

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## THE CURSE OF THE RINGSPIRE

#88.5: A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE  
BY HARLEY STROH



# AREA MAP

AREAS K-1 THROUGH D-4

Kingspire  
Castle

D-4

D-3

D-2

Arko's  
Quarters

Loft

1 inch = 120 feet

D-1

K-1

Old Queen's Road

K-3

K-5

K-3A & K-4  
(50% chance  
per hut)

K-2



# THE CURSE OF THE RINGSPIRE

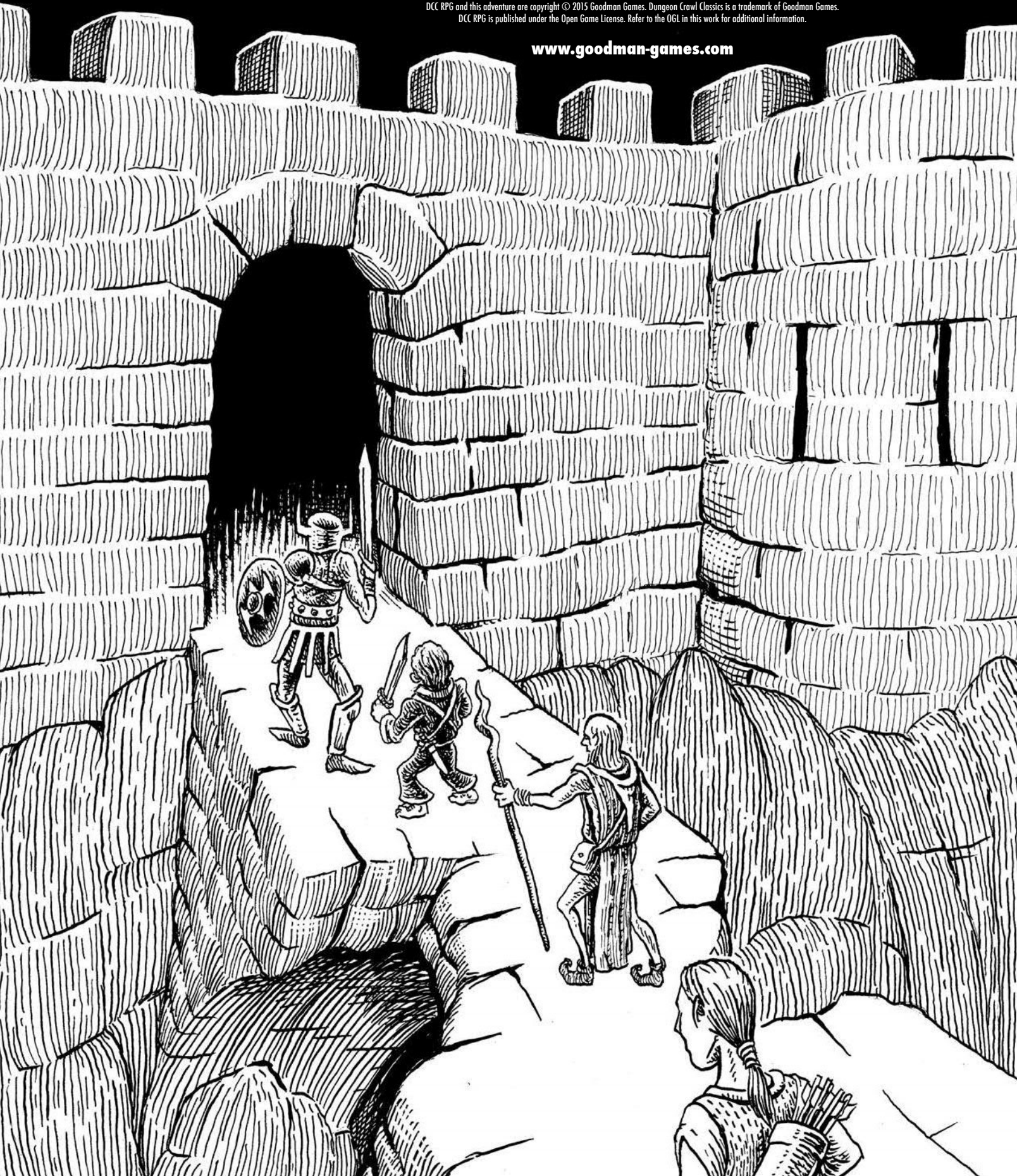
## A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE

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## INTRODUCTION

**R**emember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. *Dungeon Crawl Classics* don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Legends are born from epic heroes and timeless adventures. While some are content to wile away their lives wresting grubby pieces of copper from kobolds and goblins, a select few are called to high adventure. Many will rise and many will fall, but those that survive will have earned the fated title of Hero.

*Curse of Kingspire* is designed for 5 characters of 2nd level, but can easily be scaled to accommodate higher-level PCs or larger adventuring companies. Elves will enjoy moments in the spotlight, with special encounters keyed for (or against) them. Wizards will find special challenges amid the eldritch secrets concealed by the Kingspire, thieves will be tested during the infiltration of the citadel, and warriors of every stripe will find foes aplenty to challenge them.

**Caution:** Like all Master Dungeons, *Curse of Kingspire* is not recommended for first-time judges or players. The adventure is designed to reward intelligent play, just as foolish choices must surely be punished. New players, testing their

character's wings may find the adventure unforgiving and harsh, while new judges may be challenged when the adventure calls for improvisation. There are many other excellent adventures eminently more suitable for beginning players and judges.

However, for players and judges looking for a challenging, dynamic adventure, or for those brazen enough to laugh in the face of danger, the Kingspire awaits!

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

**T**he *Curse of the Kingspire* takes place in three distinct chapters, each requiring – and rewarding – its own style of game play. The first chapter, focusing on the infiltration of a shire and the ruins atop the ridge known as the Kingspire, rewards careful infiltration, and quick, deadly strikes. The second chapter, taking place in a distant, otherworldly realm where the Kingspire is eternally under siege, rewards role-playing and problem solving. The final chapter, set in the gloomy underworld beneath Old Kingspire is a violent, bloody climax, where the PCs must use both wit and brawn to overcome monstrous foes.

The adventure begins with the adventurers investigating rumors of demon worship on the outskirts of the realm. Happening upon the hamlet of Kingshire, the PCs discover it devoid of inhabitants, save for a few cultic devotees. The leader of the cult, driven to insanity by the encroaching madness that roils and seethes amid the foul mists of the Drachenvold, has been sacrificing his fellow villagers to the fell power that lurks within the ruins of the Kingspire citadel. While Arkos aims to restore his people to greatness, the rite he is enacting has far graver results.

Investigating the abandoned hamlet of Kingshire, the PCs encounter a band of cultists, a rearguard ordered to ward off any that might risk interrupting Arkos' fell rite. Continuing with their investigations, the PCs press into the Drachenvold swamp, where they encounter the sinister remains of Arkos' wicked deeds.

Arriving at Kingspire citadel, the PCs infiltrate the ruined keep, by guile or by blade, bypassing guardian sentries and traps and finally encountering Arkos, the leader of the cult. In a climatic battle, Arkos' hellish rite comes to a head, resulting in an eldritch apocalypse the washes over the adventurers, transporting them through space and time to Old Kingspire, where an eternal battle wages.

In order to escape this extra-dimensional prison, the PCs must ply their guile against the sinister Crow King and his Twilight Court. Winning the graces of the king (or failing that, one of his rivals), the PCs discover the secret that will win their release:

The Twilight Court is divided, the eldest son of the Elder Kith exiled to the endless caves beneath the Kingspire. When he fled from his treacherous family, the rogue lord stole an ancient *Runeblade* in his flight. That same relic

holds the key to releasing the Kingspire from its internment, returning the Elder Kith Court (and the PCs) back to the Known Realms from whence they came.

But recovering the relic is no small feat, and will test the heroes to their fullest. The worst crimes are those committed brother against brother, and the Twilight Court is no exception. Before recovering the *Runeblade* the PCs will face down a tribe of rebel Elder Kith, their dead master, and the gruesome fiend that lurks beneath the Kingspire and the plot to undo all the realms of the North.

## JUDGE'S SECTION



To help the judge prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. The abbreviations used are: **Loc** the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Type** this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** the key monsters, traps or NPCs that can be found in the encounter.

## GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED



The Kingspire offers mystery, wealth, and magical to spare, and these are but a few lures to offer curious PCs. Judges can design story hooks specific to their PCs, or modify one of the story hooks listed below:

- The party, seeking treasure or sent at the behest of a liege lord, seek to ferret out the mystery lurking beneath the Kingspire. Seers aver that the Kingspire was once home to a clan of rebel Elder Kith, ancient forebears of the elves, though the truth behind the legends will likely never be known.
- Studying ancient tomes late into the night, one of the PCs (likely either a wizard or elf) discovers an antediluvian scroll hinting at the Kingspire's secrets. Penned in an ancient elven tongue, the scroll records the flight of a lost clan, which built up a citadel high atop the


## ENCOUNTER TABLE

Location	Type	Encounter	Location	Type	Encounter
K-1	P/C	The Witch of Drachenvold	2-5	T/C	Hall of Four Panes
		2 crocodiles	2-6	C	Invading savages
		3 spiders	2-7	C	Invading savages
K-3	P/C	Jon Ocat	2-8	T	Cold trap
		4 spearmen	2-9	C	Invading savages
		4 huntsmen	2-10	C	Invading savages
K-5	C	The Miller's Apprentice	2-11	C	Invading savages
D-2	C	8 zombies	2-12	C	War bear
		Crocodile	2-14	C	Fomorian torturer
1-1	C	Army of phantasm Elder Kith & savages		T	Poison gas trap
1-5	C	3 archers	2-15	P	Portal puzzle
1-6	C	2 woodsmen	2-16	C	The Mad Gaoler
		5 hunters			8 giant rats
		10 cultists			3 rat swarms
1-8	T	Cold trap	2-19	T	Oil cloud
1-9	P/T	Collapsing ceiling & bronze maiden trap		T	Collapsing ceiling
			2-20	H	Doom Arch
1-11	C	5 gargoyles	2-21	C	2 exiles
1-12	T	Oil trap			3 exiled knights
1-13	C	Arkos			Exiled shaman
		2 cult champions			Javelin trap
		4 initiates			Collapsing hut
	C	8 knights of Elihai	2-25	C	Devourer Worm

Kingspire. Of more interest to the PCs, the ancient elves carried a fabled eldritch blade with them, a relic from another age: the *Runeblade*.

- The party's cleric is tasked by his deity to root out a nascent cult taken root in the shire at the foot of the Kingspire. The cleric is shown a terrible vision of a war between Elder Kith and sub-human savages, and once the cult is placed to rest, the cleric and his allies must put the wandering spirits to rest.

## BACKGROUND

he Kingspire was once a hamlet of sixty or so hunters and fisherfolk that made their livelihood on the marshy banks of the Drachenvold. The hamlet sits on the tip of a peninsula that extends into the marsh, and takes its name from the rocky ridge at the heart of the swamp – the Kingspire.

All that changed this past winter, when Arkos the Miller ventured into the ice-laden swamp to harvest roots from the lower slopes of the Kingspire. Caught in a surprise ice storm, Arkos was forced to weather the night in the ruins. As night fell and howling winds stripped his life away, he witnessed ghostly lights dancing high on the icy ridge. Mistaking the lights for searchers sent from the hamlet, Arkos crawled from his hovel, pleading for aid. Exhausted and frozen, he reached the top of the spire only to discover the lights were phantasms, ghost warriors with blazing brands, heedless of the freezing rain.

Arkos cried out to any gods that would listen, offering up his soul for his life. And while no gods deigned to answer, some *thing* did.

When the storm broke, Arkos emerged from the swamp a changed man. Though covered in sheet ice from head to toe, an unnatural fire burned behind his crystal blue eyes. Returning to his village, Arkos bore witness to his miracle to any that would listen. In short order, the charismatic miller was the leader of a small – but devout – cult, dedicated to the mystery of the Kingspire. Each full moon, Arkos and his followers rowed their shallow punts into the swamp and made offerings to the unknown powers of the Kingspire. At first the cultists offered up simple animal sacrifices, laying the bodies of lambs and calves upon the fallen stone blocks that litter the slope of the Kingspire ridge. Whether out of divine favor or simply the fickle, uncaring hand of fate, the cultists prospered while the rest of the hamlet suffered misfortune and disaster.

Fearing the rise of the swamp-born cult, the local priest sent word to the king. The messenger betrayed the priest and instead reported the missive to Arkos. The next full moon, it was the priest's steaming corpse that adorned the crude altar. The death of the priest ushered in a time of terror for the villagers. Those with the means to flee deserted the hamlet, but those that were too poor or weak to leave either professed devotion to Arkos' mystery god or were offered up in bloody sacrifice.

For Arkos, the sacrifices were merely a means to an end. In his heart, he knew that the secret of Kingspire was hidden inside the ridge, and the miller was marking the path with blood.

## THE SECRET OF KINGSPIRE



Times past, long after the sun had set on the Elder Kith, the Drachenvold swamp marked the furthest reaches of the ancient elvish empire. As the empire fell into darkness and chaos, rebel lords accelerated its decline by breaking from the royal houses and claiming fiefdoms for their own.

Chief among these young lords were the brothers Nyrae, who led their kith and kin into the wilderness, and erected the mighty Kingspire, a citadel from whence they might subdue the surrounding lands and rule independent of their decadent kind.

But the wilderness brought its own host of challenges, and chief among them were the dread Thal, tribes of sub-human savages who coveted the Elder Kith's mastery over magic and metal.

## THE COURT OF ETERNAL NIGHT



The second part of the adventure takes place in a Kingspire Citadel that is neither in the past, nor in the future, but rather exists *elsewhere*. This portion of the Kingspire was torn from the material plane and suspended in a temporal loop in which the same night repeats itself, again and again.

The arrival of the PCs offers the Black Prince a chance to upset the balance. Two of the adventurers resemble the witch's lover and the Princes' sister. The regents are wicked and evil, but they also hold the key to the PCs' escape from the cursed demi-plane.

Though they have existed within this forsaken place for over a thousand years, the creatures of the dreaming court do not age. Here, it is eternally the night of siege, when the savage barbarians overran the Kingspire, slaughtering its guardians and all that dwelled within.

## THE ELDER KITH



The Elder Kith are ancient forebears of the elves, whose nature is even more closely entwined with the Elflands. Like elves, they are deeply enmeshed with the machinations of supernatural entities, but they are even more susceptible to the presence of cold iron. The Elder Kith suffer an additional 1d6 damage whenever struck by an iron or steel weapon. The Elder Kith all have the ability to use an Action Die to pass through the Hidden Ways – holes in the weft of reality that allow them to disappear from one place and reappear in another. An Elder Kith can use this ability to effectively teleport up to 10' away per Hit Die of the Elder Kith.

Few Elder Kith still dwell in the Lands We Know. Most passed into Elfland so long ago that even the elves view their time on the Known World as part of a semi-mythical past. When dealing with elves, the Elder Kith tend to call them “younger cousin.”

## PLAYER BEGINNING

**R**ead or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure: *By the time you reach the hill overlooking Kingspire, the sun is low in the sky, casting an ominous red haze through the thick swamp mists. The hamlet is set on the edge of a low marsh; from your vantage point can just make out the rocky spire at the heart of the Drachenvold swamp. The village itself is strangely silent.*

*The muddy, rutted road that has brought you this far continues down the slope to the hamlet’s low, earthen wall. To your left, a narrow footpath picks its way down the rocky slope to the swamp, before continuing on to the hamlet.*

*The air cools as the day wears on, causing the seething mists to roll in from the swamp, first obscuring the hamlet, and then curling like ghostly tentacles around you and your companions.*

## KINGSPIRE HAMLET

**A**t the time of the PCs’ arrival, most of the hamlet’s populace is already high atop of the Kingspire, preparing a rite that is intended to shatter the boundary between the past and present Kingspires. The remaining inhabitants are leaving to join their fellow cultists shortly.

While it is likely that encounters in Kingspire will turn to combat, violence is not necessary to advance the plot. Adventurers favoring duplicity and deception can accomplish much by disguising themselves as cultists or their allies.

There are two principle entrances to the hamlet. The first, the King’s Road, is the most direct, and shows signs of regular use. The second is a humble footpath winding its way down the ridge to the swamp’s edge, before meandering into town.

**Area K-1 – The Witch of Drachenvold:** *The narrow, muddy footpath wends its way down the rocky slope. At the base of the steep hill, where the ridge meets the swamp, is a small hut with a thatched roof and mud and wattle walls. The bones of small animals dangle from the eaves like wind chimes, clattering and clacking as a chill breeze blows mist in from the swamp.*

*The thick mists roll in, and in moments, the hut vanishes into a bank of fog.*

The hut is home to an ancient, slightly crazed crone, known to the locals as the Witch of Drachenvold. Although she appears to be an elf, nearly skeletal and hunchbacked with age, she is one of the original inhabitants of the Kingspire Citadel. The witch is quick to recognize the PCs’ purpose for coming to Kingspire. Far from a force for Law or Chaos, the crone is content to let her auguries determine her reaction to the adventurers.



As the fog descends upon the PCs, anyone succeeding on a Luck check immediately feels as if they are being watched. The crone’s “lovelies,” a pair of ancient crocodiles, move in with the fog, lurking 50 feet or more from the hut, but closing quickly if the encounter devolves into combat.

The hut has a single, low entrance that forces all but halflings to stoop as they enter. From the outside, the hut is surely no more that 12 feet across, but inside it seems to be quite spacious and nearly 20 feet in diameter. A fire pit in the center of the hut’s muddy, wooden floor provides illumination and warmth. The walls are hung with the skins of dead rats, lizards, and vultures, alongside large ceramic decanters filled with odd, viscous liquids. A variety of rats, toads, crows, and small black cats sit in cages hung from the ceiling, and tiny black spiders race everywhere. The hut smells of bitter herbs, burnt fat, and wood smoke.

The crone is crouched before the fire, stirring the dying embers with a smoldering twig. As the PCs enter, she looks up with milky white eyes and begins to giggle. Tossing a log onto the fire, the witch beckons them closer.

The crone is a skeletal, hunchbacked Elder Kith dressed in a robe of rags and stitched animal skins. Her hands are dark from soot and grease, and her curling black fingernails haven’t been cut in decades. When she smiles (which is nearly constantly), the Witch reveals blackened, dying teeth and diseased gums that have whitened with age. Her speech alternates between high-pitched giggles, and a grim, threatening growl.

The sole inhabitant of the Kingspire to escape the fell curse, old age has rendered the Witch utterly mad. What little sanity she has is founded on loyalty to her long vanished kin; the Witch works to aid the Lost House, but her tactics are obscure at best.

The crone insists on reading the PCs' fortunes, preferring to single out any elf.

*The ancient crone cackles with unholy delight as you draw near. "The Kingspire knows its own, yes it does. You have been here before, no? And here you will remain, until the spire sinks back into the mists from whence it arose, until the end comes to all things."*

*Still cackling madly, the crone empties a vial of viscous blood onto the muddy floor, scraping runes into the grime. Looking up with pale white eyes, she extends a single bony hand, saying, "A bit of hair, or flesh, to give the spell its soul. The stones must have something to win, eh?"*

If the PC complies, offering the Witch a bit of his or her hair or a piece of flesh, she places the component into her mouth, chewing vigorously with the few teeth she still has, before spitting it into the witch's brew on the floor. Her preparations complete, the witch casts three runestones into the slick puddle.

The replicate the rite, roll three 4-sided dice before the players and act out the result.

Roll (3d4)	Fortune
3	<i>"Woe! You are the end to House Nyrae, and this must not come to pass!"</i> Cackling madly, the Witch calls for her lovelies (the pair of crocodiles), and then hurls herself into battle.
4-5	<i>"Heavy is the head that wears the crown. We honor you, Monarch of the Damned. Your throne awaits you atop Old Kingspire."</i> The crone reaches into her robes and retrieves a dark crown of heavy ancient bronze, swaddled in rags, and offers it to the PC.
6-9	<i>"Secrets lurk beneath Old Kingspire. Search there for answers, but 'ware the exiled Regent and his Court. The humblest twig will be the end of them all!"</i> The witch offers the PCs the Witch's Twig.
10-11	<i>"The Dragon arises, once more! Share this ring with the black-haired regent, and she will favor you with her boons."</i> The crone removes an emerald ring from her skeletal fingers and presses it into the PC's hands.
12	<i>"Your coming has been long foretold. The old rites are undone, and the end is upon us all! Lord Death rises from the deeps, and you are his herald!"</i> Cackling madly, the Witch calls for her lovelies (the pair of crocodiles), and then hurls herself into battle.

If at any point the PCs attack the Witch, she responds in kind, calling out for her lovelies. As the pair of crocs enters, the hut enlarges even further, reaching a diameter of 30 feet across. At the same time, a trio of leaping spiders descends from the ceiling, growing from small spiders (the size of a small coin) to fearsome, dog-sized monstrosities.

The spiders keep close to the Witch; by using an Action Die, a spider may leap in the way of a ranged attack against their mistress. If the attack roll is high enough to hit the spider, the spider takes normal damage; otherwise, the spider deflects it. The crocs, for their part, hurl themselves at their foes, doing everything in their power to defend the Witch.

In addition to the normal abilities and limitations of the Elder Kith, the Witch can use the evil eye three times each day, and a spoken curse once each day. The evil eye can target any character in sight, causing 2d4 damage (Will DC 14 half). The spoken curse ("Bobugbubilz I call to thee/let my foes your children be!") forces all enemy combatants to make a DC 12 Will or Fort save each round (whichever is better), or suffer 1d3 temporary Personality damage. A character whose Personality drops to 0 is transformed into a common toad. Three successful saves prior to transformation end the curse, but otherwise the transformation is permanent unless undone by magic or divine intervention (DC 8).

A fourth spider, which remains hidden in the rafters of the hut, is the Witch's familiar. If she is slain, her soul enters this spider and seeks to escape.

**The Witch of Drachenvold (Elder Kith witch):** Init -2; Atk claw -2 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, evil eye, spoken curse, familiar, spellcasting, pass through Hidden Ways 30'; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +8, AL C.

The Witch can cast the following spells with a +8 bonus to the spell check: *ray of enfeeblement, paralysis, and second sight.*

**Leaping spiders (4):** Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30' or leap 10'; Act 2d20; SP protect Witch; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +0; AL C.

**Crocodiles (2):** Init -3; Atk bite +5 melee (3d4); AC 17; HD 3d8; hp 13 each; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N.

The *Witch's Twig* grants a +1 bonus to spell checks 3 times each day, and binds the wielder to Bobugbubilz in two ways. First, if the character uses spellburn while using the Twig, she uses the toad fiend's spellburn table. Second, if the user rolls a natural "1" on a spell check while using the Twig, she gains a patron taint from Bobugbubilz in addition to any other effect that may occur.

Ages past, the Witch owned jewels and treasures worthy of an Elder Kith princess. But in the centuries since her flight from the Kingspire, much of what she owned has been lost, traded in exchange for favors, or simply abandoned and left to vanish into the swamp's murky waters. The little treasure she does have is worn on her person. In addition to the Twig, ring, and crown, the witch wears a greasy golden necklace hung with a bird skull (worth 25 gp), and carries a simple leather pouch that contains 50 well-worn cp.





