

THE LOST CASTLE OF THE ASTRONOMERS

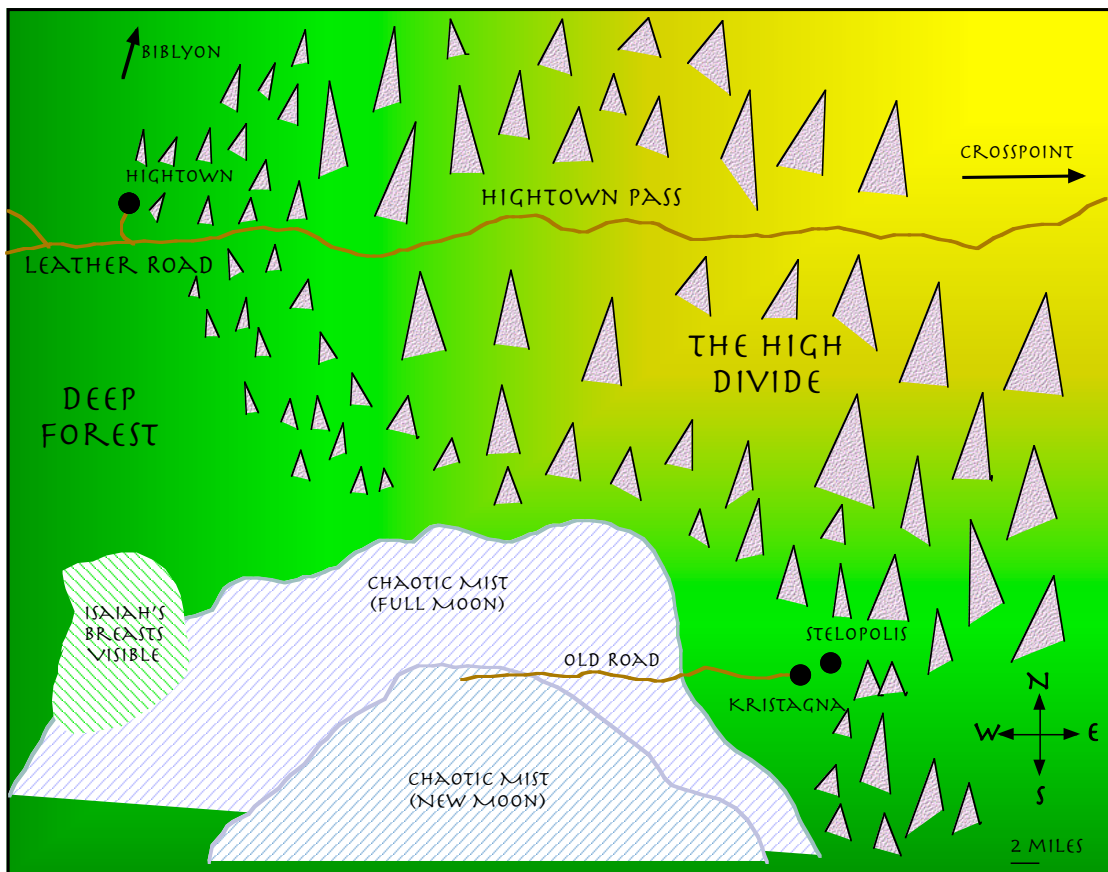
A dungeon crawl suitable for three to six 1st to 2nd level characters

by Jerry Stratton

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THE ORDER OF THE ASTRONOMERS

The mountains of West Highland are dotted with scholarly orders, most of them, by now, lost orders. Only the rival Knights Caelius and the Knights Templar are known to survive to the modern age. Scholarly disputes in the high days of the Orders often led to battle, and the Astronomers and Illustrators were known to fight over the finer points of their philosophies. The Order of the Astronomers and the Order of Illustration were rivals over a hundred years past, before the Goblin Wars, when the Night Trolls under the mysterious Goblin Mage nearly overran the civilized world of West Highland.

The Knights of Illustration lost Illustrious Castle to the goblins during that war, and then retook it when the goblins were pushed back south, but they then fell into ruin and disappeared some fifty years back at least. The Astronomers are presumed to have lost Kristagna (their castle) and all of their lives: none have been heard from since the Goblin Wars, and the location of their castle has been lost to time; only the Illustrators knew, and the Illustrators aren't around to tell. The library at Biblyon lost much of their works during the Wars, and now only vague references remain to taunt treasure-seekers and spell-seekers. (Make sure you work with one of your players about this—at least one of the characters needs a strong reason to seek out the lost castle.)

Kristagna is somewhere south of the Leather Road, hidden in the Deep Forest. The Deep Forest is a dangerous place, home to many strange creatures, dragons, and evil faerie, and of course is overrun with Night Trolls. The forest is not to be traveled lightly, and only adventurers of stout heart and cunning mind can hope to penetrate the forest and return with their treasures alive.

MAPS AND HANDOUTS

You will want to keep the maps and handouts separate from the book, so that you can refer to the maps without flipping the book back and forth. You'll want to make sure that the handouts are one per sheet (use a scissors) so that you can hand them to the players when they need them without handing them the ones they haven't discovered yet.

GETTING TO THE ADVENTURE

If you are planning on playing this game with a player character, it will probably be more fun if you do not read this book. This book is presented as information for the Adventure Guide. The Guide may use this to present a series of encounters to the players as their player characters proceed through the adventure.

This is the same adventure that the sample characters went through in “The Order of the Astronomers”. New players should read that story first. The goal is not necessarily surprise (although the characters will almost certainly run into things that the fictional players’ characters did not), but an exercise in “what if?” What would the players like their characters to do differently? If you are not using the pre-generated characters, how will the players use their own characters’ different abilities?

This is also an exercise in role-playing. The players will know, ahead of time, things that their characters do not know. This is always the case: players always know things that their characters do not, and their characters know things that the players do not. Role-playing is in many ways a balance between role-playing everything, and ignoring character knowledge, and rolling everything, ignoring player knowledge. How will your players and your group handle this? Different individuals and groups will come to different balances.

This otherwise simple adventure will require your group to face this issue head-on.

If the characters have some experience (for example, having gone through the introductory adventure in the Adventure Guide’s Handbook), they will probably reach the second level of experience by the time they finish the adventure. The adventure will last at least one night, and probably two. If this is the characters’ first adventure, you may wish to play up a “mini-adventure” on the trip to the ruins, or perhaps even within Hightown.

The characters should in some way be willing to or desirous of traveling into unknown areas to search for unknown knowledge or treasure. At least one of the characters should be a mage who is aware of the legend that the Astronomers knew powerful magics that have been lost since they fell from sight. If you feel that your players may need an added bonus, you might let one of them have found the key to the safe in the Gemini room; it was taken from Abbot Parthane’s corpse by a goblin, who lost it to a guardsman on a caravan raid. The guardsman, unaware of the significance of the astrological symbol (Gemini) on the key, sold it cheaply at a Crosspoint street fair, where the character in question found it. They’ve held it since hoping for more clues to the lost astronomer’s castle. (If you do this, make sure you “remove” the key from its expected location in Stelopolis.

As an added twist, you might create a rival group or individual, and have them also vie for the secrets of Kristagna.

FLAVOR TEXT

The boxed text for each encounter is “flavor text”. Under most circumstances, you’ll read that text to the players as their characters “enter” the location in question. Sometimes you’ll need to modify the flavor text. For example, if the flavor text states that “a waxing moon rises, barely visible in the morning air”, and the players have started out in the evening, you’ll need to change that. (Most likely, if the moon is visible in the morning, it won’t be visible in the evening.)

In this adventure, nearly every location has flavor text. Some have multiple flavor texts for different times of day and for different perspectives. When you create your own adventures, you'll usually provide yourself some flavor text for key encounters, and provide notes for the rest. If you're planning on publishing the adventure, however, I suggest writing the flavor text first, so that your playtesting includes testing the flavor text. And of course, some Adventure Guides will prefer to prepare more or less flavor text than others. You should do whichever makes the game more fun for you and your players.

HIGHTOWN

The adventure goal in Hightown is to acquire enough information to foray into the Deep Forest in search of Kristagna, the lost castle of the Astronomers.

Hightown stands in the foothills of the High Divide. The mountains loom mightily to the east. At the west end of town you can stand atop a hill and look out across the vast western forest, now tinged with the earthy reds, yellows, and golds of autumn. The stocky wooden buildings of Hightown are centered around the always-active, if uncolorful, marketplace. A waxing moon hangs, barely visible in the morning air, over the western forest.

The players should ensure that their characters are in Hightown. Because Hightown is a major stop on the Leather Road, players can easily arrange for their characters to be there. They might travel with a caravan, be traveling to friends in the west, or be leaving Crosspoint for reasons of personal safety. (There are only two directions to go if Crosspoint is no longer hospitable: west or south.) Scholarly characters might be taking advantage of the library at Biblyon, north of Hightown. Such characters would easily come down to Hightown for supplies, or perhaps to assist a Biblyon merchant acquire supplies.

Hightown Pass is the only way across the mountains between West Highland and East Highland without traveling far north and back down again. The pass still rises an easy 3,500 feet above sea level, and Hightown, on the lower western side of the pass, is still 2,000 feet above sea level. Dawn comes late to Hightown: the sun does not rise above the mountains for an hour after it would if the mountains weren't there.

Characters from smaller towns to the west are likely to view Hightown—with its relatively varied culture and relatively larger population—as a large town. Hightown sees merchants from both east and west, and occasionally even from the south. It has a political culture which, if not thriving, at least exists for the sake of the market, unlike the political cultures of smaller towns which are usually far more authoritarian.

While Hightown is smaller than Black Stag on the west end of the Leather Road, Black Stag is an insular and homogenous town. Hightown, especially its market, will contain things that Black Stag residents might never see. Many of those things will, however, be crated up.

Characters from Crosspoint will, on the other hand, see Hightown as the quintessential boring West Highland town, at least until they find a more boring one. Crosspoint already gets everything from West Highland that Hightown has: almost by definition, anything that passes through Hightown arrives at Crosspoint.

HIGHTOWN MARKET

As you walk about the market, smells hit you more than colors or sounds. The Hightown Market is not filled with the brightly colored fabrics of Crosspoint, nor the bright vegetables of most markets, but with crates, barrels, and pallets. You can smell the sharp smell of newly-made leather; the sickly-sweet smell of autumn's first cider pressing; the smell of horses and mules is everywhere.

While your first impression is one of barrels and crates, you soon see that there are stalls for individual buyers. Most of these sell leather goods, hot foods, and ciders and beers to drink. There are apple pies in the stall to your left; cured meats hang to your right.

Everyone around you is haggling over something. The numbers you catch range from pennies for pies to shillings and pounds for wagonloads of beer, salt, leather, beef, and hams.

A crowd is gathering beyond the pie stalls, and you can hear music. The singer sings a story about two Knightly Orders going to war.

The center of life in Hightown is the market. Here, merchants exchange goods; many West Highland merchants never leave West Highland, and many East Highland merchants never go further west than Hightown. Within the market, deals are made and wholesale goods change hands.

Here, also, caravans will stock up on the supplies they'll need to cross the High Divide or to travel the Leather Road, depending on which way they're going. Hightown is the only choice for such supplies, and they know it. Prices are usually about 20% higher for arms, armor, dry rations, and other traveling supplies.

Villagers from the surrounding villages will come to sell their crops or wares, and perhaps to pick up a few things themselves (but most villages will have their own markets where the villagers acquire any food that they do not grow themselves).

Occasionally, Knights of one of the northern Orders will send a delegation to purchase or commission supplies.

In almost all cases not involving merchants (and in many cases involving them also), trade occurs without the use of money: barter is the order of the day, and an important part of interpersonal relations in Hightown is determining what the other person would want enough to trade for a good deal for what they have.

As befits the main town of the Leather Road, leather is everywhere.

For the rest of this adventure, it is assumed to be autumn; if it is not you will have to modify some descriptions.

THE SONG OF THE ASTRONOMERS

If the players don't take the hint and listen to the song, you'll need to be more blunt: let them catch snippets of the song, words like "lost gold", "Illustrators" and "Astronomers". "It must be about the legendary lost castle of the Astronomers."

A pair of dark-haired twins sing a tale of two armies back in the days of scholarly combat. Their accent is the unmistakable lisp of Great Bend.

The singers are two rogues from Great Bend. They are twins, and their song is the adventure hook. The player with the wizard, or whichever player is the scholar who knows about the Order of the Astronomers, will recognize that, if true, the song includes instructions on how to find the lost castle of the Astronomers! Unlike the oft-visited "Haunted Illustrious Castle" to the north, Kristagna is likely to never have been visited by any human since its presumed demise.

...so passed the Mist through Biblyon.

*“South!” he cried, and south he led
 his hundred men down past the road,
 into the deepest forest led
 a hundred men to steal the gold
 of Christ-at-Anna’s starry hold.*
*They marched beneath a waning moon.
 Three days they marched and many a troll
 fell to his army and his sword.
 And many creatures long unnamed
 were stirred, and fled, Mistole’s horde.*
*Things that fly and things that creep
 with leather wings and slimy hoof,
 feared, and fled, in the forest deep
 before the Mist’s well-armored horde.*
*The third night out the moon was gone
 Beneath the stars they made their camp.
 One by one the stars went dull,
 A mist rose up, so cold and damp.*
*“Mist for Mistoles? An omen good,”
 So cried Mistoles’ aide-de-camp.*
*They built a fire, tall and hot,
 and heeded not the omen,
 to drive the mist that chilled their hearts
 to dry the damp ‘til morning.*

*The fire crackled to the sky,
 sent fiery coals a-borning,
 when from the mist they heard a cry,
 a scream, and then a warning.*
*Groping! Groping in the dark!
 The camp was in a turmoil.
 Groping! Groping in the wood
 But only for a moment.*
*The warnings died, the screaming waned,
 and when they counted up their men,
 A hundred men were ninety.*
*At morning when the sun arose
 cradled in Elijah’s breasts,
 It burned the mist away.
 And ninety men turned East and left
 the thing that gropes the wood.*
*They bore due east upon the breasts,
 to Christ-at-Anna’s hold.
 And many songs describe the war,
 and many tales are told.*
*In some they die in forest deep,
 In some they win the gold.
 But no song knows the fate of those
 lost to the thing that gropes the wood.*

When the singers finish, they receive a few farthings in their caps, but most of the people at Hightown Market are not here for entertainment, nor to give their money away.

If the characters are friendly with the singers, the singers will be friendly also. They don’t know anything more about the song, although they will claim to have heard it from a survivor of the battle, a nigh-impossibility unless they’re a lot older than they look or the survivor was Elvish. The singers speak in a vaguely French accent, the strong nasal accent of Great Bend. They will (if asked) claim to be here because of a run-in with a Southern Duke over the Duke’s daughter, and can go on about their escapades with her for as long as interest (or beer, should their suggestion to retire to the nearby tavern be successful) holds out. Their stories may or may not be true; but they will certainly be sensational.

If you wish, the twins can be avatars (or a single avatar halved) of Artemis and Apollo, Janus, Gemini, or the Yoruba gods, or any twin god of your campaign. If so, the twin singers will become permanent fixtures in the adventurers’ lives, managing to get them into major trouble with whatever heavenly power struggle is currently going on.

THE JOURNEY SOUTH

It is less than two miles between Hightown and the Leather Road, so unless the characters tarry considerably, they won't have to worry about encounters north of the road. The goal at this part of the adventure is to reach the castle.

The walking path south to the Leather Road is shaded by massive trees of oak and maple, whose red, yellow, and brown leaves rustle lightly in the breeze. The well-worn path curves around the low hills. The path is patched with grasses and ferns, and wild flowers of yellow and purple lace the edges.

ENCOUNTERS

When traveling north of the Leather Road, encounters occur about 20% of the time every 24 hours.

Remember that you can determine these encounters by chance, or choose encounters as appropriate to the story, or simply use these charts as a guide to what else lives in the area. Also, these outdoor charts include possible encounters with creatures nearly impossible for first and second level characters to defeat head-on. While poor decisions on the characters' parts might lead to their deaths, you should not personally place the characters in untenable positions. Let them do that on their own.

Main Table

01-10	Civilized Peoples
11-25	Humanoid Creatures
26-56	Harmless Encounters
57-91	Animal
92-00	Fantastic Creatures

Civilized Peoples

01-40	Farmers (d6)
41-60	Small Village (d50+5)
61-70	Hermit (1)
71-79	Brigands (d4)
80-95	Travelers (d12)
96-00	Masquerade

Masquerade

01-40	Werewolf (1)
41-55	Werebear (1)
56-70	Apparitions (1d4)
71-80	Phantasm (1)
81-94	Dryads (d6)
95-00	Deities (1d2)

Most masquerade encounters will be with a creature acting human; deity encounters may be with deities acting as just about any creature or

thing, as appropriate. The characters may never know they met a werewolf, dryad, phantasm, or god. Such encounters are unlikely to result in combat now, but may set up a later adventure when the characters discover that their acquaintance (perhaps by then a friend) has a secret.

Humanoid Creatures

01-60	Goblins (1d20)
61-90	Orcs (1d2)
91-00	Yeti (1d3)

Encounters with Goblins are 15% likely to include 1 Orc running the show.

Harmless Encounters

01-25	light shower
26-33	heavy shower
34-49	stream in path
50-67	swarm/flock
68-77	strange noise
78-79	Celtic ruin
80-94	lake or pond
95-96	unmarked tomb
97	part of animal skeleton
98	human skeleton
99-00	ruins of small settlement

Animals

01-05	Badgers (d4)
06-07	Bull (1)
08-09	Cattle (d20)
10	Bear (1)
11-15	Dogs (d4)
16-26	Deer (d20)
27-29	Horses (d6)
30-36	Stags (d3)
37-45	Wolves (1d8)
46-47	Wolverines (1d2)
48-50	Bats (d40)
51-52	Eagles (d3)
53-54	Goats (2d10)
55-60	Owls (d4)
61-63	Ravens (d6)
64-68	Rats (d20)
69-70	Rams (d3)
71-75	Skunks (d6)
76-80	Snakes
81-89	Squirrels (d20)
90-91	Weasels (d2)
92-93	Leopard (1)
94-95	Wildcats (d3)
96-99	Black Widows (d8)
00	Pheasants (d20)

Snakes

01-20	Blue Racers (d4)
21-29	Copperheads (d8)
30-80	Garter (d6)
81-94	Watersnake (d20)
95-99	Rattler (d4)
00	Huge snake (1)

Copperheads, waterheads, and rattlers are standard poisonous snakes.

Fantastic Creatures

01-05	Gryphon (1)
06-20	Unicorns (d3)
21-30	Pegasi (d2)
31-50	Large Spiders (d3)
51-60	Brownies (d20)
61-68	Dryad (1)
69-76	Pixies (d20)
77-83	Naiad (1)
84-91	Apparitions (d100)
92-97	Poltergeist (1)
98-00	Ghouls (d4)

Most animal-like fantastic creatures will hardly notice the characters; those that eat livestock might descend upon the characters' packmounts if they have any, but unless the characters do something stupid to attract the attention of, say, a gryphon, these fantastic encounters will be marvels to tell about having seen when they return home. Undead encounters will occur in an appropriate location: phantasms or poltergeists in abandoned homes, ghouls in a cemetery.

