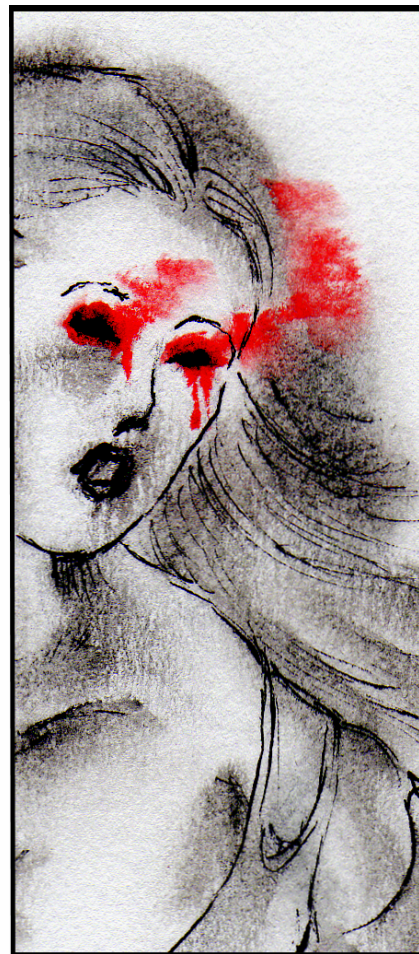


LAMENTATIONS *of the* FLAME PRINCESS PRESENTS

A
JAMES EDWARD RAGGI IV
ADVENTURE FOR LOW-LEVEL CHARACTERS

NO DIGNITY IN DEATH



THE THREE BRIDES

LAMENTATIONS OF THE FLAME PRINCESS presents a JAMES EDWARD RAGGI IV production "NO DIGNITY IN DEATH: THE THREE BRIDES" starring YOU writing by JAMES EDWARD RAGGI IV artwork by LAURA JALO proofreading by MARIA KYTINEN compatible with existing FIRST edition, ORIGINAL edition, and "BASIC edition" FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES, as well as modern "clone" games including LABYRINTH LORD™, OSRIC™, and SWORDS & WIZARDRY™. Labyrinth Lord™ is copyright 2007, Daniel Proctor. Labyrinth Lord™ and Advanced Labyrinth Lord™ are trademarks of Daniel Proctor. These trademarks are used under the Labyrinth Lord™ Trademark License 1.0 available at www.goblinoidgames.com. . . This product uses the OSRIC™ System (Old School System Reference and Index Compilation™). The OSRIC system text may be found at <http://www.knights-n-knives.com/osric>. The OSRIC text is copyright of Stuart Marshall. "OSRIC" and "Old School Reference and Index Compilation," are trademarks of Matthew Finch and Stuart Marshall and may be used only in accordance with the OSRIC license. This product is not affiliated with Wizards of the Coast. . . Swords & Wizardry, S&W, and Mythmere Games are the trademarks of Matthew J. Finch. This product is not affiliated with Matthew J. Finch or Mythmere Games™. . .

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

This module was originally run as three unconnected adventures in my home campaigns in both Vaasa and Helsinki, with the three parts being run a total of five times. Of all the adventures I could have chosen to be part of this module, I selected these not only because of the common theme of the brides and the fact that each involved a small town as either the adventure location or the base from which to adventure, but because each adventure was seen as unusual by most of the participants.

There are lengthy NPC descriptions and detailed back story for each section of this module. At no point should this back story at all suggest any sort of script for players to follow, and there is no impetus to relay any of this background information to players who do not indicate a desire to hear it and whose characters never put themselves in a situation to learn it. It is here merely to better inform the referee of the forces that have brought everyone to the important point for game purposes – the introduction of the PCs into the situation. By knowing the history of the area and the different situations, the referee can better choose particular NPCs' reactions to the players' actions. The overall “story” of the adventure will only be known after the fact, and the referee should not encourage any particular resolution. It is solely the players' responsibility to consciously move towards resolutions that will be satisfying for them; the NPCs have their own agendas. Discovering what happens, for the referee and players both, is the entirety of what the game *is* and undue direction towards a specific goal subverts the very purpose of playing.

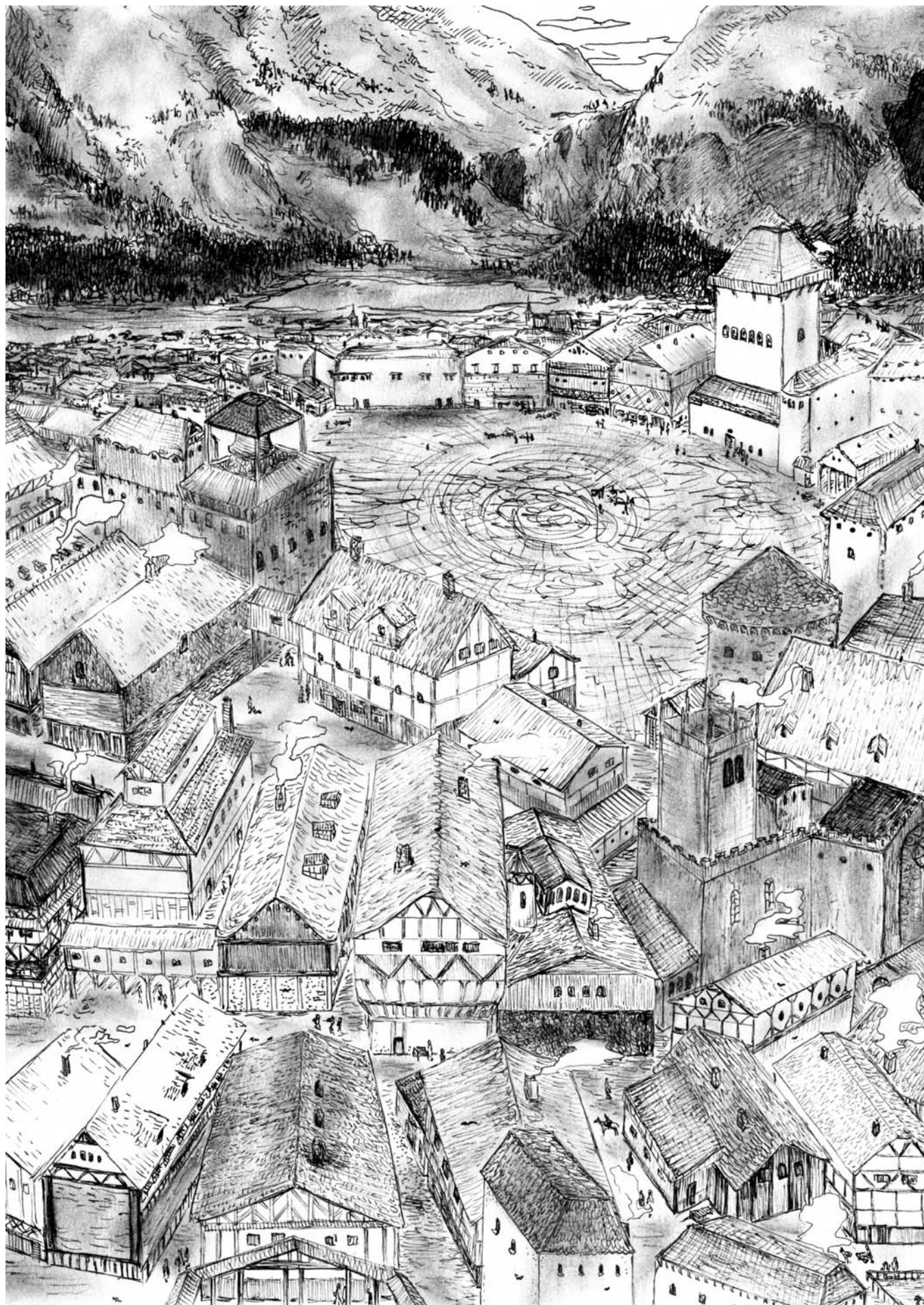
Just a note about the gypsies in this adventure. When I first moved to Finland, I noted the local “gypsy” population was not well thought-of by the public at large. Not having ever seen these people in the States, and thinking that Europe was supposed to be far more enlightened, I was fascinated by the whole thing. I decided to make the victims in an adventure gypsies, just to see what my Finnish players would do with that setup. But I don't know anything about the real-life culture, and the adventure is in no way social commentary or trying to teach a moral lesson about racism. I intentionally made the gypsies as “Hollywood” as possible, with any resemblance to any real-life ethnicity superficial, to keep that distance between real life and the fictional idea of gypsies. The 1941 version of *The Wolf Man* and the *Ultima* computer games were what influenced some of the characteristics of the gypsies in this adventure, combined with the kind of antics that traveling entertainers indulge in. I know this caricature depiction of gypsies has been ill-received in other games, and I thought a word of explanation about their appearance here would be in order.

I had a great time putting my groups through these situations and finding out what happens. I'd like to hear what happens when you run *No Dignity in Death*. Drop me a line at lotfp@lotfp.com and let me know.

I dedicate this work to Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, John Eric Holmes, Tom Moldvay, Dave Cook, Steve Marsh, and Frank Mentzer – the chief architects of the house that my imagination has inhabited for over a quarter of a century.

James Edward Raggi IV
July 13, 2009
Helsinki, Finland

PEMBROOKTONSHIRE



OVERVIEW

Pembrooktonshire is a sleepy, peaceful, out of the way mountain town that should be able to be placed in any campaign world that has a medieval flavor. Because the town is out of the way and isolated, even details that do not mesh precisely with the rest of a campaign world may be retained and excused due to ‘local eccentricities.’ There will be no follow-up done for this module or any character herein, so any great changes or mayhem wrought to the area is limited only by your imagination and events in your campaign world stemming from this adventure will never be contradicted.

Approximately 2000 people live in Pembrooktonshire, and it has a high-grade manufacturing economy. Their craftsmen are highly skilled and fetch high prices amongst the wealthy throughout the realm, and the people here have quite a progressive stance on social welfare, so the standard of living is quite comfortable, even for the hardest working laborer. They are far off enough off the beaten track to never be involved in wars, and somehow even with all their riches, bandits and other organized criminals have never been a problem in Pembrooktonshire. However, while the populace is well educated in civic and mercantile matters, they are not so prepared to face trouble. Every person (with just a couple of exceptions, which are given in the adventure texts, but even these are merely first level) living in the town is level 0 and are at a further -1 on all to-hit rolls in combat.

RUMORS

Each PC knows one random rumor (which may be false!) from the following table before beginning the adventure:

1. Pembrooktonshire, despite being on the very edges of civilization, knows no hardship.
2. Prospectors sometimes use Pembrooktonshire as a base from which to explore the mountains, but they often never return.
3. The residents of Pembrooktonshire are very ignorant.
4. The residents of Pembrooktonshire are all pacifists and vegetarians.
5. Pembrooktonshire is fairly well known for its orchards and fruit-based spirits, and high-end craftwork.
6. A prestigious bookbinding company is based in Pembrooktonshire.
7. The mountains beyond Pembrooktonshire have many caves and legends exist telling of ruins of an ancient civilization somewhere in the mountain range.
8. Beware the priests, for they will steal your soul!
9. The guards of Pembrooktonshire are eager to receive bribes.
10. The Last Stop is the only place for a visitor to Pembrooktonshire to receive a decent meal and place to stay.
11. The people of Pembrooktonshire are very cultured, and custom and manner are the most important things in their lives.
12. Everyone in Pembrooktonshire is a werewolf... bring silver.
13. The entire town is under a terrible curse. Stay away!
14. Larson's Raiders, the baddest bandit horde in the land, went to scout Pembrooktonshire a few years ago... and disappeared without a trace.
15. "My grandfather did some construction work up in the mountains years ago. If you find yourself in the mountain house, look for the secret room next to the study!"
16. Pembrooktonshire produces the best apple wine – indulge!
17. Pembrooktonshire's apple wine will give you the runs and lay you up for a week – avoid it!
18. Never compete with a Pembrooktonshireman in sports.
19. The evil in Pembrooktonshire is more insidious than any devil, more malignant than any demon.
20. "You're going *where*? Don't go into the hills at night..."

GETTING ALONG IN PEMBROOKTONSHIRE

The locals have several laws and customs which will be of immediate concern to adventurers.

Anyone wearing armor of any sort (leather armor doesn't look like clothing) around town, or carrying any sort of weapon (a utility knife or staff will not draw this attention) will be stopped by the local guard. Refusing to disarm is seen as proof that the offender is planning trouble, and anyone refusing to disarm will be apprehended by the guard and thrown in the stocks. If there is any resistance to this, there will be violence, and townsfolk will generally form a mob if anyone is taking down their guards. And that would attract the Knight (see below) in short order... Any outsiders causing trouble will find themselves completely unwelcome in town. Any attempts to talk to a villager after this will be met with rudeness and a direct command to go away, with calls for the guard if this is not heeded. All the guards have whistles hanging around their necks for summoning help.

"Passing through" or saying they are equipped to go into the mountains is not a valid excuse PCs can use. The locals will be strongly against anyone going into the mountains. Of course it is perfectly possible to sneak about (and out of) town at night, but during the day a group is not going to make it through town in the direction of the mountains without being challenged.

Pembrooktonshirefolk have indeed developed an overactive sense of courtesy, and the proper form, as well as intent, is important. The natives will all speak to each other in over-exaggerated phrases if they are not fast friends, and will often smirk and giggle and glance at each other when speaking to foreigners, as the foreigners are continually and constantly breaking small rules of local etiquette.

