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Expert Game Adventure

Skarda's Mirror

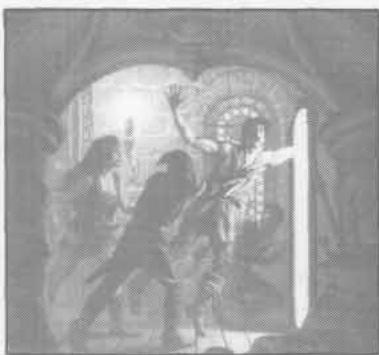
by Aaron Allston



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SKARDA'S MIRROR

by Aaron Allston



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PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

It's early in the evening, and your party has come to your favorite tavern for an evening of dining, drinking, story-telling and friendly fellowship.

Midway into your meal, as the tavern is filling and becoming cheerfully noisy, two people push their way through the throng to stand before your table — an aging man and a young woman.

He's tall, with expensive clothes, a hawklike set of features framed by a graying beard and hair, and a pronounced limp. He's in good shape, looks like an old military man.

She's brunette, of average height, wearing a simple but bright blue robe; she also wears an apprentice's badge on her shoulder (Magicians' Guild of Specularum); her left arm is in a sling, and there's a bandage tied about her brow like a headband.

Both appear to be tense and worried.

The man addresses you each by name — questioning, making sure you are who he thought you were — and asks, "May we sit? This is a matter of great importance. Lives are at stake, and I desperately need your aid."

He seats the young lady and then himself. "My name is Retameron. Once upon a time, I ran about slaying monsters and upholding the good. Maybe you've heard of me." (You haven't.) "My son is doing the same thing these days; his name may be familiar to you: He is Skarda."

Now, that's a name you know. Retameron is an adventurer, one of the best-known fighting-men in Karameikos. Like you, he's come by his notoriety the hard way, battling his way to fame in armed conflict with the forces of evil and chaos. The last you'd heard of him, as of a few years ago, was that he'd married a magic-user by the name of Halia and settled down in these parts; he'd hired a troupe of fighting men and accepted missions both large and small from the Duke Stefan Karameikos and upright clergymen.

"You ever hear of Skarda's Raiders?" asks Retameron. "For those of you who haven't — well, it's a long story. For many years, a magic-user by the name of Skarda was terrorizing the backwoods settlements all over Karameikos and surrounding territories. He had a whole company of followers — cavalrymen, formidable fighters. They'd swoop down on a town... and somehow, no one knows how, he'd kidnap everyone in the village, steal

all the livestock, and make off with all the treasure his men could carry.

"And — this was the rub — they were never caught. Not one of them. When one of them fell in combat, the rest would butcher him rather than let him fall into the hands of the army or the royal guard. Pursuers would just lose their tracks on the road. The tracks would get to a certain point, and mill about a bit — and they wouldn't continue on from that point. They were never caught; the kidnapped folk were never recovered or ransomed; the livestock was never recovered; the treasure was never seen again. Skarda's face was never even seen.

"Well, about two years ago my boy Retameron and his lady came down to Specularum to visit me. He went out to do a little carousing and saw some ugly manjack in a tavern. This fellow, might've been part orc by the look of him, was wearing a piece of jewelry Retameron recognized — a brooch that belonged to a lady he knew, lady from a country estate that was overrun by Skarda's Raiders a year or so before. She and her staff and all their goods were missing, of course — until Retameron saw the brooch that night.

"My boy's not dumb. He didn't confront this lackey, just watched him and followed him when the fellow left, mostly drunk, several hours later.

"Fellow went straight to the house of Mallek, who was a local magic-user; ranking member of the Guild, nice enough fellow, always willing to help the townsmasters. Turns out this drunken soldier was a member of Mallek's personal bodyguard. That got my boy curious, so he fetched his lady and some adventurers he knew, and they broke into Mallek's house that night, in the wee hours.

"Good thing they did, too. They got to see this Mallek and his lieutenants plotting some sort of coup against Duke Stefan. And they found out that Mallek WAS this Skarda.

"Anyway, they were discovered before they got out, and all hell broke loose. What a night that was: Swords in the streets, fireballs flying... Some of Skarda's swine died that night, and some good folk among my son's friends. When all the fighting was over, Skarda was trapped, all his magic spent, in his burning house, and perished there. Or so we thought.

"The royal guard sifted through the

wreckage of Mallek's house, Skarda's house, and they found enough papers in an undamaged strongbox to support Retameron's story. They also found this mirror — you know what a Mirror of Life-Trapping is? One of them. One of Retameron's friends spotted it before the guardsmen, so nobody was drawn into it. Retameron kept the thing, all wrapped up out of sight, for the day that it might come in useful. The attacks by Skarda's Raiders ended that night, and all was right with the world.

"Well, a week ago, somebody that Retameron had jailed began making threats against my boy, and then escaped. Retameron, just to be safe, dusted off that Mirror of Life-Trapping and decided to hang it on his bedroom door — facing the hall — at night; of course, he made sure the servants were under strict orders not to enter the hall until after dawn each day. First night, though, it happened.

"This here is Andrya. She's one of Halia's apprentices. She was there that night and she'll tell you the rest."

Andrya looks between the lot of you and clears her throat. She speaks in a low, pained voice, and it's obvious that her story is not to be a happy one.

"Nobody's sure how it got started. It was sometime after midnight, I guess, and everyone was asleep... and then there was yelling and screaming from outside. I found out later that there was some sort of monster out in the hall. The headmistress was yelling, 'He's gone, Retameron's gone into the mirror,' and then she screamed and her scream was cut off. The monster had killed her.

"We all hurried out into the hallway, me and Sera — that's the other apprentice — and Lady Halia, and Kraigg and Norrin — that's Lord Retameron's two squires — and the tower's scribe, and soldiers from the lower floors... and there WAS some sort of monster in the halls of the top floor. It was like a baboon, only man-height, with black fur and a mouth like a huge iron bear-trap. It immediately went after Lady Halia, but Kraigg and Norrin got in the way long enough for her to gather herself. It killed Norrin. And then she blasted it dead.

"We draped a cloth over the mirror, and Lady Halia tried to call Retameron out, but she couldn't get an answer from him, so she knew it wasn't an ordi-

nary Mirror. You're supposed to be able to talk to whomever is inside, you know. But she couldn't. When they first got the mirror, she thought it must have been empty because there was no answer from inside it, but now she knew something was wrong.

"She gathered up all her magical apparatus, and they took the Mirror into the dining room, and got as many soldiers as would fit in the room, and they prepared to break the Mirror to let Retameron out — and to fight whatever else was in there with him. But it wouldn't break. Not a mace nor a hammer nor a battle-axe would break it.

"So she decided that this was some sort of artifact, an item of great power. She was frantic by then, frantic for Lord Retameron's sake, and so she decided to go into the Mirror. She couldn't be dissuaded. She put on all her adventuring

gear, loaded herself up for bear, and looked into the Mirror, and disappeared.

"That's when the other monster came out, one just like the first one, and this time we didn't have Lady Halia's magic to help us. It dove into us like a berserker, and before we knew it it had killed poor Sera, and Lieutenant Gerard, and cut Kraigg up pretty bad.

"I got Kraigg out of there and got hurt falling down the stairs. We two, and a couple of the cooks, and three of the servants, and four of the soldiers, and Sergeant Alkin — we were all that got out alive. Twelve out of more than forty, and most of us hurt pretty bad." She shakes her head sorrowfully.

Teranon takes over again. "That's why I wanted to talk to you. Something awful is going on with that mirror, at Retameron's tower. Threshold's townsman has sent a couple of armed parties into the

tower, but nobody's come out alive. But people like you tend to succeed where common soldiers fail. Will you — would you — secure Retameron's tower, and then go into the Mirror to rescue my son?"

That's the situation — a deadly creature loose in what had been an adventurer's home... two noted adventurers missing... a desperate father pleading for their rescue. Who could resist?

This is an adventure for four to six characters of levels 5 through 8. If you don't have a character appropriate to this adventure, you can (with DM approval) use one of the sample player-characters presented in the center of this rulebook. (Don't take the characters out yourself; the DM has to do this, and has to separate those sheets himself.)

If you're ready to start, inform your DM and you'll begin your efforts to unravel the mystery of Skarda's Mirror.



DUNGEON MASTER'S INTRODUCTION

History of Skarda's Mirror

Skarda's Mirror is an artifact — a powerful item of magic, one which brings both great powers and severe disadvantages upon its "owner." An artifact's true owner is the Immortal who constructed it, but many artifacts fall into the hands of mortals, as the Mirror has fallen into Skarda's hands.

Skarda's Mirror belongs to the Sphere of Thought, and has the following power: *Create Magical Monsters* (the Mirror Fiend, described in Episode One; Special Note: no effective duration on spell; 90 points). Penalty Effect: Mania (obsessed with conquering the world through use of the artifact).

The difference between Skarda's Mirror and other artifacts is that it's basically a "retreat" for the Immortal who created it. At some distant time in the past, this Immortal, a devotee of the Sphere of Thought, created a tiny "pocket universe" — a small, contained plane of existence, distinct from our own but connected to our plane by portals: seven mirrors.

The Immortal's little plane was about one mile long, 3/4 mile wide, and 500' tall; its floor, ceiling, and walls were reflective, like mirrors. It was just a vast plain of mirror with a vast ceiling of mirror, and walls likewise: just the place in which a thoughtful Immortal would love to meditate.

Eventually, however, this Immortal ceased to visit and meditate within his pocket universe creation. It's likely that he was imprisoned or destroyed — Immortals are loathe to just give up the objects which cost them so much energy.

Over the succeeding centuries, six of the portal mirrors were lost — buried, dropped in the deepest oceans — until only one survived. About twenty years ago, that Mirror fell into the hands of Mallek, a local hedge-magician. Mallek, like Retameron and Halia years later, believed it to be a mirror of life-trapping until the day he accidentally glanced into it and was drawn into the universe to which it provided access.

Appearing in this Mirror Plain, he was immediately struck with the reflecting and rebounding thoughts of the Immortal who had created it; the thoughts had been bouncing back and forth from wall to ceiling to floor for centuries, and finally struck an object which wouldn't reflect them: Mallek.

Not even a capable magic-user could cope with the concentrated force of the Immortal's stray thoughts. Mallek collapsed, overpowered by their magnitude. He rose, hours later, quite insane and possessed of a new

mission. It is unfortunate that the Immortal's last thoughts had been about mortal dictators and their efforts to conquer the world, because that was now Mallek's goal. He had to conquer the world, and had to use the Mirror to achieve that end.

He could take his time at it, though; at no time did the Mirror demand quick and foolish actions. Mallek set up an alternate identity for himself: Skarda the Unseen, Skarda the Reaver. Under this name he committed all his crimes toward his ends.

His plan was not simple, but it was clever. He'd set up a fortress inside the Mirror — an army, including heavy and light cavalry, with all the "support personnel" (workers and slaves) necessary to keep them up.

He hired brave but villainous men and women as his first lieutenants. The lot of them would enter a small village, and corral the entire population, forcing everyone to stare at — and enter — Skarda's Mirror. The majority of the men would gather the village goods and then enter the Mirror, except Skarda, who would ride home with the mirror in his backpack.

Years passed in this fashion. Across the world, he kidnapped hundreds of slaves, hired hundreds of soldiers. Eventually realizing that the dwellers in the Mirror needed more reliable food sources than stolen livestock, and more comfortable accommodations than blankets on the hard mirror floor; he developed magical means of growing vegetables, utilizing the light continuously generated inside the Mirror Plane; he authorized his minions to begin a great quarry in one corner of the Plain, and the stone from that quarry went to build enormous walls and buildings.

By the time Retameron discovered who Skarda was, the magician's plan was almost done. He had a force of a few hundred army and cavalry, supported by thousands of captured servants and their children. His plan was simplicity itself: use his own magic to sneak into the palace of Duke Stefan Karameikos, and call his army and cavalry out inside the palace. No palace on the face of this world is defended against such an assault from within; it would take only minutes for the death or capture of the duke to be effected.

Once he was settled in as the new ruler of Karameikos, Skarda would repeat the trick at Black Eagle Barony, then perhaps move on to Ylaruam and Thyatis; he'd use the same tactic until news of it had spread; then he'd begin conquering territories the old-fashioned way, using his nations' armed forces and resources. He'd become king of the entire

world.

But Retameron's attack spoiled everything. That obnoxious hero and his allies burned Skarda's home down, burned his best lieutenants, injured him and forced him to enter the Mirror to avoid being burned to death, and, most harmful of all, kept the Mirror covered for two years. Skarda and his minions could not leave the Mirror.

There they stayed, trapped for two years, until the fateful night Retameron uncovered the Mirror. Skarda wasted little time; he used the special power of the mirror to summon a mirror fiend, one of the magical creatures which inhabit the portal between the Mirror Plain and the real world; he sent the Fiend out to bring him Retameron and Halia and kill everyone else it saw.

The Fiend was successful enough. It threw Retameron into the Mirror. Halia, however, slew it and covered the Mirror before Skarda could respond. But, as the Players' Introduction related, her concern for Retameron's safety prompted her to a foolish move; she entered the Mirror, and when she did so Skarda summoned another mirror fiend into the real world.

With both Retameron and Halia captured, and the Tower abandoned, Skarda could take more time to plan his next actions. He ordered sheets of mirror glass taken from the quarry to be put through the portal, to the fiend, so that it could best use its own special powers. He imprisoned Retameron and Halia, mocked and abused them. He left the mirror briefly, traveled to nearby Threshold, and there hired a very good mercenary officer — not just to have another officer: he also wanted news of the world and the changes that occurred within it during his imprisonment.

Setting of the Adventure

This adventure is written presuming that you're using the Grand Duchy of Karameikos setting from the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® EXPERT SET. If this is the case, your characters are probably from the Threshold area; Teranon and Andrya would have found your player-characters in their favorite Threshold tavern. Retameron and Halia live in a small village called Verge, a half-day's travel south of Threshold; they're the village's personal protectors.

If you're using Karameikos but aren't using Threshold, then locate Verge within a half-day's travel of the usual campaign city.

(Note that Retameron wouldn't cooperate with the Black Eagle Barony. If the characters

spend most of their time in that barony, wait until they're visiting some other city, within Karameikos, and then spring this adventure on them.)

If you don't use the Expert D&D® world-setting, you'll need to make a few changes before running the adventure. Substitute your own setting's ruler for Duke Stefan, his capital for Specularum, the characters' home city for Threshold. Place Retameron's village of Verge within a halfday's travel of the campaign city.

Getting Involved

There are several ways to get your usual player-characters involved in the adventure. In all cases Teranon and Andrya track them down and make their impassioned speech from the Players' Introduction, but different circumstances lead to different approaches they'll take once that speech is done.

Old Friends: If you have the time and opportunity to do so, try this. One or two adventures before *Skarda's Mirror*, establish that Retameron and Halia are old friends of one or more of the player-characters. They may never have adventured together, but they could be old drinking buddies.

If you'd like to take this approach, when the characters are in the city, in the course of or after an adventure, have Retameron and/or Halia buy them a round of drinks and give the player-characters a quick explanation of who they are — "You've met Retameron and Halia before; they're adventurers, too, as well-known as you are, and you all have shared quite a few drinks and stories in the past."

Then, if you can contrive it, you can get them involved in the player-characters' latest adventure. After all, they're heroes always willing to help uphold the good, and therefore willing to help the player-characters on their own adventures.

If you do this, the characters feel a certain affection for these characters; and when, a couple of adventures later, Retameron and Halia turn up missing, they'll probably be all the more anxious to help.

If this is the approach you take, then Teranon and Andrya have heard Retameron and Halia speaking of the player-characters, which is why they've tracked them down and told them this story.

New Friends: You can perform the same sort of tactic without establishing a prior relationship with Retameron and Halia. A couple of adventures before you plan to run

Skarda's Mirror, have Retameron or Halia or both provide some sort of critical assistance to the characters in the course of their adventure. (Retameron could intervene in a street swordfight in which the player-character is badly outnumbered; Halia could be the sole source for a vital fact, and the player-character magic-user could be referred to her by the Magicians' Guild in Specularum; either hero could accompany the player-characters to the completion of their quest.) If you contrive to have the player-characters owe Retameron and/or Halia a favor, they'll be more willing to jump into this dangerous adventure.

Hirelings: It could be that the player-characters are mercenary adventurers; if you prefer not to complicate your life with prior relationships, then Teranon and Andrya have tracked down the player-characters in order to hire them to go after Retameron and Halia.

Teranon offers his savings, 2,000 g.p., and his own sword, a normal sword +2, as reward for this mission. (If the characters' price is already well-known, or if they demand more money but not an impossible sum, then he'll be able to borrow enough money to meet it.) He'll offer either the gold or the sword in advance, but not both; the remainder of the price is given to the characters when they emerge from the Mirror.

It's always better, though, to get characters involved in adventures because of personal involvement; it makes them exercise their personalities and makes them more human. Mercenaries are just not as heroic as true heroes.

Family Ties: Finally, you can always establish that Retameron or Halia is related in some way to one of the player-characters (or even to one of their followers). Often, a whole family could be adventuresome; Retameron could be the cousin or even brother of one of the player-characters (in which case Teranon is the character's father, tracking him down to inform him of his brother's disappearance); Halia could be a sister or other relative, or even former fiancee, of one of the campaign's characters. This establishes a strong tie between the characters and Retameron and Halia.

What Teranon and Andrya Know:
VERGE: Teranon and Andrya, of course, know the way to Verge and are able to lead the characters there.

THE OTHER SURVIVORS: If the characters are interested in what has befallen the

other survivors of the massacre — they're all staying at Teranon's small estate. Are they willing to come into the mirror with the player-characters? Most are not — this includes the servants, cooks, and common soldiers who survived. Andrya is injured and not willing to. Kraigg is willing to, but is so badly injured — he has 1 hp remaining — that Andrya insist he be kept away from the tower and Mirror. Sergeant Alkin is willing to accompany the player-characters, if they ask for help. The stats for all the people given by name are in the appendix entitled "Non-Player Characters."

THE MIRROR: Andrya describes the Mirror for the player-characters. It's large, a foot and a half by two feet. It's housed in a frame, a beautifully carved wooden frame covered with gold leaf; the underside of the top of the frame has a drapery bar, and a drape of black velvet is hung upon it and may be drawn over the mirror or aside from it.

MAP OF THE TOWER: If the characters don't ask for a map of the Tower, don't offer it — they're supposed to be bright enough to know what they need. But if they do ask, Andrya draws them one — give the characters the Players' Map of Retameron's Tower. If they quiz her about contents of various rooms, then pull out your own map and key and describe the rooms they ask about in greater detail; she's very familiar with the tower and is able to answer most questions. (She's never seen the treasury or the inside of the soldiers' barracks, but those are about the only rooms she doesn't know.)

When Things Go Wrong

No adventure goes precisely according to plan, so when the character actions prevent certain adventure events from taking place, you have to improvise around their actions.

The appendix entitled "When Things Go Wrong," at the back of this book, describes various problems that can arise and what you can do to fix problems that can occur.

Getting Started

Before beginning the adventure, you'll want to read through the entire adventure, including the appendices and character sheets. Once that's done, you should be ready to begin.

Provided in the center of the rulebook are six character sheets. If one or more of your players don't have characters suitable for the adventure, pass out these six sample PCs and let them choose from among them.

EPISODE ONE: RETAMERON'S TOWER

In this first episode, the characters, having heard the story told by Teranon and Andrya, must investigate the tower of Retameron and see if they can find what has befallen him and Halia.

Verge and the Tower

The characters have no trouble in getting to the little village of Verge (population about 50).

Into the woods a few hundred yards, along a path, the characters come across the encampment of Sergeant Alkin, who has posted himself within view of the tower in order to keep an eye on it. He has a tent pitched and campfire blazing on a little hillock 50 yards from the tower fortress.

When asked about the status of the tower (either by the player-characters or Teranon), he'll say:

No, there hasn't been any real movement at all, in or out of the Tower. I camped here four days ago, after the second party of soldiers tried to take the tower, and haven't seen anything happen since then.

Except, well, through those little windows I keep seeing little glints of light. And I KNOW there are eyes on me. Almost all the time. Something staring at me. Gives me the creeps, I can tell you.

If you need a character sheet for Sergeant Alkin, it's in the appendix entitled "Non-Player Characters."

Retameron's Fortress

The little inset map on the DM's Map of Retameron's Tower shows the layout of Retameron's small fortress.

The fortress is a very small citadel; it would have been called a castle in times before castles became enormous all-stone constructions. This fortress is a large tower on a hillside; the tower is surrounded by a wooden wall, which is itself surrounded by a dry moat.

The moat is 6' deep all around; at the gate, a drawbridge can be lowered to allow entry. The drawbridge is now down, as it has been since the night of the attack.

The fortress walls are 20' high wooden palisades with a catwalk at the top and ladders up every 30'; there are small wooden towers on the four corners.

Within the walls, in addition to the tower, are the stables (due east of the tower) and the

well (immediately in front of the the tower).

The stables ordinarily hold a dozen horses. Today, they're empty; a couple of mounts were killed by the monster during his original rampage, but the devoted grooms managed to get the rest to Teranon's villa and safety.

The well is simply a deep shaft sunk into the earth, 6' broad, 60' deep, and lined with brick; over it is the typical arrangement of winch and bucket.

The State of the Tower

There are several ways for the characters to get into Retameron's Tower. They can march into the front door. They can use fly spells or magical items or climbing skills to get them up to the roof. They could use other magical effects or items to gain access in any number of ways; therefore, we're not going to predict any starting point or progression for their search. We'll simply describe the tower as it is now.

The tower itself is 50' tall. It is constructed of ashlar (i.e., dressed blocks of stone), with a few narrow (and barred) windows on upper floors.

The top floor is broader than those below it — the four lower floors are 50' along a side, while the top is 70' along a side.

The interior rooms are all brick-walled; some have tapestries, carpets, etc. upon them. The doors are all round-topped oaken doors, except for the two large square-topped doors leading into the antechamber. All doors can be barred from within.

Several of the rooms, bedchambers especially, have chests. Though the characters may light into these chests with anticipatory glee, none of them is a treasure chest; most people keep their common personal effects in chests the way we put them in chests of drawers today. We haven't detailed the contents of any of these chests; if a character gets really interested in their contents, each contains clothes (reflecting the social status of the owner) and personal effects such as combs, belts, shoes, boots, handkerchiefs, perhaps a stray copper piece or two — no treasure.

The monster has had days within the tower, days to prowl around and change things to its liking—and it has.

By a means the characters initially find puzzling, the monster has acquired an enormous quantity of mirror-glass and scattered it all over the tower. Now, each and every room has a piece of mirror propped up against the wall or lying on the floor. All of these sections of mirror are at least a square foot in size, some much larger, usually bro-

ken in an irregular shape.

The Monster

The monster awaiting the characters is a fierce one. It is called the mirror fiend; it is a bizarre demonic monster from Skarda's Mirror. When the characters enter the tower, the fiend can be anywhere. It's going to be aware that adventurers have come to the tower the instant the first one sees one of the mirrors it has set up. It spends all its time and effort trying to stalk and kill them. It has many special abilities, and it's going to give the characters a hard time.

For the mirror fiend's statistics and special abilities, see the NPC appendix.

First Floor

1. Antechamber

This chamber has doors east, west, north, and south. The double doors south (leading outside) are ajar. The doors east and west are closed. The door north (into the stairwell) is torn off its hinges and lying in the doorway. On the floor, in the center of the room, is a large triangular piece of mirror-glass.

There is nothing special in this room.

2. Waiting Room

The walls of this chamber are draped with tapestries; the floor is covered with a blue rug woven with the image of a fiery phoenix; the furniture consists of two comfortable sofas and a table. On the table, propped up against the north wall, is a large squarish piece of mirror glass.

This is the chamber where visitors wait until Retameron can meet them. There is nothing special within the room.

3. Common Hall

This chamber has two long tables with benches behind them, against the walls, and one large fireplace on the west wall. On the mantelpiece above the fireplace is a large piece of mirror-glass.

Halia banishes Retameron to this chamber when he's in a mood to hold drinking binges with his friends. There is nothing special within the room.

Should the mirror fiend attack characters within this chamber, it leaps out of the mirror and backbites one character (just once); then, as the other characters begin to attack it, it ducks and scurries under the long tables, out of the characters' immediate vision. Once it's out of their sight, it will teleport back into the mirror.

4. Wine "Cellar"

This room has several racks of wines and a few large kegs of beer. Delicately balanced on bottle-necks, facing the door, is a large squarish piece of mirror-glass.

The tower doesn't have a cellar, so Retameron and Halia store the bulk of their wines here. (They have a separate little wine closet on the fifth floor and so the characters won't find any wonderful or expensive vintages here; all the "good stuff" is kept upstairs.)

There is nothing special in the room.

5. Dry Goods Storage

The door into this room is ajar.

In this large chamber is stored a great quantity of the goods necessary to the upkeep of an estate like Retameron's: bolts of cloth, leathers, seasoned wood for carpentry and making weapons, furniture stored because it is broken or not currently needed, clothing made in anticipation of need and stored in large wooden chests, etc. Propped up on a wooden chair with a broken leg is a medium-sized chunk of mirror glass turned to face the doorway.

None of these goods is very valuable, though the room's entire contents are worth a little money (1,000 gp, encumbrance 30,000 cn).

When the characters are within the room, they'll hear some scuffling and shifting under the mounds of goods: It sounds as though some largish creature is under there.

And there is: Halia's captured baboon, which lived in Halia's Laboratory. It's hiding beneath bales of cloth. If characters begin tossing things aside to get to the source of the noise, it takes up the table-leg it carries around, springs out, and attacks the invaders.

Don't tell the characters immediately that it IS just a baboon: tell them that a large, baboon-like creature is leaping out at them. After they've slain it and examined the body they'll realize that this WAS just a baboon.

The Rock Baboon:

Armor Class: 6
Hit Dice: 2
Move: 120'/40'
Attacks: 1 club/1 bite
Damage: 1-6/1-3
No. Appearing: 1 (under these circumstances)
Save As: Fighter 2
Morale: 8
Treasure Type: None (under these circumstances)
Alignment: Neutral
XP Value: 20

6. Dry Goods Storage

This room has contents similar to Room 5; the ubiquitous piece of mirror glass is on a wooden chest. There is nothing special of note in the room.

7. Stairwell

The stairwell runs up the center of the tower from floor to roof; the stairwell is very broad, to allow a good flow of traffic. At each floor, the right-hand stair (as you face north) goes up and the left-hand stair goes down; on the bottom floor, there is no left-hand stair, just an open space.

You see no mirror shards in the stairwell.

The stairwell goes up to the roof and the large hatch accessing it, which is not shown on the map.

There are no creatures or objects at all in the bare stairwell.

Second Floor

8. Officers' Quarters

These chambers are bedrooms, containing a bed, under which is a chest. There is blood on the bed, walls, and ceiling, but no sign of bodies. On the floor, right beside the door, is a large shard of mirror glass.

