

The Lord of Gorburn

An Adventure for **Dragon Warriors**
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Overview: This is a short scenario for 4-6 characters of approximately 7th rank, set in the western lands of the fief of Baron Aldred in the kingdom of Albion. Specifically written for convention play, it should slot into many other campaigns. It takes place some time after the events of the official *Sleeping Gods* campaign, and draws of the events of that campaign, specifically *The King Under the Mountain* through to *The Sins of the Father*.

A Note on Time

Time is important in this adventure. It begins only a few days before midsummer (both the actual summer solstice (8/7/995) and the observed date of Midsummer's Day in Albion (6/7/995 in the current year – see *Dragon Warriors*, page 188). In an ideal situation all the actions of this adventure should take place in one day. If this does not occur, the characters may find things more difficult as their main opponent, Bravikarn, a Darkness Elementalist, will be somewhat more powerful.

This is because of a combination of two factors. The first is that Bravikarn expends Magic Points in all three of his elements (Darkness, Fire, and Earth) on the first morning of the adventure. Because it is so close to Midsummer, sunset (when he can recover his Darkness elemental MP) will not take place until a little after half past eight in the evening, although sunrise (where he can recover his Fire element MP) will occur quite early approximately half past three the following morning.) The real problem for Bravikarn is the fact that this adventure begins on the day and night of a new moon. This means he will not be able to recover his Earth element MP until nearly midnight on the day after the adventure begins).

If the characters can reach their final encounter with Bravikarn before sunset on the day the adventure begins, they will find him somewhat diminished in power.

The adventure begins at approximately ten o'clock in the morning.

It is Syfsdae, the second day of Waed-Monath in the Holy Year 995 (2/7/995) and it is a sad day in all of your lives. You are adventurers and are used to a life of high adventure and low desperation. A life of great glory and sudden failure. A life of soaring victories and crushing defeats. In short a life of life itself and death alongside it.

It began here in many ways. The village of Axbridge in the Barony of Gorburn in the nation of Albion. Most of you met each other here for the first time, six long years ago. A priest, Bretwald, brought you together in order to go on a treasure hunt. It brought you together so you learned to rely on each other, to work with each other. Later you found yourself in the service of Aldred, the Baron himself, for a time, a happy time for the most part, but you outgrew his service and sought greater things. But now you find yourself back in his lands, back in this village. And you've come to mourn the friend who brought you together.

Bretwald lived the hard life of a village priest. After your single adventure together, he embraced his duties with greater strength of conviction and vigour than ever. He worked hard for his village and perhaps that is part of the reason his health failed so quickly. Or perhaps it is just a sign of the times and the harshness of the world, even for the common folk.

He managed to get a letter to you, telling you he was dying and asking if it would be possible for him to see, one last time, a holy relic you recovered on that first trip into the

underworld. You raced here as fast as you could and arrived just in time. You knelt beside his bed as he said his final prayer clutching the ivory crucifix of Saint Leon in his hands, and you watched him breathe his last. As he died, you swear the birds fell silent and the earth seemed to shudder with that final breath. You almost wonder if you have witnessed the death of a saint – if so, your experiences together must have changed him more than you had known.

Now you stand in the village graveyard next to his village church, surrounded by his flock as you consign your friend to the ground. You have honoured his final request, and placed the relic in his church. You hope that whoever takes over as priest of Axbridge is worthy of holding such a holy thing. Relics have power in the hands of the righteous and stories say can do great harm if misused by the powers of darkness.

A horn sounds suddenly from the edges of the village. Startled, you turn and watch as two armoured riders, on horses that show great signs of stress, enter the village. They see the crowd around the churchyard and ride towards it, the villagers scatter, not sure if this is some sort of raid or attack. You stand your ground but ready yourself for battle if need be. As the armoured knights approach, you recognise the tabard of one – Sir Elias, who last you knew was still in the service of Baron Aldred. He reins his horse in next to you and his hand raises his visor. You can see the blood on his tabard now. He looks down at you, wild eyed.

“For the love of God, to me, old friends. Thank providence you are here. The Baron has been seriously wounded in an attack, he’s being brought here on his horse but is still an hour or so away. Come, help us bring him in.”

