DNH2

Fifth Edition Fantasy

Part Two of the
Haunting of Hastur Series

The Buried Zikurat

by L. Kevin Watson

An Adventure for Characters Levels 6-8



The Buried Zikurat is an adventure for 3-7 characters level 6-8 and designed for use with most versions of the best known fantasy roleplaying game. It is optimized for the fifth edition and for 5 characters at level 7.

Dark Naga Adventures
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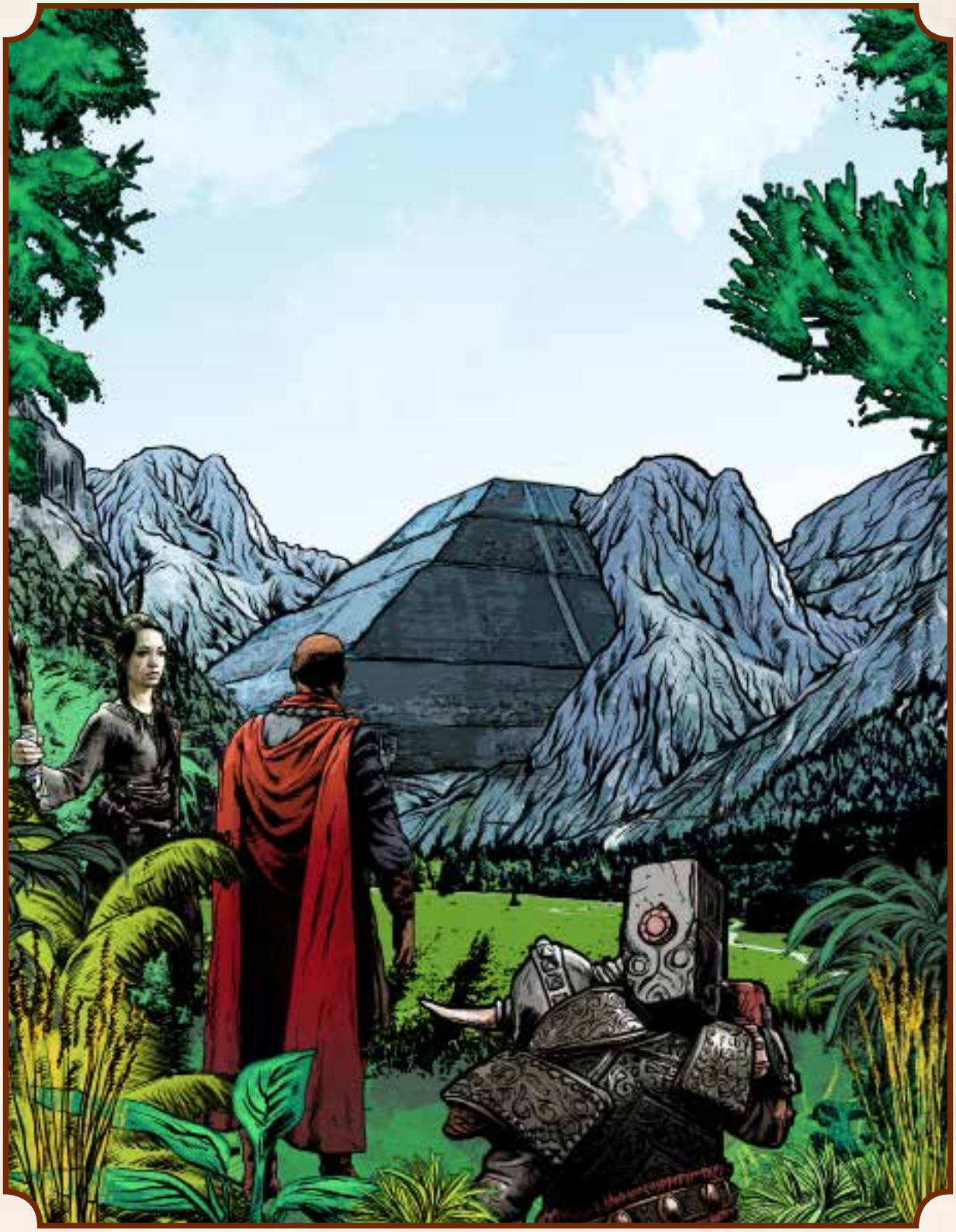
The Buried Zikurat



DNH2:
The Buried Zikurat

Dark Naga Adventures

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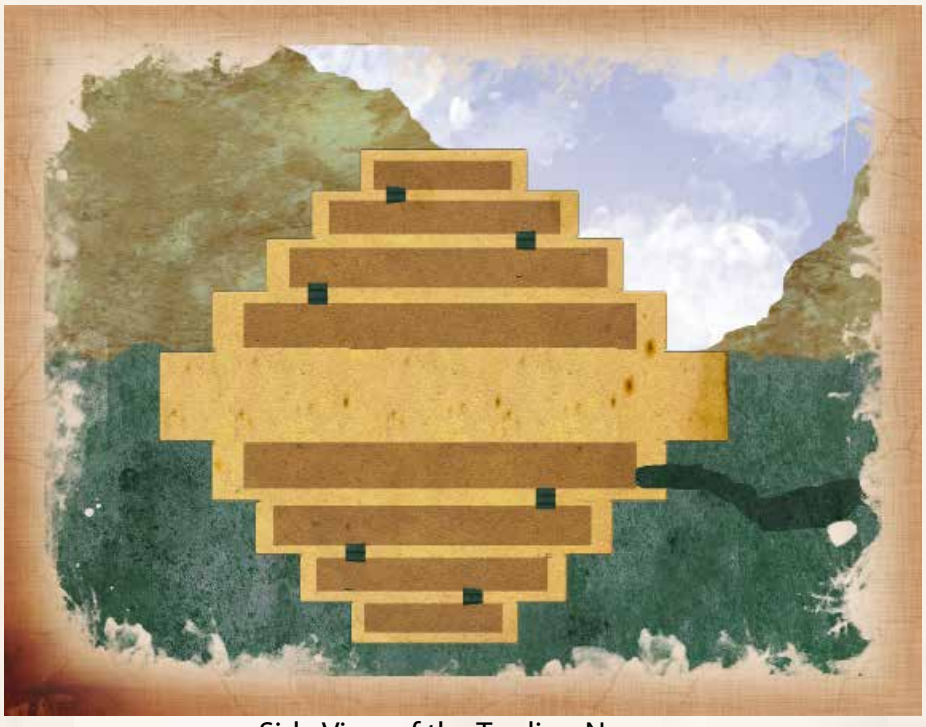
The Buried Zikurat

DM Background – An Atypical Adventure

Several thousand years ago, strong, light, and rare metals, adamantine and mithril, were found in the deep earth. This happened early in the First Age of Man; Man, Dwarf, Elf and Halfling learned to make spectacular weapons and armor from these new metals. The gear quickly became valuable due to its strength, durability and ability to hold enchantment. Man's thirst seemed unquenchable. One tribe of Elves, concerned that Man would destroy the subterranean realm in pursuit of the metals and minerals of the deep earth, moved into the Formene, elvish for "The Lands of Night", and negotiated with the native denizens to become wardens of the subterranean realm and its resources.

The new wardens adapted to their subterranean home, and became known as Formene Elves (commonly shortened to the Formene). The Formene used powerful wards and illusions to make every known entrance difficult to find, much less access. They balanced the closing of the Formene by creating trading Nexuses throughout the land. These Nexuses allowed controlled quantities of resources to enter the surface world while shielding the Formene from exploitation.



Side View of the Trading Nexus

About the Formene

The Lands of Night exist predominantly in the roots of mountains. The rock there produces large voids, caverns and other key elements necessary to have a vast subterranean civilization. The roots of mountains are rarely more than 80 miles wider than the mountain ranges and extend throughout the crust of the planet, an average of 30 miles thick. The continent of the Five Kingdoms has two large mountain ranges, along the east and west coasts, and three medium ranges, two of which are spurs of the larger ranges, and one that sits to the north of the west coast range. All of them are thought to host Formene kingdoms, and legends of tunnels connecting them abound.

At these locations, they traded goods, knowledge (mundane and arcane) and, rarely, services with the surface dwellers.

The land changed them as much as they changed the land. Over a century, the founders adapted to their new world. These adaptations changed their senses, their biology, and their relations with nature. Adapting to a world without sun made them strangers to surface elves, but allowed them to form the many native cultures of the Formene into a confederation of common interests, trade and eventually civilization, protecting them from future invasion. See Appendix 3: The Ecology of the Formene Elves.

Fifteen hundred years ago, the cult of Hastur was poised to take over the lands of man. The Formene elves closed and secured the trading Nexuses, effectively sealing off the Formene from the surface. The Nexuses

never reopened and were mostly forgotten when the First Age of Man ended a few centuries later. Some legends persist, exaggerated and distorted by the dark ages. Legends can rarely be trusted to be completely accurate.

During the intervening years, the Nexus near Caford was buried under a large sheet of clay due to regular, heavy seismic activity during the dark ages between the First and Second Ages of Man. The sheet exceeds 100' in thickness and covers hundreds of acres on the west side of the Batun mountains. In this region, clay is mined for ceramic production. Two months before the adventure starts, the miners exposed a strange stone structure which was revealed to be a step pyramid (the trading Nexus). After a month of digging, and trying to discover the origins and purpose of the strange pyramid, the mining foreman sent a messenger to Meawold seeking help.

The Situation

There is little conflict in this adventure. It is more of an investigation than a treasure or monster hunt. In fact, this adventure has the ability to be played without bloodshed, which is rare. All doors within the Nexus are locked, some with mechanical locks, others with magic puzzle locks. For puzzle locks, a panel opens next to the door, and the party is presented with four to ten controls. The controls themselves vary from lock to lock. Within the adventure, these locks are symbolically defeated using challenges from the Book of Puzzles (BoP) or other suitable challenges. The BoP contains riddles, logic puzzles, math puzzles and cryptograms of varying difficulty for the players to solve. Solving them opens the locks. Within the game, each lock is opened by positioning knobs, buttons and sliders to the correct positions. If the challenge is answered incorrectly three times or the lock is attacked, a number of Nexus Guardians spawn from the lock and attack the party. The guardians have randomized special abilities. The abilities can be the same for all guardians of a given lock, or different for each guardian at the GM's discretion. See the Bestiary for a table of random special abilities.

The Nexus is presented with all puzzle locks in working order, and with the guardians appearing after three failed attempts. Changes to align the adventure with your party are encouraged. For those desiring more combat, for some or all of the locks, either allow only one failed attempt or have the locks attack the party immediately when triggered. The locks that act in this way have suffered from age degradation and think the three permitted attempts have been mostly or completely used up. If you, the GM, feel that pure logic puzzles are not a great match for your players, a change of this nature might alter the adventure to better suit their playstyle.

Throughout the Nexus the party finds, among the trading records, a number of opportunities for power, riches and exploration at the Formene capital city of Talos. At the base of the Nexus is a Formene elf named Sherin Po-thole who teleported here to both greet and challenge the party. He explains the lockdown and fills some of the gaps regarding the history. During the conversation he recognizes that the surface races have faced and defeated the forces of Hastur, and offers the party access to the Formene and the city of Talos. The city has determined it's ready to resume interaction with the surface. Sherin provides supplies needed to survive in the Formene and thus travel to and around Talos. *Boots of the Formene*, *Cloaks of the Formene* and *Rings of Elvenkind* will make expeditions in the Formene more survivable. Without these items, navigation through the Formene is nearly impossible for surface peoples. There are few landmarks, numerous hazards, and ferocious predators.

Player Background

If the party completed "The Lost Temple of Forgotten Evil":

While the party is being celebrated in Meawold for their defeat of Hastur's Aspect in Boldon, Edmur, Minister of Internal Affairs for Meawold receives word of the discovery, and determines that his heroes of Boldon should be the team to investigate. He approaches them at breakfast one morning.

If the party is new to the "Haunting of Hastur" series":

A courier from Edmur in Meawold finds the party resting and enjoying life after an adventure and invites them to the Royal Court at Meawold. If they accept, upon arrival they are treated to the hospitality of the Duke and access to many of the splendors of Meawold before being approached at breakfast by Edmur.



