

# The King's Road

Matt Davids





# THE KING'S ROAD

*An Epic Fantasy RPG Campaign*



MATT DAVIDS

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# INTRODUCTION

The King's Road is an epic fantasy role-playing playing game campaign. It was originally conceived for playing in 5E. However, it can be adapted to nearly any fantasy tabletop role-playing game.

The campaign is epic in several senses.

First, it is long. The characters must travel a great distance that takes years of in-game time. There is the possibility of the characters entering thousands of dungeons.

Second, the campaign is intended to take characters from level one to level twenty.

Third, the characters' actions have epoch-changing results on the world they live in, if they succeed.

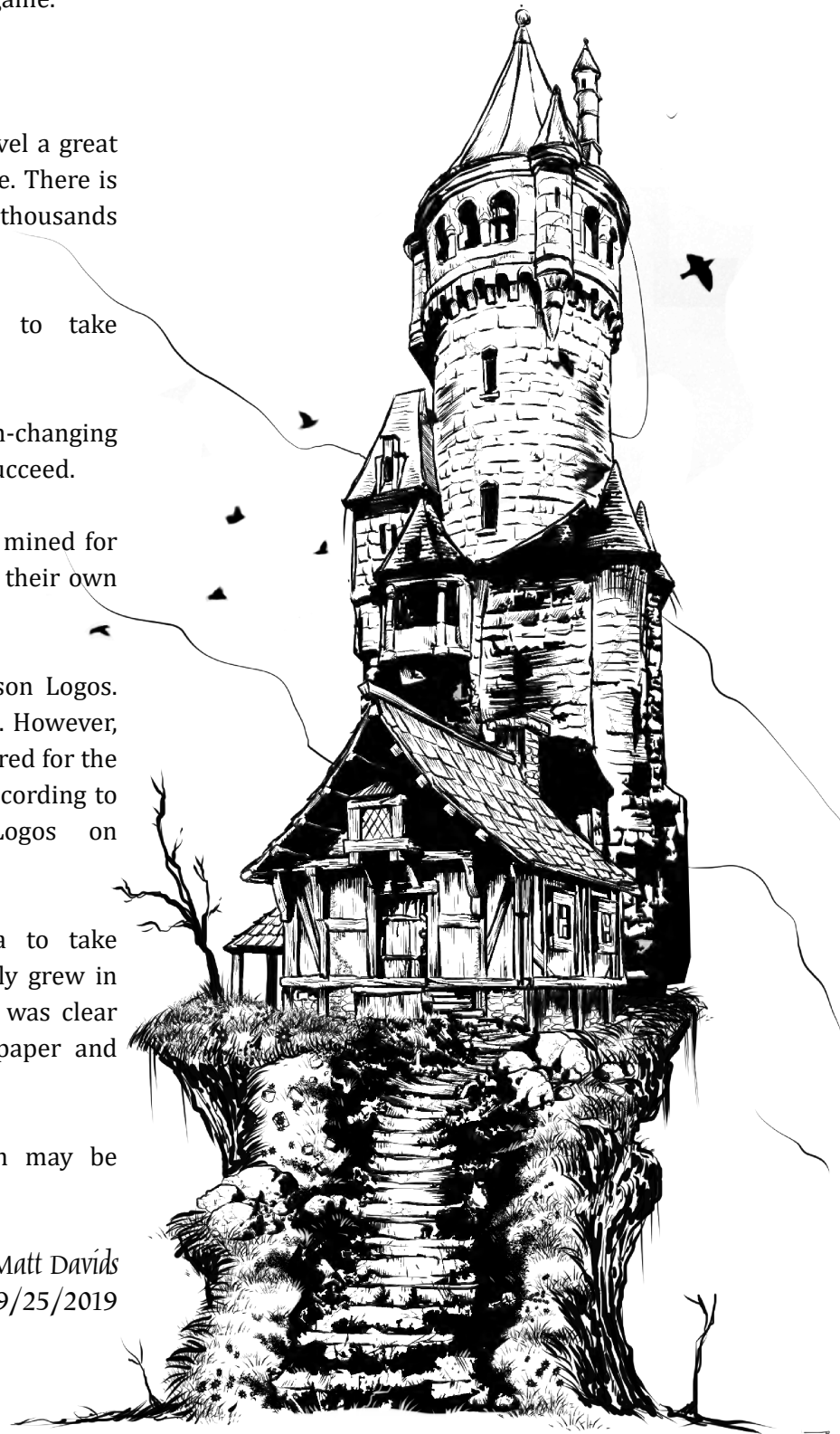
The campaign can be run as written or mined for ideas gamemasters can incorporate into their own settings or current games.

Included in this book are maps by Dyson Logos. These maps are available for free online. However, the ones included are reimaged and tailored for the King's Road. All of the maps are used according to the license offered by Dyson Logos on DriveThruRPG.

The King's Road started as an idea to take characters on a long journey and quickly grew in scope. By the fourth or fifth session, it was clear this campaign was worth putting on paper and sharing with others.

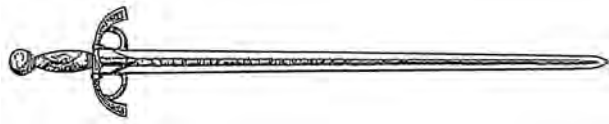
Enjoy the journey, for the destination may be nothing you expected.

*Matt Davids*  
9/25/2019



# PART 1

## THE WORLD



*“Compared to the people from which we spring we  
are wispy pale shadows flitting feebly at their feet.”*  
- Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farringdon, *Reflections  
on Greatness*



# SUMMARY

The party is given an ivory sphere about the size of a baseball that they are to take to the former capital of the Grand Kingdom. To reach the city they simply need to follow the King's Road, which of course, is easier said than done.

Once there, they need to slay a dragon and place the orb into a socket in the throne room. After that, they are taken into the earth where they find the tree of life and awaken eight heirs to the Grand Kingdom, who will restore it.

## RING MEGASTRUCTURE

The King's Road campaign is set on a ring megastructure. This is how the road can be so long that the party cannot circumnavigate the globe to reach the capital more quickly.

If you are not familiar with ring megastructures, please see these links for an introduction:

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megastructure>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringworld>
- <https://www.popularmechanics.com/space/deep-space/a11183/could-we-build-a-ringworld-17166651/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo\\_Array](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_Array)

The structure is a complete ring around a star built by some unknown incredibly advanced and ancient culture.

The characters know nothing of the ring megastructure save for the Arc of Heaven which they have seen all their lives.



## THE ARC OF HEAVEN

*"Countless nights have I sat contemplating The Arc of Heaven,  
silently imploring it to tell me about those who came before." -  
Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farringdon, The Passing of the  
Ancients*

There is no moon in this world. However, there is something visible in the night sky. Rectangles of light rise in the east and the west and fade in the unknown heavens.

This is called the Arc of Heaven. No one knows what it is, though sages and scholars ponder it and sailors gaze at it for hours while on watch.

In reality, it is the arms of the ring megastructure reflecting the light of the star.





## TECHNOLOGY

Even though the campaign is set on a ring metastructure, keep high weapons and gadgets out of the campaign. There is some tech at the end of the adventure, but that is not the focus of this campaign.

The achievements of the past were certainly a result of advanced technology. The building of the road itself would be impossible without it. However, introducing technology throughout the adventure is sure to break the game and the setting.

Characters should wonder over the marvels of the past and dream of someone who could cut stone like the Roadbuilders.

## MAGIC

Limiting magic is up to the gamemaster's discretion. However, allowing characters to be wished to the Capital or letting them fly there robs the campaign of the important part, the journey.

Gamemasters should have a conversation with their players, so everyone is on the same page. High-powered spells and items can be used to overcome obstacles, but should not be used to skip to the capital.

## THE GRAND KINGDOM

*"The Grand Kingdom was the greatest and best that humankind has ever achieved." - Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Ridley Morn, Lord General of the Army of Farrington*

The Grand Kingdom was an empire that lasted for ten thousand years. It had unparalleled works and splendor upon which a million tales are made.

The Grand Kingdom stretched for thousands and thousands of miles and encompassed vast territories. The citizens were happy and worked hard for their kings and queens.

Then there was the King's Road. Stories say the road took a century to build and that its dual purpose was to provide easy travel throughout the kingdom as well as connect the King's High Elf allies with the rest of the kingdom.



# THE GREAT CATAclysm

One night 500 years ago, an earthquake transformed the very lay of the land. On the same night, in a mad war frenzy, millions of orcs and goblins burst forth from the subterranean depths.

Citizens of the Grand Kingdom were cut down in their beds and glorious buildings collapsed into ruins.

Rivers were swallowed by the earth. Oceans moved and conquered new lands. The Grand Kingdom fell and the island home of the High Elves was no more.

To add to the chaos, volcanoes erupted, and the heavens opened and beat the land with hail. Then the Old Wyrn, the dragon, the first of its kind, came breathing fire and spreading desolation.

## What Actually Happened

A comet struck the ring metastructure causing the earthquakes and destruction.

The goblins and orcs had been forced underground during the first millennium of the Grand Kingdom and had nearly passed out of memory at the time of the collision. Informed by the dragon that a disaster was coming they prepared for war.

The King and Queen of the Grand Kingdom also knew the disaster was coming, but only had time to place their heirs in status. They warned the High Elven Queen yet she and her advisors were indignant that they didn't learn of the comet first and they failed to prepare.

The King and Queen remained with their people, but the damage was too severe. They perished when the dragon attacked the Capital. However, they were able to dispatch a messenger with an orb and a note before they were killed.



## THE CAPITAL

*“What wealth of knowledge did the ancients amass? Whatever it was, it is now scattered on the winds, sprinkled in the seas, and obscured by remorseless time.” - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farringdon, The Passing of the Ancients*

In its day the Capital of the Grand Kingdom was home to millions and was a center of art and culture. The white walls and streets were lined with fountains and hanging gardens. Statues of heroes of old graced the plazas in imposing fashion. Knowledge and wisdom flowed out from its core into the surrounding lands.

All now is changed. The statues are broken and the garden flowers long dead. The fountains no longer laugh merrily with clear water. The white stones are sullied with ash and mildew. Now, it spills forth filth and reek. No human, dwarf, elf, or halfling calls it home. It is the definition of ruin, yet not an unoccupied one.

The great five concentric circles of the once splendid city are now the haunts of vile creatures and monsters.

In the first circle, goblin hordes teem and scratch. In the next circle, orcs rage and war. Higher in the

third circle, ogres prowl and devour. In the fourth circle, storm giants brood over secrets ancient. In the highest circle rests a dragon, old and miserly.

The party must climb higher and higher through the rings of the city encountering monsters of all sorts and then slay the dragon to gain entrance to the throne room.

Even though each ring is mainly populated with the creatures mentioned above, it is possible for them to encounter or be attacked by all manner of horrific evil beasts.

The party may also discover ransacked libraries, looted treasure vaults, and random items of all kinds.

### **The Dragon's Lair**

The vast audience chamber, once regal and proud, is now heaped with the dragon's hoard. Treasure, weapons, and armor collected over millennia are piled haphazardly. In the middle sleeps the dragon.

### **The Throne Room**

At the top of the tower, above the audience chamber, is the throne room. From here the kings and queens looked out over their domain.

The party must insert the orb into a socket in the back wall behind the throne. Once they do so, a door opens to a lift or elevator that takes them down deep underground.

When the door of the lift opens, they find they are standing in a large chamber with circular rooms. In the center room stands the Tree of Life. See the map in Part 9.

## **THE TREE OF LIFE**

*"Certainly there is a strong vein of mythology connecting the Tree of Life to the Grand Kingdom. However, we are missing too many pieces to complete the puzzle as it were." - Atwood Keeler, Lady Librarian of Farringdon, Letter to Milbourne of Elvesport*

After the lift in the throne room leaves the party at the base of the tree of life, the characters see strange boxes that give off light. An odd phantasmic image of a large ring with a point of light in the center floats in midair.

The tree of life appears quite organic. Its boughs and foliage stretch high and wide in the vault. Flashes and flickers play on the trunk, branches, and leaves.

In another chamber, the party finds eight capsules or coffin-like boxes. As the characters enter the chamber, the capsules open and from them emerge eight beings. The beings are humans, but more so.

Four are male and four are female, and they claim to be the children of the last king and queen. They thank the characters for awakening them and tell them that rebuilding can begin. The characters are welcome to stay and join the royal court if they like.

The tree itself is some kind of matter rearranger. If any of the characters stay in the court, the tree can be used to create wondrous objects and restore the kingdom by making reconstruction much easier.

Also, they learn that the tree is never used in its full power so not to scare the simple folk of the land. It could have built the entire King's Road in a day, but it was used in stages. This is how the heirs plan to do the rebuilding.



# THE ORB

*"I am convinced the orb is the key." - Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farringdon*

The orb is apparently made of ivory with gold inlaid that create an intricate pattern. The orb needs to be placed in a socket behind the throne in the throne room, which is located in the Capital.

Once placed there, a shaft with a magical elevator opens. It takes the party down to where the Tree of Life is located.

## More Orbs

On the journey, the party can find more orbs. Some can be identical to the first orb and others can be black. When the orbs are brought close to each other have reality warp or the ground tremble. This should keep the players wondering what they are carrying.

If the party has more than one orb when they reach the throne room, simply have more slots where the orbs can be inserted. Perhaps the arch around the top of the throne.



## THE HIGH ELVES

The High Elf homeland was an island about 50 miles offshore from the terminus of the King's Road at Elvesport. Some say the Grand Kingdom had the road constructed to help the High Elves reach the Capital.

In the Great Cataclysm, the island was plunged beneath the sea. Most of the High Elves perished, yet some survived. Some were on the mainland, of course, and some washed ashore with nothing save their lives.

# ELVESPORT

*"We live at the literal end of the road. Perhaps it is too much to ask, but can you send me an account of any ruins you find on your patrols?"- Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Archer Graves, Ranger Captain of Farrington*

This is the city where the party begins their journey on the King's Road. It is a city of about 10,000 people, mainly humans. However, the races do mix here since it is the main fishing village and one of the best natural harbors for miles along the coast.

A small group of High Elves call the city home as well.

The characters can be very familiar with Elvesport or new arrivals.

The city was made of the white stone just like The King's Road, but now it is a shell of what it used to be. The ruins tell of a city that would have had a population of at least 50,000 or more. Now, the inhabitants have gathered closer to the old city center. Rubble and new stone form the city's new walls while the old wall surrounds a much wider area, like the bleached white skeleton of a snake.

The folk are simple fishermen and sailors. The city is officially part of a duchy, which is based in the north. The duke, Thurlow Hollis, appoints a governor (Lady Mayor or Lord Mayor) of the city and collects taxes. But contact is sparse, other than loads of salted fish sent north.

If a character is from Elvesport, they know that the King's Road ended here and that the city used to be a great hub of commerce. Stories about travelers and elves coming and going all the time are still told in the city. However, most have been forgotten. The Grand Kingdom is sung in songs and spoken of in tales, but not many even know truly what it was.

The city lives with the consistent threat of goblin or orc raids. However, they are well defended and

usually fight off the attacking parties. However, travelers are at a higher risk. Although Rangers do patrol the southern regions and the road itself for a distance to the East to help keep the travel open.

The King's Road leads out of the city almost due east. There is a dirt road that leads north to holds and the cities of the duchy. There is also a dirt road leading south to some small villages along the coast.

The cargo ships and fishing boats work the coastline. Even though they can navigate by the stars, few rarely go beyond the sight of land. Those who have tried sailing farther out to sea never come back, or they return mad speaking of dragons, sea serpents, and endless ocean.

Situated on the coast a thousand miles north of Elvesport is a major city of the duchy. The closest port city to the south is more than three thousand miles away. It is an exotic city of strange people and rare spices.



# THE KING'S ROAD

*"On certain days after being accosted with vapid and shallow concerns from vapid and shallow personages, I long to take a traveler's pack and follow the King's Road into lands unknown."* -  
Thurlo Hollis, Duke of Farrington, *Collected Musings of a Restless Ruler*

The King's Road is a stone road that leads from east to west. It originates from the old capital of the Grand Kingdom and terminates at the seaport called Elvesport from which the party embarks.

It was the culmination of the Grand Kingdom's works at the height of its power and glory.

The road is made of smoothly cut, white stones that are all the same dimensions. No one knows how the stones were cut so precisely. The stones are seemingly laid without mortar, yet elemental forces are required to break them apart.

Every 50 miles is a garrison, most of which are ruined. Every 25 miles in between the garrisons are watchtowers. These too are mostly in ruins. The original purpose of these structures was for defense, but also to provide travelers a refuge for the night. Now, the ruins can be used as dungeons the party can explore.

The stones of the road glow at night making traveling easy. However, many sections of the road are deteriorating from centuries of weather and neglect.

From the end of the road at Elvesport to the Capital, it is said the journey took two years for someone traveling fast. Now, no one knows how long the trip would take.



## CITIES ALONG THE ROAD

Cities, towns, and villages still appear along The King's Road at sporadic intervals. Some of the old cities are nothing but ruins. Newer villages and towns have popped up near key positions in order to facilitate trade or to mark the territory of a duchy or some warlord.

It is important to provide towns periodically for your party, so they can resupply or winter in safety.

Towns can be tiny villages or large cities. They can be built in the ruins of an ancient town or use a watchtower or a garrison as a keep.

Towns can have stockades or masonry walls or be unwallled. Gamemasters can require an entrance fee of some sort or simply allow the characters to walk in. Whatever is needed for the tone and harshness of your campaign.



# THE PETTY DUCHIES

*"Of all the Dukes and Duchesses I have written, you only have returned my letters, my lord. I thank you for taking notice of your humble servant." - Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington*

North of the road is a series of petty duchies. Their influence usually touches the road but goes only a short way south of it. The more powerful duchies provide Rangers to patrol the wilder southern lands.

Usually, the dukes and duchesses are at war with one another or conspiring on how to gain territory, wealth, or power through other means. They tend to be a quarrelsome lot of pompous fools, inbred from a confusing web of marriage alliances.

However, occasionally a duke or a duchess cut from a different cloth arises. They tend to be active, forceful, and even in some cases wise. Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington is one of these.

Some characters may be from certain duchies or have had run-ins with patrols. They could even be a son or a daughter of a duke and duchess fleeing their parents' decadent court.

## WILD COUNTRY

*"We tracked an orc warband of thirty for three days and ambushed them on the banks of Siden. After the fray, we burned their foul bodies at Iydstitch." - Archer Graves, Ranger Captain of Farrington, Letter to Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington*

South of the road is a more wild country. Orcs, goblins, ogres, and other foul beasts haunt the forests, hills, swamps, bogs, and glades.

Rangers patrol the wilds near Elvesport and the southern extremes of the other duchies. Wood Elves live in these lands and range from nomadic tribes to treetop kingdoms.



## TRAVELING

Traveling can be handled by narration and skipping over the boring bits to get the party to a dungeon or an important location.

It can also be used for random encounters and side quests.

Since the campaign is so insanely huge, the GM and players can skip years at a time and narrate the results. Gamemasters can ask their players questions and construct a story of what happened during the time on the road.

## WINTERING

The winters can be harsh. While traveling the King's Road, the party needs to winter in a town or other place with supplies.

Depending on the severity of the winter, the party may have to stay in place for three to five months.

Wintering can either be skipped or resolved with GM narration. Also, it is a good time to use downtime rules that are provided in a number of fantasy RPGs.

However, wintering does provide a good opportunity for side quests and character development.

# COMPLICATIONS ON THE ROAD

*"The dangers along the road must be great. How far from Elvesport did you follow the road?" - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington, Letter to Milbourne of Elvesport*

As the party is traveling, narration can be used to skip long sections of the road. However, the gamemaster can also introduce complications to make traveling more interesting.

Some obstacles along the road may include:

- Bandits
- Orcs
- Goblins
- Ogres
- Any wandering monster or creature
- Wood Elf Hunting Parties
- Landslides
- Collapsed bridges
- Other travelers
- Merchant caravans
- Refugees
- Animal stampede
- Fallen trees



## CHARACTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

The characters know certain things about the world they live in even though they are surrounded by many mysteries.

It is reasonable for the player characters to know the following:

- A great disaster happened about 500 years ago.
- Orcs, goblins, ogres, and giants appeared during the disaster.
- A kingdom with wondrous knowledge fell during the disaster.
- The island homeland of the High Elves sank beneath the sea.
- Very few High Elves remain in the nearby lands.
- Elvesport used to be a much larger city.
- The King's Road leads to the east for an incredible distance.
- Only small, recent settlements can be found along the road to the east.
- The lands south of the King's Road are wild.
- The lands north of the King's Road are controlled by a series of dukes and duchesses.
- The ocean at Elvesport cannot be crossed. Sailors and fishermen work the coast from north to south.
- Elvesport falls under the jurisdiction of Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington.

# VILLIANS

The gamemaster can introduce a number of villains that actively work against the characters and wish to claim the orb as their own.

These can be dukes or duchesses, evil wizards, bandits, warlords, and more.

Also, if the dragon learns of a party heading to the Capital, he begins scheming their downfall.

## The Dragon

The dragon is impossibly old and filled with the knowledge of ages. He came from somewhere far away on the ring metastructure drawn by whispers of the existence The Tree of Life. After he conquered the city on the night of the Great Cataclysm he spent nearly a century searching in vain for the location of the tree.

Now, he sleeps and thinks. He employs storm giants to look into shattered secrets of the Grand Kingdom and spies to scour the lands.

If the dragon were to realize he sleeps above the tree, all would be lost and the Grand Kingdom could never be restored.

The dragon's goals:

- To find the Tree of Life.
- To destroy any memory of the Grand Kingdom.
- To live forever.

The dragon knows:

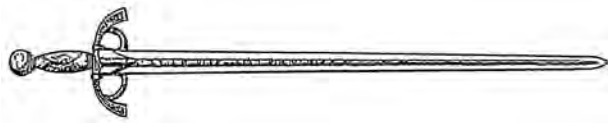
- The world is a giant ring.
- The Tree of Life could grant him true immortality.
- The Tree of Life could restore the Grand Kingdom (which he does not want).





# PART 2

## BEGINNING THE CAMPAIGN



*“The Grand Kingdom can and must be restored. I  
will search for a way as long as I have breath.” -  
Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Thurlow Hollis,  
Duke of Farrington*



# HELP WANTED SIGN

At the beginning of the campaign, the party can be formed in numerous ways. The characters can know each other or be complete strangers. The characters can be from Elvesport or be new arrivals. They can come from the wildlands of the south or the more civilized lands of the north.

Regardless of where they are from or if they know one another at some point, every character sees a help wanted ad posted somewhere and decides to respond.

**Please read the ad aloud to your players.**

If a player says their character would not respond to the ad, please kindly tell them to roll up a character that would.

Jumping into the action seems like a better start of the campaign than having each player role-play seeing the ad posted on a town bulletin board or fence post.

However, a little creativity can go along way. Have each player think of a reason why their character needs to make themselves scarce.

- Did they just commit a robbery?
- Did they break a heart?
- Did they anger their father or mother?
- Did they make an enemy of a powerful figure in town?
- Do they wish to run away?

Whatever the reason, it should be compelling enough to motivate the character into accepting the quest.

The GM and the players can narrate the scene of the character finding the ad and then quickly jump to arriving at Milbourne's house.

It is wise to make sure all characters are equipped for the journey before play begins as to not waste time shopping.

Although, the characters equipping themselves could be used for character development. It simply depends on how the gamemaster and the players wish to run their game.

## ADVENTURERS WANTED

Three to Eight Adventurers Wanted for a Long Journey!

**MUST POSSESS:** Adventuring gear, hardy souls, keen minds, iron wills, strong muscles, indomitable spirits, the fortitude of steel, unparalleled bravery, courage beyond that of the ordinary.

**SKILLS:** Warmaking, bladecraft, wilderness survival, animal handling, arcane knowledge; historical knowledge of the Grand Kingdom is a plus.

**TASKS INCLUDE:** Feats of strength, battles of wits, surmounting implacable obstacles, doing what weaker souls say is impossible.

**MUST BE ABLE TO ENDURE:** Prolonged riding and walking, hardships of every kind, exposure to the elements, the privation of food, drink and sleep, and the threat of constant death.

**COMPENSATION:** Loot, unending glory, the satisfaction of helping restore the Grand Kingdom.

**PERKS:** See the world, meet new and exciting people/beings, slay vile monsters, test the mettle of your soul and character, never have to return to this lousy city.

*Applicants, please see Milbourne in Elvesport.*

# MILBOURNE

*"He has written me numerous letters and claims to have written you as well, my lord. Is he a scholar or a madman?" - Atwood Keeler, Lady Librarian of Farrington, Letter to Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington*

Milbourne is a human male about 95 years old. It is he who posted the help wanted ad, and it is he who gives the characters the orb and bids they travel the King's Road.

Milbourne is incredibly frail. However, his mind seems sharp, and it is filled with lore and knowledge of the Grand Kingdom.

He would have made the journey years ago himself, but it took him decades to find the orb and to learn it needs to be placed somewhere in the throne room. He found the orb and sealed note near a human skeleton in the ruins of the garrison closest to Elvesport. The note said, "The key to restoration." The symbol on the seal was the royal crest of the King of the Grand Kingdom, or so says Milbourne.

