

ASTRENOR

ON THE ARTIFACT TRAIL - PART 1

First Astrenor campaign

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Duration: 3-4h

For 2 to 4 players of at least level 1

Action



Infiltration



Dialogue



Reflection



SYNOPSIS

In this scenario, the players will participate in their first battle against the forces of Asgure. Freshly recruited by one of the guilds of Castle City, the player characters (PCs) are sent as reinforcements to the town of Klodenn, which has suddenly come under attack by the enemy. Their mission: protect the local population.

We recommend that you have played the introductory scenario beforehand, so that you are comfortable with Astrenor's combat system.

CONTEXT

In the year 308, 15 years after the last great war between the allied forces of Rautha and the troops of Asgure, the world is at peace. However, rumors are spreading, hinting at the possibility of a new war on the horizon. One of Rautha's bastions, the port of Kingshill Landing in the duchy of Velugian, appears to have fallen into the hands of Asgure's forces. The enemy seems to be using the Rock Stream river, which connects Klodenn to Kingshill Landing, as a means to infiltrate the lands of the Republic of Rautha, the stronghold of the Alliance. If the rumors are true, President Panorius is expected to declare a state of war any moment now and order the various army corps and guilds under allegiance to join the combat zones.

Kingshill Landing is a military base situated at the southernmost point of the duchy of Velugian. Positioned at the junction of the Sea of Blood and the Crater Ocean, its strategic location makes it an ideal surveillance post and a perfect port for fishing. The Rock Stream river, connecting it to the Republic of Rautha, facilitates trade and supplies, be it in manpower or resources. This river originates from the Cradle of Irdia, a lake located at the intersection of the four nations, deep within Rautha's heart. Several small villages have been settled around this lake for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and one of them, named Klodenn, seems to be the next destination for Asgure's troops.

Klodenn relies heavily on commercial exchanges between Kingshill Landing and Castle City. Formerly part of the Kingdom of Irdian before the formation of the Alliance, this town now falls under President Panorius' jurisdiction. It was among the territories bequeathed to the Alliance during the formation of the Republic of Rautha. The inhabitants of Klodenn are deeply attached to their old beliefs and customs and, for the most part, remain loyal to the royal family of Irdian.

As war is about to be declared, the citizens of Castle City continue to live peacefully despite the rumors of an invasion. It has only been a short while since you joined one of the guilds in the capital and got acquainted with your superiors. You thirst for adventure and wish to prove yourself within your new guild. You have an appointment at your guild's headquarters to sign your new contract and embark on your life as an adventurer!

A map of Castle City is available in the Appendix.

WAR IS DECLARED

The sun is at its zenith in Castle City as noon approaches. Our heroes arrive at their guild's headquarters, where they have an appointment with one of the officers. If they have just been recruited, the purpose of the meeting will be to sign their membership contract. If they are already members of the guild, they will come to report on their latest mission.

Here are the names of the officers corresponding to each guild of the player characters (PCs):

Adventurer's Guild: Nylian

Explorer's Guild: Nicolaus

Mercenary's Guild: Nurdin

Once their appointment is over, the officer invites the PCs to go to the headquarters' hall and choose a rank D quest, intended for new recruits (ranks ranging from A to D). However, upon arriving at the quest board, the PCs only come across mundane missions: a lost cat, a noisy neighbor, escorting a cargo...

After a few minutes of searching for the perfect quest among the rank D missions, a person arrives at the guild's door. It is a messenger bearing the word of President Panorius. He is introduced with fanfare accompanied by trumpet sounds.

«Hear ye, hear ye,

Dear soldiers and adventurers, members of the Rautha Alliance.

The hour is grave. Rautha was attacked last night by Asgure's troops.

The port of Kingshill Landing is currently under enemy control. But fear not! Our armies from the Duchy of Velugian are already on site, fighting valiantly to reclaim the stronghold.

However, Asgure's troops have infiltrated the lands of the Republic by using the Rock Stream river. Their boats were spotted at the mouth of the Cradle of Irdia.

All our forces are called to stand against the invaders.

Therefore, by order of the President, all members of the guilds in Castle City are summoned to head towards Klodenn. Their mission will be to save the civilian population there and push the enemy out of the lands of the Republic of Rautha.

The departure to Klodenn will take place from the North-East gate of Castle City at 5 p.m.

Any attempt at desertion or failure to uphold allegiance will be punishable by death.»

The messenger's speech leaves no adventurer indifferent. Some are terrified, while others eagerly await the chance to confront their age-old enemies. As the clamor grows louder in the headquarters' hall, the officer with whom the PCs just had their appointment bursts into the room, imposing silence with a loud voice. He orders everyone to prepare for war, reminding them that this is not a game and that many

Castle City

Capital of the Republic of Rautha, this booming metropolis is a symbol of progress. Its modern, ingenious architecture bears witness to its growing power and influence since its foundation. Castle City is the alliance's central HQ, the beating heart of this powerful coalition.

Adventurers' Guild

The Adventurers' Guild is one of the oldest institutions in the Republic of Rautha. Highly prestigious, only graduates of the finest academies can apply. Members of the Adventurers' Guild are revered and their services are highly coveted. Their motto is «Honor, Bravery and Resilience.»

Explorers' Guild

The Explorers' Guild is very famous on the continent of Rautha. Its members often lead expeditions outside the continent. Their discoveries and knowledge have led to the creation of world maps. Their motto is «Only mystery founds being.»

Mercenary Guild

The Mercenary Guild is one of Rautha's most lucrative institutions. Its members don't hesitate to offer their services, no matter what the request, as long as the reward is worth it. Their motto is «Service for the price of gold.»



