

From my fortress diary:

25th Moonstone, 182, Early Winter - Water flooding of the top of guildhalls began this month, but with the sealed passages between the buildings accidentally closed off, the dwarves (restricted to the interior of the halls, via burrows) pathed along the exterior avenues. Four dwarves perished when water flow pushed them off of the streets to fall many z -levels to their deaths. Additionally, one dwarf died on the surface, slain by a goblin ambush before the military could rush to protect him. The total fortress population has been reduced to 96, with no new dwarves having been born since 157.

Welcome to Nugrethshorast.

The fortress is a collection of free-standing structures, carved from natural rock, and housed inside a hollowed-out hemisphere. The bottom of the grotto is the bottom of the upper cavern layer, and most of the structures have been carved to match the arrangement of pillars and cavern walls of the caverns. The entire project took the majority of the summer, with the outline of each layer having to be carefully calculated (there was a lot of math involved), and carved out before the next could be worked on.

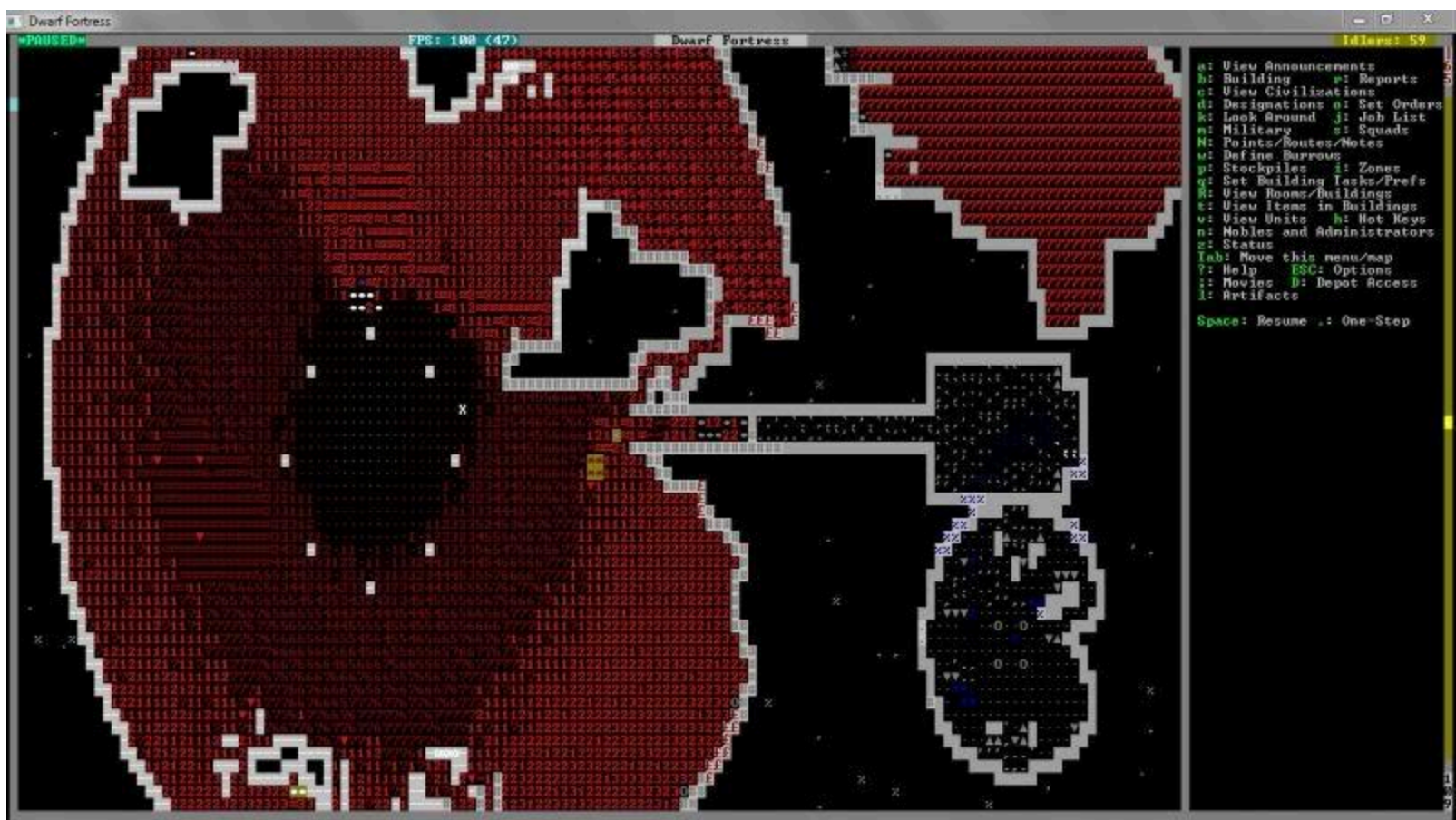


As it turns out, the Merchant of Echoing (the fort's parent civ) was destroyed by goblins during the first few decades of world gen, so when Weatherwires was declared the Mountainhome (shortly after excavation began), no queen arrived - she had been dead for more than a century. With the duke (Kogsak Murdershot) dead in a recent tantrum spiral, the only 'royalty' left in the fortress, and thus in

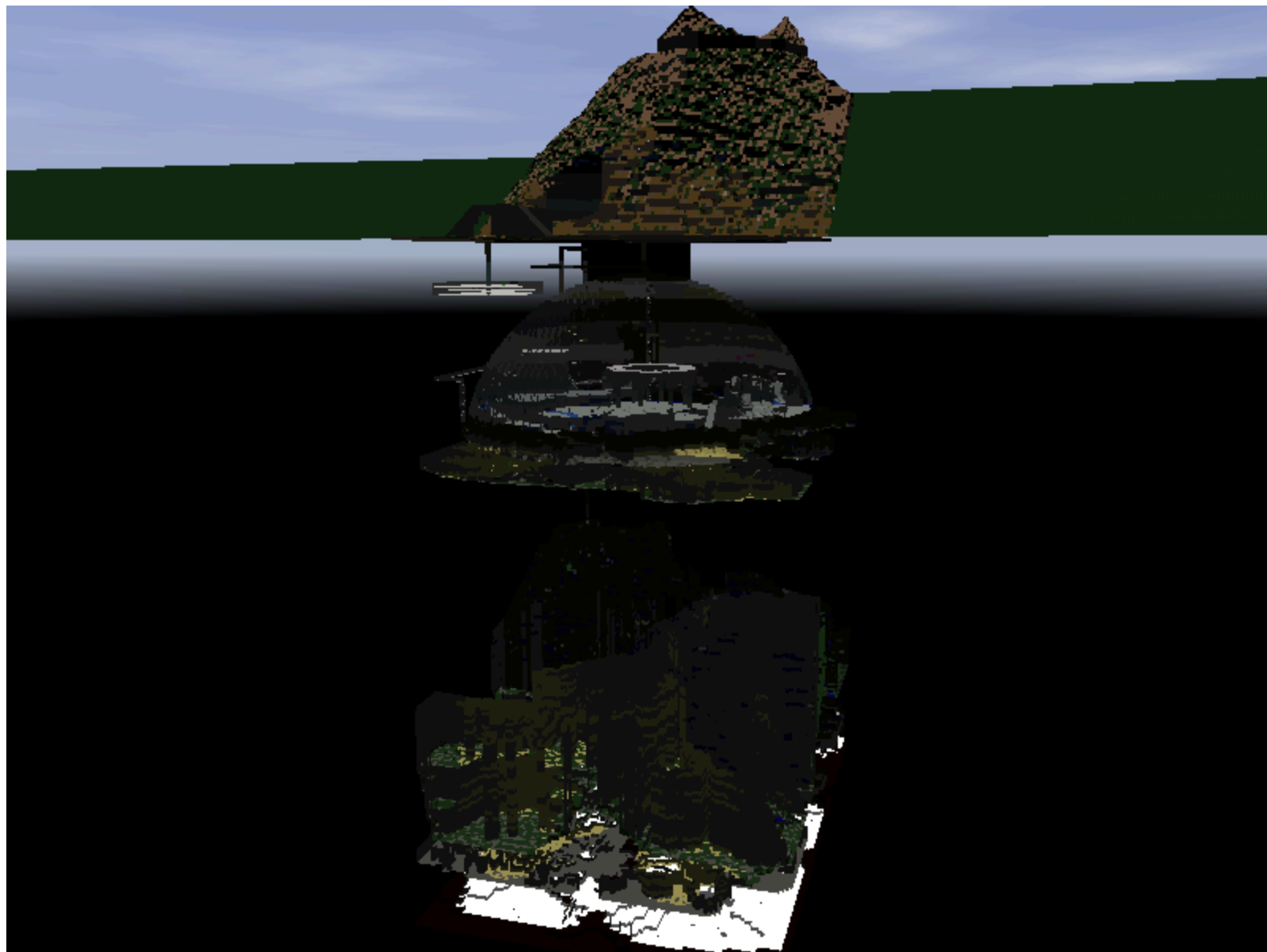
the entire civilization, was the duke's wife and four surviving children. At this time (around the year 135), I resolved to make the dome the last impregnable bastion of dwarfdom in the world.



