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Veil  
of  
Darkness





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*The  
Prophecy*

*From the ever dark sky shall he descend in a bird of steel,  
 Salvation for those who have been unrighteously damned.  
 He shall deny the part he is destined to play.  
 Until he finds a bloodied tool most foul.  
 He must free a man cursed for curiosity's sake,  
 And dispel one dead but forced to serve.  
 A youth in madness he shall willingly heal,  
 The hanged man's grief must he unveil.  
 Seven lost souls have favors to ask,  
 Once appeased he shall be allowed to pass.  
 He shall find and slay the hound that hunts the night,  
 Claiming a purse of silver to serve his needs.  
 A hidden place he must pry from one quite mad,  
 And speak to evil incarnate, the Dark Lord's bane.  
 He shall turn aside the vampire's charms,  
 And stand strong against claw and fang.  
 Then he must make his own most holy attack,  
 And the imprisoned light must be set free.  
 A true name must be spoken for Evil's power to wane.  
 He cannot falter, not even once, for it means his death.  
 And if he denies the Dark Lord his place of rest,  
 The veil of darkness shall be lifted,  
 And the evil reign of terror shall at last come to end.*

## A LETTER FROM BLONDIE

To my dear friend —

You have often asked what happened to me during those weeks I seemed to drop off of the earth. At the time, I told you all I could — these were painful memories, and I never wanted to revisit them. However, it has been many years now, and I wanted to explain it all and record it for future generations.

I've written out everything that happened to me during those crazy weeks. In fact, I surprised myself with the amount of detail I recalled. When I started, I didn't think I would ever be as complete as I have been. I suppose a part of me found it therapeutic — and at least I know this is now recorded for posterity.

You've always been curious about Deirdre, and how I met her. Suffice it to say I never wanted to talk about that because it, also, was a part of the strange and horrendous story you are about to read. Hopefully you will understand my need for silence, and will one day be able to forgive me.

Please keep this journal for me. One day Deirdre and I will pass on, and I want a record of what happened for the children. When the proper time comes, please give it to them, and show them this note. Hopefully they too will understand.

I hope to speak to you soon —

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blondie', written in a cursive style.

## EXPLORER'S JOURNAL TO THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS

This is the story of a Prophecy. Fulfilling this rather annoying Prophecy wasn't easy or fun, but it does make for a good tale. It may seem amazing, or even unbelievable, but I swear it is all the truth. I have attempted to be as clear and precise as possible — perhaps this evidence will help silence the unbelievers. May you read with an open mind, and not judge me too harshly.

### *From the Ever Dark Sky Shall He Descend in a Bird of Steel*

**S**ome parts of that Prophecy were easier than others to fulfill. The first line, for example, I managed to take care of with ease! Highly unwanted ease, but nonetheless. . . .

I was flying a cargo run in that old plane of mine. Money was always tight, and I had taken to running these side missions for some extra cash. Well, I was flying one night and a storm came up. It was a strange storm — came up very suddenly and violently, just as I was passing over a valley of some sort. I almost lost control of the plane once — could have sworn a giant hand had flicked the thing! The needles flickered wildly, and the plane was diving straight for the ground. I tapped the gauges, hoping they were just acting up again, but to no avail. Fighting the stick was difficult — it seemed possessed the way it bucked! Finally though, I regained control.

I had fallen a bit too close to the ground for comfort, so I began to climb, trying to gain some altitude. Things were going fine, and my heart was beating a little less wildly. Finally I thought I was free of the storm. Then, out of nowhere, this huge black thing hit the windshield. I recoiled and lost control of the plane. Just before I crashed I was able to see that it had been a giant bat.

I must have blacked out on impact. I remember waking up and smelling smoke. The plane was catching fire, and I knew I had to get out of there. I grabbed my knife, and then managed to drag myself from the wreckage and up a hill. I lost consciousness just as I heard the plane burst into flame behind me.

### *Salvation for Those Who Have Been Unrighteously Damned*

**I** woke up some hours later. I had been cleaned up and placed into a bed. Focusing my vision, I saw an angel standing above me. At least, that's

what she seemed to me. Turned out her name was Deirdre, and that she and a servant named Ivan had carried me from the Crash Site. She said it was a miracle that I had survived. I thought she was cute, and tried to get to know her better but she sent me downstairs to talk to her Dad. At the bottom of the stairs I found Ivan, who told me I should hurry into the study. I entered the study and found Mr. Khristoverikh sitting in his chair smoking a pipe. He never offered me a seat in the empty chair to his right.

As we spoke, Mr. Khristoverikh kept on calling me “sir”; when I asked him to stop calling me that, he gave his first name — Kirill. Thank goodness — I was getting worried about having to pronounce that last name all the time!

He described how Deirdre and Ivan, their servant, went to “investigate the metal beast that fell from the sky.” I was surprised that they had never heard of nor seen an airplane before — but it turns out that the whole valley was rather backward anyway.

Once we had established that the metal beast was indeed my plane, I asked if I could see where it had crashed. He was quite polite and suggested that I conserve my strength for a few days; then he asked me if I could perform a small favor for him. How could I say no? He and his daughter had probably saved my life! Besides, it was a simple task — fetch a hammer. Evidently a neighbor named Eduard had borrowed it some time back and had not returned it. I just had to speak with him and return the hammer to Kirill.

Kirill even told me to ask Ivan about some coins before I left; I could use the money Ivan would give me anyway I saw fit. I spoke to Ivan about the “coins”; he gave me a sack containing six silver pieces and warned me to spend them wisely.

*He Shall Deny the Part  
He Is Destined to Play*

I left the house and began wandering around the Village. At first glance, there was a tavern, three houses (besides Kirill’s house), a shed, and a general store.

I noticed the tavern had a rather interesting and colorful sign depicting a severed head. Curious, I entered the establishment. I met Seth the bartender; he seemed friendly enough. He asked if I smoked and offered me a light if I ever needed it. Seemed that his family had owned The Severed Head — which was the name of the tavern — for several generations. He mentioned that he also had a hobby of collecting things, in particular cups. He seemed especially proud of a golden goblet that he would only bring out to drink very fine wine.

Sophia, a lady at the bar, kept interrupting my conversation with Seth. She offered me a drink, but I had a headache so I declined as politely as I could.

I saw three darts lying on the floor near the dart board; I didn’t bother to pick them up. I figured if I ever needed them, they’d still be there later.



There were three villagers sitting in the tavern. I couldn't help overhearing their conversation about a dead man named Eduard. It hit me that this was the man who had Kirill's hammer! Although this should make retrieving the hammer a bit easier, I wasn't sure if this was my idea of a simple errand. One of the villagers thought that a werewolf may have killed Eduard, but the others seemed to think otherwise. I decided to check it out for myself so I left the tavern to explore . . . even though I had misgivings about the whole thing.

The first building I came across had three skulls hanging by the front steps. My college literature professor would have been intrigued by the subtle death motif, but I just wanted to know if this was Eduard's house. Inside, I found Annabelle. She was an apothecary of sorts; she bought and sold herbs. That day her stock seemed a little low because all she had to offer were fennel seeds for a silver piece. I made a mental note of this; I could probably pick up herbs along the way and make a little money by selling them to her. As I turned to leave, I thought to myself that if I were the apothecary, I'd think twice about using skulls as porch decor. They don't do much for credibility. Of course, they could be the remnants of the previous apothecary who didn't know any better. . . .

I walked out of Annabelle's and into the shed next door. I noticed a pry bar lying on the floor. At the time I saw no use for it and left it there. Of course, I regretted this decision later.

The large, two-story building next door seemed more promising. The sign above the awning had parcels, so I

assumed it was a store of some sort. Turns out it was the village's general store. Ion, the storekeeper, offered to sell me an oil lamp for a silver coin. I had no use for it, so I passed for the time being.

I noticed a door on the back wall of the store. Being the nosy kind of guy that I am, I strolled right through. The back room had stairs that led up. At the top of the stairs I found a cozy living room with a couch and tables and other such things. I tried to look under the sofa cushions for some change, but they seemed to be sewn down, and I couldn't manipulate them in any way. My designs being frustrated, I decided to explore the doors along the wall. One room had nothing of interest, except for an elaborate quilt that looked like something my grandmother would have made. The other room, however, was definitely occupied.

A little girl lay moaning in her bed while her mother sat in a chair by her side. The mother said the girl's name was Natalia, and that Natalia was sick with "the madness." Touched (in the head?), I volunteered to find a cure. I tried to talk to the girl, but she just kept calling to her mother and father and mumbling about being taken away. Having explored the house, I decided to move on.

Now there were only two houses left to explore; one seemed rather large and abused and the other small and homey. Having just recently been spooked by Natalia's situation, I decided to explore the small, homey, and safe-looking bungalow. Candles burned in the foyer, and the scent of

melted wax permeated the walls. A closed door led further into the house, and a stairway led to the basement.

I took the stairway down first. The stairs led to a storage room filled with candles. A door on the far wall led to the candlemaker's workshop. The candlemaker introduced himself as Josep. We went through the "Yes, I'm the outlander who fell from the sky" routine again. Then, he told me about his son, Anton, whose imagination led him to believe that I was "more bird than man, covered in glistening scales of steel, and armed with long, sharp talons." Glancing at my fingernails, I continued to listen as he expressed his hopes that the madness would not touch Anton. Apparently Anton and Natalia were friends. He also mentioned that his wife recently died an untimely death . . . like many people here in the valley. The candlemaker asked that I keep quiet about Natalia to Anton — he didn't want to worry his son unnecessarily. He also mentioned that although the candles he was working on weren't ready for sale yet, he would have some ready if I came back later. I wanted to ask why I couldn't buy the candles in the store-room outside, but decided to be polite. Maybe he had a huge backorder to fill.

I went back upstairs and to the foyer. Walking through the door, I discovered the living room with a fire blazing cheerfully in the hearth. As usual, I poked my nose into the rooms; one was empty and in the other I found Anton. He frantically bounced a little red ball against the floor. He seemed

surprised to see that I was just another guy, not a monster. I explained that people probably mistook my plane for an evil creature. Relieved, he asked if I would take him to see my plane; I didn't think it was such a good idea at the time. Remembering my promise to Natalia's mother (but absent-mindedly forgetting my promise to Anton's father) I asked Anton about "Natalia". He was quite aware that she was ill and that no one ever recovered from the madness. They had been good friends and had even swapped locks of hair to remember each other by. He was glad to have that memento of their friendship. I took my leave and left him to his frenetic dribbling.

### *Until He Finds a Bloodied Tool Most Foul*

**H**aving explored every other building in the Village, I realized that the remaining ramshackle building must be Eduard's. After hearing the villager's talk at the tavern, I dreaded what I might find inside, but entered anyway.

The front foyer was empty, and another door led into the home. I found myself in a large living room with two other doors. One was locked, so I walked through the other.

Just not my day. I found myself in a library of sorts — quite a cozy one, really. Unfortunately, a rather large blood stain dispelled any urge I had to kick back and do some reading. I examined the stain a little more closely

and discovered a piece of torn fabric. Remembering the suspicions the villagers had regarding Eduard's disappearance, I examined the path of the stain.

Strangely enough, the trail of blood led beneath a bookcase leaning against the wall. Now, I wasn't as brilliant a coder (or decoder) as Mr. Holmes, but I was surprised the villagers hadn't thought to wonder why the stain seemingly led off into nowhere. I poked about the bookcase a bit and found that pushing against its right side caused it to slide back, revealing a hidden door!

Of course, I wasn't about to stop now, so I walked right through it. I should have known things wouldn't get better. . . . On the other side was a small room, its most prominent features being a bookcase on the wall and a dead body on the floor. Finding no books of interest, I turned my attention to the corpse. It quickly became obvious that the body on the floor was Eduard's, and that the hammer I had been sent to fetch had been the instrument of his death. I picked up the bloody hammer. As an added bonus, I appropriated the two silver coins lying on the floor, wiping them off on my trousers.

Eduard was obviously being uncommunicative, so I exited his home and slowly walked through the Village to Kirill's house. My misgivings were getting worse and worse every minute. It was obvious that Eduard had not been killed by anything supernatural — he had been murdered! I needed to talk to Kirill . . . and soon.

I spoke with Ivan as I entered the house. He was happy to see that I had the hammer and directed me to speak to Kirill as soon as possible. That suited me just fine.

Kirill was sitting in his favorite chair when I entered the study. He seemed very happy that I had found the hammer — or as he called it “a bloody tool most foul.” He then started yammering about my being the people's salvation, and being the one to “deliver us from Kairn's embrace.” I had to interrupt then and point out that while I had found the hammer, I had also found a rather dead man along with it. I thought they were all crazy, and had no qualms about telling him that.

He had a rather interesting response to my outburst . . . instead of becoming offended, he simply explained that instead of being crazy, most of the valley people were cursed. He also explained his excitement by repeating that he believed I was the valley's hope and salvation.

I interrupted him again. I told him I simply wanted to get out of there, and I certainly did not want to be anyone's “hope.” Kirill simply responded by pointing out that there was no escape from the valley. He continued by describing the high mountains ringing the vale, and warned of the many dangers that had kept people from escaping in the past.

As he talked, I got a sinking feeling in my stomach. Much as I didn't want to, I began to believe what he was saying. And once I believed that what he was saying was true, I knew there was no turning back.

He continued by telling me about a Prophecy, and how he believed I was the savior mentioned in it. I was somewhat doubtful, but he gave me a copy of it and told me to read the first few lines:

*From the ever dark sky shall  
he descend in a bird of steel,*

*Salvation for those who have  
been unrighteously damned.*

*He shall deny the part he  
is destined to play,*

*Until he finds a  
bloodied tool most foul.*

I couldn't believe it — these lines described exactly what had befallen me. I had crashed in a "bird of steel", denied the part I was to play, found a bloody tool "most foul", and was now being considered salvation for "those who have been unrighteously damned"!

According to the Prophecy, I was going to go up against the "Dark Lord" and end his reign of terror. It seemed to be a good time to ask about the Dark Lord — Kairn.

Kirill said Kairn's story was too long to tell, but gave me a sheaf of paper titled "The Forge of the Evil Heart." He said the whole story of Kairn and the history of the valley was within, and that I should read it. His final words were to tell me that he and his home were at my disposal, and that he would help me in any way possible.

My heart heavy, I left Kirill in the study and went to wander about the house. I felt like talking to somebody, and realized Deirdre might be about. I went up to the room I had awoken in and found her

She seemed happy to see me, and asked if everything had gone well with her father. Kind of a tough question to answer, really. I replied that everything seemed like a dream, and that it seemed as though I was trapped there.

She replied that all of the people were trapped in the same nightmare I was. I was frustrated and responded by saying that if I had anything to say about it, the nightmare would soon end.

Deirdre paused a moment and seemed touched. She said that her father read stories to her when she was young, and that the princess always gave the champion knight her scarf. With a shy smile, she pulled her scarf off and gave it to me. I was flattered, and told her that after everything was done, I'd like to see her more often. My heart leapt when she agreed!

She smiled again, and suggested that once that time came, we could share some of her father's fine wine. She said that her father had the finest wine collection in the valley, but always kept it under lock and key. I didn't care too much about the wine, but I looked forward to seeing her again! I wished her well and left the house, wanting to finish all of this!

*He Must Free a Man  
Cursed for Curiosity's Sake*

**I** resigned myself to fulfilling the Prophecy. I wasn't sure how to start, but I thought it would be good to find

my plane. There was a lot of useful stuff in it, some of which I hoped survived the crash.

I remembered how talkative the villagers in the tavern were, and I walked over to it, hoping I might glean some useful information. Entering the tavern, I found the usual group of villagers, with one addition.

Standing in front of the fireplace was a traveling minstrel named Jascha. He offered to play me a tune, but I declined. I wasn't feeling too musical at the time. He seemed hurt and told me that I would never find a finer minstrel, especially one with as fine an instrument as he had. I glanced at the instrument and answered that I never had been a big fan of the violin. To myself I thought that they had always sounded like screeching cats. He smiled (obviously not knowing what I was thinking) and said the violin had once been owned by a musician named Khristian. This didn't mean much to me at the time, so I said farewell and walked over to the villagers.

They were speaking about a farmer named Boris and his wife, Sylva. Other than the fact that Sylva made a mean beef stew, the only information of interest I gleaned was that the Farmhouse was to the south and west of the Village. I figured I might as well go visit since I wasn't finding anything else useful.

I strode in the front door of the Farmhouse and found Boris reading and yawning on the couch. Startled, he suggested I knock the next time I enter somebody's house. I apologized, but said the door was open and so I just

came in. He didn't seem to mind, and said to forget about it, but warned that others might not be as forgiving. He continued by saying that if I had entered the back door in the same fashion, his wife, Sylva, might have used her butcher's knife on me!

I introduced myself by saying I was the stranger that had crashed the other day. He responded with the usual "oh, you're the stranger who fell from the sky" bit, and then said that he kept intending to go look at the Crash Site; after all, the plane had landed in one of his fields.

At last! Someone who knew where my plane was! I asked him where it had come down. He told me that it was probably in his fields to the northeast, where he grew his sneezewort crop. He seemed glad that he had harvested the crop before I crashed. As an aside, he also mentioned that his wife thought he should grow garlic or onions, but that garlic didn't grow around the area, and he didn't like onions anyway. I didn't really care about that, but thanked him for his time anyway and went to find Sylva.

A couple of doors led off from the room. One led to an empty bedroom, and the other led to the kitchen. Sure enough, I found Sylva there, chopping something with a huge meat cleaver. She said she thought she heard someone come into the house, and asked if Boris had talked my ear off. Before I could respond, she said that he should be doing work in the Barn — there was plenty to do there. I hadn't seen a Barn, so I asked her about it. She said it was behind the house.

Suddenly, I noticed the meat she was chopping up with her cleaver — she was preparing rats for her stew! I felt ill, and she didn't help any by describing how tasty they were. She also explained that they had to be prepared correctly — after all, she didn't want Boris to choke on a tail!

Thoroughly repulsed, I ran through the door at the back of the kitchen, hoping to find the back door Boris had mentioned. Strangely enough, I found a pantry, but no back door! I was surprised that Boris had made such a mistake about the layout of his own house, but then again, I guess a diet of rat stew could do that to a guy. I quickly left the farm house and decided to check out the Barn before I went to the Crash Site.

The Barn was, well . . . a Barn. It had hay, and hens, and pigs. It also had a rather wicked-looking pitchfork. It seemed like a decent weapon — at least better than that knife I had! I “borrowed” the pitchfork and left for the Crash Site.

I found where the plane must have come down. A large scar had been inscribed in the earth, and scorch marks were all about. There were a few strange things about the site however. Probably the most obvious (and annoying) was that the plane wasn't there! Where there should have been a twisted mass of metal, I could only see the torn-up earth. That was the second strange thing — the scar in the earth didn't resemble any crash I had ever seen before . . . in fact, it seemed to resemble a cross! To top it all off, wild wolves were prowling about the site and took a definite interest in me. I

was glad I had picked up that pitchfork — it proved an excellent weapon against these creatures!

Scattered about the Crash Site (other than the wolf bodies, of course) were several plants called cowberries. I recognized them, but didn't know what they were good for. I picked them up and decided that I'd have to ask Annabelle about them later.

A strange, twisted tree caught my attention at the far end of the field. Things seemed to be moving all over it — as I moved closer, I saw they were spiders. At this range, the tree looked almost as though it had a mouth and eyes. Suddenly it spoke to me! The tree said that it had once been a man. He had come to see the “bird of iron,” curious from all of the tales he had heard. Hiding in the trees, he saw Kairn's “dead ones” come and examine the plane. He had hidden in the forest — Kairn's undead were known to hunger for the flesh of the living. He must have accidentally made some sort of noise — perhaps stepped on a twig; Kairn appeared and transformed him into the tree I now saw. The undead dragged the plane away afterwards. Excited, I asked him where the plane had been dragged to. After all, I was getting quite frustrated with trying to find it!

The tree paused, and then refused to tell me. He said that I must first free him from the curse that had befallen him. Not having much choice, I left, hoping to find some way to help him.

I went back to the Village to ask Annabelle about the cowberries I had found. She didn't seem to think they were good for much, but was willing to

buy each plant I found for one silver coin each. I knew I could always use the silver, so I sold them to her.

I left and went to the tavern. I hoped that the villagers might know something, or that I might gain a clue as to how to help the Tree-man. The villagers were speaking about a mad monk in a Monastery to the northwest of the Village. Evidently, this monk was the last of many, the rest having died mysterious deaths over the years. Although it seemed a thin chance, I decided to visit the Monastery in the hope that the monk might help me. I figured that for centuries, desperate people had turned to religion for help. I might as well check it out too.

I walked to the Monastery and entered the front door. To the left and right of the main hall were two doors, and at the front stood a monk lighting candles on a table. I entered the door to the right and found a small empty room. Finding nothing of interest there, I left. The monk hadn't noticed me yet, seemingly over-engrossed with his candles. I entered the door on the left and went down the staircase behind it. A hallway held two doors. The farthest led into an alcove with a stairway leading down. At the bottom I found a locked door I could not open.

Returning up the stairs, I entered the other door. This one opened onto another hallway with many more doors.

In most of the rooms I found nothing. In one, however, I found a man writing frantically with a golden quill. He referred to the monk upstairs as the Nameless One. He didn't remember his own name, but said the monk upstairs had named him Pius, and that he had

forgotten his past. All Pius could do was incessantly write with the quill he held. He claimed the quill was cursed, and that it once belonged to the Dark Lord's brother, Michael. The curse forced him to write forever, asleep or awake. I asked if I could help, but he claimed the curse prevented him from giving any clues to his predicament. I could think of no way to help him for the moment, so I left him to his own devices (or device, I suppose).

In another room I found the Crystal Innate, a book that spoke of the healing powers of crystals. The only other room of interest held a ceremonial gothic mace. It felt like a powerful weapon, and indeed proved to be helpful later on. Returning upstairs, I strode forward and spoke to the monk. He welcomed me to the Monastery, seeming more sane than the villagers had given him credit for being. He mentioned that he and his brothers could provide services for me. When I asked about his brothers, I realized that he was indeed mad, for he spoke to thin air as though there were someone present. Intrigued, I asked what sorts of services he and his "brothers" could provide. He mentioned three things: he could sell me holy water, bless items, and possibly resurrect the dead.

