

# Castle Warrack

## AWAKENINGS

**"Waking Dreams"**  
Part 1 of 6

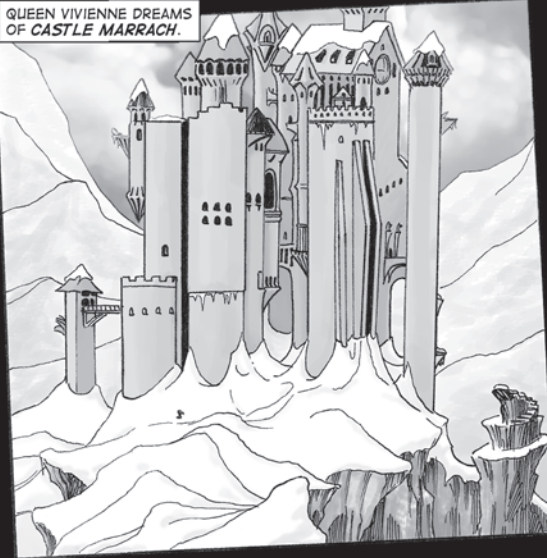


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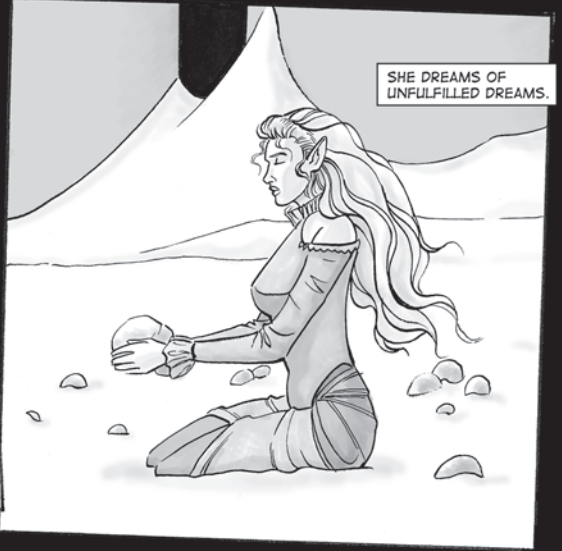
SKOTOS



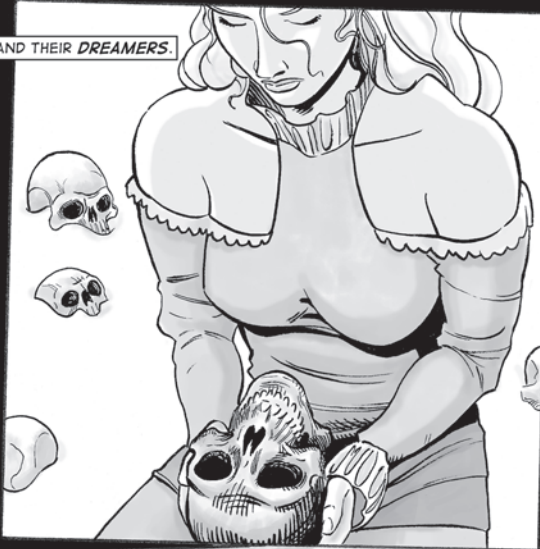
QUEEN VIVIENNE DREAMS OF CASTLE MARRACH.



SHE DREAMS OF UNFULFILLED DREAMS.



AND THEIR *DREAMERS*.



HER VOICE IS LIKE A WHISPER WHEN SHE BEGINS TO SPEAK, NEARLY OVERWHELMED BY ARDAN'S RAGING WINDS.



WHAT DO YOU WISH FROM US?

YOUR FATHER DISTURBED US WHEN HE BUILT THIS PLACE.



WE TOSS AND TURN.

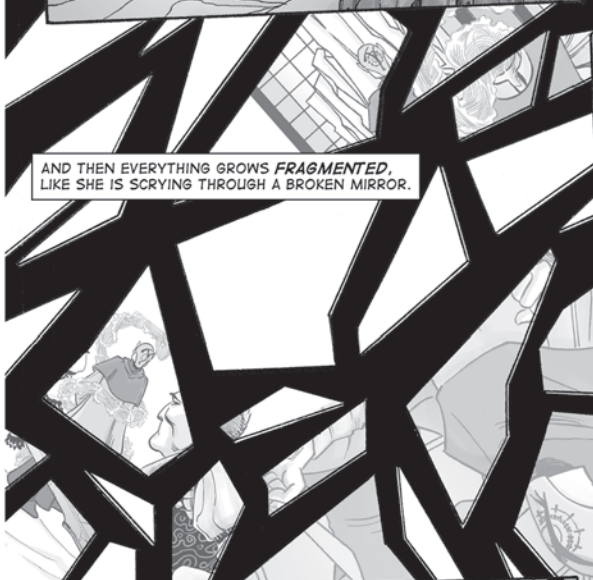
OUR SLUMBER IS RESTLESS.



YOU MUST AWAKEN US  
OR IT WILL BE TOO LATE.



AND THEN EVERYTHING GROWS *FRAGMENTED*,  
LIKE SHE IS SCRYING THROUGH A BROKEN MIRROR.



SHE DREAMS OF  
A DARK RITUAL.



AND A DARK BEAST.



AND FINALLY SHE SEES A MAN  
THAT SHE CANNOT REMEMBER.



QUEEN VIVIENNE AWAKENS.

**BOREAS!**

# AWAKENINGS

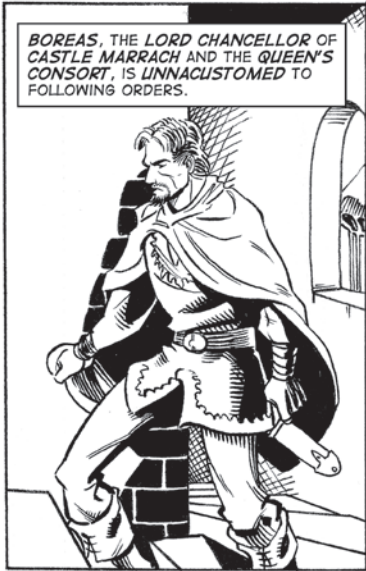
## PART ONE OF SIX

"WAKING DREAMS"

WRITTEN BY SHANNON APPELCLINE  
ILLUSTRATED BY BOB GRAM JR

COVER AND CONCEPT ART  
BY STEPHANIE PUI-MUN LAW  
PRODUCED BY CHRISTOPHER ALLEN



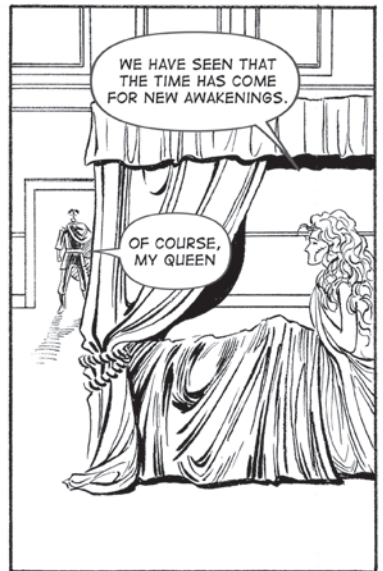


BOREAS, THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF CASTLE MARRACH AND THE QUEEN'S CONSORT, IS UNNACUSTOMED TO FOLLOWING ORDERS.



