

Forgotten Suns



An Exalted® Adventure
by
Wordman

CREDITS

Writing, layout and artwork by Wordman (<http://www.divnull.com/lward/>).

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Omnes qui occulte peccant, peccant ocuis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Items throughout this book in [brackets] are page references. If there are no letters within the brackets (e.g. [42]), this is a reference to the main rule book. Other books are prefaced with abbreviations:

3c=*Book of Three Circles*
ab=*Abyssals*
cd=*Caste Book: Dawn*
ce=*Caste Book: Eclipse*
cn=*Caste Book: Night*
ct=*Caste Book: Twilight*
cz=*Caste Book: Zenith*
db=*Dragon-Blooded*
gd=*Games of Divinity*

kh=*Kindgom of Halta*
lu=*Lunars*
mc=*Manacle & Coin*
pl=*Player's Guide*
rr=*Ruins of Rathess*
sc=*Storyteller's Companion*
si=*Sidereals*
ss=*Scavenger Sons*
tt=*Time of Tumult*

INTRODUCTION

This adventure provides an introduction to Exalted, both in terms of the world and the game mechanics, for a small to mid-sized group. It may, of course, be adapted to any other purpose, but is intended for a mixed group of beginning characters. As such, it suggests a mechanism by which the characters are gathered together (even from very separate backgrounds and locations) and provides several strong foundations upon which a campaign may be built.

The structure of the adventure is such that it can benefit from gradual introduction of players over several sessions, so some storytellers may want to start with a small group that grows a bit. If you want to start everyone at once, that should be no problem. Many of the encounters, particularly those at the beginning, are intended to introduce the players to the mechanics of Exalted. As such, early encounters may be too simplistic for veteran players.

STYLE

This adventure follows the Encounter Page format. This format differs from what you might be used to, providing more of an outline and avoiding some of the prose style typical of store-bought adventures. This is done intentionally, specifically to achieve the following goals:

- Make information easy to find during “run-time” of the adventure. The prose style of most adventures makes locating the bit of information you want during the chaos of a typical gaming session problematic.
- Provide modularity where possible. Encounters and NPCs are presented as self contained pages, allowing you to mix and match pages from different Encounter Books into a single adventure.
- Provide summaries of the dramatic purpose behind each scene. This allows you to more easily customize the adventure to your campaign while maintaining the basic sense of the adventure (or, at least, know at a glance when you are stepping far away from the basics of it).
- Run the adventure without a great deal of preparation, if necessary. Adventures are better when you customize them to your players, but sometimes you don’t have that kind of time.

More about the Encounter Page concept can be found on the web at <http://www.divnull.com/gaming/encounter/>.

This adventure is presented as a series of scene outlines. Each of these sections contains the following entries:

- Abstract:** A brief description of the scene.
- Dramatic Purpose:** A description of how this scene is intended to move or otherwise contribute to the story.
- Metagaming Purpose:** A description of any motivations for the scene that don’t relate to story. Such purposes do not always exist, so this section will not always be present.
- Setting:** Describes the environment of the scene, as well as any critical props that may be present.
- Order:** Comments on how this scene fits chronologically with other scenes. In some cases, this may be part of a fixed order, other cases may be more free-form.
- Principals:** Other than the circle, the people, creatures or other entities involved in the scene, usually with statistics. Typically, motivation for important characters is also described here.

Some NPCs are listed with “stereotypes”. These are suggested shortcuts for the Storyteller to find the voice, appearance and personality of the NPC. Feel free to disregard these. Some may be a little obscure, so just wing it if you don’t recognize them. One warning, these NPCs follow the George Lucas scheme of all citizens of the Empire speaking with English accents.

- Specifics:** A more detailed description of the scene.
- Variations:** Not always listed, this section suggests some typical ways to modify the scene to fit differing campaigns.
- Outcome:** Possible outcomes expected of the scene. This section will also summarize any booty that might be discovered in the scene.

Debugging: Suggestions on what might go horribly awry.
Field Testing: Comments about how the scene was modified in the writer’s own running of it, and how it turned out. This particular campaign was fairly generous in terms of starting power for characters (for example, solar characters started with orichalcum artifacts).

A NOTE ON CAPITALIZATION

For some reason, role-playing games have a tendency to capitalize Everything Under the Sun. This book will forgo this annoying “tradition” and stick to capitalizing only proper names and the first letter in a sentence.



BACK STORY

During the First Age, a group of solar and lunar exalted grew weary of the excesses of their brethren. Disillusioned, they withdrew from exalted society and sought an isolated place of their own. During their search, one of their number—a Twilight named Divash—discovered an extremely unusual demesne deep in the jungle east of Rathess. After months of study, Divash became convinced that he could design a manse upon it aspected to both solar and lunar essence, a feat unheard of previously (and since). Anxious to start, Divash convinced the rest to join him in building this manse and to make it their new home.

Building this dual-aspected manse quickly became an obsession with Divash and most of the others in the group. Initially relying on their own charms and sorcery, the group took to using human labor and conscripted sorcerers to speed the process. As the manse grew, so did the need for labor. In their obsession, the exalted assumed that the human laborers were just as determined as they to build the unique manse and felt that the humans would see the opportunity to work on it as its own reward. As such, the laborers were no better than slaves, conscripted without compensation. Slowly, the exalted began treating them as slaves, using them to staff the manse and cater to their needs. They drafted a small cadre of dragon-blooded to keep them in line. By the time the main structures of the manse were completed, the group had become just as decadent as the exalted society from which they had withdrawn.

The exalted enjoyed their creation and isolation for only a few years before the Usurpation began. Even in isolation, the exalted

heard of the treachery, though the staff of the manse remained ignorant. The immediate reaction of the exalted was to slaughter their dragon-blooded staff. Content that they were safe in isolation, and sure their decadent brethren would turn back the usurpers, the group settled back into isolation.

Without the dragon-blooded keeping them in line, the human staff began to abandon the manse, slowly at first, but soon in droves. The exalted barely noticed, more concerned with the Usurpation, which was going very badly for their kind. Eventually, the exalted decided to join the fight, and left the manse to reinforce the other exalted. By then, however, it was far too late, and the dragon-blooded destroyed them.

Only the humans forced to help build the manse now knew of its existence, and these, too, passed away soon enough. Like so much of the First Age, the existence of the manse was forgotten, and the jungle soon claimed the manse.

Though the jungle intruded through the centuries, the manse remained intact, resisting the effects of age, weather and nature. That changed roughly 200 years ago when a meteor struck the manse. Whether this was coincidence, providence or divine will, the impact knocked down a portion of the manse, though the manse absorbed a good deal of the meteor's energy.

The contrail of the meteor was seen by a gold faction sidereal named Octaliel, who tracked down the point of impact in the hope of salvaging starmetal. She recognized the manse for what it was, though the method of its construction was beyond her. Completely stunned that a manse that had taken such damage still remained more or less functional, she spent a good deal of time studying it, discovering (but not understanding) its dual solar and lunar nature. Determined to help solars reclaim their destiny, Octaliel resolved to rebuild the manse. After retrieving the starmetal from the meteor, she summoned a number of spirits and demons to help her patch the damage as well she could and to protect the manse while she left to gather assistance for the rebuilding effort, using an artifact found in the manse to bind the demons within the building.

Unfortunately, she did not get far with her rebuilding plans. In Nexus, a rival quarrelled with her over the starmetal and accidentally killed her. Though her rival did manage to get the precious ore, Octaliel took the secret of the manse with her to her grave.

For nearly two hundred years, the spirits and demons in the manse have waited. Though some managed to escape the manse once Octaliel died, others were not strong enough to get past the manse's defenses and remain inside, plotting their escape.

Three years ago, the soul of one of the builders of the manse returned, inhabiting an ambitious information dealer in Nexus. Unfortunately, the dragon-blooded caught wind of him. Their pursuit led him all the way to Gem, where he entered one place he was sure the dragon-blooded wouldn't follow: into one of the many shadowlands within the caverns. He soon met a deathnight serving the deathlord Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears. Facing nearly certain destruction at the hands of the substantial force of the wyld hunt sent to kill him, this newborn solar followed the only option available to him: he made a deal with the Lover and became a day caste abyssal exalted, given the name Regret of the Sun.

Perhaps in response to this event (or perhaps not), the souls of some of the other manse builders worked their way back to Creation. These are the forces that inhabit the PCs (or, at least, some of them) and perhaps some others. The manse is now calling to these souls trying to reunite them. This call is manifesting in the dreams of the circle and as a vague pull towards the manse.

MANSE TIMELINE

An exact timeline of the manse central to this story is difficult, as at the time of writing there seems to be no official indication of how long before the founding of the Realm the Usurpation started. The only official mention indicates that this period lasted "centuries" [11]. This timeline assumes this period lasted 500 years. Feel free to manipulate this number to suit your own purposes.

- 525 RY Divash discovers demesne underlying the manse
- 523 RY Construction of manse begins
- 521 RY Manse builders begin to conscript human sorcerers and labor
- 507 RY Construction of manse completed
- 500 RY The Usurpation begins
- 482 RY Manse builders leave the manse to join the fight against the dragon-blooded. All of them die.
- 4 RY Great Contagion (un-official)
- 1 RY Realm founded
- 564 RY Meteor strikes manse. Rediscovered by Octaliel.
- 565 RY Octaliel killed
- 763 RY Empress Vanishes
- 765 RY Soul of a manse builder returns to Creation, ultimately becoming the abyssal Regret of the Sun.
- 767 RY Carrionis visits manse.
- 768 RY Present day.



This call has also reached Regret of the Sun. The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears, however, would not let him leave to pursue the call, instead sending a detachment of dead and mortal servants lead by Carrionis, a deathnight well versed in necromancy. Carrionis located the manse and attempted to enter. He proved strong enough to survive the manse's perimeter defense, but his mortal and undead soldiers were not so lucky.

Once inside the perimeter, Carrionis was unable to gain entry into the manse, and elected to return to the Lover to report. Before leaving, he assembled the remains of his soldiers inside the perimeter, turning them into spine chains, tasking them to interfere with anyone attempting to enter the manse. While his journey to the manse had been dull but simple, his journey out proved harrowing, as the jungle seemed to harass with him at every turn.

The Lover tasked Carrionis with claiming the manse, or at least the demesne beneath it, and altering its aspect to abyssal energy. Carrionis considered that, since he appeared to have some connection to it, Regret of the Sun may be able to enter the manse. He suggested that the Lover allow him to "escape", gambling that he would head to the manse and get inside.

Taking more direct action, Carrionis has returned to creation and captured the inhabitants of a small village not far from Thorns called Lush. With the help of a host of the dead as well as another deathnight, Carrionis leads this force slowly to the manse.

Meanwhile, the pull on Regret of the Sun grew stronger, so strong that he defied the will of his mistress and is now approaching the manse. In keeping with Carrionis' plan, the Lover has let him escape her embrace, for now.

LINKS TO OFFICIAL PRODUCTS

This adventure is intended to be used as an initial adventure for a circle. It can act as the springboard for an entire campaign if desired, linking in several ways to published adventures. The following sections suggest some possibilities for linking in other adventures. Naturally, these are not the only options.

In any of dreams used in this episode, instead of showing the character the past, the Storyteller may wish to show them the future instead, giving a glimpse of one of these adventures.

TIME OF TUMULT

A number of elements in this adventure bear striking similarities to aspects of *Time of Tumult* (e.g. the gimmick of a "pull" towards the manse, the concept of an undiscovered manse, use of a brilliant architect, demons trapped in the manse, etc.) *Time of Tumult*, however, is a much richer adventure than the simple tale spun here, which is more concerned with introducing players to the game than top notch plot. (For the record, the author drafted this adventure and ran it for his players before reading *Time of Tumult*.)

Assuming this adventure is run before *Time of Tumult*, the similarities between the two can be used to provide a great deal of misdirection that should make *Time of Tumult* more memorable. For example, the reason for the "pull" the players feel is quite different between the two stories. Characters expecting a repeat of what they find in the this adventure are in for a rude awakening. Storytellers should be able to use such reversals of expectations to great effect.

Another example of this technique could deal with dreams. Characters who get used to the way dreams in this adventure work will likely be easier for the Guardian to manipulate.

This adventure can be used to mention Bax [tt7] in passing. It

may be, for example, that Divash was Bax's apprentice, but the two had a parting of ways. If one of the characters is the reincarnation of Divash, he or she may have strong reactions to Bax's work. Characters in a mood to repair the manse may find references to the Singing Staff [tt94] used by Bax.

Characters who start the game in the north may catch glimpses of the very beginnings of the resource rush, just whispers. Perhaps they actually meet the little girl in the cloak.

If any of the characters travel up the Grey River, a Storyteller may be able to add some sort of hook for the "Spirt Exiles of the Western Ocean". For example, maybe a water spirit of some type is trapped. If the circle frees it, it might be how Fakharu discovers the circle.

Hooks for "Crusaders of the Machine God" will likely depend on if any characters pass through the south. The circle may run into Autochthonians out exploring. Such people would likely take an active interest in the characters, particularly if they have artifacts.

RUINS OF RATHESS

The sections on jungle travel in *Ruins of Rathess* will be quite useful for running this one, though they paint a more deadly picture of the jungle than this adventure does. Any of the random encounters can also be used here, including run-ins with stalkers. Some of the locations may also be used for this adventure, particularly Jades.

A number of hooks can be placed into this adventure to lay groundwork for running *Ruins of Rathess* later (even much later).

THE WYLD

The wyld surrounds the manse. Though in deep jungle, it is still somewhat close the both the Realm and the Scavenger Lands, which tend to stabilize the area somewhat, as does the manse itself. Still, portions of the jungle around the manse are bordermarches [lu198], some isolated sections may be middlemarches as well.

As written, this adventure elected not dwell much on the wyld aspects of the story, focussing more on the manse itself and keeping things simple for starting players. For example, though there are two encounters dealing with mutated animals (pg. 15, pg. 20), their mutations are due to essence leaking from the manse, not from the wyld itself. Another example: no attempt was made to include fair folk in the story, though there are obvious ways of doing so.

Storytellers should have no problem at all adding more wyld specific encounters, particularly to Act I. Some possibilities are:

- A wyld storm or two [lu204]
- Checks for wyld addiction [lu205] and mutation [lu208].
- More vivid descriptions of the wyld (walking rocks, frozen fires, dancing clouds) [lu198]
- Encounters with wyld tainted [lu208]. Bandits (pg. 10) would be a good candidate for this.
- Encounters pitting the characters against the wyld itself (e.g. animated vines, randomly opening pits, etc.)
- Run-ins with fair folk.
- Interaction with lunars.
- Character back stories that incorporate the wyld, lunars or fair folk in some way.
- Using the fair folk in opposition to the army of the dead in Act III.



En route to the manse, for example, characters may hear rumors of Rathess, the Goblin King [rr73], the cult [rr52] or even the fabled “lost city” [rr56]. The library of the manse in this adventure, though ruined, may have scraps of information leading to Rathess, or simply information that may help them if they get there (e.g. a bit of information on the languages of the Dragon Kings, or even just mention of them). There may also be hints to specific treasures thought to be in Rathess, such as the Great Observatory.

Alternatively, you might alter *Ruins of Rathess* to have treasures that require some secret to operate, and knowledge of the secret happens to be available in the manse. For example, perhaps this manse contains a hint at how to restart the Great Observatory.

The circle may also run into one or more items of vegetative technology [rr79] on their travels to the manse, particularly when they get close.

SCAVENGER SONS

While not an adventure book, *Scavenger Sons* contains a number of plot ideas and hooks, many of which can be incorporated into this story. The specifics of this will depend on where the characters start.

Information about the jungle containing the manse is sparse in *Scavenger Sons*, but the nearby Marukan Alliance [ss86] is covered. Storytellers may also be interested in brief mentions of Thorns [ss71] and the Grey River [ss68].

MANACLE & COIN

Because coca grows only in the southeast [mc52], it is logical to assume that the Grey River would act as a primary shipping route for cocaine to Nexus. Storytellers wishing to add Guild intrigue to their campaigns should, therefore, have ample opportunity to do so. This area could also be of interest to Burning Feather [gd28], so it is not inconceivable that she may take an interest in the party (though this would be something of a stretch).

THE LUNARS

This adventure is designed to easily incorporate lunar characters, either as the whole party or as a mix with solars. It also lends itself to purely solar campaigns with heavy lunar involvement. In addition, *Lunars* will prove valuable to storytellers wishing to place more emphasis on the wyld.

THE DRAGON-BLOODED

The *Dragon-Blooded* may be of some use in forming the back stories of the characters. Storytellers wanting to move their campaign towards dragon-blooded politics and machinations should be able to plant hooks to do so during the Hunters (pg. 12).

With a little imagination, this adventure could be mutated to serve a party of all dragon-blooded characters.

THE ABYSSALS

The third act of this adventure relies on information in *the Abyssals* significantly. It is likely that the resolution of this story will attract the attention, and probably the ire, of a deathlord. This, combined with the events at nearby Thorns, should allow any Storyteller interested making the dead a strong element of his or her game to easily do so.

The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears will likely be very interested in the solar characters that defeat her minions. While her reaction could be one of rage, it may more likely be closer to an infatuation, making her want to add them to her stable. On the

other hand, the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears is thought to be easily distracted, so storytellers not interested in bringing oblivion into their campaign have a reasonable way to avoid it.

THE SIDEREALS

One of the gates leading to Yu-Shan [si17] opens fairly near the manse in this adventure. No use is made of this gate (number 13) in this adventure, but storytellers could add it as a plot element if it suits them.

Campaigns interested in involving Sidereals could easily integrate with this adventure by involving Octaliel in some way. Or, perhaps a sidereal astrologer has been auditing predictions of meteor strikes in an effort to find starmetal and realizes that the metal from the strike that hit the manse went missing.

PLAYER’S GUIDE

Released long after the primary writing of this adventure had been completed, the *Player’s Guide* nonetheless contains a number of ideas that can be mixed into it. With the main setting in fairly close proximity to Rathess, dragon kings [pl154] may be introduced in a number of ways. Perhaps feral dragon kings attack the circle on their way to the manse. Perhaps more advanced dragon kings have taken up residence.

The adventure’s setting also lends itself to mixing (or at least introducing) different character types into a circle. Designed for a lunar/solar mix, it should be a trivial matter to work god-blooded [pl44] or even mortal thaumaturges [pl96] into the adventure.

None of the alternate combat rules were used in this adventure, so all stats for weapons and the like use the original rules. Storytellers wishing to use the new rules will need to alter the stats of the NPCs. In the third act, with so many mortals and zombies present, the Mail and Steel rules [pl214] will likely prove useful.

The dreams many of the characters have are almost an exact description of a one-point Past Lives merit [pl27]. The Hidden Manse merit [pl23] is also quite appropriate to the adventure. Storytellers should consider how to handle this with care. Since the events will happen to all characters, campaigns may be best served by treating the events in the adventure as outside the merit system. Otherwise, the storyteller will either have to force players to take these merits, or appear unfair in some other way.

ALTERNATIVE USES

This adventure is intended to be used as the first adventure in a campaign, to introduce players to the game and its mechanics. Naturally, it does not have to be used this way.

Storytellers integrating this adventure into an existing campaign will probably want to make significant changes to the first act, as most of the encounters there are intended to demonstrate things an experienced group of players has already seen.

An existing campaign may also have character histories that don’t fit the “reincarnation” idea of this adventure, so some other means may be needed to get the players to the manse. For example, the players may find an ancient map showing it, or find the diary of a mortal sorcerer who helped build it.

Another option is change the meteor strike to happen in present day. This eliminates Octaliel and the demons from the from the story, but could provide a way for the players to find the manse in an exciting way. This would be particularly useful in a campaign that made heavy use of Sidereals.

At bare minimum, storytellers will be able to just use the maps of the manse and toss everything else.



RIVER

Abstract: Some or all of the party converges at a river they need to cross.

Dramatic Purpose: Introduces some PCs to each other in a setting that gives them a common, non-violent goal to overcome. Opportunity may present itself for a dramatic rescue if one or more characters get swept away by the current.

Metagaming Purpose: Give the players a reason to role-play their introduction, without needing a lot of dice rolling.

Setting: A river that, while only moderately wide, possesses very strong currents. One side is thick forest, the other is forest transitioning into jungle.

Order: After Dream and before Lady of the Vine. One of a set of scenes where some of the PC's meet. Ideally, first.

Principals: Some of the circle.

Specifics: After travelling separately through forest, some of the circle converges at a raging river. Depending on their origin, they may be on different sides. Once the PCs see each other, they feel the call shift toward the manse (if it was not already). The river is about 80 feet across and remains rough for miles up- and downstream. Swimming across the river is probably not possible without the use of charms, as the current will whisk the characters away.

If swimming or wading, crossing every 10 feet requires a difficulty 4 strength + athletics check to avoid being swept down stream. Characters caught by the current take 8B damage per turn as they are bashed into the rocks and have a chance at drowning. Each turn, such characters can attempt to swim to shore (again, test each 10 feet), grab onto a thrown rope, rocky outcropping or reachable branch (difficulty 2 dexterity + athletics).

The trees on either side of the river are about 60 feet tall, around 20 feet too short to fully cross the river, though clever characters may find a way to use the trees to their advantage.

Variations: Having this encounter apply to only some of the party (perhaps just two of them) will be slightly more believable than having the whole party happen to be at the same place at the same time; however, if you like you can have all the characters meet here at once. Or, perhaps the characters pair up in some of the other encounters first and the pairs meet here.