Sage Alfred, Expert on First Age
Artist: Adam Schmidt

The Breakfast Meeting

Edmur finds the party at breakfast and holds a private conference with them. He tells the party that about two months ago, the clay miners near Caford discovered something in their mine. Over the course of a month, they excavated about 20% of a zikurat, or step pyramid, from the stone base to the top. During the excavation, they discovered what appears to be an entrance and the miners attempted to open this possible entrance, but their efforts were ended within an hour by the mine foreman, knowing that Meawold would prefer to send their own investigators. The foreman sent word to Meawold that they needed help with the next wagon train headed from the mine. Edmur is sending the party to be that help. He asks the party to travel to the Caford clay mines and undertake two major quests: Discover the origins of the zikurat and determine if it is a threat to Meawold. He offers each party member 1000gp and favored status within the Meawold Court.

He also advises the party to consult with Alfred, a jovial, witty sage with a penchant for sharing the sweets he makes. He can tell the party about two known zikurats. One is a temple; legends are unclear as to who the temple was devoted to and even more ambiguous as to the location. The other is mentioned in a partially destroyed scroll about a trading post in the Batun mountains where exotic goods were traded. The zikurat they are going to investigate could be either or something else...

From Meawold, Caford is a week's travel. From Caford, the step pyramid is an hour's ride or a two-hour walk. A letter of introduction from Edmur to the mayor of Caford, Altes, provides the party with sufficient authority to access the town, the strip mine and the surrounding areas.

About Caford

Caford is a mining town of about two thousand people. Only about ten percent of them are not active in mining operations. The biggest mine is the copper mine about an hour by foot to the north. The majority of people in Caford work there (eleven hundred), the balance either supports the town (one hundred) or works in the clay pit mine (five hundred). Like many mining towns, it has a boom town look, but has been a growing town for over a century. Minimal effort is invested in the town; all the energy is expended at the mines. Most of the accommodations are little more than flop houses with large common rooms, overpriced food, and watered down beer and ale. As representatives of Edmur, the party is given nicer accommodation, but nice for Caford, not nice in any absolute sense of the word. The local authorities are expecting the party.

The Clay Mine

The clay mine is a pit mine stretching about 250 feet by 500 feet in a rough rectangle and is about 130 feet deep. The miners have reached bedrock at the floor of the mine and have begun expanding the pit to the north. On the east face a wide set of ramps in a switchback configuration allow cart and wagon access to the floor of the mine. Scaffolding is used to ensure safety for those digging out clay. The southeast corner of the zikurat was discovered about two months ago. When it was clear that the smooth pale stone was not a large statue or a displaced stone block, they began digging out the zikurat to gauge its size. They have exposed about half of the zikurat. Only one potential entrance has been found. The top level has a section of stone

that is a darker shade and appears to be a cover stone. While it resembles a cover stone, the miners had no luck moving it aside the one time they tried. No other entrances have been found (three of them are along the base on the north face, still buried under 125 feet of clay). The miners have set scaffolding to allow the party to access the top level and the possible entrance they have found.

The Entrance

The scaffolding leads to the upper level and the possible entrance. There are some tool marks where the miners have tried to open the zikurat. The entrance is a magical effect that is opened with a command word. It can be opened with magic that would open a lock set by a level 8 wizard, an Intelligence (Arcana) skill check (DC20) to probe the magic and extract the keyword, or via brute force (DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check). This will not destroy the entrance, only trigger an opening. The dark stone swings out from the bottom forming a covered deck. A short railing rises from the stone making a 20-foot square area for relaxation and allowing entrance into the upper level of the trading Nexus. The miners could fully expose the zikurat in about ten weeks of mining. If requested, they will agree to do so since it would have almost no negative impact on their productivity.



Top Down View Of The Mine -Artist: Rick Hershey

Quests and Milestones (Adventure Structure)

Major Quests (1500 xp per player)

- Discover the purpose and origin of the zikurat
- Determine if the Nexus is a threat to Meawold
- (Bonus) Convince Meawold to enter negotiations to restore trading relations with the Formene by re-opening the Nexus

The first two major quests are given by Edmur; the bonus major quest comes when the party encounters Sherin Po-thole (Area 80)

Minor Quests (500 xp per player)

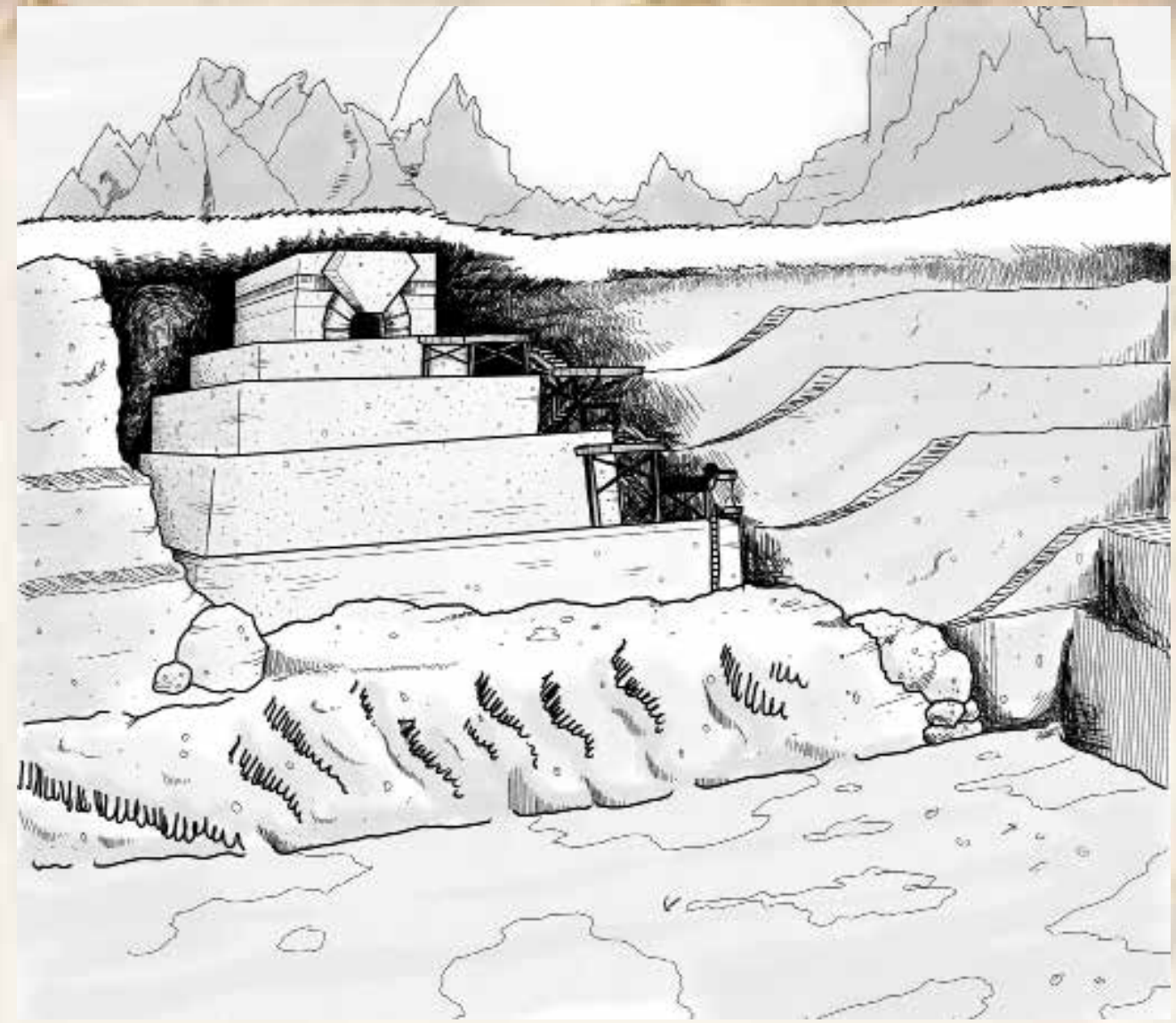
- Enter the Nexus
- Exit the Administrator's office using the teleporter
- Make the trading floor teleportation runes operational
- Use the Formene teleporters
- Discover the path to Talos

The minor quests are significant challenges on par with Medium Puzzle Locks. They are solved through exploration and from reading the letters, journals, and other lore in the Nexus.

Milestones (200 xp per player)

- Find the trading floor
- Discover there are levels below ground
- Enter the Formene Levels
- Discover Sherin Po-thole
- Report to Edmur

The Milestones are discoveries that mark the players' progress on quests. They are comparable to an Easy Puzzle Lock in difficulty and reward.



View of the Nexus from the Top of the Mine - Artist Z. Mann Zilla

The Trading Nexus

The entire Nexus has been sealed for over 1500 years. The upper levels are covered in 1500 years of dust and magically lit unless noted otherwise. The lower levels are clear of debris due to magical custodians that maintain the area. They are also magically lit, but not as brightly. The name of this Nexus is Cafeld in common, Arlond in elvish. This information is found within the game at Area 1, Surface Administrator's Office.

All doors, desks, cabinets, etc. not identified as having magical puzzle locks are mechanically locked (DC 15 Dexterity, thieves' tools apply, or DC 20 Strength (Athletics) to open with brute force).

Magic Puzzle Locks

Several doors, and some desks, are locked with magic puzzle locks. These locks present as a projection in which the person attempting to open the lock must position a number of items to unlock it. In terms of game mechanics, these locks are represented as puzzles such as riddles, logic puzzles, and cryptograms. These can be found in the Book of Puzzles. There are twice as many puzzles of each difficulty level as there are locks to allow the GM to select options that are appropriate for the players. Any other puzzles or similar challenges can be substituted.

All locks identified as magical puzzles have the following qualities:

- The puzzle cannot be cleared with a skill check. Only solving a puzzle from the Book of Puzzles or defeating the Guardians will unlock it.
- Defeating a puzzle via solving the puzzle or destroying the guardians results in XP per the chart to the right.
- Attacking the lock (or what the lock is securing) will result in a number of Nexus Guardians attacking the party. Defeating the Guardians will defeat the lock. See table for quantity.



Administrator Genniver Challey and her kids.
Drawn by Epiccan, her husband.
Artist: Adam Schmidt

Puzzle Guardian and XP chart		
Easy Puzzle	1 Nexus Guardian	1800xp
Medium Puzzles	2 Nexus Guardians	3600xp
Hard Puzzles	4 Nexus Guardians	7200xp

Human Levels

The walls of the human levels are large stones placed adjacent without mortar. They appear magically placed (and were). Dwarves and others with a stone mason background will recognize this fact without need for a skill roll. The stones that compose the exterior walls, floor and ceiling are 5' cubes. The interior walls average a foot in thickness. The stones are anorthosite, producing a wonderful, light toned array of interesting patterns and also serving as a form of art in the Nexus. On the human levels, the teleporters are raised (by 3") runic squares, about 5' on a side, twisted 45 degrees relative to the floor blocks. In the center is a glowing area that indicates the direction: green for down, red for up. On the trade floor, the teleportation runes are pylons due to the additional energy required to move the cargo. A DC 10 Arcana check will reveal a conjuration aura for all of the teleportation runes that are not dead; even the pylons that are offline have the aura.

A4 - Surface Administrator's Level

1 - Surface Administrator's Office

Ingress/Egress: Teleporter to 8 (A3 – Teleporter room), Activation password in room; Terrace to Outside – Enclosed in stone. Inside: activation password in room. Outside: DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check, or DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to force open. Some spells can open it.

Description: 20'x20', 1 green (down) teleporter, desk, chest, chair with ottoman. Desk contains a journal and papers. Walls decorated with art from administrator's home, done by her children. This was the office of Genniver Challey, the woman in charge of the upper four levels of the trading Nexus. She was responsible for regulating trade, settling disputes and collecting trade fees from all activities on the surface levels. Genniver died over 1500 years before present. Spending thirty minutes skimming the journal will allow an Intelligence (Investigation) check (DC 15) or three hours reading it will reveal the command word for the terrace and the teleporter: "denaketya".

