

CITADEL™

Secrets



Adventure of the
CRYSTAL KEEP™

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Adventure of the CRYSTAL KEEP™

By Steve Sauder



27811 Avenue Hopkins, Suite 6, Valencia, CA 91355
(805) 257-1797

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 0-9625779-0-1

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Author's Notes:

What follows is a diary of the descent into the Citadel by a man named Madoc. Even now, six hundred years after he made his trek, and long after the fame of his deeds has spread throughout the world, his last name is unknown. The genealogy he gives in the introductory section, however, has been researched exhaustively by this author and, assuming the information is correct, it would appear that his last name was Beleel, the patronymic attributed to Kenelm the Wild, Madoc's father.

This document has been reprinted almost verbatim (except for some spelling errors and unreadable segments) from the original, which was discovered hidden in a vault in the coastal city of Perdea, the city in which Madoc spent his final years as an elder of the Guild of Wizards. After the events described herein, according to history, the various members of Madoc's party lived full lives and even met occasionally, perhaps to discuss what had transpired within the subterranean walls of the Citadel. Until recently, it was assumed that history would never know how exactly those five brave people managed to defeat so powerful a foe. This document has finally shed light on the mysterious, and earth-shattering events which occurred within the bowels of the Citadel.

For ease of use, the original diary (which was written as the party adventured) has been rearranged and organized by level. Also, the text has been keyed to maps which I have compiled from the descriptions given by Madoc. When the story progresses from one location to another, I have inserted, in brackets, directions according to the map for that level.

The first three sections, Youth, Apprenticeship and Village, give background information on Madoc himself, and on the other members

of the party with which he descended. They were left in because they contain important information, vital to the completion of the adventure. The actual descriptions of the occurrences within the Citadel follow, listed by level, and the book is concluded with a recounting (also from the diary) of the final, fateful battle with Nequilar himself.

This book is dedicated to Madoc, Gammaliel, Almiri, Cephas and Deklan, whose successful foray into the Citadel returned light and hope to a tormented land, and also to those less fortunate before them, who tried and failed. It is to all of them that we owe thanks that the Citadel still stands, and that the world we know still lives and breathes.

Youth:



I am Madoc, son of Kenelm the Wild. My father was a feared and respected warrior, and the bells of history shall peal his deeds; that is not my desire. I am here, instead, to tell you my own story. My mother was the youngest daughter born to a nobleman of the city of Coranthin. She was a raging beauty; slender and lithe with long black hair and angular features. It is indeed unfortunate that I do not inherit my countenance from her, but from my father, who was broad of shoulder and of brow, with small, piercing far-set eyes and a flattened profile.

Kenelm and the Lady Serina met when he was employed by King Orestes as a foot soldier during the Twenty Years' War. The King's army was marching toward the northern wilderness, and stopped for the night in Coranthin. The entire army was encamped outside the city, and all the women, my mother included, rushed out of the gates in a flood of civic pride, to help mend wounds, make meals, and receive stories of the war from the soldiers. Thus occurred the fateful chance meeting between my mother, who was innocent of men, and my father, who was experienced of women. One night of amorous passions is all that is required, now as then, and my mother was gotten with child — me.

When my grandfather, the Lord Karnamon, discovered what had transpired, he was livid with rage, and if it were not for Kenelm's heroism during the war, he would have been murdered. My grandfather insisted that he marry my mother and remain in the King's army; probably in the hopes that he would be killed in battle. Kenelm, my father, faced with no choice, complied.

And so I was born. Although fate had seen fit to grace me with my mother's intelligence, she had been decidedly ungenerous when it came to my father's stature. As I grew, I became awkward, my arms and legs

far outstripping the rest of my body in growth. When my father returned home between battles, as he was wont to do occasionally, he would laugh and admonish me to go outside and play with the other children to try and instill some sense of strength and coordination into my muscles. Later, the subject of those admonitions turned to work, my father insisting that long hours spent working the fields surrounding the city would surely build a strong physique. I am convinced that he was honorable in his intent, and that he wished desperately for me to tread in his path and become a great warrior, but that was not to be my lot.

Instead, books and learning held enormous fascination for me. Unbeknownst to my father, who valued intellect little if at all, my mind was growing faster even than my limbs, all the while obtaining a voracious appetite for knowledge. My mother, the Lady Serina, took notice of my rampaging curiosity, however, and encouraged me to pursue it where it led — when my father was away.

And so I fell headlong into learning. For entire days, I would sit under a particular tree outside my grandfather's mansion, and let my mind run free through the pages of books on physics and literature, astrology and metallurgy. My grandfather, although approaching senility, was a kindly man, and he provided me amply with reading material. It was he who kindled my interest in the Black Arts of Magic at the age of fifteen.

One day in the early afternoon, Gloster, my grandfather's manservant, approached me as I was hastening back to my reading after taking lunch with my mother. We were staying at my grandfather's mansion, high on a hill to the west of Coranthin. Since the city was on the edge of the Great Desert, that solitary hill commanded an impressive view from one horizon to the other. Gloster informed me that his master wished to see me, and I, hoping that Grandfather would have some new and fascinating book for me, rushed up to his chambers. I knocked, and entered at his command.

My grandfather had always kept tropical birds in his enormous, airy chambers, and on this day, they produced such a cacophony that the room sounded like a jungle. The shutters on all the windows were thrown wide, and a warm, desert breeze drifted in, bringing with it the bright sunlight. My grandfather sat in a large armchair fabricated from a bleached softwood. His elbows rested on the chair arms, and his chin was placed on his steepled fingertips. He looked out the window over

the city, his face lined in his typically frowning expression. Looking at him, I could understand the respect people paid him; he cut a stern figure indeed.

This illusion lasted only until he turned and saw me, whereupon his face broke into a toothy, almost childish grin.

"Madoc, my boy!" he said, beckoning me to his chair, "I have something to tell you."

I knelt beside his left arm. "What is it?" I asked. He turned and directed his gaze back out the window. From my angle, the sunlight filtered through his fine, white hair, creating a halo which ringed his abrupt features. He returned his elbow to the rounded depression created in the yielding wood of the chair arm by his many years of sitting in the same posture.

"The time has come for you to choose a path in life," he said, slowly moving his eyes along the unbroken, even horizon line of the Great Desert, beyond the city, "I spoke to your mother this morning. She didn't want me to talk to you; she thought you were too young."

With this, he looked at me and smiled. "But I think you're ready, don't you?" I nodded, returning his grin.

"Every person must at some age decide what they want to do with their lives," he resumed, "We live in a society where the guild to which you belong determines how you act. Warriors fight, thieves steal, clerics deliver religion, and wizards use magic. Everyone chooses according to their talents and interests. You too, must some day select a path." He took my hand, and looked earnestly into my upturned face.

"Because they have no guidance, many make their choice foolishly and without thought for the future. As your grandfather, I don't want you to fall into that same trap. I want your decision to be made wisely."

"I think I've already decided," I ventured. His coarse eyebrows rose.

"Tell me what you have chosen," he said, the corners of his mouth turning up into a smile, "and why you have chosen it."

"Well..." I stammered, slightly nervous. I felt like I was being tested. "I am not strong or tough, so the warriors will not have me. A thief needs to be cunning and quick, and, although I possess intelligence, I am too lanky to be dextrous. I am more interested in learning, and matters of

the mind. The only two guilds which deem those things important are the clerics and the wizards. I would be happy with either of them.”

“I knew you would come to a conclusion something like that,” he said, smiling, “Having said this, I have a present for you. I think you’ll like it.”

I barely contained my joy as he handed me the most beautiful book in the world. It was huge, and bound in an utterly smooth black leather the likes of which I had never seen. It’s oily, cimmerician surface and spine was devoid of any writing. It smelled old, very old.

“What is it?” I asked, looking up into his eyes. They sparkled.

“It is a very special book, Madoc,” he replied, “It contains magic. It’s yours to keep. You will learn great things from this book, but it must remain our secret. You must never tell your parents, especially your mother, of its existence. Do you understand?”

“Why?” I asked.

“Why, always why,” he sighed, “There are two reasons. Magic is a very powerful force, my boy, and most adults are afraid of it. Your mother is very, very afraid because her brother died in the pursuit of the black arts. He was killed in a manner too horrible to tell small children, but you shall know that it was because of magic that he died. He was my only son.”

“And the other reason?” I asked.

“The other reason is your father. He is not a man of intellect, Madoc. What he doesn’t understand he hates. For this reason alone, you must not tell your father. He will prevent you from learning magic if he finds out, so you must keep this book away from him.”

And so I began the study of the magic arts. My grandfather had been right: the black book taught me things I had never dreamed possible. Its cover was a source of endless fascination for me. It was of the deepest black imaginable and completely flawless, without one mark or blemish to mar it. The size of the book and that extraordinary cover made it difficult to conceal, but somehow, I managed to keep its existence from my parents. For just over a year, I studied its secrets almost exclusively; my interest in other subjects lost, I set the other books aside. For just over a year, I immersed myself in the ever more

fascinating world of the black arts. For just over a year until, finally, my father discovered my book.

I shall never forget that evening: my father home after a relatively short absence, my mother and I preparing the table for the evening meal, my father rushing into the kitchen with my book. Such thoughts raced through my mind! How had he found it? Had I left it out in the open? What would they do?

“I told you all that studying and book learning was no good for the boy! Look at this!” my father shouted, heaving my beautiful book at Mother. She opened it and began to read. Slowly, her eyes widened, and she turned to look at me. Those eyes! Those betrayed, anguished eyes. She began to cry, a remembering, lonely sort of sound, and I began to understand the grievous pain I had caused her.

In a blur, Kenelm the Wild, my father, sprang around the table, trying to take me, hold me, punish me. I evaded his grasp, and sprinted for the door. He came after me and I dashed into the night, my mother screaming at us through her tears to “Stop! Stop!”

I ran. I heard the door crack against its frame, and my father shouted: “Don’t come back, devil!” I ran. Even after some time, I imagined I could still hear my mother sobbing. I ran.

My feet directed themselves without the benefit of a brain, and I arrived at the door to my grandfather’s mansion. In a frenzy, I threw my entire body at the massive door. The booming echoed throughout the house. A few moments passed, and I collapsed, panting, into a crouch in front of the door. The door was opened, and in the flickering light of a single candle, I saw two bare feet step onto the sill. Slowly looking up, I gradually beheld the confused, concerned countenance of Gloster, whereupon I fell into unconsciousness.

I awoke listening to the worried voice of my grandfather: “Madoc, my boy, what’s the matter? Gloster, get some warm cloths from the firegrate, hurry man!” My senses returned by degrees, and I felt my body cradled in my grandfather’s wiry arms. Gloster returned, and I felt warm smoky-smelling cloths wrapped about me. When I opened my eyes, my grandfather looked into them and said: “Your parents found your book, didn’t they, boy?” I nodded dumbly.

“I knew this would happen eventually,” he said, motioning to Gloster,

who scooped me into his arms. Grandfather moved out of my field of view, and his voice drifted into my mind, seeming to drive out everything else. "We must take you to the Wizard's Guild. You cannot ever return to your parents, but you will be safe at the Guild. The wizards there will make you one of them."

"...book..." I whispered, unable to gain enough air to form a complete sentence.

"The wizards at the Guild will teach you more than you could find in a hundred books, Madoc," Gloster replied, hearing my barely audible query.

My grandfather returned, and took me from Gloster. I watched the underside of his face, bathed in the shivering firelight, as he spoke. "Prepare the horses," he commanded, "we leave immediately."

I was slung onto the back of a horse, behind my grandfather. Gloster mounted another, and we were off at a gallop. Very little of that trip is clear: perhaps I began to cry and was swept up into my grandfather's strong arms and comforted there, I don't know. I am unsure of how long we travelled through the night, but it was still dark when we rode along an earthen country road beside a low, stone fence and finally arrived at a wrought metal gate.

My grandfather leaned down from the saddle, and pulled a bell rope. Almost instantly, a hooded figure clad in a coarse, brown material arrived at the gate and opened it. I strained to see under the obscuring hood, but only blackness was there. The horses, whinnying and side-stepping, proceeded through the gate.

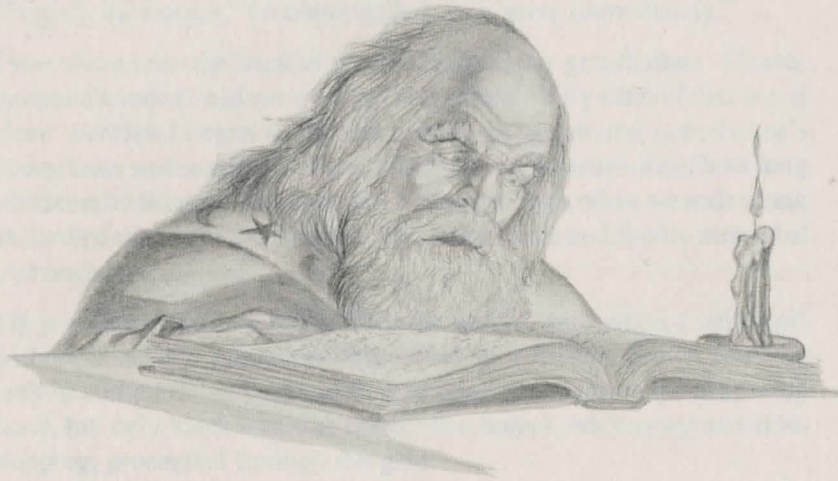
"This is the Wizard's Guild," Grandfather whispered to me. He dismounted, and lifted me to the ground. I clung to his riding robes, pulling them around me. The hooded man approached, bowed wordlessly toward my grandfather, and assisted Gloster in holding the horses. I wondered at the respect shown to my grandfather even here, in the place of the wizards.

Taking my hand, he led me to the main building, a tall, menacing structure, full of corners and shadows. Without knocking, he entered through the main portal, and led me down a high, vaulted corridor. Darkness seeped from every alcove, seeking to banish the thin light provided by torches set in wall sconces, yet I was not afraid. My

grandfather was with me, to be sure, but there was something else. I knew I belonged in this place. We entered a room, in which two very old men and one ancient woman were seated upon golden thrones.

"These are the master Magi, Madoc," my grandfather said. He crouched beside me, and turned my face to his. "Do you want to learn the art of magic from the wizards here?" he asked, his manner serious. Looking into his eyes, I nodded. "Then you must ask them yourself," he said, straightening up, and squeezing my shoulder. Hesitantly, I stepped forward.

Apprenticeship:



True to my grandfather's word, the wizards of the Guild took me in. I left him, and followed another hooded figure, who led me up some stairs to a room, and told me that this was to become my home. The room was dark and I did not light a candle. Instead, I went to the open window, and looked down over the main courtyard, where Gloster was waiting with the two horses. I watched the two dark figures of my grandfather and Gloster ride out the main gate. I saw Grandfather turn in his saddle and look directly at me. My eyes began to fill with tears as he waved, and directed the horse back toward the city. For a very long time, I leaned on the sill, listening to the fading, lonely sound of eight hooves on the dirt road. Eventually all was silent. I slept.

The next morning, I was inducted into the Guild, and became an apprentice wizard. One of the requirements of my entrance was to guard the secret rites of passage and learning what occurs behind the stone walls that surround the Guild. Thus, I cannot tell you how I spent the next four years, learning the mysterious arts of magic and wizardry. Suffice it to say that the knowledgeable men and women of that powerful place taught me well.

One by one, my fellow wizards left the Guild, sent on their way by the elders on some quest known only to them. I knew that soon, my turn would come, and I would be conveyed out into the world, on a mission of my own.

On a chill, bright autumn day, it happened, as I knew it would. Obed, a younger apprentice, approached me in the courtyard, and informed me that Theodosia, one of the elders, wished my presence. My skin tingled. This was to be the ultimate test. I rushed to Theodosia's chambers.

I paused at the door to calm myself, then entered. There was no need

to knock; she knew I was there. One wall of the main room was taken up by an enormous book shelf, which stretched from floor to ceiling in rich, dark wood. Its shelves were sagging with books about absolutely everything. There were hundreds of them, of varying ages and states of decay. The oldest book in her library, which she had proudly shown me one day, was a particularly large, heavy specimen called "The Weirding Histories" written by Samar Del Forth. It was several centuries old and priceless, bound in wood, with an iron clasp holding it closed.

As I entered, Theodosia stood at her wonderful bookshelf, her back to me. In her hands, she held open *The Weirding Histories* and was studying it carefully.

"Come here, Madoc," she said, not looking around, "I have something very interesting to show you." I crossed the room to her side, and stopped. She was frowning as she read, introducing even more lines to her already wizened features. In profile, her face resembled that of some great bird of prey. She had deep-set, piercing eyes that flashed with a light of their own, and a high, blade-like nose. Age and gravity had drawn her mouth into a permanent scowl. She was a truly awe-inspiring woman. She turned to look at me and her countenance lightened somewhat, but not much: I had never seen her smile.

"I would like you to read this," she said, handing me *The Weirding Histories*. Gently, I extended my hands, palms up, and accepted the proffered book. Theodosia pointed to a passage on the opened page. "Begin reading here," she said.

I began to read the paragraph she had pointed out to me. I have quoted it at the beginning of this story. When I was finished, I looked at her.

"Where is the Citadel?" I asked. She turned and, motioning for me to follow, walked slowly to a large chest at the other end of the room. Upon reaching it, she opened the lid, and withdrew a map from among many scrolls within. She closed the chest, and unrolled the map on top of it.

"We are here," she said, pointing to a spot near the Great Desert. Slowly, she drew her finger east, crossing the Horned Mountains, through the vast, *primaeval* forest of the coastal regions, veering south along the shore of the Warm Sea and finally, coming to rest on a point of land jutting into the water.

"Here, close to this small village," she said, indicating a dot on the map, "lies the Citadel."

"You're going to send me on a quest, aren't you?" I asked, brimming with curiosity.

"We are," she replied. She opened the chest again, and withdrew three scrolls. She handed them, and the map, to me. When I looked questioningly from them to her, she said: "I will explain everything. Sit down." She moved to a rigid, straight-backed wooden chair, and seated herself. I sat facing her on an equally uncomfortable chair. Not for the first time, I wished she weren't so spartan in her accommodations.

"The Citadel is a powerful place," she began. Her old voice, although strong, sounded like dry, autumn leaves crackling underfoot. "It is situated on a point where the Earth's lines of force cross. As you have read, it has been there since the dawn of recorded history, and with it the Lady Synd. She is said to be the first wizard, and the founder of our order. She is a very powerful woman indeed, possessed of magic the likes of which we cannot fathom.

"As you can imagine, a place as powerful as the Citadel has drawn the attention of the greedy. Do you remember what you were taught about the Fracture?"

"Yes," I said, casting my mind back to my lessons, "It happened about two hundred years ago, and it was when the Guild was split into two warring factions because of internal fighting."

"Correct. It is not something that we like to recall, but it is part of our history. The Citadel plays a particularly important role in the Fracture; in fact it was the cause of the original schism. One particular wizard, Manasseh by name, grew greedy, and persuaded a group of his comrades that the Citadel should belong to them. There was great strife within the guild, and Manasseh, along with about thirty wizards, high-ranking and low, broke from the rest of us and disappeared for many months. Knowing what they sought, the remaining wizards dispatched an urgent warning to Lady Synd, who enlisted the help of fifty highly trained soldiers, and taught them the most basic of her arts. She supplied them with enchanted weapons, and installed them to protect the Citadel.

"Eventually, as was feared, Manasseh attacked the Citadel. He had amassed a sizable army of soldiers, along with the wizards who were

with him. We feared for the Citadel, but Lady Synd and her soldiers performed admirably, keeping the Citadel safe from all strange manner of attack. Manasseh was defeated and killed, his army vanquished, and the wizards who still supported the Guild rejoiced. Lady Synd became more cautious, however, and the soldiers were kept on as defenders of the Citadel, and called the Blood Guard.”

“Why don’t I recall hearing or learning about the Citadel before now?” I asked.

“This is the reason for your quest, Madoc,” Theodosia replied, directing her penetrating gaze at me, “For fifty-three years, there has been no Blood Guard. There has been no Lady Synd. And there has been no Citadel.”

My eyes widened. “What happened to it?” I asked. She lowered her head.

“It was sent back into the Earth, by one of my own students. His name is Nequilar. He was one of the most promising wizards to leave this place. I myself tutored him at times. He had such talent! His inner disposition, however, was unfit for a wizard. He was not satisfied with what little power he possessed at first. We attributed it to curiosity. In fact, it was avarice; greed, pure and simple. We were still ignorant of his inner desires when he left us on his first quest.” Here she paused, adjusted her posture, sighed heavily and went on: “While he was away from us, his greed ate at him; how he lusted after power! Eventually, it became too great a burden for his mind, and it broke, snapping like a brittle autumn twig.” For effect, she mimicked the action with her hands.

“Now with the added impetus of insanity, he immediately abandoned his quest, and set out for the Citadel. He knew, as you now do, that the location of the Citadel is where the Earth’s power is strongest, and I am certain that his thirst for this power drove him there. We at the guild knew nothing. Everything that I will relate to you comes from hearsay and the stories of the people in the nearby village.

“The villagers first saw Nequilar in the spring, when he appeared and asked for directions to the Citadel. They showed him the way, not knowing who he was. He posed as an apprentice wizard, not affiliated with the Guild, who wished to learn his craft from Synd herself. She allowed him into the Citadel, and began to instruct him.”

“The Weirding Histories say that Synd was the servant of Gaea, possessed of great power from the Earth,” I said, “Why couldn’t she see that his intent was evil?”

“That I wish I knew,” she said, raising her eyes to mine, “Perhaps the gods are fallible, after all.” Our eyes locked, and I could see real unease in her gaze. My mind grasped for explanations.

“Perhaps he cast a charm of some sort...” I shrugged.

“There are many possibilities,” she answered, “His power was increasing at an alarming rate, even before he left us.”

“What happened then?” I prompted.

“According to the villagers, things remained calm for about six months. Nequilar spent this time learning, sucking in all the knowledge Synd was able to provide for him. Then, when he had gained enough strength, he turned on her, and using the very magic she provided him, he defeated her.”

“How?” I breathed, awestruck.

“All the information we have indicates that he called upon demons, devils and other monstrosities from the very gut of the Earth to destroy the Blood Guard. With that accomplished, he attacked Lady Synd herself. From the violence of the battle the villagers describe, the good Lady staved him off for some time, using ever more powerful and Earth-shattering magic. Eventually, however, realizing that she drew her power from the Citadel and the very Earth itself, Nequilar conceived a trap that would finally destroy her.”

Always the consummate storyteller, Theodosia paused for effect.

“To isolate her from the source of her magic, he imprisoned her in a crystal. Sealed immobile and ageless inside, Synd was indeed fallen.” Theodosia sighed audibly, her heaviness of heart finally showing.

“What do you want of me?” I asked, my breathing becoming quicker.

“Wait, there is more to tell,” she responded. I settled back against the chair. “Nequilar wasn’t finished. Like any megalomaniac, he needed one last act, one gaudy display to awe the world. To this end, he began to work his most powerful incantation yet. With his new found mastery of the Earth magic, he caused the very ground under the Citadel to

crumble and disintegrate. He thrust the Citadel back into the ground from whence it came, leaving only the spire of the tallest watch tower as testimony to its existence.”

Theodosia fell still, staring into space. I kept my eyes downcast, knowing better than to break the silence. Suddenly, she looked at me, and I raised my gaze to meet hers. I saw great emotion and anguish in her face.

“How could we have let him do this?” she said, her voice breaking, “He was one of us. We are users of the arcane powers, soothsayers and tellers of the future. We should have foreseen it!” She punctuated this by hitting her knee with her bony fist.

Extremely agitated, she thrust her wiry body from the chair and circled around behind me. I remained fixed, staring ahead, uneasy at the sudden downturn in Theodosia’s mood.

“Since the Citadel was cast down, a vileness has been spreading across the Earth,” her voice issued from behind me, “and I do not speak of simple omens and portents, two-headed calves and such. Evil. Real evil again, the likes of which man hasn’t seen in eons. Devils and demons roam the farmers’ fields, killing, eating, mutilating” — a slow chill began at the base of my spine — “populations of entire villages disappear, or are ravaged beyond identification” — and slithered upward — “the land withers and dies, and great grey worms crawl blindly through the earth, rendering it incapable of sustaining life” — and caused the hair at the nape of my neck to stand on end. Abruptly I turned in the chair, and found her standing, staring out the narrow window. The wire-thin autumn light slashed onto her face, making her appear very old and very frail. She turned to face me.

“This is your quest,” she began. Her voice was empty, vacant. “You are bound by the laws of our order to uphold it or die in the attempt. You are to leave this place tomorrow with the sun. You are to go to the Citadel, and attempt to free the Lady Synd from her imprisonment. Once you have released her, she will be able to raise the Citadel and, hopefully, stop whatever is happening to the world.”

As her words lingered in the crisp air, the strangest thing happened in my chest. My heart leapt into my throat with excitement at the thought of such a daring adventure, but simultaneously, it sank into the depths

of my stomach, with fear and apprehension. Such lurchings and flutterings were occurring within me!

“Be you sure,” Theodosia continued, slowly moving toward me, “that this is no easy task we have given you. Nequilar still inhabits the subterranean Citadel, along with what other monstrosities, not even Gaea herself knows. Synd is imprisoned using dangerous, powerful magic, which you will have to circumvent. We have sent three wizards before you on this same quest.” She was directly beside me, looking away. She placed her hand gently on my shoulder. “None have returned.”

“Why send me then?” I asked, struggling against futility. She turned her face to mine.

“I know we elders aren’t supposed to treat any apprentice specially,” she said, “but I think you are better than the others. You show great promise, Madoc. More than I’ve seen of any apprentice here since Nequilar himself. You take after your grandfather.”

“I meant to ask you about that...”

“As you have probably already deduced, he is one of us. We agreed to take you in on his word of your talent, and he is paying your way. He is a good wizard, but not great.” She crouched facing me, her old knees making brittle popping sounds. “You have the potential to be great, Madoc,” she said, “that is why we are sending you. Be forewarned, though, it will be the toughest test of your mettle that you will ever face. Nequilar is cunning and strong. Although you may one day be, you are no match for his power now, so you must be cunning as well; more so than he. You must learn quickly and well.”

Theodosia stood, and indicated the map and scrolls she had given me. She said: “These are all I can provide you with, save the necessities required for the journey. The map will guide you, and the scrolls contain magic that will aid you, but the rest you must provide for yourself. Your quest must be your own. Are you familiar with the rituals you will be required to perform before tomorrow morning?”

“I am,” I said. She nodded approvingly.