The townsfolk believe in the superiority of their way of life and the bloodlines of the people. Outsiders who move to town will *never* fully be accepted in society, including those that marry a local (an exceedingly rare occurrence). Even the children and grandchildren of such a couple will be branded an outsider by those old enough to remember that one parent is indeed such. Children of outsider couples are themselves also treated as outsiders. The town's bigotry on this matter is especially sharp when it comes to demi-humans. Elfs, dwarfs, and halflings are treated as if they are malformed humans, and are subjected to slurs and insults (often based on height, or ear-shape).

When speaking to villagers beyond the realm of regular small talk and chit-chat, remember to make reaction rolls for the NPCs. A bad roll may not necessarily mean that the character won't talk, but it may mean that they feel intimidated or bullied, and may report the interrogation to the watch or the Knight afterwards. A positive reaction also doesn't necessarily mean that the character will freely tell everything they know, but they may rather offer their secrets for a price instead of having the PCs needing to guess what they know and then tricking the information out of them. Also remember that people are not likely to discuss painful or sensitive information with strangers unless they are given good reason.

Prices in Pembrooktonshire will be 10% higher than normal for foreigners, and of the three pubs in town (The Squicky Wicket, The Good Shepherd, and The Last Stop), only The Last Stop will serve foreigners. The other two bars won't say "get out," but will repeatedly bring the wrong orders, bring food/drink with trash in it, or other things to cause complaint, the answer to which will be (especially at midday when no other patrons are present), "Sorry, we're so busy it's easy to make mistakes, maybe you should try another establishment."

WHAT TO DO?

If the PCs settle in at The Last Stop and you'd like to run the murder mystery, then refer to **Part I: Small Town Murder**.

If you are not running Small Town Murder, you may refer to **Part II: The Great Games** and begin immediately. If you are running **Small Town Murder**, **The Great Games** must occur after that.

If PCs wish to go into the mountains at any time, refer to **Part III: A Lonely House on a Lonely Hill**.



PART I: SMALL TOWN MURDER



A horrible crime has occurred the evening before the PCs arrive in town. The PCs will likely learn of the events at Pembrooktonshire's only inn, The Last Stop.

The locations of possible interest surrounding the murder are given first, followed by information about the people involved.

Locations

The Last Stop

The first building along the road into the village proper is the local inn and tavern. Run by Eddie Diggle and his wife Bertha (with their pre-teen children Tad and Dot helping out), The Last Stop usually does a modest business as a pub, not so much for providing rooms. Visitors aren't so common, and only so many husbands get locked/kicked out of their house at a time. However, with the Knight in town, the local crowd avoids this place because the Knight is frequently there and he isn't so fond of anyone partaking in the drink...Eddie will be very friendly with the PCs, and freely offer the following information:

- Wandering around town in combat gear is not considered proper.
- Visitors will be warned to tread lightly, as a great tragedy has happened the night before.
- Visitors should also be aware that a Knight of Science is in town, so they shouldn't behave in any way that attracts attention.

Eddie won't expand on any of this information unless the characters buy a round of drinks (5 copper for a mug of beer, 1.5 silver for a full meal, 10 gold for a bottle of good wine, 5 silver for a room for one person for one night). This is the story of the tragedy (and is what anyone would have witnessed, but likely Eddie will be the first to tell it):

For the wedding of Jessica Reuter and Armand Leroux, a special performance by a gypsy family was arranged by the father of the bride. Included were to be fortune telling, traditional gypsy music and dancing, a puppet show, as well as a "magic show" with parlor tricks and things like fire eating. The gypsy wagon train (three wagons, one the core family wagon with the mother, father, and three kids, one for the two cousins and supplies, and one for the grandmother and supplies) arrived five days before the wedding.

The performance was exquisite, with the puppet show being the highlight of the evening, with the puppets being dressed up like the wedding party and telling the story of the groom slaying a dragon.

It all went sour when one of the gypsy men got quite drunk after his performance and thought it would be a great idea to make a pass at the bride in the presence of the groom and the bride's family. Another gypsy tried to break it up immediately but the offense was too great, and the bride kicked the offender low and the bride's father decked him, breaking his nose. He was dragged off by the rest of his clan screaming that the bride's family would learn what "Gypsy pride" meant and how gypsy men behave when "bitch *gaje*" rejects them. The father of the bride was screaming about not paying for the show and wanting the whole crew of gypsies locked up.

A couple of hours later, the bride was dead in the courtyard of her house, murdered with a knife wound in the back as well as a slashed throat. Her family ran to her aid when she first screamed but by the time they got outside, she was dead and someone was already running off with too great a lead to follow, and the hue and cry brought people to the scene of the crime, not in pursuit of the killer.

The footprints of the man running away were stained with blood, leading towards the gypsy camp.

The acting constable (for the real constable is out of town on holiday) ordered the gypsies' wagons searched, and what they found wasn't good. A pig had been slaughtered in ritual style, and in one

wagon the puppet of the bride had been hacked apart with a machete, and the gypsy who had made the pass at the bride was absolutely covered in blood.

A traveling Knight of Science had attended the wedding, and when he found out about the murder and the evidence in the gypsy wagon, he declared the entire clan to be devil worshippers who used ritual and a “voodoo doll” to prepare themselves for the slaying. He ordered the entire bunch of them (including the children) jailed and to be burned (including the children) in three days’ time. No one dared question his authority and the evidence didn’t give any reason to.

If asked about the Knight, Diggle will say that he and his crew arrived a little over a week ago. They have set themselves up at the Clover homestead, deciding that residing at the inn would be too vulgar because of the bar there. The Clovers, who were informed, not asked, that their residence was going to be taken over (without any compensation), have been living at The Last Stop during this time. They aren’t allowed back at their house, and have been told that several possessions of “questionable moral status” have been destroyed.

The Clovers (Dell and Sarah, with their kids Timmy, Gertrude, and small Rebekah) will only be seen in the common room after dark, otherwise Dell is working in his field outside the village and Sarah handles the childcare and small domestic projects in their private room at the inn. If encountered, Dell will seem frustrated but believes that overall the whole house-commandeering incident will be seen locally as an honor when the Knight is gone, and Sarah is not upset over the situation at all. Timmy is furious though (one of the destroyed items was a rather rude toy he’d kept hidden from his parents), and will complain and insult the Knight to anyone that wants to hear it. Dell or Sarah will tan his hide if they hear it though, and the Knight or his crew wouldn’t hesitate to punish the boy themselves if he is insolent in their presence. The whole family will disapprove of the gypsies though, and be quite vocal about being glad that the Knight is there to properly punish them instead of risking the incompetence that the local law enforcement might have displayed.

Diggle will offer a bottle of his finest wine, and if the PCs have more than one bottle (or tip or otherwise offer more than 5 gold above and beyond any purchases), Diggle will say that a page of the new Bumblebee Bandit book has been leaked from the printers, and hand them the pirated page (give the players the Bumblebee Bandit handout, with the story excerpt on one side and a picture of the Bumblebee Bandit himself on the other, from the center pullout section)! If asked, he will mention that the family that runs the local bookbindery was the family of the murdered bride, and that the Bumblebee Bandit is a storybook hero, and that the new book is being pressed and bound right here in Pembrooktonshire! He doesn’t know who left the page, as it was left behind, wet with beer and forgotten under a table when he found it.

He will warn the party that they should make themselves scarce every day around noon and 6pm, as the Knight and his group come to The Last Stop for meals then (and they don’t pay for them), and they tend to make lives for everyone present quite miserable. Especially the Squire, who will point out lack of fine dining manners and such and generally harass others until they leave.

Indeed, ten minutes before noon and ten minutes before six, a horn will sound at the Clover residence, and then there will be a parade of sorts as the Knight, his Squire, and their men make their ten minute march, in formation, down to the tavern. That nobody lines the streets to cheer them on bothers them not; but the Knight truly believes he is honoring the host community by giving them the opportunity to view him as he marches. That they do not is, of course, due to their ignorance and inferior upbringing. Anyone and anything blocking their path will be forcefully removed by the men-at-arms. When they arrive at the tavern, the men-at-arms will form a guard outside, and the Knight and Squire will dine. They will be very unhappy about anyone disturbing their meal. They will stay for exactly three quarters of an hour, and then march back to the Clover place. These are the only times when the Clover residence will be completely unguarded.

The Clover Homestead

This is a five room, one story farmhouse at the edge of the village, currently occupied by thirteen men. One room is used as a common room, one room for the Knight, one for the Squire, one for the priest, and then the

ten men-at-arms take shifts sleeping and standing guard. There will always be at least two men-at-arms here no matter what, and often every single one of the Knights' group, except when they go for their afternoon and evening meals, when the place is unguarded. The Squire's book collection is in his room in a box labeled Prayer Books, along with a bloody Bumblebee Bandit costume (sans cape).

The Bookbindery

Even though the owner's daughter has just been murdered, work continues at Reuters Printers and Bindery. The new Bumblebee Bandit novel is real feather in the cap for the business, and the reputation of the firm will live or die on its ability to get a quality job done on time. Kurt, Armand, and Franz handle the presses while Klementine, Lilli, and Ursula sew the pages into the binding and handle trimming issues. They need to print 3000 copies in just a couple weeks time, and they've already lost enough time on the wedding. Several servants also perform as guards, and absolutely no one will be permitted to snoop around. The books are placed in a locked vault as they are completed. The finished books have a value of 25 gold each, but a copy sold before the intended release will fetch two to three times that (although no buyers in Pembrooktonshire will be found, and any attempt to sell it in town will be reported to the Reuters).

All but Armand and Franz live on the premises (the Reuter house is something of a mansion), but between the harsh deadline and the death of Jessica, nobody here will be much in the mood to talk, especially to strangers, and especially not to those seeking to aid the ones that they believe are murderers (not to mention the rudeness at the wedding...).

The Jail

The jail is an old barn that's been refitted for its current use. It also houses the town watch: Peter Orhan, second constable, as well as watchmen Curran Ranahan, Paddy Killpatrick, and Shamus Dooley. The head constable, Blackie Stark, is out of town for several months leaving poor Peter out of his league with the current situation. One of the watchmen is usually at home sleeping, one is on duty here watching the prisoners, and the third is guarding the gypsy wagons. All three are very badly bruised and a bit unhappy. Orhan usually wanders about town, or stays here if the weather is bad or he's trying to look busy to avoid certain people.

The gypsies are held here. Seeing as they are in a desperate situation, they will freely speak with anyone who cares to listen.

The Temple

The local priests (head priest Ryryd Rhydderch, level 1 cleric, and Benedict Onions and Euros Tither, lay brothers) administer to the needs of the faithful in Pembrooktonshire. They all believe in the absolute divine right of the Knight to do his duty, and are especially fond of Cantrovius. They will be open to a sincere effort to confirm the truth of the matter, but will not cooperate with anyone who seems out specifically to discredit the Knight or further their own interests.

Jessica's body is kept in the crypts under the first floor. The funeral will be held in four days' time and the body will be buried in the graveyard. It is laid out on a slab. She is wearing a dressing gown, which has gone all bloody from the slashed throat and single knife wound to the back.

The Gypsy Wagons

As noted in the jail description, there is always a watchman here.

There are three wagons: One belonging to Vorzana, one that Anthoni and Josef use, and one "family sized" wagon that the rest travel and live in. Anthoni and Josef's wagon is the one that had the "incriminating evidence" in it, and that still remains. However, if the PCs search the gypsy wagons, they will find a black and yellow cloak covered in blood, in Vorzana's wagon! All the guard will attest that the wagons were thoroughly searched leading to the apprehension of the gypsies and the cloak was not there at the time the gypsies were taken into custody. "Maybe somebody found it and returned it to its owner?" If given the idea

that maybe somebody put it there after the fact not knowing the place had been thoroughly searched already in order to finish the frame-up job, the reaction from Peter Orhan will be “Hmm, that’s a possibility I never would have thought of. I wish Constable Stark would not have left me!” He will be much more cooperative with the PCs after this, but would certainly let the gypsies burn before ever crossing the Knight.

KEY PERSONA:

The Knight’s Retinue

Tiberius Novius Tucca

Sir Tucca is a Knight of Science and has absolute authority in this town (and most others he visits) while he is here.

The Knights of Science is a fanatical religious order that began hundreds of years ago as an organized response to demonic and diabolical threats in the world. Knights are absolutely ruthless in their quest to eradicate extra-planar influence to the point where they have become overly authoritarian, paranoid, and brutal in their methods.

Knights of Science behave in a manner that lives up (down?) to every excessive tendency found in nobility and the self-righteous. They demand the finest accommodations, the finest food, and the services of most skilled craftsmen wherever they go, for both themselves and their retinue, and they expect to not even be asked for payment. Anyone inconvenienced by this had best not complain to the Knight. They will demand all ‘sinful’ behavior (drinking, women wearing revealing clothing, women speaking up in front of men, any sort of games or entertainment at any time other than festivals, not attending religious services, cursing, magic use, etc) cease in their presence and will not hesitate to make sinners feel the lash. They expect local authority to bow to their will (and commoners to literally bow to them) and they expect everyone to treat their words as law. They will behave as ruler, law enforcer, judge, and executioner as they see fit, and truly see themselves as better than the common man because they feel the common man has no inkling of the nature of the threats poised to corrupt and devour them. Even the most beneficent Knight is like a hurricane when he comes to town, disrupting lives and causing all to live in fear of him.

