

# The Haunted Fort

An Oathbound Eclipse Adventure

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# The Haunted Fort

AN OATHBOUND ECLIPSE ADVENTURE

For 4-6 characters, level 1 to 3

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OATHBOUND/ECLIPSE: Core Components of the Oathbound game setting can be found in “Oathbound Seven”, the Oathbound Core Book for the Pathfinder RPG. Eclipse-oriented components of the setting are located in the book “Oathbound Eclipse”. Both books are available from Epidemic Books via our website.

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First Edition, February 2011



TO ARMS! TO ARMS! TO ARMS!  
CALLING ALL INTREPID  
**WARRIORS!**

THIS IS OUR HOUR OF NEED!

**REWARD OFFERED!**

WE COME IN SUPPLICATION AND ON BENDED KNEE,  
OUR VILLAGE IN TURMOIL!

**WE SEEK AID & SUCCOR!**

WE SEEK PROTECTION FROM RAIDERS AND  
THE RETURN OF OUR STOLEN FOLK.

**SUCCESS WILL BE RICHLY  
REWARDED!**

INTERESTED PARTIES ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED TO REPORT  
TO THE INN OF THE VIGILANT DOVER IN BLACKHOLD,  
BEARING THIS NOTICE AT ALL SPEED!!

**ALL COURAGEOUS MERCENARIES &  
VAGABONDS WELCOME TO APPLY!**

## PRELUDE

An independent village in the wilds of Eclipse is being terrorized by unknown forces. For months now, dozens of villagers, nearly thirty, have gone missing, and no trace of them has been found. Mostly young men and women have been taken, but several families have had their children stolen as well. The watchmen of the village have not succeeded in protecting the townsfolk, and the town fathers are growing increasingly restless. A call has been put out to any intrepid mercenaries who are willing to come and try to help the village out of its dire predicament.

The raiders have become increasingly bold in their endeavors of late, and nearby villages are also now reporting that they have been struck by the kidnappers. Always attacking in the thickest mists, the raiders appear stealthy and well-trained, but the most recent reports indicate that they are resorting to greater violence in their most recent incursions.

The village of Blackhold has suffered the most attacks, and many of the townsfolk are grumbling that the entire village should pack up and move. The call to help instructs any willing party to meet with the Lord Mayor at the inn of the village to discuss the situation.

The village is isolated in a thick forest, and the approaches to it are difficult to ascertain in the ever-present dark. The main road leading to the village undulates and curves, up and down small valleys and hillocks. A modest crag rises some distance out from the village as one approaches from the south; it also is thickly wooded, but its crown seems to be cleared, and a crumbling structure can be faintly seen when the moon is out as the group approaches the main gate.

## BACKGROUND

A young ancient has discovered an ancient secret that he is using to start his own goddust mine. With this dust he hopes to become rich enough to both prolong his own life and to start his own guild within Baradume. The secret is an arcane machine located deep in a hidden dungeon of a crumbling fortress, just outside the village of Blackhold. The machine draws its power from the will of mortal slaves, who are attached to it via mystical cables. Slaves must be fitted with an artificial heart in order to interface with the machine, ensuring that they are as dependent upon the

machine as it is on them. A strange talisman acts as the key to the machine, controlling its movements and providing the owner an unbreakable mind control over those augmented with the machine's foul fittings.

The haunted fort itself sits not far from the village of Blackhold. In ages long past, it had been the seat of the town lord, a mad wizard who built the machine and secretly enslaved many of his subjects in order to prolong his own life. Upon the eventual death of the wizard, his castle fell into disrepair and the secrets of his machine were lost. A year or so ago though, his diary turned up for sale in a local marketplace, eventually falling into the hands of the young ancient. Its encoded writing hid its secrets from all but the most persistent, but after several months of laboring, the ancient eventually cracked the cipher.

The ancient investigated the crumbling fort and discovered the machine, as well as secret tunnels leading to and from the village of Blackhold. The ancient has now set up a band of mercenaries in the old fort (under the false promise of immortality) and himself splits his time between the fort and Baradume (or Erebus, or wherever). In order to provide the machine with slaves, the ancient and his men have raided the neighboring villages. The stolen villagers have been fitted with artificial hearts and bonded to the machine. The talisman that controls the machine is the last piece to the puzzle, and the ancient desires to find it. It is actually currently located in the village of Blackhold and has been used as the town seal for the last few decades.

However, despite its recent rehabilitation, the Fort is forever scarred by cruel and ancient energies and still has a few dark secrets of its own left to reveal. The Fort is truly haunted, and solving the current situation is not going to undo this damage.

## SETTING UP

While the Haunted Fort may be used by anyone running an Eclipse or Oathbound campaign, this adventure is intended as an introduction to Eclipse, and is deliberately not set in any particular location. GMs should feel free to place the village of Blackhold anywhere they like on the Eclipse domain map so as to best coincide with where you would like the campaign to start from or lead to. Suggested locations might be:

1. Just to the North of Erebus. This is ideal for parties who have adventured elsewhere on the Forge and have just made their first trip to the Cauldron.
2. On the North shore of the Sea of Ink, near the mouth of the Dardan or the Fal. This may be a better spot for parties starting out from Baradume or the Werran lands.
3. Between Highmark and Baradume. This allows parties to be based in Highmark or Baradume.

Before beginning the adventure, you will want to read the Oathbound Eclipse book and familiarize yourself with the setting. Decide where you want to set the adventure and present the party with the hook, which has been provided in the form of a poster. Introduce the poster however you see fit; it may be placed on a public bulletin board, posted in an inn, passed by a stranger, found on a dead body, blowing in the wind, or so on.

The first part of the adventure is getting to Blackhold. That part is not covered here. If you don't want to play it out, you can put Blackhold closer to the starting point. Otherwise, you'll want to read up on traveling in the wilds of Eclipse; there are few roads here and plenty of opportunities for adventure. There may even be some adventures to be had in locating Blackhold in the first place. Once the party arrives in Blackhold though, the published adventure begins—turn to section A to run through it. Note that text offset in square brackets is meant to be read aloud to the players.

This is not a long campaign. Depending on your play style, the adventure can be finished in a single night, or it may take a few sessions to complete. You may want to change some of the details of the adventure in order to set up your Eclipse campaign or tie in to other adventures you have planned. The villain is purposely vague. He has been presented as a senior guild officer from an unnamed guild in Baradume, but he could easily be a werran wanting to compete with Lanerin, or a rich merchant from Erebus hoping to make a start in the big city. He could even be a disgruntled Highmarker intending to stir up trouble in that part of the domain. It's all up to you.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party's attention is piqued by a mysterious poster asking for rashers to help out a small village in distress. Whether attracted by the reward or the adventure, the party sets out to the village. Once the party arrives at Blackhold they are ushered into the local tavern to meet with the lord Mayor. Here they are told of the town's sad plight and are introduced to the rumors surrounding the talisman. While they are talking to the mayor, raiders enter the village, and the party has the opportunity to fight them off. Once the dust has settled, the consensus is that the villains are based out of the crumbling fort a mile or so down the old road from the town. Without further ado, the party sets out to the Fort.

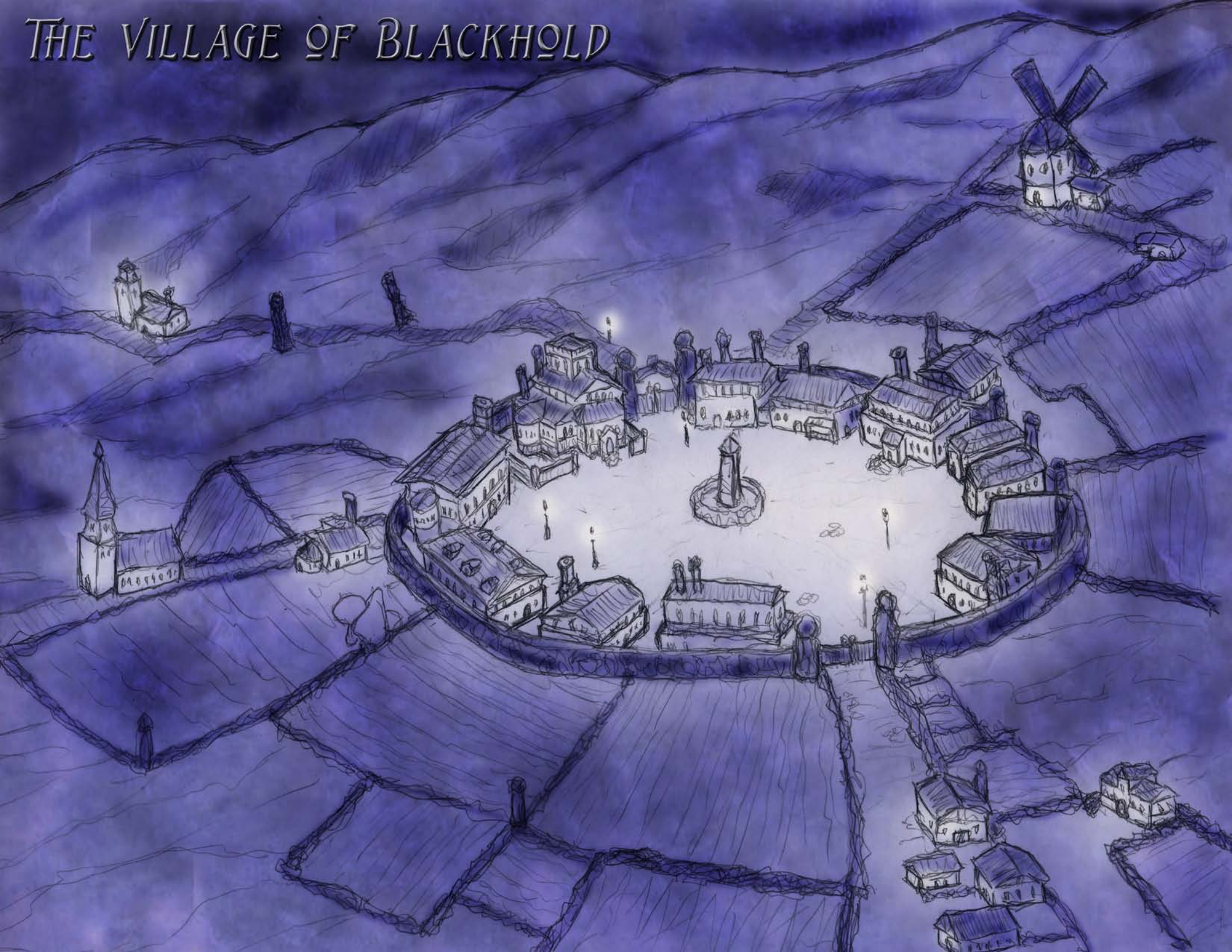
The road to the Fort is not long, but is not without its pitfalls, and showcases some of the difficulties of traveling in Eclipse. When the party reaches the ancient fortress, it appears mostly abandoned, and it takes some exploration before the bandits' hideout can be located.

Once the party invades the hideout, they will fight their way through to the machine room, discovering along the way many of the foul details of the townsfolk's situation. The party enters the machine room by surprise, and discovers the villainous ancient high above, inspecting the progress. A fight ensues, and if the party is clever, they can turn the tide in their advantage, causing the ancient to flee and abandon his men. Once the machine room is secured, the party faces the difficult task of returning the missing townsfolk to their families and collecting their reward. From here, what justice is to be brought to the escaped villain depends upon the party's wishes.

## SCALING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure as written is designed for 4-6 first level characters. Throughout the adventure alternate stats are provided for scaling encounters to level 2 and level 3. If your party is level 2 or 3 or is more powerful than most, use the appropriate alternate stats. If you find the adventure is too easy or too hard, you can scale it up or down as needed as you go.

# THE VILLAGE OF BLACKHOLD



## PART A – THE VILLAGE OF BLACKHOLD

The village is a typical small settlement of Eclipse. It consists of a circular stone wall encompassing a single circle of buildings around a village square in the center. Buildings are stone and/or oak in construction and are mostly built right up against each other and the town's wall. There are two gates into the town. The party will approach from the main gate, and will head off to the fort from the back gate. A dirt road leads from the main gate to a larger coastal village about two miles off. There are settlements along this road, and it is fairly safe. There are also a number of farms and houses just outside of the village walls. The old road to the fort is less used and passes over more treacherous terrain.

Keep in mind at all times that Eclipse is always dark. Two days a month there is moonlight, but beyond this, it is difficult to see much in the distance. Even when the moon is out, mists can limit visibility. Maps are provided without mists for obvious reasons, but don't let this mislead you. Because of the ever present darkness, time is not measured in Eclipse. Regardless of when the party arrives, the village will be found in the state presented in section A.

The village main gate (A1) is at the top of the village map. Locations continue clockwise around to the largest building, which is the Lord Mayor's house (A15), just to the left of the gate. Use the road map for the approach to and from the village.

### A1. VILLAGE MAIN GATE

This is the main entrance of the village of Blackhold. It is closed and guarded.

[The forest road bends slightly, and the main gate of the village comes into view. The gate is approximately 10 feet high and 8 wide, barely enough for a wagon to pass through. It is crudely made of hewn logs lashed together with what appeared to be leather cord. A stone wall made of flagstones and daub-and-wattle cement extends on either side of the main gate, rising approximately 7 feet high. A heavy iron chain hangs across the gate mouth approximately 4 feet from the ground. Standing on either side of the gate mouth are two grizzled gatekeepers or watchmen.

They are very threadbare in appearance, as though their duties and accoutrements were hastily assembled, and they give off an air of nervousness. The two watchmen are holding lit lanterns, and there are also torches mounted on each of the gateposts.]

The two watchmen will call the group to halt and question their business in the area at this time. If the group wishes to inform them of their true intent, they will ask how they came about this information, and the call to assist can be produced. The group will then be admitted with good wishes and a palpable sense of relief in their demeanor. The watchmen instruct the group to seek out the Lord Mayor in the tavern. If the party elects not answer the guards' questions or chooses not to divulge the true reason for their arrival, the watchmen will attempt to bar entry into the village with word and deed.

#### Encounter

CR 1-3 – Two Town Watchmen

*Town Watchman* – Pale Human Fighter, Level 1 (S 13, D 12, C 14, I 10, W 12, Ch 9) Speed 30; HP 10; AC 18 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +3 Longsword (1d8+1/19-20x2); Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; CMB +2, CMD 13; *Feats*: Alertness, Power attack, Weapon focus; *Gift*: Funny; *Skills*: Intimidate +3, Perception +11, Perform (comedy) +3, Sense motive +3; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

CR: 1/3; XP: 135

### A2. VILLAGE MAIN SQUARE

The village of Blackhold is small and centered in a single circle around an open central square.

[Upon entering the main gate, your group steps onto the village's modest main square. Paved with large flagstones with glow-moss growing between the many cracks, this is a quintessential small-town square (or circle, more accurately). It is approximately 60 feet across. In the center of the square is a tall, stone monument approximately 15 feet high and taking the form of a plinth topped by a representation of a dragon-like creature. There is carved writing on the base of the monument. Several benches are set about the square in a seemingly random way, and large planter pots

of glow-ivy are set at the corners of the square and in a circular formation at the base of the monument; here the ivy appears to be growing up a branch of white wood. As a result, the square is relatively well-lit, and in addition, several of the shop fronts that look onto the square have burning torches mounted. The entirety of the town square is fronted by shops and inns and taverns, all of them two storeys high, although none of these establishments appears to be enjoying great custom at the moment. From this vantage point, your group can see twelve doorways, most of which have signs hanging above them. The square appears deserted, but sounds can be heard from inside some of the far buildings.]

If the monument is examined, the writing is revealed to commemorate deaths of certain townsfolk in skirmishes of recent years. The monument itself is old, and the dragon-creature is a tusked wyvern, the town's mascot. The white-looking branch is actually ivory, and looks to once have graced the head of an unusually large creature. There are small stacks of flat copper-like discs stacked or lain upon the base of the plinth. If the discs are examined, they are enumerated at 27, and appear to have had either crude pictures or names scratched onto them with a knife or nail. These are flimsy memorials of the missing townsfolk. Some of the benches have the remains of tea-candles upon them.

If the party wishes to examine any of the shops that are closed, they will be unable to enter without breaking in, which will attract the attention of the watch, who continue to observe them from the gate. If the party wishes to enter any of the shops that are open, their arrival will make the shopkeepers nervous and not inclined to answer questions or provide details.

The buildings fronting the square, from the main gate and counting clockwise, are:

### **A3. BRIAN CROVERTY. CANDLER**

The candle and waxwork shop is closed. The candler is one of the missing.