“Then go and begin them,” she replied. Her face had an animation in it that I had never seen. “My thoughts go with you,” she said, taking my hand in both of hers, “I have great faith. You will be successful.”

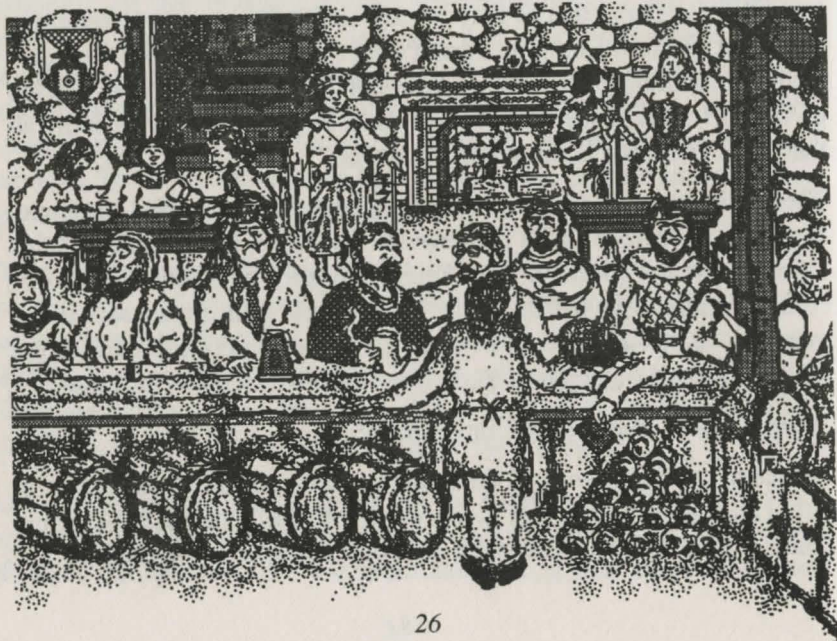
With that, she directed me out of her chambers. As I left, those last words echoed in my mind. Whether she had said them earnestly or only to be encouraging I didn't know. My thoughts racing, I prepared for my journey.

I set off the next day under a low menacing sky. I knew the entire population of the guild was watching; I could feel their gazes upon my back as I directed my horse through the gate, just as my gaze had been upon the ones before me. I couldn't look back, despite my desperate wish to do so. I kept my eyes rigidly ahead.

The guild is situated at the center of a wide, bowl-shaped depression in the earth, and as I crested the brim of the valley, I could stand it no longer. I reigned the horse to a halt, and turned in the saddle.

The low, grey clouds descended into the dale, muting the colors, and there, sprawling and neatly demarcated by its fences, was the place where I had learned my craft. It was, in a very real sense, my home, and I began to feel the tug of loneliness.

I watched for some time as thin beams of sunlight, allowed through by the clouds, played silently across the scene below me. A restless breeze rustled through the yellowing grass around me, and tugged at my cloak. It made the only sound. Finally, I turned and clucked to the horse. The adventure began.



Village:



I rode through a blighted land. I travelled alone mostly, spending terrified nights awakening each time the horse shied from some unseen menace. It seemed to know, as I began to, over the course of the several months it took for me to cross the vast landscape, that all was not well with the land. Many times I saw hideous figures running and capering in the cut of the moon. Theodosia had understated the case; the sickness was spreading rapidly through my country, affecting everything.

Occasionally, I took up with trains of wagons or carts; people migrating from one place to another similar place. This alleviated some of my loneliness, and also provided me with valuable insight into the nature of the corrosion which had befallen the Earth.

"The land is souring right under our feet, lad," one man told me as we trundled across the plains under the towering Horned Mountains, "That's why we move. Our last crop came up poisoned and gnarled and grey. Not a scrap of edible matter will grow."

Time passed. Eventually, I arrived at the small village near the Citadel. It was located half way down a long, rolling forested slope which ended at the sea. As I rode in down the main route, I was granted a clear view of the village and its environs.

The settlement was small, a haphazard arrangement of about fifty houses and other buildings. The road on which I travelled cut through the center of these, and continued on to the sea beyond. It was odd, I thought, that the village should be constructed so close to the water, yet not directly upon it. Crowding close around the buildings and road was dense green forest. Looking to either side of myself, it was impossible to see more than a short distance into the tangled woods.

Beyond and to the north of the village, overlooking the sea, was a lone mountain, seeming to push up the verdant carpet of the surrounding forest. The trees continued up the flanks to the summit, broken occasionally by slashes of bare rock. It began gently in the forest, gradually increasing its slope to the massive peak at the sea, whereupon it fell, in cliffs and crags, directly to the water. Grey clouds surrounded the pinnacle like a shroud.

I was unsure of how to proceed, and decided that I had to obtain more information before formulating a plan. On my journey, I had discovered that a glass of some strong ale was an effective way to persuade people to talk. I entered the village, and reigned my good horse outside the local tavern. As I took some oats from the saddle bag, and placed them under my horse's mouth, I was struck by the amount of activity occurring in such a seemingly quiet place. When I entered the tavern, I realized why.

It was quite busy, and one look at the patrons was enough to tell me they weren't local citizens. All manner of people were represented, from across the land. In my cursory glance of the room I noticed, among the other patrons, several of the short, hirsute dwarves who inhabit the high reaches of the Horned Mountains, two female elves, lithe and graceful, engaging a particularly small hobbit in conversation, and one lone gnome, sitting in the shadows at the back. The buzz of discussion permeated the air within the tavern.

Although I attracted no undue attention upon my entrance, I could feel that I was being scrutinized. Every individual had noted my arrival briefly, and had returned to other matters. There were several wizards situated throughout the tavern, and they nodded to me, recognizing me, as I did them, as fellow members of the Guild. I also observed warriors, some dripping with weapons, clerics and the occasional thief among the faces. Somewhat overwhelmed by the diversity of the tavern's customers, I moved toward the bar. The bartender was a sinewy, older man with a high, narrow face. I ordered a draught of ale.

"Is it always this busy?" I asked him while he poured.

"Has been since I bought the place thirty years ago," he replied, "Always coming or going, some idiot or another going up to the Citadel to try and get rich."

"Where is the Citadel?" I asked. He handed my drink to me, and fixed me with a penetrating stare.

"It's at the top of that cliff over the sea," he said, pointing, "but let me give you some advice, boy. Leave. Just go. Forget about the Citadel."

"Why?"

"I'll tell you why," he said, leaning over the counter toward me, "We usually have one or two groups a day who manage to screw up their courage and go in. The last time someone actually came out again was two months ago, and she was in bad shape, bleeding from ten places and saying really crazy things. She died the next day. That's why." I looked directly into his eyes.

"I have no choice," I said, "I've been sent on a quest by the Wizard's Guild." He straightened up and frowned at me for a moment.

"That's too bad," he replied, leaving me with my glass.

I turned my back to the bar, and looked around. I knew that alone, I wouldn't last ten minutes inside the Citadel. Who knew what sort of creatures had turned its catabombs into subterranean lairs? I needed to gather together a party of people to accompany me, but was at a loss as to how to go about selecting whom. I decided it would be best to ease myself into a conversation with one of the other wizards. I strolled to a table where two of my guild-mates sat, engaged in intense discussion. They were both considerably older than myself. They looked at me with thinly veiled suspicion when I approached. One was elven, and wore a black robe, voluminously drawn about his small body. The other was more modestly attired in the traditional cloth tunic of our order. I introduced myself, and their suspicion relented somewhat.

"Sit down, lad," the elven wizard said, offering me a chair, "My name is Sylvan."

"Ruric," the other said, nodding at me. I took the proffered chair, and seated myself across the table from them.

"You appear to be quite young to be coming to the Citadel," Sylvan said.

"This is my quest," I answered. They both nodded, understanding.

"That is most unfortunate," said Ruric.

"What do you know about all this?" I asked, gesturing at everyone in

the tavern, "Where do all these people stay? Surely they aren't all residents."

"No, they aren't," Sylvan replied, "There are small encampments scattered throughout the forest surrounding this village. Mostly, these people seek fame or wealth. It is said that there are great riches within the Citadel."

"Don't they know about Lady Synd?"

"They know," Ruric said, "they just don't care. They try to ignore what is happening to our land, and think only of themselves."

For many hours, we discussed various aspects of the descent into the Citadel. Not one of us had actually entered the monument which was the topic of our discussion, so most of our conversation was based upon stories and legends. It was indeed unfortunate that there was precious little information about what lay ahead!

We decided that the optimum size for a party of adventurers was five. Any more would attract the attention of whatever foul beasts inhabited the Citadel, and any less would be too weak to effectively fight those same beasts, should the need arise. We were undecided as to the best composition of a party, however. Sylvan suggested two warriors, a cleric, a thief and a wizard: "A strong party stands the best chance against whatever lies in wait."

"On the other hand," Ruric replied, "there is the magic to consider. Nequilar inhabits those depths, and a party will require strong magic to release Lady Synd. I agree with the cleric, for healing, and the thief, to defuse traps and such, but I think you will need two wizards, and only one fighter.

It was also agreed that at least one member of the party should be a dwarf or gnome, because of their excellent vision in the darkness.

Finally, Ruric stood and said: "It is now afternoon. If you are quick, you can select your party, and set up an encampment by nightfall. I must go. I wish you luck, Madoc." He nodded to me, and strode from the tavern.

"I too, have business to attend to, Madoc," said Sylvan, standing, "You must excuse my friend Ruric. He senses, as I do, your destiny. I have great hope for your success. My wishes are with you." He took my hand, and shook it before leaving.

Now, sitting alone at the table, I began to survey the tavern. Each face my eyes fell upon, I scrutinized carefully. My masters at the guild had shown me how to infer elements of a persons personality from subtle movements and facial features, and soon, I had chosen the ten faces which seemed the most suitable. I left my table, and approached these people. Several laughed at my age, but, in the end, I left the tavern with four other adventurers.

We rode into the woods surrounding the village, and set up camp in a small clearing. It was growing dark, so we prepared a fire, and congregated around it. We talked late into the night, acquainting each other with our own lives and stories. These are the people who sat around the fire with me:

Deklan Rhadearle, a burly mountain of a man, who hailed from the northern plateaus of the Horned Mountains. A warrior by trade, he was only a few years younger than my father, and had actually served as a foot soldier in King Orestes' army when he was young. He was a good tempered fellow, always ready with a joke and a willing smile.

Almiri, an amazon warrior. Over twice my height, she looked the part; flaming red hair hung in ringlets down her back, and she always wore chain mail, and carried a small arsenal with her. She had been born and raised in the Great Desert, a member of one of the many nomadic tribes which constantly migrate across those sands. She was also good natured, but tended to be sarcastic and cutting in her humor.

Gammaliel of Orth, a dwarf cleric. He was newly arrived at the Citadel from the great dwarven cavern cities in the Horned Mountains, and typical of a dwarf, he sported a full beard. He was quite knowledgeable, and wise beyond his years. His manners were that of a dwarf — that is to say, he was quiet and a little suspicious of the rest of us.

Cephas Seth, a thief. He was an elf, from the southern forest, but, unlike most elves, he was evil. I had known this about him since I had first spoken to him, and it worried me somewhat. Deklan had expressed misgivings about his motives, but I was more concerned about the effect of an evil member on the rest of the party than I was about him attacking us in the middle of the Citadel. The first thing the elders in the Wizard Guild taught me about was evil, because the number of evil wizards roughly equals the number of good ones. I knew that evil was simply

an abiding concern with oneself; greed, essentially. Knowing this, it is easy to keep evil people loyal, by making them believe it is in their best interest to be so. Cephas himself posed no particular problem to the party, except that he had a tendency to brood. Indeed, he turned out to be quite talented in his craft, as he ably proved by picking the three scrolls Theodosia had given me from my robes without me noticing. When I confronted him, he returned them readily enough, claiming to be practicing.

Eventually, we tired of talking, and slept under the pitch sky. The night was warm, but no stars were visible through the constant cover of dense fog. I fell asleep last, listening to the easy breathing of my new found companions. As the last of my consciousness slid away, I thought I heard inhuman cries echoing from a great distance, but sleep claimed me, and I did not awaken.

Morning dawned grey and unpleasant, with occasional spurts of rain falling from the close sky. In these inclement conditions, we ate breakfast.

“Before we go for the day,” Gammaliel said, “I need to meditate for spells. I’d rather do it here, than chance it once we’re inside the Citadel. Any suggestions?”

“What will we need?” I asked.

“Better get a few heal spells,” Deklan replied, “If there’s any truth to the stories, we’ll need it.”

Gammaliel nodded, and sat away from the rest of us. As he began his meditations, we sat and discussed our chances. Occasionally, I glanced at Gammaliel’s figure, his face utterly relaxed, his lips moving slowly, forming words I could not begin to comprehend, requesting access to the powers of the universe. I thought about the differences between clerical and wizard magic. Each has advantages and disadvantages: unlike wizards, clerics must meditate for their magic, but the only sources of wizard magic are scrolls created by other wizards. My reverie was broken by Gammaliel rejoining us. We tore down our small camp, and returned to the village.

“You need to visit the local shop,” Deklan said as we walked, looking at my clothes appraisingly “You’ll need more than that. Do you have any gold?”

“Practically none,” Cephas answered for me, and we all turned to look at him. He shrugged and said: “It’s my job.”

“Does he have anything to sell?” Deklan asked Cephas.

“Only some scrolls,” Cephas replied, matter-of-factly.

“I need those scrolls,” I said, instinctively hugging my robe to me.

“You need protection more.”

“Besides,” inserted Gammaliel, “The stories say the hallways of the Citadel are piled high with magic.”

“Okay,” I relented, removing my scrolls, “but I can only sell one.” Theodosia had given me two Haelen scrolls for healing, and one Fortis scroll for battle. “I’ll sell one of the Haelen,” I said.

“You’d better give it to me to sell,” Almiri said, “the shopkeeper’s helpless against a beautiful woman’s charms. He’ll give me a better price.” We had arrived at the unkept looking shop, and we entered. I handed her the scroll, and she winked at me.

She approached the shopkeeper, who was obviously impressed with her. I couldn’t hear what he offered, but she accepted, and returned to us.

“Three hundred gold pieces,” she said proudly, “that should get you everything you need.”

With the help of my new-found comrades, I purchased supplies.

“It’s going to be dark down there,” Gammaliel remarked, “Being a dwarf, I’m used to it, but you might be more comfortable with torches.”

“You’re going to need a weapon,” Deklan suggested, testing the balance of a broad sword. It looked like it weighed more than I did. I looked at him imploringly. “Well, maybe this is too big,” he said, smiling, “but perhaps a dagger?”

“I can’t wear armour,” I explained to Almiri as she approached with some fine-looking chain mail, “I need to be able to move freely when I cast spells.” She turned, and replaced it.

Cephas was skulking about by himself at one end of the shop. “Don’t even try it, thief,” the shopkeeper said, “This shop has been magically protected from your type.” Cephas held out his hands for the shopkeeper’s inspection.

Finally, we finished and exited the shop, emerging into the grey light.

"If everyone's ready, it's time to go to the Citadel," I said. We looked at each other, meeting eyes silently communicating. Knowing the horses would be useless, we boarded them at a local stable, and left the village on foot.

We crept through the entangled undergrowth for hours, guiding ourselves only by the occasional glances of the mountain afforded us when the canopy of trees parted briefly. When the ground began to slope upwards, we began our ascent. The going was easy at first, but became increasingly difficult as we neared the summit. At Deklan's insistence, we stayed in the cover of the trees. Several times, we were forced to halt, and crouch low among the bushes as creatures, some monstrously deformed, passed near us. Finally, we stood at the entrance to the Citadel.

I looked at the benighted place where we found ourselves. Gnarled, blackened trees crept to the single tower still protruding from the cracked ground. Evil washed over me in waves like nausea, originating at the darkened opening into that tower, which had at one time been a window. Looking at Gammaliel, I could see he was affected also; his eyes were wide, his breathing rapid.

Suddenly, from overhead, there came a screeching call that instantly froze in my spine. Almiri and Deklan dropped into defensive stances, weapons at the ready. Above us, a large bat swooped among the trees, cast a baleful glance at us, and disappeared into the blackness.

"Nervous, anyone?" Almiri asked, sheathing her sword shakily.

Deklan let out a laugh that sounded uncannily pure, given the surroundings. I looked at him in wonder. He gifted me with a brilliant grin.

"Let's get 'em," he said, gesturing at the opening. We moved slowly toward the blackness encompassed within those stones; the night which seemed to seep from that portal, and flow into the earth around it.

Within my mind, steel walls were being erected, traps into which fear would fall, should it appear in my thoughts. I knew that the scales on which the world balanced were tipping slowly toward evil. I knew that only Lady Synd could provide the counterweight that would prevent all of us from toppling ever further into the grasp of vileness and deceit. I

could sense my destiny, close now, preparing to embrace me in its ebony arms.

We took up our positions; Deklan in front for protection, broadsword drawn; Gammaliel and myself next, spells at the ready; Cephas then, crouched low to the ground, dagger hidden in his cloak; and finally Almiri, watchful for rear attack.

I decided, at the last second, that I would keep a diary of our subterranean encounters so that, if we were to fail, perhaps some other souls might find our experience useful. With that in mind, I lit a torch, took some paper from my pack, and prepared to write down everything that we saw or heard.

My companions looked at me, waiting. We were ready. I nodded and, silently, we entered (into level 2, location 1).

(Author's Note: As you travel through the book, you must follow the references given at the end of each location. The numbers to the left of the text on the following pages indicate locations on the Citadel maps beginning on page 157.)

Level 1:

The Downfall

1

The gateway from the mysterious pedestal room was unlocked on this level. We exited into a short corridor. At the end, lit by torches on either side, was an ornate carving of an immense skull. We approached.

“Imagine how much that’s worth!” Cephass breathed.

“Imagine how much it weighs,” Almiri replied dryly.

When we were next to it, we began a close inspection. Below the head were several large gems, embedded in an extravagant display of gilt carving. Cephass grasped one, and tried to remove it. Instead of coming out, the panel on which the gem was placed receded, and the skull face came to life!

It’s eyes began to glow with an unearthly light, dim and red, and the jaws moved, cracking the stone out of which it was carved. Then it began to speak!

“How long does it take to fall ten feet?” it asked, its voice deep and gravelly, as though it hadn’t spoken for millennia.

Cephass looked at me, panic-stricken. “I’m sorry,” he squeaked.

My mind raced. Ten feet wasn’t such a long way to fall, but I had no idea how fast things travelled when falling, or how long it would take. Everyone looked at me. Deklan shrugged.

“Ten seconds?” I hazarded a guess.



Apparently, this was not the answer it was expecting, because the floor beneath our feet disappeared, leaving a gaping pit, into which we plummeted, screaming.

We landed with a thud on a particularly hard floor. Far above us, through the pit, we heard a small giggle, then silence.

"Everybody okay?" Deklan asked, standing and brushing himself off. I stood, and looked around. We were in a corridor, and to the south of us was a gate. I went to it and looked inside.

"So much for our efficient method of moving about," Almiri stated, standing beside me. The small room contained only a pit in the floor and in the ceiling.

"It looks as though that strange room is still on the level above us," I said.

"Here we are again," Gammaliel said, picking up the same burnt torch which we had seen from the other side of this same gate.

"Well, at least we know where we are," I replied. "Is anyone hurt?" I looked around, and everyone shook their heads.

"Let's go then," I said, annoyed at losing what was surely the most interesting room that I had ever seen. We reentered the main room (level 2, location 1), and descended the stairs again (to level 3, location 1). A hallway directly across this room from the entrance led us to another set of stairs going down. We descended (to level 4, location 1 — page 53).

2 After the arduous climb from the sixth level, we paused to catch our breath.

"What a maze!" Almiri said, leaning on her sword.

We found ourselves in a short, east-west hallway, which we followed. It bent to the south, and then west.

At the final turn, a skeleton lay prone upon the ground. As

we approached it, there was a hissing sound, and the wall ahead of us (at the west end of the hallway) disappeared. Beyond it, we saw the familiar gateway to the mysterious pedestal room.

"Looks like we've regained our efficient method of transportation," Gammaliel said. Stepping over the skeleton, we approached the place where the end of the hallway used to be. As soon as we had moved past the skeleton, however, the wall reappeared with a crash. We returned to the skeleton. The wall disappeared again.

"It must have something to do with this," Cephas said, examining the skeleton. He moved the head, and revealed a helmet and another skull wand like the one we had used to partially disintegrate Lady Synd's crystal.

"Excellent!" I exclaimed, taking the skull wand from Cephas, who held it out to me. The helmet was given to Deklan, who donned it.

"Someone has to stay here," Gammaliel said, "to hold the wall open. I would be willing to stay. You could then move through, and get to the pedestal room."

"What about you?" Almiri asked. "You would be trapped here. Even if the wall remained open for us, when you moved to go through it, it would slam shut, trapping you here."

"I'll wait. You can use the pedestal room to get back down from this level, and retrace your steps to here." Deklan shook his head.

"How important can this room be?" he asked. "We shouldn't leave him here alone."

"If you prefer, another can stay with me," Gammaliel replied. "Fra Elsof and I should be able to defend ourselves against attack."

It was agreed that Fra Elsof and Gammaliel would stay behind, to hold the wall open for the rest of us, who would take the pedestal room back down.

Deklan, Almiri, Cephias and I stepped away from the skeleton, toward the place where the wall used to be. It remained open. We stepped through.

As soon as we were on the other side, the wall slammed shut again with a crash, cutting us off from the rest of the party. I prayed that noble Gammaliel and Fra Elsof would be safe from harm.

We entered the pedestal room, and closed the gate. I depressed the lower button on the pedestal, and we were transported down with a bang. Once again, and we returned to the third level (outside level 3, location 1).

We retraced our steps from this point, trying as quickly as possible to return to the first level and rejoin Fra Elsof and Gammaliel. We travelled uneventfully, except for the antechamber on the fifth level (level 5, location 1), where we were brutally attacked by more horned devils. We managed to dispose of them, and continued down to the sixth level (level 6, location 1).

The north door leading from this place was still propped open with our torch, so we went through, and followed the maze-like corridor, and mounted the six levels of steps.

Finally, we arrived at the first level, to find the corridor empty. Fear descended on my heart.

“Gammaliel! Elsof!” Deklan called, and we began to frantically search the area.

“We’re here,” Gammaliel said, stepping from around the corner, “we just moved to a safer place.” He and Fra Elsof stood before us.

There were congratulations all around, and several heartfelt don’t-ever-do-that-to-us-again’s from Almiri. Once rejoined, we returned to our original entrance to the sixth level (level 6, location 1). Gammaliel pulled the torch from under the door, and we walked to the center exit from this room.

Using the same technique of placing a torch to hold the

door, we entered the hallway behind the center door, by jumping over the pit there. We followed this hallway (to level 6, location 11 — page 91).

The Beginning



1

We entered from the outside world by means of a dirty, worn staircase. The air was stale, and the two lit torches on the walls to the left and right of us flickered only slightly. The pools of light cast by these torches were feeble indeed. Ahead, lay a large room, its far wall barely visible in the gloom. We began to move away from the entrance.

“Wait,” Gammaliel said, pulling a torch from his pack. “We’ll probably need this.” He removed a torch from a sconce in the wall, and lit his from it. Replacing the original, he said, “let’s go.”

We entered the room, our torch providing dim but sufficient lighting. Of course, Gammaliel saw more easily than we, so he kept us informed of any details we missed at the edge of our vision. Turning right, we entered a corridor, and proceeded along it until we reached an iron gate.

Peering through the bars, we could see a small room, consisting solely of a pit in the floor, and a hole in the ceiling, directly above the pit. A foul breeze floated up from the pit. The gate was locked, and no amount of forcing would open it. As we stood, Gammaliel’s torch sputtered and went out, plunging us into darkness.

“Must have been a bad one,” he said, dropping the torch to the ground. “We’ll have to light another, follow me.”

With Gammaliel’s excellent vision leading the way, we returned to the main room and lit another torch from the ones on the wall.

That completed, we exited the room, creeping out the north wall, opposite from where we descended. A short corridor led us to a set of stairs which dropped down into the blackness below. Silently, we descended (to level 3, location 1 — page 47).

2

Rising up from the floor, we saw some objects lying in the corner of the room. Lady Synd strode to them, and picked them up. There was a finely wrought golden statue, and a chalice.

“It’s not here,” she said. “I suppose I should have known. All these years, he would have taken it as far from the light as possible.”

“What?” I queried.

“The Blood Scroll,” she said. “It is that which will restore the Citadel to its original state. On it are written ancient words of great power, penned by Gaea herself. There is only one place where it could be. Come!” She stood in the center of the room, and jumped into the pit. We followed.

Once back in Synd’s crystal room (level 5, location 7), we stopped.

“I cannot tell what lies ahead of us,” she said to us. “If you wish, you may leave and go in peace.”

As one, we shook our heads. Such a wondrous smile spread across Lady Synd’s face, that my poor words are incapable of describing it. We returned to level 11, and entered the central area. From her robes, Lady Synd pulled a key. She opened the door, and we entered the round central room.

Inside, dead center, was another set of pyramidal stairs leading down. The four entrances faced the four points of the compass.

“Down there,” Lady Synd said, pointing to the stairs, “is the temple of Gaea. It is small, and directly at the bottom of the stairs. That is the only place Nequilar could have

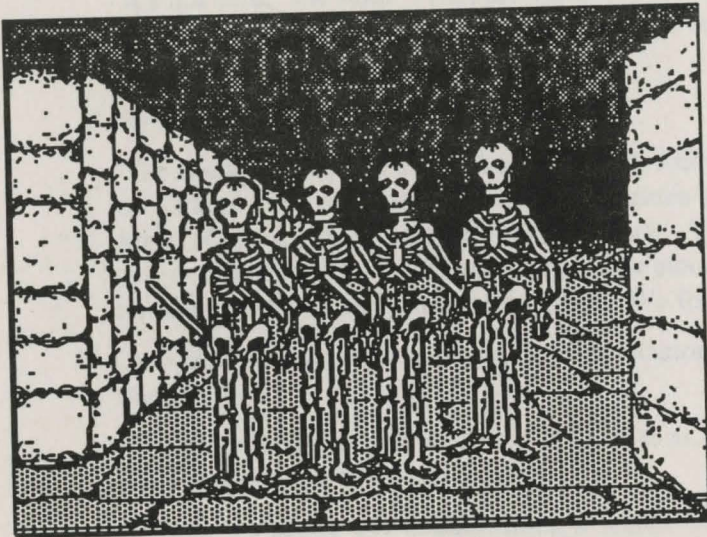
placed the blood scroll. Before he committed his diabolical deeds, the temple was on the west side of the stairs. What lies down there now is anyone’s guess. If anything should happen to us and we become separated, we will meet here at the top of the stairs again. Is everyone ready?” We nodded.