This is all tolerated because there is no question that the Knights will gladly, and without hesitation, sacrifice their own lives in order to save innocents from evil. Knights are quick to find evil where none exists, yes, but where there is actual evil, there are no allies more trustworthy, and fewer more effective, than a Knight of Science. They are incorruptible and uncompromising in their drive to eradicate extraplanar evil. Local rulers and clergy defer to the authority of the Knights not simply out of fear, but because at their core the Knights are nothing less than pure champions for the common, mortal man.

In game terms, Knights of Science are fighters of no less than fifth level. They must be Lawful, but depending on their methods and ruthlessness, may be aloofly good at best to cruelly evil at worst. They may not use any magic items (except those based on clerical magic) and will not tolerate any magic use or items in their presence (again, save those used by clerics), but they may strike creatures normally only affected by magical weapons and receive a +4 on any save versus a magic effect (including clerical magic!). They *must* attack any supernatural creature if doing so would defend a helpless innocent (defined as a level zero human or halfling) or non-evil religious location.

Tiberius is in many ways representative of the worst excesses of the Knights. He will not cooperate with any investigation and will in fact view any investigation as an offense against his station as a Knight of Science and against the gods (trying to help devil worshippers... how dare they!) and work to make life miserable for any investigators, if he can’t manage to find a convenient excuse to end their life altogether. In any interaction with anyone, Tucca will expect others to bow before him and speak with the utmost deference and humility. Failure to do so will result in Tucca taking the lash to them (d3 subdual damage to the offender). Resisting this will result in being put in the stocks (and not being released until Tucca leaves

town), and actually taking up arms to resist Tucca's actions will result in Tucca and his retinue slaying the intruder on the spot.

Players may not enjoy having to bow down to the likes of Tucca, and may consider such requirements "unheroic" or not in the spirit of the game. But remember that for all intents and purposes, while not the murderer, Tucca is the villain of this scenario. He has cast summary judgment prematurely on not only the accused, but the accused's family, and will resist any attempt to bring the truth to light. The heroic thing to do is to save the family; not bowing down to nobility is all good and well, but the privilege of flexing, peacock preening, and acting like a rebellious badass are not requisites for heroism. Tucca most likely must be defeated in ways other than expressions of pride or martial force.

Tucca, when not sleeping, wears a set of ancient-styled bronze armor, carries a shield and battle axe, and has a heavy war horse and lance stabled in town. He is a sixth level fighter.

Faustius Germanicus

Faustius is the Knight's squire. He will act even more snobbish than the Knight himself, warning that anyone helping the gypsies would be seen to be in league with evil and that isn't such a good idea. He will dismiss the PCs as "unread beggars" and always be "finding time to broaden my mind with great literature" and hanging out in the book binderies when not toadying up to the Knight and going out of his way to be a slave and errand boy. He has a complete collection of Bumblebee Bandit novels in his trunk (*The Bumblebee Bandit* (signed by the author!), *The Bumblebee Bandit Battles the Bourgeoisie*, *The Bumblebee Bandit and the Dragon That Ate Ten Towns of Some Size*, *The Bumblebee Bandit and a Monkey Named Fred*, *The Inconvenience of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Death of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Return of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *Son of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Bumblebee Bandit Meets The Creature From Bog Dell Swamp*, *The Bumblebee Bandit: Critical Review Edition with Bonus Chapter!*, *The Many Loves of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Bumblebee Bandit Rides Again*, *The Legend of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Son of the Bumblebee Bandit Meets the Many Loves of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Unauthorized Biography of the Bumblebee Bandit*, *The Bumblebee Bandit and the Writing Ghosts*, *Earnest Wilde Exposed: The Wild True Story Behind the Bumblebee Bandit* (with never before seen Bumblebee Bandit short yarns!), and *The Strange Case of Dr. Bumble and Mr. Bee Bandit*) but has told the others that it is his collection of prayer books.

Faustius wears shined plate mail and wields a two-handed sword. His light warhorse is stabled in town. He is a first level fighter.

Cantrovius Peña

Peña is the Knight's priest. He is a most reasonable and kind man who does his duty simply because he believes it must be done, but is quite sad that it is so. He doesn't like that the children are going to be burned but believes that the family is guilty and needs to be punished. He will only discuss matters with the PCs if he is not with the Knight or any of his cohort. He believes in the power and judgment of the Knight but thinks the squire is a turd. He will reveal that they came to Pembrooktonshire on the squire's request. He will cooperate with the PCs as long as they present logical arguments and do not threaten the person or reputation of the Knight and will go to bat for the PCs to the Knight if (and only if) they have an overwhelmingly compelling argument.

Cantrovius wears leather armor and carries a mace when traveling (but not in town) and has a riding horse stabled. He is a third level cleric and carries a scroll of Hold Person.

10 Knight's Men-At-Arms

These men are not liking being in a town of "unbelieving book readers who learn too much for their own good." For the most part they are extremely ignorant, narrow-minded types. Whereas the Knight does his duty because if he does not, mankind will fall to evil forces, and the priest feels he must even though it pains him to do so, these men are little more than thugs that have been raised since birth to believe in the

unwavering righteousness of their cause, without contemplation or hesitation. They will not be cooperative with PCs at all and will report all of their doings to the Knight.

The men-at-arms are 0 level (but with maximum possible hit points) wear chain mail and carry halberds, short swords, and light crossbows.

The Gypsies

Vorzana Yevanovich, gypsy grandmother and fortune teller

Vorzana is Zindelo's mother and the grandmother to the children. She will not speak with anyone without reading their palms and consulting tea leaves (which were not confiscated). Generate a fortune using the following chart (roll once on the left column, once on the right). It is recommended that this be done in advance of the players arriving for the game, so the fortune really seems to be for each individual rather than something random. Of course, if there is something in your campaign that you'd like foreshadowed, this is a perfect way to introduce it.

1	Will Destroy	A Princess
2	Will Come into Contact With	A Great Dragon
3	Will Know	An Evil Curse
4	Will Never See	A Lonely Hero
5	Will Witness	A Vast Wealth
6	Will Deliver Unto an Enemy	A Painful Death

If asked about the murder, she will say "seek a super hero". She maintains the innocence of her family. She says she spat on the Knight and the priest when they were accused and the Knight broke her cheek bone with a slap.

Zindelo Lezarovich

This is the father of the children, husband to Nataliya, and is Anthoni's uncle. He will volunteer nothing (he doesn't trust any outside his clan in the best of times, and now...) but anything he does say will be an outright lie. He is under a powerful curse to never tell the truth. The other gypsies will not admit to this, as they all feel foolish to have fallen for such a thing. He is a second level fighter.

Nataliya Lezarovich

This is Zindelo's wife and Josef's aunt. She doesn't understand why everyone was so upset with Anthoni at the wedding. A simple "no" should have sufficed if they didn't want to include him on their wedding night. She herself had an extra admirer on her wedding night, what's the big deal? She is sad that her family has been accused but does not blame the Knight since "his kind knows only simple truths" and "looks only for easy solutions." Thinks highly of the priest (Cantrovius) who came to visit them overnight but hates the Squire who laughed "in a most disgusting manner" at their accusing until the men-at-arms hushed him up.

Sylvester Lezarovich, Batiste Lezarovich, Everilden Lezarovich

Sylvester is an eight year old boy, Batiste a four year old boy, and Everilden a two year old girl. They are Zindelo and Nataliya's children. Batiste and Everilden are being kept in a separate cell from their parents, and cry uncontrollably much of the time. None of them will have anything useful to say, and only Sylvester speaks the common tongue at all.

Anthoni Fingo

Fingo is perhaps one of the most naturally handsome and charming men on the planet. He is even able to melt the hearts of the xenophobic Pembrooktonshiretonians, even to the point where some of the women try to get with others in the gypsy family just to get closer to Antoni. And female or gay PCs will do a double-take when they see what this guy actually looks like.

He will admit to several things if asked. Yes, the pig was killed in a ritual manner after the wedding debacle (the family was performing a ritual to attempt to cleanse their honor), and yes, he was really pissed off at the bride so he did hack up the puppet. And yes, he did go to the groom's house that night... but in an attempt to get with Jessica (he's not a bright man), not to kill her. He saw the attack, but not the attacker (who was wearing a black and yellow cloak), and he attempted to save Jessica's life (which is why he was covered in blood). When he realized she was beyond help and that people were coming outside, he ran.

Josef Lezarovich

He's just pissed off about the whole thing and will not be shy about telling anyone that wants to know. "Why that daughter so tight-legged? Her sisters not so cold to us gypsies. Even their mother, even though I told her no. Did Anthoni kill the bitch? He say no, and I ask 'Why not?'" He resisted when the watch came to arrest the family, and severely beat the three outfitted watchmen with his fists before one got a lucky stab in. He will disparage their fighting ability, their manhood, and most everything else about them and this town. He is not a nice guy in the best of times, being a general cad and unpleasant person, really. He is a third level thief.

The Wedding Party

Jessica Reuter

This is the dead bride. Can the party speak with the dead? The Squire committed the murder, that handsome, dashing man who would be a Knight... and dressed up and acted like her favorite storybook hero! She couldn't leave her family and village (oh yeah, and that nerd husband of hers) for a squire though, so he killed her when he realized she'd reconsidered after he'd already risked his position as the Knight's squire.

Yet it might be too obvious to make the one guy the players will want to most see dead the real killer. The actual culprit can be almost anyone. Just come up with a motive and stick the Bumblebee Bandit suit in their closet, and there you go. Maybe one of the others gypsies did it as sort of a lover's spat or jealousy thing trying to keep Anthoni away from her. Maybe it was Ursula, thinking Jessica was going to run off with the gypsy and bring shame on the family. Maybe it was Franz, who got blamed for a missing copy of the book (which spawned the leaked page) and taking his revenge on the real culprit, who due to nepotism wasn't going to be punished anyway. As long as it makes sense and the players aren't going to throw dice at you once the killer is revealed, it should be OK.

The only specific people that it would be unwise to set as the murderer would be the Knight (they will lose all mystique if they are actual villains instead of icons of supreme in/justice) or Anthoni (how much of a let-down would it be if you set up this big murder mystery, and the accused is actually guilty?). If you decide to make the killer someone not otherwise noted in this adventure, it would be best to write some sort of part for them, because it's supremely unsatisfying (and unfair!) to find out the killer was some guy you never heard of until the moment he's implicated. However, the important thing is that it must be possible to successfully investigate the truth and as a result free the prisoners. If Anthoni is the killer, then the rest of the gypsy family is still doomed and anything the players decided to do was for naught. That is dreadful refereeing. Failing to save the gypsies is certainly a valid outcome; not being able to even if successfully learning the truth and doing every single thing correctly is just crap. Choose the killer wisely so that success is possible if the players care to try.

Armand Leroux

Armand is the husband of the dead woman, and also the second-in-command at his father-in-law's bookbinding business. He is a very unassuming, wimpy, shy man, skinny with bad skin and teeth. He doesn't know much, and is very, very sad that his bride was killed. Has confidence that the Knight is correct since the Knight is very commanding. Loved that his wife was an "imaginative woman who could conceive of realms and deeds far beyond the ken of mortal man" and how he would spend "evenings on end reading to her stories of utmost heroics tempered by the melancholy of the true human spirit."

Kurt Reuter, father of the bride and landowner

Kurt owns the bookbindery and is the father of the murdered girl. The Squire has been in his book bindery for a week before the wedding wanting to read “the trashy adventure stories before they were even bound, let alone available to the public.” Says that stuff is the worst mind-rotting junk in the world and thinks the Squire is a good-for-nothing that “better be careful because those Knights don’t tolerate fools for very long.” Knows that the Squire got access by “pressuring” his daughters into letting him in.

Klementine Reuter, mother of the bride

Klementine is Kurt’s wife and mother of the bride. She is horrified at it all. It was her idea to hire the gypsies because she likes gypsy men! Found Anthoni’s behavior highly amusing and was embarrassed that her husband got violent and blames the whole business on him since he couldn’t keep his wits about him. She does think the bride’s response was appropriate and very hilarious though. Thinks Anthoni could have done some good for her daughter since he’s a real man of the world and not a bookish shut-in that “hasn’t seen a woman naked unless it’s on an engraving to be pressed.” Was flirting with Zindelo but was put off by his lying, and made a pass herself at Josef, who thought that bedding the wife of their employer before the money had been paid would be a bad idea.

Lilli Reuter

Lilli is Jessica’s sister. She will admit to having flings with both Josef and Anthoni in the days before the wedding. She thinks Anthoni would have been good for her sister, but thinks her sister “believed those awful storybooks too much and they always call the gypsies murderers and thieves so she didn’t want anything to do with them.” She believes the gypsies just have a different set of values and was hoping to leave with them for a more exciting life. “It would be like running away with the circus with no elephant dung to clean up.” Wishes more men were like that instead of all the men around here and “that loutish Knight whipping boy who should be learning to slay dragons and instead wants to sit around reading unfinished books all day.” Complains that the squire was using “false storybook chivalry” to attempt to woo her and got him to shut up after letting him read the loose pages of the latest Bumblebee Bandit book.

Ursula Reuter

Ursula is Jessica’s other sister. She thought her sister was lucky to be getting married to a man with a sound head and a solid future. Jessica was so smitten with tales of knights and derring-do and worried that she would end up an old spinster as no knight would want a simple bookbinder’s daughter as their wife. Ursula is very respectful of all of the Knight’s entourage (and disdainful of the entire gypsy way of life) but thinks the squire is very odd and “like a Pembrooktonshire man in a knight’s world.”

