



The Hidden City

Act III

The Main Pillar

At the centre of the city a huge column of rock rises in to the darkness. Hammered into the stone is a wrought iron staircase that terminates at a door some forty feet above you. Further up in the hollowed out mountain, perhaps 100 feet, light floods from the edge of a platform and a bridge arcs across to the column. You can just make out a creature pacing about impatiently.

Grand Staircase

A grand staircase leads around a massive pillar of rock fifty feet wide. After climbing 40 feet the staircase stops at a door in the side of the pillar. This occurs five times, the PCs must pass through each of the rooms to reach the next section of the staircase.

The Door to room one is a heavy wooden door (Hardness 5, 20 hp) and is locked (DC 25).

The Bronze Key

If the party have stumbled over a bronze key so far they will be able to get past the many locked doors of the column. If they do not have the key they had better have a good Rogue and a set of thieves' tools with them

The Main Pillar: Room 1

This room is circular and 40 feet wide. The only door that exits the room is on the opposite side. The room is unlit. In the center of the chamber is a trap door that deposits the unwary into the spider's lair.

Wide-Mouth Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger, manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets within a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 28,200 gp.

The dark room is circular and features an ornate mosaic on the floor made up of turquoise and black tiles. The plain wooden door on the opposite side of the room is the only exit.

The Spider's Lair

The ceiling of this area is ten feet high. Inhabiting the chamber are two monstrous spiders! There are three entrances from the chamber. The western entrance is blocked with rubble and refuse. The southern entrance leads back outside to a grill set in the ground by the southern promenade staircase. The eastern entrance leads into a sewage out pipe that leads to the pits below the guard tower. If the Gibbering Moulder is still alive here the PCs will be in dire trouble!

Treasure: There are two corpses here; one is a Skorne Praetorian who has an Elite Jade Token, badly damaged Skorne armour, long swords and a potion of *Endurance*. The other body is of a human who wears an intricate leaf shaped cloak clasp of gold inset with emeralds (75 gp). PCs making good search checks (DC 26) will notice a short sword hidden in the webbing. It is in fact a +1 Shortsword that is over a 100 years old manufactured in Khador.

Main Pillar: Room 2

This room is circular and 40 feet wide. The only door that leads from the room is on the opposite side and is locked (DC 25). The room is unlit. There is nothing of note here. If the party decides this might be a good place to rest they stand a 15% chance of being disturbed by a patrol each hour.





SPHERS '06



The Hidden City

Main Pillar: Room 3

This level comprises of a corridor 10 feet wide and 15 feet long that leads to a door. The door leads into a small chamber, ten feet by ten feet (the trap). The door on the far side is locked (DC 30) and is made of thick stone (Hardness 8, 60 hp). The locked door leads to another 15 foot long corridor that terminates in a door. The door opens out on to another section of the wrought iron staircase that will take the party another 40 feet higher.

Compacting Room: CR 6; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); walls move together (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (4 rounds); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22. Market Price: 25,200 gp.

The trigger is a pressure plate reacts when 350 lbs or more is resting on it. The pressure plate also activates a portcullis trap that traps the players in the ten-foot chamber.

Portcullis Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (3d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis. Market Price: 1,400 gp.

The Portcullis has a Hardness of 10 and 60 hp.

Main Pillar: Room 4

Four Skorne Praetorians: The Praetorians (Veterans or basic Praetorians, your choice) are returning from patrolling the ruins of the old Skorne settlement. They have located four humans whom they are escorting to the Paingiver in the upper levels. The humans are all shackled. They have stopped in this room for a rest after the many stairs. They will have a sentry by the door listening.

The room itself is circular and is 40 feet wide. Anyone searching the room will find more trap doors in the centre if they beat DC 28. However there is no trap here and the doors refuse to open. The exit to the room is on the opposite side to the entrance.

Treasure: One of the Praetorians has found Darioch Giamati's weapon: a +1 Icy Burst Great Hammer. 1D10 Damage, Critical 20/ x3, Bludgeoning, 10 lb.