The items hung about the hut are largely worthless, but a close search turns up the equivalent of 3 doses of a *potion of healing* (each doing 1 HD of healing), a vial of draconic acid (which does 1d5 damage to a target each round, until the target succeeds in a DC 15 Fort save), and an ominous carven idol depicting a dragon devouring itself.

**Area K-2 – The Body in the Rushes:** As the PCs pass this area, secretly make a Luck check (DC 12) for the character with the highest Luck score. Alert PCs on the lookout for danger may discover the body automatically.

*You and your sharp-eyed companions spy something hidden in the rushes on the side of the road – a figure hunched low to the ground and perfectly still.*

Investigation shows the figure to be the body of a man in his late forties, dressed in muddy rags. A pair of arrows lodged in the corpse's back leave little mystery about the cause of death. The arrows are fletched with black feathers, matching those carried by the bowmen in area K-3.

The villager was Tomkin the Shepherd. Refusing to bow to the cult's evil ways, he attempted to flee and was shot. Tomkin eluded pursuit, but finally succumbed to his wounds, collapsing in the ditch.

Tomkin collapsed atop a sheet of parchment, ruined with mud and tucked into his belt. This parchment, stolen from a tome Arkos found in the ruins of Old Kingspire, is Hand-out A.

**Area K-3 – The Watch:** Ahead, the muddy track runs to a crude wooden gate set into the wooden palisade that surrounds the hamlet. Smokey torches are set atop the palisade wall, casting a hellish red glow through the mist and soot.

*A small earthen rampart rises to the palisade. Figures stand watch atop the wall, their spears held at the ready.*

A band of watchmen stand atop the wall. Rough men in shaggy beards and muddy armor, they are loyal to the cult, and tasked with ensuring that the night's ritual isn't interrupted.

Their captain, Jon Ocat, is a cagey veteran. What he lacks in intelligence, he makes up in cunning and hard earned experience. Ocat calls out to the PCs, asking their names and business, playing the part of an anxious watchman. A quick look is enough to ascertain that the Watch's bowmen carry black-fletched arrows identical to those that killed the villager in area K-2.

Jon Ocat is eager to learn what brought the PCs to the hamlet. If they appear to be agents of the crown, sent to investigate Kingspire, the captain does his best to lure them into an ambush (see below). However, if the PCs keep Jon in the dark about their true intent (or manage to convince him that they are a part of the cult), Jon hesitantly allows them to enter but insists on accompanying the PCs, escorting them to the Miller's Apprentice (area K-5).



**Ambush!** The captain calls for the gates to be drawn aside and welcomes the PCs into the hamlet. Once they enter, he springs an ambush, attacking the PCs from all sides with his spearmen, while the archers fire into the melee. Jon Ocat is no fool – if all his spearmen fall in battle, he orders a withdraw, retreating back to the Old Mill (area K-5), joining the Miller’s Apprentice in the defense of the hamlet.

If captured, Ocat attempts to buy his freedom by spinning a tale of how he and other villagers were pressed into service by Arkos. (The tale is a lie; Jon Ocat joined freely, eager to indulge his cruel and hateful nature.) While the Captain has little insight into Arkos’ true motivations, he readily betrays his master, confessing to the PCs how Arkos has pressed the entire hamlet into service of a foul, unknown power. He also tells the PCs that tonight the cult is holding a rite atop the Ruins of Old Kingspire, in the hopes of opening a portal to lost powers.

**Jon Ocat, Watch Captain:** Init +5; Atk spear +6 melee (1d8+3); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 18; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C. Leather armor, shield, spear.

**Spearmen (4):** Init +0; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C. Leather armor, spear, 4 javelins.

**Huntsmen (4):** Init +1; Atk short sword +0 melee (1d6) or short bow +1 ranged (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C. Leather armor, short bow, quiver of 20 arrows, short sword.

**Area K-3A – Abandoned Home:** *The ramshackle hut is silent and cold. Cobwebs hang over the door, in the corners of the hut, and from the low, thatched ceiling. The hearth is cold and untended, with simply a rusted pot hanging over the dead coals.*

When the cultists came to power they drove out most of the village’s good folk, leaving many of the homes abandoned. The cultists have looted these huts, taking anything of use and destroying everything else. If the heroes inspect multiple huts, the judge should vary the description slightly (one might have a muddy floor from a leaking roof, while another shows signs of a rat infestation), but on the whole, the huts are identical.

PCs taking the time to scour the huts have the chance to uncover clues pointing to the fate of the hamlet. For PCs searching a hut, roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

Roll (1d12)	Discovery
1-3	Bloodstains on the walls and floor, and a broken, bloodied, spear-tip buried in one of the wooden beams.
4	A weapons cache, once hidden beneath the floor in the back of the hut, has been unearthed. A few worthless items, scavenged from battlefields in generations passed, still remain, including a pair of pitted and scarred short swords, a dozen spear tips, and a rusted chain hauberk.
5-6	A smashed holy symbol dedicated to the Lawful Goddess of Hearth and Harvest. The symbol is half-buried and crushed into a dozen pieces.
7	A child’s homemade ragdoll, tied from scraps of homespun fabric. The doll has been torn in half and tossed into the hearth.
8-10	A large X drawn in charcoal across the wooden planks of the hut’s door. (A symbol marking the inhabitants as non-believers.)
11	A severed human hand, staked above the hearth with an iron nail; a warning to those that would try to steal from the cult.
12	The corpse of a dog, collapsed in the corner of the hut. A trio of black fletched arrows (matching those carried by the Watch in encounter K-3) is buried in the animal’s chest.

**Area K-4 – Occupied Hut:** Read or paraphrase the following: *The muddy hut squats low to the damp ground. Thin trails of smoke curl from the mud-brick chimney in long tendrils, before vanishing into the gray mist. A single, humble door bars the entrance.*

The huts are occupied by villagers that have either dedicated their lives to the Cult of the Kingspire, or turned a blind eye to the cult’s crimes. Those that aid or abet the cult’s work have prospered under Arkos’ rule, while their goodly neighbors suffer and starve, making their sins all the more damning.

None of the huts have locks, and all the villagers are already en route to the Kingspire, so there is little to prevent the heroes from thoroughly searching the huts. If the PCs inspect multiple huts, the judge should vary the description slightly, but on the whole, the huts are identical.

Characters taking the time to search the inhabited huts have a chance of uncovering clues pointing to the hamlet’s involvement with the cult. On a successful Luck check (DC 10), roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

Roll (1d12)	Discovery
1-3	A simple shrine set into the hut wall, composed of a candlewick in a shallow stone bowl filled with lamp oil. Beneath the bowl is a simple, hand woven altar-cloth, stained with blood, wine, and the ashes of burnt offerings.
4	A partially completed embroidery depicting a worm devouring its own tail.
5-6	A hammered copper chalice, swaddled in cloth and sticky with blood and matted hair.
7	A wooden block, carved to resemble a terrible dragon curling around to devour itself.
8-10	A tray of maggoty sweetmeats, made from the remains of past sacrifices. (See the Old Mill, area K-5).
11	A bloody cleaver, fastened to the end of a cudgel. The haft is decorated with a winding carving of a ferocious worm.
12	A hidden shrine dedicated to a Lawful deity of the judge’s choice. The shrine is secreted beneath a pair of muddy floorboards at the back of the hut.

**Area K-5 – The Old Mill:** *A small, tepid stream runs down the side of the ridge, splashing down over a moss-eaten waterwheel. Beside the waterwheel, set into the grassy ridge, is a humble mill. A simple footpath wends its way past a pair of clay ovens, to the front of the mill.*

Before falling under the spell of the Kingspire, Arkos was a simple miller. The mill, situated away from the village



proper, allowed Arkos and his devotees to worship without fear of interruption from their fellow villagers. Once the cult seized control of the village, the cultists no longer had any need to conceal their horrid practices. Now, the mill serves as a staging place and headquarters for the cult.

**The Ovens:** The clay ovens are hot to the touch. Inside each oven are a dozen small-wafer like sweetmeats made from the ground remains of the cult’s previous victims. Each sweetmeat has been rolled and baked in the shape of a looped knot, in homage to the cult’s all devouring worm.

The sweetmeats, intended to be part of an unholy sacrament atop the Kingspire, are steeped in unholy magics. Anyone consuming one of the cakes immediately marks himself as a devotee of Arkos, granting the cleric power over him. (See encounter area 1, The Ruins of Old Kingspire for more information.) There are a total of 24 sweetmeats baking in the twin clay ovens.

**The Mill:** Map 2 details the interior of the mill. The miller’s apprentice labors inside the mill room, hurriedly working to finish preparations for the night’s festivities. The misshapen giant is feeding corpses of villagers and animals into a chute, then driving the millstone by hand, grinding the bodies into a bloody mush that he bakes into sweetmeats.

Once the handsomest youth in all of Kingspire, the miller’s apprentice has suffered terribly under Arkos’ ministrations.

A towering, misshapen hulk of a man, the apprentice's bones are twisted and overgrown, his skin is stretched taut over his tall, narrow frame, and his eyes and ears have been crudely stitched and stretched to resemble the Elder Kith Arkos has mistaken for the Old Gods.

Despite his size, the apprentice displays only a childlike intelligence. In fact, his master's unpredictable cruelty has made the apprentice hesitant and uncertain. Once his ire is aroused, however, the apprentice is a terrible opponent. He takes up his maul and charges into battle, effortlessly dancing in and among his foes as he deals out devastating blows.

The apprentice does his best to drive PCs into the waterwheel – a successful Mighty Deed requires the target to make a DC 10 Reflex save or suffer 1d12+6 damage from the wheel's crushing force. The victim is then dragged underwater for a round, before surfacing on the far side.

The mill is only one floor, with rafters supporting a half-loft above. Agile (or foolhardy) PCs can ride the turning waterwheel to its peak and leap into the rafters to gain a tactical advantage against the rampaging apprentice, using a successful Mighty Deed or a DC 15 Agility check. Failure means that the PC is immediately caught by the wheel and dealt damage as above, but success allows either a leaping attack using 1d24 to hit, with a critical range of 20-24 or hiding in the rafters to gain a +2 bonus to AC. Note that PCs hiding in the rafters are easily within the range of the apprentice's enormous maul. However, any time a PC attempts to move in the rafters, or takes damage, he must succeed on an Agility check (DC 5 + damage taken) or lose his footing, falling to the floor below (1d6 damage).

**Miller's apprentice:** Init +5; Atk maul 1d5+3 melee (1d8+1d5+3); AC 11; HD 5d12+5; hp 40; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Deed Die (d5); SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C. Maul.

**Arkos' Quarters:** This room holds a simple pallet made from furs and quilts stitched from homespun rags. Arkos carries all of his most prized possessions on his person, so there is very little here of worth.

A simple beeswax candle stands in one corner of the room, beside a collection of odd relics looted from the ruins of Old Kingspire. Included in the pile are the bronze pommel of a shattered sword, a few links of mithral chainmail armor, and the hammered copper boss of a shield depicting a dragon-like worm devouring itself. An elf, sage, or similar character might be able to determine that they are of Elder Kith make with a close inspection (Intelligence DC 15; a result of 20+ reveals that the relics likely belonged to one of the race's exiled rebel houses). Judges should reveal as little or as much of the background story as they see fit, based on the PCs' occupations and background.

At the head of the bed is a sheaf of muddy sheets of parchment. Arkos has diligently recorded his visions, but they are nearly entirely gibberish. The sole sheet of use to PCs is recorded on the reverse of one of the sheets: a crude map of Old Kingspire. (Handout B.)

**The Loft:** Arkos' apprentice spends his nights sleeping on a narrow bed of planks placed across the rafters. Amid the tick-eaten pelts and homespun blankets, there is little of worth. A careful search of the pallet reveals a worn bracelet of silver and gold – Arkos discovered the bracelet in the ruin on one of his later expeditions, and gave it to his apprentice as an afterthought. The simple ornament has become the simpleton's prized possession. The bracelet, a broad band, has little worth (7 gp) were it not for the inscription on the inside of the band. The inscription is in Ancient Elder Kith and reads:

*Atop the Kingspire*

*We raise this Staff of Scorn.*

*And this Sword of Runes*

*Kith & Kin, Bound by Blood*

*May they never be Sundered*

**The Crawlspace:** A trap door is concealed beneath a pile of sacks in the corner of the mill. Swollen shut with moisture, a DC 15 Strength check is sufficient to wrench the trap door open, revealing a crawlspace below. At first glance, the crawlspace is filled with sacks loaded with tubers and squash. Hidden at the very back of the crawlspace is a small bronze coffer.

The coffer, looted from the ruins of Old Kingspire, is fouled with age, making picking the lock more difficult than normal (DC 20). The bronze is corroded, and a DC 20 Strength check is sufficient to wrench open the lid.

The coffer opens to a pair of rotted wooden trays. The top tray holds 21 soiled gp; each is heavily worn and bears the stamp of a dragon, with a sword and arrowhead on the reverse. Amid the coins is a shard of broken a mithral blade, bearing the stamp of a dragon matching the coin.

## THE DRACHENVOLD SWAMP



he swamp is ancient in aspect: its leafless trees are gnarled and twisted, the marsh grasses crackle and break underfoot, and the water is stagnant and still. The thick evening mists are pervasive, curling underfoot and obscuring sight beyond 30 feet. Light behaves strangely in the mists – torch and lantern light seems to flicker and reflect in the distance, while pale globes appear from the swamp waters and vanish in an instant. The stench of rot and decay is everywhere, and the swamp is perfectly silent, making the actions of the adventurers jarringly loud in comparison.

The depth of the bogs varies throughout the swamp. As a rule of thumb, bogs within 50 feet of the shore are 1d6+3 feet in depth, while those further than 50 feet from the shore are 1d12+6 feet deep.

While there are no wandering monsters for the purpose of this adventure, the Drachenvold does lend itself to eerie experiences. For every half-hour spent in the swamp, roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

Roll (1d12)	Discovery
1	A ball of light hovers in the mist just at the edge of the PCs' vision.
2	The adventurers hear screams in the darkness.
3	A PC feels biting worms crawling through the sole of his boot, and burrowing into his flesh. (Inspection reveals that the soles are whole.)
4	One of the characters sees an enormous, serpentine form gliding through the swamp, away from the PCs.
5	A pair of sinister vultures circles above the characters, following them on their way through the swamp.
6	One of the PCs senses a squirming sensation coming from his backpack. Upon inspection the PCs discover that all their food is spoiled, contaminated with writhing worms.
7	One of the adventurers sees a corona glowing around the head of an elf PC. (If there are no elves in the party, determine a PC at random.) None of his companions sees the same halo.
8	A PC slips knee-deep into a hidden bog, coating his trousers and armor in stinking red ooze.
9	The characters hear their names being called from somewhere out in the swamp. The voices are human, but have a sinister, delighted tone.
10	One of the PCs pitches forward in a coughing fit, spitting up a bloody, six-inch worm.
11	Cold chills pass over the party. One PC (determined at random) is strangely immune.
12	A PC's shadow detaches from his form, kills a nearby animal, then returns.

**Area D-1 – The Sodden Punt:** *A narrow dock extends from the muddy shore out over the brackish waters. No more than three planks wide, covered in black mold, and surrounded by high reeds, the dock seems about to vanish into the swamp.*

*At the end of dock is a single, sodden skiff, moored to the dock with a single rotting rope. A pair of 10-foot poles rests against the bow of the skiff.*

The skiff is the last of villager's boats. The rest have already borne the cultists to the Kingspire. The skiff is large enough to accommodate up to 8 PCs, but any larger creatures or mounts will need to be left behind or make their own way through the deep-water bogs.

**Area D-2 – A Watery Grave:** In the course of his ritual sacrifices, Arkos sinks the corpses into the swamp. Some of the corpses, animated by the unholy power of the Kingspire, have awakened from the dead. In each of these areas, they lurk beneath the dark waters, and then flip over the PCs' punt as they pass overhead. The zombies seize hold of the hapless PCs, dragging them down to their watery doom. Kind judges may allow a PC to note ripples in the murky waters just before the zombies surface; otherwise, surprise is assured.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*The brackish water erupts in violence all around you. Horrid groans and the stench of maggoty flesh fill the night, even as rotting fingers seize hold of the skiff, threatening to flip you into the black waters!*

A total of 8 zombies lurk in the waters. Five of the corpses are older and weakened from rot, collapsing quickly beneath determined blows. Three, however, are fresh and fight with terrible, unholy strength.

Any zombie adjacent to the punt can attempt to grab hold of it (AC 8), and any PC in the punt can make an attack to knock the hand free (normal damage with a successful Mighty Deed, or half damage without). At the beginning of any round with 3 or more zombies having hold of the punt, the zombies flip the punt over, spilling all the PCs into the water.

The swamp waters here are 7 feet in depth – just deep enough to drown most PCs.

- Swimming PCs must make a DC 5 Strength check each round to stay afloat. This is modified by armor. A PC can choose to sink but risks drowning.
- Drowning: A submerged PC can hold his breath for as many rounds as his Stamina score. If he engages in actions while submerged, this duration is halved. Once this time limit expires, the PC begins drowning and must make a DC 10 Fortitude save each round or temporarily lose 1 point of Stamina. The save DC increases by 1 each round after the first. A drowning PC can take no actions and must be rescued by another character. When a PC's Stamina reaches 0, he dies. If the PC is rescued, the lost Stamina is restored immediately.
- The base speed of all swimming or submerged characters is halved. That rate is further modified by armor.
- Swimming or submerged PCs suffer a -2 modifier to initiative checks.
- Swimming targets gain a +2 bonus to their AC against ranged attacks originating outside the water. Targets completely underwater add +4 to their AC against attacks from outside the water.



- Attacks by submerged characters are less effective. Slashing and bludgeoning weapons such as axes, clubs, and two-handed swords inflict half-normal damage. Piercing weapons such as spears, daggers, and short swords do normal damage. Missile fire attacks are impossible underwater.
- Spells may not be cast while submerged. Spells may be attempted while treading water, but the caster suffers a -2 penalty to his spell check when doing so.

Complicating matters, a crocodile lurks nearby, a mere 50 feet distant. Drawn by the abundant supply of food, and wary of the un-dead, the crocodile is quick to make a meal out of one of the living if the PCs end up in the water. The crocodile attacks the PC furthest from the action, and then retreats into the swamp with its meal. The crocodile has no interest in the battle itself, and retreats once injured.

**Zombies (8):** Init -4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 11, 10, 3 x 5; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, flip boat; SV Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2; AL C.

**Crocodile:** Init -3; Atk bite +5 melee (3d4); AC 17; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N.

**Area D-3 – The Ruined Steps:** A crude platform of wooden planks and thick branches sit atop enormous blocks of cut granite that have tumbled into the reedy marsh. Above stand two twin pillars, the remnants of the collapsed stone arch.

Several wooden skiffs are moored at the docks, and tracks lead up the muddy slope of the Kingspire.

The makeshift dock is built atop the fallen blocks of the once mighty arch. Once a memorial built in honor of the

Elder Kiths' might, all that remains are the pillars and the fallen blocks.

Each of the pillars bears engravings depicting the history of Clan Nyrae: their break from the Elder Kith empire; the clan striking out into the wilderness; and finally, the founding of the Kingspire Citadel. PCs taking the time to inspect the fallen, muddy blocks discover a grim prophecy: The stones of the fallen arch depict a skeletal king sitting atop a stone throne. A skeletal court, assayed by armies on all sides, surrounds the king. The throne rests upon the back of a two-headed worm.

**Area D-4 – The Silent March:** A narrow path wends its way up the barren ridge. Candles are placed along the sides of the path, lighting the way into the high mists. High above, you can make out the silhouette of the citadel atop the moonlit spire.

A moment or two after the PCs start up the slope, ghostly blue figures emerge from the black waters and march up the path to the top of the spire. Towering, spectral savages armed with spears and battleaxes and girded in hides, the ghosts were once proto-humans, a mere step above Neanderthals. They are the ghosts of the savages that stormed the Kingspire Citadel, bringing the Elder Kith conflict to a head.

There are over 100 ghosts emerging from the swamp, marching up the ridge. The silent ghosts ignore the characters, unless there is an elf among them, in which case, the ghosts gather around that PC, their weapons raised in threat.

The ghosts are entirely insubstantial, and only pose a threat if the PCs flee. The ghosts give chase, their spectral howls

filling the night. Elves are targeted and must make a DC 10 Will save each round until they reach the citadel (area 1-1) or leave Kingspire Island. Those falling to the attack suffer 1d3 points of temporary psychic damage and are slowed by 5'. Elves reduced to 0 hp are unconscious, forcing allies to leave them or carry them to safety.

If unconscious PCs are left behind, the ghosts converge on them. The PC must immediately begin to make a DC 10 Fort save each round. On a failed save, the PC perishes and rises in 1d4 rounds as a ghost (see pp. 413-414 of the *core rulebook*).

## LEVEL 1: RUINS OF OLD KINGSPIRE



he ruins of the citadel are overgrown with ashen vines and noxious weeds. The ruins are mostly 1 story high, with crumbling walls stretching up another 1 or 2 stories in height. Unless otherwise noted, there is no natural light in the old ruins.

**Area 1-1 - Field of the Fallen:** *The rocky ridge gives way to a barren field, utterly devoid of life. A phantasmal light rings the top of the ridge, causing the mists to glow as if lit from below. Ragged war banners, shattered weapons, and bits of broken armor litter the field. Deep in the heart of the mists, a crumbling ruin stands silent in the darkness.*

The war banners, weapons and armor, are all ghostly remnants of a terrible battle waged over a thousand years ago. The battlefield is haunted, and on certain moonlit, misty nights, the spirits of the fallen return to continue their endless battle. Normally, these battles cannot affect the living, but Arkos' fell rites have brought the battle to a fever pitch that spills over into the realm of the living.

As the PCs come within 100 feet of the gatehouse (area 1-2), a heavy mist rolls over the battlefield, obscuring all sight beyond 5 feet. The mist smells of smoke and burning flesh, a fell harbinger of things to come. As the foul mists lift, the PCs see two opposing armies. First, an army of sub-human savages, charging up the slope in their wolf pelts and bear skins, axes and spears raised high. Moments later, an army of cruel-faced Elder Kith, armed with bows and sharp mithral blades, stream from the gatehouse and take up formation at the top of the hill. The PCs are caught between the clashing forces.

It is mere seconds before the armies clash, and immediate action is called for. The battlefield is sufficiently pocked and pitted to allow quick PCs to seek cover, but this solution is only good for a few rounds at the most. The armies crash together in chaotic melee, and the Elder Kith formations stop the charging humans, but their forces are scattered in the process. However, 1d4 rounds into the battle there is nowhere on the ridge for the PCs to hide. The characters must either flee from the battlefield or fight their way through to the gatehouse.

This area is entirely filled with phantasmal combatants. To make any progress, the PCs are forced to hew their way through the chaotic battlefield. For every 15 feet moved, the PCs must succeed in 2 attacks against AC 8. With each successful blow, a phantasm fades into the mist, its face contorted in agony. Characters that move as a pack, defending each other and using their attacks to allow the entire group to move, can make good progress, but if they become separated, the encounter quickly resolves into a deadly blood-

bath. Roll 1d8 each round to determine random battlefield encounters. If the PCs are separated by 15 feet or more, roll for each group individually.

