

ACT III - CHAPTER II

INNER DEMONS

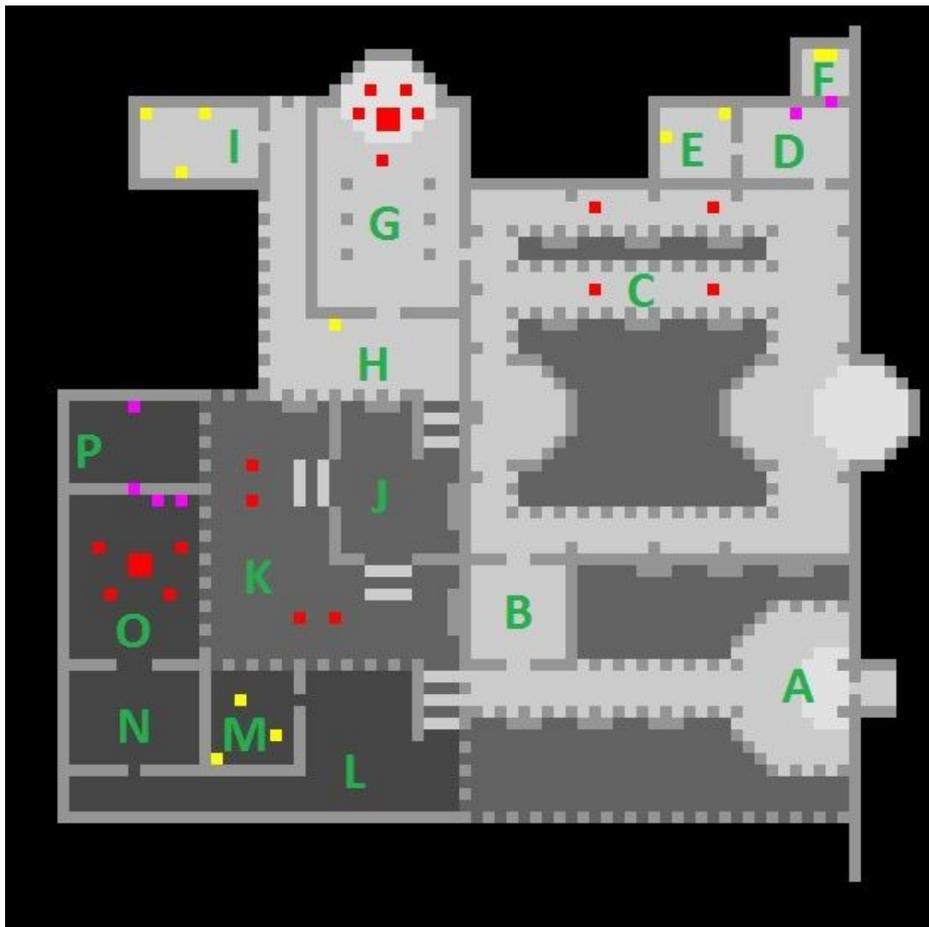
MAP SCREEN

This quest takes place inside Tintagel Castle, the seat of the lords of Wessex. Its notorious dungeons now hold Uther prisoner.

LOADING SCREEN

Such are the pitfalls of honor and love, that Uther was drawn to Igraine's voice. In reality, it was a fabrication of alchemical technology that led him right into Wessex's trap. The famed knight of Mercia was now the newest and most valuable prisoner of the insane, self-proclaimed Emperor Gorlois.

Terror loomed nearer with every passing second. Tintagel Castle, once the illustrious seat of the Lords of Wessex, was now the center for unspeakable experiments and the group's latest destination. No one truly believed that Uther and Igraine would be found alive and well, but hope had become their only nourishment.



GAMEPLAY

AREA A: The party infiltrates the castle dungeon via the entrance located in Area A.

FELIX

(Whisper)

May Terah forgive us for even
laying eyes on this unholyest of
places. We only do so for Sir
Uther.

GWEN

(Whisper)

What's that shitty stench?! Let's
find our lovebirds before I puke.

MERLIN

(Thought)

This place does not fit... within
itself. What power has he
achieved?

FERGHUS

(Speech)

Ullaichibh. They ken we're here. An
ambush is imminent.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

INVESTIGATE: Find Uther and Igraine.