The meeting of the characters at Milbourne's house can, of course, be role-played out. However, this can slow the campaign down. It seems best just to narrate the meeting and explanation of the quest.



Then pick up the game after the party has left his home in the morning and they are on the road.

Once again, it is best to have all the shopping done either in Session Zero or before the game begins.

Milbourne offers the party an old pack mule that has a saddle and a bridle, but nothing else. He can provide a good dinner and a place to stay for the night and then a good breakfast as he hurries them onto the road.

What Milbourne knows:

- The Grand Kingdom was glorious and did many wondrous things.
- The orb was made by the architect of the capital, who is also the one who designed the King's Road.
- The orb is the key to restoring the Grand Kingdom, but he doesn't know how or why.
- It will take years to reach the capital.
- He doesn't know what they will find in the capital.

# FARMLAND

*"My land is good and the people are honest and hardworking, yet they lack imagination and ambition." - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington, Reflections on Greatness*

Once the party leaves Elvesport, the King's Road takes them through fertile farmland. Occasionally, a watchtower or a garrison has been turned into a fortified farmhouse.

South of the road, the country is still wild, but more and more people are moving into this area as they can sell their crops to Elvesport and a few other towns nearby.

A few situations a gamemaster can introduce are goblins attacking a farmhouse, farming family needing help of some kind, or a

merchant with a broken wagon wheel. Of course, the watchtowers and garrisons should be used for dungeons.

This area of the road is intended for characters of low levels to gain experience points.



## HILL COUNTRY

*"I count one hundred and twelve goblins slain. We burned the crude wooden defenses and packed the mouth of their reeking tunnel with earth." - Ridley Morn, Lord General of the Army of Farrington, Letter to Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington*

After the party moves through the farmland, they reach the hill country. A land of rolling hills and river valleys.

This land is more sparsely populated, and towns tend to be more fortified. The folk are a hardy lot who are farmers, orchardists, hunters, and fur trappers.

More challenging creatures and obstacles can be introduced during this section as the characters should be at least level three or so.

Also, the party passes out of the domain of Thurlow Hollis at some point during the hill country.

## THE GREAT MOUNTAINS

*"Any who even dare think of crossing the Great Mountains are mad." - Copper Gowen, Fur Trader, Letter to Millbourne of Elvesport*

After the hill country, the land rises sharply and a titanic mountain range cuts the land in half. The great peaks are enterally snow-covered and reach dizzying heights.

The mountains are now home to orcs, goblins, trolls, and frost giants. Local fur trappers work the lower altitudes, but none have crossed the mountains in nearly a century. None knows of any who have crossed over from the other side in more than a century.

The King's Road climbs the slopes in colossal switchbacks until it makes its way through a pass overshadowed by two of the tallest peaks.

The gamemaster can have their party either cross over the mountains at the pass or under the mountains through orc and goblin tunnels.

If the characters approach the pass, it is completely filled in with snow. However, the garrison at the top can be entered and exited on the opposite side. Doing so will not be without blood since the garrison is now home to vile monsters, and flying monsters roosts on nearby crags.

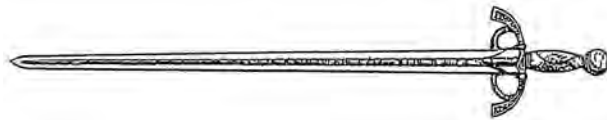
If the gamemaster prefers the characters to go under the mountains or the players choose to do so, any garrison or watchtower along the road up to the pass can be used as an entrance to a larger network of underground tunnels. Of course, those tunnels should be populated with all manner of hostile creatures.

# PART 3

## POSSIBLE AREAS ALONG THE ROAD



*“The King’s Road passes over the Great Mountains  
and out of memory. Who lives that can comprehend  
its length?” - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington,  
The Passing of the Ancients*





These are ideas of different terrain that the characters can encounter along the road. The gamemaster can introduce these areas at any time and in any order after the Great Mountains.

## THE FLOODED LAND

The plain between two mountain ranges where giant bears hunted and wild horses grazed is now a vast shallow lake. In the Great Cataclysm, the land was altered so the water from mountain streams and snow melts poured in and transformed it completely.

Bright green watergrass sways gently beneath the surface of the chilly water. Where grass and other plants are absent one can see the bottom as clearly as looking through the sky.

Ducks, geese, and waterfowl of all kinds gather in the millions. Several distinct species of manatees and dugongs graze among the submarine grass. Fish of all sizes from tiny minnows to coldwater behemoths dart and glide through the glassy water.

The King's Road is now submerged. It can be seen easily as no plants or moss grow on the white stones of the road. At night the glowing road creates an eerie ribbon in the water. The garrisons and watchtowers rise out of the lake like broken teeth.

When the party is confronted with this obstacle, they have little choice except to make a raft or boat of some kind. The shoreline where the road descends into the water provides timber and grass for construction. If the party absolutely cannot construct a raft or boat, feel free to have one hidden in reeds along the shoreline or in the garrison at the water's edge.

The deepest points in the lake are only about 12 feet with shallows of about three feet. The recommended width of the lake is 500 miles. This provides 11 garrison and 10 watchtowers assuming there is a garrison where the party embarks. This is



21 opportunities for dungeons as the party traverses the lake.

Since there is little or no current it would take 12 hours to pole or paddle a raft the 25 miles to the next watchtower or garrison. If the party has built a makeshift sail, it cuts the time in half.

Hunting and fishing can provide ample food for the journey if a survival-type campaign is being played.

The garrisons and watchtowers in the lake are damaged like all the rest. The roofs are missing, walls have collapsed, elegant spiral stairs made by some forgotten master reach into the empty sky.

However, some pockets of dry shelter remain. A few rooms above the present waterline have survived.

The subterranean levels of the building can and should be used as dungeons the party can explore. The tunnels and rooms can be flooded or partially flooded to give atmosphere to the dungeons.

# METROPOLIS

At some point along the road, perhaps after a particularly grueling leg of the journey, the gamemaster should introduce a metropolis.

The party can winter here and reequip for the next part of the journey. The city should have at least 80,000 inhabitants. The King's Road should run right through the center of the city.

A ruined garrison partially rebuilt with new stonework serves as a barracks for troops. A walled keep only about 70 years old commands the area and is home to a duke and duchess who rule from the city. Several other castles dot the skyline. These are home to barons and baronesses who serve the duchy.

Numerous inns, taverns, and saloons tempt the characters with warm fires, soft beds, and all sorts of worldly pleasures. Myriads of shops and stores carry nearly every conceivable item a person could need.

The metropolis is an opportunity to give the party side quests and to provide variety from the constant journey and dungeons.

## Side Quests

The metropolis is an opportunity to give the party side quests and to provide variety from the constant journey and dungeons.

- Help an old shopkeeper who's being extorted by a gang.
- Help an innkeeper who's going out of business.
- Catch criminals who have bounties.
- Stop two gangs from going to war.
- Help a baroness recover a stolen jewel.
- Odd jobs for various guilds.

## Threats to the Quest

Characters could also be tempted to remain in the city and to abandon the quest.

- The orb is stolen.
- A villain steals the party's horses.
- The party is robbed.
- The party is falsely accused of a crime.

## Clues and Rumors

The city can also provide a place to learn clues about the Grand Kingdom, lore about the Capital, news of the surrounding countryside, and so on.

- A dragon lives in the ruins of the Capital.
- The Grand Kingdom never existed and no one built the road. (Not true, but a rumor nonetheless.)
- Small spheres were used as keys in the Grand Kingdom.
- Goblins and orcs are children's fairy tales. (Obviously not true, but they haven't been seen near the city in generations.)





## THE SALT LAKE

The remnants of an inland sea form a huge salt lake. The King's Road was built as a bridge over the sea with great arches reaching 60 feet above the surface. Now the surface is a hundred, or in some cases, two hundred feet below.

If characters stay on the road, the following challenges can occur: collapsed bridge spans, rubble from watchtowers and garrisons, or even the perils of falling.

If the characters follow the ground under the bridge, they face sand and salt flats, extremely salty water up to 12 feet deep in places and miles in length, and they wouldn't be able to enter any of the garrisons or watchtowers, as they are on the spans above.

The salt lake can be any length. Make sure there are enough garrisons and watchtowers for dungeon opportunities.

## THE SEA

The Great Cataclysm threw an arm of a vast ocean over the King's Road in one section.

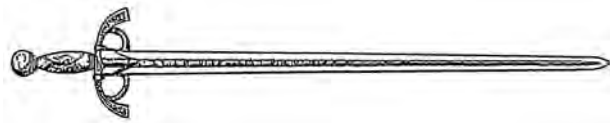
The road can be seen dipping into the ocean near a small port city and comes back out of the water near some small fishing villages on the other side.

In the city, the characters can charter a ship to take them across the sea. Under normal sailing conditions, it is a three-day journey.

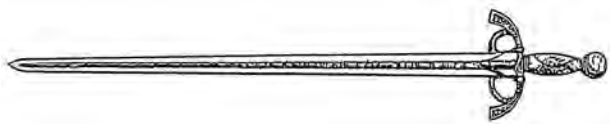
The green foamy sea is a breeding ground for dragon turtles.

# PART 4

## GARRISONS



*“Every fifty miles travelers were treated with protection, fresh meals, and warm beds. Gone now. All ruins. I explored several when I was younger.” -  
Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Atwood Keeler,  
Lady Librarian of Farrington*



Every 50 miles along The King's Road is a garrison as mentioned above. These structures provide opportunities for dungeons as the campaign is played.

Provided here is flavor text for each structure. The gamemaster should fill them with whatever fits their campaign: combat encounters, non-combat encounters, treasure, or loot.





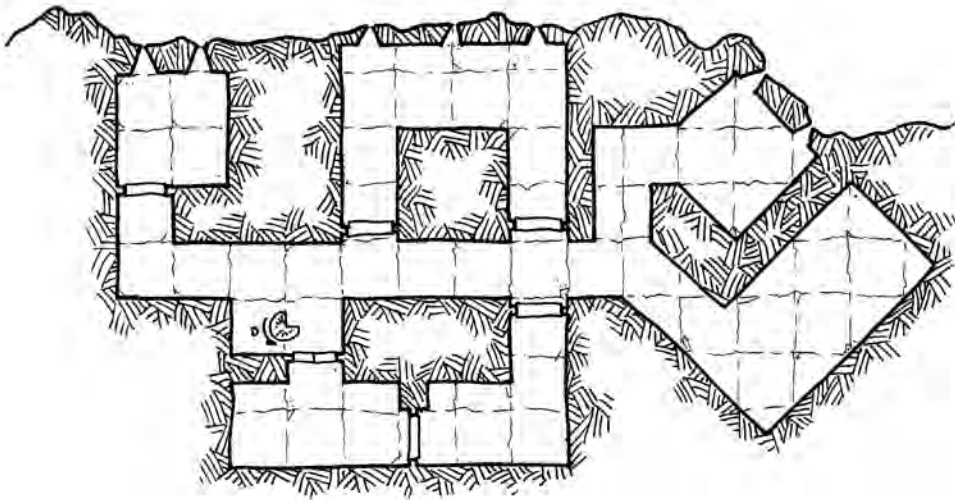
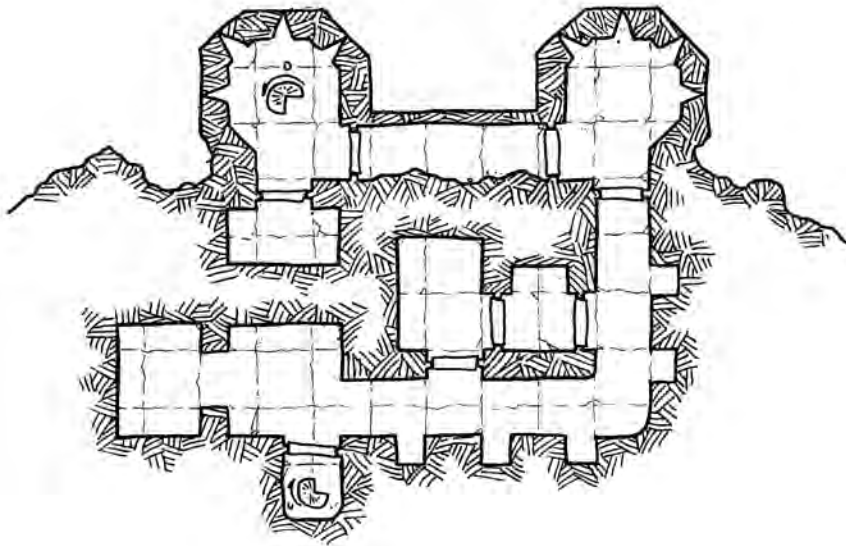
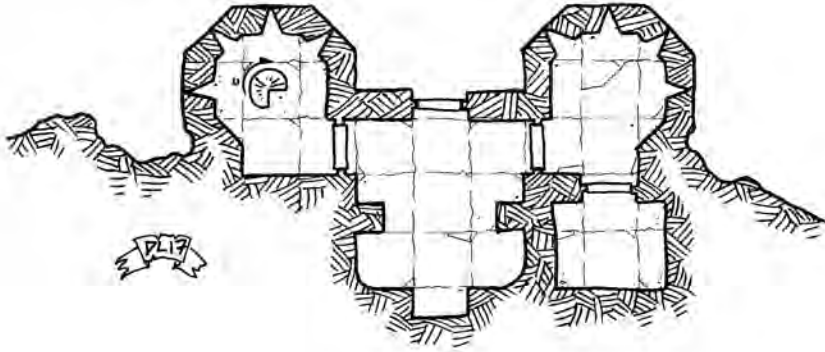
# GARRISON #1

Built into a cliff overlooking the road this garrison used to command a large section of the road. It can be entered by a long ramp that forks off the road.

The garrison is now smashed and broken. Bits of stones and layers of dust cover the floors. Evidence of ancient looting and bloodshed are clear.

In one room, the characters find the remnants of an old journal. It was kept by Alcott Bronley, the Lady General of the garrison. One entry says:

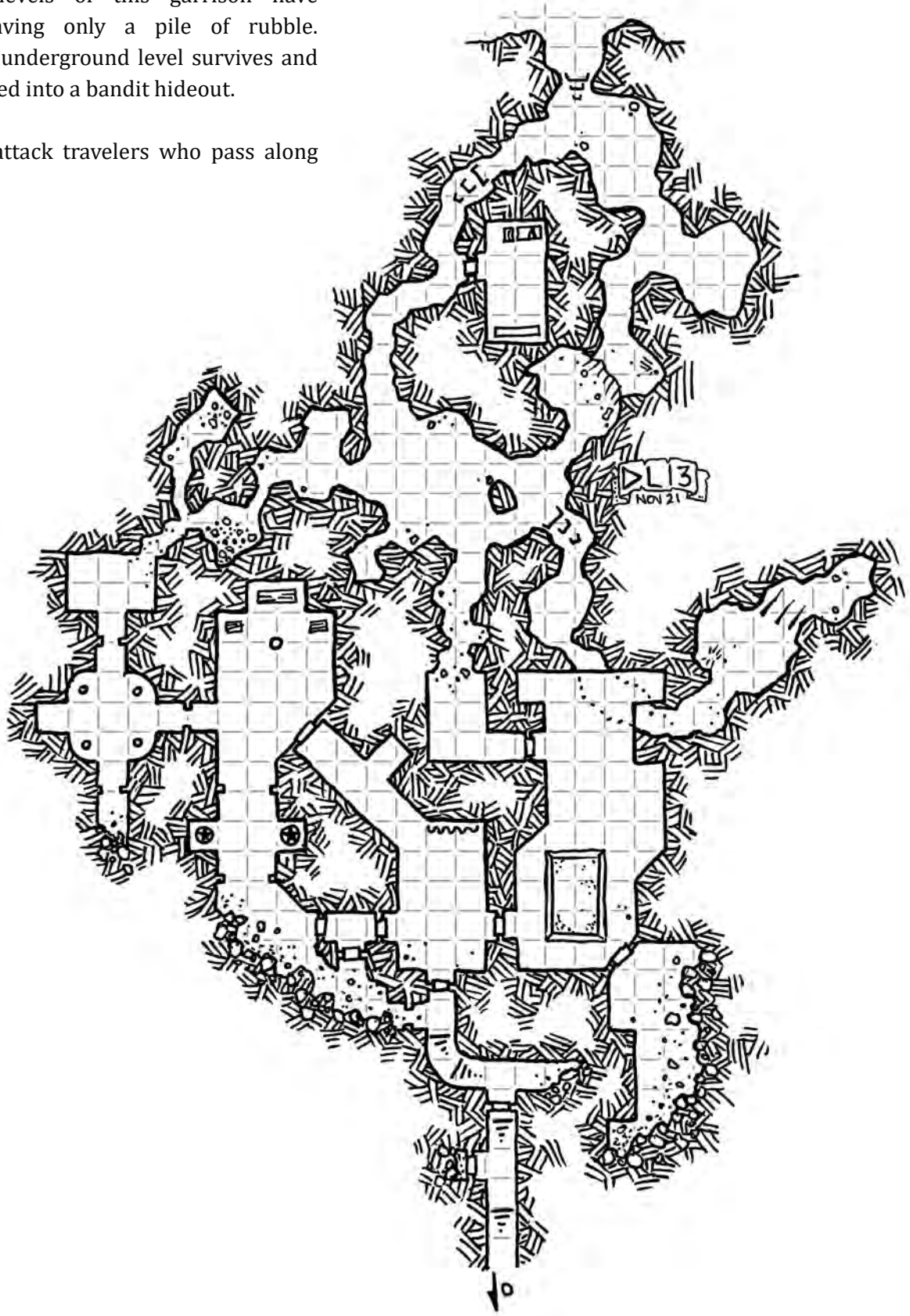
*"The earthquake was devastating. We have had no contact with the watchtowers in four days. A large force of goblins and orcs is gathering at the gates. We shall make our stand, and if we prevail, the survivors will head east to find any remnants of the King's Army. If our defenses break, we shall die well and make the vile destroyers know the wrath of the King's Own."*



## GARRISON #2

The upper levels of this garrison have collapsed leaving only a pile of rubble. However, the underground level survives and has been turned into a bandit hideout.

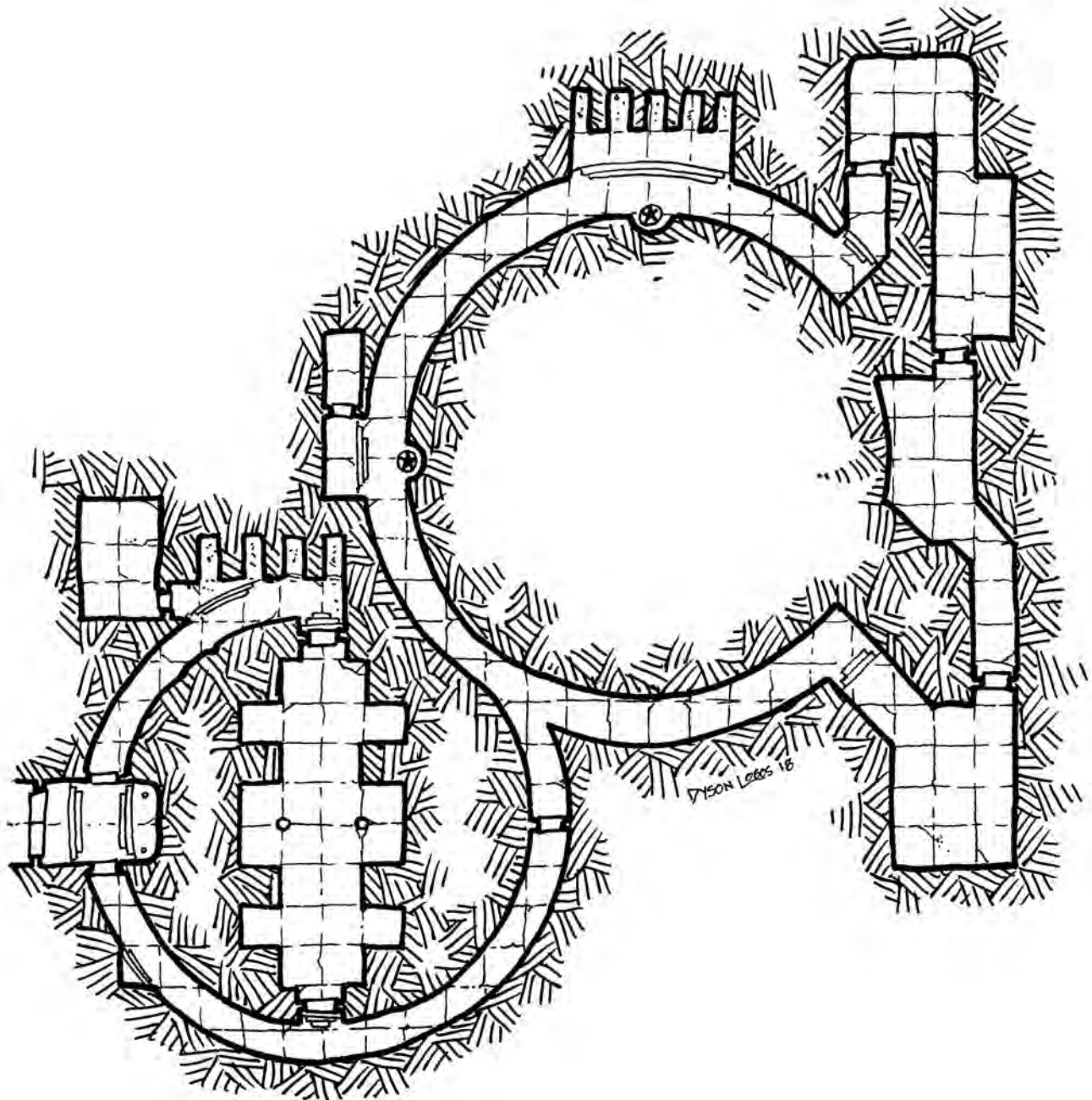
The bandits attack travelers who pass along the road.

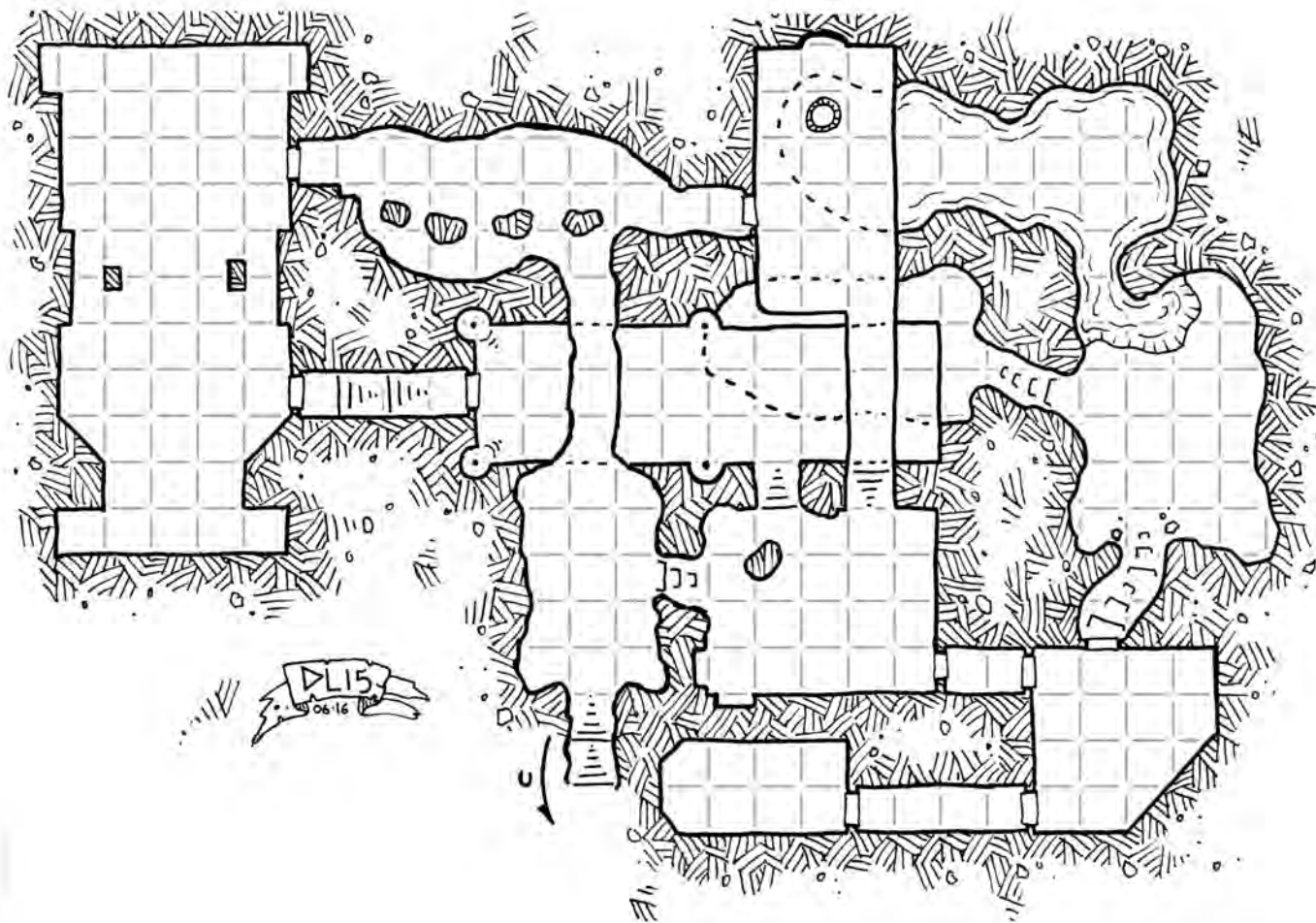


## GARRISON #3

Only a vague outline of foundation stones can be seen above ground. However, the underground level has not been entered in 500 years.