This seemed a bit ludicrous. Raising the dead? If true, however, this might provide the means for the Tree-man's release. To perform this service, he would need something called the Cup of Life, and the ashes of the person to be resurrected. Oh well — I guessed I'd have to burn the Tree-guy. He also wanted three silver pieces as a "donation." Good thing I sold those cowberries to Annabelle. I asked him

about the Cup of Life, and he said it had been stolen long ago. He didn't know where it was, but mentioned that it was more like a chalice than a cup. Whatever that means. Although, now that I thought about it, that cup Seth had been talking about might fit the description. I'd have to check in with him later.

As for those other services, though I didn't have a need right now, I wanted to find out about them. The holy water, he said, was effective against the lesser vampires that roamed the valley. I supposed it would have less effect on Kairn, so I didn't buy any just yet. Apparently the blessing he mentioned was specific to certain items, rather than an all-around benediction on my person. Since I didn't have any items worth blessing, he sent me on my way.

I returned to the Village. I wanted to talk to Seth for two reasons. First, he had offered me a light earlier, and I needed a fire to get the Tree-man's ashes. Second, I wanted another look at that cup of his.

He wouldn't give me a "light" because I didn't have a pipe. I told him I didn't smoke, but he insisted that I get a pipe anyway. Now where . . . ? Well, since Kirill was such a chimney, I supposed he might have an extra pipe I could borrow. I was getting good at borrowing things. As for the "goblet", Seth showed it to me, saying only that he wanted some good wine to drink out of it. Wine! I had a better use for it than that! Well, Seth seemed to be pretty uptight about lending me things, so I guessed I had to get him his wine, too. I remembered that Deirdre had mentioned Kirill's collection of fine

wines, so I supposed I'd be borrowing a bottle of that, as well. Since Kirill seemed to be the one-stop stuff shop, I headed over to his place.

Kirill had no qualms about loaning me a "pipe", but refused to tell me where I might run across some "wine" besides at the tavern. Time to do some exploring. I searched the house, but found nothing. Remembering that most people kept their wine in the cellar, I checked downstairs, but found only a locked door and some loose change (two silver pieces). I'd need to find some way around that door.

I returned to the tavern. I didn't have the wine, but at least I could get a match from Seth. He tried to light my pipe for me, but was interrupted and gave me the match instead. From my Boy Scout days, I remembered that a mere match would be no help in burning a whole tree. Ion, the storekeeper, had mentioned an oil lamp earlier. That would do the trick! I hurried to the store and asked him for a "lamp". He sold me one for a silver piece; what a bargain! Now I could burn the Tree-man and collect his ashes. Seemed like a weird way to help somebody — I hoped that he would appreciate it.

I went to the Crash Site and strode up to the helpless tree. Facing the tree, I lit the lamp. Smiling in what I hoped was a reassuring manner, I hurled it at the tree. The Tree-man was highly startled, but soon his cries of anger were obscured by the raging pillar of fire he had become. Eventually the fire died down, leaving a small pile of ashes. Pocketing these, I thought about my next step. I had the ashes



and sufficient silver. Now I needed to get a better look at Seth's cup to see if it might be the Cup of Life. And in order to get Seth to bring out his cup, I had to find Kirill's wine supply.

I went to the tavern, hoping for some useful information. As usual, the villagers were discussing the latest gossip. One of them mentioned a gypsy fortune teller, Maria, who had received a package from Eduard just before his demise. They were curious what it contained, but were afraid to go to the Gypsy Camp. It was far to the northeast, near Kairn's Fortress. I had no plans to visit Kairn, but I too was curious about what that package held.

I went to the Gypsy Camp and found Maria's wagon. She wanted to tell my fortune for a silver coin. I agreed, and she asked for my palm. Her vision showed me hammering something with iron nails. Interesting, but not useful. I asked about the "package". She grew sad. She said she had foretold Eduard's death, and that he sent her the package because of it. She claimed he was murdered, confirming my own suspicions. (It would have been a rather difficult suicide.) The package had contained a key; she gave it to me, having no use for it herself.

Outside, I could see another wagon and a man leaning against a tree. I spoke with the man. His name was Carolus, and he was a woodworker. At the time, he was carving what he claimed was going to be a flute. He offered to prove that he was a good woodworker by carving me something. He did say that I had to find a good, strong piece of wood — it wouldn't be



worth it otherwise. I told him that he really didn't have to prove anything; he pointed out that he wanted to, since if I liked what he did, I might become a regular customer. I thanked him and decided to examine the other wagon in the camp.

Inside she found a woman named Carmen. She was an extraordinary healer, all the more so since she didn't charge for her services. She healed the few wounds I had taken during the day, and I spoke to her some more. She claimed she knew how to make a potion to cure the "madness". I realized that this was the same madness that afflicted Natalia, so I listened carefully as she listed the ingredients. She said she would need two plants: the seeds of fennel and leaves of betony. She also needed a lock of hair from the one who suffered, and a wide belly jar with a face painted on it. I realized I could get the lock of hair from Anton when I needed it — I would have to keep my eyes open for the other ingredients.

Remembering the key Maria had given me, I left the Gypsy Camp. Since it was Eduard's key, it made sense to check out his house. There was a locked door

the last time I'd been there, and sure enough, the key fit. It led to a stairway going down. In the basement I found three silver coins. There were no doors, but one wall with a small bookcase caught my eye. Remembering the hidden door upstairs, I pushed on it from the left and sure enough, it slid aside.

Behind it I found a gloomy, damp corridor. The Catacombs into which it opened spread out around me in many directions. I had some napkins in my pocket from the tavern, and I mapped my way on them as I explored. (You can find this map on page 74.) I was attacked by giant bats several times, and fought them off with my trusty pitchfork. Travelling about, I found a sack with a strength potion and a full elixir in one cul-de-sac. I wandered aimlessly for quite a while, finding many dead ends. In one room I found a locked gate, covered with rust. I couldn't open it.

Finally, at the end of a nondescript passage, I found an archway which led me to Kirill's wine cellar. In it I found an empty pouch and four silver coins; a key lay next to the pile. I could always use silver coins, and keys usually tended to be fun, so I picked everything up. On the other side of the room I noticed a bottle of wine. Triumphantly, I also picked it up. A door in one wall probably led into Kirill's cellar. I tried the key in it — it opened. At least I could get all the wine I wanted in the future, without crawling about those dank passages! I took advantage of the door and returned to the Village to get Seth's cup.

I entered the tavern and proudly showed Seth the wine. He was amazed that I had acquired it from Kirill's closely guarded collection, and offered to drink a toast from his golden goblet. I hastily agreed, popping open the bottle. Seth poured the wine and offered the goblet to me. Almost



certain now that it was the Cup of Life, I drank the wine and announced that I would be borrowing the cup for a while. Seth was angry, even though I promised to return it as soon as I was through with it.

Now having all that I needed to resurrect the much-maligned Tree-man, I proceeded to the Monastery. I spoke to the monk and asked him to perform the resurrection ritual. Taking the Cup of Life, the ashes, and the three silver pieces, he began the ceremony. Soon the ashes transformed into a very angry man. The monk was overjoyed at his handiwork, and chose to keep the Cup as his reward. I decided to deal with the ex-Tree-man first. After all, it's not every day you see someone brought back from the dead.

I apologized for torching him, explaining that there had been no other option. Politeness aside, I asked about my plane. Enraged, perhaps by his recent trauma, he refused to answer my question. He was positive there must have been another choice beside burning him. I thought about making a comment about roasting marshmallows, but held my tongue. I interrupted his tirade and demanded he tell me about my plane. Grinning maliciously, he finally replied that the dead ones had taken it to the Swamp, and he hoped it had sunk deep into the quagmire. As a final benediction, he wished for the Dark One to take my soul. Good grief, but he was grumpy.

Turning to the monk, I thanked him for performing the ritual, and asked about the “cup”. He claimed it belonged in the Monastery and refused to give it up. He seemed a little greedy for a man of the cloth. I told him it belonged to someone else now — the monks had lost it long ago. Finally, his invisible brothers encouraged him to return the cup in exchange for a “donation” of yet another three silver pieces. I sighed, handed over the cash, and snatched the cup back.

Wanting to return Seth’s cup, I returned again to the Village. Entering the tavern, I apologized profusely and handed his treasure back to him. He was surprised that I had returned it, but thanked me. Leaving him, I listened again to the villagers’ gossip. They were speaking about a silversmith in what they called the Other Village to the northeast, and mentioned that the magistrate lived there too.

### *And Dispel One Dead but Forced to Serve*

**S**ince I finally knew that my plane was in the Swamp, I headed over to visit it. Arriving, I was depressed to see that my plane had, indeed, sunk deep into the slime. In fact, I was only able to salvage a few items that lay on the ground. Among them were my machete, pistol, and rope. Farther to the north (by the tail of my plane) I found my empty knapsack and my lighter.

A large tree stood by the Swamp, near a deep hole that led into the soggy ground. I was curious as to what lay below, but I knew I wouldn’t be able to climb back out of the hole without help. The tree by the hole looked quite solid, and I decided to tie the rope to it. Throwing the rope over a limb that lay over the hole, I was soon able to swing myself down.

Down below, I found the Sinkhole Caverns. (You can find this map on page 78.) I wandered through them for a few hours, hoping to find anything useful. In one cavern, I found six mushrooms. Curious, (and hungry), I ate one. Great — as if it hadn’t been dark enough, now I was blind! Luckily, the effect wore off a few seconds later and I could continue my exploration.

I discovered a few dead-ends, and many bats. The bats weren’t too hard to dispatch, but they had an annoying tendency to get caught in my hair. In

another cavern, two bats attacked; after I had dealt with them I found ten more mushrooms. Although I had learned not to eat these fungal growths, I picked three of them up anyway. After all, I might be able to sell them to Annabelle.

Having explored every nook and cranny, I headed back to the Village to ask Annabelle about the mushrooms. She very helpfully mentioned that they caused temporary blindness (good timing, that . . .) but after a moment agreed to buy each mushroom for a silver piece. She only bought two, leaving me with one — I figured I could always use it later, if only for a practical joke or something.

Remembering the villagers speaking about the Other Village, I decided to head on over and check it and the silversmith out. The Other Village was large; at first glance I could see it contained a silversmith's workshop, a cozy-looking bungalow, a respectable-looking home, a large stone building with a fountain in front, and a gloomy, gray cottage with a garden in back.

The silversmith had a sign with a forge depicted on it hanging outside the door. I entered and spoke to the man within. His name was Erasmus, and he asked what he could do for me. I asked him what kind of things he could make. He said that he could forge almost anything from silver, and added that the gravedigger Kregorh had even asked him to forge a silver weapon. He continued to say that only silver weapons had any effect on the walking dead. I asked him how much it would cost to have such a weapon forged — it

turned out to be a total of fifteen silver pieces. He also mentioned that he could plate many other items, but that I would have to specify what I wanted plated.

Not needing his services at the time, I thanked him and exited his store. My eye caught something glinting in the garden behind the gray house. It turned out to be a shovel someone had carelessly left out; I picked it up and noticed one parsley plant by it. My breath was fine, so I let the plant live.

The small bungalow I had seen earlier was near the garden; I decided to visit its inhabitants. Inside I found a small living room with two women. One was dusting while the other sat silently by the fire. I first tried to speak to the young woman by the fire, but she gave no response. The other woman snapped at me, stating that everybody knew that the other woman (whom she referred to as Christiana) couldn't speak. I responded with my well-rehearsed "I'm the stranger that crashed" bit, and she seemed to warm up a little — probably didn't think I'd live long. She said it was a shame that Christiana was in her trance — she was always interested in stories of the outside world. She continued by saying that Christiana had been in the trance since her betrothed, Kirill's son, had died. I was somewhat surprised by this; it seemed strange that Kirill had never mentioned having a son. The woman continued by saying she couldn't remember the boy's name, and that she thought a familiar name might snap Christiana out of her trance. I noted this and decided to ask Kirill

some time about his son — perhaps that name might be enough to help the poor girl. I left the sad woman alone and left the building.

I strode about and decided to enter the tan building with a lamp post in the front. Inside I found a homey-looking living room with two doors leading out. A woman was rocking by the fireplace, and I decided to speak to her. (I figured it would be the polite thing to do — I had, after all, just walked into her house unannounced — I could at least introduce myself!) She assumed I had come in looking for someone named Constatine, and told me that he was in the other room. I was curious and asked if he was her son; she paused to spit out some leaves and said yes. Having found all sorts of interesting substances growing around, I was somewhat curious about the leaves and asked her about them. She said the leaves were from the rare betony plant, and that only Constatine knew where they grew. She suggested speaking with him to find out where I could get some. Betony was one of the plants I would need to heal Natalia, so it seemed like a good idea to check out this lead.

Through one of the doorways, I found a couple of bedrooms with nothing of interest. Through the other, I found a man in a study. He was standing at a pedestal, reading a book, and didn't notice me when I entered. When I spoke to him, he introduced himself as Constatine. He was a historian and a collector of relics. Historically, he knew a lot about Nikolae (the father of Kairn) and his sons. I suspected that this information would come in useful at a later time.

Constatine believed that Nikolae was murdered by his son, Kairn; however, he admitted that the records said it was a thief. I wondered why a thief would want to kill Nikolae; he said it looked like a thief because many valuables were stolen from the lord's castle. Among those valuables was Nikolae's signet ring. Thus, it was assumed that the thief had been trying to steal it while he slept. Nikolae must have awakened, and the thief was forced to kill him.

I wondered how many sons Nikolae had, and learned there were seven: Aleksander, Feodor, Nathan, Michael, Kairn, Khristian, and Peter. I asked about each one in turn.

Aleksander was one of the finest warriors of his time. When dueling in the tavern with a stranger never before seen in the valley, he met his match. Aleksander was killed and then beheaded with his own rapier, which is how the tavern was named "The Severed Head." Nikolae's guard arrived and dragged the stranger, laughing, to the gallows where he was hung.

Feodor was terribly vain, and spent his money on frivolous things. Once when his father was away, Feodor had coins minted with his own image on them. His father was furious when he returned and destroyed many of the coins. Constatine believed that some still existed, however. Feodor was found dead in a dark alley with his skull split open — few grieved his death.

Nathan loved to hunt, and had a small cottage built in the Dark Forest. He died in a hunting accident. It was difficult to tell what had killed him, since little of his body remained.

Michael, the weakest of the brothers, dedicated his life to scholarly duties. He died of some disease before he grew into full manhood.

The historian shuddered at the mention of Kairn. He said that Kairn ruled the valley with an iron fist, and that the people of the valley were the sustenance upon which he fed. Of course — I got to go up against the friendliest brother of them all! Just my luck. Then again, my luck hadn't been all that good lately, what with falling out of the sky and all.

Khristian was a minstrel, one of the finest ever to live. Like his other brothers, he too died a strange and mysterious death.

Peter was the youngest son. Although his body was never found, he was believed drowned. His pony had washed ashore on the banks of "Blackwater." Constatine suspected Peter's body was sunk in the depths there. I asked him about this lake, for I hadn't recalled seeing any such body of water. He said it could be found in the very center of the valley. He continued by saying that few went there, as it was inhabited by will-o-wisps, creatures that fed on humans' life forces. He also mentioned an island in the middle of the lake; unfortunately no one could go there since the old ferryman had drowned a hundred years before.

Gazing at the relics around me, I asked if he had anything he'd be willing to sell. He replied that most of his relics were very valuable to him, but he did have a talisman of sorts that he would part with for two silver coins. He said he had no idea what it did, but that the old witch at the Crossroads

might know more — that is, if she didn't eat me first. It was a beautiful piece of work, so I bought it and promptly placed it around my neck.

Before I left, I remembered his mother suggesting I ask about the "betony". He said it was difficult to find, but he had discovered a small patch in a graveyard. I thanked him for his time, and left his house.

Next door, I noticed a stone building with a fountain out front. Continuing my explorations, I entered the building. A butler told me that the house was the residence of the magistrate, and that I had better not bother him with unimportant things. Considering I was on a mission to save the valley, I figured that was important enough.

Beyond the butler, I found a hallway with two doors leading off. The one to the right led into a living room . . . of sorts. I hadn't seen very many living rooms with skull candles on the coffee table, but at least he was prepared — he had a collection of spare skulls in the corner under the candelabra. Having sufficiently amused myself critiquing his interior design, I entered the other door and found the study. The magistrate reclined behind a desk, deep in thought.

I approached him and spoke. He assumed I was another villager, and tried to brush me off. He bade me to be quick, for he didn't like wasting time. I told him I wasn't there to waste his time, and reiterated my "I'm the one that crashed" bit. This seemed to cheer him up, and he explained that it was Kairn himself that had given him the power to govern the valley. He warned me to obey his laws, else I would end

up like the supposed murderer, Ambrose. I asked what the laws were. Quite simply, anything that displeased him or Kairn was considered unlawful.

He went on to say that I might be able to help him. Considering I was speaking to the judge, jury, and executioner of this valley, I felt it prudent to hear him out. Besides, he also mentioned something about a purse of silver. I asked what I had to do for the reward. He explained that a werewolf was roaming the valley, and all I had to do was slay it. He told me how to make the werewolf reveal itself: accuse it while in its human form and thereby cause it to transform and attack me. I smiled weakly, and listened as he continued.

He explained that finding the werewolf was only part of the problem. To complicate matters, no normal weapon could kill the beast. He didn't elaborate, but I remembered the silversmith speaking about the powers of silver against undead. I would have to speak with him about this later.

Curious about this murderer, I asked him about Ambrose. He seemed grumpy — evidently, there had been a lot of unrest about this hanging. However, as far as he was concerned, Ambrose was the one who had killed Eduard. He told me what he had told all the others: that if I disagreed, I should bring him proof that someone else had killed Eduard. He wanted three pieces of evidence; should I find them, he promised to hang the guilty party as well. It seemed too bad that Ambrose would never know — after all, the dead couldn't talk, right? Little did I know. . . .

I felt I'd learned all I could from the magistrate, so I went back outside and crossed the street toward the gray house, the only one I hadn't visited yet. I entered a small room with a bureau and a door leading off to the left. A man dressed in raggedy clothes stood before a door in front of me, seeming to guard it. Ignoring him for the nonce, I went through the unguarded door. I entered a spacious living room. An empty bottle of fine wine lay on the floor, which I decided to leave for now. Two doors led off to the right, and on a shelf was another skull candle. This guy and the magistrate must have been friends.

Through the first door, the one closest to me, I discovered a messy bedroom. The sheets were rumpled and torn, and there was a torn shirt on the floor. I decided to leave the shirt there; it wasn't my style or color. Behind the farther door, I found another bedroom, this one much tidier. In the corner was a strength potion, which I pocketed.

Returning to the foyer, I spoke to the man in raggedy clothes. He asked if I had anyone he could bury, saying that it had been a while and he wanted a chance to dig a grave. He offered to dig mine, but I declined. About now I realized that this was Kregorh, the gravedigger that the silversmith had mentioned. Kregorh warned that I, too, might end up mad or eaten by a wolf. Then, he said, he wouldn't be able to bury me. However, he could add my name to the "Book of Souls." He explained that the names of all who died were recorded in the book, along with the method of their death. I asked for a look at it, but he declined.

When I asked why he was so anxious to bury someone, Kregorh answered that it was his job. He was the gravedigger, and he certainly seemed to enjoy his job. I wondered aloud as to why it had been so long since he had buried anyone. After all, it seemed to me that people were dropping off left and right. He agreed, but pointed out that most of them ended up as zombies or vampires, who either disappeared or didn't stay buried. Then he said an interesting thing: he said that if things didn't change soon, he would create some work for himself. He asked my opinion of this plan. I thought he was out of his mind, and told him so. I wanted to leave, but first I asked him where the graveyard was. He told me, and mentioned that I could admire his handiwork while I was there.

I left quickly. I had my suspicions now about the manner of Eduard's death. If this gravedigger was so excited about burying people, and had practically told me he would kill someone just for some business, I wouldn't put it past him to have bumped off Eduard just for the work. I'd have to bring this possibility up to the magistrate when I had some evidence. I would just have to keep my eyes open and see what turned up.

With that in mind, I headed for the Crossroads to speak to the witch Constatine had mentioned. I wondered if the talisman I'd bought from him could be of any use. When I arrived there, however, I found to my surprise that Ambrose was hanging from a tree at the crossing. I was examining

the body when it scared the living daylights out of me by talking to me! I guess the dead could talk around here.

Ambrose told me not to be frightened — as he pointed out, there wasn't much he could do to me since he was quite dead. I told him I wasn't necessarily frightened, just very surprised that he was talking. Ambrose agreed that he would have been surprised too. He continued by saying that he was speaking to me to warn me about the witch in the hut. I asked why he was warning me. He answered by saying that he knew what it was like to die an untimely death, and that he wouldn't want the same to happen to me. He claimed she was insane because she had been the one who had killed off all the monks over the years.

Ambrose and the witch had fought because he refused to give her a key to a library beneath the Monastery. The key led to a book about dispelling ghosts called the *Etheric Rites*. I asked him if he would give me the key, but he insisted that I redeem his soul first. Of course, the only way to do this was to prove him innocent of the murder charge, and have the real murderer punished. Ambrose had been accused of killing Eduard, and though he had claimed he was innocent, he had been hung by the magistrate as an example to the other villagers. I realized that I could help him if I could prove the gravedigger was the killer.

First though, I decided to speak to the witch about the talisman and to get her side of the story. I entered the hut and found the old woman stirring a pot. She seemed harmless enough,



and said that other than Ambrose, she hadn't had anyone to talk to in a long time. I cautiously asked her about her profession, making sure she wasn't about to cast a spell on me or something. She laughed and told me they were only stories — she simply relished the chance to talk. I asked about Ambrose, and she confirmed that he was the hanged man.

She said he had something she wanted, and until he gave it to her, she would continue to torment him. (Alive or dead, or both, I wondered.) I suspected she wanted the key Ambrose had mentioned, and she verified this. She said she needed the Etheric Rites to dispel the ghost of her grandfather. He had been unrighteously damned, and she meant to free him. She recounted the tale of her grandfather's death: he had been hunted down and killed as a vampire, and a spike driven through his skull. Soon after, his spirit was recalled to guard the door to the mausoleum in the Cemetery. I had to go check this place out soon.

When I asked about the Etheric Rites, she talked about her search, saying that she once thought it was hidden on the island in the middle of Blackwater. This coincided with Constatine's words about Peter's death. In trying to find a way to get to the island, she discovered how to raise the dead ferryman from the depths of the lake. By now I was becoming rather blasé about people getting resurrected — it seemed to happen all the time around this valley, what with corpses talking and all. She said only the ferryman knew the safe passage

through the jagged rocks surrounding the island. The witch continued by saying she needed an ivory horn. She knew a spell and runes that needed to be carved into it; having done this, the horn would have the power to raise the ferryman.

