

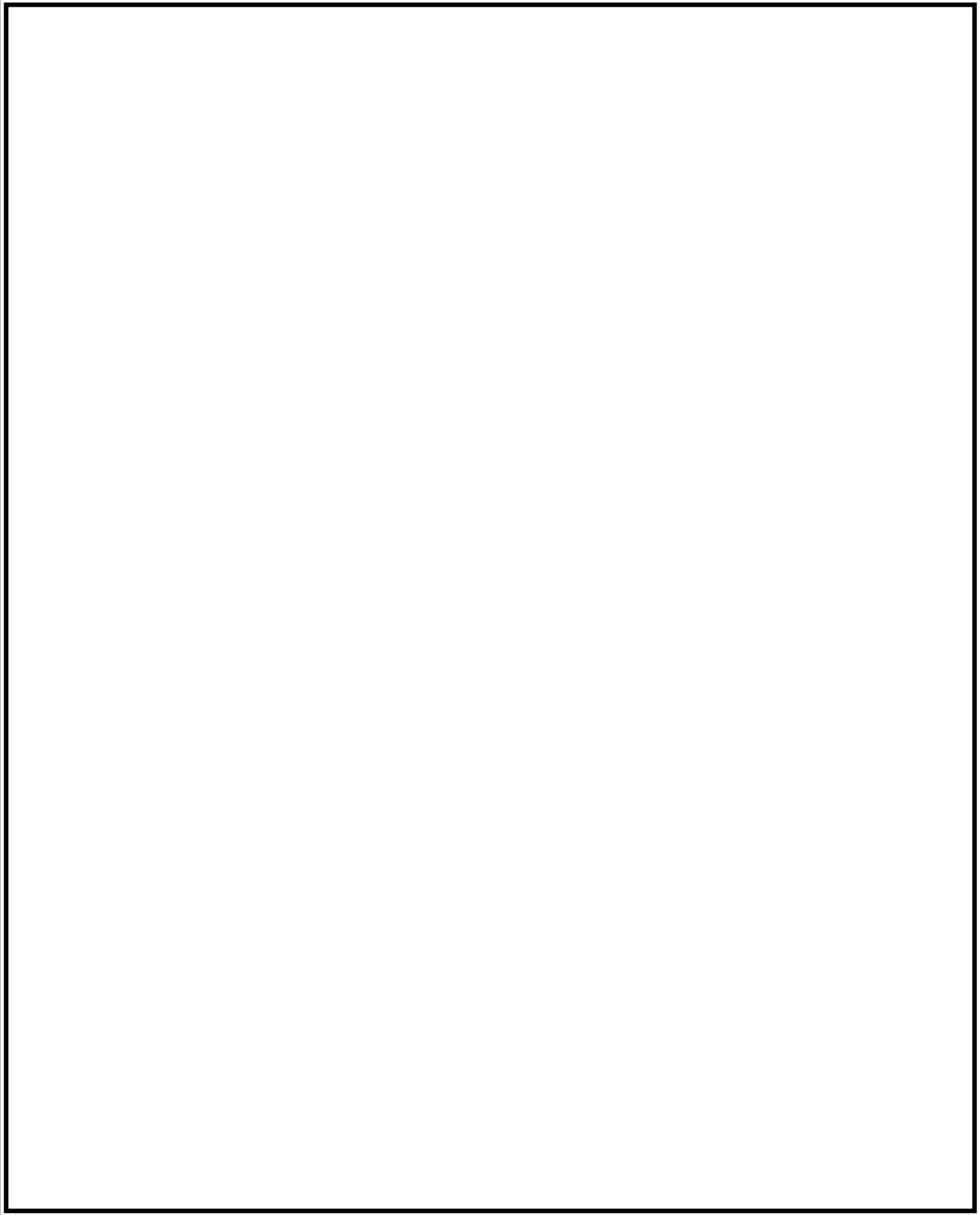
• PART XI • THE SARALIS FRONTIER

We have a saying in Helyssa when someone tries convince one of us of something that is patently untrue: “If you believe that, I have some farmland in Saralis you might be interested in.”

KIER IANIS
PRINCE OF HELYSSA
PRESUMPTIVE KING OF U-LYSHAAK



Once a prosperous kingdom, Saralis has fallen like many of its brethren into a state of almost total desolation. There are isolated farms and villages, inhabited by backward, superstitious people who look upon strangers warily—if not with open hostility. The landscape is dotted with ancient crumbling ruins, including cities, villages, farms, and sometime rows of outposts and signal towers. These tumbled stones are all that remains of a proud kingdom.



• Northwest Jaiman •

1•NORTHWARD

GM Note: as the PCs travel northward, they will notice that the days are growing shorter and the sun is lower and lower in the sky at zenith. By the time they reach the latitude of the Mur Fostisyr, (assuming it is still late winter or spring) the sun will barely clear the horizon. In the deep winter it does not rise at all for several weeks.

The gentle river current should carry the *Maid of the Mist* gently along at a steady pace, arriving at the shores of Lakyran in about three days. Zaris also strongly urged the PCs not to stop to camp, but to continue without putting ashore.

■ **PC Rolls:** Minimal boating skill—a Routine (+30) roll every five hours—is required during this part of the journey. But once the lake is entered, someone with a little sailing skill will have to take over. A Light (+10) roll is required every two hours. Catastrophe is unlikely, as the lake is relatively calm, but in order to make decent time, some knowledge of tacking will be needed.

Aside from weather problems, and spotting a few unusual birds high in the dry, clear skies, the PCs proceed to the straits dividing Lakyran and Karish without incident.

ENCOUNTER: THE LAKYRAN-KARISH STRAITS

Water flows south through these straits, so the PCs will find a fairly strong current going against them. It will require some sailing and boating skill to navigate this region successfully.

■ **PC Roll:** Two people on sails and one at the rudder. Use the Maneuver/Movement table on page 91 of *Arms Law & Claw Law*, the *Hard* column. Getting through the straits will require a total of 5 ‘group’ rolls. Each person rolls individually, and the result is indexed. The total must be 300 or over, or a supplemental roll by any who rolled under is needed. If any of the three rolls over 100, their extra points may be added to the others to bring the total over 100. If anyone fails to act or falls, the roll must be made again; if a fall is rolled, there is a 15% chance he fell into the freezing water and a rescue will have to be made. If, on any roll, the cumulative total is more than -100 the ship has hit a rock and sustained damage. It should be able to take 3-6 such impacts before taking on water...

ENCOUNTER: ATTACK FROM BELOW

As soon as they enter Karish, the group feels a different ‘character’ about this lake, almost as if it does not welcome intruders. Huge chunks of ice can be seen drifting through it, and far to the north, a great expanse of white might be glimpsed: the Ice Sheet Zaris warned of.

■ **PC Roll:** The feeling of hostility continues as the group sails north, until, completely without warning (unless the GM wishes to allow a split second of Morden sensing a great presence rush up from below) the *Maid of the Mist*.

THE KRAKEN

A large squid with a deadly beak, this lake denizen is very hungry and determined. It is not large enough to capsize the *Maid*, but if lucky it could yank a tasty morsel or two off the boat. It has ten tentacles, four of which can attack at a time—the body is hidden under the boat. When a tentacle reaches max hits it vanishes under the water to be replaced by another (if a critical hasn’t severed it). If a PC is grappled and stunned, it will begin to drag her over the side, and the body will appear next to the boat, beak snapping. It takes 3 rounds to get a stunned body to the mouth for a Beak attack. If the victim becomes

unstunned and struggles, it will make another grapple with that tentacle at +50, and gains a crush critical on top of any grapple.

If the body of the kraken goes over max, it slithers away. If five or more tentacles are over max or severed, it also leaves.

Shaken, cold and probably soaked, the PCs will probably have had enough of this lake and soon set ashore. In any case, the treacherous ice sheet will loom even closer, a warning that the lake will soon become impassable.

2•LANDING

According to the maps at Gryphon College, there is a pass through the Dragonsfang mountains along the northern border of Saralis. If the group could cut through this pass they would come down just above the port of Kelfour’s landing, and from there take ship to the Mur Fostisyr. To that end they would strike northwest across Saralis.

The land here is mostly rolling plains of short, springy grass interspersed with a rare isolated farm or small forest. It is usually windy and cold. It rains often, and snow is also very possible. Some regions are actually moor: fairly solid, yet poorly drained flat land. The moors can be dangerous for the unwary, for they are dotted with treacherous swampy areas almost like quicksand.

ENCOUNTER: FOLENN REFUGEES

A few days of hiking through this dismal, if unthreatening landscape may allow the group to settle into a routine. Things are disrupted, however, by the unexpected appearance of a group from the other side of the world.