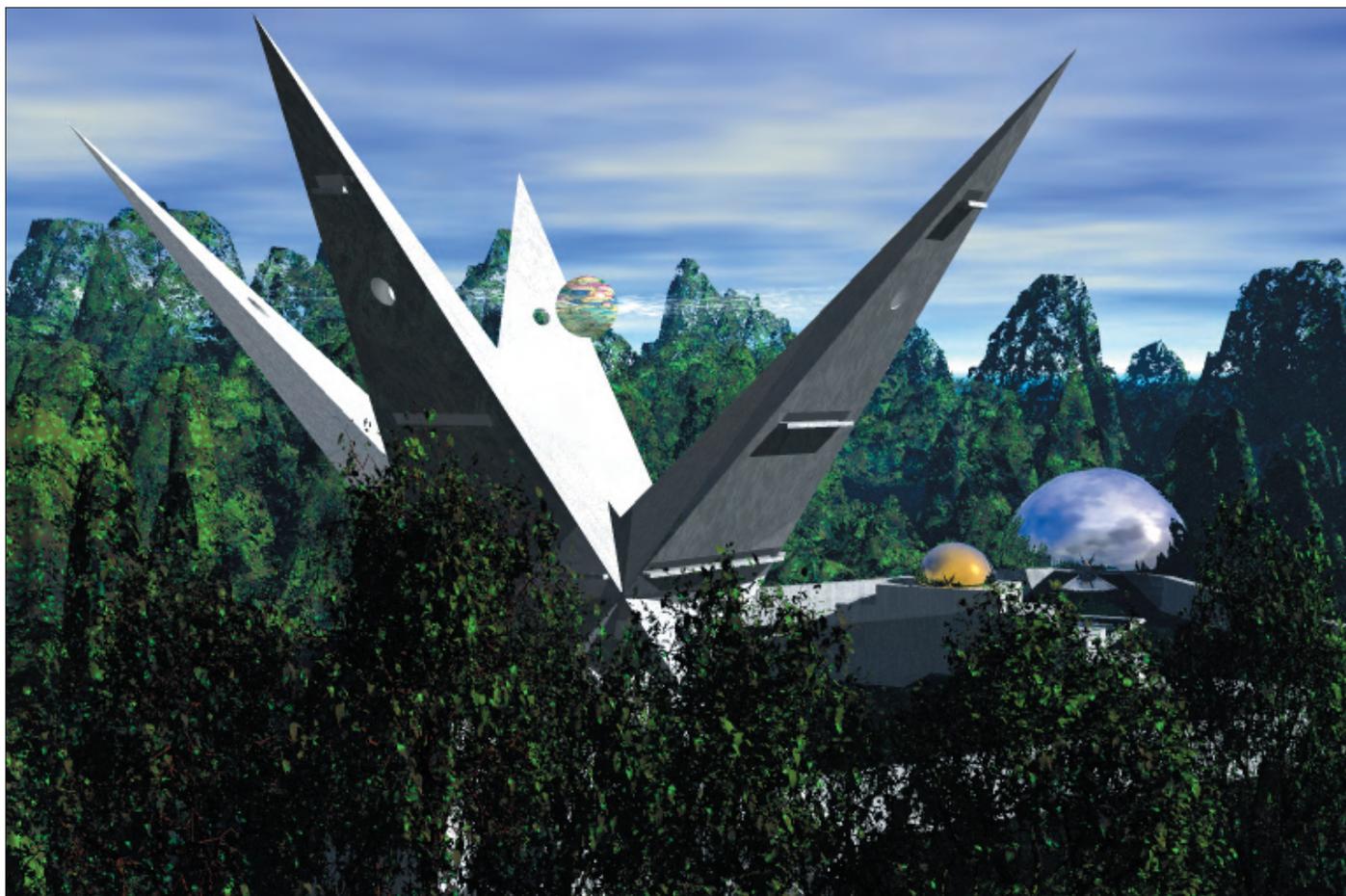
Outcome: In all probability, at least one of the characters will have some charm or other method to cross the river and the group will find a way to get across. The characters might also opt to walk up or down river in an effort to find a spot to cross (they will find one several miles away). Hopefully, some role-playing will have occurred along the way.

Debugging: Party in-fighting is probably the greatest risk here, or one character abandoning the others. Feel free to leave such characters out of the action until the party is back together.

Field Testing: Both Gutts and Guen approached from roughly the same direction. Guen was in cat form and Gutts "smelled unusual" to him. They discussed their dreams very soon after introducing themselves. To cross, Gutts used his massive sword to cut down a tree. One of Guen's animal forms was an alligator, so the two crossed the 60 feet of tree, then swam the remainder. The swimming roll was made less difficult for Guen in alligator form and, with Gutts holding on and both of them rolling pretty well, they made it across.



Night/Lunar



Zenith

SPIDERS

Abstract: Critters ambush the party.

Dramatic Purpose: Add some spice to a dull journey.

Metagaming Purpose: Expose the players to the combat mechanics of Exalted.

Setting: Deep jungle.

Order: After the party has mostly assembled. Before Lady of the Vine.

Principals: Two giant wolf spiders per character.

Specifics: As the party is walking through the jungle towards the manse, a pack of giant wolf spiders have spun webs in their path. Spotting the webs requires a difficulty 4 perception + awareness test. Characters caught in the web must make a difficulty 3 strength + athletics test to escape by themselves. If getting help from free characters, successes of the characters can be combined. Giant wolf spiders drop on them from above.

Variations: The spiders shouldn't pose much of a challenge to typical exalted. If your players already know combat mechanics, you might want to skip this one. If you have a mix of beginners and veterans, you might want to have one session with the beginners containing this and other encounters, with the veterans joining in the next session.

Outcome: Players should defeat the spiders easily.

Debugging: Some characters might get unlucky with rolls. If this happens and the party is light on healing ability, have the spiders jump to more robust targets. In the worst case, a character may die. In this case, if the party can do nothing to help, you might have spirits intervene.

Field Testing: Gutts and Guen dispatched the spiders without much problem, though they did take damage. They learned a lot about exalted combat, as well as their own strengths and limitations.

Type:	Giant Wolf Spiders [315]										
Abilities:	Awareness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2										
Str/Dex/Sta:	3/3/2	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Per/Int/Wit:	2/1/3	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>								
App/Cha/Man:	0/0/0	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	0/0/0/0	-4	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Willpower:	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Essence:	0	Attack	Sp/At/D/Df								
Initiative:	6	Bite	6/6/3L								
Dodge/Soak:	5/2B/1L										
Tactics:	Will attempt to ambush from above [238].										



BANDITS

Abstract: Investigating shouts heard through the trees, the characters discover bandits up to no good.

Dramatic Purpose: Introduce additional characters and/or NPCs. Provide PCs with role-playing opportunities in how they react to mortals. Possibly introduce local politics or other hooks.

Metagaming Purpose: Continue to expose the players to the combat mechanics of Exalted, introducing more complex ideas, like ranged combat. Also should give the players a feel for how their power level compares to mortals.

Setting: Begins in the jungle trees, leading to the shore of a large lake. A small raft or boat is tied to a tree and small tent is pitched.

Order: After the party has mostly assembled. Before Lady of the Vine.

Principals: A dozen bandits. Someone in distress. Though normally not brave and currently in fairly rough shape, these bandits are desperate, so may fight hard if the payoff seems worth it. They may also be open to negotiation, or recruitment.

Specifics: As the party (or whatever portion of it has assembled) hacks through the jungle, they come across an old but serviceable trail that runs in the general direction they are being drawn. After traveling down it for a while, they begin to hear shouting ahead. Investigation reveals that the trail ends just ahead at a large lake and the shouting comes from the coast of the lake. (Note that the pull the circle feels leads directly across the lake).

The shouters are a group of bandits who have seen better days. Dirty and unkempt, with rotting clothes and battered weapons, the bandits have driven this deep into the jungle to avoid destruction by a nearby militia. They have come across some unexpected prey.

The exact nature of this prey is up to the Storyteller. One possibility would be a lone PC or NPC who has not yet met the rest of the group. Other options would include a lost merchant, an archeologist, a stray scientific expedition, a wounded diplomat, etc. Just keep in mind that this happens deep in the jungle, so whoever it is will need a reason to be there. In any case, whoever it is should need rescuing.

Variations: For more of a challenge, or just to avoid rationalizing bandits this deep in the jungle, the Storyteller might want to make this an encounter with beastmen instead of bandits. Such beastmen may or may not be offspring of Saerssa (see *Eyes in the Night*, pg 11, and *Saerssa*, pg. 59). Another option is to have these bandits be part of a cult dedicated to the Lady of the Vine (pg. 55) or Saerssa (see sidebar). Still another possibility is for these bandits to be wyld-touched [lu208]. Or, perhaps they are not bandits at all, but a mercenary company looking for orchids to make sweet

CULTS

Both Saerssa and the Lady of the Vine have cults. As mentioned in the variations section (see this page), the bandits in this encounter might be replaced with cultists. While these cultists are roughly the same power level as these bandits, using them here will likely make this adventure significantly more difficult, because it will color the way Saerssa or the Lady will react to the circle. Neither will be pleased if their cultists are killed.

Of the two cults, the Lady's is more formidable. Though very loosely organized into small regional bands, the cult boasts thousands of members, most of whom worship daily. Typically, the leader and some of the other key figures of each band possess a fanatical devotion to the Lady. If the Lady cared to actually lead the cult, they could be a potent force in the lightly populated region. That they worship her captures more of her interest, however, though she occasionally will occasionally sic them on people (farmers, usually) who begin to hack into her jungle.

Saerssa's much smaller cult enjoys even less organization, working more along the lines of a dedicated fan club. Membership consists almost entirely of men living at the edge of the jungle who have, at some point, been abducted by Saerssa for a week of mating or those who want to be.

cordial [336], or a band of toughs led by a mortal sorcerer to find some exotic ritual component or potion ingredient. The main point is to expose the characters to what it is like to fight mortals.

Outcome: The circle comes to the rescue. They will either have fought the bandits off, negotiated or hired them. In terms of booty, all the bandits (or perhaps whoever was rescued) have is a small rowboat (which may be useful in crossing the lake). Whoever was rescued will definitely have at least some food or other supplies. The lake is freshwater and clean.

Debugging: The circle may refuse to help whoever is in distress and just move on. Though a somewhat repugnant thing to do, this will have no adverse effects on the story. Worse may be a character getting seriously hurt or killed. In this case, it may be possible for whoever was being rescued to have access to healing of some type.

Field Testing: An NPC (*Cruxis*, pg. 52) was introduced in this encounter. Having been ambushed in his sleep while making camp on the lake shore, the bandits were rifling through his belongings and celebrating. *Cruxis* spent the encounter hog tied, as the circle pretty much annihilated the bandits.

Type:	Bandits [277]										
Abilities:	Archery 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Bureaucracy 1, Larceny 1, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Performance 2, Presence 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2										
Str/Dex/Sta:	2/3/2	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Per/Int/Wit:	2/2/3	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>								
App/Cha/Man:	2/2/3	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	1/3/2/2	-4	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Willpower:	5	1	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Essence:	1	Attack									Sp/At/D/Df
Initiative:	6	Short Sword									6/5/4L/6
Dodge/Soak:	5/6B/3L	Self Bow									6/4/4L
Tactics:	Will attempt to gang up on opponents. Bowmen will attempt to stay at range.										
Notes:	Buff Jacket (-1 mobility). Only four bandits have bows.										



LAKE

Abstract: While crossing the lake in a rowboat, the party is attacked by a hungry lake monster.

Dramatic Purpose: Action/horror sequence.

Setting: Middle of a deep, freshwater lake.

Order: After Bandits, before Lady of the Vine.

Principals: One very large serpent.

Specifics: Having handled the bandits, the circle may attempt to cross the lake by boat. The lake is quite large; from one shore, the opposite shore cannot be seen. The journey proceeds uneventfully until roughly the midway point (where no shore can be seen at all). It is here that a huge serpent attacks the circle's boat.

Alert characters may be able to spot the serpent under the water before the attack with a difficulty 3 perception + awareness test. Otherwise, the serpent's initial attack seems to come out of nowhere. The serpent will first attempt to bash the bottom of the boat. This will probably knock a few characters into the water and has a good chance of tipping the boat over. It is possible the boat may break as well, though with such a small boat, it is more likely the whole boat will get thrown into the air on one piece.

Characters knocked into the water fight at a penalty [237], unless they have some charm or spell that allows them unhindered movement in water. Rules on treading water [241] may also come into play. Characters lucky enough to remain in the boat will have difficulty seeing enough of the serpent to attack it.

Outcome: The circle is likely to be a bit beaten up by this encounter. They also have a good chance of losing armor, supplies and equipment if the serpent overturns their raft.

Debugging: The biggest threat here is that this encounter may prove a bit too much for parties that are not prepared for water. In such cases, you might change the damage rating for the serpent, or even have it prematurely exit the field.

Field Testing: Guen, a lunar, has a crocodile as one of his forms, which proved able to kill the serpent nearly single handily.

EYES IN THE NIGHT

Abstract: At night, the characters get the feeling they are being watched.

Dramatic Purpose: Tension and foreshadowing.

Setting: Deep jungle, nighttime.

Order: After the party has mostly assembled. Before Lady of the Vine.

Principals: Animals of various kinds.

Specifics: At nighttime, perhaps when only a few characters are on watch, some PCs get the feeling that they are being watched, which, in fact, they are. Characters can feel eyes on them, but when they investigate, there is nothing there. Sometimes, they hear a noise and run it down only to find it is just a simple bird or other animal. A lone character (or a pair) on watch may see bestial eyes peering out of the darkness at them, or become convinced they are about to be attacked, but nothing comes of it. One character starts to think he sees the same bird over and over, but never is quite sure. This encounter is more about putting the characters on edge and giving them a bit of a fear of the unknown wyld surrounding them.

This jungle is the territory of a lunar named Saerssa, who employs numerous animals as her eyes and ears (see Saerssa, pg. 59 for information on both Saerssa and how she manages her pack). The characters have attracted the attention of a pack of such animals, and they are now investigating the characters more thoroughly. The animals are instructed only to watch and report back to Saerssa in the daytime.

Saerssa is attempting to determine what the characters want, what their capabilities are and if they are a threat to her territory. Pay special attention to any actions the circle takes which mark them as exalted, as this will be of great interest to Saerssa, particularly if there are lunars among them. She has not made up her mind about them, and their actions will push her assessment of them one way or the other. PC's who attack members of her pack will gain her ill will quite readily.

Variations: The Storyteller can either stretch this encounter over several nights or do it all at once. Also, the Storyteller may want these animals to be in service of the Lady of the Vine (pg. 55) instead of Saerssa.

Outcome: Hopefully, the characters start lunging at shadows or otherwise being freaked out. They might attack the animals. If they kill any, Saerssa will be extremely upset.

Debugging: Since the whole point of this encounter is to see how their actions inform the opinion of a major NPC, there is not much here that can go wrong from a storytelling point of view.

Field Testing: The circle was only mildly concerned.



Type:	Lake Serpent		
Abilities:	Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Presence 3, Stealth 1 (Swimming + 3)		
Str/Dex/Sta:	13/4/12	-0	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Per/Int/Wit:	2/1/3	-1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
App/Cha/Man:	0/0/0	-2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	0/0/0/0	-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willpower:	4	I	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essence:	0	Attack	Sp/At/D/Df
Initiative:	7	Bite	7/5/13L
Dodge/Soak:	0/12B/6L		
Tactics:	On taking a lot of damage, it may retreat, only to return again a number of minutes, or even hours, later. It will attempt to flip the character's boat (see text) and eat any who fall overboard.		
Notes:	Slightly smaller cousin of the River Dragon [318]		



HUNTERS

Abstract: The circle runs across dragon-blooded hunters in pursuit of a young solar.

Dramatic Purpose: Introduce new characters. Potentially introduce a minor adversary or two (if they don't get killed). Expose the circle to the machinations of a particular dynastic house and how it might affect them.

Metagaming Purpose: Introduce the dragon-blooded.

Setting: Jungle, daytime.

Order: After the party has mostly assembled. Before Lady of the Vine (pg. 13). Can be used to introduce a character into the party, so might come sooner than later in that case.

Principals: Three dragon-blooded (Volaris, pg. 63, Suriel, pg. 60, and Mordock, pg. 56). Six Imperial soldiers (one of whom is a dragon-blooded spy named Trieste, pg. 61). The person being pursued, either an NPC like Jorias (pg. 54) or a PC just joining the group.

Specifics: As the characters continue to follow the pull to the manse, their paths are crossed by a pursuit. The person being pursued is either one of the PCs or a solar NPC (see Appendix C, pg. 33). The group pursuing him or her consists of three young dragon-blooded looking to make a name for themselves and a handful of Imperial soldiers. They have been pursuing this solar for some time, and the solar had hoped to lose them in the jungle.

This party is not officially a Wyld Hunt, more like a bunch of frat boys getting their kicks. The solar in question was stumbled upon accidentally, so the hunt is something of a makeshift affair. Though over-eager, the hunters are still dangerous.

The hunting party's goal is to kill the solar, and their ambition is such that they would be more than willing to add a few more to the tally if they think they can handle it. On the other hand, the dragon-blooded leading the party have no qualms about beating a hasty retreat if they think they are out matched, and will gladly sacrifice their soldiers to do so.

Unbeknownst to most of the hunting party, there is a fourth dragon-blooded amongst them, posing as one of the soldiers. This man, Trieste, is a spy for both the Immaculate Order and a faction within House Iselsi. In this particular case, his two masters are working at cross purposes, but his first loyalty is to those he serves within his house. The dynasts for whom he works are part of a secret group of dragon-blooded called Sundial (pg. 66). They believe that the Usurpation was the worst form of treachery and hold that, with the disappearance of the Empress, the solars will soon be returning to power. Sundial want to throw their lot in with

the solars (covertly, of course) and aid this effort (and, in their eyes, put them on the winning side).

Trieste is torn between his duty to his House and to the Order, even ashamed because, as a monk following the wood dragon style he knows the order should really come first. Ironically, his immediate superior in the Immaculate Order knows all about Sundial and, in fact, supports them, as he himself is an agent of a gold faction sidereal seeking to destroy the Immaculate Order.

Variations: All of the dragon-blooded in this encounter are legal starting characters. Storytellers running large parties may wish to enhance their abilities and/or increase their numbers.

Outcome: This scene is pretty much guaranteed to end in a fight. The solar being rescued, if an NPC, will be very thankful. If pressed he will indicate that he, too, is being pulled to the manse.

The dragon-blooded possess a number of jade artifacts and each will have a handful of jade coins.

Debugging: Someone could die here, or at least be very badly wounded. If the solar being rescued is Jorias, he will use his substantial healing abilities to help anyone in need.

Field Testing: The pursued was the NPC Jorias, who used Graceful Crane Stance and Monkey Leap Technique to run across the tree branches (and, consequently, glowed brightly). After a brief conversation, combat erupted. The speed of Volaris' blade kept Gutts dodging most of the combat, though he eventually cut him in half (as well as some infantrymen). Guen took his woolly mammoth form and, though taking a lot of arrows, disarmed and later killed Mordock. Cruxis eventually managed to kill an infantry man that was harassing Gutts (and was extremely proud of himself). Jorias managed to pretty much savage Suriel, who used Shrouding the Body and Mind to evade him after taking a lot of damage. He also transferred some damage from Gutts to himself, allowing Gutts to continue the fight.

Suriel, meanwhile, attempted to keep attacking, as her comrades were still alive at that point. Her wounds made this difficult, however, and her attacks allowed Trieste to locate her. He used that moment to switch sides and (with a really lucky shot), he put an arrow in her chest. The combat finished soon after, with everyone but Trieste being killed. The last of the infantry died most spectacularly when Guen (still in mammoth form) hurled him into the air and Gutts (on Guen's back) bisected him in midair.

Trieste was spared, and he delivered his proposal to the party. After some discussion, they agreed to send word to a specific bar in Nexus to arrange a meeting with Trieste's benefactors.

Type:	Infantry		
Abilities:	Archery 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Endurance 2, Medicine 1, Melee 2 (Chopping Sword + 1), Presence 1, Resistance 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1		
Str/Dex/Sta:	3/2/3	-0	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Per/Int/Wit:	2/2/2	-1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
App/Cha/Man:	2/2/2	-2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	2/3/2/3	-4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Willpower:	6	I	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Essence:	1	Attack	Sp/At/D/Df
Initiative:	4	Chopping Sword	4/6/7L/6
Dodge/Soak:	3/9B/5L	Spear	7/5/5L/4
	Target sld	Self Bow (Rof: 2)	4/4/5L
Tactics	They will tend to work as a team, employing mixed weaponry against a single target.		
Notes:	Reinforced buff jacket, target shield.		

LADY OF THE VINE

Abstract: Characters have an impromptu audience with the powerful spirit who rules the section of jungle surrounding them. She gives them information, allows them passage and tells them there will be a price to pay.

Dramatic Purpose: Convey portions of the back story to the characters, particularly information of their past lives. Also introduces the presence of deathnights and their minions into the minds of the characters.

Metagaming Purpose: Cocky PCs may be given quick lessons in humility by this encounter.

Setting: Deep jungle.

Order: Before Mutant Tyrant Lizards (pg. 15)

Principals: The Lady of the Vine (pg. 55).

Specifics: The jungle starts to get thicker, with the PC's needing to cut leaves out of their way. Soon, however, the characters enter a sun-soaked clearing containing a small pool. Standing on the opposite end of the clearing, a beautiful naked woman with long blond hair, a perfect body, striking green eyes and a spear regards the party calmly. She will wait for the characters to say or do something, but regardless of what it is, she will ask (curiously, not angrily) "what is your business here?". If they tell the truth about the pull they feel, she will nod knowingly. If not, she will say, calmly, "Liar. Your dreams brought you here."