### **A4. MERCANTILE: THE OLD TINDER BOX**

The dry goods store has a "closed" sigil hanging in its front window, but

light can be seen within, as well as people moving about.

If the party wants to wait about for a few hours, the shop will eventually open, and basic supplies for the road (such as rope, packs, etc.) can be purchased here for a reasonable (but slightly above market) price. The Old Tinder Box also specializes in pipes and rare tobaccos.

### **A5. LODGING: THE BONNIE PALLET**

This modest lodging-house has several candles in the front window and glow-ivy growing on its outer wall. Through the window, a man can be seen seated at the front desk, watching the group intently. On the upper floor, several rooms are dark, but one has light shining out its window.

Rooms are available here for a reasonable price, 10 gold per person per quarter-moon. Those staying for shorter periods of time are better off at the inn.

### **A6. MERCANTILE: THE BENDED BOW**

This hunting and tackle shop is closed. Through its window can be seen an inventory of bows and long spears.

### **A7. DAMON ABERSTRATH. FLETCHER**

The fletcher's shop is closed. This shop has no windows.

### **A8. UNKNOWN**

This doorway has no markings or sign. It is likely a private residence.

### **A9. INN: THE SIGN OF THE VIGILANT DOVER**

This is the liveliest building on the square. Light is pouring from all the windows, even the upper storey. Above the door is a sign depicting a dover's head with exaggerated eyeballs. The noise of subdued conversation and eating/drinking can be heard from within. It is here that the group is supposed to meet the town fathers this evening.

When the party enters, go to part B.

### **A10. THE BLACK GATE**

This gate is shorter and plainer than the main gate, though just as wide.

It is older and stained black with soot and age. Only one guard waits beside it. It opens onto the road to the old fort. Near the black gate stands the town's well.

### **A11. GROVER & INKWHITE. MONEYCHANGERS**

The moneychanger's shop is open, but there is no custom. A bald man seated at a large banker's desk in the front window is also staring most interestedly at your party. Beside him on the desk is a large stack of paper.

The moneychanger can provide any kind of service involving coins or gems. He is also willing to purchase jewelry or other valuables. The town is poor, so items above 5,000 gp in value cannot be liquidated here. The moneychanger takes between 5 and 10%, depending upon his mood and how well he perceives the party.

### **A12. MERCANTILE: ABIGAIL NEWFISH. SUNDRIES AND WHATNOTS**

This sundries shop is closed.

This shop specializes in more unique and odd items than the Old Tinder Box. It also carries used equipment. Household goods are available here for the locals.

### **A13. CUSTOMS HOUSE AND LAND REGISTRAR'S OFFICE**

This office has gold leaf lettering in its window proclaiming its identity, unique on the square. It is closed. This building is closest to the main gate as one enters the village. A sign posted on a large wooden plank states, "All Travelers Are Requested To Stop And Declare At Customs Office Before Proceeding Into Town." A large lockbox stands beside the door, but is currently open and empty.

If asked about this, the watchmen relate that strangers to the town are supposed to register their presence, but that the customs official is currently asleep. The lockbox is provided for visitors to deposit their weapons while in the town, but is currently not in use now that the town is on high alert (no one wants to be caught defenseless in the case of a raid). The customs house also handles the collection of the taxes that fund what little money the village has. The land registrar resolves disputes between farmers and locals over borders. The "are requested to" part of the sign

seems to effectively have dodged Colopitiron's ban on laws being written down.

### **A14. TAVERN: THE MIGHTY MOLICE**

This tavern is open, but most of the custom of the town seems to be at the Vigilant Dover. Through the window can be glimpsed a handful of patrons seated at a bar, drinking from large steins. Above the door hangs a sign depicting a molice standing victorious, sword in hand, over a werewolf.

The patrons of the Molice are mostly local farmers who don't take well to strangers. Most come here to get drunk, and a few like to tell tall tales. There are some knife and dart targets here as well as a nine-pin and cheese setup.

### **A15. LIAM CONOVER-CONROY. LORD CONSTABLE & LORD MAYOR**

This building serves as the town hall and court. One of the front-facing windows has iron bars on it. A paper hung in the window reads, "Report Your Missing Here." Another reads, "Keep Vigilant, We Endure." This office is closed and dark. Through the window can be seen a long counter littered with paper and quills.

### **PART B - INTERIOR: THE SIGN OF THE VIGILANT DOVER**

This is the town's inn. The Lord Mayor is in here and will provide the party the information they need to set off on their adventure. Use map B for the interior of the inn.

[The interior of the inn is a large, sparsely-furnished room. The floorboards are worn and covered in a light film of dirt. There are three long tables set up to your right, able to seat approximately 10 patrons each. There is a large stone fireplace set into the right-hand wall, and a couple of large stuffed chairs are placed before the fire, which is roaring, making the entire room seem a bit stifling. One chair is unoccupied, but in the other is seated Liam Conover-Conroy, the Lord Constable and Mayor, who sent out the call to assist, and who you are scheduled to meet this evening.

On the left-hand side of the door are four small, square tables, each with an incomplete set of chairs. A pair of dovers sits drinking ale at one table. There is a threadbare rug before the door. A long bar stands ahead of your group, and a large, burly man with pronounced whiskers stands behind it, spitting onto a filthy rag and polishing glassware and cutlery. Inspection of the room indicates it is approximately 60 feet by 30 feet. There is a hanging rack for coats and such mounted on the wall on the left-hand side of the door. Beyond the coat rack, a set of wooden stairs leads upwards, presumably to the inn's rooms for rent. A series of glow-lamps hangs from the rafters, which are approximately 10 feet high. On each long table are several lit candles; on the small square tables are bowls of freshly-picked glow-ivy leaves, floating in water. These, coupled with the fire and the candles, give the room a sickly, orange-greenish light. The walls are bare, but for a mounted and stuffed were-elk head, beneath which is a small brass plaque affixed to the stone of the fireplace. The room has two large windows which look out onto the square. Several kegs are stacked in the far corner behind the bar. Assorted other patrons, mostly human, are seated at the long tables, engaging in conversations and eating.]

The barman is a walrus-like human called Frunt Butwin. He will continue to polish the glasswares and cutlery as the group enters, nodding in a perfunctory way to each. If asked, he will indicate to the group the Lord Mayor.

The two dovers sit placidly, drinking their ales. They are local farm hands and brothers. The group's arrival does not appear to interest them much, but they give the group all a once-over. If spoken to, they will be reticent but polite, not particularly interested in engaging outsiders. However, if there is a dover in the group, they will be slightly more friendly but no more interested in conversing. They will be sure to sniff rears though.

The other patrons at the long table include seven humans and one camo. Most of the humans are locals and will barely acknowledge the group's presence; if approached, they will shrug them off. The camo is a wandering bard who is happy to speak to the party of their travels. He has just finished performing, and says he will play again after his meal.

The Lord Constable and Lord Mayor, Liam Conover-Conroy, sits dozing lightly before the fire. He is a pale human, in his later middle-age. He will waken with a start as the group approaches. His demeanor is wearied, tinged with a sense of relief. He wears a long, grey coat and has a signet ring upon his right hand. A chain around his neck hangs beneath his shirt. He will welcome the group to his village and thank them gravely for agreeing to the task set out. If asked for details, he will tell the group that twenty-seven villagers have been taken in the last moon, with no traces left behind. The kidnapped villagers seem to have no common characteristics, although they are mostly young. No sign of their fate has come back to the village, and there have been no surviving witnesses to the attacks by the raiders. The Lord Mayor will tell, if asked or not, that strange sounds have been heard in the wilds outside the village in the past months, ghastly sounds that he admits to fearing.

Also, whether asked or not, the Mayor mentions an old superstition of the village, regarding a curse placed on the townsfolk by an evil sorcerer in ancient times. The superstition pertains to evil spirits who will haunt the village and spread fear and discord in their times of plenty. If asked for details regarding the source of the superstition, the Lord Mayor will become dismissive and make some excuses regarding "old-wives tales". But he will add that the village had been particularly lucky in recent years, owing in his and others' opinions to an opportune visit paid to the village by a wandering trader who sold to the Lord Mayor an artifact from ancient days that was regarded as a talisman against evil and a boon to its owners. Whether asked or not, the Lord Mayor will confide that this artifact is hidden in his office at the town hall. Again, if pressed for details regarding the artifact, he will become embarrassed and dismissive, but half-heartedly so; he appears to believe, however reluctantly, in the power of the talisman.

The Mayor will also mention, in passing, that the evil sorcerer who cursed the village had had his headquarters in the old fort at the top of the crag outside the village. If asked for details about the fort, he will tell that the fort is ancient, older even than the village itself, but is now in ruins, and has been that way for ages. The fort, he says, has served as a sheltering place for wanderers and rogues in the past, a camp for those passing through who wish to avoid the village or the villagers. If asked, he will report that campfires have been seen lit in the fort in past weeks.

The Lord Mayor will express his belief that the raiders have made it their redoubt, but due to their skill at killing and the shroud of mystery and superstition that surrounds the old fort, none of the villagers have been willing to approach it to see if this is so.

After imparting this information, the Lord Mayor will offer to purchase supper for the group. If they agree to partake, a decent if plain fare is served by Frunt. If not, the Lord Mayor will invite them to rest before the fire and tell him of themselves. The Lord Mayor will be offended if this is also refused and will become brusque. If they decline to illumine the Lord Mayor regarding themselves, he will become surly and begin a long-winded harangue regarding the flaws and faults of outsiders, which will draw the attention of the other patrons, who will seem to agree with the Lord Mayor's opinions whole-heartedly and appear more than willing to defend these principles violently.

Toward the end of the meal (or the harangue, whichever is chosen), from outside the inn can be heard screams and breaking glass—the sounds of fighting. An explosion is heard. The other patrons scramble for cover or to peer out the windows. If one of the party goes to the window, outside will be seen smoke and fire pouring from the Lord Mayor's office and several of the other buildings on the square. A flutter of townsfolk are scurrying to and fro, yelling for help. Three humanoid figures dressed in black robes proceed to slaughter these townsfolk with long scimitars. Other black-clad figures are seen emerging from the town hall, and meet up with their compatriots at the monument. If the party elects to leave the inn and fight the black-clad raiders, the raiders will attempt to flee. If they elect to watch the festivities from the safety of the inn, they will see them soon escape through the main gate.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – Four Raiders

CR 2 - Six Raiders

CR 3 - Eight Raiders

*Raiders* – Pale Human Fighter, Level 1 (S 14, D 12, C 12, I 9, W 8, Ch 12) Speed 30; HP 10; AC 17 (Scale mail); Atk +3 Scimitar (1d6+2/18-20x2); Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; CMB +3, CMD 14; *Feats*: Dodge, Power attack, Weapon focus; *Gift*: Chameleon; *Skills*: Intimidate +5, Perception +7,

Stealth +5; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

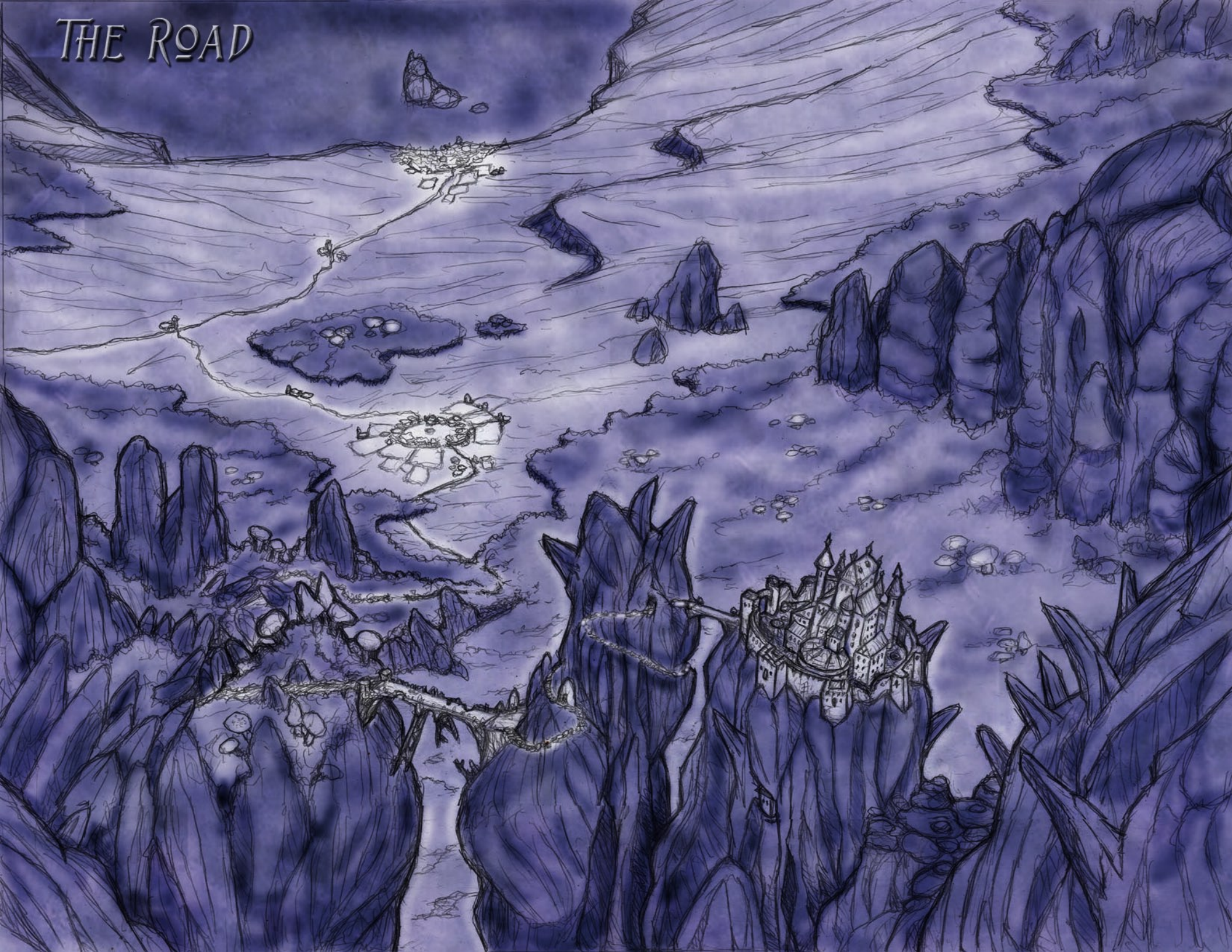
CR: 1/3; XP: 135

Not all the raiders engage the townsfolk. Regardless of whether the party fights or not, some of the raiders will escape, these likely heading the back way out of the mayor's house. After the departure of the raiders, the Lord Mayor will become agitated and fearful and rush out from the inn and into the square to his office, begging the group to follow him. In the square are seen three dead bodies, easily identified as villagers. The two main-gate watchmen are also out of commission, one fatally. Following the Lord Mayor, he bursts into his office and utters a cry of horror as he discovers the utter destruction of the hiding place of the talisman, as well as its theft. The Lord Mayor is beside himself, now revealing himself as a much more superstitious man than he'd led to believe, and lamenting the oncoming doom of the village as a result of this calamity. The Lord Mayor begs the group to hie to the old fort and recover the talisman and his stolen folk, tears streaming down his face. He promises all the riches of the village and deeds of land, anything within his power to grant. He collapses weeping and is unable to speak further.

Inspection of the dead villagers reveals they were indeed killed by scimitar blows. Two are older males and one is a middle-aged dover woman. The raiders have also defiled the monument with what appears to be a hurled bucket of blood. The square is now filled with villagers struggling to contain the flames that are now engulfing the Customs House and are threatening to spread. The town hall's front is a rubble of stone and wood, but its fire has been extinguished.

At this point the party should set out to the fort. If they are tired or wounded from the fight, the Mayor will offer them free accommodation in the inn for one sleep. They can also stick around for a bit in order to purchase goods from the town's stores. However, the townsfolk are highly agitated, and the Mayor will pressure the party to hurry on their mission.

# THE ROAD



## PART C – THE ROAD TO THE OLD FORT

The road to the fort is dirt, but appears to once have been paved, with broken stones poking out of the ground here and there. The first quarter-mile or so of the road gets a fair amount of use from the neighboring farms, but once the party has left the region of the village, the road becomes rough, dark, and eerily quiet.

Any skilled trackers will be able to recognize that the road has seen some use in the past few months. The raiders that took the talisman appear to have come this way, but their tracks are faint, as if disguised, and disappear completely sometime before the bridge at C2.