Players: This room contains a desk covered in scattered papers with a journal on top, an old wooden chest and a comfortable looking chair and matching ottoman. The inside cover of the journal contains a drawing of the Administrator and two of her children. The walls have faded drawings that look like they were created by children. There is a rune on the floor with a glowing green center.

Lore: History of the Nexus, and clues to the nature of the lockdown protections.

A3 - Trade Support Level

2 – Security Office

Ingress/Egress: Door to 3 (A3 – Watch Staging Area) – medium puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 15', desk, hooks on wall for weapon storage. This was the office of Breda, the last head of security patrols on the surface levels of the Nexus. Walls hold a watch roster and three posters of *Personae Non Gratae*: Willeon Grythey, Simond Koerwe, and (something unreadable) Onweard. The watch roster is unreadable.

Players: On the wall are three posters that are mostly readable, and a faded page with a grid, but the contents are lost to time. A desk holds an incident log book.

Lore: Incident Log – One entry identifies an attempted break-in, their target was Area 4 (A3 – Vault), identified by reference as the room with a shared wall.

3 – Watch Staging Area

Ingress/Egress: Door to 2 – medium puzzle lock, Door to 5 – mechanical lock, Door to 6 – mechanical lock, Stairs down to 11 (A2 – Hallway)



Art from Genniver's Children
Artist: Jeremy Corff

Description: 15' x 45', three doors, stairs down, table with four chairs, hooks on the north wall for weapons, cloaks, etc., mostly empty. A ratty cloak closest to the west wall has a side view map of the Nexus within. This was where the watch gathered before patrols. A guard sat at the table here to filter people from direct access to the head of security and to monitor who came up the stairs. Guards used the table when receiving shift briefings.

Players: A table in this room has some scratches carved into the top by someone who was facing the stairs. A chair on that side shows the most wear. Ten hooks on the north wall are empty except for the west-most, which holds a cloak.

4 – Administrator's Vault

Ingress/Egress: Door to 5 (A3 – Watch Rest Area) – Hard Puzzle Lock

Description: 25' x 15', one door, locked chest, locked vault. Four pieces of art on the walls.

This area was used to store valuables. The door is locked with a magical puzzle. The chest is locked [DC 18 Dexterity (thieves' tools apply) check to open] and trapped [DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) to detect, DC 18 Dexterity (thieves' tools apply) to disarm, 3d10 necrotic damage, DC 16 Constitution save for half] and contains:

- 300sp,
- 800gp,
- 8 small pieces of tanzanite worth 100gp each.

The vault is locked with a hard magic puzzle lock and contains:

- bloodstone statuette worth 250gp,
- soapstone bird cage worth 200gp,
- jade mug with gemstone inlay worth 350gp,
- linen robe worth 250gp,
- fur stole with a gemstone pendant worth 150gp,
- soapstone set of animal figurines worth 300gp,
- *potion of frost giant strength*.

The art on the walls is above average and worth an average of 100gp each.

Players: This room is clearly a vault. There is one chest and one large safe remaining among signs of another half dozen being removed. The chest is about 2' x' 3' and 3' tall, with a flat lid. The safe is about 6' tall, 3' square at the base, and of sturdy metal construction. On the wall are four framed pieces of art depicting life in a different time or land.

5 – Watch Rest Area

Ingress/Egress: Door to 4 (A3 – Administrator's Vault) – hard magic puzzle lock, Door to 3 (Watch Staging Area) – mechanical lock, Door to 7 (Private Meeting Space) medium magic puzzle lock

Description: 25' x 30', three doors, two tables each with four chairs, hooks on the walls, some cloaks on the hooks. This room was used by the watch to rest, prepare for shifts and prepare to go home (similar to a police locker room)

Players: There are worn hooks on the walls with extremely faded grease pencil letters over them, as if they might have been assigned to someone. Wooden tables carry abandoned mugs and a deck of cards. This might have been a gathering area.

6 – Office of the Assistant to the Administrator

Ingress/Egress: Door to 3 (A3 – Watch Staging Area) – mechanical lock, Door to 8 (Teleportation room) – hard magic puzzle lock

Description: 20' x 30', two doors, desk, chest

Hune, the majordomo of the Surface Administrator, worked here. The majordomo's desk has an appointment book and a journal.

Players: This room looks like an office. The desk is orderly; the chair was placed under the desk before the occupant left. A small, neat stack of parchment is held in place by a journal. An appointment book rests on the opposite half of the desk.

Lore: The journal discusses the reasons the Nexus was closed, confusion over why it was not locked down immediately, and the nature of the lockdown.

7 – Private Meeting area

Ingress/Egress: Door to 5 (A3 – Watch Rest Area) – medium puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 40', one door, locked cabinet, table with four chairs. This was a secure meeting place. All participants placed their weapons in the cabinet, and it was locked to ensure that the meetings, no matter how tense, did not end in bloodshed. The cabinet is empty. The locker is empty, but scratches show where long and short swords were likely stored within.

Players: The single egress and complicated lock on the door, accompanied by the weapon locker on the opposite side of the room, suggest that negotiations took place here. On a table sits a blue leather-bound book.

Lore: A journal from a guard and war vet on table discusses a Lost Caravan laden with treasures; it left the Nexus and never made it to Talos.

8 - Teleportation Room

Ingress/Egress: Door to 6 (A3 – Office of the Assistant to the Administrator) – hard puzzle lock



A Magic Puzzle Lock Attacks - Artist: Z. Mann Zilla

Description: 20' x 15', one door, two teleportation runes (one green, one red). The command words for these teleporters are not in this room. The red teleporter leads to 1 (A4 – Administrator's Office). which is where the command word can be found. The green teleporter leads to 72 (F3 – Teleporter Area). The command word for the green teleporter can be learned in 71 (F3 – Office of the Assistant to the Formene Administrator).

Players: This room contains a pair of runes on the floor. One has a green glowing center, the other red.

A2 – Trading Offices Level

9 – Storage Room for Tool Merchants

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 20', one door, four crates of hand tools. This was a storage room shared by some tool merchants. Excess inventory was stored here. The four crates contain wooden handled tools like hammers, hand axes, and wooden mallets. Since wood is not available in the Formene, surface merchants made a good living trading them to the denizens of the Formene.

Players: This room contains four open crates. Each crate contains about a dozen of one type of hand tools: hammers, hand axes, mallets and chisels. The wood handles are well preserved and the steel is still sharp. The lack of a desk or table suggests this might have been storage and not trade space.

10 – Tool Merchant, Rewilh Alys

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 30' x 15', one door, crate, display table. This room is where Rewilh conducted small trades and displayed samples for larger orders. She traded hand tools, particularly wood working tools, into Talos for a long time before the lockdown.

Players: The crate in this room contains nine hand tools with wooden handles: three mallets, three hand axes (the tool, not the weapon), and three hammers. The table is scratched suggesting tools might have been placed on it and picked up with regularity. The table has a note, folded into quarters with a hammer resting on it.

Lore: There is a note to self from Rewilh indicating that she overheard the gem merchant across the corridor telling his son how to deactivate the puzzle trap to the area.

11 – Recorder's Office

Ingress/Egress: Open to area 13 (A2 - Main Hallway)

Description: 15' x 30', open to adjacent area, large desk. This was an office used to record all goods taken into and out of the Nexus by the surface population. All of the vital records and the official seal were removed in preparation for the lockdown.

Players: The desk is empty of papers. There are a couple of dried up inkpots, a few quills, and some sealing wax.

12 – Beer Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 20', door, stack of three beer casks. This room was used by a beer dealer to sample wares and negotiate larger orders. The three casks used to contain three different beers, but today they are largely evaporated, and quite gross. Anyone brave enough to sample one will encounter the following flavors: vinegar, goat, and soured milk, and will need to make a DC14 Constitution save to avoid retching for 1d6 x 10 minutes (as Poisoned). Stirring them releases some noxious odors.

Players: This room has a heady smell of brewed drinks. The three casks have open tops. Each of them contains some liquid, but none are recognizable.

13 – Main Hallway

Ingress/Egress: Stairs up to 3 (A3 – Guard Staging Area), Stairs down to 30 (A4 – Trading Floor, Outer Area), 14 doors (one to each room on this level) about half with mechanical locks, the balance with magic puzzle locks.

Description: 20' wide hall surrounding a 50' square inner office area with some offshoot areas in the NE, SE and SW corners. The NW corner contains a guard station for the watch, and the SW corner contains a table with three chairs at the landing for the stairs leading up from area 30 (A4 – Trading Floor, Outer Area).

Players: The hallway circles around a central core. It links all of the rooms on this floor to each other and the floors above and below. A thin layer of dust uniformly covers the floor.

14 – Spice Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A3 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 20' x 20', small stack of sealed spice casks and a table. The merchant who worked from this office traded in surface spices: pepper, cinnamon, cloves, paprika, thyme and bay leaves—all spices not found in the Formene. The spices are all are stale, but not completely useless.

Players: The room contains several small casks and a table. On the floor and table, traces of cinnamon, paprika and some crumbling bay leaves are found.

15 – Gem Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A3 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 20' x 20', large desk. The desk contains two secret compartments: a false bottom in the upper left drawer and a false back in the upper right drawer. Both are empty. Inventory was kept in them. The main drawer contains a journal of Roguy Mynge.

Players: The room is empty except for a desk and its companion chair, which is knocked over on its back.

Lore: A cave with veins of tanzanite, a gem unique to the Batun mountain region, lies somewhere in the Formene

16 – Wine Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 15', door, stack of three wine casks. This room was used by a wine dealer to sample wares and negotiate larger orders. The three casks used to contain three different vintages, but today, they are largely gone to vinegar, and quite gross. Anyone brave enough to sample them will encounter the following flavors: vinegar, goat, and soured milk, and will need to make a DC 12 Constitution save to avoid becoming dizzy and having their movement rate reduced by half for 1d4 hours.

Players: This room has a heady smell of fermentation. Three casks with open tops each contain some liquid, but none of the liquids look potable.



A Collection of Art from the First Age of Man - Artist: Z Mann Zilla

17 – Tool Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 20', table. This room is where Francis conducted small trades and displayed samples for larger orders. He traded hand tools, particularly metal working tools, into Talos for a long time before the lockdown. There is an enchanted sharpening stone on a table that will give any bladed weapon a +2 bonus to damage for a total of ten hits. The stone will affect four weapons before it is consumed. Also on the table is an unsent letter from Francis to a partner, Larissa.

Players: A table bears marks from heavy things being placed on it and picked up frequently. There is folded piece of parchment with a wax seal on the table held in place by an overrun of wax.

Lore: Letter, discusses plan to break into the Administrator's Vault and lists the erstwhile treasure within.

18 – Grain Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 15', bare. A grain merchant used this room to sample grains for larger orders. The goods that were not evacuated when the Nexus was abandoned were taken by people who looted the Nexus behind those who left when ordered. Careful inspection shows a mixture of rice and wheat grains along the east wall.

Players: This room appears empty.

19 – Art Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 20', large desk, ten canvases rolled, tied, and stacked in the NW corner.

An art dealer worked from this office. Some of the denizens that the Formene Elves watched over enjoyed human art and had the trade imbalance to afford luxury items. The canvases depict art from the height of the First Age of Man, which was akin to the Greco-Roman era of our history. The art is worth 300gp per piece. They weigh 6lbs each.

Players: The desk here is empty. A stack of canvases in the northwest corner are tied with silk rope, three loops per canvas: each end and the middle.

20 – Spirits Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 20', door, chair. This room was used to sample hard liquor (whiskey, rye, etc.) for larger trades. There are marks on the floor where a desk was moved. The chair was nice, but has aged poorly.

Players: This room has one ragged chair near the far wall from the door. Scratches in the floor suggest something large and heavy was dragged through the room, perhaps a desk.

