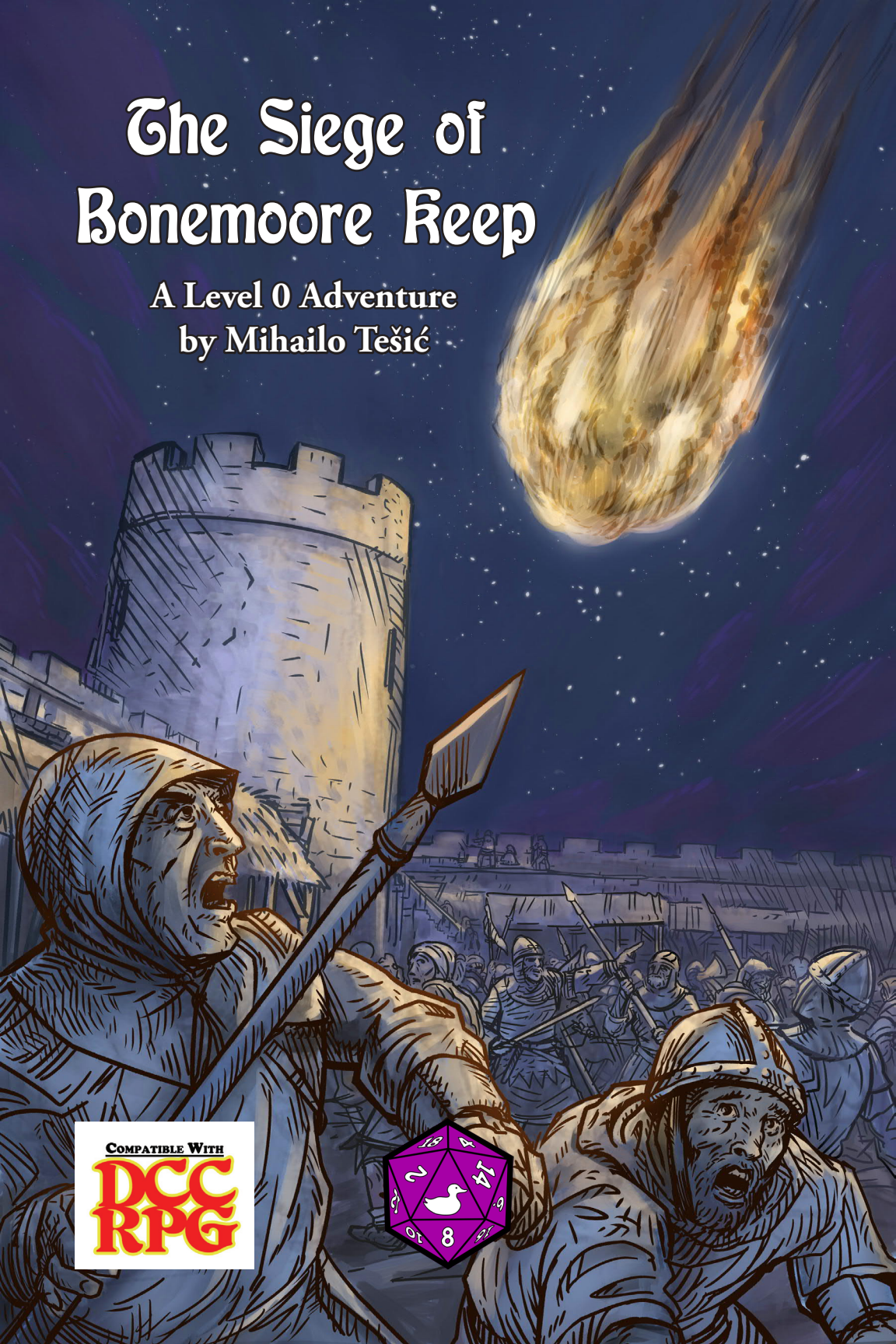


# The Siege of Bonemoore Keep

A Level 0 Adventure  
by Mihailo Tešić



COMPATIBLE WITH

**DCC  
RPG**



# The Siege of Bonemoore Keep

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# The Siege of Bonemoore Keep

## A Level 0 Adventure

### Introduction

This adventure takes place at a single location, Bonemoore Keep, over the course of a single night, during an attack by a superior and terrifying enemy force. The characters are ordinary people from the surrounding region who have gathered here to seek refuge from a marauding army comprised of cannibals and flesh puppets. They have been conscripted and are now a part of the grim garrison that will take a fateful stand against the terrible Thrallmaster and his minions. The battle to come will likely leave some characters dead but could make heroes out of others, as epic battles are wont to do. This will allow the party to build a sense of camaraderie and distinguish themselves enough to be sent on a special mission, where they will discover a terrible weapon hidden beneath Bonemoore Keep – an ancient platinum golem.

The adventure is divided into three parts, each one focusing on a specific aspect of the OSR experience, making this funnel suitable for new players and veterans alike. At the very start, the players are thrown into a desperate defensive battle, with rock golems dropping from the sky and ghuls storming the walls as the keep is set ablaze. In the aftermath of the assault, they are tasked by a demon in disguise to find the Lord of the Keep, and will have to interact with various NPCs to reach the finale: the dungeon beneath, where they have to overcome devious puzzles and traps in order to get out alive, while possibly unleashing a horrifying calamity upon the world!

The adventure presents an alternative advancement system that directly links player actions to rewards, which are not expressed as experience points, but mostly as improvements to Ability scores, and sometimes as aid such as allies, equipment or replacement 0-lvl characters.

### Background

For centuries, the six-spined silhouette of Bonemoore Keep has been the most prominent landmark in the remote flatlands inside the gargantuan Farwall crater. Rising at the very center of the fecund Crater plains, the

keep was built by Loew - wizard, constructor and explorer, known as the greatest mind of his generation; also, as Loew the Demented.

The hexagonal tower that is the heart of the keep was first set up ostensibly as a border hold, to Loew's design, in accordance with mystic geometries. As the colonists began settling the area, Loew was given the title of the first graf of Farwall. He made the keep his residence and invited select people to join him there, offering them freedom under his ward to become explorers of the senses and the limits of human spirit. In his designs, the keep was to be a place for all who would share his taste for freedom unrestrained by convention and custom. In this faraway enclave of enlightenment, he would both escape obligations towards his arranged wife and unwanted son and be able to perform his important research far away from the prying eyes of clerics.

Loew had secretly built a laboratory underneath the keep, where he could dedicate himself to that most noble of alchemical pursuits - discovering the essential property of life itself, the *elan vital* – and the means of controlling it. His ultimate goal was to become a master over life, akin, if not equal, to gods themselves. Over decades, Loew and his followers experimented with pleasures and transgressions to uncover the hidden ways of power. He wrote that knowledge down in dragon blood, etching sigils that trace the barriers between being and potential on a scroll of fairy skin. And he built a receptacle for these words to animate, just as gods put words in clay to create man: a wondrous metal giant, an indestructible body of platinum gears and steel plating, a machine waiting for its ghost, the first golem.

Finally, the time came when Loew needed just one more word to complete his Scroll of Life; a word that was not of this world. To hear it uttered he had to conjure an entity outside of reality, a being that weaker minds would call a “demon”. In demonogenealogies, the being was dubbed The Malthusian and it had one infernal purpose: to mar any noble idea, turning it on its head so it would cause endless suffering instead. So, Loew sacrificed an innocent soul to summon the demon.

As Loew heard the Malthusian's word and wrote it down, he clearly saw in it all his folly and hubris. For the final word needed for the enchantment was one of pure chaos, a speck of antithesis, the black dot of yang in the white yin. He knew then that he could never place the scroll in the Golem's head, because the demon's taint would allow its purpose to be warped, and for it to be turned into a vessel of destruction. Consequently, this had to be the nature



of life itself, to succumb to chaos and entropy. This realization about the folly of his life's work drove Loew quite insane. Still, he could not bear to destroy the secret of life, so he hid the scroll in his laboratory, which he sealed off and warded against demons, and expelled all the residents from the Keep, remaining alone there.

Word of Loew's madness eventually reached his son, who set out to find out what had happened to his sire. When the lad arrived, months later, he found Loew dead, seemingly by self-imposed starvation. Now the graf of Farwall, the young lord burned his father's remains and scattered the ashes to the four winds, and then refitted the hexagonal keep into a proper border fortress, establishing a force that would guard the ever-growing population of colonists from the wandering beasts and the native tribes raiding the newly established farms and roads. The laboratory was never found.

Centuries passed. Today, after countless battles with surrounding native tribes and cannibals the locals call *ghuls*, Bonemoore Keep still stands unconquered on the artificial island in the marshland that Loew had erected. Although it has not seen a major conflict in well over a century, its garrison is made of hard men, veterans and crafty opportunists. But none of them know that the venerable keep is harboring a terrible secret: an unimaginably powerful golem, and the words that can breathe life into it.

All that will change soon. The Malthusian has finally come for his due, as a dark army is marching on Bonemoore Keep, led by the mysterious Thrall-master. The days are turning dark and that which has never lived may yet rise, ending all life as we know it.

# JUDGE'S NOTES

## The Keep

Bonemoore Keep rises on an unnatural rocky patch that is elevated scarcely a few feet above the surrounding plains stretching for a hundred miles in each direction. Its immediate surroundings are marshland, which by itself has deterred many an invader seeking to conquer the fertile crater lands. The Keep proper is guarded by a moat filled with a substance known as quick-mud, which acts as quicksand, albeit stickier and more foul-smelling; a single drawbridge is the only point where the moat can be crossed to enter the Keep above.

The keep has four round corner towers, the main hexagonal Hightower, the last remnant of Loew's original design, and two guardhouse towers as tall as the walls. The walls themselves sprout seamlessly from the rock below, to a height of 50 feet above the plain. They are 10 feet thick, with outer 3 feet being the battlement with 3-foot wide openings spaced evenly every 10 feet. Each wall is approximately 200 feet long, with outer towers being 30 feet in diameter.

The Hightower is a hundred feet high. The top is fitted with an observation deck with a signal bonfire, and a wondrous farseeing glass called the Skyeye, built by Loew himself. Looking through it, observers can cast their gaze at any place in the vast Crater plain, dotted with settled farms, brisk woods of poplar and groves of black locust.

It is through the Skyeye that the dark forces of the Thrallmaster were first spotted five days ago, massing in the mountain passes and advancing down into the great Crater plain. With only a short time to spare, the Keep's defenses have been improved where possible. Old machicolations in the inner walls were repaired, and the two smaller gatehouse towers equipped with oil (well, swampwurm tallow)-filled cauldrons. The Keep's only scorpio, a massive spear-throwing siege weapon, was taken out of its grease vats and assembled and attached to the Skyeye, its harpoons ready to be set ablaze in the great beacon fire which now called all Crater denizens to refuge, as moths to a flame.

The Lord has dispatched one of his three prized clockwork hounds to run to the Homeland, with a letter seeking aid and warning of the Thrallmaster – but it will take even the tireless hound days to reach a city of note, from which the message would be relayed to a relief force, and there is no telling how long the assembly and arrival of such a force would take.

The refugees from the surrounding plain soon came flocking to the Keep, at least those who had escaped the ghul-scouts of the Thrallmaster. Farmer families, ranger and trapper bands, merchants, mendicants, and traveler troupes, are all now enlisted as troops in defense of the Keep. Anyone who could hold a spear in one and a shield in the other has been mustered and given basic training, no matter their age or gender. The rest, mainly the sickly and elderly, some women and all small children, were packed into the Hightower and barricaded inside. The place is now a hotbed of rumors, the more subdued ones regard the ways in which the Lord will make sure the folk are killed rather than taken by the ghuls.

The two score horses used by Outriders and their commander, sheriff Dohr-Ian, are tied up in the long stable near the eastern wall. Other buildings of note in the courtyard are the leatherworks and smithy, both working around the clock, assembling leather armor and forging arrowheads. The roofs of all three buildings have been covered with mud to prevent them from catching fire, and the water pump, which is fed from deep underground, has been oiled, with dozens of buckets prepared.

Some two hundred soldiers of the garrison have been deployed on the battlements in three shifts, their longbows at the ready, and down in the inner courtyard, the drafted defenders have made their miserable camp. Some five hundred sturdy, foolish or simply brave men and women huddle around a few measly fires, some whispering, some sleeping, the luckiest among them sharing what are probably their last ever flasks of wine or plum brandy.

## The Player Characters

The characters are all placed in the same unit, which is supposed to serve as the first reserve - that is, those who will relieve the archers and man the walls in melee, should it come to that. The upside of this situation is that they were given top notch gear, out of the equipment the defenders could spare. Each player character receives a **leather armor (and helm), shield and spear**, in addition to any starting equipment gained by their occupation.

The unit is commanded by **Sarjeant Zim**, a no-nonsense veteran and war hero, and is divided into five detachment of 15-25 people, each group led by an experienced soldier. If any characters are mercenaries or soldiers or have any sort of martial background, they are assigned as the leader of the detachment and effectively, the party, since it is could be assumed the character serves in the garrison (and consequently, is familiar with the fort layout, including the location of the dungeons). If there are three or less players, it is recommended to allow 5 characters each.

Any other character can choose to be a part of the Keep's garrison, providing the player gives a satisfactory explanation (Judge's discretion). For example, halfling cooks or farmers supplying the garrison with produce could have spent time in the Keep. Dwarves could have been brought to work as masons, while elves could be outriders or scouts. More colorful explanations for demi-humans can be given, in accordance with the campaign setting.

## Rewards

This adventure includes a different approach to handing out rewards, intended to better approximate and evoke what it means to live through a bloody, ruthless battle, discover that there exist things one has not even dreamed of, and come out on the other side a 1st level hero! The Siege of Bonemoore Keep will become the stuff of song and legend, an epic last stand, a tale of a brave few who turned back the doom that has threatened to erase all humanity - or who caused it to be, depending on the outcome of the adventure.

But whether those who survive are remembered as heroes, villains or fools, they will come out of the harrowing experience changed, with increased depth of perspective, sharper personality, more wisdom and improved muscle memory, especially if they have committed some deeds that have changed the course of the battle or saved lives.



Instead of awarding experience points, each successfully resolved encounter or challenge in this adventure results in an **increase of an Ability score**, handed out at the end of that encounter or section. This bonus is usually +1, for the character(s) who used the relevant score to overcome the encounter – using skills and performing actions that depend upon that ability score. Additionally, completing segments of the adventure nets all characters **fleeting Luck**, which can be given to other characters similar to the Halfling Lucky Charm ability. However, a PC loses all current fleeting Luck when he rolls a 1. Any fleeting Luck not used is converted to permanent Luck at the end of the adventure.

Playtesting has shown that characters who already have a relatively high Ability score tend to gravitate towards situations or resolutions that rely on that score being used, which results in further increase of that score. A strong character will go to pump water and an intelligent character will try to work out the puzzle. This results in 1st level characters which have a better chance of possessing high or relatively high ability scores relevant for their future class, as well as increased player investment into those fragile 0- level PCs. In any case, the Judge should not inform the players upfront what Ability will be increased, but rather hand out the rewards in accordance with players' actions.

Every encounter or challenge has a suggested Ability increase award, both for surviving or resolving it, as well as for some courses of actions that can be taken during the encounter. The players are often creative in seeking solutions that will use their preferred abilities, so the Judge is advised to be ready to improvise different bonuses if a player solves a situation relying on an Ability score that is not listed as a potential reward for an encounter.

Some Ability increases are awarded for coming up with solutions or ideas. Since these come from players, the player should decide which of the characters they control will receive the reward. Finally, if a character reaches a Luck score of 18 over the course of the adventure, any additional fleeting Luck can be used to increase any other Ability score. Those blessed with fortune are blessed, indeed!

Of course, if this approach does not suit your style, you can always use DCC experience points or simply have any survivors level up at the end of the adventure.