With a Turn check of 15+, a Lawful or Neutral cleric can clear an area of phantasms far enough to move 30' without any chance of a random encounter.

No statistics are provided for these phantasms; the PCs can only interact with them as described.

Roll (1d8)	Encounter
1	No random encounter for the round.
2	A savage astride an enormous warhorse rides down the PCs, spear couched for a charge (+6 melee for 1d6+3 damage).
3	The PCs hear the mournful whistle of war arrows fired from the ranks of the Elder Kith. The arrows rain down over them (DC 15 Reflex save, each character gains a bonus equal to the AC bonus for armor and/or shield, 1d6 damage if failed, 2d6 on a natural "1").
4	A savage standard bearer collapses before the PC, his wolf-skin banner falling to the ground. If the PCs take up the banner, the savages rally around them and surge forward, bringing the PCs within 30 feet of the gatehouse.
5	A mob of savages charges the PCs, howling wildly. They clash with the ranks of adventurers, driving them back 10 feet, stabbing and slicing with their ghostly weapons (+2 melee vs. all characters, 1d8 damage).
6	A spectral wave of fire washes over the battlefield, slaughtering Elder Kith and savages alike (Will DC 5 or suffer 2d6 fire damage), clearing a way for the PCs to advance 30 feet without encountering combatants.
7	An Elder Kith dragonrider swoops down from on high. The dragon attempts to snatch 2 PCs in its ghostly-blue talons, flinging them 30 feet, attacking at +5 melee causing 1d6 damage, and 3d6 damage (Reflex DC 12 half) from being hurled 30 feet.
8	No random encounter for the round.

**Area 1-2 – The Gatehouse:** *You and your companions stumble up the blood soaked steps and into the ruined gatehouse. All is silent, an eerie contrast to mad melee. The field where two great armies fought, just moments before, is now still as the grave.*

*The gatehouse stands in ruins. Fallen blocks and rotting timbers litter the floor and a pair of mighty, ironbound portals, that once might have held back an army, now hangs loosely from their hinges.*

There is little for the PCs to discover in the gatehouse. A close inspection of the floor by a tracker, hunter, or similar character, done *before* the party tracks through the dust and cobwebs, reveals that a large group of humanoids (Arkos and his cultists) recently passed through the gatehouse, en route to the citadel.

**Area 1-3 – The Bridge:** *A narrow stone bridge spans the gap between the gatehouse and the citadel. Leering, horned gargoyles look down from the walls of the ruined citadel, and you can spy holes along the edge of the bridge that once supported wooden railings. Gray mists swirl below in the darkness. Any fall from this height would surely be fatal.*

Despite its age, the bridge remains as sturdy as the day it was constructed. A mere 10 feet in width, those crossing the bridge feel an acute sense of exposure, with the knowledge that it would take little to knock them into the swirling abyss below.

The rocky base of the ravine is 60 feet below, hidden in darkness and the swamp mists.

Cautious PCs inspecting the citadel note light shining into area 1-4 from the arrow slits in areas 1-5, and hear the sounds of loud chanting and drumming coming from area 1-6.

**Area 1-4 – The Killing Hall:** *The short hallway is littered with fallen blocks and overgrown with weeds. It runs no more than five paces before coming to an enormous portal, banded in rusty iron. The portal stands partially open, and from beyond you can hear fevered voices raised in unholy prayer and song.*

Adventurers distracted by the rite taking place in the courtyard (area 1-6) may make a deadly mistake: the north and south walls of the hall are punctuated by arrow slits. Cautious PCs that take the time to inspect the hall before turning their full attention to the courtyard are quick to notice the arrow slits.

As detailed in area 1-5 below, the guards placed by Arkos are anything but attentive, and only take notice of the PCs after one or more of the characters have passed into the hall. Careful PCs can slip past the archers if they take pains to hide themselves in the shadows and are quiet enough to avoid detection. Of course, cunning PCs might come up with even more effective solutions (perhaps by distracting the guards, or dispatching them with well placed spells).

Combat is the least effective tactic. The archers inside the guardrooms enjoy superior cover (+4 to AC), but have no penalties while raining down their arrows on the PCs. See area 1-5 for more information.

**Area 1-5 – Guardrooms:** *The small, ruined chamber has been turned into a camp of sorts. A small fire smolders in the heart of the chamber. A trio of archers dressed in humble, woodsmen garb are crouched around the fire, taking long draws from their wineskins and idly casting dice for handfuls of copper pieces.*

*On the opposite wall you spy a pair of arrow slits.*

Note, the description of the archers is different if the PCs are detected passing through area 1-4, or if the archers join in the general melee of area 1-6.

There are 3 huntsmen in both of the areas keyed 1-5, for a total of 6 huntsmen that can attack area 1-4 if the PCs are discovered. Arkos ordered them to stand guard over the gatehouse to ensure that his ritual isn't interrupted, but the archers believe there is nothing in the swamp foolish or powerful enough to threaten their watch. Sullen because of their assignment, the guards have instead taken to drinking as they wait for Arkos to permit their return.

If the archers detect the PCs passing through area 1-4, they spring to the arrow slits, firing volley after volley of arrows into the hall. If the PCs make it past the archers, or if the archers hear sounds of combat coming from the courtyard (area 1-6), they desert their post, hurrying to the aid of their comrades.

There is little treasure here, as all of the cultists have turned over any items of worth to their master Arkos. A careful search of the bodies garners a meager cache of 3d30 cp, 1d12 sp, and a pair of silvered arrows.

**Huntsmen (6):** Init +1; Atk short sword +0 melee (1d6) or short bow +1 ranged (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C. Leather armor, short bow, quiver of 20 arrows, short sword.

**Area 1-6 – Overgrown Courtyard & the Plague of Worms:** *The ruined courtyard is overgrown with weeds and even a stunted trio of trees. Thick moss has overgrown the surrounding walls, as if the swamp was trying to draw the citadel down into its brackish waters.*

*The courtyard is littered with rubble, but you can spy a mob of ragged and muddy villagers dancing, chanting and howling in the night. They carry flaming brands that send sparks drifting into the misty sky, and farming tools – pitchforks and cleavers – transformed into cruel implements of slaughter.*

*At the far end of the courtyard, obscured by the swamp mists and smoke from the flaming brands, you can make out a high balcony. Lights glimmer and flicker inside the crumbling ruin as the wild dancers reach a fever pitch.*

There are 27 cultists in all, reveling in the courtyard. Ten have been forced into the ritual, and still cling to a semblance of their rational minds. The remaining 17 have sworn their souls and lives to Arkos and his strange cult, and are thoroughly wicked.

The cultists are caught up in their rite. If the PCs make any effort to conceal themselves, it is relatively easy to slip unnoticed to the southern entrance. The northern entrance,





set closer to the bonfire, is more difficult to reach, although a thief or other stealthy character may succeed with three DC 10 checks (move silently, hide in shadows, or halfling's stealth), as determined by the judge.

Statistics for the 17 dedicated cultists are listed below, but the remaining 10 flee at the first chance, wanting nothing but to flee the cult and Arkos' cruelty. If the judge so desires, one or more of these villagers might prove to be a suitable replacement PC. Otherwise, these craven villagers are of no use in a fight, dropping their weapons and falling prone if confronted.

The 17 cultists, however, have no qualms about giving their lives in the name of Arkos. Their master has promised them eternal rewards and more, and the cultists have foolishly bought into his promises. While the cultists try to surround the PCs, the hunters hurl their daggers into the fray, and the woodsmen lay into those that try to break free of the cordon.

Arkos and his retinue are preparing their rite from atop the balcony (area 1-15). If the PCs elect to bring the battle to the cultists, Arkos retires to area 1-14 to complete his ritual, but if the PCs conceal themselves and allow the ritual to progress, read or paraphrase the following:

*A ragged, wild haired man appears on the balcony above the courtyard. A pair of silent priests dressed in black robes and bearing a chalice and a large, earthenware jug flanks the man.*

*The wild-haired man raises his arms to the crowd and the dancers go quiet.*

*"Ages past, when the world was still young, and the race of man was little more than tribal bands," he intones, his deep voice filling the courtyard, "the Kingspire shined like a jewel in the wilderness. But our ancestors, with savage cruelty and bloodied fist, laid low the Kingspire and its rulers, destroying what should have been our legacy."*

*"The rulers of this mighty citadel fled, beyond the veil of day and night, like unto immortals. We were meant to sit with them and raise cups of ruby wine in their eternal court at twilight, as kith and kin."*

*With wild eyes the man fills the chalice from the earthen jug and drinks deeply, spilling down his beard and staining his robes crimson. "Join me, brothers and sisters! Let your chants echo through the ages as we call back the Master of Kingspire! You are the holy ones, chosen to feed His hunger, and thereby secure your place beside His mealy throne! Give your lives for Him now, so that He might cleanse the world, and raise your fists in triumph! For long has He slept and great is His hunger!"*

*The wild-haired man raises the earthenware jug over his head and casts it out over the courtyard. It crashes down among the revelers, who immediately break into a riot, fighting for drops of the foul potion. Laughing mightily, the priest withdraws into the citadel.*

As the cultists fall upon the liquid, a great rumbling shakes the Kingspire. Moments later, the ground underfoot begins to roll and shift as thousands of worms squirm their way up from the ground. Unless engaged in combat, the cultists hurl themselves to the ground, and are quickly devoured by the worms, leaving naught but bones stripped of muscle and flesh. However if the PCs played their hand too early, the cultists stumble their way through the plague of worms in an effort to turn the PCs into a sacrificial offering.

For their part, the PCs must succeed on DC 10 Reflex save each round or fall to the ground. Any PC falling against the ground is immediately attacked by flesh eating worms (+4 melee, 1d8+2 damage). Additionally, with the arrival of the worms, movement in the entire courtyard is reduced by half, and it becomes impossible to run or charge.

The plague of worms is merely a precursor of things to come, and only extends over area 1-6. Once the PCs leave the courtyard, they are free from the threat of the worms.

Arkos does not stay to fight – he is too busy bringing about the end of the world. If the PCs somehow force Arkos and his retinue to stay, their statistics are provided in area 1-14.

**Woodsmen (2):** Init +0; Atk Woodsman's axe +1 melee (1d6) or handaxe +1 ranged (1d6); AC 10; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C. Woodsman's axe, handaxe.

With a successful hit with a boar spear, a huntsman can hold his target in place, preventing attacks from shorter weapons and possibly forcing an enemy combatant to the ground with an opposed Strength check. A DC 10 Strength check, using an Action Die, frees the pinned target.

**Huntsmen (5):** Init +1; Atk boar spear +2 melee (1d8 + pin) or dagger +0 ranged (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP pin (with boar spear, Strength DC 10 negates); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C. Leather armor, boar spear, dagger.

**Cultists (10):** Init +2; Atk polearm +0 melee (1d10); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C. Polearm (cleaver attached to pole).

**Area 1-7 – The Dungeon Tower:** *This wide tower once offered a commanding view over the swamp to the north and east. Now it is like much of the rest of the castle, merely a ruined shadow of its former majesty. Debris litters the tower floor, forcing you to carefully pick your way through the fallen rubble.*

Concealed amid the rubble is a locked (DC 10) heavy bronze grate opening to a spiral staircase. The key to the lock is kept hidden in area 1-8. The staircase below has collapsed, making passage impossible without weeks of heavy digging.

The tower once served as quarters for the Elder Kith archers serving the regents of the Kingspire. A careful search of the rubble along the arrow slits lining the walls reveals a deteriorating leather quiver containing a sheaf of 12 ar-

rows. While all of the arrows are ruined with age (and worthless, like the quiver) there is a pair of bowstrings threaded into the decaying leather of the quiver. Wound with gold and silver thread, and strands of hair taken from a unicorn's mane, the bowstrings bestow a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls to any non-magical bow. The ancient bowstrings fray quickly and are only good for 1d12 uses, each. The arrows have silver heads, now blackened with age, which can be discovered only if the PCs actually examine the arrowheads. Each is worth 5 sp.

**Area 1-8 – Ruined Storeroom:** The western door to this chamber is stuck, and requires a DC 10 Strength check to force open, alerting the archers in area 1-5 who investigate the noise in 1d6 rounds. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The rotting door gives way, revealing what appears to be an old storeroom. Shelves line the walls, laden with ancient casks, bundles and crates. Many of the shelves have collapsed, spilling their ruined contents to the floor.*

At first glance, there is little here to merit the PCs' interest. The storeroom's contents have all been rendered worthless by the passage of time. Thorough PCs, however, are in luck: there is a hidden panel set into the north wall. Plastered over with mud, ages ago, the panel is easily pried loose with the tip of a dagger. However, the panel is also trapped, and PCs failing to take the appropriate countermeasures are targeted by a billowing cloud of icy air that freezes skin, sears eyelids, and scars the lungs (2d8 damage, Fort DC 14 for half). A DC 10 Find traps roll notes that the panel is cold, but methods to disarm the trap are left to the players' imaginations – the easiest method is to pierce the panel from a distance, causing the trap to discharge.

Hidden behind the panel is a dark velvet pouch sewn with small diamond chips in imitation of the night sky (worth 200 gp). The pouch contains a large, ceremonial key ring chased with platinum (worth 50 gp) and a trio of bronze keys that open the gates in areas 2-15.

**Area 1-9 – The Ruins Below:** *The narrow staircase descends the side of the citadel to a platform below. The steps are slick with black moss and condensation. Swirling mists obscure the sheer drop to the base of the citadel far below.*

Descending the steps brings the PCs to an old ruined entrance to the citadel's dungeon level. The entrance is secured by a locked gate of heavy bronze (Open locks DC 15); the key to the gate can be found hidden in area 1-8.

Through the rusty bars, the PCs can see that the chamber is largely in ruins. The ceiling above has partially caved-in, and the remainder of the chamber is in danger of collapse. The chamber was once the quarters of the dungeon's master torturer, the cruel Elder Kith responsible for extracting secrets and instilling fear in the regent's enemies. Apart from a few cruel implements trapped beneath fallen blocks (leg manacles, brands, thumb screws and bits of a broken rack) little is left to testify to the horrors that took place here.

In the very back of the chamber, some 20 feet distant from the entrance, stands an “iron” maiden made of bronze. When the citadel fell to the Nyrae’s curse, a female elf was left trapped in the bronze maiden, where she died a slow and agonizing death. The residual, psychic taint of her tortured spirit permeates the torture device, threatening to draw the PCs into its ancient misery.

The first PC to see the bronze maiden is targeted by the lingering spirit and must make a DC 15 Will save. Whether or not the save is successful, the PC feels hatred and agony wash over him, emanating in waves from the bronze maiden. Additionally, on a failed save, the PC is pricked, as if by a thousand tiny spikes, causing 1d3 points of damage per round. The PC’s blood, however, weeps from the bronze maiden, emerging from a hundred tiny pinholes and running in tiny rivulets down into the stone floor. This damage ends when the bronze maiden is opened, or the PC is brought out of the area (up the stairs to area 1-8 is sufficiently distant).

**Opening the Maiden:** One of the timbers supporting the remainder of the ceiling is resting precariously against the bronze maiden. Opening the maiden causes the beam to shudder and fall, causing the ceiling to collapse. When the maiden is opened, the animated corpse of the elf woman springs out, grasping hungrily for the nearest living creature.

When the maiden is opened, call for initiative for every PC in the room; roll 1d20+5 for the corpse as well. Characters beating the corpse’s initiative can leap for safety, insuring that they take only half damage from the falling ceiling, and allowing a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid all damage.

However, if the corpse succeeds in beating any of the PC on initiative, it leaps to the closest, slowest PC (+7 melee, 1d3 damage and holds PC fast). On a successful attack the PC is held in place and suffers the full brunt of the collapsing ceiling (3d6). Characters who pause to attack the corpse automatically suffer full damage from the collapsing ceiling. The corpse is no longer animated after the ceiling collapses.

If the PC survives the collapse, he discovers a silver ring clutched in the skeletal hand, forged in the likeness of intertwined leaves, wound around a glittering ruby. Though not magical, this band once held great worth to the regent of the Kingspire.

Apart from the ring, there is no treasure to be found in the chamber.

**Area 1-10 – The Hall of Shattered Panes:** *A once-majestic hall now stands in ruin. The vast ceiling arches high overhead, decorated with leering gargoyles, demons, and devils that seem frozen in the semblance of life. Four towering windows line the outside of the hall, their panes shattered into a thousand shards that litter the floor. Something, or someone has laid the shards out in the shape of a dragon.*

Any effort to look for tracks confirms that nothing (living) has passed through this hall in many a decade. Arkos rightly fears this hall, and has commanded his followers not disturb the “haunted hall of many panes.”

This hall was once decorated with elaborate stained glass panes – works of art that also came with a curse. While the hall poses very little threat in its ruined condition, keen investigators might glean details that will aid them when they encounter the hall in its previous incarnation (see area 2-3).

A cursory inspection of the glass reveals that most of the shards are stained with blood, and that the skeletons of a dozen tall, humanoids litter the corners and walls of the chamber. (Heroes might mistake these for Elder Kith, but their build is far too stocky. They actually belong to the sub-human savages that attacked the Kingspire in ages past.)

A more thorough inspection of the chamber reveals 4 nooks set in the north wall, opposite the empty windows. In the past, these nooks served as simple altars to the vices celebrated by the cruel Elder Kith, but now their contents have been scattered throughout the ruined hall or stolen by scavengers.

**Area 1-11 – Tower of the Magus:** The arched stone bridge leading to area 1-11 fell away decades ago, forcing explorers to puzzle their way across the gap. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The stone archway comes to an abrupt halt. The bridge has fallen away here, leaving a daunting gap to the far side. Across the gap are the ruins of an enormous tower. Once several stories in height, the tower now stands as an empty husk, a few ruined gargoyles watching from atop its crumbling walls.*

It is a 10-foot jump (Strength DC 10 or DC 15 without a running start) to reach the far side of the collapsed bridge, but PCs making the leap without adequate precautions (spells, or simply tying a rope to their companions) are in for a deadly surprise. The 5 feet of the platform on the tower side (to the south) is crumbling and readily collapses under the weight of a PC. Characters successfully leaping the gap, hit the far side, only to have it crumble beneath their feet. PCs must succeed on an immediate DC 15 Strength or Agility check (player’s choice). Those failing *this* check must make a DC 20 Reflex save or plummet 50 feet to rocky ground below (5d6 falling damage).

Characters succeeding on a Strength check or the Reflex save are clinging by their fingertips, and must make a DC 10 Strength check each round to hold on. Those succeeding by 5 or more manage to drag themselves back on to the bridge, but otherwise, they must be saved by their allies before weakening ... and plummeting to their fate. A thief may add his Climb bonus to this check, and a warrior or dwarf may add the result of her Deed Die. Note that once the bridge falls away, the leap to jump the gap becomes 15 feet in width, increasing the DC for success to 15 with a



running start or 20 without. Once the PCs have the time to inspect the tower on the far side of the collapsed bridge, read or paraphrase the following.

*A single hammered copper portal, stained with verdigris, guards the entrance to the ruined tower. The portal is decorated with reliefs of a spiraling vine that follows the curve of the arched door, wending its way around a hammered copper sun and moon, before winding down the far side of the portal. Framed within the work, wielding the contrasting might of the sun and moon, stands a looming sorcerer.*

This tower was once the lair of powerful Elder Kith magus. It has since fallen into a ruin and little remains to interest heroes. Some of the magus' guardians, however, remain ready to carry out their tasks, in obedience to a master who has long since passed from the world.

Five ruined gargoyles lurk atop the crumbling walls of the tower, some 25 feet overhead. Their bodies are pitted and cracked with age; their magic has diminished to the point that they no longer have the ability to fly. However, the gargoyles have adapted to their ruined condition and still make deadly opponents. As the last of the PCs crosses over to the far side of the bridge, the gargoyles hurl themselves off of their perches at the adventurers, crashing down amid them, and likely achieving surprise (+4 to hit, 2d6 damage per dropping gargoyle). The gargoyles are not harmed by the fall.

Once at ground level, the gargoyles scratch and claw at the PCs, doing their best to repel the intruders. The gargoyles are under orders to repel all invaders.

**Gargoyles (5):** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d4); AC 21; HD 2d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP drop attack, half damage from non-magical weapons; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

The interior of the tower is a collection of fallen granite blocks, rotted timbers, and shards of slate shingles. The rubble makes searching for anything of value exceedingly difficult. However, thorough explorers are rewarded for their diligence. A close search of the tower floor (requiring 1 hour or more) discovers a small silver coffer trapped beneath the rubble.

Digging the coffer free, the PCs find that - while the coffer is hopelessly crushed - its contents have survived. Once locked, the coffer's clasp was snapped off when the tower collapsed. Inside, swaddled in a black velvet bag stitched with silver runes, is a gold-colored orb carved from crystal. This orb, a relic from a previous age, holds the secrets to the Kingspire's past.

Out of place and out of time, the *Orb of the Magi* grants a +3 bonus to spell checks where at least 1 point of spellburn is used, up to three times each day. Each time that it is used, there is a cumulative 1% chance that 1 point of the spellburn is permanent; once this occurs, the chance is reset.

**Area 1-12 - Western Blockhouse:** *The square tower chamber is littered with debris. Water collects in pools on the stone floor, amid the fallen timbers and crumbling stones. Muddy stone steps rise to a central platform above. A dozen or so small burning lamps rest on the steps, casting the staircase in flickering yellow light.*

Tracking confirms what cautious PCs likely suspect: dozens of muddy footprints lead up the stairs. The staircase is trapped, however, with thin trip wire strung along the steps (DC 12 to locate, DC 10 to disarm). PCs unlucky enough to spring the trap overturn 3 casks of oil, showering all of the steps with oil.

The oil is instantly ignited by the lamps resting on the steps, resulting in a raging inferno that washes up the stairs, causing fire damage to all characters on the stairs. The flames persist for 3 rounds, doing 3d6 the first round, 2d6 the second, and 1d6 the third round, before dying down into tiny patches of pooled oil. A character who clears the oil and stops, drops, and rolls can reduce damage by 1d6 each round, or extinguishes the flames altogether with a DC 10 Ref save.

**Area 1-13 - Balcony:** *Stairs rise to a wide balcony that overlooks the courtyard below. At the back of the balcony, stairs climb towards to the inner keep of the citadel. The balcony is decorated with elaborate stonework: curling stone vines, forest animals, and bas-reliefs of dark, wooded groves, adorn the chamber.*

*Plates of glowing embers are placed about the floor and the air is thick with the smell of burning incense.*

If the PCs have not raised an alarm among the cultists, Arkos and his 5 initiates are here, preparing to make an offering in the name of the spirits inhabiting the Kingspire.

If the PCs have been detected, however, or set off the trap in area 1-12, Arkos has retreated to area 1-14, leaving his cultists to fend off the PCs. The cultists fight in a holding action, stalling the PCs long enough for Arkos to finish his rite.

The cult champions are arrayed in rusted armor, scavenged from the innumerable armies that perished trying to assault the Kingspire. The champions fight with ancient, rusted swords and pockmarked shields. The initiates swarm around them, doing their best to harass and harry the PCs, buying their master time.