Franz Hoffmann

Franz works at Kurt’s bookbindery and was the best man at the wedding. He was really annoyed at the Squire interrupting his work all week; he had enough on his mind with the wedding and everything! Knows that the Squire was interested in the new Bumblebee Bandit book, and the Reuter family has been commissioned to bind 3000 copies of it.

Others

Peter Orhan

Peter is the acting lead constable in town right now. He knows he’s in over his head and so is letting the Knight handle this. He doesn’t like the whole business. Doesn’t like it at all! He doesn’t like that the children were condemned with the rest of the gypsies but feels his job would be in jeopardy if he, not even a real constable, challenged the Knight’s authority. And besides, the evidence is pretty clear, isn’t it? He believes the Knight is rude and that the Squire is as pleasant as a great big plate of piss. He’ll work with the PCs if he believes they can solve this whole mess with no professional or personal cost to himself. He’d love to get one over on the Knight and can take credit when everyone’s gone and the constable returns in a week, but he will also not risk being put under scrutiny by the Knight!



RESOLUTIONS

If the gypsy family is cleared (and this can only be done by revealing the real murderer), then the Knight will deal with the Squire violently (not that the Squire will stick around if the truth becomes known, but the Knight will consider the Squire's actions as a personal affront and it will be his foremost priority, and indeed obsession, to punish – that is, kill – the Squire), and then will leave. If it is known that the PCs had anything to do with this, there is a 50% chance that outside of the wedding party and the Diggles that any particular villager will react at -1 on reaction rolls – the commoners won't like that Proper Authority has been embarrassed for the sake of *others*.

If the gypsies' innocence is not established in time, then the Knight and his entourage will do their parade act to the jail, will take the gypsy family to the nearest clear area, and burn them at the stake. The day before, the men-at-arms will be preparing a number of stakes for this purpose. Destroying the stakes will incur a deadly penalty if the vandal becomes known, but it won't save the family; the Knight will simply put the family to the sword. The Knight and company will then leave the village for far-off lands.

If the gypsy family is rescued without their names being cleared (whether this is through a cunning jailbreak or through brute force, either against the Knight or the local authorities or whatever), then whoever is responsible (or believed responsible) will have a hefty price on their head and be soon hunted by the law, as well as the Knight (if he's still in any condition to do so). No villager will have anything to do with the perpetrators, and even the clergy will condemn them. The Reuters will also put up a 5000gp bounty on the responsible party's head(s), which will result in bounty hunters coming after them as well.

If cleared, the gypsy family will give the party their most valuable possession: A brooch which will absorb any one curse inflicted on whoever wears it. The father of the bride will reward the PCs with 1000gp (total) and make sure their reputation as truth seekers becomes known as he will commission a novel!

If freed but not cleared, there will be no reward, but in any event, if not executed, the gypsies can be reoccurring allies of the PCs, showing up in the darndest places.

PART II: THE GREAT GAMES



This part of the adventure can only happen after the first part has been resolved and the Knight has moved on. Alternately, if the first part of the adventure is not used, there need be no delay in beginning this section.

Once the Knight has left, the village will prepare for a grand celebration. It will take about two days, as a grandstand will be erected in the town square, colorful banners will be flown from every rooftop, and people begin to feel merry. This is the Celebration of the Spirits! During this time, it is customary that “everyone” stops working and celebrates. While this is not true (the Reuters will be continuing their work, and of course the town officials and those preparing the games and preparing the rich foods the revelers consume work very hard), the vast majority of the population will refuse to perform their usual duties and if the PCs need any particular services beyond food, drink, and lodging, they are out of luck.

Once the preparations are complete, six engaged young couples, always the most beautiful and well-regarded in the village, take part in the games. Actually, only the men actively take part; the women merely get dressed up in the fanciest of clothing and receive gifts and pledges of service from the other townsfolk for the duration of the games.

Each day the men participate in a single dangerous sport or contest. If all of the men survive, then the games continue. When there is a death, then the games are over, and the dead man and his fiancée are declared the “winners.” There is then a great feast, and the next morning there is a ceremony where the Mayor (Impert Laverick), Steward (Pip Moulds), and the Priests, with an “honor guard,” march the winning woman, called the Spirit Bride, up the mountain and several hours later they return to the town without the woman.

Most anyone in the village would be happy to answer questions about what is happening. Here are answers to questions the PCs may have:

What is this?

To keep the spirits of the mountains happy, every ten years they town selects a bride for them. The games are way of selecting the bride, and the celebration is for thanking the spirits for ten more years of safety and prosperity.

Why did you wait for the Knight to leave?

If he found out about the sacrifice, he’d stop it. If he found out about the spirits, he’d attempt to kill/destroy/exorcise/banish them. The spirits aren’t evil, but their assistance in keeping Pembrooktonshire free and peaceful requires something in return.

What happens to the girl?

Nobody knows exactly, but it is assumed that she is ‘taken’ by the spirits and joins the spirit world. Nobody wants to say “she dies,” but it is understood that she does. But it does have a happy ending – she reunites with her fiancé and they are able to be together for eternity, rather than the mere lifetime that the others from the games get to share.

Why don’t you do something about the spirits instead of sacrificing to them?

Pembrooktonshire has never been attacked by orcs or goblins or anything of the sort, its merchant shipments have never been robbed, there has never been a problem with bandits, never an avalanche endangering the town. Life is peaceful and perfect thanks to the spirits.

Why this method of selection?

The spirit’s bride must be someone very worthy and capable of great love. The selection process of the couples ensures that the spirits do not get an unworthy woman, and the death of one of the competitors is how the spirits communicate which woman they want.

When did this all start?

Hundreds of years ago!

Isn't this all a bit messed up?
Oh no! It's wonderful!

It is important to remember that *every single person* (save the exceptions to be described in a bit) in the village believes that what they are doing is for the best, and that anyone attempting to stop the whole thing is committing a grave, evil act. Two deaths every ten years for a life of security and safety is considered a trivial price to pay. There will be no hesitation to destroy any threat to this situation.

As to the potential sacrifices themselves, every single one believes that it is a fine honor to be selected. You don't get to the top of the social ladder in this town if you haven't been a sacrifice candidate, and every influential parent petitions the town council in an effort to have their children selected. Engagements amongst the appropriately-aged often drag on for years if the couple believes there is even a slight possibility of being selected (Jessica and Armand's wedding took place beforehand because Armand was considered strange and there was no way he was going to be allowed into the games). After the sacrifice, there are often a great mass of weddings, as the surviving couples all wed, and it is customary for those couples that were hoping to be selected to also wait until after the entire celebration to wed.

It is true that every so often a selected man intentionally martyrs himself (and therefore his bride-to-be) immediately in the competition (and it is considered a very brave and honorable thing to do so!), the truth is the vast majority of the selected people merely want the honor and social benefits of being selected, but they don't want to actually *die*. The competition is usually quite fierce, with the best and brightest fighting for the easy life. However, when one falls, the woman that becomes the Spirit's Bride does not resist. It is the way of things. Cheating during the actual games is also strictly forbidden. Someone was caught attempting an unfair advantage once, and both he and his fiancée were put to death and their names and both families disgraced, and the games continued on until there was a fair winner.

THE COMPETITORS

Here are the couples whose heads are up for the chop:

Marcela Quedgely
Rupert Reginald Harnsworth

Prudence Nelthorpe
Nathaniel Gainsborough

Cassandra Ravensdale
Cuthbert Erasmus Fitzherbert

Lucretia St. John
Horatio Heathcote

Penelope Snow
Gilbert Marmaduke Charrington

Gunilla Ødegård
Edmund Fitzclarence Wyndham

All of them are from the more well-to-do families in town, and all are very physically beautiful and impressive. To determine the personalities of each contestant (and this should only be done when it becomes important to know), roll on the following tables, once on column one and once on column two:

Male Competitor Personality		
1	Loud	Curious
2	Soft-Spoken	Indignant
3	Observant	Ambitious
4	Braggart	Laid-back
5	Rude	Philosophical
6	Courteous	Narrow-minded

Female Competitor Personality		
1	Distant	Ladylike
2	Graceful	Tomboy
3	Steeled	Cheerful
4	Easily Distressed	Despondent
5	Spoiled	Pious
6	Innocent	Skeptical

They are each aged d6+14.

THE GAMES

The games will go on for a maximum of seven days. Every day, roll a d20 for each contestant. If the roll is 20 or higher, then that person dies during the day's event, and the games are over. If a roll is over 15, add one to that competitor's future rolls. If a roll is 19, add two to that competitor's future rolls. All such modifiers are cumulative and represent injuries suffered each day, which make a fatal mistake more likely the following days. No magical healing is allowed to the competitors during the games.

Wagers and sponsorships are very common throughout the games, so the winners of the individual events will be well-set for their future lives... if they get to live them. Randomly roll to see which competitor wins each day.

Most of these events don't take so long. They will begin at noon each day, with the Mayor and the head priest each giving speeches and leading prayer before the contest itself begins. Before this time each of the competitors will be in seclusion, resting and preparing. After each event, while their wounds are being tended to, they will be honored at various feasts, gift-giving, and many speeches being given on their virtues and courage and about the Pembrooktonshire way of life. Do note that none of the competitor couples live together and will not be spending any of the time around the games together with no one else around – that would be *very improper*.

Day 1

The first day's event will be a round-robin wrestling tournament. It is important to note that while the townsfolk will all be most impressed by the martial displays, any outsider (including the PCs) will note that the men have the fighting technique of training exercises at best, little girls at worst. Because there is no real strife or conflict or threat or hardship in Pembrooktonshire, nobody really knows how to fight.

Day 2

The second day is a race. Each competitor is yoked to a cart which bears a very heavy load of rocks (the exact same weight for each). The carts must be pulled up a hill on the defined track, and then back down the hill to the finish line. Of course on the back end, the men will be racing to not be crushed by the carts.

Day 3

The third day's competition takes place in a small, shallow lake near the town. Along the bed of the lake is a specific type of plant (the Flowing Water Root) that grows nowhere else in the area. The competitor that collects the most root bulbs (a particular delicacy!) over the course of two hours wins. Competitors must

avoid the poisonous water snakes that live on the bottom of the lake as well as battle the deadly exhaustion that comes from two hours of diving and digging difficult roots.

Day 4

This day's event is the stone's throw. Each of the six men is assigned a two foot diameter circle, which is equidistant from a center point, and the men are spread evenly around this point. Every round each man is given a rock, and when a whistle is blown, he may throw his rock at one of the other competitors, or keep hold of the rock to use for defensive purposes. The rocks begin at quarter of a pound the first round and each round advances a quarter of a pound. A competitor is eliminated when he falls (to one knee is enough for elimination) or steps out of his circle, and the final competitor to remain (or the last to be eliminated – judges watch closely to see who went down/moved first in the common case that no competitor remains standing in his circle at the end of a round) is the winner.

Day 5

This is a crowd favorite – the hanging fights! A large gallows is erected (almost like a small crane), and all six men are fastened by silk ropes around their chests. The ropes have simple knots tied in the back, and the idea is that the six competitors wrestle with each other while suspended, attempting to untie each others' knots. The competitors aren't suspended so high, the fall is only about five feet, but that fall can be quite nasty if one is in an awkward position when the knot is untied. The last competitor to fall wins the day.

Day 6

All six men are strapped into chairs, holding a bell. Their feet are lightly covered in sugar, and then their feet are placed into buckets containing earth of freshly dug-up fire ant nests. When a man can take no more, he rings the bell and onlookers quickly untie him and soak him down with buckets of water to remove the ants. The last man to remain without ringing his bell wins.

Day 7

Enough is enough! If the games continue into the seventh day, then six goblets of wine will be prepared, and a deadly poison put into one of them. The men are randomly paired and each pair plays a game of chess. The loser of the game with the least moves must then drink one of the goblets. Then the loser with the second-most number of moves, then the loser with the most moves, then the winner with the most moves, winner with the second-most number of moves, and then, terribly (because if it comes down to this, there's no question of the outcome), the winner with the least moves, until someone drinks the poison and dies. Roll a d6 to find out which guy will die, and roll a d6 to determine which position he was in.

WHAT ABOUT THE PCs?

All of this information concerns what happens in the background of PC actions. While it is possible for the PCs to wreck the games and the competition (a simple sleep or charm spell can work wonders on yokels like these), the adventure takes a very different tone as they will be hunted like dogs (and a sacrifice is going up the mountains regardless). The referee will have to improvise from this point. The details of the PCs' actions during this adventure will stem from those who do not like what is going on. If the PCs decide to do nothing, then the entire games and their result can be covered in just a few minutes of narration – it is dreadfully easy for the adventure to completely miss the PCs in Pembrooktonshire. Those used to waiting for the enemy to break down their door will wait forever here. Passivity is the bane to those claiming the title of adventurer.

The description of what is happening, and why, may just sound a bit odd to the PCs. In fact, the desired effect is that they will think these townsfolk are completely insane, especially as they continue to cheer and celebrate the pure torture the contestants put themselves through day after day. The villagers are no mindwashed zombies, however, and will not become violent or even too perturbed at an expression of confusion or disapproval, as long as it does not take the form of disruptive action.

If they do express their disapproval of the ongoing events, the players will later that day (or the next day, depending on when the PCs make their comments) be contacted by agents of those who also disapprove.