The weapon has a trigger at the end of the shaft which activates the enhancement and the Icy Burst effect. The second trigger is further up the shaft and triggers an Icy Ray effect that deals 4D6 points of damage on a successful hit. Icy Burst uses 2 charges per day, +1 Enhancement uses 1 charge per day, Icy Ray uses 1 charge per day. The weapon has a heavy accumulator built into it. This has no charges left when found. The weapon is of Khadoran design and is in fact a prototype. Darioch stole it during his tour of duty in the Thornwood.

There is also a potion of *Cure Critical Wounds*, a Skorne +1 Longsword and finely crafted spyglass.

Main Pillar: Room 5

The pit trap in room five is cunning as it triggers doors in room four so the drop is twice as far. The victim will come to rest in room three. If the victim weighs over 350 lbs he will trigger off the compacting room trap. As before, the door exiting the room is on the opposite side and is locked (DC 25).

Pit Trap: CR 4; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Market Price: 4,000 gp.





The Hidden City

The Bridge

The door from Room 5 leads onto a 15 foot wide bridge that is 50 feet long. At the end of the bridge a huge Cyclops waits silently on a semi circular platform some 30 feet in diameter. The Cyclops has explicit orders to prevent any non Skorne from crossing the Bridge. The Cyclops will wait until the party are half across the bridge before charging them.

All around is the sound of terrible shrieking. The bridge leads to a smaller complex where the higher-ranking Skorne live and the Paingivers test the humans.

A sturdy stone bridge reaches out in front of you to a broad platform. At the far side of the platform is a large doorway. A Cyclops stands in front of the doorway immobile gripping its huge falchion in both hands.

On either side of the bridge small weirdly carved menhirs of black glassy rock curl and spiral. A bracing wind gusts past you. As the wind rises and falls so do the haunting shrieks you have heard for so long.

A staircase leads from the side of the bridge to the top of the 50 foot wide column. There are two Assassins hiding from the party here. They will not assist the Cyclops, even if the Cyclops is doing well. If the party flees to this area to escape the Cyclops the Assassins will fight.

The Stone Bridge crosses over a chasm 100-feet deep. Below is the Northern Quarter of the city. Large posts on either side of the bridge have strange holes carved into them that cause the passing winds to shriek and howl (Will save DC 17 or suffer -2 Morale penalty). The stone posts have a Hardness of 10 and 40 hp.

Across the bridge and behind the Cyclops are the doors to the Upper Levels. There are also grilles in the walls that serve as windows to the barracks.

Dirty trick: Remember that ring of *Feather Fall* the party found earlier. Did you make a note of who claimed it? Maybe now is the time to Bull's Rush them over the side of the bridge! Have the ring save their life regardless of whether they know the command word or not. Now all they have to do is climb up all of those steps and get past all of those traps... again.

Treasure: The Cyclops has Masterwork plate armour and a Masterwork falchion. This will be mostly useless to anyone in the party unless they are an Ogrun.

Large Masterwork Falchion (450 gp)

Damage: 2D6

Critical: 18-20/ x2

Weight: 20 lb

Type: Slashing

The armour will need a Craft: Armourer or Smith DC 25 with full use of a forge to be of any use.

Top of the Column

On the top of the column two Assassins are waiting for the party to pass by. Once the party have entered into the Barracks the Assassins will make their way down the column and attempt to escape the city. They are not stupid and know when they are outclassed.

The column is 50 feet wide and anyone falling over the edge will plummet 140 feet. Should any of the party succumb to the Dirty Trick listed on page 25 the Assassins will wait until the coast is clear before making their move.

Treasure: Masterwork studded leather armour, Skorne Elite Jade Token, Long Sword and three Obsidian Figurines. Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 10 gp.





The Hidden City

Upper Level Guard Point

After your battle on the bridge you enter into the next room warily. It is a circular room some 30 feet wide with a high vaulted ceiling. Torches flicker and spit oil as the breeze passes over them. Two tall banners rest in supports against the walls. There are four highly polished wooden benches that have been stained black. Three doors exit the chamber at the West, North and East.