21 – Spirits Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 20', stack of six small barrels. The barrels contain the remnants of beer (three casks), wine (two casks) and rum (one cask). The casks were cheap, and the contents evaporated a long time ago. There is a residue remaining. If ingested, the residue will do 1d10 poison damage, DC 15 Constitution save for half. The residue can be used on a bladed weapon (or ammunition) to add 1d6 poison damage (DC 15 Constitution save for half) to a total of two weapons or ten pieces of ammunition. The poison lasts for four strikes of a weapon or one use of a piece of ammunition. Between two casks, Ernard left a letter to his partner.

Players: A stack of six barrels in this room are stacked three on the base layer, two on the layer above and one on the top. They are held in place with ropes tied in loops around the base. Between the center and left casks on the bottom row is a letter folded in half.

Lore: Letter discussing a test of the Nexus lockdown and how long it took to restore the Trading Floor Teleporters (Area 33A-D) to operation due to the need to adjust the stones at the base of the Teleporters; specifically, they must all be turned to align the base into a continuous loop.

22 – Fruit Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – easy puzzle lock

Description: 15' x 20', four barrels. The barrels contain fungus that eventually starved. Disturbing the fungus results in a choking and sneezing fit and a 10 percent chance to develop a fungal infection of the lungs that prevents natural healing and requires a **Lesser Restoration** spell to cure.

Players: This room has a pungent smell that seems to come from a collection of four barrels.

23 – Exotic Goods Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Door to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway) – mechanical lock

Description: 15' x 30', large desk, chest. The desk and chest were emptied when the Nexus was closed. Neither is locked or trapped.

Players: There is a large desk and a chest, but no other furnishings.

24 – Meat Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway)

Description: 15' x 20', large desk, book shelf. A man, Walton Intes, representing dozens of livestock farms and hunters operated here. Dried and other preserved meats sit on the shelf, remains of product samples. Beef, lamb, game, poultry, and some species of fish were traded by this merchant. The bits of jerky flex a bit when handled. The desk contains a letter.

Players: A book shelf holds about a dozen small objects smelling of salt and meat. They look like bits of salami and jerky. The top of the desk is empty.

Lore: Letter discussing life in the Nexus, and how weird Formene elves are compared to the elves he has seen before.

A1 - Surface Main Trading Level

25 – Trading Log Station

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Main Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 40', large desk, two crates, and a cabinet. This area was used to check trade caravans in and out of the trading floor, and direct them to their goods-specific stall until time for trade. The cabinet contains trade logs going back 50 years before the closure of the Nexus. The two crates are seized contraband, destroyed. The desk is empty.

Players: Two crates contain broken bits of wood and metal. A cabinet contains 50 large matching books (12" wide, 18" tall). A desk sits in front of the cabinet, its drawers slightly open.

26 – West Trading Door

27 – Central Trading Door

28 – East Trading Door

Ingress/Egress: 3 doors to area 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area), 3 doors to the exterior

Description: 20' x 70', metal doors to the exterior will not open because the magic effect cannot create a path from them to air due to the thousands of tons pressing against the doors. If the doors were forced open, the tons of clay would result in a cave-in like event and would fill the passage and about 40% of the room with clay. The metal doors on the interior emit a persistent spell-like effect that tunnels through the stone wall to the exterior doors, similar to a **Passwall** spell. All of the doors are in a large room, which provided a buffer from the trading floor and the exterior doors. Red and green glyphs to the left of each door used to operate them. If pressed, the red glyph does nothing. The green glyph glows for about 5 seconds and goes dim again.

Players: The metal doors each have a pair of glyphs to their left: one red, one green. The red glyph glows; the green is dark.

29 – Caravan Check-in

Ingress/Egress: Open to area 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 15' x' 20', desk, and 25' x 35', large desk, cask. Caravans checked in here and were assigned to the appropriate stall for negotiating trade. Almost all of the outer stalls were merchant stalls for negotiating trade. The stalls (Areas 31-32, 34–39, 41-43) all are open to the Main Floor Outer Area (Area 30).

Players: (29, 31-32, 34-43): These areas are open on one side and show significant traffic and wear under the dust.

30 – Main Floor, Outer Area

Ingress/Egress: Stairs up to 13 (A2 – Main Hallway), 3 Doors in the north wall lead to 26-28 (Trading Doors), opens to 16 stalls (no doors), surrounds area 33 (Trading Floor), which has a contrasting floor stone with flush teleportation runes.

Description: 15' wide walkway surrounds a 100'-wide square area, set of stairs up in the SW corner.

The hallway circles around the trading floor and the stairs to the level above.

Players: This area bridges the stalls and the trading floor. The interface between the corridor and the trading floor is demarked by a change in color of the floor blocks.

31 – Grain Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', desk. Wheat, oats, and barley were traded here.

Players: There are small traces of various grains here.

32 – Fruit Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', two barrels (empty). Citrus, apples, raisins, and other fruits were traded here.

Players: Small bits of dried rind can be seen

33 – Trading Floor

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area), teleportation runes to and from 51 (F1 – Formene Trading Floor)

Description: 70' x 70' with a raised section (1' higher) in the middle 20' x 20'. Each of the four outer quadrants are 25' x 25' with a large runic perimeter and two teleportation nodes (3' tall, 2' diameter pylon versions of the teleportation runes seen in other parts). Each teleportation node has a ring of stone tiles about its base. The tiles are about an inch long and only a quarter inch thick. They can be rotated like dials with some resistance. This is the trading floor. The trade master stood in the central, raised area and, after confirmation from his counterpart in area 51, and the trader before him that both were ready, the two trade masters would execute the trade.

Nodes A and D can be restored. A will only come up from area 51, D will only go down to area 51. To get the nodes functioning, the party needs to align the stones to form a continuous circuit around the node (this can be discovered with a DC 15 Intelligence check, masonry proficiency and proficiency bonus for Dwarves apply) and uncover the commands to activate each node. The *up* node for A, both B and C nodes, and the *down* node for D have too many of the stones around the base damaged to be activated by the party. It would take some very advanced magic and some rare materials to restore them.

Players: This 70-foot square area is demarked by a change in the color of the floor blocks. A central square, 20'x20', is lighter than the surrounding stone floor, and a foot higher. Pylons, two per quadrant of the area, have a dark top. One per quadrant is green and the other is red. None of them glow. The pylons look as if they might be extended versions of the runes seen elsewhere.

34 – Tool merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', large desk, barrel. Woodworking Tools were traded here.

Players: There are wood shavings on the desk and on the floor.

35 – Beer Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

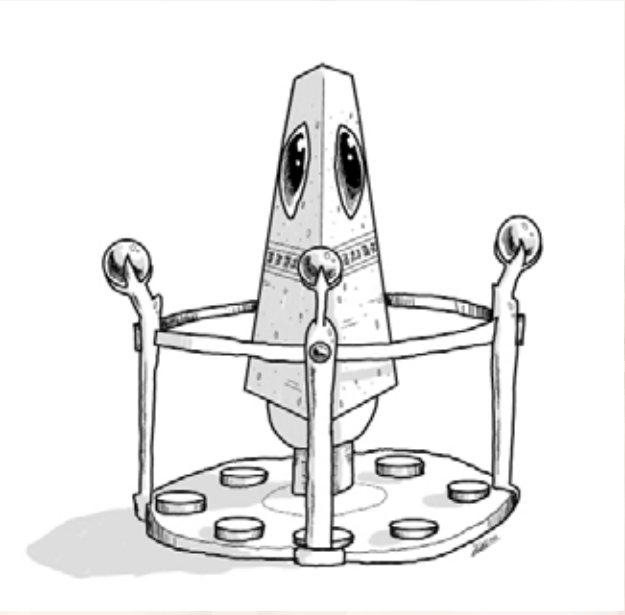
Description: 20' x 25', large desk, beer cask (empty). Meads, beers and ales were traded here. Beer was not popular. This was not a very busy trading stall.

Players: This stall is empty. There are no signs of significant wear. The empty cask appears to have never been used.

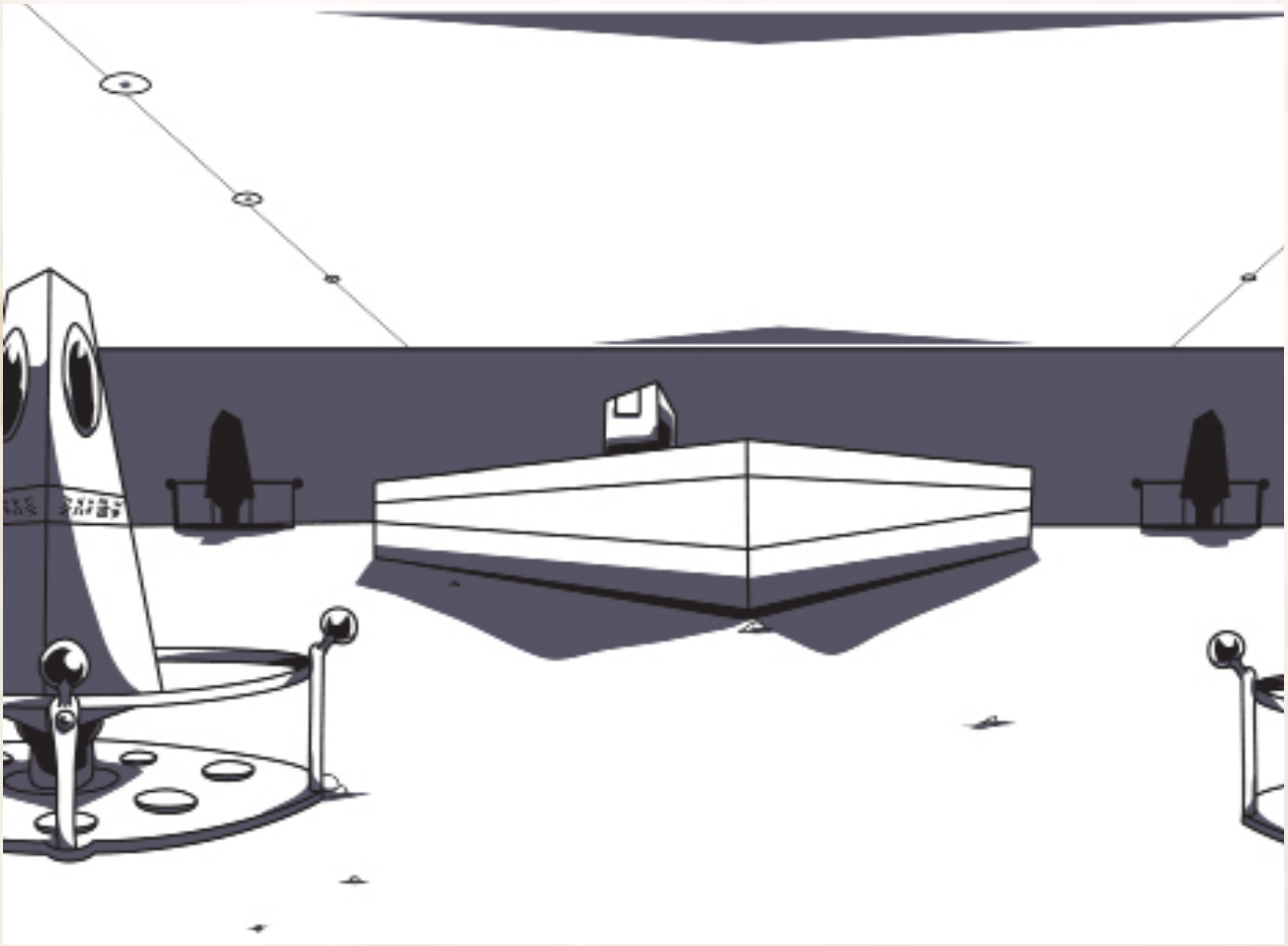
36 – Meat Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', table. Duck, pheasant and chicken were traded here. The meats of the surface were something that the Formene missed from their former life.



Close Up of Teleportation Pylon
Artist: Z. mann Zilla



Nexus Trading Floor - Artist: Jeremy Corff

Players: From the wear, this was a busy and important trading stall. There are a variety of feathers in a small pile in a corner.

