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Memoirs of Cabirus

A Note of Explanation: This volume came into our possession only recently, though it was penned decades ago. The chronicler is one Corby, scribe to the Cabirus whose life was devoted to the doomed experiment on the Isle of the Avatar. All contact with the settlers of the Abyss was lost years ago, and we therefore suppose the colony to be extinct. — Joye the Librarian

<i>Proclamation</i>	<i>i</i>
the original call for colonists in the Abyss	
<i>The Chronicle of Sir Cabirus</i>	<i>1</i>
an account of the history of our isle	
<i>The Colony of the Abyss</i>	<i>5</i>
a more detailed description of our society	
<i>Ye Who Venture Here</i>	<i>13</i>
words of wisdom for any who might join us	
<i>Magic in the Depths</i>	<i>16</i>
how magic differs in the Abyss	
<i>Bestiary</i>	<i>19</i>
creatures we have seen in the depths	
<i>Afterword</i>	<i>27</i>
a final statement by Joye, the Librarian	

Proclamation

To All Who Strive Along the Avatar's Path:

I, Cabirus, call upon those of Virtue to join me in a Valorous Quest, one which promises to be rich in Sacrifice and Spirituality.

Decades ago, Lord British in his wisdom founded eight settlements, each dedicated to one of the Virtues. We Britannians have lived up to our lord's expectations, for the towns of Britain, Jhelom, Minoc, Moonglow, Skara Brae, Trinsic and Yew have flourished to the present day.

I believe the time has now come to found one further town, where all of the Eight Virtues are bound together into a unified whole. In order to people this new community, I call upon the most faithful among our citizenry to come forward in this cause — fighters and mages first, and later craftsmen and even children.

Further, it is my intent to bring together in this new settlement those who have seldom been a part of our civilized community — creatures of the mountains, woods and swamps. Whether by myself or my agents, these primitive beings will be contacted, taught of the Way of the Avatar, and invited to join our pioneer colony.

And where shall this new town be located? This has been a matter of long discussion. At first, it had been thought to place this colony in a setting conducive to its goals — a pleasant woodlands, adjacent to a placid lake, or even at the peak of a lofty mountain. However, I have since realized the usefulness to all of Britannia should this Center of Virtue be situated in such a place as to seal off a gate that has in the past been used by Evil forces to trouble us — on the Isle of the Avatar, directly in the Great Stygian Abyss itself!

With the blessing of Lord British, I dedicate myself to this sacred Quest, and call upon all who are likewise stirred by the Vision of Avatarhood to join me in this Honorable Deed. Pray that we may succeed, for the auguries hint of dire consequences should we fail to guard the Abyss against the incursion of Evil.

Sir Cabirus

Foreword

As I set these words upon this parchment, I have recently emerged from the Stygian Abyss. I am the former page of the late Sir Cabirus, and the Eight Virtues have impelled me to compile these excerpts from the writings and speeches of my beloved spiritual master. Through the founding of our brave colony in the very heart of the Great Stygian Abyss, Sir Cabirus has demonstrated a degree of Valor and Sacrifice comparable only to the selfless acts of Lord British or the Avatar themselves.

I witness to the Honesty and Justice of this record with my signature.

Corby

The Chronicle of Sir Cabirus



I have chosen to set down upon this parchment the facts, as they are known to me, concerning this island upon which I and the colonists have chosen to found our new town. I wish that most of this information were not new to my readers, but unfortunately, few of my fellow-citizens seem to take as much of an interest in our history as they once did.

The Ascent of the Avatar

The Isle of the Avatar was discovered during the Fourth Age (as related in *Quest of the Avatar*), at the climax of the Avatar's quest. The Stranger from Another World, who came to Britannia in answer to Lord British's summons, completed the Test of the Eight Virtues and became the Avatar — the embodiment of the pure axiom of life.

It was during his journeys that the Avatar unearthed a chilling artifact: the skull of Mondain the Wicked, the first of the Triad of Evil. There were those who claimed that the artifact held the power to destroy all life on our world. Fortunately, it was the Stranger who discovered it, and not someone of lesser Virtue.

Upon completing the Path of the Eight Virtues, the Avatar embarked on a search for the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom. Legend linked this ancient tome with the subterranean maze known as the Great Stygian Abyss. "Truly, no one has ever plumbed its depths," wrote Shamino, who arranged by magic to obtain a map of its corridors. "I cannot imagine the horrors that await the first to venture into the Stygian depths."





The entrance to the Abyss was found to lie on an uncharted island south-east of the mainland, guarded by a squadron of sailing ships crewed by ghosts of ancient pirates. Forcing his way past the spectral fleet and unraveling the mysteries of the Abyss, the Avatar at last succeeded in obtaining the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom. In honor of this achievement, the mystery island was christened the "Isle of the Avatar."

Peace and Treachery

With the Avatar's triumph accomplished, Britannia settled down for a period of reconstruction and consolidation. The kingdom's seers took note of the discoveries made by the Avatar on the Isle of the Avatar — notably, the entrance to the dungeon Hythloth (which was sealed shut) and the location of the Shrine of Humility. Lord British also caused a second sanctuary to be built, where the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom was enshrined.

Curious scholars researched the ancient records of the land, and identified the Isle of the Avatar as the former home — in another age — of the great daemons who destroyed Old Magincia for its lack of humility. The same beings had guarded the Shrine of Humility through the eons, but now the mystic creatures could no longer be found.

Meanwhile, the raising of the Codex from its subterranean resting place had caused great disturbances across the face of the land, and opened a vast underground network of caverns which came to be known as the Underworld. The Great Stygian Abyss became one of the many entrances to this subsurface world. Vulcanism tore up the Isle, reawakening its central volcano.

The next drama in Britannian history (as related in *Warriors of Destiny*) involved the kidnapping of Lord British. Since the king was believed dead, his realm fell under the rule of Lord Blackthorn, whose good nature was corrupted by the Shadowlords. The Avatar was once more summoned from his distant world to combat the menace, and his tortuous quest took him once more to the Isle of the Avatar and the depths beneath it, before his victory.

The Time of Prophecy

When the Avatar liberated Lord British from imprisonment, the act had both geological and spiritual reverberations. The most dramatic of these was the collapse of the Underworld, which forced many denizens of the depths to venture into our surface world.



