

Wintercliff is one of the few remaining Scavenger forts in Akoros still connected to Duskvol by rail. Fragments of paper from the morning warding ritual spin and dance among the snowflakes. The upper crust of ice crunches under your feet as you follow your contact, **RICHTER** *(patient, quiet)*. Gesturing for you to accompany him, he ducks through a low doorway into a hall with a long table, lit by dim gas lamps.

“During our last expedition into the mountains, some of our party got separated and haven’t reported back. They were carrying an old artifact—an astrolabe that lets us navigate using light from the stars. We’ve tracked the artifact to an old castle in the mountains. We don’t have the resources to make an expedition there ourselves.”

Richter solemnly hands you a tattered, handdrawn map of the surrounding Deathlands.

THE CASTLE IN THE DEATHLANDS

The ancient ramparts angle upward into the darkness, topped by rotting wooden battlements. From outside the walls, you can barely make out the castle’s keep, where yellow lights flicker behind arrow slits and through cracks in shuttered windows.

BAILEY: Pieces of machinery and giant gears lie half-buried in the courtyard.

- ❖ A hunched figure quietly sobs at the courtyard’s well
- ❖ Red streaks lead to the Keep’s locked doors

GATEHOUSE: Across a rocky trench, an iron portcullis blocks the way in.

- ❖ A long-broken drawbridge
- ❖ A **HOLLOW** shambles along the battlements
- ❖ Faded, tattered banners

THE KEEP: Crumbled upper floors reveal the abandoned interior.

- ❖ Sleepers doze in rooms off a long hallway lit by torches
- ❖ A **DEMON** feeds on the nightmares of the castle’s guests

“With any luck, their deaths were quick and painless.”

SCENES & COMPLICATIONS

The gatehouse is the easiest way to access the castle bailey. Floor tiles within triggers strange clicking machinery within the walls.

- ❖ A banner tears loudly as you grab onto it
- ❖ A great blade swings across the gatehouse
- ❖ Another portcullis begins to lower slowly, threatening to lock you out of the courtyard
- ❖ Boiling oil spills down from above!

The massive doors to the keep are freshly painted in red blood and magically sealed.

- ❖ You are suddenly overcome with exhaustion and begin to nod off
- ❖ The **DEMON** within is aware of your presence
- ❖ Your tools splinter and crack

Over the howling wind, you can hear faint whispers from the well. The figure looks up with hollow, sunken eyes. “Please help me.”

- ❖ The Scavenger pushes you into the well
- ❖ He lets out a bloodcurdling scream: **HOLLOWS** begin to converge on the bailey
- ❖ Wisps of shadow spiral out of the well, engulfing you with a deep sense of dread

Clasped in the hands of a sleeping Scavenger on a dirty cot is the astrolabe. Behind you, feel an unearthly presence. “You entertain me. Grant me your greatest fear, and you can leave with that which you seek.”

- ❖ The fear manifests within your mind

Richter gingerly moves a hinge on the astrolabe.

“Yes, this is it. This will make our expeditions much safer again. We’ll keep you in mind if we find anything of interest out here in the Deathlands.”