

D&D Fantasy

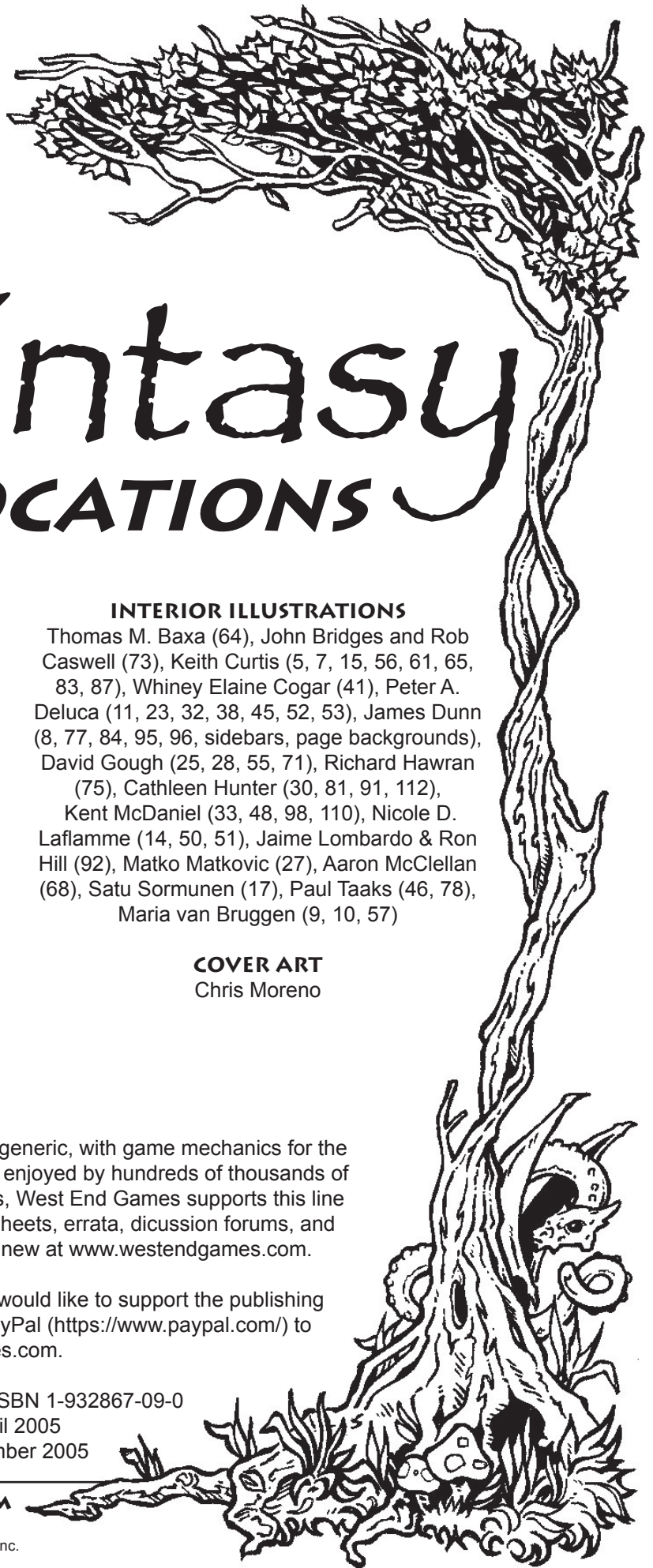
Locations



CHRIS MORENO 2005



Fantasy LOCATIONS



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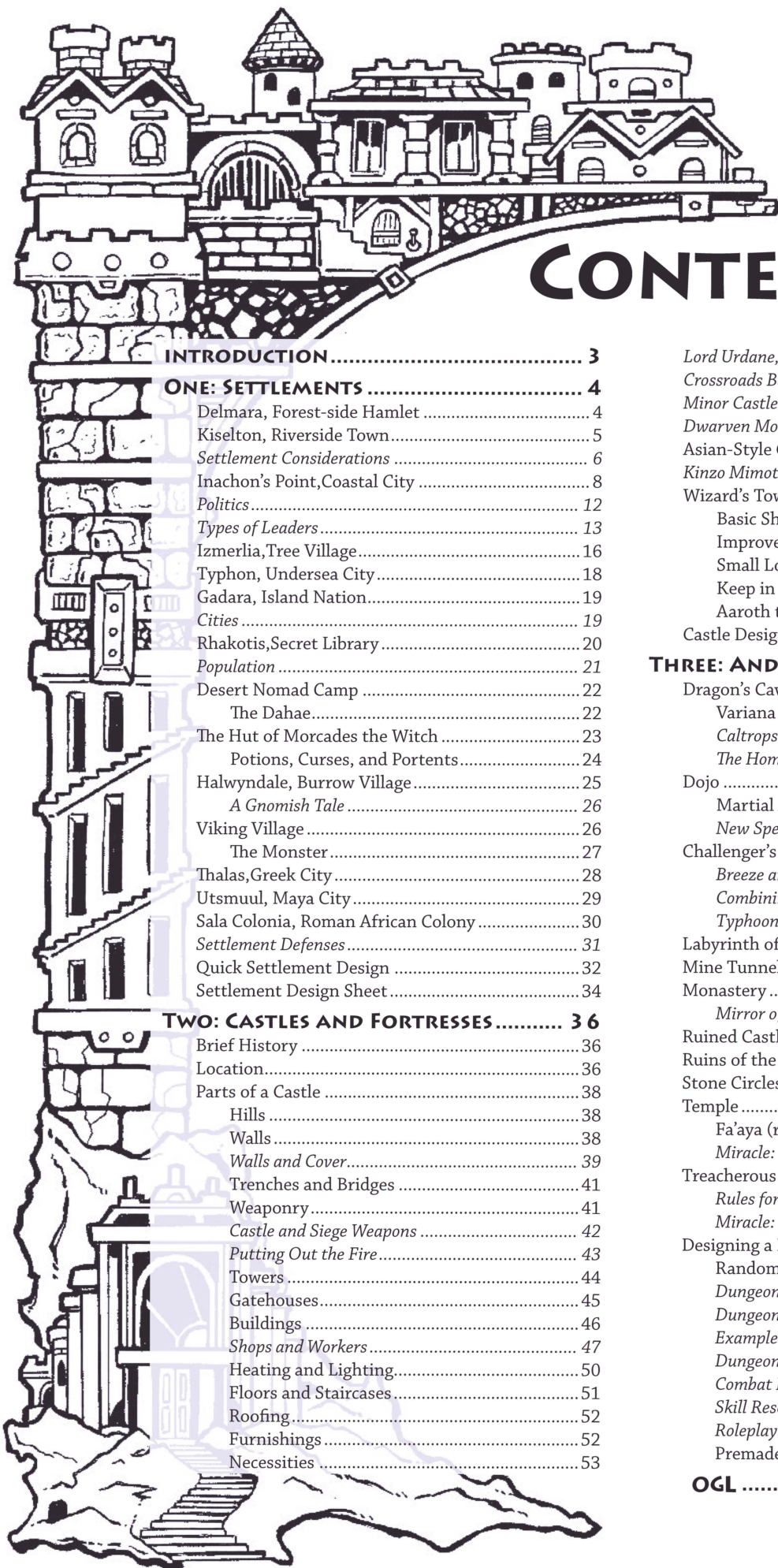
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INTRODUCTION

Who am I? That's not important. Let's just say that I might be a bard who may have angered a certain fairy once upon a time, and as a result is forbidden from mentioning his name in his writings. (Tip to all young men: Fairies are notoriously jealous.)

Anyway, I accepted a tidy sum of silver to scribe a guide to some of the more unusual places within our fair lands. (Okay; technically I've had a rather substantial debt forgiven as a result of my agreeing to this project . . . let us not quibble the bits.) Another friend of mine penned a composition on several of the interesting settlements in this region, while a third provided a treatise on castles, including a few examples.

I presume that my fellow bards managed to get their facts and figures on their own, as they mention nothing of how they came by their information. I, however, was given the most dangerous section to expound upon, and my exploits may make more sense if you know a bit more about who my band of companions is.

The leader of our group is Okent, a paladin within a holy order devoted to upholding the good and protecting the innocent. I've never known a more effective leader, mixing determination and compassion in a way that's compelling enough to make even me stick around through thick and thin.

The healer of our group is a priestess named Raichael, a woman who is as holy as she is beautiful, and I could go on and on about her beauty if I wasn't afraid she'd see this and break my fingers. Although I have visited her temple many times, I still don't know who or what she worships. Apparently one of the core tenets of her faith is that the name of her deity (or deities) is sacrosanct; no one who isn't a true and heartfelt believer is to ever hear the deity's name.

Our oldest member is Grubba, but that's only because Dwarves are so long-lived. I don't want to be stereotypical, but I will say Grubba is a humorless, hard-working, industrious, fiercely loyal companion. I also confess to

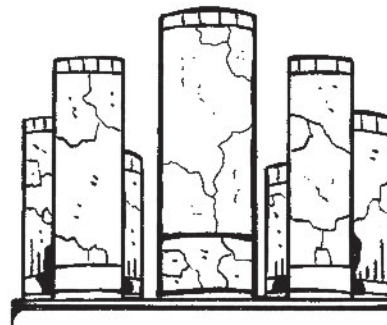
having tossed him once in the heat of battle to break an enemy's lines. I think he enjoyed that, given the slightly higher inflection in the curses he hurled at me.

As for me, I'm the youngest of the group. I'm as good at writing as I am at sneaking and hiding, and each skill set has enabled me to get out of sticky situations the other skill set created. I've had it said that, despite my protestation, I'm a good friend when the chips are down, but I like to think I don't know what I'm capable of, since the chips could fall even further yet.

The more I see the world with my companions, the more I realize there's so much left I want to see. While some things vary all over the world, other aspects remain the same. The discovery of the new and the comfort of the old. Making new friends and seeing old faces. The world is big and the adventure is just beginning. I hope that you'll find this book as useful as it was interesting to create.

May all your travels be ones you can write about, and may you live to write all of your travels.

The game mechanics in this book are based on the system found in the D6 Fantasy Rulebook, but the general information, including the random location generators, is suitable for any fantasy campaign.



CHAPTER ONE

SETTLEMENTS

My friend has stayed in some pretty interesting places in his travels. Here's just a few of the most notable settlements from his trip around the world.

DELMARA, FOREST-SIDE HAMLET

Standing alongside a trade route is the small hamlet of Delmara. The ancient deciduous forest that edges the city provides the inhabitants with the material for housing, fuel, and trade. Carpenters, wainwrights, and shipwrights favor the ancient hardwood trees in the area, providing most of the 300 denizens with a valuable commodity for barter. Those in Delmara who are not foresters rely upon farms for their sustenance, selling their excess nuts, fruits, vegetables, and livestock at markets. Even though the hamlet is small, it's situated upon a heavily traveled trade road, bringing many merchants to the settlement. In turn, Delmara's solitary inn is quite successful and is a favored gathering point at sunset. Not even Bede Trowbryde, Delmara's mayor, is immune to the appeal of the Forest Nymph Inn.

Although the fertile ground makes the land surrounding Delmara perfect for farming, its rich soil lacks an abundance of stone. Over the years, many people have attempted to dig a stone quarry, but each attempt has failed as there's seldom enough stone for the construction of more than one or two buildings. The majority of the structures in the settlement are wattle and daub buildings. These are constructed of woven strips of oak, covered with a mud and straw plaster to insulate against the cold weather.

DELMARA FOREST

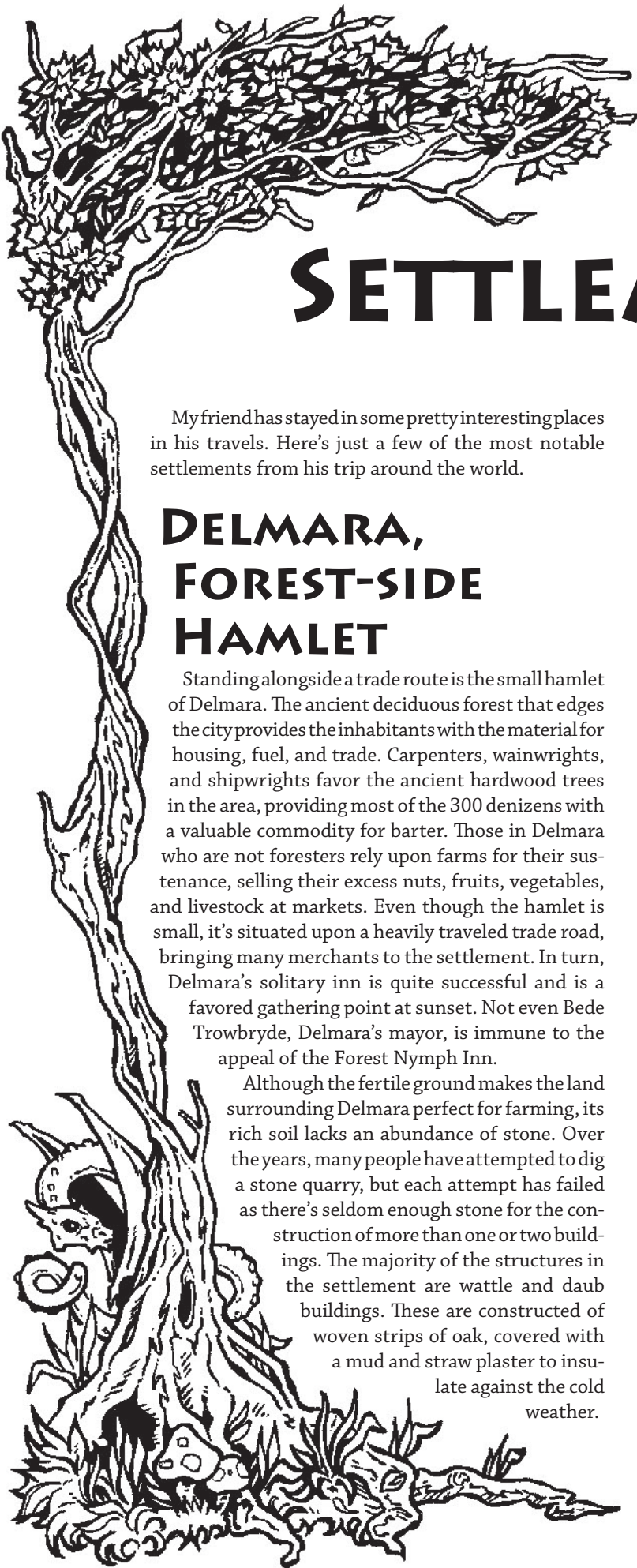
Spanning for miles around the hamlet are the tall, brooding hardwood trees of the Delmara Forest. Bards sing songs about this ancient woodland, and the resilient trees. The songs recount a history of a forest imbued with magical properties, tended and farmed by Elves. The Delmara Forest in these songs is often called the Bowwood Forest, as it's told that for centuries elves used the trees to make beautiful and powerful bows. Most folk in Delmara consider this nothing more than a folktale. Certainly many bowyers have attempted to construct bows from the hardwood of the trees, but none have succeeded, as the wood either cannot be bent or snaps during shaping.

DARKWATER SWAMP

Just north of Delmara is the foreboding Darkwater Swamp. This place is avoided by all of the inhabitants of the hamlet. Both animals and people have lost their lives in this treacherous region. Many folk believe that the swamp is not natural, that it's a living thing itself. It's said that it often calls to those who wander within its sight, luring them into its watery clutches with familiar voices. Or its fetid stench is replaced by an alluring smell of food that leads animals to a watery grave. At night, for those who dare to look, lights are often seen floating over the black waters, dancing about as though they were alive. All who visit Delmara are warned away from the Darkwater Swamp.

THE HAMLET

Pushcart Market: Just off the road, north of the Forest Nymph Inn, is where the local farmers gather each day with their pushcarts. In this small, mobile market, fresh fruits and vegetables are sold. Salted and smoked meat is also offered. While the hamlet is small, the market sees much traffic, as all of the locals, and some travelers, frequent the spot for food. On occasion, a traveling caravan that offers cloth, spices,



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pottery, and other rare products joins the farmers. By noon each day, the pushcarts vanish as quickly as they appeared, only to return again on the morrow.

Church: One of the few buildings to be constructed of stone is Delmara's church. In the early years of the hamlet, the cleric Cernay Avers arrived, and with his newly acquired flock, constructed the church. Believing the daub and wattle building did not properly serve his deity, Cernay convinced his sect to rebuild the church in stone. It's become an emblem of Delmara's staunch and steadfast devotion. Many travelers who encounter Cernay find him a trifle over zealous. The locals tend to overlook his determined attitude.

Cernay Avers, Cleric: Agility 2D+1, melee combat 4D+1, Coordination 2D, throwing 2D+2, Physique 2D, Intellect 3D, cultures 4D, reading/writing 3D+1, scholar 3D+1, speaking 3D+1, Acumen 3D, search 3D+1, Charisma 3D, mettle 4D, Miracles 2D, divination 3D, favor 2D+1, strife 2D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to religion; Employed (R2), must follow sect's regulations. *Equipment:* robes; coins; pouches containing holy symbols; mace (damage +1D+1).

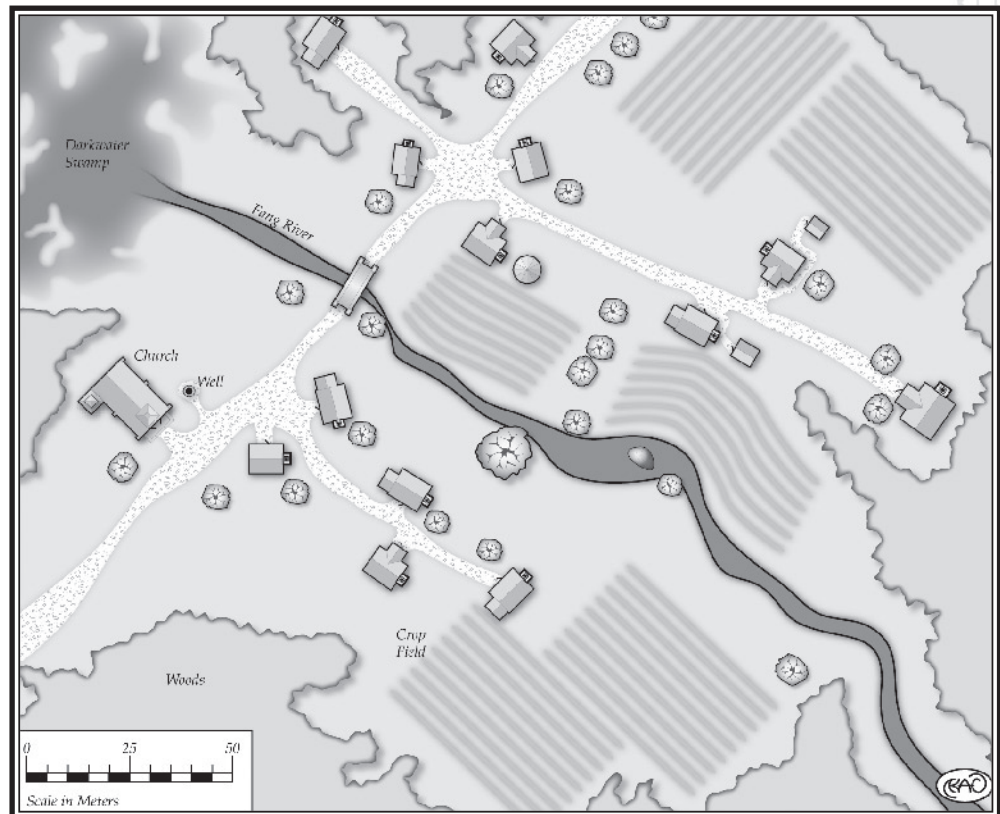
Bede Trowbryde's House: Opposite the Fang River from the church stands Delmara's second stone building, the mayor's house. When the building was first erected, the intention was to make it the abode of the elected mayor. As it happens, Bede Trowbryde has been the elected mayor for 20 years. Most of the people in the hamlet now simply refer to the dwelling as the "Trowbryde House" or "Bede's House." Because of the stone and mortar used, the building stands two-stories high, and is quite comfortable compared to many of the smaller residences in Delmara.

Bede Trowbryde, Mayor: Agility 2D, riding 2D+1, Coordi-

nation 2D, sleight of hand 2D+2, Physique 2D, running 2D+1, Intellect 2D, cultures 3D, reading/writing 2D+2, scholar 3D, speaking 3D, trading 4D, Acumen 2D, hide 2D+1, streetwise 4D, search 3D, Charisma 3D, bluff 3D+2, charm 4D, persuasion 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 1. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), mayor. *Equipment:* fine clothes; cloak; hat; pouch with coins.

KISELTON, RIVERSIDE TOWN

Nestled upon the banks of the Durbin River is the town of Kiselton. With a population of over 1,000, it's a booming trade center that relies upon its salt mines as a chief source of revenue. Like most settlements of its size, Kiselton has a ruling council and a mayor to perform the civic duties, such as appointing a sheriff, negotiating trade agreements, and collecting the taxes required to maintain the town's dock, roads, defensive walls, and government buildings. Over the years, Kiselton has done well, attracting laborers to work in the mine for wages seldom seen in smaller villages or warrens. Along with the opportunity for



SETTLEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Settlements in fantasy settings vary depending upon many factors. Population, resources, location, and trade are often the influential elements that give a settlement its distinct personality, whether it's a small hamlet or a booming metropolis. Some locations serve focal points for trade and travelers, while others may possess small populations but have abundant mineral mines or farms. Gamemasters need to consider these aspects when designing settlements or when heroes are exploring them. Every city is distinct. Intrigue, adventure, and excitement are plentiful in such places. Avoid making villages nothing more than spots to purchase equipment; doing so, while sometimes entertaining for players, slows the pace of a scenario. This is not to say that the players' characters should not be allowed to resupply; rather, gamemasters can take advantage of this to introduce subplots, new characters or entirely new adventures. The locations included in this chapter serve as templates and ready-made settlements for immediate use. Additionally, the "Settlement Design Sheet" provides a quick system for creating hamlets, villages, towns, cities, and other similar places.

greater earnings comes a broad range of entertainment, attracting more residents with a variety of talents to the riverside town. Its ease of access makes it a popular stopping place for travelers, caravans, and various touring merchants.

THE SALT MINES

Located northwest of Kiselton is the vast series of underground salt mines that have brought the town its rapid growth and wealth. Each year, several tons of salt are pulled from the earth and sold to smaller and larger cities, near and far. Although the work is wretched and dangerous, it's the lifeblood this thriving riverside settlement. The recent deaths of miners have forced Mayor Garvin Belot to place city guards inside and outside the mines. No one in Kiselton is sure what or who is killing the workers, but the talk in the taverns is that a monster is lurking about, feeding upon warm flesh.

Such rumors do not sit well with the mayor, or the ruling council. At every opportunity, all town officials deny claims of monsters; instead, they place the blame on rogues, claiming that soon a band of brave souls will arrive and offer to rid the town of the "bandits." These

so-called heroes are the true perpetrators, and the members of the council anticipate their arrival.

RUMORS OF WAR

Perhaps council members have hired ruffians in an attempt to oust the firmly planted mayor. Or maybe they hired toughs, but there's also a monster prowling about. However, should the players' characters hear the rumors and offer to help, the mayor doesn't hesitate to have the sheriff arrest them, and he proclaims he has captured the villains responsible for the deaths, hoping to keep the favor of the people.

THE TOWN

With wealth often comes a fear of losing that wealth. As Kiselton started to prosper, one of the first undertakings of the ruling council was to construct defensive walls around the town, leaving only the riverfront open. Each wall has a guarded gate, which is

normally open during daylight hours. During the night, the gates are closed, though the guards remain. Gaining entry to the town is much more difficult at night, as the guards carefully inspect all who wish to enter.

Here are a few of the locations with the town, but there's plenty of other places that weren't visited during a visit not too long ago. As things hardly ever change in these little places, it's likely that other visitors will find the sights familiar from these descriptions.

LOCATIONS IN KISELTON

1. Government House (Mayor's Abode): This luxurious manor was one of the first town structures to be erected. Beautifully tended, old hardwood trees surround the structure, providing plenty of shade for the three flagstone patios situated on the north, west, and south sides of the building. Standing two stories, constructed of stone and mortar, the Government House is the location for council meetings and trade negotiations with merchants and emissaries from neighboring cities.

Garvin Belot, Mayor: Agility 2D, dodge 3D, stealth 3D, Coordination 2D, lockpicking 2D+1, Physique 2D, Intellect 2D, cultures 2D+1, reading/writing 2D+1, scholar 3D+2, speaking 3D+1, trading 3D+2, Acumen

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2D, hide 3D, streetwise 4D, Charisma 4D, bluff 4D+1, charm 4D+1, persuasion 4D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), mayor. *Equipment:* clothes; coins; keys to Government House.

2. Temple: Kiselton's temple rivals the Government House in size and beauty. Entirely built at the cost of the temple's followers, it's another of town's prominent structures. Not only does it serve as a house of worship for the locals, it also provides boarding for its growing number of clergy. Presently, the temple houses 15 priests, but it's capable of rooming twice that number.

Ladira Almer, Head Priestess: Agility 3D, fighting 3D+1, melee combat 4D, Coordination 2D, Physique 2D, Intellect 3D+1, cultures 3D+2, reading/writing 3D+2, scholar 4D, speaking 4D, Acumen 3D, search 3D+1, Charisma 3D, mettle 4D+2, Miracles 2D, divination 2D+2, favor 4D, strife 4D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to religion; Employed (R3), must follow sect's regulations. *Advantages:* Authority (R1), religious leader; *Equipment:* robes; holy symbol (provides +2 bonus to *divination*, *favor* and *strife* skill totals); quarterstaff (damage +1D+2).

Typical Acolyte: Agility 2D, melee combat 3D, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, Intellect 3D, cultures 3D+1, reading/writing 3D+1, speaking 3D+1, Acumen 3D, investigation 3D+2, Charisma 3D, mettle 3D+1, Miracles 1D, divination 2D, favor 2D+1, strife 2D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 11/*Wound levels:* 2. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R1), to religion; Employed (R1), must follow sect's regulations. *Equipment:* robes; holy symbol; quarterstaff (damage +1D+2).

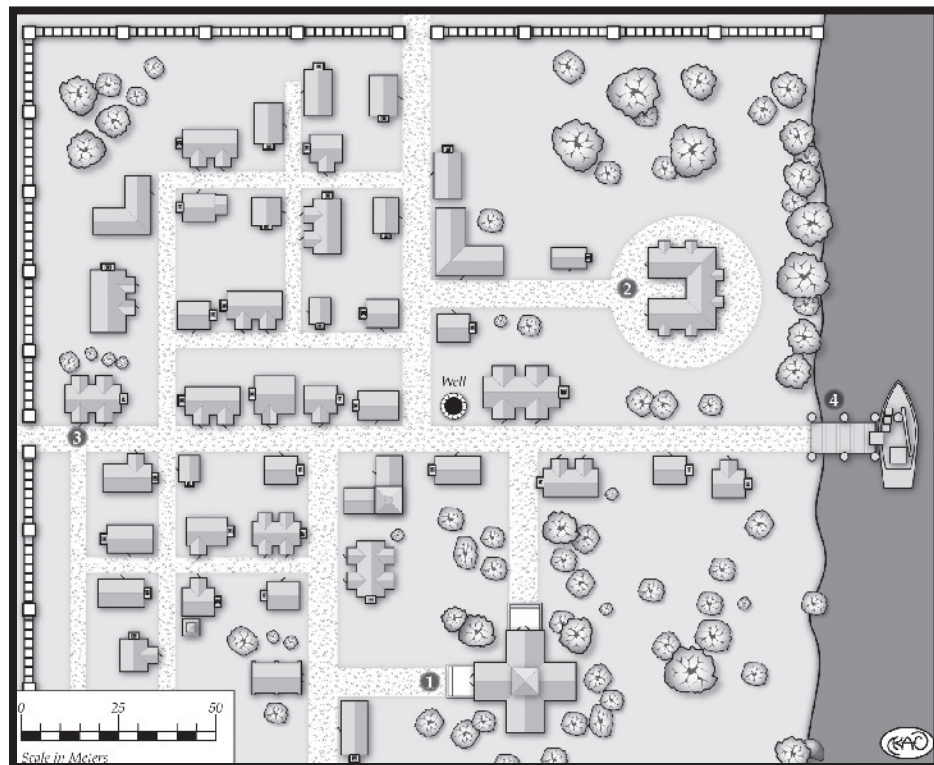
3. Durbin River Inn: This inn existed years before the city walls were erected around Kiselton.

It's a favorite haunt of the riverboat crews and road-weary travelers. Its sturdy wooden frame stands three-stories high, and it has 20 rooms, varying from cramped and windowless on the lower floors to large and brightly lighted on the top floor. As with most settlements, the local inn is a locus of rumors, gossip, and shady deals.

Renting a room at the Durbin River Inn varies in price with the quality of the room. Cramped, single bed rentals are Very Easy (10 copper pieces), while large two- and three-bed suites are Moderate (four gold pieces). Jurin is not fastidious when it comes to cleaning the cheaper rooms. Dust and discarded material are included in the low-budget rentals, and the bedding is crawling with lice. These extra amenities are not found in the upper, more expensive suites.

Jurin Coram, Inn Keeper: Agility 2D, riding 2D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 2D, stamina 3D+1, Intellect 2D, cultures 2D+1, trading 4D, Acumen 2D, streetwise 3D+2, search 4D, Charisma 3D, bluff 4D, charm 3D+1, persuasion 3D+1, . *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Equipment:* clothes; pipe; small knife (damage +2).

Ori Swifthand, Inn Regular: Agility 3D, riding 3D+1, Coordination 4D, lockpicking 4D+1, sleight of hand 4D+1, throwing 4D+1, Physique 3D, Intellect 2D+1, cultures 2D+2, Acumen 2D+2, hide 4D+1,





streetwise 4D+2, search 3D, Charisma 3D, bluff 3D+2, charm 3D+1. *Move*: 10. *Strength Damage*: 2D. *Fate Points*: 0. *Character Points*: 1. *Body Points*: 19/*Wound levels*: 3. *Disadvantages*: Enemy (R1), suspected of being a footpad and watched carefully by the mayor. *Equipment*: clothes; cloak; bag of pepper (+1 to difficulties for animals using *track*); lockpicking tools (+1D to *lockpicking* rolls); throwing dagger (damage +1D); stiletto (damage +1D); soft leather boots (+1 to *stealth* totals).

4. Dock: While commerce is readily conducted by road, it's much easier by water. This is truer when transporting heavy loads of salt. While many of the neighboring settlements haul the precious mineral by horse, along the rutted roads leading to and from Kiselton, the larger cities use riverboats, carrying vast cargos of salt to be resold to even more distant locations. As a result, the dock has become an essential part of the town's economic success. It's not difficult to hitch a ride on one of the riverboats — for a small fee paid to the captain, naturally.

Typical Dock Worker: Agility 3D, fighting 4D, melee combat 4D, Coordination 2D, pilotry 3D+1, Physique

4D, lifting 5D, running 4D+1, stamina 5D, Intellect 3D, Acumen 3D, gambling 3D+1, hide 4D, streetwise 4D, Charisma 3D, bluff 3D+2. *Strength Damage*: 3D. *Fate Points*: 0. *Character Points*: 0. *Body Points*: 12/*Wound levels*: 2. *Equipment*: clothes; small knife (damage +2); heavy garments (Armor Value +1).

RUMORS

All who spend an evening at the inn are likely to hear numerous rumors. The gamemaster can use the following table for determining random rumors, deciding which is true and which are not. Amend the table to suit the needs of an existing adventure, if desired.

1. A clandestine band of thieves practices their trade in town. They identify each other and communicate through secret gestures.

2. The mayor is planning on expanding the dock. The ruling council had a private meeting. They intend to purchase the houses along the river before announcing the plan, so that they can buy the property at a low price.

3. The priestess at the temple is an excellent healer. It's said she came here from a distant city, hiding from the elders of her order for a crime she committed.

4. Monsters did not kill the mineworkers! The mine foreman had them murdered to slow the production of salt. The foremen have been secretly mining it and selling on their own.

5. The mines run deep into the earth. Something has been disturbed there, something that should not have been awakened.

6. The bard Selwyn of Burch knows many histories of Kiselton and the local lands. Often he visits the inn, regaling customers with forgotten tales and delightful songs.

INACHON'S POINT, COASTAL CITY

Perched on the side of a coastal mountain is the seaport city of Inachon's Point. For over 200 years, the city has served as a coastal beacon with its towering

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lighthouse. Inachon's Point is a free city-state, ruled by a six-member governing council and an Assembly of 500 citizens, legislating for a population of nearly 100,000.

Decades before the city's founding, it served as a base for pirate fleet that scoured the coastal cities, plundering every place encountered. But all residents of the now thriving trade and port city agree that the ugly history is behind them.

Defended by massive stones walls, a rocky outcrop, and the sea, this maritime settlement is well protected — which was part of the appeal for the original pirate base. Visitors to the city find plenty of soldiers patrolling the streets and docks. While all are welcome to enter the magnificent city, those who disrupt business or cause civil unrest are dealt with severely.

From a distance, the brilliant white houses of lime and sandstone catch the sun, making Inachon's Point shine like a gem. Even at night, its lighthouse blazes, warning ships of the shallows and welcoming them to a delightful haven. Merchant ships, caravans, and traders all descend upon the thriving city each day. Spices, textiles, precious metals, gems, and common and rare items are all to be found within its time-worn walls.

THE PORT

When the city's location existed as a pirate base, a lonely, ramshackle pier served all the ships that ventured into port. But after the pirates were forced from their stronghold, the newly formed Assembly constructed a marina that extends for nearly one mile. This mammoth undertaking has served Inachon's Point well. It allows over 100 ships to dock and load or unload cargo. Like most other areas of the city, soldiers patrol it. Damage to the harbor would be catastrophic for the city's economy. All those who threaten this important part of the city are executed for the crime.

THE BAZAAR

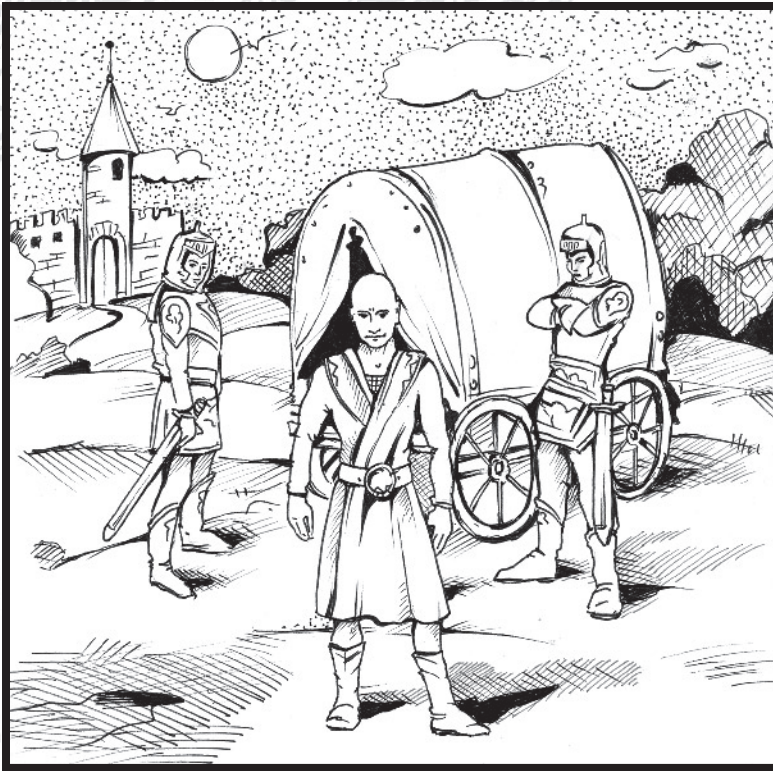
Located near the port is the open-air bazaar where merchants sell, trade, and barter all manner of goods. Day and evening, the bazaar bustles with traffic, its narrow cobblestone streets so crowded that simply moving from one end to another is

time consuming. During the hot afternoons, many of the merchants hang rugs above their stalls, offering shade to their customers in the hopes of selling more wares. Lamps and candles guide the customers once the sun sets, while the enormous flames from the lighthouse add an eerie cast to the area. But all business ends at midnight: Even the profitable merchants need to rest.

Heroes who venture into the maze of merchant stalls and pushcarts are likely to find most anything they could need. The air is redolent with the sweet and spicy smells of cooking food, the calls of hawkers, and the consistent buzz of amazed customers. Unless a player's character is familiar with the bazaar or has a guide, he must make either a Moderate *streetwise* or a Difficult *search* attempt to find a particular merchant during the day. The difficulty increases by +5 at night.

If a hero is in search of a particularly rare item (such as a well-crafted weapon, poison or exotic materials for spells), increase the difficulty by +10 during the day and +15 during the night. A guide familiar with the twisting





streets of the bazaar can reduce the difficulty by 10, but an incompetent one can make things worse!

The prices in the bazaar vary from day to day. A gamemaster might change the location or price each day, or require a player's character to haggle over prices — the more unusual the item, the greater the cost. Some items have such high prices that heroes might have to work for the merchant before the fee is met. Many merchants in the city hire daring adventurers to seek out extraordinary things to resell.

KASEN THE MERCHANT

For the entire 40 years of his life, Kasen has lived in the city of Inachon's Point. From outer appearances, he is a moderately successful spice merchant — but this is deceiving. During the years of toiling at his stationary wagon, Kasen has acquired a vast amount of wealth. He has also purchased stalls for family members who, while not as successful as he, have done well for themselves. Although Kasen has much experience, this is not the secret of his success. Rather, he sells unusual potions and incense that possess nearly magical qualities. His years of working in the bazaar have provided him with numerous contacts from distant shores, and the amazing qualities of his product have made him a favorite among warriors and wizards. His goal is to one day sell his stall and move to a large house above the city. To

protect his investment, he sleeps in a caravan wagon in the bazaar, and he has hired two guards, who never leave his side.

Because of Kasen's renown, many potential customers seek him. Trying to get Kasen to part with some of his special stock requires a suitable (and successful) interaction attempt, greased by an appropriate monetary offering. The merchant response much better to charm than anything else.

Agility 3D: dodge 3D+2, stealth 4D

Coordination 3D

Physique 2D: running 2D+1

Intellect 3D+1: reading/writing 3D+2, scholar 4D+1, speaking 3D+2, trading 5D

Acumen 3D: hide 4D, search 3D+1, survival 3D+2, tracking 3D+1

Charisma 3D+2: charm 4D, persuasion 4D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Devotion (R2), spends much time searching for new plants and herbs, and pays little attention to local events; Employed (R3), driven to work until he can earn enough money to quit the business

Special Abilities Uncanny Aptitude (R1), has a natural sense about plants — can select herbs and mix them into incense and potions that have astounding properties

Advantages Contacts (2), has many contacts from various lands who supply him with rare plants and herbs

Equipment: fine clothes; keys; pouch bulging with coins

KASEN'S POTIONS AND INCENSE

Dragon's Kiss (Moderate price difficulty/5 gold): Rubbing this pungent concoction upon wounds hastens the healing process (+2 bonus to two *healing* totals). The mixture must be kept dry at all times; otherwise, its healing properties are lost. There's enough in one packet for two uses.

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Adrik Incense (Moderate price difficulty/4 gold): Burning this incense while performing any *Intellect* skill adds a +2 bonus to all related totals for one round. Each stick of incense provides one use.

Dried Lion Flower Tea (Moderate price difficulty/5 gold): Brewing this tea and consuming adds 2 to *stamina* totals for two hours. The dry tea is sold in silk packs with enough for a single use.

GUARDS

Nevest, Guard: Agility 4D, melee combat 5D, Coordination 3D, Physique 4D, stamina 4D+2, Intellect 2D, Acumen 3D, streetwise 3D+2, search 3D+1, Charisma 2D, intimidation 2D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 0. *Body Points:* 17/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* ring mail armor (Armor Value +1D+1); long sword (damage +2D+2).

Cire, Guard: Agility 3D, fighting 4D, melee combat 4D, Coordination 3D, Physique 4D, stamina 4D+2, Intellect 2D, Acumen 3D, streetwise 4D, Charisma 3D, intimidation 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 0. *Body Points:* 17/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* ring mail armor (Armor Value +1D+1); long sword (damage +2D+2).

THE SCAR

Nearly at sea level, running along the outskirts of the bazaar is Inachon's slum quarter. This district of the city is the oldest, and it looks its age. Scattered throughout the ramshackle neighborhoods are the occasional stone buildings, but for the most part, the structures are comprised of rotting wood. Age and the damp wind have conspired to destroy many of the once beautiful residences and stores.

Gathered in this neighborhood are the laborers who load and unload cargo. There are far more people than there are jobs, so each morning thousands of the Scar's denizens trot to the docks, each waiting in line, hoping to be selected for

work. The pay is low and the work is hard. But desperate people work for desperate wages.

FANE'S TAVERN

Sitting among the myriad rows of unassuming buildings in the Scar is a shuttered shack that has served as tavern and secret guild house for decades. Although history tells that the pirates who once called Inachon's Point home are long dead, it isn't the case. On the contrary, the pirates have simply adapted. When sailing the seas and stealing gold and jewelry became too risky, many of the former seamen traded their sea legs for walking boots — soft-soled trading boots.

On the surface, Fane's appears nothing more than a rats' nest of a tavern. All respectable citizens of Inachon's Point avoid the despicable site. But underneath its haggard façade is the gathering place for the city's thieves. Beneath the floor of the tavern is the cellar where meetings, plans, and territories are discussed. The descendants of the forgotten pirates do not limit themselves to stealing from wealthy houses. They help themselves to cargo on the docks — bribing soldiers to watch the stars while barrels and crates vanish into the night. They also smuggle cargo into the city, avoiding tariffs and taxes, allowing them to resell it to merchants on the cheap. This is accomplished by a series of smugglers' coves that pepper the coastline, with a maze of tunnels leading beneath the city. The members of this exalted guild are sensitive about freelancers.



POLITICS

One essential element in designing a settlement is the political system. The very nature of villages, towns, and cities requires them to be organized under some form of rule of government.

The type of political system used in a settlement is mainly determined by the gamemaster in the end. However, consistency does make fantasy locations more credible — although bending the rules of politics can create intriguing and memorable places. To make a hamlet or metropolis fascinating for players, a gamemaster can allow them to discover through roleplaying the type of government present. As the heroes are likely to travel from one land to another, from one kingdom to another, from one city-state to another, it's quite plausible that they would not be aware of the laws of each place they stop. If the laws or politics of a settlement is an essential part of the location's "personality," then the gamemaster needs to define these elements before the players' characters arrive. However, it's not necessary for a gamemaster to become entangled in the complications of politics to devise a political system. Sometimes using a land lord who is appointed by a king is sufficient. Unless the politics of a settlement are essential to an adventure, then all that need be done is to provide enough surface information to give the village or town plausible background. The list in the "Types of Leaders" sidebar gives some common possible political systems that can be used when designing a settlement.

Of course, each of these basic political structures can be modified with various flavors of political philosophies such as democracy, communism, oligarchy, monarchy, republic or constitutional government, and scores of others. Possibly the best rule that a gamemaster can adhere to when designing a government for a settlement is the rule of consistency. Avoid placing political systems that oppose each other within the same borders, unless the realm is a collection of city-states. Don't create laws that conflict with a settlement's politics simply to control or confuse the heroes. And equally important, keep the politics in the background unless it's essential to the story.

Any thief who attempts to practice her trade inside the city is certainly going to encounter a member of the guild. Such an event is only a matter of time. When this happens, the "scab" thief is given the option to join the guild, usually by performing several jobs that are both risky and profitable, or the thief is told to leave the city. If one or the other option is not accepted, the

members of the guild are ruthless in remedying the situation.

FANE, TAVERN OWNER

Fane is a spyman in his mid-fifties, with dark hair streaked with gray. He is rotund, friendly, and unimposing. Underneath this friendly exterior is the head of the thieves' guild, and a ruthless criminal. Although he no longer practices his trade, he does train and guide the members of his guild. He assures their interests are protected by eliminating any other guilds that vie for power, and by preventing any outside thieves from working the city.

Any new customer who enters Fane's business is carefully scrutinized. Unable to resist practicing his art to some degree, Fane greets all new faces with a warm smile, while patting them down for money and belongings. He never steals anything; he just sizes up his prey. He doesn't want to draw any attention to the tavern by having a client accuse him or one of his customers of theft. Once he knows the "worth" of a person, later that night he sends out one of his guildsmen to acquire the goods.

Besides being the leader of the largest underground business in Inachon's Point, he is also a useful source for rumors and information. Heroes who manage to befriend him find him a useful ally for garnering secrets, gossip, and news.

Agility 3D: dodge 3D+1, fighting 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1, stealth 4D

Coordination 4D: lockpicking 4D+2, sleight of hand 5D, throwing 4D+1

Physique 2D: lifting 2D+1, stamina 2D+2

ina 2D+2

Intellect 3D: reading/writing 3D+1, speaking 3D+1

Acumen 3D: hide 4D+2, search 3D+2, streetwise 3D+1, tracking 4D

Charisma 3D: bluff 3D+2, charm 3D+1, intimidation 4D, mettle 4D+2

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Enemy (R1), detested by other guilds attempting to move into the city; Enemy (R2), harassed by local authorities

Advantages: Authority (R2), respected leader of the local thieves' guild

Special Abilities: none

Equipment: lockpicking tools; long sword (damage +2D+2); soft leather vest (worn beneath a jerkin; Armor Value +2); dagger (damage +1D)

TYPICAL GUILD MEMBER

Agility 3D, fighting 3D+1, melee 3D+1, Coordination 4D, lockpicking 4D+1, sleight of hand 5D, Physique 3D, Intellect 2D, Acumen 3D, hide 3+1, streetwise 4D, search 3D+2, Charisma 3D, bluff 3D+1, charm 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 1. *Body Points:* 14/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* clothes; cloak; basic lockpicking tools; dagger (damage +1D).

HIGH TOWN

Sprouting from the mountainside upon which the city's lighthouse rests are numerous residences, each growing larger as they move upward. This quarter of the city is where the money lives. It can be seen in the limestone-plastered houses, and the mansions lining the cobblestone streets. Groomed gardens and spraying fountains are common fare for this neighborhood. Few residents walk the streets, preferring to ride in carriages. Every morning, there's a great exodus from High Town as the servants plod down to the bazaar to purchase food and daily necessities. Unlike the lower levels of the city, this is the land of successful merchants, bankers, politicians, and city officials.

PHYLO DURAN'S LIBRARY

Standing tall among the stone buildings of High Town is the city's only library. Funded and erected by one of the city's most eccentric citizens, it serves as a research library for Inachon's Point scholars. It's visited by people from hundreds of miles away and across the sea.

While the library's oblong, eight-story exterior is rather bland, it's one of the tallest buildings in the city. From the port and from the city gates, the bright white library stands out among the surrounding buildings.

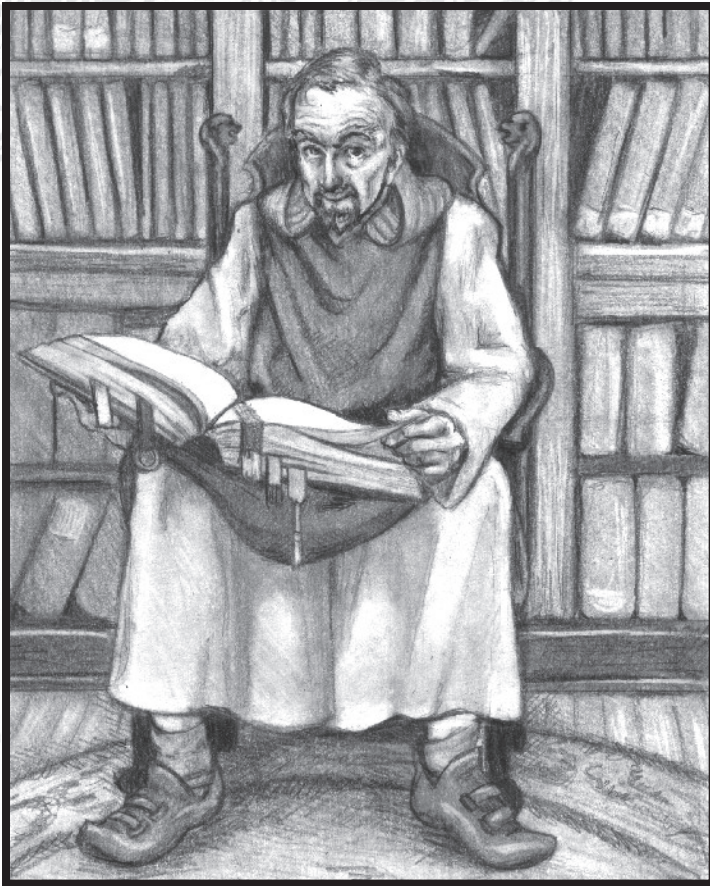
TYPES OF LEADERS

Elected Leader: The ruler is selected by the general populace or by specific officials. These officials in turn might be elected, or they might have the ability to foresee the future, thereby making them the best people to choose a ruler. The ruler might be of average ilk, be a persuasive orator, have demonstrated leadership ability, possess mystical qualities, or claim birthright. The title can vary from chief to constable to mayor, depending upon the nature of the settlement.

Appointed Leader: In some cases, this class of ruler doesn't differ much from an elected leader. However, in most instances, an appointed leader is one who has been granted the rule of power by a higher authority in an empire, kingdom or city-state. Titles for this class of ruler vary from consul, governor, pro-consul, mayor, lord, or prince.

Self-Appointed Leader: Occasionally these rulers are benevolent and concerned about the welfare of the people they govern. In most instances, though, they're tyrants who have come into power through money, otherworldly means, or military might. These self-appointed leaders might adhere to a rigorous military code or be religious zealots, determining laws by whim and interpretation of their belief system.

Ruling Councils: Rather than limit governing of people to a solitary person, ruling councils have multiple members, ranging from two to hundreds. These rulers could be selected by a law that requires each member of the settlement to serve as a member of the council, by the drawing of lots. Or they might be elected or appointed, depending upon the political landscape of the country they occupy. This is also a common system of government for large city-state that are independent of greater rule.



