



THE VESSEL OF STARS

CREDITS

Design:	Robert Holzmeier
Editing:	Gwendolyn Kestrel
Web Production:	Sue Cook
Web Development:	Mark Jindra
Cartography:	Ian Malcomson
Graphic Design:	Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

INTRODUCTION

The Vessel of Stars is a DUNGEON & DRAGON® adventure suitable for four 4th-level player characters. Player characters find themselves escorting a child monarch to a mysterious location in an area stalked by extraplanar horrors, alien assassins, and secret forces. Two unallied groups seek the queen. One wishes to kill her. The other wants to capture her alive. The player characters are her only defense.


Encounter Levels: *The Vessel of Stars* also accommodates parties of more than four 4th-level players. Player characters (PCs) who survive the entire adventure should advance through 5th level to 6th level before the finale. The adventure can handle parties beginning at 5th and possibly even 6th level, if the appropriate time is taken to make the encounters herein more challenging. This can be accomplished by accelerating the frequency of random encounters, opting for creatures with a higher Challenge Rating (CR), increasing the number of opponents per encounter or the advancing the class level and/or hit dice (HD) of the adventure's opponents to provide heroic obstacles appropriate to the party. As you increase the toughness of the creatures, make comparable increases in experience points and treasure.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master® (DM), should have a copy of the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. A copy of the *Monster Manual* is also extremely useful.

Text that appears in the shaded boxes is player information, which you should read aloud or paraphrase to the players when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information to the DM. More often than not, DMs can find abbreviated monster statistics with each encounter. Full monster statistics appear in alphabetical order in the appendix. One of the responsibilities of the DM is to review these statistics before the game starts so as to refresh his or her memory of the more distinctive characteristics of the creatures.

Individual encounters possess an overall rating called the encounter level (EL), if appropriate. The concept of the encounter level is important only as a point of information, allowing you to gauge the strength of a particular encounter at a glance, not to assign experience. To calculate experience for a given encounter,



refer to the CR provided for each monster in the appendix. Cross-reference the CR of a given monster with the party's average character level on the Single Monster Challenge Rating table (*DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, Chapter 7), then multiply that number by the number of monsters dealt with by the PCs for total experience award. The total experience award is then divided by the numbers of PCs (and possibly NPC party members) who were present at the beginning of the encounter.

Before the game begins, DMs may wish to review the rules on vision and light in Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*, reread the section on setting up the game in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and review the combat rules.

BACKGROUND

The PCs are not initially privy to the background information, but they may learn it during the adventure.

This adventure revolves around the PCs escorting a beleaguered child monarch on the last leg of her flight from the players' world. The girl, named Satura, is a deva, called the Vessel of Stars by her Peloran allies. Many pursue the young Emprix, and they drive much of the action.

The vrill, wild ox-like humanoids from a distant dimension, seek to prevent the young Satura from returning to her dimension. The vrill comprised the bulk of the dimensional skimmer's crew, conscripts who were forced into servitude by the more powerful devas. They feel that without the deva Emprix, the other devas will eventually abandon the plane, thus freeing the vrill.

Also vying for the Emprix is an unscrupulous group of wizards and sages, the Order of Unknown Truths. The brilliant minds of the order have deduced much about the deva and the vrill rebels who seek to stop her. They have devised plans to thwart both the vrill and the deva, including hiring a band of mercenaries and sending three of their own after the prizes.

Recently, in the city of Stern, Satura with her supporters, the vrill, and the Order of Unknown Truths collided. In a grand battle, many died. The Order failed to account for the vrill's resistance to charms, and one of the leaders, Seril, almost died. The deva escaped with merely one ragged cleric named Raz. The Vessel has arrived in Horvath, anxious to be gone of this violent

world. She seeks a dimensional skimmer, also known as the Vessel of Stars, to take her home. Though Satura nears her goal, the vrill upstarts and the ruthless mages follow close on her heels.

The adventure begins here.

SYNOPSIS

The Vessel of Stars is both a flight- and site-based adventure. Player characters find themselves escorting a child monarch to a mysterious location in an area stalked by extraplanar horrors, alien assassins, and secret forces.

Horvath: The PCs begin in the large town of Horvath, a town mostly of humans and which the vrill avoid due to their alien appearance. Although the adventure is designed to push the players forward to the Blighted Hills, unfortunate circumstances or misdirection may lead the party back to town to recuperate and replenish supplies.

Vrill: The vrill have one goal from which they cannot be dissuaded short of powerful magical influence: prevent the deva Emprix from escaping. They are not powerful enough to make it into the bowels of the skimmer, but they seek to block the young deva from reaching it. They are intent upon killing the child as well as anyone who seeks to stop them. Note: Each time the party returns to Horvath, the likelihood of encountering hostile vrill patrols increases. See the DM's Overviews *Into the Wood* and *The Blighted Hills* for details on random encounters.

Mercenaries: Not just blood-thirsty bandits, Tallon's Crew are clever professionals commissioned by the Order of Unknown Truths to capture the child and secure the site for their agents' arrival. The mercenaries' spies infiltrated Horvath and now the group waits to ambush the party and take the girl. They will try to take her without fatalities in the woods and will pursue the characters doggedly until they have Satura. As a contingency, the group has taken control of the Waystation, a tower rest stop and temple to Fharlanghn. They will take the girl here for holding, or surprise the party should they stop there to recuperate.

The Forest: A dense wood shielding the trading post from the Blighted Hills to the north and east, this unnamed forest is where the PCs are most likely to lose Satura to the mercenary ambush.

The Waystation: This three-storied tower is situated on the Upper Horvath Road, just on the outskirts of the forest. Run as a rest stop for weary travelers, the Waystation has fallen out of control of its Fharlanghn proprietors and into the hands of Tallon's Crew.

The Blighted Hills: Eventually, the character will arrive at these hills. The stranded dimensional skimmer, the Vessel of Stars waits buried beneath. The rift caused by the skimmer's crash has collapsed, but the fractures still permeate the barriers between realities here, so the area crawls with outsiders and other foul creatures. The vrill, falling back after the disaster in Stern, confront the party here, just in sight of Satura's goal.

The Vessel of Stars: The climax of the adventure occurs within the ruined Vessel of Stars. There, the PCs learn the truth of the deva's and vrill's relationship. They also have their final confrontation with the Order. The heroes must decide: Should they block the Emprix's escape, risking her life and interfering with another dimension's destiny or shall they help her flee and thwart both the Order and the vrill rebels?

CHARACTER HOOKS

Player characters can find Horvath, the Blighted Hills and its hidden secret in any number of campaign settings. Refer to the Overland Map for a view of the area, including the forest and tower. The PCs can be drawn into the adventure via the following methods (several of which work well together). Relate the information immediately below to the players as necessary to get them interested in taking up the adventure of escorting the mysterious child. The key element is to get the PCs to agree to escort the young "girl." She is accompanied by an earnest, ragged cleric of Pelor, named Raz who came to her aid in Stern.

- **Simple Adventuring:** You are intrepid adventurers, come to the town of Horvath to investigate the nearby Blighted Hills. Rumors have it that hideous creatures not of this world haunt the abandoned hills. Your nose for adventure has led you here, a place ripe for discovery, challenge and, hopefully, treasure.
- **Contracted:** Having recently arrived in Horvath, you are surprised when a cleric of Pelor requests your presence at the local temple. He wishes to hire you to escort a young initiate and holy relic to

an undisclosed location within the Blighted Hills. If pressed, the old cleric states that task will resolve the intrusion by otherworldly creatures in the area. The church is prepared to pay each PC 500gp to complete the task and ensure the relic's arrival at its destination. He intimates, that if the characters can offer proof that the relic fulfilled its mission, the church is willing to be more generous.

- **Fate:** You are dining in the Five Rings Inn & Tavern, when two terribly road-worn initiates of Pelor enter. One is but a child and the other, hardly more than that, is gravely wounded. The child, a young girl of unusual carriage, approaches you, saying, "We are in need of your protection. Help us. Take us to our temple here."
- **Solving a Mystery:** Two weary, half-dead children arrive in town wearing the robes of the sun god, Pelor. The local priests suddenly have a means of restoring the Blighted Hills. And Horvath, normally bold and bustling, seems subdued and tense. There's a connection between these children, the priest's relic and those cursed hills. And it's one you can't resist uncovering.

KNOWLEDGE GAINED IN HORVATH

PCs can discover the following information either through a Gather Information check, where they spend some time in the local tavern (DC 10), or via roleplaying:

- If they're looking to go into the hills, the quickest and least dangerous route is the Upper Horvath Road leading north past the Waystation and branching away near the Blighted Hills.
- The problem with strange creatures appearing in what is now called the Blighted Hills began about ten years ago, after an intense winter marked by eerie lights from the area.
- Bandits driven out of the hills by the encroaching monsters prowl the forests.
- The Waystation is a safe and refreshing stop just north of the forest. The gracious clerics of Fharlanghn provide food, lodging, care and even a fine song on frequent occasion. Their hospitality far exceeds the modest donation they request for the church.

