

# Vale of the Azure Sun



A **Gods & Monsters** Adventure



# Vale of the Azure Sun

A *Gods & Monsters* adventure of marvels suitable for three to six 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level characters

by Jerry Stratton

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Pray not to trip on a strawberry tide,  
Nor ask of the dead for a hand to guide.  
Nor follow to Alice, her rabbit astride,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

See [godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/](http://www.godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/) if you'd like to use *Vale of the Azure Sun* in AD&D or other old-school games.

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1. *Lost Castle of the Astronomers*, for 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> level
2. *Haunted Illustrious Castle*, for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level
3. *The House of Lisport*, for 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level
4. *Helter Skelter*, for 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level

# Background

## Hidden Worlds

The Magic Garden. The Grand Guignol. The Empty Garden. The Butterfly Halls. The Grey Ship of the Moon. The Land Where the Jumblies Live. Perhaps even the Chaotic Mist and the Dry City are magic realms gone awry. Iskander may have been lost in one of these realms. So, perhaps, Coleridge's Eastern King or his ancient mariner. Coleridge told of the entrance to the sacred river, but what existed beyond that great romantic chasm he claimed not to know.

There are many tales of travelers who have pierced this veil into strange, faerie-like, magical realms. The most famous are perhaps the tales of Alice related by the sorcerer Charles Dodgson. Falling down an endless hole, stepping through a mirror, or an ornate door in the wilderness. In some cases, all it takes to enter a new world is turning onto a new path in the forest, or a side street you've never seen before.

The Vale of the Azure Sun is one of these. Sometimes a swimmer goes under water and returns in a dank cavern riddled with upright lizards, beetles that breathe fire, and strange creatures in the shadows. If the traveler leaves the caverns they find a small valley covered by a yellowed canopy of sky, and shining brightly upon the world is a bright blue sun. Others find it by falling, as Alice did, down a hole guarded by faeries.

The exit from such places can be as difficult to find as the entrance, and all the more maddening. But the tales of those who have escaped can inspire greed and desire. In Vale of the Azure Sun, Rilesen wrote of incredible knowledge gained in a game of chess, of magical secrets hidden in secrets, and of heaps of gold in a deep cavern guarded by dragons.

## 2—Background

Whether Rilesen's work is any more real than Dodgson's allegorical tale of illusion is hotly debated – though usually only after many drinks. Even in a world of magic, it can't be real. And yet tales persist of those who find a hollow oak and a hole in the ground...

## Getting to the Adventure

The map of the Blue Sun's island, if they have it, is a MacGuffin: it can be used to help drive the players to the Vale and what lies beyond the Vale, but it doesn't mean much to the adventure. If you choose to let them find the map, you might also let them find some clue or item along with it that leads them to the Vale. Or you may let them find the map in one place, and then the clue elsewhere after they've researched the children's poetry about the Vale.

### **THE HOLLOW OAK**

While traveling far from civilization, the characters are somehow brought to the oak tree that is the entrance to the vale. There are any number of means to this. One is to have the White Rabbit rush by, perhaps steal an apple or other fruit in its mouth, and rush away into the oak tree.

The oak tree is the most mobile of the entrances to the valley, and may be the most useful entrance for an accidental foray into the valley.

### **ILLUSTRIOUS CASTLE**

It's possible that they may realize, if they get to the cavern underneath Illustrious Castle, that an entrance or exit from somewhere is nearby. If they find that entrance, they will end up at the Wyvern's black lake, area 10 in the Long Caverns.

### **THE HAIKIUTL**

There is a cave in the sacred mountains of the Haikiutl, which was once traveled by one of their greatest shamans, Dodna, about two hundred years ago.

## THE CROSSROADS

Characters who are already traveling into other worlds may come upon the crossroads of Dead Rome. There is, for example, an entrance to Hamokera in the sewers of Byzantium, and an entrance to the crossroads in a grove near the old city of Barcelas.

## A MAGIC ACORN

They might acquire a magic acorn (perhaps along with the map, although someone who draws a map of their house probably isn't someone Cirkegrad would give an acorn to), and told to plant it only if they need to escape. They may or may not be told that after planting, they'll need to wait up to a day before the escape route is available.

## Pocket Domains

The Vale of the Azure Sun is a pocket domain: a world completely separate and mostly cut off from the “real” world. There are different kinds of pocket domains, depending mostly on their entrances and exits. The entrances and exits to the Valley are mostly stationary: they stay where they are. Some of the entrances (such as the oak) are under the control of the Blue Sun. Others, such as most of those in the cavern system, are not. These, he tries to fill with dangerous creatures.

Within a pocket domain, the “outside world” is inaccessible, except through the special entrances and exits. Magic (at least magic that cannot traverse dimensions) cannot transport anything from the outside in, nor from the inside out. “Teleport”, for example, will not allow the sorceror to escape a pocket domain. As far as the magic is concerned, there is no outside world.

Pocket domains can have different rules than the real world. Most things in the Valley work the same as on the outside. However, the Valley is a pocket domain with its own rules. The most obvious difference is that falling results in less damage. It just doesn't have the same force as in the world above. Divide the distance fallen or jumped by three for the effective damage-causing distance. This does not mean that characters can jump higher or farther, nor that they fall more slowly. Only that they can fall farther without death or serious injury.

#### 4—Background

Time within the Valley is variable compared to the outside, but generally will not vary by more than 50% to 200%. Four days in the valley could be as little as two days in Highland or as much as eight days. It is up to the Adventure Guide and may be used to interesting effect.

While in the Valley (and the surrounding caves) characters will not become hungry. They may eat if they wish, but they do not have to.

## The Vale of the Azure Sun

Most any child or gypsy could tell you two or three verses of The Vale of the Azure Sun.

Fields of blue by hills of stone,  
Sky bright green on a sparkling dome.  
Clouds of wispy yellow foam,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

Pray not to trip on a strawberry tide,  
Nor ask of the dead for a hand to guide.  
Nor follow to Alice, her rabbit astride,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

Sculptures fine of marble pied,  
As no man makes nor ever tried.  
Wait for the sculptor in grey to guide,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

His chariot races across the sky,  
Chased by the night his reindeer cry.  
Never once caught however he fly,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

His chariot chases the morning shore,  
As swift as a shadow it flies before.  
Dusk behind, Dawn afore,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

Doors of water, doors of mirth,  
Doorways hidden in the earth.  
Doorways of enormous girth,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.

Pray not to trip on a strawberry tide,  
Nor ask of the dead for a hand to guide.  
Nor follow to Alice, her rabbit astride,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.



## Other Worlds

The Vale of the Azure Sun opens to several other worlds, and creatures from these worlds inhabit the Valley and the Long Caves. The worlds are the World of Highland, Fading Highland, and Dead Rome at the Crossroads. In Dead Rome it opens to a crossroads which returns to the Vale, goes to the World of Barcelas, and also goes to two other worlds of your design. Dead Rome at the Crossroads is itself almost lost. If the players choose to explore it, they will see the tattered edge of reality.

There are three portals to the World of Highland. One is the one in mid-air from the hollow oak which will be in a location of your choosing. Another leads to the underground lake beneath Illustrious Castle. And the third leads to the western slope of the Great Mountains, near the Haikiutl.

Coins are usually Crosspoint, sometimes Roman, sometimes Barcelasian, and sometimes Black Stag.

There is more information about these worlds in the back of this book. Places like the Vale often become way-stations between worlds. They are a means of providing adventures that don't have any place in the "real" world that the characters know.

# Characters

## The White Rabbit

The White Rabbit is a messenger from another wizard's domain, namely Wonderland. The White Rabbit knows where each of the entrances are in the Valley, and also will travel with the Blue Sun and use the chariot of the sun to choose its desired destination.

The White Rabbit is always in a hurry, and is always late for whatever it is doing. It is nervous and prone to tics, much like its master.

The White Rabbit appears as a normal, if perhaps large and chubby, mottled brown and white rabbit in the "real" world. In the Valley or any other pocket domain, it walks upright, is white with a brown waistcoat, and speaks the native tongue of whoever it is speaking to.

*A white hare wearing a waistcoat wiggles its whiskers frantically, and pulls from its waistcoat pocket a small round piece of metal, with a chain on it that goes back into its pocket. "Oh dear, oh dear, I'm late again," it says, and hops away revealing a second hare that rushes after the first.*

It is currently here to give a message to the Blue Sun, who will also send it to give a message to Kelelmien, the White Dragon.

*"Why, it's the valley of the Blue Sun, of course. Why are you here if you don't know that?"*

*"Come on, I'm in a hurry."*

*"Why? You want to know why? Go see... go see the White Dragon. On the other side of the valley."*

*“Oh dear, oh dear, we’re late. Do you have coins? You need, I shouldn’t be telling you this,” he looks around, “but you should go swimming by the rock.”*

On stupid questions, such as “who are you” (he’s the White Rabbit, of course), the rabbit will roll his eyes at the questioner, wiggle his whiskers, and then waddle away as two rabbits.

The White Rabbit can also repeat the “Vale of the Azure Sun” nursery rhyme, though it will do so in hurried and agitated manner.

The White Rabbit has no name, and is known generally as “the rabbits” or “the white rabbits”. In the Barcelasian tongue of Cirkegrad, it is known as Demelan, for example, which means “the white rabbit”.

The White Rabbit is able to, at will, divide into two identical rabbits. At will, and no matter the distance, the two rabbits can merge to a single rabbit; the single rabbit can be at either of the two rabbits’ locations. When the White Rabbit enters a pocket domain while split, the other rabbit automatically merges with the one entering the domain. If one rabbit dies, it also automatically merges with the living rabbit, and then the rabbit breaks into two again. Only if both rabbits are killed simultaneously can the White Rabbit be killed.

The White Rabbit appears as two rabbits weaving in and out of each other because of this.

## The Blue Sun

*He is a short, balding man, with blue skin, light blue hair in a fringe around his head, and gold-tinged blue robes flowing behind him.*

The Blue Sun is an ancient wizard of Order who has ascended to a higher plane of thought. This world is his pocket dimension, his place of research and solitude. He traverses the sky in thought, pulled in a chariot drawn by hounds of blue glass. Daytime is six hours long. Night is another six hours. He can, however, slow or speed up if he desires it. He may slow to a stop, for example, if something exceedingly interesting is happening on the ground.

He prefers to keep to schedule. If he slows to watch something on the ground, when no one’s looking he’ll speed up quickly to where he should be in the sky.

## 8 – Characters

The blue sun can take on a human form, and does so at night when he leaves the sky and returns to his wife. However, he is the light source for this place, and wherever he is, will be where the light comes from. He isn't overly bright (so to speak), and can be looked at directly.

*"How did you get up there?"*

*"Years of hard work and clean living."*

*"We saw your 'private collection'."*

*"I paid someone off."*

In fact, clean living and hard work is closer to the answer. He carved this domain from the fabric of reality using high level spells and dangerous rituals which have tied this domain to his life force. As long as he remains inside, he will live. If he ever leaves, he will quickly age to his true two thousand-odd years. He created this world 2,267 years ago. It is part of his eternal life ritual, as well as a means of study. The sky itself contains many windows on other worlds. But if he leaves this world, even through those windows, he will age instantly to his true age, dying. He can observe and he can study, but he cannot take part in what he sees.

### ECLIPSES

There is a one in six chance per 'day' that he will work around the house. On such a day, the sun will not rise. He carries a journal with him at all times.

The Blue Sun is a twenty-sixth level classical sorcerer. At 26th level, he has at least 351 spell slots. Remember there is an intelligence maximum to spell levels, and his intelligence is 21.

He has just about any spell he wants. Don't give him all the spells in the book, after all, some were written in the last few centuries. But if there is a particular spell the characters have been over-using, give him the perfect anti-spell. After all, he wrote the original!

### PROTECTIONS

His protections include, but are not limited to:

**Ring of Escape:** contingent on anyone attacking him. It casts the 'escape' spell, at fifteenth level. It has two charges which replenish every twenty four hours.

**Bracelet of Dampen Magic:** Usable three times per twelve hours, at a low level of effect which means that he can easily overcome it, but lower-level spellcasters will have trouble. It is at fifteenth level. Basically, it reduces all casting levels by five in its area of effect, which is a 50 yard radius centered on the bracelet.

**Staff of Ra:** the staff has three charges in it; it casts a blinding light and a shield combined into one, and at the ninth level of experience.

On being attacked, if his attackers are low level and he is not in imminent danger of a melee attack, he will activate the dampen magic shell.

He will tend to respond to attacks in kind. He is loathe to cast spells of destruction, especially fire, near his home and library. Many of his books have a permanent Indestructible Object cast on them, but that's not perfect.

If he incapacitates his opponents, he will not kill them in cold blood unless he feels he must in self-defense. He will summon magical servants to take them to the cavern. He will leave with them any weapons and items, unless they seem exceedingly dangerous to his own life.

*Blue Sun (Sorcerer: 26; Survival: 75; Move: 11; Attacks: spells; Defenses: spells; Moral Code: Ordered)*

Commonly used attack spells include sleep and mage bolt.

## THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN

The Blue Sun may end up inviting a particularly insightful, kind, and intelligent character to ride with him upon the chariot. That's a bad idea. The chariot leads, during the day, through phases of enlightenment which require much training and experience to understand without going insane.

*The great blue stags lead your chariot through the cavern alongside the river. As the chariot picks up speed, the stags slide over the river itself. The wheels of the chariot throw up an arc of water on either side as you follow the river downstream. The roaring falls grow closer. Something over the falls glows a natural green as you skim closer and closer until finally you drop down the falls and into the green and yellow sky of the Azure Vale.*

A character who rides upon the chariot must make a Willpower roll or be overcome with distractibility by what they've seen. From then on, they will be easily distracted and must make a Willpower roll before taking any action. On a failure they stare off into space, or examine some trivial item.

## 10 – Characters

*As the chariot follows the dome of the sky, the green and yellow tendrils part, revealing a hidden and shimmering scene. Behind each tendril is a world, each drop of dew magnifies a scene of wonder, the very air holds worlds beyond worlds on dust motes in a sunbeam. At every turn a new glint sparks your imagination; every sight holds new sights beyond it.*

On the plus side, a successful Perception roll will allow the character to know any answer they choose to look for on the chariot journey – but remember that telling anyone else this answer is an action. Further (and subject to the same restriction), the character may choose to make up to *Intelligence* Learning rolls later. Success means that they can piece together some answer to that question based on what they saw while riding with the Blue Sun.

The effect disappears by a penalty of 1 per day to the Learning roll.

Distractibility is an ailment of strength 0 with an action time of one day. A character with distractibility is thus allowed a daily Willpower roll to throw off their distractibility.

## Cirkegrad

*She is a beautiful young woman. A red cape, tinged with brown at the edges, accentuates her figure. A hood veils much of her face, and her luxuriant red hair fills the hood to bursting. You can still make out a shy smile within the veil's darkness.*

Cirkegrad appears as a beautiful young woman, the Blue Sun's shy and demure wife. She always wears a cape and hood to cover the snakes she has for hair. She is a gorgon, like the medusa, summoned by a Barcelasian sorcerer who escaped to this pocket domain.

She is attuned to order, and tries to avoid turning people to stone unless in self-defense. If she accidentally turns someone to stone, she will feel really bad about it and be very apologetic.