37 – Spice Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', desk, cabinet. Pepper, cinnamon, cloves, paprika, thyme, and bay leaves were traded here.

Players: There are some traces of spices in a cabinet.

38 – Wine Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', barrel, crate of wine bottles. Wine was traded here. Wine was the most popular surface drink that could not be produced in the Formene.

Players: This stall is very worn, and there are corks, corking machines and plenty of evidence that this was a very busy trade stall for wines.

39 – Exotic Goods

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 25', large desk, chest. There is a letter, still sealed, at the rear of one of the desk drawers.

Players: No one can tell what used to be traded here from the contents of the stall.

Lore: Letter discussing a (rare) visit to the Formene portion of the Nexus and how strange the Formene elves are.

40 – Trade Recorder

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 25', desk. The person working here kept records of all of the trades between the surface and the Formene. The desk was emptied when the Nexus was abandoned.

Players: This area is devoid of any details that might reveal its original purpose.

41 – Spirits Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', three large barrels. Whiskey, rye, vodka, rum and other spirits were traded here. This was a busy trading stall. The barrels contained spirits that evaporated, and left the barrels open to rot. They will fall apart at the slightest touch.

Players: The casks here smell faintly of spirit alcohol.

42 – Grain Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', large desk. Corn, rice and millet was traded here. There is a journal in the desk written by Kater Arnet.

Players: There are grains scattered on the floor.

Lore: Journal, one entry includes the command word to send the contents of the southeast teleportation quadrant (33D) to the Formene trading floor (51D). Most of 33 is not working, only 33A (Up) & 33D (Down) can be restored. The command word is "Hindra".

43 – Meat Merchant

Ingress/Egress: Open to 30 (A1 – Trading Floor, Outer Area)

Description: 20' x 20', two desks, one crate. Beef, lamb and other livestock were traded here. This was a busy and important trading stall.

Players: There are some meat hooks hanging from the walls and some curing agents like salt and nitrates are on the floor. A crate is coated with dark brown dried smears.

Formene Levels

The Formene levels are maintained by enduring magic that keeps them dust free and well preserved. Spells akin to **Unseen Servant** and **Mend** largely hold time at bay throughout these levels. Several levels have natural passages into the Formene itself. These tunnels are blocked by a series of invisible **Walls Of Force**, except that the one leaving the Formene Administrator's Office (79) is not blocked. This is a factor common to the "Players" description of the areas not repeated for brevity. Not all areas have a "Players" entry due to this consistent element.

When the party crosses from the Surface levels to the Formene levels of the Nexus for the first time, an alarm is triggered. Some Formene hear the alarm in Talos. The players hear nothing.

F1 – Main Trading Floor Level

Ingress/Egress: All of the areas on this level are open to the main corridor (not numbered), unless otherwise noted.

44 – Empty Alcove

Description: 10' x 20', empty

Players: This alcove is completely empty. There is nothing to help identify what purpose this space served.

45 – Alcove

Description: 10' x 20', crate

Players: The crate in this alcove is open and empty. There is no sign to indicate the contents.

46 – Mushroom Merchant

Description: 20' x 25', large desk cabinet – Easy Puzzle Lock. This is where Nellaser, the mushroom merchant, operated. In the top drawer of the desk is a letter from her family in Talos.

Players: There are some dried husks of mushrooms beneath the desk.

Lore: Letter from family talking about the Nexus being closed due to the encroachment of Hastur on the surface.

47 – Caravan Check-In

Description: 20' x 25', locked cabinet. Caravans coming from and going to Talos that enter the Nexus from the north tunnel check in here for recordkeeping. The cabinet is locked with a mechanical lock; it contains ten log books.

Players: Records make it clear that this area was where caravans checked in and out of the Nexus and were steered to the staging area for their specific cargo. It only takes about two minutes of looking at the records to garner this information.

48 – Wine Merchant

Description: 20' x 25', large desk, stack of six casks (in a 3-2-1 stack). The desk is unlocked and empty. The casks are empty, and vaguely smell of exotic fermented Formene mushroom juice, representing a brief craze on the surface world.

Players: This area contains scraps of cork and empty bottles, along with six empty casks and a desk.

49, 50 – Caravan Break Area

Description: 25' x 20', long bench along one wall, or 30' x 20', long bench along one wall. Most goods were not transported between the Nexus and Talos by pack animals. A few used larger cave lizards as pack animals; the majority used carts with a variation of the spell **Floating Disk** to move them. If any player touches it, it will follow them, about 5 feet behind, matching their pace until it is tapped three times by anyone. However, a fourth tap will restart the process. This was where the caravan masters rested while their cargo was being traded before transporting acquired goods back to Talos.

Players: The worn bench provides little clue to determine what this area was used for. There is a 3' wide, 6' long, 3' high box floating in one corner.

51A-D – Trading Floor – Teleport Area

Ingress/Egress: The trading floor is accessed through 51E and 51F (F1 – Trading Floor – Outer Areas) which in turn connect to the outer corridor

Description: 70' x 70', four red and green pairs of teleportation devices flush with the floor. The middle 10'x10' section of the floor is raised. This is the Formene Trading Floor. Like the Surface Trading Floor, the trade master stood in the central, raised, area, and, in conjunction with his counterpart in area 33, executed trades where the goods were exchanged between upper and lower quadrants simultaneously. Unlike the Surface Trading Floor, all of the pads here are functioning. However, with only 2 of the 8 pylons in area 33 capable of being restored to functioning (33A-Down and 33D-Up), only those two pads will function without a lot of work from the wizards of Talos. The pads and pylons work in a push/pull capacity to handle the weights that were transported regularly. If the down pylon in the southeast quadrant was aligned to restore function, the corresponding down rune will glow green. If the party restored the pylon in the northwest quadrant, that corresponding rune will glow red. All other runes are dark, even though the color can still be determined, because the corresponding pylons are out of commission.

Note: It is possible for the party to appear to lock themselves in the Formene part of the Nexus by restoring 31A-Down but not 31D-Up before moving from area 33 to area 51. In area 72, there is a way back to area 8 (A3 – Teleportation Room) and in area 79, they encounter more options (see area 72). If they think they have no way back, run with it.

Players: Eight pylons, surrounding a raised floor.

51E-F – Main Trading Floor – Outer Areas

Description: 25' x 30', tunnels into the Formene. This area connects the main corridor of level F1 to area 51A-D (F1 – Trading Floor, Main Area) and to the tunnels into the Formene. The tunnels are blocked with walls of force (five in each tunnel) as part of the lockdown. (They were blocked with a single wall when surface people were in the Formene portion of the Nexus.) The walls of force might be bypassed by a clever party. To navigate the Formene without support from a Formene elf (see area 79) is nearly impossible and will require some clever thinking to avoid becoming hopelessly lost.

Players: These areas show significant traffic unlike most others areas on this floor.

52 – Mushroom Merchant

Description: 30' x 20', desk – Easy Puzzle Lock. A mushroom merchant had an office here. There are a few dozen little white caps on the floor that have taken root in the dust and some soil that sifted out of the sacks used to transport them. They look interesting, and smell inviting. See Appendix 3 for possible effects of ingesting them. In a lower desk drawer is a letter.

Players: The mushrooms growing in this area provide clues to the use of the area.

Lore: Partial letter to a surface grain merchant discussing using a gold piece standard for trade.

53 – Trade Master's Office

Description: 25' x 20', desk – Easy Puzzle Lock, stack of six casks of water. This was the office of the Formene trade master. In his desk a journal can be found. The water probably was used to refresh the pack lizards that some Formene traders employed. The water is brackish and stale. Also in the desk is a loose sheet of faded parchment.

Lore: Journal where in Findire explains how to align the teleporters in area 31 after lockdown and how to operate the teleporters. On the parchment is the command word for area 55 (F1 – West Teleport Area): "Nelebrie"

54 – Weapon Merchant

Description: 25' x 20', large desk – Easy Puzzle Lock. The desk is scratched heavily. Something heavy was placed on and picked up from this desk a lot. From the effects found in the desk, this merchant traded rare metal weapons. There is a letter about mithril weapon trade among the papers.

Players: Scratches on the desk look like test taps, pokes, and slashes from finely crafted weapons.

Lore: Letter, discusses the huge profits for mithril weapons, and how the humans have a lust for the well-crafted weapons.

55 – West Teleport Area

Description: 25' x 20', teleportation rune flush with floor. This pad leads to area 69 (F2 – Southwest Teleportation Area). The command word can be found in the desk at area 53 (F1 – Trade Master's Office).

Players: The room has two runes in the floor. One has a red glowing center, the other, green.

56 – Gem Merchant

Description: 25' x 20', chest.

Players: The velvet trays in the chest suggest that this merchant traded gems or jewelry. No valuable stones were left behind.

57 – Wine Merchant

Description: 25' x 20', large display case, four bottles. A wine merchant had a stall here. A few bottles of wine remain; all but one have gone to vinegar. The remaining bottle is worth 200gp unopened. There is a thick layer of black fungus on the corks. This fungus is common to wines stored for a long time, harmless, and has no effect on the taste. However, it looks pretty creepy. There are a number of ways that the players can determine, before opening, which bottle is good, and which have gone to vinegar. Let them get creative.

Players: The large wine rack has four corked bottles and half a dozen empty bottles, but is otherwise empty. The corks are fully covered in a black fungus with a hair like texture. Two of the full bottles have sediment and two are sediment free.

58 – East Teleport Pad

Description: 25' x 20', teleportation rune flush with floor. There is no indication of a magic aura. It is dead.

Players: The room has a rune in the floor. Its center is a dull green.

F2 – Trading Offices Level

Ingress/Egress: All of the areas on this level are connected to the main corridor by a door. Doors with a blue sigil under them are locked with Medium Puzzle Locks. The remaining doors are locked with mechanical locks. Two areas are open to the main corridor.

59 – Metal Goods Merchant's Storeroom

Description: 15' x 20', two large shelves, both empty. Table near door. The shipping manifest on the table near the door reveals the merchant here traded in exotic metal goods, but not weapons or armor.

Players: The table has a small stack of papers. The shelves are empty. On the floor are some remnants of packing straps and paper.

Lore: Shipping manifest indicating some of the exotic goods that are available in Talos but unseen in the surface world for over 1500 years.

60 – Northeast Teleport Area

Description: 15' x 20', teleportation rune flush with floor. This pad leads to area 72 (F3 – Teleportation Area). The command word can be found in the desk at area 53 (F1 – Trade Master's Office) and is the same command as area 55 (F1 – West Teleport Area).

Players: This room has a rune in the floor with a glowing green center.

61 – Minerals Merchant

Description: 20' x 15', cabinet. The remains in the cabinet suggest that this was the office of a minerals merchant.

Players: Remnants of feldspar, phosphate rock, potash and quartz can be found in the cabinet.

62 – Antiques Merchant

Description: 20' x 20', ornate desk. In a lower drawer of the desk is the journal of the merchant, Almon. From the journal, the merchandise is obvious.

Players: The desk has drawers down the left side and a lap drawer. The desk is much more ornate than the others in the Nexus (other than the Formene Administrator's Office [Area 79]). The chair is missing.

Lore: Almon discusses a fortune hunter and the steady supply of finds she supplies. Speculates if she has found an abandoned city.

63 – Storeroom

Description: 20' x 20', five sets of shelves. This is a storeroom for one of the merchants (Area 62). However, the inventory has all been removed and it will be nearly impossible to determine who used this room to store goods. The shelves are all empty.

Players: The shelves show no significant wear. There is no debris. This room could have been used lightly or not at all.

64 & 65 – Open Merchant Area

Description: 20' x 20', large desk. This office, open to the corridor is empty of almost all signs of who used it. The desk has mechanical locks typical to the Nexus, but the desk is as empty as the office. A very careful search will produce indications of wooden casks being stored here, suggesting wine or other liquids were stored by the occupant.

66 – Storeroom

Description: 20' x 20'. This room is a twin of area 63 (F2 – Storeroom), including empty shelves.

Players: The shelves show no significant wear. There is no debris. This room could have been used lightly or not at all.

