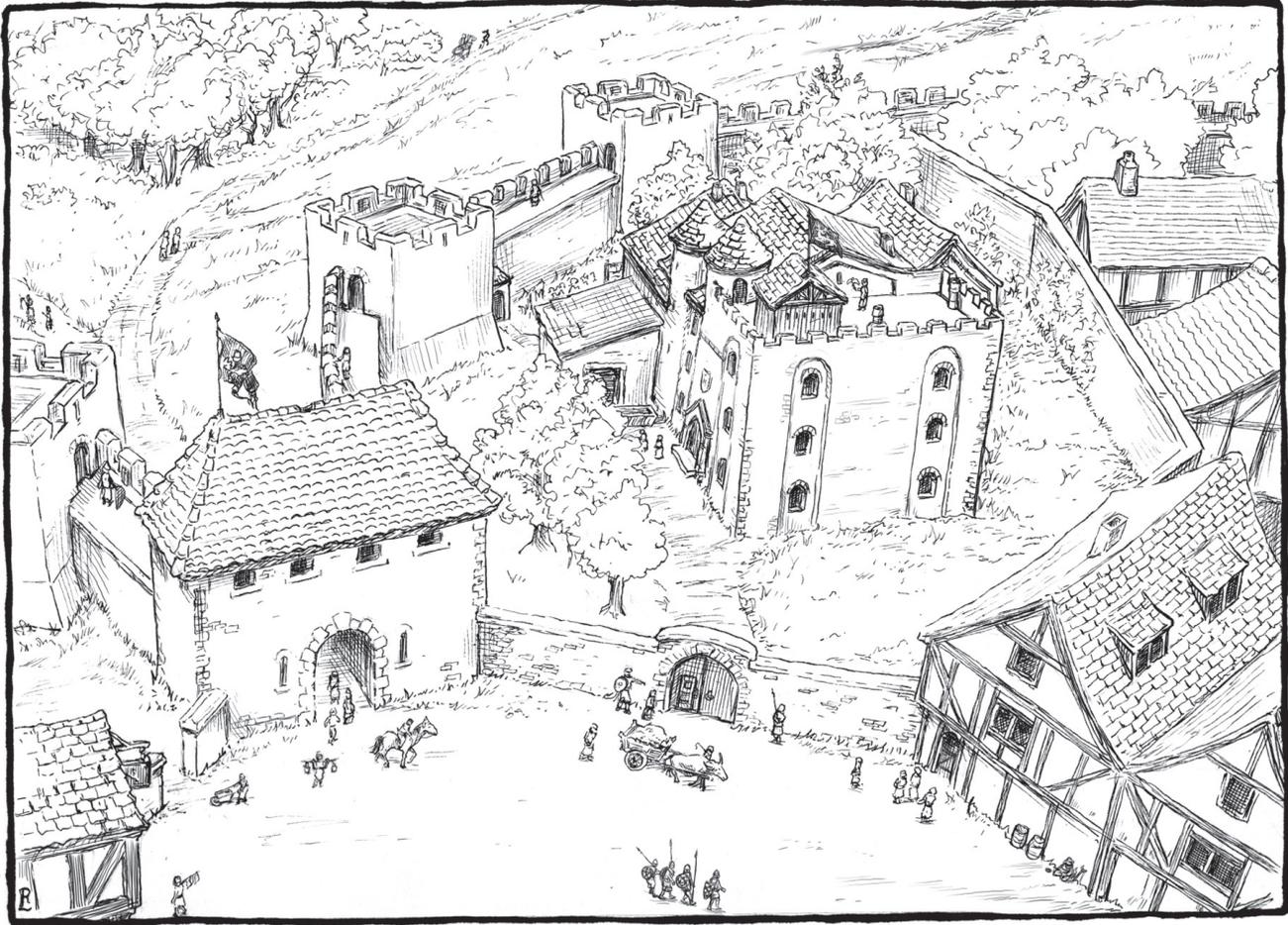


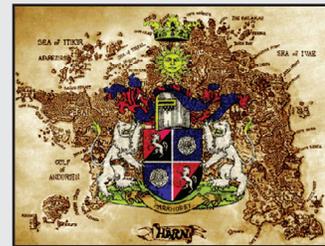
BALIM HOUSE 1



alim House in Tashal is a grand and imposing building situated on one of the largest lots in the city. It is the principal city residence of Troda Dariune, 20th Earl of Balim. He prefers to live here when in Tashal, rather than the quarters provided for him in the royal castle, Caer Elend, as due his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Kingdom of Kaldor. His unwed sister, Lady Donesyn Dariune, makes the house her permanent home and serves as majordomo. Located next to the Ternua Gate in the Haldana section of Tashal, the house adjoins the city wall and shares part of its western wall with the townhouse of Clan Bastune, which holds the Barony of Kolorn. The western wall is taller than usual to prevent prying eyes from the buildings that abut the alleys off Chidena Street.