Of course, once the dome was excavated, the massive amount of stone piled at its bottom was debilitating to my framerate, a problem which I resolved by flooding the entire affair with magma, pumped in from the adjacent magma tube. Many dwarves gave their lives in the excavation and flooding of the dome - I thought that my supply of dwarves would be neverending, between immigrant waves and new births. I could not have been more wrong.

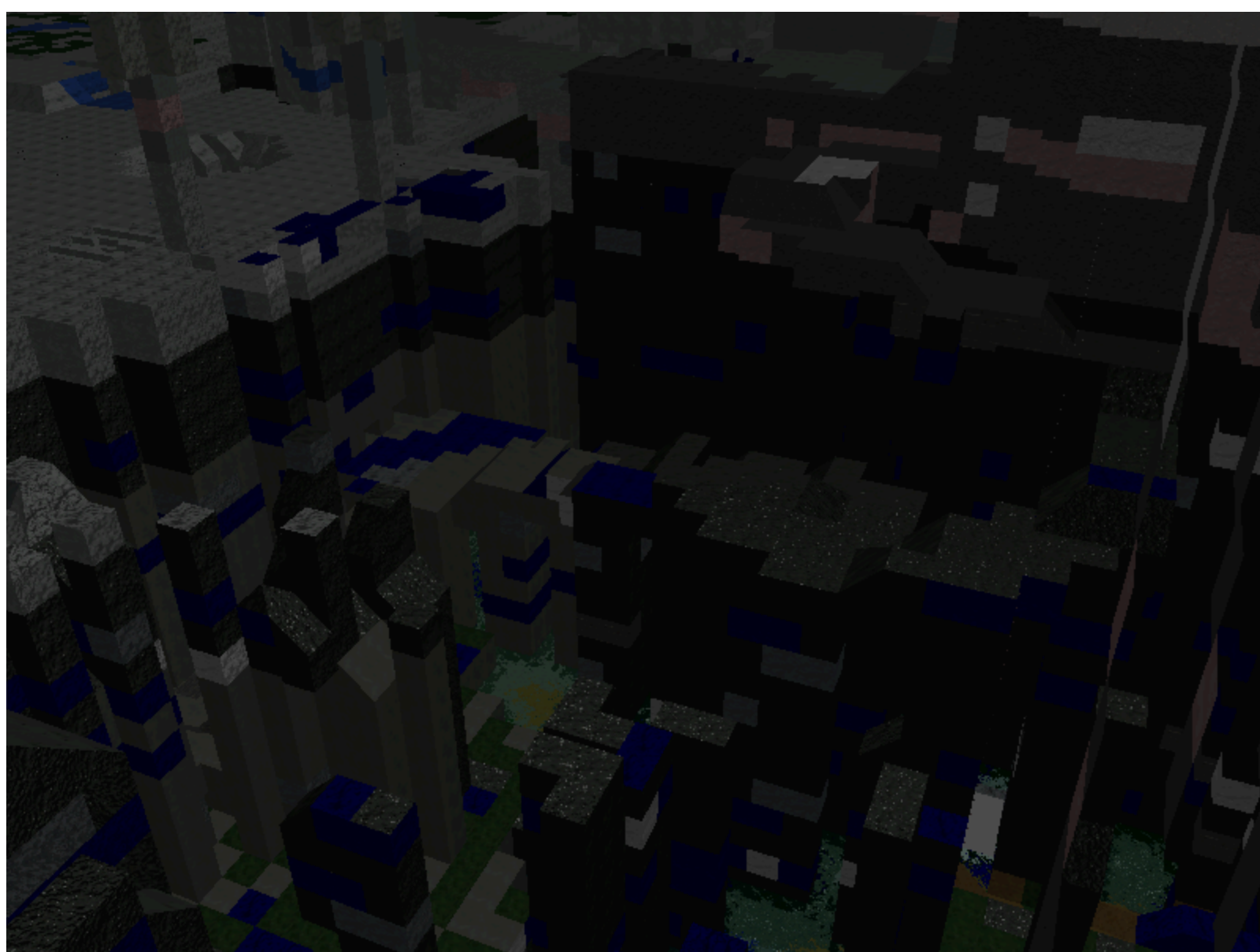


In the hopes that the dwarves, sealed underground, might procreate and develop into an essentially limitless civilization, I organized them into clans. Each dwarf that was born in the fortress was given a nickname that was the same as their father's surname. The late duke's children were named princes and princesses, and given the nickname "Murdershot," in honor of their dead father, the last royalty of the Merchant of Echoing. A tantrum spiral or two later, the fortress population had dipped down to about 150, but no immigrant waves had arrived to replace the dead. I assumed then that the civilization's dwarven population had been exhausted, and all dwarves living in the fortress were, indeed, the last of their kind.



In 157, Kol "Languagemetal" Claspedrelief was born. His birth went unheeded for several years, until the following journal entry:

16th Obsidian, 164, Late Winter - All remaining stone dumped, and the bottom of the dome channeled out. The dome is finally contiguous with the upper cavern layer, and thus the excavation portion of the project (not counting housing within buildings) is complete. Also, the fortress, despite containing married couples who have produced children before, has stopped producing new infants. The only child left is Kol Claspedrelief, of clan Languagemetal, and at 7 years old, is the youngest dwarf in the fortress.