If she asks him to restore a stoned victim, the Blue Sun will have the statue transported into the caverns, and restored to flesh there.

Cirkegrad enjoys the hop snakes, and is well aware that there are no more of them as the world they came from is gone.

Cirkegrad enjoys entertaining guests, and either she or the Blue Sun will invite interesting and polite characters to dinner.

If Cirkegrad enjoys the company of someone, she can give them a magic acorn that will become an entrance to the valley.

*Cirkegrad: (Gorgon: 4, Thief: 2; Survival: 25; Move: 11; Attacks: gaze, snakes; Defenses: Immune to normal weapons; Magic Resistance: 6; Moral Code: Ordered)*

# The Hollow Oak

*Dry brown leaves cover the ground around the hollow trunk of an ancient oak. Its leafless branches rise starkly against the green forest. A gaping hole on one side exudes the smell of autumn.*

The hole from the oak tree is three and a half feet in diameter. It goes down about twenty-five feet. If it is daytime, the ground can be seen about twenty-five feet below that. On the ground is a corpse and a large sack. The corpse is wearing leather armor, a shield, and a battle axe.

Because falling results in less damage here (see below), falling fifty feet will be like falling about seventeen feet. Jumping from the bottom (the “roof” of the sky) will be like jumping about eight feet.

There is no opening visible from the valley. From the valley, the exit will only be visible if they have some means of seeing magical openings or if they can otherwise discern where the invisible three foot wide opening is.

The hole opens near some small hills that butt against the dome of the sky. It is suspended in the air, about 13 feet out from the dome and about twenty-five feet above the ground.

From the top side of the hollow oak, the ground looks normal, covered in old leaves. But stepping on them results in the character falling through to the other side. An Evasion roll may be made to grab the sides.

The oak tree may be entered at any time. Once used as an entrance, it will not function as an exit for two Valley days. If a rope is dropped through it, the rope may be pulled back—but nothing larger than whatever is currently at the point of the hole will be able to be pulled back with it. Thus, a person could stick their foot down and pull their foot back. But if they stick their head down to their neck, they will not be able to pull their head back.



# The Valley

*The sky is a bright yellow, interspersed with threads of green mist. High in the sky a bright blue ball of fire slowly traverses the sky, drawn in a silver chariot by translucent stags that look like blue glass. Lower in the sky, very near you, the yellow and green merges into brown dirt and stone, where the dome of the sky meets the hilly ground.*

*A corpse lies on the hillside, empty sockets gazing across the brilliantly-colored landscape.*

*Down the hill, a brilliant blue river flows from a sparkling waterfall on your right into the stone horizon to your left, gurgling as it moves. In an island in the river, to your left, a small building stands alone.*

*Across the river, fields of orange and red cover the hills, broken by patches of yellow and blue. Two small groves of trees burst with orange and blue leaves. Between the groves, you can see a statue or marker of some kind standing alone atop a small, red and orange hill.*

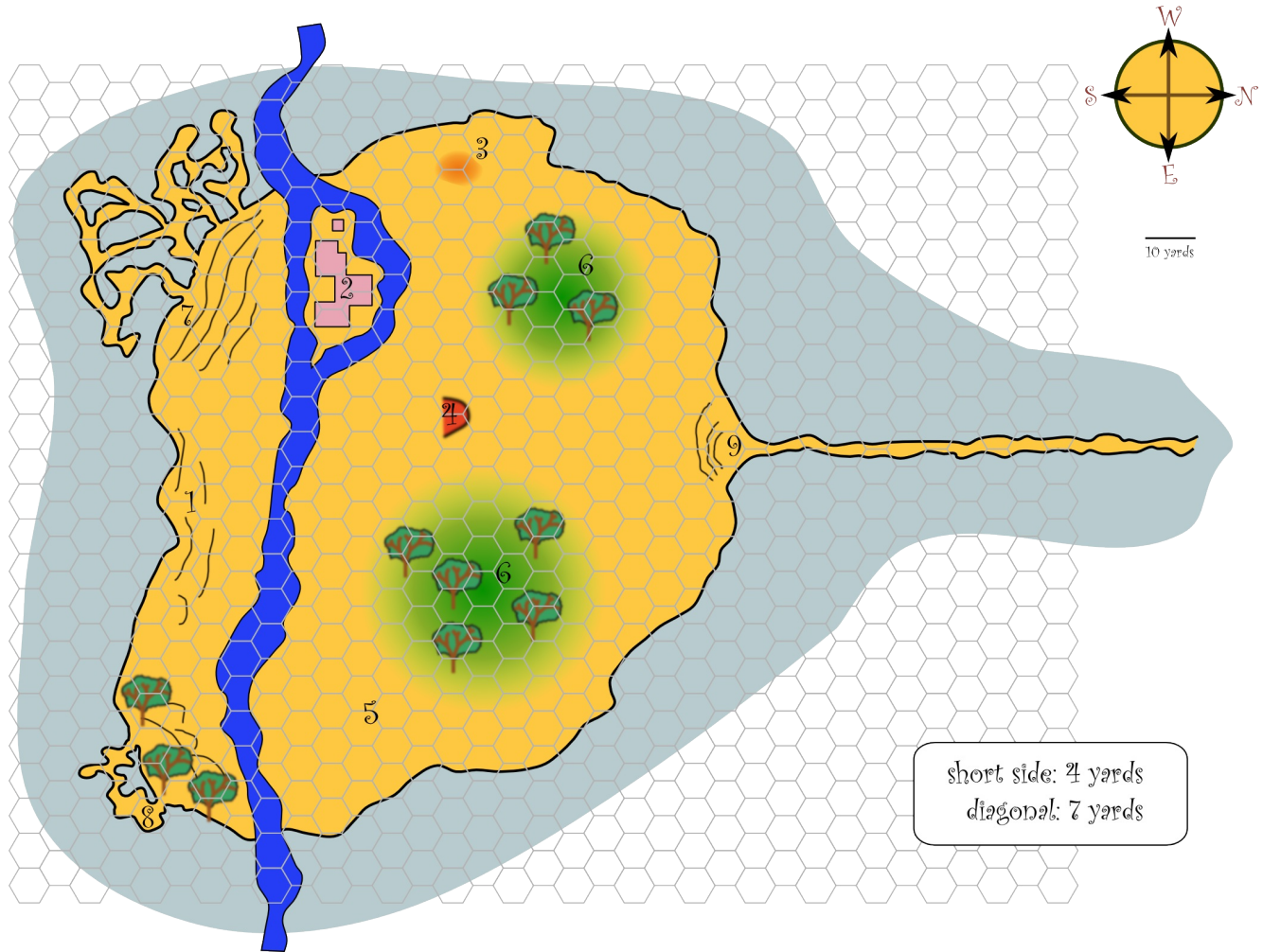
With no moon and the stars as dim phosphorescent vines hanging from the sky, darkness at night is nearly total.

The sky itself during the day is a bright yellow, like fields of flowers (which in fact it is), mixed with bright green vines that appear mist-like from a distance. At night, the vines provide the appearance of thread-like yellow stars.

## Strawberry Fields

*Fields of strawberries, raspberries, turnips, and carrots spread across the north side of the river. Onions bear bright blue stalks.*

14 – The Valley



## Wandering Encounters

In the valley, wandering encounters will usually occur with valley creatures. Occasionally, cavern creatures will brave the skeleton gauntlet, however. Encounters in the valley occur 20% of the time every three hours. Creatures in the valley (and in the caverns) are generally wary about any new, unknown creatures they meet.

d100	Encounter	Number	See Location	Origin	
01-18	Hop Snakes	d20	Area 5	Araman	18%
19-34	Crazy Crabs	d4	Cavern 22	Dead Rome	16%
35-47	Xolome	d12	Area 7	Haikiutl	13%
48-56	Pigasi	d6	Area 6	Araman	9%
57-64	Saurians	d4	Cavern 14, 17	Barcelas	8%
65-72	Orcs	d8	Cavern 3, 7, 12	Highland	8%
73-79	Brown Bear	1	Area 8	Highland	7%
80-85	Karuat	d3	Cavern 2	Highland	6%
86-91	Xolome	d10	Cavern 18, 19	Dead Rome	6%
92-95	Carathaxian	d3	Cavern 8	Barcelas	4%
96-99	Buzzflies	d20	Caverns	Dead Rome	4%
00	Cirkegrad	1	Introduction	Barcelas	1%

Cirkegrad will never be encountered as a wandering encounter when the Blue Sun is in their house. They will be together in the house.

## The Guardian (1)

If anyone lands on the ground, the corpse will awaken as a zombie. Lying next to the ‘corpse’ is a battle axe and a small pouch. The pouch has forty Crosspoint shillings in it, from about three hundred years past, and fifteen Crosspoint pennies. It is wearing leather armor and a wooden shield. It is moderately more intelligent than your average zombie.

It is activated when someone touches the axe or when someone enters or exits the portal above it. The axe will jump and strike (at an attack bonus of 2) and fly to the corpse’s hand, whereupon the zombie will attack. This is generally at least a penalty of two on surprise rolls for its opponents.

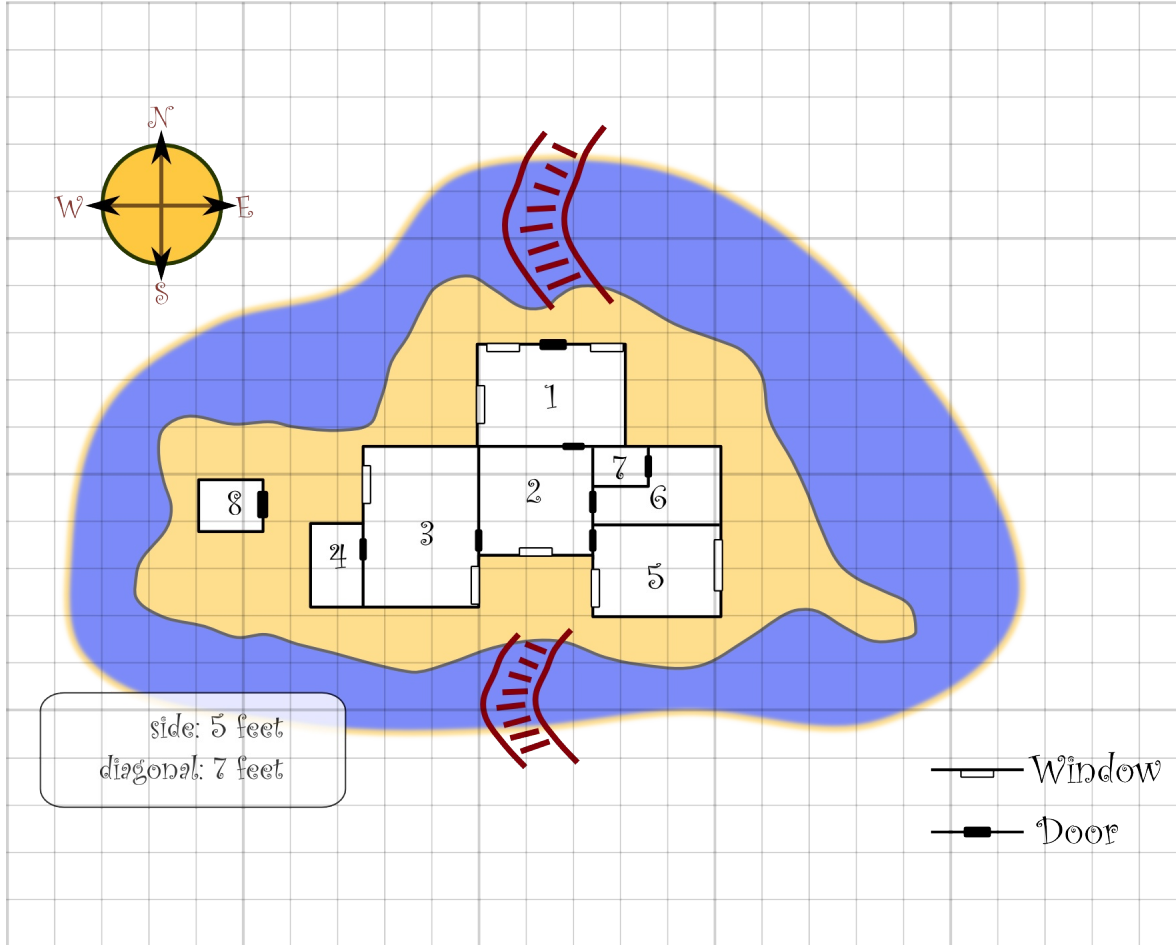
## 16 – The Valley

The zombie will reform every midnight.

*Zombie: (Undead 3, Survival 20, Defense 5, damage 1d8)*

If the characters leave a rope hanging down from this end to both mark the opening and make it easy to get to it, then whoever was hostile enough to get them here will probably pull the rope up while they're pre-occupied with the zombie. Otherwise, the rope will be available when the hole is open again from the Valley side.

# The Island (2)



## 18 – The Valley

Note that from different perspectives, some of these features will be visible and some will not. For example, the statuary and mausoleum will not be visible from the southeast of the house. If it is evening, there may also be smoke coming from the chimney.

*The river flows around a small island. A wooden plank bridge with four-foot handrails arcs lazily over the bright blue water of the river. A simple one-story home, painted a pastel pink with white trim, covers most of the island.*

*A small garden filled with low bushes, flowers, and statuary decorates the west side of the island. A tiny building stands amidst the trees and statues.*

### THE RIVER

Two giant octopuses live in the river and guard the island. The bridges are from 1 to 3 feet above the water. Anyone crossing the bridge is likely to be attacked by the octopuses: while crossing the bridge there is a 10% chance per minute of noise that one of the octopuses will become curious and consider an attack.

When near the river but not making noise, the chance of an encounter becomes a 20% chance per hour of an encounter with the octopuses.

The river drops over a waterfall on the west edge of the map into the Stations of the Sun. Underground in the Station, it drops over a waterfall on the east edge to fall into the “upper” level.

*Octopuses: (Animal: 4; Survival: 9, 15; Move: 9/15; Attack: 2 tentacles or bite; Damage: d6/d6 or d8; Defense: 4; Special defenses: ink, camouflage)*

### GROVE OF THE STATUARY

*Flowers grow on vines and on bushes, twisting amongst marble statues of men, monsters, and other creatures. Among the statues you see goblins and hobgoblins, men and women, and things you don't even recognize. The garden also encloses a small, stone building on the east edge of the island. Purple and yellow flowering vines climb the walls of both wood and stone. Lizards and strange lobsters wander about.*

These statues are all unfortunates who viewed the beautiful Cirkegrad. Hop snakes bounce and cavort among the statues. There are statues of creatures from many worlds: saurians from Barcelas, goblins, orcs, humans from Highland, from the Haikiutl, from Barcelas and Dead Rome. There is even one gigantic spider. There are xolome, karuat, and any other races you'd like to foreshadow the use of.

*Hop Snakes: (Fantastic: 1pt; Move: 8 slither/14 hoop/12 coil; Attack: bite; Damage: 1/2 pt; Defense: 3)*

### **FOYER (1)**

*On the far wall, above a simple fireplace, an oil painting looks down the side of a mountain to an ancient city on a seashore. You hear scuttling above you. There is a sideboard on the right, beneath a window looking out to a statue-filled garden. On the left, there is a single shelf filled haphazardly with books.*

There are 1d4 rainbow lizards roaming this room and every room of the house. Usually they stay in the rafters, though some may come down to play with Cirkegrad.