BOREAS!

EXCEPT FROM HER.



WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR NEW AWAKENINGS.

OF COURSE, MY QUEEN



FOR HER, BOREAS WOULD DO ANYTHING.

SHE WISHES TO FILL THE OUTER BAILEY AGAIN, CHAMBERLAIN.



I HAVE ORGANIZED A LIST OF NAMES.



I SUPPOSE IT WAS TOO MUCH TO EXPECT THIS PEACE TO LAST.

JUST DO IT, CHAMBERLAIN.



THEY ALL WOULD.

THE LIST, DOCTOR GETHEAHT.

IT SEEMS YOUR TIME OF REST IS OVER.



I DO NOT REST HERE, MY FRIEND LAUNFAL. NO REST INDEED.

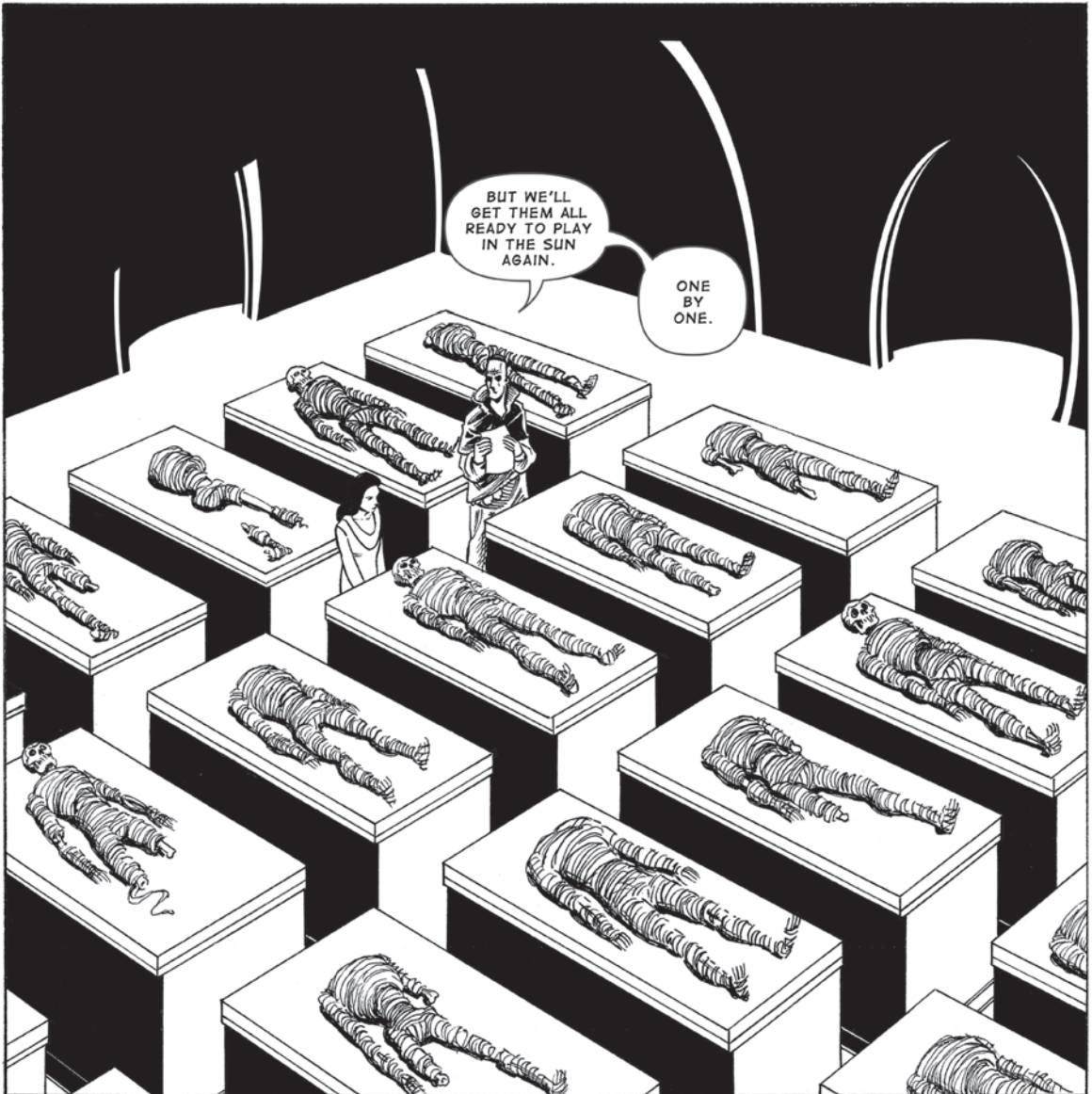
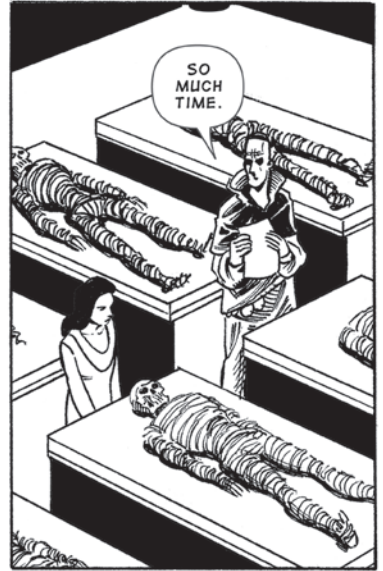
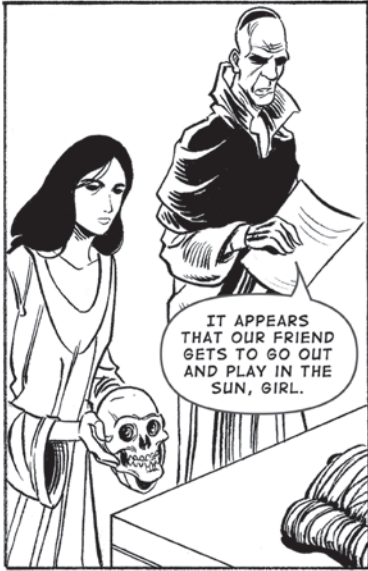
THE BONES ARE NEVER QUIET, NEVER SILENT, HERE IN THE CATACOMBS.



AH. WELL.

GOOD ENCHANTING THEN.

LITH!





EXCUSE ME.  
ARE YOU AWAKE?

HELLO?

BUT SUDDENLY VICTOR IS REMEMBERING. THE MEMORY IS SO STRONG THAT IT FILLS HIM UP ENTIRELY. HE CAN HEAR THE CLATTER OF THE KITCHEN, FEEL THE HEAT.

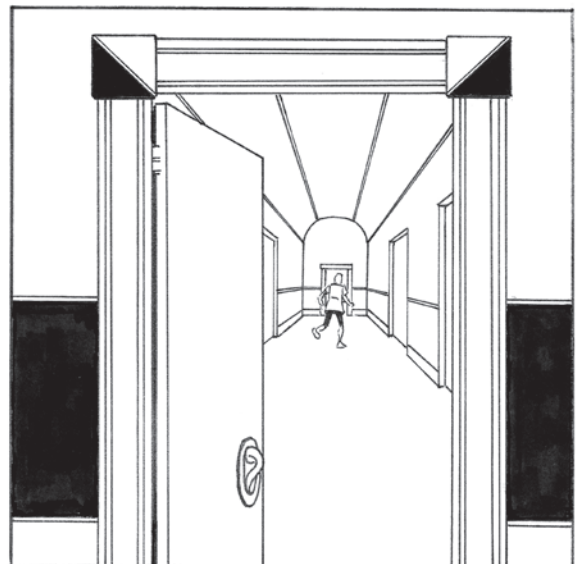
WHAT?

