

MINOTAUR BRIDGE



ROOM INTRO

Between where the heroes just were, and where they're headed, place this obstacle. A great gulf, chasm, or fissure is spanned by a hefty stone bridge. The far end is guarded by a furious Minotaur and two scorpion-style arbalests. The near side has bountiful cover. This is one case where a frontal assault will end in disaster.

ESSENTIALS

The wind rushes ahead, revealing a dark-bottomed chasm. The breach is spanned by a heavy stone bridge of elder days, and watched over by a horned creature at the far end. The burning eyes, brass-ringed nose and massive musculature are a distraction. It's the massive double-bladed battle axe that catches what light there is. There is no other way forward.

TIMERS: Three things will push them:

- A cloud of incendiary ash and choking smoke fills the area. The fire they started has grown out of control
- The ritual is under way somewhere ahead. If they tarry, an age of doom will fall
- The fisherman-made-king has delver venom in his thigh, and time is running out to save him, and the throne he belongs on

THREATS: The sentinels here are formidable, but the long drop is the real danger.

- A minotaur, bound to stand guard here
- Twin arbalests (giant siege crossbows) and their operators
- A long fall on either side of decaying stone rails that are all too low

TREATS: This encounter is ruthless, but there are a few hidden gems.

- If the arbalests could be taken, they could be powerful weapons to use
- Old lantern pillars offer effective cover
- The biggest treat players can use here is the clumsy rage of the minotaur

MECHANICAL

1: KORD THE MINOTAUR

- Kord was once a great warrior of Duradin, but he has been transformed and bound by powerful magic
- Kord carries a Great Cleaver's Axe. This weapon can hit ALL CLOSE TARGETS on a successful attack
- Kord will charge if provoked with CHA or good role play. When he charges, he will not only damage those failing to evade, but if circumstances are right, a failed DEX roll will send heroes flying off the narrow bridge
- If unprovoked, Kord will remain with his troops and hunker down
- See page 117 in the **ICRPG CORE 2e** for more. Kord is no ordinary Minotaur. He takes 2 ACTIONS per TURN

2: ARBALEST OPERATORS

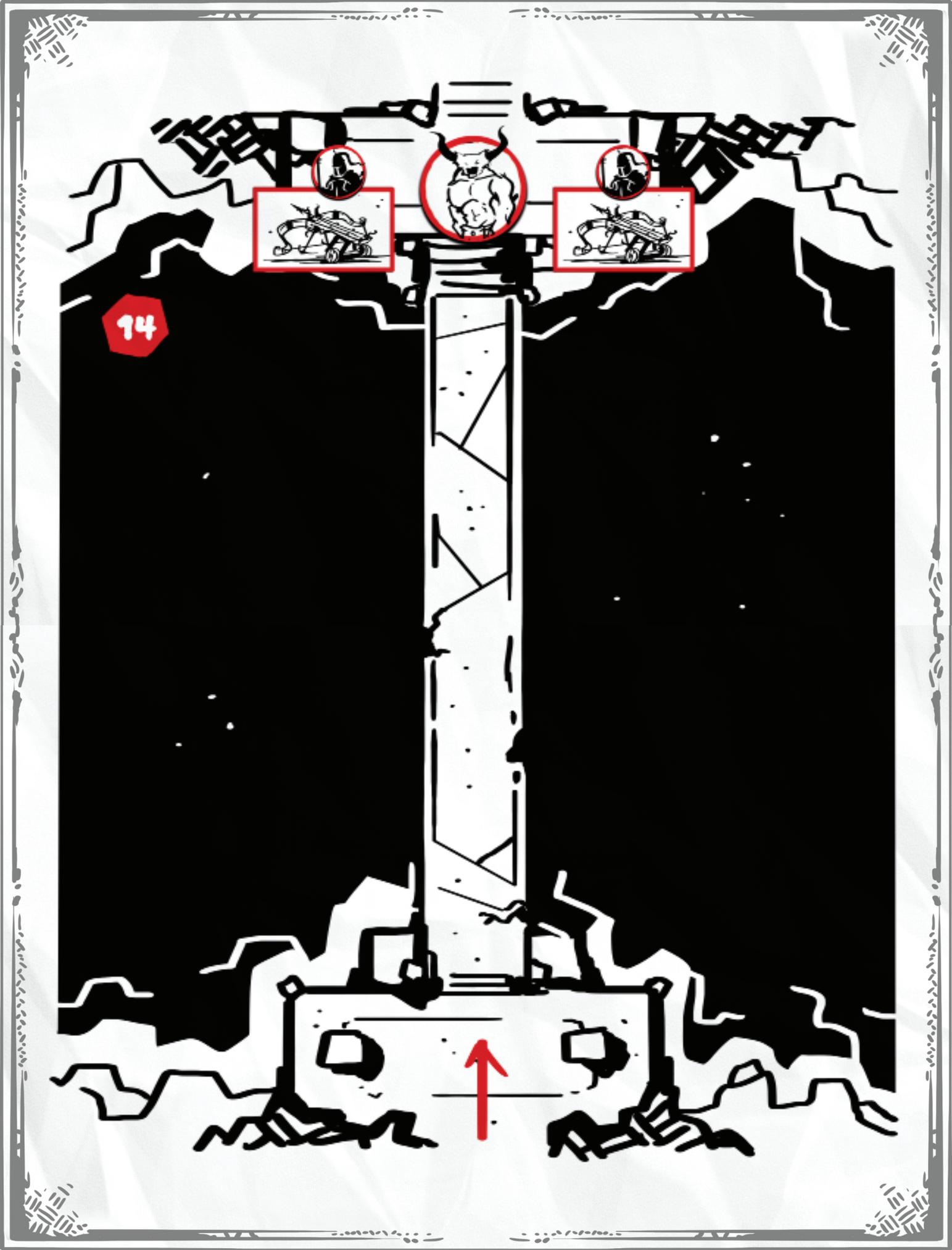
- Arbalests hit for ULTIMATE damage
- They take 1 ROUND to reload
- Each operator is a human warrior, +2 all rolls
- Arbalests are built in place, but can be turned

