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## INTRODUCTION

# SACRED SITES

*Not with slow, funeral sound  
Come we to this sacred ground;  
But with the trumpets' blare  
And shot-torn battle-banners flung to air,  
As for a victory!*

— Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Whether you're looking for a powerful temple to provide magical healing after a long dungeon crawl, an isolated holy site in which to set your next adventure, a magically fortified lair for your players' newest arch-nemesis, or just something to put over top of your lovingly crafted dungeon, *Sacred Ground* is for you.

*Sacred Ground* is an SRD rules sourcebook that details four sacred sites for your fantasy roleplaying game. Described in full are holy locations dedicated to gods of combat, the winds, summer, and the undead. Each site includes complete maps and illustrations of the location, along with magical and mundane protections that will make any would-be intruder quake.

But *Sacred Ground* goes beyond the walls of these unique places; the personalities behind the sites are vividly depicted for each location. Dangerous intrigues, elaborate plays for power, and inscrutable secrets are sure to enthrall your players even after they've explored the site's hidden recesses.

Like all Penumbra RPG products, *Sacred Ground* gives you material that's adaptable to any fantasy campaign, whether it's a published setting or a world that you've created. You can use these locations straight out of the book at a moment's notice, or make them a foundation for holy places of your own design. Either way, *Sacred Ground* promises to enhance your next game session with mystical sites designed to captivate every player's imagination!

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## THE SITES

The four sites included in this book cover a variety of designs and types. Each was created by a distinct group with its own goals and motivations and harbors secrets and dangers unique to itself.

### GABRIEL'S AERIE

Floating high above the earth, the Aerie is, to all appearances, an airborne island of tranquility and peace held aloft by unfathomable magic. The island is covered in wild growth and inhabited by all manner of strange and exotic winged creatures, including priests who spend their time soaring like birds on cunningly crafted wings. This paradise isn't as serene as it seems, however. The frequent raids of roc-rider warriors threaten everyone's safety, and Melodious Whisper, the elemental lord who lives inside the wind farm dangling from the Aerie's lowest groundside peak, plots to depose Gabriel.

### SUMMER'S BARROW

The myths of the death of the Summer God in autumn and his resurrection in spring are true. The location of the tomb is kept secret from the general populace for the god's safety, but the religion's clergy and the most devout of the god's faithful travel to Summer's Barrow on pilgrimage during the winter months. And when necessary, a Sacrifice is sent into the Underworld at midwinter to find the god and guide him back to the world of the living.

## THE NECROPOLIS

On an island that was the site of a necromantic disaster, a five-story ziggurat rises from the barren ground. Known to outsiders simply as “the Necropolis,” this temple is dedicated to the Judge of the Dead, who claims dominion over all souls and sees them to their final resting places. This god’s monks simultaneously oppose the unlawful reanimation or resurrection of the dead and assist in bringing back those whose time has not yet come, while eliminating the undead that still arise on the island.

## RETREAT OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

The followers of the Warrior Saint once led the common people against their oppressor and now run a renowned martial arts school, training any who will learn in unarmed combat and the use of peasant tools as weapons. They view themselves as the protectors of the commoners in the realm, and maintain a widespread information network that allows them keep close tabs on the various nobles and rulers of the domain, watching for the signs that they are needed to step in and remove another tyrant. For now, they’re content to wait, watching for signs that it is time to once again fulfill their holy mission.

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## SECTION LAYOUT

Each holy site is described using the headers below for easy reference. The index in the back of the book also lists all of the NPCs given in this book, as well as the new OGC material, for quick referral.

### AT A GLANCE

This section provides a summary of the site’s history, purpose, and inner conflicts. It discusses the group that built it, and describes a few of the characters inhabiting it, as well as their basic goals and motivations.

### PLACEMENT

The Placement section discusses the locations where the site is best located in your campaign world. This section usually gives choices designed to adapt the site into your campaign with minimal effort, and talks about changes that might help the site fit in realistically.

### CHARACTERS

Here you can find statistics and descriptions for the site’s most influential characters, and for “typical” inhabitants. This section describes their personality traits, motivations, goals, and their potential interactions with other NPCs and the player characters. The larger politics

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## SACRED GROUND

and tensions involved in the situation are many times outlined in this section, as well.

### THE SITE

This is the bulk of the entry, where the physical description of the site is given room by room. Detailed accounts are included here of the site's layout, traps, hazards, magical protections, design features, magic items, treasure, and all the crunchy bits that make the site what it is.

### SCENES

This "adventure seed" section contains ideas for ways PCs can become involved with the site. This includes hooks for getting the characters to

the site and suggestions for involving them in the internal machinations of its inhabitants, as well as larger plotlines that can involve your players.

### ALTERNATE VERSIONS

Finally, we give some ideas for modifying the site so that it can play a different role in your campaign. The personalities and goals of the site's inhabitants might change drastically, or the site itself might be transformed. What if the residents are really the evil minions of some dark god, for instance, and not the kindly caretakers they would have the PCs think them? Maybe they're hiding a deeper agenda that only the player characters can discover. These are the kinds of variations that are suggested in this last section.