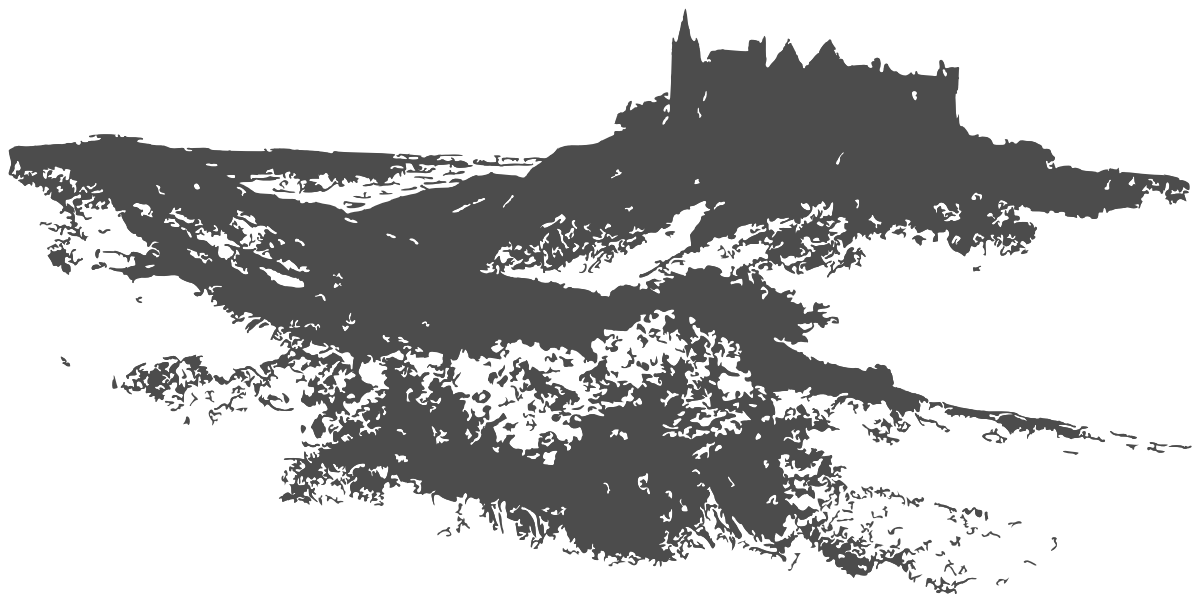


Fornost Erain v0.9

A fan supplement for The One Ring roleplaying game



“Deadmen’s Dike, you say. So it has been called for long years;
but its right name, Barliman, is Fornost Erain, Norbury of the Kings.”

—*The Return of the King*

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	New rules	5
	Dungeon delving	5
	Shadows	9
	Tides of war	10
	New optional rules	11
3	Locations	12
	Surrounding lands	14
	Farmsteads	17
	Watchtower	20
	Cultist camp	22
	Fornost grounds	24
	Palace entrance	26
	Ruined mansion	28
	Dome of Sight	31
	Crypts	34
	Palace ground floor	36
	Throne room	37
	Garden	41
	Library	44
	Grand staircase	50
	Palace upper floor	52
	Upper hall	53
	Feast hall	56
	King's quarters	58
	Palace underground	61
	Witch-king's laboratory	63
	Dungeons	68
	Treasure chamber	71
	Tunnels	74
	Chasm	76
	Tunnel crossing	79
	Orc caves	81
	Troll's lair	84
4	Campaign	87
	History of Fornost	87
	Concerning spirits and seals	89
	Factions	93
	Other creatures and characters	110
	Artefacts	116
	Tying the campaign together	122

5	Appendices	126
	Trinkets	126
	Dreadful sights	130
	Miscellaneous rooms	131
	Soundtrack suggestions	132
	Connections to other adventures	134
	Acknowledgments	136

Chapter 1

Introduction

Fornost Erain, Norbury of the Kings. The bygone capital of the Northern Kingdom, whose ruins lie only a week's distance from Bree. Stories tell of its sad history and fall under the Shadow a thousand years ago. Men say the place is haunted and call it Deadmen's Dike. No sane person walks there, but people whisper of forgotten secrets hidden in the abandoned halls, guarded by nameless horrors.

For centuries, Fornost slept, visited only by the watchful Rangers of the North. Now, the ancient city has awoken. One stormy night, lightning struck and the earth shook on the hills, and now rumours speak of unearthed treasure and eerie lights in the night. Whatever lies buried beneath the ruins is stirring, and sinister forces are moving to make their plays.

Who has broken the peace of the dead city? What dark secrets are sealed within, and what happens if they break free? What, exactly, happened here, one thousand years ago? The mysteries are many. Only one thing is certain:

Fornost needs heroes.

What is this book?

Fornost Erain was the capital of the northern kingdom of Arthedain, the counterpart of the southern Gondor. It is located on the edge of the North Downs, at the end of the Greenway. A thousand years ago, Arthedain was destroyed by the Witch-king of Angmar, who claimed the city and ruled there until an alliance of Elves and Men drove him away. The occupation left a dark mark, and Fornost was abandoned and fell to ruin.

This book presents a reimagination of Fornost Erain for *The One Ring* roleplaying game, set around the year 2965 of the Third Age, after mysterious events have reopened the ruined city for exploration. The book describes the site and its surroundings, including chambers and corridors in, around, and beneath the Royal Palace. Put together, the locations form one extended Landmark, a sandbox for the Player-heroes to explore and interact with. Players familiar with other roleplaying games may find similarities to megadungeons, massive structures of many levels with treasure to find, secrets to discover, and foes to vanquish.

The bulk of the book details the key locations of Fornost, with enough content to cover multiple Adventuring Phases. The locations may be used one by one, for quick expeditions to track down a monster or recover a piece of lore, or linked together with

the new Dungeon delving rules to form a campaign spanning years or even decades of game time.

To help tie the campaign together, the book presents multiple story hooks and factions with their own sinister plans for Fornost. Highwaymen set ambushes for treasure hunters, and a tribe of Orcs is undergoing a power struggle that spills over to the surrounding lands. Fell Wraiths patrol the underground tunnels, and restless spirits haunt the halls. Hillman cultists plot to unearth dangerous relics of old Angmar and unleash a dark force upon Eriador. The Rangers of the North do their best to combat the threats, but they need the Player-heroes' help.

Fornost is different for each play group. The book is modular, designed so that a Loremaster may pick and choose the elements they wish to use. It provides the tools for a Loremaster to run a game in their preferred style.

How to use this book?

Most of this book is for the Loremaster's eyes only. After this Introduction, to get a taste of Fornost, the Loremaster may wish to browse the chapter on *Locations*, p. 12, starting, for example, with the *Palace entrance*, p. 26, followed by the *Throne room*, p. 37. It is not necessary to read through all the locations before starting to play—the Loremaster may

dig deeper together with the Player-heroes, preparing a handful of location for a given Adventuring Phase. The Loremaster should also take a peek at *Getting started*, p. 122, for suggestions on how to begin the adventure.

Before starting to play, the Loremaster should also read through the chapter on *New rules*, p. 5, especially the section on *Dungeon delving*, rules for travelling between the different locations. This chapter may be shared with the other players, though there are mild spoilers regarding the campaign, especially in sections *Event resolution*, p. 7, *Shadows*, p. 9, and *Tides of war*, p. 10.

After the Loremaster has gotten the hang of things and maybe run an Adventuring Phase or two, if they wish to extend the Company's adventures in Fornost into a full-blown campaign, they should read the chapter on the *Campaign*, p. 87. The chapter accounts the history of Fornost and discusses the key elements in the overarching campaign, including its various factions. It also lists the Loremaster characters and artefacts the Company may encounter, to be used as a reference when needed. Finally, the chapter gives instructions on combining the different

elements into a coherent whole.

At the end of the book, the *Appendices*, p. 126, contain useful lists to inspire the Loremaster and spice up their game.

This book as a supplement for The One Ring roleplaying game

This book is a fan supplement for *The One Ring* roleplaying game by Free League Publishing, and *The One Ring* core rule book is needed to play. The book is written out of love for the game and for the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, and it is to be distributed and used freely for the enjoyment of fans everywhere. The author claims no ownership over the intellectual property of the involved parties, and encourages the reader to support them by buying the officially published awesome work. More on the sources and inspiration can be found in the *Acknowledgments*, p. 136.

Despite being written for *The One Ring*, much of the content is system-neutral and can be used, in particular, with *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying game*.

Chapter 2

New rules

‘There’s hundreds of Shirriffs all told, and they want more, with all these new rules.’

This chapter introduces rules for delving into the depths of Fornost, dealing with the cursed spirits that reside there, and keeping track of the various factions competing for dominance.

Dungeon delving

Fornost lies in ruins. Adventures there take place around a few key locations preserved from decay. The next chapter, *Locations*, p. 12, introduces many such sites; this section presents rules for travelling between them. Inspired by the journey rules of the core game, these rules let the players recreate the essence of the dungeon-delving experience—wandering through abandoned halls, digging through rubble in collapsed passageways, watching out for enemies lurking in the shadows—while bypassing most of the details.

A typical Fornost Adventuring Phase consists of the Company traveling to the city, delving into a key location either following a rumor or by open-ended exploration, adventuring there searching for treasure and encountering enemies, possibly continuing to another key location if their resources permit it, and eventually returning to the surface and home with their findings. Just like the journey rules, the dungeon delving rules should be used mainly when the Company is on its way to the site of the adventure. Return trips back to the surface need not be played out—unless they are a vital part of the adventure, for example, if the Company is lost or chased by an enemy.

While written for this module, these rules can be used as-is for any dungeon-delving adventure revolving around one or several key locations.

Dungeon levels

A dungeon is made of levels, each consisting of closely related locations. A level may be, for example, a quarter in a ruined city, one floor of an ancient

palace, or part of a cave complex.

Some locations connect to multiple levels, letting the Company pass from one level to another through doorways, staircases, or other passageways. The dungeon is connected to the outside world through one or more such locations.

When exploring a dungeon level, the Player-heroes don’t necessarily have a clear destination: they scour the place for anything and everything interesting. The exploration rules below are written with this approach in mind. When the Company starts exploring, the Loremaster chooses which location they will find next from the level-specific list, or they may pick one at random. This gives the Loremaster an opportunity to direct the flow of the campaign; they may even decide that certain high-profile locations aren’t accessible until later on when the heroes’ friends or foes have completed their own investigations and opened new paths. Recommendations are given in the level and location-specific entries in the next chapter. If no new locations are available for the current level, the Loremaster may come up with a new one or inform the players that, after a couple of days of searching, they don’t find new directions to explore.

If the heroes do have a destination, for example, if they have heard rumours of a specific artefact in a specific part of the dungeon, they still need to explore as usual, but the Loremaster should let them find their destination (sooner or later), and may lower the difficulty, see section *Dungeon-delving sequence*. If the heroes travel along paths they have already explored previously, they have an easier time, see section *Old paths well-trodden*.



The dungeon-delving Company

Just as during a journey, each member of the Company takes on a role when delving into a dungeon. The roles and the associated skills are:

- **Guide (Riddle)**: In charge of deciding which passage to take and when to rest.
- **Look-out (Awareness)**: In charge of keeping watch.
- **Scout (Explore/Stealth)**: In charge of scouting ahead.
- **Trailblazer (Athletics)**: In charge of clearing out obstacles and opening collapsed passages.

Assigning dungeon-delving roles works just like assigning journey roles.

Dungeon-delving sequence

When the Company leaves one location and starts to look for a new one, apply the following sequence:

1. Set the Exploration Difficulty
2. Make Delving rolls
3. Ending the Delve

1. Set the Exploration Difficulty

Each level has an Exploration Difficulty, a number that describes how difficult it is to travel from one location to another within the level. This is comparable to the length of a regular journey measured in hexes. If the Player-heroes have a concrete destina-

tion in mind and a solid clue to follow, the Loremaster may lower the difficulty by one or two steps.

2. Make Delving tests

Once the Company sets out, the Guide makes a series of **Riddle** rolls, analogously to the **Travel** rolls during a journey.

- If a **Riddle** roll is a failure, the Company makes two steps of progress into the delve.
- If the **Riddle** roll is a success, the Company makes three steps of progress, and one more step for each success icon rolled.

After resolving the **Riddle** roll, if the total progress made during the delve is equal to or higher than the Exploration Difficulty, the delve ends. Otherwise, an event occurs, see below.

3. Ending the delve

Once the delve ends, the heroes gain Fatigue. Then play continues at the new location. If there are multiple entrances to the location, the Loremaster decides which one the heroes have found. There are recommendations in the location descriptions.

Travel fatigue: Analogously to the end of a Journey, each Player-hero should mark down the Fatigue points they gained through the delving events, reduced by a **Travel** roll. Mounts don't help, unless the Loremaster rules otherwise—indeed, most beasts refuse to descend into a dungeon.

Delve length: A skilled Guide can puzzle out the quickest route to reach the Company's destination.

At the same time, some levels take more time to explore than others. A level's description indicates its exploration time. For a 'short' exploration time, each **Riddle** roll made by the Guide corresponds to a few hours of exploration. For a 'long' exploration time, this time is up to one day instead. The Loremaster makes the final decision. The time is spent mapping out new regions of the dungeon, clearing out pathways, and finding detours around obstacles.



Event resolution

Delving events are resolved like journey events, in three steps:

1. Select targets
2. Determine event
3. Resolve event

1. Select targets

The Loremaster selects targets from the following table by rolling a Success die:

EVENT TARGET:

Success die roll	Target	Skills
1–2	Scouts	Explore/Stealth
3–4	Look-outs	Awareness
5–6	Trailblazers	Athletics

2. Determine event

The Loremaster makes a Feat die roll to determine the event from the table below. Depending on the dungeon level, the roll may be *Favoured* or *Ill-Favoured*; see the level descriptions.

DUNGEON DELVING EVENTS TABLE:

Feat die	Event	Consequences of the skill rolls	Fatigue points gained
Φ	Terrible Misfortune	If the roll fails and an enemy faction has a Presence in the level, the Company is Ambushed by them. Otherwise, if the roll fails, the target is Wounded. In addition, if the Guide's Riddle roll failed, the Company is Lost.	2
1	Despair	If the roll fails, everyone in the Company gains 1 Shadow point (Dread). In addition, if the roll fails and an enemy faction has a Presence in the level, the Company is Chased by them.	1
2–3	Ill Choices	If the roll fails, the target gains 1 Shadow point (Dread). In addition, if the Guide's Riddle roll failed, the Company is Lost.	1
4–7	Mishap	If the roll fails, the target gains 1 additional Fatigue.	1
8–9	Short Cut	If the roll succeeds, the Company immediately arrives at its destination, ending the delve.	–
10	Chance-meeting	If the roll succeeds, the Company encounters something useful (a friend, useful equipment, a trinket, information overheard from an enemy, ...)	–
℥	Joyful Find	If the roll succeeds, everyone in the Company regains 1 Hope or gains 1 point of Treasure.	–

3. Resolve event

The event is resolved analogously to a journey event. If the target is a Scout and the event deals with enemies (in particular, Feat Die results ϕ and 1), the Loremaster may ask for a Stealth roll instead of Explore. New terms used in the table are explained below.

Ambushed. Enemies ambush the Company. The Loremaster improvises a combat encounter, with the number of enemies equal to the number of Player-heroes (up to Loremaster discretion), using the rules for surprise attacks as appropriate.

Chased. The Company is chased by enemies. The Loremaster should describe the signs to the players: approaching footsteps in the corridors behind them, sightings of shadowy figures at the edges of dark halls, horns and drums sounding in the distance.

The next time the Guide fails their **Riddle** roll, or another member of the Company fails a roll associated with a delving event, the pursuers catch the Company, likely forcing them into a fight. The Loremaster chooses who the pursuers are based on the Company's current location. Initially, the number of pursuers equals the number of Player-heroes (up to Loremaster discretion).

Each time the Guide succeeds in a **Riddle** roll, the Loremaster rolls a Success die and follows the Chase effect table.

If the Company reaches its destination while the chase is on, it is up to the Loremaster to decide if the pursuers catch them there or give up. The Company may also decide to continue towards a new destination right away to shake the pursuers off.

The Loremaster may use these rules also outside of delving events, for example, start a new delving sequence with a chase if the heroes are fleeing from enemies encountered in the previous location. The Loremaster should feel free to apply the chase rules liberally, to maximize tension and excitement.

CHASE EFFECT:

Success die roll	Effect
1	The chase grows more intense. The number of pursuers grows by half the number of Player-heroes.
2–4	The chase continues as-is.
5–6	The Company has evaded the pursuers. The chase is over.

Lost. If the Company is lost—as a consequence of a delving event or otherwise as dictated by the Loremaster—set the delve progress back to zero. The Player-heroes can't take old paths as described in section *Old paths well-trodden* until they have found a location they have visited earlier. The Company can't get Lost again before this happens.

If the Company stays Lost with no access to the outside world for a prolonged period of time, they may run short on food, drink, and light. In such a situation, every Player-hero gains 1 Shadow point (Dread) each day.



Old paths well-trodden

Once the Company has found a location once, they know how to reach it. Traveling between two known locations that are on the same dungeon level and connected by previously discovered paths doesn't follow the dungeon-delving sequence. Instead, the Guide makes one **Riddle** roll to find the correct route.

- If the **Riddle** roll is a failure, the Loremaster rolls a random event from the table below and plays out the consequences. Similarly to the dungeon delving rolls, this may be *Favoured* or *Ill-Favoured* depending on the dungeon level. After which the Company reaches their destination, unless they get Lost.
- If the **Riddle** roll is a success, the Company arrives at their destination without trouble.

Travel fatigue: If the heroes gain Fatigue as a consequence of the event, they mark it on their character sheet immediately (don't make **Travel** rolls to reduce Fatigue).

Delve length: The time it takes to travel between two explored locations varies level by level—pushing through cramped spaces is fast once a route has been cleared, but following winding passageways takes time even if one knows the way. See the level's description for details.

These rules can be used when the Company is moving through previously explored levels of a dungeon on their way to a deeper, yet unexplored destination, or when they return back temporarily but plan to continue delving during the same Adventuring Phase. If the adventure is over, the Loremaster shouldn't call for a **Riddle** roll: the heroes simply return home without trouble.

OLD PATHS EVENTS TABLE:

Feat die	Consequences
ϕ	The Company is Ambushed by enemies.
1	The Company is Lost.
2–3	The Company encounters work of the Shadow. Every member of the Company gains 1 Shadow (Dread).
4–7	The Company is delayed. Each member of the Company gains 1 Fatigue.
8–9	The Company finds a new direction to explore. Next time they start a delve on this level, they start with two steps of progress.
10	The Company encounters something useful.
ℙ	The Company encounters a joyful sight. Everyone in the Company regains 1 Hope.

Shadows

When delving into the depths of Fornost, the Player-heroes will encounter Shadows, cursed spirits haunting the abandoned halls. They are practically invisible to anyone except for the keen-eyed elves, who can see shapes of armoured Men, appearing and disappearing into thin air or walking through walls. The Loremaster may find more information on the Shadows in *Concerning spirits and seals*, p. 89.

The Shadows harass all who trespass on the ruins. They can't physically affect the visible world, and they can't be harmed by ordinary weapons. An aura of fear lingers around them and they, on their part, fear fire and sunlight.

Shadow Level

The effect of a shadow host is described by a Shadow Level, a number typically ranging from one to three.



Shadow point gain. In combat, the Player-heroes all gain Shadow (Dread) equal to the current Shadow Level on each round after the Player-hero actions. Outside of combat, the Loremaster should cut the action into combat-like rounds so that each Player-hero has the opportunity to move and take one action—for example, make one Skill roll and cross the room—between Shadow Tests.

Fighting off the Shadows. Player-heroes can fight against the shadow host with appropriate Skill rolls, for example:

- Driving the Shadows away with a burning torch with **Athletics**,
- Singing to encourage their companions with **Song**.

A success decreases the Shadow Level this round by one, plus one more for each Success icon. All nearby Player-heroes gain this benefit.

The Shadow Level can only be reduced by one such roll on each round. If multiple Player-heroes wish to contribute, use the support rules or let them all roll and choose the highest result.

Light and shadow. In direct sunlight, the Shadow Level decreases by one, on top of any reduction from Player-hero actions. In total darkness, the Shadow Level increases by one.



Tides of war

The Player-heroes aren't the only people interested in Fornost. A collection of factions vie for control over the ruined city, each with their own goals and agendas. The factions are described in section *Factions*, p. 93, and tying them into a campaign is discussed in *Using the factions*, p. 124. The Loremaster should use the factions as best benefits their game, but this section offers some game mechanical guidance.

Presence

If a faction's members occupy or frequently move on a particular dungeon level, the faction has a Presence there. The *Events and threats* (*Events and opportunities* for the Company's allies) section in a faction description tells whether the faction starts with a presence on one or more levels and how their Presence changes through faction events.

Presence is a bookkeeping tool that helps the Loremaster decide what sorts of creatures the Company may encounter on a given level and how the creatures might behave. Even without a faction's Presence, a Company may encounter the faction's members on a level—Presence is a stronger effect that indicates an effort to control the territory and may include active patrols, guards at important locations, and a base of operations.

Presence affects

- Delving events: A faction's Presence affects the results of the *Dungeon delving table* and lead to the Company being *Ambushed* or *Chased*, p. 8.
- Enemy reinforcements: A faction with a Presence on a level may receive reinforcements during an battle, as per the Loremaster's discretion.
- Clashes between factions: If two factions have Presence on the same level, they are likely to come to conflict with each other. The Loremaster should decide the consequences—one faction might drive the other away, they might get locked into repeated skirmishes, or they might make peace and become allies.

Faction events

A faction's descriptions includes a list of faction events at the end of the *Events and threats* (*Events and opportunities*) section. These events place if the faction gets to advance its agenda freely.

In each Fellowship Phase, the Loremaster should revise the active factions and choose one or more faction events to take place, if appropriate. They may also come up with custom events to fit their own

campaign. The events are a great way to showcase the passage of time and draw the Company back into Fornost after a break. The Player-heroes may hear rumours of the events during the Fellowship Phase, or the *Rangers of the North*, p. 106, may send them a message of the latest developments.

New optional rules

Here are some optional rules to make the players' experience of Fornost Erain smoother.

Turn and run

Fornost is home to many powerful foes. Sometimes, the Company may not stand a chance against an enemy on their first encounter, needing to acquire new skills or knowledge first. To make this feasible, here is an additional option to leave a fight, to be added to those listed in *Fly, you fools!* on p. 104 of *The One Ring* rulebook:

Fly, you fools! 3. As their main action, a Player-hero in the Forward stance may choose to turn and run. Enemies can still attack the Player-hero during

the Loremaster actions, and they *gain* (1d) for these attacks due to the hero's stance, as usual. After the Loremaster actions, if the Player-hero is not seized by an enemy, they leave the battle.

Darkness

The halls of Fornost are dark; often the Player-heroes carry the only sources of light. If those lights are distinguished, darkness engulfs the Company. As per p. 102 of *The One Ring* rulebook, all creatures relying on sight are severely hindered in such conditions and *lose* (2d) from all their attack and Skill rolls. The darkness does not affect the Undead or the Nameless Things.

Lighting a lantern or torch in combat takes one main action, but the light starts to have an effect only after all the Player-hero actions.

The Fell Ability *Denizen of the Dark* makes all (attack) rolls of an adversary Favoured while in darkness. It is recommended this applies in an otherwise dark environment even when fighting a Player-hero carrying a light, unless the Company takes extra steps to light up the battlefield, such as surrounding their foe with torches or lighting a bonfire.

Chapter 3

Locations

‘From the lowest dungeon to the highest peak it climbed, ascending in unbroken spiral in many thousand steps...’

This chapter lists all key locations of Fornost, organized by dungeon level.

Dungeon level descriptions

The dungeon level descriptions describe the general mood of the level and its connections to other levels. They also list the level’s statistics with respect to the Dungeon delving rules and possible additional rules related to exploring the level.

In brief, the levels are:

- **Surrounding lands:** A number of farms and other points of interest within a day’s reach of the city itself.
- **Fornost grounds:** The ruins of the city surrounding the Royal Palace.
- **Palace ground floor:** The first level of the Palace, accessible through the main doors.
- **Palace upper floor:** The upper chambers and towers of the Palace, including the King’s quarters and the Witch-king’s throne room.
- **Palace underground:** The below-ground parts of the Palace, including dungeons, laboratories, and treasure chambers.
- **Tunnels:** A cave system below the Palace, extending to the North Downs. Home to Orcs and other unsavory creatures.

Key location descriptions

The location descriptions start with a brief account of the location’s history and connection to the bigger campaign. Then they describe a number of sublocations, keyed to an accompanying map, and a number of points of interest in each sublocation. In the end, a section titled *What’s going on* gives further instructions on how to use the location in a campaign.

Information for players and the Loremaster.

Coloured text gives an at-glance description of a location or an object. The Loremaster should read or paraphrase this information when the Player-heroes enter a room or approach a point of interest. Normal text gives further details and instructions for the Loremaster.

Rules-specific information. The main description of a location is general and not specific to *The One Ring* roleplaying system. Rules-related instructions and additional information can be found in separate information boxes—for an example, see *Distances and positioning in combat* below. As always, this information is subject to the Loremaster’s interpretation.

Distances and positioning in combat

On all the maps, the length of one side of a square is five feet (roughly one and a half meters or yards) so that one character can comfortably occupy one square in combat. The Loremaster is encouraged to use the geography and obstacles in a location creatively, e.g. to modify the engagement rules. For this purpose, it is good to keep track of the rough locations of characters. On one round, a character has time to move from one sublocation to another or from one side of a big sublocation to another side, up to the Loremaster’s discretion. If another character is blocking a path, a successful attack roll against them lets adversaries move past.

Using the locations in a campaign

The brief descriptions at the beginning of locations are a good place for a Loremaster to get a feel of the different locations in Fornost Erain. When the

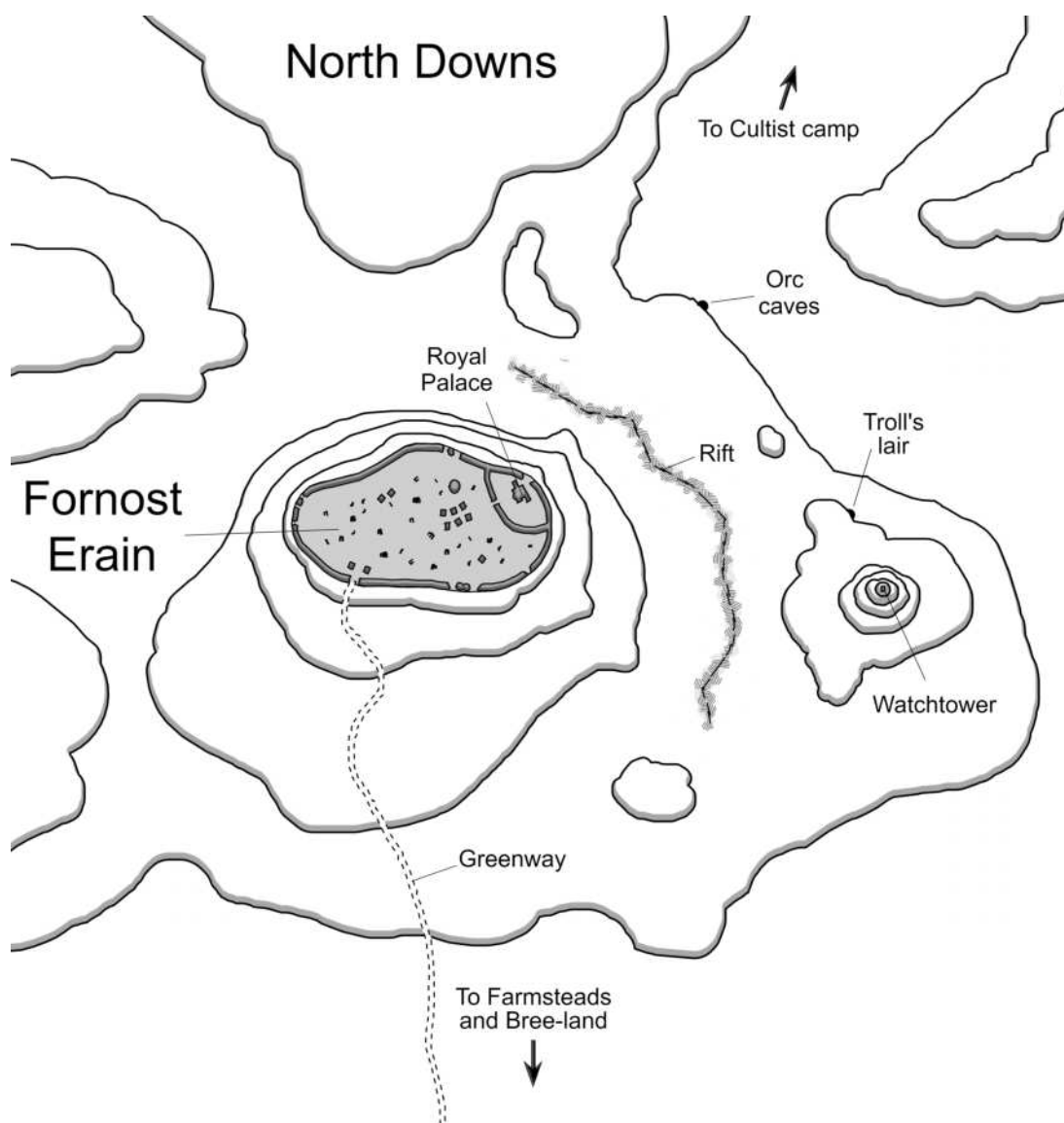
Loremaster wants to use a specific location in their game, they should first note its dungeon level and make sure they have read the level description for general rules governing its locations.

The Loremaster can then proceed to the *What's going on* section for tips on how to run the location. This includes, in particular, notes on the activities of different factions and adversaries in the location. The Loremaster should pick some of these options to spice things up for the Player-heroes, taking into account the factions' current statuses in the campaign.

The section also lists all the entrances to the location, suggesting the most appropriate ones for a first

visit. The Loremaster chooses from which direction the Company first enters the location. Entrances connecting to other levels are also listed here.

Each location is a collection of challenges and rewards for the Player-heroes—traps, riddles, and adversaries to defeat, and treasure and secrets to find—and it is the Loremaster's job to use the offered tools to build an engaging adventure for the players. It is not necessary to use all the offered options at once. If the Player-heroes return later, the Loremaster may mix things up by pulling on a different thread—maybe a new faction has moved in and left their mark on the location.



Surrounding lands

But the Northern Lands had long been desolate, and the North Road was now seldom used: it was grass-grown, and the Bree-folk called it the Greenway.

Fornost Erain is built on elevated ground on the southern edge of the North Downs, a range of rolling hills in northern Eriador. On a separate hillock nearby rise the remnants of an old *Watchtower*, p. 20. The plains surrounding the Greenway open further south, dotted by small *Farmsteads*, p. 17.

What's going on

The recent events have severely shaken the peace of these lands. An earthquake summoned by the Pale Rider opened a crack in the ground, visible on the surface as a thin seam running between Fornost and the Watchtower. Bandits have started to roam the countryside again, and livestock have gone missing. The wildest rumours speak of Orcs and Trolls on the hills. The Cult of the Witch has arrived to start its own investigations, based in the *Cultist camp*, p. 22.

Travel near Fornost

All locations in this chapter lie within a day's distance from Fornost. It is not necessary to apply the Journey or Dungeon delving rules to travel between them—if the Company knows where they are headed, the trip is not difficult. To liven things up, the Loremaster may roll for or pick an event from the below table. “Target” refers to a random Player-hero.

If the Company searches for a hidden location, such as the Cultist camp or the entrances to the *Orc caves*, p. 81 or *Troll's lair*, p. 84, this can be run as a Laborious Skill Endeavour (Resistance 6). After each roll, if the Endeavour is not completed, the Loremaster should roll an event from the below table. “Target” refers to the Player-hero who made the last Skill roll for the Skill Endeavour.

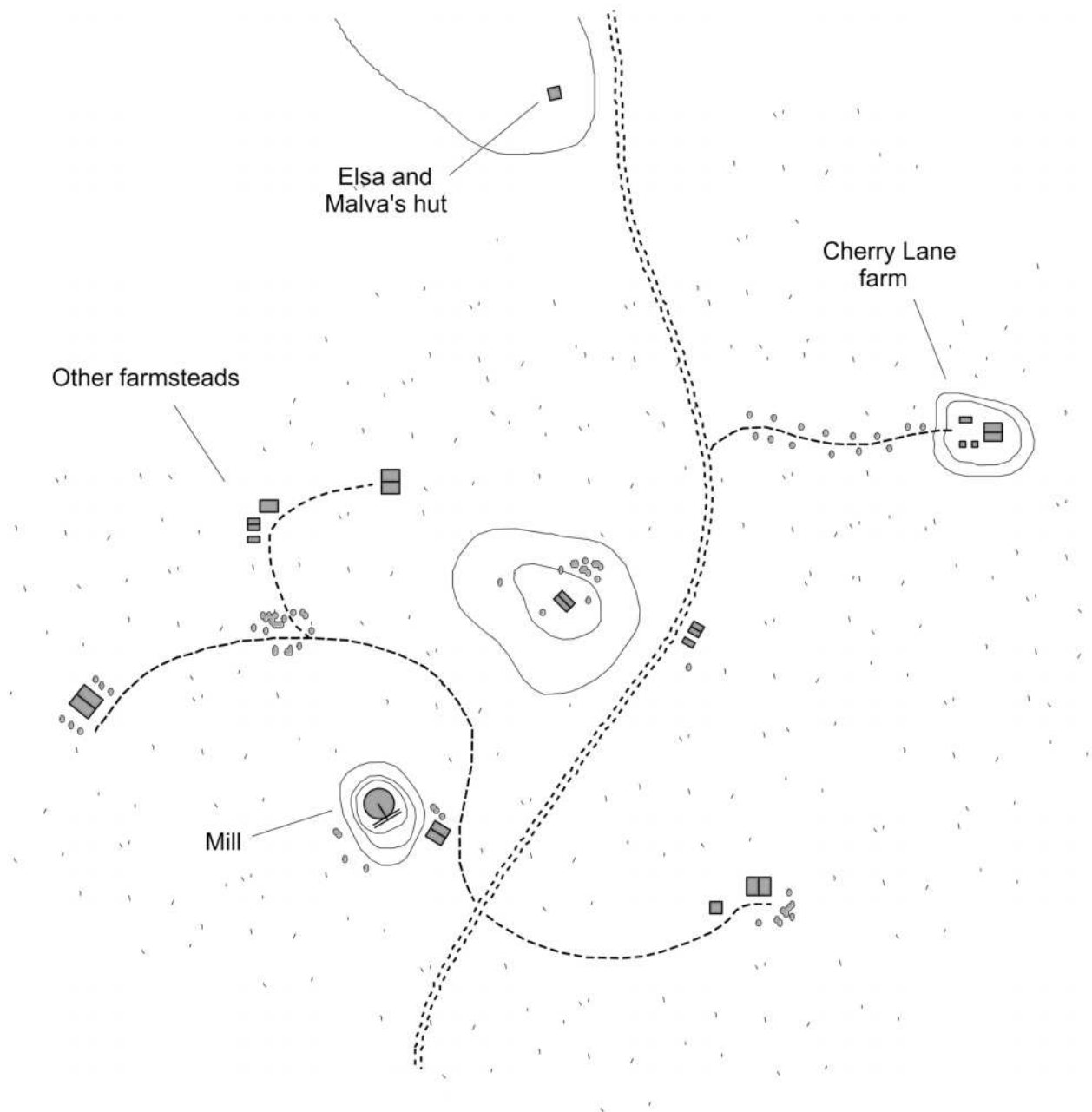




RANDOM EVENTS TABLE:

Feat die	Event	Description
Φ	Ominous Drawing	The Player-heroes find an old, crude painting on a cliff side depicting Orcs swarming the city of Fornost. Everyone in the Company gains 1 Shadow point (Dread).
1	Loose Earth	The ground crumbles beneath the target's feet. They must succeed in a suitable Skill roll or be Wounded.
2	Orcs in a Cave	While seeking shelter in a cave, the Player-heroes run into one Orc Chieftain and two Orc Soldiers from Gulbug's tribe (<i>The One Ring</i> , p. 150). The Orcs are out on a drawn-out hunting trip, hiding from the Sun and waiting for nightfall.
3	Bandits	A group of Highwaymen ambushes the Company, demanding them to hand over their valuables.
4	Wolf Pack	A pack of five Wild Wolves (<i>The One Ring</i> , p. 156) stalks the Player-heroes and may attack when the Company rests.
5	Foul Weather	A sudden storm gathers, and the Player-heroes get soaked in heavy rain. Everyone in the Company gains 1 point of Fatigue.
6	Cultist Convoy	The Company runs into four members of the Cult of the Witch, who are moving supplies in a cart between Fornost and the <i>Cultist camp</i> , p. 22.
7	Lost Sheep	A lost sheep wanders on the hills. It comes from the <i>Farmsteads</i> , p. 17, perhaps from the flock of Elizabeth and Malva.
8	Tracks in the Mud	The Player-heroes spot tracks belonging either to Frank the Troll, cultists from the Cult of the Witch, or Orcs from Gulbug's tribe (Loremaster decides).
9	Short Cut	The Player-heroes quickly find what they were looking for. (The Skill Endeavour, if any, ends.)
10	Delicious Mushrooms	The Player-heroes find a patch of mushrooms. Everyone in the Company regains 1 Hope.
℥	Dúnedain Cache	The Player-heroes find a hidden cache of supplies left behind by the Rangers of the North. Everyone in the Company loses 1 Fatigue.

Farmsteads



Farmsteads

A number of farmsteads lie scattered around the Greenway just south of Fornost. Times are tough, but the people living here are tougher, used to taking care of themselves far from the safety of Bree-land.

Cherry Lane farm

A lane runs across the fields from the Greenway up a hillock's slope. Rows of cherry trees grow on both sides of the lane. Atop the hill rises a farmhouse surrounded by side buildings.

This is the Cherry Lane farm, home of Amos and Edith Summers, their teenaged daughters Hannah and Mia, and their young son Otto. Amos is a kind mand and the farm is prosperous by local standards, with chickens, a few cows, and a horse to work the fields. Chad, the Miller's youngest son, helps around as a farmhand and goes out with Hannah.

Unlike most locals, people of the Cherry Lane farm are friendly towards strangers and happy to share local news. There is only topic they avoid: their eldest son Amos Junior, who left the family to join the *Highwaymen*, p. 102.

Elsa and Malva's hut

A lonely hut stands on the moors, closer to the northern Fornost than the other farmsteads. A flock of sheep grazes nearby.

Two old women, Elsa and Malva, live here. Malva spends her days weaving; Elsa keeps sheep, helped by her dog Flash. Malva is the more social of the pair, chatting with visitors and offering them tea while Elsa is out tending the flock. It is Elsa, however, who is more knowledgeable about the local affairs and history. For more details on the couple, see *Elizabeth*, p. 113.

Mill

A wind-powered mill rises in the middle of the farms, next to a small house.

The inhabitant, Clint Miller, is a grumpy, middle-aged man who dislikes strangers. He has lived a secluded life since the death of his wife in an Orc raid ten years ago. Two of Clint's sons live in Bree, and his youngest, Chad, works as a farmhand at the Cherry Lane farm.

The Company is likely to get the cold shoulder if they approach Clint, with comments on nothing good ever coming from mingling with outsiders. Clint loves his community, however, and is the first to rise to its defence if anything threatens its peace. Wielding his father's old sword, he is a surprisingly proficient warrior.

Other farmsteads

People of the other farms live in small family units, farming and keeping cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and chicken. Weaving and other crafts are common. Typical local names include:

Jeb, Malcolm, Warren, Emmett, Carson, Tobias, Ash, Oliver, Owen; Holly, Maple, Talia, Vana, Wendy, Ruby, Lydia, Nancy; Stone, Willis, Butcher, Winter.



What's going on

With an increasing threat from bandits, wolves, and worse, many people have left the Farmsteads and moved south over the last decades. A hundred people are still left, living in twenty families. An occasional trader or travelling blacksmith visits from Bree, but the farms are mostly self-sufficient, surviving on growing crops and tending to animals. They avoid Fornost, or Norbury of the Kings as they call it, out of a mixture of respect and superstition.

Seeking shelter. The locals are wary of strangers, and the Company may have a hard time making friends here. Amos's and Edith's family is the exception. Respectful Player-heroes may find shelter at the Cherry Lane farm in exchange for stories of the wider world and a hand in the farm's chores. The farm is considered a safe refuge for the purposes of getting rid of Fatigue.

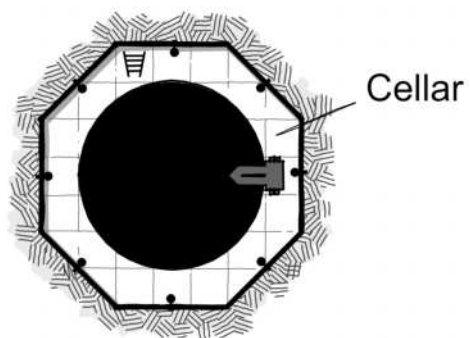
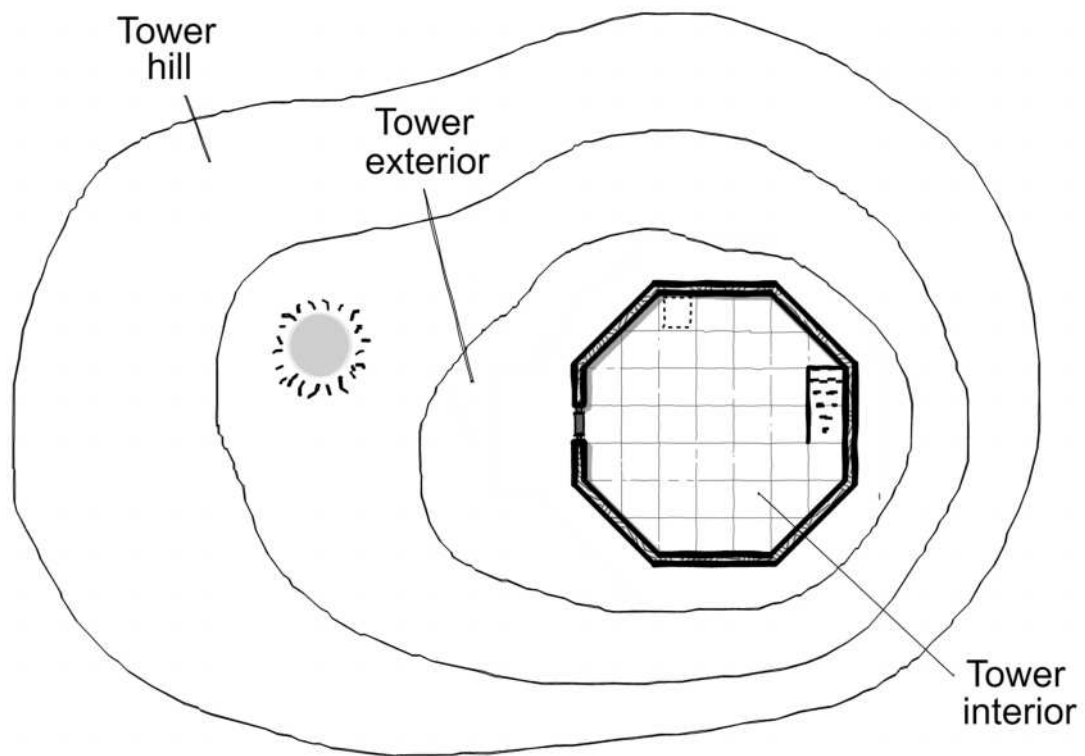
Highwaymen. Seeking adventure and wealth, some locals have joined the *Highwaymen*, p. 102. Due to their ties to the community, the bandits have left the Farmsteads alone for now, but if times grow tough enough, things may change. There is already tension between the two groups, with the farmers blaming the Highwaymen for luring their sons and daughters to a life of crime and the Highwaymen seeing the farmers as too naive and stubborn for the darkening world.

Growing Shadow. Unbeknown to the locals, the Rangers of the North have kept the farms safe from the worst threats for centuries. However, the

Rangers' numbers are dwindling and the shadows are growing longer. If the evil stirring in Fornost ever escapes beyond the city walls, the farmers will be the first casualties. A need to protect the locals may motivate the Company, and in the worst-case scenario, the Farmsteads may become the stage for a last stand against an advancing wave of Orcs, Wraiths, or Shadows.

Coming and going. The Company will run into the Farmsteads if they travel north along the Greenway. The Farmsteads are scattered on both sides of the road, less than one day's distance from Fornost.

Watchtower



Watchtower

A high hill rises within sight of Fornost. On its top, the Men of Arnor built a watchtower. The upper floors collapsed long ago, but the base stands, and the cellar hides a secret.

Tower hill

A ruined tower stands on the highest point of a steep hill. The hilltop offers a magnificent view over the land—the North Downs in the north, the ruined city of Fornost in the west, and the Greenway in the south, with little houses and farmsteads sprinkled around.

Next to the tower, there is a barren patch of land free of vegetation.

Withered circle. Grass has died here in a circle three yards across. Air is cold.

The Pale Rider stood here when she summoned an earthquake to crack the earth open, creating the *Rift on the ground*, see below. The land was tainted by her sorcery.

Into the circle

A Player-hero stepping into the Withered circle gains 1 Shadow (Sorcery). If the associated **Wisdom** roll is a success, the Player-hero learns what happened here, seeing a vision of a storm raging around the hilltop. In the vision, a pale figure sits on horseback, chanting a spell, and the earth starts to shake.

Rift on the ground. An eagle-eyed observer can notice something far below, between the tower hill and Fornost: a seam in the ground, as if earth had shifted, creating a thin rift hundreds of yards long. This is the *Chasm*, p. 76, or what can be seen of it above ground: a crack barely an inch across, plummeting into the darkness. It is easy to miss on the ground level, and only the hill's high vantage point reveals it in its full length.