Among those who emerged from below were the Gargoyles, whose sages prophesied that their race could only be saved by the recovery of the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom (which they claimed as their property) and the destruction of the Anti-Prophet (whom they believed the Avatar to be!). With diabolical cunning, the subterranean beings summoned the Avatar to Britannia in an attempt to kill him, but Lord British intervened in time to rescue the otherworlder.

Still, the Gargoyles remained a threat to the peace of Britannia, and the Avatar embarked on a difficult quest which once again brought him to the Isle of the Avatar. The Twin Shrines were in time liberated from the Gargoyles' possession, and in the lower regions of Dungeon Hythloth — from which most monsters save drakes and dragons had been driven by lava — the Stranger rescued a mariner with priceless information about the Gargoyle menace.

Eventually, the Avatar realized that there was but one way to peace to Britannia — making the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom accessible to both Lord British's subjects and to the Gargoyles, by placing the Codex in the Vortex and then supplying both enemies with mystic Lenses by which they could view the arcane tome. By working his solution from the Shrine on Avatar Isle, the otherworlder brought peace to our world.

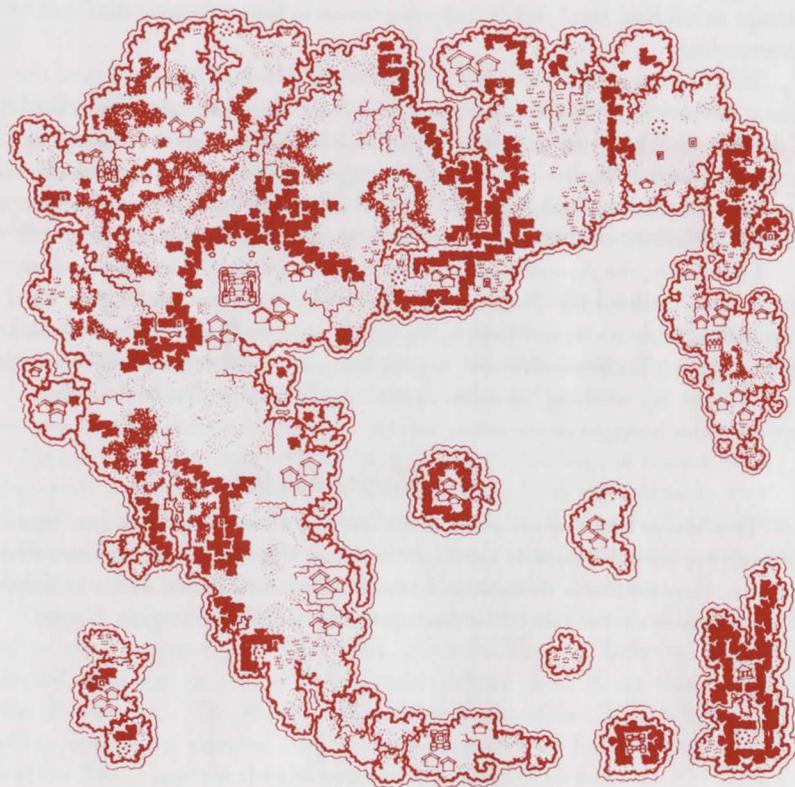
Ten Years Later

The Avatar has now returned to his world, and we must seek our future through our own devotion to the Eight Virtues. Thus it has come to pass that I, Cabisus, have set about to found a Town of Virtue within one of the arcane foci of Britannia — on the Isle of the Avatar, within the Great Stygian Abyss.





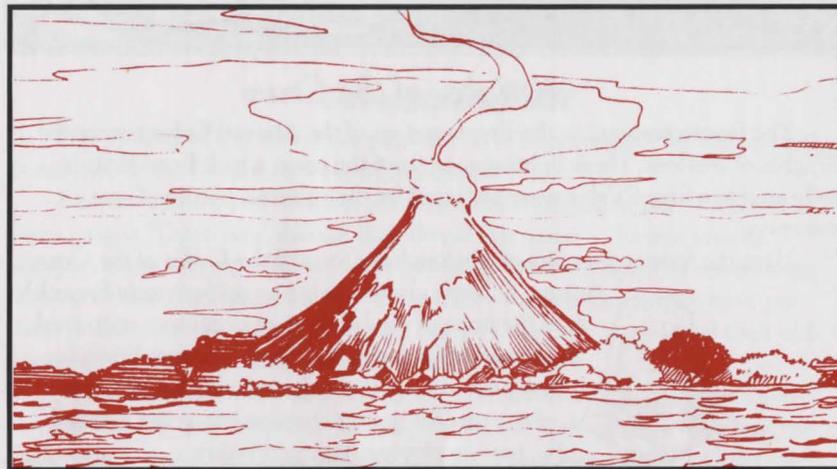
Map of Britannia



Isle of the Avatar



The Colony of the Abyss



With the permission of Lord British, my fellow colonists and I set sail for the Isle of the Avatar five years ago. After a brief though difficult voyage, we sighted the bleak, forboding island rising above the waves.

We wasted no time in charting out the island, pausing to meditate at the Twin Shrines and once again sealing the entrance to the Dungeon Hythloth. Our company of warriors, mages and other pioneers then made the descent into the legendary Abyss. The eruptions and quakes of the past drove away many of the former predators of the chasm, and with the island again stable, we can dwell here in relative security. Nevertheless, our fighters find many challenges against which to test their Valor.

Lord British ordered that a village be established upon the surface of our isle, as a point of contact between ourselves and the rest of Britannia. Baron Almiric, formerly the King's Master of Hounds, has been appointed to command the settlement. His men have erected a rough stone tower, and the completion of a small fort should take only a few years more.

Lord British may soon favor us with a seat upon his Council — that is, we may gain equal status with the Eight Towns of the Virtues. If so, this can only be because of the brotherhood we have established among the disparate societies who have settled this Colony: Knights, Mountain-Folk, Seers, Lizardmen, Goblins and Trolls.