NOT TO WORRY.  
YOU'RE JUST A WEE BIT  
DISORIENTED. IT'S FINE THAT  
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING,  
FRIEND. JUST FINE.

IT'S GONE IN JUST A SECOND, AND THEN VICTOR FEELS EMPTY.

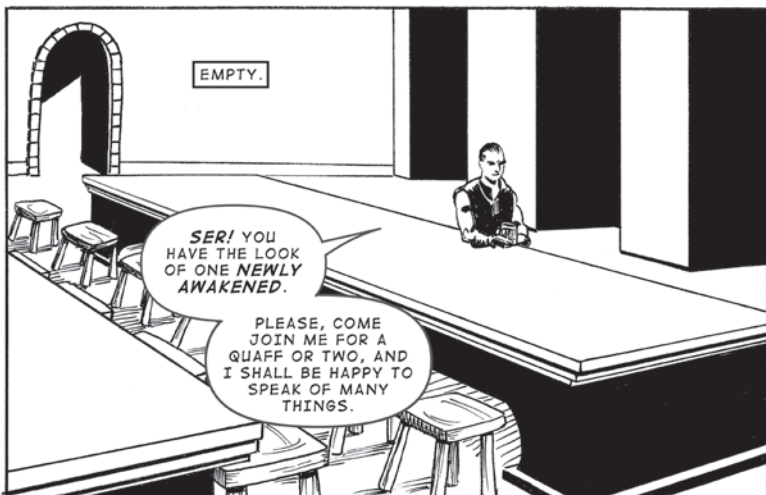
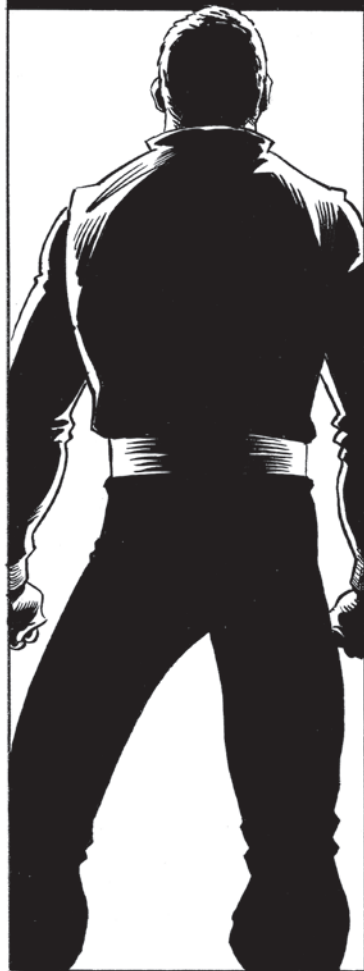
**WHAT HAVE  
YOU DONE  
TO ME??!!**

OH, BALANUS!  
YOU'RE  
VICTOR SAVARY!





THE DINING HALL IS EASY TO FIND, BUT ON THE WAY VICTOR BEGINS TO GROW *UNEASY*, REALIZING THAT THE CASTLE IS UNNATURALLY...



EMPTY.

SER! YOU HAVE THE LOOK OF ONE NEWLY AWAKENED.

PLEASE, COME JOIN ME FOR A QUAFF OR TWO, AND I SHALL BE HAPPY TO SPEAK OF MANY THINGS.



INDEED! GROG AND FOOD TOO! I COULD EAT A PIG!



VICTOR BEGINS TO WALK TOWARD THE TABLE, TOWARD THE STRANGER AND TOWARD HIS FOOD, BUT THEN HE'S *ELSEWHERE* AGAIN, LOST IN MEMORY.

HE REMEMBERS BEING VERY COLD, AND HE FEELS THE WEIGHT OF A MOUNTAIN PRESSING DOWN UPON HIM.



IT'LL BE FINE, OLD SPORT. JUST UP INTO THE CHAIR.

CAN'T REMEMBER.

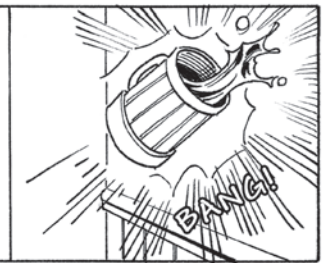


SOMETIMES A FEW MEMORIES OF SOME OTHER LIFE BUBBLE UP FOR THE *NEWLY AWAKENED*. THEY'LL PASS.

WANT THEM BACK.









SIR LAUNFAL!  
THIS NEWLY AWAKENED  
WAS MAKING TROUBLE IN  
THE DINING HALL!

UNIDENTIFIED  
NEWLY AWAKENED  
DISTURBING THE PEACE,  
8 BELLS, OUTER BAILEY  
DINING HALL.

YES, YES. THE  
CONFUSION IS QUITE  
UNDERSTANDABLE,  
QUITE.

YOU ARE NEWLY  
AWAKENED. ASK  
ME YOUR  
QUESTIONS.



WHERE  
AM I?

THE CASTLE MARRACH,  
AND TO HEAD OFF YOUR  
NEXT QUERY, YOU HAVE  
BEEN AWAKENED AT THE  
QUEEN'S REQUEST.



WHY?

WE  
DO NOT  
ASK THAT  
QUESTION  
OF SHE.

AND AS YOU  
WILL DOUBTLESS ASK  
WHERE YOU CAME FROM  
BEFORE YOU AWOKE, EACH  
HAS THEIR OWN  
ANSWER FOR THAT.



YOU KNOW  
IT ALL, DON'T  
YOU?

YES.



EASY.

YOU JUST NEED TO  
MOVE ON, WELCOME THIS NEW  
LIFE. YOU LOOK LIKE A STOUT  
MAN. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD  
JOIN THE WATCH.



INDEED.





IT IS VERY DARK IN THIS PLACE THAT DOES NOT SMELL OF DOVES, YET SHOULD. VICTOR IS BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE THE DARK.



Želčōŭē  
ōīō ʌřīēāŭū

WHAT?  
SPEAK THE  
COMMON  
TONGUE!

OF COURSE.  
I HAVE A SMALL  
TASK FOR YOU, OR  
RATHER MY MASTER  
DOES.

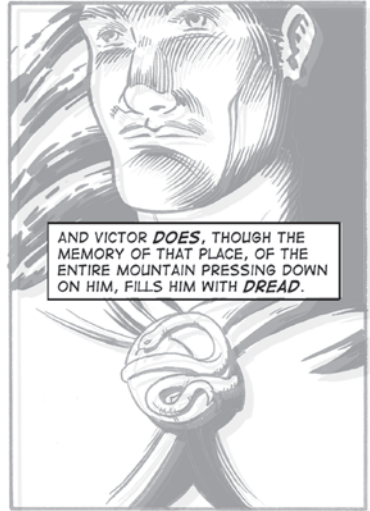


I WANT  
TO MEET  
HIM.



THERE IS AN  
*OBJECT*. A  
BROOCH WITH  
A SNAKE COILED  
AROUND IT.

MY MASTER  
WISHES IT, AND BELIEVES  
YOU WILL RECALL WHERE  
IT IS.