Leroy Merlin

A man in his sixties with a long, graying beard, he is dressed in a magnificent black and gold mage's robe. A legend in the Republic of Rautha, Leroy is a powerful sorcerer who has fought many battles for the Alliance. He has decided to devote his old age to passing on his knowledge to new generations by becoming the director of the adventurers' academ



Gadil

A green-skinned half-orc who, beneath his austere exterior, is a benevolent man ready to sacrifice himself to help his fellow man. A member of the Alliance for almost 7 years, Gadil rose rapidly through the ranks to become a non-commissioned officer, thanks in no small part to the support of Leroy Merlin, who saw in him a certain potential.

may lose their lives. The PCs have 5 hours to gather their belongings, equip themselves, and bid farewell to their families, if they have any.

During this period, the PCs are free to spend their money as they wish. All items from the equipment tables in the rulebook are available in Castle City. Bandages and survival kits will be useful for the upcoming adventure.

By 4 p.m., the streets of the capital become increasingly deserted. The adventurers and soldiers of the Alliance head in almost religious silence towards the North-East gate. By 4:30 p.m., a large crowd of several hundred people has already gathered there, nervously awaiting the departure to war. Dozens of carriages have been prepared for the occasion, awaiting the signal to depart. At 5 p.m., as the sun begins to set, the squads are all formed and, just as everyone was about to leave, the legend of the Alliance, Leroy, arrives on the scene. He heads towards the center of the crowd, which splits in two as he passes, and begins to speak in an admiring silence.

«Dear adventurers, Alliance soldiers, and soon-to-be brothers-in-arms, I imagine that the prospect of this new war must bring back terrible memories for the veterans and terrify the young ones among you. What awaits us there is not a game. It is war. There will be blood and tears. Many of our comrades may lose their lives. But this war is also hope. The hope for peace. The hope to see our friends and families continue to live happily. Of course, it won't be easy. There will be casualties on both sides, that's for sure! But if we don't go, who will? We are the last line of defense for peace. We are the members of the Alliance. We are Rautha. And together, yes, together, we will succeed, as we always have, in pushing back the threat. So follow me, and I will lead you to victory! For Rautha!»

Members of different guilds, galvanized by Leroy's speech, begin to shout in unison, «For Rautha,» while raising their weapons and shields. Leroy, on his white horse, takes the lead of the group heading towards Klodenn, followed closely by guild leaders and Alliance officers.

Meanwhile, the PCs meet Gadil, an Alliance non-commissioned officer who introduces himself as their squad leader. He invites them to board the carriage on his right, where other young recruits are seated. Once the PCs are settled, the carriage sets off under Gadil's orders. It will take about 14 hours to reach Klodenn. During the journey, Gadil will explain the mission to the members of his squad. In order to avoid unnecessary losses, the new recruits, who are inexperienced for the battlefield, have been assigned to protect civilians. Their objective will be to escort the inhabitants of Klodenn to a refugee camp located a few dozen kilometers away from the conflict zones.

HELPING THE VILLAGERS

After a restless night spent in the carriage, the PCs wake up to the first rays of sunlight. It's approximately 7 a.m. when they finally catch sight of the village of Klodenn. As they draw closer, they can hear the sounds of battle and see clouds of smoke rising above the buildings. All the soldiers from Castle City gather at the West gate of Klodenn (right next to the stables) where they are greeted by a mysterious individual wearing a skeleton mask. He introduces himself as Oriel and happens to be a high-ranking officer of the Alliance. He seems to have spent the night there, protecting the group of villagers by his side.

As soon as the reinforcements arrive, he urges Leroy to send his best soldiers to the port of Klodenn, to the north of the city. Galarond, another high-ranking Alliance officer, needs help to repel the invaders. Several squads are sent to the center of the city to assist in evacuating the last civilians, while the young recruits help the present villagers to settle into the carriages to take them to safety.

The squad leader of the PCs, Gadil, gathers his members one last time to remind them of the path they must take to reach the refugee camp. He also warns them of the likelihood of encountering some ruthless bandits who might take advantage of the situation to seize the belongings the villagers are carrying. Unfortunately, Gadil will have to take part in the battle in the center of the city and cannot stay with his recruits.

The PCs are ordered to escort one of the carriages carrying about ten civilians to the refugee camp, which should normally be an hour's ride away. However, as the horses are somewhat exhausted from the journey, it may take a little longer. The path to the camp goes through several wooded areas, which are prone to bandit attacks. But circumventing them could exhaust the last of the poor horses' strength.

As expected, after about twenty minutes of travel, the PCs' convoy is targeted by a group of bandits. Each PC can make a perception check with a moderate difficulty (DC 10) to try to spot the bandits and attack first. The number of bandits is the same as the number of PCs.

The map of the wooded path and the bandit sheet are available in the appendix.

Determine the order of combat based on your players' perception rolls and play the combat rounds as indicated in the rulebook.

During the combat, the bandits will attempt to attack the carriage to steal the belongings of its occupants. Stealing from one of the passengers is considered an action, which can be to the advantage of the PCs, as it means they will not be targeted every time.

Once the bandits have been routed, the PCs can resume their journey and safely escort the villagers. At the refugee camp, they are greeted



Oriel

Recently appointed as a high-ranking Alliance officer, Oriel has risen through the ranks in the shadows, carrying out several secret missions on behalf of President Panorius. In public, Oriel never takes off her skeleton mask, which gives her a metallic voice and an intimidating appearance. Few people know his real identity, despite his status within the Alliance.

The bandit attack

After hearing rumors of Klodenn's attack, it didn't take long for local thugs to see an opportunity to line their pockets. Hidden in the woods, these bandits watch for villagers passing by, attacking them by surprise and stealing any goods in their possession. They are organized in small groups and generally obey a leader.

Refugee camp

Makeshift camp to accommodate refugees from Klodenn and surrounding villages until the invasion is repulsed. The camp is located some ten kilometers from Klodenn, in the middle of an open plain. When the PCs arrive, the barricades surrounding the camp have just been erected, but there's still some work to be done to make the camp a safe place for refugees.



Orcar

A man in his sixties with a head injury. He doesn't seem very talkative and is wary of the Alliance members who have come to help them. The shock to his head has probably left him a little confused.

by a young Alliance recruit who asks them to identify themselves and show proof of their affiliation. Once convinced by the villagers' praise of the PCs, she allows the carriage to enter and asks the PCs to participate in the life of the camp.