67 – Rare Minerals Merchant

Description: 20' x 20', ornate desk – locked. This was the office of Quennethir, a rare minerals merchant. This is only evident from the contents of the papers in the desk, including a letter instructing someone on the operation of the teleport runes.

Players: On the desk are a dozen sheets of parchment. Most of them discuss rare minerals trading; one is a letter with a wax seal.

Lore: Letter reminding the recipient of the commands to operate the teleporters between F4 and F3, and between F3 and F2.

68 – Mushroom Storeroom

Description: 20' x 20', empty except for a carpet of mushrooms across the majority of the floor. Even after 1500 years of being empty, this room can still be identified as a storeroom for mushrooms. They were a very popular trade item with the surface population. While the smell is overpowering, the room is not a generally hazard. However, the players' paranoia will be fun when it comes to this room. Eighteen species of mushroom in total are scattered about the floor. See Appendix 3 for possible mushroom effects if a player ingests one.

Players: This room has an overpowering smell of decay and mushroom spores. At least five varieties of mushrooms can be seen at a glance.

69 – Teleportation Area

Description: 20' x 20', red teleportation rune. The teleportation rune in this room is flush with the floor, and leads to area 55 (F2 – Teleportation Area). The command to control this teleport rune is the command learned in area 53.

Players: This room has a rune in the floor. Its middle glows red.

70 – Gem Merchant Storeroom

Description: 20' x 20', chest – locked. Like the other gem storeroom, the velvet lined trays in the chest reveal this room was used by a trader of gems or jewelry. Below the trays sits a thick book.

Players: The room is empty except for a chest.

Lore: Book detailing the history of how the elves adapted to the Formene over a century.

F3 – Trade Support Level

Ingress/Egress: the doors on this level open to area 72 (F3 – Main Corridor and Teleportation Area). Most doors have a magic circle indicating they are locked with a magic puzzle. A few suffice with mechanical locks.

71 – Office of the Assistant to the Formene Administrator (Very Hard Puzzle Lock)

Description: 15' x 15', ornate desk, chest – both locked. This was the office of the Assistant to the Administrator of the Formene levels. Akin's job was to ensure that issues were received by the administrator in a timely fashion with the nuisances filtered out, and that Administrator decrees were communicated. In a locked lap drawer, the desk has a stack of parchment documents

Lore: Instructions for operating the Teleporters between the Formene levels and between the Formene and surface levels are mixed in with details of the Administrator likes.

72 – Main Corridor and Teleportation Area

Description: 15' x 20', two teleportation runes (one red, one green). This corridor is narrower than the others. The mild traffic at this depth did not require more than 5' wide corridors. There are two tunnels that extend into the Formene, and eventually lead to Talos. They are blocked with five walls of force as a part of the lockdown. When not locked down, one wall remains to protect the Formene from intruders (and more importantly, to spare surface dwellers from the dangers of the Formene). The green teleportation rune leads to area 79 (F4 – Administrator's Office), and the red rune leads to area 60 (F2 – Northeast Teleport Area).

Players: The tunnels are blocked with an invisible wall. In the northwest part of the corridor there are two runes in the floor. One has a red glowing center, the other a green glowing center.

73 – Trade Leader's Office (Hard Puzzle Lock)

Description: 10' x 25' east to west with a 20' x 10' extension north to south. Ornate desk, large chest – both locked. This large office also served as a union hall of sorts. The trade leader met frequently with the merchants of the Formene levels here. Many of the concerns of the merchants were funneled to the Administrator through this office. Also the trade leader enforced the Administrator's decrees. In the desk, a number of letters, records, invoices and a journal can be found. The letters cover a myriad of mundane matters. The invoices concern tracking the incoming and outgoing trade and the tariffs owed on the trade. The other records track internal concerns: concerns being taken to the Administrator, and decisions being communicated to the merchants.

Players: This room is 'L' shaped, and shows more wear than other areas of the Formene part of the Nexus. Letters, records and invoices cover a journal on the desk.

Lore: Journal contains a passage that deftly explains the concerns that the Formene elves have about the encroachment of the cult of Hastur on the surface world: they fear that man will unite and overwhelm their protection of the Formene, and it will be exploited to extinction.

74 – Private Meeting Room (Medium Puzzle Lock)

Description: 20' x 15', table with four chairs, pegs along the west wall for hanging weapons, cloaks, etc.

The room is lightly furnished, and bereft of valuables, making the enhanced security point to its likely purpose: a secure meeting room.

Players: This room shows signs of more than average wear. The hooks on the walls are mostly empty. Two cloaks remain, as does a belt with a sheathed dagger.

75 – General Meeting Room

Description: 20' x 25', large table, with four benches. The table in the center of this room would seat sixteen for a meal or over twenty for a meeting. The low security suggests it was a casual use room.

Players: This room shows signs of wear and signs that meals were held here. The table has fifteen place settings (plates, eating utensils, and mugs). The benches could hold five people each comfortably, maybe six if they are really friendly people.

76 – Administrator's Teleportation Room

Description: 15' x 20', rubble in the northwest corner, red teleportation rune flush with the floor. The teleportation rune was used for the majordomo of the surface levels and the Administrator's Assistant of the Formene levels to travel freely and to communicate regularly. The Administrators also used these runes, just not quite as often as their seconds.

Players: There is a rune in the floor with a glowing red center. A corner of the room has a partially collapsed ceiling, the rubble from which is on the floor. The ceiling seems safe.

77 – Administrator's Vault

Description: 15' x 20', large chest – locked.

This room has been emptied. It appears to have held nearly a dozen chests, but only one large chest remains today. The chest might have been forgotten. In the chest, the party finds:

Gems: (Total Value of each type)

- 1 x brown diamond (2000gp)
- 6 x deep blue spinel (3600gp)
- 4 x violet garnet (2400gp)
- 6 x tanzanite (3000gp)

Magic Items:

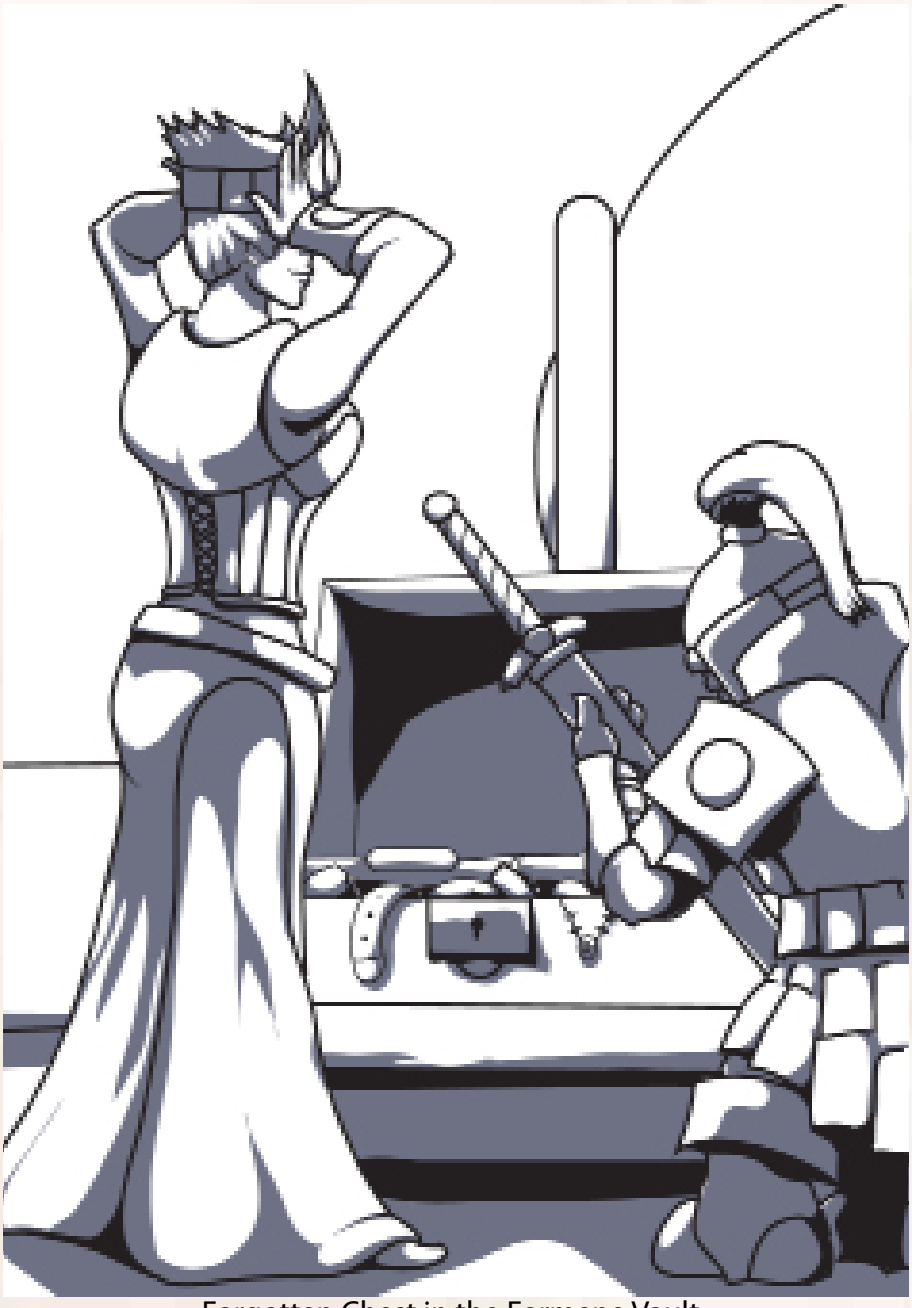
- *(GM's Choice: Weapon) +2*
- *(GM's Choice: Weapon) +1*
- *Robe of Scintillating Colors*
- *Potions: Healing (4), Water Breathing, Frost Giant Strength, Clairvoyance, Superior Healing (2)*
- *Eyes of Minute Seeing*
- *Armor +1 (Half Plate)*
- *Scroll of **Destroy Stone** (New spell, see Appendix 1)*

Players: This room's floor shows some scratches. A single chest remains. It is obviously locked and looks very sturdy and heavy.

78 – Private Meeting Room (Medium Puzzle Lock)

Description: 25' x 10', table with four chairs, pegs along the east wall for hanging weapons, cloaks, etc. The room is lightly furnished, and bereft of valuables, making the enhanced security point to the likely purpose: a secure meeting room.

Players: This room shows signs of more than average wear. The hooks on the walls are mostly empty. Two cloaks remain, as does a belt with a sheathed short sword.



Forgotten Chest in the Formene Vault
- Artist: Jeremy Corff

F4 – Formene Administrator's Level 79 – Formene Administrator's Office

Ingress/Egress: Teleport Rune flush with floor leads to 72 (A3 – Main Corridor and Teleportation Area), tunnel to the Formene.

Description: 20' x 20', Teleportation Rune, ornate desk, bookshelf full of books, scrolls and loose parchment, comfortable chair. The office of the Administrator, Celadir, has the nicest desk in the Nexus and a luxurious reading chair, which is well worn from the Administrator's use. The bookshelf is full of scrolls and books. One of the books is a history of the elf move into the Formene. When the party enters the room they hear a cry of agony from somewhere down the passage into the rock.

Players: The room looks almost like time has stood still, like much of the Formene levels. With no dust and no rot, the room is nearly in the condition it was left by the occupant. The natural cavern passage into the Formene, unlike others from previous levels, is not blocked with spells. A pained yell comes from down the tunnel.

Lore: History of the Formene and account of a tribe of elves moving in the Formene.



Office of the Administrator - Artist: Adam Schmidt

Beyond the Nexus

The passage from 79 (F4 – The Formene Administrator's Office) into the Formene has no barriers. A few yards down the narrow passage the party discovers a Formene elf. The elf is half embedded in rock. There was a partial cave-in and a significant amount of rubble obscures the teleportation pad. The elf teleported to the Nexus responding to the alert that the seals had been breached, and ended up embedded in the rock. He is dead (see sidebar: Saving Sherin), and the party has less than an hour to learn from him what they can before his magic fails and he fades from the world.