THE LEATHER ROAD

The characters are likely to spend no more than a few minutes on the Leather Road, but you may find this information useful if they decide to travel somewhere other than Hightown when the adventure ends.

The small and winding Hightown Road finally ends, opening onto the wider Leather Road. Tree trunks, of trees long-since chopped down, dot the edges of the road. A seven-foot wooden post with four wooden arrows gives you directions: east to “Crosspoint, 180 miles”, west to “Black Stag, 250 miles”, and north to “Hightown, 2 miles or so”. The fourth points south and reads simply “Dragons”. The Leather Road goes east to the mountains and west to the forests, but south is only a solid line of oak, ferns, and bushes.

ENCOUNTERS

When traveling on the Leather Road, encounters occur about 20% of the time every 24 hours.

Main Table

01-56	Civilized Peoples
57-61	Humanoid Creatures
62-75	Harmless Encounters
76-96	Animal
97-00	Fantastic Creatures

Civilized Peoples

01-40	Caravan (d20+10)
41-60	Merchant (d6)
61-79	Traveler (d6)
80-93	Brigands (d4)
94-98	Inn and village (d60+4)
99-00	Masquerade

Masquerade

01-40	Werewolf (1)
41-55	Vampire (1)
56-80	Apparitions (d6)
81-94	Phantasms (d2)
95-00	Deities (1d2)

See earlier for notes on masquerades.

Humanoid Creatures

01-60	Goblins (1d20)
61-90	Orcs (1d2)
91-00	Yeti (1d3)

Encounters with Goblins are 25% likely to include a Orcs leader.

Harmless Encounters

01-25	light shower
26-33	heavy shower
34-49	bridge over stream
50-67	swarm/flock
68-77	strange noise
78-79	ghost village
80-94	unbridged stream
95-96	unmarked tomb
97	part of animal skeleton
98	human skeleton
99-00	remains of travelers

Animals

01-05	Badgers (d4)
06-07	Bull (1)
08-09	Cattle (d20)
10	Bear (1)
11-15	Dogs (d4)
16-26	Deer (d20)
27-29	Horses (d6)
30-36	Stags (d3)
37-45	Wolves (1d8)
46-47	Wolverines (1d2)
48-50	Bats (d40)
51-52	Eagles (d3)
53-54	Goats (2d10)
55-60	Owls (d4)
61-63	Ravens (d6)
64-68	Rats (d20)
69-70	Rams (d3)
71-75	Skunks (d6)
76-80	Snakes
81-89	Squirrels (d20)
90-91	Weasels (d2)
92-93	Leopard (1)
94-95	Wildcats (d3)
96-99	Black Widows (d8)
00	Pheasants (d20)

Snakes

01-20	Blue Racers (d4)
21-29	Copperheads (d8)
30-80	Garters (d6)
81-94	Watersnakes (d20)
95-99	Rattlers (d4)
00	Huge snake (1)

Copperheads, watersnakes, and rattlers are standard poisonous snakes.

Fantastic Creatures

01-10	Gryphon (1)
11-19	Unicorn (d3)
20-30	Pegasus (d2)
31-50	Large Spider (d3)
51-60	Brownie (d20)
61-62	Dryad (1)
63-68	Deep Forest Fantastic Creature
69-75	Pixie (d20)
76-91	Apparitions (d100)
92-97	Poltergeist (1)
98-00	Ghoul (d4)

See earlier for notes on fantastic creatures.

THE DEEP FOREST

The forest south of the Leather Road is thick, and smells of autumn. Oak and maple trees form a canopy above the dry ground. Brown leaves crackle as you walk along the rolling hills. Sunlight shines through the trees in beams that shine like spotlights to the ground. You step through ferns and bushes, some flowering in bright blue, others mustard-yellow.

The players might decide to try and triangulate where the castle should be in order to shorten their trip. This is fraught with danger: from nearer, the breasts will not be as obvious as they will from further, especially given that the time frame will be different. The High Divide is a wide set of mountains, and it will be very easy to miss the castle. A surveyor will be able to handle the math with a successful skill roll, given good maps, but characters without that sort of skill to rely on are likely to get lost. The southern forest is thick, dark, and completely uncivilized.

The best way to become unlost when lost in the Deep Forest is to go north to the Leather Road. Each individual paying attention is allowed a Perception roll when traveling across the Leather Road to notice it.

As the sun caresses the tops of the trees, a sense of golden calm settles over the forest. Birds chirp cheerfully, go silent, and then chirp again from a different direction. A cool breeze lazily flutters a few leaves here and there as shadows lengthen upon your first night in the Deep Forest.

ENCOUNTERS

When traveling south of the Leather Road, encounters occur about 20% of the time each day and each night.

Main Table

- 01-03 Civilized Peoples
- 04-20 Humanoid Creatures
- 21-50 Harmless Encounters
- 51-89 Animal
- 90-00 Fantastic Creatures

Civilized Peoples

- 01-10 Human
- 11 Elves (d4)
- 12-29 Dwarves (d20)
- 30-63 Gnomes (d40)
- 64-00 Masquerade

Human

- 01-25 Adventurers (2d6-1)
- 26-50 Hermit (1)
- 51-70 Ancient Ruins
- 71-85 Celtic Ruins

- 86-93 Wandering Druid (d3)
- 94-00 Night Priest (d3)

Masquerade

- 01-30 Werewolf (1)
- 31-42 Weresnakes (1d3)
- 43-50 Wererats (d10)
- 51-57 Werebear (1)
- 58-69 Apparitions (d12)
- 70-78 Phantasms (d3)
- 79-87 Dryads (d6)
- 88-94 Petraiads (d4)
- 95-00 Deities (1d2)

See earlier for notes on masquerades.

Humanoid Creatures

- 01-53 Goblins (1d20)
- 54-75 Orcs (1d4)
- 76-90 Ogres (d3)
- 91-00 Yeti (d3)

Encounters with Goblins are 25% likely to include an Orc leader.

Harmless Encounters

01-25	light shower
26-33	heavy shower
34-44	stream in path
45-50	river in path
51-62	swarm/flock
62-75	strange noise
75-76	Celtic ruin
77-82	lake or pond
83-87	swamp
88-89	dead forest
90-96	deep valley
97	unmarked tomb
98	part of animal skeleton
99	human skeleton
00	remains of small settlement

Animals

01-05	Badgers (d4)
06	Bull (1)
07	Cattle (d20)
08-10	Bear (1)
11-15	Dogs (d4)
16-26	Deer (d20)
27-29	Horses (d6)
30-36	Stags (d3)
37-45	Wolves (1d8)
46-47	Wolverines (1d2)
48-50	Bats (d40)
51-52	Eagles (d3)
53-54	Goats (2d10)
55-60	Owls (d4)
61-63	Ravens (d6)
64-68	Rats (d20)
69-70	Rams (d3)

71-74	Skunks (d6)
75-81	Snakes
82-89	Squirrel (d20)
90-91	Weasel (d2)
92-93	Leopard (1)
94-95	Wildcat (d3)
96-99	Black Widows (d8)
00	Pheasants (d20)

Snakes

01-20	Blue Racers (d4)
21-29	Copperheads (d8)
30-76	Garters (d6)
77-90	Watersnakes (d20)
91-94	Rattlers (d4)
95-00	Huge snake (1)

Copperheads, watersnakes, and rattlers are standard poisonous snakes.

Fantastic Creatures

01-03	Gryphon (1)
04-15	Treeherders (d4)
16-20	Unicorns (d3)
21-25	Pegasi (d2)
26-37	Large Spiders (d3)
38-48	Huge Spiders (d2)
48-50	Carrion Worms (d4)
51-54	Brownies (d20)
55-58	Dryad (1)
59-62	Petraids (1 or d4)
63-65	Naiads (1 or 1d20)
66-68	Satyrs (d10)
69-80	Pixies (d20)
81-91	Apparitions (d100)
92-93	Poltergeist (1)
94	Ghoul s(d4)
95-00	Mist encounter

See earlier for notes on fantastic encounters.

SIGHTING ISAIAH'S BREASTS

Approximately three days' walk south of Hightown, if the characters are occasionally rising above the trees, the "breasts", the twin peaks that lead to Kristagna, become visible. Any character with tracking, mapping, or surveying skills will (if paying attention at all) see the breasts automatically. Others must make a Perception roll at a bonus of five.

The characters will have to be either climbing trees or hills, or otherwise rising above the level of the treetops, to see the mountain's peaks.

Climbing to the top of a small hill, you suddenly realize that to your left, rising out of the High Divide, are twin peaks, each with rounded ascents and each with a tiny cap of snowy white. The resemblance is too striking to be anything other than the peaks which mark the location of the lost castle of the Astronomers.

As long as the characters sight their path on the peaks, they will not only find the castle, but will very likely find themselves walking on the old road to Kristagna Castle.

THE CHAOTIC MIST

At some point the characters are likely to pass through or near the Chaotic Mist. Where the creatures of the Deep Forest are dangerous, the creatures of the Mist are dangerous and alien. The chaotic mist is largest on nights of the full moon. If the characters left Hightown during the waxing moon, the moon is most likely full now, resulting in a three or four day journey through the mist. On a new moon, the journey through the mist will take less than a day (unless, of course, they get lost).

The old road to Kristagna goes into the mist. The mist has grown since the road was built; it would have been easy to build the road around the mist's full moon border.

If the mist rolls in on their camp:

A deep mist rolls in from the south during the evening as you unpack and build your fire. The twinkling stars slowly fade from view. The moon's white light filtering through the mist lends an eerie feel to your camp.

If they encounter the mist while walking:

A fog slowly builds as you move east. Tendrils of mist block your view and then clear, and then finally turn deep and thick. You can see barely ten paces in front of you. The sun is a mere brighter white area in the (eastern or western, as appropriate for time of day) sky. Water condenses on your faces and your clothes.

When fully within the mist, at night:

Within this thick fog, the darkness is complete until the moon rises. Sound has a strange hollowness within the fog, and you can hear faintly the sounds of squeaks, clatterings, and thumps from a great distance. When the moon rises, you see only vague outlines of trees and hills, and occasionally of strange, moving shapes along the ground or in the air.

Encounters

When traveling within the mist, encounters occur about 20% of the time each day and each night. Because of the thickness of the mist, it may be possible for careful groups to avoid detection by these strange and dangerous creatures.

- 01-15 Fire Spider (1)
- 16-30 Beaked Sweeper (1)
- 31-45 Crazy Crabs (d2)
- 46-60 Pink Horrors (d6)
- 61-75 Toves (d3)
- 76-79 Mist Wraith (1)
- 80-88 Giant Venus Flytrap (d4)

89-94 Mushroom Walker (1)

95-00 Giant Leeches (d8)

Flytraps, mushroom walkers, and leeches will often (75%) be encountered in a chaotic grove, a wild collection of alien plants, growing like clumps of green blades coming out of the ground, with red or purple flowers; trees with brush-like red appendages hanging down from strand-like branches resembling weeping willows; trees with flowers like yellow trumpets that smell of dung; creeping weeds with purple flowers that tear down larger trees.

THE FORGOTTEN ROAD

If they follow the breasts and do not try to go a roundabout way, they will eventually find the old road.

As you walk along you slowly realize that the path you have been walking on is a long-abandoned stone road. Every once in a while one of the stones of the old road peeks above the grass. To your right is a low stone marker with some marking on it.

The marker reads the number of miles to the castle in roman numerals.

Within a half mile of the castle, the last battle between the goblins and the Astronomers still has its remnants.

Half-buried in the ground and grass to your right is a small skeleton, almost a child's skeleton except for the fangs in the jaw. As you gaze around, you see, a bit further into the forest, a man-sized skeleton, still in its rusted armor, with grass and ferns growing around and through it. A bright blue flower rises through the eye sockets.

They will see several of these on the road, and, if they walk off of the road, they will see ten or twenty more.

If they search the human skeletons they will be able to find d20 silver coins marked with signs of the zodiac, each worth about a shilling in Crosspoint. There are a maximum of 28 coins on all the human skeletons out here (they had little use for coinage here in the middle of nowhere). Each player may make a Perception roll to see either Captain Cambel or Lieutenant Courlander; if a player makes their Perception roll, roll randomly to see which skeleton that player has found.

Captain Cambel's skeleton is more richly arrayed than the others. His sword and armor are rusted away; as one of the twelve leaders of the Astronomers, his gear was once embroidered with the symbol for Capricorn. He still wears an amethyst ring with a glittering Capricorn engraved beneath the gem, the band silver. The ring is worth 15 pounds in Crosspoint, 10 in Black Stag. Another skeleton, that of Lieutenant Courlander, wears the Moonstone Ring (see back). Courlander's helmet, with iron wings and a Pisces symbol on the forehead, pokes above the ground. His long sword is rusted, but the hilt's intricately woven fish designs are still visible (though fragile).

Throughout these battles, there are perhaps three to four times as many goblin skeletons as human ones.

The road rises very slightly as they move east towards the castle. It also continues on, around the castle, to the "city" of Stelopolis, up the mountains.

KRISTAGNA

Now that they're at the castle, the adventure goal will be character-specific: different characters may have different goals, such as finding treasure, finding knowledge, or going home again.

The forest ends at a clearing and within the clearing a castle sits on a slight rise, four tall towers girding it, low outer walls surrounding it. The outer walls are of granite stones, the inner walls and inner tower of smaller stones. A golden dome rises from the North side of the castle, and in the center an arch of white marble encloses a great golden timepiece covered in arcane symbols, moon phases, and roman numerals.

The timepiece reads not only the correct time, but also the correct zodiac symbol (the “arcane symbols” on the clock) and phase of the moon. The “clock” has three hands, one for the hour, one for the zodiac, and one for the moon. Since, for these astronomers, the actual positions of the stars was important, the zodiac dates will appear to be wrong: they do not follow the Ancient dates, but rather follow the current dates. Each astrological month begins approximately:

- 1: Aquarius: February 17
- 2: Pisces: March 12
- 3: Aries: April 18
- 4: Taurus: May 14
- 5: Gemini: June 21
- 6: Cancer: July 20
- 7: Leo: August 10
- 8: Virgo: September 16
- 9: Libra: October 31
- 10: Scorpio: November 23
- 11: Sagittarius: December 18
- 12: Capricorn: January 20

The moon hand points to the new moon at “12” and the full moon at “6”. The hours run from 12 at the top to 1 through 12 again, with 6 at the bottom, however, the hours do not run steadily. In the morning, ‘6’ is always sunrise, and in the evening, ‘6’ is always sunset. True midnight and true noon always occur at ‘12’. It is likely that the moon hand points now to the full moon, at 6. The moon hand is mid-sized; the astrological month hand smallest, and the sun’s hand longest. The astrological hand is likely in Virgo, coming close to Libra.

Characters with architecture, engineering, or other skills that might let them assess the quality of the castle will see it as a fairly standard piece of work. Some design ideas were seriously flawed (the walls of the inner bailey would not normally be so close to the walls of the outer bailey). The castle’s design was enough to fend off normal attacks by orcs or wildlife, but probably contributed to its fall when met with a more determined effort. Given the size of the attacking army, however, it isn’t clear how successful a better design would have been.

The clock and the dungeon are, to characters with the skill to see it, clearly of far better quality than the rest of the castle. To those who can recognize it, both are of Dwarven workmanship.

OUTSIDE

A sickly, murky, moss-covered moat surrounds the castle. The moat is filled with the detritus of battle. Skeletons of man and goblin share a watery open grave. The trees across the moat stand stark and empty in the sunlight, their orange, red, and yellow leaves scattered across the yellowish grass on the lightly rolling hill that leads up to the castle.

The moat is generally about forty feet wide, and is as much as sixty feet wide in some places. The drawbridge is down, but it is also broken. Only a few feet extend over the water on the castle side. The grass on the castle side of the moat is yellow, the trees smaller and slightly more gnarled and twisted than their taller cousins in the forest. None of them hold their leaves, which are scattered loosely about the ground in red, orange, and yellow, leaving the trees stark and sharp.

On the north side of the moat, a war engine lies on its side mostly crossing the moat. The goblin mage's army attempted to get it across and up to the castle, but failed. Here, also, skeletons of man and goblin lie about the brackish water. Any character trying to cross the moat by clambering across the war engine will need to make an Evasion roll or slip and fall.

Encounters

The chance for an encounter here is 10% per day and per night, although if the skeletons have been activated none of these creatures will stick around.

- 01-30 Large Spider (1d3)
- 31-45 Huge Spider (1)
- 46-57 Copperheads (1d6)
- 58-67 Timber Snakes (1d4)
- 68-70 Borogoves (4, level 2 room 3)
- 71-72 Pink Horror (level 1 room 8)
- 73-99 Giant Rats (1d20)
- 00 Deep Forest encounter

Copperheads and timber snakes are standard poisonous snakes. The borogoves travel together, and if killed will not appear again—there are only four in the entire area. See level 2, room 3 (the East Overlook) for more information about the borogoves.

The Outer Walls

The battlement is dotted with skeletons, mostly human and a few goblin skeletons, the human skeletons still in rusted chain and crackled leather, some bony hands still clutching their rusted swords and spears.

Looking out through the embrasures you feel some of the pride that the defenders must have felt, overlooking the moat filled mostly with goblin skeletons and looking out over the vast forest outside of the walls. This was a heroic battle, and you held your own against wave after wave of evil creatures from the forest.

Inside the walls, you see the path leading up to the huge arched doors of the stone castle, the great dome over the north half of the castle, and the great three-handed clock above the arched doors. The largest of the hands has moved since you last looked.

The outer walls are four yards tall, and four feet wide, with crenellated sides and a walkway on the tops. Doors, opened, lead into the second story of each of the towers from the battlements.

Skeletons of both man and goblin lie in jumbles outside the walls, where they fell in battle and were never removed. There are also skeletons in the battlements, although fewer, and mostly human (any goblins killed were thrown over the side, until the very end).

Searching the dead humans of the outer walls will yield another d20 zodiac coins, up to a maximum of 23.

The Outer Towers

Searching the dead humans and bedrolls of the outer towers will yield d6 zodiac coins per tower floor, up to a maximum of 7 (NW), 9 (SW), 7 (SE), and 10 (NE). Only the third floor has windows, although the second has arrow slits. Each floor has only a few skeletons (the third floor none). Most of the soldiers left the towers to engage the goblins in battle.

The open doors enter onto the first floor; each floor has only one circular room. The stairs circle upwards at the walls. There are no doors between floors.

The windowless room is dark except for a small amount of light that trickles in from above the stairs. A few skeletons, human and goblin, lie scattered about the floor, their swords and spears strewn about them.