- Kata, the barmaid, tells the player characters that reports have come from Stern of a battle involving small, horned creatures of great ferocity. An aged Peloran cleric and his dwarf companion were seriously wounded and still recovering.
- Kata also mentions that Horvath, where adventurers are not uncommon, has seen a number of new faces in recent days.
- Groom Puttersmith, the gnome proprietor and barkeep of the Five Rings Inn & Tavern, can confirm that unusual number of new faces have been showing up at the bar.
- If asked, tavern guests will also confirm the influx of unfamiliar faces. They'll mention that within the past six months, more experienced, perhaps even hardened, brethren have replaced most of Pelor's caring and fresh-faced priests. Only the town's leading priest remains, the other local clerics are said to be studying beyond Stern.
- If the PCs mention to anyone that their information came from Kata, they learn that the vivacious barmaid has resided in Horvath for less than a month.

MARCHING ORDER

Ask the players to tell you in what order their characters are generally walking down paths and corridors. This information lets you know where each character is with respect to each other, which is important if the PCs are suddenly attacked or if you need to determine who walks into a trap first.

THE TOWN OF HORVATH AND ENVIRONS

The following numbered entries refer to the locations noted on the maps.

Horvath

Once the player characters have left Horvath, the adventure truly begins. But, they may wander through town for various reasons. Here is a quick rundown of the town's major sections:

- **South Gate/Five Rings Inn & Tavern:** Stern Way Road leads south and east from the town's fortified southern entrance. Just inside the protective walls of Horvath is a warm and comfortable establish-

The Large Town of Horvath

The community closest to the hidden ship is a large, coastal town called Horvath (or a name more appropriate to the DM's campaign). The large town follows the rules noted for a town of its size in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* in Chapter 4.

Horvath (large town): Conventional; AL NG; 3,000gp limit; Assets 120,000gp; Population: approximately 2,500; Isolated (human 96%, halfling 2%, elf 1%, other races 1%).

Authority Figures: Mayor Shel Maznoble, female human Ari7.

Important Characters: Father Poltimm, male human Clr9 (Pelor/Good-Healing); Norin, female human Clr5 (Pelor/Sun-Strength); Raz, male human Sor2/Clr3 (Boccob/Magic-Trickery) [**Note:** Raz is *only* posing as a cleric of Pelor, but don't tell the players this. Let them find out for themselves.]; Groom Puttersmith, male gnome Com9 (owner/barkeep, Fine Rings Inn & Tavern); Kata, female human Sor2/Rog3 (barmaid) [**Note:** Kata is a spy for Tallon's Crew. Don't tell the players this. Let them find out for themselves.]; Ergo, male dwarf Exp12 (blacksmith); Munns, male human Ari3 (shipwarden); Ilsa, female human Com9 (sundries merchant); Berast, male human Com18 (merchant); Bolm, male human War10 (constable); Dessi, Mig, Jode, and Yris, male and female humans War5 (deputies).

Others: Town guards, War2 (33); Elite, Ari1 (3); Merchants, Com4 (4); Bureaucrats, Com2 (8); Craftsmen, Exp6 (2); Ship Captains, Exp3 (4); Sailors, Exp1 (8); Peloran Priests, Ftr1/Clr2 (4); Peloran Initiates, Clr1 (8); Oracle, Adp3 (1); Acolytes, Adp1 (2); Citizens, workers, farmers, deckhands, etc., Com1 (2,408).

ment, the Five Rings Inn & Tavern. Here the PCs can gather information and encounter the owner/barkeep, Groom, and his comely barmaid, Kata. *See the appendix for Kata's entry under NPCs.*

- **Shipyards/Market Squares:** Along Horvath's west side are its port and shipyards. Should the characters attempt to charter a ship, they will find all the docked vessels to be otherwise engaged. Just east of the shipyards and extending to Horvath's eastern wall are shops and marketplaces where the PCs can replenish their supplies, if needed.

Into The Woods: An Overview for the DM

Despite the presence of an increasingly used road and the Waystation, the forest to the north and east of Horvath can make for dangerous traveling. Brigands, normally operating from the hills and foraging into the woods, have now set up a number of well-encampments with the dark, dense forest. Likewise, wildlife and other creatures native to the hilly areas have begun to migrate to the woods in increasing numbers, some strangely affected by the dimensional energies contaminating the Blighted Hills.

The Waystation is roughly 15 miles north of Horvath, along the narrow track of road. It takes almost a full day to traverse the forest and arrive at the Waystation. As the party is likely to encounter both the vrill and Tallon's Crew, this journey is likely to take longer, forcing the party to continue on to the Waystation after nightfall or set up camp.

Should the party decide to forego the road, they find traveling in the woods both slow and hazardous. Thick with underbrush, uneven ground and other terrain dangers, the forest is ill suited for travel by horseback. The forced walking extends the travel time, taking two days, if not more, for the party to make it through the forest. You may want to see Chapter 3 of the *DMG* for how to handle environmental hazards of the wilderness.

It is entirely possible that the PCs may avoid the Waystation altogether, preferring to continue directly into the Blighted Hills. However, a number of different circumstances conspire to lead the party to the roadside tower. If Tallon's Crew abducts Satura, they take her to the Waystation. The player characters can find tracks conveying this information via a successful use Search check (DC 13) or they may reach this conclusion via reasoned deduction. Should neither of these avenues work out for your players, you might remind them that the Waystation is reputedly a good place to refresh and regroup (most likely the party needs some care and a safe place rest if they've lost the young deva). Alternatively, you can choose to have Raz lead them to the tower, although the treacherous cleric's intent is to put a final end to the threat the PCs pose to his plans. Finally, once night has fallen, Satura will use her developing spell-like abilities to send an unmistakable light sign from the top of the Waystation.

Use the following table for generating random encounters along the road and in the forest. Remember that if the party returns to Horvath for any reason, the chance of encountering a hostile vrill patrol increases. To represent this increased chance, substitute a vrill patrol for encounters denoted with an asterisk (*) as appropriate. With the increased activity in the area, treat the chance of encounter as that of a heavily traveled area, or 12% per hour of traveling. If the party sets up camp along the road or within the forest, they are likely to draw the attention of at least some of the wood's denizens. Camping PCs have a 60% chance per night of one of the encounters on the table below.

d20		Number	
Day	Encounter	Encountered	EL
01-20	No encounter*	—	—
21-30	Ankheg	1	3
31-35	Assassin vine*	2	5
36-45	<i>Bandits</i> *	1-2	5
46-50	Dryad*	1	1
51-55	Ettercap	1-2	5
56-65	Monstrous spider, huge	1	4
66-75	Owlbear*	1	4
76-80	Shadow	2	5
81-85	Shambling Mound*	1	6
86-95	<i>Vrill patrol</i>	2	7
95-00	Worg*	2-4	5

- **Town Center/Peloran Temple:** The Town Hall and Temple of Pelor dominate the town center. A purely civic building, the Town Hall provides offices for the mayor and other officials. The Temple of Pelor focuses the religious life of the town. The adventure begins at the temple, with the Pelorans offering sunrise prayers for the party and their NPC charges, Satura and Raz. *See the appendix for Satura's and Raz's listings under NPCs.*
- **North Gate/Residences:** Grander homes near the temple give way to more humble abodes and various small shops through the north end of town. Horvath's only other entrance leads north through the forest along the Upper Horvath Road.

Going through the forest is difficult, but not impossible. PCs must dismount to travel safely. Otherwise, they constantly risk being batted from their saddle by the thick, low-hanging branches.

3. TREEFALL (EL 8)

Horvath lies roughly five-miles behind, completely obscured by foliage and several bends in the road. Directly ahead, a huge and ancient tree trunk has fallen across the narrow path, completely blocking it.

The fallen tree is no natural occurrence, as any PC within 10 feet of the massive trunk can notice with a Spot check (DC 10). The vrill have laid a trap for the PCs, intending to kill the young Emprix. Of course, any character close enough to see the hacked base of the trunk is already in danger. The vrill, who have been lying in wait, attack immediately and without mercy.

Creatures: A patrol of three vrill has set this trap, hoping to force the party to stop and make easier targets.

Vrill (3): 23 hp each, 2d4 gems worth 50 gp each, 1d4 thunderstones, 1d4 antitoxin.

Tactics: The vrill begin their assault by firing arrows from the woods, hoping to pick off the party members, their mounts, and the young deva. After several volleys of arrows, the vrill will pour out from both sides of the road, engaging in melee combat. They liberally use their special abilities. The goal is to execute the Emprix and return with her disembodied head to their lair near the entrance of the skimmer caverns. It is important to play the vrill as ruthless and bloodthirsty, a stark contrast to the less lethal, well-designed plan of Tallon's Crew.

1. UPPER HORVATH ROAD

Calling the shadowy track a road is nothing short an exaggeration. The narrow trail pierces the thick forest, running north. The trees seem about to swallow the road, tall trees bath the path in ceaseless shadow. Underbrush and gnarled tree limbs that seems to reach out at you make visibility along the path limited.

Ten years ago, the Upper Horvath road was well traveled. While it has not fallen into complete disuse, the dangers of the Blighted Hills make trade north a risky proposition. These days, the road is used mostly by adventurers setting out for the Blighted Hills or any number of remote outposts to the north.

