

## SHADOWS OF THE PAST ©2003

By Michael Baumann and Matthew Hartley

For Stormbringer 5th Edition.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Dedication:** Matthew would like to dedicate this to his wife, Carol for letting him play games instead of painting the house. Michael also dedicates this to his wife, Gina for being "grossed-out" by the description of Bazak.

**Play-testers:** Tom Eiler, Andrew Gilbertson, Chris Privetere, and Barry Tebon.

The maps for this adventure were created with the *Dungeon Crafter* program available at <http://www.dungeoncrafter.com>.

### INTRODUCTION

The following adventure is designed for four to six moderately experienced *Stormbringer* characters, but the adventure is easily increased in difficulty by adjusting the skill level and/or number of NPC opponents. With a bit of work it can be modified for the *Corum* or *Hawkmoon* games as well. If the party is extremely skilled, has several bound demons, contrivances, or technological devices the Game Master will have to radically redesign the opposition. Information to be read to the players is always in *Italics* while GM information is in plain type.

This adventure catapults the party to the Shadow Plane. This horrid place lies close to the plane of The Young Kingdoms. Moorcock's writings indicate that it is a place of banishment for those who offend the Lords of the Higher Worlds. While it is easy to get to the Shadow Plane, leaving is an altogether different matter. The adventurers will remain stranded in this awful place unless they can find a method to get back to the Young Kingdoms. The description and atmosphere of the Shadow Plane are found in the novel [Elric of Melinboné](#).

This adventure was originally designed for Mike's *Stormbringer* campaign. He was inspired to write it after re-reading [Elric of Melinboné](#) by Michael Moorcock. The adventure originally was run on the heels of *The Sands of Time*, where he used the shattering of the Crystal Heart to catapult the party across the Multiverse to the Shadow Plane. Once there, the characters had to search for a way to return to the Young Kingdoms.

## GAMEMASTER'S SYNOPSIS

This adventure takes place after the events in *The Sands of Time*. An alternate beginning is presented for those Game Masters who choose to run this scenario on its own.

The adventure begins as the characters awaken on the Broken Plains of the Shadow Plane. Their unconscious selves are about to become the dinner for a band of roaming demons. Undoubtedly, they will object to this and a fight will ensue. Once the demons have been beaten off they will find a ginger-bearded dwarf inside a sack carried by one of the creatures. This turns out to be none other than Jermays the Crooked. The dwarf will guide them to the city of Ameeron and along the way they may meet the Mute Piper, an Avatar of a Lawful Champion. When they reach the city they will be set upon, in turn, by beast-men, a hoard of loathsome beggars and cultists. Eventually, they will and meet a patron in Ahld.

Lord Ahld is a Granbretan from the plane of the Tragic Millennium. A member of the infamous Order of the Serpent, he has created a device that has the capability to travel the MegafLOW. Baron Kalan will later use his research to create his own dimension-traveling pyramid. Unfortunately, Ahld's device is by no means perfected and it has broken down stranding him on the Shadow Plane. The sorcerer-scientist knows of another traveler who has reached the Shadow Plane: Gunther Pugh. Pugh and Ahld have met before, when the Granbretan poisoned him in order to steal his dimension traveling machine. Unfortunately for Ahld, Pugh was able to escape and is now hiding in the city. Ahld has hit upon the idea to hire the adventurers to find Pugh for him.

Pugh is also a native of the Tragic Millennium, but he is from the fabled continent of Amerkha. He too was stranded on this plane after his machine's power source burned out in a particularly turbulent portion of the MegafLOW. The characters should be able to track him down with some persistent questioning, and must affect his rescue from more beast-men. When they find him they will be surprised to discover that Pugh already knows them! This is purely to show the players how odd the flow of time is in the Multiverse. Later adventures may reveal Pugh's first meeting with the characters (at least from their perspective).

The players should come to the conclusion that in order to get off of this Plane, they must either betray Pugh or Ahld, or persuade them to work together. Either way, in order for a machine to work it must have a suitable power source. The only one available is currently used to restrain a Liche named Morbant. This undead sorcerer came to the Shadow Plane over two decades ago, fleeing from a Champion of Law named Anastasia. Much to his dismay, "the Hammer of Mirath" had little trouble following him here. Anastasia confronted and imprisoned Morbant with a marvelous technomagical artifact that encased the manse of the Liche in an impenetrable barrier seemingly made of stone. Imprisoned though he was, Morbant was still not beaten. He managed to use his sorcery to trap Anastasia within his manse before she could escape. Ironically, the same device that imprisons the Liche powers the barrier of her own prison.

When the adventurers enter Morbant's prison, they will free Anastasia to act. The Liche and her are evenly matched in power and both will beseech the characters to help them destroy the other. Again they will be faced with a choice between two opposed forces. No matter whom they side with at the end of the struggle the device powering the prison will no longer be needed and they can use it as a

power source for the dimension traveling machine. If they manage to avoid betrayal by Lord Ahld they will soon be back in The Young Kingdoms.

## **THE SAGA OF ANASTASIA AND MORBANT**

The Mabden of the plane of Prath are not content to drift placidly amongst the Million Spheres. Like so many other poor souls, its inhabitants are embroiled in the never-ending war between Law and Chaos. The struggle for this world is played out in the wars between the minions of Mirath, of the White Hands and those of her antithesis Chardros, The Reaper. The saga of Anastasia and Morbant is one of the battles of this war.

Anastasia is a powerful and fanatical servant of The Lady of Mortality. Rising from humble beginnings as a street urchin to become the most powerful Champion of Law on Prath, she earned her sobriquet "The Hammer of Mirath" by smiting the worm-eaten forces of Chardros wherever they lurked.

In contrast, Morbant was raised in the luxurious surroundings befitting a scion of the Duke of Braidlund. Trained by the best scholars, he quickly became a fine courtier, skilled duelist and expert sorcerer. At the height of his career the young nobleman contracted the Sleeping Plague, a deadly disease for which there was no cure. With nothing to lose (or so he thought at the time), he petitioned fell Chardros for eternal "un-life". For some perverse reason The Reaper chose to grant his request and Morbant rose from the dead as a liche.

Rumors of Morbant's atrocity soon reached Anastasia and she gathered an army of the faithful to lay siege to Castle Braidlund. As the forces marched on his estate Morbant's father, the Duke, disowned his son, taking him captive. The Duke had counted that this act of betrayal would redeem him in Anastasia's eyes. In the end, he only gained a quick death from "The Hammer of Mirath".

With no hope or allies on Prath, Morbant called upon his magical powers to open a gate to the Shadow Plane. Feeling confident that Anastasia could not follow him to this dismal plane, he ensconced himself in Ameeron and began to plot his next move.

After Castle Braidlund fell and Anastasia discovered that her enemy had slipped through her fingers, she determined to make certain Morbant would never befoul Prath again. Gathering her staunchest companions, she beseeched her goddess to allow her to follow the liche and put an end to him forever. Mirath happily granted her request.

They were not long in finding Morbant's lair - an ancient manse on the outskirts of Ameeron. Anastasia and all save one of her followers entered, bringing with them a miraculous techno-magical artifact known as the Stasis Engine. They planned to use this device to imprison the liche on this plane forever. Anastasia's followers defended her to the death while she set the Stasis Engine in place. When engaged the engine engulfed the manse in a stone-like barrier, trapping Morbant inside, but before she could make her escape, the liche was able to use his sorcery to tap into the engine's power and trap Anastasia in turn. Now both are imprisoned in the Stone Manse (as the inhabitants of Ameeron came to call it), however the forthcoming Conjunction of the Million Spheres allows Anastasia to draw sufficient aid from Mirath to manifest as The Mute Piper.

The Mute Piper is a projection of a juvenile Anastasia. She can manifest this form on a number of Planes, including the Young Kingdoms. Whilst the Piper can project music and has limited ability to effect physical objects (such as handing over the pouch to the Characters at the beginning of the *Sands of Time* scenario, and restraining Hunter the dog), these efforts exhaust Anastasia.

Hezakell was the only one of Anastasia's followers not to enter The Stone Manse. He was entrusted with a device, the Nullifier Key, which negates the Stasis Engine's effects. A signal was pre-arranged to have him free her and any survivors once the barrier was in place. When Anastasia was caught within her trap, the signal never came and he has been at a loss ever since. To Anastasia's immense frustration, he does not recognize his Lady in her manifestation of The Mute Piper.

With the coming Conjunction, Mirath again needs her favorite tool. She has revealed how to imprison Morbant in a shard of the Crystal Heart (see *The Sands of Time*). Anastasia now must find worthy adventurers who can bring the shard to her and free her from her prison.

## **THE SHADOW PLANE**

The Shadow Plane lies close to the plane of the Young Kingdoms, but it in no way resembles that world. The Young Kingdoms, the World of the Fifteen Planes and even Tragic Millennium Earth are vibrant, living worlds. The Shadow Plane feels as if it has been drained of life, happiness and all that could be considered good. The Game Master should strive to make this world quite alien and unpleasant to the players. The following notes should aid him in this task:

**The Passage of Time:** The only way to tell the passing of the days is by the Clock Tower in Ameeron, or by a watch or water clock. The daylight (or lack thereof) is always about the same so it is impossible to determine the hour. Most of the inhabitants eat when they are hungry and sleep when tired.

**Magic:** Although the Shadow Plane lies close to that of the Young Kingdoms there are some significant effects on magic. Spells from *Stormbringer* work normally on this plane. Demons may be summoned, but not bound. Bound demons will demand additional attention to their need, but are otherwise unaffected. Elementals may not be summoned. Bound Elementals are at half normal statistics and/or powers for the duration of their stay. Chaotic Effects from *Corum* work as they would on the plane of the Young Kingdoms, but cost 6 Magic Points per Intensity.

**Navigation:** With no sun, moon, or stars to serve as guides, navigation is difficult. Halve the characters Navigate skill for the duration of their stay. The inhabitants have adopted a convention that Ameeron, the sole habitation of any size, lays at the center of the plane. A forest of charred trees lies to the west of the city, and far off to the east stands a black range of mountains. All navigation is done with reference to these landmarks, but it is still very easy to become lost.

**Shadows from the Past:** Each night spent on the Shadow Plane the characters will suffer incredibly vivid nightmares. The nocturnal terrors will be different for each person but follow the same form: All the things he has ever killed surround the adventurer. Closest to him will be the men and other sentient creatures, then any animals or insects, and in the distance at the periphery of his vision will be the plants and the blades of grass. All the entities appear dead, yet animated. Those that were capable of speech will appear to be whispering to him, but he can't quite make out what they say.

All these "shades" appear to view the character with extreme malice. To ignore the nightmares for one night a player must make a resistance roll of his POW vs. POW of 14. If he fails the character will suffer a -5% penalty (cumulative for each night failed) to all actions as a result of sleep deprivation. Success allows the character to reduce the penalty by 5%. The nightmares are purely a by-product of the unpleasant nature of the Shadow Plane on people not banished there. They continue each night they spend on the Plane.

**Visibility:** The thick air and odd, gloomy shadows make it difficult to see anything at a distance. Halve all ranges for missile weapons and the distance at which things can be spotted.

**Encounters on the plain:** Every few hours the Game Master should introduce an encounter as the party journeys across the blasted plain. These encounters are not deadly, but designed to show the players what an awful place they have found themselves stranded in. The order of the encounters is not important, and none but the encounter with the Mute Piper is central to the plot. The Game Master is free to pick and choose what to inflict on his players, or add additional encounters if the action seems too slow.

