



*Patreon Kingdom Project
October 2021*

The Ruins of Baroncliffe Castle

*Maps: The Ruins of Baroncliffe Castle
– four levels
Night version
Winter version*

The Ruins of Baroncliffe Castle

How to use these resources

With our Kingdom Project	Explore the 4 levels of this huge, ruined castle and finish your adventure in the Old Kingdom using one of our exciting plot hooks.
In your own games	Use this giant, 4-level castle when you need somewhere grand to explore or face a boss. We've got set dressing, threats, items and rumours, to help you plan.

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Patreon Map of the Month GM's supplement

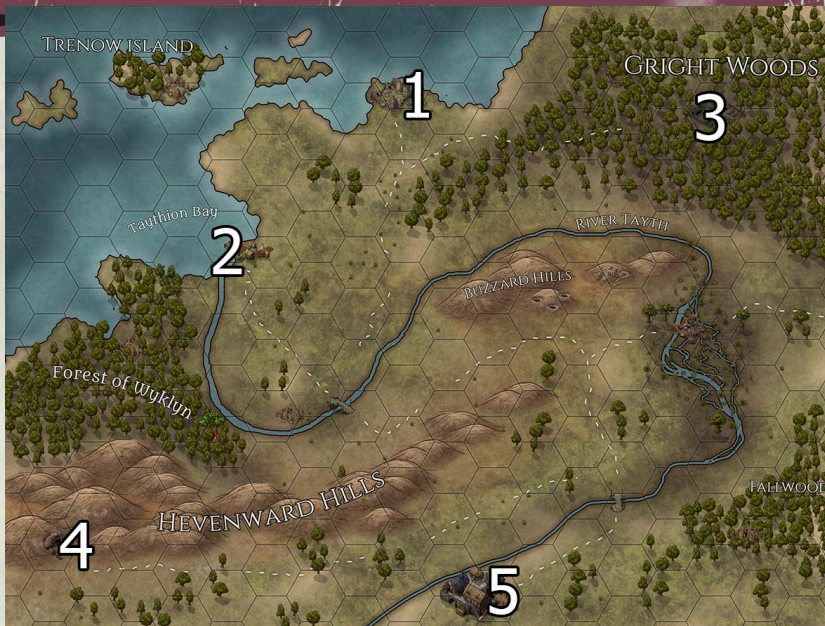
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Regional map made using Inkarnate (www.inkarnate.com).

SETTING



Regional Map

Around the Old Kingdom (Key to map)

1	Baroncliffe Castle
2	Port Periwinkle
3	The Forest Necropolis
4	The Royal Mines
5	Kingsalter

Setting description – Baroncliffe Castle

These walls grew up around a small, fortified house that once watched over the trade routes of Taytheon Bay. The home of a shrewd baron, as his power grew, so did his castle. The fortified house was replaced with a stronghold; with towers and with dungeons that burrowed deep into the cliffs below the castle. When the grandson of the baron came of age, he inherited the title and, modelled in the image of the grandfather he remembered watching as a boy, set about achieving something greater. Within a decade, he had transformed the castle from that of a mere baron into that of a king.

And so it stayed through the reign of many a monarch that followed him. But unforeseen by the First King, who had proclaimed their eternity, his glittering kingdom and his royal castle would not stand in glory until the end of time.

When the country was overrun and the Kingdom fell, the castle was, for a time, a bastion of safety. Panic reigned, of course, but those who dwelled in the castle tried to maintain some normality. One of those who remained was Arabeth, the Queen Consort of the fallen King. Distraught at the death of her husband, she had his tomb prepared in the castle crypt. But his body was never returned and the Empty Tomb of the King became a focus for the loss and horrors of the fall. It seemed to sap the last of the people's hope and slowly, chaos came to Baroncliffe. Supplies ran out. People

fled. Fear undermined order and status and ultimately the fabric of the castle. One morning, Queen Arabeth woke and simply found herself alone.