Use the Road map for this section, and at this point, move on to area C1.

### C1. THE PATH LESS TAKEN

When the party leaves the region immediately surrounding the village, read them the following:

[The path is faint, as though unused for centuries. There is no glow-moss or glow lichen growing on the stones or plants beside the road. It is pitch-dark but for whatever light source you have brought. After several spans, the road begins to rise perceptibly. High stone spires thrust up from either side as the road leaves the flat ground and rises up the hillside. Some of these spires appear to have writing inscribed onto their faces. Grossly thick mushrooms grow at the bases of the stones, and thick bramble-weeds carpet the ground. Thorn bushes grow thick at the sides of the road where the spires push together, eventually meeting overhead to create a tunnel-like run.]

If the writing on the spires is examined, it will prove to be an indecipherable script, ancient and forgotten. If there is a vampire in the group, they may recognize it as a long-dead dialect of the Dark Tongue. The writing appears to be wardings protecting against vampires (though it is unclear whether it is still effective or not). The thorn bushes effectively prevent movement off the path; they are a poisonous invasive known as wire-screen, whose sap is a neurotoxin (see appendix).

### C2. BRIDGE

This old bridge is in a state of disrepair and may prove treacherous to cross.

[At this point, the tunnel made by the meeting of the spires breaks, and the road runs to a bridgehead. The bridge is carved of black stone, and spans a deep chasm whose bottom cannot be fathomed. The sound of rushing air—foul-smelling—and water comes up from below. This side of the bridgehead is distinguished by two large towers of smooth, black stone marbled with silver veins. At the base of each tower is a large pile of weathered bones, some easily identified as human and others as wild creatures or dover, camo, and so on. Some are still swathed in rags of decayed clothing. The bridge is approximately 100 feet long and 20 feet wide. There are visible cracks and holes in the bridge. From either side of the road can be heard in the brambles the sounds of the rustling of forest creatures.]

If the piles of bones are examined, a d6 can be rolled to determine what is found in each. Each pile takes approximately two rounds to search.

1. Rusty dagger; examination will reveal ornate carvings upon the hilt.
4. A pouch containing 17 copper coins, which are mostly worthless in this area.
  1. A metal amulet on a thick chain, in the shape of a Maltese cross.
5. A waterskin half-filled with what smells like strong wine. If drunk, the PC must make a Fort saving throw (DC 12 + 1 per ounce drunk) to combat nausea and not vomit profusely, as this skin contains highly fermented and sour moss wine. Affected characters are *sickened* for 2d4 hours.
2. A thigh-bone covered in silver, with what appears to be dried blood on both joints, indicating it has been used as a weapon. It also appears to be human in origin, and the silver has been dented with bite marks. This can be used as a club, and bypasses silver-based damage reduction.
3. A sheaf of yellowed papers that dissolve to dust when touched.

If the group dallies for more than 2 rounds, they will be attacked by the

rustling forest creatures. A pack of jagloms will emerge from both sides of the road. These are badger/wolverine-like creatures with powerful jaws and sharp teeth, long claws, and spiny grey-blue fur, with fiery red eyes. Their method of attack is to spring forward at their prey, attempting to knock them backwards (and possibly off the bridge). If anyone falls, the jagloms will retreat to climb down into the chasm and eat the victim at their leisure. If the party is weak, you may want to have the jagloms attack farther from the bridge so as to minimize the chance of death by falling. Also, those knocked over near the very start of the bridge may not fall all the way down, but only 20-30 feet onto the lower rocks of the cliff below (and into the wirescreen).

#### Encounter

CR 1 - Two Jagloms (new monster; see appendix for stats)

CR 2 - Four Jagloms

CR 3 - Six Jagloms



When crossing the bridge, each PC must roll percentage dice each round for 5 rounds to safely cross. Any roll over 90% indicates instability and will require a Reflex save (DC 12) to keep from falling into one of the cracks or holes. If the PC's tie themselves together with rope, they should be able to prevent anyone falling unless the rope breaks (1% chance per 10 lbs of the character's weight, half for good rope) or the falling character is quite heavy (neighbors must make a strength check to not get pulled in afterwards, DC is equal to 1/10<sup>th</sup> the falling character's weight in pounds, minus the resisting character's strength score). Those who fall from the bridge plummet for 500 feet before hitting either dark water (75%) or sharp rock (25%).

### C3. ROCKY PATH TO OLD FORT

From the bridge, the road slowly now climbs upwards towards the old fort.

[Across the bridge, the road narrows to a poorly-maintained dirt path, strewn with large rocks from the spires that once again burst upwards. The path twists steadily upwards, skirting the edge of a massive cliff. Below is only darkness and mist. Overhead can be heard the wings of flying creatures. Screeching is also heard from the tops of the spires. There are no mushrooms or plants growing beside the path at this point.]

If the group tarries at this point in the path for more than 3 rounds, there is a 40% risk of being struck by a falling boulder. These stones deal 2d6 points of damage. Anyone struck must make a reflex save vs. a DC equal to the damage dealt or plummet over the edge of the cliff. The cauldron floor is over 1,000 feet down.

### C4. THE STANDING STONES

At this location, the bandits have chained one of their number who has become possessed by the spirits of the fortress.

[After a small curve in the path, the party comes to a small clearing where three thick standing stones sprout upward approximately 8 feet high. On either side of the path, the ground falls steeply,

though the ground is again covered with thick mushrooms and vegetation. All three of the stones have iron shackles mounted into them and runes carved at their tops. One set of shackles is occupied by a skeleton of humanoid race, one is empty, and the last is occupied by a young, male, pale human. There is a pungent acidic smell in the air. On the far side of the clearing, the path is visible, and is seen to rise sharply as the crown of the hill is close by. You have now risen above the mists of Eclipse, and looking upward, the tops of the old fort's battlements can just be seen above the crowns of the spires. The sounds of the wind can be heard, along with a faint howling which seems to be coming from up the path, though far away. The young chained man also seems to be whimpering.]

If examined, the runes carved at the tops of the standing stones are seen to be in the same script as the writing carved onto the stone at the beginning of the path. The iron shackles are found to be bolted securely into the stone and cannot be pulled free. There is nothing of note on the ground around the unoccupied stone. The skeleton chained to the stone proves to be long dead and without any identifying characteristics or possessions, and the ground around its stone is also not noteworthy.

Upon examination, the young, chained man is still alive and breathing shallowly. He appears to be malnourished, and his bones are clearly visible through his skin. His hair has fallen out in clumps and his eyes are sunken into his face. His tongue lolls in his mouth and his teeth are blackened. He is stripped to a pair of leather trousers, barefoot. He is whimpering and trying to speak. He is shackled with his arms above his head, and around his neck is a thick heavy chain which bends him forward with its weight. Affixed to the chain is a sheet of metal upon which has been scratched the word "Befouled" in several languages, and a strange sigil. He smells terrible, of dried excrement, and has dried vomit down his front. If an attempt to speak to him is made, he will be unable to reply coherently. However, if an attempt is made to give him water or wine, he will successfully drink and his mind will clear sufficiently to answer rudimentary questions. The young man does not remember his name, or where he comes from, but he is terrified of something, and his eyes grow large and fearful when he looks up the path toward the old fort. Finally, he begs to be killed. If the party elects to oblige him, a

round pellet of solid gold, the size of a peach pit, will fall from his mouth as he dies.

If the party does not choose to put the boy out of his misery, he will scream violently with a strength he should not have and vomit forth a stream of bile, which will eat through armor and through skin to the bone (1d6 acid damage per round for 1d3 rounds – apply to armor first, hardness does not apply). Roll a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid being hit. Eventually, when the vomit stream stops, a round pellet of silver, the size of a peach pit, will fall out of his mouth and he will die. If attempted, the chain around his neck will prove to be too heavy to remove; also, the shackles cannot be undone. His body contains nothing of value or interest. If somehow the boy is released from his chains, he will fight to throw himself off of the cliff. If somehow an exorcism is performed, the boy will die from his physical condition.

#### Encounter

CR 1-3 – One Jerwin

*Jerwin* – Pale Human Rogue, Level 1 (S 7, D 14, C 3, I 12, W 10, Ch 11) HP 3; AC 13; Atk +3 Rock (1d3-2/x2); CMB -2, CMD 9; *Feats*: Dodge, Stealthy; *Abilities*: Sneak Attack +1d6, Trapfinding; *Gift*: Cheat death; *Skills*: Acrobatics +6, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +8, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +8; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

CR: 1/8; XP: 50

## C5. THE GATES OF THE OLD FORT

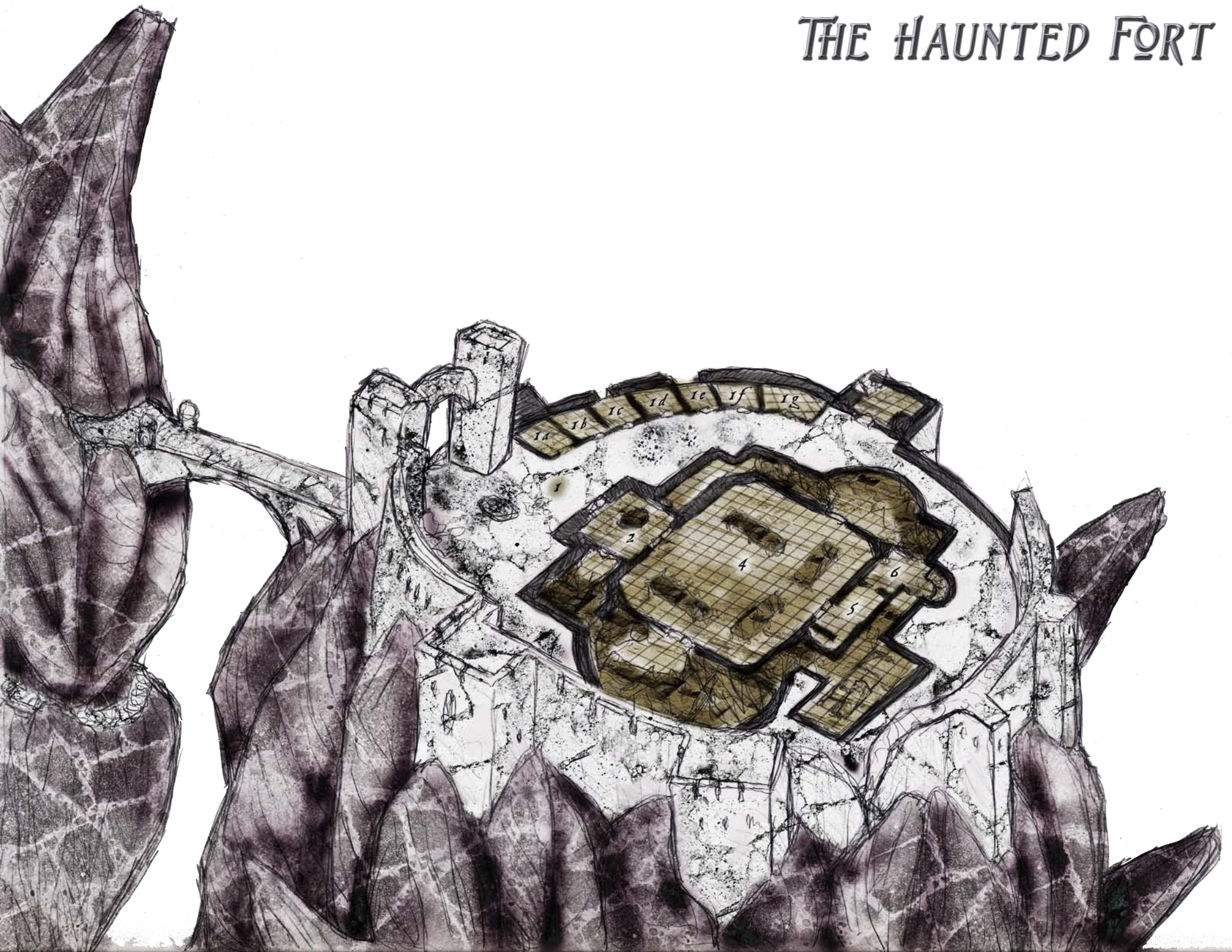
At the top of the crag, the fort can now be reached over a short bridge.

[The path winds through the thick mushrooms and vegetation until finally reaching a high point where nothing grows. A greenish mist hangs in the air, and through the last of the spires and branches can be glimpsed the old fort. Its battlements are in ruins, rising some 40 feet into the air. There are huge gaps in its stonework, and the towers are crumbling. The portcullis is twisted metal, easily entered. Piles of huge stone rubble lie at the base of the great walls. From here, the group can see easily through the gaps into the fort's interior, where some of the storehouses and other buildings seem to be somewhat more intact. The main

keep, just inside the crumbled walls, seems to be in good shape. Strange noises can be heard coming from inside the old fort, sounds of strange wailings and of metal scraping metal, but there is nothing seen moving about. A palpable sense of dread is in the air. Greenish fires are seen burning at intervals on the upper battlements, but are untended. There is no wind here, and it is noticeably warmer than it was in the village or on the path. Scorch marks mar the face of some of the stonework, but these appear to be the remnants of a very old assault. From the top of the hill, you can see far below in the mists what must be the lights of the village, gleaming green pinpricks against the blackness. There is a staggering drop all around the fortress wall, with a crudely made stone bridge crossing the empty space to the main gate.]

This bridge is sturdier than the lower one, but the winds are high here. Those walking across without precautions must make a Reflex save (DC10) or be blown towards the edge. A second Reflex save (DC10 also) is required to prevent toppling off into the chasm. The fall is fatal unless stopped somehow.

# THE HAUNTED FORT



## PART D – THE HAUNTED FORT

Map D shows the upper part of the fort. The old fort is in ruins, but the outer wall and the central keep are still mostly intact. Above on the battlements, greenish specters can be glimpsed out of the corners of the eyes, but disappear when looked directly at.

[The old fort has no visible detriment to your entry. Huge gaps in the stone walls allow easy access to the inner fort, and the portcullis has been rendered obsolete. There is nothing of interest or note on the ground before the fort gates. There are also no footprints or signs of habitation, other than the sounds and the green fires.]

**NOTE TO GM:** The upper floors and the castle walls are mostly impenetrable due to stone debris. Large gaps in the stonework make progress through the halls very dangerous and likely unrewarding. While the group may wish to explore this area, please note that it is not covered in this adventure, and anything encountered or found there is completely at your discretion.

Entrance through either the gap in the walls or the portcullis will lead to D1. If anyone climbs to where any of the green fires are seen burning, they appear to be the ghosts of signal fires of ages past. The fire is visible, yet eerie and transparent, and it gives off no heat, only a faint greenish light.

### D1. THE OLD FORT PARADE GROUND

The inner courtyard of the Fort is in disrepair, but has been used somewhat recently.

[Passing through the walls of the old fort, your group comes to the inner courtyard, or parade ground, of the castle. This area is large and open, approximately 70 feet square. It is paved with flat stones, many of which have been pried up and removed. Glow moss grows freely in the empty spaces. Situated in the center of the courtyard is the keep of the castle, a sturdy, stone tower approximately 30 feet high, with narrow windows at regular intervals going up it, and a thick, ornately-carved wooden door set in the center of the wall facing your group. Along the right-hand wall of

the courtyard is a long hitching post, to which is hitched a sickly looking severn, obviously ill and maltreated. The inner walls of the castle look out onto the courtyard, though most of the windows are too narrow for your group to see inside. The left-hand wall is a long portico that runs the entire length of the courtyard, doors set into it at regular intervals approximately every ten feet; these doors are of wood with iron bracing. The courtyard appears deserted but for the braying severn.]

There is nothing of value or interest on the courtyard floor. The doors on the portico are locked, but can be easily broken. There are seven doors, and if opened reveal:

- a. Empty cell, with nothing of interest or value.
- b. Cell, with iron cot and chamber pot and an old wooden plank with odd fittings on one end. Another door is set into the far wall, but this is locked and cannot be opened. If the lock is picked, the door opens into a short, narrow tunnel through the wall, ending in empty space. At the lip of the precipice is a gap and bracket that look like they might fit the mysterious plank. This is, of course, the execution chamber, with viewing space from the battlement above.
- c. Cell, with three iron cots and one chamber pot. In two of the cots are sleeping two kobolds each. The kobolds will defend their cell if awakened. The door to this cell is trapped, and the kobolds actually come and go through a hole in the wall. If the party's level is advanced, another hole will lead to cell 4, where the kobolds' bodyguard ("Big Al", the ogre) lives. Anyone opening the door is subject to a swinging axe trap coming down from the ceiling of the cell (Perception/Disable DC 20, Atk +10 melee, Id8+1/x3).
- d. Cell, with iron cot and heavy chest. The chest is iron, locked, and cannot be broken with weapons. If the lock is picked (DC 20), a coat of mail and iron dirk are found. The dirk is magical, but cursed. It applies a -4 penalty to all Stealth checks attempted by its wielder, though the wielder will believe the opposite.
- e. Cell, with iron cot and pile of filthy clothes in the corner. If examined, the clothes prove unremarkable, and the PC searching will smell like moldy laundry for d6 rounds. All within 10 feet

must make a Fort save (DC 12) or be *sickened* for 2d4 rounds.