They will be told that their presence is requested in the cellar underneath the old Hunsley farmhouse (a now dilapidated and unused place) at noon. Using a secret tunnel that leads to the basement of another house, the Lady Snow, Lady St. John, and Lord Ravensdale will appear, in full obscuring cloaks and hoods (along with half a dozen servants and guards dressed the same), to speak with the PCs. They will not willingly reveal their identities, but those identities are noted because PCs do the wackiest things...

They start by asking that this meeting and the information they will learn be kept confidential by the PCs. They will state that not everyone in Pembrooktonshire is thrilled about sacrificing a young couple, especially in the name of a lie. They state that the story about the mountain spirits is there to fool the commonfolk and to discourage outsiders from interfering. The truth is that a great dragon lives up in the mountains and protects the valley and the inhabitants from harm in exchange for one maiden every ten years. The deception is made because combating spirits is a terrifying and inglorious thing, while every yahoo with a sword in hand and a yearning for distressed maidens will come running if they find out that a dragon is “menacing” an area. The dragon keeps the town safe and secure, and the town does likewise for the dragon.

They can provide a magical elixir which can control dragons. They want the party to save the girl when she’s brought up to the dragon, but make sure nobody from the town knows about it. Use the potion to make the dragon ignore the sacrifice this year (these people don’t care about the sacrifice in general, although they will pretend to; it’s *their* children they are worried about), don’t bring the dragon down on everyone’s head and don’t let the town know anything’s amiss. Just get the girl (they consider the guy a lost cause already, since there’s no way to save him without ruining the whole ceremony and causing great upheaval), and take her far away. The girl will be adorned with jewelry for the dragon – the PCs are welcome to take that as their reward.

With that, they will hand over the potion (which is a Potion of Red Dragon Control) as well as a map to the dragon’s lair/sacrifice area, and wait for the PCs to leave before themselves leaving back out their secret passage. They will answer the PCs’ questions as long as they are on-topic, not intrusive as to the cabal’s identities, and don’t involve disrupting life in the town.

THE DRAGON’S CAVE

(The map of this area is found in the center pullout section.)

The trail leading from the town up to the dragon’s cave takes about two hours to walk, and goes through some very rough, and at times dangerous, terrain. Horses won’t be able to use the trail. Getting there off-trail is certainly possible but will take five times as long.

If the dragon’s cave is visited before the games are decided, they will find the whole thing deserted. The sacrifice pole will be there, shackles attached, with piles of bones at its base. This is directly in front of the mouth of the cave. The cave mouth itself is huge (20’ across), and after thirty feet turns, so one must commit to walking right in before seeing much. Inside is a gigantic dragon skeleton, with signs of decay (it’s been there for many, many decades) and many chunks taken out over the years as trophies (if asked, any townsman will confirm that the sacrifices have happened every ten years without fail, and those in the sacrifice procession will confirm that they’ve seen the dragon!). Of course there is no treasure. There is also an odd metal tank, about four feet long, with a hole on one end and a leather balloon secured to the other.

As soon as a Spirit’s Bride is determined in the village, one commoner (and otherwise unimportant person) will release a carrier pigeon announcing the fact. This won’t be noted by anyone, as various types of birds are always flying around the area. The pigeon will go to a dwarf outpost ten hours’ march from the cave. Twelve hours from that point, a squad of fifteen dwarfs (chain mail, shield, battle axe, heavy crossbow, ten 0 level men-at-arms, four 1st level fighters, and a 3rd level fighter) will arrive at the cave, go inside, and stay there. Overnight one of the dwarves will travel to a nearby ridge, within signaling distance, to keep an eye out for trouble.

The next day at dawn, the sacrificial procession will begin. When they reach the cave, they will chain the woman (who will be draped with jewels worth d10 x 100 gold, with an additional d10 x 100 gold for every event her fiancé won) to the pole, while the Mayor reads pronouncements and the priests sing songs of praise and joy. Every so often a great big burst of flame will appear within the cave. After three quarters of an hour, the procession will begin the descent down the mountain again. When the lookout gives an all-clear signal, the rest of the dwarfs will come out and strip the girl of her valuables, and then they will pack up and leave. The woman will begin to scream bloody murder when the dwarves appear, but the departed party will assume it's the dragon devouring or breathing on her, and won't hear anything the woman tries to say anyway.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The dragon, of course, doesn't exist. Or to be accurate, the dragon used to exist, and the entire ceremony at one point served the exact purpose that the villagers think it does, but the dragon has been dead a long, long time.

Already millennia old (and quite tired) when Pembrooktonshire was founded, the dragon knew that outright violence against the humans would only bring great heroes, and for what? These settlers had no riches. The dwarves, already long settled in the mountains, held a steady peace with the dragon with the understanding that they would not attempt to steal the others' treasure (of course the dragon had to deal with a few rather overambitious dwarf youths over the years, but the dwarven elders never held that against the wyrm). So the dragon offered protection from bandits and knowing the area was geologically sound, proclaimed to guard the mountain town against earthquakes and major avalanches... in exchange for one maiden every ten years and a prohibition against entering his mountain range.

And so the tradition began, and all parties present in the mountains were satisfied.

At some point the mighty dragon died – of old age. Dragons are mighty and dragons grow in power and wisdom as they age, but they are not immortal. A great chapter in history ended, a history that will never be known, for all the dragon saw during its six thousand years of life was never recorded. The dwarves were at once thrilled and terrified. Thrilled because they finally got to loot a great dragon's vast hoard, and terrified because there was now nothing to keep the humans out of the mountains.

You see, the dwarves never revealed themselves to the humans. This mountain range is a paradise – it is indeed geologically sound, and earthquakes *never* happen here. There are no goblins or orcs or elves or any other sort of intelligent creature that takes issue with dwarves. The dangerous, larger monsters have all been slain or driven away ages ago. This is a tame land. And a rich land, as the dwarves have never failed to find new veins of ore. And while the dragon was still alive, the dwarves never had to worry about the humans attempting to move into the mountains and set up mining operations themselves.

With the death of the dragon and the sacrifice soon coming due, the dwarves decided to maintain the status quo. They built a primitive flame thrower and hid it in the cave. When the humans bring up their sacrifice, the dwarves blow some fire within the cave while the young maiden is bound outside. When the humans leave, the dwarves strip her of the offered valuables... and leave. They aren't so cold-blooded that they'd murder a helpless girl, but they don't care to bother themselves enough to bring her with them and keep her as a captive in their hold. And of course they can't let her go or the entire jig is up.

The maiden indeed dies... of exposure, dehydration, and/or starvation.

To keep up other parts of the charade, the dwarves indeed keep the dragon's bargain. Bandits moving into the area are dealt with mercilessly by the dwarves. In fact, anyone found in the mountains is quickly dispatched, which accounts for the disappearance of many prospectors over the years.

RESOLUTIONS

If the PCs do not involve themselves in this situation, then the Spirit's Bride is chosen, she is marched up the mountain, the dwarves loot her, and she dies in a day or three. If the PCs reveal the dragon's death to the villagers, they will begin to explore the mountains, and soon enough it will be realized that the dwarves are there and are not interested in sharing their territory. Outside help will be called and there will be war. If the PCs reveal the dwarves' involvement directly to the villagers, the outrage will be immediate (all those women sacrificed for nothing) and war would start even sooner. Outside of any PC involvement, the war will bring chaos to the region, and banditry as well as the eventually roving humanoids (don't think that far-off hordes aren't aware of the dwarves, and aren't dying to pester and take down this seemingly invincible dwarf nation) will move in and this "idyllic" place will be just another hell on Earth.

There are other ways of dealing with the problem for creative PCs. The dwarves, through their spies, will know the PCs are not local. They will not take retribution on the villagers for the actions of PCs. They will know if the sacrifice does or does not reappear in the village, but they don't care about the girl – they care about their secrecy and they care about the humans staying out of the mountains. It is certainly possible for PCs to snatch the girl and run far away from here without upsetting the local order.





PART III: A LONELY HOUSE ON A LONELY HILL



This section describes one possibility for determining what happens when the PCs decide to explore the mountains.

A great many things could be hidden in the mountains. The dwarfs may own the land, but they do not have encyclopedic knowledge of every small cave and crevice. Underground patrols detect threats to the dwarf homeland; surface patrols are merely for the detection and interception of human encroachment. One could just as easily decide that there is actually nothing interesting in the mountains.

Characters exploring the mountains will encounter only natural, small-scale threats, such as mountain lions. Any intelligent or monstrous creature will be dealt with by the dwarfs in short order. There is a 1 in 10 chance per day, cumulative (it resets after the PCs exit the mountains), that a dwarf scout will see them. There is only a 5% chance that the party will see the scout. Using a carrier pigeon, he will alert the nearest dwarf patrol, which is identical to the crew from the last chapter, with the addition of two trained brown bears. If the party is very large (more than 10 people), a double patrol will be summoned. The dwarfs will cut off the party's return route, and then hunt them down and kill them. There will be no negotiation (unless the referee has *other plans*, of course!). The dwarfs believe their very existence relies on remaining a secret, so any favors the referee would bestow on the PCs to ensure their survival should occur before the party actually encounters a dwarf, because the dwarfs are very organized, motivated, intelligent, and capably led. Of course a resourceful or lucky party may escape (or be victorious in the ensuing fight!), and that will have consequences as described in the previous chapter.

The townsfolk of Pembrooktonshire will strongly discourage the PCs from going into the mountains. They know that the spirits won't blame them for the incursion, and they don't care about foreigners all that much, but they are concerned about appearing Good and Proper enough to protect foolish ne'er-do-wells (that would be the PCs) from meeting their doom. Any belongings left in their room (or anywhere unguarded) will be confiscated (temporarily!) "for inspection," shops will not sell traveling supplies, etc.

If they tell their plans to either Diggle, or a local provisioner, they will be told about Konstantin Kuznetsova. He was a young man that came into town about a month back to seek his fortune in the hills. He would not listen concerning the spirits or the fact that people that go into the mountains often do not return, and those that do are never richer. After two days, he returned, flashing around a diamond that he says he found in a large house in the hills, and convinced a few local boys to go with him. The next day they were off, and nobody's heard from them in over three weeks. Others about town will know about the boys, but not so much about the stranger.

This is both a cautionary tale and a plea for help. That some foreign prospector disappeared is no big deal, but three local boys (being named Odard Beaver, Ringer Wilberforce, and Sweting Snoddy, all 15 or 16 years of age) is another matter. The locals are a bit broken up that they seem to have been lost, but they'd sure appreciate getting the bodies back. And a search of Kuznetsova's room turned up no jewel, so he must still have that on him. The interested parties will be conflicted. They want someone to claim the town's lost (especially if the PCs have successfully resolved any previous issues in town), but don't want anyone to go up into the mountains. No reward will be offered, as the mention of the jewel is pretty much enticement for getting someone (more foreigners!) to go up into the mountains.

If asked about the house that Kuznetsova had found, the townsfolk will not want to talk about it much. The priests and Diggle will be willing to talk, for a token donation or a purchase of a fine bottle of wine, as is appropriate. The PCs will be told that a generation ago, there was a Pembrooktonshire man who had become wealthy through foreign soldiering (these people don't quite understand "adventuring" as a profession, and while the idea of war is not very clear to these people either, the concept of marching around in armor and uniform is familiar), brought with him a foreign and alien bride. She was so deformed that her eyes and ears were out of proportion, and it was believed that they were bringing bad luck to the town. The woman was accused of witchcraft. So they built themselves a homestead outside of town, on the edge of the mountains, to practice their depravity away from the decent folks. Of course the spirits of the mountains, benefactors though they are, would not leave such evil be. Soon enough the witch was dead, and the man returned. But

so tainted by wicked ways was he that he could not live in Pembrooktonshire for long, and left never to return.

WHAT HAPPENED:

Konstantin Rodionovich Kuznetsova is an adventurer-agent of a powerful lord who is interested in the areas around Pembrooktonshire. Kuznetsova was charged with finding out why the area is so peaceful, and how those methods could be applied to the lord's own domain.

Using the cover of a foreign prospector, Kuznetsova was surprised to find that the locals were hostile to the idea of the mountains being entered, and he was chastised for tempting the mountain spirits to anger. He decided to see the truth of the spirits himself, and his first stop was the old manor house that was rumored to be haunted. He knew something was wrong when he saw the great column of steam flowing from the side of the cliff, and heard the great roar rising from the very depths of the Earth. This entire area was as geologically perfect as can be, so this wasn't a volcano or other such disturbance. He guessed that learning this secret would be a major step in completing his overall mission.

He returned to town and fashioned a few advanced gauges (his father being a renowned tinker and all-around intellectual back in his lord's court) and hired a few younger, more rebellious lads to help him explore the area. The younger men were fearful and would not venture into the mountains at night, but after a particularly stressful day of fastening gauges around the caverns, the group lost track of time. They would never leave the grounds alive.

THE GROUNDS

(The map for this area is in the pullout section.)

The house is approximately one hour away from town by way of a well-worn trail (horses can travel on it unhindered) leading away from the heart of the mountains into a spur of peaks. The trail opens into a rather pleasant open field which runs against a great ravine. There is a combination of deep howling and high whistling to be heard everywhere on the grounds, intensifying near the cavern and house entrances, that can be heard up to a mile away. This area is extraordinarily tame, and not even natural animal encounters are possible here. No animals larger than a bird or a mouse will be found in the immediate area.