We descended, entering the east entrance to the stairs, and emerging from the west exit. Directly ahead of us was a room (level 12, location 1 — page 141).



Eternal Light

1



After descending the stairs (from level 2, location 1), we found ourselves in a dark hallway. While stalking carefully along the corridor, Gammaliel stopped.

“Look,” he said, pointing. Enscensed upon the wall was a torch, unlit.

“Shouldn’t we light these as we go along?” Deklan said, glancing around. “I see another one along this wall.” So saying, he started off. The rest of us stayed, and waited until Gammaliel had lit the wall torch with his own. As we turned to follow Deklan, we heard shouting in the direction he had gone. We sprinted toward the noise.

What I saw when we were close enough that our torches encircled the action, sent spikes of fear into my heart. Engaged in battle with Deklan, were several skeletons, magically animated. Their bones clattered hideously as they attacked Deklan with swords. Deklan, for his part, was putting up an admirable defense, staving off thrusts from all sides.

Almiri drew her sword and rushed to Deklan’s aid. I withdrew my dagger from my cloak and followed. As I ran, I turned my head, and saw Gammaliel mumbling and gesticulating, casting a spell. Cephas was nowhere to be seen. Cursing, I rushed to the nearest skeleton.

Deklan and Almiri were inflicting deadly blows on their rivals, but I couldn’t get close enough with my dagger to effect an attack. Only by leaping about madly was I able

to avoid being struck by my skeleton's blade, which glinted in the torchlight. Suddenly, there was a blood-curdling scream, and Cephas leapt upon my skeleton from behind. With one swift slice of his dagger, he beheaded it, and the rest of the bones crashed to the ground, dismembered.

There was silence. All that remained of our attackers were bones, strewn in a disorganized heap. Breathing heavily, I rested my hands on my knees.

"Look," Cephas said, digging in the bones. He held up a small bag. Opening it, he said: "Twenty gold pieces. They must have had this hidden somewhere."

"Our first booty," Almiri said, smiling.

We gave the gold to Deklan, who placed it into his pack, and we continued. Two corridors led from the east wall, one in the northeast corner, and one from the middle of the wall. We took the more southern of the corridors, and arrived at another iron gate. This one was not locked, and we opened it.

On the other side, was a small room with a pedestal in the middle. The pedestal was ornately carved, and the angled top had two buttons protruding from it.

"Fascinating," I said, "I wonder what these do?"

"Don't...!" Deklan shouted, but it was too late. I had depressed the top button. The room shook, and we raced for the gate. Before we could get there, however, the most amazing thing occurred outside.

As we watched, the wall with the gate fell away, descending through the floor. More rumbling, and the wall continued its downward motion, another gate appearing from the ceiling, and eventually stopping at the floor. The shaking stopped.

We looked out the gate, which gave onto a hallway similar to the one by which we had entered this infernal room.

"Wait!" Gammaliel exclaimed, "I know this place! Look

at that!" He pointed to the floor, where a partially burned torch lay. "This is the hallway we were in before. I remember this gate, too!"

We shook the gate, and found it locked, as before.

"Somehow, we have been transported up one floor," I said, amazed. "Imagine what an efficient method this will be of moving through the Citadel!"

"But now, how do we get out?" Deklan lamented. "The gate's still locked."

"I assume the lower button will take us back down," I said. I went to press it, but before I did, a thought struck me.

"We descended a set of stairs from the outside to arrive at this level, didn't we?" I asked. Everyone nodded.

"Then, it would be logical to assume that somewhere above us, there is another level, yes?"

"I suppose," Deklan said, scratching his head.

"Well, let's find out," I replied, pressing the top button again. With more shaking and groaning, we arrived at the next level up (to level 1, location 1 — page 37).

2

We entered a circular room after climbing the hidden stairs behind Lady Synd's recently vacated crystal prison. Almost without warning, we were set upon by two large dragons. Their oily black scales flashed in the light which emanated from the crystal ball Gammaliel was holding.

As she was wont to do, Almiri slipped her ring of invisibility on, and instantly disappeared. Earlier, we had discussed tactics to use when she was invisible to us, and it was decided that she should attack from behind the creatures, thus placing the maximum possible distance between herself and us during the fight. In this way, we could be relatively sure not to attack her accidentally, without being able to see her.

With Lady Synd's help, we fended off the dragons. They

screached and shrieked raucously as they attacked. Soon, those shrieks turned to screams of agony, and they died.

Lady Synd had sustained a gash across her abdomen from the vicious ripping claws of one of the dragons, and Deklan healed it with his gloves.

"Those are impressive gloves," she said, and Deklan nodded proudly.

There was a hole in the roof.

"We need to get up there," Lady Synd said. She fell silent, and tilted her head to one side, her face closing in concentration. After a few moments, she straightened.

"It appears that fifty years sealed inside a crystal haven't dulled my memory. I can still remember my spells. I have a Risan memorized. Do you have a Levitas?" she asked me. I nodded, increasingly puzzled as to how she knew so much about me. I cast Levitas, and she cast Risan, and in a charged swirling of magical auras, we were on the previous level (level 2, location 2 — page 44).

3

Climbing the stairs (from level 4, location 7) proved to be difficult, because of the accumulation of dust which covered the steps.

"This place hasn't been visited in quite some time," I commented.

We arrived in a hallway which went west, then turned south. Following it, we arrived in a small room. There were alcoves in the west, south and east walls. In each of these, were small recesses, filled with rocks and stones of all sizes.

"I've seen these things before," Gammaliel said. "I wonder what they are."

"They were windows," Fra Elsof said. "Keep in mind that before Nequilar, this was all above ground. They were filled with rocks and dirt when the Citadel was sunk."

"What a view," Cephas said, inspecting the western window. "If you could get through these rocks, you could tunnel back to ground level. It shouldn't be too far up from here." Gammaliel, with his intimate knowledge of things subterranean, shook his head.

"What would you dig with?" he asked. Cephas shrugged, and continued to finger the stones. He pulled on one at the bottom of the window, and there was a crash. We leapt back, as all the rocks came tumbling from the window, revealing a small cubbyhole.

In the hole was a large crystal ball, incredibly beautiful. I picked it out of its hiding place, and inspected it.

"Wow!" Cephas exclaimed. "We should be checking all of these things!" He rushed into the other alcoves. The rest of my companions looked at the crystal.

"I wonder if it works," I said. I rubbed my hand over the smooth ball in a circular motion. Slowly, a mist began to appear inside the crystal. Everyone looked on, awestruck.

Suddenly, the vapor in the crystal ball coalesced into an evil-looking face. It laughed, and the sound came from all around us.

"Come looking to help that witch, Synd, have you? My eye follows you now, so that my hand may crush you!" the face in the crystal ball said.

"It's Nequilar!" Fra Elsof shouted.

The face in the crystal ball disappeared, and the ball began to glow brightly.

"Well, he knows we're here," Almiri said.

"I hope he drops in to say 'Hi'," Deklan commented in a decidedly unfriendly tone of voice, hefting his sword.

"I wouldn't be so quick to attack him," I replied. "His magic is terrifyingly powerful. He could turn you to cinders with a wave of his hand." Deklan suddenly looked less certain.

"Should we leave that here?" Gammaliel asked.

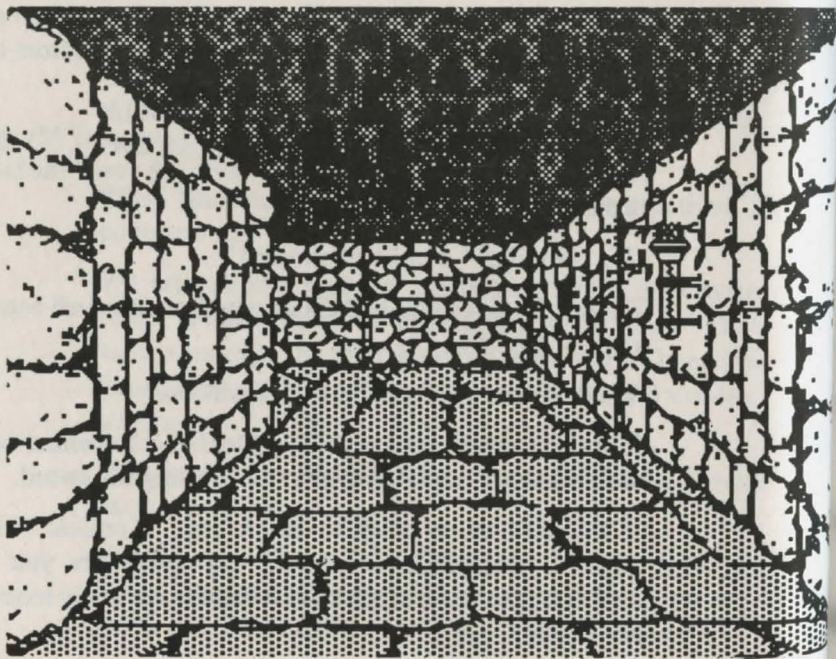
"I don't know. It looks as though it's going to continue glowing like that. We wouldn't need torches."

"But won't he know where we are while we've got it?" Almiri queried.

"I think we've already fallen under his scrutiny," I replied. "I'd be willing to bet that he'll know where we are with or without this crystal ball."

"On the other hand," countered Gammaliel, "there's no point in taking chances. Until we need it, I say we should leave it extinguished." We all agreed. I rubbed the ball again, and its light went out. I gave the ball to Gammaliel, who took it and placed it in his pack.

Cephas had returned, not finding anything in the other alcoves. We descended the stairs again (to level 4, location 8), and descended the stairs there also (to level 5, location 11 — page 78).



Level 4:

One Season

1

The unkempt stairs (from level 3, location 1) led to another corridor, which we followed, lighting torches as we went. Upon entering a large open area, we were immediately set upon by more assailants. Among them were more skeletons, some large insects and several hideous, horned beasts the likes of which I had never seen.

"Can't we leave them alone?" I implored. Deklan sized them up as they approached.

"They shouldn't be too much trouble," he replied. "We can take them on."

I shrugged, and we prepared to defend ourselves.

After the ensuing fight, we discovered another bag on the floor containing 20 gold pieces. We consolidated this bag with the one Deklan was already carrying, to decrease the size.

Looking around, we noticed a door in an alcove on the west wall, and two corridors, one leading from the west wall, and another from the south.

We decided upon the south corridor, and discovered another set of stairs. We descended (to level 5, location 12 — page 81).

2

The door closed behind us, and we found ourselves in another roughly square room. A door led from the northwest corner, and two torches lit the way into an alcove in the northeast.

Peering into the alcove, we beheld another huge, skeletal face, carved ornately into the north wall. Quickly, we retreated.

"Let's check the other door first," Deklan suggested, and we all agreed wholeheartedly. The door was locked, but a key lay on the ground in front of it.

"Makes sense," Cephas said, picking up the key, and trying it in the door. It worked. The door swung open, and we were in a corridor, going north. It was very long, with unlit torches along the east wall. We lit them as we walked, and it was while we were doing this that we were set upon by the largest spiders I had ever seen.

While fighting them off, I stepped into a black, greasy puddle. As I looked down in horror, it coiled up around my ankle, and bit me. Desperate, I slashed at it with my dagger. With a scream, it dried up, leaving nothing but a dark stain on the rock floor.

When our assailants were slain, we discovered four arrows on the floor.

"These would come in handy," Almiri said, "if any of us had a bow."

"We might find one," Deklan said, placing the arrows in his pack, "I'll keep them." Almiri shook her head.

"Waste of space," she said.

"Let's go," I interjected, pointing further down the corridor. We continued. The corridor turned to the east, and ended abruptly.

"Dead end," Cephas said. "I guess we have to go back to that skull."

"Do we really?" Gammaliel said, "I'd rather not fall through another floor." Cephas looked guilty.

"I don't think there's any other way," I replied.

We turned and followed the corridor back to the room.

Carefully, stepping lightly, we entered the northeast alcove.

Nothing happened. We waited.

"Well, I guess it's got to be done sooner or later," Cephas said, looking at us. We nodded. He approached the carving, and depressed one jewel after another, until finally, one receded into the wall. He jumped back.

"To pass you must know whence I came to this keep," said the animated head.

"Who's 'I'?" asked Almiri. "Could you be more specific?"

The skull remained silent. The recessed gem emerged from the wall, to take its place among the others.

"It took that as an answer," Deklan said. We waited. Nothing happened, and Deklan continued: "It seems that we have to answer correctly before going on."

"I repeat," Almiri said, "who's 'I'?"

"To pass you must know whence I came to this keep.' My guess would be that 'I' is Nequilar." I said, "Who else would be able to enchant such a trap?"

"Fine," Cephas said, "so when did Nequilar arrive here?" Everyone shrugged. "Looks like we're stuck," he finished.

Something nagged at the back of my mind. I should know the answer, I thought. Suddenly, it occurred to me; Theodosia and I had discussed Nequilar back at the Guild before I left on this quest. Casting my mind back, I remembered the answer.

"Press the gem again, Cephas," I said, "I think I know." He depressed the gem, the skull repeated the question, and I gave the response.

There was a trembling, and the skull disappeared into so much smoke. Cephas looked disappointed at losing such beautiful gems. An immense scraping sound emerged from the wall, and we all stepped back, afraid. Slowly, with great grinding noises, the wall ahead of us receded into the east portion of the alcove.

Directly behind it, were stairs descending. Deklan smiled at me.

“Good work!” he said.

We descended (to level 5, location 1 — page 61).

3

After ascending (from level 5, location 8), we arrived in a long, narrow room. To the south was a large alcove, containing a wooden door. To the east, the room narrowed to a corridor, which turned south. There appeared to be nothing else here, so we followed the corridor to the east (to level 4, location 4 — page 56).

4

We followed the corridor south and east, and arrived in a square room. As soon as we entered, we were set upon by a large minotaur, and several other monstrosities.

During the course of the ensuing battle, Cephass decided to test his new axe (acquired in level 5, location 8). He heaved it at one of the enemies, and it flew easily, end over end.

“Nice balance,” Cephass commented. His contentment was short-lived, however, because his throw was off — by a hair’s width only, but off nonetheless — and the axe missed its target. Cephass cursed. Before our very eyes, however, the axe, as though magically enchanted, circled around, and flew back to Cephass, returning neatly into his hand.

He looked at me, wide-eyed, and I shrugged.

“Useful weapon,” I suggested. He nodded, and we continued with the battle.

The minotaur in particular proved to be difficult, but we managed to dispatch the aggressive beast. We had sustained minor injuries, but nothing life-threatening.

When the monsters were dead, we discovered a full set of battle clothing, including chain armour, helmet, shield, and gauntlets. Overjoyed, Almiri donned them, leaving her far inferior armour behind. We returned to the larger

room (level 5, location 3), and took the south door into a long hallway. We decided to go east, and followed the corridor for quite some distance, turning south, then west, then north. We arrived at an intersection, and looked east. Down the corridor, we could see the door through which we had just emerged — a circular hallway.

“Most interesting,” Gammaliel said.

“Well, nothing interesting down there,” Deklan said, “let’s go west.”

We followed the corridor west and north, and finally arrived at a door in the west wall. We opened it and entered (to level 4, location 5 — page 57).

5

“Wait!” Deklan shouted, stopping us in the doorway, “look.”

We looked, and saw a large circle drawn upon the floor, directly in front of us. Beyond that, lay a skeleton.

“I don’t like this,” Cephass said. “This reeks of some kind of trap.”

“Evidently involving that circle,” I said.

“Well, there’s one way to find out,” Deklan said, pulling out his bow. “We’ll trigger it.” So saying, he fired an arrow into the center of the circle. As soon as arrow touched stone, there was a roar, and a column of flame leapt from floor to ceiling.

We leapt back and still we were singing, but not seriously so.

“Wow,” Gammaliel breathed.

“Nasty,” commented Fra Elsof.

We approached the skeleton. It appeared to be the dead kind, not the animated types we had seen previously. Just to be sure, I moved its head with the toe of my boot, revealing a dagger, and a small book.

The dagger was kept, and I took the book, and began reading it. It recounted the final days of the Blood Guard.

"It appears as though you weren't the only one who wrote of his experiences here," I said to Fra Elsof, handing him the book.

We left this room, and continued north in the corridor. Shortly, we arrived at another door in the west wall. We entered (to level 4, location 6 — page 58).

6

A corridor led from the door, and turned north. On the north wall was a gate, through which we peered. On the other side, were several monsters, wandering around, apparently unaware of us. Quickly, we moved away from the gate. The corridor turned east, and there was a large ring mounted on the wall at the end of it.

We moved toward the ring, and suddenly, there was a flash of light, and we appeared back at the gate.

"What ... ?" Almiri stated intelligently, and we looked around.

"Uh, this is not good," Deklan said, clearing his throat, "look behind us." We spun around, and were faced with monsters.

"We're on the other side of the gate!" Gammaliel exclaimed.

The monsters rushed us.

We fought them off. There were several mummies, and ugly, worm-like things, that bit viciously.

With them dispatched, we searched the room, and found a key, and a book. Inscribed on the cover of the book were the words "Map Book".

"Now we can keep track of where we've been" I said, opening it. The pages inside were neatly demarcated into squares, and there was a writing implement attached to the cover.

"Will you map for us?" I asked Fra Elsof. Reluctantly, he agreed, and I gave him the map book.

We went to the gate at the southeast corner, and used the key we had found to open the gate.

"How convenient," Almiri stated drily.

We returned to the previous room (level 4, location 6), and left there, emerging once again in the main corridor. We followed it north and then east, right to the very end, where there was another locked gate. Above the gate was a banner which read "Camera a Cwen"

"Why not try the same key?" Almiri suggested. It worked. Opening the gate, we entered (level 4, location 7 — page 59).

7

The room was dark and eerie, and a strange odor wafted to our noses. We crossed the room, our torch flickering.

"We'll need a new torch soon," Gammaliel said. "Let's light one now to be on the safe side." There was a lit torch visible through the gloom, and we moved toward it.

As we approached it, we could see a door beside it. When we were beside it, several mummies stepped out of it and attacked us.

We joined in the battle, and soon, several dark spirits also appeared, apparently drawn by the sounds of fighting. We all fought, even Fra Elsof, who was an advanced Cleric. He stood slightly off from the battle, and was a great help, casting Haelen and other spells almost constantly.

When our assailants were dead, we searched the room, but found nothing. There were, however, two staircases leaving the room, one ascending and one descending.

"Let's go up," I suggested, and we did (to level 3, location 3 — page 50).

True and False



1

At the bottom of the stairs (from level 4, location 2) was a door. We opened it, and entered what appeared to be an antechamber. It was a square room, with doors situated in the middle of each wall. As the door from the stairs closed behind us, two creatures leapt upon us.

They were short, and appeared very muscular. Growing from their flattened heads were two very sharp horns.

Deklan and Almiri dispatched them after a short fight. I was beginning to thank Sylvan, the wizard I had met in the village, for his forethought in suggesting two fighters.

When it was over, Cephas searched the bodies, but to no avail.

“Nothing,” he grunted. “So far, we haven’t found anything terribly exciting.”

“We’ve only just gotten anywhere interesting,” I replied, “Just think how many people have already combed the areas we’ve been in. We must be getting further than most. Soon, I think, we’ll find something big.” This seemed to whet Cephas’ appetite.

“Let’s go,” he said, looking at Deklan. “Pick a door.”

“West,” Deklan replied.

“West it is,” Cephas said, starting toward the door in the west wall (to level 5, location 2 — page 62).

We entered this room from the west door, and discovered, much to our chagrin, where the beasts who had attacked us in the previous room (level 4 location 1) had come from. The door slammed behind us, and we were beset with more of them. This fight was not so simple as the last, as there were more of the creatures (which I will call devils) to deal with.

Gammaliel and Cephas entered the milieux, Cephas as usual sneaking around behind the attackers. I moved to Gammaliel's aid, and together, we battled a particularly large devil.

Suddenly, we heard a yell, and Deklan was injured. He sported a gaping wound in his left shoulder, where the devil had bitten him. Bravely, he parried another attack, although he was obviously faltering from the pain. Almiri was engaged with a devil of her own, so she could be of no assistance. I looked at Gammaliel, who nodded. I withdrew from our fight, leaving him to battle the devil alone. Once I was clear of the action, I pulled my Fortis scroll from my cloak, and began to read it. Fortis is a simple defense spell which places a magic aura around the recipient of the magic. This aura causes many physical attacks to glance away harmlessly, inflicting no wounds. When I had finished reading the scroll and the magic had been prepared, it travelled into my hand from the paper, which crumbled to dust. Now all I had to do was touch Deklan, to transfer the magical protection to him.

This proved to be difficult, as the devil was forcing him backward in a circle. He was defending himself desperately, but not inflicting any damage on the beast. I crept around the fight, pacing my steps with that of the devil. When its back was completely turned to me, I leapt behind it, and followed them around in the circle. It's attention was directed solely at Deklan, and didn't notice me. Deklan did, however, and struck a single mighty blow at the devil, causing it to stop circling.

Seizing my chance, I dived between Deklan and the creature, slapping Deklan's leg with my enchanted hand. The

devil, enraged, struck me with it's huge claw, gouging my back. I writhed in pain.

Deklan drew its attention away from me, and began to defeat it, buoyed by his newly acquired protection. I crawled from the center of the action, and stood. My wound was very painful, but did not feel fatal.

By this time, Deklan had dispatched his devil, and was helping Gammaliel with his. Cephas and Almiri had theirs almost dead. In a few more moments, the fighting was over. I closed my eyes, and waited.

"Now this is more like it!" Cephas exclaimed, hefting several large bags of gold. "One ... two ... three ... four," he counted, "almost five hundred gold pieces!"

"And look," Gammaliel said, holding up a book, "this was in the corner. I think you might be interested in this, Madoc." He brought it to me, and, as I opened it, I couldn't help smiling.

"What is it?" Almiri asked.

"It's a spell book," I responded. She and Deklan looked puzzled.

"It's for holding magic ..." I prompted. Still no recognition. I looked at Gammaliel.

"The magic I need for my spells, I meditate to receive," Gammaliel began, "my powers are granted to me when I pray."

"My powers, however," I continued, "come from special runes and phrases written down on scrolls. The problem with scrolls, though, is that they can only be used once. After the first reading, they disintegrate."

"Not terribly useful," Almiri said.

"Oh, but they are," Gammaliel replied. "Scrolls are the only form of magic available to other guilds; fighters like yourselves and thieves." Cephas was listening intently by now.

"You mean, we can cast magic too?" Deklan asked, shocked.

"From scrolls, yes," I answered, "anyone can. But, like I said, they only work once. My power lies in the fact that I can take a scroll and transfer its magical energy into a spell book like this one. The spell in the book is in a different form than that on the scroll - only wizards can understand it."

"What use is it there, then?" Cephias inquired.

"Here's the point," I responded, "once a spell is in the spell book, I can memorize it and cast it as many times as I want. The spell becomes permanent in the book, and can never be removed."

"I see!" said Almiri. "That's why that book is so important to you."

"Exactly," Gammaliel said, returning from the corner of the room again, "and here's some more good news. Look what else I found." We all turned to see him bringing over four scrolls.

"Great!" I said, "I can start my book!"

"While you're doing that," Gammaliel said, "I would like to meditate for some spells, too."

"We'll keep an eye open for trouble," Deklan said.

I began moving the four scrolls Gammaliel had given me into the spell book: Gestun, Spice, Fortis Al, and Haelen. That proved to be a relatively short-lived task, so I decided to memorize one Haelen. That required a good deal of time, but, when I was finished, Gammaliel was still meditating.

"Takes a long time, doesn't it?" Deklan whispered to me. He was sitting beside me, leaning against the wall. Almiri and Cephias were prowling around the large room, watching for intruders.

"It does," I said. "But remember, he's gaining magic power for each second he meditates."

Suddenly, a shout pierced the stale air like an arrow. "Watch out!" It was Cephias' voice. Deklan stood, as did I, grimacing at the pain in my back. Deklan drew his sword just as several black shapes swooped down from the roof upon us. I withdrew my dagger, and prepared to fight.

Footsteps could be heard running from a distance, and shortly, Almiri appeared from the south, and Cephias from the east. We all attacked the bat-like creatures, but not before one had lashed its claws at Gammaliel, wrenching him from his meditation. Instinctively, he covered his head, and just prevented the bat from decapitating him.

During the fighting, Gammaliel managed to stand, shaky and dazed, and draw his weapon, but he wasn't very effective.

When the creatures were defeated, I went to him.

"Are you alright?" I asked. His pupils were dilated, but he appeared uninjured.

"I'll be okay in a minute," he said.

"I guess from now on, we should find a safe place before you do that." He nodded his head, and we rejoined the group.

"We should get going," Deklan said, "there may be more of them."

We agreed, and exited the room from the door to the south (to level 5, location 3 — page 65).

3

The door gave onto a narrow, lightless corridor. While travelling along it, we were attacked by an small group of executioners. We defeated them with few injuries.

Almiri, searching the dead bodies, held up a bag containing 90 gold pieces. Cephias' eyes glittered.

We rounded a corner in the corridor, and came upon a door in the north wall. Carefully, we entered. Behind it was a long, narrow room, with no creatures in it, thankfully. In

fact, the room was completely empty, except for another chalice. As with the first, the liquid in the chalice was unspillable. I pocketed it, and we returned to the hallway.

"Wait," Gammaliel said as we stepped into the hallway, "My torch is getting low. I'd better light another." We waited until he lit a new one, and shook out the old one, and dropped it on the floor.

We continued east in the corridor, until we reached an archway. To the south was a door.

"Shall we?" Deklan asked, opened the door and stepped inside. We followed (into level 5, location 4 — page 66).

4

In the room was a group of animated skeletons. They waited in the middle of the room, neither advancing or retreating.

"Can we get past them?" I asked Almiri.

"I don't mean to sound cocky," she said, "but it would be easier to kill them." With that, we attacked them.

Almiri was right. In short order, the skeletons lay in disarray on the floor, and we were 20 gold pieces richer. In the course of the battle, we had been pushed back into the northwest corner of the room.

"Do we have to kill everything we see?" Gammaliel asked.

"Think of it this way," Almiri replied, "We're housecleaning for Lady Synd. When we free her, you don't think she'll want all these creepy things in her castle, do you?"

"Or all this terrible gold," Cephass cut in sarcastically.

Gammaliel's response was cut off, because Almiri leaned against the west wall, and disappeared with a shriek. Stunned, we ran to the wall. I placed my hand on it, and my arm disappeared up the elbow. Looking at the others, I stepped into the wall.

The world went grey. I could still see the others standing,

their mouths open. I went back, and appeared in front of them again.