It should be a rainy night or day (it rains or snows almost constantly this time of year in Saralis), the sky heavy with clouds, the group soaked by the damp chill that seeps to the skin no matter how many layers of clothing you wear. They are trudging along a muddy track which may once have been a road, when a sudden tingling comes over everyone.

■ **PC Roll:** *Medium Perception* (±0); successful rollers recognize this sensation as similar to the feeling before they entered the Flowstorm, but not as intense..

Then the sky strobes blue-white all around and a wind comes out of nowhere. There is a final lash of light, and a crack like lightning, and not a hundred feet away, in the center of a blackened circle of turf, stand five figures. Four appear to be humanoid, while the other is nearly eight feet tall, and possesses hideous clawlike appendages. They are a *Soulslayer of Murlis* and four *Vancu*, its humanoid servants. The Soulslayer is a Thematic Demon; those versed in demonlore will recognize it and be aware of its terrifying powers.

SOULSLAYERS OF MURLIS

Assuming hideous, vaguely humanoid forms, the Soulslayers have a thick pinkish hide with visible veins and a wet, oily appearance. Long sinuous arms mounted on disturbingly placed shoulders end in trinary pincer-like claws than can rotate freely to either slash in an even row or grasp with frightful power. Sinewy bowed legs end in large, three-toed feet built for running.

The Soulslayers frequent the Bladelands of Folenn. Their loyal servants are the humanoid *Vancu*. Their rivals are the Watching Sisters of the Steel Rain, an elusive cult following the Dragon Ulya Shek.

Soulslayers can fire three *Nether Bolts* per day, each at x3 hits. They need one round of inactivity to prepare each bolt

In melee Soulslayers strike with their claws, slashing or pinching, able to make one attack with each per round. Their surprising reach gives them a +50 first-strike advantage in melee to all but wielders of pole arms. Should a victim be stunned, they can close and grapple, reducing their DB by 50 but enabling them to use their cruel soul-draining power.

Soulslayers of Murlis consume the very souls of their victims, drawing on the life-force for energy. This has the effect of a *Dark Absolution*, with the bonus of touching (the Soulslayer must be in physical contact with the victim). They can perform this operation an unlimited number of times, and in fact can heal up to the number of the victim's hit point total and/or any one critical inflicted on it per soul. The victim's soul can often be seen as a faint bluish aura being drawn out of it and into the Soulslayer's sucking maw.

THE VANCU

An evil race of men, the Vancu are servants of the Soulslayers residing in Folenn. The captains of their armies wear Dragonskin Armor and carry a three-headed mace they call a *war claw*. A large enchanted gem is set into the head of this weapon, said to take the soul of each target it kills.

Vancu cut the tongues out of their victims and tie them to their belts.

The Soulslayer will immediately turn towards the PCs, and its Vancu will begin to spread out. A repulsive hissing, slathering sound will emanate from the Soulslayer, and the group will hear it speak "Where are the Watching Sisters!? Are you their servants?" Not waiting for a reply, its minions will rush the group. It may wait a round and fire a *Netherbolt*.

GM Note: These evil servants of the Unlife were unwittingly transported here from Folenn, blasted through an Essænce Portal just before a Bladestorm struck. They are enemies of the Steel Rain. While they have no idea what happened to them, they do not know fear, and will simply attack whatever is nearby. In addition to being cruel and evil, the Soulslayer hungers for victims...

This should prove an excellent test for the PCs, especially Tyrus and Terek with their new weapons. They might get to use their magical fires twice before their monstrous foes can close. They will need these powers to defeat these foes.

When killed, the body of the Soulslayer will vanish. The disgusting, stinking corpses of the Vancu will not. Assuming the characters survive this challenge, they will meet something which will be quite unimpressed by their fiery weapons.

3•AN ANCIENT TRAP

Continuing across this bleak landscape, the PCs will inevitably run into a trap of very unusual—and unexplainable purpose. Who built these stones and why? Did humans worship the creature within? Was some sort of unholy pact made between them? Even Loremasters do not know.

ENCOUNTER: THE SPIRAL OF DEATH

How this structure is encountered depends on whether the group is travelling during the day or night. If they are sleeping during daylight, they will come upon the Spiral; if they are sleeping at night, they will unwittingly set up camp within a couple of miles of the Spiral.

If the group is camping, the man on watch is attacked first, followed by anyone else who is awake, then the sleepers. Should the first attack fail, the Spiral continues until that target is subdued. The Mind Enslaved will then begin a trek across the

N'GURATH GAR (SPIRAL OF DEATH)

Situated in a shallow, flat depression on a rolling plain in Saralis, the N'gurath Gar is a place of absolute evil. When, why and who built this coiling march of stones is a mystery which may never be solved. At the heart of the Spiral is a malevolent entity which feeds on the spirit and has powerful mental abilities to draw prey inside its lethal snare. Around it stand a series of red-grey stones, each ten feet tall and tapered towards the top. All are carved with ancient, indecipherable runes and symbols. Set vertically, they march in a curling row which slowly turns in upon itself until it reaches the center of the depression: a shadowy hole eight feet across and fifty deep. This pit is lined with writhing roots which draw the prey inside for a final embrace. This is not actually a pit, but a hideous sort of mouth, the sides lined with a mucous membrane (very slippery) and the tentacles like many prehensile tongues.

The spiral is about 100 feet across at its widest point (50' radius), but the power extends more than five miles from the center.

Powers:

At five miles it can detect presences and cast one 10th level *Mind Slave* (Evil Mentalist Base Mind Domination) per round. If the target fails, he must slowly walk towards the Spiral. The Spiral can control up to 6 targets simultaneously. Each target gets an RR every six rounds after failing the initial RR, though subsequent tries are at -45. Once within the actual spiral, no more RRs. When a target gets within 5' of the pit, the strong roots snake out. The target suffers 2-4 +50 Large Grapple Attacks. Each root is AT11 (-40) and takes 50 hits. The creature takes half damage from all spell attacks and is 90th level vs mental attacks. It is virtually impossible to kill with regular attacks.

After these first tentacle strikes (whether or not it succeeds in grappling), the *Mind Slave* spell is cancelled (a slim chance to escape—though the Spiral will try to enslave the target again, at ±0). If successful in their grapple, the roots will pull the screaming and fighting target into the hole, where it feeds. Tentacles wrap around the head and the victim suffers an effect similar to *Mind Erosion I* (Evil Mentalist Mind Erosion) on every mental stat simultaneously until the first reaches zero (the victim dies). This affects Temporary stats, lowering all at the rate of one point per round. (Should the PC be rescued before any reach zero, they can fully recover at the usual Temporary Stat increase method.) This process is excruciatingly painful, yet causes no actual physical damage. The Spiral can hold several victims in its 'maw' simultaneously.

When the victim is dead, the body is lowered into the bottom of the 'mouth' where a pool of digestive juices goes to work. The victim is consumed in a few hours.

★ote: there is quite a treasure trove of items at the bottom of this mouth: gold and jewels cannot be digested, and so remain untouched. However, Elor will have no interest in such things. In fact, he might seem reluctant to destroy the Spiral.

Things might appear hopeless for the stalwart adventurers, but of all unlikely sources, aid may come walking over the hill.

5•ELOR

In the unlikely event that the PCs manage to escape the Spiral on their own, they will come upon the House of Elor before they encounter him. On the other hand, they will probably need Elor's help, and he will appear in the nick of time to rescue them.

ENCOUNTER: ELOR ONCE DARK

Elor arrives probably just as the first PC in the pit is starting to lose stat points. Not being one for subtlety at this point, Elor draws his sword and strikes it against the ground. From the end a crack begins to open in the earth, widening as it reaches the spiral until it hits the central shaft. With a terrible piercing cry the beast is split in two and the entire shaft opens to its fifty foot depth. Everyone on the surface is thrown to the ground and the spell is broken. All the tentacles fall limp, but still holding the PCs. The acid in the Maw drains away. Elor calls out to them "Get your friends out of there and join me as quickly as possible; I won't hold this open forever!"

■ **Roll:** adjudicate the rescue of the PCs from in the maw as you see fit. The treasure will be lying in the bottom, glistening in the lingering acid. Anyone who tries to grab anything will earn Elor's irritation, and probably a bad acid burn.

After everyone is free, Elor will raise the sword and the crack will close. If asked whether the creature is dead he will say "Oh, now; out of

commission for a year or so, but not *dead*."

He then invites them to his house about fifteen miles away for a rest and "coffee."

GM Note: At some point along the way, Terek and Tyrus may notice that the Phoenix Pendant and Sword are glimmering with a pale light while near Elor. If they ask him, he will explain that they are probably reacting to his own sword, which was made by Tethior's brother Krelj (Elor might very well go off on a long-winded history of the smiths, including one or two useful bits of information).

THE ISLE AND HOUSE OF ELOR

The house of Elor rests on an island about a mile long and half a mile wide, situated in the center of a river in the foothills of the Saral March (known in Quellbourne to the north as the *Dragonsfang* mountains).