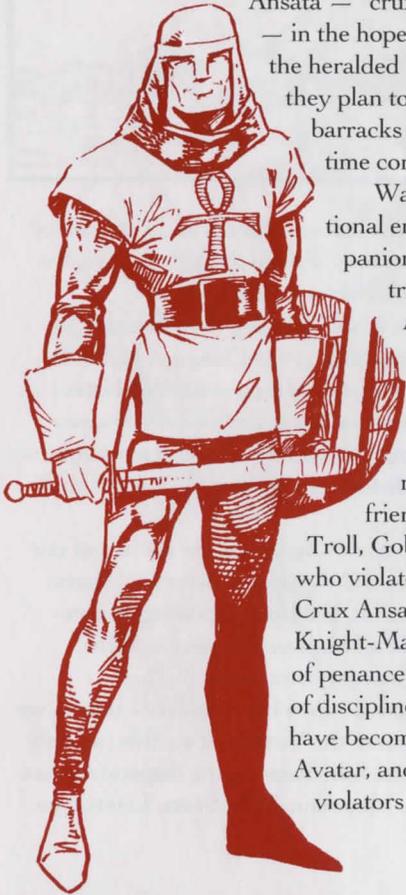




Knights of the Crux

The first to respond to the Proclamation of the Abyssal Colony were the Knights of Jhelom. These fighting men from the town which Lord British dedicated to a life of Valor were attracted by the valorous nature of our enterprise.

Here the former warriors of Jhelom have formed the Order of the Crux Ansata — “crux ansata” being an ancient term for ank — in the hope of establishing an organization to rival the heralded Order of the Silver Serpent. Someday they plan to have extensive training facilities and barracks for young recruits, but at the present time conditions remain primitive.



Warriors and mages, while not exactly traditional enemies, have often been bickering companions in the world of Britannia. Such is not true among us, for the Knights of the Crux Ansata are dependent upon our wizards for magical light and healing. Therefore, mage and fighter are amiable allies in the Abyss.

Our Knights have also renounced many lifelong prejudices and formed friendships with their traditional foes — our Troll, Goblin and Lizardman citizens. Any fighter who violates the least aspect of the strict code of the Crux Ansata must submit himself to the will of the Knight-Master, who prides himself on finding acts of penance which match the violation. This method of discipline has worked so well that the Knights have become strict advocates of the Way of the Avatar, and are often the first to locate and bring violators to our Court of Justice.



Mountain-Folk

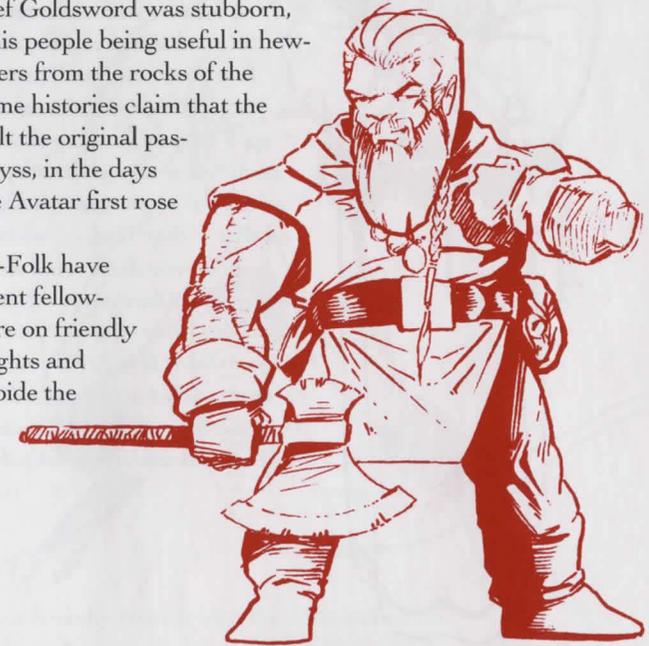
Our Colony in the Abyss is a place for new beginnings. This has certainly been true for the Mountain-Folk of Britannia.

Short of stature and broad of shoulder, the Mountain-Folk — known in times past as “Dwarves,” though they detest this name — have a unique lifestyle dedicated to traditional craftsmanship. Over the ages, however, their distrust of outsiders and their well-known love for precious metals have put them in disrepute. In the past century, many of the Folk abandoned their old ways, left their homes, and married outside their clan.

I was surprised when the Chief of the Mountain-Folk wrote to me concerning the desire of his people to join the Abyssal Colony. Knowing that the Folk were in danger of dying out as a culture, I suggested that the Chief might not want his people to be part of our town — where, after all, our goal is to prove that all people can live in unity.

However, Chief Goldsword was stubborn, and correct about his people being useful in hewing out living quarters from the rocks of the chasm. (Indeed, some histories claim that the Mountain-Folk built the original passageways of the Abyss, in the days when the Isle of the Avatar first rose from the ocean.)

The Mountain-Folk have proved to be excellent fellow-citizens, and they are on friendly terms with our Knights and Seers. They even abide the presence of their traditional foes, the Trolls.





Seers of the Moonstone

On the southern tip of Verity Isle, the town of Moonglow was founded by the mages of Britannia as a settlement embodying the virtue of Honesty. The wizards of this town were among the first to volunteer to be colonists, and an entire contingent of mages joined me on our first voyage to Avatar Isle.

Our magic-users have formed their own Order of Magic, and refer to themselves as the Ancient Illuminated Seers of the Moonstone. They have an especially close relationship with the Mountain-Folk — it was the mountaineers who carved out the seers' living chambers from the rock walls of the chasm.

The seers have, of necessity, chosen to specialize in those magics most useful in our subterranean abode — spells of light, food and comfort. They also conduct many magical experiments, and hope to find new spell reagents among the materials which occur naturally in the Abyss. The seers have asked our explorers to bring back samples of all that they find.