If the characters ride out (and there is no reason they should not), they will come across the baron with three more knights about seven miles north of Axbridge along the White River. All of the knights are wounded to varying degrees, the Baron himself is very gravely wounded and unconscious. All of the knights present are ones the characters know from their own past service and who know the characters so despite the common prejudices against ‘witchcraft’ they will not object to any healing magic being tried. Such spells will serve to keep Aldred alive, but a broken collarbone, and a shattered right arm will take some weeks or months to heal.

Aldred was one of a number of senior nobles of the realm who were accompanying King Hadric on a tour of the north. Hadric has always been seen as a weak king but over the last two or three years, he has suddenly become more forceful and commanding and had set out to see his kingdom as the start of an effort to correct the problems that had developed during the period where he clung to power in the city of Ongus. He has been forcing traditional rival lords such as Aldred, Montombre, and Grissaille to moderate their enmity and all three of these were present during his tour. And they were present during the hunt that occurred four days ago on Oster Moor. When Hadric was struck in the back by a stray arrow fired by one of his retainers.

Hadric was mortally wounded but before he died, he asked to see all of his lords who were present in private. When he spoke to Aldred in his pavilion, he placed into his care the crown of Saint Edred, and asked him to convey it with all haste and speed to his eldest son and heir, Prince Brevard, currently in command of the royal garrison at Netherford. Aldred, along with fourteen retainer knights set out on the long ride cross country towards Netherford. Only Aldred knew what was stored in the plain wooden box that he had stored in a backpack.

Aldred, suspecting (probably with justification) that the accident that befell the King was no accident (unfortunately the errant archer was cut down by Lord Montombre in an apparent rage at what he had done, before he could be questioned) did not want to travel on normal roads. He had little choice but to cross the river at Gully's Inn, but after making that crossing set off cross country towards the white river, intending to follow it south for a time. As he and his men passed near an old ruined Selentine villa, darkness and rain suddenly fell out of a crisp, bright morning, and then a sudden tremor struck which shook them from their horses. Two men fell into a chasm that opened between them, the others managed to ride clear of it, but were then attacked by what Aldred and the others can only describe as the spawn of hell – hideous, malformed, creatures, every one of them different. They fought for their lives and managed to fight them off. But before they did, one flying creature had snatched up Aldred, only dropping him when his backpack straps broke, leaving him lying unconscious on the ground as it flew towards the villa, on the opposite bank of the river, carrying the pack and its contents. All but five of his knights lay dead, and these survivors placed him on a surviving horse and three of them set off to carry him towards Axbridge, the nearest village, two of them riding on ahead.

Once Aldred is restored to sensibility, he will want to know where his pack is. When he discovers it was taken, he will tell the characters all he can and ask them to recover the crown at all costs. They are more capable than his surviving retainers and the task is of great importance.

The above is all that the survivors can tell the characters. For the GMs information, the attack was made by an exceptionally powerful Darkness Elementalist, Bravikarn, who was aware of the presence of the crown and wishes it destroyed as one of many steps of extending the powers of the Prince of Darkness across Albion. He cast an *Extinguish*, and then a *Tremor* spell and then stood back as hellions attacked Baron Aldred and his men. The crown is now in his possession in catacombs under the ruined villa (which is Selentium in origin, but was also later used as a base by pagan resisters to true faith rule) and he intends to destroy it in a dark rite four days from now – at noon on Midsummer's Day.

The Crown of Saint Edred

This crown was originally worn by King Edred nearly two hundred years ago, one of the early Kings of Albion. In some ways, an unremarkable King – he reigned less than five years, mostly in his teens – he was renowned for his piety and he was ultimately assassinated by certain of his lords who wished to turn Albion away from the True Faith,