Well, at least from above ground. Something dark and terrible has tunneled from deep within the earth and now dwells here.





## GARRISON #4

This garrison appears to have been turned into a home at one point, but now is abandoned.

A tome of lore from the Grand Kingdom called, *The Works of King Manning and Queen Locke*, can be found in one room. It tells of how the king and queen built many great libraries and fountains throughout the kingdom.

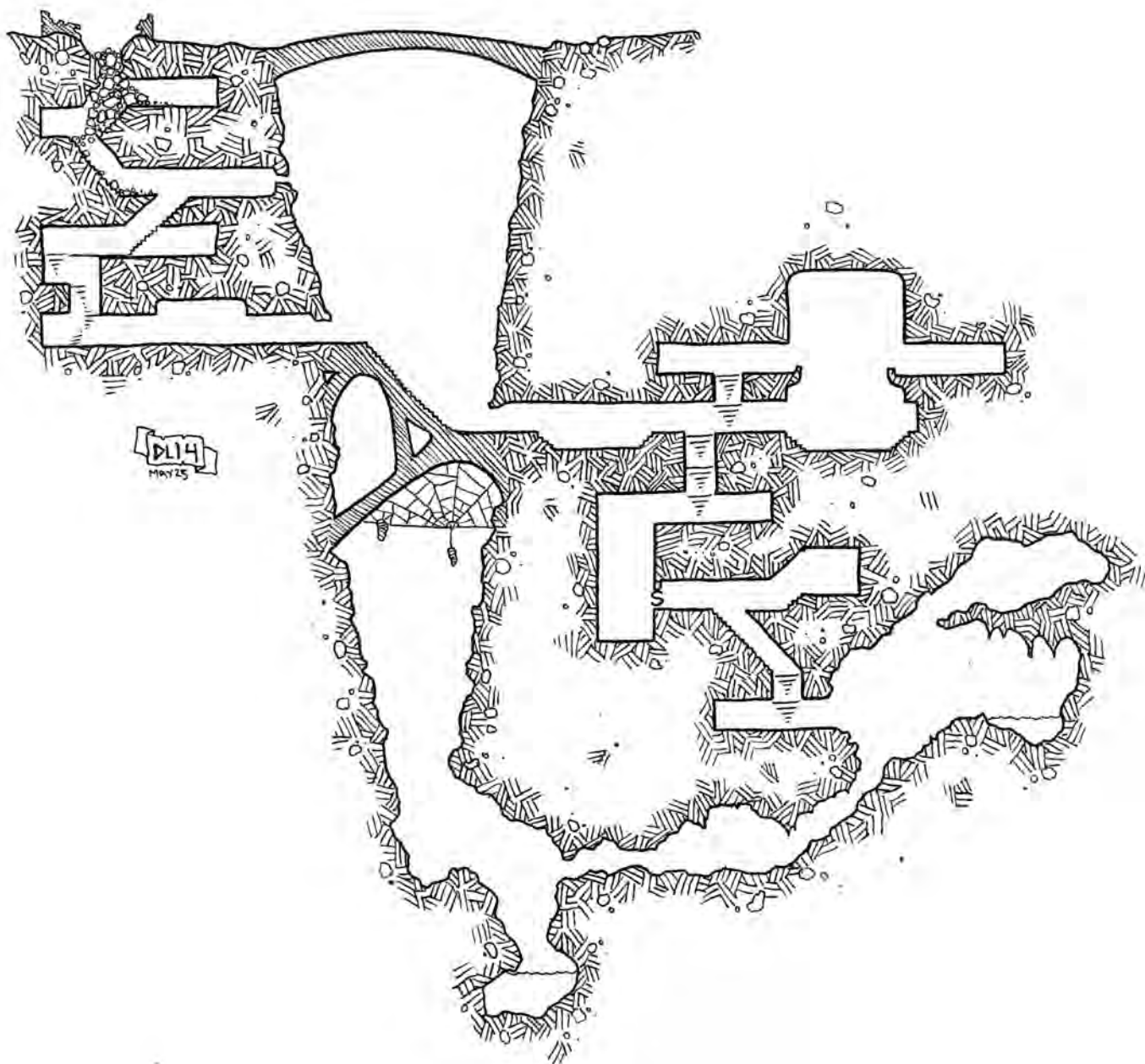
From reading, the characters can tell that the road was already built at the time the book was written. They also learn common household items that could talk and special keys used to open secret doors.



## GARRISON #5

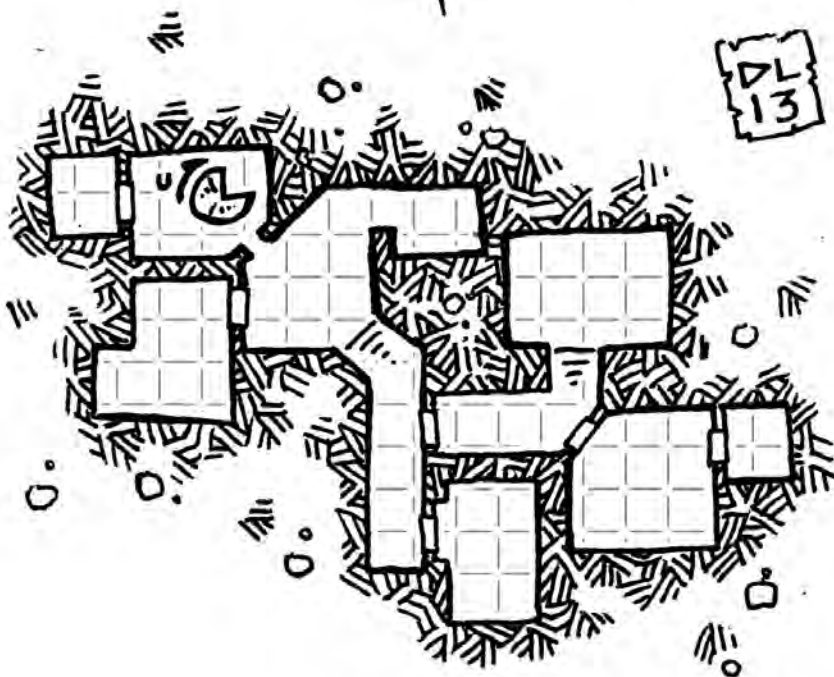
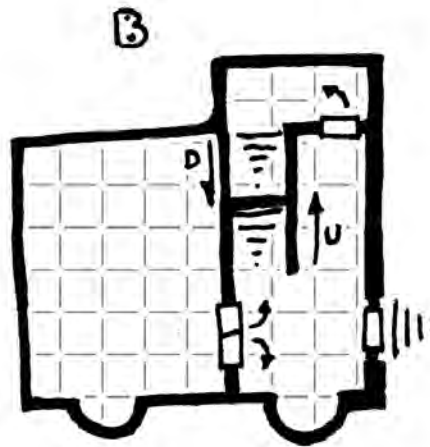
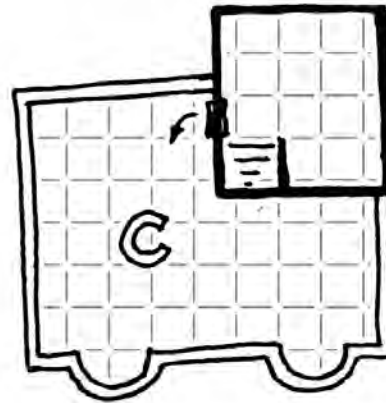
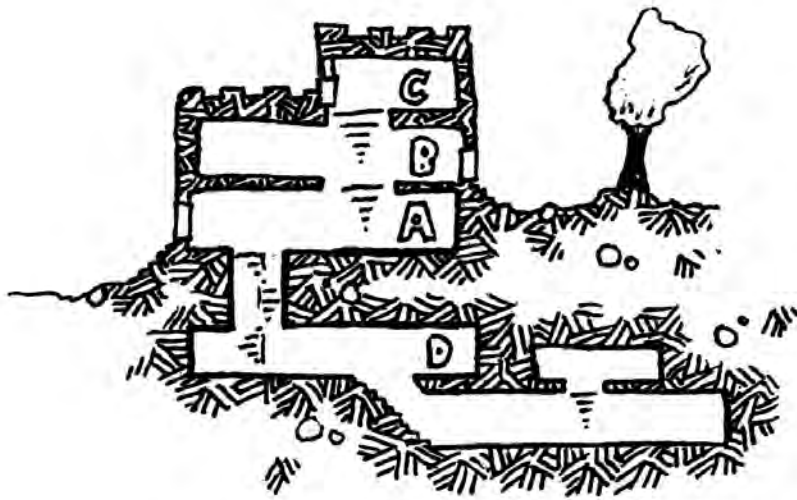


This garrison once protected a bridge over a deep gorge. Now, that all remains are the underground passages. However, something lurks within them.





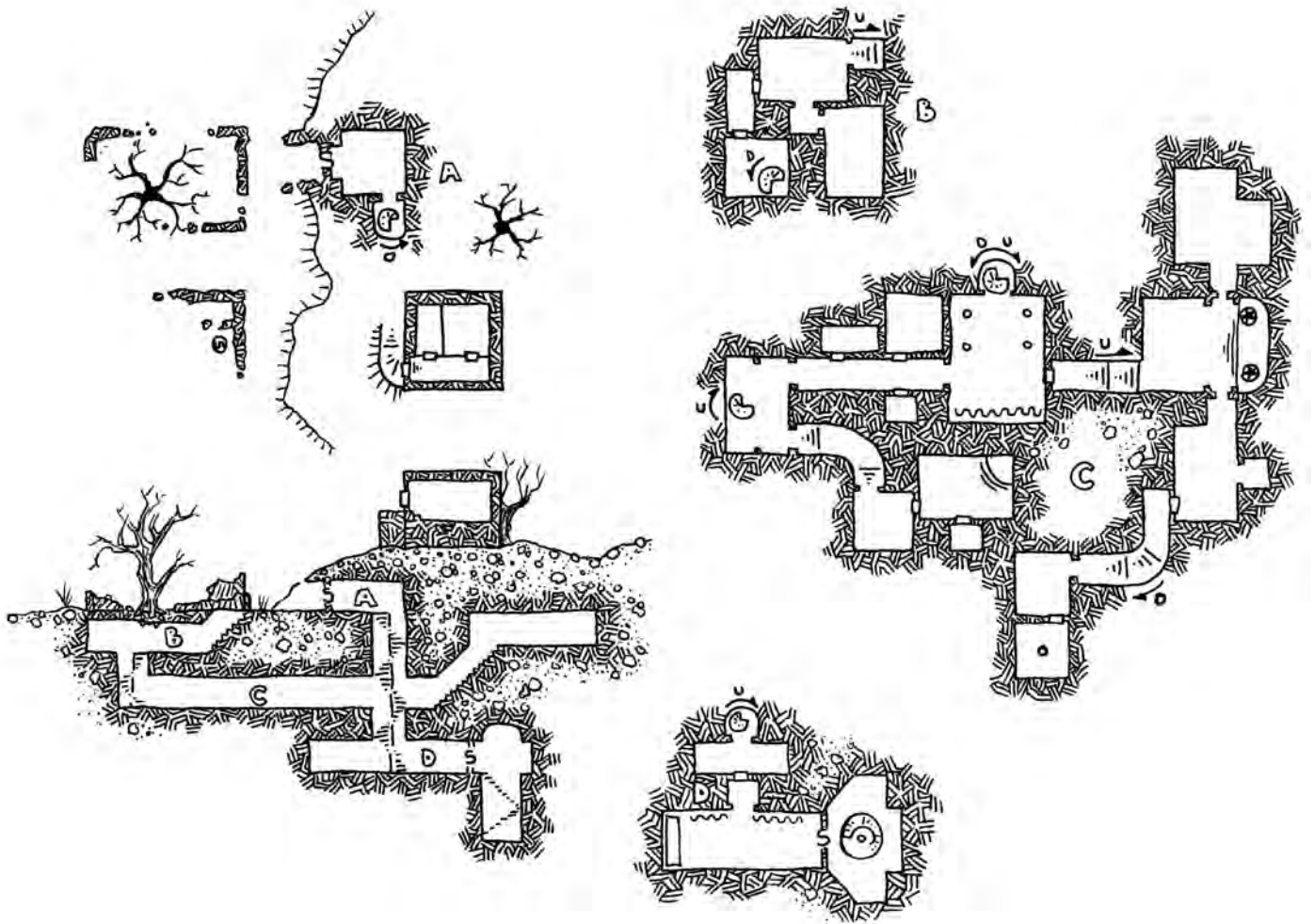
## GARRISON #6



The garrison is now a fortified farmhouse. A simple farming couple with a dozen children greets the party warmly and offers them a home-cooked meal.

If the party stays, after dinner, they discover that the house is surrounded by a group of orcs, goblins, bandits, or other types of creatures intent on destroying the family and taking the garrison.

If the party does not stay for dinner, as they pass along the road they discover signs of the evil group that is going to attack the farm house.



## GARRISON #7

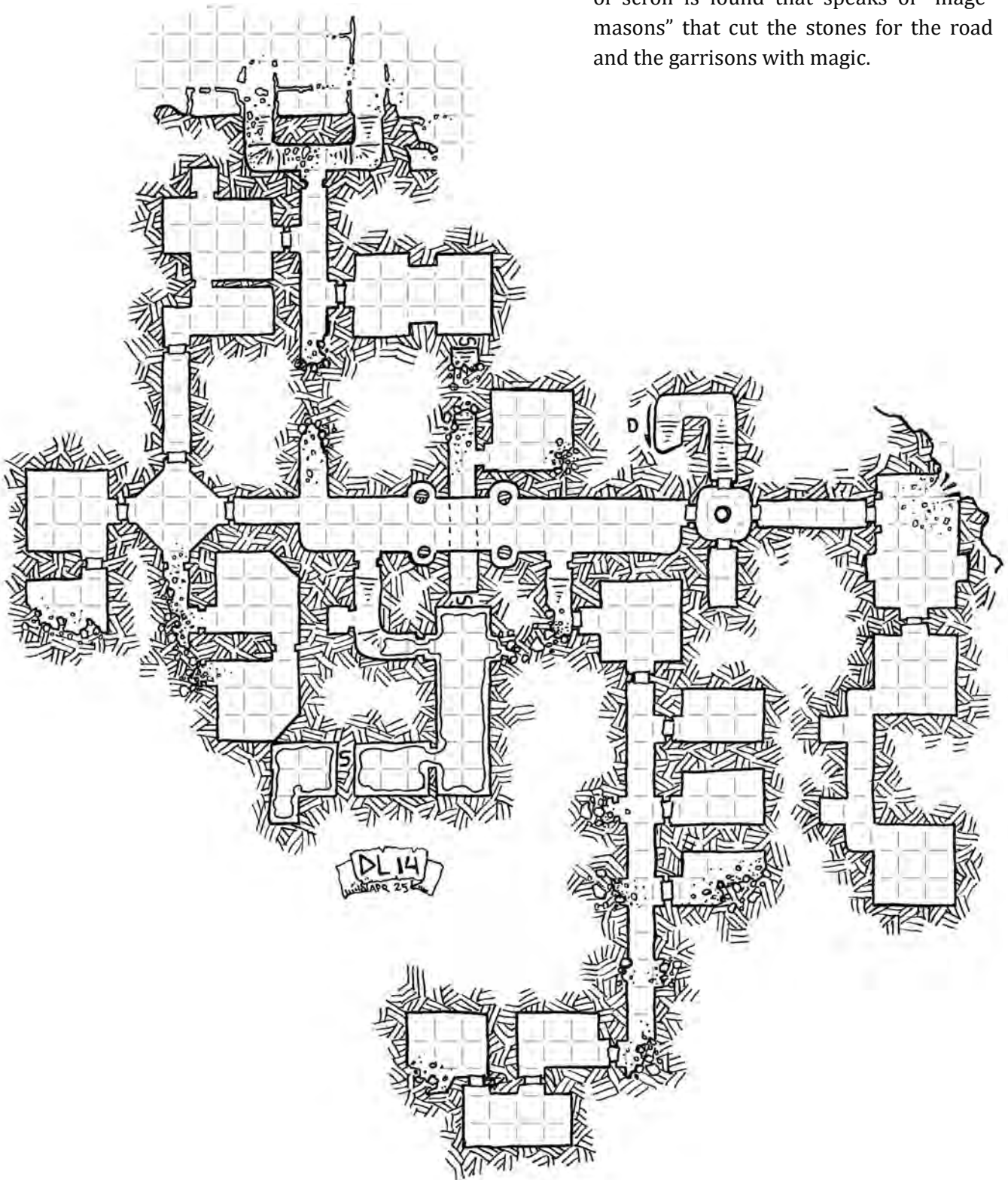
The remains of this garrison have become home to lurking monsters and wild creatures.

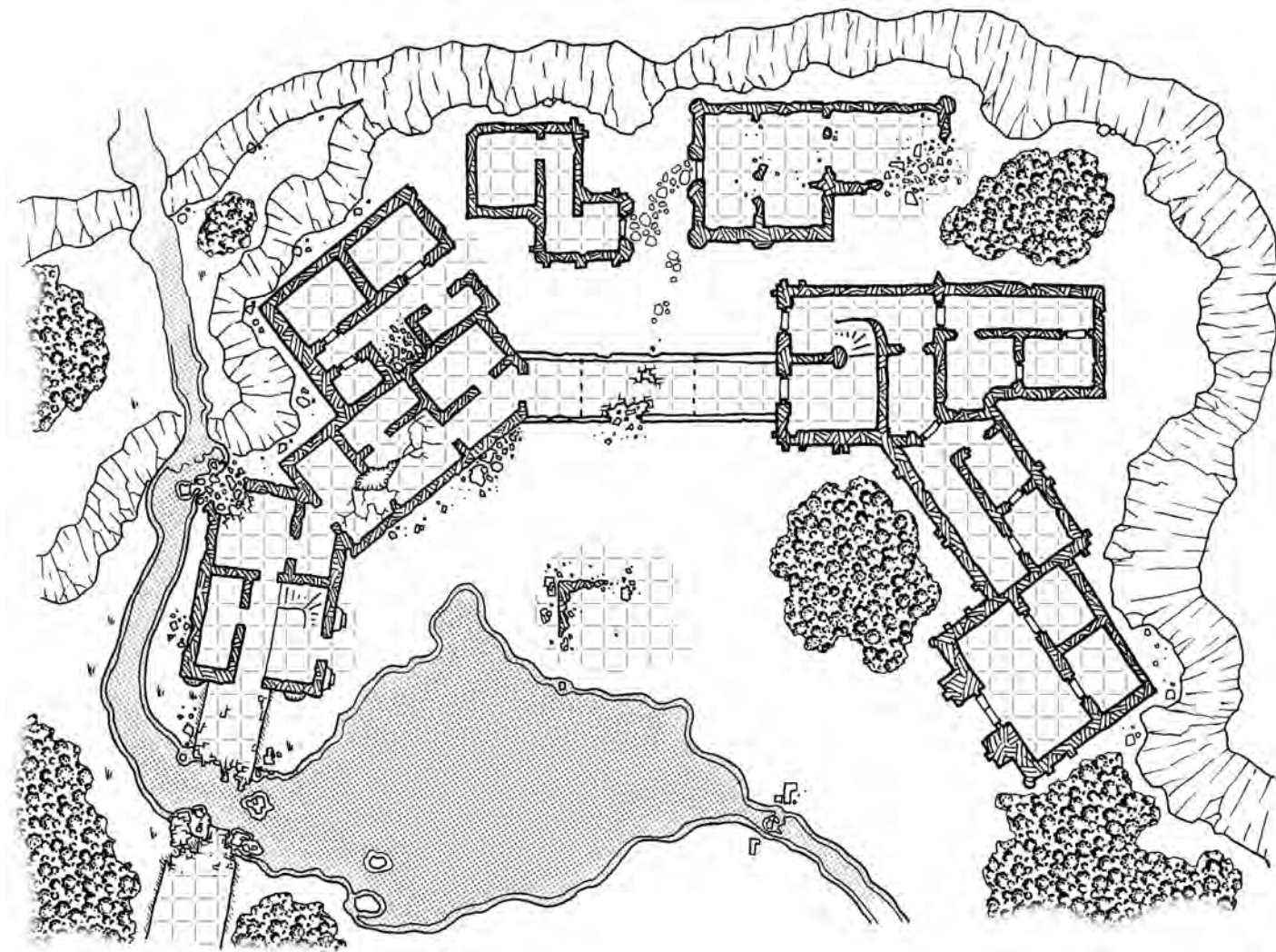
In one room can be found a chest containing 3D100 gold pieces. A letter with the chest tells of a robbery nearly a century ago and staching of the loot. A human skeleton nearby tells a grim tale of at least one of the robbers.



## GARRISON #8

These dark and dank halls reek of mildew and stagnant water. In one room, a piece of scroll is found that speaks of “mage-masons” that cut the stones for the road and the garrisons with magic.





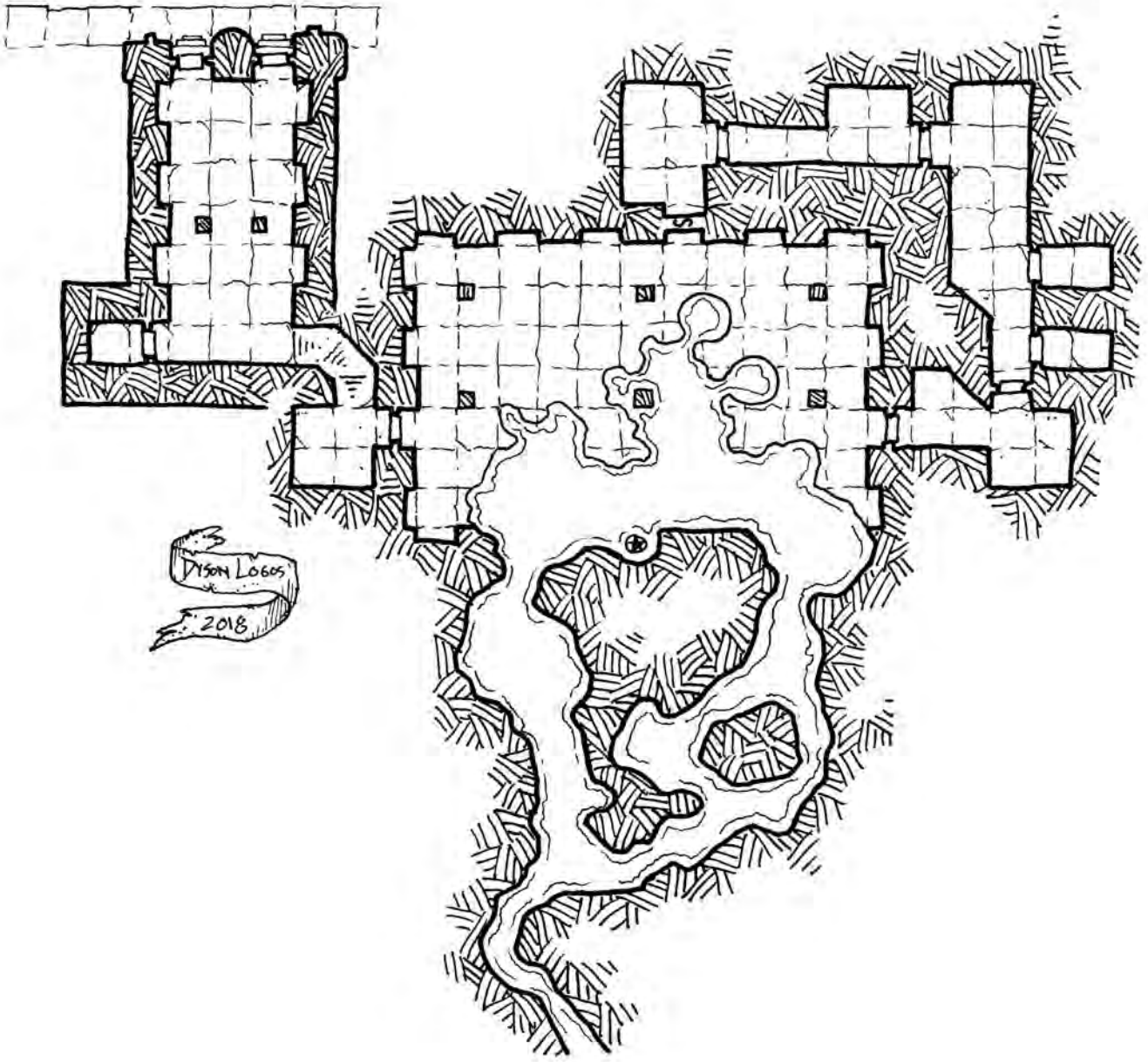
## GARRISON #9

Vines grow over this ruined garrison. Even though long abandoned, the story of a siege can be seen here. Defenders hopelessly outnumbered fought to the last man, but in the end were overrun.