If the PCs succeed in surprising the cultists, Arkos fights just long enough to break free to area 1-14. Arkos is obsessed with completing his rite, never realizing that the damage has already been done. His initiates fight to the death, confident in the eternal reward promised them. If the PCs succeed in defeating Arkos here, see **Curse of the Kingspire**, below.

Arkos can call upon the *fist of the ancients* as a harmful spell 3 times per day, sending a stone fist unerringly toward his target for 1d8+2 damage (Will DC 13 half). In addition, he can turn away foes 3 times each day using his unholy symbol (an image of a dragon swallowing its tail); opponents must make a DC 13 Will save to approach within 30' of Arkos for the next 1d6 rounds.

**Arkos, cult leader:** Init +4; Atk mace +3 melee (1d6+1) or harmful spell; AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 15; Act 1d20; SP harmful spell; SC Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C. Leather armor, mace.

**Cult champions (2):** Init +2; Atk short sword +4 melee (1d6+2); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C. Rusted scraps of armor, rusted short sword.

**Initiates (4):** Init +1; Atk spear +0 melee (1d8); AC 12; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C. Rotting leather armor, spear.

**Area 1-14 – Chapel of the Crow King:** If Arkos survives his encounter with the PCs in area 1-13, he flees here, desperate to complete the rite that will return the Kingspire to greatness. Unbeknownst to the deluded would-be sorcerer, the curse of the Kingspire has already been triggered.

If Arkos was slain atop the balcony in the previous encounter, proceed to **Curse of the Kingspire**, below. Otherwise, read or paraphrase the following:

*The dark chapel is silent and still, a preternatural gloom smothering all hints of light or sound. A thick coat of dust covers the doors, cobwebs hang from the ceiling, and moldering tapestries drape the walls. A dusty stairway rises to a loft, decorated with solemn gargoyles and leering dragons. The sensation of magic is thick in the air, like a terrible storm about to break.*

If the PCs are bearing light, they may note tracks leading up the stairs rising to the balcony above. Arkos is lurking in the back of the loft, ready to spring an ambush on the PCs.

As the characters enter the chamber, they hear a soft chanting that quickly rises to an apocalyptic shout. Crying out



to the Crow King, Arkos hurls a black orb down from the loft. Nearby PCs can attempt DC 15 Reflex saves to catch the orb before it strikes the ground. However it avails them little – the orb has an eggshell-like consistency and whether it strikes the ground or is caught by a PC, it shatters into a thousand tiny shards.

For an instant, a mute, eldritch silence engulfs the world. Moments later, a wave of magic, sounding like the crash of a thousand armies, washes over the PCs, rendering them unconscious. When they awake, they are still in the Kingspire, though in another world.

See the **Player Beginning for Level 2** for more information.

**Curse of the Kingspire:** Despite Arkos' success or failure at completing his faux rite, the results are largely the same. With the priest's death, the curse is triggered, sending an eldritch wave rolling over the Kingspire.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*You hear a crash, and then a cacophony like the breaking of a thousand crystal shards. Your companions shout over the noise and point towards the heart of the Kingspire. A wave of eldritch force, distending and destroying everything it passes, rolls your way!*

The PCs cannot outrun the eldritch wave, though the judge should call for actions all the same. All characters in the Kingspire are rendered unconscious. When they awake, they remain within in the Kingspire, though in another time and space. See the **Player Beginning for Level 2** for more information.

# LEVEL 2: LOST KINGSPIRE



In order to escape the barbarian assault, the rulers of Kingspire tore the fabric of space and time to carry their home to safety. However, the rite was only a partial success, and the inhabitants of the Kingspire have languished in their self-wrought prison ever since.

Old Kingspire is the citadel at the height of the barbarian siege, frozen in time like an ant caught in amber. While the world outside has long since forgotten about the inhabitants of the Kingspire and the battles fought there, the inhabitants are forced to relive the same 24 hours, again and again.

The rite that will free the Elder Kith from their prison requires three days to cast. Ironically, the Elder Kith are trapped in an eternity of only *one* day, and can never complete the rite. Weary from their endless existence and unable to win their freedom, the Elder Kith have bitterly resigned themselves to their fate.

The arrival of the PCs changes all this. For the last several hundred years, the Elder Kith have dealt only with one another, warred against the barbarians at their gate, and fought against their kin in the dungeons beneath the Kingspire (detailed in level 3). The arrival of the PCs heralds the introduction of chance, chaos, and change; if the PCs succeeded in entering their cursed prison of shadow and time, there is still the chance that the Elder Kith might escape.

However, the Kith also know that they must act quickly. The adventurers must not be allowed to become jaded, cynical, and forlorn; for once this comes to pass, the PCs will simply be additional courtiers in the Crow King's immortal retinue. Therefore, the court moves quickly, each attempting to turn the PCs' arrival to his or her advantage.

## THE TWILIGHT COURT



The noble court of the Elihai family is composed of three principal personalities, each with his or her own strategies and goals. Although polite and kind when in each other's presence, each is a heartless, deceitful traitor, willing to take whatever steps are needed to eliminate any obstacles to their ends.

**Nyrae the Crow King:** (Area 2-2) Cruelly handsome, charismatic, and confident, Nyrae symbolizes all the arrogance and hubris that laid the Kingspire low. Tall, with a shock of white hair pulled back beneath his serpent crown, and a cloak of raven feathers cast over his shoulder, the Crow King sees the PCs as pawns – intriguing pawns, to be sure, but little more than playthings provided by the Fates for his amusement. The Crow King can be kind or cruel as it suits him, but in truth, he cares for naught but himself, a trait that becomes immediately apparent when he forgets himself and flies into a rage.

Obsessed with the defeat of his elder brother, Nyrae seeks to convert the PCs to his cause. He does this through all manner of lies and deceptions, but his most effective ploy is the

truth: his brother has the means of escape from the Kingspire. Nyrae refuses to share the specifics of this relic, instead insisting that the characters “trust him,” fully knowing that they can't, and yet won't have a choice.

*The Path of Betrayal:* The Crow King “confides” in the PCs that his brother possesses a dangerous artifact that has the power to free them from the curse of the Kingspire. If the adventurers can succeed in defeating his brother and recovering the *Runeblade*, the Crow King promises to help them to escape the Kingspire, along with great rewards of gold and magic once they return home.

Of course this is a lie, but the Crow King is careful not to appear too eager, knowing that this will only drive his pawns away. He makes his offer, and if the PCs decline, Nyrae simply waits for his less subtle kinfolk to drive the PCs back to him.

If the PCs accept the Crow King's offer, his knights escort the PCs to area 2-19 and command them to fulfill their master's will. The Crow King joins his servitors a short while later, and they secret themselves atop the trapped staircase, lying in wait for the PCs when they emerge from the caverns below. See **Conclusion** below for details on the adventures' dramatic finale.

**Lady Ariarch:** (Area 2-10) Mistress of the Tower of the Magus, Lady Ariarch was once the star of Kingspire, a shining beauty, sorceress without peer, and lady-in-waiting to Clan Elihai. Secretly, she was also the lover of Prince Rynth, and when the Kingspire was overrun, it was Lady Ariarch's magic that whisked the citadel away from certain defeat.

But her efforts to save her lover's life cost her his love. With the Kingspire trapped within a demi-plane of eternal violence and war, Prince Rynth cursed the day that Lady Ariarch had ever been born, casting her from his side and leading his followers into exile in the caverns beneath the citadel. Since that day, Lady Ariarch has pined for her lost lover, wanting only to be in his arms once more.

Though her physical beauty has not diminished with the passage of centuries, it pales before her bitterness and simmering hurt. Unlike her regent, Lady Ariarch is unable to conceal the anger and disappointment that consumes her. Worse, whatever eldritch talent she might have once had was spent long ago in her efforts to return the Kingspire to its home. While far from helpless, her once awesome magical powers have been reduced to mere shadows of her former might.

The PCs' arrival sparks a glimmer of hope in Lady Ariarch's blackened heart. She cannot contain her eagerness around the heroes, questioning them without end, and staring at them with stark, desperate eyes when her regent commands silence. Given the opportunity, she exhausts the PCs with her constant presence, quietly observing every action, and interrogating them about their passage into Lost Kingspire.



*The Path of Obsession:* Lady Ariarch fully believes that, with Prince Rynth at her side, she would be content in the eternally warring demi-plane of Lost Kingspire. She begs, bribes, curses and threatens the PCs, all in an effort to win their loyalty, or failing that, obedience. Lady Ariarch proposes an expedition, a quest in search of her lost love. Though she cannot join the adventurers (the Crow King forbids it), she does her utmost to aid her champions, using all the wiles at her disposal.

**The Vizier:** (Area 2-4) Seated at the left hand of the Crow King, the Elder Kith known simply as the Vizier, is a gaunt, skeletal creature perpetually garbed in dark robes, and with his magical rod always close at hand. The Vizier has a cruel face, with sharp features and stern, commanding eyes. Seldom speaking (at least, in the presence of his regent), when the Vizier does speak, it is with unflinching honesty and cruel appraisal.

*The Path of Regicide:* Among the twilight court, the Vizier alone does not care to escape the demi-plane. But he has no desire to serve for eternity; rather, he would rule from this hell, the lovely Ariarch at his side, constantly warring against the savage sub-humans that assault the spire time and again. To accomplish this, he must find a way to slay the Crow King, no small task, given the nature of the Kingspire's curse. The answer lies with Lord Rynth's *Runeblade*. The eldritch blade consumes the souls of its foes, and its powers are so great that even the curse of the Kingspire cannot return the dead to life.

The Vizier has tried, and failed, to recover the *Runeblade* on his own. The PCs' arrival offers him the chance to shift the balance of power in his favor. The Vizier pulls the characters aside, and in his cold, calculating manner, approaches them with a simple bargain: aid him in recovering the

*Runeblade*, and he will assure them safe passage home. The Vizier warns the PCs against attempting to use the sword – the ancient relic is the reason behind the curse that laid the Kingspire low, and to toy with power of its magnitude is to invite destruction. The Vizier speaks the truth: the sword poses a dire threat to those that dare to wield it.

**Tracking Time:** The Kingspire's curse necessitates strict timekeeping. While the PCs can gather information, make allegiances and other non-material gains over the course of several days, any material gains (specifically magic items and treasure) are lost when the Kingspire resets at the end of 13 hours. It falls upon the judge to note the passage of time, applying changes to the encounter locations as noted.

After suffering through one or two cycles of the curse, astute PCs may wish to do their own time keeping. This is particularly challenging given the perpetual night that shrouds the citadel – without the cycles of day and night, or even the turning of the stars, the usual methods of estimating time are worthless. Characters will need to divine their own means of tracking time, either through magic, the measured burning of lantern oil, or the like. Cunning PCs are sure to relish this somewhat mundane challenge, and an effective timepiece can afford the PCs considerable advantages over the curse, allowing them to predict key events in the siege. Note that the PCs can have a significant influence on the Cycle (by killing key members of the Twilight Court, or by driving back the savages), and judges should alter the events as needed to reflect the PCs' actions.

Finally, while it has no explicit effect on the PCs, the savages rain down arrows, spears, and boulders on the citadel throughout the night. The clatter of arrows on flagstones, catapult shot crashing through the slate shingles, and the plaintive cries of the dying can be heard throughout the keep, no matter the hour.

## THE FALL OF KINGSPIRE CYCLE

Hour	Event
0	<i>The Turning of the Worm.</i> All inhabitants are returned to their original encounter areas. All wounds are healed and the dead are restored to life.
1	The first wave of barbarians assaults the gatehouse (area 2-13), sundering the portals, but is driven back.
2	Servants prepare a banquet in area 2-1.
3	The second wave of barbarians storms the gatehouse (area 2-13), pushing back the defenders to area 2-12.
4	The Crow King, Lady Ariarch, and the Vizier join one another for a final repast in area 2-1.
5	The barbarians charge area 2-12, but are driven back across the bridge to the gatehouse (area 2-13).
6	The banquet ends. Lady Ariarch retires to her tower (area 2-10) to prepare her defenses, while the Crow King and the Vizier leave for the Hall of Four Panes, offering prayers to the foul principles, in hopes of winning divine assistance in the night's battles.
7	The savages launch a surprise attack on area 2-9 from below, swarming the lower level (area 2-14) and slaying everyone they encounter. The barbarians hold area 2-9 with archers and javelin bearers, cutting Lady Ariarch off from the rest of the citadel.
8	The savages press up through area 2-8 and slaughter the guards in the south 2-11.
9	Submitting to the pleas of his men-at-arms, the Crown King retires to chambers (area 2-2) to prepare for battle. The Vizier gathers his warriors in area 2-4 and prepares for the final defense of the Kingspire.
10	<i>The Death of Magic.</i> The savages storm the Tower of the Magus (area 2-10) at great cost of life. After exhausting her arcane powers, Lady Ariarch perishes to a savage's spear, and the Tower of the Magi is sacked, ending the citadel's surviving arcane defenses.
11	The Elder Kith forces clash with the savage sub-humans in the courtyard (area 2-6). Chaotic battle rages as the outnumbered Elder Kith slowly succumb to the overwhelming numbers of the savages.
12	The Vizier and his surviving warriors are forced back to area 2-1, while the barbarians swarm over the rest of the Keep. The Crow King and his royal guard stage a final assault from the throne room (area 2-2), driving the savages from area 2-3.
13	<i>The Fall of Kingspire.</i> In a frantic last stand, the Crow King, the Vizier, and a handful of royal guards perish atop the balcony (area 2-3). The savages sack the citadel, reducing it to ruin.

### DEATH WITHIN THE CYCLE



he Curse of Kingspire ensures that death poses little meaningful threat to the inhabitants of the Kingspire. At the end of 13 hours, all inhabitants, living and dead are returned to their original encounter areas. The dead are restored, the living are healed of any wounds, and the bloody cycle begins again. Lost spells are regained, divine disapproval is reset, and even spent Luck is renewed. Note that this restoration may make the players somewhat blasé about spending normally non-renewable resources, and this may have dire repercussions when the cycle is broken.

However, while the dead are healed and “reset” with the beginning of each cycle, death still comes with a cost. Each time a PC is raised through the turning of the worm, the PC's Stamina is reduced by one. This cost is permanent for as long as the PC remains under the curse of the Kingspire, and multiple deaths result in multiple penalties. A PC cannot be brought below 3 Stamina. Once the curse is broken, lost Stamina from this effect returns immediately.

The sole exceptions are those slain by the *Runeblade*. Their souls are forever lost, consumed by the fell weapon, and they are not raised from the dead with the following cycle (nor can they be restored in any manner).

### THE SAVAGE HORDE



he savage barbarians are towering subhumans, with thick brows and a feral intelligence gleaming in their eyes. They are, in turns, shaggy, painted, tattooed, and adorned with pelts, antlers, and bits of bone.

There are multiple opportunities for the PCs to battle the horde of savage sub-humans throughout the 13-hour Cycle of the Worm. Rather than duplicate the stats each time there is a chance that an encounter might be called for, statistics for members of the horde are listed here. Mark or photocopy the page for easy reference in battles with the marauding horde.

**Savage warchief:** Init +5; Atk spear +7 melee (1d8+4); AC 15; HD 4d8+8; hp 25 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C. Hide armor, shield, spear.






**Barbarian champion:** Init +4 (on 1d16); Atk two-handed sword +5 melee (1d10+3); AC 13; HD 2d8+4; hp 13 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C. Hide armor, two-handed sword, brown bear cape, bear skull helm.

**Barbarian archer:** Init +2; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8+2) or short bow +3 ranged (1d6); AC 15; HD 1d8+2; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -2; AL C. Hide armor, spear, short bow, quiver of 30 arrows.

**Barbarian warrior:** Init +0; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8+2); AC 13; HD 1d8+2; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C. Hide armor, spear.

## LEVEL 2 PLAYER BEGINNING

ollowing the events concluding Level 1, read or paraphrase the following: *The silence passes, replaced by a cacophony of howling cries, the clash of blades on armor, and the piteous screams that can only be the sound of pitched battle. Weakly, you open your eyes to discover that you are atop a balcony. A pair of staircases descends to either side. The air is thick with black smoke, but through the haze you spy a warband of frenzied barbarians charging up the stairs towards you, voices raised in a battle cry!*

Though it is the third hour in the Cycle of the Worm, a band of sub-human savages have succeeded in scaling the north-west tower, and entering a window into area 2-4 (an event that is not repeated in future cycles). The PCs, awakening on the balcony (area 2-3), must immediately contend with a band of howling, frenzied, bloodied savages.

The war band is composed of a barbarian champion, a warchief and 4 archers. The archers hang below, winging barbed war-arrows from cover, while the warchief follows the champion up the stairs, using his abilities to support his ally.

If the PCs can hold the barbarians to the stairs and area 2-4 below, they gain a +1 to attack rolls due to higher ground. The savage warriors are consumed by bloodrage, and do not retreat or withdraw.

Once the battle has ended, the PCs have the opportunity to examine their surroundings. They are atop the balcony overlooking the courtyard (area 2-6) below. Troops of disciplined Elder Kith are fighting a horde of savage sub-humans, driving them out the gate to area 2-15. The barbarian horde has routed; whether or not the PCs lend their aid, the Elder Kith succeed in securing the keep in 1d4 rounds.

Unless the PCs immediately take pains to hide themselves from discovery, a troop of 8 bloody and exhausted Elder Kith cautiously approach them. The knights of Elihai are unsure whether the PCs intend to be friends or foes.

This second encounter is a pivotal one. If the PCs conduct themselves with intelligence and grace, they can easily win the Elder Kiths' trust. However, if they behave foolishly or resort to violence, the Elder Kith immediately assume them to be a band of sub-human warchiefs. Role-playing

is essential, and judges should pay attention to the players' choice of words, tone and tenor. If one or more of the PCs are elves, negotiations are that much easier.

If the knights are convinced that the PCs are allies, they offer to escort them to an audience with their lord and master of the keep, the Crow King (area 2-2). If not, the knights attempt to capture the PCs for questioning. Captured PCs are brought to the torturer (area 2-14) where the Vizier oversees their interrogation (from area 2-4).

Once the PCs have an audience with either the Crow King or his Vizier, they are free to explore the Kingspire at their leisure. The sole exceptions are the King's throne room (area 2-2) and Lady Ariarch's tower (area 2-10). The PCs are granted quarters in the small room east of area 2-8, but given the Kingspire's short cycle, they will have little cause to use them.

**Elder Kith Knights of Elihai (8):** Init +2; Atk mithral longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through hidden ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithral chain mail, shield, mithral longsword.

**Area 2-1 – Great Hall:** *Before you stands a sumptuous banquet hall overlooked by a balcony. A large table, capable of seating 20 or more, dominates the center of the chamber, while braziers used for heat and cooking occupy the back wall.*

*The walls of the chamber are hung with thick, embroidered tapestries depicting shining armies of Elder Kith triumphing over dwarves, giants, and human savages. The tapestries show the defeated forces, enslaved to their Elder Kith masters, and working to build the Kingspire Citadel.*

If it is hour 2 of the Cycle of the Worm, 5 servants are here, preparing a meal for Crow King and his court:

*Elder Kith servitors, dressed in tunics and breeches, scurry about readying a meal for their masters.*

If it is hour 4 of the Cycle, the Crow King, Lady Ariarch, the Vizier, and 5 knights of Elihai are enjoying a sumptuous meal:

*A royal court is seated at the grand table. Upon your entrance, the Elder Kith at the head of the table stands and claps his hands once. Immediately new places are set. Offering a smile that could be mistaken for a snarl, the Elder Kith motions for you to sit.*

For stats on the Crow King and his court, see areas 2-2, 2-4, and 2-10. The PCs are the immediate focus of the dinner, harassed with an endless series of questions from the Crow King and Lady Ariarch. For his part, the Vizier sits back and quietly observes. The PCs are served crimson wine in crystal goblets, and grilled steaks, cut from the corpses of the sub-humans.

The servitors are non-combatants, fleeing at the first sign of violence. If cornered and unable to flee, they put up a mere show of a fight. If captured and interrogated, the servitors happily buy their freedom with information, providing a detailed accounting of the layout of the Kingspire, as well as a depiction of their masters.

**Area 2-2 - Throne of the Crow King:** *The stairs open into a magnificent throne room. Furs and skins taken from fell monsters adorn the floors, while trophies from defeated foes (including the head of a dwarf king, and several human skulls) adorn the walls. At the head of the chamber, seated atop a high throne carved from the heart of a great ironwood tree, sits an imperious Elder Kith, girded in an ancient suit of fur-trimmed mithral armor and adorned with a cloak of raven feathers; a mithral longsword rests at his side. An enormous black cat sits at his feet, watching you with hungry eyes.*

*Flanking the throne are 4 royal guards, their eyes watching you with the intensity of hawks. Outside the siege rages on, but here all is calm and still, like a storm about to break.*

The throne chamber of the Crow King is the spiritual heart of the Kingspire Citadel. The Crow King is a stern and solemn warrior, given to violent mood swings and passionate outbursts. He embodies the worst of the Elder Kith traits: chaos, wickedness, and heartless cruelty. Fortunately for the PCs, he needs them to exact his revenge upon his twin brother. Therefore, they merit the Crow King's kindness ... or at least his patience. The regent invites them to approach the throne, though the royal guards ensure that the adventurers come no closer than 10 feet.

If the PCs arrive uninvited, they do not make it past the entrance before being stopped by the royal guard. If the PCs can offer a sensible reason for their request of an audience, the Crow King deigns for them to enter.

**Treating with the Crow King:** The Crow King attempts to win the PCs' favor, asking them to aid him in his endless battle against his brother, the dread Lord Rynth. In exchange for their aid, he promises release from the Curse of the Kingspire. It is a simple bargain, and the Crow King makes it clear that his patience is limited: The adventurers are free to choose as they like, but if they refuse, they are worthless to the Crow King.

If pressed, the Crow King concedes that it is true that he doesn't have the power to end the curse at the moment. Nyrae contends that this is because Rynth stole a portion of his eldritch power when he fled into the caverns beneath the Kingspire, and that once his brother is slain, the power will return to him. It is a flimsy story that doesn't hold up well under examination.

If questioned as to how his brother manages to escape the reset that occurs every 13th hour, the Crow King curses and calls the audience to an end, immediately commanding the PCs to leave his presence. The next time he encounters the PCs, he is cold, but polite, refusing to grant them another audience until the PCs accede to his demands.

**Ring of the Crow King:** The Crow King is secretly in love with the elven maiden held captive in area 2-14. She carries his signet ring, a testimony to their forbidden passion. The Crow King, caught up in the defense of the Kingspire, has no idea that his love is being tortured, under orders of the Vizier.

If the PCs succeed in discovering the ring in area 1-9 and present it to the Crow King, he demands to know where they found it, and how they came by it. If the PCs answer honestly, the King immediately realizes that his trusted advisor has betrayed him. He takes his royal guard to apprehend the Vizier, while sending the PCs to free his beloved from her torture in area 2-14. If the PCs are successful, they win the Crow King's full trust and the regent does everything in his power (short of endangering himself or any of his subjects) to aid them in their quest.