AND VICTOR *DOES*, THOUGH THE MEMORY OF THAT PLACE, OF THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN PRESSING DOWN ON HIM, FILLS HIM WITH *DREAD*.

FINE, YOU'LL GET  
IT. AND I'D *BETTER*  
GET WHAT I WANT  
IN RETURN.



YES, *MEMORIES*.

MAKE  
YOUR OTHER  
PREPARATIONS  
NOW.



I AM  
ALREADY  
PREPARED,  
*MASTER*.



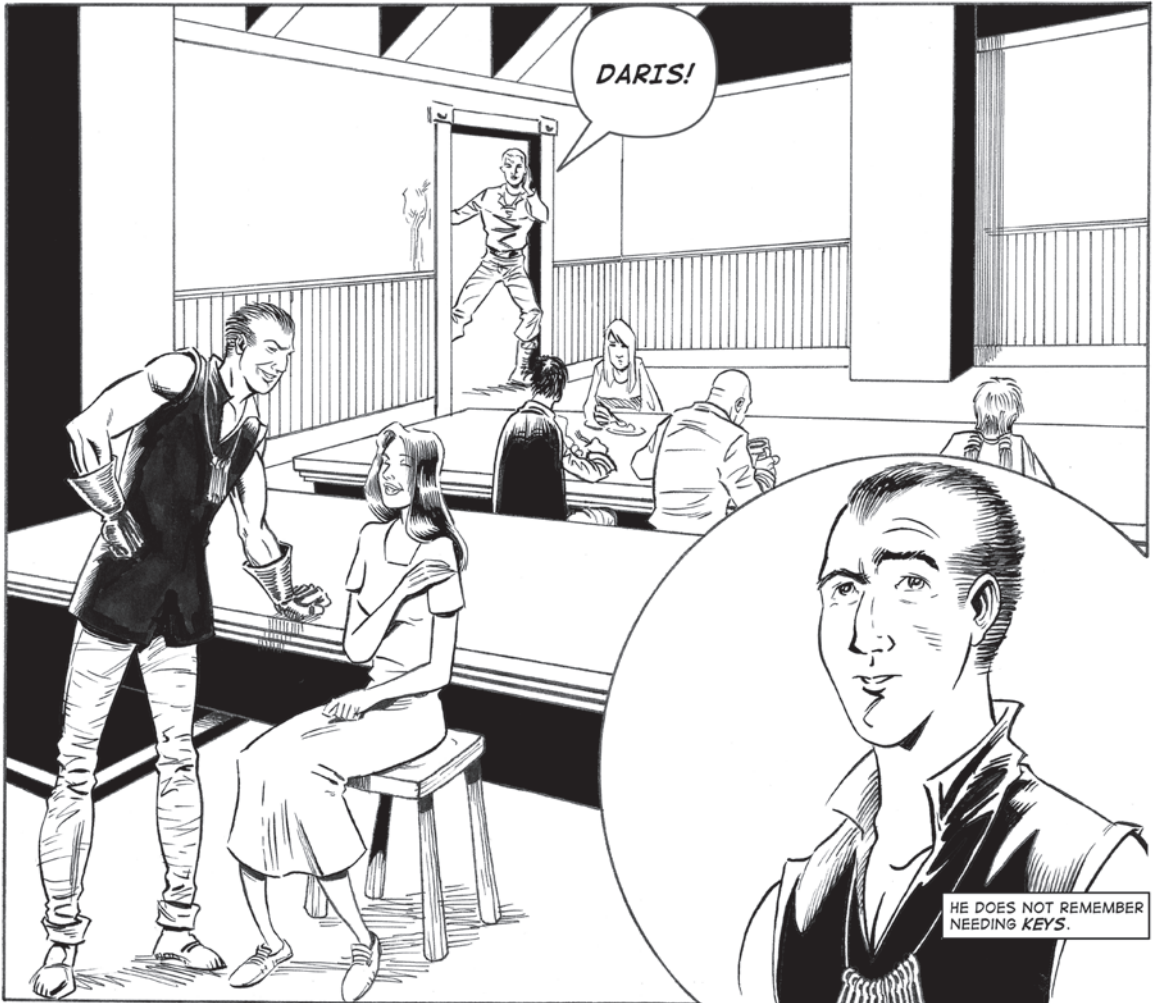
VICTOR FEELS LIKE HE IS AWAKENING AGAIN. HE IS STARTING TO REMEMBER, AND THE MEMORIES ARE GUIDING HIS FEET.



DOWN THE STAIRS, TO THE DUNGEONS. THE CATACOMBS LIE JUST BELOW.



BUT HE DOES NOT REMEMBER THIS LOCK UPON THE DOOR.





I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS, SPORT. IT'S JUST THE DUNGEONS DOWN HERE.

THERE WE GO. ONWARD TO MISCREANTS, DEBTORS, AND PEOPLE WHO CALL THE QUEEN'S HANDMAIDEN'S SERVANT'S DOG NAMES.



IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM TO VICTOR.



LIKE SOMEONE ELSE IS GUIDING HIS FEET.

NOT THAT WE ACTUALLY HAVE ANY DOGS IN THE CASTLE.



NO DOGS, NO PIGEONS, NO HAWKS.



GUIDING HIS HANDS.

JUST THE CATS. AND THE RATS.



HE FEELS LIKE HE'S IN A TRANCE, MOVING EVER DOWNWARD.



THE THOUGHT THAT HE CAN'T CONTROL HIS FEET BEGINS TO FILL HIM LIKE DREAD.



I SAY, WHERE ARE WE GOING?

AND VICTOR BECOMES SURE THAT HE WON'T STOP MOVING DOWNWARD TILL HE FINDS THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD.





BUT THE *DREAD* FILLING VICTOR IS ALMOST *PALPABLE* NOW. HE FEELS LIKE HE'S DONE SOMETHING WRONG, COMING TO THIS PLACE.



AND WHEN HIS HANDS START TO REACH OUT FOR THE CHEST, GUIDED BY LONG YEARS OF PRACTICE, VICTOR TRIES TO RESIST.



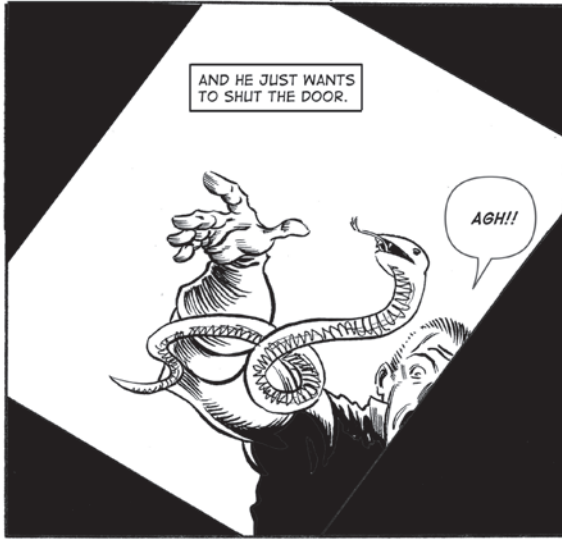
THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL PIECE, SPORT HOW'D YOU KNOW?



DONT!



HE HAD TRIED TO RESIST BECAUSE VICTOR SUDDENLY REALIZED THE DARK PLACES THAT HIS MEMORIES WERE LEADING HIM.