### **1D10 Encounter**

- 1 The Mute Piper:** A ragged and dirty girl in her early teens sits on a jagged outcrop playing sorrowful tunes on a flute. If the characters try to talk to her, they will discover she is a mute. The girl will accept any gift with a smile, but will flee with unearthly swiftness if anyone attempts to detain her. Anyone who approaches her may make an Idea roll to notice that her eyes are different colors: one a dull hazel, the other a brilliant jade. See Appendix 1 and "The Saga of Anastasia and Morbant" for more details.
- 2 Manna from Hell:** A sudden storm pelts the party with golf-ball sized objects that look vaguely like macaroons. They initially appear edible, but will quickly rot before their eyes, revealing a tangled core of vile worms.
- 3 The Dance Macabre:** The adventurers encounter a line of scarecrows. Each scarecrow is a corpse in a varying state of decay. The corpses are displayed upright, held in place by wooden poles and string. Each figure is posed in a strange dancing posture, following in a line behind a fleshless skeleton clad in a long black robe and carrying a scythe.
- 4 A Man and His Dog:** The characters come to a crossroads. From a gibbet hangs a corpse. At the corpses feet, a thin starving dog stares upwards. As they approach, the rope around the corpses neck breaks and the body falls to the ground. The dog begins to feed.
- 5 Flight of the Gypsies:** Off from the road the characters see a gypsy camp. Brightly painted wagons are drawn together in a protective circle. If the party approaches they will discover that the camp is deserted. The central fire has burnt out, but warm food is still in the large brass cauldron. All around is evidence of a half eaten meal. Other than the people, nothing appears to be missing and there are no signs indicating why or where they have gone.
- 6 The Tomb of the Unknown Gardener:** The party comes across a shrine dedicated to "The Unknown Gardener". Rusted agricultural implements are left as votive offerings. Nothing grows in or around the shrine.

- 7     **Taxi:** The burnt-out shell of a large metallic carriage (actually a London taxicab) stands on a hill in the party's path. An investigation will reveal three charred skeletons inside. A miraculously untouched bowler hat lies under one of the seats.
- 8     **Massacre:** The adventurers feel a sudden sense of dread. They hear orders shouted and panicked voices all around them but see no one. Suddenly, invisible beings rush past them, pushing them aside. Women's screams and children's wails fill the air. The sickening sound of metal cutting flesh can be heard through the pandemonium. Suddenly, the phantom massacre stops. No trace remains visible. Any who make Search rolls can find a mass grave if they choose to excavate.
- 9     **The Troll Bridge:** The character's path leads them to a bridge crossing a long, dry riverbed. Astride the bridge stands a large, fearsome and extremely stupid minor demon. The demon will demand payment to allow them to cross the bridge. The Demon will accept literally anything as payment. It will let anyone pass for free if they threaten him, but will defend himself if attacked. The party can easily cross the dry riverbed and avoid the bridge entirely.
- 10    **The Wayside Executioner:** A muscular human in a black leather mask stands by the side of the road. He holds a great axe in his knotted hands and by his side is an execution block. He invites each character to end their misery now and place their head on the block for him. A small pyramid of skulls can be seen behind the executioner.

## PIPER'S DREAM

### An Alternate Beginning

Game Masters should skip this section if they ran *The Sands of Time* immediately before this adventure. Those who choose to run this scenario alone may use this alternate beginning. The party is assumed to be traveling between cities when the adventure begins. Choose a character taking the night watch and read the following to him:

*The night is cold. Strangely cold for this time of year and the thick fog that surrounds your campsite seems to invite the chill into your very marrow. 'Tis the kind of night to be in a snug inn with a cup of mulled wine warming your hands and belly you think as you throw a few more wet branches on the pitiful fire. As the smoke from the damp tinder clears you see her sitting across from you: a ragged girl in her early teens. Her hair is a tangled brown nest, her face smudged and dirty, but her eyes, one a dull hazel, the other a brilliant jade green, immediately capture your attention.*

*You feel as if you are in a dream. With a melancholy smile the girl rises and walks over to you. In one hand she carries a cheap-looking flute, in the other a gleaming shard of crystal. She places the crystal gently in your outstretched hand and then raises her flute to her pouting lips. Her ethereal melodies soon lull you into a deep slumber.*

Proceed with the Waking in Shadow section below.

## WAKING IN SHADOW

The Game Master should choose a character skilled in Brawling or Wrestling and read him the following passage:

*Your mind inhabits that nebulous zone between unconsciousness and wakefulness. You are aware of nothing but pain. Every muscle in your body feels as if it has been strained to the limit. Your mind reels drunkenly and your body seems to be spinning ever so slowly as nausea sets in. Suddenly, your head is jerked upwards violently. You open your eyes to stare into the face of a nightmare. The humanoid face is emaciated; it's vile green skin hanging loosely around its cheeks and neck. Sharp yellow teeth flash and a slender brown tongue lolls in its twisted mouth. The creature's eyes widen in surprise as it sees you stir and raises a corroded sickle to take off your head.*

Fortunately for the character, the G'hsst is as startled as he is. To determine whom goes first see the **Both Sides Surprised** spot rule on p. 128. The other creatures are snuffling around the remaining party members, but none can attack in the first combat round (to allow the others a chance to gain their bearings).

*The creatures are nearly seven feet tall, rail-thin, with ropey muscles covering their arms and legs. Most are armed with crude cudgels of bone or carry large rocks clutched in their clawed hands; one has a rusty sickle.*

The G'hsst's will flee when half or more of their number has been taken down. They leave behind a large burlap sack that seems to be moving. If this adventure is run on the heels of *The Sands of Time* the characters will also find a large shard of crystal (presumably a fragment of the Crystal Heart used to imprison N'urigaash).

### **THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN WHO WALKED A CROOKED MILE**

The characters can open the sack, or eventually its occupant will squirm his way out.

*From the sack emerges a most comical figure: A dwarf with a hunched back and a ginger beard. He is dressed in a most outlandish black and white costume, festooned with ribbons and lace. "That," he says with a smile on his face, "was perhaps the singularly most unpleasant experience I have had in an age! My thanks to you gentlemen, if you had not happened along I am sure I would have been served up as supper before those savages; although it would have been poor fare indeed." He finishes with a wink. "But where are my manners? Allow me to introduce myself: Jermays the Crooked at your service sirs." He says making a leg with surprisingly more grace than you would credit his twisted form.*

Assuming the players will introduce themselves he continues, "Well met my friends." He says. "Would that it were in more pleasant circumstances."

*The dwarf pauses to glance at the surroundings, offering you your first opportunity to take stock of your situation. You are standing on a blasted plain of basaltic rock that seems to stretch, unbroken, to the horizon. An occasional fissure can be glimpsed through the heavy mists that drift, seemingly of their own will, as there is no breeze, over the ground. The smell of brine is heavy in the thick air yet you can detect no presence of an ocean or sea. Neither can you see any sign of a sun, moon, nor stars*

*through the darkness overhead. In fact, this twilight land gives you the impression that you are inside a huge cavern rather than on an open plain.*

*"The Shadow Plane if I don't miss my guess." Says Jermays with a look of distaste. "A place of banishment for the disgraced minions of the Lords of the Higher Worlds. It lays close to your home plane my friends, but we must be on our guard; the servants of Chaos roam freely here. There is a city of sorts here, more a place where the damned congregate. It bears the name Ameeron. We've little hope of finding any aid there, but I can think of no place else to go. I believe it lies in this direction..."*

*Jermays sets off in a seemingly random direction cutting a swath through the dank mists, which break into tendrils that lash about as if they are resentful of being disturbed by a mortal's passage. For a moment you ponder the wisdom of following this parody of a man, but the truth of the matter is you can think of no place else to go either.*

*Travel over the plains is difficult at best. The mists hide all sorts of small obstacles that you are constantly stumbling over. Occasionally you must parallel a seemingly bottomless crevasse for hours before you can finally get on your proper track. Moans, whispers and, occasionally, intermittent shrieks rise from these yawning chasms. Soon your nerves have worn thin.*

**Travel to Ameeron:** The journey to Ameeron should take them four days by foot. The Game Master should read the description of The Shadow Plane, above, and apply the effects of nightmares and random encounters. Both of these are designed to show the players that The Shadow Plane is not a healthy place for them to linger - if they do not find a way off of this world soon its denizens will surely gobble them up. If the Game Master feels that the players are becoming bored during the journey he may spice things up with a run-in with another band of G'hsst's or some beast-men. Jermays the Crooked can also be consulted during this journey if the players are willing.

**Conversation:** If the characters ask, Jermays will admit that he has never been to Ameeron, or the Shadow Plane. His knowledge, he claims, comes from conversation with other travelers, and the perusal of ancient books. The Game Master is free to use Jermays as a mouthpiece for any information (or misinformation) he cares to give the players about the Shadow Plane. Jermays is a talkative fellow. If any of the group is interested in striking up a conversation with him he will be more than happy to chat about any subject. Those who spent the journey to Ameeron in conversation with the dwarf are allowed to give themselves an experience check in any one Knowledge skill (p.95, *Stormbringer*).

If the characters have taken part in the "Weight of Doom" scenario he will say, *"I believe we have a mutual acquaintance in Farginn Brass. He has spoken of you on occasion."* Allow the players to pursue this conversation if they desire. You can use this opportunity to set up the party for another adventure, or give some cryptic hints about the Multiverse. Perhaps Brass is concerned that their recent actions have caused them to stray from the path of the Balance, or with their role in the events of the coming conjunction.

## **AMEERON: CITY OF LOST SOULS**

Ameeron is a city of contradictions. A variety of architectural styles, some familiar, most alien, vie with one another within its shattered walls. The only thing similar about any two given buildings is their state of disrepair. There has obviously been no attempt at city planning. Ornate palaces stand side by side with the meanest hovels. Its streets are little more than narrow mazes, dead ends and cul-de-sacs strewn with rubble and garbage. The Game Master should convey a feeling of defeat and hopelessness while the party is in the city. The notes and encounters below should aid him in this task:

**Economics Ameeron:** Players must make a Luck roll to find the meanest of necessities for sale. Prices are at least double what they would pay in the Young Kingdoms and the quality of the goods appalling. Common weapons may be obtained, but roll 1D6 and subtract it from the weapon's hit points. Armor heavier than Leather and Rings is simply not available. Herbs and potion ingredients may only be found on a critical Luck roll and their prices should be ten to one hundred times as much as would be paid on their home plane. In contrast, labor is extremely cheap, running from one-half to one-quarter what they would expect to pay in the Young Kingdoms.

**The Inhabitants:** The inhabitants of Ameeron will approach other people only out of necessity. If the characters attempt to accost a passerby for information most likely that person will attempt to flee or otherwise avoid them.

**Looting:** Adventurers who begin to poke into buildings looking for treasure will be sorely disappointed. Anything of value that could be looted from the abandoned structures has long since been taken. Those who persist in snooping about for treasure may run into giant rats or venture into an unstable structure at the Game Master's discretion.

**Encounters in the city:** The Game Master may introduce encounters as the party wanders through Ameeron. Notes for the Encounters on the Plain section are applicable for Encounters in the city, and again the only encounter central to the plot is to have the group catch glimpses of The Mute Piper on occasion.

### **1D10 Encounter**

- 1 The Mute Piper:** The ragged piper the party met on the blasted plain sits in the doorway of a ruined cottage playing her somber tunes. If the characters were kind to her in the earlier encounter, she will pause long enough to flash them a pathetic smile, otherwise her multi-colored eyes follow them as they pass her by. See Appendix 1 and the section on "The Saga of Anastasia and Morbant" for more details.
- 2 Foundlings Wanted:** A member of the party notices a small note attached to a dead, twisted tree. The note advertises the services of an orphanage of unwanted babies. If they go to the address on the card they will see a large but very decrepit house, outside the front door several young women wait with crying infants in their arms. If any venture round the back of the house, they will see several well-fed pigs. A cursory inspection of the swill trough will reveal the bones of several human children.
- 3 The Fortune Teller:** The characters come across a street fortuneteller. The mystic uses plasterboard cards. They will notice that all the cards the mystic draws for each fortune are blank.