**Nyrae the Crow King:** Init +7; Atk mithral longsword +4 melee (1d8); AC 19; HD 5d6+5; hp 30; MV 20'; Act 1d20 + 1d14; SP iron vulnerability, spells, pass through Hidden Ways 50'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithral half-plate, mithral longsword. The Crow King can cast the following spells, each with a +8 bonus to the spell check: *chill touch, detect magic, invoke patron* (King of Elfland), *magic shield, patron bond, read magic, detect invisible, mirror image, and runic alphabet (fey)*.

**Shadow cat:** Init +5; Atk bite +3 melee (1d8) or claw +5 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5; AL C.

**Elder Kith Knights of Elihai** (4): Init +2; Atk mithral longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithral chain mail, shield, mithral longsword.

**Area 2-3 - Balcony:** *The balcony overlooks a barren courtyard below. The sounds of battle echo from outside the dark stone walls: the guttural war cries, the whistle of flights of arrows, the resounding rumble of boulders smashing into the citadel from below. A thick smoke hangs in the air, mixed with the smell of burnt hair and flesh.*

If it is the 11th hour, or later, in the Cycle of the Worm, the courtyard below is filled with raging barbarians, rampaging through the citadel and slaughtering all they encounter.

**Area 2-4 - The Vizier's Redoubt:** *A trio of braziers flames in the corners of this chamber, offering light and heat to stave off the gloom. A large table, stacked with maps and small stone counters, occupies the center of the chamber. Racks of bronze weapons adorn the walls, and their air is heavy with the smell of weapon oil.*

If it is the 9th hour of the siege or earlier, the Vizier is likely with his knights, directing the defense of the Kingspire. Unless the PCs have come specifically to agree to his quest, he has no time for their questions. The Vizier orders the PCs out so that he and his knights can focus on the defense of the Kingspire.

If the PCs come to area 2-4 after the 12th hour, the chamber is overrun by savage sub-humans. Bent on slaughter, they charge the PCs, hoping to add to their growing collection of bloody trophies. There are 8 barbarian warriors in all, with an additional 1d6 warriors arriving every 1d6 rounds. There is no way for the adventurers to triumph in this battle - all the PCs can win is a few spare moments, in between waves of savage barbarians.

Buried amongst the Vizier's battle plans is a rudimentary sketch of the lower levels of the Kingspire. The map (Hand-out C) is easily found by any PC taking the time to review all the maps, but if the characters are harried or pressed by foes, the map can be discovered with a DC 20 Luck check.

Additionally, the Vizier keeps a ring of heavy bronze keys on his belt. The keys open the leering gates of area 2-15.

**Vizier:** Init +3; Atk poisoned dagger +3 melee (1d4 plus poison); AC 13; HD 3d6; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, spells, poisoned dagger (1d4 hp poison damage plus Fort DC 14 or 1d4 Strength damage) pass through Hidden Ways 30'; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C. Poisoned mithral dagger, gold chain (worth 50 gp), platinum-tipped rod (worth 100 gp). The Vizier can cast *comprehend languages*, *magic missile*, and *invisibility* with a +5 spell check modifier.

**Elder Kith Knights of Elihai (3):** Init +2; Atk mithral longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithral chain mail, shield, mithral longsword.

**Area 2-5 – The Hall of Four Panes:** *The majestic hall seems out of place in the dour, block-like citadel. The vast ceiling arches high overhead, decorated with leering gargoyles, demons, and devils caught in the semblance of life. But more disturbing than the stone artistry decorating the ceiling are the towering panes of stained glass. Each depicts a court of Elder Kith engaged in a fell vice, casting pale shades of sickly colored light upon altars set into the wall of the hall.*

There are four stained glass windows casting their light over the hall, each depicting a different vice celebrated by the cruel Elder Kith of Kingspire. From east to west, the themes of the panes are Cruelty, Pride, Wrath, and Envy. Four altars, matching each of the 4 panes, are set into the north wall. The light of each pane falls upon each of the altars, so that the simple religious relics are illuminated in garish, sickly light.

The PCs have nothing to fear here – so long as they leave the altars and panes alone. If the altars are disturbed, or worse, if one or more of the panes are shattered, the repercussions pose a dire threat.

Inversely, if the PCs make offerings to the altars, they will be suitably rewarded – after a fashion – though no PC can be the recipient of more than one blessing. Each condition lasts until the next cycle of the worm begins. Clerics electing to make offerings at the altar are immediately stripped of all their divine powers, and Lawful or Neutral clerics may be guilty of sinful use of divine power if they aid those possessing one of these blessings with spell or healing.

**Cruelty:** This pane depicts an Elder Kith king, his queen, and their court looking on while a torturer performs his trade on 4 helpless humans. The altar has an empty basin and a razor sharp blade designed for bloodletting. If blood

is added to the basin (equal to 1 point of spellburn), the PC making the offering receives +2 bonus on damage rolls until the cycle resets.

**Pride:** This pane depicts an Elder Kith regent and an army of shining knights, reigning from atop a verdant hill. Beneath them, the rulers of the elves, dwarves, and snakemen offer up their crowns to the triumphant Elder Kith. The altar is adorned with a simple, white silk; a flint arrowhead, an iron spearhead, and the shattered blade of a mithral longsword have been placed atop the silk. If a PC leaves a weapon at the altar, he or she gains 10 temporary hit points.

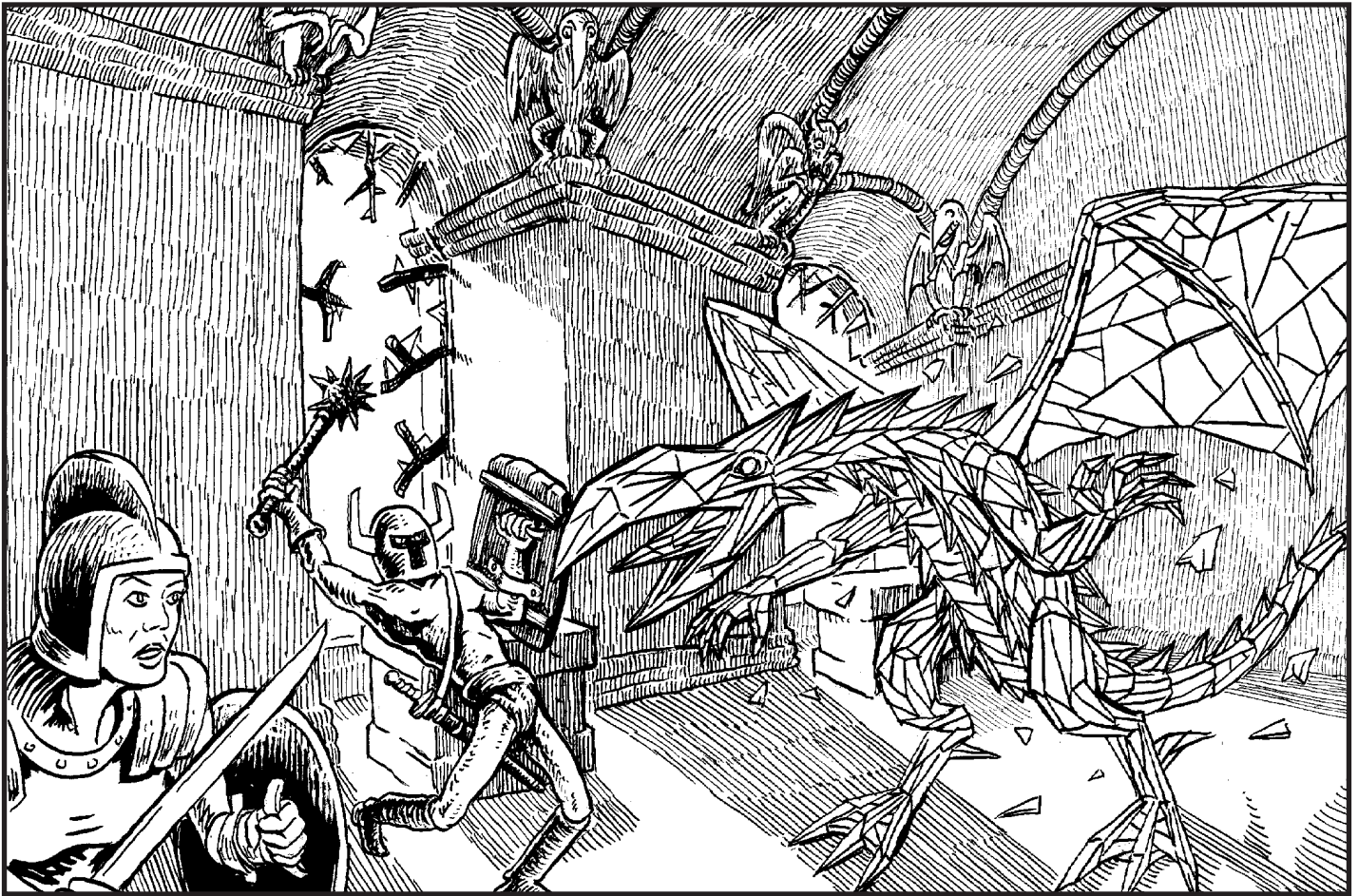
**Wrath:** This pane depicts a black knight standing amid a field of fallen foes. Corpses litter the land around him, their blood and entrails staining the ground. The altar holds a simple teak box. Inside the box is a gruesome collection of trophies taken from the bodies of slaughtered foes. The trophy box contains dried ears, finger bones, and shards of shattered skulls. If a PC leaves a foe's body part within the box (a bit of flesh or hair is sufficient) the PCs critical hit range is increased by +1 until the cycle resets.

**Envy:** The pane depicts a radiant Elder Kith king, seated at the center of an adoring court. All the courtiers look on with envy and jealousy. A censer sits atop the altar, beneath a portrait of a handsome Elder Kith regent. Any incense has long since rotted away, but if a PC is able burn his own incense in the censer, he or she receives a +2 bonus to all defenses, including AC.

If the PCs are foolish enough to desecrate the altars or break the panes, all four of the stained windows shatter, showering the hall (and any PCs) with shards of falling glass (all in the hallway take 4d6 damage, Reflex DC 15 for half). One round later, the shards take the form of an enormous glass dragon. The dragon immediately attacks any PC in the chamber, continuing its assault until all the characters have fled the area. Any wound caused by the dragon's claws or bite continues to bleed, causing 1 hp damage each round, until tended to with a DC 10 Intelligence check or magical healing. Once the PCs have left, the dragon reforms as the stained glass windows, healing all damage, and regaining all daily breath weapon uses. If the dragon is slain, it cannot reform as the stained glass windows.

**Red shard dragon:** Init +5; Atk claw +5 melee (1d8) or bite +5 melee (1d12); AC 21; HD 5d12; hp 30; MV 40' or fly 80'; Act 3d20; SP breath weapon (2/day, line of fire, damage equal to dragon's hp, Ref DC 15 half), immunity to force attacks, bleeding wounds; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C.

At first glance, there is no treasure in the hall. However, if the PCs defeat the dragon and carefully search the remnants of shattered glass they discover small, brilliantly faceted jewels amid the shards. A successful search turns up 3 jade gems (worth 50 gp each), 1 topaz (worth 250 gp), 1 fire opal (worth 100 gp) and a single, bright sapphire (apparently worth 120 gp) that can be burnt to gain a +2 bonus to a single arcane spell check.



**Area 2-6 - Courtyard:** *The wide courtyard serves as a central staging area for the entire citadel. A thick haze of black smoke hangs over the courtyard, choking the lungs and stinging the eyes. The smell of burnt flesh and spilled blood assaults your senses, and just outside the thick citadel walls you can hear the clamor of a heated battle.*

If it is the 10th hour of the siege or earlier, the Elder Kith still hold the courtyard. Every 1d12 minutes a troop of Elder Kith charge past, hurrying to reinforce the citadel's defenses. If the PCs have met with any of the principle 3 rulers of the Kingspire, the Elder Kith ignore them. However, if the PCs have not yet been formally presented before the Twilight Court, the troop mistakes the PCs for sub-human commanders. They call for the PCs' surrender; if the PCs resist, the Elder Kith sound their warhorns for reinforcements, and attempt to capture or kill the PCs. Captured characters are brought to area 2-14 to be interrogated by the Torturer and the Vizier.

If it is the 11th hour of the siege or later, the courtyard is overrun with barbarians battling the Elder Kith defenders. The horde is nearly unstoppable, and it requires all the PCs' strength simply to move across the battlefield, let alone turn the tide against the sub-humans. During the battle, characters can only move at half speed, with every 5 feet incurring an attack from an enemy. Every round, roll 1d12, and on an 8 or higher, a random PC is charged by a barbarian warrior (for stats, see above).

If the PCs elect to stay and fight, they have their pick of foes. There are a total of 5 barbarian champions, 8 barbarian archers, and a seemingly unending stream of barbarian warriors. If the PCs somehow call out and defeat all 5 of the champions, the battle turns against the barbarians, and the Elder Kith drive the savages from the courtyard.

**Elder Kith Knights of Elihai (3):** Init +2; Atk mithral longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithral chain mail, shield, mithral longsword.

**Elder Kith warriors (10):** Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Leather armor, spear.

**Area 2-7 - Barracks:** *This wide tower is host to a series of arrow slits, each peering down onto the battlefield below. Barrels of arrows are spaced throughout the chamber within easy reach, with additional bows and bowstrings hanging from racks set along the walls. In the center of the chamber is a spiral staircase, sealed by a locked grate.*

If it is the 10th hour of the siege or earlier, 12 Elder Kith archers are here, raining clouds of arrows down on sub-humans below. If it is the 11th hour of the siege or later, the barbarians shatter the grate's lock from below,



**Area 2-8 – Storeroom:** *The storeroom walls are stacked high with casks, bundles and crates, left in disarray in the face of the pressing siege.*

If it is the 7th hour of the siege or earlier, the storeroom is in disarray, though still held by the Elder Kith.

If it is the 8th hour of the siege or later, the savages have overrun the storeroom, pressing into the south 2-11, and slaughtering the guards.

There is a hidden panel set into the north wall. The panel has not been plastered over yet, a last minute action taken by the Elder Kith before surrendering the citadel to the barbarians. However, the panel *has* been trapped, and a billowing cloud of icy air that freezes skin, sears eyelids, and scars the lungs targets PCs failing to take the appropriate countermeasures. Those who have suffered this ward in the future (area 1-8) are in for a surprise: the ward is newly cast, and the magics are far more powerful (4d8 damage, Fort DC 20 for half).

Hidden behind the panel is a dark velvet pouch sewn with small diamond chips in imitation of the night sky (worth 200 gp). The pouch contains a large, ceremonial key ring chased with platinum (worth 50 gp), and a trio of keys that open the locks in 2-15.

**Area 2-9 – Catwalk:** *Your ears are assaulted by the cacophony of war. Hundreds of feet below, a seething tide of fierce barbarians surges along the base of the ridge. Arrayed in the pelts and skins of bears and lions, they look and sound more like horde of beasts than an army.*

The stairs wrap along the side of the citadel, ending at a locked gate of heavy bronze (DC 20 to unlock); the key to the gate can be found hidden in area 2-8. The gate can also be torn free (Strength DC 25, two characters can aid each other) or battered down after taking 75 hp of damage.

Characters descending the stairs may draw the attention of the barbarians below. If the savages spot the PCs, a mob of archers begins to rain down arrows on the heroes. Once spotted, each exposed PC is targeted by an attack (+5 ranged). A successful attack means the PC is struck by 1d4 arrows, each inflicting 1d6 damage.

If it is the 7th hour of the siege or later, the barbarians have succeeded in scaling the side of the ridge with ropes and crude ladders, tearing open the gate and swarming the lower levels. In order to clear the way down to 2-16, the PCs have to fight their way through 2 barbarian champions, 2 archers, and 3 warriors.

**Area 2-10 - Tower of the Magus:** When the PCs cross from the main citadel to area 2-10, read or paraphrase the following:

*A narrow stone bridge arches from the citadel to the tower. The tower stands apart, both physically and aesthetically, from the grim and dour citadel. Built of polished stone, high buttresses, and graceful spires, the tower calls to mind a solemn pine, high*

After the tenth hour, this chamber is overrun with 3 barbarian champions, 5 archers, 8 and warriors (see above for statistics). Having shattered the grate's lock, the savages swarm from below, reinforcing with 1 champion, 2 archers and 3 warriors each round. In order to fight their way into the dungeon below, the PCs need to cut their way through a total of 5 champions, 8 archers, and 15 warriors.

There are 6 barrels of arrows here, each holding 100 arrows with silver arrowheads. The finest archer of the group, a tall Elder Kith female with long dark hair tied in a tight braid has a pair of magical bowstrings threaded into her quiver. Wound with gold and silver thread, and strands of hair taken from a unicorn's mane, the bowstrings bestow a +2 item bonus to attack and damage rolls to any non-magical bow. The bowstrings fray quickly and are only good for 1d20 uses each. If the tower falls to the savages, the archer fights to the end, leaving her bowstrings to be discovered by later generations.

**Elder Kith archers (12):** Init +4; Atk bronze short sword +2 melee (1d5) or longbow +5 ranged (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4; AL C. Leather armor, bronze short sword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows.

atop a rocky slope. Its beauty does not distract your eye from the leering gargoyles that circle above, keeping a watchful eyes on the battle below.

If Lady Ariarch, the ruling magus of the tower, is present, the PCs are allowed to pass over the narrow bridge. However, if the Lady of the Tower is not present, the gargoyles make it clear that the characters are not welcome, first by flying close over head, screeching, then by dive bombing the PCs as they cross the bridge, attempting to knock the characters from the bridge. A Strength check (DC equal to 10 + damage done) prevents a character from falling. Those knocked of the bridge fall to their doom 80 feet (8d6 damage) to the rocky ground below, before being swarmed by the savage horde.

**Gargoyles (5):** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d4) or dive-bomb +4 melee (2d4); AC 21; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP dive-bomb attack, half damage from non-magical weapons, non-magical weapons have a 50% chance of shattering when they hit; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

If the PCs manage to cross the bridge, read or paraphrase the following:

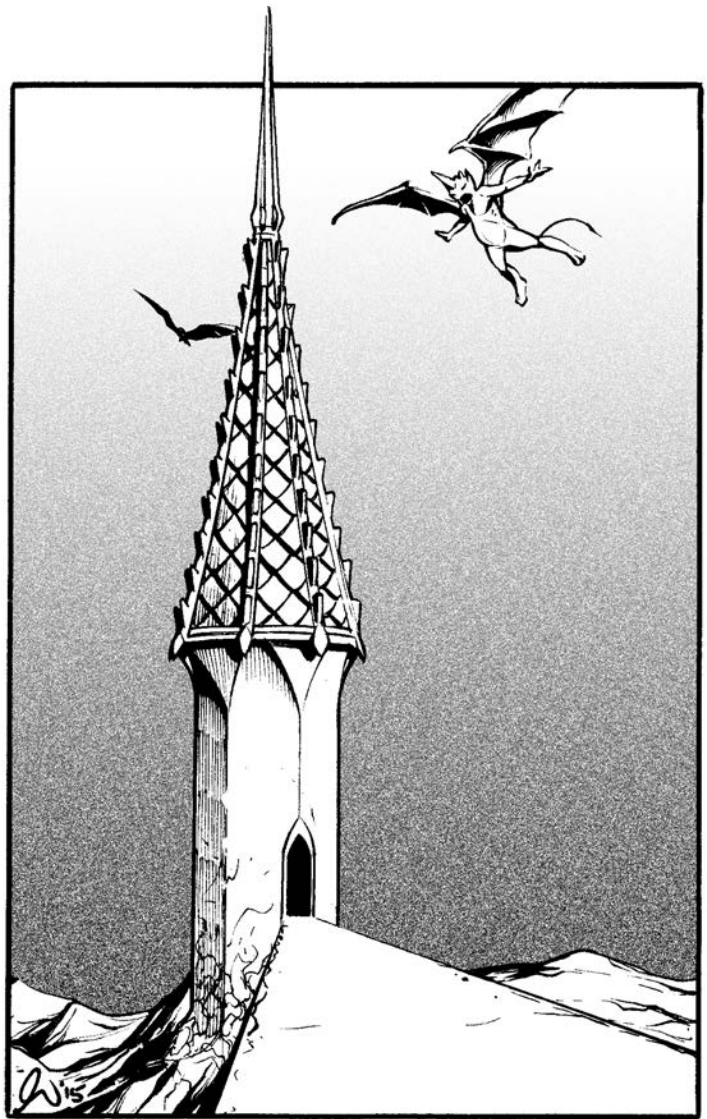
*A single hammered copper portal, stained with verdigris, guards the entrance to the ruined tower before you. The portal is decorated with reliefs of a spiraling vine that follows the curve of the arched door, winding around a hammered copper sun and moon, before winding down the far side of the portal. Framed within the work, wielding the contrasting might of the sun and moon is a single Elder Kith sorcerer.*

The portal opens at the command of Lady Ariarch. If the PCs are not welcome (or expected for that matter), they must find a means of opening the portal. Brute strength (Strength, DC 25) or raw damage (AC 20, 200 HP) is sufficient to open the portal, but each and ever time a living creature touches the portal without the Magus' permission, an arc of eldritch lightning lances from the door, striking the nearest living creature (Reflex DC 15 or suffer 1d10 lightning damage).

Once the PCs gain entry to the tower, read or paraphrase the following:

*The tower is like something out of a dream. Lit by dancing fireflies and floating globes, the interior is a single chamber, its ceiling rising to a point several stories above. The walls of the chamber are adorned with hundreds of eldritch tomes and scrolls, beakers filled with strange, glowing liquids, complete skeletons of creatures that have long since passed from existence, and hundreds of other eldritch curiosities.*

Lady Ariarch makes her home inside the tower, with her pseudodragon assistant. Here she spends her time plotting a means of winning back the love of Lord Rynth, and ridding herself of the Crow King and the hated Vizier. She welcomes the PCs as an end to that quest, and if the adven-



turers agree to aid her, she readily permits the PCs to paw through her treasure cache (see **Treasure** below). Lady's Ariarch's quest is a simple one: Find Lord Rynth and convince him of the Lady's love. (Of course the quest is not so easily accomplished: Lord Rynth died decades ago.)

If the characters spurn her advances, she responds with fury, using all the magic at her disposal to slay the PCs. The pseudodragon immediately flies to her aid, while any surviving gargoyles enter through high windows above to do battle for their mistress.

If the PCs enter the tower after the 10th hour of the siege, it is overrun with savages. The sub-humans destroy everything within reach, and set fire to the interior of the tower. If the PCs attempt to stop the destruction, 2 warchiefs, 4 champions, 6 archers, and 10 warriors attack them.

**Treasure:** The tower is home to a seemingly endless array of eldritch curiosities and secrets. Few may be of much value to the heroes, but every nook and cranny contains something of interest. If the PCs agree to act as Ariarch's agents - reaching Lord Rynth to relay her message of love and devotion - she permits them to peruse her tower, taking anything of interest. Note that any items garnered from the tower are lost at the Turning of the Worm.

For every 1/2 hour a PC spends inspecting the tower, he or she is permitted a Luck check (DC 10). On a success, the PC discovers something of value and interest amid the eldritch curiosities. Roll 1d20 and consult the treasure table. Each find can only be discovered once.