Centuries have passed since Baroncliffe was abandoned, but today the crumbling ruins still cut a grand silhouette on the cliff top. Some of the castle has fallen to the sea and much of the roof is gone, leaving rooms exposed to the elements. Where once walked nobles, now wild creatures wander the halls. The sea has worked its way into some of the lowest parts of the castle and the wind has pulled down the stones of the highest, making room for new inhabitants. Indeed, some centuries ago, a giant eagle made her nest high in one of the old towers. Generations of her offspring have returned to nest, leading locals along the coast to believe they observe here just one magnificent bird. Naming the beast the Taytheon Tytalon, it has achieved an almost mythic status, revered, feared and watched with an eye to portent.

And what is the future of this place? Perhaps the castle will continue its slow collapse into the stormy waters of Taytheon Bay. Perhaps it will have a different fate. Maybe a new monarch will rise and make this storied building a royal seat again. Maybe you, who explore its ruins today, can see yourself here in days to come, safe, warm and the proud holders of the keys to Baroncliffe Castle reborn.

SET DRESSING



Set dressing for the ground floor

- 1 This huge tower has largely collapsed. The top of the cliff here is highly unstable and anyone walking near the edge of the tower risks causing a landslide.
- 2 With the back of the hall open to the cold, grey sea, the simple stone throne that faces back into this room has gained a mournful grandeur.
- 3 This room was once the castle kitchen and the walls bear the scars of its many shelves that held provisions.
- 4 This quiet chamber was the old chapel. It smells disconcertingly of incense, even though there's no sign of anything being burnt in the holders for centuries.
- 5 In the old entrance hall of the castle the walls are covered in graffiti. In one corner an old blanket has been pulled over a skeleton, curled up in the foetal position.
- 6 A strong wind blows through the gap in the wall and into the dining hall. A pair of large, noisy gulls have made a nest in the rafters and they swoop in and out of the gap.
- 7 Once the priest's quarters, this room is remarkably well preserved. The shelves are filled with religious texts, although most will crumble to dust if moved.
- 8 The sounds of the sea can be heard from the old drain in the middle of this crumbling gatehouse.
- 9 Mounted on the wall of this gatehouse chamber, strangled with ivy, are a set of 4 halberds. Three are rusted wrecks, but one is in good, usable condition.
- 10 An old dead tree clings to the bare, salt-blasted rocks. A small fetish made from bird bones has been hung from the lowest branch.

Set dressing for the first floor

- 1 Rusted chains and manacles hang from the highest wall of this ruined tower, swaying and clanking gently.
- 2 A trail of small ants march across this chamber and up the wall to where they've made a nest in a cavity behind the stones. The pile of excavated grains on the floor beneath the nest contains a tiny silver coin.
- 3 The flagstones of the floor here are very damaged and weakened. They break if a medium creature walks on them, dropping it 15ft into the chamber below.
- 4 Once serving as a study, all trappings of furniture here have long since crumbled. However, a thorough search reveals a secret compartment in the wall, containing a pouch of 30gp and a gold ring bearing the royal seal.
- 5 The battlements here are old, the mortar disintegrating. The stones will give way if someone leans against them.
- 6 A huge bird nest occupies this room. Shattered bones litter the floor and nest interior. Glimpses of equipment and weapons can be seen in the depths of the nest.
- 7 The faded glory of the murals that decorate this room is somewhat ruined by the dried blood spatters all over them. Many streaks of dried blood also mark the floor.
- 8 A rat watches from the top of the ruined wall, its beady eyes tracing every movement. It disappears into a hole if threatened, reemerging soon after to continue its watch.
- 9 The walls of this chamber are marked with dozens of small scorch marks. A careful examination reveals they are very recently made.
- 10 Once serving as a bedchamber, all that is left of the furnishing is a tattered tapestry on the wall. Behind it is a pair of handprints in charcoal and the initials KNS.