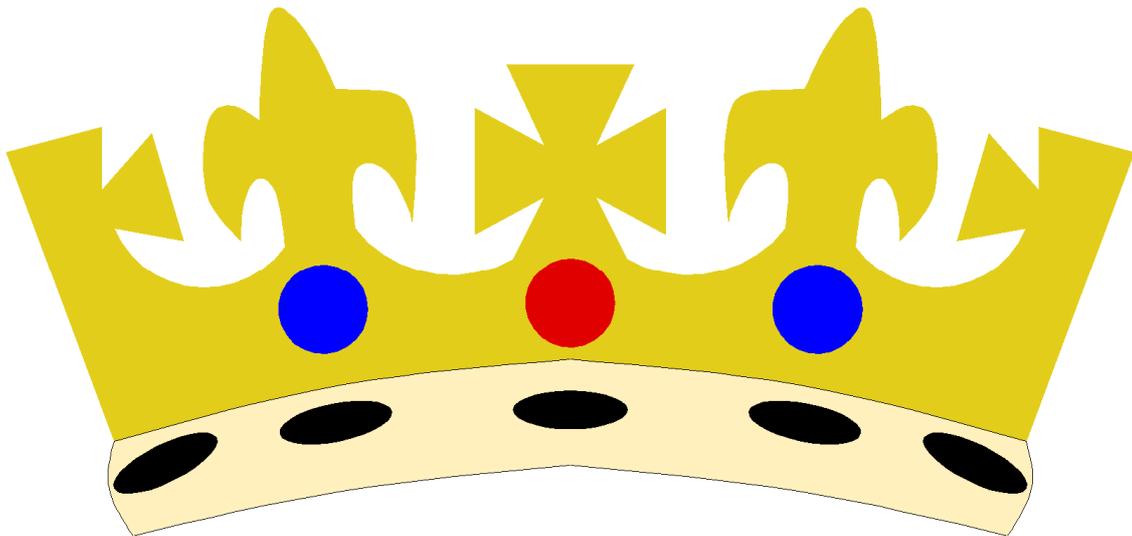
and back towards paganism. His crown has remained the symbol of true faith rulership in Albion ever since.

It is, in fact, a saintly relic (*Dragon Warriors* rulebook, page 148). As such it gives the wearer a 20% chance of sensing evil when it is present in an object, place, or person. It has the following additional powers.

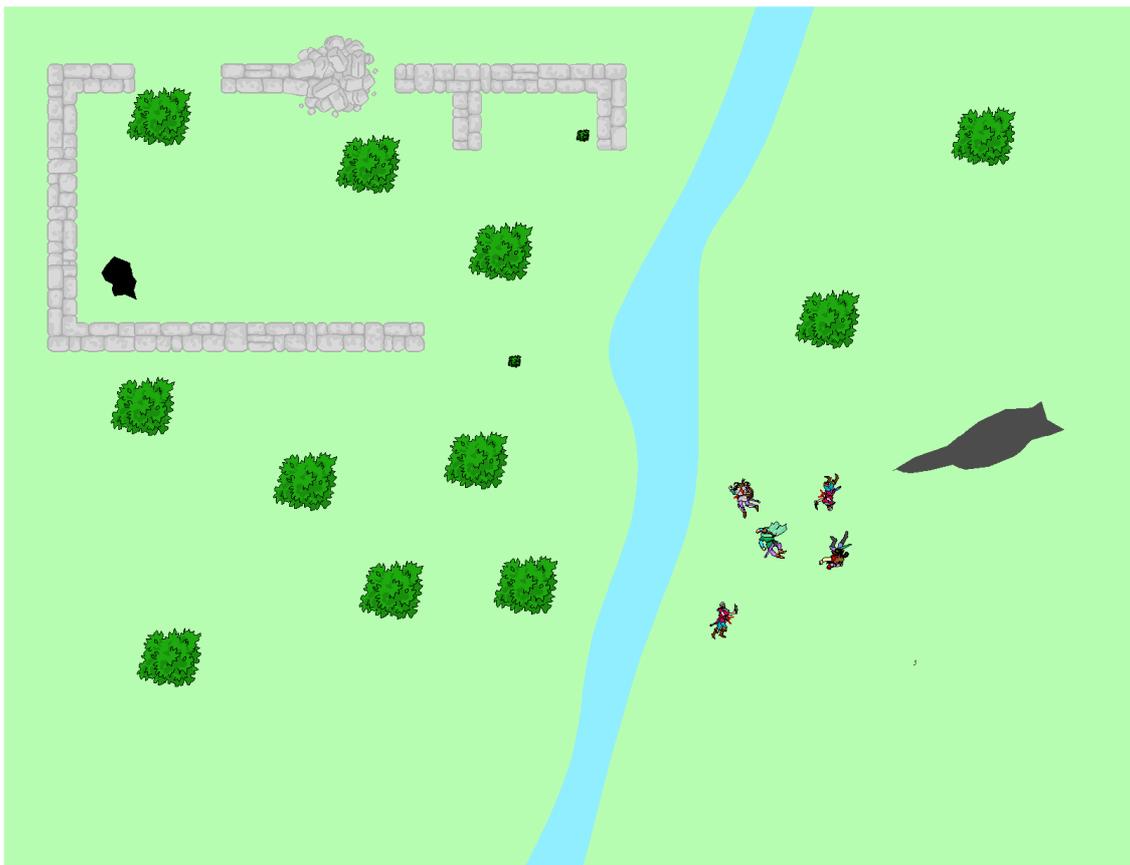
Immunity to Fright Attack, Vampire mesmerism and the bark of a barghest.
+1 MAGICAL DEFENCE vs all sorcery.