PCs on foot can proceed two abreast along the road. Horse, small wagons, carts, and carriages must travel single file. In addition to having to dodge low-hanging branches, anyone on horseback becomes a more obvious target and is more susceptible to attacks from spiders, vipers, or other tree-climbing attackers.

2. FOREST

Apparently untouched by the folk of Horvath, the ancient, green forest rises high above, blocking out much of the sunlight. Off the trail, the ground is uneven and treacherous. All manner of brush obscure the forest floor and towering, six-foot tall ground ferns make seeing more than a few feet impossible. You hear the occasional, natural sounds of small birds and other creatures of the forest.

4. AMBUSH (EL 9)

Horvath lies roughly five-miles behind, completely obscured by foliage and several bends in the road. Directly ahead, a huge and ancient tree trunk has fallen across the narrow path, completely blocking it.

Tallon's Crew, having learned of the vrill treefall which Kata and her band discovered during their night journey to the Waystation, also prepared an ambush for the party. This encounter can be acceler-

ated if the situation at the vrill treefall looks fatal for the PCs or Satura. Tallon's deal with Vrex and the Order is to deliver the deva alive and unharmed, not a headless corpse. His people will attempt to capitalize on the vrill encounter, either by wading into that battle to extract the girl or hoping to catch the successful but battle weary party off guard. In addition to the regular retinue of mercenaries, Vrex has stationed the enchanter Seril with this taskforce.

Creatures: The group engaging in the ambush consists of Seril, the Order's enchanter, Kata, and three rogues.

Seril: hp 25, see Appendix for full details.

Kata: hp 27, see Appendix for full details.

Rogues (3, 3rd-level): hp 16 each.

Tactics: Although Vrex commanded Seril and the mercenaries to take extreme measures in securing the child, Tallon's strong honor forbids killing the PCs to get the child unless the situation turns desperate and the characters themselves have shown they will resort to fatal force. Both Seril and Raz prefer to murder the group and be done with it. However, without Vrex and Maldavis to back them up, they follow Tallon's instructions. Seril is quite aware that should he resort to lethal force, the half-orc will make him pay for breaking orders. If Seril cannot flee from a murderous opponent, he will go to any length to defend himself.

The group begins their assault with spells from a distance. Both Seril and Kata use of *daze*, *flare*, *sleep*, and *color spray* spells from cover of the woods. If this fails, Kata leads the mercenaries in taking the girl by force, attempting to subdue any resisting party members. Seril will hang back, attempting to aid with spells and magic items. If possible, he will attempt to *charm* any PC confronting him, saving his most powerful spells for lethal confrontations only.

Raz will pretend to go down under the initial magical assault. Feigning unconsciousness, he aids the mercenaries in subduing the group by use of his hidden, sorcerer abilities and the Still Spell and Silent Spell feats.

5. THE WAYSTATION

At last the woods thin and the slight trail seems to grow wider and distinct again. About a half-mile from the treeline, a squat stone tower sits on the east side of the road. Flags sewn with the horizon symbol of Fharlanghn, the god of roads, snap in the air from the tower's sloped, slate roof. Smoke curls from the chimney and a breeze brings the faint smell of cooking food. Between the tower and the woods, you can make out a well-tended garden and a small orchard.

The road continues north and veers west toward the coast, skirting the beginnings of a vast expanse of barren, rolling hills.

The PCs may approach the Waystation cautiously or they may come to the tower completely unaware of the danger present. Either way, the mercenaries are well prepared for them. Hren, the owl familiar of the diviner Maldavis, hides in the trees where the road exits the forest. When the party approaches, she informs Maldavis via their enhanced empathic link. Maldavis, in turn, uses her *ring of winds* to warn Seril at the Waystation. If Tallon had successfully captured Satura, his band will attack the PCs as soon as they enter the tower proper. While they strongly prefer not to kill the PCs, they will do so in order to retain the child. If Satura is still with the party when they reach the Waystation, Tallon's men (disguised as the imprisoned priests) will attempt to neutralize the party through separation, deceit, and stealth. However, if Kata was killed in the ambush, Tallon's crew will want revenge and attempt to eliminate the PCs entirely.

Waystation Keyed Entries

The following numbered entries refer to the locations on the Waystation maps.

0. COURTYARD

Massive, ironbound wooden gates open outward from a small, walled courtyard before the Waystation tower. The stone wall is smooth, featureless, and high, perhaps fifteen feet tall. About 50 feet east of the gates, simple stairs lead up to the tower's only entrance. Against the north wall, a crude, covered hitching post and a generous haystack serve as a stable. A stately, healthy oak tree and a covered well are located near the southern wall.

1. FRONT HALL

Dozens of lit candles decorate the high front hall, lending it a warm and welcoming atmosphere. High above the outer doors, a single window lets in natural light. The round, leaded-glass window feature Fharlanghn's symbol of the horizon. Impressive paintings hang along the north wall, depicting a number of welcoming and smiling clerics of the order. An extensive mural takes up the entire south wall and depicts the local area in detail. Special attention has been given to the huge map's roads. Inlaid in bright glass, the roads glow from the candlelight, seeming almost to hover above the wall surface. Highly polished double wooden doors open deeper into the tower.

Only the most unscrupulous PCs would consider stealing these paintings from the clerics of the Waystation. However, in that event, the six portraits bring 1,750 gp each.

Creatures: Tallon and his men, disguised as the Waystation's clerics and some friendly guests, will attempt to engage the party and split them up to make it easier to subdue or kill them. Raz will participate in this ruse, acting as if he knows the clerics. (Raz does know them, but as the mercenaries they are, not kindly priests). A successful Spot or Sense Motive check (DC 10) will alert a sharp PC that the clerics are not what they seem (for example, a weapon may be hastily and carelessly concealed beneath the unfamiliar clerical robes). Likewise, a PC who successfully makes an Innuendo check (DC 10) will understand that Raz and the "clerics" communicate more than they say to each other. If Kata and Seril survived the ambush, they lie in wait for the PCs in other rooms of the tower as decided by the DM. If the party attacks Tallon and his men, the remaining members of the crew rush to their aid immediately.

Tallon: hp 42, see Appendix for full details.

Rogues (4, 3rd-level): hp 16 each, see Appendix for full details.

2. FIRST DORMITORY

Most of Tallon's Crew bunk here. Any treasure the rogues may own is carried on their persons.

This spare room is obviously used for the tower's occasional and less discriminating overnight guests. The room is high and narrow, like the front hall, with a single round window about twenty feet up on the western wall. Four nicely crafted bunk beds dominate the room, two along each of the long walls. No door secures the room. Instead, a thick, dark curtain provides both privacy and access. The room smells of lavender and other sweet herbs, which attempt to mask the lingering odor of many road-worn travelers.

3. SECOND DORMITORY

Only a heavy drapery separates this tall guestroom from the hall. The room easily accommodates six people with a well-made bed, a wooden chest, and a small table and chair for each. A candle and a bundle of pleasant, aromatic herbs adorn each table. A single, round window high on the western wall serves to focus the morning light in the room.

Sweet Gurta has taken this room as her own, preferring to be near Tallon and not to room with her human compatriots. Much of her gear is stored here while she either waits in the kitchen for the attack to begin or guards the kidnapped deva in the library.

4. PRIVATE SUITE

This well-appointed room is obviously reserved for the most honored guests and those willing to make a more generous donation to the tower's coffers. Three round windows are set high in the curving wall along the northwest. A large double bed, covered in rich velvet, dominates the room that also holds a small desk and chair. Unlit candles rest upon the desk and small tables near the bed. Wild roses spill out of a vase on a bedside table, their petals decorating its surface. A large, full-length mirror hangs against the eastern wall near the door.

Tallon and Kata have taken this room as their own. If Kata survived the ambush in the forest, she remains here out of sight of the PCs unless fighting breaks out. Although a fair leader, Tallon controls his crew by maintaining possession of the group's finances. PCs searching the room will find 13,000gp in heavy cloth bags stuffed beneath the bed.

5. STORE ROOM

Sacks of grain, barrels of wine, beer, and water as well as shelves of preserved fruits, vegetables, and other items crowd this large storage area. Torches along the western wall, currently unlit, provide the only potential illumination as there are no windows.

While nothing of much value can be found here, players may take advantage of this spot to replenish supplies.

6. TEMPLE OF FHARLANGHN

Large, well-polished oaken double doors decorated with the Fharlanghn horizon symbol open into a long room that houses a small stage, dominated by an enormous wooden carving of the order's symbol along the northern wall. Before the stage is a simple stone altar, again carved with the symbol. Several wooden pews fill the rest of the room, facing toward the altar and stage.

Anyone of other than neutral good alignment who touches the stone altar receives 1d4 points electrical damage per round that they make contact with it, as Tallon and his folk have already discovered. The heavy lid of the altar can be removed by a Strength check (DC 15), to uncover a solid gold holy symbol (Fharlanghn, of course) worth 1,050 gp as well as a dozen fire opals, star sapphires, and rubies worth 750 gp each, 2 *candles of invocation (neutral good)* and a *chime of interruption*.

7. KITCHEN

This room is obviously the kitchen. All manner of pots and pans cover the many, sturdy tables and hang from hooks on the wall. Cabinets containing a variety of foodstuffs leave just enough room to work. A deep fireplace, vented by a chimney extending upward and containing a large iron kettle, fills the southwestern area.