Elor's home can be reached by any one of over a dozen strange bridges spanning the waterway on either side. Also scattered around the island are dozens of wells of various design. All appear to be dry.

The dwelling has had many additions of conflicting architectural styles and rests on a small island in the middle of a river. The house is unique inside as well, filled with strange contraptions and artifacts, and shelves upon shelves of books.

ELOR ONCE DARK

Age: ?? (Appears ^a 35) Eyes: Green Hair: Dark Brown Build: Average Height: 6' 0". Race/Sex: Erlin-Shay/M. Skin: Pale Demeanor: Erratic; evasive, sometimes childishly teasing. Dress: Simple garments in earth tones. True Attitude: Withdrawn, Intermittently Mad. Home: Foothills of the Saral March in Saralis.

Elor Once Dark is a Loremaster of prodigious accomplishments both as a fighter against the Unlife and as a chronicler of events and persons. The strain has taken its toll on him, however, and he now lives in a state of semi-retirement in a small villa in NW Jaiman.

In appearance Elor bears the look of a true half-elf: the slightly pointed ears, the fine features and slender build.

Hits: 110. Melee: 115 bs. Missile: 95 lcb.

AT(DB): 11 (70). Sh: (Y*). Gr: (Y).

MovM: +25. PP: 135 (X 6) = 810.

Lvl: 45. Profession: Mystic. Stats: St-91; Qu-99; Em-100; In-92; Pr-101; Ag-93; Co-80; Me-78; Re-86; SD-65. AP: 85.

Skill Bonuses: Amb±12; Climb110; DisTrap80; DirSp90 (Firebolt); Perc112; PickLock125; Ride70; Rune90; S&H145; S&W30; Swim35; Track66.

Act;110 Anthp70; Appr30; Brawl50; Brib25; Cav25; DemnLr35; DetTrap80; Diplom65; Disguis75; DragLr60; DrugTol32; Falsif40; Forage35; PwrPercep55; Surveil68; Trade15; WeathWatch45.

Languages (S/W): Many

Spells: Base Spell OB: 90. Directed Spell OB: 120 (*Firebolt*). All Base Mystic to 30th, Mentalism and Essence Open and Closed to 20th.

Wyvern Sword:

1. +35 to hit, 2x concussion damage..
2. Unleashes the *Earth's Rage*: Wielder strikes the ground and delivers his choice of *Tremors*, a *Great Crack* or *Quakes* (Sorcerer Solid Destruction List). Usable 1x per 10 days.
3. Will turn Target to stone if sword delivers a critical, and target fails vs a 30th lvl Channeling. Usable 2x per day.

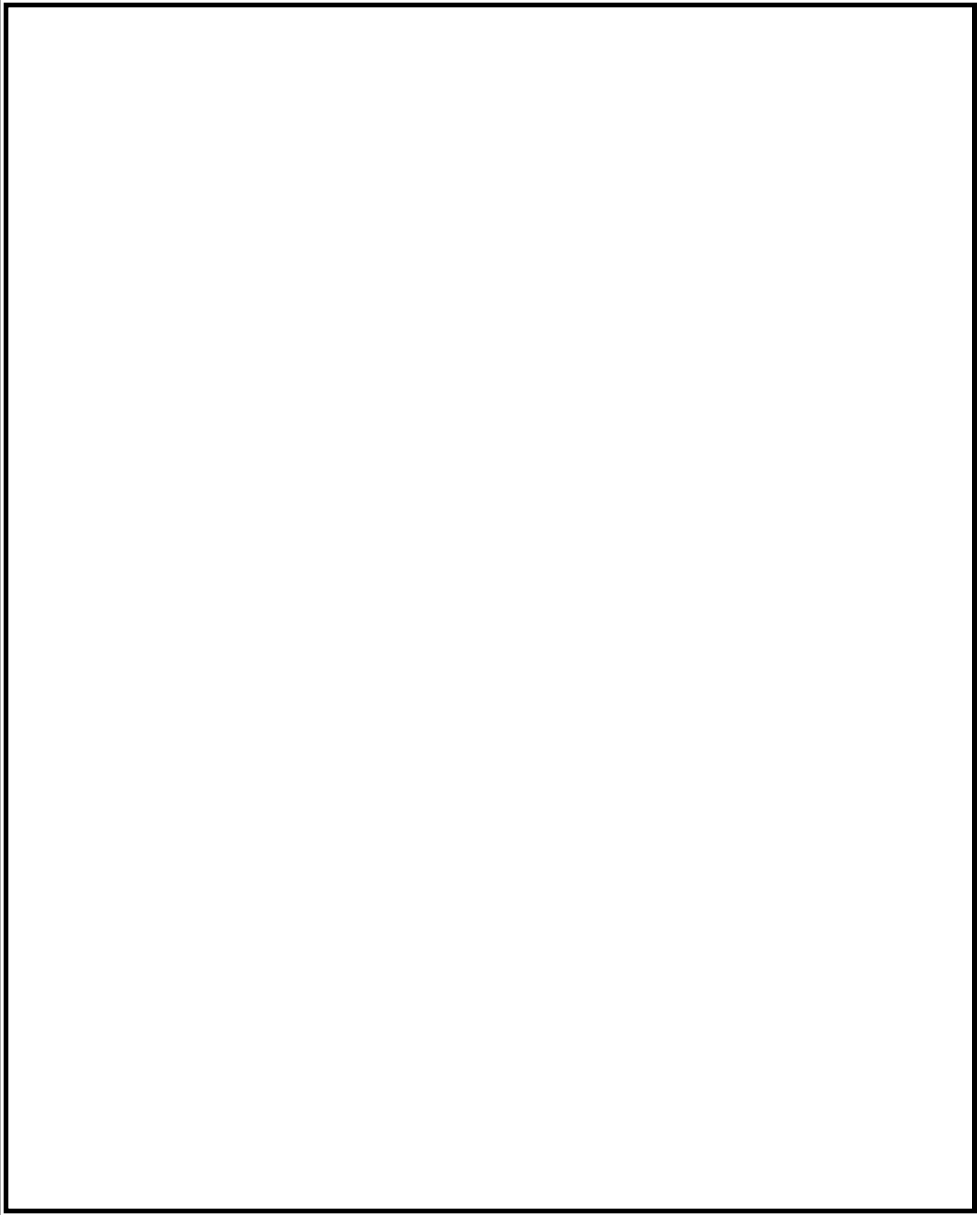


4. *Of Slaying Undead.*
 5. *Of Changing:* will become a dagger, broadsword or two-handed sword at will.
- Tunic: Protects as AT 11 with a +30 to DB.
- Ring: x6 PP enhancer for Mystics only.

Elor will put up the guests in various bizarre rooms in his home for a couple of days, no more. If asked about the pass through the mountains, he will laugh and say, "Well, you can forget that idea unless you want to wait till autumn. You'll have to go around through Lu'nak, though that will be rather dangerous as well."

Beyond that advice, he will offer little of any immediate use, though the GM may wish to add a few additional hints. He will demur about the Mur Fostisyr, saying "Oh, I haven't been there in centuries; it's completely different now, I'm sure."

Elor will send them on their way with dry clothes and provisions, and one final warning. As the group departs, Elor will say... "Well, watch out for those Shards! They're not too good at hitting you if you're invisible!" Without explanation, he'll turn and shut his door.



• Southern Jaiman •

• PART XII •

A CHILL WIND IN LU'NAK

There is a great forest in northwest Jaiman, and it is called Dír. Of all the non-desolate northern realms, it is the closest to the pole, and thus laid open to the Umlí. Yet, Kadæna was of mind and allowed only a few—survivors of the war on the forest men. Four hundred came, forever to reside down under the wicked cloak of six and sixty shards. And then there was Shar-Ti.

Excerpt from
Of the Six I-Lats:
A Treatise on the Constructs
Andraax



The Blue Forest is one of the most majestic (and eerie) places in all of the Shadow World. Made up primarily of huge blue spruces, it is like a vast cathedral stretching across much of northern L'unak. As one heads west towards the coast, the forest thins out to rolling hills. It is only as one gets to within thirty or so miles from the water that the Forest of Dír is seen, like a black shadow on the land. It covers the land north of the Colewater river, extending nearly to the edge of the plateau—stopping only at the ruined wall of the city of Quellburn. A sheer cliff falls approximately two hundred feet to the sea below. The few who travel through this land cling to the Dragonsfang Mountains along the south and avoid the eaves of the Black Wood of Dír.

1•THROUGH THE BLUE FOREST

Days of uneventful travel along the feet of the Dragonsfang Mountains follow, until the snow-covered peaks give way to lower hills that could be scaled. Over these the characters go, and down into the Blue Forest. From above it is indeed an undulating roof of soft blue-green, a seemingly endless wood. Underneath, it is an eerily quiet twilight world ruled by giant evergreens.