AREA B: Upon reaching this antechamber, the party hears the chilling call of the Haruspex coming from somewhere in the castle.

HARUSPEX

(Disembodied, Off-Screen)

Welcome to Tintagel Castle,
esteemed guests. Please, make
yourselves comfortable.

HARUSPEX

(Disembodied, Off-Screen)

After all, this will last an
eternity.

AREA C: In this large room, the party finds a small group of soldiers to fight.

AREA E: In his small, enclosed area, the party finds...

THE WESSEX TENET

LORE (Note): 1/5

"YOU FOUND..."

A written speech with numerous annotations.

Many words are crossed out and have been rewritten several times. Some terms are circled, and other passages have illegible footnotes. The bulk of it, though, is written in meticulous handwriting:

"Silence!

Rise, my kindred! Listen closely, for my voice must be the first, the last, and only thing to enter your mind.

Heed my words for they are truth and solace. The reason for your existence. Your purpose is to spread and enforce the will of Wessex! Nothing less!

Never forget this or I will end you myself. I take life as I grant it.

I shall have your absolute loyalty. You'll kill all who stand in our way! All! Understand?

No lineage is as pure and capable of ruling Britannia as Wessex! Thanks to you, we will destroy our enemies and save this condemned land!

Give me the head of anyone who dare deny! Bring glory to your maker and rightful ruler, Duke Gorlois!

Enough! Your duty is set. Go! Ours is the throne."

The word "Duke" is smudged and has been replaced with an angry scribble reading "EMPEROR".

AREA F: When access to Area F is gained, the party can see it's a study of even smaller proportions, with many crumpled pieces of paper and rolled-up parchment. A Secret is revealed upon the inspection of one of the pieces.

SCHEMATICS

SECRETS: 1/2

"YOU FOUND..."

Bizarre schematics detailing some sort of experiment.

Highly-detailed drawings and instructions indicate different ingredients, precise dosages, and various brewing temperatures of a mysterious process.

The whole thing looks like a mold blueprint combined with a cooking recipe, but the ingredients are so macabre. Some drawings show folk and fayen limbs thrown into a cauldron with wildly diverse components, from herb extracts to *massa confusa* and even quicksilver.

Once all the ingredients are added at varying temperatures, the completed mixture is poured into molds.

The illustration of the final result is truly disturbing - a strange folk-shaped creation steps from the mold holding a sword.

FELIX

(Whisper)

Please, Holy Mother, do not allow this to be real. Let it be simply the wicked musings of a degenerate mind...

GORR

(Speech)

Ye tink it all comes down to just crammin' stuff together? Metals don't work like dis and I reckon it's da same fer innards.

MERLIN

(Thought)

Gorlois, you actually did it! Yet, still so crude and childish... Alas, the wasted potential.

FERGHUS

(Speech)

Enough a this. Knowledge must respect boondaries. Once crossed, th' world gets darker ain darker...

AREA G: Upon reaching the main hall, the party finally faces the Haruspex.

HARUSPEX

(Speech)

At last, you've arrived. I believe you're acquainted with your new home. You'll soon be reunited with Uther. He's just having a chat with an old friend.

HARUSPEX

(Speech)

I regret His Imperial Majesty could not attend. However, he did instruct me on how to entertain you this evening...

QUEST OBJECTIVES

VANQUISH: Defeat the Haruspex.

A mid-boss fight ensues and the party emerges victorious.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

VANQUISH: Defeat the Haruspex. (COMPLETE)

As he's defeated, the Haruspex mutters some words.

HARUSPEX

(Whisper)

The time has come! Enjoy the show,
my dear audience...

He then disappears in a cloud of smoke.

GORR

(Speech)

Feckin' bastard! Where'd he go?

FERGHUS

(Speech)

Dògan! Did he get away? Ma axe was
aching fae his puny head.

MERLIN

(Speech)

Gorlois's henchman is merely
avoiding the inevitable. I wonder
why...

FLINT

(Whisper)

A wounded animal never flees far.
And this one's running out of
tricks.

AREA I: At the Library, there are multiple bookshelves that can be inspected.

MYSTERIOUS PAGES

LORE (Clue): 3/5

"YOU FOUND..."

Some dusty pages written in a strange language.

The text itself cannot be read, as it's nothing but strings of strange letters and symbols in an incomprehensible order. Paragraphs are nonexistent and the text does not appear to follow any particular direction. Sometimes arranged horizontally, sometimes vertically and even in spirals over large illustrations.