These two chambers are the rooms of Retameron's two officers, the lieutenant and sergeant in command of the men. The lieutenant died during the monster's night of terror; another soldier died in the sergeant's room.

9. Soldiers' Kitchen

This seems to be the chamber the soldiers' where meals were prepared; the chamber has a large double fireplace and an interior window which allows the cooks to pass the food directly into the soldiers' mess. The room's mirror shard is propped up against the fireplace, facing the door.

The mirror fiend, attacking the characters in this room, leaps out, backbites one, and (as it begins to be attacked by the other characters) charges into the fireplace and scurries up the broad chimney. It needs only get up a few feet before teleporting to the nearest mirror.

10. Soldiers' Mess

This is obviously where the soldiers eat; it can accommodate, in very cramped fashion, all twenty-two defenders of the tower. One one table is a chair facing the door, and on the chair is the room's shard of mirror.

Several of the tables bear marks as if they've been damaged by fire or acid, and on a couple of them the seating benches are entirely missing, though the metal brackets to hold them up are still in evidence.

There is an ochre jelly in the room, another escapee from Halia's laboratory, clinging to the underside of one of the tables. It remains still when the characters enter the room. If they leave the room very quickly, it plops down to the floor and slithers after them. If they walk through the room, it waits until a character is right next to its table, then plops down and attacks.

The Ochre Jelly:

Armor Class: 8
Hit Dice: 5*
Move: 30'/10'
Attacks: 1
Damage: 2-12
No. Appearing: 1
Save As: Fighter 3
Morale: 12
Treasure Type: Nil
Alignment: Neutral
XP Value: 300

The mirror fiend does not attack the characters in this room; why waste the energy when an ochre jelly is doing its work?

EPISODE ONE: RETAMERON'S TOWER

11. Soldiers' Bunkroom

This chamber contains five cots and five chests for the soldiers' possessions. Soldiers died in this room — there are spots of dried blood here and there to prove it; but the bodies are gone. In this room, a cot propped up against the wall opposite the door holds the requisite shard of mirror glass.

Each of these chambers is basically identical. None of them contains anything special.

Third Floor

12. Military Office

This chamber contains two desks and numerous chairs. Propped on one of the desk chairs, facing the door to the hall, is the shard of mirror glass. A door leads east, into another room.

This is the chamber used by Retameron and his officers to keep records of all Retameron's and Halia's military enterprises; Retameron's officers also use it to conduct their correspondence. If the characters are interested, they'll find years of correspondence between Retameron and Halia and Duke Stefan Karameikos and his scribes, but there's nothing magical or monstrous in this room.

13. Planning Room

The furniture for this room consists of one long table and numerous tables. On the table is one of the chairs, and on the chair, facing the doorway to the hall, is the room's shard of mirror glass. A door leads west into another room.

This room is where Retameron, Halia, and the officers conduct the brainstorming and planning sessions for their enterprises. There is nothing special in this room.

14. Servants' Quarters

This chamber holds four cots and four chests, and is obviously a bedchamber for the tower's servants. In the center of the floor is the room's shard of mirror glass.

If the characters are looking at the southern room, tell them that the decor is distinctly

feminine; if the northern, tell them that it is masculine.

The tower servants included the laundress, grooms, maids, etc.

Assuming that the characters haven't yet figured out the tactic of breaking each mirror as they see it, the fiend observes the characters invisibly from this room's mirror; as the characters are leaving the chamber, it leaps forth just as the last character is preparing to leave. Instead of biting him, it creeps up behind him, then slams and bars the door, trapping the character in here with it. The characters must do 20 points of damage to the door to break it down if the trapped character doesn't open it; of course, he's being attacked by the fiend.

15. Grain Storage

In this large room, stored in large wooden bins, is a great quantity of grain — you see wheat, dried corn, and barley for the most part. Also in these chambers are grinding bowls. Propped atop one bin in each room, facing the door, is the room's shard of mirror glass.

The contents of these two rooms are basically identical. There is nothing special here.

Fourth Floor

16. Antechamber

This is just an empty chamber between the other chambers and hallways of this floor; no furniture, no mirror shard.

There is nothing special in this area.

17. Kitchen

This is evidently the "upstairs kitchen," where meals for the eight residents of the top floor were cooked. You see a large fireplace on the east wall and tables all around, plus two doors on the west wall — one north, one south.

On one of the tables, facing the door, is the room's shard of glass. Spoiling food lies all over the tables and stinks terribly; there is dried blood on the floor.

Since the disappearance of the tower population, rats — normal rats — have had a field day in this room. Naturally, they'll have scurried off to hide when humans reentered the room; the humans hear some scurrying and

pattering around under the tables. If you wish to, you can run an attack by the pack of rats on the characters; use the rat statistics from the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Basic Set.

18. Chief Cook's Quarters

This bedchamber has one comfortable bed with two chests of personal effects beneath it. Lying flat on the bed is the chamber's shard of glass.

There is nothing special in this room.

19. Assistant Cooks' Quarters

This chamber contains three cots and three chests. On one cot, propped against the wall, is the room's shard of glass.

There is nothing special in this room.

20. Food Storage

In these three rooms are stored other foods for the tower. The northeastern room is described below.

This is a storage room for hanging meats; the door has a tight seal, the room is cool, and only some of the meat has started to go bad. On the floor, just inside the door to the room, is the room's chunk of glass.

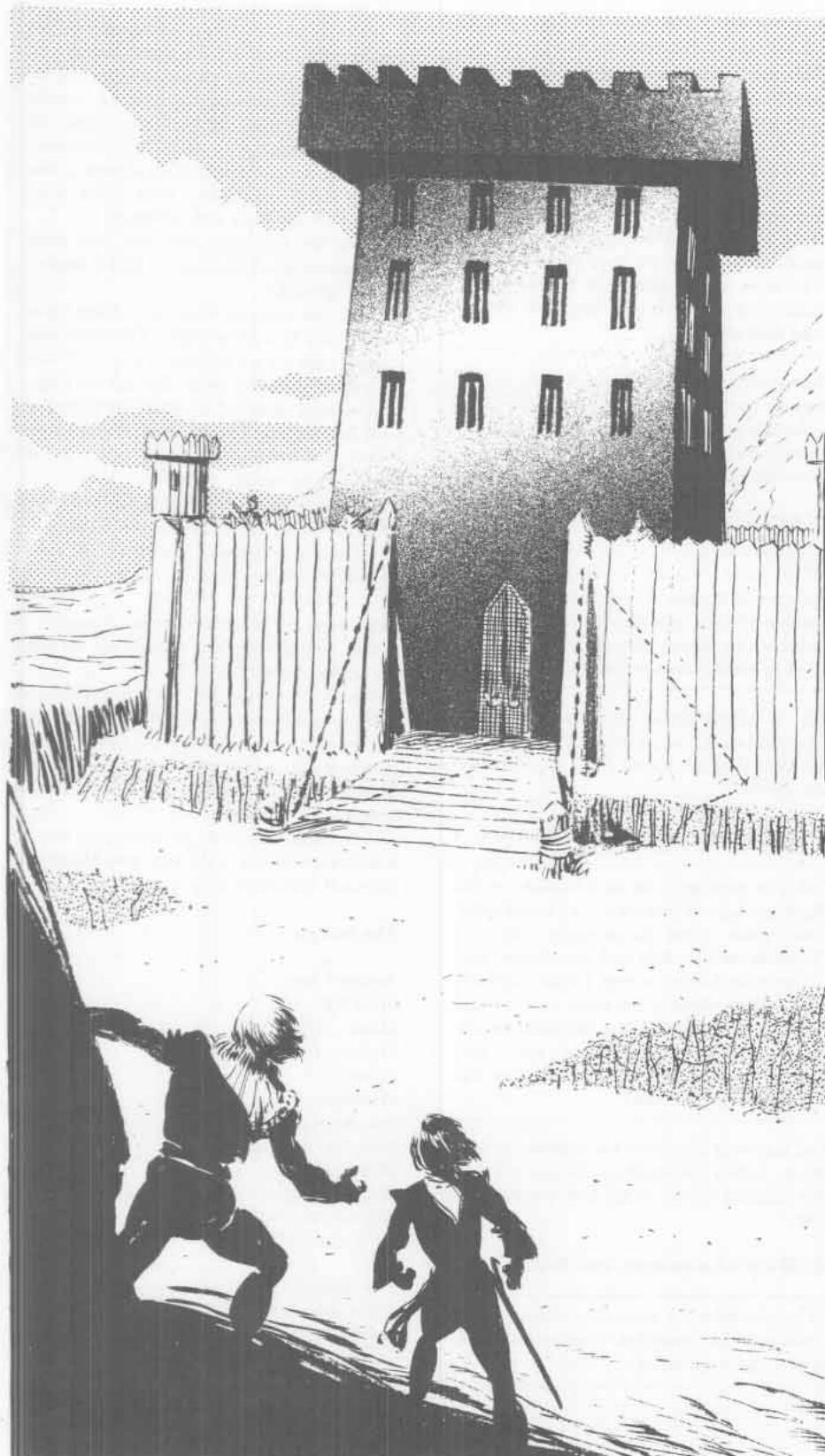
Many of the sides of hanging meat have had great chunks bitten out of them by a set of huge jaws.

Yes, the mirror fiend has been snacking on the hanging goods in this room. Except for the evidence of its feeding habits, there is nothing special in this chamber.

The other two chambers hold basically identical contents:

This chamber holds kegs with water for emergencies, dried meats and vegetables, and bottled goods (vegetables and jellies, for instance). On the floor, just inside the door to the room, is the room's chunk of mirror glass.

There is nothing special in these two chambers.



21. Dining Hall

This chamber is a richly-appointed and stylish dining room; it contains one long table and ten expensive and comfortable chairs. Lying flat on the table is the predicted shard of mirror glass.

As Andrya described it, the framed Mirror should have been on one of the tables in this chamber, but it is not now in evidence.

There is nothing special in this room unless the characters like fine furniture.

Fifth Floor

22. Defensive Corridor

This corridor is the last defense for tower defenders if the building is entered by attackers; both doors are very heavy and bear three sets of bars each, and bar against attackers coming up the stairwell (in other words, the bars are all on the south side of the doors). This corridor has no shard of glass.

23. Scribe's Quarters

This is a bedchamber; it contains one desk and bookcase for correspondence, a small table, two chairs and a large bed. There is routine correspondence lying around, both on the desk and the bookcase. Flat on the bed is the chamber's shard of glass.

This was the chamber of Rommert, the tower's scribe, who was killed by the monster. If the characters search the desk, they'll find routine letters and papers there, too. No treasure.

24. Headmistress' Quarters

This is a bedchamber; it contains a bed and small table with four chairs. The room has playing cards scattered all over the room; the shard of mirror glass is on the floor at the foot of the bed.

This was the chamber of Marica, the tower's headmistress (who kept the tower and its servants operating on schedule, managed supplies, etc.). She was killed during the monster's attack. There is nothing special in the room.

EPISODE ONE: RETAMERON'S TOWER

25. Guest Quarters

This chamber contains a large bed, a chest for possessions, and a small table. In each, the shard of glass is propped up against the wall on the table, facing the door.

These chambers are for the important dignitaries who frequently visit Retameron's tower. Each is identical but for the arrangement of the furniture; there are no items of note in this chamber.

26. Apprentices' Quarters

These are the quarters of Halia's two apprentices, first-level magic-users. The player-characters already have met Andrya (see the Dungeon Master's Introduction); her room is the more northern. Sera, who was slain the night the monster came, had the southern room. There is blood outside the door to her room, but no body is in evidence. Both rooms have large beds and chests for personal effects; the shards of mirror are propped up on the chests and face the doors.

There is nothing special in these chambers.

27. Squires' Quarters

These are the quarters of Retameron's two squires, first-level fighters. Of the two, Norrin was killed the night the monster appeared; Kraigg survived with severe injuries. Both rooms have cots, chests for personal effects, and a large rack for weapons and armor. The northern room was Norrin's; on the rack are a shield, helmet, chainmail, and dagger. The southern room is Kraigg's; there is only a bow on the rack. These weapons and armor are ordinary; there is no magic here. In each chamber, the shard of glass is on the floor just in front of the door.

There is nothing special in these chambers.

28. Rear Hall

This hallway can be barred against the other hallways. It isn't now, however. Doors lead into the other corridors; there are two additional doors on the south wall and one on the north.

This is the hallway accessing Retameron and Halia's chamber (31). Doors also lead into the Treasury (29) and the Wine Closet (30); a secret door leads into Retameron's little practice room (33). There are no objects of note in this area.

29. Treasury

This small chamber is bare except for one gold coin in a corner and a shard of mirror glass propped up against the wall opposite the door. The floor is covered with dust, except for three large patches of clear wood where furniture of some sort, probably chests, once rested. There are also large apelike footprints in the dust, but no marks of furniture being dragged around. The door to the room has a mechanical lock on it, and the lock has been forced and broken.

This room was Retameron's and Halia's treasure room, where they keep their money — winnings from adventuring and pay for the soldiers and other staff. The monster has taken the chests.

30. Wines

This room contains racks of expensive wines and liquors. Except for the shard of mirror glass propped up against one of the wine-racks, facing the door, there is no sign of disturbance within this chamber.

This is where Retameron and Halia keep "the good stuff," wines which they only break out for special occasions or to entertain special guests.

31. Retameron's and Halia's Quarters

This is obviously the bedchamber of the lord and lady of this tower; it has one large bed, three chests for personal effects, a small breakfast table with two chairs, and a portable folding screen drawn between the eastern third of the room and the rest of the room. There is a fireplace on the north wall. Doors lead east, west, and south. There is a shard of mirror glass flat on the breakfast table.

The southern door, into the hallway, is open. On it, facing the hallway, Skarda's Mirror had originally been hung, but it is not there now.

32. Halia's Laboratory and Bestiary

This chamber is evidently where Halia conducts her magical experiments and trains her apprentices.

There are two large tables against the north wall; on them is a great quantity of apparatus such as glass distilling equipment, small braziers for heating, parchment, quill, ink, clamps, gauges, etc. All the apparatus lies smashed and scattered, with fluids and powders of various colors lying here and there, with some acid-burns on the floor and tabletops.

On the southern wall are two large bookcases filled with large, bulky, musty-looking books.

On the western walls are tables upon which are four large cages. They are large metal cages, four feet on a side, with wire mesh only on the front. But all the cages have been smashed in, their doors pulled off or hanging limply on a single hinge. This was evidently a small collection of animals for study.

On the floor by the cages are two large metal storage jars. One lies on its side.

There is a shard of mirror on the easternmost apparatus table, facing the door.

The books are reference works on myths, on magic, on theology, etc. (There are no magical books or spell books here.)

The four cages, left to right, originally held: a rock baboon (now downstairs), a giant ferret (now residing in the mirror fiend's stomach), a newly-captured baby griffon (flew to safety), and a small flock of four stirges.

The stirges are atop the bookcase, not immediately evident to prying eyes. Hungry as they are, of course they'll attack.

The Stirges:

Armor Class: 7
Hit Dice: 1*
Move: 30'/10'
Flying: 180'/60'
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1-3
No. Appearing: 4 (in these circumstances)
Save As: Fighter 2
Morale: 9
Treasure Type: Nil (in these circumstances)
Alignment: Neutral
XP value: 13

The upright metal storage jar contains an ochre jelly. It slurps and bubbles at the characters and may even lunge up at them but cannot climb the slick metal sides of the container; it is helpless. (Of course, if the con-

tainer is knocked over during the fight with the stirges, the ochre jelly is free.)

Additionally, you can have the mirror fiend attack the characters while they are within this chamber; it waits until they're under assault by the stirges before appearing, and the first thing it does is to upend the jar holding the ochre jelly.

33. Retameron's Practice Chamber

There is no furniture in this chamber.

On the east and west walls are weapon and armor racks, containing one full set of plate mail and matching shield, one set of chainmail and shield, one set of leather armor, two bows and 48 arrows in two quivers, one two-handed sword, one battle-axe, two maces, a halberd (pole arm), and a war hammer.

At the south end of the room, in the little nook, the wall is has thick planks of cheap pine laid over it and two straw dummies tied to it; the dummies are in poor shape, having been penetrated many times by knife-blows. This is a short knife-throwing range, good only for close-range throws.

The room's mirror is on the floor before the door.

None of the weapons or armor is magical.

This chamber is where Retameron exercises in the long winter months when there is little adventuring going on; here, he sword-trains his squires when the weather is too rainy or awful to do so; and here he practices his short-range knife-throwing.

On the west wall, just by the knife-throwing dummies, is a secret door opening out onto the hallway.

H. The Hatches and Crawlway

On the top floor you'll see several symbols — an H in a circle. This marks a secret hatch which leads to a crawlway beneath the floor; the crawlway is marked with the dotted line. It's about 3' square and runs all around the tower, just beneath the floor of the top story. This is a last-ditch defense installed by Retameron, an escape measure for use in times of crisis; only Retameron and Halia know of its existence. The hatches constitute "secret doors" for searching purposes.

The Search Through the Tower

The progression of the player-characters'

search through the tower probably goes something like this:

The characters enter the tower (through whatever means). They encounter the first piece of glass and shrink from it, thinking it is perhaps Skarda's Mirror. Remind them that a broken *mirror of life-trapping* is harmless. They'll discover upon examination that this isn't Skarda's Mirror. They'll also discover that there's far more mirror glass in the tower than there should be: Where did it come from? No answer is immediately forthcoming to them.

They'll begin running into the little creatures living in the tower, the refugees from Halia's small bestiary.

Then the mirror fiend begins his campaign of annihilation, using the methods described above. He'll pop out, do a little damage, and flee, waging a war of attrition. If the characters begin smashing all the mirrors in the tower, it be forced to use only the mirrors it has remaining to it; it may have to appear in another room from that in which the characters are and use stealth to attack the characters.

In all likelihood, the characters will kill the mirror fiend, but it could be a costly victory in terms of characters injured (and perhaps slain).

Finally, the characters are free to find the Mirror... or so they think.

Where Is Skarda's Mirror?

That's the fun part. The Mirror is nowhere within the Tower.

Let the characters ransom the Tower as they please; the Mirror is not within its confines. After having caught members of the second group of soldiers entering the Tower, Skarda became convinced that further, and perhaps more vigorous, attempts would be made on the tower and the Mirror, and decided to move it — and so he has.

You can choose for him to have done this in one of two ways.

He could simply have appeared in the real world and Teleported, with the Mirror, to another place. This would account for Sergeant Alkin's not having noticed the Mirror's departure.

Or, more entertainingly, he could have appeared before Sergeant Alkin and charmed him, persuading Alkin that he'd captured Retameron and Halia to protect them from some unnamed evil.

The latter is the better of the two choices, and you should use it unless the players are suspicious of Alkin and use some sort of *ESP*

or *dispel magic* upon him.

What Now?

The characters have cleaned out the tower but have not put their hands on the Mirror — what do they do now?

That decision is up to them. For the moment, however, Skarda is stalking THEM — anxious to revenge himself upon the adventurers who slew his pretty mirror fiend — and they'll find themselves back in the adventure too soon to suit them.

EPISODE TWO: THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

In this episode, the heroes make the transition into Skarda's Mirror. It's almost certain that most or all of them will be captured soon after they enter; though it's possible that they'll elude the forces there, it's not very likely.

For the moment, the progress of the adventure is in the hands of the players. They can do anything they choose. They'll probably summon Teranon in to give him the bad news that they can't find the Mirror. Then, let them go about their business as they please; if they want to go home, stay here, run about doing investigations, it's all the same.

Stalking the Characters

For the moment, Skarda is stalking them. He'll have a spy among or near them at all times — he has plenty of *charm* spells to use. If Sergeant Alkin isn't *charmed*, Andrya will be (while the fight is going on inside the Tower); or, if the characters immediately depart the tower to go home, neither needs to be charmed; Skarda will find someone else (preferably a low-level hireling or retainer of the characters) later on.

Eventually, he'll move to entrap them in the Mirror. He'd prefer to get them when they're split up — in separate rooms in a tavern, for instance. If they always stay together, then he'll have to get them when they're together. Here are ways he can do it:

At a Tavern

You can decide that the network of spies and *charmed* persons in Skarda's power informs the evil magic-user of which room in the tavern the characters are renting — while they're still haggling with the tavernkeeper and before they've even gone upstairs. Skarda will use his wizard eye to gain knowledge of the chamber, *teleport* to the chamber, place the Mirror against the wall behind the door (so that it is not evident when the door is open, but is when the door is closed) and hide himself elsewhere.

In Camp

While the characters are encamped — most asleep, at least one on guard, in the time-tested fashion — Skarda, with Mirror bared, will *teleport* into the middle of camp, shouting "Arise and meet your doom..."

In a Public Place

The characters, walking along through the

town bazaar, in a tavern taproom, or wherever they are, are followed by Skarda, who simply bares his Mirror at them (heedless of all the innocents who might be pulled into the Mirror — more slave labor, after all).

What Happens Then?

Now, Skarda can't be sure that all the characters will be pulled into the Mirror when they're exposed to it the first time. After all, each character gets a saving throw vs. spells, just as with an ordinary *mirror of life-trapping*, to avoid being pulled into it.

But he's taken that into account. The moment the Mirror has been exposed and characters have gazed upon it — some being transported into the Mirror, some not — a mass of soldiers from within the Mirror will emerge from the Mirror and assault them.

Skarda's planning to take advantage of a special feature of the Mirror — the fact that it can transport great masses at a single time. If a character riding on a horse, with an unconscious prisoner laid across the saddle behind him, gazes deliberately into the mirror, all three — character, horse and prisoner — will be transported into the Mirror. Therefore, if a soldier grabs hold of a player-character and then deliberately gazes into the Mirror, both soldier and unwitting character will be transported into the Mirror — and the character doesn't have a saving throw against that.

Skarda and his Minions

Skarda's character sheet, if you need it, is to be found in the "Non-Player Characters" appendix.

So are those for his men, the elite guardsmen accompanying him on this mission to capture the characters.

When they appear, these guards' weapons will be sheathed; their mission is to grab the characters, not harm them.

Two guardsmen will appear for each character. Each round, each guardsman will try to grab his character; this requires a normal to hit roll vs. the character's Armor Class, and does absolutely no damage.

When a guardsman grabs a character, he'll automatically look at the Mirror and both will be drawn into it — the character gets no saving throw if he's held by another character who is being drawn in.

Skarda, when the action starts, will gladly get out of the thick of things — he knows the characters have enough ability and power to do him harm. So he'll step out into the hall, or behind a tree, or anywhere the characters

can't immediately see him, and monitor the action on his *crystal ball*.

If things go badly for his men, he'll step in with a spell or two — anything he can use to bind, *charm*, or knock out the characters without really harming them. (He wants to take his time about harming them, back at home — in the Mirror.)

The purpose of this encounter, obviously enough, is to get the player-characters into the Mirror. Make every reasonable effort to make sure that's what happens — that the characters are drawn into the world of the Mirror. The adventure will continue presuming that this effort is successful.

What If Things Go Wrong?

If something goes drastically wrong (the characters are just too clever, powerful or lucky for them all to be drawn into the Mirror, and/or they kill Skarda in this episode), consult the "When Things Go Wrong" appendix.

Note: The Mirror can't be broken; it's an artifact. That's one thing that cannot go wrong.

Just Inside the Mirror

As the characters begin appearing inside the world of Skarda's Mirror, they'll be confronted with an amazing vista — and a whole lot of new enemies.

When they make the transition, they find themselves struggling with their opponents — somewhere entirely different from where they were before. Read them the following:

You're on an enormous platform — it has to be a hundred feet long, flush up against a giant mirrored wall.

You're looking out over a great vista — a huge chamber, which has a floor and walls and ceiling of mirrored glass. The platform you're on must be thirty feet above the shining mirrored floor, and the ceiling must be five hundred feet above you.

In the near distance, perhaps an eighth of a mile away, is a giant black ziggurat with a shining, mirrored palace standing atop it. Beyond it, maybe a quarter mile from you, is a line of black wall built upon this mirrored plain; there are tiny dots moving upon the walls, guardsmen most likely, and beyond the walls you see great open spaces, more walls, the roofs of buildings...

Behind you, the great mirrored wall reaches from floor to ceiling — smooth and shining except for the area immediately above the platform.

Ranged along the platform are what look like seven portals. Each stands twenty feet tall and is fifteen feet wide, and is surrounded by a golden border identical to the one around Skarda's Mirror.

The three on the right and the three on the left are black, but the portal in the center is lit — and it shows the scene you just left, the place you were in just before you were drawn here.

You've taken this all in with just a quick glance. You've also taken in the fact that this platform is crawling with soldiers — sixty or seventy, you can't be sure. They're carrying swords, pole arms, and especially crossbows, and several of them, in plate armor and wearing officers' crests on their helmets, are shouting "Surrender!"

If the characters are all drawn through at practically the same time, give them all this description at the same time. If they're drawn in at different intervals, you can take them aside individually and describe their surroundings to them, only allowing the players to interact when they're in the same place — either in the Mirror or outside it.

Draw them a quick sketch of what they see, based on the DM's Map of Skarda's Mirror, if it will help them visualize the scene.

Magic and Invisibility

Incidentally, this platform area has a permanent *detect magic* and *detect invisible* effect on it. When the characters have time to notice, they'll realize that their magical equipment is glowing brightly. If a character turns *invisible*, he'll still glow brightly enough for the guardsmen to know where he is.

Escape or Capture

Let the characters know — especially if they inquire — that they don't have much of a chance of physically overpowering all these guards. A sorcerer might get off one good spell and harm many of them, but the remainder will riddle him with crossbow fire or drag him down by sheer weight of numbers.

If a character struggles physically, he'll be wrestled down and beaten senseless — though the beating will not do him significant

harm.

How's that, you say? Let's introduce a rule for non-lethal attacks and talk about:

Subdual

When the guardsmen are grappling with the characters, they'll be striking to subdue them. They'll be using the pommels of their swords and daggers, the flats of their blades, etc.

Their weapons still do the same amount of damage, but only one-fourth of the damage is permanent, "real" damage.

When characters are being struck with subdual damage, tell them to mark the subdual damage separately from any real damage they might have already received. When the character reaches 0 hp, he is not dead — he is merely knocked out. Have the player take one-fourth of the subdual damage and note it as his real damage for that fight; the rest of the damage is erased (it "goes away"). The character is unconscious, and awakens hours later, at the DM's discretion.

Getting to the Portal

If, in the course of the fight, a character manages to get to the portal, which is mere feet away, he'll simply run into it; it feels like glass and is incredibly hard. (Skarda and his top officers know the command word to allow people out of the Mirror; a character must know the word in order to get out the way he got in.)

When the Dust Settles

If the characters do surrender, fine. If they don't, a scuffle as described above will occur. When this eventually settles down, it is likely that most, if not all, of the characters will be captured.

While this is going on, the portal behind the characters has gone black (as Skarda has concealed the Mirror) for a while, and then, not long after, the portal brightens up again — the characters can see that Skarda has returned to his own room, or tent, or whatever he is using as his momentary HQ. There are others of his elite soldiers there. The Mirror is turned to face the fireplace or campfire; Skarda speaks momentarily with one of his officers, then looks at the Mirror and appears within it.

