

HERO QUEST™

Eschaton

Q U E S T



B O O K

Introduction

Whether Ulrik the Fiend was a man twisted by dark powers, or a beast that long ago forced its way into our dimension, his war against the Empire was the stuff of legend. It was said that his prized weapon, the Eschaton, was a gift from the dark gods: the day he finally unleashed it upon the battlefield proved this. The earth shook and the sky cracked. The cosmos cried out in agony. The Emperor's forces were decimated like an arm sweeping the pieces from a chessboard.

It has been ten years since the Imperial Palace fell; ten years since Castle Agony blighted the horizon with its hideous silhouette; ten years since the ever-growing legion polluted three nations with the banner of the Iron Fist, the symbol of the Fiend's undisputed rule.

Any hope of re-establishing human order was ground to dust by the end of Year One. The capital was reduced to smoldering ruin as a morale-crushing symbol of defeat for mankind. The Fiend's ever-present soldiers choke every city with their foul presence, taking whatever they want, brutally enforcing the Fiend's laws, and assaulting anyone who so much as whispers their master's name in vain.

The lord of Castle Agony is more terrible than ever. His mere possession of the Eschaton ensures victory at every turn as his influence spreads like a disease across the landscape. He wears a suit of enchanted armor which renders him impervious to all harm, forged by the Black Dwarves of Ash Mountain. He can (and indeed has, supposedly) defeated an entire human regiment singlehandedly, with and without the Eschaton.

In ten years the nation has sunk into a cesspool of everlasting turmoil...but in all that time the guard detail at Castle Agony has grown lazy and complacent. They are unprepared for an assault of any kind, pampered by their unchallenged control of the land. Now hope glimmers from within the very forge that gave birth to the tyrant's armor: could you build a weapon there that would kill the Fiend and destroy the Eschaton? Perhaps then, with the legion's ranks left in disorder, mankind may take its world back.

Quest Map Guide

The Quest map symbols are color-coded to help you guide the Heroes through these Quests. Here's what the various map symbol color mean.



Gold: This color is used to highlight traps that the Heroes can detect by searching.

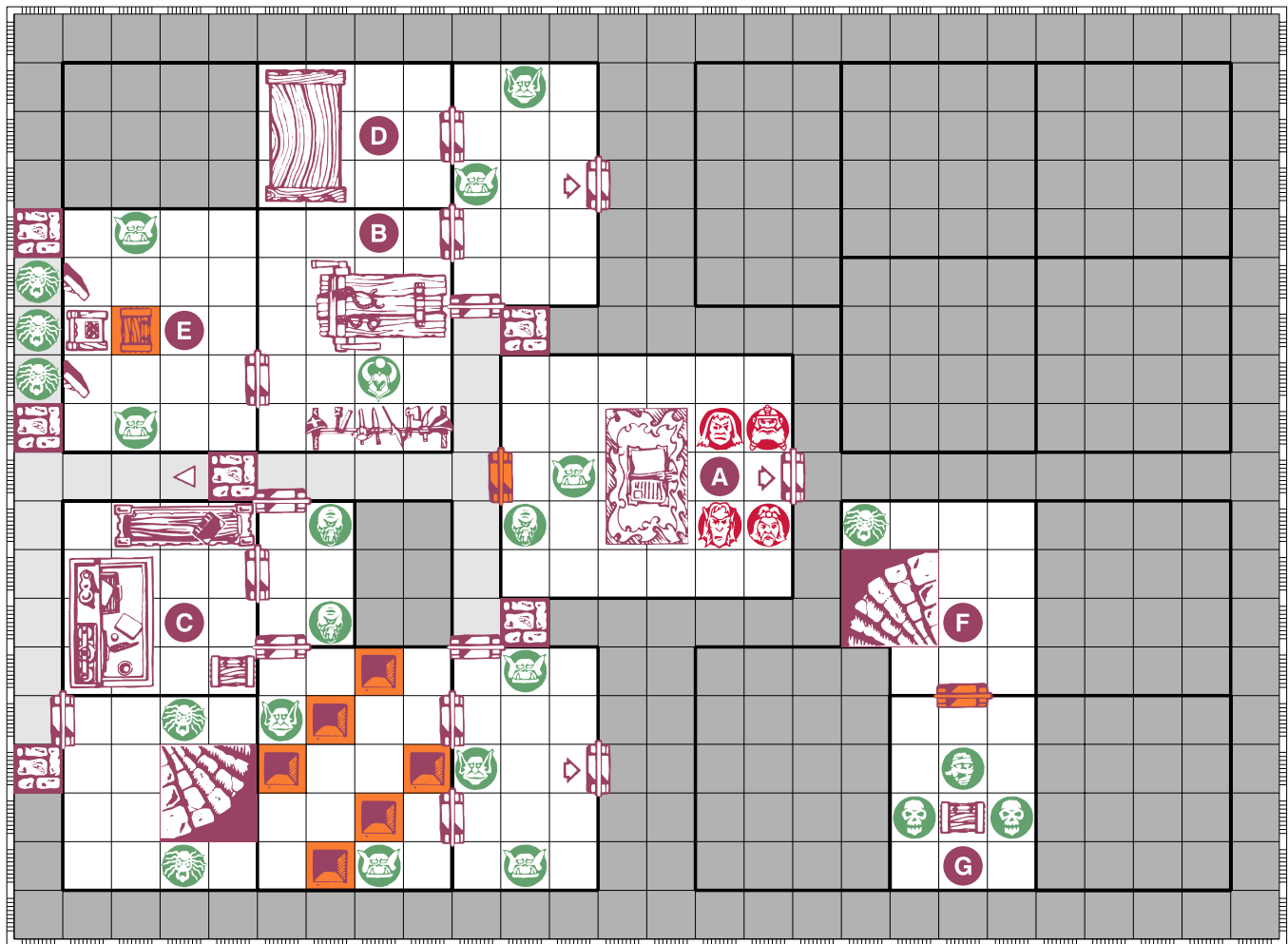


Light Green: This color is used to highlight traps and other hazards that the Heroes can neither see nor detect by searching.



Dark Green: This color is used to highlight monster symbols. See the Monster Chart for actual symbols.

In each Quest, notes prefaced with a capital letter correspond to a matching letter location on the Quest map.



