

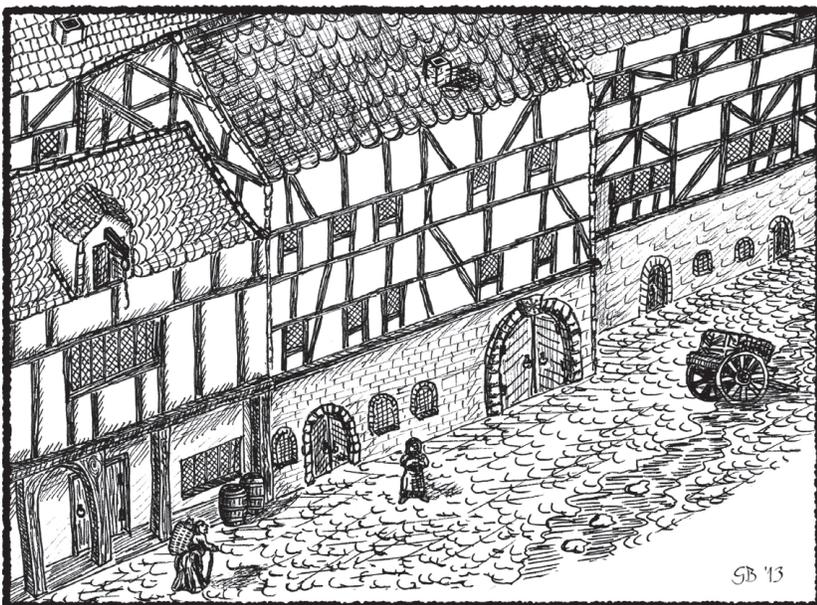
UBAEL HOUSE 1



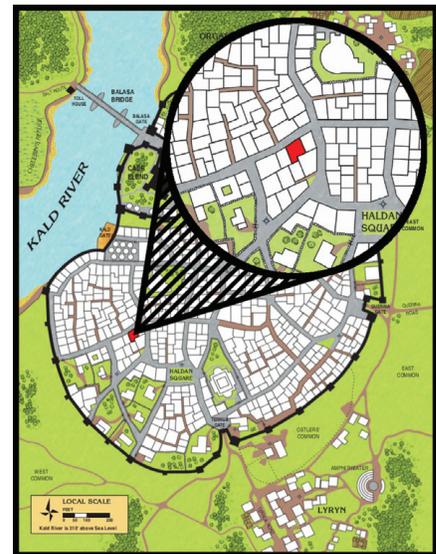
Ubael House is a well-appointed, mid-sized townhouse on Chelebin Street in Tashal. The house's owner, Baron Karsin Ubael, prefers living at rural Uldien Keep and seldom visits his city residence. Still, great care is taken to keep the house clean and in decent shape. The staff know they will be held accountable for potential negligence by Baroness Serli Ubael should the lord and lady pay a surprise visit. Not a piece of lint or speck of dirt escape the Baroness' keen eyes and she is not to be trifled with. The steward of Ubael House is Sir Tonan Yaronne, who is married to the baron's youngest cousin, Lady Enlyn. Sir Tonan and Lady Enlyn live with their two children year-round at the townhouse.

Chelebin Street runs through the Medrik district, a quarter once fashionable among the great lords but nowadays inhabited by rich merchants and lesser knights. Most of the major clans have moved to the posh Haldana district, but the Ubaels have stayed in Medrik, mostly due to financial reasons. This has earned them many a pointed remark and knowing look from the gossips among the ladies of Kaldoric high society. Their neighbor to the left is Garvin of Munic, a prosperous weaponcrafter who constantly seeks contact with his noble neighbors. To the right is the townhouse of Clan Jopler, lords of Cantwee Manor. The clan also holds three smaller manors and a village, making them one of the wealthiest, most powerful knightly families in the realm. Convinced of their destiny, the Joplers seek to use their proximity to the Ubaels to hasten their ascent into high nobility.