Cirkegrad will be in the house 70% of the time during the day, and always at night when the Blue Sun is home. When she is not in the house, she will be picking fruit or vegetables in the fields, or visiting Kelelmien.

The books are the journals of the Blue Sun, in his own language.

All of the journals are protected with Unbreakable Object at level 15.

*Hop Snakes: (Fantastic: 1pt; Move: 8 slither/14 hoop/12 coil; Attack: bite; Damage: 1/2 pt; Defense: 3)*

### **KITCHEN/HALLWAY (2)**

This is an odd kitchen from a medieval mindset. It is designed more like a modern kitchen: for a single person making small meals. The south side of the kitchen is really an open hallway that leads to the dining room and the bedroom.

The fireplace in the north side is the same as the south fireplace in the foyer.

### **LIBRARY (3)**

*Books of innumerable languages fill the walls. A varnished wooden table next to a short couch holds several upright pens in an arc in one corner, partially surrounding three inkwells.*

The walls are filled with books and journals, and the table has ink and pens at it. There are three colors of ink: red, black, and green. The books are extremely varied, including books from Dead Rome, Barcelas, and both forms of Highland, as well as books from the Blue Sun's world. The books from Dead Rome speak of strange marvels, magical carriages with ghostly horses, automatic scribes, and the criss-crossing of a nation with magical lightning. The books are all protected with Unbreakable Object at levels ranging from 10th to 20th.

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### **STORAGE ROOM (4)**

Hop snakes swarm about this place. After one minute of noise, a shadow is awakened. When the shadow falls across the room, the hop snakes flee. The shadow protects the secret door to the Station of the Sun “below” the house. They also protect the house from anything that might enter from the Station of the Sun.

The secret door is the north wall. It leads to blue-glass stairs that go down ten yards to the Station of the Sun.

*Shadow (Demon: 1; Survival: 4; Attacks: 1; Damage: 1d6; Special Attack: suffocation; Defense: +9; Special Defense: Immune to normal weapons; Magic Resistance: 1)*

### **DINING HALL (5)**

The plates are made of silver, and engraved with scenes of cities from Barcelas: Barcelas, Hamokera, and the ruins of Carathax. The goblets are also silver, and engraved with almost Celtic circles and whorls. The silver plates are worth 50 shillings each. The cups are worth 30 shillings each. The Blue Sun and Cirkegrad have ten of each, but will only bring out as many as they need. They also have silver knives, forks, and spoons, and varnished wooden bowls for soups.

### **BEDROOM (6)**

There is a large brass canopied bed in the south. Cirkegrad will often be here reading if she is unaware of visitors. If she accidentally turns someone to stone, she will be ever so sorry and hide under the sheets.

### **BATHROOM (7)**

The Blue Sun and Cirkegrad have a simple indoor bathroom much like modern American houses do. There is a bath, a sink, and a toilet.

### **MAUSOLEUM (8)**

The inside of the mausoleum is bigger than the outside. Inside, it is two yards wide by ten yards long. The stone coffin is at the far end.

*As you open the door, shadows flee from the light. Light shines down a long hallway flanked with urns filled with long-dead flowers. At the far end a long box sparkles many colors, gold and ruby, and emerald green and sapphire blue.*

A gold and gem-inlaid wooden coffin worth three thousand shillings is in the center of the mausoleum. The wooden cover of the coffin is inlaid with glass, allowing the viewer to see inside at the dried corpse inside.



*A sword lies by its side, clean, reflective steel protruding from a sapphire-blue hilt.*

The corpse is “protected” by a barrowman. The sword, which the corpse will wield, is Belereden, the “sword of ice and snow” in Barcelasian. The ice sword is a +2 weapon and can freeze opponents (see appendix).

*Barrowman (Undead: 6; Survival: 25; Move: 12; Attack: sword+2; Damage: d8+2; Defense: 5; Special defenses: magic weapon required; Special attacks: voice, chill touch, ice sword)*

On leaving this mausoleum, it will be midnight and dark. If some people enter and some do not, and they keep the doors open, they will be able to see each other until those who entered leave: then those who entered will disappear (unless of course they leave at midnight).

### **THE STATION OF THE SUN**

Below the house are the stables where the Blue Sun’s steeds replenish after carrying him across the sky. The steeds are deer-like creatures, with bodies of transparent blue glass and long intricate antlers. At night, they’ll be sleeping here. During the day, it will be empty. Just after the sun goes down, the steeds will pull the chariot into the station. Just before the sun comes up, the Blue Sun will climb down into the station, and the steeds will pull the chariot away.

A river runs lengthwise through the stations, running from a waterfall on each end of the underground halls. On the west end a waterfall comes down into the station from the valley. On the east end, a waterfall drops down into the valley.

The Blue Sun is easily distracted, but not too easily, not from this task. This has been his life’s purpose for two thousand, two hundred and sixty-seven years, and he thoroughly enjoys it.

## The Orange Jelly (3)

A giant orange slime that resembles a bubbling orange pool when hungry (as it usually is) or a smooth, glassy surface otherwise. The orange jelly is from Dead Rome, before the cataclysm.

*A glassy pool of some translucent bright orange undulates in ripples and bubbles.*

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*The bubbles grow above the pool into smooth blobs, and the blobs form into human shapes that remind you of something that happened long ago.*

There are things hidden about the orange jelly. It only eats flesh and plant life, not metals. There are metal items scattered in piles around itself to entice potential victims.

*Orange Slime: (Fantastic: 8; Survival: 35; Move: 7; Attack: blobs; Damage: 1d6 or 2d6; Defense: 8; Special attacks: telepathic reflection, engulf; Special defense: most attacks do little or no damage)*

There are old daggers, swords, and shields, all metal, and stripped clean of any organic matter (such as straps, grips, and handles) at the bottom of, and suspended within, the slime. There are 89 silver coins (shillings), 3 gold coins (pounds), and 298 copper coins (pennies) of various cultures.

## The Iron Hill (2)

*Atop this ten foot tall rise you can survey the entire azure valley. A metal post is embedded into the ground. There are words on the post.*

The hill is three yards tall. A rune-post tells a riddle, which, if answered correctly, transports the riddler into the center of the hill. The riddle-mark will appear to be written in the native language of the reader. If the reader does not read their native language, it will speak.

*This you need, to fill a room that is already full.*

*I take what I cannot return, and if you would turn me away, keep me by your side.*

*When you lose me they tell you to use me. No matter how big I am, you will not see further by standing upon me, but this you must do to begin this contest.*

This tells them what they need to bring (a light and a weapon), and how to enter the hill (stand on your head).

Note that the first two riddles are language-independent for the most part. The third one requires that the viewer have a head and that the head be considered the source of calm and intellect. If not, that riddle will appear as hash marks on the stone.

If any person stands on their head in front of the stone, they will fly up a few feet, land again, and then bounce high into the sky, disappearing through the sky but actually ending up inside the hill.

This second riddle changes within ten minutes of the time it is used. You may have to come up with your own. Riddles must result in something the characters can do. For example:

*“Never begin and never end, walk in me, run in me.”*

The answer to this is to make a circle around the stone.

*You feel yourself fly up, down again, and then you bounce high into the air. You rise quickly towards the sky, and fall right into the sky, past green and yellow threads, almost like grass, that hang from the roof of the sky.*

*Then everything is dark. Your feet alight upon a solid surface as your eyes adjust to the flickering light of your torch. In the flickering light a grey lizard rears motionless beside a small, ornate chest. The lizard glints in your torch’s light.*

*The lizard’s head creaks as it turns toward you and raises a sword and shield.*

Inside the hill an onyx mail statue guards a chest that holds a small amphora, [Alcalig](#). The area inside the hill is a cylinder eight yards wide and two and a half yards tall. The onyx statue and the chest are in the northwest of the area.

The onyx statue is in the form of a Barcelasian (saurian) and is made of small interlocking onyx rings. It can attack with its tail or its hands. The lizard has magic resistance 6. Magic will thus sometimes work, and sometimes not work, inside the hill.

*Onyx Lizard: (Fantastic: 4; Survival: 20; Move: 10; Attack: tail or sword; Damage: 1d4 or 1d8; Defense: 6, Magic Resistance: 6)*

*The huge onyx lizard shatters into thousands of rings that roll around you on the stone floor.*

A plaque to the northeast blocks the way out. To leave (before or after defeating the onyx lizard), the character must answer the riddle upon it. The words will be heard by any character that cannot read well, and appears in the reader’s native tongue.

*I call without words. In storm I escape the closed door, but die when it is opened. If you would escape, make me now.*

If they whistle, they will fly out of the hill and be back on top of the hill. Whistling requires an agility roll at a bonus of 4.

## Rainbow Lizards (5)

*Among brightly-colored berries of green and blue and yellow, brilliantly-striped creatures bounce high into the air and back into the orange and red grasses. Some are bulbous and round, like giant round bladders bouncing across the fields. Others roll about with their tails in their mouths, and others coil and uncoil hopping about the ground with long snouts pointing upwards where their heads ought to be.*

While they may be found throughout the valley and the caves, the hop snakes make their nests in this part of the valley. They come in three forms: bouncing lizards, hopping lizards, and hoop-snakes, that roll up into a hoop to move around. They are herbivorous, preferring the bright green and blue strawberries throughout the valley.

The bouncing lizards are bulbous, prickly things. They inflate and deflate, causing them to jump upwards, and when they land they time their muscular inflations so as to bounce even higher.

The hopping lizards look sort of like miniature kangaroos, with two vertical snouts where their head should be.

They are three genders of the same species. Both the bouncing lizards and the hopping lizards may bear children. Their stripes run all the colors of the rainbow, and perhaps more.

*Hop Snakes: (Fantastic: 1pt; Move: 8 slither/14 hoop/12 coil; Attack: bite; Damage: 1/2 pt; Defense: 3)*

## The Copse of Trees (6)

*A sweet fragrance drifts among the shade of the trees. Wide, multi-colored fruit hang amongst the orange and blue leaves. Fat creatures, mottled green, fly amongst the trees. Wild boars with wings furling upon their backs and bright orange horns jutting from their foreheads snuffle about the ground, leap, and fly in to the air.*

The pigasi are very territorial and will amass in numbers of 2 to 20 against any who encroach on their territory.

The fruit from the trees are pear-like, sweet, and juicy, like nectar in a skin.

*Pigasi (Fantastic: 2; Movement: 12/15; Attacks: horn; Damage: d8; Defense: +3)*

## The Xolome Caves (7)

These are volcanic caves. The roofs are scattered with organic-looking pock-marks, as of long-erupted bubbles. The rock is hard and shiny. The floors are rippled and striated almost like a beach.

There are four entrances, but only two are guarded. The two unguarded ones are blocked with rocks and dirt. While within the caves, the chance of encountering xolome is 50% every ten minutes. There will be d12 xolome in any group..

**Every part of the cavern is riddled with smaller holes, one to two feet wide.** The area has been mined for gems by the Xolome. The Xolome can also use the holes to escape and to move throughout the caverns.

There are two tribes of xolome in these caves. Originally, the Black Deer tribe lived in this set of caves, and the Dark Water tribe in the caves at (8). But when the bear took over the Dark Water cave, the Dark Water xolome tried to move into the Black Deer caves. There was a war. Nobody won, and now both tribes share these caves. They have two chieftains, one from each tribe. It is an uneasy truce. While they no longer fight it with spears and knives, they still fight it in their stories over their night fires.

The original xolome come from the realm of the Haikiutl, in the world of Highland, across the Great Mountains from Highland. They carry the story of Black Deer.

*Before the world, there was Rock In Darkness, there was Water Dripping Down, there was Sun Always Burning, and there was the Moon Still Whole. Water Dripping Down called out to Moon and to Sun. It told them of three deer jumping out of holes in Rock. The first deer would be both black and white, the second, white, and the third, black.*

*Whichever deer were killed first would determine whether the xolome or Haikiutl would never need sleep, would sleep during day, or sleep during night. Each, Sun and Moon, carried three arrows.*

*Sure enough, a black and white dappled deer leapt from the hole in Rock. Moon fired one arrow at the deer, but Sun fired her arrow at Moon. Moon turned sideways to avoid Sun's arrows, but one of Sun's arrows hit Moon and made Moon miss. So neither xolome nor Haikiutl could go without sleep.*

*When the next deer jumped out, Moon saw that it was white. Sun let this deer go. But Moon took Sun's arrow from his face and fired it at the white deer, and killed it.*

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*"Your people shall have to live in the burning heat," laughed Moon. "For it was your arrow that killed the white deer!"*

*Sun slunk away beneath the rock.*

*When the next deer jumped from the caves, it was the black deer, and Moon took one of his own arrows to kill it. So, the xolome sleep during the day when the sun is hot, and wake during the safety of the night when game is plentiful.*

*So it is that the Haikiutl work in the burning heat and Sun watches over them. The Xolome work in the cool of the night and Moon watches over us. And Moon sometimes comes out early to scare Sun beneath the rock, and Moon sometimes stays up late to laugh at Sun's people rising in the heat.*

The invading xolome carry the story of Dark Water:

*The xolome were the first to leave Mud World and climb into Water In Darkness. Moon Still Whole welcomed us. The Jewels of Moon were ours for taking. When we hungered, we needed only reach out to choose the fish of our desire. Fish was plentiful, and we ate it raw.*

*Other creatures grew jealous of our bounty. They followed our trail up from Mud World. They ate our fish, and wore our jewels to mock us.*

*Moon Still Whole became annoyed at their greed. He fled into the sky to escape their demands.*

*When Moon rose, he left cracks in the sky of Water In Darkness. The cracks were too small for the other creatures, but we followed into Dark Water Scattered, where we live today.*

*The other creatures grew hungry in the empty world below. They scratched at the walls until they poked a hole in the side of the world. All of the water drained out of their world, and the hot sun poured in. Many died in the world below, and they still scratch at the sides of their empty lands, looking for the bounty that belongs to us.*

The xolome are armed with spears, knives, and bows. Their knives, spear tips, and arrowheads are stone or obsidian. They live off of the fields of berries across the river, fruit from the trees, and the occasional pigasi.

Not including the twin chieftains and their four lieutenants, there are sixteen adult xolome in the Black Deer tribe, and twelve adult xolome in the Dark Water tribe. The chieftains have taken the name of their tribe as their names: Black Deer and Dark Water. Both chieftains have leather armor and a shield with their insignia on it.

*Black Deer (xolome: 1-1, warrior: 2; survival: 10; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d6; Defense: 5)*

*Dark Water (xolome: 1-1, warrior: 2; survival: 11; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d6; Defense: 5)*

Each chieftain has two lieutenants who have one level in warrior.