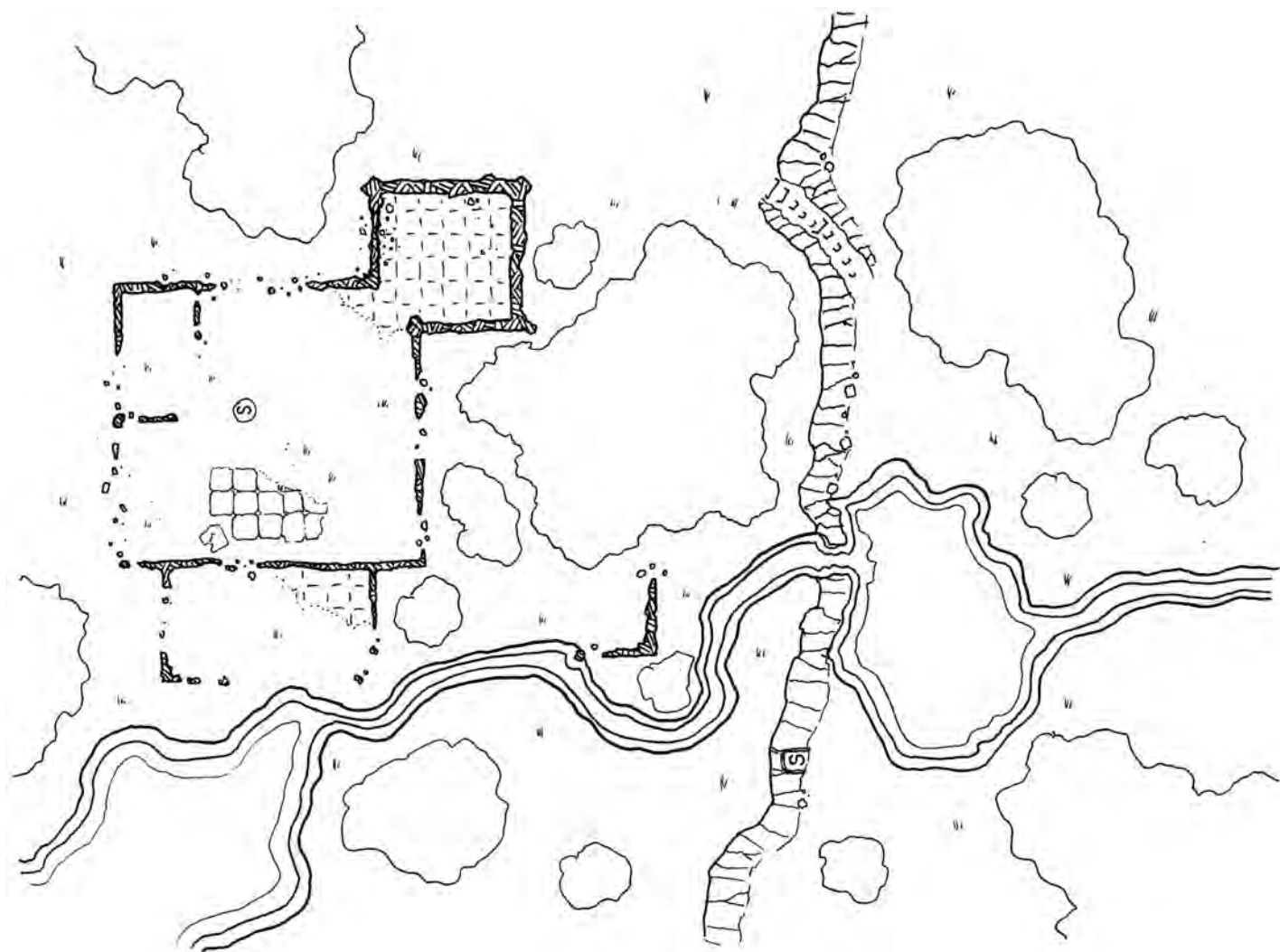
What lurks here now?

# GARRISON #10

The main tower remains, yet it is cracked and leaning. The underground chambers are broken and flooded. Bubbles surface occasionally in the murky waters.







## GARRISON #11

Something has been at work in these ruins. Has a wizard made his home here? Have a group of refugees fled here for safety?

In one room, a +1 dagger with an ornate handle inscribed, "Oswin Erskine, Lord General" can be found.



LOWER LEVEL

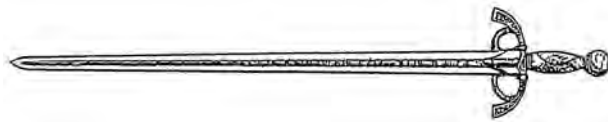


# PART 5

## WATCHTOWERS



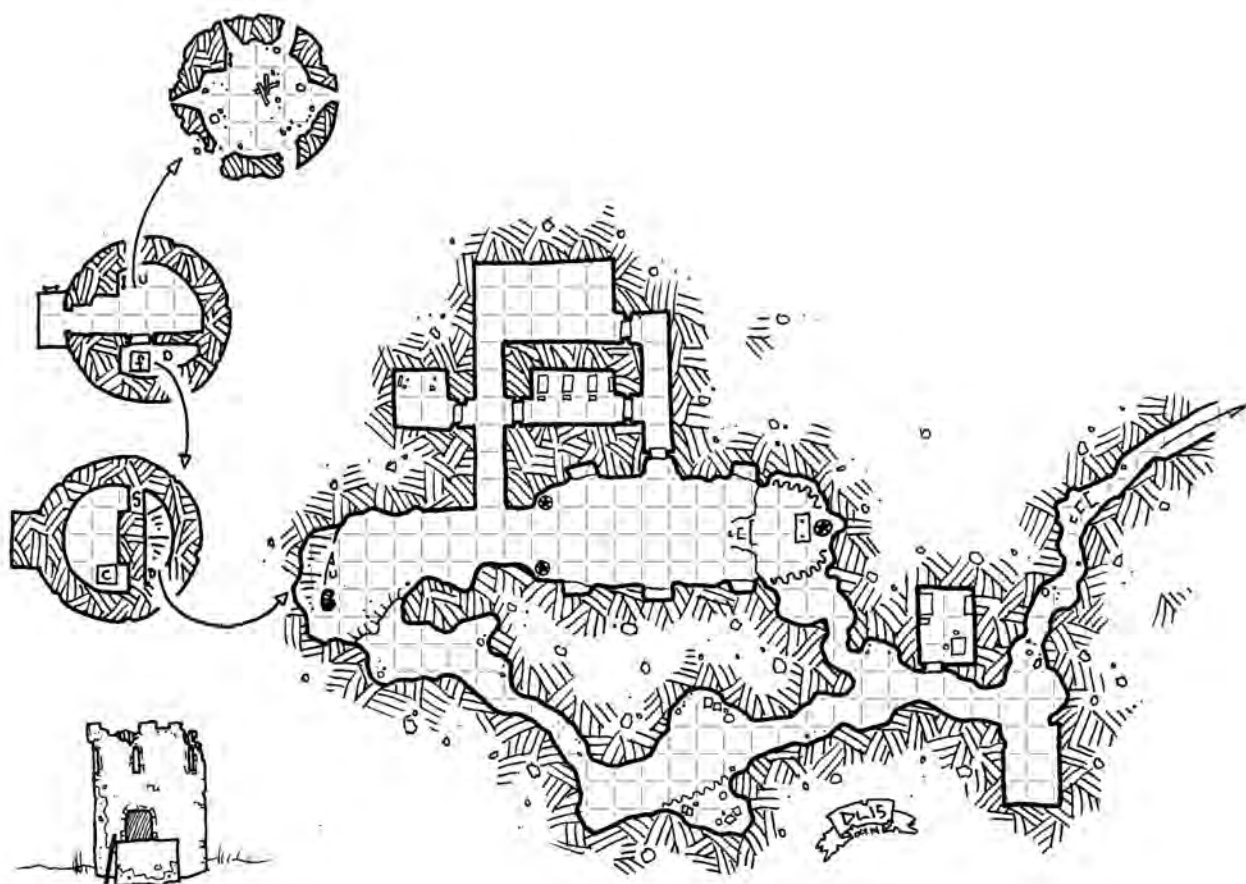
*“Once I stood upon a ridge and saw the white  
watchtowers stretching out before me like a row of  
misshapen sentinels.” - Milbourne of Elvesport,  
Letter to Archer Graves, Ranger Captain of  
Farrington*

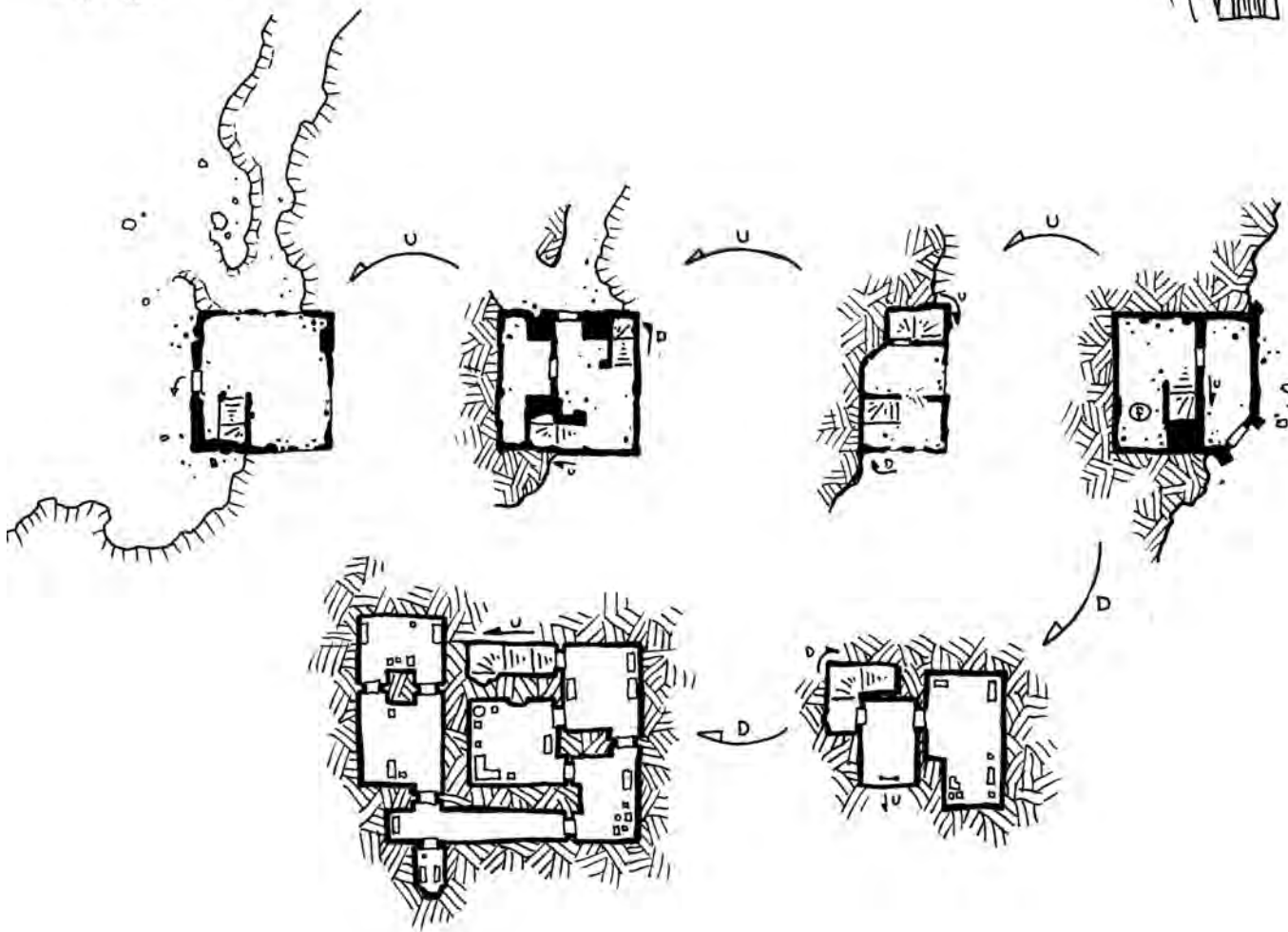
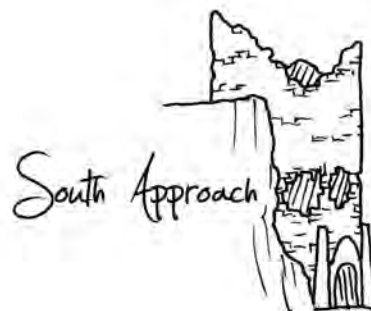


As mentioned, in between each garrison, at the 25 mile mark, was a watchtower.

## WATCHTOWER #1

The upper levels of the watchtower are abandoned. However, the underground levels are occupied by a wicked cult that worships a demon.





## WATCHTOWER #2

Monsters and other creatures haunt the ruins of the tower.

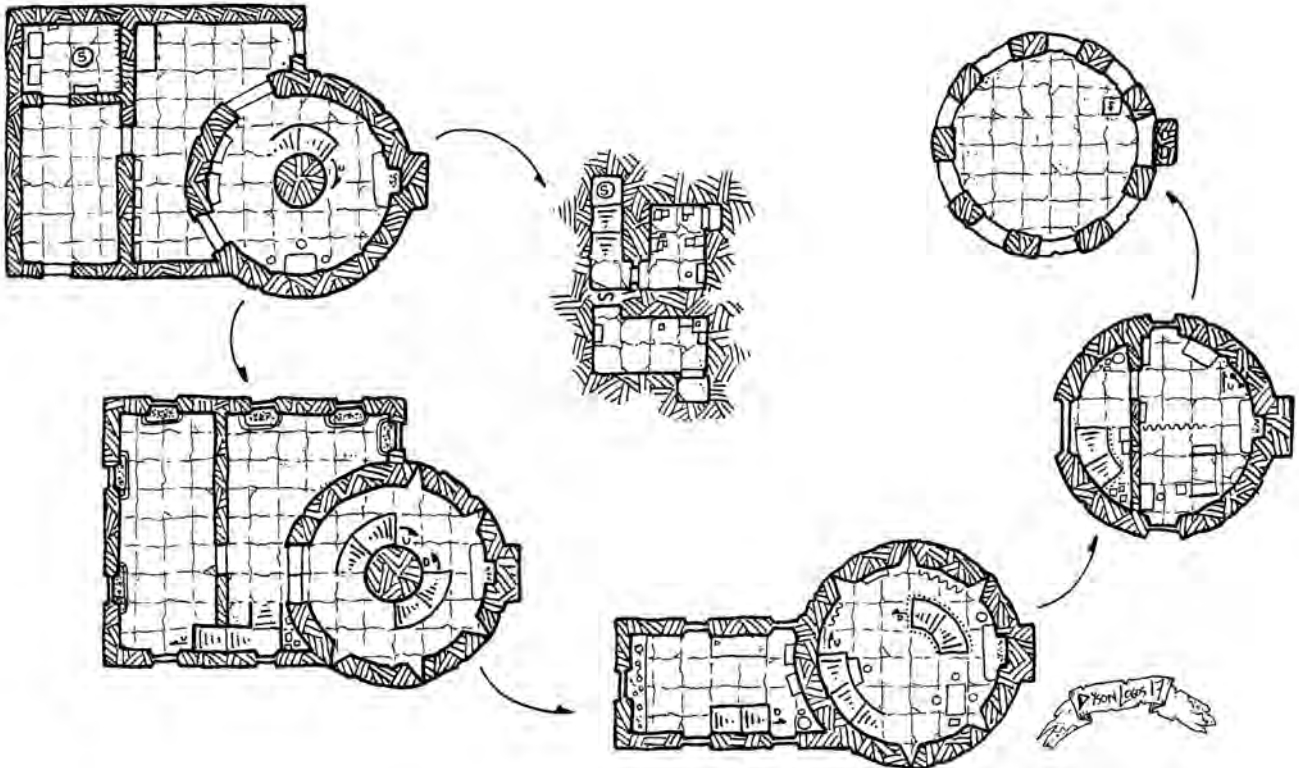
In one room can be found a journal entry by Thane Acton, Watchmaster. It says:

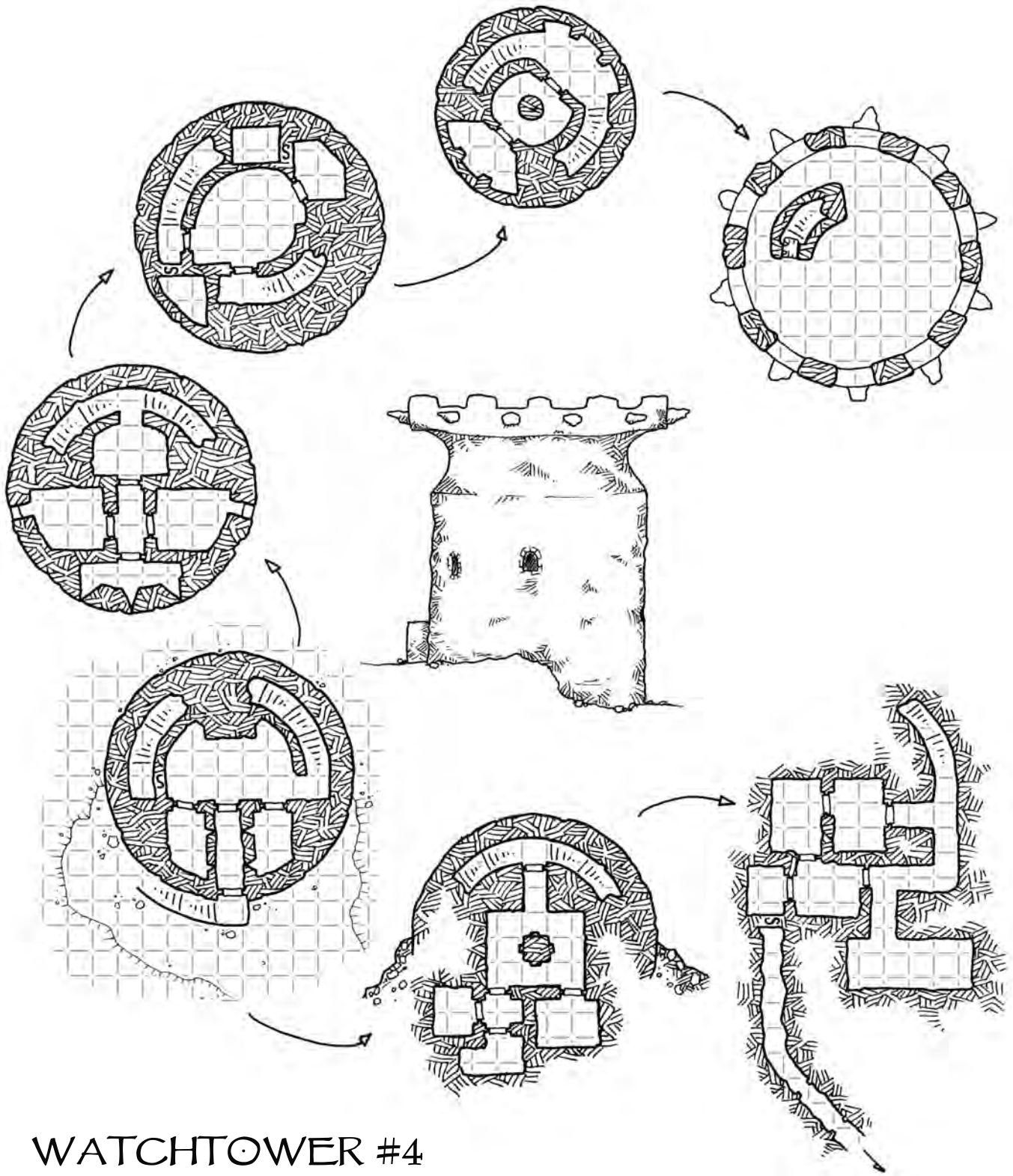
*"All is in ruins. The tower is shattered. My soldiers are broken. We are not given the slightest opportunity to rest. Shapes and things in the dark keep coming."*



## WATCHTOWER #3

Built on a commanding ridge, this tower has stood, but is cracked and worn. What calls it home?





## WATCHTOWER #4

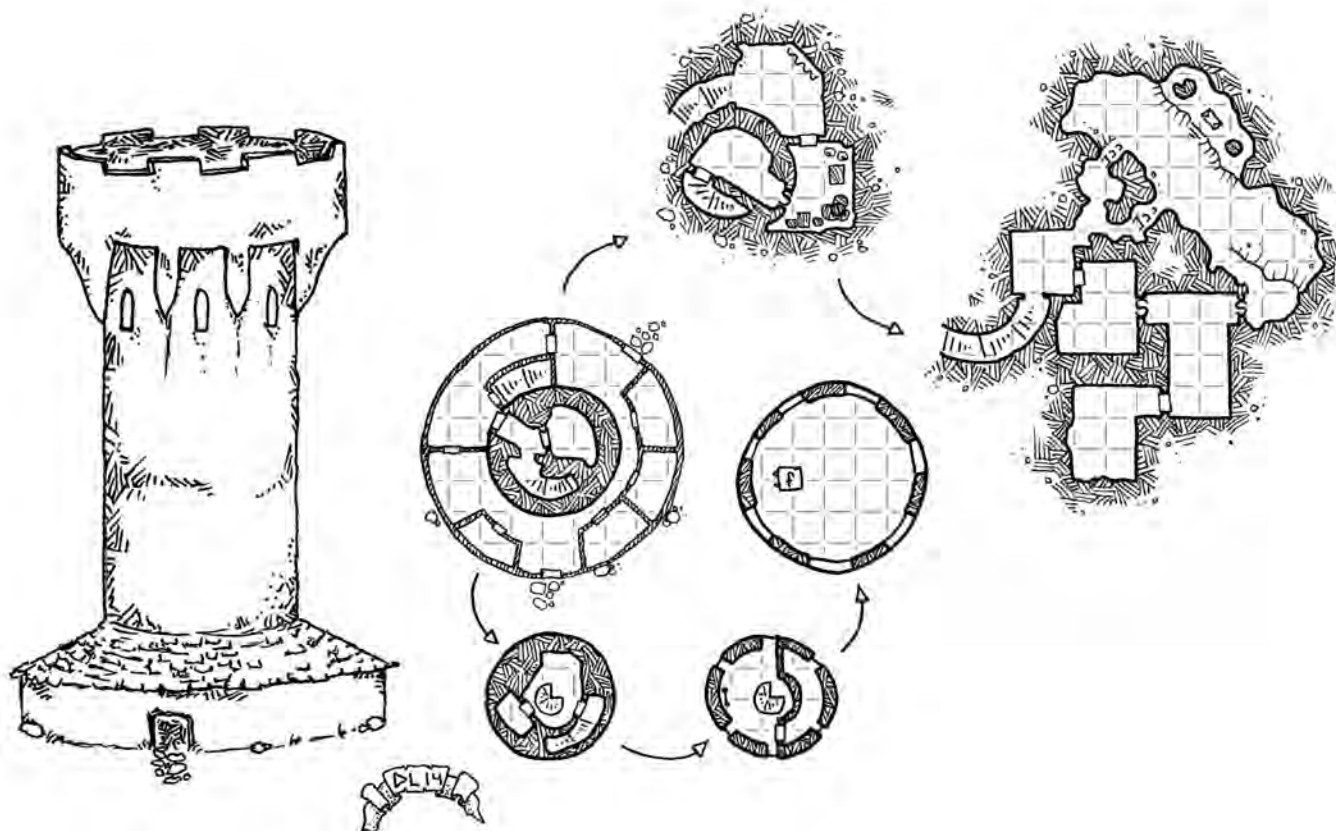
A robber baron now dwells in this tower with his band of thugs and ruffians. The King's Road near this tower is not safe for travelers.