At one time, the earls of Balim maintained a much smaller townhouse in the Medrik District, but King Haldan I granted them this land after the clan rose in prominence during the Baronial Revolt. Larilan, 15th Earl of Balim, began construction of the house in 635. The original part of the house took nearly ten years to complete, such was its construction and opulence. The finest craftsmen in the kingdom labored over every conceivable detail; the woodwork alone took years.

The house boasts three stories and is especially grand; no expense was spared in the construction. The carefully laid flooring appears almost new



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BALIM HOUSE 2

and without creak or rattle even after nearly a century. The stone walls of the lower stories are three feet thick and are intended to furnish obvious proof of the prestige of Clan Dariune but also to provide a last refuge should the need arise.

The house is almost a miniature keep, a design considered a coincidence except by the earl who ordered it. The western addition was added by the 19th earl in 671–673 and the first-floor windows were widened at the same time. The roof over the earl's chamber was illegally crenellated during this renovation but King Torastra pretended not to notice. The present earl boasts that the delicate tracery of the walls and columns on such a solid structure is the work of Khuzdul masons. No one has chosen to contest the earl's claim.

Balim House has served the Dariunes admirably over the decades. It has highlighted the power of the Earls of Balim, rather than whatever transient royal offices they might hold at the moment. Traditionally, a member of the family not expected to inherit has managed the household and seen to the affairs of the earl in his absence. Lady Donesyn is but the latest in that line, with the present earl's uncle, Sir Garil Dariune, having served the 19th earl in that capacity. Although Lady Donesyn is the only member of the clan in permanent residence, others will often be present, especially the earl's newly knighted son,

Sir Scina, and his cousin, Tyrnal, the Rekela of Kephrus. The earl's wife, Lady Olena, has not visited the house in years. Distant members of the clan and major tenants of the earldom are welcome for a meal and a bed but are not encouraged to tarry overlong unless on business directly relating to the earl and his affairs.

The house also serves another purpose beyond prestige and lodging. Lady Donesyn maintains relations with many of the great ladies of the kingdom who keep lodgings in Tashal, and among those who travel to the city from time to time. It is not uncommon for such to visit for an afternoon ostensibly devoted to needlework. Lady Donesyn's salon often includes Shyna Firth, Alessa Firth, Siwen Elendsa, Hesena Elendsa, Irla Labarn, and even Cheselyne Hosath on occasion. Although never invited, Peresta Bastune is never turned away when she has the cheek to show up. Thilisa Meleken has been known to pay a call on her rare visits to Tashal and Bresyn Risai has recently accepted invitations. Lady Donesyn has cultivated these ladies and others without regard for anything other than their suitability of rank. She is active in local politics, supporting a number of the aldermen and guildmasters, yet in every case acting with a light touch. She always seems to have news of interest to relate to her brother.



MAJOR NPCs



Troda Dariune, 20th Earl of Balim

Troda Dariune is one of the most powerful men in the Kingdom of Kaldor. Royal blood flows in his veins; he claims the kings of Kaldor and Melderyn as cousins. Troda holds one of the premier fiefs on Hårn as a belted earl and, if these accidents of birth were not enough, he is possessed of an intellect of the highest order, both cunning and shrewd. Those few who know him well, including the Earl of Neph, refer to him clandestinely as the “Spider Earl.” Some expect he will attempt to seize the throne on the death of King Miginath. Troda has plans known only to himself, but skillfully uses those around him to his own advantage.

No longer young and never what one might call handsome, the Earl of Balim now leaves the physical aspects of his position to the martial prowess of his newly knighted son Scina. He is relieved to no longer have to worry about such things, preferring to plot and plan for the time of trouble on the horizon.

Lord Balim uses the house the way his ancestors did, as a place of luxurious refuge, a place where deals can be made, and a place where the prestige of his great lands, birth, and power are made manifest in the capital of the kingdom. In short, a place to increase his power and influence in subtle ways, but always in ways that serve to protect him and his family and advance their status.

Lady Donesyn Dariune

Lady Donesyn is content to be mistress of Balim House, though it was not always so. Conscious of her plain appearance, she knew that as the daughter of an earl she would have many marriage prospects and could look forward to a life with a husband and children if nothing else. She hoped for the love of which the troubadours sang. She did not count on falling in love with Tashal.

While devoted to her brother, Donesyn considers herself his equal in every way including rank. She realized that her life would take a very different path as a young girl when she slipped out of the house into the hustle and bustle of Tashal during the summer fair. Nearly intoxicated with the sense of freedom, she whirled about, found herself near the caer, and met a beautiful woman who lived in Eastside. The woman took her home, but not before instilling in her a sense that she could be a part of this vibrant city. From that moment, Donesyn never wanted to live anywhere but Tashal.

She saw her new friend from time to time, and although never quite learning where she lived, Donesyn knew her to be a grand lady, possibly even a distant relation. Donesyn learned many things from her, especially the art of subtlety. Her friend told her, “A lady radiating charm and beauty is always welcomed. Thus is disguised the dagger of the mind.” One day, when she had not seen her friend for a long time, Donesyn realized she was gone. Although she missed her, she was thankful for a friendship that had taught her so much.