Quest 1

Fort Shriek

The gatehouse of the former Imperial capital is a haven for the Fiend's loathesome legionnaires: the stench of the Badlands hits your stomach like a boulder as you step inside. The subhuman creature behind the registry desk greets you with a

snear full of yellow spade-like teeth and lazily orders you to state your business. He laughs when you tell him you've come for the keys to the city gate. The hulking brute behind him doesn't find it so funny, and lurches forward angrily...

NOTES:

The single-arrow doors are the three entrances to Fort Shriek: the Heroes may use any of them to escape.

All Goblins on this map wield crossbows.

- A** The first Hero to search for treasure finds 75 gold coins and a Potion of Defense on the table.

The trapped door triggers an alarm, which opens all doors connected to the central hallway.

The first Hero to set foot in the main hallway hears a shrill shriek somewhere to the north.

- B** The Chaos Warrior is torturing a poor woman on the rack, the latest of the bored legionnaires' victims. If this room is revealed in fewer than 10 rounds, she is still alive and rescued when the Chaos Warrior is defeated. She thanks the Heroes, then says, "If you are taking arms against the Fiend, then this may help: the wall at the end of the main hall hides a secret passage when pushed.

Please be careful, my heroes!" Then she flees the building.

The stone block she speaks of is the one marked with a white arrow, which any Hero can push west until it moves clear of the map and reveals the rest of the corridor. Without the woman's help, a search for secret doors in the hallway yields nothing.

- C** The first Hero to search for treasure finds two throwing axes on the desk (worth 2 attack dice) and a strong Potion of Healing in the chest. The potion allows the drinker to roll 2 red dice and choose the higher result.
- D** The first Hero to search for treasure finds on the table a fresh leg of lamb and a chalice of wine, each worth 1 Body Point when consumed; and a Scroll of Courage, which casts the Courage spell when read.
- E** The first Hero to search for treasure finds the city gate keys in the chest, along with an amount of gold equal to 4 red dice.

The secret doors in this room only open when the chest trap is triggered, but they can be found with a search for secret doors or traps. The Heroes can seal



Wandering Monster in this Quest: Orc

NOTES continued:

the doors with a successful trap disarm, but they must roll 2 dice without any failures.

F

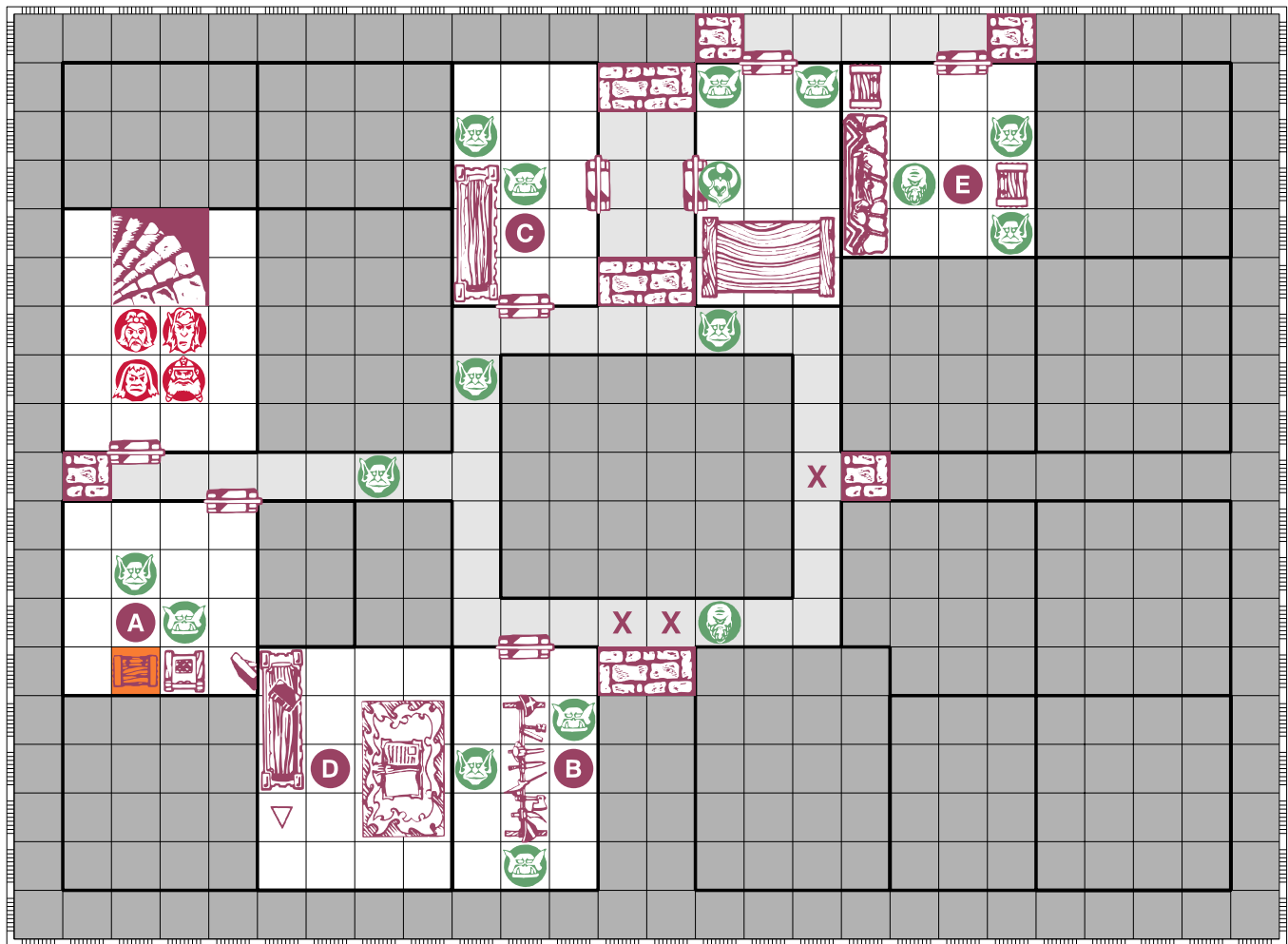
The door is trapped with a Fear spell, which blasts everyone in the room when the door is opened.

G

The first Hero to search for treasure finds inside the chest a detailed map of the roads through the Ash Mountains, and a sack of blue gems worth a total of 50 gold coins.

The Heroes claim victory when they escape Fort Shriek with the city gate keys.

The Heroes may **ONLY** buy equipment before the next Quest if they also have the Ash Mountains map.