Besides being a library with a vast collection of manuscripts, it's also the residence of Phylo Duran. His private rooms can be found on the highest floor. On warm days, he stands upon the flat roof, either reading in the sunlight or gazing at the horizon.

Even though Phylo is a lighthearted man, he doesn't let everyone peruse his collection of tomes. Heroes longing to gain entrance to this large and unusual library must first persuade Phylo. A hero that succeeds through *charm* or *bluff* is welcomed into the library. If she fails, she must return on another day, and Phylo adds a +2 bonus to his opposed *mettle* total. For each failure, another bonus accumulates.

Another approach is to engage Phylo in a scholarly debate. Again the player's character makes an opposed roll against Phylo, both using their *scholar* skills. If the player's character wins, the librarian is stumped and invites the character into the library for further discussion.

The last alternative is the use of a letter of reference. The *persuasion* or *reading/writing* total used to craft the letter must beat Phylo's *reading/writing* roll by five points, as he's always careful to examine a letter

of reference closely to make sure it isn't a forgery.

PHYLO DURAN, LIBRARIAN

The somewhat eccentric librarian lacks good interpersonal skills. He spends much of his time with books, which seldom speak back. The endless years of one-way conversations has made Phylo a bibliophile and an introvert. He is lanky, gray haired, and 55 years old. He tends to overdress and is seldom seen without a book in hand. The truth is Phylo feels awkward without the heft of a volume of lore to balance him. When engaged in conversation, he occasionally turns away and commences reading from whatever book he is toting around. He is very imaginative, so sometimes when an idea is lodged in his head, he tends to stare into the distance, pondering whatever thought has captured his fancy.

The peculiar librarian is a difficult man to befriend. Even if a hero manages to charm him, this only lasts for a few hours, after which, Phylo grows weary of the person's presence and requests her to leave. The only sure method of gaining the man's favor is by entering into a debate with him

or by presenting him with an interesting manuscript. Because of his vast collection, the character's *scholar* roll must beat Phylo's *scholar* total, with a +5 modifier to the librarian's total. If this succeeds, the hero has gained a lifelong friend.

Agility 3D: climbing 3D+2

Coordination 2D

Physique 2D: lifting 2D+2, stamina 3D

Intellect 4D: cultures 5D, reading/writing 6D+2, scholar 6D, speaking 4D+1

Acumen 4D: investigation 5D, search 4D+2

Charisma 3D: bluff 3D+1, intimidation 3D+2, mettle 4D, persuasion 3D+1

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 6

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Employed (R2), dedication to the library and Inachon's Point prevents venturing from the town; Hindrance: Intellectual Snob (R1), +1 to *charm*, *persuasion*, and *speaking* difficulties; Quirk (R2),

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loathes ignorance and anyone less knowledgeable than he (which is most everyone)

Advantages Patron (R3), the ruling council of Inachon's Point pays for the funds the library, its employees, and new acquisitions

Equipment: mismatched clothes; keys; cloth bookmarks

THE LIBRARY

1. Entry Hall: This is the main entrance to the library. The door is made of oak with iron rivets hammered into the wood to strengthen it (Toughness of 3D). Most of High Town's residences consider this an unnecessary security measure that only reduces the beauty of the neighborhood. However, it does make the door much more difficult to smash. (Picking the lock has a difficulty of 22.) Also located in this hallway is a trapdoor, which leads to the cellar. The door is normally locked and has a difficulty of 15 to successfully be picked. The cellar stores mostly food and wine.

2. Common Library: Shelves stacked with books, scrolls, and loose paper clutters this room. In the center is a reading table, and a fireplace is set into the eastern wall. A tall ladder leans against each shelf, providing access to the higher texts in the room. In the northeast corner is an iron spiral staircase leading to the next level. Performing a *search* in this room with a difficulty of 15 reveals the majority of volumes on the shelves are historical and probably only of interest to local scholars. (Exceptionally high totals may reveal a hidden book of obscure and valuable significance.)

3. Rare Collection: This smaller room off the entrance hall is designed for private study. It also has a collection of unusual manuscripts, many of which discuss legendary beasts and magical practices. Heroes who use *search* have a difficulty of 10 to findingsome of Phylo's personal notes.

4. Second-Level Hallway: The spiral stairs that lead to this level continue upward, all the way to the top level. Locked and set in the eastern walls of

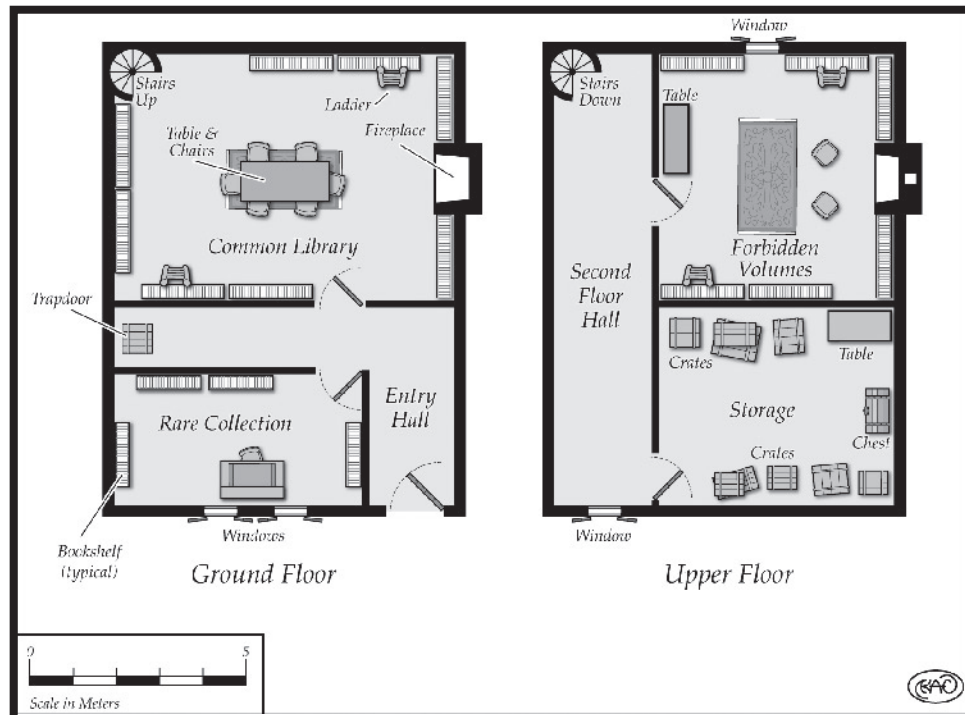
this hallway are two doors. The locks on both doors have a difficulty of 15.

5. Forbidden Volumes: This library only Phylo and his most trusted associates may enter. It contains several volumes of works that would prove dangerous in the wrong hands. Rumor of this precious library has reached ears as far as the Scar — Fane has even heard of them but has not devised a method of acquiring them that won't result in his capture. If asked, Phylo simply claims that this room is storage. A successful opposed roll of *bluff* against Phylo's *bluff* allows a hero to discern that Phylo is fibbing about the room.

6. Storage Room: This is a storage room. Inside are several crates of bound manuscripts and barrels of scrolls that Phylo hasn't inspected yet. After he scans them, he places them in the proper location in the library.

THE SCROLL OF THE LOST CITY

Secreted away in Phylo's library is a lengthy scroll that describes a lost city located deep within a desert. The unknown author of the manuscript describes the city as being covered by a sandstorm, and all of its occupants smothered in their homes. While the document itself is no more than one century old, the knowledge it contains dates back several centuries. There are enough clues in the book that a character, through careful examination, could figure out where the lost city is.



Additionally, scattered throughout its pages are also spell fragments. With some months of study, a player's character can piece together these fragments and form entire spells.

THE POINT

Nearly 1,000 meters above the city, at the highest point of the stony mountain, rests Inachon's lighthouse. It's guarded day and, as it's the guiding beacon for those who journey to the city. As night approaches, one guard carries a torch, climbing a spiraling staircase, to the stone summit. There he ignites the wood that burns until morning. Each morning, the guards clear the summit and restock the wood so the lighthouse has fuel for the next night.

Typical Lighthouse Guard: Agility 3D+2, fighting 4D+2, melee combat 4D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D+1, running 3D+2, stamina 4D+2, Charisma 3D, intimidation 3D+1, Intellect 2D+1, Acumen 3D+2, investigation 4D, streetwise 4D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 0. *Body Points:* 15/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* chain mail armor (Armor Value +2D); halberd (damage +3D); pouch of food and water.

SMUGGLERS' TUNNELS

Staggered along the coast on both sides of the city's port are numerous smugglers' tunnels. When Inachon's Point served as a pirate base, these subterranean routes were often used to transport material and people in and out of the city. Although most people have forgotten them, Fane and his gang have not. Thieves regularly use them to haul cargo in small boats to and from ships anchored off the coast. Forming a vast network beneath the city, it's possible to exit at most any place, providing the person navigating the tunnels knows her way around. The tunnels require a Difficulty *navigation* roll to get through. A roll can be made once per hour. A failure means that the hero spends another hour searching the tunnels for an exit. To find a specific exit from the tunnels, one other than the one that was used to enter the tunnels, the difficulty increases by +5. The gamemaster should add modifiers if the hero is in a hurry or is traveling without a light.

The tunnels themselves are rugged and filled with water. In most areas, the water is only waist high, but in other locations, it requires swimming or the use of a boat to pass through. Unless a hero has experience in the tunnels, there's no way of knowing which passages contain which depth of water.

IZMERLIA, TREE VILLAGE

An important feature of a treetop settlement is its precarious location. An abode built into trees might be ordinary to those who live in such a place, but certainly it proves a challenge for those who spend most of their existence on the ground. When moving about the top of a tree city, the characters should make regular *acrobatics* rolls to check for slipping or tripping. Failing an *acrobatics* roll possibly results in falling to the ground, unless the character succeeds in second *acrobatics* roll. If this happens, the fortunate hero has managed to grab hold of a rope, branch, or other feature that she can use to prevent herself from falling any farther. The difficulty of the catching attempt depends on the circumstances and the amount of equipment the hero is carrying.

LIVING STRUCTURES

Just as with a ground settlement, the resources and the skills of the inhabitants determine the craft and materials used in building habitats. For denizens of a tree city, the materials are readily available. But to cut or saw the trees seems to go against the grain of forest-dwelling beings. Rather, the structures of a tree city utilize the living forest. With the aid of ropes, weights, skill, and possibly magic, the trees can be "trained" to grow in the desired fashion, using branches for walls and a canopy of leaves for roofs. This makes the living quarters in a tree organic and fluid, not set apart from the surroundings but a part of the forest. Additionally, the furniture and other large amenities are likely to be formed of living wood.

Such architecture not only is a part of nature, but causes the habitats to blend into the trees, camouflaging them well. Heroes passing by a forest city are likely to spot it only on a Very Difficult *search* roll. Those with a penchant for building structures (and some related *crafting* skill) may receive a bonus to their *search* attempt.

DEFENSES

The best defense for a forest settlement is its secretive nature. Walls of stone or wood would certainly bring attention to it. Instead, Izmerlia uses a militia. These trained scouts keep watch miles from the perimeter of the city, and they either attempt to lead unwanted visitors astray, or sneak ahead of the intruders to warn the

city. Should a foe find Izmerlia, then the forces within the tree city are marshaled and the living wood structures form an excellent stronghold, impervious to all but the hottest flames and easily defensible from its high vantage point.

ASCRA, ELVEN CITY GUARD

For the last 10 years of her life, Ascra has served as a member of Izmerlia's city guard. She patrols the outer edges of the forest, keeping vigilant watch on all who enter. She has become so practiced at hiding and sneaking through the forest that she has taken to listening in on foreign conversations, mainly for news of the world beyond the forest. Any intruder she fears might discover her city, she attempts to lure away in another direction. She does this by openly passing through the forest at a distance from the intruding party. After she has captured their attention, she moves away from Izmerlia, slowly increasing the distance between her and any pursuers. Once she feels the city is safe, she pulls on her Elven cloak and fades into the shadows of the forest. She's only aggressive if the forest is being harmed.

Within the last year, Ascra has been paying close attention to all who visit the forest. A vile fungus has started growing on the trees of her city, slowly killing the beautiful creations of nature. Izmerlia's ruling council believes dark magic is behind the appearance of the fungus, and they've been unable to prevent its spreading. However, the council refuses to look for outside help, not wanting to reveal the location of their ancient city. It's this that Ascra doesn't entirely agree with. She has seen little success in the research of the fungus. She hopes to find someone — a mage, scholar or other knowledgeable person — who might help to destroy the evil growth. Her habit of listening to the chatter of those passing through the woods has intensified as she yearns to encounter someone who might offer a solution.

Ascra has become desperate. If she overhears anyone who seems familiar with forests, she approaches them cautiously, with the sincere hope of gaining help. She knows that doing so will cause her problems among the city council, but she believes there's no alternative.

Agility 3D: acrobatics 4D, dodge 4D+2, melee combat 4D+1, stealth 4D



Coordination 3D: marksmanship 4D+2
Physique 2D: running 2D+2, stamina 2D+1, swimming 3D
Intellect 3D: healing 3D+2, navigation 4D, reading/writing 3D+1, speaking 3D+1
Acumen 3D: hide 4D+1, search 3D+2, survival 3D+1, tracking 3D+1
Charisma 3D: animal handling 4D, command 3D+1, charm 3D+2, persuasion 4D, mettle 4D
Magic 1D: conjuration 2D
Strength Damage: 1D
Move: 10
Fate Points: 1
Character Points: 3
Body Points: 21
Wound levels: 4
Disadvantages: Devotion (R2), feel a deep devotion and kinship with trees and plants; Hindrance: Arrogance (R2), +2 to *bluff*, *charm*, and *persuasion* difficulties; Hindrance: Delicate (R2), -2 to damage resistance total
Advantages none

Special Abilities Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1), +1 to sight-based totals; Longevity (R1); Skill Bonus: Stealth (R1), +1 *hide*, *stealth*, and *tracking* totals

Equipment: longbow and 20 arrows (damage +2D+2); Elven forest cloak (1D+1 to *hide*); dagger (damage +1D)

TYPHON, UNDERSEA CITY

Not far off the coast of Inachon's Point is an underwater city. As might be expected, the city is not occupied by water-breathing creatures; rather, it's home to a group of ancient wizards who long ago decided to hide from the intrusions of other beings. Deep on the sea floor are the crystal domes that the wizards grew to form the protective shells of their cities. The transparent crystal can not only withstand the fantastic pressures of the deep water, but it's also able to "breathe" the sea water and extract oxygen, while it absorbs the polluted interior air and exudes it into the sea.

There are countless sailors' tales about a glowing city in the sea. In part, these tales are true, because ship's passing over Typhon at night can see the illumination from the crystal domes. Many sailors mistake this for the reflection of the moon, but those who have seen the glowing undersea city on moonless nights know better. Spending any time in the nearby Inachon's Point turns up rumors of this unusual settlement.

GOVERNMENT

Because of Typhon's unique environment, the number of inhabitants entering and leaving is limited. While there are forays to the surface, very few new people are allowed to enter the city — or even know of its location. New residents must meet the approval of the majority of the citizens. The people of Typhon have a truly democratic government in which there's no central authority. Instead, every member of the habitat has an equal say in the writing of laws and in decision-making. This has also led the people to have communal property. As acquiring new items and raw material is a difficult undertaking, much of what is used in the settlement is shared. There's little individual property; aside from a few personal trinkets or clothes, all of it belongs to the community.

On the rare occasions when someone is needed to visit the surface, the entire community selects a candidate. Because of her familiarity with the surface world, for the last few years the community has always chosen Tiu Mali.

DOMICILES

Most of the construction of Typhon relies upon the materials found upon the ocean floor. As collecting this material is difficult and time consuming, the inhabitants of Typhon have developed interior sea pools that allow them to grow tremendous shells, which they use for building homes within their crystal-domed environment. The farmers of these shells have become so proficient over the centuries that they are capable of growing shells in almost any size or shape. They're used for plates, cups, utensils, furniture, walls, and other objects. The shells are also ground to create the thin tiles used as manuscript pages.

TRANSPORTATION

The talented mages of Typhon have managed to develop a spherical crystal that can move beneath the water with the aid of some magic. The few who trade with the surface use these vessels to travel. It's large enough to hold multiple people, although usually there's just a solitary occupant, which leaves space for cargo.

TIU MALI

At age 11, Tiu started studying the history scrolls about the surface world. She then voraciously read every manuscript that was brought back from each surface trip. While most of Typhon's inhabitants cared little for the world outside, Tiu hungered to know more about it. Over the years, she became a prominent scholar and the city's most knowledgeable person about the surface world. On each trip she made to the surface, she studied the languages, read scrolls, and studied the cultures and practices of those above the water. As a result, she blends in with the surface people very well.

Tiu is a charismatic woman of age 28, with long dark hair, rich green eyes, and a charming smile. Although she's extremely curious, she tries to hide it under a façade of shyness. Most on the surface who engage her in conversation find her quiet and timid. Of course, this is a ruse to avoid too much contact. She fears that her accent or some off-handed remark might attract unwanted attention.

Agility 4D: contortion 4D+1, climbing 4D+2, stealth 4D+1

Coordination 2D: pilotry: crystal ship 2D+2

Physique 2D: stamina 3D, swimming 4D

Charisma 2D: bluff 3D+1, charm 3D+2, mettle 3D

Intellect 4D: cultures 5D, reading/writing 4D+2, scholar 5D, speaking 4D+2, trading 4D+1

Acumen 4D: hide 4D+1, investigation 5D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 12

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 3

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Cultural Unfamiliarity (R2), the surface world is a strange place, even documents cannot fully describe it (+10 to the difficulty of *streetwise* rolls); Language Problems (R2): the surface tongue is very different — speaks with an unusual accent (+6 to the difficulty of all communication skills)

Advantages Wealth (R3)

Special Abilities Hypermovement (R1)

Equipment: clothes; maps; pouch full of pearls

GADARA, ISLAND NATION

Not all settlements adhere to what most of the world considers the “rule of civilization.” Located in remote and isolated areas are small groups of superstitious people who use primitive technology. On the island of Gadara, there exist such a people. They dwell in huts made of bamboo and woven leaves on an upthrust of land with around 20 square kilometers of surface area. They’re not a seafaring people, so they have only visited the local chain of islands close enough to reach by canoe. For generations, they’ve dwelt on a bountiful island and have seldom encountered outsiders.

THE JUNGLE

Serving as a backdrop for the main village is a thick jungle with heavy underbrush. Even to the villagers, the jungle is a hazardous place filled

CITIES

The grandest of all settlements are cities. Populations of such places range from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands. Quite often, these are the economic or political capitals of nations.

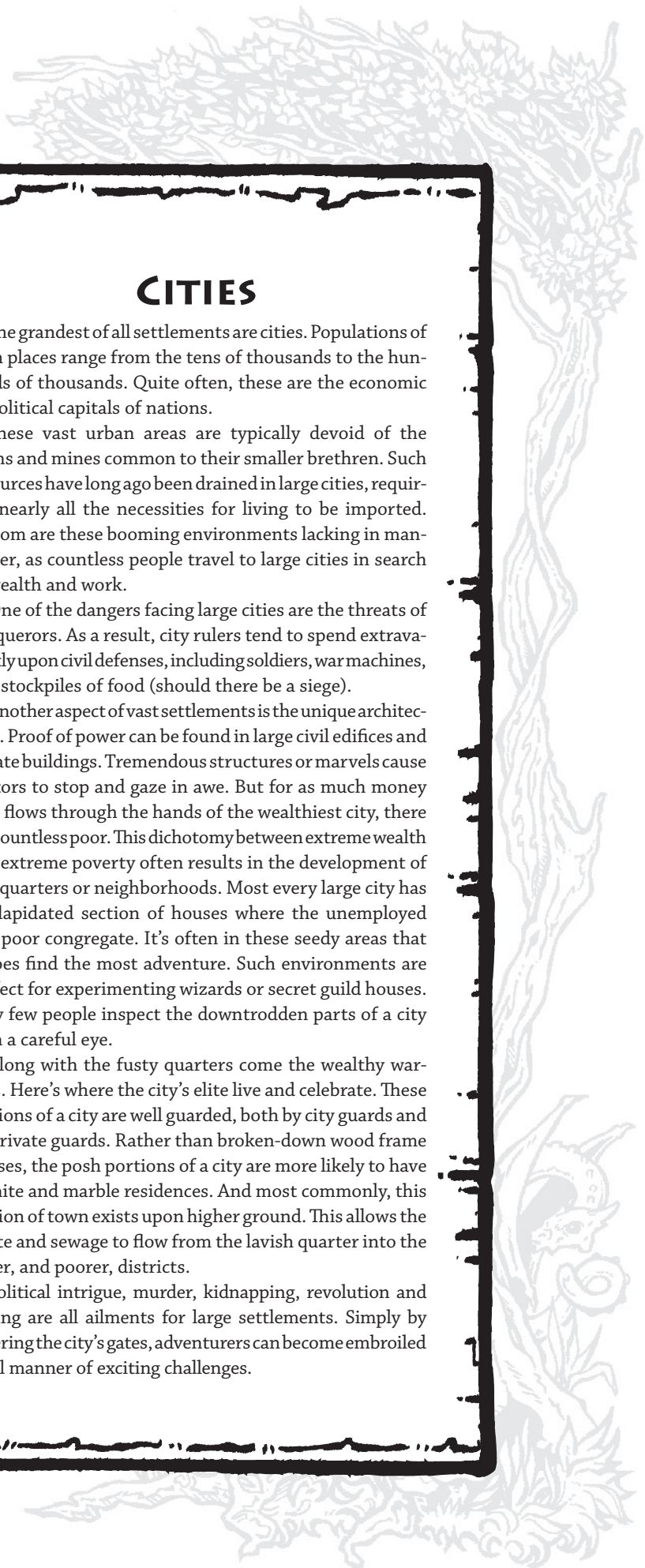
These vast urban areas are typically devoid of the farms and mines common to their smaller brethren. Such resources have long ago been drained in large cities, requiring nearly all the necessities for living to be imported. Seldom are these booming environments lacking in manpower, as countless people travel to large cities in search of wealth and work.

One of the dangers facing large cities are the threats of conquerors. As a result, city rulers tend to spend extravagantly upon civil defenses, including soldiers, war machines, and stockpiles of food (should there be a siege).

Another aspect of vast settlements is the unique architecture. Proof of power can be found in large civil edifices and ornate buildings. Tremendous structures or marvels cause visitors to stop and gaze in awe. But for as much money that flows through the hands of the wealthiest city, there are countless poor. This dichotomy between extreme wealth and extreme poverty often results in the development of city quarters or neighborhoods. Most every large city has a dilapidated section of houses where the unemployed and poor congregate. It’s often in these seedy areas that heroes find the most adventure. Such environments are perfect for experimenting wizards or secret guild houses. Very few people inspect the downtrodden parts of a city with a careful eye.

Along with the fusty quarters come the wealthy warrens. Here’s where the city’s elite live and celebrate. These sections of a city are well guarded, both by city guards and by private guards. Rather than broken-down wood frame houses, the posh portions of a city are more likely to have granite and marble residences. And most commonly, this section of town exists upon higher ground. This allows the waste and sewage to flow from the lavish quarter into the lower, and poorer, districts.

Political intrigue, murder, kidnapping, revolution and rioting are all ailments for large settlements. Simply by entering the city’s gates, adventurers can become embroiled in all manner of exciting challenges.



with wild animals, dangerous reptiles, mud pits, and quicksand. Seldom does a hunter venture into the jungle alone, instead traveling in groups, killing as much food as possible to stave off another trip as long as possible. To these islanders, the jungle is a demon that longs to devour them with its vicious spirits.

Heroes attempting to move through the jungle can readily become lost, and they find progress is extremely slow because of the dense foliage.

THE VILLAGE

The village itself has a population of several hundred, and there are a few hundred more living in extended family groups and scattered around the island. All that the people need can be found on the island or in the water. As a society, they have a unified religion, and their priest rules the island.

THE HIGH PRIEST

Living in the largest hut in the village is the High Priest, Namu. Upon the death of Namu's father, the previous high priest, stewardship of the village and the people transferred to Namu. He rules the people with the guidance of spirits and visions. Once a year, the village sacrifices a member to appease the god of the sea, to prevent his wrath. The selection of the sacrifice is a duty that Namu doesn't take lightly. It's an honor to be chosen, and he is very judicious in his selection.

Recently Namu has been besieged by dreams of "outsiders," people from beyond the island who threaten it. In his dreams, Namu sees men come to take the treasure of his people, and to bring a new way of living that leads to the destruction of his tribe. Knowing these dreams are portents, Namu prepare for a visit from the strangers; he intends to offer them as sacrifice to the god of the sea.

Agility 4D: fighting 4D+1, melee combat 4D+2, climbing 4D+1, stealth 4D+1

Coordination 3D: marksmanship 4D, throwing 3D+1

Physique 3D: running 4D+2, stamina 4D+1, swimming 4D

Intellect 3D: trading 4D

Acumen 2D: hide 3D+1, investigation 3D, search 3D+2

Charisma 2D: intimidation 3D+2, mettle 3D, persuasion 3D

Miracles 1D: divination 2D+1, favor 1D+2

Strength Damage: 2D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Body Points: 24

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Prejudice (R1), those not from Gadara represent potential threats (+4 to the difficulty to all interactions with non-natives)

Advantages Authority (R3), high priest and ruler of Gadara

Special Abilities none

Equipment: holy symbol; tribal leader staff (damage +1D+2)

FINDING GARDARA

Certainly the island of Gardara is not on any map. So, its discovery must either be by chance or by a rumor learned from a sailor. As a play upon the dreams of Namu, the heroes' ship be tossed upon the island by a tempest. With such an arrival, Namu undoubtedly sees the storm that brought the heroes to him as an act of the sea god.

Once the strangers arrive, Namu doesn't want them to leave. His visions tell him that he must sacrifice the outsiders, and that's his intention. He, at least initially, comes across as a friendly ruler who's anxious to learn about the strangers. He relies on charm as long as he can, but he resorts to force if necessary. Heroes who make a Moderate *investigation* roll realize that Namu is hiding something, which the other villagers know about but won't discuss.

RHAKOTIS, SECRET LIBRARY

Rumor of massive and ancient libraries have passed the ears of many scholars, historians, and mages over the centuries. To most, the libraries remain nothing more than folktales, but for a few, they're a dream realized. For centuries, poets, philosophers, mystics, musicians, artisans, and countless others have labored to amass large collections of knowledge in secret locations. Each one is a marvel of determination and dedication. All who visit any one of the libraries never forget the things they behold.

One of these libraries, the Rhakotis, has grounds that are vast and protected by high stone walls with patrolling guards. The front gate, with a portcullis, is the only visible means of entry into the library. The gate is open during the daylight hours, but it closes at dusk. Only those who live in the library and select visitors are allowed to remain on its premises after sunset.

The Rhakotis features numerous written works from many cities and countries, but it also has physical examples of animals, plants, art, clothing, tools, and so on. On its grounds are plant and animal gardens, museums, lecture halls, private studies, laboratories — everything needed to advance the sharing of knowledge. The offerings are unsurpassable, and some people who enter the library dedicate the remainder of their lives to studying. Knowing this, the library was constructed with living quarters to house a few hundred guests.

Heroes who visit the Library of Rhakotis can certainly find nearly anything desired. The difficulty for *investigation* or *search* rolls should be increased the more unusual the research topic. Even though the library has an excellent categorizing system, the sheer amount of material makes the difficulty for finding specific items Moderate, and it can require 1D days to locate. Players' characters can attempt repeated rolls, but each takes an additional number of days.

Because of the enormous collection within and the services available from the library, should the searchers find what they seek, they get a bonus to related scholar attempts. Additionally, characters may improve skills as if they had a teacher, though it still takes time.

Jirair Shan, Head Curator: Agility 3D, stealth 3D+1, Coordination 2D, Physique 2D, lifting 2D+2, Intellect 4D, cultures 4D+1, reading/writing 4D+1, scholar 5D+2, speaking 4D+1, trading 5D, Acumen 3D, investigation 4D+1, search 3D+2, Charisma 4D, bluff 4D+2, charm 4D+1, persuasion 4D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 6. *Body Points:* 21/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to the library; Employed (R3), can't leave the library; Enemy (R1), those who wish to suppress knowledge. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), head of famous library; Contacts (R3), those who frequent the library; Equipment (R4), the contents of the library. *Special Abilities:* Skill Minimum (R1), minimum total for *reading/writing*, *scholar*, and *investigation*. *Equip-*

ment: keys to library and rooms; fine robes (Armor Value +1); pen and ink set; tube of parchment.

GAINING ENTRY

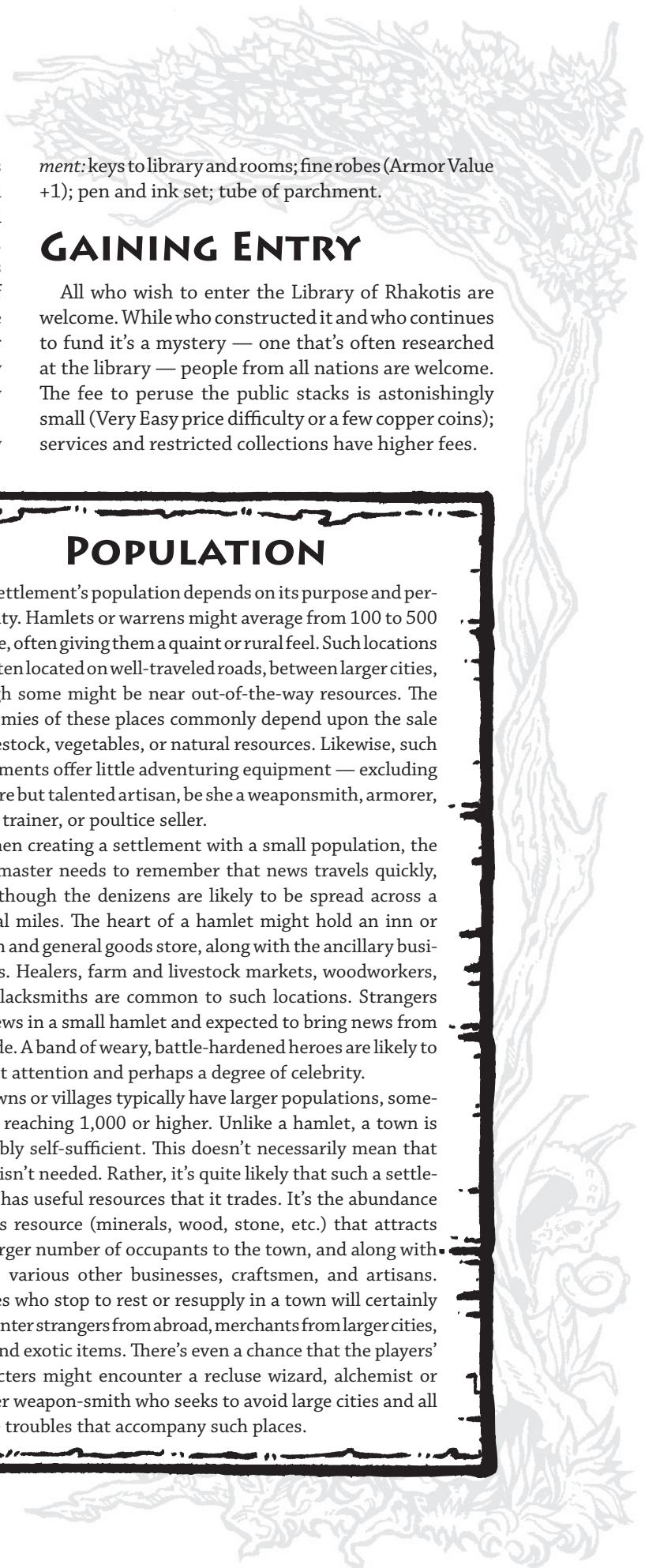
All who wish to enter the Library of Rhakotis are welcome. While who constructed it and who continues to fund it's a mystery — one that's often researched at the library — people from all nations are welcome. The fee to peruse the public stacks is astonishingly small (Very Easy price difficulty or a few copper coins); services and restricted collections have higher fees.

POPULATION

A settlement's population depends on its purpose and personality. Hamlets or warrens might average from 100 to 500 people, often giving them a quaint or rural feel. Such locations are often located on well-traveled roads, between larger cities, though some might be near out-of-the-way resources. The economies of these places commonly depend upon the sale of livestock, vegetables, or natural resources. Likewise, such settlements offer little adventuring equipment — excluding the rare but talented artisan, be she a weaponsmith, armorer, horse trainer, or poultice seller.

When creating a settlement with a small population, the gamemaster needs to remember that news travels quickly, even though the denizens are likely to be spread across a several miles. The heart of a hamlet might hold an inn or tavern and general goods store, along with the ancillary businesses. Healers, farm and livestock markets, woodworkers, and blacksmiths are common to such locations. Strangers are news in a small hamlet and expected to bring news from outside. A band of weary, battle-hardened heroes are likely to attract attention and perhaps a degree of celebrity.

Towns or villages typically have larger populations, sometimes reaching 1,000 or higher. Unlike a hamlet, a town is probably self-sufficient. This doesn't necessarily mean that trade isn't needed. Rather, it's quite likely that such a settlement has useful resources that it trades. It's the abundance of this resource (minerals, wood, stone, etc.) that attracts the larger number of occupants to the town, and along with them, various other businesses, craftsmen, and artisans. Heroes who stop to rest or resupply in a town will certainly encounter strangers from abroad, merchants from larger cities, and find exotic items. There's even a chance that the players' characters might encounter a recluse wizard, alchemist or master weapon-smith who seeks to avoid large cities and all of the troubles that accompany such places.



There's also a charge for those who wish to live in the limited accommodations inside the library. A successful *Difficult Funds* roll (100 gold) pays for a cramped private room, public bath, and basic food. Once a player's character fails a *Funds* roll or can't pay the fee, new living arrangements must be made outside the library. As there's a long waiting list to live inside the library, usually years, heroes must write a treatise on their research to be given priority. The gamemaster might consider adding to the hero's *persuasion* total the result point bonus of her *investigation* total if time is taken to research the topic prior to writing the treatise. The difficulty of bypassing the waiting list to obtain a room is Heroic.

Typical Library Guard: Agility 3D, dodge 4D, fighting 3D+2, melee combat 4D, Coordination 2D, marksmanship 3D, Physique 4D, running 4D+1, Intellect 2D, scholar 3D+2, Acumen 4D, investigation 4D+1, search 4D+1, tracking 4D+2, Charisma 3D, intimidation 3D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 0. *Body Points:* 17/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* hard leather armor (Armor Value +1D+1); short sword (damage +1D+2); short bow and 10 arrows (damage +1D+2).

SELLING ITEMS

The librarians and curators of the library are voracious collectors. However, because of the enormity of its holdings, unique new offerings are becoming increasingly rare. Rather, knowing what's lacking, the head of the library often hires people to acquire desired items. These undertakings certainly pay handsomely, but they're usually arduous tasks fraught with danger. Some needed acquisitions include locating ancient stone tablets that have been cited in other texts in the library; capturing wild animals that the library's zoo not already living in the gardens; or retrieve an item that has been stolen from the library.

DESERT NOMAD CAMP

Deserts are dangerous places for even the most experienced traveler. The scalding heat during the day and the frigid nights combined with the lack of water often brings the death of people and animal alike. This is why veterans of this harsh environment travel in groups. Perhaps the most experienced of the desert are the nomad tribes that endlessly wander the seemingly barren lands, surviving for generations.

A typical band of nomads varies in number from 50 to 300. The solitary leader, sometimes almost tyrannical, usually claims birthright. There are always several lieutenants ready to fill the position in case of an unexpected vacancy — occasionally precipitated by an impatient lieutenant and a number of supporters.

THE DAHAE

Under the command of the flamboyant leader Mukhtar, the Dahae tribe has been very successful. During his years as leader, the tribe has gained great wealth and infamy. With over 200 riders, the Dahae are not limited to robbing caravans or raiding villages. Fortified cities and supply trains for armies are some of the tribe's new targets under Mukhtar's guidance. Their reputation as excellent horseback warriors has also brought them offers from kings to join armies as mercenaries.

By their nature, the Dahae do not remain in one location for long. They're hardy and have learned the ways of the land, adapted to the environments they enter. But it's the desert that's their greater protector. Knowing they cannot stand against an army — and many nations long for the destruction of the Dahae — they dwell in the deep desert, where the heat and sandstorms shield them from the massed troops of enemies.

THE CAMP

Tents, horses, camels, waterskins, and packs filled with food and loot are the primary features of a Dahae camp. It's among the **ergs** and **hammada** that these nomads settle between raids. To the Dahae, the ergs, or shifting sand dunes, are allies. Inexperienced travelers easily fall prey to the soft sands of an erg, or become lost overnight after a sandstorm has changed the terrain.

There's also the hammada, or the "frozen" sand dune. Over countless centuries, the sand has hardened, forming rocky plateaus, barren of vegetation. These make good landmarks for those who venture into the desert, as they're virtually permanent.

Another common feature of a nomad camp is its a secret water hole or well. The Dahae, like many other desert tribes, have remembered the locations of water across the vast deserts in which they venture. These secrets are fiercely guarded, as the tribes' life depends upon them. These places are sometimes nothing more than a hole in a rocky stretch of ground in which water can be plumbed. Other times, a camp might form around a sprawling oasis where date palms, vegetation, and animals live and water is abundant. When crossing a

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desert, or hiding in one, nomads move from one water source to another, never staying in one place for more than a few days, so as to keep the locations secret.

While the Dahae are encamped, a few nomad warriors are always on guard. Typically they venture into the desert, away from the camp, to sound a warning should anyone approach. Whenever possible, the guards hide and surprise wanders, bringing back the intruders as captives for ransom, use as slaves, or sale into bondage at the next city. Should heroes find themselves in this predicament, only the clever use of *bluff* or *persuasion* skills against the leader's *mettle* can extradite them. If the heroes can possibly befriend Mukhtar through a successful interaction attempt, his trust is gained, at least enough to let them go.

Mukhtar, Nomad Leader: Agility 4D, fighting 4D+1, melee combat 5D, riding 4D+2, Coordination 3D, marksmanship 3D+2, Physique 4D, stamina 5D, Intellect 2D, cultures 2D+2, navigation 4D, trading 3D, traps 2D+2, Acumen 3D, gambling 3D+2, search 3D+1, Charisma 2D, animal handling 3D+1, intimidation 4D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 0. *Body Points:* 32/*Wound levels:* 5. *Disadvantages:* Enemy (R1), a member of the Dahae tribe desires to become its new leader; Enemy (R2), rules of cities that the Dahae have raided. *Advantages:* Contacts (R1), local spies in many of the cities raided by the Dahae; Authority (R2), possesses total rule and dedication of the band of nomads. *Equipment:* horse; camel; quilted silk robe (Armor Value +2); two-handed sword (damage +3D+1); waterskin; foodpouch; pouch of coins.

THE SECRETS OF THE DAHAЕ

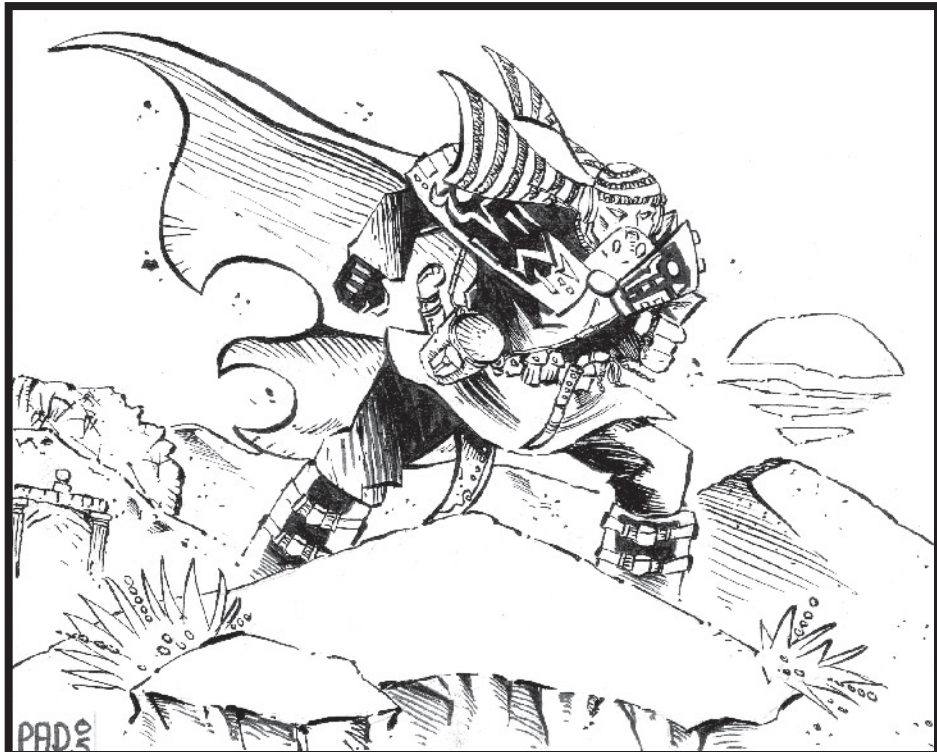
One of the obvious secrets the nomad tribe possesses is the locations of watering holes in the deserts in which they dwell. As this is tribal information, handed down generation by generation, learning of it requires that the heroes join the tribe.

This is not an easy task, as the players' characters are likely to be considered outsiders. To be accepted by the Dahae, a fitting task of bravery and profit must be performed—one that's appropriately difficult and dangerous. The trust of the Dahae is not earned easily.

Another secret known by Mukhtar and several of his closest lieutenants is the location of a necropolis. This "city of the dead" is cut into a massif in a mountain range bordering a desert. There's no map, as the knowledge has been handed down through the generations. It's both a revered and feared place, naturally rumored to be filled with treasure. No Dahae leader has successfully penetrated the massif and returned to tell of what lies inside. Mukhtar wants to be the first. If the heroes show great prowess, he's likely to suggest they enter the necropolis as proof of their worthiness, thereby gaining entry into the tribe.

THE HUT OF MORCADES THE WITCH

Standing in the depths of an ancient, gnarled forest is the hut of Morcades. Shunned and loathed by most folks, Morcades has lived her solitary life practicing



the black arts, only visited by those who willingly risk the dangers of bargaining with her.

Upon first sight, Morcades's hut appears to be nothing more than a circular structure of woven saplings and mud with a thatch roof. The shelter gives the appearance of being untended and dilapidated. Those who gaze upon it must roll their *mettle* skill against a difficulty of 17. A failure results in a forlorn and foreboding feeling, accompanied by an urge to leave. All who experience this sensation will not approach the hut. Instead, they back away until the hut is out of sight. The eerie feeling goes away after about 10 minutes. Should they wish, they may try visiting again (with the same potential problem)

The interior of the hut is cluttered, piled with earthen pots and jars, each filled with strange dried plants or noxious smelling liquids. Hanging from cords tied to the ceiling are bundles of dried herbs and desiccated animals. Heroes who make a Moderate *search* attempt also spot a variety of humanoid skulls stuffed in corners and partially covered by the debris.

POTIONS, CURSES, AND PORTENTS

Only the most desperate visit Morcades. Commoners and nobles alike have been in the witch's hut. She cares little for social rank, only in practicing her craft. If the characters do not accidentally stumble upon her hut, then they're likely to have heard rumors of her in a nearby settlement. Of course, these tales are always foul and deprecating, telling of how she slips through the night, placing curses upon people. The truth is, Morcades doesn't do this. Certainly, she takes pleasure in the dark fates of others, but she never directly brings about such dire events. Morcades has lived long enough to know that the best curses are brought about on their own. Those who enlist her help seldom realize that by playing with fate, they turn their foulest deeds upon themselves. Nonetheless, she does help in the process whenever requested.

For a price, Morcades tells fortunes, reads signs, and sells potions. Aside from pure gold flakes, coins are of little use to her. She barter for food, cloth, and various other items that must be

purchased in villages or cities. Morcades does have a fondness for beautiful dresses — even though she never has the opportunity to wear one in public.

In disguise, she occasionally ventures into settlements to make purchases. But on the whole, she prefers to stay clear of such places to avoid an unpleasant demise.

Heroes in need of the witch's services must successfully bargain with her. The difficulty depends upon what is requested and the method of request. Some days she response better to a simple plea than to flattery. Potions tend to be easier to acquire, when she has them, though brewing is always a timely venture. Removing curses or reading fortunes is more costly.

Morcades, Witch: Agility 2D, dodge 3D, Coordination 2D, sleight of hand 3D+2, Physique 2D, Intellect 4D, healing 4D+2, reading/writing 4D+1, scholar 4D+1, speaking 4D+1, trading 4D+1, Acumen 3D, disguise 4D, hide 3D+1, know-how 3D+1, survival 3D+1, Charisma 3D, animal handling 3D+1, bluff 4D, charm 4D+2, intimidation 4D, mettle 3D+1, Magic 2D, alteration 2D+2, conjuration 2D+1, divination 3D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 6. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Prejudice (R2), hated by locals — being spotted in a village can result in capture and execution (+6 to the difficulty of all interactions skills). *Special Abilities:* Fear (R2),

POTIONS

Here are two of Morcades's more common potion. Any spell appearing in the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook* might be available as a potion at the witch's hut. The gamemaster has the final say on effects, duration, and how the potion works.

Charm: This potion improves the attractiveness of a person for one day (+4D to *charm* skill), but it requires that the user to ingest the liquid. Since the clear fluid has an acrid taste and a strong odor, imbibing it's a challenge (Easy *mettle* or *stamina* attempt). Mixing it with a substance that covers the flavor and smell reduces the difficulty.

Water of Wretchedness: The Water of Wretchedness is a thick, syrupy substance that possesses an offensive odor. Once this potion has been consumed, the target suffers Bad Luck (R3). If the potion is mixed with another liquid or poured over food, the effect is reduced to Bad Luck (R2), as the potency is decreased. Coaxing or fooling a victim into consuming the liquid is at a +5 to the interaction attempt.



strike viewers with fear (+2 to all *intimidation* totals). *Equipment*: various herbs and potions; heavy, clean garments (Armor Value +1).

HALWYNDALE, BURROW VILLAGE

Embraced by the Ahern foothills of the Phelan Mountains is the Gnomish hillside warren of Halwyndale. For many generations Gnomes have occupied this peaceful settlement, going about their lives, ignoring the strife or the nearby Dwarves, Elves, and Humans. By far, the community is agrarian, with animals prowling the wide dirt roads that lead from one burrow and farm to the next. But, being creative, the Gnome warren is rich with unusual devices and contraptions — all of which are sure to attract the attention of any visitors.

THE AHERN FOOTHILLS

The gentle rises and soft curves of the foothills are deceiving. During the daylight hours, the hills are safe and a favored location for collecting sour roots for cooking and brewing. But at night, none of the denizens of Halwyndale venture beyond their village boundaries. Sprinkled about the land are many caverns that reach

deep into the bowels of the Phelan Mountains. In these dark places lives a tribe of Goblins. They venture out at night, looking for the unwary Gnome or other wanderer to capture and drag back to their lair.

THE WARREN

One of the settlement's most respected citizens is Betha Etain. Her popularity is so high in the warren that she has been elected mayor for the last 20 years — a command of office no other citizen in the history of Halwyndale has ever achieved. Protective of her warren, she seeks out and

personally greets all who enter the tiny habitation. She is an excellent judge of character, and upon a “nod,” visitors are welcome to stay. But a “harrumph” causes the inhabitants of the warren to chase the unwanted guests away.

Winning Betha's favor requires successful *charm* roll against Betha's *mettle*. Of course, a bit of flattery and a handful of sincere compliments on the beauty of the warren earn heroes a +1D bonus to rolls.

Betha Etain, Mayor: Agility 3D, Coordination 3D, sleight of hand 3D+1, Physique 3D, stamina 3D+2, Charisma 2D, bluff 3D, mettle 4D, Intellect 3D, reading/writing 3D+1, scholar 3D+1, speaking 3D+1, trading 4D, Acumen 4D, investigation 4D+2, know-how 4D+2, streetwise 4D+1, search 4D+1. *Move*: 8. *Strength Damage*: 2D. *Fate Points*: 1. *Character Points*: 5. *Body Points*: 19/*Wound levels*: 3. *Advantages*: Authority (R2), mayor; Size: Small (R1), scale value of 3. *Disadvantages*: Hindrance: Shorter Stride (R1), 2-meter reduction to running, swimming, and jumping Move; Quirk (R1), officious. *Special Abilities*: Skill Bonus: Mechanical Aptitude (R1), +1 to *crafting*, *devices*, and *traps* totals. *Equipment*: keys to various buildings in the town; fine clothes; staff of authority (damage +1D).

CACHAMWRI CABRY'S INN

This is the only place in Halwyndale that's built to accommodate “tall folk,” although this claim is debat-

able. Cachamwri's burrow has high ceilings (almost 1.5 meters) and wide hallways and rooms. While confining for most humanoids, it's better suited than any other residence in the warren. However, the inn can serve only five Human-sized occupants in a single night. The innkeeper charges more for folk who are tall, as they reduce the number of customers he can have. Furthermore, customers who cannot pronounce Cachamwri's name properly (it's "kak-am-ree") soon earn his ire. This is likely to make him moody and increase his prices.

In the front of the inn is a cramped tavern. Humans and all others of similar dimension are expected to sit around the fireplace. There are "tall folk" chairs but no matching tables.

Heroes who stay at Cachamwri's soon encounter Betha, who is there to "set her mind about them." If they're welcomed, then any Gnome customers present quickly sidle over to the characters, looking for news and tales of distant lands. Any of the players' characters who decide to indulge the locals with tales quickly find themselves interrupted, and on the listening end of a tale themselves.