AND HE JUST WANTS TO SHUT THE DOOR.

AGH!!



GET OUT, SPORT, THAT'S SORCERY!



AND THEN EVERYTHING WILL BE FRESH AND INNOCENT AGAIN.



THWAK!



LIKE IT WAS THIS MORNING WHEN HE AWOKE.

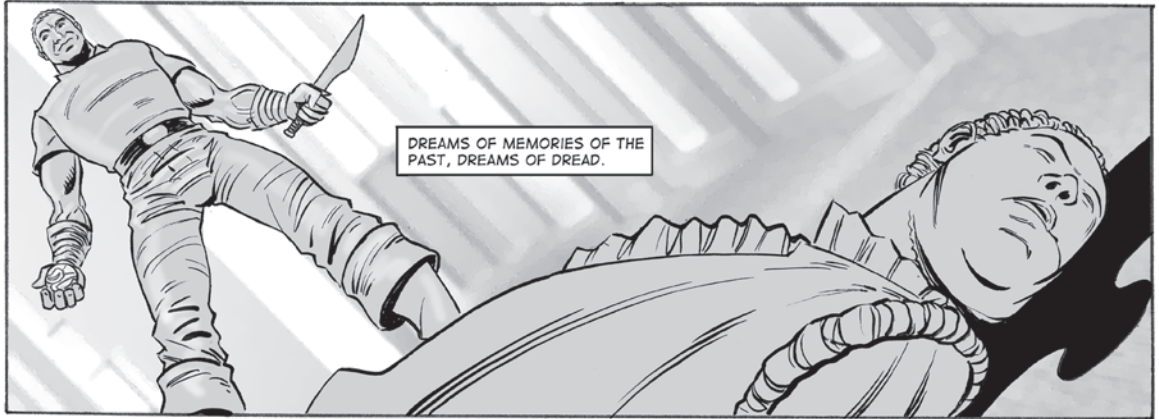




AND THEN VICTOR SLIPS INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, AND HE WELCOMES IT.



UNTIL HE REALIZES IT IS FILLED NOT WITH DARKNESS, BUT WITH DREAMS.



DREAMS OF MEMORIES OF THE PAST, DREAMS OF DREAD.



HE CANNOT AWAKEN AS MUCH AS HE TRIES UNTIL HE SEES *HER*, ALIEN IN THE LANDSCAPE OF HIS MEMORIES.

THE BALANCE IS AWRY IN YOU, SAVARY.

YOU CAN BUT OFFSET *EVILS* OF THE PAST WITH *GOODS* OF THE PRESENT. *EMBRACE* YOUR NEW AWAKENING.

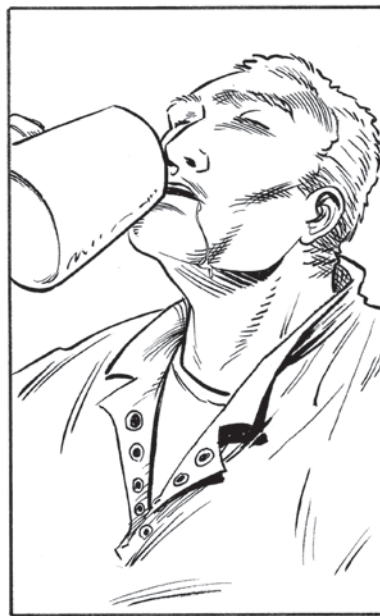
AND VICTOR DOES.



GROG!  
AND MORE GROG!



FRIEND, I'D  
BEGIN TO WORRY  
THAT YOU HAD NOT  
ATTENDED MY  
ESCAPE!



DON'T  
TELL ME  
ABOUT  
IT.



THERE  
WERE DARK  
PLACES DOWN THERE,  
INDEED, A PLACE  
OF STORIES.



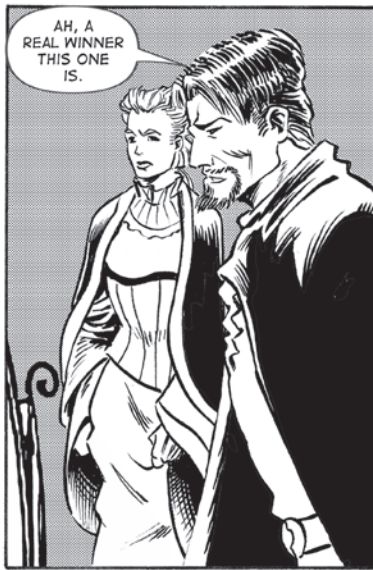
I  
KNOW.

TRYING TO  
FORGET.



AH, SPORT,  
SO GOOD TO FINALLY  
PUT THOSE MEMORIES  
ASIDE. THERE ARE SO MANY  
OPPORTUNITIES HERE IN  
THE CASTLE.





# Castle Marrach

## THE FOREVER WINTER



*A distant mountain peak thrusts upward against the cold, gray sky. Overhead, clouds churn and seethe, spewing forth flurries of snow and dangerous winds. Swirling mists cloak the frost-bound slopes of the mountain, hiding from view whatever may lie below. At the very pinnacle of this titanic peak of rock and ice rests an imposing edifice of cold, gray stone: Castle Marrach. Your new home.*

## ➔ About the Marrach Comic ➔

*Castle Marrach* was first conceived of in July of 1999. At first it was called the Castle of Romance, and later it was called Castle Hightower. It was intended solely as an online *stage* at the time: somewhere to run stories, whether they be romances or murder mysteries, but at the time it didn't actually have a fully featured story of its own.

However, the looming towers and the labyrinthine passages of the castle called to us. There are some places which just can't help but tell their own stories, and this was one. By late 1999 we'd decided to make the castle the center of its own online game, and we'd given it a new name: *Castle Marrach*.

*Castle Marrach* wasn't our first name, or even our fifth. After we decided Castle Hightower wasn't exotic enough, we moved through a lot of other possibilities. Kear Euhallys. Caistel Mortorran. Caer Bannog Twr. Casteldyn. And finally, Caistel Marrach. *Castle Marrach* comes from the Gaelic. It means a castle which bewitches and keeps you.

The games that we produce at Skotos Tech are prose roleplaying games. They're small budget and small membership. A game's doing OK if it has a few hundred players and is a big success if it has a thousand. We support intensive roleplaying and storytelling in our games, and that just doesn't work too well with the huge bases of players that you see at an *EverQuest* or a *City of Heroes*. As a result, our development teams are accordingly small as well.

*Castle Marrach* was produced by Christopher Allen, which means that he assembled the people

designing the game, and kept them inspired. It was first conceived of by Michael Blum and Lisa Disterheft. They did much of the structural work, including creating the actual castle. Afterward Staci Dumoski took over. The Castle's really her baby; she created the high fantasy side of Marrach, including many of the characters that you've met within, such as Queen Vivienne, Sir Boreas, Chancellor Launfal, and Doctor Getheht. At some point we decided the Castle was divided into two parts, the romantic Inner Bailey and the dark and gritty Outer Bailey. Chaz and Jan Engan came in to develop the low fantasy world of the Outer Bailey. I'd guess that Victor Savary, the protagonist of our comic, was originally their character.

*Castle Marrach* launched as an online game in September, 2000. It's now been running continuously for almost five years.