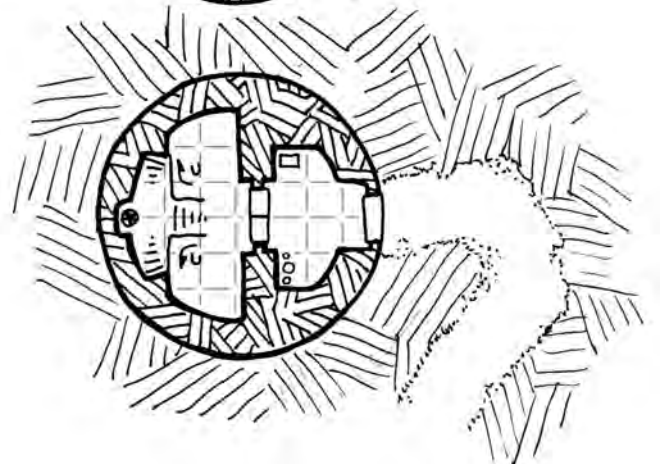
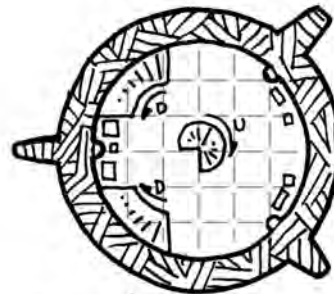
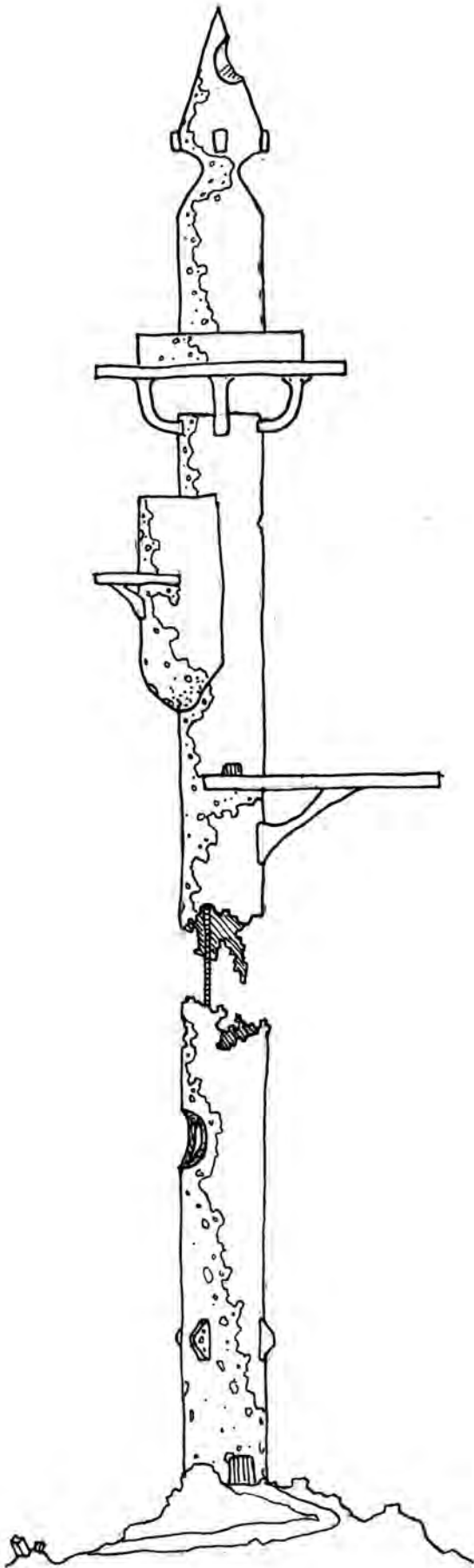


## WATCHTOWER #5

This watchtower has been claimed by an evil wizard.



# LOWER FLOORS

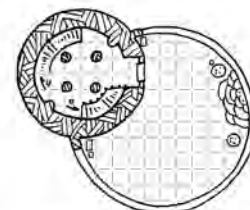
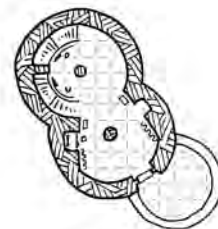
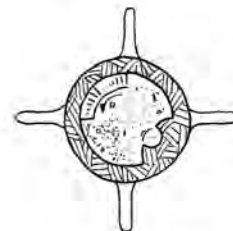
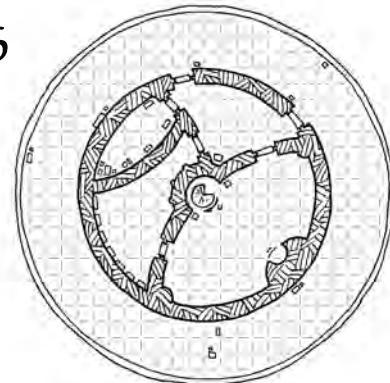


# WATCHTOWER #6

A massive tower, once proud and gleaming, now broken and soiled. Creatures slither in its stairwells and wait for wayward visitors.

In one room can be found a signet ring inscribed with the name, "Cameron Waverly, Watchmistress."

## UPPER FLOORS

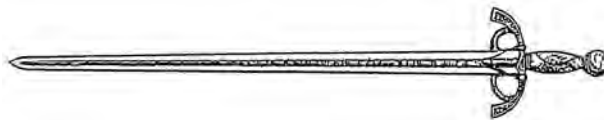


# PART 6

## CITIES AND TOWNS



*“What wonders lay beyond our borders? Truly, the world holds treasures and people beyond imagining, yet I am trapped here among the aptly called Petty Duchies.” - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington, Collected Musings of a Restless Ruler*

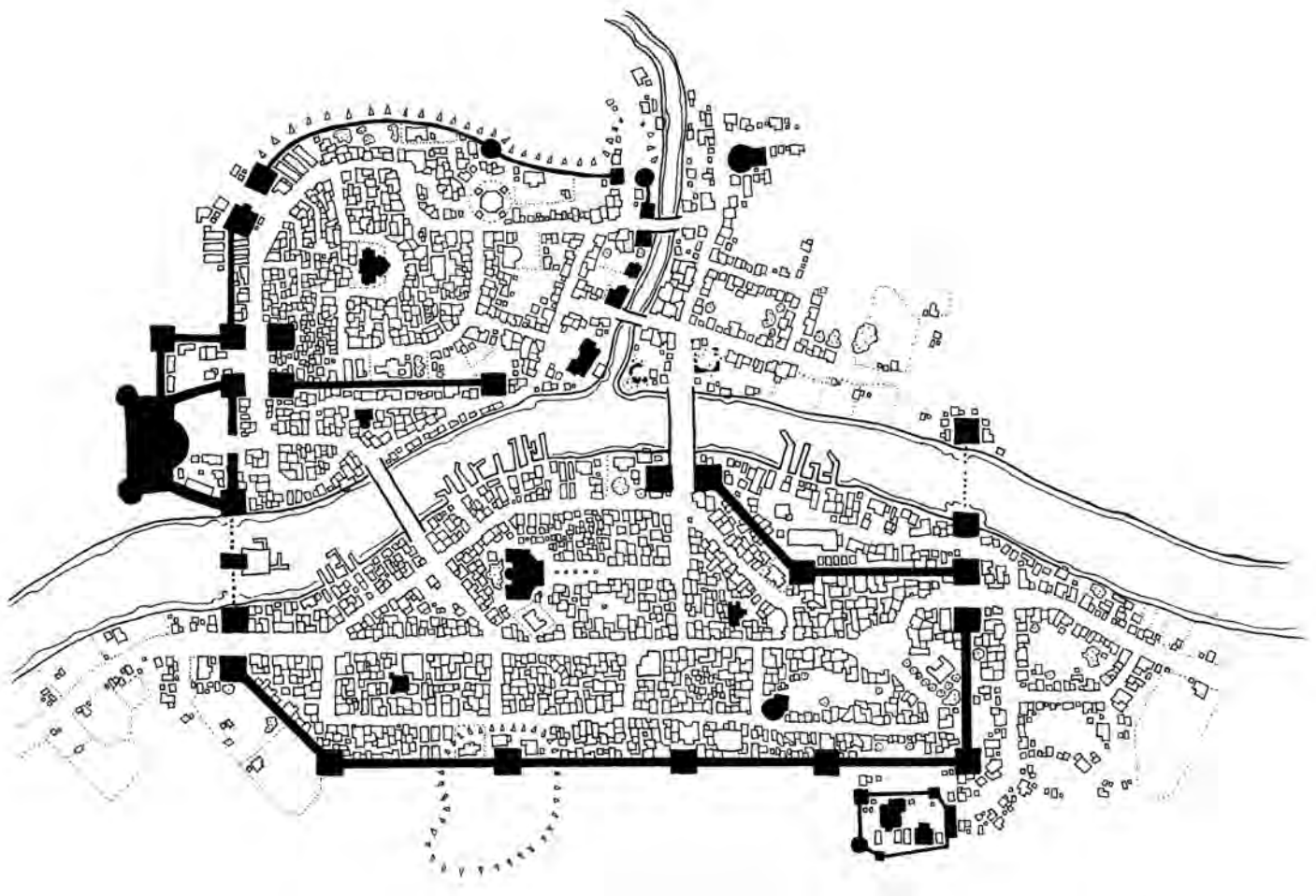


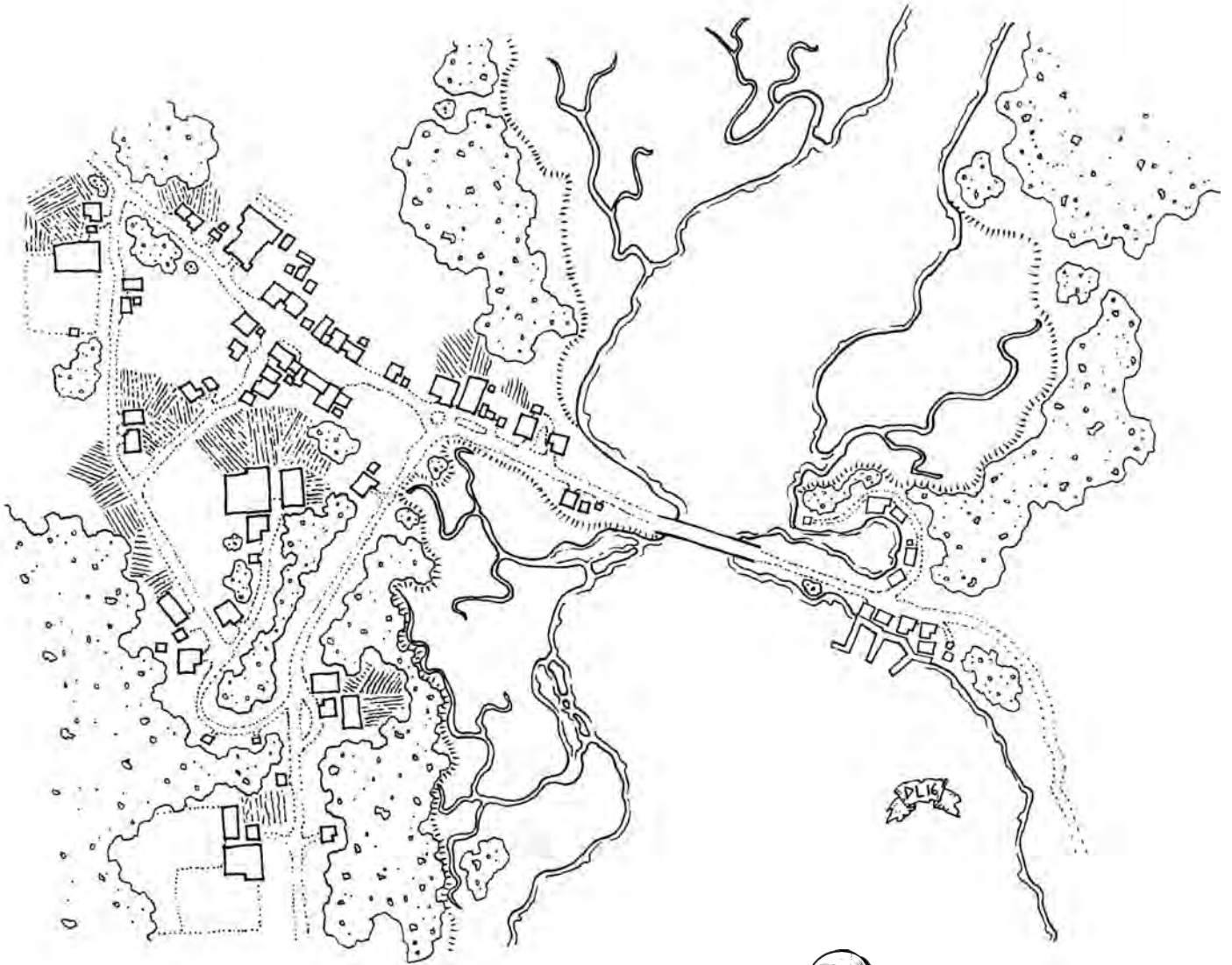
Towns can be placed along as needed for re-equipping, side quests, or wintering. The cities and towns may be positioned along the King's Road or off a ways, whatever fits the feel of the campaign or the gamemaster's wishes.

One could be used as Elvesport, if desired.

## TOWN #1

Endloss Ditton - The southernmost city of a duchy controlled by the foppish Duke Chilton Burgess and his equally inane wife Duchess Radella. Built and fortified by his great grandfather Dorset, the city sports excellent defenses and has an array of businesses and shops. If the Duke and Duchess are not visiting, the city is ruled by Viscountess Afton Averhill.





## TOWN #2

Thrupp - A small stop along the King's Road with several inns and shops. The current Lord Mayor is one Stroud Alder.





## TOWN #3

Old Wolverton - A fortified city on the shores of a lake. An excellent spot for wintering along the journey. The duchy the city belongs to has weakened greatly, leaving the Lord and Lady Mayors to do mainly as they please. The current Lord Mayor is Snowden Wakefield.





## TOWN #4

Allhallows - A well supplied port city with several strong fortifications. The body of water can be either a small sea or a lake. Also, it could be used as the port where the sea covers the King's Road.

The Duchess Blaine Corliss rules her duchy from the city. Once a devout and religious city, the people now revel in amusements, mockeries, magic tricks, and other such vanities.

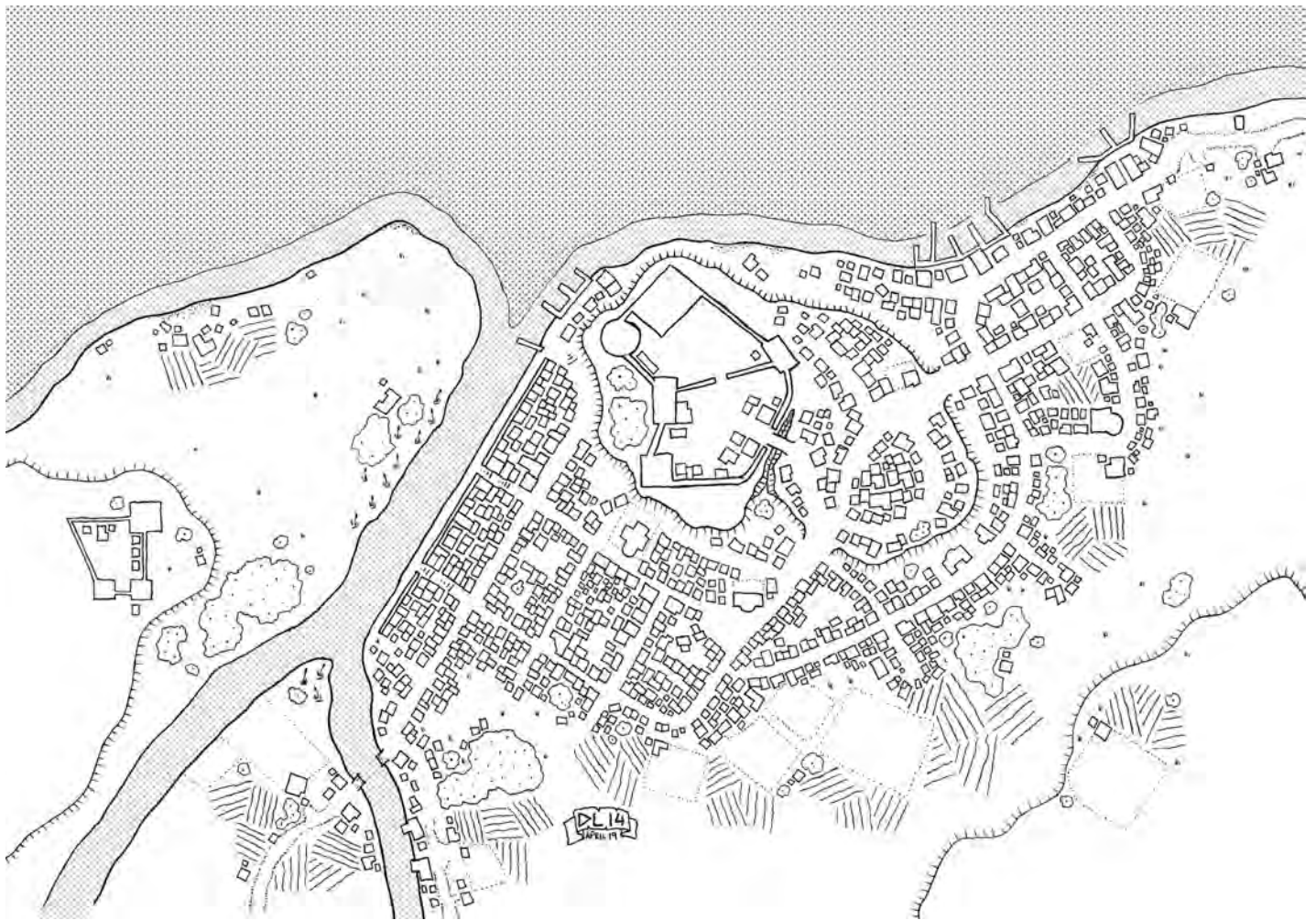




## TOWN #5

Hygham - The southernmost fort of some northern duchy, but now a small town has grown up around it. The party can find supplies, blacksmiths, food, as well as a couple of inns. The current Lord General of the castle fort is Birch Hunt.





## TOWN #6

Falcutt - The ruined garrison has been refortified. The white stones of the ancients are now topped with limestone and granite. Lawson Knox is the self-proclaimed Lord Mayor of the town. He and his group of "supporters" are rebels from a nearby duchy. They rebuilt the garrison, and other people looking for a new life have gathered around its walls. The lake and river have helped the town grow quickly.

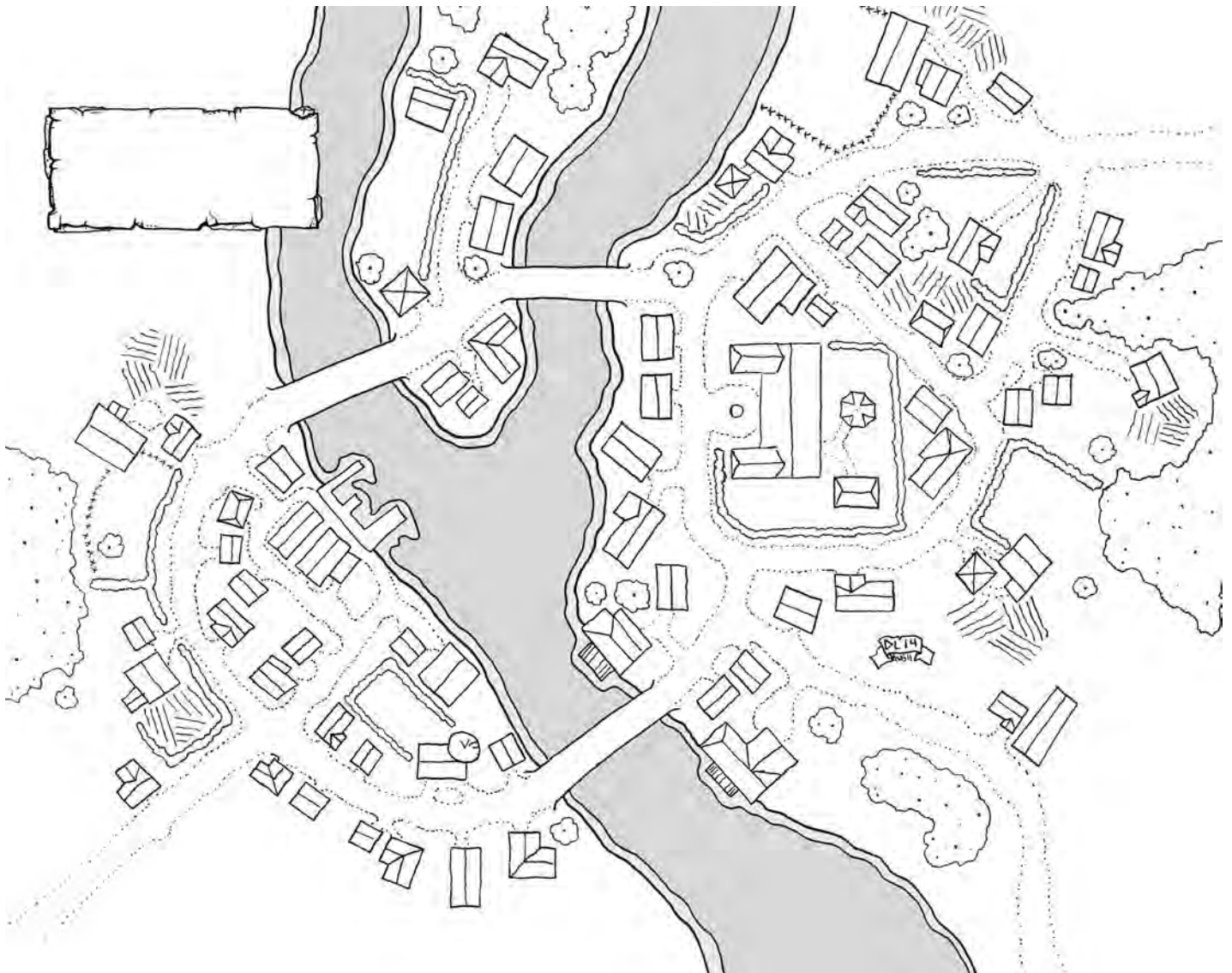






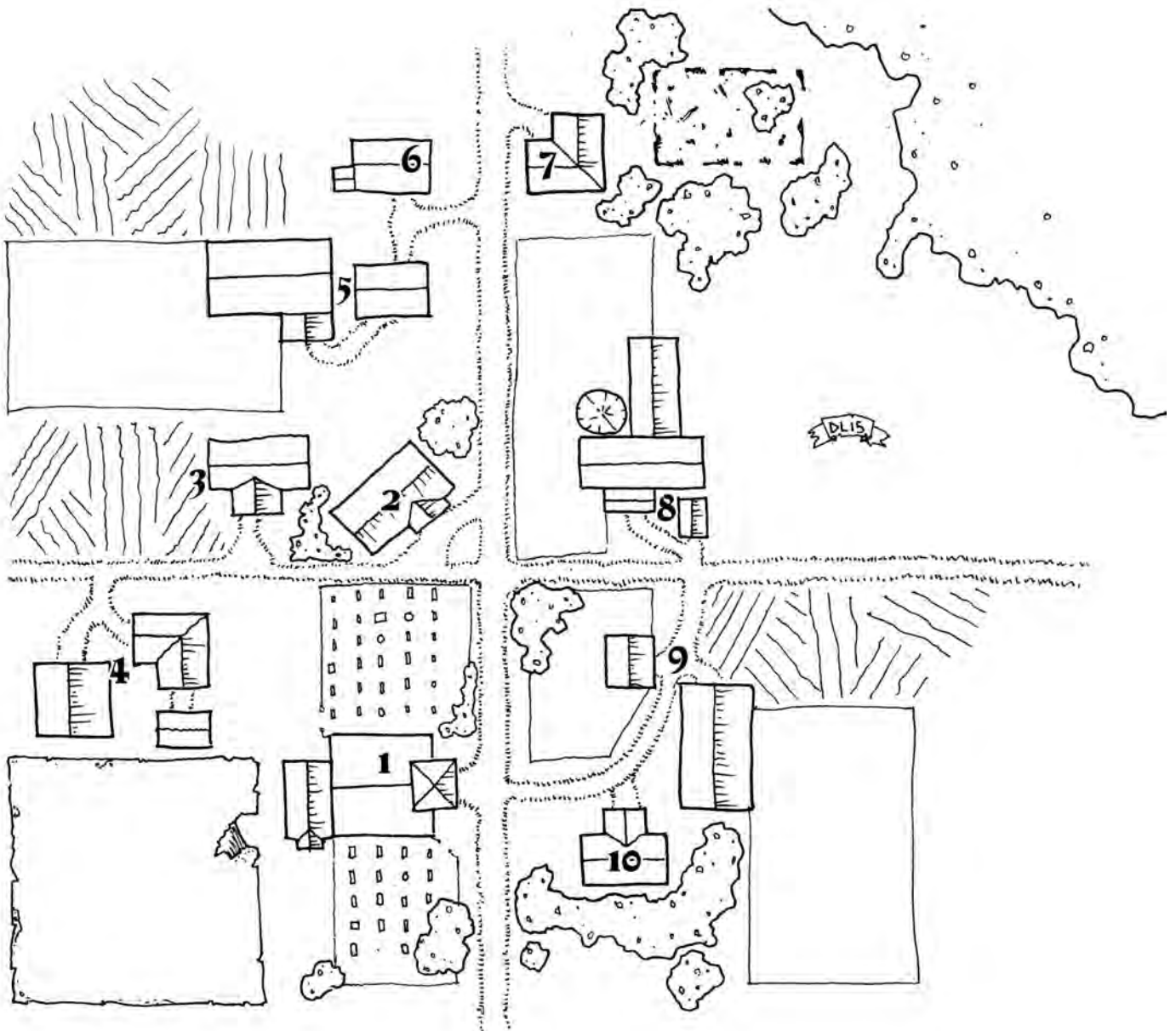
## TOWN #7

Quickwood - A small farming village with one inn. The Lady Mayor is called Mirth Durward.