# Legends and Rumors

Before beginning the adventure, each player should roll 1d16 on the following table as many times as is the total Personality modifier of their characters (minimum of 1): this represents the rumors overheard from other conscripts and soldiers. Rumors are marked T for true, PT for partially true, and F for false.

| D16 | Rumor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | The Keep was once a temple to a dark god of perversion, its original inhabitants living in debauchery and turned to demon-worshipping, before they were driven away by the first lord Farwall and became man- eating ghuls from beyond the Crater wall. (PT)                                                      |
| 2   | The Lord has sent his fastest clockwork hound with a message for the Imperial forces, but there is no way that help will get here in time. (T)                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3   | The Lord has a clockwork eagle which he keeps at the top of the tower, it can guide lightning from the heavens to crackle down and destroy the Thrallmaster's army. (F)                                                                                                                                           |
| 4   | The Thrallmaster controls his army like a puppeteer, all of them are tied by almost invisible strings to his fingers, thousands of strings converging on his battlewagon, which is as big as a manor. (PT)                                                                                                        |
| 5   | Magda's daughter is sick, she's a goner if that Priest can't help her. (T)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 6   | The Outriders have captured some scouts from the enemy army. They are like animals, only capable of killing and pillaging. They say their eyes are pools of black, like tar. (PT)                                                                                                                                 |
| 7   | Gruel, the gargantuan dragon lays asleep below the crater, as big as a cloud. It will awaken if Bonemoore Keep falls, laying waste to the lands of man. (F)                                                                                                                                                       |
| 8   | The mud in the moat around the keep is alive, it grabs at you with hands of mud and pulls you down never to be seen again. Thousands of attackers have perished in it over the centuries. (T)                                                                                                                     |
| 9   | The Sheriff was bitten by a ghul when on patrol, now he is down in the dungeons with a ghastly fever., The Lord will have to order him killed, but he cannot bear to do that to his old friend. (F)                                                                                                               |
| 10  | Dohr-Ian the Sheriff had a row with the Lord, and he ended up locked in the dungeon, nobody knows why... Except maybe that crazy-eyed old Priest who has not left the Lord's side for the last four days, ever since he came to the Keep. But good luck hearing anything sensible from that bloody doomsayer! (T) |
| 11  | Maoran the Gaoler will let you in the dungeon to 'ave a go at the prisoners, just bring him booze. (PT)                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 12  | A bunch of women in the main tower have started turning to each other for consolation. It is like an orgy in there now, and that lecherous priest Nais is in the middle of it! (F)                                                                                                                                |
| 13  | Nais the Priest can heal a man with a touch of his hand, blessed be Igman the Saviour. He did it to young Morty here, who poked his own eye out during yesterday's spear training. Bet he could do it for that gaoler what with his leg all swollen and smelling something horrible! (T)                          |
| 14  | We are doomed, that Priest has said so. He says that this army is unstoppable. He says that Thrallmaster's knights are not of living flesh and do not feel pain. (T)                                                                                                                                              |
| 15  | The Lord has captured a wendigo some years ago, and now keeps the nightmare beast locked up in a reinforced cell in the dungeons below. The Lord brings it live game every night. (T)                                                                                                                             |
| 16  | The Lord and the Sheriff... Didn't you hear? They have a go at it at night, in the Lord's bedroom. Been doing it for years. (Judge's decision)                                                                                                                                                                    |

# Event 1: Predawn Assault

Read or paraphrase the following to the players to set the scene and the mood.

*The night seems to have no end, for none of you have gotten much sleep. The walls of Bonemoore keep rise around you, like a prison for those sentenced to death, its huge hexagonal Hightower looming above you in the dark, the large signal fire on its spire now extinguished. The damp air sticks to your undergarments, not bringing much respite from the summer warmth, least of all to those who are forced to spend it in leather armor, and especially not to those whose detachment has been told to wait at the ready in the courtyard, right next to the tanner's works, as yours has. The clammy heat makes the stench from the tanned hides somehow even more unbearable than the one that rises from the moat beyond the walls, filled with bubbling mud and carcasses of farm animals deemed more valuable as sources of hide and sinew.*

*Despite the dampness, your mouths crack dry. Water has been rationed, amid rumors of the wells being poisoned. You cast quick glances at the Keep's water pumps, the nearest some fifty feet away. It could as well be behind the mountains, since Sarjeant Zim and his first detachment are stationed there. But what has kept you awake most of all is the ominous rumble from beyond the walls. The screeching and wailing and murmuring of the Thrallmaster's army. The enemy has arrived.*

*It has been five days since the army was spotted, massing in the mountains that circle the fertile plain most of you have called home since you were born. Now, ghuls have overrun your ancestral farms, your cattle has been slaughtered or lost, your fields burned, and the wild tribes of mountain-men, led by the sorcerer known only as the Thrallmaster, have converged on the very heart of the province, the old Bonemoore Keep, where all the surviving populace has sought refuge. Anyone fit to hold a spear and a shield was given one, including you, and now this garrison, led by your Lord, graf Farwall, is to mount a desperate defense. Others, the sickly, elderly, young women and children, are barricaded in the Hightower, where Magda the Housekeeper is doing her best to keep the situation relatively calm.*

*For the last few days, you have endured grueling training, gruel meals and sleeping on blankets in the Keep's courtyard, in order to become somewhat passable soldiers, although Sarjeant Zim would be disinclined to agree, loudly. The drills are at least a means to help you take your minds off the rumors that have been floating around, about the horrible Thrallmaster and his ghul minions.*

*The news has only grown grimmer as more refugees arrive. Some thousand people, less than half of them able-bodied, are now in the fortress – but at least twenty times as many approaches under the grotesque banner of the Thrallmaster, the Outriders have reported after their final foray, before they too joined the wall defenses. Strangely, their Sheriff, Dour Ian, has not been seen for the last two days.*

*The ramblings of a wild-eyed wandering Priest called Nais do not help – as he calls water from heavens to fill your cups and blesses the sickly, he rambles on about this being the end times and how only the Lord Protector Farwall can stop it. Some men whisper that he was the harbinger of this doom, while some think him a saint who has come as a sign of your victory.*

*You overhear one young soldier in the detachment next to yours start talking loudly. "I've listened to the Priest, and he says we'll all be killed! The Lord should be 'vacuating us!'" His tirade is cut short by a loud smack: Sarjeant Zim has come up to him fast as a python and punched him square in the mouth. As the recruit lands in on his bottom in the mud, weeping and clenching his bloody jaw, Zim picks up the teeth strewn in the mud. He tosses them to you. "Here, might bring you some luck. They were lucky enough to get out of his stupid mouth".*

There is 1 tooth per player. Each tooth bestows **1 point of fleeting Luck**, given to one character.

The characters have been assigned to a single “detachment“, and in these past few days they've shared bread, stories of their past and bruises from the drills that Sarjeant Zim has made them go through. Allow the players a few minutes to get acquainted with each other's characters, and suggest each player share an interesting story about one of their characters, such as would be traded in a soldiers' tent. If a character is further developed in such a way,

they get **+1 to an Ability** of Judge's choice. They have stood out and could easily be looked up to by other characters.

This is also the time for players to decide if some of their characters are soldiers or auxiliaries at the Keep. If at least one such character is in the party, give the players **Handout A, Player Map of the Keep**. Otherwise, the players can only sketch the map from the Judge's description. Once the players have had a good look at the map, read or paraphrase the following:

*It is near dawn, and the moon is hidden behind the clouds. Some recruits seem to have gotten used to the horrible sounds coming from outside the Keep's walls and have dozed off. Then, you hear commotion spreading through the soldiers – proper soldiers, on the walls. You look up, to see the Lord on the huge triangular balcony of the Hightower, wearing a ceremonial uniform with decorations and insignia whose meaning escapes you, accompanied by his clockwork hounds. As the lord looks over you, he draws a breath to speak, and is suddenly illuminated by orange light from the north.*

*All of you turn your gaze to the pre-dawn sky, only to see four, nay, five, oh gods, now it is six fiery comets streaking across the sky towards the keep! The Lord only has time to shout: "To arms, heroes!", as the first comet falls, revealing itself as a huge multifaceted flaming rock – and then strikes short, disappearing behind the walls and into the moat, with a thundering splash.*

*Zim shouts for you to get your weapons and form up. The second monstrous missile falls even shorter, but you can hear it outside the walls, as it rumbles and rolls towards the Keep, finally splashing into the moat. As two more fiery boulders fly over your heads lighting up the sky, you can almost feel the heat on your eyelashes. They overshoot, splashing into the marshland to the south. But then you are almost thrown to the ground by a huge blast from the north wall, and then another, from the east.*

The fifth boulder has hit the stables, killing most of the horses, sending others fleeing in terror around the courtyard where the tents are, occupying the Outriders and the hundreds of recruits in that part of the courtyard. But the PCs will have to deal with the sixth, which has hit the arrow storage (1A), its impact killing a dozen men and scattering the survivors. The flame quickly begins spreading to the wooden platform and rolls of arrows that are now

strewn all around. The fiery chunk of rock begins to stir, unfurling one appendage, then the other, rising upon huge legs, revealing itself to be a curled-up rock golem, towering some 12 feet, and ablaze with intense fire.

The second golem will climb to the northwestern corner tower, after wreaking havoc on the tents and the horses. The characters can see the tower is now also ablaze, a huge humanoid shape clinging to its side like a grotesque ape with no facial features or fine detail, its appendages spreading flame wherever they strike, swatting at hails of arrows that pepper it. Eventually, it will fall into the quickmud amidst archers' cheers.

The creatures are animated rock, created with the *breathe life* spell by the Thrallmaster and then doused in alchemist fire and lit before being catapulted. It spends every round moving its full speed and swiping its long arms at the defenders, killing most of them instantly, sending bodies flying like toy soldiers.

As Sarjeant Zim calls to charge, have players roll for initiative.

**Come on, you sacks! Do you want to live forever?**  
**- Sarjeant Zim**

## **Area 1: The Courtyard**

The defenders have four rounds to destroy the intruder before it reaches the Hightower. In the first round, the rock golem will strike at guard tower A. In round two, it will move to point B punching at the barbican wall. In round 3 it will follow the barbican wall to point C, and the inner gatehouse will be set ablaze. In round 4 it will go to the water pump (D), destroying it and leaving a small geyser in its place; and finally it will run out of flames in round 5, charging into the Hightower door, crashing it in, whereupon the Lord will stop it. After each destructive act, the golem will engage in melee with defenders.

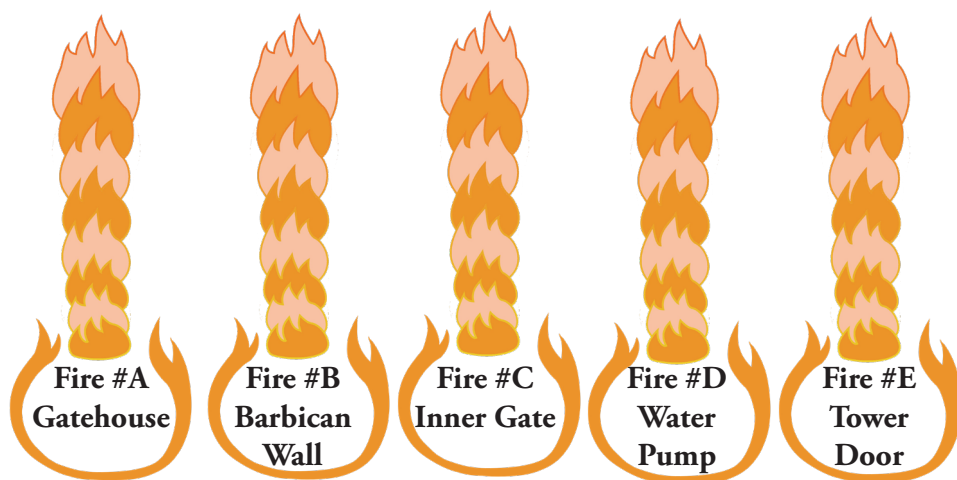
The Judge should keep note of the rounds on the Flame Spread matrix, which represents both the spread and the intensity of fires started by the rock golem's rampage. Every place where the rock golem finishes its movement and makes an attack will catch fire. Since there is not much flammable material, the fires will spread slowly. For each round that the rock golem is alive, check



a new flame on the Flame Spread matrix, corresponding to the location in the courtyard (A, B, C, D, E) and then check a flame above each already checked flame, showing how existing fires are growing in intensity.

Although it is possible the players will want to man the pump and start putting out fires while the golem is rampaging, the questionable wisdom of that choice should be obvious from the golem's trajectory.

### Flame Spread Matrix



### The Combat

The characters' detachment is next in the line of the rock golem. The first detachment has been destroyed by his fall, and the second one, commanded by Zim, is already engaged and taking heavy losses, as Zim curses horribly at the PCs to join the fight.

As the rock golem advances, it swings its long flaming appendages about, mowing troops down. Roll to hit once, (the golem effectively hits on 2+) but 3d6 damage is distributed among everyone who is engaged in melee with it. In round 0, the golem is fighting another detachment of 1d10+15 recruits, so roll to see how many are killed; they will engage in melee combat until none are left.

Starting with round 1, have all the characters involved in melee roll under Luck. Each PC that fails must take damage, but the amount is distributed as

the players agree upon between themselves. A character can soak up all damage of one hit, sacrificing themselves for the others. This mechanic is intended to simulate both the chaos and the bonding that is forged in combat, as the players will calculate and possibly offer to sacrifice some character for the good of the group, jumping in front of the golem or dragging their wounded comrades away.

If any NPCs are in the melee, they absorb damage first (1 HP per soldier, no Luck check). How much damage Zim will absorb is up to the Judge. Zim has charged between the monstrosity's legs, and is slashing at the knees with his longsword, his mighty deeds of arms focused on crippling it.

Additionally, anyone who takes damage from the rock golem and survives must roll a Reflex save equal to damage taken or catch fire, taking an additional d6 damage. This is only until the beginning of round 5, when the flames on the golem are all but extinguished. Its melee damage also drops to 2d6.

The situation is additionally complicated by the archers. In round one, Zim calls for archers, and they deliver: have each player roll a d6 and add up the results. That is the damage taken from the hail of arrows. Half of this damage is spread among the PCs and NPCs in melee. Have each character in melee roll under Luck. If they fail, they must take some damage from the arrows, after any NPCs. Zim will recall the archers as soon as the first PC calls out to him to do so. If no PCs take damage, the golem still only takes half of the damage rolled.

If a character tries to avoid combat, they quickly realize that there is no place to go but the walls and corner towers. The stables have been destroyed. The main tower door is blocked and the guardswomen inside will shout at any stragglers to get back to combat. If a character wanders onto a wall or a tower, they can try to stop the archers or join the archers (roll under Luck each round to find an archer dead from the golem impact, with a longbow and 20 arrows), adding a d6 to archer volley damage if they hit. Any character on the wall or a tower can also make out the Thrallmaster's army approaching in the predawn gloom (see **The North Wall Must Not Fall** below).

If the rock golem is still active at the end of round 5, it will crash into the Hightower door, below the balcony where the Lord is standing. All the archers will concentrate on it, on the Lord's command – last one before the

balcony comes crashing down. The Lord will jump away and jump on the creature from above, as it flails its arms with the Lord's two hounds clinging onto them, stabbing from above with his sword, killing it spectacularly, leaving a huge cloud of dust and a pile of stones. In the aftermath, one hound, marked with a "II" on its forehead plate, is obviously broken, lying on its side in the rubble, its legs making jerky walking motions. The Lord is nowhere to be seen. Go to **The North Wall Must Not Fall**, but if any of the characters stay to observe a little more, they will see the Lord bidding his last farewell to his hound and going inside the Hightower, and will later be the ones whom Nais the priest will approach and try to beguile at the beginning of Part 2 of the adventure.

**Huge Rock Golem (on fire):** Init -2; AC 18; HD 12d8+16; HP 53; Attack: flaming fist +12 melee (3d6, 2d6 after 4 rounds) MV 30' or dig 10'. SP: Set ablaze, sweeping strike, immune to mind-affecting spells; Act 1d20 SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4

**Rewards:** Any PC who joins the archers and damages the golem receives **+1 Agility**. If any PC shouts to recall the archers, they receive **+1 Intelligence**. If a PC is the one to land the final blow on the rock golem, that PC is hoisted up on the troops' shoulders amidst cheering, gaining **+1 Personality** and is dubbed the Rockbreaker by the troops. If the rock golem is killed by arrow fire, Sergeant Zim will be the one to effectively finish it off with a mighty deed of arms. Every character that has engaged the rock golem in melee combat and survived gains **+1 fleeting Luck**.