The doorway from the bridge leads to a guard point. The guard point is a circular room thirty feet wide. Through the Eastern door are the barracks where another Cyclops is hastily putting on his armour (once he has heard his comrade fighting off the party).

Treasure: The Cyclops has Masterwork plate armour and a Masterwork falchion. This will be mostly useless to anyone in the party unless they are an Ogrun. In a locked chest (DC 20) is a healers kit.

The Northern door leads the corridor listed below. The Western door leads to a small shrine tended by an Evoker. Although the Skorne have no Gods they do worship their ancestors.

Ancestor Shrine

Through the western door of the Guard Point is a Shrine Room. It is here that the Skorne pay their respects to their ancestors, pray for luck before battle and reflect. Tending the shrine is a Skorne Extoller. He is quite elderly and will not put up a fight. He is equivalent to an evil 2nd level Cleric from the DMG. He will rely on spells to defend himself from the party rather than force of arms.

If questioned the Extoller will tell the party in broken, rasping Caspian that there are three persons of note on this level: The Paingiver Tormentor, a Lieutenant and a Mortitherge (Wizard). If the party ask him about his eye he will tell them that the stone allows him to commune with the spirits of the

dead, specifically those who are now Ancestral Guardians.

If asked about more reinforcements (see the conversation with the wounded Praetorian on the Western promenade staircase) he will shrug and say he knows nothing about any reinforcements.

If the party ask the Extoller about the Ghouls he will explain that one of the Paingivers dabbled in an art called Mortithergy. An experiment went wrong and a subject escaped. It is thought this subject died but became undead and started the Ghoul infestation.

The room is triangular and about 30 feet long. At the center of the room is a triangular table five feet long. All around the chamber are broken swords on stands, dusty banners, ruined armour and any number of cracked amulets, split rings and shattered jewels. Kneeling before the alter a figure in black faded robes is lighting two black candles. His forearms are bound in bandages. As he turns around you can see his right eye has been replaced with an obsidian stone. He seems quite unafraid of you despite the fact you outnumber him.

Treasure: Skorne Elite Jade Token, two Obsidian Figurines and an ornate platinum ring (worth 40 gp) Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 10 gp.

The obsidian sphere that is set in place of the Extoller's right eye allows the bearer to use the *Commune* spell twice per day. However the bearer must be a Skorne who has had his eye removed. To a collector the Sphere is probably worth around 5,000 gp.

There is also a block of incense in the room. When lit the incense bestows a +1 AC bonus to anyone who spends 5 minutes meditating in front of it. The person must succeed a Concentration check DC 10 for the insight bonus to take effect.





The Hidden City

Corridor

The corridor is 20 feet long and unlit. There are two doors on each side and one at the end. The first door on the left leads to the training room, it is wooden and not locked. The second door on the left leads to the Paingiver's chambers. It has a wooden door that is locked (DC 25). The first door on the right leads to the torture chamber. It is unlocked. The second door on the right leads to the Officers' Quarters. It is unlocked.

Training Chamber

When the party arrives the Paingiver Tormentor is having an argument with his most hated enemy, a Noble Mortitherge. The Paingiver Tormentor is standing on the balcony above the door when the party enters. The Paingiver Tormentor will watch as the party attack the Mortitherge, quietly laughing as they cut him down. When they have dealt with the Mortitherge he leaps down on them and uses his Sneak Attack on the weakest looking character.

Treasure:

Masterwork Studded Leather,
+1 Wounding Claw Bracers: A wounding weapon deals 1 point of Constitution damage from blood loss when it hits a creature. A critical hit does not multiply the Constitution damage. Creatures immune to critical hits (such as plants and constructs) are immune to the Constitution damage dealt by this weapon. (27,000 gp)
Jade Elite Token: +1 to Fort Saves (500 gp)
Potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, Tumblers Belt: grants a +2 Competence bonus. (1000 gp)

You are surprised to find a square room here after so many circular ones. The floor is stained with a hundred deep scarlet patches. Lining the walls are racks of weapons, Longswords for the most part. Across the room looking at you with a mixture of surprise and rage is a finely dressed Skorne wearing turquoise robes. He begins to chant something and makes alien gestures.