Cachamwri Cabry, Inn Keeper: Agility 3D, dodge 4D, fighting 3D+2, stealth 4D, Coordination 4D, lock-picking 4D+1, sleight of hand 4D+2, throwing 4D+1, Physique 4D, lifting 4D+1, stamina 4D+2, Charisma 2D, bluff 3D, Intellect 2D, devices 3D, trading 4D, Acumen 3D, crafting 3D+2, know-how 3D+1, streetwise 4D. *Move:* 8. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 17/*Wound levels:* 2. *Disadvantages:* Hindrance: Shorter Stride (R1), 2-meter reduction to running, swimming, and jumping *Move;* Quirk (R1), easily angered by mispronunciation of name. *Advantages:* Contacts (R1), people of the village; Size: Small (R1), scale value of 3. *Special Abilities:* Skill Bonus: Mechanical Aptitude (R1), +1 to *crafting, devices, and traps* totals. *Equipment:* keys to various buildings in the town; fine clothes; staff of authority (damage +1D).

A GNOMISH TALE

Recently, a "tall folk" came to Halwyndale to have a sword forged. The warrior had heard of the warren's talented weaponsmiths, and wanted a sword that could sing. Lir, the local weaponsmith, set to work and created a wonderful weapon — wonderful for "tall folk," but far too cumbersome for anyone of proper proportions. No sooner had Lir finished the blade than a group of Goblins snuck in and stole it. Now it rests in the foul tunnels beneath the Ahern hills, and Lir is likely never to collect his fee for his work.

If the characters hear this tale and offer their assistance, they certainly gain the favor of the entire village — once they succeed, of course.

The exquisite weapon is a long sword, with an engraved hilt depicting a beautiful woman singing with a lute. Its deadliness is based upon the wielder's skill. A hero with a *melee combat* skill of 4D or less causes the unsheathed blade to emit a high-pitched whistle that can distract an opponent who fails an Easy *mettle* roll in the first round of hearing the sword. Characters with a *melee combat* skill of at least 6D can cause the sword to send forth a sonic blast, causes 2D+1 damage to all within two meters. Anyone wearing metal armor suffers an additional 1D of damage, as the sound sonic vibrations heat the metal. Heroes with a *melee combat* skill of 8D can cause the sword to produce a low-pitched tone that can damage all solid objects. Anything composed of stone, glass, wood, or flesh within the two-meter area of effect suffers 2D+2 damage. Each ability may only be used once per day, and the hero must have the appropriate skill level to use them. The wielder is not affected by any of the sword's abilities.

VIKING VILLAGE

The Vikings are both farmers and raiders. They tend to live in agricultural settlements, raising crops and livestock. Quite often, these settlements are near the coast, as the Vikings are shipmakers and travelers. Because the Vikings venture to many different lands, others often assimilate their customs and cultures, just as the Vikings adapt foreign folkways and technologies.

A Viking village is comprised of a variety of structures, including private houses, blacksmiths' shops, leatherworkers, carpenters, and a great feasting hall. The feasting hall serves as the focus of a Viking settlement. This is where celebrations take place

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and where the thane, or king, awards gifts to those who served him, typically in combat.

The construction techniques vary from area to area, but perhaps the most common is a structure with wood walls and a thatch roof. Sometimes mud was used to fill the cracks in walls and around doorways. The feasting hall usually towers over the surrounding buildings, well tended and lavish in comparison.

Often a palisade and a gate defends the village. Although houses and farms exist outside the palisade, the residents retreat inside the protective walls when there's trouble. The Vikings are a rugged people, accustomed to hardship and war, so when inhabitants of a village gather behind the walls, the threat is usually great.

At one village in particular, the heroes notice that the gates are locked and warriors stand at the ready. Unless the characters are from this village or a friendly village, they must convince the edgy inhabitants that they mean no harm. An opposed roll of a character's *bluff*, *charm*, or *persuasion* against the guards' and the thane's *mettle* is required. Vikings are extremely superstitious. If any of the players' characters attempt to use magic openly, the warriors and the thane receive a +10 to their *mettle* totals in all further negotiations.

Once inside the village, the heroes quickly learn of the fear of attack by a mysterious monster that ventures out each night the moon is high. Although all efforts have been made to defend the village and its people, the creature manages to enter unseen and steal away a victim. If the heroes offer to assist, then the thane promises a considerable reward for slaying the monster.

Healfdene, Thane: Agility 3D, fighting 4D, melee combat 5D, riding 3D+2, Coordination 2D+2, throwing 3D+1, Physique 4D+1, running 5D+2, stamina 5D+1, Intellect 2D, navigation 3D, traps 2D+2, Acumen 3D, search 3D+1, Charisma 3D, animal handling 3D+2, intimidation 4D+1, *Move*: 10. *Strength Damage*: 3D. *Fate Points*: 1. *Character Points*: 3. *Body Points*: 28/*Wound levels*: 4. *Disadvantages*: Quirk (R2), dislikes those who use magic or appear to have supernatural powers (+4 to difficulty when interacting

with such people); Enemy (R1), at least one king has vowed revenge; Infamy (R1), feared as a Viking by many. *Advantages*: Authority (R3), ruler; Wealth (R4). *Equipment*: ring mail armor (Armor Value +1D+1), battle axe (damage +3D).

Typical Viking Warrior: Agility 3D+1, fighting 3D+2, melee combat 3D+2, riding 3D+2, Coordination 3D+1, Physique 4D+1, running 4D+2, stamina 4D+2, Intellect 2D, navigation 3D+1, Acumen 3D, search 4D, traps 4D, Charisma 2D, animal handling 3D, intimidation 3D+1. *Move*: 10. *Strength Damage*: 2D. *Fate Points*: 0. *Character Points*: 0. *Body Points*: 18/*Wound levels*: 2. *Disadvantages*: Quirk (R2), dislikes those who use magic or appear to have supernatural powers (+4 to difficulty when interacting with such people); Infamy (R1), feared as a Viking by many. *Equipment*: hardened leather armor (Armor Value +1D+1), medium shield (armor +2D+1), and broad sword (+2D+2).

THE MONSTER

Perhaps playing off the epic tale *Beowulf* might be entertaining, particularly if the players are unaware of the story. Other ideas from *D6 Fantasy Creatures* include a werewolf, a European Vampire, or ghost warrior. Whatever the type of creature used, it should be fearsome and challenging enough to give Vikings second thoughts.



THALAS, GREEK CITY

The Greeks of the Hellenistic period are phenomenal builders. While their structures do not rival the works of the Egyptians in size, they compensate for this with quality of craft. This city is an example of the amazing craftsmanship and beauty at the time, a glorious city where the sights are as amazing as the events. Like other prominent Greek cities of the era, stone walls surround it. These flank the passage from the center of the city to the wharves. This allows the residents to have access to the sea even when under siege.

In times of peace, farms are scattered outside the perimeter of the city walls. (In times of war, the fields fill with the tents of armies.) But once the characters enter the city, they need to make a Moderate *mettle* roll to avoid being enraptured by the spectacles. Those who fail are struck by the sights and spend 1D minutes looking, pointing and talking about what they see.

The Acropolis: This is one of the oldest structures in the city. Erected upon a summit, it once served as a

citadel. Under the guidance of the city's ruler, Sofronius, the summit was cleared, and new structures were built. The Propylaia and several temples are now located upon the site of the Acropolis. From the lower portions of the city, these buildings are all visible.

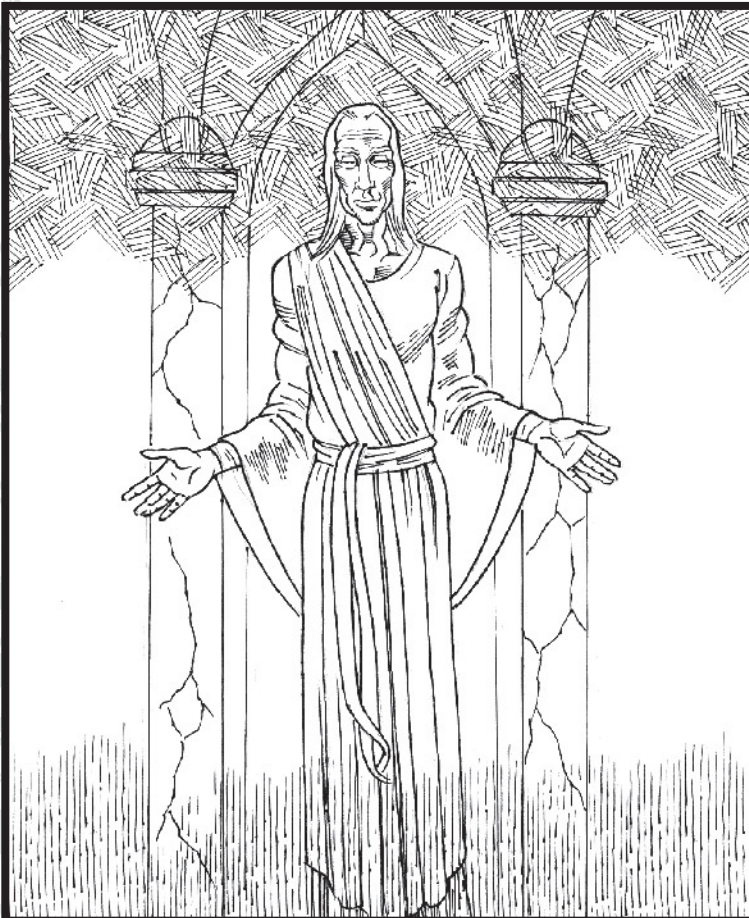
The Propylaia: Leading from the city proper are a series of stairs climbing to the gateway. The gateway has four entrances as well, each leading to a different location, including temples; a place displaying paintings, friezes, and statues of gods and heroes, and an unfinished structure. Lining the stone stairs are statues of marble and bronze. Tremendous Doric columns support roofs of the massive constructions. Upon entering the Propylaia, it's clear that only the temple is completed. Visitors are not allowed in the unfinished areas.

The Temple: Rectangular in shape, this is the city's newest temple for its patron goddess. By Greek standards, the design is simplistic. However, no mortar was used with the stone. Every block is finely aligned, creating what appears to be a perfect building. In the ceiling are a series of friezes (metopes) depicting the Greek struggle against "savagery." At the far end towers a statue, a marvel of craftsmanship and Greek technology.

The Academy: This school was established to teach philosophy. To the ancient Greeks, philosophy is the application of the mind to understand humanity, nature, and the world. There are many branches of philosophy taught at the Academy, and the work is rigorous. The Academy also trains orators who serve as members of the Assembly or as lawyers. Players' characters who spend at least a year at the Academy earn +2D to their *scholar* skill for no additional Character Point expenditure.

If any significant amount of time is spent at the Academy, students soon hear rumors about an invisible thief who has been prowling through the city stealing from the homes. Sofronius is troubled by this, believing it a bad omen. He is relying upon the council of the Academy masters to help him find the thief.

The Market: Like all Greek cities, there's an open air market here. Each day, a variety of food, necessities, and imported luxuries are displayed by merchants. Typically, a moderately wealthy Greek



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household sends a male slave to make purchases from the market. Seldom are women allowed to venture into this area.

Sofronius, Ruler: Agility 3D, melee combat 4D+2, riding 4D+1, Coordination 2D, marksmanship 3D+2, Physique 3D, running 4D, stamina 4D, Intellect 3D+2, cultures 3D, reading/writing 3D+1, speaking 4D, Acumen 3D, investigation 3D+2, streetwise 3D+1, search 3D+1, Charisma 3D+1, bluff 3D+2, persuasion 4D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 4. *Body Points:* 27/*Wound levels:* 4. *Disadvantages:* Enemy (R1), there are those who envy his power. *Advantages:* Authority (R3), ruler; Contacts (R1), members of the Assembly. *Equipment:* robes; small dagger (damage +2).

Exceptional Greek Philosopher: Agility 2D, Coordination 2D, Physique 2D, Intellect 5D, cultures 5D+1, know-how 5D+1, reading/writing 5D+2, scholar 6D, speaking 5D+1, Acumen 4D, investigation 4D+1, search 4D, Charisma 3D, bluff 4D+2, charm 4D+1, mettle 4D, persuasion 5D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 7. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to learning; Enemy (R1), some ideas are unpopular among the nobles. *Advantages:* Contacts (R1), students. **Equipment:** robes; goblet of wine.

UTSMUUL, MAYA CITY

The Maya live in metropolises located in the verdant jungles of South America. They developed original architectural designs and technologies used in the construction of their cities. They also incorporate religion, philosophy, and culture in city layout and building design, making many Maya settlements more than trading posts and gathering spots; these places serve as spiritual centers and focal points for government.

The majority of edifices in a city such as Tikal or Copan are built from large stones, carefully crafted and set into place. The Maya build large pyramids, which serve as temples. Every major city has at least one stepped-pyramid, plus a variety of palaces, shrines, ball courts, and plazas. Standing in some of these locations are stelae, large stones (two to four meters tall) with carved writing and images. To the Maya, the stelae are works of art that tell stories, identify locations, and recount history.

Clustered around the periphery of the city are the stone and mud-brick houses of the farmers, craft-people, and laborers. Besides being places to eat and

sleep, the dwellings also serve as burial sites. Occupants, when they die, are entombed beneath their former residences.

Many Maya settlements are city-states. A king, who also serves as the lawmaker, independently rules a city, though the priests have significant sway over events. The king participated in many divine rituals, including bloodletting ceremonies. The priests, however, were the only ones with the knowledge to interpret the stars and the complex calendar and determine the proper times for rituals.

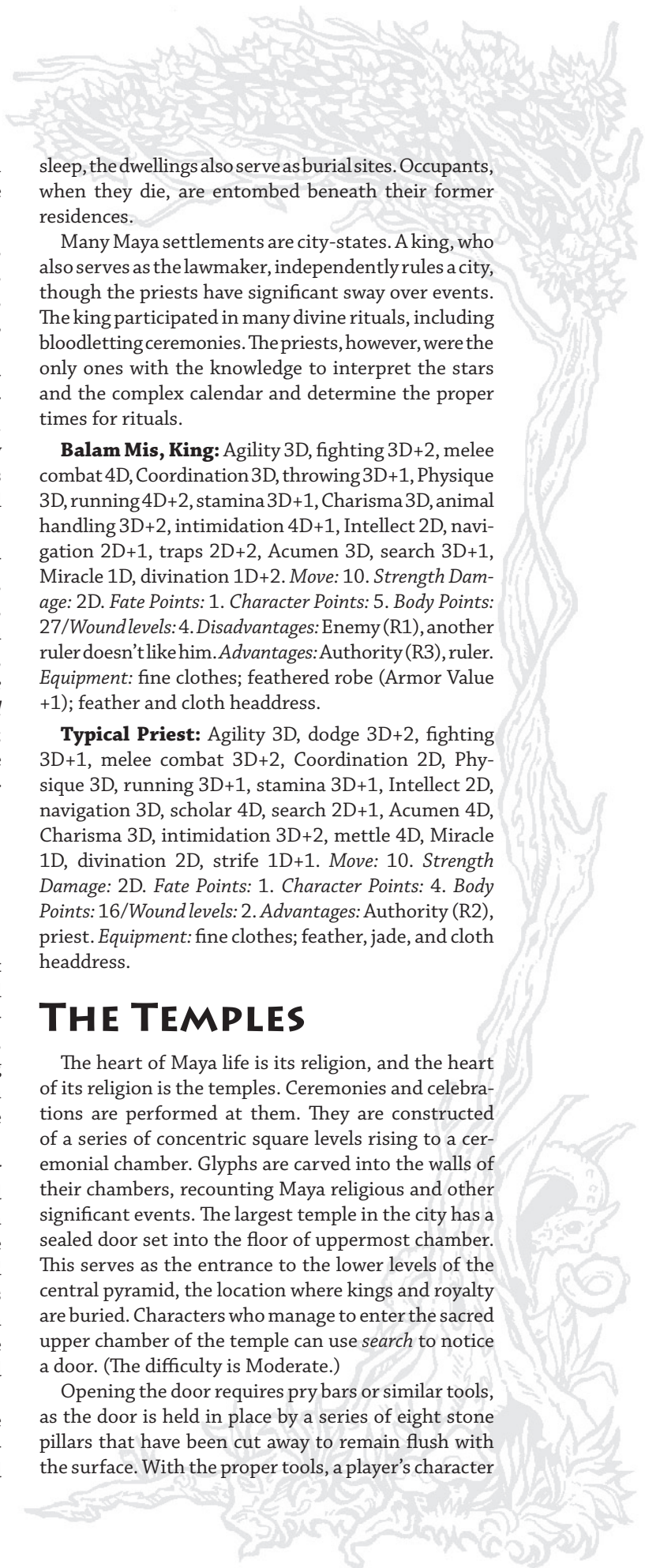
Balam Mis, King: Agility 3D, fighting 3D+2, melee combat 4D, Coordination 3D, throwing 3D+1, Physique 3D, running 4D+2, stamina 3D+1, Charisma 3D, animal handling 3D+2, intimidation 4D+1, Intellect 2D, navigation 2D+1, traps 2D+2, Acumen 3D, search 3D+1, Miracle 1D, divination 1D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 5. *Body Points:* 27/*Wound levels:* 4. *Disadvantages:* Enemy (R1), another ruler doesn't like him. *Advantages:* Authority (R3), ruler. *Equipment:* fine clothes; feathered robe (Armor Value +1); feather and cloth headdress.

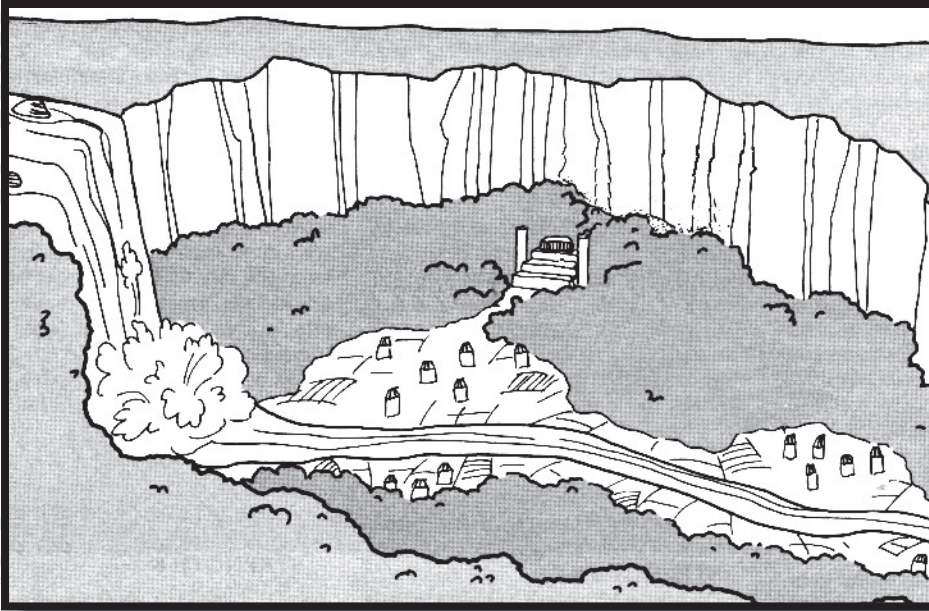
Typical Priest: Agility 3D, dodge 3D+2, fighting 3D+1, melee combat 3D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, running 3D+1, stamina 3D+1, Intellect 2D, navigation 3D, scholar 4D, search 2D+1, Acumen 4D, Charisma 3D, intimidation 3D+2, mettle 4D, Miracle 1D, divination 2D, strife 1D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 4. *Body Points:* 16/*Wound levels:* 2. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), priest. *Equipment:* fine clothes; feather, jade, and cloth headdress.

THE TEMPLES

The heart of Maya life is its religion, and the heart of its religion is the temples. Ceremonies and celebrations are performed at them. They are constructed of a series of concentric square levels rising to a ceremonial chamber. Glyphs are carved into the walls of their chambers, recounting Maya religious and other significant events. The largest temple in the city has a sealed door set into the floor of uppermost chamber. This serves as the entrance to the lower levels of the central pyramid, the location where kings and royalty are buried. Characters who manage to enter the sacred upper chamber of the temple can use *search* to notice a door. (The difficulty is Moderate.)

Opening the door requires pry bars or similar tools, as the door is held in place by a series of eight stone pillars that have been cut away to remain flush with the surface. With the proper tools, a player's character





can use the *lifting* skill to pry out the stone pinions. (The difficulty is Very Difficult, and they have a Toughness of 6D.)

Once open, a stairwell is visible. It descends several hundred meters into the pyramid, extending into a subterranean set of three to five rooms. Stone doors connect the rooms, each locked with stone pinions. Knocking down the doors requires rams or similar devices (their Toughness is 6D). Heroes can attempt to pry free the stone pinions; this has a difficulty of Difficult.

While there's always great treasure buried with Maya kings, there could be a curse as well. Treasure seekers who barge through these ancient tombs might release a creature long forgotten by humanity — and very dangerous.

THE BALLCOURT

The Maya enjoy the thrill of deadly competition. Nearly every major city has a ballcourt, some of which were over 180 meters in length and 75 meters in width. At each end of the court stands an angled wall or (preferably) temple that reflects sound with eerie ability. Without the sounds of the crowds or the players, heroes standing at one end of the field can hear whispers uttered from the other.

Sitting upon a throne set high over the field, the king presides over the games, the object of which is to get touch round disks set several meters above the ground or pass the ball through a ring set at right angles to the ground. The players may only touch the ball, which

weighs about one kilogram and measures just under half a meter in diameter, with their hips, knees, or elbows. Generally, the first team to score wins the game.

At the end of a game, the leader of the losing temple is expected to offer his head for decapitation to the captain of the winning team. Those unfamiliar with this practice or who have strong, opposing moral or religious views roll their *mettle* skill to restrain

themselves from interfering. The gamemaster determines the difficulty based on the character's views of morality, religious beliefs, and who's participating in the contest.

Any who attempt to interrupt the ending ceremonies are likely to find themselves facing decapitation as well. The games of the Maya are both entertaining and sacred. The captains who lose believe that offering their heads delivers them to the afterworld all the quicker — they don't consider it as punishment.

SALA COLONIA, ROMAN AFRICAN COLONY

In the Roman province of Mauretania Tingitana stands the city of Sala Colonia. It's one of the many territories the rampaging Roman Empire seized from Carthage. Sala Colonia is situated on the Atlantic coast, not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and serves as a port city. The access to the ocean allows merchant ships to bring cargo from distant lands to the thriving province.

The Romans are masters of stone and architecture. Even when located on another continent, far from Rome, the artisans and workers cut and craft astonishing stone structures. Unlike many other cities of rivaling nations, those of the Romans are elaborate, convenient and well organized. As with Sala Colonia, this tend to attract many thousands of inhabitants.

While there are many provinces within the domain of the Roman Empire, there's essentially one system of government. Early in Rome's history, it transformed from a republic to an imperial state, ruled by an emperor, or "caesar." Two consuls, who ruled equally with the aid of tribunes and a senate, formally held this position. When Rome became an imperial state, it retained the Senate, but all authority rested upon the emperor. From him, authority flowed to the pro-consuls, rulers of the provinces. Within each province were prefects, who ruled individual cities. But all bowed to the word of the emperor.

THE CITY

Many Romans, native or conquered, preferred to live within the boundaries of a city. Fresh water, markets, baths, craftsmen, and protection are a few of the advantages not found in rural life. To provide ample living space for these vast numbers of people, engineers developed the insulae. This is a multi-family apartment that commonly sported a therme (hot bath), courtyard, and fountains (which also served as a source of water). These buildings often served as inns as well. For the wealthier Romans, there are private villas. These two-story structures have all of the accoutrements of an insuale, except for the nearby neighbors. Privacy and plush living conditions are the marks of a successful Roman citizen.

The Forum: This public meeting place is popular among the denizens of Sala Colonia. The Forum is a gathering spot to share gossip and news and to discuss politics. It also serves as the seat of local government. Here politicians orate to the people. The Forums are so popular that many roads bear signs indicating the distance to the next Forum.

The Marketplace: Sala Colonia has a spectacular marketplace, even by Roman standards. Besides the typical street vendors selling everything from cloth to jewelry, there are taverns and bakeries surrounding the location. People visiting the market can readily step into a tavern for a drink or visit a bakery for a snack.

The Amphitheater: Almost as essential to the city as the Forum is the Roman amphitheater. These structures vary from city to city, but in most cases they're arenas of entertainment. With stadium seating, the amphitheater of Sala Colonia can hold over 1,000 spectators. The amusements vary from the display of wild animals, executions, gladiatorial games, and naval battles (the amphitheater

is sometimes filled with water and small craft used to recreate conflicts). Additionally, the amphitheater is used as a means of "taming" the population, thereby avoiding riots by keeping citizens preoccupied.

The gladiatorial games are always a popular sport, and often profitable. Characters can enter these deadly contests with a minimal cost (Very Easy price difficulty or one silver coin). The chance of profit is great — for those who survive. Gladiators can enter such events as chariot racing or one-on-one armed combat (man against man, or man against beast). Battle royales are also popular in the amphitheater. Such entertainment involves 10 to 20 contestants who fight until only one gladiator remains standing.

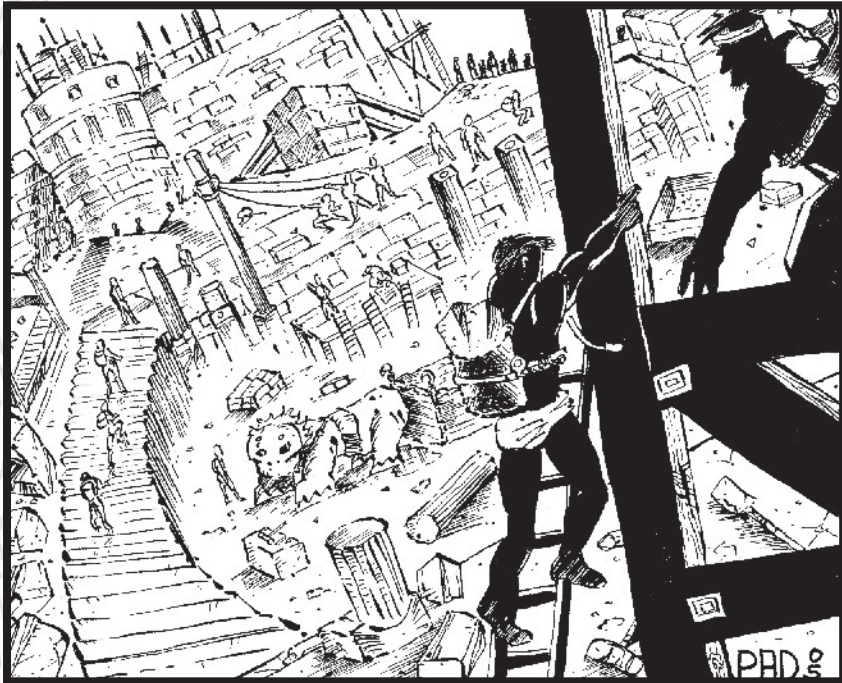
Typical Gladiator: Agility 4D, acrobatics 4D+1, dodge 4D+1, fighting 4D+1, melee combat 5D, Coordination 3D, charioteering 3D+2, marksmanship 3D+1, Physique 4D, running 4D+1, stamina 4D+2, Charisma 2D, command 3D, intimidation 3D, mettle 3D, Intellect 2D, healing 2D+1, Acumen 3D, crafting 3D+2, gambling 3D+2, know-how 3D+1, survival 4D. *Move:* 10. *Strength*

SETTLEMENT DEFENSES

Regardless if a village, town, or city is one of many within a kingdom or a self-governed, independent city-state, some form of defenses are usually required. Invading barbarians, bands of brigands, invading armies, or other threats necessitate that a settlement have some form of protection. For hamlets and warrens, this might be nothing more than a small volunteer militia. It's unlikely anything more than a handful of local inhabitants exist to defend the site, and in these cases, they're probably poorly trained and armed. With larger villages and towns, wooden palisades or stonewalls might serve as a defense or aid a small military force. Large cities are likely to be surrounded by walls, with a sizable force of men-at-arms assisting in the city's protection. Towers, city gates, and war machines are all likely components of large city's defenses.

Gamemasters designing settlements need to consider their means of protection. The greater the wealth of a city, the better its defenses. Likewise, if a habitation exists at a strategically significant location within a kingdom, the presence of a well-trained garrison of soldiers is a likely defense that's funded by the country's ruler.

Damage: 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 22/*Wound levels:* 3. *Equipment:* hardened leather armor (Armor Value +1D+1); small shield (Armor Value +2D); short sword (damage +1D+2).



QUICK SETTLEMENT DESIGN

Designing a settlement for many gamemasters is one of the most important aspects of a setting, while others avoid the task whenever possible. Because players are free willed, they often venture into unknown territory, forcing on-the-spot creations of lackluster locations. By using the Settlement Design Sheet, a gamemaster can quickly construct the skeleton of a village or city, without having to worry over the details. Of course, it can later be revisited and elaborated upon, adding vibrancy to a location.

All of the locations within this chapter can be used in whole or part when developing settings. If a village or a library is quickly needed, then simply use one that's provided. Another option is to take portions from the chapter and fit them together. Or simply start from scratch. In all cases, by using the Settlement Design Sheet, gamemasters can create well-developed locations with minimal effort.

Gamemasters may also use the following tables for randomly determining features. Roll the number of regular dice indicated and cross-reference the result on the chart. Fill in the result in the related area on the design sheet.

TYPE OF SETTLEMENT

Choose one of the following or roll one regular die and consult the chart.

Roll	Result
1-2	Hamlet
3-4	Village
5-6	City

POPULATION

Roll one regular die and multiply by the number indicated to get the population.

Hamlet:	1D x 100
Village:	1D x 1,000
City:	1D x 10,000

LOCATION

Roll and total two regular dice and consult the chart to find out where the settlement was founded.

Roll	Result
2-4	Riverside
5	Mountains or mountainside
6	Plains
7	Foothills
8	Forest-side
9	Seaside
10	Desert or desert edge
11-12	Other, such as under the sea or nomadic

GOVERNMENT

Roll and total two regular dice and consult the chart to figure out the general structure of the government. For suggestions on methods for how the citizens select leaders, see "Types of Leaders" on page 13 of this book. The "Politics" sidebar on page 12 also provides useful tips and inspiration.

Roll	Result
2-3	Anarchy (individual rights above all else)

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- 4 Military
- 5 Alliance of several families, family groups/tribes, guilds, etc.
- 6 Bureaucracy
- 7 Democracy (roll 1D: if the result is odd, then it's participatory and all citizens have a say in all issues; if the result is even, then it's representative and citizens elect officials to manage policy)
- 8 Run by a single guild, religion, or organization
- 9–10 Single person (roll 1D: if 1–2, ruler takes power by force — a dictator; if 3–4, ruler determined by series of trials or tests; if 5–6, ruler determined by heredity — a monarch)
- 11–12 Criminal

MAJOR RESOURCES

Roll and total two regular dice and consult the chart. Repeat as desired. As a guideline, hamlets will have only one major resource, villages will have up to three, and cities have three or more. The location of the settlement dictates the exact nature of the resources. You may also wish to use this chart to decide on minor resources or significant imports into the region.

Roll	Result
2–4	Natural resources (metals; minerals; logging; animals for fur, wool, or food; water; magical components; agriculture/fibers/foodstuffs; etc.)
5	Administration (government or guild headquarters)
6	Service (banking, legal, healing, magic, ship repairs, black market, etc.)
7	Manufacturing (furniture, household goods, potions, weaponry, ships, wheeled vehicles, equipment, etc.)
8	Education
9	Entertainment
10–12	Luxury goods (art, jewelry, finished gems, spices, liquor, food delicacies, magical items, etc.)

BUILDING MATERIAL

Roll one regular die and consult the chart to determine what most of the buildings are made of. Roll once for each district, if this is a distinguishing feature of the district. Generally, the building

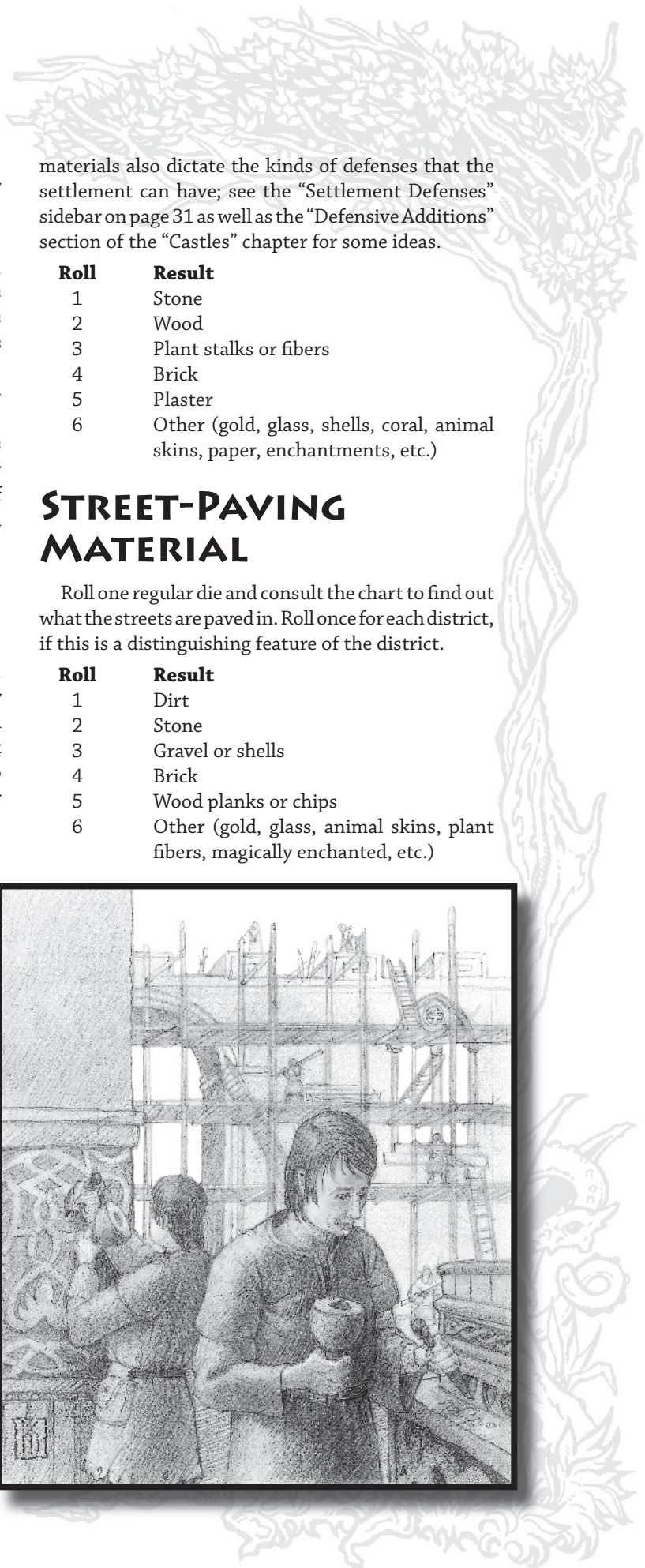
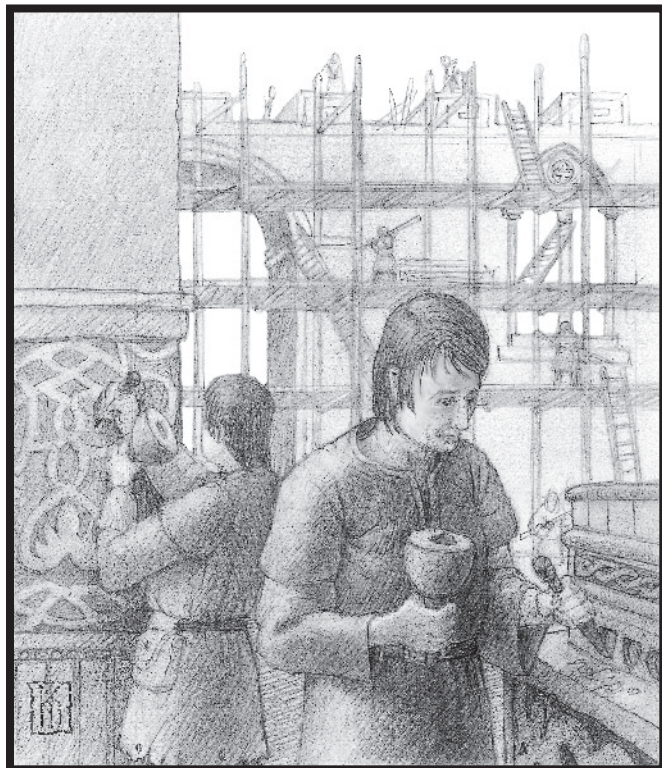
materials also dictate the kinds of defenses that the settlement can have; see the “Settlement Defenses” sidebar on page 31 as well as the “Defensive Additions” section of the “Castles” chapter for some ideas.

Roll	Result
1	Stone
2	Wood
3	Plant stalks or fibers
4	Brick
5	Plaster
6	Other (gold, glass, shells, coral, animal skins, paper, enchantments, etc.)

STREET-PAVING MATERIAL

Roll one regular die and consult the chart to find out what the streets are paved in. Roll once for each district, if this is a distinguishing feature of the district.

Roll	Result
1	Dirt
2	Stone
3	Gravel or shells
4	Brick
5	Wood planks or chips
6	Other (gold, glass, animal skins, plant fibers, magically enchanted, etc.)



SETTLEMENT DESIGN SHEET, PAGE 1

This sheet includes suggestions for randomly determining a settlement. Pick from the lists, roll the dice and find the result in the related list, or make up your own.

Settlement Name: _____

Type of Settlement: _____

Population: _____

Types of Citizens (ex., mostly Human women with a few Gnomish visitors): _____

Location and Its General Features: _____

General Type of Government: _____

Names of Important Politicians/Rulers/Leaders: _____

Other Important Local Figures (business owners, religious leaders, artisans, etc.): _____

Type of Defenses (constable, militia, palisade, stonewalls, garrison; etc.): _____

Major Resources: _____

Closest Neighboring Settlements and Relationship with Them (enemies, allies, trading partners, uneasy truce, etc.): _____

SETTLEMENT DESIGN SHEET, PAGE 2

Settlement Name: _____

Predominate Building Material(s): _____

Streets Primarily Paved With: _____

Number, Type, and Description of Districts (poor, moderate, wealthy; divided by guilds or ethnicities; etc.): _____


Popular Locations (inns, taverns, temples, libraries, guild buildings, etc.): _____

Community and Cultural Traits (superstitions, prohibitions, taboos, behavioral habits, etc.): _____

Other Information: _____

CHAPTER TWO

CASTLES AND FORTRESSES



This friend has done an extensive study of castles and fortresses, the common features of which he's summed in this chapter. He's also included a few examples of people and places that he discovered in his quest for the perfect castle.

BRIEF HISTORY

Throughout time, people have worked together for mutual strength and support. A group is much stronger than an individual, and objectives tend to be met much faster. Perhaps the best expression of this mentality is the tenacity of a group defending their mutual home. This home may be nothing more than a hole in a mountain or a hillside, but as cultures have evolved, so have their building techniques. The homes these people fought to defend became castles and fortresses.

As cultures grew and developed, many common attributes appeared in their designs. Perimeter walls are among the most common of these. Every freestanding fortification has some sort of palisade or stonework wall surrounding it. Likewise, moats, ponds, ditches, and culverts are also quite common. These are all used to delay the attackers from reaching the castle walls or in some cases to prevent them from reaching certain areas all together. The most common and unifying factor in the design of a castle, however, is that each one is designed and built to be a place of safety and refuge.

As an army invades a territory, its leaders may choose to quickly build small motte and bailey-style castles. These castles provide a foothold in the territory they have seized. They also provide a fallback location in case the invasion turns sour. These simple castles can also be used as a staging ground for more elaborate castles to be built.

From the other side, a large castle with stonework wall 10 meters tall would give even the most seasoned field commander second thoughts about laying siege. The people living in such a structure would also have a great deal of advantage over an attacking army. After all, it doesn't take a trained soldier to stand on a wall and drop large rocks or pour boiling oil onto attackers.

LOCATION

The foremost consideration to building a castle is location. The ground should be solid and stable, not overly wet — swamps are definitely not a good place to start. There should be a ready supply of water, such as a spring or a well. (Some riverside castles include in their design some means of getting water from the river that can't be blocked by a besieging army.) Resources at hand also allow for ease of building. Mines or quarries speed the building as the stones don't have to be transported a great distance. The same can be said for the ore to be forged or smelted into metal. A castle placed at a strategic crossroads or port can easily be used to police the traffic in that area and maintain contact with distant regions of the kingdom.

Castles are generally built on the high ground, making them easier to defend. In some places, high ground is not available, so the builder fixes the problem by moving a lot of earth. These artificial hills can be relatively steep but they don't have to be. A very steep hill allows for easier defense, as the attacker has to climb the steep bank. Attacking while having to worry about keeping

LORD URDANE, BARON OF THE NORTHLANDS

Lord Urdane is the typical land-grubbing baron. He quite literally bought his title from King Thuslund of Oktonia, who was busy fighting a war with his neighbors. Urdane is a man who wants nothing more than to acquire wealth and show it off to his peers. Everyone from peasants to other lords dislikes him for his greed. Nonetheless, their disdain of his character doesn't overcome the fact that he is one of the most powerful lords in the land. He has the funding to make what he says go.

Agility 2D+2: dodge 3D, fighting 3D, melee combat 3D, riding 3D+2

Coordination 2D: charioteering 2D+1, lockpicking 2D+2, marksmanship 4D

Physique 2D+1: lifting 2D+2, running 2D+2

Intellect 4D: cultures 4D, navigation 4D, reading/writing 4D, scholar 4D, speaking 4D, trading 4D

Acumen 3D: crafting 3D+1, disguise 3D+1, gambling 3D+2, investigation 4D, search 3D+1, streetwise 4D

Charisma 3D: animal handling 4D, bluff 5D, command 4D, intimidation 4D, mettle 4D, persuasion 5D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Body Points: 22

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Enemy (R2), neighboring kingdoms; Devotion (R3), to acquiring land and power

Advantages Authority (R3), ruler; Wealth (R4)

Special Abilities none

Equipment: ornate staff of office (damage +1D+2); short sword (damage +1D+2); fine garments with a heavy brocade vest (Armor Value +1); pouch of coins and jewels

HIS CASTLE

Lord Urdane's castle was completed two seasons ago, though portions of it were being lived in long before it was completed. The perimeter of the castle has a wall two stories high with a drawbridge, a gatehouse, and stonework crenels, merlons, and arrow loops. A moat surrounds it. The inner wall is also two stories high, with stonework hording and a tower in each of its corners and a gatehouse offset from the exterior wall's gate. The towers are three stories high. Both gatehouses include murderholes, arrow loops, and trapdoors.

The buildings on the inside include two barracks, a great hall, servant and guest housing, a kitchen, a smithy, stables, and other, small craft buildings. All the buildings aside from the smithy and the stables have flooring. The housing, barracks, and kitchen have wooden floors, while the great hall has a stonework floor.

All the structures aside from the great hall, kitchen, and extra housing have thatch roofs. Those three buildings have lead sheet roofs. The great hall also sports numerous narrow glass windows.

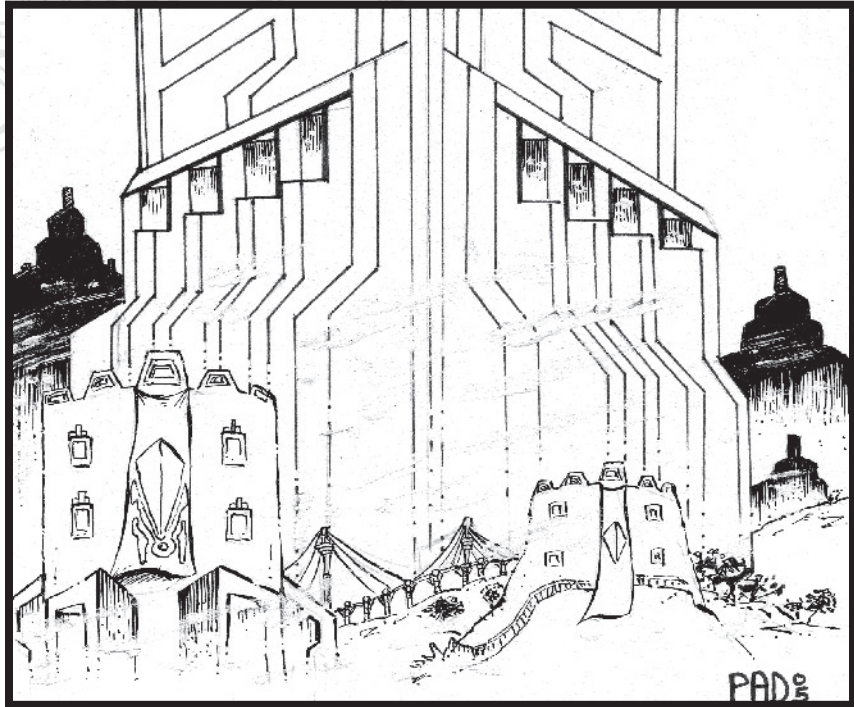
your balance and footing is very complicated.

Artificial hills, however, provide some distinct engineering problems. Packed earth from a natural hill is dense and can have many tons of stonework placed on it. Usually this requires some foundation work but not always. Artificial hills are not densely packed enough to allow for most stonework to stand on them no matter how much of a foundation is built. As more stonework is added to the top of an artificial hill, the chance of the earthwork collapsing increases. This collapse is very sudden and usually happens without warning. Very few people working on the site and in the area where the earthen pile will slide are likely to survive.

Another consideration is the people who will be building it. Anyone can dig a ditch or carry earth, but not just anyone can work stone or forge iron. Having a good work crew is best. The more people the builder can have on a job, the quicker they can do a job. Likewise, poor management can also lead to a great deal of problems and delays.

PARTS OF A CASTLE HILLS

Hills are a necessary part of a castle, though larger castles need natural hills as artificial hills cannot always support the weight of a large stonework fortification. Along with building hills up, sometimes earth has to be moved to make way for certain parts of a castle. If a suitable hill is found but it has an uneven section, the uneven area will have to be dug away. The sheep's foot method (see the sidebar) is used quite extensively to pack down the earth, but it has its problems: If the earth is too wet or too dry (which is sometimes difficult to ascertain), it doesn't compact well, possibly causing structure shifting or even disintegration of the mound later.



WALLS

The next part of any fortification is a wall around the perimeter. The outside walls' primary purpose is defense against invaders. The wall can also be used to control the entrance and exits of an area. This control can be for protection or for taxation. For example, merchants carrying goods to market may be forced to pay a toll or tax before entering the market.

The wall can be built from many different resources, depending on what's available, how much time there is to erect the wall, and what type of invaders are expected.

The first walls were made from piles of earth. The main problem with this earthen pile was that defenders only stood on top of the wall. If the attackers had large numbers, they could simply overwhelm the defenders on the wall by rushing past them.

Another early version of the wall was made by simply digging a ditch and standing trees side by side in the ditch. The ditch was then filled in. The wall height could be adjusted by how much of the tree was left above ground. This wall worked well, for the most part, but if the wall was too short, then the attackers could simply jump over it. However, if the wall was too tall, then the defenders could not see their attackers to fire on them.

A third version of the wood wall crosses these two previous walls. After digging a ditch and standing up trees, earth is then backfilled against the inside of the

wall. This earth is shaped to allow for a walkway for the defenders.

A more complicated version of this wall calls for another line of wooden uprights about two meters behind the outer wall. This set of uprights is about one and a half meters tall. Earth is then filled into the area between these walls to create a walkway. Alternatively, the builders can add watchtowers above the wall at the corners (and in the middle of the wall if it's long enough).

Stone walls are a much more permanent addition to a fortification. The stones to make these walls must either be gathered by digging them from the ground or carved from a larger stone in a rock quarry. Meanwhile, the area is prepared by digging a shallow ditch where the wall will go. This ditch is then filled with foundation stone so that less stonework is needed to accommodate the ground's slope and give the wall a firmer base. The increased wall strength comes from the bottom meter of stone being under the ground.

While weight and placement can make large stones stay in place, smaller stones need something to hold them together. This mixture is either called mortar or cement, depending on its application. They both have very similar (and sometimes) the same recipes, which varies based on geographical location. Mortar is used to join stonework together. Cement is a more structural compound. It can be cast into bricks or large blocks or mixed with crushed stone to make slabs for buildings to rest on.

Limestone, lime, and gypsum quite commonly make up these compounds. Available throughout the world, they are generally simple to dig up or find in almost ready to use forms. In areas where volcanoes are common, a mixture of volcanic ash and lime, called pozzolan, is applied. The Romans used this to make bricks for the Appian Way.

Of course, solid stone walls have their problems. They're labor intensive and have an innate design flaw. While easily withstanding individual attacks, a solid stone wall is easier for an attacker to breach with a ram. When the ram hits the wall, the energy is transferred through the entire wall. A wall consisting of a few rows of stone with earth or crushed rock between them keeps this from happening. The loose fill absorbs the force of the ram and keeps the wall intact.

Another version combines different aspects of the wood and stonework

walls. The base and first two meters of height are made from stone. A meter or more thick, the stone wall is then braced with wooden stakes on the inner side.

Having an exposed walkway on the tops of castle walls is good for lookouts but hard to defend, as there's no cover. So most walkways are set about a meter below the tops of the walls. This extra meter of wall allows for cover for most of the lower body. Some castles take this further and use crenels and merlons. Merlons are uprights about two meters in height (from the walkway), so a full grown man can easily have full cover behind one. They're about a meter wide and spaced about a meter apart. The blank space between the merlons is called a crenel.

More industrious castle builders have a merlon two meters wide with an arrow loop in the center. This allows for one person to attack from the crenel and then seek cover while another person fires through the loop without having to move as the crenel-using person seeks cover.

In some cases, a thick wooden shutter hangs between the crenels and merlons. The shutter is hinged at the top and has to be pushed up to allow for attacks to be made. When the shutter is dropped down, it gives full cover to anyone behind it. This situation almost always calls for the inclusion of a loop in the merlon, so that archers have a way to shoot without holding open the shutter.