## Fire of a Known Origin

*As the rock creature drops, breaking apart into chunks of stone and a dusting of fine soil, you turn around to see the courtyard in chaos: dozens of dead, some men burned to a crisp, horses neighing in terror and several fires spreading around this part of the Keep, the largest one being in the place where the monster impacted, near the guardhouse and munitions storage.*

*The fire is spreading, slowly but surely. Your detachment seems to be the only one left in this part of the courtyard. As you stand in the midst of the carnage or emerge from the piles of heavy hides scattered by the flaming rock creature's passage, you look at each other, when Zim's scream tears*

*through the chaos: “To the pump, you nincompoops!”*

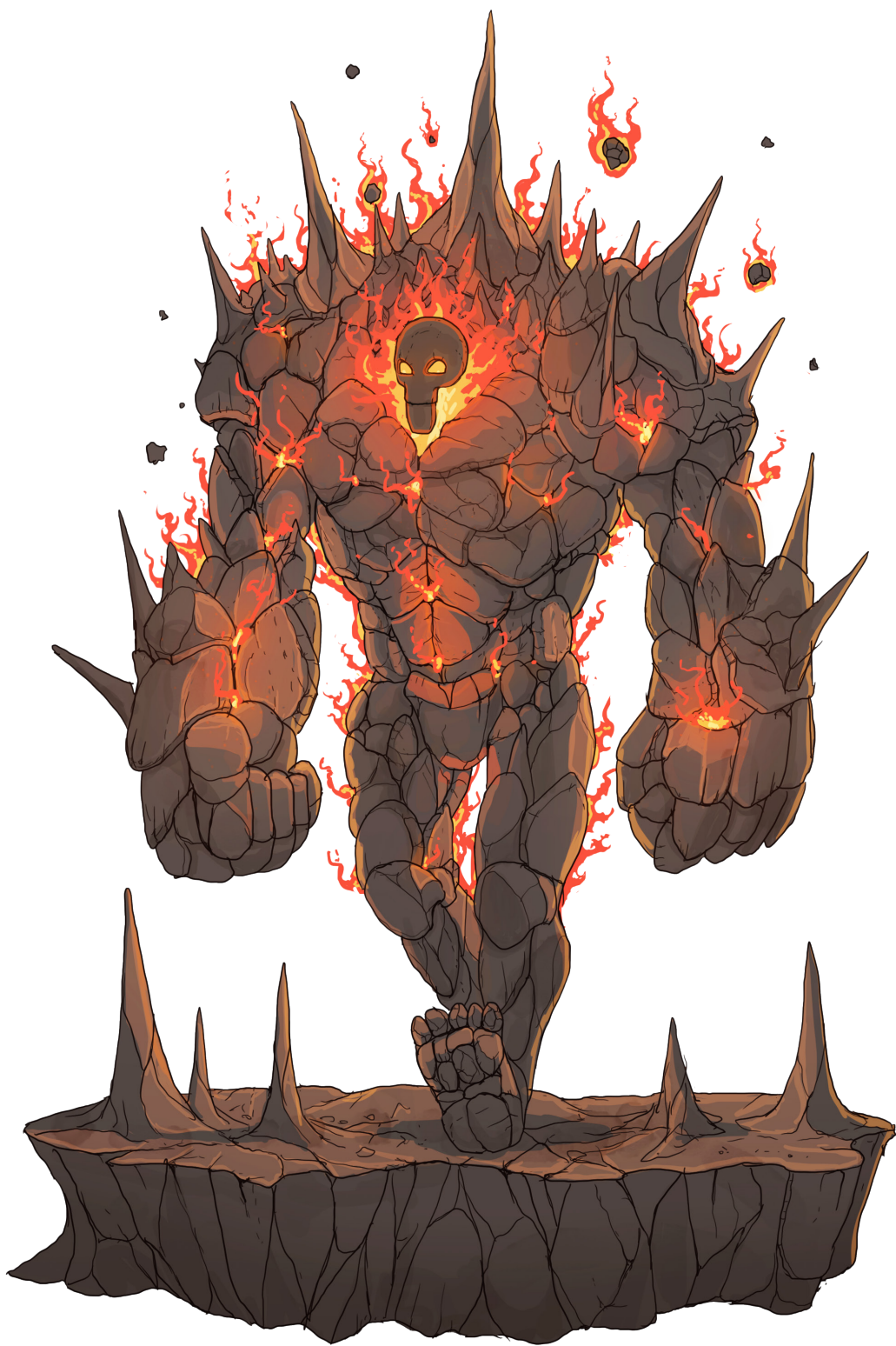
Once the golem falls, the Judge should continue counting rounds and checking new flames in the activated columns of fire in the Flame Spread matrix, one per column per round. If a fire column reaches the top, that part of the keep is destroyed. The rounds are now “non-combat“, i.e. they last an entire minute.

There are scattered buckets around the water pump (or its remains) – equal to  $d20 +$  the Luck score (not modifier) of the first PC that comes to them. It should take the party at least 1 round to get to the pump and organize a line of 10 people, so add at least one checked flame to each fire column on the matrix. The number of buckets determines the maximum length of the line. If there are 18 buckets and 18 people, the chain can reach a fire 90 feet away, which is the furthest fire from the pump. If there are not enough characters, some NPCs will have to be recruited for the cause – not Zim, though, he is busy triaging the wounded. If there are not enough buckets, the characters will have to come up with another way of extinguishing the flames, see below.

A character can pump up to his Strength score in rounds, before having to make Strength checks, beginning with DC5 and increasing the DC by 1 every subsequent round. Failing means the character is exhausted and takes -1d to all action and damage rolls for the next encounter. If the pump has been destroyed in the golem’s rampage, one character can stand at the pump filling the buckets and getting soaked with icy-cold water for as many rounds as is his Stamina score, after which they must make Stamina checks, beginning with DC5 and increasing the DC by 1 every subsequent round. If they fail, they are freezing and have to warm themselves up for a turn, and they skip the next scene (**The North Wall Must Not Fall**).

Every round spent extinguishing a fire brings its column down by 1 flame per 5 people in line. The line can be lengthened every round, if there are PCs urging other defenders to help the effort. A successful DC10 Personality check will persuade a fellow NPC soldier to help and join the line. The Rockbreaker can roll d24 for this check.

Alternatively, hides and leather from which elite hide armor is made, can be thrown on the fire to extinguish it. It will take one hide to extinguish one flame in a single column on the matrix. The hides are foul-smelling, and it takes a DC8 Stamina check to carry one to the fire without losing a round to



vomit, and if a PC wants to carry two, the check is 12. Picking up a hide is an action, as is throwing it on the fire. Each character can carry two hides. There is also the option to find the Priest Nais in the tower. Any NPC soldier can be asked if they have seen him. Have the PC roll under Luck and the NPC will say that they saw him extinguishing the fire in the stables. It will take a PC 20-Luck score rounds to find him and bring him to a fire in the courtyard. Nais will call upon divine favor to create water and extinguish three flames in a single column per round.

**Rewards:** the character who recognized that hides can also be used to fight the fires receives **+1 Intelligence** and the first character to come to the leatherworks finds **d3+Luck bonus hide armors**. Any character who dumps hides onto the fire without vomiting receives **+1 Stamina**. The character who fetches the Priest receives **+1 Personality**. The character who has worked the pump until the fire was extinguished and did not fail (or need to roll) a Strength check, gets **+1 Strength**. The character that has stood in the freezing geyser until the fire was extinguished and did not fail a Stamina check, gets **+1 Stamina**. Every character that participates in the firefighting efforts gains **+1 fleeting Luck**.

## The North Wall Must Not Fall

*Just as the last of the fires is extinguished, there is a cry from the walls – ghuls screaming and sarjeants calling for the archers to get ready with their flaming arrows. As the first volley is fired at the enemy you know now must be charging the walls, you regroup and seek each other out in the chaos. What remains of your detachment huddles in one place.*

If a character observes the surrounding commotion, looking for someone who knows what they are doing, roll a Luck check. If they pass, they will notice one of the Lord's clockwork hounds, marked II. The mechanical creature has been badly damaged; it has fallen on its side, but its winding gears still force its legs to maniacally move forward, pushing at the ground. The creature moves in a circle, a sorry wreck. Finally, the Lord, dusty and bloody, appears and inserts the tip of his dagger behind its ear, at which the beast freezes. The Lord stares for a spell as the hound's sapphire eyes go dark, then disappears inside the Hightower, among sobs and shouting of the refugees inside, followed by his one remaining clockwork hound. Anyone brave enough can pry the hound's eye out and have themselves a nice **1000 gold piece**



**ruby** but should roll for Luck. If failed, they are spotted by some soldiers and immediately attacked. The soldiers will not talk, there are d6+1 of them and they have the same stats as the offending character.

The archers have been firing their volleys for a good minute, when the call from the battlements comes: *Reserve! To the wall! To the wall!* Read or paraphrase the following:

*Zim again leads by example, charging through your group, shoving (the characters with lowest Luck) in front of him, pulling others behind him. Before you know it, you are being herded up the ladders and on the northern wall, to the right of the gate. Next to the ladder is a flight of small stone stairs leading up to the guard tower, where there is a cauldron bubbling with a boiling mass, over a large burning brazier.*

*Zim stops (the character who has a military background, or the one with the highest Personality or the Rockbreaker), and pushes a small bulb-shaped flask into your hands, shouting into your face: "This is a fairy fire. It will draw the attention of the scorio, so they know to fire where it has been used. Do not use it if they breach the battlements, but before, you hear me?" He shakes another bulb in his hand as he runs up.*

The PCs are on the wall, where they can finally take a good look at the Thrallmaster's army, illuminated by four large beacons – monstrous catapults that must have launched those living rocks. The flaming arrows of the defenders fly from the walls and dot the crusty marshland around the Keep like carnival lanterns, revealing a terrifying scene: hundreds of ghuls, sprinting on all fours towards the mud-filled moat, screeching hellishly. Almost half a mile away behind ranks of hide-bound wild men, rises a monstrous tent, shaped like a beastly hand, its five fingers flailing with the wind, alight with a ghostly glow.

The enemy charge is two-pronged, and each prong is aimed at a place where the mud-moat has been filled up by one of the two rock golems that fell short of the Keep at the beginning of Pre-dawn Assault scene. Now, to the defenders' horror, the creatures have melded with the mud, creating two earth bridges across the moat, to the base of the walls. One of them is directly in front of the gate. The other is directly in front of the PCs, on the same wall that houses the gate.

The characters are ordered to position themselves on the battlement. There

are twelve openings in the wall and each character is assigned one opening, 3 feet wide. If there are more than 12 characters, the ones with highest Luck come to the battlements last and find a large wooden pitchfork each (adds +2 to rolls to push away poles, see Combat below). One extra character can man each opening, or they can go for the cauldrons, which are on the guard towers above the gate, narrow stairways leading to them from both sides. If there are empty battlements, have them manned by NPC soldiers, and leave it at that. As the characters take position, they can see the attackers.

*Have no doubt: these are ghuls, cannibalistic degenerates from the caves, craving human flesh and poisoning the air with their beastly screeching. Some are naked, some in rags, furs or wearing bits of flayed skin, yellow eyes gleaming in the dark. They carry grappling hooks and long poles upon which other ghuls already hang, but most are content to jump at the wall and climb using the sheer strength of their sinewy muscles. The hooks begin clanging, poles sprout up, and barely a couple of heartbeats later, the first ghuls are already in your faces!*

## **The Combat**

Do not roll for initiative. The heroes have automatic first strike in every round in the ensuing combat. Additionally, they gain +4 to AC due to being protected by the battlements. However, each PC must fend off 2d6-Luck bonus ghuls that will try to climb a pole and push through that opening in the battlements.

A character can forego their automatic first strike in order to push away the pole. If they survive the ghul's attack, the character rolls a Strength check, DC8+number of ghuls on the pole/hook. If successful, all the ghuls fall and the character is considered to have single-handedly cleared their "opening".

If a PC attacks the ghul in melee and kills it, the ghul below rolls a DC10 Reflex save or also falls down. If a ghul is hit, but not killed, it rolls a Reflex save (DC10+damage taken) or falls down and the ghul below rolls a DC10 Reflex save. If there are two PCs at an opening, they can kill a ghul each. If two or more ghuls are killed or knocked over on one opening, there is no ghul attack on that pole in that round.

If a PC clears out all the ghuls on a pole, they can move to help a comrade. However, if a PC dies or moves away from their battlement opening once combat has begun, all remaining ghuls from that pole are redistributed

among the other PCs, but they appear first, and until all these surplus ghuls are killed the PC does not get the +4 AC bonus. The players should keep track of how many ghuls each character has coming up and which are surplus and deny the battlement AC bonus. Allow the players to allot these surplus ghuls among the characters as they see fit. This is, again, to foster the camaraderie that is forged in combat.

**Ghuls:** HD d6, AC12, Attack: bite +2, (d6) dmg bite. SP: Fort save DC12 or contract ghoul fever, and the wearer becomes a ghul in d3 days. Ref save + 2. **Note:** ghuls are not undead, they are living creatures who have become like this because they have feasted too much on human flesh.

There are also two cauldrons of boiling wrym tallow on the guard towers, ready to be spilled in front of the gates, or through murder holes inside the barbican, or even down the wall openings. Each cauldron hangs by its semi-circular handle on a 10-foot pole. The poles are securely set into two hooks on the inner side of guard tower battlements. There are similar hooks on every battlement, so a cauldron can be popped out of its current place and slotted to fit right into the middle of any battlement opening, to be poured over the ghuls, eliminating all the enemies in a lane i.e. that are attacking that opening.

It takes two PCs to carry the cauldron safely. They will need a round to pick it up, another to bring it down, and another to set it up and turn it over. This requires a DC5 Agility check for each PC: one PC rolls in the first round, the other in the second. If one check is failed, the oil spills on the PC and does d6 damage. If both fail, all PCs on the wall must make a DC8 Reflex save or suffer d6 dmg. Even a successful save prompts a Luck check. Those who fail the check have jumped too far away from the battlements and lose their AC bonus for the remainder of this combat. If left on the guard towers, the cauldrons can be tipped over and onto the ghuls in front of the gates with a DC 5 Agility check, failure means d6 searing oil damage.



## The Battering Skull

Describe this to the first character who has cleared their ghuls and now has time to scan the assault at the keep that is going on around them:

*A couple of hundred feet away, you make out what seems to be a fast-moving battering ram. It is carried by what seems to be a swarm of twenty or so man-sized cockroaches, scuttering on both of its sides. The business end of the ram is a black iron skull, as large as a giant's. As the ram approaches, the dead iron eyes of the skull blaze with fire, as if they are focusing on the main gate.*

These are also ghuls, but crouched under giant cockroach carapaces, which are affixed as a cover to the battering ram. They are trotting towards the bridgehead created in the moat by the golem that has melded into the quick-mud. It will take them four rounds to reach the gate. A character can throw the fairy fire in the direction of the ghuls to signal the scorio, roll ranged to hit AC12. The scorio crew will fire in the next round after the signal; it has +8 to hit and can fire up to six bolts in a round, doing 2d8 damage each. If no PCs do it by the third round, Zim will signal for the scorio spear-thrower and shout for the cauldrons. Note: if a PC fumbles the fairy fire roll, consider having the scorio fire at the PC.

There are twenty ghuls around the ram, with max HP and +4 to AC and half damage from fire due to the cockroach armor. If one cauldron is poured on them as they bash at it, it will kill d6+1 of them outright, both will kill 2d6+2. If the number of ghuls falls to single digits, they scatter and flee, leaving the ram.

## Victory

If all the attack lanes are cleared and the battering ram is destroyed, the attack is stopped. The defenders get a brief respite, as they see well-armored troops fall into formation in the dim dawn. But these troops move in a strangely ordered, synchronized and precise manner, almost like they are not human.

As the chill of the morning and unsettling realizations about the nature of the enemy set in, the Keep is in turmoil. The wounded are being carried to the Hightower, but those inside will not admit them. Magda refuses to allow the barricade to be dismantled, since it would be too risky at this moment. Nais is also there, healing the wounded and seeking out the PCs. Everybody

is asking for the Lord, but he is nowhere to be found. Rumors begin spreading that he has died defending the battlements, but the PCs know he was not there with them, and some may have even seen him enter the Hightower.