Lady Ariarch can cast three spells, each of which can be cast 3 times per day. Her *binding bolt* causes 1d8+4 damage (Ref DC 13 for half), and if the Reflex save fails, the target is paralyzed, losing its next action. Her *teleporting bolt* causes a target to be teleported 15 feet in any direction (but not into an unsafe area, Will DC 12 negates), Finally, her *dazzling blast* causes 1d3 damage to all targets within 20', and all targets must succeed in a DC 12 Fort save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds.

**Lady Ariarch:** Init +5; Atk spear +2 melee (1d8) or spell; AC 12; HD 4d4; hp 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, spells, pass through Hidden Ways 40'; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +8; AL C. Robes, spear.

**Pseudodragon:** Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8); AC 12; HD 2d12; hp 6; MV 30' or fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP breath weapon 1/day (sleep gas 10' cloud, Fort DC 12 or sleep 1d6 hours); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

**Area 2-11 - Guard Room:** *A pair of barrels and a rack of long-bladed spears crowd the narrow chamber. The far wall is composed entirely of arrow slits, offering a view into the hall beyond.*

Four Elder Kith archers watch over each of these paired chambers, firing arrows into area 2-12 when the barbarians succeed in breaking down the gates. The archers resort to their spears only if the barbarians threaten to stab their own weapons through the narrow arrow slits.

If it is 8th hour of the siege or later, barbarians have overrun the south guard room, slaughter the archers, stripping their bodies of armor and weapons, and making blood trophies of the archers' scalps, ears and fingers.

**Elder Kith archers (4):** Init +4; Atk spear +2 melee (1d8) or longbow +5 ranged (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4; AL C. Leather armor, spear, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows.

**Area 2-12 - Killing Hall:** *A pair of enormous portals, banded in an unknown black metal, blocks the way. A single mighty bolt, as wide as a tree, is laid across the gates, sealing them closed.*

If it is the 5th hour of the siege, a troop of barbarians has succeeded in breaching the portal with their massive battering ram. A force of Elder Kith knights and spearmen charges the savages as the portal is breached. The Elder Kith are ultimately successful in driving the savages back, but only at great cost of life. If the PCs lend their aid, enough Elder Kith survive to forestall the events of the 10th hour of the siege by an hour.

The attacking force is made up of a mob of savage champions, warriors, and a single enormous war bear outfitted

with metal claws, fangs, and crude hide barding. Ten warriors lead the charge, but once they are cut down, savage champions and the rampaging war bear take their place.

In order to make a difference in the battle, the PCs must slay either three barbarian champions or the war bear. (The PCs can slay any number of other invaders, but they are quickly replaced by their brethren.) Those that succeed in slaying the deadly war bear are quickly hailed as champions by the Elder Kith. At the judge's discretion, 3 Elder Kith archers swear fealty to the PC heroes, pledging their bows and blades to their defense. These bonds of fealty are not affected by the Turning of the Worm.

The war bear makes two claw attacks against a single opponent. If both claws hit, it grapples the opponent and gains a free bite attack. Thereafter, each round it mauls its opponent, automatically doing 1d8 damage from its claws and crushing strength, and gaining a single bite attack each round. A victim can escape this mauling only by making a DC 20 Strength check, with a successful Mighty Deed of 4+, or by slaying the bear.

**War bear:** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d8) or bite +5 melee (1d10); AC 20; HD 8d8+16; hp 50; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP maul; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +4; AL N.

**Area 2-13 - The Gatehouse:** *The stout gatehouse watches over the ridge rising to the citadel. Arrow slits face out onto the high moors, where an army of savages rage.*

The gatehouse falls early in the siege (hour 3), making it unlikely that the PCs find their way here. It is also a difficult place for the characters to make a difference in the battle; the brunt of the barbarian horde is directed at the gatehouse, and defending it is suicidal.

There are 8 Elder Kith stationed here, doing their best to fend off the army of savages. Once the front gates fall and the gatehouse is overrun, an endless stream of barbarian champions and warriors charge into the gatehouse. If the PCs manage to slaughter 10 champions and 30 warriors, they accomplish the impossible: giving the horde pause.

Their triumph is sure to be short lived. The horde falls back to make room for a troop of 50 archers. Armed with flaming arrows, the archers set fire to the gatehouse in 1d8 rounds. Thereafter, anyone remaining within the gatehouse suffers 3d6 points of fire damage per round as the gatehouse burns. After 20 rounds, the gatehouse is reduced to blocks of granite and cinders. The army surges through the gates, and lays siege to the gates in area 2-12.

**Area 2-14 - Torturer's Quarters:** *Various implements of torture adorn the walls of the horrific chamber. Bronze leg manacles dangle from the ceiling, brands rest in braziers of glowing embers, and thumb screws rest in bloodied brass pans. A large wooden rack rests in the back of the chamber, alongside an "iron" maiden made of bronze. You see to your horror that fresh blood is weeping from the maiden – some poor soul is trapped inside!*



## TOWER OF THE MAGUS: TREASURE TABLE

Roll (1d20)	Treasure
1	A glass globe of lightning bugs. If the globe is shattered, anyone within 10 feet is targeted by a blast of crackling lightning and resounding thunder, taking 2d12 damage (Ref DC 13 half) and being deafened for 1d6 x 10 minutes (Fort DC 13 negates).
2	A jug containing silvery, viscous liquid (3 doses of <i>potion of healing</i> , each of which heals up to 2 HD of damage).
3	A scroll of <i>knock</i> , cast with a +4 bonus to the spell check (rather than the user's bonus), and which causes the "worms of the earth" mercurial magic effect when read. It may be used three times before crumbling into dust.
4	A silver-plumed pen that scribes whatever is spoken within a 5-foot radius, on whatever surface is available.
5	An empty spell book composed of sheets of hammered gold (worth 500 gp).
6	A pair of magical boots that grant a +3 bonus to Move silently attempts.
7	A tome containing enough information for a wizard or elf to attempt to learn <i>breathe life</i> .
8	A silver key cast as a skeleton, which then molds itself into whatever lock it is placed. The silver key has 3 charges remaining, disappearing after its final use.
9	A <i>scroll of holding</i> that, when unrolled, reveals an extradimensional space capable of holding up to 3 cubic feet. When the scroll is rolled up, the weight of whatever it holds is negligible. Each time it is opened, however, there is a 1% chance (non-cumulative) that the opening to the extradimensional space is gone forever.
10	An goblinoid skull with gold teeth (worth 3 gp).
11	Blackened iron greaves that grant the wearer +2 Strength (to a maximum of 18). These were dwarf-forged, and cannot be used by the Elder Kith due to their iron content.
12	A pair of crystal, 6-sided dice that roll whatever total the owner whispers. (Note that the owner has no control over whatever numbers make up that sum.)
13	A series of pages containing instructions on how to find Death and bargain with Him for the release of a lost comrade. This may lead into <i>Blades Against Death</i> or a unique adventure of the judge's devising. The instructions on the pages can only be used once.
14	A cloak of elven make, folded inside a small teak box decorated with elaborate woodland carvings. It grants its wearer a +3 bonus to attempts to hide.
15	A trio of pseudodragon eggs, warming over a bronze bowl of embers. If kept warm, the eggs hatch in 1d4 weeks.
16	A spear tip carved from a black unicorn's horn. If affixed to a pole the tip functions as a +3 <i>spear</i> , but any who wields it is seized by a longing to visit the forests of Elfland, and dreams of those lands each night.
17	A tome containing enough information for a wizard or elf to learn the spell <i>eternal champion</i> , although any who learns the spell through this tome has the additional mercurial effect of needing a bone from one of his or her own ancestors as a component for the spell. The component is consumed in the casting.
18	A rolled tapestry depicting the PCs dying to an enormous worm in a mushroom forest. Detailed with gold and silver thread, the tapestry is worth 100 gp. If the PCs survive the adventure, the tapestry changes to show their death at the hands of their next most powerful foe.
19	A trio of scrolls tied together with a silver band, containing the spells <i>magic mouth</i> , <i>spider climb</i> and <i>sword magic</i> . Each scroll can be used but once, the writing fading as the spell is cast, using the reader's normal spell check result. The scroll of <i>sword magic</i> also releases a Type I demon, which then hunts the caster (see pages 401-404 of the <i>core rulebook</i> for details).
20	Roll twice.

This chamber is home to the fomorian that serves as the Crow King's torturer – a twisted giant from the Elflands. Unknown to the regent of the Kingspire, the Torturer is loyal only to the Vizier. Presently the Torturer is in the process of slowly killing the Crow King's secret lover. The elven maiden, Sefra, is slowly dying within the confines of the iron maiden.

At first glance, the chamber is empty. Unless the PCs pause to take a longer inspection of the chamber they take no notice of the haze hanging in the back of the chamber, mistaking it for the black smoke of the siege. In truth, the haze is the Torturer, in his gaseous form. (The Torturer enjoys entering his victims, in gaseous form, as they die, so that he can feel the rattle of their final breaths firsthand.) In his physical form, the fomorian resembles an especially grotesque ogre, with purple skin, knobby joints, and leering, watery eyes. Their fell kind delight in inflicting pain on helpless foes, making them the preferred practitioners of the torturer's arts.

The Torturer is able to become gaseous by using an Action Die, and while in gaseous form he is harmed only by fire, area attacks, force attacks, and attacks that would break up gasses (such as strong winds). When gaseous, the Torturer can fly at 40' per round.

The Torturer uses a massive iron club, too large and heavy for a human to wield, which he keeps because of the extra damage it can do to the Elder Kith, whom he both fears and despises.

**The Torturer, fomorian giant:** Init +2; Atk slam +5 melee (1d6+6) or massive iron club +5 melee (1d8+6); AC 16; HD 4d8+4; hp 24; MV 20' or fly 40' (when gaseous); Act 1d20; SP gaseous form; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C. Massive iron club.

The Torturer waits for the PCs to focus their attention on the bronze maiden before returning to his solid form and attacking the weakest PC. Once the battle against the fomorian, he returns to gaseous form and attempts to flee, joining his fellows to fight on.

If it is the 7th hour of the siege or later, this chamber is overrun by savages. The Torturer has already retreated to the citadel above, in the hopes of lending aid to his master, the Vizier. The savage sub-humans move on once the room is clear, ignorant of Sefra and her plight. If the PCs manage to fight their way here, they do not encounter savages while in the quarters.

The Torturer keeps little in the way of treasure. However, a secret door in the west wall of the chamber conceals a small hidden chamber where the Vizier likes to sit and enjoy the punishment of his foes. Inside the chamber, set into the wall, is a small wooden coffer. The coffer is locked (DC 10), and trapped with a small glass vial. If the coffer isn't unlocked twice, the vial breaks when the coffer is opened, filling the secret chamber with poison gas (Fort DC 15 or rendered unconscious for 1d3 hours).

Inside the coffer are a large emerald (100 gp), a medium ruby (75 gp), and 120 loose silver coins stamped with the image of a dragon devouring its tail.

**Saving Sefra:** There is little that the PCs can do to save the elf maiden. The Torturers' cruel ministrations ensure that death is only a few minutes away. Worse, since she was already shut inside the maiden when Lady Ariarch's spell whisked the Kingspire away, Sefra is "reborn" into the maiden, and her lingering death, every 13 hours. Only defeating the Curse of the Kingspire can free her from her eternal misery.

**Area 2-15 - The Gates of Deceit:** *A trio of heavy bronze gates frames this chamber. Each gate is topped with a demonic fey, leering down from above. The air is wet and stinks of moldy straw and filth. The sounds of battle are diminished, as if held in abeyance by the grim gates and solemn atmosphere.*

The gates are all locked, and the Vizier holds the keys (in area 2-4). They can be picked by talented or lucky thieves (DC 25), broken down by the diligent (1 hour of time, AC 20, 250 hp in damage) or torn out by the exceptionally strong (Strength, DC 30). If the Vizier's keys are used (found in area 2-4), the trap-puzzle is deactivated.

The gates pose no threat to any individual PC. However, the gates can quickly undo an entire party.

The gates' magic is sufficient to deter the weakened horde – in the 7th hour of the siege a band of 3 champions, 1 war-chief, and 12 warriors attempt to batter down the gates. Failing, they return to the battle in the citadel above.

Stepping through a gate produces a magical effect. Puzzling out the right combination is not difficult if the PCs are persistent, but violent parties might find their own swords and spells turned against them.

Any PC stepping through a gate vanishes in puff of black smoke, leaving only a cloud of falling ash and dust. Above, the gemstone eyes of the gate flash, blinding any PC failing a DC 10 Ref save for 1d3 rounds. At the same instant, a terrible, roaring wind fills the chamber and the PC reappears at the opposite gate, cloaked in illusion and shadow, appearing – for all intents and purposes – as a raging shadow demon. This illusion only lifts if the PC leaves the area or steps through the next gate. While the PCs remain in the area, verbal communication is impossible, as all sounds are drowned out by the roaring wind.

No harm comes to the character, unless his own allies respond with violence.

**Portal Puzzle:** PCs stepping through the north gates are teleported to the south side of the south gates; similarly, PCs stepping through the south gates are teleported to the north side of the north gates. In order to pass through the western gates, PCs without the Vizier's keys need to pass through a total of 2 portals. For instance, a PC coming from the south must open the south gate, step through to the north gate, open the north gate, teleport *back* once again to the south gate. At this point the PC may pass through the south gate, and through the western gate.

Exiting the dungeon causes no teleportation.

**Treasure:** The gargoyles overlooking the gates are each adorned with gemstone eyes. The gems can be pried free from their bronze castings, but this does not deactivate the gates' teleporting magic. The eyes of the south gate are 2 emeralds (worth 25 gp each). The eyes of the north gate are sapphires (worth 30 gp each). The eyes of the west gate are paste and worthless (though they appear to be pair of diamonds worth 500 gp each).

**Area 2-16 - The Kingspire Dungeons:** *A large chamber emerges from the darkness. The air is cold with moisture, and the stink of mold is thick in the air, clinging to the back of your throat and chilling your lungs. Squinting to make out the features of the grim chamber, you are able to discern manacles set into the grimy stone walls. Skeletons, their bones long since picked clean by rats and roaches, line the corners of the chamber.*

Since the start of the siege, the dungeons have seen little action. The barbarians, stymied by the gates in area 2-15, focus their forces on the upper citadel, while the Crow King and his sycophants have little use for a dungeon when they are pressed for friendly swords and spells above.

The Mad Gaoler (found in area 2-17) has come to regard the dungeons as his own domain. Since the barbarians fail to make it past the portal puzzle, the Gaoler does not perish nightly in the siege like his companions in the citadel above. Instead, his existence is largely the same, night after accursed night, without any means of distinguishing one from the next. This endless monotony cost the gaoler dearly, breaking his mind, and driving him into madness.

Now the gaoler spends his days in fantasy, repeatedly building his throne in area 2-17 and ruling over his "kingdom" of mice and rats. Unless the PCs conceal their passage through area 2-16 (including both light and sound), the Mad Gaoler sends his minions to repel the intruders. A trio of rat swarms scurry from area 2-17, swarming about the party. If one or more of the swarms is destroyed, the surviving swarms retreat, squeaking and squealing in dismay. A mere 1d6 rounds later, the Mad Gaoler enters from area 2-17 with 8 giant rats and the surviving swarms. The gaoler, believing the PCs to be potential allies, calls for an armistice, and attempts to negotiate a treaty.

**Tactics:** The Mad Gaoler is a disturbingly tall Elder Kith, with wild eyes, rotting teeth, and matted hair that has - literally - become a nest of mice. He wears mouse-eaten rags over a hauberk of leather studded with bronze, and fights with a spiked club in one hand, and a manacle attached to a 6-foot chain in the other.

Before entering combat, the Mad Gaoler calls for a truce, offering terms of parlay. The gaoler giggles disconcertingly the entire time, obsessively rubbing his hands together, and repeatedly licking his lips. The gaoler asks for the characters to forgive his aggressive "armies," declaring that it has been so long since they have received visitors. The gaoler offers for one of the PCs to join him in his "throne room," to discuss a treaty between the two powers. To earn the PCs' trust, the Mad Gaoler offers to leave a swarm of rats behind as insurance against any duplicity on his part.

If the PCs refuse or press the attack, the Mad Gaoler fights to the death in futile defense of his demesne.



If the Mad Gaoler hits with his manacles, they wrap themselves around the target, trapping his victim in place and preventing any actions until the victim succeeds in a DC 15 Strength or Agility check.

**Mad Gaoler:** Init +3; Atk spiked club +2 melee (1d8) or manacles +3 melee (1d4 plus capture); AC 13; HD 3d6+3; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP iron vulnerability, capture with manacles, pass through Hidden Ways 30'; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6; AL C. Studded leather armor, spiked club, bronze manacles and 6-foot chain.

**Giant rats (8) and rat swarms (3):** See core rulebook, p. 424.

**Cell A:** The cell's heavy bronze door is bolted closed from the outside, and corroded closed (Strength, DC 15 to open). Opening the cell, the heroes discover tufts of moldy straw, harmless green-black mold covering the walls and ceiling, and a pair of empty shackles bolted into the south wall.

A secret door is hidden in the back of the chamber. This cell is used exclusively for the select few prisoners that the Vizier secretly releases.

**Cell B:** The bronze door to this cell is also bolted closed from the outside. A simple padlock (DC 10) secures the iron bolt in place. Inside the cell PCs find moldy straw, several sets of bronze shackles and chains set into the walls, and a shallow, muddy pool dug into the floor. The anchors are stout, and difficult to tear from the wall (Strength, DC 15); similarly, the manacles - once fastened by Mad Gaoler's bolts, are difficult to break (Strength, DC 25, or 20 hp of damage).

**Captured by the Elder Kith!** If the PCs are captured by the Elder Kith, the Vizier orders them placed in cell B. The PCs are disarmed and escorted to area 2-16, where the Mad Gaoler puts them in shackles, hammering heated bronze slugs into the leg shackles and manacles to secure them closed. Any PC thus shackled receives a -2 penalty to his or her AC and Reflex saves, and has his or her speed reduced by 10'.

The Mad Gaoler is ignorant of the secret door in cell A, and randomly chooses where to place the PCs.

**Area 2-17 – Gaoler’s Quarters:** *A long, narrow cot occupies the north wall of this chamber. Nearby, a brazier of glowing coals casts the rest of the chamber in a hellish light. Placed in the center of the long east wall is a tall chair decorated with moldy, blackened rags. More disturbing, the chair has been decorated with hundreds of rodent skulls, ranging from tiny mice to enormous rats, nailed to the chair in some peculiar, esoteric pattern.*

This chamber is the home of the Mad Gaoler and his army of rats and mice. Lost in a world of fantasy, the Mad Gaoler mistakenly believes that he has come to rule over the Kingspire Dungeons. The fantasy is a fragile one, immediately banished when the Vizier enters the dungeons, but with few visitors, the gaoler has more than ample time to indulge his fantasies.

**Treating with the Mad Gaoler:** The gaoler is first encountered in area 2-16, where he offers the adventurers terms of parlay. If the PCs agree, sending one of their own as a delegate to meet with the madman, he escorts the ambassador to his chambers. The gaoler sits upon his throne with regal dignity, pulling on a mouse-skin cape and raising a scepter topped with a fanged giant rat skull. Then the Mad Gaoler offers the PC a treaty: the party may pass through his “lands” so long as they agree to never again harass his “folk” (the mice and rats). Furthermore, the gaoler knows the secret to reaching the hidden dungeons of Kingspire, and is willing to share his secrets with the PCs in return for a tithe: all the characters’ food and drink. If the PCs accept the Mad Gaoler’s terms, he immediately calls his rat and mice, handing out the food, and pouring out bits of drink to his ravenous people.

Once his folk are sated, the Mad Gaoler shows the PCs the secret door hidden in the west wall, opening the portal with practiced ease. Giggly madly, the gaoler shares that it was many centuries ago when Prince Rynth led his band of exiled fey into the caverns below.

**Secret Door:** A secret door is hidden in the west wall of the chamber. Agents of the Vizier used spy holes cut into the secret door to spy on the gaoler; however, since his descent into madness, the spies visit less and less often. The door itself is masterfully hidden, but a DC 22 Intelligence check allows PCs to spot the spyholes. Once the spyholes are detected, finding the secret door is an easy matter (DC 10). As noted above, the gaoler is aware of the secret door and the spyholes.

**Area 2-18 – Spy Chamber:** *A trio of crates stands in the center of this chamber, making a crude table and benches. Atop the center crate is a pair of dice and a shallow copper dish. A handful of coins – mostly gold and silver – are scattered about the floor. A pair of clay jugs, stained with wine, sits on the floor beside the makeshift table.*

This spy chamber hasn’t seen use in many a year. Agents of the Vizier, tiring of watching the ever more insane gaoler, have taken to gambling and drinking instead.

Because of the peculiarities of the Kingspire’s curse, there is little point to winning (or losing) at dice, a frustration the spies discovered centuries ago. Similarly, the wine jugs are filled halfway with every turning of the worm. There are total of 5 gp and 18 sp scattered about the floor.

The wine is exceedingly strong, and any PC taking more than a few draughts from the jug suffers -1 penalty on all attacks rolls, AC, and saves for the next 1d6 x 10 minutes. Characters insisting on drinking half a jug or more are severely impaired (-1d on the dice chain to all attacks rolls and saves, -4 to AC) until the next turning of the worm.

**Area 2-19 – Steps of Fire:** *You have been descending the seemingly endless stairs for what must be hours. Each flight is the same: stone steps descending ever further, and elegant wooden beams, arching towards the high ceiling, creating the effect of a silent, gloomy forest.*

*Finally, in the darkness ahead, you spy an end to your interminable descent. One last flight descends to the feet of pair of towering portals lit by braziers of burning oil. The smell of smoke, mixed with the stench of rot and mold is thick in the air.*

The steps, and the caverns past the portals were once the sacred burial grounds for Elihai regents and servants. Now they are home to the exiled Prince Rynth and his servitors.

A pair of secret doors (which may be noted with a diligent search) is set within the north wall of the steps. The steps between the secret doors are trapped, so that as the PCs descend the stairs, a faint cloud of vaporized oil descends from above. The oil cloud rolls down the steps, reaching the braziers in 1d4 rounds, causing the cloud to explode into flames, incinerating any PC remaining on the flight of stairs or in the chamber below. The trap does 3d6 damage (Reflex DC 10 for half), and any character who fails the save is set aflame, taking 1d6 damage each round until a save succeeds.

The trap’s flames ignite the oil-soaked wooden beams supporting the ceiling. After 3 rounds, the fire has progressed, causing the beams and the ceiling blocks to collapse. Falling beams and stone blocks target any PC (+4 melee, 1d6+4 damage) attempting to move down the steps. The fire continues for 1 hour.

If the PCs investigate the upper secret door they discover a corridor running parallel to the steps. Inside the hidden corridor is a large bronze lever, soaked in oil. Lifting the lever deactivates the trap, making it safe for the PCs to descend the steps.