SET DRESSING



Set dressing for sub-level 1

- 1 The crates in this storeroom seem to have survived the ravages of time. The contents haven't been so lucky, but there are a dozen bottles of now very vintage wine.
- 2 Here the old dungeon is open to the sea and is wet and slippery with spray. The doors creak on their hinges.
- 3 This chamber is entirely open to the sea. Waves break on the rocks below, frequently soaking the room with sea water. Anemones have made home in the corners.
- 4 The air feels considerably cooler in this chamber. A thin layer of frost has formed on the eastern most sarcophagus which leaves it glittering in the light.
- 5 A huge centipede has made a nest amongst the boxes in the cellar. It hisses angrily if disturbed but flees if threatened. Beneath the nest is a carved wooden box containing three healing potions.
- 6 The six doors in this section of the dungeon all slowly creak open together when someone enters the corridor.
- 7 This room is warded with a curse. Anyone searching for the room feels confused and forgetful, unsure what they're actually looking for or even doing in here.
- 8 The statue in this chamber has onyx eyes that sometimes roll sardonically when people talk near it.
- 9 One sarcophagus here appears unremarkable, but a loud banging can be heard from inside when everyone in the room has their back to it. The sarcophagus is empty.
- 10 In this room the floor is slick with a sticky moisture. Scuttling cockroaches draw your eye to the shadows, which seem to move independently of the light source.



Set dressing for sub-level 2

- 1 This circular vault holds the empty tomb belonging to the Last King. A detailed, high-relief frieze around the sides shows his life and is lit by flickering candlelight.
- 2 In this sparsely furnished room, with a dirty old bed in the corner, the ceiling is decorated with an astonishing array of crudely drawn symbols, painted in dried blood.
- 3 This gloomy chamber is dimly lit with an eerie green light from the fire burning beneath the cauldron. At the far end of the room sits a throne surrounded by spikes that seem to have erupted from the ground.
- 4 Candlelight reflects off the polished sides of the sarcophagi in this chamber. The lit candles are surrounded by thick ripples of old wax, indicating they've been used here for a long time.
- 5 The door in the north wall of this corridor is marked with strange black symbols that are hard to describe. Looking at them causes feelings of vertigo, whilst touching them induces a debilitating nausea.
- 6 The seal around the nearest sarcophagus to the door is broken and a warm draught can be felt seeping from it.
- 7 The walls of the vault are decorated with faded murals, each depicting a different person entombed here.
- 8 A low sill of rock sits just below the water at the mouth of the cave, effectively creating a still pool of seawater.
- 9 Astonishingly, the cavern walls and ceiling are covered in wet humanoid footprints, clearly recently made.
- 10 The walls of this chamber are coated with a dark green slime. Touching it causes your hand to stink for days.

PLOTS & RUMOURS

Plot hooks

Tasks relating to Baroncliffe Castle that might be posted on the Adventurer's Guild Jobs Board.

Story 1

A Plea from the Fishers of Taytheon Bay

After much careful thought, we are seeking expert hunters to slay the Taytheon Tytalon. Not since the days of our great-grandmothers has the Tytalon caused such destruction. We do not know what has caused this season of aggression, but we know it must cease. Several of our fleet have been attacked and destroyed by the great bird. Supply to Kingsalter has faltered, our livelihoods are all but destroyed. We even hear reports of individuals snatched from the highways. The Fishers are aware that downing the Tytalon may have consequences. The legends tell of its protective power and some say the great eagle holds back beasts that are worse. Yet we find we have no choice but to order the Tytalon be hunted to its death. The bird nests in Baroncliffe Castle. In reward we offer a small ship.

Story 2

A Letter Held in Private by the Guild President

Let us introduce ourselves and our cause. We are The Order of Changelings. We are those taken by the fae as children. Sickly fairy children, changelings, were left with our families in our stead. We are those grown and those who escaped the clutches of the ones who took us. But we are those who found no welcome once home. Even with the changelings who took our beds gone, our families turned away from us. They saw us as changed also. Our time with the fae rendered us strange and, to our families, little better than the wicked fairies who tricked them. Changelings now also are we, alone in a world in which we did not grow up. Yet we have found each other and we wage a campaign of terror against our former captors. We know of a crown, once worn by the wife of the last King of this Kingdom. The green crystal crown of Queen Arabeth imbued her with a shapeshifting power. This crown is a key element of our plans. We believe it still lies in the castle, where the queen died when the kingdom was lost. We are not of this world and do not fair well in such places of danger as this castle. Those who retrieve it for us will be rewarded with a chest of fae treasure.