The PCs have the choice to:

- Heal the wounded
- Help set up tents
- Serve soup
- Watch over the surroundings
- The PCs can divide themselves among different tasks.

Heal the wounded:

In the southern part of the camp, there is a large tent serving as a makeshift hospital. The recruits have been ordered to welcome the wounded and do their best to assist them. The place is very poorly equipped: a few beds have been set up for the most severely injured, and meager pieces of cloth are available for the caregivers to make bandages.

Upon arrival, a recruit will ask the PCs to tend to an old man who seems to be in particularly bad shape judging by his groans. The man's name is Orcar. He has bandages on his head and is suffering from terrible migraines, which make him very uncommunicative. The bandages are old and dirty, covering a gaping wound on the top of his head. If a PC chooses to use their personal bandages or the Heal spell, the old man will be more cooperative. If a PC asks him what happened to him, he will reply with the following words:

«I'm afraid my memory is playing tricks on me. However... I feel like I can trust you.

It's still blurry in my head, but some memories are resurfacing.

I remember witnessing a very strange scene just before I fell unconscious.

While I was walking my dog as usual, I saw a man wearing the Alliance insignia. He was talking to one of the village guards and then, just after that... He cold-bloodedly stabbed the guard. It was night, I'm not sure he saw me... But a few seconds later, I received a violent blow to the head. I woke up after several hours, and I managed to somehow join a convoy that brought me here.

I think one of Asgure's warriors must be posing as an Alliance member. Someone should go warn them...»

Help set up tents:

In the western part of the camp, young soldiers are setting up tents to shelter all the refugees while the situation calms down. Some do it willingly, while others do it grumbling, claiming that it is a thankless task and that they would be more useful on the battlefield.

If a PC tries to talk to the recalcitrant group and agrees with the idea of disobeying orders, they will learn that some of the soldiers there are preparing to return to Klodenn to prove their worth.

Serve soup:

In the southern part of the camp, cauldrons have been set up to cook the meal for the hundreds of refugees. Villagers who are in good condition are busy preparing the soup for the midday meal, but they lack hands to serve it, and a crowd of hungry people is starting to gather.

If one of the PCs serves the soup, they will come across a child with teary eyes who will ask them for food in a trembling voice. She is accompanied by an old woman who seems to be her grandmother. If the PC asks the little girl why she's crying, the old woman will say that she lost her mother and that her father has still not arrived at the camp. Upon hearing this, the little girl will plead with the PC to go find her father.

By questioning the old woman further, they will learn that her name is Yolande and that she is indeed the child's grandmother. She will recount that her son, Jirez (the little girl's father), stayed behind to avenge his wife, who was killed by a troll during their escape. According to Yolande, this troll has been tamed and obeys the orders of Asgure's warriors. During their escape, her son held off the troll, allowing her and her granddaughter to escape outside the city. Since then, they have not heard from Jirez.

The little girl will insist that the PCs go rescue her father.

Watch over the surroundings:

By keeping watch over the surroundings, the PCs will encounter nothing special. The barricades surrounding the camp seem sturdy, and the surroundings are clear enough to see hundreds of meters in all directions.

On the camp:

As time goes by, more and more new survivors and adventurers arrive at the camp.

The PCs receive more and more visits from worried villagers asking about their priest, Luther. He is considered by many to be the leader of their village, and his prolonged absence prompts the villagers to seek help from the adventurers. The priest was last seen on the eve of the attack, in the temple located in the center of Klodenn. Since then, he has been missing. Some survivors beg the PCs to search for Father Luther, whom they believe is still trapped there.

Despite Gadil's orders, everything seems to push the PCs to return to Klodenn. After more than 3 hours in the camp without any danger, it will be easy to understand that the place is secure and in good hands. No guild officer or high-ranking Alliance member is present at the camp, so it will be very easy for the PCs to take a carriage back to Klodenn.



Yolande

Grandmother of little Lize and mother of Jirez, the child's missing father. Yolande shows great strength of character in recounting the tragedy she has lived through, yet she struggles to find the words to dry her granddaughter's tears.

BACK TO KLODENN

Klodenn

Klodenn is a small town on the coast of the Cradle of Irdia, formerly part of the Irdian kingdom before the creation of the Republic of Rautha. Its few inhabitants make their living mainly from shipping goods. The town regularly supplies equipment and food to the alliance troops occupying the port of Kingshill Landing.

Back to Klodenn, the PCs notice that no one is waiting for them at the West gate: the civilians have obviously been evacuated. The place is surprisingly calm. The fighting seems to have concentrated towards the north of the village, near the docks.

A map of Klodenn is available in the Appendix.

If the PCs decide to inspect the East gate before entering Klodenn, they will find, as old Orcar mentioned, the body of the stabbed guard. He received a frontal stab to the jugular. An Intelligence check with a hard difficulty (DC 15) will allow a PC to notice that the wound is clean and made by a high-quality blade, most likely from the forges of Wolforge.

Once inside the village, they will need to be careful and advance discreetly, as some of Asgure's warriors are hiding in the houses of the villagers and taking the opportunity to steal the remaining belongings. To avoid unnecessary confrontations, the PCs must stay close to the buildings and not walk in the middle of the paved paths.

If the PCs decide to enter one of the houses, roll a luck check (a d20 without bonuses) to see if they encounter one or more Asgure warriors.

- On a result of 1-3: The PCs encounter 3 enemies.
- On a result of 4-6: The PCs encounter 2 enemies.
- On a result of 7-9: The PCs encounter 1 enemy.
- On a result of 10 or higher: The house is empty.

The village is small, and it won't take long for the PCs to reach the center. On site, some fights are still taking place, but the most surprising sight is a motionless troll sitting just in front of the temple doors.