Once the PCs reach the base of the steps, read or paraphrase the following:

*The ancient portals of brass and hammered copper tower before you. The gates are decorated with bas-reliefs depicting an Elder Kith funerary procession beneath a star-lit sky. The solemn figures, led by a queen of inestimable beauty, carry the body of a regal warrior towards a high-mountain cairn.*

*A makeshift beam is placed over the door and laden with stones.*

**Area 2-20 – Doom Arch:** *A narrow stone bridge, crumbling with age, arches out into an enormous cavern, coming to rest at a stalagmite. The cyclopean stalagmite, titanic in size like the rest of the chamber, houses what looks like a small village, separated from the arch by a wooden gate!*

Note that unless the characters take precautions to conceal themselves as they draw open the gate, they are exposed to the javelins of the exiles across the arch. The exiles lurk atop 2-21B, giving them both cover (-2 to AC) and an excellent view of the arch. They wait for the PCs to begin crossing the arch before hurling their javelins. If one or more of the PCs falls to the impalers' poison, the exiled knights throw wide the gates and one of their number rushes in to finish off the poisoned hero.

The knights fall back behind the gates if the PCs put up a fierce resistance, fully aware that a fall from the high arch to the cave floor below could well be fatal (20d6 damage).

The exiles use a poison made of fermented mushrooms that does 1d5 damage plus paralyzation and 1d3 damage per round for 1d5 rounds (DC 10 Will save to avoid paralysis; DC 10 Fort save to avoid secondary damage). If the Will save fails, the pain caused by the poison immobilizes the victim until the additional damage has run its course.

See area 2-21 for statistics on the exiles and additional tactics for the defense of their village.

**Treating with the Exiles:** Cunning PCs can call across the gap, in an attempt to win a truce from the exiles. This is challenging, at best, with the exiles slow to trust the invaders. The PCs' cause is aided if they think to offer (or hint at) potential gifts, such as weapons, as the exiles have little means for gaining or forging additional arms or armor. If the PCs do manage to obtain a truce, the exiles safely escort them to the cavern floor, directing the PCs to the Tomb of the Last King (area 2-25). Otherwise, the exiles fight to the death, willingly giving their lives in an attempt to repulse the PCs.

**Area 2-21 – Stockade of the Exiles:** Read or paraphrase the following, keeping in mind that the heroes are likely under attack:

*The high, sturdy palisade defends the stockade. Past the wooden walls, you can spy the wooden ruins of a village, all in various states of decay. A short tower, the second story barely standing, keeps watch to the north, while further down the stalagmite you can spy a large ruined great hall.*

In order to gain the exiles' stockade, adventurers must first negotiate the wooden gate. PCs can easily scale the gate

(DC 10 Strength or Climb, taking 2 rounds and leaving the climber vulnerable to attack from above with a +1d shift on the dice chain) or vault the gate in a single round with a DC 18 Agility check. Alternately, brutish PCs can shatter the gate in a single round with a DC 25 Strength check, or by inflicting 40 points of damage (AC 15) with physical weapons.

Inside the stockade are the sole survivors of Prince Rynth's original company. The six exiles are tormented souls, ruined in body and mind. Once they were simple Elder Kith, but after centuries of exposure to the fell magic of their prince's *Runeblade* and the absence of the sustaining fey magics of the upperworld, the survivors are now gaunt, gray-skinned monstrosities, with sunken cheeks, and dulled, hollow eyes. They move with feral, preternatural quickness, exploiting any opportunity the instant it appears, only to withdraw and attack from another direction. Wounded, they fall back to make sniping attacks, making their last stand in the ruins of the great hall.

Though their stockade has fallen into ruins, the exiles use it to great advantage in battle. Weapons are cached throughout the ruins, along with traps for unwary foes that might try to give pursuit. Note that the exiles are aware of all the traps, and avoid them easily, whereas the PCs might not be so fortunate.

**Exiled Elder Kith spearbearers (2):** Init +5; Atk spear +2 melee (1d8) or javelin +5 ranged (1d6 plus poison); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, fermented mushroom poison, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort -2, Ref +4, Will +0; AL C. Spear, quiver of 6 poisoned javelins.

**Exiled Elder Kith knights (3):** Init +6; Atk bronze longsword +3 melee (1d7) or javelin +2 ranged (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0; AL C. Bronze longsword, 2 javelins.

The Elder Kith shaman is now the leader of the exiles. At need, she can cast four spells, each once per day. Her *ray of filth* poisons a target within 30' (Fort DC 12 or 1d6+4 poison damage and the target makes all rolls at -1d on the dice chain for 1d10 minutes). Her *worm's curse* causes necrotic worms to burst forth from the flesh of a target within 50' (2d4 damage, Will DC 15 for half). Her *blessing of the worm* causes all allies within 15' to gain an extra attack (using 1d14) each round for 1d5 rounds. Finally, the *worm reborn* causes all allies within 30' to heal up to 5 hp.

**Exiled Elder Kith shaman:** Init +3; Atk staff +4 melee (1d4) or harmful spell; AC 12; HD 5d6; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, spells, pass through Hidden Ways 50'; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C. Robes, staff.

**Area A – Tower Ground Floor:** This room appears empty save for a fire pit that hasn't seen use in many a year. A crude staircase in the back of the tower rises to the second floor (area B). A fine wire is stretched across the third step; the first PC to ascend the steps without noticing the trip wire is targeted by a crossbow bolt fired from above (+4 to hit, 1d6 damage).



**Area B - Tower, Second Floor:** Two exiles begin the encounter atop the tower, hidden behind the battlements. They hurl their javelins at PCs crossing the bridge, but once the characters fight their way into the stockade, the exiles withdraw to ground level and split up, sneaking through the ruins to hurl javelins at unsuspecting foes.

**Area C - Backroom:** This room is empty save for a bundle of javelins resting in the shadows against the back wall, where they are difficult to notice unless the chamber is searched. The 4 javelins are all poisoned with the exiles' foul-smelling mushroom oil.

**Area D - Collapsing Hut:** This hut is propped up by key supports set by the exiles. A narrow trip wire is stretched across the entranceway at chest level. Human-sized creatures entering the hut snap the wire, causing the hut to collapse forward, atop them. The collapsing hut inflicts 2d6 damage; the target must succeed on a DC 13 Ref save or be pinned beneath the wreckage (DC 15 Strength check to escape).

**Area E - Curing Hut:** A fire pit is dug at the base of this partially collapsed hut. Soot-blackened copper chains hang from a beam placed across the walls; hanging from the chains are several skinned rats, curing over the fire. The rats' skins are affixed to the walls by spikes whittled from dried mushroom stalks.

Five poisoned javelins lean against the walls of the chamber, covered by a large lizard skin.

**Area F - Mushroom Hut:** This collapsed hut stinks of rot and mold, and is kept constantly wet from a formation of dripping stalactites high above. The exiles have taken to cultivating various breeds of mushrooms in the rotting structure, all poisonous. Dried, powdered, and then mixed into a paste, the proper combination of mushrooms produces the poison the exiles use on their javelins and spears. Foolish PCs consuming any of the mushrooms must succeed on a DC 10 Fort save for 1d5 rounds. Each failed save inflicts 1d3 points of Strength and 1d4 points of Stamina damage.

**Area G - Water Hut:** This structure collapsed long ago, and is now little more than rotting walls. A crude javelin trap wards the entrance to this hut (+2 to hit, 1d6 damage plus poison).

A formation of stalactites high above provide a constant drip of water; the exiles have taken to collecting the water in a large mushroom cap. Five clay jugs are set against the wall of the hut. Four are filled with water, and are safe to drink. The fifth contains a potent alcohol brewed from mushrooms and glowworms. A single swig of the stuff grants a drinker +5 temporary hp, -2 to his initiative rolls and Reflex saves, and +1 to his Fort saves. Fools imbibing more than a mouthful must make a DC 15 save or fall unconscious for 24 hours.

**Area H - Collapsing Hut:** This hut is propped up by key supports set by the exiles. A narrow trip wire is stretched across the entranceway at chest level, as in Area D.

**Area 2-22 - Ruined Great Hall:** *Stone steps descend to the collapsed ruins of a great hall. A crude roof of tanned hides covers much of the structure, supported by beams and enormous mushroom stalks, scabbed onto the walls. Inside you can spy fire pits, pallets made of skins and hides, and a large altar chimney.*

Driven from the upper ruins, the exiles make their last stand here in the great hall. They fight bitterly, with the knowledge that their cause is doomed. If the last survivors are all wounded, they give up their lives, plunging through a hole in floor at the back of the hall, plummeting to their death on the cavern floor below.

PCs inspecting the ruins find little of value. The piles of furs and skins are the exiles' crude beds. The skins are largely cave rats with the occasional lizard, and are worthless. Three bundles of 6 javelins are placed along the back wall of the chamber. None of the javelins are poisoned.

The stone chimney set against the back of the chamber is actually a crude forge. Resting atop the forge is a variety of ruined copper and bronze objects - the exiles' most valuable commodity. Unable to mine for metal, the exiles have taken to using and reusing any metal object. Belt buckles

and pendants are transformed into spearheads, broken weapons are re-forged and sharpened, coins are beaten into javelin tips – nothing metal is wasted or neglected.

Determined PCs are able to collect 15 gp worth of hammered gold here, though most of the soft metal has been mixed with copper or bronze and used in the exiles' weapons.

**Area 2-23 – Basket Lift:** *Narrow steps painstakingly carved into the side of the stalagmite run down to a narrow platform. A crude basket winch, built from a giant mushroom cap, fibrous rope, and counterweight stones, sits atop the platform, permitting access to the cavern floor.*

*Far below, you can spy the cavern floor, covered in a dense forest of giant mushrooms. A narrow path of stones cuts through the forest, angling toward the cavern wall.*

The exiles use the basket winch to access the cavern floor. Though crude in appearance, the basket winch isn't dangerous so long the occupants don't make any quick movements.

It takes the lift 5 minutes to make 1 trip from the platform to the cavern floor. Ascending is much quicker, taking only half the time.

If, at any point in a descent or climb, the riders make quick shifts inside the basket, or are hit by an attack, there is a chance that the mushroom cap flips; one PC in the cap must make a DC 15 Reflex save to keep the cap from overturning. If the cap does flip, riders must make DC 10 Reflex saves to seize hold of the cap, or risk falling to their death (damage ranging from 6d6 to 1d6 depending on the height of the basket).

**Area 2-24 – Fungi Forest:** *The floor of the cavern is covered with a thick bed of spongy humus. The stench of rot is thick in the air, and every breath fills your lungs with stinging spores. Giant mushrooms tower around on all sides. A narrow path of stones is set in the soft ground, wending its way through the fungi forest.*

The humus is thick, and every step drops the character a foot or more into the rotting soil. While movement on the stone path is normal, the humus is difficult to walk on, preventing characters from running or charging. Creative PCs can move along the tops of the mushroom forest, leaping from cap to cap. Each round spent moving this way, the PC must succeed on a DC 10 Strength or Agility check, or slip, falling to the spongy soil (no damage).

There are a nearly endless variety of mushrooms filling the cavern, ranging from deadly strains to those with bizarre magical properties. Eating the mushrooms is exceedingly foolhardy, but what are adventurers if not fools?

For each mushroom tasted roll 1d20 and consult the following table. Dwarven mushroom farmers and other PCs with applicable applications add +5 to their roll, and may hazard a DC 15 Intelligence check to gain an insight into the effect that might occur. Multiple tastes of the same type of mushroom by the same character do not stack or repeat effects, though tastes from different species do. Samples taken from the mushrooms are good 1d6 days before drying and losing their properties.

Roll (1d20)	Effect
1-4	<b>Common Poison.</b> The PC takes 1d20 damage, and his Fort save modifier is lowered by 2 for the next week.
5-10	<b>Harmless.</b> The mushroom is tasty, but otherwise has no effect.
11	<b>Spore of Madness.</b> The PC loses his mind for 1d6 rounds, attacking the nearest living creature with intent to kill.
12-14	<b>Healing Cap.</b> The hero recovers 1 HD of healing. Elves tasting this mushroom treat it as <b>common poison</b> (see above).
15	<b>Dancing Spore.</b> The PC takes 1d5 points of poison damage, but for the next 1d10 rounds, the PC's AC and Reflex saves are improved by +2. Halflings tasting this mushroom treat it as <b>common poison</b> (see above).
16	<b>Spore of Timorous Dread.</b> For the next hour, the PC is stricken with dread. All Initiative checks and saves vs. fear effects suffer a -2 penalty.
17	<b>Invigorating Spore.</b> The PC takes 1d5 points of poison damage, but for the next 1d10 rounds, the PC gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls. Elves and halflings tasting this mushroom treat it as <b>common poison</b> (see above).
18	<b>Shadow Stem.</b> The PC slowly fades from sight, becoming invisible for the next 1d4 rounds. Dwarves tasting this mushroom treat it as <b>common poison</b> (see above).
19	<b>Death Cap.</b> The PC immediately takes 5d5 poison damage and must make a DC 15 Fort save or die.
20	<b>Heroes' Cap.</b> Characters tasting this mushroom gain 15 temporary hp, a +1 bonus to AC and all saves, and immunity to all fear effects. The benefits last for 1 day. The powers of this mushroom only work once per character. Greedy would-be heroes discover that if the mushroom is eaten twice (or more), the second result is <b>common poison</b> (see above).

**Area 2-25 – Tomb of the Last Prince:** *The narrow stone path wends its way to the cavern wall. There, set beneath a small overhang, is a crude stone throne carved from the living rock. Seated atop the throne, girded with bejeweled mithral armor and covered in a dark fungus sits a grim skeleton.*

*A massive two-handed sword rests against the throne. The dark blade pulses with ancient, malign power, calling up bitter bile and filling your mind with dreams of bloody slaughter.*

This skeleton is the corpse of Prince Rynth; the skeleton's bones have been entirely replaced by mold and fungus. Touching the skeleton causes it to collapse into a slithering pile of rot.

The bejeweled armor is a suit of +1 *mithral plate armor*. The sword at the skeleton's side is the *Runeblade* – the goal of the heroes' quest.

The malignant, dire magic of the *Runeblade* is so great that it counteracts the Curse of the Worm. Living creatures within 500 feet of the blade age normally, and are not "reset" with the turning of the worm. The *Runeblade* is a fell artifact of inestimable power. It derives its name from the eldritch runes set in its blade. The runes pulse like dying red embers, the light growing brighter whenever the blade tastes blood. The blade is forged of some unknown black metal, and close inspection shows wisps of mist spilling across the blade, forming tortured, screaming faces. See **Appendix I** for a full examination of the blade's properties and powers.

The might of the *Runeblade's* enchantment counteracts the Kingspire's curse, and returning the blade back to the upper levels of the Kingspire brings Lady Ariarch's ill-wrought enchantment to an end.

However, the might of the blade has also attracted powerful defenders: an enormous, devourer worm. Taking the blade from the throne draws the attention of the worm. The first round, the characters feel something moving beneath the humus, and see the stalks of the mushrooms displaced as the enormous creature moves towards them. The second round, the worm erupts from beneath the rotting soil, plunging down to devour the PCs. Any creature reduced to 0 hp when bitten by the worm is immediately swallowed; the body can only be recovered if the worm is somehow slain.

In addition to its terrible bite, the devourer worm can spew acid, causing all within a 20' of its mouth to suffer 2d6 damage (Reflex DC 10 for half). It can dive beneath the ground, causing tremors that require a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling prone (with a 50% chance of dropping anything held). Kind judges may rule that PCs who make this save are afforded the opportunity for a free attack. Once beneath the ground, on its next action the worm comes up beneath a target, biting with an additional +2 bonus to hit.

Each round, roll 1d5. On a roll of 1-3, the worm bites. On a roll of 4, it spits acid. On a roll of 5, it dives beneath the ground.



ne of the four blades forged for the Courts of the Elder Kith, the *Runeblade* exists only to bring death and destruction. Known in legend as the *Winter Blade*, and the *Tirfing*, the blade brings ruin to any that dare to wield it in violence.

The *Runeblade* is a +3 *two-handed sword* that drinks the souls of all it slays, preventing any form of return from the dead. A PC reduced to 0 hp by the *Runeblade* cannot be saved by magical healing, recovering the body, or even direct appeals to divine aid. The *Runeblade's* bonus applies to both

The worm can easily outmatch the adventurers. A giant, ravenous predator, there is little that would daunt the terrible foe, and the PCs' best hope of survival lies in flight.

The worm gives chase, up to the base of the stalagmite. The worm can rear up to 20 feet in the air and still make its attacks; once the PCs have ascended 20 feet or more, the worm is impotent, screeching its fury, but affecting naught.

**Devourer Worm:** Init -4; Atk bite +6 melee (3d8); AC 25; HD 20d12+40; hp 160; MV 40' or burrow 40'; Act 1d20; SP spew acid, dive into ground, attack from below; SV Fort +20, Ref +2, Will +22; AL C.

## CONCLUSION: LEGACY OF THE SWORD OF RUNE & RUIN

For all the pain and torment it has wrought, ending the curse if is remarkably simple. The adventurers must return *Runeblade* to the upper level of the Kingspire.

When the PCs return to the citadel, read or paraphrase the following:

*The runes of the sword flare bright red, like embers about to catch fire. An unbearable brightness passes over you, and for an instant, you feel as if your entire body is disjointed – torn between two dimensions.*

*Then the sensation passes. Above, the constant dark mists part to reveal the blue sky. As the mists fade, you realize that the citadel is returned to its ruined state. The sounds of battle cease abruptly, leaving naught but the natural sounds of the swamp in their wake.*

*You are triumphant! Your companions give a shout, but a lingering sense of malignant dread hangs over you like the tendrils of fading mist. What of the *Runeblade* you still carry? It calls for blood, and you know in your heart that this tale has only begun...*

The inhabitants of the citadel and the sub-human barbarians are not so fortunate. They age several centuries in the span of a few moments, reduced to gaunt, withered forms, then corpses, then dust. A cold wind blows over the citadel carrying away the remnants of the Kingspire's folk, erasing them from memory and legend, save for the tales told of the PCs' exploits.

## APPENDIX I: THE RUNEBLADE



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The *Runeblade* is a +3 *two-handed sword* that drinks the souls of all it slays, preventing any form of return from the dead. A PC reduced to 0 hp by the *Runeblade* cannot be saved by magical healing, recovering the body, or even direct appeals to divine aid. The *Runeblade's* bonus applies to both

attack rolls and damage rolls, and it does an extra +1d6 damage to Lawful foes.

The sword's wielder gains a temporary +1 bonus to attack rolls for each foe reduced to 0 hit points during any given round, and the bonus lasts until the end of the next round.

**Goals of the *Runeblade*:** The *Runeblade* aims to bring death and destruction to the world, reaping the ranks of the champions of order and law, and spreading strife amongst the civilized realms. Its thirst for blood is insatiable, and drives the sword on, regardless of its wielder's wishes.



# CONCORDANCE



he degree to which the **Runeblade's** wielder meets the sword's evil goals determines how the sword functions for that wielder, as follows:

<b>Starting Score</b>	<b>5</b>
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner is Chaotic	+1
Owner slays a close friend	+2
Owner slays a Lawful creature of 5 HD or higher	+1
Owner is Lawful	-1
Owner permits a foe to live	-2
Owner spends 8 hours in the presence of a higher-level warrior (maximum 1/day)	-2
Owner goes for 24 hours without slaying a living creature of 5 HD or greater (cumulative until a suitable creature is slain)	-1

## Pleased (16-20)

*"I am become Death, destroyer of worlds."*

The *Runeblade* is pleased with its host – for the moment. It continues to aid the character, slaughtering as many Lawful creatures as possible, and spreading strife and terror throughout the world. The sword's bonus increases to +4, and the character gains a +2 bonus to initiative. However, the character's effective Personality is reduced by an additional 1d3. Even if the sword is forsaken, this damage never heals.

## Satisfied (12-15)

*"The blade calls to me, and I must answer in blood"*

The *Runeblade* has found a suitable wielder, but it not yet sated. When touched, it fills the wielder's mind with thoughts of slaughter and destruction, and of the great rewards that will surely follow. In addition to its normal bonus, the sword grants a +1 bonus to initiative checks while wielding the blade. The wielder's Personality is reduced by 1d3. This reduction can be healed as normal ability damage only if the wielder has forsaken the *Runeblade* for a month or more.

## Normal (5-11)

*"To achieve true peace for all, sacrifices must be made."*

When taken up, the *Runeblade* tries to seduce its owner with offers of power, and all the good that can be accomplished by a benign tyrant. At first the blade urges the wielder on to combat evil foes, slowly urging the character into attacking those that present a threat to the PCs' plans, and finally those that *might* offer a threat.

## Unsatisfied (1-4)

*"I cannot control the chaos blade – it controls me."*

The blade works actively against the wielder, goading him into battle in the hopes that the owner will fall.

At the judge's discretion, NPCs may become inexplicably angered with the PC (base chance 1 in 6), goading the NPC to attack.

## Angered (0 or lower)

*"Get away! The blade's hunger must be sated!"*

The *Runeblade* is at war with the wielder, actively working to free itself from the character. Everywhere the PC travels, he is confronted by angry, embittered foes, determined to bring his life to an end. NPCs become inexplicably angry with the wielder on a 1 in 3 chance, and the PC is sought out and attacked by a wandering monster, to the exclusion of all other potential targets. Once per week the *Runeblade* can force its owner to make Will save (DC 1d20 + the character's level). If this save is failed, the wielder must attack the next stranger he or she encounters.

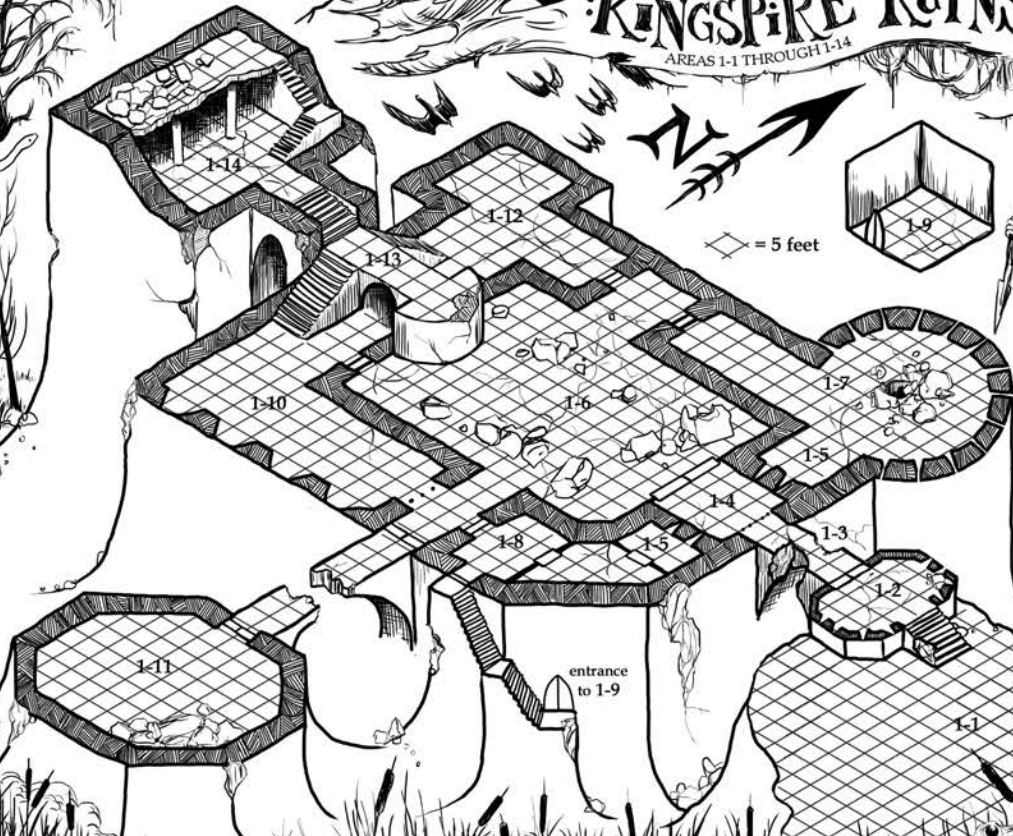
## Moving On

For every creature slain by the *Runeblade*, a portion of the wielder's soul also dies. The judge should track the number of creatures slain, applying the following table. Many of these effects are role-played, and must be conveyed to the player (possibly in secret, so that the other players must determine the reason for the PC's new behavior for themselves). Effects are permanent, even if the *Runeblade* is discarded.