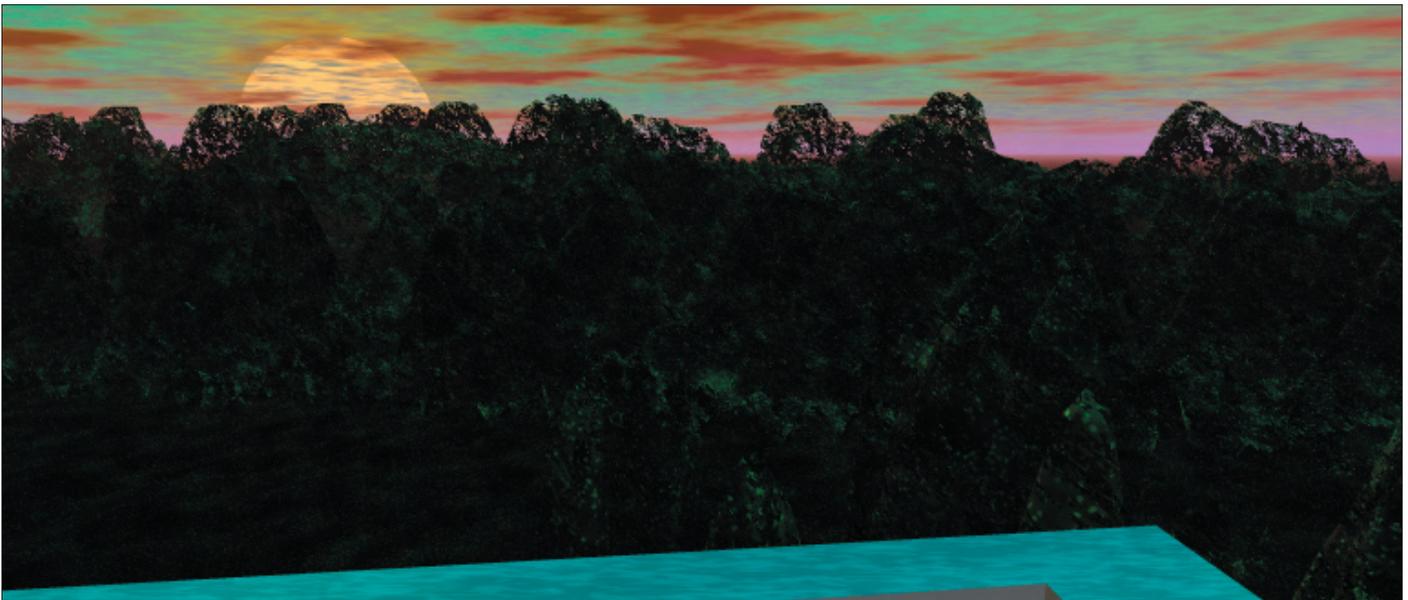
This entity is the Lady of the Vine, a forest walker [gd43]. She is a powerful spirit, in control of the surrounding jungle. She knows of the existence of the manse and has felt it calling to the circle. She also knows that the artifact protecting the manse (see Hermitage Cloak, pg. 47) traps spirits inside it. She would like to gain access to the manse for herself, as she could rip it down and move her sanctum on top of the resulting demesne. She is not obsessed with this idea, however, as her current sanctum pleases her well enough. She can foresee other outcomes that would also be of benefit, but also may cause trouble. For example, having a manse run by solars within her domain (provided they offered at least some prayers and offerings) could be a positive development for her jungle, but it might also bring conflict to it. The solars may also be useful in carrying out missions outside her jungle. In general, the Lady is more interested in worship than the manse. She is visiting the circle to determine how useful or threatening they may be to her.

CONVERSATION WITH THE LADY

Some of her non-sequiturs should include the following (use them any time the conversation stalls):

- "You have sacrificed many creatures in my jungle, but none to me." This is a complaint that they have been killing things in her jungle, but have not been showing her the proper respect. How they react to this will color her perception of them significantly.
- "I know you. Or...I did...long ago. I will know you again." A reference to the original manse builders, and their reincarnation in the PCs. It is possible that one of the manse builders was a lover, so this might be directed at a specific PC.
- "The approaching dead one will like you, but this will not help him." A prediction that Regret of the Sun will want to join the PCs when he meets them, but his new nature will not allow him to.
- If a Lunar is among the party: "Saerssa will be coming for you, no doubt."
- "(Sigh.) Isn't this a wonderful place?" An attempt to solicit opinions about her jungle.
- "Where are the rest of you?" A reference to the manse builders whose souls are not present (Regret of the Sun (pg. 57), Yrminas (pg. 64), solars, lunars, etc.)
- "One dead one walked your path, but another is returning." A reference to Carrionis visiting the manse, but Regret of the Sun coming now.
- "What will you do when the dead come for you?" A glimpse of the future, in Act III.

She will continue the conversation with the circle in an almost distracted way, frequently changing direction in ways that don't entirely make sense. She recognizes the solar essence of the original manse builders in the characters, but is confused by their new incarnations. Her Uncontrolled Prognostication charm also tends to distract her and confuse her perception of the present and possible futures. This should definitely be a conversation that raises more questions than it answers.



Dawn

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MUTANT TYRANT LIZARDS

Abstract: The circle comes across a pile of human remains. As they are examining them, the smell attracts a pair of tyrant lizards who have been mutated by the manse.

Dramatic Purpose: Action sequence.

Setting: Deep jungle, very close to the manse

Order: After Lady of the Vine

Principals: Two mutated tyrant lizards [318]. The first tyrant lizard will attack anyone it sees. If it starts to take damage, it will use its Empathic Wind ability to summon its mate, who will come from the opposite direction in three rounds (again, with a lot of crashing noises).

Specifics: As the circle gets closer to the to the manse, the pull weakens gradually, but noticeably. The jungle also starts to get extremely thick with vines growing in random directions and interwoven, almost like a mesh or net, but without any regular pattern. This may strike the characters as unusual (which it is, since it is the result of essence leaking from the manse), but the only way through is to cut.

As they are hacking their way through, they stumble across a jumbled pile of human remains, mostly legs. They appear to all be severed from the waist down, and there is no evidence of any remains above the waist at all. Most have been stripped to the bone, but there is still some decaying flesh on a few of them. The smell is quite ripe and the impression should be that the remains are somewhat recent.

If the characters bother to count, there are 18 sets of legs. Most are in a single pile, but some have been scattered by small creatures. Anyone with a relevant skill will be able to discern that the bodies were hacked in half by a sharp weapon. (These legs were are the leftovers of the spine chains that Carrionis created to guard the manse, see "Chains", pg. 18.)

They may also notice (difficulty 2 perception + awareness) that, in the direction they are going, a slight trail has already been cut. It is starting to grow back, indicating that it was somewhat recent, but at least older than a few weeks. (The trail leads to the manse, and was cut by Carrionis when he dumped the legs here.)

As they are pondering this, they hear a crashing from the right, as if a large creature is pushing through the vines, towards them. Shortly, a 20 foot tall tyrant lizard breaks into the clearing, attracted by the smell of the legs. It will attack anyone it sees.

This tyrant lizard (and its nearby mate) have been mutated by the essence leaking from the damaged manse (see sidebar). These lizards are extremely intelligent, and have a limited empathic communication between them. Their skin is also much tougher than typical tyrant lizards. These mutations are both a blessing and a curse, however, as they are now completely dependant on

MUTATIONS

The manse has been leaking essence for nearly two hundred years. In some ways, this has countered the effects of the Wyld and accented it in others. Animals who had lived in or around the manse have become mutated.

At one time, hundreds of animals inhabited the area around the manse. With the arrival of the two tyrant lizards, most of these have been eaten. All that remain are a company of giant parrots (pg. 20) and the tyrant lizards themselves.

Because these creatures are mutated by manse energy, they do not qualify as "normal" animals and, therefore, lunars cannot gain the ability to shape change into them by eating their hearts.

Creatures mutated by the manse's energy become dependant on it and cannot venture very far from the manse without serious harm. The effect is similar to a fish being out of water and the creature "suffocates" due to lack of essence surrounding it. If the creature ranges more than 30 miles from the manse, they suddenly begin to take one unsoakable health level each turn. If they return to within 30 miles, the loss of health immediately stops and made be healed normally.

Plants have been mutating as well, often picking up on some aspect of the manse. These mutations are usually harmless, such as vines that grow into net-like barriers (picking up on the manse's isolationist intent). The storyteller is free to add more wicked mutations.

the essence from the manse to live and quickly take damage if they stray too far from it.

Variations: Adjusting the bonus from the toughened skin mutation may be advisable for circles light on combat ability.

Outcome: The characters will probably have to fight the tyrant lizards, as they will pursue if the characters flee. It could be that the characters take cover when first hearing the crashing noises, in which case they tyrant lizard may track them down by scent.

Fleeing characters may run into the manse (see next encounter). This could be dangerous because a) they will need to cross the defensive barrier, b) two spine chains wait there and c) the way into the manse is not immediately obvious.

No items of any kind can be found among the dead bodies.

Debugging: Player death is the greatest risk here. If they characters are getting decimated, the tyrant lizards might be distracted by a far off howl of something of that nature.

Field Testing: The first of these creatures didn't last a turn, as he had no interest in dodging. His mate was harder to kill, however, and managed to do a little damage before succumbing.

Type:	Mutant Tyrant Lizard (2) [318]		
Abilities:	Awareness 3, Brawl 4 (Biting + 2)		
Str/Dex/Sta:	14/3/12	-0	□□□□
Per/Int/Wit:	2/3/3	-1	□□□□□
App/Cha/Man:	0/0/0	-2	□□□□□
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	0/0/0/0	-4	□□
Willpower:	3	I	□
Essence:	0	Attack	Sp/At/D/Df
Initiative:	6	Bite	6/9/14L
Dodge:	0		
Soak:	16B/10L		
Notes:	Lunars cannot gain the shape of this unnatural creature.		



MANSE

Abstract: The characters run across the barrier protecting the manse. Though weakened, they proceed and find the building they have been dreaming about, but not they way they expect it.

Dramatic Purpose: Signal start of second act.

Setting: Extremely thick jungle.

Order: Last encounter in first act.

Principals: Only the circle.

Specifics: As the PC's continue through the jungle, the intertwined vines get even thicker. As they follow the pull (which is very weak now), either by hacking the vines or following the previously cut trail (see previous encounter), they will come across the barrier protecting the manse, projected by the Hermatage Cloak (pg. 47). The jungle is so thick, the manse will not be viewable at that point, and the barrier itself is very hard to see. Seeing the barrier requires a difficulty 4 perception + lore test.

Characters who notice the barrier see a slight shimmer ahead of them. Once it is pointed out, any character actively looking for it can see it.

Characters may spend time trying to figure out some way around the barrier. There isn't one. They also might look for a way to deactivate it. That can only be done from inside. The only way to the manse is just to walk through the barrier and pay the price.

Once through the barrier, the manse is less than a thousand yards away, but the thick foliage will prevent the characters from seeing it until they are within 50 to 100 feet. When they see the manse, the circle will be able to immediately feel the essence flow and know that this is a magical place. Characters with at least one dot in either lore or occult immediately understand that this is a manse. Most characters will recognize it from their dreams, but its appearance is now different in many ways (see the "Current Appearance" section of Appendix A, pg. 39).

Outcome: The PC's find the manse.

Debugging: The only real problem here is if a character goes through the barrier without enough essence or, for some reason, doesn't have enough to pay for the crossing. In such cases, it may be necessary to make the barrier more obvious, so people with low essence don't cross it accidentally and die.

In campaigns where the circle has no chance of passing the barrier (e.g. a mortal campaign), the storyteller will need to re-think the story.

Field Testing: The party didn't detect the barrier until someone went through it. They all decided to go through and take the essence drain without investing much in stopping the effect.



ATTUNING

Abstract: The characters attune to the manse.

Dramatic Purpose: Provide the characters with an important advancement as well as information about their past lives.

Setting: Somewhere in the manse.

Order: Sometime after Getting In (pg. 18).

Principals: Only the circle.

Specifics: No living creature is currently attuned to this manse, so characters can attune to it any time they think to do so. Doing so will take three hours [249].

The attunement ritual for this manse will bring on a period of deep meditation about halfway through. During this time, the energy of the manse will trigger a vivid vision of past events in the manse for any character who is a reincarnation of one of the original manse builders. Each such character will remember a single event, determined randomly by rolling a single d10 on the table below. In general, the higher the number rolled, the more pleasant the memory. The Storyteller should feel free to add or alter these dreams to better fit the campaign and characters. All dreams are in the first person, as if the PC is seeing everything through her own eyes.

It is possible, though unlikely, that the players may attempt to attune all at once. Since everyone attempting to attune will be dreaming towards the end, the demons (see *Escape*, pg. 22) may take advantage of this opportunity.

Even after the members of the circle have attuned to the manse, they will have a chance to have similar dreams as long as they remain within it. Each night, each circle member who sleeps should roll a ten-sided die. On a 1 or 10, they will have a historical dream, and should roll on the table. Should a result be repeated, they may have the exact same dream, or a different variation of the same idea.

Outcome: Most, if not all, of the circle will be attuned to the manse. This gives them a significant advantage over the forces they will meet in the manse. The characters will also learn more about their past, though they may not realize what it means.

Debugging: Not much can go wrong here, though some characters may need to attempt attunement more than once.

Another issue may be that the circle do not know about attunement or how manses work, particularly if the players are new to the game. Having an NPC with a high lore score is a big help here.

Field Testing: As the circle was new to Exalted, and neither player character had any lore skill to speak of, the NPC Jorias (pg. 54) educated them on manses. Guen attuned to it on the first attempt. Gutts required several, having only one die to make the attempt. Just by coincidence, Guen's dreams were not very powerful or frequent, which led the players to believe that lunars were not as strongly connected to the manse.

VISIONS

1. The dreamer, holding a long knife, creeps up on a sleeping figure. As the dreamer approaches the head of the bed, she can see another knife wielding figure doing the same on the other side. As one, the dreamer and the other knife wielder begin to savagely stab the sleeper, holding her down and covering her mouth. Essence flares around the victim briefly, marking the sleeper as a dragon-blooded. All too quickly, the flare snuffs out. [*This is a memory of the manse builder's slaughter of their dragon-blooded staff after the Usurpation. It occurs in one of the bedrooms on Level 3 of the Solar Tower (see Appendix A). Several dragon-blooded were killed in this manner, so if multiple characters roll this dream, change the description of the dragon-blooded victim for each one.*]
2. The dreamer dreams of either dealing out or ordering of violence against one or more mortals who either labored or staffed the manse. Possibilities include whippings (either private or public), an impromptu beating for some offense, sexual assault, near drownings (head held in a basin, etc.), ordering exhausted workers to continue to the point of injury, and so on. In cases where the dreamer gives orders for punishments, they are given matter-of-factly, and the dreamer rarely sees the actual punishment (though they may hear it beginning as they walk into another area).
3. The dreamer sees herself maltreating a mortal. This can range from regarding them as barely worth noticing to mental abuse. Examples include treating a servant as one might treat an animal, obliviously forcing servants into situations that terrify them (e.g. holding up targets for archery practice), humiliating one in front of others, ordering restricted (or no) rations for laborers, etc.
4. The dreamer experiences herself arguing with an Exalt over trivial matters. The point of the argument is unclear, and seems to be caused more by stress than any real problem. Alert dreamers may notice that the room is somewhat messy, as if not cleaned in a number of weeks. [*This dream remembers the time just prior to the manse builder's leaving to join the fight against the Usurpation, when most of their mortal staff had abandoned the manse.*]
5. The dreamer experiences an exhilarating and satisfying (though somewhat painful) martial arts training session in the manse's courtyard.
6. The dreamer experiences a very pleasant breakfast with several Exalts in attendance. It is a beautiful morning, conversation is happy and free and the food is excellent.
7. The dreamer hazily sees an extremely pleasant night of extreme drunkenness. All of the carousers are full of joviality, singing, hugging, slapping each other on the back.
8. The dreamer witnesses a beautiful formal ceremony, with following celebration. The dreamer might be either a participant or a witness. Possibilities for the ceremony include a wedding (between mortals or Exalts), an awards ceremony (where Exalts give mortals awards), a promotion of a mortal, etc. [*This memory would be from a fairly early point in the manse's construction, so the dreamer will likely notice that the manse is incomplete.*]
9. The dreamer witnesses the moment of the manse's completion, and the raucous celebration that follows. Everyone is very well dressed, even the mortal laborers. All are deliriously happy the manse is complete (the Exalts with a sense of accomplishment, the mortals with relief).
10. The dreamer feels an incredibly intense sexual experience, with someone who feels like a soul mate. If appropriate to the character, this will be between a solar and lunar.



SAERSSA

Abstract: While exploring the lunar dome, characters spot a woman trying to sneak away.

Dramatic Purpose: Introduce Saerssa. Allow characters to interact with a lunar.

Setting: In the entry hall of the lunar dome.

Order: After Getting In (pg. 18) or Attuning (pg. 19).

Principals: Saerssa (pg. 59)

Specifics: Saerssa has been keeping tabs on the characters since their trek through the jungle (see *Eyes in the Night*, pg. 11). When her spies reported that the circle reached the manse, she immediately rushed to the manse herself.

Chances are, she arrives while the circle is exploring the solar tower. She bypasses this and explores the lunar dome first. She will have just claimed the hearthstone from the dome and be on her way out when the characters enter the lunar dome.

Saerssa will try to wait until the circle passes through the entry foyer, then backtrack around to through the opposite foyer door.

Should the circle split up in the foyer and go different directions, chances are Saerssa will be spotted. Even if the PC's all go one direction, they might still catch site of Saerssa out of the corner of their eye.

If spotted, Saerssa will flee if possible, using her Horn of the Ways if necessary. Failing that (or if pursued and caught), she will try to bargain with the circle using whatever she can, including the hearthstone she just took from the lunar dome. She will threaten to destroy the hearthstone (a bluff) and hint that the manse will not make more if the current stones are broken (true, see Appendix A). She may also take a different approach and ask permission to attune to the manse on return of the hearthstone.

If the circle includes lunar characters, Saerssa may attempt to avoid combat with the whole party by challenging a single lunar. (After all, the circle has invaded her territory.) Saerssa is more interested in survival than power or honor, so will avoid dying at all costs.

In her nearly 150 years in this jungle, Saerssa has continually used her Pack Forming Presence charm to create a formidable pack. This pack usually has around 35 animals in it, but may be as large as 50. She generally circulates these animals throughout her jungle and then back to her periodically, so she can glimpse their travels with her Comb of Bestial Explanation (see pg. 47). Mostly made up of snakes, monkeys and other tree dwellers, her pack does not accompany her into the manse. They are nearby, however, and may be useful to Saerssa is she is chased into the jungle.

Variations: It is conceivable that Saerssa reaches the manse before any of the PC's attune to it and attunes to it herself, becoming the first to do so. If this occurs, the circle will need her permission to attune to the manse, which could be an adventure in and of itself.

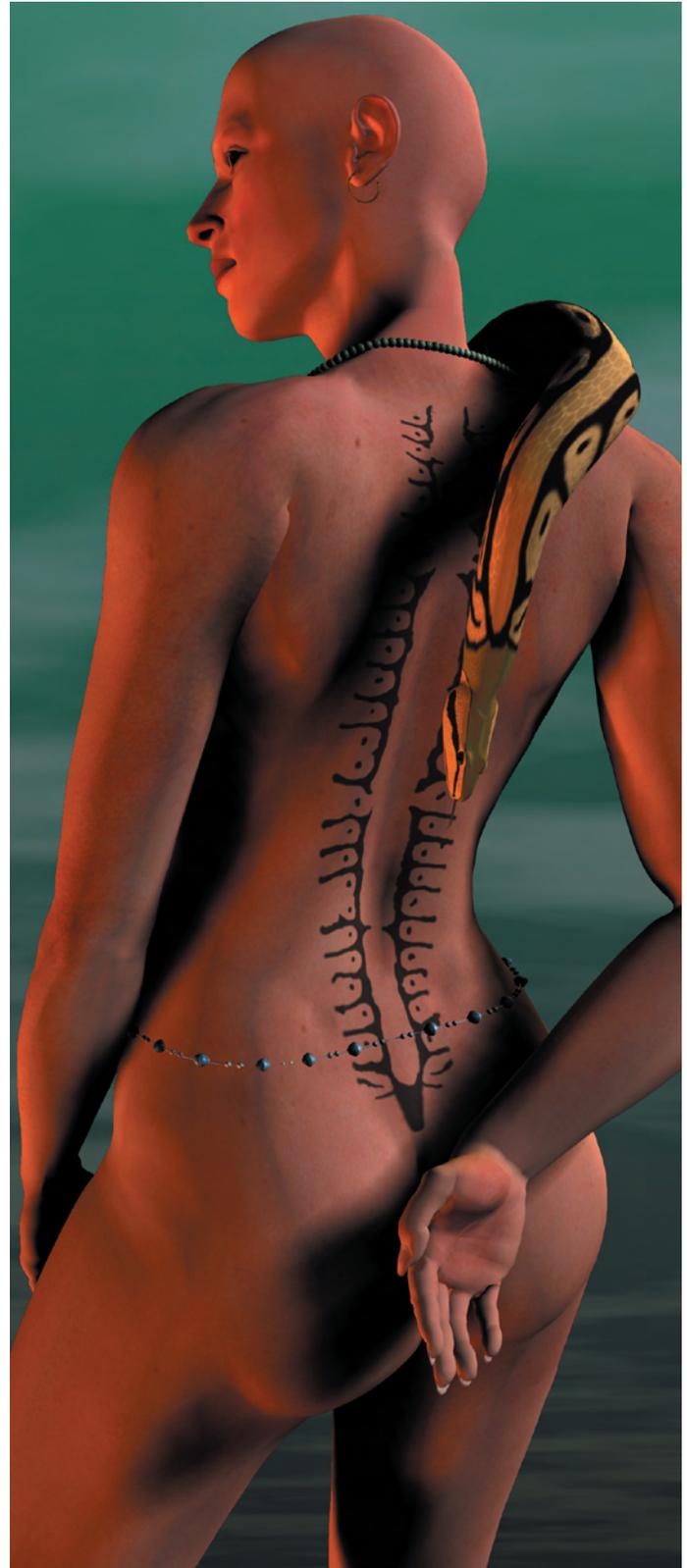
Another variant is Saerssa arriving in the lunar hearth later than PC's, and challenging or negotiating with them there.