Among the combatants, the PCs spot Gadil, engaged in a battle with two Asgure soldiers. If they come to his aid, he will ask them to leave this place: the area is too dangerous for young recruits, and the situation is under control. If they choose to obey, Gadil will quickly defeat his two opponents. However, if the PCs still wish to join the fight, Gadil will have no choice but to accept their help.

The map of Klodenn town center, the Asgure warrior sheet and the Gadil sheet are available in the appendix.

Once the combat is over, Gadil will ask the PCs what they are doing here. He will then explain that the Allied forces managed to push Asgure's troops back to the docks, but some of them are still hiding in the houses. He does not understand why the troll is not attacking, but he doesn't have time to deal with it; it's probably best that it remains still.

If the PCs tell him about a potential intruder posing as an Alliance member, Gadil will promise to inform one of the Alliance's high-

ranking officers.

If the PCs warn him to be cautious of the Alliance officers, Gadil will assert his complete trust in Oriel and Galarond, who have been fighting in Rautha's service for years.

Regardless of the outcome, Gadil will ask the PCs to take care of themselves before he heads to the docks with the few remaining Alliance soldiers. There, they find the troll and a few wounded soldiers from both Rautha and Asgure's sides.

At this point, the PCs have several options:

- Help and/or question the soldiers on-site.
- Examine the surroundings.
- Attempt to enter the temple.

Help and/or question the soldiers:

The soldiers from Rautha and Asgure are clearly identifiable by their attire and the emblem they wear.

If a PC decides to heal an enemy, the enemy will be surprised at first, then willing to answer a few questions. However, if the PCs choose to use force, they will not get any answers: Asgure's warriors are proud and have unwavering will.

Depending on the PCs' questions, the Asgure warriors may provide the following information:

«Why?»

«I acted for the good of my people. In Asgure, our chances of survival are slim. My family is counting on me. Our leader, Lord Kerozen, promised to give 10 gold pieces to the families of soldiers who went to war.»

«How?»

«We crossed the Sea of Blood on our longships to Kingshill Landing Bay. There, the gates were wide open, and we could follow the Rock Stream River that led us here.»

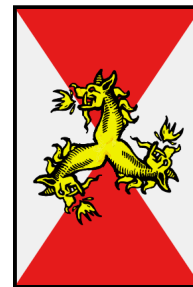
«What are you looking for?»

«I don't know. I'm just a simple soldier. Our leaders didn't see fit to inform us of the mission's objective. Our only order was to collect as much gold and precious metals as possible, killing anyone in our path.»

Examine the surroundings:

The PCs can inspect the surroundings, looking for clues about the missing individuals. A PC standing a few meters from the well can make a perception check with a moderate difficulty (DC 10). If successful, they will hear a faint cry for help coming from the bottom of the well. A man seems to be alive and stuck about ten meters down.

The PCs can use a 10-meter rope or two 5-meter ropes tied together



Coat of arms of the Alliance of Rautha

The three dragon heads represent the three kingdoms of Rautha: Irdian, Epheria and Drukh. The red and white background symbolizes the quest for peace in the face of danger.



Coat of arms of the Asgure troops

The red hand represents the hands of Asgure soldiers who have died in battle, and is the symbol of the oath of allegiance to the Emperor of Korimdor.

to free the poor man. Once the man is out of the well, the PCs will learn that he is Jirez, Yolande's son. He will take the time to thank the adventurers who came to his aid and then hurry away, despite his injuries, to join his family at the refugee camp.

Enter the temple:

Access to the temple is blocked by a giant troll who seems unwilling to move despite the situation.

On the East and West sides of the building, there are small narrow windows, about two meters from the ground. The light barely passes through the glass. They are out of the troll's line of sight, but breaking them risks attracting its attention. To enter the temple through these gaps, they will need to succeed in two moderate Strength checks (DC 10): one to climb and one to break the glass. Once the window is broken, the PCs can use ropes (5 or 10m) to secure the passage (and avoid rolling dice).

At the back of the temple to the north, there is a small hidden door that looks sturdy and locked. A PC with the Locksmith talent can try to open this door by succeeding in a moderate Dexterity check (DC 10). The door can also be forced open with strength, but it requires a hard Strength check (DC 15). If the PCs attempt this method, the success or failure of this action will undoubtedly attract the troll's attention. However, if the PCs manage to open it, they can take refuge in the temple and avoid unnecessary confrontation, as the door is too narrow for the troll to pass through.

If the PCs choose to use force or fail in their attempt to enter discreetly, they will have to face the troll.

For the confrontation, you can refer to the map of Klodenn's city center and the stat block for the troll, which are available in the appendix.



Jirez

Well-balanced man in his thirties. He has numerous wounds, including an ugly scar on his eye. Jirez fell into this well during his confrontation with the troll who killed his wife. He spent almost an entire day in this well, the din of the confrontation drowning out his cries for help.

His fall seems to have deeply traumatized him, and he can only think of one thing: finding his daughter.

IN SEARCH OF FATHER LUTHER

Once inside the temple, the PCs quickly realize that no one is present. The room contains about ten wooden benches facing a religious altar at the back of the room, right next to the hidden door. Religious symbols are hanging on the walls, and torches are present to illuminate the place at night.

If a PC inspects the altar, they will notice strange symbols that may resemble the alphabet of an ancient and unknown language. At the foot of the altar, on one of the stone slabs covering the floor, a PC may notice a trace of blood that seems to pass under the structure, probably indicating a hidden passage. By examining the back of the altar, a small golden plate catches the attention of the PCs; it appears to be much newer than the stone structure and even contains a phrase in Common language.

In truth, the back of the altar hides a control interface to open a passage if the correct code is entered.

See the appendix for the altar's riddle.

To activate the altar and release the passage, the PCs must find the answer to the riddle on the golden plate. They need to understand that it contains the translation of the text above it and that the top part is, in fact, a keyboard for entering the answer.

When a PC presses one of the keys on the keyboard, it lights up for a few seconds, showing green if it's correct and red if it's wrong. (Example: A PC presses «T,» then «E,» then «P»; it will show green, green, and then red, indicating that the «P» should come in the fourth position, not the third.)