Despite a constant feeling of being watched, there are no encounters in the Blue Forest. few birds and small mammals seem to make their home here, but they are very shy and do not come near the travellers.

GM Note: Even though there are no encounters, use this passage to build tension. Every little breeze through the whispering pine branches, every crunch of needles... Try to turn the characters (and players) into nervous wrecks.

THE OPEN HIGHLANDS

After journeying at least fifty miles through almost unbroken forest, the group emerges onto the Lu'nak highlands. They are still fifty miles or so from the coast, and on a clear day they could already see the dark form ahead which is the Forest of Dír. Only by turning

somewhat south again will they avoid the wood. Assuming the group does so (they have heard so many bad things about the Forest of Dír), they will soon meet a tangible threat.

■ **Roll: Medium (± 0) Perception:** Characters notice a black eagle flying high overhead. There will be repeated sightings over the next several hours, until they are due south of the Forest of Dír.

Just as the group comes over arise in an area where the terrain is particularly rocky to the south, forcing the group to less than a mile from the eaves of the Black Wood of Dír, someone will see a rider ahead of them, poised on his black steed. The black bird they have been spotting circles down and lands on the rider's arm. Then five more riders come up over the horizon, blocking their passage ahead. As the group looks behind them they will see six more riders have ridden up from the east. They are trapped. Then one who appears to be the leader from the west group rises up in his saddle and lets out an eerie, unsettling cry. And the riders begin to close.

ENCOUNTER: MESSENGERS OF SYRKAKANG

The only hope to avoid the riders is to flee north into the Forest of Dír. If they do not, they face almost certain death at the hands of the Messengers of Syrkakang. While the forest is terrifying, it is better than certain death... isn't it?

Should the characters decide to fight, stats for the messengers are found in the back of the book.

2•THE FOREST OF DÍR

As soon as the characters enter the forest, there is a sense of entering a very old, very evil place. The trees are all very tall (though nothing to compare to the Blue Forest), with smooth black trunks, and branches that seem to grow out almost horizontally for several feet before turning upwards. The leaves are very dark green and shiny, almost oily-looking. There are no leaves on the ground, which is covered by a springy dark moss. No birds sing, nor is there any sign of any animal life. The Messengers do not enter the forest, but seem to spread out along the perimeter. It is hard to see anything outside the wood once you are more than a few feet inside it.

ENCOUNTER: A WHISPER IN THE TREES

There are Shards in the forest, and all the Dír trees are under their 'Will.' The trees sense intruders (invisible or not) and will inform their demonic masters. Shards are nocturnal and normally sleep during the day. However, they will be roused by intruders. A lot of six shards will run to the scene.

■ **GM Roll:** Every hour after the PCs enter the forest, roll D100. If it is night add 50. If the result is above 75, shards have been awakened (it takes some time for a message to reach them). 100 minus the modified roll is the number of minutes before the Shards appear. They will not attack immediately, preferring to observe the intruders first by making high-speed passes through the upper branches.

■ **PC Rolls:** The GM should have every PC make perception rolls every few minutes, telling them each time that the forest is completely silent. Mentalists attempting to



detect presences will get nothing specific, but a disquieting sensation of a decentralized presence (the semi-aware forest itself). Then, when the shards make their first pass, everyone making a successful *Easy (+20) Perception* will hear a rustling across the treetops. It is very quick and localized, like a small whirlwind will sometimes move from tree to tree in the quiet before a thunderstorm. Then it will happen again. About now, anyone with *Detect Ambush* should roll. The Shards will attack any second. If the group is invisible, they will delay their attack up to another hour, to analyze the situation further.

■ **PC Roll:** Everyone gets a *Medium* (± 0) *Perception* to see what appears to be a clearing and a dim bluish light about 300 yards away.

There is virtually nothing to do to defend oneself against a Shard in an open space like the forest. The best chance of the PCs is to run and live long enough to get to the temple of Jaysek. The shards will drop out of the trees and run in front of the group in pairs, stop, and fire their disks. They must stand immobile for the entire round (they throw in missile phase), but plan their stop so the PC cannot reach them before they run away again. In this fashion they may attack on alternate rounds. Shards are intelligent but not terribly clever; over all they are cruel. They want the brains of the characters (which they consider a delicacy), but believe the group has no chance of escape so will 'toy' with them first.

All the shards' disks are coated with a Con-based Circulatory poison (See Master Atlas 2nd Ed p 40-42). If a critical result is achieved, the target must make a RR.

★note: If the PCs are invisible, the attack OB is reduced to 1/3 normal (they attack using smell). Targets remain invisible unless they attack. Shards will ‘spray the area’ with disks.

GM Note: Depending on whether the group can all be made invisible, the Shrine might have to be rather close before the Shards attack (those Shards are deadly, but not very bright). A group of this level might not be able to survive more than one round of attacks by these beasts. Shard disks are usually poisoned, but the GM may wish to reduce or eliminate the effect depending on how strong the group is. Remember, the shards will want to take their prey and eat their brains. Sadly, should the entire group fall here, they will meet with a rather permanent demise.

But don't worry, they'll meet Shards again later... in Emer.

Hopefully the PCs make it into the ring of trees, beyond which the Shards will not follow.

THE SHRINE OF JAYSEK

In a clearing surrounded by a double ring of blue firs even taller than the Dír-trees of the surrounding forest, there stands a circular temple. During the day, the small building appears to be constructed of a lovely (but unremarkable) white marble. At night, however, the dome and columns of the structure glimmer with a pale blue gleam. They are fashioned of Orhan Marble, an enchanted material which—in sufficient quantities—can deter evil souls from passing.

The Shards will not enter the clearing, but they will throw discs

inside if they think they can get a target. Once the group is within the actual temple, any attacks are at -120 because of the columns. A couple of rounds of this and the Shards will leave, frustrated. But they will watch. If the characters waste too much time, Shar-Ti will appear, and he can enter the ring of trees (though even he cannot come within the temple).

THE SHRINE

The structure is rather simple, and in the center stands a statue of Jaysek (his name is carved in the base). He appears to be looking down, perhaps at where a supplicant might stand.

Layout, temple above-ground 1/4 page

At first it would appear that the PCs have only gained a brief reprieve from the Shards, but this temple is more than it seems.

■ **PC Roll:** A successful Hard (-10) search for secret panel on the floor reveals that one of the 3' x 3' square tiles is set differently than the others. However, it cannot be simply pried up. This is an unusual mental door, which can only be opened by praying to Jaysek. One does not have to be a follower; simply not evil and wishing to escape. If one does this while standing on the tile, it lowers smoothly into the floor, going down about fifty feet before coming to a halt in a niche set into a circular chamber. Once the rider steps off, the tile returns to the top and another may follow. At the other end of the room a corridor stretches off to the west. It would appear to be an escape route.

THE CRYPT OF ENRIS JOOR

About 100 feet down the corridor on the right is a side passage about twenty feet long. The door and passage beyond are of different construction, much more recent —perhaps 200-300 years old, whereas the rest of the temple is very old, perhaps from the Second Era. There is an unusual hexagon-shaped door of stone at the end of the passage is locked and *Very Hard* (-20) to open but untrapped. There is a rune carved into the door which the PCs cannot read, and above it a tree emblem. When unlocked, it slides up into the ceiling via a counterbalance. beyond lies the Crypt. As soon as the door opens, the Phoenix Pendant and Sword begin to glimmer (they are awakened by the Windblade in the sarcophagus).

The room is hexagonal, and bare except for an elongated hexagonal stone box on a pedestal in the center, and a pedestal standing before the sarcophagus. It is fairly obvious that the box is a sarcophagus, even before anyone notices the inscription on the top of the pedestal:

HERE LIES ENRIS JOOR

5770 — 5810 THIRD ERA OF IRE

THE HEIR TO THE LANDS OF THE BLUE FOREST

FOUGHT VALIANTLY IN THE VALE ABOVE

AND DEFEATED THE SORCERER OF AR-SYMANG.

As the characters approach, they realize that the lid of the sarcophagus is made out of glass or some other transparent material,

Shards

Type	LVL	Base Rate	Max Pace/MM Bonus	Speed MS/AQ	Size/Crit	Hits	AT (DB)	Attacks	# Enc.	Outlook (IQ)
Lesser	15H	1000‡	Dash/50	BF‡/BF‡	M/II	175G	12(50)‡	120lcb(2x)(Slash)/poison§	1-5	Cruel(AV)
Greater	25H	1000‡	Dash/50	BF‡/BF‡	M/LA	225H	12(50)‡	150lcb(2x)(Slash)/poison§/100Bolt‡	1	Cruel(VH)
Shar-Ti ‡ Special	45	1000†	Dash/50	BF†/BF†	M/II	300	12 (90)*	230lcb(2x)(slash)/Poison§/Bolt 160†	1	Cruel(HI)

and lying in a specially formed niche in the lid is a very unusual-looking sword (see the description below). Inside can be seen the body.