I asked if she would be willing to carve and enchant the horn for me, should I find one. She said she would, but only after her grandfather's spirit was free. Remembering Constatine's suggestion, I asked about the "talisman". She thought it was imbued with a charm of protection, and that I must wear it around my neck. She could not be more specific. I took my leave, and made haste for the Cemetery.

Upon entering, I was surprised to be attacked by two animated skeletons! My trusty pitchfork had no effect on them, but fortunately the ceremonial gothic mace I had picked up in the Monastery proved valuable. They literally collapsed before my mighty swings. After polishing them off, I looked around.

Near the entrance, I saw a small patch of betony. Leaving it for now, I walked solemnly between the gravestones, pausing now and then to read the inscriptions. One was obviously the witch's grandfather. He had been branded a "Vampirus Nosferatous," and had been staked and beheaded. On another tombstone I found something even more chilling. A foolish man had been put to the spear for overwhelming greed. Hopefully others would heed this as a pearl of wisdom and live longer and happier lives.

A mausoleum lay at the back of the Cemetery. A large entrance beckoned, and of course I had to poke my nose into it. The problem was, as I approached, a fiery red apparition appeared to block my way. It spoke in a tortured voice and claimed I could not pass. I asked why not, and it basically did not give a hopeful prognosis for my future. It said that the master forbade anyone to pass — turns out the master was my old pal Kairn. This was obviously the spirit the witch had spoken of, and I would have to dispel it in order to fulfill this line of the Prophecy.

I needed to get my hands on the book of Etheric Rites the witch and Ambrose had described. Hopefully, this would tell me how to dispel the ghost in the Cemetery. However, in order to get the book, I would have to get the key to the Monastery library from Ambrose, which meant I had to prove him innocent. In order to do this, I had to get evidence to prove that gravedigger had killed Eduard. Phew! At least proving Ambrose's innocence would take care of the "The hanged man's grief must he unveil" line of the Prophecy.

If you're interested in how I proved Ambrose innocent, skip to page 27.



In any case, once I got Ambrose's key to the Monastery Basement, I made a beeline for the valley cloisters.

Entering the Monastery, I went downstairs and went to the far door. Going through it, I found some more

stairs to go down. At the bottom of the stairs I found a door. The key Ambrose had given me opened the door; walking through it, I found myself in the Monastery's library. There were a lot of cobwebs, but cutting through them I found the book of Etheric Rites lying on the floor. I picked it up and read through it.

Basically, it said what I had to do to dispel a spirit. First, I had to light a blessed candle. Then, I had to strike a finely crafted bell, forged from silver, with an instrument of iron. Finally, this instrument of iron had to be somehow associated with the life or death of the spirit's mortal existence. If all of these conditions were met, the spirit would be immediately released from its duty and allowed to depart.

Well, first things first. I had to get a candle, and then get it blessed by the monk. I headed over to the Village to see if the candle maker had finished those candles he was making last time I was there. He had, so I bought one for a silver piece. I then headed to the Monastery to get it blessed.

The monk was quite helpful, and after looking over my items deemed the candle the only thing worth blessing. Having done that, he returned to warming his hands over his own candle.

I now needed to get a finely crafted silver bell. The logical place for that was the silversmith, so I headed to the Other Village. I entered the shop and spoke to Erasmus. I asked him if it was possible for him to make a "bell" for me; he said it was and that it would cost eight silver pieces. Sigh . . . at least that included

his fee. I paid the fee and received a beautifully crafted bell in return. Erasmus seemed quite proud of it.



The last thing I needed was something of iron that was associated with the spirit to ring the bell. I remembered the witch saying her grandfather had been staked through the head with an iron spike — perhaps it could still be found with the body! I went to the Cemetery and found the spirit's tombstone. Taking a deep breath, I took out my shovel and dug up the grave. I'd done everything else — I figured I might as well add grave robbing to my resumé. Oh well.

In the grave I found the iron spike and a pouch with three silver coins. At least I was making some sort of profit today. Having everything I needed, I walked over to the mausoleum and faced the tortured spirit.

I lit the blessed candle with my lighter and, since I needed both hands free to ring the bell, put it and the lighter away in my pack. (And no, they didn't set the pack on fire — call it a miracle, but by this point, I wasn't arguing. . . .) I put the bell in one hand and realized I would not be able to ring it since it had nothing to hang it on.

Luckily I remembered Deirdre's gift of her scarf. I tied the scarf to the bell, which gave me a handle to hold it by. Putting the iron spike in the other hand, I took a deep breath and struck the bell with it.

The bell resounded with a sharp tone that echoed off into the distance. The spirit seemed to shimmer, and then with a howl, it flung itself into the air and disappeared.

The entrance to the mausoleum was now open, so I obviously had to poke my head inside. I entered and walked down some stairs. At the bottom I found a stone hall with two doors in it. One led to a crypt — usually a place for the dead. Well, the dead were there all right, but they were simply trying to get me to join them in their unholy state! After I beat the skeletons to kindling with my mace, I looked about the room. Finding nothing of any importance, I left the room and entered the door at the other end of the hall.

Behind the door were stairs leading down into the darkness. At the bottom of these stairs was another door which led into the Mausoleum Inner Chambers. I decided to sneak about a little and try to find out what was inside. Just my luck — I quickly found skeletons (the walking variety) and zombies. I knew I could take care of the skeletons with my trusty mace, but the zombies were unaffected by any weapon I had. I quickly beat a strategic retreat to the Cemetery. Erasmus the silversmith had mentioned that silver weapons were effective against undead. I would just have to come back here later when I could afford a silver weapon.

*A Youth in Madness He  
Shall Willingly Heal*

**T**he youth in question was obviously Natalia, the girl with the madness in the Village. I remembered that the gypsy healer, Carmen, said she could make a potion that would heal the madness. In order to make the potion, however, she needed several ingredients. These were seeds of fennel, leaves of betony, a lock of hair from the suffering person, and a wide belly jar with a face painted on it.

I remembered I could get the lock of hair from Anton, so I returned to the Village and entered the candlemaker's house. I quickly found Anton and asked him about the "lock" of hair. He was hesitant to lose it at first, but finally agreed to let me borrow it. I didn't feel too bad about taking his keepsake — I figured saving Natalia would be payment enough for his sacrifice!

Now I had the lock of hair, and I knew I could get the betony from the Cemetery. I went to the Cemetery and picked up the betony plant. Annabelle in the Village had been trying to sell me fennel seeds since I had started all of this, so I went there and purchased some for a silver piece. Now all I had left to do was find that strange jar.

I had no leads, so I decided to go to The Severed Head tavern in the Village and listen to the talk. I hoped I might get some ideas from the villagers. They were speaking about another of the werewolf's victims. Evidently, it had somehow gotten into a room upstairs and killed someone. The villagers had left the body

alone — nobody wanted to be the one to bury it. Not knowing to leave well-enough alone, I decided to go upstairs and examine the remains of the stranger.

I walked upstairs and looked through the rooms. I quickly found what must be the right one, judging from the ripped-apart body and the blood smeared across the walls. Shockingly, the victim was someone I knew — it was Jascha, the minstrel who had been playing downstairs just a little while ago. I obviously couldn't do anything to help him, so I looked about the room. By one of his recently parted arms, I found a sack. In it were four silver coins and a Catacomb key. The key probably opened the rusted gate in the Catacombs beneath the Village. I wondered how he had gotten a hold of it. The other item of interest was the deceased minstrel's violin. It was obviously a fine instrument, and I decided to pick it up as a keepsake of my day. I wanted to take it with me now, since it was obvious the villagers would eventually clean the room up, and probably throw it out or something.

I was burning with curiosity as to what lay behind the rusted gate in the Catacombs, so I left the tavern and went to Eduard's house. I went downstairs into the cellar and entered the Catacombs. I soon arrived at the rusted gate — sure enough, the key opened it! Behind the door I found many passages and strange square rooms. Even more passages led off from them, so I gritted my teeth and followed each one to its natural end.

One tunnel led to a large cavern. Two bats attacked me in it; after I dispatched them, I looked about. On the ground lay the remains of some less lucky

adventurer, and by him (or her) lay a torch. Seemed like a useful kind of thing, so I picked it up and continued my exploration. In another small room I found another skeleton. Lying by it was a pouch with two silver coins and a signet ring. The jewel that had once graced the ring had been pried out, and the ring had obviously been discarded. I suspected the ring was once Nikolae's; the thief had probably hidden in these caverns after the murder and removed the diamond, discarding the ring as worthless. I tended to agree with him, so I left the ring on the ground, though I took the sack and coins. Finally, at the end of one long tunnel, I found a room littered with pottery shards and old skeletons. After I killed the two bats that attacked, I examined all of the pottery. In the corner, I came across exactly what I needed — a wide belly jar with a face on it! I now had everything I needed to get the healing potion, so I left the Catacombs and headed to the Gypsy Camp and Carmen.

I entered her wagon and spoke with her. I had all of the ingredients, and she was able to make the healing concoction for me. While I was there, I asked her to heal any wounds I might have picked up; I then hurried off to save Natalia.

I went to the Village and entered the general store. I entered the doorway at the back and climbed the stairs and entered Natalia's bedroom. She still lay feverishly on the bed. Worried, I quickly spoke to the mother. I gave her the potion and told her that she must make her daughter drink it, for it would save her. She didn't believe me, but at my insistence, finally gave some to her daughter.

The potion worked as it should, and soon Natalia was quieting down. The



mother thanked me with all her heart, and gave me a gold pin. I tried to give it back, but she would not accept it. I spoke to Natalia, and she started talking.

She said that "the others" were gone, and that only the spirit of her dead father had protected her. She also said her father had left a message for me. Why not — I was getting quite used to communicating with the invisible, dead, or otherwise weird! Natalia said that her father wanted to meet me at the graveyard. He wanted to help me because he believed I was going to help them all. How could I say no? I've always been a sucker for these types of things, so I headed off to the Cemetery again. As I walked, I was at least comforted that I had saved Natalia, and in doing so had fulfilled yet another line of the Prophecy.

The Cemetery was as I had left it, with the possible exception of yet another spirit hovering about. At least I was prepared for this one, so I strode on over to speak to him. He introduced himself as Lucian, Natalia's dead father. (Duh.) He was exceedingly grateful for my help, and wanted to do something for me in return. He gave me a key, and warned me that the Hedge Maze was dangerous. I had no idea what he was talking about, so I just took the key and nodded intelligently. He then said he could stay no longer, and sunk back into the earth. I figured I would have to go to this Hedge Maze and find where to use

the key. The key looked like an old attic key I once had, so I would have to keep my eyes open for a handy attic to pry about in. (Yes, it was a bit of a leap in logic, but it worked — so hush.)

I went back to Natalia and told her that I had spoken to her father. In response, she said that her father had come to visit again, and that he had said I would make things better. I told her that I would try, but that there was always the chance I would die. I pointed out that this could complicate things. This didn't seem to phase her though, so I left to continue an already bad day.

I had already done the "The hanged man's grief must he unveil" line of the Prophecy, so I went on to do the "Seven lost souls have favors to ask" part. If you'd like to see how I did this line, skip to page 28.

### *The Hanged Man's Grief Must He Unveil*

**W**ell, I figured I had better get started; proving Ambrose innocent might not be easy. The most likely place for evidence was probably the Other Village, where the gravedigger lived, so I trekked my way over.

Once there, I again noticed the parsley in the garden behind Kregorh's house. I hadn't thought much of it before, but this time something struck me as strange about it. I had to think

about it for a few minutes before I figured it out — there was only one plant in that garden! Most people would be growing all sorts of different vegetables, but this strange man only had parsley. I figured Annabelle could tell me more about it, so I picked it up and headed to the Village.

I entered Annabelle's store and spoke with her. After she tried to sell me some of those fennel seeds again, I asked her about the "parsley". I certainly wasn't expecting her reaction! She said that she was tempted to throw me out for even mentioning it. Evidently, it was considered an evil plant and she suggested I get rid of it before someone else saw me with it. I was surprised to get this type of reaction to a breath-freshener, and I tried to tell her what it was used for back home. She interrupted, and told me something very interesting; she said only murderers grew parsley. This confirmed my suspicions about the gravedigger, and I now had one piece of the evidence I needed. I thanked Annabelle and left her store.

I sat down and tried to think of what I had seen that could be used as evidence. Then, it suddenly struck me! In Kregorh's house, I remembered seeing a shirt with a strip torn from the sleeve. I also remembered seeing just such a piece of torn fabric lying on the floor by where Eduard had been killed. It must have been torn off in the struggle between the two men. I went to Eduard's house and picked up the torn fabric. Then I headed over to the Other Village — I needed to pick up the shirt that went with the fabric.

Now, what I had seen in my travels that could be used as the third piece of evidence? Something was nagging me about Kregorh's house, and I tried to place it. After a few minutes, I realized what it was. I had gone to amazing lengths to get that bottle of fine wine from Kirill's cellar. In the end, I had to go through a secret passage that started in Eduard's basement to get it. Yet, Kregorh had an empty bottle of the same fine wine in his living room. He must have known about the secret passage, and probably used it regularly to get himself some spirits. Somehow, Eduard must have discovered Kregorh and threatened to expose his activities; Kregorh simply killed him to protect himself, and picked up some work for himself in the bargain!

I arrived at the Other Village and quickly headed for Kregorh's house. The gravedigger was still guarding the same door, so I passed him and walked into the living room. There I picked up the empty bottle of fine wine and continued on into his room. I picked up the torn shirt I had come for, and left by the same route I had entered. Kregorh still stood like a statue with that annoying smirk on his face — I'd soon have that taken off his face!

I went directly to the magistrate's office and spoke to him. I told him I had evidence to prove that Kregorh had killed Eduard. I showed him the torn shirt, the torn fabric, the empty bottle, and the parsley. After he had his assistant check on the facts the magistrate admitted he was wrong. He ordered Kregorh hung, and officially declared Ambrose's innocence.

Having proven Ambrose's innocence, I decided to go to the Crossroads to get the key from him. His spirit hovered about his cut-down corpse, and I spoke to it. He thanked me for my efforts, and gave me the Monastery key. He then disappeared to a well-deserved oblivion. This at least took care of the "The hanged man's grief must he unveil" line of the Prophecy. Now, I had to head off to the Monastery to get the book of Etheric Rites so I could complete the line: "And dispel one dead but forced to serve". Go back to page 23.

*Seven Lost Souls  
Have Favors to Ask*

**N**ow that Kregorh had been hung, I could go check out his house, and in particular, the door he had been guarding. I wasn't sure, but I suspected that I could find the Book of Souls behind it. Since the book listed the names of dead people, I hoped I might find Kirill's son's name in it. And once I had the name, I suspected it might be enough to make Christiana snap out of her trance!

I went to the Other Village and entered Kregorh's house. Not surprisingly, he was not blocking the door anymore. I opened the door and went down the stairs I found behind it. At the bottom I found a cellar with three silver coins scattered on the floor — perhaps change that had fallen from Kregorh's pants when they were taking

him away. I picked them up and went through the door that I saw on the opposite wall. Behind this door was another portion of the cellar. A book lay on the floor — the Book of Souls! I picked up the book and leafed through it. On one page I found what I was looking for — Kirill's son's name. His name had been Andrei Khristoverikh, and he had supposedly died in the Fall of 1926 from an illness.

Armed with this knowledge, I left Kregorh's house and headed to speak with Christiana. She was exactly where I had left her before, sitting in front of the fire. I spoke to her, and asked her about "Andrei". She slowly stirred, and repeated his name. I sat there patiently and listened. She said that she had loved Andrei more than life itself, but that she saw now that she must continue — even without him. She said that there was one last act of love she must do however, and she said that she must ask me to do it. She didn't think she would be successful on her own. Great — total guilt trip here. . . . I told her I would do what I could, but that I couldn't promise anything. Everyone seemed to be asking me favors, so what harm would it be to take on another? That was when she dropped the big one on me. She claimed that Andrei still lived, but as one of the walking dead — a zombie! (I thought to myself that he was probably working too hard.) She asked me to kill this zombie that he had become and free his soul.

As you might guess, this news was not the normal gossip I'd hear at home. I didn't doubt her story, but I felt it prudent to point out that Kirill

had never said anything about a son, let alone one that was a zombie. She answered by telling me about their love, and how Kirill was going to give them a huge diamond as a wedding gift. She claimed that those were the happiest days of her life. But then, shortly before their marriage, tragedy struck. Andrei grew very ill, and within a few days he had passed on to the great beyond. Both she and Kirill were heartbroken. She had lost her love, and he had lost his son.

Andrei was soon buried, but Kirill couldn't live with his grief. In a fit of madness he and Ivan dug up Andrei's body and went to the Dark Lord in the hopes of striking a bargain. Kirill hoped that Kairn would resurrect his son in return for the diamond; evidently it had once belonged to Kairn's father, Nikolae, and Kirill hoped Kairn would want it. Kairn had no desire for the diamond, but for his own amusement resurrected Andrei as a zombie. Kirill and Ivan were barely able to return the creature to the house, where they locked it in an upstairs bedroom. Kirill couldn't bear to kill what was once his son and therefore allowed the zombie to "live." Christiana said that I must confront Kirill and ask about Andrei. She added that Deirdre didn't know anything about all this, for the knowledge would probably destroy her. Christiana also mentioned that the beast must still need to feed, and Kirill must be the one who allowed it. I paused a moment, since it showed me an evil side to Kirill I hadn't seen before. What, or (gulp) *who* did Kirill feed to the zombie? Who knows what else he was capable of? I'd have to keep a wary eye on him.



I decided to go ask Kirill about his son, so I went off to the Village. I entered Kirill's house and found him in the study — as usual. There, I asked him about "Andrei". He replied that Andrei was his son, who had died of an illness a while back. I confronted him with the fact that his son had become a zombie. Kirill became angry and said that I had no right to question his integrity. I scoffed at this, and told him I had heard the whole story from Christiana.

This put a sudden stop to his blustering, and he fell silent for a moment. When he continued, he simply said that he had tried to do good — he really hadn't intended for anything to turn out the way it had. I told him that he could do some good right then by giving me the key to the room where the zombie was. He thought for a moment, sighed, and finally agreed. He said that it was about time he admitted that the thing in the room was no longer his son. With that, he gave me the key. He also said I would have to kill the zombie to get the diamond Christiana had spoken of — it was in the creature's possession.

Kirill fell silent for a few moments more and then, hesitantly, said there was something he had to tell me about Deirdre. Suspicious, I demanded that he tell me what he knew. After a long pause, he gathered his resolve and spoke. He said that Kairn had come to the house and taken Deirdre away. He had not put up a fight since they would have all been killed. With a sinking heart, I asked where she had been taken to. He wasn't sure, but suspected they would have gone to Kairn's Fortress. He

finished by saying I was Deirdre's only hope, for only I could hope to defeat Kairn.

My thoughts in a turmoil, I left the study. I had to find some way to get to Deirdre, but I knew I couldn't hope to escape detection in the Fortress. Much as I wanted to head off to rescue her, I knew I had to continue fulfilling the Prophecy. Only by doing so could I finally remove Kairn from the picture and help Deirdre.

So the next step was to kill the zombie in the house. I wasn't sure what the zombie's diamond could be used for, but I wanted to make good on my promise to Christiana. I remembered Erasmus the silversmith telling me how Kregorh had wanted a silver weapon. Evidently silver was the only metal the walking dead feared, so I figured I'd better get myself such a weapon.

I left for the Other Village; once there, I entered the silversmith's shop and spoke to Erasmus. I asked him about forging me a silver weapon. He said he could do the job, but that it would cost a total of fifteen silver pieces. I gave him the silver and asked him to do the job. He was very sur-



prised that I had such a quantity of silver, but soon transformed it into a small silver sword.

Thanking him for his time, I took the sword and headed to the Village. There I entered Kirill's house and walked upstairs. There was a door at the top of the stairs that had previously been locked; I took the key Kirill had given me and opened it. Upon entering, a horrid stench overwhelmed me causing my head to spin. I saw that the room was in shambles, but had little time for critiquing since a grotesque figure was rushing toward me — Andrei the zombie! I barely fended off its first blows, but finally brought my silver sword to bear. Moments later, I had sent Andrei to his final resting place. Revolted, I stumbled from the room and closed the door. Gasping for breath, I realized I had left the diamond in the room. I couldn't stand the thought of entering again so soon, so I decided to leave the diamond for later.

I went down the stairs to talk to Kirill. I tried to tell him about "Andrei", but he refused to talk any more on the subject. Oh well — I guessed he would discover what I had done from all the gore I had tracked throughout the house. . . .

Leaving the house (making quite sure to drag my feet), I went straight to the Other Village. Finding Christiana, I told her that she could rest easy, for I had accomplished the task. Andrei had finally gotten what he deserved, and was now enjoying a long-awaited rest. Almost a vacation of sorts, considering what he had been through lately. Tears filled her eyes, and she thanked me.

She said that she was sure his soul was resting easily now that he was freed from the valley. I hoped I wouldn't have to go to such extents to free myself from this place!

I left the house and went outside. I realized that since I now had a silver weapon, I could go to the Cemetery and explore the Mausoleum Inner Chambers. I had nothing to fear from the zombies (give or take death) now that I had my zombie-bashing blade.

The Cemetery was as dank as ever, and I quickly entered the relative cheerfulness of the mausoleum. Walking down the stairs and through a door, I entered a short hall — the beginning of the Mausoleum Inner Chambers. (You can find this map on page 77.) Quickly passing on through, I found myself in a large square room with smaller cubes breaking the monotony of the floor. I also met the first of many friendly opponents. These skeletons were easily dispatched with my trusty mace, and I continued onward on my journey. More skeletons abounded in another room, but I found a full elixir to patch myself up. This was getting pretty boring — I really wanted to take on some of those zombies!

Sure enough, my wish was soon granted, and I walked into a room with many of them. I dispatched them, and kept on looking about. Once, I found a fellow explorer in the mausoleum. Well, technically, the guy was dead and a skeleton to boot, but it was good to have company. I polished off the zombie I found in the same room, and picked up a torch that lay on the floor. In another small dead-end room, I found another full elixir. Considering

the damage I was taking, I sucked that puppy right down. In a far corner of the maze I found another unfortunate adventurer. By the skeleton was a sack with two full elixirs and a crystal. I picked them up — I suspected I'd need them later. I didn't worry too much about the theft implications — the stuff wasn't doing *him* any good.