(The seers do not speak directly to me of their matters, but I have overheard them on occasion. While the Eight Virtues may have prompted some of the mages to travel here, I believe that most came for the chance to conduct experiments. It is said that the Great Abyss is unique in all of Britannia, because the barrier between dimensions is especially thin here. — Corby)



Lizardmen

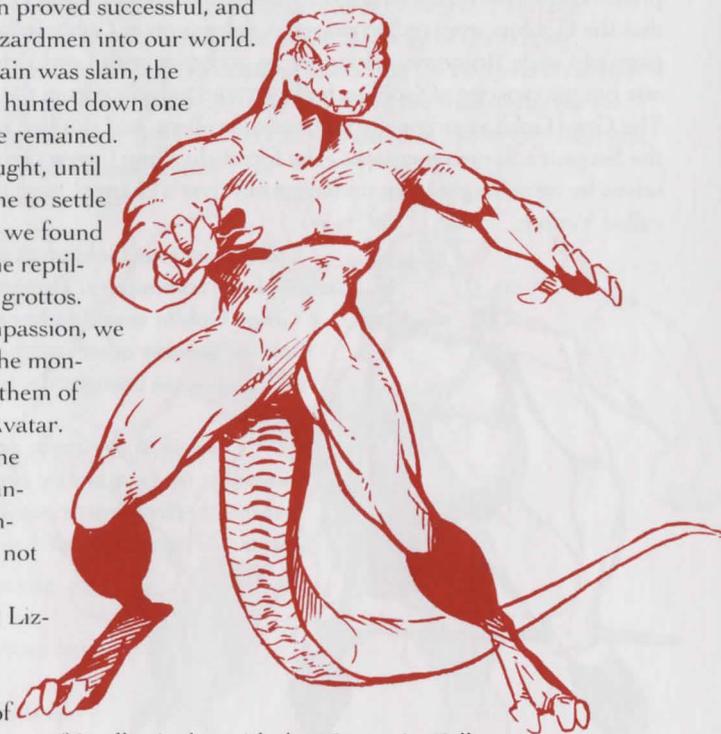
“The Dark Ages” is the name given to that long-ago time when the Triad of Evil stalked the lands. In those same years when Lord British first arrived upon our shores, a young mage named Mondain was perfecting his skills in the arcane arts. The wizard slew his own father in order to seize a gem with mystic powers. Mondain subverted the jewel to evil purposes, and began a campaign of unrest and dismay against all of the world.

In his most foul experiments, Mondain dissected his own servitors as well as the great reptiles which then dwelt in the southern swamps. Reuniting the body parts through magical means, he created a variety of strange sauran forms. One strain proved successful, and thus came the Lizardmen into our world.

After Mondain was slain, the Lizardmen were hunted down one by one until none remained. Or so it was thought, until our colonists came to settle the Abyss! Here we found the last clan of the reptilians living in the grottos. Inspired by Compassion, we forbore slaying the monsters and taught them of the Path of the Avatar.

To our delight, the Lizardmen can understand the common tongue, but not speak it.

Goblins and Lizardmen intermingle in the wetter portions of the Abyss, and have a friendly rivalry with the Mountain-Folk (the mountain-men hate dampness, and would build channels and drain the Abyss if left to themselves!).





Goblins

The Goblins originated from forbidden arcane experiments performed on prisoners and other victims by demented, power-seeking mages. (It was for causes like these that magic was once banned in our lands.) During the Third Age of Darkness, Exodus bred the Goblins into an army dedicated to his wicked cause. Following his defeat, the survivors vanished from the face of Britannia — hunted down by vigilantes or banished to other realms. (In those times, the Goblins were so loosely bound to this world that a single spell could expel them from this plane of existence.)

It was only after our Proclamation went out, promising clemency to those primitive monsterforms who would undertake to follow the Path of the Avatar, that the Goblins were rediscovered. A delegation of Goblinfolk appeared at the gates of Castle Britannia, asking for an audience with Lord British. Not just one but two species of Goblins had survived in hiding from the days of Exodus. The Gray Goblins, originally mountain dwellers, had skulked in the caves of the Serpent's Spine mountains. The forest-dwelling Green Goblins hid themselves by retreating into an underground river's channel, near the baneful lake called Venom.

Today, virtuous Goblinfolk make up one-third of our community. There was a time when a Green Goblin would rather slay a Gray Goblin than any other enemy, but the Path of the Avatar has brought the tribes together as brothers.

(Though the two species rarely come to blows nowadays, the Gray and the Green still attempt to outdo each other whenever possible in matters of Virtue. Old enmities die hard. — Corby)



Trolls

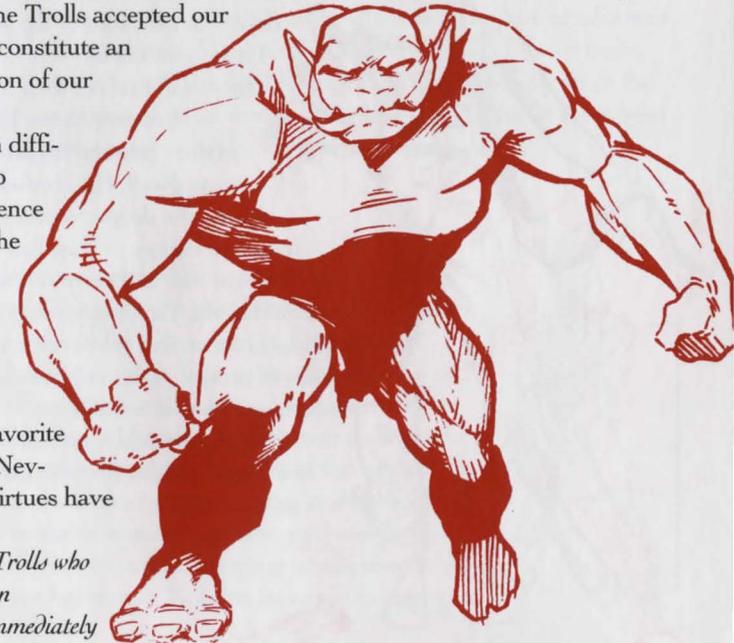
In the district where I was raised, it is not uncommon for Trolls to waylay an occasional traveler. Several times I have seen such brigands after justice had dealt with them, hanging from roadside crosses. Until I visited the Shrine of Compassion, therefore, it had not occurred to me how nearly civilized the Troll people are. After all, they use civilized weapons (stolen from us), wear tatters of clothing or hide, and speak a rough form of the same tongue which we speak.

Curiosity next drove me to visit the Lycaenum on Verity Isle, where I learned that the Trolls had once been a mountain-dwelling people. Over recorded history, however, they have always moved closer to civilization — today, they are commonly found along roads and under bridges. I became convinced that the Trolls were fit candidates for the Way of the Avatar.

My servitors and I travelled the roads of Britannia for two years, recruiting Trolls for our great Abyssal Experiment. Many of the monsterforms rejected us, and some we were forced to slay in self-defense. However, I am glad to report that the Trolls accepted our ways and now constitute an important section of our community.