Saerssa may also be a reincarnation of one of the original manse-builders, though perhaps her casteless nature has exempted her from the call of the manse.

Outcome: PC's will either kill Saerssa or negotiate with her. If she dies (or bargains for them), her artifacts can be appropriated by the PC's.

Debugging: PC's may miss Saerssa entirely, which may be cause for fudging a few rolls. Saerssa might also kill someone in combat, though she would tend to avoid that if possible.

Field Testing: Two characters spotted Saerssa trying to sneak out of the lunar Sphere and managed to tackle her before she could escape. She took on her beastman form and broke away, but was soon tackled again. While struggling, the lunar managed to calm her down and convince her to talk. Ultimately, she agreed to trade the hearthstone for permission to attune to the manse and training in how to do so. While being trained, Saerssa took a fancy to one of the NPCs (*Cruxis*, pg. 52) as a potential (if temporary) mate.





Twilight

Note that all three of the solars will have to have passed through the barrier, which will have sucked 20 motes of essence from them (and might be noticed by the players, if they are outside). In all likelihood, they will have rested/explored long enough to get all of this essence back (about two and a half hours) before this encounter begins.

Storytellers should play up any misunderstandings about Yrminas being dragon-blooded. It should be particularly dramatic if her anima flares, exposing her as a solar.

If the demon plot (see *Escape*, pg. 22) has not been resolved, they may choose to hatch their ambush either during or immediately after this encounter.

Outcome: Chances are, the circle will kill Yrminas and Righteous Glimmer. They will probably kill Adrios as well, though he will be more amenable to both negotiation and escape. These solars possess a number of artifacts and a book on celestial circle magic.

Debugging: This will be a tough encounter for most groups, particularly with the concealed combatants, so wounds are likely. In severe cases, the Groundskeeper may intervene to rescue or at least stabilize the severely wounded. In addition, Yrminas is more interested in gaining followers than killing, so she will spare lives if she can get an advantage from it.

Field Testing: The solars passed through the barrier while the party was investigating the lunar sphere. After resting to regain their essence, Yrminas and Adrios scaled the courtyard wall while Glimmer remained in his cloud trapeze.

After a quick tour of the solar tower, they moved to the central building. Yrminas bored of this, and left to explore the lunar sphere while Adrios remained in the central building. The players saw Yrminas coming through the archway of the central building into the lunar courtyard. Given her jade armor and arrogant attitude, they assumed she was dragon-blooded.

After some well-meaning but ill-fated negotiations, two circle members walked out to meet Yrmanis. One of these was Guen, a lunar who bows to no one and really hates dragon-blooded, so Yrmanis' ultimatum did not go over well and swords were drawn pretty quickly.

The length of the courtyard, as well as a Magma Kraken spell, kept the party separated for a good deal of the combat. This proved nearly fatal to Guen (particularly with some lucky damage rolls by the solars in the first round); however, Yrmanis figured Guen would be of more use to her alive.

The Magma Kraken spell was not as lethal as it might seem, though it would have been more so in a more confined space. Towards the end of the battle, Gutts pitted his Peony Death Blossom against Flow Like Blood. The verdict: a blossom plus grand daiklave creates a flow *of* blood, though Gutts was also fairly badly wounded.

One party member (Cruxis) spent an entire round doing nothing but trying to spot the source of Adrios' arrows, so managed to defeat him. By sheer coincidence, both Yrminas and Adrios were brought down to exactly incapacitated, and the party spared them.

Adrios accepted an offer to join the group. Yrminas avoided death by swearing (and sanctifying) an oath to a) leave the manse, b) release Adrios from his oath to her, c) never attack the circle again, d) show people more respect and e) "try to help people". The party returned her armor and weapon, and she left. Glimmer managed to flee in his cloud trapeze, but passed through barrier without enough essence and plummeted to his death.





REGRET

Abstract: An abyssal drops by.

Dramatic Purpose: Provide a bridge into the third act. Introduce the last of the manse builders.

Setting: The foyer of the manse's solar tower.

Order: Last.

Specifics: Of the manse builders, the essence of Tyrush (pg. 49) was the first to return, over three years ago. The resulting night caste solar was set upon almost immediately by the Wyld Hunt. He fled from them for nearly a year, with them always at his heels. The chase led to Gem where, in a last effort to escape, the new solar ducked into one of the city's many pocket shadowlands.

He may have been better off in the hands of the hunt, as in the shadowlands he ran across a deathnight. This deathnight didn't exactly capture the solar, but the solar did not go with him voluntarily either. After a long journey in the Underworld, the solar was introduced to the deathnight's mistress: the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears [ab95]. Within months, he was her deathnight, taking the name Regret of the Sun and realizing he had made a terrible error.

When the pull from the manse began, he resisted it for a time, as returning to Creation secretly horrified and shamed him. Unlike the circle, Regret's location in the underworld allowed him to spot the exact location of the call's origin, not just a vague pull in a direction.



He was forced to share this information with the Lover and she sent Carrionis (pg. 48) to investigate. While he was away, the pull on Regret of the Sun grew ever stronger, and he eventually escaped and returned to the land of the living.

Since then he, like the circle, has been making his way to the manse. His journey has not gone well, having run into fair folk. Though he managed to dispatch them, they wounded him seriously, greatly hampering his progress. Days ago, he ran across the forces that Carrionis is presently leading to the manse. He has been struggling to reach the manse ahead of Carrionis ever since.

In this scene, Regret of the Sun reaches the manse, still wounded and completely exhausted. The circle will hear a commotion in the front foyer of the solar manse, caused by Regret coming through the front door (after cutting away the underbrush). When the circle reaches him, he will be crawling on the floor, trailing blood. He will look at them and say "they are coming", referring to Carrionis' force. He will then immediately pass out.

The players have several options at this point, and the third act will be colored by their choices. Some may take in Regret, others may cast him out or kill him. If they take him in, Regret will answer any questions he can. In addition to his full life story, answers may include:

- Carrionis is approaching with a large collection of undead and mortal soldiers, as well as a large contingent of captives.
- Carrionis' intent is not known, but he likely has been tasked with taking over the manse.
- Regret is willing to help defend the manse.
- Regret has been pulled to the manse and had dreams about it while unconscious (pg. 19).
- Regret will react with recognition when seeing any image of Tyrush (such as those in the foyer).
- Regret deeply regrets is choice to become an abyssal and wishes to reverse his exultation.

Unfortunately, Regret of the Sun currently has six points of resonance [ab148] and is likely to accumulate more (particularly since he just entered a solar/lunar manse). Eventually, this will make him very difficult to be around. He will attempt to lose this resonance by manipulating it [ab149] and trying to conceal the resulting effects. He will be gaining at least two points of resonance per day (one from his deathlord for disobeying her and one for being in a solar manse). He can lose up to three points per day through manipulation, though the more points he sheds, the harder the effects will be to conceal.

In addition, the Whispers he hears [ab135] are driving him slowly mad. The Malfeans want the dead to claim the manse, and will be actively whispering to Regret, encouraging him to help Carrionis and that doing so will allow him to stop running.

Principals: Regret of the Sun (pg. 57)

Variations: The circle may not hear a noise, but rather notice Regret half passed out in the foyer or some other room.

If Jorias (pg. 54) is with the party, he may recognize Regret as a customer from when they were both mortal.

Outcome: Possibilities include helping Regret of the Sun, casting him out or killing him.

Debugging: Not much should go wrong here. About the worst that can happen is that Regret gets killed or thrown out which makes the events in the next act slightly less interesting.

Field Testing: The party took in Regret willingly, and brought him back to health.

ACT THREE: GREED

The characters now control one of the most unique (though not the most powerful) manses in existence. The third and final act centers on those who want to take it from them. Foremost of these is a small army of the dead, led by Carrionis (pg. 48) on the orders of Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears [ab95]. They intend to take over the manse and change its aspect.

Some of the entities the characters met in the previous acts will return. Wether they are friend or foe will depend on how the characters treated them.

PERSISTENT ISSUES

Though vastly outnumbered, the characters have several advantages. Firstly, their essence pools will regenerate much faster than their opposition. Being in Creation, the abyssals will need to feed on the living for essence (though Carrionis does have a hearthstone). As a result, the Storyteller will need to keep close track of essence levels.

Secondly, the defenses of the manse will be of considerable use. The Hermitage Cloak (pg. 47) plays an important role in the third act, as it will prevent the dead from coming within a thousand yards of the manse. Much of Carrionis' strategy revolves around deactivating this cloak. Further, the enchantment on the manse preventing entry (pg. 39) is another obstacle the dead must overcome.

Thirdly, the characters may have help, some of it potentially quite powerful. On the other hand, some of their potential allies may just as easily be or become enemies. Of the entities the characters met in previous acts (and depending on what the characters did in those encounters), Regret of the Sun (pg. 57), Saerssa (pg. 59), the Groundskeeper (pg. 53) and the Lady of the Vine (pg. 55) will almost certainly have an interest in the outcome and will likely try

to influence it. The Storyteller will need to track these NPCs and ponder their attitudes and activities carefully.

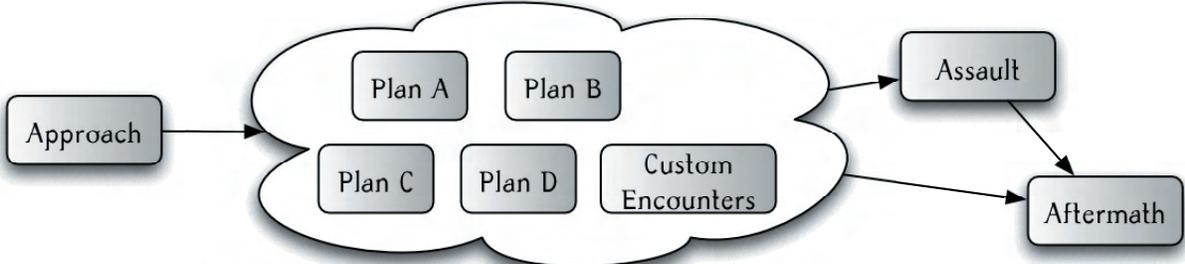
In particular, strong consideration must be given to the desires of the Lady of the Vine (pg. 55). While far from omnipotent, she still has the ability to strongly influence the act's outcome, if not decide it outright. Unless the characters have treated her extraordinarily well, the Lady will take a "wait and see" attitude toward the army of the dead. She may be interested in claiming the demesne upon which the manse is built for herself, for use as her new sanctum. To achieve this goal the manse must be removed and she feels that battle between the dead and the characters has a better chance of bringing this about. In addition, she will feel less threatened by the army of the dead than the characters, at least initially, as the only true threats to her among them are the two abyssals.

This will change as the plans of the dead become more evident and the Lady realizes that they intend to change her forest into a shadowland. Even so, her actions will depend on how much she likes the characters.

As mentioned above (pg. 25), the Storyteller should also keep close track of the resonance level of Regret of the Sun.

ENCOUNTER OVERVIEW

- **Arrival:** An army of the dead approaches.
- **Plan A:** Regret of the Sun put to the test.
- **Plan B:** Humans are sacrificed to create a shadowland.
- **Plan C:** Demons are summoned to eliminate the shield.
- **Plan D:** The dead conspire to undermine the manse.
- **Assault:** The circle comes head to head with the army of the dead.
- **Aftermath:** Picking up the pieces.





ARRIVAL

Abstract: An army of the dead approaches.

Dramatic Purpose: Allow characters time to prepare for coming battle; communication with Regret of the Sun.

Setting: Near the manse.

Order: First in Act III.

Principals: Carrionis (pg. 51), Vision Consorting with the Dead (pg. 62), 500 zombies, 2 spine chains, 8 deathrings, 3 exquisite undead servants, 500 captive slaves.

Specifics: As Regret of the Sun (pg. 57) alluded to at the end of Act II (pg. 25), an army of evil is approaching the manse. They move slowly, so the circle will have time to prepare. The army is led by Carrionis (pg. 51), an abyssal in the service of Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears [ab95]. He has orders to take over the manse and alter it to an abyssal aspect. He has several overlapping plans in mind to make this happen (see following sections) and has brought along 500 living human captives and another abyssal, named Vision Consorting with the Dead (pg. 62), to further them.

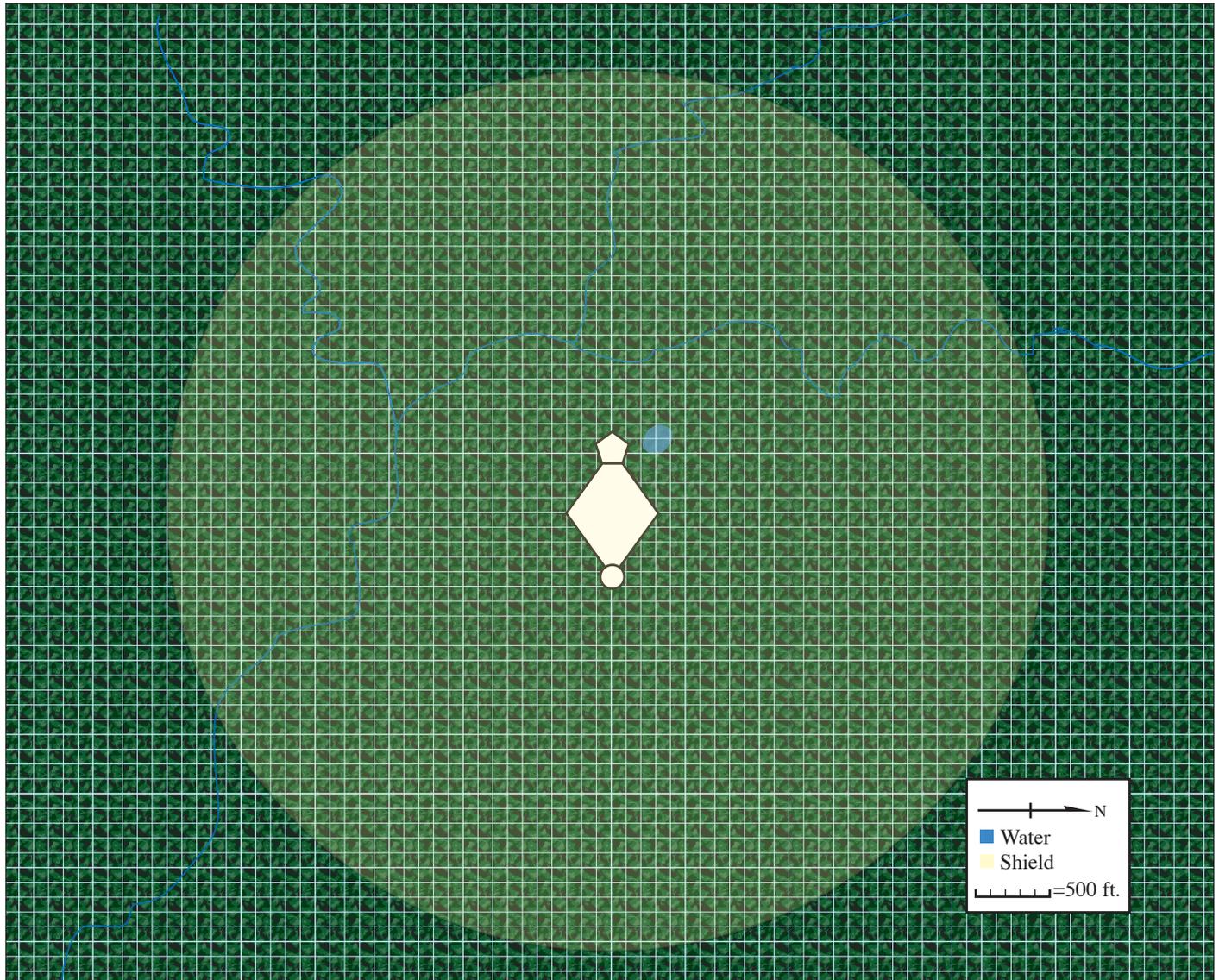
An equal number of zombies and two long spine chains also accompany him to act as guard and to deal with basic problems, as well as keep the captives from revolting. Carrionis has also summoned three stronger zombies (pg. 32) to keep the slaves in line. Lastly are eight deathrings (pg. 65), brought mostly to carry cargo and do any heavy pulling needed in re-aspecting the manse.

The circle will have two full days before the army arrives, and will likely do several things during this interval. The first will probably be interrogating Regret of the Sun.

One or more characters may also reconnoiter the approaching army to determine its strength, direction, makeup, etc. A typical marching configuration will be to have the captives in a mob in the center. Surrounding them will be a ring of zombies, roughly three or four bodies deep. One spine chain and four deathrings will be in front of this ring of zombies forcing a path through the jungle. Another spine chain and four more deathrings will bring up the rear. In between the zombies and the captives will be two of the exquisite servants, on horseback. The remaining exquisite servant will bring up the rear, keeping an eye out for stragglers. Carrionis and Vision will lead at the front of the pack, on horseback.

With the proper charms (particularly if lunar is in the group), a character may be able to slip among the captives and talk to them. They are exhausted and afraid. They are an entire village taken captive and none of them know what is happening. There is a (mortal) immaculate priest in the group, who everyone looks to for leadership, but he is only slightly less exhausted and afraid as everyone else. Many of the captives have died along the way.

Some thought may be given to shoring the defenses around the manse, such as digging trenches and so on. The manse contains



some raw materials to help with this, but most are so old that any tools salvaged from within will need to be makeshift affairs (though the forge is fully functional). Smart characters will also gather food and water while they can.

Shrewd players will realize that the shield is a likely target, and install traps or, at least, surveillance in the room housing the Hermitage Cloak.

The circle is also likely to discuss strategy. Regret of the Sun will be quick to point out that the shield should stop everyone but the abyssal from entering. He will also be baffled as to why the slaves are being brought, except perhaps for feeding essence to the abyssal. He will, casually, mention that their best course of action, therefore, will be to kill the captives, thus starving the abyssals. Regret knows Carrionis well, but doesn't know Vision at all. Throughout this process, Regret will be fighting resonance and the whispers. Both of these should intrude to the point that the characters notice them.

Once (if) the army reaches the manse, they will make a camp about 100 yards from the shield, far enough so there is no line of sight from people behind the shield to the camp due to the

intervening trees. The slaves are immediately put to work clearing the ground for the camp (lashing the deathrings to trees and ripping them down). They also pitch a large tent for the abyssals (pg. 48).

Variations: An alternate possibility is that the circle has no warning of the approaching army at all. Regret could have easily come from another direction.

Outcome: The circle will make some preparations for the coming horde. It may also be that the circle takes the fight to them while approaching.

Debugging: Not much can really go wrong here. The circle may make some bad choices, but so it goes.

Field Testing: The lunar turned into a bird to scout out the approaching army. He managed to slip into the line and talk to the slaves, but was nearly discovered and had to flee.

Meanwhile, the rest of the circle dug a trench around the solar tower (where the main doors are) and filled it with spikes. They also scouted out several ambush sites to use in case the shield failed. From an earlier encounter (pg. 24) the players had access to huge chunks of obsidian, which they used to build deadfall-type traps.



TIMELINE

If left unmolested, Carrionis' plans will proceed similar to this timeline. Naturally, events will alter this timeline, but this is what would happen if the dead go unopposed:

Day 0 The army of the dead arrives just before sunset. Vision begins summoning a demon of the first circle at sunset (ritual lasts until midnight). In the meantime, slaves directed to pitch tents for the abyssals. Several trees pulled down by deathrings for fires. Carrionis sends familiar to reconnoiter the manse.

At midnight, the demon is summoned and ordered to enter the manse and attempt to shut off the shield (Plan C, pg. 33). At soon as it hits the shield, it will be sucked into nonexistence with a loud accompanying light show.

Vision will drain the lives of ten of the slaves to regenerate her essence pool.

Carrionis will enter the shield and hide in the trees, resting until his essence is regained (via hearthstone, taking just over three hours). He will then attempt to get Regret of the Sun to let him in (Plan A, pg. 30).

Day 1 Abyssals sleep by day, in shifts, with the spine chains and one of the exquisite servants as guard. The slaves are directed to clear jungle and construct an altar. Vision begins to negotiate with Makarios in her dreams (Plan C, pg. 33).

At sunset, Vision summons another first circle demon. At midnight, it suffers the same fate as the first one.

Vision starts sacrificing captives (Plan B, pg. 31), using their essence to regenerate her pools. She gets through one hundred sacrifices before dawn.

Carrionis summons more ghosts to harass those in the manse. He then takes the deathrings and begins to alter the landscape around the shield to better channel abyssal essence (Plan D, pg. 34).

Day 2 Abyssals sleep by day, in shifts, with the spine chains and one of the exquisite servants as guard. Vision's negotiations with Makarios continue. The Immaculate priest buries and consecrates the dead. Slaves clear more jungle and continue landscape alteration.

At sunset, Vision summons another first circle demon. At midnight, it suffers the same fate as the first two.

One hundred fifty slaves are sacrificed.

Carrionis continues to summon ghosts and alter the landscape.

Day 3 Abyssals sleep as before. Vision concludes negotiations with Makarios. More burials, consecration and land alteration.

At sunset, Vision brands sixty-six slaves with Makarios' mark, effectively summoning him. He attempts to deactivate the shield (Plan C, pg. 33).

Carrionis summons more ghosts, then helps Vision sacrifice all of the remaining slaves (apart from those that are now branded) and a hundred of the zombies.

Day 4 Abyssals sleep as before. More burials and consecration.

At sunset, all of the buried slaves are ritually exhumed and defiled (Plan B, pg. 31). Immaculate priest sacrificed. By dawn, the land containing the manse and its environs will be a shadowland. The abyssal's ability to regenerate essence improves while the character's diminishes.