After exploring everywhere else, I came across one long hall with a zombie guarding it. I dispatched the zombie and found a door at the end of the hall. Entering it, I found . . . well . . . not what you'd expect. Beyond the door was a large room lined with pillars. In the center of the room was a red, six-pointed star. To make matters more amusing, ghostly figures stood on each of the six points, and a seventh figure stood in the center of the star.

Since I was already there, I spoke to the figure in the center of the star. I wasn't too worried about talking to what was obviously a dead person — I had gotten over that little trauma earlier. The figure in the center turned out to be Nikolae, Kairn's father. He called me the "undoer"; when I asked him why, he replied that it was because I was to be Kairn's undoing. Although I had become blasé about meeting the dead, I was still curious as to what he and the other spirits were doing there. He answered that Kairn hadn't been satisfied with simply killing Nikolae (the father) and his six brothers. Kairn wished to torment them for an eternity, so he summoned them back from the dead as guardians. Nikolae continued by saying there was something within the mausoleum walls that Kairn feared. Before I could get all excited, though,

he also said that he couldn't tell me what it was until he and his sons were freed. In order to do this, I had to bring each spirit objects they desired from their mortal existence. These objects were very precious to them when they were alive, and would be the keys to allow me to retrieve the object I needed to destroy Kairn.

Nikolae also said that he had seen me in a vision. The day after that was when Kairn stabbed him in the back and left him to die a slow death. In the final hour of his life Nikolae wrote the Prophecy I was busy fulfilling. He finished by saying he had waited centuries for my coming — I suspect he was trying to put a guilt-trip on me. Oh well — I was getting used to those too.

I knew I could use any weapon I could get against Kairn, especially if I was going to go up against him for Deirdre. Therefore I had to get this item the spirits were protecting, and in order to do this I had to get the miscellaneous objects the spirits wanted. Whee.

I remembered what Constatine had told me about each brother:

Aleksander was one of the finest warriors of his time. When dueling in the tavern with a stranger never before seen in the valley, he met his match. Aleksander was killed and then beheaded with his own rapier, which is how the tavern was named "The Severed Head." Nikolae's guard arrived and dragged the stranger, laughing, to the gallows where he was hung.

Feodor was terribly vain, and spent his money on frivolous things. Once when his father was away, Feodor had coins minted with his own image on

them. His father was furious when he returned and destroyed many of the coins. Constatine believed that some still existed, however. Feodor was found dead in a dark alley with his skull split open — few grieved his death.

Nathan loved to hunt, and had a small cottage built in the Dark Forest. He died in a hunting accident. It was difficult to tell what had killed him, since little of his body remained.

Michael, the weakest of the brothers, dedicated his life to scholarly duties. He died of some disease before he grew into full manhood.

Khristian was a minstrel, one of the finest ever to live. Like his other brothers, he too died a strange and mysterious death.

Peter was the youngest son. Although his body was never found, he was believed drowned. His pony had washed ashore on the banks of “Blackwater.” Constatine had suspected Peter’s body was sunk in the depths there.

As I thought about what I knew, I realized that I might already have one of the objects! Khristian was a minstrel, one of the finest to live. Before Jascha had been torn apart by the werewolf, he had claimed his violin was one of the finest ever made, and that it was once owned by a man named Khristian. This seemed a bit too coincidental, so I began to speak to each spirit hoping to find Khristian.

Since there were six brothers there, I spoke to each in turn. Aleksander, Feodor, Nathan, Michael, and Peter each said the same thing — I must bring them something they desired from their mortal life. They said nothing more, so I assumed I didn’t have what they wanted.

Murphy’s Law dictated that I would speak to Khristian last — sigh. When I finally did speak to him, he thanked me for returning his violin to him. He finished by saying that he hoped I could find the items his brothers desired. He then fell silent and his point of the star turned a deep red.

Not having any of the other objects, I left the room and found my way out of the mausoleum. As I walked I remembered that Constatine had said Aleksander had been killed by his own rapier, and that this event had been what named The Severed Head tavern in the Village. Not having any other leads, I decided to head over to the Village and speak to Seth.

I entered the tavern and found Seth at his usual place behind the bar. Directness seemed to be appreciated in this valley, so I asked him about the “rapier”. It took him a second, but he finally decided that I must have been speaking about the sword his father had once owned. He continued by saying that the weapon was rumored to have been the sword of Aleksander — this at least told me I was on the right track! He quickly shot down any hopes I might have had about getting it quickly by saying the rapier had been sold to cover a gambling debt. I asked him who the sword had gone to; Seth wasn’t sure, but he thought it might have gone to Ion’s father.

Since Ion’s store was close by, I charged out the front door and entered the general store. Ion was sitting in his accustomed spot (people didn’t seem to move much around here . . .). I asked him about the “rapier”; he replied that since he didn’t know much

about weapons, he didn't sell them in the store. I told him that it was no ordinary weapon, and that it had been given to his father to cover a gambling debt. That jogged his memory, and he remembered what I was talking about. Unfortunately (Murphy's Law again . . .) Ion's father had sold the weapon shortly after he received it. Oh well — at least I was still on the track. I asked him who the rapier had been sold to; after thinking for a moment he said that it must have been the strange family that lived in the Mansion far to the northwest. To cheer me up a little he finished our conversation by saying no one had seen the family in ages.

Well, I knew the general area where the Mansion was supposed to be located, so I headed off to the northwest. When I arrived at the corner of the valley, I found my way blocked by a huge Hedge Maze. Having little choice, I entered the maze and found myself in green-thumb hell. (You can find this map on page 76.) Huge topiary creatures slithered to and fro, cheerfully chomping on anything alive. This obviously included myself, so I quickly began to beat on these creatures with my pitchfork. I soon discovered that this (and most of my other weapons) had no effect on the beasts. The only effective weapon was the machete from the Swamp — it quickly turned the creatures to mulch.

Having thus armed myself, I headed off into the twisty maze. I quickly got lost and began to wander aimlessly. As I stumbled throughout the passages I found many things. I found some carline thistle and comfrey plants; I picked them up to ask

Annabelle later. Nasturtium littered the ground, and I picked up samples of this also. None of this was too surprising — what was, however, were the six garlic cloves I found scattered about the maze! I remembered that Boris had claimed that garlic couldn't grow in the valley — this was a find I would also have to ask Annabelle about. Several times I came across skeletons moldering on the ground. By one I found two full elixirs and an empty pouch. By another I found a pouch with two strength potions.

As I wandered, I realized that this must have been what Natalia's Father's ghost had been warning me about. You've gotta love 20/20 hindsight. . . . I hoped I would find an attic to go with the key he had given me. I'd better, after all this! Later, after countless hours of wandering and shredding shrubbery, I found the Mansion. I entered the front door and found myself in the foyer. Other than a few statues, there was nothing of interest, so I went through the door in front of me.

Beyond the door I found a huge, well-appointed living room. Two doors (other than the ones I had just come through) led from the room, and a staircase went upstairs. Leaning on the mantle by the fireplace was a man dressed in a bright green robe. He looked at me with obvious interest (as would I anyone walking into my home) so I decided to speak to him.

The man was named Mischa, or Mischa the Mad as he fancied himself. He was surprised that I had made it through the Hedge Maze — it had been set up to keep Kairn's creations away from the house, and he thought it was

quite impenetrable. I told him I was just visiting, and he welcomed me to look about the house. He simply asked that I not steal anything, for he had quite a few magical items lying about.

This intrigued me — it occurred to me that he might have something I could use in my fight against Kairn, and I told him so. Mischa was surprised (and amazed) that I would try such a thing. He explained that he once considered doing the same thing, but since he was quite safe there in the Mansion (and had everything he needed), he thought it would be better not to. But then, after a short pause, he admitted he didn't have everything he wanted. He wanted tobacco, and in return for a pouch of it he would give me a holy symbol. He claimed the holy symbol would glow when I came close to a vampire's coffin. I wasn't too impressed at first — as I told him, I wanted to kill Kairn, not find where he slept. He quickly corrected me. It turned out that a vampire's coffin was its life. It didn't matter how much I damaged the creature — should it find its way back to the coffin, it would heal itself. Mischa continued by saying I would have to find some way to seal the coffin — he didn't know how however.

On a sudden whim, I decided to accuse Mischa of being the "werewolf". He seemed strange enough — and anything was possible. In response, he growled and said I knew his secret. My heart had just about stopped when he laughed, shrugged it off and said that he had definitely gotten me going. I considered killing him, but I guessed that would seem to be the epitome of conversational gaffes.

Before I finished my educational conversation with Mischa, I asked him about the "rapier". He didn't remember it right off hand, but he admitted that with so many things in the house, it could have easily gotten misplaced. He *did* say I could have it if I found it, which took care of any problems I might have if I just "appropriated" it. We finished our conversation by his saying he hoped the rapier wasn't in the attic, since the key had long been lost. I smiled to myself — the key he spoke of must be the one Natalia's father had given me.

Through one of the doors on the far wall I found a bedroom with several suits of armor. I was tempted to put one on for my journey back through the Hedge Maze, but I resisted. After all, who knew where those suits had been?

The other door led into a library. Several large bookcases were against the walls, and a statue stood in the center of the room. I was particularly intrigued by a portrait of a question mark that hung on a wall above a chair. It seemed to symbolize my current state of mind perfectly! Lying on the floor was a book that must have fallen from one of the bookshelves. Since it looked lonely there, I picked it up and paged through it. It was titled the *Book of Temporal Incantations*, and it somehow reminded me of my youth. I felt younger and refreshed after reading it, and I decided to add it to my growing literary collection in my pack. (I just hoped that lit candle wouldn't set it on fire. . . .)

I decided to go up the stairs and look around. I figured the attic would probably also be up there, and hope-

fully I could pick up that dratted rapier! A long, messy hallway with two doors awaited my gaze at the top. A statue and a bust festooned the walls, and another suit of armor seemed to guard one of the doors. A broken chair had never been thrown out, and joy of joys, I found another question mark painting!

I went through the door closest to the stairs first and found another bedroom. This one had some more busts and statues, and there was a cool quilt on the bed. I didn't see any attic access, however, so I went to check out the other door at the end of the hall.

A large bedroom met my eyes with not one, but two suits of armor! Behind one with an orange pendant was a locked door. I pulled out my attic key and opened the door. Beyond it was a messy storage area with yet another suit of armor and a stairway leading up. Ignoring the great recycling possibilities, I went up the stairs and found myself in the attic.

The sheer amount of junk scattered corner to corner made it difficult to see anything, but after pawing through several chests, I saw a glint of steel on the floor. Clambering over piles of stuff I picked up my prize — the rapier!

Since Mischa thought the holy symbol would be so useful, I decided to go to the Village and buy some tobacco. I figured I could also ask Annabelle about the carline thistle and comfrey I had found in the Hedge Maze — I would hold off on the garlic until later. I had a feeling it could be valuable, and I wanted to keep it secret for now. I took note of my position as I left the Mansion — I was pretty

confident I could get back to the Mansion without going through the Hedge Maze again.

I went to the Village and entered the general store. Ion was his friendly ol' self, and I asked him about the "tobacco". As was befitting a high-quality store such as this one, he did have some, and offered to sell it to me for a silver piece. I gave him a coin and took the pouch.

I then walked over to Annabelle's store and asked her about the "carline" thistle and the "comfrey". She said that I might want to keep some of the carline thistle since it had the power to cure poison; she would also buy each plant for a silver piece. The comfrey had no special use, but she also offered to buy each one for a silver piece.

Since I now had the tobacco, I went back to the Mansion to trade it for the holy symbol. Mischa's word was as good as his name, and he quickly handed the symbol over once I gave him the tobacco pouch. I examined it — it looked pretty plain, but I sensed an aura of protection about it. I would have to try to use it next time I went up against Kairn's undead — hopefully it would come in handy!

Now that I was done here, the next step was to find another of the brothers' objects. After I thought for a bit, I remembered that Michael had been a scholar of sorts. The only vaguely scholarly thing I had seen in the valley was the cursed quill at the Monastery. It was a powerful magical item, and seemed a likely candidate.

I headed to the Monastery and found Pius still frantically writing at his desk. I spoke to him, and the only

thing he could tell me was that I had to “aaa” or something. I showed him my tonsils, but that didn’t help. Finally it hit me that he might be saying I had to ask him for the “quill”. I did so, and that broke the curse. He happily gave the quill to me and immediately fell asleep.

I saw the monk tending his candle on the way out of the Monastery, and on an impulse I stopped to speak with him. I asked him for a blessing — after all, who knew — I might have picked up a worthy item. After glancing at all of my stuff, he decided that my silver sword was worth blessing. I thanked him for his time and headed off to the Village.

I remembered seeing a signet ring in the Catacombs under the Village. It had been missing its inlaid jewel, and I suspected it was Nikolae’s ring. If it was, I also knew I could get the diamond from Andrei’s room and thus make it complete.

I entered the Catacombs and promptly got lost. A little while later I got my bearings and found the room with the signet ring. After picking it up, I decided to sneak into Kirill’s house through the wine cellar door. I was still angry with him for what had happened to Deirdre, and I didn’t want to speak to him. Once inside, I snuck up to Andrei’s old room. Holding my breath, I entered the room and searched for the diamond. I quickly found it on the ground; grabbing it, I rushed out into the relatively clear air of the hall.

All right — I was doing pretty well with getting all these objects. Since I had no better plan, I decided to try to figure out what Nathan needed.

Constatine had said Nathan was a hunter, and that he had built a cottage in the Dark Forest. Well, that seemed like a good place to start, so I headed off.

The entrance to the Dark Forest seemed fairly urbane. Paths led away from a small clearing in the trees. To the east I saw only more forest, while ahead of me to the north I heard the sound of wood being chopped. My curiosity aroused, I proceeded forward. (You can find this map on page 79.)

I emerged into another clearing, this one larger than the first. Before me was a man in suspenders, furiously chopping at a tree. The tree, however, never seemed to get any closer to falling — must have been one of those exotic hardwoods. The man would hack away, pause for breath, and continue, never stopping for more than a moment. Perhaps, I thought, the Tree-man would have preferred being thus reduced to sawdust over what amounted to a simple cremation? But never mind — what’s done was done. I approached the woodcutter and spoke.

He warned me not to go further into the forest, for there were wolves and banshees. The banshee, he said, sometimes appeared in the form of a beautiful young woman to lure men into its embrace. I imagined something like a boa constrictor, crushing men to death, but he said no. Instead, the banshee, when its prey came close enough, transformed into a horrible sight. Its chilling moan could age a man in seconds, leaving only a small pile of dust.

I continued by saying that, while I didn’t exactly look forward to the woods, I might have to explore them



anyway. He seemed resigned, and warned that many who entered the woods never returned. He, himself, never ventured farther in than he must to cut enough trees to continue his trade as a woodcutter. He then returned to his maniacal chopping.

I left him and continued to the east. Following one path straight ahead, I emerged into a clearing where two wolves waited. They seemed hungry, and only the repeated wounds I gave them convinced them to look elsewhere for food. Of course, by then they were dead. Oh well, technicalities. In the same clearing, I found three nasturtium plants. I picked one up and decided to ask Annabelle about it when I got the chance. Leaving the wolves to decompose, I continued my explorations.

Still to the east of the woodcutter, but down another path, I found another clearing. Two more wolves were picking over the skeleton of some other unlucky woodsman. After dispatching them, I discovered four silver coins near the body.

I returned to the woodcutter and decided to explore the western edges of the forest. The path became more shadowy as I went. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye I saw a hideous slimy black creature crawl out of the deepest gloom. Two more joined it, and they all attacked me. My weapons had no effect, and I backed away warily. As I moved to a brighter area, the creatures seemed to shy away. I realized that they were afraid of the light; while my candle might not affect them, the torch I had found earlier might. I lit it with my lighter, and sure

enough, they backed off. When I attacked them with it, they practically dissolved into the ground.

Close to the first pack, I found two more of the shadowy creatures. I quickly finished them off, and looked around. Near another skeleton I found two full elixirs and an ivory horn. I remembered the witch telling me that she could carve and enchant the horn to raise the dead ferryman at Blackwater. Since I had freed her grandfather's tortured spirit, she should be willing to do this for me now. Once I called the ferryman, I could cross to the island and search for Peter's body. Perhaps I'd even find the item he desired there!

I picked up the horn and continued to the north, where the forest seemed to thicken until there was only one navigable path. On the way I took care of another — well, I might as well name them, I guess — they looked like large shadows, so I called them shades. Seemed like a cool name at the time. Anyway, I knocked off another one and continued to the north. At one point, three wolves tried to bar my path, but I killed them off as well. Three carline thistles also lay on the ground by the bodies. (I suppose they also were on the ground *before* I killed the wolfies, but we're getting into more technicalities.)

Eventually the path widened out again, continuing to the north and west. I headed west, where two wolves attempted to block my explorations. I polished off those puppies and continued west, where I found three skeletons; unfortunately, two of them insisted on attacking me. I knocked

them into their component pieces and examined the more docile, inanimate one. Lying nearby were three silver coins. I picked them up, and continued to the northeast.

In a small grove I found three more nasturtium plants, which I left for now (not knowing what they were for). A large branch of a very hard wood (a rowan branch) caught my attention. I picked it up, admiring its heft, and realized that this might be a worthy piece for the gypsy woodworker to carve.

Returning to the south, I passed by my dead wolf companions and headed east. To the north, I found two live wolf companions. I much preferred the dead variety, and quickly imposed my preference upon them. I looked around and saw four motherwort plants. Taking one, I planned to talk to Annabelle soon about all these wonderful new herbs. The path continued north and east. To the north was a veritable field of motherwort plants; five of them grew happily in the rich abundance of the forest.

Returning south, I followed the path to the east where I was attacked by two strange glowing creatures that spun dizzily about my head. I recognized them for the mythic creatures of old: the will-o-wisps. My trusty pitchfork had no effect on them. For that matter, none of my weapons seemed to affect them. As they circled around me, I began to feel weak. I could barely swing my weapons, and I fled in terror.

I slowly returned to the Village. I hoped that Annabelle could answer my questions about the herbs I had discovered, and that perhaps one could help me in my weakness. The

“motherwort”, she reported, could cure disease, and the “nasturtium” could cure weakness. Since these were useful, she warned that I might want to keep a supply on hand, though she would certainly be willing to buy them from me if I wished.

Thanking her, I took a bit of the nasturtium and immediately felt much stronger and more alert. I decided to keep the rest of the plants I had found and left her store. The rowan branch was getting to be a bit awkward to carry around, so I figured I should go ask the gypsy wood carver if he could do anything with it.

That in mind, I headed for the Gypsy Camp. Once there I spoke to him. He was amazed that I had found a branch from a rowan tree, but quickly took it and began carving. He finished a few moments later and gave me back a rather crooked staff. Before I could question it, he said that the wood necessitated it being carved in such a fashion. He said legend had it that rowan wood was very pure and magical — making a good weapon against the supernatural. I realized that the rowan staff he had carved could be an excellent weapon against the will-o-wisps in the forest. The stick looked pretty cool too, so I took it and went back to the Dark Forest.

I strode into the clearing with the will-o-wisps and began swinging. Sure enough, my staff actually hit the creatures, and I quickly “killed” them. (They disappeared in a puff of light, so I couldn’t examine the remnants for signs of death.) Paths led east, north, and south from the clearing; I chose to go north first.

To the north I found a clearing with two nasturtium plants and two motherwort plants. A path led east, so I thought I'd poke my head in. Yet another bad move for a bad day. As I walked in I was attacked by three ghosts! I, of course, swung my favorite pitchfork at them, but quickly found it had a disconcerting way of swishing right through them! Luckily I discovered the blessed silver sword worked well, so I was able to protect myself from these fiends. On the ground was a skeleton and its possessions. There were three full elixirs, a strength potion, and a crystal, all of which I picked up. You can never have enough stuff, eh?

I returned west and then went south. From this clearing, I chose to go south again, where I found nothing but another path leading east. There, of course, two more will-o-wisps attacked, forcing me to wield my handy staff again. Since the path led north, I followed it only to discover a chilling sight.



In front of me was a whirling, coalescing, blue pattern. From the woodcutter's description, I recognized it as a banshee. It blocked the path north, and I couldn't pass without coming into its range. While I pondered weak and

wearied on how to continue my quest, I sensed a burning sensation from my neck. Looking down, I realized the amulet I had bought from Constatine had grown warm and seemed to be vibrating. According to the witch, it *was* supposed to be an amulet of protection, and since I was stuck here, I had little choice but to hope she was right! Taking a deep breath, I strode forward into the banshee's radius. Nothing happened. Bit of a let down, really, but I took heart anyway and continued north into a clearing.

In the far corner of the clearing was a little hunter's cottage — Nathan's! I entered and looked about. It was obvious nobody had used the building for many years; everything was dusty, falling apart, and covered in cobwebs. Finally though, I found something useful — a hunter's cap. It was the only object I could find that was in good shape, so I hoped Nathan would accept it.

The next step was to go to the witch and have her carve the horn. I could then summon the ferryman in the lake, cross to the island and find Peter's body. Hopefully the item he wanted could be found by it. Sigh — my feet were getting tired of all this walking. At this rate, I thought it might almost be worth asking the witch if I could borrow her broom. Grumble, grumble. . . . I muttered to myself a bit and headed off to the Crossroads.

Once there, I entered the witch's hut and spoke to her. She agreed to carve the horn since her grandfather's spirit had been released. Pulling out her knife, she scratched strange and mysterious symbols in the enamel of the horn, chanting mystical phrases all

the while. When she was done she handed it to me, and said all I had to do was go to the Lake Shore and blow on it. The ferryman would then come and take me where I wanted to go.

Well, those seemed to be pretty simple instructions, so I headed off to the Lake Shore. Three will-o-wisps awaited me there, so I dispatched them with my handy stick o' doom (also known as the rowan staff). Two nasturtium plants and three carline thistles were on the shore, but I left them alone since I didn't need them. Standing on the shore next to the water, I raised the horn to my lips and blew. An ominous note echoed across the lake's surface; I settled back to wait. Moments later, the water by the shore began to bubble furiously, and from the lake's depths arose a decrepit craft carrying an even more decrepit person. I spoke to the skeletal figure and asked if it was the ferryman. It replied in the affirmative, and I ordered it to take me to the island.



After a harrowing journey across the murky depths of the lake, I arrived at the island's shore. There I was promptly attacked by four more friendly will-o-wisps. I swung my stick a bit to take care of the creatures and commenced my exploration. On the east side of the island I discovered four cowberry plants. I didn't need the silver I could get for selling them, so I left them. Farther south, however, I discovered what I had come for. A small skeleton lay on the loamy ground — Peter's body. By it were two silver coins, which I picked up, and a small decorative dagger. The dagger was obviously Peter's; I picked it up so I could return it to him later. I returned to the lake shore where the ferryman awaited me. I spoke to him and ordered him to return me to the Lake Shore. After a traumatic return trip, I found myself safe on the mainland again.