BALIM HOUSE 4

When Donesyn's father arranged a marriage for her, she was almost relieved when her would-be suitor was killed in the Royal Chelebin Tournament of Chivalry. She spurned all further suitors and prepared herself for the day she would become mistress of Balim House. Her brother respected her desire when he succeeded as earl.



Sir Scina Dariune

Scina Dariune grew up pampered, indulged, and forgiven many transgressions, yet driven with the rod of his father's expectations. Just knighted, and expected to one day be the 21st Earl of Balim, his upbringing has left him both arrogant and insecure. Despite this, he is a capable young knight and, if not the equal of his father in intellect, more than a match for most of his peers. For all this, Scina might be expected to try to avoid his father, but in fact seeks out his father's company and approval. This brings him to Tashal frequently when he is not hunting at Kiban or Galdwas. The servants who were with the house when Scina was a child remember him as a young tyrant and treat him carefully.

Though having much in common with Sir Urien Caldeth, heir to the Earldom of Vemion, Scina considers him a plodding provincial rube born above his station and abilities. His dislike and rivalry with Sir Mirald Harabor is common knowledge, extending as far as the Princess Cheselyne. This may be the only thing that prevents Scina from squelching any talk of a union between him and Cheselyne. He does not know Sir Meden Curo, heir to the

Earldom of Neph, well, but what little he knows makes his blood run cold. He likes his cousin Sir Prehil Firith and enjoys his company when in Tashal. Sir Scina is very fond of his brother, Karison, presently squired at Jedes, and takes any opportunity to visit with him.

The one area where Scina is left to his own devices is romantic entanglements. Troda expects Scina will marry to his station—negotiations are underway for the hand of Princess Cheselyne the Younger—but if Scina decides to explore the attractions of Galopea's Feast, Tashal's courtesans, or some village whore, the earl is unconcerned. He might be more concerned if he knew the degree to which his son despises Princess Cheselyne.

Filya of Naradas

Filya, 29, is officially Balim House's cook, but aspires to much more. She is smart as a whip, knows the workings of the house and staff inside and out, and runs them like a drill sergeant. She is the power behind the chamberlain, who is happy to let her meet with Lady Donesyn each morning to determine the daily and weekly schedule. Although the chamberlain confirms all of Filya's dictates, he is grateful he can sleep in and go to bed early. Filya expects to become chamberlain in due time but is in no hurry; she likes the old man and is happy to carry his responsibilities as well as her own. She sometimes feels like she could run the household herself. She does not, however, possess his encyclopedic knowledge of Kaldoric society, nor is she aware of this lack.

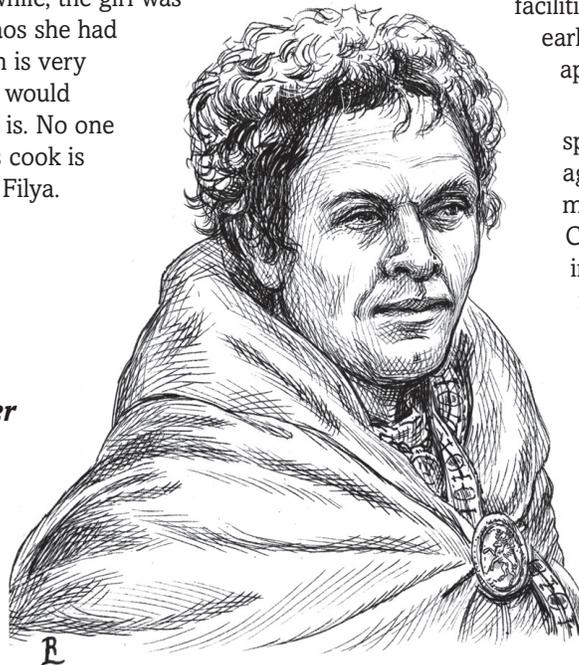


Filya believes herself to be the daughter of Mera of Naradas, the proprietor of the Oak and Stone Tavern. She is not close to Mera, having rarely seen her since she was “abandoned” at an early age. As long as Filya has a say about it, Balim House does no business with the Oak and Stone. Filya is wrong about her parentage, and the subject of a great secret.

When Lord Balim was 16, he had a dalliance with one of the serving girls in Kiban. His father found out and packed the pregnant girl off to Tashal, where she died giving birth. Troda’s mother, Kethele, named the baby Filya and arranged for her to be raised by a wet nurse, Mera of Naradas. When Filya was old enough, she came to work at the townhouse. Although Filya was trained as a cook, Sir Garil ensured she received more attention, having the household tutor, Layna of Narve, a Save-K’norian Haliki, teach her to read and how to act around the nobility.