Tower exterior

Most of the tower has collapsed; chunks of stone litter the ground. The ground floor still stands, and a heavy door shuts the only entryway. A silvery pattern shimmers on the door.

The walls are impenetrable brickwork at the ground level, but have crumbled higher up. Climbing the wall to the second floor is easy.

Door. The door leads to the base floor. The pattern on the door is one of the *Seven Seals*, p. 90. As long as the Seal remains, the door cannot be opened.

Upper floor. The tower's second floor—the highest one still standing—is open to the elements. A stairway leads down to the tower interior.

Tower interior

The room inside the tower is cold and dark. The floor is littered with rubble fallen from the ceiling. Moss grows in the cracks between stones.

The only entrances are the sealed door and the stairway leading to the second floor.

Secret hatch. A block of floor stones slide aside, revealing a ladder that descends into the Cellar. This secret hatch used to be seamlessly hidden in the stonework, but is now surrounded by moss giving it away to a vigilant observer.

Cellar

The ladder descends to the edge of a wide, round room. Torch holders line the walls. A shaft multiple yards wide opens in the middle of the floor. A large mechanical crane stands next to the shaft.

The crane operates a cage used to transport people between the cellar and an underground chamber fifty yards below. The cage is currently down, in an underground chamber that connects to the *Tunnels*, p. 74, starting with Arvedui's path. The mechanism is identical to that found behind the secret door in the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71.

What's going on

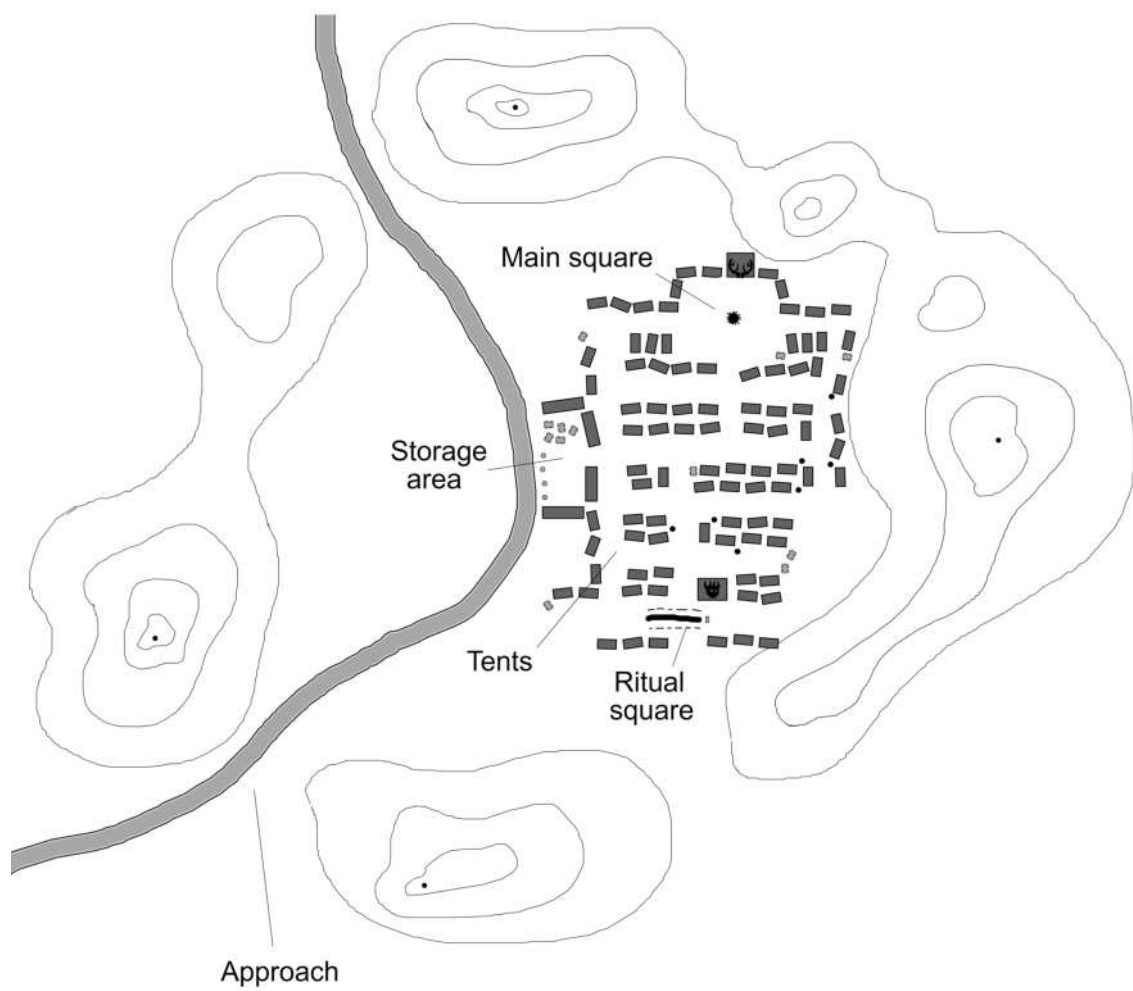
In the old days, soldiers of Arthedain guarded the surrounding lands from the top of the tower. They would send signals of an approaching enemy to the city and, if needed, retreat through the tunnel network.

In its current condition, the watchtower is not an impressive sight, but the Loremaster may direct the Company's attention to it if they scan for landmarks near the city.

Devourer in Darkness. If the Company carries treasure, the Devourer in Darkness may ambush them in the tunnels below the Cellar. The Devourer can crawl up the mine shaft, attaching itself to the stone wall. It chases the Company all the way to the Tower interior, where it is drawn to the Seal on the door and proceeds to drink its magic, giving the heroes a chance to escape.

Coming and going. The Company may spot the tower when traveling around Fornost. The trip between the city and the tower takes a few hours. The tower's Cellar is connected to the *Tunnels*, p. 74, through Arvedui's path.

Cultist camp



Cultist camp

Hidden in a valley in the North Downs lies an encampment of Hillmen. From there, the Cult of the Witch organises its campaign, seeking to awaken the dark forces within Fornost Erain and restore the heir of Angmar to the city's throne.

Approach

A brook flows between the hills. Following it upstream reveals a hidden valley. An encampment with dozens of tents rises on the brook's eastern shore.

By day, smoke rising from campfires reveals the site from further away. Once the Company is close enough to see the camp itself, they are likely to be noticed by the *Camp guards*, see below.

Tents

The tents are laid out in an orderly fashion, with wide streets running between them in straight lines. The camp is dotted with supply carts, cooking fires, and bigger open squares. People clad in leather and fur go around on their business.

For typical Hillmen activity, see *Camp by day* and *Camp by night*, below.

A typical tent. The tents are made of leather stretched around wooden stakes. Inside, there are a handful of sleeping places of hay, with a stone-lined fire pit in the middle.

Pieces of clothing may hang on threads stretched across the tent. The bigger tents have small tables and stools inside, together with storage chests that hold personal items: knives and spoons, boots and brooches, and craftwork such as animal idols carved of bone.

Main square

In the norther part of the camp, there is a big open area surrounded by some of the largest tents. A huge fire pit is dug in the middle of the square.

Chieftain's tent. At a central place along the main square rises a tent decorated with an image of red antlers. The antlered skull of a stag sits above the entrance. Usually two warriors guard the doorway.

Inside the tent, more antler decorations line the walls. A map of the North is laid on a table, with markings in red ink. They indicate the biggest dwellings of the various clans of the Hillmen, together with the location of the curret camp. All written notes are in the Hillmen's native tongue. Fornost Erain is marked with a cross.

The private sleeping area of chieftain *Tormoid*, son of *Tiobaid*, p. 96 is at the back of the tent, separated from the front with a piece of cloth.

Cooking pit. The pit is deep, lined with stones, and full of coal, with a long spit running over it. The pit is in use every night.

Storage area

Next to the stream, a number of donkeys and carts have been gathered to an open area surrounded by long tents.

There are always one or two guards watching over the animals and the making sure no one steals food from the storage tents.

Donkeys. The donkeys are tied to sturdy wooden posts. They are with reach of the water and look well fed.

Carts. The carts are neatly parked on one side of the clearing. They are sturdy, to be pulled by a donkey or a group of Men. The supply runs to Fornost start and end here, see *Supply shipments* below.

Storage tents. The tents are filled with sacks, barrels, and crates, and racks with fish and meat hanging from them. The containers hold root vegetables, mushrooms, berries, and other foraged produce.

Ritual square

On the camp's souther edge, there is a long clear area, with a ditch-like fire pit running down the middle.

Fire pit. The fire pit is ten yards long. A table stands at one end. The table is stained in dried blood. Small bones and bits of dried meat lie here and there on the ground.

On the table, the leaders of the Cult of the Witch open up small animals to read omens and to sacrifice the remains in the fire.

Witch's tent. One large tent along the clearing stands out: it is black, with a white mask and crown embroidered on one side. This is the abode of the priest *Simeag*, p. 95 and other top figures of the Cult, and also of *Catelyn*, p. 93 and *Angmar's messengers*, p. 95 when they reside in the camp.

Inside the tent, tapestries hang on the walls, depicting dark fortresses amidst hills and the starry sky. Side tables hold jars of dried herbs and a collection of razor-sharp knives.

A pungent smoke clouds the air, rising from a low-burning fire fed with the herbs. Cultists have gathered around the fire to meditate and seek for visions. They don't react unless directly provoked.

Sheets of cloth separate private sections off of the main room. Wounded Hillmen are held here to receive healing. This is also where cultists undergo the

ritual to transform into *Mask-bearers*, p. 96.

Inhaling the smoke

The smoke inside the *Witch's tent* makes an entering Player-hero dizzy. They must make an **Athletics** roll; on failure, they gain 1 point of Fatigue.

What's going on

This is the base camp of the Red Stag Clan's expedition to the North Downs. It is hidden in a valley between the hills. The camp is run by the clan's chieftain, Tormoid, son of Tiobaid, but true power is held by the priest Simeag, who leads a group of Hillmen cultists devoted to the Witch-king. Shipments of supplies flow from the camp to the city of Fornost, where the cultists' vanguard scours the ruins for relics of old Angmar. For more details on the faction's agenda, see *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93.

Camp by day. By day, the camp is buzzing with activity: people cook stew in pots on small fires, carry water from the stream, and maintain and repair equipment, clothes, and the tents. The following list provides events for the Loremaster to choose from, according to their preference or by rolling a Success die.

CULTIST CAMP EVENTS:

Success
die

roll Event

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Warriors gather at the <i>Chieftain's tent</i> to discuss strategy. |
| 2 | A change of guards takes place on the surrounding hills. |
| 3 | A supply cart leaves for or arrives from Fornost. |
| 4 | A hunting party returns, carrying the carcass of a wild boar. |
| 5 | A Hillman is caught stealing food from the <i>Storage tents</i> . |
| 6 | Priests gather at the <i>Fire pit</i> to read fortunes from the insides of a magpie. |

Camp by night. When the sun sets, the Hillmen gather around fires to spend time together. One group, led by Chieftain Tormoid, gathers at the *Main square*. They eat, drink, and laugh, sharing hunting stories and old legends. Another group, the most devoted cultists led by Simeag, gathers at the *Ritual square* to burn food as a sacrifice to the spirits. They chant and inhale the smoke of burning herbs.

By midnight, most Hillmen are asleep in their

tents, but the camp is patrolled by pairs of guards carrying lights.

Supply shipments. The camp is hard to locate in the hilly terrain of the North downs, but can be found by following the supply carts of food, water, and tools running to the city and back. The cart trail enters Fornost through a collapsed section of the city wall near a back entrance to the Palace. The cultists leave the supplies there, at a ruined kitchen close to the *Library*, p. 44, to be picked up later by a group from the *Feast hall*, p. 56. Occasionally, written messages are sent with the supplies.

At first, the convoys travel light, with four cultists pushing a cart, avoiding the attention of the Rangers of the North patrolling the area. If discovered, the numbers are increased to 10–15 guards per group, who rally with a force of equal size inside the castle to pass the supplies on.

Camp guards. The lands around camp are always watched by one to four guards hiding in man-made foxholes on top of the surrounding hills. If they notice outsiders approaching, they sound a warning with their horns, and a band of warriors assembles to receive the intruders. They speak a broken Common Speech and converse with their own language among themselves. The Hillmen are weary of strangers and the confrontation may turn violent; under no circumstances will they let Player-heroes into the camp itself.

During night time, additional guards patrol the camp with torches. If a hero manages to sneak in but gets caught, they are stripped of their gear and tied to the donkey posts, to be interrogated and judged later by the chieftain. A lucky hero may get off with a flogging and an expulsion from the area; anyone who is perceived as a threat to the Cult's operations at Fornost won't be treated so kindly. Later, the camp's security measures will be tightened.

Negotiating with the Hillmen

Confronting the Hillmen offers many opportunities for Councils, whether to collect information or to wriggle out of a hairy situation. The clan is Reluctant to deal with outsiders—the Company's rolls *lose (1d)* in all interactions.

Though prejudiced, the Hillmen are not openly hostile towards a wandering Company; attacking them unprovoked would certainly be a Misdeed.

Coming and going. The camp lies two days from Fornost, hidden within the North Downs. It can be approached from many directions, but an unwary Company is likely to be spotted by Hillmen guards before they catch a glimpse of the site.

Fornost grounds

‘...and the heirs of Valandil removed and dwelt at Fornost on the high North Downs, and that now too is desolate.’

The city of Fornost lies in ruins. A lone road snakes up a hill at the edge of the North Downs, passing through a gate in a crumbled stone wall. Beyond lie the cracked streets of the once-beautiful city, only the skeletons of its multitude of houses and mansions still standing. In many places, nature has taken over: trees grow through roofs and weeds push through the pavement. The old Royal Palace looms over the skyline on the city’s far edge.

Fornost grounds

Exploration Difficulty:	5
Exploration time:	Short
Pass-through time:	Short
Event rolls:	Favoured

Passing through the ruined city is not hard, but it takes time. The Company has to clear out overgrown vegetation, climb over the remnants of buildings and defensive walls, and occasionally circle around to find the easiest way forward.

What’s going on

Both the Highwaymen and the Rangers of the North have bases in the city: the former hidden in the *Crypts*, p. 34, and the latter guarding the *Palace entrance*, p. 26. The Highwaymen may ambush a careless Company, demanding a cut of any treasure the Player-heroes are carrying, while the Rangers of the North will prove an invaluable ally. The Devourer in Darkness has recently visited a *Ruined mansion*, p. 28, leaving its mark.

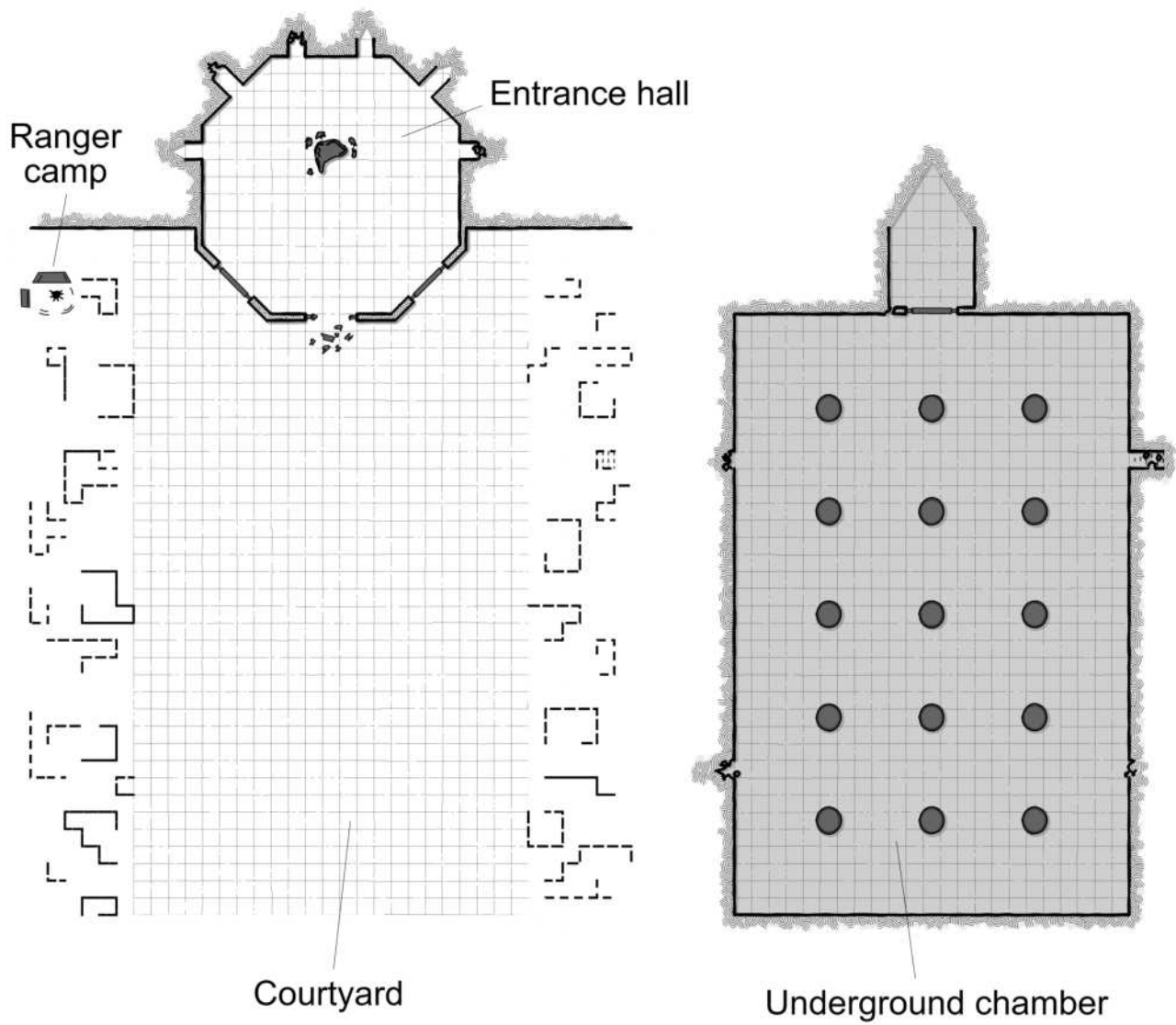
Many of the Seven Seals can also be found here, at the Palace entrance, the Crypts, the *Dome of Sight*, p. 31, and the connected *Garden*, p. 41.



Connections to other levels

The most prominent passageway into the Palace ground floor is the Palace entrance. Note that the Garden can also be accessed from the grounds. Other, hidden connections can be found in the Dome of Sight and the Crypts (connecting to the Palace underground), and through a back door behind the Palace, see *Cultist camp*, p. 22.

Palace entrance



Palace entrance

An abandoned courtyard opens next to a ruined castle, the ancient seat of the rulers of Arthedain. One can still imagine the flags fluttering in the wind and the people greeting their king on the balcony above. It was here the forces of Angmar broke into the keep. Recently, something has broken out.

Courtyard

A vast open area is surrounded by ruined buildings. On its northern end rises an old castle—sturdy walls, towers, and balconies rise up towards the sky. On the ground level, a series of doors lead in.

Doors. Three sets of double doors lead into the castle. Two of them are closed, but the middle ones are blown out, bits and pieces of wood scattered on the ground in front of an open entrance. Silvery markings glitter faintly on some of the pieces.

One of the *Seven Seals*, p. 90, was imprinted on the outside surface of the middle doors. The silver markings are dull and lifeless, and piecing them together from the rubble is difficult—the Player-heroes are likely to only catch a few high-elven words: “...cursed darkness... the light of the Sun...”. The door was smashed from the inside. The rest of the doors are stuck shut; they all lead into the Entrance hall.

A careful investigation reveals black, gooey marks on the ground around the broken door.

Balcony. High above the doors, a grand balcony overlooks the courtyard. The balcony is part of the *Upper hall*, p. 53.

Climbing to the balcony

Climbing up to the balcony is difficult, but not impossible. It can be handled as a Laborious Skill Endeavour (Resistance 6) with no Time Limit, but each failed roll leading to a moderate loss of Endurance.

Hidden staircase. Hidden in the ruins on the courtyard’s western side, there is a staircase blocked by rubble. It can only be found by good luck or a meticulous search. If cleared, it leads down to the Underground chamber.

Entrance hall

A grand hall opens behind the doors. A crumbled statue stands on the central floor, surrounded by rubble. There are several exits, some of them collapsed, others leading deeper into the darkness.

The exits lead to the *Palace ground floor*, p. 36.

Statue. The statue depicts a regal, armoured figure of elvish features, with one hand risen in greeting. The other hand lies on the floor, next to the statue’s head. The statue is covered in dark stains.

This is Eärendil the Mariner, desecrated and covered in muck by the servants of Angmar. There’s a recess on the statue’s forehead, which once bore a gemstone now lost in time.

Restoring the statue

If the Player-heroes clean and repair the statue, they will all lose 1 Shadow. For the forehead, they will need a large gemstone—a Precious Object worth at least 5 Treasure points. Perhaps one can be found in the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71?

Into the dark

Dark things wait ahead. The first time the Player-heroes venture deeper into the castle, they all gain 1 Shadow (Dread).

Ranger camp

Hidden amidst the ruins near the courtyard is a simple camp: the remains of a fire with pots and pans scattered around, and a canvas stretched between piles of rubble to provide cover from the elements.

The Rangers of the North camp here when they stay in Fornost. The site can’t be seen from the courtyard and it’s not easy to find.

Underground chamber

A staircase leads down from the street level, to a vast underground chamber directly below the courtyard. Pillars carved to the shapes of trees hold the ceiling up and cast long shadows on the floor. Silver light emanates from the chamber’s end.

The light originates from doors on the chamber’s northern wall. Other passageways have collapsed shut.

Doors. A silvery pattern shines on brass double doors. The wall next to the doors is cracked.

The pattern is another one of the *Seven Seals*. As long as the Seal remains, the doors cannot be opened. With some care, a Player-hero may squeeze through the crack to the other side, into a corridor that connects to the Palace underground.

What’s going on

Fornost’s Royal Palace stands on the city’s northern edge. The ornate Palace is built with comfort rather

than security in mind, but the area is surrounded by layers of defensive walls. The walls have crumbled to ruins, but the Palace still stands, and this is its main entrance.

The Loremaster may use the location to introduce the Rangers of the North, the Seven Seals, and rumours of the Devourer in Darkness.

Rangers of the North. The Rangers keep an eye on the Palace's entrance, guarding it against bandits and making sure the old evils stay inside. In recent years, the duty has fallen on *Prydwen*, p. 106. When the Company approaches, they may catch a glimpse of the Ranger watching them from a ruined building nearby. She calls them to halt and fires a warning shot with her bow if the heroes approach the castle doors unannounced.

If the Player-heroes manage to convince Prydwen of their good intentions, she shows them the remnants of the shattered Seal and asks for their help in investigating. Prydwen doesn't know the full history of the Seals, but she knows they seal in a great darkness and is afraid something may have broken out. Prydwen won't leave her post at the door but is willing to let the Company through, warning them no one has stepped inside for a thousand years.

Devourer in Darkness. The Seal at the Courtyard was torn apart by the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110, thirsty to drink from its power and eager to explore the ruins outside. The Devourer sensed the presence of the second Seal in the Underground chamber but

could not locate it. It spent some time on the surface, scouring the city by night, hiding from the Sun by day, but found little of value.

Soon, the Devourer will return to the Palace and continue its hunt for precious artefacts there. Maybe the Player-heroes witness its passage if they camp outside. Maybe they end up in its path, either by accident or by following its black, gooey tracks, forced to confront the monster's never-ending hunger.

The last Seal. The Seal in the Underground chamber is hard to find and is likely the last of the Seven Seals to resurface, leading to the climax of the campaign. Once it is undone, the pillars in the chamber fall, and the Courtyard and Underground chamber both collapse into a pit reaching down to the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71, located directly below. For more information, see *Concerning spirits and seals*, p. 89.

Lights in the night. At nighttime, a sickly green light shimmers in the direction of the balcony, shining from an unseen source inside the castle, see *Upper hall*, p. 53. By dawn, the light dies down.

Entrances and exits. All the main streets of the old city lead to the Courtyard through multiple walls and gates. Passageways from the Entrance hall lead deeper into the castle, to the *Palace ground floor*, p. 36—follow the Dungeon delving rules to discover new locations there. The passageway in the Underground chamber leads to *Palace underground*, p. 61 level.

Ruined mansion

A dozen ruined mansions stand along the main street of Fornost. One of them held a secret: a hidden cellar full of treasure, only recently unearthed and plundered.

Ruins

Only bits of stone walls remain of a building that once boasted two floors. One corner has collapsed completely, and the floor there has cracked, leaving a wide opening to a dark space beneath.

If the Company investigates the scene, they find signs of human activity: Debris has been cleared from around the opening, piled neatly a few paces away. Ten feet of rope is tied to a sturdy bit of the wall, looped and tucked out of sight.

In addition, the ground is marked with dark stains left by the Devourer in Darkness.

Cellar

A tight underground space, the floor and walls here are covered with strange, crystalline formations. Bits and pieces of crystal litter the floor. Among them lie a handful of old coins and many-coloured stones.

The remnants of the treasure are of no discernible value, though the Loremaster may add an interesting (non-magical) trinket or two here if they so wish.

Crystals. The crystalline formations are translucent, with branching strands of something black crisscrossing inside them.

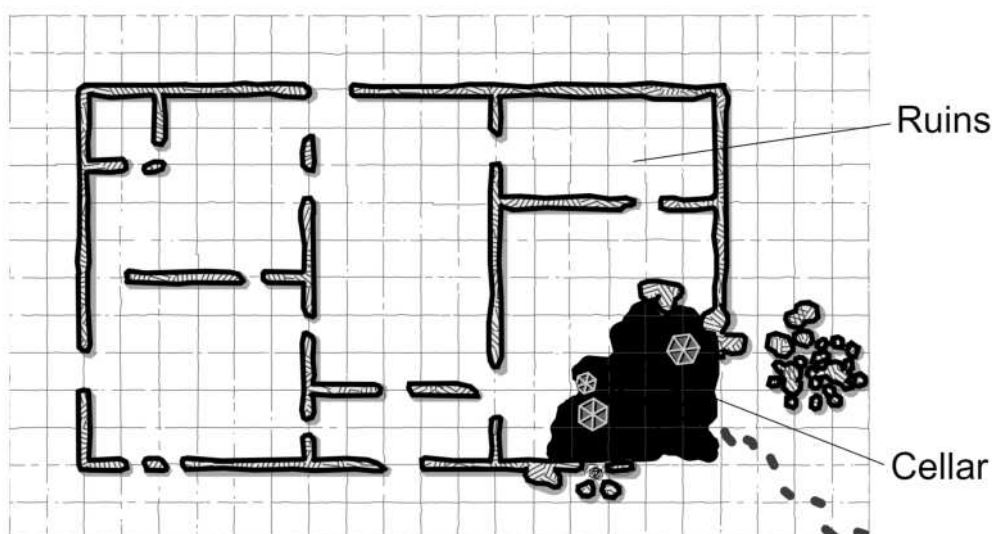
Upon closer examination, the strands seem to suck in all light that comes close, leaving the crystals dim and dull. An ominous feeling emanates from them.

Breaking the crystals

The first time a Player-hero shatters a crystal or breaks a piece off the wall, an overwhelming sense of hunger lashes out at them, followed by a moment of blindness. The Player-hero gains 1 Shadow (Dread). If they have encountered the Devourer in Darkness before, they can sense the connection between the monster and the crystals.



Ruined mansion



What's going on

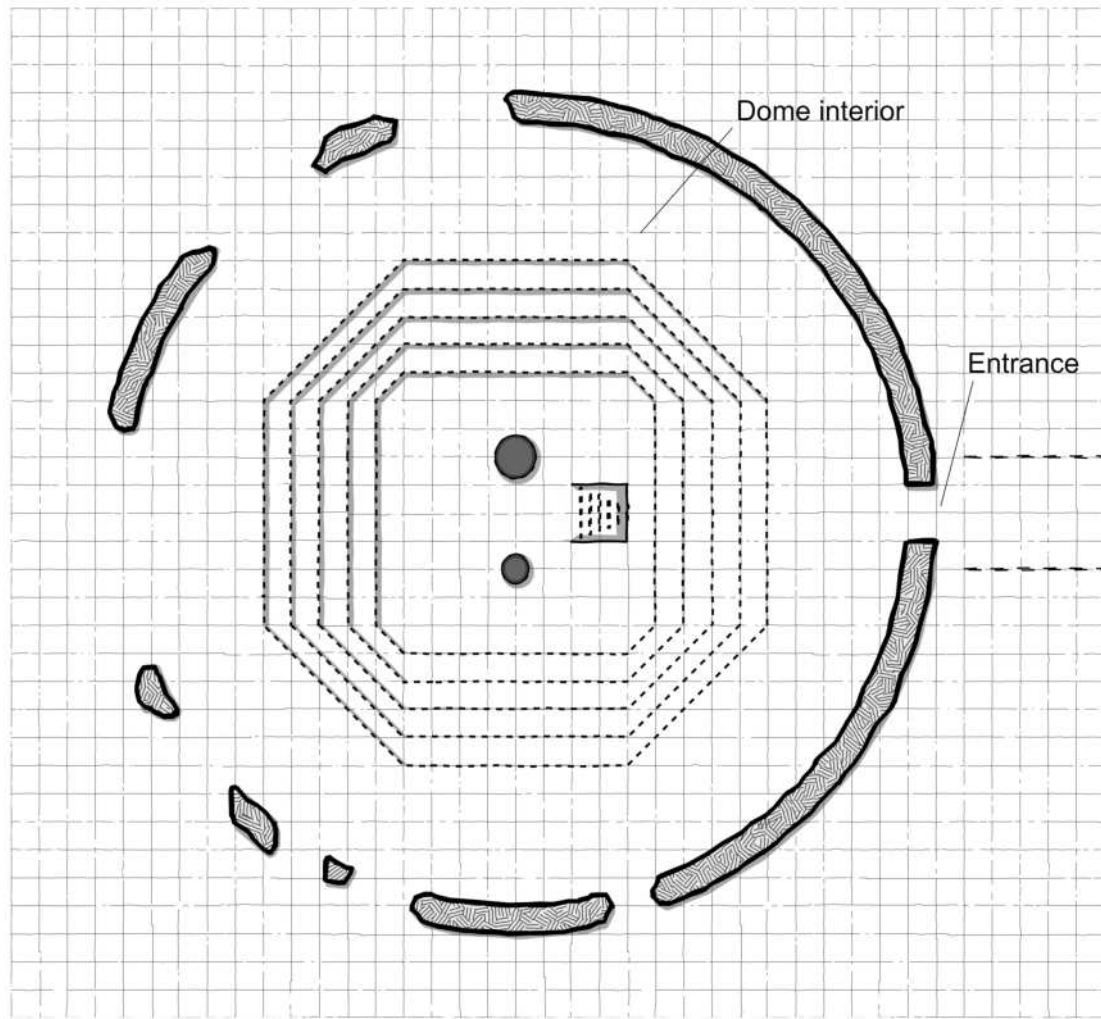
The mansion used to belong to a Dúnedain noble, and the cellar hid his personal treasure, one of the few not found by the minions of Angmar. It lay untouched for a thousand years until the earthquake summoned by the Pale Rider broke the cellar's roof.

Soon after, Caleb Thyme found the exposed treasure. The *Highwaymen*, p. 102 learned of it through him, but when they returned to the site, a new claimant had appeared: the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110, who spun a crystal cocoon inside which to digest the valuables it had just consumed.

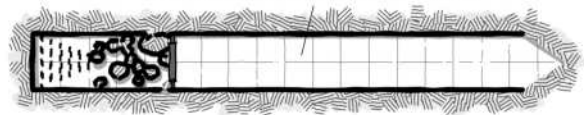
Devourer in Darkness. The Devourer in Darkness ate the cellar's treasure. Most likely, it has left the cellar by the time the Company arrives at the mansion. Only the leftovers of its cocoon remain.

Highwaymen. The Highwaymen are furious about the lost treasure. They may have found it missing earlier and are now keeping an eye on the site in case the culprit returns. Alternatively, they may have just arrived to check the place out, maybe having been driven away by the Devourer in Darkness earlier. In any case, a group of bandits accuses the Company of stealing their haul and demands they hand over all the valuables they are carrying. If the bandits defeat the Company in battle, they tie the Player-heroes up and drag them to the *Highwaymen's hideout*, p. 35, to be interrogated by Alayna Rosebud.

Dome of Sight



Underground passageway



Dome of Sight

In the days of Arthedain, Fornost hosted two of the Palantíri, the legendary Seeing Stones. They were housed in the magnificent Dome of Sight in the middle of the city. The Stones are long lost, but the Dome’s ruins remain.

Entrance

One of Fornost’s main streets leads from the Royal Palace to a half-collapsed dome. Dozens of yards in diameter, the structure looms over the surrounding ruins. Faded Elven letters are etched to a stone arch above an open entrance.

Faded text. The Sindarin text reads:
“Seeker of wisdom,
step into the Dome of Sight,
and gaze into the unknown
but beware of what gazes back.”

Based on the text, knowledgeable Player-heroes may recognise this as the former holding place of the Palantíri of Fornost.

Dome interior

The back half of the dome has collapsed, but the front still stands, providing cover from the elements.

Steps descend towards the middle of the chamber, which houses two stone pedestals.

Mosaic sky. The inside of the dome is covered by fine mosaic tiles shining in rainbow hues, forming patterns that resemble constellations. Many tiles have fallen off and lie scattered on the floor.

The seven stars of the Sickle of the Valar (the Plough or the Big Dipper) are highlighted in the mosaic in gold. The constellations match the starry sky at a certain time of the night and year—to be precise, at midnight on winter solstice.

The dome is mesmerizing: the mosaic stars seem to twinkle, conjuring a longing for far-away places and making an onlooker drowsy.

Pedestals. Two ornate stone pedestals—one slightly larger than the other—stand a few yards apart. The pedestals curve down in the middle, as if meant to hold something large and round. Next to the pedestals, a set of stairs leads underground.

The Palantíri used to lie on the pedestals; people would walk around them to gaze into the stones from different angles. The stairs lead to the Underground passageway.

Dream visions

Player-heroes sleeping inside the Dome may receive visions from faraway places. Roll one Feat die for each Player-hero and consult the table below.

DREAM TABLE:

Feat die	Dream
Φ	The Player-hero is caught in the fiery gaze of the Eye Sauron! They gain 4 Shadow (Dread).
1	The Player-hero catches a glimpse of a figure with dark eyes and long, white hair and beard, gazing into the hero’s direction with a concentrated expression.
2–3	The Player-hero sees one of the enemy factions gathering their forces. They gain 1 Shadow (Dread).
4–7	No dreams. The Player-hero sleeps soundly. They lose 1 Fatigue.
8–9	The Player-hero sees visions of a far-away land of peace and plenty. They gain 1 Hope.
10	The Player-hero sees two large, round stones, lying at the bottom of the sea, buried in sand and seaweed.
℥	The Player-hero receives a vision of a future victory against an enemy. They lose 1 Shadow.

A Player-hero may only be affected once in a given Adventuring Phase.

Underground passageway

Soon after the staircase, the underground passageway is blocked by rubble from a collapsed ceiling.

Clearing the rubble takes considerable effort, but reveals a closed door with a silvery pattern etched on its surface. Beyond the door, a corridor connects to the Palace underground level.

Opening the corridor

Digging the corridor open is a Laborious Skill Endeavour (Resistance 6) with no Time Limit, but a Player-hero gains 1 Fatigue after each roll they contribute to the Endeavour.

Door. The pattern on the door is one of the Seven Seals. Note that the door cannot be opened while the Seal remains.

What's going on

The wise of Arthedain came here to gaze into Fornost's Palantíri, two magical Seeing Stones with the ability to receive visions from faraway places and to communicate with other Stones. Their use required a disciplined mind and preferably a high lineage, but over the years, the kings and their advisors gleaned much wisdom from the Palantíri. The history of the Stones is outlined below; see also *History of Fornost*, p. 87.

The Stones are lost, but some of their charm remains. If the Company spends their night inside the Dome, they may receive visions in their dreams, see the *Dream visions* box.

The Seeing Stones. Seven Seeing Stones were saved from the destruction of the island kingdom of

Númenor three thousand years ago. They were divided among the northern kingdom of Arthedain and the southern kingdom of Gondor.

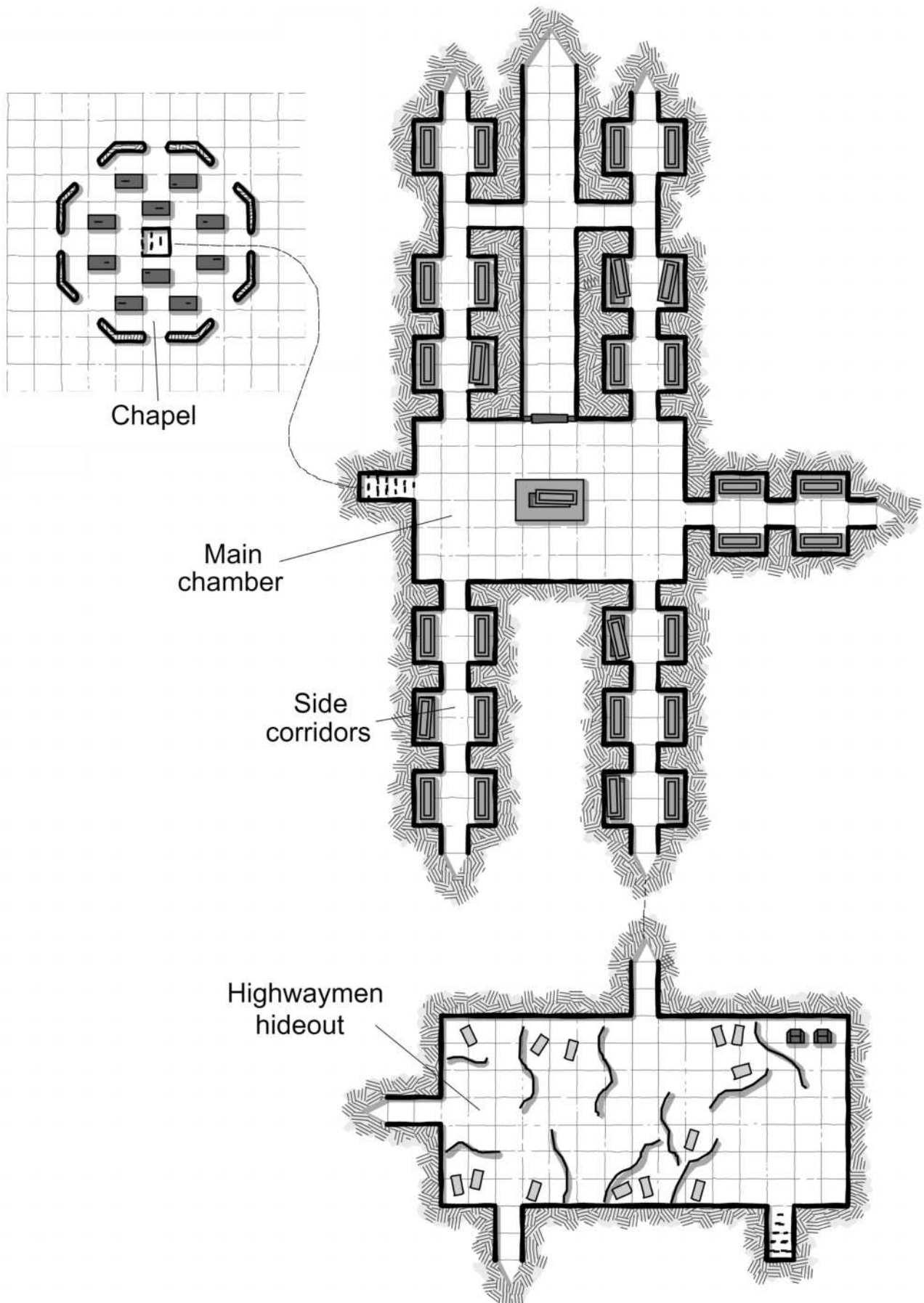
One of the northern Stones was moved to Fornost when the city became the capital of Arthedain, the successor kingdom of Arnor, and the Dome of Sight was built to house the Palantír. Another stone was held in the fortress of Amon Sûl (Weathertop), but it was evacuated to Fornost when Angmar attacked, and room was made for it inside the Dome. Both stones were saved from the sack of Fornost via the Underground passageway—no small feat amidst the chaos—and evacuated with King Arvedui. When Arvedui's ship later sank to the northern sea, the Palantíri, too, were lost in the waves.

The remaining Stone in the north is held at the White Towers, see *Ruins of the Lost Realm*, p. 58. The locations of Gondor's stones are not known to many, but one of them is lost, and the others are held by the stewards in Minas Tirith, Saruman the White in Orthanc, and Sauron in Barad-Dûr.

The Seal. The Dome of Sight is usually a tranquil and peaceful place, but it does host one of the Seven Seals, which will eventually attract the attention of the factions and the Devourer in Darkness. The Devourer will most likely approach the Underground passageway from the Palace's direction, suck in the Seal's magic, and smash the door to pieces. The Rangers of the North may find the broken Seal and alert the Company of the progressing threat.

Entrances and exits. The Dome is open to the ruined city. The Underground passageway connects it to the Palace underground level, but the route is blocked by a door with one of the Seven Seals.

Crypts



Crypts

Next to the Royal Palace, beneath the streets of Fornost, the kings of Arthedain lie buried. Recently, their sleep has been disturbed.

Chapel

Above ground, a small chapel stands in the middle of an open square. It is a round building with doorways open to eight directions.

Inside, brass plaques decorate benches of polished stone. In the middle of the chapel, stairs descend underground.

The people of Arthedain burned candles on the benches in the memory of the dead. The stairs lead to the Main chamber of the Crypts.

Plaques. The plaques list names together with dates of birth and death. A knowledgeable Player-hero may recognise the names from Arthedain's royal line.

Main chamber

A stone casket lies in middle of this cool, arched chamber. Multiple corridors lead further underground. The widest is blocked by a stone door, with silver markings shining dimly on its surface.

Tomb. A set of steps leads up to a pedestal housing the heavy casket. The lid is carved in the shape of a regal Man resting peacefully, with his hands crossed on his chest. It has been slid partly aside, revealing the space beneath.

Inside, a mummified corpse lies in the same position as depicted on the lid. A brass plaque at the casket's feet reveals this to be Amlaith of Fornost, the first king of Arthedain. The tomb is otherwise empty.

The casket was opened by the *Highwaymen*, see below, who looted it for treasure. If the dead have arisen, the corpse is also gone and wanders the corridors as a Barrow-wight, see *Seal and traitor spirits* below.

Sealed door. The markings on the stone door form one of the *Seven Seals*, p. 90. While the seal remains unbroken, the door cannot be opened.

Signs of activity. Attentive Player-heroes may find signs of recent activity in the chamber: soot marks on the walls left by torches, a burned torch tossed aside, and muddy bootprints leading to one of the side corridors. Following the tracks leads the Company to the Highwaymen's hideout.

Kings of Arthedain

The fourteen kings of Arthedain lying in the Crypts include

- Amlaith, T.A. 726–946
- Beleg, T.A. 811–1029
- Mallor, T.A. 895–1110
- Celepharn, T.A. 979–1191
- Celebrindor, T.A. 1062–1272
- Malvegil, T.A. 1144–1349
- Argeleb I, T.A. 1226–1356
- Arveleg I, T.A. 1309–1409
- Araphor, T.A. 1391–1589
- Argeleb II, T.A. 1473–1670
- Arvegil T.A. 1553–1743
- Arveleg II, T.A. 1633–1813
- Araval, T.A. 1711–1891
- Araphant, T.A. 1789–1964

King Arvedui, T.A. 1864–1974, the fifteenth and last of the line, was lost at sea and is not buried here.

Side corridors

The side corridors are lined with recesses that contain more stone caskets. The passageways branch and continue far into the darkness.

Caskets. The caskets resemble the one in the Main chamber, with the features of the owner carved on the lid and a brass plaque announcing their identity. These include the kings of Arthedain together with their families and closest advisors.

Some of the tombs have been opened, others lie intact. There is also empty space for more caskets.

Beyond the Seal. Some of the passageways connect into the wide corridor behind the Sealed door. The Seal can also be seen from the backside. The corridor leads to the Palace underground level.

Robbing the tombs

The sleep of the dead should not be disturbed. Opening the tombs is a Misdeed worth 2 Shadow points. Put together, the valuables inside constitute a greater Hoard, but looting them is a Misdeed worth 3 Shadow points.

Highwaymen's hideout

This large chamber contains no tombs. Canvases hang from the ceiling and the walls, dividing the space into more private sections. Rough-looking Men move amidst the canvases. Torches burn on the walls.

This is the hideout of the Highwaymen. Between the canvases, there are sleeping places made of rags, stashes of private belongings, and barrels of dried meat and other supplies.

Treasure chests. In the corner, two ruffians guard a group of closed chests. These hold the Highwaymen's collective treasure, confiscated from the crypts, the ruins of the city, and travellers in the nearby lands.

Stairs up. In another corner, a narrow stairway leads to the street level, to an open area in the ruins with many small fires and cooking pots.

What's going on

These are the crypts of Arthedain's royalty. Some of the tombs were robbed when Fornst fell to Angmar a thousand years ago, but the Rangers of the North repaired the damage to the best of their ability when the city was retaken. They also placed one of the Seven Seals here. Now few remember the crypts' location, save for their most recent bandit visitors.

Highwaymen. When the *Highwaymen*, p. 102, arrived in the city, they established their hideout in the crypts below the street level. Some of them started looting the tombs, until their leader, Alayna Rosebud, forbid the activity, believing it to bring bad luck.

By day, most of the Highwaymen spend their time in the city, exploring, cooking, and gathering supplies. A handful stays back in the hideout, and more within shouting distance on the open area above the chamber.