Sir Basca Ubael, the first Baron of Uldien, won the house from Baron Oren Firth over a game of cards in 608 TR. Blind drunk but still sly as a fox, the Baron of Kobe had signed over the house as compensation for a huge amount of silver lost in the gamble. At the time, it had already stood empty for a while, as the Firths were busy erecting their new residence in Haldana. When Sir Basca had a closer look at his winnings, he saw right away that structural damage from years of neglect had made the building uninhabitable, forcing him to have most of it torn down and rebuilt. To this day, Baron Orsin Firth teases his friend and relative-by-marriage about that



Location of Ubael House in Tashal



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one-sided horse trade. Baron Karsin doesn't care about the jibes; to him, the house is good enough.

Ubael House is a three-story building with a small attached stable and a cellar under the front part of the main building. As of 720, it is in relatively fair condition. The roof was re-shingled in slate two years ago and the front was whitewashed last year. The stable roof is leaking a little and the front door has become warped, causing it to squeak and get stuck on occasion. Improvements and repairs to the house are mostly done in areas where they can be readily seen. If the Ubael cannot afford to move to lordly Haldana, they at least want their residence to not look run down. The stone walls of the ground floor are almost two feet thick and form a solid base for the half-timbered upper stories to rest upon.

Baron Ubael himself may not be present for most of the year, but other guests from Uldien stay here regularly. Chief among these are the baron's vassal knights, as well as priests and lay brothers from the abbey who are sent to Tashal on Serolan Kolas Ubael's business.

Traditionally, a lesser member of the Ubael clan would hold the stewardship of the house. The current steward, Sir Tonan, hails from Clan Yaronne, loyal vassals and friends to the Ubael. Sir Tonan is married to an Ubael, Lady Enlyn, a shrewd and clever woman who is well known for her charity parties. She is assisted in her social endeavors by Lady Alessa Firith, Lady Shyna Firith, and Lady Julenia Ubael. Her gatherings are well attended by the resident noble ladies of Tashal, as none of them wants to be seen as hard-hearted or tight-fisted enough to withhold donations from the poor. Lady Enlyn keeps these events simple to save money, keep them in the Peonian spirit, and to further discussion without the distractions of opulent festivities. As a side benefit, she also picks up most of the current clack and gossip to keep the Baroness of Uldien informed about happenings in the city.



MAJOR NPCs



Sir Tonan Yaronne

Sir Tonan, 42, loves the excitement of city living and is an excellent steward of Ubael House. He dresses at the height of fashion, combining his Uldien-born love of luxurious furs with current trends. He isn't exactly the sharpest knife in the drawer. He relies heavily on his wife's advice when confronted with problems that require thinking outside his well-rutted paths and takes the counsel of the baron where politics are concerned.

His twin brother, Sir Selvos Yaronne, is constable of Caer Ubael in Uldien. Like other members of Clan Yaronne, he is absolutely loyal to his lord and his family. He has taken a special liking to Serli the Younger but has a little trouble accepting her as an adult woman; to him, she is still the child he loves so well. Although he is quite handy in a fight when the occasion demands it, his self-image as an urbane gentleman prevents him from engaging in tournaments or other "sports."

Some months ago, Sir Tonan learned that Tommas of Bilwen, the house's ostler, had a weakness for cockfighting. He has since become an accomplice to the ostler's sideline and takes a healthy cut from his illicit winnings, using the money to finance his love of fashion. Although Tonan's wife wonders how he can afford the clothiers' extravagances on the pocket money he accords himself, he has so far successfully deflected her probing questions by referring to special discounts and making other excuses. It is his utmost concern that his wife never find out where the money is really coming from.



Lady Enlyn Yaronne (nee Ubael)

Lady Enlyn, 23, is the youngest cousin of the Baron of Uldien. She is a clever and respectable lady of society and seems to know everyone and everything about town without doing a lot of personal investigating herself. People from all walks of life call on her, and her maidservant, Albea, keeps her eyes and ears open for the current intrigues when running errands around town. Lady Enlyn is the main source of information on happenings in the capital for the Baroness of Uldien, making her an invaluable asset.