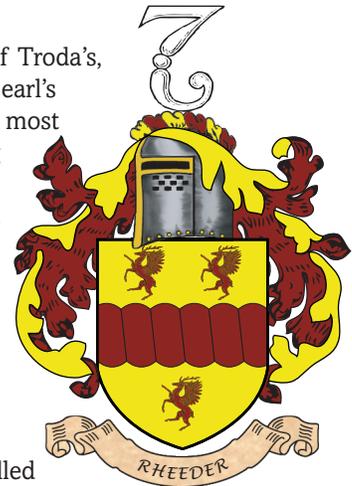
Unfortunately for Filya, she inherited all of her looks from her father. She has Troda’s nose, eyes, and heavy-set features. In 699, Troda and Olena visited Tashal. As the girl was serving at table, Troda couldn’t keep his eyes off her. Olena noticed Troda’s fascination with the girl and saw the similarities in appearance. She put two and two together and realized her husband had a bastard daughter. Accusations ensued but Troda denied all. More angry at his denials, Olena ordered him to get rid of the girl amidst ultimatums. In the end, Troda refused to put his first-born child out on the street and Olena declared she would never visit the townhouse again while that “insult” dwelled there. All the while, the girl was completely oblivious to the chaos she had caused. Secretly, Lady Donesyn is very proud of her niece, though she would never say it nor admit who she is. No one else has any idea that the earl’s cook is actually his daughter, not even Filya.

Sir Fago Rheeder



Sir Fago Rheeder

A childhood friend of Troda’s, Sir Fago now acts as the earl’s physician and is the man most responsible for executing the earl’s schemes. So discreet has he been that the earl’s enemies have on occasion sought his medical advice. He often travels with the earl but occasionally embarks on solitary sojourns, ostensibly on the earl’s business. He is also a skilled alchemist and naturalist.



Sir Fago is a cultivated, educated man of some charm and possesses a boundless curiosity. Yet is also ruthless and cold. Although articulate and facile, he is at times blunt to the point of rudeness. He would never deliberately display rude or boorish behavior but delights in asking uncomfortable questions. He possesses a sadistic streak of which few, even the earl, are aware.

Deeply loyal to Troda, Sir Fago is nonetheless driven by dark hungers and disturbing demons. He thrives on the hunt, the game, and revels in intellect for its own sake. His pursuits all feed this dark hunger of his soul. He has dissected many corpses and vivisected at least one of his enemies. He looks forward to the next one and has an arrangement with a surgeon in Medrik for use of his facilities as Sir Fago’s needs dictate. The earl has no inkling of his friend’s hidden appetites.

In his capacity as the earl’s spymaster, Sir Fago has contacts and agents throughout the kingdom. The most important of these, Zyro of Carel, the earl’s fool, remains mostly in Kiban but sends enciphered reports to Sir Fago when he is able. Sir Fago also has several agents in the royal service on his payroll. He hopes to add someone in the Lia-Kavair soon.

BALIM HOUSE 6

OTHER NPCS

Chamberlain

Tebald Lartyne, uncle of the lord of Athsic Manor, has been chamberlain of the Dariune townhouse for more than 30 years. He is experienced and capable, if slightly lazy. Tebald was appointed by Troda's father and has held the post for so long he can do it in his sleep, which on occasion he has done. He knows everyone worth knowing among the movers and shakers in Tashal. He is the perfect host, welcoming guests by name and inquiring politely about their wives, children, and interests. Having known the earl and Lady Donesyn since they were children, he is exceptionally good at reading their moods and knowing when they can be disturbed and what issues they will want to know about. The other servants sometimes refer to him as "Uncle" because of his friendly demeanor; he can, however, be very stern if crossed. He once had a servant beaten nearly to death for stealing.

Chaplain

Bertram Jendral, a Dariune cousin, entered the Laranian Church when only a teenager. Trained at Ascur Abbey, he was ordained and spent several years as a chaplain with the Lady of Paladins, which honed his sword arm. Six months ago, when the previous chaplain, Matakea Tibalt Legith, asked to be relieved of his duties due to age and ill health, the earl requested that Bertram be assigned as his personal chaplain in Tashal. Despite being officially attached to the Tashal temple, Matakea Bertram lives in Balim House and spends nearly all of his time attending to the needs of the household. Much to his dismay, Bertram finds that those needs do not consume very much of his time and he is chafing for something more to do.

Guard Sergeant

Allard of Fenton is a tall (6'4"), boney man with a hatchet-like face, a long reach, and surprising strength. He is a skilled swordsman and a trusted retainer of the earl. Sergeant Allard takes his responsibility for the safety of Lady Donesyn and Balim House very seriously. His hand-picked men respect him but are also a little afraid of him. Sergeant Allard's idea of discipline is a quick blow, and his strength makes it memorable. He is well known to the city guard, especially his good friend, Karsin of Teryne, the Ternua Gate sergeant.