Quest 2

Forge of the Black Dwarves

You know little about the Black Dwarves, except that they are skilled smithies and brutish opportunists, extorting their brother Dwarves and always serving the winning side of any conflict. It was here in their accursed lair that they forged and

enchanted the invincible obsidian armor of Ulrik the Fiend. You must gather enough obsidian ore to make a broadsword at the forge, then use the Black Dwarves' sorcery table to bless it with the same unbreakable enchantment.

NOTES:

The Black Dwarves are used in this Quest.

The spaces marked X are obsidian ore deposits, which can only be mined by a Hero who attacks them with a pickaxe. Each time an ore deposit takes damage, the miner rolls a red die and collects that many nuggets. The Heroes need 12 nuggets to forge a broadsword.

When a Hero mines ore on his turn, he rolls for Returning Patrols (see "House Rules to Aid Players").

- A** The chest is rigged with a trap that destroys its contents. The first Hero to search for treasure finds two Potions of Healing (unless he activated the trap).

The secret door is blocked by the bookcase in Area D, which cannot be moved by hand.

- B** The first Hero to search for treasure finds enough pickaxes for all Heroes and then some. The pickaxe is only worth 1 attack die.

The first Hero to search for secret doors or traps discovers that one pickaxe is a disguised lever: pulling it moves the bookcase in Area D south 1 space. If Area D has not yet been discovered, tell the Heroes that they hear something heavy move in the next room and note the bookcase's new location.

- C** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a Potion of Strength in the cupboard.

- D** The Heroes recognize the sorcery table when they enter this room: the Fiend's armor was enchanted here!

The first Hero to search this room for anything discovers there is no trace of the enchantment used on the Fiend's armor! The Dwarf enchanter cowering behind the table tells you that the Fiend confiscated it after his armor was completed, and it is now hidden somewhere within Castle Agony.

The first Hero to search for treasure finds a Scroll of Reinforcement on the bookcase, which replenishes an exhausted spell when used.

- E** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a toolkit in the chest.



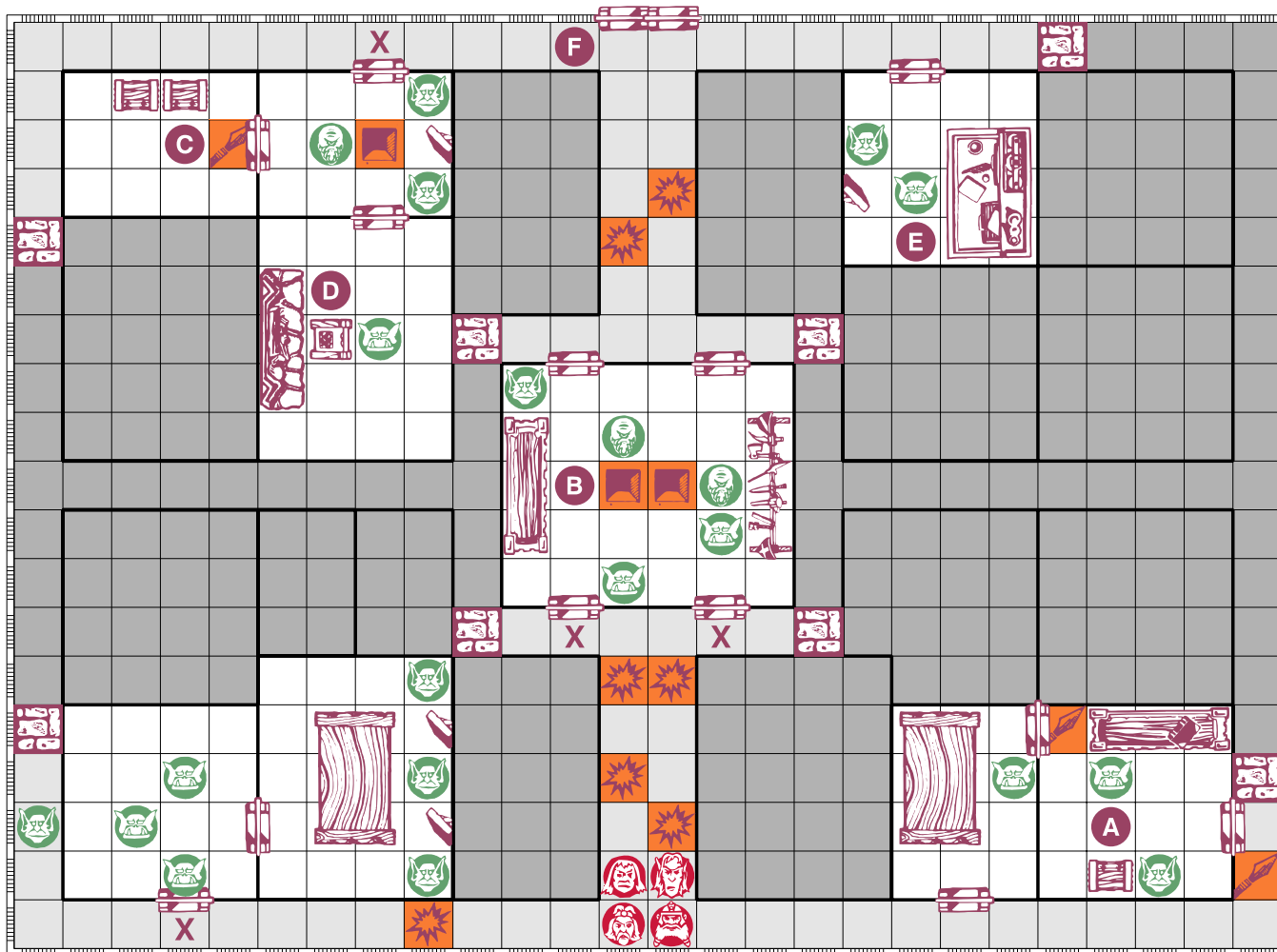
Wandering Monster in this Quest: Churl

NOTES continued:

The forge of the Black Dwarves burns with a sinister glow. Once the Heroes bring at least 12 nuggets here they may begin forging the sword: the Hero in possession of the ore stands at the forge and hammers it with 3 attack dice (each time he does, he rolls for Returning Patrols). The ore defends on white shields with 2 defend dice, and has 3 Body Points. When its Body Points are gone, the obsidian broadsword is complete. It has the same stats as a normal broadsword.