Story 3

Urgent Search Required for Boy

I urgently require people to search for my child. My boy is eleven and has disappeared from home. He has taken a bag and also our dog Duke and so I believe him to have left the city. It is likely he is headed for the old royal castle at Baroncliffe, a place of which he has had many dreams and seems obsessed. My son is named Adleroy and he has black ringlets. He will be wearing the red tunic he embroidered with small crowns. Duke is a friendly, red hound the size of a small horse and is devoted to my son. Please, Adleroy is an unusual child. You must take great care of him and should pay no heed to his outlandish stories. I am just a tailor and the daughter of tailors, so I can offer little for the safe return of my son, but the Guild of Tailors has agreed to loan to me a small reward of gold coins. In hope and prayers, Clementina Taylor.

Rumours about Baroncliffe Castle heard in local taverns (mini plot hooks)

- 1 I heard that in one of the castle towers there is a mirror that shows a person the face and location of their true love and that the old queen painted it over with pitch when her husband died.
- 2 My father always told a funny story about how there's a haunted prison in Baroncliffe and that once he went there, spoke to the ghost of a prisoner called Lord Grim and learned the location of a hidden fortune. Sadly, he was suffering an episode of extreme drunkenness at the time and forgot where to find the treasure. Old fool!
- 3 I once saw that huge eagle being ridden by a white goblin. It fired an arrow of pure flame at me! Got this burn on my arm from it, see? Haven't never been so frightened.
- 4 My old boss at the smithy said that there's a huge vault of gold somewhere underneath the castle. Said he'd like to head there himself some day! Don't believe it myself.
- 5 There's an old story that in the castle chapel, if you light the torches, a priest appears who will grant you absolution for any sin. Or damn you to the hells. I can't remember which it is now...

NPCs

Queen Arabeth, the last queen consort of the Old Kingdom, a fae witch

Arabeth had become the Queen here just as she'd planned. Placing herself in the way of the king's hunting party, the young monarch was enchanted by this sweet, sparkling-eyed young woman feeding animals in the forest. The pair were married within weeks and their love brightened the darkest corners of the royal castle. It was a fairy-tale worthy of the fairy herself, for Arabeth was a witch of the fae. Wishing to place one of their own in the court of the humans, the fae chose the witch Arabeth, who could use her craft to disguise her fairy form. To ease her path, they gave her an old crown made of emerald glass from the City of the Leaf Bearers. And so it was that a shapeshifting, witch-fairy became the beloved Queen of Baroncliffe Castle. Using her magic only for good, Arabeth found she could quietly influence the prosperity and happiness of the Kingdom. Times were good, but as ever, they do not stay so.

Now it is centuries since Arabeth's husband failed to return from the Battle of the Thousand Traitors. On hearing of the defeat, she had mournfully prepared the King's tomb, but no one returned his body. She hoped for a time he had somehow escaped, but as she waited by the empty tomb, her hope ebbed away. Refusing to give up her vigil, she waits here still. Time has treated Arabeth badly. Her disposition, once sunlit and enchanting, is now rancorous and seething. She has practiced the dark side of her craft and hidden away the good. With a witchery both sharpened and vigilant, she roams the lowest halls of her castle and will not let anyone take it from her.

Adleroy Taylor, the Eagle King

The boy has known since he can first remember having thoughts or dreams that he is the Eagle King. The knowledge consumes him. He has tried to be a tailor's apprentice as his family wished, but he finds he can only embroider golden crowns upon all the garments. And now he has dreamed that he must take the throne in the old castle. He has set off with Duke, his hound and only friend. On the road he is slow - he is only small and he knows little about surviving by himself - and soon a band of rescuers will catch up with him, seeking to take him home. Adleroy will tell them his dreams, his true identity. They will dream of him also, enthroned, and they will know he is the true king and will join

him in service. They will travel the road towards the castle with him and they will watch in horror as the eagle swoops and snatches Adleroy, soaring away towards Baroncliffe.