- 4     **Those Below:** Noxious vapors waft up from the sewers; characters can hear manic laughter rising out of them. An investigation of the sewers will reveal nothing untoward, beyond large and numerous rats, a number of rotting corpses as well as the expected effluvia.
- 5     **The Gargoyle:** A small demon pretends to be building ornament. It spits and hurls abuse at passers-by behind their back. If the adventurers spot the Demon, he'll wink at them, wolf-whistle at the highest APP party member and fly off.
- 6     **Mission to the Leeches:** Down a side street the group will observe a man dressed in long religious robes delivering a fiery sermon apparently to an invisible audience. If they investigate they will see perhaps 200 leeches resting on half a dozen neatly laid out planks. The preacher blesses a particularly bloody steak and pulls off a small piece for each leech. He ignores the party.
- 7     **Reflections:** A woman sits in a doorway staring into a hand mirror and savagely combing her long, raven hair. Her face, once clearly beautiful, is now covered in scars and boils. The characters notice that her mirror is shattered.
- 8     **Ghosts:** A dozen thin children rush upon the party. Each child wears a soiled and stained bed sheet over his head and body. Each bed sheet has the crudely drawn image of a ghost with large black eyes. The children beg for a few coins. The next day a cart will pull past the characters. The cart contains a dozen small bodies, each sown into a ghost costume bed sheet.
- 9     **False Gods:** The adventurers pass a street stall selling gaudy, glow-in-the-dark plastic images of deities and saints from many Planes.
- 10    **Free at Last:** The characters pass by a rusted, hanging cage. Inside they can see the skeletal remains of a man. A weathered placard hangs from the skeleton's neck. It reads "Free of hope. Free at last."

## **DEMONS AT THE GATE**

*Long before you see the city, you are assailed by its foul stench. The rank scent of rotting flesh, urine and effluvia are powerful enough to raise bile to your throat. This festering pit of humanity lies in a shallow valley. A pallor of smoke and the ever-present mist obscures its outlines, but even from this distance you can tell that it is in ruins. Only the smell and an occasional lit window attest to the fact that it is inhabited at all. You can see no gate nearby, but any of the huge rents in the massive, masonry wall will serve just as well. It is towards one of these that you walk.*

*Approaching the city, you begin to realize some indication of its impressive size. Perhaps only Imrryr the Beautiful, on Melniboné, can compare; although that is like comparing a mound of jewels to a dung heap. You enter the city through a breach in its cyclopean walls. After picking your way across the rubble you finally emerge on the garbage-strewn streets. All about you are the ruins of ancient buildings; their blackened shells seem ready to fall at any instant.*

Have the players make Listen rolls as they move through the streets. Success allows them to hear the sounds of scuttling coming from inside one of the buildings. A Search roll allows them to see a hunched shape moving apace with them through the ruins.

*Suddenly, a huge figure steps out in the street in front of you. He stands well over seven feet tall, is dressed in bronze mail and carries a wicked-looking halberd. With a shock you realize what you first mistook for a helmet is actually the head of a ram perched upon his powerful shoulders. "Trying to sneak through my gate, eh?" He rasps, as if speech is painful to him. "Thrice damned mabden scum! You must pay the toll, and I demand it now!" He finishes, punctuating his sentence with a thrust of his halberd.*

If one of the characters actually inquires what the toll is: *The ram-headed man pauses for a moment and then with an evil leer says, "For a group of your size I should think one soul would be sufficient."*

Undoubtedly the party will fight these half-men. Barak has his 5 creatures stationed about the street to be able to rush them from all sides. Two of his gang are stationed high in the ruins and armed with bows. The Game Master should contrive that at least one beast-man escapes the ensuing melee. This creature will be able to identify the Characters later to Barak's brother (see Justice in Ameeran, below).

If they attempt to treat with Barak they will have to make Fast Talk rolls to keep him interested. It is possible to buy off his thugs if the characters can produce something worth several thousand LB, or a magical device. He will also gleefully accept a member of the party as a sacrifice.

## **ALMS FOR THE POOR**

At the end of the encounter with Barak's gang, have the players make Search rolls. Success indicates they spot the figure of a man running from the scene. This is actually Murtok, Lord Ahld's servant. He is running to report the presence of the newcomers to his master and the Shadow Cultists (see below). If the characters pursue him (or even if they don't) they will be waylaid by a band of vile beggars. Unless they have magical aid Murtok will probably be able to escape.

*Ahead, the vilest congregation of beggars you have ever seen blocks your path. The inhabitants of Nadsokor might be princes compared to them. Each is covered with weeping sores and puss-filled boils. All are crippled or deformed and many have the look of beasts stamped across their hideous features. They emerge from the shells of buildings, alleys and even holes in the street. It is as if the city itself has vomited out this mass of corruption to block your path. "Alms!" They cry. "Give us alms good masters!"*

The encounter with the beggars is designed to slow the party if they are chasing after Murtok, or the escaping beast-man. Although there are more than a dozen of these foul beggars, they will present no physical threat to the party and will flee if confronted with a show of force or magic. Cruel Game Masters may call for CON rolls or the characters may contract some pestilence. Even though they have lost sight of Murtok or the beast-man, they may pick up a trail with a Tracking roll.

## **SHADOW CULTISTS**

*With the foul beggars to your rear, you continue to make your way into the city of Ameeron. You have just passed through an ancient square, when you hear the sounds of running and the clank of weaponry. Turning back, you see a frightened boy emerge from an alley. He pauses briefly to cast about the square. Upon spotting your party, he glances over his shoulder and then scrambles straight for you. Before the lad has taken ten steps, the tip of a drover's whip curls around his throat, jerking him off his feet. From the alley emerge 8 men. All are dressed in hooded, black robes and carry weapons of some kind. Their leader comes forth last, keeping the whip taut around the boy's throat. Two of them grab the lad and begin to bind him thoroughly.*

These men are members of the Cult of Shadow. Although abandoned by the Duke of Hell, they continue to worship Arioch, in his guise as the Lord of the Seven Darks, perhaps in the hope that he will restore them to their own worlds.

Jermays will urge the group to action, but there is little he can do himself. If the characters stand by and do nothing, the cultists will ignore them, calmly tie up the boy and return down the alley, only to ambush them again at a later time (see GM Note, below). If they intervene Magister Duncreigh will call forth his bound demon Tlughath and have his men attack. Duncreigh will stand back from the fray (if at all possible) assisting his men with spells. Allow the fight to continue for a few rounds, then:

*The blood curdling screams of the cultist's leader draws everyone's attention. You turn in time to watch him fall, his robes a mass of flame. Standing over the corpse is a figure wearing a gem encrusted, serpent-shaped helmet. He is dressed in shining scale armor and carries a jewel-tipped rod in one hand and a slender rapier in the other. You watch in amazement as a ruby beam, from the rod, strikes another of the kidnappers and he too bursts into flames. This is too much for the remaining cultists who turn and flee into the alleys.*

*The battle over, the warrior-wizard sheaths his weapons and puts up his ophidian helm to reveal a pale, handsome face. "Greetings gentlemen." He says smiling warmly. "My servant informed me that there were newcomers in this dismal place. I hurried to meet you, but I was too late to help you avoid this altercation. My name is Ahld. If you'll accompany me I have a place where we can talk for I have need of your services. The streets of this place are not safe, as you no doubt have surmised."*

If the characters follow him, he will lead them to his tower, if they are unsure, Ahld will lay out his plan immediately (see the next section). Either way, he will pause to address the boy they had just saved from kidnapping.

*"Be gone urchin!" He shouts at the lad, who looks askance at you, but refuses to move. "I've found that the beggars and urchins in this city are as apt to slit your throat as to thank you for a few coppers." He says to you by way of an explanation.*

Jermays has taken an instant liking to the boy, and will argue that the lad should be brought along "at least until we reach a place of safety", but will not press the matter if the characters tell him to be on his way. The boy's name is Galan (see description in Appendix 1). If they save the lad give each adventurer 2 Balance points.

**GM Note:** The Shadow Cultists were in the pay of Ahld, who had kept them as ready muscle to kidnap any likely Planar-travelers that appeared. When Ahld arrived on the scene and realized that the fight was turning against his men he quickly attacked them to appear as a hero. Galan was merely an unfortunate who stumbled upon the Cultists as they were planning their ambush of the party. Not ones to waste such an opportunity, they tried to take the boy for their nefarious rites, but his escape inadvertently warned the characters of their presence. If they do not aid Galan, the cultists will pursue the group and attempt another ambush at a later time.

## **LORD AHLD**

*Settling his helmet back into place, Ahld sets off through the winding streets of Ameeron. He leads a course through broad avenues and dank, twisted alleys. After little more than a half hour's travel, you emerge into an open area of sorts. The single remaining building, a shattered tower, stands in the middle of what once must have been a thriving block, but is now little more than a rubble-strewn field. Ahld gestures at the tower saying, "At last. It is not much gentlemen, but it is defensible."*

As the characters pick their way through the rubble towards the tower have them make Idea rolls. Those that succeed will catch a glimpse of one of Ahld's Death Beetles. If questioned about them he will reply,

*"Why they are automatons my friends. I created them myself before I arrived on this cursed plane. I set them on the task of finding some materials in the ruins, but I will explain fully once we are inside."*

**Role Playing Ahld:** Ahld's servant, Murtok, spied the party as they entered the city and ran to tell his master. Impressed that they were able to handle Barak, the serpent-mask hurried to meet them. His hopes are that they have a means to travel through the dimensions. When he finds out that they are as trapped as he, his clever mind switches to a new ploy.

He will attempt to enlist them in the capture Gunther Pugh. The Granbretan is unable to accomplish this by himself: Ahld has been stranded on the Shadow Plane for some time and most of the inhabitants of Ameeron know that he is a first-rate bastard, as the slow-witted Shadow cultists have just discovered. He can get no help from the locals, and so must turn to newcomers for aid. Ahld must also find Pugh relatively quickly. During their initial meeting, he administered a slow-acting poison in Pugh's drink. He felt that this would give him power over the man, but Pugh reacted in the opposite manner, refusing to give into the Granbretan's demands for his machine. The wily Pugh was able to make his escape. At first it did not bother the sorcerer-scientist. He felt that sooner or later Pugh would return to him, looking for the antidote. As time passed, he began to worry, fearing that his victim had succumbed to the poison, or resolved to die rather than give his dimension traveling machine to him. For more information on Ahld see Appendix 1.

*Ahld leads you into his ruined tower and up a set of crumbling stone stairs to a surprisingly stable second floor. He removes his jeweled helmet and sets it carefully on an ancient sideboard and then gestures towards a wobbling table and a mismatched set of chairs. "Pray be seated. Murtok, bring us some wine!"*

*A short time passes before a tall, gaunt man in a floor-length, leather coat enters the room carrying a few dusty bottles and an assortment of drinking-ware. Ahld's servant splashes a sour red wine in your mug or bowl and then shuffles out of the room.*

Anyone who makes a successful Idea roll will notice that Murtok walks oddly. Those who make a successful Search will catch a glimpse of metal under the hem of his coat, as if he wears armored leggings.