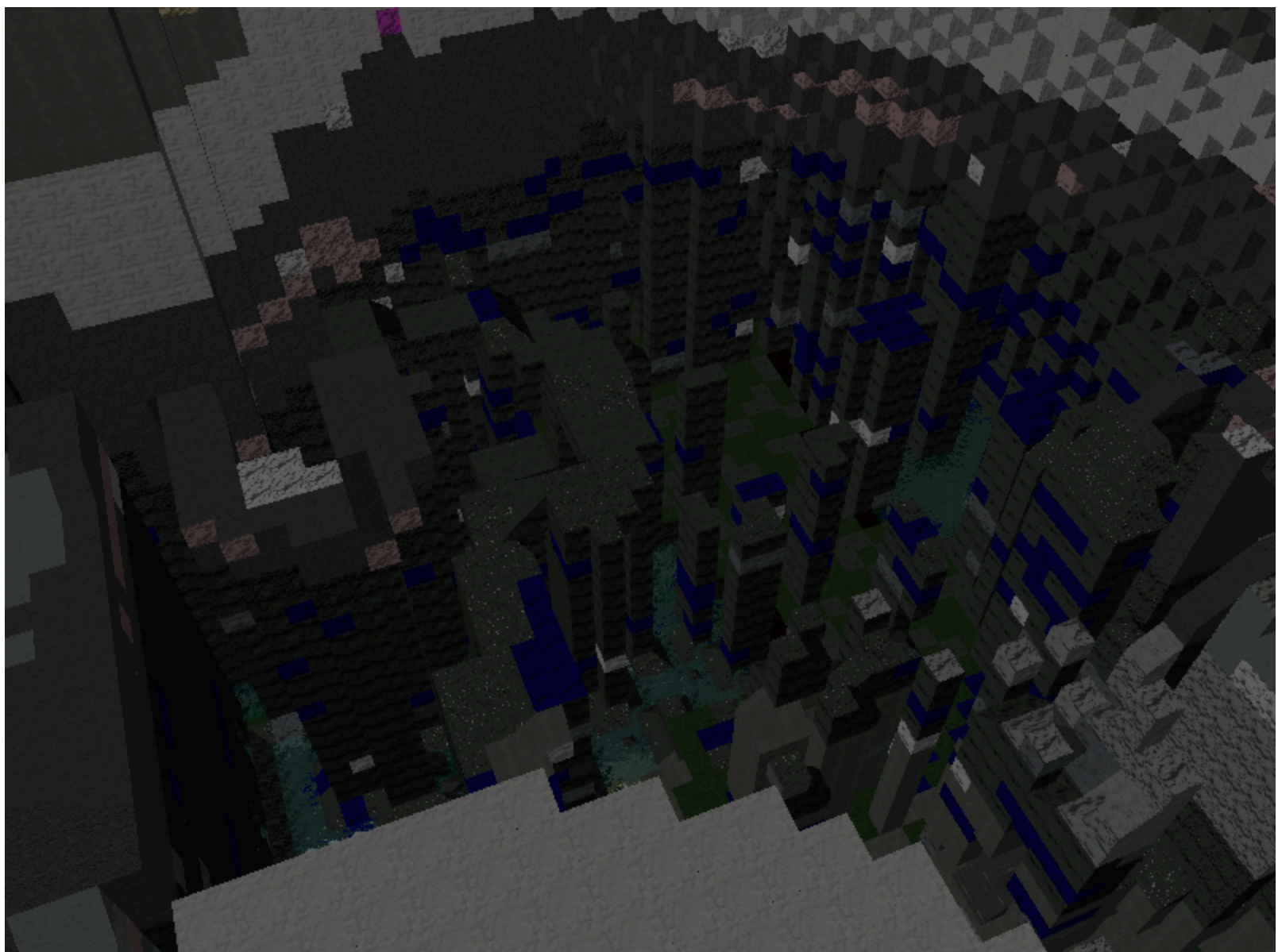
Since that journal entry, nearly two decades have passed. The fortress population has dwindled to 96, a combination of engineering accidents, pond grabber ambushes, and the occasional lucky goblin. Kol "Languagemetal" Claspedrelief has been designated "The Youngest Dwarf." The surfaces of the four separate guildhalls have been flooded with water, to allow the growth of wild fungi. Eight guildhalls have been carved out of four free-standing structures, connected by a series of causeways. The royal family (of which a mere 3 remain) are housed in their own suites in the citadel located in the north part of the dome.

With no immigrants, no merchants, and no children, these dwarves are the last of their kind. Theirs is the saga of Weatherwires.