Day 5 Abyssals sleep as before. Remaining slaves continue to alter landscape.

At sunset, the manse begins to slowly deteriorate under the influence of the shadowland. Carrionis works through the night to alter the landscape, accelerating the process.

Day 6 Abyssals sleep as before. Remaining slaves continue to alter landscape.

At sunset, Carrionis continues alterations. At midnight, the solar hearth falls. By dawn, the manse begins to crack.

Day 7 Abyssals sleep as before. Remaining slaves continue to alter landscape.

At sunset, Carrionis continues alterations. At midnight, the solar tower collapses. The essence flow to the Hermitage Cloak stops and the shield goes down. The dead assault what is left of the manse (pg. 36).



PLAN D

Abstract: The dead conspire to undermine the manse.

Dramatic Purpose: The villain's evil plot.

Setting: Outside the manse.

Order: Sometime after Plan A (pg. 30).

Principals: Carrionis, two spine chains, an exquisite undead servant, two deathrings and at least 50 zombies.

Specifics: To enter the manse, Carrionis needs to overcome two obstacles: the shield generated by the Hermitage Cloak and the spell which prevents non-exalts from entering. Like Plan A (pg. 29), this plan targets the latter (though, if Plan A succeeds, this plan will be unnecessary).

Carrionis intends to alter the landscape surrounding the manse in order to change the aspect its flow into abyssal essence. While he will not be able to make this change completely with the resources he has, he hopes that the damage the manse has sustained will make it more susceptible to even minor changes.

This plan will be more successful if the manse is surrounded by a shadowland (Plan B, pg. 31), as the land itself will be more closely aligned with abyssal energy. Should the shield be brought down as well, the task will be much easier, as Carrionis will be able to alter the terrain closer to the manse. In addition, Carrionis will likely change his strategy when and if he realizes someone other than Regret of the Sun occupies the manse.

The night after the army arrives, Carrionis will direct a team of 50 zombies, the spine chains, two deathrings and one of the exquisite undead servants to just outside the shield on the side of the manse opposite from the camp. The zombies are ordered to start digging (using their bare hands) at specific sites identified by Carrionis. Zombies dig holes in pairs, each hole ultimately growing three feet across and nine feet down.

At first, these holes seem like they are dug at random, but as more of them are made, a pattern emerges. This pattern has occult significance, redirecting essence flow in the area. Organs and viscera from the sacrificed captives (pg. 30) are dumped into each hole as it is finished, and covered with a thin layer of soil.

The circle will probably notice this process and realize that the part of the army that has split off to accomplish it is much smaller and out of formation. As such, it makes a ripe target for attack, particularly if Carrionis is elsewhere. If the circle interrupts this plan (or if Carrionis discovers the circle's presence in some other way), the plan will continue more slowly, and with more emphasis on defending the diggers.

As more and more holes are dug, the circle will begin to notice slight effects in the manse. The tubes in the solar tower will begin to malfunction, lights will waver, small cracks may develop.

Ultimately, if the circle doesn't stop entirely defeat the army, more and more holes will be dug. Once the pattern of holes is complete and the shadowland has been brought into existence (pg. 30), the exhumed bodies of the captives will be thrown, head first, into each of the holes at midnight.

The response to the completion of this ritual will exceed Carrionis' expectations. Though just the beginning of the changes needed to fully re-aspect a manse, this manse is already teetering at the edge of stability and this ritual is enough to push it over. Being able to survive the meteor strike beat all odds, but the manse cannot take more shock.

The first major indication of failure in the manse will be the flickering of the shield as the final part of the ritual is started. It will soon wink out. Simultaneously, the solar hearth will begin

to wobble. It will become more and more unstable as the ritual progresses, finally plunging into the twilight spire. The impact will shatter the glass hearth and severely crack the spire. Almost immediately, the essence released by the disintegrating hearth will detonate in a massive explosion. This will rip down the remaining spires and much of the central building. Anyone *directly* in the path of the explosion is likely to die pretty horribly. The material of the manse still has the strength to provide cover from the blast, though falling debris and collapsing walls are still a concern.

As the dust settles, it will be clear that the manse is undergoing death throws. Periodic flashes of energy will erupt from random places, ripping even more of the buildings down. The lunar sphere will start to glow and emit a hideous wine, as if building for detonation. It will erupt within the hour. Hearthstones from the manse will crack when the hearth that generated them is destroyed.

Once the manse has fallen, the rubble itself will begin to crumble as its magic fades and the Wyld intrudes. Within six months, it will be dust.

Variations: Carrionis may wish to delay this plan until either the shadowland is formed or the shield is down (or both).

Outcome: If the circle is paying attention at all, they will spot the digging crews, realize their vulnerability and take them out in stages.

Debugging: On the off chance the manse gets destroyed, the Storyteller should give some warning of the impending destruction, or players are likely to die in the explosion.

Field Testing: The circle managed to kill Carrionis early (pg. 29) and had a number of methods of reconnaissance available to them (though it took them a while to realize the scrying pools (pg. 39) could be used for this purpose). Guen realized that, being a Changing Moon, he had the ability to appear as Carrionis. This idea was all the more effective against fairly mindless creatures like zombies, and the circle brought the strategy to bear with devastating effectiveness.

Disguised as Carrionis, Guen visited each working group of zombies, pointed to the manse and said "go". Because the zombies had been raised by the Lover and given instructions to follow Carrionis (and after some really good manipulation + performance rolls on Guen's part), the zombies moved in groups to the manse, where upon they destroyed themselves one after the other against the shield. A fight broke out with one of the spine chains before Guen got to it, but the circle took it down. The other chain happily strolled into the shield. Guen saved her best rolls for the exquisite undead aide, who also was convinced to assault into the shield (leaving behind a sturdy, if confused, horse).

The same tactics proved as decisive when brought to bear on the other side of the manse. Guen even managed to fool Vision, though her robes were not fooled at all, and attacked Guen. When Vision realized what this meant, she ran. Meanwhile, Gutts couldn't resist swinging huge pieces of obsidian in great arcs to crush many zombies at once. Some of the zombies and deathrings got sidetracked by this and started to attack Gutts, though they were soon redirected by Guen.

As the zombies shambled towards the shield, the captive humans scattered. A couple of them were killed by a fleeing Vision to feed her essence pool. With the zombies dutifully incinerating themselves, Guen took the form of a hawk and tried to track down Vision. By the time the circle caught up with her, she had sacrificed her horse and entered the Labyrinth.

ASSAULT

Abstract: The circle comes head to head with the army of the dead.

Dramatic Purpose: A large final battle.

Setting: Inside and just outside the manse.

Order: Last.

Principals: Any of the remaining forces of the dead, which may include Carrionis (pg. 51), Vision Consorting with the Dead (pg. 62), 500 zombies, 500 innocent mortal human captives, eight deathrings (pg. 65), two spine chains [299] and three exquisite undead aides [ab226]. Potentially, Makarios, demon of the second circle, the warden soul of That Which Calls to the Shadows [gd102] may remain as well. Regret of the Sun (pg. 57) may also play a role, either for or against the circle.

Specifics: This section is more of a catch-all for a final battle between the dead and the circle, but how (or even if) it will happen depends significantly on how other events play.

If the shield is down and plan A succeeds: The dead will immediately stage a full assault of the manse. All remaining zombies will be divided into four groups. One group will set up four battering rams, each using trees suspended between a pair of deathrings. These rams will be brought to bear on the doors in the solar tower. Carrionis and Vision will oversee this group. Two other groups will be each be led by an exquisite aide and assigned a spine chain. Each group will select a section of wall and attempt to infiltrate the manse, using the spine chain as a ladder. The last group, also led by an exquisite aide, will be held in reserve and as a guard for the deathnights. The human captives will be completely unguarded and will likely scatter and flee, though some might fight. If possible, Carrionis will attempt to get Regret to open the gates.

If the shield is down, but plan A fails: Once the shield goes down, the army will move inside its perimeter as quickly as possible, bringing the captives with them. They will remain concealed by the jungle if possible and continue their plans. Being closer to the manse, plans B (pg. 30) and D (pg. 33) have a much greater chance of succeeding, if they have not already been attempted.

If plan D succeeds: Carrionis will send about 50 or so zombies (led by an exquisite aide) into the manse as soon as the shield drops and it starts to self-destruct. He doesn't expect any will come back out, but orders them to slaughter anyone they see. The rest of the army will surround the manse at a distance of about 1000 yards, watching for survivors of the circle leaving the manse, who will be attacked.

If the players take the battle to the army: In this, the most likely scenario, the players will, at some point, hatch a plan of attack. Many will elect to use hit and run tactics to whittle the army down bit by bit instead of a full on battle. Others may charge right in. In any case, the army will likely be more scattered in this case, with different sections of it pursuing different plans.

Throughout any of these scenarios (and any other encounters with the army), the Storyteller should keep the following in mind:

- While both Carrionis and Vision have the ability to command the dead [ab179], all of the standard zombies have already been commanded to follow any orders from either of them. This command came from the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears, who summoned the zombies herself. This has its drawbacks, as the zombies can only recognize either of them by appearance, which can be mimicked.
- Regret of the Sun may be something of a wild card, should the Storyteller choose to use him that way.
- Carrionis is more committed to the plan than Vision is. She is more likely to abandon the whole affair if things get rough.
- The Lady of the Vine [pg. 55] may intercede on either side if the Storyteller believes she would reasonably do so. Such intervention may be overt or subtle.

Outcome: In all likelihood, the circle will attack the army before most (or any) of the plans have gone very far. Smart parties should be able to defeat the army.

Debugging: Being the grand finale, bad things may happen. Storytellers should probably let the chips fall where they may.

Field Testing: The party seized an opportunity presented while dealing with plan D (pg. 33), and defeated the army handily.

Type:	Deathring (8, see pg. 65)								
Abilities:	Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Endurance 2, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Survival 2								
Str/Dex/Sta:	10/1/8	-0	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□
Per/Int/Wit:	2/1/3	-1	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□
App/Cha/Man:	0/0/0	-2	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	n/a	-4	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□
Willpower:	10	I	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Essence:	1	Attack				Sp/At/D/Df			
Initiative:	4	Gore				6/4/6L/4	Wounds likely to become infected [299]		
Dodge/Soak:	2/6L/6B	Bite				3/4/2L/3			
Tactics:	Used to lead assaults and pulling heavy objects (gates, etc.)								

Type:	Spine Chain (2, 20 sections each) [299]										
Abilities:	Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Melee 2, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2										
Str/Dex/Sta:	4/2/3	-0	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□							
Per/Int/Wit:	2/1/3	-1	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□							
App/Cha/Man:	0/0/0	-2	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□							
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	n/a	-4									
Willpower:	10	Attack				Sp/At/D/Df					
Essence:	1	Harness Sideswipe				7/5/7L/5	Wounds likely to become infected [299]				
Initiative:	9										
Dodge/Soak:	4/2B/1L										
Tactics:	Used to keep slaves in line. During assault, used as ladders for zombies as well as attack.										





AFTERMATH

Depending on how events transpire, the manse will be in one of three states: retained (mostly) intact by the circle, taken over by the dead or destroyed.

RETAINED

The mostly likely outcome is that the circle defeats the army of the dead and retains control of a semi-functional manse. This outcome is something of a mixed blessing, because until recently, the manse's main line of defence was secrecy. Now, a number of different parties know of the manse's existence:

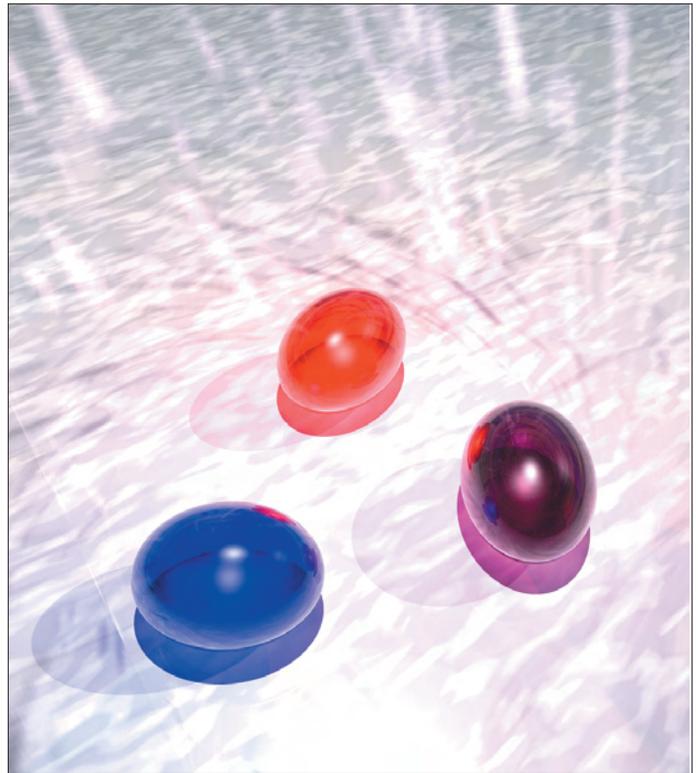
- The deathlord Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears clearly knows where the manse is and will likely be upset by the loss of two of her deathnights (if they were killed). Unless word gets back to her somehow, however, she is unlikely to know of the existence of the circle itself.
- The Lady of the Vine knows of the manse and its new owners. She has seen their ability to defend the manse, so may be more interested in a deal with the circle. She considers the shield to be an abomination, for example, so might offer to warn the circle of approaching danger, provided they leave the shield off most of the time.
- Saerssa (pg. 59) will be interested in attuning to the manse, and will be willing to bargain to do so. If lunars are in the circle, she will also be interested in having her caste fixed.
- If any of the humans captured by the army survive and make it home, chances are the Immaculate Order will hear of the manse eventually.
- Regret of the Sun (pg. 57) knows the manse, but the resonance he feels is driving him crazy, so he will likely leave if he still lives. He may return to the Lover or may not.
- If any of the demons escape, they have had ample time to determine the manse's location.
- If any of the solars from Usurpers (pg. 24) survive and escape, they may be able to find the manse again.

The remote location of the manse presents a logistical conundrum. Any attackers will need to come far to reach it, but it is also far from interesting activity. Travel to and from the manse will be time consuming, unless the circle has some sort of magic to fly over the jungle (or managed to capture or trade for Saerssa's Horn of Ways).

The army of the dead will have left behind a large amount of gear, particularly rope and some food. They will also have left a large number of rotting corpses that will need to be dealt with. If the army managed to create a shadowland, the players will likely want to deal with that as well [ab23], and both the natural fertility of the jungle and the Lady of the Vine may be able to help with this.

The circle will also inherit a number of refugees if any of the human captives survive. Some of these people will simply flee into the jungle, but most realize that home is far away, the jungle dangerous and they themselves exhausted. Most will view the manse as welcome shelter. The circle has a number of options here. If Kilate Moraj still lives, he will attempt to negotiate for a few night's rest in the manse, then lead what remains the group home. (If they make it is up to the Storyteller.)

A party wishing to keep the manse will eventually also want to repair it. To do so, they will need to gather the remnants of the night tower, raise them into position somehow (e.g. enlisting elementals), and mend them somehow (e.g. Crack Mending Technique [183]).



CONQUERED

In the unlikely event that the dead conquer the manse, chances are that the members of the circle are dead. If, instead, they survived and fled, they may be able to retake the manse. They need to act quickly, however. Left to his own devices, Carrionis will continue with the plans to re-aspect the manse. This result will surprise him, as the manse begins to disintegrate, as detailed in Plan D (pg. 33). Once this happens, events will proceed as in the next section.

DESTROYED

The manse is destroyed, but the dual-natured demesne under it is still powerful, though perhaps tainted. If this happens, the Lady of the Vine will act quickly to destroy anyone left who might try claiming the demesne and then claim the demesne as her new sanctuary.

Should this happen, the Lady will likely face some of the same issues as mentioned in the "Retained" section above, but may have to do so alone. Assuming the characters live, and provided they had good relations with the Lady, she may call on the them to help defend her.

OTHER ISSUES

This adventure may also create a number of loose ends that may or may not be significant later in the campaign.

The most obvious of these is any arrangement made with Trieste (pg. 61), assuming any was made. Chances are that this will lead the circle to its next adventure.

Other loose ends will likely revolve around survivors of the various encounters (if any), so keeping track of survivors is strongly advised.

Storytellers may want to add more hooks to lead the circle into the campaign. For example, the ruined library may contain references or maps of Rathess, should the Storyteller be interested in using that location. The earlier section on using this adventure with other adventures (pg. 3) may provide advice along these lines.

APPENDIX A: MANSE

Centuries of jungle growth conceal a unique manse possessing a dual aspect of both lunar and solar essence. Octaliel, the sidereal who discovered it, thought that either it was one manse given divided nature by incredible First Age knowledge and skill, or actually was two differently aspected demesnes in extremely close proximity, unified into a single structure. In either case, its construction eluded her understanding. In spite of sustaining significant damage, the manse miraculously remains mostly intact and functional, largely owing to its ingenious First Age construction.

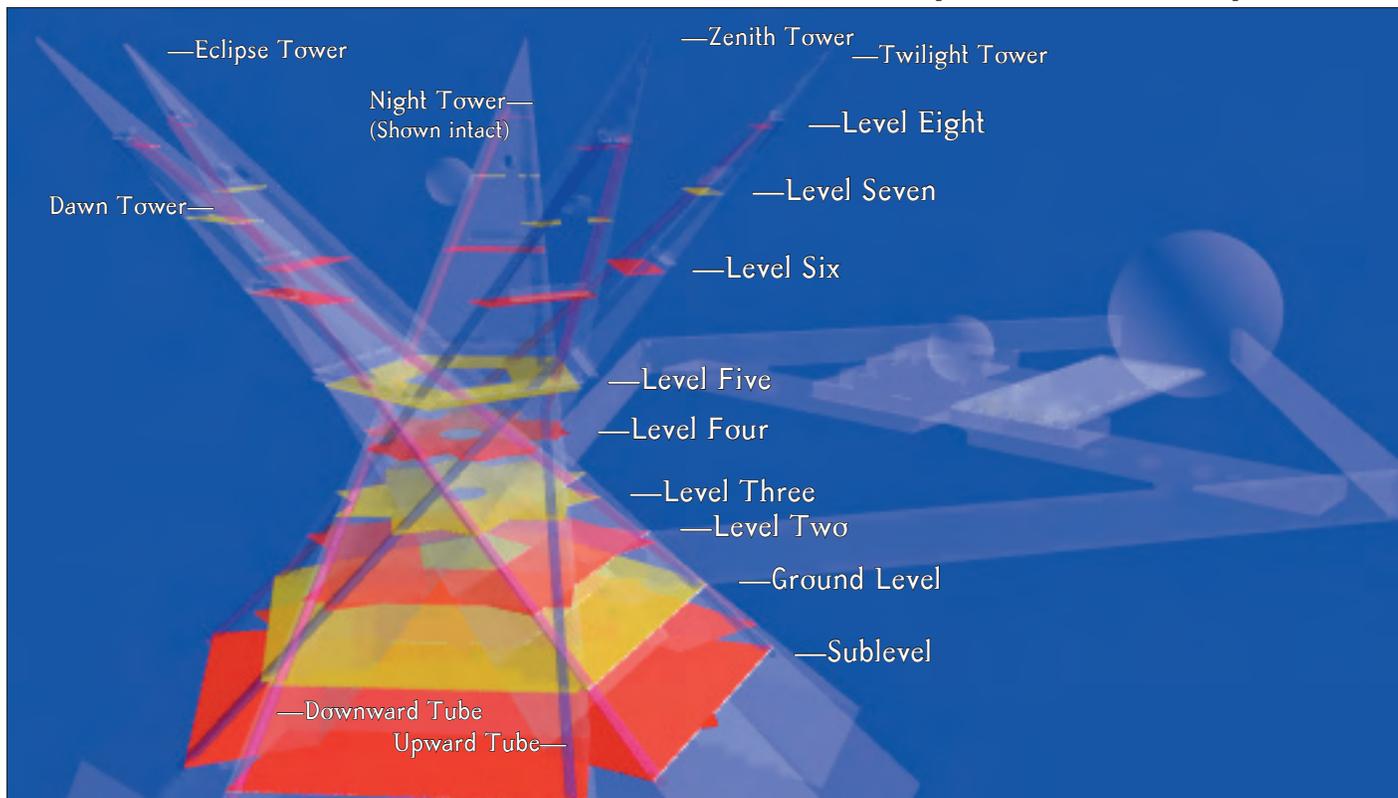
Fairly powerful, the manse divides its four rating points between its two aspects. Three points of the manse are aspected to solar energy, with the one remaining aspected toward the lunar. Each of these aspects has its own hearthstone room. The manse itself is divided into solar and lunar sections, with each hearthstone room at the heart of its respected section. As it has been abandoned for centuries and hidden by the thick jungle, currently no one is attuned to the manse.