By night, the Highwaymen retreat underground to rest. Some may sneak into the crypts to loot in secret, defying Alayna's command.

Seal and traitor spirits. At the start of the campaign, malicious spirits infest the Palace's *Throne room*, p. 37, led by the False King Gwydyon. If disturbed, the spirits flee underground, and, if the Seal in the Crypts is broken, they swoop in and inhabit the corpses of the dead kings, becoming Barrow-wights (see *The One Ring*, p. 154).

Wights in the opened tombs rise up and wander the corridors, harrasing any Highwaymen and Player-heroes, trying to claim back stolen treasure. The False King is more powerful than the others, animating the corpse of Amlaith into a monstrosity with red glowing eyes (*False King reanimated*).

Some of the spirits inhabit corpses in the undisturbed tombs. If such a tomb is ever opened, the wight jumps up and attacks the would-be tomb robber.

FALSE KING REANIMATED

Treacherous, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

7

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

32

2

7

+2

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Ancient Sword 3 (5/16, Pierce), Chilling Touch 2 (6/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: The False King reanimated has all the Fell Abilities of a Barrow-wight, see *The One Ring*, p. 154.

Entrances and exits. The Crypts connect to the street level of Fornost through the Chapel and Highwaymen's hideout, also also through other hidden entrances around this part of the city. They also connect to the Palace underground level through the tunnel behind the Sealed door.



Palace ground floor

...here too the vigilance had failed, and treachery had yielded up the Tower to the Lord of the Ringwraiths, and now for long years it had been held by evil things.

The ground floor of the Palace is full of collapsed rooms, rubble-filled corridors, and abandoned hallways. The collapsed structures block most light from entering, but here and there, a surviving window lets the rays of the Sun in.

Palace ground floor

Exploration Difficulty:	9
Exploration time:	Long
Pass-through time:	Short
Event rolls:	One Feat Die

The atmosphere is melancholic—one can feel the weight of centuries of neglect and decay lying heavily on the once-magnificent castle. Searching through the ground floor tests the Company’s patience and perseverance more than their wits or courage.

What’s going on

At first sight, the ground floor may seem abandoned and empty, but it does hide locations of interest. The *Throne room*, p. 37, offers a glimpse into Fornost’s dark past, and the *Library*, p. 44, holds secrets for those who know where to look. The Wraiths may stalk the Company here, but they avoid direct engagement. When the Cult of the Witch arrives in Fornost, they will start their investigations on the ground floor.

Connections to other levels

The Palace ground floor is connected to Fornost grounds through the *Palace entrance*, p. 26 and the *Garden*, p. 41. There are also other, more subtle passageways in and out of the castle, for example through a back door behind the castle, see *Supply shipments*, p. 23, or through a secret tunnel in the *Dome of Sight*, p. 31.

The Palace ground floor is connected to the Palace upper floor and the Palace underground through the *Grand staircase*, p. 50. It is also connected to the upper floor through the staircase in the *Library*.

Throne room

In this gallery, the rulers of Arthedain held their court. Beneath the watchful eyes of their forefathers, they served the kingdom, making decisions and exercising justice. Now the chamber is the haunted tomb of those who betrayed the last king.

Balcony

Double doors open to a balcony overlooking a dim room. Pillars line the room's walls; faint light shines through far-off windows. Two creaky stairways lead down from the balcony to the floor of the gallery.

Gallery

Every surface down here is covered in filth, dirt, and rubble. Small pieces of bone crunch under the feet. Something hangs on the walls behind rows of pillars. Ahead, steps arise on a dais beneath windows. The once-beautiful hall has been thoroughly desecrated.

Pillars. The pillars are finely carved in geometric shapes, but covered in muck.

Corpses on the walls. The figures on the walls are the remains of human corpses, nailed there with limbs spread out. The corpses are old and decayed, some fallen to pieces on the floor. There are six in total, three on the left and three on the right wall.

Throne

Three steps lead up to the end of the gallery. Faint light pours through painted windows, revealing the silhouette of a throne, with heaps and piles of stuff laid neatly around it. Something sits on the throne.

Crowned man. The occupant of the throne is a decayed corpse, clad in the remains of armour, wearing a crude crown. The crown is nailed to the corpse's head. Sindarin writing runs around its edge:

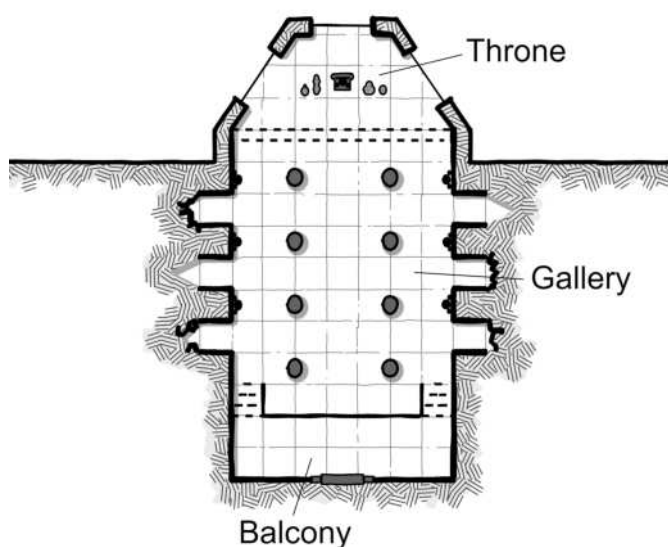
"Gwydyon the First, King of Fornost.
Crowned as promised as payment
for his service to Angmar.
May he reign in eternity."

If a Player-hero disturbs the corpse in any way, the False King awakens, his eyes light up with eerie red light, and he attacks, see *False King's fury* below.

Treasure. A collection of jewellery, gems, cups, and other precious items is carefully arranged around the throne. A strong sense of wrongness lingers in the air: touching the valuables is not a good idea.

The treasure comprises a greater Hoard. It is cursed by an evil history; touching anything again awakens the False King, see *False King's fury* below.

Throne room



Cursed treasure

Any Player-hero taking some of the treasure to keep gains 2 Shadow (Greed). In addition, if any magical treasure is found in the hoard, the Loremaster is encouraged to bestow a fitting curse upon it, maybe lifted by performing a task for a Dúnedain descendant of a victim of the sacking of Fornost.

Windows. Three stained-glass windows cover the walls from floor to ceiling. Blackened with age and dirt, they only let in dim light. Three figures in royal garments are painted on them:

- Left: A fair, long-haired man with a shining gem on his brow and a silver rod in his hand, with the sun in the background;
- Right: A broad-shouldered bearded man with a ring in the shape of two serpents with emerald eyes, with a white tree and a crescent moon in the background;
- Middle: A tall man in a winged helm, holding a down-pointing, glowing sword with both hands, against a field of seven stars.

These are the first three kings of Arnor: Elendil with his famous sword Narsil (middle); his son Isildur with the ring of Barahir, a family heirloom (right); and Velandil, Isildur's son, with the Star of Elendil and the sceptre of Annúminas, the royal symbols of the Northern Kingdom (left).

If the windows are cleaned (or broken), sunlight gets in, and the Player-heroes can see a courtyard with an overgrown garden opening below, see *Garden*, p. 41.

What's going on

The corpse on the throne is Gwydyon, a distant relative of kings and a former guard captain. He betrayed the city and opened its gates to the armies of Angmar. The Witch-king promised him a great reward and the crown of Fornost. The promise was kept, and now Gwydyon sits eternally on his hard-earned throne as a False King, the city's riches set at his feet and the remains of his fellow conspirators hanging on the walls.

False King's fury. The False King's spirit guards what it perceives to be its property with eternal vengefulness. If the throne or treasure is disturbed, the spirit returns to animate the body, making its eyes glow red; it picks up a rusted sword, and attacks. At the same time, six Shadows swoop into the room from the walls where the decayed corpses hang and start to harass the Player-heroes (Shadow Level 1).

If the False King is defeated, his spirit detaches from the corpse and leads the other spirits away. If the Player-heroes flee at any point, the undead won't follow them beyond the throne room.

**FALSE KING**

Treacherous, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

7

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

32

2

7

+2

2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Rusty Sword 3 (5/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Great Leap*. Spend 1 Hate to attack any Player-hero, in any combat stance, including Rearward.

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll ill-favoured.

Hate Sunlight. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.

The False King is an Undead creature and also possesses all the Undead-specific Fell Abilities, see *The One Ring*, p. 154.

First encounter? The throne room is a good destination for the Company's first dwell into Fornost. The False King is a powerful enemy, but he is alone; the Loremaster can tune the difficulty of the encounter by choosing when to use—and when not to use—his Hate points. The Shadows create time pressure during the fight and introduce the Shadow Level mechanic.

Wraiths. The wraiths sometimes stalk the throne room. A Fell Wraith may appear on the balcony as the Company explores the room below, disappearing back into the corridors as soon as the Player-heroes notice it. At night, another wraith may be seen walking in the garden below the windows.

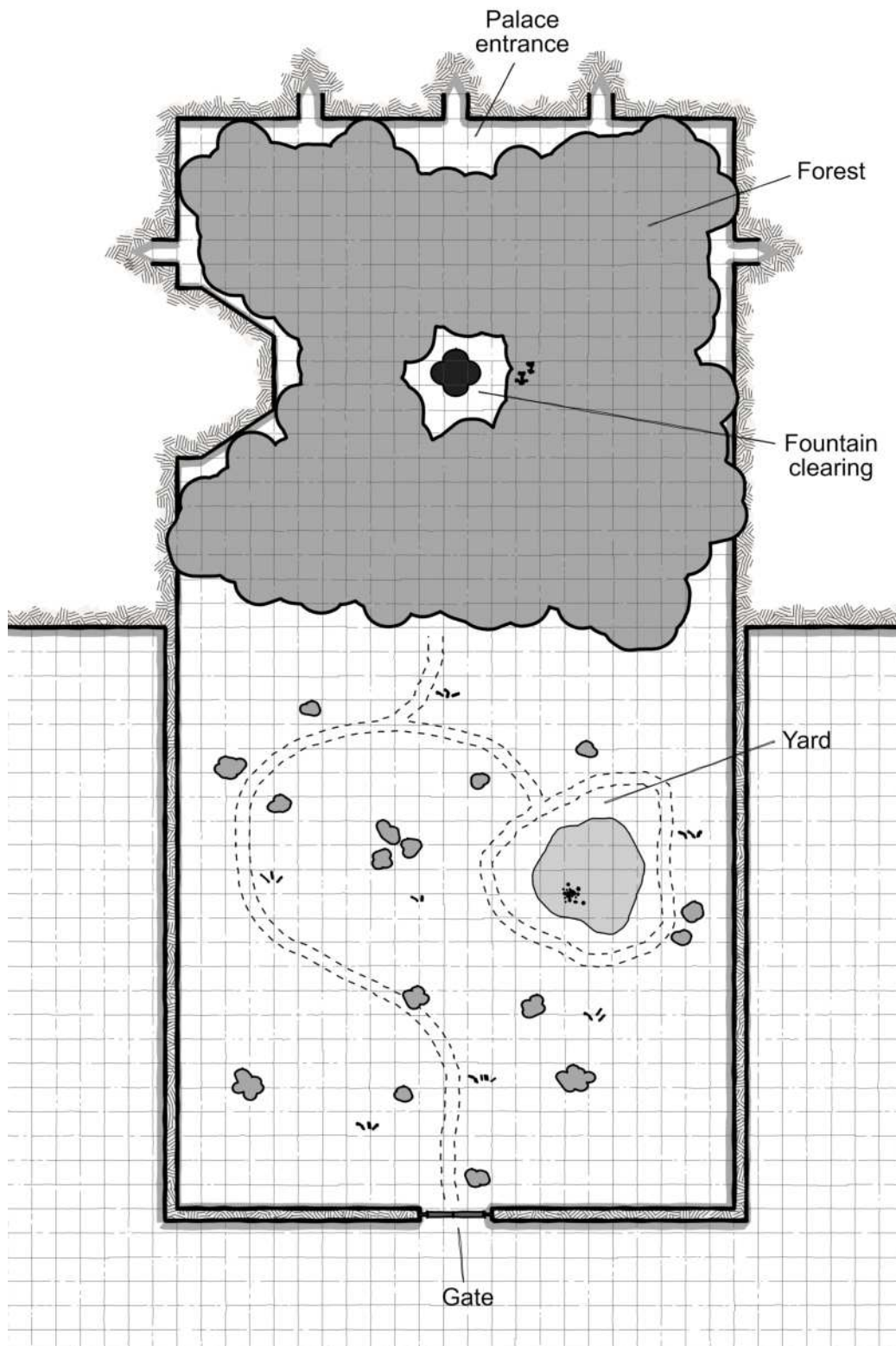
Entrances and exits. The double doors on the balcony are the current main entrance to the room. This is the recommended initial entrance for the Player-heroes; they will first see the gallery's pillars and

the dark shape of a throne, lined with light from the windows (subject to the time of day).

There used to be another entrance below the balcony, but it is now covered in rubble. There are six more side entrances to the gallery, most of them totally or partly collapsed; the Lore-master may decide on the details in the most dramatically appropriate manner.

The windows connect the throne room to the *Garden*, p. 41.

Garden



Garden

At the southern edge of the Palace, open to the sky, there is a garden. In ages past, people came here to relax on leisurely strolls, enjoying the birdsong and the water bubbling in an ornate fountain. Now the birds are quiet and the fountain is dry. The garden is overgrown with black trees, and those lured to rest under their shadow will never wake up again.

Gate

Next to the Palace, an open area is separated from the city by stone walls. The walls are covered in vines, and treetops rise to view behind them.

Double gates of solid bronze block the area's entrance. On the gates' surface, beneath a layer of overgrown ivy, something shines in silvery hues.

Climbing over the walls is not hard. The gates are not locked, but the ivy has to be cleared out before they can be opened. Either approach leads the Company to the yard.

Seals. Two of the *Seven Seals*, p. 90 are imbued on the double gates, one on each half.

Yard

Inside the walls, the area resembles an overgrown garden. Weeds, bushes, and many-coloured flowers grow beside old paths trailing around a little pond. A forest of black trees with yellow leaves stands closer to the Palace. A sweet smell emanates from the trees' direction.

Herbs in the garden

At the Loremaster's discretion, the Player-heroes may find the following herbs in the garden:

- Athelas, or kingsfoil: a plant with long leaves and a sweet scent. A Player-hero making a **Healing** roll to help a Wounded character *gains* (1d) and, if the roll is successful, the character removes 1 point of Shadow.
- Jester's prong: a spiky bush with blue, bulbous flowers and a sickening odour. Eating the flowers causes vomiting, helping to cleanse the body of poisons.
- Bloodbell: a small plant with pale red berries. The berries taste bitter and are poisonous; eating multiple causes a severe loss of Endurance.

Pond. The water of the pond is murky. A swarm of insects buzzes over it.

The pond is a possible hiding place for the *Black Blade of the Mountain King*, p. 116, or, alternatively, a Trinket of the Loremaster's choice.

Insect swarm

The insects attack any Player-hero disturbing them or the pond. The swarm blocks the hero's vision, and the hero loses 1 point of Endurance as the insects bite into their flesh. The hero must scatter the swarm with an appropriate successful Skill roll; each failure leads to an additional point of Endurance loss.

Forest

The sky is dimmed by the canopies of waxy, yellow leaves belonging to black-barked trees. Yellow fruits grow on their branches. Wild bushes and weeds cover the ground. The air is humid and noticeably warm and carries an intense sweet smell.

Player-heroes staying in the forest for a long time start to feel drowsy. In the middle of the forest there is a clearing with a fountain, see below.

Bones in the soil

If the Player-heroes walking in the forest succeed in an **Awareness** roll, they notice the skeletal remains of small birds and rodents crunching beneath their feet. The forest lured the animals into an eternal sleep, and now their bodies fertilise the earth.

Fruits. The fruits are the size of a fist; the sweet smell emanates from them. The smell grows overwhelming if a Player-hero takes a closer sniff.



Eating the fruits

If a Player-hero bites into a fruit, they must make an **Athletics** roll where they *lose* (2d). On failure, the hero grows drowsy, falls asleep, and gains 2 points of Fatigue. They only wake up after being removed from the smelly air of the forest and the fountain.

Through the forest

Passing through the overgrown forest requires a Laborious Skill Endeavour (Resistance 6).

The sweet smell of the fruits induces drowsiness in the Player-heroes. When a Player-hero first fails a roll during the Skill Endeavour, the hero grows drowsy: they are considered *Wearied* while in the Forest or at the Fountain clearing. On a second failure, the hero falls asleep as if they had eaten one of the yellow fruits. The effects reset when the Player-hero is no longer in the *hiresec:forest* or at the Fountain clearing.

If the Player-heroes have to drag their unconscious companions along, the rolls for the Skill Endeavour may lose one or more dice at the Loremaster's discretion. If backtracking an old trail, the rolls *gain* (1d). One success is needed to return back from a partly-finished Endeavour.

Completing the Skill Endeavour lets the Company pass between the Yard and the Fountain clearing or the Fountain clearing and the Palace entrance.

Fountain clearing

On a clearing in the forest rises a fountain. Its centerpiece is carved into the shapes of four large fish facing four pools. Water once showered from the fish's mouths, but now the fountain is silent.

If the Company looks up, part of the Palace protrudes over the forest, with three large windows facing the fountain. If the Company searches the clearing, their attention is caught by a thicket of black flowers.

Pools. A thin layer of murky water covers the pools' bottoms. A handful of gold coins lie in the mud, worth treasure points equal to the number rolled on a single Success die. There is also a trinket hidden in the mouth of one of the fish.

Shady figures can sometimes be seen moving in the reflections of the water.

Palace windows. The windows are made of stained glass and seem to depict three men. The details are hard to make out from here. These are the windows of the *Throne room*, p. 37.

Path of flowers. A carpet of black flowers grows at the clearing's edge. It continues some way into the woods and then vanishes. At the end of the flower path, buried beneath the ground, is a chest containing a lesser Hoard—the hidden treasure of a long-dead bandit.

Digging up the treasure

Finding the treasure by digging requires a Simple Skill Endeavour with the same rules as for travelling through the forest. This Skill Endeavour can be aborted at any time with no cost.

Palace entrance

Several open doorways lead into the Palace. The forest surrounds the entrances and has to be passed through to move to and from the rest of the Garden.

What's going on

The evil taint of Angmar has taken over the Palace's old garden. While the Company might not encounter enemies here, a sense of malice permeates the air.

Wraiths. Sometimes, a lone wraith can be seen sitting at the edge of the fountain. If it notices the Player-heroes, it departs and vanishes into the forest before Player-heroes can reach it.

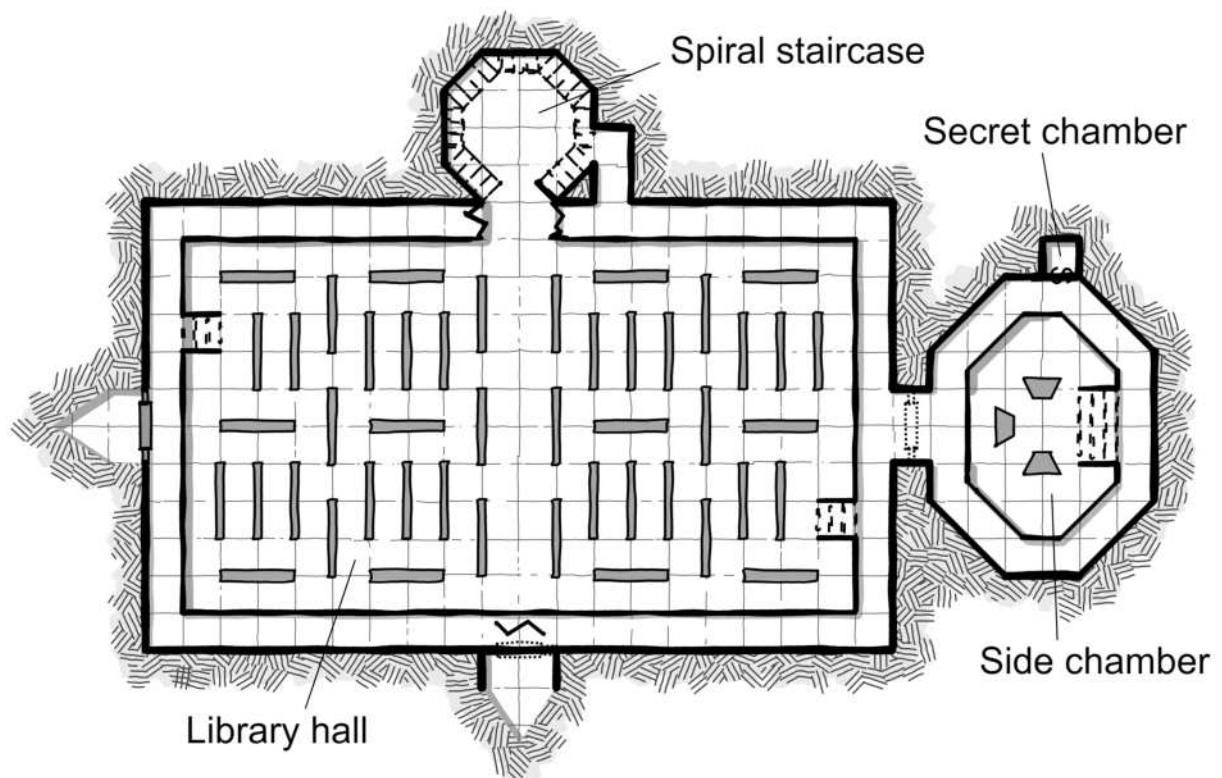
The wraiths also keep watch on the courtyard through the fountain pool (see *Mirror of sight*, p. 117). If they see sleeping Player-heroes, they may come and drag the heroes into the *Dungeons*, p. 68, locking them into cells waiting to be sacrificed in the ritual chamber.

Cult of the Witch. If the cult gets control of the courtyard, they may cut down the trees and use the fruits as an ingredient in a poisonous concoction that makes all who drink it fall asleep unless they succeed in an **Athletics** check, where they *lose* (2d). They will also coat their weapons in the same poison, causing the same effects on a piercing blow that Wounds an opponent.

Eventually, the cult moves to undo the Seals on the gates.

Entrances and exits. The Yard can be entered from the city, over the walls or through the gate. The entrances on the walls connect the Garden to the Palace ground floor. The stained glass windows connect the Garden directly to the *Throne room*, p. 37, although climbing up is difficult.

Library



Library

The Palace's library held knowledge of history, medicine, architecture, and the sciences, preserved from Númenor of old. The library was spared in the sack of Fornost, but after a thousand years of neglect, most manuscripts have fallen to rot and decay. Even so, a careful seeker may find interesting bits of lore buried within.

Library hall

Rows upon rows of shelves fill this large room, stretching out into the darkness. A balcony runs along the walls, and an arched ceiling looms high above. A musty smell of decay permeates the air.

The shelves and the balcony are made of an ebony, wood-like material resistant to the passage of time. There once were windows in the ceiling, but creeping vines and falling rubble have blocked them all—the Player-heroes can only see up to the reach of their lights, leaving the rest of the room in darkness.

Doorways lead deeper into the Palace in the south and to a spiral staircase in the north, and closed double doors lead to the side chamber in the east. Two stairways rise from the ground level to the balcony on the eastern and western walls.

Shelves. The shelves stand three yards tall, forming an ebony labyrinth. They are filled with the mushy remains of books, destroyed by moisture and rot.

Books in the library

Most of the books and scrolls in the library are destroyed, but a few remain readable. At the Loremaster's discretion, the Player-heroes may find the following manuscripts:

- Map of Eriador: a depiction of the lands around Fornost in T.A. 1955, including Arthedain, Rhudaur, Cardolan, and Angmar. Fornost is marked with a star.
- Master Eugene's Herbiology: a treatise on the herbs and plants of Eriador. Many of the plants found in the Garden are described here (see *Herbs in the garden*, p. 41).
- Astrological charts: a faded manuscript on constellations and their significance as indicators of the fates of Men.
- History of Arnor: a tome on the history and rulers of the northern kingdom of Arnor, from its founding in S.A. 3320 up to its splitting into three parts in T.A. 861.

Balcony. More shelves line the walls here, tucked full of scroll cases. An ornate rail guards the drop to the ground floor.

The balcony has fallen to pieces on the northern wall above the entrance to the spiral staircase. Above the southern exit, the balcony is weak: it creaks when a Player-hero steps on it and may crumble if crossed in a hurry.

An open archway leads to the side chamber on the eastern wall, connecting to the balcony on the other side.

Like the books, most of the scrolls have crumbled to dust.

Rotten walkways

When a Player-hero crosses the balcony above the southern exit, a successful **Awareness** roll lets them notice the frailness of the structure. If a Player-hero crosses this section in a hurry, the balcony crumbles beneath their feet. A successful **Athletics** roll is needed to complete the crossing safely—otherwise, the Player-hero falls, suffering a moderate loss of Endurance (short fall, see *The One Ring*, p. 134).

The same rules may be applied to the staircase in the side chamber.

Double doors. The doors are closed. Text is carved on the stone above them:

“A Elbereth Gilthoniel,
enlighten us on our path
towards wisdom.”

The doors are not locked, but they are stuck, and force is needed to pry them open.

Spiral staircase

A stone staircase spirals up along the wall of a tower. It connects to the balcony on the northeastern wall of the library hall. The stairway continues up from there, ending on the Palace upper floor.

Side chamber

This chamber resembles the main library hall. Bookshelves line the walls, and three bookrests face the center of the room. The floor is decorated with a complicated mosaic resembling a starry sky. On the eastern wall, a wide staircase rises to a balcony that runs along the walls. The staircase is rotten through and dangerous to climb.

Bookrests. Two of the bookrests are empty; the last holds the remains of a book. It is up to the Loremaster to decide if the book is in a readable condition—if so, they may pick one from the *Books in the library*, p. 44.

Mosaic floor. Pressing the star tiles of the mosaic makes them sink slightly into the floor. After a moment, the stars return to their original positions. Hidden amidst the stars is the Sickle of the Valar (the Plough or the Big Dipper, as it is called today). If the seven stars of the Sickle are pressed simultaneously without any other stars, a section of the wall swings open, revealing a secret chamber.

The mosaic is depicted on the adjacent page in two figures: a first one with unmarked stars, and a second one with the Sickle highlighted. The Loremaster should hand the first figure to the players.

Secret chamber

In the middle of this small room stands one more bookrest. Something big and rectangular lies on it, wrapped in layers of cloth and leather. Valuable items are scattered on the floor.

Inside the wrappings is the *Golden Book of Fornost*, p. 116. The valuables constitute a greater Hoard.

What's going on

The library contains information about Fornost's past. The Loremaster may use the location to convey lore to an interested Company through the preserved manuscripts—these need not be limited to those listed in *Books in the library*. The Loremaster should emphasize the vastness of the space and the melancholy caused by knowledge lost in time.

The Company may wish to return here multiple times to search for additional information or to solve the mosaic floor puzzle in the side chamber. The Loremaster can make these visits unique and exciting by involving the Cult of the Witch or the Devourer in Darkness.

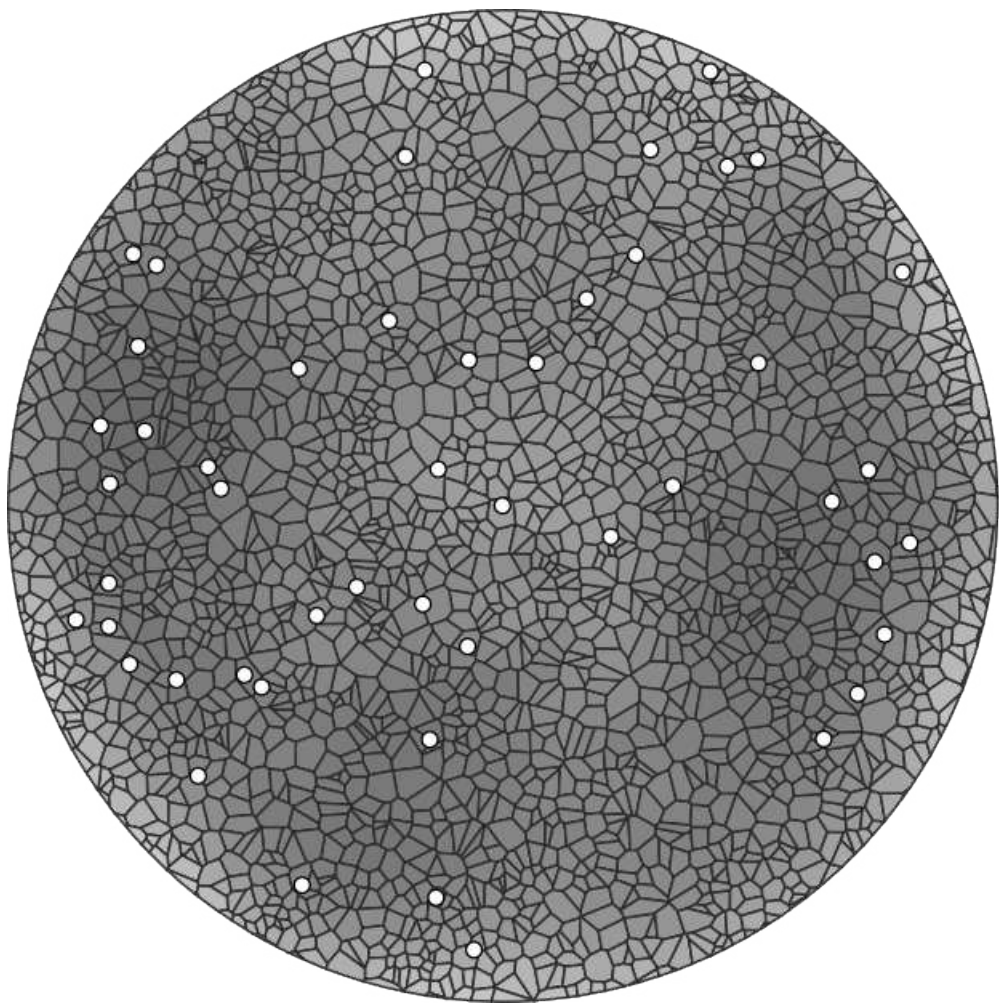
Cult of the Witch. This is one of the first rooms the Cult of the Witch finds. They spend some time here, searching for clues to help them in their mission.

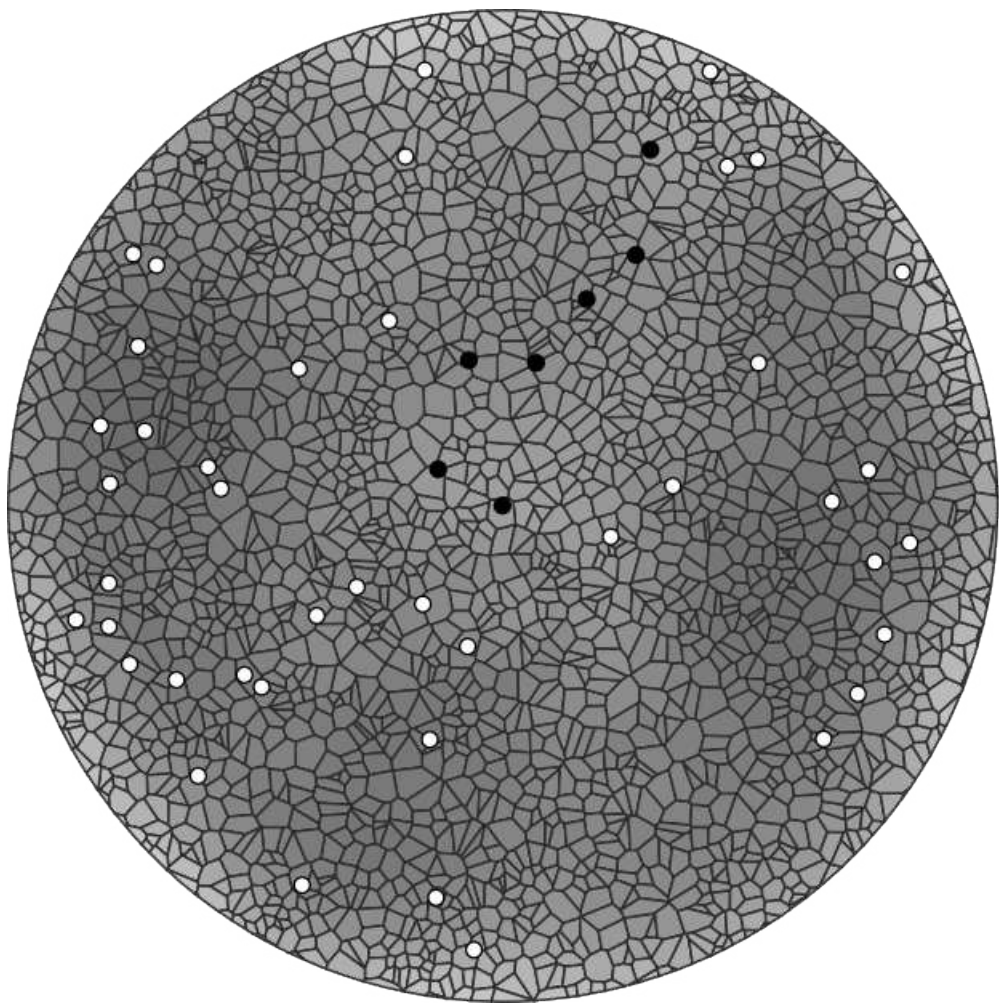
The Cult may be here when the Player-heroes arrive, two cultists searching through the bookshelves on the ground level of the main hall and three (including Catelyn) in the side chamber, examining the bookrests. First, the Player-heroes will only see lantern lights in the darkness, but if they stay hidden they may overhear snippets of conversation on old lore, the Witch-king's lost laboratory, and finding and breaking the Seven Seals.

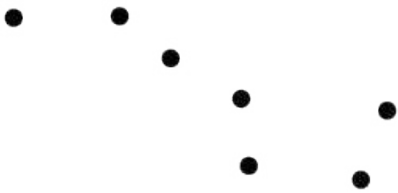
If the Company confronts the Cult, things may turn violent: the cultists aren't willing to share the treasures of Fornost with outsiders. With cultist reinforcements arriving soon, the Player-heroes may be forced to flee along the treacherous staircases and balconies.

Devourer in Darkness. The Devourer in Darkness may use the library as a temporary resting place. The creature makes its nest at the bottom of the spiral staircase; the floor and walls there may be covered in crystalline formations similar to the cellar of the *Ruined mansion*, p. 28. Black tracks run between the staircase and the southern exit. Outside this main passage, the shelves stand too close to each other for the Devourer to fit through comfortably. The creature avoids the side chamber, shunning the name of Elbereth set in the stone above the entrance.

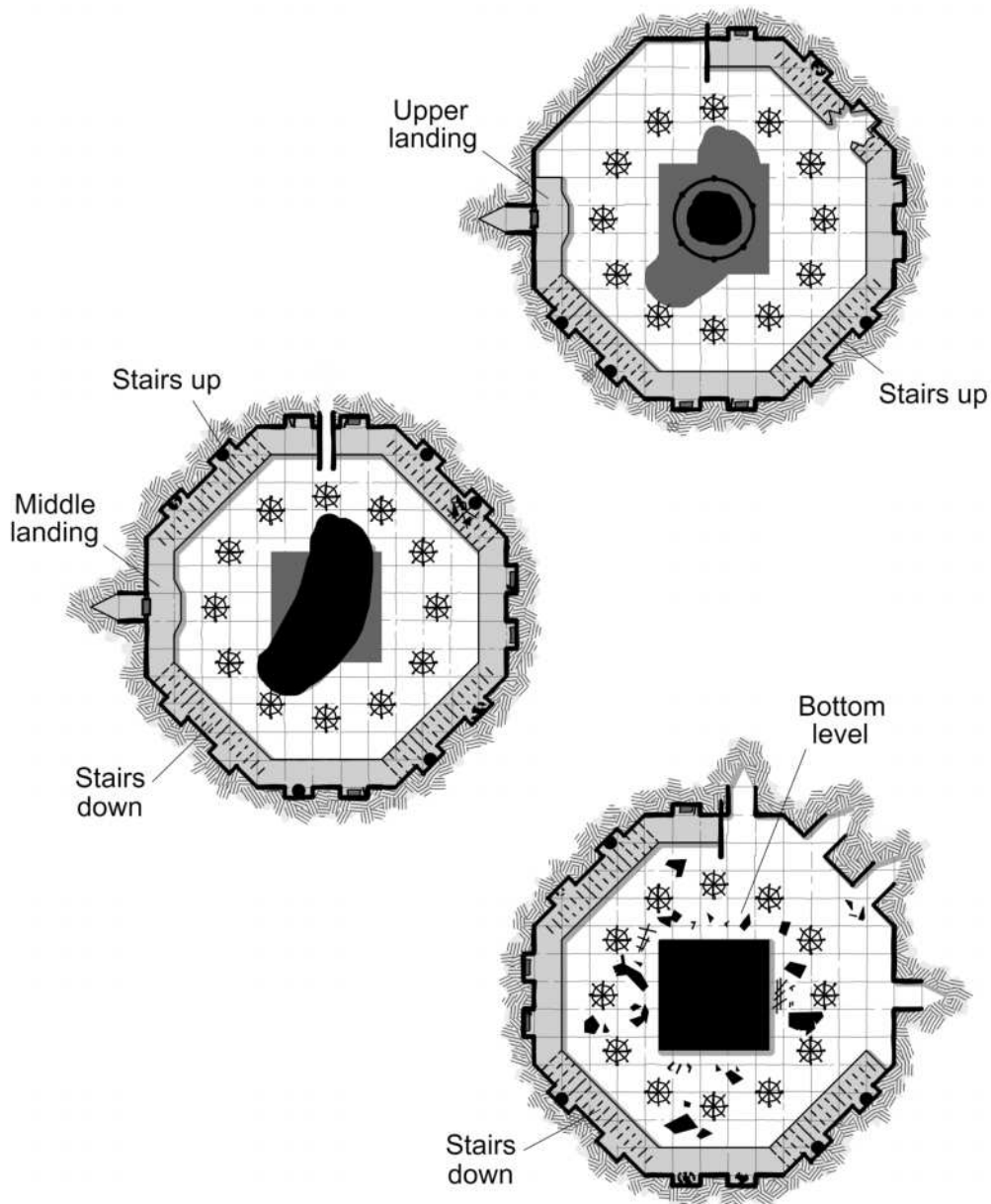
Entrances and exits. The recommended first entry point to the library is the western entrance on the balcony. This gives the Player-heroes a chance to spot anyone else already in the room while remaining hidden. The spiral staircase may provide the Company's first entryway to the Palace upper floor. The southern entrance leads towards cultist territory and is a natural entry point for cultist reinforcements.







Grand staircase



Grand staircase

A spiralling staircase at the heart of the Palace connects its multiple floors. Once a place of light and beauty, the Witch-king erected here his monument of power.

Middle landing

A door from the Palace ground floor leads to a balcony surrounded by darkness. A wide, tower-like room opens both up and down from this landing, with a spiral staircase leading in both directions along the wall. Something massive and unmoving looms in the dark in the middle of the room.

Statue. The massive figure is a statue: dark stone shaped like the midsection of a cloaked figure, with an armoured hand holding a sceptre. The statue extends up and down into the dark.

The statue depicts the Witch-king holding the *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120. The work looks unfinished, with many missing details and smooth surfaces.

Chandeliers. Chandeliers hang next to the statue at many levels, linked by chains that extend into the darkness. The lines of chandeliers extend all the way from the top of the room to its bottom. Many of the sockets still carry candle stumps.

Many feet separate the stairs from the chandeliers and the chandeliers from the statue. Reaching over the gap is difficult without proper tools.



Stairs up

The stairway winds up clockwise along the wall. Shady alcoves dot the walls. After half a loop, a section of the stairs is missing.

Gap. The stonework has crumbled here, and the Player-heroes need to figure out a way across. The gap is wide enough to be hard to jump; there is enough of a ledge left to try to walk along the wall, but not without a risk of falling.

Alcoves with statues. Most of the alcoves hold marble statues whose features have been tampered with. Pieces have been chipped off and new details have been added with clay.

The statues used to depict the kings of old, but the invaders of Angmar started to modify them to resemble their Black Númenorean and Hillmen leaders.

Alcoves with cabinets. Some alcoves hold small cabinets with closed doors with a long stick leaning against the wall. The cabinets hold drawer upon drawer of fresh candles.

The sticks, some six feet long, have pliers on one end with a string mechanism running to the other end to open and close the jaws. A bell-shaped contraption is attached next to the pliers. Servants used the sticks to replace, light, and snuff out the candles in the chandeliers.

Upper landing

A door at the upper end of the stairway leads into the Palace upper floor.

Statue. The top of the statue is visible from here: it has no head, only empty space over wide, mantle-covered shoulders. A many-pronged crown and a black mask hang in the air, suspended by chains. The mask is open at the eyes and around the mouth. Three fist-sized red gemstones lie embedded into the crown.

Ceiling. Big windows in the ceiling used to let light into the staircase during the day. They are now covered with dirt, rubble, and vines.

Obtaining the gems

The gemstones are Precious Objects worth 5 Treasure points each. Climbing the statue to pry them out is not easy and touching the stones attracts the attention of the undead Shadows (Shadow Level 1), who will pester the Company until they leave the grand staircase.

Stairs down

The stairs descend counterclockwise along the wall. There are more alcoves here. Some way down, part of the staircase is covered in debris.

Weak spot. The debris fell from collapsed section directly above. The structure of the staircase is weakened here and may collapse under the weight of the Company.

Bottom level

The stairs ascend to the room's floor, covered in more debris and big junks of rock. From there, multiple doorways lead into the darkness, some collapsed shut, others open.

Statue. The statue stands on a colossal pedestal. Its lower half seems unfinished, an amorphous mass of stone.

Various stone working tools—chisels, hammers, and files—lie scattered around the statue, mixed in with the remains of collapsed scaffolding.

Debris. Among the stone debris, there are bits and pieces of a huge marble statue: half of a head, a piece of an arm, and stray fingers. These belonged to an old statue that used to stand here in the days of Arthedain.

What's going on

The statue depicts the Witch-king of Angmar, who ordered it to be built soon after Fornost was invaded,

to replace an old statue of a Dúnedain king. Through dark arts and the toil of slaves the monument rose in a handful of months, but the work was ultimately left unfinished when the Enemy was driven out of the city.

Light and darkness. The Loremaster should emphasize the darkness of the room: the Company's lights only reveal a small piece of the staircase at a time. In particular, the statue's features are only revealed as the Player-heroes climb the staircase up and down. If the Player-heroes light the chandeliers, they leave a trail of flickering flames in the dark. However, not everyone enjoys the light—a wraith stalking the Company will use the plier sticks to extinguish the candles one by one while staying hidden in the shadows.

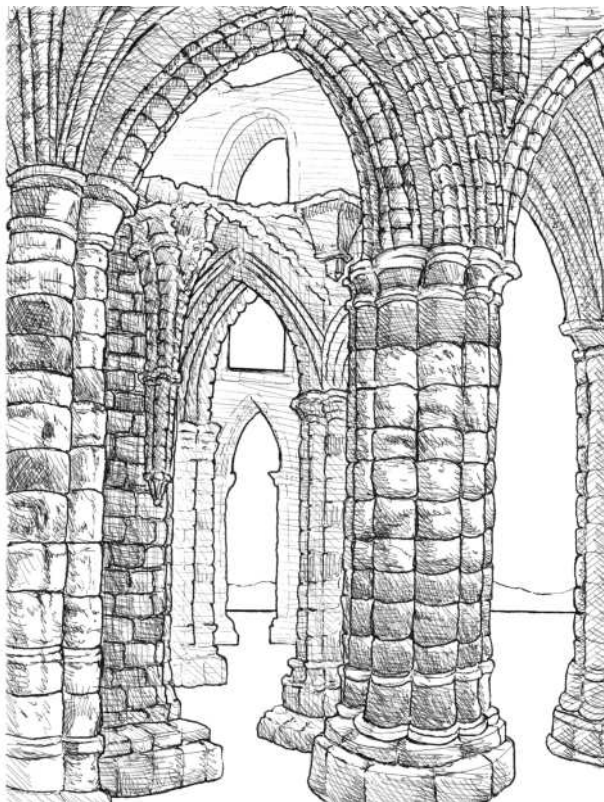
Wraiths. The wraiths use the staircase to access the upper levels of the Palace. They prefer not to reveal themselves here; rather, they stay in the dark, extinguishing any lights the Player-heroes leave behind. If pressed, a wraith may hide in one of the alcoves waiting for the Company to pass.

Entrances and exits. Many entrances connect the staircase to the different Palace floors: one on the middle landing to the ground floor, another at the top leading to the upper floor, and multiple at the bottom leading to the underground. The Player-heroes are likely to enter through the middle landing, and this may be their first route to the other floors.

Palace upper floor

Up, up he went. It was dark save for an occasional torch flaring at a turn, or beside some opening that led into the higher levels of the Tower.

Towers and balconies, spacious halls and cozy private chambers fill the upper levels of the Royal Palace. Strolling through these parts is peaceful. Occasionally, the Player-heroes have to circle around a crumbled walkway or clear a path through a corridor crushed by a fallen tower.



Palace upper floor

Exploration Difficulty:	5
Exploration time:	Short
Pass-through time:	Short
Event rolls:	Favoured

In good weather, numerous windows let in plenty of light. When the weather turns bad, the elements intrude into the Palace through collapsed roofs and facades.

What's going on

The Palace upper floor holds no great treasures, but aspects of Fornost's history can be learned in the *King's quarters*, p. 58. In time, the Cult of the Witch makes its base in the *Feast hall*, p. 56, stretching its tendrils to other parts of the Palace from there. The Wraiths sometimes stalk the *Upper hall*, p. 53, where the Witch-king erected his throne.

Connections to other levels

The Palace upper floor is connected to the Palace ground floor through the *Grand staircase*, p. 50 and the staircase in the Library. It is connected to the Palace underground through the staircase in the *Dungeons*, p. 68. The last two passageways are hard to find on the upper floor's side.