I now believed I had six of the seven items Nikolae and the brothers needed. Since I had no clue as to what the seventh item was, I decided to go werewolf hunting. If you're interested in how I discovered the werewolf and killed it, skip to the bottom of page 42



I finally had all seven items I needed! All this junk was getting quite heavy to carry around, so I headed off to the Cemetery and the Mausoleum Inner Chambers. I trundled my way through the maze, dodging the occasional zombie or skeleton I had missed the first time through. I eventually arrived at the pillared room with the brothers.

*Once Appeased He Shall  
Be Allowed to Pass*

I spoke to each brother in turn and returned their items to them. Aleksander took his rapier; Feodor took his coin. I gave the quill to Michael; he quickly noticed it had been cursed and worried that someone might have been harmed — I told him all was well. Peter received his dagger; I gave the hunter's cap to Nathan. Each was very happy to have their item, and each wished me luck in destroying Kairn as their corner of the star turned red.

Finally, I turned to Nikolae and returned his ring and diamond to him. He said that his desires had been fulfilled, as had those of his sons. He finished by saying I would then pass. With that, enormous bolts of energy exploded from the chests of the brothers and hit Nikolae. He then aimed it at the wall he was facing and released it. A gaping hole was blown in the wall (to match my gaping mouth), and when I turned back to the spirits I saw that the entire star was pulsating and glowing a deep red.

Nikolae spoke again then, and told me what lay beyond the wall. He said that it was a small magical coffer that Kairn had captured the valley's sunlight with. That explained the perpetual darkness the valley was in! He also told me that light was a weakness of Kairn, and admonished me to remember that

fact. Bidding me farewell, the spirits then faded from view, leaving me alone in the room with the pulsating star.

Of course, after all that I had to go through the hole in the wall. Beyond it I found a small, plain room. On the ground was the magic box Nikolae had just described and a sack. The sack held two silver coins, two full elixirs, and two strength potions. Those always came in handy, so I picked up the lot.

I was doing pretty well on fulfilling this Prophecy. I didn't have any other plans, so I decided to do the next line in the Prophecy, which was: "A hidden place he must pry from one quite mad." If you're interested in how I fulfilled this line, skip to page 44.

*He Shall Find and Slay the  
Hound that Hunts the Night*

Looking back, I can see that in order to fulfill the "Seven lost souls have favors to ask" line of the Prophecy, I had to complete this task.

The magistrate had tempted me with a purse of silver, so I figured that I'd go find and kill the werewolf. I was closest to the silversmith's, so I decided to talk with him first. I asked him about the werewolf. Well, technically, I accused the smith of being one; after all, that was the magistrate's suggested method of finding out whether someone is or isn't a werewolf. He was surprised but didn't transform into such a beast. As politely as he could, he pointed out that the

profession he would choose (if he were a werewolf) would not be that of a silversmith. He had a good point.

Stumped, I tried to remember anything I'd heard about werewolves. Then it came to me; I remembered reading some old legends that mentioned silver bullets were highly effective against werewolves. I still had my pistol from the plane, and it had several bullets in it. I asked the silversmith if he could plate "bullets". He was willing to do so for two silver pieces; one for the plating, and one for labor. Even here, labor is just as expensive as the materials.

Who could the werewolf be? Who liked to eat raw meat or bloody items? So many people were so strange. But Sylva seemed slightly stranger than the rest; her diet (of rats) set her apart from the crowd. While I had no concrete evidence, she seemed a likely suspect. Besides, I was getting quite good at these logic leaps. . . . I went to the Farmhouse and entered the kitchen.



Since I'd been trying the random accusation method of werewolf detection, I confronted Sylva and accused her of being a "werewolf". She didn't like the fact that I had found out her

secret, and tried to kill me. If she hadn't reacted the way she did, I'd never have known; but like the magistrate said, werewolves just get that way when accused. Fortunately I had my pistol with the newly silver-plated bullets. They did the trick. Boris was still sitting on the couch when I came out of the kitchen. He must have put two and two together, because he refused to talk to me. I left him to mourn the loss of his furry little friend.

### *Claiming a Purse of Silver to Serve His Needs*

**N**ow that I had killed Sylva, a.k.a. the valley werewolf, I decided to go claim my reward. I tromped over to the Other Village and visited the magistrate. I told him that Sylva had been the werewolf. He said he would never have suspected it was her, but gave me the purse of coins.

When I opened the purse of coins, I noticed that one of these coins was not like the others. Hmm, why did that sound familiar? Ah — the unusual coin was one of the coins that the historian mentioned Feodor had minted. This was one of the items needed to fulfill the Prophecy line "Seven lost souls have favors to ask."

Now that I had all the items to return to the brothers, I headed to the mausoleum in the Cemetery. (Return to the section "Seven Lost Souls Have Favors to Ask," page 41.)

*A Hidden Place He Must  
Pry From One Quite Mad*

I had no ideas on how to go solve this particular line, so I decided to go to the tavern in the Village and talk to the people. Something usually turned up there, and I hoped I would get some clue as to what to do.

The villagers were happily talking as usual, and this time they were talking about a man named Matthias. Evidently he had just gotten back from somewhere, and he was in a room upstairs. The villagers wanted to see Matthias, but hoped they wouldn't have to hear his story about a man named Crazy Frank. It must have been a vicious fight — it seemed that both had lost some of their teeth! Another villager thought Matthias had gotten what he deserved. Evidently Crazy Frank lived alone because he wanted to be alone. People who went to see him were only asking for trouble.

I was a sucker for these things — I knew I had to go see this Crazy Frank character and see if he was as bad as these people said. I wasn't sure where I could find him though, so I decided to go upstairs and talk to Matthias. He could probably tell me.

I went up the stairs and began checking out the rooms. In one, I found the resurrected Tree-man eating dinner. I figured he might have cooled off by now, and so I tried to talk to him. No luck there, let me tell you. He still seemed a bit miffed about the whole

episode, so I held off on my “too hot for you” wisecrack and left.

I had better luck in the next room I tried. A man dressed in brown pants and a white undershirt stood in front of the mirrored bureau. He seemed to be checking out his teeth, and I figured this must be Matthias. I strode on over and spoke to him.

He was surprised to see me, and asked what I wanted. He thought Seth would have told me that the room was rented. I guess he didn't realize I had a tendency to walk in uninvited. Too bad. I apologized and he said to forget it. He then continued by giving me some advice. He said I should arm myself, for there were many wolves around these days. I guess he didn't notice the arsenal I was carting around with me.

He then warned me to avoid Crazy Frank. I asked him who Crazy Frank was. Matthias replied by saying he was a madman who lived in a hut farther north. He didn't like company, and didn't appreciate it when Matthias had come to ask him something. Well, this seemed to be good possibility for the “one quite mad” mentioned in the “A hidden place he must pry from one quite mad” line of the Prophecy. I decided to find out more, and listened to what Matthias had to say.

Crazy Frank had jumped Matthias and the two of them got into a fight. It was then that Matthias lost his tooth. Matthias said that he got a few good blows in also, and that after the fight he picked up some of Crazy Frank's teeth. He wanted to give them to the Gypsy woman named Maria to make a voodoo doll so he could get revenge.

She refused to make the doll for him, however, because she didn't want the doll used to kill anyone. Now Matthias just kept the tooth as a reminder to leave Crazy Frank alone.

I now knew where Crazy Frank lived, but I wanted that tooth. I thought it might come in useful if I had problems when I went to visit myself. He didn't want to give it to me, but was willing to sell it for a silver coin. It seemed like a gruesome enough curio, so I agreed and gave him the coin.

Now that I had heard all about Crazy Frank, I was really curious to meet the madman in person. I decided to head off north to Frank's House and tempt fate. The house was very small and the inside was quite dirty and filled with cobwebs. A strange figure dressed in green hopped up and down muttering to himself. Using my lightning-quick powers of deduction, I figured out that this must be Crazy Frank. I tried speaking to him. It was a rather one-sided conversation, with him simply telling me he wouldn't tell me where the Agrippa could be found (whatever that was). He finished off by telling me to leave him alone.

Now, he hadn't killed me or anything — which I considered to be a great start to a relationship. Unfortunately, he had mentioned something called the Agrippa. You know me — once something secret pops up, I just have to find out about it. Since it was obvious the Agrippa was probably in the "hidden place" mentioned in the Prophecy line, I had to find some way to coerce Crazy Frank to tell me what I wanted.

Now, Matthias had said he had tried to get Maria to make a voodoo doll for him. That seemed like a good idea, so I decided to speak to her to see if she might do it for me. With this in mind, I headed off to the Gypsy Camp.

Once there, I entered Maria's wagon. She asked me if I had any needs — almost as though she knew why I had come. Then again, she probably did. . . . I asked her if she could make me a voodoo doll that Matthias had told me about. She answered that there was enough evil in the valley already, and that she wouldn't make anything that would take another's life. I told her I didn't want to kill Crazy Frank — I only wanted to scare him into telling me what I needed to know. She thought about it for a minute, and told me that I must promise that no harm would come to Crazy Frank — should anything happen to him, she would make me pay with my own life.

Well, that seemed clear enough, so I gave her my word I wouldn't harm him. She then told me she needed several things to make the doll: wax, and a personal item of Crazy Frank's. She also mentioned I would need some sort of pin or something to fool him — he wasn't as stupid as he looked. I had the gold pin Natalia's mother had given me, and I could use a candle and Crazy Frank's tooth for the doll's materials.

I gave her the candle and the tooth and asked her to make the doll. As she made it, she reminded me of my promise not to hurt him. I certainly had no plans to forget anytime soon! When she finished, she gave me the doll. She said



to hold it in one hand, and to put the pin in the other — Crazy Frank would then tell me what I wanted to know.

I went back to Frank's House and prepared myself. I put the doll in one hand, and the gold pin in the other. I then spoke to him. He quickly noticed the doll and the pin, and asked me what I was going to do with it. I told him he'd better start talking about his secret, or else. . . . That got to him, and he quickly agreed to tell me all I wanted, as long as I gave him the doll afterwards. Since I didn't think I'd need it later, I agreed.

He told me that it had all started a few months ago. He had been exploring in the mountains west of the house, and it had been getting late. Near nightfall, he found a cave and decided to shelter there. Later that evening, he heard strange whispering noises coming from a cavern entrance at the back of the cave. He decided to explore, but was attacked by vampire women! He paused for a moment to say none had bitten him — always good to know. He ran away and got lost in the caverns. Somewhere in the twistings and turnings he came across a rusted iron gate. Now, this was unusual enough, but beyond the gate he saw a book floating in the air. It was chained down, and to make things more interesting, it spoke to him! The book called itself the Agrippa, and promised Crazy Frank all sorts of things if he freed it. Well, that was about all his nerves could take, so he ran away, past the vampire women, and returned to his house.

I gave him the doll as I had promised and quickly departed the house. I just had to check out this book, so I figured I should head off to the Cave.

*And Speak to Evil Incarnate,  
the Dark Lord's Bane*

Since it seemed pretty obvious that the Agrippa was in this "hidden place" mentioned by the Prophecy, it also made sense that the next line of the Prophecy had relevance: "And speak to evil incarnate, the Dark Lord's bane". If I read this right, I would have to be careful, since the book was evil. (I was always quick on these things.) I couldn't afford to ignore it, however, since it was also something Kairn would hate. Always a good thing to find things Kairn didn't like.

Well, to this end I headed off to the Cave and passed through it into Crazy Frank's Caverns. (You can find this map on page 75.) Once there I began to do my standard wander and explore technique. Just beyond the entrance I found another one of those skeletons lying on the floor. Almost seemed as though they were what passed for welcoming committees around here. On the ground by it was an empty vial. Not too useful, so I continued on.

Soon I heard a strange whispering, and seconds later a vampire woman attacked! As Crazy Frank had warned, none of my weapons worked, so I had to run away. Once I was safe, I realized I would have to get some holy water

from the Monastery. The mad monk had mentioned that the water was an effective weapon against lesser vampires such as these.

I quickly left and went to the Monastery. There, I spoke to the monk and bought several vials of holy water. I didn't know how many I needed, but I figured I could always come back and get more if necessary.

Returning again to the Cave, and Crazy Frank's Caverns, I began my exploration again. This time, however, when a vampire woman attacked, I held my ground and threw a vial of holy water at it. Wonderful stuff! It burst upon the foul beast and quickly shriveled it up into a desiccated corpse. I would do this again and again as these fiends attacked me.

In one dead-end I found another dead skeleton and a pouch with two vials of holy water. It was a pity the poor guy didn't get to use them, but I was sure I would be able to. Later I found another skeleton in a small room. A vampire woman attacked, so I gave it a holy water bath as I'd been doing to the others. On the ground by the skeleton was one full elixir and an empty elixir. I picked up the full elixir and downed it — hit the spot, it did!

Finally I came across the rusted door Crazy Frank had told me about. Beyond it floated the book he had described, but it didn't speak to me. I tried to open the door, but it was stuck fast. Finally I realized I would need something to pry it open . . . something sort of like that pry bar I had left back in the shed in the Village. Grr.

I headed off to the Village and picked up the pry bar. Returning to caverns again, I went to the door and wrenched it open with that handy tool I had just fetched. Panting heavily from all this running about, I passed through the archway and entered the room with the Agrippa.



The book floated in a corner of the room with massive chains about it that held it firmly captive. Well, I'd come this far — I might as well speak to it.

It said it had been awaiting my coming for a long time. This surprised me, and I asked what it was. It answered quite simply: power. It said it was evil incarnate (this fitted nicely with the line in the Prophecy) and that it was what had given Kairn his power. In return, Kairn had imprisoned the Agrippa where I now saw it. To be honest, I couldn't really blame him. The book smelled of brimstone and sulfur, and I sensed the evil radiating from it.

The book interrupted my musings. It told me that I must free it, for I was the one prophesied to destroy Kairn. It continued by saying that it had been the one that brought the dream vision to Nikolae, thus allowing him to write the Prophecy. It finished by saying it

would use me to take away that which it had given Kairn.

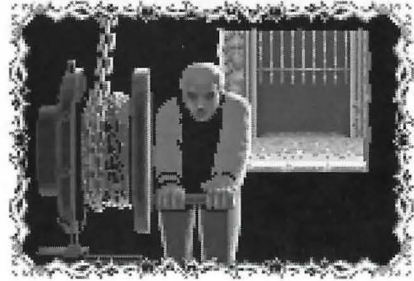
I told it I had planned to destroy Kairn before I had met it. Knowing that, I challenged it to tell me why I should free it as it wanted. The Agrippa answered that I needed to know Kairn's true name to have any power over him. In my final confrontation I must speak that name to Kairn — nothing I did would be of any use otherwise. Then it told me what I already saw coming; only it could tell me Kairn's true name.

Much as I didn't want to admit it, what the Agrippa had told me made sense. It fitted very well with the "A true name must be spoken for evil's power to wane" line of the Prophecy. Thus, I had little choice but to somehow get the key for the shackles that bound it. The Agrippa confirmed this, and said that the key was kept in a place Kairn held most sacred — his coffin.

Beauty — I already could guess where that coffin would be kept — Kairn's Fortress. It seemed as though I was going to check on Deirdre before I really felt ready. Oh well, it's not like I expected my day to get any better as I went along.

I left the Agrippa's chamber and went to the Village. I felt like some human (I hoped) company, and I went to the tavern to speak to Seth. Once there though, I quickly noticed that everybody kept well away from me. I tried talking to Seth, and he quickly complained that I stunk of fire and brimstone. Great — somehow the Agrippa was able to make that stench follow me. Having run out of options, I decided to go visit Kairn at home.

I departed the Village and soon arrived at Kairn's Fortress. Three skeletons attacked as I came up to the gatehouse of the castle. I dispatched them with that wonderful mace and noticed that one of them had dropped a key. I picked up the key and went toward the fortress entrance. There I found that my way was blocked by a huge portcullis. Putting two and two together, I used the key the skeletons had dropped and opened the door to the gatehouse. Once inside, I operated the winch and opened the portcullis.



Leaving the gatehouse, I passed through the now open portcullis and found myself in the castle courtyard. A blood-red fountain cheerfully gurgled in the center, and was ringed by six realistic-looking stone statues. With a chill, I realized that the statues were women that Kairn had somehow transformed into decorations. Nine doors ranged about the courtyard, three to a wall. Getting my bearings, I decided that the wall with the torches was to the north. Therefore, the corner doors on the east and west walls obviously led to the different towers of the castle. I figured I could leave the towers for later, so I decided to check out the doors on the north wall.

The left-most door led to an old storage room. Dust-covered chests and cabinets were scattered all about. The only thing of interest was a crystal lying on the floor. I picked it up and left the room.

I peeked behind the center door and saw an ugly green carpet. Colors like that just don't happen by accident, so I had to check it out. It was about then that I noticed the three bats trying their best to kill me. I pulled out that handy mace and played Mr. Fly Swatter for a few minutes; the bats soon lost interest (and their lives). I quaffed the full elixir lying on the floor and went to check out the third door.

The right-most door led into some sort of study. There was a suit of armor and another one of those weird stone statues standing around. Seemed a bit creepy the way the woman was frozen midstride, so I quickly left.

Standing back in the courtyard, I pondered my next move. I needed the Agrippa's key, and I still hadn't found Deirdre. I couldn't really back off now, so I turned my attention to the east wall.

I figured I might as well be methodical about all this, so I decided to start with the left-most door and check out the northeast tower. A ghost attacked me once I entered. I polished it off with that handy blessed silver sword and looked about. A spiral staircase led upwards, and two suits of armor stood against the wall. Something struck me strange about the wall behind the armor on the right. Looking closer, I saw what looked like a secret door! I pushed the statue from the left, and sure enough, it slid aside revealing the hidden passage.

Behind the secret door I found another stone statue and stairs leading down. Since the statues were becoming quite monotonous in their regularity, I decided to head down the stairs. Below, I discovered another storeroom with yet another of those statues. I was going to tip it over (just because) when Mr. Skeleton attacked from the shadows. Mr. Mace did his job, and I soon stood over Mr. Kindling. A door led away from this room. I hadn't come this far to stop poking around now, so I charged on through.

Behind that door I found a long hallway lined with suits of armor and four doors. The doors had grates in them, and looked like prison cells. I was about to look inside of one when a skeleton attacked. I did my usual thing to it. I was able to open three of the doors; the cells I found behind them were empty. The fourth door was boarded up from the inside — try as I might, I couldn't even budge it. I would have to find some other way to get behind it.

Having explored all I could here, I went back to the ground floor and climbed the spiral staircase. Another skeleton attacked me on the second floor. I dispatched it, and finding nothing more than statues, continued up the next flight of stairs.

A ghost attacked me at the top. I took care of it and looked about. The room seemed to be a library of some sort — there were several shelves lined with books. The floor was made of black marble — kinda cool, really — I'd have to get some for the kitchen floor at home. A straight staircase led up from the room. I was going to go up, but something caused me to pause.

Although I was curious as to where they led, I could somehow feel an incredibly evil presence above. With a sudden chill, I had a strong intuition that Kairn was in the room above. He probably hadn't sensed me, and I thought it wise to leave it that way for now. I knew I wasn't ready to take him on, so I left and went back to the courtyard.

The center door of the east wall led to a long greeting hall. A red carpet lined the floor, and a fire blazed in the hearth on the far wall. Six more of those statues lined the carpet — a welcoming committee, I guessed. There were two more doors at the end of the hall — one on the right, one on the left. The door on the left led to another library. Other than a grandfather clock, there was nothing in this room I hadn't seen a million times before, so I went to check out the door on the right. It led to a room with more statues. An unlit fireplace wasn't warming things up, so I left and returned to the courtyard.

The last door on the east wall led to the southeast tower. I found three bats and two silver coins on the ground floor. I killed the bats, picked up the coins, and went up the stairs. A small room with an unlit fireplace and a ghost met my gaze on the second floor. I took care of the ghost and went up the next flight of stairs to the third floor. A dining room table with candles was the only interesting thing in this room, so I quickly went up the last flight of stairs. The fourth floor seemed to be a statue and armor display. I tried to tip some of them over, but they seemed glued to the floor. Oh well — I was wasting time. I returned to the courtyard to check out the west wall.

Keeping with convention, I decided to start with the door on the left again, the one that led to the southwest tower. Behind it was some sort of altar with skulls on it. Six stone benches faced it, and stairs led to the second floor. I went up them and found another one of the castle's many storage rooms. A skeleton attacked and I beat it with my mace. More stairs went up — I decided to follow their example. The third floor had a couple of statues, but nothing else of interest. I went up the staircase to the fourth floor. A couple of suits of armor and a statue decorated this picturesque scene, and three silver coins lay scattered on the floor. I picked the coins up and went back to the courtyard again.

Next in line on the west wall was the center door. Behind it was another large hall, except this one was lined with that same black marble I had seen earlier. A large red carpet covered most of the floor, leaving the outer edges of the hall uncovered. At the far end of the hall were two doors — one led right, one led left. As I was deciding which door to explore first, I glimpsed movement in the shadowy corners of the hall. Suddenly, two shades erupted from the darkness and attacked! I had to do some weapon juggling, but I quickly drew my torch and got the creatures to see the light. I then entered the left door. A skeleton was guarding another storage room — I broke it up and went to look behind the door on the right of the hall. Jackpot! Yes, it was another storage room, and yes, there were even more of those suits of armor. But there were

also two strength potions and two full elixirs on the floor! I picked them up and went back to my favorite courtyard.

I was getting somewhat worried. I only had one door (and the tower behind it) left to explore — the northwest one. I hadn't seen any sign of Deirdre, the Agrippa's key, nor anything particularly interesting or useful. I only hoped things were going to get better. . . .

I went through the last door on the west wall. Behind it was a rather odd room. All of the other towers had large rooms with a spiral staircase leading upwards. This room was more like a small hall, and something struck me odd about it. The only things in it were another door to my right, and a cabinet of some sort. The door looked the easier of the two to manipulate (since everything seemed glued down around here), and I figured I could come back later to check out the cabinet if I didn't find anything.

I went through the door and found another small room. Another cabinet was here, but with two suits of armor to either side of it. I found the staircase I had been lacking in the other room, so I climbed it to the second floor. At the top I was almost bowled off my feet by one of those lightning-fast vampire women. Digging around my pouches, I found a vial of holy water and chucked it at the creature. She did the melt thing, and I went up the next flight of stairs to the third floor.