- f. Cell, no furnishings, but a staircase opens in the far wall. Only a few steps down reveals a flooded chamber which cannot be accessed from here.
- g. Cell, with no furnishings and nothing of interest or value.

### Encounter

CR 1 – 4 kobolds (as per bestiary)

CR 2 – 6 kobolds (as per bestiary)

CR 3 – 6 kobolds and 1 ogre (as per bestiary)

If examined, the severn will be found to have open sores and patches of skin missing. It is very apparently in pain and great suffering. The severn is not able to put up a fight if attacked. It belongs to the valco in area E3, but has been greatly neglected. If it is healed (20 hp or more) and fed, it will show gratitude, and will consent to take its rescuers as its new owners. Severns are the iconic mounts of Eclipse, and are highly valuable treasures.

If examined, the door to the keep is found to be of very thick wood, carved in elaborate and beautiful scenes of battle and warfare. It is in excellent condition, given the apparent age and condition of the rest of the old fort. Its hinges are iron and not rusted. The door handle is also iron, and is triple locked. A *detect magic* spell will find no wardings or bindings on this door. The locks can be picked, and each has a DC of 25. If only two of three locks are picked, the door will slightly come off its top hinge, and can be pulled free with successful Strength roll (DC 15).

## D2. FOYER OF THE KEEP

The entrance to the keep has been cleaned enough of debris to be accessible.

[This room is spacious, approximately 25 feet by 25 feet by 10 high, and is dominated by a spiral staircase that stands in the center of the room, leading downward. A set of wooden doors stand ahead. The stairs upward are blocked and impassable due to stone debris. There are no windows in this room. There are no surviving decorations on the walls or floor, but the staircase appears sturdy.]

The down staircase leads to D3. The doorway, which opens easily, leads to D4.

## D3. COKE ROOM

This room is not on the map, but sits directly below area D2 and has nearly the same dimensions. It is the coal room of the old fort. It connects via a number of chutes to the dungeon level at E3. It has been used of late to shovel coal into the operation on the lower levels.

[This room is where coal for the fires of the keep was stored. Large iron bins containing chunks of coal and coal dust are lined against all four walls. The lower steps of the staircase are covered in fine coal dust, suggesting that the coal was thrown down from the foyer. There are eight bins, two on each wall. Several chutes are built into the right hand wall. This room is approximately 20 by 20 feet, and 10 high. Wheel tracks can be seen on the stone floor, but any coal cart is long gone. There is no egress but the stairs.]

The bins all contain coal pieces and coal dust; two bins also hold flat shovels. Nothing else of value or interest is found. There are three chutes going down, none of which are wide enough for full-size PCs to enter. Those peering down the chutes get the faint impression of some sort of flickering light far down. Halfling-size or smaller characters may attempt the chutes, but there is a 75% chance of getting stuck. If percentage is successfully rolled, and no rope is used, the PC will fall down the shaft and land in a corner of room E3 approximately 200 feet down. The fall deals 2d6 points of damage, and the occupants of room E3 are likely to deal more.

## D4. ENTRY HALL OF THE KEEP

The keep's great hall is largely intact. Unless one of the party bears a brand showing the mark of the master of the Fortress (the strange sigil marked on the sign at the standing stones), the guardians of the room will attack.

[This room is approximately 70 by 70 feet, 30 feet high. Long wooden tables and benches line either side of a central aisle, carpeted with faded purple fabric with green ivy design. The walls

are hung with captured flags and arms from days of glory past. In each corner of the room stands a giant suit of armor. There is a whirring, mechanical noise in the room. Otherwise, the room is empty. The remains of a meal for a small group lies on the first table on the left side of the aisle. Large goblets of water and wine, plates of bones and husks litter the tabletop. The far wall opens on a long hallway.]

As the group enters the room, the whirring grows slightly louder. As the party progresses, reaching the first tables, the suits of armor become animated. With lower-level parties, some of the knights will be too old to function, and will grind and topple over. The clockwork knights advance slowly, but with increasing sounds of whirring and ramping up. If the party engages the clockwork knights with melee or ranged weapons, the ensuing racket will alert anyone in the upper part of the fort. If the knights are doused with the water or wine from the tables, they will take damage, and may even sputter out and fail ignobly (see appendix).

#### Encounter

CR 1 – One Clockwork Knight (new monster; see appendix for stats)

CR 2 – Two Clockwork Knights

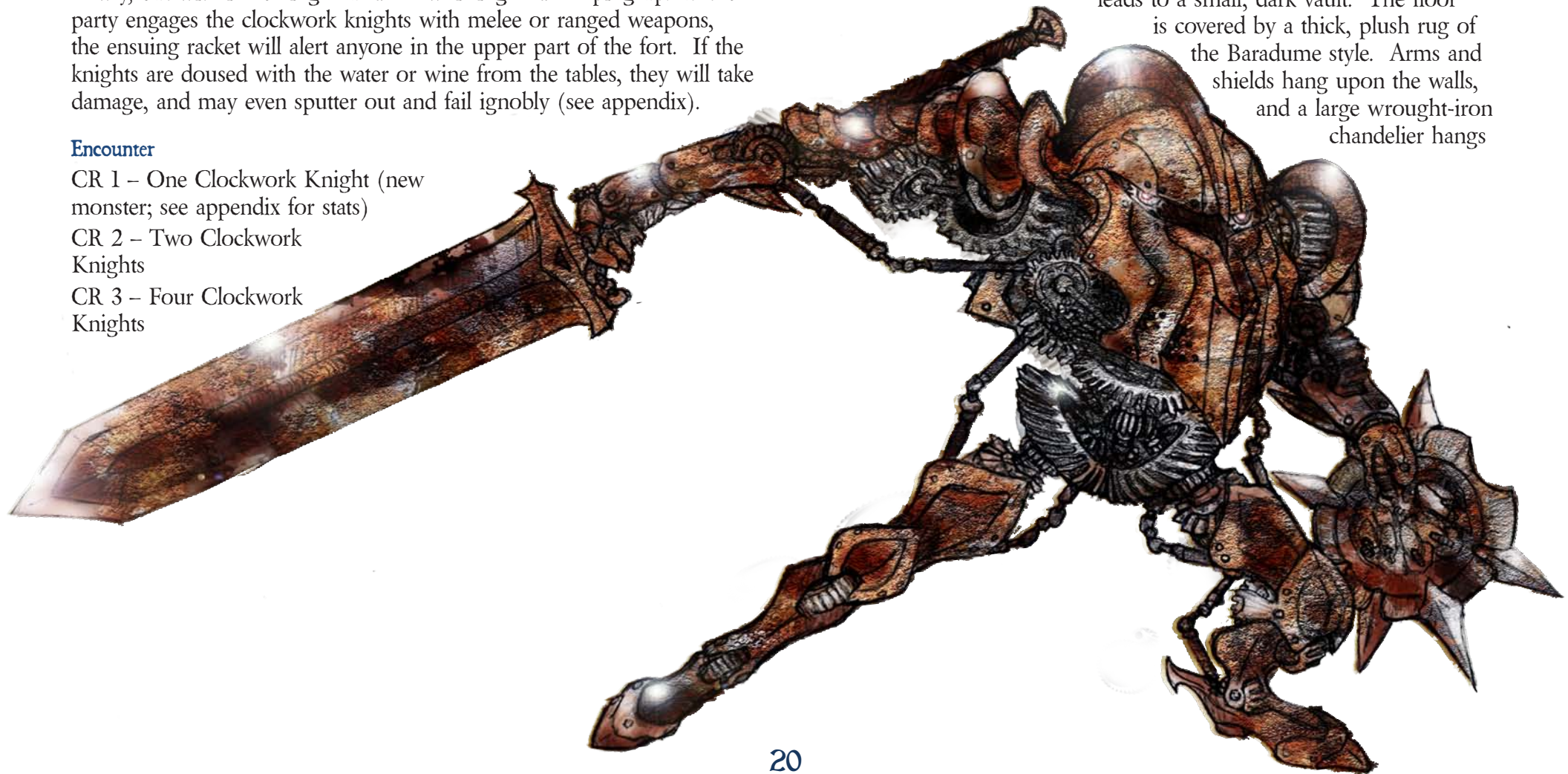
CR 3 – Four Clockwork Knights

The remains of the meal were left behind by the four valco in area E3 who are currently gathering more coal for the stronghold far below. It appears to have been left out for only a few candle marks.

## D5. CASTELLAN'S ANTECHAMBER

The castellan's chambers are the only parts of the inner keep that have been cleared of debris.

[This room is relatively small after the entry hall, only 15 by 30 feet, 10 high. It was once the antechamber of the Castellan of the keep. There are three doors, one to the right, one to the left, and the one your group has entered. A hole in the wall ahead leads to a small, dark vault. The floor is covered by a thick, plush rug of the Baradume style. Arms and shields hang upon the walls, and a large wrought-iron chandelier hangs



from the ceiling, its candles burned out. A small shelf beside the left-hand door is stacked with yellowed and faded paper.]

The door on the right-hand wall is made of iron, and has fallen off its hinges. It opens onto an area blocked by debris. Another former doorway in the wall ahead leads to a small vault that has long ago been ransacked. The door on the left-hand wall is also iron, and a successful Disable Device check (DC 25) will open it. It leads to area D6. The papers in the pile are mundane paperwork relating to the former operation of the castle, the feeding of its occupants, the stabling of its severns and mounts, and all appear to be decades old at least. Faint tracks of coal dust can be seen leading through the door on the left.

## D6. CASTELLAN'S CHAMBER

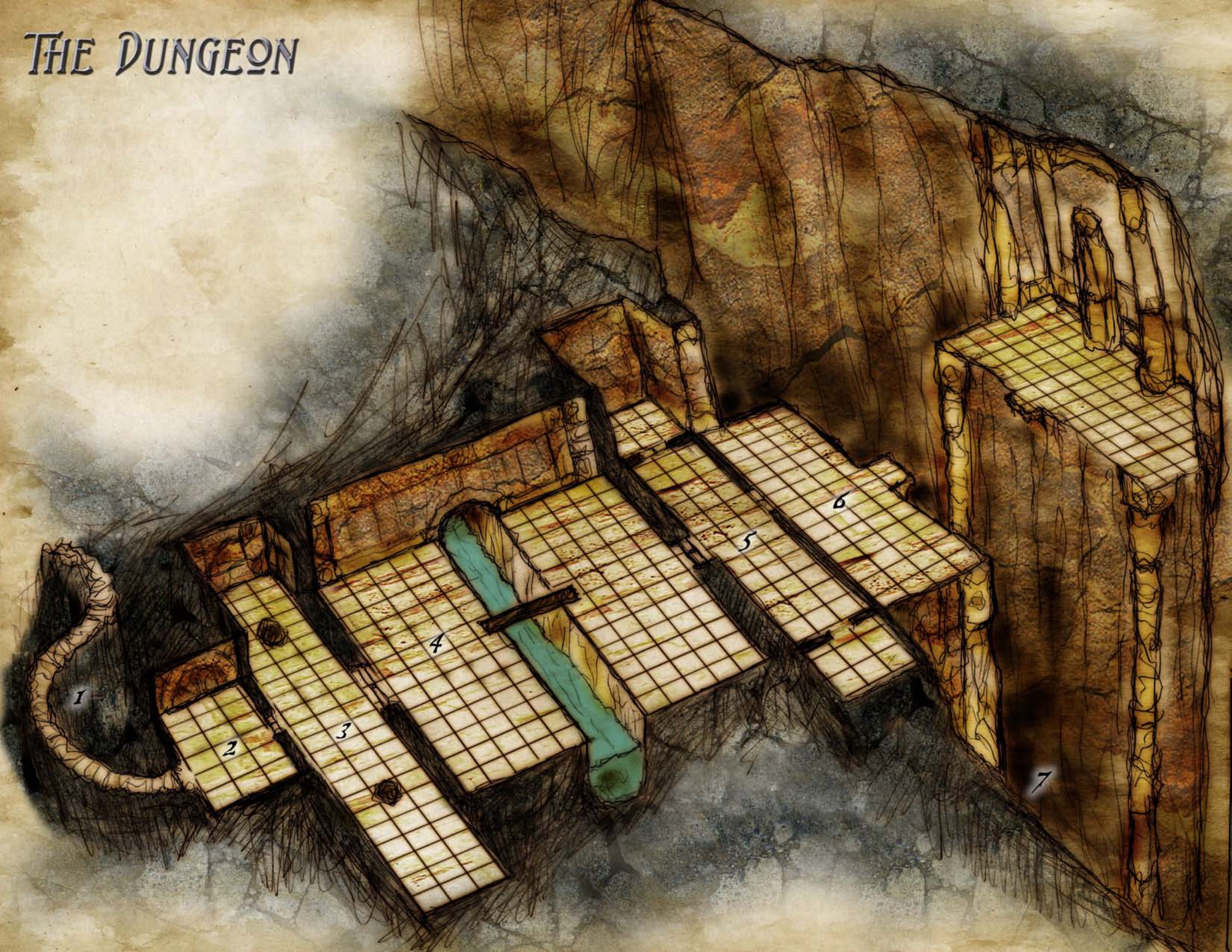
The coal dust tracks lead into here, but seem to go nowhere.

[This room is smaller yet, 15 by 20 feet, 10 high. It is the private office and quarters of the Castellan. A well-made, wooden desk sits near the far wall; along the right-hand wall is an iron cot covered in thick, velvet cloaks. The left-hand wall is completely occupied by a large bookcase, overfilled with thick books and sheaves of parchment. The desk is littered with papers and quills. The chair behind it has been overturned. There is a thick carpet on the floor before the desk, whose design depicts a locked castle gate.]

If examined, the bookshelf will yield a wide variety of books on all subjects, including law, tactics, history, etc. Several fiction volumes are also present, including “Moby-Dave, or the Ceptu”, “Emperor of the Road: Memoir of a Wandering Trader” (a common picaresque of recent history), and a well-worn copy of “The Tale of the Keymaker”, itself a famous tome of chivalry. If the Keymaker book is examined more closely, it will be discovered that the last hundred pages have been glued together and a small rectangle cut in the pages to create a hiding place. In the rectangle is a thick ivory rod, etched and notched irregularly. Among the papers on the Castellan’s desk are several sheets on which are drawn a symbol or design similar to that on the carpet. The cloaks on the bed are found to have several gold pieces sewn into their linings if they are examined closely (1d4 each, five cloaks total).

If the carpet is pulled back, a large pair of stone doors are found set in the floor, carved with a comparable design to the carpet. In the center where the slabs meet is a pair of round holes. Beneath the carving of the gate is a motto carved on scrollwork, which reads “To Correct the Wrong”. To correct a wrong is to “put right”; if the ivory rod key is placed in the right-side hole, the door in the floor will slowly creak open, a blast of sour-smelling air rushing upward, and the sounds of hammers on anvil and low moaning heard. A staircase leads down into blackness. If the ivory rod is placed in the left-hand hole, a jet of acid will burst up from the hole. The PC placing the key must make a Reflex save of 20 or be doused. The acid does 1d8 points of damage per round for 1d4 rounds. It will eat away armor first before dealing damage to the wearer, though hardness is ignored. The staircase leads downward to E1.

# THE DUNGEON



## PART E - DUNGEON

This area is the sub-dungeon of the keep. It is dark and damp. Anyone who runs or engages in battle must make a reflex save (DC 10) each round or fall prone due to the slimy nature of the stonework. There is a more typical dungeon level far above, but it is now inaccessible due to ruin.

### E1. DARK STAIRCASE

This staircase shows some signs of recent use.

[This staircase leads down several hundred feet. The walls and stone steps proceed to become slimy and slippery as the group descends. On the walls at intervals are set glow-lichen lamps, though most of them are not active or are broken past the point of efficacy. The light of your lanterns only illumines a handful of steps ahead and behind. From below can be heard sounds of hammering, moaning, and low rushing of water.]