Upper hall

In this hall, the nobles of Arthedain gathered to enjoy refreshments and gossip. After the city fell, the Witch-king set his throne here, making the hall the center of his rule. Evil still lingers at the throne, and eerie lights shine into the night through the open balcony.

Main hall

Many open doorways lead to a spacious hall. The walls are lined with torches. Crumbled remains of marble statues form a circle in the center of the room. In the middle rises a bulky stone seat, facing an open entryway to a balcony.

Statues. These used to be life-sized statues of historical figures set on high pedestals. The servants of Angmar broke the statues down, making it impossible to identify the subjects.

Torches. Along the walls, there are a number of torch holders, all holding black torches. As the night falls, the torches light up with green, cold flames. The torches, 13 in total, continue to burn if removed from their holders; the flame fades away at dawn and flares up again at night.

Obsidian throne. The seat is made of polished obsidian. Occasionally, dark shadows move on its reflective surfaces. In night-time, a low droning sound emanates from the throne as if calling out to anyone willing to listen.

Player-heroes approaching the throne feel a chill running over their spine: there's an evil presence here. If a Player-hero sits on the throne, the evil stirs, see below.

The reflected shadows are connected to the *Mirror of sight*, p. 117. They alert the wraiths to the Company's presence.

Balcony

The balcony opens to the outdoors, overlooking the city. Two flag poles stand in the corners, but the flags have decayed away a long time ago.

On the ground level far below opens a courtyard, see *Palace entrance*, p. 26, where a crowd can gather to listen to speeches given by the balcony's occupants.

What's going on

The throne is not part of the room's original furniture; the Witch-king's servants mounted it here, and here he ruled the city giving orders to his subordinates gathered in the hall or in the courtyard below the balcony. His malice still lingers in the room.

Ghost lights

The first time a Player-heroes picks up a torch, they gain 1 Shadow (Sorcery). The flames attract the undead, increasing any pre-existing Shadow Level by one for the torch's wielder. A clever Company may be able to distract a group of shades or wraiths with a well-placed torch. The torch's light is not affected by the *Devour Light* Fell Ability of the Devourer in Darkness.

Sitting on the throne

A Player-hero sitting on the throne gains 3 Shadow (Sorcery). If the hero's Shadow test is successful (so that they avoid at least one point of Shadow), a series of visions flash past their eyes, all from the perspective of the Witch-king sitting here a thousand years ago:

- Two armoured trolls standing guard on both sides of the throne, while the statues in the room are being torn down and smashed to pieces by orcs and men in hide armours, and red-and-black banners are being lifted to the walls;
- An iron crown being pressed into the head of a smiling man kneeling in front of the throne by a pale lady and then nailed in place with long iron nails by goblins, as the man's smile turns into a scream;
- Men being dragged away by orcs, and wraiths returning and kneeling before the throne, while the vision's receiver points towards them with a black scepter.

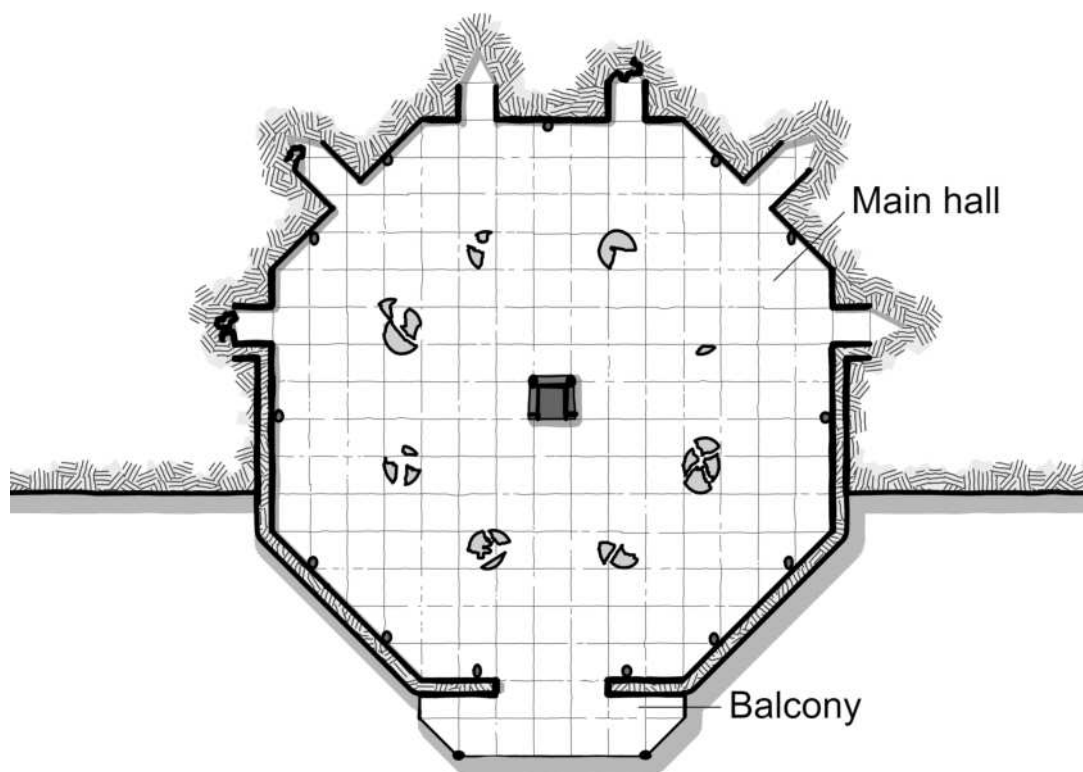
If the Shadow Test fails, the Player-hero is paralyzed by the evil magic emanating from the throne, and they only come back to their senses after someone else has pried them away from the seat.

Wraiths. The wraiths keep an eye on the room through the *Mirror of sight*, p. 117 in the *Dungeons*, p. 68. When walking in the upper levels of the castle, they usually keep their distance from outsiders, but in this hall, they are more likely to make contact. In particular, if someone sits on the throne, a Fell Wraith arrives to figure out if the newcomer is an intruder or a regent sent by the Witch-king ("Has the Master returned?"). A quick-witted Player-hero may be able to fool the wraith for this encounter, though posing as an agent of Angmar is unlikely to succeed in the long run. An unconvinced wraith may attack the Company, with reinforcements arriving soon after, though the wraiths won't fight to the death here if they can avoid it.

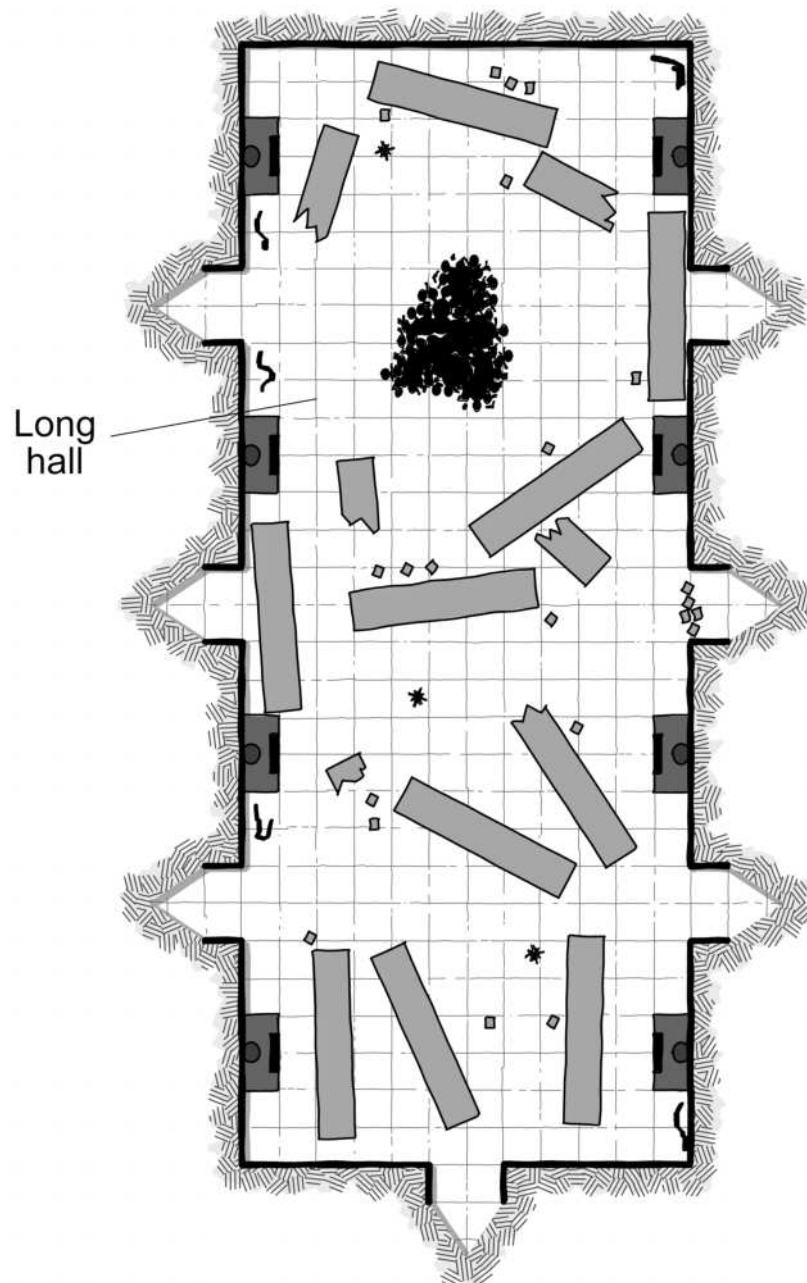
Cultists. In time, if they can, the Cult of the Witch will make this room their center of command, with their leader sitting on the obsidian throne with the sceptre of the Witch-king in her hand. The Witch-king's banners—a red mask on a black background—will again hang on the poles on the balcony. From the balcony (a great place for a climactic final battle), the Cult will command the Shadow Host gathered below to descend upon the land.

Entrances and exits. Multiple corridors open from here to the upper floor. During night-time, the eerie green light of the torches shining around the corner should be the first thing the Player-heroes notice. It is also possible to enter and exit through the balcony, see *Climbing to the balcony* in *Palace entrance*, p. 26.

Upper hall



Feast hall



Feast hall

In this hall, the King of Arthedain dined with his court and guests. The Orcs of Angmar tore the place to pieces. When Fornost was reclaimed, the first Rangers of the North piled Orc corpses into a great heap in the middle of the room. There it stands to this day as a monument for past horrors.

Long hall

Compared to the rest of the Palace, this long, high hall is in surprisingly good condition. Large windows cover the upper halves of the hall's ends, with most of their glass panels still intact. The walls are lined with arched entryways and enormous fireplaces.

That's where the orderly image ends. Furniture is scattered all over the room, and a mound made of bulky shapes rises in the middle. The floor is sticky with dirt.

During the day, the windows let in ample sunlight. There are no doors at the entryways.

Furniture. Chairs and long tables lie scattered around, some set up as makeshift barricades on the doorways. The ragged remains of banners and tapestries have fallen to the floor. A few chandeliers hang from the ceiling; the remains of many more lie on the ground.

Mound of corpses. The mound is made of dozens and dozens of decayed corpses, piled into a heap together with crude war gear. A closer inspection reveals these were once Orcs, with the crown symbol of Angmar etched on black bulky armors, mixed with spears and rusty saw-toothed swords.

What's going on

Little remains of the once-fabulous feast hall of the King, the center of the Palace upper floor. When the city fell, the Orcs ransacked the place and later used it for their own nightly bacchanals.

After the forces of Angmar lost to the Host of the West, Chieftain Aranarth led a Ranger expedition to the Palace. They chased the fleeing Orcs to the upper floor, slew them, and piled their corpses and gear into a great mound before heading down into the *Dungeons*, p. 68 (see *Chieftain Aranarth's notes*, p. 116). When recovering the Palace turned out to be impossible, the mound was left behind, sealed in with the rest of the castle's dark secrets.

Due to its good condition and central location, the hall now attracts the attention of the various factions exploring the Palace.

Searching the mound of corpses

Digging into the pile of corpses is risky business: a hero may find a stolen keepsake that one of the Orcs hid on their person, or stick their hands into something gruesome. A Player-hero searching the pile should make a **Scan** roll. On a success, they find a *Trinkets*, p. 126, and an additional one for each Success icon rolled. On a failure, roll 1 Success die and play out the result from the below table:

FAILURE RESULT:

Success die roll	Description
1–2	The hero cuts themselves in a rusty blade, suffering a severe loss of Endurance.
3–4	The hero comes upon a badly mutilated corpse. They gain 1 point of Shadow (Dread).
5–6	Part of the pile collapses. The noise attracts a Fell Wraith (see <i>Wraiths</i> , p. 109), appearing at a dramatically appropriate moment.

Each Player-hero may make one **Scan** roll. The pile is a plausible hiding place for the *Black Blade of the Mountain King*, p. 116; the Loremaster may replace any of the found trinkets with the Blade.

Orcs. The expeditions sent to the Palace by *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99, occasionally reach the upper floor and the Feast hall itself. As the Company explores the hall, they may clash with one of these groups. Alternatively, they may find a lone Orc exile rummaging through the mound of corpses, hoping to find something valuable. Maybe the Orc finds the Black Blade of the Mountain King, throwing the tribe into turmoil over the legendary weapon's ownership.

Cult of the Witch. When the Cult of the Witch arrives in force, they will make the Feast hall their center of operations, setting up a maze of bunks, supply storages, and fortifications, settling three dozen cultists here. Cult members will patrol the corridors around the hall in groups of two or three while others come and go on supply runs or expeditions to the deeper parts of the Palace. Off-duty members of the cult cook food in the fireplaces and gather in rings to tell stories of the days of old Angmar.

The cult barricades the hall's entrances properly and sets guards. If a crafty Player-hero manages to sneak inside, they may find a storage of treasure the Cult has gathered from Fornost, written correspondence between the hall and the *Cultist camp*, p. 22, or one of the Cult's leader figures such as Catelyn or her Mask-bearers.

The Cult will clear off the mound of corpses, salvaging usable gear. If they find the Black Blade, they may use it to negotiate with Gulbug's tribe.

Entrances and exits. This room is in the center of the Palace upper floor, with exits leading to multiple directions. Any one of them may work as the Company's initial approach. If the room is controlled by an enemy faction, the windows or fireplaces' chimneys provide another stealthier—if more difficult—line of attack.

King's quarters

These rooms used to be the living quarters of the King of Arthedain. They were raided when the city fell and now lie in disrepair.

Entrance room

A weathered door leads to a small room. Cracked mirrors cover every wall; images are reflected and multiplied countless times in all directions. The wooden floor is damp and rotten. Another door, slightly ajar, stands opposite the entrance.

An observant Player-hero may see shadowy figures moving among the reflections (see *Mirror of sight*, p. 117). The door opposite the entrance leads to the Bedroom.

Rotten floors

The floorboards of the Entrance room, Bedroom, and Servant's room are rotten. If a Player-hero tries to move through in a hurry (for example, during combat), they must succeed in an **Awareness** roll or the floor gives away and the hero's foot gets stuck. A successful **Athletics** roll is needed to free the hero.

Bedroom

A massive canopy bed looms in the middle of this room, and tables and cabinets cover the walls. Everything is rotten and in disarray, with drawers pulled out and chairs thrown across the floor.

Light streams in through windows partly covered by glass panes. One end of the room has collapsed, with pieces of the floor, walls, and ceiling missing, and is open to the outdoors. At the other end, one more door leads to an adjacent room.

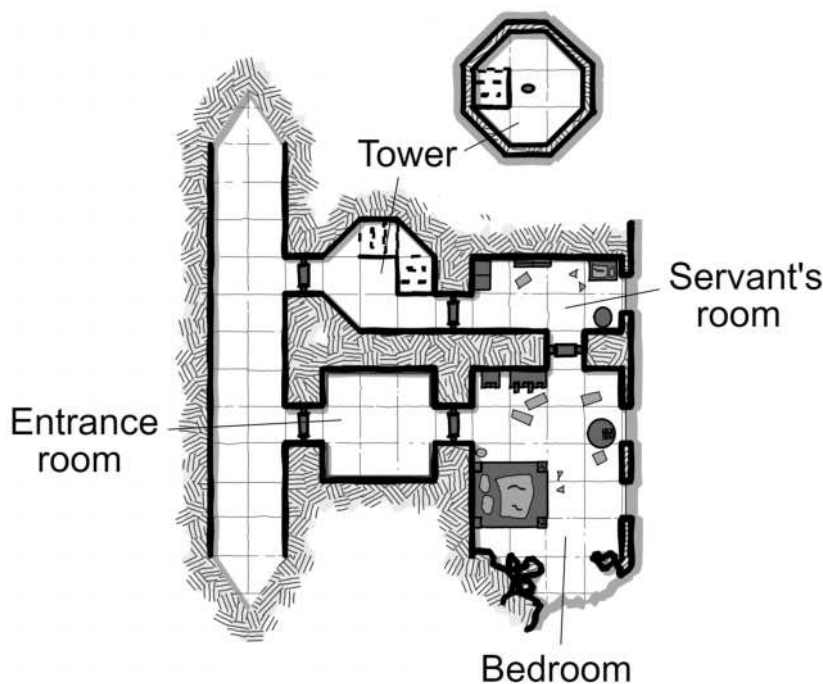
This was the bedchamber of King Arvedui. It was thoroughly looted when Angmar took the city; nothing of value remains here. The door, unlocked, leads to the Servant's room.

Bed. Two of the bed's corner posts are broken. A small bell hangs on the wall next to it. The bell was used to summon a servant from the next room.

Table. An overthrown chessboard lies on the floor next to the bedside table. Most of the pieces are missing.

Collapsed wall. The opening at the end of the room leads to a long drop to the roofs of the Palace's lower wings.

King's quarters



Servant's room

This room is smaller than the previous one but just as messy, with opened drawers and overthrown cabinets filling the floor. There is a small, four-foot-long bed in the corner and a closed door on the opposite wall.

The room belonged to the King's manservant, a Hobbit from the Shire whose identity is lost to history. The door leads to the bottom of the *Tower*.

Small bed. Peeking under the bed reveals cracked, loose floorboards. Hidden beneath them is an old, weathered diary wrapped in leather, see *Halfling's diary*, p. 117.



Tower

Two doors lead to the bottom of a tower. A narrow wooden staircase snakes its way up the wall.

One of the doors connects to the Servant's room, and the other connects to the Palace upper floor near the door of the Entrance room.

Staircase. The staircase is rotten through and perilous to climb and creaks and sways under each step. Window slits line the walls. At the upper end, a trapdoor opens to the top of the tower.

Climbing the stairs

Getting to the top of the tower is a Laborious Skill Endeavour (Resistance 6): the Player-heroes must constantly watch for unsafe steps and climb over gaps. There is no time limit, but a Player-hero failing in a Skill roll falls some yards down, suffering a severe loss of Endurance.

Top of the tower. The tower's top is in the open air. A flagless flagpole rises towards the sky. The sight over the crenellated parapets is magnificent, stretching over the city and the surrounding lands. The King used to come here to admire his realm.

At the northwestern edge of the tower, there's a spot where the air turns cold. A Player-hero standing here can feel a chill running down their spine and the sound of terrible chanting echoing in their ears. The Witch-king of Angmar once cast a spell here to summon the storm that drowned the fleeing King Arvedui in the icy waters of the northern sea.

A shadow of the past

A Player-hero experiencing the echo of the Witch-king's spell gains 2 Shadow (Sorcery). If the associated **Wisdom** roll is a success, the Player-hero learns the true nature of the spell and sees a flash of a hooded, crowned figure raising a dark sceptre into the air (see *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120).

Sights in the distance

On good weather, one can see far from the top of the King's tower, getting a good view of the city and the surrounding lands. At the Loremaster's discretion, the following may draw the Company's attention:

- A partly collapsed large, domed structure in the middle of the city (see *Dome of Sight*, p. 31),
- The remains of a ruined watchtower on a hill outside Fornost (see *Watchtower*, p. 20),
- A thin crack in the ground, hundreds of yards long, running along the direction of the city walls between Fornost and the *Watchtower*, p. 20,
- A group of people moving with a cart towards the city from the direction of the North Downs (these are members of the *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93),
- A group of people clearing the rubble near a ruined mansion on one of the city's main streets (these are the *Highwaymen*, p. 102 at the *Ruined mansion*, p. 28).

A successful **Scan** roll reveals more details.

What's going on

The Company may not encounter exciting opponents or find marvellous treasure in the King's quarters, but the place offers a wealth of information on Fornost's history and secrets. Here the Company may gain the first glimpses of the Wraiths using the *Mirror of sight*, p. 117, and the Witch-king wielding the *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120. The *Halfling's diary*, p. 117, hints at the secret chamber in the *Library*, p. 44, and from the top of the tower the heroes may spot new adventure locations.

The King's defiled chambers reflect the overall desecration of Fornost in the hands of Angmar. The Loremaster should emphasize the all-encompassing sense of melancholy and decay.

Wraiths. The Wraiths keep an eye on the King's quarters through the Mirror of sight. If they see the Player-heroes, they may send a scout or two to in-

investigate. These Fell Wraiths won't attack the full Company, but they may sabotage the Player-heroes in small ways and try to ambush anyone who separates from the group. The Wraiths hold the keys to the doors and can lock the rest of the Company away, aiming to reduce a lone hero to zero Endurance and drag them to the *Dungeons*, p. 68 before help arrives.

Entrances and exits. There are two entrances to the King's quarters: one through the Entrance room, and another through the Tower. It is also possible to enter through the collapsed bedroom wall, but the climb is difficult and the location is hard to spot from the ground level.

Palace underground

‘There is chamber after chamber, Legolas; hall opening out of hall, dome after dome, stair beyond stair; and still the winding paths lead on into the mountains’ heart.’

A maze of corridors spreads beneath the Palace, connecting to narrow stairways and abandoned storage rooms. Many passages are blocked by collapsed ceilings and a thousand years’ accumulation of debris. The structure was weakened further by the recent earthquake, and the Company has to proceed with caution to avoid further cave-ins.

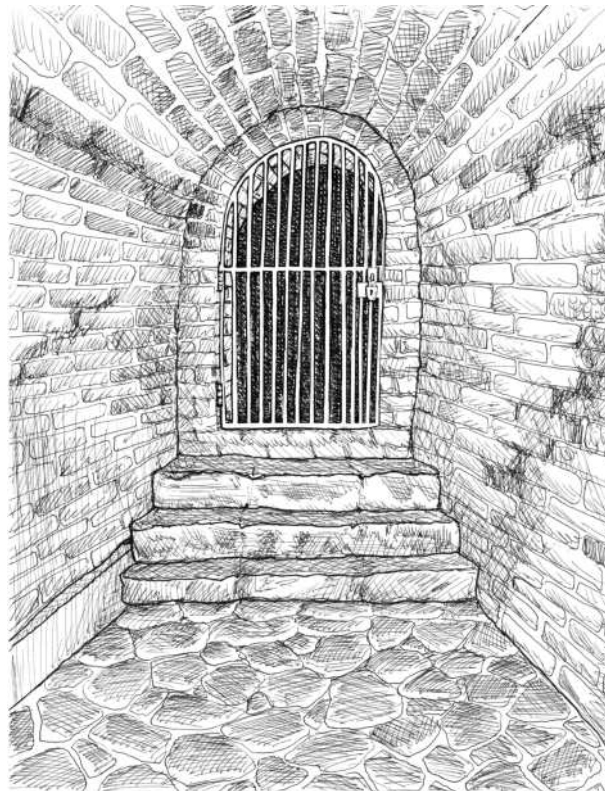
Palace underground

Exploration Difficulty:	11
Exploration time:	Long
Pass-through time:	Long
Event rolls:	Ill-favoured

Daylight doesn’t penetrate down here, and the eternal gloom will eventually get on the nerves of the staunchest of explorers. What’s worse, as the Company makes its way deeper, they get the feeling they’re not alone: whispers are carried through the darkness, and shadows dance at the edge of torch light.

What’s going on

The heart of Fornost’s darkness is buried in the Palace underground. The *Dungeons*, p. 68, are home to the Wraiths, but the creatures regard the whole level as their territory. The Shadows of fallen soldiers also move here, particularly in the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71, where they jealously guard Fornost’s greatest riches, hand-picked by the Witch-king himself. The *Witch-king’s laboratory*, p. 63, hides the true source of evil in the Palace. Its secret is sought by the Cult of the Witch.

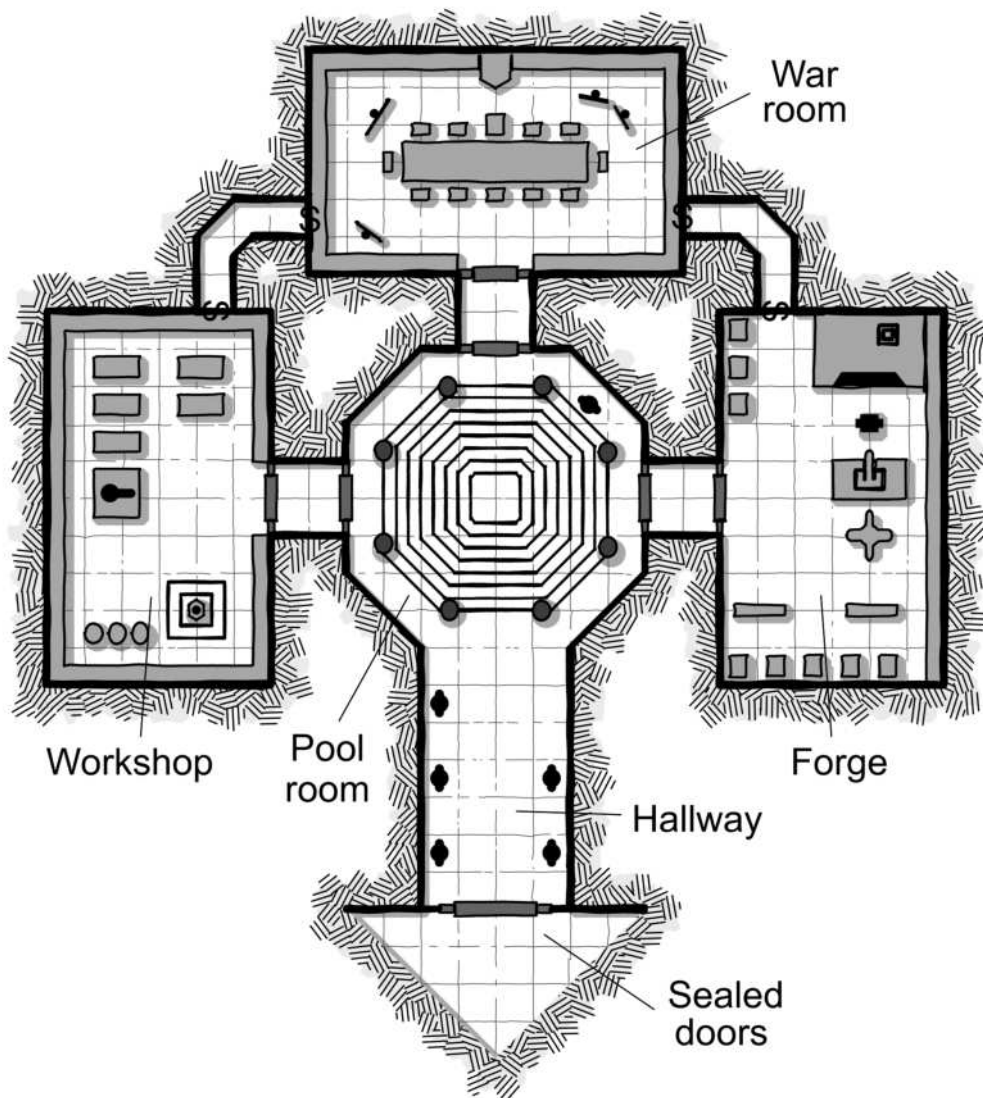


Connections to other levels

The Palace underground is connected to the Palace ground floor through the *Grand staircase*, p. 50. More subtle routes connect to the Palace upper floor through the *Dungeons* and to Fornost grounds through the *Crypts*, p. 34.

There are two connections to the Tunnels beyond the castle: one through the *Dungeons*, created by the Devourer in Darkness, and another via a secret passageway in the *Treasure chamber*, used as an escape route by King Arvedui during the siege of Fornost.

Witch-king's laboratory



Witch-king's laboratory

Originally an underground bathhouse, the Witch-king transformed these chambers into his personal laboratory. Here he practiced his necromantic arts, binding fell spirits to metal and crafting instruments of evil. This temporary workshop can't compete with the forges of Carn Dûm, but it is the center of the sorcerous power that corrupted the city. Many secrets were buried here and forgotten when the lord of the Nazgûl rode out to face the Host of the West in battle.

Sealed doors

A pair of massive brass doors shut the entryway to whatever lies beyond. Runes are carved onto them. The runes, in Black Speech, seal the doors in the name of Angmar. No amount of force can pry them open. To make progress, the Player-heroes will likely need to consult one of the Wise.

Spells of opening

During the Meet the Patron Fellowship Phase Undertaking, an appropriate patron (for example, Gandalf, Elrond, or Círdan) may teach the heroes a spell of opening that is effective against the sealed doors of the Witch-king's laboratory. A Player-hero must spend 5 points of Hope to use the spell.

Hallway

Beyond the doors, white and blue ceramic tiles cover all surfaces of a wide corridor. It's dark. Sounds echo loudly, carrying the noise of dripping water somewhere ahead. Black suits of armour stand near the walls.

Mosaics. On the floor, the tiles form the image of a ship with the likeness of an eagle set at its prow. The ship is Hirilondë, the ship of Tar-Aldarion, a Númenorean mariner king. More maritime mosaic figures used to decorate the walls, but they have been destroyed by time or purposeful sabotage.

Suits of armour. Five black suits of armour hold black swords in front of them, with tips pointing towards the ground. These are the Witch-king's creations, see *Armour spirits* below, but they don't react to entering Player-heroes, not even if prodded.

Pool room

Steps descend from all sides of this round room towards the middle, forming a large pool. Pillars encircle the rim of the pool, and one more lone black

suit of armour stands next to the north-eastern wall. A mosaic image used to decorate the domed ceiling above the pool but is now mostly destroyed. Water drips from the ceiling to the pool.

There are three closed bronze doors on the west, north, and east walls.

Pool. The pool's edges are covered in filth, and black, muddy liquid like clotted blood covers its bottom. The pool used to serve as a large bathtub but was turned by the Witch-king into a place of dark rituals to summon and bind spirits. Acolytes would chant at the edges of the pool as men were sacrificed to evil powers in the middle, their blood pouring into the pool. If the dirt is scrubbed away, runes in Black Speech are revealed, carved into the steps and encircling the bottom in concentric rings.

A ritual dagger lies at the bottom of the pool, decorated with three rubies.

Dark rituals

The pool reeks of evil: when first entering the room, Player-heroes gain 2 Shadow (Sorcery).

Ceiling. The image in the ceiling was that of Ulmo, the Vala of sea and waters; destroying it was the first thing the servants of Angmar did when repurposing the bathhouse.

Western door. This door is shut. In archaic common tongue, a riddle is carved on its surface:

"Lies in the east,
stalks bird and beast,
kills all that is green,
slave to maid and queen."

Speaking the answer, "shadow", makes the door slowly swing open. It is not locked, though, and can be simply pulled open from the large metal rings acting as handles, but this activates the door's wards: a flash of light momentarily blinds everyone around, and the room beyond is covered in magical darkness impenetrable by ordinary light. The darkness is dispelled only when someone touches the magical basin on a pedestal, see below. The wards were set by the Witch-king's acolytes to stop other servants of Angmar from meddling in their experiments.

Northern door. The door is locked. It leads to the war room.

Eastern door. This door is unlocked and ajar. Inside, the Player-heroes find the Witch-king's makeshift forge.

Opening the war room's door

A Player-hero may pick the war room's lock with a successful **Riddle** roll, but they *lose* (1d) due to the lock's complicated mechanism. Forcing the door open requires a successful Athletics check, but is hard: the Player-hero *loses* (2d).

Magical darkness

A Player-hero entering the magical darkness of the workshop gains 2 Shadow (Sorcery). A **Riddle** roll is needed to avoid stumbling into dangerous objects such as the acid vats or sharp instruments on the tables.

Searching the workshop

If the Player-heroes spend time searching through the workshop systematically, the Loremaster can ask for a **Scan** roll. A success reveals the hidden chest and a great success reveals the secret exit to the war room. On a failure, the armour spirits attack before the search is complete.

Miscellaneous finds

At the Loremaster's discretion, the Player-heroes may find the following items in the workshop:

- A gilded skull with two black stones set to the eye sockets;
- A well-preserved book on the arts of embalming written in Adûnaic, the language of Númenor;
- Texts on spirit-binding rituals written in the Black Speech, speaking of summoning un-housed spirits of nature and dead Elves, and speculating on trapping the spirit of a dying Man. Mostly decayed to an unreadable condition;
- A bottle of clear poison distilled from the trees in the *Garden*, p. 41: a drop is enough to make a victim fall to sleep if they fail in an **Athletics** roll where they *lose* (2d).

Smoke from the basin

A Player-hero peering into the smoke gains 1 Shadow (Sorcery).

Workshop

The walls of the workshop are covered by old faucets, chests and shelves, and tables full of alchemical equipment. A stinging scent permeates the room, emanating from vats in the southwestern corner. In the southeastern corner, a couple of steps rise up to a pedestal with a stone basin. The northern side of the room is dominated by a series of stone slabs with humanoid figures lying on them.

Faucets. Once used to provide water for the bath-house, the faucets are now dysfunctional.

Tables. The side tables are full of bottles filled with foul liquids, jars whose contents have crumbled to dust, distilling equipment, mortars, scales, flasks, and other exotic glassware.

Hidden chest. Inside a locked storage chest tugged under a table, there's a supply of valuable metals and gemstones, corresponding to a lesser Hoard.

Vats. Foul-smelling acid fills these three vats. Anything organic that comes into contact with the acid starts to slowly corrode.

Basin. The insides of the basin are scorched black as if by fire, and in the middle lie a handful of mo-

saic pieces, reflecting light in rainbow hues. If something is burned in the basin, a dark smoke rises up and forms images of fish and swaying seaweeds, with something dark and round looming in their midst.

The mosaic pieces are from the *Dome of Sight*, p. 31, the chamber that used to house the Palantíri of Fornost. The basin was used by the Witch-king to scry the location of the Seeing Stones and King Arvedui. The Stones now lie at the bottom of the ocean somewhere in the northern seas.

Slabs. Four humanoid figures lie on the six stone slabs. Two of them resemble the black suits of armour in the hallway, but they lie disassembled, with pieces missing. One figure is the naked corpse of a man, preserved from rot by some foul art. On the biggest stone slab towards the middle of the room lies a larger set of armour, partly decorated with esoteric runes.

The Witch-king was assembling the large armour to house a powerful fire spirit and act as his champion, but the work is incomplete.

Secret exit. Behind a shelf of bottles on the northern wall, a hidden corridor leads towards the war room.

Forge

A furnace and a large trip hammer dominate the northeastern corner of the room, with smithing equipment lying around. A big bearskin covers the rest of the northern wall. Shelves and supply crates are scattered across the southern half of the room.

Furnace. The furnace is cold. Hammers, tongs, and bellows are set neatly next to an anvil. On a table next to the wall lie four dark blades and pieces of parchment with esoteric diagrams drawn on them.

The blades are Morgul-knives, see *Morgul-knives*, p. 118. The Witch-king forged several knives here to help in his war against the Free Peoples. The parchments describe in Black Speech the process of making both the knives and the black suits of armour found in the hallway, but the details are incomprehensible to the Player-heroes.

Bearskin and a secret exit. Hidden behind the bearskin is an open passageway to the meeting room.

Trip hammer. The hammer is connected to a mechanical wheel behind it. A curled whip hangs on the wall nearby. The wheel raises the hammer up and releases it, letting it fall onto the anvil. It was operated by slaves.

Shelves and supply crates. Behind shelves of unfinished weapon and armour pieces, the skeletal remains of three people are chained to the wall. The crates next to them contain coal and ore. These were the slaves operating the trip hammer, starved to death after the Witch-king left, never to return.

War room

The walls of the room are covered in bookshelves. In the middle of the room stands a long table lined with chairs. The chair facing the entrance is more heavily built and ornated with geometric carvings. Behind it on the wall stands an ornate cabinet. Maps hang on boards encircling the table.

Here the lieutenants of Angmar, led by the Witch-king himself, planned the final stages of their campaign of conquest—a campaign that never came to pass, thanks to the Host of the West.

Bookshelves and secret exits. The contents of the shelves have decayed away. Behind two of the bookshelves, on eastern and western walls, two hidden passageways open to the workshop and the forge.

Table and maps. A map of Eriador is painted on the tabletop, with wooden pieces set on it, in particular in Fornost and the Grey Havens. More maps hang on boards encircling the table, including a partial map of the castle itself. The laboratory, *Dungeons*, p. 68, and *Treasure chamber*, p. 71 are marked on the castle map.

Cabinet. The cabinet has tall double doors made of red wood and lined with brass. Opening the doors reveals a complicated mechanism of spikes, blades, and razors filling the insides and jutting out in strange angles. Inside the forest of steel sits a rod made of dark metal—the *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120, left here for safekeeping when its master rode into battle.

If a hand is pressed through the mechanisms just right, the blades bend out of the way and allow the sceptre to be grabbed. A mistake leads to cuts and slices. If a Player-hero obtains the sceptre, they gain 3 Shadow (Sorcery), as noted in *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120.

Reaching for the sceptre

A Player-hero reaching into the war room's cabinet must make a **Riddle** roll.

- On a failure, the hero fails to obtain the sceptre and suffers a severe loss of Endurance. If they wish, they can push forward and grab the sceptre anyway, but they are Wounded on top of the Endurance loss.
- On an ordinary success, they obtain the sceptre but cut themselves, resulting in a moderate loss of Endurance.
- On a great success (one or more success icons with a successful roll), the hero avoids injuries altogether.

If a Player-hero is down to zero Endurance after the injury roll, they are also Wounded. The heroes may retry as many times as they like. Note that handling the sceptre brings its own challenges, see *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120.

Smashing the mechanism to pieces to reach the sceptre results in sharp pieces of metal flying around as spring mechanisms inside the cabinet give in, resulting in a severe loss of Endurance to everyone in the close vicinity.

Clever Player-heroes may come up with other ways to obtain the sceptre; the Loremaster should reward creativity and punish failed attempts with different levels of Endurance loss.



What's going on

Buried deep inside the fortress, the Witch-king's laboratory is a culmination of the heroes' exploration of Fornost. Gaining access is not easy and danger lurks behind every corner, but the reward is a glimpse into the inner workings of Angmar's operations a thousand years ago and access to the Witch-king's sceptre—unless the Cult of the Witch got here first.

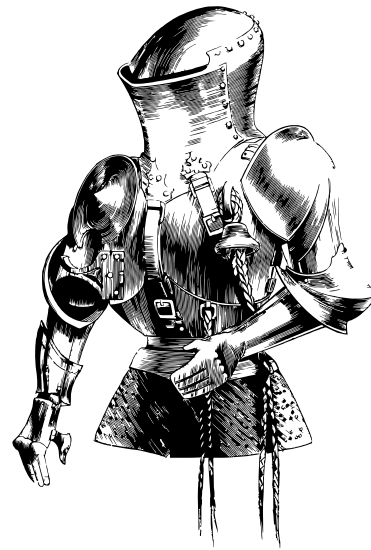
As the heroes explore the laboratory, the Loremaster should emphasize the gloomy atmosphere, a feeling that everything is not right. This escalates when the armour spirits, the Witch-king's guardians, attack (see below). An attack can serve as a consequence for the heroes' failure, for example, if they trigger the trap on the workshop's door or fail a **Scan** roll while searching through a room. At the latest, the spirits attack when the heroes obtain the sceptre.

Armour spirits. Evil spirits are bound to the six black suits of armour on the walls; in the workshop, the Player-heroes can find more in the making. They were commanded to defend the laboratory and never leave its bounds. The spirits are cunning: most of the time, the suits stand still, and there is no way to tell that a spirit resides within. When the Player-heroes are distracted, the suits start moving silently, taking better positions and preparing for the perfect moment to strike.

The armour pieces are held together by metallic poles and spikes inside the suit, and can't be worn by a living warrior. The suits can be dismantled, but the spirits stay bound to their trappings.

Cult of the Witch. The cultists are extremely interested in the laboratory and start looking for it as soon as they arrive in Fornost. Eventually, Catelyn will receive visions on how to open the sealed doors, control the armour spirits, and carry on the experiments inside. Cultists may already occupy the place when the Player-heroes arrive, or they may arrive soon after the heroes.

Entrances and exits. The laboratory can only be accessed through the sealed doors.



ARMOUR SPIRIT

Cunning, Stealthy

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

5

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

20

1

5

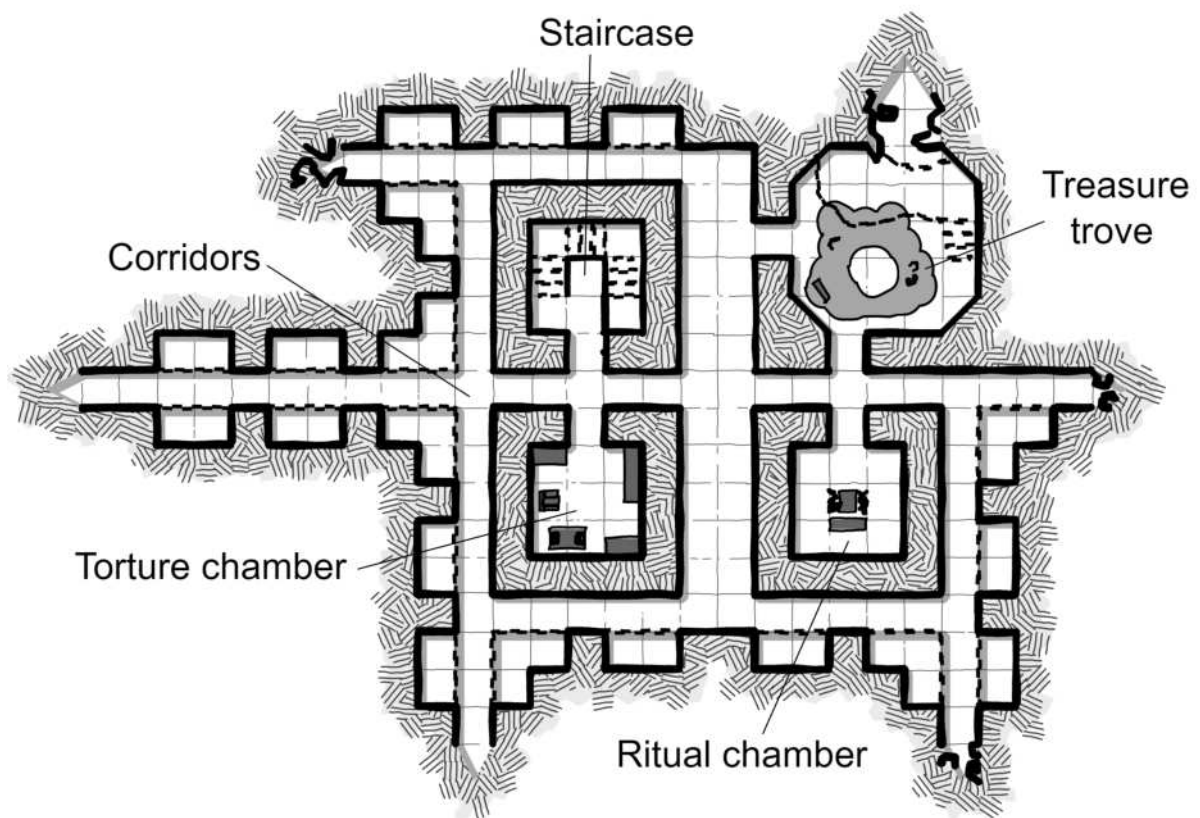
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COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Long Sword 3 (5/18, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Spells of binding.* When the armour-bound spirit is reduced to zero Endurance, its armoured form crumbles to pieces. A Player-hero may spend their action to separate the pieces from each other. If this is not done, the Armour spirit reassembles itself and returns to full Endurance at the start of the second round after being knocked out. If separated, or if the spirit is Wounded, it can still reassemble, but only over a long period of time.

Dungeons



Dungeons

After Fornost fell, captive soldiers of Arthedain were thrown into the Dungeons deep beneath the castle. Here they suffered starvation and torture, and some of them were corrupted and turned into evil wraiths in foul rituals. Shadows and Wraiths still haunt the Dungeons, but now the place also serves as the nest of a new terror, the Devourer in Darkness.

Corridors

A maze of corridors crisscrosses through this part of the castle. The walls are lined with cells, separated from the corridor by rusted metal bars and bar doors. Whispers can be heard in the air, mournful voices muttering quietly.

The voices belong to the former prisoners, who now haunt these halls as Shadows. Sometimes, words can be made out amidst the whispers:

“Tresspassers...”

“Defilers...”

“Protect the city. Protect the Palace...”

Once in a while, a shriek echoes from the distance.

The Shadows mostly stay out of sight. Occasionally, the Player-heroes may see shady figures at the edge of their lights.

Cells. Most of these small, ascetic rooms are empty, but here and there the skeletal remains of Men hang chained to the wall.

The cell doors are locked; the keys can be found in the Torture chamber. The rusted doors can be forced open, but the sound attracts the attention of the Wraiths. A Hobbit may be able to slip through the bars.

Torture chamber

An unlocked door leads to a room full of menacing devices: a rack with ropes and cranks on both ends, a chair with straps, and walls and tables full of spikes, tongs, hammers, whips, buckets, searing irons, and thumbscrews. The ghostly screams are louder here.

Hanging on the wall is a ring of keys fitting the cell doors.

Dark memories

The shadow of past atrocities lingers in various parts of the Dungeons. Player-heroes entering the Torture chamber gain 2 Shadow (Dread). Player-heroes entering the Ritual chamber gain 3 Shadow (Sorcery).