*"Poor fare I'm afraid, but it is about the best this place has to offer." Ahld says with a grimace that reveals he is used to much finer things. I shall come right to the point gentlemen: I assume that you are no more natives of this plane than I am."*

*"I don't think many of the wretches living here can claim that distinction sir." Jermays interjects. "This is truly the refuse heap of the Multiverse; a place where the Lords of the Higher Worlds discard those who no longer interest them."*

*"Be that as it may," Ahld continues. "I surmise that you fellows have come here recently. My hope is that you have some sort of conveyance that can take you from this plane."*

Assuming that they answer in the negative, *"Then you are trapped, as I am." He says with a shake of his handsome head.*

*Ahld peers into the depths of his wine goblet, watching as the dregs swirl slowly about. He tosses off the contents and then begins anew. "All is not as gloomy as it seems. There may be a way off this accursed plane, but I will need the assistance of brave men. I've seen how you've handled yourselves in combat and I know that you have the courage. Together I think we may be able to leave this place."*

If the characters are interested in his proposal he says, *"Allow me to digress for a moment so that I may explain how I came to be here: As you no doubt have guessed, I am a sorcerer of no mean ability. In my researches I have created a machine for traveling between the planes of what good Jermays describes as the Multiverse. On my maiden voyage I encountered some unexpected problems. My machine was disabled, stranding me in this dismal place. The repairs would be simple enough if I had any spare parts, but in this primitive backwater I can find nothing that is suitable. I feared that all was lost until I learned of another recent visitor: Gunther Pugh.*

*"I lost no time in seeking this man out. As fate would have it, Pugh's craft had suffered a fate similar to mine. I asked him for spare parts and help to repair my ship. I attempted to reason with the man and even offered a sizable reward for his aid, but he rebuffed my attempts at an alliance. I fear that he may even be crazed, for in the end he attacked me, presumably to gain what was left of my machine.*

*"I need allies to approach Pugh again. He is a skilled fighter. I do not delude myself with the thought that I could capture him alone, but a strong party would be able to easily. I propose that you seek him out and capture him. Once you have him trussed up you can bring him back here and we will see if we can talk any sense into him. What do you say?"*

Ahld will entertain questions, but he does not have many answers. He last saw Pugh at the Inn of the Poxed Harlot, but since he believes that he has gone to ground. His inquiries have turned up no indication of his whereabouts since. If asked why Pugh would hide himself like this, Ahld will tell them he believes the man to be paranoid. If asked to accompany the party on the kidnapping, Ahld will claim that if he showed himself, Pugh would be instantly aware of a trap. He says that they will have much better luck with Pugh if they can take him unawares.

## **THE INN OF THE POXED HARLOT**

Ahld will tell the group that he last saw Gunther Pugh in this dismal inn. For the most part this is true. What the serpent-mask failed to mention is that this is the tavern where he administered a slow-acting poison to Gunther. The party will probably start their search for him here.

*The inn is built like a fortress, with thick, stone, walls, and narrow windows. The inside is dark and cheerless; the soot and grime of untold years covers the walls and floor, while small, scuttling things can occasionally be glimpsed scurrying from shadow to shadow. The red embers of the cooking fire in the middle of the taproom provide the only source of light, obscured as it is by the joint of an unidentifiable creature roasting over it. There is no singing or boisterous behavior. The patrons seem content to sit in the gloom and be served by burly men in leather aprons.*

Belying its name and appearance, the Poxed Harlot is undoubtedly the most prosperous inn in the city of Ameeron. Her owner Esven is a minor wizard who maintains a steady traffic with demons to keep the place stocked with wines and mead. No other inn in this ruined city can compete with his vintages and thus the discarded souls of the Multiverse flock here to drown their sorrows. His wines are thrice as expensive as elsewhere, but this is not the only price that a patron of the Poxed Harlot may pay. For years Esven has been preying on his customers by capturing the odd drunkard to use as sacrifice for barter with demons and a mortal's soul doesn't buy what it used to these days. If the Game Master feels that the action has lulled, Esven may choose a member of the party to pay for his next shipment.

If the characters have Galan in tow, the boy will refuse to enter the inn with them. If asked why he will reply. *"Sometimes people don't come out of there."* The boy has no actual proof of this allegation however a successful Insight roll will show that he is genuinely frightened of the place.

**Asking Questions:** As intimated above, the patrons of the Poxed Harlot are not a friendly bunch. They come here to drink and forget, not socialize. Characters (and Jermays) may initiate a conversation by making a Charisma roll. Add 5% to this chance for each 3 bronze worth of wine or spirits the character buys his new friend. Anyone who mentions they are working for Ahld will automatically get a -25% to their roll. Each time an adventurer succeeds in talking to someone make a roll on one of the rumor tables below. A critical success indicates that the he gets two rumors, gets a free drink, or makes a useful contact, at the Game Masters discretion. A fumble may indicate that a fight breaks out.

### **1D10 Rumor**

- 1 The character hears the rumor that sometimes people don't leave the Poxed Harlot. The rumormonger assumes that Gunther has joined their ranks. *"Was yer friend alone? If so 'e could be turnin' on that spit o'er thar then."* [False]
- 2 The adventurer meets a person who was at the Inn the night Ahld and Pugh met. *"I seen him talkin' with that feller in the fancy armor. Then suddenly he spills his drink and staggers off as if he's taken on too much wine. Damndest thing..."* If asked he will say there was no altercation between Pugh and Ahld. [True]
- 3 The character meets someone who overheard part of the conversation between Ahld and Pugh. *"Ah yes, he was here with our serpent-masked friend not too many cycles ago. I paid little attention to them myself, but as your man left I heard the sorcerer say something to the effect of, 'You'll be back, you have only a few days to make up your mind or your precious machine won't do you any good.' Quite odd I thought."* [True]
- 4 The character meets a person who has had dealings with Ahld. *"Nasty piece of work, that one. Old Flindy grabbed that fancy helmet of his and took off runnin'. Well this Ahld sets his man on him, you know that tall, skinny bastard, I ain't never seen anyone move that fast. He's got Flindy down in a trice. Then, cool as you please, Ahld has him cut his throat."* [True]
- 5 The character meets someone who doesn't know Pugh or Ahld, but is trying to lead them on in order to get a drink or some money. *"Sure I know where he is at. There's an inn across town. Let me see if I can remember the directions... You know a good mug of rum always clears my head..."* [False]
- 6 The adventurer meets a person who is convinced that Pugh is dead. *"That big guy with the dog? I heard tell he went down into the caverns below the city to hunt rats. He hasn't been seen since. Probably got snatched by something."* [False]
- 7 The character meets a person who knows Pugh's real location. *"I think I know the fellow your talking about, a big man with a green coat? He ran afoul of Bazak a few days ago, or so I am told. I'm heading down to watch the punishments myself, after this pint, care to join me? Heh, heh, I'd say your friend's time is about up!"* He finishes slapping the table in mirth. [True]
- 8 The adventurer picks up a tip from a long time inhabitant. *"There's a whole series of caves and warrens under this city. There's a living to be made going down there and hunting up rats."* [Dangerous, but true]
- 9 The adventurer hears something about Morbant. *"There's a demon what lives in a stone house some ways from here. There ain't no doors or windows in this house neither. They say that anyone who can get inside this demon's house can be free of this plane."* [Mostly True]
- 10 The character heard a rumor about Anastasia. *"I heard tell that a hero came to Ameeron some twenty years ago. Supposedly she locked herself in a big stone house and hasn't been seen since."* [True]

## **THE PREACHER**

At some point while the party is at the inn run this encounter with Hezakell the priest of Law. This encounter should foreshadow the eventual confrontation with the Liche Morbant, and also give the players the idea that perhaps the worshipers of Law have another means off of this plane. The Game Master can easily move this encounter to anywhere in Ameeron with a little modification.

*As you sit in the inn, attempting to ascertain the whereabouts of Gunther Pugh, a most remarkable figure enters the taproom. He is a tall man with a halo of unkempt gray hair surrounding his balding pate. A huge, wild beard sprouts from his chin. He is dressed in a stained, white robe cinched at the waist with a thin bronze chain. In one hand he carries a tall, straight staff capped with a brass triangle; the symbol of Law. He raises his staff into the air and begins shouting familiar lines of doom and repentance. The old man's oratory is greeted with persistent heckling from the patrons, but nevertheless it proves entertaining.*

*"Repent! Repent! Soon Anastasia will return from her holy mission and take the righteous away from this cursed plane."*

*"You've been saying 'soon' for twenty years now priest!" One of the drinker's guffaws, "Where is she?"*

*"None can deny the power of Law!" The priest thunders, "One glance at the prison of Morbant will quell your wagging tongues. Is not the Liche's manse encased in stone as Anastasia promised?"*

*"Sure." A fresh critic takes up while the first is swilling his wine, "The manse, the Liche, and your pal, all in a nice little package! We know the story old man and we don't care. Now leave us to our drink!"*

*"Don't you know that you are consuming the blood of innocents when you partake of this place's wares?" He says, and with a well-aimed sweep of his staff clears the heckler's table of drinks. Chairs clatter to the floor as the drenched men rise to their feet with balled fists and drawn knives.*

*"If you're not careful old man, it'll be your blood served up next." Silence falls over the taproom as the patrons turn to stare at the small, dark man who apparently materialized from thin air. Whispers of the name 'Esven' reach your ears. With a curt nod, the man signals two of his burly waiters. "Remove him." He says before disappearing back into the shadows.*

*The priest makes a feeble attempt at resistance, but is quickly caught up by the waiters and dragged to the door. "Redemption!" He cries as they cast him into the street. "Redemption and escape for those who are true to the way of Law!"*

If the characters question the patrons of the Harlot about this exchange they will get a variety of opinions. Some stock answers to possible questions are below:

**Who was that priest?** *"Hezakell? He's just a crazy old man that's been ramming his righteous nonsense down our throats for years. He's never had the guts to set foot in this place before though. I wouldn't be surprised if he winds up missing after this."*

**Who is Anastasia?** *"The one who will lead the righteous away from this benighted realm?" He says in a fair imitation of the priest's voice. "Supposedly she imprisoned this evil creature in some house downtown. What claptrap. Personally I think that this Anastasia abandoned old Hezakell here and she ain't never coming back. By the seven Hells, nobody's seen her for over twenty years."*

**Who is Morbant?** *"Morbant is some sort of wicked sorcerer or something, but I think it is something Hezakell made up. There's this big mansion, encased in rock downtown. This is supposed to be the prison that Anastasia created to contain him. I've never seen it myself. Bazak the Warden holds 'court' near there, and you stay healthier if you can avoid him."*

If they follow Hezakell out and question him, the priest will gladly preach to them:

*"I give thanks that my message reached some souls in that den of Chaos." The priest begins. "My children know you that the proprietor trades in blood and souls for the wines and ales you consumed. The callous disregard he shows for human life is appalling, but I am powerless to stop him. Such will not be the case when Anastasia emerges victorious from her battle with Morbant!"*

**Who is Anastasia?** *"My lady Anastasia was the Hammer of Mirath. A valiant warrior and crusader against the foul taint that is the undead. I am her apprentice and chronicler." He finishes with a bow.*

**Who is Morbant?** *"A creature foul beyond imagining," he says with a look of distaste, "a terrible sorcerer who transformed himself into an undead monstrosity. My lady and I pursued him through the Multiverse until we were finally able to trap him on this terrible plane. Anastasia and her forces went to battle the creature, taking with her an artifact of great power. With this machine she was able to encase the lair of Morbant in a shell of solid stone preventing his escape while the battle raged. You need only look upon the stone manse to see the truth of my words."*

**What happened to her?** *The priest looks to the ground for a moment and then says with a sigh. "Lady Anastasia has yet to emerge from her battle. She arranged to signal me to release her when the Liche had been defeated. I am sure that she only waits for the right time however. The time of the conjunction draws near. Perhaps she awaits for this."*

*Before you take leave of him the priest calls out, "Come to the temple and pray with me tonight! Pray for the quick return of Anastasia so that we may leave this benighted realm!"*

## **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN AMEERON**

As the players have discovered, Pugh is one of thirty unfortunates to be punished for unspecified crimes and the general amusement and edification of the populace by Bazak the Warden, older brother of the (presumably) deceased Barak the Toll-Collector.

