blood-oath broken,
grief shall fly across the land,
and he who put on the mantle of the monarch,
he shall mourn his golden son.*