If the child was not secured, Sweet Gurta is hiding here. She charges out at the first sounds of conflict.

8. DINING HALL

There is nothing of value or interest here.

This area, apparently used for dining, contains a number of round, modest, and well used tables each with a number of chairs. Places are set at every seat and bouquets of bright and fragrant wildflowers fill vases at each table's center. Along the curving northeast walls, rough stone stairs make a steep ascent to the tower's second floor. A series of rounded windows high on the outer southwest wall bathe the room in light.

9. COMMON ROOM

The stairs from the dining room below lead up to a cozy room full of couches, covered chairs, and several low tables. A screened fireplace provides warmth and light from the western portion of the room. Lit by numerous narrow windows along the outer wall and dozens of candles, this room appears to be an area of general use by all that live in the tower. Books, a few simple games, and the occasional musical instrument lay strewn casually about the room. A single door in the northwest wall leads out of the room. A thick curtain hangs across the entrance to a room to the east.

This room is littered with a number of mundane items. However, lying casually among the rest are *pipes of sounding*.

10. WAITING ROOM


Behind the curtain separating this small room from the common room are several comfortable looking chairs and a couch. On the northern wall hangs a large painting of the Waystation. A door with tower's predominant symbol is located in the east wall.

There is nothing of interest or value here.

11. HIGH CLERIC'S OFFICE

A massive oak desk and rows of crowded bookshelves dominate what is apparently an office for the tower's main proprietor. A pair of the same comfortable chairs and a low, backless couch sit across from the desk.

On the desk is a single *candle of truth*. Nothing else of real value can be found here although a successful search



(DC 15) will reveal a secret door leading into the High Cleric's private room. The secret door was charmed long ago so that only individuals of good intentions can pass through without harm. It radiates a powerful magic and deals 5d6 in electrical damage to any non-good creature that attempts to pass through it. Tallon's people discovered the passage but Maldavis warned them against attempting to breach it (she intends to come back and pilfer the room beyond herself).

12. FIRST CLERICS' CELL

This spare, humble cell contains a few cots, a small table with a candle, and little else.

There is nothing of value or interest here.

13. SECOND CLERICS' CELL

This spare, humble cell contains a few cots, a small table with a candle, and little else.

There is nothing of value or interest here.

14. HIGH CLERIC'S CHAMBER

This room contains some of the finest furniture yet viewed in this homey, welcoming tower. A large canopied bed, several chairs, and an ornately carved wooden cabinet make for a cozy, but slightly cramped atmosphere. The scent of incense, wildflowers, and many candles hangs thick in the air.

The door to this room is trapped with the same ancient magic as the secret passage leading from the cleric's office. One of Tallon's men has already been killed by the spell, which is why they haven't ransacked the room yet. This ancient spell can be circumvented by a *dispel magic* spell, but doing so only allows one non-good creature to pass through before it immediately reactivates itself.

If the PCs enter the room and conduct a successful search (DC 17), they will find that the great bed actually folds up against the wall and reveals a hidden space beneath. This space contains the greatest treasures in the tower: a fully charged *staff of healing*, a *sylvan scimitar*, a *bag of tricks (rust)*, a *minor circlet of blasting*, a *necklace of adaptation*, and a *cube of frost resistance*.

15. VOCALIST'S CHAMBER

This bare room contains no furniture except for a single stand for sheet music and a stool. Long windows of thick, leaded glass open to the north.

There is really nothing of interest in this room although the PCs may find it a convenient place to rest or hide from Tallon's men.

16. FIRST MUSIC ROOM

This room is bare save for an assortment of high-backed wooden chairs and several stands for sheet music. Long windows of thick, leaded glass open to the east.

When Tallon's Crew overpowered the Waystation's tenants, one of the acolytes was practicing on one of the Waystation's oldest relics: a *lyre of building*. The instrument was dropped here when the mercenaries (none of whom had any interest in the object) corralled the priests into the next room.

17. SECOND MUSIC ROOM

The chairs and music stands in this room have been shoved into one corner. An older man and several younger men and women seem to be sleeping comfortably on the stone floor. Long windows of thick, leaded glass open to the east. The air is filled with an acrid, cloying scent and a slight haze.

The tower's true clerics were brought here and rendered unconscious. They sleep peacefully, unharmed, and can be awakened easily if disturbed. As Tallon's Crew subdued the clerics in the early morning, before the period of meditation they use to replenish their spells, the awakened clerics may be able to help reclaim their tower but they will have to do so without access to divine magics. However, the High Cleric of the Tower (Meryt), can easily enter his own chambers to retrieve the items he keeps hidden there. If the PCs subdue the mercenaries, but have not pilfered Meryt's treasure stash, he rewards each party members with an appropriate item for their valor and honor.

17. STORE ROOM

Unused furniture, carpets and other goods crowd this tiny, windowless storeroom.

There is nothing of interest or value here.

18. LIBRARY

Cramped bookshelves cover every available wall space in this room. Stacks of more books, parchments, and scrolls are next to or atop a number of small desks. Delicately carved lanterns also sit on each desk and hang from the ceiling, but the light that shines from them does not flicker as one would expect a candle to do.

If Satura was captured during the forest ambush, she can be found here with the half-orc, Sweet Gurta. She is unharmed, calmly awaiting her rescue. While the DM may choose to grant the young Emprix enough access to her developing powers to signal the PCs or momentarily distract her captors, it is best if Satura does not free herself.

The clerics of the tower have collected a large number of tomes over the years, several of them magical. A successful search of the room using *detect magic* will reveal scrolls of *mass charm*, *acid fog*, *invisibility sphere*, *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*, *sanctuary*, *locate object*, *antiplant shell*, and *transmute metal to wood* in addition to a complete *deck of illusions* and *Boccob's Blessed Book*.

The Blighted Hills: An Overview for the DM

Years ago, the area now known as The Blighted Hills was a rolling, verdant expanse of hills and valleys marked by numerous natural caverns. The area had its share of dangerous creatures and was known for being the favored hiding space for local brigands and cutthroats. With the arrival of the plane-lost dimensional skimmer, whatever alien technology the devas used to bridge dimensions tore at the barriers between the planes, flooding the area with all manner of horrible (and often quite angry) outsiders. The dimensional rifts have since repaired themselves, but the barriers between planes are still thin.

Use the following table for generating random encounters in the Blighted Hills. Remember that should the party return to Horvath for any reason, the chances of encountering a hostile vrill patrol increases. To represent this increased chance, substitute a vrill patrol for encounters denoted with an asterisk (*) as appropriate. With the increased activity in the area, treat the chance of encounter as that of a heavily traveled area, or 12% per hour of traveling. If the party is brave enough to set up camp in the hills, they have an 80% chance per night of one of the encounters on the table below

d20		Number	
Day	Encounter	Encountered	EL
01-35	No encounter*	—	—
36-50	Achaierai	1-3	7
51-55	Barghest, greater	1	5
56-65	Ethereal Marauder*	1	3
66-75	Howler	2-4	6
76-80	Ogre*	2-6	5
81-85	Vargouille	1-4	4
86-95	<i>Vrill patrol</i>	2-5	8
96-00	Worg*	2-4	5

The cavern housing the crashed skimmer is approximately two days travel to the northeast from the Waystation. Satura, through some strange racial memory, can lead the party in exactly the right direction. Alternatively, the PCs can Track the vrill and/or Seril's associates to the hidden cavern.

Skimmer Caverns Keyed Entries

1. HIDDEN ENTRANCE

Brambles and other thorny brush grow up from the base of another of the seemingly endless and identical hillocks of the area. Deep shadows behind the plants obscure a small cavern of indeterminate depth.

PCs must dismount and crawl through the opening on hands and knees. Once inside, the cavern is large enough to allow Medium-size characters to stand, although they must watch their heads.

2. RUBBLE

A tumble of rock, dirt and other debris form the back of this small, low cavern. Closer inspection reveals a narrow passage to the right, between the rubble and the cave wall.

Once again, Maldavis' owl familiar, Hren, lies in wait to warn her mistress. Characters who succeed at a Spot check (DC 10) will notice the tiny bird hiding amidst the rubble. The rocky debris is unstable and any character squeezing through the opening risks a cave-in. Tiny creatures, like the owl, do not risk starting a cave-in here. Have each character moving past the rubble make a Dex check (DC 15) to see if she starts a landslide. If she succeeds, she has moved through the danger zone. If she fails, a cave-in begins immediately and she must succeed a second Ref save (DC 15) to avoid being pinned and suffering 3d6 damage. If successful, the character is deeper in the cavern, not nearer the entrance. Refer to the rules for Cave-Ins and Collapses on pg. 114 of the *DMG* for more details on how to handle a cave-in.

3. THE DEEP CHASM

A crude, lashed-together bridge crosses a deep chasm, apparently the only way to proceed further into the caverns.

Indeed, the PCs must traverse this tricky bridge in order to reach the final portion of the cavern. The bridge was built by the vrill for themselves, thus the

guide ropes are positioned too low to be of much use to anyone larger than the vrill. Small characters can cross the bridge without effort, although they may be tense about it. Any Medium-size or larger character attempting to cross the bridge must make a Ref save (DC 15) or be pitched over into the 50-foot deep chasm, suffering 5d6 damage.