The idea for a *Castle Marrach* comic book came about a year later, in late 2001. It really wasn't much of a stretch because stories had always been the heart of the game's play. The biggest challenge was in figuring out how to tell an interesting story about the Castle in a comic without it impacting the interesting stories about the Castle being told in the game. We eventually came up with a good compromise by setting the comic several years before the game began.

It's taken four years for conditions to be right for this comic to see publication, but now thanks to advances in PDF and POD technology we can. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it!

—Shannon Appelcline, June 2005



# → About the Setting ←

*Castle Marrach* is divided into three major parts. The Newly Awakened wander into the Outer Bailey. This is the part of the Castle designated for the Common folk. Victor's room, the dining hall, and Launfal's office are all located here. Across the Great Bridge lies the Inner Bailey, which is only accessible to the nobility of the Castle and their guests. If Victor tried to cross the Bridge, he would be turned away. Queen Vivienne and Sir Boreas both live in the Inner Bailey and rarely visit other portions of the Castle. Below the Baileys are many places, some secretive and some not. Doctor Getheht's labs lie there as do the passages that Victor rediscovers that once belonged to a group known only as the Cats and Rats.

## The Characters

*Castle Marrach: Awakenings* tells the story of one character, Victor Savary, several years before the timeframe of the online game of *Castle Marrach*. However, the Castle is a place of stories, and in these times of new awakenings there are many other characters whose tales are still waiting to be told.



Following are descriptions of some of the other characters of *Castle Marrach*

### Queen Vivienne

*Ruler of Castle Marrach.* She is tall and elegant, with icy blue eyes and pale blonde hair. Vivienne often remains aloof from the Court. All

manner of gossip surrounds her: that she has dark dreams; that she is imprisoned in Marrach due to ancient debts; that she is a powerful practitioner of magic; and that she spies upon Her Court from secret passages, or lingers among them in a variety of disguises. Doubtless, most of these rumors are false.

### Sir Boreas

*Consort to the Queen and Lord Chancellor.* A tall, thin man whose dark hair is streaked with gray. His closely trimmed mustache and goatee, along with his robes, cloaks, and chains of office, give Sir Boreas an air of dignity and propriety. Sir Boreas is renowned for the order that he maintains in the Castle and also for his skill at chess.



### Sir Launfal

*The Royal Chamberlain.* A middle-aged man with thin, graying hair. His appearance is discreet; his gray clothes are of simple design but fine fabric. Although properly a resident of the Inner Bailey, the Lord Chamberlain Launfal

spends several hours a day personally administering the affairs of the Outer. He has also been known to offer aid to the Newly Awakened, if asked politely.

### Doctor Getheht

*The Royal Necromancer.* A tall and thin man, whose hollowed cheekbones and gnarled fingers make him look like a corpse. Getheht usually hides in the lower reaches of the Castle, but on occasion his apprentice,



**Lith**, has been known to visit the Outer Bailey. Some whisper that Doctor Getheht is not considered proper company for the denizens of the Outer Bailey, let alone the court itself.

For more *Castle Marrach* fiction visit -  
<http://www.skotos.net/games/marrach/fiction.shtml>

For maps of the Castle visit -  
<http://www.skotos.net/games/marrach/outerbailey.shtml>

# → About the Game ←

The game of *Castle Marrach* is now running in its fifth year at Skotos. New players are constantly entering the Castle, and being faced with the trials and tribulations of their own awakening, just as Victor Savary is in this comic.

The game is at heart a roleplaying game, which means that you get the opportunity to take on the role of a different person in a different time. Besides that, the game is centered around stories. If you like the background of *Castle Marrach* that you've seen in this comic book, and the idea of playing characters and telling stories there appeals to, you'll probably like the game as well.

What follows is a number of excerpts from the *Castle Marrach Player's Guide*, a book which helps to explain the *Castle Marrach* game to the Newly Awakened.

## Welcome to the Castle

As a guest of Castle Marrach, you arrive mysteriously, with little memory of your past, or how you came to be in this place. The Castle is a vast maze, with hundreds upon hundreds of rooms, twisting corridors, spiraling stairways, and shadowed alcoves. The Castle's inhabitants move through its labyrinthine ways, shrouded in veils of secrecy and intrigue. Servants pass you in the hall, murmuring in some unrecognizable language. Guards refuse you access to certain rooms. Fellow Guests pass rumors of spies who disappear from chambers as if made of vapor, and of unearthly sounds that drift from unexplored sections of the Castle.

You are one of the Newly Awakened, one of the Guests recently come to the Castle Marrach, by methods unknown. For years, perhaps decades, the stone halls were nearly silent — and dust gathered in the less-used corridors like a shroud — but now there are New Awakenings in

Castle Marrach, and the Queen will only say, "*There is a greater purpose.*"

In this ancient fortress you will dance, scheme, gamble, skulk, woo, and fight duels; take part in balls, feasts, and mysterious rituals; and court the Favour of the nobles of the castle, for with Favour comes power and prestige. Knowledge and Favour are the currency of Castle society — knowledge of plots, of treachery, and of secrets and Favour that grants the authority to act in the nobles' names.

The mysteries of Marrach — the cause of the eternal clouds and snow around the Castle; the meaning of the strange festivals conducted at odd intervals; the true identities of the Castle's residents; and the reason for their presence in this isolated place — are all subjects of covert discussion by the Newly Awakened.

These questions and many more will be answered as the story of Castle Marrach is told.

## What is Castle Marrach?

Simply put, an online, multiplayer, text-based roleplay game where you take on the part of a newly-awoken guest in the Castle. Your character is a cypher on awakening as you only have one clear memory and your physical appearance to build on. The rest of your time in the Castle is spent establishing not only your character's place in the greater society but figuring out the kind of person she is. What are her likes and dislikes? Who will be her life-long friends or darkest enemies? How will she react to the mysteries and oddities around her? First and foremost, *Castle Marrach* is a game of social interaction and roleplaying. Certainly there is swordplay and dangerous magics, but the story of your character is more about how she got into that situation in the first place.

*The Outer Bailey is the True World  
A world as flawed and imperfect,  
A world as amazing and terrifying,  
As any of our human souls.*

*Above us rises the Inner Bailey,  
A realm of faerie tales reborn,  
A realm of dreams given life,  
A true reflection of our Wintry Queen.*