A strong-willed woman, Lady Enlyn is passionate about three things: her family, the goddess Peoni, and animals. When she was still a little girl, she set her mind on marrying Sir Tonan, going so far as to run away from home at the age of 17, dressed as a boy, to search for him in Tashal. When she finally succeeded in finding him, he was so impressed with her that he promptly took her hand in marriage after an unusually short period of betrothal. The couple's son, Salton, is five and their daughter, Releisa, is two.

A worshiper of Peoni known for her piety and friendly character, Lady Enlyn has little trouble convincing the ladies of Tashalan society to attend her evening gatherings at Ubael House. Even the most snobbish noblewomen, who normally wouldn't consider setting foot in unfashionable Medrik, flock to her charity events to show off their Laranian largesse

and compassion for the poor and down-trodden. Enlyn clearly sees through the hypocritical masks most of them wear but overlooks them with a smile, for as long as they come, no matter their true reasons, the poor will benefit.

Her the extent of her fondness for animals would surely raise an eyebrow with most of her peers. On occasion, she has paid the ratter a little extra to deliver the rats he catches to her alive. Betraying a mild mean streak, she likes to sneak onto the properties of Earl Curo or Lady Cheselyne to release the vermin there; to her it is only fitting as everyone knows that like attracts like.

Cloya of Kandik

Cloya, 22, is the cook of Ubael House. It's a mystery to many how she manages to do her excellent cooking in the small and cramped kitchen but she always appears happy and chipper. Her voice can often be heard over the clatter of crockery and dishes, singing a merry song, but when she's all alone and no one is watching her, she is prone to sadness and a deep sorrow that has crept into her heart.

Four years ago, while an assistant cook at the Bastune townhouse, she met a very attractive man in the Red Fox tavern. One thing led to another and Cloya soon became pregnant. Her lover promptly proposed marriage and, overjoyed, she accepted right away. By the next day, he had vanished without a trace. Lady Peresta Bastune soon perceived her condition and demanded to know who the father was. As Cloya was unable to produce him, Lady Peresta suspected that she had dallied with her own current lover and kicked Cloya out of the house in a fit



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of jealousy. Scurrilous gossip soon made the rounds and Cloya found herself unable to gain new employment.

After hearing of the scandal, Baron Karsin arranged for the girl to be found and employed her as the new cook of Ubael House, filling the vacancy left by the death of the old cook. Lady Enlyn took care of her during the pregnancy and has even lent a hand raising Cloya's daughter, Jenna, earning her cook's eternal gratitude in the process. Nothing in the world could make Cloya betray her employers. The fate of her lover weighs heavily on her mind. She looks out for him every day, hoping that he will come back and make her happiness true and real.

Tommas of Bilwin

Tommas, 35, is the bonded ostler of Ubael House, as were his father and grandfather before him. He is a happy-go-lucky fellow with a deep connection to all living things, and can set man and beast at ease, even the yard dog and the vicious rooster. He is a good-natured and harmless chap but is easily capable of holding his own in a brawl or when defending the house or its inhabitants. His one secret passion is cock-fighting. Since acquiring his prize cock, the passion has turned into a profitable venture. Tommas is glad that Sir Tonan knows about his nightly outings and doesn't begrudge his employer the cut of his winnings he takes, as his cooperation severely lessens the danger of having his doings discovered by Lady Enlyn. With her love of animals and distaste for their maltreatment, the two men are very keen not get caught by the lady of the house. The one who has already smelled a rat is Baroness Serli, who became suspicious

after noticing the cock's ragged and tattered appearance. An avid supporter of cock-fighting in her youth, she instantly recognized the tell-tale signs but has decided to keep quiet about it, for now.

Tommas has cast an eye at Cloya and is also very fond of her daughter, Jenna. The little girl spends more time in the stables than in the house and has come to regard Tommas as her father. Cloya likes him but still pines for vanished lover. Tommas would give his eye teeth to win her love and marry her.