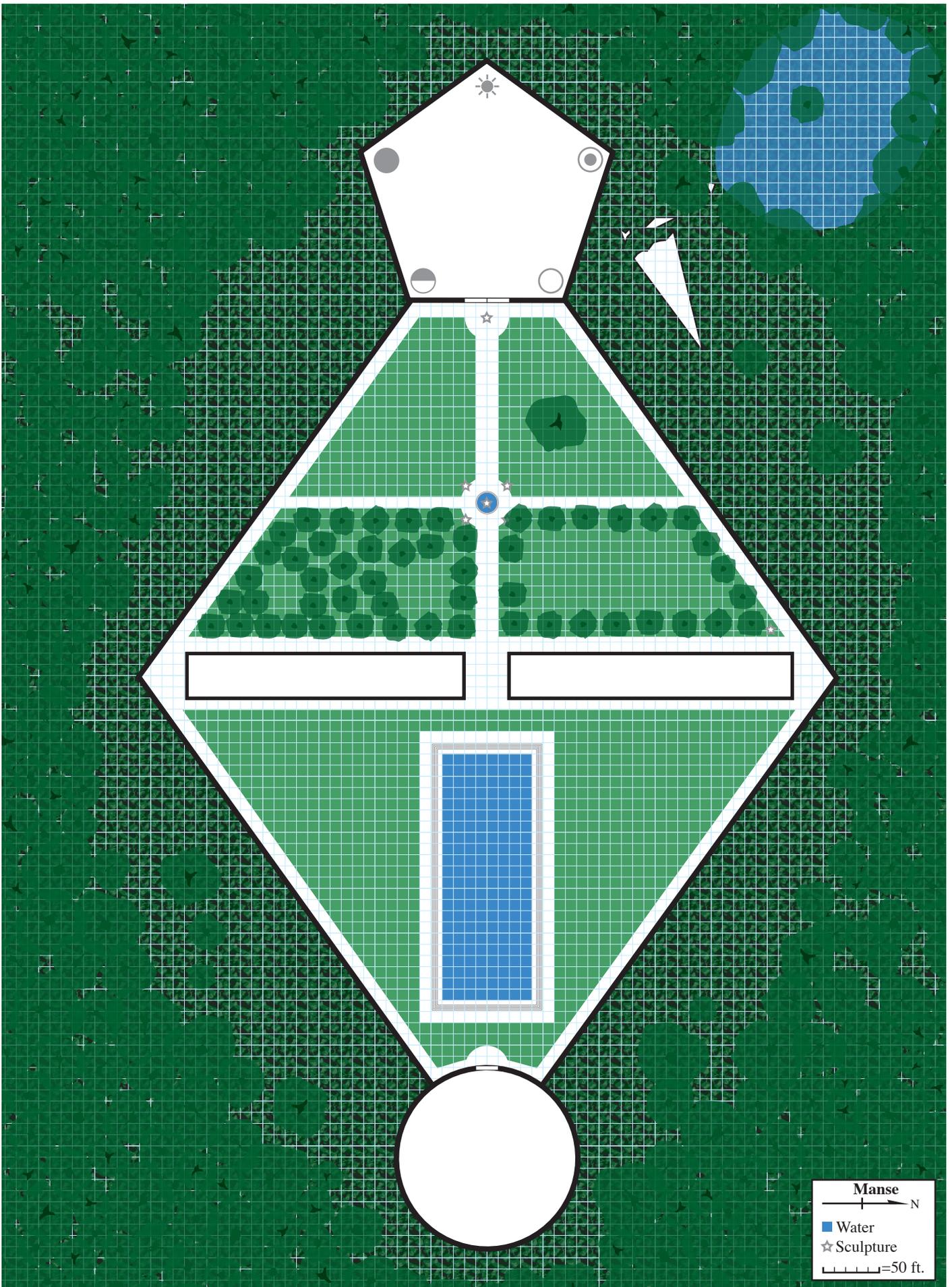
The solar section consists of five spires, crossing as they rise to surround a central courtyard. Each spire is dedicated to one of the solar castes. The dawn spire points to the east, at the rising sun. Moving around the circle (starting to the south) are the zenith, twilight, night and eclipse spires. The hearthstone room, looking much like a sphere made of stained glass, floats fifty feet above the courtyard, equidistant to the spires.

On the opposite side of the site lays the lunar portion of the manse, appearing from the outside as a large sphere of mirrored silver in front of a large, though shallow, reflective pool.

Central to the site is a large, narrow building. This tiered structure housed the manse's mortal staff as well as the more mundane needs of the site, such as stables, kitchens, laundry, etc.

As described in the introduction (pg. 2), a meteor hit the night spire around two hundred years ago, snapping it in half. Most of the top half of the night spire remains, laying on its side outside the manse amid smaller pieces of rubble from the impact. The meteor





did leave a small crater, which is discernible only as a dank pond next to the manse. The cracked lower remnants of the night spire remain standing. As the meteor hit between floors, most of the jagged top is solid rock, though the transfer tubes (see below) are open to the elements.

The manse has a greater than average number of subtle effects [3c106]:

- The climate within the buildings of the manse is controlled to keep it at a very comfortable temperature and humidity level. It is, in effect, magically air-conditioned. (minor)
- All rooms have light panels that glow or darken on command. The command is “lux” and the level of illumination corresponds to the volume of the voice. Note that it may take the characters some time to discover what this command is. (minor)
- Several pools exist which can scry any area in or around the manse. If used to scry within the manse, anyone in the room being viewed has a chance to “feel” they are being watched (two successes on a perception + occult roll). (major)
- Several sections of the manse harness the essence of the site to weaken (or even slightly reverse) the pull of gravity. This primarily affects the solar hearth, keeping it free floating between the spires. Each spire also contains two shafts that run the length of the spire. In each spire, gravity in one of the shafts reduced to a very slight tug downwards and gravity in the other is a slight pull upwards. Each shaft is about five feet across, allowing people to move up or down between levels. (major)

Several artifacts also draw power from the essence flow of the manse:

- The Hermitage Cloak, a defensive artifact, is contained in the dome of the central building. See Appendix B for more details (pg. 47).
- Below the buildings are buried what are basically magical pumps that keep water circulating in the building. These power fountains, plumbing systems, baths, swimming pools, etc.

CURRENT APPEARANCE

The manse currently appears a bit different than in the character’s dreams (and in the images presented in this book). The primary differences are:

- The night spire has been cracked off, as if struck by a large hammer. The remnants of the spire lie on the ground nearby.
- The solar hearth (floating stained glass sphere between the spires) is slowly swaying in the air, no longer balanced between the spires.
- The jungle is starting to swallow the manse, with vines growing up the walls and so on. Inside, however, the grounds remain immaculate (thanks to the Groundskeeper, pg 54).
- Alert characters (success on perception + awareness roll) will notice an extremely large spider web between the tips of the dawn and zenith spires. (Spun by Limonis, pg. 22.)
- Centuries of dirt have also accumulated on the manse, making the outside look drab and dingy. Mineral deposits from water flowing down the sides of the manse are also visible.

DAMAGE

The damage from the meteor has altered the essence flow through the manse. This damage is serious and similar alterations to the essence flow have caused many other manses to overload and explode over the years. This has not yet happened to this manse, partly due to its design and partly due to efforts by Octalviel to patch the damage. These essence alterations do, however, have the following effects:

- The hearths can no longer produce working stones (see Hearthstones, pg. 40).
- A good deal of excess energy is channelled into magical water pumps. As a result, the water pressure is much higher throughout the manse than originally designed. Turning on a sink will unleash a torrent of water. The added pressure has caused some of the pipes to give out, so the manse has occasional wet patches.
- The defensive artifact varies in strength over the course of a month, peaking during a new moon.
- The shafts used to travel between floors in the solar spires behave erratically about 20% of the time (60% in the Night spire), speeding up, slowing down, reversing or turning off.

DEFENSES

Designed mostly as a residence, the primary defense of the manse was intended to be the exalted that built it. Still, there are a number of features of the manse that act as passive defense:

LOCATION

Built for isolation, the manse’s distance from civilization has provided ample defense up to now. It’s lush jungle surroundings provide excellent cover, making it nearly impossible to see from the ground unless right next to it.

WALLS

The main grounds are enclosed by 30 foot walls. Made of the same enchanted marble used in the rest of the manse, these walls are three feet thick, extend 10 feet into the ground and are unnaturally strong. Using the rules for attacking objects [239], these walls have a soak of 22B/19L and take 100 health levels to damage or 170 to destroy. In interior walls of the manse are not as thick, but are still enchanted. They have the same soak but require only 55 health levels to damage and 90 to destroy.

SHIELD

A short dome atop the central building contains an artifact powered by the manse that protects the manse from intruders called the Hermitage Cloak (pg. 48). This shield drains essence of any who pass through it.

Octalviel discovered that this artifact could also be used to keep spirits bound to the manse. She summoned a number of them to defend it, and the artifact continued to bind some of them even after her death. The damage from the meteor, however, has made the artifact perform imperfectly, and over the years the more powerful among them have been able to break free, leaving only weakest inside.

SORCERY

Like many other First Age manses, this manse only allows certain exalted to enter [29]. Sorceries woven into the manse allow only celestial exalted to enter without permission. Interestingly, the enchantment does not consider abyssal exalted to be “celestial





exalted” for this purpose. Thus, solar, lunar and sidereal exalted may enter at will.

The enchantment allows others to enter only with the permission of an exalted (of any kind) already inside the manse. Thus, any human, beastman, dragon-blooded or abyssal may only enter if invited in. For example, a solar could walk in, then invite in a dragon-blooded. Once inside, the dragon-blooded can invite anyone else in as well.

Any person who is not allowed in who attempts to gain entry becomes frozen in place if they try to move forward. Moving out of the manse is effortless, but advancing anywhere else within the manse requires a difficulty 4 strength + athletics check for each yard of travel. No other tests may be made on a turn where such movement is attempted.

Non-human (either mortal or exalted) entities, such as animals, spirits, etc. can enter the manse at will, though they cannot invite others inside.

An invitation to any specific individual may be cancelled by the unanimous consent of all exalted attuned to the manse who are physically within the manse. If the individual whose invitation is cancelled while on the manse grounds, they feel the “freezing” effect mentioned above immediately.

ENTRY

The main entrance is through either of two large doors in the ground floor of the night and twilight spires. (Note that because of the ways the spires cross, the ground floor of these two spires have the top floor of the dawn spire above them. See the introduction to the “Solar Spire” section, below.) Presently, these two doors are completely covered with vines and other plant life, so cannot be seen without searching for them. The doors open inward, so clearing them off should not be necessary. The doors will open for any person allowed into the manse (see above).

Other ways into the manse include climbing over the walls or going through one of the open balconies on the spires. Some characters may be able to fly in. Tunneling may also work, though the marble of the walls is unnaturally strong.

THE CALL

The souls of those who built the manse have such an affinity for it that even their reincarnations can “feel” the presence of the manse. Manifesting as a sort of subconscious “call”, this affinity will drive such reincarnations to the manse sooner or later. It is this call which infects the circles dreams at the start of the story (pg. 6).

HEARTHSTONES

The manse has been constructed to produce multiple hearthstones. One side effect of the manse’s dual nature is that its essence flow cannot be concentrated into stones with a rating greater than one. As such, the manse produces three level 1 solar stones and one level 1 lunar stone.

The stones currently in the hearths original began to coalesce when the original manse builders were killed and the stones they carried were broken. When the meteor hit the manse, the impact seriously altered the essence flow to the hearths, affecting both the hearths and the existing hearthstones.

Over the 200 years since the meteor strike, the hearthstones have developed flaws. The flaw is similar in all of the stones, which may be due to the operation of the Hermitage Cloak.

More seriously, the hearths themselves can no longer generate new stones. If the existing stones are broken, the hearths will attempt to replace them, but the result will be a misshapen mass of solidified essence. Fully repairing the manse will bring the geometry back into focus and allow formation of new stones.

The stones derive their theme from the mind set and desires of the manse’s architects: isolation.

GEM OF WITHDRAWAL •

Trigger: Concentration

Type: Solar

This transparent, deep red, egg-shaped gem allows its bearer to withdraw from the notice of those around her, assuming the bearer does not want to be noticed. Mechanically, the stone provides an extra die for Stealth tests and any attempts at disguise as someone who tends not to be noticed (beggars, servants, etc.).

This stone contains a flaw that makes the bearer interesting to spirits, who are a bit more likely to investigate the bearer than normal. This is especially true when the stone’s stealth ability is in operation, when it acts much like a bright light to spirits.

GEM OF INSIGNIFICANCE •

Trigger: Constant

Type: Solar

This transparent, deep blue, egg-shaped gem clouds the idle perceptions of those around the bearer. This has no effect on those with whom the bearer directly interacts (e.g. in conversation, combat, etc.) but casual passerby will be unable to remember details about the bearer. This does not affect the bearer’s ability to be seen in any way. People will just be unable to remember details about her unless she had some sort of interaction with them.

This stone contains a flaw that makes the bearer interesting to spirits, who are a bit more likely to investigate the bearer than normal. This is especially true of the least gods, who will remember the bearer especially well.

GEM OF RELUCTANCE •

Trigger: Reflex

Type: Solar

This transparent, deep purple, egg-shaped gem makes others reluctant to touch the bearer when she doesn’t want to be touched. Mechanically, anyone attempting a bare-hand attack on the bearer subtracts one die from her test.

This stone contains a flaw that makes the bearer interesting to spirits, who are a bit more likely to investigate the bearer than normal. This is especially true of spirits of the wilderness, who will find the bearer more sexually attractive than usual.

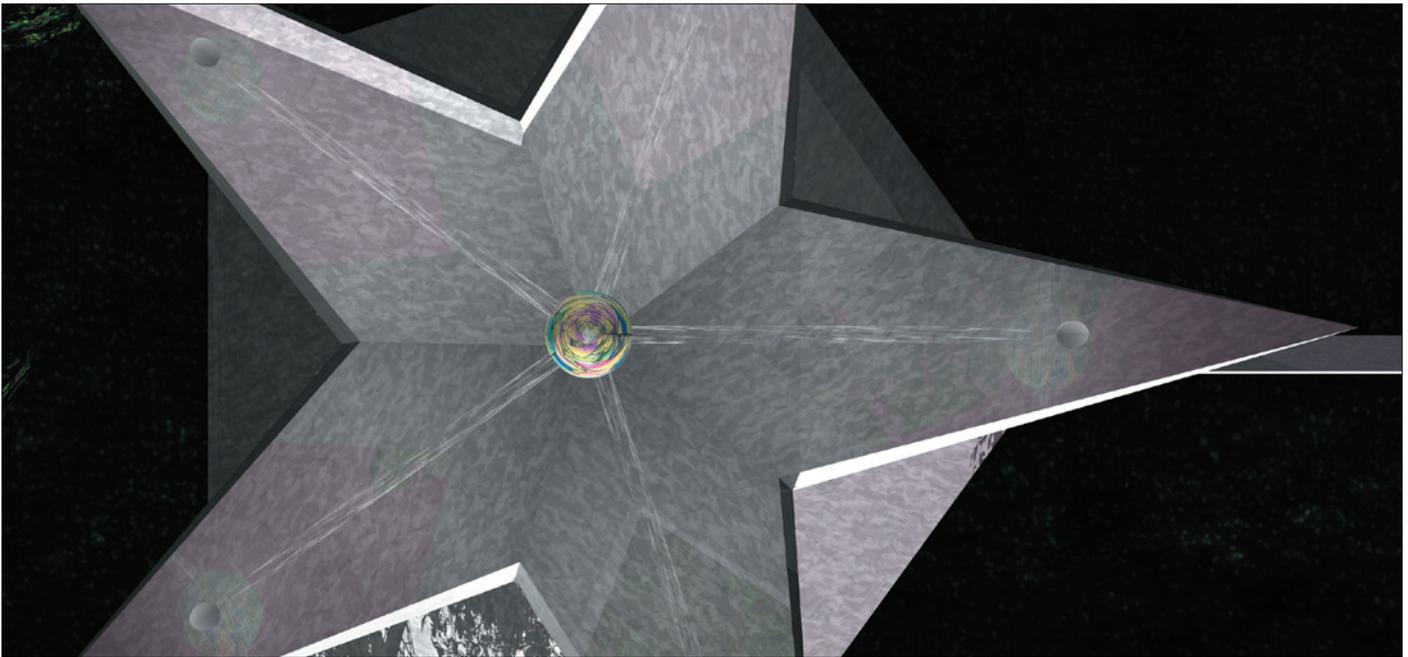
REPULSIVE INGOT •

Trigger: Concentration, Constant

Type: Lunar

This small bar of silver allows the bearer to make her presence intolerable to animals, if so desired. When active, animals will give the bearer a wide berth (around 50 yards) and will likely run away if confronted. Even when inactive, the stone maintains this function, though in a greatly reduced capacity. In this state, the ingot will keep standard insects and small animals (e.g. leeches) from making contact with the bearer’s skin.

This stone contains a flaw that makes the bearer interesting to spirits, who are a bit more likely to investigate the bearer than normal. This is especially true of elementals, which may target the bearer. Wood elementals will be particularly hostile.



REPAIRING THE MANSE

Apart from the cracked night spire, the manse has few other physical flaws. Repairing the spire, however, will require a significant amount of effort. Enough of the top of the spire remains on the ground below that it might be gathered and mended, though a small amount of new material would be needed as well. Repairs may also be made using all new material, if desired, though getting them to the manse may be problematic.

Some method will be needed to lift the materials into place. Possibilities include sorcery, demons or lots of manual labor. Once lifted in place, the new repairs must be fused into the existing structure. It will likely require charms of some kind, particularly Crack-Mending Technique, to get the night spire together again. Certain artifacts may also be of use, such as the Singing Staff [sc79].

Even with the physical structure repaired, the manse will still not function as normal until subtle details are attended to by a skilled worker. This work is considered a moderate change using the rules for manse redesign [3c106]. The difficulty of these tests increases by one if all new materials are used.

Materials used in the manse have already been subjected to other craft charms for increasing their durability, etc.

SOLAR TOWER

The manse is dominated by a large, five spired building comprising the solar section of the manse. In addition to forming the geomantic patterns that feed the solar hearth, this building acted as the primary living space for the exalted who built it.

Each spire consists of a stretched, four-sided pyramid extending from its point several hundred feet above ground to its base fifty feet below the surface. The spires all cross roughly at the center of their length, merging together into a central building. The crossing of their spires make this section of the manse somewhat difficult to navigate. For example, at the top of the manse, the dawn spire points to the east; however, once the spires cross, the east side of the tower is dominated by the bases of the night and twilight spires. Storytellers are encouraged to study the maps of the solar tower and get comfortable with how the crossing spires work before bringing players into it.

TRANSIT TUBES

The levels of the tower are connected not by stairs, but by two tubes running the length of each spire. Each tube is five feet in diameter, with large openings on each floor. Within each spire, one tube is used for travelling upward and the other for downward travel. Each tube contains horizontal indentations every foot to allow hand holds. While these can be used as a ladder, they are usually not necessary due to a subtle effect of the manse (explained above) that adjusts gravity within the tubes.

Anything entering the tubes becomes nearly weightless, floating within it. Left to their own, an item placed within the tube will drift slowly either up or down, depending on the direction of intended travel within the tube. Living creatures can pull themselves up or down any tube at a base rate equal to their strength + athletics in yards per combat turn. If moving in the tube's intended direction, this rate is increased by one yard per combat turn. If moving against the intended flow of the tube, this rate is decreased by one yard per combat turn.

Again, storytellers are encouraged to become familiar with the layout of the tubes and how they move through the manse. For example, trace the path of a character entering the twilight tube in the subbasement and moving all the way to the top level of the twilight tower. Once there, become familiar with how that character might travel from there to the top of the zenith tower. Understanding the way the tubes work should avoid slowdowns during the running of the game.

CONDITION

While the stone of the manse is mostly intact, furnishings and other items within the manse have been largely ruined by time and the tower's demonic inhabitants. While a number of animals once took up residence in the manse, these have all been eaten by the erymanthoi (pg. 22).

An occasional tapestry, painting or other item may have been enchanted to resist the ravages of time. Their pristine condition stands in stark contrast to the tattered remnants that surround them. Before abandoning the manse millennia ago, the mortal staff stripped anything they could carry, including door knobs, mirrors and so on, leaving the inside of the manse in disarray.



SUBLEVEL

Beneath the ground level is a vast sublevel containing mostly practical rooms, storage and a large vault. This level is divided into sections roughly corresponding to each solar caste. Most of the rooms are self-explanatory.

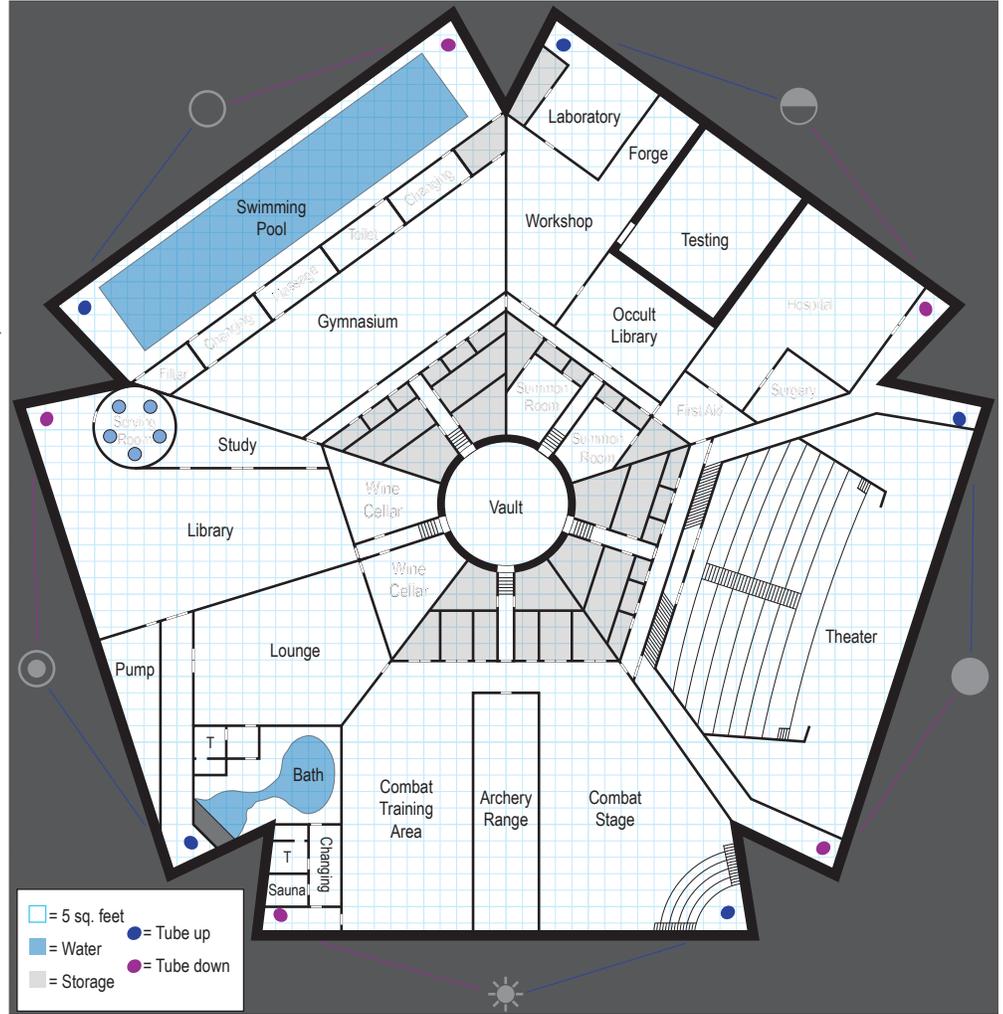
Portions of this level, particularly the night and twilight sections, have been flooded from time to time, and may be covered by up to a foot of water.