The Heroes claim victory when they return to the stairway with the obsidian broadsword.

The Heroes may buy equipment before the next Quest. However, warn them that they now approach the border of the Badlands: once they cross it, they will be unable to purchase supplies until they return to friendly civilization.



Quest 3

Hailstorm Bridge

The Badlands border lies ahead, and sprawled before you is the only way in: the accursed bridge named for the hail of arrows that greets all outsiders who attempt to cross it. You've heard tale of a select few who managed to pass the gauntlet...but

those travelers were surely gods in disguise, not mere men like yourselves. Perhaps with a bit of stealth, you shall cross into the Badlands with minimal pain...

NOTES:

All Goblins on this map wield crossbows.

The north and south edges of the map are cliffs overlooking the gorge, while the central corridor represents the bridge. All rooms containing monsters or furniture are buildings. All dark areas of the map are open gorge: Heroes and monsters can see (and therefore shoot) anything that isn't hidden behind the walls of the surrounding buildings. Zargon should indicate which rooms are buildings at the start of the Quest. Stone blocks do not block line of sight.

The "starburst" traps are tripwires that activate the bridge alarm: when any one of these is tripped, Zargon may open any secret door and/or any normal door marked X that he chooses.

- A** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a small black flask. The Hero who takes it rolls 1 red die to determine what it is:

6 = Potion of Healing worth 4 Body Points.
5 = Potion of Defense
4 = Potion of Strength

3 = Heroic Brew

1 or 2 = Orcish Rum (+1 defend die on next defend roll, -2 Body Points unless drinker is Dwarf)

- B** These pit traps open simultaneously when either one is sprung.

The first Hero to search for treasure finds an Orcish crossbow on the weapon rack: it is poor quality and breaks when the user's attack dice roll a black shield.

- C** The treasure chests are locked and cannot be opened without the keyring. Once they are unlocked, the first Hero to search for treasure finds 35 gold coins in the first, 25 gold coins and a dagger in the second.

- D** This Orc is the captain of the bridge guard, represented by the Orc with the large sword. He wears a shiny helmet pilfered from another hapless adventurer, which is looted by the Hero who slays him.

- E** This Orc is the bridge keymaster: he carries a keyring, which opens the chests in area C and the bridge gate in area F. The keyring is claimed by the Hero



Wandering Monster in this Quest: Orc

NOTES continued:

who slays him.

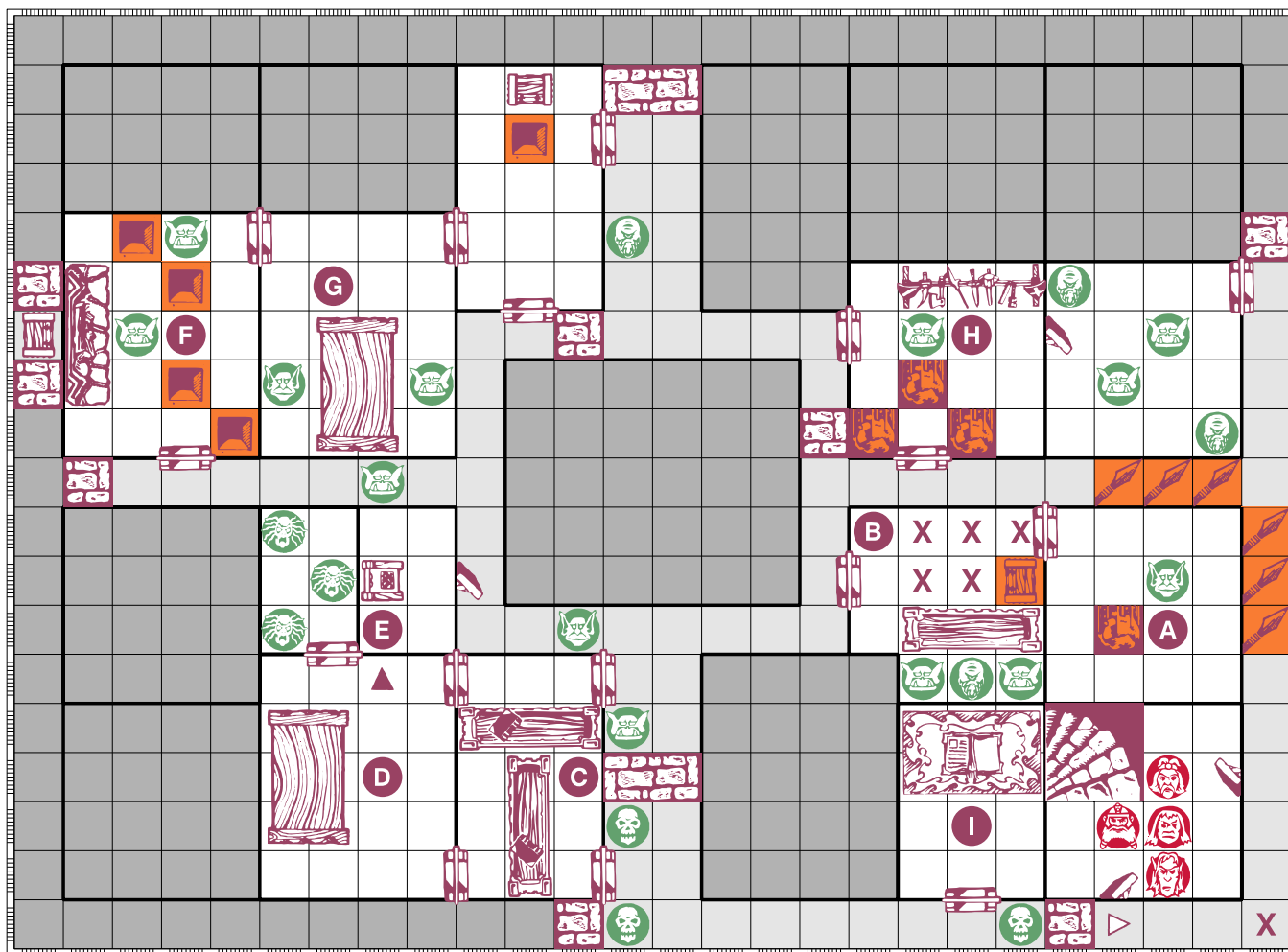
The first Hero to search for treasure finds a Potion of Healing in the desk and a sturdy lantern staff in the corner of the room. The staff itself can be used as a weapon; the lantern can be thrown as a crude firebomb for 3 attack dice.