The stairs circle up to the second floor, where:

Light spills down from the stairs above, casting deep shadows around the room. There are four arrows on the floor as you walk in, and a skeleton, a cracked bow by its side, on the far end near an arrow slit, which also lets in a little dusty light. A few swords and spears are hanging on the walls, and some shields lie scattered beneath them.

The shields were once hanging along with the swords and spears, but their straps cracked over time and they fell. There are spears that have fallen among them. At most one to two of the weapons are in any serviceable condition, and they'll require care before they can be used.

Each second floor has at least one dead archer remains where he was killed at his post by a goblin, however, not all of them fired at their attackers; some will have dropped their bow and went for their sword.

The stairs circle up to the third floor:

Sunlight streams down dusty shafts to illuminate tattered bedrolls, dirty chamber pots, and old plates and other tools. Some of the bedrolls are torn, as if they've been used as a nest. A small stringed instrument lies on the floor, faded and covered in dust.

The third floor of each of the outer towers contain bedrolls and chamber pots, none of them special. The musical instrument's strings have snapped, the instrument itself is cracked. Only use the instrument description once, for the first tower they enter. Feel free to replace it or add to it in other towers with other ways soldiers might pass their time: dice, whistles, playing cards.

The Statue of Moses (1)

A great bearded man in a flowing robe holds his staff out horizontally over the sloping hill at the rear of the castle's outer walls. The statue's detail is intricate; you can see the wrinkles on the old man's face almost shift as the sun moves across the sky. His gnarled staff almost looks like the wood it is modeled after. The statue has a presence of power and wisdom.

This statue is also the exit from the dungeon's Capricorn (crypt) room. It is generally un-openable from this end. The secret exit was kept secret from the rank and file, so they did not use it to escape the dungeon. See the Capricorn room for more information about this exit. The statue is dwarf-make, and very high quality. It weighs about five hundred pounds.

The Entrance Gate (2)

The long, thickly walled hall from the drawbridge to the inner courtyard is filled with broken beams from the ceiling. The ceiling has nearly completely caved in, as have the two small stone towers flanking the drawbridge. More goblin skeletons and human skeletons carpet the floor of the entranceway. The two wooden doors at the far end of the hall are busted through, showing a glimpse of the paved walkway of the inner courtyard.

There are also signs of fire on the upper parts of the ceiling remnants.

The Inner Courtyard (3)

Dead warriors and goblins lie scattered about the grounds and atop the beautiful, white marble pathway which curves to the terrace and huge arched doorway of the castle proper. In the still silence you can hear a faint ticking coming from the clock above the archway. A stylized image of the sun is on the right door, and of a waning moon on the left. The images are faded and faint.

From here, there are two obvious entrances (besides the various windows): the main arched doors, and the smaller door in the southwest tower.

Marble Terrace and Path (4)

The path and terrace are made of marble tiles, black with red veins. Grass pokes up between the marble tiles of the path and terrace. In some places the tiles have cracked and sunk down. In others, they've been forced up as small trees try to grow through. In the center of the terrace, inlaid with white marble, is a circle enclosing a six-pointed star. Two huge doors on the front wall beneath the dome are closed, a faded moon painted on the left door, and a faded sun painted in gold on the right.

The marble terrace is up three steps from the marble path, about two feet. The vertical tiles that were on the sides of the raised terrace have mostly fallen over. Intact tiles encumber about two pounds each and would be worth about five shillings each in Crosspoint. There are one hundred and thirteen intact tiles.

The Back Yard (5)

A decorative rock wall once ran from the southeast tower to the south wall, near the rear of the castle. Now the collapsed wall stands only as a reminder that nothing of man survives forever. Double doors, six feet wide and bound in iron, still stand in their doorways, open, allowing entrance to the rear yard.

The back yard contains two smaller buildings, and a rear entrance to the castle. The outer towers here do not have entrances at ground level. They may only be entered from the battlements. Only arrow slits open to the courtyard (and to the outside of the outer walls, of course). The buildings back here all have sloping roofs that slope to the south. The door to the garden shed is closed. The

others are all open. The rear door of the castle is also open. The door to the garbage shed is seven feet wide, like a small barn door.

At the north end of the rear yard a decorative rock wall, still standing, runs from the castle's rear entrance to the rear wall. A door of cast iron and brass meshwork stands partially open. A less ornate wooden door on the east side of the wall, adjacent to the outer wall of the castle, is still closed.

The metal is woven into a scene of a man walking among the stars, with the black of the cast iron and the brass forming the contrasting colors. The wall is eight feet tall. It creaks, loudly, if they open it further, which they'll have to do to go into the garden from here. The garden is described in room three of the first floor.

The Garbage Shed (6)

A dry grainy smell permeates this six yard wide, two yard deep, building. Carts are filled with mounds of grey and brown things. Light streams in from small holes in the ceiling, silhouetting a dark child-like form emerging from one of the mounds.

Garbage was stored here before being hauled away. It contains horse carts filled with now-dried garbage. The holes are from goblins who jumped down onto the roof from the battlements. At least one goblin remains stuck in the garbage where it died. It is now a skeleton, the "dark, child-like form" that they see illuminated. It is just an inanimate skeleton.

The Kitchen (7)

A huge chimney looms over the sloping roof of this twenty by twenty building. Through the open doors, you see a mess of metal and bone.

Inside, a huge oven dominates the north wall. Kitchen utensils, knives, pots, and pans, are strewn about the floor, rusted, amid three human skeletons.

The pots and pans were thrown down by the goblins. While a few of the utensils were taken by the goblins as souvenirs, most lie rusted in the dirt floor. The three Astronomer skeletons are unarmored, but armed with large kitchen knives. Two are male, one is female.

The Garden Shed (8)

The door is stuck against the door jam, and opens only with effort. Inside the six or seven yard arced room are old axes, cans, wheelbarrows, and other gardening tools. Everything is covered in dust and cobwebs. Even the cobwebs have been long since abandoned.

See the first level, room 3, for a description of the garden. The garden shed contains implements for gardening: old axes, cans, wheelbarrows, and other tools for maintaining a castle courtyard and the castle itself, scissors, rakes, pots, watering cans, decorative rocks, and extra lamps, statues, and oil. The oil is now gone, but the statues, could they be hauled away, would be worth as much as the statues in the garden itself. The items are arranged neatly. In one corner are two highly decorated chamber pots. One is decorated with the signs for Leo and Sagittarius and is gold-inlaid, the other with the signs for Aquarius and Pisces and is silver-inlaid. The former is worth 15 pounds, the latter 10 pounds.

This shed has a door on both ends: the wild garden and the back yard.

DOWNSTAIRS (THE FIRST FLOOR)

Encounters

The chance for an encounter within the downstairs area of the castle is 10% every six hours, although if the skeletons have been activated it is unlikely that any other creatures will come out of hiding. There are cobwebs and dust everywhere. Most of the doors are easy to open; some are marked as hard to open, due to shifting (the door to the dungeon stairs, for example). Feel free to make other doors hard to open, but make sure that this doesn't block creature movement (such as the pink horror).

01-38	Large Spider (1d3)
39-65	Huge Spider (1)
66-75	Mice (1d20)
76-88	Giant Rats (1d20)
89-91	Borogoves (4)
92-99	Strange Noises
99	Pink Horror (room 8)
00	Deep Forest encounter

See room three of the second floor for information about the borogoves.

Unless otherwise mentioned in the room description, doors down the hallway are open. The goblins did not close the place up neatly behind them when they left.

Grand Entrance (1)

The doors creak open and you find yourself gazing into a wide, long, circular hall. Great stairs lead up on both sides. Above you, the domed ceiling is covered in gold and silver constellations. The walls are covered in repeating knotwork.

There are no skeletons within the entrance. At night, if there is a bright moon (half full or greater), the domed ceiling will shine with stars: the 333 brightest stars are set as holes in the ceiling, so tiny that they are only visible when they shine. They match the stars on May 15, the anniversary of the christening of the castle.

The doors on the east (to room 2) are slightly stuck. A strength roll at a bonus of 2 is required to open them. Those doors, and the similar doors on the north, are small double doors intricately carved with interlocking circles, bands, and curves, with some bands ending in serpent's heads, and some circles enclosing many-pointed stars. Tarnished green silver inlay decorates the engravings.

There is a secret door in the shadow of the stairs to the south, leading to Captain Campbel's quarters (8). The edges of the door are at the knotwork, and both the wall and the door are wood and paneled.

The Royal Ballroom (2)

A richly embroidered cloth, once dark blue and covered in golden stars, lies crumpled beneath the marble archways leading down a long hallway beyond the door. The huge ballroom beyond the arches is filled with marble columns and dead bodies. The sun shining through tinted glass in the ceiling fills the room with shafts of dusty, varicolored light. Cobwebs fill the spaces between the columns and the floors.

On the south and west sides of the ballroom are long corridors, with a stone wall on one side and a wall of marble arches on the other, leading into the ballroom's main area. The white marble is covered with dust and cobwebs. Silverfish will scatter from the cloth if anyone pokes at it; the cloth was once curtains. There were also bead curtains in every other arch, and tiny beads lie scattered about the floor. The string has long since rotted away. The tiny beads are worth about a shilling for ten. The stone walls are covered in painted engravings of biblical scenes, from both the Old Testament and the New. The wedding at Cana is there, as is the crucifixion and Jesus' ascension into the heavens. A good part of the wall is given over to the Israelites' flight out of Egypt.

The columns are made of white marble with dark veins. Around the columns are twenty seven human skeletons, and three goblin skeletons (although they'll have to look hard to find them).

At the far corner of the room is a dais of black stone, and on the stone are three elaborate white marble chairs. One skeleton lies half draped over the largest, middle throne, dead where it fell. Parts of it on the floor along with its rusted sword.

The two great arched oaken doors on the east wall are partially opened, and dirt, grass, and weeds grow in from the outside.

The secret door in the northeast corner is made to look like a historical panel. Three panels behind the thrones describe, in pictures, the founding of the order, the trip across the mountains, and the building of the castle. The rightmost panel, the building of the castle, is the secret door. It leads through a thin corridor, through the stone wall that connects with the outer wall, to a secret door on the outside. The secret door on the outside can only be opened from in the hallway. This is an exit only; it would be very difficult to enter the castle through this secret door.

The three panels are designed with hidden images of astrological signs. For example, a wine goblet is clearly (once seen) the sign for Pisces. The panels, if removed without hurting them, are likely to be worth 50 to 200 shillings in Crosspoint, depending on the buyer.

The secret door in the south wall leads to the Lieutenant's quarters (7). The sides of the door are designed to coincide with the engravings, however, the door is wood and the wall is stone, so attempts to find it are at a bonus of 2.

There is a 5% chance of encountering the borogoves from level 2, room 3, here.

The Wild Garden (3)

In this wildly overgrown garden, bright purple flowers flow from vines hanging from trees. The trees, weighed down by the vines, droop purple and yellow trumpets towards the ground. Wrought-iron posts, ten feet tall, themselves covered in vines and weeds and shaped like tall writhing serpents, hold sparkling crystal birds shaped as if they were swooping into the garden.

The posts will not hold a person easily, because they weren't designed for holding that much weight. Leaning on them is okay; climbing will require steadying. There are twelve posts with five crystal birds. The birds are hollow, and cover the candle holder at the top of the posts. The candles are mostly burned down. The birds are worth an easy 60 pounds in Crosspoint, but will break easily. Their encumbrance is 10. There are two robins, a hummingbird, a falcon, and an owl.

See the outside area for a description of the tool shed in the back, and the outside gate.

There are two poisonous snakes here. They are coppersnakes. They'll be sleeping during the day

during late spring, summer, early fall or during the night in late fall, winter, or early spring. They will be 50% likely to attack any creatures within the garden when they are, and 75% if disturbed while sleeping. The snakes are three and a half to four feet long, thick, and with lightly pink-tinged scales, with bold chestnut crossbands allowing them to blend easily into fallen leaves.

2 copperheads (animal: 1/2; Move: 12; Attacks: 1; Defense: +2; Damage: 1; Special Attack: poison penalty 0, one round action time, d2 damage)

The Dungeon Stairs

Musty air greets you as you force the wooden doors open. The stairs lead downward and curve slightly to the left. Large, grey stones inset into a white mortar provide a dappled look to the stairs. The workmanship here is different from the rest of the castle. The design of the stone stairs is pleasing to the eyes as well as functional. The stairs twist downward and to the right.

The oaken door to the stairs is stuck, though not heavily so. A strength roll at +2 will open it. The door at the bottom of the stairs is also locked, from both sides. The bar on this side is easy enough to remove, but the bar on the other side is a bit harder. It will require a thief's "Open Locks" roll, or a strength roll at a penalty of 3.

The air here is musty, slightly cooler as they descend.

Offices (4)

Small maple desks line the walls, each with a single drawer and an inkpot in the far left corner. A few of the desks have little gewgaws of wooden rods and balls. Many ledgers are open on the tables, and some lie scattered about the floor.

The wooden gewgaws are abaci. An engineer or mathematician would recognize them. Three of them are still serviceable and if they can be returned intact would be worth three monetary units in Crosspoint. The ledgers are filled with astrological symbols and numbers. These are for calculating when various stars rise and set, and their locations. Some of that information might also be worth something to the right person, if the numbers can be deciphered from the tattered paper.

The Main Office (5)

A single desk, with an inkpot and quill, faces you as you walk into this room. A chair lies on its back behind the desk. A small, round table in the rear of the room has two benches on either side of it. A ledger lies on the desk. A door hangs open around the corner.

One of the ledgers is a list of stars and orders for their calculations. Another lists texts which need to be copied. This office was the "control center" for the other offices and copy rooms, and is connected to the Lieutenant's Quarters (7).

The Record Room (6)

Wooden boxes, filled with paper, line the floors. Bookshelves line the walls, strewn with folios and string-bound stacks of paper. The room is cramped and musty. The movement of the door sends dust flying into the air.

You can use these records as clues to other adventures you'd like the characters to discover. While important contracts and spells will be stored in the dungeon level, records of things bought, sold, and bartered will be here.

Because this is above ground, these records are in much worse shape than the ones in the dungeon. This will allow you to maximize the mystery and flexibility of your adventure clues.

Lieutenant Aaron Courlander's Quarters (7)

An unmade bed, torn as if it were a nest of animals, sits wedged in the east corner of this room. A small bureau is wedged in the opposite corner, next to an open door into another room. A candle holder stands on the bureau, and a torch sconce on the north wall.

The bed was once a nest for mice, but even they've left now. The candle has burnt down and is covered in dust. It was burning when the lieutenant left to fight the goblins. There is a hidden door on the north wall leading to the Royal Ballroom (2). The torch sconce turns down to open a small hole that allows viewing into the ballroom area. Pulling out on it opens the door. The hinges of the door, on this side, are hidden as part of a set of hooks for hanging weapons.

The door is not at all difficult to see on this side, and Perception rolls to see it are at a bonus of 4.

The bureau contains ratty old uniforms (some of which has the Pisces symbol on it), clothing (dating from about a hundred and fifty years ago), notebooks, and two small sacks of money; the sacks were once designed for hanging from a belt. One sack contains ten silver zodiac coins, and one gold zodiac coin. The other sack contains 19 Crosspoint shillings from a hundred years ago. The notebooks contain notes about the soldier's campaigns, as well as maps, and might provide useful clues to the goblins in the area, or to any nearby castle you wish to make as an adventure. Lieutenant Courlander also accompanied a delegation to the Dwarves once, and notes about that are also in the books. The last entry mentions an argument with "Captain Cambel" about what to do if the "rumors of orcs is true". Cambel wants to "take the field and wipe them up as we always do. Parthane agrees." The author thinks "we ought to hole up. This time different. Should send courier north. Still technically at peace with Illustrators."

Captain William Joel Cambel's Quarters (8)

An unmade bed looks like it was a nest at one time. The room smells of old socks mixed with the smell of a departed thunderstorm. A portrait of an elderly officer hangs on the west wall. A small door on the right wall is closed, as is an ornate wooden door on the far wall. Small animal skeletons lie in the corners of the room.

Pink Horror (Fantastic: 1+1, Survival 4, Move: 15/8, Defense: 4, Attack: claw/claw, Damage: d8/d8, Special Defense: Immune to acid and fire; Special Attack: Bite for d4 and poison; Lair: 50%)

The pink horror has been weakened by its absence from the mist. It moves slower, is easier to hit, and its poison is penalized by 2. (And if the pink horror has been encountered wandering through the castle, and killed, it won't be here.) If the pink horror is not there, there is a 1 in 10 chance of it arriving every thirty minutes.

The Captain's walk-in closet holds his uniforms (some of which has the Capricorn symbol on it), clothing, and some weapons, including his ceremonial saber. While rusted, it's basically never been used and is still in decent shape. This should be able to fetch thirty monetary units for it. The key for dungeon room Pisces is in the pocket of one of the shirts that has fallen to the floor. The key is brass and shaped like the Pisces symbol.

The pink horror has learned to use its sucker pods to close the door, and generally does so. The door is closed 50% of the time.

Conference Room (9)

A long, square wooden table fills the room. A brightly colored map is painted on the north wall. Five large ceramic drinking cups stand on the table, and in the corner of the room a barrel stands on a small brick outcropping.

This was once the main conference room for planning military escapades, until the Dwarves built the dungeon area and the Taurus room. The barrel once was regularly filled with beer, and the cups were used to drink the beer. The map is covered with dust, but maps out a wide area of Highland, from Crosspoint Bay in the east to Black Stag in the west, and deep down in the forest to the south, up to hundreds of miles north of the Leather Road. Orders, including the Illustrators and the Astronomers, are marked along the mountains with crosses. The orders are not titled, however. Anyone who knows where Illustrious Castle is will probably recognize its location, otherwise they'll probably think it marks Byblion.

Behind the map is a secret door to the Grand Entrance (1). It opens up beneath the stairs that lead up to the second level. The door pops slightly open by pressing in on the cross marking Kristagna's location.

The Copy Rooms (10)

Inkpots, quills, and papers lie strewn about the shelves that line the walls. Stools sit before the shelves.

Among the books and papers being copied are an apocryphal bible (no known bibles have survived the cataclysm, all bibles are apocryphal, and usually based on a founder's teachings) and some papers on astronomy, astrology, and mathematics.

Weapons Room (11)

Warped spears, pikes, and masses of arrows line the walls in barrels.

Few of the weapons are salvageable. The wood is too far gone. If they spend time searching, they could find up to five spears, three pikes, and thirty-five arrows. The heads of the weapons would probably be salvageable, however. Also, because the castle guard had need of the weapons, many have been taken away and are with the skeleton of their last user. Some were also taken as souvenirs by the goblins.

Guards Quarters (12)

Bedrolls, blankets, and cushions sit on a low shelf against the walls. Boxes, bags, books, and other items lie on the floor, mostly stuffed beneath the shelf. Three small tables, with a few books and candle holders, are spaced about the center of the room.