"The wall's an illusion," I said. We all went through the wall, and appeared in a small, dirty room. Almiri lay on the floor, feeling herself in disbelief.

"Stand up, you're okay," Deklan said, laughing. Almiri stood, and looked at me questioningly.

"The wall's not real," I said. Cephass began exploring the room, and called us into the south alcove.

"More loot," he said, smiling. Lying on the floor were three more scrolls, two torches, some parchment paper, and a ring.

"Can I see the ring?" Almiri asked. Cephass handed it to her. She inspected it closely, and slipped it on her finger.

She disappeared.

"You're going to have to stop doing that!" Deklan said angrily.

"Doing what?" Almiri's voice emanated from the spot where she used to be.

"Disappearing!"

"Oh! ... Oh! I'm gone!" She appeared again, with the ring in her hand. "This place never ceases to amaze," she said, putting on the ring and disappearing again. "This could come in very handy in a fight!"

Suddenly, the sleeve of my cloak was lifted away from my arm by unseen fingers, and a slice was neatly cut from it, apparently by nothing.

"What was that for?" I asked.

"Just seeing if I could use my sword like this," her voice responded. "Did you see anything?"

"No."

"Wonderful! This makes an effective weapon."

“Just stay visible when we’re moving around!” Deklan insisted, “I don’t want to keep running into you.”

“Okay,” Almiri said, reappearing. She slid the ring into the pocket of her chain armour.

“I’ll take the torches,” Gammaliel said. “The parchment could be useful for you.” He handed them and the scrolls to me.

“Just give me a minute to copy these into my spell book,” I said, sitting and opening the book.

I copied two of the three scrolls into the book: Sumos and Gestun. The third — Spice — I already had, so I gave the scroll back to Gammaliel.

“Well, nothing else here,” Cephas said, sounding disappointed. “No gold, for example.”

We left the small room through the illusory wall, and left the large room through the door in the north wall. Back in the corridor, we continued east through the archway, and hit a dead end.

“Wait,” Cephas said, going to the east wall, “I don’t trust dead ends any more.” So saying, he stepped through the wall. We all followed, and emerged in a small continuation of the hallway. A door stood to the south.

“Will wonders never cease,” Cephas said, opening the door (to level 5, location 5 — page 68).

5 When we entered the room, I could sense something was wrong, there was a strange noise, something incongruous with the sounds I had heard up to this point. It was high pitched and rough, like a rattle. By the time I had placed it, the snakes were upon us.

And impressive members of their species they were, too; over five feet long, and as big around as a man’s leg. There were three of them, and they struck almost immediately. The room appeared to be their lair, as the floor was littered with their droppings.

We fought them, but they were low to the ground, and hard to hit, and several of us were bitten — I couldn’t tell who in the confusion. Almiri was lucky to have her chain mail.

Just as it appeared that we were going to win, two smoky, evil-looking spirits arose from the darkness. They glowed a vile green, and their faces appeared to be contorted in a constant sneer of fury. Simultaneously, they opened their mouths, and a sound emerged that I cannot describe. As a body, we fell to our knees, clasping our ears to keep out that horrid sound. The snakes attacked with even greater ferocity, now that we were closer to their level. All seemed lost.

Somehow, Deklan managed to regain his footing, despite the horrible screeching. He hacked desperately at the snake which was lunging at him, neatly bisecting it. Both halves squirmed madly, ichor spouting into the air. Almiri, thanks to her sturdy armour was unharmed by her snake, which bit repeatedly at her leg in confusion. It’s fangs were broken, and I could see a flash of bloody stumps each time it opened its mouth for another attack. Gammaliel was not so fortunate: he was covered in bites, bleeding profusely, and weakening with each passing second. Deklan began attacking the glowing spirits. Cephas and I rushed to Gammaliel’s defense, leaping upon the snake which was viciously attacking him.

After several confused moments, all was silent. I looked around. Everyone lay on the ground, panting or bleeding, or both. Slowly, Almiri raised herself into a crouch.

“Gammaliel’s badly hurt,” I said, “we have to get out of here. I can only do so much.” So saying, I began to cast a Haelen upon him.

“At least they had some good loot in here,” Cephas said, displaying 10 bags of gold, a bow and several arrows, two of which appeared to be of exceedingly fine quality.

“Small consolation,” Deklan replied shortly, “we almost didn’t live to collect it.”

"This will stabilize him," I said, finishing my spell, "but he's been poisoned. He needs to be cured and we can't do that down here. I think it's time we go back up."

"And give up...?" Almiri queried.

"No, we'll come back down when we're healthy again," I said, picking up one of Gammaliel's arms. Deklan took the other, and we left.

We returned to the surface, and trekked to the village without incident.

"We have to take him to the temple," Almiri said, "that's the only place he can get the attention he needs."

By the time we had reached the temple, Gammaliel was nearly unconscious, the poison eating away at his body slowly. We left him in the experienced (and expensive) hands of the friars there.

With our new-found wealth, we purchased rooms, and spent time resting. Gammaliel slowly began to return to health. We placed the gold, evenly divided among the five of us, into the bank, and gave some items which we had uncovered in the Citadel to Almiri, who sold them at the shop.

With the resulting gold, we could afford the training, so we all petitioned our various guilds at the hostel, and advanced a level in our chosen classes.

Eventually, with our party back in form, we re-entered the Citadel, carefully working our way back down to the antechamber (level 5, location 1). Luckily, it appeared that the creatures we had killed in our previous foray had not been replaced, except for the devils at the entrance to this room. Once again, we defeated them; easily this time, because we were fresh. We decided to venture into a different portion of this level, so we left the antechamber by the north door (to level 5, location 9 — page 73).

To the north of the corridor, was an alcove containing a door. This door was of a different material than the others

we had encountered. Mounted on the east wall of the alcove was a box, with the inscription "In case of emergency, break glass" carved into it. The front panel of the box was glass, and through it, we could see a wand of some kind.

"How do we break it?" Almiri asked. In response, Cephas approached the box, wielding his dagger.

"No, wait," I said, "we don't know what that wand does. I wouldn't want to be too close when that glass breaks. Deklan, shoot an arrow at it."

Deklan complied, and the glass broke easily. We waited. Nothing happened. I pulled the wand from the box, and looked at it. It was distinctive, made of fine wood, with a small skull head at the end. The workmanship was exceedingly good. "What does it do?" Almiri asked.

"Haven't a clue," I replied honestly, "Fra Elsof?"

"I have seen it here, but have never broken the glass."

Cephas was trying to open the unusual door. "This one's a toughy," he said. After several tries, however, he managed to get it open. We stepped into the chamber where Lady Synd was trapped (level 5, location 7 — page 71).

7

To our left and right were gates, both of which were locked, and unopenable. Directly ahead of us was Lady Synd's crystal.

"Well, nothing interesting here," Cephas said, turning to leave.

"Wait, listen," I said, holding the skull wand to my ear. It hummed quietly.

"I wish I knew what this did," I said.

"There must be a reason it was put outside of this room," Fra Elsof suggested. "Maybe it can be used on her...?"

We looked at the wand, and then at the crystal. I had no idea how to make the wand work, but for effect, I brandished it in front of me. It began to glow.

I looked around. An awed silence had fallen upon the party. They all stared at the wand. I slowly went to the crystal, my heart jumping in my chest. I touched the crystal with the wand, and the crystal began to vibrate. Awestruck, I stepped away from the throbbing crystal, and noticed that the wand was beginning to crack. There was a groan, and the top quarter of the crystal exploded outward, the shards disappearing in flashes of brilliant green light before they could touch the walls. At the same instant, the skull wand disintegrated in my hand. A cheer arose from my companions. We watched and waited but nothing more happened.

Disappointed, I turned to face the party. My emotions were reflected on their faces.

"It appears that one wand is not enough," I said.

"Looks like we're going to need three more, at this rate," Cephias said.

"Grand," said Almiri, "nothing's easy, is it?"

"It wouldn't be exciting then, would it?" Deklan chimed in.

"Bore me," she suggested.

We left the crystal room, and returned to the hallway (level 5, location 6). From here, we travelled east along the corridor (to level 5, location 8 — page 72).

8

The hallway ended in a north-south corridor, and since the north direction led us to a dead-end, we went south. We appeared in a roughly square room, which had nothing in it.

Gammaliel stood in the middle of the room and used his divining ability.

"There's something to the west of us," he said, his voice

far away. Cephias went to the west wall, and disappeared. When he returned, he was carrying a large axe.

"Behind that wall is the corridor where we entered that room with the snakes," Cephias said. I winced. That was not a battle I cared to remember.

"This place is full of fake walls," Almiri said, "we should be checking everywhere we go." We all agreed that we should test the walls as we went along, in case there were more illusions awaiting us.

"The balance on this axe is fantastic," Cephias said, hefting it from one hand to the other, "I bet it would throw well."

"If we stay here too much longer, we might have a chance to prove that," Almiri said. We agreed.

There were no further exits from this room, so we returned to the north, and entered the hallway outside the crystal room (level 5, location 6). From here, we returned west, to the two staircases — one going up and the other down.

"Which way?" Deklan asked.

"It's probably wise to do the upper levels first," Fra Elsof said.

"Okay," Deklan said, and started up the stairs (to level 4, location 3 — page 56).

9

We crossed an empty hallway, to an archway with a sign over it.

"Templum Regalis?" Cephias asked. "What does that mean?" We all shrugged.

"Sounds like temple ..." I suggested. We entered the archway, and were presented with the largest room we had yet encountered. It stretched off into the darkness. The only walls we could see were those going away on either side of the archway. Almiri made an awed noise.

"Temple seems apt," Gammaliel said. Since his recovery, he had been of exceptionally good humor. Both he and I

were fully prepared, with our maximum number of spells memorized in the village, because we knew from experience how dangerous it was to try and memorize spells while in the Citadel.

We walked into the temple, toward two widely separated pillars in the center of the room. As we approached them, two mummies emerged from behind, and began to converge on us.

The battle was taken up, and we defeated them; they both disintegrated into a pile of cloth strips when killed. Deklan had been slashed in the arm, and was bleeding slightly.

"Are you okay?" Almiri asked him. He nodded his head.

"A mere flesh wound," he replied.

The mummies had some gold and a pair of gloves in their possession.

"Gauntlets!" Almiri said, "can I try them on?" The gloves were given to her, and she placed them on her hands. "Your arm's bleeding," she said, touching Deklan. Almost instantaneously, his bleeding stopped and the gash on his arm healed. She returned the gloves to Deklan.

"Healing gloves!" Gammaliel said, amazed. "I have heard that such things existed, but I never thought I'd see them. Apparently, several pairs were created by very powerful clerics ages ago. These are a great prize indeed."

"Here," Deklan said, taking them off, "you are our official healer, you should have these."

"I would dearly love them, Deklan, but I cannot. I need my hands free to cast spells. You keep them," replied Gammaliel. Pleased, Deklan replaced the gloves.

"Can I use them on other people?" he asked.

"Certainly," Gammaliel said, "all you have to do is touch people with them, and they will be healed, as though a Haelen spell had been cast upon them."

We searched the rest of the temple, and found two doors

leading out from the northeast and northwest corners. Upon opening the northwest door, we discovered a small closet. In it were a long, thick sword, and a black medallion.

"A two-handed sword!" exclaimed Deklan, hefting it. "Does anybody want it? I don't like the weight of it." Almiri shook her head. Deklan looked at me, and I raised my eyebrows.

"I suppose it is a mite too big for you," he said, laughing. He picked up the medallion in the other hand, and examined it.

"Can I see that?" Almiri asked. Deklan handed it to her, and she put it around her neck. "What do you think?"

"It's black," Cephas remarked.

"You're right, I don't like it either," she said, trying to remove it from herself. She tugged and pulled, but it remained fixed against her chest.

"Help!" she said. "It's stuck! It won't come off."

"It's cursed," Gammaliel said, "I've seen things like this before."

"Tell me," Almiri said, "what's it going to do to me?"

"I'm not sure," replied Gammaliel, "but you'll never be able to take it off, without the help of the friars in the temple in the village. It could cause you trouble."

"Well then, we'd better get it removed."

So saying, we again left the Citadel. I was unhappy with the amount of time we had wasted going to and fro; I knew that every moment's delay allowed the sickness to spread further in the world. There was nothing I could do, however. If Almiri was in danger because of the medallion, then we had to go.

For a fee, a hefty fee, I might add, the friars uncursed the medallion and removed it from Almiri's person. When the curse was removed, it was an spectacular medallion, not

magical, but brilliant black. Almiri was distinctly loathsome of it, so we sold it, for a fine price.

Hurrying, we returned to the Citadel, and to the Templum Regalis. This time, we opened the northeast door, and emerged into a corridor (level 5, location 10 — page 76).

10

The hallway led into a darkened, square room. Our torch was becoming feeble, so Gammaliel suggested that we return to the temple, and light another from the ones there. Just as we turned to go, we heard a voice behind us. Startled, Deklan turned and swung, and the fight began.

As soon as I saw with whom we were going to give battle, I was leery. He was an old man, short and sporting a white beard.

“Wait!” I shouted, but it was too late. In a flash, he had cast a spell. I tried to go to Deklan to make him put his sword down, but suddenly I was going in the wrong direction. My feet tangled and I fell. Deklan was circling uselessly, staggering as though he were drunk. Looking at the rest of the party, I saw they were similarly effected. Cephas fell in a heap, his arms and legs refusing to obey his commands. In confusion, we withdrew.

“Who are you?” I asked the man when we were back on our feet. He stood, waiting.

“I am Fra Elsof,” he said.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“I am the last servant of Lady Synd,” he said. “For the last fifty years, I have remained in this place, travelling by secret routes through the Citadel.”

“Why did you stay?” Almiri asked.

“Without my queen, I am worthless. I chose to remain here, rather than desert the noble lady whom I serve.” I didn’t believe him, but there seemed such infinite pride in his voice that I chose not to probe further.

“Do you know where she is?” Gammaliel inquired.

“Of course,” Fra Elsof answered, beckoning for us to follow. We moved to the southeast corner of the room. At that point, the south wall was illusory, and we walked through it (into level 5, location 7).

Moving straight through the false wall, we entered a corridor with plaques along the west wall. At the south end of the hallway was a gate. No amount of forcing by Cephas would unlock it.

“These are my writings,” Fra Elsof said, indicating the plaques. Each was inscribed with scrawled script. Starting at the farthest one south, we read along the hallway, recounting Fra Elsof’s telling of the tale of sorrow surrounding Lady Synd’s imprisonment.

Halfway up the hallway, Almiri turned, and said: “Look!” We turned, to behold Lady Synd, trapped in her huge, dark crystal. The look, on her face was one of fear, and it made me shudder to think of what she had seen just before being frozen forever.

The plaques ended abruptly at the north end of the corridor.

“Where’s the rest of the story?” Deklan asked.

Fra Elsof took us back into the false wall. Once inside, we turned right, and emerged into the other half of the prison chamber. This corridor had plaques running down the east wall. We continued reading. When we were finished, I said: “Why haven’t you attempted to free Lady Synd yourself?”

“After we sealed her here, I elected to stay,” he began, “for several days, I wandered through this half of the chamber, unsure whether I would survive. Then I found the illusory wall. I began to creep about the Citadel, constantly on the watch for the foul beasts that inhabit this place. I have seen them performing rites that have placed a chill upon my soul.” He let us digest this, then continued.

“I have not attempted to free my queen, because I do not

know what method to use to release her from her imprisonment. If I knew, I would stop at nothing to attain her freedom."

"Would you like to join us?" I asked. "Our quest is the same as yours."

"I would." he replied simply.

With Fra Elsof now a member of our party, we exited his room, and returned to the antechamber (level 5, location 1). We left the antechamber using the east door, and appeared in a north-south corridor. Directly to the north of the door, was a set of stairs leading upward. We decided to finish this level first, so we continued south down the hallway, which turned east. At the south west corner of this elbow, was a set of stairs which descended. We continued east (to level 5, location 6 — page 70).

11

Immediately at the bottom of the stairs were some torches. Cephas began inspecting the filled windows around the exterior of the room, while we searched the rest. We discovered some arrows, several of which appeared to be of extremely high quality.

As we were looking at the arrows, we heard a crash, and Cephas shouted. We ran to the alcove in the south wall, to see a pile of rubble on the ground. Cephas stood in the middle of it.

"Look! A passageway!" he said, pointing to the black hole where the window used to be. We approached, and looked into it. Only darkness greeted our eyes.

"It looks like a tunnel," Deklan said.

"It's awfully small," commented Almiri, "I don't think I'd fit."

"I would," I said, "there's got to be something important in there. Why else would it be hidden like this? I'll go in and see."

So saying, I climbed into the window alone.

"You'd better stand away," I said to my companions over my shoulder. "You never know what might come out of here." They moved away from the window, and hid around the corner of the alcove.

No sooner had I gotten all the way in, than I felt something odd happen. I sensed a small tingling on my scalp, and suddenly, I appeared in a room with shimmering, unearthly walls.

I hadn't adjusted to this environment when I was attacked by myself. Shocked, I staggered back from the dagger blow. I looked at myself, and myself looked, equally shocked, back at me.

"What kind of magic is this?" I asked.

"What kind of magic is this?" my alter-ego responded.

"What kind of magic is this?" a voice from behind me cried. I spun, and came face-to-face with myself — again. Stunned, I looked around, and saw another copy of me, standing off to my left, looking at me with an uncomprehending expression on his face.

Suddenly, I was angry with this foul trick. As though they had read my mind — or more accurately, as though they had actually had my mind, the three copies of myself also became enraged, and attacked me. I returned their aggression.

I proved to be a difficult opponent for myself. It was as though the copies could second guess my moves: I would slash at one of my foes with my dagger, and he would duck just out of reach of the blade, the very second it should have sliced open his skin. Luckily, this also made my task slightly easier. I seemed to be able to sense my opponents actions only slightly before they happened. I would place my opponent in a certain predicament, and I would think, 'Now, in the same situation, I would do such-and-such,' and sure enough, my opponent would do exactly what I had predicted. It was very unnerving.

Eventually, however, outnumbered though I was, I managed to defeat the unnatural duplicates of me. It was not accomplished without injury, however. My limbs were gashed badly, and I was losing blood rapidly. Weak, I crawled from the window, and returned to my party.

"What happened?" Almiri asked, "we heard some noises. We were worried that you had fallen into a trap."

"It was a trap of a sort," I began, then I looked at the ground, and my words stopped short in my throat. At my feet, lay a scroll.

"This wasn't here before, was it?" I asked. Cephas shook his head.

"You can rest assured that I would have found it if it were," he said. I picked up the scroll, and unrolled it.

"A wish spell," I whispered. Gammaliel looked awed.

"That's the most powerful spell in a wizard's arsenal!" he breathed. I placed the scroll into my robe.

"I'm hurt," I said, "I have to get back up to the surface." So saying, I collapsed into a faint.

When I awoke I lay in a bed in the hostel. My comrades were gathered around me. Almiri smiled when she saw me open my eyes.

"Welcome back to the living," she said. There was much laughing and congratulations. We discussed many things, including the idea that we should advance another level in our chosen fields before returning to the Citadel. I was completely in agreement. The others congratulated me again and left.

We remained in the village for a while, training and resting. When we had completed our stay, we returned once again to the Citadel. We followed our original route, finally arriving in the antechamber (level 5, location 1).

We exited from the east door, and went south to the bend in the corridor. Here, we descended the stairs which we had discovered earlier (to level 6, location 1 — page 85).

Descending the stairs (from level 4, location 1) proved to be difficult, because of the thick coating of dust that covered the steps. Once down, though, we entered a large room with 4 pillars reaching from floor to ceiling. Deklan moved ahead of the party, scouting for danger. Suddenly he stopped, his face agape with wonder.

"Look!" he exclaimed. We rushed to him. As we rounded the first pillar, we caught a glimpse of what had so stunned him.

There, centered between the four pillars, stood Lady Synd, encased forever in the dark crystal. Awestruck, we froze.

"How are we going to get her out of there?" Gammaliel asked, his voice hushed.

"I haven't a clue," I replied, slowly moving toward it. I reached out my hand to touch the glittering crystal. As my fingers grazed the cold surface, there was a groaning noise, and the room began to shudder. I snatched my hand away, terrified. I backed up quickly, colliding with my companions. We stood and watched, horrified, as the crystal disappeared, to be replaced by three huge, black clad men, wielding vicious-looking axes!

Deklan and Almiri instantly moved in front of me, and prepared for an attack. The three men approached, swinging their axes from side to side, accompanied by insane laughter that seemed to emanate from all around us. I drew my dagger, cursing my curiosity.

Once again, Cephas had disappeared.

The ensuing battle was fraught with confusion. Swords and axes were swung, and Gammaliel revealed his skill with weapons as well as spells, by producing a thin, rapier sword and taking part in the fight. Cephas again appeared behind the enemy, and surprised them with his dagger. For my part, I managed to dodge the massive swings of the executioner's axes, and get close enough to inflict some damage with my own dagger.

When the fight was finally over, however, all was not well. Both Almiri and Cephas were injured; Almiri was bleeding

from a large gash in her midsection, and Cephas suffered from a broken arm.

"I have one Haelen scroll," I said, pulling it from the folds of my robe. "I can use it for one of you."

"I have two Haelen spells left," Gammaliel said, "I'll use those instead. You should save your scroll. Those are my last, though. I'll have to meditate again soon."

So saying, Gammaliel incanted his spells, and managed to fix the wounds left by the executioners (as I called them), who now lay dead on the floor.

Where the crystal of Lady Synd had once sat, there now remained a hole in the floor. I ventured to the edge, and peered down. Far below, I saw a tiny room. There were some items scattered on the floor, but from this distance, I couldn't tell what they were.

"Look at this!" the cry brought my head up, and I looked around. Almiri was kneeling next to the bodies of the executioners, and holding a large, pewter cup. It appeared to contain some smokey-colored liquid.

"What sort of magic is this?" she asked me, tipping the cup upside down. Nothing spilled. I approached her, and held my hands out for the chalice. She gave it to me, right side up.

Tipping the chalice did not affect the liquid inside, yet, my finger emerged wet when I dipped it in.

"I don't understand," I said, "but this could be useful. We don't have to worry about it spilling."

"Wonderful," Almiri said, "does anybody know what that stuff does? I mean, it could be poison for all we know."

I dipped my finger into the liquid, withdrew it and tasted it. Everyone held their breath. Nothing happened.

"I feel fine," I said, placing the chalice into my robe.

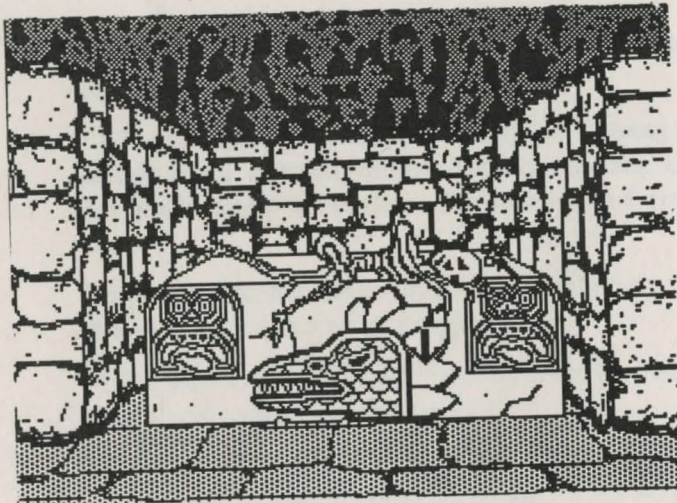
"Don't do that again, will you?" Deklan said. "Next time it might be poison."

We searched the room, and found no other exits. There was a hallway leading out the east wall, but it was blocked by another pit in the floor.

We ascended the stairs again, and returned to the room we had left (level 4 location 1). We exited this room from the door in the west wall (to level 4, location 2 — page 53).

Golden Altar

1



We descended the stairs from the level above (the corridor east of level 5, location 1), and found ourselves in a short north-south hallway. Moving east from this hallway were two other corridors, which led immediately to three doors. I shall call these doors the North, Center and South doors.

We opened the North door first, and Deklan had to hold us back, to prevent us from falling into a pit.

“What a dirty trick!” Almiri exclaimed.

“Come on,” Deklan said, “we can jump over it.” So saying, he made a leap across the pit before us.

“Wait!” I called. “What if this hallway leads to a dead end? The door will close behind us, and we won’t be able to jump back.”

“We’ll prop the door open,” Gammaliel suggested, taking a torch from his pack. He moved to place it on the floor, but stood up again, and passed his hand over it several times. A spark jumped from his palm to the torch. I looked at him inquiringly.

“Bless spell,” he replied. “In case some nasties want to come and remove it on us. This should stop them.” I nodded, and he placed the torch on the floor, holding the door open.

We jumped across the pit, and started down a long corridor. At some point, it turned north. We followed it (to level 6, location 2 — page 86).

2

The hallway turned to the west, and we followed it. As we departed from the corner, a thick smoke appeared before us, gradually congealing into a large, evil man.

“Nequilar!” Fra Elsof shouted.

A vile laughing surrounded us, the form of Nequilar raised his hands and jets of flame shot from his fingers. Screaming in pain, we fell to the floor. With more evil laughter, Nequilar disappeared.

Stunned, we dusted ourselves off, and continued west (to level 6, location 3 — page 86).

3

Following the corridor around a bend, we came upon two minotaurs. They attacked us. We defeated them.

“Next ...,” said Deklan.

Cephas pocketed the 180 gold pieces possessed by one of the minotaurs, and we continued.

The hallway was designed like a maze, twisting and turning in all directions. After a long stretch walking north, we came upon a bend in the hallway, and followed it west (to level 6, location 4 — page 86).

4

Upon reaching a large, open area of the corridor, we were beset with two more minotaurs. The battle with them was short-lived, and without injury. They dropped some gold when killed, and we picked it up.

Looking around, I noticed a plaque on the west wall, which appeared to be a message from a cleric.

“Gammaliel, look,” I said. He stood beside me, and read the message. There were some strange runes below the message, which were unintelligible to me.

“What are they?” I asked.

“They’re clerical spells,” Gammaliel explained. “Each symbol represents an element; Earth, Air, Water or Fire.

When combined in the right order, like the ones shown here, they form magic.”

“What magic will they form?” I asked.

“I’m not sure,” he replied, “I haven’t seen these combinations before. Lets see what they produce.” So saying, he began to meditate, mumbling under his breath. In a few moments, he revived.

“The first is the combination for Fortis AI. The second, I don’t have the required elements for. I’ll have to meditate for them later.”

We continued north along the corridor, through more turns, and finally arrived at stairs ascending (level 6, location 5 — page 87).