Incidentally, this is the first good look the characters will have had at Skarda. Describe him:

The man is of average height and pudgy, with a merry plump face, straggly black hair (clean-shaven), bright blue eyes and fair complexion. He dresses in a robe with alternating patches of sky-blue and flat black, and wears good boots, a belt with an expensive golden buckle and a sheath for a dagger, a gold coronet and numerous finger-rings. He looks like someone's favorite uncle — not like a murderous, traitorous wizard.

He'll look at the characters momentarily, then address them.

Well, I hope you lot feel honored. I have no personal grudge against you, you know. But that fool Teranon had to go out and get you capable adventurers to look for his wretched offspring, and I just can't have that. You're good enough to cause me problems, so I've brought you to my own home, where you can do me no harm.

My minions will be taking you to new accommodations. I hope you enjoy them; you'll be staying there for quite a while.

Naturally, he will not address them so if they're all unconscious.

Uncaptured Characters

If a player-character has managed to elude Skarda's minions and escaped (perhaps through use of *teleport* or a *wish* — but not *invisibility*, as you've seen), Skarda will know that someone's missing — he knows how many people were drawn through the Mirror.

While he may not be able to capture the missing character(s) (this depends on their cleverness at avoiding capture; *teleporting* to a great distance is practically foolproof, for the time being anyway), he'll still order massive search parties formed to track the character(s) down. And he'll dress down the officer in charge.

Worm, how could you let someone escape? You've jeopardized the entire plan. Such carelessness is unforgiveable.

But we'll let the guards decide. Make a run for it. If you make it to the Palace, I'll forgive you.

The terrified officer, having no choice, will bolt down the steps to "ground" level and make a desperate dash for the Palace, an

EPISODE TWO: THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

eighth of a mile away. Skarda will smile sweetly at his crossbowmen, who, like competitors at a county fair, will take pot-shots at him, joking all the while and making admiring remarks about excellent shots. Needless to say, the officer won't make it alive to the Palace.

So far, this hasn't told you, the DM, what to do about the escaped player-character. For that, read the "When Things Go Wrong" appendix.

To the Dungeons

Once the conversation with Skarda is concluded, the characters will be carted off to their incarceration as described in the next episode.

The World of Skarda's Mirror

That's the end of Episode Two — but here is the ideal point to describe to you the world within Skarda's Mirror.

Take a look at the DM's Map of Skarda's Mirror and we'll see about giving you the tour.

Dimensions and Materials

As described in the Dungeon Master's Introduction, the world of Skarda's Mirror is about one mile long, three-fourths of a mile wide, and 500' tall.

This enclosure is surrounded by great walls of glass; no one, including Skarda, is sure how thick these barriers are or what they lead to — if indeed they lead to anything.

The glass at surface level is all the same: a thick layer of mirror-reflective material. This glass is not truly mirror glass; it is not a layer of clear glass with silver or mercury behind it. Instead, it is reflective clear through: if you take a block of the stuff and shave it into microscopically thin slices, each "slice" will be a perfect mirror on both sides.

But, as Skarda discovered when he directed that his men begin quarrying, other types of glassy substances lie under the surface. The quarriers found pure, clear glass and a very strong stone that looks like black onyx but is suitable for heavy building; it is this onyx-like substance that has gone to the making of the walls, the base of the palace ziggurat, and most of the buildings in this little world.

Light comes from a *continual light*-type spell cast upon the ceiling by the world's immortal creator; it is nearly as bright as daylight, and no mortal *dispel* can eliminate the

light. Because the ceiling, walls and floor are all reflective, the light suffuses the entire chamber. There is no night in the world of Skarda's Mirror.

The immortal who created this world also provided it with water (with a powerful and permanent series of *create water* spells); across the surface of the world, at 600' intervals, are well-shafts, 6' across (and no one knows how deep) and filled to the brim with clear, pure water.

Though the floor and other glass/rock surfaces look and for the most part feel like glass, neither characters nor horses suffers a penalty or undue chance to slip or fall while walking upon them. It's just like walking on concrete — an effect of the magic of the place.

Magic Use

While magic-users are within the confines of this world, certain of their spells will be affected.

Clerical Spells

Commune: This spell does not function here.

Continual Light: This spell cannot be used in its reversed form in this world.

Dispel Magic: This spell can only be used on mortal magic, not on any spell cast by the world's immortal creator.

Light: This spell cannot be used in its reversed form in this world.

Word of Recall: This spell does not function here, unless the home is within this world.

Magic-User Spells

Conjure Elemental: Only air and water elementals can appear here. If the caster calls for another type of elemental, he has wasted his spell.

Continual Light: See note above for the clerical spell.

Fire Ball: The *fire ball* is unaffected by the magic of this world, but note that any *fire ball* hitting the ground, walls or ceiling will slag and dimple a section of the wall — creating a concave mirror. (This has no effect on the game, but is interesting when you're describing the effects of damage.)

Light: See note above for the clerical spell.

Lightning Bolt: A *lightning bolt*, if it misses its target, will ricochet off the walls, floor and ceiling until it hits something that doesn't have a mirror finish — onyx, a person, an animal, etc. A *bolt* could theoretically bounce around for a long and frightening time before impacting on a nonreflective target.

Mirror Image: When cast, this spell cre-

ates 10-40 (1d4x10) mirror images instead of the usual 1-4.

Passwall: If *passwall* is cast on the floor, walls, or ceiling of this world, it will not work. If it is cast on some internal wall (the walls built by the hand of man), it will function normally.

Teleport: This spell does not allow the caster to *teleport* out of this world; the teleporter can teleport anywhere within the world of Skarda's Mirror, however.

Wizard Eye: A *wizard eye* WILL pass through the portal of Skarda's Mirror, as long as the Mirror is not covered.

Wishes

Wish: *Wishes* are diminished in power in this place: A *wish* can be used to duplicate the effects of any spell up to 6th level of power, but cannot be used for any permanent effect (such as raising character abilities, etc.). A *wish* CAN be used to *teleport* a character outside the Mirror or to give him the secret password for the Portals.

The walls are all 30' tall and 20' wide, built of the black-onyx stone brought out of the quarry. Guards patrol, sparsely; the population is under sufficient control that the guards have little to worry about. The black squares you see on the walls are gatehouses, portals between the various walled-off areas; the gates are great 10' wide blocks of reflective glass which roll aside on ingenious coaster arrangements.

(For purposes of this adventure, the walls and gates are of sufficient thickness that it takes a mining crew several days to penetrate one — it's not practical or possible to hack through with one's sword.)

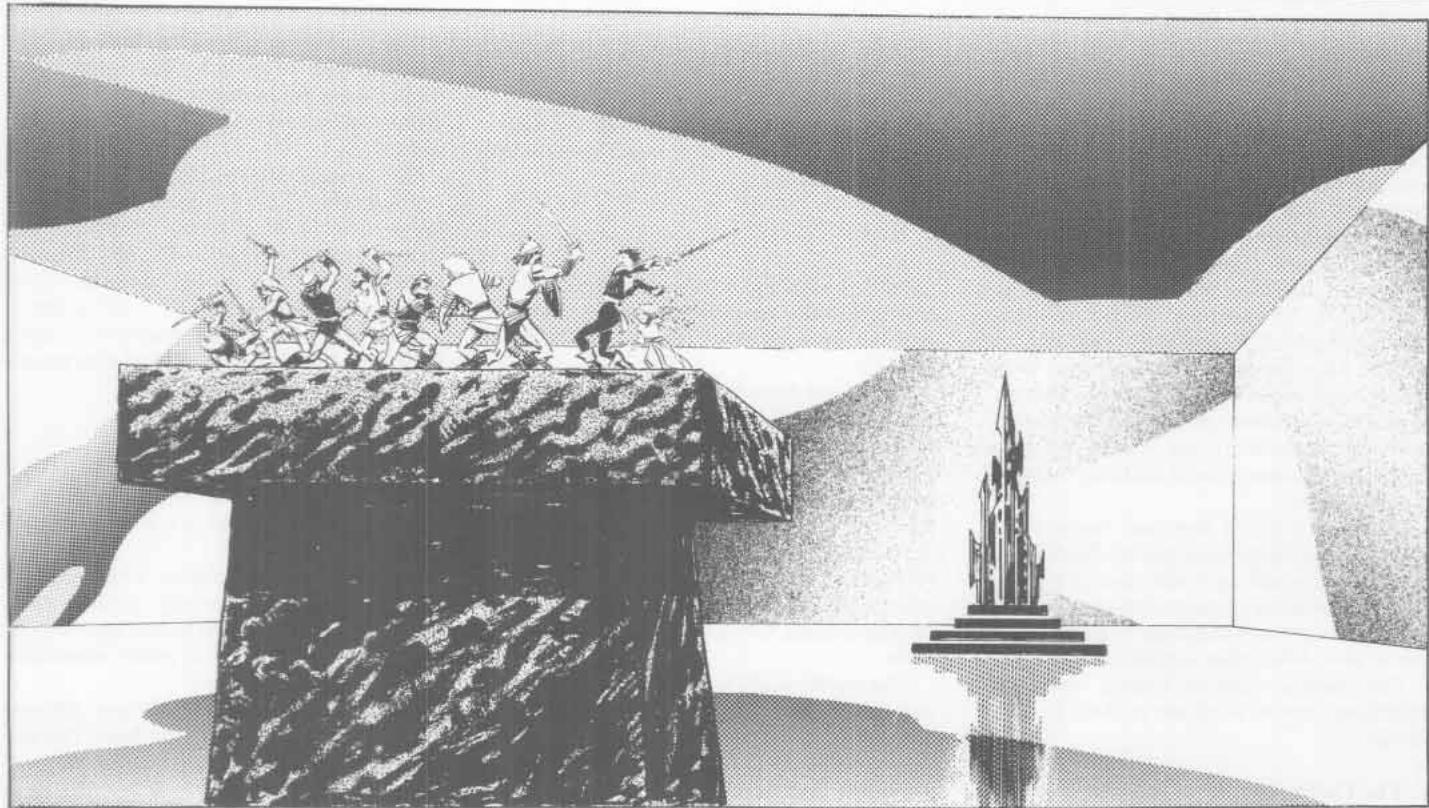
(Magic can penetrate these walls: A *passwall* will get all the way through one of the reflective portals, or half-way through a wall. A *fire ball* will blast a hole about 1' deep per level of the caster into a wall. A *lightning bolt* will bounce off a reflective wall, but will blast a hole about 2' deep per level of the caster into an onyx wall. A *disintegrate* will make a hole 10' deep.)

The Map

Now, on to the DM's Map of Skarda's Mirror. Note that the map has a compass rose, but the designations of direction (north, south, etc.) are merely for convenience and have no relation to real-world directions. The soldiers use these directions.

1. The Platform and Portals

This is where the characters appeared when



transported into Skarda's Mirror.

This is a platform built of the reflective glass; it is 30' tall, 120' long (flush with the south wall) and 30' wide. A series of reflective steps leads from the "ground" up to the platform.

Arrayed along the wall at platform level are seven portals. As described earlier, each is 20' tall and 15' wide, surrounded by an ornate golden border similar to that around Skarda's Mirror. There is 10' between portals. Of the seven, six are dark; there is only blackness beyond. The center mirror is bright and shows what Skarda's Mirror is facing in the "real" world. It shows the outside world in exaggerated detail, like a drive-in movie theatre screen; a six-foot man will seem to be fifteen feet tall. No matter what orientation Skarda's Mirror is turned, the "picture" shown by the portal is still 15' wide and 20' tall, so there is obviously no relationship between the way the Mirror is held and what people behind it see.

The portal looks clear, but there is a layer of glassy substance between this world and the outer world; this layer is impervious to damage (except from an immortal). When Skarda was transported to this world, one of the immortal creator's stray thoughts struck him and imparted to him the knowledge of

the password; whenever he (or his most elite guardsmen) wishes to leave, he stands immediately before the portal, says the password (quietly, so none can hear), and for the next combat round the portal allows people to pass through to the outer world.

When the Mirror's face is totally obscured in the outer world (usually by a protective covering such as the velvet screen that comes with it), nothing can pass through the portal; it looks identical to the other six portals. No one knows to what other places these portals might have once led.

Thirty soldiers are always stationed here.

2. Skarda's Palace

This is Skarda's modest little home — a large two-story palace, its outer walls all built of the reflective glass, set atop a mountainous ziggurat built of the black onyx-like stone.

The ziggurat covers a plot of mirrored plain 500' long by 350' broad; it rises, in four great levels, to a height of 120' above the plain, and upon the fourth level is built the palace. You see the narrow lines representing broad staircases up the north and south slopes of the ziggurat.

Skarda's Palace does not have its own map; should the characters ever break into

the Palace, you can use any other palace plans you own, or adapt the map of Duke Stefan Karameikos' hunting lodge to your purposes.

The dungeons located below the ziggurat do have their own map, so we won't talk about them in detail here.

There is a great quantity of traffic, mostly soldiers on foot and horseback, between the ziggurat and the military encampment. (Seen from afar, it looks like lines of ants moving between nest and foraging site.)

3. The Military Encampment

This is where the backbone of Skarda's plans lives: His military.

The east-west buildings at the north end of the encampment are bunkhouses for the men; each is single-story, 240' long and 40' wide, and can house 75 men. (This would give him room for 900; he actually only has about 500, and nearly half the buildings are empty. Skarda has overbuilt, anticipating the growth of his army.)

The north-south buildings on the western side of the encampment are the stables for his horses; each is single-story, 480' long and 40' wide, and has stalls for 100 horses. Of the six stables, only two are filled; Skarda's force has

EPISODE TWO: THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

200 mounts.

The building in the southeast corner is the one-story officers' quarters, where the army's 30 officers live in lavish fashion.

The open area of the encampment, the southeast one-third of the encampment, is the parade and training ground.

No maps are provided for these buildings; if your characters end up visiting them, you can easily improvise their contents and arrangements. The soldiers' barracks and stables are especially simple; the barracks are merely long buildings divided into large rooms, each room filled with bunks and garbage (these soldiers being neither terribly neat nor disciplined); the stables are great long constructions rows of stalls the length of the two walls.

There is a lot of foot and horse traffic within the military encampment: Soldiers going on duty upon the walls, and coming off duty; messengers going to and coming from the ziggurat; overseers going to perform duties in any of the other regions on the map.

The various types of soldier, when you need them, are to be found in the NPCs appendix.

4. The Coliseum

Skarda has had a coliseum built to conduct games — to punish those he wishes to punish, to entertain himself when times are slow, etc. (He was particularly grateful for the coliseum during the two-year wait while the Mirror was covered.)

Instead of being erected over the plain, this coliseum has been dug out of the plain; it's sunken into the surface of the floor. The tiers of seats are of living rock (or glass), of various types (the diggers struck several different strata while carving the coliseum, so the tiers can be reflective, clear, black, or a bizarre combination of all three. The floor of the coliseum is 60' below the surface of the Mirror Plain; the creator's wells are still in place, but the water does not rise over the level of the rim of the well.

The coliseum seats about 5,000 — more than the entire population of the world in the Mirror. Naturally, when Skarda hosts an event in the coliseum, attendance is compulsory: All, except soldiers on duty, must attend.

In this coliseum, Skarda conducts challenge or grudge matches between soldiers, battles to the death between servants who are too old or tired to work effectively, or between those he has grown tired of or angry with and wishes to see dead. He's imported enough

livestock in his years of reaving that he can conduct bullfights or slay those he wishes to by feeding them to wild lions or boars.

Skarda's box is in the center of the south end of the coliseum, and so action usually takes place there.

5. Hell

"Hell" is what the 3,000 slaves of Skarda's Mirror call the area where they live; Skarda and the military refer to it as the Slave's Quarter.

The slaves have been forced to construct single-story tenement dwellings for themselves. Hell is divided by broad streets into four major quarters; in each quarter are fifteen large, rambling buildings (some 230' by 350'). Each building can hold up to 750 residents, and so all 3,000 slaves live scattered throughout the southeastern quarter; the other quarters, built to house more slaves Skarda intends to capture, are off-limits to them.

The residents of Hell live in grinding poverty. They receive a pittance of food from the farms (see below), barely enough to keep them working each day. Disobedience toward a military man (and all overseers are military) is punishable by flogging (if the offender is lucky) or public execution (if he isn't).

They've been forced to build Hell without benefit of Skarda's engineers, who supervised the building of all the other buildings in the mirror world; consequently, the buildings of Hell are not well-constructed and are prone to collapse and kill their residents.

Of the residents of Hell, about one-third work in the farms. They grow all the food consumed by the denizens of the mirror world; they tend the flocks; they gather the flax, weave and dye the linen, and make the clothes used by all residents (sturdy, colorful uniforms for the military, miserly and inadequate garments for the slaves).

Another third works within the Quarries, either quarrying stone, or cutting it, or dragging it to building sites, or building with it; even more so than the farms, this is back-breaking and murderous work.

The last third consists of children too young to work and those who work in the other quadrants of the mirror world: palace slaves, stable workers, slaves who clean the military quarters, etc.

In the past two decades, two major attempts at revolution have failed. The soldiers are simply too well-equipped and, more importantly, too well-fed and cared for to be overthrown.

The population of Hell has been gathered from all over: Many are from Karameikos, Black Eagle, the southern islands, and lands further away, including Thyatis and Ylaraum.

The average slave in Hell looks like this:

AC 9; HD 1; hp 2 (which would be anywhere from 4 to 8 if the character were healthy and nourished); MV 90' (30') (this would be 120'/40' if the character were healthy and nourished); #AT 1; D 1 point (1-4 if the character can lay hands on a club); Save F1; ML 3 (10 if there's mob violence going on).

6. The Farms

This district is where all the food for Skarda's Mirror is grown, and it's a technological marvel.

Each of the rectangles on your map is a vast building made entirely of clear glass. Each building is devoted to one type of food: wheat, rice, barley, corn, green vegetables, cattle, sheep, swine, etc.

You can decide on one of two different growing techniques for all this food. The first is that Skarda has discovered how to manipulate the natural forces within the Mirror so that, by focusing the ambient light through panes of clear glass, he creates the equivalent of a *create food* spell in each building — sufficient, all assembled, to feed the nearly 4,000 denizens of the Mirror.

The second is that Skarda, a very inventive man, has discovered hydroponics. The buildings where vegetable matter is being grown would consist of long, shallow, watery environments out of which grow all these plants at miraculous rates; if the characters are intrigued and survive the adventure, they might carry knowledge of this technique back to the campaign world, which could lead to interesting repercussions years later.

Regardless, each of these buildings has an average of about 40 workers assigned to it: hoeing plants, tending livestock, running messages, reaping crops, baling hay, running hay over to the stables, etc. Each 20-worker team has a soldier overseeing it, and infractions of the rules — such as eating something, or trying to steal a farming implement — are punishable by death, on the spot.

7. The Quarry

This is the series of three deep pits where Skarda's minions have excavated all the building materials used in this mirror world. The two buildings shown for the area are

where the stone-carvers work. There is a continual stream of traffic out of this district, blocks of stone carried in wagons pulled by men, bound for areas still under construction (such as new or collapsed regions of Hell).

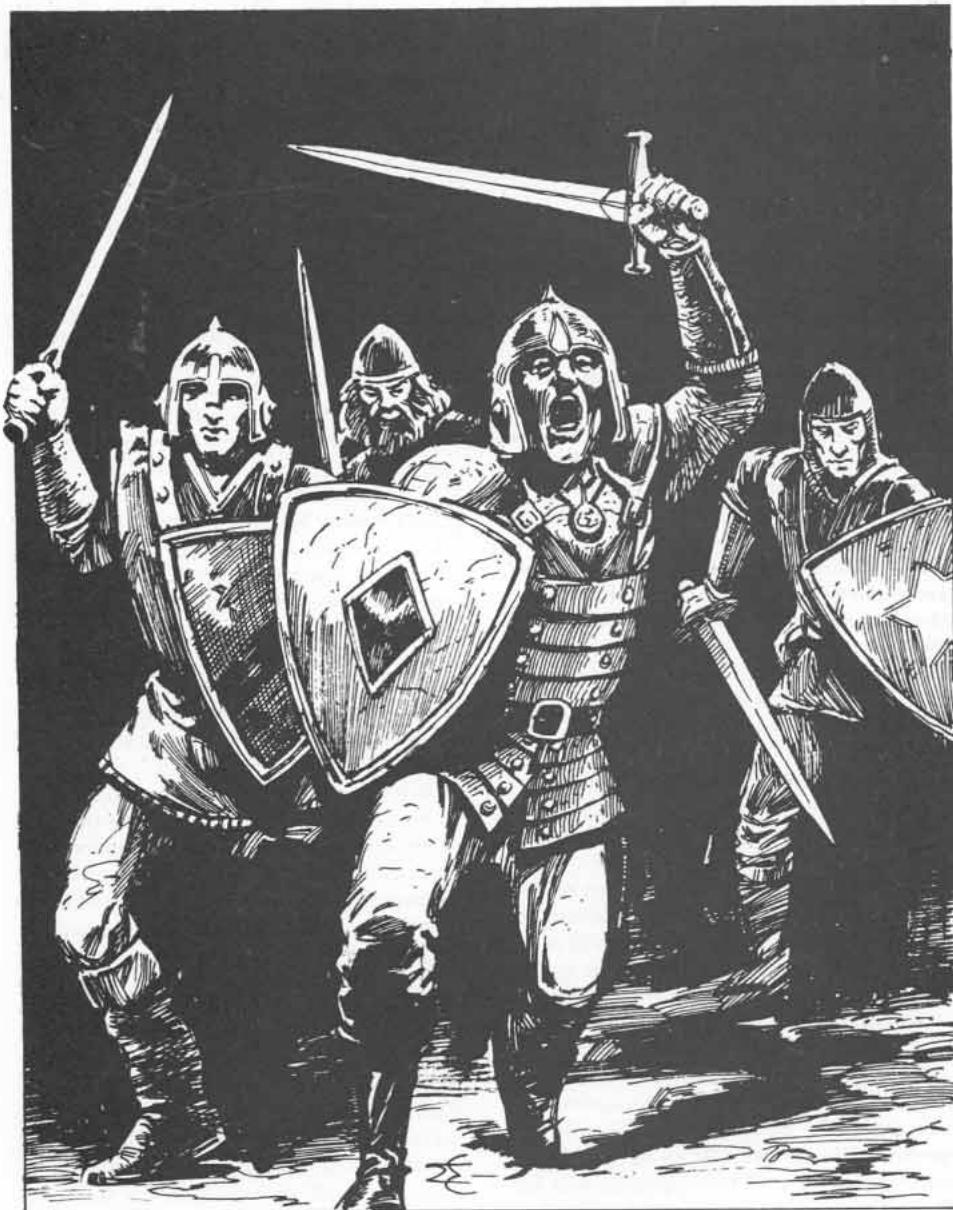
The contour lines shown within the quarry indicate depths of 30'; you can see that the northwestern pit is about 210' deep, the northeastern is about 150' deep, and the southern is about 180' deep.

For the most part, the northwestern pit is reflective glass, the northeastern is clear glass, and the southern is the onyx-like black stone.

Here, as you might expect, attempts to steal picks or carving knives or any other tools are punished by immediate execution.

Onward

Now that you have a rough familiarity with the unhappy world of Skarda's Mirror, you can continue on to Episode Three.



EPISODE THREE: IN THE DUNGEONS

The characters have been dragged to a lonely existence in the dungeons beneath Skarda's palace. In this episode, they have their chance to escape... or, failing that, to be rescued by the few rebels operating within Skarda's Mirror.

The Dungeons

The map key for the DM's Map of the Dungeons is given at the end of Episode Three.

The Characters Are Jailed

In the last episode, the characters — most of them, at least — were captured. As they stand on the platform, their equipment is taken from them. (For each character, secretly roll 1d6. On a 1, the guards have missed some small object in the characters' possession — your choice. It could be a ring, medallion, lockpick set, well-concealed small knife, etc., anything small. The characters won't immediately know that the object has been missed — but if they ask, "Do I still seem to have my (insert name of object)," you can tell them.)

The characters are shackled, the magicians and elves in gauntlet/shackle combinations which prevent them from moving their fingers to cast spells.

The characters are marched down off the platform, across the great mirror plain to the foot of the ziggurat, and into a doorway at the base of the ziggurat. They are led past guards there, down a corridor which turns right and a few yards later turns left, and then down a great spiral staircase.

There, they find themselves in a hallway; the air is stale and reeks. Their captors take them down the hallway to a door, which is opened for them, into a 30' by 30' room with more guards in it. Their equipment is left there. They are dragged through a door on the opposite side, into the actual dungeons.

They are dragged along a stone-floored dungeon with iron cage cells to either side; the cages are filled with skinny men and women wearing tattered clothing, looking at them with dull and beaten eyes; there is the sound of moaning and screaming from elsewhere in the dungeon.

The characters are led up this aisle recognize as they're led up the aisle and then right into a cross-corridor, still between rows of cells.

Kogrin

As the characters are being brought toward their cells, a figure emerges through a set of gates ahead (at 14 on the map) and lumbers toward them. Describe him so:

This man, if it is a human man, stands at least six and a half feet tall. He is powerfully, if apishly, muscled; he has a coarse mat of red hair on his head and patches of red hair on his chest, arms and the backs of his hands. His face looks like a mass of gristle that's been hammered at by an angry dwarf; his mouth looks slack and stupid, but there's a light in his eyes — a light of eagerness if not intelligence.

He wears heavy brown clothes and thick leather boots, a leather jerkin, and leather vambraces studded with spikes. Over his shoulder protrudes the hilt of a two-handed sword.

The characters' guard introduces the lumbering mass: "Gentlemen" ("and ladies," if there are any present), "this is your jailer, Kogrin. Obey him implicitly and you may keep most of your fingers and toes for a while."

Kogrin just grins and grunts happily.

Two cells — not open-barred cells, but closed metal boxes with small shuttered windows on the doors — will be opened and three characters (or less, depending on how many characters there are) will be led into each.

Kogrin will begin with the clerics, elves and magic-users who have been placed in special shackles; he'll unshackle one of their hands, gripping the hand painfully, then bring the other hand around and reshackle the character so that his hands are before him. If the character resists, remind him that soldiers are standing ready with swords and crossbows. If the character continues to struggle, they'll shoot and hack at him until he quiets down or dies. They're not playing with subdual damage here.)

Once the character has his hands shackled in front of him, Kogrin attaches the shackles to chains stapled into the metal walls.

Once all the characters are shackled in place, he'll stand up, sniff the air, shake his head, and tell the officer in charge "Wait here." He'll leave, and return a minute later with a bucket — a bucket containing aging fish-heads and sewage, which he'll liberally splash over all the characters. The guards will break up at this; Kogrin announces, "NOW they belong" in his gravel-breaking voice, and then they all depart and shut the doors

upon our heroes.