Shadows descend

If the Player-heroes linger in the corridors, the bolder Shadows assault them. The Shadow Level rises to one until a Player-hero obtains a Success icon in a roll aimed at fighting the Shadows off or until the Company leaves the spot.

Fallen knight

If the Company searches the cells, a successful **Scan** roll draws their attention to an unusual prisoner: a corpse in an armour decorated with a crown surrounded by seven stars, pierced through the chest by three Orcish blades. In its fist, the corpse clutches a signet ring depicting a blazing Sun on a red field.

This is the corpse of *Anorthand*, p. 110, the Champion of Fornost. The Witch-king ordered the body to be kept intact, and it was toured in front of the captive soldiers as a token of Angmar’s victory and then thrown to a cell to rot. Those versed in the lore of the Dúnedain recognise the ring and can tell the Player-heroes the story of Anorthand and the *Sunshield*, p. 118.

Approaching the corpse attracts the attention of the Shadows as described in the *Shadows descend* box.

Staircase

A spiral staircase rises up in the middle of this chamber. It leads to the Palace upper floor near the *Upper hall*, p. 53. The Wraiths use the stairs to move quickly between the levels.

Ritual chamber

Behind an unlocked door, a monolith of black rock dominates a dark chamber. In front of the monolith lies an altar-like block of black stone surrounded by charred wood and coal. The ceiling and walls are covered in soot.

Here the acolytes of Angmar sacrificed prisoners to Morgoth by burning them alive and performed rites that turned broken Men into Wraiths by stabbing them with Morgul-knives. The Wraiths still burn an occasional fire here to revere the Dark Lord.

Monolith. Words in twisted Sindarin cover the monolith:

“He who arises in Might,
the Elder King,
the Lord of All,
the Giver of Freedom,

Lord of Darkness,
Master of the Fates of Arda;
the King of the World.”

These are the names of Morgoth, the Great Enemy.

Altar. The surface of the stone altar is smooth like a mirror. A black knife lies on top. It is a Morgul-knife, see *Morgul-knives*, p. 118.

Treasure trove

This ruined chamber is filled with treasure—gold coins, gemstones, decorative vases and busts, and a large mirror, scattered among stone and rubble. In the middle of the room, an area three yards in diameter has been cleared off. The floor there is covered in crystalline formations, and crystal pieces also lie further away, mixed in with the treasure.

A staircase at the edge of the room leads to an upper level. An enormous hole covers most of the far wall.

This is one of the nests of the Devourer in Darkness; the crystalline formations match those found in the cellar of the *Ruined mansion*, p. 28. The treasure trove, gathered by the Wraiths, comprises a greater Hoard.

Mirror. A full-length mirror is propped against a wall, with Quenyan text written on the silver frame: “See those who see themselves.” This is the *Mirror of sight*, p. 117, and it has been tainted by the *Curse of the Devourer*, p. 111. When the Devourer in Darkness approaches, the mirror’s surface grows dull and shadowy.

Staircase. The staircase leads to a mostly collapsed upper level. Only a few square meters of floor remain. They offer a place to hide and monitor the lower chamber.

Hole in the wall. The far wall of the chamber is busted open. Behind starts a three-yard-wide tunnel, penetrating through natural rock and into the darkness. Based on the spread of the rubble, the wall was smashed in from the outside. The hole connects to the Tunnels. The Devourer in Darkness made it while seeking (and finding) a way into the Palace.

An Orc corpse lies a few yards into the tunnel, killed by the blades of the Wraiths after trying to steal treasure from the trove.

What’s going on

In the days of Arthedain, the Dungeons saw little use. When the Witch-king overtook Fornost, he threw the city’s surviving defenders into the cells, where their corpses still rot. The jailers of Angmar tortured the captive soldiers into submission, and the Witch-king and his acolytes experimented on them, turning some into Wraiths and dooming others to haunt Fornost

as Shadows even after their death.

After Fornost was abandoned, the Wraiths started gathering a treasure trove: choice artefacts from all over the Palace that reminded them of the glory days of Arthedain. The trove later attracted the attention of the Devourer in Darkness, who first entered the castle here.

Wraiths. This is the main base of the Wraiths haunting the castle. They walk the corridors, fiddle with the devices in the torture chamber, chant strange songs praising Morgoth in the Ritual chamber, and carry more treasure into the Treasure trove.

The Loremaster must decide how active the Wraiths are when the Player-heroes arrive: maybe they are actively guarding the area against intruders, maybe they spot the Player-heroes first (with an unsuccessful Awareness roll on the Player-heroes’ part) and surround them to set an ambush, or maybe they are all dispersed into other parts of the castle. An observant Company may hear their footsteps and the swishing sound of their cloaks from a long distance.

The Wraiths can be encountered here in groups of one to three, and more may arrive as reinforcements. On their home turf, the Wraiths don’t ask questions: they do all they can to kill, capture, or drive away the Player-heroes.

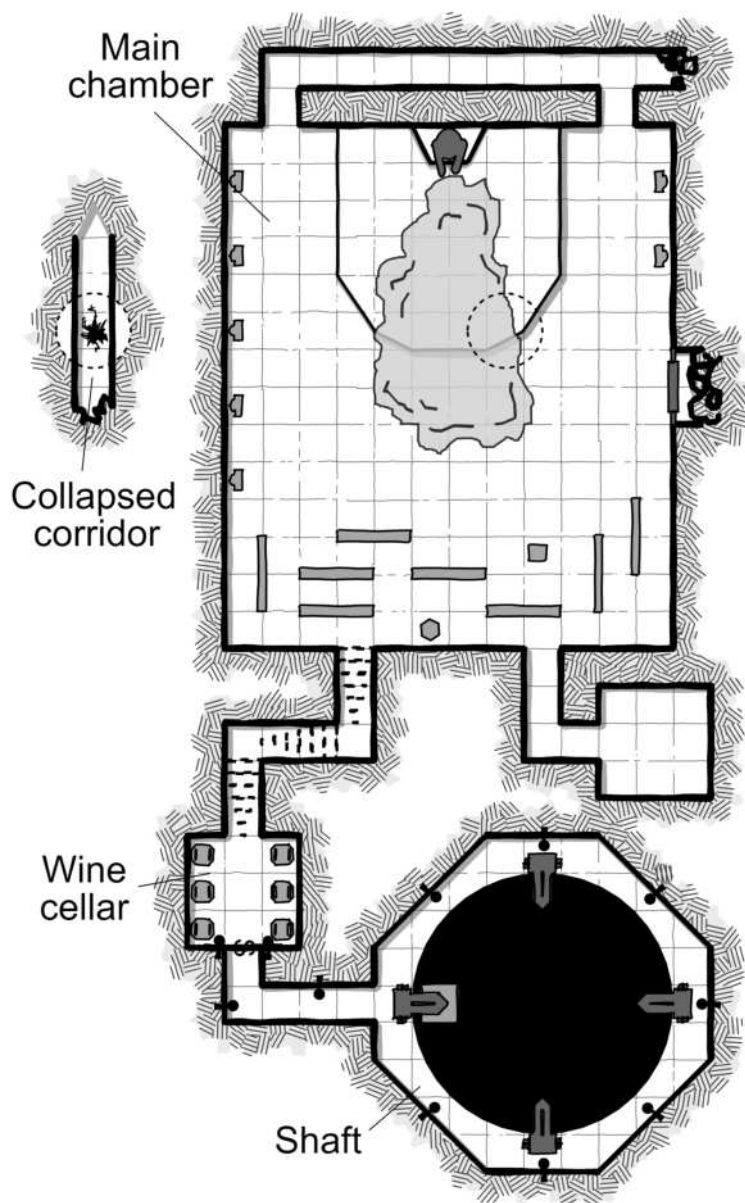
Devourer in Darkness. The Devourer in Darkness makes its nest here. The beast is often away, but it may burst in at the worst possible moment when the Loremaster so decides. This is also where the Devourer flees to recuperate from its wounds, see *Flight to darkness*, p. 112, and where it likes to digest its bigger meals. When prey is not to be found, the monster may consume some of the remaining treasure in the Wraiths’ treasure trove.

When the Devourer in Darkness is nearby, the Wraiths keep out of the way. They have accepted the beast’s habit of plundering their treasure and even supply the hoard with new items gathered from elsewhere in the castle, hoping to keep the Devourer satisfied.

Entrances and exits. The western corridor is the most likely first entry point for the Player-heroes, placing them far away from the treasure trove. The other corridors can act as escape routes to the Palace underground if the Company is overwhelmed by the Wraiths or the Devourer in Darkness. They may be partly blocked off by the Loremaster’s discretion. The staircase connects the Dungeons to the Palace upper floor.

In addition, the hole in the wall of the treasure trove connects to the Tunnels, possibly the first entrance into this region the Player-heroes find. If the Wraiths or the Devourer in Darkness chase the Company in, then the adventure is just beginning.

Treasure chamber



Treasure chamber

In this large chamber, the Witch-king gathered the treasures of Fornost he fancied most, saving them from the pillage and plunder of Orcs and Hillmen. Now they represent the remnants of the lost glory of Arthedain and are vehemently guarded by the spirits of the fallen city's late defenders.

Collapsed corridor

This corridor through the Palace underground has collapsed shut. Just before the blockage, there is a hole in the floor. The space below is vast—light shone into the hole doesn't reach anything tangible.

The fall continues for twenty yards, leading into the main chamber. The Company can descend using a rope. The landing spot is at the edge of the treasure hoard.

Main chamber

This high, domed chamber is dominated by a mound of riches, rising towards the room's northern end, where a golden statue looms at the edge of the light. Various chests, shelves, and tables line the other walls.

The treasure corresponds to a marvellous Hoard. The Player-heroes don't have much time to take in the sight before the Shadows start to fill the chamber, see *Shadows* and *Host descends* below.

The Company's lights are not enough to illuminate the whole room at once. If they approach the walls, they find carvings of ships at sea and birds flying over foreign islands. There are several exits, most leading to dead ends.



Statue. On a pedestal next to a wall stands a golden statue of an elven woman, three times the natural size, with long hair and robes flapping behind her as if in a strong wind. A golden surf surrounds her feet like the front wave of a ship. The statue's arms blend into giant bird wings as they reach forward to hold up a precious gemstone.

In front of the statue, on top of the treasure hoard, lies a large shield decorated with an image of the Sun.

Knowledgeable Player-heroes recognize the statue as Elwing, a foremother of the people of Númenor. The shield is the *Sunshield*, p. 118. The Witch-king's curse dims its golden surface, but if the Player-heroes manage to activate its power, it will fill the chamber with rays of sunlight reflecting and multiplying off the statue and driving the Shadows away.

Chests and shelves. The chests at the room's sides contain more treasure, and even more is set upon shelves and tables. All the treasure is part of the same marvelous Hoard.



Items in the hoard

Items in the hoard include coins, gemstones, idols, decorated vases, and jewellery. Some items haven't weathered the passage of time well: scrolls, wood carvings, rugs and tapestries, broken urns and statues, rusted weapons, fine foodstuff, and the like. These fill many of the chests and shelves. The Loremaster may also include a number of *Trinkets*, p. 126, especially the valuable ones from the end of the list.

Host descends

Soon after the Company enters the chamber, the Shadow Host descends upon them and the Shadow Level rises to one. The Shadow Level increases by one each turn until it reaches the maximum value of three on the third turn. The Shadow Level then stays constant until the Player-heroes leave the area.

On their turn, a Player-hero can spend an action to, for example,

- collect 5 points worth of Treasure,
- check one of the exits,
- contribute to a Skill Endeavour to open the blocked northern exit, or
- fight off the Shadows.

If the Company scatters into different parts of the chamber, fighting off the Shadows only helps heroes close to the fighter.

Northern exits. Two doorways on the northern wall lead out of the room. They connect to the same corridor, blocked by rubble some ways in. Clearing a way through requires effort.

Eastern exit. Heavy double doors stand on the eastern wall, partly unhinged. The doors cover a completely collapsed corridor.

Southern exits. Behind a jungle of tables and shelves, two doorways lead out of the room on the southern wall. The eastern one leads to a small, empty side chamber. The western one leads to a staircase, descending down into the Wine cellar.

Wine cellar

A narrow staircase leads to a small room with wine barrels covering the walls to the left and right. Torch holders line the wall opposite the entrance.

Secret door. If the leftmost torch holder is pulled, the middle section of the wall swings open like a door, revealing a secret passageway. The door can be operated from the other side by an identical torch holder, and more torch holders jut out of the walls of the passageway, leading to the Shaft.

Shaft

The passageway from the wine cellar leads to a round chamber with a shaft ten yards wide opening in the middle of the floor. Torch holders line the walls. Mechanical cranes sit on four sides of the shaft, with ropes running down into the darkness from outstretched beams.

A metal cage two yards a side is attached to the ropes beneath one beam and to rails running down the shaft's side.

Each crane is connected to a similar cage. Three of the four cages are currently at the bottom of the shaft, fifty yards down, beyond the reach of light.

Cranes. A complicated pulley system connects the ropes to a crank. Turning the crank lets one winch up the cages from the bottom of the shaft. This takes several minutes. The ascending cages make a clanking sound as their brakes bump against the rails.

Cage. The cage is made of crossed metal bars. The side facing the shaft's edge can be opened like a door. The floor and roof are closed and connected by a sturdy central pillar. A crank is attached to the pillar, connected to the ropes that run through the cage. A lever is set next to the crank, connecting to a mechanism beneath the cage.

Pulling the lever releases the cage's brakes and disconnects the crank and sends the cage plummeting down the shaft at an accelerating speed, shaking and clanking as it goes. The velocity can be controlled by manipulating the lever. The crank can be used to winch the cage back up.

The cage is large enough for the whole Company to fit in.

Bottom of the shaft. The shaft ends in a natural cave. Three more cages wait there, connected to their own systems of ropes and rails. A passageway leads out into a network of natural tunnels.

This is the beginning of Arvedui's path, see *Tunnels*, p. 74.

What's going on

After taking over Fornost, the Witch-king collected his favourites among the Palace's treasure to this chamber, a gallery dedicated to Elwing. Some of the valuables have been lost to decay, but the treasure is still the greatest in all of Fornost, the main prize for a Company seeking riches.

This is also the base of the Shadow Host; their presence is even stronger than in the Dungeons. Among the Shadows is the spectre of Anorthand, bound to the Sunshield the Witch-king threw on top of the treasure pile.

Shadows. The ghosts of the fallen defenders of Fornost are attracted to this chamber and its treasure. The overzealous dead make it their duty to protect these last remnants of Arthedain's memory. They soon start to harrass anyone who enters.

After the Player-heroes have gathered their bearings, the Loremaster should ask for an Awareness roll; a success reveals several Shadows hovering up in the room's dark corners. Before too long, at the

latest when a Player-hero starts looting the treasure, the Shadows move in, flooding the chamber first in the dozens and then in the hundreds. Shady figures make swooping attacks towards the Company, and angry whispers can be heard in the air:

“Begone... Tresspassers...”

“Our duty...”

“Begone, or join us!”

As the Shadow Level rises (see the *Host descends* above), the Player-heroes must make hard choices between hauling in the treasure and escaping.

If a Player-hero's Shadow score reaches their maximum Hope rating as a consequence of the Shadow Tests from the Shadow Level, it may be a good idea to play out the bout of madness immediately. Maybe the hero loses all hope and actively sabotages the Company's escape attempt, or maybe they abandon their friends and flee into the darkness, only to find themselves lost in the Palace underground with no recollection of what happened.

Spirit of Anorthand. The spirit of *Anorthand*, p. 110 can sometimes be seen in the Collapsed corridor, shimmering in the air on the edge of the hole that leads down, keeping a mournful watch over the treasure and the lost spirits below. When Player-heroes approach, Anorthand takes a quizzical look towards them and vanishes but keeps an eye out for them as they explore the treasure chamber. With

silent gestures, he can give them advice regarding the Sunshield and possible escape routes. In particular, if the Player-heroes enter the Wine cellar, the ghost may appear and beckon them to follow as it walks through the wall to the secret passageway beyond.

Wraiths. The Wraiths are aware of this chamber's existence and occasionally enter it to retrieve treasure. For added stakes, one or two Wraiths may follow the Player-heroes from a distance as they approach the chamber (the Loremaster should ask for an Awareness roll to see if the Player-heroes realise their presence). The Wraiths cut the heroes' rope after they descend, leaving them stranded, or attack any Player-heroes left in the collapsed corridor if the Company splits up. If they roll a Success icon on an attack roll, they push a target into the hole!

Entrances and exits. The Player-heroes will most likely approach the chamber through the Collapsed corridor. The secret passageway through the Wine cellar provides a dramatic exit, a shaky elevator ride into the unknown and away from the agitated Shadow Host, connecting to the Tunnels and Arvedui's path. The Company may even enter this way if they find Arvedui's path through other means or if they return to retrieve treasure they left behind.

The rest of the potential exits are blocked, though the northern corridor may be opened, connecting back into the Palace underground.

Tunnels

Some of these caves, too, go back in their beginnings to ages before the goblins, who only widened them and joined them up with passages, and the original owners are still there in odd corners, slinking and nosing about.

A network of natural tunnels snakes beneath Fornost, stretching out into the nearby hills. With its hundreds of twists and turns, the labyrinth is hard to navigate, and a careless Company risks getting lost forever.

Tunnels

Exploration Difficulty:	7
Exploration time:	Long
Pass-through time:	Long
Event rolls:	Ill-favoured

The damp darkness beneath the hills is oppressive. A sense of animosity emanates from the rock, an ill will aspiring to suffocate anyone who dares enter. Still, for those brave and clever enough to pass through, the Tunnels provide a shortcut into the heart of the Royal Palace.

Arvedui's path

In the days of Arthedain, a group of the King's knights—predecessors of the Rangers of the North—patrolled the hills and explored the Tunnels. They discovered a route that led all the way to the roots of the Royal Palace. A secret pathway was prepared from the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71 to the hills, marked by torches set on the walls along the way. The Dúnedain hid supply caches in these parts of the Tunnels and built traps elsewhere to stop enemies from discovering the route (for examples, see *Collapsing ceiling trap*, p. 76 and *Pit trap*, p. 82). The preparations paid off: during the Siege of Fornost, King Arvedui used this path to escape with his closest guards and servants.

The torches on the walls have long since decayed, but the torch holders remain, contraptions with three legs of dark steel embedded into the wall, supporting two concentric rings meant to hold a light source. While the ground has shifted and passageways have collapsed since the days of Arthedain, following the path is easier than blind navigation through the Tunnels. On the path, the Player-heroes may use the following statistics for Dungeon delving:

Arvedui's path

Exploration Difficulty:	5
Exploration time:	Short
Pass-through time:	Short
Event rolls:	One Feat Die

The path connects the following locations in order:

1. *Treasure chamber*, p. 71
2. *Chasm*, p. 76
3. *Tunnel crossing*, p. 79
4. *Troll's lair*, p. 84, or *Watchtower*, p. 20.

The path branches at the Tunnel crossing, see location description for details.

Note that Arvedui's path is not a single corridor but a route mapped out through the twisting and turning maze of tunnels. All locations on the path can also be reached from any other location in the Tunnels using the standard Dungeon delving statistics for the level.

What's going on

The Tunnels were created by the Devourer in Darkness eons ago, before the time of Men, as it tunneled through the hills, slowly consuming veins of precious ore. Later, the beast fell into a slumber until the Pale Rider opened the *Chasm*, p. 76, cracking open the Devourer's resting place. The creature occasionally returns here, hunting for wanderers with treasure.

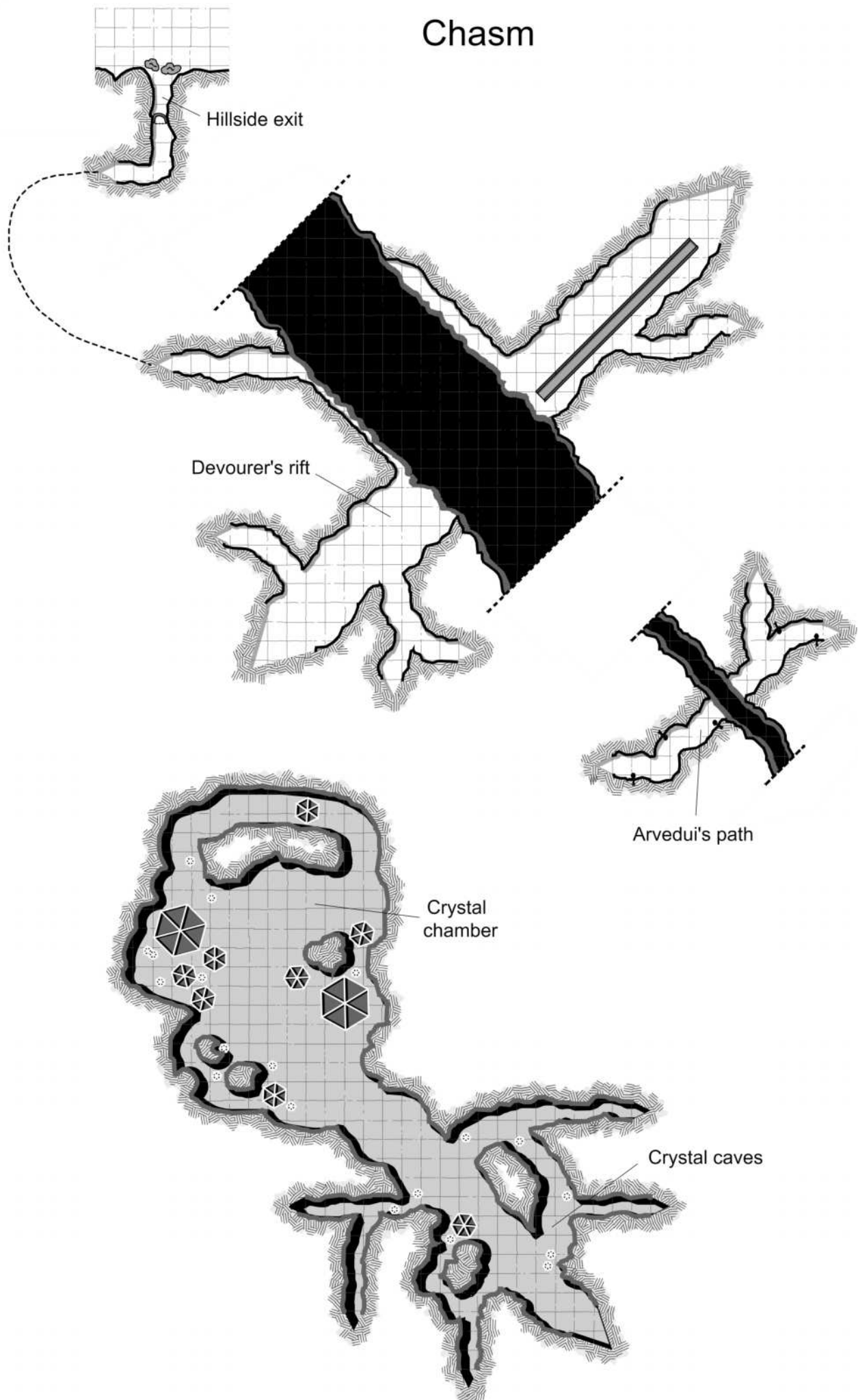
The outer edges of the Tunnels provide homes for Frank the Troll in the *Troll's lair*, p. 84, and Gulbug's tribe in the *Orc caves*, p. 81. The Orcs' infighting often spills out of their territory, into the Tunnels. Some Orcs wander all the way to the foundations of Fornost.

Connections to other floors

The Tunnels are connected to the outside world through the Troll's lair, the Orc caves, an exit below the *Watchtower*, p. 20, and a side entrance at the Chasm. They are connected to the Palace underground through the *Dungeons*, p. 68, and the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71.

The Chasm cuts the Tunnels in half, separating the connections to the Palace from all the locations in the Tunnels. As a special rule, **the Company must pass through the Chasm when moving between the Palace entry points and the locations of this level.**

Chasm



Chasm

When the Pale Rider chanted her spell, a chasm opened deep underground, cutting through the tunnel network. Only a narrow crack runs above ground, but below it spreads into a ravine hundreds of yards long and dozens of feet wide before tightening again as it plummets towards a labyrinth of crystal caves in the depths. These caves are the home of the Devourer in Darkness, a monster now haunting the city of Fornost.

Devourer's rift

A rift running from southeast to northwest cuts through a tunnel. The chasm is ten yards wide, too broad to be jumped over without magical aid. The tunnel is five yards wide on both sides, leading towards the Palace underground level on the southwestern side and towards the Orc caves on the northeastern side.

Into the rift. The chasm's bottom can't be seen from here. The fall continues down for fifty yards, leading to the Crystal chamber, see below. This is where the Devourer in Darkness crawled up from the Crystal caves after the chasm opened. If the Player-heroes wish to descend into the darkness (or fall in involuntarily), see *Down the chasm* below.

Ledge. On the chasm's southwestern edge, a narrow ledge a few inches wide leads northwest. Walking along the ledge is challenging and perilous in a hurry. After a while, the ledge widens into a proper corridor that leads to the Hillside exit.

Side tunnel. On the chasm's northeastern edge, a tunnel runs towards the northwest for a while before turning into the rift. The ledge on the opposite side used to part of this tunnel until the chasm cut it in half.

Down the chasm

Falling into the chasm causes a grievous loss of Endurance (see *The One Ring*, p. 134) as the hero stumbles down the near-vertical slope.

Climbing up or down is challenging, a Laborious Skill Endeavour. Failing a roll leads to a Player-hero falling or suffering a moderate loss of Endurance, depending on the Company's strategy and equipment. The Loremaster may set a time limit for the Endeavour, after which the Orcs, the Crystal-crawlers, or the Devourer in Darkness itself arrive to harass the heroes.

The bottom of the chasm opens into the Crystal caves.

Bridge. In the northeastern half of the tunnel, a crude wooden bridge lies on the ground. It was made by Orcs, ready to be pushed over the chasm when needed. The bridge is narrow and must be crossed in a single file.

Hillside exit

The tunnel widens here. Light can be seen in the distance, and the air smells fresh. The passageway from the Devourer's rift leads out to a hillside on the North Downs, but the tunnel is trapped a few yards before the exit. On the outside, the entrance is hidden behind thickly growing bushes.

Collapsing ceiling trap. Near the exit, a carefully constructed stone arch holds up a pile of rocks. A sturdy trip wire runs across the tunnel near the ground. Disturbing the wire collapses the structure.

Triggering the trap

If the Company fails in an **Awareness** roll, the Loremaster should determine at random who trips on the wire. That hero must make a successful Athletics roll or suffer a grievous loss of Endurance and become partially buried under the falling rocks. The rocks block the corridor, possibly dividing the Company in two.

Arvedui's path

Arvedui's path, marked by torch holders attached to walls, is also cut in half by the chasm. Here the rift is only a few yards wide: jumping over is possible but risky.

Crystal caves

Translucent crystals cover the walls, floor, and ceiling of these caves. The crystals reflect some of the light that touches them, but otherwise, the darkness is oppressive, torches flutter and lanterns burn low. Space is tight, with narrow labyrinthine tunnels connecting to each other and leading down towards the roots of the earth.

Player-heroes have an uneasy feeling of evil lurking in the shadows. Here and there, openings in the ceiling lead up into the chasm.

Darkness down below

A Player-hero entering the Crystal caves or the Crystal chamber gains 2 Shadow (Dread). If they linger here, this Shadow gain repeats every hour.

Crystals. The crystals resemble those in the cellar of the *Ruined mansion*, p. 28, with black strands branching inside, but they are larger and cover all flat surfaces.

Collecting the crystals

The crystals have been tainted by the evil presence in the caves. They are large and worth Treasure points if collected, but a hero trying this gains 1 Shadow (Dread) as described in the box *Breaking the crystals*, p. 28 and, if they continue, 2 Shadow (Greed). They also attract the attention of the Crystal-crawlers.

Crystal crawlers. Occasional noises can be heard from the darkness, like crystals clinking and scratching against each other. Crystal-crawlers move in the shadows. The bodies of these hunched, human-like creatures are covered in crystalline formations.

If the caves' crystals are disturbed (as they inevitably are if the Player-heroes try to make progress in the narrow passageways), the crawlers become agitated and attack the Company, first one by one and then in force. There's a seemingly endless supply of the creatures lurking in the depths.

CRYSTAL-CRAWLER

Wary, Protective

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

3

ENDURANCE MIGHT HATE PARRY ARMOUR

12

1

3

-

4

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Claws 3 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fear of Fire*, *Hate Sunlight* (see *The One Ring*, p. 232).

Hard to Crack. The first time the creature is reduced to zero Endurance, the crystals covering its body crack, and its Endurance is set to 1 instead unless the Endurance loss exceeded the creature's remaining Endurance by at least 5 points.

Crystal chamber

This chamber is more spacious than the rest of the surrounding caves. Huge crystals, multiple feet in length, jut out from the walls.

The chamber is directly beneath the Devourer's rift. Tunnels branch into different directions, leading to different parts of the Crystal caves. Here the Devourer in Darkness slept through the millennia before it was awakened again.

Heart of darkness

If a Player-hero touches one of the larger crystals in the Crystal chamber, they gain 3 points of Shadow (Dread) and see a series of visions from the perspective of the Devourer in Darkness flashing past their eyes:

- An eon of digging through stone, finding, eating, consuming everything that glitters;
- Millennia of slumber, with crystalline structures growing all around;
- Earth trembling and crystals rattling, a rift opening above, and a jolt of electricity coursing through the body;
- A new terrible hunger and a drive to climb up to consume more.

The better the Player-hero succeeds in their **Valour** roll, the clearer and more vivid the visions are.

What's going on

The chasm is the handiwork of the *Pale Rider*, p. 115, who opened it through sorcery with the express purpose of awakening the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110. It cuts through the whole tunnel network, interrupting all passageways running towards the Palace underground. The crossing points described here are not directly connected to each other, except through a tedious climb along the rock wall. The chasm spans a lot of ground, and the map presented above is not detailed and not necessarily to scale—the details are up to the Loremaster.

Going up, the chasm narrows into a mere crack, letting in hardly any light from the outside world. The chasm's appearance from the outside is described in the introduction to the *Tunnels*, p. 74 and along with the *Watchtower*, p. 20.

Other crossings. In addition to the ones described above, the Loremaster can improvise other crossings if the Player-heroes seek them out or the game's flow requires it. Some may be too wide to cross without aid, some may entail openings at different levels so that the Player-heroes need to climb up or down; some may have temporary bridges built by Orcs that make crossing easier.

Orcs. Gulbug's tribe sometimes sends their exiles over the chasm towards the Palace at the Devourer's rift. If the Player-heroes arrive when this is happening, they see the Orc bridge spanning over the chasm and a group of five Orc Guards forcing an Orc Soldier (*The One Ring*, p. 150) across with spears. At other times, the bridge is pulled to the northern side of the rift, and two to three Orc Guards may wait there in case an exile returns from the castle with treasure

to purchase the right to return to the tribe. They may engage an approaching Company with words or arrows.

Devourer in Darkness. The *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110 can crawl up and down the chasm, attaching itself to the wall with its tentacles. If grievously hurt, it returns to the Crystal caves through the Devourer's rift entrance to recuperate, see *Flight to darkness*, p. 112. While in the Crystal caves, the Devourer's powers peak, and it gains the following ability:

Avatar of Darkness. When in combat with this creature, a Player-hero gains 2 points of Shadow (Dread) on each turn before taking their action.

Entrances and exits. From the Palace's side, tunnels from the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71 lead here, to the crossing of Arvedui's path. The tunnel from the *Dungeons*, p. 68 leads to the Devourer's rift. The Hillside exit leads out onto the hills, a few hundred yards northeast of Fornost, in sight of the city walls.

The passageways on the other side lead deeper into the Tunnels—from the Devourer's rift towards the *Orc caves*, p. 81, and on Arvedui's path towards the *Tunnel crossing*, p. 79, although the paths cross and intermingle on this side. As indicated above, the Loremaster should feel free to improvise more entrances and exits on both sides of the chasm.

Tunnel crossing

The darkness of the tunnels beneath Fornost is not impenetrable: an ancient artefact shines light on a tunnel crossing like a beacon of hope.

Crossing

Three tunnels cross here, all lined with torch holders. In the middle of the crossroads, a post of grey metal rises from the ground, holding a glass sphere that emanates light.

Sphere of light. The sphere is one foot in diameter. Soft, white light shines through its creamy surface. It is firmly attached to its metal stalk, with metallic leaves shaped like petals wrapping around and covering the lower half. The sphere is lukewarm to the touch and practically impossible to remove from its place without breaking it.

Light in the darkness

The light is a welcome sight in the dark tunnels: each Player-hero regains 1 Hope when they see it for the first time.

The sphere's light counts as full, bright sunlight for the purposes of Fell Abilities such as *Denizen of the Dark* and *Hate Sunlight*.

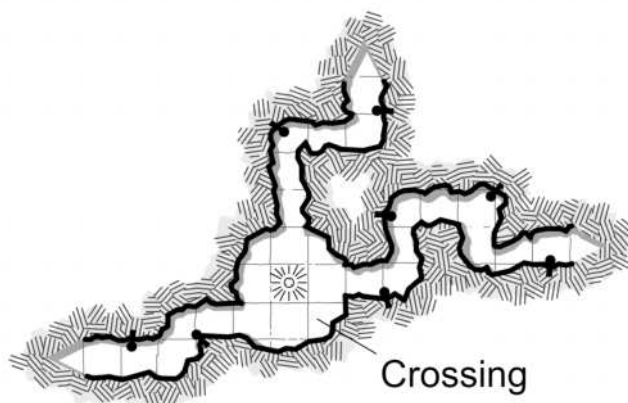
What's going on

The tunnel crossing is part of Arvedui's path. The sphere of light was a gift from the elves of Lindon to the people of Arthedain, set here as a relief from the oppressing atmosphere of the tunnels. Here the Company can enjoy a brief rest before pressing further into the darkness. However, the light also attracts unwanted visitors.

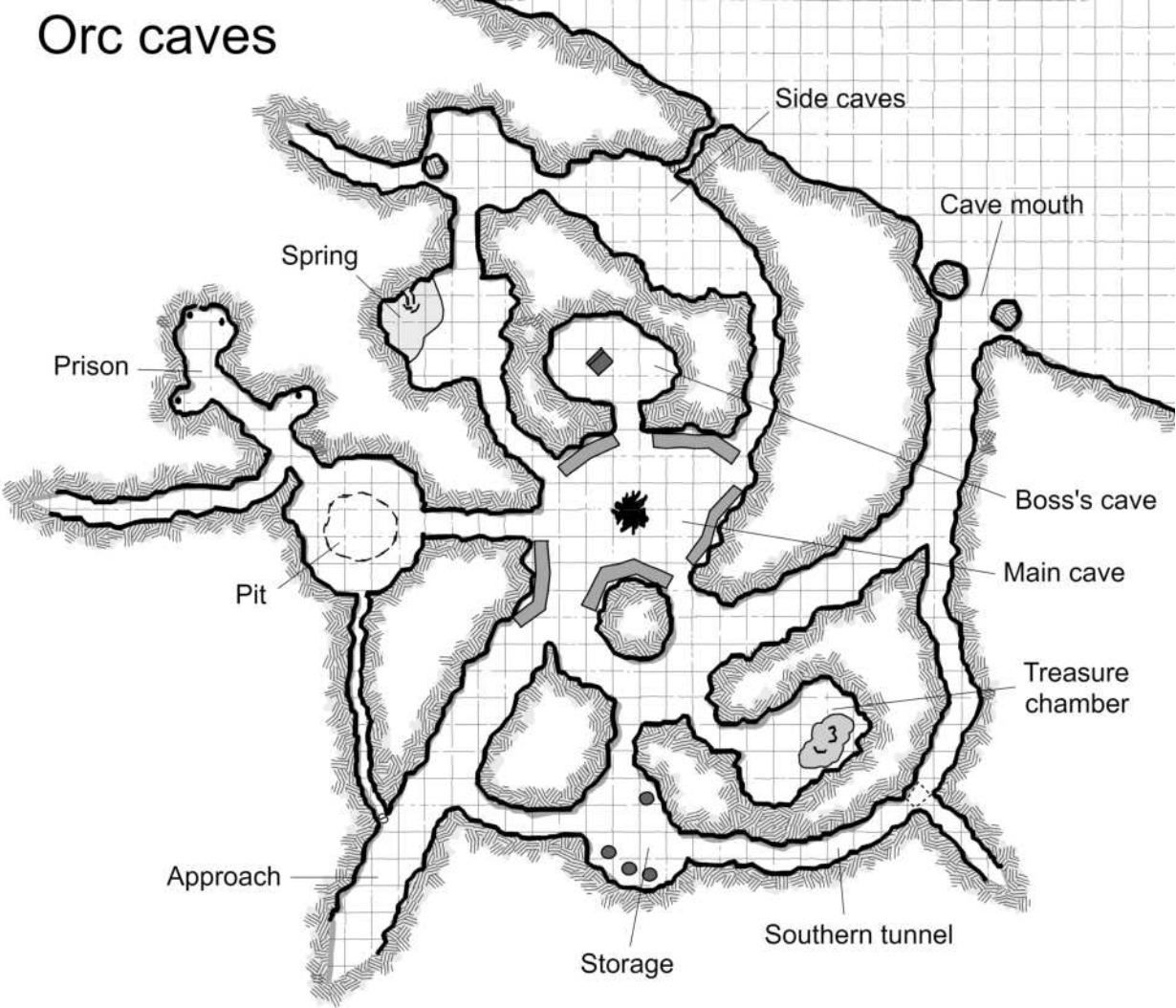
Orcs. Lost Orcs may wander this way, curious about the light shining behind a corner. No Orc voluntarily enters the elf-light, but they may keep an eye on the Player-heroes from the shadows in hope of easy prey. In this case, the Company is Chased by Orcs (see *Chased*, p. 8) as they leave the Tunnel crossing.

Entrances and exits. The three passageways lead to different branches of Arvedui's path: one towards the *Chasm*, p. 76, another towards the *Troll's lair*, p. 84 (the left one when approaching from the Chasm), and the last one towards the *Watchtower*, p. 20 (the right one when approaching from the Chasm). No matter the direction from which the Player-heroes approach, they first see light emanating from behind a bend in the tunnel.

Tunnel crossing



Orc caves



Orc caves

Some time ago, the Orc Gulbug led his tribe to the North Downs, lured by rumours of a magical treasure. They built a lair in a cave complex beneath the hills. The site is far removed from Fornost, but long tunnels connect it to the castle's underground level.

Approach

A broad tunnel snakes slowly upwards. Firelight flickers in an open cave ahead. Dark figures move against it. The air is stirring, signaling an exit out of the caves.

A hidden passageway. A narrow passageway opens high on the northern wall, concealed by shadows. It leads towards the pit. If the Orcs have had trouble with the Player-heroes or the Devourer in Darkness recently, there is a guard watching the approach from this hidden vantage point. Otherwise, the approach is unguarded.

Main cave

A bonfire blazes in the middle of the cave. Many-layered wooden platforms line the walls. Tunnels diverge in multiple directions.

Usually, a few Orcs sit huddled near the fire, trying to stay warm. When the tribe feasts, they all gather in this cave to eat, drink, sing, and fight. If the Player-heroes get caught here—or anywhere else in the caves—the Orcs sound the alarm and attack.

Platforms. These wooden structures fill the walls from floor to ceiling, in multiple tiers joined by ladders. They look poorly built and frail.

Small goblins use the platforms to move to little holes in the walls, where they have built little homes. When threatened, they fire arrows and throw stones at enemies below. The platforms aren't sturdy enough to support bigger creatures.

Boss's cave

An opening in the main cave's wall is blocked by a curtain. Two Orcs stand guard in front. The Orcs are part of Gulbug's personal guard (Orc-chieftain, *The One Ring*, p. 150); he retreats here when he needs a moment of peace or feels threatened.

Inside the cave. A crude throne made of stone dominates the room, with trinkets of gold and silver scattered around. When in the room, Gulbug sits on the throne, admiring his treasures, making plans, or giving orders to his captains. His bodyguard, Magbarog, stands by his side.

Melee in the main cave

If the Player-heroes get caught in a fight in the main cave, they face multiple threats.

- First, Orc Soldiers charge them, one for each Player-hero.
- On the second round, a number of Goblin Archers start to fire, one for each Player-hero.
- On the third round, one Orc Guard per Player-hero joins the fight, together with one Orc-chieftain.
- After this, more combat-hungry Orcs join the fray, targeting Orc and hero alike, turning the fight into an all-out melee.

When the melee starts, organized fighting becomes impossible. Each Player-hero receives one attack from a Scimitar 3 (3/16) each round; if a hero succeeds in an attack roll, they can use one success icon to break themselves or one of their companions out of the melee. The chaos of the fight keeps the Orcs busy, helping the heroes escape.

If the melee gets out of hand, Gulbug himself may appear to bash some order back into his followers. He's shielded by two Great Orc Bodyguards.

Sneaking through the caves

If the Company tries to sneak through the caves unnoticed, they must succeed in a number of **Stealth** rolls. Each hero rolls separately, but each success icon covers another hero's failed roll. The Loremaster should call for a roll each time the group comes close to Orcs, such as the guards in the prison, storage room, main cave, treasure cave, and cave mouth. The Company may also encounter patrols of two to four Orcs, up to the Loremaster's discretion. If a roll fails, the Orcs attack the heroes in waves of increasing strength, with more Orcs arriving each round.

These rolls allow the Company to move past the guarded areas; sneaking in requires a distraction. Similarly, passing through the inhabited side caves or the main cave during a feast is harder.

Side caves

These caves are filled with signs of life: rudimentary sleeping places, rocks rolled over as makeshift tables and chairs, stacks of weapons and tools made of wood and bone and stone. Several fires flicker in the darkness. Figures move nearby.

The Orcs rest and live their everyday lives here.

During the day they sleep; during the night, they gather around small pots upon fires and squabble over scraps of food. Many Orcs have marked their personal territory with lines of pebbles, but there are constant disputes over the best spots, away from snoring neighbors and cold walls.

Orc sleeping place. Dirty hay is scattered on the floor, forming a crude bed. Someone has set a rabbit skull and a polished stone next to the bunk.

Crack. A crack through the northern wall leads out of the caves. It is hard to find from the outside; from the inside, it is hidden behind a wolfskin, suspended on the wall between poles to block sunlight from leaking in. The crack is twenty feet deep, six feet high, and almost too narrow to pass through.

Boulder. On the western end of the caves, a boulder mostly covers an exit deeper into the Tunnels. The boulder is hard to move, and passing it requires effort.

Moving through narrow spaces

If the Player-heroes are in a hurry to pass through the crack or squeeze past the boulder, they must each make an Athletics roll. A hero gets stuck halfway on a failure, requiring a new success to push through. Hobbits don't need to roll.

Spring

In this cave, water flows down from a hole in the western wall, forming a pool on the floor. Half a dozen buckets lie nearby. This is where the Orcs get their drinking water. The water flows out of the pool through underwater openings.

Pit

A pit eight feet deep and twelve feet in diameter opens on the floor of this round cave. Bones clutter the bottom. There is room on the edges of the pit to walk around comfortably—or to gather and watch the action below.

The Orcs organize formal fights here to solve disputes, punish the disobedient, or simply amuse the crowd. The fighters are thrown into the pit and only one climbs up alive. Unlucky prisoners may find themselves here pitted against an Orc champion.

Prison

An Orc guards a narrow tunnel. They are ready to whip any prisoners making undue noise. A branching passageway leads deeper into the underground level.

Cells. Cell-like alcoves open on the walls of the tunnel.

Inside, sturdy metal bars jut out of the ground, with multiple chains dangling from each bar. They end in manacles. Prisoners are manacled from both wrists and ankles. The guard holds the key. One or two Orcs lie chained here, waiting for punishment.

Storage

Two Orcs guard a room full of half-open barrels and crates. Strips of meat hang on drying racks. This is the tribe's food storage; the containers are full of stolen root vegetables and beer. Every now and then, a crafty goblin tries to sneak in to snatch more than their share.

Treasure chamber

Two brutish Orcs watch the doorway to this chamber. Gold glitters inside in a huge pile. All treasure plundered by the tribe—gold, gemstones, jewellery—is gathered here, comprising a greater Hoard. The Orcs are from Gulbug's personal guard (Orc Guard, *The One Ring*, p. 150). Only he is allowed to enter.

Southern tunnel

Crude paintings in white and red decorate the walls here, depicting creatures hunting, fighting, and whipping slaves.

In the middle of the tunnel, an intersection connects it into a passageway leading deeper into the underground level. There are no paintings at the intersection. An old Dúnedain pit trap is hidden beneath loose stones and gravel.

Pit trap. The ground is held up by weak wooden poles. If a Player-character walks through, they fall fifteen feet, landing on spikes that have fortunately rotted soft. The stones and gravel covering the pit fall with them, and the noise alerts nearby Orcs, who are aware of the trap. The trap can be bypassed by walking close to the wall.

Triggering the trap

If the Company fails in an **Awareness** roll, the leading Player-hero falls into the pit trap, suffering a severe loss of Endurance (see *The One Ring*, p. 134).

Cave mouth

A light breeze can be felt in the air here—the cave opens to fresh air! Two Orcs guard the exit. During the daytime, they stay in the shadows to avoid the hated Sun. Two large boulders stand near the doorway; with great effort, the Orcs can move them to block the entrance.

What's going on

A local Orc tribe has made these caves their home. The tribe's most important members and long-term plans are described in the section *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99. Gulbug and Magbarog spend their time in the *Boss's cave*, while Lugnash patrols the tunnels, trying to recruit other Orcs to his cause.

The Loremaster is advised to sketch a map of the caves as the heroes explore, to help the players visualize the various exits and entrances.

Orc guards. Besides the guards mentioned above, groups of Orcs constantly wander the tunnels—stealth is needed to move through unnoticed. Only during the great feasts are the tunnels empty, with most Orcs gathered in the main cave to celebrate. If

the Orcs catch trespassers, they raise the alarm, and soon dozens of Orcs will pile on the intruders.