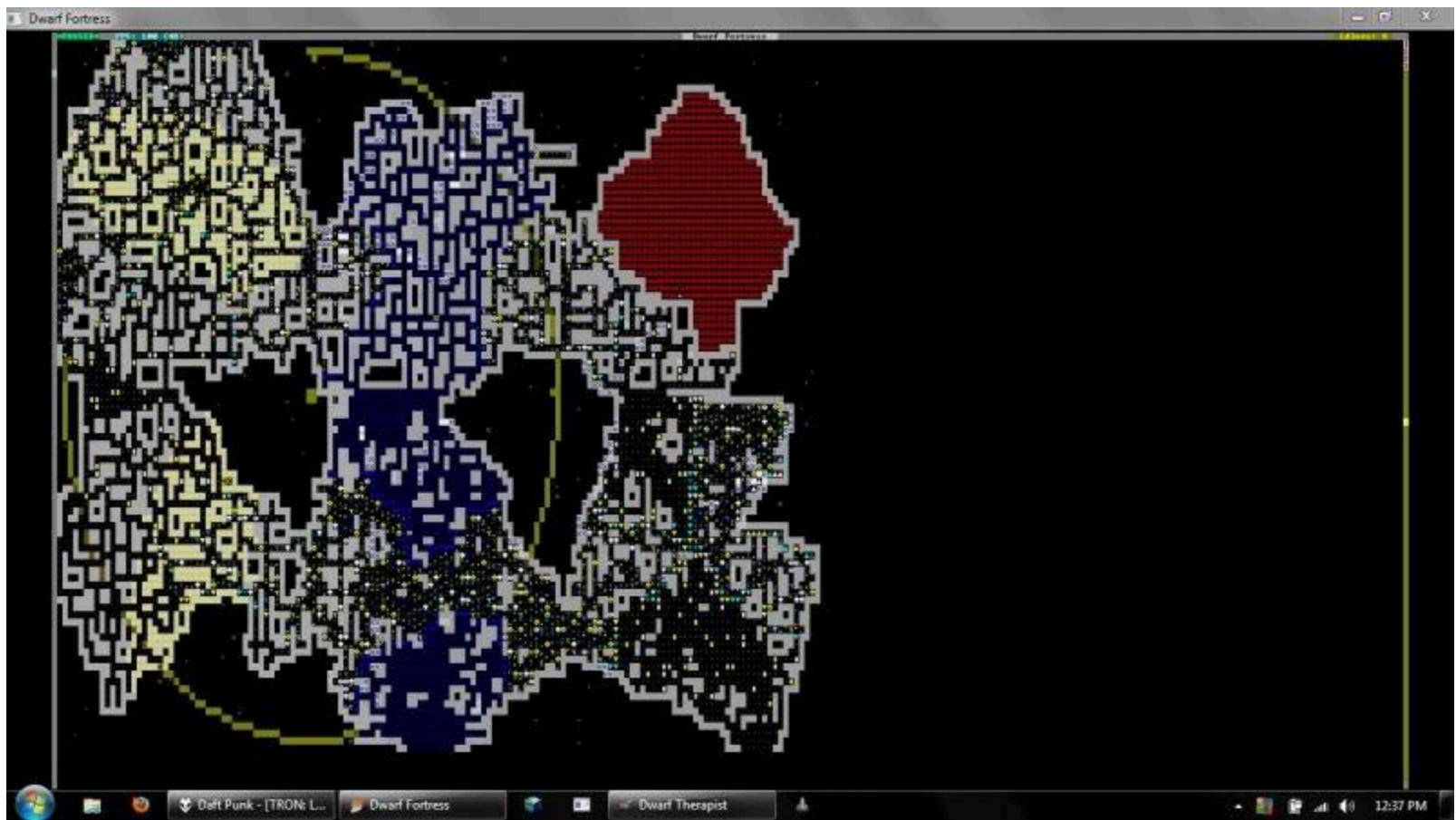


More screenshots!

A view of the southeast quadrant of the dome, which is mostly open air all the way to the cavern floor/underground lake. Several pillars are visible in this picture. Bear in mind that the placement of each one was dictated by the layout of the original cavern layer.



For reference, here is the cavern at about the time when I began excavating. The outline of the dome's 'equator' is designated here, mostly for my own reference at the time.

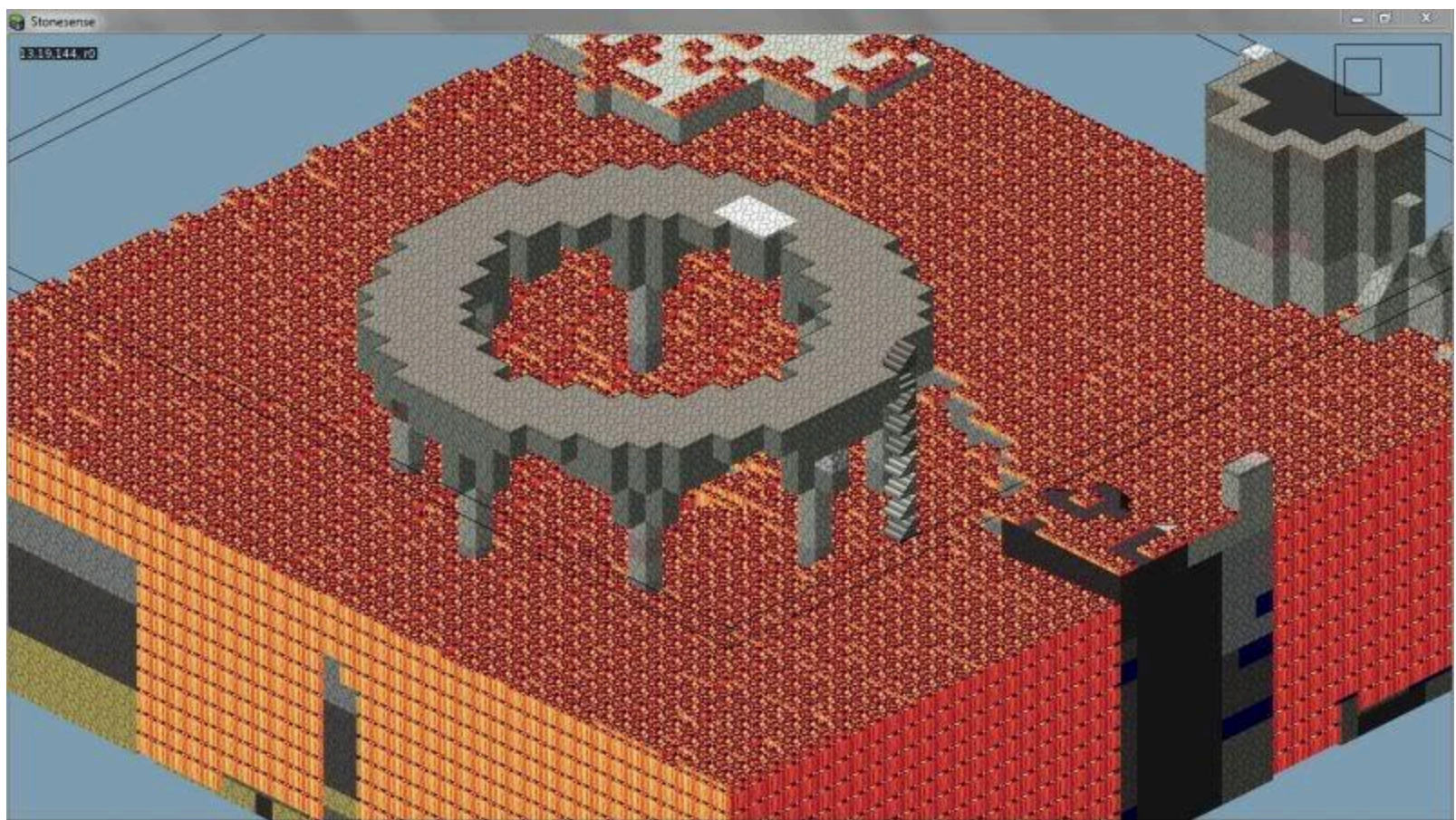


Compare the previous picture to these, which show eight out of the nine guild locations present in the fortress. There are two per building, mostly occupying vertically opposite ends of the structures. Each guild 'controls' (in my mind, there's really no in-game effect) a communal guildhall, containing a table and chair assigned to each member dwarf. Each dwarf additionally has their own bedroom, which includes at least one chest and cabinet (more, if that dwarf has many possessions). Additionally, each guild has a leader, who has a separate suite of two or three rooms.