What Happens in the Dungeons

The characters have now been deposited in their cells, there to await their fates. Doubtless they're not going to do that; they're likely to want to escape. As a matter of fact, they're likely to be able to escape. But it's important that you see to it they don't do so immediately; you'll want to introduce them to an important NPC and impart some knowledge to them first.

Finding Missed Possessions

Once they've been left alone, they'll begin talking among themselves. While they're doing so, tell any one character who still has some of his equipment left — because the guards missed it — that, for instance, "You feel a hard lump where your medallion should be—if the guards hadn't taken it."

When he checks it out, he'll discover that the guards missed it — he still has it. The other characters will probably make sure that they haven't been left any equipment, so you'll be able to inform all other characters which equipment they have remaining to them.

(Since each character had only a 1 in 6 chance of having anything left, it's not likely that more than one will have anything left; it's possible that none will. If you prefer that someone have a piece of equipment left to him, then don't rely on the 1 in 6 roll; just decide that the guards missed it, and allow him to find it now.)

Earthquake

After the characters have been in their cell a few minutes — they can have found their missed possessions and perhaps begun planning their escape — a low groaning, like a dragon bellowing deep beneath the earth, sounds; the floor trembles; frightened yelling is heard from the other cells; the characters hear the jailers and soldiers cursing in vexation; and dust (black onyx dust) settles down from between the blocks that make up the ceiling. After a minute, the tremor ceases.

The Eyehole

As was mentioned earlier, there's a coin-sized hole between the more easterly of the characters' cells and the cell immediately behind it. Have each character in that cell roll 1d20, and the character rolling highest notices the hole. He also notices that there's an eye there,

staring in at the player-characters — a blood-shot blue eye.

Once he's been noticed, Ashgarth (the fellow in that cell) will move his mouth to the hole and whisper hoarsely: "Welcome to the dungeons. I'm Ashgarth, from Hell. Who might you be?"

Conversations With Ashgarth

Ashgarth, the man in that cell, is a rebel leader, an organizer against Skarda. He's planning a rebellion and can recognize the sort of talent — and power — which will improve its chances for success.

He knows that it's not Skarda's style to place spies within the dungeon. Therefore, Ashgarth trusts that anyone slapped into a cell is doomed as he is and can perhaps aid his cause. Also, these adventurers are unknown to him and look like healthy fighters — just what his revolution needs.

So he will introduce himself as mentioned above, then ask the characters their stories, how they came to be here, etc.

If asked, he'll gladly give them information about what's going on here; sample questions and his answers to them follow. For the questions below which the player characters do NOT ask, he'll volunteer the answers anyway — it's important that the players know all this, so make sure that Ashgarth gives them the facts.

Who Are You?

My name is Ashgarth of Lumm. That's my village, Lumm. I don't imagine it's there any anymore. I'm the son of a barrelmaker.

How Did You Come to Be Here?

Skarda and his raiders overran Lumm when I was six. Nearly twenty years ago, that was. They rode in, whooping and yelling, with Skarda at point. Just as I began to make out details of his band, I was drawn into the mirror and captured by the portal guards, as we all were. I've grown up here.

Did you mean, how did I come to end up in the dungeons? I dropped a brick on the foot of a corporal a few hours ago. It was an accident, but they brought me here. I'm to be stretched until they know one way or another whether it was truth or accident; then they'll probably slay me.



EPISODE THREE: IN THE DUNGEONS

What Is This Place?

None of us is truly sure. It is, we think, a little plane of being held within Skarda's Mirror. We have no men of learning among us — Skarda has made sure to slay all the magicians and clerics among us — so we know very little about the nature of this place.

Ashgarth will also (gladly) describe the entire world of the Mirror in great detail, quadrant by quadrant, concentrating his speech especially upon the suffering and terrible toil which his people suffer.

How Many People Live Here?

As near as we can calculate, there are just under four thousand. Most of us are slaves in Hell. There are about five hundred soldiers.

What Was That Tremor?

Some sort o' groundshake or earthquake. They worry just about everyone here except Skarda. They only started about a month ago. Lotta people think that whatever being built this little world is mad about the damage done to it — the quarry especially.

What Do You Know About Skarda?

I know very little about the man himself. He's just a monster in the form of a man. Lives within the Palace above us.

I know of him that he is a powerful user of spells. I know that he is insane; according to all tales I have heard, he can be terrible and wrathful and murderous one minute, calm and peaceful and even generous the next.

I know that he has been capturing villagers like myself for twenty years and more, forcing us to build for and grow for and serve his army.

And I know why he has been making his plans and forming his army all these many years. He has a terrible mission: He plans to conquer all the nations of the world. It's no secret.

He'll start by sneaking into the palace of Duke Stefan Karameikos with the Mirror in his possession. If he cannot enter by normal means, I am sure that his magic will carry him within.

Once he's within the palace, all he needs to do is summon forth his army. Imagine that — hundreds of soldiers swarming through the Duke's palace from inside! What palace could prepare for this sort of attack? None, I'm thinking.

He'd planned to do this more than two years ago, when something happened — we don't know what. But he couldn't leave the Mirror and he's been very angry since then.

But now the portal is open to him again — I don't know how, though I'll wager you do. And he's ready to begin his plan again.

Do You Have a Plan for Escape?

Listen closely — I can help you to escape if you can help me to do so. This is important.

Back in Hell, I've a force of men and women who are healthy enough and willing to fight; we have some weapons and a little armor. We're not enough to confront the whole army, but we can, I think, sweep the Portal of guards and hold it for a few moments.

That's not enough to escape, as you might know. The Portal is barred to those who do not know the magic word of passage.

But I know of an officer, a member of Skarda's own personal guard, who is willing to give us that password if we can get, uh, him through to the outer world.

What we have to do is escape the dungeon and somehow get back to Hell, where we can meet with this officer and with my warriors.

Other Questions

If the characters have other questions for Ashgarth, here are some appropriate answers:

HOW TO ESCAPE: Ashgarth doesn't have any specific idea as to how they can get out of their chains or the dungeons. He does know that the rear entrance, the one which the characters entered, is much less well-defended than the main entrance; this is particularly true because the sending of an alarm at the bottom of the main entrance stairwell will alert guards at the top of the stairwell, and they can put together an enormously strong welcoming force for characters as-

cending that stairwell. He'd definitely prefer to leave through the rear entrance.

MAP OF THE DUNGEONS: Ashgarth does know the layout of these dungeons fairly well (he is, after all, a rebel leader and gathers information like this). If asked, he'll use some muck from his cell and crudely sketch, on the back of his tattered tunic, the Players' Map of the Dungeon. He'll roll it up and pass it through to the players; at that point you can give them the appropriate map.

RETAMERON AND HALIA: Ashgarth knows that there was some sort of stir about two new prisoners, a man and a woman. He does know, from his little grapevine, in which cells they have been placed.

THE MYSTERY OFFICER: He is not eager to give the characters the name of the officer who knows the password. (This is simple defensive paranoia; he'd prefer that the characters not be too independent of him.) If the only way to persuade the characters to break him out is to give them that name, he will. The officer's name is Zira, and she's a brand-new member of the elite guard.

THE CHARACTERS' PROPERTY: He does know that the first room the characters came through is where prisoners' gear is held prior to examination.

SIZE OF THE REBEL FORCE: Ashgarth has over a hundred men and women willing to fight — when the time is right. Each has some sort of weapon and heavy linen armor. It's taken years to smuggle enough tools, flax, and food to equip and make healthy these freedom fighters; they're all desperate to escape back into the real world. Ashgarth is certain that, once violence begins, the other slaves in Hell can be incited to riot and swarm over the guards — but the other slaves must be able to see the rebels achieving some success before they'll be willing to fight.

STILL MORE QUESTIONS: If the characters have other questions for Ashgarth, decide to your own satisfaction how much he knows about the subject and how much he'll be willing to tell them. In general, he's glad to tell them anything he knows in the hopes that they'll be persuaded to rescue him and help his cause.

Ashgarth's statistics are in the NPC appendix at the back of this module.

The Characters Escape Their Shackles

The characters are going to want to escape. They have to start with escaping their shackles, then escape their cells, then get out of the dungeons, and (finally) escape this little universe.

Delson 6th Level Cleric (Elder)

S 13 I 7 W 15 D 11 Co 13 Ch 12

HP 31 AC 1

Bonuses and Penalties: +1 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to saving throws vs. magic; +1 hp per level

Weapons: war hammer +1, mace

Armor: Plate and shield

Magical Items: ring of protection +1, 5' radius

Spells:

First Level — Cure Light Wounds Third Level — Striking
Cure Light Wounds

Second Level — Hold Person
Bless

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Holy Symbol

Five Phials of Holy Water

Kerole 8th Level Fighter (Superhero)

S 18 I 11 W 10 D 15 Co 13 Ch 14

HP 59 AC 1

Bonuses and Penalties: +3 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +1 hp per level; +1 reaction

Weapons: Sword +1, bow and 20 arrows, dagger

Armor: Plate and shield

Magical Items: Boots of Traveling and Leaping

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Trylia 7th Level Thief (Pilferer)

S 11 I 11 W 8 D 18 Co 16 Ch 15

HP 34 AC 3

Bonuses and Penalties: -1 to saving throws vs. magic; +3 to missile fire rolls; -3 to AC; +2 hp per level; +1 on reaction rolls

Weapons: dagger +1, daggers (normal, 3), sword

Armor: Leather Armor

Magical Items: Potion of invulnerability, potion of speed

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Lockpicks

Delson is a warrior-cleric; his spells are usually combat-oriented. This cleric's philosophy is that evil should be destroyed — mercilessly and swiftly. He has adventured with Kerole, Lindoran, Trylia, Kindel, and Nesmis in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

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Kerole is an experienced and well-known fighter/adventurer. She is a heavy combat specialist — fond of plate armor and toe-to-toe slugouts — but is also proficient with the longbow for distance work.

Kerole has adventured with Delson, Lindoran, Trylia, Kindel, and Nesmis in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

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Trylia is a notorious rogue within the local Thieves' Guild, one willing to embark on all sorts of madcap adventures either for treasure or for fun. She is one of the nimblest thieves around and an expert with thrown knives; she is leery of confronting magic-users.

This character has adventured with Delson, Kerole, Lindoran, Kindel, and Nesmis in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

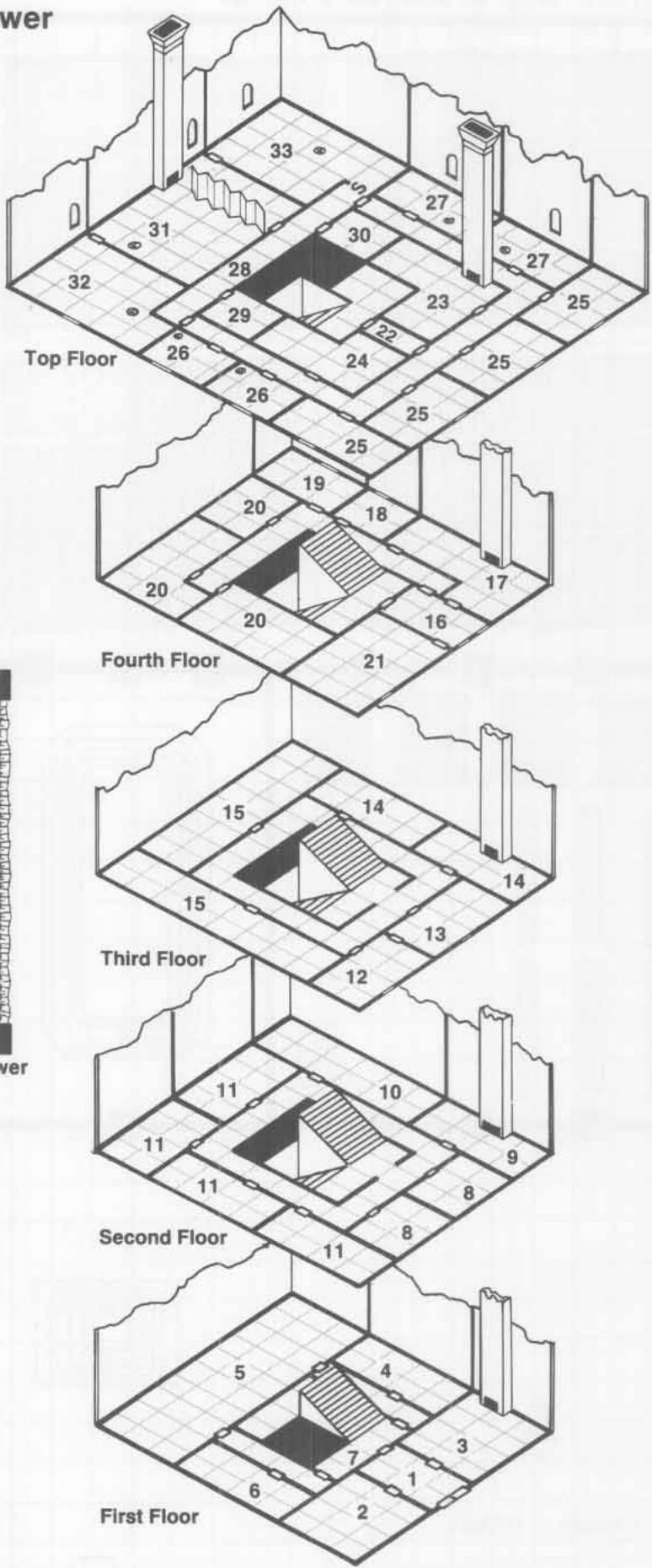
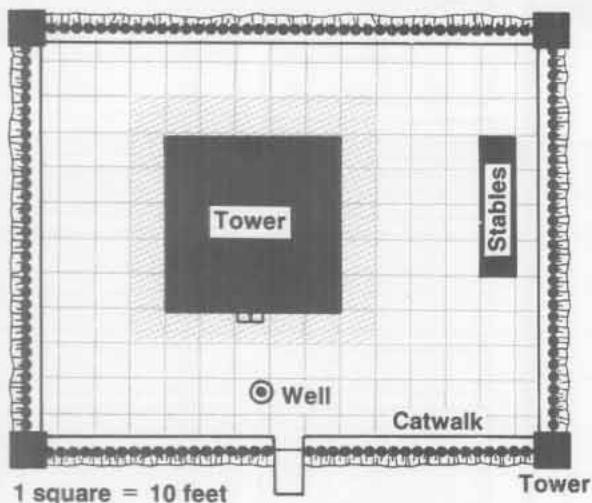
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DM'S Map of Retameron's Tower

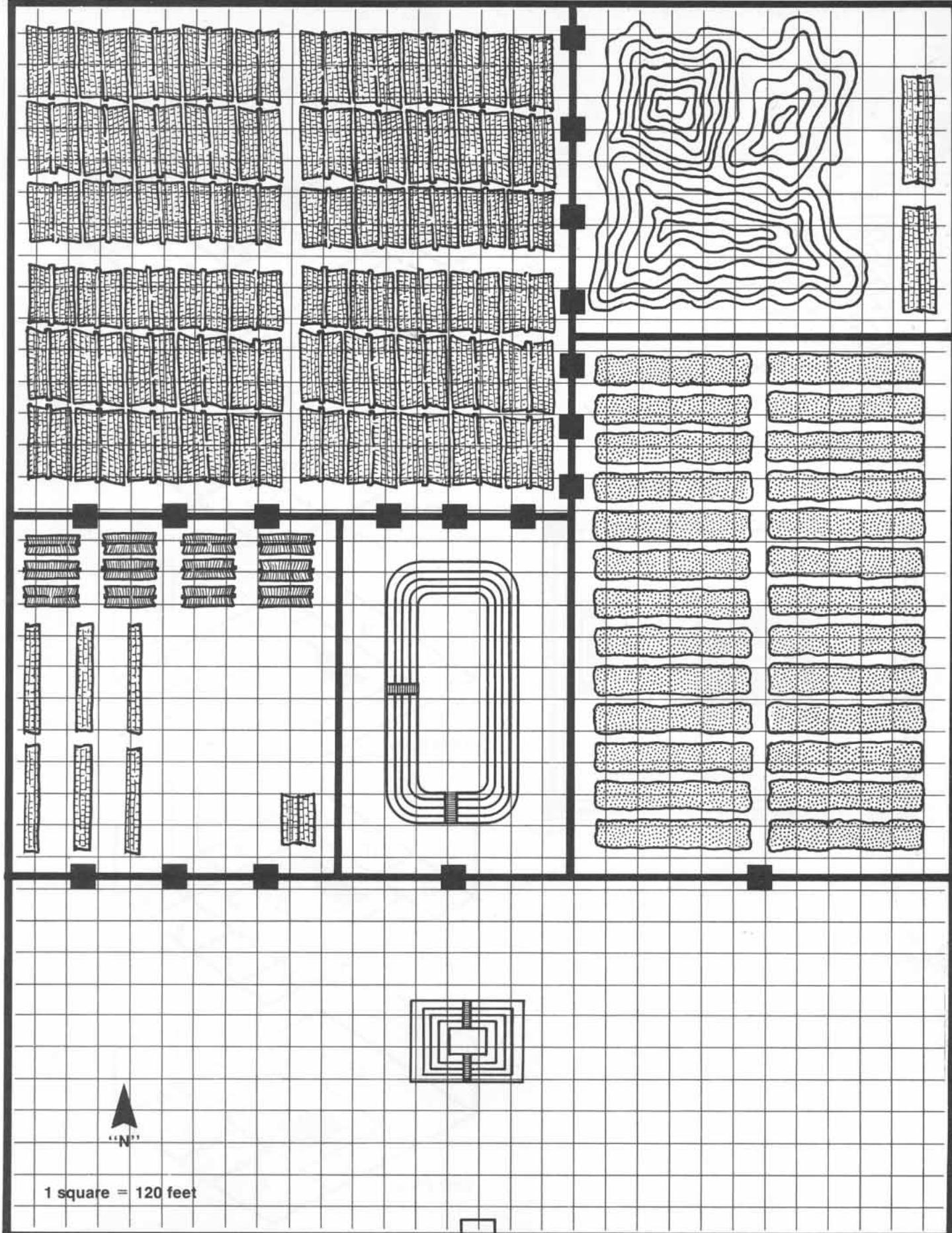
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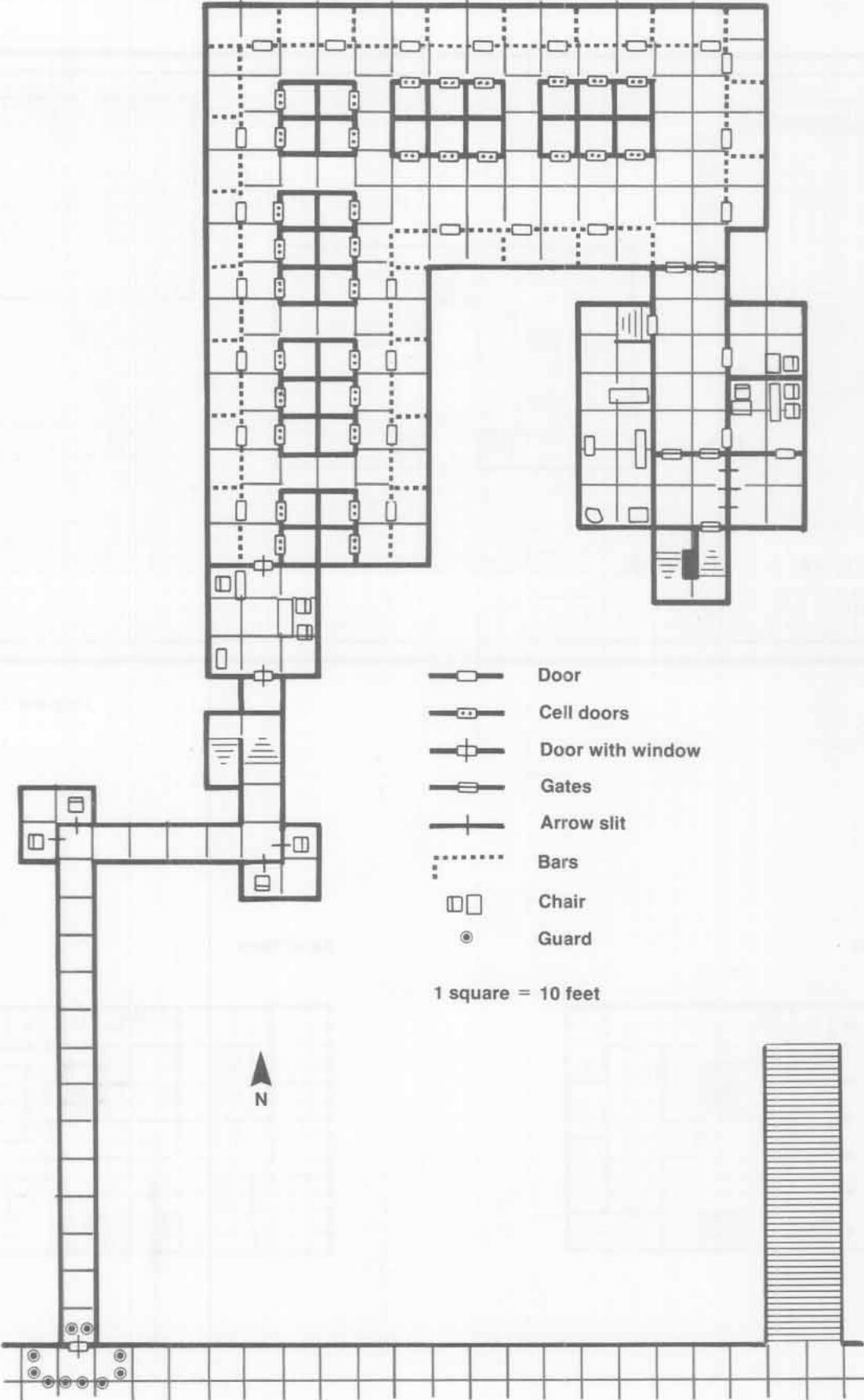
2 squares = 10 feet



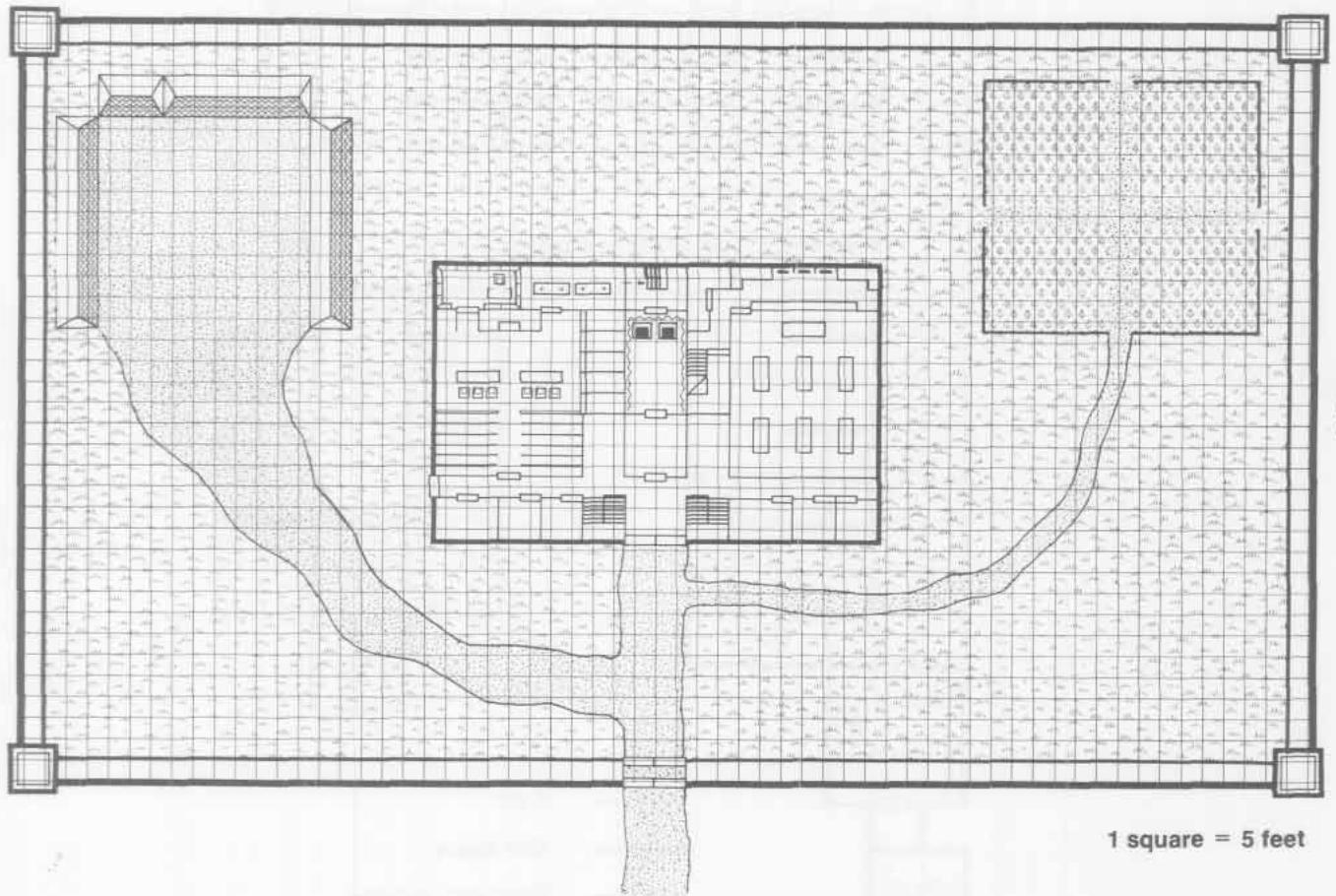
Players' Map of Skarda's Mirror



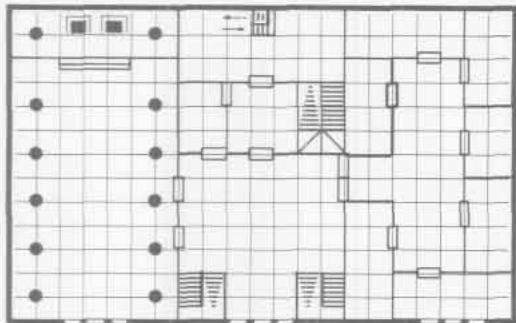
Map of the Dungeons



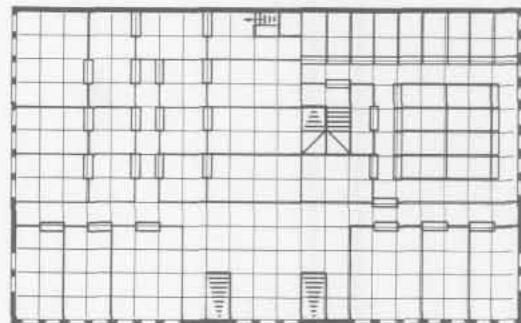
The "Hunting Lodge" of Duke Stefan Karameikos III



Second Floor



Third Floor



Lindoran 7th Level Elf (Champion-Sorcerer)

S 17 I 13 W 9 D 11 Co 10 Ch 11

HP 26 AC 2

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to added languages

Weapons: Sword, bow and 20 arrows, dagger

Armor: Plate and shield

Magical Items: Amulet vs. crystal balls & ESP, ring of plant control

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Spell Books

Spells:

First Level — *Charm Person*
Magic Missile
Sleep

Third Level — *Clairvoyance Fly*
Fourth Level — *Polymorph Self*

Second Level — *Detect Evil*
Detect Invisible

Nesmis 5th Level Halfling (Halfling Swashbuckler)

S 13 I 10 W 11 D 16 Co 13 Ch 15

HP 24 AC 2

Bonuses and Penalties: +1 to hit and damage rolls; +2 to missile fire rolls; -2 to AC; +1 hp per level; +1 on reaction rolls

Weapons: Shortsword +1, small bow and 24 arrows, daggers (2)

Armor: Chainmail and shield

Magical Items: Scarab of protection

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Kindel 7th Level Magic-User (Sorcerer)

S 11 I 15 W 11 D 13 Co 7 Ch 12

HP 17 AC 8

Bonuses and Penalties: +1 to added languages; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 AC; -1 hp per level

Weapons: Dagger +2

Armor: None

Magical Items: Displacer cloak, crystal ball of clairvoyance

Other Equipment:

Standard Adventuring Gear — Two flasks oil, tinderbox, 50' rope, waterskin, lantern, two small sacks and one large sack, two torches, one day's worth of iron rations, all in a leather backpack

Spell Books

Spells:

First Level — *Light*
Magic Missile
Protection from Evil

Third Level — *Fire Ball*
Lightning Bolt
Fourth Level — *Ice Storm/Wall*

Second Level — *Invisibility*
Web

Lindoran is a warrior-elf who uses his magic to perform other than combat effects. Except for a few basic spells (his first-level spells), his magic is all design to perform detection or to allow him/her to perform unexpected maneuvers (i.e., fly, turn into a creature and wriggle away, etc.).