*Black Deer Lieutenants (xolome: 1-1, warrior: 1; survival: 10, 5; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 5)*

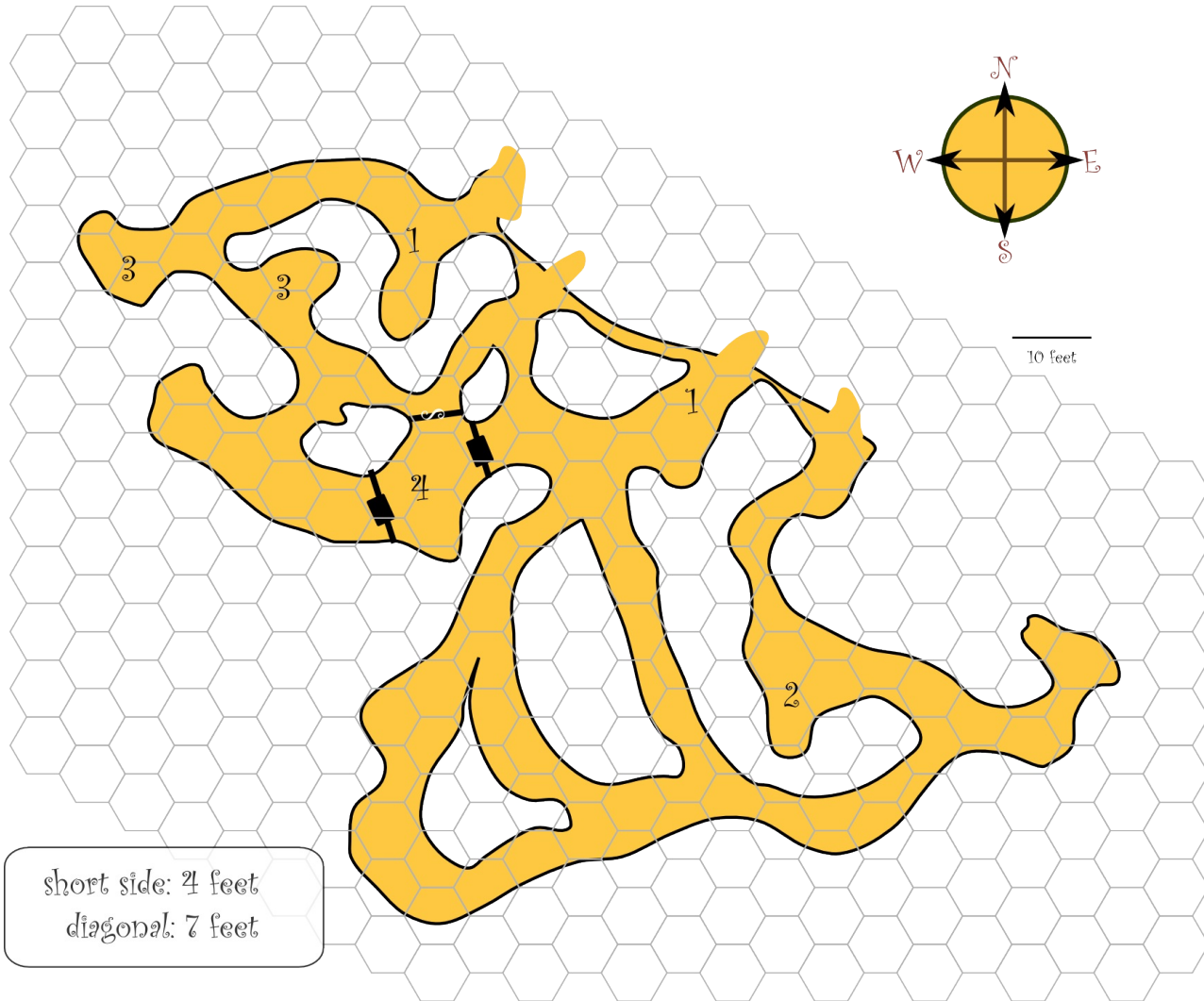
*Dark Water Lieutenants (xolome: 1-1, warrior: 1; survival: 7, 10; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 5)*

The rest of the adult xolome are normal xolome, with spears (50% at any encounter also have obsidian daggers). As for armor, 25% will have leather armor (+2 defense), and 25% a shield (+1 defense). One quarter (25%) also carry bows and arrows. The bows of the xolome are small compared to normal-sized bows. They do d4 damage and have a range of 14.

*Xolome (Fantastic: 1-1; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 2, 3, 4, or 5)*

Each xolome carries 1-6 minor gems worth 1-20 shillings each.

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## **GUARD ROOMS (1)**

*[Two, three, etc.] little creatures leap up snarling, pointing spears at you, ready to throw. One of them makes a high-pitched squealing noise; their faces, tiny, misshapen mockeries, almost weasel-like, bob back and forth as they speak.*

Two to six (2d3) xolome wielding spears and daggers, and fully armored (both shield and leather) guard the entrance from pigasi, bears, and other strange things that might have fallen through the hole. In general there isn't ever a problem, so while they are guarding, they aren't guarding well, and are often pre-occupied with card games, sleeping, and arguing. They play for gems taken from the mountain, stories, and for whatever else they might have of value.

Each xolome guard d6 minor gems (worth d20 shillings each), and may also have any other weird things you choose to give them.

*Xolome (Fantastic: 1-1; Ordered Evil; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 5)*

There will also often (40% of the time) be one lieutenant in a guard room, unless the "on-duty" lieutenant has already been killed.

## **HOME ROOM (2)**

*Piles of furs cover the floor. An animal smell fills the cavern, a sweatiness on the air.*

There is a 50% chance that 2d4 xolome will be here. This is where all of the stuff they happened to have with them when they came through is kept. There are straw mats, baskets, up to forty-nine gems, and small bone icons throughout the furs.

## **GATHERING HALLS (3)**

There is a 50% chance that there will be d20 xolome in each of these parts of the cavern.

## **TEMPLE (4)**

*The makeshift door creaks open. A tall, thin form stands motionless in your flickering light. Bright colors adorn the walls. You see another door across the way, beyond the tall figure, still motionless and gray in your flickering light.*

*Belts of leather, embedded with hundreds of tiny colored rocks or gems, hang from every part of the cavern walls. Nets woven around bone and stick hang from the crevasses and cracks.*

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Their temple contains leather belts of bright colors, bones and sticks bound into nets, and a statue of a tall, lithe man or woman wearing a metal helmet. The statue is oddly deformed, with long, thin arms and legs that seem abnormal even in the flickering of a torchlight.

The statue is Lesertfar, a lesser dragon turned to stone while in its “human” form by Cirkegrad. Lesertfar is from beyond Venethtlas in the world of Barcelas.

The metal helm on the stone statue is a helm of consciousness. The helm keeps Lesertfar conscious as a punishment for her attempted murder of the Blue Sun’s wife. Lesertfar can mentally converse with the xolome. She can read their minds, or the minds of anyone within ten feet, if the target fails a Willpower roll. She can talk to anyone through telepathy.

Lesertfar first toyed with the xolome, but now has come to regard them as useful and is trying to turn them into a competent fighting force.

Anyone attempting to take the helmet off will take 2d6 points damage on touching it, and another 2d6 points damage on pulling it off. An Evasion roll on touching the helmet allows the character to choose not to grab the helmet, and not take any damage.

If Lesertfar were to be turned from stone back to normal, she can become a brood of vipers and breathe a poisonous gas. Her eyes can hypnotize a victim into immobility. She is the offspring of forest and mud dragons and is a level 6 creature. She is Evil.

There is one hidden door in the east, and doors which can be barred to the south and north.

The xolome worship Lesertfar as an oracle.

*Lesertfar (lesser dragon: 6; Move: 12/24; Attacks: claw and bite; Defense: +7; Damage: 2d6/2d4; Special Attacks: earthquake breath, telepathy)*

Note that Lesertfar can only use her telepathic power; the others would only be usable if she were returned to from stone. Her earthquake breath causes everything in its path to shake and bend violently. It causes 4d6 points damage to any who fail an Evasion roll, 2d6 to those who succeed. It will crack wood and shatter glass, stone, and ceramics. Anything that isn’t secured will likely topple. It affects a spherical area up to thirty yards from Lesertfar and six yards wide.

## The Bear Caves (8)

*Dust mites and orange leaves dance in shafts of blue sunlight here within the grove. Two large holes in the side of the valley gape open. Inside is dusty rock and darkness.*

A brown bear scared away the Dark Water xolome who used to live here. This resulted in a minor war between the Black Deer and Dark Water tribes. The bear will not attack unless someone comes near. First it will try to scare them off. If they move towards it, the bear will leap towards them and fight.

*A deep guttural growl echoes around you in the cavern. As the echo dies you hear scraping on stone. A great growling mass leaps at you, claws extended and biting at you with yellowed teeth in a long snout.*

*Brown Bear (Animal: 6; Movement: 16; Attacks: 2 claws; Damage: 1d8/1d8; Special Attack: bear hug; Defense: +5)*

## Entrance to Long Caverns (9)

*You see a gaping hole in the valley's wall up a small hill. Grassland turns to dusty ground as you climb the small stepped hill to the cave's wide entrance.*

*Looking out over the valley you see groves of orange and blue trees to your right and left, a round hill red between them. Beyond them runs a sparkling river and more hills. Fields of orange and red, broken by patches of yellow and blue, cover the ground.*

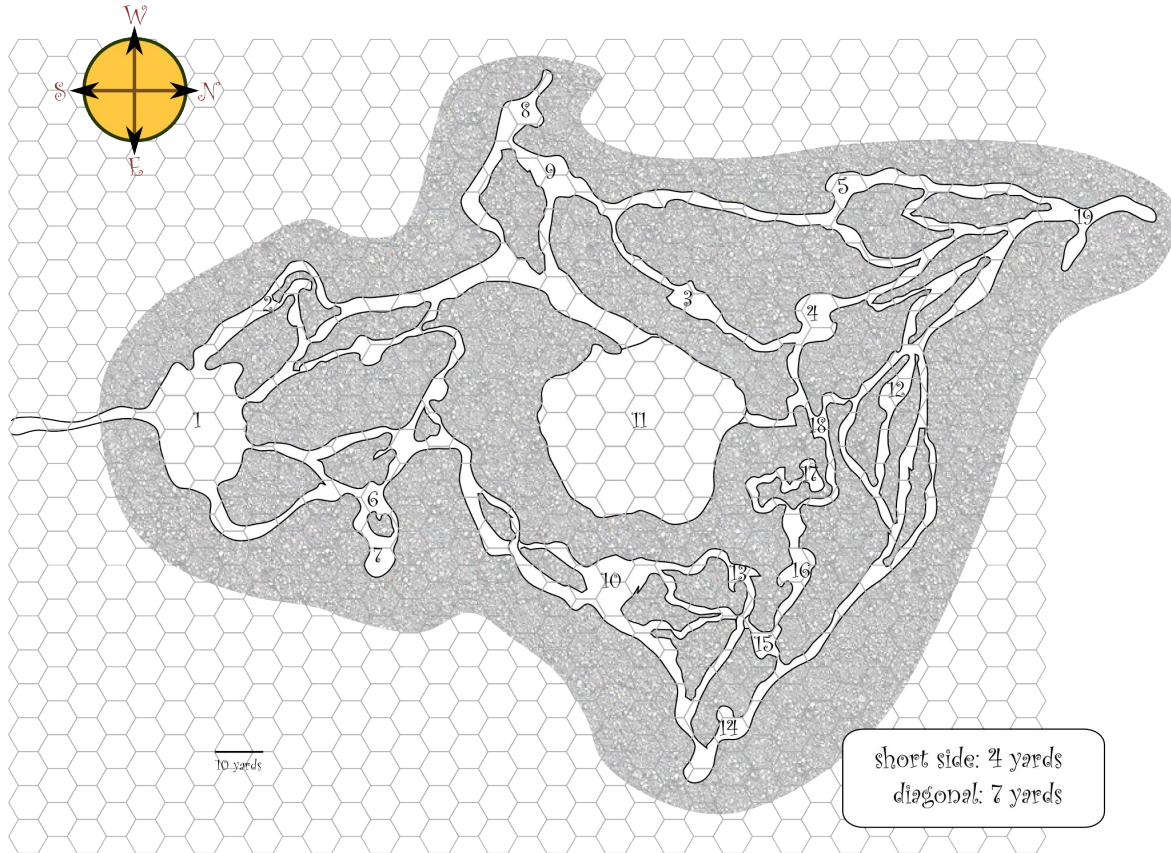
*Two statues flank a dark cave entrance. On your left a warrior holds a sword tightly above its head, its hands in front of its face in fear. On your right an old man raises a staff and leers obscenely across the valley.*

*The dark hole is about eight feet wide, and appears to be relatively straight for as far as your light goes.*

Both statues, of course, are extremely life-like, having been made by Cirkegrad.

This long cavern leads three hundred yards into the long caverns.

# The Long Caverns



The long caverns are river-cut limestone caverns. The walkways and open areas are filled with misshapen, wet, bumpy stalactites and stalagmites, but the walls are smooth and worn.

Inside the long caverns, as elsewhere in the valley, no creature need eat for sustenance. They may eat as normal, but they do not need to. This includes the player characters. Without a sky or hunger, they may lose track of time, knowing it only by when they grow tired.

How much the creatures of the Long Caverns know about the valley is up to you, but they could certainly tell some strange stories about the things they've seen pass through the caverns. Those from Dead Rome or beyond the crossroads know that Kelelmien has an entrance to the crossroads, because they passed through it.

## Languages and factions

Most creatures that have been here a while will speak a limited pidgin of Barcelas, Orcish, and Camprye.

<b>Creatures</b>	<b>Faction</b>	<b>Languages</b>
Barcelasians	Barcelas	Barcelas
Carathaxians	Barcelas	Barcelas, Carathax
Karuat	Karuat	Camprye
Kelelmien	None	Many
Mad Elf	Barcelas	Barcelas, Elvish
Orcs	Orcs	Orcish (Giant-kin), English
Tenon	Haikiutl	Haikiutl
Xolome	Haikiutl	Haikiutl, Camprye

There is a delicate balance of power within the caverns. Everyone is suspicious of strangers or newcomers. But they are also desirous of gaining allies whenever newcomers appear. This is a competitive, closed ecosystem, with each faction competing for space and power, and all for no obvious purpose beyond space and power.

## Wandering encounters

In the caverns, wandering encounters will usually occur with cavern creatures. Occasionally, valley creatures will brave the skeleton gauntlet, however. Encounters in the caverns occur 40% of the time every two hours. Most of the creatures are at least familiar with the other creatures in the caverns: overall, the caverns are a small place. Creatures in the caverns (and in the valley) are generally wary about any new, unknown creatures they meet.

d100	Encounter	Number	See Location	Origin	Statue	
01-20	Stone statue	Special	roll again, d20			20%
21-34	Crazy Crabs	1d6	Caverns 12, 13	Dead Rome	6-11	14%
35-45	Carathaxian	1d4	Cavern 8	Barcelas		11%
46-55	Saurians	1d4	Cavern 15	Barcelas	13-15	10%
56-64	Hop Lizards	1d12	Valley 5	Araman		9%
65-72	Karuat	1d6	Cavern 2	Highland	1-2	8%
73-79	Buzzflies	2d12	Below	Dead Rome	12	7%
80-85	Xolome	1d10	Caverns 17, 18	Haikiutl	3-5	6%
86-90	Orcs	1d8	Caverns 3, 4, 5	Highland	16-18	5%
91-95	Pigasi	1d4	Valley 6	Araman	19	5%
96-97	Xolome	1d10	Valley 7	Haikiutl	20	2%
98-99	Tenon	1	Cavern 7	Haikiutl		2%
00	Cirkegrad	1	House	Barcelas		1%

As in the valley, Cirkegrad is only encountered when the Blue Sun is not at home. She occasionally goes to visit the Carathaxians or Kelelmien. The others have learned not to attempt to harm her, or even to look at her, and the skeletons are set to allow her safe passage.