It has been difficult for many to accept the presence of the Trolls. The Knights were trained from youth to slay such creatures on sight, and Goblins are a favorite food of Trolls. Nevertheless, the Virtues have triumphed.

(And those Trolls who offend by dining on Goblinflesh are immediately exiled, if caught. — Corby)





Exiles

What follows has been written by me in the interests of Honesty and Justice. The fact that Sir Cabirus did not include these facts among his own writings was no doubt a simple oversight. — Corby

Some colonists prove unable or unwilling to live according to the Code of the Avatar. A few became discouraged by life in the Abyss, which is hard and bleak. Some were formerly wicked men who honestly adopted the Eight Virtues, but who, through weakness of will, returned to wickedness. There are

those who say that the Abyss itself works to degrade the quality of a man's character, but Sir Cabirus regarded this as sheer superstition.

Those unable to live in peace with the rest of us are asked to separate themselves, and if they will not go of their own will, they are driven at the point of the sword. Most Exiles join Baron Almiric's keep, or from there sail back to their former lands.

However, some Exiles descend further into the Abyss than any colonists dwell. Knights who have explored the deeper recesses tell of reclusive beings — they call them "ghouls" — who eat rats and vermin. Our warriors claim that the Exiles have degenerated in physical form, and that even though they were once of several races and colors, all approach a common, horrific semblance.

I suspect these are stories embellished by a few rounds of ale, for who can believe such an occurrence!



Ye Who Venture Here

This passage is a guide to those who might feel moved to join our Colony. This rough place is unsuited for those with soft hands or unsteady swords! In particular, we are looking for settlers of these eight professions:

Bard. Minstrels with bright songs and inspiring tales might relieve our bleak existence, and our Colony is worthy of a new tale or two. Bards considering the journey to Avatar Isle must be prepared to perform deeds of valor, not just chronicle them! Many bards are greatly skilled with sling and crossbow, not to mention the arcane arts — these are talents always needed here.



Druid. We are now seeking a contingent of druids to join us in the Abyss. We hope they might be able to use their mystic abilities to persuade a sacred grove to take root in our chasm. Many druids are skilled with bow or mace, and so would be doubly useful. Druids generally shun the wearing of metal armor. Here this is good, for in the Abyss sound carries easily, and metal armor is noisy.

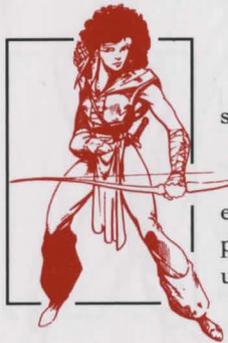
Fighter. Those warriors wishing to join our number should be prepared to satisfy the qualifications of our fighting society, the Order of the Crux Ansata. Prospective Knights should have spent their lives in martial training and have the use of all weapons and armor. (The Order has particularly found the double-edged Britannian sword to be a devastating weapon in the close quarters of the Abyss.) Horses are impractical in our surroundings, and we have no facilities to feed or stable mounts, so leave your steeds behind. The Order's custom is that engaging in magic is only a waste of energy for fighters — Knights leave spell-casting to the mages.





Mage. As with the fighters, wizards desiring to join our Colony must be ready to satisfy the entry requirements of a fraternal organization unique to the Abyss. This is our magical society, the Ancient Illuminated Seers of the Moonstone. Their by-laws encourage magic-users to shun armor except that made of cloth, and to carry no weapons beside staff, sling or dagger. (Arcane weapons are, naturally, excluded from this limitation.) However, no natural or magical law prevents spellcasters from using whatever armor and weapons they choose, and many of the younger Seers opt for the heaviest arms and armor they can manage. Still, the Seers' rules serve to keep the mage focused on his primary purpose — the working of magic.

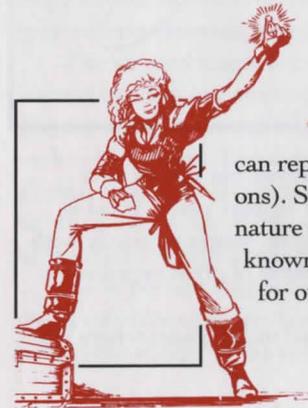
Paladin. I have lately regretted not encouraging immigration by members of this profession, as it might be useful to have colonists experienced in both magic and combat. It is well-known that paladins are formidable warriors and valued allies.



Ranger. With the coming of the druids, should I be successful in recruiting them to establish a grove in the Abyss, we will of course also welcome woodsmen of all types. I have often thought that rangers would be useful here to track down intruding predators, and their training in woods lore might enlighten us about some of the odd creatures we find.



Shepherd. I have given some thought to the introduction of sheep into the Abyss, and for that reason would like to encourage shepherds to make their way to our isle. Herders vary widely in their training, some being adept at certain weapons or even spells, but the one certain attribute of every shepherd is a degree of humility which would be most welcome here.



Tinker. Our community has great need of any who can repair metal or wooden implements (especially weapons). Such artisans should also be warriors, due to the nature of our settlement. I do not think that the well-known tinker aversion to magic will be a problem here, for our mages are never intrusive.



Magic in the Depths



In the first years of our settlement here in the Abyss, our mages have learned much about the nature of magic in this most strange place. What is written below is meant for the guidance of those pilgrim mages who may wish to join our company, lest you bring with you those items of great expense which will be useless to you here.

(Many thanks to Seer Danlock, who has advised me in places where my natural gifts and learning failed me.)

A History of Magic

Many alive today do not realize that magic — or the “dreadful arts,” as the mystic arts used to be known — was once a lost art in the land we now call Britannia. The rulers of the various city-states recognized the great evil which could be worked through the casting of powerful spells, and enforced a rigid ban on the practice of magic-working.

Unfortunately, there was one who did not hold himself subject to the rule of law. His name was Mondain, and his evil wizardry brought about the First Age of Darkness. In order to defeat him, certain good citizens took down from their shelves the long-disused tomes of magic, and taught themselves the secrets of the arcane world in order that their power might be used in opposition to the spells of Mondain the Wicked.

There have been many ages since the defeat of Mondain, but the forces of evil, empowered by their knowledge of spell-casting, have never ceased to be a



threat to our peaceful world. Therefore, our own mages have never abandoned their studies, and have greatly added to the number and power of their spells over time.