Enemies found that by getting very close to the castle wall, they became hidden from the defenders using the merlons and crenels. The hoarding solves this problem. This wooden structure extends out over the outside perimeter of the wall. Since wood braces the hoarding, it can extend out as much as two meters from the wall without much difficulty. There really isn't much need to extend the hoarding out much more than two

WALLS AND COVER

A flat-topped wall offers no cover from ranged attacks. Seeking protection behind a merlon provides 100% cover, while using a crenel gives 50%. Wooden shutters to the crenel increases the cover to 75%. Hoarding offers 75% cover while firing and 100% cover when not firing. Firing loops increase the difficulty to hit the defender by +5D (+15). Murder holes are impossible to fire through as the shape and angle completely hide any possible targets.

CROSSROADS BORDER KEEP

Lord Urdane knows of a large cluster of villages near a crucial crossroad in his land. To gain better control of the village and the crossroad, he sends Sir Warrock out to build a small fortification. This keep will provide a staging area for Urdane to strong-arm his neighbors into paying a toll to use the roads. Sir Warrock is more than happy to do his lord's work as it will improve his station. Warrock isn't hungry for money — he desires to improve station. He lacks the motivation and social skills to be a lord, but he knows that any lord will always need someone to do their work.

As the crossroads are located quite close to an extensive forest, Warrock decides to build a wooden-walled castle. As the site is on a slight rolling hill, Warrock decides to improve with an artificial hill. He adds a watchtower near the gate, but that's the only tower he builds on the perimeter. Inside, Warrock erects five wooden-walled buildings (a barracks for 100 men, food stores, a great hall, a smithy, and a stable). These buildings are freestanding structures. Only the great hall and the food stores have wooden floors; everything else has dirt floors. (He had intended to put flooring in the barracks, but a wall collapse meant that the resources had to go elsewhere. Maybe next year.) He also digs a well to provide water for the fortification residents.

Sir Warrock, Knight of the Northlands: Agility 2D+2, dodge 3D+1, fighting 3D, melee combat 4D+1, riding 3D, Coordination 2D, marksmanship 3D+2, Physique 3D, running 3D+1, stamina 4D, Intellect 2D, reading/writing 2D+1, Acumen 2D, search 3D+1, survival 3D+2, tracking 4D, Charisma 2D, command 3D, mettle 2D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 19/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to increasing social status. *Advantages:* Authority (R1), leader of an army; Patron (R1), Lord Urdane. *Equipment:* broad sword (damage +2D); knife (damage +1D); plate armor with helmet (Armor Value +2D); steed.

meters as any weapon that needs more than a square meter to fire through isn't one that will be commonly used to fire directly down on an enemy. (A large siege weapon would be overly challenging to build and support in a hoarding.)

square corner allows for a blind area where defenders cannot bring weapons to bear on their attackers. To prevent this problem, corners are often rounded and numerous windows included in them.

The advantage of a hoarding is that it allows the defender to not only attack out toward the enemy but also down. Hoardings allow the defender to fire weapons or drop fire or stones on the attackers from above. Trap doors can be opened to attack and closed to block incoming attacks. The hoarding can have merlons, crenels, and a roof. The merlon rises the full height of the hoarding and it braces the roof.

Wooden hoardings are convenient to build but can catch on fire. The stonework version is called a machicoulis. The machicoulis usually goes out no more than a meter and a half over the outside perimeter of the wall due to the weight and supports necessary to hold its weight. They're identical to hoarding in their purpose and use.

A very small version of a machicoulis is called a breteche. It usually extends over a door or window to increase the defense of the area.

Posterns or sally ports are small hidden entrances in the castle walls. Sally ports are small gates and posterns are small doors. These doors are used to slip troops or messengers out side the castle. The use of these doors can be quite devastating to an enemy if he is not expecting a force that he didn't see come out of the castle and attack from the rear. These raiding tactics can also be used as an attempt to fool the attackers into thinking a much larger reinforcing force is approaching.

Fortification builders also learned (the hard way) that a

TRENCHES AND BRIDGES

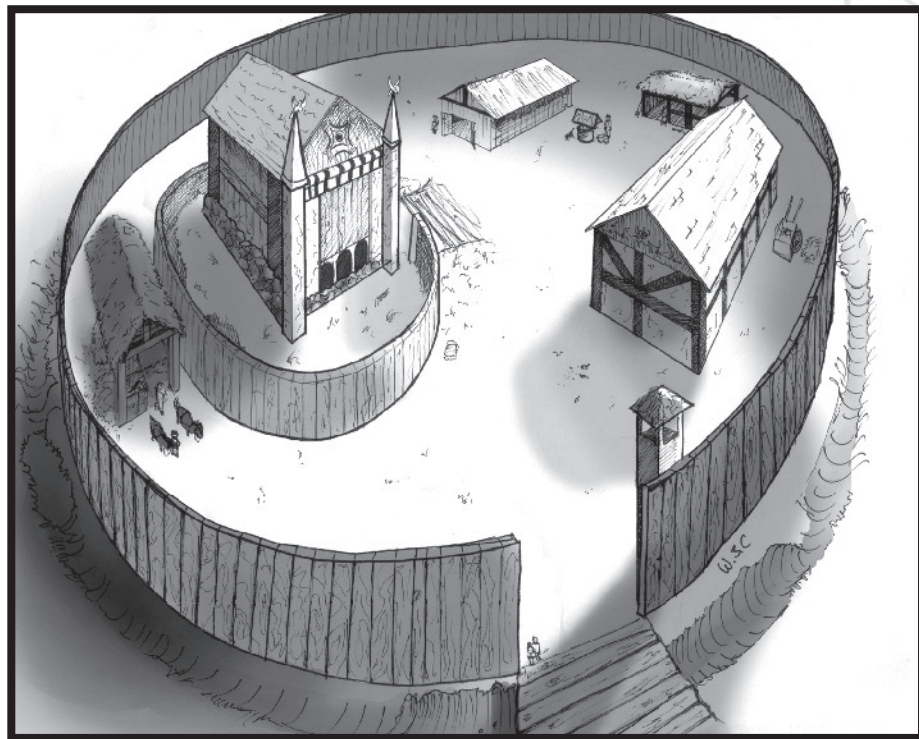
A castle built on high ground is in a very defensible position but a little more defense always helps. A trench dug around the perimeter requires the attackers to slow down as they come up the trench toward the wall. If the trench is deep enough, it would require the attackers to bridge it.

Filling the trench with some kind of liquid turns a ditch into a moat with little effort. Most of the time, rainwater keeps the moat full. In the event of a drought, diverting a nearby river or stream could maintain the water level. Should that tactic fail or not be an option, the ground stays soggy for some time, adding +2 or more to movement difficulties for several days or weeks, depending on how severe the drought is.

Spanning techniques are pretty much the same and have not changed since the first foot bridge was built. Readily made from any trees or wood in the area, the sides of a bridge are reinforced so it will bear the weight of soldiers as they cross it. The attackers carry the bridge up to the moat and drop it across to the castle allowing them to attack.

A moat or trenching network requires some way for the defenders and people who live in the castle on a daily basis to enter and exit. A permanent bridge is the simplest solution, but it needs to be defensible. A heavy gate is one way to do this, while a movable bridge is another.

A drawbridge is hinged at the base of the gatehouse, and a pulley system raises the bridge. In the basic version, gravity lowers the bridge quickly, but it takes a great deal of work to pull the structure up. Adding a large counter-weight on one end, with a support in the middle, can solve the raising problem. Braces under the weighted end are pulled or knocked out when attackers threaten. This causes the bridge to snap up quickly. The enemy can try to grab onto the end near them and pull it down, but doing so draws fire from the defenders.



WEAPONRY

Many weapons can be used as a defensive or offensive weapon. Swords and other bladed weapons lack the range to be able to attack foes more than two meters away. Bows and crossbows are quite obvious choices to for combat at a distance. A well trained soldier with a long bow can be deadly at 250 meters and a heavy crossbow at 300 meters.

Siege weapons are also as useful tool for the defending army as they're for the attacking army. Catapults, ballistas, trebuchets, and cannons (if available) are easy to use and can be devastating to an army.

Catapults are wood and rope devices that use tension to fire a projectile at the enemy. The upright of the catapult is pulled back with either rope on an axle or a block and tackle. The upright can either be a single piece of wood or many different pieces of wood banded together. Drawing back the upright stores a great deal of energy into the device. As the rope is cut or set loose the upright springs back to its original shape, propelling the projectile forward. The larger the upright, the more force is required to draw it back, but the projectiles get tossed greater distances. As there's an upper limit to this design, other types of siege engines using comparative principles were created.

Trebuchets are similar to catapults but they use a large counter-weight to fire the projectile, instead of tension in the weapon. A long wooden beam serves as the throwing arm. A basket or platform is on the long

CASTLE AND SIEGE WEAPONS

	Damage ¹	Reload Rate ²	Range			Crew	Scale ³	Price
			Short	Med.	Long			
Marksmanship Weapons								
Ballista, small, & stone	3D+1	2	85	170	340	1	15	D (100 G) ⁴
Ballista, small, & bolt	4D	2	110	220	440	1	15	D (110 G) ⁴
Ballista, large, & bolt	4D+2	4	120	240	480	2	20	D (120 G) ⁴
Cannon, small	4D	2	50	200	800	2	5	D (75 G) ⁴
cannon ammunition: E (1 G) for one ball and powder								
Cannon, large	5D	2	50	150	500	4	10	D (125 G) ⁴
cannon ammunition: E (1 G) for one ball and powder								
Catapult, small	3D+2	2	45 ⁵	90	180	2	10	D (50 G) ⁴
Catapult, large	4D	12	90 ⁵	180	360	5	20	D (65 G) ⁴
Trebuchet, small	4D+2	60	60 ⁵	120	240	4	15	D (115 G) ⁴
Trebuchet, large	5D	60	75 ⁵	150	300	8	20	D (122 G) ⁴
Oil, pot, boiling	4D	1	⁶	—	—	1	0	E (2 G)
Tar/pitch, pot, boiling	4D+2	1	⁶	—	—	1	0	M (3 G)
Rocks, bucket, dropped	2D per 1.5 meters	1	⁶	—	—	1	0	—
Melee Combat Weapon								
Battering ram	6D+2	1	⁷	—	—	4	8	M (10 G)

Note: All weapons listed on this table receive a +5 to their combat difficulties due to their unwieldiness. Game-masters may have the weapons do damage on subsequent rounds because of rolling or splashing. On a failure with a 1 on the Wild Die, the weapon misfires and injures its crew.

1. For ammunition that can be set on fire, add +1D to the initial damage and inflict 3D damage each round thereafter until it's cleaned off. Incendiary ammunition costs two gold (Easy price difficulty).

2. This is the number of rounds it takes to reload or reset the weapon.

3. This suggested scale for when the item is not mounted on a vehicle.

4. Price does not include ammunition or (in the case of cannons) firing powder. Price of ammunition varies, depending on how much work went into shaping it; use two coppers (Very Easy price difficulty) for a quarried and unshaped stone as the average.

5. The minimum Short Range is 30 meters. This weapon does not have a Point Blank range.

6. As these items are dropped, not thrown, they do not have a range. A cauldron or bucket can injure one target. For every pot's or bucket's worth poured in the same area, increase the number of targets by 1 (this does not also increase damage). Make one attack roll for all targets. Cauldrons designed to pour on several people need a crew of three to tip and a lot of time for the oil or tar to warm up. **Example:** One basic pot of oil can hurt one person for 4D. A cauldron twice that size can injure two people for 4D each with one attack roll. Two basic pots can harm two people for 4D each, but two attack rolls are necessary.

7. May only be used at Point Blank range.

end while a heavy weight is set on the short end. The long end of the arm is drawn down to the ground, raising the weight into the air. When the arm is released, the weight falls and swings the arm into the air. The larger the trebuchet the larger the counterweight can be. The larger the weight, the heavier and farther the weapon can fling objects. The maximum size of the trebuchet depends entirely on whether the basket can be pulled down.

Catapults and trebuchets are not precise weapons, as projectile shape, wind, temperature, and humidity can greatly affect the flight characteristics of the projectile. Therefore, the projectiles are made in such a way as to have a better effect on impact. A round or semi-round projectile will skip and roll along the ground. If it lands in front of a unit, it can very well bounce its way through an entire section, at least breaking the formation and inflicting a large number of rather brutal injuries. Larger trebuchet and catapults can also fire huge square sections of stonework. These shaped rocks tumble and roll depending on the ground they land on. If the ground's soft, the block sticks when it lands, but if the ground's hard, it rolls. Throwing incendiary devices is also quite common, as they can set fire to the ground and anything around the area around where they land. Pots of burning oil are the most popular incendiary projectile, but the only limit's the user's imagination.

Ballistas are monstrous versions of the catapult; some have a cross member more than three meters in length. These weapons act exactly like a crossbow, only on a much larger scale, including firing bolts or spears. A few fling out stones.

To fire an incendiary device, a pottery container filled with oil is attached to a spear before firing. This prevents the pot from breaking on the weapon and dispersing its fiery contents on the people using it.

A cannon is a metal tube with one closed end and one open end. The cannon is loaded with black powder and shot. Powder is then poured down a hole (drilled near the closed end of the tube) and touched off with a light fuse. The powder explodes and propels the

PUTTING OUT THE FIRE

Gamemasters simply can increase the damage of weapons set on fire, or they can use these optional guidelines to add depth to fiery effects.

Should the damage total be less than the damage resistance total, the fire either goes out or rolls off the target's armor or natural protection.

Any time the damage exceeds the resistance total, the target's set on fire and continues to burn until the flames get put out. After the first round, the fire does 3D damage — but be sure to check the Wild Die. If the Wild Die shows a 6, the fire intensifies by +1D on the next round. If the Wild Die comes up a 1, the fire dies down by 1D.

Characters can extinguish the fire by immediately immersing themselves in water. Alternatively, they can attempt to smother the fire either with a heavy blanket or by rolling on the ground. In either case, putting out the fire takes two full rounds in which the character may do nothing else. The continue to incur damage for those rounds, but the end of the second round, they're extinguished. They're still susceptible to being reignited if incendiary weapons redouse them. Characters can also continue to fight and hope luck puts them out.

Example: Sigmund, Skinny Peter, and Worthington the Priest are storming a gatehouse. Sammy pours burning pitch down on them from his position on the wall. As it's a Sammy rolls damage for the group (2, 3, 5, and 5 on the Wild Die). Sigmund, Skinny, and Worthington take 15 points of damage. Unfortunately, their armor doesn't absorb all of it, so they're on fire. In the next round, Skinny's player rolls eight points of damage, with a one on the Wild Die; the next round, he will roll 4D damage. Skinny abandons his friends and leaps from the gatehouse into the moat, putting himself out after two turns of washing off. Sigmund's player is luckier; he doesn't roll any value on the Wild Die. His character drops to the ground in an attempt to put himself out (it'll take two rounds). Worthington continues to attack the door. His player rolls 3D to determine damage from the fire and rolls a six on the Wild Die. Next round, the fire will have died down by 1D, causing it to do only 2D of damage.

MINOR CASTLE IN THE NORTHLANDS

Urdane must play host to a knight whom he despises, though he can't kill him outright due to his family's social status. Thufer the Pious is a kind and gentle man who wants no one to suffer and is liked by everyone from the peasants who serve him to King Thuslund, who sent him to Urdane's lands to keep tabs on Urdane. The king would like to get back Urdane's land, and if he learned enough of Urdane's secrets, then he would have him ousted. Thufer would probably be the one to take over the barony. In an attempt to get Thufer out of his lands and this world, Urdane sent Thufer to guard a small castle on the border to the orc lands. Fighting is common there, and if the orcs kill Thufer, then Urdane can tell the king that Thufer died honorable in the service of his lord.

The minor castle has a two walls, the exterior one of wood and an interior one of stone. There's stonework hoarding on the inner one, for the protection of the defenders using it. Though the exterior wall only sports a gate, the interior wall has a gatehouse complete with murder holes, arrow loops, three-meter-tall doors, and a portcullis. Two wells inside of the inner walls provide water for the residents. The barracks and the small hall (with kitchen) have metal roofs and stone walls. The stable and smithy are wooden structures, and other, temporary wooden buildings are erected as needed.

Thufer the Pious: Agility 2D+2, dodge 3D+1, fighting 3D, melee combat 4D+1, riding 4D+2, Coordination 2D, marksmanship 3D, Physique 3D, running 3D+1, stamina 4D, Intellect 2D, cultures 3D, reading/writing 3D, Acumen 2D, search 4D+1, survival 3D+2, tracking 4D, Charisma 2D, command 4D, mettle 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 19/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Devotion (R3), to chivalrous code. *Advantages:* Authority (R1), leader of an army; Patron (R1), King Thuslund. *Equipment:* broadsword (damage +2D); knife (damage +1D); plate armor with helmet (Armor Value +2D); steed.

shot out the open end of the barrel. Cannon shot is generally round stone.

Weapons dropped on enemies from the walls are usually simple yet devastating. Rocks dropped from

above can break bones or crush a skull. Boiling water, oil, or pitch poured onto enemies can scald them. Oil and pitch also have the distinct advantage of being quite flammable. If the boiling liquid isn't enough, once it's set on fire, it will cause most attackers to at least reconsider their route into the castle.

TOWERS

Towers allow defenders to see the country around them and keep watch over people in the castle courtyard. Some watchtowers consist simply of a wooden platform with no roof, while others are cut stone like the rest of the castle.

They are generally a level or two higher than the exterior walls, but they're not necessarily taller than the main structure. This added height allows for a better view of the local terrain. Another advantage of a tower is that dropped weapons (stones and the like) fall a greater distance and cause more damage when they strike attackers.

Towers can have round or square corners. Square corners are difficult to defend, because it's hard to put a loop in at an angle that can see the corner. Round corners don't have this problem, but they're more complicated to erect.

Typically, the towers have wooden floors, because they're cheaper and easier to build than stonework. Towers with siege weapons built on, however, require a strong building to support the weight. Instead of rooms in their interiors, their centers

are filled by earth and they have a stairway running up the side. In a few cases, towers with siege weapons also feature a walkway around the perimeter, so lower parts of the tower can be defended more easily.

GATEHOUSES

A castle with four solid walls is not much use without entrances or exits. Assuming that the residents don't fly or have a magical means of getting in, having one very large opening in the wall would allow attackers to breach the fortification without little effort. Including a gatehouse enables a large entrance to be easily protected. A gatehouse is basically a sizable tower with a large opening that can be closed off by heavy doors.

Gatehouses are built into the walls, usually in the center. The centered placement is not a requirement but it can have strategic importance. If it's too close to a corner tower, the attacker could focus on that corner and capture the corner tower and the gatehouse. If the gap between the corner towers and the gatehouses is equidistant, then the defenders would have a better chance at defending all three structures.

The gatehouse is built in the same way as a tower. The entrances to the gatehouse tower are on the inside of the castle to keep invaders from gaining access to the defensive parts of gatehouse. It's quite important that the gatehouse has a hoarding, machicoulis, or breteche over the main opening.

The primary means of entrance and exit to most castles is through a large set of doors on either end of a wide hallway that runs through the gatehouse. These doors generally are made out of heavy wooden planks and banded together inside and out with iron straps. Outer and inner doors are used to keep attackers from simply having to breach one set of doors to gain entrance to the courtyard.

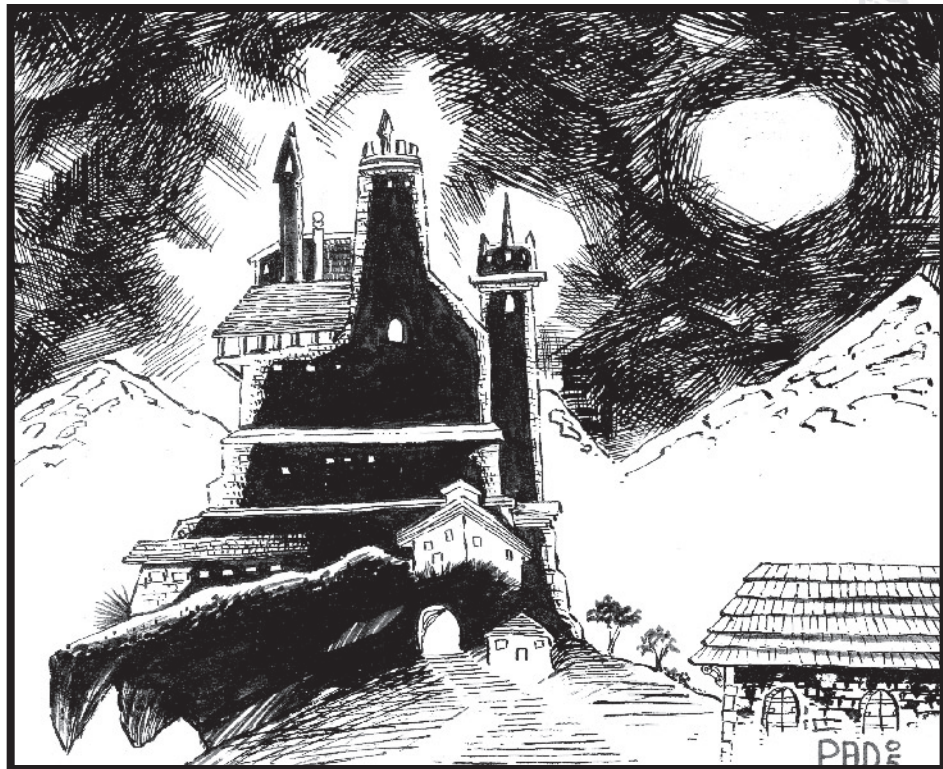
These doors are quite large and heavy. They can be set on a counter-balance so that even the smallest child can open and close them. The doors are pinned open and, when they need to be closed in a hurry, the pins are removed and the doors close quickly. (The setup of the balance determines how quickly this happens.) In the event of an attack, the doors can be closed and

the counter-balance system broken so the doors were much harder to move. The doors are then barred with a large wooden plank and braced with whatever is handy. (This can add +1D or more to the door's Toughness.) The attacker generally will try to force the doors down by whatever means necessary. Though a battering ram is the most obvious means of forced entry, the rocks and fire dropped by the defenders from the machicoulis above the doors could prove this a costly maneuver.

A portcullis is another choice for barring the way. This is a large grid made of thick wood and/or iron. The openings in the grate are generally no more than five centimeters across. This allows for the defenders to thrust spears and fire arrows and bolts through without the danger of the smallest attacker getting past.

The portcullis is kept in the raised position. A large wheel and axle system is used to move it. With more than one person operating the system, it can be lowered slowly, but a single person can throw the release and slam down the portcullis. Some large fortifications use one or more portcullises in addition to inner and outer doors in the main gatehouse.

The long hallway through the gatehouse and the castle walls can be designed to permit side or overhead attacks by the defenders. To do this, the hallway is lined on both sides by narrow arrow loops connected to hidden hallways. These loops allow the defenders to fire into attackers as they crowd into the hallway. In two-



story gatehouses, holes can also be added to the ceiling. Through these “murder holes,” the defenders can fire missile weapons or pour boiling or burning liquids.

The hallway also gets narrower from the outside coming in. This is done mainly to create a chokepoint. An area wide enough for five people to run abreast narrowing to only allow four causes that fifth person to either fall back or trip his comrades as they approach the end of the tunnel.

Most castles have one gatehouse on each wall. Multiple gatehouses would necessitate more troops to defend each one. If the outermost wall is big enough, then more than one entrance could be added.

In castles with an outer wall and multiple inner walls, the gatehouses need to be offset from one another. If the gatehouses were in line with each other, attackers could immediately get to the inner gatehouse after breaching the outer one. The larger the offset, the larger the amount of fire the defenders can bring onto the invaders.

BUILDINGS

Buildings provide places for people to live, eat, sleep, and go about their business while still inside the castle. Some of these buildings stand alone on the inside of the courtyard. Others share one or two walls with the castle walls. This reduces the amount of cut stone required to erect the building and the whole castle project. It also saves a great deal of time, as only two walls have to be made instead of four.



GREAT HALLS

A castle's great hall is one of its most important buildings. This is the room where the lord performs all his business, including receiving other nobles and dealing with the everyday affairs of governing his lands. A lord keeps this hall presentable to any visitors, because it reflects directly on their ability to rule. If the chamber is dirty and unkempt, a visitor could assume the lord did not care about his domain.

In most castles, the great hall is also where many of the meals and all banquets are served. At banquets, select members of the community and heads of larger households are invited to the hall. Other nobles from the surrounding areas and their families would also be given prominent seating positions. Fathers have arranged marriages over a large meal like this one, just treaties have been negotiated or the groundwork for a united attack on a common enemy has been planned at the dinner table.

In smaller, more modest castles, these chambers are also the lord's quarters, as well as quarters for any guests. This can either come from their pious nature or from the fact that they cannot afford a separate chamber for living (either monetarily nor in terms of space that could be used to defend the castle). Guest quarters can also be in the great hall for very similar reasons. If the lord must live in his great hall, then guests can be assumed to rest there, too. They shouldn't expect quarters better than the lord of the keep unless they're of a higher station than the lord. If the guest

is a king or baron in charge of the lord, the lord gives up his sleeping area to allow the guest to repose in the most comfortable location.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Throughout many regions, people have strict beliefs requiring them to spend time regularly in a religious service of some sort. The times and locations of the services are determined by those beliefs. Some religions prefer them to be in a rural wooded location (and descendants following such a religion may attempt to recreate the desired space within

the castle walls), but for the most part the services were inside a structure built for the purpose.

This church or temple is almost always a building that serves this function alone. A great hall can be used if there's no other space available, but most communities make sure that they find to erect a special location.

The construction of a church is generally the same as the rest of the castle. Wooden or stonework walls are common; the furniture is generally wood. Local master craftspeople in the area donate some of their work for the structure. Glass windows are common, especially stained glass ones depicting scenes from religious cannon or displaying patterns of significant symbols.

In most places, a religious structure is a form of sanctuary where people come to seek protection either from the law or from the horrors of war. Likewise, wounded people or people suffering from a plague are often brought to the building for medical attention during a conflict, because the number of people that could be served at once is far greater than the doctor could care for in his home.

In most cases, invading army hesitates to storm a religious building and kill everyone inside as the ground the church is built on is blessed and considered holy by worshippers of the same deities.

SHOPS

Many shops are built inside the castle walls or inside a larger building in the courtyard. Many goods needed to erect the castle are made at the castle as it's being built. Once it's been created, the shops built to aid the construction of the castle are converted for other uses after the castle is completed. For example, the smithy that made the iron bands for the portcullis can easily be converted to an armory. Likewise, after the ceramic tiles are made for the roof, those kilns can easily be used to make large pots for food storage.

The sidebar lists some of the more common shops needed while building a castle, along with the wages for

SHOPS AND WORKERS	
Worker	Week's Wage
Carpenter	1 silver (VE)
Cleric (less pious, more wage)	1-5 silver (VE-E)
Cook	4 copper (VE)
Ditch digger	1 copper (VE)
Glass makers	2 silver (VE)
Guard, town crier	1 silver (VE)
Mason	1 silver (VE)
Porter	2 copper (VE)
Scribe	3 silver (E)
Smiths/metal workers	1 silver (VE)
Spinner, tailor, or weaver	1 silver (VE)
Stable hand	2 copper (VE)
Stone cutters (quarry men)	4 copper (VE)
Woodcutters	4 copper (VE)
Apprentice	worker's cost x 0.5
Master craftsman or supervisor	worker's cost x 3 (+5 to difficulty)

a week of work by someone of average experience. Many are converted for other uses after the castle is complete: bakery, breeder, farmers' market, glass shop, jeweler, kitchen, library, mason, metal workers, smiths, spinner, stable, tailor, weaver, carpenter/woodworker

Crafter: Agility 2D, melee combat 3D, Coordination 2D, sleight of hand 2D+2, Physique 2D, lifting 3D+1, Intellect 2D, Acumen 2D, artist 3D, crafting 4D, Charisma 3D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 11/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* Crafting tools; simple clothing; knife (damage +2).

Master Crafter: Agility 2D, melee combat 3D+1, Coordination 2D, sleight of hand 3D+1, Physique 2D, lifting 3D+1, Intellect 2D, scholar: (specific craft) 5D, trading 4D, Acumen 2D, artist 4D, crafting 5D+2, Charisma 3D, command 3D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 11/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* exceptional crafting tools (+1D to relevant *crafting* rolls); work-stained clothing; knife (damage +2)

Unskilled Laborer: Agility 2D, fighting 3D, melee combat 3D, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, lifting 3D+2, Intellect 2D, Acumen 2D, crafting 2D+2, streetwise 3D+2, Charisma 2D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:*

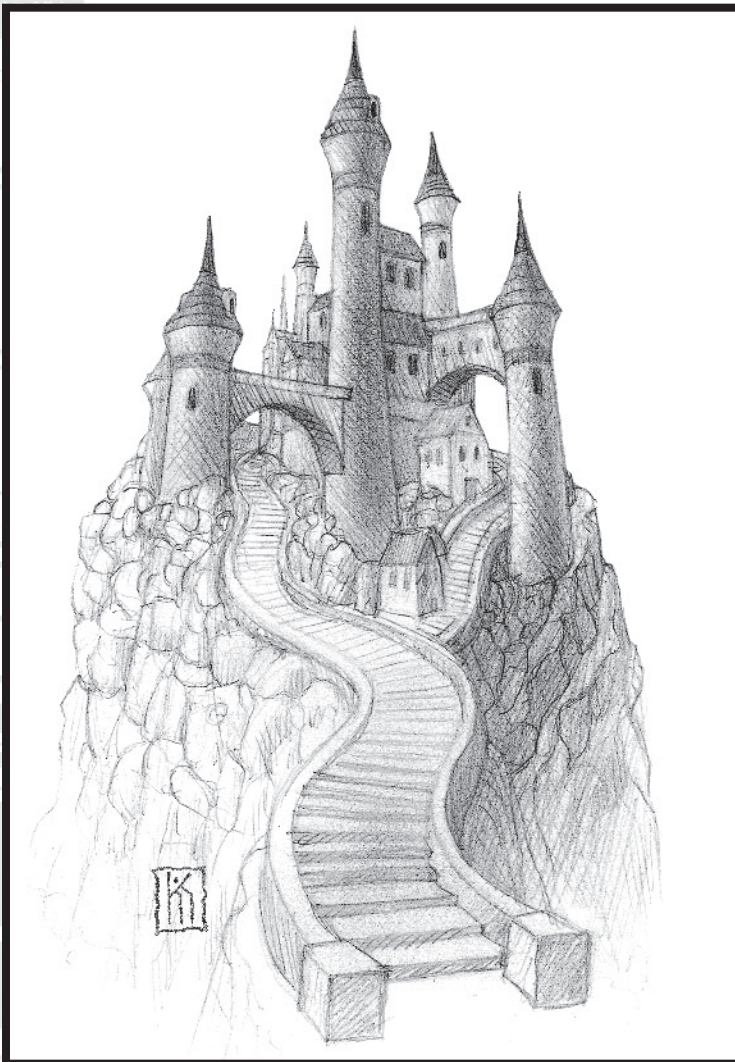
0. *Character Points:* 1. *Body Points:* 14/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* appropriate tools (such as shovel, pick, or rake); simple clothing; knife (damage +2).

Merchant: Agility 2D+1, dodge 2D+2, fighting 2D+2, melee combat 2D+2, Coordination 2D, sleight of hand 2D+1, Physique 2D, Intellect 3D+1, cultures 4D, navigation 4D, reading/writing 4D, scholar 3D+2, speaking 4D, trading 5D+2, Acumen 3D, gambling 4D, search 3D, streetwise 4D, Charisma 3D+2, animal handling 4D, bluff 4D, charm 4D, mettle 4D. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 11/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* staff (damage +1D+2); fine garments with a heavy brocade vest (Armor Value +1); small bag of coins and jewels.

Guard: Agility 2D+2, dodge 3D, fighting 3D, melee combat 3D+2, riding 3D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, running 3D+1, Intellect 2D, Acumen 2D, search

3D+2, survival 3D+1, Charisma 3D, mettle 2D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 2. *Body Points:* 14/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* short sword (damage +1D+2); knife (damage +1D); padded leather armor (Armor Value +1D) with helmet.

Cleric: Agility 2D+1, dodge 2D+2, fighting 2D+2, riding 2D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 2D, Intellect 3D+2, cultures 3D+2, healing 3D+2, reading/writing 3D+2, scholar 3D+2, speaking 5D, Acumen 3D, artist 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, search 3D+1, streetwise 3D+1, Charisma 3D, charm 3D+2, command 4D, mettle 3D, persuasion 4D, Miracles 2D, divination 2D+2, favor 2D+1, strife 2D+2. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 11/*Wound levels:* 2. *Equipment:* staff (damage +1D+2); fine garments with a heavy brocade vest (Armor Value +1) leather bag filled with a handful of small gold and silver coins and small jewels.



TUNNELS

For those castles having a large and impressive superstructure (the walls being a meter or more below the ground), some tunnel work is necessary for storage or escape. The simplest tunnel can be used as a final escape route for a lord after his fortress has fallen. Or a lone messenger can flee out a tunnel system with a letter requesting urgent supplies and troops. A tunnel can be used by a defending army in conjunction with posterns or sally ports to get troops outside the castle to attack enemies.

Storage rooms and living quarters for the people of lower class can also be dug into the ground. This allows for the courtyard to maintain a clean and neat appearance while still providing adequate living space inside the castle walls. These chambers vary in size based on many factors including the type of ground, the skill of the people clearing the dirt, and the skill of the people shoring up the walls with timbers. Less competent workers digging through hard earth will find it faster and easier to create narrow escape tunnels rather than large chambers useful for burial or storage.

The designers could include tunnels and chambers intended for burial grounds. Called catacombs, they provide not only the burial locations for the lords and ladies

DWARVEN MOUNTAIN FORTRESS

Wrekyon the Strong is the twelfth leader of Runiver and the direct descendant of Adumshar Longshins, the first Dwarf to begin the excavation process of the stronghold.

Runiver is on the south face of one of the southern-most mountains in a chain of mountains. It's been the location of numerous attempts to breach the Dwarven tunnel system but every attempt to pass through have failed. The large number of hidden tunnels and sally ports allow for the defenders to attack their enemies from every front. During one particularly vicious assault, the defenders allowed their enemies into the great hall as a trap. As soon as the last invader had passed through the main entrance, the doors slammed shut and the Dwarves commenced to destroy their unwelcome guests.

The fortification also has a large hidden room where 12 generations of treasure hordes are kept, along with various other spoils of war and riches found in and near the mountains.

Taszor the Wise, a very secretive and reclusive Dwarven wizard, has a study in the keep, though he's seldom seen among the people. Little is know of Taszor, though he hardly ever seems to be in his room.

Wrekyon the Strong, Leader: Agility 3D, fighting 5D+2, melee combat 5D, Coordination 2D, throwing 2D+2, Physique 3D+2, lifting 4D, running 4D, stamina 4D, Intellect 2D, devices 4D, trading 2D+1, traps 3D, Acumen 4D, artist 4D+2, crafting 5D, gambling 3D+1, Charisma 2D+1, intimidation 2D+2. *Move:* 8. *Strength*

Damage: 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 24/*Wound levels:* 4. *Disadvantages:* Hindrance: Gruffness (R2), +2 to *bluff*, *charm*, and *persuasion* difficulties; Hindrance: Shorter Stride (R1), 2-meter reduction to running, swimming, and jumping *Move*. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), leader; Size: Small (R1), scale value of 3. *Special Abilities:* Hardiness (R2), +2 to damage resistance totals; Longevity (R1); Ultravision (R1) +2 to sight-based totals while in dim or dark conditions. *Equipment:* leather garments (Armor Value +1D); hammer (damage +1D).

Taszor the Wise: Agility 2D+1 fighting 3D+2, melee combat 4D, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D+2, lifting 4D, running 4D, stamina 4D, Intellect 3D, devices 4D, trading 3D+1, traps 4D, Acumen 3D, artist 4D, crafting 5D, gambling 3D+1, Charisma 2D+1, intimidation 3D+2, Magic 3D, alteration 4D+1, apportation 4D, conjuration 4D+2, divination 4D. *Move:* 8. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 21/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Hindrance: Gruffness (R2), +2 to *bluff*, *charm*, and *persuasion* difficulties; Hindrance: Shorter Stride (R1), 2-meter reduction to running, swimming, and jumping *Move*. *Advantages:* Size: Small (R1), scale value of 3. *Special Abilities:* Hardiness (R2), +2 to damage resistance totals; Longevity (R1); Ultravision (R1) +2 to sight-based totals while in dim or dark conditions. *Equipment:* leather garments (Armor Value +2); writing materials; pouch of spell components.

of the castle but even the most common peasant can find a place of permanent rest there. These catacombs generally start under the church and spread out. Over time, they become quite sprawling; the larger cata-

combs could house literally hundreds of thousands of mortal remains. Eventually the catacombs reach their maximum size, so the older and lesser known graves are moved to make room for new. Most of the time,



the bones are ground up and spread across a field as fertilizer, or simply dumped outside the castle wall.

Some of these underground chambers are used for nefarious purposes. For example, some hold torture implements used to extract information from prisoners. These areas often include a holding area a barren, dark, chilly cell with a strong door to keep the occupant or occupants inside.

In abandoned sections, a wizard with experiments of a questionable nature would greatly appreciate the solitude. Similarly, a thief's guild or a persecuted religion could find the forgotten area useful.

For further suggestions on what could appear here, see the "Ruined Castle's Dungeon" and the "Designing a Maze" sections in the third chapter of this book.

HEATING AND LIGHTING

The rooms inside of castles would be dark places unless there's a way to vent smoke from fires or allow for daylight to shine inside. Though candles and torches can provide light, these are costly alternatives to a simple fire pit or a window.

A fire pit can be in the center of a first floor room or in a fireplace along a wall. The pit's generally located in an earthen hole, preferably one lined with large rocks that transfer the heat of the fire evenly to avoid explosions.

Without adequate protection against the intense heat, a fire pit cannot be placed on a second floor for some obvious reasons. If the floor is made of wood, it will burn through. If the floor consists of small stones, these would heat and cool unevenly and eventually shatter, spraying hot shards and coals about the area.

Another consideration about the fire is what to do with the smoke. The simplest system puts hole in the wall at the highest part of the ceiling and another hole in the wall near the ground to allow for enough ventilation. The smoke rises to the ceiling and is drawn outside as fresh air is pulled in through the other hole in the wall. A large ductwork hood suspended over the pit is a more complex version of this. While this system allows heat to escape with the smoke, it keeps people from suffocating with the least amount of building work.

If a fireplace and chimney for venting are built into the wall, they can heat their room and the room on the wall behind it. The fire heats the walls around it, which then warms

the air in adjacent rooms.

Windows are another means of lighting a room. Those that are nothing more than holes in the wall allow sunlight and any number of things to come inside, such as rain, animals, and intruders.

The most basic form of window covering is a piece of animal hide stretched thin and then soaked in oil to make it translucent. Similarly, sturdy paper offers a (generally) inexpensive covering, though it's susceptible to dampness.

More expensive options include mineral sheets or glass. Mica and some other minerals are translucent almost to the point of being clear. The surrounding minerals and metals determine the color, because they stain and tint the mica. They can be hard to find in large enough quantity to make a single sheet for a window. Instead, smaller pieces are fitted in a frame to make a patterned window.

Glass tile requires a large equipment cost and a master craftsman to make. Glass, which can be colored with certain metal powders, is dipped from the furnace and then blown into a bubble. This bubble is then flattened to make the panes of the glass. Pieces are often welded together by lead strips to form windows.

On most castles, windows on lower floors are tall and very narrow, to keep people from entering through them. Windows on upper floors, where it would be nearly impossible for someone to reach, can be of any size. Windows can also be barred or shuttered on either side to keep intruders out also. Metal bars are immovable and can block some light, while wooden or metal shutters can be opened or closed by ropes or poles to let in more light or keep out rain or projectiles.

Specialized windows, such as holes for firing missile weapons, generally have a set shape to maximize visibility while minimizing exposure to enemy actions. The most common of these is the arrow loop. A quarter meter to a half meter in width, this opening is generally as tall as a person to allow the archer to aim at a wider range of distances. (If the loop were too short, then the archer could only fire down.) The wall on the outward side of the loop is angled out to allow for a larger field of fire.

A more advanced type of loop contains a circular wooden drum with two matching openings about the same size as the arrow loop. The archer can fire through the open section and then turn the drum to block incoming projectiles. These drums can also be closed to keep inclement weather out.

Other types of loops are available for different types of weapons. For example, loops for crossbow-style weapons are generally the exact opposite of a bowman's loop: The loop is horizontal instead of vertical. This loop has a stop to allow the crossbowmen the ability to rest their weapons, thereby improving their aim.

FLOORS AND STAIRCASES

A dirt floor is the most basic but has its problems. It generates a lot of dust and gets muddy and sticky when wet. Vermin can easily burrow and live in the floor. Nonetheless, many people have lived on dirt floors for years with neither health nor cleaning problems.

Dirt floors are common in areas where fire can be a problem, like a large kitchen or a smithy. Food stored in a dirt-floored location is kept in large jars, baskets, or another means of protecting the food from dust and vermin.

Plank flooring is a rather common upgrade to dirt floors. Made from large pieces of wood cut to shape and smoothed, the planks wear down to a polished finish over time through

the wear of footsteps on them. Their lightness allows for easy addition of multiple floors, as well as cellars underneath the ground level rooms. Easy to keep clean by sweeping and mopping, most great halls have a plank floor in them, because this is the chamber where all a lord's business is conducted. Plank flooring is also useful in creating a uniform appearance with the lord's dais.

Cut stone floors are another upgrade to dirt floors. These floors last for decades (unlike wooden floors) and require little upkeep other than replacing or recementing a few stones as they come loose. Though plain stones are most common, colored stones are sometimes used to create a pattern or design on a floor.

In some cases, ceramic tiles are used in place of cut stones. These tiles require less work to fit together as they're made to shape, but they require a large outlay for equipment and many skilled craftsmen to make the tiles. Ceramic tile can be rather expensive to use on a whole floor, so it appears most commonly as a decoration of smaller areas.

Stairways are necessary to get people around inside a castle with multiple levels. Stairs can be made either of stone or wooden planks. While the wooden steps are easy to build they eventually will need replacement, while stone is harder to cut and place but will not need





any work other than sweeping. They staircases can also act as a chokepoint inside the castle. They can be used to limit the amount of access to the upper or lower floors of the castle.

Straight staircases are quite easy to build, especially if they're built at the same time as the wall. Spiral staircases require more effort, but they're useful for rooms with limited space. Defenders learned that if the stairway turned right, it allowed them more room to swing their swords while inhibiting the attacker's swing (assuming that they are both right handed).

ROOFING

There are three basic types of roofing: thatch or reeds, metal sheets, and ceramic tile. Each type of roofing has its advantages and its disadvantages. Thatch and wood are inexpensive, but they can leak, are flammable, and need to be replaced every few years. Tile and metal sheeting require a great deal of labor to make and to hang, but they require little upkeep.

Using thatch or reeds as a roofing material is almost as old as housing outside of caves. The plant stalks are generally cut from any local field or bog, bundled, and dried. The bundles are then laid out on a wooden roofing frame so the layers overlap. If the bundles are improperly positioned, the roof leaks.

Dry thatch creates a real fire hazard, as it can act like tinder to ignite the entire building. If an area expects

a siege or a dragon attack, the roofs of thatched buildings are wet down and kept wet throughout the crisis.

Building in combat zones or of extreme importance require a much more stable roof. Metal sheeting and tile provide a sturdy roof nearly impervious to fire. Composed of whatever metal is handy (generally lead because it's so easy to process), sometimes a castle owner uses copper or another rare yet strong metal to show off his wealth.

Ceramic tiles are made in the same way that they are for flooring applications. The shapes can be flat like floor tiles, half rounded, or any other shape desired by the builders. A pattern of overlapping flat tiles is

the most common style, sometimes with runner bars between rows, to hold the tiles in place.

FURNISHINGS

After the castle is complete, it needs to be made comfortable for its occupants. There are three general styles of furnishings:

Basic furnishings are simple and utilitarian. These items are generally crafted by the user for personal or family use. Rough-hewn wooden chairs and a table, a box full of straw covered in a woolen blanket for a bed, and an unadorned iron pot for cooking are the most basic of furnishings.

Quality furnishings exhibit more style and decoration to them than basic furnishings. Though the user might make these items, it's generally an artisan who crafts them. Chairs have a woven basket seat, the table is a bit more ornate, woven tapestries or blankets are used on the walls and around windows to keep out the winter winds, and things are more than utilitarian.

Lavish furnishings adorn the utilitarian form with decorations or design it from superior materials. A master craftsman makes these items, and in some cases, this craftsman is under the employment of a lord exclusively. A wooden desk with an ornate inlay, a set of silver flatware, or a complex clockwork novelty are examples of lavish furnishings.

NECESSITIES

When building a castle, there are a few other matters to consider. One of them is disposing of occupant waste. A single hole in the floor, preferably in an out-of-the-way room or in another building entirely, can serve for depositing personal waste. However, the hole must be sufficiently deep, or the occupants risk filling it too quickly.

A step up from this is a bowl or pot designated for the purpose only. The chamber pot is emptied daily either into a dump, cess pool, or other place outside of the building. In a basic fortification, a simple system can be built into the structure. A small room is constructed on the outside of the outmost wall. A hole in the floor provides a place for waste to go. (In important locations, such as the lord's chamber, a wooden or metal chair is put over the hole.) This hole leads directly to either the ground or the moat outside the castle. In larger castles, an empty space is left in the wall to act as a length of pipe to funnel the waste to the outside dumping area.

Water is another necessary part of daily life. Springs, wells, and aqueducts can all help to fulfill this need. A natural spring is an area where water literally bubbles up from the ground. This water has been naturally filtered by the earth it flows through. Where the output of the spring is constant but not a high volume, a cistern is built to catch the water. Cisterns use tile walls to create a storage tank. In some cases, filter (made of small rocks, carbon chunks, or clay) are built into the inlets of the cistern. These filters can be nothing more than a series of rocks that the water must flow over. These rocks catch leaves and other similarly sized material in the water. Cisterns can also catch rainwater.

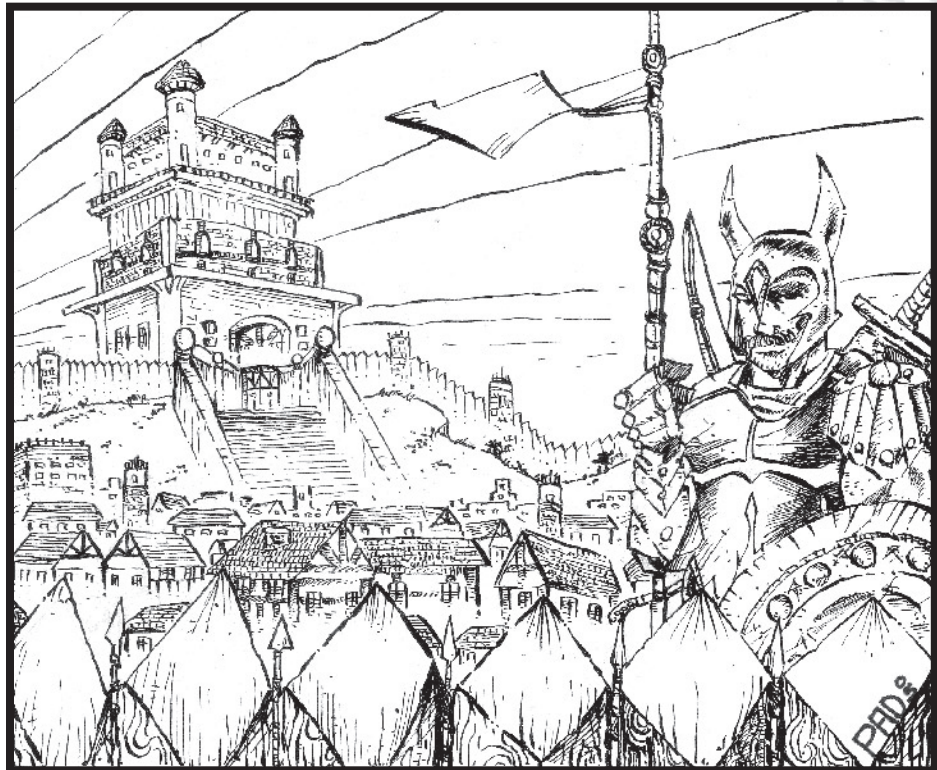
A simple well is a deep and narrow pit that's dug down to a depth below the water level. Buckets, dropped down, scoop up the water and are hauled back to the surface. Very deep wells usually require some sort of shoring to keep them from collapsing. This shoring is usually done using stones fit together to support the walls.

Generally reserved for large cities that can afford to build such things, aqueducts are artificial rivers made of stone or wood used to carry water from a distance source. Although expensive and time consuming to build, they afford the city great flexibility in directly water exactly where they want it to go. Naturally, stone channels last longer than wood ones, though they're more expensive. Either one wears away eventually.

ASIAN-STYLE CASTLES

With wars and trade relations tying Europe and Western Asia, the castle-building techniques migrated from one area to the other. Designers would take the best elements from one castle and add them to their design. Meanwhile, Eastern Asia operated in a vacuum of sorts, allowing this part of the world to develop its own fortification style.

Like European castles, walls of Eastern Asian fortifications are made of stone surrounded by a moat with some sort of bridge that narrowed to keep attackers out. However, the castles in some parts of Asia have to be resistant to earthquakes, so they take on a different shape. These castles are built on a stone foundation with a pyramid shape one or two meters tall. The walls are most often made of stone fitted tightly together without mortar, to provide better stability.



KINZO MIMOTO'S FORTRESS

Kinzo Mimoto is a skilled warlord with many followers. His fortress was built with defense in mind. Two castles sit in a large, artificial lake. The main castle is for show and for guests; Kinzo lives in the secondary castle. Bridges were built between the “mainland” and the central castle and between the central castle and the secondary castle. The interior buildings have wooden walls, wooden floors, paper partitions, and tile roofs. Each castle is surrounded by a curved stone wall.