Members of the Order of Changelings

- 1 Olusa-Victory, once of the Lukan Family of West Ki.** Short and strong, Olusa learned basic magic with the fae, but prefers the traditional combat skills of her homeland. Taken as the fairies who assisted her untimely birth in the forest could not bear to live without her. The sickly and cruel bearded changeling who joined her family smothered several of her siblings and ate the family's cattle. A natural leader, Olusa sought out others of her kind who wished to band together against those that took them as children.
- 2 Baby Parkin, a large, long-haired man with a deep voice.** Too young to have been named by his family when he swapped for a changeling, Baby has never known his name. The fairies treated him unkindly, having mistaken him for a sweet-voice boy from the same village. Disappointed in his gruff, gravelly tones even as a toddler, they abandoned him in the human realm as soon as he was old enough to fend for himself.
- 3 Mish Phloxcreep Autumn'nigh** keeps the name he gained with the fairies, having rejected everything about the family that rejected him upon his return. With pale hair, bronze skin and emerald eyes, his unusual appearance attracted the fairies, who treasured this mild mannered, beautiful boy. As he aged, Mish grew angry to learn he was not of the fae and he escaped seeking home. Home, however, did not want him. His rapier skills are exceptional, honed in the fairy schools.
- 4 Emily from Little Farning,** a dead-eyed young woman who finds no joy in this world. Having escaped from the fae, she sought her family, but no one in her home village would claim her. Regretful at leaving a world of great wonders for this dull and lonely place, she blames the fairies for having spoiled her for her homeland. She has spent the last few years training in the skills needed to track the fae.

AROUND THE CASTLE

Treasures that can be found in the eagle's nest

- 1 A necklace made of dozens of tiny seashells. At the centre of the necklace is a piece of blue seaglass.
- 2 A tattered leather satchel containing a bottle labelled as 'Potion of Stone Giant Strength'. A second faded label on the bottle reads 'not really'.
- 3 An old military medal, tarnished, dented and worn, but the words 'For Valour' are still legible. A scrap of dirty purple fabric is still attached.
- 4 A Wand of Magic Detection, still grasped by a withered, severed hand.
- 5 A tin box containing three beeswax candles. The scent produced when they burn repels undead creatures.
- 6 A suit of plate mail, largely intact except for the breastplate, which has three large, ragged rips across it.
- 7 A small pouch containing three gemstones carved into tiny bears – garnet, tourmaline and jade.
- 8 A brass horn, beautifully decorated with engraving that depict a hunt. Blowing the horn summons a pack of 1d4 hunting dogs. It can be used once a day.
- 9 A set of three throwing daggers, perfectly balanced and slightly enchanted, allowing even a novice to throw accurately.
- 10 A child's stuffed toy, resembling a pink owlbear. One eye has been replaced with a shiny gold button.

Useful plants growing in the ruins

- 1 **Gorlin moss** – grows on damp stone that is permanently in shadow. Swiftly stems bleeding.
- 2 **Snakestong** – a fern used to wrap wounds. It has a mild painkilling effect as it contains a toxin. Beware overuse.
- 3 **Heventhistle** – when used in cooking it acts as a 'secret ingredient', making any dish taste incredible.
- 4 **Splinterbark** – found on the dead trees, it can be used as arrow shafts that lethally splinter inside victims.

What is inside some of the castle crypt's tombs?

- 1 The withered skeleton of a young man, clad in rusted chainmail. He wears a thick silver bracelet, engraved with a ward of protection.
- 2 The partially mummified remains of two hunting dogs. Each wears a jewelled collar with their names – 'Outlaw' and 'Snowstorm'.
- 3 An ancient battleaxe, lovingly wrapped in yellow-dyed linens. Oils have kept the blade from rusting.
- 4 A small roll of parchment, covered in tiny writing. At the centre of the text is an expertly drawn map of house.
- 5 A large kite shield, decorated with heraldic symbols. Placed underneath the shield is a single shard of bone.
- 6 The skeleton of an old man, dressed in stately robes. A signet ring is firmly lodged on one of the fingers. It bears one of the symbols of the royal family; a crab.
- 7 A partially gnawed skeleton. A hole in the corner allows rats to come and go – the bottom of the tomb is coated in their droppings.
- 8 The body of an old woman, tightly wrapped in red linen. Only the skeletal face is showing, but a pair of gold coins have been placed over her eye sockets.