The staircase continues downward; the last 30 feet are particularly treacherous. Unless precautions are taken, roll a Reflex save (DC 10) every ten feet to avoid slipping and falling as the lower steps are reached. If the first save is failed, the PC takes 2d4 points of damage and slides into E2. If the second roll is failed, the PC takes 1d6. If only the last roll is failed, the PC takes 1d4.

### E2. LANDING HALLWAY

This room contains a guardian left over from the old days of the keep.

[The staircase ends in a wide, short hallway. The room is approximately 15 by 30 feet, 10 feet high. There is an stone door on the opposite wall. Two fire torches are burning on each side of the door. On the right side of the door is the statue of a great, winged being, about 8 feet tall, humanoid in figure. There is nothing else of note in this room.]

The statue presents a figure of beseeching, the face contorted in a mask of misery, one hand extended palm upward, as if begging. The other hand holds a longsword against its leg. If examined, the palm of the statue's hand has a ball-like indentation in its center. There is also

carved into the base of the statue the single word "Mercy". If the golden ball taken from the prisoner of the standing stone is placed in the palm, the stone doors will open silently. If the silver ball is placed in the palm, the statue will animate and attack with its stone sword. If the door is attempted without placing anything in the palm, the statue will animate and attack with the stone sword. If defeated, the statue will shatter. The stone



doors will then be able to be swung open with great commotion.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – Stone Guardian (hp 26) (new monster; see appendix for stats)

CR 2 – Stone Guardian (hp 36)

CR 3 – Stone Guardian (hp 46)

If this encounter is going badly for the party, it is worth noting that the guardian cannot fit back up the stairs. It may be possible to retreat up the stairs and push rubble down into the chamber until the guardian is destroyed.

### E3. UNDERGROUND ANTECHAMBER

This was once the antechamber to the court of the sorcerer who built the keep. The coal chutes from D3 lead here. A small team is busily gathering coal to take to the stronghold (area F).

[The stone doors open on a broad room, 15 by 100 feet, 10 feet high. An arched doorway stands opposite. Two braziers burn green fire in the room, and it is very hot. The room smells of rot. A small group of armed and armored Valco stands in the room. From further along, the sounds of moaning and hammering are much louder. A large pile of coal is visible in the far left corner. Water drips from the ceiling and the walls are mossy.]

The four Valco have been branded upon the neck with the same sigil that was found on the sign hanging around the neck of the prisoner of the standing stones. Each has had one of its antlers replaced with one made of metal, with knife-like edges. They are also armed with short blades. They have a glazed look to their eyes, as though hypnotized. If the group has been unsuccessful in entering the antechamber silently, the valco will get the drop on the party and will attack first. If the party was relatively stealthy and used the gold ball to open the door, the valco will be caught off-guard and will be shoveling coal into bags.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – 4 Mindwashed Valco Guards

CR 2 – 6 Mindwashed Valco Guards

CR 3 – 8 Mindwashed Valco Guards

*Mindwashed Valco Guard* – Pale Valco Fighter, Level 1 (S 14, D 12, C 17, I 8, W 9, Ch 11) Speed 40; HP 12; AC 19 (Banded mail, Light steel shield); Atk +4 Calkru (1d6+2/19-20x2), +5 Horn charge (2d6+3); Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; CMB +3\*, CMD 14; *Feats*: Cornered\*\*, Power attack, Weapon focus; *Abilities*: Hardy; *Gift*: Unbelievable; *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Perception +4; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

\* +2 to disarm/grapple rolls; \*\* From Oathbound Seven

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

The Valco each have a pocketful of coins (1d10gp) and various low-quality weapons and armor. Their brands are the symbol of their lord, the ancient who runs the stronghold. If their brands are examined, it will occur to the examiner that they can be faked. Mixing ink with blood (such as from the valco) should do the trick, and a *Disguise* check (DC 12) will allow a fake brand to be drawn on someone's neck (assuming the party has access to ink and a brush).

### E4. SACRIFICIAL CHAMBER

This room is used to sacrifice slaves that are no longer usable, their souls fed to the spirit of the keep. The occupants of the stronghold below believe the keep must be fed in order to prevent corruptions like the young man at the standing stones. What the original purpose of this room may have been is not apparent.

[Through the archway is a large chamber, 60 by 60 feet, 15 feet high. In this room are nearly a dozen creatures chained bodily to the floor. Flowing across the middle of the floor is a channel cut in the stones, filled with green, brackish water. The channel is ten feet across. There is a narrow, metal plank spanning the channel. The channel emerges from and disappears into the side walls through grates. On the opposite side of the channel there is a metal gate through which another room can be seen. Chains hang from the ceiling, hooks and blades attached to their ends. Light comes from several torches on the walls.

In this room are at least two dozen creatures chained to the floor, of all manner of races: human, dover, valco, frey, haze, and so on. All of these creatures appear to have a strange clockwork apparatus attached with bolts to their chests. These machines are rusty

and wheezing, and the wounds beneath are seeping. Gears spin slowly and out of sync, slipping occasionally. The purpose of these apparatus cannot be immediately ascertained, but wires run from each of them into the foul water of the channel. All of the creatures are barely alive and sensate. They are moaning, and all have been branded similarly to the valco.]

The water of the channel is flowing rapidly, smelling foully of tripe and spoiled meat. Figures appear to be swimming beneath the surface or being carried along by the flow, but their nature cannot be determined. The chains holding the prisoners are strong and iron, bolted firmly to the stones of the floor. If an attempt is made to grasp the chains, they will be found to be very hot to the touch (1 point of damage is dealt per round the chains are held) and difficult to detach from the stone floor. The chains hanging from the ceiling are not hot to the touch, but also prove difficult to detach from their bolt-plates.

The prisoners include some of the missing townsfolk. If interrogated, the chained survivors will all describe in delirious terms their ordeal since coming to the castle, including the medical tortures they have endured at the hands of the raiders. None seem to have an inkling of the bigger scheme. If the wires leading into the water are removed, the prisoner's artificial hearts will begin to lose their charge, and the prisoners will die within 12 hours. See the Aftermath section of the adventure for ideas on how to deal with this.

If the metal plank bridge is examined, it will be found to be corroded in spots and unlikely to bear the weight of more than one of the party at a time. There is a cumulative 1% chance that the bridge will collapse for every pound it bears above 200. If the plank collapses, the PC walking on it will plunge into the water below. If the plank is crossed on foot, emaciated hands and claws will reach up from the waters and attempt to grab and pull the crosser under. Roll 1d4 attack rolls at a bonus of +4. Each hit results in a trip attempt with a CMB of +5. Any successful trip sends the PC into the water. Immersion in the water deals 1d6 points of Wisdom damage per round. Anyone trying to get out of the water must avoid an additional 1d4 grab attacks. PCs reduced to 0 Wis by the water become possessed by the spirit of the keep. They gain a +4 to Strength, and will attempt to push other party members into the water. If a cleric channels energy at the water, the grab attacks will cease for 1 round per

point channeled, but the Wis drain effect will not be diminished.

Upon reaching the metal gate, the lock will be found to be in the shape of a Maltese cross. If the Maltese cross medallion from area C2 is fitted into the lock and twisted, the gate will open. If the cross was not taken or is not inserted, the gate will not open, but the hinges of the gate can be broken out of the stone if enough force is exerted (20 HP of damage at hardness 8, or STR check of DC 20).

## E5. TORTURE CHAMBER

This long, narrow room was once the torture chamber of the keep. There are old cells on the far ends, and stone slabs where prisoners were once chained up and tortured.

[Through the gates is another chamber, not as large as the last, approximately 15 by 60 feet, 10 high. There are doors in each of the three walls facing your group; the two on the left and right hand walls are crumbling grates, and in the wall facing opposite your entry is an archway leading to the next room. Torches are mounted on the wall near you and near the archway on the far wall. The room is lined with man-sized stone slabs bearing rusted chains and conspicuous stains. Rusted and broken iron torture equipment is scattered around the room haphazardly. From the crumbling grates to the south can be heard the sound of something large and angry throwing itself violently against the weakened barrier. In the center of the floor is also a crumbling grate, measuring approximately 6 feet in diameter.]

Beneath the grate in the floor can be heard the rush of water, and the smell of rotten meat is very strong in this room. The grate in the floor can be swung open. It covers a chute leading to the underground river in area E6. It was originally used as a drain and to dispose of dead bodies. If the party has good rope, this chute may actually be a safer way down than the ladder,

The cell to the south contains several werran raiders that have been captured by the current occupants of the Fort. The lunar disease actually prevented their control with the talisman, so they were little use as slaves. Because of their smell and noisy behavior, the leader had them placed in this area until a use could be found for them. The werrans are

half-starved, and are about as likely to eat their rescuers as thank them. If food is presented openly before the gate is opened, the werrans will take it, and will regain their wits. They may even agree to help the party explore the fort. If the gates are just opened recklessly, the werrans will attack, though they may surrender if things are going badly for them.

If the party tarries too long in this chamber, the werrans that have been throwing themselves against the grate in the wall burst through, and the starving raiders attack. They look emaciated, but none the worse for wear. They are armored lightly, but have no melee or ranged weapons. Having not been released willfully, the raiders will not look kindly on the party, and will simply consider them to be food. If defeated, their cell proves to be a dead-end, serving only as a pen; piles of excrement lie in the corners.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – Two were-warhogs

CR 2 – Three were-warhogs

CR 3 – Four were-warhogs

*Were-Warhog* – Pale Nightling Ranger, Level 2, Werran Level 1

Social Form: (S 15, D 13, C 14, I 11, W 14, Ch 13) Speed 30; HP 20; AC 13 (+2 tough hide); Atk +4 Rock (1d3+2/x2), +4 Tail (Improved Trip); Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; CMB +4, CMD 15; *Feats*: Nimble moves, Point-blank shot, Stealthy; *Abilities*: Animal form, Favored enemy (Humans), Heal on transform, Moon transformation, Scent, Track, Trip up, Weakness to silver, Wild empathy; *Gift*: Eyes of the night; *Skills*: Acrobatics +3, Climb +7, Perception +11, Stealth +9, Survival +7, Swim +7; Low-light vision, Darkvision 120 feet, Light blindness, Light sensitivity.

Animal Form: (S 19, D 17, C 14, I 11, W 14, Ch 13) Speed 40; HP 20; AC 17 (+4 natural); Atk +7 Gore (1d8+6/x2); Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; CMB +4, CMD 15; *Feats*: Nimble moves, Point-blank shot, Stealthy; *Abilities*: Animal form, Favored enemy (Humans), Ferocity, Heal on transform, Moon transformation, Scent, Track, Trip up, Weakness to silver, Wild empathy; *Gift*: Eyes of the night; *Skills*: Acrobatics +3, Climb +7, Perception +11, Stealth +9, Survival +7, Swim +7; Low-light vision, Darkvision 120 feet, Light blindness, Light sensitivity.

CR: 1; XP: 400

## 66. THE FIN-DE-TÈRRE

This was once, long ago, the throne room of the cruel sorcerer that ruled the keep. At the far end, an ornate, yet broken, stone throne still sits amongst the rubble of the room's former glory. However, access to the throne is denied by the fact that the bridge across the underground river that forms the center of the room has long fallen away.

[Entering through the archway, this room abruptly stops after approx 20 feet in a large chasm that falls away into blackness. The room extends on either side of the doorway from which you entered for maybe 40 feet, and it appears as though this was some vast and giant hall which was cleaved by a god's axe. The far side of the chasm is approximately 50 feet across and there is no visible means of crossing. From below can be heard the rush of water, and possibly distant voices and hammering. Also, the sounds of fluttering wings rustles on the stale breeze. An odd green glow is coming up from below, though not enough to light the room. Overhead, the ceiling is no longer of stone blocks but is now a cavern. There is a rusted ladder attached at the brink of the chasm.]

The group has entered the end of the man-made fort and the beginning of the natural cavern that lies within the hill. At the lip of the chasm, the bottom cannot be seen, but if a pebble or some small object is dropped the depth can be estimated at approximately 90 feet down. The rusted ladder is broken in parts, slippery, and will most assuredly not hold the entire party at one go. Descending, the group will be flustered by the pestering flight of cave bats. The bats will not directly attack unless the party strikes first, but their curiosity and swarming behavior may make one slip and fall off the ladder. Climb DC is 10 to not slip and fall if the bats are present. There is also a 20% chance of the ladder breaking for each PC climbing down (roll 4d20 to determine approximate distance of fall). Smart parties might use a rope ahead of time to minimize fall damage.

#### Encounter

Bat Swarm (as per bestiary)

If the party somehow makes it across to the ancient throne room, there is little left that has not been already looted or smashed. The walls are covered in grim carvings and grotesque gargoyles. If anyone actually sits in the throne, they will feel oddly more self-confident. The throne is already cracked, but if it is smashed open (Hardness 8, HP 12), a hollow will be revealed holding a pink-and-green *Ioun Stone*, which grants its owner +2 to Charisma.

## E7. SMALL QUAY

This quay offers access between the old keep and the hidden fortress. The boat here was most recently used by the Valco in area E3.

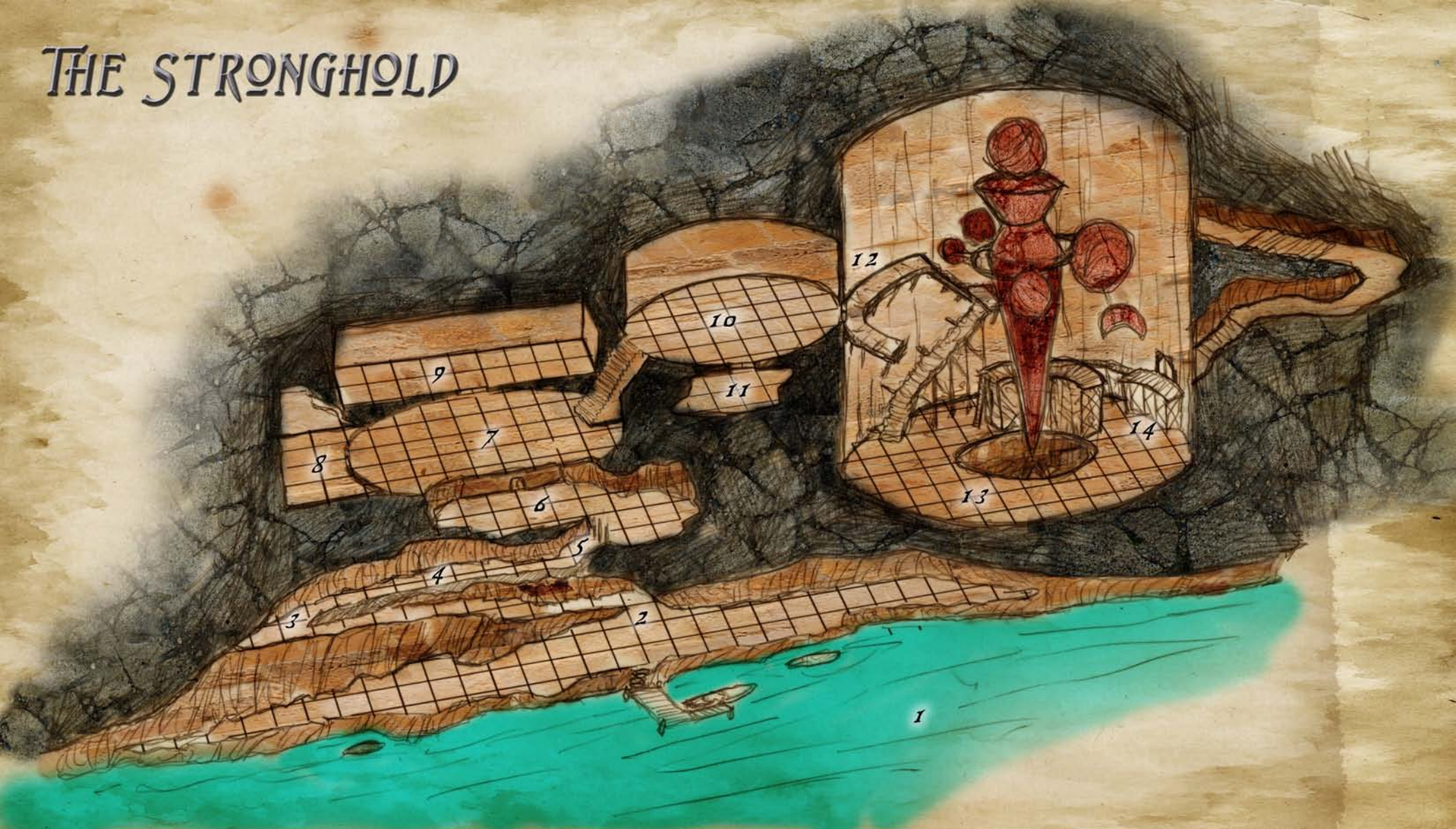
[The ladder ends on a small dock beside a moderately quick running subterranean river. There is an old longboat tied to the piling. Three barrels stand on the edge of the dock. There are several coils of rope also on the dock. On the rock wall of the cliff you have descended, beside the ladder, is mounted a log book and quill. There are four oars in the keel of the longboat. There is also a long spear, likely used to push the boat.]