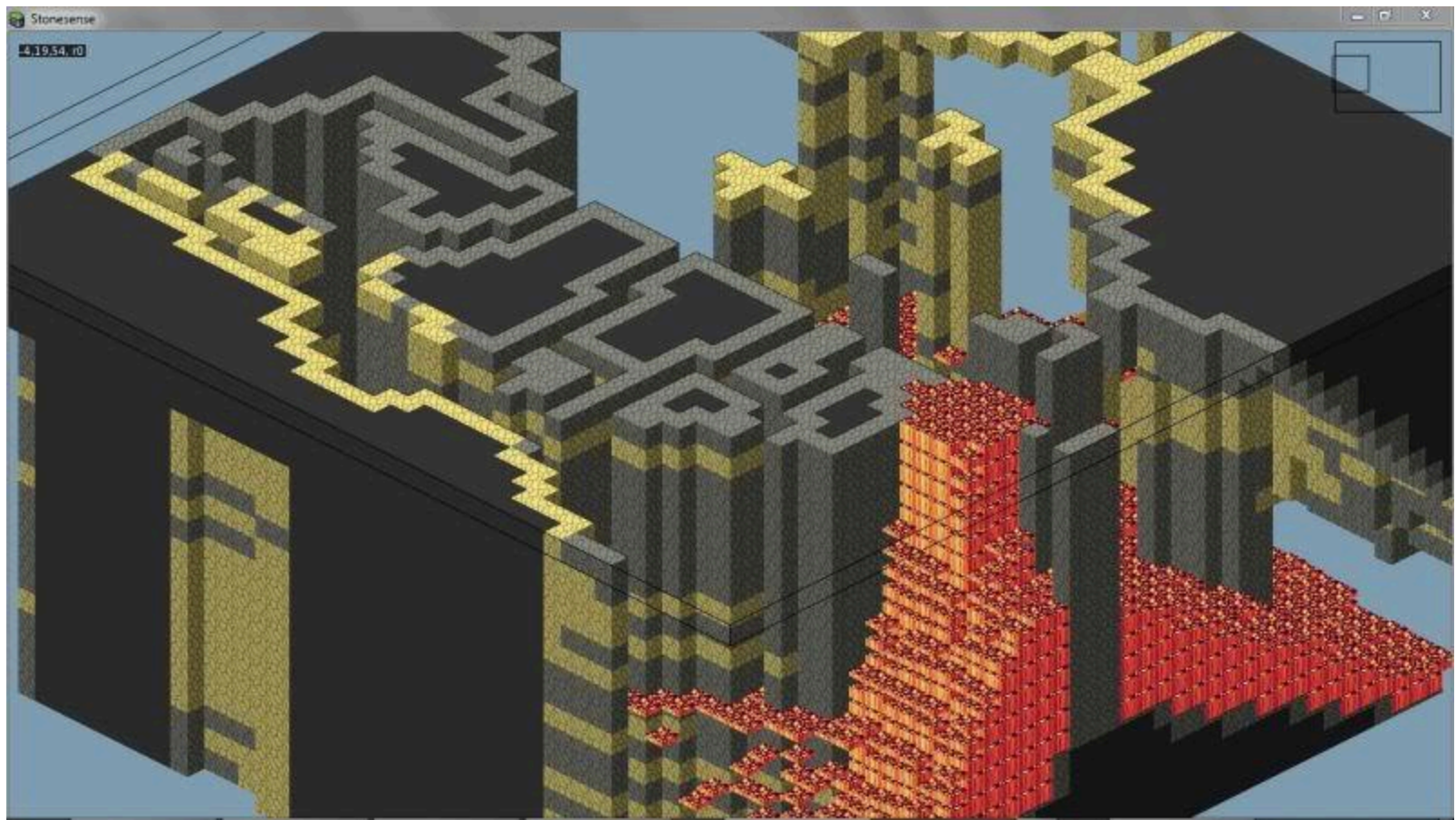




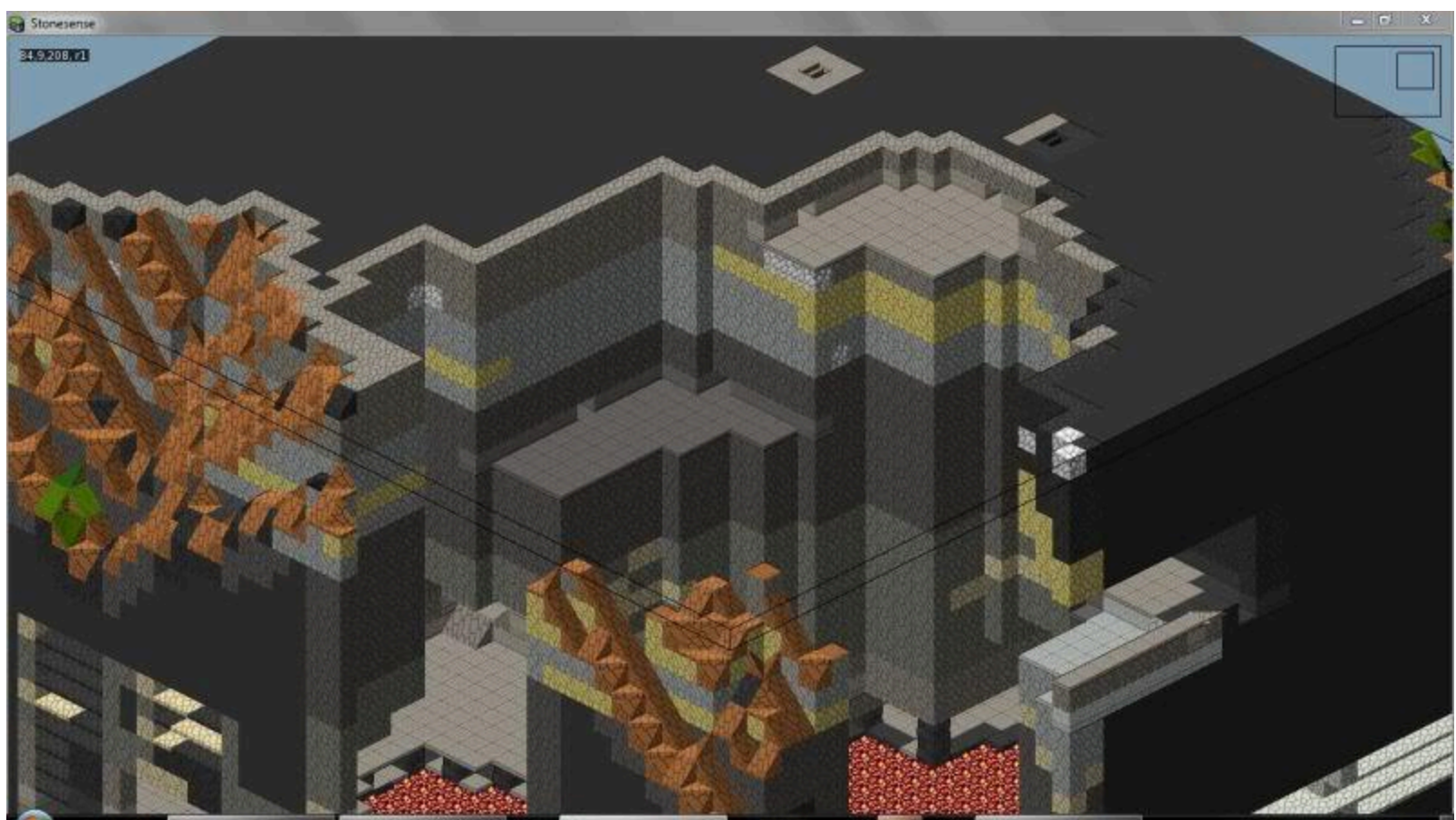
When the dome was initially flooded (with magma), it took a while - a couple days of real world time, if I recall correctly. I turned off alert pauses in the init files, and just let it run while I was at school. When it was finished, I was amazed at just how much magma it took to fill the damn thing.



Then, I drained it into the second cavern layer. That took a while, too.



When the fortress was still above-ground, the duke resided in quarters that had been carved out from the inside of the volcano's caldera. Each 'room' was merely a furnished ledge, exposed to the open air, connected to the other 'rooms' by seven z-levels of stairs. In these pictures, you can also see part of the caldera rim, as well as some of the lower parts of the old fort.