Foes Slain	Effect
0-5	No effect
6-10	The PC grows cold and distant, seldom caring for social niceties.
11-16	The PC no longer cares for friends or allies, taking action only if it has a direct and immediate benefit to himself. If Lawful, the PC becomes Neutral.
16-21	The PC displays open disdain for the cares and pain of others.
22-25	All animals fear the character. Horses refuse to be ridden, dogs snarl and attacks, and cats flee.
26-28	The PC engages in cruelty for pleasure. Left alone with another, he attacks with the blade to observe his targets' responses.
29-30	The PC actively seeks out old allies to kill, bent on wiping all traces of their existence from the world.
31+	The PC has become numb and indifferent to the world of the living. The player must forfeit his character to the judge, who can run the character as a psychopathic villain.

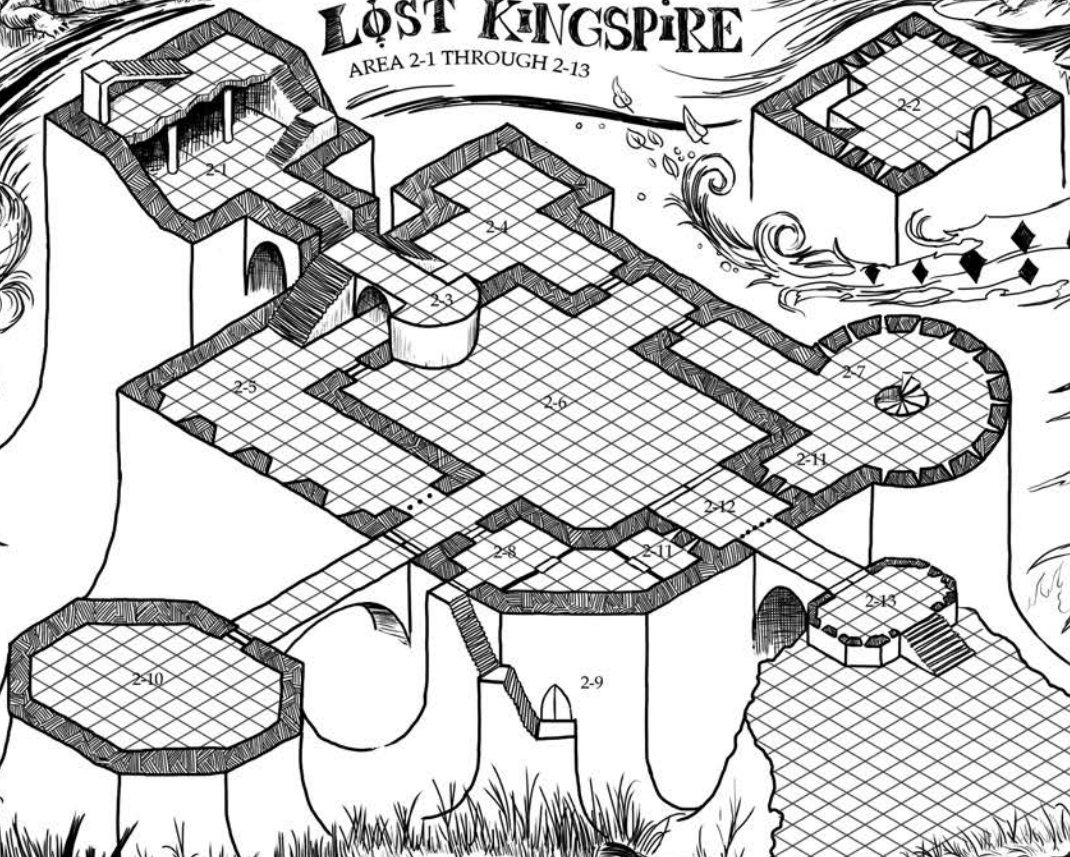
# KINGSPIRE RUINS

AREAS 1-1 THROUGH 1-14



# LOST KINGSPIRE

AREA 2-1 THROUGH 2-13

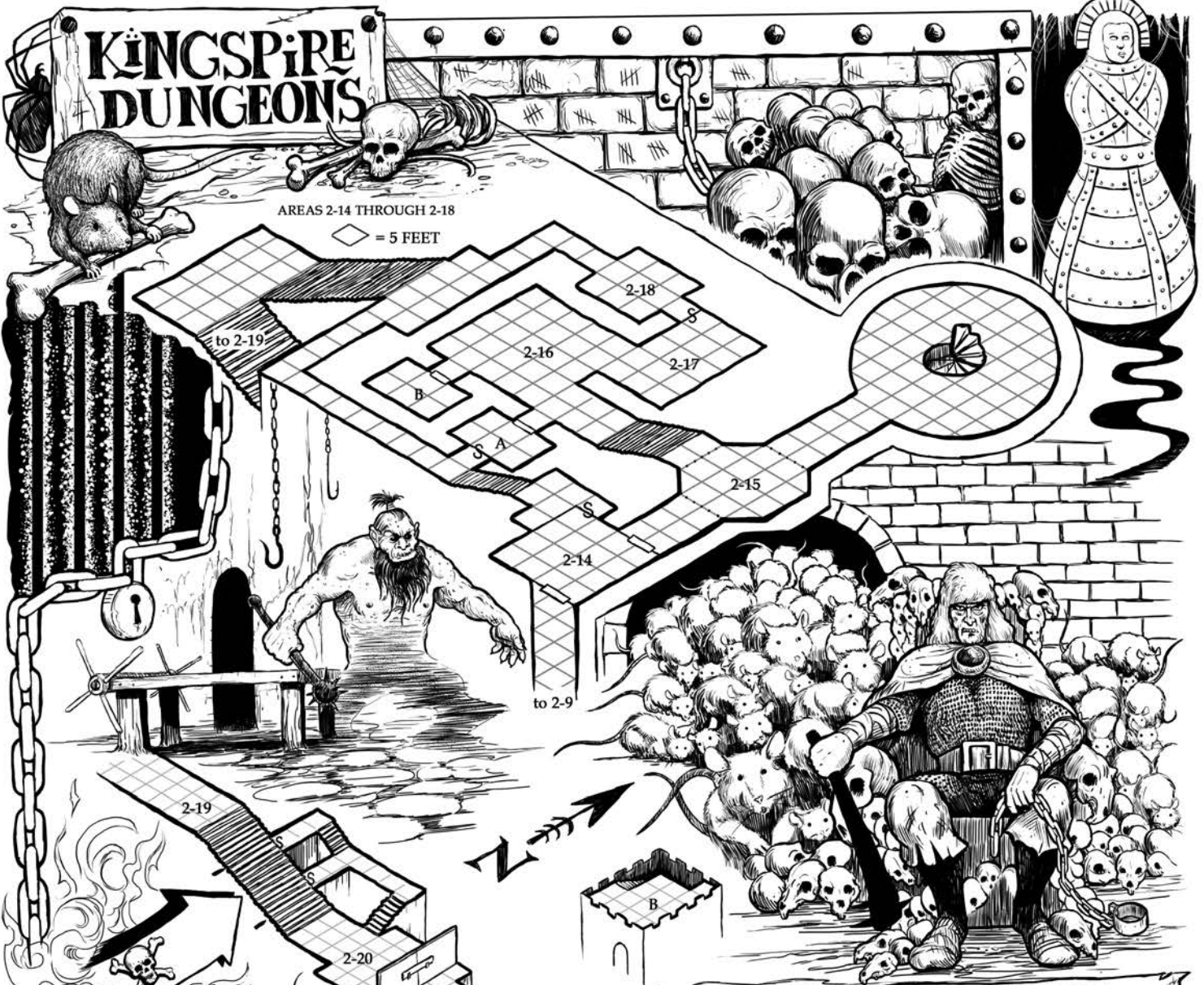


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# KINGSPIRE DUNGEONS

AREAS 2-14 THROUGH 2-18

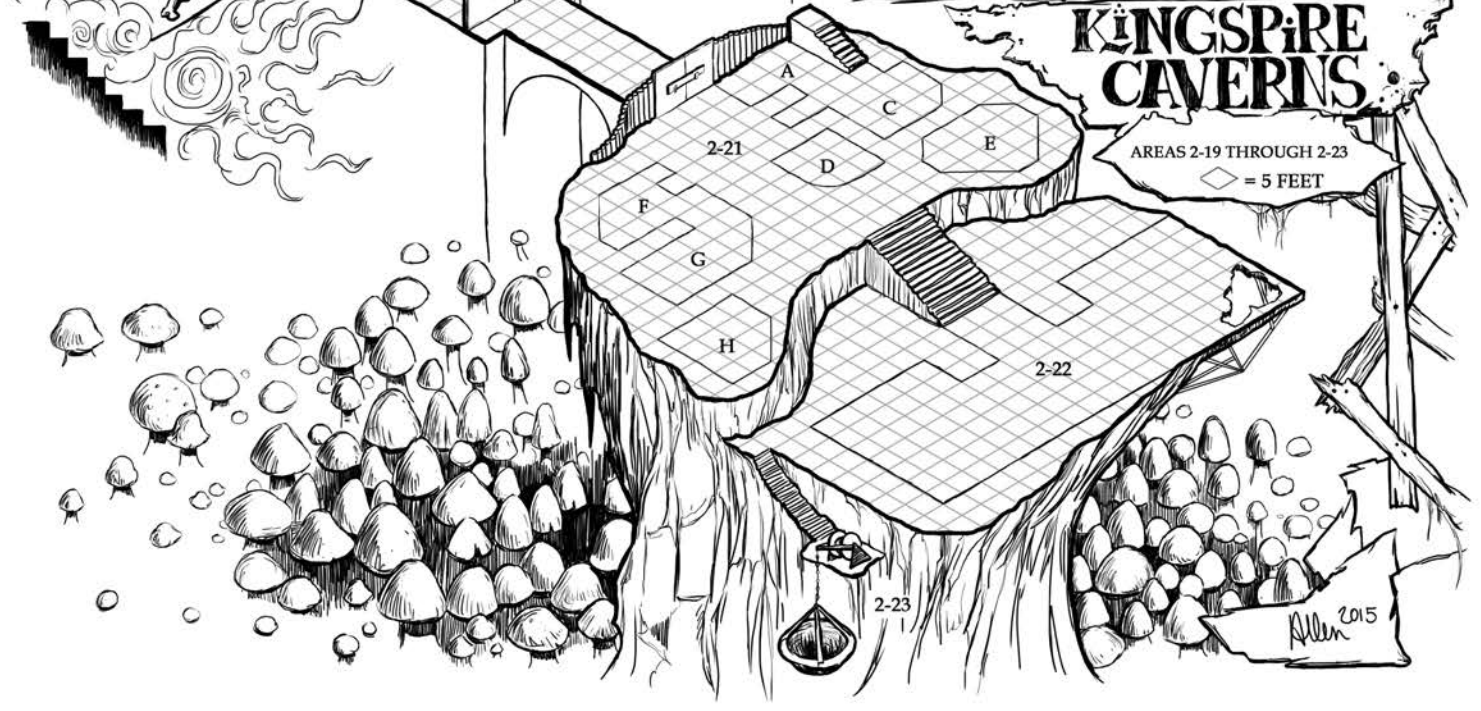
◇ = 5 FEET



# KINGSPIRE CAVERNS

AREAS 2-19 THROUGH 2-23

◇ = 5 FEET

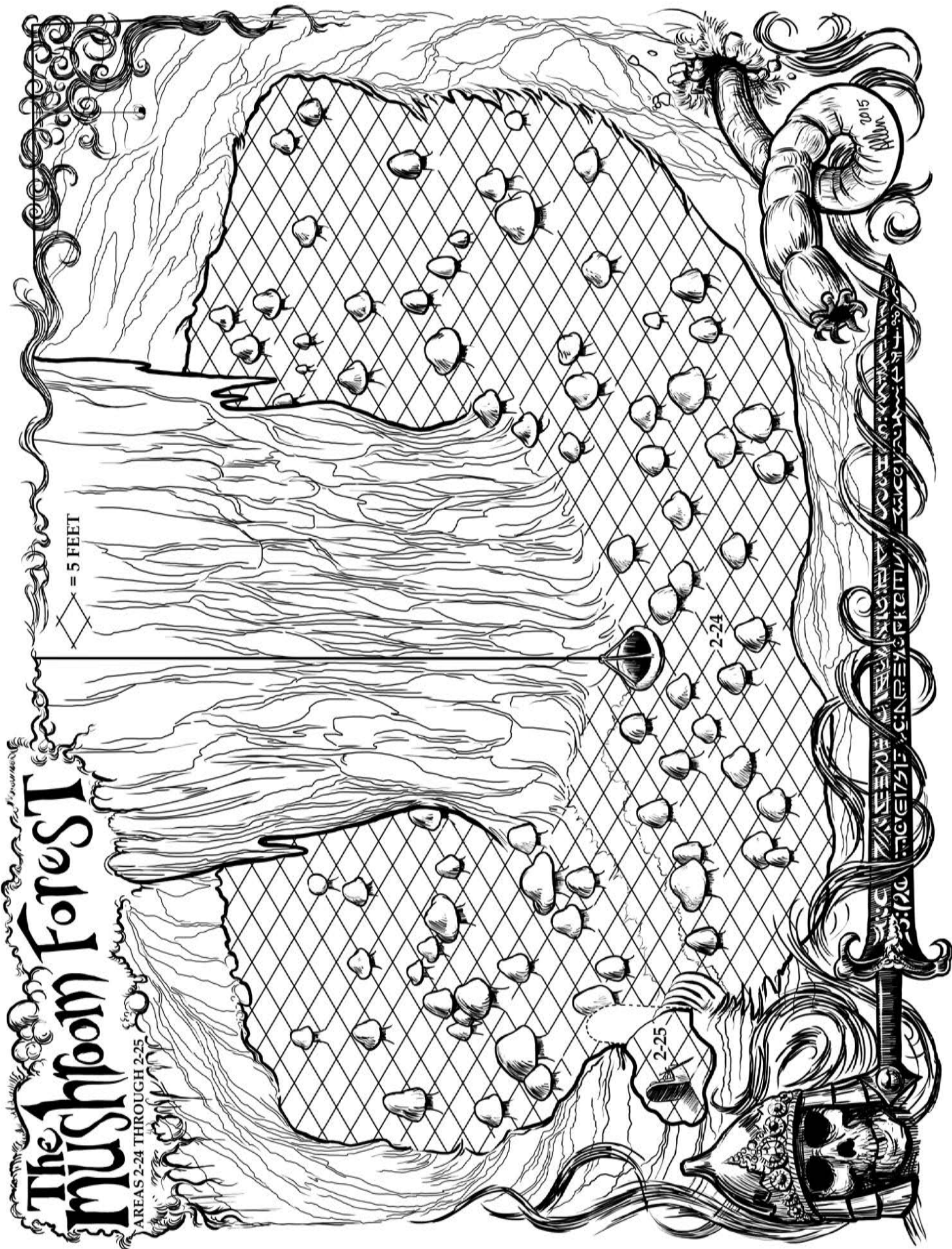


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# The Mushroom Forest

AREAS 2-24 THROUGH 2-25

◇ = 5 FEET



2-24

2-25

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MUSHROOM FOREST

TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE THE WORLD

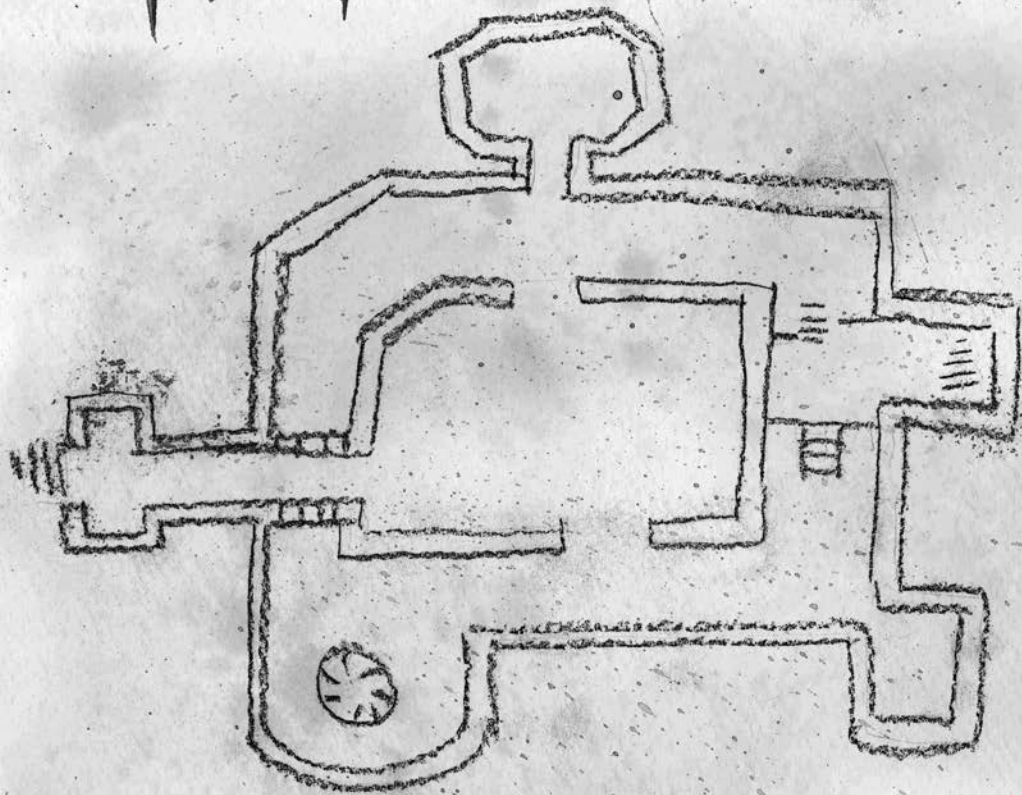
HANDOUT A

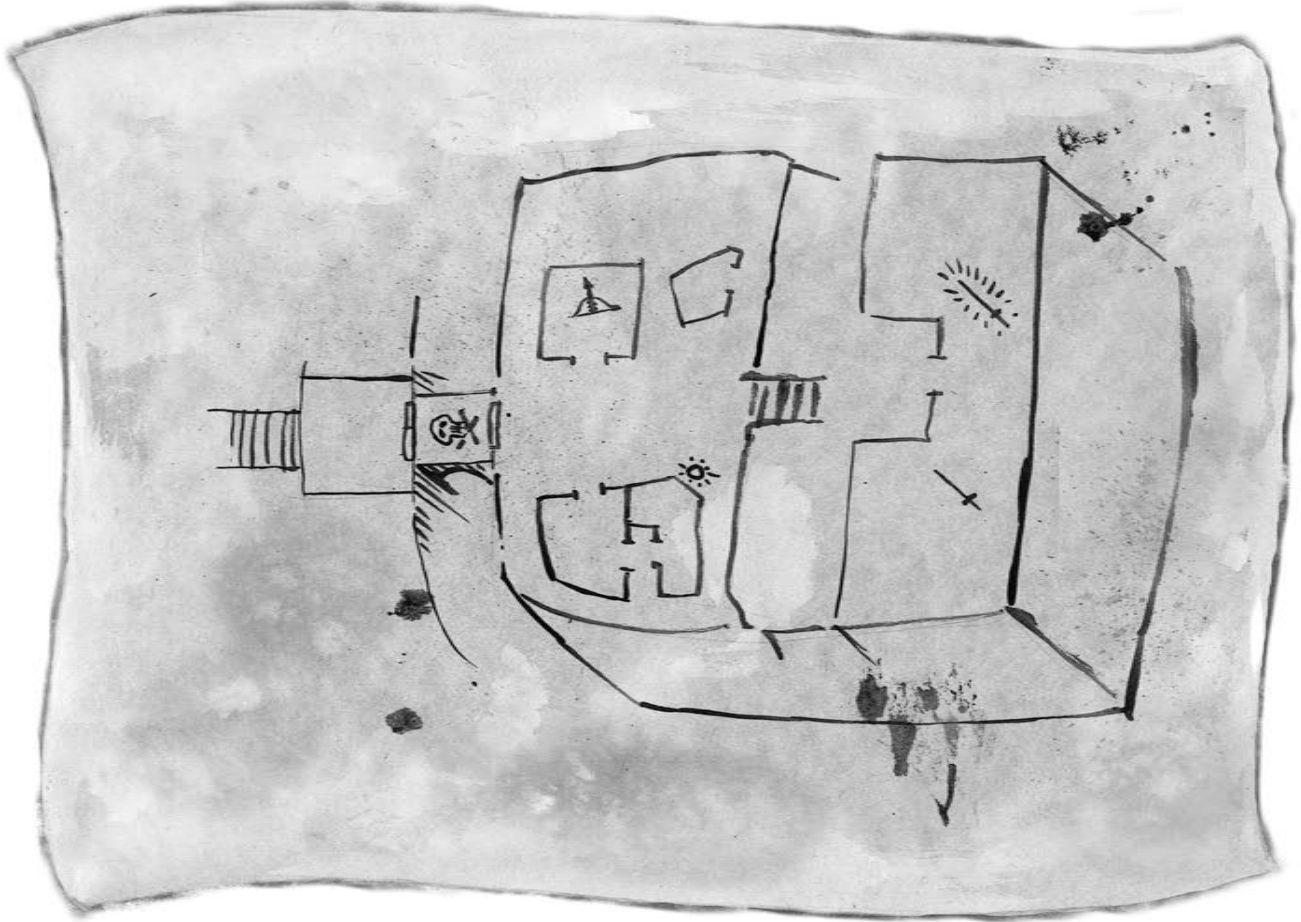
MY BROTHER LEA HIS REMAINING HENCHMAN, FOU FORMORIANS AND TWISTED RITH, ALL INTO THE CAVERNS BENEATH OUR CITADEL. I WOULD SEAL THE GATES AND FORGET HIM, WERE IT NOT FOR THE RUNESWORD. THE SAVAGES DRAW CLOSER EVERY DAY, AND THOUGH LADY ARIARCH AVERS THAT HER MAGICS CAN SAVE US, I'D RATHER PUT MY FAITH IN THE HELL BLADE

CURE ME, A THOUSAND TIMES THAT I EVER TRUSTED HIM. MAY THE HELL BLADE TAKE HIS SOUL, AS IT IS CONSUMED SO MANY BEFORE HIM.

EVEN NOW THE SAVAGES BEAT OUR MIGHTY GATES, THE TIME FOR BATTLE IS AT HAND. I SHALL CALL THE VIZIER TO ME SO THAT

HANDOUT B





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