F

This gate leads to Castle Agony, but it is locked. Only the Hero with the keyring may open these doors.

The Heroes claim victory when they escape through the bridge gate with the obsidian broadsword.

The Heroes CANNOT buy equipment before the next Quest.



Quest 4

Castle Agony

Favoring the element of surprise, you scale the mountain perch of the castle and slip through a window in the rear, wasting no time as you fly up the stairs to the second level. As you climb, you feel the confidence trickle from your feet with every step:

the Fiend will have his Eschaton, and he may not care if he levels his own castle to slay the lot of you. But his minions have stored the Empire's plundered magics for ten years in this castle – the enchantment you seek must be here!

NOTES:

- A** The first Hero to search the halls for anything (or to fall victim to a spear trap) notices murder holes lining the walls, through which the spears appear.

The spear traps lining this room are not expended when activated: the spears are in fact wielded by the Goblin in Area A, who is attacking the Heroes as they pass the murder holes. When area A is revealed by the Heroes, the spear traps instantly disarm.

- B** The monsters behind the cupboard are not revealed initially when the Heroes find this room. When a Hero attempts to disarm the trapped chest, search for treasure, or move the cupboard, the ambush activates: the cupboard topples forward and crashes onto the spaces marked X, revealing the monsters hiding behind it. Any Hero standing on an X rolls a combat die, losing 2 Body Points for a black shield and 1 for anything else; the cupboard is then removed from the board.

The chest has a poison gas trap that damages all Heroes in the room for 1 Body and Mind Point. The first Hero to search for treasure finds 15 gold coins inside the chest.

- C** The first Hero to search for treasure finds that the bookcases hold many magical tomes, but none are useful to the Heroes' cause.

The bookcases both rotate 90 degrees at the center when activated by the lever in area E: if a Hero or monster is standing in area C when the bookcases are activated, he is pushed out the nearest door.

- D** The first Hero to search for anything notices an arrowslit in the wall: looking through it reveals the tiny throne room (and vice-versa).

- E** The first Hero to search for anything discovers that the throne has a disguised lever on it, which activates the bookcases each time it is used. If area C hasn't been discovered yet, tell the Heroes they hear a mechanical grinding sound nearby.

- F** The first Hero to search for secret doors discovers one inside the fireplace: opening it reveals the hidden chest, which contains a Ring of Return and gems worth a total of 80 gold coins.

- G** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a jug of ale on the table. Drinking it



Wandering Monster in this Quest: Orc

NOTES continued:

has the combined effects of a Potion of Healing and a Heroic Brew, but the drinker's defend dice are reduced by half the next time he defends.

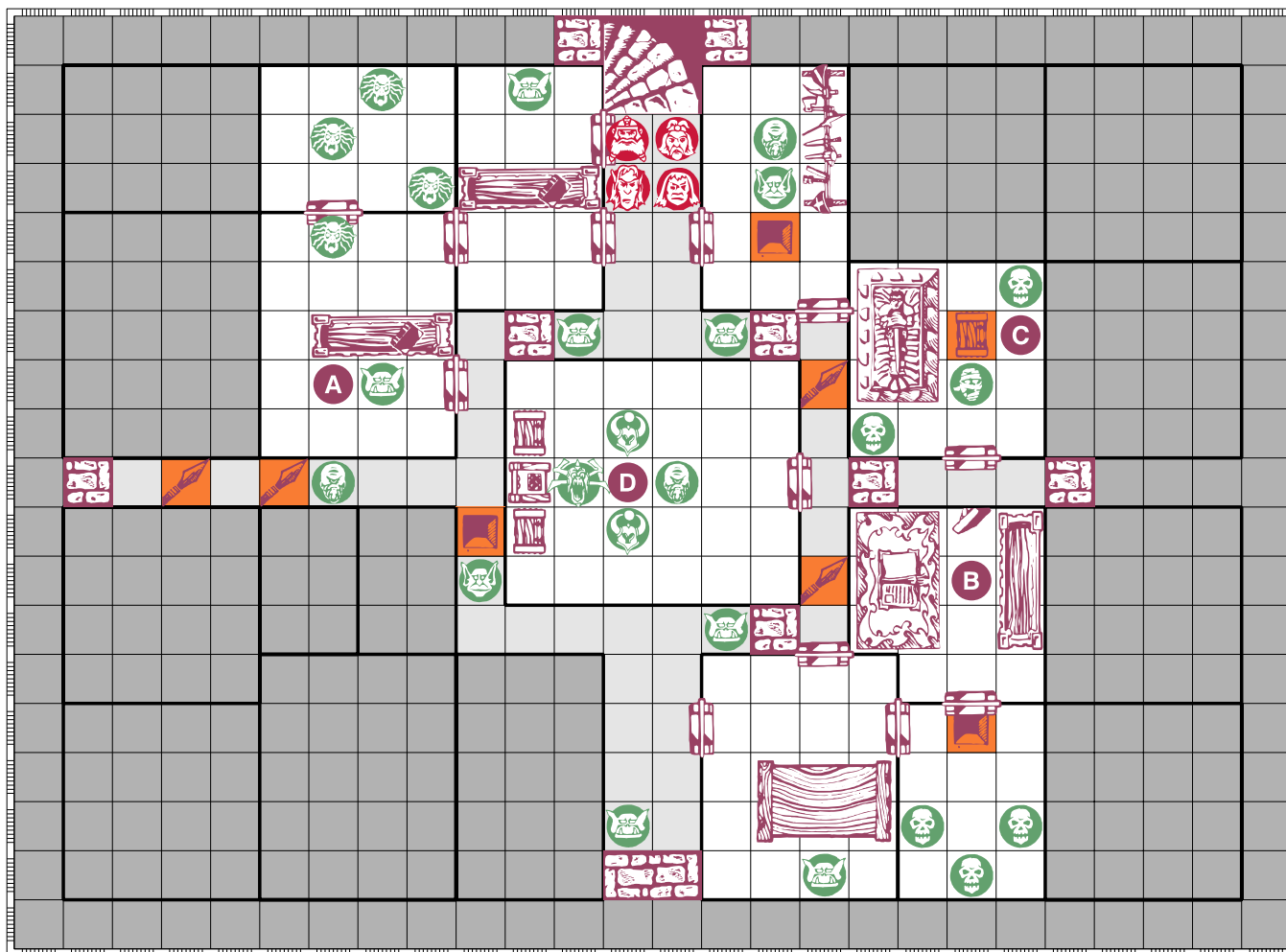
H The first Hero to search for treasure finds a flail on the weapons rack: the wielder can attack with 3 dice normally, or 4 if he forfeits his next move.