The statues are creatures that threatened Cirkegrad and were turned to stone by her. Half the time, only one statue will be encountered. The rest of the time, roll the appropriate encounter number for that creature.

There are also mice and other small animals in the caverns.

## BUZZFLIES

*A high-pitched whine grows quickly. Reflections of green and blue glint at the edge of your light; buzzing and whirring, an amorphous metallic cloud moves towards you; it moves closer and you see a swarm of iridescent green insects flying rapidly and erratically. They swarm around you. Their wings rip into your faces and arms, drawing blood and tearing skin. And then they recede, buzzing, into the distance.*

These creatures from the ocean of Dead Rome make no lair but instead buzz and careen about the caverns and the valley trying to find their way home. Their buzzing backwings are sharp and constantly cutting. A swarm of buzzflies flying through a forest will leave a trail of flying leaves and cut foliage behind them. A swarm flying through a group of adventurers will leave blood and torn flesh behind it.

Buzzflies shine a shimmering iridescent green, and in a flying swarm can appear as an iridescent cloud until they are within several yards.

*Buzzflies: (Fantastic: 1/2; Move: 14; Attack: wings; Damage: 1d4)*

There are a total of forty-seven buzzflies throughout the cavern and valley.

## Braziers and skeletons (1)

*Flickering flames from bronze braziers dimly light the stalactites and stalagmites of this huge cavern. Over a dozen skeletons line the dripping rock walls on all sides ahead of you.*

The skeletons will stand and attack as soon as anyone enters. They will not give chase, but will attack anyone except the Blue Sun, Cirkegrad, or a designated messenger (such as the White Rabbit) so designated by the Blue Sun. Travelers with those individuals are also safe. Destroyed skeletons reform at midnight.

*As you step inside, you hear a scrape against stone. The skeletons stand away from the walls and raise their swords.*

The entrance to the valley is 300 yards down the long thin cavern to the south.

*19 Skeletons: (Undead: 1; Survival: 5 each; Move: 10; Attack: sword; Damage: 1d8; Defense: 3; Special Defenses: pointed weapons do 1 pt, slashing weapons do half damage)*

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This huge open area is off-limits to both cavern and valley creatures. No creature is allowed to make this cavern their home. Creatures will occasionally rush past the skeletons to reach the other side. An evasion roll is required to rush past once the skeletons begin moving.

### Karuat Lair (2)

*The splashes of dripping water echo throughout the cavern. Tall creatures, with beaks and huge claws, walk like humans. They clatter at you, raising sword and claw against you. Pale stalagmites rise from a dark pool behind them.*

This relatively undesirable space is settled by seven Karuat. The Karuat are from the underground of Highland. They came by way of the lake below Illustrious Castle. They are lost, and do not understand how they arrived here.

One of the Karuat uses a magical +2 long sword, +4 vs. dragons. Kelelmien is aware of this, and schemes to acquire the sword, or at least destroy it. The sword is Menverae from the Dwarves of the Eastern continent. Kelelmien lets them keep it for the moment because he prefers that Menverae not be held by a stronger creature.

There is a hole above the pool which leads up two hundred yards to the side of the Great Mountains far north and west, in Fading Highland. Only someone skilled in climbing could even hope to use it. Worse, the world looks like Highland, but is a different world, closer to the edge of “reality”, winding down. This is the least-used entrance to the caverns, but occasionally small animals come through it.

*Karuat: (Fantastic: 3; Survival: 22, 18, 16, 20, 20, 17, 18; Move: 9 walking, 6 water; Attack: 2 claws or sword; Damage: d4/d4 or by weapon; Defense: 6)*



## Orc Lair (3, 4, 5)

These Orcs entered through the tree in various locations in the Deep Forest. They were sent into the caverns by the Blue Sun. The Orcs are the strongest contingent in the caverns, but not the smartest. They tend to stand alone in any fights.

They sometimes try to take over the passage leading between the entrance and Kelelmien's cavern. When they do this, the others combine against them, as this is an important travel route.

There are three chieftains, each leading a "tribe" of normal Orcs. Each tribe keeps to their own circle for living space, but interacts daily with the other tribes.

### THE FAT MAGGOT ORCS (3)

Gigliwa leads these Orcs. He is probably the most approachable of the three chiefs. He has five Orcs under his command. Though still evil, he is almost Dwarvish in demeanor.

*Orcs (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 11, 10, 14, 17, 8; Move: 12; Attack: spears; Damage: d6; Defense: 3)*

*Gigliwa (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 17; Move: 12; Attack: spear; Damage: d6+2; Defense: 4)*

### THE HIGH ORCS (4)

Balgor is the High Chief of these small tribes. He leads seven Orcs, some of whom were originally part of the other tribes. He carries a Ring of Reflection. See the appendix for a full description of the spell-reflecting ring. He also wields a somewhat battered scimitar, which he took from the ruins of a pyramid in the Deep Forest. His pouch contains the orc's treasure of 198 shillings, and he is never without it.

*Orcs (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 11, 15, 13, 15, 16, 14, 10; Move: 12; Attack: spears; Damage: d6; Defense: 3)*

*Balgor (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 16; Move: 12; Attack: spear or scimitar; Damage: d6+1 or d8+1; Defense: 4)*

### THE ROACH AND SKULL ORCS (5)

Gelobus leads only three Orcs, but he and his remaining followers are especially cruel and frightening. Gelobus carries the Roach Sword (see appendix), which itself is a frightening weapon in combat.

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These Orcs decorate their part of the cavern with skulls, and candles jammed into them. They try to conserve the candles by not burning them, but they're scary enough unlit. If the Orcs expect non-Orc company or are meeting with the other Orcs, they'll light the candles. There are currently seven skulls with candles and several skulls without candles.

One of the skulls that doesn't have a candle hangs from the west wall of the cavern. It is haunted by an evil spirit that can talk. It can detect any living creature within twelve yards, and knows the relative strength and moral code of such creatures. It will warn Gelobus about any approaching creatures. If the Orcs are killed, it will try to convince any reasonably powerful creature to take it, though it is likely to betray any good "owner" as soon as possible. It knows the caverns fairly well.

*Orcs (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 15, 13, 16; Move: 12; Attack: spears; Damage: d6+1; Defense: 3)*

*Gelobus (Fantastic: 2+1; Survival: 16; Move: 12; Attack: Roach Sword+2; Damage: d8+2; Defense: 4)*

*Skull: (Level 2; Survival 11; no attacks; Defense +4)*

## Dangerous Treasure (6)

*Hairy masks hang above a hide or cloth table. Interspersed among the masks are nets with trinkets or other colorful things hanging on the nets.*

The altar is hide wrapped around long bones. Beneath the altar is a woven reed basket, and inside the basket are several of Tenon's belongings. There are two thin copper plates (worth 3-10 shillings each), round, stamped with square designs and wrapped in a seal fur blanket (worth 4 shillings), a fox's head carved in whale ivory (worth 20-60 shillings), and a necklace of abalone shells (worth 10-30 shillings).

Four Haikiutl icons guard the passage back to the Haikiutl shrine. These masks will fly, screech, and bite. They are under the mental control of Tenon (area 7) and will also attack anyone who takes anything from the nets (including a mask).

*Biting Masks: (Level: 3; Survival: 14, 19, 15, 5; Move: 15; Attack: bite; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 6)*

In a fight, Tenon will likely arrive from area 7 within one to four rounds.

## Haikiutl Shrine (7)

*A rock slab, covered in dully-painted hides and curious skulls, juts out of the cavern wall in a thin alcove at the other end of this cave.*

*A creature with a feathery tail whirls around, and you see a human face wrapped in a bird's plume, its front covered in a bony, slatted carapace, painted in strange colors and designs.*

The “creature” is Tenon in full battle dress. Tenon is a Haikiutl warrior. He wears the ring of the unveiled world (see appendix), which makes him blind but very difficult to surprise. Because he is blind but wears the ring, his combat penalty due to lack of vision is only one.

Tenon is Ordered Evil, and a worshiper of the untold story. He was thrown into these caves by his tribe, but has made a world for himself here. He interacts with the Orcs and the Xolome most, but with everyone as necessary. He sometimes pretends to madness when it benefits him.

In a fight, Tenon will first want to extinguish any light sources that he knows about (remember that he can't see them). He is most likely to use the ring's once-a-day power of dead night.

Once there's darkness, he will wade into battle using his enhanced senses, ready to run under cover of darkness if he decides it necessary.

Tenon carries two obsidian daggers, which he can throw, and one spear (he can also throw the spear but is unlikely to, since it is his best weapon).

Tenon can also command the Haikiutl masks from area 6, if they have not already been defeated. They will arrive at the beginning of the round after he calls for them.

On the rock altar are two obsidian cups (worth 60 shillings each), and a jade globe, cracked in nine places and held together by a reddish-brown amber-like substance. The globe is six inches in diameter, has a bulk of 10, and is worth 250 shillings.

*Tenon: (Warrior 5; Survival: 40; Move: 11; Attack: daggers or spear; Damage: d4+1 or d6+1; Defense: 5)*

Tenon wears the equivalent of studded leather; rows and rows of wooden and bone rods that make up his “bony, slatted carapace”.

## Spider Lair (8)

*Creatures stand in line with spears and clubs held in four arms, and their four legs on the ground, like spiderous centaurs.*

*Each creature carries several spears, ready to throw them towards you. One speaks in a rasping voice, in a language you do not understand. Caseltas! Casatesiosica!*

(If one of the characters speaks Barcelas or the cavern pidgin, they will understand the language. “Who are you, and what do you want?”)

The Carathaxians are the same as the Sakmat of the Encounter Guide. They were slaves in the world of Barcelas, much as Cirkegrad was. They speak the Barcelasian tongue natively, and Cirkegrad is comfortable speaking with them. This grants them some extra cachet in the caverns.

The Carathaxians avoid the Barcelasians whenever possible. However, because of their shared language and culture, they will work together when conflict spreads through the caverns.

If the Carathaxians are aware of an approaching group, the adults will grab spears and clubs and stand in two rows. If they feel the need, they will move themselves and their young into the darkness of cavern area 9 and make their stand from the darkness..

There are eight adults and five young.

There are 966 silver pieces in five urns in the back of the room; these are from Carathax in the world of Barcelas.

*Carathaxian Spiders: (Fantastic: 1, Warrior 1; Survival: 10, 14, 11, 11, 16, 10, 5, 11; Move: 12; Attack: spear or club; Damage: d4 or d6, twice; Defense: 6)*

The adults each carry three weapons. Four of them have three spears, and four of them have two spears and a club. When they attack, they will throw one of their spears at their enemies and fight with the remaining two weapons. They attack with two weapons at a time. They wear the equivalent of cloth armor.

## Darkroom (9)

There is a permanent magical darkness in this area that blocks all light, including from light spells but not including sunlight spirit manifestations. It also does not block underground vision. The Carathaxians often use this for tactical purposes, at least when fighting creatures that do not have underground vision.

The ground here has as much stalagmites as the rest of the caverns. An Evasion roll or Perception roll is required to avoid losing d4 survival while crossing this room.

## Black Lake (10)

*A mess of bones and metal litters this cavern. Coins glitter in your light. In the center, a small pond is shrouded in a rising miasma. A brooding figure, tall, bat-like wings rolled around it, sits lost in thought or sleep on a far rock.*

*Over ten feet tall, it uncurls its slithery tail and turns towards you.*

The lake is comprised of poisonous grey water. The creature is a Wyvern. The wyvern is cursed with ravenous hunger, despite not needing anything to eat while in the caves. She sleeps as often as she can on a huge promontory in the center of the lake. But she is very alert, and it is difficult to sneak into her cavern undetected. Unlike the other denizens of the cavern, she may not leave her post. She can travel to anywhere within this area, but may not leave this area.

There are many coins of many denominations scattered about the bones and rusted armor and weapons here: 9,093 copper coins (pennies), 1,705 silver coins (shillings), and 568 gold coins (pounds). The wyvern has made no attempt to collect them or pile them. They come from Highland, Barcelas, Rome at the Crossroads, Byzantium, and any other places or times you'd like them to come from.

Some of the bones are of Karuat, some of humans, and of course other creatures from the cavern.

There is a tunnel under the water that is an exit from this pocket domain. It leads to the underground lake beneath Illustrious Castle. Anyone who spends a round or more in the poisonous water may be affected by the

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poison: it is strength 2, action time one round, and its effects are to lose one survival point per round. After leaving the pond, the effects will cease.

*Wyvern: (fantastic: 6; Survival 27; Move: 20 flying/13 walking; Attacks: claws, bite, or tail; Defense: +6; Damage: 2d6 or 1d6+poison)*

## Dragon Lair (II)

*The bones of myriad creatures, familiar and strange, line the cavern walls and floor leading to a large wooden door. The door is banded in iron and blacked with age.*

*Bones and shards of bones crackle beneath your feet as you walk towards the door. A great brass ring hangs at the center, and above it three iron bars cover what may be a sliding pane.*

The door opens inward; the hinges are on the inside. If they knock, Kelelmien will first open the sliding window.

*The small pane slides open, revealing more iron bars behind it and a well-kept cavern beyond the bars. Coins glint from the cavern's walls as a pale man steps in front of the window.*

*"Welcome, visitors!" he says. His scraggly white hair lies almost clear atop his long face. He peers at you through a monocle held in his right eye. From it hangs a brass chain.*

*He steps aside again, disappearing from view. The door opens slightly inward, then opens fully.*

*Your host is a tall, gangly man, perhaps late middle-aged, with white hair and a monocle around his neck. His green and yellow robe is luxurious, hanging in folds about his thin frame. He rubs his hands together.*

*"Do you come for questions?" he says, "or passage? Regardless, there is a fee. Come in, come in!"*

The room is about 30 yards high. It is lit by dim eternal flames on roman-style lanterns throughout the cavern.

Kelelmien, an albino dragon, guards two exits (or entrances, depending on your point of view).

Kelelmien normally maintains the form of a tall, gangly, late-middle-aged man, pale, with scraggly white, almost clear, hair. He wears the *monocle of Petar* on a gold chain.

Kelelmien is a numismatist, or a collector and cataloguer of coins. One wall of the cavern is a display of one each of the type of coins he has collected. He has coins from Crosspoint, Black Stag, Great Bend, Byzantium, Ancient Rome, modern Rome, China, Venus, Europa United, and Arcade. He has almost a full collection of Astronomer zodiac coins, missing only a Pisces and a Taurus.

Kelelmien charges ten coins or ten sheets of paper for passage through his cavern, per person, whether it be from the exits to the caverns, from one exit to another, or from the caverns to an exit. He also will charge up to ten coins or sheets for information. Kelelmien keeps track of everything that passes through this cavern. He has a library filled only with his own journals, each categorized and cross-referenced so that he knows where each bit of information came from and which coins came with the person who brought that information.

Kelelmien knows, for example, that this is currently the year 2021 Anno Domini in Highland, and that the people of Highland think it is only the year 1991. He knows that the Cataclysm occurred sometime between the year 989 and 1013 A.D. Probably around 1007 A.D.