Falconer

Tromath of Davold, a mild man of about 30 (he is not sure), grew up on Galdwas Manor, the son of cottars. When he was orphaned at a young age, Tromath was taken into the manor household as a servant, but his talent with birds was soon recognized. Troda's father, the earl at the time, appointed him falconer to Balim House. He is content with his lot and takes excellent care of his raptors. He likes to take a pint at the Seven Stars, where he recently saw a buxom spitfire of a girl laughing and singing and flirting. He was too shy to join in the fun but was smitten. He has discovered she lives in an impressive townhouse across from Galopea's Feast but is at a loss as to how to meet her, or even learn her name.

Karison Dariune

As Troda's youngest son, Karison has been spared the pressures to which his brother Scina has been subjected, and is much clearer in his perceptions than Scina. Presently squiring at Jedes, Karison is often detailed by Constable Mirdarne to carry messages to the earl, which frequently brings him to Tashal. He knows it will fall to him to help his brother shoulder the burdens of the earldom. He is prepared to do so but has no desire to bear those burdens himself. He expects to one day be the master of Balim House.

Enoriel Dariune

Enoriel, the earl's only daughter, enjoys visiting Tashal from time to time, preferring the company of her Aunt Donesyn to that of her mother. She is also keenly aware that, being of marriageable age, she ought to be the object of some interest. However, the earl's heralds spend much of their time trying to get Sir Scina and Princess Cheselyne in the same room, thus giving little attention to Enoriel. A willful young woman with much of her father's grit, Enoriel is determined to take matters into her own hands before someone manages to betroth her to the boorish Urien Caldeth. Tashal seems to her both a good place to do that and very far from Minarsas.

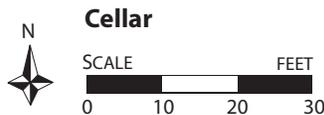
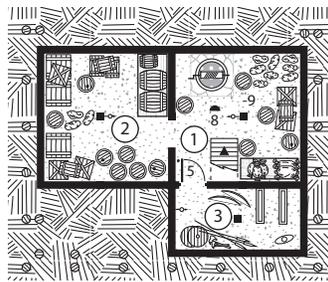
BALIM HOUSE 7

CELLAR

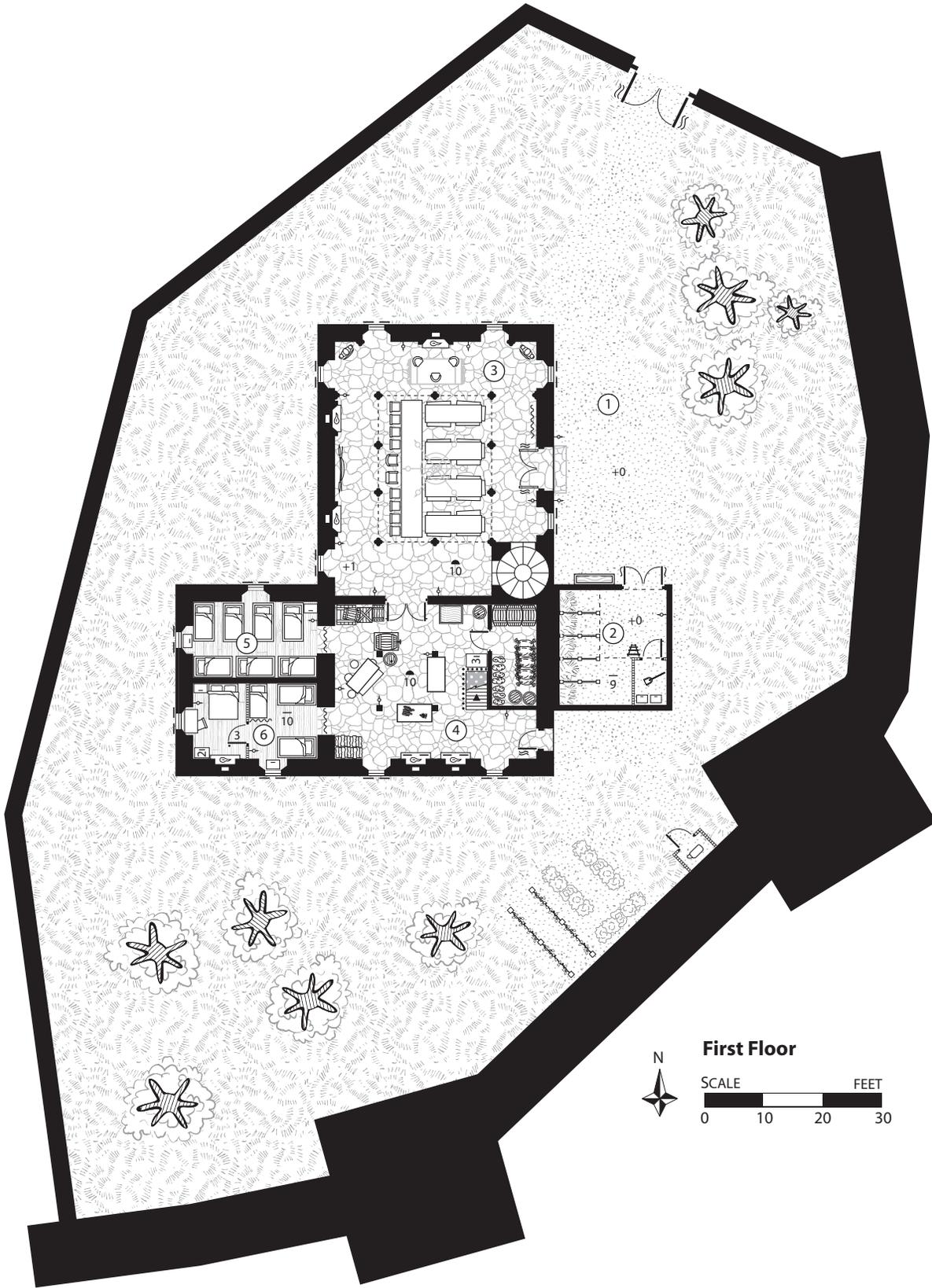
[1] **Well Room:** The townhouse has its own well, both for convenience and security. The well room is cool and humid and is used to store the overflow of food from the pantry upstairs. The cellar is home to a number of semi-domesticated cats. Four related females are the core of the colony, led by a large orange-striped dame named Tess. The gray short-hair older tom, aptly named Scarface, does not tolerate any other males and drives off the male kittens when they are old enough to be weaned. This clowder of cats is extremely effective at managing the mouse and rat population in and around the townhouse. Filya leaves the window next to the back door open so they can come and go at will. She has named the cats herself but despairs that they will ever respond to her.