Sir Crowsalot

This aggressive and combative rooster was trained in Setrew for the cock pit and came to Ubael House during the last Tashal Summer Fair. Tommas found the cock in the market one day and immediately saw his potential as a winner. After arranging a fatal accident and one-way trip to the stew pot for the house's old cock, Tommas was granted permission to purchase a new one. Since then, Sir Crowsalot (as the children have named him) has had the chance to prove his mettle in many fights and has become one of the most-feared fighting roosters in Tashal. This has had a peculiar effect on his "day job": due to the lack of regular nocturnal rest, he regularly neglects to wake the inhabitants at daybreak by over-sleeping. As if in compensation, he tends to crow frequently throughout the rest of the day, thereby earning his nickname. The cook frequently threatens to slaughter him but, thanks to Lady Enlyn's protection, that seems an unlikely fate for Tommas' king of the ring.



Depending on his condition at the time, Sir Crowsalot can be somewhat uninterested in the house's two hens. This seems to offend the hens, who tend to lay an egg only every third day. Although Lady Enlyn has noticed the often-tattered condition of Sir Crowsalot's plumage, she suspects the yard dog to be responsible, a belief fostered by her husband and the ostler.

OTHER NPCs

Albea of Rothe

Albea, 17, helps in the kitchen, cleans the house, and feeds the animals. She came to Ubael House two years ago with excellent references from a mercantyleer in Getha. She actually hails from Gardiren and is a snitch for Sir Halach Nytarun, the steward and spy master of the Earl of Neph. Albea has come to like the townhouse and especially the Yaronne children. The longer she spies on the house for the earl, the more she is bothered by her guilty conscience. She recently began withholding information from the agent the earl sends to debrief her and has only passed along harmless gossip. Still a naïve girl at heart, Albea has not realized that Lady Enlyn has found her out and, together with the baroness, uses her to feed select disinformation to Earl Curo's spies.

Milya of Datmer

Milya, 26, came into the Yaronne household five years ago as a wetnurse for the newborn Salton. With her practical hands-on manner and down-to-earth personality, she soon endeared herself to both adults and children. When the breastfeeding period came to an end, she stayed on at the house as a nanny and general lackey. The Yaronnes are everything to her now, as she lost her husband and child in an accident five years ago. Milya couldn't imagine living anywhere else and would be heartbroken to lose one of her charges.

PLOT HOOKS

Treasure Hunt: A mysterious stranger hires the PCs to find a hidden treasure. He hands them a page torn from the lost diary of Sir Basca Ubael that indicates he had hidden his ill-gotten gains somewhere in his townhouse. The diary was said to have vanished upon his death, with allegedly no one knowing its contents.

Lost Soul: A priest tending the Peonian crypt in Medrik seeks the PCs' help. He tells them a ghostly figure accosted him in the crypt and begged him to retrieve its bones for a proper burial. The ghost seemed rather confused but claimed that its remains were located behind the wall in a nearby cellar.

Rooster-Chase: A petty crook named Sticky Fingers loves cockfights, especially those he wins. But no matter which fighting rooster he sends into the cock pit, Sir Crowsalot always wins the day, and the purse. At wit's end, he hires the PCs to steal the rooster for him.

Oh, Tragedy! Tommas befriends the PCs over a pint at the local pub. He would give a lot to find out where his love's fiancée vanished to so that she can finally get a sense of closure and start anew. Can they help?

Pain in the Arse: Lady Enlyn has a new project. She wants to win over some important noble ladies to finance the purchase of a run-down property in Eastside to refurbish as an orphanage. The current owner of the apparently empty house seems strangely reluctant to sell but Lady Enlyn will not give up easily. The building is secretly used as a safe house and quarters for the agents and spies of the Earl of Balim, who hires the PCs (probably through a middle-man) to dissuade Lady Enlyn from her plans.

What a Night! The PCs are attending a formal dinner at Ubael House and are invited to stay the night. During the night, they are awakened several times by strange sounds, including rooster crowing, slamming doors, and soft wailing from the cellar. What in Agrik's name is going on here?