A wizard who is also a true follower of the Way of the Avatar recognizes his heavy responsibility to wisely use the arcane powers which he possesses. The Prime Virtue of all mages is Honesty, for a practitioner of magic must strive to be free of illusions or confusions — he must see the world as it really is, and correctly assess his own limitations and improper aspirations. Should a mage use the mystic arts for personal gain or vengeance, he might find that his powers have deserted him.

The ways of magic are diverse and strange, and there is much yet to be learned by even our most advanced mages. We believe that the magical energies are arranged in eight spheres, all positioned about a common center, and each sphere larger than that which precedes it. Unseen bonds link these shells of energy with the workings of the physical plane. As a mage grows in learning, he also grows in his ability to touch the greater spheres of energy, until at last he can cast even the spells of the Eighth Circle.

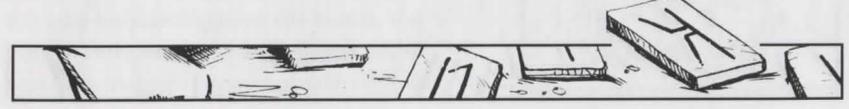
An important element in the manipulation of these arcane energies is the use of syllables of magic, for unless a mage can speak the proper words of power, the energy of the spheres will remain locked to him.

Runic Magic

The magically-attuned among our original colonists quickly discovered that the rules of magic as known in the rest of the world do not apply to our new underground home. As any student of our world's history must be aware, many titanic and dramatic events have unfolded in the vicinity of the Great Stygian Abyss — indeed, the chasm and the isle itself originated in energies arcane! Our foremost mages believe that the release in past times of enormous mystic energies here has worn the dimensional fabric thin, allowing the laws of other worlds to mingle with and even negate certain of the mystic principles.

Firstly, the casting of magic while within the Abyss does not require the use of reagents. Bring no sulfurous ash, ginseng, spider silk, nightshade, black pearls, blood moss or garlic — you will have no need for arcane ingredients in our community.

Secondly, new colonists should leave behind their spellbooks. We have discovered a way to cast magic which works only in the Abyss, and which does





not require the user to carry a cumbersome tome with him. There are, scattered among the corridors in the depths, special stones charged with mystic potency. Each of these stones is inscribed with a rune identifying its nature. These rune stones are similar in function to the syllables of magic used in ordinary Britannian magic. Any spell can be cast by a mage who possesses the rune stones pertaining to that spell, unless the caster lacks the experience to utilize the spells of that Circle.

Thirdly, rune stones can only be used when they are placed in a suitable receptacle. Our seers have enchanted special bags for this purpose, and will provide you with a rune bag upon your arrival.

Fourthly, mages in the depths must develop proficiency in the physical gestures associated with spell-casting. We have noted spell failures here when all other conditions have been satisfied, and we attribute these disappointments to a lack of casting skill on the part of the wizard.

Lastly, it is just as important for a Runic Mage to possess Mana as it is for any other Britannian Mage, for this is the power which must be channeled into all wizardry. The mystic energy is restored when a mage sleeps, or sometimes by the use of arcane objects such as scrolls.



Bestiary

The prospective member of our community should not be discouraged to learn that there are many fierce beasts which inhabit the Abyss. Numerous and diverse as they are, they have proved no match for the swords of our Knights.

(Or so the Knights tell us. — Corby)

Bats

These verminous, disease-ridden pests proliferate in the more remote portions of the Underworld. Bats are bird-like in aspect, but covered with a rough fur rather than feathers. Bats make annoying foes, as they are difficult to strike and very swift, and are almost always found in flocks.



Our Knights report finding two varieties of bat in the Abyss. Cave Bats are not known to be fearsome antagonists, preferring to avoid battle when they can. Being dark as midnight, they are difficult to sight but may be detected by the high squealing sounds they make when communicating amongst themselves. One is easily killed with a well-placed blow.



On the other hand, the Vampire Bat is a robust creature which seems to seek out opponents. This cunning beast — which can be distinguished from the Cave Bat by its red fur — prefers to attack from above, and may easily remain unseen by those who keep their eyes fixed on the ground, looking for traps or gold. Beware the bite of the Vampire Bat, for the venom it releases is strong enough to sear one's skin.

Bloodworms

These repulsive green crawlers are distantly related to the common Rotworms of Britannia, but are possessed of an aggressive nature that would befit a creature ten times their size. Sir Broderick stumbled upon a subterranean nest of these vermin, and quickly discovered that they were not as easily killed as Rotworms. Seeking to find a better location to make his stand against the beasts, the Knight retreated — only to discover the worms pursuing him with single-minded



determination. Broderick finally slew them all, only to die from poisoning of the blood as a result of the worms' venom. His scrawled notes, written as a selfless act by a dying man, were recently recovered by explorers, but the good knight's body has never been found.

Fire Elementals

These beings of fire, left in the chasms after eruptions of lava in the last age, are among the most challenging foes of the Abyss. First of all, one should know

that these Elementals have the ability to toss portions of themselves — balls of living fire — at their opponents. Secondly, they are fearsome warriors: quick to attack with their flaming arms, nimble enough to escape most blows, and sturdy enough to withstand grievous damage. As they can kill a man in only a few blows, it is often prudent to avoid their attention by passing quietly and at a distance (Elementals are said to be nearly blind).



Gazers

Surely this creature was created by sorcerous means, for no natural law could have given birth to a beast this monstrous. Gazers float through the corridors of our chasm, and with their many eyeballs are quick to spot intruders into their domain. Do not underestimate the fearsomeness of this obstacle, as a Gazer's attack — noted by the wink of its great central eye, or the twist of an eye stalk — cuts as deep as a sword thrust, and this beast seldom misses its mark.



Ghosts

Our Seers have been at a loss to explain the presence of the several types of spectral beings which are sometimes found within the Underworld. We do not know whether these are the spirits of Britannia's dead or merely beasts of an ethereal nature. The typical Ghost is no match for an experienced warrior, as two or three well placed blows will quench its essence, and in such a short fight



the specter cannot seriously injure its foe.