Barn

The barn is very much in disrepair, with several boards almost to the point of disintegration. There is a hayloft, but anyone walking around up there has a 1 in 2 chance every turn of falling through the floor.

Four horses and two mules are lying in the stalls here, about three weeks dead. Several packs (with rotting, bug-infested rations as well as cookpots, blankets, and the like) are also here.

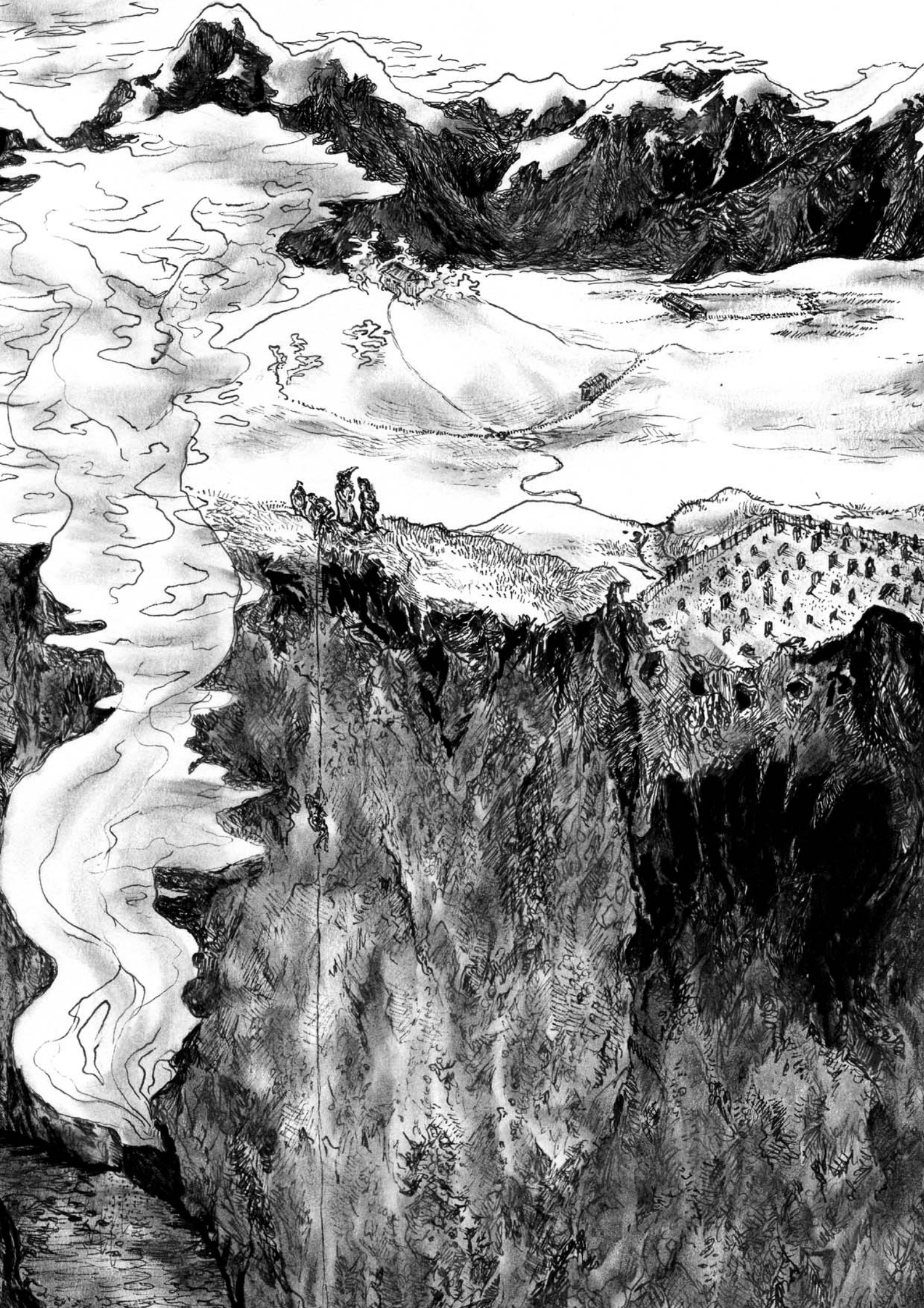
Graveyard

Various graves of the O'Shaunnessy family and its servants are here. The cliff edge is obviously retreating (the edge is made of packed earth rather than solid rock, and rainfall is slowly eating it away) as several coffins are sticking out of the cliff face and coffins and headstones are smashed on the rocks below. There is one dug-up grave here- Shelagh Cori O'Shaunnessy, the coffin top smashed and the ring finger of her left hand missing. Hers is the most recent grave, being buried thirty-one years before the present day.

Hedge Maze

The maze will take 3d20 minutes to navigate. In the center are three decomposed bodies (about three weeks dead), lying around the center statue with their hands over their ears. These are the bodies of Odard, Ringer, and Sweting.





Kennel

Empty. Several baby giant spiders have taken up residence here, but they are not able to harm anything larger than a rat at this time.

Ledge

The ledge is 100' down from the top of the cliff (the rest of the gorge lies about two hundred fifty feet down). A continuous, massive amount of steam flows from the cave entrance, and that is visible to anyone walking on the grounds. Anyone looking over the cliff will see that there is a cave there.

THE HOUSE

(The map of the house is in the center pullout section.)

The House of O'Shaunnessy is built around the natural stonework in the area. The lower floor especially looks almost cave-like.

The distinctive feature in the house is the noise. Several pipes in the stonework have formed up through the caverns into the house. Loud ringing steam from below passes through these pipes, making it both warm and uncomfortable (anyone encumbered or wearing metal armor will suffer 1 point of subdual damage per turn that they are in the house, which will heal at a rate of 1 point per turn they rest in the outside air), as well as absolutely deafening throughout the house. Players should not be allowed to communicate verbally with each other at all while in the house. All communication should be directly to the GM describing what they are doing. The benefit is that the banshee scream can not be heard, although at nightfall each night it will try (expending its scream for the day). The steam also makes it quite difficult to see more than a few feet ahead. Of the fifteen steam "valves" in the house, if seven are plugged, then the banshee scream will be able to be heard everywhere but the basement. If the windows are opened, visibility will improve and the noise will no longer be deafening (again, except in the basement). If all fifteen are plugged securely, in exactly two turns the entire house will blow sky high, killing anyone inside.

Because the house was abandoned in an orderly fashion, it is largely empty.

There are single valves in areas 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 16, and two valves each in locations 5, 7, and 13.

1. Entry Area

Above the stairwell is a wooden carving that says: "The House O'Shaunnessy- Long May it Reign!"

2. Storage

Empty.

3. Study

Empty, except for a warped bookshelves and desk and chair.

4. Drawing Room

Empty. A giant wood engraving of men and hounds on a hunt for deer hangs on the wall.

5. Dining Room

Empty.

6. Pantry

Empty, with a trapdoor with ladder going down.

7. Kitchen

Empty. The oven is here, long unused. There is also a mysterious device that has been stuck into one of the walls, a large spike with a large clock-like gadget on it, with three dials. This is one of Kuznetsova's gauges, and more information about them can be found under location 1 of the caverns.

8. Stairwell

Trapdoor on the ceiling.

9.Storage

Empty.

10. – 11. Bedrooms

Empty.

12. Master Bedroom

The bedroom is untouched. The décor is very nature-y, with flowers and plants (all long dead) along the windowsill and in hanging pots from the ceiling. A double bed is here, and on the wall is a damp and runny wedding portrait ("Seamus and Shelagh O'Shaunnessy") showing a bearded man (human) and his elven bride, displaying her shiny diamond wedding ring.

13. Bedroom

Empty.

14. Study

Empty, but there is another gauge stuck in the wall.

15. – 16. Bedrooms

Empty.

17. Attic

Empty, but with yet another gauge.

18. Basement

Empty.

19. Wine Cellar

Empty wine racks.

20. Wine Cellar

Mostly empty wine racks. There are four bottles that were left here, but the heat and ghostly contact has corrupted the liquid contained within, turning it lumpy and oddly colored. Due to the banshee's contact, these bottles will radiate magic. If tasted, there is a 50% chance that it will induce sickness (onset time 2d4 hours, -2 on to hit, damage, and save rolls for d4 days), a 25% chance that it will be poisonous (save vs poison with a d6 bonus or die, if successful make another save or become ill as previously described), a 15% chance that it will be a supernaturally delicious wine that may be sold for 100gp, and a 10% chance that it actually has become a magical potion – randomly roll to determine what type.

21. Wine Cellar

Empty wine racks, and another gauge stuck in the walls.

22. Wine Cellar

Empty wine racks, with a skeleton in the corner.

The roar is very loud coming from a stone trap door in the floor. Steam billows out from beneath the surface. Opening it will dislodge some stone and shoot steam into the room, doing d6 points of damage to whoever opened it, and 1 point of damage to everyone in the room every turn thereafter. There is an empty void under the trapdoor. This opens directly over the pit in the cavern. A faint red glow in the distance can be seen. Only about four inches of stone separate the floor of the basement from the great expanse below.

THE BANSHEE

Shelagh Cori O'Shaunnessy was the elfin bride of Del Murrow O'Shaunnessy. Shunned by the townsfolk for their romance across racial lines, Del Murrow rebuilt a old abandoned and ruined family homestead an hour's travel up a mountain trail. This location was selected because the ground was quite warm and provided great comfort in the otherwise icy mountain air.

The dwarfs of the mountains were of course very unhappy over this, and made efforts to remove the O'Shaunnessys. Through skillful negotiations and strength of arms (in those days Pembrooktonshire was still capable of producing some men of note), Del Murrow won an agreement: He would keep their existence a secret, since he had no love for those that had driven him away, and in return he would help the dwarfs keep others out of the mountains and generally be a *bad neighbor* to the rest of the humans, and of course he agreed to never set up any sort of mine or digging project of any sort.

Shelagh died five years later (actually poisoned by dwarfs who despite agreements did not like anyone living in the mountains, and especially not an elf, but nobody knows this. Even the dwarves who placed the poison believe their plot failed, because they did it years earlier, and Shelagh only came into contact with the poison after burning some long-stored junk in a winter campfire, and the poison had soaked into that material) and was buried on the property. Del Murrow had trouble keeping servants after that, and there were whispers that the Lady still stood out on the ridge, looking over the property. With no reason to remain isolated, Del Murrow moved back into society, first to Pembrooktonshire, and later to a large city far away. The property remained deserted, and most definitely haunted. The great pit below the house eventually caused cracks and holes in the house's foundation, and that has been the state of things for some decades now.

The O'Shaunnessy Banshee, during daylight hours, is bound to the house (including the basement, but not the grounds or the caverns). At night, she may freely wander the grounds, including the caverns. Anyone on the grounds at night has a 1 in 10 chance per turn, cumulative, of attracting her attention. She may not leave the greater property in any event.

The banshee will attempt kill any living creature on her property. She has seven hit dice, and is immune to sleep, charm, hold, cold, and electrical effects, is unaffected by non-magical weapons, has a 50% magic resistance, and has a death scream which kills all within 30' who hear it if they fail a saving throw. In hand-to-hand combat, she does d8 damage with her ghostly touch. She moves as fast as a normal, unencumbered man. Because the banshee is not material, it may pass through solid objects and is 90% invisible within the steam-filled areas of the estate.

The referee should decide where the banshee dwells during the daytime, or more appropriately, where the banshee will reveal itself to the players. In the house and in the caverns, the banshee's scream will be inaudible, with no ill effects for those who hear it, but the banshee will not know this until it makes the attempt. Referees should feel free to scare the characters at the most opportune moment (such as when characters are in a quite precarious position). It might be fun to make the banshee appear in the middle of a party, and see if they can be made to flee in opposite directions...

THE CAVERN

(The map for this area is in the center pullout section.)

The steam and noise conditions in the cavern are the same as in the house (including the subdual damage and the noise), except the noise can not be silenced through normal means. In fact, except for keyed areas, every turn roll d10, on a 1 a mild burst of hot steam shoots up under the party, doing d2 normal damage (half if a save versus dragon breath is made, double damage if the character is wearing metal armor).

1. Cave Entrance

The combination of low roar and high whistling definitely is in favor of the roar from here. Random small jets of steam shoot up from holes in the ground. The air is thick with steam and visibility is poor, perhaps 5'.

Note that when in the center of a tunnel, it is impossible to see the walls due to the steam, and if hugging one wall, it is impossible to see the other.

The tunnel slopes downwards until meeting location #2. The tunnel to #3 slopes slightly upward.

There is a large spike in the ground with a rope tied to it, leading into the cave. The lines in the passages of the map represent the ropes (that are spiked into the ground every 25 feet) which Kuznetsova used to navigate his way around the caves. In all areas where the rope leads to an area with a ledge, the rope goes up the ledge as well. After several weeks of soaking up the steam, those ropes aren't so reliable; there is a 1 in 4 chance that anyone climbing these ropes up a ledge will snap the rope and fall.

2. Central Chamber

Attracted to the great warmth of the place, a group of pterodactyls has made their nest here. They sleep hanging from the ceiling like bats, but since they are only 4' long with a wingspan of about 30', they can crawl out of the cave easily to hunt... or find food that wanders in the cave as it is big enough to fly around in. They are sensitive to the steam currents, and will easily detect anyone walking through the cavern. The banshee leaves them alone as she was always fascinated by dragons and in her undead state recognizes these things as dragons.