The crown is quite heavy and when Hadric became King, he chose to wear a lighter replica crown for the day to day business of ruling his kingdom. Three years ago, this replica was damaged just before a state banquet forcing him to wear the real crown. When he did so, he discovered it gave him an increased insight into the machinations of many of those around him. This was the impetus for his renewed interest in his kingdom, and his strengthening rule.

The repaired replica traveled with him on his recent tour, and is now in place on the top of his coffin, slowly traveling towards Ongus (it is currently near Market Cross). His final wish was to ensure the crown reached his son as Hadric realised it had, for the first time, made him a good King, and might help his son to be a great one.



Towards the Villa



The characters know the location of the ruined villa – roughly ten miles north of Axbridge, on the western bank of the White River. It is a well known landmark in the area and many people have pored over its ruins over the years, much has been taken away as building stone for other tasks, but enough remains that its location is well known. They will not find it hard to get to, but there will be one encounter along the way. Choose one character to be the main target of this encounter.

The weather is quite warm as you head north towards the ruined villa. Quite warm and rather pleasant. Riding along the banks of the river, it's hard to imagine that, from what you have been told, hell spawn were in this area only hours ago. But you remain alert

because you know the men who told you this tale and they are not given to exaggeration, and anything that wreaked such havoc among them is worthy of your concern. The villa is not far away now, and you peer into the distance, to see if it is visible yet.

Ahead of you, you spy three figures... strange figures... dark and shadowy outlines on a bright and sunny day. This must be evil, surely.

The chosen character will get a different view as the creatures approach.

Your companions speak of three shadows, but what you see is rather different. Three figures, yes, one a young man, one a young maiden, and one a withered figure that could be man or woman. They float above the ground, their feet shrouded in mist, grey in colour, dead eyes, and their limbs seem somehow stretched beyond their customary length.

The character could choose to surrender himself to these creatures to protect his friends, in which case they will surround him and leech all life from his body until he fades from view and from earthly existence. Assuming they choose to fight, however, they are Jumbees (*Bestiary*, page 80-81) and they will seek to target their chosen victim first.

Jumbees

ATTACK	17	Touch (see below)
DEFENCE	7	Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	10	Movement 8m (30m)
EVASION	7	
STEALTH	-	
PERCEPTION	15 (panoptical)	
Health Points: (Ref 8)	10, 9, 8	Rank Equivalent: 6th

If they hit, Jumbees do not need to make Armour Bypass rolls – each touch of the man-Jumbee (10 *Health Points*) drains one point of *Strength* from the victim, each touch of the girl-Jumbee (8 *Health Points*) drains one point of *Reflexes* from the victim, and the elder-Jumbee (9 *Health Points*) drains one experience point. The first two scores will recover at a rate of one per day. If any score reaches zero, death results.

For the purpose of this convention scenario (to avoid leaving a player with an unplayable character because of a single unlucky roll) the normal Fright Attack power of the Jumbees is ignored. If placing the adventure in a campaign, that power should be restored (see *Bestiary*, page 81).

Any physical attack against the Jumbees has a 40% chance of causing the weapon to shatter. Sorcerers and Mystics have a 40% chance of miscasting any spell. Any magical item used against the Jumbees has a 10% chance of losing its enchantment permanently.

You crest a small hill and you can see the villa now ahead of you to the north. There is no sign of life to be seen, but off to the northeast on the other side of the river, you can see the signs of death. Carrion birds fly above a scene of battle and a pack of feral dogs can also be seen among the bodies of men and horses and a chasm in the earth. This must be where Aldred was attacked.

It is possible for characters to swim across the river if they choose to – it is not a difficult swim in the middle of summer (much harder in spring as snow melts in the mountains) and if they search the battle site, it is possible to gather a fair amount of treasure. This is a somewhat mercenary approach, but we are dealing with adventurers, and it also represents a chance to find weapons to replace some lost in the battle with the Jumbees. The characters also know these men and may be reluctant to leave their bodies to the mercies of the elements without any attempt at burial. Those who traveled with them only left them out of concern for the life of their lord.