An interesting note - during the founding decades of Weatherwires, many engravings were made of a legendary beast named Usu Wavedpearl the Murky Deer, the mountain titan. Usu - a gigantic theropod composed of crystal glass - attacked the fortress in the summer of 1511. I thought it fitting that Kib Waxpaddled, leader of my marksdwarves, and mayor at that time, should deal with the beast, seeing how he had been demanding crystal glass items for some time now.

A passing knifedwarf (part of a side project at the time; getting dwarves to be competent at using large daggers) by the name of Vabok Earthenfins killed the beast instead. The next year, I received this message:



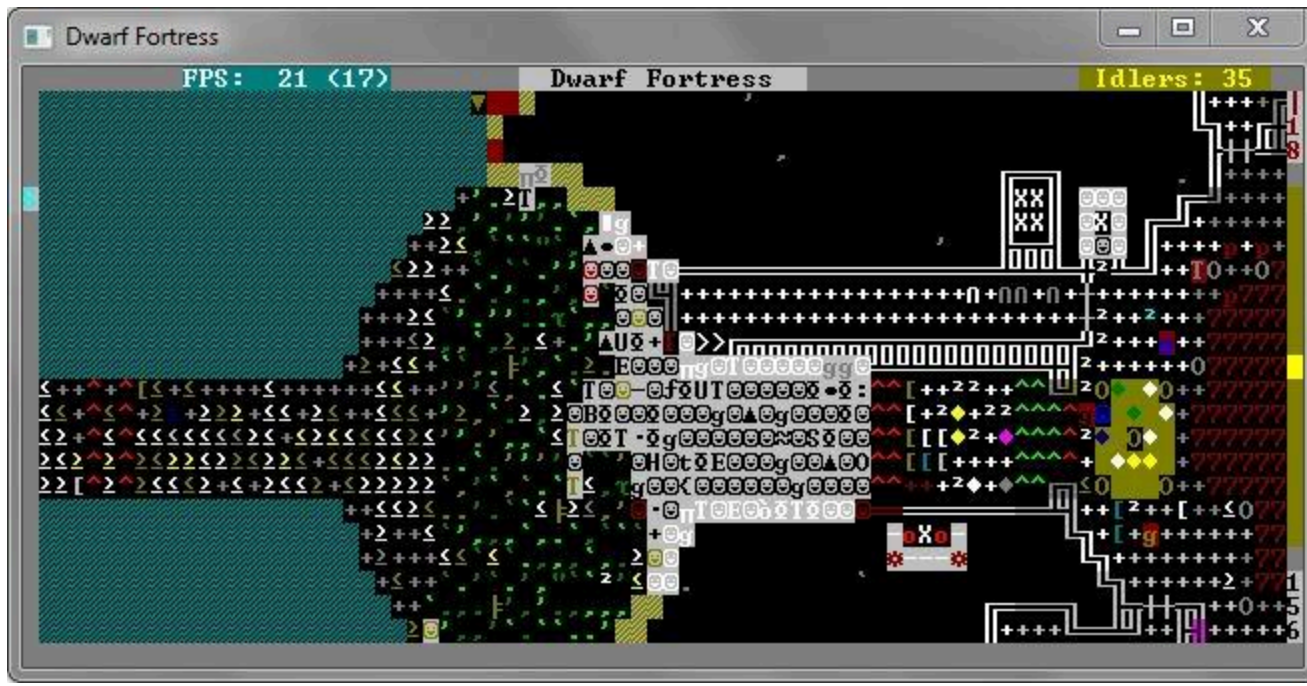
In 152, a plains titan arrived and was slain. The incident passed without much notice (I was more concerned with the dumping of all magma-proof stone into the volcano). In the spring, I was notified that the world had passed into the Age of Heroes. And so, the dwarves of Weatherwires thrust the world out of myth, give it a swift kick in the pants past legend, and into the hands of heroes.

Concerning the fort itself:

I am currently sealing up the various side passages out of the dome, including the cavern layer itself. There will be various doors, operated by levers, which can seal the dome off completely. At that point, the lake can be drained (this is already in place), and allowed to dry. Then, the dwarves can be restricted to their burrows (safe inside the buildings, which are designed in such a way as to be entirely magma-sealed), and the dome can be flooded with magma once more.

This constitutes the last stretch of the second-to-last goal I had assigned myself with this fort. The final part will be to allow the fort to run its course, with the dwarves living out the rest of their natural lives, sealed away from the surface world forever. Hopefully the bug will break, and the dwarves will become fertile once more. If not... well, thus will end the tragedy and legend of Weatherwires.

Oddly, Dwarf Therapist always registers my population as one more than what it actually is. The extra dwarf is a child. Even more strangely, the child is visible in Stonesense, standing idly upon the bridge outside the fort. In game, he appears as dead in the units menu. The strange child is named Zuglar Fountainclinch, of house Throwerlens. He doesn't appear on the living units list (which in my past experiences has indicated child snatching), but he DOES appear in Dwarf Therapist, appearing just below his still-living brother.



So, I checked Stonesense, on a whim, and...



There he is. Just standing there. He's been like that since I first noticed, shortly after I noticed that there were no babies in the fort anymore. He's not the only one, either:



None of those animals appear in game. They crowd the edges of the map, silently haunting me whenever I want to look at the fort in Stonesense. The entire situation is... bizarre, to say the least.

27th Obsidian, 183, Late Winter

Tragedy has struck. Work on sealing the dome so it can be successfully flooded was progressing at a steady pace, until there was an accident concerning a wall being built without actually having any supports. Kol, the youngest dwarf, was caught in a cloud of dust following the cave-in - luckily for him, only his heart and guts were bruised. Dakost the carpenter, however, broke several bones, including his upper spine. Unable to draw breath, he suffocated minutes later.

Now there are 94.

UPDATE: I did a search through the gamelog, and found this:

Quote

A kidnapper has made off with the Dwarven child Zuglar `Throwerlens' Zefonakgos!

I can't be sure precisely WHEN this occurred, although I suppose I could copy my save, abandon the fort, and check Legends mode. I just might do that.

Regarding how long it took to fill the dome with magma, it's hard to say. Let's check my journal:

1st Galena, 149, Late Summer - *PULL THE LEVER*

15th Malachite, 150, Mid-Summer - The volcano has drained to the lowest pump level, filling the dome nearly up to the pumps themselves. Only 45,000 stones listed in the stocks menu, a lot of the dome was dug out of magma-safe rock, apparently.

Keeping mind that when the dome was first filled, its volume was smaller (I hadn't connected it to the top cavern layer), and there were a number of leaks (it actually was connected to the top cavern layer), so it might take more or less than a year to fill now. In any case, the flooding was a success, when compared to the amount of time it would have taken to merely dump all the stone by hand:

1st Galena, 156, Late Summer - Mass dumping of all remaining stone (besides stockpiles of obsidian and marble) continues, with about 23,000 stone left to be dumped. In the same time (approximately 5-6 years) that it took to construct the pump and windmill system (which liquefied approximately 60,000 stone), the dwarves have dumped approximately 20,000 stone - of course, additional areas have been excavated and stone added to that total in the meantime.

To give an idea of just how much magma we're talking about here, this is a very zoomed out profile of the fortress, showing the points to which the dome fills and the caldera drains.