## TOWN #8

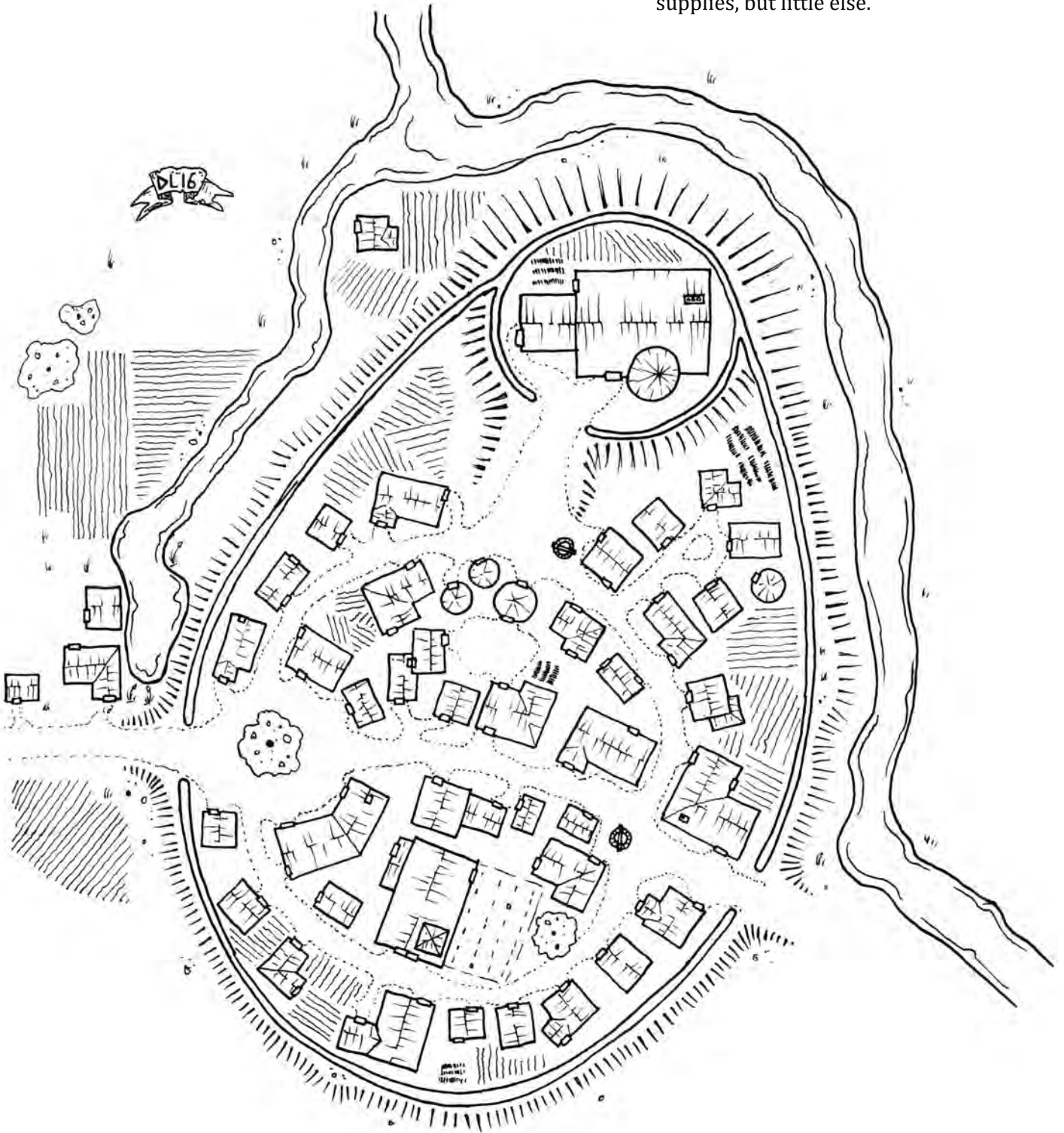
Osberton - Barely a town at all, this is a collection of a few farm families and a church with a graveyard.

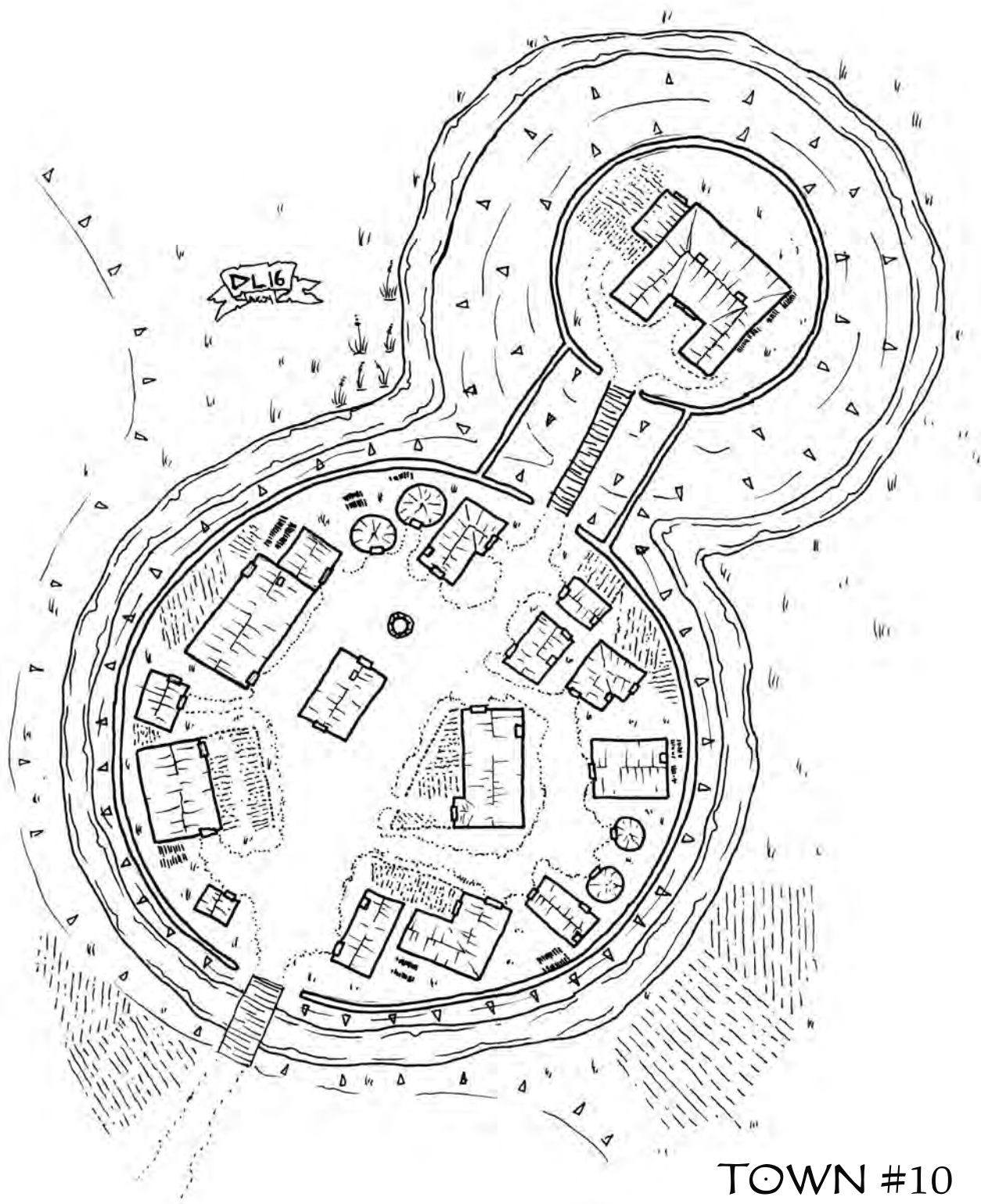




## TOWN #9

Pickworth - The town and the fortified manor house of the Lord and Lady York Wells. The land is a fiefdom owing fealty to some duchy in the north. The party find a warm meal and a few basic supplies, but little else.



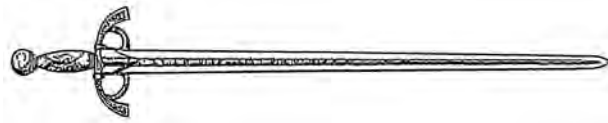


## TOWN #10

Slaughden - The fortified compound of Baron Rishley Gower. The baron is hospitable, but guarded. There have been a lot of bandits in the area recently.

# PART 7

## INNS



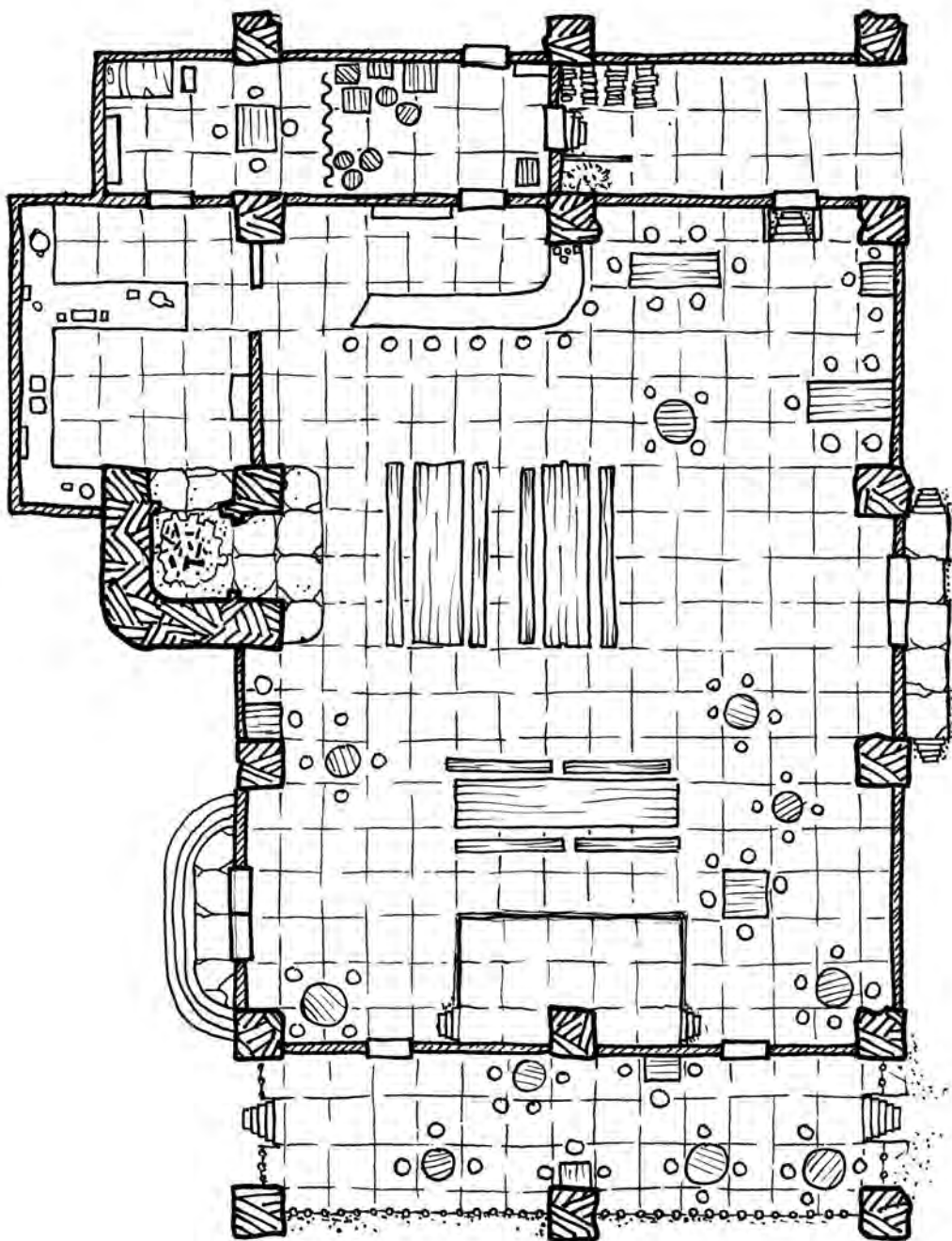
*“The temptations of comfort, good ale, steaming buttered bread, soft pillows, skygazing, and easy work are always the most devastating to one’s legacy.” - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington, Reflections on Greatness*

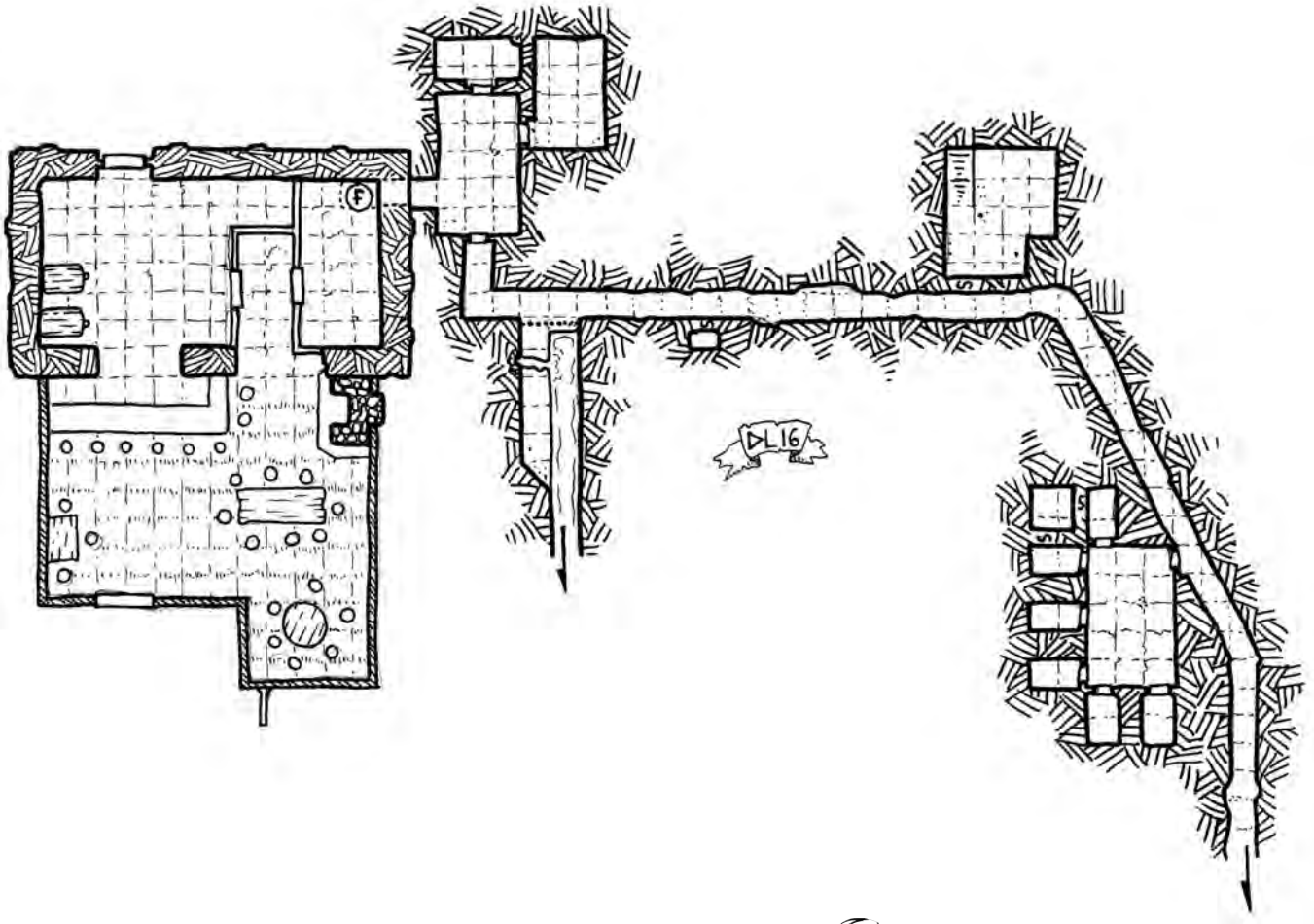


Inns along the King's Road are a welcome sight for any travelers. These maps can be used as inns along the road or as inns in the various towns.

## INN #1

Golden Hind - A homey inn always with a large fire and tasty food. The innkeeper is one Isolda Budd.





## INN #2

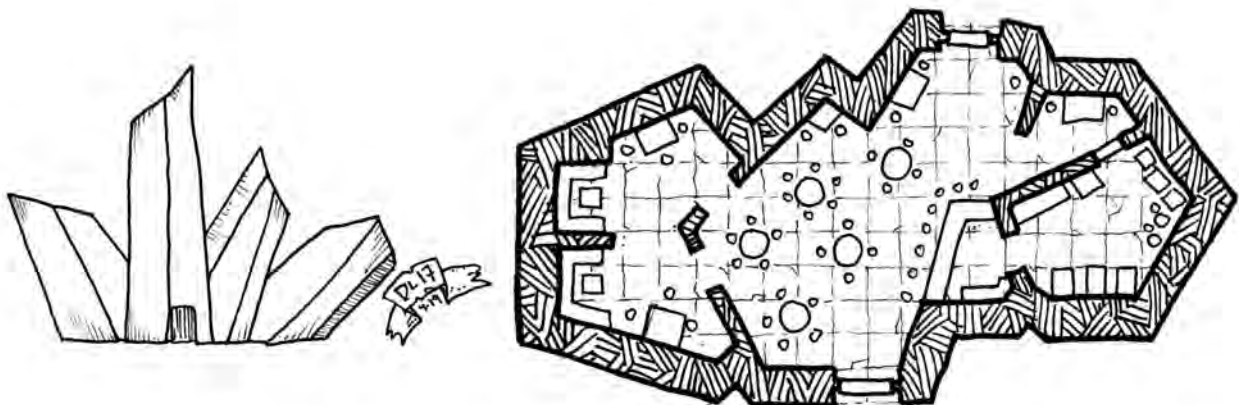
Bird in Hand - A welcoming inn with a good hearth and a flock of farmers discussing the day's chores. The inn is run by several generations of the Hadley family. The inn is also a front for a contraband smuggling operation run by the family.



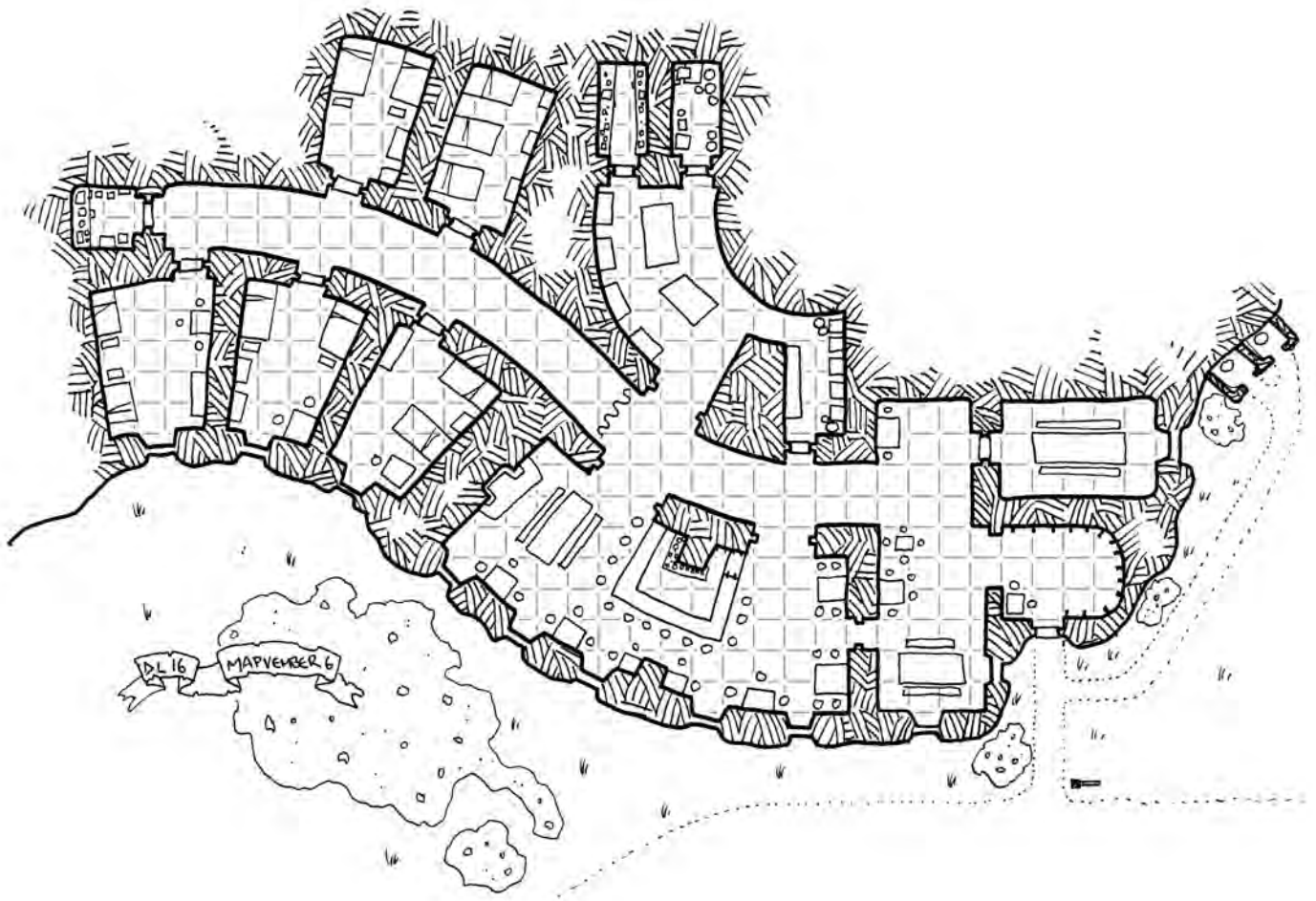


### INN #3

Harrow Rock - Carved within a large unknown type of stone, this inn provides a unique dining experience.







## INN #4

The Undercliff Inn - This inn is built into the side of a cliff near the King's Road. It is run by the Oakley halfling clan.

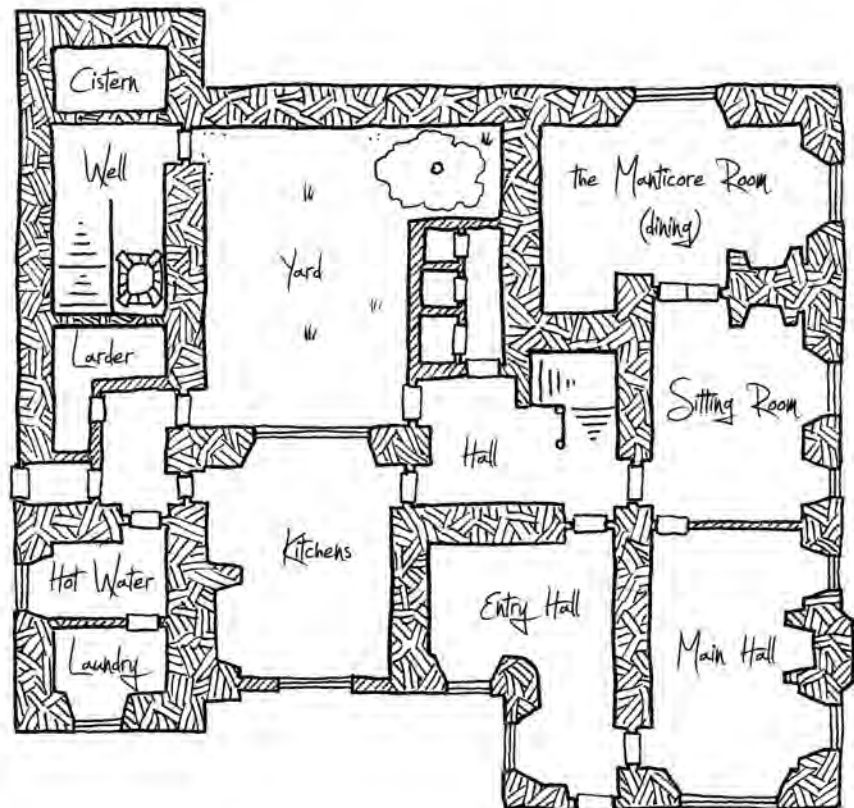
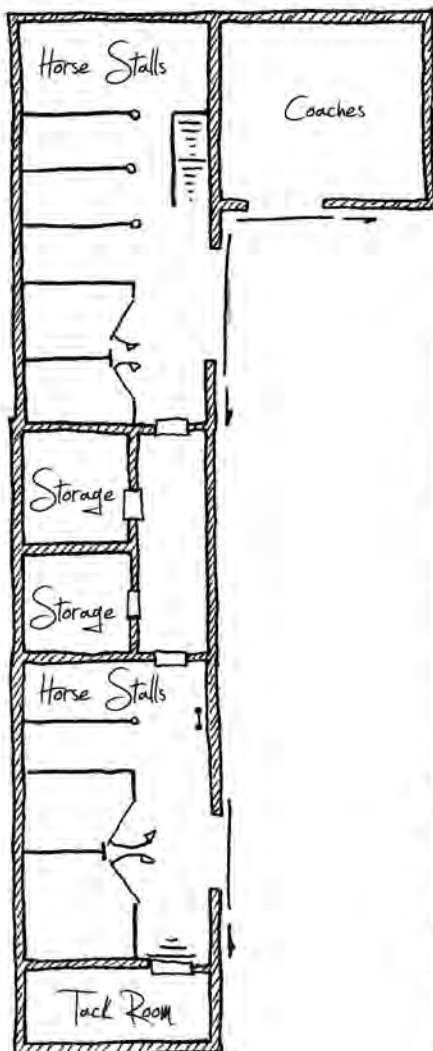


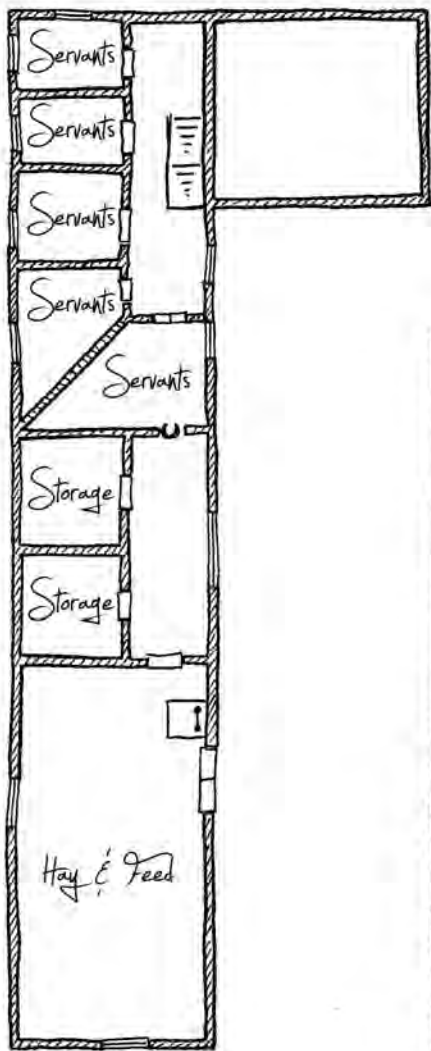
## INN #5

King's Arms - A prosperous, bustling inn run by Redford North.