If they do approach the bodies, they will need to deal with the pack of six feral dogs.

Wild Dogs

ATTACK	12	Fangs (d4,3)	
DEFENCE	3	Armour Factor 0	
MAGICAL DEFENCE	1	Movement	12m (25m)
EVASION	3		
STEALTH	16		
PERCEPTION	11 (normal)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	9, 9, 8, 7, 6, 4	Rank Equivalent:	1 st
(Ref 11)			

If the battle site is thoroughly searched (which will take about an hour) among a large amount of damaged goods, three normal swords, a dagger +1, a battleaxe +2, and a sword +3 may be found. One suit of plate armour is still intact. A total of 8 crowns, 216 florins, and 107 pennies lies scattered about the site.

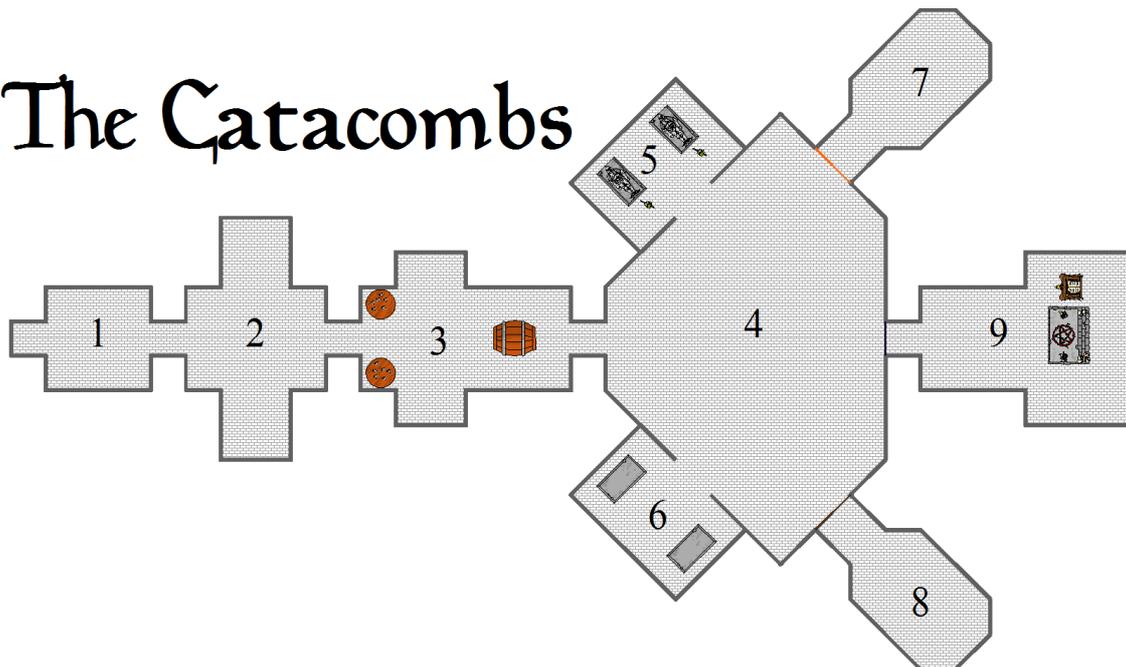
The Villa

The villa itself is an overgrown ruin that has been picked over time and time again for any treasures it once held. But underneath this ruin, undisturbed until recently lay a small series of catacombs, once used by pagan warriors as both tomb, temple, and base of operations. Sealed until recently, Bravikarn, has reopened it to use it in his planned ritual and prepared it so he will not be easily disturbed. The *Fissure* he used to reopen the catacombs is still visible and should be obvious to the characters as where they need to enter.

The Catacombs

Encounters are keyed to areas on the catacomb map.

The Catacombs



1. Hideous Headless Horrors

You step down through the fissure into the darkness. Once you have taken steps so you can see, you find yourself in a chamber of worked stone. Some sort of cellar for the villa above or something else. You can't tell at this point.

As you cast your eyes around, suddenly two creatures – glowing, hideous headless warriors clad in ancient armour, wielding two handed swords have emerged to try to cut you down.

These creatures are Mordu (*Bestiary*, page 81.) They are the phantoms of two old lords of pagan Albion, beheaded for resisting the true faith and interred by their fellows deeper in these catacombs.