## Defeat

If the party drops to less than half of the number of characters that have first manned the walls, it means that the ghuls have overwhelmed the defenders, even if the battering ram is destroyed. If the battering ram is not destroyed 7 rounds after it was first spotted (it takes 3 rounds for the ghuls to batter down the gate), the gate will crash and ghuls will pour into the barbican and through the damaged guardhouse into the courtyard beyond, under heavy fire from the archers who are now manning the barbican walls. The ghuls are soon decimated, but not before a screaming horde of mountain-men pours through the gate, led by groups of men in full plate mail armor, walking in horrifying unison like automata, seemingly oblivious to attacks. The puppet-knights cut at defenders cruelly, maiming them but not killing them, as if they want to capture anyone who has survived the ghuls.

All surviving PCs should roll Luck. All who have rolled under gather in front of the reinforced door to the Hightower. Those who fail must first single-handedly face an enemy that pops up in front of them in the chaos of the breach.

### Enemies Pouring into the Courtyard

| D6 | Enemies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | A small rock golem falls from the sky right before the PC. The PC has one chance to flee but has to win initiative. Init -2; AC 18; HD 4d8+16; Attack: fist +4 melee (d8) MV 30' or dig 10'. SP: immune to mind-affecting spells; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +2 |
| 2  | Ghul HP d6 AC12, Attack: bite +2, jumping from above in front of the character. The character has initiative.                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3  | Tribesman scalper: Init +0; Atk khukri +1 melee (d5); AC 11; HD d4                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 4  | Tribesman gorger: Init +0; Atk spear +1 melee (d6); AC 11; HD d6                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 5  | Puppet warrior – offers a chance of surrender; Init -1; Atk axe +5 melee (1d8+2); AC 17; HD 5d8 (10d8 for officer); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will+8; Int 12, Str 16, Agi 10. See the Finale for more details.                                              |
| 6  | Puppet officer – tries to capture the PC, subdual damage (dmg d6+2); MV 25' If knocked out, the character is taken to the Thrallmaster. See the Finale for more details.                                                                                                |



In any case, when all the surviving PCs are at the Hightower door, go to Part 2.

**Rewards:** All surviving characters gain **+1 fleeting Luck**. Those who have handled the cauldrons successfully without failing their checks, as well as those who have escaped the hot oil spill gain **+1 Agility**. Any character that has single-handedly fought off all his attackers during the wall defense gains a choice of **+1 Strength** or **+1 Personality**. Anyone who survives a random encounter gains **+1 max hp**.

# Event 2: Deeper Delve

This rest of the adventure is time-limited, but the limit is intended to be dramatic rather than realistic: if the party dallies for more than an hour of game time in the Hightower and the dungeon, the keep shakes from a subterranean explosion, hinting that the invaders are trying to reach the laboratory by blasting and burrowing their way through, and there is another massive attack on the walls. This attack will culminate only when the characters find the scroll of life in Part 3 of the adventure.

## Area 2: Hightower

The priest Nais either approaches the characters in the chaos of retreat or they find him tending to the wounded after the wave of ghuls is thrown back from the walls. When he sees them, he glares at (the character with highest Personality or the leader of the detachment) with his unsettling black eyes.

*You! Your face. You should know. You must know. There is a way, to end this, now and forever! The Lord is gone. He is lost. He could not handle the truth, but you, you must!*

If asked to clarify further, these are some of the answers he offers:

*The Lord? He has gone! Gone mad! Gone gone! (if pressed further) He must have used a secret exit, the vision that came to me, he was too weak to meet his destiny, he used the sacred knowledge that I have divined for his cowardly ends!*

*Bonemoore Keep holds a secret, my god has shown me what mortal eyes cannot see, hidden behind the rock, deep underneath the Keep.*

*A golem- A human-shaped, soulless engine of destruction! Built to guard the lands of man from any threat. Never used. Until now! Now is the time, or everything will be lost! And our Lord is missing, so the gods have chosen you! I have seen your faces in my vision!*

*There is a hidden laboratory below the dungeons, seek out the entrance in the dungeons. I have seen the door in the floor in my vision. In this laboratory you must find a scroll with words of magic and power, and you*

*must place that scroll into the golem's head, as per the ancient ritual of Loew Farwall! I have seen it! It must be done! It is the only thing that can put this right!*

*But even should you encounter the Lord hiding somewhere down like a coward, do not trust him! He must have gone mad from the strain that has been in his family forever. It was his ancestor, Loew the Demented, who built this Keep. That is why it is his most powerful creation, the Golem, is the one thing that can save us now! I have seen it! The gods have shown it to me!*

To further impress upon the characters the need to act, he heals them (roll as usual, Nais does not suffer disapproval, but if he rolls a 1, his demonic nature bursts through - which he uses to hasten the characters into action, telling them the Thrallmaster is attacking him with spells and leaves), Nais tells them that they have been blessed by his god of suffering and sacrifice and they are but his weapons - so go, sentinels of mankind! He even gifts a character that first accepts the mission with *food of the gods*, enough for 5 people to heal d4+3 damage each and restore a point of ability loss.

He wants to see them succeed. If pressed on what has happened with the Lord, Nais says he must have escaped the Keep through a secret exit there once he learned of the Laboratory, but implores them to keep silence on that, he has no proof but the fact that the Lord is missing.

If the characters are suspicious of Nais, they have little opportunity to act upon it. He is well-respected by all, especially the wounded and any move against him is bound to turn everyone against the PCs. As a final solution, he can *charm* the most prominent character, but only after taking them aside or somehow talking to them alone.

**Your suffering is necessary. There is no joy without suffering. Stay content in the knowledge that your suffering may well become the source of joy to someone.**

**-Nais the Priest**

## 2A: Hightower Entrance

*A heavy wooden door, large enough to haul a cartwheel through, rises above several wide stairs. The entrance to the tower is closed and barred from the inside. You can hear voices shouting from behind the door.*

The Priest will bring the surviving heroes here, imploring them again to go to the Laboratory quickly and find the scroll; he cannot go with them, since he is needed here to tend to the wounded. And as if to prove his point, the horn alarm blares, as another wave of attackers splashes against the walls. The troops are called out to man the walls again, Zim shouts for everyone to get to the walls, while the Priest sends the party up the wide steps, into the Hightower.

If the Hightower door has been breached, they can just run or walk in, where they encounter **Magda** (see **NPCs of Note**), tending to the people, trying to keep them calm. If the door stands, they are stopped right there by sentries – Magda’s girls, who do not open the door while talking to them.

In both cases, first they must contend with Magda and her flock, who will turn them back, shouting at them bitterly to go to the walls, unless they present some credible explanation why they are not on the walls, fighting. Possible avenues of persuasion could include: carrying the body of the clockwork hound (to the Lord, for repairs); one of the characters knowing Magda and simply asking her to trust them; mentioning the Priest – Magda’s daughter is sick (and is also with child, but that is a secret only the mother and the daughter share), and if the Priest can spare a few minutes away from the wounded to heal her, a character could go fetch him quickly. Nais will be more than happy to do so, after he tends to the wounded for d2 turns. Magda will not ask for that, however - only if a PC engages any of the girls in conversation, that girl will divulge the information. (“Look, how brave she is. She will get us out of here, if anyone can, Magda will. That’s why I follow her. You could never tell that her own daughter is sick, she still takes care of everyone!”)

Magda is a friend to the Lord, and she knows that he has gone to the dungeons, but he has not told her the exact reason - he only announced that he is going to make sure doom doesn’t take us all. She chose to interpret those words positively, believing that the Lord has some sort of secret weapon down there, but she only guesses it could be the wendigo (see **The Dungeon**) – and

prays that the Lord returns soon. If the characters express concern about the Lord or show intent of saving him or bringing him back, she divulges what she knows and guesses, hinting at her disapproval of the whole wendigo business, but bashful to tell the whole story.

If the characters threaten violence, the girls will stand their ground, until the characters successfully break down the door, which is a DC20 Strength check. Three additional characters can try helping, each one adding +2 to the roll. This can be attempted only once, but several groups of four characters can have a go. If the door is broken down, the girls are caught off guard and some even throw down their spears – they are after all, here mostly because they are unfit to fight. The characters can stroll on, over Magda's protests, but neither she nor the girls will initiate violence.

**Rewards:** Persuading Magda to let the party in gets the character **+1 Personality**. Getting information about the Lord from Magda nets **+1 Intelligence**. Breaking down the door brings **+1 Strength**, to all characters that have participated.

## 2B: Main Hall

*The great hall is teeming: a few hundred miserable people are clinging to their possessions or hugging their loved ones, chattering nervously, some sickly with fear, others with old age or hunger. As you walk among them, they look at you hopefully, little children bemused by seeing armed soldiers here, their mothers frightened that this means the battle is not going well.*

Once inside, the party is free to enter the dungeons below. If they roam through the great hall and the granary, they must push through hundreds of refugees packed tightly together, tension running high. The people here are mostly women and children, a few men too old or sickly to hold a weapon. All of them are scared spitless, but unable to do anything about their horrible predicament except pray to the gods for the defenders to prevail.

Roll for one rumor (overheard from the people gossiping around in hushed, trembling voices) and for one encounter on the following table every time the party enters the Hall or the Granary.

## 2C: Granary

*This large silo is fenced off into two halves, you enter the one where refugees have made camp, at least two hundred more huddle here tightly, mostly women and children. The fence is guarded by several armed women. Another, quite large and striking woman is arguing with them in a deep voice.*

The back half of the granary is where food and water are stockpiled. There are six of Magda's flock there, and the one arguing with them is Genheric (see Random Encounter table).

| D6 | Hightower Encounters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | A young mother with a day-old child, asking for ale or just lots of water, she needs to get her milk flowing, for her baby is wasting away. If a PC has <i>food of the gods</i> , or at least some ale or fresh water from the water pump, she gulps it down and blesses the PC, asking them for their name. She will name the child after the character. The character can re-roll their Lucky Number if they desire to do so.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2  | A girl of sixteen comes up, looking at the characters' faces, as if trying to find a familiar one. If engaged in conversation, she reveals that she was hoping one of them is (PCs name, preferably a character whose player has lost at least one other character so far). Her parents sent her on a horse and told her to look for the PC, who is an acquaintance here, but she ended up locked in here with the other refugees and she has not been able to talk much to soldiers. Unfortunately, her parents have not reached the Keep before the siege began. She is a 0- lvl character.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3  | Genheric, an actor and theatre owner, dressed as a woman. He seems to be pulling it off, but an observant PC will notice something too manly in the voice and gait of that tall woman with an obvious wig and heavy makeup. If confronted, he will plead for the PCs to spare him, offering them good wine as a bribe, which could be useful in the dungeons below – he knows the Gaoler, a horrible man, but a lover of a good drink. If the PCs coerce him into following them into the dungeon, he will accept. He has knowledge of history, art and even something of the occult, allowing him a d20+1 roll for this type of knowledge, but he will leave the party at the first opportune moment, which likely will not happen until the very end of the adventure. |



|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | An old man, withered and bent, comes up, clutching a sword in his arthritic hand. He introduces himself as Daedal and volunteers to follow the PCs. He is (roll d4) 1. Blind in one eye, 2. Deaf as a doorknob. 3. Walks half speed, 4. A sage of no small repute, versed in religion and culture, who could have something to say about the symbolism in the mural at the entrance to the Laboratory.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5 | A pair of twin orphan boys, Oli and Gogi, age 12, who wish to follow the PCs. If one of the characters is the Rockbreaker, they will not take no for an answer and will shadow the party into the dungeons, which could lead to potentially disastrous consequences if the wendigo is released. They have +2 to Sneak and Hide but are 0-lvl characters otherwise.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 6 | An elderly mother asks the PC with the lowest Luck if they have any news of her son. Roll Luck, if successful, the PC knows the man and the player must decide what has happened to him - and whether he will tell the truth to the mother. If the Luck roll is failed, the PC does not know the man is dead, but could still choose to comfort the mother with a lie. If the PC tells her the truth, he gains +1 permanent Luck. If he comforts her with a lie, she gives him a pair of socks to take to her son, or to remember her son by. The socks are lucky - as long as the PC has them on his person, he gets +1 fleeting Luck at the beginning of the session. If the character ever loses one sock, he loses the bonus, and if he loses both, he loses one additional point of Luck. |

## 2D and 2E: Bailey and Guardroom

*You enter a small bailey in the middle of the Hightower, and the iron dungeon door is there, on the other side. As you descend the wet stone steps, you hear grunting and heavy, messy gulping.*

*You enter a small guardroom, with several metal boxes stacked neatly on top of each other to the left of you, and a large grate door taking up most of the wall on the other side. To the right of the wall sits a bloated, belching man: his leg is swollen and emits a smell that would make a ghul's eyes water.*

*He holds a jar of what must be brandy in one hand, and a small baton in the other. He does not seem at all eager to leave his chair, seemingly content to chug at the jar and eye you suspiciously. His eyes are red and watery, and his nose is broken.*

*“Who in hells are yer? Git off, no business for yer here”, he growls, his voice unexpectedly high, his breath expectedly pungent. A set of keys on a ring dangle as he takes another swig, shifting his considerable weight on the tiny chair.*

This is **Maoran** the gaoler. He has been stationed here because of his gangrenous leg as much as his abrasive alcoholic personality. However, he lacks any real means of stopping the PCs from taking the keys away from him, although he will put up a show of doing so. If anyone threatens him with violence, he will fall from the chair and hoist his horribly smelling leg at the PCs. Anyone in a 10 feet radius must make a Fortitude save DC12 or become ill from the smell, having to leave the room for d6 rounds for each point of difference between the roll and the DC, suffering -1d to all rolls for the duration.

Alternatively, the party could offer Maoran something to drink, which he will gladly accept, but will not let them pass. However, he will let slip that the Lord has ordered him not to let anyone in until he comes back from the dungeon. He is already quite drunk (although he holds it well) and unreasonably optimistic regarding the battle and asks that the character who has given him drink toasts with him. He believes the Lord will release the wendigo inside but will only mention the wendigo if a character drinks with him. After four drinks, he will fall asleep, mumbling something about how the characters can just go in and enjoy themselves... The character can simply pretend to drink, or can roll Fortitude saves at an increasing DC 5, 8, 12, 15 to not get drunk. Each failed save nets a -1 to attack and skill rolls as well as +1 to Will saves for 1 hour.

Maoran's heavy key ring has six smaller and six larger keys, as well as a comically big key for the grate door. The six smaller keys open the metal boxes, where the prisoner belongings are kept. **Box 1** contains two composite short bows and a two quivers of 20 arrows; **Box 2** contains Dohr-Ian's bastard sword and his sheriff's badge; **Box 3** contains a pair of beautiful soft boots that fit the wearer's feet and a cloak, light as cobweb, yet warm and snug when worn. These belong to Norfain, who is locked in cell 3. **Box 4** holds 3 torches. **Boxes 5** and **6** are empty, but box 6 has a secret compartment, which has recently been accessed (Spot check DC 8 to notice), shaped to fit a T-key. If box 5 is searched, another such compartment is revealed, with a spare T-key, which serves to easily open the trap door in cell F.

**Rewards:** The character who tries intimidating Maoran gains **+1 Personality**. The character who drinks him under the table gains **+1 Stamina**. Anyone who successfully resists the horrible smell gains **+1 Stamina**.

**Maoran the Gaoler:** Init -2; HP 6; AC8; Attack: baton +0 melee, (d6); Act d20; SP: Gangrenous leg, DC12 Fort save or nausea and must leave the vicinity . Saves Fort +1, Ref -2, Will +2; AL N.

## 2F: The Dungeon

*The door opens to a long hallway, without any light. You can make out a hard, iron, cell door in the right wall, and another, a little further in the left wall. There seems to be more down the hall.*

Each cell is barred with a heavy iron door, with the only opening being a slit used both for food and for observing the prisoners. The gaoler's larger keys can unlock any cell. Otherwise, the lock can be picked (DC15) or broken (Strength check DC17). Add +5 DC to both for cell 6.

The cells are 12x12 feet, with no beds and a hole for a toilet. There is some straw and two dirty blankets in each cell, as well as shackle rings in the walls, but no prisoners are currently shackled.