And I've had long-term plans to mechanize certain parts of the fort - including flooding of the dome - since excavation began. It is a relatively low priority at the moment, that's all.

A tragic, yet unsurprising update while I continue to finish the dome's seal (this is nearly done).

19th Moonstone, 184, *Early Winter* - I returned to the fort after dinner to find that Monom Bistökasob, a weaver, had died of thirst while trapped on top of a single tile of land amidst 6-7 deep water. How he got there is a mystery. The lake's drain has been closed off, to prevent further dwarves from somehow pathing into the area. Current population: 93.

17th Galena, 185, *Late Summer* - In the final stages of beautifying the fortress, five blue peacocks and Reg Violencedoor, a stonemason, were flushed over the edge of a causeway and fell to their deaths. The fortress population is now 92, and all that remains before the magma pumps can be activated is for the water to dry.

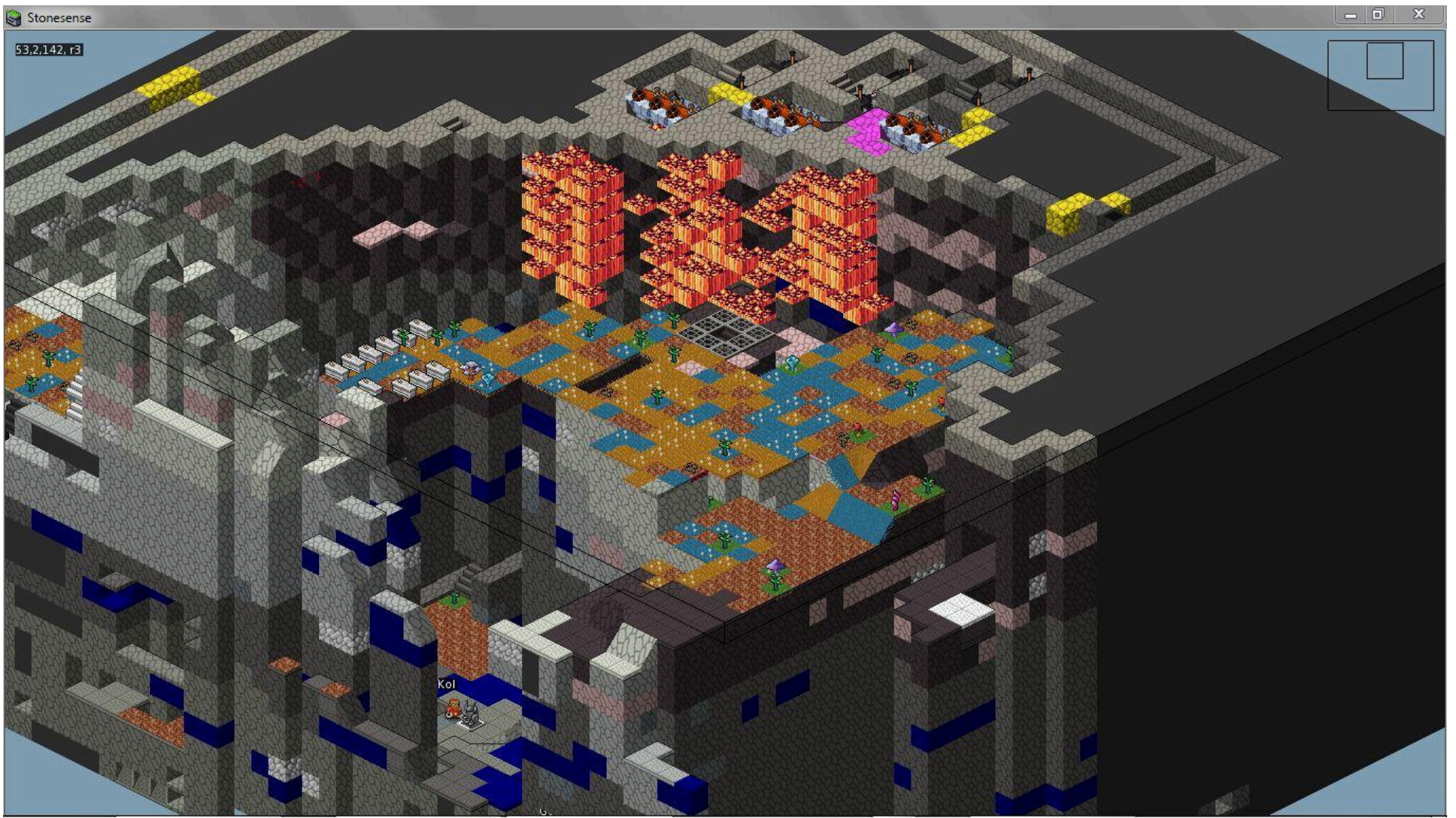
The dome is complete! Meanwhile, a dwarven caravan came through - the first in years. I used Runesmith (a 3rd party utility) to switch two merchants to my side, and one of them promptly dragged the one-humped camel it was leading to a cage, stuffed it inside (along with all its goods) and is now hauling it down to the animal stockpile within the dome. Strange.

I soon find that I cannot enable labors on the merchants, except through Runesmith. Also curious, that my fortress population is still listed as 92, despite the addition of two merchant dwarves. It appears that, no matter how many visitors I recruit (I would assume this includes humans), the dwarves will never actually view them as fortress natives.