The dawn section focusses on combat training and includes a small grandstand for viewing martial demonstrations.

A theater with tiered seating for up to 120 dominates the zenith section.

The twilight section is dedicated to healing and creative arts. The occult library contains an artifact to protect books from aging, but unfortunately has been flooded, ruining most of the texts. The forge continues to burn with an endless flame. The thick walled testing room shows signs of explosions and other damage, but is sturdy.

Dedicated to physical training, the night level contains a room with an artifact that keeps the swimming pool filtered. The pool room, however, has been flooded with rain water, which the filter has dutifully purifying over the millennia. The flood is not deep, however, as the pump in the eclipse section transports most of it to the surface.



The eclipse section is one of the only parts of the sublevel (apart from the theater) designed to host guests and includes a history library (most books have rotted), bathing grotto (with running waterfall), wine cellars (though the wine has turned to vinegar) and a lounge (once furnished and decorated like an opium den). A pump room also works to remove water, though it is malfunctioning slightly.

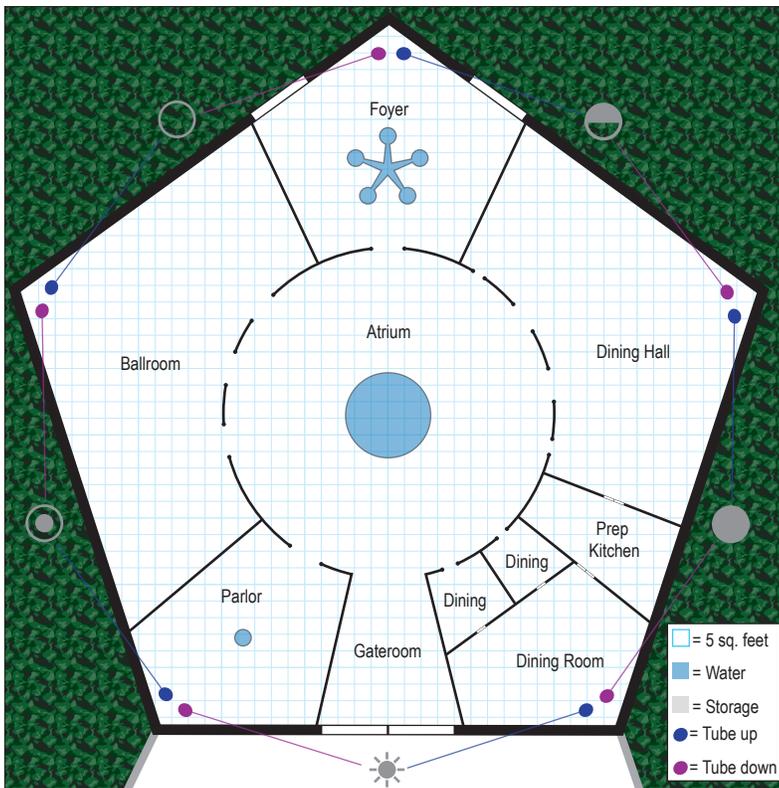
The central section contains storage and the vault. The door leading to the vault from the eclipse section is open, and the vault is empty apart from some dried blood smears on the floor and wall left by a struggle among the mortal staff once the solars left. All of the storage rooms have also been ransacked.

GROUND LEVEL

Though built to be impressive, the ground floor is not as lavish as it might be, as its builders neither wanted nor expected visitors. In addition to two large doors to the outside, the foyer contains statues and mosaics of the manse builders. Fountains in the foyer, atrium and parlor continue to circulate extremely clean water.

While several dining areas of different sizes are on this level, the prep kitchen acts as more of a staging area, with the main cooking done in the central building (see below).

Open to the sky, the glowing stained glass of the solar hearth room can be seen floating far above the central atrium. Balconies on several levels above look down into this atrium.



LEVEL TWO

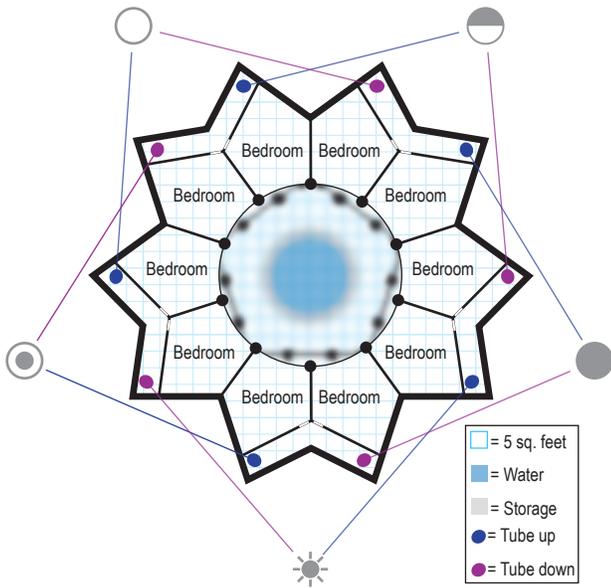
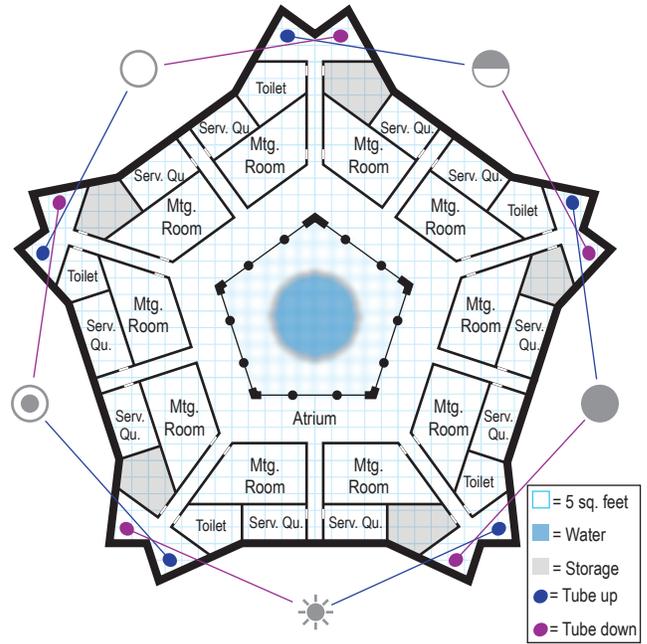
Considered a semi-public area, the second level contains a wide entertaining area overlooking the atrium below, toilets for use by guests in the dining areas and a number of “meeting rooms”, which could be used for anything from hosting card games, military planning, massage parlors, research rooms, studies and so on. On rare occasions, these rooms could be converted to bedrooms, but this was only done once, early during the construction, when the builders converted this level into a brothel of sorts to reward their human laborers (and a couple of spirits as well).

In addition, this level contains rooms that were the quarters of the select mortal staff who served the manse builders directly. Most servants lived in the central building, but these house servants were expected to be at the beck and call of the solars at all times, so were allowed to live within the solar tower itself.

As with the ground floor, there are no windows on this floor. Only the central atrium opens to the outside air.

The area around the central atrium contains a number of stone tables and chairs of various sizes, many set against the marble banister overlooking the fountain below. Water from the fountain below shoots up almost to eye level on this floor.

In visions gained while attuning to the manse (pg. 19), the area overlooking the atrium may be glimpsed as part of a memory of a pleasant meal, particularly a breakfast.

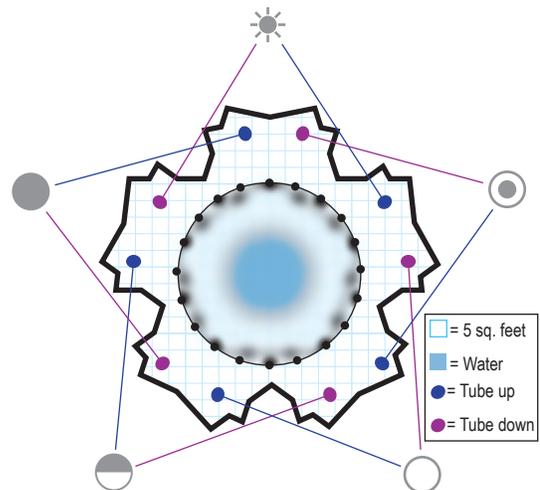


LEVEL THREE

The first private level, the third level housed the dragon-blooded staff who kept the mortal laborers and, later, servants in line. Though now as much of a shambles as the rest of the tower, these rooms were once well appointed. Each room on the map is actually a suite for a single dragon-blooded, containing a bedroom, a toilet and a living room.

While none of the rooms have windows to the outside, they each have a balcony overlooking the central atrium. This balcony is split so that part of it is entered from the bedroom while the rest is entered from the living room.

Any visions involving dragon-blooded, particularly their murder, will have happened within these rooms. Also note that crossing between certain spires is not possible on this level.



LEVEL FOUR

As the level where the spires of the tower cross, the fourth level is the most narrow. The entire floor is a single room, largely air atrium, with a long drop down to the ground floor.

With the crossing of the spires here, the transit tubes are closer together here than anywhere else in the tower. Combined with the open air nature of the floor, this level tends to be used predominantly for transferring from one spire to another.

Having no other practical purpose, this level also hosts a great deal of sculpture and mosaic art.





LEVEL FIVE

The last level where the five spires are merged together, the fifth level is also the first level with an outside facing opening. On each of the five sides is a long balcony, stretching the entire length of the wall. The inner walls also contain long openings allowing a view of the solar hearth above and the atrium below.

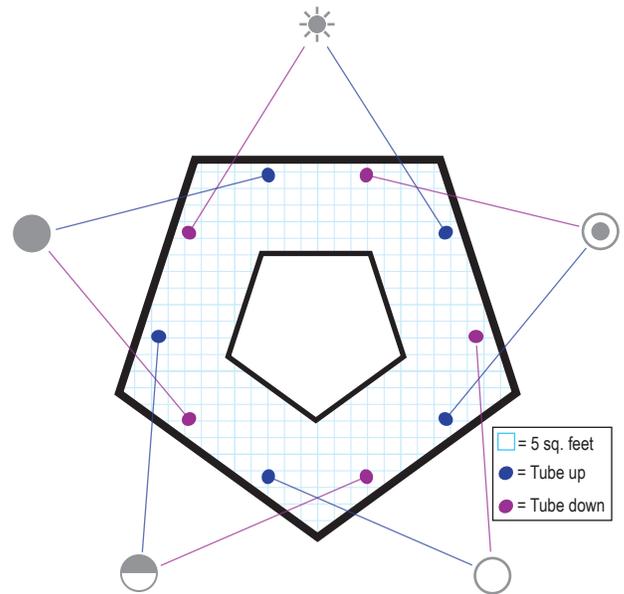
These openings make this level quite well lit during the day, so the majority of the floor acts as a greenhouse of sorts. Enchantments have kept the plants within largely as they were, though some have become more wild. Most of the plants are rare tropical species, including the orchid used to make sweet cordial [336], maiden tea bushes [mc45] and the vine from which age-staving cordial [mc45] is extracted.

LEVEL SIX

By the time the sixth level is reached, the spires have completely separated from one another. This floor holds the quarters of the manse builders, once the most opulent of the manse, each with an outward facing balcony.

Each manse builder had their own suite (though some were shared by a mated solar/lunar pairing) containing a vast bedroom, a living room and toilet. The style of each suite differs radically from the others, matching the personality of the builder who lived there. Some suites have no internal walls, separating the various rooms with curtains. Others used dark stone furniture or mirrored walls.

Many of the visions seen when attuning to the manse may take place within these rooms, particularly visions from later in the construction, when the builders were growing more corrupt.



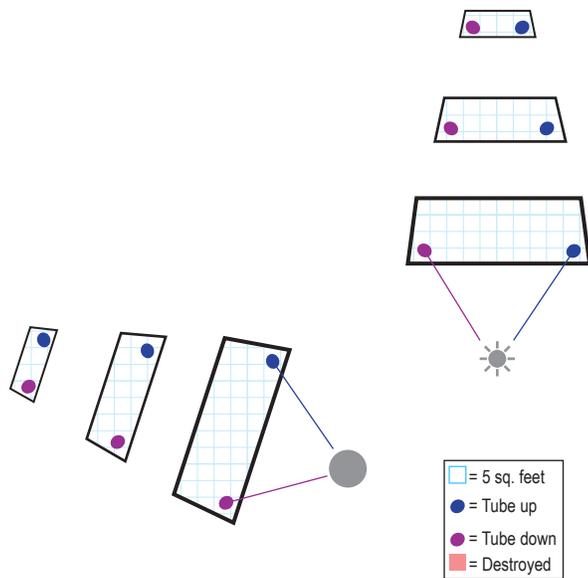
LEVEL SEVEN

The rooms of the seventh level form the vital elements of the manse. As the solar aspect of the manse is a rating three manse, only six rooms are necessary for a functional manse [3c104]. Five of these rooms are the rooms of this floor (the sixth is the hearth room itself).

Each room has a large circular hole in the center both the inner and outer walls. Subtle carving in the walls directs the energy from each spire into a sphere of energy at the room's exact center. From this central spot, a beam of essence is directed through the hole in the inner wall into the solar hearth, which is floating directly in between the rooms of this level. Behind this beam, near the outer wall, is a small platform, large enough for a single person. Any exalt standing on this platform is instantly transported to inside the solar hearth.

LEVEL EIGHT

Simple observation rooms make up the eighth level, each with a stone bench and an outward facing balcony. The view from any of these rooms is quite breathtaking.



SOLAR HEARTH

Floating at the level of (and being fed by) the rooms on the seventh level is a large stained glass sphere containing the solar hearth. All of the solar essence of the manse is concentrated within this room, forming the manse's three hearthstones on a marble platform. Five steps lead up to this platform from a circular marble floor surrounding it. Radiating outward from this are five marble walkways, each pointing towards one of the spires.

At the end of each walkway is a platform identical to platforms found in the rooms on level seven. Stepping on these platforms will transport an exalt back into the room on level seven within the corresponding spire.

As mentioned previously, due to the damage of the night spire, the solar hearth sways and bobs slowly in mid air. As a result, movement within the hearth follows the rules for shipboard movement [258].

LUNAR SPHERE

On the opposite side of the manse from the solar tower lies the lunar sphere. From the outside, this is a large, reflective silver sphere buried partially in the ground. One large door opens outward into the courtyard to gain access to the inside of the sphere.

From the inside, the sphere is completely transparent, allowing any within to see outside in any direction. Further, the sphere blocks all sunlight from coming in, but does allow light from stars and the moon. The net effect of this enchantment is that visitors can see the entire night sky, even during the day.

Unlike the solar tower, the lunar sphere is not intended for residence. Rather, focussing essence into the hearth is its primary purpose, with some additional space for study and training.

Note that this manse was constructed when there were five lunar castes and internal decoration will differentiate between these five rather than the modern three castes [lu77].

LEVEL ONE

The main entrance opens into a foyer dominated by a large statue of Luna holding a boar hunting spear. A mosaic tile image of a full moon graces the wall behind her, covered from ceiling to floor by a thin sheet of falling water that empties to a pool around her feet. Water from this pool silently cascades down five stairs toward the door, slowing to almost mirror smoothness.

As with most lunar manses, water plays a significant part in this one, where pools of water form an outer and inner ring around the main circular walkway of this floor. Three sets of stairs climb from the outer pool directly into the outer wall of the manse, leading nowhere. Stairs also circle around the central hearth room, leading up top a set of walkways above the main room and downward into the darkness. As is common with lunar manses, the stairs downward lead to a dead end (though some storytellers may want to connect a level of catacombs to this stairway).

The central room forms a critical part of the manse, focussing essence up a ten foot wide marble pillar to the hearth directly above.

LEVEL TWO

More of a set of walkways than a proper level, the outer section of this level holds a large number of study and training tools and space. From this level, visitors can look down onto the first floor below.

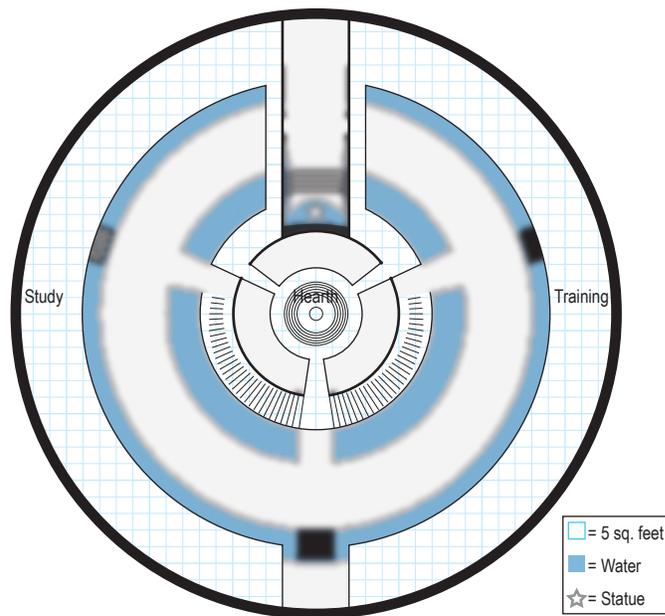
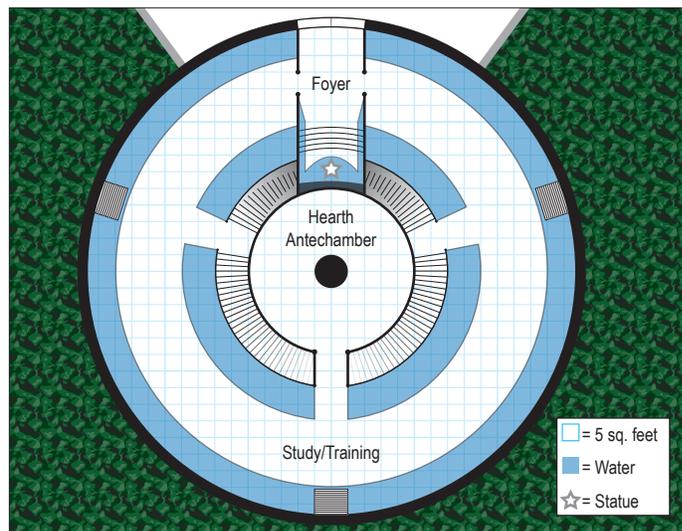
The lunar hearth also resides on this level, at nearly the center of the lunar sphere. The platform on which the lunar hearthstone forms is of similar marble construction and appearance as the platform in the solar tower.

GROUNDS

Thanks to the efforts of the Groundskeeper (pg. 53), the grounds of the manse are immaculate, with well trimmed lawns, weeded gardens and so on.

The grounds between the solar tower and central building are divided into four sections, each surrounded by varying degrees of flower garden. Grass comprises the entirety of one section, used for outdoor training, contests and sport. A lone tree dominates another, used mostly for picnicking. A ring of smaller trees surrounds another section, enclosing a secluded great lawn. More heavily wooded, the last section was intended mostly for secluded outdoor liaisons.

A reflecting pool of almost still, extremely pure water dominates the grounds between the lunar sphere and central building.



CENTRAL BUILDING

Between the solar tower and lunar sphere lies a multi-story building which housed the mortal staff and many maintenance rooms, such as a kitchen, laundry, stables and so on. Most maintenance functions were conducted on the ground floor, with a barracks on the floor above. Rooms above the barracks floor house mortal servants, with those of increasing status on higher floors than those under them.

The building is a tiered structure, with each floor narrower than the floor below. This gives each floor a wide balcony on each edge, the floor of which is the ceiling of the level below. Each of these balconies has been fashioned into an intricate, very well tended garden. Some rooms on each floor open into or overlook the garden, and these rooms tended to be highly prized and given to the most important servants on a given level. The vast gardens on the barracks level were something of an exception, being considered more public access and containing wide areas for personal combat training.

Atop the building is a golden dome, also surrounded by a garden. Within this dome is single room containing the complexity of the Hermitage Cloak (pg. 47).

Most rooms in this building have opening glass windows and the entire building (stables included) are climate controlled.



DOME

Filled with the machinery of the Hermitage Cloak.

LEVEL 5

Sorcerer's chambers: Rooms for mortal and dragon-blooded sorcerers (used for summoning worker demons). All rooms well appointed and have private baths.

LEVEL 4

Artisan's quarters: Mostly double bedrooms, some singles with private baths. Common bathrooms in center, along with studio rooms. Much more ornate. Common sun rooms on end.

LEVEL 3

Servant's quarters: Rooms for cooks, maids, etc. Rooms in center include common bathrooms, recreation rooms and small library. Chief servants in rooms on ends, with garden doors.