**Cell 1:** *Two men are lying on the dirty, bloody blankets. They are badly beaten, their faces hidden under bruises, but their baldness, their sinewy frame and the complexion of their skin give them away as mountain tribesmen. The enemy.*

**Drim** and **Pinha**, two tribal scouts for the Thrallmaster's army are inside, badly underfed, thirsty and brutally tortured. They are both beaten to a pulp and Pinha cannot even talk, his mouth is so swollen, most of his teeth missing. They will not initiate any talk, expecting more beatings. The beatings were orchestrated by Maoran, who has been taking booze from soldiers to let them in and attack the prisoners.

If the PCs are kind to the prisoners, giving them water, Drim is the one to talk, but only if the PCs insist on him answering questions. Otherwise, he fears some ruse to further hurt him. He knows little: they are both from the Hawkill tribe, their chieftain and shaman said that they have been called to battle by the hawks, and the hawks follow the big tent on wheels, one shaped

like a clawed hand; it was waiting for them at the bottom of the mountains, and flesh-eaters were gathering, too, but they seem to revere the hand on wheels and it tells them not to eat tribesmen. But the ghuls he knows. It is the armored men that scare him. They are men but they are not. They are flesh but not really alive. Like puppets made of meat, encased in armor.

Drim and Pinha believe that the keep is doomed and ask for nothing, the Thrallmaster's forces will overwhelm the defenders and probably release them, and then their chieftain will flog them, maybe even expel them from the tribe for being captured. They can be persuaded to join the party; they are both 0 lvl.

**Cell 2:** *Your movement down the dark hallway has elicited a prisoner to bang on his door. "The battle! How does it go? Speak to me, whoever you be!" a man's sonorous voice demands.*

**Dohr-Ian** is locked here (see **NPCs of Note**). He will ask to know how the battle is going, and then will plead for the PCs to release him. He knows that the Lord has gone down and he knows why. He has been charmed by the Priest Nais, so he believes that the weapon below should be used, but he is also aware that he is needed as a commander now that the Lord is gone. Therefore, he is on edge and nervous, being deeply and obviously conflicted between releasing the golem and joining the battle. He decries the Lord as a coward and a fool.

He can tell the PCs about the trap door in the furthest cell and he knows of the T-key and will tell them this to bargain for his release. If the characters explicitly ask him to help them and mention that they are on a mission from Nais, he will insist on retrieving his sword and the reserve T-key fast and he will run off to cell 5, opening the trap door and jumping down.

If the PCs release him but do not try to persuade him to go with them, he will immediately ask for his sword, and will attack the PC holding the sword if he is refused, using his attack to try and wrest the sword away, then running out of the dungeon to join the battle. If he is given free access to the sword, he will be thankful and dispense a few choice pieces of advice, urging the PCs to go below, as Nais has requested.

Of the wendigo, he simply tells them not to listen to the whispers and not to go down the hall further than the last cell on the left – the final cell is the

Lord's matter. If further pressed, he tells them the story of the wendigo and expresses his disdain at the Lord keeping the creature there, but insists that it is much too dangerous to be released (paradoxically, since he advocates releasing a much more dangerous thing; this inconsistency could be seized by clever players to conclude that Dohr-Ian is under the Priest's sway).

If Dohr-Ian is released and goes off to join the battle, his sense of duty will prevail over the Priest's charm, and he will take command of the defenses. This means that the characters get an additional hour until the blast forces them down into the Laboratory, but more importantly, Dohr-Ian makes a sortie and goes for the Thrallmaster's tent, wounding the dark lord, but dying in the process. However, this is enough to allow the refugees to escape, as the invading army comes to a grinding halt while its master recuperates. Dohr-Ian's gambit pays off, since the Thrallmaster is only after the golem, and does not pursue the survivors, most of his unruly ghuls being killed in the battle, anyway.

**Cell 3:** *As you approach the door, the spyhole on the door slides open—by itself since it could not have possibly been opened from the inside! But the voice that comes through it seems to suggest otherwise – a soft, yet exuberant ringing of an elven tongue.*

*“Ah, finally someone who mayhap listen! If I may implore you gentlefolk to lend me your ears, although I already have a pair that is the envy of the Elflands, for it is I, Norfain the Wanderer, who stand before you. Well, not before you as you may see, there being a rather unpleasantly ironic door between us, the matter of which you may be able to help me resolve, to my – and your—advantage! You see, there has been a misunderstanding...”*

**Norfain**, the elven explorer and traveling prestidigitator, has been locked here under suspicion that he is a spy for the Thrallmaster, as he was found skulking in the woods. He insists that it was all a misunderstanding, he is simply a traveler, and asks brazenly to be released. He promises that he will be indebted to the PCs, waxing poetic about the gratitude of an elf and his stature at the Elfland Court (where he is a member of very dubious standing). If released, he will immediately go search for his boots and cloak. If allowed to get them, he will don them and immediately leave, slipping out of the castle, almost invisibly, walking on quickmud in his magical boots. Upon the adventure's end, the PC who has released him will stumble upon a fairy glade in the nearby forest and get invited to the Seelie court in the Elfland. If they go,

they will spend d7 years there, which will seem like mere days. What strange quests and unbelievable sights will they encounter is left to the Judge. Suffice it to say that it will be worth at least one EXP per year, or a gift of elven cloak and boots, allowing the wearer to see and walk the portals into Elfland.

If the PCs have already taken Norfain's gear, he will smell it on them and ask for it, offering to lead them out, but only if they give it to him, it is unfortunately literally impossible otherwise (he is lying, he will just leave them if he gets his gear). If the PCs are unrelenting and desire to keep his gear, he will offer to call forth his Patron and remove them all to Elfland. He is willing to stand by his word, but of course he hesitates to share that this will mean that the PCs will be gone for d7 years and will return to a much different world, effectively short-circuiting the adventure. If the PCs do not accept that, he will offer to join them and employ his magical powers to their benefit. However, he will stay out of harm's way and will not venture anywhere first and will make that clearly known. If an opportunity presents itself, he will steal his boots and cloak and sneak off.

**Norfain the Seelie:** Init +2; Atk +1 melee; AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spells (*Invoke Patron*, *Patron Bond* (*The King of Elfland*), *Cantrip*, *Ventriloquism*, *Comprehend Languages*); heightened senses, iron vulnerability, infravision; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; AL C.

**Cell 4** is empty.

**Cell 5** is empty but contains a trap door, noticeable only by a tiny round hole in the floor. It requires the T-key to be fit into the hole and the door can then be lifted up, accessing the shaft fitted with handles, serving as a ladder down into Area 3, the Laboratory. The trap door locks if closed.

**Cell 6:** *As you advance down the hall, you seem to hear faint whispers, like soft, eerie beckoning...*

This cell is at the end of the hall, some thirty feet from other cells. A wendigo will start whispering to any character who comes down this corridor, but only one PC at a time. The wendigo's whisper is husky and unrelenting, but not altogether unpleasant. It causes the individual who hears it to become drowsy, and acts as the *sleep* spell cast at the lowest strength (DC13). A successful save means that PC is immune to the wendigo's whisper. The wendigo has

the power of manifesting in the dreams of anyone who has been put to sleep in such a way. There, it asks to be released, promising unrelenting servitude, until death. This takes only one round, and the PC can be awoken by normal means after that. If the PC refuses, the wendigo attacks and kills them in the dream, which causes the PCs heart to stop, Fort save DC13 to survive.

The beast is exceedingly dangerous. Norfain the Elf can explain about it if asked but will steer clear of advising any course of action. Maoran the Gaoler also knows the basics and will shout at the PCs to not open that cell.

A wendigo eats only beings intelligent enough to dream. It needs to devour one such creature every night (fortunately for the beast's captors, hares and mice dream) and the way it hunts is horrifying. The wendigo can put creatures to sleep with its sweet whispers, but it can also smell dreams, and slip into any dream it catches a scent of. There it manifests only to kill the dreamer savagely in their own dream, usually after a wild and wondrous hunt. This causes the victim to awake, but paralyzed. Then, the wendigo appears in flesh and devours its unfortunate prey, slowly.

If released it will indeed be thankful and follow the PC just out of sight for the rest of his days, bringing fresh meat nightly while in the wilderness, (Luck check DC 5 or the meat is of a humanoid being) coming to his dreams when in the city, denying the character rest until the character leaves for the wilderness again. The only way out is to kill the wendigo or to die, although one could try capturing it as Lord Farwall did. A wendigo prefers killing sleeping victims and will not defend its "master" or help in combat unless explicitly called upon by the character who has befriended it, and then only at night, demanding a blood price afterward: a dreaming creature freshly killed, by the character.

The wendigo must have some real meat. Any other PC, follower or prisoner will do, and the player who controls the PC must decide who it will be, now.

**Wendigo:** Init +2; Atk: +5 melee (d6); AC 16; HD 2d14+4; HP 22; Act 2d20; SP sleep whisper (DC14 Will save or fall asleep), haunt dreams, scent, Sneak & Hide +6, Int 6, Per 16. SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5; AL N

**Rewards:** Any characters who live to go down the shaft receive **+1 fleeting Luck**. They'll need it.



You...  
I see in your  
dreams...  
You...  
Roaming...  
Conquering...  
Feasting...  
You are a worthy  
one...  
Worthy to run side  
by side with...  
A wendigo...  
With me...  
Fate finds its way...  
Always...  
Let us hunt...  
Together...  
Always...  
Let me out...  
And we will be  
running free...  
Always...  
Like it was meant  
to be...  
This was meant to  
be...

Now...  
- Wendigo Whispers



# Event 3: Loew's Laboratory

## Area 3: The Laboratory

The walls and floors of the laboratory, including the disinfection chamber, are all made of the same white, polished rock as the walls of the keep. The laboratory is a cavity in the huge rock that Loew magically conjured in the middle of the Crater Plain. The rooms are illuminated with magical lights embedded in either the ceiling or the top of the walls, equivalent to full daylight, and all ceilings are 15 feet high, except in the center of **3B** and **3E**.

Every door in the laboratory is opened in the same manner – by locating a panel near the door, which is hidden in the wall (Int or Luck DC10) and pressing it. However, each panel contains the same trap: once touched, the palm of the unlucky character who did so will fuse with the rock, trapping the character. This can be avoided (or the character released, if already trapped) by smearing Lord Farwall's blood on the panel or on one's palm, since he is the direct descendant of Loew, who designed this security measure in order to foil any intruders. Only if he drew his own blood would the doors open. He apparently did not even entertain the possibility that he could be killed, and his blood used in this manner. Of course, if trapped, there is always the option to cut off one's palm skin or even entire hand off, which inflicts 1 or d3 points of damage respectively, with 1 point of Agility loss, permanent if the entire hand is cut off.

Lord Farwall has discovered this the hard way: his hand was trapped in **3A**, but when he tried peeling his palm skin away with the knife, as his blood touched the panel, it released his hand. That is why the PCs can open the door to **3B**, **3C** and **3D** without triggering the trap – there is still enough blood on them, from the Lord passing through.

Note that if Dohr-Ian has been persuaded to help, he has jumped down the shaft and the sound of screeching and sword clinging on metal can be heard along with his cries before the characters descend. After three rounds it dies down: he and the clockwork hound will kill each other before the characters arrive, to find him bloody and mauled, the hound mashed up, but clutching at his throat, still jerkily moving its one working leg. The heroes can now loot his sword.

### 3A: The Disinfection Chamber

*You descend the dark shaft, straight towards the circle of light at the bottom, a bright contrast to the dark dungeon above you. As you climb down, you can see that the shaft opens into a room of some sorts, with a polished white rock floor. As your eyes adjust to the whiteness, you realize that there are smears of water on the white rock, as if the room was recently mopped. The last of the ladder handles are on the wall of the room, some 10 feet high. You cannot see how large the room is from the shaft, but perhaps if someone poked their head out...*

If the players stop before descending into the room, have the characters in the shaft roll a DC12 Luck check. Anyone who succeeds will hear a strange, subdued noise coming from the room – like iron grating, slowly, but relentlessly. This is the “growling” of the clockwork hound, its gears turning the teeth in its maw in order to keep them from rusting. Anyone poking their head will see that this is a well-lit (there is a magical light in the ceiling) circular room, with the Lord’s clockwork hound IX standing ready to pounce in the middle of it. It is glistening with water on its polished protective plates; water has seeped into its gears, which could have the effect of making the hound slower to respond.

The reason for this is a small plate in the wall of the round chamber (see **Area 3 Map**), which can be pressed to activate the steam cloud shower system, put there by Loew to sterilize anyone entering the laboratory. Pressing the obviously protruding plate activates the blast of scalding water, a painful but quite effective means of sterilization, which Loew enjoyed putting himself through. Everybody in the room takes d4 damage from steam and anyone holding metal weapons or shields must drop them unless they make a DC10 Reflex save, which also halves the damage to a minimum of 1.

Clockwork creatures are slowed for 1 hour if they fail the save and any flaming attacks are disabled. The Lord has activated the plate when entering the Laboratory, not knowing what it does. He has left the hound to dry and guard against anyone potentially following him, ordering it to kill.

If a character examines the plate, a DC16 Intelligence check will reveal its true function. Other clues include stains from dripping water, which can be found at the height of about 4 feet all around the room, collecting in a thin horizontal groove that circles the entire room. Tracking the stains upward to

the height of 7 feet will reveal camouflaged pipe openings. The hound's rusty movement and the somewhat wet floor could also serve as hints that there is water lurking near.

There is another similar pressure plate hidden in the wall (DC10 Int or Luck check to find). Casually examining it reveals that there is a smear of dried blood on it. Pressing it opens the wall-door into **3B, Loew's Chapel**. The hound will hear the characters coming down and will be ready to pounce as soon as a character comes low enough. If the characters try to shoot at the hound from the shaft, they will have to make a DC10 Agility check each round to shoot from the ladder and remain in cover, otherwise falling and taking d6 damage.

Two characters per round can enter the room. If they are aware of the hound, roll normal initiative. Dropping from more than 10 feet requires a DC10 Reflex save or the character takes d6 falling damage. Anyone who has witnessed the Lord deactivating his other hound can try to stab with a piercing weapon behind the hound's ear. The slot is AC18 and hitting it deals +2d6 dmg.

The floor of the room is still slippery. Anyone moving in combat must roll a DC5 Reflex save or fall prone. The hound is immune to this. Note that the wendigo cannot help in the fight against the hound - since the clockwork beast does not dream, the wendigo does not even acknowledge its existence.

**Canine IX:** Init +2; Atk: +4 melee (2d4) or +2 ranged (d6 flame spew, range 15'); AC 14; HD 2d10+8; HP 17; MV 50'; Act 2d20; SP superior hearing, infravision 60 feet, pounce +4 to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

**Rewards:** the character that strikes the killing blow gets **+1 Strength**.





## 3B: Loew's Chapel

*The wall section rotates around an invisible axis and a passage is opened into a large, domed room, as if you have stepped into a forbidding temple. The room is a rotunda, some 50 feet in diameter, its colorful mosaic floor sloping towards the middle, where there is a level surface 10 feet in diameter.*

*The flat, circular middle of the chamber is dominated by a dial of some sorts, curved but ending in a point, aiming straight at the door you have just entered through. There are words etched into the floor on three equidistant points at the inner edge of the circle. The words are, clockwise beginning at the closest WHATEVER, WILT and THOU. If you come closer, you realize that the dial is shaped like a question mark and that the words are marked by notches in the edge of the dial, one, two and three.*

Present **Handout B** to the players and show them the Thelemic sign of Loew.