Enris Joor is wearing a suit of silver armor, and surrounded by glittering black slivers, like shards of obsidian. The sword could be removed without opening the lid, of course. However, if anyone does open the lid, the body will turn to dust.

Anyone touching one of the black shards with bare hands must make a Ag RR vs 20th level or take 1-10 hits (a cut from the broken laen of the Implementor; these shards are also intensely evil). There is nothing of value in the box.

THE WINDBLADE

The Windblade is one of the three *Narsælkin*, enchanted blades made by the Swordmaker Krelj. They were intended to act as focus points in the fight against the Unlife which culminated in the Wars of Dominion. Specifically, they were to stand against the evil swords known as *Implementors*. All three *Narsælkin* vanished after the Wars along with their wielders. Tales of the *Narsælkin* reappearing persisted through the Third Era, and one or two instances have been verified. The Windblade had not been seen for several hundred years, however, and was rumored to have been lost in Tanara with the fall of the Cloudlords.

Perhaps most strange of the three *Narsælkin* in its powers, the Windblade is also considered by scholars to be the most powerful. With an edge of the shiny black material known as *Keron* and a core of what would appear to be polished purple marble with white striations, the sword is also a very beautiful item. Its hilts are wound with silver and gold wire, and the ornate wrist guard is also of keron with gold inlay. *None* of the powers of this sword can be used (save #1) by anyone except a non-evil user of Channeling.

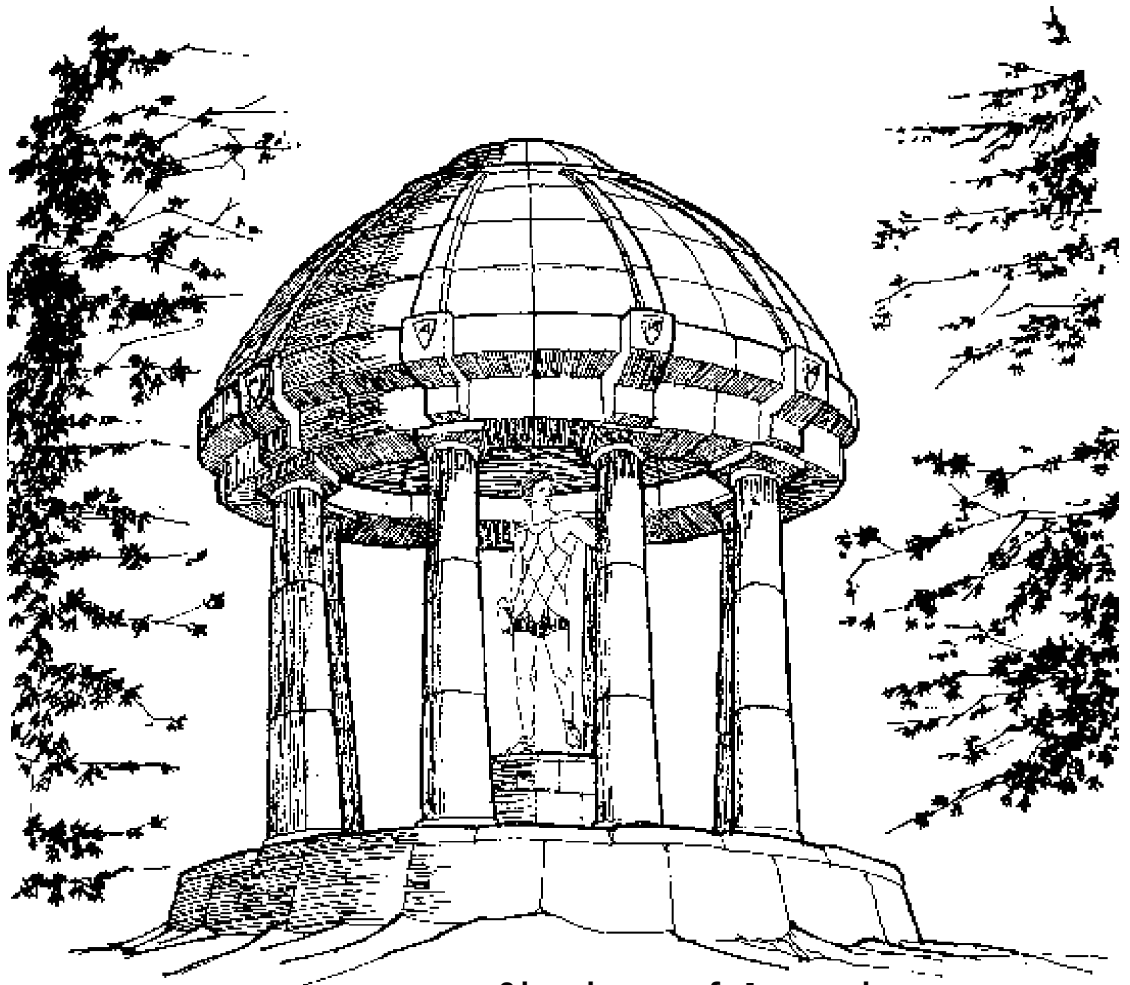
Powers:

1. +20 enchanted broadsword. When swung, all within 30' feel a cool breeze.
2. Summons a thunderstorm ("I call thunder!") of severity to be determined by the wielder, up to what is within reason for the climate; generally as high as gale-force (50 mph) winds and a steady downpour, all in up to a 30 mile radius. Once summoned, the storm will form in about one minute and run its natural course. This power can be called upon but once per ten days; it will only work outdoors, of course.
3. *Of Slaying Undead.*

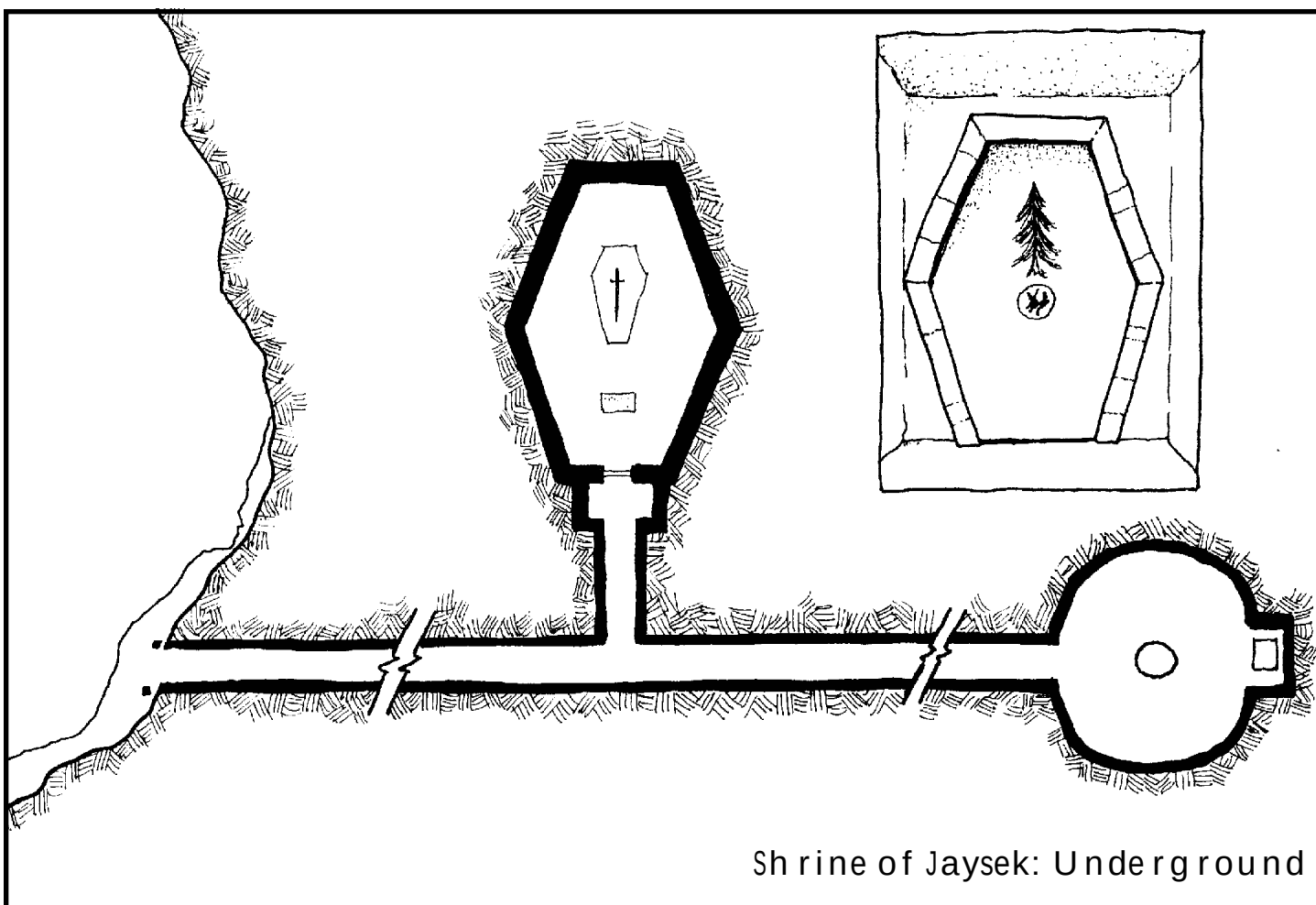
4. When laid across a bleeding wound (up to 5 hits/rnd), it will close and completely heal the wound in 1 round.
5. Creates a 10' radius *Protections True*. (+30 to all RRs of friends of the wielder within the radius). This power is continuous and automatic while the sword is drawn and in the presence of an *Implementor*.
6. If there are clouds in the sky (and if not, the wielder can call a storm) the sword may cast a *Lightning Call*, in which a very powerful lightning bolt arcs down from the sky and is channeled through the sword towards the designated target. Roll on the *Lightning Bolt* table (+20, x5 hits, 100' range). Note that this is natural, not enchanted lightning. The power may be used only 1x per round and only in the presence of an *Implementor*. The *wielder* of the sword takes 1-10 hits every time he uses this power, due to electrical backlash. Wielder may acquire *Directed Spell* skill with this attack.