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The Ghosts of Ubael House

Sir Basca Ubael, the first Baron of Uldien was a scoundrel born and bred. His opportunism and lack of scruples eventually gained him the barony his descendants still hold. As Uldien's constable, he had made quite a lot of money on the side through highway robbery, gambling, and crooked deals. Once he became baron, he took great pains to cover up his misdeeds but still led a secret life of crime disguised under the thin veneer of an honorable knight. As the barons succeeding him became more honorable and pious with each passing generation, the truth about Sir Basca slowly but surely sank into oblivion and made way for the romantically idealized persona that exists in people's imaginations today. The only shred of truth that has survived the years is the persistent rumor that a fabulous treasure trove of riches gained in Sir Basca's raids remains hidden because he was too mean to tell his children its whereabouts, even on his death bed.

Three spirits from this less-than-glorious period in the history of Kaldor's smallest barony linger on in the cellar of Ubael House. The first, Sir Durvo Ethasiel, was an ancestor of the current Baron of Setrew and a former drinking companion of Sir Basca. One evening in 620, Sir Durvo had been invited to a grand dinner in the townhouse and couldn't refrain from feasting his eyes on Bela Verdreth, the beautiful lady of the house. Generous with everything but his wife, Sir Basca warned him not to overstep his bounds. Sir Durvo seemed to acquiesce to the admonishment but a few days later called at the house at a time when Lady Bela was home alone. He tried to take by force what he couldn't get by guile, but Lady Bela successfully fought back.

When Sir Basca returned home, he found a very dead Sir Durvo and a servant babbling about witchcraft. He ordered the servant to brick up the dead body in the wall of the cellar's prison cell, then killed the man once the deed had been done. In the aftermath of the killings, the servants of Ubael House began whispering that the cellar was haunted, claiming to hear one ghost moaning about the lady that bewitched him and another that insistently inquired about its name, which it seemed to have forgotten after a heavy blow to its head.

This was not the end of Sir Basca's misdeeds in Tashal. By 631, he had racked up a huge gambling debt to Sir Boran Bastune, who started bragging all over town that he had won so much money off Sir Basca that he could now travel abroad to Lythia and spend the rest of his days in luxury in a nice, warm country like Azeryan or Karejia. Shortly before his departure, Sir Boran called on Baron Basca to collect his money. That was the last that was ever seen of Sir Boran Bastune. From that day onward, the servants whispered about a third ghost down in the cellar, a nobleman with a cleft skull, bitterly complaining about the duplicity of all Ubaels.

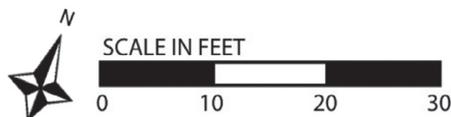
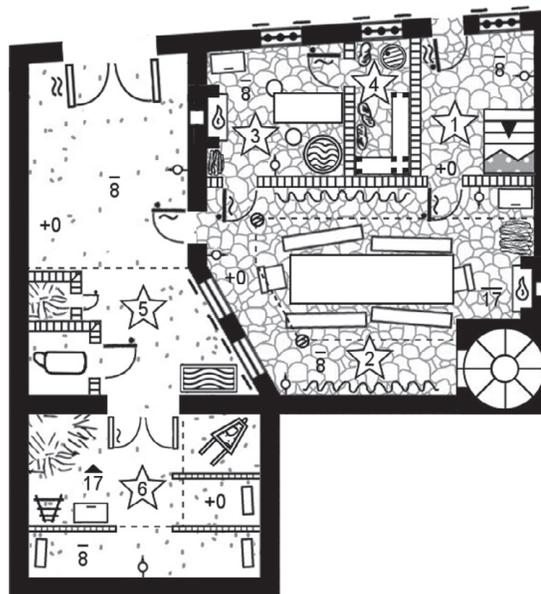
Baroness Serli Ubael the Elder is well aware of the ghosts' presence in the cellar. She wouldn't dream of having them exorcised since they have turned out to be a valuable source of historical information. Using her talent as a medium, she milks them for family secrets and things long forgotten by their descendants. Although they rarely volunteer their knowledge, they are bored after almost a century spent in the cold cellar of Ubael House and are prone to let slip valuable tidbits in between their rantings.