Lindoran has adventured with Delson, Kerole, Trylia, Kindel, and Nesmis in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

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Nesmis is a nimble warrior halfling; she goes about with comparatively light armor (chainmail) but has a high enough dexterity to make up for the armor. She prefers to barrage enemies with arrow fire from behind the lines, but can mix it up in hand-to-hand combat when necessary.

Nesmis has adventured with Delson, Kerole, Lindoran, Trylia, and Kindel in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

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Kindel is a combat mage; unlike Lindoran, Kindel uses magic to harm and destroy his enemies. He prefers to be behind the fighting lines, blasting enemies on the other side.

Kindel has adventured with Delsona, Kerole, Lindoran, Trylia, and Nesmis in the past.

This character's age, appearance, and alignment are up to the player using the character.

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At first, they have to start with their shackles.

Picking Locks

If one of the characters is a Thief, it's certain that the first thing he will do is to see if he can pick his locks. Let him make his Open Locks score: At his normal roll if he still has his lock-picks, at -10% if not (he's presumed to be using a sliver of metal from the cell or somewhere else on his person).

If he makes it, he knows he can open the locks, but the first one will take a few minutes (half an hour). If he fails it, that lock is too difficult for him and he may try another.

The thief can roll once for each wrist (both his and his friends'). The first successful roll will still take half an hour to open, and all subsequent ones will take a minute or two.

Breaking Shackles

Does one of the characters have a 17 or 18 Strength? If that one asks, tell him that he thinks he can break his chains... but it will take a lot of time.

If he wishes to go ahead with it, conduct Ashgarth's conversations and all other conversations that need to occur, and give the character occasional updates as to his progress in breaking the shackles.

As he pulls and pulls, the place where the ends of the link were welded together begins to flake. Eventually, small cracks appear. (The character takes 1 hp damage from his exertions.) This takes several minutes. After still more straining, a crack in the weld goes all the way through, and the link is no longer a continuous loop. After still more straining, the link parts noisily and his hands are free of one another and of the chain to the wall. Give him 1d6/2 more damage for his final exertions, and tell him that his arms are extremely sore.

A strength of 16 or less is not sufficient to break these shackles.

Trickery

The characters can, in time-honored tradition, trick their way out of their chains. If they think to try some sort of deception to lure a jailer in, overpower him and take his keys away, let them try.

Have the characters explain precisely what they're going to do. Then play the encounter out based on how clever you perceive the plan to be.

For example, having one character pre-

tending to be sick and hoping the jailer will come within reach to be grabbed is not terribly clever — make it difficult for them, but possible. They have to do all sorts of acting histrionics to persuade him to enter the cell at all, and when he does he has another guard with him; the characters have to lure both guards to within range of their grabbing hands AT THE SAME TIME, and then grab both at the same time to prevent outcry, in order for this tactic to work.

Infuriating a jailer with insults and thrown garbage, hoping he'll be angry enough to come inside to punish the offender, is somewhat more likely — in such an instance, you can have the jailer enter alone; let him leave again if the characters' insults are too ordinary or feeble; let him do a little damage with a whip on the offending character until he unwittingly steps to within reach of one of the other characters.

If the characters botch their rolls or fail to come up with a clever plan, there are numerous ways for their effort to fail. The jailer could notice that the dummy on the floor is a dummy, and simply not enter the cell (until he has backup and can rechain the prisoner); the jailer could have been followed by a subordinate, who hears the capture inside the cell and shouts a warning; the jailer, being attacked, could simply get a shout off before being overpowered, warning the other guards stationed in the dungeon.

But if they come up with and execute an intelligent plan, they should be able to get out of their shackles and cell.

Magic Use

If the characters have somehow managed to get only one of a magic-user's hands free of its shackles, the character can use his magic. You'll have to decide how valuable his spells are to their escape attempt; obviously, things such as *knock*, *dimension door*, *teleport*, *passwall*, and so forth would be invaluable in getting characters free of their chains and cell.

The Characters Escape Their Cells

Once the characters are free of their shackles, they can now try to exit their cells. Some ways to go about this:

Picking the Lock

Thief characters can pick the lock. All those cells have key-locks — they're not just barred on the outside.

Using the Keys

If the characters have been clever enough to take out a jailer silently, they have his keys—which will fit their shackles and the door.

Magic Use

Magic can get the characters free, as noted above. *Passwall* and *knock* would be most efficient, as they would allow all the characters to exit the cell quietly. *Dimension door* and *teleport* would get one character out of the cell, whereupon he could try something clever to get keys from a jailer.

Outside Help

It's possible that the characters will simply be unable to escape their cell. If this is the case, then you can get them started on the road to escape.

The officer who is Ashgarth's contact, the one who knows the password out of the Mirror, is named Zira. Ordinarily she wouldn't appear in the story until the next episode, but if the characters are totally unable to escape their cell you can bring her in to provide an assist.

Read the information on Zira from the "Non-Player Characters" appendix.

An hour or so after they were incarcerated, the characters will hear Ashgarth's cell door creak open. (One player-character can watch the action within that cell if he wishes, through the eyehole already mentioned.)

A jailer enters Ashgarth's cell, followed by a woman, a striking black-haired woman in the uniform of one of Skarda's elite guard. "You've got a visitor, scum," the jailer smirks, "come to interrogate you." Whereupon Zira silently draws out her knife, grabs the jailer from behind — her free hand clamped over his mouth — and stabs him to death with two quick blows.

She'll let his body down quietly, stoop over Ashgarth and speak to him in very quiet tones; he'll respond, and they'll both look over in the direction of the eyehole. She'll nod, gather up the jailer's keys and free Ashgarth while he explains to the characters: "This is Zira. She's the guard of whom I spoke. She says I was to be killed tonight. She's letting us loose..."

Which she does. She'll unlock the doors and the characters' shackles, all of which is well and good... but the characters are still in the middle of a very hostile dungeon. Zira has her armor and weapons, and the characters have the jailer's gear (clothes, leather armor,

EPISODE THREE: IN THE DUNGEONS

sword and dagger)... that's all.

Finding Retameron and Halia

Once they're free of their cell, the characters may wish to free Retameron and Halia. Ashgarth knows which cells they are in; he'll tell the characters to walk about like they own the place when in sight of the other prisoners, so that the prisoners won't realize the characters are escapees and make noise. When guards are about, the characters must creep around. Either way, it's a simple matter to get to their cells. Thieves can pick the locks there, or they can use captured jailers' keys and/or magic to free the other two captured heroes.

Retameron and Halia will be amazed and delighted to be freed; they'll gladly exchange hurried stories with the player-characters and then one another.

And, finally, you're left with the task of getting the characters out of the dungeon... if they can manage it.

Planning the Escape

Now it's time for the characters to escape the dungeons themselves. There are two categories of escape which you, as DM, must decide between, and then you must let the characters come up with their own plan.

The first category of escape is the Cloak and Dagger Escape. You rely on the characters' ability to come up with a good plan of escape and to execute it. You throw some obstacles in their way, which they must overcome; if they do overcome them, they can succeed.

However, if the characters have so far demonstrated that they can't plan their way out of a paper bag, you may wish to use the Divine Providence Escape. Let them make their plan for escape, and if it is doomed to failure by their own lack of planning ability, rock the dungeons with another earthquake — a severe one.

Executing the Escape: Cloak and Dagger

Ashgarth will be able to map out the dungeon for them, and the approach by which they entered. He'll be able to tell them that this "back door" has only a third of the personnel guarding it that the palace entrance does... but they still have to get through a barred room of guards, the crossbow-guarded zigzag corridor, and guards at the outside door in order to be clear of the palace. And then they must be able to get through the gates to another quadrant of the Mirror world without

being pursued in order to really have some breathing room.

The "front door" entrance into the palace is a possible route, but it has a standing guard with alarm bells, and is such a tall climb that the palace guard can muster forty or fifty fighters to await them at the top of the stairs if a single alarm is sounded.

Either way, let the characters come up with their own plan. They best know their abilities. It's obvious that stealth and magic are their best tools here; if they realize that they might be able to knock out an officer, take his uniform, and bluff their way past some guard stations, so much the better, but don't have Ashgarth recommend this (it's the characters' story, so they're supposed to come up with the good ideas).

While they are sneaking about in the dungeons, though, you can interrupt and complicate their plans with a number of encounters. Give the characters surprise encounters at appropriate and inconvenient stages in their plan. This will keep them on their toes.

Here are numerous small encounters with which you can confront your escaping characters. Pick and choose from among them as you please, based on the plan the characters have chosen.

Wandering Guards

At any point in the escape, you can introduce a Wandering Guard to make the characters' life difficult. Perhaps he'll be in the corridor between cells, talking through the bars to a prisoner, right in their way. Perhaps he'll unexpectedly walk up on them from the rear. He's not expecting trouble and so is automatically surprised, but the characters still must quiet or eliminate him immediately before he can raise an alarm.

Silent Grabber

As a character is creeping up on a guard, a prisoner in a nearby cell (driven mad by the years of his confinement) reaches out silently to grab the character. Our hero must defeat his attacker as noiselessly as possible before the guard notices.

Extra Troops

As characters are preparing to take out a pair of guards with a sudden, silent rush, a third guard joins the guard-post; the characters must quickly figure out how to rid themselves of the third guard.

Sharp-Eyed Guard

As the characters are bluffing their way through a guardpost, one of the guards takes a sudden, if silent, interest in one of the characters, obviously remembering him from somewhere but not remembering exactly where; the character must divert or satisfy his curiosity before the whistle is blown on them.

Extra Errands

A character trying to bluff his way into a guardpost is instead assigned another duty to perform by the higher-ranking officer on duty there.

Spidery Friends

A stealthy character hiding in shadows while guards pass by suddenly feels spiders dropping upon and crawling upon him, and must remain still while the arachnids investigate him.

Noisy Prisoners

A prisoner spots the characters creeping around and demands to be released too, else he will begin shouting and give the characters away.

Kogrin

While a character hides around a corner, observing the guards there and trying to figure out what to do about them, he feels a hand on his shoulder and hears Kogrin say, "What have we here?" Kogrin, overconfident and a maniac, isn't going to let out an outcry until it's obvious he's losing a fight — whereupon it might be too late. But his presence and the threat of discovery he represents will give the characters fits.

Kogrin's statistics are in the NPC appendix at the back of this module.

Required Encounters: Leaving By the Front Door

If the characters foolishly try to leave the front way, they must:

(a) Get to the gates at 14.

(b) Take out the guards there and unlock the gates without being overheard, or bluff their way through those guards and gates. Note that these guards are within sight — barely — of the guards at 18.

(c) Get to the gates at 18. To do this they



must make it past the doors to 15 and 16 — either without being seen, or by eliminating the officers in 15 and 16, or by bluffing their way past those officers — and must get past the guards at 18 either by stealth or by bluff.

(d) Take out the guard at 19, or bypass him with bluff, and get through that gate.

(e) Ascend the staircase up to Skarda's Palace. Take out or bluff past the guard there.

Required Encounters: Leaving By the Back Door

If they decide to go out the way they came in, they must:

(a) Get to the door to Room 8 without being seen by the guard stationed inside that door.

(b) Get into that room, and take out or bypass the guards stationed there without too much fuss. The characters must prevent the officer at his desk from pulling his alarm pull-rope. If the characters choose to overpower the guards in this room, they can then can open the chest, recovering their gear — and more besides, if they wish.

(c) Ascend the stairs and get to 5 without being detected by the guards in 6 or by bluffing past the guards at 6.

(d) Take out or bypass the guards at 6 without being seen/suspected by the guards at 4.

(e) Take out or bypass the guards at 4 without being seen/suspected by the guards at 2.

(f) Get out through the door at 1 without causing too much of a commotion — which entails either bypassing or eliminating all those guards with no commotion.

Executing the Escape: Divine Providence

On the other hand, if you want to run a very simple and dramatic-looking escape, try this: As soon as the characters are all reunited and planning their escape from the dungeons, rock the dungeons and palace with a massive earthquake. This fills the dungeon with black onyx soot, sends debris tumbling down on guards and prisoners alike; doors will crack, guards will run around willy-nilly, prisoners will escape on the opposite side of the dungeon and raise more commotion by trying to batter their way past the guards there, and the characters must make a run for safety the other way.

Let them dodge (saving throws vs. death magic) large boulders dropping from the ceiling, let them run into Kogrin, etc.: The difference is that there is so much commotion that they don't have to worry about being stealthy. They just have to get out of the

EPISODE THREE: IN THE DUNGEONS

dungeon before the dust settles. It'll be fairly simple, but will also be dangerous because of the presence of Kogrin and falling rocks (which do 2-12 points of damage when they hit).

If They Escape

If the characters do make it out of the ziggurat undetected, make their progress to Hell tense but fairly uneventful. They'll sweat enough just passing through the gates; you don't need to give them any more encounters.

If, however, you WISH to give them a good strong melee, have them discovered to be escapees just as they're passing into Hell, so they must fight a body of soldiers before they can get away.

If the characters do escape as far as Hell, you can progress on to the next episode.

If They're Recaptured

If the characters botch a planned escape, unmanageable numbers of guards and soldiers will congregate upon the dungeons to recapture them. If this happens, let them have that earthquake a little later in the afternoon as a second opportunity for escape.

The characters won't be recaptured during the earthquake: There's too much going on. That doesn't mean that none will be killed — that can easily happen. But none will be recaptured.

The Dungeons

Here is a look at the palace dungeons from the DM's Map of the Dungeons.

The dungeon is poorly-lit, with torches mounted in wall-brackets at 30' intervals. This is enough to see to travel by, but a Light spell would definitely improve matters.

In the upper areas (map numbers 1 through 5) the air is reasonably fresh. In the lower areas (8 to 20) it's dank and stuffy — and revolting of smell.

1. Rear Entrance

This is the entrance through which the characters are brought. It is heavily guarded: eight soldiers, one NCO, and one officer.

2. Guards

There are two NCOs here. On the wall to the their right is a small bell-rope; when tugged, it will ring a bell right over this door, as well

as bells in rooms 4, 6, and 8. It is an alarm to signal that someone is breaking out.

3. First Turn

This is the first of two guarded turns before characters reach the staircase down. It is guarded by —

4. Alarm Room

This is one of the rooms which is signalled by the pulling of the bell-rope at the rear entrance. This little room has its own bell-rope which signals the same rooms.

Inside the room are stationed two soldiers, each armed with a crossbow and plenty of ammunition. They keep watch out of the two little windows indicated on the map; if unauthorized personnel are travelling down the corridor, the soldiers challenge them and then open fire.

The arrow-slit windows are hard to fire INTO; characters into the windows subtract 4 from all their rolls to hit. On the other hand, the windows were designed to be fired out of, so subtract nothing from the soldiers' chance to hit.

Each arrow-slit window is also a Secret Door.

5. Second Turn

This is the same sort of arrangement as 3, above.

6. Alarm Room

This is functionally identical to the Alarm Room described at 4, above.

7. Staircase Down

This staircase spirals counter-clockwise; it descends five complete spirals before emerging upon the lower landing. A Dwarf will be able to tell that the depth is 60', more or less.

8. Check-In

This room is the rear entrance officers' station and check-in area. It has barred doors (with little windows) north and south, and the doors, except when opened to admit prisoners or visitors, are barred closed.

Inside are stationed one officer (to manage the paperwork of admitting new prisoners), one NCO (to run errands and assist the officer) and four soldiers.

Furniture consists of the officer's desk and

chair, and a table and chairs to seat six; usually supplied with cards and dice.

In the southwest corner is a massive locked chest; the officer on duty has the key. It is here that all the personal possessions of the prisoners are placed until Skarda has had a chance to see them and decide their fates.

Currently, the chest contains:

Retameron's sword +2 and *girdle of giant strength*; both bear his name in gold inlay.

Halia's three ordinary daggers, her *wand of cold*, her *ring of telekinesis*, and her spell book; her *wand* and *ring* bear her name enamelled upon them in blue, and her book has her name upon it.

Twelve sets of chainmail (some pierced and bloody), shields, swords, and daggers, all formerly property of the two groups of guards sent into Retameron's Tower before the player-characters showed up. One of the swords seems exceptionally finely made (it is a *sword +1*) as does one of the undamaged suits of chain (which is *chain mail +2*).

9. The Dungeons

Once through that final door, characters enter the actual Dungeons. This isn't a nice place.

The stone floor is covered with mouldering hay, and the stench of decay, of unwashed bodies, and of blood and other substances is simply overpowering. Low moaning fills the air from all over the dungeon area. Torches gutter in the stale and oppressive air, and soldiers can occasionally be seen walking the aisles between cells.

There are two types of cells: Long 20' by 10' cells with walls of bars, and small 10' by 10' chambers with steel walls and doors with small windows which can be shuttered closed. It's obvious that the oppressive atmosphere must be next to unendurable in those closed-off rooms.

10. Retameron's Cell

Retameron, alone, has been placed into this cell; Skarda has seen fit to make sure that he's in solitary confinement and a great distance from his lady-wife. He is down several hit points, as you can see on his character sheet in the center of the book.

11. Halia's Cell

Halia, also alone, has been placed into this cell; she is of course wearing shackles that prevent her from using her hands to cast spells. All her adventuring equipment has

been taken from her.

12. The Characters' Cells

These cells are those into which the characters are thrown.

13. Ashgarth's Cell

In the back of the more easterly of the characters' cells is a small hole the size of a copper piece. On the other side of that hole is the cell of Ashgarth, another prisoner, one who will be important to the player-characters soon enough. Ashgarth's story, activities, and character sheet appear a little later in this section and in the Appendix titled "Non-Player Characters."

14. Gates

This is a broad wall of bars with two locking doors within it; behind the bars stand two NCOs at attention. The doors are left locked except when Skarda, Kogrin, elite guardsmen, and officers wish to pass; a note from Skarda also allows people to pass.

Immediately beside the guard on the right is a bell-rope similar to the ones at the other end of the dungeon. This one rings a bell here, in rooms 15, 16, and 20, and at the very top of the stairs leading up to the palace.

15. Records Room

This is where the official records of all prisoners are kept. There is one officer on duty here at all times. The room has one desk, one chair, and a large bookcase containing baskets full of papers.

Beside the desk hangs a bell-rope like the one at 14.

16. Ready Room

This is where this area's soldiers wait when not needed. The room contains a small desk with chair and a table for five. One NCO, subordinate to the officer in Room 15, and four soldiers stay here at all times; like Room 8, cards and dicing are the main activities of the day.

Beside the small desk is a bell-rope like the one at 14.

If trouble comes from the direction of the dungeons, the soldiers grab up their weapons and step out into the corridor to deal with it. If the troublemakers have already penetrated as far as the hallway in front of Room 17, or is anticipated from upstairs, they pass through

the door into Room 17 and set themselves up there.

17. Defensive Fire Room

This room is used to barrage invaders from upstairs — or fleeing prisoners who've gotten through the gates at 18.

This room has four arrow-slits precisely like those described at Room 4 (except that they have no Secret Doors).

Inside the room, on racks beside the arrow-slits, are kept four crossbows. The soldiers may fire on invaders in the hallway from this vantage point.

18. Gates

This is a set of gates similar to that at 14, but has no bellrope. Two soldiers are always on duty here.

19. Staircase Up

This is another circular stairwell; it is closed off from the hallway by a single gate defended by a single NCO.

The staircase goes up all the way to the first floor of the palace; it is therefore an immensely long and tiring climb. At the top of the steps there is a bellrope and bell alarm like that at 14.

20. Torture Chamber and Kogrin's Quarters

This chamber is where Kogrin works. A flight of steps descends 10' below the rest of the dungeon. There are various tools of the trade scattered about the room: A rack near the door; a brazier for heating tongs and brands, on the wall opposite the rack; a coffin-sized box (with sword-slits in it) to lock prisoners into, due south of the rack; an Iron Maiden in the southwest corner; a traditional whipping post and shackles (designed to hold the prisoner up off the floor) in the southeast corner.

21. Outside Staircase

This shows the lower portion of the broad staircase leading up the south face of the zigzag to the Palace; it is indicated here for purposes of reference.

EPISODE FOUR: THE REBELS

In this episode, the characters make it to the Hell district of Skarda's Mirror, and to the rebel hideout there. They become more familiar with the state of affairs in the Mirror, and learn that time is short if they wish to escape back to the real world: They must act now or, perhaps, be trapped forever. Also in this episode is the map key to Skarda's Palace.

In Hell

Once the characters have gotten through the last gate and are within the Hell district, describe their surroundings to them:

Ashgarth leads you up a broad street which curves and wavers between two lines of ill-built buildings. He travels in this direction the length of one building, then turns right onto the first street and travels in that direction two buildings farther.

The streets are teeming with men and women who are so skinny and spectral and downcast that they make Ashgarth look like a carousing barbarian warrior. They shuffle along, carrying blocks of stone or scraps of paper or bushels of hay, looking like an army of zombies... but not nearly so formidable as zombies.

The buildings you're passing are all one story tall, made of the black onyx-like stone you've seen. They are very long and look badly engineered, as if the architects were drunk... or they used no architects. One of them you pass has collapsed, and a work crew of denizens is clearing the debris away. "Earthquake damage," says Ashgarth.

The "doors" are drapes of ratty-looking linen; nothing covers the windows, and through them you can see more of the malnourished residents of Hell, tending house or weaving garments or working on crafts... As you pass them, their eyes follow you, filled with fear or barely-concealed loathing.

At the third building along this street, Ashgarth turns left into a building's open doorway. You follow into a much darker hallway which has numerous doors right and left. As soon as Ashgarth passes the first door on the left, a silhouette leans out of that door and whispers something in his ear; Ashgarth nods and continues.

(The hatred with which the denizens of Hell look upon the player-characters presumes

that they're wearing soldiers' uniforms, of course. If they're not, they won't be looked upon with any emotion but curiosity.)

Assuming that it wasn't Zira who helped rescue the characters from the dungeon, Ashgarth tells the characters, "The officer of whom I spoke to you is here. It sounds as though something is happening; we may not have much time."

If Zira is already with the party, he says instead, to her, "I'm told that something is happening;" she'll nod and reply, "We haven't much time, and we've problems from two directions."

Whichever statement is made, Ashgarth will lead the characters down this long, slightly meandering hallway quite a distance. Tell them that the air grows stiffer; they pass doorways that open into crowded, smelly dwelling-chambers with defeated people looking out.

The hallway continues down 200' before Ashgarth pauses at a doorway. He pulls a candle from the bracket on the wall, then passes through the doorway into a chamber filled with broken cots and garbage. "Pull the drape over the door," he'll tell one of the characters.

When that's done, he'll pull aside a clump of broken cots and push on the wall behind them; and that section of wall, actually a secret door, grates open. Ashgarth will motion for the others to enter the small 10' by 10' room beyond, will enter behind them, and close the door.

The room is furnished only with rickety cots and chairs. The air is close, hot and stuffy. Light comes from the candle brought by Ashgarth.

Zira

If Zira isn't already with the party, she'll be in the room, seated on the best of the chairs, and will rise as the characters enter, giving them a raking and evaluative look.

Ashgarth says, "Allow me to introduce Zira of Skarda's Own elite guard — and my collaborator. Zira, may I present —" and he will name off the characters one by one. "These mighty heroes are helping us in our glorious quest for freedom." (He'll say that regardless of whether the characters have agreed to such a thing; after all, he IS a fanatic.)

Zira will nod at all the introductions, warily shake hands if they're offered, and then Ashgarth will say "I hear that we have to act soon. Please enlighten us."

And she will:

Well, we have two problems. Big ones.

First, Skarda's gone off into the real world, and taken a few of his guardsmen with him. Scuttlebutt has it that he's about to start his grand plan. At least half of his soldiers are massing on the mirror plain outside the Portal; they expect that sometime within the next few hours the Portal will open and they'll be jumping out into the palace they're supposed to sack.

Second, and this is worse, something happened in the Quarry not long after Skarda left. There was a quake and the bottom of the mirror glass pit split wide open; there was churning water in the gap. A lot of workers fell in and drowned. And then the water started to rise — not just from that hole, but from all the wells in the Quarry.

If the characters haven't already been told about the way the water-wells function in this world, Ashgarth will lean over the table, interrupt Zira briefly, and fill them in on why this is an unusual event. Then he'll let Zira continue.

The water's been rising for quite some time now. A while back it filled up the entire quarry and it's risen above ground level over there. The officials evacuated the quarry and sealed shut all four gates into it. Since then the water's continued to rise — a foot, the last I heard. And it's still rising.

The palace officials are going crazy, because Skarda's been missing all this time and the portal's closed; they can't get the message to him. Word has spread in Hell and some of the workers are starting to get panicky. If you're really planning to break for it, this may be precisely the opportunity you're looking for.

Incidentally, Zira's character sheet is in the NPC appendix at the back of the module.

The Truth to Zira's Story

What's happening here is simply explained. Skarda has for years been meddling with a world that was the creation of a god. His quarrying operations have somehow interfered with the delicate magical/ecological balance created by this world's fabricator... and so the world has begun to shake itself apart. The earthquakes are foreshadows of the great

quake to come, the one which will destroy the Mirror. The Create Water spells used to provide water to the world have been thrown out of kilter; in the Quarry, the water is rising visibly; it's rising elsewhere, too... imperceptibly. But the rate the water is rising will start to increase, and soon.