GM Note: The sword could be used by either Ræk or Vania. The Windblade was cursed by a Priest Arnak. All powers but #1 are inoperative and it cannot speak except to say "I am the Windblade." It will require a successful casting of a Remove Curse type spell vs 20th level to remove it.

The passage continues, a cool, slightly salty breeze blowing into the PCs' faces. This tunnel does not waver from a due western course for ten miles. Then (if it is day) a light can be seen at the end.



Shrine of Jaysek



Shrine of Jaysek: Underground

4•THE COAST

The tunnel opens onto a shelf of rock facing northwest. The PCs are about halfway down a sheer cliff rising 300' above the Colewater River passing to the north of them. On the far (northern) bank of the river, sprawled across a lower plateau about 200' high, are the ruins of the city of Quellburn. A narrow ledge leads down to the southwest, and appears to lead to the coast. According to maps in Gryphon College, the town of Kelfour's Landing lies about 200 miles further east along the coast. The actual distance is more like 250 miles because of the convoluted shore of the Claedesbrim Bay.

GM Note: If you have a copy of Quellbourne, Land of the Silver Mist, you may wish to allow the characters to visit the haunted ruins of Quellburn or other interesting sites in this region. The book also includes a map of Kelfour's Landing.

Otherwise, it is a relatively straightforward trip, although the group might very well encounter wolves, bears, or even two or three Messengers of Syrkakang.

5•KELFOUR'S LANDING

This is a small coastal town situated on one of the few flat areas of the rocky slopes that descend from the Kaldsfang Mountains to the bay. The population varies from three to five hundred, but seasonal influxes of traders and trappers bring the total to over 2000. The buildings of Kelfour's Landing are all constructed of wood, as is the palisade running the perimeter of the town. This barrier to fend off occasional raids by the semi-human sea-kral; all others are welcome if they pay their 1 copper piece entrance fee.

The town crossroads for many people on all sorts of business. The group might encounter Ky'taari, Syrkakar, Fustir, and other Jaimani peoples, as well as traders from as far south as Kaitaine.

GM Note: this is an excellent place for the PCs to have some side adventures if the GM feels that her players need more experience.

What the group needs is a boat that can navigate the treacherous, icy waters between the bay and the Land of Blue Light. Naturally, Terek will want to seek out a Ky'taari. They are in luck (after a fashion), for they find one, drunk on cheap Fustir beer, in an inn called *The Raging Threk*.

The owner is indeed named Threk, and the characters would be well-advised to not incite his anger, for he looks like he could break any one of them—even Tyrus—in half over his knee. But he seems to be in a good humor today, and even feeling sympathetic towards poor Luklyn.

The man in question is a Ky'taari craftsman who fled the Land of Blue light a few weeks ago. He and his sister were the only survivors of a raid on their village by Syrkakang troops. He was left for dead and his sister was taken. He heard them say they were returning to the *Aalk Gaath*: Citadel of the Dragon. He has since recovered from his wounds and learned where this feared citadel is located. he has an ice sloop that can carry up to ten people, and makes this simple offer:

"I will take you wherever you want to go in the islands, but you must help me to rescue my sister Tirilin from the Aalk Gaath."

LUKLYN

Age: 30 (Appears ^a 20) Eyes: Blue Hair: Blond Build: Slender Height: 6' 4". Race/Sex: Ky'taari/M. Skin: Tanned Demeanor: Serious Dress: Layers of wool, cotton and fur-lined garments; white over-robe. True Attitude: Serious Home: Mur Fostisyr.

Hits: 65. Melee: 84 bswrd. Missile: 45 dagger.

AT(DB): 1(20). Sh: N. Gr: N.

MovM: +15.

Lvl: 5. Profession: Rogue. Stats: St-81; Qu-92; Em-67; In-80; Pr-79; Ag-85; Co-94; Me-40; Re-70; SD-83. AP: 87.

Skill Bonuses: Climb65; Perc50; PickLock29; S&H50; Swim40.

AthlG25; Brawl20; Dance15; 1stAid30; Nav80; Sail95; Skat50; Skii40; StarG35; WeathWatch67.

Languages (S/W): Rhaya, Ky'taari, Erlin

The PCs can put Luklyn to bed at the inn and let him sleep it off. If anyone decides to look elsewhere for a ride to the Mur Fostisyr, they will be out of luck: no one is going there now, with talk of sea-kral, the oppression of the Tenth Syrkakang, and even sightings of the White Dragon.