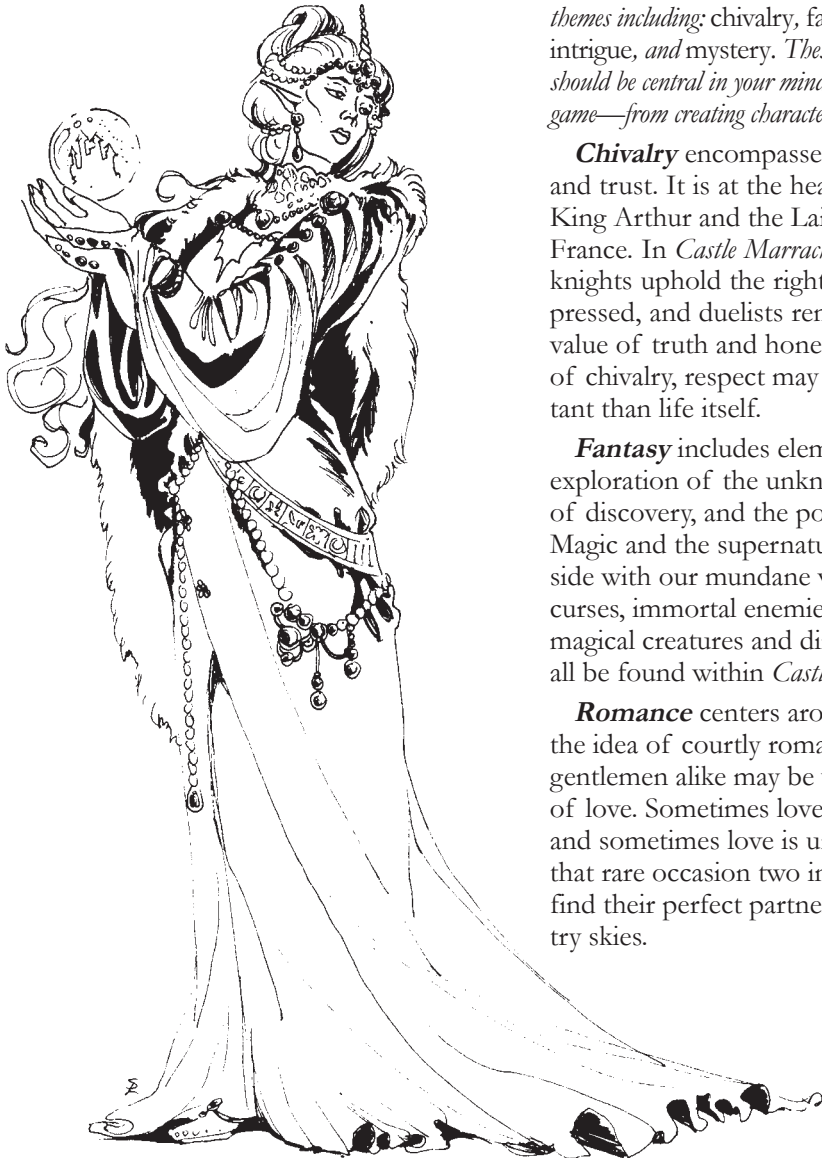
*Below us there lies, Only Nightmare.*



# Style of Castle Murrach

*Castle Murrach* is a fantasy game set in a world beyond our own. Perhaps it is a realm of dream, ruled by the unconscious. Perhaps it is a realm of stories, ruled by the imagination. Perhaps it is a realm of enchantment, ruled by magic. None know for certain. Though *Castle Murrach* reflects the background of the Middle Ages, it occupies another history entirely.

The Castle is a timeless place. The chimings of the grandfather clock and the great bell tower betoken the passing of the hours, but the days have no meaning. There is no calendar in *Castle Murrach*; its winter is forever. Festivities and celebrations in the Castle are solely undertaken at the bequest of the Queen, not according to the passage of time.



*Castle Murrach* is a place of socialization. Conflict is more likely to be resolved by a sharp tongue or a sharp wit than a sharp blade. It is a place of stories, poems, and chronicles. It is home to the bard and the poet, the artist and the crafter.

*Castle Murrach* is a game unlike any that you have played before. It's a game of creativity, where you join together with other players from all over the world, taking on roles of characters in another time, and telling the story of another place. It's a game where you will have an impact upon the plots of the world, and may even introduce plots of your own.

## Themes of Murrach

*Castle Murrach* centers around a number of themes including: chivalry, fantasy, romance, intrigue, and mystery. These are the ideas that should be central in your mind during all parts of the game—from creating characters to running plots.

**Chivalry** encompasses honor, loyalty, and trust. It is at the heart of the tales of King Arthur and the *Lais of Marie de France*. In *Castle Murrach*, brotherhoods of knights uphold the rights of the oppressed, and duelists remind us of the value of truth and honesty. In the world of chivalry, respect may be more important than life itself.

**Fantasy** includes elements such as the exploration of the unknown, the wonders of discovery, and the power of heroism. Magic and the supernatural exist side-by-side with our mundane world. Ancient curses, immortal enemies, powerful spells, magical creatures and dire prophecies may all be found within *Castle Murrach*.

**Romance** centers around true love and the idea of courtly romance. Ladies and gentlemen alike may be wooed in the ways of love. Sometimes lovers are star-struck and sometimes love is unfulfilled, but on that rare occasion two individuals might find their perfect partners under the wintry skies.

**Intrigue** is hidden within the romance of *Castle Marrach*. Members of the Court scheme for position and power, helping their friends to rise and their enemies to fall. No apparent truth is the literal truth, and only a true friend can be entirely trusted ... and true friends are rare indeed.

**Mystery** is the core of *Castle Marrach*, the solid foundation upon which the rest of the edifice is built. There are several major mysteries in *Marrach*, such as the origin of the Castle, the reason for its isolation, the past lives of the Guests, and their purpose for being here. However, smaller mysteries abound too: the purpose of the elusive Cats & Rats, the secrets of the Black Guard, and even the true natures of many of those within the Castle's walls.

## Playing Roles

The heart of *Castle Marrach* is your adopting a Role within the Castle: a person with a name, a personality, and a physical description. Many people enjoy roleplaying for the opportunity to become someone completely unlike themselves: someone stronger, or wiser, or more truthful, or more deceptive. Others prefer to play Roles very much like themselves, in order to experience how they might behave in extraordinary circumstances.

## Telling Stories

Unlike many other roleplaying games, *Castle Marrach* focuses on storytelling—creating and playing out stories in cooperation with other players. In many respects, *Castle Marrach* is more like improvisational theater than a game. There are no clear-cut goals that players need to achieve in order to win. A story might have any number of outcomes, depending upon actions of the players who become involved. The challenge comes in creating a compelling drama that brings your character to life.

Sometimes you will achieve success in your goals, but sometimes you may instead meet failure. In seeking to become an Honored Guest, attempting to find magic within yourself, or competing with another player for a rare object, you may find that you are defeated, perhaps after months of work. This is part of storytelling as well, for adversity brings with it character growth. When participating in stories, you should always consider how your character might be changed, for good or for ill.

Initially you will have the opportunity to become involved in many of the stories already taking place in the Castle. However, you are also encouraged to create your own stories, either individually or with the cooperation of other players. Has a conflict erupted between your character and another, that you'd like to see more fully played out? Has your character discovered a lost memory that might point to a mystery from her past? Is your character interested in staging a play or leading a lecture? This is your chance to be the hero of your own story — or the villain.

Online StoryPlotters will often be able to provide some support for your stories, by offering guidance with details, rounding up additional players, and creating special objects and settings.

## Seeking Success

Though *Castle Marrach* is about roleplaying and cooperative storytelling, that isn't the be-all and end-all. Many players will be interested in advancing their characters, and there *is* room for that within *Castle Marrach*. Players will be able to rise through the ranks of various guilds, becoming leaders or notable members. Some will create guilds of their own, to espouse their particular ideas. If players are able to gain sufficient Favour to be allowed into the Inner Bailey as an Honored Guest, new vistas open. The Royal Guard, the Orders of Knighthood, and the Royal Collegium offer positions for some of the most esteemed residents of *Castle Marrach*. Some residents will gain the special Favour of the Queen and her consort, Lord Chancellor Boreas.

And that's to say nothing of the catacombs beneath the Castle, where a different type of Favour may be found. They have been closed for decades, all but impenetrable, but whispered rumors say that one day they may open again... to a select few.