The world of Skarda's Mirror is doomed... and if the characters haven't realized this, they're sure to understand that something bad is happening.

The Characters' Plan

With Zira's news, Ashgarth will sit back, elation fighting with worry on his face, and ask the heroes: "Well? What have you to recommend? It's almost time to strike, and I desperately crave your advice."

In effect, although the characters may not realize it, he's turning over leadership of the rebellion to the characters — because he'll follow whatever consensus plan they come up with instead of any plan of his own. It's up to the characters to figure out how to coordinate this revolt and their own escape back to the real world.

Using Ashgarth and Zira to ask the questions and point out problems with ideas, let the characters figure out how they're going to arrange this thing.

By way of resources, they have: Ashgarth and about one hundred fighters (first-level fighters, to be sure, but they're some use); Zira and her knowledge of the palace and the password out of the Mirror; and themselves, plus Retameron and Halia; and more than three thousand slaves who, perhaps, can be convinced to revolt — if they have reason enough.

Allow the characters to come up with their own plan and execute it. Ashgarth will give them all the support he has, even unto turning over leadership of his rebels to them. Zira will accompany the characters into danger, as it may be the only way for her to get back to the real world.

Take the characters' plan; determine to your own satisfaction how likely each step of the plan is to succeed, based on its own merits; and then role-play or battle out each step of the plan, so that its real success is based on how the characters do.

Sample Plan

For example, here's one way the characters could plan to get out of Skarda's Mirror and how you'd resolve the plan.

Their plan is this:

They start by sowing the seeds of panic in Hell, spreading the rumor that the water will rise up and drown them if they don't escape.

Then, they demonstrate that soldiers can be defeated. They do this by attacking and defeating a force of soldiers, then perhaps another, until they've convinced enough of the denizens of Hell to make a large, angry mob.

Then, presuming that they have enough followers in their enraged mob, they take a wall gate and let the mob through into the Military Encampment to begin sacking it and slaying more soldiers.

Lastly, they take the gates leading to the Palace and the Portals, swarm out and engage all the soldiers there, then leave to the real world through the Portal.

That sounds simple enough. The first thing you do, then, is to break it down into its component steps, evaluate them, and then role-play them out.

STEP ONE: Begin to Incite Panic in Hell. How do the characters choose to do this? Do they walk down the street crying that the end of the world is coming? That'll only get the guards called down upon them. If, however, they use their brains — and the manpower they have available to them — they can cause a lot of panic. All they have to do is have Ashgarth call in his hundred warriors and have them run about, spreading the word that the quarry is flooding and will drown them all, that the army is massing to leave them to drown... Independent witnesses, those who saw the rising waters and the companies forming up before the portals, will corroborate the story. Panic will begin to spread.

STEP TWO: Demonstrate Successful Revolt. To do this, the characters really need to find a force of soldiers, defeat them, give their weapons and armor to the awed onlookers, and do this again a couple of times. They're probably itching for another fight around now, so they'll be all too willing to take on these slimey soldiers. And the word will spread — revolt is coming, the slaves are being aided by adventurers who can't be stopped, the soldiers are dropping like flies.

STEP THREE: Lead the Slaves into the Military Encampment. To do this, they have to take and open one of the gatehouses. All it takes is a thief's climbing ability or a magic-user's Flight spell to get someone on top of the wall; the first hero up can tie off and drop a line so that the others can climb up. At that point, some of the characters must operate the massive cranks that open the gate while the rest fight off the guards trying to stop them... when the dust has cleared, the gates will be open and the maddened slaves will be

charging into the military encampment to slay their oppressors.

STEP FOUR: Lead the Slaves to the Portals. As chaos ensues inside the military encampment, and soldiers and slaves begin to perish on one another's weapons, the characters must open a gate leading into the Mirror Plain (and the Palace and Portal there). The slaves overrun the encampment (with great losses) and then rush toward the companies massed in front of the Portals.

Let's leave that line of thought at that point, because what happens at the portals is not likely to be just what they expected.

Other Types of Plans

The plan above is just one of the hundreds of different types the characters can come up with and implement. In each, your job as DM is the same: Break the plan down into its component steps, evaluate each step on its own merits, and then role-play that step.

To role-play the step, you set up the encounters the characters must face and let the characters at them. If the characters fight valiantly against the combat encounters you've set up, act quietly and efficiently in the stealth encounters you create, and speak convincingly with the NPCs they must persuade to aid them, you should reward them with success. If they botch an encounter and cannot pull success out of a hat — well, see "When Things Go Wrong" for ways to bring the adventure back on line.

It could be that the characters won't wish to use the tremendous manpower and diversion potential available in the slaves. This would be foolish, but if they feel that they have enough power to pull it off without help, let them try... they could be right.

More Earthquakes and Portents

As they progress through their plan, give the characters more clues that disaster is in the offing.

Another earthquake occurs: Buildings collapse, walls collapse. Panic increases.

The water rises within the Quarry to sufficient height that the wall between it and the Farm collapses, allowing the water to begin flooding in there. Panic increases.

All the wells have begun rising and water is running in rivulets from each one. Panic increases.

(All this is nice color for the characters' own steps toward getting out of the mirror world.)

EPISODE FOUR: THE REBELS

At the Portals

Once the characters have successfully gone through their steps and have gotten to within sight of the portals, it's time to launch them into the climax of the story.

Whether it's at the head of a charging army, or using stealth or magic to creep up on them, the characters will see that the portal platform has many men on it and many more massed in front of it — three or four hundred. And, as the characters approach, the central Portal will brighten, revealing the real world — rather, an interior hallway of the local ruler's palace — and cavalrymen and infantrymen from Skarda's Mirror will begin plunging through to execute his grand plan.

If the characters are sneaking up on the force at the portals, they'll still be able to get among them, at the rear of the columns entering the Portal. If the characters are at the head of an armed force charging the Portal, about a third of the force assembled there will form up to repel the slaves while the rest go running and charging through the Portal; the characters will have to break through the line of defenders before they can get to the Portal and through to the real world.

You can also punch up the panic and drama of the moment by commencing the greatest earthquake yet: The ground shakes, characters not making saving throws vs. death are shaken off their feet (for no significant damage), great cracks appear in the Mirror Plain and water begins to gush from them, huge hunks of mirror glass fall from the ceiling to crush soldiers and rebels, the wall between the farm and the Mirror Plain collapses and water from the farm begins rushing in.

When the characters finally do get through to the real world, progress on to Episode Five.

All These Encounters

All these encounters use the character types given in the NPCs appendix: Elite Guardsmen, plus Skarda's Officers, NCOs, and Soldiers.

When choosing what forces (of the above types of soldiers) you want your heroes to face, simply decide what sort of force they're supposed to be attacking and what you'd like to see happen.

Are they taking a guard-tower? Use mixed forces possessing combined experience levels equal to about two-thirds of the characters'.

Is this the final charge against the line of soldiers, as the characters watch the other sol-

diers disappearing into the real world? Face each character with enough opponents to slow him down and give him a bit of a challenge; once those opponents have fallen, so has the line, and the heroes can continue.

Skarda's Palace

No map for Skarda's Palace is provided. If the characters feel a need to get into the palace during the adventure, use any other palace map you have on hand, or adapt the map of Stefan Karameikos' Hunting Lodge provided in this adventure.

Some quick notes on Skarda's Palace: Each entrance is guarded by six fighters — one officer, one NCO, and four soldiers. Each entrance has a huge double door typically kept shut but unlocked.

Twenty members of the Elite Guard and twenty palace administrators are housed on the first floor.

Skarda's chambers are heavily patrolled by Elite Guardsmen. Additionally, except when he's in his own quarters, Skarda is accompanied by four of his elite guards at all times. Skarda's own personal treasure room, one of the rooms of his suite, contains a good deal of treasure:

Two oversized chests — locked, and trapped, with poisoned needles (saving throw vs. death to sustain damage equal to half of remaining hit points); each contains coins worth 15,000 gp in mixed silver, gold, and platinum. Twelve paintings by ancient masters, scenes from legends, landscapes, portraits of beautiful women (all well-known works, all of which have been stolen or bought by an unknown collector years ago), each worth an average of 2,000 gp but with an Encumbrance value of 200 cn. A variety of weapons and armor taken from captured heroes: Swords (5, various types), lances (2), spears (3), battle-axes (2), plate mail (1), chain mail (2), shields (4), horse bardings (1), etc., all normal, of good workmanship, except the plate is *plate mail + 2* and one of the swords is a *two-handed sword + 2, charm person ability*.

But it's quite likely, with the chaotic Episode Five looming on the horizon, that the characters will never make it into the palace... and treasure wasn't the point of this adventure anyway.

EPISODE FIVE: ROYAL CHAOS

In this episode, the characters emerge back into the real world and must defeat Skarda's master plan.

The Setting

As you know, Skarda's master plan has his troops overrunning the palace of Duke Stefan Karameikos III. Unfortunately for Skarda, Duke Stefan was not at his palace — rather, he was at his "hunting lodge," a walled palace some miles from Specularum. This is the Duke's country estate, where his family occasionally retreats from the city and where the Duke does his hunting.

This is an aggravation for Skarda because the Duke's family is not with him; he can get the Duke but not the Duchess or their children. They're next on the list. For now, his target is the Duke.

Skarda has, disguising himself as a beggar, entered the three-story dwelling and has drawn aside the curtain before the Mirror. His troops are charging through to begin their attack.

(If you're using your own game-world, use the palace of the ruler of your campaign nation.)

Take a look at the DM's Map of the "Hunting Lodge" of Duke Stefan Karameikos III. Skarda has, with his mundane and magical abilities, made his way within it — to Room 8, a good launching-point for his invasion.

When the Characters Emerge

When the characters win their way through the Mirror to reappear in the real world, they will appear in Room 8, where Skarda holds the Mirror. The instant he sees them appear he'll realize that he's in serious jeopardy — he Teleports out before any of the characters can attack him. (If the players protest, tell them that making the transition took all their attention for the full round, and Teleporting was Skarda's action for that same round.)

The soldiers ahead of the characters are charging forward, attacking the guards at the front door, spilling out along the side corridors, running up the stairs, charging into the throne room; most of them are unaware that they've been followed, and continue charging, spreading out all over the dwelling. The rearmost will notice that something's wrong — about one soldier per hero — and turn to attack; this will be an aggravating delay for the characters. Once this mass of soldiers is put down, though, the characters are free to act as they please.



Let them: This is the climax of the adventure. They may want to hunt Skarda down, to try to find the royal family and save them, to do any number of things.

The following map key and encounter descriptions are given to you in fast and loose style. No boxed descriptions of the rooms are given for you to read to the players; in most cases, they have barely enough time to get an idea as to their surroundings before they're plunged into combat. No exact placements for enemy forces are given; set up the combat encounters to suit your characters' abilities. Alter the numbers of fighters in the encounters to suit the circumstances.

All the fighters in the following text are taken from the statistics for Skarda's soldiers, as given in the NPCs appendix. Any group of Skarda's men will consist of common soldiers; if there are five or more, one will be an

NCO; if there are ten or more, one will be an Officer. Any group of the Duke's men will consist of NCOs' if there are six or more, one will be an Officer.

If you wish, you can encourage the characters to split up (Ashgarth, Retameron, Halia or Zira can shout that they should split up to cover more ground in the search for Skarda). If they don't want to, fine. If they do, you can have them scatter in all directions, and then have each one confront his own personal menace.

Whatever happens, Retameron and Halia will split off from the group, an added inducement for the heroes to scatter to find their own enemies and destinies.

The Hunting Lodge

The Duke's "Hunting Lodge" consists of one

EPISODE FIVE: ROYAL CHAOS

three-story summer palace, three outbuildings (one barracks for soldiers, one kennels building with quarters for dog-handlers, one stable), and a large walled garden. The whole compound is walled, and the lodge can be used as a military retreat in times of trouble.

Here are the rooms of the palace, the other areas of the compound, and the encounters which can occur therein:

1. List Yard

This is a well-kept lawn, now strewn with the bodies of the guardsmen who stood before the doors to the building. Skarda's minions are pouring out of the doors and into this yard, separating and running every which way. Characters charging out into this area will see the last group of Skarda's men, a batch of ordinary soldiers, two per character, running off toward 11; they may have one free attack on these soldiers if they wish to surprise them.

Characters rushing out here will be able to hear and see one of Skarda's soldiers leaning out from the center window at 14: He shouts down to them, mistaking them for allies, "Hey, mates, we've got the Duke trapped up here!"

To his right, from the windows at 18, is emerging cries for help in a female voice; to his left, from the windows at 15, comes the sound of furious swordplay.

2. Antechamber

This chamber is empty except for the bodies of two of the Duke's soldiers and three of Skarda's men. If the characters are in here when the soldier above makes his announcement, they'll hear his voice from the stairwells. The female screaming comes from the east stairwell, the sound of combat from the west.

3. Waiting Room

This is the waiting room for the throne chamber; it is empty.

4. Throne Room

This is the throne chamber used by the Duke; it contains two stone thrones and tapestries on the wall. The tapestry on the north wall has been pulled down to reveal a doorway leading to 5. There are bodies in this room: Two of the Duke's soldiers and six of Skarda's men. Four of the bodies of Skarda's men lie immediately before the throne.

5. Staircase Chamber

This is an empty chamber with a staircase leading up.

6. Chamber of Justice

In this chamber, trials are held — it's a smaller copy of a similar chamber in the palace in Specularum. A court martial of one of the Duke's officers was being conducted here and has been interrupted by the attack. A furious battle is being waged here between ten of the Duke's men and fifteen of Skarda's.

The room has benches with plenty of seating, two tables for the prosecutor and defendant, the judge's dias and desk, doors into the judge's chamber (upper left), deliberation room (upper right), and holding rooms (right wall).

7. Administrative Offices

These are offices used by the Duke's administrative underlings. Each has desks, chairs, papers, etc., but currently contains no treasure and no persons.

8. Nooks

These broad areas are for palace visitors to stand around in, conspire, and swap gossip. It is from the western of the two that Skarda launched his invasion. If any characters are still here when the soldier from (1.) makes his announcement about the Duke, they will hear it from both staircases.

9. Dining Hall

This is a hall which seats about 75; the tables are shown on the map. Duke Stefan normally sits at the table on the north wall. (a) is the storeroom for food, (b) the kitchen, (c) a servants' stairwell which leads to the third floor (no opening on the second floor), and (d) is a utilities closet.

There is a fight going on in the main hall, between six men garbed as hunters (mostly overweight, aging warrior-lords who are friends of the Duke's) and ten of Skarda's men.

10. Walled Garden

The walls are brick and 10' high. The garden is beautifully laid out with flower beds and bushes, roses especially.

An aging cleric (first-level) has led some of the children of the palace servants to pre-

sumed safety within the garden. If the characters never make it as far as the garden, then they stay safe. But if any characters do make it that far, they'll see children running helter-skelter through the bushes and flower-beds, hotly pursued by crazed Skarda horsemen, while one ineffectual cleric runs about trying to stop them. There is one horseman per character, and (naturally) the children will all perish if the characters don't rescue them.

11. Soldiers and Beasts

These three buildings house the soldiers who defend the hunting lodge and the animals used in the Duke's hunts. The interiors of these buildings are not shown, but each is a large single room with furnishings and partitions appropriate to its function.

(a) is the stable; inside are sheltered 16 horses.

(b) is the kennels; inside are kept about 35 good bloodhounds, and the eastern third of the building is given over to small rooms for five dog-handlers.

(c) is the garrison's barracks; the building generally houses forty soldiers.

In the open area between these three buildings, a fight is going on between ten of Skarda's men (cavalmrymen, still mounted), five soldiers, and the five dog-handlers; about fifteen of the bloodhounds are running in all directions through the melee, barking like mad but doing their masters very little good.

12. Guard Towers and Walls

Each guard tower is manned by three of the Duke's men; in each tower, two of the men have come down the stairs to join in the fight, while the third remains unhappily on duty.

This compound has a lot more wall than it does protectors, and is not really intended to withstand a seige unless a larger body of troops is encamped within the walls.

13. Gatehouse

The gates are closed.

14. Second Floor Open Area

It is from this area that the soldier mentioned in (1.) made his announcement. This area leads into Rooms 15, 16, and 18, has two flights of stairs down and three windows overlooking the list yard.

15. Ballroom

This chamber is used for dances and other entertainment. A raised dais on the north wall holds two thrones; the walls are flanked with columns.

Right now, in the center of this room, one noble warrior is hard-pressed against six attackers. The defender is a tall, burly, middle-aged man wearing expensive clothes and bearing a distinctive shock of red hair: It can be no one but Duke Stefan. He has lost 14 hp from the hit points described for him in the NPCs appendix (half of that damage is subdual damage — some of his attackers are striking to subdue, some to kill) and he'll be in serious jeopardy soon if he's not rescued.

16. Duke's Office

This room, and the smaller office immediately west of it, are offices used by the Duke when writing letters or conducting business informally. They contain desks, chairs, writing implements, but right now contain no persons.

17. Den

It is to this room the Duke retires to relax from his office duties; it contains comfortable furniture.

18. Administrative Offices

These chambers are used whenever the Duke's court winters at the hunting lodge; his premier administrators for Specularum set up their offices in these chambers for the winter.

Right now, in the southernmost chamber (the one with the windows), two of Skarda's officers have trapped three servants; they are busy chasing the two male servants around, swinging at them with swords, while the female servant, not being attacked, calls for help and occasionally tries to bring a chair down on the soldiers' heads.

19. Open Area

This area is the third-story equivalent of (14).

20. Guest Quarters

These rooms are used to house guests visiting the hunting lodge. If the characters survive this encounter, they'll be quartered here. Each room is finely furnished with one large bed, fireplace, tables, chairs, etc. but there is negligible treasure to be found.

21. The Duke's Chambers

These are the duke's personal chambers. (a) is his bedroom/dressing room, (b) a living room, (c) nothing more than a long, broad hallway leading toward the staircase room (but decorated with nice paintings of the Duke's deeds, nonetheless); (d) houses the staircase leading down to (17) and (5).

22. Royal Chambers

These chambers are used for other members of the Duke's immediate family and his closest friends when they are quartered at the hunting lodge. Each suite consists of one bedroom and dressing room.

23. Servants' Quarters

Each of these minuscule rooms is a bedchamber for one or two of the servants of the palace. Right now, most of these servants are either downstairs, being menaced, or hiding beneath their beds. Four of Skarda's soldiers are gleefully searching this block of rooms, looking for attractive young women to capture. (a) is the servants' staircase, leading down to (9c); (b) is the considerably larger chamber of the headmistress of the lodge servants.

Climax of the Adventure

Whichever way the characters choose to work through these situations, give them every opportunity to rescue the Duke, his soldiers and his servants from various dooms. (Recognition from the crown is one of the intangible rewards adventurers like best, particularly while they're at Expert levels of experience.)

While all this is going on, play up the chaos of what's happening in the compound. The characters will see Skarda's soldiers attacking everywhere... the compound defenders, ill-armed and ill-armored, resisting them mightily... non-combatants fleeing in all directions... Skarda's horsemen galloping across the list and along hallways, narrowly ducking beams and chandeliers (sometimes not ducking them)... soldiers throwing torches onto upper floors of the buildings.

Wherever the player-characters are not, the battle goes in the favor of the soldiers. Wherever the player-characters show up, they swing the balance in the favor of the defenders. Let the characters go through a couple of encounters before they realize the good they're doing: The more people they rescue, the more people can go to rescue other defenders. Eventually, the characters

should notice a decided swing of odds in the favor of the defenders. Eventually, you can contrive to bring most or all of the characters back together. And, eventually, Retameron and Halia, having been about in battles of their own, rejoin the characters.

Over the tumult of battle, Halia will shout to the player-characters: "I had word from a captain of the palace guard here. Someone saw Skarda outside the compound, with the Mirror in his hands. He drew the cloth aside and suddenly he was surrounded by a lot of ill-armed and poorly-armed men and women — the denizens of Hell, I expect. Skarda used a wand which scattered his attackers before him, then turned into a bird and flew back into the compound. I'm sure he's around here somewhere..."

The Last of Skarda

And so he is. When you've gotten most or all of the characters back together, they're going to be confronted by Skarda and several of his minions.

If the characters are travelling about, they'll turn a corner and there he'll be. If they're remaining stationary, he'll round the corner some distance away and confront the characters. (In either case, it's best if you can set up the confrontation for some large open area — the list yard, the ballroom, the roof, etc.)

Whichever way it comes about, Skarda is first noticed when he's 50' away. He's trembling with rage, his face is nearly purple with his anger, and he no longer resembles a favorite uncle. He's accompanied by several of his elite guardsmen.

You'll have to decide how many there are based on what sort of shape the characters are in. The characters should be faced with about as many experience levels as they have, total; in other words, if the party includes one 5th-level one 6th-level, three 7th-level, and one 8th-level characters, that party has 40 (combined) experience levels and should be faced with no more than about 40. (In this example, Skarda has 11, leaving 29 for his minions; since they're all 4th-level, there should be seven or eight of them.)

If the characters have been badly damaged in the fighting so far (which is likely, considering that it's all they've been doing for the last day or so), decrease the number of opponents to make matters more equal; alternatively, you can reinforce the characters' side with NPCs (and not balance them with an equivalent number of experience levels of bad guys); likely prospects include the rescued ruler, Zira, Ashgarth, etc.

EPISODE FIVE: ROYAL CHAOS

For Skarda, use his character sheet from the Non-Player Characters appendix. Mark off his Fire Ball, Teleports, Polymorph Self, and Polymorph Others spells, and one charge from his Wand of Fear — he's used all these in the battle so far. For the elite guardsmen, use their sheet from the NPCs appendix.

Skarda addresses the characters:

Oh, the gods smile upon me. You simpletons have done me a great hurt — and so I must slay you all. I may not realize my plan this time, but I'll have the satisfaction of seeing you dead!

Whereupon his men scatter to attack, and he begins preparing his spells, and the characters are propelled into their climactic battle.

Make it a big, splashy one. If you have to fudge matters to keep Skarda alive for awhile — for instance, letting him automatically make his Saving Throws so that he's not immediately annihilated — do so: The characters are expecting an epic battle.

Ultimately, inevitably, Skarda will be killed; it could be that he'll drag some of the characters to death with him. When he dies, assuming the tide of battle has turned against them, the surviving elite guardsmen will surrender.

Elsewhere in the compound, the invaders have been defeated; the compound guard has amassed numerous prisoners, and the dead lie everywhere. A bucket brigade struggles to douse the fire raging in one part of the building.

The characters will doubtless wish to find the Mirror and see what's occurring with it. Well, there's a mass of people — compound folk — congregated the south wall, gesticulating and talking loudly.

When the characters get to the top of the wall, they'll spot the Mirror. It's lying on the ground about forty yards south of the gatehouse. There are people near it, mostly infirm former denizens of the Mirror, crawling away from it — crawling because the ground around them is shaking. And then, with a mighty cracking noise, the earth will rock; all characters must make a Saving Throw vs. Death or be thrown off their feet (which will do no damage to them); and those who remain on their feet see a remarkable sight:

The Mirror cracks and shards of glass go flying in all directions. And, instantaneously, all things that were in the Mirror — except the stone and water that belonged in the Mirror — appear on the patch of ground around the Mirror. (Yes, the collected mass of denizens, soldiers, horses, trappings, wooden

doors, treasures, crops, weapons, armor, and even forms of the dead sprawls across several ACRES.) No object appears within another object, as can happen with Teleportation. Most of the denizens who appear immediately shade their eyes to look up at the sun and look about in amazement and glee. Some sporadic fighting is still going on, as denizens of the Mirror pull down the last of the soldiers from within the Mirror... but it's obvious that this battle is over.

Repercussions

The guard collects prisoners. The captain of the guard will approach the characters and tell them that a servant will conduct them to quarters where they may bathe, rest, see healers, etc.

If they feel a driving need to run out and scoop up treasures lying around, they'll have some trouble in the doing. After the characters made it into the real world, the denizens of Hell overran the palace, slaying the guards there and sacking it of all remaining treasures; the characters would have to take all the gold pieces and items of treasure from the rebels who have them now. They can — but it'll do harm to their reputations later. Each of the denizens who has some of the treasure from Skarda's chambers has 1d10 pieces of gold. There is a very minimal chance (a roll of 2 on 2d6) that the characters would find any of the magical treasure scattered among members of that mob.

Once the characters accompany the servant back to their quarters (Rooms 20 within the building) soldiers belonging to the Duke will begin to erect a bivouac on open ground for the horde of people which emerged from the broken Mirror... and, at the Duke's order, they collect the remaining gold and other treasures from these folks, that they might have money to buy them food and to send them back to their countries and cities of origin.

After the characters bathe, rest, and are attended to, palace officials will interview them individually to learn the story of Skarda's Mirror. The characters will be fed in their rooms (by servants) and given fresh clothes; their weapons, if they wish it, will be cleaned and sharpened. The servants will answer any questions posed to them by the characters, and the palace seneschal will inform them that there is to be a great feast on the morrow to celebrate their victory over Skarda.

Rewards

The next day, the characters are indeed

grandly feasted in the great hall of the Duke's lodge. All the player-characters (still living) will be there, as well as Retameron and Halia, Ashgarth and Zira (assuming they didn't perish the previous day), and the collected court nobles.

Role-play the event up as much as you can: The court nobles will variously be amazed at the characters' story, incredulous of it, irritated that they weren't the ones to rescue the Duke, appreciative of the heroes' valor, suspicious of the heroes' true motives... bards will sing and, for the interest of the nobles, the characters' story (somewhat edited down and prettied up) will be told by a court bard... and, toward the end of the feast, the herald will stand and summon the player-characters (by name) to come up and stand before the Duke.

When they have assembled before him, the Duke will rise, hold up his goblet as for a toast, and address the characters:

My friends, through your remarkable bravery, and tenacity, and skill with steel and the arts of magic, you have preserved my life, the lives of my family, my rule and my name. I drink to you.

He does, as do the assembled nobles of the court. He continues:

I also find myself in your debt. To each of you I owe a gift, a debt of honor. Name me your desire now, and if it is within my power I will grant it. If you choose to wait, bring me your wish any time — bring it before my family a hundred years from now and my great-great-grandchild will honor it, for such is the honor of my clan.

Then, in turn, he'll name each of the characters and ask what the character will have of him.

Guidelines for the Gifts

The ruler is no immortal granting wishes — he's a mortal ruler operating on the financial limits of his nation. But he'll be delighted to grant each character what he may, on the order of 10,000 gp value per character.

If a character asks for riches, he'll be brought a chest with gold, silver, gems and jewelry, all adding up to about 10,000 gp.

If he asks for magical arms and armor, he'll be given magical arms and armor with a collective bonus of no more than +2 (for instance, chainmail +1 and a sword +1, or a sword +2); he'll award magical treasures confiscated from Skarda's goods first, natu-



rally, before dipping into his own collection.