If the Player-heroes get caught this way, they aren't killed outright; instead, the Orcs take their equipment and throw them into the prison. Gulbug himself arrives to question them, trying to figure out who else knows of the tribe's hideout. It is up to the heroes to escape before dying in the fighting pit or some other cruel form of amusement. They may receive help from Lugnash in exchange of a promise to deal with some of Gulbug's lackeys.

Entrances and exits. Coming from the Tunnels, the approach is the most natural entryway into the cave complex. The Player-heroes should first find the cave complex through the approach or the cave mouth.

Troll's lair

In the days of Arthedain, this cave served as an emergency hideout only known to the royal family and their most loyal knights. When the Witch-king invaded Fornost, King Arvedui fled here to regroup and gather supplies before moving further out to the North Downs. Now a new occupant, a troll named Frank, has settled in.

Back entrance

Torch holders line the walls of this tunnel. Some have been torn off, leaving behind holes in the rock. A door blocks the tunnel. Someone has painted on it a crude red angry face.

If Frank is in the cave, the heroes may hear him moving about, humming to himself, eating noisily, or snoring.

Door. The “door” is made of nailed-together wooden planks of various lengths. It leans against the walls and ceiling of the corridor but is not attached to them.

Frank made (and painted) the door to scare off unwanted intruders (in particular, Orcs). Spying through cracks between the planks reveals the main room with a low-burning fire in the pit. If the heroes

move the door carelessly, it falls over with a loud bang and alerts the troll.

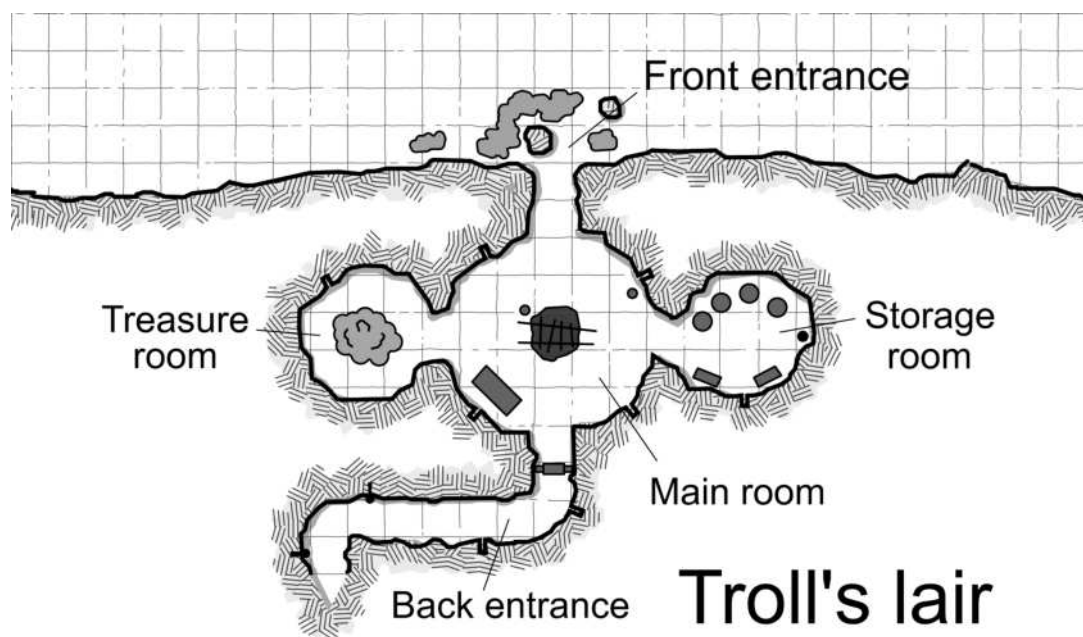
Main room

Light emanates from a firepit in the middle of this room. Something is grilling over the low flames. Around the pit, dirt and pieces of bone cover the floor. A few fancier items decorate the room: a stool near the fire, a blanket next to the wall, a bucket in a corner. On the walls, tunnels open in four directions.

When staying here, King Arvedui's men slept in this room. Smoke from the fire escapes through cracks in the ceiling, dispersing into the outside air without leaving any distinguishable trail.

Fire pit. The grill is made of torn-out torch holders. Chunks of meat sizzle on it. The meat is mutton and the bones around are from sheep.

Fancy items. The yellow paint of the stool is peeling off. The blanket is covered in floral embroidery. The stool is too small for Frank to sit on, but the blanket he uses to cover parts of himself while sleeping. Frank is proud of his few possessions and will be furious if they are damaged.



Storage room

This chamber is filled with piles of firewood, large barrels, and meat hanging in racks. At the back of the chamber, a hole in the ground sinks down to darkness. Men of Arthedain stored food here, and so does Frank.

Barrels. Some of the barrels are empty, others are sealed shut. They contain beer.

Hole. There is water at the bottom of the two-foot-wide hole. The Dúnedain used it as a well.

Treasure room

Gold glitters in the middle of this room. Coins and jewellery lie in a heap on the floor, mixed with plates, cups, horseshoes, old boots, and other mundane items. This is a lesser Hoard. Some of it was left here by King Arvedui's retinue a thousand years ago, some stolen from unlucky travelers in more recent times.

Front entrance

The corridor slopes up, leading out of the Tunnels into the fresh air. Two large boulders and thick bushes hide the mouth of the cave.

Frank moved one of the boulders when he found the cave, widening the entryway and tearing away some of the vegetation. The troll's massive footprints can be seen on the ground all around the area.

What's going on

The knights of Arthedain, predecessors of the Rangers of the North, used this cave as a shelter and supply storage when patrolling the North Downs. Arvedui's path ends here, and the king himself spent a few days in the cave when fleeing the Witch-king's invasion.

If the Company aims to get in or out of the Tunnels this way, the cave's new inhabitant is their main obstacle.

Frank the Troll. For the last few years, the cave has been the lair of a lone stone-troll who calls himself Frank. Frank is an old and experienced troll (Stone-troll Robberwith the *Thick Hide* Fell Ability of a Cave-troll, *The One Ring*, p. 152) who wears a ragged loincloth and defends his cave fiercely (and grumpily) against intruders with his massive club.

During the nights and on cloudy or foggy days, Frank is out hunting—mostly for deer and stray sheep, but occasionally lone Orcs or travelers on the North Downs or even all the way down on the Greenway. Back in the cave, the troll spends his time roasting his prey, eating, and sleeping. He has a habit of muttering and humming to himself as he goes on his daily tasks.



The Loremaster may set up an encounter with Frank in several ways. If the troll is asleep, the Player-heroes have a chance to sneak past him unnoticed. If he is away, he may return at the most dramatic moment—say, when the heroes are looting his treasure. Frank accuses the Company of intruding into his home and prepares to fight. If he catches a Player-hero alive, he ties them up and throws them into the storage room to wait for a feast. Frank is too large to chase the Player-heroes into the Tunnels, but he may follow them out onto the hills if the sun is not shining.

If the heroes prove to be formidable opponents, Frank is willing to negotiate. In his old days, he has grown fond of anything that makes his cave more cozy and comfortable and, if bribed with such items, he may let the Player-heroes pass through or even part with some of his treasure. He will never abandon his home or his trolling ways even if harrassed repeatedly by the Company.

Negotiating with Frank

Persuading Frank not to attack the Company can be played as a council (Resistance 6). The Troll is reluctant to negotiate (all rolls *lose* (1d)), and the heroes have to convince him they are a serious threat instead of easy prey.

- If the council fails, offering suitable gifts (see main text) may gain the heroes a success with woe.
- If the council succeeds, Frank may exchange such gifts for part of his treasure.
- If the council ends in disaster, the confrontation turns violent. Frank fights to the death.

Entrances and exits. The Player-heroes are likely to first approach the cave via the back entrance, following Arvedui's path. The front entrance is hidden well; the only way to find it from the outside is to follow Frank's tracks. Travelling here from Fornost over the hills takes half a day.



Chapter 4

Campaign

‘Have we not heard of thee at whiles, and of thy wanderings, ever hatching plots and mischief at a safe distance?’

In Fornost, the Company runs into undead Shadows, a monster prowling in the depths, and runic rings of Elven magic speaking of darkness sealed within. Orcs, cultists, Wraiths, and more move within the ruins, all with their own goals and agendas. For the Company, all this may be mere background for a straightforward treasure hunt in the Royal Palace, but if the Loremaster so wishes, they can be combined into a full-fledged, epic campaign. This chapter provides the tools.

Most of the mysteries of Fornost revolve around the Seven Seals, rings of magic imprinted on various doors and gates of the city’s Royal Palace. When the adventure begins, their origin is a mystery. However, as the Player-heroes dig deeper into Fornost, they learn the Seals’ true purpose, tying into the tragic history of Fornost’s restless spirits. They also find the Enemy is working to undo the Seals to release a dark force upon Eraidor. Can the Company stop these plans and release Fornost from shadows?

The following sections give details on the history of Fornost, the mystery of the Seven Seals, and the various factions, characters, and artefacts the Company may encounter during their adventures. It is recommended that the Loremaster introduces these elements into a campaign little by little, according to the interest of the Player-heroes and the requirements of the narrative.

History of Fornost

That is a chapter of ancient history which it might be good to recall; for there was sorrow then too, and gathering dark, but great valour, and great deeds that were not wholly vain.

The table below lists the major events in the history of the northern kingdom of Arnor from the point of view of Fornost Erain. It mixes canonical sources (see, in particular, Appendices A and B in *Return of the King*) and material written for this campaign.

FORNOST’S TALE OF YEARS:

Year (Third Age)	Event
By 2	The Dúnedain establish two kingdoms in Middle-earth: Gondor in the south and Arnor in the north. The Last Alliance defeats Sauron. Valadil, son of Isildur, rules over Arnor from the capital of Annúminas.
263	Arnor expands north and east. The fortress city of Fornost Erain is established at the edge of the North Downs to ward off threats to the new territories.
861	In the wake of an inheritance dispute, Arnor splits into Arthedain, Rhudaur, and Cardolan. In Arthedain, the capital is moved from Annúminas to Fornost.

FORNOST'S TALE OF YEARS (Continued)

Year (Third Age)	Event
~1300	The Witch-king, a servant of Sauron and the leader of the Nazgûl establishes the kingdom of Angmar and gathers Orcs and other evil things there. Rhudaur, led by the native Hillmen, falls under Angmar's influence.
1409	Angmar attacks. Cardolan is invaded; Arthedain loses Weathertop, but repels the enemy. The Palantír of Weathertop is moved to Fornost.
1438	King Araphor establishes the Rangers, a group of royal knights, who start to prepare for Angmar's return. They explore the tunnels beneath Fornost and hide supply caches for an emergency. A secret passageway is found connecting the Royal Palace to the North Downs.
1601	With the permission of King Argeleb II, the Hobbit brothers Marcho and Blanco found the Shire. The Hobbits keep to themselves, but occasionally an adventurous youngster wanders out to seek Fornost, the 'Norbury of the Kings.'
1864	Prince Arvedui is born, prophesied to be the last king of Arthedain by Malbeth the Seer, the king's counsellor.
1973	Angmar on the move. Arvedui, now king, sends a plea for aid to Gondor.
1974 (January)	Orcs, Hillmen, and sorcerers from Angmar cross the border and march towards Fornost. Arvedui's sons meet the Enemy in battle but are swept aside to the west towards river Lune.
(February)	Fornost comes under siege, with King Arvedui trapped inside. The Witch-king himself commands Angmar's troops, but the city's defences hold.
(April)	Gwydyon, a captain of the city guard, betrays the Kingdom and opens Fornost's gates to the invaders. The city is sacked. Anorthand, the King's Champion, holds off the attackers, buying time for Arvedui to escape to the North Downs through secret tunnels. Arvedui brings the city's two Palantíri and the heirlooms of the House of Isildur with him.
(May–)	The Witch-king rules in Fornost. Together with his acolytes, he worships Morgoth and experiments with dark magic, binding spirits and forging Morgul-weapons. Captured soldiers of Arthedain are tortured into submission and turned into Wraiths or killed and bound to the city as restless Shadows.
(June–)	With Fornost as their centre of operations, Angmar slowly conquers the rest of Arthedain. Among their leaders is a sorcerer known as the Pale Rider.
(July– October)	Hunted by the enemy, Arvedui is forced to flee from the North Downs with his entourage. They escape to the North, finding shelter among the native Lossoth living by the seashore.
1975 (–March)	Círdan the Shipwright sends a ship from Lindon to bring Arvedui to safety. The Witch-King summons a storm that sinks the ship and drowns Arvedui. The Palantíri are lost in the waves.
(May)	A fleet arrives from the south: finally, Gondor answers Arthedain's call. Combining forces with Elves from Lindon and Rivendell, the Host of the West marches to Fornost. A great battle is fought on the plains between Fornost and Lake Evendim, ending in the Free Peoples' victory.
	The Elf-lord Glorfindel confronts the Witch-king in battle and cuts his mask in half. The Nazgûl flees. Glorfindel prophesies he will not return to the North, but will fall only later, and not by the hand of man.
	Aranarth, son of King Arvedui, leads a group of knights into Fornost. They defeat the remnants of the Orcs there but are driven from the Palace by the restless spirits of their compatriots, whom they don't recognise.
	The Host of the West proceeds to cleanse Angmar. The remnants of the Witch-king's forces, including the Pale Rider, escape to the North, beyond the borders of Eriador.

FORNOST'S TALE OF YEARS (Continued)

Year (Third Age)	Event
(July)	With help from the smith Dammor of Rivendell, and a reluctant agreement from Elrond, the Royal Palace of Fornost is locked by Seven Seals to prevent the Witch-king's malice from spreading.
1976	The war has ended in victory, but Arthedain has been devastated. Aranthar refuses the title of king, becoming instead the first Chieftain of the Rangers of the North.
2000–2800	Fornost lies abandoned, crumbling to a ruin. The Rangers return to the city regularly to keep an eye on the Palace and the Seals, but over the centuries, the original purpose of their watch is forgotten. Rumours spread of restless spirits haunting the old capital. People of Bree-land avoid the place, calling it the Deadmen's Dike.
~2900	The Pale Rider returns, spreading malice in the North. She schemes with cultists and Hillmen to strengthen the Enemy's power in Eriador.
2966	The Pale Rider weaves a spell to awaken the Devourer in Darkness, a monster with the power to unravel the Seven Seals. She makes arrangements to send the Cult of the Witch, led by the Dúnedain woman Catelwyn, to Fornost to ensure this happens.
	Other forces are also gathering: Gulbug's tribe has moved into caves near the city, a group of Highwaymen has sniffed out a chance for loose treasure, and Wraiths wait in the shadows for the return of the Witch-king's heir.
Early Fourth Age	In one way or another, peace returns to Eriador. King Elessar re-establishes the Kingdom of Arnor, and Fornost is rebuilt.

Concerning spirits and seals

Over the land there lies a long shadow, westward reaching wings of darkness.

After conquering Fornost, the Witch-king moved his seat of power there. In a secret laboratory he experimented on spirit-binding, commanding spirits of nature to do his bidding. His greatest ambition, however, was to bend the dying spirits of Men to his will, stopping them from passing on beyond the bounds of the world. Former soldiers of Arthedain, captured during the sack of Fornost and thrown into the dungeons, were his test subjects.

The results were mixed. With the help of his magical sceptre, the Witch-king cast a cloud of doubt on the prisoners' minds. Through sorcery and torture, they were twisted to believe that they had broken their oaths and that the fall of Fornost was their fault. One by one, their bodies gave up, but their spirits were bound to the city by guilt, doomed to remain by a misguided need to defend their kingdom. The soldiers, reduced now to mere Shadows (see *Shadows*, p. 9), obeyed the wielder of the sceptre, but only insofar as the commands aligned with their own urge to drive out and destroy any perceived threats to Fornost.



When the Witch-king marched to war against the Free Peoples, he left his sceptre and undead servants behind, confident in a victory that was not to be. Angmar was defeated and Orcs and evil Men were driven out of Fornost, but the Shadows remained. They attacked the Dúnedain who entered the Palace, making them flee in terror. Not understanding the nature of the evil that now haunted the castle and scared of it spreading out, the Dúnedain decided to seal the doors. With the help of Elven smiths from Rivendell, they set Seven Seals on various entryways around the Palace, imbued with magic that would stop the Shadows from leaving.

So the Shadows remained in the Royal Palace, guarding its remaining treasures for eternity. The double curse of the Witch-king's sceptre and the Seven Seals keeps them locked in, until someone—a hero or a villain—arrives to set them free.

Shadows and the Player-heroes

The Player-heroes first encounter the Shadows as malicious spirits terrorising explorers in the Palace. Their origin is the campagin's central mystery. The Company may find hints in the *Dungeons*, p. 68, *Witch-king's laboratory*, p. 63, and *Treasure chamber*, p. 71, but only the spirit of *Anorthand*, p. 110, the soldiers' former commander, can tell them the whole truth.

Communicating with the Shadows is difficult. They speak in incoherent whispers but won't answer the Player-heroes' questions. To break through to them, one must command them with the *Witch-*

king's sceptre, p. 120. Alternatively, if the spirits are exposed to the light of the *Sunshield*, p. 118 and pressed for answers, they show remorse and reveal bits and pieces of their story. Releasing the Shadows from their bondage is discussed below.

Seven Seals

A Seal consists of a silver circle one yard in diameter, surrounding the pictures of seven stars, the Sun, and the Moon. Quenyan writing spirals around the circle:

“By the the grace of the first-born,
the vigilance of the Dúnedain
and the blessings of the Valar,
we seal in the cursed darkness.
While a single Seal stands,
let no shadow see the light of the Sun.”

All Seals look identical and shine a silvery light. They are etched on seven doors at the Palace's outer edge, and can be seen from either side of the door. As long as the Seal remains, the door can't be opened by any means. Removing a Seal requires powerful black magic, see *Seals undone* below.

The locations of the Seals are listed in the Seven Seals table below. In most cases, the Seals won't stop the Company from entering the Palace—there are ample ways around the sealed entryways. However, they block the passage of the undead: as long as at least one Seal remains, no Shadow can step outside the darkness of the Palace, and the Wraiths are hindered as well.

SEVEN SEALS TABLE:

Seal location	Consequences of breaking the Seal
<i>Palace entrance</i> , p. 26 (above ground)	The ghost lights in the <i>Upper hall</i> , p. 53, return to life. This Seal is broken when the adventure starts.
<i>Garden</i> , p. 41 (two Seals)	If both Seals are broken, the forest of black trees starts to spread out of the Garden. The spread only stops when the Shadows have been freed.
<i>Crypts</i> , p. 34	If the False King has been disturbed in the <i>Throne room</i> , p. 37, he and the other traitor spirits enter the Crypts and inhabit the corpses in the tombs, turning them into Barrow-wights (<i>The One Ring</i> , p. 154).
<i>Dome of Sight</i> , p. 31	The Wraiths break out of the Palace into the city and start to harass the explorers there.
<i>Watchtower</i> , p. 20	The Wraiths break out of the Palace onto the surrounding lands, venturing all the way to the <i>Farmsteads</i> , p. 17.
<i>Palace entrance</i> , p. 26 (below ground)	The center of the courtyard in front of the Palace entrance collapses, forming a pit whose bottom punctures the ceiling of the <i>Treasure chamber</i> , p. 71. This Seal is well hidden and is likely to be the last to fall.

The Seals were crafted by an Elf named Dammor, a smith from old Eregion, who has since left Middle-earth. Elrond Half-elven helped him, though reluctantly, unsure of the nature of the threat reported by the Dúnedain. In addition to stopping the passage of the undead, Elven magic has helped preserve the Palace and its treasures, delaying the processes of decay that have claimed most of Fornost's buildings. The Elves have the means to remove the Seals, if needed; see *Elves of Rivendell*, p. 114.

Seals undone

The *Pale Rider*, p. 115, a servant of the Witch-king, wishes to undo the Seven Seals and free the Shadows as a plague upon Eriador, preferably commanded by the *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93. For this, she has summoned the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110, a beast from the abyss, capable of sucking out the Seals' magic. Both the Cult of the Witch and the Wraiths living beneath the castle strive for this goal; see the faction descriptions for more information.

When a Seal is undone, part of the protective magic around Fornost falters. The destruction of each Seal has an unique effect, as listed in the table below.

Since the Seals are partly responsible for preserving the Palace's structural integrity, the ruins become more unstable as the Seals get dismantled. Collapsing walls and ceilings become a real threat, and old passageways are closed and new ones opened on a regular basis.

Seals in a campaign. The unraveling of the Seals is the ticking clock that drives the campaign forward. An attack against a seal is an excellent seed for an adventure, pitting the Player-heroes against the various threats and factions within Fornost, aided by the *Rangers of the North*, p. 106. However, repelling such an attack is only delaying the inevitable. The enemy is strong, and the Company can't be everywhere at once; sooner or later, the Seals will fall, a progression that can't be undone. This may happen during a Fellowship Phase, so that the Company only learns about it when it's too late, through a message from the Rangers, rumours of new developments near the ruins, or their own discovery during the next Adventuring Phase. The Loremaster should use the destruction of the Seals liberally, to create a sense of urgency and drive the Player-heroes towards the climax of the campaign: the releasing of the Shadows.

Releasing the Shadows

Once the Company learns about the fate of the Shadows, releasing them from their binds is likely to become one of the main goals of the campaign. For the Shadows to pass on to the afterlife, a specific set of

circumstances must be met:

- The Seven Seals have to be broken.
- The *Sunshield*, p. 118 must be presented to the Shadow Host to remind them of their former allegiance, awakening them from their madness.
- The Shadows must hear the true story of the fall of Fornost and they must be either convinced that they did they part to defend the city or offered a way to redeem themselves now.
- The Shadows need to see the light of the Sun to wash away the Witch-king's curse.

When the last Seal is broken, the Shadows start to rise from the depths through the pit in front of the *Palace entrance*, p. 26, presenting the Company with a chance to make their case. The Cult of the Witch will try to seize control of the Shadow Host with the Witch-king's sceptre, or stop the Company and set the Shadows to roam the countryside. **As long as the Witch-king's sceptre is used to command the Shadows, this will thwart any attempt to release them.** If the Cult of the Witch has a strong position on the Palace, their leaders will gather at the *Upper hall*, p. 53, addressing the Shadow Host from the hall's balcony, and setting the scene for a dramatic final encounter.

Depending on how things evolve between the Company, the Shadows, and other factions, there are three possible outcomes:

- If the Shadow Host gets out of Fornost without breaking their curse, they will spread fear and panic around Eriador, inhabiting old ruins and attacking travellers in a misguided attempt to eliminate all threats to their realm. For years, no one feels safe being outside after the dark. The sparse settlements of the North grow ever more isolated and ill-prepared for the Enemy's next move.
- If an enemy with the Witch-king's sceptre takes control of the Host, they will lead the Shadows out as a tidal wave of terror, making any opposition flee in fright, leaving the villages of Eriador vulnerable and ripe for plunder for any mortal troops that follow. Eventually, an ambitious enemy will turn their gaze towards the Bree-land. By that point, the Rangers of the North have gathered a score of warriors to stop the threat once and for all—but the cost will be great, weakening the already faltering defences of the North.
- If the Shadows are released from their curse successfully, they fade away in the sunlight and vanish in a breeze, finally free from a thousand years of torment.

Traitor spirits

There is a group of spirits that differs from the others: the traitors who turned on their fellows and let Angmar's armies into Fornost. Led by the False King Gwydion, they reside in the *Throne room*, p. 37, and later in the *Crypts*, p. 34. These spirits are also bound to the Palace, this time by a well-earned guilt and oaths actually broken, protecting what they perceive as rightfully theirs. Indeed, Gwydion's group were the first test subjects in the Witch-king's sorcerous designs, inspiring him to experiment on the other Dúnedain.

The Seven Seals bind the traitor spirits just as they bind the other Shadows. However, the traitors are further gone on their dark path: they are more malicious and violent and can even manifest in dead bodies, see *Seal and traitor spirits*, p. 35. If Fornost is cleansed of evil, the Loremaster must decide if the traitors fade away with their brethren or if they stay behind as a final remnant of the city's dark past.



Factions

‘They have come!’ called Balin. ‘And their camp is very great.’

The various factions competing over the control of Fornost are described here, including notable characters, relations to other factions, and a progressions of events that are likely to take place if the faction is not stopped. For more details on using the factions in play, see *Tides of war*, p. 10, and *Using the factions*, p. 124.

Cult of the Witch

There the Dúnedain were few, and power had been seized by an evil lord of the Hillmen, who was in secret league with Angmar.

In the days of old, the Hillman clans of the North allied themselves with Angmar and learned sorcery from the Witch-king. When Angmar fell a thousand years ago, the clans were thrown into disarray, and the Enemy’s influence waned among them. However, recent visitors have rekindled the spark for the old ways in the hearts of the Red Stag Clan.

A decade ago, a delirious young woman arrived at the clan’s dwelling place in the northern wastes of Eriador. She bore half of a black mask on her face and spoke of visions of shadows and war. The clan’s priests took her arrival as a sign from the old powers and nurtured her back to health. They soon came to believe the woman to be the chosen one of the Witch-king, speaking his will through the fragmented mask. The woman regained her strength, settled in, and learned the clan’s language. She started gathering followers as a seer and a herald for Angmar’s eventual return.

Recently, two messengers arrived from the North, claiming to hail from those who survived the destruction of Carn Dûm, Angmar’s capital. They spoke of dark forces within Fornost Erain and a plan to unleash them, possible if the *Witch-king’s sceptre*, p. 120, could be recovered from the ruins.

Now, a sect of the clan’s best warriors march towards Fornost, led by the woman Catelyn, called “the Witch” by her followers. Aided by Catelyn’s visions, they intend to uncover the secret powers buried within the fortress and reign chaos upon Eriador in the Witch-king’s name.

Catelyn

Occupation: *Cult leader*

Distinctive features: *Proud, Wilful*

Statistics: See box.

Catelyn is a stern, middle-aged woman with handsome features and sharp eyes. She is not from the Red Stag Clan—in fact, she is one of the Dúnedain, and she knows her worth. She is also Angmar’s heir—the Hillmen call her the Witch and say that the Witch-king himself guides her through the black half-mask she always wears.



History. Catelyn was born in a small farmhouse along the Greenway, near Fornost Erain. Her father died when she was young. Catelyn was never happy with the simple countryside life, yearning for something more. When she was a teenager, her mother *Elizabeth*, p. 113, revealed her noble bloodline hailing from the Númenoreans, the Lords of the West who once ruled over the North as Kings by birthright. Then Catelyn knew her destiny: to guide the people of the North back to the glory of the old days. She ran away, south towards Bree-land.

To her dismay, Catelyn found the Bree-landers to be ignorant of the past splendour of the Northern Kingdom, infuriatingly content with their mediocre lives and refusing to be ruled by anyone but themselves. They treated the Dúnedain Rangers as homeless wanderers, hardly better than common thieves.

In her search for like-minded spirits, Catelyn joined a band of Rangers. Over the course of many years, she learned their ways and lore. She admired the Rangers’ tenacity and they treated her like a sister, but in time she grew to dislike their humble ways,

always toiling to keep the settlements of the North safe but never seizing their true calling as leaders and kings. Bitterness followed.

Everything changed when Catelyn found the mask, lying on an icy riverbank on the northern wastes of Eriador. Maybe it was a coincidence, or maybe it called to her, but there it was, sticking out of the mud: half of a fractured black visor, whispering promises of power to her ear. Her Ranger companions, Morwenna and *Gwynfor*, p. 107, wanted to bring the artefact south to the Elf-lords' safekeeping, but she took it for herself and ran away, once more, into the night.

Wearing the broken mask, Catelyn wandered the wastes, haunted by visions of black towers and shadow hosts. They took over her days and nights, blurring everything into a sleepless fever dream. She was about to collapse from the lack of food and drink when the Red Stag Clan found her. The Clan's priests revived her to a new purpose: to rekindle the might of Angmar and bend the insolent peoples of Eriador on their knees.

More years passed. Catelyn became the Witch, the leader of a Hillman cult, gathering followers from near and far. Little by little, the visions taught her the secrets of the Witch-king. Among them was knowledge of a hidden sceptre, sealed in Fornost Erain, commanding a great power. When messengers from the ruined Angmar arrived, the pieces of a plan fell into place, and Catelyn the Witch gathered her host and marched to the city of the kings.

Powers. Catelyn wears a shard of the *Witch-king's mask*, p. 120, which gives her visions and knowledge of Fornost. In particular, the mask grants her knowledge of *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120, its location and usage. The visions aren't clear, and it often takes her time to interpret them, but if she recovers the sceptre, she will gain power over the *Shadows*, p. 9 as well as the *Armour spirits*, p. 66 in the *Witch-king's laboratory*, p. 63. The mask also provides her with means to control the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110, and the *Wraiths*, p. 109 will eventually recognise her as an ally.

Wearing the mask for years has left a mark on Catelyn. She retains her connection to the Witch-king even if the artefact is taken from her. Moreover, if Catelyn dies, the Cult's priests can bring her back with the help of Angmar's messengers, reviving her as a Morgul Wraith, a robed creature with an almost invisible body, surrounded by an aura of fear.

Meeting Catelyn. Catelyn spends her days inside Fornost, organising or leading search parties into different parts of the Palace. She is usually accompanied by two or more *Mask-bearers*, her personal bodyguards, together with Hillmen cultists.

CATELYN

Proud, Wilful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

6

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

RESOLVE

PARRY

ARMOUR

24

1

6

+2

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Spear 3 (4/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Snake-like Speed*. See *The One Ring*, Highway Robber, p. 147.

Mask of Darkness. At the beginning of the round, each character engaged in close combat with the character must make a **Wisdom** roll. All characters who fail the roll are Weary until the end of the round.

Command. Spend 1 Resolve to restore 1 Resolve to all other cultists in the fight.

CATELYN'S WRAITH FORM

Proud, Wilful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

7

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

48

2

7

+2

2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Spear 3 (4/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: As an Undead, this creature has the *Deathless*, *Heartless*, and *Strike Fear* Fell Abilities (*The One Ring*, p. 154). It also has the following Fell Abilities:

Denizen of the Dark. See *The One Ring*, Fell Wraith, p. 155.

Spells of Breaking. Spend 1 Hate to make one Player-character gain 3 points of Shadow (Sorcery). If the target fails the **Wisdom** roll, they lose 5 points of Endurance.

Mask of Darkness. At the beginning of the round, each character engaged in close combat with the creature must make a **Wisdom** roll. All characters who fail the roll are Weary until the end of the round.

Shadow Veil. The creature veils itself in darkness and turns to flee. Player-heroes trying to stop the creature gain 2 point of Shadow (Dread). If a Player-hero gains no Shadow points from this source (after the Shadow test), the creature is stopped and can't use this ability for the rest of the combat. If the creature is not stopped, it leaves combat and vanishes into the night.

Catelyn is cold and reserved towards strangers and quick to turn to violence. She tolerates others in the Palace only if they respect her and promise to hand over any artefacts they find. If confronted about her goals, she proclaims she wants to bring back the glory and order of the kings, by any means necessary.

To make Catelyn see the error in her ways is unlikely but not impossible—she must first be unmasked and then confronted with powerful enough counterarguments. An intervention by someone from her former life (such as *Elizabeth*, p. 113, or her former Ranger companions, *Morwenna*, p. 106, and *Gwynfor*, p. 107) may help.



Angmar's messengers

Occupation: *Sorcerer*

Distinctive features: *Inquisitive, Secretive*

Whispers among the Hillmen tell of two figures in crimson robes, a man and a woman, seen in the company of the Cult's leaders. They are said to have great knowledge in the dark arts, and to carry messages from the frozen North, maybe from Witch-king himself. It is said they teach the leaders of the Cult in the lost ways of Angmar, in dark rituals to command the spirits and glean visions of the future.

All of this is true. The messengers hail from Carn Dûm, the ancient fortress of the Witch-king, where a handful of the servants of old Angmar still survive. They come and go, putting in a word here, revealing a secret there, nudging the events of Eriador into a direction that's favourable to them. They found the Cult on their travels and decided to capitalise on Catelyn's ambitions, conspiring with the Pale Rider to provide the Cult with a way to open the Seven Seals and turn the Shadows inside Fornost into a destructive weapon.

The messengers have also visited *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99. Their full exploits are beyond the scope of this book, but the Loremaster may use them as a connection to further adventures.



Simeag

Occupation: *Priest, Healer*

Distinctive features: *Proud, Cunning*

Statistics: See box.

Simeag is the wise-woman of the Red Stag Clan. She knows many secrets and uses them for healing and darker purposes, passed on by her predecessors who never completely abandoned the old ways of Angmar. Simeag is old and grey-haired but still moves with grace. She is proud and outspoken and treats outsiders with contempt.

Simeag is the clan's spiritual leader and the founder and head of the Cult of the Witch, second only to Catelyn. It was Simeag who took the younger woman in and later convinced the rest of the clan to follow Catelyn to Fornost.

Simeag believes her people were greatly wronged when Angmar fell and the Free Peoples wiped the Witch-king's minions from the North, including many Hillmen settlements. She believes that through Catelyn, the Witch-king has finally returned to exact revenge on his enemies. The priest will stop at nothing to propel Catelyn to victory and see Bree-land burn. This has turned her towards ever darkened means, learned from the visiting Angmar's messengers, to transform cultists into the abominable Mask-bearers.

Simeag spends her days in the cultists' camp, teaching young acolytes and performing sacrifices to the spirits.

TORMOID SON OF TIobaID

Honourable, Patient

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

6

ENDURANCE MIGHT RESOLVE PARRY ARMOUR

24

1

6

+2

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Long-hafted Axe 4 (6/18, Break Shield)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fierce Folk*. See *The One Ring*, Southern Raider, p. 146.

Battle Cry. Spend 1 Resolve to restore 1 Resolve to all other Hillmen in the fight. In addition, recover 10 Endurance.



Tormoid, son of Tiobaid

Occupation: *Chieftain, Warrior*

Distinctive features: *Honourable, Patient*

Statistics: See box.

Tormoid is the chieftain of the Red Stag Clan and one of its best warriors. He is a strongly built man wearing a mantle with embroidery of giant red antlers, boasting a lavish red beard and a liking for the simple things in life.

Tormoid left his wife and two children behind when embarking on the mission to Fornost—a mission he looks upon with some disdain. The chieftain would rather keep the clan out of the business of Angmar and the Witch-king, but he fears the Cult has grown too popular to resist openly. Instead, he concentrates on looking after his warriors and ensuring a safe return home as soon as possible.

Tormoid spends his days organising the daily life of the clan back in their camp. He doesn't set foot in Fornost outside of an emergency, and even then only if his warriors' lives depend on it.

SIMEAG

Proud, Cunning

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

20

ENDURANCE MIGHT RESOLVE PARRY ARMOUR

20

1

5

-

1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: -

FELL ABILITIES: *Fanatic Devotion*. If the character starts its turn without Resolve, it recovers 1 Resolve.

Spells of Breaking. Spend 1 Hate to make one Player-character gain 3 points of Shadow (Sorcery). If the target fails the **Wisdom** roll, they lose 5 points of Endurance.

Spells of Blinding. Spend 1 Hate to make all Player-character in sight gain 2 points of Shadow (Sorcery). Next round, Player-heroes *lose* (1d) from their attack rolls for each Shadow point gained this way (after the Shadow test).



Mask-bearers

Occupation: *Bodyguard*

Distinctive features: *Bold, Swift*

Statistics: See box.

The most devoted followers of the Witch have undergone dark rituals of Angmar to obtain unnatural speed and strength. These enhanced warriors are clad in dark armours of leather and fur and wear blank, black masks with slanted eye holes and painted round white mouths. Beneath the mask, their facial features are molten and distorted. Mask-bearers cannot talk, but their minds are linked and they constantly share thoughts with each other.

The Mask-bearers act as the Witch's most devoted servants and bodyguards, and at least two accompany her everywhere. Five mask-bearers exist at any given time; if a bearer dies, another Cult warrior


undergoes the transformation to take their place.

If the Cult finds *Morgul-knives*, p. 118 in the *Witch-king's laboratory*, p. 63, the Mask-bearers wield them in addition to their usual blades.






MASK-BEARER

Bold, Swift

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL



5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
				
20	1	5	+3	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Sword 3 (4/16, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Snake-like speed*. See *The One Ring*, Highway Robber, p. 147.

Shared senses. Spend 1 Resolve. Another Mask-bearer in the fight *gains* (1d) for one roll. (This is in addition to any bonus dice the Mask-bearer gains by using its own Resolve points. A roll may only be affected once by this ability.)

Shared pain. If a Mask-bearer is Wounded, all other Mask-bearers in the combat lose 5 points of Endurance.

Other clan members

The expedition consists of approximately one hundred Hillmen, all capable fighters. Most Hillmen use the Southern Raider statistics (*The One Ring*, p. 146). The fiercest warriors use the Southern Champion statistics instead (*The One Ring*, p. 146). The Loremaster may use these names for the other clan members as needed: Aimil, Beitris, Eiric, Niall, Peadrus, Ualraig.

Relations to other factions

As long as they can fulfill their own goals, the Cult of the Witch is happy to make an alliance with any of the other factions. They may offer the Highwaymen a reward for interesting artefacts (which the Highwaymen, in turn, attempt to steal from the Player-heroes).



Events and threats

The Cult of the Witch extends its reach little by little, first sending scouts to Fornost and later launching a full-scale occupation of the fortress. Of all the factions, they have the most far-reaching and nefarious goals.

The Company is likely to first run into the Cult when both parties are investigating the same location within the Palace. The Cult would like to see any artefacts the Player-heroes take out of Fornost, especially anything that resembles a sceptre; if they fail to make the Company promise this, or if they figure out the Company works with the Rangers, the Cult turns hostile.

Later, after establishing a presence in the Palace, the Cult will set up permanent guards along the most trafficked routes on the Palace ground and upper floors. They will repeatedly harass a Company trying to pass through, unless properly routed (see also *Fighting alongside the Rangers*, p. 108).

Catelyn is active in all of the Cult's activities within Fornost. The Loremaster should feel free to introduce her to the Company as soon as possible—even if the Company defeats her, the Cult has ways of bringing her back.

The Cult's end goal is to break all the *Seven Seals*, p. 90, find the Witch-king's sceptre, and use it to turn the freed Shadows into an army of ghosts. If not stopped, the plan progresses as follows:

Arrival. The Cult establishes a camp some miles away from Fornost (see *Cultist camp*, p. 22). Their scouts find a back entrance to the castle (see *Supply shipments*, p. 23) and start exploring the Palace ground and upper floors in groups of five to ten.

A base on top. The Cult moves some of its resources to the *Feast hall*, p. 56, barricades the location, and makes it their base of operations within the Palace. Fresh supplies are periodically brought in from the outside. The cultists find no sign of the Witch-king's sceptre but clash briefly with the Wraiths in the *Upper hall*, p. 53. The Cult establishes a Presence on the Palace ground and upper floors.

Taming the Beast. The Cult uses Angmar's rituals to tame the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110 so that it obeys Catelyn's verbal commands. They direct the Devourer to attack one of the Seven Seals—most likely in the *Garden*, p. 41.

Search for the sceptre. Convinced the Witch-king's sceptre is not in the above-ground parts of the Palace, Catelyn personally leads a search party to the Palace underground. Eventually, they find the *Witch-king's laboratory*, p. 63. With instructions received via her mask, Catelyn opens the doors and retrieves the sceptre.

Unsealing the darkness. The Cult locates and attacks the Seven Seals one by one. They either use the Devourer in Darkness or, if the beast is defeated, summon a *Devourer Spawn*, p. 113 to aid them.

Raise the Dead. The Cult finds the last Seal, the one beneath the *Palace entrance*, p. 26, and sends its full force to bring the Seal down. Meanwhile, Catelyn and the Mask-bearers gather in the Upper hall and summon a cover of dark clouds to dim the sky.

When the Seal breaks, Catelyn stands on the balcony and calls forth the Shadows from the depths of Fornost, and they appear in the courtyard below. If Catelyn possesses the Witch-king's sceptre, she uses it to take the Shadows under her command and marches out with them, making the North tremble. If she does not have the sceptre, the Shadows embark on their own misguided and less coordinated—but just as destructive—campaign across Eriador to eliminate any perceived threats to Fornost.

Gulbug's tribe

'If there are Orcs there, it may prove ill for us, that is true.'

Some time ago, an Orc called Gulbug made a plan to assassinate the Goblin ruler of Mount Gram and seize the mountain's treasure hoard. His scheme was foiled, and Gulbug was forced to flee with his fellow conspirators. Gulbug's band pillaged and plundered its way through the northern wastes of Eriador until they found the caves of the North Downs (see *Orc caves*, p. 81), where they settled down.

Later, messengers from Angmar approached Gulbug in private. They told stories of the riches hidden in the fortress city of Fornost, and claimed it was the resting place of the legendary *Black Blade of the Mountain King*, p. 116, a relic whose owner could join the scattered Orc tribes of the North. They urged the Orc chieftain to set his tribe to search for the artefact. Gulbug hesitated, scared of the rumours of undead things walking in the abandoned halls, but the Orc's lust for wealth and power had been roused.

Gulbug's tribe, some eighty Orcs strong, survives by hunting deer and smaller animals. Game is plentiful and staying out of the lands of the Free Peoples has let the tribe avoid the attention of the Rangers. However, beneath the surface tensions are rising: some say the boss has grown fat and soft and another chief is needed to lead the orcs back into a life of raiding and violence. For now, such ideas are kept in check by a combination of frequent feasts and forceful punishments.

Thus far, fear and superstition have kept the Orcs away from Fornost proper. They call it the Flogging Fell, remembering the massacre that took place there when the Free Peoples retook the city. However, with a new passageway opening underground (see *Dungeons*, p. 68) and the tribe's tensions escalating, Orcs are starting to venture in.

Gulbug

Occupation: *Chieftain*

Distinctive features: *Fair-spoken, Subtle*

Statistics: See box.

Gulbug is a big but cowardly orc obsessed with gold. He is great with words and has a knack for planning. When putting his band together at Mount Gram, he promised them wealth and power beyond their wildest dreams. This has not come true: both the wealth the Orcs managed to gather on their raids and the power over their new realm are held by Gulbug alone. He doesn't wish to disrupt the status quo by sending his Orcs far from the caves, though the rumoured treasures of Fornost do tempt him.



GULBUG THE ORC-CHIEFTAIN

Fair-spoken, Subtle

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

5

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

50

1

5

-

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Club 3 (4/14, Break Shield)

FELL ABILITIES: As an Orc, Gulbug has the *Hate Sunlight* Fell Ability (*The One Ring*, p. 148). He also has the following Fell Abilities:

Great Leap. See *The One Ring*, Orc-chieftain, p. 150.

Yell of Triumph. See *The One Ring*, Orc-chieftain, p. 150.

Hard to Kill. Spend 1 Hate to cancel a Wound.

Gulbug spends most of his time feasting in his private quarters or counting the tribe's gold in the treasure chamber. If there's an issue that concerns the whole tribe, he gathers everyone in the main cave and addresses them in a pompous speech followed by a celebration around the bonfire.



Magbarog

Occupation: *Bodyguard*

Distinctive features: *Stern, Tall*

Statistics: Great Orc Bodyguard, *The One Ring*, p. 149

Gulbug's bodyguard and second in command, Magbarog is a massive orc of few words but the strength of a bull. Magbarog is happy with her role as the muscle to Gulbug's brains and trusts the male orc to make decisions that benefit both. That said, she is growing restless with the tribe's new lifestyle and jumps at the chance to draw her sword for battle.

Magbarog leads the tribe's guards, a collection of twenty strong orcs (Orc Guards and a few Orc chieftains, *The One Ring*, p. 150) loyal to Gulbug, and is also in charge of the tribe's fighting pit. She is ready to punish anyone who speaks against Gulbug and acts as his champion in any formal challenges.

Lugnash

Occupation: *Schemer*

Distinctive features: *Cunning*

Statistics: See box.

Small in stature, Lugnash compensates with a sharp wit and a sharper knife. He is frustrated with the tribe's decision to hide in their caves, hoping them to return to a life of pillaging and plundering and maybe one day march back to Mount Gram to finish the job they started.

In Lugnash's view, the biggest obstacle in the tribe's way to success is Gulbug. Lugnash is disappointed at Gulbug's empty promises and jealous of the bigger Orc's popularity. In the shadows, he plots Gulbug's demise and his own ascension to the throne. To support his ambition, he has gathered a gang of fifteen followers (Orc Soldier, *The One Ring*, p. 150) who obey him without question.



LUGNASH THE USURPER

Cunning

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

4

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

16

1

4

+3

2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Jagged Knife 4 (2/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: As an Orc, Lugnash has the *Hate Sunlight* Fell Ability (*The One Ring*, p. 148). He also has the following Fell Abilities:

Snake-like Speed. See *The One Ring*, Orc chieftain, p. 150.

Orc-poison. See *The One Ring*, Goblin Archer, p. 150.

Wickedness and mischief. If Lugnash is taken out of combat, he is at his enemies' mercy but does not die immediately. He offers his loyalty and inside information about Gulbug's tribe for a chance to live, only to betray his captors later.

Other Orcs

The tribe consists of eighty members, from small Goblins (Goblin Archer, *The One Ring*, p. 150) to brutish Orcs (Orc Soldier, *The One Ring*, p. 150), all combat-capable. The Loremaster may use these names for the other tribe members as needed: Cognac, Dagrak, Snagsmaga, Pug, Volg, Zug.



Relations to other factions

The Orcs live only for themselves and beat up and rob anyone else they encounter. However, they fear the Wraiths and flee from them at first sight.

If the Rangers find out about the Orcs, they want to purge the creatures from Fornost. The tribe is too strong and too well positioned in their caves for a direct attack, but if the Player-heroes come up with a convincing plan, the Rangers can muster a small fighting force—ten to twenty warriors—to aid them in the effort. Even if such an attack is successful, some Orcs will survive and escape deeper into the Tunnels.