The most skilled and valued of Kinzo's followers is Miroko Yhukimi. The warlord is currently waging a losing war with his neighbors to the east, Hitimia Kinka, over trade routes. If Mimoto can win the control of the Kikomoko valley, it will trap thousands of Kinka's troops in a position where they could easily be dealt with or forced to surrender. Yhukimi is looking for people to assist her in scouting out the location of Kinka's army, as well as troops to lead into war at the Kikomoko valley.

Kinzo Mimoto, Warlord: Agility 2D, dodge 3D, melee combat 4D+2, riding 4D, Coordination 2D+1, Physique 2D+2, Intellect 3D, cultures 4D+1, reading/writing 5D, scholar 3D+1, speaking 4D, Acumen 2D, Charisma 3D, charm 4D, command 5D+1, intimidation 3D+2, mettle 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 1D. *Fate Points:* 1. *Character Points:* 5. *Body Points:* 23/*Wound levels:* 4. *Disadvantages:* Enemy (R2), neighboring warlords. *Advantages:* Authority (R2), over lands and people; Contacts (R2), has made treaties with other warlords; Wealth (R4). *Equipment:* katana (damage +2D); knife (damage +1D); exceptional armor with mempo (Armor Value +2D+2); steed.

Miroko Yhukimi, Warrior: Agility 2D+2, dodge 3D+1, fighting 3D, melee combat 5D, riding 4D+2, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, running 3D+1, stamina 4D, Intellect 2D, cultures 3D, reading/writing 3D, Acumen 2D, search 4D+1, survival 3D+2, tracking 4D, Charisma 2D+1, command 4D, mettle 3D+1. *Move:* 10. *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Fate Points:* 0. *Character Points:* 3. *Body Points:* 19/*Wound levels:* 3. *Disadvantages:* Enemy (R1), those who are envious of her status. *Advantages:* Authority (R1), leader of an army; Patron (R2), Kinzo Mimoto the Warlord. *Equipment:* katana (damage +2D); knife (damage +1D); armor with mempo (Armor Value +2D); steed.

Unfortunately, the pyramid shape permits enemies to easily place ramps to the walls. Thus, the walls are designed to have a slight outward curve to them. The wall is often capped with a tile roof as the tops are not used for patrolling sentries. The outside of the wall is smooth, with any support structures on the inside. In times of conflict, planks are placed on these supports to form a platform from which archers can fire or troops can drop rocks. Trapdoors and murder holes area also built into the walls. The sentries patrol the castle perimeter with lookouts stationed in watchtowers inside the castle.

Paper walls are quite common in these castles. Ground rice suspended in water with some other fibrous mass (silk, shredded fibers, sea weed, and so on) makes rice paper. The solution is then dipped or poured out into boxes with screens in the bottom. These screens allow the water to filter through while trapping the rice mixture. The paper may be pressed, squeezed, or heated to speed the drying process. After it dries, the paper is simply rolled up until needed. The paper is then fitted into wooden frames that are hung room dividers, doors, or window coverings.

WIZARD'S TOWER

The design of the wizard's tower is limited only by the abilities of the wizard and the spells cast. This section describes a few spells that allow for casters to build a tower of their liking.

The volume of the spell dictates the size of the castle. Advanced wizards can modify the spell to build larger castles.

BASIC SHELTER SPELL

Skill Used: *Conjuration*

Difficulty: 14

Effect: 6 (Armor Value of 1D and Environmental Resistance (R1), +3D to *stamina* or *Physique* against heat, cold, or pressure)

Range: Self (0)

Speed: 0

Duration: 10 hours (+23)

Casting Time: 1 minute (-8)

Other Aspects:

Area of Effect (+6): Hut-shaped area about 1.25 meters wide, 2 meters wide, and 2 meters tall

Components (-2): Pinch of brick, stone, wood, paper, or cloth (ordinary, destroyed)

Focused (+5): On ground

Gesture (-2): Slowly sprinkle pinch in circle around caster (fairly simple)

Incantation (-2): "Give me shelter." (sentence)

Other Alterant (+2): Hut features — see description

This spell is quite useful for the single, traveling caster. This creates a cramped shelter around the caster. The shelter has a door to exit it and a small fireplace in one corner so a fire can be set to create warmth and light. The thin walls, seemingly made of the same material as the component, give the caster some protection from the elements and physical attacks. As the spell is focused, the caster may leave the hut without worrying about it disappearing.

IMPROVED HUT SPELL

Skill Used: *Conjuration*

Difficulty: 21

Effect: 21 (Armor Value of 5D and Environmental Resistance (R2), +6D to *stamina* or *Physique* against heat, cold, or pressure)

Range: 1 meter (0)

Speed: 0

Duration: 1 day (+25)

Casting Time: 5 minutes (-13)

Other Aspects:

Area of Effect (+11): Hut-shaped area a little more than 4 meters on a side and 2 meters tall

Component (-4): A painted toy house (uncommon)

Concentration (-1): 3.5 seconds with *mettle* difficulty of 7

Focused (+5): On toy house

Gesture (-2): Place toy house on ground and pretend to shape a larger house around it (fairly simple)

Incantation (-2): "Give me protection from the elements (sentence)

Other Alterant (+2): Hut features — see description

Designed to accommodate a small band of close adventuring comrades, this improved version of the basic hut spell creates a domicile with thin walls apparently composed of the same material as the toy house. Inside is a small fireplace, and there are uncovered windows and door, allowing in light. The shelter offers excellent protection against the weather and predators.

SMALL LONG-LASTING TOWER SPELL

Skill Used: *Conjuration*

Difficulty: 31

Effect: 22 (Armor Value of 5D+1 and Environmental Resistance (R2), +6D to *stamina* or *Physique* against heat, cold, or pressure)

Range: 1 meter (0)

Speed: 0

Duration: 25 years (+45)

Casting Time: 1 week (-29)



Other Aspects:

Area of Effect (+26): Fluid shape of no more than 268 cubic meters — approximately six rooms 2.5 meters tall by 3.75 meters wide by 4.75 meters long

Component (-6): Mud brick or stone block from an ancient temple (extremely rare)

Concentration (-3): 1 minute with *mettle* difficulty of 9

Focused (+13): On temple material

Gesture (-4): Make hand gestures as if building a tower (complex, *crafting* difficulty of 11)

Incantation (-5): Read or recite loudly prayers related to the religion of the ancient temple (litany, loud, *speaking* difficulty of 11)

Other Alterant (+3): Tower features — see description

This spell creates a retreat of any shape that the caster desires, including whatever doors, windows or stairs that she wants to include. It appears to be made of an ancient building material, and it provides terrific protection for up to 25 years. The caster may change the shape of the structure at any time during that period. Anything inside will automatically shift without breaking, to accommodate the new shape.

Range: 1 meter (0)

Speed: 0

Duration: 15 years (+44)

Casting Time: 10 hours (-23)

Other Aspects:

Area of Effect (+26): Fluid shape of no more than 268 cubic meters — approximately six rooms 2.5 meters tall by 3.75 meters wide by 4.75 meters long

Component (-15): Empty glass jar with fitted lid (common), white feathers (very common, destroyed); gold dust (uncommon, destroyed)

Concentration (-5): 15 minutes with *mettle* difficulty of 11

Focused (+11): On glass jar

Gesture (-1): Shake lidded jar filled with feathers, gold dust, and air (simple)

Incantation (-1): Blow air into jar (simple)

Variable Movement (+7): 15 meters per second/3 meters per round

Other Alterant (+3): Tower features — see description

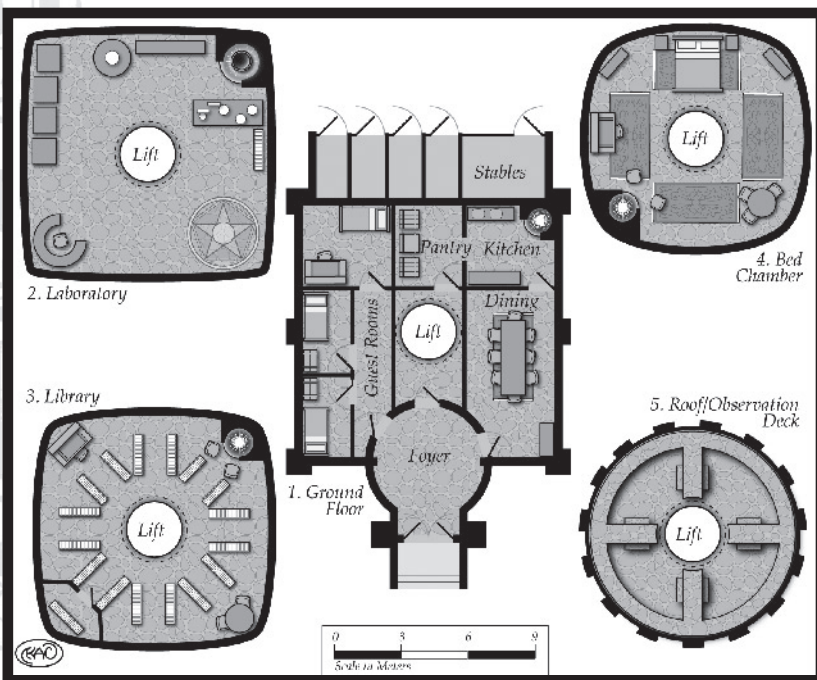
After less than half a day of preparation, 15 minutes of concentration, and a lot of shaking of some feathers, gold, and air, the caster creates a movable tower. The tower may go up and down or across the landscape at a rate of three meters per round. It appears to be made of white marble flecked with gold and has as many doors, windows, and staircases as the caster desires. He may also change its shape at any point during its existence, with the items quietly moving themselves around without damaging themselves. At the end of the duration, the feathers and gold dust turn to a fine ash.

KEEP IN THE AIR SPELL

Skill Used: *Conjuration*

Difficulty: 30

Effect: 14 (Armor Value of 4D and Environmental Resistance (R2), +6D to *stamina* or *Physique* against heat, cold, or pressure)



AAROTH THE WIZARD

Aaroth the Wizard travels the world to meet people and observe their cultures. He has seen most major cities in the known world and a few in the uncharted territories. His desire for material possessions is rather small. He takes a trinket or rock from each location of his travels and has a room in his tower just for storing them. His abilities in conjuration are almost unparalleled, which accounts for his Spartan lifestyle. If there's anything, he needs he simply makes it and when he's done with it, it disappears.

CASTLES ♦ 57

Aaroth is also a wanted man. He was the most powerful and outspoken member of his group, but the group went rogue on him. They were tired of using their abilities for the betterment of society at financial cost to themselves. They wanted to make some coin the old-fashioned way: taking it by force. Aaroth tried to dissuade his friends, but they would have none of it and he was privately cast out. The group still uses his name to gain access to places they wouldn't normally be allowed into. Then they sack the location for anything they think is of any value. Aaroth knows that without some outside help he can never stop the group, who together are more powerful than he is alone.

He built his tower using his magic. Inside it is a little bit of everything. It starts out roughly square at the bottom, about 10 meters on a side, and twists to circular toward the top. There's a central shaft that runs the height of the tower. It has a metal platform that's moved via an air elemental up and down. The entrance is hidden and can only be made visible by a person uttering the magical phrase "Open in the name of Aaroth." The top chamber houses an observation deck (where the wizard takes his meals and likes to watch the sun set). The rooms below the observation deck (in order of level) include his bed chamber, pondering room, library, laboratory, guest quarters, kitchen, and, finally, stable. Each room takes up its own level. Air elementals cool the place, while fire elementals heat it. The kitchen has been ensorcelled to provide any food upon request. Elementals also guard the tower against invaders and the elements.

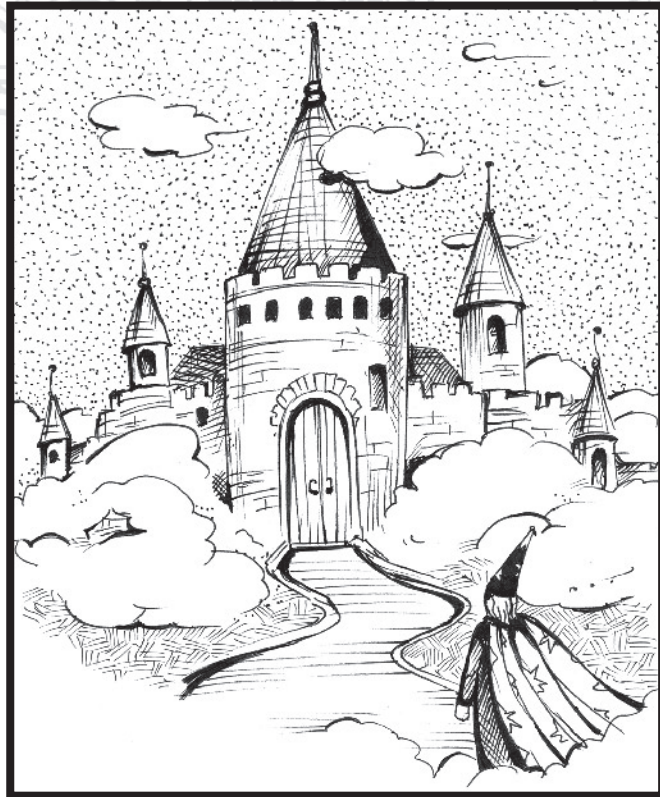
His travels have left him with an eclectic pile that it would take dozens of people years to catalog. His "pondering room," where he keeps what he's acquired in traveling, contains a chair in its middle and floor-to-ceiling shelves and piles full of things around the rest of the room. In some places, the piles are as high as the shelves, but Aaroth knows what every item is and can find anything at almost any time.

Aaroth also has created his own version of the *keep in the air* spell, which moves at a brisk 12 meters per round. He's used it to travel around in after accidentally dropping in on a fellow caster in a most precarious position that caused a great deal of tension among the casters in his social circle.

Agility 2D+1: dodge 2D+2, fighting 2D+2, melee combat 2D+2, riding 2D+2

Coordination 2D+1: sleight of hand 3D

Physique 2D: lifting 2D+1, running 2D+1, stamina 2D+2



Intellect 3D+1: cultures 3D+2, healing 3D+2, navigation 3D+2, reading/writing 3D+2, scholar 4D, speaking 3D+2, trading 3D+2

Acumen 3D+1: artist 3D+2, crafting 3D+2, disguise 3D+2, gambling 3D+2, hide 3D+2, investigation 4D, know-how 3D+2, search 3D+2, streetwise 3D+2

Charisma 2D+2: animal handling 3D, bluff 3D, charm 3D, command 3D, intimidation 3D, mettle 3D, persuasion 3D

Magic 3D: alteration 5D, apportation 3D+2, conjuration 6D, divination 3D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 10

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Enemy (R2), hunted by members of a wizard cult; Prejudice (R2), left a wizard cult that turned evil and he is commonly confused by people who do not know about the group as a current member

Advantages: Wealth (R3)

Special Abilities: Good Luck (R1)

Equipment: small knife (damage +2); long staff (damage +1D+2); heavy robes (Armor Value +2); bag with various tomes, pouches with spell components and a few gold pieces; writing supplies.

CASTLE DESIGN SHEET, PAGE 1

Players and gamemasters can use this checklist for deciding on the features of their castles. Suggested prices and difficulties are included, though gamemasters should adjust factors as appropriate for their settings. The gamemaster may also adjust prices based on materials used or moved; ornateness or number of features of the structures; and so on.

Total the values to get the price in gold; use the value to determine the *Funds* difficulty with the chart on page 114 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*.

FOUNDATION

- Natural hill (0)
- Artificial mound (20 gold per cubic meter of earth moved)
- Flat land (0)
- Treetops (0, but cannot build stone structures in treetops)
- Mountain interior (50 gold per cubic meter of rock moved)
- Other (specify; gamemaster determines cost): _____

EXTERIOR DEFENSES

Exterior wall sections are three meters tall by three meters deep.

- Log wall (10 gold per meter)
 - Log and stone wall (20 gold per meter)
 - Stone wall (50 gold per meter)
 - Wooden gate (included in price of wall)
 - Trench (dry moat; 20 gold per cubic meter of earth moved)
 - Moat (with water; 20 gold per cubic meter of earth moved)
 - Corner tower (60 gold per 2.5 square-meter area)
 - Wall tower (60 gold per 2.5 square-meter area)
 - Gatehouse (50 gold per 2.5 square-meter area)
 - Bridge (5 gold per 5 meters)
 - Drawbridge (10 gold per 5 meters)
- Features of towers and gatehouses: _____
- _____

Interior walls and defenses: _____

TUNNEL

- Tunnel to a secret location outside of the exterior walls (20 gold per cubic meter of earth moved; 50 gold per cubic meter of rock moved)
- Specify entrance and exit points: _____
- _____

- Storage or burial tunnels under interior of castle (20 gold per cubic meter of earth moved; 50 gold per cubic meter of rock moved).

Describe: _____

CASTLE DESIGN SHEET, PAGE 2

INTERIOR STRUCTURES

Include in building descriptions the flooring, wall, roof, and window/door material, as well as significant furnishings. The lowest level may have a floor of dirt, wood, ceramic tiles, or stone. Other levels may have wood or stone, with or without ceramic tiles. Stairs may be spiral or straight, of wood or stone, and against a wall or not. Interior and exterior walls may be of wood or stone, with other materials (such as branches or fabric) possible in some locations. Roofs may be of reeds, metal, or ceramic tile. Windows may be covered with animal skins, paper, glass, metal bars, or wooden shutters. Of course, in certain settings, other building materials may be more common.

Buildings are two gold per square meter for the most common combination of walls, roofing, interior partitions, and window coverings.

Against a defensive wall: _____

Freestanding: _____

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS

- Needed materials nearby (0)
- Needed materials far away (20 gold per 2 kilometers moved)
- Water nearby and easily tapped (0)
- Aqueduct, cistern, or well must be created to get water (20 gold per structure)

SEASON

Once the total amount of gold has been determined, decide in which month the work began. Subtract the value for each season, including the starting season, until the total reaches zero or less. **Example:** A player discovers that a wooden-walled castle with five interior buildings, a watchtower, and a few other features costs 860 gold to build. The gamemaster decides that it was a particularly bad spring season, when the castle's being built, reducing the amount of build time points available to 750. Thus, the castle won't be finished until sometime in the summer.

- Winter (450)
- Spring (1000)
- Summer (1250)
- Fall (1000)
- Particularly bad season (-250 per season)
- Particularly good season (+250 per season)

Total number of seasons: _____

OTHER FACTORS

The gamemaster determines any other bonuses or penalties to the total gold or to the amount of time each season. Such factors include unusual skill of the laborers, harassment by an enemy, poor labor management, lack of income (and thus gold), and so on.

Describe: _____

CHAPTER THREE

AND OTHER PLACES

Now, we've come to the good part — my section. Considering that our travels took us to an odd assortment of places, I've alphabetized the entries to make it easier for you to return to a particular point in our journey.

DRAGON'S CAVE

Most adventuring parties, when presented with a gargantuan winged shadow that engulfs them all, would take this as a cue to hide. Or perhaps flee.

It was Okent's idea to follow the Dragon. My idea — which involved informing distant taverns of this potential threat — was discarded.

In the sketches and ballads, they often depict the Dragon's lair as being at ground level, with a sylvan glen leading to a nice straightforward cave. I know now how foolish a concept this is. Most Dragons can fly, and most flying creatures make their homes in places that can only be reached by flight. Now, while Dragons don't reside in trees (at

least, I hope not), they do prefer caves that can be only be easily reached from the air. I would assume that flightless Dragons would stay in mountainside caves they could climb or slither up to, but it's possible they could reside underground.

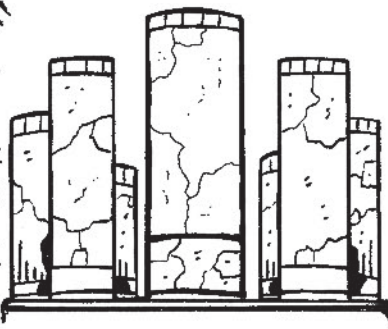
They can, however, also be reached by backbreaking effort. In all, *climbing* the mountain was Very Difficult, although it was made easier because we could take our time.

The cave extended inwards a ways, then opened into an entry area of some sort. It was large and almost devoid of illumination. (Anyone who doesn't bring a light source or alternate form of vision to a Dragon cave should be prepared to face complete darkness.) This was our first hint at the scope of what we were to encounter. The light of day was far behind us, and the echoes of our footsteps echoed loudly ahead of us.

The scope of that initial chamber took our breaths away. We knew the rest of the mountainside extended above and beyond us, but we hadn't fully considered that it might be **hollow**; it extended at least 30 meters above. A Dragon capable of hovering could probably be leisurely in destroying us. (Of course, the Dragon also might have lucked out in finding such a great spot; in remembering similar caves we've explored, I note that most such chambers usually have at least a few ledges where foolhardy fighters could scale to and engage a flying creature directly. Regardless, in this situation, archers or others capable of ranged attacks are worth their weight in gold.)

We explored a couple of other tributaries. Like other caves we've seen, these contained obstacles trivial for a giant Dragon to overcome, but proved really challenging for us. Some examples (drawn from both this Dragon's cave and others I've researched):

- **Changes in altitude and grade** — dangerously steep slopes send unaware folks sliding to dam-



age and disorientation if they aren't capable of Difficult *acrobatics* maneuvers. Also possible are utterly inaccessible places, such as the cave continuing up a 10-meter sheer "cliff" face (or down a 10-meter drop).

• **Damaging terrain**

— the floor of one chamber was littered with thousands of flawed, shattered gemstones broken up into the most costly caltrops imaginable.

• **Other monsters**

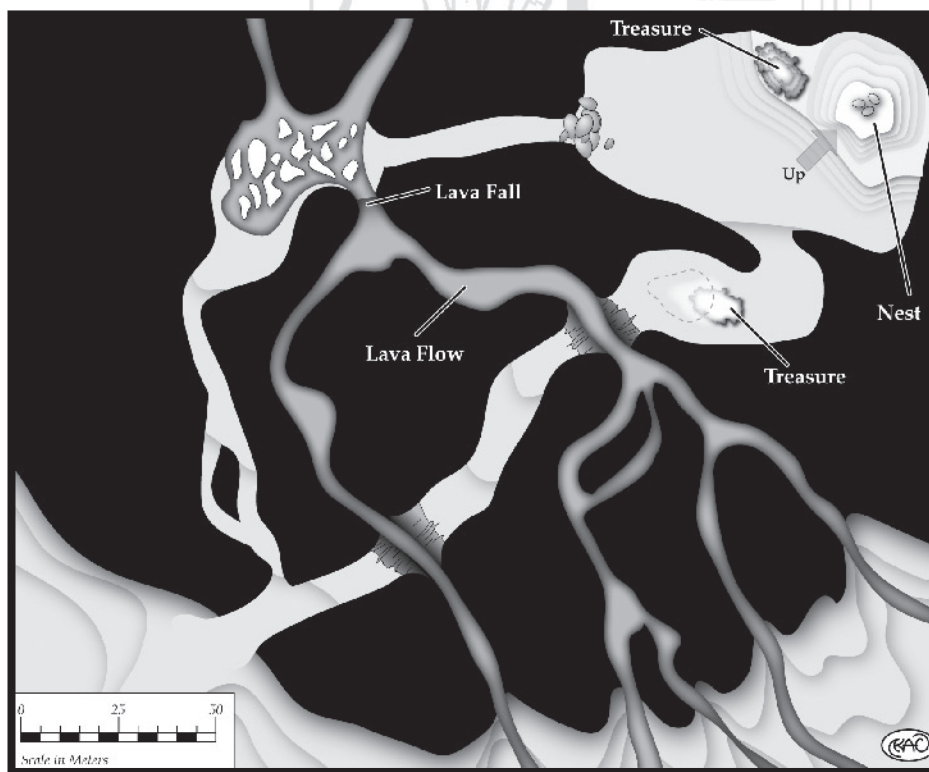
— although they were not evident in this cave, intelligent and semi-intelligent creatures could make their home within a Dragon cave

in a symbiotic relationship. They would know enough not to attack the gargantuan fire-spewing creature, and would serve as a first line of defense and warning to the dragon.

Two of the side caves were made of hard, nonporous rock, and contained large pools that I recognized as quicksilver; the fumes were unbearable, and it took a quick prayer (and the resultant divine intervention) by Raichael to keep us from succumbing. I'd never seen that much of the liquid metal before; alchemists would have a king's ransom, if they could survive to gather it.

Later on, we stumbled across another chamber; unlike the rest of the cavern's tributaries, this one was not designed by or for Dragons. In fact, it was barely Human-sized, and we squeezed single-file. In the small chamber beyond, there were magical glyphs everywhere. We avoided them, but it seemed to be some kind of protective chamber. A small pile of treasure rested inside the central circle, resembling some kind of golden "nest." We didn't investigate further, since that would have entailed crossing the wards.

Finally, we emerged into one high-vaulted cavern chamber. Our torches were guttering at this point as we navigated the steeply ascending terrain ahead of us. Midway up the incline, Okent commented about feeling slight tremors. We glimpsed flares of flame ahead of us. As we got closer, we saw a smooth, curved



rock shift toward us. I think it was Grubba who first realized it was an eye.

"Is this lunch crawling on my back?" we heard the booming voice beneath us say.

"Uhh ... no?" I stammered.

The dragon hummed. "What is the weather like outside?"

"It's ... damp?" Raichael offered.

"I see." There was a long pause. "Before being awakened, I had the oddest dream that I roasted some Humans alive who were crawling on my back. Strangely enough, my dreams often come true. Do you take my meaning?"

"Was there a Dwarf in your dream?" I asked shortly before Okent cuffed me across the head.

"There was. I swallowed him whole."

"Right. Umm ... we were just leaving."

"I know you were."

And with that, we beat a hasty retreat; only then did we notice the bodies, skeletons, and piles of treasure and coins littered around and under the Dragon. I was so stunned on the way out, I was only able to find several handfuls of gold. Oh, and a sparkling wand.

To make a long story short, we somehow went from moving quickly out of the cave to running for our lives. Several days later, we concluded that we had evaded the pursuing Dragon. However, I am deeply concerned

CALTROPS

Maneuvering through caltrops requires an *acrobatics* roll, with a difficulty ranging from 10 to 20, depending on the quantity and quality of caltrops. (In theory, the difficulty could get up to 25, although at that point, there would be so many hideously expensive caltrops on the floor that it'd indistinguishable from a bed of nails.) It normally takes twice as long to maneuver through a bed of caltrops than it does clear terrain; thus maneuvering through a 10-meter patch of caltrops would take two rounds for a person with a Move of 10. Taking extra time to “prepare” means wading through the caltrops longer but lessening injury, while rushing through the field increases the difficulty — and the damage. (See the “Preparing” and “Rushing” rules on page 52 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*.)

If the character doesn't make this *acrobatics* roll, the degree of failure is the damage done to the person traversing the caltrops. However, this damage cannot exceed the difficulty rating of the caltrops. Depending on the character's attire, the gamemaster may decide that her armor doesn't protect her.

Regardless of the *acrobatics* roll or any damage taken, the person moving across the caltrops gets past them (unless she is Stunned or otherwise slowed down by injury).

Example: Okent is chasing a cutpurse who scatters caltrops behind him (covering a 10-meter patch). The caltrops are shoddy, having a difficulty rating of 10. Okent would normally need to take two rounds to get across that patch, but he needs to pass through it as quickly as possible, so he takes 50% less time, incurring a +10 difficulty penalty (raising the *acrobatics* difficulty to 20). Okent's player rolls abysmally, failing his *acrobatics* roll by 14. However, since the caltrops only have a difficulty rating of 10, Okent only needs to deal with 10 points of damage. If he had failed the roll by 6, he would only need to deal with six points of damage. Regardless, he traverses the patch and continues the chase.

Caltrops have a price difficulty or number of gold per 10-meter square coverage equal to their difficulty rating, up to 20. In use, a person can drop twice as many caltrops to get a +5 bonus. (Thus someone could buy two batches of difficulty 10 caltrops, or one batch of difficulty 15, and get the same result.) Deploying caltrops requires a *throwing* total of 10 or greater to accurately cover a 10-meter area; this deployment range can be no greater than two meters.

about the untrusting nature of Dragons; this creature failed to believe me any of the times I threw my newfound gold behind us and said I didn't have any more of its treasure.

It **is** a beautiful wand, though.

VARIANA

Even among the temperamental Earth Dragons, Variana is known for her extreme capriciousness. Within the course of a single conversation, she can go from haughty to conversational to murderous to reconciliatory. Yet even these mood swings are not constant; she has been known to exhibit the same personality for a month or more.

Scholars who have researched Variana have differing opinions regarding her irrationality. Some argue that, since her egg hatched in an area prone to earthquakes, her spirit absorbed the unstable nature of her birth land. Others posit that she has spent most of her life around natural deposits of the liquid metal mercury, which has shaped her mind. Another theory holds that her magical nature makes her as unstable as the eldritch energies she seeks to control. Still others argue that she was merely **born** somewhat crazy; expansions of this theory speculate that the land around Variana may change in response to her moods. Regardless, sages agree that anyone who pierces the mystery of her psyche might gain invaluable knowledge into the link between Earth Dragons and the land itself.

Sadly, most seekers of lore have done little first-hand investigation of this enigma; sage guilds and religions alike take a dim view of suicide.

Perhaps the only reason Variana's eccentricities are tolerated (outside of the fact that there's no one powerful enough to do anything about it) is that she is as much a force for good as she is for ill. After years without incident, she hovered over a nearby city to bestow treasure and grain during a blight. Three years later, well after the city had recovered, she went on binging raids against farmers' livestock. Yet another time, she drove off a pack of Fire Dragons who threatened area villages.

The fact she possesses vast knowledge of the arcane arts is not a secret. In fact, many mages and sages seek her out to request aid or

enlightenment, although a smaller subset of those walk away from the encounter and an even smaller subset have any kind of satisfaction. However, one of her most closely guarded secrets is that she is extensively proficient in shapeshifting, and often walks among the two-legs in cities seeking adventure, treasure, and occasionally aid. Her vanity means that she never chooses anything less than a stunningly beautiful form (of either gender), and her temperament ensures that trouble will follow wherever she goes.

Beyond these excursions (and the occasional lunch raid on wild or tamed animals), she keeps more or less to herself, unless bothered. What happens in those situations is entirely dependent on her frame of mind. However, if her home is threatened, she will fight with unbridled ferocity to resolve the situation. She's spent an Elf's lifetime attuning herself to her cave, and she knows her survival is directly tied to its.

Within a campaign, Variana can exist as a catalyst for any kind of "Dragon" story the gamemaster would like to run. Her shapechanging abilities make it possible to infiltrate Human (or other) society, where she might seek adventurers to aid her. She might be sought in her home as part of a larger story; she possesses many rare treasures and arcane knowledges. If provoked (or if she slips into a darker mood swing), she can be a ferocious foe. Lately, she has been harboring more maternal feelings, going so far as to set up a protective chamber for a nest. If a group were to do a service to make this possible — such as finding her a mate or protect her offspring — she would probably be grateful as long as she was still sane. Of course, the nearby locals would be worried as long as they were still alive ...

Agility 2D+2 (+10): acrobatics 7D, dodge 7D+1, fighting 10D, flying: 9D+2

Coordination 2D: marksmanship: fiery breath 10D

Physique 2D (+14): lifting 8D, running 6D, stamina 8D

Intellect 3D+1: cultures 7D, healing 4D+2: obscure cures 8D, navigation 6D, reading/writing 6D, scholar: arcane lore 10D, speaking 6D+2, trading 6D

Acumen 2D+1: disguise 5D, investigation 6D, search 6D, streetwise 3D, survival 4D+2, tracking 6D

Charisma 3D+1: bluff 6D, charm 5D+2, command 6D, intimidation 7D, mettle 6D+1, persuasion 5D

THE HOME CAVE ADVANTAGE

Dragons are fully described in *D6 Fantasy Creatures* (page 23–27), and that volume should be consulted for general information about them. The Earth Dragon is the type most commonly found in caves, although other Dragons might be found here if some other aspect of the cave suits their environment. For example, a cave in a cloud-scraping mountain might attract a pack of Air Dragons, while a volcano's cavern system might lure a Fire Dragon.

The specimens described in *D6 Fantasy Creatures* are "typical" versions; young dragons can be somewhat less powerful, while elder dragons can be much, much deadlier. Even for experienced adventuring groups, an encounter with a Dragon should never be trivial... especially for those who dare confront a Dragon within its own cave.

Those Dragons who live in caves almost universally have Infravision or Ultravision (*D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 35), which enables them to navigate and defend their own cave fully. However, some Dragons are unable to see in the dark normally but instead develop a "sense" about their own caves; in other dark situations they maneuver no better than anything else, but within their caverns they hold absolute dominion. Such a Dragon's "cave sense" might be represented by the Special Ability:

Ultravision (R6), +12 to sight-based totals in darkness with Restricted (R3), to Dragon's own cave.

In fact, "Restricted (R3), to Dragon's own cave" can be a useful addition to a Dragon's repertoire for many Special Abilities, representing the significant advantages a Dragon has in its own habitat. Combat Sense, Sense of Direction, Skill Bonus, or Skill Minimum are all reasonable Special Abilities for Dragons to have within their caves, and even more unusual ones such as Luck or Ventriloquism are not impossible. ("Yes, tiny pink ones, you hear my voice all around you, do you not? It is so rare I get to play with my food ...")

Of course, Dragons are also powerful and mysterious enough to have these abilities **outside** their caves as well.



Magic 2D+1: alteration 3D+1, conjuration: shape-shifting spells 6D+2, divination 3D+2

Strength Damage: 1D (+14)

Move: 10

Fate Points: 3

Character Points: 20

Body Points: 26

Wound levels: 5

Disadvantages: Achilles' Heel (R3), Home Attunement: can only heal damage by resting within her cave, without the aid of medicine or magic; Infamy (R3); Quirk (R3), mercurial; Quirk (R3), territorial; Quirk (R2), vain

Special Abilities: Flight (R4), flying move 80; Increased Attribute: Agility (R10), +10 to related totals; Increased Attribute: Physique (R14), +14 to related totals; Longevity (R1); Luck, Great (R3), with Restricted (R3), to Dragon's own cave; Natural Armor: Scales (R3), +3D to damage resistance totals; Natural Hand-to-

Hand Weapon: Claws (R3), +3D damage; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Teeth (R3), +3D damage; Natural Ranged Weapon: Fiery Breath (R2), damage 6D, range 10/20/40, with Ability Loss (R1), may only fire once every other round; Ultravision (R6) +12 to sight-based totals in darkness

Advantages: Size (R4), scale value 12; Wealth (R3)

DOJO

Although he believes in furthering the causes of good, Okent isn't prone to displays of spirituality. So when, without provocation, he said, "I have to go this way," and darted off in an apparently random direction within the bustling seaside town of Inachon's Point, we followed.

We arrived outside a boxlike building. It stood out against its surroundings by its contradictions: It was, simultaneously, less ornate yet more refined than the neighboring buildings. Lacking the elaborate statues, lanterns, or bright paints of the

other shops and homes around it, it should have been completely invisible. But it wasn't. The building itself was the most refined place of its type I'd ever seen. While the other shops and houses seemed content with serving their functions adequately, this place wanted to be the **best** ... whatever it was. The rich planks of its walls and doors were thin but strong cherry wood, precise and beautifully interlocked. The front entrance had three graceful characters above it, which I transcribed into my notes. We entered and immediately felt at ease as the faint smell of incense infused us.

The entry chamber continued the simple beauty of the exterior, and I realized now that this must be a school of some sort. It had an aura of education; individual mats pointed toward a slate, which had pictographs obviously depicting a small man throwing a bear over his shoulder.

After several minutes, our tranquil study of this place was startled back to reality by the sound of Raichael

OTHER PLACES ♦ 65

gasping; we turned to see what caught her attention, and noted a man standing there. He introduced himself as Master Quyen Ota. Seemingly young and vibrant yet with an atmosphere of power and experience, he asked why we had come. Okent explained that he felt compelled to come here.

Quyen nodded, as if this was not in the least bit unusual, and said, “Do you wish training?” Okent paused, struggling to answer. Quyen continued. “I should warn you, however, that the Path of Stone is difficult, and it must only be used for good. You must defend the weak, protect the innocent, and uphold virtue. Are you prepared to do this?”

I guffawed, and others in our party snickered as well. Master Ota might have well asked if the sun had plans on rising in the morning. I caught the teacher’s eye and noted the gleam signifying he understood the rhetorical nature of his own question. Okent himself was smirking, and he nodded in the affirmative.

I asked Master Ota what the markings above the entrance into the building meant. He smiled and said, “Step through this doorway and learn.” I nodded.

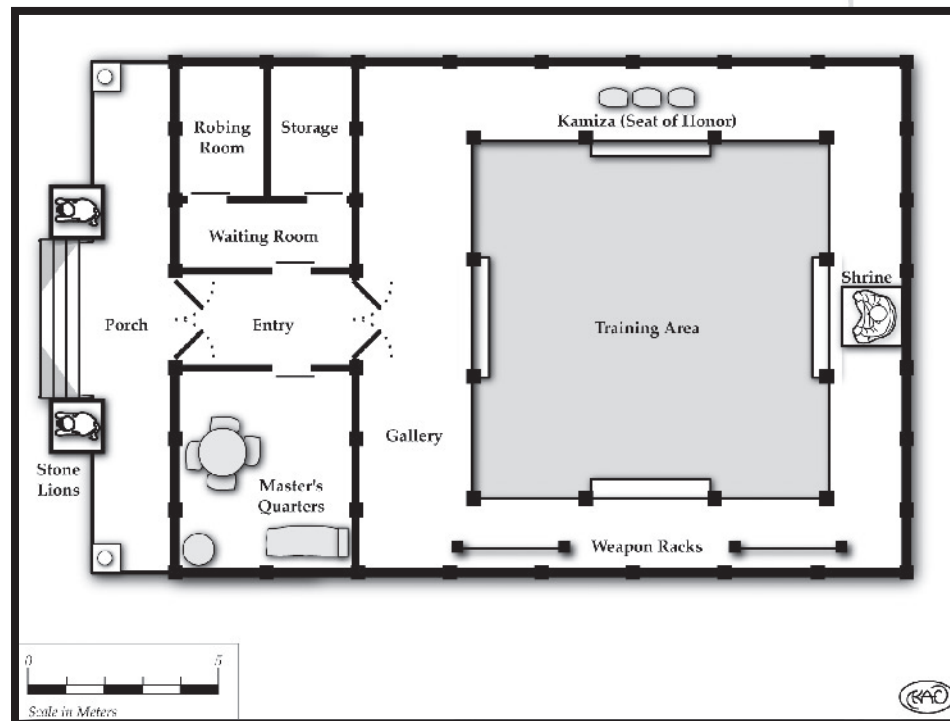
Okent’s training mirrored the structure of the dojo itself. He began in the robing room, which was bare save for places to hang normal clothing and two sets of robes. One set of white cotton robes were worn for functional instruction while the other silk set was more ceremonial, although still not overly gaudy. The color of the silk robes denoted the level of training. The red robes indicated a novice, followed by orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, which signified the highest rank. A sign on the door indicates whether the room is in use. (When asked if women were permitted training from his school, Master Ota replied, “Only hubris would allow an architect to build a house while excluding its walls.” This drew an appreciative nod from Raichael.) We were also introduced to the washroom, which provided private facilities, including a bath.

After Okent changed, Master Ota took him to the *nafudakake* — a board showing the rank-

ings of all the students, with each name engraved on a thin vertical plank. This board ensured that pupils of roughly equal levels trained against each other, and it gave students something to strive for. Quyen explained that, although there were seven other students listed (three red robes, two oranges, a yellow, and a blue), this was the beginning of a month-long event for his students at a martial arts competition in another place. He frowned as he said it — the first betrayal of his inner calm — but informed us that Okent would be his only student during this period.

A small shelf containing small ceremonial items and an actual bound book was also along the wall. The book, Master Ota told me, was called the *Precepts of Stone*, and it contained most of his martial teachings. “If such a book were to fall into the wrong hands,” he said gravely, “the results could be dire.” Grubba asked, “If that’s true, then why isn’t it kept in a vault?” Quyen explained that, to lock away knowledge is to entrap it, which is a dishonor. “Besides,” he said, “As long as I live here, it has a guardian.” While I had little doubt as to the Master’s efficacy, I nevertheless worried: Couldn’t the book be used to train an army with the might of Master Ota, but without his discipline and honor?

And then we were led to the training room. This served as our primary residence for the next few weeks, becoming our domicile and Okent’s chamber of beatings. (At least, that’s how it seemed to me.) This room consisted of a huge padded area, a storage closet containing additional training supplies, and a small shrine



MASTER OTA

Agility 4D+2: acrobatics 5D+2, dodge 5D+2, fighting 7D+2, melee combat 6D+1

Coordination 2D+2

Physique 2D+2: lifting 3D, running 3D, stamina 3D

Intellect 2D: scholar: teaching 5D

Acumen 2D: investigation 3D+1

Charisma 2D: command 2D+2, mettle 4D

Strength Damage: 2D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 10

Body Points: 28

Wound levels: 5

Disadvantages: Devotion (R3), to Path of Stone; Enemy (R2), foes of his school

Advantages: Fame (R1)

Special Abilities: Ambidextrous (R1), +1 to select skill totals when using two hands; Combat Sense (R1), -2 to surprise modifier; Fast Reactions (R1), +1D to initiative and 3 extra actions per adventure; Hardiness (R1), +1 to damage resistance total; Pain Tolerance (R1), ignore effects of 1 level of injury

along one wall devoted to the spirit of stone. Lighting usually came in from overhead through a translucent paper ceiling, although in times of inclement weather, the roof was covered and we used lanterns inside.

Once Okent's training began, I was surprised to see that Master Ota wore the same red robes as an initiate. When I asked him why this was, he answered, "The true master knows that he is but a novice. The more he learns, the more he knows that he knows nothing."

The mat, I discovered, consisted of modular segments that could be changed to simulate different conditions or situations. The standard flooring was tightly woven straw, which provided ample padding. During the course of the month, however, we watched Okent train on many types of mats and surfaces:

- A gigantic silk sheet covering the entire floor, making it treacherous and slippery.
- A grid of crisscrossing bamboo, about a half meter off the ground. The gaps in the bamboo force the combatants to stay focused, lest their feet fall into the empty squares and put their ankles at risk.

- A large valley formed by wooden segments and spanning the entire area. Extending two meters off the ground at each side, this training method forces students to be aware of slanted surfaces and height differences.

- A balance beam positioned three meters off the ground, with the usual objective being to knock the opponent to the padded floor. At first, Okent believed this was solely to train him in balance and to fight along a line. But late in his training — and in a moment of clarity — he swung underneath the beam, using his momentum to carry him under and over the beam, knocking Master Ota off. The Master was impressed and greatly pleased, noting that a true master of the martial arts does not limit himself to preconceived notions or self-imposed limits, outside of those dictated by honor.

In addition to simulating different environments with the mats, Master Ota trained Okent in various conditions, including being blindfolded, having the arms or legs restrained, and fighting while both combatants hold the same pole — the goal is to get your opponent to let go.

After several weeks, I was surprised to learn that the paper ceiling was not entirely for light, as Okent and Quyen sparred on the roof. The object was to not get knocked through the ceiling ... or, if you were, to avoid bruising one's posterior as much as one's pride. Okent's final match, to determine his level of mastery, involved a dizzying three-tier battle: The balance beam was hoisted to the roof, and Okent and Quyen started atop it, battling to the rooftop, through the ceiling, to the mat below, and eventually sparring into the entrance antechamber before Master Ota, appearing pleased, called the match over.

Finally, after a month, Okent was presented with a yellow robe in a formal ceremony. "You are permitted to resume your journey whenever you like," Master Ota said, "and your name shall remain on the nafudakake."

As we left that noble school, I noticed — for the first time — the characters above the doorway leading outside. I smiled, realizing they were the same as those leading in: "Step through this doorway and learn."

MARTIAL ARTS IN D6 FANTASY

Training in any martial arts is represented by the *fighting* or *melee weapons* skill, depending on whether

the martial art is armed or unarmed. The specific martial art is **not** a specialization of the skill; rather, that is simply how the combat skill manifests in the character. However, specific maneuvers are permissible as specializations, such as *fighting grab*. These should generally represent particular aspect of a martial art in which the character is particularly skilled, and they cannot thus be purchased without having the base skill; it's difficult to justify how a character knows how to do a Judo tackle without knowing any other aspects of the style.

Supplemental aspects of martial arts are represented by other skills, usually *acrobatics* or *dodge*, although some skills — such as *climbing* or *stamina* — can be gained because of martial arts training. In addition, many noncombat features of a style can justify other skills, such as *healing* or *stealth*.

For moderately cinematic games, many Special Abilities are appropriate. These include: Ambidextrous, Combat Sense, Fast Reactions, Hardiness, Iron Will, Pain Tolerance (see the related sidebar), and Skill Bonus.

For wildly cinematic games, other Special Abilities can be purchased to represent truly super-skilled aspects of the character's training. These include: Armor-Defeating Attack, Hypermovement, Invisibility, Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon, Paralyzing Touch, Silence, and Skill Minimum. Most — if not all — of these abilities are only available at low levels; the character isn't truly becoming invisible, but rather using his incredible stealth abilities to be unseen by even the most skilled eyes.

Players and gamemasters are encouraged to be creative for these kind of powers. For example, a character might purchase Flight (R1) with Restricted (R2), to require physical contact with roughly horizontal surfaces (for a combined cost of 4). This would represent the ninja-like ability to run on water or other surfaces that wouldn't seem to support a Human's weight.

Although cinematic martial arts abilities can confer Special Abilities, they are usually balanced by Disadvantages. Many martial artists take on vows forsaking monetary attachments (Debt and/or Poverty), find themselves under attack by their school's foes (Enemy), and usually take on the code of honor and conduct taught by the school (Devotion). Those who do not have any such restrictions are often called "ronin," which marks them as those with the martial knowledge but not the responsibility (usually resulting in Infamy among the school's other members).

Note that this is the most basic method of including martial arts in games. Gamemasters

may devise their own, including creating packages of skills and Special Abilities; designing special maneuvers with their own difficulties and effects; and so on.

CHALLENGER'S FORGE

Coincidence or kismet, Okent's new training found use a few months later. While visiting a nearby township, we learned that a beloved patriarch — named Hideaki — had been kidnapped. If the locals' story is believable, this resident had been living there for over 500 years, and his great-great-more-greats-than-I-have-fingers kids were worried sick. Worse, somehow the health of the village seemed tied to this man. The town's water had an acrid taste, its chickens grew sickly and thin, and the sky possessed an unseasonable chill — all of which coincided with Hideaki's disappearance.

We learned that he had been taken by agents of a man named Shadohowl, who apparently wanted to try to harness the secrets of his agelessness for his own desires. Regardless, Okent — whose nose, I'm convinced, has a preternatural ability to detect simultaneous opportunities for doing good and endangering us all — volunteered our group to retrieve him.

Shadohowl, I discovered through some nontrivial investigative work, had spirited himself away to an incredibly secret martial arts tournament, known only as the Challenger's Forge. (I gloss over much of this aspect of the tale; suffice it to say, the group owes a great debt to a certain bard willing to drink small cups of rice

NEW SPECIAL ABILITY: PAIN TOLERANCE

The character is, for whatever reason, resistant to the effects of pain. This doesn't keep her from becoming damaged, but it does prevent some of the supplemental effects of injury. For each level, the character ignores the effects of one level of injury. Thus, a character with this at Rank 3 would ignore the effects of Stunned, Wounded, and Severely Wounded. At Rank 5, the highest level available, the character ignores all penalties up to and including Mortally Wounded; she can continue acting at full capacity until she is dead. Character creation cost: 2.

alcohol and investigate every tavern within a day's walk of the village.)

The trouble with infiltrating the Challenger's Forge was multifold.

Learning of the event. Sure, we just stumbled across it (thanks to Okent), but how do others find out about this event? I have some theories. This competition might be a big deal among martial arts types, such that, if you're the bulkiest muscle-bound board-breaker in five counties, they'll find you. But I suspect that knowledge of this event might be lore in particular regions, or among certain family lines. Why might that young gal be competing? Because every firstborn child in her family has competed for generations. It might also be common lore among some martial training schools. Or it might be a "prize" at the end of an arduous maze or dungeon: "Congratulations! By opening this chest, you qualify as a competitor for ..." Regardless, it's a well-kept secret, and learning about it could well be an exciting tale itself.

Finding out where the event is. This was more difficult than I imagined. How hard could it be to track down a competition housing over a hundred freaks bristling with bone-crunching power? Well, it turns out it's pretty troublesome when it's not in this world. The Challenger's Forge is, as best I can describe, hidden in an extradimensional space. We reached it from a certain riverside dock we learned about, showing a special marker to the quiet yet creepy captain of a small boat. He rowed us down a littler known river

tributary — a stretch of river, Raichael assures me, she had investigated previously. The air surrounding us became dark and ominous, and after a while we docked outside a series of buildings that seemed to be the support facilities to keep all the competitors and their supporters fed and housed. (If I were writing such a tale and looking for a more realistic premise, I note that a competition could easily be kept secret in an underground cavern system ... or perhaps a village whose citizens transform their town into the arena, making it a regional secret.)

Getting an invitation. As I mentioned, we needed a marker to show the boatman. The marker in question was a small painted ceramic tile, resembling those used by the area residents to play a local game. These were in limited quantity but didn't seem tied to a particular competitor. Again, the tale behind how we tracked down and retrieved one of these markers will make for a rousing ditty all its own.

Paying the mark. Once we arrived at the event, our first encounter was with Susumu, a groundskeeper for the Arena. He asked who was competing, and wanted to know what we had brought to wager. Apparently this event goes on the assumption that each competitor will make an offering to the game. This must be an item of great value, and most of our mundane offerings were rejected. Finally, Okent offered the wand we had retrieved from the dragon's cave. Susumu accepted it. I cried. Raichael muttered that Susumu had a destiny path too akin to the boatman. When pressed for clari-



BREEZE AND WIND ARENA CHALLENGES

Water: Getting from one island to the next requires a *jumping* total of 15 (for those with a Move of 10, as per the rules of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 55). More information on the giant eel is in *D6 Fantasy Creatures* (page 30); this is a slightly smaller version of that animal.