3 Pterodactyls: AC equivalent to leather armor, 3+3 hit dice, one attack for 2d4 damage. It flies at 125% the walking speed of a normal, unencumbered man, and crawls at 1/4th that speed. The beasts can not hover, and will not land to engage, so characters hugging the walls will be safe from attack.

Standing against the wall in the south exit is a large plate of stone-color painted board about 5'x5' – it can be used to disguise anyone moving back and forth across the cavern, and anyone walking across this cavern while holding this over their head will not be attacked.

3. Raised Ledge

On the 20' ledge are a HUGE amount of rope, various spelunking equipment, lanterns, oil, and a chest full of rations (spoiled). There are notebooks (in horrid, but readable condition) filled with boring, useless geological information (10 weighing 5 pounds each, could be sold for 10gp each).

4. Raised Ledge

On this 30' ledge is a gauge stuck into the walls.

These gauges, placed around the caverns, have several dials that seem to all have gibberish for settings. They measure temperature, rock consistency (in a very primitive way, measuring how hard the rock is, not exact composition or anything) and atmospheric pressure, but only someone with a formal geological education (sages!) will recognize these devices. They weigh four pounds and can be sold for 50 gold each.

5. Cave of Voices

Another gauge is stuck in the walls here.

The noises and whistling in this area sound like voices... soft voices, but nothing can be understood. If the party for some reason camps out in this cave, they will have dreams of elfin feasts interrupted by thundering storms.

6. Raised Ledge

One more gauge here.

7- Raised Ledge

Another gauge here.

8. Raised Ledge

On this ledge is a partially collapsed tunnel leading to an old room, obviously not a natural cavern. Referees wishing to expand this cavern into a full-fledged dungeon complex can best do so from here.

9. Raised Ledge

Another gauge here.

10. The Hole

The noise in here is truly deafening. The huge, 350' pit is effectively bottomless, so falling in is a very bad idea. A great heat and steam rises from the pit, and a great ROAR of boiling water. A faint red glow comes from below. The PCs will take 1hp damage – real – for every turn they spend here from the heat. This is the primary ventilation shaft for the forges of the dwarven city below.

Seven ropes at various points drop over the edge of the pit, with gauges stuck into the pit walls down the length of the ropes. An eighth rope is in actuality a heat-eating scavenger, a pest the dwarves call the Tyhmä Paska, The “rope” is its tail, from which it hangs down several dozen feet, soaking up the steam and the heat. Its body resembles a horseshoe crab, with hooked feet. If anyone starts fiddling with its tail (such as trying to raise the assumed gauge to look at it), the creature will snap up, surprising 5 in 6 chances, and if it hits, the victim must make a saving throw versus death ray or be thrown into the pit. The creature will then attack normally, but any time it hits for maximum damage, the victim must save or fall to their fiery deaths.

Tyhmä Paska: AC equivalent to chain mail, 2 HD, one attack for 1d6 damage. If it loses 3/4th of its hit points, it will loosen its tail and scuttle down the shaft at 1/4th the movement of a normal, unencumbered man. It is immune to heat and fire attacks.

11. The River

The tunnel slopes sharply downward here before leveling off and leading to a rushing underground river.

Ancient moorings are attached to both sides of a rough, freezing-to-the-touch, rapidly flowing underground river. The bridge that these anchored has of course long broken and rotted away. Kuznetsova's guide rope had been tied across the river, but it has snapped in the middle.

PCs can make a big deal about how to get across the river, but it is only waist-deep (on a human), and may be walked across with little danger, provided they take any precaution at all. Human characters who do not take precautions have a 1 in 6 chance (4 in 6 chance for dwarfs and halflings) of being knocked off their feet and swept down the river, where after several thousand feet, if they haven't drowned already, they'll be thrown over a two hundred foot waterfall into a shallow pool full of jagged rocks. And hungry scavengers. Bye bye!

12. Raised Ledge

On this raised ledge is the body of Konstantin Rodionovich Kuznetsova. It's covered in maggots and assorted vermin, but the clothing is definitely modern. Also here are his pack of geological survey equipment (5 50' coils of rope, dozens of spikes, 10 10' hollow tubing, and four more gauges). Also here are his geological chart and map (which can be sold for 100 gold). In a pouch around his waist is a large diamond ring (5000gp) and three gold nuggets (75, 50, and 25gp). The diamond ring is of course the looted ring of the Lady O'Shaunnessy.

The banshee will be aware of anyone in possession of the ring, and will move to attack them immediately if they are in an area she can access at the specific time of day. Some characters might wish to return the ring to the remains of the Lady in hopes of ending the haunting. If they attempt this, roll a d3 and consult the following table (or choose a result that best fits the theme of the campaign):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The haunting was indeed due to the grave robbery. With the return of the ring, the Lady O'Shaunnessy will remain at rest. |
| 2 | The haunting had nothing to do with the grave robbery. The haunting will continue as before. |
| 3 | The haunting had nothing to do with the grave robbery. The haunting will continue as before. However, the banshee is no longer bound to the house during the day. |

In cases two and three, the banshee would move to attack the characters around her grave immediately if in the appropriate time frame (immediately, in case 3).

Characters should not get any experience from the value of the ring if they do not keep it, as this is a "sacrificing temporal power for a higher purpose" case. They should get the experience for "defeating" the banshee if indeed replacing the ring makes the thing disappear. And of course if they do take the ring themselves, they should get the experience for it when they return to civilization. There is, however, a 1 in 4 chance that the banshee's haunting area is determined by the location of the ring, so she will follow it wherever it goes. She will not attack or appear directly to anyone that carries the ring outside of her normal haunting area, but people in the immediate vicinity will start dying within days...

WHAT NEXT?

Assuming the players pursued the leads in this module, there are many logical follow-ups to the adventure. There is plenty of intrigue and danger surrounding the Knights of Science, and a great many scenarios where the Knight must be either stopped or aided is possible. And remember Sir Tuca is going to be in a bad mood if the suggested resolution of the murder is used, and he will likely be more quick and brutal in his next judgments.

The dwarfs can provide an endless source of intrigue and adventure. Why are the dwarfs secretive and murderous concerning the surface? Is it just the military division responsible for the surface taking its duties to an extreme that would horrify the dwarf rulers and people? Or is it a secret society of dwarfs protecting their people whether their people approve or not? Or is the dwarf kingdom as a whole indeed actually a fierce enemy of man? Will there be war?

What about Kuznetsova's employer? Will they have a further interest in the region? Surely they'll want to know what happened to their agent. Will the PCs become involved?

Further exploration into the culture of Pembrooktonshire is possible. These people are privileged and isolated, which is never a good recipe for avoiding atrocity. Referees can push their imaginations to the most macabre coming up with ideas for this place. Alternately, perhaps they are just supremely naïve and innocent, and things begin to happen that forces the community to adapt to the realities of the greater world.

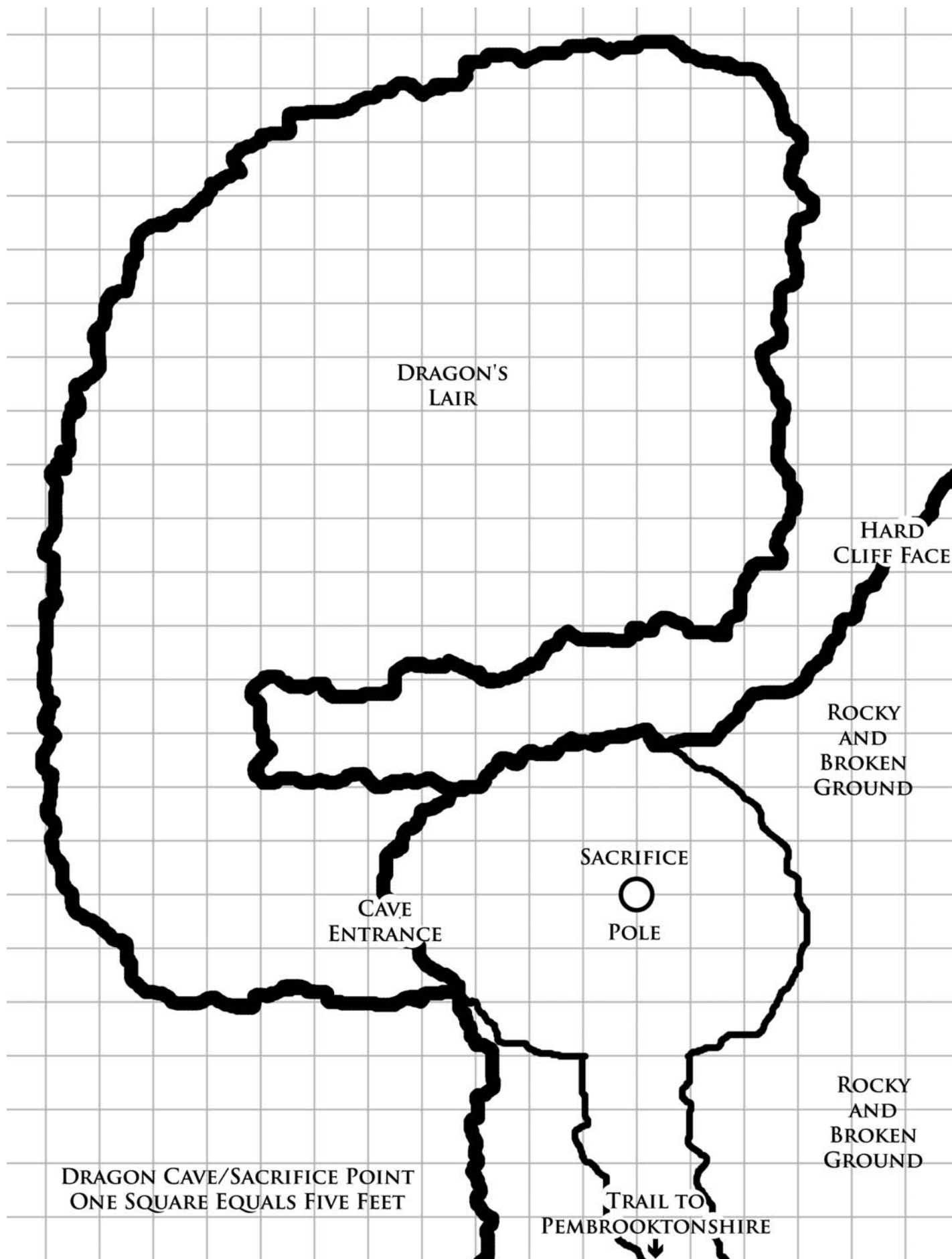
Simple exploration of the mountains is another possibility. The dwarfs will not like it, but surely there are many nooks and crannies to be found that the dwarfs ignore as no threat, right?

Of course, a referee is free to decide, “OK, that chapter’s done, now to something completely unrelated!” if he and/or his players so choose.

This ends No Dignity in Death: The Three Brides.