4. THE REBEL STRONGHOLD (EL 9)

Luminescent mists hang in the air of this large side cavern. Clumps of glowing fungus dot the walls and ceiling of the room and grow atop large, oddly shaped mushrooms that crowd the space.

The mushrooms are, in fact, small crude huts constructed by the vrill to serve as makeshift housing. A total of five such huts make-up the vrill base camp.

Creatures: Although the vrill use this as their base camp, the creatures have multiplied prodigiously over the years and can be encountered throughout the region. Here, only a small group — those not out searching for the PCs or with Vrex in the skimmer — are left to defend their stronghold. These are the old, the weak and the very young and also the most willing to negotiate. Should the PCs attempts to communicate with the vrill here, they will learn the whole story of the vrill and the stellar devas.

Vrill (4): 23 hp each.

5. THE WRECK SITE (EL 5)

The tunnel finally opens into an impressive cavern, strewn with rubble and other debris. Stalactites and stalagmites — some pocked with more of the luminescent molds — stretch up from the rough stone floor and hang down from the shadowy ceiling. More impressive than any of the natural formations, however, is the massive bulk of some strange vessel that fills most of the free space in the room. The large, ship-like structure vaguely resembles some winged creature of the sea or air that has been seamlessly fused with its new surroundings.

This is the wreck of the dimensional skimmer that brought the vrill and the devas to this plane. PCs who

investigate the exterior of the craft will discover that it seems to have materialized in place, damaging the skimmer and fusing most of it beneath tons of rock.

Only a very few rooms remain accessible at this point. The “wing” closest to the entrance of the room has been fused with a massive, connected stalactite/stalagmite growth. The other “wing” across the cavern has been sheared in half, allowing for precarious entrance into the vessel. For all intents and purposes, the material of the ship’s exterior is indestructible. The players cannot breach it by force or magic, including such spells as *passwall* and *dimension door* (although both spells work within the confines of the ship).

Creatures: A swarm of darkmantles infest the area nearest the inaccessible wing and will descend en masse on any creatures investigating the area. The vrill are well aware of the creature’s presence, actively avoiding them and assisting Vrex and his party in the same. In fact, the vrill have “seeded” the area with some treasure in hopes that the party will investigate the area and provoke an attack from the creatures.

Darkmantles (6): hp 6 each, 12 gems worth 20gp each, a *ring of feather falling*, and a *+2 shield*.

6. UNDERDARK ACCESS (EL 8)

A broad tunnel, seemingly unworked, extends into the darkness.

Three vrill normally camp here, protecting the skimmer from pillaging by races from the Underdark. Like their brethren, these vrill agreed to serve the necromancer Vrex in exchange for his help in blocking the Emprix’s escape.

This dim tunnel leads beyond the scope of this adventure. PCs who resolutely continue down the rough path find mile after mile of nothing but darkness and more passages.

Creatures: Vrex has made certain to keep this vrill in place to block any attempt by the party to flee into the Underdark. They are certain to hear any confrontation with the darkmantle swarm and will be well prepared.

Vrill Guards (3): hp 23 each, 6d10 gp.

Vessel of Stars Keyed Entries

1. SHEARED WING ENTRANCE

This side of the ship has been ripped away from the main bulk of the vessel, allowing access into its interior. The torn metal hull juts out viciously in every direction, as if some internal force blew out through the area.

When the skimmer crashed, the surviving vrill and devas created this exit. It is possible to use magic to safely navigate through the wreckage. Characters without access to such means must climb through the wreckage with a successful Climb check (DC 15). Those that fail cut themselves on the sharp metal, receiving 1d4 damage and must try again.

2. GUNNER ROOM

This long, high-ceilinged room is a tangle of wreckage, cables and broken, empty pipes. A number of knobs, buttons and levers cover the walls and others panels throughout the room, but whatever its purpose, you are unable to fathom it. A metal ladder sharply ascends to an exit in the far wall.

When operational, this room was one of two chambers focusing positive energy into powerful destructive beams.

3. COMMAND DECK (EL 8)

Despite being unable to see to the far side of this room, the openness and the sounds of your own footsteps echoing back to you lead to believe it is quite large. Huge, cracked glass portals look out into the surrounding cavern, allowing some of the luminescent mold’s glow to filter into the room.

Again strange panels and unfathomable buttons, levers and other machinery litter this expansive room. Vrex stationed the last of the vrill here with his cohort Fessid, a displacer beast, in order to kill the PCs and take Satura. He and Maldavis are watching from the next room, prepared for the PCs should they survive.

Creatures: Two vrill and the displacer beast Fessid wait to ambush the party once they have entered the room. The vrill, now thoroughly terrified of Fessid and his human companions, will attempt to slay the PCs but not Satura.

Vrill (2): hp 23 each.

Fessid: hp 51.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

4. ROYAL OBSERVATION DECK

This richly appointed room lacks the strange panels seen in other parts of the ship. Indeed, it looks much like a splendid parlor. Large windows with the glass long broken out, look down onto the large room below.

Satura will know that her escape is near but she does not sense the secret door here, only the PCs should be allowed to discover this (DC 12).

5. ROYAL YACHT HANGAR (EL 9)

This narrow, hidden room curves around to the right. Unlike the rest of the vessel, it is well lit, unharmed and obviously occupied. Dressed in robes, a man and woman glare viciously at you and bar the path to an egg-shaped structure behind them.

Vrex and Maldavis wait with murderous intent. They are both enraged that the PCs have gotten this far and will use every means at their disposal to kill them. Vrex, however, will not sacrifice his own life to secure the girl. If the PCs have killed Hren, the owl familiar, Maldavis will not leave until she has exacted her revenge. However, if she is knocked unconscious, Vrex will take her with him when he attempts to escape.

If Satura still lives, she will insist that the PCs slay anyone who attempts to stop her escape. She will enter the yacht (really much more like an escape pod from the outside, but much roomier on the inside) and will attempt to brand one of the PCs (most likely the one who has been kindest to her). The brand — which Satura places on the palm of the character's hand — is necessary to activate the dimension spanning ability of the yacht. Satura will hastily instruct the PC on how to operate the ship.

A single panel faces the yacht with an image identical to the Sigil of Stars on its face. The yacht can only be launched from the outside (ensuring against mutiny and theft) when a branded creature places his or her hand on the panel.

Vrex: 34 hp, see Appendix for Vrex's possessions.

Maldavis: 25 hp, see Appendix for Maldavis' possessions.

Failure!

Should Satura be killed during the adventure, the heroes can continue, but the child is lost. As an outsider, she cannot be *resurrected* or *raised*. If Satura survives, but is captured and not rescued, the PCs may begin searching for her, interrogating surviving mercenaries or following the suspicious Raz back to the Order of Unknown Truths. Should the PCs die in their quest to aid Satura, the adventure is simply over.

Success!

If Satura successfully flees the PCs' dimension, they have succeeded. However, they may not feel good about returning her to her people and their enslavement of the vrill.

Continuation....

Many ways of continuing this adventure are possible. Some PCs may wish to travel to the vrill home world to convince the devas — via diplomacy or force — to vacate. Others may wish to further investigate the Blighted Hills and the areas to the north. It is also possible that Tallon, his surviving followers or even the Order of Unknown Truths will be interested in exacting their revenge upon the PCs, appearing later in capers to plague them mercilessly.

APPENDIX: STATISTICS

For standard creature stats and descriptions, please see the *MONSTER MANUAL*.

Bandits (4th-level rogues): CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 4d6; hp 20 (average); Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, rapier), +8 ranged (1d6+1 comp. shortbow); SA Sneak atk +2d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide/Move Silently/Tumble +10, Open Lock +12, Listen/Spot +7, Search/Appraise +9. Disable Device +11, Use Magical Device +6; Improved Initiative, Shield Proficiency.

Rogues (3rd-level): Male and female humans Rog3 CR 3; Medium-size humanoids (humans); hp 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, rapier), +6 ranged (1d6+1, composite shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ

Evasion, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide/Move Silently/Tumble +8, Open Lock +10, Listen/Spot +6, Search/Appraise +8, Disable Device +10, Use Magical Device +5, Spellcraft +5, Concentration +6; Improved Initiative, Shield Proficiency.

Possessions (each): Studded leather armor, rapier, composite shortbow, 20 arrows, 2 *darkvision* potions, 2 *spider climb* potions, 2 *cure light wounds* potion.

Vrill: CR 5; Small outsider; HD 3d8+10; hp 23 (average); Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2, gore), +1 melee (1d10+2, vrill waraxe), +1 ranged (1d6, shortbow); SA Breath weapon, stun; SQ SR 15, dmg reduction 10/+2, *darkvision*, immovability, charm resistance, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +5, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +5, Profession (any one) +10, Sense Motive +15, Wilderness Lore +7; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Track.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon - cone, 60 ft, 1d4 temporary Con damage and flee for 1d6 rounds, Fort save (DC 17) negates; Stun - must successfully charge, Fort save (DC 15) or stunned 1d6 rounds.