Paingiver Tormentor's Chambers

The Paingiver Tormentor has a luxurious apartment but there is little of value that is easily transportable. GMs should feel free to introduce their own treasure ideas here.

Bride of Paingiver

For GMs that enjoy giving parties moral dilemmas perhaps now is the time to unleash the Skorne Concubine. She's not evil (per se) but she sure as hell ain't pretty or well adjusted. Will the party kill her, leave her to starve or attempt to 'rescue' her?

Of course if you want to skip the 40 minute alignment argument this creates feel free.

Should the party want to try to interrogate her they will need to speak Skorne as she does not know any human languages. She knows the following things;

- The Tormentor has been distracted recently with tales of a battle group in the desert.
- There has been a terrible accident lately and one of the humans died at the hands of an inexperienced Mortitherge. The human then jolted back to life and escaped after killing and eating the Mortitherge.
- If asked she does not know of any reinforcements on the way.





The Hidden City

Torture Chamber

In the torture chamber are no less than three humans attached to upright metal racks. They are shackled at the ankles, wrists and neck. Two are suffering wounds, one is dead.

Before you even open the door to this room you know what lies beyond will be very bad. You can hear screams and the smell of voided bowels and bladders is heavy in the air.

Standing over them are two Paingivers. They have been too interested in causing harm to hear the chaos and combat in the rooms beyond.

When you open the door to this room two lightly armoured Skorne turn around; both wield spiked whips and brandish wicked looking daggers. Manacled to racks are three humans, two men and woman. One of the men is unconscious and possibly dead, the other man and the woman are bleeding from a number of wounds.

The dead man is heavily muscled and has a military unit tattooed on his right shoulder. A Skill check Knowledge: Military DC 15 reveals he once belonged to the Stormblades: one of Cygnar's elite regiments. His name was Darioch Giamati and he accompanied the Intelligence Liason. Since serving with the Stormblades he has become a Warcaster. Darioch was captured after trying to fight off the Titan single-handed. A suit of strange armour sits on a wooden stand nearby:

Treasure: Regular Warcaster Armor
Masterwork Breastplate 850, Hybrid Socket 450,
Heavy Accumulator 1,000,
Energy field (30 hp) 16,000, Turbine 16,000,
Arcane Focus Chamber 4,000
Total 38,000
The accumulator has two charges left.

The wounded people are Haagen Myers, a heavy set, surly man who worked the waterfront of Corvis unloading ships (Commoner 2).

He has nothing to offer the party but is very grateful to be set free. He'll offer to serve one of the characters for a while but has no money of his own.

The woman is a human Bard (4th level) called Evangeline Toras. She is also an accomplice of Harven Dordra and is very relieved to see the party. She explains that it was Darioch's impetuous attitude that was their undoing.

"He was either completely mad or completely fearless." she'll comment.

Also in the chamber are masterwork Torturers tools that give the user a +2 bonus to Intimidate and cause wounds that automatically stabilise unless the user rolls a natural failure. The tools deal D3 damage per Intimidate attempt (100 gp).

Officers Quarters

Another Skorne Lieutenant awaits in this room. He has recently been woken by two frantic servants. Having suited up he waits behind the door to ambush the first person to enter the room.

The servants will only attack if they have no other choice.

As you open the door to this room you see two female Skorne cowering away from you. They both brandish long curved knives. Each of them hisses at you in their guttural language. The room is about 20 feet square and seems to serve as quarters for someone important. There is a large bed, a sturdy stand and a sword rack as well as a deep intricately embroidered rug.

Treasure: Masterwork Praetorian Plate, Potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, two Skorne Longswords +1, Cloak of Charisma (+2) and four Obsidian Figurines. Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 15 gp.