Kelelmien provides no information without payment. However, he will not accept payment for things that he does not know, and will be happy to inform them of this. He will engage any friendly party in conversation. Except for being a stickler for payments, a real obsessive-compulsive with regards to information, and having the ability to shoot shards of glass as a breath attack, he's kind of a nice guy.

Kelelmien will accept any coin for payment, and will be willing to bargain for coins he definitely does not have. He will tend to not accept the same coins twice from the same person, however. If they pay with silver on one trip, he will require gold, copper, or some other coin the next time through. The value of the coins doesn't matter, only how unique they are. He always accepts sheets of paper, as he always needs something to write on.

*Kelelmien (lesser dragon: 7; Ordered; Move: 12/24; Attacks: claw and bite; Defense: +7; Damage: 2d6/2d4; Special Attacks: shards, command)*

His shards do 6d6 points damage, or 3d6 on a successful Evasion roll, to any in their path: forty yards long, one yard at Kelelmien's mouth and ten yards wide at the end.

## DOORS

Kelelmien has built doors to isolate him from the riff-raff throughout the long caverns. Each door is thick wood and bone, with a small window five and a half feet up which he can open to look out and see who is knocking.

## TREASURE

Kelelmien has a marvelous treasure horde, including a library of meticulous notes covering one thousand, nine hundred, and twenty-six years. The notes also carefully catalogue his coin collection and everything else he has acquired, including who he acquired it from, when he acquired it, where he thinks they are from, and, if it was acquired by killing them, where their bones are.

In an alcove away from the display area there is a huge armoire of dark, solid wood. It has six hundred and twenty five small drawers. It is worth 1,500 shillings and weighs 400 pounds on its own. It holds:

1. [The Amulet of the World Snow](#)
2. a red glass vial of potion of shrinking: decrease size, 4th level: 50% size, for 20 minutes; scratched with a Roman numeral CXXIV by Kelelmien to match it to his records (it is from the Blue Sun)
3. a blue crystal vial of poison, strength 2, action time 1 round, damage 1d8; marked with the Barcelasian symbol for poison
4. 2,676 copper coins
5. 1,531 bronze coins
6. 1,626 silver coins
7. 595 electrum coins
8. 740 gold coins
9. 60 platinum coins
10. two matching silver necklaces (1,000 shillings each) from Barcelas
11. six leaf-shaped gold brooches (500 shillings each) from Venethlas
12. two matching electrum rings (200 shillings each) from Rome at the Crossroads
13. three matching gold-braided platinum rings (800 shillings each) from Hamokera
14. seven different turquoise bracelets (5 shillings each) from the Haikiutl
15. one thin ruby bracelet (60 shillings) from Byzantium
16. one thin emerald bracelet (130 shillings) from Rome at the Crossroads
17. one pearl-inlaid bracelet (80 shillings) from Byzantium
18. one cursed [Scroll of Blindness](#)
19. The coins are all of varying denominations.

Displayed on the walls of the cavern, there are:

1. four hundred coins, each unique, worth in total about 300 shillings
2. one golden helmet (900 shillings) from Byzantium



3. seven swords in varying styles worth about two to four times normal
4. six shields in varying styles worth two to four times normal
5. five full suits of plate armor in varying styles, worth two to four times normal

Next to the chest, and near his writing desk, he has three hundred and fifty five books, each consisting of approximately a hundred and fifty sheets of paper, detailing exactly where all this stuff came from as well as what he learned from the creatures which brought the stuff. Each book weighs about four pounds.

## EXITS

There are two exits from the pocket domain here. The northeastern one leads to Dead Rome, the southern one to the west side of the Great Barrier, and the lands of the Haikiutl. The tunnels are about four feet wide, five to seven feet tall. They aren't straight, but they don't wind about much. They are filled with crazy crabs.

Kelelmien is the chosen guardian of the gates, but there are small holes in the cavern beyond those doors which lead to other parts of these caverns. These small tunnels let the crazy crabs, hop lizards, and buzzflies get past Kelelmien.

There is a 20% chance per hour of encountering 1d6 crazy crabs in these tunnels.

## QUOTES

*"Coin collector? Pfah! I am a numismatist, not some mere bagger of coins."*

*"Out? Out is such an interesting word. It means so many different things."*

*"Kaiser came looking for a shortcut to Egypt, but was unwilling to pay the price. He and his army now line the walls of these halls as a warning to other bargain-seekers."*

*"Why would I want to go there when I have so much to do here?"*

## Strange Lobsters (12, 13)

These crazy crabs crawl through the tiny holes in the wall from the hall to Dead Rome. The crazy crabs are very aggressive; little is required to set them into a feeding frenzy.

### **CRAZY CRAB POND (12)**

*Snick-a-snack, snick-a-snack. The noise grows louder as the cavern widens. Snick-a-snack-plop.*

*The very walls of the cavern are exuding strange creatures, huge crabs with snapping claws. They fill the dark pool as they come out of small holes in the cavern walls. Then they crawl out of the pool, scuttling randomly across the floor, but seeming to swarm in unison at the same time.*

There will be 2d8 crazy crabs here when the group first comes into this room. Each round, d8 more will enter from the holes and d8 will leave through the holes, though there will never (except perhaps during a fracas) be more than thirty crabs here.

*Crazy Crabs: (fantastic: 1+2; Move: 6; Attacks: 2; Defense: +4; Damage: 1d6)*

There is a 20% chance that a swarm of buzzflies (see encounter chart) will be attracted to the commotion in d6 rounds after any combat or loud noises begin.

### **CRAZY CRAB MAZE (13)**

*Snick-a-snack. Snick-a-snack. You hear the strange snapping noises grow louder, and you hear cracks and scrapes, as you move past the rocks jutting downwards and upwards around you.*

*Strange scuttling things, crabs or crawdads or lobsters, misshapen, huge, scrape about a wide opening in the cavern. One crawls away into a tiny hole in the wall; another sticks its head out and then falls to the ground, rolling over and onto its mis-matched feet.*

The stalactites and stalagmites are especially thick here, making combat with any swinging weapon difficult; with especially long weapons (such as two-handed swords or battle axes) it is essentially impossible. With normal slashing or swinging weapons, there is a penalty of two on any attacks. Pointed weapons, such as spears, have no such penalty.

There will be 2d4 crazy crabs here when the group first comes into this room. Each round, d4 more will enter from the holes and d4 will leave through the holes, though there will never (except possibly during a fracas) be more than fifteen crabs here.

*Crazy Crabs: (Fantastic: 1+2; Move: 6; Attacks: 2; Defense: +4; Damage: 1d6)*

## Barcelasians (14, 15, 16)

The great Saurians of Barcelas control this corner of the cavern system. They are the most powerful faction within the caverns. There are sixteen saurians.

They guard and keep the mad Venethtlas Elf, who they see as divine.

*Saurians: (Fantastic: 4; Moral Code: Ordered, Move: 12/15; Attacks: 2 or weapon; Defense: +5; Damage: 1d6+2 or weapon, Special Defense: +2 death rolls)*

### **BARCELAS LAIR (14)**

Usually there will be three to ten saurians here. Some will be sleeping, others playing odd games with stones and hole-filled boards. There are many beautifully-woven blankets, faded and ragged with age, towards the back of the cavern and around the edges, and a few hanging from the walls. They don't show any specific scene. They are filled with geometric patterns of many colors.

### **BARCELAS CROSSROADS (15)**

*As you step through the pointed rocks, you see two tapestries hang from the stone sides of the cavern. The tapestries are faded with age and damp, but if you look closely you see greenish creatures with long tails, like lizards walking upright, swords and shields in hand fighting creatures of four arms, spider-like creatures with fangs and multiple weapons and shields each. They meet on a shore, with a mountain in the distance casting its shadows upon the sparse lands.*

There is a 25% chance that there are one to four saurians here moving from one cavern to the other; and this should be checked every ten minutes.

### **BARCELAS CIRCUS (16)**

Most likely there will be a public fight going on between two saurians, with several other saurians looking on and talking. Unless the characters make a lot of noise, they aren't likely to be heard.

*You hear a strange commotion as of a babble of squeaking and guttury noise; you hear the knock of wood against wood, raspy whistles, and movement.*

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*Two great lizards are beating on each other with long, thick sticks. Around the edges a mass of creatures shine green and blue in your light: huge lizards, walking upright, watching the fight and talking amongst themselves in a strange speech. Their bulbous eyes turn towards you. The fight stops.*

Tell me you got the fucking golf shoes!

Besides the two fighters, there will be three to ten saurians watching the fight.

## Mad Venethlas Elf (17)

*A wet warmth billows out of the darkness. Within, your light reflects off of myriad points as if from a broken mirror, or from dust in sunlit shafts.*

*As your vision adjusts, you see huge bubbles, and tiny bubbles, rising from a frothing pool. Within each shiny sphere, you catch a glimpse of unnatural movement, until the inevitable burst as each showers warm rain upon you.*

Bereden of Venethlas has long forgotten his race and his name. He guards the thin fume of reality that bubbles up from the hot spring in this area of the caverns. Within each shimmering bubble is a vision of another world and place. The mad Elf can control the movement of the bubbles; if a bubble engulfs a person or a group, they will be sent to the place viewed in the bubble.

*Bereden: (Prophet: 3; Moral Code: Ordered; Survival: 17; Move: 10; Attacks: hand; Damage: d3; Defense: +1; Special attacks: spirit manifestations, reality bubbles)*

Bereden will not attack physically. He may call on spirit manifestations, but he is likely to send attackers on a random journey through reality. Anyone he targets for a bubble must make an Evasion roll or be sent to the world depicted. He can target one bubble per round.

He can call on spirits of Order, Prophecy, and Prophet. He will normally have a third-level spirit of Order, a third-level spirit of Prophecy, and a second level spirit of Prophecy.

## Empty (18)

This empty area may provide a bit of respite, although it is at a crossroads between the saurians of 15, the orcs of 12, and the crazy crabs of 21. The saurians and orcs don't like to meet each other, and the crabs don't often travel.

## Xolome Lair (19)

Six xolome, led by a chieftain and two guards, have been driven to this section of the caves. These xolome are from Haikiutl. They call themselves the Moldwater Tribe. They all wear the equivalent of cloth armor, except for the guards and chieftain, who wear the equivalent of leather. Their chief is also called Moldwater.

*Moldwater (Fantastic: 1-1, Fighter: 2; Ordered Evil; Survival: 10; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 4)*

*Guards (Fantastic: 1-1, Fighter: 1; Ordered Evil; Survival: 5, 7; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 4)*

*Xolome (Fantastic: 1-1; Ordered Evil; Survival: 1, 6, 4, 1, 3, 3; Movement: 8; Attack: spear; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 3)*

These xolome can be very conciliatory given the chance. Their tactics against stronger opponents are to toss spears and then run through the small holes in the caverns. These will allow them to hide until it is safe to return.

Their holes go deep but do not (yet) connect with the holes that the crazy crabs use.

The Moldwater Tribe carry the story of how Xolome learned to settle in caves and water was forced to flow.

*When we were new to the world, when Moon was still whole, Water knew neither purpose nor direction.*

*We moved from cave to cave searching for water free from mold. From the center of the world we moved upwards, for water knew nothing except to grow moldy in the presence of the people. From cave to cave we moved, whenever water changed from dark and cold to moldy and warm. Throughout our travels we met many stories, and these you may meet also.*

*Finally, we began to run out of places to go. At the edges of our caves, Sun began to heat and dry the world. So Tel-a-mec went to Moon Still Whole to ask advice.*

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*"We are at the edge of the world," said Tel-a-mec. "Water grows moldy and warm once again. Where shall we go?"*

*"Water is lazy," said Moon. "Water should go from cave to cave, not you. I shall give you dark spears to beat Water."*

*"Water is strong," said Tel-a-mec. "It strangles us and cannot itself be hit. How can we fight it?"*

*"Water is lazy," said Moon. "In Mud River you will find fish. Spear the first fish that you see. When you go to water, eat the fish raw. As fish are immune to Water's stranglehold, so shall you be, and you will defeat water. Water is lazy."*

*Tel-a-mec took the dark spears of Moon and left. At Mud River he saw a line of silvery fish swimming from Moon to Sun. With Moon's dark spear he took the first of the fish.*

*"We return to Deep Cave," said Tel-a-mec to the people. "But you must do as I say. First we will talk. Then we will fight."*

*Tel-a-mec had the people eat the silvery fish, then he handed them Moon's dark spears. They marched upon Moldy Water in Deep Cave.*

*"Why do you come to me armed, hero of the people?" asked Moldy Water. "May we not sit peacefully, you and I, and talk? Come, sit by my banks, and air your grievances."*

*So Tel-a-mec signed to his warriors to wait, and he sat beside Moldy Water.*

*"We have moved from cave to cave," said Tel-a-mec. "But it is water's job to move from cave to cave. You are lazy. You sit here and grow fat and warm, while we grow sick, and see the burning Sun."*

*"I, lazy?" cried Moldy Water. "Here is how lazy I am."*

*And Moldy Water covered Tel-a-mec, and tried to strangle him, but Tel-a-mec had eaten first of the silvery fish, and was safe.*

*Tel-a-mec took his dark spear and thrust it into Moldy Water. Water fled back into its bed. Tel-a-mec's warriors sprang from the shadows and with Moon's dark spears beat Moldy Water back. Moldy Water screamed and swirled, and finally ran from cave to cave through the secret passages only Water knows.*

*And because of that fight, Water moves from cave to cave while the People choose the best cave they can and remain until they feel like leaving.*

# Special Items

## Circegrad's Acorn

If planted in natural ground, the acorn will slowly grow into a hollow tree and become a temporary entrance into the Valley. It must be planted in dirt, in natural ground, not in a pot or inside a building. In d20 hours, the tree will become the hollow tree that allows entrance into the valley. An acorn can only be used once.

These descriptions assume a 10 hour span from planting to becoming an entrance:

Within the first ten minutes, a green shoot spurts out of the dirt. In three hours the shoot grows to a sapling, and in another three hours to a large tree. By the ninth hour, the tree is old and gnarled, and in its last hour it crackles and dries and hollows until finally cracks form up from the ground revealing a hollow trunk and a hole into the Valley of the Blue Sun.

The entrance will last for d6 hours.

## Alcalig

Alcalig is a small amphora, enough to hold a good drink of water. The name is from the Barcelasian for "Above Time". It is a magic jar from Barcelas that enchants water to grant the drinker a bonus of level to any archetypal skill, including attack for warriors, up to a total of +18. The effect may be spread out over up to ten minutes. The jar may be used once per day.

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The drinker may choose to lessen the effect, in order to make it last longer before reaching the +18 limit. The maximum bonus for any single action is always the character's level in the archetype that the skill belongs to.

Alcalig is enchanted with Indestructible Object at 12th level.

## The Amulet of the World Snow

From the Haikiutl in the world of Highland, the Amulet allows the wearer to call down a light snowfall once between every new moon. The snow will fall for 2d6 hours in a range of 1d6 miles, raising half that many inches of light, fluffy snow. The snow will not begin to melt until that many hours later.

The Amulet of the World Snow was given to Kelelmien as a gift by Dodna, a shaman of a northern Haikiutl tribe in A.D. 1813 (Year of the Cataclysm 783), Dodna fought off the then-guardians of the cavern many times to visit Kelelmien and spoke with him for many hours each time. Dodna's last visit was in 1867 (Year of the Cataclysm 837) as a very old man. By this time the cave guardians let him through without any challenge.