*Then, the ceiling draws your eye. The entire surface of the dome, 15 to 30 feet above you, has been decorated with wall to wall frescoes in fine detail. As you examine the paintings, you realize it is one huge composition, dominated by a building, a fortress or an abbey of sorts, its pointy tower peaking at the highest point of the dome and eerily like the Hightower of the Keep above. A symbol almost identical to the sigil of house Farwall adorns the tower, above its massive open gates. Hundreds of figures dot its walls, pass through its gates, frolic in its gardens, engaging in activities so varied and colorful one could spend hours studying each vignette, as it tells a particular story, and not even scratch the surface, as there are thousands more all over the ceiling.*

*However, it soon becomes obvious that all vignettes have at least one thing in common: all people – men, halflings, dwarves, even elves – depicted are doing something that brings them joy. They are exuberant and joyful, raising their arms in ecstasy, even when the activity they are engaged in seems a mundane joy such as conversation, eating or something more sensual. There are so many vignettes that any enjoyable activity one could imagine is found here, and some of them reveal themselves to border with depraved. It soon becomes overwhelming to study the mural.*

This chamber is Loew's architectural and artistic masterpiece. The floor is an intricate abstract mosaic which serves as a powerful repulsion against demons. He also painted the mural on the ceiling and was adding to it until the day he went mad. Careful observation a player announcing that their character is studying the mural despite its unsettling nature and passing a Will save (DC10 if Neutral, DC15 if Lawful, no need to roll if Chaotic) check to not avert eyes when encountering a particularly horrific vignette will lead to a realization that the mural is divided into five segments, by a subtle difference in background color, but also by a repeating pattern. Further observation and another DC 10 Int check will reveal that every figure depicted in a single segment holds up the same number of fingers. In the leftmost segment every figure holds three fingers up. In the second left, it's two fingers. In the middle, one finger. In the right, three fingers again. And in the rightmost, it's two fingers again. The Judge is free to divulge this information without Ability checks to players who pose detailed questions about the characters depicted, their positions, similarities etc.

This is the principle clue to the dial mechanism combination needed to unlock the door into Laboratory proper. An additional clue could be the content of the mural itself, the Thelemic sign above the abbey gates, which was Loew's sigil, and people depicted doing whatever they desire, experimenting with the limits of sensation, in accordance with Loew's Thelemic teachings. Thou wilt whatever thou wilt.

The question mark dial can be moved into four positions, one neutral and three pointing to each of the words etched into the floor. Dial movement is noiseless, but it is followed by an audible clicking sound when the dial rests at one of the four slots. The proper combination is to move the dial, beginning from the neutral position, which resets the mechanism: THOU, WILT, WHATEVER, THOU, WILT.

When the dial clicks the final time, a panel will reveal itself in the wall. Examining it reveals blood on it (freshness depends on how long it took to figure out the puzzle). Pressing it opens the door to 3C. The Wendigo can recognize the blood as lord Farwall's and will urge his "master" to go in.

**Rewards:** The characters that participated in solving the puzzle get +1 **Intelligence**.



### 3C: Workstation

*The wall slides open to reveal a large semicircular room dominated by a long table crowded with alchemical equipment, whose names and purpose you can only guess at. There are sheets of metal placed on the walls, some shining like gold and platinum in the milky bright light coming from the wall. There is a pristine forge in the other corner, with smith's tools as exquisite as a noble's spurs. Next to it stands another table, filled with gears and clockwork mechanisms, springs and precision tools. There is a door in the opposite wall – an open panel in the wall gives it away, since it is discernible only as a thin line, being made of the same white rock as the walls. What seems to be a window opening into another room gapes a few feet from the panel.*

Everything in the rooms seems almost new, no traces of wear or specks of rust, but the archaic style of writing on the various parchments suggests that this is a long abandoned place. Any character looking at the “window” will see another room, but from a strange perspective, as if they were standing in the corner of the room, at a height.

*The room also has white walls, but the view is dominated by a huge statue of a sitting, fully armored knight, seemingly meditating, a large disk-like hat covering its head so you cannot see its face. The statue is made of metal, and the style of the armor is ancient, with intricate patterns all over it.*

This is a screen that displays the view of the magical eye that Loew has set in the **Golem's Den (3E)** to perform test runs of the golem remotely. If any character looks at the “window” for a minute or so, they will notice a figure moving in front of the huge statue. A DC 10 Int check will reveal it is Lord Farwall.

The sheets on the wall are 3x3 feet and made of various metals; among them there is one partially cut-up platinum sheet and 4 gold sheets. Gold sheets are worth 100 gold pieces each, and the platinum sheet is worth 500 gold pieces. The sheets are quite bulky and heavy - a character carrying a sheet cannot do much more than move with a -10' penalty. There is also a sheet of strange gold-like metal, lighter and probably also precious. It does not incur a move penalty and can be sold for d6x100 gp in a city. It emits invisible decaying energy, which leaves the one carrying it sick unless they pass a DC 15 Forti-

tude save each hour it is carried. If the save is failed, the carrier loses 1 point of Stamina permanently.

The alchemist equipment could be randomly looted to yield d6x100 gold pieces in any city that has a wizard or an alchemist. Otherwise, it can be sold for d6x10 silver pieces as kitchen utensils or simple curios. There are also hundreds of notes on parchment, which no one can understand since they are written in Loew's secret code language, but the parchment can be sold for d6x10 gold pieces.

The forge is fully usable, its fire ever-burning, and the tools add +1d to a skilled smith's rolls when forging armor. They are worth at least a 1000 gp, but good luck finding a smith with so much money on his hands. Alternatively, the tool can be given to a smith in return for forging superior metal armor with halved armor check penalties and -1d to fumbles.

The door leading to **3D** opens by pressing a panel that has been left open, with more blood on it.

## 3D: Corridor

*You enter a corridor, its white walls gleaming from the bright lights above you, making you squint as if you are staring into a sunrise. The corridor intersects with another one, some 30 feet away, and ends in a huge double door, made of the same white rock. There is a sigil engraved on the door, identical to the one you saw on the abbey depicted in the mural.*

The corridor leads to **3E**, while the intersecting corridor connects the store-room **3G** and the library **3F**, which have normal-sized doors, like the one in **3C**. The panel in front of the huge doors to **3E** is open and there is a smidgen of blood on it. If the characters have taken more than an hour to get here since the start of **Part 2**, the blood is too dry – there is just enough of it to open the door, but the last smidgen will be erased and anyone touching the panel will be trapped. Otherwise, they can open the doors to **3E** by pressing the panel. Once this happens, the Lord, who is inside **3E**, enthralled by the sheer magnificence of the golem, takes cover behind the golem and waits for characters to enter.

Doors to **3F** and **3G** have hidden panels (DC 10 Int or Luck check to dis-

cover, but the heroes should be able to deduce that they are there by now). If touched, they trap the character touching them and the doors do not open.

## 3E and 3H: Golem's Den and Reservoir

*The huge door swings open into the room beyond, and inside, seated on a circular dais of sorts, you finally see the Golem: it is taller than two men, even when sitting there like a lotus. Instead of a head, a huge disk is on its shoulders, almost like a straw hat, and underneath it, two dark blue sapphires, as large as a fist. Between them is a dark slot, horizontal, like a mouth a child would draw in one pencil stroke. Its huge armored arms rest in its lap, the shiny plates reflecting your flabbergasted faces. The construct is unmoving, nothing distinguishing it from a statue.*

As soon as a character enters the room, the Lord's voice can be heard from behind the golem – and then he will show himself, pointing a crossbow at the nearest character, or the one with the lowest Luck.

*“Stand right where you are!” a familiar voice booms from behind the golem. Your Lord Farwall stands before you, a light crossbow in his hands. “Now I do not understand or pretend to understand much of this here”, he points with his chin around the room, and the golem specifically, “but I do know what needs to be done. And what you need to be doing now is to stay calm and tell me how and why you have come to this place? Speak!”*

If the wendigo has been released, it immediately attacks the Lord, screaming for revenge. It is up to the characters who they will support in the ensuing combat, if anyone. Otherwise, the Lord is cautious. He is quick to fire a surprise shot if he suspects any mischief from the characters, using his mighty deed of arms to pierce any character that has missile weapons – if the damage drops the character and the deed roll succeeds, the arrow can end up in another character, roll to hit as normal. The Lord will then charge at any who have missile weapons, dealing subdual damage, using his mighty deed to roll normal damage dice while doing so. The Lord has 1 hp less than maximum, from blood loss.

If the PCs explain that the Priest has sent them, he will frown and tell them that the Priest is certainly mad – the golem is the work of a madman and

there is no telling how anyone could control it once it is awakened. The only option is to destroy it, and the characters can help him do just that. They must find the scroll that the Priest wanted them to insert into the golem's head – and then destroy the scroll. Even if it means it will blow up in their faces. That is why he needs the characters, but he will not break that to them yet, just saying that he needs help finding the scroll. It is not in this room, or the first one, he is sure. He still hasn't checked the other two doors.

If the PCs refuse, he tells them that he is the only one who can open those doors, so they have no chance of finding the scroll without him. He suggests that he could release anyone trapped by the panels. If they still refuse, he has reached the limit of his reasonableness and fires his crossbow. He tries to kill them all except the character with the highest Luck, whom he subdues. If the PCs cooperate, the Lord takes them to either 3F or 3G, roll randomly. He cuts his hand and smears blood on the panel to open the door (taking 1 hp of damage).

This room is a huge dome, its highest point some 30 feet above the floor. There is a hidden door, which the Lord has found in his search around the room but will not tell the PCs about until necessary, which opens into a chamber with a chute in the floor. The chute leads into the reservoir (3H). Various heavy metals, warping concoctions and strange radioactive materials have accumulated here. There is no way for the PC to suspect this, except a strange metallic smell from the water, and a couple of glowing bars that emit an eerie light, allowing them to glimpse an exit tunnel under the surface. Anyone diving in can quickly get to a tunnel leading out of the basin. After 5 rounds of swimming, the tunnel rises above water level and then goes on for more than a mile, deep under the quickmud and swamp soil, to exit in a small grove, the Keep visible as it succumbs to the Thrallmaster's assault.

**Platinum Golem:** Init +0; Atk fist +25 melee (d20+8); AC30; HP 300; MV 40'; Act 2d24 + d30 spell; SP immune to magic, lightning damage acts as *haste* cast at the same result, detect life 120' radius, Spells: (+10 spell check) *choking cloud*, *magic missile*. SV Fort+10, Ref +10, Will +10

**Rewards:** Anyone who swims down the basin and out the tunnel gets a choice of either **+1 Agility** or **+1 Stamina**, but has to roll a DC10 Fort save or suffer a mutation from the toxic water (roll on any mutation or minor corruption table you might have) that will take d30 days to manifest fully.

## 3F: Library

*The door slides open to reveal a room with aisles of iron shelves, as high as the ceiling, each overflowing with scrolls, parchment rolls, snake skins, tomes and grimoires. This must be Loew's library. [If Lord Farwall is present] The Lord lets out a deep sigh. "It must be here."*

The *scroll of life* is indeed here, but cleverly hidden. If the Lord is present, he orders the characters to search around. Searching the shelves is pointless but can net spectacular knowledge (see **Library Finds Table**) and the Lord will enter the library after all PCs have had a chance to roll once, whether they have passed or failed the Luck check. Anyone declaring they are searching the bottom of the bookshelves will realize that the shelves stand on tiny wheels: they can be moved back and forth and moving the one farthest from the door reveals an adamantite safe in the wall. The combination to the safe is 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, the movements same as on the dial in **3B**. If the players don't figure it out fast, the Lord will get impatient and strike the safe door with his sword, breaking the lock, and his sword.

When the safe is opened, a scroll filled with fiery, almost living runes can be seen lying inside, uncurled. The Lord will reach for the scroll or demand it of the character who has opened the safe. If he takes the scroll, he will have a hard time resisting glancing at it (Will save DC 15 for the Lord to resist).

This is a scroll of *explosive runes*. It is warm to the touch and even says "Do not read explosive runes" in an ancient language, which the Lord actually knows how to read, but will explode right in the face of anyone trying to read it, inflicting 4d6 fire damage (Reflex save DC 20 for half as well as to avoid blindness and d6 Personality damage if the character survives the blast). If there is an elf with the party, they can make a DC 12 Int check to recognize the scroll without reading it, before the Lord reads it. The wendigo will also smell the trap and cackle bestially when the lord uncurls it, which could serve as a signal to the PCs to stop the Lord from reading it.

The actual *scroll of life* is hidden behind a false panel which is easily opened if one tries to feel around the safe. It is similar to the scroll with *explosive runes*, but its writing flows with multicolored energies and changes so it can be read by anyone, even the illiterate – the writing becomes images, like a comic book.

**Rewards:** If anyone tries to read the *scroll of life*, they gain **+1 to a random ability, including hp** – roll d7. If anyone actually reads the entire scroll, which is highly unlikely since it will take 4d5 turns minus the character's Intelligence bonus to get to the end of the writing, they get **+1 to all abilities and hp**, but their alignment becomes chaotic and they receive a greater corruption.

### 3G: Storage

*This is a large cube-like room, filled with various materials, stacks of stuff, boxes, chests, barrels and crates, all of them ancient in design and origin.*

There is not much of use here, although more than two thirds of the available space is filled with ancient containers. At the exact moment the characters discover the true *scroll of life*, a huge blast is heard from this room. A rock golem has burrowed its way to the Laboratory, and will blast through the door into the corridor, going straight for **3E** and the platinum golem. Two rounds later, 8 puppet warriors and 2 puppet officers arrive through the tunnel the golem has punctured.

The PCs have six rounds (a minute) to do something with the scroll or flee with it before the rock golem reaches **3E** and begins dragging away the Platinum Golem, while the puppets come to the intersection and cut off the character's retreat. The puppets will offer the characters a chance to surrender, while the rock golem takes twelve more rounds to drag the Platinum golem to the tunnel and start climbing back up with its precious cargo. The Lord, if present, will not yield and will attack the puppets, but the puppets aim to subdue him and the party.

**Puppet Warrior (8):** Init -1; Atk axe +5 melee (1d8+2); AC 17; HD 5d8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will+8; Int 12, Str 16, Agi 10.

**Puppet Officer (2):** Init +0; Atk axe +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 17; HD 10d8; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will+8; Int 12, Str 16, Agi 10.

## Library finds

Roll under Luck, then roll a d24 on this table. A character can try to roll under Luck only once before the Lord gets impatient (if he is in the room) or finds the PCs (if he is not in the room.)