After three attempts, the system locks for 1 minute. All the keys light up in red, and the keyboard becomes unresponsive. After four unsuccessful attempts, the system locks for 3 minutes, and on the fifth attempt, it locks permanently.

If your PCs fail to solve the riddle, proceed directly to the conclusion.

Right after entering the word «Time» on the altar, it begins to vibrate and move laterally, revealing access to a gloomy staircase that goes down for several tens of meters. The PCs will need to find a way to light their way along the path, or they risk a dangerous fall with every misstep. The PCs can take a torch from the temple and light it with a tinderbox or a fire spell. If they choose to advance in the dark, they'll need to succeed in a moderate Perception check (DC 10) to avoid tripping. The staircase is large: a fall will make a lot of noise and cause injuries. Roll a d6 for raw damage (ignoring the target's armor) when a PC falls.

After 10 long minutes of descending the staircase, the PCs arrive

The altar

Sacred table once used for ritual sacrifice or for depositing offerings. The altar takes the form of a huge, compact block of stone, covered with decoration and religious symbols. It appears to be the vestige of an ancient civilization.

in front of an immense corridor. In the distance, they can see a faint light hundreds of meters away. As they get closer, the PCs begin to hear barely audible voices of two individuals. The closer they get, the stronger the light becomes, and the more comprehensible the discussion between the two men.

If the PCs made noise while descending the stairs or traveling through the corridor, they will no longer hear the voices and will be greeted accordingly.

A few meters from the end of the tunnel, the PCs can see what appears to be the interior of a buried temple, belonging to a civilization that seems unknown to them. If they have been discreet, they will hear the following conversation:

Man 1: «You have wasted too much of my time, old man. Now, speak, or I'll gut you, and your corpse will never return to your people.»

Man 2: «I won't tell you anything! I would rather die than betray my king!»

Man 1: «Your king? Shall I remind you that your lands are now under the jurisdiction of the Alliance?»

Man 2: «There is only one sovereign before whom I'll bend the knee, and he does not bear your emblem.»

Man 1: «Tell me where the artifact is, or I'll break that stubborn knee myself.»

Man 2: «Do as you wish. If these are the methods of the Alliance...»

Man 1: «I'll force you to talk, old man. You can say goodbye to your legs.»



Galarond

High-ranking officer and Alliance celebrity. This forty-something elf, with his strong character and flirtatious appearance, has many admirers on the continent. His feats of arms, most of which are highly romanticized, have helped build his legend. After almost 15 long years in Rautha's service, Galarond seems destined to become Leroy Merlin's worthy successor as the Alliance's emblematic figure.

The PCs can intervene now if they wish to save the old man's life. If they have been discreet, they can catch sight of the two men in the center of the room. The first one is in armor, wearing the emblem of the Alliance, and heavily equipped. A hard Intelligence check (DC 15) might allow one of the PCs to recognize him. He is Galarond, a high-ranking officer and a true legend of the Alliance. At his feet, another man is seated, his back against a strange structure. He wears a robe and a religious symbol around his neck. This is Father Luther. The PCs can take advantage of their stealth to launch a surprise attack on Galarond, using the shadow of the pylons to move.

If the PCs made noise while traversing the secret passage, they will see priest Luther, covered in blood, securely tied to a pylon and gagged. They will be attacked by Galarond by surprise the moment they enter the room.

The map of the buried temple and Galarond's stat block are available in the appendix.

A TERRIBLE PLOT

Defeating Galarond :

If the PCs defeat Galarond, Father Luther will be saved but heavily injured. He will say the following words to the PCs:

«Thank you, whoever you are, thank you!

This man tried to make me talk by any means.

He is responsible for this massacre! He helped Asgure's troops penetrate our lands! It's because of him that Kingshill Landing's port couldn't hold back the invasion!

I don't know if I'll recover from my injuries. So, please, do me one last favor.

Go and inform King Toric that his treasure is in danger.

Tell him that Galarond and probably other high-ranking individuals are seeking to take the royal family's artifact that was in Klodenn, and they are ready to do anything to get it!»

The PCs can try to interrogate Galarond, but he doesn't seem inclined to respond. He is resigned and ready to accept his punishment.

If they question the old man about their location, he will say that this place belongs to Irdian's royal family, and he has protected it for decades, just like his father before him. He doesn't know what these strange markings on the floor mean and is unaware of the place's nature.

An immense stele on the right side of the room reveals a map of another world. Several gems are embedded in the stele, two of which shimmer with a yellow and orange light. The priest doesn't know what this stele refers to.

See the appendix for the stele's map.

After a few minutes, another Alliance high officer sneaks into the room. The PCs will recognize Oriel, the masked individual who welcomed them to Klodenn. As soon as she enters, Oriel exclaims, «Father Luther!» and removes her mask, revealing a feminine face with long, curly hair. She rushes to his bedside and asks him what happened. The PCs don't have time to react, but they understand that she didn't come to harm them.

Oriel knows Father Luther well, as she grew up in Klodenn before joining the Alliance. That's why she was one of the first to arrive when she heard that the village was under threat.

She is a bit disoriented and has trouble understanding how Galarond, whom she has known for several years, could betray them. She will demand an explanation from him, but he will remain impassive and prefer to stay silent.



Father Luther

A wise old man with greying hair and beard. Father Luther is considered by many to be the head of the village of Klodenn. Holder of the memory of the village elders and close to the Irdian royal family, Father Luther has dedicated his life to protecting the secrets of the Irdian throne. He would rather die than betray his oath.

The stele

A huge, thick slab of granite depicting a map of another world. Five jewels are embedded in the stone, seemingly impossible to dislodge without damaging the stele. Two of them glow with yellow and orange light. A hole in the bottom right-hand corner of the stele seems to indicate the absence of a final jewel.



Oriel without mask

Beneath her mask lies the face of a pretty young woman with black skin, piercing eyes and a lioness's mane.