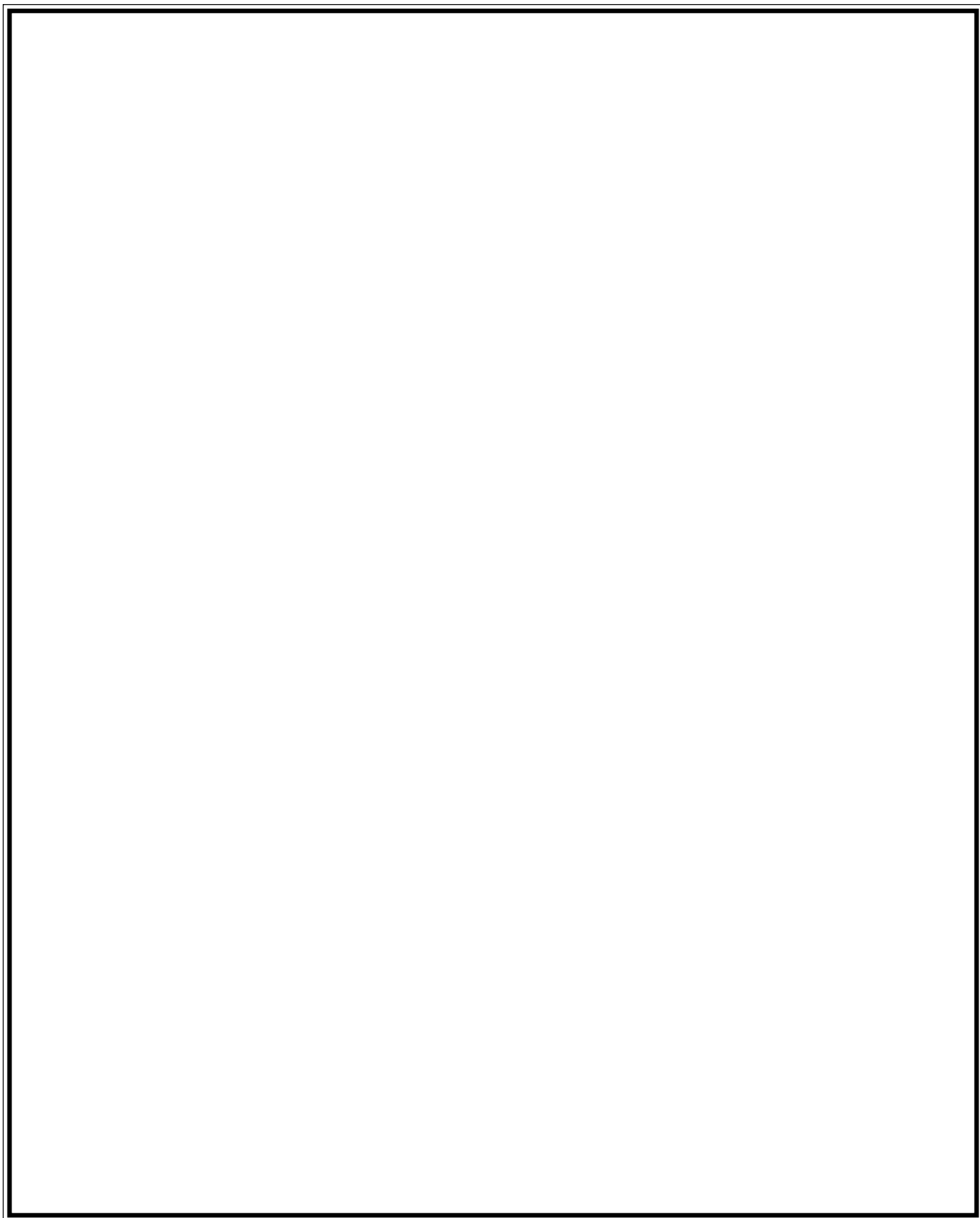
6•ABOARD AN ICE SLOOP

The Ky'taari ice sloops are unique vessels, equally at home in the water or skimming across the frozen ice sheet which creep down from the poles every year. The ship is even able to switch from one to the other with relative ease, the foreblade cleaving a wedge which allows the boat to glide up and onto the ice floe. There is a small cabin in the *Kyashaan* (K. "Iceblade") which sleeps up to four in cramped quarters, but it is warm. Provisions will have to be purchased. Luklyn strongly urges that everyone buy climbing gear.

Illo, Iron Wind pg 50

■ PC/GM Roll: While Luklyn is a skilled sailor, a capable assistant would make things easier. It is 200 miles through treacherous waters to the Land of Blue Light. There should be a *Medium* (± 0) *Sailing* roll by each crewman twice a day.

If the weather is favorable and there are no mishaps, the group should make it to the southern tip of the Mur Fostisyr (where the Aalk Gaath is located) in 3 days.



• The M u r Fostisy r •

• PART XIII • THE MUR FOSTISYR

Long and treacherous was my way to Dawnwater's Edge. It is well hidden in a misty vale, and nearly escaped even my powers of detection. Picking my way carefully along a steep slope above a lake which resembled very much the last several lakes and fjords I had explored, I was about to give up on this one as well: nothing in sight but a few small herds of Torkaani cavorting over the grassy hills. The sky in the east was growing lighter by the moment; night (my favored time to travel) was nearly over, for it was spring and the sun rose and set with regularity. Abruptly the grey vale turned to gold as the sun ignited the fog and damp grass. Far out on the water the mists shredded in the morning breeze, revealing for an instant a tiny isle, and perched upon it a strange manor.

I spread my arms, and in a moment that body which was Elor was gone, and only an arctic tern stood at the edge of the water where I had been. Though this transformation consumed much of my power I dared not use a lesser trick to reach the Kaldaraak-Vaar unnoticed. With a rush of white feathers I was airborne and sweeping low over the calm waters, my sharp avian eyes picking out every detail of the landscape. In just a few minutes I arrived at the dense mist, and a moment later burst through it to a clear area. There stood Dawnwater's Edge. I perched upon the peaked roof of the house to assess the situation.

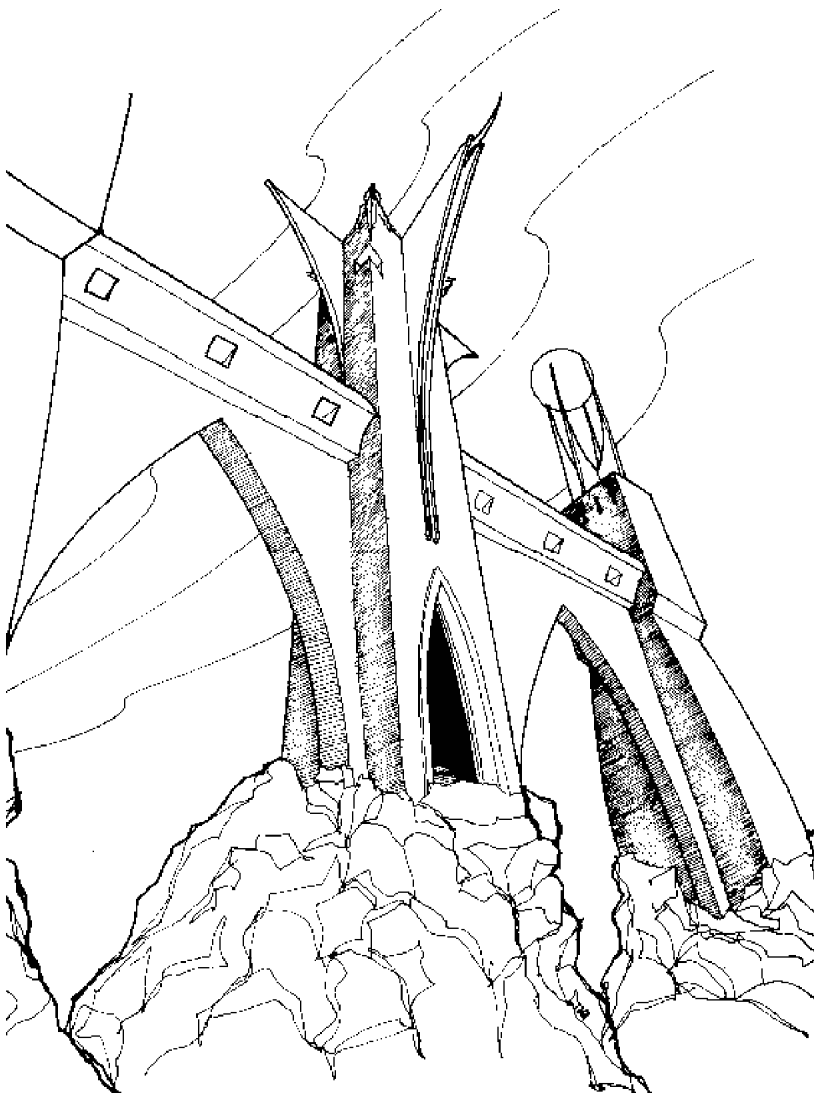
This is the most holy place of the Ky'taari, as it was the home of Ariaana when she came to live within the realm of the Ice People. Its incredible age is betrayed in part by the method of construction: the strange, interlocking stone of the Syrkakar masons. The blocks themselves are roughly hewn, yet fitted together with the utmost skill by the first Ky'taari, who learned their abilities from the Syrkakar before that race degenerated into its current state. It is a monastery of the utmost security and power, invincible to

all but the most fierce attack. On the first day of spring of each year the A-Ryaan travels here, and Ariaana returns for a day to give her blessings and advise the Priestess.

Year round, thirty-three monks are in residence: the elite of the monasteries of the nation, guarding this most sacred of places and creating great works of text and gold. Here also is kept the master orb of the seeing stones of the Ryaani, able to view any site within the realm at the command of the A-Ryaan, or the Lord Monk, who rules here in her stead.

Monks indeed there were: several in the sheltered courtyard, and I could sense others patrolling within the roofed parapets. At first I searched in vain for an open window, and despaired of an easy entrance. At last, however, a monk threw open the wide sashes along the eastern face. Alighting on a sill, I peered within, and the moment he left the room I glided inside and to a shadowy corner. I stood, Elor again, and with a shrug of my cloak I vanished from sight. Within the actual fortress the residents would not be as wary, and (hopefully) none would be casting spells which allow them to detect those unseen. Silent and invisible as a wraith, I investigated the hallowed chambers of this most holy of places. Undetected, I left as I had come, with no trace behind to betray my intrusion.

Elor Once Dark
c. 4200 Third Era



The Aalk Gaath

An Island cluster lying to the north and west of the continent of Jaiman, the Mur Fostisyr (Um. "Land of the Blue Light") is a surious area borm of volcanic eruptions, where nights last for months and the peoples fight an ongoing battle to survive against the elements and the forces of the Unlife: the Iron Wind.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Should the GM have a copy of Iron Wind at his disposal, there is the potential for several encounters with the savage Syrkakar or other denizens of this harsh land.

1•ADEA HU: "PILLARS OF BLACK ICE"

A sheltered inlet lies to the north of the citadel, and Luklyn steers there.

■ PC Roll: A successful *Hard* (-10) roll by Luklyn and first mate will guide the boat safely to the rocky shore. as they approach, the strange tower of the Aalk Gaath can be glimpsed between two white spurs of ice and rock, over 4000' above the churning waters.

There appears to be a village to the west; Luklyn grounds the Kyashaan along the north-facing shore. Above the narrow rocky beach, the coast climbs steeply: it is nearly a 45° ascent to the tower.