5

The stairs ascended, level by level, travelling through many hallways and corridors, each set of stairs taking us higher and higher into what must have once been the south tower of the Citadel.

Finally, we attained the top level, and emerged (into level 1, location 2 — page 38).

6

We emerged into an enormous room, the biggest we had yet seen. Ahead were two pillars. As we approached them, we discovered that there were plaques on them.

“In this, the temple of Lady Synd, you must give of yourself to find true knowledge,” read the first.

“Made by the hands of gods the Citadel and the Lady are forever bound together — one drawing strength from the other,” read the next.

We continued north in that cavernous place, and found two more pillars with plaques on them.

“Stand, and be in awe. For the Lady of this mighty structure holds the power of nature in her hand,” read the west plaque.

“As dawn always follows night, so also does the Citadel grow in strength at the coming of a new day,” was the message contained on the east plaque.

To the north of us stood an impressive altar, elaborately carved and made of some stone with which I was not familiar. There were no other exits from the temple.

“Well, so much for this plan,” Almiri said. “How are we going to get back up that pit?”

“There’s got to be another way out, there just has to be,” I said. “What did that first plaque read?”

“To find true knowledge, you must give of yourself,” Gammaliel replied, “or something like that.”

“Give,” Deklan repeated, “to who?”

“To whom...” Almiri corrected.

“To the church,” I replied, my mind racing. Blank stares. “Put some money on the altar ...” I prompted. Nodding, Cephas placed a bag containing 30 gold pieces on top of the altar. We waited.

Suddenly, the bag slid off of its own accord, landing on the ground with a clank.

“Apparently, that’s not enough,” Gammaliel said. “Try some more.”

We continued trying amounts, until at 100 gold pieces, the wall to the north and east of the altar disappeared.

“I thought so,” I said, pleased. We left the temple through the new exit, and emerged into the maze-like hallway. Following it to the east (arriving at level 6, location 4). We continued to the room which contained the staircase leading up to the fifth level (level 6, location 1). From this point, we decided to descend to the seventh level. We left this room by the south exit, and followed the corridor past the talking mouth (to level 6, location 17). We descended (to level 7, location 4 — page 101).

7

Entering from the south door, we emerged into a large room. To the left and right of us, were more carnivorous plants.

“They can’t move,” I said, “just stay away from them unless we have to.”

Ahead of us, lay three pits, one in the northwest, one in the northeast, and one in the center. Behind each pit was an alcove.

We jumped over the northwest pit, and found 80 gold pieces. The northeast alcove contained 100 gold pieces.

In the alcove behind the center pit was a door. We leapt over the center pit, and opened the door (and emerged into level 6, location 6 — page 87).

8

We found ourselves in a narrow hallway. We followed it west. As we rounded a corner, turning north, we saw ahead of us some strange plants growing from the floor. We stopped. They swayed, and their enormous, brown flowers opened and closed, but they did not move.

“Yech,” Almiri suggested, “those are the ugliest plants I’ve ever seen.”

“Can we get past them?” Cephas asked. “They don’t seem to be able to move.”

“We can try,” Deklan said, moving toward them. As we edged past them, their ropy stems leaned toward us, and became entangled in our legs. There was a slithering, secretive sound, as though the plants were calling, calling to us in whispering, evil voices that we could almost hear.

The fight was on.

Although they couldn’t move from their rooted bases, these terrible plants possessed tendrils, which whipped through the air, seeking, touching and holding when they came into contact with us. They were tough, and required

a lot of hacking with swords and daggers to break through. What's more, they tried to strangle us, the tendrils instinctively seeking our necks.

When we had cut them down, and their stems lay twitching on the ground, Cephas discovered a good deal of gold entangled in their roots.

Digging it out, he said: "Imagine the number of other poor souls these things have killed."

We set off again, heading north. As we rounded another corner, we discovered a second set of these plants blocking our way. When we had cut our way through them, Cephas stopped to pull more gold from among their roots.

In the northeast corner of the hallway was a door. The hallway itself moved south from this point, and, temporarily leaving the door, we followed it to a dead end. Beside us, on the east wall, was another portal. We opened it, and discovered a small closet. Inside was a golden flute, of intricate and beautiful design. Almiri tried to play it, with less than pleasing results.

"Thank the powers that be that you are a warrior by trade," Deklan said, wryly. Almiri made a threatening gesture, but put the flute away.

We left the corridor using the northeast door (into level 6, location 7 — page 89).

9 We found ourselves crammed into a tiny room. On the north wall was a plaque, reading: "Once fallen, you must rise again or forever join my evil reign."

"I don't much like the sounds of that," Almiri said.

"One step at a time," I replied, "let's see what's outside."

There was a door on the south wall, so we opened it and stepped outside.

"Wait," called Cephas, "you almost left these behind."

He held up a pair of finely tooled gauntlets, and a glowing

dagger. He handed the gauntlets to Almiri, and tilted his head to examine the dagger.

"It's called Sting," he said, reading the side of the hilt, "I think I'll keep it." So saying, he slipped it into his leather armour.

He followed us out of the small room (into level 6, location 8 — page 89).

10 After stepping out of the pedestal room, we were beset by two dragons.

"Dragons!" Almiri said, "we haven't seen these before!"

Right she was. These were particularly vicious dragons, snapping and biting, and breathing fire at us. By the time they were killed, several of us were badly burned. Deklan's healing gauntlets soon put us to rights, and we gathered up the large amounts of gold contained in the room.

We entered the pedestal room again, and descended to the eighth level. The gate there was not locked, so we exited without needing to use the key. We followed a long corridor, inspecting every nook and cranny, until we finally arrived at a door (level 8, location 5 — page 117).

11 Cephas had been quickly checking along the walls as we moved since the fifth level. At the southeast corner of this hallway, just as it turned north, his arm disappeared into the apparently solid stone.

"Hey!" he said, "secret wall."

We readied our weapons and entered (level 6, location 12 — page 91).

12 "A treasure room!" Cephas exclaimed as we appeared on the other side of the illusory wall.

Indeed, that was what it appeared to be, for on the floor were strewn objects of all types. There were arrows,

swords, a flail, helmets, hammers, axes, shields, a quiver containing four more arrows, and a beautiful ring. It appeared very expensive, and was made of white gold, with a black gem set into it.

"I wonder who left all this here?" Deklan asked.

"Or what..." Gammaliel interjected darkly. "Some creatures collect treasure too, you know."

"Smart creatures," Cephass replied, already hard at work scooping as much of the booty into his arms as he could carry.

"Wait," I said, "aren't we forgetting our purpose in being here in the first place? This treasure won't help us free Lady Synd."

Cephass favored me with an expression which suggested that I was quite possibly the most idiotic being ever to draw breath.

"Au contraire," he began, slowly, as though explaining to a child, "this treasure will enable us to purchase more effective weapons and supplies to defeat the enemies of Lady Synd."

"...and to advance levels," Gammaliel finished.

I found it difficult to argue with such straight forward logic, so I relented. We gathered up the booty, although it was difficult because of the sheer bulk of it all, and carried it back to the surface.

Once outside, we sold some of the treasure, including the ring, which turned out to be fabulously expensive. Some of the equipment, such as the arrows, which we felt we would need, we stored in our cache at the campsite.

True to Cephass' and Gammaliel's arguments, we purchased some new equipment, and were able to train and receive another level of proficiency within our guilds.

Fully rested, we returned to the Citadel, and descended,

reappearing outside the treasure room (level 6, location 11), we followed the corridor north (to level 6, location 13 — page 93).

13

From the corridor, we entered an immense room. We searched it, and discovered a gate in the north wall, and an exit from the west wall. We peered through the gate, and saw a small room. Cephass, with his far-sight ability, could make out a book on the floor.

After a few tries, Cephass was able to open the gate, and we entered (level 6, location 14 — page 93).

14

Almost as soon as we had entered, a black spirit descended upon us. It breathed the foul stench of the grave, and it attacked us immediately.

This was not an easy fight. The spirit, which wielded a scythe (with great accuracy, I might add), was almost impossible to hit. It flitted about us, its skull face grinning madly.

Eventually, after some severe injuries, we managed to defeat the spirit. With a shriek, it disappeared into a gout of oily black smoke.

"That was nasty," Almiri stated emphatically. Cephass searched the room, and discovered another spell book.

"Won't do me any good," I said, "I've already got one."

Suddenly, Cephass shouted. We rushed over to him. He was kneeling next to a beautiful golden mask, holding his one hand in pain.

"It burned me!" he said. Large blisters were rising from the reddened skin of his hand.

"Let me try," Gammaliel said, reaching carefully for the mask. Gently, he touched a finger to it. Nothing happened. He picked it up.

"This item carries a strong aura of goodness," Gammaliel said, holding it in front of him, "Cephass couldn't pick it up

because of his evil alignment. Someone else will have to carry it." The mask was given to Almiri, and we left the room, having found nothing else.

We returned to the large chamber (level 6, location 13), and left this room from the exit in the west wall (to level 6, location 15 — page 94).

15

This room was empty.

"Looking at the map, there should be another exit from this room," Fra Elsof said.

"Where?" Deklan asked.

"If I were forced to guess," Elsof answered, "I would say the most logical place would be right there." He pointed directly across the room, to the wall opposite the entrance. We crossed to the far wall.

Suddenly, as we approached the wall, there was a thunderous crash from behind us. We wheeled, and the entrance had become a wall.

"We're trapped!" Deklan said, running back to where we had come in.

No sooner had we gotten back to the place where the entrance used to be, than we were attacked by several mysterious creatures. They dropped on us from above, screeching terribly.

With great effort, and some injuries inflicted by the winged monsters' deadly claws, we defeated our foes. They left nothing behind.

"I need help," Almiri said. She was bleeding badly, from a deep wound. Deklan went to her, and applied the healing gloves. There was a hissing sound, and her wounds began to fade.

Gammaliel said: "I'm running low on spells. We should get back to the camp." We turned to look at the wall where the exit used to be.

"It's probably fake," Cephas said, and walked through it. We followed.

"See?" he said on the other side. We hurried down the long corridor (to level 6, location 11), and turned west, to make our way back to the door (to level 6, location 1).

As we rounded the corner, however, we were beset by several beasts which were similar to the winged creatures we had just fought. In our weakened condition, we nearly did not survive. Eventually, however, hurt and bloodied, we defeated them. They disappeared without a trace, leaving nothing behind, much to Cephas' chagrin.

We left the Citadel again, and returned to our camp. While there, Gammaliel meditated for spells, and I studied my spell book, memorizing the spells I thought we would need. Deklan healed us all with the gloves, and we rested for a short time. When we finished, we descended again, finally arriving at the stairs to the sixth level (level 6, location 1)

We went to the south exit from this room, and opened the door. Sure enough, like the previous two, this door had a pit directly behind it.

"I worry about these pits," Gammaliel said, "what happens if one of these passageways returns to one of the other doors? We've taken the torches out of them. If it becomes necessary, we won't be able to get back through them."

"Let's leave something in them all the time, then," I suggested.

Gammaliel left a torch in each of the three doors, and protected each of the areas with a Bless spell, to prevent any wandering creatures from removing them.

Finally, we left (level 6, location 1) via the south exit, jumping over the pit there. We moved along the hallway (to level 6, location 16 — page 95).

16

As we walked cautiously down the corridor, Gammaliel's excellent vision perceived something down the hallway.

"Wait," he said, pointing. At the end of the hallway was a mouth, mounted on the wall.

"I can't see! Come closer!" it said.

"I don't like it, I don't like it at all," Deklan stated emphatically.

"Maybe it'll tell us something important," Almiri suggested.

"Like where there's more treasure," Cephas added.

"Let's just be careful," I said, starting down the hall. Slowly, we approached the mouth.

"Closer! Hold your torches closer!" it said urgently as we approached.

Finally, we stood directly in front of it. We held our torches high to provide better light. Suddenly, the mouth pursed its lips, and blew our torches out. As we were plunged into blackness, we heard a small giggle.

"Infernal thing!" Deklan shouted. "Now what do we do?"

"Just a second," Gammaliel said reassuringly, "we have the crystal ball from Lady Synd's chambers." I heard him rummaging in his pack. "Just stay where you are," he said.

Suddenly, it was bright. I squinted until my eyes adjusted. The mouth was still there, but it was suspiciously silent.

"Speak," Almiri said to it. It didn't.

"Leave it," I said, "It's not going to tell us anything. It's just a trap."

We turned south along the corridor, and followed it as it bent to the west (to level 6, location 17 — page 96).

17

The hallway ended at a set of stairs descending into the blackness below us. A very slight, evil-smelling breeze rustled the cobwebs in the archway at the top of the stairs.

"Let's go," Deklan said, starting down.

"Wait," I said. I was unsure what, but something was bothering me. Remembering that Fra Elsof was tracking our progress, I said: "Could I see the map book, please, Fra Elsof?" He handed it to me.

I looked at the map of the level we were on. There was a chunk missing from it, in the southwest corner.

"Just as I thought," I said.

"What?" asked Deklan.

"Look," I said, showing everyone the map, "there's a piece missing. There's got to be some part of this level that we haven't seen yet."

"But, we've been checking for doors and false walls," Cephas said. "We would have found any secret entrances to that section."

"There must be a way into it," I said, thinking hard. There was a long pause.

"I've got it!" Gammaliel said. "Remember that room on the level above us, where the false crystal of Lady Synd was?"

"The one where we were attacked by executioners?" Almiri asked.

"Right! When the crystal disappeared, there was a pit in the floor."

"That's right," I said, "I looked down it, and could see a room below it. That's got to be the entrance to the other portion of this level."

Moving quickly, we returned to the false crystal room (level 5, location 12). Once again, I peered through the pit in the floor.

"It looks like quite a drop," I said.

"Let me see," Gammaliel replied, bending over the edge. "It's not that bad. Nothing worse than I had to jump through in the caverns where I played when I was young"

So saying, he leapt into the pit, and landed squarely on both feet.

“See? Easy!” he called up to me. “Get one of the fighters to jump down. Then they can catch the rest of you.”

Reluctantly, Deklan jumped over the edge. He did not land as neatly as Gammaliel, however. Standing and brushing himself off, he called up: “I’m okay. I’ll try and catch the rest of you.”

One by one, we jumped down, until we all stood (in level 6, location 9 — page 90).



Level 7:

Finding A Friend

1

The room that we entered was of enormous size; the far corner was not visible. As we entered, pits in the floor stretched off as far as the eye could see. We walked around the circumference of these pits, gazing into the center. Using his far-sight ability, Gammaliel noticed something.

“There’s a spot right in the center, where there’s no pit. There’s something out there, but I can’t see well enough to tell what.”

“Well, we can’t get there now. Perhaps later,” I said. We left the room from the northwest corner, where we had entered. We took the corridor north a short distance (to level 7, location 3 — page 100).

2

We entered a small square room. It was empty, except for an alcove to the southeast, which contained a pit.

Peering over the edge, we saw something in the darkness at the bottom. We held our torch down, and could barely make out a shape.

“Looks like a small statue,” Almiri said.

“There’s something else,” Gammaliel said, his vision in the darkness superior to ours, “but I can’t make out what it is.”

“Can you see any exits?” I asked.

“Nope. Completely sealed, from the looks of it.”

"Well, then we can't go down, can we?" Cephas asked.

"It appears not," I said. "Remember this place. Later, we may be able to return, and get whatever is down there."

We left, and returned to the open area to the west (level 7, location 3). We moved north through the open section, and discovered another column in our way. As we walked around it, a mist appeared ahead of us, and began to coalesce into a dark form.

"Not again..." Almiri managed to blurt out, before the form became Nequilar, and raised his hand toward us. Flame shot from his fingers, burning us. Amid insane laughter, he disappeared.

"I hate it when that happens," Deklan fumed.

A hallway departed the open area from the north, and we followed it. We appeared in a hallway which had pits spaced evenly out along its length. We began to jump over them, and several times we had to backtrack until we had found a path through the pits. Here it is: We jumped over the first pit, then walked south and west, so we arrived at the south edge of the second pit. Once there, we jumped north, turned and jumped west, and finally, turned and jumped north again.

We ended up, winded, in a corridor which headed east and west.

"That was a lot of leaping about for nothing," Almiri panted.

"For nothing is right," Deklan commented. "This level's pretty dry."

We followed the corridor east, to a set of stairs which went down. We descended (to level 8, location 13 — page 122).

3 We emerged into an open room with four pillars in the middle. As we entered the area in the center of the pillars, we were attacked by two creatures which resembled bats.

We fought them with relative ease, and they disappeared without a trace.

"Nothing again," said Cephas, disappointed.

We exited the open area to the west (to level 7, location 2 — page 99).

4

We descended the stairs (from level 6, location 17) into a large, narrow room. There was an alcove in the northeast, which contained nothing, and also one in the southeast, which contained a key rack, mounted on the wall. There were three pegs in the rack, and mounted on the center peg was a key. Deklan removed the key, and held it in his hand.

"This is it," he stated, "no exits. We're stuck." I was flabbergasted.

"Think hard everyone," I said. "Have we missed one square inch of this place?" Everyone shook their heads.

"The pedestal room!" Gammaliel shouted. "We've only used it to move between the first and third levels. Maybe it will bring us down here."

"Brilliant!" I said, "let's go get it."

We returned to the third level (level 3, location 1), where we had left the mysterious pedestal room. We entered it, and depressed the lower button on the pedestal. The room descended to the fourth level.

"Try the gate," I said to Cephas. Despite his best efforts, he could not open the lock.

"Let's try another level," Gammaliel suggested. I depressed the lower button again, and we descended to the fifth level. Here too, the gate was locked, as it was on the sixth, and finally, on the seventh.

We stood in the pedestal room, and looked at each other.

"Shall we try one level lower?" Deklan asked.

"I would advise against it," Gammaliel said, "I've noticed that the creatures in here have been getting steadily more

vicious and dangerous as we have descended. I don't think we should get ahead of ourselves. We aren't yet proficient enough in our various guilds to deal with what might be below us." Everyone considered Gammaliel's statement.

"I agree," Almiri said, "and if these gates are any indication, not many of them are open. We've tried all the keys we have, and none of them work. Somewhere, there must be a special key that operates all these gates."

Disheartened, we returned to the third level, and descended again, on foot, to the seventh level, and the key rack (level 7, location 4).

"Let's search this room again," I said, fumbling for ideas. "Put everything back the way we found it, and give it another look. Maybe we missed something." We moved to the key rack, and placed the key back on it.

Suddenly, there was a huge crash. Almiri screamed. The wall to the east of us disappeared, and to the west of us, where there was once empty space, a wall had come crashing down.

"Aha!" Cephias said. He pulled the key off the rack, and put it back on. Once again, the wall shifted position with a crash, from west to east.

"There's our way out," Deklan said. Cephias repeated the procedure, then pocketed the key as we moved away from the rack to the east (into level 7, location 5 — page 102).

5

We entered a large room, which had four gates leading from it; three in the east wall, and one in the north.

Deklan tried the gate in the north wall, and was unable to open it. "I'm beginning to have doubts about my abilities here," he said angrily.

We entered the center gate in the east wall, and came upon a gruesome sight; a skeleton chained to the wall. We searched the room, and found nothing. Deklan moved to the skeleton, and began to examine the shackle that held its

wrists to the wall. To do this, he had to leap at the shackle and dangle from it.

"What are you doing?" asked Almiri.

"I need to unlock something," Cephias replied through gritted teeth, "I've had so little luck lately." He pulled the key we had found on the key rack (and which had moved the walls for us) from his armour, and unlocked the shackles with it. The skeleton collapsed to the floor. He jumped down.

"Damn," he said, "I was hoping I'd have to pick it."

Just then, there was a flash of light from the skeleton. We all covered our eyes, and drew our various weapons, preparing for the worst.

"Wait! Don't kill me!" a voice came to us as our eyes adjusted. When I could see, I espied a small dwarf, oddly clean-shaven but too big to be an elf or hobbit. He wore a leather apron, making him look like a blacksmith.

"Thank you all very much for saving me," he said, "My name is Burliman." He had an odd accent.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I was a clerk for Lady Synd," he said, "I know not what kind of magic kept me here, or what sort of foul beasts I have seen, but if I can be of any help to you, O brave sirs ..., and ma'am ..., I will."

"What can you do?" I asked.

"I can identify objects for you," he said, "that's my field of expertise. If you have any items you are unsure about, I can tell you what they are, and maybe, what they do."

"If we make the party any bigger," Almiri counselled me, "we'll surely draw a great deal of undue attention from monsters." I agreed.

"We'll be needing your help, but I don't feel right about making you stay down here with us. Why don't you go back to the tavern, and rest there," I said, handing him some

gold. "If we need your valuable services, we'll come there."

"That'll be fine," he said, taking the proffered gold, "How safe is the journey back?"

"It should be fine," Deklan said, "we've cleared out most of the upper levels."

"All the same," Fra Elsof remarked, "he shouldn't go alone. I'll go with him. You can come up for me later."

"Fine," I said, "we'll just finish with this room, and be up. Cephas, you go with them to the key rack, and come back with the key." With that, the three of them left. We heard the crashes of the wall being moved, and Cephas returned.

We entered the southern gate on the east wall, and unlocked the skeleton there. There was a flash, and two hooded figures appeared. We defeated them, and they left nothing behind.

"Well, what about the third one?" Cephas asked. "Should we chance it?"

"That was a difficult battle," I replied. "Gammaliel is right; the monsters are getting more vicious."

"And more stingy," Cephas commented, "They aren't leaving much for us."

"Can't hurt to look," Almiri said, and we agreed. We entered the northernmost gate in the east wall, and were faced with another skeleton. There were no other exits.

"Looks like we've reached the end of the line again," Deklan said. "No way out."

"Maybe unlocking the skeleton will open a door," Cephas suggested.

"I guess there's no other way," I sighed, and Cephas unlocked the skeleton. It became more hooded figures, which we dispatched, to no avail. Still no exits.

"This is getting aggravating," I said.

"We should go back to the tavern, and pick up Fra Elsof," Almiri suggested. "Let's think about it on the way out. Maybe we'll come up with something."

We returned to the surface, and picked up Fra Elsof in the tavern. As we left, we bade Burliman a warm goodbye. I knew he would be helpful later. We went to the shop to sell some of our possessions, and petitioned our guilds for training. Once again, we could all advance one level. We did, and when the required training time had passed, we resumed our quest in the Citadel.

We returned to the room we had come to call the prison, because of the three small cages (level 7, location 5), and began to search again for exits.

"Maybe the key rack does something more," suggested Cephas. We returned to it, and began testing various combinations of pegs. I didn't like doing this, because of all the noise we were creating. I was sure we would attract undue attention, but nothing attacked us. Eventually, we heard something different.

Cephas placed the key on the center peg. BANG! He removed it and placed it on the center peg again. BANG! He removed it and placed it on the right peg. BANG ... bang ... BANG!

"Did you hear that?" Cephas asked. "Three crashes. Something's opened somewhere else." Excited, we rushed back into the prison. As soon as we removed the key from the rack, however, the walls returned to their original state.

"We'll have to leave the key here," I said. Cephas repeated the center-center-right combination, and we returned to the prison. Sure enough, in the northern cage, the north wall had disappeared.

"Eureka!" Almiri shouted, and we went through it. We appeared at the end of a hallway, and we followed it east into an immense room (level 7, location 1 — page 99).

The corridor ended here, at the gate to the pedestal room. As that particular room was currently on the third floor, only a pit in the floor and the ceiling could be seen through the locked gate.

“Well, looky here,” Almiri said, indicating a key which hung on a rack, “I’ll bet I know what this is for.” She unlocked the gate to the pedestal room with the key.

“I’ll wager this key opens the locked gates on every level from this room,” she said.

We returned north to where the corridor branched, and headed east again. The corridor jogged north, then continued east, and finally turned south, and ended at a blank wall. My spirits sank.

“It’s fake,” Deklan said, sticking his arm through. I thanked whatever gods were listening, and we proceeded through.

When we emerged in the alcove with the locked gate, in the north wall of the prison (level 7, location 5), my heart sank again.

“I’m going to have to use this other Levitas to take us back across those pits,” I said

“Why don’t you copy it into your spell book, and we’ll stand guard,” Deklan suggested.

“It’s not the copying, that only takes a moment,” I replied. “Once it’s copied in, though, I have to memorize it again. That’s what takes all the time. We’re likely to get attacked.”

“That’s a chance we’ll have to take,” Almiri said.

Reluctantly, I sat in the cell with my spell book, and copied the Levitas scroll into it. Then, I began the long process of memorizing the spell from it. Sure enough, just as I was finishing the spell, we were attacked, but it was not a difficult fight, and at least I had the magic retained.

We returned to the double pits, and levitated over them.

From there, we returned to the long north-south hallway, and finally to the top of the pyramidal stairs. We descended and re-ascended, coming up from the west side of the base, and emerging on the east side of the top. We followed the short hallway to the door (to level 7, location 15 — page 112).

We emerged (from level 7, location 15) into a diamond-shaped room, with a pillar in the center. As we rounded the pillar, we were attacked by two strange creatures made of what appeared to be dirt. Their attack was similar to the water creatures we had encountered earlier, that is, they attempted to suffocate. They also moved quite slowly.

To combat them, we stood well away, and fired arrows and other thrown weapons at them. When they finally were exterminated, we discovered 500 gold pieces lying in the small piles of dirt that remained.

We exited to the north, and found ourselves in a large open area. It was empty. There was a door in the southeast corner of the area, and we opened it, and went through (to level 7, location 8 — page 107).

Upon entering this room, we were beset by what appeared to be four tornadoes.

“How do you fight the wind?” Deklan shouted desperately.

“As best you can,” I replied. I didn’t have time for more, as they were upon us. We managed to defeat them, after a harsh battle, with many wounds. As Deklan was healing everyone, Cephass held aloft our prize.

“Defender,” he said, reading the hilt, “It’s beautiful. Damascus steel blade, finest forged anywhere. Too bad it’s too big for me.”

Defender was given to Almiri, and we continued through the door in the southeast. Immediately south of this door was another. We went through it also (to level 7, location 9 — page 108).

9

This large room appeared empty, until we approached the south end, and suddenly, we were attacked by fiery monsters, who seemed to have no defined form, but breathed smoke, and were very hot.

“Elementals,” Gammaliel said, “In the last few rooms: Wind, Earth, and now Fire.”

We defeated our hot opponents, but only barely. They disappeared without a trace.

To the south of the room was a corridor. We followed it west and north, and discovered several arrows and a shield with a bird engraved upon it.

At the end of the passageway, a pit broke through the floor. Looking down, we could see another closed cubicle, but couldn't determine if there was anything of interest in it.