The old longboat appears water-worthy, with no visible cracks, holes or leaks. It is, however, quite dirty with coal dust. If examined, the writing in the log book will show fairly recent entries, however, since dates in Eclipse are no more accurate than quarter-moons, it is hard to tell how recent. The logs appear to detail the number of prisoners that were brought to area E4 from the stronghold and how long they seem to be surviving for.

The ropes are hemp and vary in length, from 20 feet to 100 feet. If examined, the three barrels will produce the following:

1. Nails and a wooden mallet
2. Mulled wine (still drinkable)
3. Scraps of fabric

# THE STRONGHOLD



## PART F - THE HIDDEN STRONGHOLD

This region of the fortress is located deep underground and is connected to the dungeon area via the underground river. The challenges found here are greater than before, and it may be advisable to allow the party to rest and heal before proceeding or to level up if they have gained the requisite experience.

## F1. UNDERGROUND RIVER

It is about a quarter mile from the dungeon area to the hidden stronghold along the river. This river moves through the underground caverns of Eclipse. Feel free to add encounters or side passages along the way if you wish to expand this part of the adventure.

[The longboat easily slips its moorings and is carried by the flow of the underground river. The speed of the river is moderate, and

the oars do not necessarily need to be employed. Leaving the small quay, the river flows into a tunnel, much of which is lined with glow-lichen. The course of the river flows around several curves and straight-aways. Eventually, the river widens and slows, and upon the right-hand shore is a large beach with a lighted pathway leading up from the rocky beach. The beach looks well-used; there are stacks of wooden crates and barrels stacked in various places near the pathway.]

The longboat is easy to navigate and the flow of the river does most of the work. After the place where the river widens and the beach appears, it becomes apparent that the river flows into a vast underground lake which fills a large cavern. The beach, as it is neared, has three long, narrow, shallow channels cut into it; these are the docking slips, and the longboat will easily fit into one. All slips are empty. The pathway is paved with flat stones, leads upward from the beach along the cavern wall, and eventually curves out of sight. It is well-lit also, with burning torches every few feet or so. The beach is covered with pieces of the cavern ceiling which have fallen over the years, along with the smaller rocks which are common to other beaches. If examined, the crates and barrels prove to be filled with rusty machine parts: dials, cogs, plates, tubes, pipes, etc. The beach, while long and wide, ends against the cavern walls at either extreme, if explored. The roof of the cavern cannot be fathomed in the gloom, nor can the opposite shore of the widened river. There is no glow-lichen nor light source in the river, lake, or on the cavern wall/roof. The pathway leads to F2.

Most of the commerce to and from the stronghold comes not through the fort but via the lake and the rivers and passages beyond. This region is not detailed here, but it eventually connects to either the Sea of Ink or to a major roadway some miles distance from Blackhold.

## F2. UNDERGROUND PATHWAY

This semi-natural pathway leads up from the beach to the tunnels above.

[The pathway from the beach is well-paved and appears to be used frequently. There are scuff-marks on the stones, as made by a large number of heavy boots. The path is approximately 5 feet wide, and climbs upward at a gentle slope from the beach. The

right-hand side of the path is the cavern wall. On the left-hand side is a protective wall approximately 3 feet high, to prevent a fall off the path onto the beach. The height of the path above the beach rises gradually to approximately 15 feet before the path curves away from the beach and rises more steeply, and the left-hand wall also becomes the cavern wall as the path comes to a tunnel mouth.]

The pathway is easy-going, easily traversed. The fire from the torches keeps the path dry, although the cavern walls are wet and slimy. If touched, the slime will coat whatever is touched with low-glowing light until it dries in 1d4 rounds.

## F3. TUNNEL MOUTH

From the open river cavern, the path now turns into the mouth of the tunnel complex leading to the hidden stronghold.

[The pathway comes to the mouth of a tunnel, the length and depth of which cannot be fathomed from this point of vantage. The mouth is approximately 13 feet tall and 8 feet wide. The remains of a rusted gate lie in large pieces to either side of the path in front of the mouth. Torches are mounted on the tunnel walls just inside the mouth, but there are none visible as the tunnel progresses. The tunnel appears to run straight and smooth from the mouth. The tunnel is quiet but for the light rush of stale air, and its dimensions are comparable to the mouth.]

If examined, there is nothing of value in the wreckage of the ruined gate. Crossing the threshold of the mouth, the mounted torches can be removed easily and borne by the group. One round after entering the tunnel, the group will be attacked by a small swarm of Carver Wings, which will come tearing down the tunnel towards them. Carver wing swarms attack on the run; if the swarm is not killed or incapacitated, it will exit the tunnel mouth and reverse course, attacking again from the opposite direction. If the swarm is reduced to 0 hp, it will disperse, and surviving members will exit the tunnel mouth and continue on to points unknown to mourn their dead, leaving the group to lick its wounds, if any. The tunnel progresses onward.

## Encounter

CR 1 – Minimal Carver Wing Swarm (20 hp; 1d8 damage) 400xp

CR 2 – Tiny Carver Wing Swarm (30 hp; 1d10 damage) 600xp

CR 3 – Small Carver Wing Swarm (40 hp; 2d6 damage) 800xp

Carver Wings – See *Oathbound Eclipse*, Appendix A for details

Creative (or smart) parties may be able to avoid the swarm altogether. There is probably time to run back to the mouth of the tunnel and leap down onto the beach to avoid the first strike. The soft sand makes the 15-foot fall equivalent to 10 feet, and an *Acrobatics* check (DC 15) will negate the 1d6 damage from the fall. Once on the beach, characters can take refuge in the water or in the crates, or even under the boat if they work together to overturn it onto the sand. The carver wings will leave the area after a few minutes if they are unable to attack. GMs should award full xp for defeating the swarm if the party manages to successfully dodge it.

## F4. TUNNEL

The party has now left the natural caverns and entered the tunnels of the stronghold. The party has come at a good time. The great machine is finally in operation, and its sound fills the caverns, covering most sounds made by mortal feet.

[The tunnel twists and winds a short ways, rising and falling in shallow dips and small inclines. From further along the tunnel can be heard a loud sound of clanking metal and the low chugging of some engine, and again the low moaning which has been heard often before, with no discernable source. The walls of the tunnel are smooth stone, and no glow-moss grows though the surface is wet and slimy. It is growing hotter as your group progresses deeper into the tunnel. A smell of smoke is for the first time noticeable.]

The tunnel runs onward, leveling after a moderately long decline. The tunnel bends in a hairpin curve, and from around the corner can be distinctly heard voices and the milling about of feet. The language is An-orthi. It is rare, and spoken only by an isolated group of drow. If anyone in the party speaks drow, they will be able to gather the gist of the conversation, though not the details. The drow appear to be making mundane

conversation regarding the drudgery of guard duty and the ineptitude of their supervisors. At this point, the noise of the great machine has covered the sound of the party approaching (even if they fought the carver wings), and the drow are unaware.

## F5. GATE OF THE UNDERGROUND STALAG

This gate marks the main entrance to the stronghold.

[Rounding the hairpin curve of the tunnel, your group is confronted by a small group of drow archers, who are guarding a heavy iron gate. The gate is set into the rock wall of the tunnel, and beyond it can be seen a well-lit room from which are coming screams of agony. There are torches mounted on either side of the gate, and each of the Drow archers is slathered with glow-lichen cream on their copper-tinted armor. The tunnel is approximately 8 feet high at this point, and a large boulder lies to the front-right of the gate.]

The drow captain will confront the group as they round the hairpin, questioning them in various languages until one is found common. The drow archers will not draw their weapons, nor will the captain, unless provoked. The Drow sentinels are all branded similarly to others seen. The sentinels appear bored, and seem to take personal offense at having been assigned something so mundane as guard duty. Unless there is a deep fey in the group, they will not be overtly hostile. If an attempt is made to talk or bluff a way past the sentinels and the lie is reasonable, a *Bluff* check can be rolled to get past (the captain has a *Sense Motive* skill of +4). If the party has faked the valcos' sigils on their necks, a +10 can be added to this check. The captain may even be amenable to bribery (100 gold per drow present should be enough).

If the party attempts to fight the drow (or if there is a deep fey in the group), the drow will fight with reckless abandon. Despite the open gate, the occupants in the room beyond are all in the back part of the room and will not be able to see the conflict. Also, the roar of the great machine and the moans of the prisoners will mask the sounds of combat for the most part.

## Encounter

CR 1 – 2 Drow archers

CR 2 – 2 Drow + Captain

CR 3 – 4 Drow + Captain

*Drow Archer* – Drow Ranger, Level 2 (S 12, D 15, C 11, I 10, W 12, Ch 14) Speed 30; HP 16; AC 19 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +4 Longsword (1d8+1/19-20x2), +5 Shortbow (1d6/x3); Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; CMB +3, CMD 15; *Feats*: Point blank shot, Weapon focus (Longsword, Shortbow); *Abilities*: Drow immunities, Favored enemy (deep fey), Poison use, Spell Resistance 8, Track, Wild empathy; *Gift*: Jumpy; *Skills*: Acrobatics +4, Climb +6, Perception +8, Stealth +7, Survival +6, Swim +6; Darkvision 60 ft, Light blindness; *Spell-like Abilities*: (1/day) *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*.

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

*Drow Captain* – Drow Ranger, Level 3 (S 15, D 16, C 13, I 12, W 14, Ch 15) Speed 30; HP 27; AC 20 (Breastplate, Light wooden shield); Atk +6 Longsword (1d8+2/19-20x2), +6 Shortbow (1d6/x3); Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; CMB +5, CMD 18; *Feats*: Endurance, Point blank shot, Precise shot, Weapon focus (longsword, shortbow); *Abilities*: Drow immunities, Favored enemy (deep fey), Favored terrain (underground), Poison use, Spell Resistance 9, Track, Wild empathy; *Gift*: Willful; *Skills*: Acrobatics +6, Climb +8, Perception +10, Stealth +9, Survival +8, Swim +8; Darkvision 60 ft, Light blindness; *Spell-like Abilities*: (1/day) *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*.

CR: 1; XP: 400

## F6. BRANDING ROOM

This room is used to prepare new prisoners for servitude. Prisoners are tortured until their will is broken, and then they are branded with the mark of the master of the stronghold.

[Through the gate, the group enters a large natural chamber, approximately 35 by 15 feet, 8 feet high, the walls and ceiling of which are the cavern walls. The front part of the room serves as the entryway to the stronghold. In the back part, there are set five rows of metal chairs, five chairs to a row, each chair equipped

with straps, clamps, buckles, and various apparatus which appear to be intended to immobilize whomever sits in the chair. The chairs are of different sizes and conform to other body shapes than human. Fifteen of the chairs are occupied by screaming, wailing, thrashing creatures. Milling through the prisoners are several humans dressed in white, medical-like smocks, each brandishing a red-hot poker. There is a burning brazier in one corner of the room. There are also a few dover guards strolling lazily back and forth, seemingly oblivious to the screams and ruckus.]

The creatures strapped to the chairs are mostly humans, although there are other races represented; they are all stripped naked. The white-smocked humans are in the process of branding each of the prisoners upon the neck with the pokers. Most of the prisoners have already been branded; the smocks are just finishing the process. Upon the group's entrance into the room, they will be noticed by some of the prisoners, who start to scream for help, which will draw the attention of the smocks and the dover guards to them.

If a battle ensues, the smocks will attempt to retreat to F7 for help unless the way is blocked by the party. If the way is blocked, the torturers will attack with their pokers, but are otherwise unarmed and unarmored. One of the dovers has a key ring upon his belt that will fit any of the doors in the stronghold, including the metal door on the far wall. The iron door and the sounds of the forge and the great machine will cover any sounds of battle here.

If the adversaries are defeated, the prisoners can be freed easily. If questioned, some of the prisoners will reveal they have been kidnapped from Blackhold. Others, of course, will babble incessantly, their minds gone. All prisoners bear the marks of torture.

## Encounter

CR 1 – 2 Torturers, 1 Dover Guard

CR 2 – 3 Torturers, 2 Dover Guards

CR 3 – 4 Torturers, 3 Dover Guards

*Torturer* – Pale Human Expert, Level 1 (S 10, D 12, C 11, I 15, W 9, Ch 9) Speed 30; HP 6; AC 11 (no armor); Atk +0 Hot poker (1d4+1d4 fire/19-20x2); Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1; CMB +0, CMD 11; *Feats*: Improvi-

sation\*, Skill Focus (engineering); *Gift*: Marksman; *Skills*: Craft (machine) +6, Heal +3, Knowledge (anatomy) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +9, Perception +7, Profession (torturer) +3; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

\* From Oathbound Seven

CR: 1/6; XP: 65

*Dover Guard* – Pale Dover Fighter, Level 2 (S 14, D 15, C 13, I 10, W 10, Ch 11) Speed 30; HP 18; AC 19 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +3/+3 Shortsword (1d6+2/19-20x2), +4 Bite (1d6+2/x2); Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; CMB +4, CMD 16; *Feats*: Cleave, Power attack, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon focus (Shortsword); *Abilities*: Ambidexterity, Bravery +1, Musk, Natural weaponry, Scent; *Gift*: Second skin; *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Perception +4 (+8 listen), Stealth +4, Swim +6; Low-light vision, Darkvision 60 ft, Scent Vision 30 ft., Light blindness.

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

## F7. FORGING ROOM

This forge is busy at work preparing the chains that bind new prisoners to the great machine. The coal gathered from the fortress above is used here in the forge.

[Through the iron door, the group comes to a very hot, round room. There is a bellows and a great fire burning in the center of the room, a large wide hole in the ceiling which seems to lead to fresh air to fuel the bellows and expunge the smoke. A clanking of hammers on metal fills this room, and two long tables stand at either side of the fire pit. The smell of the smoke is rancid, and the smell of burning meat and hair is thick in the air. Three naked slaves, all freakishly strong valco, work the bellows under the lash of a human slaver in spiked armor and a metal whip. At the tables, dwarves hammer the metal that is brought glowing from the fire, and forge chains and hooks. Large metal bins hold discarded pieces of scrap metal. There are three doors in the circular wall of the forge room, each lit by a torch, plus a visible upward stairs.]

The human slaver lashes the valco at the bellows mercilessly, screaming obscenities in nearly every imaginable tongue. The dwarves are too caught up in their work to notice the group's arrival. The dwarves wear heavy, thick leather aprons to protect themselves from the heat of the fire

and dross, and thick leather gloves and boots. If the group attacks and it looks like they have a chance of winning, the valco slaves will obligingly assist their efforts by breaking the necks of 3 dwarves before hightailing it back the way the group came from to whatever freedom they believe lies therein. Completed lengths of chain and hooks, along with scrap metal, are available for the taking.

### Encounter

CR 1 – Slaver, 4 Dwarves

CR 2 – Slaver, 6 Dwarves

CR 3 – Slaver, 8 Dwarves

*Slaver* – Pale Human Fighter, Level 3 (S 17, D 12, C 14, I 10, W 9, Ch 13) Speed 30; HP 30; AC 20 (Spiked plate mail); Atk +9 Warhammer (1d8+5/x3), +6 Whip (1d3/x2); Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +0; CMB +6, CMD 19; *Feats*: Dodge, Exotic weapon prof, Power attack, Weapon focus; *Abilities*: Armor training 1; *Gift*: Stalker; *Skills*: Acrobatics +4; Climb +7; Intimidate +6, Perception +10; Stealth +3; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

*Magic Items*: Warhammer +2

CR: 1; XP: 400

*Dwarf Forger* – Dwarf Expert, Level 1 (S 15, D 10, C 15, I 11, W 13, Ch 7) Speed 20; HP 8; AC 10 (no armor); Atk +2 Warhammer (1d8+2/x3); Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; CMB +2, CMD 12; *Feats*: Skill Focus (craft weapon); *Abilities*: Greed, Hatred, Hardy, Stability, Stonecunning; *Gift*: Understanding; *Skills*: Craft (weapon) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +4, Perception +5, Profession (blacksmith) +4; Darkvision 60 ft.