More dangerous are the rarer, more powerful ghostforms. The White Ghost, which differs from a typical ghost by being opaque and blazingly white in hue, is more substantial in this plane and thus much more difficult to slay. Therefore, combat against this foe typically takes much longer — and the White Ghost can easily slay its foe in such a span of time!

The most dangerous form of ethereal being to be found here is the Dire Ghost. Dark as night and as substantial as a shadow, this creature is difficult to see until it attacks — when its eyes glow a bright golden color. Seer Moonwane believes that these ghosts are the remnants of slain monsters, based on the observation that Dire Ghosts attack with an unmatched ferocity.



Giant Rats

Over the centuries, the rodents of Britannia have grown ever larger (and hungrier) in the catacombs and tunnels which honeycomb this land. Natural agility and sharp teeth are these creatures' chief advantages. Even a single Giant Rat poses a significant danger for a lightly armed opponent, though an experienced warrior can slay a pack in as many blows as there are enemies.



Of the rats which have bred in the Abyss, we have distinguished two varieties. The Giant Tan Rat, commonly found in the drier upper levels, is an aggressive beast with the disgusting tactic of leaping up in order to slash with its teeth at an enemy's throat.

The Great Gray Rat is found in the lower depths, where it feeds upon the refuse washed down from higher in the chasm. Consequent to their revolting eating habits, these rats are universally infected with noxious germs which they pass on with every bite. Seldom do our Knights tangle with Great Gray Rats without someone in the party becoming ill. Fortunately, these rats can often be avoided, or driven off with a spirited defense.

Golems

Whether these monsters are natural to this chasm, or whether they were created here by long-ago wizards experimenting with dark forces, our wisest men cannot say. What we do know is that the Golems attack us on sight, and that no single mortal warrior has yet been a match for their fearsome strength and resistance to damage.



Each type of Golem appears to have been formed from a different element, and they also differ somewhat in mass. The Earth Golem, a brown-hued figure composed of solidified soil, is the smallest. Still, it is a formidable creature best tackled by well-armed opponents. Knight Galloway claims that he once escaped from such a Golem by entering a maze of passageways — he thinks these beasts track their foes by eyesight, and are probably hard of hearing.

The Stone Golem is larger than the Earth Golem, and can be recognized by its gray color. As it can slay a man in as few as two blows, and since it would seem to take many sword strikes to slay it, our Knights only tackle this opponent in teams.

Worst of all these unnatural creatures is the Metal Golem, noted for its mottled rust-and-steel appearance. Few weapons can dent this massive being, while a single blow from a Metal Golem can leave a warrior crippled for life. Knight Galloway concluded that Metal Golems were practically blind, but his recent death at their hands has put this theory into disrepute.

The Headless

Do not fall prey to pity for these wretched deformities, for the Headless have a relentless animosity for all upright beings with heads — they attack without thought, and give no quarter unless on the verge of their own extinction. Having no visible eyes or ears, it has long been a mystery how the Headless find and pursue their prey. It is a simple matter to avoid a pack of these beasts by exercising silence and keeping a prudent distance.



Imps

These damnable abominations, virtually extinct elsewhere in Britannia, remain alive in the Abyss despite our best efforts to slay every last one of them. They are a foul conglomeration, part demon, part monkey and perhaps part creature or creatures unknown (to account for their hideous green coloring). Flying lazily overhead in the larger crevices, taunting our Knights and tossing down the occasional arcane bolt, Imps have been a nuisance and a thorn in our flesh since our arrival. They are poor fighters when one can draw them into hand-to-hand combat, and can easily be slain with a sword-thrust or two — if they can be enticed to fight.



Lurkers

For the most part, these tentacled monstrosities have been more of a nuisance than a threat. Lurkers dwell in the subterranean rivers and channels of the Abyss, and have never been seen on land. They are normally seen floating just below the surface of the water, with their eyes and yellow tentacles poking out above. We know of a few cases in which a Lurker has pursued a swimmer, and once a beast became so enraged that it lurked at the water's edge and attacked those along the shore.

Knight Willomar tells of encountering a more ferocious variety of Lurker in the deeper catacombs. This Deep Lurker is reportedly a veritable giant. (We do not know if it is a lone monster, or one of a new sub-species.) Its great size could not be detected from the small profile it presented above the water, but the Deep Lurker should be recognizable by its distinctive green color. Willomar spent many days recovering from his battle, and was for a time wracked by a mysterious fever that poisoned his brain, but we do not know if the disease came from the monster or from some other source.



Mongbats

The Mongbats rank even worse than Imps as the most pestiferous elements in our underground abode. Resembling a cross between bat and monkey, these brown avians have no honor, but instead conduct battle by swooping down to score a hit, then flying off to circle out of range of one's weapons. Even worse, the beasts are so swift and nimble that they are difficult to hit even in close combat. These evil pests are most accurate in their diving attacks, though fortunately they are too small to cause great damage with any single blow. We would exterminate these vermin if we could.



Reapers

Legend tells us that the first Reapers were born when an ancient, enchanted forest was swallowed up in a cataclysmic upheaval long ago. Ever since, these animate, arcane tree-forms have been found in subterranean places, often guarding some object they fancy or patrolling their chosen territory. The common Reapers of Britannia are fully mobile for only a brief period in their life cycle, but the specimens to be found here can wander about at will (though quite slowly). Although their wildly swinging branches often miss their targets, one blow that strikes a valiant warrior can do more damage than any sword thrust. Therefore, Reapers are a serious menace, to be avoided by the inexperienced warrior.



Rotworms

In the dank depths of the Underworld — where rot infects, corrosion ruins and corruption festers — can be found the foul nests of these loathsome worms. Should one approach close enough to be sensed by a Rotworm, the beast is sure to attack. An armored warrior has little to fear from these worms, but an ill-equipped explorer could easily be overcome by sheer numbers.

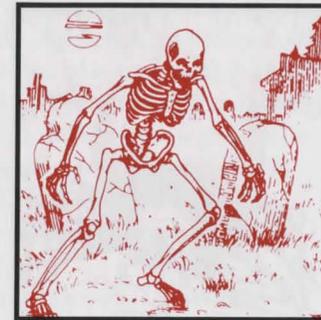


Shadow Beasts

There is little we can say about this entity, or family of entities — we obviously cannot see that which is invisible, so we do not know how many there are. The Shadow Beast is thought to be immensely powerful, more than a match for any single warrior. When attacked by an unseen adversary, first look up (for a flying attacker) and down (lest a small worm or other foe is striking) — if none of these be the case, then suspect the Shadow Beast and begin to strike in all directions!