At this point, we decided to return to the surface, and rest. We petitioned our various guilds, who allowed us each to advance a level. After some time, we returned to the Citadel, and descended. Eventually, we arrived at the top of the strange, pyramidal staircase (south of level 7, location 10). From here, we descended, emerging on the east side of the base. We followed the invisible wall around the north and east sides of the staircases, and eventually discovered an exit, to the east, under a pit from the level above. We exited (and arrived in level 8, location 10 — page 122).

10

As we entered this large room, we were attacked by two black-clad creatures, wielding daggers. They were very quick, and they could skip in for an attack, then skip away again. This made them very difficult to kill, but we managed to do them in. They did not possess anything. There were two hallways leaving this room; one from the northwest, and one from the southeast, but neither contained anything. A door was situated in the southwest wall, so we opened it and went through (to level 7, location 11 — page 109).

11

In this large room with two pillars in it, we battled several more black-clad creatures, who had nothing on their persons.

Cephas was beginning to become disheartened. “We'd better find something soon,” he mumbled.

There was nothing further in this room, so we left by a door in the west wall. We emerged in a north-south corridor that went on for as far as the eye could see.

We followed it to the north, where it ended in a blank wall, so we turned south, and continued past the door out of which we had just stepped, and on to the next one. We entered (level 7, location 12 — page 109).

12

Immediately inside the door was a pit, so we had to place a torch in the doorway to hold it open. We jumped over the pit, and headed east along a short corridor to another ornate skull face carved into the east wall.

Some inspection, and one of the bottom gems slid into the wall. The face spoke.

“What was once hot, then cold, serves evil and good alike, and can bestow honor and death?” rattled the face.

We turned, and talked among ourselves.

“Hot and cold ... day and night?” suggested Fra Elsof.

“Bestows death and honor,” said Deklan, “sounds like a weapon.”

“That makes sense,” continued Gammaliel, “a weapon would serve both good and evil alike.”

“What weapon is hot then cold?” I asked. We thought for a moment.

“A sword!” whispered Almiri triumphantly. “A sword is hot when it's forged, and cold afterward.”

“Excellent,” I said, and turned around. “Sword,” I replied

to the face. It disappeared, and the wall receded into the south alcove with a crash. We walked through.

The room opened up into a larger area, and we were attacked by two slithering, horned lizard-like creatures.

“They just keep getting weirder and weirder,” Deklan commented as we moved into battle.

After a difficult fight, in which we discovered that these creatures discharged shocks of energy like lightning, they were dispatched. As their carcasses decayed before our eyes, we began to see gold. A great deal of gold.

“Eight hundred gold pieces!” exclaimed Cephas, overjoyed. “Now we’re talking!” The rest of the room contained nothing, which was good, because we were overloaded with the gold left behind by the creatures.

“Time for a deposit,” Cephas said, and we agreed. We left the Citadel, and deposited the money in the bank at the village. We also sold some of the items we had picked up. Then we returned, descending to this room again.

We followed the long north-south corridor south to the next door. We entered, and discovered an empty room, with a pit in the middle of the floor.

We continued down the corridor to the next alcove in the east wall. Upon entering the alcove, we were beset by two strange water creatures.

These were strange beasts indeed! They attacked by grasping us in their watery grip, and attempting to drown us. Almiri was badly hurt, nearly suffocating to death, almost immediately.

“Stay back!” Deklan shouted. “Use arrows or thrown weapons. They’re too dangerous to get close to!” As Almiri crawled weakly away, we peppered the creatures with arrows, axes and whatnot. When they died, in a great splash that soaked us all, they left nothing behind. Almiri was healed by Deklan and the healing gauntlets. The alcove turned out to be a short corridor, which led to a door. We entered (to level 7, location 13 — page 111).

When we entered, we were attacked by a group of eight wizards. I tried to speak to them, but they appeared to be under some sort of enchantment, because they wouldn’t listen, and kept attacking.

They proved to be difficult to kill, because of their ability to cast spells. I cast several attack spells back at them, which had the desired effect.

When they were finally deceased, two scrolls fell from their cloaks. I looked at them.

“Levitas,” I said, “a floating spell. Considering the number of pits we’ve seen on this level, this could come in very handy.”

“Very handy,” Cephas said, pointing to a corridor that left the room from the southwest. We followed it, and came upon two pits blocking our path, one situated directly after the other.

“I could use one to get us across, but if this leads to a dead end, I’ll have to use the other to bring us back, and then I’ll have nothing left to put in my spell book,” I said. “Let’s see what else is down that long hallway first.”

We agreed, and returned to the north-south corridor. We followed it south. Part-way down, Nequilar appeared and blasted us with magical fire again.

“That,” said Deklan through clenched teeth, “is beginning to become annoying.” Eventually, we reached the south end of the corridor, whereupon it turned east (into level 7, location 14 — page 111).

As we entered, we were attacked by two dark, shadowy creatures. We were able to defeat them, but only barely, and then only by using up most of my magic.

The room we were in was a large rectangular room, with two pillars in the center. Behind the second pillar was

another of the strange, carnivorous plants. When we had dispatched it, we discovered five scrolls behind it. I picked them up and read them.

“More stuff for my spell book, if I ever get a chance to put them in it,” I said. The spells were: Anti-Magic, Enfeeble, Faer, Fortis Al and Open Portal.

There was nothing more of interest in the room, so we returned to the room with the two pits (level 7, location 13).

“I’ll read this one,” I said, pulling out one of my Levitas scrolls, “but I have to save the other, to put in my spell book.” So saying, I read the scroll.

We began to shimmer, and lifted off the ground. Almiri’s eyes widened, and she tried to touch the ground with her toe. Her arms shot out from her sides, supposedly to provide balance. She wavered uneasily.

“Just walk normally,” I said. We moved south, hovering effortlessly over the two pits, and into a small alcove behind them. Here, we picked up a large golden apple.

“Quickly,” I said, “This spell won’t last too long.”

We floated back until we were standing over the most southerly of the two pits, then turned east, and floated down a corridor. Shortly thereafter, the spell gave out, and we were returned gently to the ground. The corridor branched, one arm continuing east and one turning south. We followed the south path (to level 7, location 6 — page 106).

15

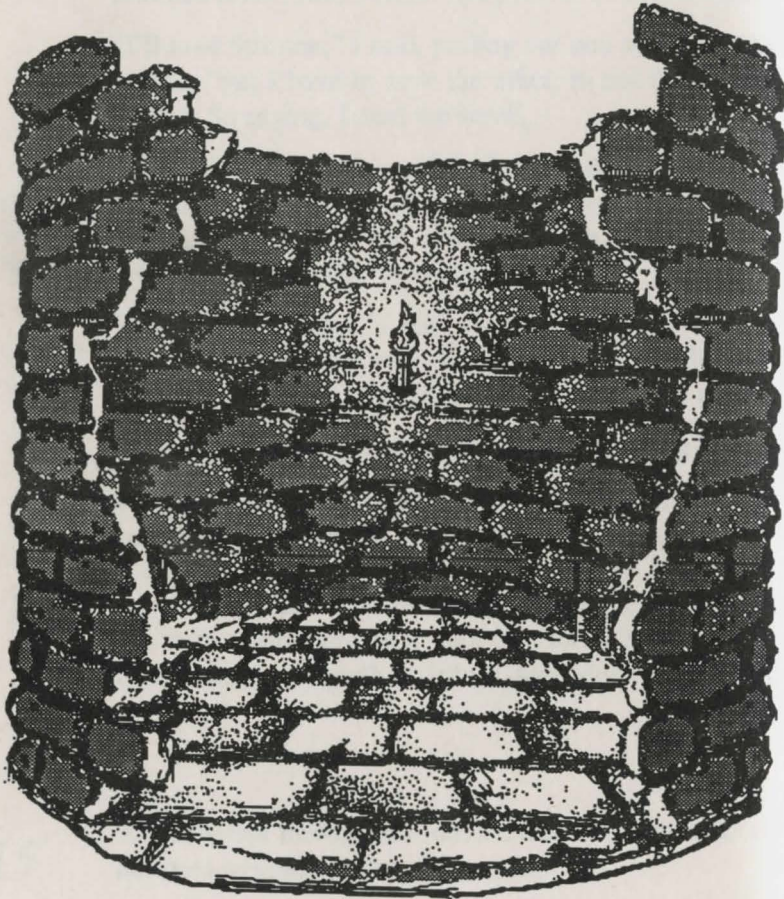
As we went through the door, Nequilar appeared, and attacked us with his fire spell again.

The room itself was empty, except for five pits on the floor, which we were required to jump over. A passage led from the east wall, into a short corridor, and finally to a door on the south wall. We went through (to level 7, location 16 — page 113).

16

The passageway led to the east wall of another empty room, with pits in the floor. We left this room by the north exit, and found ourselves in the other room with pits in the floor (level 7, location 15). From here, we went north (to level 7, location 7 — page 107).

Invisibility



1

This was the huge cavern below the room which contained so many pits on the level above. In the center, was a single pit in the floor. Peering down it, we could see nothing. We continued to wander (to level 8, location 6 — page 119).

2

On the floor of this cramped space were three scrolls: a Cista and two Risan. There was also an ornate golden statue, which appeared priceless. Cephas, of course, was overjoyed.

“Just give me a minute,” I said, and copied one of the Risan scrolls into my spell book.

“We’ll need to use this other Risan to get up out of here,” I said.

“What does that spell do?” Deklan said. “Why can’t we use the one you used before to float us across the pits?”

“That was Levitas,” I answered, “it only makes you float, it doesn’t make you go up. Risan lifts you up through a pit. We’ll need Levitas too, because without it, once you’re up there, you’d fall down again.” So saying, I cast Levitas on us. We began to shimmer, and floated a few inches off the floor. I then read the Risan spell, and we ascended through the pit over our heads. Once we were level with the floor above, we stopped rising.

“Here, Risan stops working,” I said. “Without the Levitas,

we'd plummet back into the pit." We walked on air, moving away from the pit.

"We'd better go out again," Cephas said, "we're carrying a lot of stuff. It's getting heavy."

"I'll need to memorize Risan again, to go down the other pit."

So saying, we left the Citadel. On our way out, we were attacked by several devils in the antechamber on the fifth level (level 5, location 1). While fighting them, Deklan seemed to be getting hit quite brutally. When the action was over, he was badly bleeding.

"Some armour," he said, "they hit every time! I don't like it, and besides, black's not my color" He directed a pointed glance at Almiri. Deklan tried to take the armour off, but to no avail.

"Ten to one says it's cursed, like that medallion Almiri wore," Cephas said, chuckling.

"Well," I said, "there's another good reason for us to go up."

When we returned to the village, we sold some items, petitioned our guilds, and rested. We also had to take Deklan to the temple, to have the cursed armour removed. While we waited in camp, I memorized some spells, among them Risan and Levitas, and Gammaliel meditated.

We returned when we were finished, descending to the other pit room on the seventh level (level 7, location 9). From here, we jumped into the pit (to level 8, location 3 — page 116).

3

When we appeared in this location, Cephas immediately spotted the skull wand on the floor

"Here's another one!" he exclaimed, handing it to me.

"Now we only have to find one more," I said, "if I'm right about us needing four." I used Risan and Levitas to return us once more to the seventh level.

"We should get to the pedestal room, and find out what

we've missed on this level," Almiri suggested, and we all agreed.

We returned to the third level, where we had last deposited the mysterious room that transported us from level to level, and entered it. Depressing the lower button several times brought us to level 6.

"We haven't explored a section of this level either," Fra Elsof said, pointing to a blank area of the sixth level map. We opened the pedestal room door with the key, and got out (to level 6, location 10 — page 91).

4

Once again, Nequilar appeared from thin air, and blasted us with his flame spell. We tried to run for cover, but to no avail: we were all singed.

"Isn't there anything we can DO about him?" Almiri asked, blackened.

"Our time will come," I replied, "all too soon, I fear."

We wandered (to level 8, location 1 — page 115).

5

We noticed another circle on the ground outside the door to this chamber, and stopped.

"Another trap?" Deklan asked.

"No," replied Fra Elsof, "This is Gladiis' room."

"Gladiis?" I prompted.

"She's a fortune teller," he replied, "I've run into her twice before in the years I've been here. Why she lives down here, I'll never know. She wasn't here when Lady Synd was in charge, I'll tell you that."

"What do we do?"

"Well," Elsof began, "one person can stand in the circle, and place some gold in front of the door, then knock. She'll take whatever's in front of the door, and tell your fortune."

"Of course," Almiri said, "the more gold, the better the fortune."

"Of course," Elsof replied.

"My kind of girl," Cephas said.

"I'll go," Deklan said. We hid around the corner while he stood in the circle, placed 200 gold pieces in front of the door, and knocked. Nothing happened.

"Maybe you'd better knock louder, she's pretty deaf," suggested Fra Elsof.

Deklan put his shoulder into the door twice, making a great deal of noise, and causing his dagger to fall from his armor. He bent to retrieve it, but a panel in the door opened, and a set of beady eyes peered from the darkness. They looked at the gold. Deklan stood up, leaving the dagger on the floor. The eyes looked at him.

Suddenly, the door opened, and an old hag stepped out. She cackled, a sound which sent shivers up my spine, and mumbled a fortune to Deklan, in tones so low only he could hear. When she was finished, she retreated, taking the gold and dagger with her, before Deklan had a chance to act.

"She took my dagger!" he said, rejoining us.

"She'll take anything not moving," said Fra Elsof.

"Imagine all the loot she's collected in there over the years!" Cephas said, rubbing his hands together.

"Will she pick up a person?" I asked. "If they are completely still? Unconscious, for example?"

"I don't know," Elsof replied, "I would imagine so."

"What do you have in mind?" Cephas asked.

"If I place myself into a trance," I replied, "I could be left in front of the door along with some gold, and, when you got your fortune told, I would be taken in with the gold."

"Then," Gammaliel continued, "you could reawaken yourself inside, and battle her. Brilliant!"

"In theory," I said.

I placed myself into a trance, and Deklan placed me along with another 100 gold pieces outside the door. He then knocked, and received his fortune. I was whisked inside, along with the gold.

Once inside, I revived myself, and faced Gladiis.

"I'm gwine ta wallop the tar outa you!" she cackled. Although I couldn't understand a word of what she had said, I didn't like the sound of it, so I stayed as far from her as possible, while casting various attack spells at her. When my spells ran out, I used a bow and arrow; anything to avoid direct contact. When I finally exhausted my supply of arrows, she was sufficiently injured for me to finish her off at close range. Even so, she managed to extract several decent wallops from my hide, and I was bleeding when she finally was killed.

She deposited a key on the ground, as she disappeared into a cloud of rather foul-colored vapor. I picked it up, and used it to open the door to the room. I rejoined the party, and Deklan healed me with his gauntlets. Cephas, on the other hand was busy gathering items and large quantities of gold, collected by Gladiis over the years.

We left the Citadel, and returned to the village. With the treasure discovered in Gladiis' room, we were able to advance a level in our professions. When we were finished training, we returned to the pedestal room, and descended to the ninth level. We emerged into a corridor, and followed it north and east, to a pit. I cast Levitas on us, and we floated to the door (to level 9, location 8 — page 127).

6

"What is it?"

"A door!" Deklan said. "Look! It's a door!"

"Is that what they look like?" Almiri asked, "I haven't seen one in so long, I've forgotten."

"Let's go in, shall we?" I asked. Heads were nodded in agreement. We opened the door and entered.

The room we arrived in didn't really look like a room, because the other three walls were invisible, but it was a room nonetheless. Inside, there were two objects: an hourglass and some plate armour, that had the unusual distinction of being completely black.

"Who needs plate armour?" Cephas asked. Deklan raised his hand, and Cephas handed the armour to him. Deklan donned it, and looked quite impressive.

"Black's your color," Almiri said.

"What an interesting hourglass," Gammaliel said, peering into it. "The sand is running, but the top part never seems to lose any sand."

"It must be magical," I said. "We'll probably find a use for it. Keep it."

There were no other exits from the room. "I'm at a loss," I said, looking at Fra Elsof's map. "We've been everywhere, and there's this chunk still missing in southwest here." Everyone crowded in for a look.

"The pedestal room should come out here, in the middle of the area we haven't seen," Gammaliel said, pointing.

"We have a key for it," Almiri said.

"We should check those two pits we found earlier, too," Cephas suggested.

It was decided. We returned to the level above, and entered the first room where we had seen something down the pit (level 7, location 2). We jumped down the pit, and landed with a thud on the floor of a tiny, enclosed room (level 8, location 2 — page 115).

7

More of the strange carnivorous plants grew here. As we approached them, the sinuous stems lashed out to grasp us. We hacked the plant to bits.

"Take that," Almiri said defiantly, as the last of the ugly

brown flowers fell to the ground, dead. In its roots, Cephas discovered more gold. We continued to move about the maze, unable to tell at times if we were in a room or in a corridor, which is why I cannot give exact directions here. In the distance, through the walls, we could see various hideous creatures wandering about, and often, without warning, we would be attacked by one or more of them. We moved on (to level 8, location 8 — page 121).

8

An invisible wall blocked our way to the end of this corridor, but we could vaguely see a plaque on the wall directly ahead of us. It was too far away to be able to read, though.

"Cephas," I asked, "can you use your far-sight to read that plaque for us?" He stood next to the invisible wall, and concentrated.

"Something about David Pavan and Robert Van der Pyl," he finally said, puzzled.

"What odd names," Gammaliel said, "I wonder who they were?"

"I don't know," replied Cephas, "but they wish us luck."

"Thanks for nothing, guys," replied Almiri drily.

We wandered (to level 8, location 9 — page 121).

9

In this enormous room, we were attacked by several monsters.

First, a group of minotaurs set upon us, and dropped 180 gold pieces when killed.

Then, we managed to avoid a fight with carnivorous plants, by skirting around them, only to be attacked by several devils, whose smokey remains turned into 480 gold pieces.

We wandered (to level 8, location 11 — page 122).

10

Two beasts with bull's heads attacked us when we entered the corridor (at least, I think it was a corridor — the strange invisible walls made everything difficult to judge). We fought them off with difficulty, and they dropped 180 gold pieces when they disappeared. We began to wander through the maze of invisible walls, bumping into many. Our only saving grace was that the walls, although they allowed us to see through them, shimmered slightly. As we moved, with Fra Elsof mapping, we became adept at distinguishing walls from empty space. We wandered south and east, crossing through an apparent doorway located under a pit from the level above (to level 8, location 7 — page 120).

11

Upon the wall was a plaque which bore the inscription of more clerical runes. Overjoyed, Gammaliel wrote them down.

“What spells do they represent?” I asked him.

“I haven't a clue,” he replied matter-of-factly, “I'll only know once I meditate for them.”

We wandered (to level 8, location 12 — page 122).

12

Lying on the floor were two items; an oval shield, and an axe.

“Another throwing axe,” Cephas said, testing the balance, “I wonder if it returns to me when I throw it, like mine does.” So saying, he threw the axe down the corridor. Sure enough, when it had flown a certain distance, it turned of its own accord, and flew back into Cephas' hand.

“I could use one of those,” Almiri said. Deklan handed her the axe, and she slipped it into her belt.

We wandered (to level 8, location 14 — page 124).

13

Upon descending, we emerged into a very strange room indeed. It looked immense. Except for just around the

stairs via which we had descended, no walls could be seen. I tried walking forward, and ran into something hard. I felt ahead of me.

“It's stone,” I said, in amazement.

“How can that be?” Gammaliel asked, feeling the stone ahead of me, and off to the side.

“It's a wall,” I replied.

“An invisible wall,” he said, looking at me with great unease, “I don't like it here. I shudder to think what magic did this to these walls.”

“I agree...” I responded, but I was cut off by a shout.

“Look!” Almiri said. She stood to the north of us, pointing around the corner of the wall. We moved to her. Around the corner, was another staircase ascending.

We walked around the square pillar. On each side was a staircase going up.

“Do these all return to the same place?” I asked.

“As I recall,” Fra Elsof answered, “these are enchanted staircases. The four bottom entrances all end up at the same point on the floor above, like a pyramid. However, you are facing in a different direction, depending on which side you enter. For example, we entered from the east on the level above here just now, and we emerged from the west end of the base of the pyramid.

“So if we enter the bottom from the north,” I said, “we will emerge from the top at the south.”

“Correct,” he said.

“Let's go then,” I said, and we entered the north stairs. We appeared in a tiny cubicle, with no exits.

“Nothing here,” Cephas said, and we descended again.

This time, we entered the bottom of the pyramid staircase from the south entrance, arriving in a large room (level 7, location 10 — page 108).

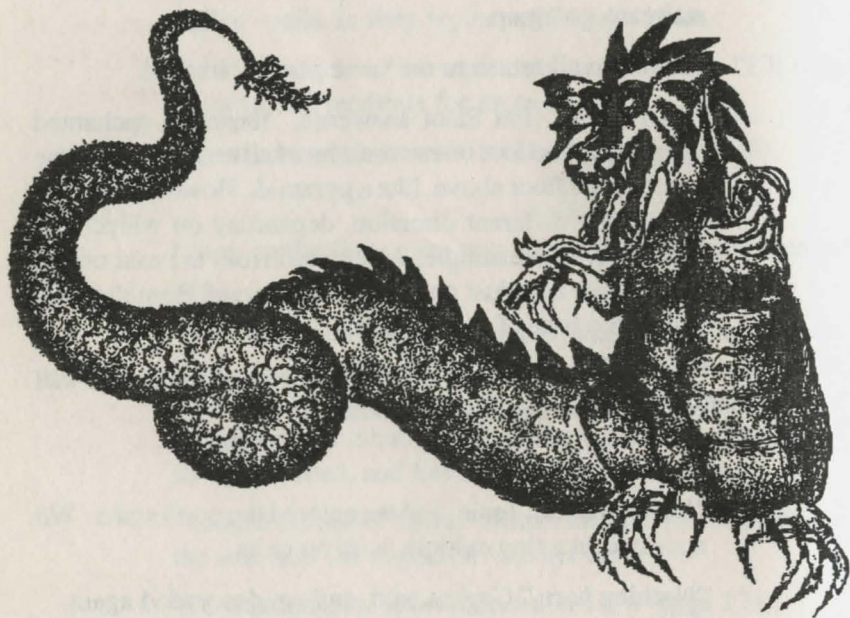
Once again, our path was blocked by a carnivorous plant. We attacked it, and destroyed it.

“Bloody weeds,” Gammaliel opined.

It did not have any treasure within its roots.

“Bloody cheap weeds,” Cephas replied.

We wandered (to level 8, location 4 — page 117).



Catch Me If You Can

1

The large pillar in the center of this location had a false wall in it, as determined by Cephas. We entered, and inside the wall, we discovered a handsome helmet. Almiri could wear it, so it was given to her. There was nothing else in the tiny room, so we left via the false wall.

When we stepped back out of the wall, we all felt strange. An odd tingle ran up my spine, and I felt somehow rejuvenated. We were unable to provide an explanation, so we carefully moved on. We returned to the hallway where we had entered this portion of the level, and turned south. We continued until we reached a massive east-west corridor.

We followed it west to a dead end, then back east, and finally north (to level 9, location 5 — page 126).

2

In this room, we were attacked by four strange creatures with no visible facial figures. They were white, and of a doughy consistency that made them most difficult to hit. We moved north, jumping over pits (to level 9, location 3 — page 125).

3

Once again, in the center of a ring of pits, we were attacked. This time, our enemies were strange bat creatures, who screeched hideously when they died.

Finding nothing of interest here, we headed south (to level 9, location 1 — page 125).

4

We were attacked by vampires here, and we fought them very carefully indeed. Vampires attack by draining energy levels from their victims, so we attempted to fight them at a distance (with arrows, etc.), but they were also fast-moving, so this proved difficult. When the fight was finally over, Gammaliel had lost one level of proficiency as a cleric.

Lying on the floor was a black shield, carved with unusual runes, the likes of which I had never seen before.

“Black,” Deklan said, “I’m staying away from it. That black armor put me off black altogether.” We left the shield there, and travelled east (to level 9, location 2 — page 125).

5

As we moved down the corridor, Nequilar appeared and scorched us before disappearing. Blackened and grumbling, we continued north, eventually arriving in a massive open area. The floor was rife with pits, and we were forced to jump many times, but I didn’t have to use another Levitas to bring us to the door in the southwest corner.

We emerged in a hallway, which we followed north to a dead end. In the northwest corner was a door.

“A normal one,” Deklan noted, “I don’t have to chase the handle around.” Behind the door was a set of stairs descending.

“If for some reason we can’t get back up from down there, the pedestal room will be trapped on this level. We’ll lose it like before,” Deklan said. We decided instead to use the pedestal room, and returned to it.

Depressing the lower button on the pedestal, we descended to level 10. We left the pedestal room, and followed a corridor north to a door in the west wall. We entered (level 10, location 16 — page 136).

6

As soon as we stepped around the corner into this hallway, we were attacked by four minotaurs. We fought them off, and continued adventuring. We followed the corridors in a generally south direction (to level 9, location 4 — page 126).

7

As soon as we entered this narrow room, we were attacked. We ended up battling four separate groups of opponents in quick succession, the most severe of which being two dragons. By the time they were killed, we were badly injured.

Abundant applications of Deklan’s healing gloves, aided by several Haelen Al spells on Gammaliel’s part soon brought us back to good condition.

In the northeast corner of this room, there was an alcove with three doors in it. We used the east door, and entered into a maze-like conglomeration of hallways. We explored them, almost entirely unmolested by creatures, until we were attacked (at level 9, location 6 — page 127).

8

As we floated in front of the door to this room, we noticed the door handle was different from any we had seen before. As Deklan reached to pull on it, it scurried away from his hand. He pulled his hand away.

“What is this?” he said. The handle scurried back to its position. He reached for it, and it scrambled away again. He followed it, and grabbed at it. As his hand closed around it, it gave a little squeak of failure, and the door opened. We entered.

In the room, were four hideous women, with writhing snakes instead of hair.

“Medusa!” Gammaliel shouted. “Don’t look in their eyes!”

Trying to avoid looking at them, we battled them, and eventually killed them. When they were gone, we searched the room, and discovered a key.

"It's identical to the key for the pedestal room," Almiri said, holding up the two keys for us to verify her conclusion. We left the room by the same door we had come in, and tested the key on the pedestal room gate. Sure enough it worked.

"Not terribly useful," Almiri said, giving the key to Deklan. He pocketed it, "Just in case we lose the other."

We followed the corridor north from the door. I had to cast Levitas again, to get us over two pits, but luckily I had stockpiled them before we entered. To our left as we passed over the second pit was another door, so we entered, with Deklan having to grapple with the squirming door handle again. We emerged in a strangely shaped room, with doors exiting from the north, northwest and south walls. We decided to use the south door.