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GROUND FLOOR

- [1] **Vestibule:** This entrance hall leads directly into the great hall. The wall next to the front door has pegs for hanging cloaks and a wooden frame for overshoes. The stairs to the cellar have no railing or separating wall and are dreaded by the servants during winter or wet weather, as they tend to get slippery and have led to the occasional hard fall and broken leg.
- [2] **Great Hall:** The social center of the house, this hall is used for all meals by the family and servants as well as for entertaining guests. The staff use it for their own gatherings once the hosts have retired to the solar for the day. The hall is rather small, but comfortable, well lit by the windows and easily heated by the large fireplace. The wooden pillars supporting the gallery are decorated with carved floral ornaments. The tapestry on the south wall shows Sir Basca Ubael at the side of Earl Alessa Dariune. Alessa has his arm around Basca's shoulders and both are looking at Tashal in the distance. The tapestry was a gift from Earl Troda's father to Baron Konin Ubael on the 100th anniversary of the Ubaels' oath of fealty to Clan Dariune in 702. The hanging on the opposite wall shows Caer Ubael rising above bucolic Uldien. Above the mantle hangs Baron Karsin's favorite hunting trophy: the impressive antlers of a 12-point stag. The chest hold tablecloths and the good dishes; two brightly polished silver plates are usually propped up on its lid as showpieces.
- [3] **Kitchen:** Despite the kitchen being too small for preparing large feasts, Cloya the cook nonetheless works culinary miracles here. The hearth and tabletop are crowded with meals at various stages of preparation all day long, so that hungry mouths always find a morsel to eat. The chest contains the everyday dishes and cooking utensils. Larger pans and pots hang on racks above the fireplace.
- [4] **Pantry:** The pantry is filled to capacity with foodstuffs and Hemisen the house cat has his paws full keeping the population of mice in check. The lazy cat's idleness forces Lady Enlyn to regularly call in a ratter. Hemisen profits clearly from the lady of the house's love of animals and from the fact that it was the baroness herself who dragged the fat tomcat in one day from Peoni-knows-where. Well-hidden among the shelves are a few pots of honey and boxes of rare spices used only for special occasions.

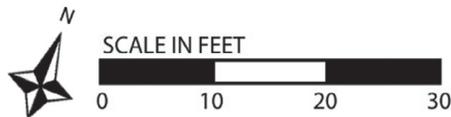
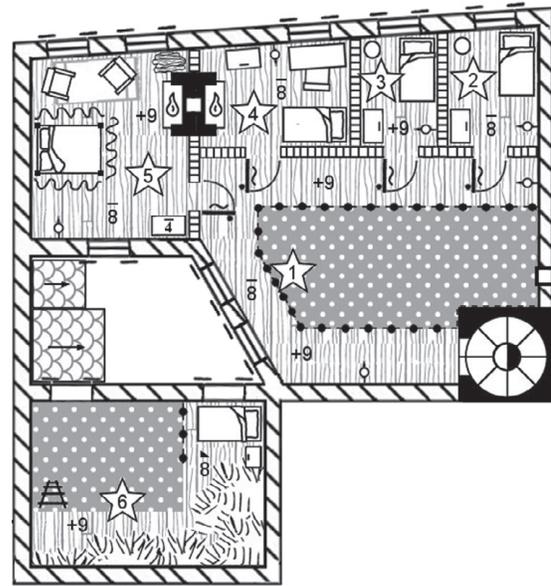


- [5] **Courtyard:** The courtyard is home to Sir Crowsalot, the house rooster and champion of the cock pit, and his two hens, Peck and Pick. The seven-foot-tall iron-bound gate leads onto busy Chelebin Street and is usually only opened to bring in visitors' mounts or for the nightsoil collectors who come to clean out the privy. The courtyard is also the haunt of a small, lean Trierzi terrier named Lion because of the thick fringe of fur about his head. Like Hemisen the cat, Lion prefers lazing in the sun to chasing after rats.
- [6] **Stable:** The stable has enough space for three horses. Normally, two riding horses for the lord and lady are stabled here, along with Daisy, the children's pony. These horses are moved to a livery stable nearby when the baron comes to visit.