[2] **Store Room:** A siege or famine has not happened in many years but Lord Balim still insists that a large store of food be kept in case of emergency. The food is rotated regularly to ensure it will be fresh when needed. The eastern part of the room is used to store the earl's collection of fine wines and spirits.

[3] **Armory:** The armory door is kept locked and only Lady Donesyn and Lord Balim have keys. Enough weaponry is kept here to outfit a company of men-at-arms in case of emergency. The two manservants and the chaplain drill with the men-at-arms on holy days after services. They practice with sword, shield, and spear. A target is occasionally set up for archery practice. Matakea Bertram is a talented swordsman and Tanner and Lyman are equal to most militia archers.



BALIM HOUSE 8



FIRST FLOOR

[1] **Courtyard:** Balim House is located just inside the Ternua Gate on Ternua Road. This is a prominent, busy location with continuous traffic throughout the day. The entrance to the townhouse is often blocked by wagons or people, and the guards and servants are kept quite busy maintaining a path to the gate. Once, when delayed by a stubborn mule, Sir Scina drew his sword and slew it. The guards do not wish to learn how the earl himself would react to a similar situation.

The property is bounded by the city wall on the east and south sides and a 20' tall, ivy-covered garden wall on the north and west sides. Set into the wall is an oak gate that is 10' tall and six inches thick. Because of the hubbub in front of the townhouse, the gate is usually kept closed and barred. The right leaf of the gate has a person-sized inset door known as a wicket gate, with a large peep hole protected by a grill and shutter. A bell attached to a rope allows visitors to announce their presence; it can be heard as far as the house. Two men-at-arms are stationed at the gate during the day.

The earl's private courtyard is roughly oval in shape and is a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city. Nine large elm trees shade the grounds and dampen the noise from the road. Lady Donesyn has little interest in gardening and has left the grounds mostly in grass save for a small plot tended by the cook. A couple of sheep named Gorge and Gackie keep the grass closely cropped. One of the younger servants is tasked with making sure the sheep do not trample the garden.

A single-hole privy stands against the city wall and provides a private place to answer the call of nature. The pit below is 8' deep and lined with mortared stone. The contents of the townhouse's chamber pots are dumped here or used as fertilizer for the garden plot. The city's gong farmers compete to collect such noble business.

[2] **Stable:** The stable is usually reserved for the most valuable and important horses, usually those of the earl or his sons. Other horses are kept on the nearby ostlers' common. One stall is unofficially home to the two sheep who keep the courtyard grazed short. Most of the horses do not care for the sheep.

[3] **Great Hall:** This hall is only used when the Earl of Balim is in residence and has hosted many a sumptuous feast. It is also used for the earl's less-elaborate entertainments, such as his post-Soratir receptions, some of which happen to coincide with similar functions hosted by Lady Cheselyne Hosath, in which case the northern portion of the room becomes the focus. Regardless, the food and drink served are of the highest quality and the only mistake for the staff greater than serving inferior fare is running out of it.

The hall is exquisitely appointed. Each column boasts a unique set of carvings and a vaulted roof supports the encircling balcony. The chandelier hanging above the tables holds more than 100 candles when fully lit. Behind the earl's seat of honor hangs a large shield with his comital arms: a field azure, a stag lodged argent. Nearly opposite and next to the main doors hangs a tapestry depicting the victory of King Haldan I in the Baronial Revolt, with Allesa Dariune, 12th Earl of Balim, at his side. A stylized statue of Kaery, the 13th Earl, stands in the northwest corner, while a newer and more physically accurate statue of Troda stands in the northeast corner. The latter statue was carved by Sattris of Meralen and is a splendid example of his devotion to the verisimilitude of art. While carving it, Sattris made too freely with Lady Donesyn and has incurred her lasting displeasure. That he quickly turned his attentions to Lady Peresta Bastune did not soften her attitude.