CR: 1/4; XP: 100

If searched, the slaver has spiked plate mail, 50 gp, and a +2 warhammer. The dwarves have nothing of value.

## F8. LATRINE

This small room is the latrine for the stronghold.

[Upon opening this small, iron door, a great stench greets you. This small 10 by 20 foot room appears to serve as the latrine for the stronghold. A small spring trickles down from the left hand wall and runs through a trough along the back wall before disap-

peering into a hole in the right-hand wall. Various buckets and tubs are scattered about the room for purposes of washing and collecting waste. A rotten set of shelves to the right of the door holds what appears to be soap and linens. The latrine is currently unoccupied.]

There's really not much to this room. Feel free to insert an encounter here if you think it will amuse your players to catch someone with their guard down.

## F9. BARRACKS

This room serves as the barracks for the full-time occupants of the stronghold.

[This long, narrow room is lined along the far wall with cramped, rancid beds. The room's linens are dirty, and the room is in a general state of disarray. At the foot of each bed is a small iron locker. At the center of the room, a small, dirty table appears to mark the dining and lounge area of the complex. This room is currently unoccupied except for what appears to be a dover coughing and shivering in the far bed to the left.]

The dover guard in this room is incapacitated, delirious, and suffering from Black Hives (see Diseases list in *Oathbound Seven*). Anyone who approaches him will notice he is covered with black, oozing boils. If he is disturbed, those in contact with him have a risk of contracting the disease. (Note: Black Hives is contracted via contact, not injury, as incorrectly listed.) If this guard is healed somehow, he will swear allegiance to the party.

The footlockers all contain personal items owned by the guards and slavers. Each locker contains a set of black robes, clothes, letters, food, and so on, and 1d10 gp worth of coins. One of the footlockers contains a false bottom. A successful Perception check (DC 15) will reveal the compartment if the locker is searched (though *detect magic* will do the trick as well). Beneath this bottom is stowed an *Eclipse Compass* and a set of *Fog Vision Lenses* (see *Oathbound Eclipse*, Appendix C).

## F10. THE SURGERY

This room is used to fit "broken" prisoners with machinery to allow the great machine to draw power from their life essences.

[Coming up the short staircase from the forging room, your party arrives in a large, open room built along the contours of the cavern. The ceiling here is very high, over 20 feet up, and the room's walls are roughly circular. The floor is paved with stones, and in places in the floor are large grates, as for the elimination of effluent. Several large racks line the left-hand side of the room, rising approximately 8 feet high. Upon these racks are metal plates and devices of the sort seen bolted to the decrepit prisoners encountered earlier. On the right-hand side of the room are many surgical beds, basically metal slabs set up off the floor. There are eight beds, each with a subject strapped to it. At the beds are more white-smocked technicians, each in various states of slicing open, digging into, removing entrails from, or bolting metal apparatus to the strapped prisoners, who are all conscious and screaming violently. A small, wheeled tub of acid stands at the center of the room, and appears to be mostly used to cut chains into desired lengths. There is an archway cut into the cavern wall on the right-hand side, which cannot be seen into. There is a heavy iron door closed and locked on the far wall. The great rumblings and clanking that fill the stronghold seem to come from beyond the door.]

The technicians wear belts containing capped syringes; they also wield bone saws and scalpels. Various other surgical equipment is ready to hand. The syringes contain 1 of 3 different fluids:

1. Sting Jelly, a nerve toxin which numbs and causes short-term paralysis (see appendix).
2. Dream Venom, a powerful sedative (see appendix).
3. Anemone Bile, an amphetamine-based revival drug which will reverse the effects of the other two drugs, and send the victim into near-berserk fits (see appendix).

The prisoners are all stripped naked and strapped to the beds, and the technicians are affixing metal plates, tubes, gears, cogs, servomotors, etc. onto gaping cavities in their chests. A Will save (DC 12) must be made

to keep from getting a splitting headache at the sound of their screams, and the sounds of bones crunching and snapping (those who fail the save are effectively *sickened* for 2d4 rounds). The sound of the group's entry will be masked by the screams of the prisoners, and the rumblings of the great machine, and the group will have the element of surprise on the technicians. If attacked, the technicians will attempt to flee back down the stairs. The prisoners will prove too much in the throes of pain to answer any questions the group may pose. In fact, all of them are missing important organs and will die if not given major surgery (Heal DC 30) or a *regeneration* spell immediately.

### Encounter

CR 1 – 4 Surgical Technicians

CR 2 – 6 Surgical Technicians

CR 3 – 8 Surgical Technicians

*Surgical Technician* – Pale Human Expert, Level 1 (S 10, D 12, C 11, I 15, W 9, Ch 9) Speed 30; HP 6; AC 11 (no armor); Atk +0 Scalpel (1d4/19-20x2); Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1; CMB +0, CMD 11; *Feats*: Improvisation\*, Skill Focus (engineering); *Gift*: Twist of fate; *Skills*: Craft (machine) +6, Heal +3, Knowledge (anatomy) +6, Knowledge (engineering) +9, Perception +7, Profession (torturer) +3; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

\* From Oathbound Seven

CR: 1/6; XP: 65

The surgical technicians carry nothing of value aside from the drugs, their personal items are all in area F10. All told, there are 2d6 doses of each type of drug in the room. Once identified somehow, these may be used by the party, or they can be sold in any city for market price. The vat of acid in which various metal items are currently dissolving is set on wheels, and can be moved about fairly easily and tipped over if necessary.

The iron door to area F12 can be opened with the key from the dover guard found in area F6.

## F11. RECOVERY ROOM

This room is where patients are sent to recover after they have been surgically altered.

[The small room carved off to the right-hand side of the surgery is the recovery room. Inside are three recently modified creatures of different races, one of whom is a Blackhold villager. The three are groggy and in obvious pain, their new metal plates and accompanying servomotors and tubes chugging away like failing engines. There are three more empty beds in the recovery. Light in this room comes from a long, glass tube suspended from the ceiling, inside which is a colony of glow-emitting bacteria.]

The villager is coherent enough to explain to the group his fate in coming to this place. He had been kidnapped in a raid upon the village a fortnight ago, along with several other villagers, whose fates he is unaware. After his arrival at the fort and its subterranean horror chambers, he was taken to a large chamber where he saw several hundred slaves laboring at a giant machine deep in the bowels of the cave. All of the slaves were machined, his term for the metal modifications made in the other room. The slaves were attached via tubes that ran from their own apparatus to a great coil of tubes and plugs in the great machine, and as they labored, it seemed to him that the machine fed on their energy and will to live. He did not know or understand the purpose of the giant machine. The villager is able to give a rough set of directions to the machine room, and a warning that the machine is only serving something else, something even more evil, something which he, of course, cannot describe.

If the room is searched, four potions of *cure moderate wounds* will be easily discovered on a shelf.

## F12. CATWALK

This narrow walkway rings the very top of the machine room (F14 below). It is technically part of the machine room, but it is separate enough due to its great height to warrant its own section. It is easy enough to remain discreet and hidden up here from the proceedings below, if that is what is desired.

[The wooden door opens onto a metal catwalk built high above a vast chamber, approximately 50 feet from the floor. The dimensions of the chamber cannot be fathomed. At the center of the room is a giant machine, towering high above your heads. It resembles a ramshackle skyscraper made of rusted and corroded

metal, with huge wheels and gears spinning at various speeds, steam exploding from it at random points, pulleys and conveyers snaking through great rifts in the metal. The cacophony of noise coming from the giant machine is deafening. At the base of the machine are hundreds of slaves engaged in various labors, each of whom are tethered in some fashion to the machine via their metal chest-plates. Gears in the chest-plates seem to propel some, while others seem to draw power from whatever is flowing into or out of the tubes. The intent of this labor is not readily apparent, nor is the purpose of the giant machine. Various human and dover slavers roam the floor, whipping and barking orders, although the laborers seem oblivious, as though compelled by the machine alone. Approximately 30 feet to the right, a metal ladder descends to the floor. To the left is a set of narrow stairs leading downward to lower platforms and more stairs. Dover guards are visible slowly patrolling the catwalk.]

This horrific scene described in area F14 plays out before the group upon the catwalk. Descent of the ladder, while the quickest route, would be the route most likely to draw attention to the group. The stairwell descends from the catwalk, pausing at a small platform approximately 30 before reaching the floor. The guards' attention is mostly focused on the floor. If there are two guards, one will be here by the door, and one will be at the lower platform. The guard by the door will need to be dealt with quickly and with a minimum of mess. If there is only one guard, the door will be unguarded.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – 1 Dover Guard

CR 2 – 2 Dover Guards

CR 3 – 2 Dover Guards

*Dover Guard* – Pale Dover Fighter, Level 2 (S 14, D 15, C 13, I 10, W 10, Ch 11) Speed 30; HP 18; AC 19 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +3/+3 Shortsword (1d6+2/19-20x2), +4 Bite (1d6+2/x2); Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0 (+5 vs. fear); CMB +4, CMD 16; *Feats*: Cleave, Power attack, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon focus (Shortsword); *Abilities*: Ambidexterity, Bravery +1, Musk, Natural weaponry, Scent; *Gift*: Brave; *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Perception +4 (+8 listen), Stealth +4,

Swim +6; Low-light vision, Darkvision 60 ft, Scent vision 30 ft., Light blindness.

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

### F13. MACHINE ROOM

This room basically holds the great machine. The machine is currently in operation, blasting the rock below and extracting any goddust that may be contained within. The machine feeds on the life force of the captured slaves.

[The floor of the machine room is swarming with chest-plated slaves, all laboring at various tasks. All have been branded, and all have a glazed look to their eye that suggests a sapping of life-energy. The machine is enormous, but in places, corroded and crumbling sections are easily seen. Four heavy chains string out from the center of the machine, apparently anchoring it in place. The nearest two chain is anchored to the stone wall just below the catwalk to your right. Another chain meets the wall below the catwalk to your left. A raised platform stands on the east side of the machine, which serves as a control room. Fashionably dressed city-folk can be seen thronging the platform in the company of another creature, much taller than the others. The floor of the machine room is a grate, beneath which rushes up air, as though an infinite chasm lies just beneath. The machine, it should be noted, is visible beneath the grate, as though built from the bottom upward. A loud rumbling sound, as if of drilling, is heard.]

The party must now make some tough decisions. If they were able to dispatch the guards quietly, they can descend to the floor of the chamber where they can blend in with the throngs of prisoners. The slaves take no notice of the group's arrival on the floor, and the slavers are too busy enjoying their whippings to take much notice (effective *Perception* +0 to notice stealthy party members). The sheer number of slaves on the floor may hinder the group's progress, but also affords excellent hiding opportunities. From here they can approach close enough to the control platform to be read the text under area F14 below. If the party is noticed on the floor though, things will not likely go well for them.

The smart party will take the hint about the anchor chains and try to do

something about them. The anchor plate are about a foot below the catwalk, and a sword could possibly be slid between the catwalk and the wall in order to attempt to dig them out. However, unless the party has an adamantite sword or the equivalent, this won't do much good. It is fairly easily though to fetch the small vat of acid from the surgery room and pour it onto the anchor plates. The acid will take roughly 1d4+1 rounds to eat through the chain. Once weakened, the first chain will pull away from the wall and the machine will shudder. At this point, the ancient's party below will notice something is amiss, and will order the guards and slavers from the floor to charge up onto the catwalk. If the party can hold off this attack long enough to destroy the second chain, all hell will break loose

[As the great anchor chain snaps, the machine makes a tremendous lurch, and the very earth seems to list sickeningly for a moment. Everything around you begins to vibrate violently as a horrible grinding noise echoes through the chamber. A moment later, the machine topples forward with great momentum, right towards the control platform. The tall figure has already retreated back into the cavern mouth, but the reflexes of the others are not as honed, and they are crushed violently and then ground up by the death throes of the machine. The lead slaver is unfortunately thrown clear of the wreckage and staggers to his feet, shaken. He orders the remaining guards and slavers to climb the catwalk and kill you at all costs.]

Whether the party decides to descend and fight or to disable the machine, the floor of the room contains the following enemy occupants in addition to the approximately 100 prisoners.

#### Encounter

CR 1 – 2 Dover Guards, 2 Valco Slavers

CR 2 – 4 Dover Guards, 4 Valco Slavers

CR 3 – 6 Dover Guards, 6 Valco Slavers

*Dover Guard* – Pale Dover Fighter, Level 2 (S 14, D 15, C 13, I 10, W 10, Ch 11) Speed 30; HP 18; AC 19 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +3/+3 Shortsword (1d6+2/19-20x2), +4 Bite (1d6+2/x2); Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; CMB +4, CMD 16; *Feats*: Cleave, Power attack, Two-weapon

fighting, Weapon focus (Shortsword); *Abilities*: Ambidexterity, Bravery +1, Musk, Natural weaponry, Scent; *Gift*: Shapechanger (wolf); *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Perception +4 (+8 listen), Stealth +4, Swim +6; Low-light vision, Darkvision 60 ft, Scent vision 30 ft, Light blindness.

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

*Valco Slaver* – Pale Valco Fighter, Level 1 (S 14, D 12, C 17, I 8, W 9, Ch 11) Speed 40; HP 12; AC 15 (Sap Hide); Atk +4 Calkru (1d6+2/19-20x2), +3 Whip (1d3/x2), +5 Horn charge (2d6+3); Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; CMB +3\*, CMD 14; *Feats*: Cornered\*\*, Power attack, Weapon Focus (calkru); *Abilities*: Hardy; *Gift*: Hardy; *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Perception +4; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

\* +2 to disarm/grapple rolls with calkru; \*\* From Oathbound Seven

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

If the party does not figure out the business with the chains and lingers too long on the catwalk, they will eventually be spotted. The dover guards will be sent up to deal with them. The Ancient and the Baradume courtesans will watch the battle as if it were sport. If things seem to go badly for the guards, the lead slaver will climb the stairs to back them up. The lead slaver will stupidly have brought the talisman with him. If the lead slaver is defeated, the party will gain control of the talisman, and if they are clever, they will destroy it, which will evoke the following scene.

[The talisman shatters in a blue sphere of light, leaving a blue blaze on the retina. The ancient gasps far below, looking panicked. The prisoners have all stopped moving. Slowly but surely, they appear to be coming to their senses. Within a few seconds, they begin to howl in pain as sensation returns to their bodies, and tortured, they throw themselves at their oppressors, swarming over the slavers on the machine room floor. The courtesans on the control platform scream in terror and begin fleeing into the tunnel. The tall figure looks about, unable to control the situation, and then finally runs after them. Within a few moments you are alone with about a hundred agonized villagers, who appear to have made short work of the guards. ]

## 114. CONTROL PLATFORM

This platform is also technically part of the machine room, but is separate enough to warrant its own entry.

[This is a metal platform built approximately 15 feet up off the machine room floor. Large wooden crates stand to the side of the platform. There are twelve finely-dressed folk standing about on the platform watching the proceedings, all bearing the look of citizens of Baradume. Two more guards protect them. The guards are vigilantly watching the machine room floor. Amidst the guards and city-people on the platform is an extremely tall figure, and the others show great deference to this personage. A valco who appears to be the lead slaver stands beside the tall creature, ostentatious in his toadying. Around the valco's neck is hung what appears to be the talisman stolen from the Lord Mayor. As you watch, he touches it and barks an order at several of the prisoners to gather below him. A throng of prisoners quickly congregates at the foot of the stairs to the platform, as though waiting for something.]

The laborers congregating at the foot of the stairs will hide the party from view temporarily. The party is in great danger, and must choose to act quickly or be vastly overpowered and killed. About the only sensible course of action here is to do something about the talisman that appears to be controlling the prisoners. It can possibly be stolen via *mage hand* or a similar spell, but the slaver will be allowed a Reflex save vs. the spell in order to keep hold of it. A missile could target it possibly as well. The talisman carries a weight of evil upon it, and can be shattered with a strong blow; it has hardness 5 and 2 hp. The players will not be able to use the talisman without training, but if the talisman is destroyed, read the following text to the players.

[The talisman shatters in a blue sphere of light, leaving a blue blaze on the retina. The slaver staggers backward, looking panicked. The prisoners have all stopped moving. Slowly but surely, they appear to be coming to their senses. Within a few seconds, they begin to howl in pain as sensation returns to their bodies, and tortured, they throw themselves at their oppressors, swarming over the guards and slavers on the machine room floor. The

courtesans on the control platform scream in terror and begin fleeing into the tunnel. The tall figure orders the lead slaver to control the situation and then runs after them. The slaver takes one long look about the room and then flees as well, leaving you alone with about a hundred agonized villagers, who appear to have made short work of the guards.]