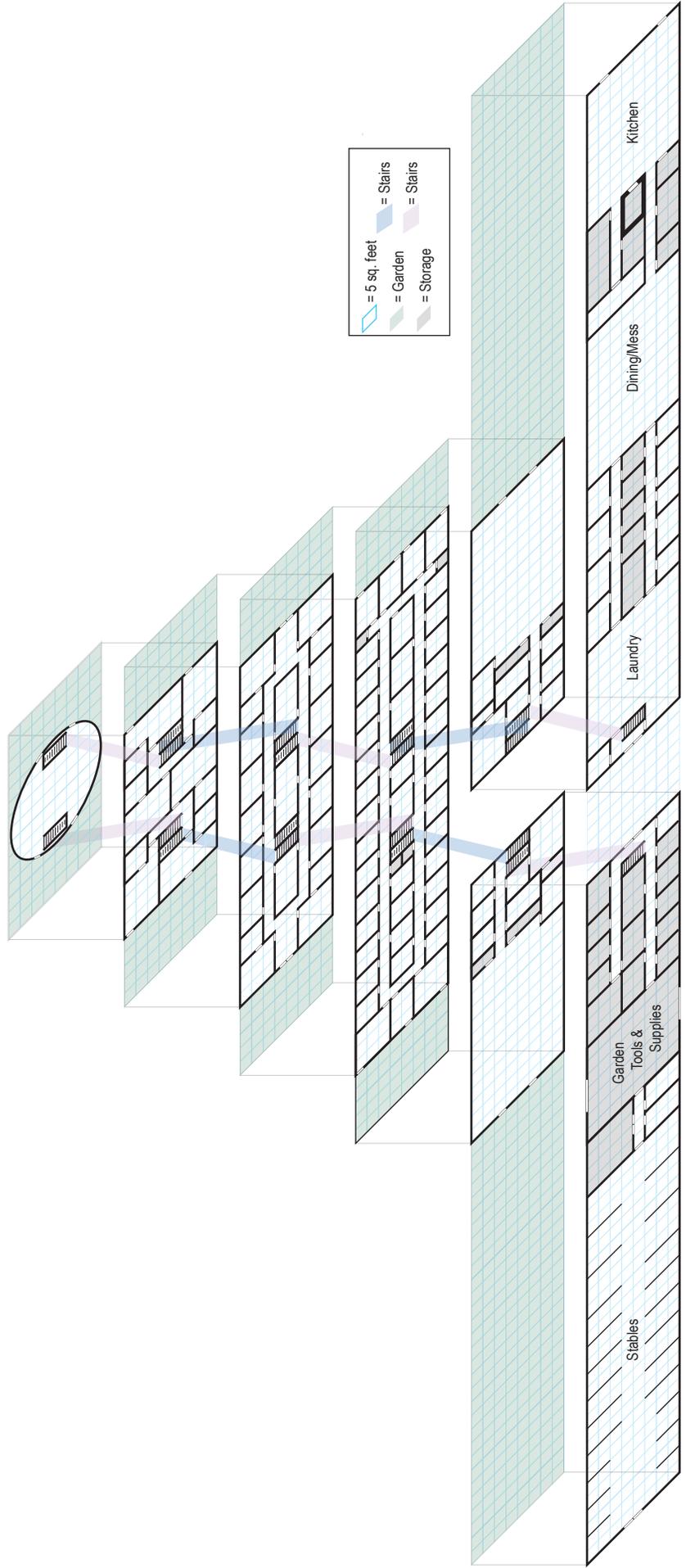
LEVEL 2

Barracks: large common room for soldiers; common shower room/toilet; lockers; private officer rooms; private commander room with private bath. Gardens contain some training areas.

LEVEL 1

South: Stables, storage for stables, rooms for stable boys; storage for garden tools and supplies; storage rooms for sundries (tools, dishes, weapons, etc. all ruined); sentry room.

North: Sentry room; laundry; rooms for tailoring, minor repair, assembly, etc.; storage for cleaning supplies, linen, etc.; dining hall; food storage (ruined); cold room (manse drains heat from room, making it colder the further you enter, running from cool to below freezing. Some frozen meat and other foods); kitchen (including ovens, dish cleaning, etc.)



APPENDIX B: ARTIFACTS



BONEWEDGE ●●●

Speed: +1

Accuracy: +1

Damage: +7L

Defense: +1

Minimums: Strength ●●, Essence ●●●

Commitment: 7

A unique soulsteel grimcleaver, Bonewedge speeds the motions of those who wield it (+1 to speed and defense compared to standard grimcleaver). Like all soulsteel weapons, it drains essence from the victim when a wound is inflicted. Bonewedge, however, hungers particularly for the essence of the living world. While in Creation, each strike from Bonewedge that would normally drain the victim's essence drains an extra two motes (that is, the normal soulsteel drain of wielder's permanent Essence score, plus an additional two). These additional motes may, at the option of the wielder, be transferred into wielder's own peripheral essence pool. This cannot increase the maximum size of the pool.

Bonewedge is something of a stingy eater, and outside of Creation (e.g. in the Underworld, a shadowland, etc.), it instead drain's one fewer mote than normal (that is, the normal soulsteel drain of wielder's permanent Essence score, minus one) and no motes may be transferred.

Bonewedge is currently wielded by Carrionis (pg. 48).

COMB OF BESTIAL EXPLANATION ●●

When 3 motes of essence are committed into this ivory hair comb, the user can read the last 24 hours of memories from any mundane animal groomed with it. These rush into the user over a five minute period, but the comb sifts through the memories to find items of interest to the user (or of particular interest to the beast). The memories are transferred as the animal experienced them, so will be colored by the animal's senses (e.g. dogs will have black and white vision, but strong senses of smell and hearing). Some animals (e.g. fish) may not have the memory capacity to be useful, so typically the comb is used only on mammals, though it can be effective on birds as well. The target animal must consent to the combing, so wild animals are often pacified with Beast Calming Method [lu189] before use.

HERMITAGE CLOAK ●●●

A room-sized artifact, the Hermitage Cloak requires the essence flow from a manse to power it. The Cloak's primary feature is the projection of an invisible, spherical barrier, 1000 yards in radius. This barrier extremely difficult to see, appearing only as a very slight shimmer and even then only to people who are really looking for it. Noticing the barrier without knowing it is there requires four successes on a perception + occult test. Knowing the barrier is there allows anyone who takes the time to spot it, however.

The barrier reacts differently to different types of creatures. As far as the barrier is concerned, the world is divided into four different families of creature:

- **Animals:** Any sort of mundane beast, insect, germ or similar form may pass through the barrier with no ill effects. This includes non-intelligent magical animals and those touched by the Wyld, but not anything that qualifies for one of the other types, listed below. To be clear, lunars shifted into animal form are still considered lunars, *not* animals.
- **Humans:** This group includes any creature based on human beings. This includes mortal humans, exalts of all varieties, beastmen, undead, etc. (This group contains any undead at all, including those based on non-human species.) The shield will drain 20 motes of essence from any creature in this group passing through it. This drain occurs regardless of the direction of travel (either in or out) and peripheral pools are drained first. Creatures drained to zero motes (or without access to essence pools in the first place) pay any remaining cost in unsoakable lethal health levels.

Note that essence drained in this way is transferred into the shield, not spent in a conventional way. As such, it does not cause anima displays of any kind. The shield itself will glow slightly immediately around where penetrated.

- **Fair Folk:** Any fae creature passing through the shield (in either direction) has 40 motes of essence drained from them. Fair folk drained to zero motes (or without access to essence pools in the first place) pay any remaining cost in unsoakable lethal health levels. The shield will glow and crackle for about 100 feet from the point of penetration by a fair folk.



- **Spirits:** The cloak is designed specifically to defend against enemy spirits, but allow passage to friendly spirits. Spirits coming one way through the shield are drained for 80 motes of essence, while spirits coming the other way are unharmed. Spirits who have their essence pool reduced to 0 by the barrier are either disrupted for a time or destroyed, depending on their type and power level (Storyteller's choice). Disrupted spirits will tend to reform in their domain after a few days or weeks. The entire shield will ignite with a blue fire when a spirit is drained by it, with the point of penetration crackling with lightning.

There is no provision made for bypassing the barrier safely. The artifact's designers just assumed that anyone in control of the manse would be tough enough to handle the drain when they needed to cross. Anyone attuned to the same manse that powers the artifact may turn the barrier off and on by moving a lever on the artifact. A second lever, also only settable by someone attuned to the manse, controls whether the shield affects spirits moving in or out.

Though the artifact is normally configured to drain spirits crossing from the outside in, Octalviel altered its configuration so that the barrier currently drains spirits who cross from the inside out, effectively trapping the demons she summoned inside it.

The cycle of the moon has a slight effect on power of the barrier, though this may have more to do with the nature of the manse in which it resides than a property intrinsic to the artifact. The barrier is strongest during a new moon, when the radius extends an additional 50 yards and the drain on spirits increases by 5 motes. During a full moon, the radius shrinks by 50 yards and the drain on spirits decreases by 5 motes.

The Hermitage Cloak is large and complex and watching the mechanism in action has a slightly hypnotic effect. Anyone in the room housing the artifact must make a Temperance check to leave. Otherwise, they become distracted by the operation of the artifact. This check is a dice action and only one may be made per round. If the test is botched, another may not be made for five minutes or if another character distracts the one affected.

POCKET BOAT •

Committing 1 mote of essence allows the user to change the size and weight of this simple wooden rowboat from twice normal to the size of a small charm (and anything in between). Without committed essence, the boat shrinks to charm size.

OCTALIEL'S STARMETAL

The meteor that hit the manse (pg. xx) did so at extremely high velocity and temperature. Almost molten from friction with the atmosphere, it slammed through the essence flow of a strong manse in a massive release of energy. It is likely, therefore, that the resulting starmetal possesses some rather unique properties, having been so infused (or, perhaps, tainted) by solar and lunar essence.

Storytellers, particularly those interested in sidereal campaigns, are encouraged to explore the idea of what happened to this starmetal. What kind of artifact(s) was it used to fashion? Who has them now? How much was the starmetal affected by the solar and lunar essence? What kind of side effects (or primary effects) does the combination yield?

SANGRELETT •••

Speed: +6

Accuracy: +2

Damage: +3L

Defense: +0

Minimums: Strength •, Essence •••

Commitment: 5

This wicked looking soulsteel knife exists primarily to assist in ritual sacrifice. If a wound is caused during a ritual sacrifice, in addition to the essence drain common to all soulsteel weapons [341], the wielder may regain a mote of peripheral essence for each health level inflicted. Alternatively, rather than gain essence, the wielder may choose to exchange each two full levels of lethal damage that would be dealt to the target with a single level of aggravated damage. Both of these effects are only available in a ritual context, not combat.

Sangrelett has also been enchanted to allow the wielder to create an effect similar to the necromantic spell *Piercing the Shroud* [ab225], even if the wielder does not know necromancy. This differs from the spell slightly: it can be cast in a single action but requires the sacrifice of a creature of at least the size of a large dog. The wielder must pay the standard essence and willpower cost for the spell.

When being wielded in combat, Sangrelett gives its user knowledge of the *Fivefold Shadow Form* charm [ab206] if she does not already know it. This lasts only as long as the knife is actively being used in combat.

Lastly, the wielder may fire a bolt of crackling darkness from the tip of the knife twice per night. The bolt's effects are identical to a 5 mote *Crypt Bolt* [ab191] doing 10L damage (10A against Fair Folk and creatures of the Wyld). This may only be done at night.

Sangrelett is currently possessed by *Vision Consorting with the Dead* (pg. 62).

TRAVELLING TENT •

In its collapsed form, this tent appears as a bundle of cloth the size of a large backpack. When set on the ground and 10 motes of essence are channeled into the bundle, it expands into an extremely large and opulent silk tent. The tent forms with three "rooms" separated by curtains. The entrance leads to the 20'x20' central room, which is usually used as an audience chamber. To the right and left are two other rooms, each 15'x15', typically used as bedrooms. These rooms have flaps that act as windows on the three sides that do not lead to the central room. All rooms are lushly appointed, with carpets and silk pillows in great abundance.

During the expansion of the tent, the person spending the essence may choose the internal and external color scheme of the tent. This may be simple, garish, festive, a camouflage pattern, even a mural. Once set, this pattern cannot be changed until the tent is collapsed and expanded again. The tent may be collapsed back into a bundle by spending another ten motes, but only by the person who first expanded it.

The climate within the tent is set to always be 72° F, at a comfortable humidity level. The central room has a flap in the roof that may be opened to allow a fire pit to burn in the center, but no such pit is provided. The tent is also enchanted to keep prevent normal insects from entering.

Vision Consorting with the Dead (pg. 62) has been assigned one of these tents by the Lover. She tends to expand the tent with black on the outside, with scarlet and grey on the inside.

LADY OF THE VINE

Type: Forest walker

Nature: Conniver

Concept: Queen of the jungle.

Use: Variable. Contact with circle in Act I (pg. 13) and may impact finale.

Dramatic Purpose: Plot exposition and foreshadowing. Can also be used to make story harder for advanced circles or bail out circles who get in over their heads.

Birthplace: Her jungle.

Gender: When manifest, the Lady is always female.

Hair: Blonde

Eye Color: Green

Skin Color: Very tan

Height: 5' 5"

Weight: 130 lbs.

Stereotype: *Appearance:* Shakira. *Voice/style:* Iris Hineman (Lois Smith) in *Minority Report*.

Style: The Lady's visions of the future distract her from what is happening in the present while she is talking, giving her a detached and somewhat eerie demeanor. She tends to be calm and polite, even when angered.

Like all Forest Walkers, the Lady can take the shape of any creature in her jungle, as well as a human of any size. When dealing with humans, she finds it advantageous to use the form of a beautiful naked woman.

Known Languages: Old Realm, High Realm, Forest-tongue, Riverspeak.

History: During and slightly after the First Age, the Lady invested significant effort in wagering with others of her kind, in spite of her distance from the forests of the east. As other forest walkers viewed her jungle with varying degrees of distaste, winning these bets became critically important to the Lady. She struck deals with a number of sidereal astrologers to vary outcomes in her favor. This plan lost its luster when she was double-crossed by one of her fortune tellers who had made a better deal with a rival forest walker.

UNCONTROLLED PROGNOSTICATION

The Lady's ability to see the future is similar to the Natural Prognostication charm [sc50], but is always in operation and cannot be controlled. Further, it provides glimpses only of possible futures, usually showing multiple possible outcomes in a simultaneous jumble. These glimpses tend to visually overlap onto her field of vision, distracting her and derailing her focus.

Soon after, she became obsessed with gaining her own ability to read the future, going so far as to consult with demons, attempting to bargain for knowledge of prognostication charms. This act did not sit well with her superiors in the celestial bureaucracy, who decided to punish her by giving her just what she wanted. They cursed her to see the many paths the future might hold whether she wanted to or not (see sidebar, above).

Though this new sight has proved useful to the Lady from time to time, mostly it is a hindrance and distraction. As a result of this punishment, the Lady is a model citizen of the bureaucracy (with a pair of powerful allies in Yu-Shan) and now avoids the wagers of her brethren. She tends to avoid supernatural control of her jungle, letting it grow where it will.

Though her contact with mortals is limited, she has cultivated a number of small cults along the edges of the jungle (pg. 10). Originally intended as a way to prevent mortals from hacking the jungle away, her cult now blesses her with thousands of worshippers a day. About a hundred of these cultists are fanatically loyal.

Goals: While she doesn't mind the changing nature of the jungle, the Lady works to prevent the jungle from changing too radically, and is always on guard for such threats (a band of solars claiming a manse, or an invading undead army, for example). The possibility of claiming the demense upon which the manse is built interests her marginally.

Items of Note: Her spear is called *hlantana*.

Generation: Standard forest walker, with addition of Uncontrolled Prognostication and a dot of Linguistics (language learned from her cult).

Type:	Forest walker [gd43]		
Abilities:	Awareness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Endurance 3, Linguistics 3, Lore 3, Melee 5, Occult 4, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 3, Survival 5		
Str/Dex/Sta:	6*/5/8	-0	□□□□□□
Per/Int/Wit:	3/4/4	-1	□□□□
App/Cha/Man:	3/4/4	-2	□□□□
Cm/Cn/Tm/Vl:	3/3/3/3	-4	□
Willpower:	6	I	□
Initiative:	9	Attack	Sp/At/D/Df
Dodge:	10	Spear	15/14/17L/12
Soak:	23B/19L	Spear (+ 3 motes)	15/14/19L/12
		As animal	12/12/+2L/12
Essence:	4 (cult provides +3 motes per hour)		
Pool: 80	□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□		
Notes:	Allies •••••, Cult ••• (pg. 10), Followers •••••, Influence •• *Strength listed is for form of naked woman. Can grow to larger forms with higher strength if desired (up to 14).		





SUNDIAL

Though not central to this story, the encounter Hunters (pg. 12) makes use of a group known as Sundial. This entry is provided for storytellers wanting to make this organization a more important part of their campaign.

In the early days of the rule of the Scarlet Empress, more than a few people, mortals and dragon-blooded alike, died in mysterious circumstances or simply vanished. Rumors inevitably circulated upon such an event, most of which were rapidly forgotten. One such rumor survives to this day however, spawned from the disappearance of five important people within the span of a week. The disappearances themselves, though of more prominent personages than usual, were not otherwise noteworthy until a newly minted imperial official's response to a public inquiry about the disappearances was, "all I can say is that rumors of the involvement with Sundial have proven to be false". This comment baffled nearly everyone because, as far as anyone could tell, there were no "rumors of Sundial". No one had ever heard the name used before. When the official who made this strange comment vanished himself several days later, an orgy of rumor mongering followed.

While a large number of theories appeared at the time (and since) about what Sundial was, one came to dominate the consciousness of the time. The five who vanished were thought to be the leaders of an organization called Sundial, which secretly controlled Creation. Though people disagreed about whether these five were secretly anathema, spirits, fair folk, demons or anything else, most agreed that it was "obvious" that Sundial went back long before the Usurpation. Believing that it was they who taught the Empress how to harness the First Age relics she used to unite the empire, most people saw the disappearance of the five as a grand double-cross, with the Empress eliminating her puppet masters.

True or not, this tale has survived centuries, though not without mutation. Common folklore holds that Sundial has been revived at least twice. Some hold that it never really died, but just periodically became more public. Many also believe that it exists at present as well, and they are correct, though whether the current incarnation has anything to do with the original or is merely taking advantage of a folktale is anyone's guess.

Conspiracy theorists who believe in Sundial believe that this latest incarnation is comprised of powerful, yet shadowy figures within the tattered remnants of House Iselsi [db96]. Based on a decoded letter from someone known only as Stylus, it is thought that the modern Sundial (and, some think, the original) believes that the Usurpation was a hideous betrayal of the natural order and seeks to restore House Iselsi to prominence as the servants of solar and lunar exalted.

Like the original Sundial, the modern version identifies its leaders as implements used in architectural design. Some claim to know the five principals of the modern Sundial:

Stylus undoubtedly leads Sundial and is widely believed to be an elder member of House Iselsi. Some suggest that this might be Iselsi Musgrave, a water aspect who died in suspicious circumstances over a century ago. Those who support this idea are divided, with most thinking he faked his death and the rest thinking he is a ghost.

Edge is almost certainly a fire aspect named Drelen Assad. He is something of an impatient man, and one of the more well known members of House Iselsi.

Angle worships the Unconquered Sun and is probably a sorceress. The most likely candidate is Karnis Tarani, an earth aspect who dwells in Nexus.

Compass has connections deep in the Immaculate Order and may actually be a monk. Assumed to be a woman, little is known about her, but she is probably an air aspect.

Paper is known to be slightly insane and a sorcerer. Several possibilities exist here, but the top of the list is Miranis Illurian, a wood aspect known to wander in the eastern wyld.

As with all conspiracy theories, many rumors surround Sundial. Storytellers will need to decide if all, some or none of the above is true and which, if any, of the following rumors is fact. Note that some of these rumors (particularly those involving sidereals) may rely on information that most people don't really have. In no particular order:

- The original Sundial never existed, but was a ploy of the Empress to keep her enemies off guard.
- The original Sundial was a band of solars.
- The original Sundial was a band of gold faction sidereals.
- The original Sundial was a band of bronze faction sidereals.
- The original Sundial was a band of demons.
- The original Sundial was a band of spirits.
- The original Sundial was a band of fair folk.
- Sundial is so named because they have mastered magic that controls time.
- The original Sundial still exists.
- Sundial possesses the Eye of Autochthon [sc80].
- Sundial controls every aspect of the hat-making industry in creation and, through it, the minds of anyone who wears a hat.
- Sundial are actually agents of the Empress.
- Sundial struck a deal with Mask of Winters and sabotaged the defenses of Thorns.
- Sundial has nothing to do with House Iselsi, but are actually a cabal of mortal sorcerers.
- Sundial is run by an ancient, hidden gold faction sidereal.
- Sundial is run by Chejop Kejak.
- A second circle demon runs Sundial and, through it, controls much of what is left of House Iselsi and a large collection of outcaste dragon-blooded.
- Sundial is under control of the Guild, who seek to make mortals the masters of creation.
- Sundial actively promotes the heresy of the antitheses [db81] for their own nefarious purposes.
- Sundial holds the key to dispelling the Great Curse [131].
- Sundial's entire reason for existence is to abduct exalts of all varieties and trade them to the fair folk to feed on.
- Sundial is a tool of a deathlord for tracking down and recruit solar exalted into service as deathnights.
- One of the incarnations of Sundial was responsible for engineering the fall of House Iselsi.
- Sundial hates the deathlords with a passion and secretly leads the resistance against them through any means, including recruiting solars.
- Sundial has always been the secret ruler of creation and faked their initial disappearance to gain even more control.
- Sundial is behind the disappearance of the Empress.
- Sundial controls the spirits who rule Great Forks.
- The spirits who rule Great Forks control Sundial.
- Sundial directs the Bull of the North [kh38].