I The first Hero to search for treasure finds bountiful magic spells on the sorcery table, including the enchantment that blessed the Fiend's armor! The Hero who brings the obsidian broadsword here automatically enchants it – it is now the Fiendslayer!

The first Hero to search for secret doors finds a slide-switch on one end of the table. When activated, the stone block marked with the white arrow slides to the space marked X.

The Heroes claim victory when they return to the stairway with the Fiendslayer.

The Heroes CANNOT buy equipment before the next Quest.



Quest 5

The Iron Throne

The highest floor of the castle is deathly silent, save a low, inexplicable hum that grows louder as you penetrate deeper into the castle. This is the lair of the Iron Tyrant, the Fiend who haunted your childhood nightmares and devastated your

hometown. Your weapons tremble in your hands. This is it: the ten-year old tower built from the bricks of misery and turmoil finally crumbles today. If not, then it is the miserable end of your own pitiful existence.

NOTES:

- A** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a small dram on the bookcase: it is a Potion of Defense.
- B** The first Hero to search for treasure finds an open book on the table: he touches the pages absently and the words on the page vanish, blessing him with the effects of a Potion of Defense.
- C** The chest is trapped: when opened it casts Summon Undead in area B.

The first Hero to search for treasure finds 65 gold in gems; and a crystal skull artifact, a one-use item that casts Summon Undead. The undead servants will fight for the caster until the end of the turn, then they crumble to dust.
- D** When this room is revealed, read the following aloud:

"Gazing at last upon the Fiend in the flesh, you are unable to decide if he is man or beast. His left hand idly swings a two-headed flail that could easily knock bricks out of the castle walls; on his right hand, a golden gauntlet hums with diabolical power – could this be the accursed Eschaton?"

The Fiend's yellow eyes fall upon your obsidian sword – glowing with the same awful power as his own armor – and a low growl rolls out of his throat. You can't tell if he is angry or afraid. He says nothing as he points a massive, gnarled finger at you, and his minions brandish their weapons in reply."

Ulrik the Fiend (Gargoyle)

MOVEMENT	ATTACK	DEFEND	BODY	MIND
7	3	6	1	5

Ulrik the Fiend can only be damaged by the Fiendslayer. In addition, if a Hero fails to roll any white shields against the Fiend's attack, his Body Points are reduced to 0. If the Fiend lands any hits against another monster, that monster is destroyed.

When the Fiend is defeated, read the following aloud:

"The Fiendslayer bites through the obsidian armor like wet bread, tearing the life from the Fiend's twisted body in one stroke. He howls, staggers, and collapses in a bloody heap."



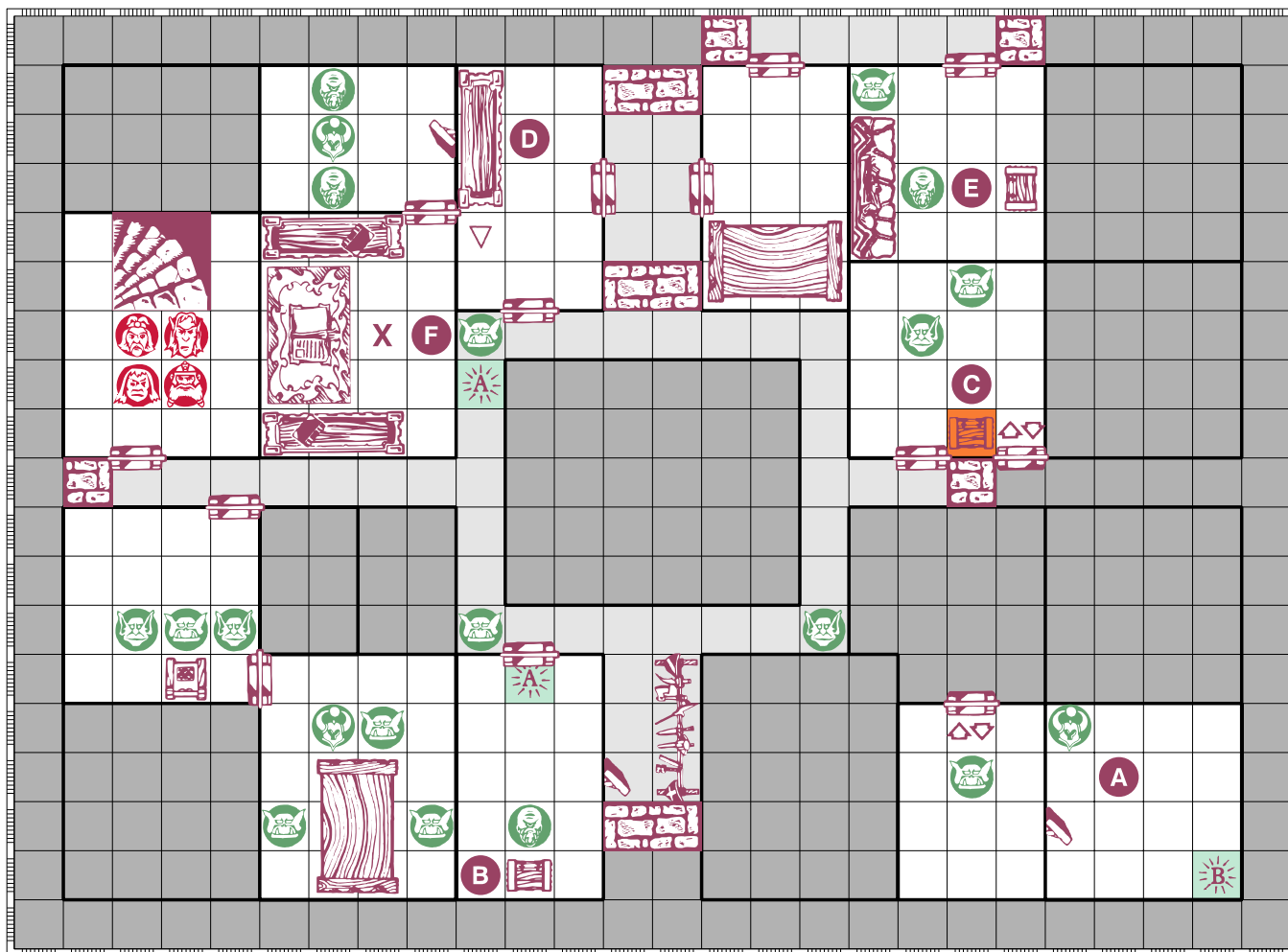
Wandering Monster in this Quest: Orc

NOTES continued:

The dull hum in the air subsides. You watch in astonishment and horror as the Eschaton's golden sheen corrodes into a brittle black crust: it crumbles to ash, and the Fiend's body does the same, leaving only a bleached skeleton behind."