Special Qualities: Immovability -19+ Str and Will save (DC 15) to move; Charm Resistance - Immune to enchantments below 6th-level

For more details, check out our "Monster Mayhem" feature at www.wizards.com/dnd.

APPENDIX: NAMED CREATURES

Fessid: Vrex's displacer beast cohort, CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Atk +9 melee (1d6+4, 2 tentacles), +4 melee (1d8+2, bite); SQ Displacement, resistance to ranged attacks; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +12, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +6; Alertness, Dodge.

Special Qualities: Displacement - melee/ranged attacks miss 50% of the time, *true seeing* negates, Resist ranged attacks - +2 to saves vs. ranged spells or ranged magical attacks (except ranged touch).

Hren: Maldavis' owl familiar, CR 1/4; Tiny animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 17; Atk +5 melee (1d2-2, claws); SA Share spells, touch; SQ Improved evasion, empathic link, speak with master; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +14. Move Silently +20, Spot +6 (+8 in dusk/darkness); Weapon Finesse (claws).

Kata: Female human Sor2/Rog3; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (human); hp 27; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, rapier), +10 ranged (1d8+1, masterwork light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Evasion, spells; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide/Move Silently/Tumble +8, Open Lock +10, Listen/Spot +6, Search/Appraise +8, Disable Device +10, Use Magical Device +5, Spellcraft +5, Concentration +6; Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier, masterwork light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, thunderstone, dagger, 2 tanglefoot bags, *blur* potion, *cat's grace* potion, *invisibility* potion, 2 *cure light wounds* potions, *sneak* potion, *darkvision* potion, *neutralize poison* potion.

Spells Known (6/5): 0 - *flare*, *daze*, *mending*, *arcane mark*, *read magic*, 1st - *color spray*, *true strike*.

Maldavis: Female human Wiz6 (Diviner); CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); hp 25; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), +6 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Spells (no necromancy); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Spellcraft +12, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +9, Scry +10, Knowledge (History) +9; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Toughness, Alertness and +2 Move Silently (with familiar, Hren).

Possessions: Masterwork robes with hidden spell component pouches, magnifying glass, masterwork crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, staff, backpack, water-skin, bedroll, sack, spellbook, flint and steel, 7 gems worth 100gp each.

Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4): 0 - *detect poison*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *light*; 1st - *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *identify*, *true strike*,

color spray; 2nd - *detect thoughts, locate object, see invisibility, misdirection, darkvision*; 3rd - *clairaudience/clairvoyance, tongues, displacement, dispel magic*,

Spellbook: 0 - *detect poison, detect magic, read magic, resistance, light, arcane mark, mage hand*; 1st - *comprehend languages, detect secret doors, identify, true strike, color spray, protection from good, shield, hold portal, magic missile, change self*; 2nd - *detect thoughts, locate object, see invisibility, misdirection, darkvision, mirror image, rope trick*; 3rd - *clairaudience/clairvoyance, tongues, displacement, dispel magic, nondetection, illusory script, fireball*.

Raz: Male human Sor4/Clr2 (Boccob/Magic-Trickery); CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff), +7 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Spells, Turn undead 7/day; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Bluff +9, Spellcraft +7; Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Possessions: Peloran robes, quarterstaff, masterwork light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, thunderstone, dagger, 2 tanglefoot bags, smokestick, alchemist's fire, 2 *blur* potions, *cat's grace* potion, 3 *cure light wounds* potion, 2 *color spray* scrolls, *invisibility* scroll, *wand of magic missile* (4th-level caster, 34 charges), *wand of sleep* (12th-level caster, 18 charges), +1 *bracers of armor*, +1 *cloak of resistance*.

Spells Prepared (Cleric 4/5): 1st - *invisibility, obscuring mist, bless, doom, cure light wounds*.

Spells Known (Sorcerer 6/7/4): 0 - *daze, flare, light, open/close, mending, prestidigitation*; 1st - *sleep, true strike, color spray*; 2nd - *web*.

Satura VI, Vessel of Stars, Emprix: Female stellar deva; CR 3; Small outsider (Lawful, Good); HD 3d8+10; hp 25; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff); SA Spell-like abilities, positive energy; SQ Dmg reduction 10/+1, SR 20, celestial qualities, brand; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Escape Artist +7, Hide +11, Knowledge (arcana, religion, planes)+13, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +10; Improved Initiative.

Special Attacks/Qualities: Spell-like abilities: at will – *aid, continual flame, flare, cure light wounds, detect magic, dispel magic, holy aura, daylight, remove disease* and *remove fear*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 13+spell level). The following abilities are always active on the Emprix's person, as the spells cast by a 15th-level sorcerer: *detect evil, detect chaos, see invisibility*, and *true seeing*. They can be dispelled, but the Emprix can reactivate them as a free action.

Additionally, the Emprix has the following enchantments available to her each round. Whether in human or star form: at will – *daze, charm person, suggestion, charm monster, confusion, emotion*, 3/day – *mass charm*, 1/month – *geas/quest*. These are as the spells cast by a 17th-level sorcerer (save DC 15+spell level).

Brand: A use unique to an Emprix is the ability to brand any non-evil, living beings with "The Sigil of Stars". To be successful the Emprix must actually touch the target being, who is allowed a save to resist being branded (DC 15). An Emprix may only brand one being at a time. Successfully branding a second being cause the brand on the first being to immediately fade away. The brand remains on the target until he or she has used up all it inherent powers. The Sigil of Stars appears as a crescent moon surrounded by eight stars. It is visible only in darkness, underground and at night, although a *true seeing* spell will reveal its presence under any circumstances. The Sigil of Stars' bearer can, at will, perform the following abilities as the spells cast by an 8th-level sorcerer: *flare, light, disrupt undead* and *protection from evil*. The bearer may also cast *glitterdust, daylight* or *halt undead* but each casting of these spells causes one of the Sigil's eight stars to vanish. Once all eight stars have been used, the Sigil dissipates and the bearer no longer has access to any of its benefits.

Celestial Qualities: Protective aura, tongues, fire resistance 20, electricity, cold, acid, and petrification immunity, +4 save against poison, lowlight vision, darkvision 60 ft.

NOTE: The DM should restrict or allow Satura's access to her abilities as he/she see fit to enhance the adventure.

Seril the Enchanting: Male human Wiz6 (Enchanter); CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); hp 25; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), +6

ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Spells (no illusions); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Spellcraft +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Diplomacy +6, Concentration +10, Alchemy +5; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Possessions: Masterwork robes with hidden spell component pouches, masterwork crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, staff, backpack, waterskin, bedroll, sack, spellbook, flint and steel, masterwork mirror, 100gp.

Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4): 0 – 2 *daze*, 2 *ray of frost*, *flare*; 1st-level – *charm person*, *hypnotism*, 2 *sleep*, *true strike*, *shocking grasp*; 2nd-level – *Tasha's hideous laughter*, *protection from arrows*, *web*, *darkness*, *arcane lock*; 3rd-level – *hold person*, *suggestion*, 2 *lightning bolt*

Spellbook: 0 – *daze*, *ray of frost*, *flare*, *light*, *disrupt undead*, *mending*, *open/close*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitiation*, *read magic*; 1st-level – *charm person*, *hypnotism*, *sleep*, *comprehend language*, *mage armor*, *true strike*, *shocking grasp*, *message*; 2nd-level – *Tasha's hideous laughter*, *protection from arrows*, *whispering wind*, *web*, *darkness*, *arcane lock*; 3rd-level – *hold person*, *suggestion*, *nondetection*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *alter self*.

Sweet Gurta: Female half-orc Bbn6; CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (half-orc); hp 50; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Atk +11/+6 melee (1d12+3, masterwork greataxe), +9/+4 ranged (1d8+3, mighty composite longbow); SA Rage 2/day; SQ Uncanny dodge (AC bonus, no flank); AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb/Jump +9, Listen/Wilderness Lore +10; Dodge, Track, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: +1 *breastplate*, masterwork greataxe, mighty composite longbow, 20 masterwork arrows, 1 *cure light wounds* potion, 2 *cure moderate wounds* potion, 2 *delay poison* potion, 2 *lesser restoration* potion.

Tallon: Male half-elf Ftr5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (half-elf); hp 42; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21; Atk +10 melee (1d10+5, masterwork bastard sword), +7 melee (1d8+3, mighty composite longbow); AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb/Jump +3; Exotic Weapon (bas-

tard sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, half-plate armor, large metal shield, mighty masterwork composite longbow, 20 arrows, *cure moderate wounds* potion, *endurance* potion, +1 *cloak of resistance*.

Vrex: Male human Wiz8 (Necromancer), CR 8; Medium-size humanoid (human); hp 34; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork crossbow), +4 melee (1d4, poison DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str, 4 daggers [2 poisoned]); SA special cohort (Fessid), followers, spells; SQ Spells (no divination); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Alchemy +7, Knowledge (nature) +14 (+17, human anatomy), Knowledge (planar) +14, Spellcraft +14; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Possessions: Masterwork robes with hidden spell component pouches, masterwork crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, staff, backpack, waterskin, bedroll, sack, spellbook, flint and steel, 5 gems worth 200gp each, *dispel magic* scroll, *web* scroll, *confusion* scroll, 2 *fireball* scrolls, *haste* potion, *alter self* potion, 2 *cure serious wounds* potions, +1 *bracers of armor*, *wand of summon monster II*.