There are three zodiac coins on one table, and a board that looks like a chessboard with some coins on it. The members of the Order played a variation of checkers that used the twelve zodiac coins. When a coin was "taken", it was kept by the taker. A game was in progress when the goblins attacked. There are seven pieces on the board now, three at heads and four at tails.

The books are prayer-books, astronomical study guides, and collections of military aphorisms. There are few or none in any sort of readable shape.

Novitiates Quarters (13)

Wooden shelves line the walls, with blankets or rugs piled upon most of them. One is lined with books and papers. A table is on its side in the center of the room. You can see a skeletal hand reaching out from around the table, holding a piece of metal.

There are four human skeletons here. They once wore simple leather armor. Their short swords are here. One used a crossbow, but the goblins scavenged it. The metal that the skeleton is holding is the key to the crossbow crank. This room was ransacked. There is no gold here. Some boxes have been smashed open.

The books and papers are heavily degraded. They are mostly ‘homework’ and special projects that the students were working on. One appears to be calculations on a periodic comet as if the comet could repeat itself over hundreds of years on a regular basis. Another is calculating the stress on the arched ceiling over the ballroom. There appear to be some problems with his math; he’s trying to get it to allow the ceiling to stand up.

The Guard’s Hallway (14)

This long thin corridor leads from one tower to the other. One skeleton’s bones are in a pile against the wall down the hall a ways. Light shines through the narrow slits along the south wall.

The bones were piled up as part of a nest by a long-gone rat.

The door to the Last Stand (room 15) is spiked shut from room 15.

Last Stand (15)

The door is open, and was clearly forced long ago. Skeletons lie in piles to the left and right, intermingled with their swords and armor. A door opens into the southeast tower.

There are three goblin skeletons here.

The door to the corridor (14) is spiked shut on this side. The door to the main hallway is open, clearly forced open, although it might be possible to jam it shut with spikes if necessary.

The Magical Library (16)

The moment you open the door you are assailed by the musty smell of old and damp paper. Within this wide room books and papers line the walls and old, rotten, red-and-gold-upholstered chairs sit haphazardly throughout the room.

Despite their poor condition, the combined books of all three of these rooms would give a bonus of 2 on research for any mental spells, and a bonus of 1 on any spells at all. If a character were to spend two hours culling through the books, they could gain sixty pounds of books that would give a bonus of 1 on researching spells of any one school of magic. Two books, carefully chosen, could give a bonus of 1 on researching any single spell.

Titles include copies of Charles Dodgson’s “Wise Words About Magical Research,” “Involuntary Reactions to Imaginary Stimuli,” and “Phantasmal Realities,” Measure’s “Magical Auras and

Their Identification,” Lawrence Bisson’s “The Residual Auras of Human Writing,” Isaiah’s “The Interpretation and Control of Somnambulist States of Being,” and the multiply-authored “Survey of Classical Sorcery in Western Highland” and “The Ring Magic of the Traveling Romans of Great Bend”.

Library of the Sciences (17)

The moment you open the door you are assailed by the musty smell of old and damp paper. Within this square room books and papers line the walls.

Books here include geographies of West Highland, East Highland, and Great Bend; an anonymous “Survey of Possible Geographies of the Holy Roman Empire”; “Spices of the Phoenix, a catalog”; “Gems and Mineral Lodes in the High Divide”; “The Known Heavenly World”; “Planets and Stars, a Comparative Study”; and other works of geography, geology, botany, and astronomy.

The Back Library (18)

More books line the walls of this triangle-shaped back room. Two goblin skeletons, one missing its head, lie on the floor against the small table in the center of the room. The missing head stares back at you with empty sockets from the small table.

The goblin’s missing head is on one of the books, where it came to rest after leaving the goblin. Blood is spattered on the books on the table, and they’ve been eaten away pretty well. Close examination of the two books on the table will make it easy to determine that they are studies of another language. A successful Perception roll will indicate that the language was Elvish. The books are far too gone to be of any use, however.

Library Workroom (19)

Wide-mouthed jars stand on shelves above a worktable. Books lie open, bound and unbound. Standing off to the side, a metal wheel stands on a stone pylon. An iron bar sticks out of the side of the pylon.

This tiny room contains library paste, extra bindings in the process of being made, and blank paper and writing materials for the Order. Books need to be rebound every few hundred years.

The room also contains the resetting mechanism for the trap in the Gemini room, room 5 of the dungeon level. The lever has three settings. Pulling it all the way up (the position it is currently in) arms the trap in the Gemini room as normal: the trap will not go off if the key is used to open the door (or if the person picking the lock is lucky enough to disable the trap as well). Pulling it straight out to the middle position arms the trap so that the trap will go off regardless of whether the key is in the lock or was used to open the door. Pulling it all the way down disarms the trap. At each position is a symbol, Dwarven for “on”, “danger”, “off”. (See handout.)

Southwest Tower (20)

Stone stairs lead in a circle up the sides of the tower towards a trap door in the ceiling. The air is very slightly damp. A pale fungi grows along the ceiling and walls.

The trap door to the upper room is charred slightly around the edges, and blocked with pieces of furniture and spikes. There is a symbol drawn on the door in rouge (see handout). To someone

who knows spellcraft, the symbol is probably a magical fire symbol of some kind. The symbol is drawn large at the five foot level. This symbol was part of the spell that burned the defenders on the second level of this tower (level 2, Southwest Tower 11).

Southeast Tower (21)

The skeletons lie so thick in this tower you need to step carefully if you wish to avoid stepping on them. A trickle of light shines through a cracked and busted trap door above the circular stairs.

As in the other towers, the doors between levels are horizontal trap doors, though the trap door to the next higher level is busted open. There are no goblin skeletons here. The warriors were a volunteer guard, guarding the escape route that their friends used to escape the battle. The goblins never found the trap door in the floor; perhaps they never cared. The trap door route leads under the castle walls and up the hills.

One skeleton is lying as if reaching towards something on the floor. It's shattered forehead still holds the arrow that killed it, like a wilting flower in a deranged flower pot.

The secret trap door opens by pressing down on one of the stones. Finding the stone is at a bonus of 2. The door will shift down slightly and may then be pushed further. It will spring back and lock if let go quickly.

It is a thin tunnel, barely four and a half feet wide. Twenty feet into the tunnel is a trap; if the lever in the upper area is not correctly set, anyone stepping on the plate will set off the trap. The roof will collapse upon them, causing 3d6 points damage; an Evasion roll will reduce this to half damage. The plate for the trap is five feet wide; the tunnel collapses for a thirteen foot length, four feet on either side. Anyone at the edges of the collapse can make an Evasion roll to avoid the collapse completely.

Someone highly skilled in tracking might be able to recognize that five people last used this escape route.

UPSTAIRS (SECOND LEVEL)

Encounters

The chance for an encounter within the downstairs area of the castle is 10% every six hours, although if the skeletons have been activated it is unlikely any other creatures will come out of hiding.

01-38	Normal Spiders (1d3)
39-65	Large Spiders (1d2)
66-75	Mice (1d20)
76-88	Lost Bird (1)
89-91	Borogoves (4)
92-99	Strange Noises
99	Pink Horror (level 1 room 8)
00	Loose floor

In the event of a loose floor, the player must make a Perception roll to avoid their character stepping on it, and an Evasion roll if their character does step on it, to avoid falling all the way through. It is a fifteen foot drop to the lower floor.

For information about the borogoves, see the key for the East Overlook (room 3).

The secret doors at the end of the hallways between rooms 4 and 5 and between rooms 9 and 10 are not very secret, (and were often opened by the original inhabitants). Search at +5 to find them.

Battlement

From here you can just see across the outer walls and survey the forest for miles. Beyond the desolate courtyard, the trees are thick, some green, some the red and brown of autumn. Far to the southwest a mist rises above the trees. Occasionally you hear the cries of birds and the screams of predators.

Skeletons of the castle's defenders lie scattered about the battlement. Only a handful of the skeletons are goblins.

The crenellated battlement runs along the entire edge of the castle. However, it does not extend through the towers: the two towers have doors which open outward.

The tower doors are opened. The southwest tower doors are charred around the edges. See the Charred Door, below, for flavor text.

There are human skeletons scattered throughout the battlement, and three goblin skeletons lying on the north side.

There are three windows set five feet above the battlement, and two doors that lead into the main entrance on the first floor. The windows have wooden 'doors', once used to close them in inclement weather, that lie on the battlement.

Remember that the battlement runs above the first floor and at the same level as the second floor. On the north half, the dome of the ballroom rises above the battlement. On the south half, the walls of the second floor of the castle rise another twelve feet.

Charred Door

The door to the tower is charred and blackened around the edges, as is the wooden frame set into the stone tower walls. The door itself is slightly opened, and moves imperceptibly in the light breeze that blows across the battlement.

There is otherwise nothing special about these doors. The tower room on the first floor was hit with a fire spell that killed everyone in the first floor room, and started a fire on the second floor room.

Landing (1)

At the top of the stairs, you can look down over the grand entrance and the curved walls and ceiling. The knotwork is almost hypnotizing, and leads into the ceiling's constellations so well you can barely tell where one ends and the other begins. You hear a barely perceptible whirring coming from beyond the wall, interspersed with a slight ticking. Two doors lead west, and one leads south.

The two western doors lead out to the battlement. The other leads to the second floor.

Clock (2)

The great marble arch encloses a golden circle. Inside the circle, three hands point at arcane symbols. Some symbols look like ancient reckoning, as are often found on clocks. Others might be moon phases.

The third symbols are zodiac symbols (see handout). The entire face can be pulled outwards (although it is about seven feet up) to reveal the gears inside. This clock was designed for the long haul. It does not rust; it does not collect dust; dust it does collect is blown off by fans; animals are discouraged with moving blunt pinwheels. The gears gleam as if they were polished yesterday.

It runs by water from below. Water winds the clock, and a long axle reaches up through the castle walls to turn the clock.

East Overlook (3)

Beyond the arched doorway, tapestries hang in tatters from the walls, and lie in heaps on the floors. Tables are tipped over and ceramic jugs and pots shattered on the floor. Couches are ripped open. Seeds are scattered about the floor and crannies. A pile of straw lies in the far corner. A wide arched balcony overlooks the great ballroom. Shafts of light break through holes in the ceiling, illuminating the devastation below, the skeletons and columns.

There is no door, just the archway. The pile of straw is a borogove nest. If not yet dead, they are here 50% of the time. They are unlikely to attack, although they are shy and will leave if they hear noise, inflating their tails and floating out over the ballroom and out the back door.

The nest includes bits of gold, silver, and colored thread, three silver zodiac coins, a brass key and a silk glove. The key is the key to the Gemini room in the dungeon level.

Borogoves (Fantastic: 1-1; Survival 3, 4, 3, 5; Move: 8/4; Defense: 2; Attack: claw/claw/bite; Damage: 1/1/1; Lair: 50%)

West Overlook (4)

Beyond an arched doorway, tapestries lie in ribbons and tatters on the floor. Tables are tipped over; ceramic jugs and pots lie scattered about, and a couch has been turned over and then torn apart. A wide arched balcony overlooks the ballroom, where shafts of dusty light illuminate the dead below.

Note that if the borogoves are in room 3, any noise here will likely scare them into leaving; they will then be visible from the balcony.

Bedrooms (5)

A gaping hole in the ceiling has given the elements full reign. A flock of birds flutter out the hole as you open the door. Cots are overturned. Boxes, pots, and chests are smashed. All are covered in bird droppings and feathers.

The room was first ransacked, then left to the elements, and finally turned into nests. Searching the room could, on a successful Perception roll, find d3 silver zodiac coins, up to seventeen total.

Toy Room (6)

The ceiling has partially collapsed. Birds flutter away as you open the door. Beneath the feathers, dust, and bird droppings, odd structures poke above the rubble.

The odd structures include smashed starfields painted on wood, a starfield painted on wood with a shield attached, with a hole in one side; the shield turns to show only part of the starfield at a time. The edges are marked with astrological symbols (to denote the months). What was probably once glass spheres within spheres to show the planets and stars, now in slivers.

There were also tools for metalworking, measuring, and shaping wood, all destroyed or rusted away. Calipers stick out of one bird's nest. Hammers, wood shaving knives, pliers, all worthless, may be found. Whether or not anything is salvageable is up to you. Anything that is salvageable will take significant work.

Carrels (7)

Tables and chairs lie overturned about the room. Tattered pieces of papers flutter slightly as you push the door further open. The walls are stained with a faded blue. Light glows from circular skylights in the ceiling.

The faded blue is from ink, long faded, that the goblins tossed against the walls. The tables were carrels, basically, for studying. Each scholar or pair of scholars would work at a table and store their work there.

Among the papers here are plans for an “astrological laboratory” (an observatory). Only parts of the plans remain, and they were never finished, but a scholar could with years of study recreate the missing work.

There are six skylights. Two have translucent glass covering them; the other two are open, and shattered glass lie below them.

Abbot Jethroh Parthane's Bedroom (8)

Your eyes are drawn immediately to the life-size portrait on the far wall. A man in nearly royal accoutrement stands amidst the stars and moon in a black velvet sky. A tall bed to your right bears a sagging, torn canopy. Beneath the bed appear to be drawers. A bookshelf and writing table stand to your left. A high window overlooks the battlement.

The painting was very important to the last Abbot. It has been enchanted with a permanent indestructibility: +5 to saving rolls. It has barely aged because of this. On the abbot's left is the constellation Libra. On his right is Leo.

The Abbot's diary is largely intact. Written in both Ancient and Anglish, depending on what the Abbot felt like, it concerns itself mostly with the bureaucratic aspects of running an order. The last entry, for example, concerns a dispute between Captain Cambel and Lieutenant Courlander. Another recent entry indicates that the harvest was extremely good this year. The diary also contains, about a year previous, the code word for “Abiram's book case”.

There is no money here. His clothing (much of which contains the symbol for Leo) is intact enough to be worth 60 shillings and his portrait is worth 80 to 120 shillings depending on tastes. It may be removed from its frame and rolled up to reduce its bulk from 35 to 10. The portrait is by the turn-of-the-century South Bend painter Henry l'Autrec, and dates to 1885, the beginning of that painter's career.

Behind the painting is a secret door to the southwest tower. If the painting is moved, the door is relatively obvious; rolls to find it are at +5. It opens simply by pushing on it, and then it swings back into place. It does not open from the other side.

Master Astronomer Abiram Forney's Bedroom (9)

The wooden door, closed, is scratched with a circle, with a multitude of crude lines pointing out of the bottom.

A goblin skeleton lies clutching a book on the floor in front of a small, glass-enclosed bookshelf. The glass doors are open, and on the shelf are books and two vases or containers of some kind.

A large decorated pot in the corner of the room is overturned, and drawers beneath a simple mattress have been opened, their contents strewn about the room.

The door was scratched with a warning (see handout; it is meant to represent the sun, a warning symbol to goblins) to the other goblins looting the castle, to stay away from this room, after one of their number tried to take a book from the shelf and was killed by the lightning ward. They fled, leaving the corpse and the room alone, slamming the door behind them. (The goblin skeleton is holding Abiram's diary.)

The ceramic chamber pot is decorated with symbolism relating to the two zodiac signs Leo and Virgo. It is worth 5 pounds.

The Master Astronomer was also the Master Engineer. It was Abiram's predecessor who decided that they didn't know enough about building castles and that they should work with the Dwarves on any further additions (such as the dungeon level). Abiram worked with the Dwarves to design the clock tower. He has all of his notes on the clock's mechanism and construction in a binder; his diary (in the goblin's "hands") also contains much related to the clock's day-to-day construction, as well as his consultations with the Dwarves. Combined, the two books would be worth 200 to 300 shillings, depending on the buyer. The diary alone is worth about 50 shillings; the plans about 100 shillings. The binder is in the bookshelf.

Abiram specialized in protective spells. His bookshelf is protected by a minor ward that has been made permanent. The first person taking anything from the shelf without speaking the phrase "ne lucere", pronounced "nay loo cherry", will take 2d6 points lightning damage. They may make an Evasion roll for half damage. The ward replenishes each night at midnight. Only the Abbott (and Abiram) knew the pass phrase.

Also on the shelf (and also subject to the ward) is a small vase decorated with wolves howling beneath a starry sky. In the vase is the Pisces treasure safe key, a small brass key. A cobalt-blue vial contains a healing potion which will heal 1d8 survival points, for a minimum of 4 points. The vial is marked with the depressions in the shape of the stars of the constellation Aquarius.

Finally, there is a second book still on the bookshelf. It is a notebook detailing star positions and how to build something; it is how to build an observatory. It matches the observatory in Stelopolis.

Much of Abiram's clothing contains the symbol for Virgo.

Temple (10)

The doors to this wide, empty room are already mostly open. Muted light shines from two white skylights in the ceiling. Dark wooden bars cross the floor all the way up to the front of the room, where a wooden altar stands before a huge tapestry. The tapestry appears to be a depiction of Heaven, but in this heaven the departed read books in great, heavenly libraries, and write on papers that are then handed to angels who shelve them in golden scroll repositories, while Jesus and the Saints perform alchemical experiments, and God the Father holds the stars in his hands, crafting them.

The temple has been ransacked. The low bars are solid oak kneelers (there are no pews). There is also an oak podium, overturned, on the left side (facing the altar) of the altar. There are a few prayer tracts scattered about, with prayers dedicated to “the great clock maker” and “he who lights the stars one by one each evening.”

Southwest Tower (11)

Skeletons of man and goblin lie scattered about the soot-covered floor. It is dark. A door at the top of the stairs is closed, as is the door at the bottom of the stairs. Some skeletons wear armor. Weapons lie intermingled with the dead. A light mold grows over everything. Soot is everywhere.

The doors are heavily charred on this side. The door leading down is blocked with furniture and spikes on the other side. A strength roll at a penalty of 5 will open the door.

The secret door does not open from this side. The upstairs door is open.

If they search, they will see a hint of silver beneath some soot. One sword hilt is weaved in simple silvery knotwork. Only a jagged piece of blade remains sticking out of the hilt. It has odd writing on it (see handout). The writing is Elvish and reads “daro lirl fey rivel leelen” which means “Bear this sword in defense of life”. This is Lirl len-Elessan. If they take the broken sword, this will “activate” the goblin skeletons surrounding the castle. See the “Magic Items” section for more information about when and how this happens.

Southeast Tower (12)

The trap door is busted open. Pieces of wood fall down the stairs as you brush past the opening. A few skeletons lie jumbled on the floor, animal corpses scattered among them. A grayish curtain of gauze hangs through the trap door up the stairs to the right, and a sliver of light shines through a window on the far wall.

The corpses are desiccated, except for a few that are fresher. They are all small animals such as rats, squirrels, and birds. Some are so old they fall to dust on touching them. The gauze is a large spider’s web. It is thicker than the cobwebs that have been everywhere else.

Southwest Tower Third Level (13)

Soot and ash cover everything. Scrolls, papers, and flasks lie about shelves around the walls. Two skeletons lie here, one on the floor, cloth wrapped around its skull, and one on the floor before the front window. Light from three windows clearly illuminates the tower room.