## Belereden

The "sword of ice and snow" is a Barcelasian weapon. It is a +2 long sword, shaded lightly blue. On a successful called attack, it can freeze opponents: the target must make an Evasion roll or take an extra d8 points damage from freezing and be at a penalty of one to attack, defense, and movement for ten minutes, cumulative with other freezings.

The sword can also freeze water twice per day. The sword must touch the water. It can freeze up to one cubic yard of water in a radius of four yards. The water remains frozen until the sword is removed. The sword is easily removed from such ice by the wielder. Others must make a strength roll, at a penalty of three, to extract the sword from the ice, and such an attempt takes one round.



## Menverae

This sword, the *Dragon's Debt* of the Eastern Dwarves, was made by the Dwarves for a human ally thousands of years ago. It is a +2 sword normally, but is +4 against dragons. It has unbreakable object on it at 12th level.

## Monocle of Petar

From the world of Fading Highland, the Monocle allows the wearer to see whole once per day, and to see invisible once per day. Each ability is at 8th level.

The monocle is enchanted with unbreakable object at 8th level also.

Kelelmien acquired it when its most recent bearer, Shivan Guinstar, attempted to fight her way past Kelelmien and failed. This was in, by Highland year, 696; by Fading Highland year, 720; by Dead Rome Year 2479. And by normal year, A.D. 1726.

Shivan was very tasty, and worked especially well as a stew with turnips and a touch of onion. Kelelmien has the recipe in his journals for that year: sharp-tongued shivan stew.

## Ring of the Unveiled World

This ring blinds the wearer but grants them much greater senses of touch, taste, smell, and hearing. Penalties due to an inability to see are dropped by up to two due to the other enhanced senses. The character can hear for three times the normal distance, and gains a bonus of six to any perception roll that doesn't rely on vision.

Once per day, the wearer may cause dead night at sixth level: an eleven-yard-radius darkness centered on the wearer that lasts two hours. The command word is Xel-I-tec.

## 54 – Special Items

The blindness takes effect immediately upon wearing the ring; it disappears d20 minutes after taking the ring off. The enhanced senses arrive d10 minutes after wearing the ring.

The ring originated in the lands of the Haikiutl.

### Ring of Reflection

This ring is a simple, polished ring with a clear and shining varnish. It contains six charges of Spell Reflection at 8th level.

### The Roach Sword

This sword was made by one of the Night Priests, from the benediction of insects. When in use, bronze cockroaches appear to crawl over the bearer's hands and down the blade. The sword grants a bonus of 2 to attack and damage.

On a called shot, the target must make an Evasion roll or be affected by the infestation spirit manifestation at the sixth level of effect, for a duration of three rounds. The sword can cause an infestation three times per day.

### Scroll of Blindness

This scroll has a ward on it that, if viewed, targets the viewer for blindness. The viewer must make a Willpower roll (at a penalty of 3) or be blind for 2d6 weeks.

Once triggered, the scroll is harmless. It was created by the Barcelas.

# Other Worlds

Most pocket domains, existing as they do in the crevasses between worlds, open on to many worlds. The vale opens on to the Eternal Crossroads, Highland, Fading Highland, and (at the mad Elf's cave) to just about anywhere.

The crossroads open on to Barcelas, Iridia, and the Vale. They once opened up to Araman, but Araman is gone.

You can, of course, replace these worlds with your own (although I may be using Barcelas in the future). Time is basically the same in each of these worlds.

## Dead Rome at the Crossroads

The cavern leads through walls of bone into a basement, up some stairs, and into a golden door. The door opens into a temple, which itself leads to a dead city.

*There are no stars, and no sun or moon to light the sky, violet beyond the fluted columns and amphitheater-like stairs or benches that circle you. The light that comes is a flickering violet that seems to rise into the sky. In the center of this amphitheater is a small platform with some machinery of brass or gold upon it, and a pillar rising alongside it.*

*As you step beyond the door, a low voice whispers as if floating upon the strange and heavy air. "Viator, amplecti quadrivium."*

The violet light emanates from the aurora-like edge of reality that surrounds this last remnant of a once vibrant world.

Dead Rome is a parallel world where Rome continued to rule the world through the industrial and technological revolutions. That world is soon to disappear, and is dead. Only crazy crabs, buzzflies, oily moss, and scraggly twisting vines that wind through the city remain alive.

Buzzflies and crazy crabs come out every few hours. First the buzzflies swarm past above the depression, and then the crabs come clattering over the stairs.

Within the dead city there are newspapers in a form of Latin that is vaguely understandable as the Ancient tongue of Highland. Those who know the Ancient tongue can read this world's Latin at a penalty of two.

In the streets are metal contraptions on wheels, windows with glass so fine you can see through them, and so on. These are vehicles, like our cars but perhaps slightly more advanced, but they show signs of having been lived in and unmoved for years. Tires are flat. They were used by refugees from cities and towns that are now beyond the edge of the world. They go by names of places that Rome considered exotic and conquered. There is an Ahura Mazda pickup truck, an Obelix, a Helgo, a Britannica, and a Corinth.

The final issue of the Roman Daily Sun is provided as a player handout. The paper's last issue was in Highland year 774, or our year 1804. This single-page paper can be found in several of the vehicles along the street. At the very end, refugees were living in their cars. Many cars never left their parking spot for years.

In some of the buildings there are timepieces that run off of perpetual energy sources. But time as well as space is dying in this world. The timepieces will stop for several minutes, and then rush forward. It will move slowly and quickly, and rarely at what the characters think is the "real" flow of time.

In this dying world, magic is more difficult. To successfully cast a spell, a Learning roll must be made at a penalty of the casting level, and a further penalty of 3.

## **EDEN HAD FOUR GATES**

*A series of gears and wheels lie upon and in the small altar. One wheel has two small extrusions, one vertical, like a handle, and one arrow-like that points to one of the doors.*

*Beside the altar a four-sided basalt pillar is covered in writing, in what appears to be many languages. A larger section of writing in the center of each side reads "Viator, amplecti quadrivium" and then "Omnis viae Romam ducunt".*

The pillar in the center of the circle reads, in Ancient, "Traveler, welcome to the crossroads." "Viator, amplecti quadrivium." The first line is repeated in smaller lettering in several languages including Highland English,

Elvish, and Kilirel. Touching a phrase will have it read in the low, fading, cracking voice that greeted them. The Elvish phrase is “elanvedo vestelerivel morilvan” and the Kilirel phrase is “andenil, arenorten reneri”. After the welcome, it will also read instructions: “Please ask the temple guards for assistance.”

Also in large letterings, but not repeated, is “Omnis viae Romam ducunt.” In English, this means “All roads lead to Rome.”

The temple has four doors leading out of it, each set on marble stairs. Clockwise from the door which leads to the Vale of the Azure Sun (Water) are doors that lead to: Barcelas (Earth), Iridia (Air), and Araman (Fire),

The temple is a place of power, though now only level 1.

### **THE EDGES OF THE WORLD**

The edges of Dead Rome are unraveling. An invisible, malleable field of force separates the remaining reality from the horrible scene on the other side. Cities twist into lakes that bend like rivers. It looks like a cross between Hieronymus Bosch and Salvador Dali rolled together with Escher.

There are blobs hanging in the darkness, inaccessible, and what look to be the remains of city streets inside these blobs. On these streets creatures barely visible only with enhanced vision skitter slowly like dots among the twisted streets and buildings.

Looking into the darkness, it is utterly black except for the pockets of reality bubbling off. If a person looks closely and carefully, however, there are strange, ponderous movements in the utter darkness, as if a thing of even more absolute darkness were moving at some unknown distance.

It is possible to push through the force field separating this world from the abyss. It is like moving through cold molasses. But successfully doing so will mean a cold, empty death in Health rounds.

### **A GREEN AND SLIMY SEA**

*A green and yellow sea engulfs the streets at the edge of the world. The still waters exude a faint, sweet-smelling odor, reminiscent of lilac or jasmine. Sightless things slither above and below the slimy surface. Huge iridescent green insects buzz across the surface. Strange lobster-like creatures crawl onto the shore and eat the insects and slimy things, grabbing them with their oversized claws.*

The ocean on the other side of the crossroads is much contracted by the edge of reality, and its proximity to that strange abyss has not had a wholesome effect on the waters.

## REFUGEES

You can put refugees from “the Dead Eternal City” in many places. You may choose to make the traveling Romans of Great Bend refugees from Dead Rome, in search of the true Eternal Crossroads. Somewhere in Barcelas, in 3360, some refugees settled into a community in Hamokera.

## Fading Highland

The years of Fading Highland, which also experienced the Cataclysm, are off by a different amount. Subtract 6 from the real year to get Fading Highland’s “Year of the Cataclysm”.

Fading Highland is closer to dying than Highland is. Crosspoint is a smaller city, and even then much of it is abandoned. Few make the journey across the mountains. Biblyon was never founded. There is a long beach between Crosspoint and the bay. There are no Elves or Dwarves, and few if any night trolls remain. There never was a Goblin War.

Little magic is left in Fading Highland. The last practitioners of magic are the Celts in the north. Using magic requires a Learning roll at a penalty of the casting level, with a bonus of 1.

The storms of Fading Highland mark the edge of this world: beyond is only the malleable darkness seen at the edges of Dead Rome.

## The World of Barcelas

*As you open the door, you smell fresh air and see sunlight filtering through the widening crack in the door.*

*Beyond the open door you see trees, bushes, ferns, and tall grass, all green and lush. The trees are set in a circle of which you are the center. A few yards ahead of you is a small stone bench. Around the grove, partially in and out of the trees, statues of odd persons or creatures stare back at you with elongated snouts, perched strangely forward.*

*A small animal, perhaps a squirrel, crawls over one of the statues and into the trees.*

*Pillars of stone stand between the statues, and the ruins of something, perhaps arches, lie amidst the ruins.*

The door to Barcelas opens in the side of a small mountain, in a grove outside of Barcelas in the world of Barcelas. There are seven statues of Barcelasians: Saurians wearing robes, some holding scrolls, some swords, some tools. There were once arches surrounding the grove. They have fallen to the ground, though the pillars mostly remain. Some two hundred yards east of the grove, the forest opens up on a plateau overlooking the Celara.

*The forest opens up and you are standing atop a high mountain, looking down upon a great blue sea. To your right, a river pours into the sea, and to your left a great city some miles wide lies on the shore of the sea.*

The vista resembles the painting in the foyer of the Blue Sun, except that the city is not as vibrant. The world of Barcelas is another land in decline. Though they have not seen the effects of the cataclysm, the energy is still draining from their world. The Barcelasian empire has fallen and nothing has risen to take its place. Barcelas, long abandoned by anything resembling civilization, remains a war-torn city of factions of barbarians: Usilar, Saulabar, and saurians competing for the now meaningless Aquali throne.

The city is a long day's walk from the grove, about twelve miles down a mountain path and across first thin forest and then fields. The fields were once farmed, but now stand fallow.

## **THE HISTORY OF BARCELAS**

It is Barcelasian Year 3465. Political bickering dominates the last Barcelasian city, Hamokera in the north, though Hamokera at least remains civilization. A succession of petty foreign kings has “ruled” the royal section of the city of Barcelas since its final sack four hundred years past. The ruler does not even control the entire city.

For over three thousand years the Barcelasian Empire ruled the known world. Starting from the small town of Barcelas on the shores of Celara, the bipedal lizard-like Barcelasians expanded to conquer or ally with first their near neighbors, then their less-near neighbors, until the Barcelasian Empire covered parts of three continents and several large islands off the coasts of those continents. Until Barcelasian Year 2285, the Empire was a republic of nearly free client states. The only requirements were that each client state provide troops for the armed forces, and that each client state grant Barcelasian citizens a franchise in electing local officials.

The backbone of the Empire was their citizen-soldiers, first composed only of true Barcelas, and later of all races under Barcelasian rule. They were well-trained, ruthless in battle, obedient in war, and learned in peace.

In their early years, the chief Barcelasian rival was the great spider-race of Carathax on the opposite shore of the Celara. Several wars were fought between Barcelas and Carathax before Carathax was finally razed to the ground

## 60 – Other Worlds

and forcibly depopulated. Many were taken into slavery. Others fled into the Rathac mountains where they skulk in cavern and shadow to this day.

In BY 2285, a civil war began that ended in military rule. Military rule grew to emperor rule. The Prelins, or supreme rulers, of Barcelas claimed divine power.

Towards the end of the second millennia, the edges of the empire began to see Usilar, pale bipedal creatures (humans) from the north, who began to chip away at Barcelasian conquest. At first they were mere gnats on the Barcelasian elephant. But as the military state grew more autocratic, as civil wars inside grew more bloody, the borders began to grow weaker. Finally, in BY3065, after their own lands were invaded by wolf-riding Saulabar (goblins) to the north, a massive wave of Usilar invasions caused Markesh Prelin to recall all Barcelasian troops back to Barcelas. Even this was not enough: Barcelas was sacked, its power destroyed and an Usilar Prelin placed on the Aquali Throne.

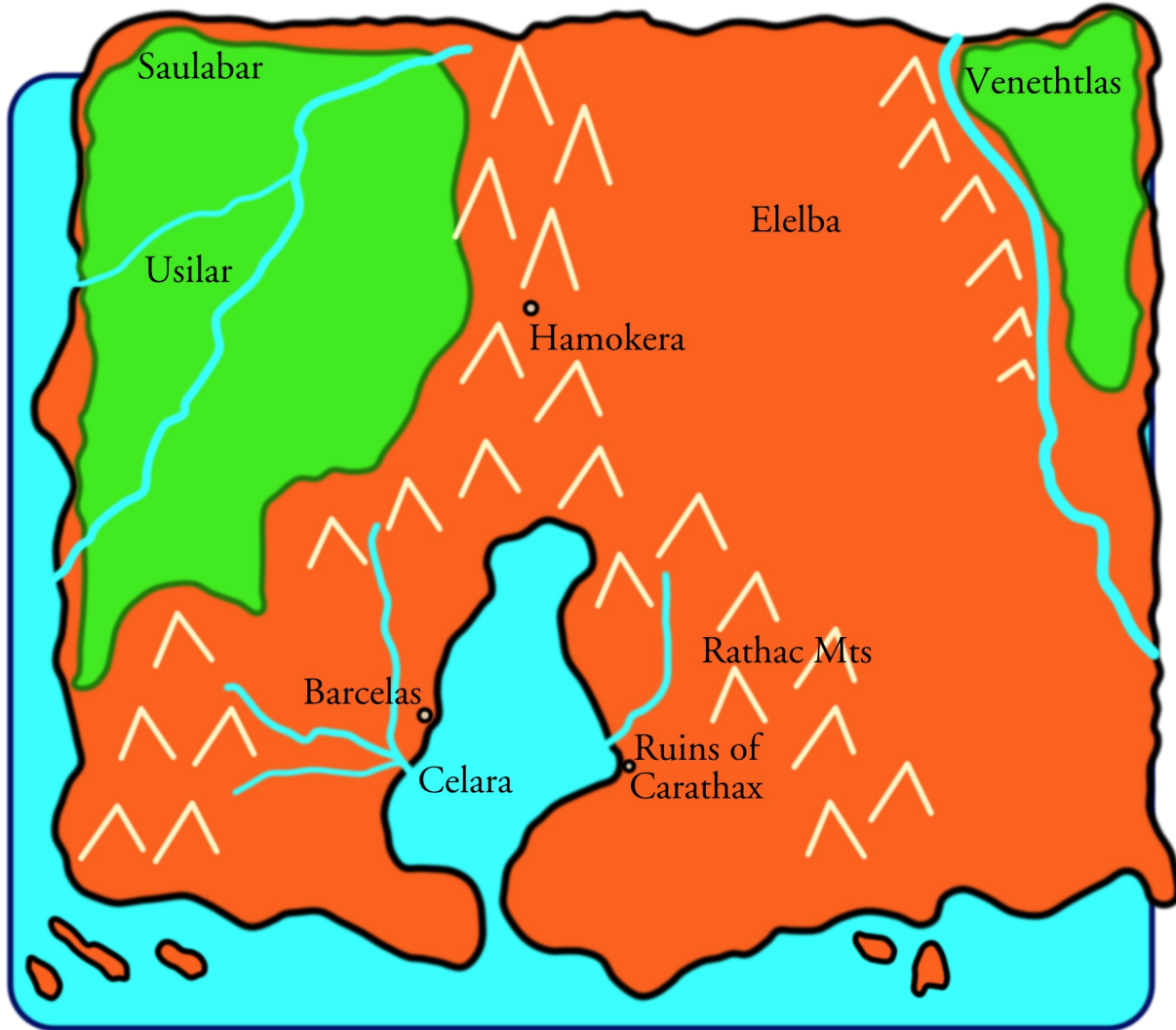
But this emperor barely ruled Barcelas itself, let alone the rest of the empire. Cites, long walled, became states of their own. Some banded together. Many fell empty. More and more Usilar arrived and created their own villages, towns, and cities. Except for one outpost of civilization, the cities of Barcelas fell into ruin.