*You enter into a large and, by the standards of Ameeron, well-kept square. A crowd of several hundred people has already assembled and it is only with difficulty that you can force your way in for a decent view. In the center of this cobblestone court stands what you presume is the means of punishment. It must be one of the few remaining civic masterpieces of Ameeron: an enormous clock, encased in a wooden tower resting on four, twenty-foot tall stone pillars. The pendulum of the clock swings between the two pairs of pillars and is weighted by a large, convex blade, which at its lowest*

*point swings little more than a foot above the cobbled ground. The vicious pendulum takes exactly one minute to swing its full arc.*

*Behind the clock tower a small dais has been built out of the debris gathered from the nearby buildings. Sitting atop this mound of rubble is the most disgusting parody of a man you have ever seen. A great, pig's head sits atop his broad, flabby shoulders, tiny, red eyes stare out from sockets deep in the pink flesh. Four arms sprout from the folds of blubber on his torso each busily stuffing gobbets of raw flesh into his tiny mouth. This, you presume, must be Bazak the Warden.*

*Several yards behind the clock tower stands a large, wooden cage containing about thirty unfortunate souls. As you press through the crowd, you see a pair of burly beast-men take a struggling victim from the cage and haul him to a small cart in front of the clock tower. The cart, which is little more than a few boards laid across two sets of wheels, stands approximately one foot tall. Stout ropes are attached to either end of the contraption. Bazak's henchmen quickly tie the screaming man spread-eagled to the cart. Once the victim is tied in place, a pair of beast-men takes up each set of ropes and position the cart beneath the tower. You watch with horror as the cart is pulled back and forth across lowest point in the path of the pendulum. All around you bets are taken as to the number of passes the beast-men can manage before the blade deals with the victim.*

If a player makes a successful Search roll he will see The Mute Piper in the crowd. The girl stands holding a huge dog that appears to weigh twice as much as her frail form. Although the beast appears to be straining at the leash, the girl holds him as easily as if he were a kitten. This is Pugh's dog, Hunter. The Mute Piper will release the dog (who makes for the nearest beast-man) and disappear into the crowd if a rescue is attempted.

By virtue of his height, Jermays will not be able to see the proceedings, but if told what is happening he will urge the characters to "*save the poor wretch*". If they attempt to rescue the victim, they will need to make a successful Dexterity roll to slip through the crowd, or a Strength x 5 roll to push their way through. When attacked, the cunning beast-men will leave the poor soul in the path of the blade necessitating that the adventurers push him out of the way. The Game Master should use this ploy to its fullest, by having the beast-men continually use an action to push the cart into the path of the pendulum while they fight with the characters. Each time the cart is in the path of the pendulum, roll 1D4 for the number of rounds it takes before the blade descends on the victim. Of course the players can also attempt to lure the dim-witted beast-men into the path of the blade.

Bazak has a dozen beast-men in the square, but only he and the four manning the cart are close to the clock tower. It will take the remaining creatures 1D8 rounds to reach the fray and engage. The characters would best use this time to release the captives from the cage and attempt to escape. A successful Pick Lock skill (at +10%) or delivering 10 points of damage in one blow will free the prisoners. Award each character that took part in the rescue 2 Balance points. The crowd will press round eagerly to watch the fight, but give way if threatened with weapons or sorcery. The adventurers may hear more bets being placed on the fights between them and Bazak's henchmen.

Pugh will be the sixteenth victim to the blade unless they intervene. For each victim sacrificed there is a cumulative 5% chance that one of the beast-men (who escaped the demise of Barak) will recognize the party and inform the Warden of his brother's killers' presence. Bazak will attack them immediately, with the intention of capturing them for execution.

## **FRIENDS FOUND OR FRIENDS MADE?**

*You easily locate Pugh amongst Bazak's prisoners, but he does not appear to be the mighty warrior the sorcerer made him out to be. His skin is yellow and waxy, his eyes puffy and filled with rheum. He appears barely able to support his own weight so it comes as no surprise that he extends his hand for you to help him from the cage. What he says, however, takes you aback.*

*"[Character's name] by the gods it's good to see you my lad. Help me out of here and give me a blade, I've still got a little fight left in me."*

*You've never seen the man before in your life, but on some level you seem to recognize him as well. Has he cast some sort of spell to divine your name and win your confidence? There is no time to ponder the question; a series of short, piercing horn blasts breaks your train of thought.*

*"That'll be more of Bazak's creatures lad. We best get going while the going's good!"*

*Looking about, you see the crowd in the square is quickly dispersing with looks of panic on their faces. Trusting he is correct, you set off down the twisting streets of Ameeron at a reckless pace. Pugh runs with a grimace on his face, his hand clenching his belly. You quickly realize that if you don't help him, he will quickly fall behind. After you put perhaps a half-mile between yourselves and the square you quit running to allow the man to rest.*

*When he finally catches his breath, Pugh greets you like old friends: Shaking your hands and clapping you on the backs he thanks you repeatedly for rescuing him. He addressed each of you by name, asking how you have fared and reminiscing over supposedly mutual adventures that you have no memory of. Ahld is surely correct. The man must be mad, and yet what he says tugs at your subconscious mind in the oddest way: an inescapable feeling of *deja vu*. You find it hard not to like him. Even his dog, Hunter, nuzzles at your hands, demanding attention. It's most unusual behavior for a war-dog, but maybe not for the pet of a friend.*

Players who make Insight rolls during this conversation will realize that Pugh is telling them the truth, at least as he understands it. He does not appear to be deluded, but his tales certainly seem to be. He is also genuinely confused as to why they don't seem to recognize him. The truth is Pugh has already met the party (although not Jermays, or Galan), years ago by his reckoning. See Appendix 1 for more information on Pugh.

*After a few moments Pugh stops his ramblings and stares at you blankly. "What's the matter with you lads? You look as if you don't recognize me. Out with it now, what's going on?"*

If they profess ignorance of who he is, Pugh will say, *"Well, that solves one mystery for me anyway: how you lads knew my name the first time we met!"*

If Jermays is present he will interject, *"What he says is entirely possible my friends. Time does not flow linearly, as mortals perceive it, but rather ebbs and flows through the Multiverse. This man may know you even though you feel you haven't met him yet."*

The remainder of the conversation will depend upon what the players make of this man. Remember that Pugh knows them and, unless they are utterly despicable, wants to trust them. If they display open loyalty to Ahld, he will be guarded with his answers and try to convince them of the Granbretan's duplicity. If they accept Pugh at face value he will embrace them as trusted companions. A few samples of his answers to possible questions are presented below:

**How he came to Ameeron:** *"Of course, you haven't seen my planar yacht! It is a marvelous craft capable of traveling between the planes of the Multiverse. I had no intention of stopping in this wretched place, but I must have hit a spike in the MegafLOW or something..." He trails off at your looks of incomprehension. "Suffice it to say that my craft burned out stranding me here."*

**Location of his dimension-traveling machine:** If the group is maintaining a pretense of loyalty to Ahld, Pugh will simply tell them that his machine is 'safe'. If they appear to have taken his side he will say, *"I have her concealed in the ruins of an old cathedral near the Wailing Gate."* Galan the urchin nods his head eagerly to indicate that he knows the place.

**Information on Ahld:** *"That Granbretan is a fine piece of work I dare say. He contacted me shortly after I came to this wretched plane. He seemed amicable enough at first, plying me with questions about the state of my machine and what he thought it would take to repair it. We'd talked like this for about a half hour when suddenly I felt a sharp pain in my belly. That devil leans over the table and says, 'I see my little tonic has started to take effect. Now, let's go and get your machine and then I'll administer my antidote.' Well that didn't sound like too good a deal to me. I high-tailed it out of there, intent on finding a cure for myself, and ran straight into Bazak's goons."*

## **COMPROMISE OR BETRAYAL**

The players now have to make a choice: They can turn Pugh and his craft over to Ahld, they can attempt to locate Ahld's craft and steal it from him (possibly killing him in the process), or they can try to persuade the two to cooperate.

**Betraying Pugh:** The easiest course of action for is to turn Pugh over to Ahld. Weak and unarmed, he is no match for the party. If they turn on him, Pugh will resign himself to defeat. The combination of the poison and the act of watching his friends sell him out is more than he can take. He will reveal the location of his machine after he is subjected to a moderate beating. Ahld will be delighted by this course of action. Once he has the machine, he has no qualms about letting Pugh die. Only the intervention of the party will save the man's life. Of course neither does Ahld care about the fate of the party. He will string them along until they secure him the necessary power source (see below) and then abandon them at the earliest opportunity. Award each character a Chaos point if they follow this course of action.

**Betraying Ahld:** This is possibly the most satisfying course of action, but one fraught with particular dangers. Ahld's flame blade, death beetles and Murtok make him a tough opponent. Slaying Ahld is a bad idea. His technical skill far surpasses that of Pugh, so repairing the dimension-traveling machines is a much easier task with his presence. If captured and forced to work for the characters, Ahld will do his best to see that they pay for the indignity. The antidote he administers to Pugh will not work and he works diligently to try to poison his captors or somehow gain the

upper hand. He also has the skill to create a weapon from the remains of the machines. He will require constant supervision. Award each character a Chaos point if they choose this route.

**Cooperation:** The hardest course of action to initiate, but in the end it is the one that will reap the greatest reward. With Pugh and Ahld working together on the dimension-traveling machine, the work will proceed rapidly. Pugh will be extremely reluctant to ally with Ahld (the man has poisoned him after all) and will insist on an antidote (see below) before proceeding further. Ahld will make show of reluctance (still claiming that Pugh is somehow demented) but will finally agree. He has however no intention of keeping his word. He will play along with the characters and Pugh until he has an opportunity to betray them and escape on his own. He will only return Pugh and the party to their respective Planes if he has no other choice and so must be watched diligently. Award each character a Balance point if they argue for cooperation. Jermays will suggest this if nobody else does.

If they decide to ally with Pugh (either betraying Ahld or by arguing for cooperation) he will insist on going to his machine to re-arm and make certain it is unharmed.

**The Antidote:** Ahld will of course deny that he has poisoned Pugh, claiming that tainted food or water must be the explanation for his illness. If the characters press the point he will attempt to "*brew some concoction to help with his symptoms*". He will administer enough of a dose to cure Pugh for 1D6 days, but then the symptoms start to set in again. If the adventurers killed Ahld they may be in a bad position. It will take a person skilled in potions to divine the antidote from amongst Ahld's possessions.

## CRAFT WORK

**Retrieving Pugh's Machine:** The characters will have to contrive some method of transporting Pugh's machine to Ahld's tower before repairs can commence. Draught animals are few and far between on the Shadow Plane. A critical Luck roll might allow the party to hire one, otherwise they must hire a cart and laborers or devise something themselves. It will take 1D6+4 hours to complete this task; halve this time if they have a draught animal, lots of labor or are exceedingly clever. If Bazak is still alive this task will surely catch his attention and he will ambush the party in an attempt to capture them.

**Repairing the Craft:** The repairs will take Pugh 1D8+4 days; halve this time for Ahld, quarter it if they are working together. Pugh's craft is in much better condition than Ahld's (although the Serpent-mask claims it is an inferior design) and will be used as the basis of the machine. Characters may wish to assist, but unless they are skilled in Electrical or Machine Lore (see *Hawkmoon*) they will be of little help. A Character helping and observing the repairs may pick up 1% in either Lore if he makes an INT x4 roll. Eventually, the repairs will run up against a dead end in that there is nothing to power the craft.