A comfortable-looking study greeted me, along with a shade. I used my torch on it and removed it from the premises. I was tempted to sit down in one of those chairs and relax, but duty

called. Besides, I was getting more and more worried about Deirdre — now wasn't the time to slow down.

I found another library on the fourth floor. I almost turned and left, but I noticed a strange-looking book lying on the ground. It had a night-blue binding, and an eye seemed to peer from its cover. The book was entitled *Dismissals of Evil, Vol. III*. I couldn't help but flip through it — suddenly I realized the stench had disappeared from me! The book must have "dismissed" the Agrippa's curse. Seemed like a handy thing, so I added to my ever-growing library.

Now what? I had explored everywhere in the castle, and I had yet to find any clue of Deirdre or the Agrippa's key. Then I remembered that cabinet in the strange room at the base of this tower. Something had struck me strange about the cabinet then, and I resolved to go find out what.

I went down and examined the cabinet. (It was the one *without* the suits of armor to either side.) It seemed normal enough, but its positioning against the wall seemed strange. Considering all of the secret passages I had been finding in these parts, I figured it couldn't hurt to try to move the cabinet. Yep — when I pushed it from the right side, it slid and revealed a hidden door.

I entered the door and found a small room with a spiral staircase leading down. I seemed to be on the track of something, so I headed down. At the bottom of the stairs I found . . . a dead end? It was a storeroom, with a bureau against a wall, boxes in the corners, and statues and armor

scattered about. I didn't see anything particularly interesting, but suddenly noticed that my holy symbol was glowing! Mischa had said it would glow when I was near a vampire's coffin — it seemed as though I was on the right track. There had to be more here than met the eye. I spent a few minutes poking about when I suddenly realized the bureau was the only thing covering a large portion of the wall. I took a closer look and pushed the bureau from the left side. Lo and behold, I found yet another secret door!

Behind the secret door was a short hall with a regular door at its end. Going through this door, I entered an even shorter hall with another door. This door was flanked by several suits of armor, and I stepped toward it. A ghost attacked just then, and I paused to clean up after it. Then, facing the door, I took a deep breath and entered.

A large stone room greeted my gaze. Several more of those omnipresent statues were there, along with a huge coffin! The coffin must be where Kairn slept — I now knew where to find it if I needed. The Agrippa had said I could find its key near the coffin, so I looked about some more. There were two doors on the walls. One was heavily boarded up — it must have been that door I couldn't open up earlier. The other door seemed to be to a cell of some sort — I was about to examine it when I saw the key! It lay next to a table by the door I had just entered. I walked toward it and picked it up.

Suddenly I heard a voice from the cell — it was Deirdre! She begged me to help her, and to get her out of there. She was afraid that Kairn would return

soon, and didn't want to become a vampire like him. I certainly didn't want that either, and I tried to calm her down. I asked her where the key to the cell door was; she answered that Kairn had it, and kept it by his side at all times. That didn't seem to raise my chances any of getting it. She suggested I use one of the axes held by the suits of armor on the door, but I knew it would take too long. The only hope was to attack Kairn and kill him. Once that was done, I could free Deirdre and we could leave the accursed valley. As I was about to leave, Deirdre told me something shocking. She said not to trust her father — he had given her up to Kairn in order to try to buy his own escape. I hadn't been liking Kirill too much anyway, but that was the final straw. I'd have to have a, ahem, "conversation" with him later.

I bid Deirdre good-bye, and rushed off to the Cave, and Crazy Frank's Caverns beyond. I had to get to the Agrippa, and I had to get that true name of Kairn's. Only then did I stand a chance of saving Deirdre and myself.

I found my way through the caverns and soon stood before the Agrippa. It quickly noted that I had the key, and demanded that I free it immediately. I turned the key in the lock; the chains fell to the ground. The Agrippa then began to glow brightly, and turned to face me.

It began to laugh maniacally, crying that it was "free, free!" Then it spoke to me directly and told me to look within its pages — as promised, it would show Kairn's true name. I looked at the

page it showed me — the name was a strange one, so I made sure to write it down. (Note: the name changes from game to game — be sure to remember it!) Seconds later, the book began to glow even more brightly. As I shielded my eyes, it suddenly disappeared. Of course, it couldn't resist cursing me with the stench of brimstone before it left. I knew how to take care of that, however. I pulled out my *Dismissals of Evil*, Vol. III and read it — sure enough, the smell soon disappeared. The benefits of being an English major, I guess.

I had the name. I had released one of the most evil objects in existence to get it, but I now had the name. I wasn't quite sure how to feel about that. How did I know I even needed that name? Then I remembered again — there was a line in the Prophecy about that. I opened it up and found it — “A true name must be spoken for Evil's power to wane.”

That seemed pretty clear. I now had to figure out what the other lines meant if I was to survive.

### *He Shall Turn Aside the Vampire's Charms*

I read the next line of the Prophecy: “He shall turn aside the vampire's charms.” Great. I knew vampires could charm their victims — I just couldn't remember how! Then I remembered how hypnotizing the gaze of the vampire women had been. I had been able to break away from them, but I

shivered as I realized how powerful the gaze of Kairn would be. Somehow I had to find a way to keep his gaze from freezing me. A few seconds later I had it — I could eat one of those mushrooms! I only hoped that if I timed it right, its effect would disappear before Kairn decided to take me on by hand. That could make things a little awkward.

### *And Stand Strong Against Claw and Fang*

Kairn's next logical step would be to attack me by hand. That would explain the “And stand strong against claw and fang” line of the Prophecy. He had supernatural strength and speed, and I would have little chance of standing against him. Unless . . . I could keep him at a distance. Hey — I could use that garlic I had found in the Hedge Maze! I knew it was valuable, but I figured now was a good time to ask Annabelle about it.

I headed off to the Village and entered Annabelle's store. She was still standing behind her counter doing her thing. I asked her about “garlic”. She couldn't believe I actually had garlic — she thought it was destroyed long ago. She said that if I had six cloves of garlic, she could make me a necklace. She would keep some for herself, but in the end I would have a handy thing to wear around my neck. She also said that while the necklace would have no effect on the lesser creatures like the vampire women, it would be an great thing to keep Kairn at bay.



I had found what I needed to keep Kairn from tearing me apart. Now the next step was to go from the defensive to the offensive.

*Then He Must Make His  
Own Most Holy Attack*

The next line of the Prophecy read “Then he must make his own most holy attack.” This seemed a bit ambiguous. It seemed as though I could either use the blessed silver sword to attack, or throw a vial of holy water at the fiend. I soon realized that the line probably meant to use the holy water — after all, I had already seen its effects on the vampire women! I was sure that this would wound him, but I knew it wouldn’t kill him. I figured I’d better read the Prophecy for additional clues.

*And the Imprisoned  
Light Must He Set Free*

I knew a creature as powerful as Kairn could survive far more damage than what the holy water would inflict. Therefore, I still needed to attack and weaken him some more. The next line of the Prophecy read “And the imprisoned light must he set free.” At least this one wasn’t a brain-bender. I just had to release the sunlight in the

magic box. Nikolae had told me Kairn feared it — the Prophecy only confirmed it.

*A True Name Must Be Spoken  
for Evil’s Power to Wane*

The Agrippa had cleared up the “A true name must be spoken for Evil’s power to wane” line of the Prophecy. I simply had to say Kairn’s true name at this stage. Hopefully it would be enough to drive him away.

Then I remembered what Mischa the Mad had said. He had said that I must block Kairn’s access to his coffin. If Kairn could return to his coffin, he could heal any damage I might do and return to make me quite unhappy. Thus it seemed as though that was the “And if he denies the Dark Lord his place of rest” line of the Prophecy. If you’re interested in how I fulfilled this line, skip to page 57.

*He Cannot Falter, Not Even  
Once, For It Means His Death*

This line seemed to be the most vague. It seemed to say I couldn’t back off once I had started, and if I did I would die. Since Deirdre’s life was on the line, I knew I wouldn’t falter. Besides — I rather enjoyed life. Everything else on this blasted

Prophecy seemed to be accurate, so I figured it would be a bad move to ignore it now!

The next line said "And if he denies the Dark Lord his place of rest. . .". I obviously needed to keep him away from his coffin. If you'd like to read what I did to do so, go to the "And if he denies the Dark Lord his place of rest" line on page 57.



The two remaining lines of the Prophecy seemed to refer to the good times that would occur after I had defeated Kairn. These lines were: "The veil of darkness shall be lifted" and "And the evil reign of terror shall at last come to end". Since I couldn't see anything to do to prepare for them, I decided to ignore them.

Well, it looked as though the time had come. I decided to head off to the Monastery to get a vial of holy water. The monk gave me the standard sell, and I bought the holy water for a silver piece. Taking a deep breath, I continued to Kairn's Fortress. Once there I entered the northwest tower,



went through all of the secret doors, and found my way back to Kairn's coffin room. I put the iron nails in one hand, the hammer in the other, and went to work nailing the coffin shut. It made a dreadful clamor, and I kept looking about nervously, hoping no one would hear. Finally it was done. Now I simply had to confront Kairn himself. Easy as pie. . . .

I left the hidden room and went back to the courtyard. There, I entered the northeast tower and found my way up the stairs to the room with the black floor. The straight staircase led up from there, and somehow I could sense Kairn waiting for me.

I put the garlic necklace around my neck, and put the mushroom in hand. The holy water and magic box I put where I could get to them quickly. Then, I went up the stairs. The room I found must have been Kairn's throne room. A large chair stood in the center with a view out the windows. Two more of those statues stood around, and standing by the gothic windows was Kairn himself, his back to me, looking out.

I knew I only had a few seconds before Kairn turned to face me with his evil gaze, so I chomped that mushroom. The world turned black, and seconds later I heard Kairn's voice. He said I had become a thorn in his side, and that he should have destroyed me long ago. He then tried to charm me with his gaze — I told him it wasn't going to be that easy.

The fact that I could resist him angered him even more, and he rushed at me to attack with his physical might.

Was I glad I had that garlic necklace around my neck! He couldn't even get close to me, and screamed in anger that he had destroyed all of the garlic plants in the valley long ago. I was a bit snide (just this once) and pointed out that he must have missed some. I then told him I had come to destroy him, and end all of the pain and suffering he had brought to the people of the valley. He laughed, not believing I could do it.

I figured it was a good time to wipe that smirk off his face, so I carefully aimed and threw the vial of holy water at him. He began to scream in pain as the water etched trails upon his face. In a twisted voice he said that the pain



I would suffer in return would be a thousand-fold what he felt then.

I had him tottering — it was time for the next blow. I grabbed the magic box and opened it in his direction. A blinding surge of light erupted from the tight confines of the box and seared Kairn. He cried that he was blind, and that he couldn't see. I think he was pretty unhappy, and I was getting worried what he would do if he recovered.

Therefore, it was time to do the last step of the instructions in the Prophecy. Facing him, I uttered his true name. He screamed in shock. He couldn't believe I had just spoken his true name, and he said he could feel himself weaken. He realized I must have found the Agrippa, and screamed again. He was weakening even more — he said he must seek refuge to heal or perish. He began to turn into a bat — as he did so he cried that we would meet again, and that I would die then. He then fled in pain and agony.

Little did he know I had shut that coffin of his. I knew I could find him by the coffin, so I left the throne room and went back to the courtyard. There, I entered the northwest tower and wended my way to his coffin room.

Kairn lay slumped upon his coffin, shock and chagrin pasted all over his face. He was very unhappy that I had sullied his coffin in such a crude way, and said there must be a way he could still defeat me. I had been dealing with him for far too long, and I figured it was time to end all of this.

I took a chair and broke off a stake. Piercing Kairn's heart with it, I threw his body to the ground. I went over to the axe Deirdre had mentioned earlier and picked it up. Aiming carefully, I swung and decapitated Kairn's head, thus ending his evil reign forever. I picked up the head and threw it on the table. I also took the key to Deirdre's cell, walked over to the door, and unlocked it. Deirdre rushed into my arms, and all was well again.

*And If He Denies the  
Dark Lord His Place of Rest*

This line of the Prophecy seemed to indicate I had to find a way to block Kairn's access to his coffin. There didn't seem to be any reasonable way to block off the room — Kairn could turn into a bat after all, and I still had to get to Deirdre afterwards.

Then I remembered what the gypsy fortune teller had told me. Maria had read my palm, and she had said she saw me nailing something. She continued by saying that I was using iron nails. I was rather hesitant to rely on a fortune, but considering how much faith I was putting in a madman's Prophecy, this didn't seem like much.

Well, nails should be easy to procure. Any decent general store should carry them, so I went to the Village and spoke to Ion in the store about "nails". He said that he did indeed carry iron nails, and that a handful of them would cost me a silver piece. Seemed like a worthy buy, so I purchased them and left the store.

Next step was to find something to hammer the nails in with. I realized an ex-girlfriend would have suggested my forehead, but I wanted to find some other way. "To hammer the nails in with. . . ." Hello — I obviously wasn't thinking — the bloody hammer I had found by Eduard's body would work quite nicely. Maybe I *should* use my head — might shake something up in there. Sigh . . . I decided to go ask Kirill about the tool.

I entered the house and found Kirill. He began to ask how things were going — I told him to shut up. I didn't even want to hear any more lies out of him. He tried to act innocent, but I told him I had spoken to Deirdre. About then he ordered me out of his house, and called for Ivan to "escort" me out. I left, but told him I was going to rescue his daughter.

Ivan was still standing in the front foyer. He said I shouldn't be in the house — I told him I didn't care what Kirill wanted. I asked him for the "hammer". He didn't think he should give it to me, and wanted to go ask Kirill about it. I got mad then and began to yell at him. I told him to give me the hammer right then. He finally complied, but warned that if I ever yelled at him again, he would use that hammer to beat my skull in. I swear — one can't even get good domestic help these days.

I now knew how to seal Kairn's coffin. I decided to try and figure out the last "step" of the battle with Kairn. (Return to the section "He Cannot Falter, Not Even Once, for It Means His Death," page 54.

*The Veil of Darkness  
Shall Be Lifted*

**W**e returned to the Village and found people blinking in the unfamiliar sunlight. We quickly explained to them what had happened — a great cheer of joy rose from their throats as they realized that they were free.

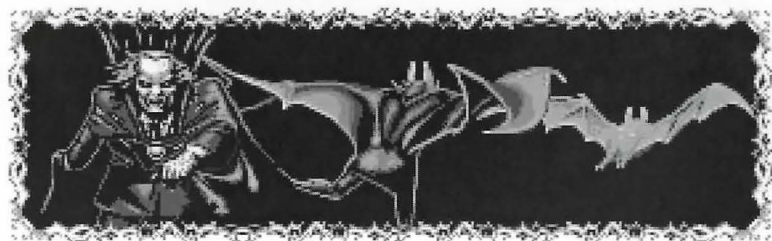
As we left them, I realized I'd have to think about importing some sunglasses. I'd make a killing selling them here. . . .

*And the Evil Reign of Terror  
Shall at Last Come to an End*

**K**airn had been killed, and light had returned to the once-dark valley. I had no desire to stay around, especially anywhere near Kirill. After Deirdre had said goodbye to her friends, I wanted to take her away to another life.

A few days later we had left the valley and found a ship. Standing on the bow, we looked back at the high mountains we had just left behind. Finally, we were leaving this once-accursed place to live a life of our own. Kissing Deirdre, I only hoped life with her wasn't always going to be this exciting.

— ✦ THE END ✦ —



## HERBS, FUNGI, AND OTHER MEDICINAL SUBSTANCES

The following table lists the different valley flora and potions that you find in your travels. Each item has special qualities.

SUBSTANCE	WHAT IT DOES
Carline Thistle	cures certain poisons
Comfrey Plant	can be sold for silver
Cowberry Plant	can be sold for silver
Elixir	heals minor wounds
Motherwort	cures disease
Mushrooms	temporarily blinds
Nasturtium	cures weakness
Parsley	grows near homes of murderers
Strength Potion	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities

## ITEMS LISTED BY NAME

Throughout the game you find special items that will help you fulfill the Prophecy. Here is a list alphabetized by the items' names. This list *includes* items listed in the previous section "Herbs, Fungi, and Other Medicinal Substances."

ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Agrippa	Crazy Frank's Caverns	contains Kairn's true name
Ashes	Crash Site, make by burning the Tree	use to resurrect the Tree-man
Bell with Ribbon	make by tying Deirdre's scarf around the silver bell	use to dispel the spirit guarding the Mausoleum
Betony	Cemetery (after asking the Historian about it)	use to make the healing concoction
Blessed Candle (lit)	Village, Candlemaker	use to dispel the spirit guarding the Mausoleum
Bloody Hammer	see Hammer, Bloody	—
Book of Etheric Rites	Monastery Basement	read for instructions to dispel the spirit guarding the Mausoleum
Book of Souls	Other Village, Gravedigger's House	contains a list of those who have died (including the name of Kirill's son)
Book of Temporal Incantations	Mansion Library	removes aging effects
Book, Crystal Innate	Monastery Basement	explains the healing powers of crystals
Book, Dismissals of Evil, Vol. III	Kairn's Fortress	dispels Agrippa's curse
Candle	Village, Candlemaker	use to make voodoo doll
Carline Thistle	Hedge Maze	cures certain poisons
Carline Thistle	Dark Forest	cures certain poisons
Carline Thistle	Lake Shore	cures certain poisons
Ceremonial Gothic Mace	see Mace	—
Coffer with Pipe	see Pipe	—

ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Coin with Feodor's Face	see Feodor's Coin	—
Comfrey Plant	Hedge Maze	sell for silver
Cowberry Plant	Island	sell for silver
Cowberry Plant	Crash Site	sell for silver
Crystal	Dark Forest	increases vitality
Crystal	Mausoleum Inner Chambers	increases vitality
Crystal	Hedge Maze	increases vitality
Crystal	Kairn's Fortress	increases vitality
Crystal Innate	see Book, Crystal Innate	—
Cup of Life	Village, Tavern Bartender	use to resurrect the Tree-man
Dagger	Island	return to Peter
Darts	Village, Tavern	leave there (or use as weapons)
Diamond	Village, found after killing the zombie (a.k.a. Kirill's son, Andrei)	return to Nikolae
Dismissals of Evil, Vol. III	see Book, Dismissals of Evil, Vol. III	—
Elixir, Full	Catacombs	heals minor wounds
Elixir, Full	Dark Forest	heals minor wounds
Elixir, Full	Mausoleum Inner Chambers	heals minor wounds
Elixir, Full	Kairn's Fortress	heals minor wounds
Elixir, Full	Hedge Maze	heals minor wounds
Elixir, Full	Frank's Cave	heals minor wounds
Etheric Rites	see Book of Etheric Rites	—
Fennel Seeds	Village, Apothecary	use to make healing concoction
Feodor's Coin	Other Village, in the purse of silver that was your reward for killing the Werewolf	return to Feodor



ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Fine Wine, Empty Bottle	Other Village, Gravedigger's House	use as evidence to convict Gravedigger
Fine Wine, Full Bottle	Village, Kirill's Wine Cellar	use to get Cup of Life from Seth
Frank's Tooth	Village, Tavern, Matthias	use to make voodoo doll
Garlic Cloves	Hedge Maze	give six cloves to Annabelle for a garlic necklace
Gold Pin	Village, General Store, Natalia's Mother	use with voodoo doll to threaten Frank
Hair, Lock of	see Lock of Hair	
Hammer, Bloody	Village, Eduard's House	return to Kirill; retrieve from Ivan to nail Kairn's coffin shut
Holy Symbol	Mansion	use to find Kairn's coffin and the Key to Agrippa's chains; protects vs. undead when used
Holy Water	Monastery, Monk	use to kill the vampire women, and as a weapon during final battle with Kairn
Holy Water	Crazy Frank's Caverns	use to kill the vampire women, and as a weapon during final battle with Kairn
Horn	Dark Forest	use (once engraved by witch) to summon the dead ferryman in the Lake
Huntsman's Cap	Dark Forest, Nathan's House	return to Nathan
Iron Spike	Cemetery, dig out of grave	use to dispel spirit guarding Mausoleum
Jar (with face)	Catacombs	use to make the healing concoction
Key to Unlock Agrippa's Chains	Kairn's Fortress	unlocks the chains around Agrippa
Key, Andrei's Room	Village, Kirill	unlocks the locked door to Andrei's room
Key, Attic of Mansion	Cemetery, Lucian	unlocks the locked door to the attic in the Mansion

ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Key, Catacomb	Village, Tavern, Minstrel's Room (after his death)	unlocks the rusty gate in the Catacombs below the Village
Key, Eduard's	Gypsy Camp, Maria	unlocks the locked door in Eduard's house
Key, Gatehouse	Kairn's Fortress (a skeleton drops one after you kill it)	unlocks the locked door to the Gatehouse
Key, Monastery	Crossroads, Ambrose (after you prove his innocence)	unlocks the locked door in the Monastery Basement
Knapsack	Swamp	carries ten items
Knife	this was salvaged from the plane crash	use to kill miscellaneous monsters
Lamp	Village, General Store	throw the lit lamp at the Tree-man to turn him into ashes
Lighter	Swamp	lights torches, candles, etc.
Lock of Hair	Village, Anton	use to make healing concoction
Mace, Ceremonial Gothic	Monastery Basement	use to kill skeletons and other nuisances
Machete	Swamp	use to kill topiary creatures
Match	Village, Tavern Bartender (if you've borrowed one of Kirill's pipes)	use it to light the lamp
Motherwort Plant	Dark Forest	cures disease (if you eat one)
Mushrooms	Sinkhole Caverns	blinds you temporarily (if you eat one)
Nails	Village, General Store	use to nail Kairn's coffin shut
Nasturtium	Lake Shore	cures weakness (if you eat one)
Nasturtium	Hedge Maze	cures weakness (if you eat one)
Nasturtium	Dark Forest	cures weakness (if you eat one)
Pages (of "The Forge of the Evil Heart")	Village, Kirill	read the story in the Rule Book to learn more about Kairn

ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Parsley	Other Village, Gravedigger's Backyard	grown only by murderers; use as evidence to convict Gravedigger
Pin	see Gold Pin	—
Pipe (in Coffers from Kirill)	Village, Kirill	bring this with you to the Tavern, and Seth will give you a match
Pistol	Swamp	kills the Werewolf, once you get the bullets plated with silver
Pistol with Silver Bullets	Other Village, Silversmith	have Silversmith plate the bullets with silver, then use the pistol to kill the Werewolf
Pitchfork	Barn	use to kill miscellaneous monsters
Pouch	Many Different Locations	carries eight items, fits inside of sacks
Prophecy	Village, Kirill	lists the tasks you must complete to defeat Kairn
Pry Bar	Village, Shed	opens the rusty gate in Crazy Frank's Caverns (behind which is the Agrippa)
Quill	Monastery Basement	return to Michael
Rapier	Mansion Attic	return to Aleksander
Rope	Swamp	use to lower yourself into the Sinkhole Caverns
Rowan Branch	Dark Forest	have the Gypsy Woodcarver carve this into the Rowan Staff
Rowan Staff	Gypsy Camp, have Woodcarver carve rowan branch into staff	use this against will-o-wisps
Sacks	Many Different Locations	carries twelve items
Scarf	Village, Deirdre	tie to Silver Bell
Shirt (torn)	Other Village, Gravedigger's House	use as evidence to convict Gravedigger
Shovel	Other Village, Gravedigger's Backyard	dig up graves
Signet ring (with diamond missing)	Catacombs (behind the rusted gate)	return to Nikolae

ITEM	WHERE YOU FIND IT	WHAT IT DOES OR HAS
Silver Bell	Other Village, Silversmith	use to dispel the spirit guarding the Mausoleum
Silver Coins	Many Different Locations	buys various items needed to complete the game
Silver Sword	Other Village, Silversmith	kills ghosts (when blessed) and zombies
Strength Potion	Catacombs	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Strength Potion	Dark Forest	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Strength Potion	Other Village	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Strength Potion	Hedge Maze	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Strength Potion	Mausoleum Inner Chambers	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Strength Potion	Kairn's Fortress	temporarily strengthens your combat abilities and stamina
Study Sword of Slaying	Other Village, under the fountain if you have found the snorkel and mask	Don't bother searching too hard for this item — it doesn't exist. (Just wondering if you're paying attention.)
Talisman	Other Village, Historian	protects you from being killed by the banshee
Tobacco	Village, General Store	trade this for the Holy Symbol
Tooth, Frank's	see Frank's Tooth	—
Torch	Catacombs (behind the rusted gate)	light and use as a weapon against shades
Torch	Mausoleum Inner Chambers	light and use as a weapon against shades
Torn Piece of Shirt	Village, Eduard's library	use as evidence to convict Gravedigger
Violin	Village, Tavern, Minstrel's Room (after his death)	return to Khristian
Voodoo Doll	Gypsy Camp, Maria makes the doll if you bring Frank's Tooth and a candle	use this to scare Frank into telling you where the Agrippa is

## ITEMS LISTED BY LOCATION

Throughout the game you find special items in the Valley that will help you fulfill the Prophecy. This list, unlike the previous one, lists all the items that you find, buy, or have made at various locations. This list *includes* items listed in the previous lists.