■ **PC Rolls:** The entire climb will require 8 Light and 2 Hard climbing rolls by each character (more if they fail to make “100%” on any given one). If a “fall” result is indicated, the PC may make a D100 recovery roll using Quickness stat as a bonus. A roll under 100 indicates that the character has really fallen, 1-100% of the way down the slope. For each 100’ fallen, make a roll on the Fall Crush table. It is recommended that the PCs tie themselves together into 3’s so that if anyone falls, they will be caught and a messy death avoided. As implied by the rolls, the final 1000’ is more difficult.

When they scramble to the top, the group finds itself on a small plateau. In the center is a frozen lake, and rising out of the lake is the Citadel of the Dragon.

THE AALK GAATH PLANS

GM Note: those who have the Iron Wind book will find that the Aalk Gaath has changed somewhat. In the several centuries since Elor’s visit, a few things have indeed changed.

Entry Level

1. Ceremonial Entrance.
2. Staging Area.
3. Secret Door, down to Oran Jatar’s Forges
4. Secret Stairway. Very Hard (-20) to detect, each of these is intended for guard access and goes all the way up to Level Four (about 400’).
5. Living Quarters, Messengers of Athumurl. Three squads of six Messengers are quartered here. One, two, or even all three squads may be out on patrol.
6. Lairs: Eighteen pens hold eighteen huge white cats. Their saddles and gear are stored in niches carved in the walls.
7. Sally Port. An inner portcullis is operated by a winch in a niche (a) and the steel outer door is raised and lowered on its track by the same method.
8. Living Quarters, Messengers of Syrkakang. Three squads of six Messengers are quartered here. One, two, or even all three squads may be out on patrol.

9. Stables. The eighteen steeds (black war horses) of these Messengers are kept here.

Mezzanine (Two)

10. Stairway down to Entrance Level.
11. Balcony. Overlooking the Staging Area.
12. Mechanical Lift. Leading up to the Throne Room Level
13. Cells. All are empty except...
- 14a. Luklyn’s sister Tirilin
- 15b
16. Guard Quarters. Basic accommodations for 12 Syrkakar warriors.
17. Kitchen/Dining Area.

Throne Room Level (Three)

15. Stairs.
16. Guardroom.
17. Waiting Area.
18. Throne Room.
19. Dais. Throne, two sculptures
20. Quarters. For six priests of Athimurl. It is likely that only one or two of the priests will be in at the time.
21. Kitchens.
19. Dining Hall.
20. Quarters. For six priests of Gaath. It is likely that only one or two of the priests will be in at the time.

Level Four

21. Access Corridor. This links the two wings on this level
22. Seeing Chamber. Oran Jataer has acquired one of the Lesser Ilarsíri of Tethior and keeps it in this room. The doors are steel, locked and Very Hard (-20) to open.
23. Hall of Arms and Treasures. Here is kept the sword Ashaanaar, like a trophy in a glass case. It is not even locked.
- 24.

25.

26.

27.

Level Five

Level Six. Observatory of Oran Jatar. The roof of this onion-dome shaped chamber is actually in six layered sections, (rather like just the skins of six orange sections) which can pivot along a track at the base and a hub at the pinnacle. This allows 5/6th of the roof to open to the sky. This is handy not only for stargazing, but as a launching point for Oran Jatar as a winged White Drake..

A careful reconnoiter will reveal that in addition to the ceremonial entrance in the front, there are two sally ports on the back sides. They would appear to lead in to stables. If they pick the Athimurl entry, the cats will pick up their scent and grow restless; the horses on the Gaath side, however, they might get by unnoticed. If the group is very lucky, all of the Messengers are out on patrol, in which case the sally ports are only guarded by one gateman at each.

As noted above, only a few priests will be in residence, the others afield on errands. Oran Jatar himself will either be in his laboratory or in the Seeing room, and it is unlikely he will encounter the PCs in the tower (fortunately for them).

THE SWORD ASHAANAAR

The sword will sense that one it's own is nearby and it will call to Rælen. It is cursed and locked into the form of a dagger, but still magical. It is intelligent and can convey basic thoughts.

A review of the plans will show that Luklyn's sister Tirilin is in ???a, and the sword of the Ky'taari is in ???. It may be just too much to try to get the sword this time. The characters might come back for it later in the quest when they are more powerful.

Assuming the characters make their escape from the tower proper, they must get back down the mountain (repelling down the first 1000' might be a good idea) and get away in their boat. If they attracted no attention and sounded no alarms, they will get away

without being harassed. If, however, anyone raised the alarm, they will be pursued to the edge of the cliff but no further. They PCs may wonder what the Citadel of the Dragon is up to, until they hear an unearthly cry from above. The White Dragon is hunting them.

ENCOUNTER: THE WHITE DRAGON

The dragon will strafe them, delivering a Cold Ball attack (only 2x hits because of the situation). he will get one or two of these off, and things will look very bad for the group, when the cavalry arrives: a squadron of six Thyfuriak. (Udahir riders of giant birds) will arrive and distract the Dragon long enough for the group to slip away. A couple of these brave warriors are killed in the effort, but they lure the Dragon to the other side of the peninsula.

2•YALF HURM: "LAND OF GLASS SPIRES"

Rælen has a general idea of where he needs to go; he feels 'summoned' by Ariaana. They sail west northwest to the great isle of glass spires. Once they set ashore they have another climb up a snowfield to the vale of the temple.

The GM may wish to have the group encounter snow wolves or other natural denizens as they travel 20 miles inland and 7,000' up to the hidden vale.

ENCOUNTER: HERALD OF NIGHT

At some point, perhaps during a quiet night after a heavy snow, the group will have a sinister visitor.

■ PC Roll: *Medium* (± 0) *Perception*: it seems that this black rider almost wants to be seen. Far out across a snowfield they stand as if they have been waiting. See *Master Atlas* (2nd ed pg 152) for a complete description of the Herald. Everyone who sees the Herald

is momentarily overcome by a feeling of utter despair, even though they may not have ever heard the term “Herald of Darkness.”

He sits astride his horse, rider and mount both glittering and immobile as if they were carved from obsidian. His head swivels to face the group, and all get the very uncomfortable feeling that he sees them. He remains immobile for several seconds, then reins his horse around towards Dawnwater’s Edge and unceremoniously vanishes.

3•KAL D ARAAK-VAAR: “DAWN WATER’S EDGE”

The group now begins its ascent to the holiest of Ky’taari refuges, the hidden temple of Dawnwater’s Edge. Rælen has an unnerving sense of where it is now, drawn there by a summons. At the edge of the lake, a barge manned by four monks in white awaits the group. They say nothing, but gesture for them to get aboard. They are conveyed across the still lake.

When they arrive at the temple, they are greeted by the A-Ryaan (K. (“High Priestess”) who welcomes them, and orders that the group be given rooms and fed. They shall gather in the Sanctuary just before dawn the following day. (Luklyn and Tirilin will not be included in this audience).

Dawnwater’s Edge illo

The group is provided with spartan but clean quarters (Rooms #6 for those with the *Iron Wind* book) and fed simple but satisfying meals until the time arrives. They are asked to stay in their quarters until summoned.

While all around this vale seems serene, there is a sense of tension and expectancy, though whether good or bad it is difficult to say. Rælen is practically delirious. They are awakened an hour before dawn and told to dress and pack, and be prepared to depart immediately. The A-Ryaan leads them into the Holy Throne Room (#20). A dim grey light filters in through the east-facing windows. They wait facing the far end of the room where an empty throne sits before

a huge golden disk representing the sun, ten feet in diameter and set on the back wall.

ARIAANA, LADY OF THE SUN

Just as the first ray of sunlight enters the room, the golden sun glows blindingly bright, and from out of the light steps a tall, beautiful woman clad in gold and white (see the description of Oriana in the Master Atlas, pp 105-6). She smiles and seems to speak telepathically to the A-Ryaan, then turns to the group. To each she will mind-speak, and perhaps offer some small bit of information or advice. Then she says to them all: “A time of crisis has come not only for the Ky’taari but all of the world they call Kulthea. All peoples must work together to combat the Unlife, for it will grow darker before the dawn...” Even as she speaks, a cloud seems to pass before the sun, and her image flickers. The gold sun behind her dims and the room grows eerily dark.

As Ariaana shimmers and fades, there is a cry that the Holiest of temples is under attack. Bells ring out across courtyard.

The ground trembles from a terrible blast, and through the slit windows the group can see a huge fiery form cloaked in darkness: an Ordainer. The A-Ryaan rushes to the door.

Where Ariaana stood, the throne has vanished and the golden sun begins to glow, then in place of the sun a swirling light dilates to form a *Portal*. Arianna’s voice whispers: “Go, my children; there is nothing you can do here!” And to Rælen alone she speaks: “Return when the great task has been completed, child of the Sun. Only then can you help the Ky’taari people.”

The PCs leap through the enchanted portalway.