If a character asks for something modest, he will be as lavish as possible in the awarding of that prize. If the character asks for, say, a horse (value far less than 10,000 gp), they will reward him with a well-bred warhorse complete with barding and his own groom (a new retainer) to work for the character. (The groom will be an indentured servant who must work for the character for seven years with no more pay than room and board; he has his own horse, gear and equipment, courtesy of the ruler.)

If the character wishes to defer his favor until later, the ruler will have his scribe mark the character's name down in a book of debts so that he will not be forgotten.

If a character blatantly asks for something which the Duke cannot or should not provide (a wish, a million pieces of gold, a book to increase attributes or experience levels, the hand of his daughter in marriage, etc.), he will answer that he would be ill-serving his people to bestow such a reward. He'll not take offense... but he'll remember the character as being one who asks too much. He'll still owe the debt to the character and meet it as he may.

Once the debts are all met or temporarily set aside, the Duke will motion the characters

back to their seats and the feast will continue to its conclusion.

The next morning, the characters' gifts will be delivered (those that can be assembled in the course of one night), the characters will find all their gear mended or replaced with new gear; they'll be gifted with ponies and saddles (riding horse plus saddle and bridle, 100 gp worth total), and the seneschal will bid them good luck on their future adventures. Their story here is over.

And, yes, if they really wish to return to Verge to collect it, Teranon will give them the reward he promised, even if it is much less than that they earned at the palace of the ruler.

Skarda's Treasure

If the characters expected Skarda to have been sitting on some vast mound of treasure, you can set them straight: Except for the goods found in his personal treasure room, most of the treasure he stole over twenty years went into payment for his soldiers, purchase and upkeep of weapons, armor, and steeds, bribes to acquire maps of the palaces of the great royal houses of the continent, etc. There never was any gigantic treasure in Skarda's possession.

The Denizens of Skarda's Mirror

If the characters are curious as to what happens to the poor souls who emerged from Skarda's Mirror, they'll hear that the Duke did indeed use Skarda's gold to import food to keep them alive and, over the course of several months, shipped and sent them all back to their various homes.

New Friends

Finally, the characters do have new friends in the forms of Retameron, Halia, Ashgarth, Zira, Andrya, Kraigg — you can use them in later adventures as friendly encounters, NPC allies, etc.

And, if you wish to, even game-years later, you can remind characters of this adventure — and the continuing good reputation they have from it — by this means: Have a villager, or nobleman, or craftsman befriend the characters (by sheltering them for the night, helping them with a quest, etc.) and then explain, "You probably do not remember me, for I looked very different then, but you rescued me from Skarda's Mirror."

APPENDICES

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

ALKIN (SERGEANT)

2nd-Level Fighter (Warrior)

Neutral

S	12	HP	12 (9)
I	13	AC	4
W	10		
D	13		
Co	10		
Ch	11		

Bonuses and Penalties: +1 to languages known; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC

Weapons: Battle-Axe, Dagger

Armor: Chainmail

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: Camping Gear & Tent

Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 battle-axe; D 1-8; Save F2; ML 9; AL N

Appearance and Dress: Sergeant Alkin stands 5'10" tall and weighs 165 pounds; he has brown hair and mustache and brown eyes. He is 29.

He dresses in the standard brown uniform issued to all of Retameron's soldiers and wears his sergeant's insignia on both soldiers and his helmet.

History: Alkin is a competent but not exceptional officer in Retameron's service. Son and grandson of a soldier, he spent five years in the Specularum city guard. Unable to rise above the rank of common soldier in the city guard, he applied to Retameron and was hired on by the hero four years ago.

Personality: He is a professional soldier, meaning that his loyalty is only rented by his employer's gold; however, he is very ethical and would not betray an employer for a bribe.

At the adventure's beginning, it is possible that he is *charmed* by Skarda, as discussed in Episode One.

ANDRYA

1st-Level Magic-User (Medium)

Lawful

S	8	HP	4 (3)
I	16	AC	8
W	13		
D	15		
Co	10		
Ch	14		

Bonuses and Penalties: -1 to hit and damage rolls; +2 to languages known; +1 to saving throws vs. magic; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +1 to reaction rolls

Weapons: Dagger

Armor: None

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: Spell Book

Spells: First Level — *Sleep*

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger; D 1-4; Save M1; ML 8; AL L

Appearance and Dress: Andrya is 5'5" and 125 lbs, brunette, with brown eyes. She is 19.

In general, she wears simple robes — especially blues, from sky-blue to deep royal blues — and wears the apprenticeship badge of her Magicians' Guild status upon them.

History: Andrya is the daughter of a Specularum wheelwright. As a child, she demonstrated high intelligence and an aptitude for magic, and so nine years ago was routinely apprenticed into the Magicians' Guild of Specularum. Five years ago, she was assigned to Halia, her official mentor.

Personality: Ordinarily of sunny disposition, when first encountered by the player-characters she is still recovering from the shock of seeing her friend Sera killed by the Mirror Fiend. She is also down 1 hp from tumbling down part of a flight of steps while trying to help Kraigg to safety, though not a fighter by temperament.

ASHGARTH

1st-Level Fighter (Veteran)

Lawful

S	10	HP	5
I	17	AC	8 (6)
W	13		
D	15		
Co	9		
Ch	15		

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to languages known; +1 to saving throws vs. magic; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +1 to reaction rolls

Weapons: Harvesting Sickle (1-6)

Armor: Usually none; otherwise heavy linen (works like Leather)

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: Usually none; otherwise linen cord (50' rope)

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 sickle; D 1-6; Save F1; ML 12; AL L

Appearance and Dress: Ashgarth is 5'11" and 145 pounds; he has thin red hair and blue eyes, and wears mustache and beard. He is 25 but looks to be in his late 30s.

He is, as you can see from his vital statistics, very skinny. He dresses in the clothes

normal for a slave in Hell: Ratted breeches and tunic stitched from third-rate linen, seldom washed and pockmarked with holes and tears.

History: Ashgarth was the son of a townsman of the village of Lumm, a small community a few miles northeast of Kelven. The whole community was kidnapped by Skarda 19 years ago, and he has grown up in Hell.

Understandably, over the years he developed a great hatred for Skarda and his men and eventually began organizing a rebel underground, which he currently serves as leader. For years, he and a few other slaves have operated a "food pipeline" to smuggle extra food to a few dozen men and women — enough to give them almost normal stats and fighting strength. They've also been stealing tools and implements to use as weapons, some of them dying in the process.

Personality: Ashgarth lives only to free the denizens of Hell and to avenge himself upon Skarda. It's all he talks about and all he thinks about, and every decision he makes will be in light of how it can aid him and harm Skarda.

HALIA

7th-Level Magic-User (Sorceress)

Lawful

S	8	HP	26
I	18	AC	9
W	13		
D	11		
Co	13		
Ch	15		

Bonuses and Penalties: +3 to languages known; +1 to saving throws vs. magic; +1 hp per level; +1 on reaction rolls

Weapons: Daggers (2, one on belt and one concealed)

Armor: None

Magical Items: *wand of cold* (18 charges remaining), *ring of telekinesis*

Other Equipment: Standard Adventuring Gear, Spell Books

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger, or magic; D 1-4, or magic; Save M7; ML 10; AL L

Spells Normally Carried:

First Level —

Charm Person

Magic Missile

Ventriloquism

Second Level —

Locate Object

Phantasmal Force

Third Level —

Fly
Lightning Bolt

Fourth Level —

Charm Monster

Spells In Her Spell Books:

First Level —

Charm Person

Detect Magic

Light

Magic Missile

Read Magic

Sleep

Ventriloquism

Second Level —

Detect Evil

Knock

Locate Object

Phantasmal Force

Wizard Lock

Third Level —

Dispel Magic

Fly

Lightning Bolt

Protection from Normal Missiles

Fourth Level —

Charm Monster

Polymorph Self

Appearance and Dress: Halia is 5'7" and 135 pounds. Her hair is red, worn long and usually braided; her eyes are blue. She is 26.

She usually wears robes — the materials varying with the circumstances (silk for society affairs, linen for home life, heavy linen with woolen cloaks for traveling) — often in green hues; she wears her rank mark for the local Magicians' Guild on a golden brooch.

History: Third daughter (and eighth child) of a noble family, and distantly related to Duke Stefan, Halia ran away from home to take up the adventuring life rather than be traded away in a marriage of convenience. Over the last eight years, she has adventured all over the continent, always returning to the city of her birth, Specularum. Gradually, she centered her adventuring around the city, became an important figure in the Magicians' Guild of Specularum, married her co-adventurer Retameron, and moved to his home, the small village of Verge, near Threshold.

Personality: Halia is rather temperamental, not one to take a back seat to other adventurers, her husband included. Her hobbies, other than adventuring with Retameron, include research into magic and old legends.

Note: When first encountered by the player-characters, she will be bereft of all her equipment, and will have used her *magic missile* and *lightning bolt* spells (in the slaying of the first mirror fiend).

KARAMEIKOS**(DUKE STEFAN KARAMEIKOS III)**

15th-Level Fighter (Lord)

Lawful

S	16	HP	80 (66)
I	13	AC	3
W	15		
D	16		
Co	14		
Ch	17		

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to languages known; +1 to saving rolls vs. magic; +2 to missile fire rolls; -2 to AC; +1 hp per level; +1 to reaction rolls.

Weapons: *Sword* +2

Armor: *Shield* +2

Magical Items: *Ring of Protection* +1

Other Equipment: None

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8 (+2); Save F11; ML 12; AL L

Appearance and Dress: Duke Stefan Karameikos III is of middle age. He is of average height but burly. His hair, beard, and mustache are a fiery red, flecked with gray; his eyes are sea-blue.

When interrupted by Skarda's attack, the Duke was in his throne room attending to business and so was not dressed for combat; he wears formal white robes of state over his riding gear. He was able to grab up the sword and shield of one of his personal guards before being set upon.

History: The Duke's history is too long and involved to detail here. Briefly, he is a nobleman originally of the empire of Thyatis. A distinguished military commander and adventurer by the age of 20, he was offered a baronial title if he settled in and developed the unclaimed wilderness west of Thyatis.

Stefan Karameikos III built himself a sea-coast town, a village which he named Specularum, and began settling his followers all through the region. Eventually the region became the Barony of Karameikos, then the County, and finally the Duchy. Now, 30 years after the initial landfall, the Duchy is flourishing, and the Duke is a powerful and well-liked ruler, the father of strong heirs.

Personality: In spite of myths saying that red hair accompanies temperament, the

Duke is cool in situations ranging from society affairs to military actions to personal betrayal. He shows more than faint emotion only to members of his family and his closest friends. His speech is gruff, his opinions candid and uncompromising.

KOGRIN**6th-Level Fighter (Myrmidon)**

Chaotic

S	18	HP	46
I	5	AC	8
W	10		
D	12		
Co	18		
Ch	6		

Bonuses and Penalties: +3 to hit and damage rolls; illiterate; +3 hp per level; -1 reaction Weapons: Two-Handed Sword

Armor: Leather

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: Tongs, chains, pokers, whips, and other implements of torture

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-10 (+3); Save F6; ML 12; AL C

Appearance and Dress: Kogrin stands 6'6" tall and 250 pounds, with a scruffy knot of red hair atop his head and beady black eyes sunk deep in his face. His age is impossible to determine (his species nearly so).

He wears heavy clothes and boots, plus a leather jerkin and leather vambraces studded with spikes (which do 1-3 points of damage if he strikes someone with them).

History: Kogrin, awaiting execution in Specularum for a series of brutal murders, was rescued five years ago by Skarda, who admired his bestial nature. Skarda put Kogrin in charge of interrogation and disposals in his dungeon — in other words, appointed him chief torturer and executioner.

Personality: His disposition is unpleasant, his smell more so; he enjoys his work (takes a childlike glee in it, as a matter of fact); he is despised by every living thing in the Mirror except for Skarda.

KRAIGG**1st-Level Fighter (Veteran)**

Lawful

S	17	HP	10 (1)
I	12	AC	3
W	10		
D	13		
Co	16		
Ch	13		

APPENDICES

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +2 hp per level; +1 to reaction rolls

Weapons: Sword, Bow

Armor: Chain and Shield

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: None

Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8; Save F1; ML 8; AL L

Appearance and Dress: Kraigg is a big, strapping young man — 6'1" and 190 lbs. He has blonde hair, mustache, and beard, and brown eyes. He is 18.

He usually dresses in standard traveling clothes — tunic, breeches, boot and belt — and, of course, wears his armor whenever action is in the offing.

History: Kraigg, raised in Threshold, son of an old adventuring friend of Retameron, came to Verge and the tower when he was 16, in hopes of being trained by the famous hero. Retameron accepted him, and since then Kraigg has been a Follower of Lord Retameron.

Personality: Kraigg is a brave young man and devoted to his patrons; if encountered by the player-characters, he'll be all too anxious to accompany them on their quest.

However, in the battle against the first Mirror Fiend, Kraigg was injured to within an inch of his life — that is, 1 hp. He shouldn't be allowed to accompany the heroes to a county fair for fear that a cat-scratch might kill him.

At the adventure's beginning, Kraigg is staying in the small Threshold property of Teranon.

MIRROR FIEND

Monster

Armor Class: 3

Hit Dice: 9

Move: 120' (40') and Special*

Attacks: 1 bite

Damage: 3-18

No. Appearing: 1

Save As: Fighter: 9

Morale: 12

Treasure Type: Nil

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 2,300

The average mirror fiend stands about 6 feet tall. Its body structure and facial features superficially resemble those of a baboon; but it is covered with a dense coat of night-black fur, and its mouth stretches across its unnatural

rally wide head, so that when opened it does indeed resemble the kind of iron traps used to catch large game.

The mirror fiend has numerous special abilities:

It can *teleport* into a mirror and exist there, either invisible or as a reflection visible to those viewing the mirror. It can only *teleport* into the mirror closest to it.

While in a mirror, the mirror fiend can see out of all other mirrors within a 60' radius. This is rather like viewing a bank of closed-circuit television sets, from its perspective. When action begins occurring in one mirror, it tends to ignore the rest.

When invisible, it is helpless; it can do nothing but become visible and see out of mirrors within its 60' radius.

When visible, it can turn invisible, *teleport* out of the mirror, or *teleport* to any other mirror within 60' (when it's already within a mirror it is not limited to *teleporting* into the nearest mirror). It can also choose whether it is in front of or behind other reflections within the mirror; for instance, if the mirror is reflecting a bedroom, the mirror fiend could effectively hide behind a chair, sit on the chair, lie on the bed, stand behind a character's reflection, stand in front of the character's reflection, etc. It CAN-NOT interfere with or alter the other reflections in any way, however.

When *teleporting* into mirrors or between mirrors, the fiend can appear at any altitude (where there is a mirror); it can *teleport* itself only. For purposes of determining botched *teleportation* chances, the mirror fiend is presumed to have Exact knowledge of all mirrors within its 60' radius.

Only mirrors one square foot or greater in area can be used for all these functions. It cannot *teleport* into or between smaller mirrors; it cannot see out of smaller mirrors.

The mirror fiend is fond of surprise attacks. Its favorite tactic is to wait inside a mirror, either invisibly or behind the reflection of a piece of furniture. When its victim enters the area and looks at the mirror, the fiend appears — it prefers to leap from behind the furniture to stand behind the character's reflection, or to appear from invisibility behind the character's reflection.

Under these circumstances, the character's usual reaction is to turn around to confront the creature he imagines to be standing behind him. At this point, the fiend *teleports* out of the Mirror and bites the character in the back.

Like thieves, mirror fiends get a +4 bonus when attacking from behind. Unlike thieves, they do not get extra damage from these at-

tacks.

If a mirror fiend is within a mirror when it is broken, it takes 1d6 damage and is automatically *teleported* to the nearest mirror. If there is no mirror within 60', it will instead perish.

A *detect evil* spell will make the mirror fiend glow; if the fiend is within a mirror, it will make the mirror glow. If the fiend is in another mirror, but looking through a mirror within range of the spell, that mirror will glow — very faintly. If *detect invisible* is cast, and the mirror fiend is invisible within a mirror, it will cause that mirror to glow.

Only one mirror fiend can appear at a time. Once it is killed, another can appear from Skarda's Mirror. Only two may appear each day.

The mirror fiend is a guardian-creature whose home is the nebulous portal area between this world and the world of Skarda's Mirror. It cannot be drawn INTO Skarda's Mirror; it can only exist in the real world, or be drawn into its home area. The nature of its existence in that place is unknown.

Though Chaotic of alignment, the mirror fiend obeys the owner of the Mirror without hesitation. For the last two decades, of course, the owner has been Skarda.

REBEL FIGHTERS

AC 7; HD 1; hp 4; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 (short sword, sickle, pick, pitchfork, etc.); D 1-6; Save F1; ML 10; AL N

These men and women are the denizens of Hell who have been smuggling food and weapons to these many years in preparation for another attempt at revolution. They're in much better shape than the average denizen of Hell, and all have some sort of weapon (as described above) and a heavy linen cuirass (equal to leather armor).

RETAMERON

9th Level Fighter (Lord)

Lawful

	HP	AC	
S	18		53 (30)
I	13		0
W	11		
D	16		
Co	13		
Ch	12		

Bonuses and Penalties: +3 to hit and damage rolls; +2 to missile fire rolls; -2 to AC; +1 hp per level

Weapons: Sword +2, Dagger, Bow with 20 arrows

Armor: Plate and Shield

Magical Items: *Girdle of Giant Strength*

Other Equipment: None

Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8 (+3); Save F9; ML 11; AL L

Appearance and Dress: Retameron stands 6' tall and weighs 190 pounds. His hair is brown, worn short, with mustache and beard; his eyes are dark brown. He is 31.

In order to be stylish — and to draw to him the attention of enemies while his allies set up their own defenses — Retameron long ago adopted a very flashy dressing style, and is usually clad in bright gold garments with rich trimmings in a variety of colors. His accoutrements (such as belts, boots, swordbelts, etc.) are always functional and worn, however.

History: Son of Teranon, an adventurer and later sword instructor, Retameron grew up in Specularum. Like his father, he was drawn to the adventuring life and at 18 began his own adventuring career. His center of operations was originally Threshold, but he eventually moved to Verge, a small village in need of a protector. Over 13 years of adventuring, he became famous and experienced enough to receive permission from the Duke to establish his stronghold in Verge. Since that time, he has divided his time between personal adventures, missions for the Duke, and his home life.

Personality: Retameron likes the good life — good mead and wines, cheerful company, excellent food, etc. — but is always willing to forego the easy life in order to bring grief to evildoers.

Notes: When encountered by the player-characters, Retameron will have been beaten senseless after the transition into the Mirror (hence the second HP score, reflecting his current hit points); all his gear has been taken from him (and all his special gear from his tower has been taken, too).

RETAMERON'S SOLDIERS

AC 4 (chain and shield); HD 2; hp 12; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8; Save F2; ML 7 (9 in the presence of Retameron or Halia); AL N

SKARDA

11th-Level Magic-User (Wizard)

Chaotic

S	10	HP	26
I	18	AC	6
W	13		
D	16		
Co	11		
Gh	15		

Bonuses and Penalties: +3 on languages known; +1 on saving throws vs. magic; +2 on missile fire rolls; -2 on AC; +1 on reaction rolls

Weapons: Dagger +2

Armor: None

Magical Items: Crystal ball with clairaudience; ring of protection +1; wand of fear (12 charges remaining), Skarda's Mirror

Other Equipment: Spell Books

Combat Notes: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger or magic; D 1-4 or magic; Save M11; ML 7; AL C

Spells Normally Carried:

First Level —

Charm Person

Charm Person

Magic Missile

Sleep

Second Level —

Detect Invisible

ESP

Web

Third Level —

Fire Ball

Hold Person

Lightning Bolt

Fourth Level —

Polymorph Others

Polymorph Self

Wizard Eye

Fifth Level —

Teleport

Teleport

Sixth Level —

Invisible Stalker

Spells in His Spell Book:

First Level —

Charm Person

Floating Disc

Hold Portal

Light

Magic Missile

Read Languages

Read Magic

Sleep

Second Level —

Detect Invisible

ESP

Invisibility

Knock

Locate Object

Web

Third Level —

Dispel Magic

Fire Ball

Fly

Hold Person

Lightning Bolt

Fourth Level —

Charm Monster

Polymorph Others

Polymorph Self

Remove Curse

Wizard Eye

Fifth Level —

Cloudkill

Hold Monster

Teleport

Sixth Level —

Invisible Stalker

Stone to Flesh

Appearance and Dress: Skarda, once known as Mallek, is 5'8" tall, 195 pounds (rather a lot of it fat), with black hair and bright blue eyes. He is rather pale of complexion and goes clean-shaven. He is 52.

He doesn't advertise his profession, and so dresses like any other adventurer — in pants, tunic, cloaks, etc., anything but wizardly robes. He usually dresses in black. As the text noted, Skarda is merry of expression and looks like a favorite uncle or teacher, not a megalomaniac.

History: Mallek was a simple Medium in Thyatis 30 years ago. Adventuresome of spirit, he was eager to become part of young Stefan Karameikos' colonization expedition, and spent his early years in the village (later city) of Specularum. But, as was related in the Dungeon Master's Introduction, two decades ago he discovered the Mirror and his life, goals and identity changed for the worse. Even after the change, he maintained his trusted Mallek identity, operating a magic services shop in Specularum and biding his time.

Personality: Skarda is soft-voiced, well-spoken, and well-educated; he would be much better-liked if he weren't intent on taking over the world.

The man is erratic and strange. He has flashes of being a nice person — he could stop a torture midway through because he felt a sudden pang of his old personality, or have someone executed and then be smitten by a wash of guilt for what he's done. But, ultimately, the behavior patterns imposed by the Mirror shine through again and he becomes nasty old Skarda once more.

SKARDA'S ELITE GUARD

4th-Level Fighters (Heroes)

Neutral

S	16	HP	25
I	10	AC	1
W	10		

APPENDICES

D	13	HP	25
Co	13		
Ch	10	AC	1

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +1 hp per level
 Weapons: Sword, dagger
 Armor: Plate mail and shield
 Magical Items: None
 Other Equipment: None
 Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8 (+2); Save F4; ML 10; AL N

These men are the best of the mercenaries Skarda has hired, top-line fighters (by mercenary standards). They are fearful of Skarda, but less so than the rank-and-file officers and soldiers; Skarda has paid too much money for his elite guards to punish them as casually as he does his other minions.

When he's in the Mirror and while he's riding on raids, Skarda is accompanied by 5-8 (2d4) of these guards.

SKARDA'S NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS (NCOs)

AC 4 (chain and shield); HD 2; hp 12; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8; Save F2; ML 8 (9 in the presence of Officers); AL N

SKARDA'S OFFICERS

AC 2 (plate and shield); HD 3; hp 17; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8; Save F3; ML 9; AL N

SKARDA'S SOLDIERS

AC 6 (leather and shield); HD 1; hp 5; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-6; Save F1; ML 6 (7 in the presence of NCOs, 8 in the presence of officers); AL N

SLAVES (DENIZENS OF HELL)

AC 9; HD 1; hp 2 (would be 4 to 8 if they were healthy); MV 90' (30') (this would be 120'/40' if they were healthy); #AT 1; D 1 point (1-4 if the slave can find a club); Save F1; ML 3 (10 if there's mob violence going on); AL N

TERANON

5th-Level Fighter (Swashbuckler)

Neutral, Lawful leanings

S	14	HP	29
I	11	AC	1
W	12		
D	18		
Co	13		
Ch	10		

Bonuses and Penalties: +1 to hit and damage

rolls; +3 to missile fire rolls; -3 to AC; +1 hp per level

Weapons: Sword, bow (and 24 arrows), daggers (3, one on belt and two hidden)

Armor: Chainmail and shield

Magical Items: None

Other Equipment: None

Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8; Save F5; ML 9; AL N

Appearance and Dress: Teranon is 6'2" and 180 lbs. His hair, mustache and beard, originally black, are now mostly gray. His features are sharp, like a bird of prey's; he walks with a limp from an old knife wound. He is 58.

He tends to dress richly but not gaudily, in expensive but somber grays and blacks, reflecting the good living he earns from his profession.

History: Teranon was of low noble birth in Thyatis. He'd been an adventurer in Thyatis before joining Stefan Karameikos' first expedition; in Specularum, he was for a few years one of the Duke's guardsmen before retiring from the combat life.

He invested his considerable winnings into founding a school for the teaching of basic swordsmanship and has lived as a tutor since that time. His wife, mother of Retameron and the hero's siblings, is still alive.

Personality: Teranon is a little gruff, the mark of a military-style teacher of 40 years' experience, but good-natured. He's no longer adventuresome, but is certainly willing to dust off his armor and risk his life for family and friends. His accomplishments as an adventurer, negligible as they were, are still a great source of pride to him, and so he is inclined to become gabby and tell war stories — especially to those few people who've heard of him.

ZIRA

4th-Level Fighter (Heroine)

Neutral

S	16	HP	25
I	10	AC	1
W	10		
D	13		
Co	13		
Ch	14		

Bonuses and Penalties: +2 to hit and damage rolls; +1 to missile fire rolls; -1 to AC; +1 hp per level; +1 to reaction rolls

Weapons: Sword, daggers (3, 2 on belt and one concealed in boot)

Armor: Plate mail and shield

Magical Items: *Medallion of ESP*

Other Equipment: None

Combat Notes: MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword; D 1-8 (+2); Save F4; ML 10; AL N

Appearance and Dress: Zira stands 5'10" tall and weighs 140 pounds. She has pitch-black hair cropped short (so that none will protrude from her helmet and offer an opponent a handhold) and blue eyes. She is 25.

She wears the jet-black uniform (with white piping) of Skarda's Elite Guard, and her own plate armor and shield are meticulously shined and cleaned.

History: Zira is an adventurer, born in Kelvan and living for the last few years in Threshold. If you wish, you can, before the adventure begins, establish that they know Zira in much the same way you can do so for Retameron and Halia, as described in the Dungeon Master's Introduction. (This will give her all the more incentive to help rescue the characters.)

The minute that the second Mirror Fiend had cleaned out Retameron's Tower, Skarda left the Mirror to do some reconnaissance. Traveling to nearby Threshold, he happened across Zira. Zira, who was in desperate need of money to settle debts, accepted employment from this foreboding stranger, in spite of his warnings about "unconditional obedience," "numerous enemies," and so forth. He transported her to the Tower and into the Mirror, then began picking her brain about the state of the world as it was two years after his last appearance. After learning from her what he could, he assigned her to his elite guard.

It didn't take her long to see what goes on inside Skarda's Mirror; or to learn that members of the elite guard must spend a year within the Mirror and pass Skarda's loyalty test (an ESP probe) before being allowed to leave; or to realize that she would never pass the test. Had she known what Skarda was, she'd never have accepted his employ, regardless of her debts. Now she is biding her time and looking for her opportunity to escape Skarda.