| D24 | Finding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>Necrocomicon.</b> This book is filled with dark magic but infused with a necessary dose of black humor to make it palatable. The reader must roll a DC12 Will save or die laughing upon reading a single page. If they survive, they can learn Int modifier spells. Non-wizards can learn these spells but cast with d16 and each casting nets a minor corruption. The book becomes the owner's patron after a week, roll for patron bond as normal. |
| 2   | <b>Rage of Lurd.</b> A purple prose depiction of a dwarf's hard life. Its many injustices, as well as the inexplicable behavior of its protagonist will lead anyone to tear the book up in rage. The reader then gains the ability to enter battle rage up to Stamina bonus times per day, lasting 1 round per level – simply remembering passages from the badly written novel is enough to make one fly into a frenzy.                                |
| 3   | <b>Manual of Manly Melee.</b> Reading the book makes a 0-level character into a 1st level Warrior. If read by a Warrior, gain +1 to hit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 4   | <b>Grey Falcon Capers.</b> Reading the book makes a 0-level character into a 1st level Thief. If read by a Thief, gain +1 to all Thief skills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 5   | <b>Dressed-up Supper.</b> This stream of consciousness novel transports one into different dimensions. Anyone who spends an hour daily reading it will master different realities, allowing them one reroll per day but making them increasingly paranoid.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 6   | <b>The Lingering Changeling.</b> Reading the leafy scrolls makes one into a 1st level Elf, regardless of the character's race or class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7   | <b>Tome of Seven Serpents.</b> These snake skins hold mysteries and incantations known only to scale-kind. Anyone reading them will learn how to charm snakes. Roll d20+personality+level, the ophidian rolls a Will save.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8  | <b>Concerto II in Sky Minor, Op. 39.</b> A notebook containing the most beautiful song in the world. If anyone tries to play it, they will be compelled to continue, rolling a DC20 Will or Reflex save each round. If eight saves are failed, the unfortunate performer will make too many mistakes, blemishing the absolute beauty of the melody and kill themselves. If the song is played to the end, which takes 20 rounds, the performer will gain +1 to Intelligence and +1 to Personality as well as the ability to enthrall audiences, rolling d20+Personality+level, with each creature hearing the song rolling a Will save. |
| 9  | <b>Coulier's Cookeries.</b> This tastefully leather-bound tome contains the recipes of the legendary chef Coulier. Mastering them will require investing 300 gold pieces in both mundane and rare ingredients and 3 months' time, but anyone who does will have a safe future as a cook.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 10 | <b>Ulcers, by Ur-celsus.</b> A catalogue of types of ulcers in humans and demihumans.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11 | <b>Songbird and Nine Apples.</b> A protracted fairytale with a questionable moral. Ask the player if the character agrees with the moral. If they do, they get +1 Intelligence. If they disagree, they lose 1 point of Intelligence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 12 | <b>Nadir-khan and 40 Soon-to-be-ex-virgins.</b> A collection of 40 exquisitely engraved plates depicting erotic escapades of Nadir-khan. A true treasure for connoisseurs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 13 | <b>Angeliconium.</b> A list of angelic beings. Reading the book makes one into a 1st level Cleric. If read by a Cleric, gain +1 to spell checks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 14 | <b>Mighty Brains, Mightier Deeds by Spartacis.</b> Reading the book allows one to substitute their Int bonus for their Strength bonus in melee combat. Warriors can add their Intelligence bonus to their Mighty Deed rolls.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 15 | <b>Mercurial Magic Effects.</b> A list of mercurial magic effects. Any wizard will be able to tell what their mercurial magic effect is on a given spell right after rolling it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 16 | <b>5-dimensional Space De-cluttering Procedures by Khondo the Merry.</b> A manual of arcane geometry that holds the secret of utilizing any space to its maximum potential. Adds +50% to the carrying capacity of the character.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17 | <b>Shieldbook.</b> A heavy book with a leather binding strap that can be fitted onto an arm. It acts like a shield that gives +2 to AC.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 18 | <b>Grand Book of Castles.</b> A wonderful book of pop-up castles. Each of 2d12 folds represents an actual existing castle, depicted to minute detail and can serve as a functional map to that castle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 19 | A <b>scroll</b> with a Type IV demon's true name on it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 20 | An <b>ink bottle</b> containing a forgotten servant ink imp. It will serve the PC who releases it but will cause no end of mischief while actually trying to be helpful. It knows where the safe is and everything that happened with the Malthusian, up until Loew's death.                                                                                                                                                   |
| 21 | <b>Nicopernicus' Conclave of Constellations.</b> The reader will learn everything about constellations and how they affect the fate of beings. Their Lucky Roll bonus will now change with their Luck score.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 22 | <b>A strange coloring book, wonderfully colored in.</b> It contains several colors unknown to man and as such will be highly sought by artists, alchemists and wizards alike. It also contains a hidden sequence of pictures, one on each page, suggesting the horrific fate the child who colored it has suffered in the hands of Loew as it was groomed to be sacrificed to the Malthusian, whose face is the same as Nais'. |
| 23 | <b>Theodicy of Albewic.</b> The book that explains the motivations of the gods. It will change the alignment of the reader into Chaotic and will turn them into a hateful atheist, despising all clerics as fools at best, dangerous at worst. Clerical spells and healing do not affect the character anymore.                                                                                                                |
| 24 | <b>Manual of the Golems.</b> Effectively, the <i>breathe life</i> spell codified into a ritual that anyone can perform with proper ingredients. The process is ridiculously expensive but will allow one to create golems of all sorts.                                                                                                                                                                                        |

# Finale

If Dohr-Ian has been released and leads the defenders, have the golem and puppets freeze after d3 rounds of combat and then immediately leave the way they have come: the Thrallmaster has been wounded. The characters have one hour before he recuperates to make a break for it and leave the Keep while the ghuls run amok, and mountain tribesmen fall to infighting. Zim will organize a breakthrough, taking 5d100 + combined PCs luck score people with him. Magda and her daughter will be among them.

Otherwise, if the PCs are captured with the *scroll of life*, they are taken to the Thrallmaster, after having a chance to see the Keep fall and its defenders butchered. They witness the Thrallmaster reading the scroll and cackling madly, before burning it. He then has the PCs cut up and used to make more flesh golems.

If the characters are captured with the *scroll of explosive runes*, they are taken to the Thrallmaster, after having a chance to see the Keep fall down and its defenders butchered. But the final satisfaction will be theirs, as they witness the scroll blow up in the Thrallmaster's face. He is killed and all the puppets and golems fall over, tribal chiefs and ghuls released from his domination, and the army descends into chaos of in-fighting. Award all characters a **+1 bonus to an Ability of their choice, including hit points**.

The platinum golem is inactive until the *scroll of life* is slid into the slot between its eyes. In the next round, it will awaken and turn towards the nearest living creature, which is most likely the one who has inserted the scroll, attacking it until it is dead, unless it climbs on its disc-hat, which is its only blind spot. It will continue homing in on the nearest living creature, casting *choking cloud* if there are multiple creatures around. It will beat the rock golem to a pulp, before turning on the puppets, since they were created with the *breathe life* spell, they have the energy of life in them.

The platinum golem will work his way through the PCs or the puppets, whomever is present, exiting through the tunnel the rock golem has burrowed and continuing to methodically slaughter the Thrallmaster's entire army. If the characters somehow escape back into the Keep, they are met with enthusiastic cheers from the men on the walls, observing the golem's carnage. But

after several minutes, the cheers die down, as people start to get uncomfortable. Only the cackling of Nais the Priest is still heard. If anyone tries to talk to him or touch him, the Malthusian manifests and flies off into Hell laughing thunderously, foretelling the doom of Man, caused by its own creation. That is the right moment for someone, probably Zim, who has miraculously survived unscathed, to order evacuation, and the people hurry to leave the castle in disorder, but glad to be alive, hoping that the golem will need more time to deal with the entire army. It will, in fact, take the platinum golem d3 days to fully stomp out the Thrallmaster's forces – and any other living thing it encounters - since after it destroys the puppets and the tent, it will go away into the mountains, after the tribesmen who have fled.

The characters can destroy the *scroll of life* with fire, the nearest one being in the forge, or a torch could do the trick. The character that does it receives **+1 Personality**. If the scroll is destroyed, Nais the Priest screams furiously and the scream turns into a deafening roar, as the Malthusian reveals his true form and leaves for Hell, cursing all the characters (Will save DC 24 or suffer a Curse) so that they can hear it wherever they are. They have a powerful enemy now, working to turn any noble deed of theirs into ruin.

If the *scroll of explosive runes* is inserted into the platinum golem, it will explode in its head, destroying its precise machinery, effectively rendering it useless. The character who comes up with the idea gets **+1 Intelligence**. The character who actually does it gets **+1 Agility**.

If the characters hold on to the *scroll of life* and flee back to the Hightower or out of the Keep, Nais appears as they exit the dungeon. He grabs the scroll and turns into the Malthusian, killing the cowardly character who was trying to escape with the scroll. He then teleports back to Hell, scroll in hand. The entire army of puppets and mountain-men stops for a brief spell, enough for the defenders to make a break for it.

Any surviving characters gain **+1 permanent Luck** at the end of the adventure.

# NPCs of Note

## The Lord

The current commander is a tall, imposing man, with long whiskers and a balding mane, followed everywhere by his clockwork hounds, wonders of Imperial engineering. His name is Jydas Farwall, the thirty-third of his line, which began with the discovery of the Crater plains by his primogenitor, Loew the Constructor, a thousand years ago.

Loew was both a wizard and an engineer, and he used his knowledge to create many things now taken for granted throughout the land, from trebuchets to functional wings. He was also a charismatic cult leader, using the keep he had built as an abbey dedicated to exploring the limits of human freedom, and ultimately, debauchery. This dark history has been a closely kept secret of the Farwall family, and the Lord is well aware of it, though he found it of little consequence thus far. That is, until recently, when he was made aware of the existence of the laboratory and the Golem in the bowels of the Keep by Nais, a wandering priest who has come to the keep to warn the defenders about the advancing armies of the Thrallmaster.

The Lord is a proud, stubborn man, used to and expecting deference from all, but willing to listen to counsel of those who have proven their courage or intelligence, such as Dohr-Ian. He is smart but limited in his scope of thinking, being a military man first and foremost - as his ancestors were.

He knows it in his guts that the priest's words ring true, but he was taught by his forefathers that whatever Loew did has no place in the world, and he sees it as his duty to deal with the fallout of his ancestors' dark affairs. Still, when he witnesses the terrible power of the Thrallmaster and becomes convinced that the enemy is after the Golem, he will head down in order to destroy the scroll. The party can encounter him in the laboratory, where he will offer them cooperation in destroying the scroll, or a quick death if they elect to awaken the Golem.

**Lord Jydas Farwall:** Init +2; Atk Ancestral longsword +d4+3 melee (d8+3; the sword is +2 in his hands only and directs the flow of blood to blind enemies, +2 to mighty deeds for blinding) or crossbow +D4 ranged (d6); AC 16 (chain mail and shield,

no helm); HP 24; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Mighty deeds of arms, immune to mind-affecting magic; SV Ref +1, Fort +3, Will +1  
AL L. The Lord possesses a magnifying glass and a Feather of the Court, which he can use to write a magical writ that will always be recognized as a seal of authority in the land.

## The Priest

Nais is not nearly as old as he looks - his skin leather-like, his mind seemingly semi-absent. The bearded old body and intensely black eyes house a spirit that is, in fact, much, much older. He is the Malthusian, Seneschal of Deceit and Foil, the demon who had made a pact with Loew a millennium ago. Now, the chance has finally come for the pact to be fulfilled to his satisfaction.

The Malthusian was keen on Loew completing the scroll with the corrupted spell of life, so that the Golem would awaken as an engine of unthinkable destruction, unleashed on the world to seek out any sentient life and destroy it. Loew never used the scroll and had it sealed away in his laboratory, warded against demons. But the Malthusian has existed for countless ages, what's a puny thousand years of waiting?

When the stars aligned in a baleful constellation, he knew the time was right. He arranged to be summoned into the world, then possessed the poor wretch who was careless enough to summon him. He now poses in this body as a penitent priest of the god of sacrifice and suffering.

Nais arrived at the Keep a day before the Thrallmaster's army was spotted, to warn the defenders of the imminent attack. After his doomsaying was confirmed to be true by the Skyeeye, he sought an audience alone with the Lord, where he told him that he came to the Keep guided by a vision: of an ancient mechanical weapon, built to defend the land in its hour of direst need, by his glorious ancestor, Loew. He revealed all about the golem and the scroll that is to be placed in its head to activate it, both awaiting in the laboratory for the true scion of the Farwall line to awaken them and save us all. However, he has not succeeded in convincing the Lord, who is not a man easily swayed by promises of power or glory and is inherently distrustful of magic and anything his ancestor was known for.

The Malthusian then turned to the Lord's right hand, Dohr-Ian, whom he

magically charmed. But the Lord had Dohr-Ian imprisoned, so the demon will now look for a chance to use the characters as patsies to enter the Laboratory for him in the chaos of the siege, ideally tricking them into thinking that they are on a holy quest to awaken the Golem and thus save both the Keep and themselves. Until then, he can be found around the Keep, acting as a benevolent, albeit gloomy holy man, healing people, never seeming to suffer disapproval, although somewhat noticeably less effective on the Lawfully-aligned.

**Nais the Priest:** Init +2; Atk hands +3 (d2) melee; AC 13; HP 28; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP priest spells (all 1st and 2nd level) +7 spell check, Lay on hands +6; SV Ref +6, Fort + 6, Will + 6; AL C. If the priest is killed, the Malthusian, a Type V demon, is released and remains stable in his demon form for d6 rounds before shifting back into Hell from whence it came.

**The Malthusian:** Init: +9, Attack: kick +18 melee (d12); AC 24; HP 99, MV60' fly; Act 2d24 or 2d20 and d24; SP Type V demon traits, spells (knows all wizard spells) +14 spell check; Curse (Will save DC24); SV Ref +9, Fort +9, Will +9; AL C.

## The Sheriff

Dohr-Ian or Dour Ian as his men call him, is a handsome dark-haired man with a heavy brow, gifted with a swift and fair mind, and burdened with a harsh upbringing, which has made him into a cynic. After proving his bravery and loyalty many times in the Outriders, he became their leader, proving himself to be a capable commander, and has since become the Lord's trusted advisor and confidante, possibly even a discreet lover. However, since the arrival of the Priest, the two have come to an impasse, only made more volatile by the frantic situation developing with the advance of the Thrallmaster's army. The Priest Nais has magically charmed Dohr-Ian and now he believes that the golem must be activated.

Dohr-Ian persuaded the Lord to accompany him below the tower to confirm the Priest's claims. The two of them indeed discovered a secret entrance. Dohr-Ian advised they should get in and use the weapon, whatever it is, but the Lord's deeply ingrained misgivings about his ancestor's creation and a healthy dose of suspicion had prevailed over his fascination, and the two friends came to harsh words. The Lord subdued Dohr-Ian and had him



locked in the dungeons, so he could not spread the word about what the Keep was hiding.

Dohr-Ian is deeply hurt and resentful towards his Lord, bordering on hatred - especially now that the attack is imminent, since he believes he could do much to help the defensive effort. Everybody in the plains knows him as a fearless protector and, more importantly, fair tax-collector. His outriders' morale has certainly gone to hell these two days since he has been locked up without much explanation.

Dohr-Ian can be encountered in the dungeon, where the PCs will have the choice of releasing him to help the defenders, convincing him to accompany them into the laboratory, or leaving him to his death there.

**Dohr-Ian Oakenson:** Init:+2; Atk bastard sword +4 melee (2d4+2) or longbow +4 ranged (d6+2) or fists (d3+2) AC 12 or 17 (with scale armor and shield); HP 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Ref +3; Fort +2, Will +1 AL N

## The Sarjeant

Zim is one of the few true veterans in the garrison. He has been in a proper war, distinguishing himself as a hero by leading a marine charge to take an enemy flagship. But all that was 20 years ago, before he came to serve in this remote region. Since then, he has seen numerous skirmishes with tribal raiders, and has even chopped off the head of a ghul or three. His men practically revere him, and he takes good care of them in peace, but will not think twice to send them off to their death in combat if that is what the situation calls for. He is tall, square jawed and beak-nosed, with widely set bull-like eyes and, quite intimidatingly, lacking any visible scars from his years of service. Zim will be there during the first part of the adventure to shout orders at the PCs should they begin wandering around the castle or trying to leave the battle, and also to help them in some crucial moments.

**Zim:** Init: +3, Atk longsword +d3+2 melee (d8+d3+2); AC 16 (studded leather and shield, helm); HD d12+d4 HP 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Mighty Deeds of Arms; SV Ref +3, Fort +2, Will +1 AL N.

## The Keeper

Magda is of noble origin, but she fell on hard times when her husband died, so she sought fortune in the far away colony, becoming the housekeeper of the Keep and a friend to the Lord. She has a small but wiry frame and she takes her duties as seriously as any soldier, albeit with a strong motherly bent. She oversees all the servants, as well as the halfling cook and his family. But mostly she oversees young girls who come to the Keep, with a focus on them staying away from the soldiers. She was not so successful with her daughter, Marta, a 16-year-old girl who is pregnant and refuses to name the father.

During the siege, Magda is (wo)manning the barricaded wooden door of the inner tower and single-handedly keeping the people from panicking or worse. She is a stern but caring presence, sharp of tongue and slow to change her mind. She is determined to project an image of someone who knows what she is doing, although that technically may not be the case at this moment.

Magda is almost supernaturally capable of catching hold of gossip and she knows all the rumors - if engaged in conversation she will know which ones are true or false. She can be encountered in the Hightower, accompanied by a flock of six to eight women who are armed with spears and quite on edge.