**The Power Source:** After 1D4 days of work Pugh and/or Ahld will come to the Characters and explain that the machine will not function because it has no power source. They will ask the party to try to find something suitable after a lengthy explanation (patiently from Pugh, condescendingly from Ahld). Jermays believes that he could recognize such a contraption "*although my knowledge is much more theoretical than practical*". In any event, Pugh or Ahld suggest that they inspect the device before they make any purchases.

If the characters spoke to Hezakell they may already know of the artifact keeping Morbant prisoner. If they do not immediately grasp its significance, allow them to wander about Ameeron asking questions of the inhabitants. For the most part they will get little information (although the Game Master is free to create some side-adventures to entertain the players). Eventually they will find or be directed to Niun.

Note: if the Taxi encounter took place while the party was making their way across the blasted plain, they may think to use the remains of the engine as a power source. Sadly, the motor is far beyond repair (not to mention inadequate), but reward their ingenuity by having Pugh or Ahld fabricate some vital component from the wreckage.

## **NIUN WHO KNEW ALL**

Niun was a great sorcerer who desired to learn everything there was to know. He spent the better part of his life filling his head with forbidden knowledge and delving into the secrets of the Multiverse. His quest eventually brought him to Orland of the Staff, who showed him the error of his ways. Niun was sent to the Shadow Plane until he had forgotten all he had learned.

If the adventurers avoid talking to Hezakell outside of the Poxed Harlot, or fail to pick up on the hints he drops about the "artifact of great power", Niun can steer them towards their goal. The Game Master should decide how (or if) he wants to implement this encounter. The party may find Niun through several means, he is well known amongst the inhabitants of the Shadow Plane, however Galan or Jermays is the obvious choice to reveal his existence.

*As you near the outskirts of the city, you spy an aged man sitting atop a crumbled section of the wall. His red face lights up as you approach and he clammers down from his perch to greet you. "Greetings [insert Character names]." He begins. "You are strangers to Ameeron, are you not? No don't bother to tell me, it would just be one more thing I'd have to forget..."*

*"Not many come to speak with old Niun." He continues with a chuckle. "Once kings and princes were clamoring for a moment of my time, but that was long ago, when I knew most everything. Now I know little and soon I hope to know nothing, so that Orland of the Staff will let me leave this place. Never-the-less I am at your service."*

*Niun combs his fingers absently through his long, white beard as you explain your situation. When you are finished he nods his head animatedly and says, "Yes, I can help you. There is an engine that can power your craft on this plane, in the city itself as a matter of fact. A Champion of Law named Anastasia brought it here some twenty-odd years ago. She used it to generate a barrier of stasis imprisoning Morbant, a liche of some notoriety, so I gather. The barrier still surrounds his home near the outskirts of Ameeron, so it stands to reason that the engine still functions. Anastasia herself has never emerged from the prison that she set for her adversary and I am uncertain how she ever expected to. I theorize that she must have had some spell or device that would let her pass through the barrier, but was unable to use it. Her chronicler, Hezakell, is still at large in the city. Perhaps he can aid you further."*

If the players ask for more information or ask him to clarify any points after he has finished the story he will begin as if to speak and then say *"I have forgotten."* A successful Insight roll will tell the character that he truly has forgotten all of the information. No amount of cajoling, threats or beating will cause Niun to remember it again, so hopefully the players paid attention the first time.

## **THIEVES IN THE NIGHT**

The players should now realize that the only viable power source for the dimension-traveling machine available on the Shadow Plane is being used to maintain the barrier around Morbant's prison. This should steer them to Hezakell and the Temple of Law.

*The Temple, if it can be called such for it has the appearance of once being a shop or small tavern, is a narrow two-story, exterior-framed building sandwiched between the tottering ruins of larger, brick edifices. Some attempt has been made to clean the dingy, stucco, but the result only serves to draw attention to the layers of grime that have not been attended too. The previous tenants must have been moderately prosperous for evidence of stained glass windows can be seen in the broken shards clinging to the frames. The once beautiful windows have been shattered, and the openings covered with planks scavenged from the nearby debris. The yellow glow of lamplight can be glimpsed through the cracks around these makeshift shutters and the chinks in the stout door blocking its entrance.*

*The mournful sound of a flute catches your attention and you turn to see the young piper sitting in the window of building across the street. She pauses a moment to give you a questioning stare before resuming her playing.*

Hezakell's congregation is primarily composed of former Chaos worshippers who turned to Law when their old masters abandoned them. The piety of the church members runs from the truly repentant to those only paying lip service to the Lords of Law in search of some advantage. Services are held three times a day at 9am, 2pm and 9pm. Hezakell administers to a congregation of 1D6 members and his sermons typically last 3 hours. Characters may wish to go to one of the services to scout out the temple. At any other times the Game Master can choose if Hezakell is present (assume a 50% chance if you don't care).

The group may attempt to reason with Hezakell, but he will not be willing to give the Nullifier Key up to anyone. A critical Oratory made by a priest or champion of Law can persuade him to surrender the key that will open the portal to Morbant's prison, the only two options left to secure it are stealth or force: Stealth is a simple option. All they need do is wait until Hezakell leaves the temple and then break in. Even a ham-fisted approach will work. In Ameeron, no one needs worry that the town-watch or an upright citizen will apprehend the burglars. Force is a practical idea for the Shadow Plane. Only a few worshippers are ever at the temple, and most are not skilled fighters. Hezakell will certainly put up a struggle if someone attempts to steal the Nullifier Key, but he should be no match for any determined party of adventurers. Remember, the Mute Piper is across the street and she will know how they obtained the key to Morbant's prison.

### **Mirath's Temple:**

**Sanctuary:** Upon entering the sanctuary it becomes apparent that the temple was once a tavern. The bar has been hacked out and a portion of it positioning near the rear of the building to serve as a

podium. Crudely worked images of Law (the Arrow and the Triangle) adorn the inside walls; Hezakell is no artisan, and his congregation is adept at making excuses when he asks for help. A cursory search of the sanctuary will reveal a trap door underneath a threadbare carpet. When opened, the smell of damp earth and decay rises from it. An unsound-looking set of wooden stairs leads down into a dank basement.

**Living Quarters:** The upper floor of the temple has been left relatively untouched since Hezakell appropriated the building for his temple. It consists of a sitting room, six small bedrooms, and a master bedroom. The priest uses only the sitting room and the master bedroom, although people seeking sanctuary occasionally occupy the other rooms. The rooms are unremarkable save for the priest's quarters. Hezakell's quarters are comfortable for an inhabitant of the Shadow Plane. The room contains a bed, table, chest and iron stove. The chest contains some spare clothing, 2 blocks of ink, six writing quills, a pouch of mixed coinage (worth 68 bronze), and several copies of a long-winded tome entitled Anastasia, the Hammer of Mirath (written in the Common tongue). Hidden under a loose flagstone below the stove in the corner of the room (a Search roll at -20% reveals it) is the Nullifier Key (see Appendix 2), the key to Whisperer's case (see below) and a small jar containing 7 doses of Pferrin's Balm (see Appendix 2).

**Basement:** The fieldstone walls are covered in thick mosses, and shallow puddles of standing water pool in low spots in the slick, stone floor. Aside from a small number of decaying crates there is apparently nothing down here. A Search roll at -20% will reveal a secret niche, swarming with centipedes and silverfish, behind one of the fieldstones. In this niche is a long, wooden box whose once-beautiful finish has been ruined by the damp. The box is locked. Opening it reveals the demon broadsword Whisperer (see Appendix 2). Hezakell received the weapon from a truly pitiful warrior who was being driven mad by the demon's constant murmurings. Not wanting to let it fall into the hands of another he hid it down in the temple basement.

## THE STONE MANSE

The Manse lies near the center of Ameeron, close by the Clock Tower Square. Its location is known and feared by many of the inhabitants (including Galan). The party will have no difficulty in finding it. If the Game Master desires to heighten the tension in this portion of the adventure he can have a group of Bazak's half-men discover the characters investigating the manse.

*The Stone Manse, as you have heard it called, is aptly named. In appearance it might bear a similarity to the villa of a rich Filkarian merchant except it is completely encased in rock. In fact, the glistening coating of niter reminds you of nothing so much as the walls of a cavern. No doors or windows can be discerned through the stony precipitate.*

The stone casing surrounding the house is actually a field generated by the Stasis Engine (see Appendix 2). It keeps Morbant trapped within and also acts as an extremely effective deterrent for keeping interlopers outside. Magic and science prove equally ineffective in breaching the field. Demons with the Teleport ability cannot pass it, and the barrier follows the foundations of the manor, so the party may not simply dig beneath it.

*As you stand pondering the exterior of the liche's villa, the mournful sound of a flute draws your attention. The ragged piper emerges from the ruins of a nearby structure and approaches your*

*group.* If the characters have lost or sold the shard of crystal, the Mute Piper will give it to a member of the party now. *The ragged urchin takes [the character with the Nullifier Key]'s hand and guides him to a spot on the wall. She looks up at you with her melancholy hazel and green eyes while gesturing to the wall with her flute.*

If the character touches the Nullifier Key to this point he will find the door to the manse. Players may choose to enter Morbant's home by a different route. The Piper will only shrug and follow along with them. Once the party has entered the manse, the Piper will attempt to lead them directly to the Atrium and the events described in the "A Matter of Life and Death" section. If the characters would rather search and ransack the house there is little she can do to dissuade them. Morbant will remain out of site until they reach the Atrium where he will confront them. The interior of the manse is described below.

### **The Interior:**

The first thing that the characters will notice is that the interior of the manse is several degrees cooler than the outside, nearly freezing in fact. This is a side effect of the Stasis Engine. The inside has been unaffected by time since the field was erected. There is no smell of decay and no signs of life - all is sterile and absolutely silent.

**Entry Hall:** The party will immediately notice that several of the floor tiles nearest the entrance have been pulled up and the earth below them excavated along the foundation. The shallow pit reveals the stasis barrier extends beneath the manse. The wide, plastered hallway is decorated with frescoes depicting an intricately interlaced floral design. A series of three niches are spaced equidistant down the hall. Each niche contains a small, bronze statuette of some unknown god or hero. They are of excellent quality and could fetch up to 200 bronzes apiece if sold to a collector. The statuettes are affixed to the niches with some type of mortar, but a Repair/Devise or appropriate Craft roll can remove them undamaged.

**Atrium:** This colonnaded court was once open to the sky, but the stone barrier now covers it. The frescoed, outer walls carry the same interlaced floral motif that the group noticed in the Entry Hall. Their attention will immediately be drawn to the center of the room by the lights and discharges of the Stasis Engine. Next to this eerie machine stands a crudely formed statue of a warrior gripping a sword and hammer. It appears to be made of the same stone that encases the house, but is in fact the body of Anastasia.

When the party finally enters this room, run the events described in "A Matter of Life and Death" below.

**Kitchen:** A pair of Lambients (see Appendix 2) illuminate Morbant's makeshift laboratory. Spices have been cleared away to make room for the powders and unguents he managed to take with him when he fled Prath. Meat hooks and flensing knives have been put to more grisly purpose when the liche raised Anastasia's followers as undead. Morbant's Grimoire, entitled Secrets from Beyond can be found here. It contains the spells Necrology, Raise Zombie and Speak with the Dead. Note: neither Morbant nor Anastasia will willingly let the adventurers make off with this tome.

**Master Suite and Bath:** The master bedroom is modestly, if expensively, furnished. Its walls and floors are lined with white marble which are, in turn, are covered with rich rungs, wall hangings and the like. A huge, canopied bed lies in the center of the room. Elegantly carved armoires hold the clothing and jewelry of the former owner. No items particularly stand out, however characters inclined towards thievery could pick up 1000 bronze from amongst the domestic ware. The bath, like the master suite is also done in white marble. A rectangular pool, half filled with icy water, takes up most of the room, while beautiful tapestries line the walls.