## Meeting Friends

*Castle Marrach* is a multiplayer game open to the entire Internet, and thus it has developed a community. When you're playing *Castle Marrach*, you'll be doing more than just telling stories, playing roles, and seeking out success. You'll also be meeting real people, interested, just as you are, in interactive fiction. *Castle Marrach* isn't just a storytelling game, it's a *multiplayer* storytelling game. And *that* is where much of the enjoyment lies.



# Playing the Game

As we said, *Castle Marrach* is a multiplayer, online, text-based roleplaying game. Since the interface is text-based, how evocative everything is becomes based on how imaginative you are with the words you choose, not in how powerful your video graphics card is. *Castle Marrach* is about socialization and roleplaying, and the text interface allows you to bring that out to the fullest.

## Parsers and Imperatives

The parser is the part of the *Castle Marrach* game that figures out *what you mean* when you type in a command. It expects commands to be delivered to it as imperatives (in real life, words like "Stop!" or "Heel!"). You're telling your character what to do. There's no need to include a pronoun (like "you" or "I").

Commands should be simple, singular thoughts. A complex command might involve a verb, an adverb, a preposition, an adjective, and a noun (**bow gracefully to tall guard**), but not much more. Here's a few examples of the type of simple command that *Castle Marrach* can understand:

- > go north
- > smile happily at queen
- > slyly wink to third guard

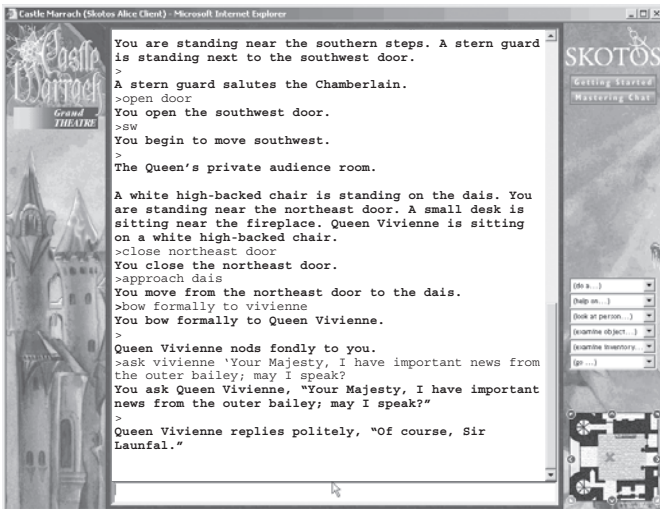
Hundreds of commands can be used to *say* things in *Castle Marrach*. You can **state**, **question**, **mumble**, or **shout**. Use the command that best describes your character's emotions. After the verb, put what you want to say in quotation marks:

- > say "I think you'll like it here!"  
You say "I think you'll like it here!"
- > whisper to Victor "Thank you."  
You whisper to Victor, "Thank you."

Finally, you can also attach spoken evocations to many gestures, like smile, frown, and wink. This allows you to speak while engaging in another activity.

- > smile broadly "Hello, my friend."  
You smile broadly, "Hello, my friend."

There's a much more complete online tutorial which can be found at <http://www.skotos.net/games/marrach/quickstart.shtml>. You can also find a lengthy Player's Handbook that goes into far more detail about all of the elements of *Castle Marrach* at <http://www.skotos.net/games/marrach/guide.shtml>



The *Castle Marrach* game client for your web browser, available for Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Firefox/Mozilla for the Windows PC, Macintosh and Linux.

Quick  
Commands

Graphic  
Map

Want to play *Castle Marrach*? visit -  
<http://www.skotos.net/games/marrach>

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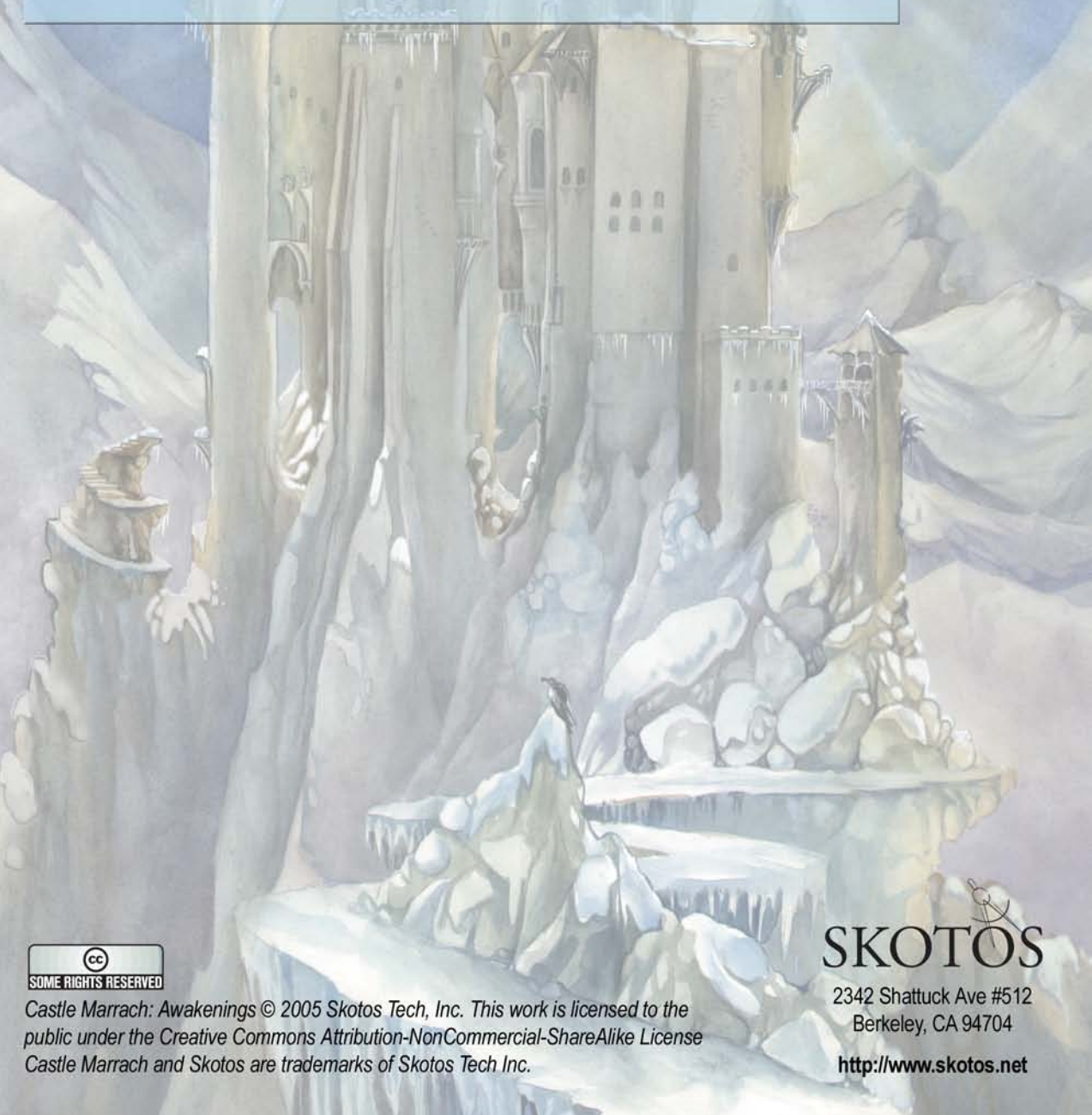
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