Giant Eel: Agility 5D, fighting 5D, contortion 5D, dodge 5D, stealth 5D+1, Coordination 2D, Physique 3D, lifting 4D+1, swimming 4D, Intellect 1D, Acumen 2D, search 3D, tracking 3D, Charisma 2D, intimidation 3D, mettle 2D+2. *Move:* 10 (swimming). *Strength Damage:* 2D. *Body Points:* 14/*Wound levels:* 2. *Natural Abilities:* breathe in water; constriction (successful tackle does +1D damage per round, cumulative, after the first round, to a maximum of +3D); jaws (damage +1D); thick hide (Armor Value +2); large size (scale value 1).

Fire: The flames deal 2D damage if someone comes into direct contact with them, plus an additional 1D in damage per round for 1D rounds; fire damage can be lessened or prevented if reasonable precautions are taken (such as dousing clothing in water), at the gamemaster's discretion. Jumping over the flames requires a *jumping* total of 5.

Earth: The rocky ground counts as "very rough terrain" and imposes a +15 difficulty modifier, as per the movement rules of the *D6 Fantasy Rule-*

book, page 56. Direct, uncontrolled contact with the rocks (such as being thrown or tackled on them or critically failing a failed movement roll) causes 2D in additional damage.

Air: The ropes require skill to swing and maneuver with. The complex way to represent this is to call for an *acrobatics* roll each turn to maneuver into position on the ropes, with a minimum difficulty of 13. Swinging from the ropes and attacking in the same round necessitates two actions, and incurs a multi-action penalty as a result (see *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 51). Hanging from a rope does not require an action, although anyone attacking that person hanging from the rope will have a +5 bonus.

The simple way to handle combat in the Air area is by assigning a +10 modifier to all actions while hanging or swinging from the ropes; failure indicates a miss, while failure by more than 10 indicates a possible fall to the spikes (with an *acrobatics* check at 15 to avoid this).

The sharpened spikes deal 3D damage to anyone who falls, drops, or is tackled on them. The ropes have a Toughness of 0 each, and thus ropes taking 10 points or more damage in a round are destroyed (as per "Breaking Things" from the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 69).

fication, she said, "I believe they are the same person." The implications and seeming impossibilities of this disquieted us.

Anyway, once we made our way inside the Challenger's Forge, we were escorted to our quarters. Sparse and simple like all the buildings here (except the "Arena"), they were nevertheless suitable for our needs. (I also note that many of the more vain competitors brought their own furnishings and ornamentation to decorate their temporary homes.) An incredible number of servants skittered everywhere — at least two to three

for each competitor — and they had a resigned look about them. Raichael told us that she felt they weren't being mind controlled or unduly influenced; although the environment was oppressive, it didn't seem worse than a harsh noble's domain.

That evening we were classified by Zinan, a dignified gentleman with a gentle laugh. (Raichael frowned again: "The same as Susumu and the boatman.") Competitors are categorized into three classes: "Breeze," "Wind," and "Typhoon." Okent grumbled at his Wind status, until he saw the next person who came in after us

COMBINING ATTACKS

Remember that combining attacks uses the *command* skill, as per page 76 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*. In the case of a forced or impromptu team-up, such as the Wind competitors endured, the difficulty modifier is +15 (“Never worked together before”).

In a tight controlled fighting environment, each round of a successful *command* roll reduces this penalty by 1, to a minimum of 0; thus after six successful *command* uses the penalty would be +9. This penalty negation only applies to a specific combat; after the combat is over, the penalty would reset, since the team was synchronizing their efforts against one specific threat. Of course, if the team worked together frequently, their default *command* penalty would slowly decrease and could eventually become a bonus if they stuck together long enough.

Most of the time, unwilling teammates would require a *persuasion*, *charm*, or *intimidation* roll to sway to working together. However, even one successful *command* result afterwards is enough to convince most that working together is in everyone’s best interest, at least in the short term.

In combat situations, for simple commands of only a few words (and having a difficulty of 3 to 11), the *command* roll does not require a separate action. For more complex maneuvers needing some degree of precision on the part of most of the team, the leader must go before his teammates and the *command* attempt counts as a separate action.

was classified as Typhoon — a hulking brute of a man named Breaker of Granite. Okent is no coward, but he’s no fool, either.

The next day, we got to see some of the Breeze competitors, as well as our first encounter with the Arena. In much the same way that we needed to step through to someplace else to get to the Forge, so too did we step through another gateway to reach the Arena.

We emerged inside a small coliseum — with shallow seating suitable for a thousand people or so — where the central circular area (30 meters in diameter) had been divided into quadrants, each representing one of the four elements. The walls between quadrants were about 1.5 meters tall — big enough to separate them, but small enough to allow people to look or jump over.

The water section had three small islands — each barely big enough for a single man — forming an equilateral triangle. Each island was five meters apart,

and a giant eel-like creature swam around inside, no doubt licking its lips in anticipation. The fire area had three parallel rows of burning wood extending across most of the quadrant, each about two meters apart and shooting flames two meters high. They formed small corridors, and those who fought there needed to maneuver around, over, or through the flames.

The earth section had large jagged rocks placed haphazardly throughout its quadrant, making it a treacherous environment for the weak-ankled. Finally, the air region consisted of dozens of ropes tied to an overhead gridwork (which was heavily greased to prevent fighters from climbing up there); competitors needed to swing and maneuver from ropes while attacking each other, being careful to avoid plummeting to the spiked floor below.

As we grew acclimated to the site of the Arena, a skinny androgynous person in gaudy ornate red robes emerged from an official-looking area along the edge of the coliseum. This person — whose name was announced as Nanashi — seemed young (in his late twenties), with a wide smile and slicked-back hair that formed a shell just above the shoulders. Welcoming us in with sweeping gestures and loud proclamations, Nanashi was clearly in charge.

Nanashi started pairing up the Breeze competitors to battle. Nanashi seemed mercurial, choosing conditions and terms

for the battle almost at random. As but a few examples of the terms:

- Where to battle (competitors must battle within one quadrant, two or three adjoining quadrants, or anywhere)
- The terms of battle (to first blood, first knockdown, first two of three hits, a time limit, or even death)
- Any special conditions (no weapons, only weapons, competitors blindfolded, etc.)

However, these conditions were always fair, or at least universal; there was never a condition such as, “The shorter competitor will be bound and gagged!” (On the other hand, when Nanashi declares a weapon-only match, and you’re a bare-fist fighter while your competitor looks like she sleeps with her sword ... well, “fair” won’t be the four-letter word you’re likely to spout first.)

OTHER PLACES ♦ 71

The Breeze competitors fought over the course of several days, and our clandestine search of the grounds for Hideaki proved fruitless. The Breeze competitors and their supporters were dismissed, forced to leave the event; the “inferior” weaker fighters weren’t permitted to watch the more skilled combatants. The top three competitors collected a share of the rewards based on the value of the markers staked by the Breeze competitors: First place won 50 percent of the treasure value, second place won 30 percent, and last place won 10 percent. (Nanashi claimed the remaining 10 percent as the cost of upkeep.)

The next day, the Wind fighters took to the stage; still there was no sign of Shadohowl. The Arena had been completely redesigned — not merely what was on the floor, but its actual shape and structure. The Arena floor had been replaced with a smaller 20-meter circle. This time, the spectators sat **above** the proceedings, climbing ladders to another 20-meter disc that hovered above the Arena. This floating platform seemed as transparent as water, yet solid as stone. These were clearly powerful magics.

The Wind-level competition had the fighters face off two at a time in randomly chosen teams. Most of the fighters here relied on a “gimmick.” I’m not trying to dismiss their abilities, but they had a more unifying theme than their Breeze counterparts. Some of them had magics or abilities that corresponded with an element or environmental condition (lightning, fire, metal, or the like), some had a preferred prop or weapon, and others had a form of attack they’d studied to the exclusion of all others (such as one gentleman I dubbed “Crazy Only-Able-To-Kick Man”).

After each round of Wind competition, the teams were mixed up at random, so no team had an advantage. Finally, when the competitors were down to one team, Nanashi had that team face off in one-on-one combat. As it so happens, Okent survived each round and went on to the final. He wasn’t

the best fighter, but he’s a born leader and got his teammates to work with him better than anyone else. Through the luck of the draw, Okent’s final teammate happened to be weaker than him, and Okent won the battle (albeit not without some bruising).

Again we searched for Hideaki during this competition, but the old man was nowhere to be found. We conferred with Okent briefly before his victory round, telling him we needed more time; unfortunately, we would be sent home after this fight if we didn’t think of an excuse to stay. Okent pondered this, and after he won against his final battle, he requested that he be permitted to compete in the Typhoon event. There were gasps from the audience. Nanashi gave an enigmatic smile, and said that to do so Okent would need to forfeit his winnings from the Wind level, to prevent people from fighting below their level for easy treasure. Okent said, “That is agreeable,” and they carted away his treasure. I cried.

Two days later, the Typhoon competition began. It was then that we received word: Shadohowl had arrived. Not wanting to associate with the “riffraff” of weaker competitions, he purposefully showed up as late as possible. Even so, we couldn’t see him, because he stayed hidden in his tent; even his servants that kept watch over the outside of his tent looked massive.

We concluded that Hideaki must be within that tent, and we’d only have one chance to rescue him: during



TYPHOON ARENA CHALLENGES

The terrain in the Typhoon-level Arena can be extremely dangerous.

Any time a character rolls a one on the Wild Die, roll one regular die and consult this table:

- 1: A hazard springs up or shoots out, causing the character 1D to 6D damage (roll 1D to determine how many damage dice to roll).
- 2: The character is impaired by a bright light, spray, dust, etc. for one round.
- 3: The character steps in a trap, goo, muck, etc. and can't move for one round, though he can still take upper-body-only actions.
- 4: The character stumbles or is distracted and loses initiative next round.
- 5: The character's upper body is entangled or immobilized for one round, but she can still use her legs.
- 6: The character drops his weapon or, if he has no weapon, he's stunned by some circumstance. In either case, he must spend the next round doing nothing but recovering.

a time when Shadohowl was competing. All that was required was the luck of the draw permitting Okent to compete after Shadohowl, since if he competed before and lost, he'd be forced to go home.

So, naturally, Nanashi demanded that Okent and Shadohowl fight at the same time ... each other. Clearly the gods have a strange sense of humor.

For the Typhoon competitions, Nanashi pulls out all the stops to make as interesting and tortuous a background as possible. For Okent and Shadohowl's battle, Nanashi set up the Arena with a border of strange contraptions, each four meters tall, spinning a wall of swords, axes, knives, flails, and other weapons. Getting too close to any part of the edge except the entryway was a sure way to get hurt — bad. In addition, large sections of the dirt floor had hidden traps: vents to underground hot springs, bear traps, and the like.

The Arena floor was enlarged to 40 meters; there weren't as many seats this time since everyone else except Typhoon competitors and their helpers had been sent home.

The competition began, and for the first time we saw Shadohowl: a three-meter tall hulking brute of a man whose muscles rippled with power and whose eyes glinted with a cold cruelty. This man not only loved fighting and bringing pain to others; he **lived** for it.

We heard Nanashi's condition for this battle: until someone surrenders. We learned that Nanashi seldom imposes any other unusual terms on these battles, preferring it to remain a competition among equals (or those who think they're equals, at any rate). However, Nanashi does impose varying designations for the end of the match, and will commonly deign them "to the death" — especially if it seems there is animosity or a grudge between the competitors.

Our plan was simple: Okent would battle Shadohowl, and at the same time, we would investigate Shadohowl's tent to find Hideaki.

The tournament began, and after a couple of rounds, we realized that Okent was entirely out of his depths. He was struck so hard across the face that a thin mist of blood flew across us, and Raichael wanted to spring into the Arena to help him. Okent, holding himself together, shouted at us, "Go; do what you must!" Grubba guided Raichael as I sneaked ahead to Shadohowl's tent. The guards there put up an incredible fight, and I was only able to imagine what Okent was going through. There within the tent, a weak and frail old man lay bound and gagged on the floor; as we freed him, he identified himself as Hideaki. We began our escape.

As Grubba and Raichael guided Hideaki back to the boatman, I returned to the Arena ... hoping to find Okent still alive.

Okent had discovered his best strategy was to stay out of Shadohowl's way. In fact, that was the only way he had any hope of surviving. I could hear the buzz from within the audience: Why wasn't he surrendering? Did he want to die? Will this be the blow that kills him?

The dirt of the Arena floor was slick from Okent's wounds, and it looked like one more blow would finish him. I gave a whistle as I approached, and caught Okent's eye. Raising his head weakly, he said, "I surrender."

Shadohowl replied, "I don't care," and went in for one more attack — a blow, everyone knew, would be fatal.

I'm not sure why I did it, or even how, but I found myself moving as fast as I could, acrobatically vaulting over the whirring perimeter to interpose. My attack surprised Shadohowl, knocking him back. Again fortune

was with me, as he stepped into a pit of a supernaturally cold substance, which clung to his foot and no doubt caused him incredible pain.

Okent struggled to stand as I pressed the advantage. I started taunting him, hurling every mocking invective I could muster. I must have done something right (or wrong), because he hurled himself at me in an inhuman rage. Again I mustered my courage and, as he charged me, I ducked, using my legs to pivot him up and over me ... into the bladed walls.

Immediately the lummox became jammed between two of the devices, an axe imbedded in his chest and a morningstar wrapped around his legs. Rather than harming him significantly, it just made him angrier; his confinement no doubt added to his rage. But I didn't care as I escorted our badly hurt friend out.

We made haste and escaped via the boatman — curiously, Nanashi was nowhere to be found — and eventually returned Hideaki to his village. The villagers were ecstatic and helped tend Okent's wounds. Part of me was glad we did the right thing, but another part of me realizes that doing so cost us a large winning that Okent had won, and we'd earned a powerful, cunning enemy who will, no doubt, be hunting for us now.

COMPETITORS

SUMMER BLOSSOM

TYPICAL BREEZE COMPETITOR

Summer Blossom, a wonder at only 18 years old, has the potential to be a world-class fighter some day. Unbeknownst to her, she has also been simultaneously blessed and cursed by her deceased older sister, named Winter Bloom. Winter's village was attacked by barbarians, who committed all manner of atrocities as they slew everyone within. As a newly formed spirit with a hatred for all men, Winter contacted her sister Summer — who was away from the village at the time — and protected her with magic: So long as Summer avoids the kiss of a man, she shall be immortal. Summer can still talk to her sister, who does what she can for Summer with information, insight, and advice.

Agility 4D: acrobatics 5D, contortion 6D, dodge 6D, fighting 6D, jumping 5D+1

Coordination 2D+2

Physique 2D+1: running 2D+2, stamina 3D

Intellect 2D: traps 3D

Acumen 2D: tracking 3D

Charisma 2D: mettle 2D+1

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 4

Body Points: 22

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Devotion (R3), to improving her fighting skills; Quirk (R1), aloof

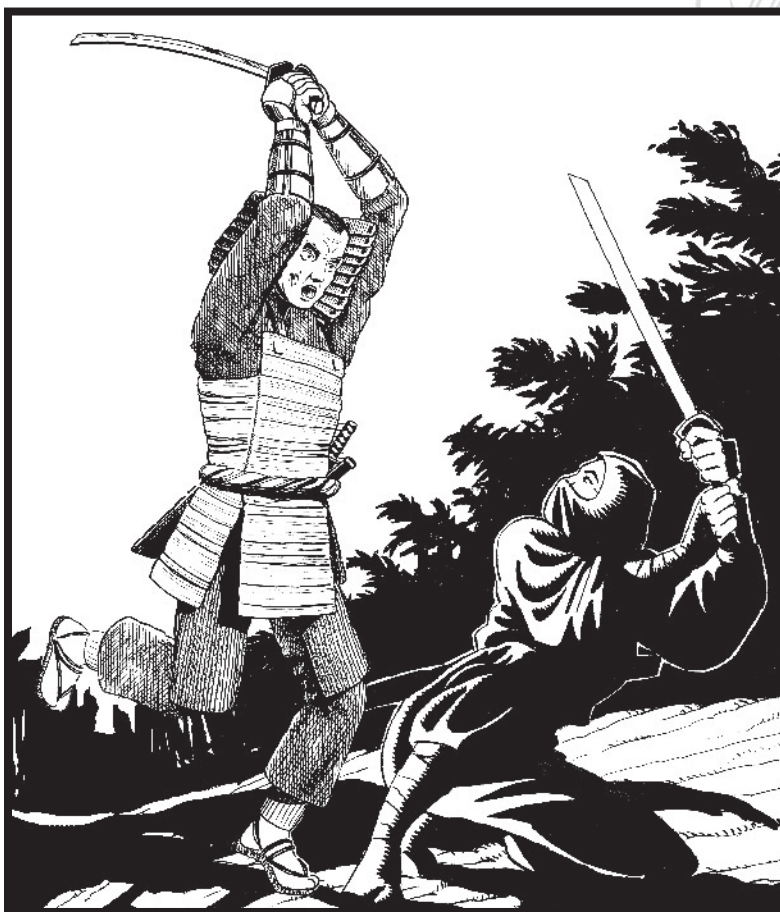
Advantages: Contact (R3), spirit of sister

Special Abilities: Immortality (R1), cannot be killed so long as she avoids kissing a man, with Additional Effect (R2) of regeneration to full health after being "killed," allowing lost limbs or the like to grow back

FANG

TYPICAL WIND COMPETITOR

Fang has been a professional mercenary for years. He identifies strongly with snakes, basing his martial arts styles, education, and even mannerisms on the snake.



He usually fights in combat with at least one serpent, training them to do his bidding. (For more information on snakes, see page 75 of *D6 Fantasy Creatures*.)

Agility 4D+1, acrobatics 6D, dodge 7D+1, fighting 7D+2

Coordination 3D, throwing 3D+1

Physique 3D, stamina 4D

Intellect 2D: scholar: snakes 4D

Acumen 2D+2: survival 3D

Charisma 3D, animal handling: 6D, charm 4D+2, mettle 4D+1

Strength Damage: 2D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 4

Body Points: 24

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Quirk (R1), no sense of taste or smell; Quirk (R2), does everything in a snakelike manner

Advantages: Trademark Specialization (R1), throwing a snake at someone with one hand at the same time he does a piercing thrust with the other hand

Special Abilities: Iron Will (R2), +2D to *mettle* totals and +4 difficulty modifier to all interaction attempts and mental attacks

SHADHOWL

TYPICAL TYPHOON COMPETITOR

Little is known about the hulking brute called Shadohowl. Many whisper that he gained his skills and power by entering into a dark pact with unknown forces, but this could be a lie. Regardless, all anyone knows is that he has never lost a fair hand-to-hand combat. However, he is cunning, and if it seems that an encounter is going to end with him losing, he will retreat. He usually kills his opponents, but if they escape he takes great delight in tracking them down and killing them. Although viewed as exceptionally cruel, a few who've witnessed him discreetly note that there might be a tormented and sensitive side, as they have witnessed his giant hands folding paper into delicate and beautiful shapes. If so, it might be possible to redeem him some day ... although that seems like an exceptionally challenging prospect.

Agility 3D (+6): acrobatics 7D, dodge 7D+1, fighting 9D+1, melee combat 8D+1, stealth 8D

Coordination 3D+1: lockpicking 4D, marksmanship 3D+2, sleight of hand 3D+2, throwing 4D+1

Physique 2D+2 (+6): lifting 7D, running 4D+2, stamina 4D

Intellect 3D: cultures 4D, speaking 4D+1

Acumen 3D: artist: origami 5D, disguise 5D+2, hide 3D+1, tracking 4D

Charisma 3D: intimidation 5D+1, mettle 4D

Strength Damage: 4D (+6)

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 4

Body Points: 28

Wound levels: 5

Disadvantages: Debt (R2), to dark master(s); Infamy (R2), cruel and fearsome opponent; Devotion (R1), to causing pain and injury; Quirk (R1), provokable to blind rage

Advantages: Fame (R3), dangerous and highly skilled opponent; Size: Large (R1), scale value 3

Special Abilities: Accelerated Healing (R1), +1D to natural healing rate; Ambidextrous (R1), +1 to select skill totals when using two hands; Combat Sense (R1), combat modifier from surprise is at -2; Increased Attribute: Agility, Physique (R6 each), +6 to related totals; Natural Armor (R1), +1D to damage resistance totals

LABYRINTH OF KEPHALOS

Kephalos, an emperor who was justly elected with the help of a carafe of poison, thought it would be a good idea to sink a decade's worth of his kingdom's income into the construction of an elaborate labyrinth. His people, while showing their appreciation at being driven to the brink of poverty, misplaced a dagger between his ribs. Rumor has it that pieces of his corpse were accidentally tied to large rats and released into the labyrinth.

Centuries later the labyrinth — or Kephalos' Demise, as it's also known — remains an impressive legacy of the Kephalos reign. In fact, modern descendants in the region view the construct with a sense of pride, and look back on the emperor's era with a certain nostalgia.

Our travels brought us to this labyrinth in the spring, with the heat high and our tempers short. To make a complex story simple, someone in our group was found in a compromising position with the current emperor's curious daughter, there was a trial, and this person was thrown — along with his companions — into the labyrinth. This person is truly sorry, and has learned a valuable lesson: Don't get caught.

Anyway, this kingdom's laws have evolved for serious offenses to a trial by ordeal; those who escape are considered innocent, and those who don't are considered guilty. (There's actually a fair bit of debate

about how this code of justice evolved; apparently before Kephalos, there was an elaborate judicial system that relied on a “jury by peers”; this system was discarded after Kephalos’ reign. I suspect the rationale was, “Well, as long as we have this great labyrinth ...”)

We were allowed to bring all our gear; the reasons behind this were confusing, having to do with the time of year, the omens of the stars, and (for all I know) the size of our boots. Apparently, the essence of transgressors’ guilt and punishment is determined by the emperor, while the priestess determines the classification of guilt and the conditions of punishment. (In our case, the emperor found us guilty of doing something wrong; the priestess decided it was an “imperial transgression.”) The result of this is that the emperor gets to decide whether someone is thrown into the labyrinth, while the priestess decides how easy it is to get to the center and light the signal fire, which notifies the keepers to unlock the entrance to the maze. Then, the prisoners need to safely make it back to the beginning, which has become the way out.

In researching the matter, I learned of some other conditions the priestess has placed on those tossed into the maze:

- Weapons only; no armor (or vice versa)
- All gear except torches, lanterns, or other light sources
- The group must be attached to each other in a line with chains
- No gear or clothing permitted
- The party must escape within a certain amount of time (for example, a day)
- The party must spend a certain amount of time within the open-air chamber (for example, a day)



And so on. The limitations so placed seem constrained only by her creativity.

We learned that the labyrinth also is used for other rituals and festivals, especially the larger chambers and open-air portions. For example, one of their local temples sponsors a “Closeness of Community” ritual each spring solstice, where the faithful mill about the maze, learning to rely on each other to ensure that no member of the community is lost or left behind. Before these events, a group of brave individuals scopes out the labyrinth, clearing out any obvious corpses or critters and negotiating with the Minotaur. These groups are prevented from getting lost by the tying one end of a spool of string to the beginning of the entrance, with the party unwinding the spool as they travel; they only need to rewind the spool to find their way out. (Of course, if someone or something within the labyrinth were to cut, eat, or retie the string, life could get very complicated for those travelers ...)

However, this information didn’t help us in our punishment. The underground half of the construct contained no light source and was thus completely

dark; however, the open-air portion was lit by whatever ambient sunlight shone from above. The labyrinth's walls were smooth yet intricately decorated, containing glyphs, engravings, and pictographs, as well as the clawing and scratching of those who've passed through the maze. Although it would be Very Difficult, I imagine anyone who had an appropriate *scholar* ability could learn a lot about the history and customs of this region's past; who knows what treasures the carvings might describe? (Of course, going voluntarily into the

maze specifically for such lore would be a foolhardy move, in my experienced opinion.)

The maze itself was challenging, and the chittering of various life forms kept us on edge. We managed to get to the center and light the signal fire in short order, but then we realized we had forgotten how to get back to the start. After wandering the corridors for a half-hour, we had an encounter with a fearsome creature: a three-meter-tall Minotaur!

Resisting the urge to fight or flee, Raichael invoked a miracle that soothed the creature and helped us charm it into guiding us to escape. It's lucky we did, because I'm sure we would have wandered there for much longer, and possibly encountered some of the maze's other strange inhabitants. However, shortly before we were lead to the exit, the Minotaur seemed to become enraged and lunged for us; it took some lucky evasive maneuvers to outrun the beast.

Scarcely an hour after we set into the maze we emerged, much to the emperor's sputtering disbelief. The emperor grudgingly decided that we must be innocent, and a wedding was prepared for the offender (whoever he may be) and his daughter. We fled that night, with said daughter graciously providing the supplies we needed to escape. I think we both agreed that getting devoured by a Minotaur was a preferable fate to being stuck with each other.

AISCHROS THE MINOTAUR

Aischros is a sad specimen of a Minotaur. Long ago, Aischros stole some supplies from the original construction site of the Labyrinth of Kephalos. When the emperor's guards tracked down the bull-headed creature, they dragged him back before the ruler. Whether Emperor Kephalos was more or less merciful to Aischros than similar thieves (whom he sentenced to death) is open to debate; Kephalos decreed that Aischros stay within the confines of the construction site for the rest of his days. The priestess, Lady Thaleia of the Half-Light, insisted that her own will be added to the sentence. She asked her deity to bestow Aischros with longevity and the need to never eat. (Scholars who know this tale

CHEATING

While it may be tempting to cheat in the Labyrinth of Kephalos by going over, under, or through walls, it's by no means easy.

All walls within the maze have a toughness of hardened brick (3D+2), as per the "Breaking Things" rules on page 69 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*. Furthermore, at least 15 points of damage must be dealt to make a hole of roughly Human size; this number is adjusted by one for every two points of a scale value, rounding up; thus a Cyclops (large, scale value 6) would need to deal 18 points of damage to make a hole big enough for it, while making a hole large enough for an owl familiar (small, scale value 7) would require 11 points of wall damage. Such damaging attempts would certainly reverberate throughout the labyrinth, and it is likely some of its denizens would come to investigate.

Since half of the maze exists in the open air, it may occur to some to clamber over walls. They are 10 meters tall and are considered smooth for climbing purposes (+20 difficulty; see "Climbing" on page 56 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*), although given enough time and effort, it's certainly possible. Of course, those able to fly over the walls would not have any such difficulty.

Finally, some might consider digging their way under the walls. This is slightly easier but more time consuming than going through the walls. The floor has a toughness of 2D+2 and takes 12 points of damage to yield a hole big enough for one Human-sized tunneler (modified by the scale rules, as above); it takes two such successful attempts to get under a wall.

Regardless, most of these efforts would be, of course, damaging to the Labyrinth of Kephalos. If these attempts are discovered and the damage is significant, the emperor would be most displeased (as would some of the maze's inhabitants).



suspect it is the first instance of this kingdom's unusual dual sentencing ritual.)

Over the course of years, the rest of the maze was constructed around the Minotaur; the last brick sealed the hole where his glowering red eyes peered out.

Over the centuries since, Aischros has wandered the labyrinth. The intense solitude has caused his mind to fracture. Part of him wishes nothing more but to escape. However, shortly before reaching the exit, the other portion of his mind awakens; this part wants nothing but to dwell within the maze forever, and so he wanders to the center of the maze again. At this point, his other personality takes control and the cycle repeats: go near the exit, go to the center.

Neither aspect of Aischros knows about the other. However, the continual wandering has proved deeply confusing and unhelping, and he is even angrier than other Minotaurs. It's still possible to reason with him, however, especially if one convinces his escaping half that they can help him get out.

How he might ultimately leave his fate is up to the gamemaster, and could make a good story, especially if

he knows the location of a valuable treasure from long ago. However, those who would seek to aid Aischros should beware; his unaging is tied to the ground of the labyrinth, and leaving it would cause him to age to dust within minutes unless that aspect of his longevity could be counteracted.

Agility 3D+2: fighting 4D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D

Coordination 2D: throwing 2D+2

Physique 5D: lifting 7D, running 5D+2, stamina 6D

Intellect 3D: navigation 5D+1

Acumen 2D: survival 3D, tracking 4D

Charisma 2D+1: intimidation 4D, persuasion 2D+2, mettle 4D

Strength Damage: 4D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 1

Character Points: 4

Body Points: 25

Wound levels: 3

Advantages: Size: Large (R1), scale value 3

OTHER ENCOUNTERS

The Labyrinth of Kephalos is home to all manner of unusual creatures, although most of them are small or can leave via the open-air portion of the maze. Appropriate encounters from *D6 Fantasy Creatures* include the giant bat, domestic cat, ooze, scorpion, giant spider, and toad. These creatures may have a die or two of *navigation Labyrinth of Kephalos* or *Infravision/Ultravision*, representing their adaptation to their environment. Undead such as skeletons and zombies might be formed from the corpses of those who are lost within the maze.

In addition, those within the Labyrinth may encounter any other any Human or humanoids who are forced to the maze at the same time. Of course, why these people would be here and whether or not they can be trusted to team up with could form an interesting encounter all by itself ...

Disadvantages: Quirk: Bull-Headed (R2), +6 bonus to those trying to trick or anger into blind rage; Quirk: Split Personality (R3), part of him wants to escape, while part wants to stay forever

Special Abilities: Longevity (R1) with Burn-out (R2) if Aischros ever leaves his labyrinth; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Horns (R1), +1D damage; Omnivorous (R1) with Additional Effect (R3) doesn't need to eat or drink; Sense of Direction (R4), +4D to navigation and tracking

Equipment: Large axe (damage +3D)

MINE TUNNELS

After months of travel, we realized that we were close to the mine tunnel system Grubba worked in, so we detoured to return to what he called "home."

This mine tunnel system was more finished than many others I'd seen, with many

supports and smooth walls that would only require a polishing or two to make shine. Mine tunnels are a prime example of a location that's designed with a specific purpose in mind. In this case, it's mining, or the extraction of metal ore, jewels, and other elements from the earth.

The form of a mine tunnel will mostly depend on how long it's supposed to be utilized, the composition of the earth, and what "surprises" exist when digging the mine.

Mines that are designed for short-term usage — perhaps because diviners have discerned that there isn't much metal or because the extracted material is needed quickly — tend to be much more shoddily constructed, with few supporting braces, alternate routes, and other safety mechanisms. They are also generally very narrow, although they can be wide but shallow if the mountain is unusually strong. Long-term mines — those that are expected to yield lodes for a decade or longer — are often built much more sturdily, and could even serve as a short-term fort or city if the need arose.

The makeup of the mountain itself will also have an effect on determining the character of the mine. Those that are built within unusually soft rock will



often require many braces and supports, and typically have crumbly, cavelike ceilings and walls. Those made of harder material — like Grubba's mine system — can be much more solid, almost resembling the stone walls of a castle.

Finally, nature likes to play tricks on miners, putting all kinds of obstacles within the mountain. For example, diggers might discover some harder rock that cannot be easily mined, or a chasm that extends under the currently dug mine. If these uncertainties can be worked into the design of the mine, then the architects often do so. Alternatively, the dangers may need to be sealed off, such as a mine shaft that opens into a chasm; it's a brave or foolhardy explorer who pokes around past any hallway that has been specifically blocked. (In fact, I've heard of one mine system that had a demon down a blocked-off section, trapped within a simple chalk circle.) In extreme examples, it may be necessary to close or even evacuate the mine — sometimes quickly! This is especially true when underground sources of water are discovered; a thin wall between a mine and a river can collapse the entire tunnel system.

There are a few other points to keep in mind when considering mines.

Mines are three-dimensional. In addition to moving left and right, mines can slope up and down. Those mines that use wheeled mine car mechanisms (which themselves require *charioteering* abilities) take every effort to ensure that the slopes are as gentle as possible, but that's not always an option, especially when obstacles within the mountain force an alternate path. (Tunnels with mine cars also try to have gentle turns, since even a moderately fast-moving car can tip over when it hits an overly sharp corner.)

Mines are dark. Obviously, being underground means that there's no natural light. Human mines tend to have lanterns, while those made by humanoids with ultravision or infravision often have little or no light sources, which can be very disorienting to those who need such things.

Mines are a group effort. It's an exceptionally foolhardy miner who digs alone, since so much can go wrong: ceiling collapses, pockets of poisonous gas, and accidents can trap someone within a mine, doomed to starve to death or worse. As a result, miners are usually accustomed to working together and helping one another.

If I was writing a tale set in a mine shaft, there are a number of tacks I could take. First, if there was anything mysterious or unusual buried in the earth,

TYPICAL HUMAN MINER

Agility 3D+1: climbing 4D+1, contortion 3D+2, dodge 3D+2, melee combat: pickaxe 4D

Coordination 3D: charioteering 3D+2

Physique 3D+2: lifting 5D, stamina 5D+2, swimming 4D

Intellect 2D: devices 2D+1, navigation 2D+2

Acumen 2D: investigation 3D, know-how 2D+1, search 4D, tracking 3D

Charisma 2D: command 3D, mettle 3D+2

Strength Damage: 3D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 16

Wound levels: 2

Equipment: pickaxe (damage +2); shovel (damage +2); helmet (Armor Value +2 to head only); leather vest (Armor Value +2)

Information on Dwarves, including a sample of those most often found within mountains, can be found on page 28 of *D6 Fantasy Creatures*.

miners would usually be the first ones to find it ... or deal with it. Second, a mine would be a perfect place to set a rescue mission. It's entirely possible for a person to be accidentally (or intentionally!) lost within an unsafe mine, and it could be a real challenge to rescue someone in that situation. Finally, miners can be very insular and suspicious of outsiders, and if there was a secret hidden within a mining community or information that only they possessed, it might be very difficult to get it from them; the easiest way would probably be to become a miner for a period, enduring the dangers of the mine to get closer to them.

But, mostly, mines are a good way to keep Grubba from getting too anxious as we go from one overland journey to another.

MONASTERY

At the request of Raichael's superiors, we found ourselves visiting a collective of monks to build stronger ties between her faith and theirs. The monastery

— beautiful in an understated kind of way — belonged to the Order of the Highest Sun. (As an aside, I wonder why more religions don't use exotic travel as a means

of recruiting: "Become a traveling holy minister and make your friends jealous of all the fantastic places you'll visit!")

The abbot, a jovial round-faced older man named Brother Nyll, informed me that this particular monastery was fairly small, capable of supporting 10 monks — 20 if they installed bunk beds. ("Monk bunks?" I volunteered helpfully. Okent elbowed me in the ribs.)

Raichael and Brother Nyll needed to discuss business, so I took an opportunity to investigate the monastery. I was done in what seemed like five minutes, although it might have been six. Abbeys and monasteries, I realized, are places where the devoted go to escape the distractions of worldly trappings. As such, anything that isn't necessary to the base needs of living is devoted to the clearing of the mind or the deepening of faith.

In fact, even some things that are necessary for living have a decidedly different bent. For example, the Order of the Highest Sun has (logically) the sun as its central focus. As such, they work the sun into many of the sundries of life. For example, they don't have a fireplace. Rather, a ladder leads from the kitchen to the roof, where a highly polished huge shallow metal bowl collects the sunlight and focuses it, giving the heat necessary to boil water, cook, and so on. (I asked Brother Nyll what they did on those days when the sun didn't shine. "Pray harder," he said, betraying a slight smile.)

The chapel is the focal part of the abbey, serving as the physical reminder of the monks' spiritual lives. This particular chapel had a beautiful stained glass ceiling, which allowed the sun to enter in a blinding and glorious display, especially when it loomed high overhead.

The lay brothers made their residences in two types of chambers — small and large, although even the "large" ones still made me feel slightly claustrophobic. All chambers consisted of an uncomfortable bed, a simple wooden box that served as both a night table and storage, and a candle. The abbot's chamber was a little bigger and contained a shelf with numerous scholarly books and religious artifacts.

The dining room had barely enough room for 10, so I deduced that, should the monastery ever have more residents, they would need to eat in shifts or make other arrangements. The kitchen, while functional, definitely served to reinforce a life free of material distractions. The storeroom contained enough supplies that, fully stocked,

TYPICAL MONK

Agility 2D

Coordination 2D

Physique 2D

Intellect 3D: healing 4D, reading/writing 4D, scholar 5D

Acumen 2D+2: crafting 4D

Charisma 2D+1: mettle 3D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 11

Wound levels: 2

Disadvantages: Devotion (R2), to the holy order (including a vow of poverty)

Advantages: none

BROTHER NYLL

Agility 2D

Coordination 2D+1

Physique 2D

Charisma 3D+1: charm 4D, command 4D+2, mettle 4D

Intellect 4D+2: cultures 3D+1, healing 4D+2, reading/writing 5D, scholar 6D

Acumen 3D+2: crafting 4D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

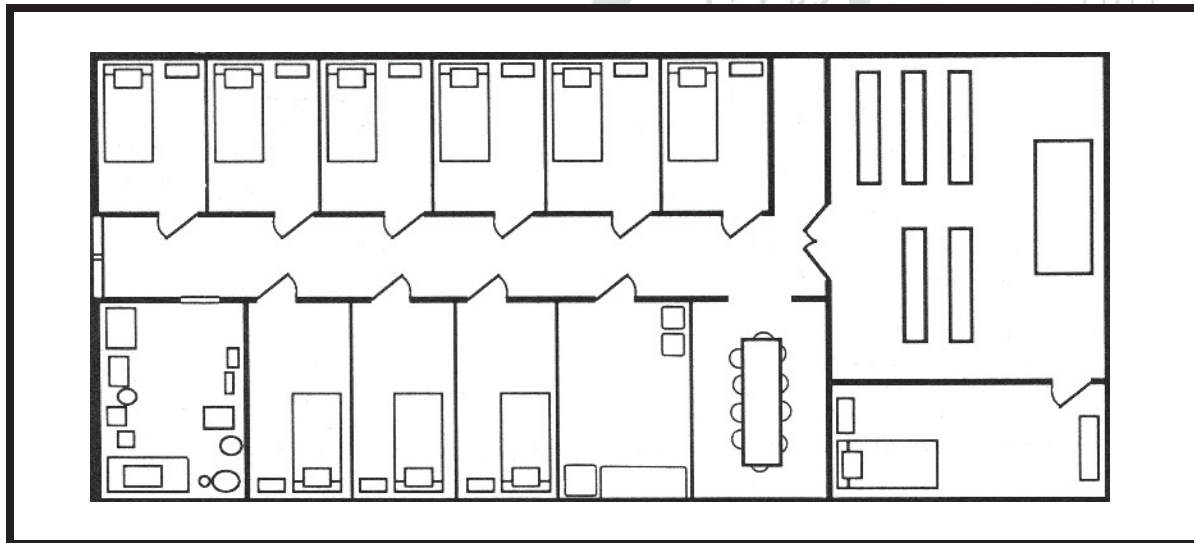
Character Points: 4

Body Points: 21

Wound levels: 4

Disadvantages: Age: Old (R1); Devotion (R2), to the holy order (including a vow of poverty); Employed (R2), to the holy order

Advantages: Authority (R1), over the holy order; Contacts (R1), within the holy order



could feed 10 for four months (assuming relatively light eaters and that their nearby well would continue supplying water). For most of the year, the brothers kept their supplies much lower, with the supplemental space used for their crafts.

What crafts? Well, many monasteries are self-sufficient, and as such they will often have crafts or artistic products that they can use to make money. Common crafts or talents include book or manuscript scribing, cheese making, and making wine or beer. (Speaking from firsthand experience, I can say that some monasteries make a truly divine brew.) Basically, anything that requires a lot of patience, skill, and spare time — but **not** constant supervision or work — is a good candidate for a monastery. Alternatively, if it's something that requires a lot of effort, then the act itself can be worked into the spiritual regimen of the monastery, such as melodic chanting. Scribing is also common in this regard because spending hour after hour writing is a great way to reflect on one's soul. The Order of the Highest Sun has an unusual craft: mirrors. Feeling that mirrors reflect the radiance of their divine inspiration, the Order creates some of the most breathtaking mirrors I've ever seen, made from a durable, highly polished metal. They receive the metal elsewhere, cut it into shape outside, and polish it at the dining room table while ritually praying for hours on end. (I've heard of some places making mirrors out of silver-backed glass, but they are much more fragile, and aren't as free of warping as polished metal. Trust me — glass mirrors will never prove common.)

So what's there to do at a monastery? Well, if you're a monk, the answer is obvious: Pray. These institutions

serve as places of spiritual solitude, away from the distractions of the world. When I asked Brother Nyll what they hoped to accomplish, he replied, "To keep the sun shining bright." It's a place for those who feel a yearning to a holy life but who do not feel they have the calling to be a leader within the faith. They pray for the good of their order, their believers, and — ultimately — the world. I postulated that the faithful have their communities strengthened by having these places as part of their fold. Brother Nyll chuckled and said, "And the existence of the faithful strengthens ours."

For those who do not belong to a monastery, there are still opportunities for improving one's well-being, either physical, mental, or spiritual. Monasteries are often home to people skilled in healing arts, so they can be an ideal place to rest and recover. Such ministrations aren't free — especially if one isn't a member of the order's religion — although most monasteries will heal those who seem at least somewhat aligned to their goals for *Moderate Funds* (a gold piece or two per day). Of course, if a person were poor and in dire need, it seems unlikely most monasteries would turn him or her away, at least for a night.

Monasteries are also great sources of information. In some regions, they remain the primary (or only!) means of duplicating documents, manuscripts, and books. Given how rare and precious a commodity their lore can be, almost all monasteries require those seeking knowledge to gain permission of the abbot (and possibly even higher up in the religious hierarchy, depending on what is sought). Regardless, it will usually be *Difficult* to afford their knowledge (at least a couple dozen gold coins), and it will be *Very Difficult* to buy one of their

MIRROR OF THE HIGHEST SUN

These holy items are highly polished metal, made more reflective than any conventional means by the abbey's secret process. Although it does not seem to have any miraculous abilities of its own, it can augment other effects that rely on light or the sun. Thus vampires find light reflected by this mirror even more unbearable, illusions using it as a component are more effective, and so on (Uncanny Aptitude (R4), +4 to all totals utilizing or requiring sunlight; Burn-out (R1), can be lost or stolen). Price: VD (100 G).

books outright (at least 100 gold), assuming they would be willing to part with such information; far more common in this regard would be to trade a deed or favor from such seekers in exchange for the lore. Nevertheless, monasteries remain the sole surviving source for some information, and they can be worth it.

Finally, monasteries serve to strengthen the souls of the faithful or those seeking reaffirmation or enlightenment. Although not their primary function, they can nevertheless serve as temporary homes for those requiring a spiritual respite, either for a couple of days or a more extended period (perhaps years).

Monastic life is not for the fainthearted. Most monasteries rigidly define one's life, telling monks when to sleep, eat, worship, and perform other duties. Monks must usually take vows beyond a conviction to the monastery's order: chastity, poverty, and silence are all common. (In particular, the vow of silence is often misunderstood. Like most such vows, it teaches self-discipline, and isn't an absolute; most monks are permitted to speak or sing during prayer, when completely necessary to finish a work assignment or respond to a visitor, or when addressed by a superior.)

Of course, one doesn't spend the better part of a day at a monastery — waiting for one's clerical companion to stop gabbing with another religious superior — without coming up with other ideas. As such, here are some other possibilities for what I might do, if I wrote a tale set in a monastery.

Monasteries offer seclusion and insularity. While this is wonderful for those seeking respite from worldly distractions, it can also provide an ideal canvas for stories requiring secrecy. For example, a murder mys-

tery is ideal for a monastery; it's a closed-off environment and there are a limited number of suspects — many of whom don't speak! A monastery would also be a good place for someone unscrupulous to hide; presuming he could con his way in, he could remain undetected for months or even years. And if this miscreant had other nearby objectives, he could use the monastery as a base of operations.

A monastery can serve as the last stand against some evil, either physical, spiritual, or both. Although not fortresses, most monasteries are designed to withstand some level of attack, especially if they contain items, crafts, or knowledge of value. A group of heroes might seek to aid a region under attack by using the monastery as a line of defense, working with the monastery to cobble together offensive or defensive strategies. Of course, for this story to

work, the monastery (or at least the abbot) would need motivation to thwart the assailants; many monasteries place themselves above the petty squabbling of nations and wars. But attacks of an evil, mystical nature would surely draw the monastery's attention, and woe befall any attackers who forget that such places often commune with higher powers dedicated to order and good.

Finally, the establishment or rebuilding of a monastery might be a long-term goal for a sufficiently pious individual, bringing much of the same flavor of castle-building tales while advancing the holy person's religion and faith.

As for myself, I volunteer to help any monastery that has sufficient brewing ambitions to hone their offerings.

RUINED CASTLE'S DUNGEON

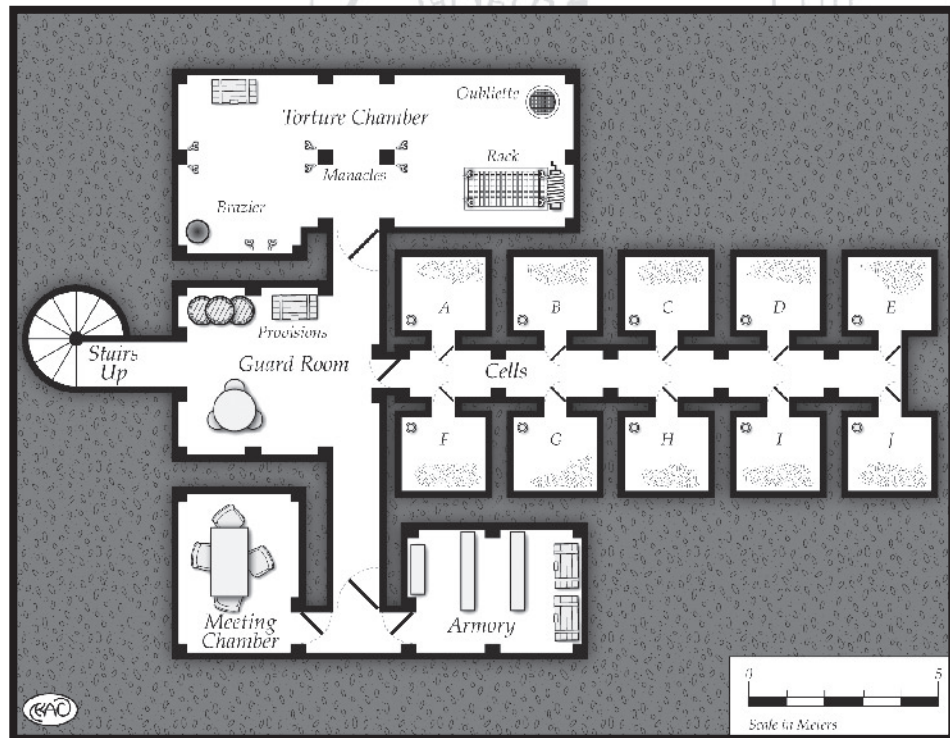
It was noon when we arrived at the rubble that denoted a previously mighty fortification. How the castle became ruined, and why it has remained such without being replaced, I do not know. The large hilltop it rests upon appears (to my admittedly untrained eye) an exemplary location, overseeing the region below and providing excellent visibility for kilometers in all directions, especially from the one seemingly sturdy tower remaining in the valley-side corner. Raichael seemed to sniff the air, looked up to the sun, and uttered a short prayer to her deity. "Ill omens," was all she would say, and I got the feeling this would prove, yet again, her extreme capacity for understatement.

Looking for clues within the ruins, we discovered a few points of interest. Grubbastoked his long beard and asked if he could poke through the ruins on his own. We assented, and the dwarf wandered off in an expression of absolute glee (which is to say, he was scowling less than normal).

After searching for a time, we found what seemed to be the remains of the throne room. Any valuable trappings had long since been destroyed by the elements or looters, but it still exuded the regal style as typifies royalty. After some more examination, we found a collapsed secret door which led to the castle's dungeon.

There are some general misconceptions among commoners about typical castle dungeons. The normal vision is a sprawling, vast complex, replete with dozens of chambers and corridors, containing prisons, supply rooms, and so on. This is generally wrong for a number of reasons. First, any kind of under-earth burrowing is hideously expensive; unless there's a specific reason for doing so, a castle's underground construct, if it exists at all, is likely to be modest. (Of course, plenty of castles are constructed by those with a less-than-full grip on reality, which can be reason enough for making a sprawling dungeon.) Second, sprawling underground prisons are rare beneath a castle. Prisoners scarcely ever warrant the expense of building a dungeon; in fact, in most kingdoms they seldom warrant the expense associated with **feeding** them. Wrongdoers in most kingdoms are punished by fines, banishment, or death. Occasional short-term public humiliation (such as a public cage or stockade) may serve for those who need to be taught a lesson by brief imprisonment.

Regardless, the only folks you want to seal beneath the earth in a full dungeon are those who are too dangerous to set free or too valuable to let go. Political prisoners most commonly frequent dungeons, although those who know valuable lore (especially of an arcane nature) might also be found there.



The final reason there aren't more sprawling castle dungeons is that it presents a security risk. A moment's thought will reveal why: If you're building a thousand-ton castle on a spot of earth, digging beneath the foundation is a good way to ensure your castle becomes ruins. (In fact, if an enemy castle does have such a dungeon, it's possible that an adventuring party might be tapped to play the role of sappers against it, sneaking into the dungeon and weakening the ceiling to help invaders take or destroy the fortification.)

Because of all these reasons, most dungeons beneath castles — if they exist at all — are small... "hole-in-the-ground" tiny. The normal purpose of the dungeon is the short-term holding of a small number of prisoners (no more than four, kept in two rooms of two people each, although only having enough space for two — or even one — is common). Soldiers usually guard above such tiny dungeons at the sole entrance.

However, this castle's ruined dungeon was an exception, being somewhat more elaborate than the typical underground hole. It seems this dungeon served primarily to imprison and interrogate; the entryway opened into an antechamber which led to 12 prisoner cells, each sealed with a lock that would take Moderate *lockpicking* ability to thwart. The doors consisted of stout wood, with grated openings to peer in and a slot at the bottom to give food. We weren't interested in exploring the chambers fully, but it stands to rea-

son that any number of secrets might be housed in those cells, either in the form of gear the prisoners managed to hide on them, or else in messages or lore hidden within. I've heard of one prisoner who carved an elaborate enciphered text on the inside of his cell using a fork, over the course of his months of captivity; the guards never new because they never bothered to open the cell door.