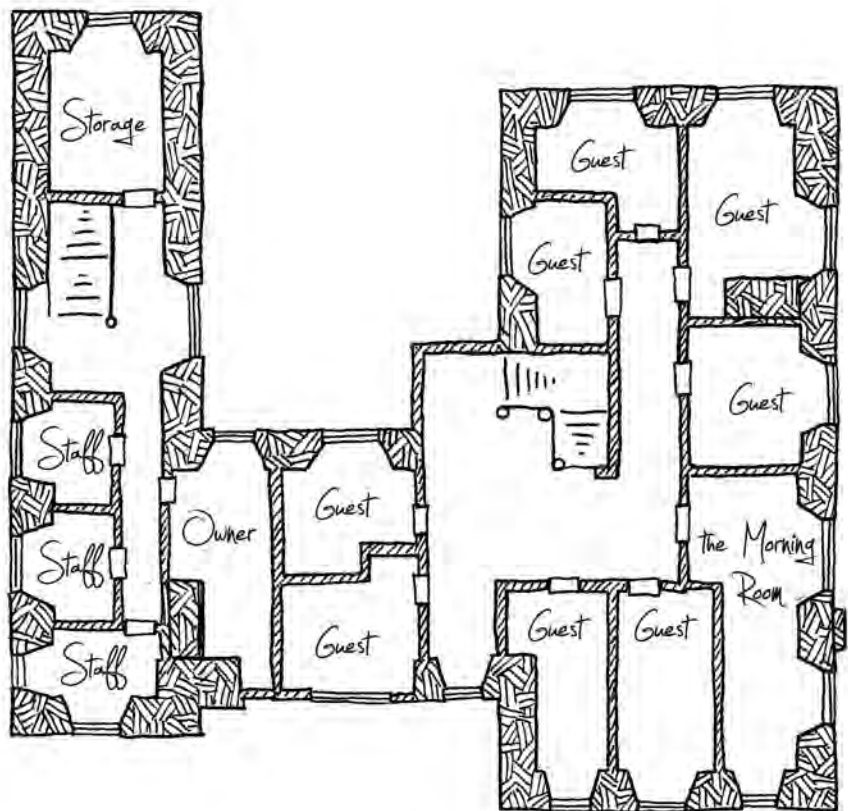


## BOTTOM FLOOR





## UPPER FLOOR



# PART 8

## LOCATIONS



*“Our world is vast and mysterious, of that there is no doubt. I feel as though I am in the middle of a tiny trampled sliver while leagues of untrampled treasures are just beyond my reach.” - Thurlow Hollis, Duke of Farrington, Collected Musings of a Restless Ruler*



These are interesting places that the party can encounter on their journey. Several could even be used as maps of the Capital. A couple could fill as extra garrisons or watchtowers as needed.

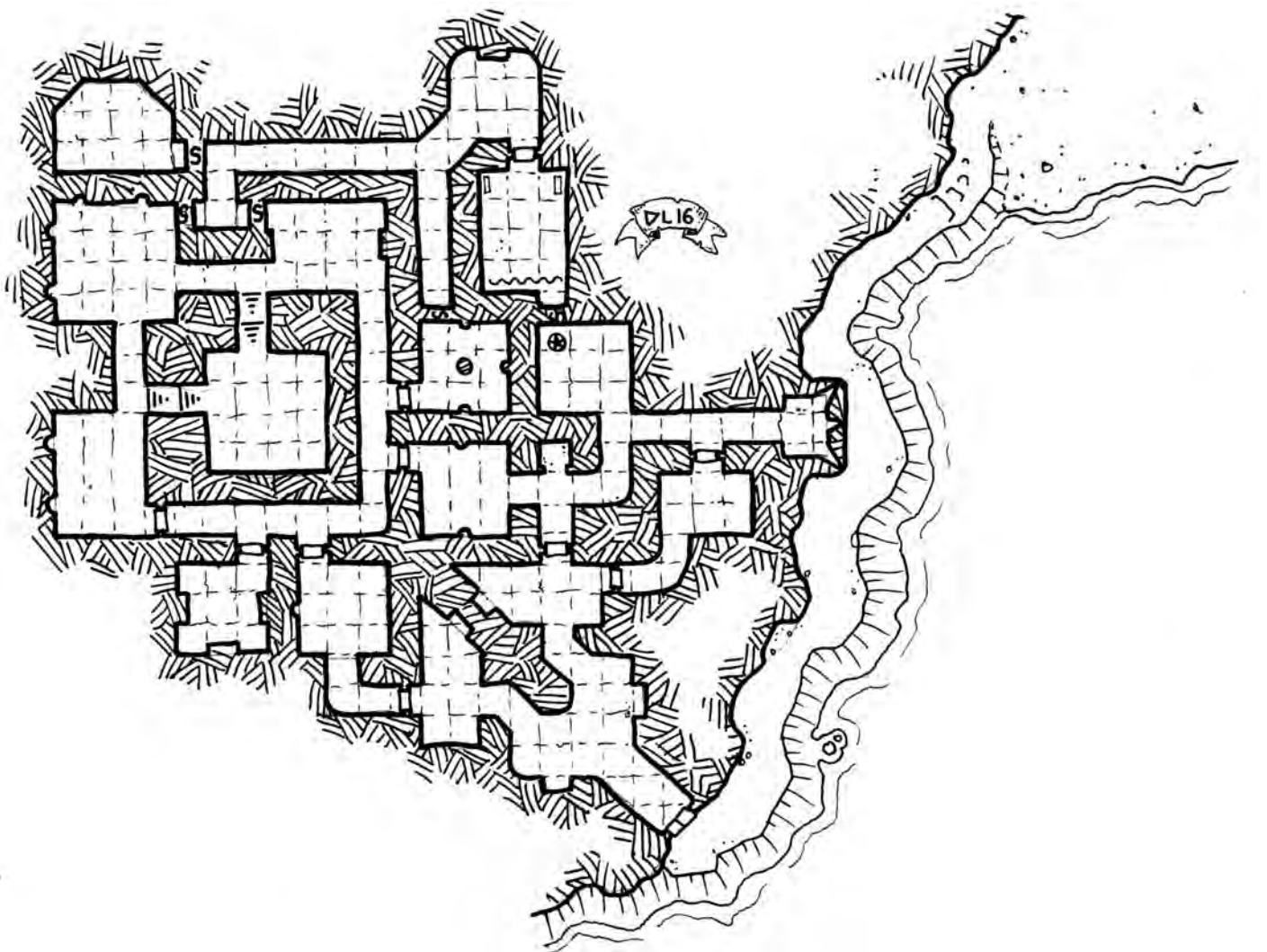
Details are not provided as these locations should be used by the gamemaster to add variety in the campaign.



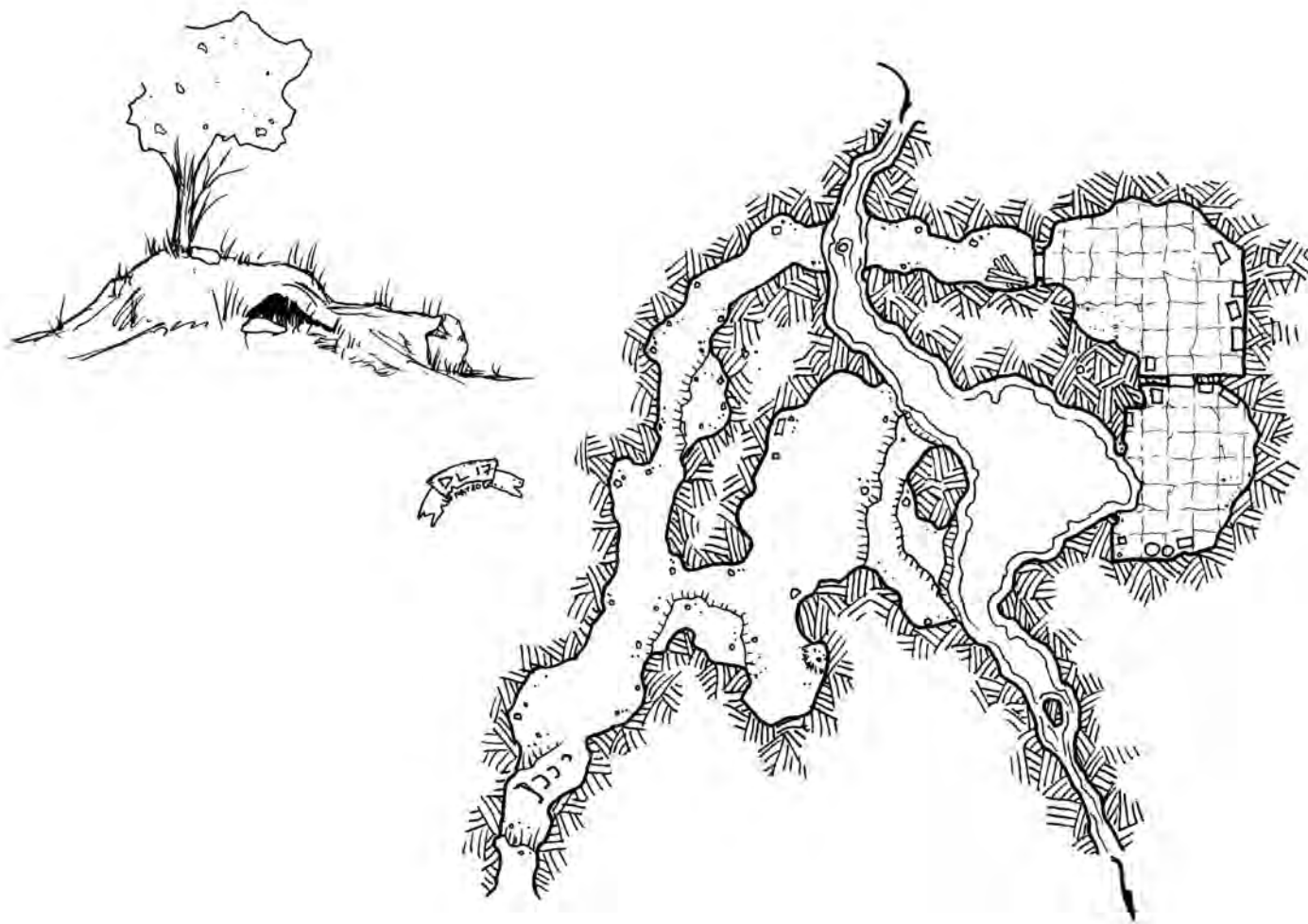


## LOCATION #1

Could be an underground temple or an abandoned fortress of some kind.







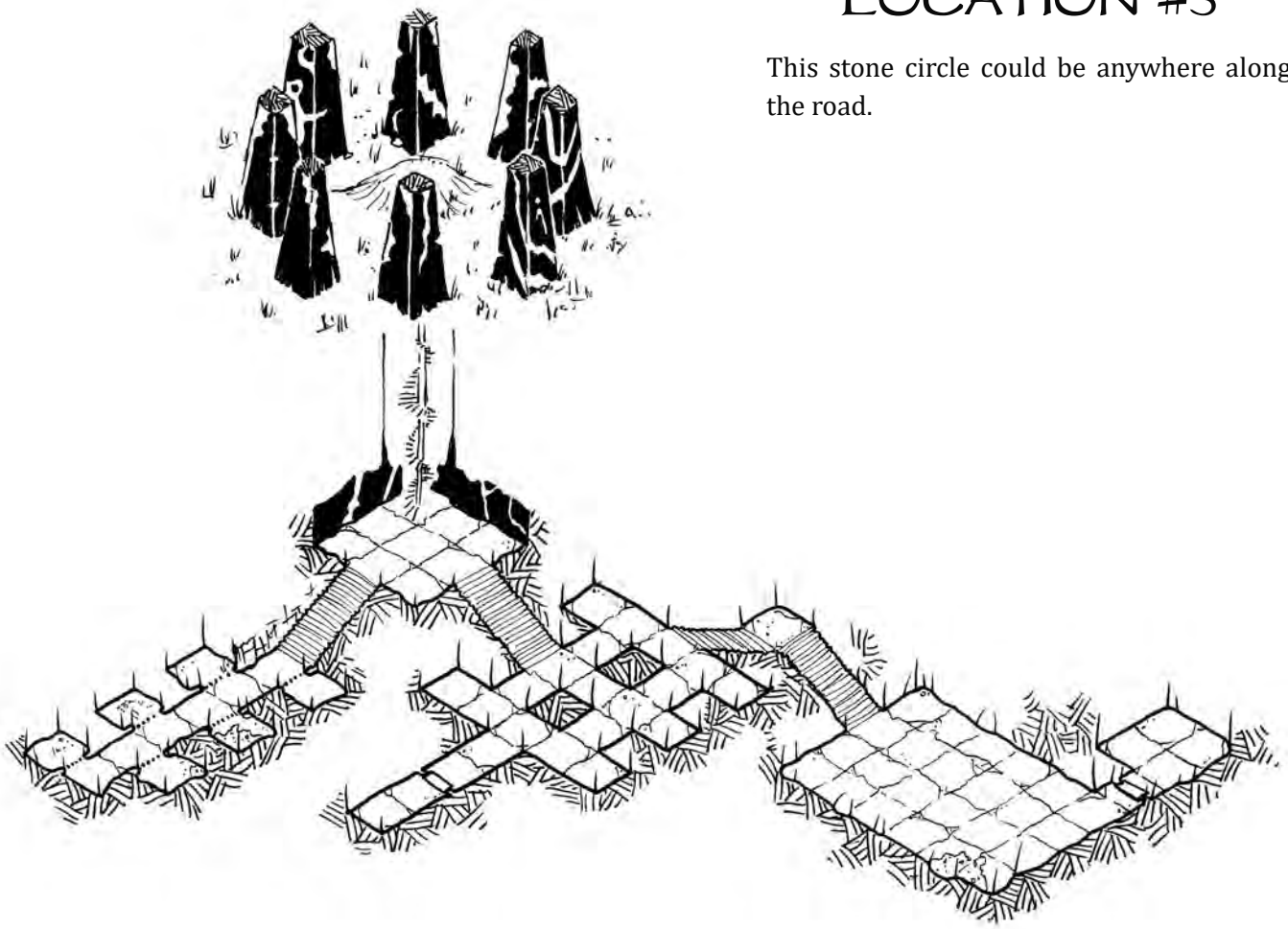
## LOCATION #2

Could be a bandit hideout.



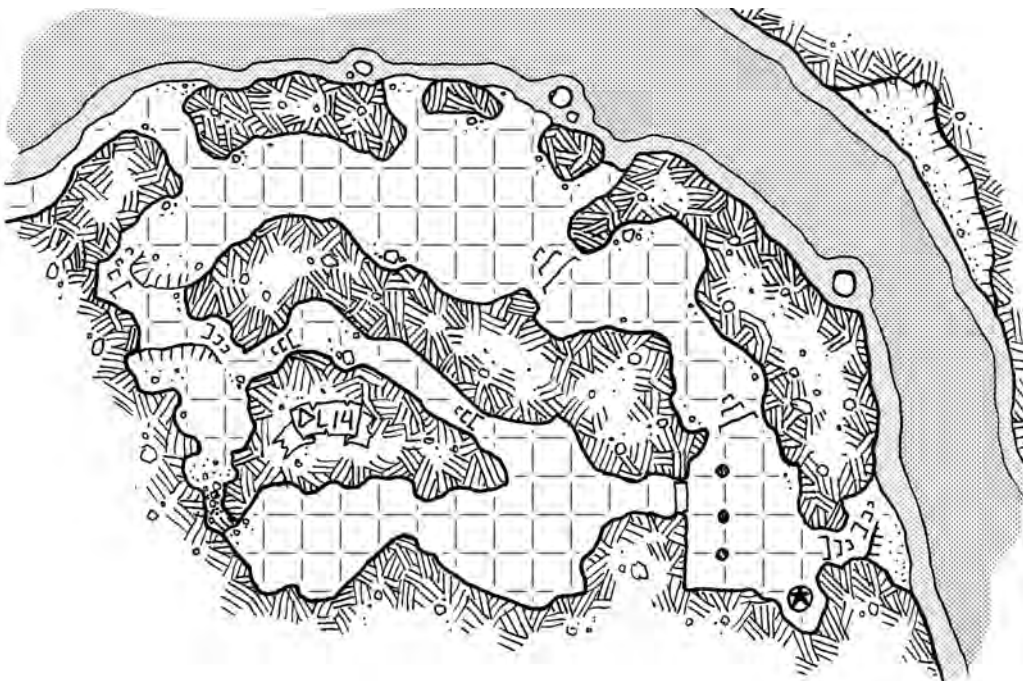
## LOCATION #3

This stone circle could be anywhere along the road.



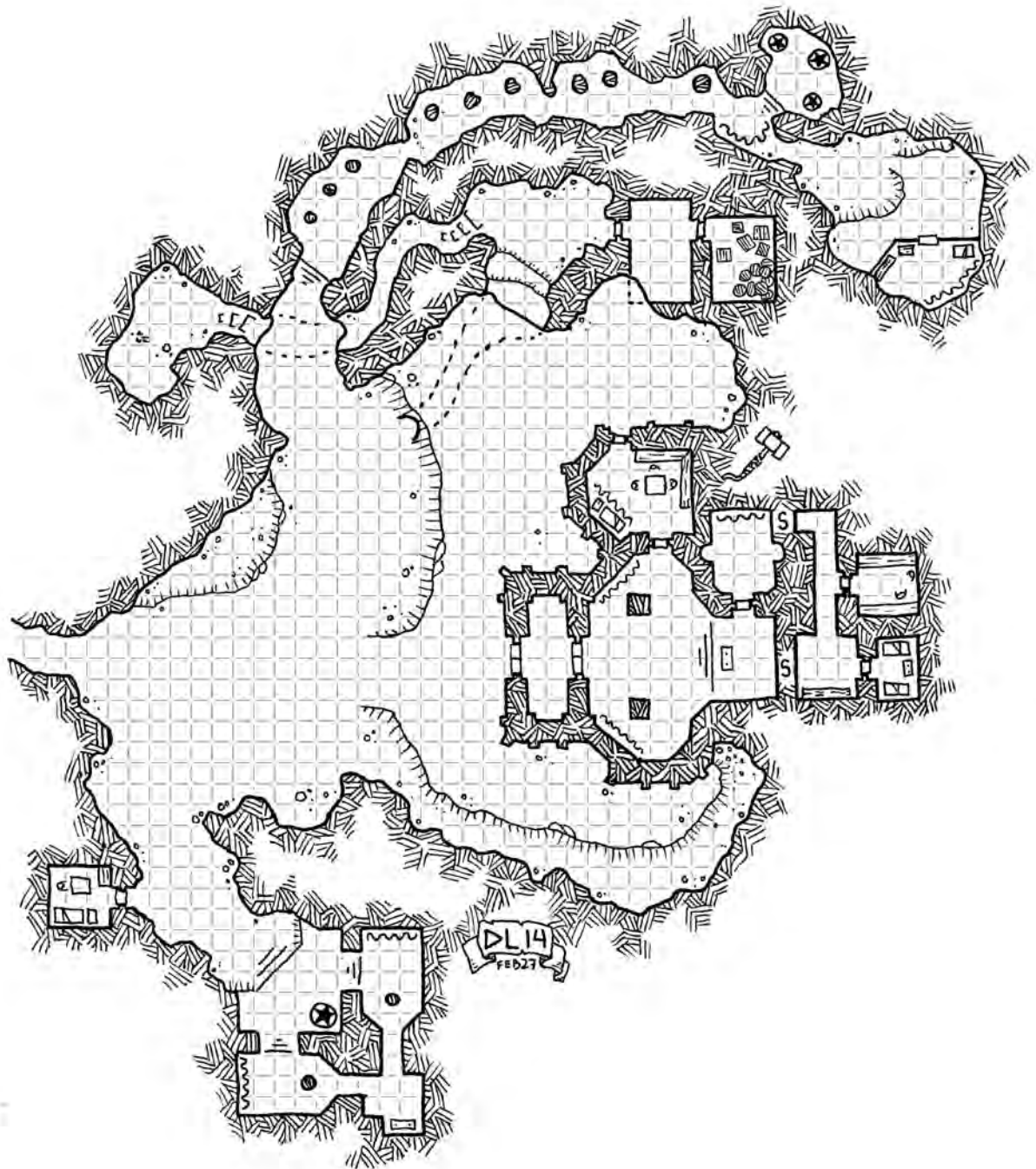
## LOCATION #4

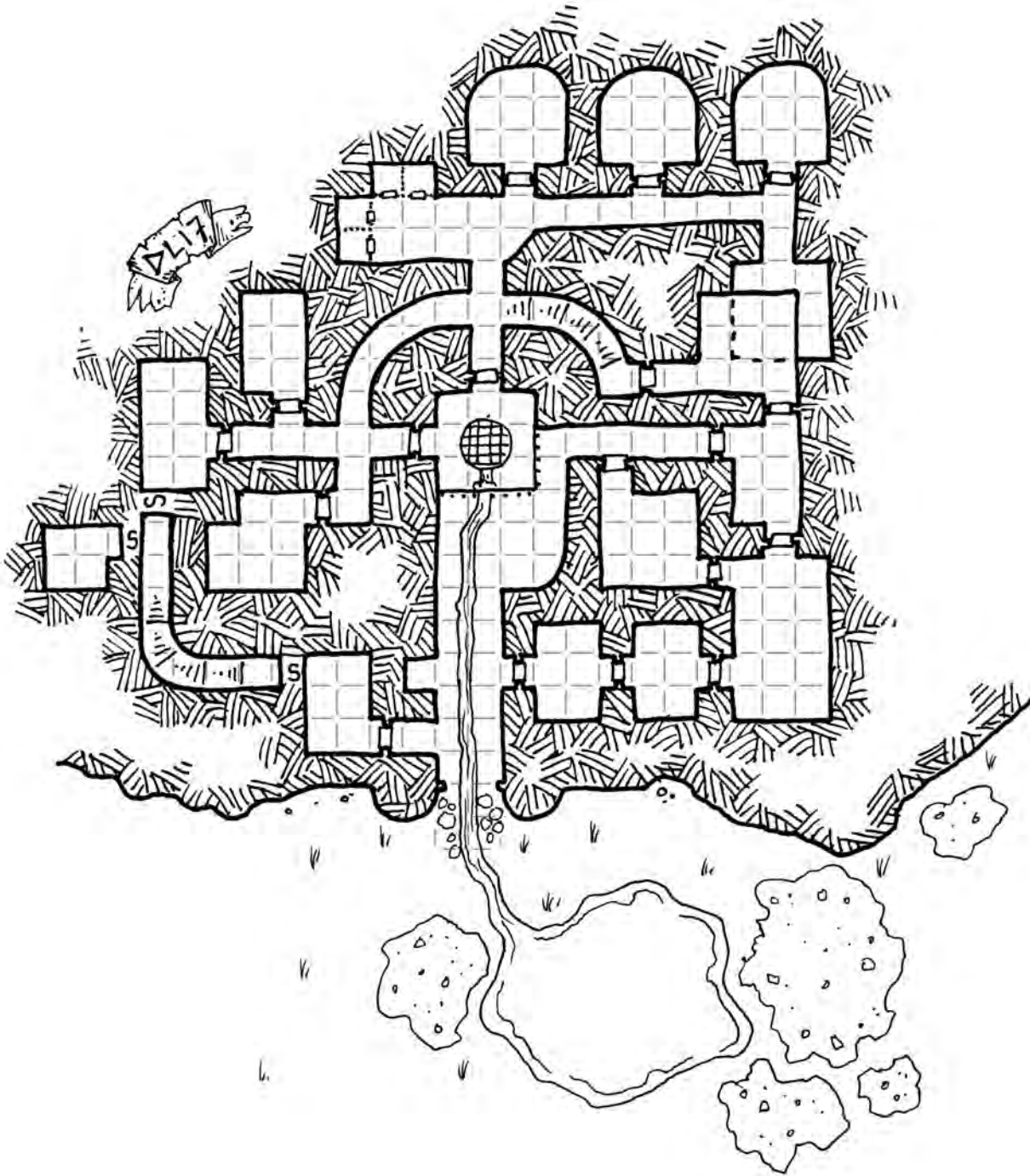
Could be a base for river pirates or a refugee camp.