[4] **Kitchen:** The hall is served by a spacious kitchen. The two massive fireplaces can accommodate the cooking for even a large feast. A substantial pantry, right off the kitchen, is storage for the most frequently used items. On most days, the kitchen is a hive of activity, with Filya seeing to meal preparation and the execution of the day's tasks. Supplies are delivered almost daily.

[5] **Barracks:** The earl maintains a garrison of nine men-at-arms to protect the house and to attend to such tasks as he may see fit to assign them. These men rotate the guard duty throughout the house and are commanded by Sergeant Allard. Additional beds in this room are used by servants or other low-born guests as needed. Tromath the falconer also sleeps here. When the earl is in residence, the guard detachment typically includes an additional company of foot and several knights.

[6] **Servant Quarters:** The outer room houses the four female domestic servants and the cook. The chamberlain has a private room.

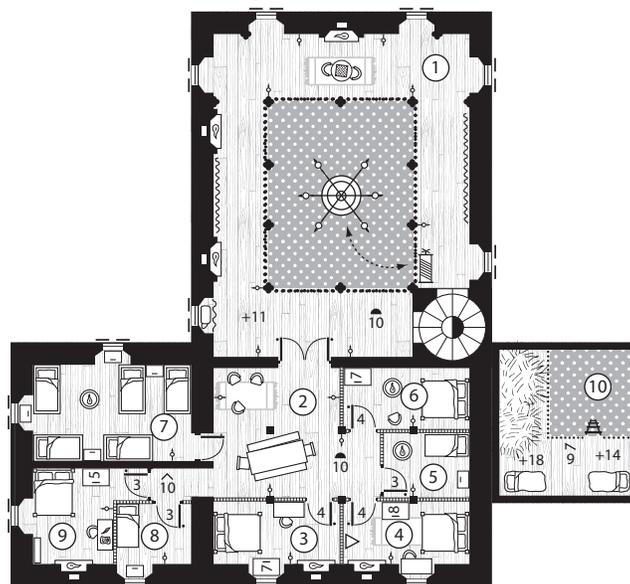
BALIM HOUSE 10

SECOND FLOOR

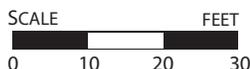
- [1] **Gallery:** The bright and warm gallery serves as Lady Donesyn's morning solar. She runs the household from her seat in front of the fireplace, where a good view of the gate is but steps away. A skilled Malnirala player, she frequently will challenge visitors to a match. When the earl is in residence, the gallery is filled with cots and straw ticks to provide accommodation for guests and servants. Lord Balim does not like people to be bedded down in the hall where he might see them.
- [2] **Solar:** The gentle members of the household take their meals in this hall, which Lady Donesyn also uses in the afternoons for needlework with other ladies. She keeps a scrupulous pecking order as to who uses the chambers off this hall.
- [3] **Quarters:** This comfortable room is used by Rekela Dariune, Lady Enoriel, or a very prominent guest.
- [4] **Lady Donesyn:** The Mistress of Balim House occupies this well-appointed room but will rarely be found here unless sleeping, engaging in private devotions, or seeing to the household accounts.
- [5] **Lady-in-Waiting:** Lady Hilaria Karondal is the sister of the lord of Hetheron Manor. Now in her

mid-40s, she has been lady-in-waiting to Lady Donesyn for more than 20 years. When the house is especially crowded, this room is given to a noble guest and Hilaria shares a bed with Lady Donesyn.

- [6] **Quarters:** This room is often used by Karison.
- [7] **Guest Quarters:** Lesser clan members, retainers, and other gentle guests are given the use of this spartan room.
- [8] **Chaplain:** As befits a great household, the earl provides for a Laranian priest, Father Bertram. A Dariune cousin, Betram is treated as a family member. The adjacent room now used by Sir Fago was the previous chaplain's quarters, a fact that irks Bertram, and it bothers him that it bothers him.
- [9] **Sir Fago:** This warm and private room is used by Sir Fago and only he has a key to it. Servants are never allowed in here alone and only Sir Fago knows what his books and papers contain.
- [10] **Stable Loft:** The house's two manservants, Tanner and Lyman, sleep here. They are tasked with the heavy labor around the household and tending to the horses when required. They like the privacy of the loft and female guests are not uncommon, although they need to be sneaked in and out.