3: THE ANCIENT BRIDGE

- Three huge pillars support the bridge, disappearing far below in distant gloom
- One pillar is somewhat weakened with age
- There are almost no rails
- The bridge is only 8 feet wide
- If impacted by explosives or heavy force, the bridge will begin to crumble in 1D4 ROUNDS

4: HOWLING WIND

- Amplify the challenge level by adding an erratic, gusty wind through the fissure
- The wind blows every 1D4 ROUNDS
- Use D12 as a 'clock reading' to determine wind direction
- All creatures not secured or safely sheltered must roll STR or be pushed NEAR with the howling gust
- The wind only blows on the GM turn, and only for a moment, then roll the timer again



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WHAT NEXT?

INFORM

HERO REVEALED

If and when Kord is defeated, he will revert to his original human form as he breathes his last. He was once a great knight of Duradin, friend to the dwarves, and loyal subject of Ramthas.

Heroes at this moment, unlike many monster deaths, can choose to heal Kord and help him recover. This comes with revelations and new opportunities for the story to take new directions.

- Kord does not return to his Minotaur form when healed, but keeps his STATS and Axe.
- Kord's gratitude to the heroes is infinite. He will pledge himself to them if they desire, fighting even to the death to honor his life bond.
- Use Kord as a voice to reveal more about your specific dungeon or events ahead. Give him complete knowledge of the enemy, and be generous with players!
- Kord is despondant as time goes on. His wife Elsa has been taken by whatever primary villain you have ahead in your story. Kord will not directly ask the party to risk their lives to help him, but until he saves her he will never smile, joke or laugh.
- Finally, Kord has knowledge that other good fighting men are being transformed into bull warriors. This can be happening nearby as a dungeon side chute, or be a separate adventure entirely, if the players choose to help these poor cursed souls.

WHAT'S DOWN THERE

Falling off the brudge into the abyss may not be lethal. It can lead to an entirely new offshoot to your adventure path if players find a way to survive the plunge.

- Mud-soaked frog warrens and tunnels lead back up to the main levels. One among them is a truly old, hungry monster who can swallow men whole
- If deep enough, the chasm reveals rivulets of lava and a series of wide cracks and gaps in the stone. Fire folk and Fire Salamanders dwell here.
- Why not go classic? SPIDERS! Fill a cave set with spider webs and egg sacs, but twist the tone with a pious, gentle mother spider who only wants to survive. Can she be communicated with?

CLUES IN THE STONE

The bridge, regardless of its final state as the encounter concludes, holds subtle clues about the overall setting. These can be discovered with WIS rolls, or simply revealed by you to draw players forward.

- This place was built ages ago by dwarves. They have hidden tiny etchings. They are slogans of freedom and rebellion. They must have been enslaved
- The weaknesses in this masonry can be found elsewhere in the 'dungeon' and exploited to topple or ruin structures
- The stones show signs of duranium tools. Some stones hewn like warm butter. IF such tools can be found somewhere ahead, they would be mighty relics