## LOCATION #5

Some type of dark worship is happening here no doubt.



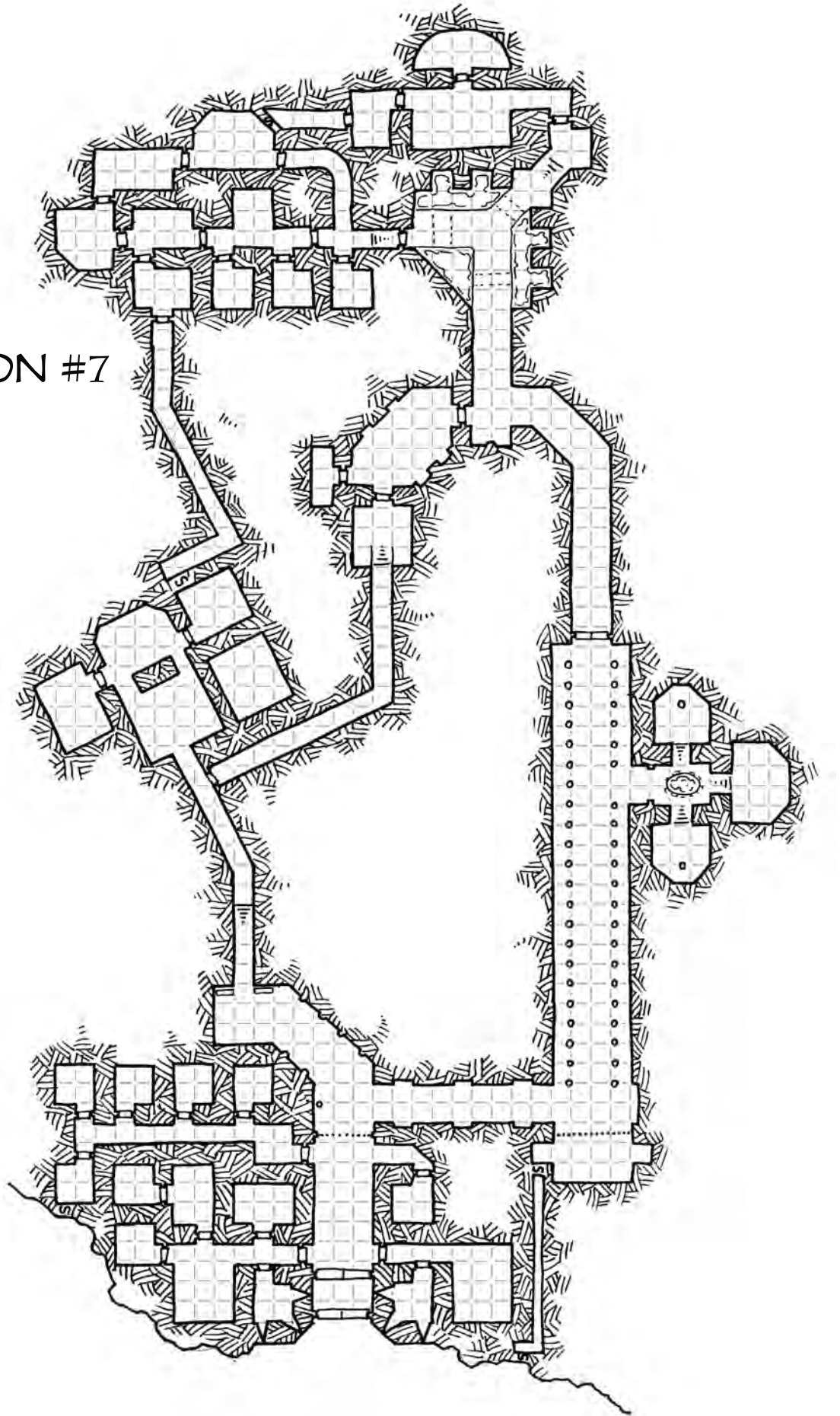


## LOCATION #6

An old storehouse? A hospital built around  
an enchanted spring?

## LOCATION #7

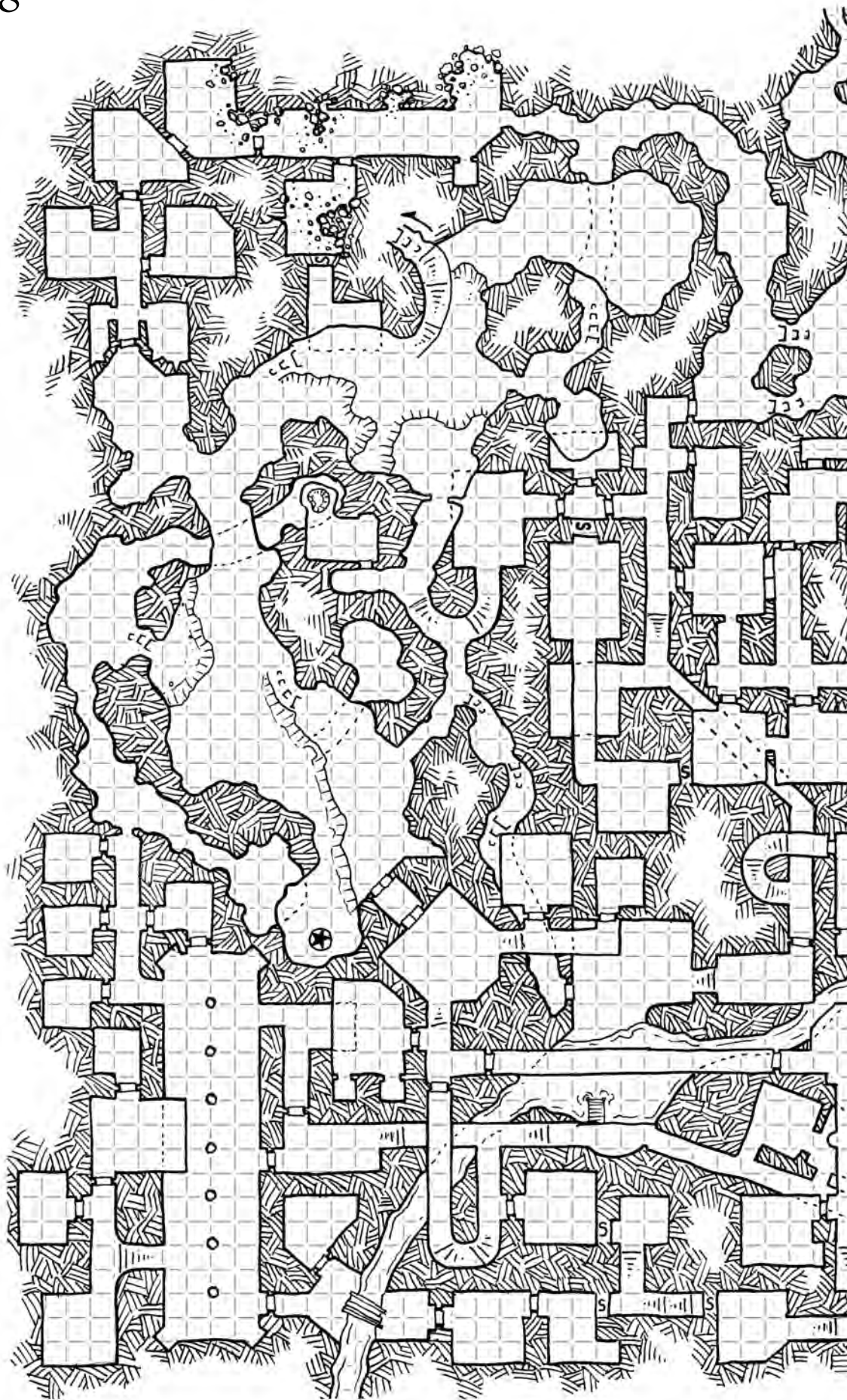
Part of the Capital?



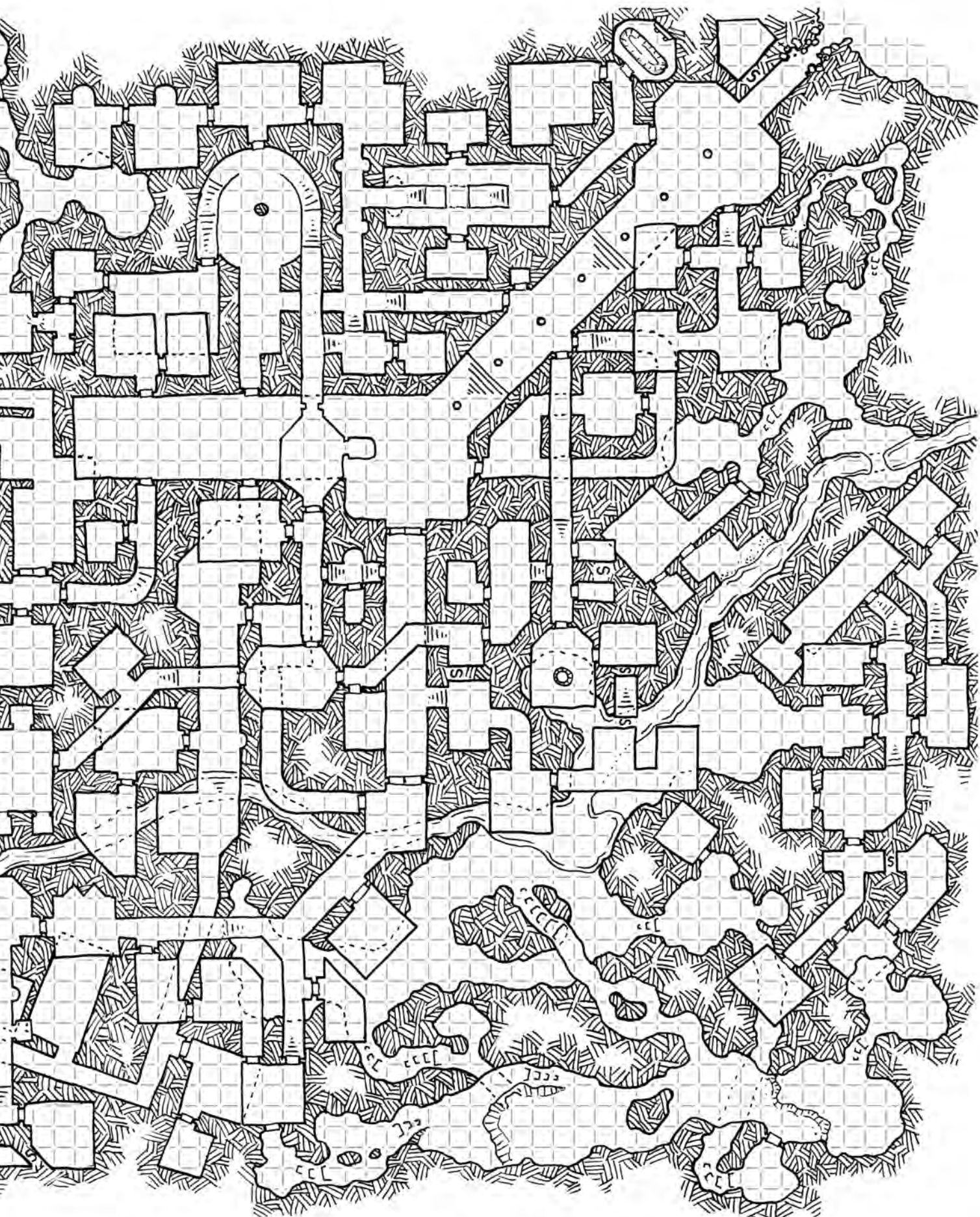


## LOCATION #8

Some ancient under-keep in the mountains or one of the many layers of the Capital?

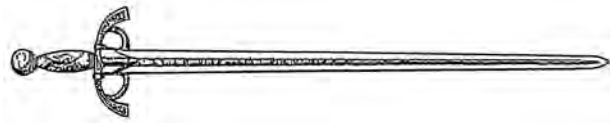






# PART 9

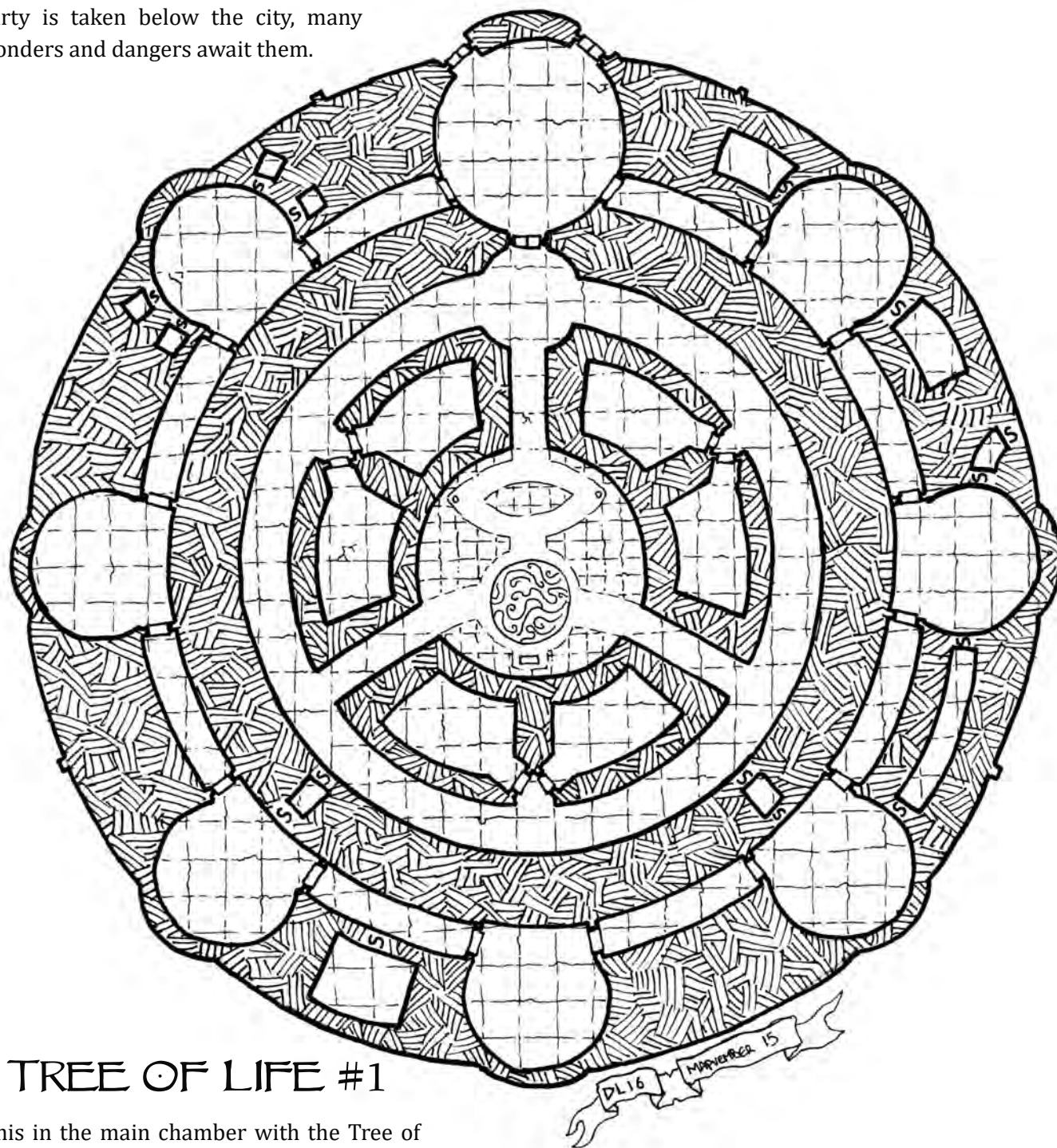
## TREE OF LIFE



*“To walk the streets of the Capital and to search its  
halls has been my dream since I was a young boy.” -  
Milbourne of Elvesport, Letter to Thurlow Hollis,  
Duke of Farrington*



Once the orb has been placed and the party is taken below the city, many wonders and dangers await them.



## TREE OF LIFE #1

This is the main chamber with the Tree of Life in the center. The rooms can be filled with treasure or “guardians” that attack the characters.

The party enters this chamber from the top left door. There are strange flashing lights and floating images of a giant ring that the characters don’t comprehend.

## TREE OF LIFE #2

This chamber is located through the top right door of the main chamber. The party finds eight beautiful humans sleeping in each alcove. Four are male and four are female and they are siblings and the heirs to the Grand Kingdom.

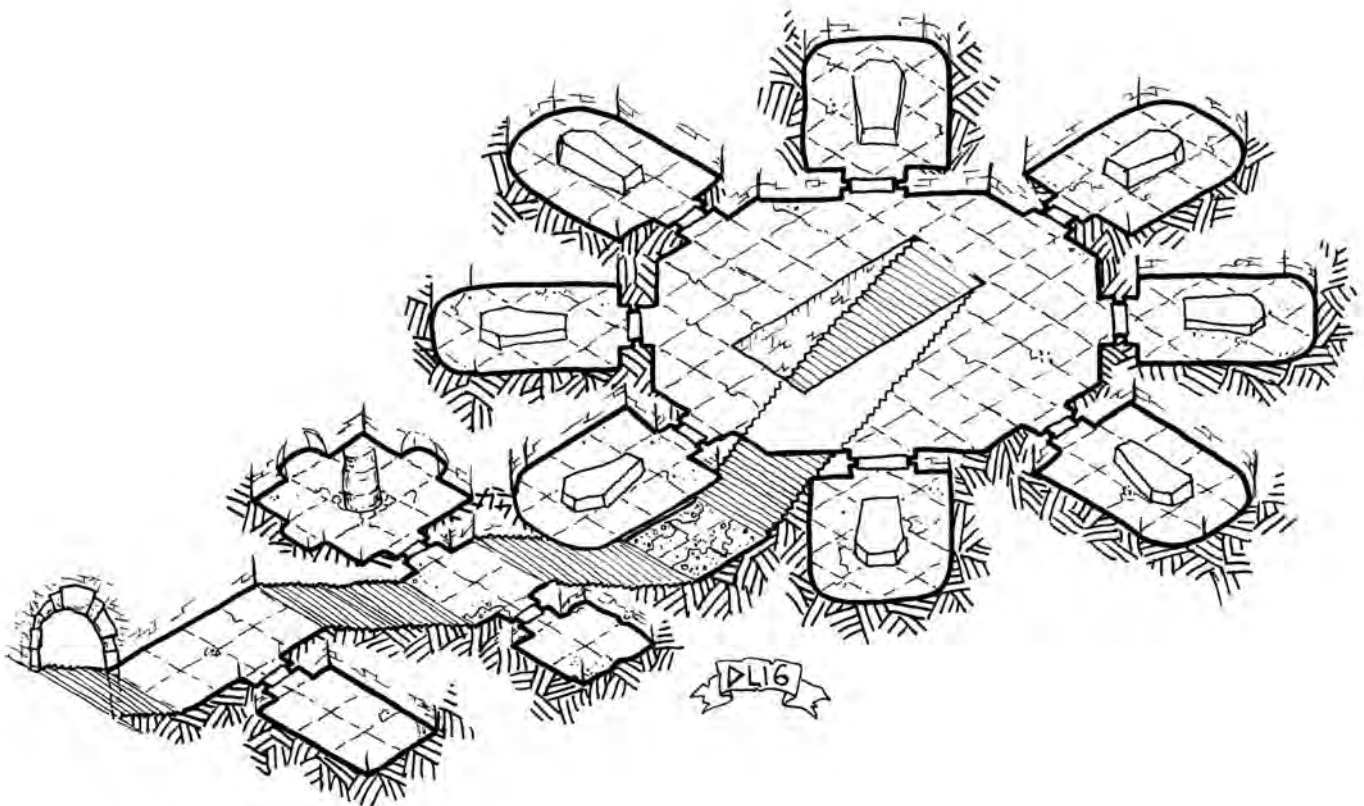
The beings only awake if the party approaches the Tree of Life and speak with it.

The males' names are:

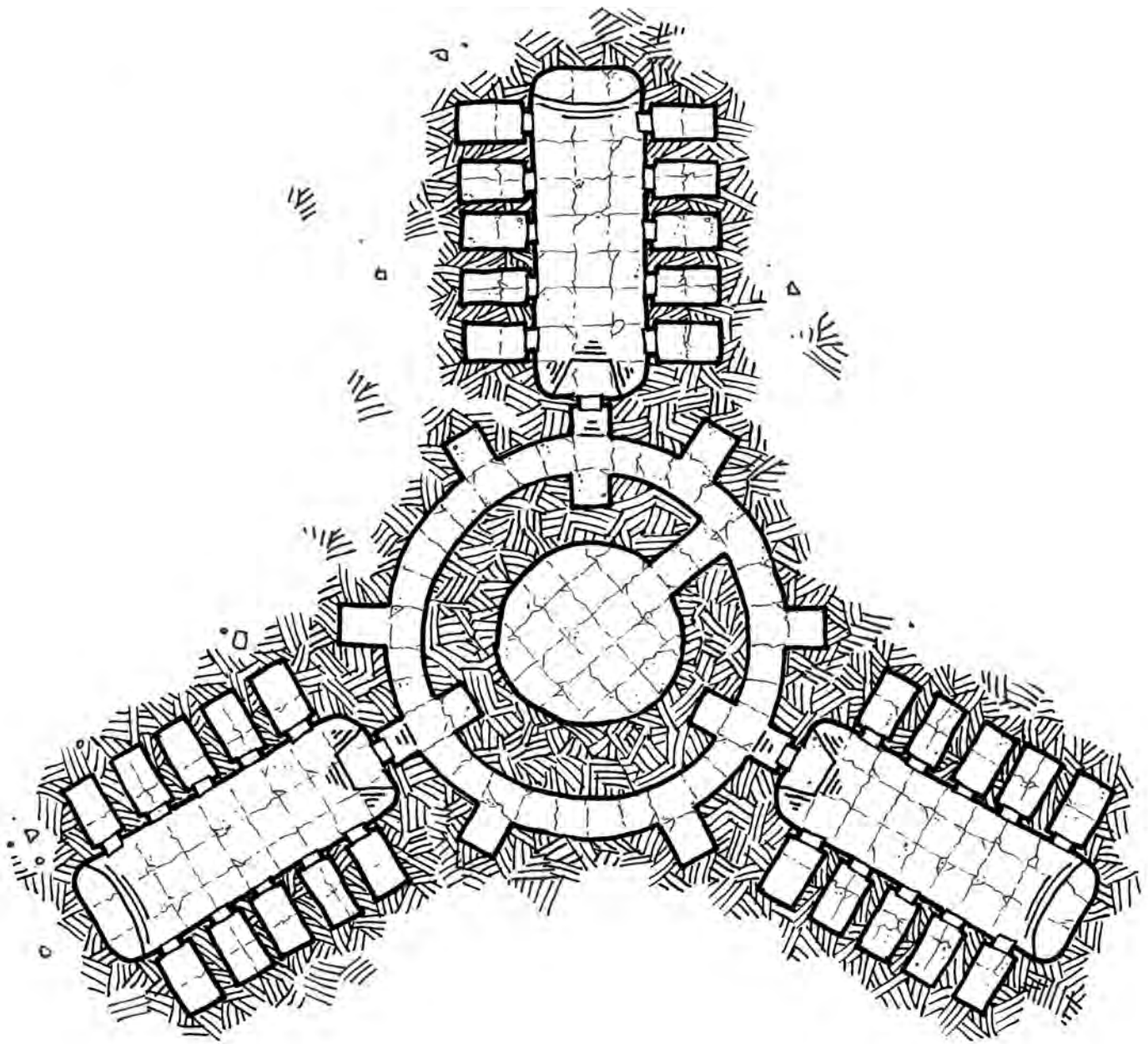
- Osmond
- Penn
- Aldrich
- Olin

The females' names are:

- Carden
- Blythe
- Hollace
- Burne







### TREE OF LIFE #3

This room is a repository of knowledge. The eight beings show the party how to use it after they are awakened.

*"The knowledge stored here will restore the Grand Kingdom."*

# CREDITS

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