**Library:** A single Ambient lights this room. Its glow reveals a large bay window dominating one wall of this room, while shelves of books and niches crammed with scrolls line the rest. Most of the books and scrolls prove singularly uninteresting. These are written in the Common tongue and comprise the balances and ledgers of a merchant family dating back hundreds of years. A successful Search roll will uncover a novel entitled My Life for my Lord, the unfinished work of a sorcerer-spy in the service of Braidlund. Morbant happened to have a copy of this book amongst his personal effects when he fled Prath. Any who read the book may make an Idea roll. Success indicates they may add 1d6% to their Disguise skill.

**Dining Room:** A battle appears to have raged here. Chairs are smashed, the table is overturned and dried blood can be found on the walls and carpets.

**Other Rooms:** If the party explores unlabeled rooms, roll on the following table:

#### **D4 Room**

- 1 Empty:** Little besides dust can be found here.
- 2 Guest Chamber:** Well appointed chamber.
- 3 Servants Quarters:** A pair of beds, perhaps a chair or table.
- 4 Storage:** Spare furniture concealed below sheets, or perhaps a chest of two of old clothing.

### **A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH**

The climax of the adventure takes place when the party emerges into the Atrium. Here the final showdown between Anastasia and Morbant will take place and the players must choose sides.

*The young girl takes [the character carrying the Nullifier Key] your hand and begins leading you towards the statue with a surprising strength. Before you have taken a half-dozen steps, a tall, raven-haired man steps out from the shadows of the colonnade and says, "A moment of your time good sirs. I am Morbant, welcome to my nightmare." He gestures depreciatingly about the crumbling atrium.*

*"Before you do anything rash," He says fixing his eyes on you and the Piper. "I think I should be given the chance to state my case." The piper looks up at you with a pleading expression in her jade and hazel eyes and tries to drag you towards the statue.*

If the character attempts to resist, he will have to overcome Anastasia's Strength in a resistance roll. All members of the party should make Search rolls to notice shapes lurking about the colonnade - the reanimated warriors of Anastasia's retinue.

What happens next depends upon the players. If they pause to listen to Morbant, he will continue with the dialog below. If they free Anastasia from her imprisonment he will call his zombie guardians to him, but still attempt to talk. The liche will only attack in self-defense.

**Morbant's Tale:** If the party allows Morbant a chance to explain himself use the following dialogue.

*"My tale is one of self-indulgence and tragedy." He begins. "I led a privileged life as a youth. The second son of the Duke of Braidlund, I was groomed for a role in politics. My studies included the arts of sorcery, which in Braidlund were considered an honorable enough skill for any who had the aptitude. I excelled in it, as I excelled in my other studies and my name soon reached the ears of the Emperor himself. I was promised a position in his most noble court and assured that a man of my proven capabilities would go far.*

*"My heretofore good fortune deserted me. At this apogee of my existence the Sleeping Plague, a virulent sickness for which there is no cure, struck me down. In a pain-blinded delirium, I called out to Mirath for release. When the Lady of Mortality ignored my pleas I turned to Chardros. The Reaper heard my prayer, granting me that which I thought I desired: release from the torment of mortal flesh, and an immortal existence - would that I had died instead.*

*"Our lady Anastasia soon heard of my "transformation" and gathered an army to lay siege to my Father's castle. Rightly fearing the wrath of the Hammer of Mirath, and perhaps what I had become, my Father had me imprisoned in his dungeons to await her coming. I contrived to escape my imprisonment, but my family did not escape Anastasia's justice. All of our line was exterminated for sharing the same blood as an "undead monster", but I ask you, who really is the monster?"*

*"I used my sorcery to flee to this twilight world hoping that I could find a way to escape my doom, but I was followed and again confronted by Anastasia. Twenty long years I have resided in this Hell. I wish nothing more than to leave in peace so I may claim my soul back from Chardros. Aid me against this murderer that I may redeem myself!"*

Players who make Insight rolls will realize that Morbant is telling the truth.

**Releasing Anastasia:** Anastasia must be freed from her imprisonment to bring the adventure to a climax. If the adventurers do not do so, an NPC (Ahld would be perfect, the Mute Piper if no one else is available) will snatch the Nullifier Key and release her.

*When the Nullifier Key touches the statue, the calcareous shell disappears revealing a silver haired woman in heavy armor. As the warrior-woman emerges from her stony casing, you watch in fascination the young piper slowly fades into nothingness. The woman whirls about to face Morbant regarding him warily with her jade and hazel eyes. "Heed not the honeyed tongue of this servant of death!" She shouts. "Mirath has sent you to aid me. Together we will rid the Multiverse of this undead slime!"*

The party is again faced with a choice: Morbant or Anastasia. There is no chance of a compromise. Anastasia is determined to see the liche destroyed once and for all, and Morbant realizes that she will never give up if allowed to live. If the players side with Anastasia award them 1D6 Law points. If they side with Morbant award 1D4 Chaos points.

**The Binding of Morbant:** This section is only applicable if the party sides with Anastasia. When Morbant is reduced to zero hit points he will collapse. Ordinarily (as if killing such a creature is an ordinary event) when a liche is slain he loses a point of POW and then regains his full hit points. However, the shard of the crystal heart has the power to bind the spirit of the liche eternally. The party must act fast to avoid doing battle with Morbant a subsequent time.

*Anastasia kneels beside Morbant's body and extends her hand towards [the character who has the crystal shard]. "Quickly," she commands, "give me the shard of crystal!"*

*Even as you fumble with your pouch you see the liches arm quiver, and then grope blindly until his hand fastens around the hilt of his rapier. In horror you realize that he is still not dead!*

If the player hesitates or refuses to give up the shard, Morbant will quickly regain his semblance of life and attacks again. Anastasia will cast a venomous look at the character and then pick up her weapons to fight the battle anew. The adventurers will either have to kill Morbant twenty three times (!) or give her the shard so she can bind his spirit.

*When you finally produce the crystal shard, she places it over Morbant's heart and begins to murmur a cryptic incantation. You watch in revulsion as the undead body rapidly decays before your eyes - the flesh sloughing off the bones and desiccating in a matter of moments. Anastasia never stirs, nor ceases her prayer, but continues to hold the shard, which is becoming darker and darker, in its place over his heart. When there is nothing left but dust filling the fine clothes of the liche, the Hammer of Mirath raises her head and says, "It is done. This foul creature is bound eternal. Let his name never be spoken again."*

## **HOME AGAIN?**

With the Stasis Engine as a power source, Pugh and/or Ahld can finish repairs to the Planar Yacht. The Game Master is free to use this opportunity to send the party to adventures further across the Multiverse, or he may opt to send them back to the Young Kingdoms. When they finally leave the Shadow Plane read this dialogue:

*A shudder runs along the length of the craft as Pugh engages the power source. There is a slight jolt, and then the vessel begins to rise from the ruins, slowly at first, but quickly gaining speed and altitude. Soon you are hurtling through the air of the Shadow Plane, rising ever closer to the ceiling-like layer of overcast sky. Pugh stands at the helm with a look of concern written on his normally jovial face. His hands grip the wheel tightly while he monitors the crystal gauges of his planar compass. Suddenly, a brilliant flash of white surrounds the craft forcing you to momentarily close your eyes. When again you open them you find the vessel sailing through a clear night sky. The unfamiliar constellations shine brilliantly against the ebon blackness of space, each star throwing out beams of pale light, which intersect and conjoin to form a magnificent lattice against the firmament. It is towards one of these beams that a now smiling Pugh steers.*

*"By god we've made it lads!" He shouts. "Our next port: The Young Kingdoms."*

## APPENDIX 1: THE NPC'S

### G'HSST BAND

See description in Appendix 2.

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	11	11	15	11	14
CON	11	09	07	08	16
SIZ	15	18	18	17	16
INT	15	05	12	13	08
POW	14	15	13	11	11
DEX	17	15	12	11	09
HP	13	14	13	13	16
DB	+1D4	+1D4	+1D6	+1D4	+1D4

**Weapons:** Claw, Rock or Club 50% damage 1D6

**Armor:** None

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Dodge 40%, Track 40%

### JERMAYS THE CROOKED, age unknown, Servant of the Balance

A bandy-legged dwarf with a ginger beard and a hunched back, Jermays is dressed in an outfit more suited to a circus performer than an inter-dimensional traveler. His appearance is deceiving however, a keen intellect hides behind his comical appearance and despite his twisted form he is quite graceful. Jermays has traveled extensively through the Multiverse and has often aided the Eternal Champion in his quests.

**Chaos 21, Balance 200, Law 55**

STR 07      CON 12      SIZ 06      INT 20      POW 21  
DEX 16      APP 08      HP 09

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Art (any) 75%, Bargain 110%, Climb 75%, Conceal Object 77%, Craft (any) 65%, Dodge 114%, Evaluate 94%, Fast Talk 97%, Hide 71%, Insight 205%, Jump 40%, Listen 77%, Million Spheres 101%, Move Quietly 78%, Natural World 104%, Oratory 126%, Other Language (any) 85%, Physik 97%, Potions 59%, Scribe 106%, Search 81%, Swim 54%, Unknown Kingdoms 70%, Young Kingdoms 70%

### BARAK, age unknown, Half-man, "Toll Collector"

This brutal creature has the body of a powerfully built man and the head of a ram. Barak may have been human once; one of the unlucky souls who sell themselves to Chaos and then find out that they got more than they bargained for. Whatever he was once, he is now a ruthless, sadistic, cannibal. A party who looks powerful, or displays obvious magic can deal with Barak. He can never be trusted





INT	12	09	10	09	12	09	12
POW	08	10	09	14	09	07	09
DEX	15	15	14	10	10	10	10
HP	11	14	13	13	14	13	14
DB	-	+1D4	+1D4	-	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4

**Weapons:** Roll 1D8.

1-2: Battle Axe 47%, damage 1D8+2  
 3: Great Axe 42%, damage 2D6+2  
 4-5: Light Mace 55%, damage 1D6+2  
 6-7: Long Spear 51%, damage 1D10+1  
 8: Morningstar 52%, damage 1D10+1

**Armor:** Leather & Rings with Helm (1D6+1)

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Dodge 31%, Hide 61%, Move Quietly 48%

### **LORD AHLD, age 37, Sorcerer-Scientist**

Above average in height, pale and handsome, few would suspect that behind this man's charming demeanor lies a ruthless, power hungry and amoral mind. A native of the Tragic Millennium's Granbretan Empire, Ahld is a member of that nation's Order of the Serpent (read the Hawkmoon novels for more information). Ignored and even discouraged by the master of his order Baron Kalan, who fears that the silver-tongued Ahld could likely replace him as the order's head, Ahld has pursued his research into extra-dimensional travel with the utmost secrecy. His first prototype machine was both a success and a failure. While he was able to make a journey through the Multiverse, his machine's power source quickly burned out leaving him stranded on the Shadow Plane.

Ahld wants desperately to return to Granbretan and present his findings to the King-Emperor. Having proven other planes of existence abound and that it is actually possible to travel to them, he plans to pitch the idea of a multi-planar empire for Granbretan. He feels certain that Huon will see the wisdom in this and sweep Kalan aside, installing him as head of the Serpent Order and maybe even giving him dominion over his own plane.

In typical Granbretan fashion, Ahld takes what he wants. This has earned him no friends, and many enemies in Ameeron. Thus far, no one has dared cross the wizard and his deadly flame wand. When he discovered that a fellow traveler, Gunther Pugh, was also dimension traveler, he attempted to poison him and take his machine. When this attempt failed, he changed tactics, seeking out allies to help him in his quest: the Characters. Ahld will prove to be an unreliable ally. He plans to use the Characters to get what he wants and then abandon them.