Graffiti scratched into stone around the castle

- 1 Stamp 3 times upon the floor blessing for you ever more
- 2 I curse the cook Carythe and his horrible cakes
- 3 King o' the Eagles will return
- 4 Garwissy eats the doings of Fluffkin Pinkpaws
- 5 If you read this, find my prayer, hidden in a statue's hair.
- 6 I visit'd Baronclif and all I got were a bucket of gold!!
- 7 High-Wizard Renaud turned his lover into a silver ring
- 8 There once was a big guard called Dale; who was cruel to us men in his jail; he pulled off our toes; or branded our nose; so we flayed him and then watched him wail.

THREATS

Creatures among the ruins (above ground)

- 1 A forest troll, missing an arm and a leg, hiding in the ruins while her absent limbs regenerate.
- 2 A gargantuan black bear, territorial and aggressive.
- 3 A party of nervous, jumpy goblins from the Curklebikk Treetop village, searching for a missing friend.
- 4 A zombie owlbear, still showing the three deep slash wounds across its back that killed it. It seems to have also been partially eaten.
- 5 A group of four wererat bandits, sheltering in the ruins. They're happy to live and let live if left alone.

Creatures among the ruins (below ground)

- 6 A trio of ankhegs that have burrowed through the rock surrounding the castle.
- 7 A fiendish giant spider that has spun a large sticky web across a corridor and lurks in a corner of the ceiling.
- 8 Six bedraggled zombies, the remnants of drowned sailors. They're crusted with barnacles and seaweed.
- 9 A nest of four carrion crawlers, drawn to the area by the scent of death.
- 10 An animated suit of rusty orange armour, scattered across the area. It comes to life if all the pieces are brought within 15ft of each other.

Some of the spells that the witch knows (OGL)

- 1 Insect Plague – a swarm of biting locusts fills the space, hurtling around the witch in a blur. They bite any creature caught within the swarm.
- 2 Enervation – a tendril of darkness moves out from the witch, attempting to drain life from a target. It causes necrotic damage to anything it touches.
- 3 Plane Shift – the witch targets an opponent. If the opponent fails a Charisma saving throw, they are transported to another plane of existence.

Ghosts in the castle prison

Ghosts you may encounter in the castle dungeon. When the castle fell, these prisoners were left to starve in their cells. Their bitter deaths have left their souls restless.

- 1 Throatcut Jen was a murderous highway robber. She cut her own throat with a shard of wood rather than starve here. She will try to possess someone and attempt to make them take a knife to their throat.
- 2 Chancellor Garwiston roams the prison in the form of a rabid dog, stopping in cells to resume his human form and weep in pity for himself. Once in charge of Kingdom justice, he had an embarrassing fall from grace. Can lock any cell if someone is inside.
- 3 MaryGrace Hellibore was born in the castle prison. At the Kingdom's fall, her mother escaped and left 8-year-old MaryGrace here to die. A pitiful sight, if she manages to touch a person, she can drain life force.
- 4 Lord Grim, jailed for fraud he is not an immediate threat to prison visitors, but tells false stories that tempt the listener to travel to places of great danger to them.
- 5 Denvell Sneit, the castle stableman, jailed for theft. He has a horrifying visage and terrifying horse-like scream that instils intense fear. Galloping hoofbeats signal his approach.
- 6 Jigithril Lossi, a sorcerer in life, he holds none of his power in death, but can make all the lights go out. Appears as a glowing blue orb.
- 7 Watt the Chains, a tall white spectre, carries corporeal, rattling manacles that he will attempt to catch someone with. If caught, a person will suffer psychic torture.
- 8 Bill Cordraiser, who claimed he was the King's illegitimate brother and was thrown in jail for his trouble. His resulting anger did not cease in death and he throws sharp items at anyone he sees. A ball of rage.

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MAP LIST



A full list of Old Kingdom maps made for Heroic Maps patrons

Each map is also available in night time and winter versions.

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | The Adventurers Guild | 7 | Hagwellion Point |
| 2 | Port Periwinkle | 8 | The Royal Gold Mine |
| 3 | The Forest Necropolis | 9 | Meverrin Monastery |
| 4 | The Hand of Vanth | 10 | Mandible Hill Giant Ant Nest |
| 5 | Marsh Village of the N'angverik Clan | 11 | The Ruins of Beaugrey Hall |
| 6 | Treetop Village of the Curklebikk Clan | 12 | The Ruins of Baroncliffe Castle |

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