WHERE YOU FIND IT	ITEM
Barn	Pitchfork
Catacombs	Elixir, Full
Catacombs	Jar (with face)
Catacombs	Strength Potion
Catacombs (behind the rusted gate)	Signet ring (with diamond missing)
Catacombs (behind the rusted gate)	Torch
Cemetery (after asking the Historian about it)	Betony
Cemetery, dig out of ground	Iron Spike
Cemetery, Lucian	Key, Attic of Mansion
Crash Site	Cowberry Plant
Crash Site, make by burning the Tree	Ashes
Crazy Frank's Caverns	Agrippa
Crazy Frank's Caverns	Holy Water
Crossroads, Ambrose (after you prove his innocence)	Key, Monastery
Dark Forest	Carline Thistle
Dark Forest	Crystal
Dark Forest	Elixir, Full
Dark Forest	Horn
Dark Forest	Motherwort Plant
Dark Forest	Nasturtium
Dark Forest	Rowan Branch

WHERE YOU FIND IT	ITEM
Dark Forest	Strength Potion
Dark Forest, Nathan's House	Huntsman's Cap
Frank's Cave	Elixir, Full
Gypsy Camp, have Woodcarver carve Rowan Branch into Rowan Staff	Rowan Staff
Gypsy Camp, Maria	Key, Eduard's
Gypsy Camp, Maria makes the doll if you bring Frank's Tooth and a candle	Voodoo Doll
Hedge Maze	Carline Thistle
Hedge Maze	Comfrey Plant
Hedge Maze	Crystal
Hedge Maze	Elixir, Full
Hedge Maze	Garlic Cloves
Hedge Maze	Nasturtium
Hedge Maze	Strength Potion
Island	Cowberry Plant
Island	Dagger
Kairn's Fortress	Crystal
Kairn's Fortress	Elixir, Full
Kairn's Fortress	Key to unlock Agrippa's chains
Kairn's Fortress	Strength Potion
Kairn's Fortress (a skeleton drops one after you kill it)	Key, Gatehouse
Kairn's Fortress	Book, Dismissals of Evil, Vol. III
Lake Shore	Carline Thistle
Lake Shore	Nasturtium
Mansion	Holy Symbol

**WHERE YOU FIND IT**

**ITEM**

WHERE YOU FIND IT	ITEM
Mansion Attic	Rapier
Mansion Library	Book of Temporal Incantations
Many Different Locations	Pouch
Many Different Locations	Sacks
Many Different Locations	Silver Coins
Mausoleum Inner Chambers	Crystal
Mausoleum Inner Chambers	Elixir, Full
Mausoleum Inner Chambers	Strength Potion
Mausoleum Inner Chambers	Torch
Monastery Basement	Book of Etheric Rites
Monastery Basement	Book, Crystal Innate
Monastery Basement	Mace, Ceremonial Gothic
Monastery Basement	Quill
Monastery, Monk	Holy Water
Other Village	Strength Potion
Other Village, Gravedigger's Backyard	Parsley
Other Village, Gravedigger's Backyard	Shovel
Other Village, Gravedigger's House	Book of Souls
Other Village, Gravedigger's House	Fine Wine, Empty Bottle
Other Village, Gravedigger's House	Shirt (torn)
Other Village, Historian	Talisman
Other Village, in the purse of silver that was your reward for killing the Werewolf	Feodor's Coin
Other Village, Silversmith	Pistol with Silver Bullets
Other Village, Silversmith	Silver Bell
Other Village, Silversmith	Silver Sword

**WHERE YOU FIND IT**

**ITEM**

Other Village, under the fountain if you have found the snorkel and mask

Study Sword of Slaying

Sinkhole Caverns

Mushrooms

Swamp

Knapsack

Swamp

Lighter

Swamp

Machete

Swamp

Pistol

Swamp

Rope

Village, Eduard's House

Hammer, Bloody

Village, Anton

Lock of Hair

Village, Apothecary

Fennel Seeds

Village, Candlemaker

Blessed Candle (lit)

Village, Candlemaker

Candle

Village, Deirdre

Scarf

Village, Eduard's library

Torn Piece of Shirt

Village, found after killing the zombie (a.k.a. Kirill's son, Andrei)

Diamond

Village, General Store

Lamp

Village, General Store

Nails

Village, General Store

Tobacco

Village, General Store, Natalia's Mother

Gold Pin



**WHERE YOU FIND IT**

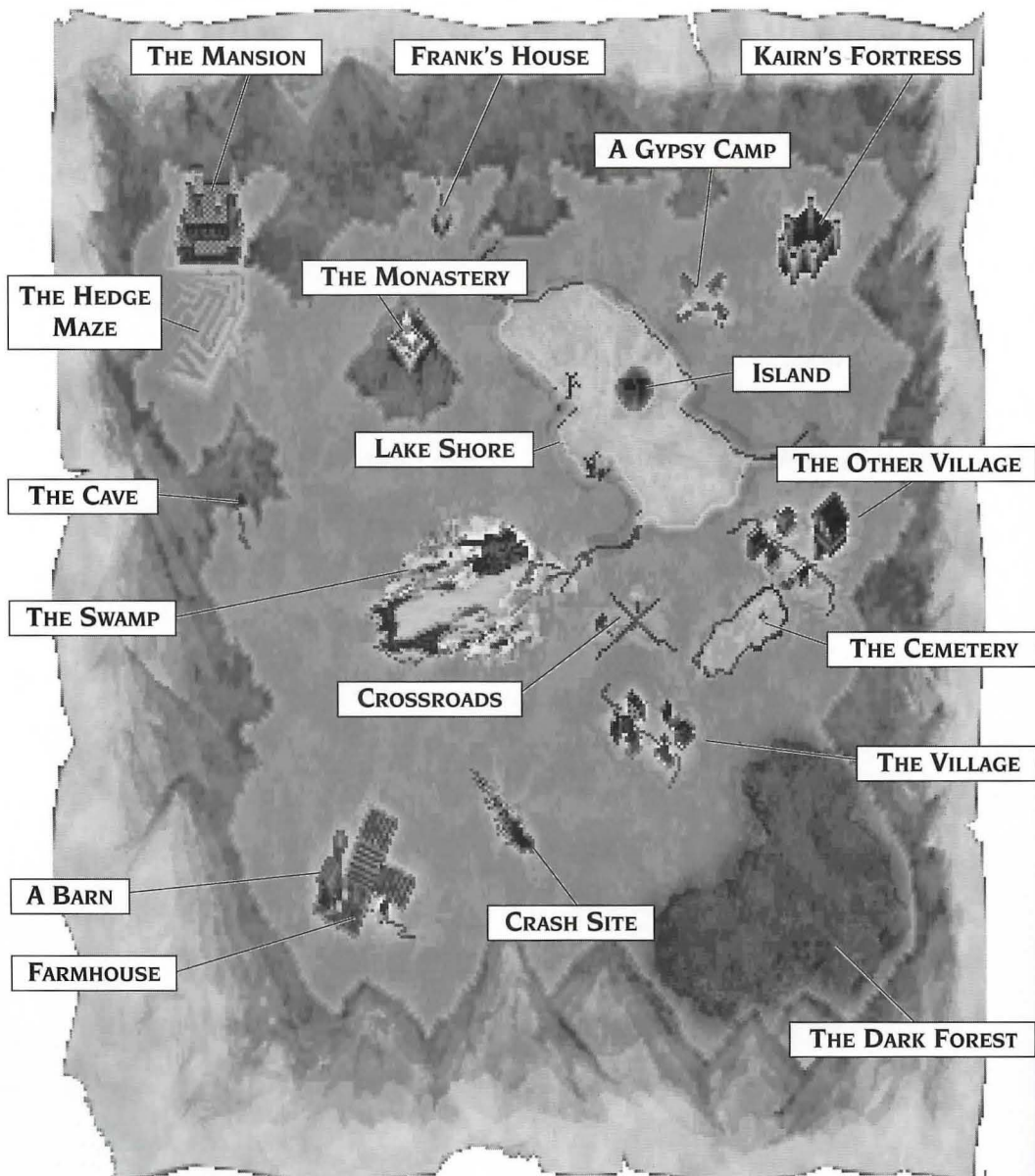
**ITEM**

Village, Kirill	Key, Andrei's Room
Village, Kirill	Pages (of "The Forge of the Evil Heart")
Village, Kirill	Pipe (in Coffers from Kirill)
Village, Kirill	Prophecy
Village, Kirill's Wine Cellar	Fine Wine, Full Bottle
Village, Shed	Pry Bar
Village, Tavern	Darts
Village, Tavern Bartender	Cup of Life
Village, Tavern Bartender (if you've borrowed one of Kirill's pipes)	Match
Village, Tavern, Matthias	Frank's Tooth
Village, Tavern, Minstrel's Room (after his death)	Key, Catacomb
Village, Tavern, Minstrel's Room (after his death)	Violin

## MOST COMMONLY VISITED MAP LOCATIONS

### The Valley

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## Village

THE SEVERED HEAD TAVERN

APOTHECARY

SHED

GENERAL STORE



KIRILL'S HOUSE

JOSEPH THE CANDLEMAKER'S HOUSE

EDUARD'S HOUSE

## Other Village

SILVERSMITH'S SHOP

CONSTATINE'S HOUSE

MAGISTRATE'S HOUSE



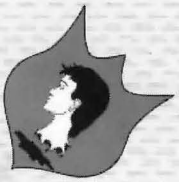
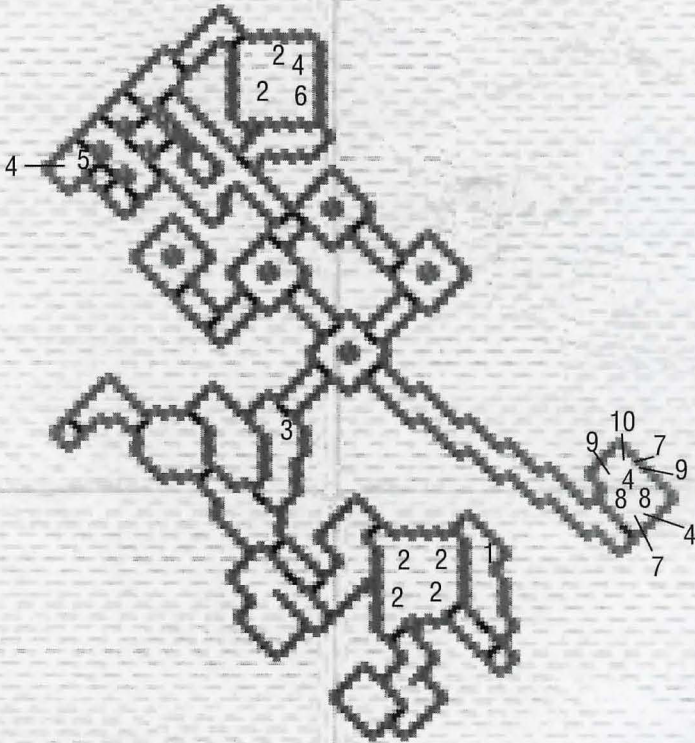
CHRISTIANA'S HOUSE

KREGORH'S HOUSE

## MAZES

The following napkins contain maps of the mazes that J have come across while fulfilling the Prophecy. Because my plane crashed (and unkindly destroyed all my stationary in the process) I am forced to make do with these napkins, which I picked up at the Severed Head Tavern. They may not be the most beautiful, but they work well for my purposes.

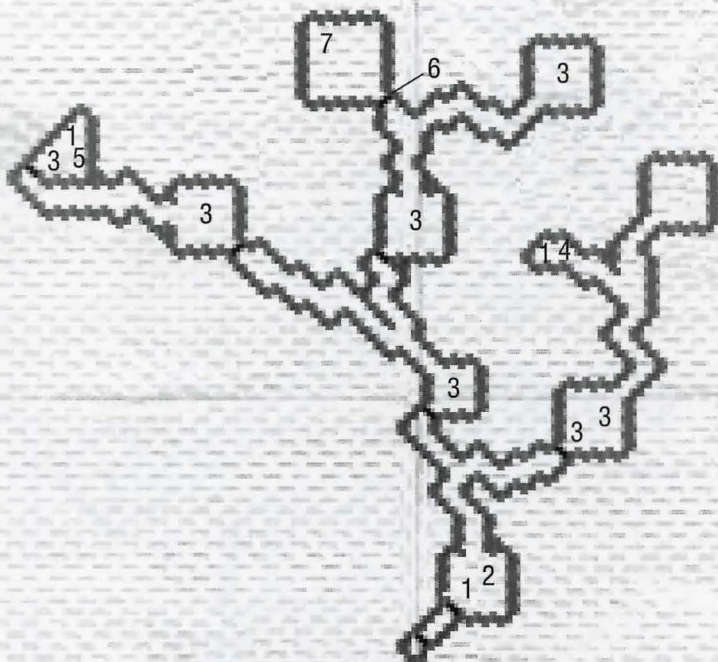
# Catacombs



1. A sack containing a full elixir and a strength potion lies on the floor.
2. There is a bat at this location.
3. This gate requires the catacomb key.
4. A skeleton lies on the floor.
5. A pouch containing two silver coins and a signet ring lies on the floor.

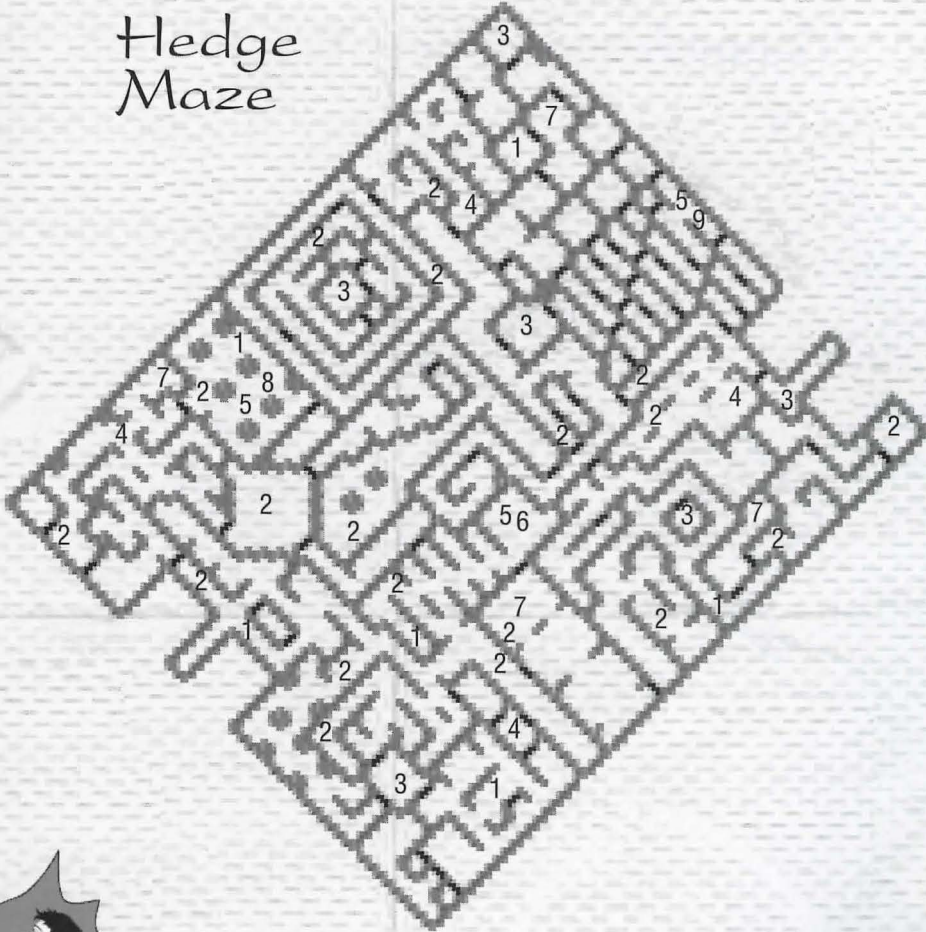
6. A torch lies on the floor.
7. Broken pottery lies on the floor.
8. Cracked pottery lies on the floor.
9. Pottery shard lies on the floor.
10. A jar lies on the floor.

# Crazy Frank's Caverns



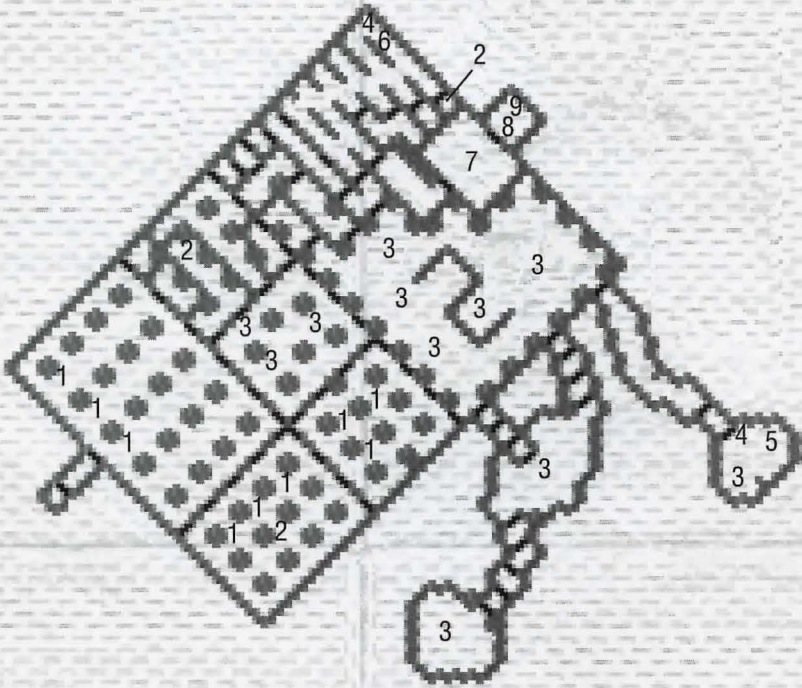
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A skeleton lies on the floor.</li> <li>2. An empty vial lies on the floor</li> <li>3. There is a vampire woman at this location.</li> <li>4. A pouch containing two vials of holy water lies on the floor.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. A full elixir and an empty elixir lie on the floor.</li> <li>6. This gate is rusted shut and must be opened using the pry bar.</li> <li>7. The Agrippa floats chained to the floor at this location.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

# Hedge Maze



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A carline thistle plant is growing.</li> <li>2. There is a topiary creature at this location.</li> <li>3. A garlic clove is growing.</li> <li>4. A comfrey plant is growing.</li> <li>5. A skeleton lies on the floor.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. A pouch containing two strength potions lies on the floor.</li> <li>7. A nasturtium plant is growing.</li> <li>8. A pouch and two full elixirs lie on the floor.</li> <li>9. A crystal lies on the floor.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

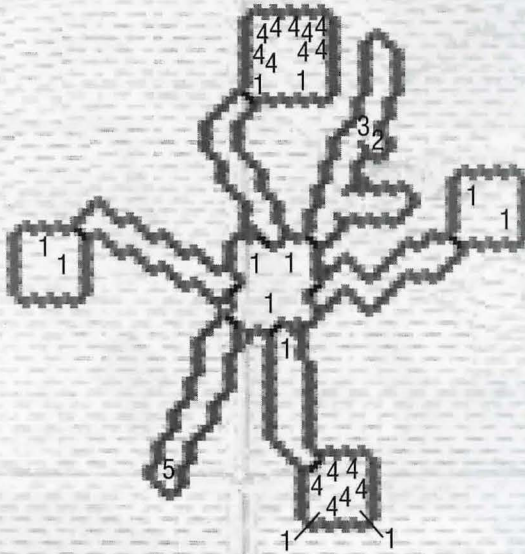
# Mausoleum Inner Chambers



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a skeleton at this location.</li> <li>2. A full elixir lies on the floor.</li> <li>3. There is a zombie at this location.</li> <li>4. A skeleton lies on the floor.</li> <li>5. A torch lies on the floor.</li> <li>6. A sack containing two full elixirs and a crystal lies on the floor.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. The Seven Lost Souls are at this location.</li> <li>8. The Box of Light lies on the floor.</li> <li>9. A sack containing two silver coins, two full elixirs and two strength potions lies on the floor.</li> </ol> |
|--|--|