**Magda:** Init +2; Atk spear +4 (1d8); AC 11; HD 2d8; HP 9; MV 20' Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L

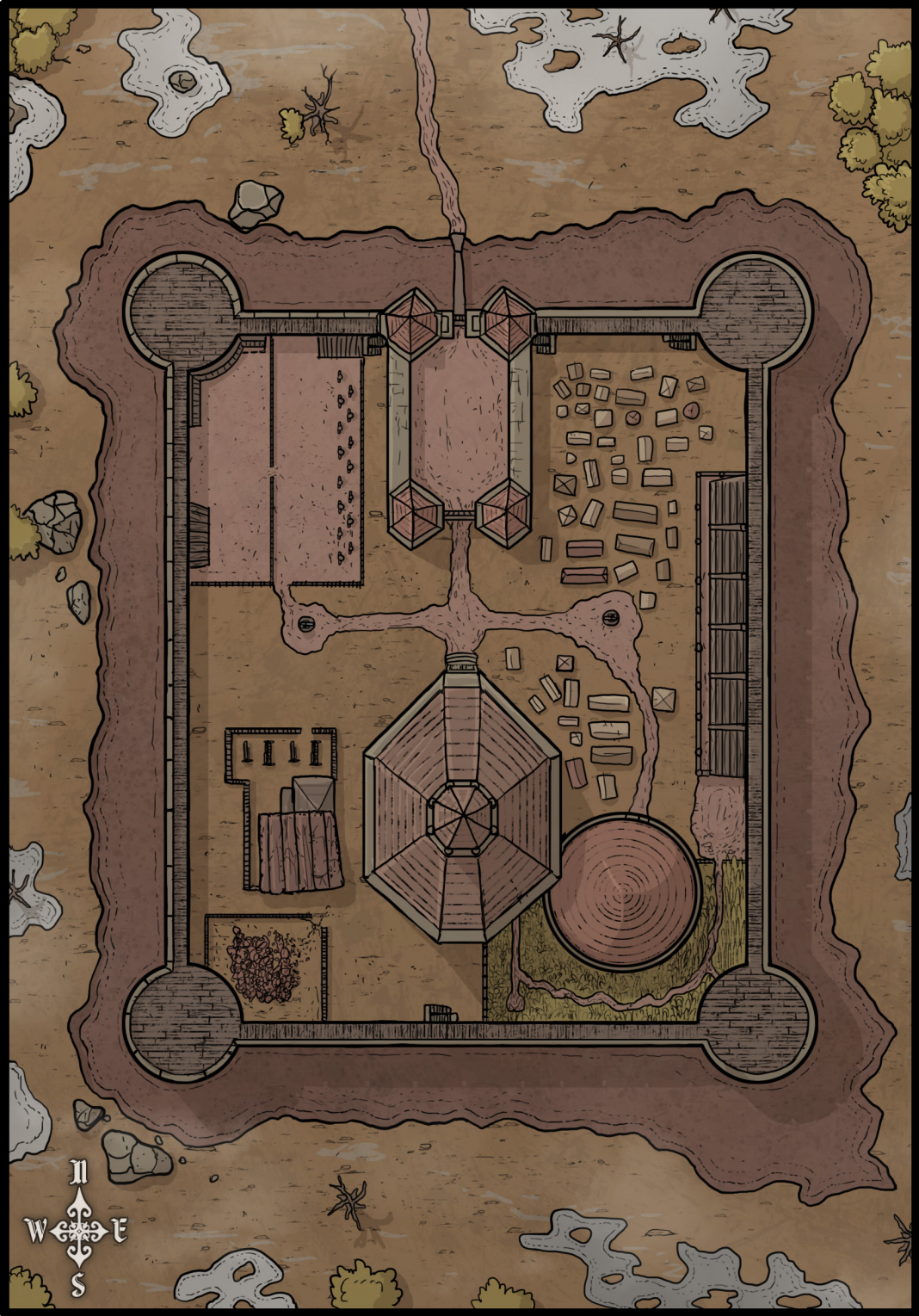
# Who is the Thrallmaster?

It is highly unlikely – although possible – that the heroes will meet the Thrallmaster. The main antagonist's origin and appearance are purposefully kept vague. This serves not only to make it easier on Judges to use the adventure as a starting point for the campaign they have in mind, but also to make the enemy more mysterious and sinister. The characters can project all sorts of paranoid ideas or villain tropes onto the Thrallmaster, and the Judge is free to go along with them in developing him (or her) further.

The only definitive thing about the Thrallmaster is contained in his name: he is a mind-controller, a ruler whose subjects obey him unconditionally and totally. He has, with equal ease, brought into his fold the chieftains of wild mountain tribes and flesh-eating cannibals – and there are more sinister troops in his employ, made of living rock as well as those armored in full plate, their movements disturbingly puppet-like. These rock and flesh golems are a thematic link to Loew and the Judge is free to build on that.

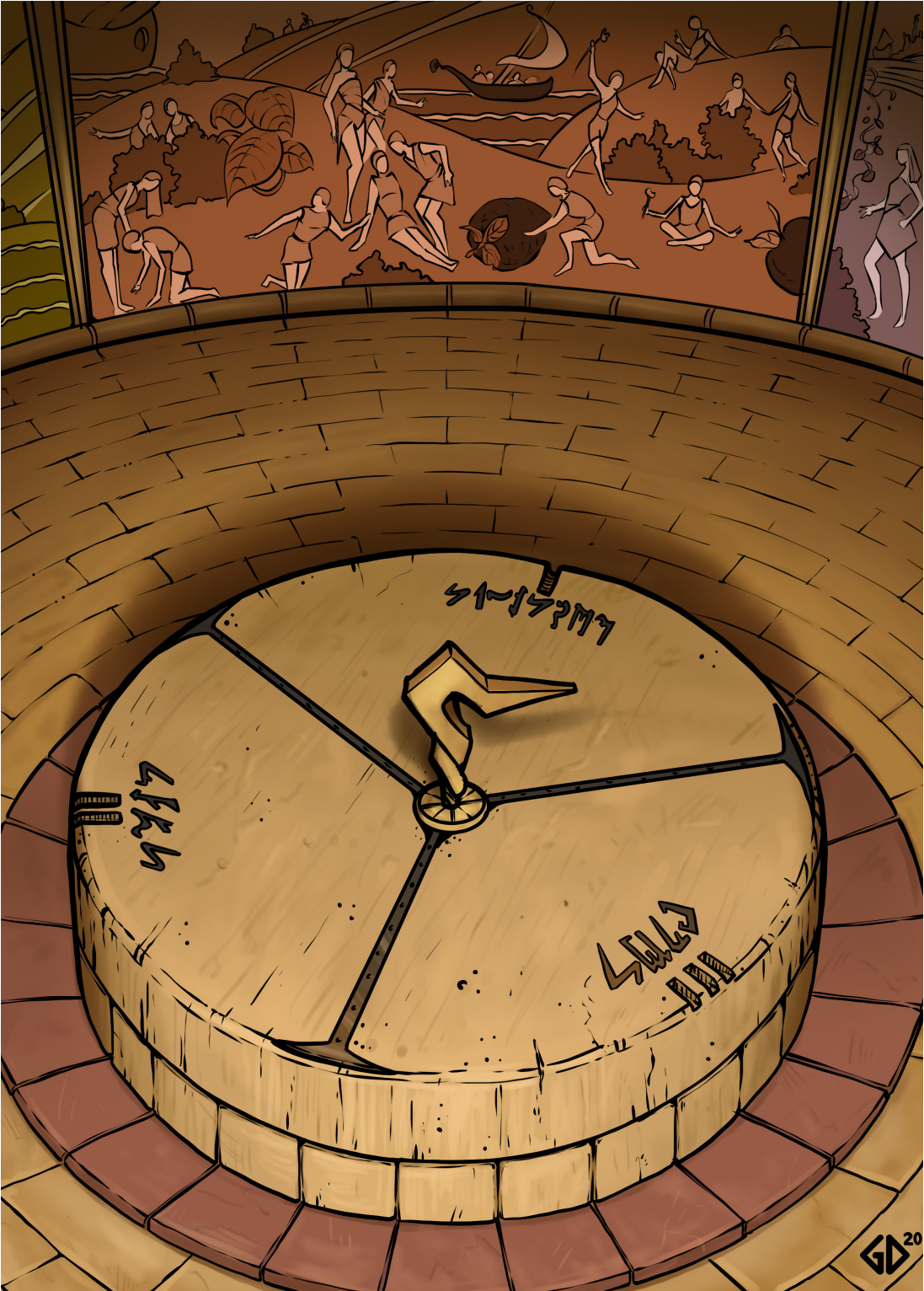
As the adventure unfolds, it should become obvious that the Thrallmaster is after the laboratory in the Keep and the platinum golem locked away inside. How he came about that information is anyone's guess, but it could have something to do with a certain demon whose gambit to cause immeasurable suffering has been foiled once before...

# Player's Handout A

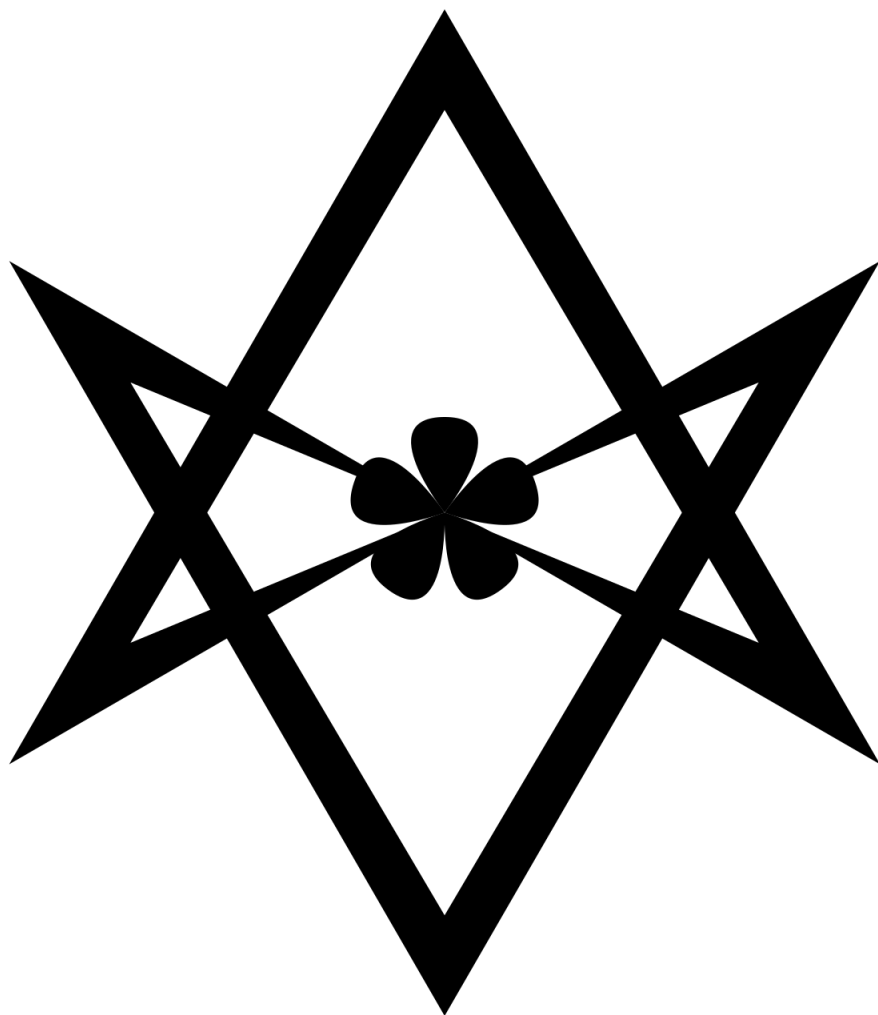




Player's Handout B



## **Thelemic Sign of Loew and the sigil of House Farwall**



Aleister Crowley's rendition of the unicursal hexagram, perhaps the best known symbol of, and certainly one of the most important symbols in Thelema, equivalent of the ancient Egyptian ankh or the Rosicrucian Rosy Cross but first derived in 1639 from Blaise Pascal's hexagrammum mysticum theorem.

This image exists in the Public Domain.

# GM Map #1 - The Inner Keep





# Descriptions of the Inner Keep

**1 - Hightower:** Once the keep of Loew, this is where all non-combatant refugees are. The Skyeye and the scorio are on the top platform of the tower, accessible by stairs.

**2 - Granary:** This is where all the supplies, foodstuffs and goods collected as tax are kept.

**3 - Stables:** The Outriders keep their horses here. Currently, all 30 horses are inside their stables.

**4 - Leatherworks:** Consisting of the building of the tanner's shop and a fenced-off yard where hides and leather are left in vats to soak or hung to dry.

**5 - Inner Courtyard:** Also known as the killing ground. Another set of iron gates, smaller and weaker than the main gates, separates it from the keep courtyard.

**6 - Gate Towers:** Cauldrons with boiling wyrmallow are on top of both towers.

**7 - Melee Training Grounds:** Dotted with dummies and stacks of pointy sticks.

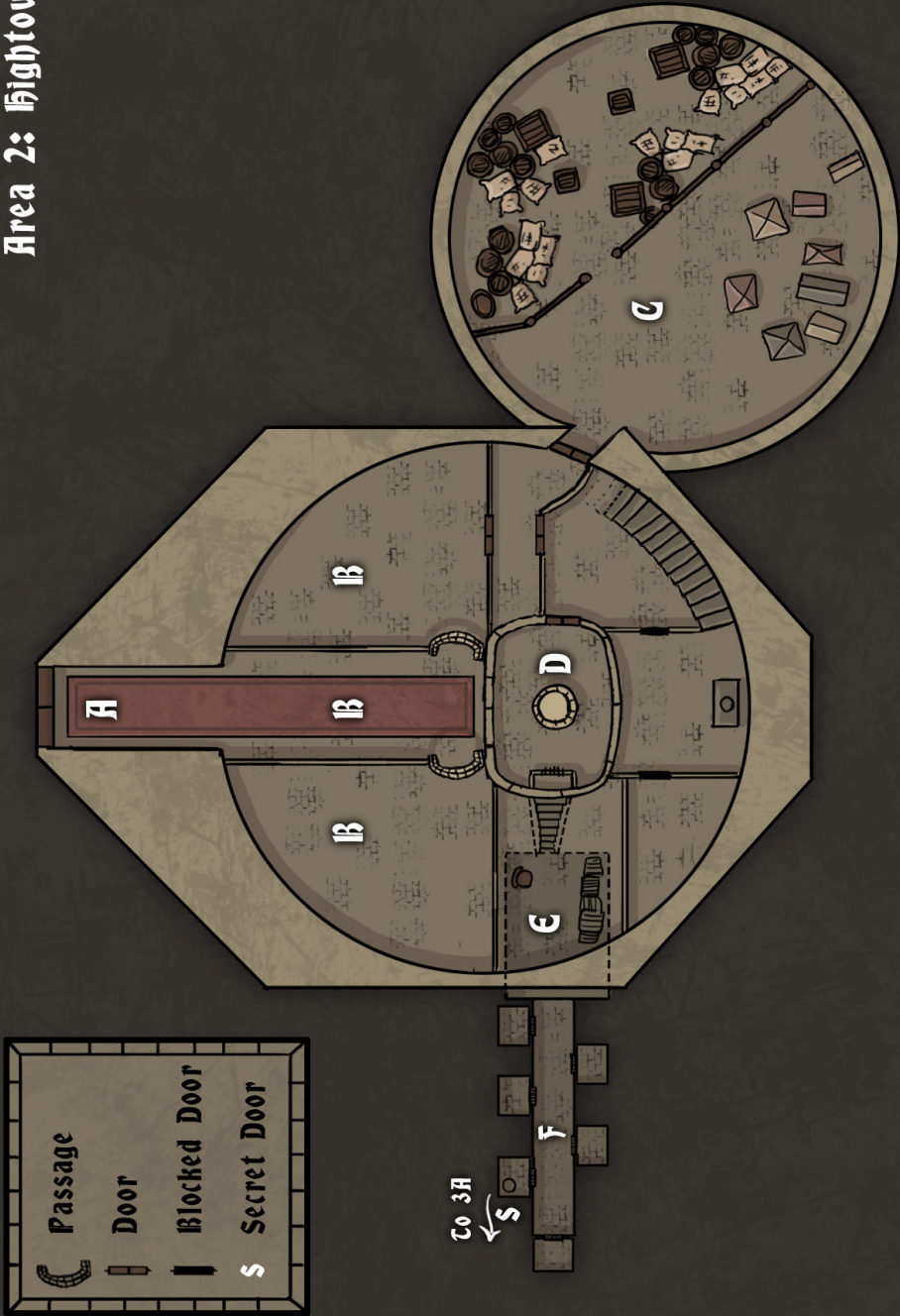
**8 - Archery Range:** Targets are placed along the western wall.

**9 - Water Pumps:** The PC detachment is deployed at the western water pump.

**10 - Compost:** Complements the foul smell coming from the tanner's shop.

**11 - Garden:** Overgrown and untended, the growth is thick and there are various strange flowers and fruits to be found for anyone who braves the thorns. The trail leads to a bricked-off, rusty iron door in the back of the Hightower.

Area 2: Hightower



Area 3: The Laboratory

 Golem

 Door

 Bookshelf

 Secret Door



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