Deklan reached for the door handle, and grabbed at it as it squirmed away, but missed.

"Help! Help!" it cried. We looked at each other, and were attacked by a group of various monsters.

After we had defeated them, Cephias said: "You'd better be careful with those doors from now on." Deklan agreed. He opened the door (to level 9, location 7 — page 127).



Level 10:

Song Of The Wind

1

When we entered this tiny room, we were beset by two black dragons. We battled them heartily, but it is with great sadness that I recount that Gammaliel was killed. Burnt and screaming, our honorable comrade was cut down by a searing blast of acid from one of the terrible lizards.

Screaming insults, Almiri dispatched the responsible dragon with several well-placed swings of her large sword.

When the rest of us had finally killed the horrible beasts, we discovered a beautiful set of musical pipes on the ground, but there was little rejoicing.

Sadly, we carried Gammaliel out of the Citadel, and to the temple in the village. We implored the friars there, and they agreed to try what magic they could. We waited.

A wave of relief passed through me when it was announced that Gammaliel would live. After a period of several days, he returned to us. It had cost us dearly, but the price was meaningless in the saving of his life.

After letting Gammaliel recover from his ordeal for a few more days, we re-entered the Citadel, and returned to the tenth level. We resumed our quest in the hallway where we had left off, and entered the last door in the north wall (to level 10, location 3 — page 130).

2

We fought with a group of devils in this location, and they dropped 480 gold pieces. In the southeast corner of this room, was another small room (level 10, location 1 — page 129).

3

In this room, we battled three dragons. When they were destroyed, we noticed a plaque on the north wall.

“More clerical spells,” Gammaliel said, copying them down.

There was nothing else in the room, so we returned to the corridor, and entered the door immediately across it. This room was empty, so we followed the hallway west to the side corridor. We followed this one south, and entered a door on the west wall (to level 10, location 4 — page 130).

4

This room was moist, with water dripping from the ceiling, and running down the walls.

“Odd,” Deklan said, running his finger down the walls. Suddenly, we were attacked from behind by two water creatures. By staying out of their way, and fighting them using long range weapons, we managed to defeat them.

In the northwest corner of the room was an alcove containing a beautifully honed two-handed sword. On the hilt were carved runes, in a language none of us could decipher. Deklan wielded it, found its balance good, and decided to keep it. In the south wall of the room, was a door, which we opened (to level 10, location 5 — page 130).

5

We found ourselves in a corridor. We followed it south, and arrived in a large room. While searching it, we were attacked by huge spiders. We defended ourselves, and eventually defeated them. As we moved to leave the room, which was otherwise empty, we were beset again at the exit by another group of spiders. Once more, we fended them off.

We returned to the room to the north (level 10, location 4) and exited to the corridor. We turned south to a door (to level 10, location 6 — page 131).

This room contained three alcoves in the east wall. In each alcove was a scroll, and each scroll sat on a circle inscribed in the floor.

6

“More traps?” Almiri asked. “One way to find out...” replied Deklan, nocking an arrow, and firing it at the circle. A gout of flame leapt from floor to ceiling. Deklan reached in and retrieved the scroll, which was miraculously unscathed.

We repeated this action in each of the other two alcoves, and ended up with three scrolls; Morale, Dopplegang and No Potionis. I placed them in my robe for later copying to my spell book. In the south wall of the room was a door, and we followed it (to level 10, location 7 — page 131).

7

Immediately inside the door, was another circle on the floor. Deklan fired an arrow at it, and triggered the fire trap.

“Hot place,” Almiri commented.

Too soon, we found out why. In the room were several creatures which appeared to be made out of flame. We battled them, and defeated them. Searching the room, we discovered a black slate and a Veikr scroll.

The room was otherwise empty, so we returned to the side corridor, and followed it to the main east-west hallway. We turned west, and entered the first door in the north wall (to level 10, location 8 — page 131).

8

In this room, we were attacked by three black dragons. When they were defeated, we found nothing of interest in the room.

“Don’t dragons usually hoard treasure in their lairs?” Cephas asked.

"Maybe that wasn't their lair..." Gammaliel suggested.

"Well, we'd better find it soon," replied Cephas.

In the northwest corner was a door, which led into a corridor. We followed it north, past an arch in the west wall, to a small square room (level 10, location 9 — page 132).

9

We searched this room, and found nothing interesting. Cephas made a round of the room, searching for false walls. We started in the southeast corner, and progressed counterclockwise. When we returned to the southeast corner, there was a whine, and the east wall disappeared, and was replaced by a stone archway.

"I wish that would stop!" exclaimed Almiri.

"What?" Deklan asked.

"All these traps! Give me something I can fight!"

We went through the archway where the wall used to be, and emerged into yet another large room (level 10, location 18 — page 136).

10

As we neared the center of this room, we were set upon by four more of the strange, two-headed creatures. They attacked using small swords which were difficult to dodge, but, when they died, the swords disappeared with them.

The north end of the room had two corridors leading from it. One ended in a set of stairs going up, and the other ended in a set of stairs going down. We bypassed both, in favour of a hallway which left from the southwest corner of the room (to level 10, location 12 — page 133).

11

Vanished.

12

The corridor ended abruptly, and there was a golden flute on the floor. As we approached it, there was a whoosh, and Deklan, Cephas and Fra Elsof disappeared.

The three of us left looked at each other. Cephas picked up the flute. We looked at it.

"The music of the wind," Gammaliel said.

"What?" Almiri asked.

"Remember that plaque in the first large room we came to?" he asked, "it said something about people gone missing and playing the music of the wind..."

"Right!" I said, "let's go read that plaque again. We hurried into the chamber with the large pillar in it (level 10, location 13), and read the plaque on the north wall of the pillar.

"Weep not for those gone missing, for they find a great treasure. Sing their praise instead with the music of the wind."

"It must mean the flute," Almiri said, "but what do we play?"

"There could be any number of combinations of notes," Gammaliel said, "where do we start?"

"Anybody know Nequilar's favorite tune?" Almiri asked.

"The clerk," I said. Almiri and Gammaliel looked at me, puzzled.

"Burliman," I reiterated, "the clerk. He might be able to help us. He knows about objects in the Citadel."

We rushed from the Citadel, and hied to the tavern in the village at a dead run. Burliman sat at a table, engaged in conversation with a Dwarven female. We rushed in, breathless, and gave him the flute.

"What can you tell us about this," I asked. He examined it closely, and told us about who made it, when it was made, and the fineness of its crafting.

"Anything more?" I asked.

"Well, there's some faint writing on the side of the flute," he answered, straining to see. "'When all else fails, ABEDAB C,' that's all I can see."

"Abedab c, what does that mean?" Almiri asked.

"Some sort of magical incantation?" I suggested.

"No," said Gammaliel, "they're musical notes." We looked at him.

"I had musical training when I was young," he answered, looking slightly embarrassed, "The key farthest away from the mouthpiece is A. The next one is B, then C, et cetera, all the way up to G."

With this information, we re-entered the Citadel, and returned to the plaque (level 10, location 13). Placing the flute to his lips, Gammaliel played the note sequence A-B-E-D-A-B-C. The plaque and wall ahead of us disappeared, revealing a small room inside the pillar.

In it were Deklan, Fra Elsof and Cephas.

"I knew you'd get here eventually," Deklan said, smiling.

"Look what we found," Cephas said, holding up a skull wand.

"...for they find a great treasure..." Gammaliel said.

We now possessed four skull wands. It was decided that, rather than go immediately to release Lady Synd however, we should go down a level.

"In case we've missed something," Almiri suggested.

We returned to the room with the two staircases (level 10, location 10), and descended the stairs (to level 11 — page 137).

13

There was a large pillar in the northeast corner of this room, and we walked around it. It was big enough to contain a closet, but the exterior of the pillar contained no hint of any doors. On the north side of the pillar, however, was a plaque reading: "Weep not for those gone missing, for they find a great treasure. Sing their praise instead with the music of the wind."

"What does it mean?" Almiri asked. We shrugged, and continued.

"So many confusing things here," Gammaliel mused. A corridor departed from the southeast corner of the large room, and we followed it. We passed a door on the north, and decided to see what was further down the hallway before going in. A little further, and a side corridor went south. We continued, passing two more doors, and finally coming to a gate, which we opened.

We entered an empty square room, with an exit in the east wall. We used it, and followed the short corridor to two doors. One was on the north wall, with a moving door handle, and one on the south.

We tried the north door first, managing to grasp the squirming handle, and found an empty closet. The south door led us to another large chamber (level 10, location 2 — page 129).

14

Various monsters wandered throughout this cavernous room, which may have been a great hall of some kind, when the Citadel was above ground. When we entered into a fight with four strange, two-headed creatures, the other creatures began to converge on us, and we had to fight our way through them.

When they had finally all been dispatched, we were badly injured and covered in blood, both our own and that of our opponents. Applications of Deklan's healing gauntlets alleviated the problem, however, and we headed to the north portion of the room (level 10, location 13 — page 134).

15

Immediately upon entering this long, narrow room, we were attacked once again by the ghostly figure of Nequilar. Burnt and grumbling, we continued into the room. There were four devils, who leapt upon us from a small alcove in the north wall.

When they were killed, Cephas discovered 480 gold pieces in the alcove. Nothing else was in the room, so we returned to the corridor, and followed it north to a dead end.

"The wall's fake," Cephas said, and we walked through it, emerging in an enormous room (level 10, location 14 — page 135).

16

Once in the room, we were attacked by two dragons. These were unusual members of their species, as they spit acid rather than fire. The effect was the same, though, and several of us were severely burnt by the time the fight was over. They disappeared in a cloud of smoke. There was nothing else in the room.

We exited this room using the door in the west wall (to level 10, location 17 — page 136).

17

No sooner had we set foot in this room, than we were confronted by four screaming men. Their faces were blackened and rotting, and they rushed at us, shrieking unintelligibly. We fought them off, although they were difficult to hit because they leapt about madly, swinging wildly at everything. When they were finally killed, their corpses revealed 730 gold pieces. Searching the room produced three scrolls. I inspected them, and discovered that they were Blast Portal, Freosan and Awake.

There were no more exits from this room, so we returned to the corridor. We followed it north, to another door in the west wall. We entered (to level 10, location 15 — page 135).

18

As we explored this chamber, we were repeatedly attacked by cloudy, wailing spirits. They fought viciously, and left nothing when we killed them. Three times we battled groups of them, eventually finishing badly injured.

"That wasn't productive," Cephas complained. Indeed, there was nothing of interest in the massive chamber, except a great number of holes in the ceiling, from the pits above.

We left through the archway we had created, and crossed the corridor (to level 10, location 10 — page 132).

Level 11:

Frustrated

We descended the stairs from level 10, and found ourselves at a door. We opened it, and Deklan had to fire an arrow into a fire trap before we stepped through to another door. We opened it, and found another door, as well as one to our left. We continued in this way, moving from door to door, and it was only due to Fra Elsof's excellent mapping ability that we were able to find our way from this unusual maze.

I cannot recall exactly how we found them, but there were only four rooms on this level. In the center of the level, was a square room with locked doors on all sides.

Around this central room, was an area where a most unusual phenomenon occurred, and again, it was only due to Fra Elsof's mapping that we were able to discover the treachery. There were four halls approaching the central area, one from each of the directions on the compass. Each time we entered the central area from one of these hallways, we were somehow transported to the identical spot in one of the other hallways. As the central area looked exactly the same from all four directions, and we didn't feel anything strange, we had no way of knowing that we had been transported (to level 11, location 1 — page 137).

1

In this room, we fought two smokey spirits and two strange snake creatures. There was 1000 gold pieces in the room. We went (to level 11, location 2 — page 138).

2

In this room, we fought the same foe, and defeated them. These four, however, dropped only 500 gold pieces upon their death. On the wall was a plaque which contained the runes necessary for two more clerical spells. We went (to level 11, location 3 — page 138).

3

Once again, we were attacked by two spirits and two snake creatures. Their carcasses revealed 500 gold pieces, and there was a medallion, some arrows, and an Invidere Al scroll. We went (to level 11, location 4 — page 138).

4

Again, we fought the same four enemies, defeating them and finding 500 gold pieces in place of their remains. In this room, was a Fyr Striken scroll, and a plaque on the wall which contained more clerical runes.

“We’re ready,” I said when we had finished this level. A sense of momentousness surrounded us like an aura, the air was filled with the heady enormity of it. We were about to unlock the keeper of the secrets of the earth.

“Before we rescue the good Lady,” suggested Deklan, “don’t you think we should prepare ourselves?”

“How?” Almiri asked.

“Well, we’re a little weak, and you three are running short on spells,” he said, indicating Gammaliel, Fra Elsof and myself.

“He’s right,” Cephas added, “we should go to the village and rest before we do this. She’s been in there for over fifty years. Who knows what she’s going to want us to do?”

We returned to the village, and petitioned our various guilds for advancement. We thanked Fra Elsof profusely, and left him safely in the tavern.

“I will wait now,” he said, his manner peaceful, “when you have freed my queen, perhaps I can be of service to her again.”

“You have been an invaluable help to us,” I replied. He took my hand, and shook it. We left the tavern, and trekked back to the Citadel, our heads filled with destiny. We returned to Lady Synd’s room (level 5, location 7) with the three skull wands. One at a time, we brandished the wands and the crystal slowly disappeared. Lady Synd stepped out. With a puzzled expression, she gazed around her at what she must have remembered as a clean, brightly light chamber. Silently, we stared at her. Her confusion seemed to abate in small stages, as the memories of her entrapment in the crystal came to her. Finally, she looked at us and smiled.

“Thank you, brave adventurers,” she said, nodding her head appreciatively. “it feels like I have been asleep for a very, very long time. How much time has passed?”

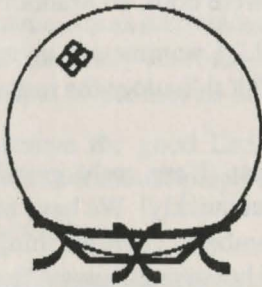
“Fifty-four years,” I answered. She uttered a low whistle.

“That means I was tricked by that upstart, Nequilar long before you were born, eh Madoc?” She looked at me.

“Lady Synd,” I stammered, awestruck, “we are at your service.” I felt ridiculous the instant the words had passed my lips.

“And for that, I am truly grateful,” she said, smiling warmly. “But quickly! We have much to do. First, I must go to my chambers. There are things there I must retrieve.” So saying she stepped away from the broken crystal. Behind it, hidden in the north wall of the chamber, was a set of stairs going down. Following Lady Synd, we descended, then followed a secret corridor to some stairs going up. We ascended (to level 3, location 2 — page 49).

The Beginning of the End



1

In the center of this small room was a simple altar. On it sat the blood scroll.

“There it is!” said Deklan. As we approached the altar, however, there was a brilliant flash of light. Blinded, I stood stock still, waiting for my vision to return. Slowly, blurrily, I realized I was in a section of the dungeon I had never seen before.

Fighting the rising panic, I worked my way through a long and twisting hallway, eventually arriving at a set of stairs ascending. I followed them up, and arrived in the center section of level 11, where Deklan, Cephas and Lady Synd were waiting for me. I joined them, and we waited for Almiri and Gammaliel.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Nequilar has moved the real altar, and placed that false one in its place,” said Lady Synd. “The real one’s somewhere down there. You came up from the north entrance at the base of the stairs. What’s that way?”

“Only a very long hallway,” I replied.

“I found myself in a tiny room,” Cephas said, “with stairs to my west. I came up to here, so there’s nothing on the east side of the base.”

“It must be on the south side,” Lady Synd said. “Perhaps your two friends are there already.”

“What will we do?” Deklan asked.

"We'll wait for them," she replied. After a few more minutes, both Deklan and Gammaliel appeared at the north exit at the top of the stairs.

"Come here!" they shouted in unison.

"The blood scroll?" asked Lady Synd.

"Yes!" We descended from the north, exiting from the south of the base (to level 12, location 2 — page 142).

2

We entered, and Lady Synd reached for the blood scroll on the altar. As soon as it was in her hand, the altar cracked, a huge echo booming through the catacombs of the Citadel.

Creatures wandering on all twelve levels stopped, and raised their heads, as though scenting something new in the air. A ripple passed through the earth, centered at the Citadel.

"You have vanquished his great minions and stand before me now as living legends!" Lady Synd said to us, holding up the scroll. "But quickly now ... the blood scroll must be taken to the light of a new day to destroy him forever."

We rushed up the levels, using the stairs until we reached level 10.

"It'll be faster to use the pedestal room," I said. We rushed to the pedestal room, which was on this level, where we left it. As soon as we entered it, however, it began to sputter and whine. I tried pressing the top button, but nothing happened.

"Maybe the blood scroll can't be transported in this room," Almiri suggested.

"We'll have to use the stairs," Gammaliel said, moving from the room.

"Hurry!" exclaimed Lady Synd. "We must hurry!"

We ascended the stairs to level 9 (in level 10, location 10), from where we had to use Risan and Levitas spells to raise

through a pit (in level 9, location 1) to level 8. From here, the stairs carried us back to the entrance level.

As we approached the exit at a dead run, there was a huge crash. The exit was sealed with a locked door. Frantic, Cephas attempted to open it, but to no avail. Suddenly, there was another boom, and all exits from the entrance room (level 2, location 1) were sealed.

We heard maniacal laughter emanating from all around us, coming from the walls, coming from the floor.

"Be ready," Lady Synd said, clenching her fists, "here he comes."

In the center of the room, Nequilar appeared.



Final Confrontation:

“Prepare to meet your end!” Nequilar screamed from the center of the room. His eyes blazed with the collected light of all the hatred and evil contained in this cursed place. I recognized him finally for who he was: the infernal father of all the foulness that was spreading across my home land, poisoning its people and curdling its soil. We were paralyzed with fear.

Suddenly, I was very angry. A scream built in the back of my throat, forcing its way up from my lungs. When it came out, it frightened me with its ferocity. Screaming, I began casting attack spell after attack spell at Nequilar. Lady Synd did the same.

My comrades' paralysis broke with the sound. Deklan and Almiri rushed into battle, swinging their swords viciously. Cephas disappeared as only a thief can do, blending in with the background surroundings, trying to get behind Nequilar and back stab. Gammaliel entered into battle, rushing in for an attack, then backing off, ready to cast Haelan on whomever might need it. He also cast the occasional attack spell on the beast, Nequilar.

I had a full complement of spells memorized, after our recent foray into the outside world, and I timed their execution carefully, to fall between swings of my companions, when Nequilar was on the defensive. I saw the battle through a red haze of hatred.

Nequilar, for his part, was a powerful foe. He dodged blows from Deklan and Almiri that would have killed the largest creatures we had encountered in the Citadel. Furthermore, he occasionally cast the flame spell that he had used on us in the lower levels.

The odds were six to one, however, and even the most powerful must

fall when confronted with greater numbers. Lady Synd and I used cunning in the timing and choosing of our spells; Almiri and Deklan fought valiantly, swinging one deadly blow after another with their swords; Cephas was indispensable, sneaking up from behind, inflicting painful damage on our enemy, and disappearing again; and Gammaliel managed to get in several good attacks, while casting Haelan and Haelan Al almost constantly.

With a scream that pierced the air, and set the hair on the back of my neck on end, Nequilar died. Flames shot from his eyes, engulfing his head in an unholy green-orange gout of fire. Beneath this translucent aureole of flame, we witnessed his flesh seething and rippling, flowing: now feline, now lupine, now hideous and unrecognizable. The scream emitted from the very air, protracted and growing in strength. We covered our ears, and fell to the ground, writhing in pain.

Suddenly, silence. In the center of the room, a blackened, fleshy mound quivered bonelessly. At the center of it, slowly, a depression formed, gradually taking on the shape of a mouth. Painfully, the mouth opened, mucous sliding to the floor as the lips parted. It uttered a shrill, mewling cry.

A wave of what I can only describe as vileness swept over me. Contained in that whimper of death was all the pain and anguish of a sickened land, all the repressed anger, all the suffering. Almiri turned away and vomited violently.

“Evil,” Lady Synd said, whispering. A geyser of clear, sticky liquid erupted from the open mouth, to fall into a fetid pool around the mound, which began to quake. The mound pulsated for a moment, and was gone, in a flash of unclean grey light. The doors barring the exits from the room disappeared.

Shakily, Lady Synd stood.

“Thou art truly the heroes of a new age in our realm,” she said, a slow smile spreading across her face. “Go forth into the light and rejoice!”

We stood, and left the Citadel. Lady Synd remained in the entrance, and as we mounted the last of the stairs, we could hear her incanting.

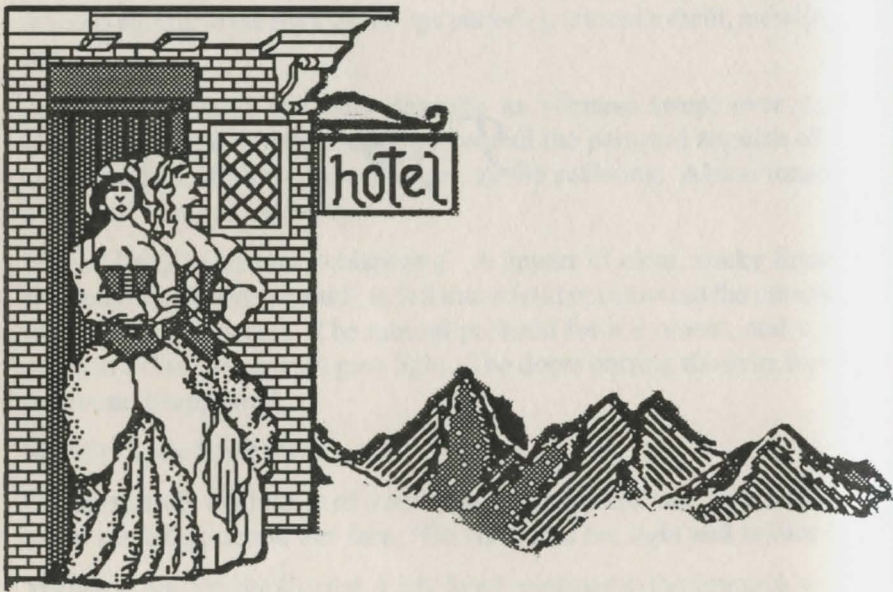
We were several hundred feet from the Citadel, when it began to rise from the ground. Slowly at first, then with redoubling speed, the towers and turrets emerged from the yielding ground with a roar that was

answered from all directions, reverberating throughout the land, and echoing from the very skies.

Despite our wounds, bruises and fatigue, we began to dance and leap, jump and shout, joy overflowing.

The dark fog which had surrounded this forest for years finally parted, seemingly separated by the thrusting figure of the Citadel as it rose. The sunlight, impossibly bright and pure, shone through. The new day had dawned, at last.

Finis



Charts:

Normal Weapons Chart

Name	Encumbrance	Damage	Alignment
Long Sword	9	1 - 8	Neutral
Wavy Dagger	4	1 - 6	Neutral
Saber	9	1 - 8	Neutral
Scimitar	9	1 - 8	Neutral
Broad Sword	12	2 - 8	Neutral
Bent Dagger	3	2 - 4	Neutral
Rapier	9	2 - 7	Neutral
Double Dagger	5	3 - 5	Neutral
Step	3	1 - 4	Neutral
Tip Sword	10	1 - 8	Neutral
Machette	6	1 - 6	Neutral
Short Sword	8	1 - 6	Neutral
Bastard Sword	10	1 - 8	Neutral
Nunchaku	3	1 - 6	Neutral
Mace	10	2 - 7	Neutral
Spiked Club	9	1 - 6	Neutral
Battle Axe	10	1 - 8	Neutral
Guisarme	8	2 - 8	Neutral
Trident	12	2 - 7	Neutral
Bardiche	13	2 - 8	Neutral
Hand Axe	8	1 - 6	Neutral
Hammer	7	2 - 5	Neutral
Lucern	15	2 - 8	Neutral
Flail	15	2 - 7	Neutral
Morningstar	13	2 - 8	Neutral
War Hammer	15	2 - 8	Neutral
Bardiche	12	2 - 8	Neutral
Jo Sticks	5	1 - 6	Neutral

Magical Weapons Chart.

Name	Ench.	MR	AC	Damage	Align.	Value (gp)
Bastard Sword	10	10%	-1	1 - 8	Neutral	2000
Battle Axe	9	0%	0	1 - 15	Neutral	5000
Boomerang Axe	5	0%	0	1 - 6	Neutral	5000
Dancing Sword	9	10%	0	2 - 9	Neutral	20000
Defender	9	10%	-4	2 - 10	Neutral	10000
Guardian	10	20%	-6	3 - 8	Good	11545
Long Sword	9	0%	0	3 - 10	Neutral	4000
Military Fork	10	20%	0	1 - 8	Neutral	1000
Rapier	9	20%	0	5 - 15	Neutral	5000
Sting	1	0%	0	1 - 4	Neutral	4000
Throwing Axe	8	0%	0	3 - 10	Neutral	7000

MR - Magic Resistance Bonus.

AC - Effect of Weapon Upon Armor Class.

Armor Chart

Name	Ench.	MR	AC	Align.	(gp)	#Pock.	P. Ench.
Banded Mail	25	1%	-7	Neutral	3000	2	6
Black Plate	30	0%	+4	Neutral	40	4	2
Chain Mail	20	0%	-4	Neutral	75	2	8
Chain Mail *	7	0%	-5	Neutral	3000	3	3
Chain Mail *	12	0%	-5	Neutral	3500	1	8
Cloth Robe	2	0%	0	Neutral	5	2	5
Gold Robe	4	0%	0	Neutral	3500	2	4
Leather	10	0%	-1	Neutral	5	1	5
Plate Mail	50	0%	-6	Neutral	400	1	2
Plate Mail *	50	0%	-7	Neutral	400	2	5
Plate Mail *	50	0%	-9	Neutral	4000	4	1
Ring Mail	18	0%	-2	Neutral	30	1	8
Scale Mail	19	0%	-3	Neutral	45	1	6
Silk Robe	1	0%	0	Neutral	2500	2	2
Wool Robe	3	0%	-2	Neutral	500	2	4

* - Denotes the item is magical

Experience Points

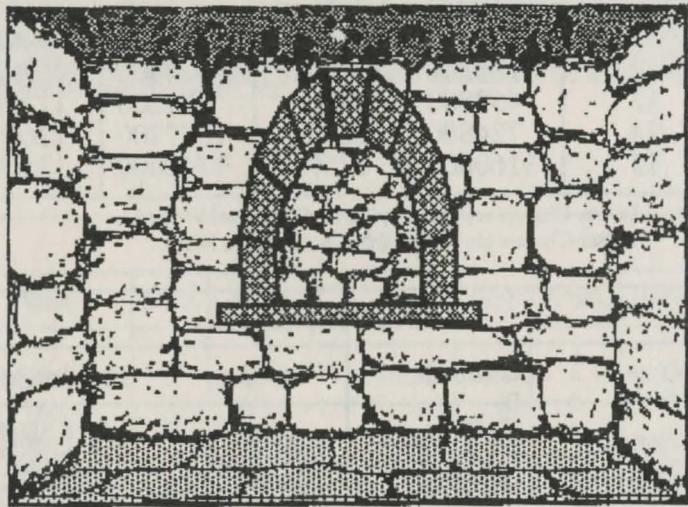
Level	Lower Classes		Higher Classes	
	Exp.	Gold	Exp.	Gold
1	1600	450	2400	900
2	2400	900	3600	1800
3	4000	1350	6000	2700
4	6400	1800	9600	3600
5	10400	2250	15600	4500
6	16800	2700	25200	5400
7	27200	3150	40800	6300
8	43200	3600	64800	7200
9	68800	4050	103200	8100
10	110400	4500	165600	9000
11	176800	4950	265200	9900
12	283200	5400	424800	10800
13	452800	5850	679200	11700
14	724800	6300	1087200	12600
15	1160000	6750	1740000	13500

Note - Lower Classes are Fighter, Thief, Cleric and Wizard.