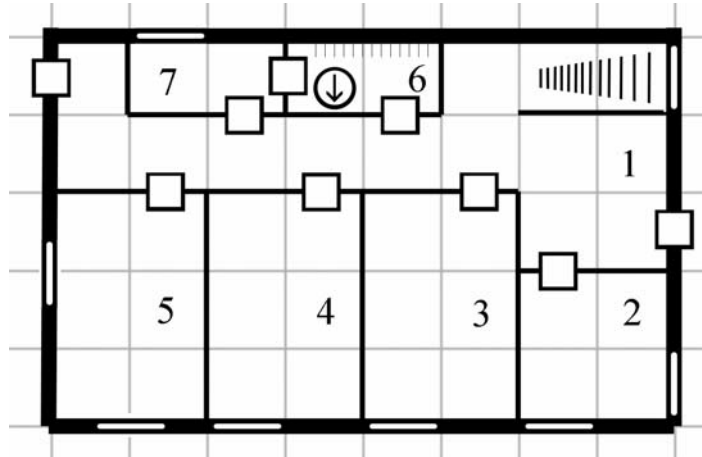




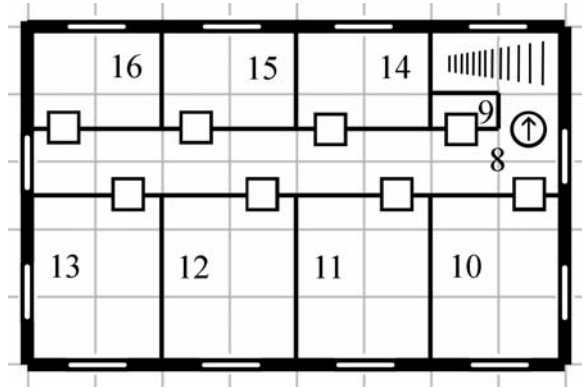


HOUSE MAP

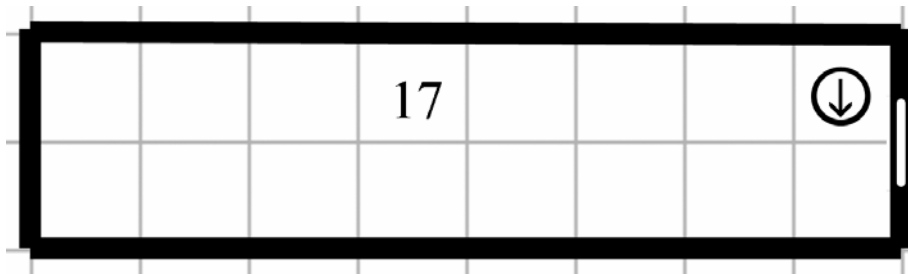
FIRST FLOOR



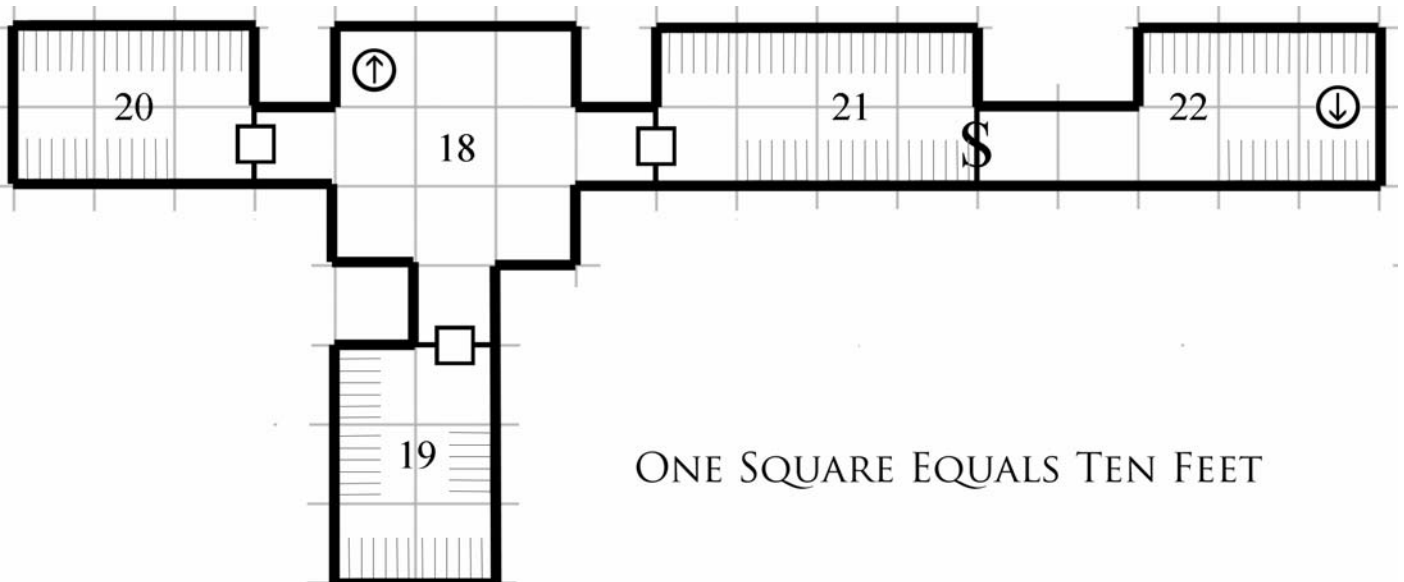
SECOND FLOOR



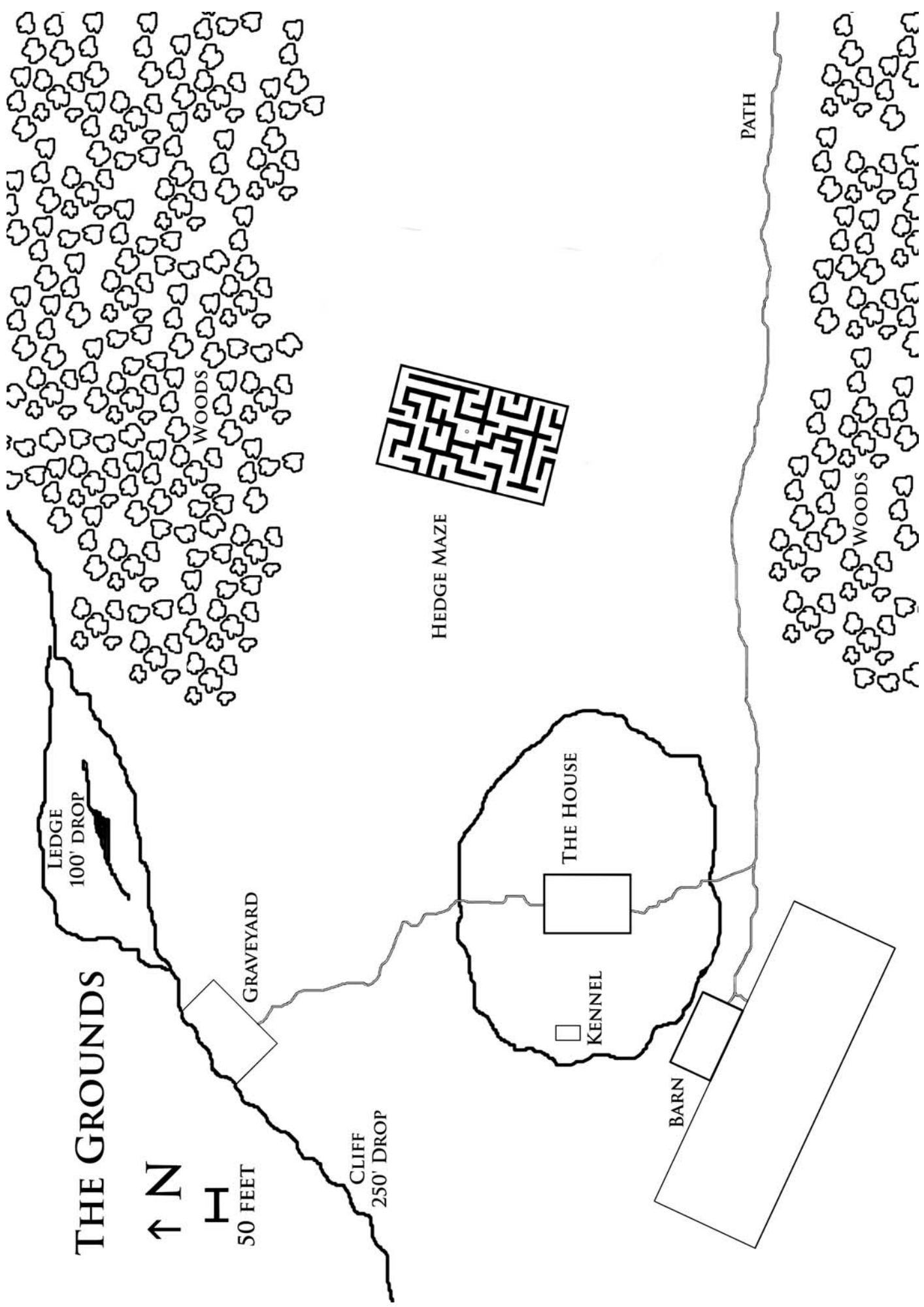
ATTIC



BASEMENT



ONE SQUARE EQUALS TEN FEET

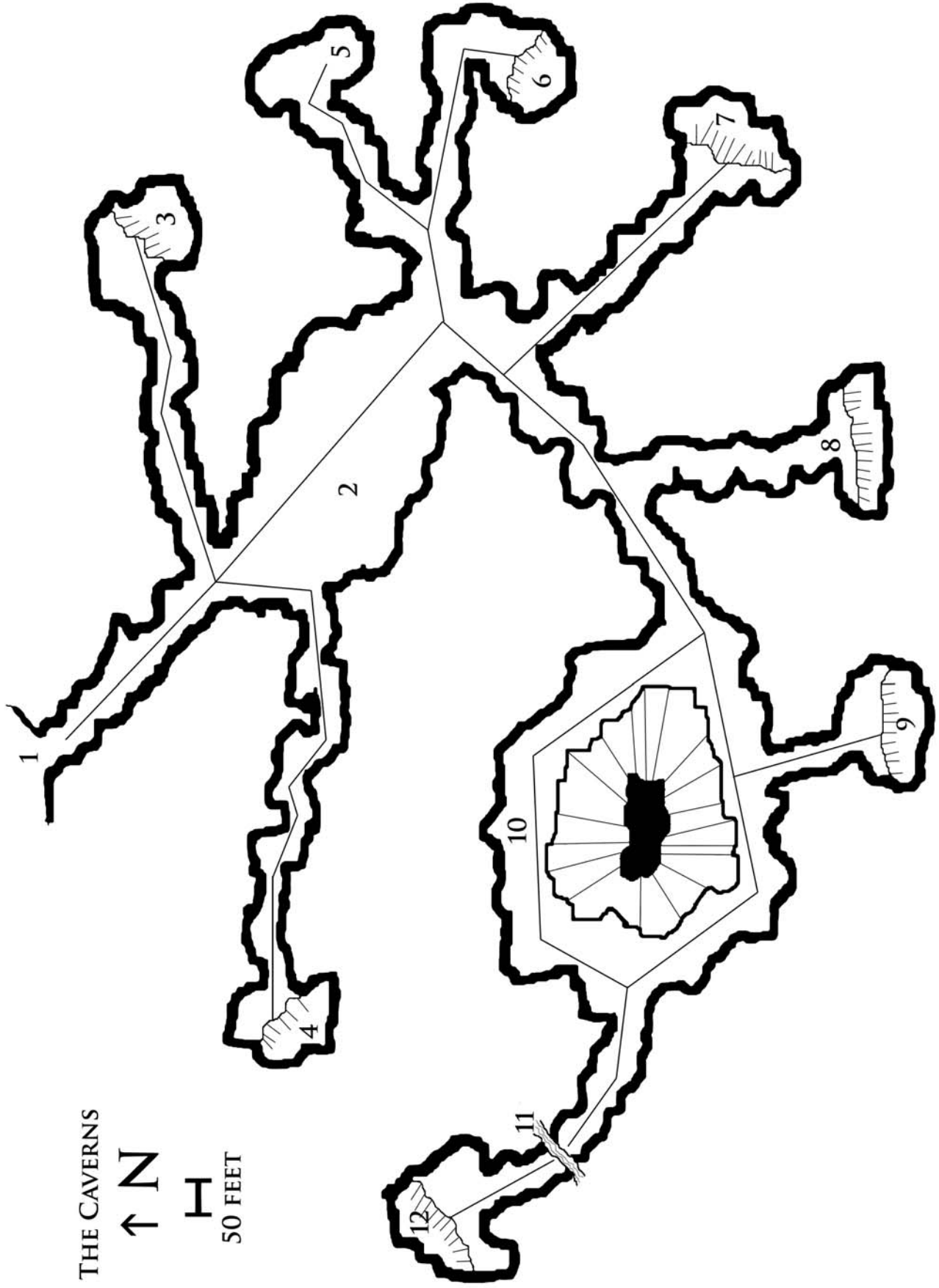


THE CAVERNS

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H

50 FEET



THE BATTLE OF THE BUMBLEBEE BANDIT BY EARNEST WILDE

unfortunately the struggle had caused her corset to come undone. “Oh, my modesty!” cried Lady Labreque, attempting gather her torn gown over her lady dumplings.

Her savior, her knight in shining armor looked at her intensely. “No need, milady. I will not blush if I inadvertently see thine womanly charms as thou gatherst yourself with dignity.”

Lady Labreque came close to swooning! “Oh, who art thou, dear sir, who hath saved me from a fate worse than death?”

“I am the Bumblebee Bandit!” said the man, waving his rapier in the air with one hand as he shook his trademark yellow and black cloak with the other in his signature way. “Champion of the poor, scourge of the evildoers, a man of justice that only evil need fear!”

The Bumblebee Bandit! Lady Labreque was beside herself! She’d heard tales of these, these *highwaymen* that took advantage of proper ladies without even asking their fathers’ permission beforehand!

“Oh, I willst not sin for you, Bumblebee Bandit!” The Lady felt her dander rising and a bead of sweat form on her brow. She panicked as she realized how unladylike she was acting!

“Oh, forgiveth me!” The Lady threw herself at the feet of the Bumblebee Bandit, Champion of the Poor and the Shadowy Fear that Lurks in the Hearts of All Evil Men! “Oh, I beg thee to forgive me for mine own unladylike behavior! I am a noblewoman of the house Labreque, yet young and unfamiliar with the ways of the

world and how rude that may make me! I didst not mean to be ungrateful! Please do not tell my father! The ladies at the riding club would never invite me to their tea parties again if they found out I behaved so!”

“Have no fear, my fair lady!” thundered the Bumblebee Bandit, Hero of All Who Would Call Themselves Free. “As I have saved you from disgrace and dishonor at the hands of these uncourteous toll-keepers, so shall I keep your honor and secrets safe from your riding club mistresses! Thou shalt be free to sip tea and eat crumpets at thine own leisure, forevermore!”

“Oh, a million and one thanks from the bottom of mine own heart, Bumblebee Bandit! You are surely the paladin of virtue, the paragon of manliness, the example of all those who seek to be admired in high society! I shall make an entry in mine diary tonight celebrating your wit and your charm and your kindness!” The Lady secretly hoped that this is one diary entry that would be spied upon and read!

“Enough talk, fair Lady Labreque! Let us not discuss such trivial matters, unfit for a noblewoman! Seeing your heaving bosom and your fair, flushed skin, white as the virgin snow on the tallest mountain peak yet as richly tan as the finest and most magnificent dunes of the greatest deserts of the East, I feel the time is ripe that you should no longer merely be a noble lady. Nay, let me show you how to be a noble *woman*!”

“Oh, yes, Bumblebee Bandit!” The Lady Labreque was overcome with thoughts so unlike a lady but so like a woman. “I will



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