- The elf is Sherin Po-thole; he is a Formene elven wizard who teleported from Talos to the Nexus to investigate the party entering the Formene levels of the Nexus. He is tall for an elf at nearly 6 feet, and has orange eyes, pale skin, and pale hair. He is in a great deal of pain, and consequently talks very slowly.

- He tells the party that when they teleported from the Surface Trading Floor down to the Formene levels (most likely the Formene Trading Floor), an alarm was triggered. He teleported here in response to that alarm to challenge the party. If more than half of the party played through "The Lost Temple of Forgotten Evil", he will sense that they have faced and defeated an aspect of Hastur, and will welcome them to the Formene as brothers. The Formene elves are ready to make contact with the surface world again. To enable the party to travel to Talos and beyond under the protection of the Formene Elves, the wardens of the Formene, Sherin reaches into his pack and provides the party with three items each. These items are a combination of signs of the party's protected status and magical adaption to the environment: *Boots of the Formene, Cloak of the Formene, Ring of Elvenkind*. See Appendix 2 for details. Sherin directs the party to follow some specific signs to Talos only visible when wearing these gifts and tells them they will be welcomed and provided with the education necessary to explore the Formene on their own. The adventure continues in *DNH3 – Talos, City of Mystery.*

- If the party has not played *DNH1 -The Lost Temple of Forgotten Evil*, the elf is less inclined to open the Formene to them. A party dominated by good aligned characters whose motivation comes more from exploration and assessing the danger to their community than from lining their pockets with gold would be welcome. A mostly neutral aligned party with similar motives would be tolerated. A mostly evil aligned party, with any motive, would be very unwelcome. The GM is free to invent intermediate quests, and other challenges to earn entry to Talos. Sherin will be dead, but another can come replace him when the party returns after their challenges, one who might escort them to Talos and chaperone them until they prove themselves worthy.

Saving Sherin

The party may be inspired to try to free Sherin from the stone and heal him. Short of a wish spell, this is not possible. He is already dead. Currently, he is using powerful magic to stay alive long enough to determine the party's motivation and if they are worthy of being the first surface visitors to Talos. The damage done when he teleported into stone is beyond any healing magic. Converting the stone to something less damaging will not reverse the trauma to his internal organs. Were he a lesser wizard, he would have died instantly when he teleported unto solid stone. His power allows him to cling to this world long enough to complete his mission.

Surviving the Formene

Without the gifts from Sherin, entering deeper than a few hundred yards into the Formene will result in the party wandering with an infinitesimal chance of finding their way to Talos, and a large chance of dying if they do not turn back. Navigating the Formene is as challenging as surviving it. Circumventing the walls of force before encountering Sherin will likely end with the party turning back or becoming hopelessly lost.



Sherin Po-Thole's Final Mission - Artist: Adam Schmidt

Bestiary

Nexus Guardian

Medium Construct, Neutral

- **Armor Class 18** (Construct Hardened Skin)
- **Hit Points 52** (5d10 + 25)
- **Speed** 40 ft.
- **STR** 22 (+6) **CON** 21 (+5) **All Others** (+1)
- **Saving Throws** Str + 9, Con +8, Others +4
- **Skills** Athletics +9, Perception +6
- **Damage Resistance** Blunt, Piercing, Slashing (including magical weapons)
- **Senses** Passive Perception 16
- **Languages** Elvish
- **Challenge 4** (1,800 XP)

Actions

- **Special Attack: see Table to right. (GM can roll per individual or per group)**
- ***Multiattack.*** The guardian makes two attacks (any combinatoin of two actoins, including Special Attacks, melee attacks and Energy Bolts.
- ***Light-axe.*** *Melee Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft. *Hit: 12* (1d12 + 6) slashing damage.
- ***Energy Bolt.*** *Ranged Attack:* +8 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit: 17* (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Nexus guardians are the chosen defenders of the Formene Nexus, coming into existence when a puzzle lock is disturbed.

Nexus Guardian Random Ability Table

D12 Result	Special Ability
1	Each attack does additional 1d6 cold damage and target must make DC 10 Constitution save or be SLOWED (half move, save ends)
2	Each attack does 3d10 necrotic damage (replacement); DC 14 Constitution save halves damage
3	Guardian doesn't have a weapon. Casts **Magic Missile** at will as if from a level 5 spell slot
4	On critical hit, target takes no damage but is phased into another dimension, DC 15 Wisdom save to return
5	On hit, the target must make a DC 10 Dexterity save or be blinded until the end of their next turn
6	If both attacks hit, the Guardian can make a bonus attack using **Energy Bolt** (This is not at disadvantage, unlike typical ranged attacks in melee)
7	After being hit, the Guardian's AC increases by 3 until the start of its next turn. This effect does not stack
8	Each hit reduces target's STR by 1d4. At STR 0, the character collapses. Recovery takes a long rest
9	Successful hit requires target to make a DC15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid being disarmed
10	Successful hit can become a Feint, which negates target's Dexterity bonus to AC until the end of their next turn
11	On a successful hit, the attacker can grant a +2 AC bonus to its nearest ally that it can see that does not currently enjoy this benefit until the start of the attacker's next turn.
12	Each successful hit requires target to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) save (DC10) to avoid being knocked prone

Appendix 1

New Spell
Destroy Stone

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 2+ actions (One to aim, one to execute each cube)

Range: 20 feet (to the first cube. Further cubes require no movement)

Components: V, S, M (a small stone and a pinch of rock dust)

Duration: Instantaneous

With the small stone in your dominant hand, and the dust in your other hand, a thin, pale blue beam springs from the stone framing a 10' cube ahead of you. You move your hand to aim the projection, and when ready, rotate the hand holding the dust until the dust hits the ground at your feet. When the first dust speck touches the ground a 10' cube of stone disintegrates.

Everything in the 10' cube is gone, except a few grams of stone dust. Any minerals, or other materials in the cube that are not magical are destroyed. This includes organic material. However, stone must be the target for the spell to work. The organic material must be incidental.

This spell is most typically used in siege actions. But elves have been known to create tunnels by this method.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, an additional 10' cube is destroyed for each level beyond 5 that the spell is cast. These additional cubes are normally behind the initial cube, but can be directed by moving the hand holding the dust to point in the direction of the next cube.

Lore: Legend holds that some wizards and a pair of clerics, all among the most powerful, spent years making a tunnel to connect two large Formene sprawls.

Using their potential, they could clear over half a mile per day. The clerics were part of the party using their divine magic to provide nourishment, comforts, and emergency healing if needed. They could have cleared 100 miles per year this way.

Reality: Four groups of twenty, fourteen wizards and six clerics, (along with servants) made multiple parallel tunnels, all 20' wide, linking the two major and three minor Formene realms. The gaps averaged 1200 miles. The wizards also carved out rest stops at 20 mile intervals. The rest areas are 60' square (36 cubes) and connect to the main tunnel with a 10' wide and 40' long (4 cubes) tunnel.

Each group averaged 80-90 miles per year. While It was uncommon for a wizard to become burned out and quit the project, replacements were scarce, so progress suffered the handful of times this occurred.

The group camped in the nearest rest area, and travelled to the current excavation site in teams of three (two wizards and a cleric) using various magics. Once on site, one wizard would use **Destroy Stone** to excavate the path while the other stood on the ready to project a **Wall of Force** to protect them if the excavation hit something disruptive. In about an hour, the excavation team could travel to the current site, cast all of the spells possible that day, and return to camp. This left about sixteen hours for other endeavors back at camp.

Most of the wizards on the project used the quiet and short work day to study, research or contemplate philosophical quandaries. On average, each tunnel took thirteen years to complete.

More detail about the project could be found in the City of Talos.

Appendix 2

Magic Items

Wondrous Items, Very Rare, (require attunement)

Boots of the Formene – This pair of boots connects the wearer with the Formene allows the wearer to:

- Navigate the Formene like an elf, by following hidden signs to reach their destination and avoid known pitfalls,
- Avoid cave-ins through seismic warnings passed through the soles of the boots, and
- Derive nutrition from the fungus, animals, and plants of the Formene without vitamin issues.

Cloak of the Formene – This cloak envelopes the wearer in a shroud of protection:

- Providing protection from air quality issues, including toxins in the air, lack of oxygen, and breathing underwater. The hood of the cloak has a face mask that protects the wearer from such threats.
- Suppressing all fires within 20' of the wearer to protect them from air depletion, toxins, etc.
- Reducing damage from flash floods. In addition to allowing underwater breathing, the cloak gives the wearer protection from damage that might be taken from sudden flooding of caverns. (Advantage on all saves to mitigate damage, and the saves are for half vs. no damage, not full vs. half damage, similar to the Rogue Ability **Evasion.**)

Ring of Elvenkind – This ring grants the wearer a connection with nature. This allows the wearer to:

- Communicate via a form of telepathy with any willing intelligent being in line of sight, including strangers that want to communicate but have no common language or no language at all.
- Maintain a sense of time. The wearer is in tune with the sunrise and sunset on the surface.
- See in the complete darkness of the Formene (Darkvision 60').

Appendix 3

Things found in a desk

Each desk can contain d4 random items.

D20 Result	Contents
1	16cp
2	3 quills
3	2 sheets of blank parchment
4	Sheath for a dagger
5	Belt buckle
6	2sp
7	IOU note
8	Scarf
9	Floppy hat
10	Small blank book
11	Broken hand crossbow
12	Hairpin
13	Small mirror
14	5 marbles
15	30-40 dried beans
16	Blank sheet of vellum
17	Crumpled 'Dear John' letter
18	Sealing wax
19	Candle
20	Flint and steel

Mushroom Effects

Roll 3d6.

Result	Effect
3-4	Heal up to 4hp (not to exceed max hp)
5	Euphoria (+1 to all rolls due to confidence)
6	Feel mild euphoria (no in game mechanical effect)
7-8	Feel refreshed (no in game mechanical effect)
9-10	Nothing happens
11	Stale
12	Upset stomach
13	Break out in hives
14	Vomiting
15	Mild hallucinations
16	Severe hallucinations (d6 hours to recover)
17 – 18	Complete psychotic break (Greater Restoration, or player becomes an NPC)

Appendix 4

This section details variations to the PC races from the default game setting to the world of Tumunzar, on which the continent Barestir resides. The Five Kingdoms are the core civilizations of the continent of Barestir.

Use of this material is not mandatory. Dark Naga adventures fit into any fantasy campaign world with little modification. However, if adapting this adventure to your world, this information will guide conversions from Tumunzar to your world.

In Tumunzar, particularly on Barestir, the traditional non-human (demi-human) player races have all but withdrawn from the world of man. These races are: Dwarf, Elf, Gnome, and Halfling. Tumunzar has no Dragonborn, Half Elves, Half Orcs, Tieflings, or playable Orcs.

Events that led to the collapse of the First Age of Man were instrumental in the decision for the demi-human races, one at a time, to withdraw from the world of man. Halflings started the movement, seeing the unhealthy obsessions take root within man as he slipped from celebration to debauchery. The elves and gnomes followed, deciding that man was more interested in shaping the world than living in harmony it. Dwarves were the last to withdraw as the fall of the First Age of Man started, and also hold the greatest distain for man among the demi-humans.

A party of adventures in the Five Kingdoms will be mostly human. Any demi-human who adventures in the world of man would be an exceptional individual, and will be met by the world with stares, questions, and sometimes fear, but not malice. The level of distraction will fall off over a few days until it becomes a mere distraction after being in an area for a while. The people of the Second Age of Man know of the demi-humans, and have vague knowledge of why they withdrew from civilization. The demi-humans of Tumunzar include all of the subraces. These races are not dying off, they are just withdrawn from the world of men to their own mountain towns, shires, forests, etc.

Dwarves

The Dwarf nations withdrew from the world to their mountain strongholds. Zigundum, Zigila, Zigunarg, Zinbizar and Zabarak are the capital strongholds of the five Dwarf nations of Barestir. Each shares a name with the Dwarven name for the mountain peak where the stronghold is rooted. Unlike the Formene which starts more than 1000 meters below the surface, Dwarven strongholds are rarely found deeper than 300 meters below the surface and are predominantly deep within the mountain above the surface. All of the subraces of dwarf can be found on Tunmunzar.