Events and threats

The Orcs serve as an occasional threat to a Company exploring Fornost. They possess some treasure, brought from Mount Gram or looted in raids afterward, but it lies carefully guarded in their caves—to get to it, the Player-heroes need to strike when the Orcs are otherwise occupied.

In the long run, shifts in the tribe's power structure may drive them back to looting and pillaging the countryside. If left unchecked, the events will progress as follows:

Unwilling explorers. The Orcs discover the newly-opened route from the Tunnels to the Palace underground (see *Chasm*, p. 76 and *Dungeons*, p. 68). They send some of the tribe's trouble-makers in, only letting them return if they bring back a piece of treasure as a tribute to the boss.

Lugnash's rebellion. Lugnash tries to kill Gulbug in his sleep but fails. He flees with his gang deeper

into the Tunnels, where they survive by searching for hidden Dúnedain caches. Magbarog leads a party of the tribe's guards after them and the groups clash repeatedly. The groups may run into Frank the Troll or the Player-heroes. The Orcs establish Presence throughout the Tunnels.

Hunt for the Black Blade. Lugnash's rebellion causes restlessness in the tribe, with many quietly supporting his cause. To sate his Orcs' lust for action, Gulbug tells them of the Black Blade of the Mountain King, promising a princely reward for the Orc who retrieves the sword. Expeditions of five to ten Orcs are launched into the castle, establishing Orc Presence in the Palace underground and ground floor.

Lugnash hears about the Blade and joins the search with his gang, wishing to seize the legendary weapon for himself and use its fame to unite the Orcs under a new leader. The search parties fight each other and anyone else they encounter.

Unlikely allies. As the search parties make their way up in the castle, Lugnash seeks allies from the Cult of the Witch or maybe even from the Player-heroes, promising them the tribe's loyalty if they help him dethrone Gulbug. If this happens, Lugnash will honour his word for a while, lending the tribe's fighters against their new allies' enemies in a series of brutal attacks.

Orcs will be orcs. Eventually, Lugnash will lead the Orcs out of Fornost to loot and burn the countryside. The *Farmsteads*, p. 17, will be their first target.

Highwaymen

'Some were just poor bodies running away from trouble; but most were bad men, full o' thievery and mischief.'

Most Bree-landers are quiet, upstanding, law-abiding citizens, not willing to break out of the comfortable circles of their neat little lives. However, there are always those who don't conform, seeking for something more. Some become adventurers—others become bandits. Both share a goal: to hit it big, secure a nifty sum of gold, and live the rest of their lives like the kings of old.

It was for this purpose that Alayna Rosebud led her gang of Highwaymen up north, to the ruins of Deadmen's Dike, following only the word of a lone vagabond and wanderer, one Caleb Thyme. Caleb claimed to have found a buried treasure in the ruined city. Other guests at the Prancing Pony didn't take the man seriously—the fool didn't have much to show for it, save for a few old (though curiously shiny) coins—but Alayna had heard the rumours of a strom and quaking of the earth near the ruins, a quaking strong enough to topple a building, or expose long-hidden gold. This was her chance.

On their way north, Alayna's gang recruited reinforcements from the local farmsteads, young lads and lasses who knew the region and yearned for excitement. Forty ruffians strong, they arrived in Fornost and set up a camp in old catacombs beneath the streets.

Unfortunately, they came too late: someone had already emptied Caleb's trove, leaving behind only stange crystalline formations and black goo. But Alayna wasn't about to give up. There were bound to be more freshly unearthed valuables in the ruins, and there were bound to be other fools coming to dig them up. And the Highwaymen would be there, too, claiming their share of the profits.

Caleb Thyme

Occupation: *Vagabond*

Distinctive features: *Rustic, Patient*

An elderly vagabond and wanderer, Caleb wears shabby clothes and fingerless gloves. When meeting strangers, he tends to stutter and glance around anxiously.

Originally from Bree-land, Caleb has spent his years on the road, making a living through begging and odd jobs. Occasionally, a wandering-madness seizes him and he treks further into the wilderness. On one such trek, he sought shelter in the ruins of Fornost, and stumbled upon the *Ruined mansion*, p. 28, and its recently exposed treasure hoard. Overwhelmed by the find, Caleb took what he could carry and hurried back to Bree, determined to let others know of the remarkable find.



The Highwaymen took Caleb in, first to guide them to Fornost, and later to keep him from tattling their secrets to outsiders. Another man might feel trapped under the bandits' watchful eye, but Caleb is only glad—finally, he has found people who are happy to have him around.

Caleb is shy and mostly keeps his own company at the *Highwaymen's hideout*, p. 35, but occasionally he joins the ruffians around a campfire or for a search through the ruins.



Alayna Rosebud

Occupation: *Bandit leader*

Distinctive features: *Fierce, Fair-spoken*

Statistics: See box.

Alayna is a woman of quick wit but hot temper, quick to laugh one moment and snap in anger the next. She constantly plays with a set of knives, ready to plant one on the wall inches from an onlooker's face at the slightest provocation. Some call her crazy—

she prefers ‘instinctive.’ Alayna’s charisma keeps the Highwaymen together.

Born on the streets of Bree, Alayna grew up into a life of crime. Over the years, she has hatched one foolhardy scheme after another, from extorting the Reeve of Bree to trying to rob a company of wandering Elves in hopes of obtaining a pot of gold. Now Alayna is convinced that the hidden treasure of Fornost will be her big breakthrough, and she will pursue her goal ruthlessly. However, Alayna shares the superstition of most Bree-landers, and prefers to let others do the hard work rather than expose herself or her men to the most haunted depths of the city.

In Fornost, Alayna bounces between the various Highwaymen search parties, inserting her own ideas and instructions and then storming off. In the evenings, she gives improvised speeches on the right of the strong to take what is due to them to get ahead in the world.

ALAYNA ROSEBUD

Fierce, Fair-spoken

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

6

ENDURANCE MIGHT RESOLVE PARRY ARMOUR

24

1

6

+3

2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Sword 3 (4/16, Pierce), Dagger 4 (2/14)

FELL ABILITIES:

Throwing daggers. The character may attack any opponent with her Dagger Proficiency, regardless of engagement.

Dagger strike. When the character makes an attack with her Sword proficiency as her main action, she may make a second, free attack with the Dagger proficiency. *Snake-like Speed.* See *The One Ring*, Highway Robber, p. 147.

Inspire. Spend 1 Resolve to restore all Resolve to another Highwayman.



Tom Cooper

Occupation: *Strongman*

Distinctive features: *Bold, Stern*

Statistics: See box.

Tom is a natural ruffian, a burly man bearing the scars of many skirmishes. He is a merciless opponent in battle and doesn’t shy away from getting his hands dirty.

Tom is Alayna’s second-in-command and organises the gang’s everyday life. Both feared and respected by the rank and file, he gives the orders and keeps the other bandits in line. It is Tom who gives structure to Alayna’s crazy ideas and acts as the muscle to her brain.

In the camp, Tom’s growling voice can be heard far as he scolds anyone who fails to fulfill their duties. Sometimes, Tom personally leads a patrol out of the city to ambush and rob unwary travellers.

TOM COOPER

Bold, Stern

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

5

ENDURANCE MIGHT RESOLVE PARRY ARMOUR

20

1

5

+2

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Cudgel 3 (3/12), Bow 3 (3/14, Pierce)

Shrug it off. Spend 1 Resolve to halve the Endurance loss caused by an attack to the character (rounding fractions up). Can only be used once per attack.

Play rough. Spend 1 Resolve to increase the Endurance loss caused by an attack made by the character by 5. Can only be used once per attack.

Command. Spend 1 Resolve to restore 1 Resolve to all other Highwaymen in the fight.



Amos Junior

Occupation: *Strongman*

Distinctive features: *Bold, Stern*

Statistics: Footpad, *The One Ring*, p. 147

Amos Junior is an excitable youth with a sandy hair and nineteen years of age. He resembles his namesake father from the *Cherry Lane farm*, p. 17. Amos left his family for the Highwaymen, lured in by Alayna's promises of adventure and treasure.

Amos is eager to prove his worth to the Highwaymen, whom he sees as free men and women living life to its fullest. He hasn't yet been exposed to the gruesome side of the job, and secretly hopes he never needs to raise a sword against another human. Amos is smitten by Alaya's easy-going ways and is the first to support the older woman's ideas. Many of the new recruits from the Farmsteads look up to him.

In Fornost, Amos spends his time doing various chores at the camp and helping search parties look for treasure. He has volunteered to venture deeper, into the Royal Palace itself, if needed, but Alaya hasn't allowed such rash actions.

Other Highwaymen

The Highwaymen consist of forty ruffians, equipped with miscellaneous weapons and pieces protective gear. Half of them are fresh recruits and use the Footpad statistics (*The One Ring*, p. 147), while the other half are long-standing members of Alayna's gang and use the Highway Robber statistics (*The One Ring*, p. 147). The Loremaster may use these names for the other Highwaymen as needed: Cole, Jimmy, Owen, Macey, Rachel, Willow.

Relations to other factions

The Highwaymen are opportunistic and are ready to work with any other other factions, for the right price. In particular, they may trade with the Cult of the Witch, selling rare artefacts for gold or buying the Cult's valuables in exchange for commodities

from Bree.

The Highwaymen are wary of the Rangers of the North, and the two factions stalk each other from a distance. Outnumbered, the Rangers won't confront the Highwaymen directly, but may start a campaign of harassment if they find out about the Highwaymen's dealings in the *Crypts*, p. 34 or if the ruffians start to approach the Royal Palace.

Events and threats

Despite their best efforts, the Highwaymen will have limited success in finding treasure on Fornost's street level, and their focus will turn towards thieving and plundering. Since many of the new recruits have ties to the Farmsteads, the Highwaymen leave the locals alone and concentrate on harassing travellers, merchants, and other treasure seekers—but things may change if they fail to catch easy prey.

The bandits may waylay the Player-heroes on the way to Fornost or back, emerging from behind trees and large rocks and blocking the road, demanding payment for passage (in return for 'keeping the roads safe'). If the heroes agree to this, they should deduct one or two points of treasure for each trip. If the Player-heroes are carrying a large pile of treasure away from Fornost, the bandits will demand half of the haul for themselves (as a 'rightful share of goods found in their lands'). If denied, they attack straight away or, if properly intimidated, ambush the heroes later with a larger force. The Loremaster may run negotiations with the ruffians as a Council.

A typical bandit squad consists of four Footpads (two fighting with cudgels, two with bows positioned in an advantageous way) and two Highway Robbers (fighting with short swords). A larger group doubles these numbers, and may include Tom Cooper or even Alayna Rosebud herself.

Running into the Highwaymen inside Fornost is less likely due to the size of the city. However, the Player-heroes may eventually stumble upon the bandits' operation at the Ruined mansion or in the Crypts. If they wish to drive the ruffians out for good, they may need to cut off the head of the snake or convince the new, impressionable recruits to abandon their bandit ways.

If the Highwaymen are not driven off, their influence will slowly expand towards the Royal Palace, progressing as follows:

Unsafe roads. The Highwaymen arrive in Fornost and set up camp. They establish a Presence on Fornost grounds and start waylaying travellers on Greenway.

Visitors from afar. Angmar's messengers visit Alayna and hint at goods of great value inside the Royal Palace—in particular, the *Witch-king's scepter*.

tre, p. 120, for which certain parties would pay a lot of money. The Highwaymen set up an ambush at the city's main gates, attacking anyone who tries to leave the city with valuables.

Into the darkness. Disappointed in the lack of results, Alayna sends Highwaymen expeditions into the Palace, chief among them Amos Junior. If the treasure in the *Throne room*, p. 37 is untouched, the Highwaymen will snatch it, angering the traitor spirits.

Clash with the cult. The Highwaymen make contact with the Cult of the Witch. After initial hos-

tilities, the two factions come to an agreement on trading in artefacts and gold on mutually beneficial terms.

Pawns and queens. In the conflict to come, the Cult seeks to turn the Highwaymen into a tool of violence against the Rangers and the Player-heroes. Highwaymen expeditions penetrate deeper into the Palace, establishing a Presence on the Palace ground floor and underground.

Meanwhile, Alayna has grown curious of the mask carried by Catelyn, the Cult's leader, and plans to seize it and any other magical artefacts if she spots a moment of weakness in the other faction's ranks.

Rangers of the North

‘Few now remember them,’ Tom murmured, ‘yet still some go wandering, sons of forgotten kings walking in loneliness, guarding from evil things folk that are heedless.’

As heirs to the Kingdom of Arnor, the Rangers of the North have close ties to the city of Fornost. They visit the city regularly to keep an eye on their ancestral home and to fend off any would-be tomb robbers. However, their numbers have dwindled over the centuries, and they will need the Player-heroes’ help to defend the city against the rising Shadow.

The Rangers know much about the city’s history, and they know to avoid the Palace, a site of old sorrow and darkness. However, the secrets of the Seven Seals are remembered by few, and the true nature of the evil inside they never discovered.

When the Seven Seals start to open, only one Ranger—Prydwen—is close to the city. She sets her camp near the *Palace entrance*, p. 26 and watches, trusting reinforcements to arrive eventually.



Prydwen

Occupation: *Ranger, Warden*

Distinctive features: *Wilful, Stern*

Young by the Dúnedain standards, Prydwen is a well-built woman in her thirties with a stern face and a distrustful attitude towards strangers. With little time for a personal life, Prydwen puts duty ahead of everything else. She carries a spear and a shield decorated with a many-pointed star and has a keen military mind.

For many years, Prydwen patrolled the plains between Fornost and Lake Evendim, keeping both wild beasts and highwaymen in line. When she saw the storm rising over Fornost and felt the earth shaking beneath her feet, she hurried to the city.

Prydwen is convinced an old evil is stirring inside the Palace and is committed to keeping it in check and the Seals untouched at any cost. She keeps a vigilant watch on the Palace’s entrances, often staying up late into the night.



Morwenna

Occupation: *Ranger, Hunter*

Distinctive features: *Cunning, Keen-eyed*

Morwenna is a middle-aged, spindly woman of few words and watchful eyes. She can mimic the sounds of birds and beasts and is a hunter, tracker, and trapper of exquisite skill. In combat, Morwenna trusts in her hunting bow.

In her youth, Morwenna patrolled the lands north of Bree together with Gwynfor and *Catelyn*, p. 93. After the three split ways, she spent many years tracking down Orcs in Eriador’s northern wastes. Morwenna bears a personal grudge against the creatures, having lost many friends and relatives to their blades. Lately, she has been following the trace of *Gulbug’s tribe*, p. 99 near the North Downs, but the Orcs’ lair has evaded her so far.

Now Prydwen is heeding the call of her kin to join the defense of Fornost against Orcs or worse foes. When not out scouting or hunting, Morwenna keeps watch in the camp and cooks the day’s prey. Rabbit stew is her specialty.



Gwynfor

Occupation: *Ranger, Warrior*

Distinctive features: *Fair-spoken, Bold*

Gwynfor is a burly middle-aged man with strong arms and a wide smile. He knows people from all over Eriador and, unlike most Rangers, is on friendly terms with most of them. On the battlefield, Gwynfor uses a two-handed spear to a deadly effect.

In his youth, Gwynfor travelled together with Morwenna and Catelyn. Afterward, he concentrated his efforts near Bree and became good friends with the people of the *Farmsteads*, p. 17. He knows their secrets and sorrows and is committed to protecting them against new threats.

After word got out from Fornost, it was Gwynfor who put together a band of Rangers and led them to Prydwen's help. In the camp, he tells jokes, plays his lyre, and teases the others but leaps to defend them at the first sign of danger.



Mabron

Occupation: *Ranger, Scholar*

Distinctive features: *Honourable, Inquisitive*

Mabron is a handsome elderly man with long, braided hair and striking grey eyes. Even though old age is starting to weigh him down, he is still a

capable Ranger and a fierce opponent in battle, brandishing his family's heirloom sword. Mabron's true passion, however, is not in combat but in scholarship. He knows the history of Arnor like the back of his hand and is always on the lookout for tidbits of old lore.

Mabron's active days of wandering are behind him, and he has settled down in the Ranger-haven in the Angle. He's composing the history of the Northern Kingdom into a book, only rarely leaving his homestead for field work or to consult the Elves of Rivendell. Occasionally, he takes apprentices. Young Cadog is his latest ward.

Mabron knows that Seven Seals were laid around the Palace in Fornost after the city was reclaimed. Their location and exact function remain a mystery to him—a mystery to be solved. He can point the Company to *Chieftain Aranarth's notes*, p. 116, for a first-hand account of their making.

In the camp, Mabron rests his aching joints and works on the notes for his book.



Cadog

Occupation: *Ranger, Apprentice healer*

Distinctive features: *Patient, Subtle*

A boy of only fifteen years, Cadog is the young apprentice of Mabron. In the field of history, he is still a student, but he possesses an uncanny aptitude for medicine and already knows much about healing and herbs.

Cadog makes it his responsibility to help Mabron in his daily errands and, if need be, defend the older man with a sword. He makes an ointment that eases Mabron's aches.

In the camp, Cadog is silent, observing the more experienced Rangers and learning all he can.

Relations to other factions

The Rangers are natural enemies of all the other factions and wish to see them driven away from Fornost, though they understand they don't have the numbers for a full-on assault. They are particularly protective of any Seals they find around the Palace.

Fighting alongside the Rangers. If the Rangers clash with the other factions, the Loremaster may either decide the outcome behind the scenes as usual, or they may involve the Player-heroes in the action. The Player-heroes may even initiate such a conflict—the Rangers will help them if they find the cause to be good and the plan to be sound. For smooth gameplay, it is recommended that the Rangers act as a separate unit, fighting their own battle parallel to the Player-heroes. Example scenarios include:

- Defending one of the Seals against a number of enemy waves. The Rangers fight lesser foes in the background, leaving the enemy leaders to the Company.
- Driving the enemy away from a location, such as the site of one of the Seals. The Rangers tie up the rest of the enemy forces to prevent them from sending reinforcements and later guard the freed location.
- Sneaking into enemy territory to steal an artefact such as the *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120 or the *Black Blade of the Mountain King*, p. 116. The Rangers arrange a distraction, drawing some of the foes out to make the Company's task easier.

If the Player-heroes succeed, the Rangers' part of the mission is also successful.

Events and opportunities

The Rangers are an active force for good in Fornost, but they won't be able to do much without the Player-heroes' help. Their efforts to defend the Seven Seals are doomed to fail in the long run, merely a delaying tactic while the Company tries to come up with a better solution. They hesitate to enter the Palace and leave such expeditions to the Company, especially at the beginning.

The Rangers stay behind as the Company comes and goes, acting as their eyes on the streets and hills of Fornost. The Loremaster may use the Rangers to convey the Company information on new locations and enemy movements.

The following events further the Rangers' cause and help the Player-heroes:

New friends. Morwenna, Gwynfor, Mabron, and Cadog arrive to help Prydwen in Fornost's defense, establishing Ranger Presence at Fornost grounds. Searching the ruins, they find the Seals on the doors of the *Garden*, p. 41.

Dome and tower. While out hunting, Morwenna find the Seal at the *Watchtower*, p. 20. Mabron and Cagod find the Seal beneath the *Dome of Sight*, p. 31.

Sealed crypt. Prydwen finds the *Crypts*, p. 34 with its Seal and runs into the lair of the Highwaymen. The two factions clash.

Retaking the ancestral home. To expedite the search for the last Seal, the Rangers attempt to take control of the Palace ground floor, establishing their Presence there and clashing with any factions already present.

The last Seal. Gwynfor finds a way to the Seal beneath the *Palace entrance*, p. 26—perhaps just in time to set up a defense against the last attack of the Cult of the Witch or the Devourer in Darkness.

Wraiths

‘But only evil wights dwell there now, and I will not willingly tell more of them.’

When Fornost fell, many soldiers of Arthedain were captured and tortured in the Palace’s dungeons. Some broke and swore allegiance to the Witch-king. Through evil experiments, they were turned into Wraiths, undead creatures cursed to forever wander in the Palace’s darkness.

The *Dungeons*, p. 68 are the Wraiths’ lair. Waiting for their master’s return, they keep the cells and torture chambers functional. The Wraiths see themselves as caretakers of the Witch-king’s legacy, embarking on missions to stalk and drive away intruders and snuff out unwanted sources of light.

There are dozens of Wraiths in Fornost. They use the Fell Wraith statistics (*The One Ring*, p. 155).



Relations to other factions

The Wraiths are suspicious towards all other beings and openly hostile towards anyone disturbing the Dungeons. They acknowledge Gulbug’s tribe as servants of a common master and let them pass through as long as their treasure is not touched. Sometimes, this trust is violated, and a slain Orc can be found

near the treasure chamber’s entrance.

The Wraiths have a peculiar relationship with the Devourer in Darkness. The beast has made a nest in the Wraiths’ treasure chamber and periodically returns there to consume choice items or digest its own finds. The Wraiths tolerate and even encourage this by feeding more valuables into the trove. They sense the Devourer has the potential to advance their master’s cause by breaking the Seven Seals.

Eventually, if Catelyn recovers the Witch-king’s sceptre, the Wraiths will acknowledge her as the Witch-king’s rightful heir and help the Cult with its cause.

Events and threats

The Wraiths start with a Presence in the Palace underground but wander all over the castle. Over the centuries, they have gathered a sizeable treasure hoard into the Dungeons, including the *Mirror of sight*, p. 117, which they use to keep an eye on any activity in the city. If a Wraith finds a Player-hero outside of the Dungeons, they keep their distance, observing and, if opportunity arises, making mischief. If the Player-hero is helpless, the Wraith drags them into one of the Dungeons’ cells, waiting to be sacrificed in a dark ritual.

The Wraiths are bound by the Seven Seals and can’t exit the Palace as long as the Seal in the *Dome of Sight*, p. 31 stands. If this Seal is broken, they are set free and gain the confidence to attack the Free Peoples around Fornost more openly. The Loremaster may then use the following events to challenge the Player-heroes:

Knives in the dark. When the Company is camping in Fornost outside of the Palace, a pair of Fell Wraiths sneaks into their camp at night, trying to ambush any watchmen and strangle the remaining heroes in their sleep.

Homes under attack. While the Company is resting at the *Farmsteads*, p. 17, a group of three Fell Wraiths surrounds the Cherry Lane farm, splitting into different buildings with the goal of killing any living beings they find. If successful, they return in the following nights to attack the other farms.

Other creatures and characters

He had imagined himself meeting giants taller than trees, and other creatures even more terrifying...

This section details important creatures and characters not directly associated with any of the factions.

Anorthand

Occupation: *Champion of Fornost, Spectre*

Distinctive features: *Honourable, Faithful*

Anorthand, the Champion of Fornost, was the leader of King Arvedui's personal guard. When Angmar invaded Fornost, he defended the Palace, buying time for the king to escape. No Orc or Hillman could cut Anorthand down—the Witch-king himself had to engage the Champion in battle, and even then, he only fell when overwhelmed by the Nazgûl's bodyguards.

Anorthand wielded the *Sunshield*, p. 118, an heirloom of his house, gifted to his ancestor by Elven smiths. The shield's power drove Orcs away and shielded Anorthand from the Witch-king's sorcery, helping him stand his ground when other defenders fled.

After Anorthand's death, his body was thrown into the *Dungeons*, p. 68. His spirit, however, was given a choice: to move on from this world or to stay behind for the sake of his comrades, who had been captured and twisted to Shadows by the Witch-king's experiments. Anorthand chose the latter. He can't do much to help the Shadows directly, but he understands their agony and remembers their story, and he is ready to guide a new Champion in breaking their curse when the time comes.

Meeting Anorthand. The Player-heroes may encounter the spirit of Anorthand near the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71. He mostly stays invisible, but if needed, can take the form of a luminous spectre in shining armour decorated with the symbol of a crown and seven stars. He is bound to the Sunshield and can't move far from it. As long as the Witch-king's curse remains on the shield, Anorthand can't approach it, and the Player-heroes can't hear his words—he can only guide them through vague gestures.

If the Player-heroes break the shield's curse, Anorthand appears to the Company, introducing himself as the former Champion of Fornost. He then tells his story to the best of his ability. The details are hazy to him, but he emphasizes that he was given a mission: to make sure the Shadows are set free from their prison. He knows the Shadows are the true source of the persistent evil plaguing Fornost, that they are former soldiers of Arthedain, and that they are under the Witch-king's spell, breakable by the Sunshield's power.



After conversing with the Player-heroes, Anorthand's spectre vanishes, but he may occasionally speak in the shield bearer's mind to guide them in their mission. His spirit departs Middle-earth only when his comrades' souls are free.

Devourer in Darkness

In ancient times, before the coming of Men, a creature moved in the darkness at the mountains' roots. A hunger burned in its guts, a desire to devour things precious and shiny. It glued its tentacles onto the stone and consumed its way forward. Beneath a high hill it found veins of silver and gold, and greedily it ate everything, carving the rock full of holes. Afterwards it slept, digesting its meal, and its dreams crystallized and filled the deep caves.

Ages passed. Men of Westerosse built a city on top of the hill and explored the tunnels below, wondering about their origin. The Witch-king arrived and sensed the creature in the depths, but let it sleep. Finally, the *Pale Rider*, p. 115, learned of the thing from her master and weaved a spell to bend it to her purpose. Earth shook, lightning hit the depths, and the Devourer in Darkness woke from its slumber with a renewed hunger: to consume the remaining light in Fornost and destroy the Seven Seals.

Creature of darkness. The Devourer's form is slug-like, with grasping tentacles continuously forming and reforming at one end of an amorphous body. Its slimy skin absorbs light, surrounding the creature with shadows. Searching for nourishment, the

beast slowly slithers through Fornost's Royal Palace, leaving a trail of oily goo in its wake.

The Devourer fills the Palace's corridors from floor to ceiling. Despite its formidable size, the creature is diminished compared to its form in the ancient days.

Hunger for treasure. The Devourer can sense riches from far away. Its slow search through the Palace occasionally leads it to hidden troves, but mundane treasure won't hold the beast's attention for long: it hungers for magic.

When the campaign starts, the Devourer has already found and consumed one of the Seven Seals (see *Palace entrance*, p. 26). However, the Sun confuses the beast's senses; it only moves on the surface at night and needs help locating the other Seals, most likely from the *Wraiths*, p. 109, or the *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93. If the Devourer ever manages to absorb all of the Seals, the magic overwhelms it and seals it away into the Void in a flash of light.



Curse of the Devourer

When the Devourer in Darkness gets its tentacles on a magical item, it drinks the item's power, afflicting it with a Curse. A cursed item loses all its magical properties (Blessings and Enchanted Rewards) when the Devourer in Darkness is near. Even away from Fornost, the item may look dull and lifeless and occasionally suffer from the Darken Curse (TOR, p. 168), at the Loremaster's discretion. The Curse is lifted only when the Devourer in Darkness is dead.

DEVOURER IN DARKNESS

Nameless Thing

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

8

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

80

3

8

-

3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Tentacle 3 (3/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: As a Nameless Thing, the Devourer in Darkness has the *Fear of Fire* and *Hate Sunlight* Fell Abilities (*The One Ring*, p. 232). It also has the following Fell Abilities:

Denizen of the Dark (see *The One Ring errata*).

Devour Light. Spend 1 Hate point. All Player-heroes gain 2 Shadow points (Dread). All lights nearby flicker out, absorbed into silvery patterns on the Devourer's skin, resembling the *Seven Seals*, p. 90. If a Player-hero holding a light source succeeds in their **Valour** roll, their light is spared.

Devour Everything Beautiful. Every round, at the end of the round, all Seized targets lose 3 Treasure points worth of Treasure they are carrying, or one of their magical items is afflicted with the Curse of the Devourer, see below. For each afflicted target, the Devourer in Darkness gains three Devour points. If a Seized creature carries no more treasure and all their magical items are already cursed, the target is freed instead.

Grow More Powerful. When the Company first encounters the Devourer in Darkness, it has zero Devour points. Once between encounters, if it has at least 15 Devour points or if it completely devours an abandoned magical item, it grows more powerful: either its Attribute Level and Hate point rating grow by one, or it gains a Fell Ability inspired by one of the magical items it has cursed or devoured (the Loremaster may consult the list in *The One Ring errata* or come up with a custom ability). Reset its Devour points back to zero. If the Devourer devours one of the Seven Seals, it gains 10 Devour points.

Flight to Darkness. The Devourer in Darkness can only be slain in the *Crystal chamber*, p. 77. If it is defeated outside the chamber, its form changes and it flees deeper underground, see *Flight to darkness* below.

The Devourer may seek out and ambush a treasure-carrying Company. The beast wants to consume their riches and drain their magical items (see *Curse of the Devourer*)—the heroes themselves are merely collateral damage. A clever Company may distract the Devourer with well-placed valuables and escape while it's distracted.

After a successful hunt, the Devourer withdraws to a secluded place to sleep (see *Ruined mansion*, p. 28, *Dungeons*, p. 68, and *Chasm*, p. 76). Crystals grow over its body and surrounding surfaces. When the cocoon breaks, the beast awakens renewed, with the power of its meal absorbed into its essence. The next time the Company runs into it, the Devourer has grown stronger.

Killing the beast. If the Devourer is defeated in combat, it flees to one of its old nests (see *Flight to darkness*), sucking remnants of power from the crystals there to rejuvenate itself. It can only be killed cronered in the *Crystal chamber*, p. 77 deep beneath Fornost, a deed of major heroism.

If the Devourer is destroyed before the Seven Seals have fallen, the Cult of the Witch will devise a plan to bring it back in a lesser form. They use the goo the beast has left behind and crystals from the Crystal caves in a ritual that summons a *Devourer Spawn*, see below, and assault the Seals with its aid.

Example Fell Abilities

Here are example fell abilities from cursed or devoured items:

- *Horns.* (From an enchanted horn:) The Devourer in Darkness grows a pair of horns. Spend 1 hate point. The horns quiver and a thundering sound echoes all around. All Player-heroes gain 1 Shadow point (Dread). Those who fail their **Valour** roll are Weary for the next round.
- *Blades.* (From a magical sword:) The tentacles of the Devourer in Darkness occasionally take blade-like shapes. It gains a new attack: Slashing Tentacle 4 (5/16), which it can use once per round.
- *Scales.* (From a magical armour:) The Devourer in Darkness grows scales, raising its maximum Endurance to 100 and its Armour rating to 4.



Flight to darkness

If the Devourer in Darkness would be defeated in battle, its form melts into a puddle of black slime and it flees deeper underground, towards the Crystal caves, see *Chasm*, p. 76. In this form, the creature is surprisingly quick; the Player-heroes can't keep up with it, but they can chase it, following the black trail it leaves behind.

To chase the Devourer in Darkness, start a new Dungeon delve using the following rules:

Devourer's path

Exploration Difficulty:	7
Exploration time:	Short
Pass-through time:	Short
Event rolls:	Ill-favoured

A delve that starts in the Tunnels or in the Dungeons ends at the *Chasm*, p. 76, with tracks leading down to the Crystal chamber, where the Devourer waits reformed. A chase that starts anywhere else ends in the *Dungeons*, p. 68, with the Devourer waiting in its Nest (if it is defeated again here, it flees to the Crystal chamber).

If the Company gets Lost during the delve, they lose the Devourer's tracks. The next time they encounter the Devourer, it has recovered all lost Endurance and Hate points and healed all Wounds. If the Company reaches the delve's end, they find the Devourer ready to fight again, but exhausted—its Endurance and Hate points are half of their maximum (or the amount it had when it fled, whichever is higher) and it has two Wound slots left (or the amount it had when it fled, whichever is higher).


Note that successfully following the Devourer opens a new route through the castle, one the Company can use from now on.

These rules can also be used to find the Devourer's current location, or perhaps a temporary nest like the one described in *Ruined mansion*, p. 28, starting from an old trail.

DEVOURER SPAWN

Nameless Thing

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL




ENDURANCE


MIGHT


HATE


PARRY


ARMOUR











COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Tentacle 3 (3/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: As a Nameless Thing, the Devourer Spawn has the *Fear of Fire* and *Hate Sunlight* Fell Abilities (*The One Ring*, p. 232). It also has the following Fell Abilities:

Denizen of the Dark (see *The One Ring* errata).

Silent Scream. Spend 1 Hate point. The Devourer Spawn lets out a high-pitched, barely audible scream of agony. All Player-heroes gain 2 Shadow (Dread). If a Player-hero fails their **Valour** roll, their magical items lose their Blessings and Enchanted Rewards for the rest of the fight.

Drink Light. The Devourer Spawn can consume the Seven Seals around Fornost. Afterwards, it gains access to the *Devour Light* Fell Ability of the *Devourer in Darkness*. For each consumed Seal, its Attribute Level and Hate rating rise by 1.

Elizabeth

Occupation: *Wise-woman, Healer*

Distinctive features: *Secretive, Wary*

An elderly lady with puffy white hair and a weathered face, Elizabeth (Elsa) looks frail, but Dúnedain blood flows in her veins, lending her vigor. At the ripe age of 120, she spends her days in a small cottage along the Greenway with her companion Malva and her dog Flash, tending to her sheep and telling stories of the old days (*Elsa and Malva's hut*, p. 17). She knows things everyone else has forgotten: of heroes and monsters, of wars and kings.

Elsa has lived in her cottage for as long as anyone can remember. It is said she once had a husband who died in an accident. It is also said she had a daughter who ran away decades ago and was never seen again (see *Catelyn*, p. 93). The common folk regard her with a mixture of suspicion and awe. Elsa knows the herbs and words needed to mend wounds and ward off disease, and the locals come to her when in need, bringing foodstuff and helping with chores in return. Sometimes children sneak out to listen to her tales, to the dismay of their parents. Rangers are known to visit Elsa's hut from time to time.

When meeting strangers, Elsa is quiet but kind, leaving most of the talking to Malva. If asked about the history of Fornost, Elsa doesn't give a direct an-

swer but smiles and starts telling one of her tales in a quiet voice. Malva weaves her tales into tapestries on her loom; pictures of warriors and castles cover the walls of their hut.

Tales the Player-heroes may hear include:

The Angmar war. “A thousand years ago, when kings still ruled these lands, the north was at war with the terrible Shadow from Angmar—and they were losing. King Arvedui, the last king in the north, sent messengers south to Gondor, but help did not arrive in time. Armies of orcs marched over the hills, aided by the evil Men. They swept aside the king's troops and laid siege to the capital, our Fornost here, of which now only ruins remain. The city fell, and the kingdom with it.

When the Gondorians finally arrived a year later, led by their prince Ēarnur, they rallied with the Elf-lords and assaulted Fornost. On this very ground was the battle fought. The Host of the West prevailed that day and the land was freed. A mighty Elf-lord faced the Witch-king in battle and cut his black mask in half, forcing the wraith to flee, never to return to the north.

The war was won, but the cost was high: no king has ruled here since those days, and only shadows move in the old castle. But one day, maybe the King will return.”

The Last King. “The tale of King Arvedui is a sad one. From the beginning, he was doomed to be the last ruler of Arthedain. Malbeth the Seer, a counsellor of kings, spoke words of prophecy at his birth, declaring Arvedui to either unite the scattered kingdoms of Men or plunge the Dúnedain into an age of darkness.

The end came when Angmar marched to war. The capital, Fornost, was sacked; the King escaped through secret tunnels to the North Downs, where he held for a time with his servants, until they were ousted and forced to flee further north.

It is said King Arvedui spent some time among the snow-people of the northern shores. Maybe they tried to warn him of the Witch-king's true might, but the King didn't listen—elves sent ships to fetch him, and he boarded one of them, only to be drowned in an evil storm, summoned, some say, as a cold hand of wrath from the tallest tower of Fornost.

So ended the tale of the Last King, and the last true kingdom in these lone lands.”

The fall of Fornost. “Death of winter was at hand when the Enemy came to Fornost Erain. Countless was their number, and in front of them rode the Witch-king, with a sceptre of terror in his hand and spells of sorcery on his lips. The King dared not face him on the open field, and retreated instead behind

the city's walls, for Fornost was a mighty fortress from the Elder Days.

Once, twice, three times the Enemy tried to break through the city's defences, but the line held. Not thwarted so easily, the Witch-king turned to treachery. False promises of wealth and power lured one of the watch-captains, a nobleman who had fallen out of the King's favour, to open the gates in the middle of the night. So the Enemy flooded into the city, terror spreading before them. The surprise strike left the defenders paralyzed, and the city fell in hours.

It is said that at dawn, at the doors of the King's keep, the King's Champion faced the Witch-king and his servants. With a fire in his heart and the gleam of the rising Sun on his shield, the Champion held the Shadow at bay until, at last, he was overwhelmed.

Only by the Champion's sacrifice could the King flee with his most loyal knights and the few men, women, and children who had managed to evacuate into the castle. They took secret passageways into the North Downs, abandoning Fornost to a dark fate. Many others were captured, never to be seen again, doomed to death or worse in the hands of the Enemy."

The line of the Seer. This is a personal tale, and Elsa only tells it to people she trusts.

"There was a great Seer who lived in the last days of the old kingdom. Malbeth was her name, and she was a counsellor of kings, gifted with foresight and prophetic visions.

It was Malbeth who foretold that Arvedui would be the last king, unless he managed to reunite the two kingdoms of the Dúnedain. Other prophecies she also told, many now lost in time. One concerned the fate of Fornost.

Abandoned lies the fortress of kings, only shadows walk behind barred doors. The earth shakes, old seals are broken, shackles thrown aside. Whose call shall the restless shadows heed? The one who comes after would set them free as a tidal wave, drowning the sleepy villages of the north. She needs but an instrument to play her part. The one who remains would set them free as birds in the sky, flying away to the Halls of Awaiting. But he needs help: a word to light the hearts' darkness and a hand to hold a shield.

When the city fell, it is said the King's manservant escorted Malbeth to safety. After the war, she settled near the ruins, teaching others what she knew of the history of the dead kingdom. Her knowledge—and her gifts—passed to her daughters, and they to their daughters, in an unbroken line until this day. We have waited here, for the return of the King and the resurrection of our once-beloved city.

But these are dark times. I have seen the vi-

sions, no doubt the same my ancestral grandmother saw: a shadow host gathering behind the city's walls and sweeping over the land, driving everything before them, led by a figure wearing a broken mask. I do not know what these visions mean, but the time of shadows approaches, I can feel it in my bones. If the King is to one day return, Fornost must first be cleansed of darkness."

The Pale Rider. If the heroes ask about recent events, Elsa tells them of her encounter with the Pale Rider.

"On the night of the storm, I was at the downs, tracking a lost sheep with Flash here. I saw a lone figure on the hill of the old watchtower. Curious of who would be out in such foul weather, I climbed the slope. It was a pale lady, on a pale horse, and she was shouting dreadful words into the wind. Suddenly, lightning struck, and where it hit the earth cracked, sending trembles across the hills.

I then spoke: 'Who are you, foul creature, and what are you doing on my land?'

The Pale Rider answered in a cold voice: 'This land belongs to the Witch-king.'

'Not today, it doesn't,' I said. 'Begone now, before I send my dog onto you!'

For a brief moment we gazed at each other—her eyes were grey and freezing as a winter night. Then she turned away.

'Things have been set in motion. I will go. Others will follow', she said, and rode away. When she was gone, I noticed the grass was dead in a circle where she stood.

I never found the sheep."

If asked about the sheep, Elsa says its tracks ended at large footprints, leading deeper into the hills (the troll Frank snatched the sheep, see *Troll's lair*, p. 84).

Elves of Rivendell

While this tale centers around Fornost, the elves of Rivendell may also play a part in it.

Elrond can tell the Player-heroes the full history of the Northern Kingdom. He is an excellent patron for a Company investigating Fornost, and can feed them rumours of Orcs and Hillmen in the North Downs, maybe even of servants of old Angmar. Elrond would very much like to see Fornost purged and prepared for the return of the King—maybe now is the time? The elf-lord is also one of the few healers who can tend the wounds from *Morgul-knives*, p. 118, should a hero be struck by one.

Elrond approved of the construction of the Seven Seals around Fornost, work done by Elven smiths originally from Eregion but residing in Rivendell at

that time. The smiths, led by an Elf called Dammor, have since sailed to the West, but records of their work are stored in the personal library of Elrond.

Glorfindel knows better than anyone the might of the Witch-king—it was he who faced the Wraith in battle when Angmar was defeated. The Witch-king fled before the Elf-lord after getting his black mask cut in half.

Glorfindel knows much of the Enemy's abilities and weaknesses and can give the heroes advice on fighting the sorcery of Angmar or the Devourer in Darkness. He guards Rivendell and rarely leaves the valley, but if the Player-heroes manage to expose and track down the Pale Rider, the Elf-lord may make an exception and ride into battle with the Company.

More information about Rivendell and its inhabitants can be found in the Free League's *Rivendell* booklet.

Undoing the Seals

If ever needed, Elrond can teach the Player-heroes a spell that unravels the Seven Seals. To invoke the spell, a Player-hero must stand in front of a Seal, speak the words of power, and spend 1 Hope.



Pale Rider

Occupation: *Champion of Angmar, Sorcerer*

Distinctive features: *Proud, Subtle*

Rumours whisper of a pale lady in grey robes, riding across Eriador on a pale horse, bringing misfortune with her. Her eyes are empty, and her voice sends chills across a listener's spine. Where she goes, laughter fades away, crops die, and cattle fall ill. Some say the Lady conspires with Orcs or evil spirits, others claim she is Death herself walking on earth. A scant few realise her true nature: a herald of the kingdom of Angmar come again.

Old records speak of a Pale Rider, a general of Angmar's armies, who learned sorcery from the Witch-king. When Angmar fell, she vanished, perhaps hiding in the far North with the Witch-king's other surviving followers. Over the recent decades, the lady has re-emerged, setting forth schemes against the Free Peoples of Eriador. In the latest of these, she summoned an earthquake to tear a chasm into the core of the hills beneath Fornost, waking the Devourer in Darkness, and conspired to send the Cult of the Witch into the city, aiming to break the Seven Seals and usher the darkness within upon the North. Despite the circulating rumours, the Pale Rider remains an elusive figure, vanishing into the shadows before raising too much suspicion.

What is the Pale Rider's secret? She holds one of the lesser rings, artefacts forged by the Elves of Eregion when they were trying to perfect the craft of ring-making. The later Rings of Power have the ability to preserve life and beauty around them, and the Pale Rider's ring holds a perverted version of the same power. It heals and empowers the wielder but also sucks life from the surrounding land, spreading rot and corruption. Through the ring, the Pale Rider has obtained practical immortality, immunity to disease, old age, and most physical injuries, but ill luck and a sense of loss follow in her wake.

This book does not recount the Pale Rider's full history, and the Company is unlikely to encounter her outside of stories told by other Loremaster characters. She is an enigma, an initiator of many plots stirring up evil things in the North. Her power is in meticulously prepared sorcery and long-term plans, and she often works through followers and intermediaries, much like the Five Wizards on the side of the Free Peoples. She carries out these tasks in cooperation with cultists from Angmar, see *Angmar's messengers*, p. 95. For more ideas for the Pale Rider's exploits, see *Connections to other adventures*, p. 134.

Artefacts

‘Are these magic cloaks?’ asked Pippin, looking at them with wonder.

This section describes all the magical and mundane artefacts related to the Company’s adventures in Fornost. For less significant items, see *Trinkets*, p. 126.

Black Blade of the Mountain King

The Black Blade is a large, two-handed sword made of dark metal with a jagged edge. During the days of Arthedain, it was carried by the Mountain King, a Great Orc who united the Orcs of the northern mountain ranges to fight under the banner of Angmar. The blade was the symbol of his power.

The Mountain King met his doom in the battle between Angmar and the Host of the West in T.A. 1975. The blade became a legend and is recognised by any Orc in Eriador. It is said that a new bearer of the sword could again unite the scattered Orc clans.

The path of the blade. When the Mountain King fell, his followers retreated to Fornost, bringing the blade with them. When the Rangers stormed the Palace, the weapon was lost.

Where the blade’s path next leads is up to the Loremaster. Maybe it was hidden by the Orcs of Angmar or buried in the pile of corpses in the *Feast hall*, p. 56, to be found by the Company, the Cult of the Witch, or an Orcish search party. Maybe a lone Orc already found the weapon and carried it away, only to fall prey to the Devourer in Darkness. (The blade’s magical powers, if any, result from black sorcery; the Devourer is not interested in consuming the item.) Maybe the Wraiths—or even Frank the Troll—found the blade and delivered it into one of Fornost’s treasure troves for safekeeping. The Loremaster should choose the most opportune time and place for the weapon to resurface.

The Black Blade

Game-mechanically, the Black Blade is a 2-handed Sword with a Damage rating of 5, Injury rating of 20, and Load of 5. A Player-hero picking the sword up for the first time gains 1 Shadow (Dread) due to the blade’s dark history.

Chieftain Aranarth’s notes

The Rangers of the North safekeep notes written by Aranarth, son of King Arvedui, the first Chieftain of the Dúnedain. The following passage concerns the events in the Royal Palace after the Battle of Fornost:

“We drove the Orcs back, and they fled in panic or were slain. The corpses we piled into a heap in the

upper hall.

“When the battle died down, they came. We did not have time to search the Palace, not even visit the throne room to pay our respects when they set upon us. Shadows, barely visible, but with an aura of terror about them.

“I took five of my best men and we pushed down into the dungeons in a desperate search for surviving prisoners. There were none, only more Shadows. Three of the men I lost to madness before we made our escape.

“We found the body of Anorthand, but could not bring him back up with us. There was no sign of the Sunshield. Rumour says it was locked away in a treasure chamber deeper in the Palace.

“There is a darkness here we cannot comprehend, an Evil beyond our mortal understanding. It must not be let spread beyond the city walls. I held council with Lord Elrond and Dammor of Rivendell. The Elves shall forge seven Seals, sigils of power around the Palace’s entrances. They will hold the Shadows at bay, ensuring they never emerge to haunt the living again.

“Evil now reigns inside Fornost Erain. My kin shall keep watch over it, but none may enter.”