One particularly intricate engraving looks like a scheme for a complex mechanism, with interconnected cogwheels, plates, pointers and a crank. Some of the iconography can be inferred, such as the sun, the phases of the moon and stars forming constellations, but most of its parts are drawn with the exotic language itself.

There are some footnotes written with common letters, which mention the name "Azoth" several times. There are also well-known alchemical reactions involving the symbols for

Quicksilver and Antimony, as well as the famous *Magnum Opus* creation process, but ingredients such as Gold and Alkahest, are replaced with unknown symbols. Perhaps the author has found, or even created, brand new alchemical elements.

The last page has a curious inscription: "O, Magnanimous Azoth, come forth, vest us with your wisdom and save us from the darkness of ignorance".

MERLIN

(Whisper)

I remember this... Could it...?
What did that wretched little turd
do to the manuscript?

A section of the shelves is reserved to storing more of the mysterious wax cylinders. Next to them, over a small table, there is a strange wooden device, resembling what today we call a Phonograph. When interacted with, it will emit strange sounds:

PHONOGRAPH

(Scream)

RISE, MY KINDRED!

A note can be found by the phonograph.

"REPETITION IS KEY"

LORE (Note): 4/5

"YOU FOUND..."

A note left next to the strange speaking machine.

Your Majesty,

As we concluded during our last experiment, repetition is key. The homunculi respond to it marvelously, retaining your wise words in their small minds and carrying out your orders flawlessly.

Following your suggestion, I have completed the fabrication of our prototype. It is ready to inscribe your heartfelt speech in the sound of your own voice, onto the wax cylinders. These will be used to relay the message endlessly during the late brewing and early molding stages, saving your precious time and breath for more pressing matters.

If all goes according to plan, this advance should considerably reduce the training time of the homunculi and greatly increase our warfare efforts.

Glory to Wessex.

-- *Primus Legatus*

DUANNE

(Speech)

So the soldiers speak weird
because they're repeating
orders... Now I understand... and
that makes me sick.

FLINT

(Speech)

"As obedient as a folk soldier",
we say. Now there's a more apt
comparison.

GWEN

(Speech)

C'mon, no time for bickering.
Uther needs our help.

GWEN

(Whisper)

Damn, I sound just like him.

STAR MAP

LORE (Misc.): 5/5

"YOU FOUND..."

A Star Map of Britannia.

The map has an incredible amount of detail and shows constellations never mentioned in any other astronomy book. It is possible that Wessex made astronomical discoveries over the past decade that they kept to themselves, but for what purpose?

As expected, the area corresponding to Wessex is the most complete, even including changes according to seasons and phases of the moon. The area for Mercia, however, displays a curious drawing that resembles an astrolabe amidst many stars and planets. Mercia is known for its clear skies, but the only observatory in Britannia is located in Tintagel Castle.

Could the recent military expansion be connected to this mad scientific desire? Would knowledge of far-away stars be enough to justify, in Gorlois' twisted mind, slaughtering in the hundreds?

AREA O: As soon as Area O is reached, the party faces the "Super-Homunculus", a hulking creature guarding a tiny cage where Uther lies, hanging over a huge cauldron.

GWEN

(Whisper)

What is that thing?!

DUANNE
(Whisper)
Sir Uther! There's a monster
guarding him!

GORR
(Speech)
Now dat's a beast of a yoke.

HOMUNCULUS
(Black Speech)
My kindred! Heed my words!

HOMUNCULUS
(Black Speech)
Give me... solace!

HOMUNCULUS
(Black Scream)
KILL ALL WHO STAND IN OUR WAY!
ALL!

QUEST OBJECTIVES

VANQUISH: Defeat the grotesque monster.

The party engages in a boss battle. When it is finally defeated, the creature falls to its knees and drops a key. The party picks it up.

HOMUNCULUS
(Black Whisper)
Thank... You...

UTHER
(Whisper)
...

QUEST OBJECTIVES

VANQUISH: Defeat the grotesque monster. (COMPLETE)

EXPLORE: Knock the cauldron down and free Uther.

The remainder of the party knocks the cauldron down, making its gruesome contents spill on the floor. There is a lever next to it.