There were three soldiers here. One jumped to his death (he's still there at the bottom of the tower), while the other two hoped to wait out the fire below, but it lasted too long and they died of smoke inhalation (the one on the floor) and an arrow (the one next to the window) because he was hanging his head out the window for air.

There are also four arrow slits in the walls.

The paper easily tears. They've been subject to weather, sun, weather, sun, over and over, for a hundred years. Agility rolls are required to hold a paper intact. Most of these are written in Ancient. It will be nearly impossible to carry these papers back home without destroying them. One of the papers describes the means to create the gas in the Pisces room in the dungeon.

If material components are needed, there is a 25% chance that simple components will be here. There is a flask of quicksilver, for example, worth 50 shillings, a vial of sulfur, and a box of huge spider web powder (marked with the symbol for Cancer).

Southeast Tower Third Level (14)

You push aside the spider's web and can see clearly into the upper tower. Light is shining through gossamer strands around each window. The netting on the far window shakes as a tiny sparrow struggles within it. The strands hang throughout the room and cover the ceiling like a blanket of criss-crossing string. There may be a bronze glint behind the webbing on the left wall.

There are two large spiders in the webbing on the ceiling. They are extremely likely to attack about a round or two after anyone enters and begins moving the strands of webbing.

Large spiders (Animal: 1; Survival: 3, 4; Move: 10; Attack: 1 point; Lair: 90%; Special: poison strength 1, d2 points per round)

Most of the papers here are unreadable. Golden bookends surround some books that have survived fairly well behind the webbing. The bookends are of gold leaf, heads studded with blue gems for eyes, green for earrings, and the gold hair pounded into curls. The bookends are worth 250 shillings each and weigh ten pounds each.

The books are journals of experiments, and catalogs of equipment and materials. A few experiments might be intact, but most are stuck together with other pages, blurred, or even eaten from the inside. At the back of one is a note to "request Pisces key from Abiram or Abbot for more cinnamon". (Someone with spellcraft might note that cinnamon can be used for certain kinds of aromatic illusions.) Another note in different handwriting says "why not get it yourself?" with an arrow pointing to a crude stick figure getting hit by lightning.

Some flasks are broken. Some sulfur spills out of one flask onto the floor.

DUNGEON

The dungeon is laid out with the doors on the points of two six-sided stars. The dungeon level is better quality stonework than the rest of the castle (except for the clock). Anyone skilled in stonework will be amazed at the quality of the work in this section of the castle. If they've seen Dwarf work before, they will recognize it immediately. Otherwise, legends of the Dwarven miners and craftsmen are still likely to come to mind.

Doors are spaced nearly exactly ten yards apart. The hallway is 360 feet in circumference measured from the inner wall. All of the doors open easily unless they are locked. The Dwarves'

craftsmanship endures. Doors are generally unlocked but closed unless otherwise noted in the flavor text. They generally open into the hallway (towards the characters).

Note that the wall painting descriptions assume that the characters are moving clockwise or counter-clockwise around the circle. Transition descriptions are marked “CW” for clockwise, and “CCW” for counter-clockwise. There will also often be an “inside” text for when they open the door or peer inside.

The walls in the hallways are usually set with stone. The walls in the rooms are usually set with thin stone.

Encounters

The chance for an encounter within the downstairs area of the castle is 10% every six hours, although if the skeletons have been activated it is unlikely that any other creatures will come out of hiding.

01-10	Huge Spiders (1)
11-30	Normal Spiders (1)
31-50	Mice (1d20)
51-60	Giant Rats (1d6)
61-75	Snakes (1d3)
76-85	Poisonous Snake (1)
86-00	Rats (1d10)

The huge spiders are from the Aquarius room. See that room for details.

Center Room

A large pillar rises from the center of this tiny circular room. Large, rusted keys hang from the simple stone pillar.

The center room contains entrances to the prison rooms, and the keys to those rooms as well. Keys to both the inner (barred) doors and the outer, observation, doors to the prisons hang from the wall. There are thus seven keys, although they won't be able to see all of the keys while they are still hanging.

The center room also provides drainage to the other rooms. Tiny holes in a groove around the edges of the column allow water to seep into the earth.

Aries (Stairs, Ram)

Large grey stones of varying shades lead down stairs that twist right and then left for at least forty steps. At the bottom of the stairs is another oaken door, bound in iron and barred with two thick wooden poles. The poles pass through bars on both the wall and the door.

The six-inch diameter poles on this side were designed specifically for this purpose. Huge iron slots in both the walls and the door hold the poles and keep the door from opening into the dungeon hallway. The door is barred from *both* sides. The spears barring the other side are weaker. A strength roll at a penalty of 3 will burst it. The stairs lead about fifty or so feet down, taking forty yards to do so. (The stairs twist so that the secret exit on the other side will match up correctly.) The spears pass through iron bars on the wall only. (Since the door opens towards the

spears, this was all that was necessary.) The door itself is six inches thick, and oak, with metal bars through the center of the wood. Breaking the door itself is likely to be difficult.

You smash the door in. The hallway runs in a curve to the left and right. The walls and floors are set with large stones, boulders of granite, and occasional dark marble, inlaid with a greenish metal around the stones. The hallway is about five feet wide and seven feet tall. The walls are covered in paintings of mountains silhouetted by the night sky.

If they turn around to look at the door they've just opened:

The door you've just opened is lacquered with a scratched and chipped ram's horn beneath a crescent moon.

If they've arrived from clockwise or counterclockwise, use the appropriate description:

CCW: Rural library and field becomes hill and mountain, darkening the night so that mountain peaks are silhouetted by stars and moon.

CW: Hell gives way to earthly tortures. Sodom and Gomorrah burn in the night. Destructions fades to tournaments as jousts take the field. Jousting fields and crowds in turn give way to mountains, darkly lit by the painted night.

Libra (1, Scales of Justice)

CCW: The mountains give way to tournaments of jousting, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the scales of hell. Yellow stars mark the outline of blue lacquer scales on an inner door.

CW: Man's great labors fall into decay. The pride of Babel drops to the fires of hell, its stones weighed and found wanting.

Inside, stone stairs lead down a small auditorium, past oaken seats, to a table flanked by dark marble statues of scales and a huge crab. High-backed chairs decorated with silver stars seem to still hold ceremony to the empty seats. Torch sconces line the walls. Two large ones jut from the wall behind the high-backed chairs.

The statue of the scales is on the left, the statue of the crab is on the right. The marble is veined with white streaks and blood-red streaks.

Pulling on the right torch sconce behind the chairs opens the secret door.

Taurus (2, Bull)

CCW: Destruction gives way to the rebirth of great structures and cities. Man and beast toil to move blocks of stone and lift great monuments to God. On the outer wall a lacquered carving outlines a rampaging bull, glossy black against the rich brown of the door.

CW: Whirlwinds calm, and from the desert grows great monuments to God and man. Beasts and workers toil to move huge stones to create grand tombs and towers to the heavens, where man speaks to the stars as an equal.

Inside, a huge glass table held off the floor by an obsidian-black bull is covered in papers. The bull's hollow eyes give it an eerie, vacant stare. Two brilliant red gems lie on the floor beneath the table.

The maps are of Highland, Byblion, and Illustrious Castle. It looks as though they were planning an attack on Illustrious Castle when they were last here.

The red gems, once the eyes of the bull, are worth 100 shillings each. (The bull, could it be removed—it was carved in place here—would be worth a thousand shillings easy, perhaps up to two or three thousand, or even four thousand with its glass top, depending on the buyer.)

Scorpio (3, Scorpion)

CCW: Cities give way to deserts as you approach a door on the inner wall. Whirlwinds stir up dust, and the devil tempts Jesus with the illusory kingdoms of the world from a rock overlooking the desert's desolation. A white lacquer scorpion raises its tail menacingly at you from the entrance to the door.

CW: Armies lie dead in the fields, rotting to skeletons and dust. Desert sands overtake all. Jesus stands atop a huge rock and overlooks the great cities of the world, tempted by worldly power.

Inside, a barred window looks down on strange devices. A hollow man with spikes and an open, man-shaped door; whips of man kinds, and metal and wood contraptions you have no idea what they were used for and probably don't want to know.

Well, anyone familiar with torture instruments will recognize quite a few of these things, from the iron maiden of the description to cat-o-nine tails, thumbscrews, and others.

From the bottom, a door of vertical iron bars leads into the room.

Sagittarius (4, Archer)

CCW: The desert gives way to combat. Arrows rain down on helpless armies; war machines carry destruction to castles. On the outer wall, the door is slightly ajar, but you can see a translucent amber archer pointing his arrows to the stars.

CW: The serenity of lake and mountain turns to masses of soldiers battling endlessly in forest, city, and plain. Arrows rain death to soldiers, and great machines carry destruction to castles.

Inside, an hour-glass-shaped room holds benches, and bows and arrows in various states of repair. Strings hang from rods on the walls. You can see the edges of a pile of dirt around the squeeze in the "hourglass".

In the far section some of the soldiers broke through the wall and tried digging to the southeast. They made it ten feet in before dying. They were trying to reach the secret tunnel out of the southeast tower. They did not have the Dwarves make a secret exit here because they didn't want anyone knowing about the secret tunnel to Stelopolis.

The cool dryness of the underground is less destructive to wood and string than the wild weather changes above ground. While the bows are probably not usable, they look reasonably nice, and

the arrows could probably be put to use, though they might need refletching (use them at a penalty of two to attack). There are seven bows and thirty arrows here.

Gemini (5, Twins)

CCW: Combat gives way to writing, study, and experimentation.

CW: Sharp peaks smooth to soft, restful mountains.

Both: A monastery sits at the edge of a serene lake, a mountain looming behind it; both the mountain and the monastery are reflected perfectly in the lake. Giants look down and over to the scholars.

Note that unless they stop to take a look, proceed immediately to the next room.

The stars above the mountain are of Gemini, and a twin-faced god stares down from the heavens. A two-headed giant lifts its head from behind the mountain peaks, its eyes vacant holes with pinpricks for an iris.

Finding the door is at a bonus of four if they know where the door is and that it should be Gemini. The door itself is locked, and a “locks & traps” roll at a penalty of 1 must be made to unlock it if they don’t have the key. The door is made of metal, with thin stone, designed to sound like the wall. A perception roll will be required to find the location of the door even by pounding on the wall.

The Gemini room key fits into the eyes of the rightmost head.

The giant’s head twists and the door pops inward, gliding silently open to reveal the darkened room. Inside, past a short initial hallway, two bronze bells flank the entrance. The walls on the far end of the “diamond” are lined with shelves and benches, themselves holding inkwells, and decorative sculptures of horizontal rods with rings around the rods. A large tapestry is woven with an image of the castle. Above the castle, in the night sky and surrounded by attending stars, the moon greets the sun.

The room is somewhat diamond-shaped. About five feet inside the room, it begins to widen, and there are two bronze-colored, bell-shaped devices, one on either wall just at that point.

There is a trap on the entrance that might be triggered if the key is not used to open the door. Anyone picking the lock will need to make a second “locks & traps” roll to have successfully disabled the blade. If that second roll is successful, they have unlocked the door as if they used the key, and—without necessarily knowing it—have thus bypassed the trap. The second roll is at a penalty of 2. (The Dwarven craftsman who designed this lock recommended that the key have to remain in the lock, but the Astronomers overrode that recommendation on safety grounds.)

Anyone looking at the wall near the bells will see a thick dark line running up the wall from floor to ceiling. Looking closely or with good light, they’ll see that this thick line is an opening in the wall as if for a sliding door or something. The opening extends from floor to ceiling and is about three inches thick.

The trap is triggered by at least 40 pounds of weight stepping on a three foot by three foot square of the floor inside the room just as the room widens. If the door is not opened with the key, the first person to step into the room must make an Evasion roll at a bonus of 1, or take 2d6 points damage from a massive blade that swings down on a heavy pendulum.

The head of the pendulum will strike both bells on each pass, which is likely to attract creatures. An encounter check is made for every two minutes that the bell is ringing.

The pendulum will swing for about ten minutes before it begins to wind down (which will happen in another ten minutes). Quick characters may be able to get through between swings on a successful Evasion roll, at a bonus of five, but it'll be safer to wait. (Of course, they might not realize this.)

Characters who are careful may be allowed a Perception roll to realize that stepping onto the floor inside is likely to trigger something.

This is a re-settable trigger. It can be reset in room 19 (the Library Workroom) on the first floor of the castle. It can also be disabled in that room, and it can be armed in “alert” mode, which means that even if the key is used, the trap will still go off. Unless the characters have changed the setting, however, the trap is as described here.

The bells ring sweetly if tapped and loudly when hit by the pendulum. The “decorative sculptures” are abaci.

Across the bottom of the tapestry reads “Praeluxi Astralas Erudit”, or “Knowledge shines forth from the stars”. The tapestry is intact and worth 400 shillings, though it is seven feet by five feet and weighs about 25 pounds. The tapestry covers a safe.

A simple metal door stands at chest height in the wall behind the tapestry. A small keyhole mocks you on the right side of the door.

Here, the Astronomers followed the Dwarves’ recommendation: if the key is not in the safe for the entire time the door is open, anyone removing anything or jostling the contents will cause an arrow to shoot out. An evasion roll is required to avoid d6 points of damage. There are two arrows in the trap. Only one will shoot at a time. Anyone looking extremely closely at the sides of the inside of the safe might realize that the inside is not fully attached to the wall.

The door pops outward. The safe is filled with papers, books, and scrolls in what looks to be pristine condition. One book’s spine reads, embossed in leather, “Morpheus Somnium”.

Most of them are contracts and treaties, in the Ancient tongue. One English contract is with the Dwarves for building the dungeon complex in the 863rd year of the Cataclysm of Earth. The long preamble forgives the Dwarves for “working with their long-despaired enemy”. They paid in large amounts of grain, alcohol, vegetables, and wood. There is another contract, far in the back, for the building of the clock tower in the 795th year of the Cataclysm of Earth.

There is a treaty in both English and Ancient with the Order of Illustration, marking peace terms and dated June 15th of the 887th year.

There are three spell research notes. One contains the secret dream spells of the Astronomers: Dreams, Sleep, Dream Omen, and Dream Walk. It is inscribed on the inside with “Rex somnium dicat servis suis, et interpretationem illius indicabimus.” This is from Daniel, and means “Let the King tell his servants the dream, and we will declare the interpretation of it.” The other contains Indestructible Object and Elemental Ward; these were researched by Master Astronomer Abiram Forney. The final is a shorter book discussing “Ephemeral Backdrop”, and including that spell. Each of these are for mnemonic casters of Highland, but a classical (West Highland) caster should be able to use them with a little extra study.

And there is an excerpt from “No More Stars”, taken from the Order of Illustration.

Capricorn (6, Goat)

CCW: The restful mountains and stream build to rocky badlands and sharp peaks. A lacquer pink ram bounds from peak to peak on a wide open door on the outer wall.

CW: Swamps are fed by rivers, rivers by streams, and streams wind through rocky badlands. Badlands grow to sharp peaks and stark hills. The door is open

Both: Tiny goats range through hills carved on the frame around the doorway. A mountain shepherd leads a flock of goats and lambs to his cottage home overlooking a valley.

Inside, cobwebs hang everywhere. Skulls and skeletal hands poke upwards through the webbing in shelves on the left and the right. Two ornate arches hold up the ceiling at ten foot intervals.

The spiders no longer abide here, they are in the Aquarius room, but they do visit on occasion. There is a 5% chance of finding one huge spider here.

This is a crypt. Officers and leaders of the Order are lain here, on shelves in the sides of the walls, once their flesh decays from their bones in the graveyard.

This crypt is for you to work with. At its most basic, it is a crypt that may provide some clues to the higher-status members of the Order but none of the skeletons will animate. There's no reason, however, that some of them couldn't. Or there could be oracular ghosts haunting the crypt, or phantasms. Or it could lead to an entirely new dungeon of your design. Just make sure to put in the right backstory elsewhere in the adventure if necessary.

These are the higher status members of the Order. The majority of the Order is buried in the cemetery in Stelopolis.

The arches are inscribed with goats and snakes prancing among trees and hills. At the far end of the crypt is a statue of a tree. From the tree hang fruit and snakes. At the base of the tree is written "Ipse revelat profunda, et abscondita, et novit in tenebris constituta: et lux cum eo est" which means "He reveals deep and hidden things, and knows what is in darkness: and light is with him."

There are three apples on the left side of the tree which, if pulled, cause the right side of the tree to slide over, revealing a ladder on the inside and a hole in the ceiling. This hole leads to the statue of Moses up top (which has also opened up). This secret exit was known only to Abiram, Parthane, and Campbel. Campbel died in the forest, and Abiram and Parthane escaped to die in Stelopolis.

A thief examining the tree's trunk might, on a Locks & Traps roll at a penalty of 4, see the fine seam running down both sides of the tree. A similar roll looking at the apples will let them know that some apples are just very slightly more giving than others.

Cancer (7, Crab)

CCW: Badlands turn to streams, and streams to rivers and swamps.

CW: Aqueducts and cities draw from deep dams, dams hold back rivers, peasants carry water from river to hovel. Rivers meander into swamp.

Both: Crabs abound in the water, and tiny gnome-like creatures feast on boiled crab. A lustrous white lacquered crab menaces a door on the inner wall with its raised, open claws.

Inside, a barred window looks down on benches and cots, empty.

A gate of vertical iron bars leads in from the Center Room. This was once a prison cell. If any items or people have been teleported by the trap on the Pisces room, they will be in here. The door with the barred window is locked. The keys are in the center room.

Aquarius (8, Water-bearer)

CCW: Peasants carry water from rivers to hovels, aqueducts carry river water to cities, and dams hold back the rivers.

CW: Thrones rules castles, castles rule kingdoms, and kingdoms rule cities. Cities depend on life-giving water delivered by complex schemes of aqueducts.

Both: An open portal with no door leads into dirt and darkness. An earthy odor emanates from the inky blackness.

As you turn around the twisting corridor, you begin to see a light glow, and hear the gurgling of falling water. The corridor turns and you find yourself gazing into a garden of unearthly beauty. The walls and arching ceiling glow a soft white; pastel purple flowers hang amidst gossamer strands of white. Vines loop around bright red and yellow flowers. Tall plants, their white clusters swaying ever so slowly, grow from reddish leaves at their base. Flies buzz by, and a light warmth surrounds you. Fireflies flicker before your eyes.

In the center of the garden a small, stone-lined pool is cooled by green ferns. Dragonflies skim across the water. Three skeletons recline around the pool, almost as if they were sleeping.

Two small waterfalls fall into pools in alcoves to the right and left. A beetle crawls over your foot.

The tall, pencil-necked plants are giant Venus Flytraps. Closer examination will reveal the pods at the top and perhaps a rat skeleton or two fading into the ground as nature takes hold of it.