If things go well, the party will have to do little fighting. If things turn out otherwise, any of the following opponents that currently occupy the control platform may be faced.

### Encounter

CR 1-3 – 2 Dover Guards, 1 Lead Slaver, 12 Courtesans, 1 Ancient

*Dover Guard* – Pale Dover Fighter, Level 2 (S 14, D 15, C 13, I 10, W 10, Ch 11) Speed 30; HP 18; AC 19 (Chainmail, Light wooden shield); Atk +3/+3 Shortsword (1d6+2/19-20x2), +4 Bite (1d6+2/x2); Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; CMB +4, CMD 16; *Feats*: Cleave, Power attack, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon focus (Shortsword); *Gift*: Jovial; *Abilities*: Ambidexterity, Bravery +1, Musk, Natural weaponry, Scent; *Skills*: Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Perception +4 (+8 listen), Perform +4, Stealth +4, Swim +6; Low-light vision, Darkvision 60 ft, Scent vision 30 ft., Light blindness.

CR: 1/2; XP: 200

*Lead Slaver* – Pale Valco Fighter, Level 3 (S 15, D 12, C 18, I 10, W 12, Ch 13) Speed 40; HP 36; AC 16 (Bracers of armor, buckler); Atk +7 Longsword (1d8+3/19-20x2), +7 Horn Charge (2d6+3); Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2 (+7 vs. fear); CMB +5, CMD 18; *Feats*: Cornered\*, Dodge, Power attack, Weapon focus; *Abilities*: Armor training I; *Abilities*: Bravery +1, Hardy; *Gift*: Brave; *Skills*: Acrobatics +8; Climb +6; Intimidate +6, Perception +7; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

*Magic Items*: Bracers of Armor +4, Longsword +1, Ring of the Ram

\* From Oathbound Seven

CR: 2; XP: 600

*Courtesan* – Pale Human Aristocrat, Level 1 (S 10, D 15, C 12, I 17, W 15, Ch 18) Speed 30; HP 7; AC 12 (no armor); Atk +0 Dagger (1d4/19-20x2); Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; CMB +0, CMD 12; *Feats*: Persuasive, Skill

focus(art); *Gift*: Good-looking; *Skills*: Appraise +7, Craft (art) +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Perform +8; Low-light vision, Light blindness.

*CR*: 1/6; *XP*: 65

Ancient – The ancient is far too powerful for the party to defeat, but if necessary, use stats from *Oathbound Eclipse*, appendix D.

If any of the guards or slavers survive, they will attempt to bargain with the group for mercy. They will explain that the tall creature is an Ancient, using the machine to harvest the energies of the slaves to run the machine in hopes of delving far below the surface enough to strike a legendary god-dust mine. The guards will continue on to say that the Ancient had enchanted the Lord Mayor's talisman so that it overpowered the will of the slaves when combined with the warding magic of their branding.

The guards also know of the series of secret tunnels that lead from the machine room underground through the caverns to emerge in a cave mouth several miles from the outskirts of Blackhold. It is from this place that the raiders leave on their sorties, returning with their victims back through the tunnels. The fort itself is mostly used only for its heavy supply of coal. The guards will also reveal the truly evil cunning of the Ancient by saying that the metal chest-plated slaves cannot survive for long if separated from the machine. None of the villagers can live more than a moon if returned to their homes.

If the machine is searched (whether smashed or not), inside can be found a small adamantium vial of raw god dust. Raw god dust is extremely unstable and dangerous and should not be touched, but it has a very high retail value. There is enough dust for two doses here; it can sell for 20,000 gp if a buyer can be found without attracting too much attention. If refined, it can sell for even more. The best use for the dust is to head to Baradume and bargain for entry into a guild. The vial of dust is enough to get all the party members into the guild of their choice.

## AFTERMATH

At this point, the group can decide whether to return to the village via the hidden tunnels and inform the Lord Mayor of the sad fates of his kidnapped townsfolk, or attempt to gather as many of the villagers as possible and slog back with them for a short-lived homecoming with their friends and families. In either case, the Lord Mayor will prove good to his word, and offer up treasures and land to those who accept it. The treasures are fairly small, amounting to about 1,000 gp per surviving party member, but the gift of land is a great honor, and the party may wish to make the village a base of operations, a home, or maybe just an out of the way place to hide out when things get tough. The keep itself can be taken too, if the party can stomach it. Land near Blackhold is not particularly valuable at the current time, but it may go up at some point. In any case, the party will be very popular with the townsfolk, and even the ugliest members will receive numerous romantic advancements from smitten townspeople.

If anyone makes an effort to experiment, there is a way in which the villagers can be kept alive. The chest plates absorb magic, and can be fed spells on a regular basis in order to keep them working. Not all spells are easily absorbed, but the *mana* spell used to power mana engines works perfectly, and will keep a former prisoner alive for one additional month. Other spells only last for one quarter-moon per spell level. However, the prisoner still has no heart and will be in constant pain from the mechanism. If the mechanism is removed, the victim will die in 2d6 rounds, but a *regenerate* spell can be cast before death to fully restore the victim to health.

The villain of this adventure is purposely left nameless so that you can use this adventure as a springboard to an Eclipse campaign. If the party is the type to bear a grudge, they may wish to travel to Baradume and seek out the ancient, who can be most readily identified by the unique sigil that he uses to brand his men (which itself was taken from the ancient sorcerer's notes). It is suggested that the villain be a minor officer in an established guild, but this need not be the case. He could be from Erebus, or a guild leader, or even an outsider. It all depends on where you want to take it.

## APPENDICES

This adventure introduces numerous new game materials for Oathbound. The new material is all compiled and detailed here.

### APPENDIX A – NEW SUBSTANCES AND ITEMS

The following items make their debut in this adventure.

#### POISON – ANEMONE BILE

This amphetamine-based revival drug which will reverse the effects of many other drugs and conditions, but will send the victim into near-berserk fits. (Injury; Save: Fort DC 15; Onset: 1 round; Freq: once; Effect: Reverses unconsciousness and paralysis, but causes victim to be *confused* and *sickened* for 1d10 minutes; Cure: 1 save)

*Market Price:* 200 gp per dose

#### POISON – DREAM VENOM

This powerful sedative is often used by medical professionals to put patients under before surgery. (Injury; Save: Fort DC 15; Onset: 1 minute; Freq: once; Effect: Unconsciousness 1-3 hours; Cure: 1 save)

*Market Price:* 100 gp per dose

#### POISON – STING JELLY

This potent nerve toxin numbs and causes short-term paralysis. (Injury; Save: Fort DC 15; Onset: 1 minute; Freq: once; Effect: Paralysis 10 to 60 minutes; Cure: 1 save)

*Market Price:* 150 gp per dose

#### PLANT – WIRESCREEN

This invasive bramble grows best in particularly poor soil and dim light. It would be a gardener's dream if it wasn't useless and dangerous. The bush bears no fruit, but has many sharp thorns that tear the flesh of anyone passing through them. Those moving through the thorns may only move at ¼ move rate, and take 1 point of damage per round from

the thorns. Every full 10 points of damage done by the thorns also deals 1 point of Wis damage. If the sap of the wirescreen is extracted, boiled down, and burnt, anyone inhaling the smoke must make a Fort save (DC 15) or suffer 1d3 points of Wis damage. Those affected by the smoke will have terrible nightmares for the next 1d4 sleep periods. Wirescreen incense is often employed by torturers as a tactic to soften up prisoners.

*Market Price:* 20 gp per stick of incense (enough to fill a 10x10 area)

## APPENDIX B – NEW MONSTERS

The following new Oathbound monsters make their debut in this adventure.

### CLOCKWORK KNIGHT

Essentially a suit of armor with a complex clockwork mechanism allowing it to fight on its own. An impressive mix of magic and technology.

#### Clockwork Knight – CR 1

Medium-Sized Construct

XP 400

Init -1; Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -1

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#### Defense

AC 18, Touch 9, Flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +9 Natural)

HP 31 (2d10+20)

Fort +1, Reflex +0, Will +0

DR 2/adamantine; Immune Construct Traits

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#### Offense

Speed 20

Melee Greatsword +6 (2d6+6/19-20)

Space 5ft.; Reach 5ft.

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#### Statistics

Str 18, Dex 8, Con - Int -, Wis 8, Cha 8

Base Attack +2, CMB +6, CMD 15

SQ Water Vulnerability

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#### Ecology

Environment Any

Organization Solitary or Troop (2-8)

Treasure None

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#### Construction

CL 7<sup>th</sup>; Price 20,000 gp

Requirements Craft Construct, *lesser geas*, bull's strength, creator must be caster level 7

Skill Craft(armor)DC 19; Cost 10,000 gp

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#### Special Abilities

**Construct Traits (Ex)** Immune to all mind-affecting effects. Immune to disease, death effects, necromancy effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning. Not subject to ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, energy drain, or nonlethal damage. Im-

munity to any effect that requires a Fort save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless). Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hp or less. Cannot be raised or resurrected. Does not breathe, eat, or sleep.

**Water Vulnerability (Ex)** Clockwork knights have sensitive mechanisms that are vulnerable to water damage. Total immersion in water will short out the golem and kill it. Splashing the golem with one pint of water (or other equivalent liquid) will cause it to rust and freeze up, dealing 2d4 points of damage and kicking up a noxious cloud of steam.

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#### Description

The little-known clockwork knight is something of a poor man's Iron Golem. It is essentially a suit of full plate armor modified to operate without an occupant. The knight has no intelligence of its own, but it can be set to guard and operate under certain conditions. A command word sets the knight's instructions, and it will stand motionless for ages until the conditions for its operation are triggered. Such conditions might be whenever anyone enters the knight's chamber who does not bear a certain symbol, or if anyone of a particular race passes within the knight's range of perception. The condition can be nearly anything, but cannot be too complicated, and the knight has perception only out to 60 feet to interpret its surroundings. Once activated, the knight will carry out its instructions, typically either to kill, bar the way, or remove the offender from the premises. A second command word will return an activated knight to its position. If a knight awakens and performs its duty successfully, it will also then return to its assigned position and go back into stasis. If it is in a guarding position, a third command word will reset the knight's programming completely, and it will not act again until given new orders.

A guarding knight is nearly imperceptible from a normal, empty suit of display armor. A perception check (DC 15) is required for anyone looking at it to notice the difference. Because the clockwork knight is crafted on a budget, it is not fully magically alive. Only a small engine inside of the knight functions magically, and the rest of the knight is propelled via a collection of gears, springs, and clockwork joints. Due to this, the knight is susceptible to damage from water and other liquids (beer, wine, juice, etc.). Clockwork knights must be kept indoors; rain can cause it to rust and freeze up.

## JAGLOM

These tenacious relatives of the common badger have developed an incredible ability to knock opponents backwards with their ferocious leaping attacks, often toppling their prey off steep cliffs.

### Jaglom – CR 1/2

#### Small Animal

**XP** 200

**Init** +1; **Senses** Low-light Vision; Perception 2

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#### Defense

**AC** 15, **Touch** 13, **Flat-footed** 12 (+3 Dex, +2 Natural)

**HP** 7 (1d8+3)

**Fort** +6, **Reflex** +6, **Will** +1

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#### Offense

**Speed** 40, **Climb** 10

**Melee** 2 **Claws** +4 (1d2+3), **Bite** +4 (1d3+3), **Ram** +4 (special)

**Space** 5ft.; **Reach** 5ft. (10 ft. pounce)

**Special Attacks** Driving Pounce

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#### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16 **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Attack** +1, **CMB** +3 (+9), **CMD** 7

**Feats** Multiattack

**Skills** Acrobatics II, **Climb** II, **Perception** 2

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#### Ecology

**Environment** Woods, forests, hills

**Organization** Pair or pack (3-12)

**Treasure** None

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#### Special Abilities

**Driving Pounce (Ex)** The jaglom has developed exceptionally strong back legs for a creature its size. It can pounce straight forward at its enemies when attacking, sending them flying backwards. The jaglom is smart enough to know when to use this ability, and typically chooses its battles in spots where opponents can be toppled off cliffs or the like. The jaglom can then climb down and eat the victim at its leisure. This ability is a full-round attack. When employed, the jaglom must be within 10 feet of its opponent. The jaglom makes a ram attack (dealing no damage and not provoking an attack of opportunity), if successful, the jaglom gets a +6 to its CMB (upping it to +9) and rolls vs. the victim's CMD. If successful, the opponent is knocked prone. For every point the roll succeeds by, the opponent is also pushed back one foot. So if the roll succeeds by 10, the opponent is pushed back 10 feet and knocked prone. This ability works only on

medium-sized or smaller creatures. It can be used to knock mounted opponents off their mounts.

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#### Description

The ornery jaglom is one of the more overlooked pests of the Forge. In a fair fight, it is no more deadly than a small cat or badger, but in the right terrain, the creature becomes deadly. A distant relative of the common wolverine, the jaglom is distinguished by a tripod of three blunt horns on its head. These are used to great effect in ferocious driving leaps that knock opponents backwards. Since jagloms are skilled climbers, they have little concern for where their victims end up. The typical jaglom ambush involves knocking its prey off a cliff and then climbing down to eat its dead body in peace.

Jagloms travel in packs, and generally go after larger animals, such as deer or elk, but are not afraid of people and will attack if hungry or threatened. They are not entirely carnivorous, but like bears, will eat whatever they can get their paws on. Jagloms are not easily frightened, and will stand their ground and fight to the death if their dens are threatened.

## STONE GUARDIAN

A poor man's stone golem—easier to create, but no less deadly in the right situation. This construct follows strict orders and does not stray from its purpose.

### Stone Guardian – CR 2

#### Large Construct

**XP** 600

**Init** +1; **Senses** Low Light Vision, Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception 0

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#### Defense

**AC** 21, Touch 11, Flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +10 Natural)

**HP** 36 (3d10+20)

**Fort** +1, **Reflex** +2, **Will** +1

**DR** 4/adamantine; **Immune** Construct Traits

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#### Offense

**Speed** 30, Fly 40 (average)

**Melee** Stone Maul +7 (2d8+7/19-20x3), Gore +7 (2d6+7)

**Space** 5ft. x 10ft.; **Reach** 10ft. (maul) 5ft. (gore)

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#### Statistics

**Str** 20, **Dex** 12, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Attack** +4, **CMB** +10, **CMD** 21

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Multiweapon Fighting

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#### Ecology

**Environment** Any

**Organization** Solitary or Pair

**Treasure** None

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#### Construction

A stone guardian's body is chiseled from a single block of hard stone, such as granite, weighing at least 2,000 pounds. The stone must be of exceptional quality, and costs 3,000 gp.

**CL** 7<sup>th</sup>; **Price** 40,000 gp

**Requirements** Craft Construct, *lesser geas*, *fly*, *bull's strength*, *locate object*, creator must be caster level 7

**Skill** Craft(sculpture) or Craft(stonemasonry) DC 16; **Cost** 20,000 gp

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#### Special Abilities

**Construct Traits (Ex)** Immune to all mind-affecting effects. Immune to disease, death effects, necromancy effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning. Not subject to ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, energy drain, or nonlethal damage. Im-

munity to any effect that requires a Fort save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless). Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hp or less. Cannot be raised or resurrected. Does not breathe, eat, or sleep.

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#### Description

This unusual magical guardian is somewhat more durable than the clockwork knight, but still not nearly as powerful as his more well-known cousins. The stone guardian does not function via a command word, but is instead bound to a particular lock. Those who use the appropriate key to open the lock do not awaken the guardian, but those who attempt to bypass the lock without the proper key are attacked, generally until death.

A stone guardian appears as a large, stone statue until awakened, though it will radiate a faint magical aura if scanned. The guardian can take a variety of appearances; most take the form of large, winged humanoids. Some may appear more angelic in nature, while others seem almost demonic, and others simply primitive or animalistic. Usually the hard, rough stone surface of the golem is plastered over and painted to give it a more artistic appearance. When the guardian awakens for the first time, most of this plastering falls away, revealing the heavy stone beneath.

A stone guardian can attack twice in a round, once with its weapon, and once with its horn(s). The guardian will relentlessly pursue transgressors, though most are forbidden to pass more than 120 feet from their binding points. If a pair, one guardian is usually free to pursue enemies while the other blocks the portal or chest to be guarded.

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