### **Chaos 41, Balance 00, Law 29**

STR	10	CON	12	SIZ	14	INT	17	POW	15
DEX	15	APP	16					HP	13

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Weapons:** Rapier 83%, damage 1D6+1

Flame Blade 76%, damage 1 to 4D6 (see Appendix 2)



POW 00 00 00 00  
DEX 15 15 15 15  
HP 09 09 09 09  
DB -1D4 -1D4 -1D4 -1D4

**Weapons:** Bite 50%, damage 1D8-1D4

Spit Acid 50%, damage 1D10

**Armor:** Steel Carapace (1D8)

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Hide 75%, Move Quietly 50%, Search 50%

### **GALAN, age about 12, Urchin**

A shy, scrawny boy, dressed in tattered rags that are infested with lice. He is constantly scratching and looking around like a frightened rabbit. Galan cannot recall a time when he was not living in Ameeron, but he has no recollection of parents or how he came to be in this awful place. So far he has managed to elude the monsters (human and other) in the crumbling city and eked out a pitiful existence scrounging through the trash and stealing when he can. If the characters rescue him from the Shadow Cultists, he will attach himself to their band. The lad will attempt to ingratiate himself to them by acting as a gopher and servant. Even if they tell him to be gone, he will follow them about, attempting to keep them in sight. The truth of the matter is that he is alone in this foul place, and unless he finds some protector he is doomed. The boy may turn out to be quite a resource for characters searching for clues in Ameeron. Galan knows of Lord Ahld by reputation. He will attempt to warn them of the Granbretan's duplicity if they seem willing to help him, but fears the wrath of the sorcerer-scientist too much to denounce him outright.

### **Chaos 01, Balance 01, Law 00**

STR 08 CON 12 SIZ 07 INT 13 POW 11  
DEX 14 APP 09 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** Bargain 25%, Climb 80%, Conceal Object 67%, Cut Purse 52%, Dodge 66%, Evaluate 20%, Hide 81%, Jump 54%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 84%, Search 40%

### **BAZAK, age unknown, Half-man, "Warden"**

The bloated body of Ameeron's "Warden" has been so warped by Chaos it is hard to believe it was once human. Bazak's corpulent bulk belies his inhuman speed and strength. His habits are even more debased than those of his brother Barak. Despite the state to which he has fallen he still recalls that the "Toll Collector" is his brother and will take bloody vengeance on anybody who has harmed him. Bazak fights with two, two-handed swords. By virtue of his four arms, he may strike with each weapon once per round in addition to his normal defense.

### **Chaos 207, Balance 00, Law 23**

STR 20 CON 17 SIZ 26 INT 14 POW 15  
DEX 19 HP 22

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6





have not decayed much in the near freezing interior of the Stone Manse even after twenty years. They are covered in horrible wounds, many with their throats slit, and stare methodically into the middle distance even when attacking.

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	15	18	14	16	16
CON	14	15	23	21	17
SIZ	09	16	17	14	13
POW	01	01	01	01	01
DEX	16	09	09	06	03
HP	12	16	20	18	15
DB	+1D4	+1D6	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4

**Weapons:** Roll 1D6

1-2: Broadsword 50%, damage 1D8+1

3-4: Long Spear, damage 1D10+1

5-6: Great Axe, damage 2D6+2

**Armor:** Decaying Half Plate (1D8-1). Impaling weapons do one point damage, all other weapons do half normal damage.

**Spells:** None

**Skills:** None

### **ANASTASIA / THE MUTE PIPER, age 56 years (20 in stasis), Champion of Law**

Anastasia is a woman of striking features. Her prematurely silver hair is cut short around her neck, held back from her eyes by a tooled leather headband. Her cheeks are high and smooth, drawn taught to her strong jaw line. Her movements are graceful, poised and sure. For a woman seemingly in her mid-thirties, there are no visible signs that age has worn her down. Characters will not fail to catch her eyes: one subdued hazel and the other piecing jade - just like the Mute Piper.

Despite the fact that she is of medium height and slender build, she presents an imposing image. Anastasia knows she is Mirath's chosen champion and her self-confidence is boundless. Her voice is hard and cold, nearly emotionless, lest she is speaking of the glories of Law (in which case she approaches the ecstatic), or the blasphemies of Chaos (when it drips venom).

The Mute Piper is a projection of a juvenile Anastasia, which Mirath has allowed her to manifest on a number of Planes, including the Young Kingdoms. Whilst the Piper image can project music and has limited ability to effect physical objects (such as handing over the pouch to the Characters at the beginning of the *Sands of Time* scenario, and restraining Hunter the dog), these efforts exhaust the imprisoned Anastasia. To her immense frustration, Hezakell, her companion on the Shadow Plane, has failed to recognize The Mute Piper as his Lady Anastasia.

**Chaos 05, Balance 12, Law 207**

STR 16	CON 18	SIZ 12	INT 14	POW 21
DEX 19	APP 15			HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** RH Broadsword 230%, damage 1D8+1D4+1

LH Warhammer 189%, damage 1D6+1D4+2

**Armor:** Exceptional Plate w/o Helm (1D10+1)

**Spells:** Diminish Demon, Reflection of Law

**Skills:** Art (Flute) 92%, Bargain 41%, Climb 86%, Craft (Blacksmith) 27%, Dodge 174%, Evaluate 46%, Hide 94%, Insight 102%, Jump 79%, Listen 91%, Million Spheres 7%, Move Quietly 87%, Navigate 59%, Oratory 103%, Physik 76%, Ride 89%, Sailing 47%, Scent/Taste 51%, Search 102%, Swim 71%, Throw 62%, Track 59%

## APPENDIX 2: MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

### Demons:

#### **G'HSST, lesser demon, vile, cannibalistic humanoid**

Standing 7 feet tall and thin to the point of emaciation, the G'hsst presents a vile parody of the human form. Its hairless skin is a putrescent green color. Its long arms and legs are covered in thin, ropey muscles. Ebony claws sprout from its fingers and toes, and rows of sharp, yellow teeth line its jaws. The creatures delight in feasting on the bodies of slain sentient creatures, but men, quite possibly, are their favorite food. They are usually opportunists in this regard, scavenging battlefields for their nourishment, but are not above killing their prey if success seems likely.

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>rolls</i>	<i>averages</i>
STR	2D8	9
CON	2D8	9
SIZ	4D8	18
INT	2D8	9
POW	3D8	13-14
DEX	3D8	13-14
MOV 2D8	av. HP	13-14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Abilities:** Claws 50%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Dodge 40%, Track 40%

**Need:** to consume dead flesh of sentient beings.

**Magic Points to Summon:** 32

#### **WHISPERER, lesser demon sword**

Whisperer is a stout broadsword with the symbol of Chaos engraved in its pommel. The blade of the sword appears to be made out of translucent, smoked glass or crystal. When the demon sword is used in combat it seems to absorb blood into its blade turning it dark crimson until it is sheathed. Whisperer is aptly named, for the demon is constantly whispering to its master, begging him to commit murder and feed it blood.

INT 14      POW 10

**Abilities:** Demon Weapon, adds 1D10 damage, Scent Emotion

**Need:** to whisper blasphemies to its wielder.

**Magic Points to Summon:** 13

### Technology:

**Lambient:** These alchemical "torches" are relatively common on the plane of Prath. They consist of a two-foot long, ebony rod topped by a glass sphere slightly smaller than a man's fist. The sphere gives off a bluish-white light about equal to a torch in illumination. The device cannot be shut off, and are usually hooded when not in use. Lambient's are fragile (6 hit points) and the glass sphere will shatter if used as a weapon. The 'lux gas' powering the device will last for nearly 50 years.

**Megaflow Navigator:** Ahld's dimension-travelling machine is a brutal and ugly; taking the form of a huge egg supported by three short iron feet. The surface of the craft is composed of a dull steel "shell" studded with large, bronze rivets. A trapezoidal door hinges down to form a walkway to the interior. Inside the cramped craft luxuries are few; the black leather command seat in the center of the vehicle is the only sign of comfort, but a metal bench bolted to one side of the craft can seat an additional three people. Finger-thick brass conduit forms arcane designs across the interior of the shell, sending traceries that eventually merge into a mighty column supporting the mirrored-silver control globe in front of the command seat.

**Pferrin's Balm:** This pale green cream is a prized healing unguent on the plane of Prath. When applied to a wound, it will heal 1D6 hit points in as many hours. During the time the balm is working, the wound burns and itches intensely. Anyone so anointed must make a CON x 5 each hour or he will wash the balm off - stopping the healing process. Patients on Prath are usually restrained until the balm runs its course.

**Planar Yacht:** Pugh's craft is a beautiful sight. Seemingly made of a fine-grained wood, it resembles nothing so much as a river pleasure barge, its deck roofed with a voluminous multi-colored silken awning. An investigation of the awning will show a surprising resistance to damage: it cannot be cut or torn by normal means and is clearly made from some a special fabric quite unknown to the Characters. A small poop deck holds a ships wheel and an odd brass device that Pugh refers to as a "planar compass". The inside of the craft is equally impressive, decorated as it is with finely worked fixtures and fittings Pugh has gathered from across the Multiverse. The three large staterooms are lavishly appointed with rich full rugs, fine furniture and soft beds. The craft can comfortably hold six people, but twice that number can be pressed on board with little difficulty.

**The Nullifier Key:** The key is an ivory rod about the length of a man's forearm. Close examination reveals fine golden thread has been worked into a pattern of arcane runes covering all surfaces of the device. The workmanship is exquisite and it might bring one or two hundred bronze coins if sold to a collector. The key is simple to use, merely pressing the device against the surface of the stone field generated by the Stasis Engine will open a circular portal six feet in diameter (centered on the key) in the field. The portal will remain open as long as the key is in "contact" with the field.

**The Stasis Engine:** The techno-magical Stasis Engine is generates the barrier that surrounds The Stone Manse. It does little more than confine Morbant to his home, but he cannot pierce the barrier with his magic or contact his patron deity through it. A side effect of the device is that it lowers the temperature of anything inside the barrier to nearly freezing. The Stasis Engine takes the form of a crystal tetrahedron that stands little more than waist height. In the center of the device a gray, metal sphere supported by a mesh of golden wire can be seen. When the engine is in operation colored lights and tiny electrical discharges can be seen playing in the interstices of the wire mesh. The device is not heavy, but it would be awkward to transport and requires at least two men to carry it. Only the "pure of heart" (i.e., those with Law points equal to at least twice their total in Chaos or Balance

points) may tamper with the device or switch it off. All others will receive an electric shock (damage 1D3-1, armor does not protect) if they attempt to handle or strike it. While the field is engaged, the engine is immune from any form of physical or magical attack as a portion of the field protects it from such eventualities. Once the field is switched off; a determined blow could easily shatter the fragile device.

### **Weapons:**

**Crossbow Pistol:** A small, one-handed crossbow. This device is unknown in the Young Kingdoms and is a rare and specialized weapon in the Tragic Millennium arsenal.

**Flame Blade:** A smaller, one handed version of the Flame Lance, the Flame Blade is sometimes carried by officers of the Granbretan military. The Flame Blade consists of a metal tube approximately one foot long that swells slightly towards the handle. A ruby crystal is screwed into the end of the weapon and acts as a focus for the beam. The wielder may use from one to four "charges" when firing the weapon. Each charge used causes 1D6 damage to any creature struck by the ruby beam. Flame Blades are prone to overheating when used excessively. Increase the chance to fumble with the weapon by 1% per charge used if not allowed a round to "cool down".

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Base %</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>Att./rd</i>	<i>Impales?</i>	<i>Parry?</i>	<i>STR/DEX</i>
Crossbow Pistol	20	1D4+2	25	6	1	yes	no	8/9
Flame Blade	10	1-4D6	30	5	1	no	no	4/11