There are usually d6 Huge Spiders here (90% of the time), d6 poisonous snakes (65% of the time), and 2d6 Giant Rats (90% of the time) here. And many more rats, spiders, snakes, and insects. The creatures here are rarely aggressive, unless they are hungry, which happens 5% of the time for the flytraps, and 10% of the time for the huge spiders. They will fight back if attacked, unless somehow specially frightened. (Flytraps can't run away, and huge spiders usually bite if frightened. They might bite once and then run if that seems expedient from an instinctive standpoint.)

Huge Spiders (Animal: 2; Movement: 10; Attacks: 1; Damage: 1d3; Defense: 1; Poison: strength 2, d3 points per round)

Venus Flytraps (Plant: 2; Movement: 0; Attacks: special; Damage: d3; Defense: -1)

Poisonous Snakes (Animal: 1/2; Movement: 12; Attacks: 1; Damage: 1; Defense: +2; Poison: strength 2, damage d3)

The pool in the center is blessed. Three people per week may drink once from the pool. Doing so will heal 1d8 survival points, minimum 3. Otherwise, the pool is merely refreshing. The water must be drunk in the garden.

A niche at the far end, about head height in the wall, has a small curtain covering it. The curtain can be pushed aside, and behind it is a skull. This is the skull of the founder, Aaron Paul. Beneath the niche is a simple plaque engraved with the words “Et eduxit eos de tenebris et umbra mortis et vincula eorum dirupit.” In English, this is “And he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death; and broke their bonds in sunder.” A person familiar with the bible might recognize this as a psalm.

Anyone taking the skull will incur a curse. The last voluntary bearer of the skull will have a penalty of 1 on all rolls, including saving rolls, ability rolls, attack rolls, and damage rolls. The curse will only be broken when someone else voluntarily takes the skull, or the skull is returned to the niche.

Leo (9, Lion)

CCW: Cities grow to kingdoms, kingdoms to castles, and castles to thrones.

CW: Whales battle great waves to escape huge kraken. Storms rile the sea, but fade to lesser and lesser waves as you move on. Sea comes to shore, shore to forest, and forest arrives at castle and throne.

Both: Wise rulers dispense wisdom and justice. A ruby red lion, outlined in gold, roars proudly on an inner door. Red eyes, shining with an inner fire, stare back at you. Its tail is a cluster of bright gems of purple, red, and blue.

On the inner wall of the main corridor, towards the floor, there is a running satire. Beneath the grand human castles and cities, a gnome king leads his subjects against the rat king. His great heroics end when a flood cleans out the undercity of both gnome and rat.

The gems are worth two shillings each. There are seven in the tail.

Inside, a door with a barred window stands slightly open. The room beyond the door is Spartan but comfortable. Two jugs stand beside a wide bowl. A large ceramic pot shows a lion tearing a deer to pieces.

This prison was used for more noble captives.

Pisces (10, Fish)

CCW: The paintings on the wall fade from throne to forest, forest to river, river to sea, and sea to storm. Whales battle the waves, and great kraken feed on the whales, their eyes glittering like stars.

CW: Utopian bay disappears across endless waves. Storms batter the seas, and great monsters rise out of the water. Whales flee the tentacled monsters, and the monsters feed on the whales. The monsters' eyes glitter like stars in the storm.

The eyes of the Kraken are moonstone, and most are placed in the shape of the constellation Pisces. If all 17 eyes of Pisces (and only those eyes) are pressed in at the same time, one of the waves will roll over, revealing a keyhole. Two people at least are required to do this.

You hear a slight click, and a smaller wave rolls over, revealing a small hole in the wall.

The lock is at a penalty of 3 to pick. If opened without the key, similar to the Gemini room, it will trigger a trap. The thief is allowed a second Locks & Traps roll to “accidentally” disable the trap.

A huge wind assails you, sending a storm of dust into your faces.

Evasion rolls are required to avoid going sand-blind for d4 rounds after the wind stops. The wind stops after one round.

Inside, the room is filled with sacks overflowing with treasure: gems, coins of gold and silver, necklaces and bracelets studded with gems, goblets of gold embedded with rubies and sapphires, and goblets of ruby held in baskets of spun gold.

This is an Ephemeral Backdrop. It is easy to recognize as unreal if examined closely.

The trap is magical: a one-way *magic portal* to the Cancer cell, dungeon room 7. The *magic portal* will last six rounds (one minute). The illusion will last 24 minutes.

This is sort of a one-time trap: once set off, it will not be set off again until after midnight, whereupon both portions of the spell renew.

If they wait over a minute, but less than twenty four minutes, to step through:

The treasure disappears. Three halls extend down, each lined with swords, spears, or maces. The walls are made of large stones set in a pebbled mortar.

The spears are untrustworthy. The swords and maces could be used, though the tang on the swords is unlikely to last long. There are sixty spears, thirty swords, and thirty maces.

At the end of the middle hall is a secret door. One of the pebbles below it moves to reveal the keyhole. This lock can be picked at a penalty of 3. If a key is not used, it will trigger a gas trap. Unless they recognize that there is gas being released (it makes no noise), they must make a Health roll or fall unconscious for d20 minutes. If they do realize gas is being released, they’ll be allowed an Evasion roll to hold their breath.

Anyone at the end of the hallway will need to make a saving roll about four rounds after the gas is released; their saving rolls will be at +3 due to the gas being diluted. The gas dissipates completely in two minutes.

The gas trap is also a one-time trap.

The safe contains two hundred shillings (in bags of one hundred each), one hundred pounds, and bags, jars, and vials of magical materials: powders, spices, dried plants. One large, heavy (fifty pound) blackened rock. Feathers, hooves, teeth, bones. Insects. Insect parts. Lizard tails. Animal hair.

The bags of spices (hand sized, about 1/4 pound) are worth ten to sixty shillings. The jars (three pounds) are worth 2d20 shillings. If specially chosen, they can be worth 20+d20 shillings.

Virgo (11, Virgin)

CCW: Storm is abated by bay, and waves lap lightly on shores untouched by war or hunger.

CW: Mountains drop down to fields and isolated libraries.

Both: Delicately painted nobility pursue their studies chastely and without emotion in library and field.

Inside, sacks of flour, barley, wheat, hemp, beans, and roots have been ransacked and scattered about.

This was a dry food storage room; most of the food has been eaten, though it must not have been comfortable.

STELOPOLIS

Once in Stelopolis, normal wandering encounters for the deep forest are in effect. Stelopolis is built on a series of wide terraces. There is a stone fence running east-west going down the mountainside at the north and south edges of the fields and Stelopolis.

You may decide to expand on Stelopolis. For example, it is entirely possible that some creatures, organized or not, have taken up residence in the abandoned town.

If Stelopolis is still empty, you may use the Deep Forest encounter chart for random encounters.

THE SECRET EXIT

The secret exit from room 21 of the first floor (the Southeast Tower) comes out in a small building, after winding up stairs and through tunnels for two miles.

You walk for nearly half a mile down the tunnel when you come to stairs that wind upwards. Between stairs, and tunnels, tunnels and stairs, you must walk miles before the moonlight peers through cracks in a wooden ceiling.

There is a trap door in the wooden ceiling which must be forced open. While there is a lock on this side (as well as on the other) that can be turned simply with no key, there is a bit of debris lying on the trap door, and it opens upwards. A strength roll is required to force the door open; it will break when so forced.

You crack the trap door open. Amidst splinters and dust, moonbeams shine through openings in the slats on the wooden walls of a small building. You are surrounded by long blades—of plows, and by tackle and harness.

The character opening the trap door should make an Evasion roll to avoid falling debris; on a failed roll they will take 1d4 points damage.

Nothing in here is particularly worthwhile. It was a small barn for the storage of farm implements.

THE FARM BUILDINGS

You step outside into the cold night air. A few skeletons lie jumbled together several yards away. Two more buildings stand to your right, and small towers rise above them. To the left are even more buildings, and beyond them the mountainside drops slowly. Further to the right the mountainside rises at a reasonable angle.

The small towers are granaries. Each of the farms once contained sacks and barrels of grain to fill from the granaries, but the granaries are now emptied. The goblins took whatever they could to feed their army.

About ten yards from the storage building are the skeletons of Abbot Parthane, Master Astronomer Abiram, and their guards, where they were overwhelmed by orcs and goblins. There are some orc and goblin skeletons there as well. The only thing of value remaining (unless you've placed it somewhere else) is the key to the safe in the Gemini room. Once in the folds of the abbot's cloak, it now lies on the ground beneath his skeleton.

OBSERVATORY

On a small hill, a domed tower overlooks the lesser buildings. It has withstood the test of time with fewer holes in its sides, although there is a wide swath missing from its roof.

Inside, light from the stars and moon shine through the swath in the ceiling. A grooved shelf circles the walls at about six feet. Some small chairs and stools lie in the outer area, and upon a raised dais in the center.

The observatory is a small, circular wall built around a deep foundation. It was going to be an observatory, but the Astronomers never had the chance to finish it. In particular, there are no lenses (it is up to you whether they have already placed the order with the Dwarves). Some of the observatory had been built, and there are gears in a wooden crate at the edge of the room. The gears are well-designed; there are two large gears and seven smaller ones, which will fetch 10 monetary units and 5 monetary units respectively. The larger ones weight fifteen pounds, the smaller ones four pounds.

CRAFT ROW

Two rows of tightly-spaced single-story and story-and-a-half ramshackle buildings form a wide pathway a hundred yards long leading towards the mountain. Gaunt windows look out on a leaf-covered, overgrown street. Half-empty trees spread their denuded branches over the roofs of the buildings.

Comprising the brewery (just north of the row) and a number of other craftsman's workspaces, craft row once held workspaces for a carpenter, a blacksmith, a potter, a tailor, a baker, a wainwright/cooper (wheels and barrels), an armorer, and a weaponsmith.

LIVING QUARTERS

A haphazard collection of buildings, large and small, form a vague pathway, though the path is now broken by small trees and bushes. The buildings are seeing the effects of age and disuse; in many you can see inside through small holes; in others large portions of the walls have fallen in or been removed.

This is where the craftsmen and other supporting crew to the castle, as well as families, lived. A few also tried to make a home for themselves in a more secluded area, so within this part of the Deep Forest the characters may run across other homes.

A road leads down directly from here to the castle a mile away.

Some of the buildings have occasionally been used as a source of firewood.

THE CEMETERY

Rows upon rows of stone pillars, crosses, and markers run unevenly down the side of the mountain.

If they spend an hour or so studying the cemetery, you might allow them to deduce some information about the Order. There were more women in earlier days than in latter days, for

example. The earliest date on the stones is from the 558th AC (year of the cataclysm), and the latest is from the 895th year AC.

THE TERRACE FIELDS

Tall grass waves in the breeze on terraced fields. Further down is a field of trees, and to the right vine-like plants tangle. A light smell of cider wafts up from the side of the mountain.

Stelopolis was mostly a farming area. Tomatoes, apples, wheat, and barley grow wild now, on these wide terraces up and down the mountainside.

THE END

RETURN HOME

The journey home will be similar to the journey south, except that it may be shorter if the characters decide to travel due north instead of retracing their steps.

FUTURE ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are a number of things in this adventure that could lead to other adventures. There are the occasional references (in the contracts in the Gemini room and in Lieutenant Courlander's diary) to an unknown area of Illustrious Castle. Any part of Illustrious Castle that has not been searched and ransacked might still contain treasure, information, and magic.

Further exploration of the Chaotic Mist might lead them to an understanding of the “passing on” of the world, especially if they can tie it to a Dry City adventure.

The Elvish sword, Lirel len-Elessan, may well lead them to the Elves, and thence to a quest to find the rest of the sword. The Elves of West Highland have never heard of it, and in fact had sent an emissary to the area about eighty years ago in search of a rumored sword with Elvish runes. He never returned (his skeleton is in the back of Illustrious Castle). Of course, the sword itself may well attract the attention of undead creatures the characters would rather avoid.

Some adventurers may wish to search out the Dwarves.

Some adventurers may wish to find some way to empty out Kristagna of all of its treasures; this would be a heady undertaking: the larger the group heading into the Deep Forest, the more danger they'll attract. And if the characters have activated the goblin skeletons, you can provide a running adventure in the style of “The Evil Dead” or “Army of Darkness”.

And there is the evidence right before their eyes that the Goblins, not normally organized or particularly advanced, led a modern campaign against West Highland a hundred years ago. No one ever did find out who the Goblin Mage was or even why he led his armies against West Highland.

Some of the texts in the castle might reference a historical or magical relic the Astronomers had on display, but which is clearly missing now. No text mentions it having been removed. The characters' best choice in finding it is to track down the descendants of the Orcs who stole it.

NEW THINGS

Dream Research of the Astronomers

The spell research notebooks from the Sagittarius room of the dungeon contain enough research notes for any sorcerer to reconstruct the dream spells of the Astronomers. The spells in question are: Dreams, Sleep, Dream Omen, and Dreamwalk. It will take about one week per level of the spell to try to “extract” each spell from the book; a Learning roll will be required to successfully extract the spell. The character can try again as often as desired until the spell is deciphered, with standard penalties.

The spell descriptions can all be found in the “Arcane Lore” rulebook.

You may also allow the research notes to be useful in researching other dream-oriented spells, perhaps with a bonus of 1 or 2 to the Learning rolls required to successfully create such spells.

Clock Design Notes of Abiram Forney

Master Astronomer Abiram Forney’s diary details the day-to-day construction of the clock, as well as his day-to-day consultations with the Dwarven builders. He also has a binder of notes planning the clock’s design and summarizing his original consultations with the Dwarves. Combined, the two books would be worth 200 to 300 shillings, depending on the buyer. The diary alone is worth about 50 shillings; the plans about 100 shillings

Diary of Abbot Parthane

The Abbot’s diary is written in both Ancient and English, depending on what the Abbot felt like. It concerns itself mostly with the bureaucratic aspects of running an order. The last entry, for example, concerns a dispute between Captain Cambel and Lieutenant Courlander. Another recent entry indicates that the harvest was extremely good this year. The diary also contains, about a year previous, the code word for “Abiram’s book case”. (The code word is “Ne Lucere”).

Beyond that there isn’t much of interest in Parthane’s diary, although you are of course welcome to place any clues or foreshadowings you wish into the text.

Military Notes of Lieutenant Courlander

It is up to you how much information the lieutenant’s notes contain. One of the trivial things it contains are some of the names of the other members of the order, such as Captain Cambel, Abbot Parthane, and Master Astronomer Abiram. Towards the beginning of the book (while he is merely a minor officer, probably a sergeant), he agrees that the Dwarves are being too paranoid about the Gemini room. “Their idea is too dangerous.” But he thinks they were right about needing a secret passage out of the dungeons. “We may come to regret the lack of an exit.”

When he discusses the goblins, he calls them “orcs”. The last entry, dated May 3rd in the 896th year of the Cataclysm, mentions an argument with “Captain Cambel” about what to do if the “rumors of orcs is true”. Cambel wants to “take the field and wipe them up as we always do. Parthane agrees.” Courlander thinks “we ought to hole up. This time different. Should send courier north. Still technically at peace with Illustrators.”

Courlander’s diary also, towards the beginning, describes how he and a group of five other soldiers and sorcerors made a pact of mutual benefits. Among the things the group did were commission a special ring of silver strands and soft white pearl from the Dwarves. It describes his and their adventures acquiring the pearl back in East Highland. It tells of their journey into an underground tomb of the Druids, though it does not say why. Sometime after that he and the rest of the group moved ahead more quickly. Nothing sinister about it, but something is missing from the diary. He becomes a better spy; it was he who copied the “No More Stars” piece by sneaking into Illustrious Castle. He does not describe sneaking in, though he does describe sneaking around and going into their underground living quarters.

You should fill the diary with entries that relate to adventures you might want the characters to discover. For example, on a journey to find a ghostly castle that appears but once every year:

Date

We have come further south than I ever imagined possible. The sky is diamond-studded pitch, and the forest is alive with ghosts. We must retrieve a stone from a castle that does not exist.

Keys

There are special keys for certain rooms. The Pisces room, the Pisces treasure room, the Gemini room, and the Gemini lock box, all have special keys. If the characters find them, they can avoid the traps on those locks.

Gemini room key: brass, ornate, it is the sign of Gemini. It is in the borogove nest on level 2, room 3, the east overlook.

Gemini safe key: on a corpse in Stelopolis.

Pisces room key: in Captain Cambel's closet. The Pisces symbol is on it.

Pisces safe key: on Master Astronomer Abiram Forney's bookshelf, in a vase.

MAGIC ITEMS

The Moonstone Ring

The “moonstone ring” is made of silver strands woven together around a pale, soft white pearl. Under normal circumstances, the ring offers the wearer a bonus of 1 to defense. At night, it offers a bonus of 2 to defense. On nights of the full moon, it offers a bonus of 3 to defense. On nights of the new moon, the wearer and up to ten pounds of clothing or other items may walk through any door as if the door were insubstantial.

The ring is also enhanced with *Indestructible Object*, for +8 on saving rolls or defense against destruction.

“Night” means after sunset and before sunrise.

This is the ring commissioned by Lieutenant Courlander and his friends from the Dwarves. They then adventured to find the right ingredients and magic to enchant it to its current power.

The Sword Hilt of Ellesan

Forged by Dwarves and wielded by Elven kings, the sword was broken in the last battle of the Deadless Lord on the eastern continent. The Elf call it “Lirelen Elessan” (which means, simply, “the sword of Ellesan”). It was last wielded by Elessan Torilarvan, whose name means “Sword of the Silver Forest”.

The sword is now in two parts, the hilt and the lower part of the blade, and the middle and tip of the blade. This is the hilt and lower part. There are five lines of Elvish runes on the sword, clearly incomplete:

tiale waya: “tiale” means “in the reign of”. The next part is almost certainly the first part of a royal name.

panvono vira: “panvono” means “victory”. The next portion, if it is a whole word, is “gratitude”. It might make sense for this to be “viralva”, which would mean “In gratitude for victory”.

dier dencarotuh: “dier” means “transported”, and “dencarotuh” is “across the wide earth” or “across the wide lands”.

lirelilen ciri: “lirelilen” is “this sword of” and “ciri” is “Elves and” something else.

daya lirelen ele: “daya” is “I am” and “lirelen” is “the sword of”. The fragment “ele” could be many things, such as “elessar” (starlight) or “elessan” (weapons, swords), or a name. That is, “I am the sword of swords” or “I am the sword of starlight.”

The hilt and base of the sword confer the ability to Turn Undead (as the Specialty), as a fifth level prophet. Prophets who bear the hilt gain a bonus of two to their level when “Turning” undead (but turn at a minimum of fifth level). In the presence of undead, it grows a full blade, glowing green, which confers a bonus of 2 to attack and a bonus of 1 to defense against undead. Even when glowing, it may not be used to attack anything other than undead: it simply passes through other creatures or things. The magical blade ignores certain physical defenses of undead, such as the skeleton’s ability to take only half damage from slashing weapons.