Every character who sees the Mordu emerge from the shadows is subjected to a 1d10 Fright Attack – it's unlikely to be fatal (10% chance of heart failure) but failure will cause the character to stand terror-struck for 2-8 Combat Rounds.

Mordu can sense opponents all around it – stealth or *Invisibility* spells will not help the party. They can be harmed by spells using destructive energy, but not direct attack spells.

Mordu

ATTACK	20	Two-handed sword (d10+1,6)
DEFENCE	14	Armour Factor 5 (immune to non-magical weapons)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	-	Movement 12m
EVASION	5	
STEALTH	11	
PERCEPTION	17 (panoptical)	
Health Points: (Ref 13)	22, 21	Rank Equivalent: 8 th

2. Fresco

You find yourself in a chamber with drawings all over the walls. These are not great works of art, but nor are they crude scratchings. There is enough detail to realise that these frescos tell a story.

They show a conflict. A conflict between men wearing armour with the device of the cross, and men wearing armour with various devices – moons and animals, the sun, lightning bolts, flames. It is not heraldry as you know it – it is too primitive for that, and despite the presence of the men adorned with crosses, it does not seem to depict the crusades.

Or perhaps it does show a crusade. Not the modern one, but that of the past.

A powerful figure who strikes you as... yes, you're sure it is Vallandar, the greatest of all Kings of Albion, seems to be leading the men who bear the crosses, against those adorned with other symbols. By his side – that must be Mathor, his wizard and looking above these, you see the dragon Fengel in the sky. Behind them is the Bishop Rando – these frescoes depict the spreading of the true faith across Albion, and the crushing of the ancient pagan rites

As you look around the chamber, some of the frescoes, which what you remember of history tells you show somewhat later periods are cruder than those that came before. They have a haunted quality, somehow, a tinge of desperation, as they show defeat, and then perhaps, acceptance. Whoever produced these, crude as they are, had a talent for showing emotion in their work.

The final fresco just before the tunnel deeper in, shows a scene of a young man – really not much more than a boy – wearing a crown, fighting against three burly warriors. He bears the cross on his garments, they bear a pentacle... this scene you know, and it strikes you hard. It shows the martyrdom of Saint Edred, the assassination of King Edred. It is his crown you seek. Why find this fresco here?

There is blank wall remaining. As if there are stories yet to tell.

3. Roll out the barrel

This room is almost completely empty, except for a large barrel at its centre and two tables either side of the tunnel from which you are emerging. It lies on its side in the manner of a keg of ale with a tap in the right place, an image that is further enhanced as you realise there are six tankards on each of the tables,

The characters may be suspicious of this barrel and they should be. It is part of a trap that, unless you know it's secret, is difficult to evade, except by chance.

To avoid the trap, each person who enters the room should take a tankard, draw a drink from the barrel and drink it simultaneously.

If everybody does this, they can leave the room without experiencing any harm. If only some people do it, whoever is in the minority (either drinkers or non-drinkers) will be subjected to a MAGICAL ATTACK of 25 when leaving the room. Any who fail to resist will be afflicted by stomach cramps that will reduce their ATTACK, DEFENCE, EVASION, and STEALTH scores for 1d6 hours. If an equal number drink and do not drink, one random group will be afflicted.

The ale is a delicious, rich brown brew.

4. The Deeper Guardian

This room is shaped like an irregular hexagon with exits apparent in each wall. The three opposite you are each shrouded by what looks like some sort of sorcerous curtain. Directly in front of you is a curtain of darkness, to its left a curtain of fire, and to its right a curtain of earth.

To either side of the entrance you have come in by low archways seem to lead into other rooms.

A ragged figure, hard to see, ringed by clear, cold fire is advancing towards you from the curtain of darkness, it is absolute silent and unrelenting in its approach.

A 1d8 Fright Attack is inflicted on any who see the Wraith.

It will choose a character at random to attack and will close on them and standing before them begin to shriek (See *Bestiary*, page 86 for full details). This Wraith will delay three rounds before attacking (thus building a MAGICAL ATTACK of 3d10) its chosen target. If that attack succeeds, the character dies instantly and the Wraith will turn its attention on another. If it fails, it will depart.