Fell into ruin except in one city, in the mountain pass between west and east, the city-state of Hamokera, recently converted to the worship of Na-el, grew in power in that small region of the world. Hamokera rarely knows peace: with the Usilar to their west and the growing Fictates of Elelba on their east, this mountain empire must continually defend itself. But it is well situated, and defend itself it has, to this day.

Na-el is a minor deity from a once minor religion in the Elelban desert. Once a simple, communal sect of an already small religion, over its centuries in Hamokera it has been caught up in Hamokeran factionalism and political maneuvering. It now more closely resembles Hamokeran culture than its Elelban roots.

Beyond even Elelba is rumored the great kingdom of Venethlas, home of the ruddy, tall Elves who are known only for the Elvencord (Venetia) that comes to Hamokera through Elelba. Their Barcelas-given name, prosaic as all things Barcelasian, means simply “land of cord”.





## Iridia

*A great rainbow circles a monstrous one-eyed orb staring unblinkingly at you from a near-empty void. The orb is banded with all of the colors of the rainbow and more. Beyond the orb, multicolored lights shine like pinpricks upon a velvet darkness. In the grey darkness beneath the orb and rainbow, a desolate surface filled with a jagged landscape stretches out before you.*

The door to Iridia looks out upon the moon of great, ringed planet.

## Araman

This is where the hoop lizards and bouncing lizards came from. This world has unraveled completely. The door opens onto bare rock.

# Visual Aids

The three maps might be found before the characters enter the Valley, or might be found somewhere within the valley. They should be very brittle and aged. They might be found, for example, on a dead body below Illustrious Castle, someone who came through the black lake. They don't have to be found together.

The Roman Daily Sun can be found in Dead Rome. The Roman Daily Sun will be fairly well preserved since they have so many copies to choose from, but will be brittle.

Depending on where the player characters find the player maps, the maps will probably be heavily worn. Soak them in tea and hot water to heavily stain them, and then tear them a little and fold them a lot while they are still wet.

You can find PDF, PNG, and Inkscape versions of these at [godsmonsters.com/Guide/Blue/](https://www.godsmonsters.com/Guide/Blue/) for editing and printing.

## Roman Daily Sun

This is a glossy sheet of "paper" that once was an automatic newspaper. With the power grid long gone, they are frozen onto the last front page. Some of them will have different cover images, others may be in different languages depending on the owner's default. The most common language, however, is the Latin variant of the Ancient tongue.

The "paper" feels smooth and glassy to the touch. It does not fold, but will roll up.

# THE ROMAN DAILY SUN

Rome

2557 September Idea

## THE END OF THE WORLD

It will not be necessary for the last person to leave to turn out the lights. Lightning will fall tomorrow, and all machines will stop. This is the last issue of the Roman Daily Sun. There has been no sun for hundreds of years. There will be no sun tomorrow. The edges of the abyss close further into the

crossroads. Taracina and Narnia have all passed into the abyss. Ostia is underwater. Why? Since the great cataclysm, there have been no answers, but our world grows smaller with each passing week.

Rome has been inundated with refugees. Most have left into the crossroads. The citizens of Rome have followed the refugees. Some have followed

Camamine in search of the greater crossroads that he says Dionysius told him can save our world. Others have gone simply to escape. Tomorrow we have no job, and we will follow them.

If you are reading this, watch to the violet and know that you have no future here. We have been the guardians of the crossroads since time immemorial. Now, the crossroads will take us hence. We cannot but wonder if they were not the beacon of our doom. We thought we could be the Eternal City. We were but echoes in the night, the stars have faded one by one, and we finally fade into the blackness. The Eternal City lies out there, somewhere, waiting. We are now a rootless people wandering in search of Eternity. Somewhere beyond the crossroads, and beyond crossroads again, we follow the invisible river.

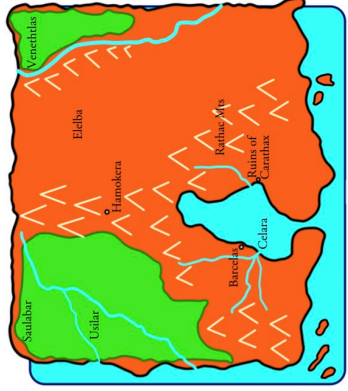
Do not go into the dragon's lair. Choose Barcelas if you wish an unsettling familiarity. There may be

other worlds beyond Barcelas, beyond fair Venethlas across the Elelban desert. Choose Iridia if a happy death is your preference, or Araman if you wish to watch another world die. In none of these worlds do they speak our tongue, though some say the dragon has heard of it.

But choose, and soon.

When our world falls and the crossroads disappear there will be no further choice.

Jupiter, Zeus, or whoever has abandoned us, may you find us again when you look for us again, wherever we roam. Now, citizens of Rome, save yourselves. For Olympus, too, has fallen into shadow and answers us no longer.



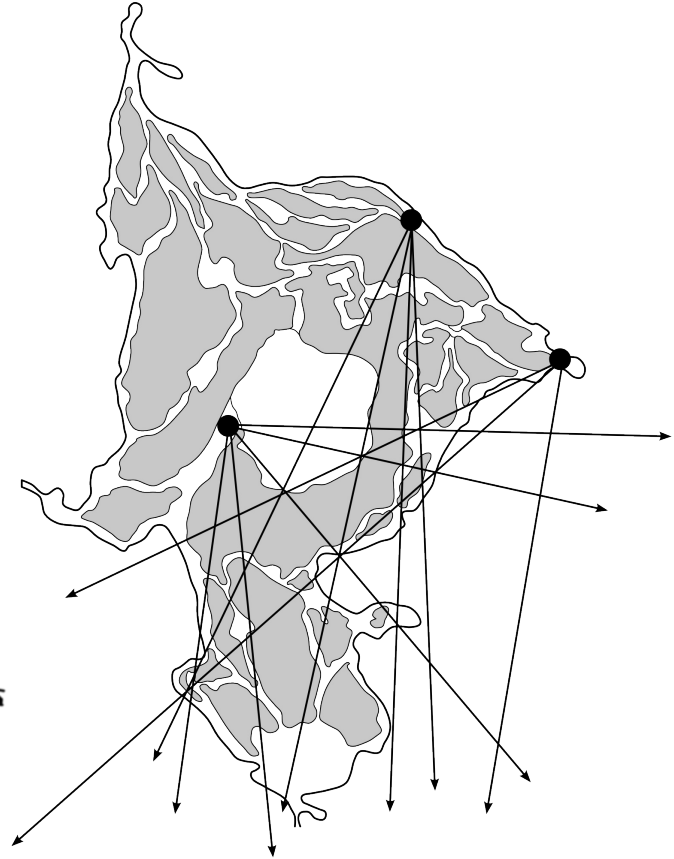
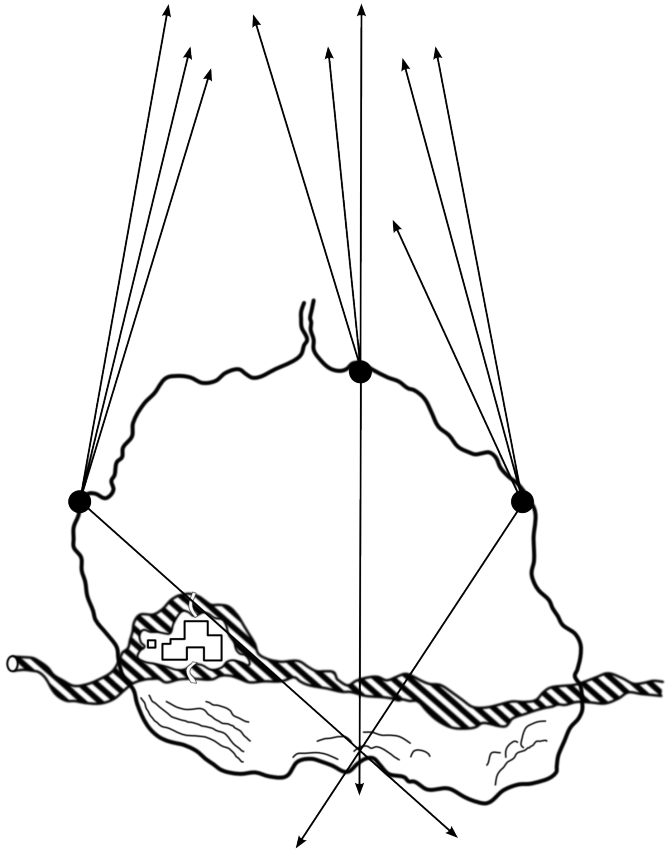
## BARCELAS

In Barcelas you enter into a grove, on a plateau, that overlooks the great inland sea of Celara. On the shores of Celara lie the ruins of cities once perhaps as great as our own. As our own was.

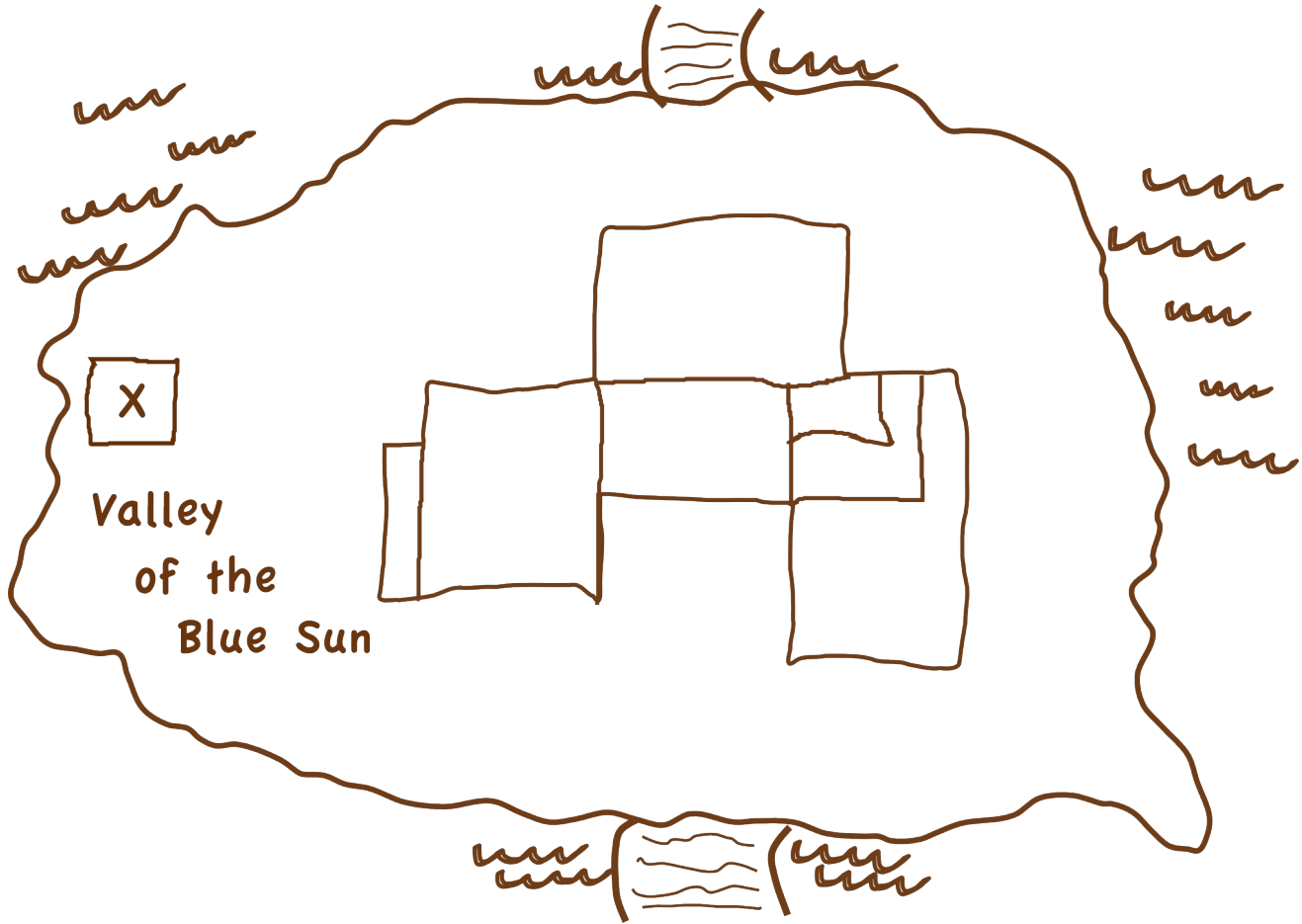
The cities of the coast are empty, and those which are not empty are filled with dangers: the Barcelasians have regressed; the barbarian Uslar and Saulabar fight constantly in the crumbling streets. Beware the Saulabar, for you most resemble their barbaric Uslar enemies.

Make your way, if civilization be your choice, to the high mountain city of Hamokena. There are rumors of doors in that city. Across the Elelban desert are also strange rumors. If you would follow Camamine across Elelba, do so with water and food, for the desert is wide and devoid of life. Be friendly with the desert dwellers, and also wary. *(follow article)*

# Player's Triangulation Maps



# Player's Island Map



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# Vale of the Azure Sun

There are things in this world that defy all logic. Places that no door enters and no road goes, where the maps exist only in the minds of madmen.

One such map has led you on a search for mounds of treasure and heaps of magic. The legendary valley of the blue sun.

Fields of blue by hills of stone,  
Sky bright green on a sparkling dome.  
Clouds of wispy yellow foam,  
In the Vale of the Azure Sun.