Step One of her plan was to pretend to be as ruthless and callous as all the other soldiers and guardsmen. Step Two was to get herself assigned to duties in Hell and drop word among the denizens of Hell that their rebellion might have an ally in her. Step Three was to find out the password allowing her access out of the Mirror; with her *medallion of ESP*, won during her adventuring career, she has probed the mind of the Captain of the Elite

Guard and pried from him the password to the Portal.

She's willing and anxious to strike a deal with the rebels... before Skarda finds her out.

Personality: Like most mercenaries, Zira is willing to rent out her sword and loyalty and to engage in wars with people she has no personal grudge with. However, while she's no tender-hearted child, she's not willing to help perpetuate the cruelty and barbarity she sees within Skarda's Mirror. Her solution is to leave... but she can probably be persuaded to help the rebel effort.

Adventures never go quite the way that adventurers predict... and certainly never go the way that designers and DMs expect. So this appendix deals with what you can do when the adventure manages to derail itself.

Episode by episode, here's what can go wrong... and what you can do to fix things.

Episode One

There are only a couple of things to go wrong with Episode One, namely:

Characters Realize They're Being Stalked

In spite of your best efforts at concealment, the characters realize that Skarda is after them. Perhaps they're relying only on a hunch or on paranoia; perhaps one of them unexpectedly used ESP on the character you'd had Skarda *charm*, and for some reason you can't change who the *charmed* party is.

If this is the case, the characters will be aware that Skarda is after them... This will only make them more suspicious. You'll just have to be cleverer at capturing them at the beginning of Episode Two; this is an inconvenience, but not a disaster.

Dead Characters

If any characters died during the first episode, you should wait until they've been replaced within the party (by the Raising of Dead or by the introduction of new characters) before launching into Episode Two.

Episode Two

Quite a lot can go wrong with Episode Two:

Characters Elude Capture

In spite of Skarda's best plans, the characters somehow elude the plan to capture them. Well, this is a problem. They may decide to cover the thing up, round up the Fifth Cav-

alry, and go charging in with a massed army. This would upset things a lot.

There are ways to get around this calamity:

You can give Skarda enough wishes to bring the characters into the Mirror anyway. (This is the brute force approach.)

Or, you can have Skarda *teleport* back into the Mirror world and close up the portal from the other side. The characters will cover up their side and presume that they're safe, so long as they keep it that way. BUT: Sometime in the next few weeks, another of the portals within the Mirror opens up (the other Mirror has been buried and is now discovered by treasure-hunters). Skarda is on the loose again with a new Mirror. His first action will be to track down the player-characters and capture them; this time, in all likelihood, he will not fail.

Characters Kill Skarda

Well, this is very bothersome. Assuming that Skarda has used his magic to best effect and has been killed anyway, we can also assume that the characters have eluded capture in this attack. This gives them the Mirror and apparent victory.

If they decide to enter the Mirror anyway, the adventure can continue as written. The characters are still very likely to be captured by the waiting seventy soldiers; they cannot leave the Mirror without the password. The chief captain of Skarda's military will take Skarda's place and continue his plan; the primary difference is that he will have no magical powers but will have superior military tactical knowledge.

If they decide not to enter the Mirror for several days, use the tactics described immediately above: Skarda's second-in-command is able to leave by a portal unearthed elsewhere and continues the plan.

Character In Mirror Eludes Capture

The characters have been drawn into the Mirror — and one or two have somehow eluded capture. (If the character can *teleport*, it becomes a lot easier — all he has to do is *teleport* to one of the distant guard-towers and he's well away from the scene of action.)

This is aggravating — it's hard to keep track of separate groups of characters. First, find out what the character wants to do. Perhaps (cross fingers) he wants to follow the characters into the dungeon and rescue them. If so, let him — assuming he has the ability. This will actually fit very well in with the adventure and save the characters some effort.

If the character doesn't want to aid his

friends (why not?) let him do as he pleases; you'll have to divide your time between him and the rest of the party, and most of it will have to go to the party. The character faces a better-than-average chance to be noticed and captured wherever he goes; perhaps you can contrive to have him caught and thrown into the dungeon before the others escape.

Escaped Character Follows Skarda

If the escaped character wants to follow Skarda back into the outer world — and can manage it — you're in the same position. (The only way for a character to do this without being detected is to burn a *wish* or to use *polymorph self* to turn into something small and ride in with Skarda and his guardsmen. The portal area has a *detect invisible* on it, remember.)

Skarda will appear in his room/tent as it was seen earlier, then he will travel by the simplest expedient to the palace of the nation's ruler. (If the ruler's palace is within a day's travel, he'll ride. If it isn't, he'll *teleport*, leaving his guardsmen behind.)

The escaped character could attack Skarda and conceivably beat him. This would tend to change the adventure radically — which is not in itself a bad thing. Perhaps the rest of the adventure could involve the player-characters trying to rescue the denizens of Hell from the Mirror while it is rocked with the earthquakes which are destroying it. Perhaps the defeated Skarda could, with his dying breath, gasp "It's too late, hero..." Then his *invisible stalker* kayos the character from behind, carts the Mirror to the nearest palace, and whips the cover off anyway.

Dead Characters

If characters die while they're being captured, see the "Dead Characters" note from Episode Three.

Episode Three

The problems that can crop up during Episode Three include:

Dead Characters

If characters died during their capture or during their escape from the dungeons, replace them with characters already in the dungeons. Perhaps some of the royal guardsmen and guardswomen sent to retake Retameron's Tower are alive and incarcerated; they'll make dandy replacements. (Use the pull-out characters included with the adventure; give each character some damage from being subdued; the character's gear is where

APPENDICES

the player-characters' gear is.)

Characters Just Want to Go Home

Once escaped, the characters may decide that they don't want to help the people of the Mirror; they just want to escape.

Well, they'll have a hard time of it. The Portal is black when they exit the dungeons. Skarda's getting to the palace, remember. If the characters just want to wait around near the Portal and charge it when it lights up, they stand an excellent chance of being recaptured. They must have the password to get through the Portal anyway. In short, taking this tack is just the thing to get them recaptured; have them noticed, attacked, re-chained, and slapped back into a new cell, and let them start all over.

Episode Four

Problems that can occur during Episode Four include:

Characters Botch Escape from Mirror

The characters could blow their attempt to get out of the Mirror. Perhaps they've unexpectedly defeated by the guardsmen they attack. Perhaps they're just no good at inspiring the slaves.

One way to get them into the last episode is to have the guard-leader bind them and take them through into the outer world so they might be forced to witness the sack of Duke Stefan's dwelling. Once they're through into the real world, that particular batch of soldiers could run into some of Duke Stefan's guards, who defeat them and free the player-characters.

Or, perhaps Zira can rescue the characters by taking them "into custody" once they're captured and then escaping with them.

Perhaps the stresses which are causing the earthquakes actually tear the Mirror apart prematurely, scattering the denizens of the Mirror all over the hunting lodge grounds now instead of in Episode Five; this would certainly get the characters to the scene of the finale.

Dead Characters

If characters die during this adventure, your best bet at replacing them is to have one of the player's alternate characters at the palace (for unrelated reasons); he'll join up with the other characters when the action starts. You can, alternately, use one of the pre-generated characters included in the adventure and decide that he's the captain of the palace guard; he'll recognize the characters for what

they are and help them.

Episode Five

Problems which could crop up during the climax include:

Characters Fail to Save Duke Stefan

Well, the soldiers confronting Duke Stefan have been doing both normal and subduing damage. When he's finally brought down, he'll be seriously wounded — but half the damage will be subduing and he will be alive. Perhaps they can rescue him later.

Characters Fail, Period.

Skarda takes over the hunting lodge. Hurrah for him. But he's not exactly where he wanted to be — it was important that he capture Duke Stefan first, but he still needs to capture the Duchy palace in Specularum. So the player-characters and the Duke can plot their escape and revenge while Skarda is recovering, relearning his spells and preparing to take the palace in Specularum.

Other Things to Do

Finally, there are other ways to go about using SKARDA'S MIRROR.

The Characters Instead of Retameron

You can run the player-characters through an adventure where they, instead of Retameron, find that Mallek is actually Skarda and "kill" him (inadvertently capture him within the Mirror). This puts them into the adventure from its beginnings.

The Plot, from Outside

When the second mirror fiend exited the Mirror to attack the people in Retameron's Tower, Zira escaped as well, and she helped Andrya and Kraigg get to safety. She'd be with Andrya and Ieranon when they find the player-characters, and would be able to describe everything that goes on within the Mirror and what Skarda plans.

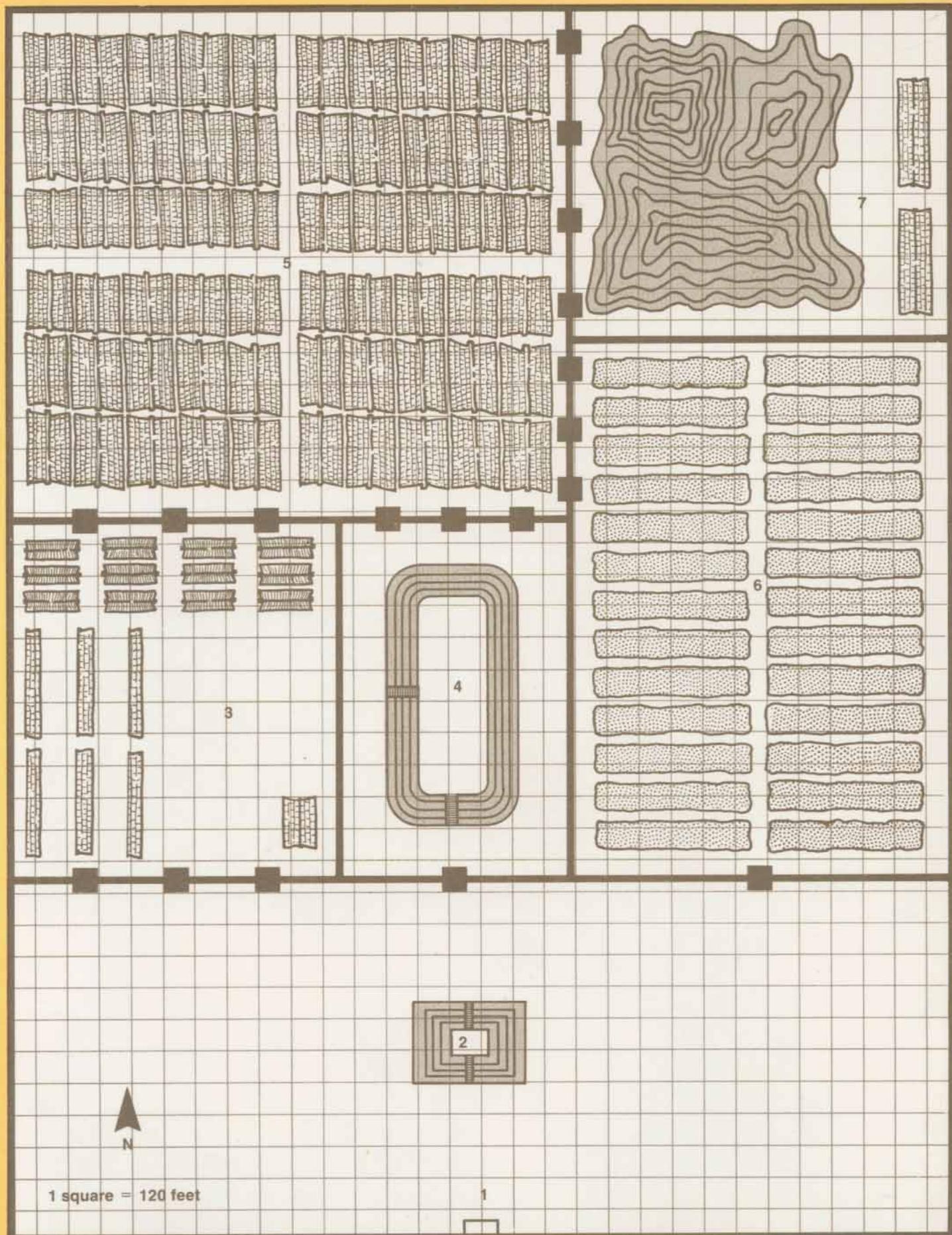
The adventure is not, therefore, learning those things the hard way; the adventure would be the characters trying to catch up with Skarda before he can get to the ruler's palace. (You'd want to make this an exciting cross-country race taking days; presume that Skarda doesn't have *teleport*. This will only work if the characters don't have *teleport* spells, *flying carpets*, etc.)

Other Mirrors Open

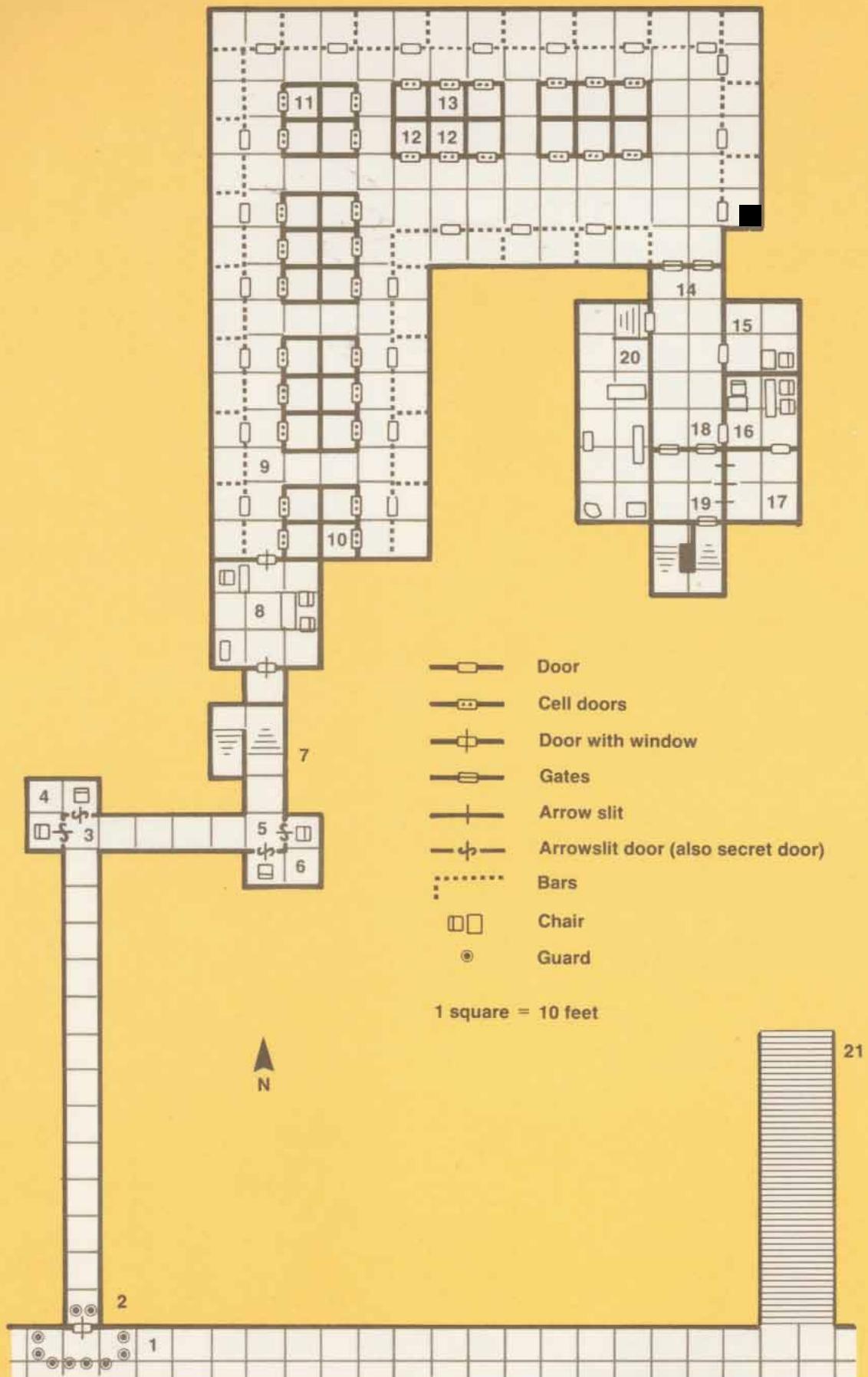
And, lastly, we placed the other portals —

and the other Mirrors that they surely must access — in the adventure just so that you can use them if you wish; you can use them for whatever purpose strikes your fancy. Perhaps the characters find their own Mirror into the Mirror World. Perhaps the Mirror World is not tearing itself apart and one of the other Portals opens into another world. They can be used for anything you please. As is always the case, the only limits to this adventure, the only limits to the changes you can make to it, are the boundaries of your imagination.

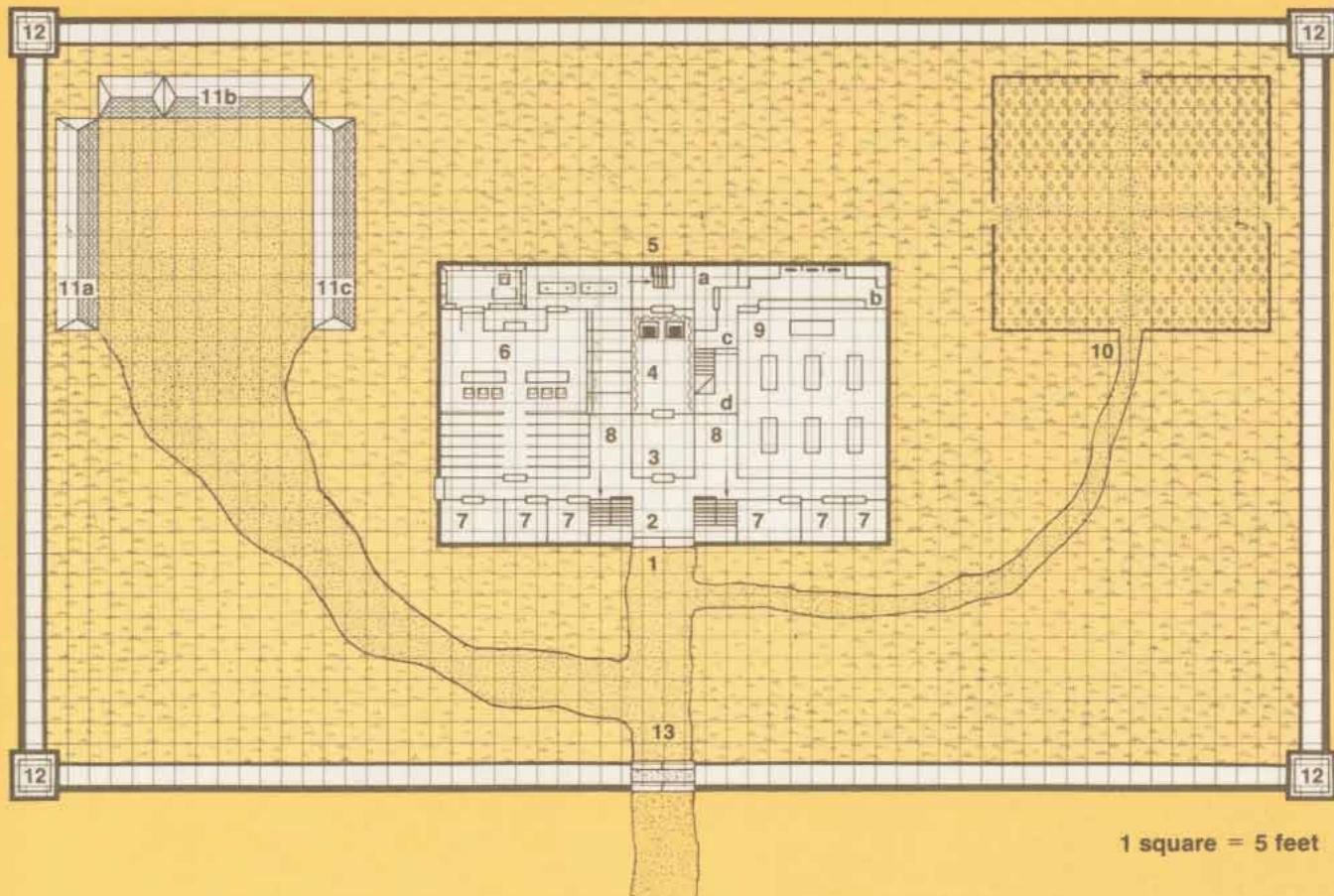
DM's Map of Skarda's Mirror



DM's Map of the Dungeons

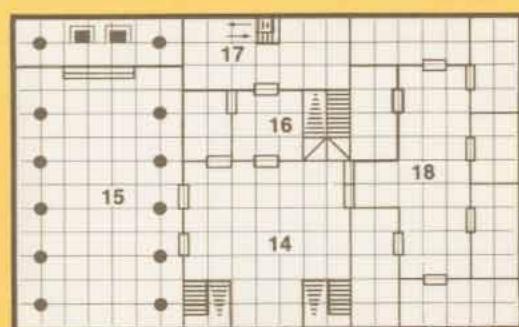


The “Hunting Lodge” of Duke Stefan Karameikos III

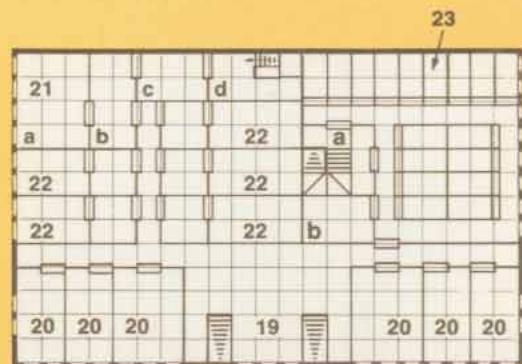


1 square = 5 feet

Second Floor

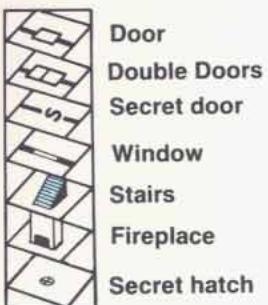


Third Floor

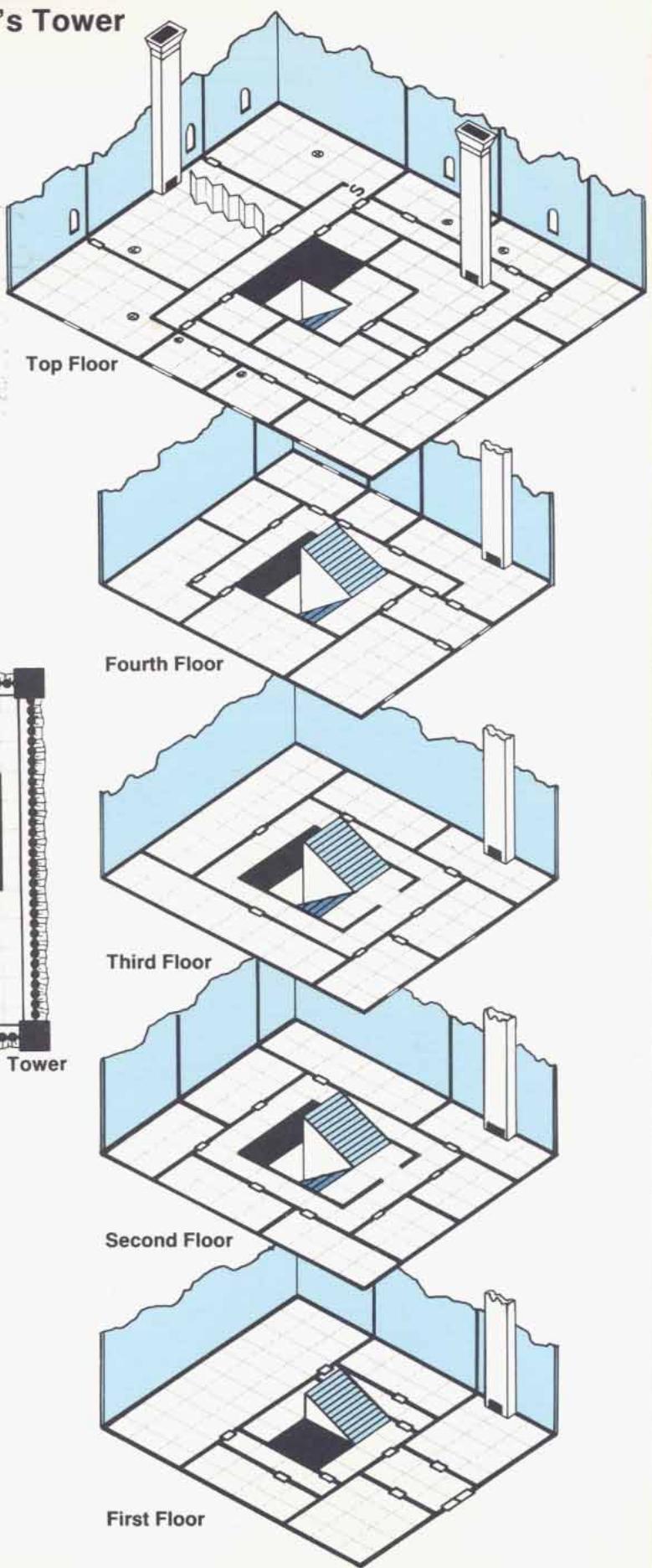
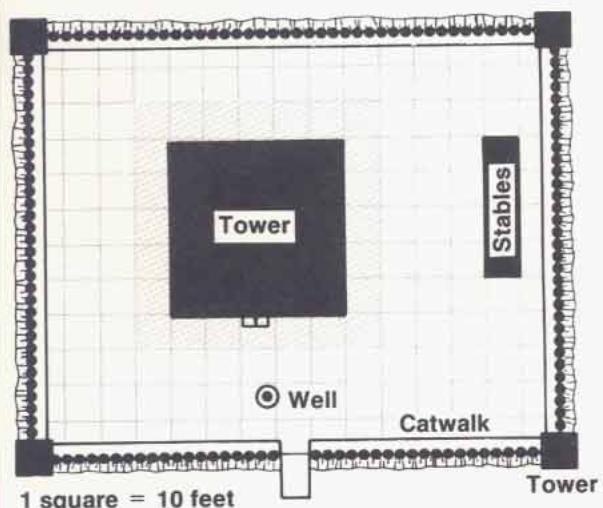


Players' Map of Retameron's Tower

Key



2 squares = 10 feet





Expert Game Adventure

Skarda's Mirror

by Aaron Allston

It's a mirror of life trapping, isn't it?

Well, yes and no. People go in, and they don't come out. Nor can you talk with anyone inside. Somehow, that's not quite the way you remember those mirrors work.

This Skarda fellow showed up a few years ago with a band of raiders, and no one in the land has been safe since then. Whole villages have disappeared into this Skarda's mirror. Your band is approached by relatives of one of the victims—an adventurer like yourselves.

You have to get into that mirror of whatever-it-is, find this man, and get him out in one piece. The reward is more than adequate. Only problem is, no one out here can tell you what to expect once you get in—or even how to get there.

This adventure is for use with the
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Basic and Expert
Rules produced by TSR, Inc. You must
have both rule sets to play the adventure.

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