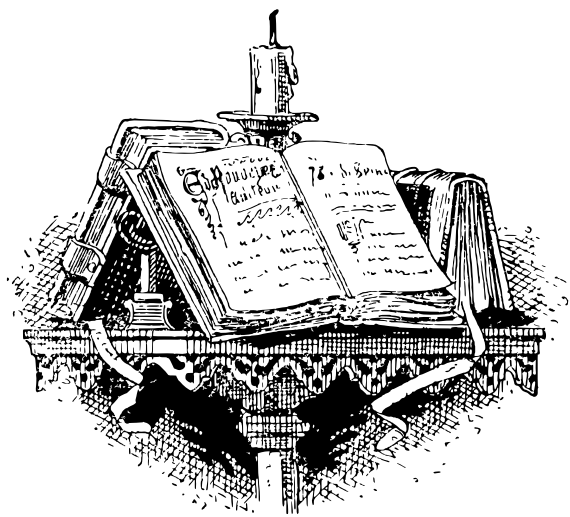
Golden Book of Fornost

A crown and seven silver stars adorn the cover of this ancient golden book. On its golden pages, the kings of Arthedain have penned the history of the kingdom in red and black ink. The entries run from the founding of Arthedain in T.A. 861 all the way to its fall in T.A. 1974. Notable subjects include:

- T.A. 861: Arnor splits into the three kingdoms of Arthedain, Rhudaur, and Cardolan after the death of King Eärendur and the strife between his three sons. Amlaith becomes the first king of Arthedain and moves the capital to Fornost, taking the Palantír of Annúminas with him.
- T.A. 1200–1300: Angmar rises in the days of King Malvegil. Orcs and evil men gather in the North.
- T.A. 1409–: Angmar attacks. King Arveleb I is slain on Weathertop, but the Palantír of Amon Sûl is moved to Fornost, which comes under siege. Rhudaur falls to the hands of the Enemy, and Cardolan is ravaged. Arthedain’s young

king Araphor drives the Enemy back, helped by the Elves of Lindon, but the hostilities never stop completely.

- T.A. 1601: The brothers Marcho and Blanco lead hobbit settlers into the Shire, with official permission from King Argeleb II.



The fall of Fornost is described in a number of entries from 1973–1974 by King Arvedui:

- December 10, 1973: “As we feared, the Enemy is again on the move. Scouts report sightings of Orcs and Hillmen gathering beyond the eastern border. There is no word from Gondor.”
- January 21, 1974: “The Enemy has taken Amon Sûl. My sons rode to face them in battle, but messengers tell me they were swept aside towards Lune. The forces of Angmar march to Fornost, led by the Witch-king himself. We prepare for a siege.”
- March 15, 1974: “Not much time left. The Enemy has broken through the gates—through sorcery or treachery, I cannot say. They are overrunning the city. With a heavy heart, I have decided to heed my knights’ advice and retreat to the hills. There we will resist until reinforcements arrive.

“Anorthand, the captain of my guard, shall stay behind and delay the enemy while we escape through the secret passage in the Chamber of Elwing. I shall take with me the heirlooms of my house and the two Seeing Stones.

“I will send my little servant to seal this book into the library, behind the Sickle of the Valar. If we fall, may it survive to tell the tale of these last days of the Northern Kingdom.”

Studying the Golden Book of Fornost

The Book of Fornost is a dense tome of thousands of pages, and searching it for specific information takes time. The Player-heroes may choose to study the book as a Fellowship Phase Undertaking, letting them ask the Loremaster questions about the history of Arthedain and Fornost (see, for example, Appendix A of the *Return of the King*).

Halfling’s diary

This small booklet is the diary of a nameless Hobbit from the Shire, the personal servant of King Arvedui during the fall of Fornost. Mould and moisture have destroyed most of the book, but some entries are still readable:

- “...say that some evil Men and Orcs are on the move in the east. They have ordered me to accompany Lady Malbeth for now. In case of danger, I am to escort her to safety, though she said she’d rather not travel far...”
- “...The King showed me a hiding place in the Royal Library. The big book he’s always writing, the golden one; if anything happens, I am to hide it there, behind the lock made of stars. He taught me the opening combination. The Valacirca, he called them, though back in the Shire we called them the Wain...”
- “...Oh my, this is all quite scary, and I hope it doesn’t come to it. But I swore an oath, and I am going to stand by it...”

Mirror of sight

This full-sized mirror is decorated with an ornate silver frame with writing in Quenyan: “See those who see themselves.” Anyone looking into the mirror can see flashes through other reflecting (and currently lit) surfaces in the castle, including but not limited to:

- The obsidian throne in the *Upper hall*, p. 53, with visions of broken statues and green-burning torches.
- The pool in the *Garden*, p. 41, with visions of a fish fountain, the sky, and the canopy.
- The mirrors in the entrance room to the *King’s quarters*, p. 58, with visions of other mirrors.

With some concentration and a successful Scan roll, an onlooker can focus the view on one of these and see what’s happening in the room in real time. The Loremaster is encouraged to add interesting details and members of the factions into the visions.

Originally located in the treasure trove in the *Dungeons*, p. 68, the Wraiths use the mirror to spy

on other occupants of the castle and to scry their locations so that one of them can be sent to follow an intruder. The mirror has been afflicted by the *Curse of the Devourer*, p. 111, and only works when the monster is away.

The mirror is unwieldy to move, corresponding to 10 points of Load; it counts as a Marvelous Artefact, but with the unique ability to see through any reflecting surfaces within one mile's radius, as described above. Observant targets of this scrying may spot shadowy figures on reflective surfaces around them.

Morgul-knives

Morgul-knives are long, thin daggers with an evil aura. An invisible inscription on the hilt reveals the weapon's purpose (readable with a Magical success on a **Scan** roll): to subjugate a pierced victim to the will of the Shadow.

When a Morgul-knife wounds its victim, a shard of the blade clips off and remains in the wound. The rest of the blade turns into smoke, leaving only the hilt behind. The shard starts to work its way towards the heart, and the victim grows cold and feverish, starting a transformation into a Wraith, a servant of the Nazgûl.

By default, Wraiths created this way use the Fell Wraith statistics (*The One Ring*, p. 155). However, in case a particularly important character is transformed, the Loremaster may opt to use the more powerful Morgul Wraith statistics presented here.

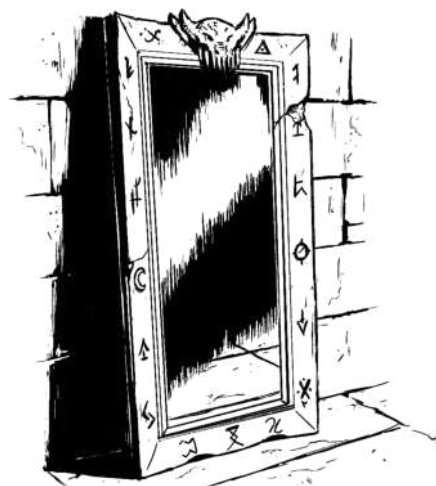


Sunshield

A large, round shield depicting a many-rayed Sun on a red background, the Sunshield can harness the Sun's power.

In the Second Age, after the forging of the Great Rings, Sauron went to war with the Elves. Númenor sent warriors to aid in the war effort, and one showed his valiance by saving a group of Elven-smiths from Eregion. In return, the Elves helped Númenorean smiths to forge the Sunshield as a symbol of the warrior's valour. The shield became a family heirloom, passing through generations from Númenor to the final days of Arthedain.

The latest bearer of the Sunshield is *Anorthand*, p. 110, the Champion of Fornost, who fell when Angmar overtook the city. The Witch-king cursed the shield and threw it into the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71, together with other valuables.



Using a Morgul-knife

When a Player-hero picks up a Morgul-knife for the first time, they gain 2 Shadow (Sorcery). Game-mechanically, the knife is a Dagger.

Wounding someone with a Morgul-knife is a Misdeed: the Player-hero gains 4 Shadow points and 1 Shadow Scar.

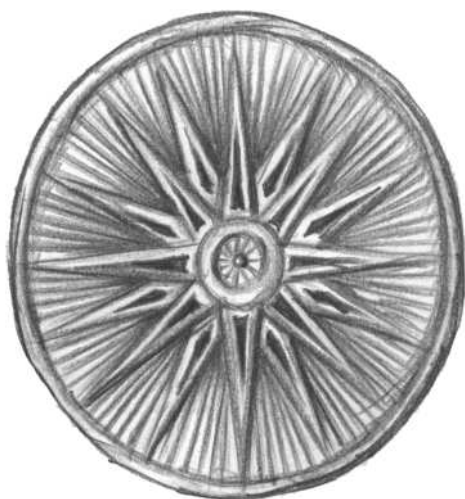
Wounded by a Morgul-knife

When an attack with a Morgul-knife results in a Wound, the Wounded target starts to transform into a Wraith. For a Loremaster character, the transformation completes in a few days. A Player-hero instead gains 3 Shadow (Sorcery) and becomes incapacitated, incapable of moving. The Shadow gain repeats every evening at nightfall. The victim has an opportunity to Harden Will before each Shadow Test, but if their Shadow score reaches their maximum Hope rating while under the Morgul-spell, the transformation completes.

When the transformation completes, the victim turns into a Fell Wraith (*The One Ring*, p. 155) under the service of the Shadow. A Player-hero undergoing this fate turns into a Loremaster character. The Loremaster may have the Wraith attack their former companions immediately or flee into the night, to return later as a champion of the Enemy.

An experienced healer, such as Elizabeth, can delay the spreading of the spell by treating the wound with the herb Athelas. With such treatment, the victim *gains (1d)* on the Shadow Tests. Only a healer of extraordinary skill, such as Elrond Halfelven, can stop the effect completely, but even they can't undo the already accumulated Shadow points.

Powers. In the hands of a valiant warrior, the Sunshield has the power to summon the light of the Sun even into the deepest darkness. As such, it is useful in dealing with the threats inside Fornost, such as the Orcs, the Wraiths, the Shadows, and the Devourer in Darkness. For the soldiers of Arthedain, it is a symbol of defiance against evil. The Player-heroes will need the shield to release the Shadows from their curse, see *Releasing the Shadows*, p. 91.



Sunshield's curse

Immaterial, shadow-like chains criss-cross across the Sunshield's surface, suppressing its power. The Player-hero first picking up the shield gains 2 Shadow (Sorcery).

The curse breaks when the shield bearer achieves a great success (one or more Success icons) in a **Valour** roll triggered by a Shadow test. The shield bearer can provoke such tests voluntarily by forcing their will against the curse, gaining 1 Shadow (Dread). In direct sunlight, such voluntary tests *gain* (1d).

Immediately when the shield's curse is removed, its Improved Flame of Anor quality activates, see *Sunshield restored*. (Afterwards, the shield reverts back to only having its first quality unlocked.) In addition, when the Player-heroes next enter sunlight outside of the Palace, the spirit of the Champion of Fornost appears to the Company, see *Anorthand*, p. 110.



MORGUL WRAITH

Swift, Bold

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

7

ENDURANCE

MIGHT

HATE

PARRY

ARMOUR

48

2

7

+2

2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Sword 4 (4/16, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: As an Undead, a Fell Wraith has the *Deathless*, *Heartless*, and *Strike Fear* Fell Abilities (*The One Ring*, p. 154). It also has the following Fell Abilities:

Denizen of the Dark, *Fear Fire*. See *The One Ring*, Fell Wraith, p. 155.

Shrill Shriek. Spend 1 Hate to make all Player-heroes in hearing distance gain 2 points of Shadow (Dread). Those who fail their **Valour** roll are Weary until the creature's next turn.

Shadow Veil. The creature veils itself in darkness and turns to flee. Player-heroes trying to stop the creature gain 2 Shadow (Dread). If a Player-hero gains no Shadow points from this source, the creature is stopped and can't use this ability for the rest of the combat. If the creature is not stopped, it leaves combat and vanishes into the night.

Sunshield restored

The Sunshield is a Great Shield. When its curse is broken, it becomes a magical item of Númenorean Craftsmanship with Bane of Orcs and Undead and the following qualities:

- **Flame of Anor:** When wielding this shield, whenever you succeed in a **Valour** roll triggered by a Shadow test, if you so choose, the shield starts to shine with the light of the Sun. This completely illuminates the area and counts as sunlight for rules concerning the *Shadows*, p. 9 and Fell Abilities such as *Hate Sunlight*. The light fades when the cause of the **Valour** roll is no longer present.
- **Superior Reinforced** (*The One Ring*, p. 165).
- **Improved Flame of Anor:** You may activate the Flame of Anor at will, without the need for a **Valour** roll. The light reduces Shadow Level to zero near you, and Enemies with the *Hate Sunlight* Fell Ability within the light are Weary.

As usual, only the first quality is unlocked initially. The Devourer in Darkness or the Devourer Spawn can't affect the Sunshield's magic.

Witch-king's mask

In the days of Angmar, the Witch-king wore a black mask made of steel, open around the eyes and mouth. When Angmar fell, the Elf-lord Glorfindel cut the mask in half. One of the halves dropped to the ground and got buried, resurfacing later in the hands of Catelwyn the Witch.

The mask is saturated with the Witch-king's evil intents.

Powers. The mind of anyone wearing the mask is flooded with thoughts and images from the Witch-king's head, about the glory days of Angmar and plans for the new rise of the Shadow. The visions are constant but fragmentary, overwhelming and confusing the wearer and casting them into a dream-like state where they lose track of their surroundings.

With enough willpower, it is possible to tame the information flow and learn great secrets. By that point, however, the mask has corrupted its wearer and made them a servant of the Shadow.

Destroying the mask. The mask's power lies in its history, not its form. It can be destroyed by mundane means, but the remains continue to resonate with evil.

Wearing the mask

A Player-hero picking up the mask for the first time gains 3 points of Shadow (Sorcery) and hears distant whispers in their head. The Shadow gain reoccurs repeatedly if they try to wear the mask.

With each Shadow gain, the Loremaster may opt to give the Player-hero visions of the past and present of Angmar and Fornost Erain. Examples include:

- A metal rod held in an armored hand, and a voice: "Find it..."
- Shadowy figures moving in abandoned chambers, and a voice: "Command them..."
- Orcs swarming a city, attacking a palace guarded by Men in shining armours, and a voice: "Destroy all..."



Witch-king's sceptre

The Witch-king's sceptre is a two feet long rod made of dark metal. Its surface is covered in carvings of faces screaming in pain, and it ends in five prongs that resemble an iron crown.

The Witch-king made the sceptre around T.A. 1500 to amplify his sorcerous power and help him bring down Arthedain. He used the sceptre to send evil spirits into the Barrow-downs and, after capturing Fornost, to summon the storm that drowned King Arvedui. The sceptre was instrumental in his experiments with the tormented soldiers of Arthedain, and he used it to bind their spirits to Fornost as Shadows. When the Witch-king rode to battle against the Host of the West, he left the sceptre behind locked doors in the *Witch-king's laboratory*, p. 63.

Now, the *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93, seeks the sceptre, wishing to use it to control a released Shadow Host.

Powers. The sceptre is a tool for necromancy, the art of communicating with and commanding spirits. A wielder can tap into the power stored within to

- command spirits of nature to control the weather—in particular, call down cold spells and storms,
- summon and command the spirits of the dead, such as the Shadows in Fornost,
- gain assistance for other feats of sorcery.

The effects are subtle and take time to reach full force; the sceptre is an instrument for evil rites, not a weapon for the battlefield. The magnitude of the effects depends on the user's inner strength and their affinity with the Shadow. The sceptre's power corrupts the user over time. For details, see the *Player-heroes and the sceptre* box.

Destroying the sceptre. The sceptre can't be broken by force. It can be melted in a forge, but this releases the dark power inside in an explosion that may summon storms and call forth restless spirits, as per the Loremaster's discretion.

If the Company wishes to get rid of the sceptre, their best bet is to either hide it or bring it to

someone who knows how to dispose of such artefacts safely, such as Elrond Halfelven in Rivendell. The Loremaster should make journeys with the sceptre dangerous: wherever it goes, the sceptre draws in the forces of Shadow. The Cult of the Witch also gets alerted to the resurfacing of the sceptre and hunts the Company down to get their hands on the artefact.

Player-heroes and the sceptre

A Player-hero picking up the sceptre for the first time gains 3 Shadow (Sorcery), and a sensation of dark power washes over them. This is an instrument of evil, and meddling with it is unwise.

A Player-hero may attempt to use the sceptre to achieve one of the effects described in the list above. They gain 3 Shadow (Sorcery), and if the associated **Wisdom** roll is successful, the effect takes place. The Loremaster should scale the effect taking into account the stature of the caster: the sceptre reacts best to those with perceived strength (such as Rangers of the North and High Elves of Rivendell) and a close connection to the Shadow (heroes who have progressed further on their Shadow Path).

Tying the campaign together

‘...I have never even considered the direction,’ said Frodo. ‘For where am I to go? And by what shall I steer? What is to be my quest?’

This section gives tips on how to weave the contents of this book into a coherent campaign, from getting the Player-heroes involved up to the epic climax.

Getting started

There are multiple ways to get the Company’s adventures in Fornost started.

Rumours

Word travels along the Greenway with merchants and wanderers. The Company may hear rumours of Fornost that draw them into the city or make them come back later. Example rumours include:

- A lightning storm raged on the North Downs one night. It was accompanied by an earthquake that opened a crack in the ground. (See *Pale Rider*, p. 115.)
- Green lights have been seen shining in the darkness in the direction of Deadmen’s Dike. (See *Upper hall*, p. 53.)
- Highwaymen have been harrassing travellers along the northern Greenway, asking if they carry valuables from the ancient ruins.
- A vagabond named Caleb Thyme claims to have found gold in the ruins of Deadmen’s Dike. He was sighted in dubious company in the Prancing Pony and hasn’t been seen since.
- Orcs have been sighted in the North Downs, robbing travellers and vanishing into the night.
- Sheep have gone missing from the farmsteads along the Greenway, supposedly snatched by monsters in the night.



Quests

Once word of new expeditions into Fornost spreads, various parties may approach the Company with requests.

- One of the Wise wishes to learn the fate of Malbeth the Seer (see the tales of *Elizabeth*, p. 113). They send the Company to search for the Golden Book of Fornost, which was presumably kept in the king’s private chambers on the upper level near the Palace’s highest tower (see *King’s quarters*, p. 58 and *Library*, p. 44).
- A Ranger of the North would like the Company to retrieve a family heirloom lost during the sack of Fornost, a golden cup decorated with the symbol of a silver anchor. (The Lorremaster may place the item anywhere within the Palace, for example, in the *Treasure chamber*, p. 71.)
- Someone in Bree tries to sell the Company a map leading to a hidden treasure, presumably buried in the vicinity of Fornost (see *Trinkets*, p. 126, entry 92).
- A group of wandering Elves tells the Company they have spotted a large group of Hillmen camping near Fornost (see *Cultist camp*, p. 22, *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93). During the night, they heard chanting in the Black Speech. They are looking for heroes to investigate.
- A group of Orcs attacked a travelling band of Dwarves but were handily defeated. Under interrogation, the Orcs turned out to be exiles from Mount Gram, searching for an Orc leader called Gulbug, supposedly residing somewhere in the North Downs (see *Gulbug’s tribe*, p. 99, and *Orc caves*, p. 81).



Personal connections

If the Loremaster wishes to center a whole campaign around Fornost, they may want to link the Player-heroes directly to the events. Here are some ideas:

- A Ranger of the North is a descendant of *Anorthand*, p. 110, the Champion of Fornost, and wishes to know what happened to his forefather and the *Sunshield*, p. 118, a fabled family heirloom.
- A Ranger of the North was once a traveling companion of *Catelyn*, p. 93, *Morwenna*, p. 106, and *Gwynfor*, p. 107, before Catelyn found the Witch-king's mask and ran away.
- A family legend says that an ancestor of a Hobbit of the Shire once ran out to find adventure and became the personal servant of the King in Norbury. Other hobbits question the tale, and the Player-hero is determined to travel to Fornost and find proof. See *Halfling's diary*, p. 117, and *King's quarters*, p. 58.
- A Man of Bree grew up at the *Farmsteads*, p. 17, and wants to find their friend Amos Junior who has vanished, rumoured to have joined the *Highwaymen*, p. 102.
- A High Elf of Rivendell was an apprentice of the smith Dammor, see *Elves of Rivendell*, p. 114. They learned that one of Dammor's masterpieces was located in Fornost, but Dammor and Elrond were both reluctant to discuss the details; see *Seven Seals*, p. 90. Now the Player-hero travels to Fornost, hoping to learn the truth.
- A relative of a Dwarf of Durin's Folk was killed by an Orc chieftain in the Battle of Azanulbizar. The Player-hero has recently learned that a descendant of the chieftain, *Gulbug*, p. 99, leads his own band of Orcs somewhere in the North Downs, see *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99, and *Orc caves*, p. 81. The Player-hero has sworn to hunt Gulbug down and avenge their relative.

Patrons

Various Patrons have reasons to send the Player-heroes to Fornost:

- Gandalf is concerned of the rumours of the storm and eerie lights around Fornost and wants to send someone to investigate.
- Elrond would gladly see Fornost cleansed of evil and prepared for the eventual return of the King.
- Bilbo Baggins is intrigued by the stories of Hobbits of old venturing to the Norbury of the Kings and participating in the Battle of Fornost. He is also keen to learn any bits of lore concerning the old kings—if it's a city, there must be a library, right?
- Gilraen the Fair takes the Rangers' watch duty over Fornost seriously and dispatches any available aid to investigate the disturbances there. She is also concerned over the rumours of Orcs and the well-being of the people of the *Farmsteads*, p. 17.



Example starting adventure

For a simple starting adventure, the Company may venture to Fornost following the rumours of a storm and an earthquake that took place a month or so ago. At the end of their Journey, they travel past the *Farmsteads*, p. 17, where they have a chance to gather more information from the locals.

When travelling towards the ruined city, the Company is ambushed by a group of *Highwaymen*, p. 102, who tell them of the rumours of unearthed treasure—treasure they don't want to share with outsiders.

After reaching the city's outer edge, the Company passes through *Fornost grounds*, p. 24, using the Dungeon delving rules to the most visible landmark, the Royal Palace. They arrive at the *Palace entrance*, p. 26, and meet Prydwen the Ranger, who draws their attention to the bashed door with one of the *Seven Seals*, p. 90, and urges them to go inside and investigate.

The Company delves to the *Palace ground floor*, p. 36, and eventually stumbles upon the *Throne room*, p. 37, discovering the False King's treasure, guarded by the undead. They must decide what to do with the cursed hoard, and possibly face the False King's wrath. When leaving, the Company encounters the *Devourer in Darkness*, p. 110, who is seeking to consume the treasure, whether carried by the Player-heroes or left intact in the Throne room. The Company will likely have to hide or flee from the monster.

Outside, Prydwen surmises the beast they encountered is responsible for shattering the Seal, and that there is much more to find within Fornost, even if the Company has to retreat and rest before venturing deeper.

Deepening the campaign

Once the Player-heroes have been drawn in, the Loremaster may let the campaign's plot thicken.

Using the factions

The *Factions*, p. 93, are the movers and shakers of Fornost Erain, the antagonists to the Company's heroes. Still, not every faction is needed for every campaign. The Loremaster should consider what sort of a game they want to run—an epic campaign or a short side adventure?—and choose the factions involved accordingly.

During the sessions, it is good to introduce the factions little by little, so as not to overwhelm the players. The Loremaster may let the Player-heroes explore the ruined city at their own pace and bring a faction into play if the location description suggests so and if it's time to spice things up. Alternatively, a faction may be introduced through a quest or a rumour, as described above.

Once introduced, a faction can become a major driver of a campaign. As described in *Tides of war*, p. 10, the factions progress their agendas over time, creating new adventuring opportunities and a sense of urgency for the Player-heroes to act. The Loremaster should let the Company clash with the factions freely from early on—if they meet overwhelming opposition and are forced to flee, that is only a reason to return stronger or seek an alternative solution, and if they defeat an important Loremaster character, the confusion inside the faction is bound to lead to interesting developments. A faction about to succeed in their goals or, on the other hand, on the brink of destruction can usher in the climax of the campaign.

Continuous or episodic?

It is possible to run a whole campaign of *The One Ring* in Fornost alone. On the other hand, the Loremaster may wish to mix things up and have the Player-heroes also engage in adventures outside the city. This gives the factions an opportunity to progress their agendas over time. New developments, rumours, or quests can then draw the Company back into Fornost. For ideas on how to connect Fornost to the published *The One Ring* adventures, see *Connections to other adventures*, p. 134.

The Loremaster may also make the adventures inside Fornost episodic by introducing the factions one at a time. The Player-heroes may start by investigating rumours of the Highwaymen in the ruins, and clash with them while searching for treasure for an Adventuring Phase or two. Later, when the Highwaymen have been defeated, they may learn of a new threat from a local Orc tribe that is spreading its influence. Once the Orcs have been put in their place, the Cult of the Witch may arrive and trigger the plot regarding the Shadows and the Seven Seals. The different phases may act like the seasons of a television series, deepening the mystery of Fornost little by little.

The end

Every campaign comes to an end. Here are some tips to make it memorable.

Climax

Depending on its scope, the campaign may reach its climax when the Player-heroes battle one of the factions for the last time, when they defeat the Devourer in Darkness, or when they release the Shadows from their curse, to name a few examples. The plot involving the Shadows, the Seven Seals, and the Cult of the Witch is main through line on this book, and its climax is discussed in *Releasing the Shadows*, p. 91.

Whatever the stakes are, the Loremaster should pull out all the stops to make the climax memorable, and also let the players know the big finale is at hand. Whether the Player-heroes succeed or fail, the outcome is sure to have an impact on the future of Eriador.

Aftermath

If all goes well, the Company's adventures in Fornost end with the Shadows released from their bondage, the Cult of the Witch driven away, and the other factions defeated. The return of the Enemy has been delayed, but loose ends remain: What is the origin of the messengers of Angmar who taught dark lore to the cultists? What about the Orc bosses of Mount Gram, the former masters of Gulbug's tribe? And

what is the truth about the Pale Rider?

If things go wrong, the darkness over Eriador grows and the Enemy's grip over the land tightens. The Farmsteads are the first to suffer the fallout of the Comapny's failure, and may be wiped out completely. More complications are sure to arise before the end of the Third Age, keeping adventurers busy in the days to come.

Eventually, after the War of the Ring, King Elessar restores the Northern Kingdom and people will turn the wastelands into fields and homesteads. If the Company succeeded in cleansing Fornost, the old capital will be rebuilt to its former glory. Otherwise, the site will likely never recover, remaining a dark reminder of the shadows of the past.



Chapter 5

Appendices

‘Don’t adventures ever have an end? I suppose not.’

Trinkets

‘Full description of every article, garment, weapon, letter, ring, or trinket is to be sent to Lughúrz at once, and to Lughúrz only.’

Here is a list of trinkets the Company may find anywhere in and around Fornost. The Loremaster may add them to treasure hoards, reward them for successful skill rolls, or use them in any other way they see fit. A random trinket can be generated using a 100-sided die.

TRINKET TABLE:

d100	Trinket description
1	The <i>Black Blade of the Mountain King</i> , p. 116.
2	Clay mug.
3	Piece of red glass.
4	Rusty fork.
5	Rusty spoon.
6	Rusty dagger.
7	Rusty bracelet.
8	Empty wine bottle.
9	Foot-long tusk.
10	Glass inkpot with dried ink at the bottom.
11	Rusty iron chain.
12	Leather pouch with a handful of teeth inside.
13	Shard of obsidian-like dark material. Extremely sharp.
14	Rusty pauldron with a carved symbol of seven stars in a circle.
15	Rusty garden shears.
16	Metallic spinning top.
17	Small hammer with a stone head and a bone handle.
18	Rusted thumbscrew.
19	Loop of string with five mummified fingers dangling from it.

TRINKET TABLE (Continued)

d100	Trinket description
20	Sewing needle.
21	Glass eye.
22	Arrow with black feathers.
23	Flower-shaped hairpin.
24	Disk of metal with a hole in the middle, tied to a piece of string.
25	Green button.
26	Red button.
27	Yellow button.
28	Blue button.
29	Green button.
30	Brass knuckles (a Brawling weapon with Damage 2, Injury 12, Load 0).
31	Small, sealed bottle with purple paint inside.
32	Metallic hula hoop.
33	Two six-sided ceramic dice.
34	Rusted badge with a spiked crown carved on its surface.
35	Metallic playing card (ace of diamonds).
36	Carnival mask.
37	Stone statue of a closed fist.
38	Tin candleholder with a small plate and a handle.
39	Bird skull coated in silver.
40	Dirty bottle with foul-smelling liquid inside.
41	Gilded lyre with broken strings.
42	White chess piece made of stone.
43	Black chess piece made of stone.
44	Chess piece made of glass.
45	Black, scented candle.
46	Porcelain teacup with flower decorations, with a piece cracked off.
47	Half of a porcelain plate, with the image of a white tree.
48	Hobbit-sized teapot.
49	Finely-carved pipe.
50	Toy soldier that walks when its spring is winded up.
51	Stone that glows faintly in the darkness for a while after being exposed to light.
52	Ebony flute.
53	Clay doll with a missing eye.
54	Flask of extremely flammable thick, dark liquid that burns for a long time.
55	Silver spoon.
56	Small silver bell.
57	Dirty handkerchief with the letters J. T. sewn to a corner.
58	Tin pitcher decorated with leaf motifs.
59	Hand mirror. Like other reflecting surfaces, can connect to the <i>Mirror of sight</i> , p. 117.

TRINKET TABLE (Continued)

d100	Trinket description
60	Tambourine with images of boars carved on its sides.
61	Jar of strong spice that makes anyone inhaling it sneeze.
62	Amber earring carved into the shape of a teardrop.
63	Coin with a kingly face (that of King Arvedui).
64	Coin with the image of a spiked crown.
65	Bullseye lantern embossed with images of ships.
66	Pocket watch with a cracked glass.
67	Bottle of wine from the Old Winyard, 369 vintage.
68	Glass orb with a diorama of a small castle inside.
69	Marble made of many-coloured glass.
70	Piece of parchment with faded text: “... of gold, a gem-decorated cup, the shield with the Sunto be moved underground, to the chamber with the golden statue ...”
71	Piece of parchment with faded text: “...to be locked tight until He returns. The sceptre is to be sealed inside ...”
72	Piece of parchment with faded text: “...hidden in the Library ...”
73	Magnifying lens set in a bronze frame.
74	Bone figurine of an animal with four heavy legs, tusks, floppy ears, and a snout like a snake.
75	Handheld compass decorated with the image of a towering man with a foam-crested helm and green mail.
76	Wax-sealed scroll case decorated with stars. Inside, a drawing of a knight in a shining armour, with the Sun emblazoned on a large shield that radiates light. (This is <i>Anorthand</i> , p. 110.)
77	Signet ring with a star symbol.
78	Signet ring with a tree symbol.
79	Signet ring with a skull symbol.
80	Hobbit-sized pen decorated with a golden image of a dragon.
81	Metallic music box that plays a broken tune when opened.
82	Pin decorated with an image of the Moon.
83	Bottle of perfume with a rosy odor.
84	Sextant.
85	Gold key. The Loremaster decides which door it fits, if any.
86	Bronze key. The Loremaster decides which door it fits, if any.
87	Iron key. The Loremaster decides which door it fits, if any.
88	Walking stick with an end shaped like a horse’s head.
89	Collapsible spyglass.
90	Booklet carefully wrapped in leather, full of elven poetry.
91	Metal plate with the following text carved on it: “ <i>Eärendil the Mariner, guiding us through the starless voids.</i> ”
92	Hand-drawn map of a wooded area surrounded by walls. There is an opening in the woods with a fish drawn in the middle. At the edge of the opening, there is a black flower with a big ‘X’ next to it on the forest’s side. The map’s corner is signed with the name “Archibald”. (The map leads to the hidden treasure in the <i>Garden</i> , p. 41.)

TRINKET TABLE (Continued)

d100	Trinket description
93	Golden locket, inside a picture of a regal woman and a smiling man next to each other in fine clothes, and the carving: <i>“To my Malbeth.”</i> The woman resembles a younger version of Elizabeth.
94	Silver comb decorated with red gemstones. (1 Treasure point)
95	Button decorated with a small ruby. (1 Treasure point)
96	Silver bracelet with carved images of soldiers with spears and winged helms. (1 Treasure point)
97	Gold bracelet decorated with seven silver stars. (1 Treasure point)
98	Dagger with a blue gemstone set in its hilt. (1 Treasure point)
99	Bronze sphere with all the constellations drawn on its surface as a projection of the night sky. The seven stars of the Valacirca (the Plough/Big Dipper) are marked with little diamonds. (1 Treasure point)
100	Fist-sized diamond. (5 Treasure points)

Dreadful sights

A sudden dread and a horror of the chamber fell on the Company. ‘We cannot get out,’ muttered Gimli.

Here is a list of dreadful sights and experiences the Company may run into in and around Fornost. The Loremaster may use these as inspiration for delving events or to add colour to Fornost’s various locations.

DREADFUL SIGHTS TABLE:

Feat die	Dreadful sight description
ϕ	Mural on a wall depicting the Witch-king’s mask and crown.
1	Rusty armour with the decayed remains of a Man inside. A spear runs through the helmet.
2	Cold spot where quiet, disembodied sobbing can be heard.
3	When you open a door, corpses fall on you.
4	Wind like a sigh blows all lights out.
5	An obelisk of black stone sucking warmth out of the air.
6	A humanoid figure stands behing you at the edge of light but vanishes when you turn around.
7	Lights flicker, and you think you can feel someone touching your shoulder.
8	Outline of a body surrounded by scorch marks.
9	The shapes of a face in agony and an outstretced arm protruding out of a chunk of black stone, as if trapped inside.
10	A doorway leads to a totally collapsed room. The edges of the doorway are burned black.
℥	A stone gargoyle sits on top of a doorway. Its gaze seems to follow anyone passing through.

Miscellaneous rooms

‘I have no memory of this place at all!’ said Gandalf, standing uncertainly under the arch.

Here is a list of miscellaneous rooms the Company may pass when they wander inside the Royal Palace of Fornost. The Loremaster may use them as stages for delving events and faction encounters, camping sites for a resting Company, or even seeds for full-blown locations.

MISCELLANEOUS ROOMS TABLE:

Feat die	Room description
Φ	Piece of the sewer system beneath a removable grating on the floor. Muddy water to the waist level.
1	Gallery with dozens of frames of decayed paintings hanging on the walls.
2	Old kitchen with sturdy tables and some metalware still remaining.
3	Small inner courtyard, overgrown with vines, with a dry well in the middle.
4	Room with a massive fireplace in the middle and multiple connected metal tanks for heating water.
5	Flooded amphitheatre with steps descending down towards a water-covered stage. Water drips from the ceiling.
6	Four-way crossroads, guarded by rusted suits of armour on the walls, with seven stars carved in the ceiling.
7	Hall with a checkerboard floor and statues of dancing couples lining the walls.
8	Privy on the castle’s outer wall, with three holes connecting to the outside.
9	Descending staircase collapsed shut, but with a hidden nook behind some of the fallen stones.
10	Storage room full of empty barrels.
11	Round room with images of fish carved on the walls. An aquarium full of dirt stands on a pedestal in the middle.
℥	Hidden room behind a partly crumbled wall. Candles and trinkets lie on a stone table, and the wall is adorned with a carved image of a tree.

Soundtrack suggestions

*They also keep a horned cow as proud as any queen;
But music turns her head like ale, and makes her wave her tufted tail
and dance upon the green.*

Here is a collection of background music suitable for Fornost Erain. The first table lists ambient music for different dungeon levels and locations. The second table lists music for combat against various foes. *Tabletop Audio* refers to the excellent soundscapes from <https://tabletopaudio.com/>.

BACKGROUND MUSIC TABLE:

Site	Description	Track
Surrounding lands	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Middle Earth:Dawn
Farmsteads	Ambience	Lord of the Rings Online: Bree-land tracks
North Downs	Ambience	Michael Ghelfi Studios: Windy Hilltop
Fornost grounds	Ambience Mystery	Martia's Muses: Abandoned Town Ambience and Music Planescape Torment OST: Bones of the Night
Dome of Sight	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Abandoned Chapel
Crypts	Ambience	Planescape Torment OST: Fortress of Regrets
Palace ground floor	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Dungeon I
Throne room	Impending doom	Myst IV: Revelation OST, Main Theme
Garden	Ambience Through the forest	Tabletop Audio: Temple Garden Tabletop Audio: Lush World
Library	Sense of awe	Uru: The Ages Beyond Myst OST, Gallery Theme
Palace upper floor	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Defiled Temple
Palace underground	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Shadowfell Tabletop Audio: The Underdark
Witch-king's lab	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Catacombs
Dungeons	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Vault of Terror Tabletop Audio: All Hallows' Eve Tabletop Audio: Haunted Ramparts Tabletop Audio: Nightmare
Treasure chamber	Shadows descend Anorthand appears	Naruto Shippuden OST, Girei (The Crying God) Planescape: Torment OST, Deionarra's Theme
Tunnels	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Lost Mine Tabletop Audio: Cavern of Lost Souls Tabletop Audio: Dust to Dust
Orc caves	Orcs' feast	Edvard Grieg: In the Hall of the Mountain King
Troll's lair	Ambience	Tabletop Audio: Sleeping Ogre



COMBAT MUSIC TABLE:

Opponent	Description	Track
Cult of the Witch	A misunderstanding? Witch and the Mask-bearers	Tabletop Audio: Witch Mountain Star Wars: TOR, Darth Revan Theme
Highwaymen	Your money or your life Tom Cooper Alayna Rosebud	Doctor Hmm: Primo Victoria (Medieval Cover) (Orig. Sabaton) Middle Ages: Moskau (Medieval Cover) (Orig. Dschinghis Khan) Samuel Kim: Duel of Fates (Medieval Cover) (Orig. Star Wars prequel trilogy, John Williams)
Gulbug's tribe	Fight! Drums!	The HU: Wolf Totem Warcraft: The Beginning Soundtrack: Forest Ambush
Wraiths	Walkers in the shadows Wraiths on warpath	Lyre RPG Music: Undead Sailors Lyre RPG Music: Mormesk the wraith
Devourer in Darkness	First encounter Devourer hunted Last stand	Apollon de Moura: Cthulhu Awakens Rick Oli: March of the Templars Globus: Preliator
Generic	Epic Suspenseful Dark	Vangelis: Conquest of paradise Tabletop Audio: Escape from Shadow Rok Nardin: Where is Your God Now

Connections to other adventures

He was liable to drag in bits of what he called poetry; and sometimes, after a glass or two, would allude to the absurd adventures of his mysterious journey.

Fornost Erain works well as part of a wider campaign set in Eriador. The fortress itself can act as a hub of adventures where the Player-heroes return many times over the years while also embarking on other quests. This section suggests ways to connect Fornost to some of the published adventures in *The One Ring* core rule book and the adventure collection *Ruins of the Lost Realm*.

The Star of the Mist

The One Ring, p. 223

The tale of the False King Gwydyon, see *Throne room*, p. 37, bears a resemblance to that of Lord Hadirion. The Witch-king had an iron crown nailed to the head of Gwydyon, whose betrayal of Fornost cursed him to haunt the ruined castle forever. The Pale Rider, impressed by his master's cruelty, wanted to reproduce Gwydyon's fate when she led the assault against the House of Hadirion. However, the captured lord refused to betray his king. The dwarves of Narag-Nâla were more easily corrupted, and the Lady used the Witch-king's might to bend their treachery (channelled through a blue gemstone) into a curse upon the Dúnedain.

Written on Hadirion's crown are the Sindarin words:

"Lord Hadirion of Black River.
Crowned to honour his loyalty
to the Last King,
little it helped him in the end.
May others curse their loyalty to him
in eternity."

The blue gem on the crown started to shine again when the Pale Rider rode past the tower on her way towards Fornost.

The Player-heroes can learn parts of this story by reading the Black Speech in the Accursed Halls, or from the dwarves of Narag-Nâla, who still tell stories of the old days.

The White Towers

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 58

Fornost used to house two of the Palantíri, see *Dome of Sight*, p. 31. Now, the last Seeing Stone lies in Elostirion, and the tower's library holds detailed records of the Stones' history. If the Company wishes to learn more of the Palantíri, the White Towers are their likely destination.

The records of Elostirion indicate that an echo of a Palantír's power may remain in a sturcure where a Stone has stayed for a long time, explaining the visions the Player-heroes receive in their dreams in

the *Dome of Sight*. The texts may also instruct how to harness this power in a limited fashion, letting a Player-hero control their dream visions with a successful **Wisdom** roll to reveal secrets around Fornost.

The Shrouded Islet

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 70

Targon, the leader of the Dúnedain expedition to the Shrouded Islets, is descendant of *Anorthand*, p. 110, the Champion of Fornost. Targon knew Anorthand had fallen in Fornost, and at the same time, Anorthand's brother Duinhir had been lost at Lake Evendim, where the family had an ancestral mansion. Targon wishes to find out what happened to Duinhir, and, if fate favours him, find the family's heirloom, *Sunshield*, p. 118—maybe Duinhir was carrying it at the time instead of Anorthand.

Unfortunately, Targon fell to the Doom of Nenuial before the Player-heroes arrive on the scene. On the Bleak Cove, the floor stones of the mansion remain, with Targon's family's Sun emblem carved on them. Beneath, there is a hidden cellar with a lesser Hoard but no Sunshield. Celerwen can fill the Company in on the details; it seems likely the Shield lies either in the bottom of the lake or somewhere in the depths of Fornost.

Targon may have left an heir behind, the next rightful bearer of the Shield, or it may fall on the Player-heroes to find the artefact and use it for good on Targon's behalf.

Note that this version of the events moves the appearance of the Domm of Nenuial to the time of the fall of Arthedain. The beast was likely summoned by the Witch-king to harrass any Dúnedain still remaining at the shores of Lake Evendim. In the aftermath of the Angmar war, the Dúnedain did not have the resources to figure out what happened at the Shrouded Islets, and the mystery remained till this day.

Mount Gram

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 101

The *Pale Rider*, p. 115, went to Mount Gram to negotiate an alliance between the the forces of Angmar

and the local Orcs. However, the Orc leader Radgul did not want to take orders from others and turned the visitor away. Later, Angmar learned of *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99, and saw an opportunity to bend Mount Gram under their heel by equipping Gulbug with the *Black Blade of the Mountain King*, p. 116, to be found in Fornost, and helping him usurp Radgul.

Norima, an Elf from a wandering Company, saw the Pale Rider ride towards Mount Gram, felt something was off, and decided to follow. Unfortunately, she was captured by bandits, delivered to the Orcs, and thrown into the haunted dungeons beneath the mountain.

Norima's Company only knows she departed towards the Ettenmoors and never returned. They now seek brave adventurers to find out her fate. If the Player-heroes rescue Norima and she recovers from her ordeal—for example, by resting for a time in Rivendell—she tells them what she learned of the Pale Rider. She may also speak of *Gulbug's tribe*, p. 99, an occasional talking point among her jailors.

The Ranger-Haven

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 114

Chieftain's Lodge in the Ranger-Haven of the Angle holds, among other treasures, *Chieftain Arnanth's notes*, p. 116, shedding light on the origin of the Seven Seals of Fornost. The sage *Mabron*, p. 107, is aware of the notes' existence and can send the Company to the Lodge to have a closer look.

In the the Ranger-Haven, the Company may meet Gilraen, daughter of Dírhael, a potential patron invested in the fate of Fornost, see *Patrons*, p. 123.

The Black Númenoreans

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 33

Over the centuries, communication between Barad-Dûr and the servants of the Shadow in Eriador has been sparse. When the ship *Kâthuphazgân* sails north, its leaders are not aware of the machinations of the survivors of Angmar or the *Cult of the Witch*, p. 93. Eventually, as the Black Númenoreans expand north, the factions will come into contact.

The Black Númenoreans, acting on direct orders from the Dark Lord, expect the other forces in Eriador to fall in line and serve their cause as spies and warriors. The Cult of the Witch has different ideas—

they are loyal to *Catelyn*, p. 93, who wishes to restore Eriador according to the old ambitions of the Witch-king instead of the plans of outsiders. Even if Catelyn eventually acknowledges the lordship of Sauron, she intends to rule Eriador by herself, and won't cede to Zoril or other Black Númenoreans.

Angmar's messengers, p. 95 may act as intermediaries between the Black Númenoreans and the Cult of the Witch, persuading the Númenoreans to stay out of Fornost but giving them information on the state of affairs in Eriador and aid in Usapthôn's pilgrimage to abandoned ruins in Angmar. If these efforts are successful, there may be peace between the factions. However, if the Númenoreans learn that powerful relics are buried in Fornost, they will seek to seize the site, and a clash with the Cult may be inevitable. Angmar may take either side in the conflict, allying themselves with the most likely victor.

The White Hand of Saruman

Ruins of the Lost Realm, p. 40

Through his servants in Eriador, Saruman may hear rumours of the *Pale Rider*, p. 115, and the suspicious circumstances around her comings and goings. Through his own research into history and Ring-lore, he makes a connection between the Rider and the Witch-king and suspects her to carry one of the lesser rings. He may seek the Player-heroes' help to learn more.

Out of the agents of Saruman, the healer Arcinyas is particularly interested in the Pale Rider—if she truly is deathless, as the rumours say, or even possesses a Ring, finding her may help Arcinyas evade his own death. Pursuing the rumours, Arcinyas may travel to the *Farmsteads*, p. 17, near Fornost. He talks with *Elizabeth*, p. 113, a fellow healer and loremaster, but she mistrusts Arcinyas and won't say much. Instead, Arcinyas turns to the Player-heroes, revealing Saruman's guesses in exchange for information.

In addition to the Ring, Arcinyas informs the Player-heroes that Saruman is interested in other artefacts hidden within Fornost. If the Company possesses dangerous objects such as the *Witch-king's sceptre*, p. 120, or the *Witch-king's mask*, p. 120, Arcinyas offers to take them to Saruman for safekeeping.

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Tales of Collaborative Storytelling

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