# Sinkhole Caverns



1. There is a bat at this location.

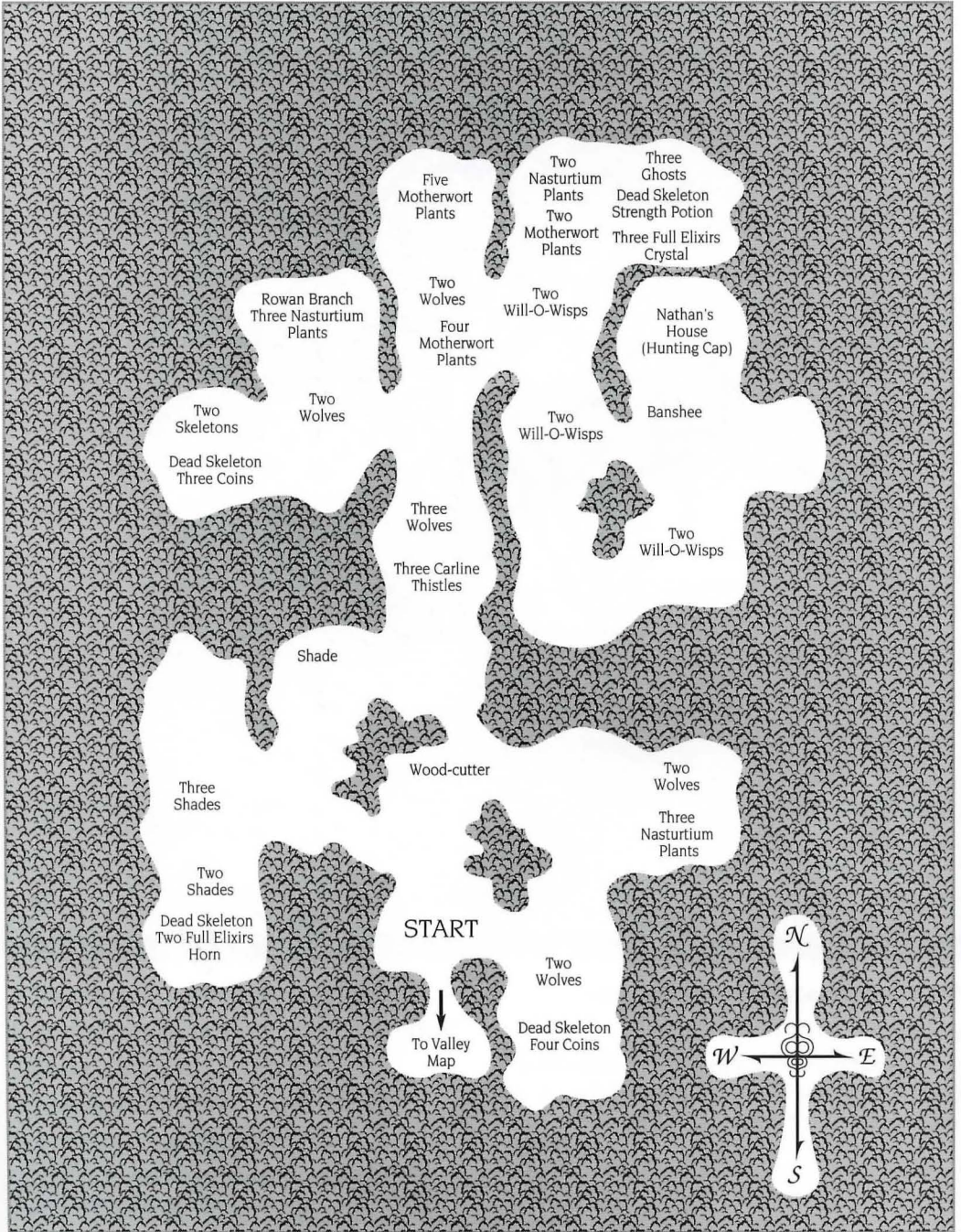
2. A skeleton lies on the floor.

3. A pouch containing four silver coins lies on the floor.

4. A mushroom is growing.

5. Entrance/exit to the Sinkhole Caverns.

# Dark Forest



## WHO REVEALS MAP LOCATIONS

The following table lists the various above-ground map locations and which NPC tells you about it.

MAP LOCATION	REVEALED BY
Barn	Sylva, Boris the Farmer's wife
Cave	Crazy Frank
Cemetery	Gravedigger / Constatine the Historian
Crash Site	Boris the Farmer
Crossroads	Constantine the Historian
Dark Forest	Constantine the Historian
Farmhouse	Tavern Patrons — after returning the bloody hammer
Frank's House	Tavern Patrons — after getting Frank's tooth from Matthias
Gypsy Camp	Tavern Patrons — after visiting the Monastery
Hedge Maze	Lucian, Natalia's dead father — after healing Natalia
Kairn's Fortress	Tavern Patrons — after visiting the Monastery
Lake Shore	Constantine the Historian
Mansion	Found at edge of Hedge Maze
Monastery	Tavern Patrons — after visiting the Crash Site
Other Village	Tavern Patrons — after resurrecting the Tree-man
Swamp	Tree-man — after he's been resurrected
Village	Tavern Patrons — after returning the bloody hammer

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following section contains pictures of the Non-Player Characters that you may meet on your journey. Use this section as a reference to the different “people” that you meet.

### NPCs in Alphabetical Order



#### ***Agrippa***

The Agrippa is an ancient, evil book of great power. It gave tremendous power to Kairn, and offers you the ability to take that power away by giving you Kairn’s true name. The book also curses you with the stench of fire and brimstone every time you talk to it.



#### ***Aleksai***

Aleksai is the magistrate of the valley and rules in Kairn’s name with an iron hand. Few dare oppose him, for he holds almost absolute power over every inhabitant of the valley. He is the man you must prove Ambrose’s innocence to by finding sufficient evidence. He also offers you a purse of silver for killing a werewolf.



#### ***Aleksander***

Aleksander was one of Kairn’s brothers. He was a mighty swordsman, and wants his rapier back in return for allowing you to pass the room he guards.



#### ***Ambrose***

Ambrose was an innocent man who was wrongly hung for Eduard’s death. You must prove him innocent in order to redeem his soul and allow it to escape the prison of his corpse.



#### ***Annabelle***

Annabelle is the valley apothecary. She knows much about the plants in the valley, and can prove to be an excellent source of information on herbs, fungi, and other medicinal substances.



**Anton**

Anton is the son of the candlemaker, Josep. He wants to do more heroic things with his life than being a candlemaker, however. He has a friend named Natalia who is deathly ill with the "madness," and Anton proves instrumental in saving her life.



**Carolus**

Carolus is a gypsy woodcarver. He wants to carve something for you to prove his talent. However, he will only carve a worthy piece of wood — in this case, a rowan branch.



**Bayard**

Bayard is Aleksai the magistrate's butler. He stands around and makes a lot of snide comments.



**Catherine**

Catherine is Natalia's mother. She is almost beside herself with despair, for she believes her daughter will die from the dread "madness." Because of this, she is somewhat rude to you until you save her daughter, at which time she becomes properly appreciative.



**Boris**

Boris is a farmer who is (unknowingly) married to a werewolf. He reads and yawns a lot, and grows sneezewort out in his fields.



**Christiana**

Christiana is a girl who has been driven into a trance by some terrible thing that once happened to her. Once she is brought out of the trance, she is very interested in discussing events of the outside world.



**Carmen**

Carmen is a gypsy healer of great talent. She doesn't charge for her services, and can make a potion to heal the "madness."



### ***Claudia***

Claudia is a villager who lives her life in The Severed Head. She and the other villagers speak on all sorts of useful rumors, trivia, and slander. It is often profitable to listen to them for a while.



### ***Erasmus***

Erasmus is a talented silversmith who resides in the Other Village. He makes all sorts of useful items for you . . . for a price.



### ***Constatine***

Constatine is a historian and a collector of relics. He talks about the history of the valley and sells a talisman which proves quite useful.



### ***Eustace***

Eustace is a woodsman who makes his living chopping down trees in the Dark Forest. He tells you of the many dangers that lie in the forest, and warns you not to go any deeper.



### ***Deirdre Khristoverikh***

Deirdre is the main reason you survived the crash. She is a kind and gentle person who you fall in love with. As time passes, you find that you must rescue her from Kairn's evil grasp.



### ***Feodor***

Feodor was one of Kairn's brothers. He was a vain man who had silver coins minted in his image. He wants one of these coins before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



### ***Elizabeth***

Elizabeth is a kind-hearted woman who has taken care of Christiana while she was in her trace. She doesn't appreciate strangers coming in to gape at Christiana.



### ***Ferryman***

The ferryman is the only person who knows a safe path through the treacherous waters of the Blackwater to the Island in the center. Of course, he *is* technically dead, so you must find a way to resurrect him before he will do you this favor.



**Frank, a.k.a. Crazy Frank**

Crazy Frank is a man who discovered the whereabouts of the Agrippa. He refuses to tell you where this evil tome can be found until you scare him mightily.



**Ivan**

Ivan is Kirill's servant. He is gruff and foreboding, but don't let this put you off — he's actually much less friendly than he seems.



**Gheorghe**

Gheorghe is a villager who lives his life in The Severed Head. He and the other villagers speak on all sorts of useful rumors, trivia, and slander. It is often profitable to listen to them for a while.



**Jascha**

Jascha is a wandering minstrel who occasionally visits The Severed Head and plays music for its patrons. He finds it difficult to do so later since he dies and has one of his arms torn off.



**Ion**

Ion is a storekeeper in the Village. He sells you all sorts of useful items, and is supposed to keep people like you away from Natalia. He does a poor job of this.



**Josep**

Josep is the world's slowest candlemaker — he has thousands of candles being made in his storeroom, but it takes him quite a while before he's ready to sell any. His son, Anton, fears becoming a candlemaker like his father due to the high-paced, stress-related pressure that the job entails.



**Iuliu**

Iuliu is a villager who lives his life in The Severed Head. He and the other villagers speak on all sorts of useful rumors, trivia, and slander. It is often profitable to listen to them for a while.



**Kairn**

Kairn is the evil overlord of the valley. He is a vampire of awesome power, and a dread force to go up against. You probably don't have all that much hope of surviving a confrontation with him. Then again, stranger things have been known to happen.



**Kregorh**

Kregorh is the valley's gravedigger. He has become quite disturbed with the recent drop in business, and is considering inflating the corpse-count through artificial means.



**Khristian**

Khristian was one of Kairn's brothers. He was well known as a highly talented musician. He wants his violin back before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



**Lucian**

Lucian is Natalia's dead father. He (or his spirit) speaks to you in the Cemetery and gives you an item necessary for the recovery of the rapier.



**Kirill Khristoverikh**

Kirill is the father of Deirdre and Andrei (the zombie). He is the one who sets you on the path of fulfilling the Prophecy, and occasionally aids you. This man is evil, malicious, and self-centered, and has no qualms about sacrificing his own daughter to gain his freedom.



**Maria**

Maria is a gypsy fortune teller. She reads your future and gives hints on how to defeat Kairn. She also aids you in getting Crazy Frank to tell you about the Agrippa.



**Matthias**

Matthias is a man who got in a fight with Crazy Frank. He gives you an idea on how to get Crazy Frank to tell you all he knows.





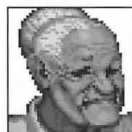
**Michael**

Michael was one of Kairn's brothers. He was the scholar of the family. He wants his golden quill back before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



**Mihai**

Mihai was a man who was transformed into a tree by Kairn. You rescue him in return for discovering where your plane was taken — somehow, he doesn't appreciate your method of resurrecting him.



**Miheala**

Miheala is Constatine's mother. She sits in a chair and tells you to ask Constatine about the betony leaves she's chewing.



**Mischa**

Mischa (or Mischa the Mad as he sometimes fancies) is the last member of a family that decided to go into seclusion. He is friendly enough, and gives you some help on your quest to destroy Kairn.



**Monika**

Monika is a witch who lives at the Crossroads. She wants to free her grandfather's spirit from guarding the mausoleum in the Cemetery. In return for this, she is willing to carve a horn that can summon the ferryman from the depths of the Blackwater.



**Monk**

The monk resides at the Monastery with his imaginary friends. He claims he can see them, but it is widely believed that he has long since gone mad. He offers all sorts of useful services you will need during your quest.



**Natalia**

Natalia is a young girl afflicted with the "madness." Saving her fulfills one of the lines of the Prophecy.





### **Nathan**

Nathan was one of Kairn's brothers. He was a hunter who often frequented the Dark Forest. He wants his hunting cap back before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



### **Seth**

Seth is the barkeep of The Severed Head. Other than talking a lot, his primary interest is collecting cups. He has a particularly fine golden goblet.



### **Nikolae**

Nikolae is Kairn's father. He was cruelly murdered by his errant son, and now stands in eternal vigilance with his other sons. He wants his signet ring and diamond back before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



### **Sophia**

Sophia is a woman who stands at the bar and does nothing. That sums it up for her.



### **Sylva**

Sylva is Boris' wife, and enjoys being a werewolf in her spare time. Her hobbies include killing rats, making rat stew, and waving her cleaver in the air.



### **Peter**

Peter was one of Kairn's brothers. He was the youngest, and died somewhere around the Blackwater. He wants his decorative dagger back before he allows you to pass the room he guards.



### **Vladmihr**

Vladmihr is Monika's grandfather. His spirit was summoned back from the beyond to guard the entrance of the mausoleum. Freeing him from his task fulfills one of the lines of the Prophecy.



### **Pius**

Pius is a man who is in the grips of a curse laid upon a golden quill. He cannot stop writing until you find a way to break the curse.

## CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

### ***Banshee***

There is no way to destroy these creatures. Rumors say that some magical items may protect the user from the banshee's destructive powers. The talisman from Constatine seems to work just fine.

### ***Bats, Giant***

These flying nuisances are fairly easy to eliminate. Just about any weapon serves to swat them away. The only mildly tricky part is maneuvering so you can get a good shot!

### ***Ghosts***

These glowing shrouds lumber about the Dark Forest and Kairn's Stronghold. The only good weapon against them is a blessed silver sword; the blade has no effect without the blessing.

### ***Shades***

These slimy black blobs scoot around the edge of the Dark Forest and inside Kairn's Fortress, lurking in the dark shadows. They quickly slither out from their cover once they sight their prey (usually you). Of all things, these beasts seem to fear fire. A lit torch works well against these creatures.

### ***Skeletons***

Skeletons are the animated remnants of people, forced to serve Kairn's will. Sharp-edged weapons have no effect on these hardened fiends; use a blunt object like a mace to destroy these creatures.

### ***Statues***

The statues of warrior women are almost invincible — really. Once animated with Kairn's magic, they won't die until he does. Don't bother with fighting it out; nothing works. The only way to remove the magic is to remove the source himself, Kairn.

### ***Topiary Creatures***

These over-grown, green, slug-plants guard the Hedge Maze that surrounds the Mansion. I found the best weapon against these wandering worms is a machete. Although they seem relatively slow and harmless, beware: they can poison you. A dose of carline thistle takes care of the poison right away.

### ***Vampire Women***

These beautiful but deadly women roam the labyrinth under the Cave (also known as Crazy Frank's Caverns) and wander Kairn's Fortress. The only way to dispose of them is to douse them with a bottle of holy water. If you toss a bottle and it breaks open on a vampire woman, she'll melt away before your eyes.

### ***Werewolf***

This is one battle that you really want to go into prepared! Be sure that you've got your pistol and that the silversmith has silver-plated your bullets. Use this against the werewolf *after* you accuse him or her of being a werewolf. He or she will want to rip you apart if it's true. Shoot before you're torn to shreds!

### ***Will-O-Wisps***

Will-o-wisps commonly haunt the Dark Forest, the Lake Shore, and the Island. They are magical creatures and cannot be wounded by normal weapons. They attack with bursts of energy which wound and weaken you. The only substance known to hurt them is magically enchanted rowan wood. I once found a rowan stick in the forest and had it carved into a rowan staff by a Gypsy. The staff was decorated with magical runes and proved a most effective weapon against will-o-wisps.

### ***Wolves, Wild***

There are a few wolves that roam the land around the Crash Site and deep in the Dark Forest. Just about any weapon; knife, pitchfork, darts, etc., works against these canines.

## **Zombies**

Like the ghosts, a good weapon against zombies is a silver sword. Unlike the ghosts, however, the blade does not have to be blessed to be effective. Be careful of their touch, for it often brings debilitating disease.

## **Kairn**

Kairn epitomizes the ultimate in evil, and is a fiendish beast to confront. Only by following through a careful list of tasks can you remove this creature's influence from the world. (Start reading at the "He shall turn aside the vampire's charms" line of the Prophecy on page 53 for more specific information.)

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## **Presidential Babble from Event Horizon Software, Inc.**

First of all, thank you for your purchase of VEIL OF DARKNESS. We hope you enjoyed playing it as much as we enjoyed making it!

One of the tests we use to see if a game is up to our quality standards is to see if we enjoy playing it ourselves, after the many months of work we spent on the project. By this gauge, we succeeded. Before VEIL OF DARKNESS was even released, almost everybody here was talking about "how they did this," or "how they solved that." Everybody was also proud to be a part of this project.

So far at Event Horizon Software, Inc., we have only been able to produce one product at a time due to the limitations of previous publishers. Instead of developing multiple products, we had to focus on one game at a time and condense our development cycle so we could show a new product to a different publisher.

Enough of the past — currently, Event Horizon Software, Inc. has teamed up with Strategic Simulations, Inc. Plain and simply, SSI delivers! With the success of our first product with SSI, THE SUMMONING, we are gearing up for the future. Now we can start to do simultaneous production without sacrificing quality.

Be prepared! We are developing two new engines for our next two series of products. The first will be out before the year's end, with the second shortly after. Each will not

only show you new technologies, but each will pull you into the plot and atmosphere like no other games before. At this time, I cannot go into further details. But I give you my word — if you liked our games before, you will be mighty pleased!

For those of you who have been following our previous products throughout the past few years, you have my sincerest thanks. We deeply appreciate your loyalty. Without you, we would not be around today. To our new fellow game players, we are glad you decided to pick up *VEIL OF DARKNESS*. We hope you were entertained and will continue to consider our products in the years to come.

Future Successes!

Jim Namestka

*President*

*Event Horizon Software, Inc.*

## A Letter from the Authors

As you may have noticed, we used a story-telling format for this clue book. This is different from what we have done in the past. We chose this style because VEIL OF DARKNESS is *not* a linear game, nor is it grid-based like many dungeon adventures. You can do many of the “quests” out of the order given in the Prophecy. You can also (and sometimes must) bounce back and forth between the many locations in the game to get items and use them in the appropriate places.

We felt that the traditional dungeon-style grid map would not work very well. With the old style you would only have a map (littered with numbers) and short descriptions telling where the items and monsters were. Instead, the tone and the construction of this game lended itself to a story-like approach. We thought a guide to the story, telling you how, when, where, and why to do certain tasks would be more useful.

Obviously, the point of the clue book is to reveal what you need to know to win the game. However, some of you may want hints rather than having everything spelled out for you. You may wish to find one particular item, discover what an herb does, or find out what that annoying NPC is really there for. If you fall into that category, we included charts, tables, and an NPC section. This way you can look up only the information you need, and unravel the rest of the game yourself.



We would like to read your comments on this clue book. Feel free to suggest anything else you would like to see in future clue books from SSI. Although we may not be able to respond personally to each and every letter, we *will* keep track of your comments and suggestions.

Please send your letters to the following address:

*SSI Technical Writing*  
*Veil of Darkness Clue Book Comments*  
*Strategic Simulations, Inc.*  
*675 Almanor Ave., Ste. 201*  
*Sunnyvale, CA 94086-2901*

We look forward to hearing from you!

SSI Technical Writing



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# LIFT THE VEIL.



You've crash-landed in one of the strangest places on the

planet. The scenery is twisted, the atmosphere is oppressive, the people are frightened.

Your only thought is to get back to the safety of the world you came from, but something holds you, a realization you can't shake. And, as the people begin to speak of you as the one sent to free them, you realize the

horrible truth: *the road to freedom runs straight through Kairn, the malevolent master of the valley.*

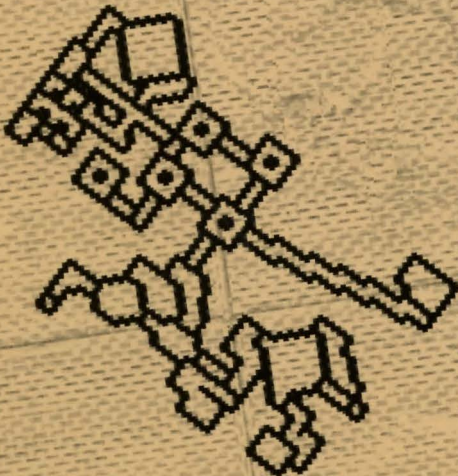
Let's be honest – you're in big trouble. Fortunately there is big help to be had. The book you now hold was created to guide you safely through Kairn's valley of terror – it is, without a doubt, Kairn's worst nightmare.

It is also, without a doubt, the only way you can be sure of lifting the veil of darkness.

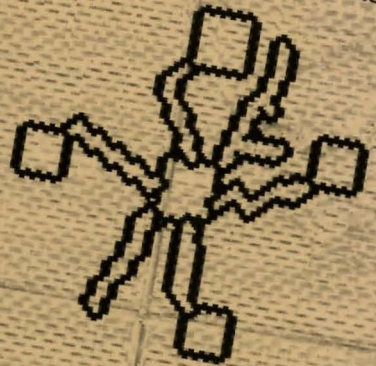
## HERE'S WHAT YOU GET:

- **A strategy section** with hints that'll help you defeat all the vicious beasts you'll meet.
- **Complete descriptions** of all locations with specific clues for all events, character interactions and puzzles that you encounter.
- **Detailed maps** of every maze in this macabre adventure.
- **Lists of items** by name and location – you'll know what and where everything is!

Catacombs



Sinkhole Caverns



**Detailed maps, exhaustive descriptions, numerous lists – it's all inside waiting to get you out of this nightmare with your throat intact!**