After a few minutes of talking with everyone, she entrusts Father Luther's mission to the PCs and asks them to learn more about this artifact. Oriel, on the other hand, will go to Castle City to report on the matter and deliver Galarond to President Panorius. She arranges to meet the PCs at Carleon Castle in 48 hours. If she is absent, the PCs are ordered to go to Castle City to deliver the information they have directly to the president.

Losing to Galarond :

If the PCs fail to defeat Galarond, they will wake up in the buried temple, saved by Oriel. She is no longer wearing her mask and is at Father Luther's bedside, who conveys a few words before passing out, completely exhausted.

If the PCs reduced Galarond's health points below half of his maximum health, then they bought enough time, and Father Luther won't succumb to his injuries. Otherwise, Father Luther won't wake up from his coma.

In tears, Oriel lets out a cry of distress before laying Father Luther, still unconscious, on the floor, to ensure that the PCs are all right. Once everyone is on their feet, she explains the situation:

«Galarond has betrayed us. He is responsible for this invasion! He triggered this war to create a diversion and steal an artifact that should have been here. Father Luther entrusted me with one last mission before he died. He asked me to warn King Toric that the royal family's artifact is in danger.

The Alliance must be informed of Galarond's treason, and a wanted notice must be issued as soon as possible. It is my duty to go and inform the president.

That's why I'm entrusting you with this mission. By order of the Alliance, I command you to find King Toric and deliver Father Luther's message. Take the opportunity to learn more about this artifact. If our enemies are searching for it, the Alliance must know what it represents.

Don't waste time. I'll meet you at Carleon Castle, in a maximum of 48 hours, after I've made my report. If I don't return in time, go to Castle City and deliver the information you've obtained directly to President Panorius. He's the only one I still trust.»

CONCLUSION

If everything goes well, your PCs have received the mission to meet King Toric, who is in Carleon. They must inform him that the artifact from the Klodenn temple is actively sought by individuals ready to do anything to get their hands on it. They are also ordered to gather information about this artifact so that the Alliance can be prepared for any eventuality. They have 48 hours to complete their mission before meeting Oriel in Carleon, unless there are any counter-orders.

Failure to solve the altar riddle :

If the PCs failed to decipher the altar's riddle, they will see a warrior in armor emerging from the secret passage as they retreat. It's Galarond, covered in the priest's blood. If he comes across the PCs, he will tell them to flee as the underground is swarming with goblins and other cave creatures. He will then escape, and the PCs won't be able to stop him. The PCs find themselves alone in the temple again, but the passage is now open. They can descend to the buried temple and find the dying priest Luther. In his last breath, he entrusts the adventurers with the mission to warn King Toric that his treasure is in danger. Once they leave the temple with Luther's body, the PCs encounter Oriel in the center of the village. She will be emotional, removing her helmet, and ask the PCs to fulfill the priest's last wish. She arranges to meet them in Carleon for a debriefing once the situation has calmed down.

In this situation, Galarond is still alive and has fled. When the Alliance realizes that he is the instigator of this war, it will be too late. The PCs now have the heavy task of informing King Toric and gathering more information about the artifact so that the Alliance can respond to this new threat.

The PCs must hurry to complete their mission within the next 48 hours before meeting Oriel in Carleon, unless they receive counter-orders. Time is of the essence, as if the artifact falls into the wrong hands, the consequences could be disastrous. The PCs will need to be cautious and resourceful to succeed in their mission and protect King Toric's treasure.