The next room was a full-fledged torture chamber. The smell of rusting iron and sound of creaking chains filled the air as we moved quickly through here. There was a door similar to those blocking the cells between the torture chamber and the prison antechamber, and I realized that this probably let the interrogators control whether or not the other prisoners heard what they were doing to their fellow inmates.

This chamber had a thick, sealed door that would be difficult to open for anyone *lockpicking* it. We weren't able to penetrate the door's defenses, but peering through the keyhole I realized it was a weapon closet of some sort; apparently this dungeon also served as a secondary defensive measure for the castle. The door had to be nearly impenetrable in case the prisoners escaped, so they couldn't arm themselves. (There might also be untold treasures behind that door — or maybe just an angry skeleton tapping its foot impatiently.)

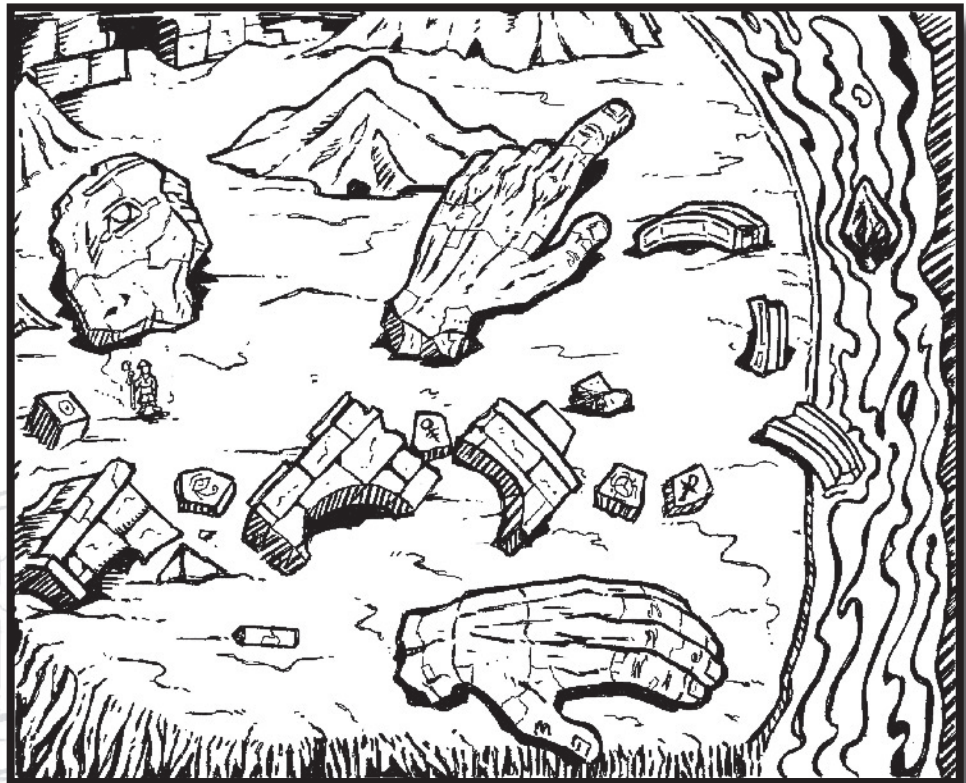
Finally, the torture chamber opened up into a little meeting room, with a small table and chairs. Upon closer examination, I realized the walls of this room were lined with cork — apparently to keep prying ears from hearing what's going on amid those who gather here. (It wouldn't surprise me to learn the walls were ensorcelled to prevent supernatural scrying, as well.) Apparently whoever owned the castle above reveled in secrets, both extracting them from others and keeping them himself; given the phenomenal cost in the cork lining alone, I can only guess that these secrets were more than paying for themselves.

As we were ruminating about the implications of this dungeon — and what secrets might still be hidden within these chambers — we heard an armored figure rapidly approaching. Drawing our weapons, we turned around ... only to spot Grubba coming at us full tilt, gasping. "Short of breath?" I asked our diminutive friend, causing him to draw his axe and stagger tiredly toward me. Okent interceded and Grubba, grumbling, told his tale. "I found another underground cavern system. In investigating, I learned there lurks some kind of inhuman presence there. They have sensed our presence here, and are clawing at the earth separating their caves from this dungeon. We need to get out of here **now!**"

Never needing incentive to run from a fight, I led the way out of the castle's dungeon. I can only hope that any secrets that might still remain buried weren't so important that we should worry about them falling into hostile hands ... or needing to wade into those enemies in a future effort to retrieve this lost lore.

RUINS OF THE ANCIENTS

It comforts us at night to believe that we, as a world, have come far. We can turn the tiniest seeds into the mightiest oaks. We can build mighty castles, then



suspend them in the air with magic. We have harnessed the wind and sailed the seas.

But there are a few mysteries left in this world that serve only to show us where we've been. How far we've fallen. And how far we may yet fall again some day.

Such is the way of the ruins of the Ancients. These monuments were created by a people known to be here no longer. (At least, this is the supposition; however, this may not be the final word, as I will reveal shortly.)

Here's what we know for sure:

They're big.

Okay; perhaps we know a little bit more.

There seem to be four areas of interest within these ancient ruins located by a cliff and waterfall. First, there is the remains of a gigantic arc or circle covered in unknown runes. Assuming that the arch was complete at one point, it would be possible to lead a herd of elephants through it. What purpose this might have served, if any, is completely unknown; it could have been as mundane as an archway to a city, or something as magnificent as a gateway to someplace else.

Some people of great power have discussed trying to reassemble the arch, but these plans have always fallen apart. Perhaps the project is just too daunting, or perhaps the universe itself rebels against the endeavor. Regardless, the fragments of the archway by far compose the most complete of the ruins, and the unknown runes on the pieces form the most complete record of their language (unknown as it is) that we currently possess.

The second area of interest is a portion of a gigantic face. Sages find this piece amazing because of how much of the face remains, yet how little information can be gleaned from it. The eye is smooth and betrays no insight. The face ends at the forehead, so it's impossible to see if, say, it wore a crown or similar sign of royalty. The mouth and cheeks reveal no discernible emotion, and even the gender of the face (if the Ancients had such a concept) is open to interpretation. Artists find this ruin amazing, because it's possible for viewers to project any type of emotion or connotation atop the face: a sad child, a stern mother, or a peacefully benevolent monarch have all been suggested as possibilities for what the original statue portrayed.

The third and fourth items of interest are the gigantic hands, half buried beneath the earth. Assuming the rubble all came from a statue of the same scale, the hands seem slightly larger than the face, although

USING THE RUINS

The Ruins of the Ancients — much like the Ancients themselves — exist entirely as a convenient plot hook. In this regard, they are similar to the stone circles, and serve many of the same purpose. However, while the stone circles represent a mystery that can be solved (determining who built them, how, what happened to the ruined circles, and so on), the ruins of the Ancients cannot be deduced. While cracking the secrets of the stone circles can form the basis of an exciting adventure or three, scratching the surface of the Ancients' enigmas can form the basis of an entire campaign.

Of course, the gamemaster is free to disregard this and assign whatever significance and story she desires. However, fantasy settings are often about the unknown — secrets, unknown lore, mysteries lost to the sands of time. If something as breathtaking as the Ancients can be fully plumbed, this might up the ante on any future attempts at instilling wonder in the game.

this assumes the Ancients — or whatever is depicted by the ruins — had the same proportions as Humans. (This doesn't seem to be an unreasonable assumption, since the hand seem to be, for all other purposes, based on a humanoid's.) The hand farthest from the cliff is clenched in a loose fist, and seems to be pointing ... although why it's pointing or where it's pointing to — if anything — is impossible to discern. The second hand seems to be cupped, although the why is, again, unknown. For whatever reason, this hand is prized by mages, especially those specialized in apportionment magics; apparently standing on the highest knuckles is considered to be a Unique location when it comes to devising a spell's components. (It's not unheard of for skirmishes to break out between mages wishing to use the hand at the same time, especially during celestial alignments or other rare phenomena.) Oh, and as one other item of note: Both hands are left hands. All attempts to find remains of a right hand have turned up empty. Did the Ancients only have left hands? Did some force obliterate the right hands for some reason? Or were the Ancients just really bad at sculpting right hands? (That last one is my personal theory.)

Beyond these four areas, there's plenty of random rubble strewn throughout the rest of the site. Perhaps something interesting is buried there, waiting to be unearthed by people or erosion.

In investigating the ruins, we encountered a band of travelers from this region. By their long robes painted with strange runes taken from the rubble of this area, we recognized them as the Ruin Nomads. (I should note that this is a name bestowed upon them by outsiders; their name for their people is “Cotushan,” while an individual is “Cotusé.” My pedantic nature notes that “Ruin Nomad” is an oxymoron; the ruins aren’t that common, and they spend most of their time wandering outside the area of the Ancients. However, they definitely claim the ruins as their birthright, and it would be an unwise idea to tangle with them over that claim.

Some of the smartest minds of the lands have put their minds to the task of unlocking the secrets of these ruins, and I’m more than happy to steal their ideas.

The Ancients seem Human or humanoid. Given how the primary evidence of their existence stems from gigantic statues, this would appear to be an obvious observation. However, there are two problems. First, we don’t have a full example of their statuary; we have pieces. It’s possible they had, say, gargantuan tentacles extending from their abdomens (or something equally alien), but that those representations in their statues have long since broken off and eroded away. Second, there is the problem of scale. The Ancients — whoever they were — did nothing half-baked. For those of you with hopes of investigating the Ancients, let me stress

the difficulty of scale. When you are standing next to these ruins, you can’t fathom them, seeming like nothing more than odd stone formations. From afar, however, you recognize them for what they are — the creations of an intelligent mind. Of course, you don’t always have the opportunity to have the perspective that distance provides. I’ve heard tale of one adventure-some gnome who spent all day scaling an odd jagged column he discovered in a valley — only to get to the top and find that the bottom of his “mountain” had toes, and he was atop the broken statue of a leg.

The Ancients lived a long time ago. The most long-lived races are deeply disquieted by the realization that intelligent beings exist outside their collective memory. (Frankly, anything that adds to the discomfort of Elves makes my heart glow a little warmer.) Regardless, everything we know about them comes from these ruins. There are no books, writings, crystals that glow with illusory messages — nothing. Mind you, the discovery of such artifacts would be a breathtaking find, and no doubt be a treasure that people — or nations — would kill for.

We don’t know what happened to the Ancients. While merely an extension of the idea that we don’t know anything about them, this fact alone should give us pause. What could cause a people so advanced to vanish from creation so thoroughly, such that our only evidence of their passing is site?

The Ancients possessed knowledge and abilities beyond ours, but not impossibly so. This observation is entirely my own, based on my discussions with many sages on the subject. When one spends enough time with these scholars, it’s possible to get the impression that we can’t even fathom how these ruins came to be. This isn’t so. Grubba tells me that any Dwarf could note the fragments of statuary were obviously carved; they weren’t forged whole-cloth out of the fabric of space.

It’s an important fact to realize. We mere mortals can never look at the sun or a mountain or a whale and think, “I can make one of those!” No knowledge or extension of our understanding of the universe would allow us to do these things, even with magic. But it would be theoretically possible to envision a world where we could construct monuments as impressive as these.

We could **become** the Ancients.

Should that idea fill us with hope and inspiration? Or dread?

RUIN NOMADS

The nomads are normal Humans changed by a lifetime of exposure to the strange energies responsible for the ruins (or, at least, the powerful forces infusing the ruins). Although not all the nomads have been affected, many of them display unique abilities, which seem to manifest without pattern from person to person.

At character creation, Ruin Nomads may spend up to six creation points on Special Abilities. At the gamemaster’s discretion, they may even possess *Extranormal* abilities not otherwise found in the fantasy setting (such as *Psionics* from the *D6 Adventure Rulebook* or *Metaphysics* from the *D6 Space Rulebook*); these six points could thus be spent on one attribute die and up to two skill dice in these extranormal abilities.

Ruin Nomads may never teach their extraordinary abilities to others. They may also have additional Disadvantages that do not count toward the maximum but that offset the additional creation points, such as Devotion to the ruins or their tribe.

STONE CIRCLES

I'd always believed that there was a point of wetness beyond which one could eclipse; for example, a rock thrown in a lake became as wet as that rock could get. After days of trudging through the nonstop downpours of that cold island nation, I realized I was wrong, and considered jumping in a nearby lake in an effort to dry off.

I emphasize the gloom and dreariness because is the only reason we hadn't seen the stone circles before almost literally smacking into them. Sure, in most situations a group of stalwart adventurers should spot a large collection of five-meter-tall stones on flat land, but it was raining. A lot.

We knew this location bore further investigation, so we made camp, using a giant stone as a brace for our tents.

We awoke the next morning to the commanding voice of a man dressed in leather and furs, arranged in ornamental strips radiating from a thick gold ring in the center of his chest. He exuded authority and power. "Who dares to defile our sacred site?" he demanded. I pointed to Okent.

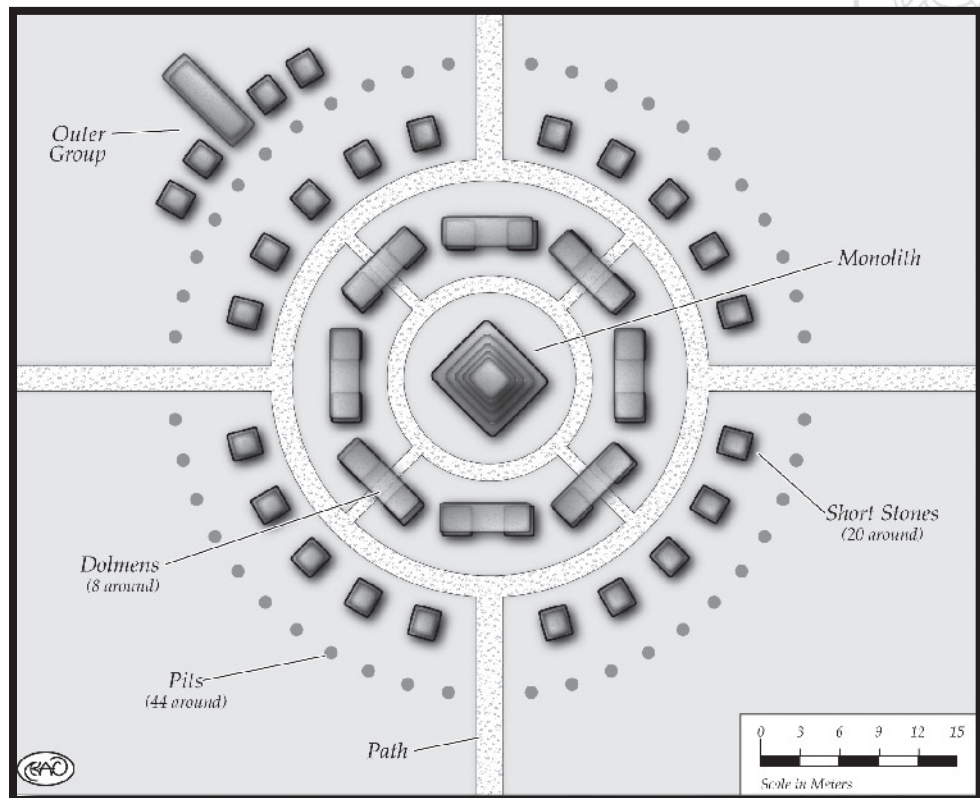
I knew the fur-wearing man had to be powerful, because his presence marked the first time it wasn't raining since we got to this land. Raichael, using her divinely inspired charisma, quickly smoothed the situation and kept Okent and the fur-clad warrior-priest from striking anyone. The holy man, who referred to himself only as "Precursor to the Perpetual Falling Land," served about three dozen men and women as both secular and religious leader. This group lived in the foothills, in a cavern system containing enough bolt-holes, traps, and hidden ambush points to make us thankful we didn't discover their community the previous night.

The Precursor (as I called him, lacking the desire to devote more ink than necessary to

his full name) was not a pleasant man, and it seemed his hospitality sprang mostly from the fact that he hadn't found any reason to kill us yet. However, his reluctance in talking about his people did not extend to his faith, about which he was more than willing to explain.

Unfortunately, his explanations just didn't make much sense. His people seemed to believe in the notion of falling. When they sacrificed animals on the main altar stone, the blood flowed into the earth along with its spark. They contend that the world's spark — and all life — stems from within the earth, from whence it is renewed and where it shall return. All aspects of their beliefs stem from this idea of falling: The sun doesn't rise, but rather the earth falls each morning, its momentum carrying it away enough to give the sun reason to itself in turn fall back into the earth. They claim that lava and natural springs are the land's soul, proof of the essence that shall fall into it. "After all," he explained, "when our blood flows from us, we turn cold; our warmth has descended into the ground, from whence it shall come again. Lightning strikes, bringing fire to what it touches. The fire, too, will ultimately die down, to fall into the earth." It made my head hurt.

(Raichael later explained that our confusion stemmed from the faith's antiquity. Their ideas were born at least two Human Ages ago, perhaps even older. They had only rudimentary ideas of community and faith, all centered on the stone circle. They didn't even believe



PRECURSOR TO THE PERPETUAL FALLING LAND

Agility 2D+1
Coordination 2D+1
Physique 2D+2
Intellect 2D+1: scholar 3D, speaking 2D+2
Charisma 2D+1: charm 2D+2, command 3D+1, mettle 2D+2, persuasion 2D+2
Acumen 2D
Miracles 4D: divination 4D+2, favor 6D+2, strife 6D+2
Strength Damage: 1D
Move: 10
Fate Points: 1
Character Points: 5
Body Points: 28
Wound levels: 5
Disadvantages: Devotion (R3), to the Perpetual Falling Land; Employed (R3), to the Perpetual Falling Land
Advantages: Authority (R3), over the followers of the Perpetual Falling Land
Special Abilities: Skill Bonus: Leadership (R1), +1 bonus to *command*, *intimidation*, and *persuasion* totals

in a god or gods, per se, so much as elemental forces that governed the universe. That the rest of the world existed was of little import to the Precursor, who she guessed felt that all life radiated from this circle, and back to the circle all life would eventually fall.)

The Precursor took us on a tour of the circle, and I made a map as best I could. Although each stone looked near-identical to the others, each had a sacred name, which only the Precursor and his followers knew. “This is *Vleya* — the moment of clarity before impact. This is *Af’nyara* — the ever-increasing speed of a body’s decent. This is ...” and I tuned out after a while.

I asked the Precursor if his people or ancestors built this circle. He looked at me quizzically and mock-laughed. “Did your people build **that**?” he asked, pointing at the sun. I stammered a protest. Surely, this monument could be built by people, perhaps using giant ramps and log rollers to move carved stones from the

nearby foothills. (I even pointed out what seemed to be the remnants of Human-made valleys, long overgrown, that seemed to support my idea.) But he just frowned at the prospect. “All things fall. The rain. The over-ripe fruit. The newborn calf. This circle. All things have fallen into place as they should. And it falls to us to ensure the cycle.”

I asked what he meant, and he seemed reticent. Raichael coaxed him, and we learned that the next morning was their most holy day. After more convincing, he agreed to let us observe.

Several hours later, we found ourselves shivering in the pre-dawn hours, still mercifully clear of rain. The initial preparations had been completed, and we were only awaiting the dawn. In an effort to understand the coming ritual, I asked the Precursor what he and his people were going to be doing. Again, he looked quizzically, and said, “My people and I are keeping this world alive. It is by our actions that the land’s spark stays within it, and life remains possible. We can do no more, and we must do no less.”

I chuckled inwardly, disbelieving the enormity of his proclamation. Less than half an hour later, the sun arose.

I find myself pausing, trying to convey the enormity of this stone circle and what we witnessed. The circle, while impressive, had seemed to our eyes a random phenomenon, akin to a child on the beach placing shells in a pattern pleasing to her. But I realized

there was more going on here than I could conceive. For, as the sun’s rays hit the first stone, the Precursor chanted a prayer extolling the virtues of the forces of that stone. And just as he finished, the sun had risen enough to strike the two stones next to that first. And again he praised the stones by name.

As each stone became alight and alive with sunrise, I found my spirit soaring with possibilities. And then the sunlight hit the altar stone. I winced, unprepared for the display. For the sun proceeded to shine through the focus stone, directing its brightness on the center altar, its light following the precise line work etched in the slate. The light illuminated the fawn’s falling blood, absorbing into the sodden earth with a glow I’d not attributed to blood before. Words cannot express the precision and beauty of this display; it was like the world’s most intricate sundial, acting with the complexity of a water clock but using light instead of fluid. And

USES FOR STONE CIRCLES

Stone circles represent a convenient plot hook for all manner of stories; since their immediate use isn't obvious, anything that seems reasonable can become the focus of a plot. Some ideas include:

- The site of a spell or miracle
- The only means of creating or destroying an object of great power
- A means of teleporting to another location or opening a gate to another dimension
- A way to decipher an ancient formula or celestial calculation

Of course, these ideas can be combined; perhaps a villainous necromancer has calculated the perfect time for his grandiose undead creation ritual via a stone circle, and a band of heroes needs to use the same circle to forge a weapon that can defeat this new nightmare army.

Traditionally, stone circles are associated with astronomical phenomena, such as the ability to track or predict the movement of heavenly bodies. They have also been the site of various spiritual and religious movements, usually involving pagan beliefs.

Stone circles represent the flip side of the coin presented by the Ruins of the Ancients. While the Ruins symbolize a mystery from ages long past standing apart from humanoid accomplishments, a stone circle is a long-lost mystery that **could** be created by people, given sufficient resources, time, and dedication. As such, while the Ruins of the Ancients are probably never able to be fully understood within a fantasy campaign, stone circles can theoretically be deciphered and their secrets utilized. Of course, what influence such secrets would have on the world is up to the gamemaster.

The effect of a stone circle on miracles and magic depends on the rarity of the circle and the conditions under which it can be activated. In most circumstances, unless stone circles are very common, they will qualify as "extremely rare" or "unique" components, and thus count as a -6 or -7 Negative Spell Total Modifier (see the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 91). In addition, if the spell or miracle can only be used in the stone circle at a certain time, this counts as an Other Condition, worth -3 for daily events (sunrise or sunset), -4 for a seasonal effect (equinoxes or solstices), -5 for an annual event, and -6 for an event only occurring every few years or rarer. See the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook* page 94 for more information.

this spectacle was being played out on a display larger than any I'd ever imagined possible by Human hands.

The sun eventually rose higher, ending its breathtaking display. But for at least a day afterwards I found myself believing instead on some level that the earth had fallen into place under the sun. Our group remained another day, and I noted that the sun's display was not repeated the next morning within the stone circle (although it was still beautiful); whatever we were observing, it was obvious that it only worked on certain days a year.

I found my mind divided. On the one hand, there was no miracle here, per se; nothing we had witnessed could not be explained beyond mere tricks of the stones' placement. On the other, these stones were huge, and each weighed more tons than I wanted to consider. Could Human minds have understood how to position these stones to account for this display? Also, the stone only fulfilled its seeming primary function a couple days a year at most; this leaves little room for trial and error. ("Hmm. Nope, that wasn't spectacular enough. Hey, Thadius! Help me move those 10-ton stones a few finger-widths to the left and we'll try again!") This stone circle either stood as a monument to a near-dead religion that sprang from wisdom we cannot fathom; or else it was crafted by Human minds, pointing to a former glory and expansiveness of intellect the likes of which we no longer possess. Or perhaps both are true.

It rained the day we left.

Seven months later, we found ourselves in a dark and twisted land over a thousand kilometers away from that monument. If grass and forests ever grew there, if there were ever people, if there were ever birds or bugs or any sign of life, then no evidence remained beyond the dried, decaying posts of once-mighty trees dotting the muddy landscape.

After countless miles of trudging through this bleak region, we came across a five-meter-tall stone, which — we soon discovered — formed part of **another** stone circle. However, this circle was in disarray, with stones overturned, broken, or missing entirely (although the indentations remained where these stones once stood).

All indications pointed to the fact that the calamity behind the land's death lingered far in the past, although we couldn't determine exactly what happened. Regardless, as we finished surveying the remains of the circle, we reached a conclusion: This circle was an exact duplicate of the one we had already visited, save for its ruin.

And that conclusion led to questions: Could that warrior-priest have been telling the truth when he said that he and his followers were keeping the world alive? And if so, what would happen if his devotions were ever disrupted, his faith shaken, or his circle damaged?

TEMPLE

In our travels, we investigated hundreds of temples. Sometimes, it was because Raichael had been asked to by her order; sometimes, it was out of curiosity or a desire to explore; sometimes, it was to patch up our wounds. Although there are as many types of temples as there are religions, most temples have the same (or similar) features.

Above all else, temples exist to serve a religion and its community. For any belief system that has been around for more than a few years, almost no aspect of its temples is designed by accident; the layout, shape, size, color, and appointment of temples generally reflect its dogma and symbolism.

Here are some features we've found in various temples.

Narrow corridors might represent that the precepts of its faith dictate everyone must ultimately go to visit a deity one at a time after death. Conversely, **wide open areas** might signify that community is exceptionally important to the religion.

A temple may have many **windows**, both to provide light and to expose its members to the glories of the natural world. Or it may have very few, because the religion demands that its community not lose focus by distractions of the outside world.

Food might be presented or sacrificed at a temple. Fruits and grain products such as bread are the most common offerings (to be collected and eaten by the clergy or — especially in open-air temples — eaten by animals or left to rot). Animals are generally sacri-

ficed, the blood often gathered to represent purity or impurity, depending on the faith. (However, at least one religion we witnessed had a touching ceremony where the priestess describes how they are about to celebrate their faith with the struggling, flustered dove before her ... only to release it just before plunging a dagger into the wooden altar top. The dove's escape to the open skies represents the faith's triumph of mercy and forgiveness over humanity's base desires to kill and defile.)

The most important element of almost any temple is the **altar**, here defined loosely as the focal point of the faith's prayers and devotions. The altar is where the faith's community leader directs the prayer services. While it's possible to have a temple without an altar of some kind, in practice we've only seen this twice. In one, five clerics address the congregation while standing against each wall of the pentagonal temple. In the other, taking place in a near-pitch-black temple, the priest's sermon took place from amid the congregation (the acoustics made it difficult to discern where, exactly, he was). At the midpoint of the ceremony, he performed a miracle that summoned a ball of light; this hovering ball became the focal point of the mass.

Unlike monasteries, temples are devoted to the greater needs of larger groups of the faithful. As such, they generally have a **gathering area** of some kind; this is almost always by the altar, usually containing seats, pews, or benches for the faithful to sit, kneel, and stand. Alternatively, some temples have special mats or other portable seating arrangements. In general, these gathering areas are usually the most richly appointed and adorned sections of the temple.

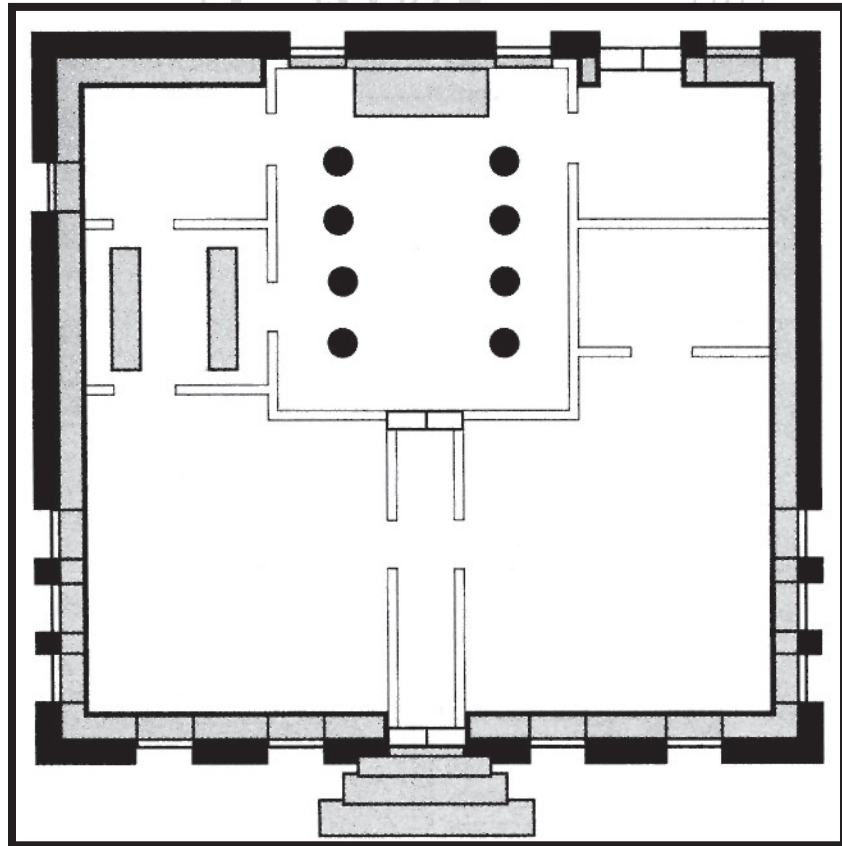
In addition to one or more formal gathering places, temples often have **other contemplation areas** where the faithful can visit to pray, meditate, compose their thoughts, or the like. These can be sections of the main gathering area (such as a shrine to a lesser but still important deity or prophet), other rooms within the temple, or even separate buildings or locations on the temple's grounds. These places run the gamut from ornate to plain, although they almost never have as many resources devoted to them as the altar or main gathering area. I hesitate to say they are "worse" because that's an aesthetic judgment; I've often found my (admittedly weak) spirituality more kindled by these simple, tasteful shrines or rooms than I have by the ostentatious temple center.

To be honest, even if an element does seem incidental, the religion will usually come up with some justification as to why it is such. "We enter the temple from the west because ... er, that is the direction of the sun's set-

ting, and our illumination begins where the world's light ends. And the large fire in the antechamber represents the purifying love of our ... no, wait. That's not supposed to be there. Run!" (More seriously, incense is used in some temples to mask the aroma of sweaty farmers ... although the faith might incorporate this real-world necessity by pointing out the smoke rises to the heavens like the spirits of believers.)

Most temples have on-premises clerics, monks, deacons, or the like, and as such must provide living quarters for them. Depending on the region, religion, and relationship with local nobles or community, these holy people may also be charged with the defense of the temple in the event of attacks; if not, then there will presumably be knights or trained militia citizens marshaled in that situation. (In case it's not obvious, these arrangements exist because temples are usually the first target of an attack on a community, owing to the wealth most temples have on their premises; statues, ornamentation, or dressing that are considered sacred to the faithful are merely seems gold and silks suitable only for reselling.) Of course, these measures assume that a region knows the threat of invasions. While this is usually the case, our group encountered one temple in a remote region that had **never** known warfare or invasion, so they had absolutely no concept of the notion when we visited. (All the while we were there, I kept saying to myself, "Please don't be invaded while we're here. Please don't be invaded while we're here ..." Fortunately we weren't ... although, in hindsight, it would've made a pretty exciting story if that had happened.)

Finally, most temples have ample storage, whether for seasonal adornments, ceremonial garb for the holy, or other odds and ends. There's generally little noteworthy about such areas. However, our group once found a temple that promised its followers a means of directly interacting with their god; after some investigation, we discovered a gearwork assembly in a store room that controlled a giant "talking" visage above the altar. (I'm generally skeptical of any miracles that require constant lubrication.) If a temple has any significant stores of



treasure, they'll usually be kept in a locked or guarded vault room or other heavily protected area.

The Nyg-Fa Temple of the Fa'ayn belief (translating to "truth" in their language) illustrates both the commonalities and individuality of these places of worship.

The Nyg-Fa Temple has a traditional altar; in this case, it's made out of top and bottom layers of basalt with an outer ring of bamboo. Locked within this bamboo "cage" is a plant with broad blue-green leaves and tiny yellow flowers. In talking with the Temple Elder, Raichael learned that this plant is a Gar-Fa ("the growing truth"). All Fa'ayn temples contain one of these plants, and according to their traditions, all these plants are descendants from the original Gar-Fa created by Fana'ayn, their faith's beautiful druidic founder. In fact, this plant is so sacred to them that living specimens are **only** permitted to be within Fa'ayn temples, although a leaf from the temple's specimen might be presented to a particularly devout member or family on a special occasion. (No doubt, should a temple's Gar-Fa become endangered, the Temple Elder would go to great means to ensure its recovery and safety.)

Nyg-Fa's followers bring thin, soft mats made from richly dyed green fibers. Over the course of their thrice-

weekly religious services, followers go from sitting crouched on the matt to kneeling to standing with their arms over their heads — simulating the “growth” of the followers as part of the community.

The Nyg-Fa temple has two meditation areas. The first is adjacent to the ceremonial hall and is lined with beautiful wood carvings depicting the religion’s tenants; so fine is the line work and artistry that it’s possible to miss seeing them the first few minutes you’re within the chamber. (For a donation of a few

silver, the Temple Elder will provide parchment and charcoal for people wishing to make rubbings of a particular engraving. Given the beauty and intricacy of the etchings, this could well be a bargain ... and I swear I saw something resembling a map in one of the pieces.) The second is an elaborate garden that is, according to the Temple Elder, exactly 360 steps from the rear entrance of the garden — one for each degree of the circular sun, “from which all good life ultimately springs” (or so says the Elder).

Although not universal, temples are often centers of a community (for believers, at any rate). The purpose and structure of this center depend on how popular, universal, and strong the faith is within a community. In a township with many rival religions, these gathering sites might be small and intended primarily as a meeting spot before services. In communities with one primary religion, however, these sections of the temple can be large and elaborate, serving the role as a gathering spot to keep the community strong. Of course, how much the community uses these areas depends also on how spiritual the people are in the first place. In several communities, we’ve seen solitary temples with large antechambers almost awash in dust, with uncaring citizens bustling around it.

Such a fate has not befallen the Nyg-Fa. The temple enjoys the status of belonging to the second-most prevalent religion; as a result, its people are a vibrant community, especially among farmers. This temple has two adjoining rooms. Three times weekly, one room is used for small meetings of select groups, and once a week, both rooms are used for gatherings after religious services.

Like most religious living quarters, those of the Nyg-Fa are pretty spartan. There are two rooms — one for the Temple Elder and one shared by the two neonates. Their proximity to the altar means they are the first line of defense for the temple, although in the event of an emergency, the Elder’s only duty is to retrieve the Gar-Fa and escape — usually out the back exit.

The Nyg-Fa storage facilities are mundane, containing nothing more than spare mats, ceremonial garb, food, and other items necessary for formal and informal functions. It has no “hidden” wealth to speak of, although the temple uses a fair amount of gold (actually gold plating) throughout, since they see a symbolism between gold and the rays of the sun.

While Raichael was debating metaphysical nuances with the Temple Elder, I found myself wondering what other sorts of events might hap-



pen at a temple. To be sure, “evil” temples (those who worship dark gods, evil forces, politicians) have been a staple of literature for quite some time, not to mention a constant thorn for do-gooders of this world.

Of course, most of the story possibilities of the monastery apply to temples as well. They are very similar buildings, except a temple serves the needs of the faithful public while monasteries tend to its private holy people.

It’s possible that a group might have to infiltrate such a place, perhaps to recover information or find a secret lurking within. While it’s usually nice to be diplomatic and polite, some religions are more insular than others, and it’s not always possible to even **see** those in power at a temple. For example, one palatial house of worship we encountered had as a precept that its High Priest was unapproachable. Unfortunately, we had learned that an assassin had tricked her way within the temple and was planning on killing the High Priest. (If this had happened, the region would likely have plunged into turmoil.) Denied any direct means of warning the church, we had no choice but to infiltrate it ourselves; we eventually found and stopped her, but it was nerve wracking for a while.

Many temples have a policy of “sanctuary” — those seeking asylum within such a temple are protected from the secular law by staying within. In theory, those who receive sanctuary are expected to live by the moral code of the religion; they have, in effect, been given freedom from secular authorities in exchange for obeying the church. In practice, many unscrupulous people have used this asylum in the past merely to escape prosecution, hoping to flee from the church — and justice — later.

Temples often provide services to the community, such as healing, research, or access to holy items. Sometimes these are only furnished to members of the religion, but often they will be given to others if the need is great or if they feel that doing so might persuade someone to join their faith. Some temples just don’t care, and offer their services to anyone willing to meet their nonbeliever prices. This is most common in war-torn or conflicted regions where showing favoritism would be tantamount to choosing sides, which could prove devastating to weak temples.

Finally, visiting a temple can be a deeply moving event for the faithful; those who are devoted to their causes can find themselves refreshed, and even those who aren’t particularly religious can find themselves rejuvenated by watching the simple act of those believing in what’s right doing what they can to express their belief and commitment to those ideals.

As an aside, I note that it’s also possible for people to be in conflict with a religion, yet neither side being “evil,” as we think of it. For example, if two temples exist in a town, and one preaches restraint and self-denial while another celebrates the openness and freedom of alcohol and casual interactions, then these two will probably be in conflict. Neither is “evil” (per se), although both would probably view the other as misguided. (But if the head of the temple cackles maniacally and expresses confidence in his ritual to allow a venomous god to snuff out all life in the world, thus satiating primal dark appetites ... well, you should stop that person.)

FA’AYA

Those who follow Fa’aya (or the Fa’ayn Path, as it is otherwise known) believe in the holiness of its founder, the druid Fana’ayn. Although upholding the sacredness of life as most other druids do, she asserted that **everything** has the potential for divinity through the process of growth. She taught that all good things grow, and that the only criteria for the divine is they do not stop “growing.” (One of her ideas most often scorned by other religions is that stars are actually akin to the sun, and similarly divine; the light from these orbs has merely “grown” outward infinitely, and reflect in the night sky visibly as a result.) Because of this faith, followers of Fa’aya believe in healthy growth in all things; whether growing mighty oaks, erecting high towers, expanding the mind through learning, building muscles, or raising tall and healthy children, Fa’aya teaches that all growth and expansion is proper, holy, and a way to achieve divinity.

Fana’ayn’s most remarkable deed came during the most incredible drought and pestilence seen in the region for centuries. As crops withered and thousands died from illness and hunger — and with the threat of even greater death looming — Fana’ayn convinced everyone in the village to replant their crops, requesting that, in the four corners of their fields, they should plant clippings of her own plant. These crops grew just enough to feed the region, even without minimal water, an abbreviated growing season, and fewer skilled farmers than normal. Once the plants were harvested, all of Fana’ayn’s clippings withered and died, despite their having been left in to grow out of respect; in fact, all clippings of this plant in the world supposedly died. The only plant to survive was Fana’ayn’s original one. This became known as the Miracle of the Gar’Fa, and all Fa’ayn temples supposedly contain offspring of this original plant, although the fate of that first plant is unknown.

MIRACLE: CLEARING THE UNDERGROWTH

Skill Used: *Strife*

Difficulty: 16

Effect: 18 (6D in damage)

Range: 10 meters (+5)

Speed: +5

Duration: 3 rounds (+6)

Casting Time: 1 round (-4)

Other Aspects:

Area of Effect (+10): 5-meter radius circle

Component (-8): Light overgrowth or foliage of the forest (uncommon; destroyed)

This miracle ignites the fallen branches and leaves of a typical forest. Such burning is common and necessary to ensure the healthy growth of normal forest, by allowing new trees and plants have access to sunlight. A side effect of this miracle is that those who are within such clearing areas find themselves burning as well, making this a popular offensive spell to otherwise pacifistic naturalist clerics.

This miracle can only be used once for any given five-meter area radius, because the underbrush fueling the fire burns away, not to be replaced for a decade or so. Although taller trees are scorched a bit by this miracle, it does them no lasting damage, and there is no danger of starting an uncontrollable fire via this invocation.

At present, there is a slight schism within the community; a splinter sect, calling themselves Fa'aya Engar (meaning "grandiose truth"), has taken Fana'ayn's mandate to grow to also mean weight. Many members of this sect are thus phenomenally obese. Fa'aya's official position is that this is not "healthy growth" as mandated by Fana'ayn; the splinter sect counters that, according to Fana'ayn, **all** growth is healthy and holy. The outcome of this ideological conflict is uncertain.

Fa'aya is a religion favored by farmers and cosmopolitans alike; anyone devoted to the concept of growth — whether it's tending crops, expanding a mercantile empire, learning new languages and philosophies, or designing castles — is welcome. Their sworn enemy is entropy and war of all types. They teach a mild

aversion and prejudice against those who avoid the sun, especially Humanoids such as Dwarves who are shorter than Human average (who, their precepts argue, "have stopped growing because they have turned their backs on light").

CLERICS OF FA'AYA

Clerics of Fa'aya with access to *Miracles* almost universally prefer the *favor* extra-normal skill, since ideas of growth most often correspond with those of aiding the world or others. The second most common is *strife*; this surprises many, who assume that skill's destructive capabilities are antithetical to the ideals of growth. While this is true, smart Fa'ayn clerics realize that to make something grow it's often necessary to destroy or cut it; for example, cutting circular open wounds into a square enables the body to heal much faster. The least common is *divination*; it is difficult to directly justify many aspects of this skill, since Fa'ayns do not dwell in the past and they also believe the future is what a person grows toward. Still, some clerics realize that learning is a step of personal growth and can often work *divination* miracles that lead to a greater growing good.

REQUIRED ASPECT

Gesture (-2): Making something seem to grow (fairly simple). This is most commonly accomplished by making a fist and then opening it, palm up; the fingers are "growing" outward. However, there are variations: curling into a ball and standing

upright, and so on. One Fa'ayn cleric who was bound and held captive in a prison cell was able to invoke a miracle by puffing out her cheeks.

RECOMMENDED ASPECTS

Gar'Fa Leaf (-5): Every year on the spring equinox, all fully vested clerics of Fa'aya receive one leaf from their temple's Gar'Fa leaf. This is the most powerful and sacred holy symbol of the Fa'ayn, and is irreplaceable; if a cleric loses it or has it destroyed, he must wait until the next equinox to receive another. In dire straits, a Fa'ayn cleric can have the component become consumed at the end of invoking a miracle; this destroys the leaf but imparts an additional -5 aspect modifier (see "Components" on page 91 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*).

Incantation (varies): Prayer to Fana'ayn or exaltation on the power of growth. This is most often a -1 modifier (for common mantras such as "Good stems from growth" and "Sun, I reach for you") although it can rise as high as -6 (for reciting, from memory, Fana'ayn's "Sermon of the Fresh-Cut Gar'Fa").

TYPICAL FA'AYN TEMPLE ELDER

Agility 2D+1

Coordination 2D+1

Physique 2D: stamina 2D+2

Intellect 4D: healing 4D+1, reading/writing 5D, scholar 5D

Acumen 3D+1: artist 3D+2, crafting 4D

Charisma 4D: charm 4D+2, command 4D+2, mettle 4D+2, persuasion 5D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 4

Body Points: 16

Wound levels: 3

Disadvantages: Devotion (R3), to the holy order (including a vow of poverty); Employed (R3), by the holy order

Advantages: Authority (R2), over Fa'ayn followers; Contacts (R2), within the Fa'ayn order

Special Abilities: Skill Bonus: Charismatic (R2), +1 to *charm*, *persuasion*, and *command* totals

TYPICAL FA'AYN TEMPLE NEONATE

Agility 2D+1: dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D+1

Coordination 2D+2

Physique 2D+1, lifting 3D, stamina 2D+2

Intellect 2D+2: cultures 3D, healing 4D+2, reading/writing 4D, scholar 4D, trading 3D

Acumen 2D+1: artist 2D+2, crafting 3D

Charisma 2D+2

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 12

Wound levels: 2

Disadvantages: Devotion (R2), to the holy order (including a vow of poverty); Employed (R2), by the holy order

Advantages: Contacts (R1), within the Fa'ayn order

TYPICAL FA'AYN TRAVELING CLERIC

Agility 3D: dodge 4D, melee combat 4D

Coordination 2D

Physique 2D: stamina 2D+1

Intellect 3D: cultures 3D+2, healing 4D, reading/writing 3D+1, scholar 4D, speaking 3D+1, trading 3D+1

Acumen 3D: crafting 3D+1, investigation 3D+1, search 3D+1

Charisma 3D: charm 3D+1, command 3D+1, intimidation 3D+2, mettle 4D, persuasion 3D+1

Miracles 2D: favor 3D, strife 3D

Strength Damage: 1D

Move: 10

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 11

Wound levels: 2

Disadvantages: Devotion (R3), to the holy order (including a vow of poverty); Employed (R2), by the holy order

Advantages: Contacts (R1), within the Fa'ayn order

Equipment: various seeds; pouch; blanket



TREACHEROUS STRAITS

I have come to believe that the gods created urgent needs and dangerous straits at the same time, for surely one cannot exist without the other.

I reached this conclusion aboard a rickety ship I had won us specifically for this occasion in a high-stakes mumblety-peg game. Raichael's order had charged her with delivering supplies and medicine to a coastal city that was ravaged by a recent war they had no direct involvement in. The onset of a plague had made their situation particularly dire, and time was of the essence. So, naturally, the only way to get there promptly was through the Serpent's Maw Straits, a route usually exclaimed by agitated soldiers as a curse.

One of the first observations I had when approaching the straits was recognizing I could no longer hear the omnipresent creaking and groaning of our own ship. I realized after a moment this was because of the deafening roar of water, circling in chaotic patterns around the vessel, the jagged rocks, the coastline — everywhere.

Shortly thereafter, the captain bellowed that turning around or changing course was no longer an option. "What about a horrible death?" I offered, helpfully.

Once within the straits, there are two possible roles for all those aboard a vessel. The first is to obey the

captain as if your life depended on it ... because it does. The ship almost seems alive, with ropes flailing and sails spasming. It falls to the people aboard the ship to keep it under control, making sure lines are secured and any damage is repaired or its impact minimized. (A broken railing can mean death, both from sailors flying overboard and from additional impact and damage from the railing debris.)

The other role in this situation is to wait; if you don't have the skills to help, or if you freeze under pressure, you're a liability, both to yourself and to others. So your only options in this case are to watch and feel helpless; or hide, **not** watch, and feel helpless.

Work yourself to death, or wait to die. It's debatable over which role is more difficult.

I had chosen to wait because, outside of composing the dirges that might be sung at our funerals, I felt impotent (although I was not yet at the point of observing my stomach's contents, as Grubba was). But after we were about a third of the way through, I heard the sounds of panic from the aft of the ship. I drew my short sword and sprinted up from the cabin, only to see a tentacle flailing and grabbing at crewmen.

During the course of the battle, I also found myself entangled by one of the tentacles, being lifted high in the air. An unfortunate glancing blow knocked my sword out of my hands, sending it to the straits below. Panicking and having few other options, I reached into

my belt sack and pulled out the first item I could find — the sharpened quill I use for writing. As the monstrous beast drew me in closer to its maw, my desperation helped my quill-equipped hand into one of the beady eyes of the monster; it squealed in pain and confusion, flinging me backwards into the water. I could also hear the sound of the other men being dropped safely aboard deck. Clearly, in some situations, the sword is weaker than the pen.

The churning foamy straits sucked me under almost immediately.



RULES FOR NAVIGATING STRAITS

Straits have a base difficulty and a scale range. The difficulty is the minimum *pilotry* roll the ship's captain makes when navigating through, all things being equal. The scale range is the range of ships' scale values that can navigate through at this difficulty. The lower end of the scale range represents the smallest a ship can be before being tossed around by the chaos of the straits. The large end of the scale represents the largest a ship can be before running afoul of the outskirts of the straits. For each point outside of the scale range, the *pilotry* difficulty is increased by 3. (The gamemaster can decide that ships of a certain size are impossible to sail through a strait at all; a gargantuan war galley won't fit through the Needle's Wrath, no matter how good its captain is.) If the captain is successful with her *pilotry* roll, a ship passes through the straits successfully. If this roll is unsuccessful, one die of damage is dealt to the ship for each point the roll is missed by.

EXAMPLE STRAITS

Strait Description	Base Difficulty	Scale Range
Simple, wide straits	10	2–30
Simple, narrow straits	10	2–13
Rough, wide straits	15	6–30
Rough, narrow straits	15	6–13
Challenging, wide straits	25	12–30
Challenging, narrow straits	25	12–13

Others may aid this roll — through hoisting sails, battening down hatches, and other crew efforts — by

making successful *pilotry* rolls at the same difficulty of the pilot's. For every five points these supplemental rolls are made by, the captain may add one to her roll; this bonus cannot exceed half the difficulty (rounded down), no matter how many people help.

Example: Captain Nick is piloting his small galley *Thinker's Bell* (scale value of 14) through the rough and narrow Straits of Mattenkelé. These straits have a base difficulty of 15 and a scale range of 6–13. The *Thinker's Bell* has a scale one greater than the upper range of the straits, so his difficulty is 18 (15 + 3). The ship's 20 crewmembers each roll their *pilotry* difficulty (against a difficulty of 18); those who roll a 23 add 1 to Captain Nick's roll, those who roll 28 add 2, and so on. The maximum bonus the crew can provide is +9 (18 divided by 2). If Captain Nick failed his *pilotry* roll by 5, then 5D damage would be dealt to the ship.

The gamemaster may decide that there is a certain level of crew involvement required to keep the ship afloat, and he may determine that a certain number of crew members need to succeed their supportive *pilotry* rolls. If this threshold is not met, the captain suffers a -1 penalty to her roll for each person below this threshold.

Example: The *Thinker's Bell* needs at least six helpful crewmembers to get through the Straits of Mattenkelé. If at least six of the 20 crewmembers didn't roll an 18, then Captain Nick suffers -1 for each crewmember short (up to a maximum -6 penalty).

While it was only a Moderate challenge to my *swimming* abilities to make sure I inhaled enough air before being pulled under, it was much more Difficult to ensure I swam against the pull of the water. Perhaps guided by instinct, luck, or the tides, I found myself emerging

from a large pool inside a wondrous grotto, the walls of which were lined with a glowing phosphorescent moss. The most immediate treasure this cave contained was air, and my staccato breaths filled my thankful lungs. As my eyes adjusted, and I found there were remains

of long-departed Human life here — the wreckage of a small boat, which had apparently been damaged and sucked under to this cave by the straits. Seeing the four clothed skeletal bodies lying here, I couldn't help but think of myself and my own friends; the possibilities of an adventuring party being trapped here both frighten and intrigue me.