Wraith

ATTACK	-	
DEFENCE	14	Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
MAGICAL ATTACK	1d10	Combat Round attack is delayed
MAGICAL DEFENCE	11	Movement 15m
EVASION	4	
STEALTH	10	
PERCEPTION	13	(darksight)
Health Points: (Ref 14)	20	Rank Equivalent: 5 th

5. The Dead

Within this chamber lie two stone slabs. A headless, armoured, skeleton lies on each of them. They seem identical to those you met as you entered this place. Their heads stand on spears at the foot of their slabs, strangely preserved.

They are. They are the actual bodies of the Mordu the characters encountered in the entrance chamber. They are completely inert and harmless.

6. The Vacant Tomb

Within this chamber lie two stone slabs. The whole feels unused and very empty.

There is nothing of interest here.

7. Door of Fire, Man of Earth

A curtain of fire covers this door. Passing through it will do 1d6 of damage to any character. It can be extinguished if the characters work out a way of putting large amounts of water on it.

Once they pass it, by whatever means:

You enter a room occupied by a large man of stone – or actually more of dirt. It flexes enormous muscles and moves to attack you.

Earth Elemental

ATTACK	19	Two-handed sword (d10,6)
DEFENCE	14	Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	8	Movement 10m
EVASION	4	
STEALTH	10	
PERCEPTION	14 (panoptical)	
<i>Health Points:</i> (Ref 10)	22	Rank Equivalent: 8 th

Defeating this creature (along with that in room 8) is necessary to open the curtain of darkness to room 9.

8. Door of Earth, Man of Fire

A curtain of shimmering earth covers this door. Passing through it will not damage the characters but will make them as if they have been buried alive for the brief period that they are within the curtain.

Once they pass through:

You enter a room occupied by a flickering humanoid of fire. It darts towards you.

Fire Elemental

ATTACK	19	Two-handed sword (d10,6)
DEFENCE	14	Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	8	Movement 20m
EVASION	8	
STEALTH	10	
PERCEPTION	14 (panoptical)	
<i>Health Points:</i> (Ref 16)	22	Rank Equivalent: 8 th

Defeating this creature (along with that in room 7) is necessary to open the curtain of darkness to room 9.

9. The Final Curtain

A shimmering curtain of vivid purple blackness covers this tunnel.

The curtain will disappear once the elementals in room 7 and room 8 have been defeated.

You walk down the tunnel carefully, and you find yourself emerging in a brightly lit room. An altar dominates the centre, a lectern to one side. Behind the lectern stands a man clad in black. On the altar rests a crown.

Bravikarn fears the Prince of Darkness more than he fears the characters. He will waste no time on discussion. He knows he must defeat them to be able to perform the ritual and unless he performs the ritual, he does not want to wind up before his Lord – Balor would punish him with an eternity of suffering for failure.

For this reason, he will not summon Balor, even at the last. He will, however, try to keep 9 Darkness Magic Points in reserve so that he may cast *Shadow Self* in order to escape.

Conclusion

Assuming the characters succeed and recover the crown, they should then return it to Aldred in Axbridge. He will ask them to take it to Netherford to present it to the new King.

If this adventure is being used in a campaign, there is every chance they will be waylaid along the way either by those involved in Hadric's death, or those associated with the forces of Darkness.

If they present the crown to the new King, they will have earned a great deal of prestige and potential influence.

Name:	Bravikarn			Profession:	Darkness Elementalist	Rank:	10 th		
<i>Strength:</i>	12			ATTACK	14	Player:	NPC		
<i>Reflexes:</i>	11			DEFENCE	8	Gender:	Male		
<i>Intelligence:</i>	15			EVASION	5	Age:	66		
<i>Psychic Talent:</i>	11			STEALTH	16	Birth Date:			
<i>Looks:</i>	11			PERCEPTION	8	Skin Tone:	White		
Magic Points	30	10	10	MAGIC ATTACK	25	Eyes:	Blue		
Health Points	14			MAGIC DEFENCE	15	hair:	White		
						height:	176cm		
						Weight:	62kg		
Armour Factor	0	Armour Type:	None	Shield:	Yes/No	Spell Miscast:	0		
Hand Weapons				Missile Weapons					
Spear +3	(2d4+3,7)				(d ,)				
Sword +2	(d8+2,6)				(d ,)				
Dagger +1	(d4+1,4)				(d ,)				
	(d ,)								
	(d ,)								
Magic Items				Skills					
Love Philtre				Spellcasting					
Potion of Strength				Raw Power					
Potion of Dexterity				Elemental Resistance					
Amulet of Sovereignty Over Violence									
Orb of Darkness									