Elves

The Elvish tribes withdrew from the world to the deep forests. Edheren, Eglavad, Egioniond, and Egulond are the Elven kingdoms. They are deep within forests scattered across Barestir. The forests that contain these kingdoms are Dorwine, Dondoris, Dyamene and Dalinde. Each of these forests covers between a score to two score million acres. While all of the elves live in forests, not all elves are of a sylvan subrace. All of the surface elf subraces can be found on Tunmunzar. Elves on Tunminzar have a lifespan of 500 to 600 years.

The elves of Tumunzar are a single species that have adapted to their environment. Those who have a cerebral life over time adapt and can be represented as High Elves. Those who select a more sylvan life will, over time, adapt and be represented as Wood Elves. On Tumunzar, there are no half elves. Humans and elves are reproductively incompatible. Additionally, the Drow are replaced with the Formene Elves in this world.

The elven ability to adapt to new environments attracts the interest of Hastur. He sees elves as a way to more fully manifest his Aspects and minions in this world. This interest scares elves as much as it intrigues those who follow the dark god.

Formene Elves

Another tribe, the Elonde, divided themselves among the five Formene regions, and became the wardens of their respective regions. No surface person has entered the Formene for over 3000 years. The wardens secured it from surface civilization shortly after mithril was discovered. The five Formene areas include the vast lands under the Batun and the Alithis (greater mountain ranges) and the Gorthsea, Oliden and Argors (lesser mountain ranges). The Formene are their own subrace of Elves. In "The Five Kingdoms" campaign setting, the Formene replace the Drow of a typical fantasy campaign. In the "Haunting of Hastur" series, Formene Elves are not a PC race.

Gnomes

The Gnomish warrens were the last to withdraw from the world when Hastur began to take over. They were the first to join the fight to free the world from the clutches of Hastur when Man decided to fight back. Their burrows lie in the rolling hills of Barestir. Four very tightly knit communities, Stapoole, Wydale, Haley, and Ledale, enjoy burrows in the hilly forests that are not far from the shires of the Halflings or the forests of the Elves. All of the surface subraces of gnome can be found on Tunmunzar. However, when Man's decadence led to the collapse of the First Age of Man, they were the first to withdraw.

Halflings

The Halfling families withdrew from the world into their shires in the rolling hills of Barestir. The major families are: Beeford, Bemoor, Beydon, Chyley, Eswick, Rawood, Reywich, Snegate, Stahill, and Waywold. Each family maintains a large shire, with dozen or so smaller shires on the periphery. The shires are typically found in the foothills of the major mountain ranges of Baristir. Foothills put them in relative close proximity to the Dwarf nations. All Halfling subraces are found on Tunmunzar. Unlike other demi-humans, the subraces can be found within a single shire, especially in the smaller shires on the periphery.

Humans

Humans dominate Barestir. When the First Age of Man collapsed, civilization nearly disappeared as people struggled to survive and abandoned pursuits beyond subsistence. Over the last three centuries, civilization has returned to the lands of man. The Five Kingdoms setting is named for the Five Kingdoms that rule the lands of man. Meawold, Cawold, Wywold, Hawold, and Gamwold are the capitals of the five kingdoms and the names of the kingdoms. Man exists in a large number of varieties. Any fantasy race could be easily adjusted to be a human variant.

Other Races

If your world has races beyond what is enumerated, and they withdrew from the world of man, and potentially engaging again, create similar back stories for how and why these other races withdrew. Optionally, you can have a more integrated world. The DNH series of adventures are deeply human-centric, and have few demi-humans beyond the Formene elves. This can be altered if desired, or can be a source of role-play interaction as players with demi-human characters encounter people who have never seen one.

The Ecology of the Formene Elves

The Formene is a vast subterranean world. The tribe of elves that moved into the Formene to become its wardens adapted dramatically over time. Their adaptations can be reversed if they change their environment for about a century. These adaptations make living in the Formene routine. Many people use Formene to refer to the elves and the lands interchangeably.

The Formene are attuned with nature, and worship mostly the same elven gods of Life, Light, Knowledge, and Nature as their surface cousins. Their guardianship of the Formene has led to millennia of peace among the subterranean races and prevented human incursion into the Formene.

Over time, they developed a pale, rough skin and large dark eyes that have two different sets of eyelids. Their eyes can see in "normal" light with the inner lids closed, and often do so when in Talos or other Formene Elf cities. This reduces the incoming light by 96%. In dim light, they open both sets of lids, which allows all available light to enter the eye. In complete darkness, they close both sets, which frees their minds to process other sensory information, which manifests as darkvision/ blindsight 75'.

Like all elves, Formene Elves do not have body hair. Unlike their surface counterparts, many males keep their scalps closely cropped. Female Formene Elves tend to prefer very short hair as well, above the shoulders, typically in a pixie cut. Like all elves, the Formene live between 500 and 600 years.

As a elven children mature, they begin to adapt to their environment during puberty, which for elves is typically between age 16 and 32 years. By the end of puberty, elves are fully adapted to their home environment. During their childhood, elves look generically "elven", and during puberty progressively take on the appearance of their tribe. By mid to late puberty, the exterior appearance changes are complete and the internal changes finalize.

Adults adapt more slowly when they move into a new environment or change lifestyles. Adaptation pressure is noticeable after 25 or 30 years in the new situation, and changes start about ten years later; adaptation is usually complete about a century after the elves are introduced to the new environment.

During the First Age of Man, the Formene elves enjoyed the delights of the surface world though trade with it. They enjoy fine cuts of meat, surface fruits and vegetables, wooden goods, spirits, brews, varietals, and art. These they combined with subterranean plants, particularly mushrooms, and some lizards to create a unique cuisine. Like their surface cousins, the Formene elves live in harmony with the subterranean world. Since closing the Formene to the world, they have shifted their diet to exclude the surface delights of old.

Talos, the Batun mountain region's Formene capital is a brightly lit, open city. Within Talos, about 30,000 elves live (around 22,000 adults and 8000 children and adolescents).

Hastur

Since closing the Nexuses and withdrawing from the world, the Formene Elves have spent centuries debating a return to interacting and trading with the surface and other issues. The biggest issue is Hastur. His influence on the world nearly destroyed man. Scrying and other intelligence gathering suggests that the threat is largely neutralized. Only once has an Aspect of Hastur reached into the world (see DNH1 – The Lost Temple of Forgotten Evil). Seeing the Aspect arise and be confronted so quickly in Boldon has led to a growing movement to open the Nexuses again. A marginal majority of the Formene feel that man is ready to try again and that Hastur's incursions will be confronted and stopped instead of taking root and spreading.

Connecting with the Surface

The Formene elves and their love of knowledge led them to build a collection of human knowledge. Man's thirst for discovery and innovation intrigued them and led to a vast library. Most of this library has been translated into Elvish by scribes who preserve and reproduce books.

Much like the role of Moors and Arabs and the Greco-Roman knowledge they translated and preserved, the knowledge from the First Age of Man that the Formene preserved will be critical to initiation the coming Renaissance phase of the Second Age of Man, assuming the party pursues the goal of restoring interaction and trade with the surface.

These negotiations are the core subject of DNH3: The City of Talos



Human Level 1



Human Level 4



Human Level 2



Human Level 3



Formene Level 1



Formene Level 4



Formene Level 2



Formene Level 3

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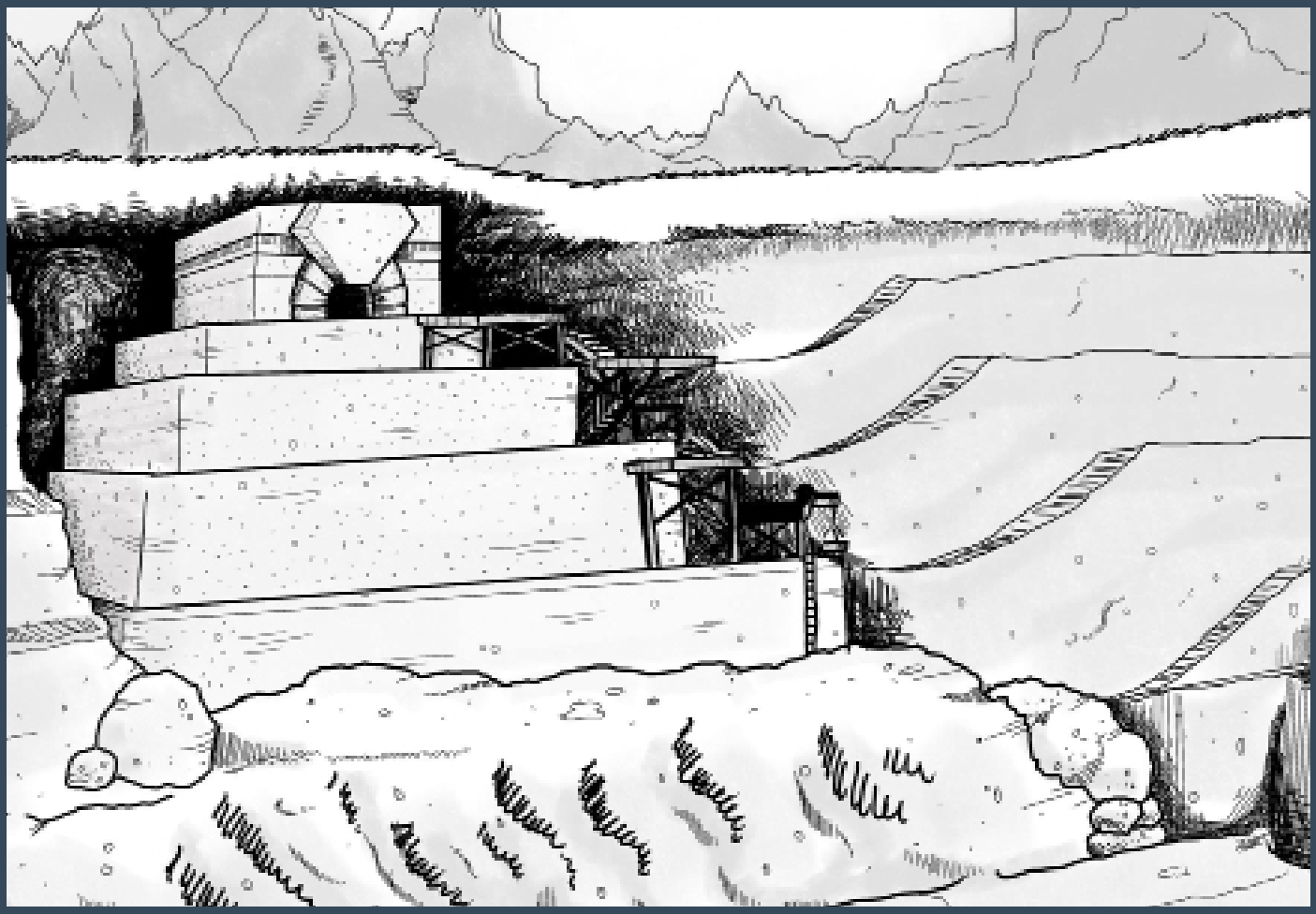

The clay mining operation at Caford has discovered a large step pyramid, or zikurat. This imposing structure was buried completely in the clay sheet they have been mining for decades to make brick and other ceramic products. The local miners see what they think is an obvious entrance, but cannot get past the slab of stone. A call for aid is sent to the capital city of Meawold, and the party is sent to investigate.

Could this be one of the Nexuses that traded goods from the subterranean Land of Night to the surface world?

Places where treasures of the subterranean kingdoms, like mithril weapons, were traded for surface goods. Bastions of trade that were lost during the fall of the First Age of Man. Why has it been dormant for almost two millennia? What lies within? Is it a threat to Caford, or the Kingdom of Meawold as a whole?

If they can get inside, the party will have to navigate millennia old magic locks and security sentinels to find answers to these questions and more within The Buried Zikurat.