A thin beam of light trickled from above, and I concluded that it would take a Heroic *climbing* feat to get out of here; even then, I wasn't sure where I would emerge in the outside world (no doubt one side of the straits or another). However, a suitably skilled craftsman or tinkerer might have been able to rig a device or contraption to escape, especially using the remains of the ship; I guessed *crafting* such a device would be Very Difficult. And, of course, one appropriately trained in the arcane arts could possibly fly or levitate one out of here.

As I explored the cave, trying to find a means of escape, I came across a sealed but unlocked chest. Opening it, I saw an impressive cache of treasure,

including a dagger and amulet that seemed to glow with mystical might. Atop it all was a rolled scroll, old but still treated with care; obviously its contents were important. My hands drew toward this discovery, when I heard sounds behind me.

There, from the pool of water, emerged the second most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. She beckoned me closer with long, slender fingers, and I found myself leaving the treasure to go to her. Meter by meter, I was drawn toward her. As I drew tantalizingly close to her lips, she smiled ...

... and cuffed me upside the head, rendering me unconscious.

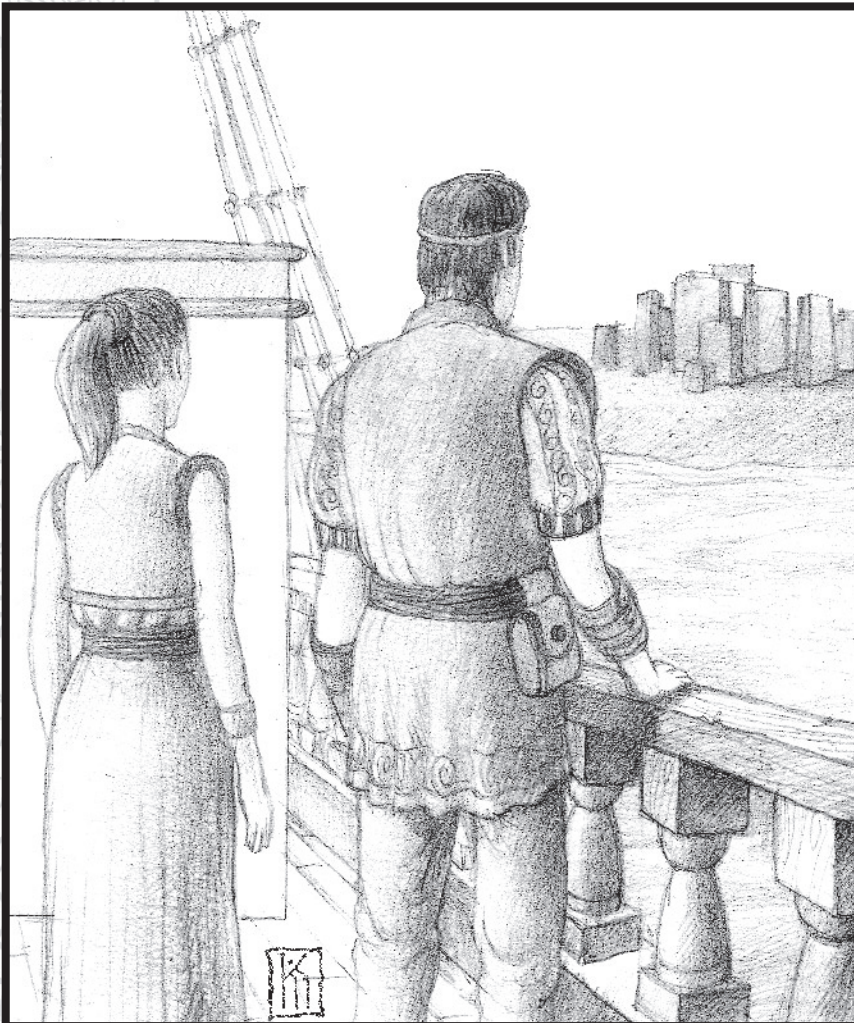
I awoke back aboard our ship, with Raichael tending the bump upon my head. (I wish I could say this was the only time I'd been knocked out by a woman, but that's another tale.) The waters were calm now, as our vessel had made it through the straits. Apparently, Raichael had prayed for aid, and her deity provided it in the form of a Mermaid. When I asked how the Mer-

maid was able to transport me back, Raichael responded, "She swam ... and probably breathed into your mouth a couple of times." I groaned; "A heavenly beauty's lips upon mine, and I was unconscious for it?!"

I have no way of knowing what that treasure was, or how to get back there. But I couldn't help but wonder: Where were those travelers going with those items? Their ship was obviously too small to survive the straits. Was that scroll a map or a letter, perhaps indicating how and where the amulet and dagger were to be used (or even destroyed)? If the failed legacy of this group becomes important, how would anyone else brave the straits to find them?

As we sailed on to our destination, I pondered our harrowing journey. Why someone would want to risk traveling through dangerous straits? Some techniques I might use in my own tales include:

- Inaccessibility — the straits represent the only way to reach



MIRACLE: DIVINE AID

Skill Used: *Favor*

Difficulty: 11

Effect: 0 (variable; see description)

Range: 1 kilometer (+15)

Speed: +15

Duration: 0 (variable; see description)

Casting Time: 1 minute (-9)

Other Aspects:

Incantation (-2): An appeal to the deity for help with a specific problem (sentence)

Variable Movement (+4): Bending (can't see target)

Other Condition (-1): Problem must be explained to the summoned aid

When faced with a problem that seems truly insurmountable, *divine aid* permits the cleric to petition her deity to deliver someone (or something) most able to help resolve the crisis. Invoking this miracle summons one or more nearby living beings to the cleric; the capacities of this aid depends on how well the miracle is invoked.

Upon successfully invoking this miracle, the result points are multiplied by 2; this total is then divided between values for effect (either the target's *mettle* or weight — whichever is greater) and duration, as per the tables on page 87 and 88 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*; remember that *mettle* requires one result point per pip, and three result points per die.

Example: Raichael invokes *divine aid* and rolls a 24. This is 13 more than *divine aid*'s difficulty of 11, so 26 points (13 times 2) are divided between the effect and duration; the gamemaster decides that

a nearby Mermaid, with a *mettle* of 4D (value of 8) will help Raichael for one hour (value of 18). If the deity (and gamemaster) determined that an owl (with a *mettle* of 3D) would better serve Raichael's needs, then the creature would help her for 2.5 hours (value of 20).

This miracle does **not** summon the being instantaneously; instead, it must travel under its own power to the invoker. This travel time is deducted from the duration given to the creature. When it arrives, the invoker must explain its needs to the creature; the miracle automatically "translates" the invoker's requests. The summoned being will follow the cleric's desires fairly closely; although it will not seek to "trick" the invoker, it also won't go beyond the reasonably narrow bounds described by the invoker.

If multiple beings are summoned, each *mettle* effect must be paid for separately, although the duration is only paid once. For example, summoning two Mermaids for one hour would require a roll of 28.

As per the limitations of the *favor* skill, *divine aid* can only be used for nonoffensive interventions. Creatures summoned to protect someone or something else could attack in self-defense but under no circumstances would they attack a target first or cause other destruction (even if for a good cause). Another miracle — called *divine retribution* — is similar in almost every way, except it uses *strife* as its skill; those summoned via this miracle can **only** be commanded toward destructive, retaliatory, or offensive purposes.

a secluded area. (This would especially be true of an archipelago or lone island. Of course, this island would have to be pretty special to risk life and limb.)

- Reduced risk — it's possible such dangerous straits could represent the safest route to an area.

- Fewer supplies — although time may not be of the essence, in shipboard journey, the need to carry an additional six months' worth of supplies could be really challenging, especially when traveling through regions where it's unfeasible to restock.

- Danger-seeking — okay, I confess; surviving the voyage through the Serpent's Maw was one of the most thrilling experiences of my life. It's possible that people might track down such experiences just to gloat that they did so and survived. It might also be a challenge provided by a bored, eccentric nobleman or a crazed wizard.

DESIGNING A MAZE

Now, I was supposed to write about how to make dungeons and mazes and the like. Unfortunately, I wouldn't know how to do that if my life depended on it; really, the most complicated thing I know how to make is a mead blinder. (One-half mug of mead mixed with one-half mug of rum; shake vigorously; drink; shake vigorously.) So I've farmed out this duty to an earnest monk who owes me a favor. It looks right and has lots of pretty maps, but beyond that I haven't read a lick of it. If you want to read more about my exploits, you'll need to skip ahead a bit.

TYPES OF MAZES

Whether it's the hedge maze of a dryad, the catacombs of a sinister cult, or the mines of a Dwarvish king, the thought of roaming through twisty corridors is a staple of Fantasy games.

There are three broad categories of maze-like structure: planned, constructed, and natural.

Planned maze-like structures have their entire purpose defined from the beginning, and its entire layout and design is carefully considered. A labyrinth is probably the most common example; the builders of a maze must know both the entrance and exit, as well as any desired stops along the way.

Constructed maze-like structures are constructed by their final form was not envisioned by anyone. However, its structure is still manufactured by intelligent minds, or else intelligent minds had an active hand in its development at some point. Mine systems are the classic example; those who burrow into the earth seldom know the exact shape of their final construct, but instead build new shafts as they discover new resources or encounter difficulties. A confusing mansion would be another instance, if the basic house had extension after confounding extension added on, resulting in disoriented explorers.

Natural maze-like structures are entirely unplanned; their confusion stems not from any active desire, but the random formations of natural processes. Ancient

underground caverns caused by water flow and erosion are the most classic and obvious examples, but treacherous mountain passes or paths carved by roaming animals through overgrown forests would be other cases.

A maze-like structure can consist of more than one type. For example, a planned dungeon beneath a castle might have a branch that leads off to a series of constructed mine shafts; during the construction of that shaft, the miners may have stumbled onto a natural cavern system. As another case, a planned labyrinth built long ago might have collapsed into confusing ruins, resulting in a dungeon where parts retain their original planned organization while others are merely constructed; some parts might even have collapsed or overgrown so fully that they are indistinguishable from a natural formation. Finally, a natural cavern might become inhabited by demihumans, who transform it into a constructed habitation.

THE MAZE'S PURPOSE

Although some gamemasters have the urge to pick up a pencil and graph paper and start plotting a maze or dungeon immediately, more satisfying results can occur if some simple preparations are made.

First, the most important idea to keep in mind when conceiving of or designing a maze-like structure is: Why does it exist? Most such locations are wildly expensive and difficult to construct, and would almost never be undertaken lightly or randomly. (Of course, natural locations have the advantage that they can just exist; no further justification is necessary ... although then the gamemaster should carefully consider why players' characters would want to explore them.)

There are many reasons a maze-like structure could come into being:

- To keep something safe (for instance, valued prisoners or a paranoid noble)
- To hide something (for example, a powerful magic item or weapon)
- To honor something (usually a ruler or somebody of incredible wealth and power, or else a loved one of such a person)
- To provide amusement (such as a hedge maze, or coliseum puzzle)
- To keep something from escaping (such as a monster or cosmic entity)
- To provide housing (especially subterranean dwellers)
- To access valuable resources, usually through mining (generally precious metals or jewels, although Fantasy games can have other types of resources)

- To provide a challenge (for example, a maze used as a culture's Rite of Adulthood, or a Trial of Champions used to judge one's guilt or innocence)

Of course, multiple techniques can be used for a single place. For example, a group of goblins might live in a cavern system. When a respected warrior died, they dug a multi-roomed tomb for her body as an adjunct to the main caves. When their shamans captured a wicked Djinn that slew many of their kind, they sealed it in another addition to their caverns, hoping to ensure its evil could never escape.

Or a maze-like construct might have had its purpose changed or modified. For instance, a temple might originally have been designed to honor a fallen hero, but an evil priest who worships an opposed god might have taken it over and turned it into a twisted mockery of the tomb.

Finally, it **is** possible for a maze to have no purpose at all; fantasy tales are filled with stories of those who have succumbed to madness and built strange, inexplicable structures. However, even in this case, the gamemaster should probably know the source of both the builder's resources and his madness. (Fortunately, the same powerful beings that can inspire such madness are often eager to supply their new minions with the resources necessary to further their insane goals.)

ORGANIZING THE MAZE

Once the gamemaster knows the reason for a maze's existence, he can begin building and populating it. The most obvious place to start is the "central" chamber or purpose of the construct. For example, a dungeon primarily intended as a prison will need cells for captives, interrogation facilities, and so on. An under-earth vault designed to guard a precious jewel would probably be best created with the treasure chamber first, adding additional rooms outward from there.

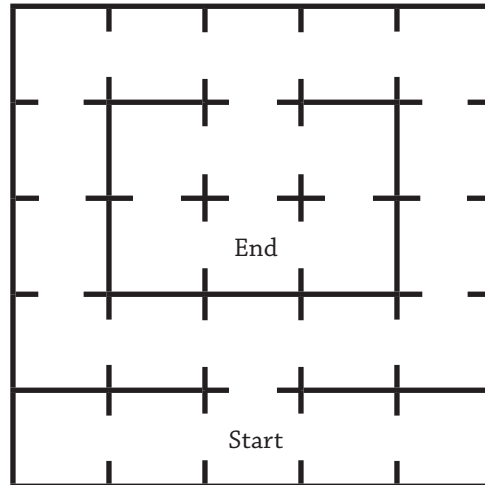
From there, the next logical addition is any support rooms or structures necessary for the central room (or rooms) to fulfill its purpose. For instance, both the prison and the treasure vault will require guards. However, if the prison only leads to one central exit point, then these guards probably don't reside under the earth,

LEFT ISN'T ALWAYS RIGHT

Everyone knows that if you just keep hugging the left (or right) wall, you'll eventually find your way out of a maze, right?

Not necessarily. Although it's a good general strategy, it's by no means foolproof. In particular, it's possible for a maze-maker to make one or more "islands" within a maze. If the object is to get to a central area, then following one wall will entirely miss it.

For example, an adventurer who enters the simple sample maze below and follows the left wall will do a clockwise circuit of the dungeon, completely missing the treasure in the center.



instead posting watch at that exit point. However, the vault will probably have full-time guards, and they will thus need to be supported.

Continuing these cases, both the prison and vault would have supply areas for guards (although the prison's supply closet would probably be more heavily secured, to keep escaped prisoners away from weapons). The vault would also have living quarters and feeding facilities for its guards.

ADDING ENCOUNTERS

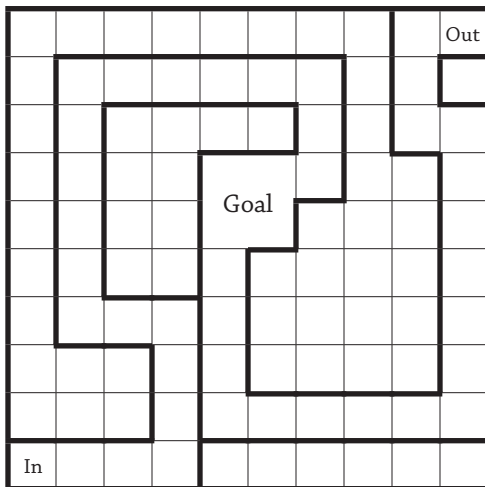
At this point, the gamemaster should have a fully functional underground setting, fulfilling its primary duty. However, it's pretty bland. To mitigate this, add

entrance and the exit (if they are different places). Then draw any areas where explorers will want or need to visit. (See “Choosing the Size.”)

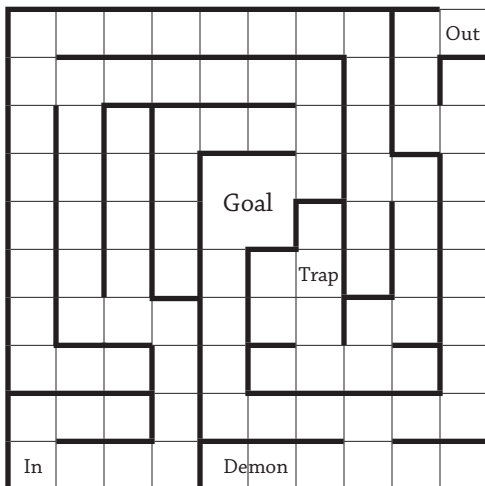
From there, draw the “correct” route through the maze, being sure to connect all the ancillary locations along this path. (See “Designing the Correct Path.”)

Finally, draw off-shoot paths from the correct route, making sure to close up any of these side treks so they don’t present an alternate means of thwarting the maze. It’s also possible to place alternate rooms within these dead-end routes, giving additional encounters for those who are off the beaten path. (See “Finishing the Maze Layout.”)

DESIGNING THE CORRECT PATH



FINISHING THE MAZE LAYOUT



RANDOM DUNGEONS

This is a system for designing a maze with little advance notice. Of course, the gamemaster can also choose what seems interesting, and is free to ignore any result that doesn’t make sense.

First, figure out the purpose of the construct. Roll one regular die and consult the “Dungeon Goal” table.

Next, decide where the construct by rolling one regular die on the “Dungeon Location” table.

Then, decide how many “rooms” the dungeon should be, and draw a grid of that size. At this point, figure out the number of “active” encounters and the number of “empty” (or nonencounter) rooms. Both of these will determine how long the adventure takes, although the number of active encounters is much more important. Depending on the gaming group’s style of play and the number of players, a good rule of thumb is that every three encounters will take about one hour, assuming a ratio of one combat, one skill resolution situation, and one roleplaying encounter. Combats take the longest, especially with more players. Roleplaying encounters are shorter, and skill resolution situations are usually the shortest.

Connect the rooms in the maze using the “Creating the Maze Layout” tips. In general, these “mazes” will be **much** simpler than traditional mazes, consisting of several dozen squares. However, the technique is the same: Determine the entrance and exit, craft the one true path through the maze, and build other “dead ends” around it. (In a typical dungeon, it’s common for there to be more than one true path. However, make sure there’s at least one! In addition, check for and eliminate any “shortcuts” that can let players skip large portions of the scenario.) In this system, the

“last” room is the one that fulfills the function of the construct or the adventure. For example, if it’s designed to keep a powerful monster locked in, then the last room would contain the monster; if it’s an underground community, then the last room would contain the city ruler who must be defeated or the goal that the city ruler has commanded them to complete.

As an option, generating the maze can be skipped until after determining the encounters if it would be easier to build the maze around them.

EXAMPLE

A gamemaster has been coerced by her players to run a three-hour adventure with no notice. She decides on a 25-square dungeon (a five-by-five grid), with nine encounters. Upon rolling for the purpose of the construct, she rolls a 6; she rolls again, and gets a 2 and a 4: It’s designed to keep something in, as well as a test or amusement. Next she rolls to determine where the construct is. She gets a 3: It’s above ground.

She decides on a simple spiral pattern, beginning in the lower left-hand corner and progressing to the center (see “Example Maze, Figure 1”).

She then decides where the encounters are and numbers them accordingly (see “Example Maze, Figure 2”).

Next, she formulates the back story of the adventure. Centuries ago, a wise priest came into possession of a powerful weapon. Realizing it would be wrong to destroy it, or even keep it hidden away forever, he instead ordered a temple constructed that would serve as a means of protecting the weapon and determining who should be worthy to receive it.

Note that the mazes generated in this method are not “to scale”; they are merely meant to represent the layout of the construct. Thus the example temple could be a square, but it could also be long and rectangular, circular, rising and falling over many heights, and so on. All that’s really important is to determine that encounter 1 leads to 2, 2 leads to 3, and so on. (In fact, it’s possible to construct a dungeon of this sort without needing to draw anything; the gamemaster merely needs to keep track of information as words on paper or in her head.)

ENCOUNTERS

For each encounter, the gamemaster should decide what type of encounter will be generated, or roll one die (not a Wild Die) and consult the “Dungeon Encounters” table on page 106.

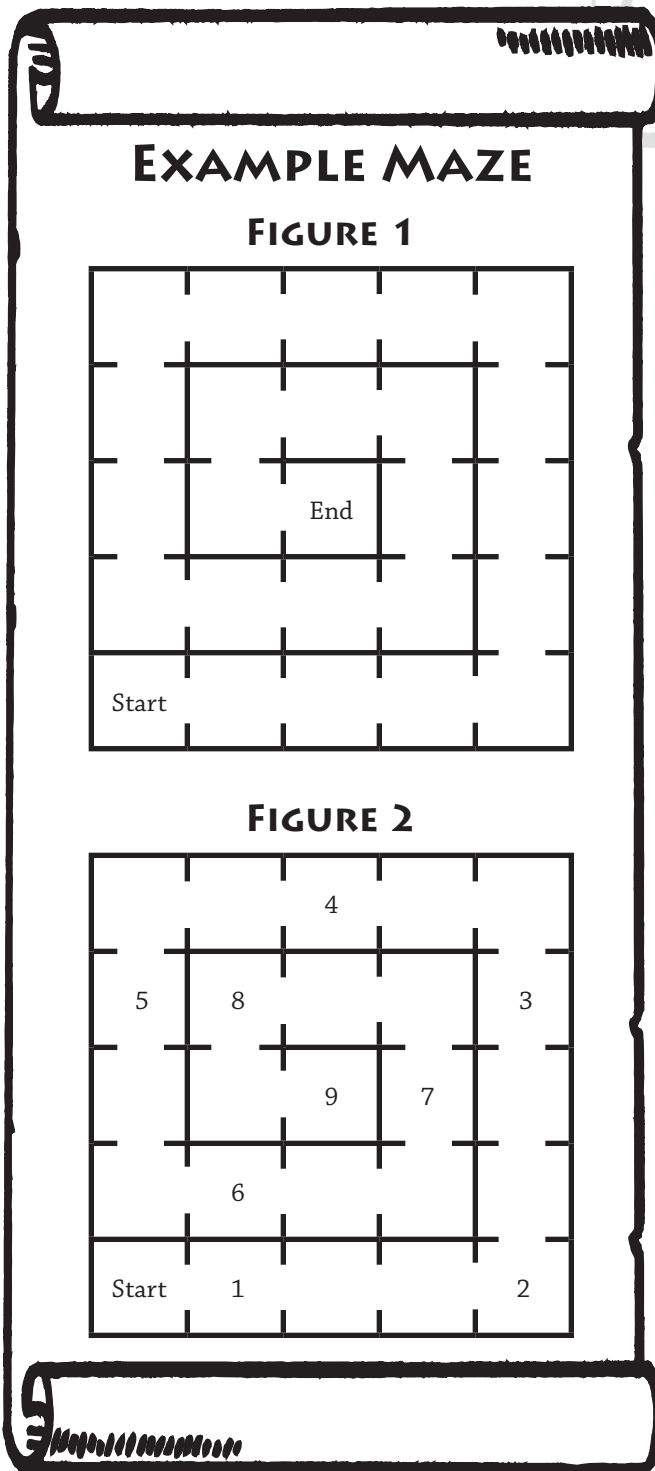
The most common combination is “combat” and “roleplaying.” This represents a creature that can be fought but might also be rea-

DUNGEON GOAL

Roll 1D	Result
1	To keep something in (such as a prison or a powerful monster)
2	To keep something out (such as guarding a treasure or great artifact)
3	A natural construct or a living environment (such as an underground community or city of undead)
4	To provide a test or amusement (such as a god’s “Test of Honor” or an emperor’s torture chamber)
5	Completely random (such as one designed by a madman)
6	A combination of the above; roll twice (ignoring duplicates) or choose two

DUNGEON LOCATION

Roll 1D	Result
1–2	Underground (such as a “classic” dungeon or subterranean cavern system)
3–4	Above ground (such as a mansion, pyramid, or hedge maze)
5	In some other dimension or some other strange environment (such as underwater or floating in the air)
6	A combination of the above; roll twice (ignoring duplicates) or choose two



soned with. However, it's possible for all of them to be combined in various ways. Combining combat and skill resolution might mean a combat in an unusual environment requiring skill rolls; alternatively, it might represent a skill resolution that, if failed, will lead to

combat (such as needing to sneak past a pack of sleeping wolves).

COMBAT

Generating combat challenges is one of the most challenging aspects of a gamemaster's job, and is not one that can be easily summed up here. The gamemaster is encouraged to look through *D6 Fantasy Creatures* to determine appropriate encounters for her gaming group, adjusting combat skills, damage dealt, and Body Points or Wounds to make suitable encounters for the players' characters. Generally, beings found closer to the end of the maze should be tougher than those at the beginning of adventure.

To get a randomly generated combat encounter, use the "Combat Encounters" sidebar on page 106. Any character or creature can be used in a combat situation by simply altering the combat skills, damage resistance, weapons, and Body Points/Wounds. Additionally, a "more powerful than players' character" result could indicate a large number of weaker opponents rather than a single character with higher skill scores than the players' characters.

SKILL RESOLUTION

To generate an encounter requiring skill resolution, first roll one regular die (not a Wild Die) to decide on the number of skills necessary to resolve the situation. Compare the result to the "Number of Skills Needed" chart in the "Skill Resolution Encounters" sidebar on page 107.

Next, referring to the "Skills Used" chart, roll one die (again, not a Wild Die) to determine which attribute is most appropriate to resolve the encounter. Then, to figure out which skill is most suitable, roll another regular die (or two if *Acumen* is the indicated skill). When two or more skills are listed, the gamemaster may pick whichever one she wishes.

Finally, determine the challenge level to resolve the situation for each skill by rolling 2D (again, without a Wild Die) and comparing the total to the "Challenge Level" chart.

Whether any detrimental effects are suffered by the entire party or just the person who failed the skill result is up to the gamemaster.

Note that this challenge level can be adjusted depending on the overall skill level of the players' characters. For example, an experienced party with many dice above normal starting characters might

DUNGEON ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1D	Result
1–2	Combat
3–4	Skill resolution
5	Roleplaying
6	A combination of two or more of the above; roll again (ignoring duplicates) or choose two

have all of their final difficulties (**not** the roll on the table) raised by 5; thus a roll of 6 — indicating an Easy encounter — might have a final difficulty of Moderate (which is, coincidentally, Easy +5).

The effects of failing the skill challenge, if anything, should depend on what kind of encounter the gamemaster devises. Some good common ones include:

- Damage (roll 1D to determine the number of dice of damage done)
- A hindrance (for example, a wound that temporarily reduces Move; a knee injury that adds +2 to *acrobatics*, *jumping*, and *running* difficulties, and so on)
- A curse (Bad Luck or Achilles' Heel is especially appropriate, although Infamy can also indicate characters "marked" in some way)
- A loss or damaging of gear, weapons, or the like (such as acid splashing on armor, causing it to be degraded or destroyed)

Whether or not these are permanent should be up to the gamemaster, although effects that forever alter a character (such as a curse) should be considered **very** carefully, generally restricting application to those whose abilities need to be limited lest they become too powerful.

Now the gamemaster needs to decide what this collection of random skill resolution numbers means (again, feeling free to discard any results that she can't make fit or don't inspire anything). See the "Example Skill Difficulties" chapter from the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook* for ideas on what various difficulty levels might represent.

Example 1: The gamemaster generating the sample temple determines some skill resolution options. On her first roll, she gets a 4 (indicating two skills are required). For the first skill, she rolls a 2 (*Coordination*), a 3 (*lockpicking*), and a 7 (Moderate). For the second skill, she gets a 6 (*Charisma*), a 6 (*mettle*), and a 4 (Easy). She decides that this encounter room has a mysterious locked door with a well-constructed complex key lock (*lockpicking* difficulty of 14, as per the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*, page 79). Opening the door causes a loud magical scream that has to be shut off by destroying a magical crystal in the center of the room. Because of the noise, approaching the crystal requires an Easy *mettle* roll; the crystal, she decides, is as tough as a

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Strength of Opponents

Roll 1D	Result
1–3	Opponent(s) are less powerful than the players' characters
4–5	Opponent(s) are as powerful than the players' characters
6	Opponent(s) are more powerful than the players' characters

Reason for Combat

Roll 1D	Result
1	Angry at getting lost and seeking revenge
2	Defending/protecting (intentionally or unintentionally) a clue/treasure/person
3	Defending territory/offspring (or what it mistakes as its territory)
4	Gets into fights because they want to (makes the opponents feel good or gives them energy)
5	Gets into fights because they have to (ordered by someone else)
6	Characters have something the opponents want

SKILL RESOLUTION ENCOUNTERS

Number of Skills Needed

Roll 1D	Result
1-3	One
4-5	Two
6	Three

Skills Used

Roll 1D	Result
1	Agility (roll 1D) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 acrobatics 2 climbing 3 contortion 4 jumping 5 riding or flying 6 stealth
2	Coordination (roll 1D) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 charioteering or pilotry 2-3 lockpicking 4 marksmanship 5 sleight of hand 6 throwing
3	Physique (roll 1D) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 lifting 3 running 4-5 stamina 6 swimming
4	Intellect (roll 1D) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 devices 2 navigation 3 reading/writing, speaking, or trading

4 cultures or scholar

5-6 traps

5 Acumen (roll 2D)

- 2 artist
- 3 gambling
- 4 crafting
- 5 hide
- 6 tracking
- 7 search
- 8 investigation
- 9 know-how
- 10 survival
- 11 streetwise
- 12 disguise

6 Charisma (roll 1D)

- 1 animal handling
- 2 bluff
- 3 charm or persuasion
- 4 command
- 5 intimidation
- 6 mettle

Challenge Level

Roll 2D	Result
2-3	Very Easy (1-5)
4-6	Easy (6-10)
7	Moderate (11-15)
8-10	Difficult (16-20)
11	Very Difficult (21-25)
12	Heroic (26-30)

thin wooden door, and thus has a Toughness of 1D and requires 10 points of damage (see page 69 of the *D6 Fantasy Rulebook*).

Example 2: The gamemaster's dice are feeling frisky and generate some odd results. On her first roll she gets a 6 (indicating three skills). For the first skill she rolls 3, 1, 11: a Very Difficult *lifting* task. For the second she gets a 2, 1, 7: a Moderate *charioteering* or *pilotry* roll. For the last roll she gets a 1, 3, 4: an Easy *contortion* roll. Putting her thinking cap on, the gamemaster decides that the chamber opens into an unusual challenge: a wheeled vehicle at the top of a steep incline, which leads down to a ramp that leaps over an impossibly wide and deep chasm. Those who investigate this vehicle will note that it seems to be the only way to cross the chasm. The vehicle has a very sticky, stubborn brake that needs to be released before the chariot will move; this is a Very Difficult *lifting* task. Once the vehicle is moving, it will take a *charioteering* roll to maneuver it into place so it will optimally jump the chasm. Finally, the vehicle needs to be stopped on the other side before it crashes into a wall, but the brake engagement mechanism is buried deep within the vehicle! It requires an Easy *contortion* roll to squirm one's hand to engage the brake.

Of course, once the gamemaster devises a "skill resolution" encounter, it's entirely possible for there to be other solutions to the problem. For example, the runaway chariot might be controlled in midair by a player's character with *flying*, and the players' characters might use *devices* to fix the brake or *jumping* to get to safety. Nevertheless, this system is designed to give a basic idea for thinking up a skill-resolution situation.

ROLEPLAYING

Generating an encounter that calls for roleplaying is challenging and requires more ingenuity to make it satisfying for the players. Nevertheless, here is a quick system to get ideas.

First, roll one die to determine which of the two tables "Most Appropriate Skill" charts in the "Roleplaying Encounters" sidebar to roll on. Then roll a second die to determine which of the six skills below each table is most appropriate to resolve the encounter.

ROLEPLAYING ENCOUNTERS

Most Appropriate Skill

If the first die roll is 1–4:

Roll 1D	Result
1	bluff
2	charm
3	command
4	intimidation
5	persuasion
6	speaking

If the first die roll is 5–6:

Roll 1D	Result
1	cultures or scholar
2	disguise
3	gambling
4	streetwise
5	trading
6	reading/writing

Strength of Those Encountered

Roll 1D	Result
1	Weaker than the players' characters
2–4	About as strong as the players' characters
5–6	Stronger than the players' characters

Attitude of Those Encountered

Roll 1D	Result
1	Friendly
2–4	Neutral
5–6	Hostile

Next, determine the strength of those being interacted with by rolling one die and checking the result against the “Strength of Those Encountered” chart. This roll can also represent the number of individuals encountered. For example, a roll of 1 might indicate a lone puny goblin who’s eager to talk, while a 6 might indicate a well-trained party of goblins, led by a powerful shaman who’s willing to negotiate.

Finally, determine the base mindset of the encountered person (or persons) by rolling one die and comparing the result to the “Attitude of Those Encountered” chart.

“Friendly” doesn’t necessarily mean “willing to help a character,” but is generally a person prone to seeing things the players’ characters’ way. Likewise “Hostile” doesn’t necessarily mean “will attack any moment,” but indicates an individual who likely views the players’ characters as a threat, a nuisance, or lunch.

Again, discard any results that don’t make sense or are too difficult to work into the encounter. For example, a dungeon that’s populated entirely by undead might make it difficult to justify a Friendly encounter. On the other hand, maybe the this result can be interpreted as a lost Human child within the dungeon. (Or maybe the gamemaster is inspired by the thought of the players’ characters encountering Ted the Happy Zombie ...)

Use all this information to generate a skeleton of a roleplaying encounter, then add whatever feels interesting. Note that the “appropriate skill” is **not** intended to be used as a skill roll to resolve the scene (unlike the Skill Resolution Encounter system earlier); rather, it’s designed to suggest a starting point where that skill would be appropriate. Of course, the skill could be used to replace the roleplaying encounter if the players aren’t interested in roleplaying.

Example 1: The gamemaster rolls a 1 (indicating the skill will be chosen from the first table), a 4 (indicating that *intimidation* is the most appropriate skill), a 5 (indicating the encounter is stronger than the players’ characters), and a 3 (indicating the encounter is Neutral to begin with). The gamemaster decides that a Sphinx is in one of the chambers of the temple, giving a test of courage. He will be increasingly more belligerent and will eventually attack. However, he will back down if treated in an antagonistic nature; if the players’ characters forcefully indicate they deserve the treasure, and they won’t be stopped by the likes of the Sphinx, he will smile and commend their spirit.

Example 2: The gamemaster gets a 5, 4, 2, 5: a hostile encounter with someone who’s the same strength as the players’ characters where *streetwise* is the best skill to use. The gamemaster decides that an assassin has

gotten trapped within the temple, unable to progress further or escape. The assassin will try to trick the players’ characters into thinking that he’s a noble fighter and would be a good asset to the group. The assassin will ride the group’s coattails in hopes of passing the test and getting the powerful weapon; regardless, at some point he will betray the party when it best suits his purposes. If the players’ characters are *streetwise* (although not necessarily using the skill), they will note that the stranger is not what he seems, and can deal with him accordingly.

Example 3: Earlier, the gamemaster rolled a 6 when determining the encounter type, indicating more than one. She then rolls a 5 and a 4: both a roleplaying and skill resolution will be necessary to resolve the situation. For the skill resolution part, she rolls a 2, 4, and 7: a Moderate *marksmanship* task. For the roleplaying part, she rolls a 5, 5, 1, 1: A friendly, weak encounter where *trading* is the best tactic to take. The gamemaster decides that a Flying Cat lurks in the temple; she possesses the password necessary to bypass a future encounter safely. The Cat is bound by oath to protect one particular room of the temple, but she wants a mouse from another part; she’s willing to trade the password for a plump, tasty mouse. The mice like to hide in the high parts of the temple, and the easiest way to get them is by using *marksmanship* to shoot them with a ranged weapon. Once they get the mouse, the Cat will reveal what she knows and the players’ characters can move on. (Of course, they could also think of a better way to get mice, or even tell the Flying Cat to take a walking leap, hoping to resolve the future encounter on their own.)

ENCOUNTER TIPS

If using this system, the constructed place should be building toward the “final” room, which fulfills the purpose as defined in the first roll. In general, the final encounter should be of a type that’s most satisfying for the players. (For example, those who like roleplaying may need to trick or persuade someone in the final room to resolve the adventure; those who like skill resolution may need to do impossibly difficult things to succeed, and so on.)

Additionally, the last room should be the most difficult challenge within the dungeon, and it’s appropriate to require many rolls; extensive roleplaying, problem-solving, or negotiation; or a lengthy combat to win the day. It’s a good idea to design this final encounter to require at least one Fate Point to be spent by the players’ characters, and possibly more depending on their skill level.

The gamemaster should make sure that treasure, clues, and other rewards are sprinkled throughout

these randomly generated dungeons, ensuring that the players get incentives to continue investigating.

PREMADE ROOMS

Gamemasters looking for other ideas can roll on the following table. This roll can either be used to supplement or replace one of the earlier rolls, as desired. To use this table, roll two dice: a regular die and a Wild Die. (The Wild Die is **not** interpreted as a Critical Success or Critical Failure, but is instead just used to differentiate between the two dice.) The Wild Die is read as the first die and the regular is the second. Thus, rolling a 3 on the Wild Die and a 2 on the regular die would mean looking up the “Regular Die = 2” paragraph under the “Wild Die = 3” section.

Each selection provides a broad outline for an encounter or challenge. The specifics (such as difficulty, an explanation for the area’s existence, or limits on use) are left up to the gamemaster.

WILD DIE = 1

Regular Die = 1: The players’ characters get some kind of tangible insight to a future encounter within the construct, such as a scroll or riddle.

Regular Die = 2: Movement is restricted in some way. Perhaps there is molasses or oil on the floor, or maybe a spell forces the players’ characters to move more sluggishly.

Regular Die = 3: There is a secret door in this room, which requires a *search* roll to find.

Regular Die = 4: The way the players’ characters came from is suddenly blocked off (although the way forward is still open); this requires them to force that way open again or find another exit out of the construct.

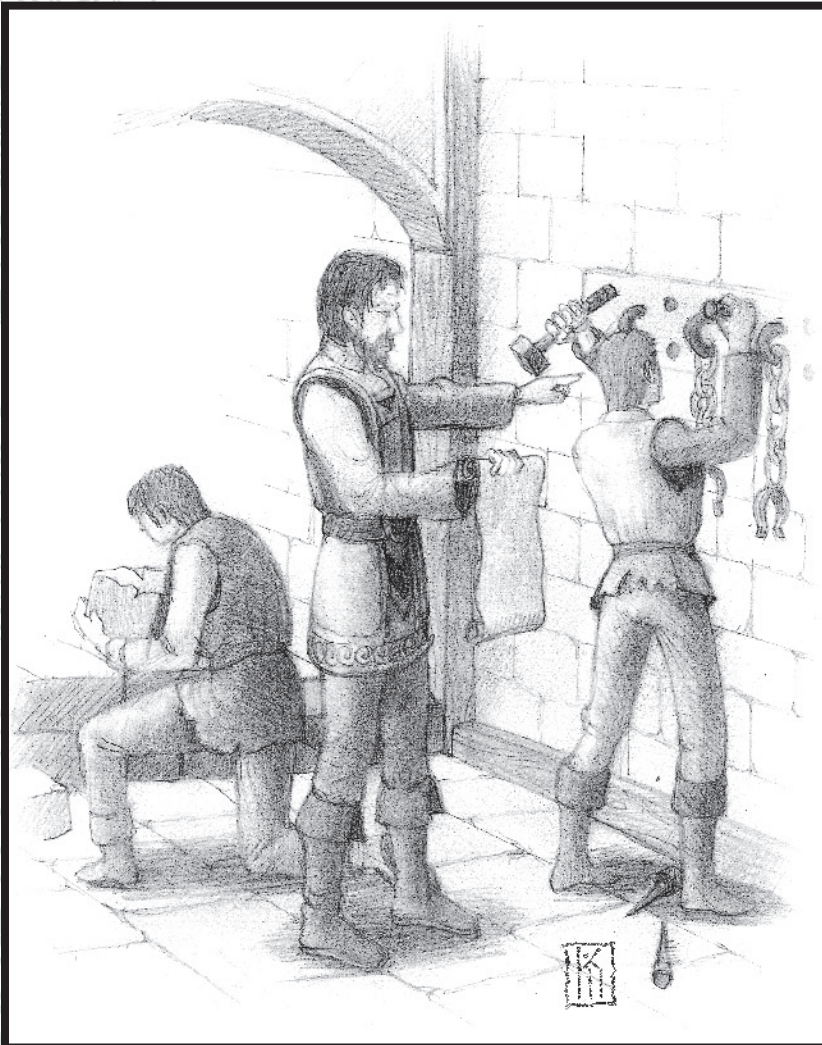
Regular Die = 5: A fountain, pool of water, or other source of liquid enhances the skill of the first player’s character to drink from it. Figure out which skill by using the “Skill Resolution” system herein. This bestows a +1D bonus for the 1D hours or the duration of the time within the construct, whichever comes first.

Regular Die = 6: A fountain, pool of water, or other source of liquid decreases the skill of the first player’s character to drink from it. Figure out which skill by using the “Skill Resolution” system herein. This bestows a -1D penalty for the 1D hours or the duration of the time within the construct, whichever comes first.

WILD DIE = 2

Regular Die = 1: This room or section of the construct contains a personal tie for one the players’ characters. For example, maybe a Patron or Contact is tied up in a cell and must be escorted to safety, or maybe the a player’s priest character finds a scroll containing information of value to his religious order.

Regular Die = 2: Circumstances within this room force the players’ characters to establish camp for the night. Maybe they are overcome by a spell that induces sleep, or maybe the dungeon they are exploring is so big that they



need to rest. Regardless, anyone who travels without food or other essential supplies might find themselves unhappy.

Regular Die = 3: This room contains an exit to another construct (such as a portal to a maze, a stairway down to another dungeon level, and so on). Whether or not to follow it will be up to the players' characters.

Regular Die = 4: Circumstances affect the players' characters weapons, such as a room with a ceiling too low to use normal hand-to-hand weapons, or a room with explosive kegs where missed shots with an arrow could prove disastrous. This forces the players' characters to be inventive, find alternate weapons, or do without weaponry.

Regular Die = 5: Circumstances affect the players' characters armor, such as a room with a deep pool that would make it dangerous to wear heavy armor, or a hallway that's too narrow to use a normal shield. This encourages the players' characters think creatively, find alternate armor, or do without protection.

Regular Die = 6: Circumstances affect the players' character other gear, such as needing to walk through a waterfall to progress onward (which could affect water-permeable spellbooks or scrolls). This forces the players' characters to find a means of protecting their gear or do without those items.

WILD DIE = 3

Regular Die = 1: A treasure of indeterminate value that's much too big to be easily carried is located here (such as a giant golden statue). This could test the players' characters ingenuity and determination. The item might be as valuable as it appears or it might be worthless.

Regular Die = 2: A section of wall with valuable information is here, such as hieroglyphics or magical lore. It may not be immediately useful to the players' characters, but it should be of interest to someone. Figuring out how to acquire and transport this information is up to the players' characters.

Regular Die = 3: One of the characters' Disadvantages is triggered by this room, such as any Allergies, Environmental Incompatibilities, or Quirks.

Regular Die = 4: One of the characters' unusual Special Abilities proves useful here, such as Elasticity, Glider Wings, or Omnivorous.

Regular Die = 5: A creature or object that is obviously too big for the construct is within this area (such as a huge Dragon within a large room where the exits are a meter wide).

Regular Die = 6: A supernatural means of healing is in this chamber, such as a fountain, a compassionate druid, or the like.

WILD DIE = 4

Regular Die = 1: The characters' sight is hampered in some way. For example, the room might be filled with smoke or unnatural darkness. Penalties can be assessed for any rolls requiring vision.

Regular Die = 2: The characters' hearing is hampered in some way. For example, a continuous ringing gong may make normal conversation impossible. Penalties can be assessed for any rolls requiring hearing.

Regular Die = 3: The characters' smell, taste, or touch is hampered in some way. For example, decaying corpses might make scents impossible to distinguish, or an aerial poison might make touch less sensitive (which, among other things, would make *lockpicking* difficult). Penalties can be assessed for any rolls requiring the sense.

Regular Die = 4: Something affects the characters' scale, making them larger. This can affect the characters' ability to get through doorways, pick up objects, or get to certain places.

Regular Die = 5: Something affects the characters' scale, making them smaller. This can affect the characters' ability to pick up items, get to certain locations, or make themselves noticed.

Regular Die = 6: This room contains some or all of the supplies for the construct, such as the food and water of a dungeon's guards. The players' characters could restock their own supplies or be creative and turn this discovery to their advantage.

WILD DIE = 5

Regular Die = 1: A device, person, or mental effect espouses divinations that prove to be true (although they may be vague).

Regular Die = 2: A device, person, or mental effect espouses divinations that prove to be utterly false (although they may be made true by the superstitious).

Regular Die = 3: This room contains a map or depiction of the construct that is entirely accurate (such as the designer's blueprints), although not all encounters may be listed if they were changed after the map was constructed.

Regular Die = 4: This room contains a map or depiction of the construct that is somewhat accurate but has been purposefully designed to be misleading

and inaccurate. (“The Dragon in this chamber likes to be poked with sticks!”)

Regular Die = 5: This room contains what seems to be the exact same encounter as an earlier room, but something significant has been changed about it. For example, an earlier room might have featured combat with a Harpy, while this room contains a Harpy that is actually a princess cursed into the form of a Harpy. Players’ characters who rush in may find themselves surprised or disappointed at their haste.

Regular Die = 6: The room is covered with an illusion such that the immediate situation isn’t obvious. This could be as simple as an illusion of solid floor over a pit trap, or as complicated as the players’ character believing they have exited the dungeon and are returning to their village, when in fact they’re entrapped by a hallucinogenic ooze.

WILD DIE = 6

Regular Die = 1: This room contains information that, if deciphered or figured out, will prove useful in a future combat encounter (such as a creature’s weakness or details about how many to expect). If the benefits of this are not obviously portable (such as a potion or weapon), then this information should count as at least a +5 bonus to the attack or defense rolls made against the encounter.

Regular Die = 2: This room contains information that, if deciphered or figured out, will turn out to be useful in a future skill resolution encounter (such as information as to how to overcome a trap or how one

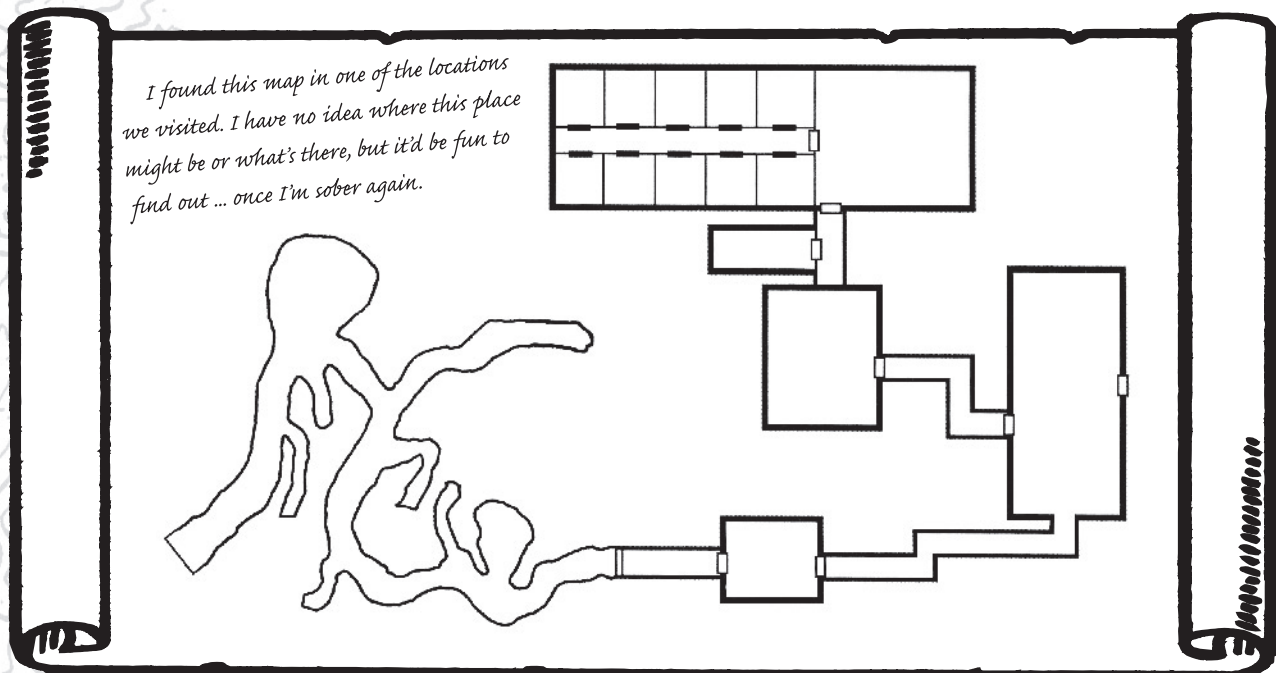
can best clear a chasm). This should count as at least a +5 bonus to the skill resolution situation.

Regular Die = 3: This room contains information that, if deciphered or figured out, will provide a benefit in a future roleplaying encounter (such as information as to what a creature wants or how a person needs to be treated).

Regular Die = 4: Those players’ characters with one of the *Extranormal* abilities may find themselves denied access to those abilities for some reason. For example, maybe the laws of magic within a dungeon are such that failing a *Magic* roll will deny him access for the remainder of the time within, or perhaps a player’s character’s *Miracles* are suppressed within a temple as long as three relics to an opposing deity are present.

Regular Die = 5: An otherwise ordinary encounter is made much more challenging because the “normal” rules don’t apply. For example, the room might be devoid of gravity, time might flow differently, or perhaps the only way to harm a creature is to try to heal it.

Regular Die = 6: Somehow, one or more of the players’ characters are given access to an *Extranormal* attributes, if they don’t already have them. For example, they might meet a deity’s Celestial who offers them access to *Miracles*, or they might meet the familiar of a deceased wizard who offers to teach *Magic*. This does not actually grant the attribute, but rather gives the option of purchasing it after character creation; if the offer is accepted, all of that player’s character’s forthcoming Character Points go toward paying for that new attribute until 1D is purchased.



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