Second Floor



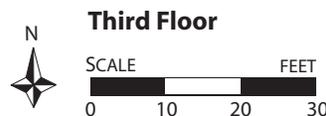
BALIM HOUSE 11

THIRD FLOOR

- [1] **Chapel:** This chapel for private family devotions is richly decorated. A fine tapestry adorns the back wall and richly brocaded linen covers the altar. An exquisite alabaster statue of Mendiz stands proudly in front of the altar. Father Bertram is often found here praying for the well-being of the earl and Clan Dariune. Filya tries to slip in at some point during the day to offer her own devotions.
- [2] **Earl's Hall:** This hall is used by the earl as a place to dine in private with favored guests. In inclement weather, the earl will also hold audiences and other meetings in the room. On the south wall hangs an opulent tapestry depicting Tashal as seen from the approaches along the Salt Route. A tapestry on the north wall shows a scene of courtly love. The oaken spiral staircase is of unusual but solid craftsmanship.

When his father is not in residence, Scina has begun to entertain his friends here and sometimes brings in various entertainers.

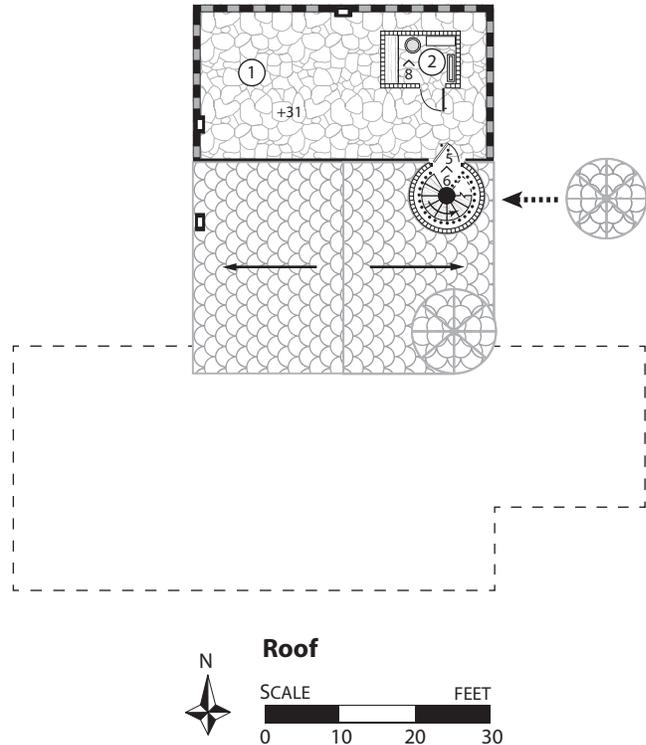
- [3] **Quarters:** Once the quarters of the Lady Olena, Countess of Balim, Sir Scina has used this room since being dubbed a knight. He knows his mother is not going to displace him, though he does not know why.
- [4] **Earl's Chamber:** This large, luxurious room is the private refuge of the Earl of Balim. It contains beds for his squire and body servant, along with a small private library. The earl keeps his city treasury in a stone chamber in the northeast corner, behind a secret door. There is usually at least £20 in silver coin and three to four times that amount in gems, jewels, and other specie. The earl keeps a broadsword in this room in case of emergency.



BALIM HOUSE 12

ROOF

- [1] **Roof:** The house is crowned by a large rooftop parapet. From here, one can see over the garden walls to the Laranian temple, the city proper, Caer Elend, and beyond the city walls out into the country. The crenellations hint that the house is a keep in all but name. High above the city, the parapet usually receives a breeze off the river. The earl often holds court here. On hot, humid days, he will order an awning put up for shade and a table and chairs brought up for him. Welcome guests are offered cool ale and a chair. Unwelcome petitioners are forced to stand in the hot sun and plead their case.
- [2] **Mews:** The mews were built by the previous earl to keep the tables filled with tasty game. Tromath takes a bird or two out to hunt in the fields and forests south of the city on most days, weather permitting. Sir Scina makes a point of hunting with the birds when he is in town.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

I need a falcon! The PCs have been tasked with obtaining a fledging kestrel falcon and it so happens that Tromath has one. He wants only one thing in return: Who is that girl?

It's a party! The Earl of Balim is having a little get-together after Soratir. The PCs (if noble) have been invited or (if common) hired on as temporary guards, servants, etc.

Did we just see Balim in a dress? The PCs see Filya out on errands. Is it Balim? What's he up to? Surely someone will pay for this kind of information...

Spies like us. Sir Fago Rheeder is looking to recruit the PCs for his network of agents, whether for their skills or as possible cat's paws. If they botch their first assignment, Sir Fago may arrange for them to visit a surgeon in Medrik.

New Guards. Allard of Fenton, Balim House's guard sergeant, is friends with Karsin of Teryne, the Teruna Gate sergeant. Karsin drinks heavily and his men are undisciplined. Some resent the ostentatious wealth around them and have taken to bullying the poor when bored. The PCs are new hires and will be tested by Karsin and his men.

Summer Fair. The Earl of Balim sponsors a musical performance at the amphitheater on the 10th of Larane during each year's summer fair. For this year's event, Lady Donesyn wants a change from the same old musicians that the chamberlain usually hires. The PCs can either be hired as the new musical troupe or have been tasked by Lady Donesyn with finding and hiring something novel.