Higher Classes are Knights, Ninja, Shaman, Magi.

Clerical Spells

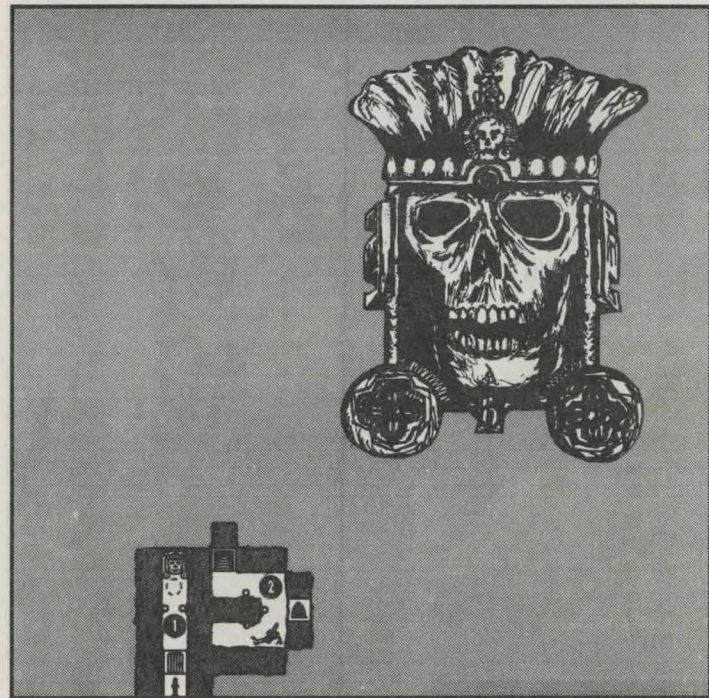
Name	Elementals	Name	Elementals
Haelan	ξΨ	Fortis Al	ΨξΨΦ
Fortis	ξΦ	Cural	ΨξΨΨΦ
Bless	ξΩ	Sanctifis	ΦξΦΨΦΩ
Percer	ΨΩ	Freosan	ΩΨΩΩ
Haelan Al	ξΨΦ	Dispellere	ΩΦΩΨΩ
Divine	ξΦΨ	Awake	ΨΨξΨΦ
Gestun	ξΨΩ	Gifan Shift	ΦΦΨΦΦ
Citatrize	ξΨΨΦ	No Potionis	ΩΦΩΩΦΩ
Slo Potionis	ξΦξ	Morale	ξξΦξΦξ
Fear	ξξΦ	Cleric Touch	ΦξΦΨΦΩΦ



Maps:

Level 1 — The Downfall

Level 1

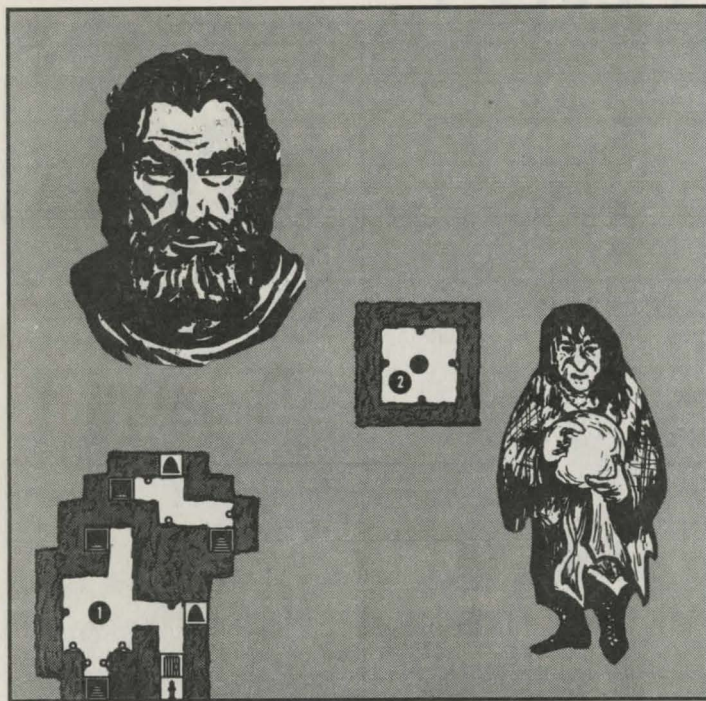


Citadel Dungeon Legend

	Unlocked Gate		Skull		False Wall
	Locked Gate		Upstairs		Wall
	Locked Door		Downstairs		Invisible Wall
	Unlocked Door		Elevator		Unlit Torch
	Locked Door		Window		Lit Torch
	Moving Door Handle		Magical Null Area		Coat Rack
	Archway		Teleport Pads		Fire Trap
	Altar		Plaque		Hidden Pit
	Ceiling Hole		Floor Pit		

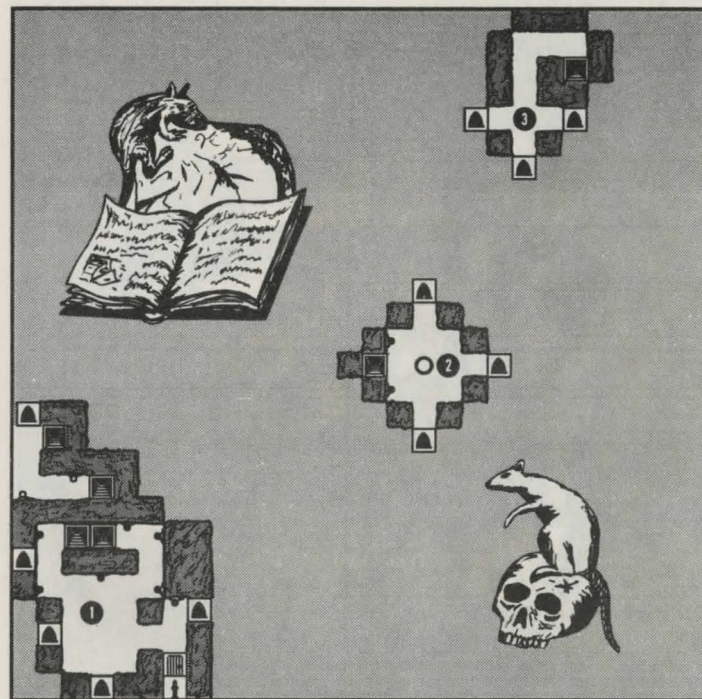
Level 2 — The Beginning

Level 2



Level 3 — Eternal Light

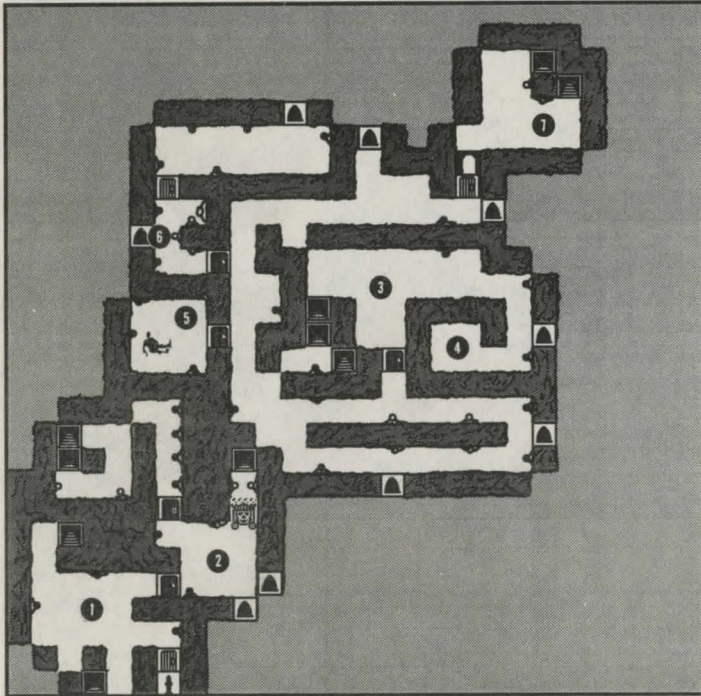
Level 3



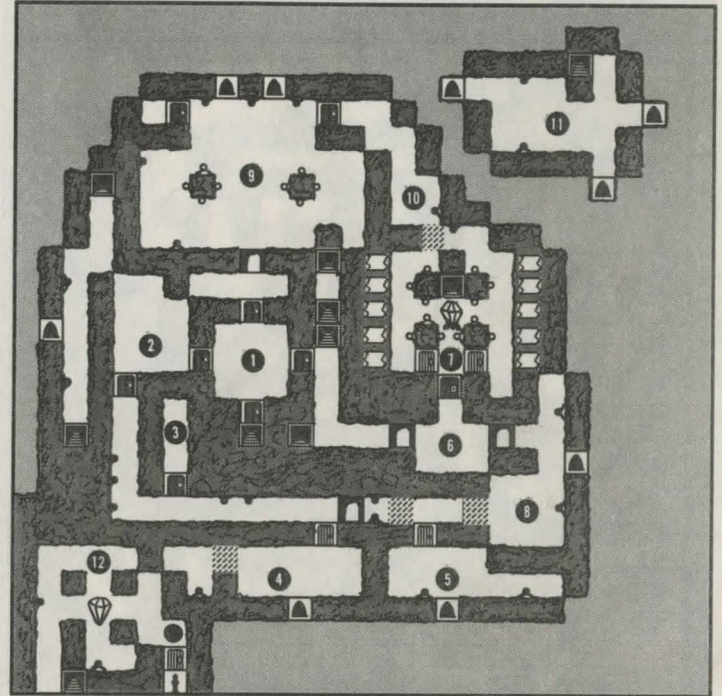
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	Altar		Plaque		Hidden Pit
	Ceiling Hole		Floor Pit		

Level 4



Level 5

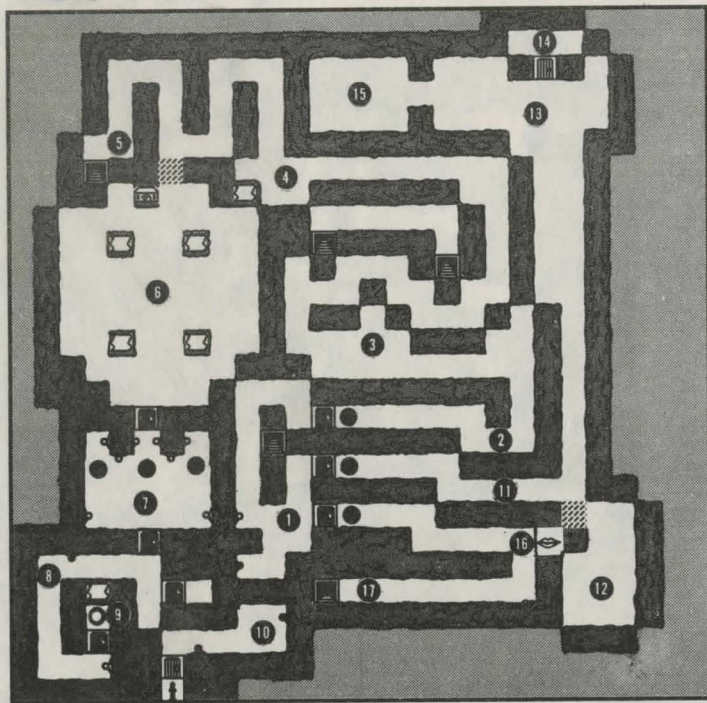


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	Altar		Plaque		Hidden Pit
	Ceiling Hole		Floor Pit		

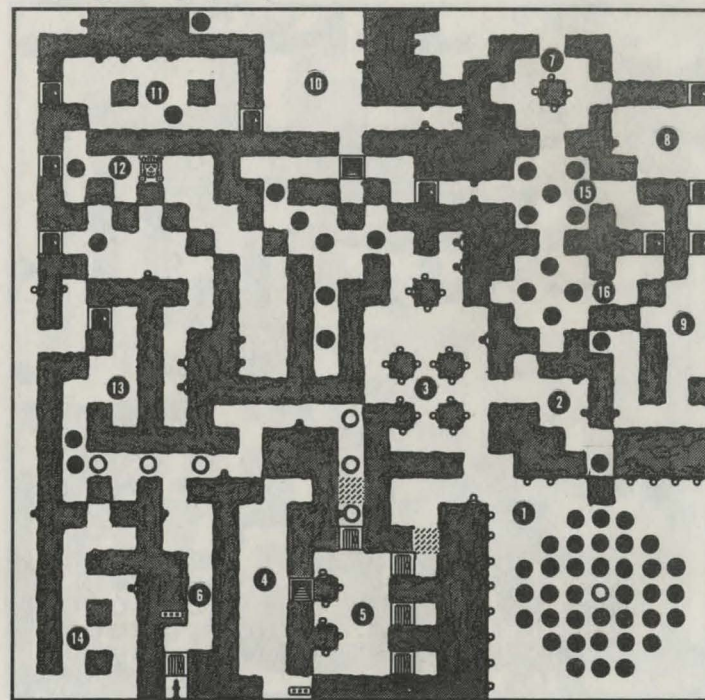
Level 6 — Golden Altar

Level 6



Level 7 — Finding a Friend

Level 7

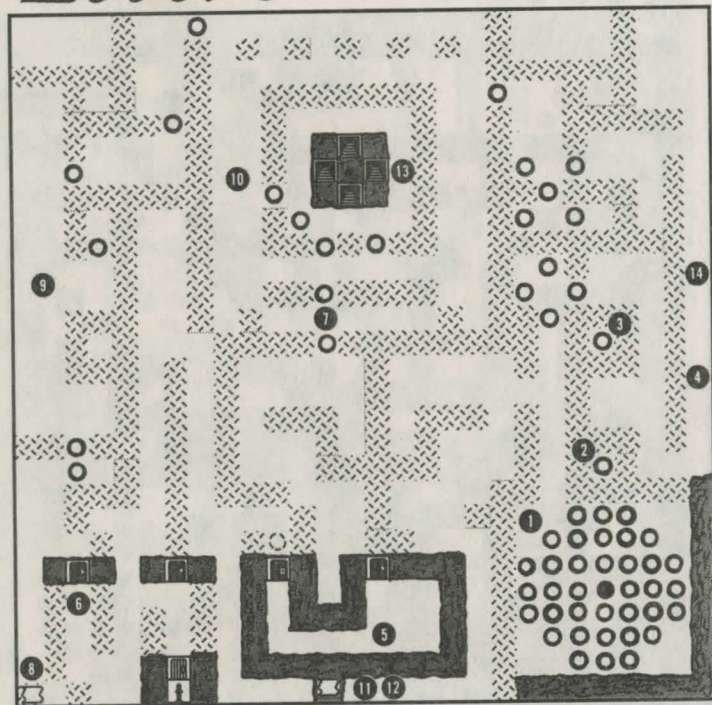


Citadel Dungeon Legend

	Unlocked Gate		Skull		False Wall
	Locked Gate		Upstairs		Wall
	Locked Door		Downstairs		Invisible Wall
	Unlocked Door		Elevator		Unlit Torch
	Locked Door		Window		Lit Torch
	Moving Door Handle		Magical Null Area		Coat Rack
	Archway		Teleport Pads		Fire Trap
	Altar		Plaque		Hidden Pit
	Ceiling Hole		Floor Pit		

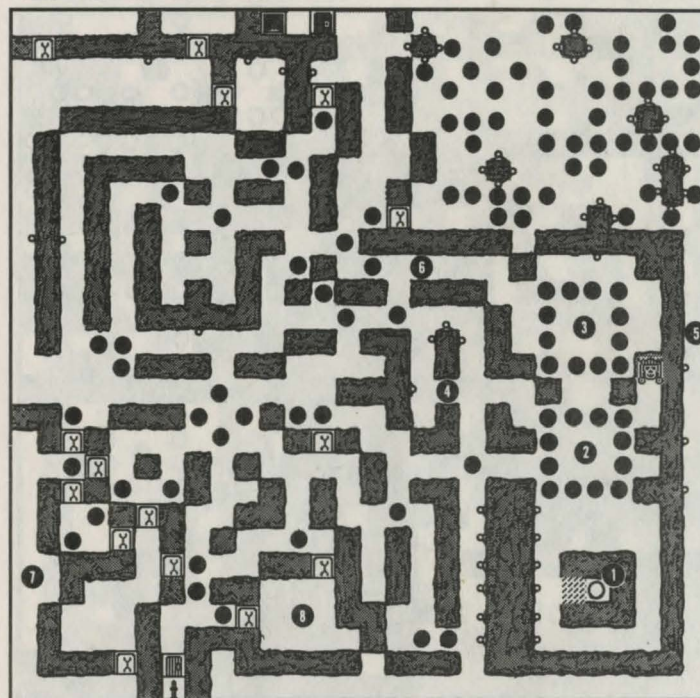
Level 8 — Invisibility

Level 8



Level 9 — Catch Me If You Can

Level 9

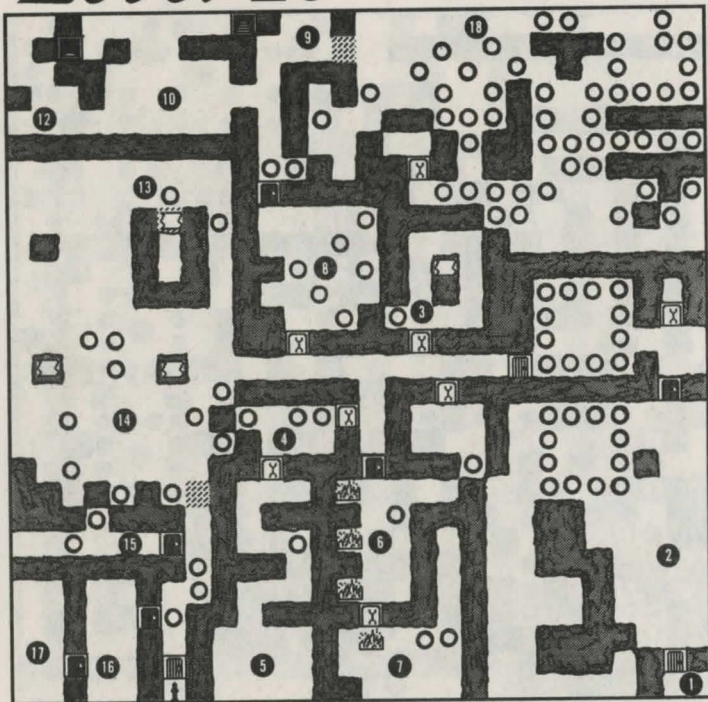


Citadel Dungeon Legend

Unlocked Gate	Skull	False Wall
Locked Gate	Upstairs	Wall
Locked Door	Downstairs	Invisible Wall
Unlocked Door	Elevator	Unlit Torch
Locked Door	Window	Lit Torch
Moving Door Handle	Magical Null Area	Coat Rack
Archway	Teleport Pads	Fire Trap
Altar	Plaque	Hidden Pit
Ceiling Hole	Floor Pit	

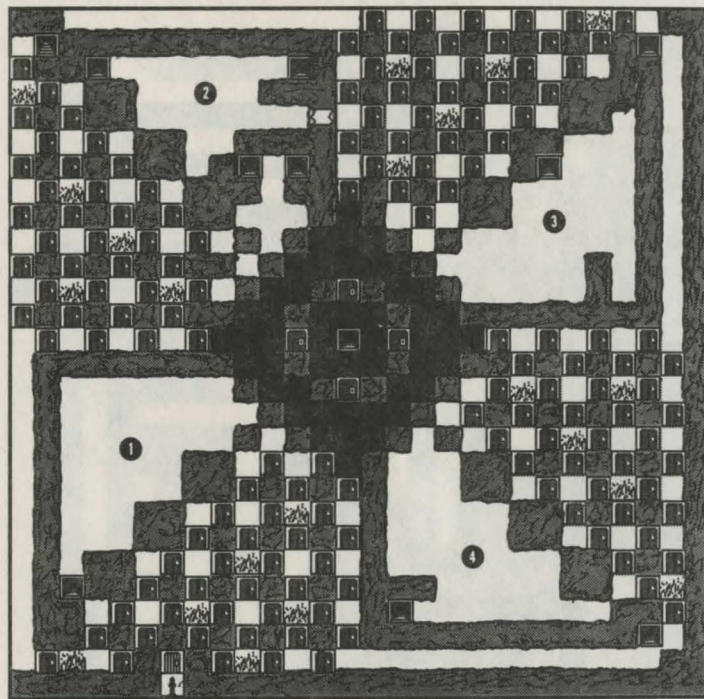
Level 10 — Song of the Wind

Level 10



Level 11 — Frustration

Level 11

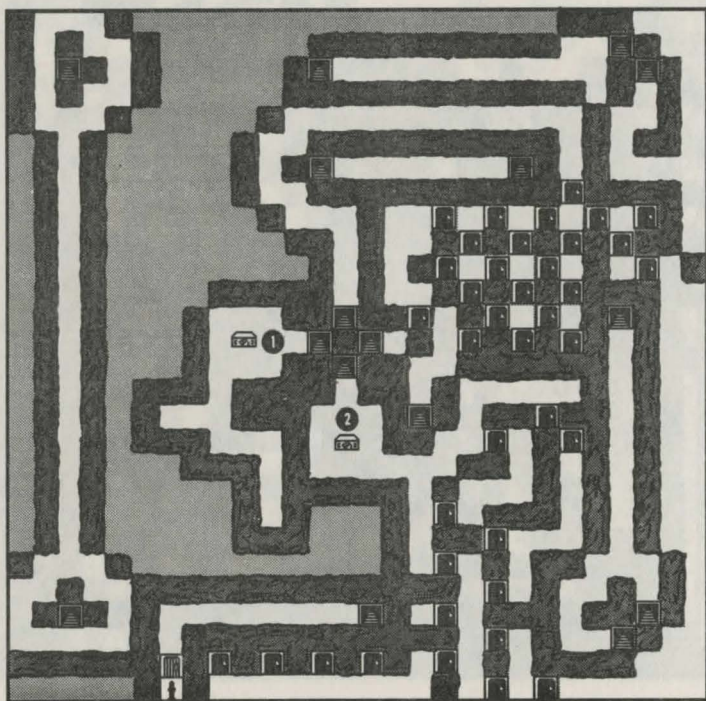


Citadel Dungeon Legend

	Unlocked Gate		Skull		False Wall
	Locked Gate		Upstairs		Wall
	Locked Door		Downstairs		Invisible Wall
	Unlocked Door		Elevator		Unlit Torch
	Locked Door		Window		Lit Torch
	Moving Door Handle		Magical Null Area		Coat Rack
	Archway		Teleport Pads		Fire Trap
	Altar		Plaque		Hidden Pit
	Ceiling Hole		Floor Pit		

Level 12 — The Beginning of the End

Level 12



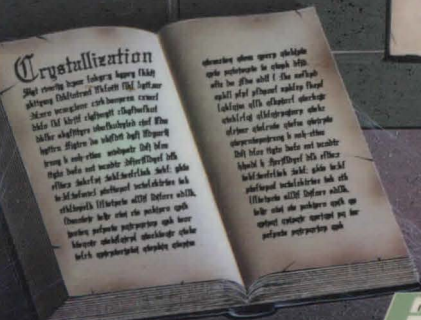
Citadel Dungeon Legend

Unlocked Gate	Skull	False Wall
Locked Gate	Upstairs	Wall
Locked Door	Downstairs	Invisible Wall
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Locked Door	Window	Lit Torch
Moving Door Handle	Magical Null Area	Coat Rack
Archway	Teleport Pads	Fire Trap
Altar	Plaque	Hidden Pit
Ceiling Hole	Floor Pit	



Many will enter
...few will exit,
ALIVE!!!

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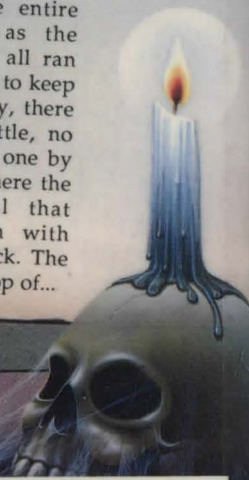
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was but a young man when the Citadel was destroyed, and this became a place of evil. Before that, as long as I can remember, the mighty sorceress, Lady Synd, and her Blood Guard had resided there, bringing peace and harmony to our land from their fortress high above our village. I can still remember the fine spring day when the mysterious, cloaked figure arrived and asked for directions to the Citadel. Foolishly, we showed him the way. Not long after that, strange events began to occur. The animals and birds fled the hills, the sky became dark and the air stale. Some of the braver men of the village, my father among them, crept up through the forest to request help from Lady Synd. Agonizing hours we waited, and when they returned, they told us of black, winged demons and other beasts, too horrible to mention, which had pursued them from the Citadel. Terrified, we fled into our homes and prayed. "The fortress is surrounded by a foul black smog," my father whispered to me, "and from within, come the sounds of a terrible battle. I fear all is lost." That night, as the church clock struck midnight, a monstrous noise roused us in terror from our beds. The entire village shook and groaned as the ground heaved and rent. We all ran into the streets, clasping our ears to keep out the savage sound. Suddenly, there was silence. No sound of battle, not a sound at all. The next morning, one by one, we moved up the hill to where the Citadel had once stood. All that remained was a field strewn with rubble, and one small stone shack. The tiny shack was actually the very top of...

ISBN 0-9625779-0-1



POSTCRAFT
INTERNATIONAL INC.

27811 Avenue Hopkins, Suite 6, Valencia, CA 91355 • (805) 257-1797