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SECOND FLOOR

- [1] **Gallery:** Rather narrow and unsuited for lingering, the gallery is occasionally used as a music loft for gatherings, in which case the hired musicians are seated here on stools. The walls are hung with smaller hunting trophies.
- [2] **Guest Chamber:** This room is usually used only when the main guest chamber above is already taken. Baron Ubael's squire sleeps here when the lord stays in town.
- [3] **Cook:** Cloya only uses this small room to sleep. Her daughter, Jenna, also spends little time here, preferring the stable or solar instead.
- [4] **Lady Serli's Chamber:** The baron's daughter uses this chamber when she stays in Tashal. She uses the table for her drawings, which she then hangs on the walls with small clumps of resin. The chest holds her personal effects and clothes as well as her precious books. She dreams of one day owning a proper bookshelf holding a small library.
- [5] **Baron's Chamber:** This spacious room is used by Baron Karsin and Baroness Serli. Normally, they would use the chamber above, next to the solar, but since Sir Tonan and his family live at the house year-round, the baron graciously leaves the better room to them. With his advancing years, he's secretly relieved to have fewer stairs to climb. The bed is screened by luxurious brocade hangings to keep out the chill and prevent the baroness' frail health from worsening. The hangings are embroidered with sexually explicit imagery, which always prompts Baron Karsin into a harangue when he sees them after a lengthy absence. The baroness tells him to not get preachy, reminding him that the curtains were quite a bargain, as the subject matter made them practically unsalable in prudish Kaldor. Before retiring for the night, the two of them like to relax in the easy chairs in front of the fireplace and talk about the day's affairs while sipping a cup of wine.
- [6] **Hayloft:** Tommas the ostler makes his home in the hayloft. Sir Tonan has offered him a room in the house, but Tommas prefers the company of the animals. This also makes it easier for him to get away for his nightly outings with the rooster. The gossips suspect that he has a girl somewhere in the city, which makes it easier for him to keep his sideline secret but at the same time causes him to fear that the rumors hurt his chances with Cloya.



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THIRD FLOOR

- [1] **Solar:** This private hall for the family is also the baroness' favorite place in the house. Lady Enlyn plans her gatherings and social projects here, such as arranging for physicians to care for the poor or the building of an orphanage. The ladies like to practice their needlework at the table, while the men prefer discussing politics seated in the chairs in front of the fireplace. The south side of the solar holds a statue of Uldine from Uldien, an ancestor of the baron who is awaiting proper canonization as a Laranian saint. It was a recent gift from Serolan Kolas Ubael of Uldien Abbey. The tapestry on the opposite wall was hand-crafted by the baroness herself; it shows her parents in front of the royal castle of Tashal. The chest holds handiworks and boardgames.
- [2] **Servants' Quarters:** This room is used by Albea the maidservant and Milya the nanny. The spare bed is used by additional servants hired on occasion.
- [3] **Guest Chamber:** These good accommodations are used by for important guests or vassal knights from Uldien. Karsin the Younger stays here when running errands in Tashal for his master and uncle, Orsin Firth.
- [4] **Sir Tonan's Chamber:** The living quarters for the Yaronne family. The two children and young Jenna are the pride and joy of the household. Lady Enlyn often has to walk carefully in this room to avoid stepping on a discarded toy knight or other obstacle. The bed-hangings are simple and unadorned but offer some privacy for the parents. The children sometimes spend the night with other members of the household. The locked chest holds the ready coin and salaries for the servants. Lady Enlyn likes doing her accounts sitting at the table, watching the crowds milling outside her window.