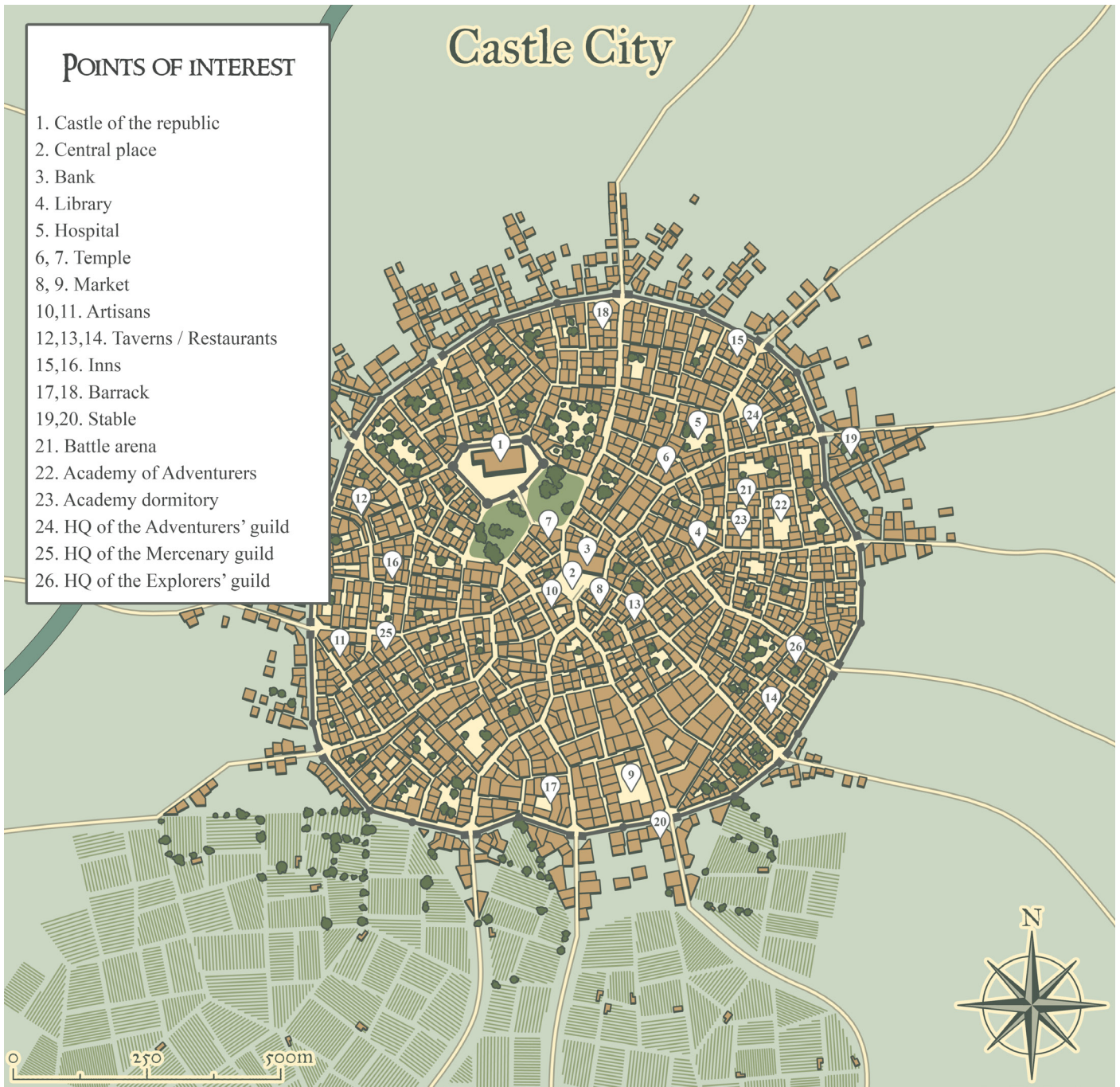
AWARDS

Here is the list of end-of-scenario rewards available, based on objectives achieved :

Objectives	Awards
Defeat Galarond	200 experience points
Saving Father Luther	1 morale point and 100 gold coins per PC
Rescue Jirez from the well	1 morale point
Solve the altar riddle	100 experience points
Defeat the bandits	70 experience points
Defeat the Asgure warriors with Gadil	100 experience points
Defeat the Troll	70 experience points
Give new bandages to old Orca	1 morale point
Complete scenario	70 gold coins per PC