The Heroes claim victory when they return to the stairway after slaying Ulrik the Fiend.

The Heroes may buy equipment before the next Quest.



Quest 6

Return to the Forge

The death of their leader has left the Badlands hordes in disorder, but to crush their morale completely you must destroy their sacred symbol of victory: the Ebony Spire. It would take a battalion of catapults to topple the Spire, which you don't have.

You require a very special weapon...the sort that can only be devised by the eldorman of the Black Dwarf clan, Fafnir Goldrake. With his patron dead, he might be equally willing to help you or kill you.

NOTES:

The Black Dwarves are used in this Quest.

When a Hero or monster steps on a Teleport Trap marked A, he instantly appears at Teleport Trap B. This is a one-way trip.

The double-arrow doors are connected via staircase.

A The Einerjar is a statue and does not attack. However, if there are no undead in the room when a Hero appears at teleport trap B, a wailing alarm sounds and the statue casts Summon Undead!

B The first Hero to search for treasure finds 65 gold coins in the chest.

C The first Hero to search for treasure finds 30 gold coins and a Potion of Healing in the chest.

The chest is trapped with a chattering skull: when triggered, a magical bouncing skull leaps out of the chest and harries the victim by biting his ankles and screaming suddenly in his ears, reducing every future die roll the

victim makes by 1 success. Every turn the victim must roll a red die for each of his mind points (not affected by the skull): if he rolls a 6, he tricks the nuisance into going away for good.

D The first Hero to search for treasure finds 2 Heroic Brews in the cupboard.

If a Hero searches for secret doors, he slides the cupboard 2 spaces south, revealing a secret door behind it! However, doing so knocks the Heroic Brews out of the cupboard, and they smash to bits on the floor (unless they were looted first).

E If area E is among the last three rooms revealed by the Heroes, they find the Black Dwarves forging an impressive hand cannon, claimed by the first Hero who searches for treasure (in addition to 1 red die's worth of bullets found in the chest). The weapon cannot be used until it is enchanted on the sorcery table.

F Fafnir Goldrake is here. When the Heroes find him, read the following aloud:

"An unnaturally large Dwarf sits at the sorcery table, staring at you all with



Wandering Monster in this Quest: Churl

NOTES continued:

irritation and bewilderment in his beady yellow eyes. He wears fine armor laced with animal fur and his bronze beard glistens with traces of gold. This can only be Fafnir, the Eldorman of the Black Dwarves and patron saint of extortionists.

Fafnir holds up his hands and speaks. 'You're the most persistent bloody fools I've ever heard of! You robbed me of my wealthy patron in Castle Agony, and now twice you've invaded my house! I'll give you any bloody thing you want if it means I never have to set my weary eyes on you again!'

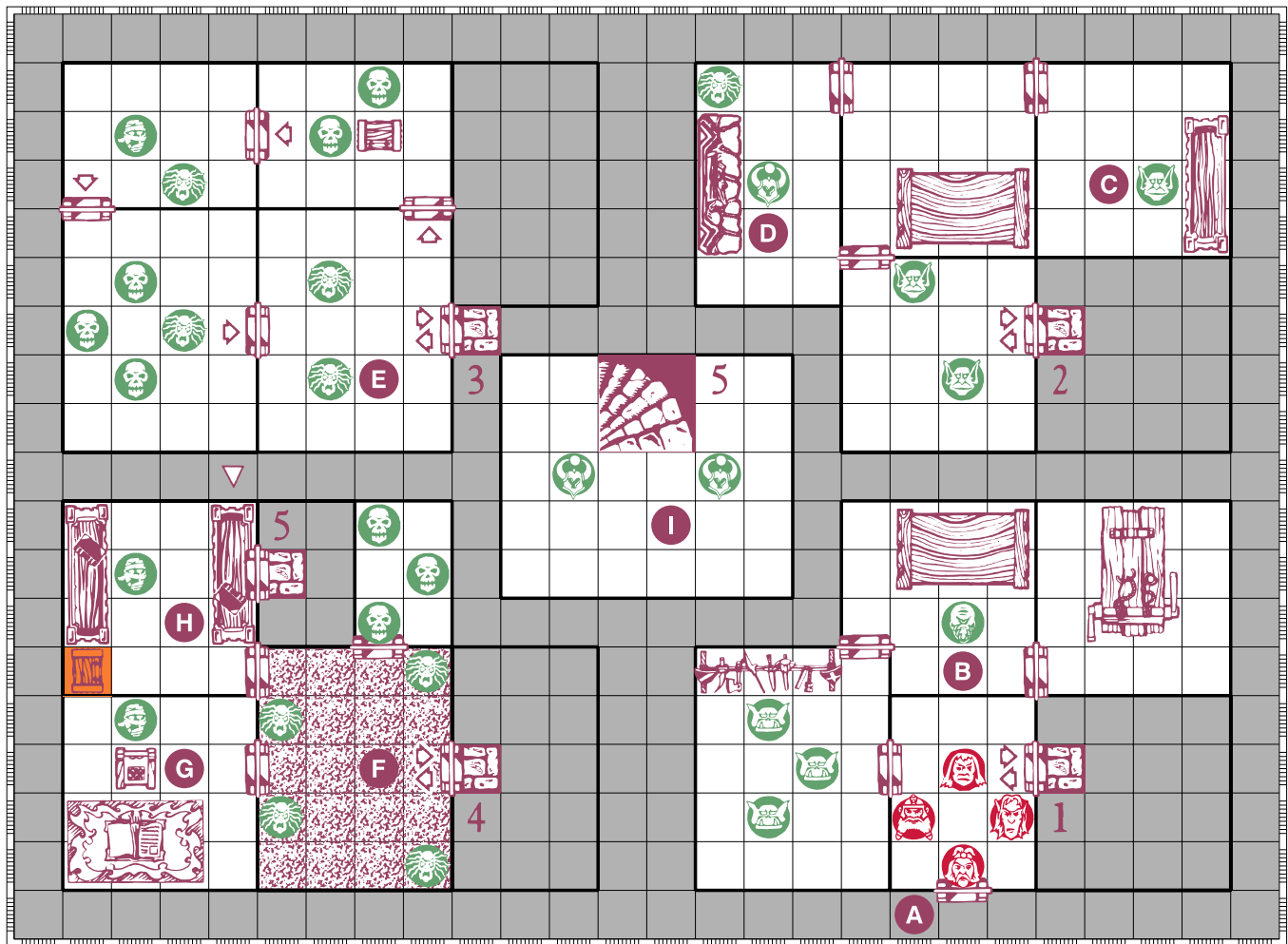
After hearing your plan to destroy the Ebony Spire, Fafnir digs through his collection of artifacts for several minutes, then finally tosses into the nearest Hero's arms a melon-sized, rune-etched metallic sphere and matching disc.