The hilt is also cursed, depending on your point of view. It will attract nearby undead, and evil things killed violently, or in the act of committing evil, near it have a slight chance of coming back as skeletons or walking dead.

The hilt came to the western continent via the underground. The Elves of the west do not know its origin, although they have heard rumors about the glowing sword with Elvish runes on the blade. They are very interesting in finding the sword, and in discovering its origin.

If the player characters (or anyone else) takes the broken sword, this will “activate” the goblin skeletons surrounding the castle. The skeletons will, at three in the morning, animate and move across the moat and crawl over the walls and into the castle, and attack anything living in their path. There are 67 animated goblin skeletons in total—far too many for your average first to third level adventurers to defeat.

There are very few goblin skeletons actually inside the castle. The goblins won, after all, and pulled their friends out for proper burial. (The adventurers may be looking for a more sinister explanation for the lack of goblin bodies, and they’ll certainly be able to make one up, but the real reason is much more mundane.)

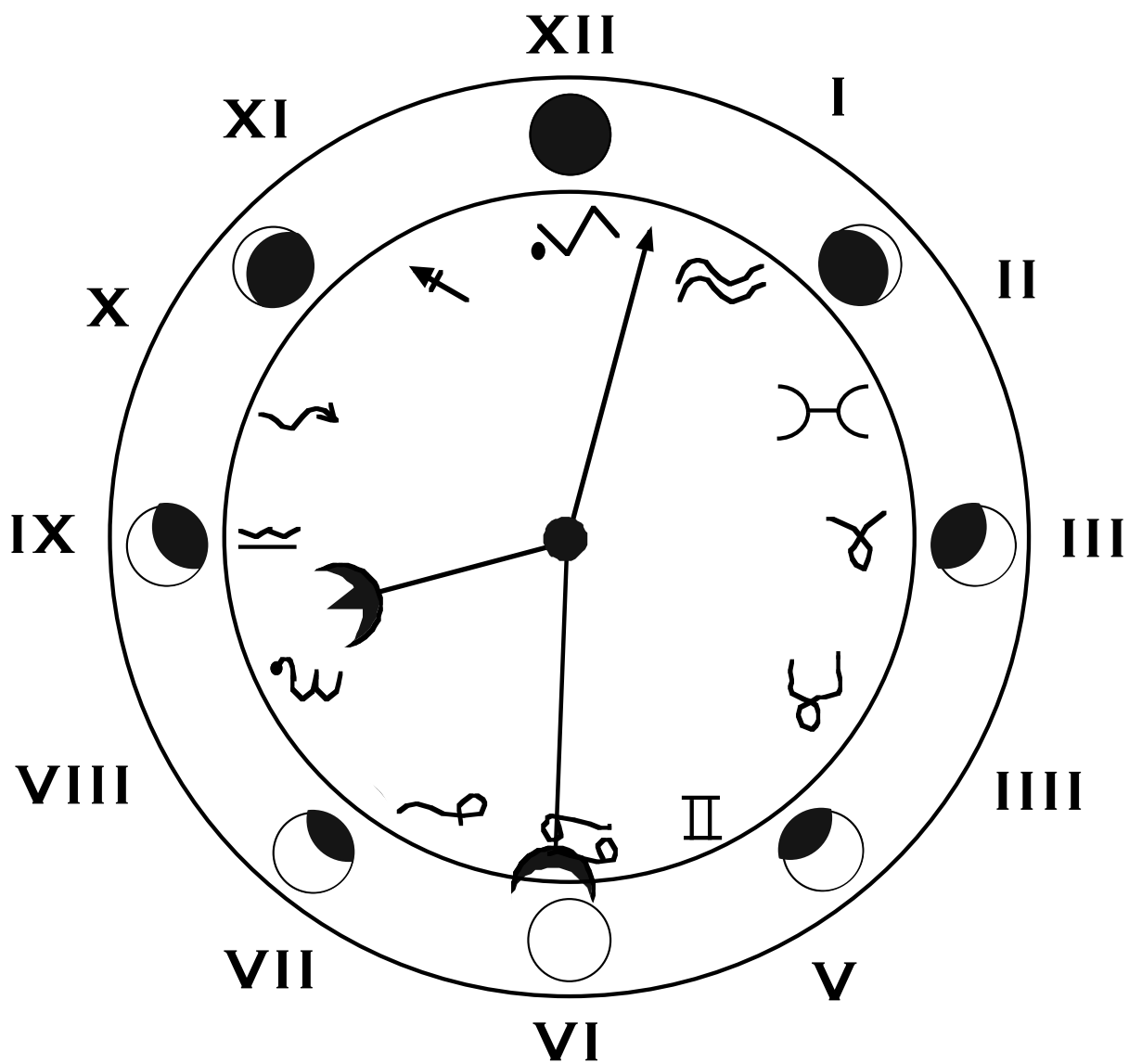
For those goblin skeletons that do remain in the castle, you’ll have to decide whether they can leave their not-so-final resting places and how much time it will take them to get to the sword-bearer. On the first floor there are still two goblin skeletons in the library (room 18), three in room 15, and three in the grand ballroom (room 2). On the second floor there are three skeletons on the battlement, and one in Abiram’s bedroom (9).

The skeletons will not follow the sword hilt out of the castle where their last battle took place. They will, however, remain animated, though still, within the castle, and anyone entering the castle afterwards will have to deal with them.

67 Goblin Skeletons (Undead: 1; Move: 10; Defense: 3; Attack: short swords; Damage: d6; Special Defense: Pointed weapons do 1 point; Slashing weapons do half damage)

PLAYER HANDOUTS

CLOCK



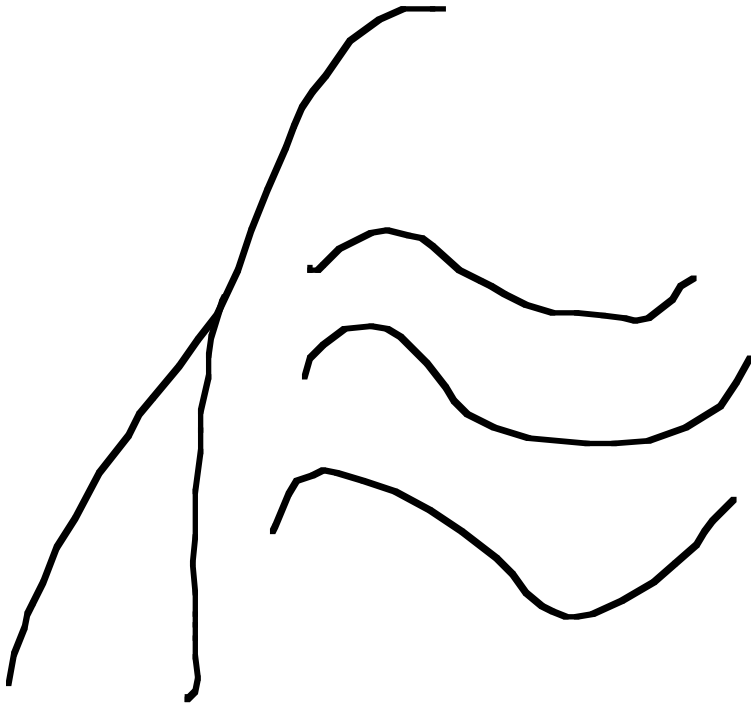
NO MORE STARS

So the four maps to Charon were cured here
of war. Ten fun games cause doom to man
in his writing, creating the lament that is his
fee due god. We issue in you this world of
humor, you mute women known.

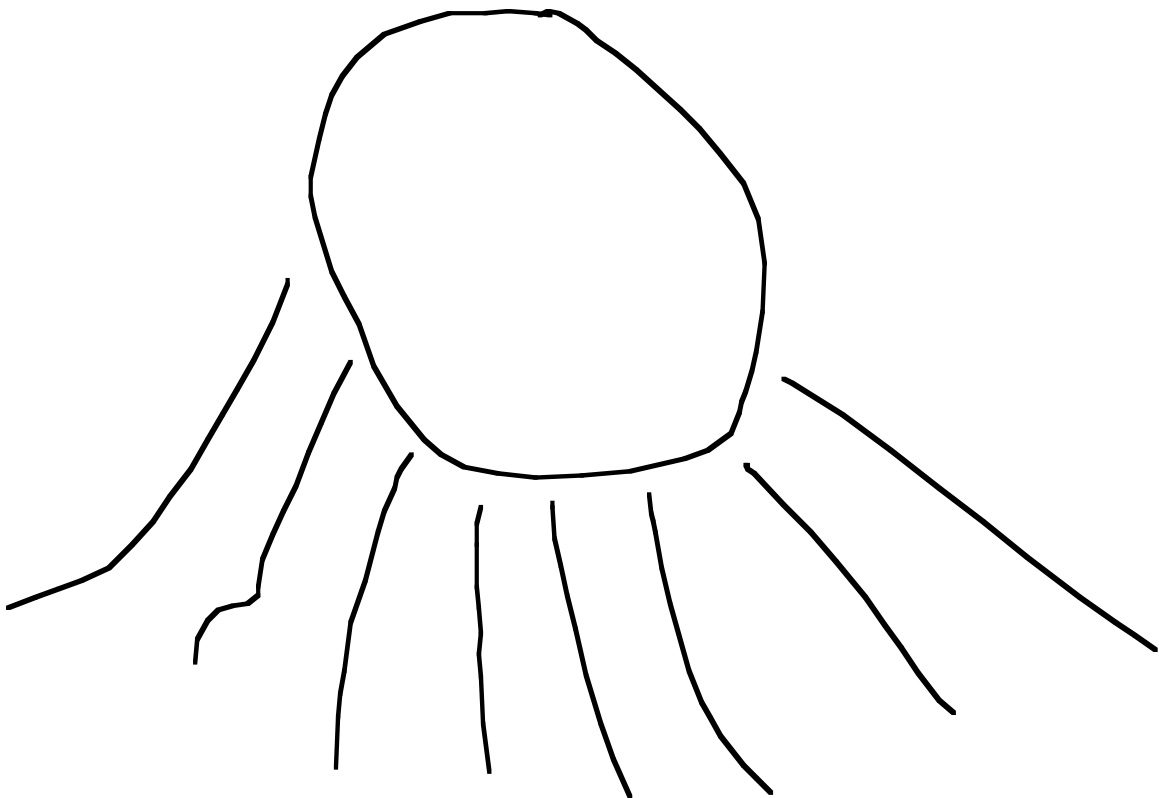
Test semen under no fat woman gods you
nurture, you who mint them the noxious
musks. He who draws to worlds will knit
one toy net. Hinges vow to better hinge, and
bar shale. Harm all strange metal, and
adhere to the thin hate of the freer sin there.

excerpted from
illustrated text

THE SYMBOL ON THE TOWER DOOR



THE SYMBOL ON THE UPSTAIRS DOOR



THE SWORD RUNES

□S8MWW ●S~

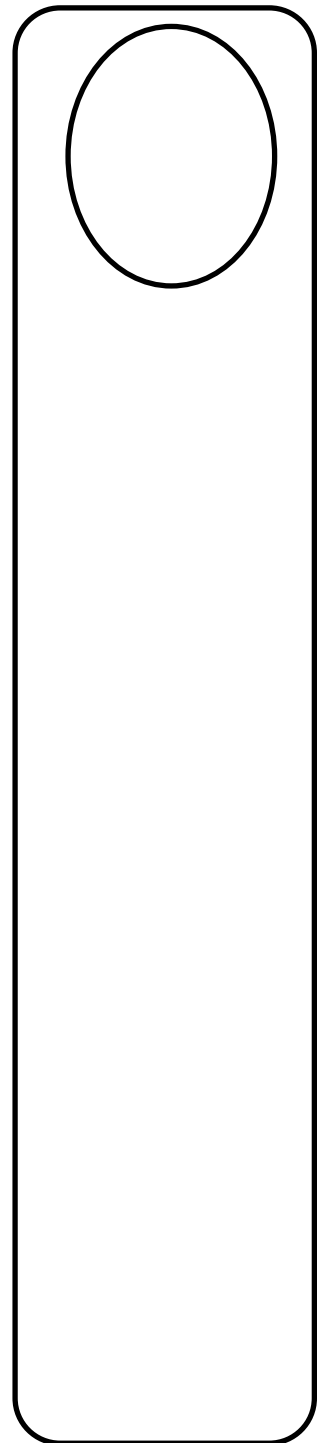
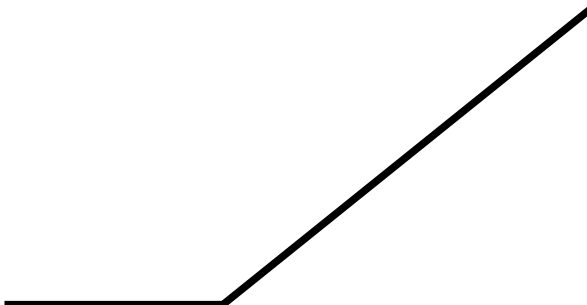
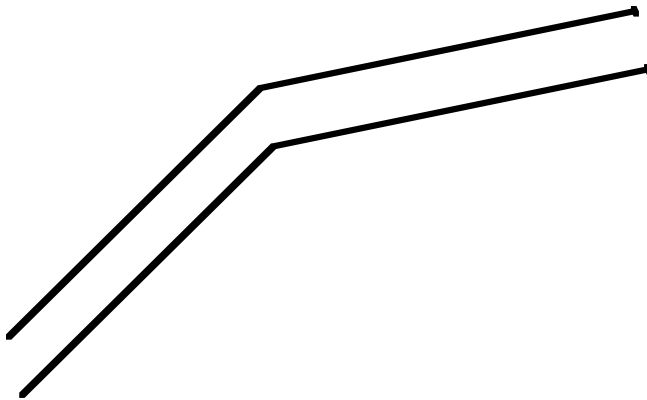
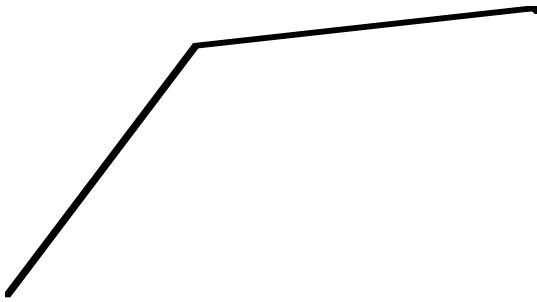
○8┐/○~┐8 /eΔ(8