Skeletons

Perhaps a consequence of the unique, arcane nature of our Abyssal environment, these Undead creatures may be found almost anywhere — some think Skeletons crawl directly out of the rock walls of the chasm! Furthermore, these monsters are most commonly found in groups (should you find one Skeleton, there are likely to be more around the corner). Skeletons hate all living beings. Fortunately, they are weak, ineffective warriors.



Slugs

Not to be mistaken for the common Slimes of Britannia, the Slugs of the Abyss are gelatinous, amorphous entities. Their extremely small and limited minds are entirely taken up with an insatiable curiosity, and so Slugs are certain to follow any motion they detect. Fortunately for explorers, Slugs have no eyes or ears, and therefore miss much that occurs around them.

Of the two varieties of Slug found locally, the Flesh Slug — notable for its pale fleshy color — is the most common and least dangerous. We are not certain if these creatures intend to bite their victims, or if their offensive actions are accidents of their constant writhing. Certainly, no warrior of any experience need fear these pitiful beasts.

However, beware the greenish Acid Slug. Though only a little larger than the Flesh Slug, the Acid Slug secretes a noxious vapor which sometimes intoxicates its foes. Despite its fearsome name, this Slug is not poisonous — merely inedible.



Spiders

The repellent arachnids which patrol the depths of the Abyss are not of the web-building kind, but roam the crevices in search of fresh prey. The common Giant Spider is a dark gray in color. These gargantuan spiders are midway in stature between a bloodhound and a small pony, and since they travel in mated pairs or clans, these creatures present a reasonable challenge to the typical fighting man. Despite their bloated appearance and short legs, don't be surprised by their leaping form of attack.

Smaller in form and reddish-brown in hue is the poisonous Wolf Spider. It is the most easily killed of the large spiders, but the Wolf Spider will likely



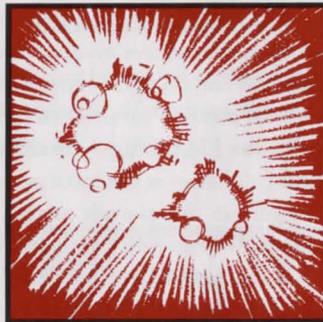
score one or two bites (and inject its red bile, a powerful poison) before succumbing to the inevitable. Most Knights think this spider to be relatively inoffensive, but Knight Vitalar reports the beasts have attacked him whenever they have detected his presence.

The greatest adversary among the arachnids of the Abyss is the Dread Spider. A ghostly white or light gray in color, this creature is the equivalent in combat of two or three of its cousins — very sturdy and thus

difficult to kill. To compound the problem, this spider is a vicious opponent, capable of repeatedly penetrating one's armor with its sharp bite. The Dread Spider is one of the most venomous creatures known in the Abyss.

Wisps

Having the harmless appearance of floating bits of light, the solitary Wisp of the Abyss would appear to be no more than a beautiful apparition. The contrary is true. Wisps are nearly indestructible masses of energy, and given their tremendous speed and devastating electrical attacks, they cannot be fought by ordinary mortals. Our Seers think them capable of casting magic as well, and often seek them out to consult them on arcane matters.



Afterword

The volume penned by Corby, scribe of Sir Cabirus, came into the possession of our Library after many years of being passed on from one reader to another. At this time, I should like to make some historical clarifications.

Firstly, there have been many suspicions about Sir Cabirus' death. These I wish to put to rest. Corby's scrawled notes testify that his master died in his sleep, in an ordinary though untimely manner. There is no evidence whatever to support rumors of murder by poison or strange magics. Such unfounded speculations apparently helped to stir up the discord which led to the downfall of the Abyss Colony.

Secondly, there is the matter of the theft of the eight mystic devices which Sir Cabirus collected before his death. It was Cabirus' plan to cement the harmony of his settlement by presenting each of these artifacts to a different group or faction among his community. Unfortunately, he did not leave a guide as to how to distribute the items. This caused great disagreement among the Colonists, and certain factions seized those objects which they believed Cabirus meant for them. Even the grave of Sir Cabirus was desecrated by colonists hungry for treasure.

What follows is a description of the eight arcane devices. Unfortunately, the precise nature of the enchantment upon the artifacts is unknown to me.

- **Book of Truth.** Said to have been penned by Ravenhurst of Moonglow, a great philosopher of the past age, this book contains meditations on the meaning of life, the importance of truth, the fallibility of the senses, and the difficulty of seeing even what is directly adjacent to one's mustache.
- **Ring of Humility.** This simple ring was worn by Bill, the humble son of Jenn. Bill labored at Lord British's Museum of Oddities to repair and preserve the exhibits, yet never asked for reward.
- **Cup of Wonder.** This object was carved from the heartwood of an ancient oak by one of the finest craftsmen of Skara Brae.
- **Shield of Valor.** Once carried by Lord Blackthorn, this shield was set aside when that noble ascended to the rulership of Britannia upon the kidnapping of Lord British (a tale told in *Warriors of Destiny*). It is therefore symbolic of Valor, which Blackthorn also set aside when he became regent.
- **Standard of Honor.** This banner was carried by none other than Sir Geraci, who was slain at Lord British's side during the ill-fated expedition to the Underworld (as related in *Warriors of Destiny*). Though Geraci could have saved himself by fleeing, he instead upheld his oath to serve his king until death.

- **Sword Caliburn.** Reportedly molded after a legendary sword from the world of the Avatar, this weapon is said to cleave truth from falsehood.
- **Taper of Sacrifice.** Crafted by the finest artisans of Minoc, this candle was once used to illuminate the Shrine of Sacrifice. I am told that none may bathe in the light from this taper without appreciating this truth — that the candle produces light only through its own destruction.
- **Wine of Compassion.** Brewed by the brethren at Empath Abbey, this noble vintage is said to open one's heart to the sufferings of others.

Thirdly, I must warn all to avoid the Stygian Abyss. Without Sir Cabirus to guide them, the Colonists warred among themselves. Contact with the subterranean community has been lost for many years, and I fear that there are no human survivors.

Joye, Librarian

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