'A siege weapon of my own design,' he says. 'The Skyhammer. Say the command word and the ball flies into the disc with enough force to shatter a fortified wall. Put the disc on the bottom floor of the Spire and the ball on the roof before you activate it, and the tower will crumble.'

As he talks, Fafnir stealthily reaches for another artifact. The moment you take your eyes off him, he mutters a command word and is suddenly gone – he has escaped, but you now have the Skyhammer!"

The Heroes claim victory when they return to the entrance with the Skyhammer.

The Heroes may buy equipment before the next Quest.



Quest 7

The Ebony Spire

The Ebony Spire was erected in tribute to the Fiend's triumph over the Empire, standing so tall on the horizon it can be seen from the Imperial Palace. The hordes of the Badlands pray to it at dusk and dawn, and before every battle. The very sight of it

invigorates them and drives each Orc to fight with the strength and ferocity of ten Orcs. If the Spire remains, the Fiend will become the martyr of the Badlands – only by toppling this monument will the Fiend stay truly dead.

NOTES:

Heroes can travel to floors 1 through 4 by using the double-arrow doors: they must do so one floor at a time, counting the stone block behind each door as a single space. The stairway (floor 5) connects likewise to the door hidden behind the bookcase on floor 4.

- A** The south door is the entrance to the Spire. The first half of the Skyhammer must be placed anywhere on this floor.
- B** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a fresh leg of lamb and a stone book on table. The leg of lamb restores 2 Body Points when eaten. The stone book seems heavy and useless, as it cannot be read.
- C** The first Hero to search for treasure finds 4 unlabeled bottles in the cupboard containing green, blood red, white, and amber liquids. The Heroes do not know what these potions do initially...though they can always drink them to find out!

The green potion is medicinal: it works like a Potion of Healing.

The blood red bottle is a kind of fruit juice that tastes very sweet, but only restores 1 Body Point.

The white bottle is toxic: the drinker rolls a red die for each of his remaining Body Points and loses 1 Body Point if he fails to roll a 6. Once a 6 is rolled, the poison is purged from his system.

The amber bottle is liquor that leaves the drinker drunk for a number of turns equal to his maximum Mind Points. While drunk, the Hero's movement is reduced by half and his attack dice only hit on a white shield, but his defend dice are increased by 1.

- D** The first Hero to search for treasure finds a stone book on the fireplace.

- E** The single-arrow doors are one-way only: once on the other side, the Heroes appear to have walked through solid wall! As such they cannot "look" through any door they stepped through.

There is a key chained to the wall on the space marked X, which opens the chest. The chest must be moved onto the key's space before it can be opened:



Wandering Monster in this Quest: Fimir

NOTES continued:

any Hero can carry the chest like he would a fallen Hero (see "House Rules to Aid Players"). The unlocked chest yields a stone book.

F This room is flooded with unnatural fog. While in the fog, Heroes cannot "see" anything more than one space away. Once an object or monster in the fog has been stumbled upon, the Hero must roll 1 combat die before he can interact with it, missing if he rolls anything but a white shield.

G The first Hero to search for treasure finds a stone book on the sorcerer's table.

H The first Hero to search for anything notices that each shelf of the east bookcase is packed end-to-end with books... except for the middle shelf, where four books seem to be missing. When all four stone books are placed here, the bookcase swings against the wall like a gate (the hinge is marked with a white arrow), revealing the door behind it: this door connects to the stairway on the fifth floor.

The first Hero to search for treasure finds several documents, among them a list explaining the uses of the four bottles from area C. There is also a precious statue in the chest worth 35 gold coins.

The chest is trapped with poison gas: all Heroes in the room lose 1 Body and Mind Point.

I The roof of the Spire is guarded by two Chaos Warriors. The Heroes must place the second half of the Skyhammer here after defeating them; otherwise the warriors will attack the Skyhammer, destroying it if they score any hits.

Once both halves of the Skyhammer have been placed, it automatically activates – contrary to the lying Fafnir's explanation! The Heroes have only five turns to evacuate the Spire before the Skyhammer pulverizes it and everyone inside!

The Heroes claim victory when they return to the entrance after placing both parts of the Skyhammer.

Conclusion

The sudden absence of the Ebony Spire is noticed immediately all across the nation. It isn't long before the news reaches the capital: of the Fiend's death, of the chaos befallen Castle Agony, and of the Eschaton's glorious destruction. The Iron Fist legionnaires, once smug and secure in their master's power, now begin to notice their inferior numbers against the human population. By the following winter they are all but completely driven back across the Badlands borders. The Black Dwarves and their evil weapons have wisely disappeared from Ash Mountain, their former stronghold the only testament that they ever lived there.

Human society reorganizes under their new leaders: the long-lost Imperial heirs, and the elders who knew the Empire in its former glory. In time its armies will be strong enough to cripple the remnants of the Iron Fist and tear down Castle Agony brick by brick, perhaps with their heroic Fiend-slayers leading the way.

But that is another story...

All surviving Heroes gain 100 gold coins and may permanently increase a stat of their choice by 1. Heroes who perished in the course of the campaign may pass an heirloom (one item from their inventory) to a new Hero of the same class.