□eSΔ □(W┐┐(S)Δ8□e

(M)eΔ(WM)e(MW)┐ ┐eΔe

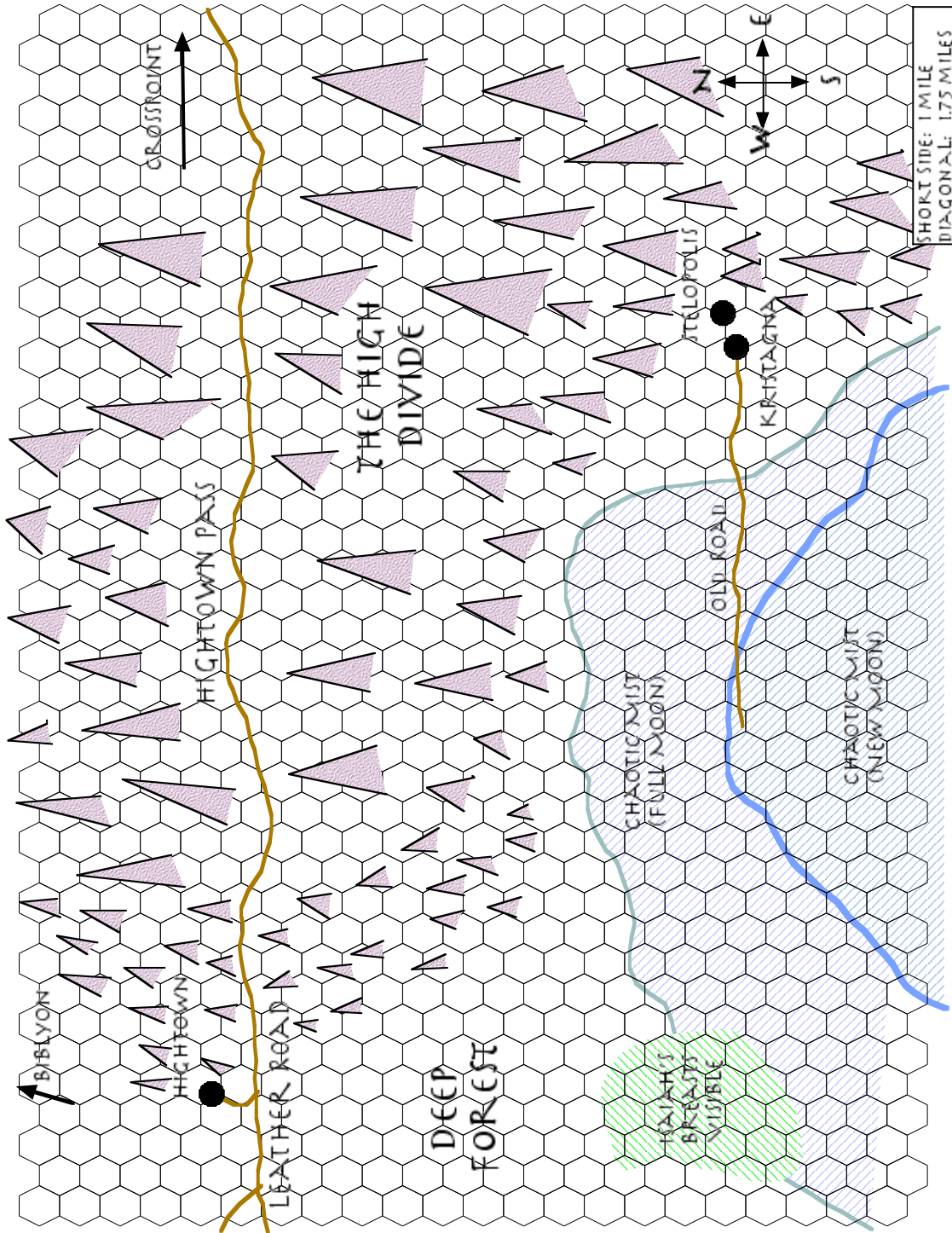
□(~Δe) (M)eΔ(WWWW)┐ (WWW

THE LEVER MARKINGS

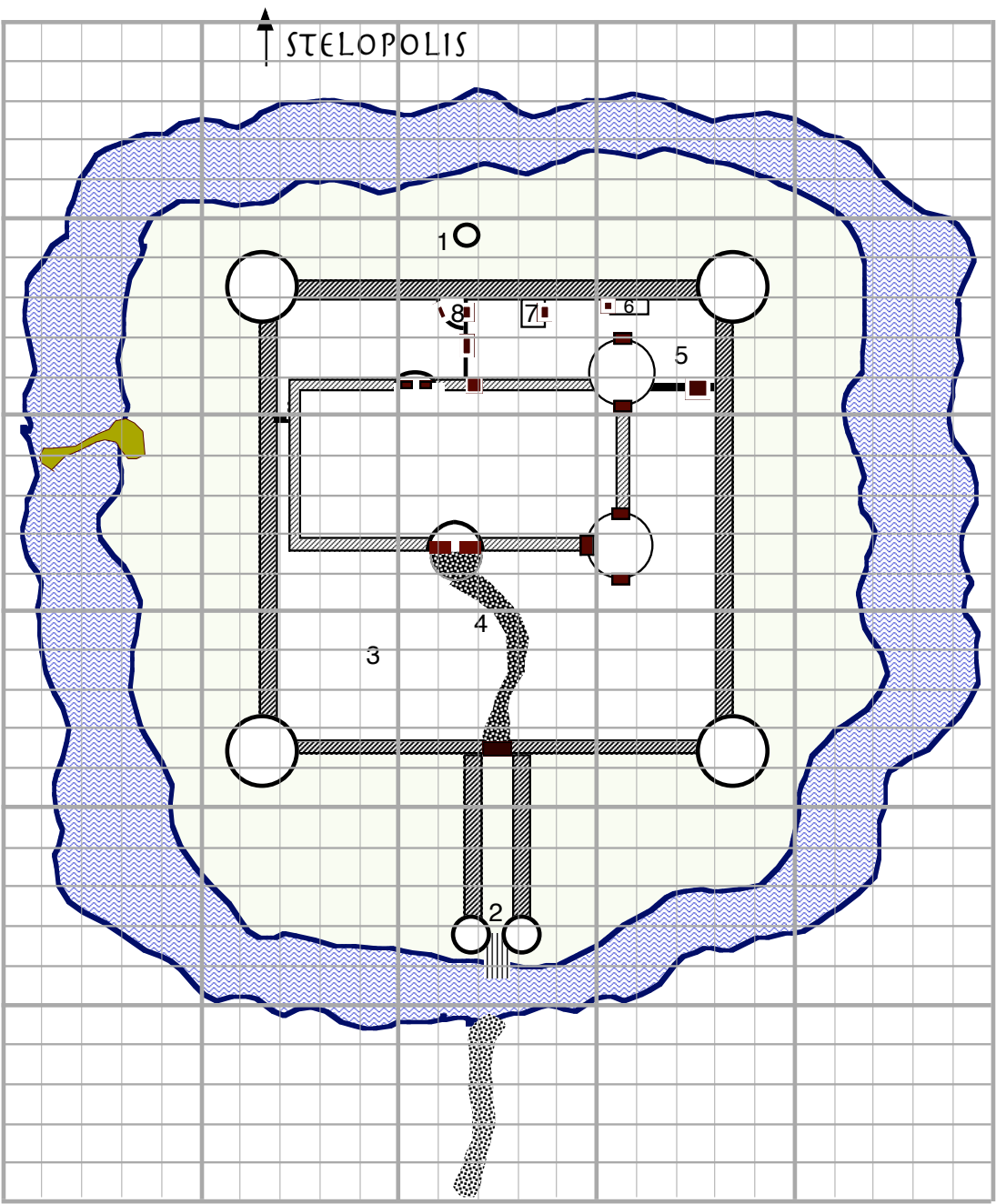
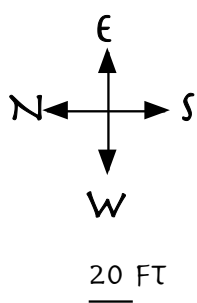


MAPS

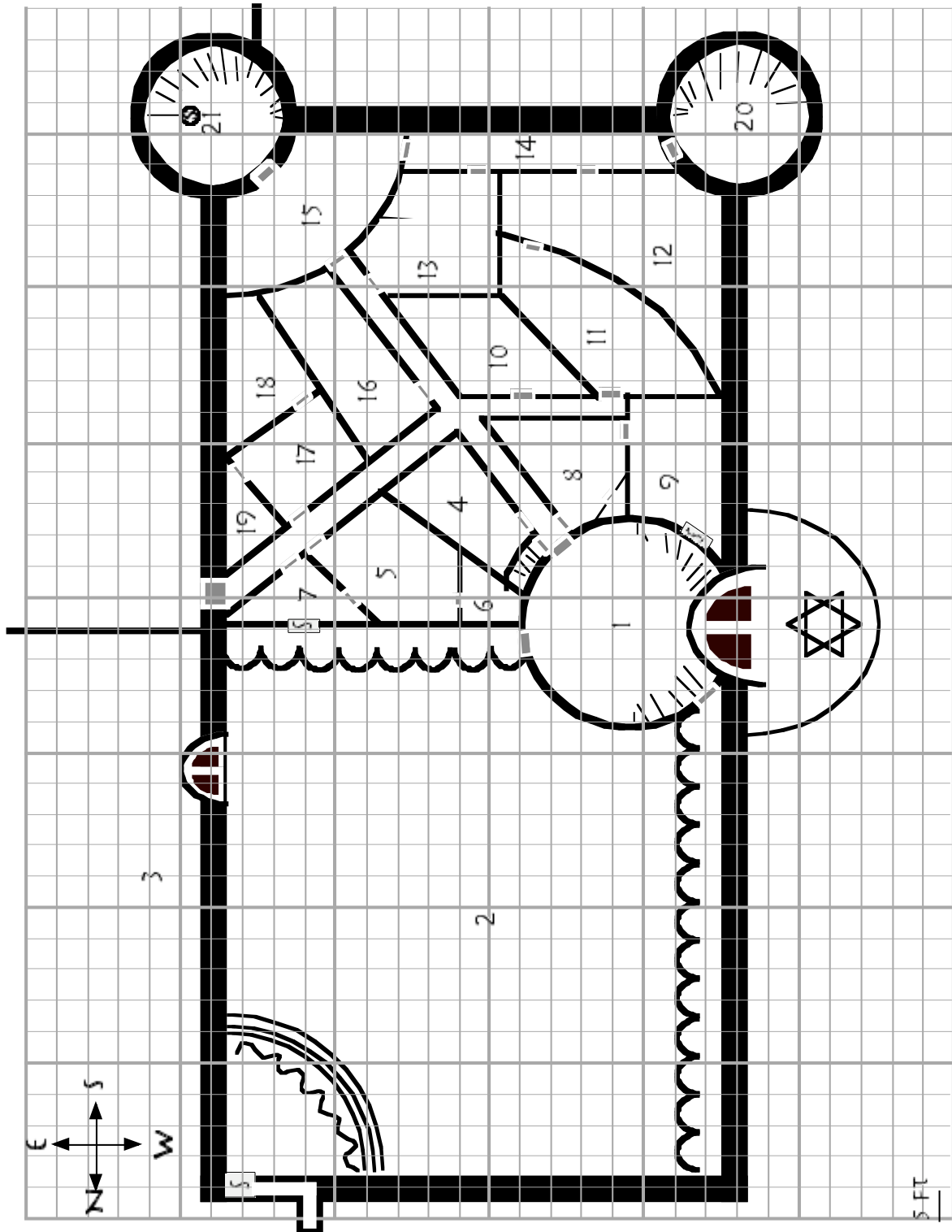
THE DEEP FOREST



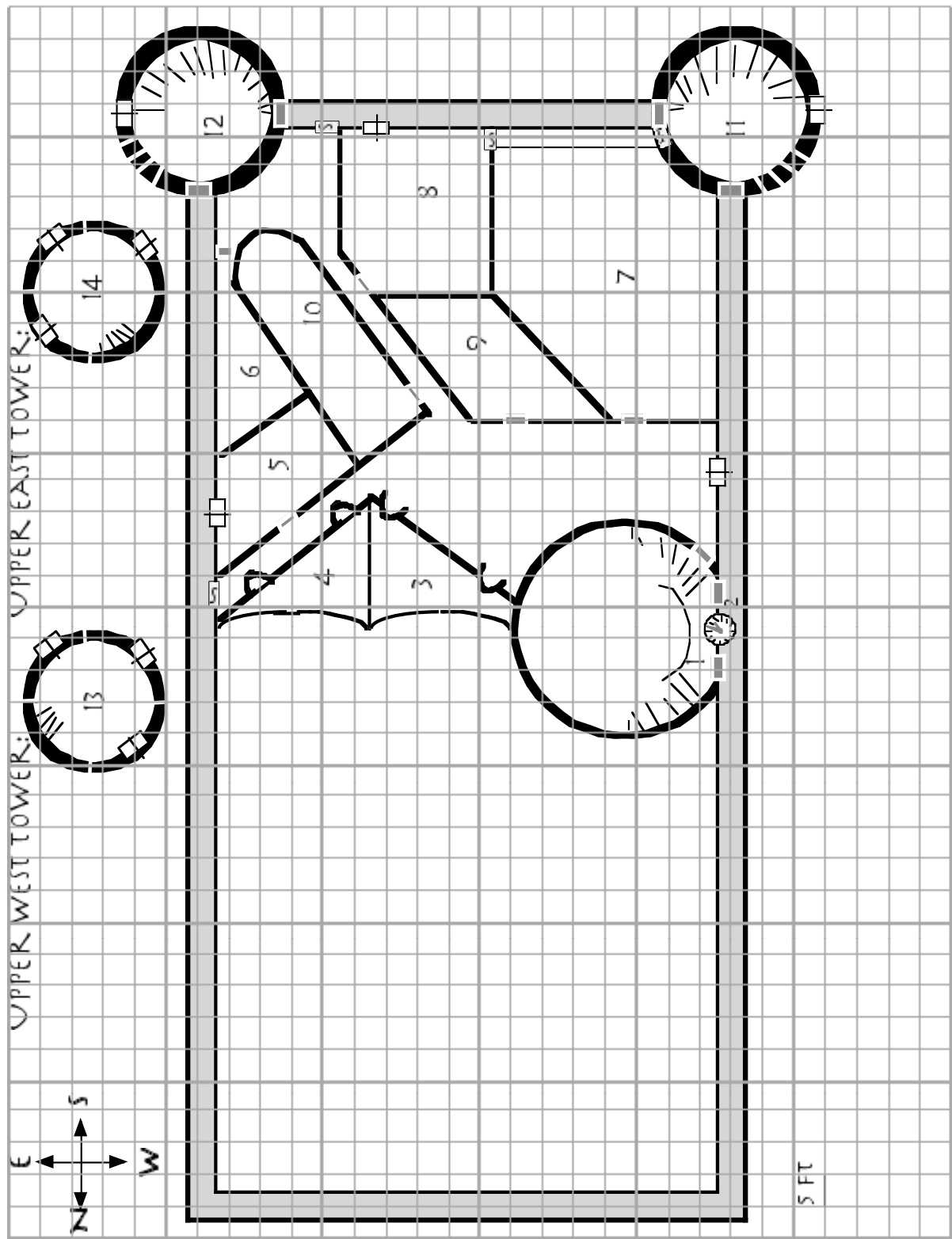
KRISTAGNA



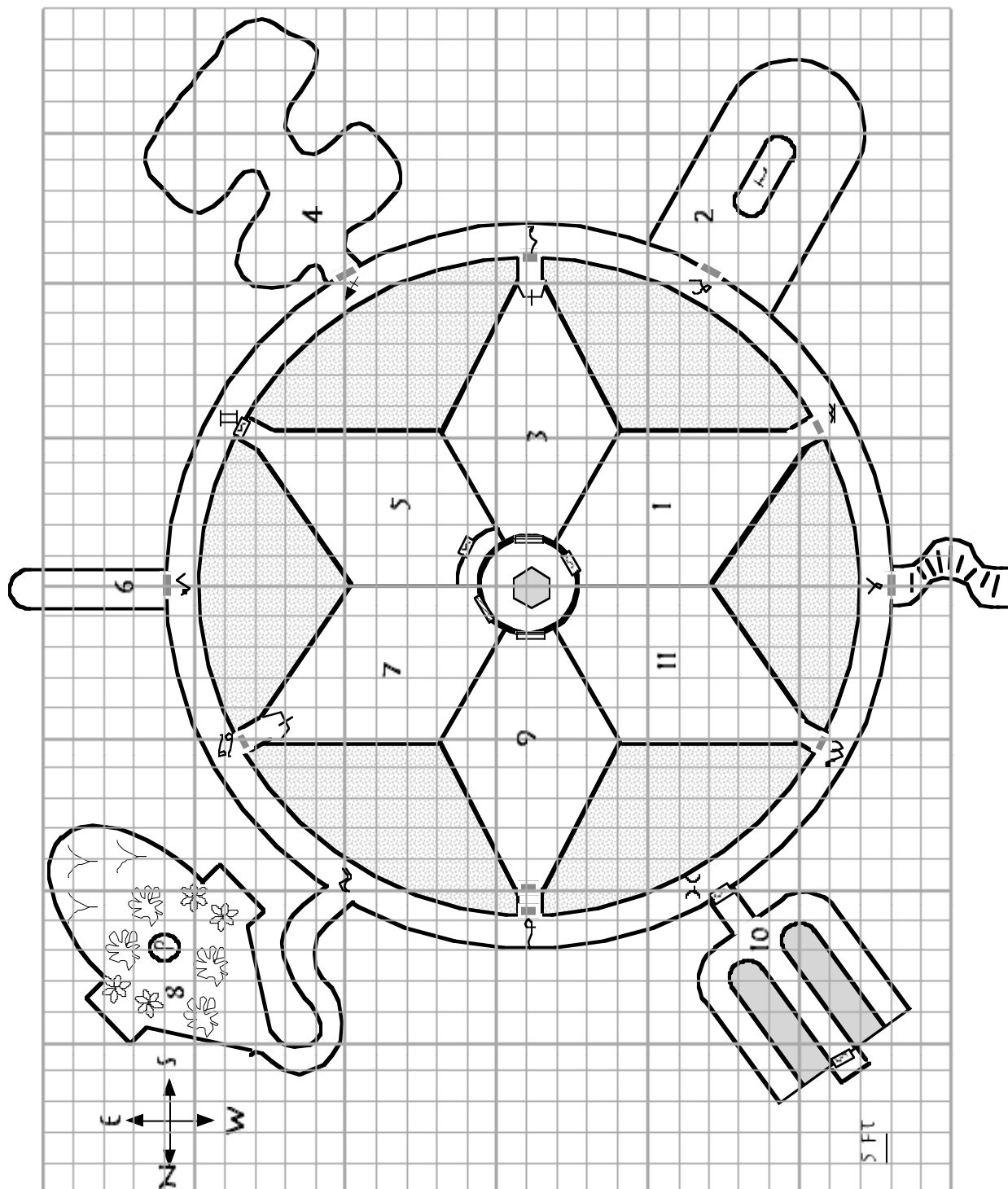
The First Level



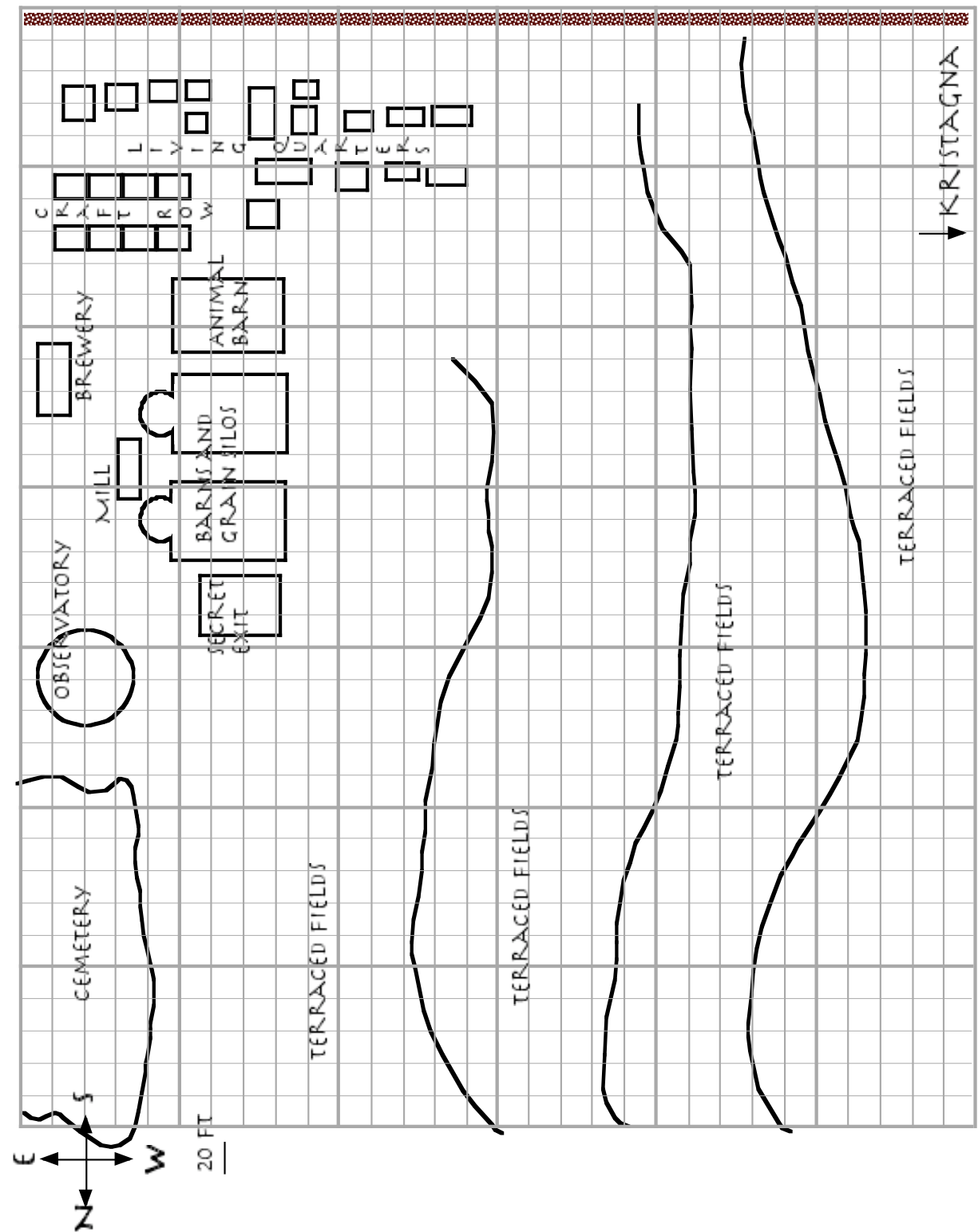
The Second Level



The Dungeon Level



STELOPOLIS



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THE LOST ASTRONOMERS

The mountains of West Highland are dotted with the ruins of lost scholarly orders. The Astronomers, in the Deep Forest south of the Leather Road, have been silent for a hundred years, unheard from since the goblin wars that so devastated Highland. Only vague references remain to taunt treasure hunters and spell seekers.

The Deep Forest is a dangerous place, home to many strange creatures. Only adventurers of stout heart and cunning can hope to penetrate the forest and return alive.