APPENDIX

MAP OF CASTLE CITY



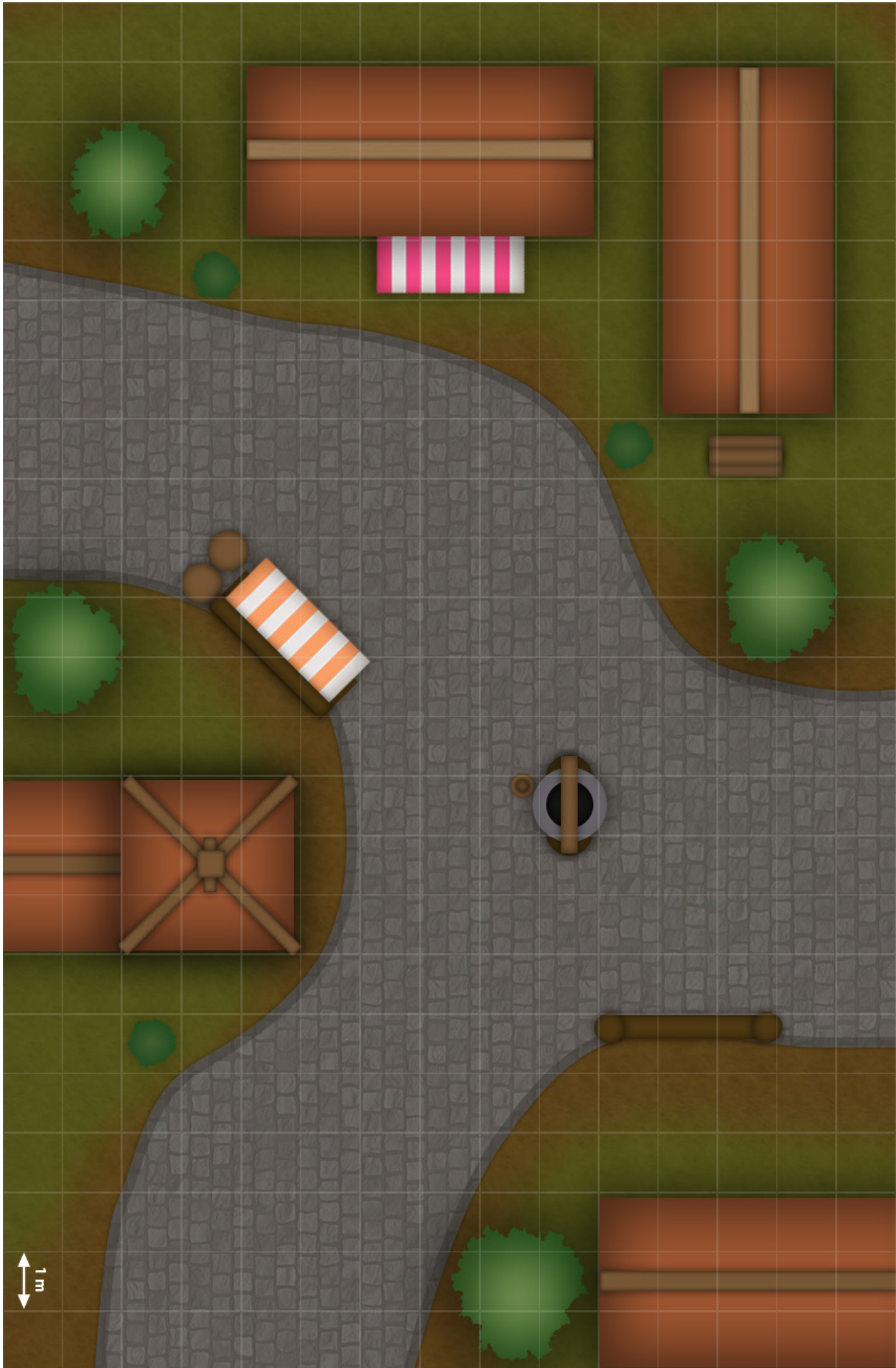
MAP OF KLODENN



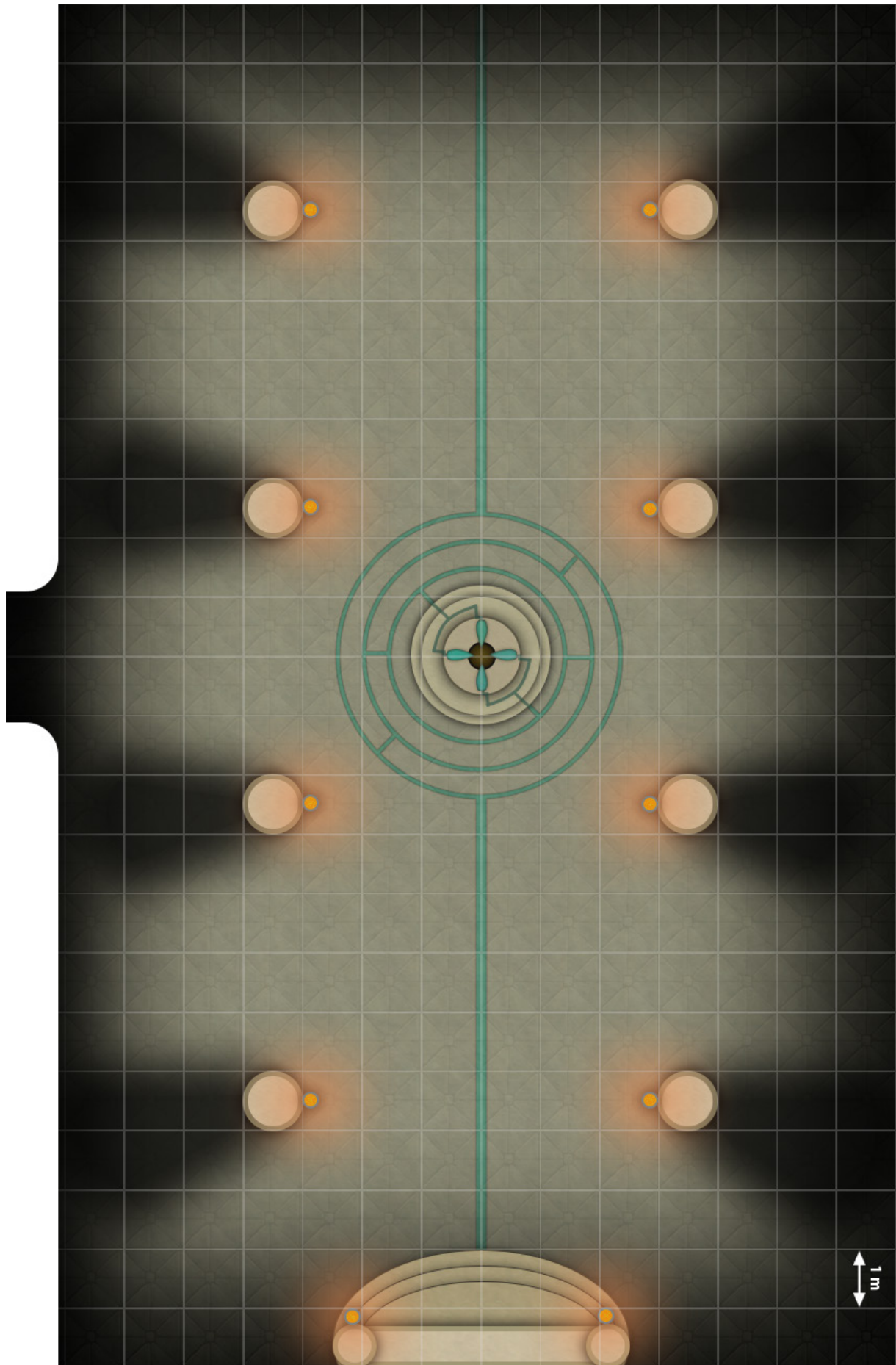
WOODED PATH



KLODENN TOWN CENTER



BURIED TEMPLE



RIDDLE OF THE ALTAR



9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



It runs forward and never retreats
 In its path, it destroys everything
 Endless devourer, its appetite has no limit

SOLUTION TO THE ALTAR RIDDLE

4 1 2

3

It runs forward and never retreats
In its path, it destroys everything
Endless devourer, its appetite has no limit

TIME

∞

MAP OF THE KLODENN TEMPLE STELE



CREATURES AND NPCs

BANDIT

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Common Weapon of choice	-	-	-

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Padded armor	-	-	1

Bandits roam in gangs and are sometimes led by thugs, veterans or mages. Not all bandits are bad. Oppression, drought, epidemics or famine can often lead honest people to a life of banditry.

TROLL

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Claw	Melee	D20	1D4+DEX+STR

Dreaded green-skinned giants, trolls eat everything they can catch and devour. Only acid and fire can stop the regenerative properties of a troll's flesh.

Strengths : Robust, Giant

Special moves : Health*

**applicable only on itself*

WARRIOR OF ASGURE

Warrior :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Basic sword	Melee	D20+2	1D8+STR

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Padded armor	-	-	1

**only applicable in defensive position*

Special moves : Fury

GADIL

Warrior / Thief :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fist weapon	Melee	D20+3	2D4+STR+DEX

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Scale armor	Constitution > 0	-1 Dexterity	3

**only applicable in defensive position*

Special moves : Stunning blow, Fury, Tactical withdrawal, Vital points

GALAROND

Warrior / Wizard :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Quality sword	Melee	D20+4	1D12+STR

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Half-plate armor	Constitution > 1	-2 Dexterity	4

Special moves : Fury, Health, Reversal, Absorption, Divine Shield

ORIEL

Thief / Wizard :

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Quality dagger *2	Melee	D20+4	1D8+DEX+INT

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Studded leather armor	-	-	2

Strengths : Ambidextrous

Special moves : Tactical withdrawal, Dissimulation, Piercing blow, Absorption, Mark