Spells Prepared (5/6/5/5/3): 0 - *ray of frost*, *disrupt undead*, *open/close*, *detect magic*, *read magic*; 1st - *cause fear*, *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spider climb*, *expeditious retreat*, *summon monster I*; 2nd - *ghoul touch*, *spectral hand*, *scare*, *blindness/deafness*, *darkness*; 3rd - *halt undead*, *vampiric touch*, *summon monster III*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*; 4th - *enervation*, *fear*, *dimension door*.

Spellbook: 0 - *ray of frost*, *disrupt undead*, *open/close*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *daze*, *ghost sounds*, *arcane mark*, *prestidigitiation*; 1st - *cause fear*, *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spider climb*, *expeditious retreat*, *summon monster I*, *enlarge*, *jump*, *reduce*; 2nd - *ghoul touch*, *spectral hand*, *scare*, *blindness/deafness*, *darkness*, *shatter*, *mirror image*, *bull's strength*; 3rd - *halt undead*, *vampiric touch*, *summon monster III*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *gentle repose*, *haste*; 4th - *enervation*, *fear*, *dimension door*, *bestow curse*, *contagion*, *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*.

APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEM

Ring of Winds

The Order of Unknown Truths crafts these magic rings for their field agents to facilitate communication and discretion among teammates. Each ring acts as a *ring of mind shielding* and a *ring of feather falling* with these additional powers, each useable once per day: *comprehend languages*, *whispering wind*, and nondetection.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *comprehend languages*, *feather fall*, *nondetection*, *whispering wind*; *Market Price:* 23,620gp.

APPENDIX: MAPS

Please see the following pages for the maps needed to run this adventure, or download full-size versions from our website separately as jpg images or in FCW format compatible with your copy of *Campaign Cartographer* or the *D&D Core Rules* CD-ROM version 2.0.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Holzmeier has played D&D for more than 20 years. The new edition of D&D inspired him to return to the game and has him writing for it! He recently contributed the spell *mirror move* to the *Spellbook* on www.wizards.com/dnd. Now, he's returned with this exciting new module. We hope to continue to see his fine work in the future!





The Vessel of Stars

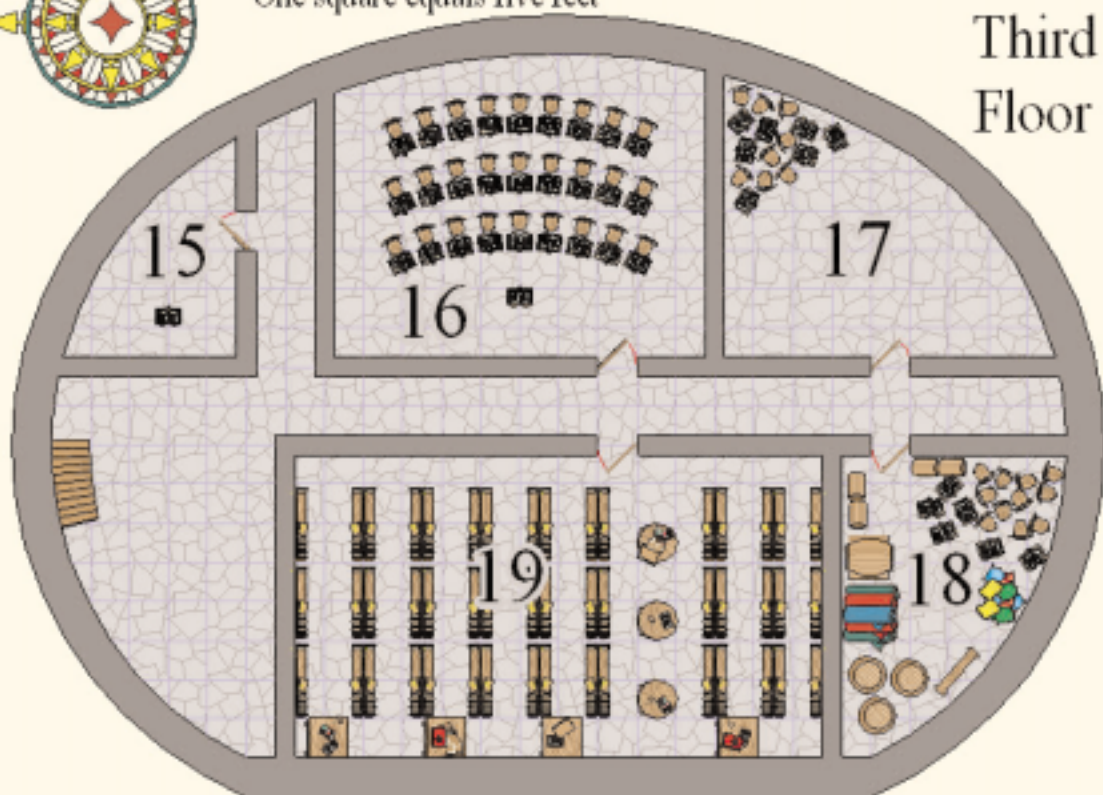
Map Three: Waystation, Upper Floors

Second
Floor



One square equals five feet

Third
Floor





The Vessel of Stars

Map Five: The Skimmer



One square equals five feet



The Blighted Hills

Crash Site

Waystation

5

4

3

2

1

The Forest

Horvath

Bay

The Vessel of Stars Map One: Wilderness

Sternway Road

To Stern



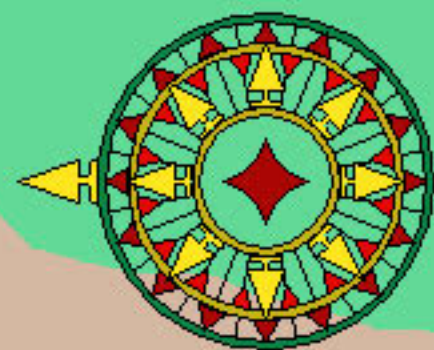
One hex equals two miles



The Vessel of Stars

Map Two:

Waystation, Main Floor

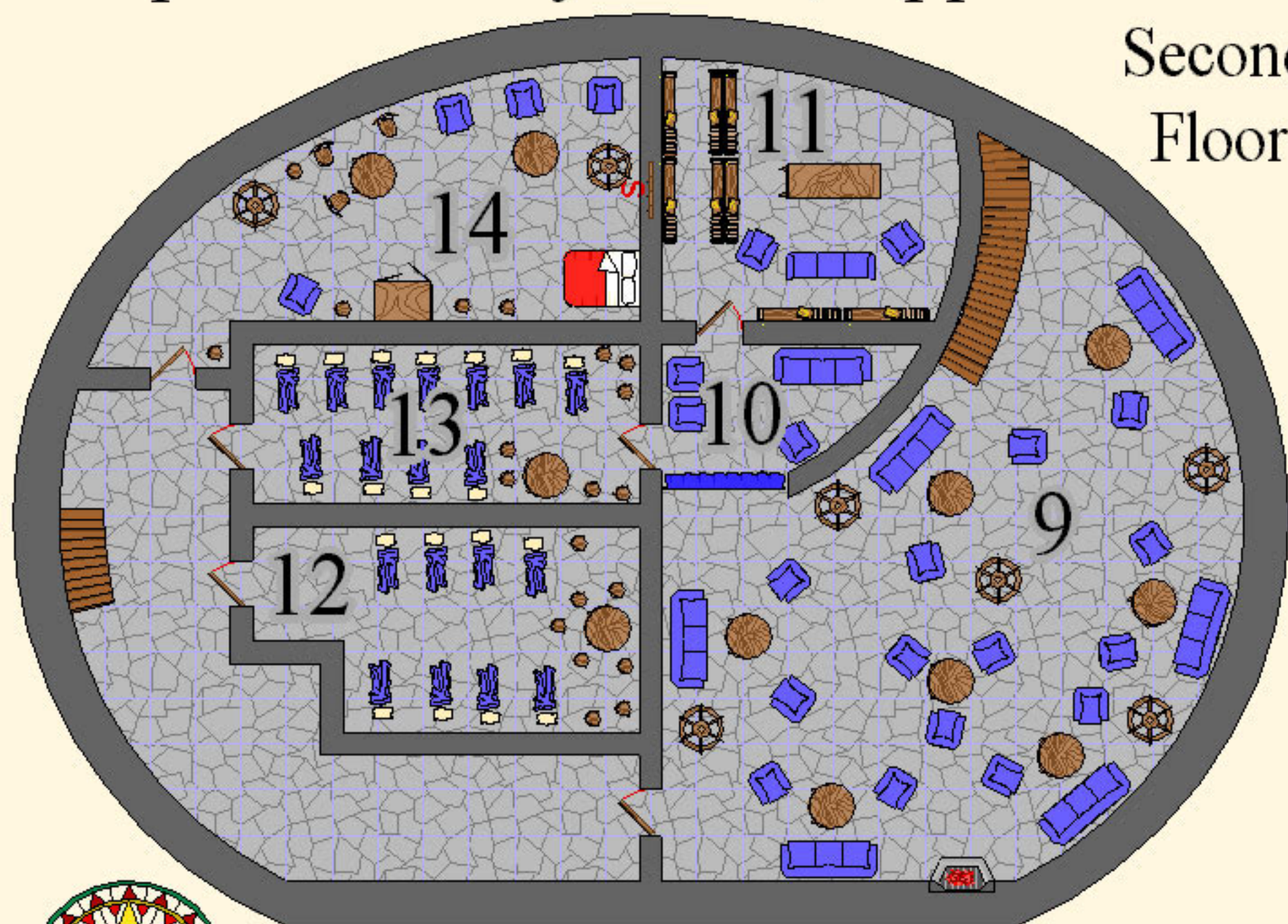


One square equals five feet

The Vessel of Stars

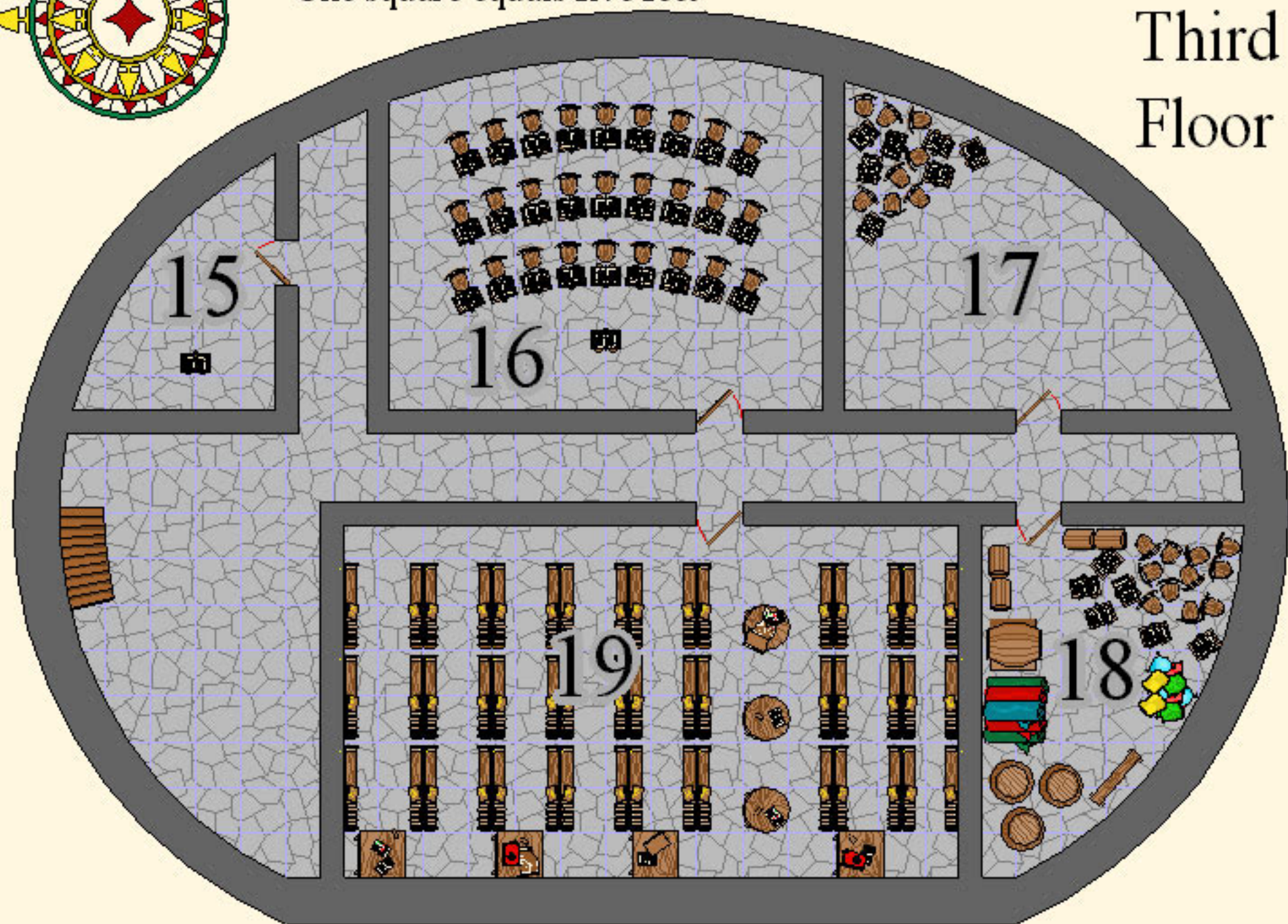
Map Three: Waystation, Upper Floors

Second
Floor



One square equals five feet

Third
Floor



To the Underdark

Skimmer entrance

6

5

3

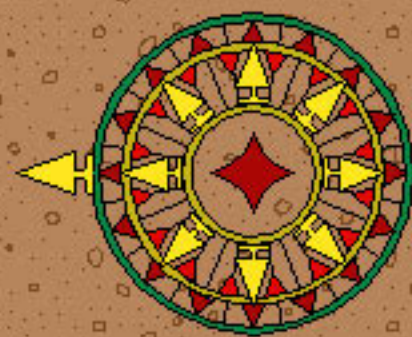
4

2

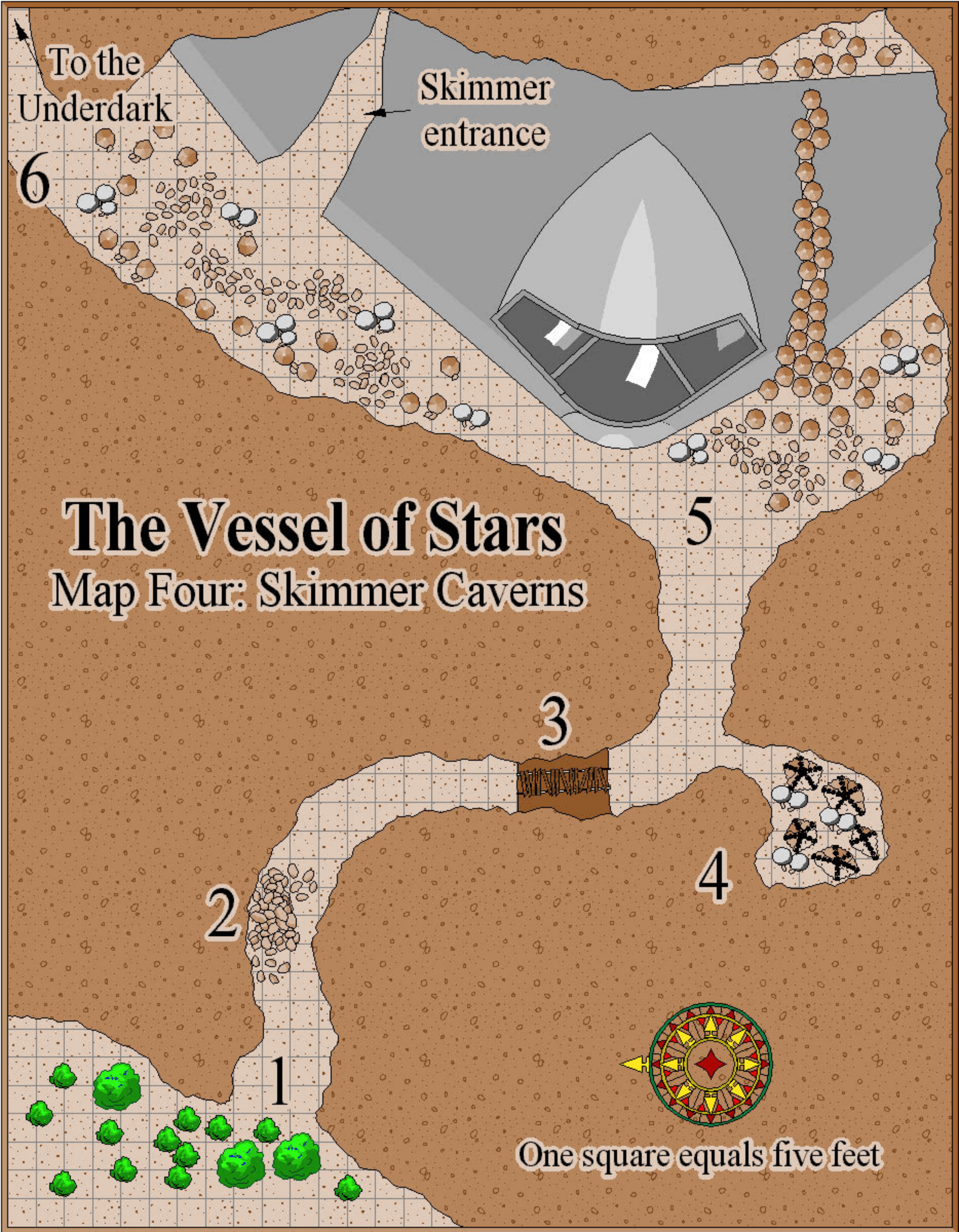
1

The Vessel of Stars

Map Four: Skimmer Caverns



One square equals five feet



The Vessel of Stars

Map Five: The Skimmer



One square equals five feet