If the player tries to operate the lever before knocking the cauldron down:

UTHER
(Scream)
Don't! The cauldron...

If the player tries to unlock Uther without having picked up the key from the monster:

UTHER
(Whisper)

The cage key... They left it with
that... creature...

After knocking the cauldron down, they use the lever to lower
the cage, and unlock it with the key to release Uther. He
approaches the monster.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

EXPLORE: Knock the cauldron down and free Uther. (COMPLETE)

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

I pledged... to defend those
who cannot defend
themselves...

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

I gave my life to be the champion
of valor against all evil...

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

And yet, here I am... - *cough* -
Evil incarnate. Even in death.

GWEN

(Speech)

Britta...? Is that you?

UTHER

(Whisper)

Britta... By the Gods... I...
never meant for this.

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

I tried my best, Sire. I hope I
died a true Knight, but then...
they brewed my remains... with
others...

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

I felt my own skin, boiling... And
the voices... The voices... Please
forgive me...

UTHER

(Whisper)

Of course, my squire. You're free,
now. As valiant as ever.
All that remains is to save
Igraine. Where is she?

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

The P-princess...? I don't understand... She... She never left Mercia.

UTHER

(Scream)

Mercia?! I've been a fool!

DUANNE

(Scream)

This isn't possible! We... The Princess...

FELIX

(Scream)

We're doomed! Doomed, I say! We were sent here to die, to be turned into those abominations!

FLINT

(Whisper)

We were moths... Drawn to a flame the size of a realm that will burn us to a crisp.

MERLIN

(Thought)

Impeccable as ever...

HOMUNCULUS

(Black Whisper)

Gorlois has her... I'm sorry, Sire... Please, I beg of you, grant me peace.

UTHER

(Whisper)

Yes, Mercia's true Knight-Commander. Tonight you feast with the champions.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

MERCY: End Britta's suffering.

The player, controlling Uther, has to kill the Homunculus.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

MERCY: End Britta's suffering. (COMPLETE)

INVESTIGATE: Find Uther and Igraine. (COMPLETE)

EXPLORE: Leave the Castle.

In that same room, the party can inspect the remains of the cauldron all over the floor.

THE BROTH

SECRETS: 2/2

"YOU FOUND..."

The revolting contents of a cauldron spilled on the floor.

No words can describe the disgust this scene evokes. Suffice to say, the quicksilver still simmers and thin rivulets of molten, organic matter slowly spread across the floor. Anyone with a soul would be haunted for the rest of their waking days.

Next to the gruesome vessel lies a piece of paper with some annotations, mostly measurements and calculations, though some indicate a succinct step-by-step description of an experiment. The last note reads:

"An absolute success! Though grasping the sword proved impossible, I managed to collect a few drops of the blade's coating with a cloth doused in Alkahest. The substance, when added to the cauldron's solution, made a very strong catalyst. Enough to enhance reactions to an astonishing speed!

My duty, as Haruspex, is to conduct more experiments and discover the true nature of this element, as delivering the untouchable sword to Your Imperial Majesty is impossible at this time.

I shall prepare a new batch of homunculi and have them sent to Mercia immediately. If we are to regain control of our operation in Swine Bog, I am adamant this new solution will not be diluted by the current waters and the rivers will carry it, pure and unadulterated, to the population in Northumbria and Kent. Soon, the whole of Britannia will become Wessex.

The lost art of Alchemy is truly reborn.

-- *Primus Legatus*

FELIX

(Whisper)

My d-dear Terah... Please, allow me to faint so I may rid myself of this sight...

FERGHUS

(Whisper)

Th' smell... Even *Uffern* would be milder. Indeed, tae end up in this

soup is a fate worse than eternal
disgrace.

GORR

(Speech)

I'd heard o' prime matter bein'
brought from abroad fer forgin'.
Turns out it was really prime
meat.

GORR

(Speech)

In da end, even da homegrown
Wessex meats were cooked into da
stew. Da lad's insane!

MERLIN

(Whisper)

The man who conceived this is far
from mediocre. An unparalleled
anathema.

UTHER

(Speech)

That's enough. Trying to make
sense of this will only drive us
as mad as him.

UTHER

(Speech)

It's time we end this.

The party leaves via the exit in Area O or Area A.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

EXPLORE: Leave the Castle. (COMPLETE)

END OF LEVEL