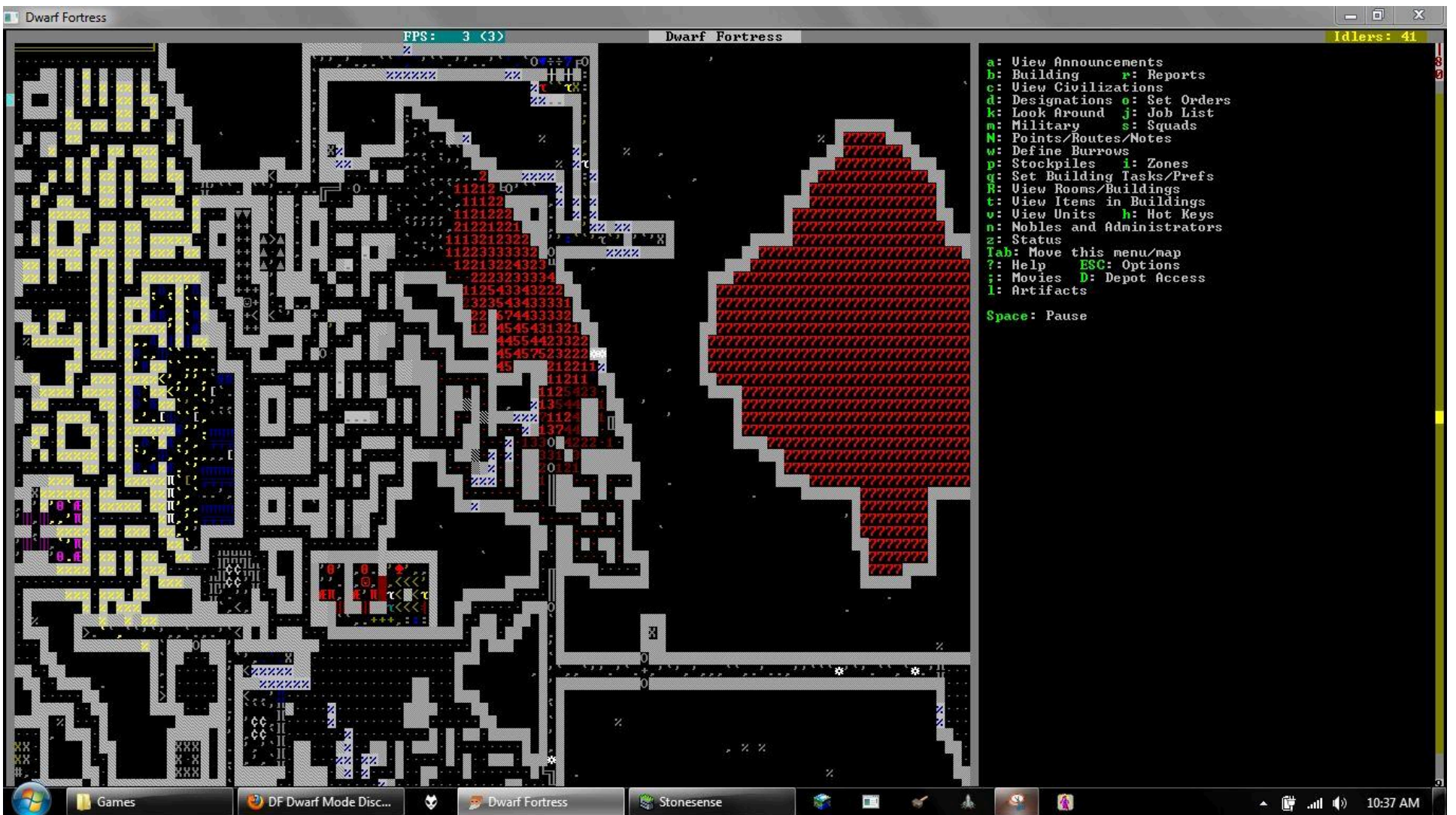
Currently, I've enabled hauling on the two merchants. I would have enlisted more, but a goblin siege appeared at almost the exact same time - all the military dwarves were slain, along with five or six other merchants. ;_;

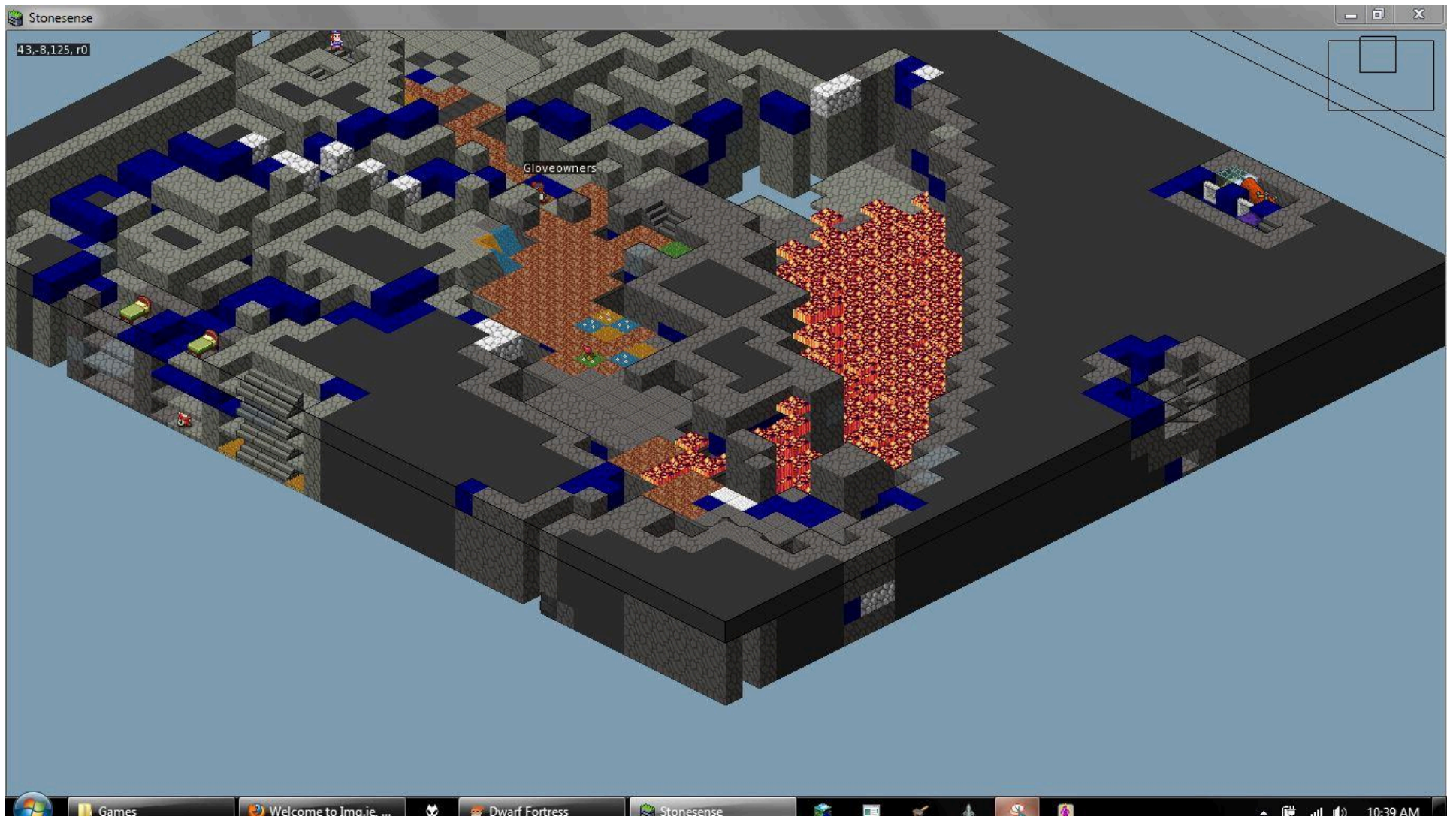
11th Opal, 185, *Mid-Winter* - With a safe amount of backup supplies stockpiled beneath the central mesa, a certain lever in the map room is designated to be pulled. As if by providence, Domas Tanineth, known as "Tickcities," of clan Murdershot, Queen of Weatherwires and the Merchant of Echoing, moves to pull the lever that will flood the entire dome with magma.

It begins.



The first area to be flooded is the northeastern quarter, between the guildhall claimed by Gloveowners and Gearguild, and the dome wall. As it fills, the magma spills out of the relatively enclosed area and through the serpentine passages between pillars to slowly fill the adjacent areas, including a major avenue (a dwarf is visible walking that street in the SS screenshot).





Here, you can clearly see how the relatively open area on the upper right fills far quicker than it drains into the rest of the dome. Eventually, it will fill completely and spill over the adjacent guildhall.



I chose not to drain the underground lake during the second flooding. I need some way in the future to be able to seal the water off completely, and I figure the best way to seal it off in the first place is with magma. Cave-ins were not an option, since I'd have to cave in parts of the dome's structures, and pumps would have been a hassle.



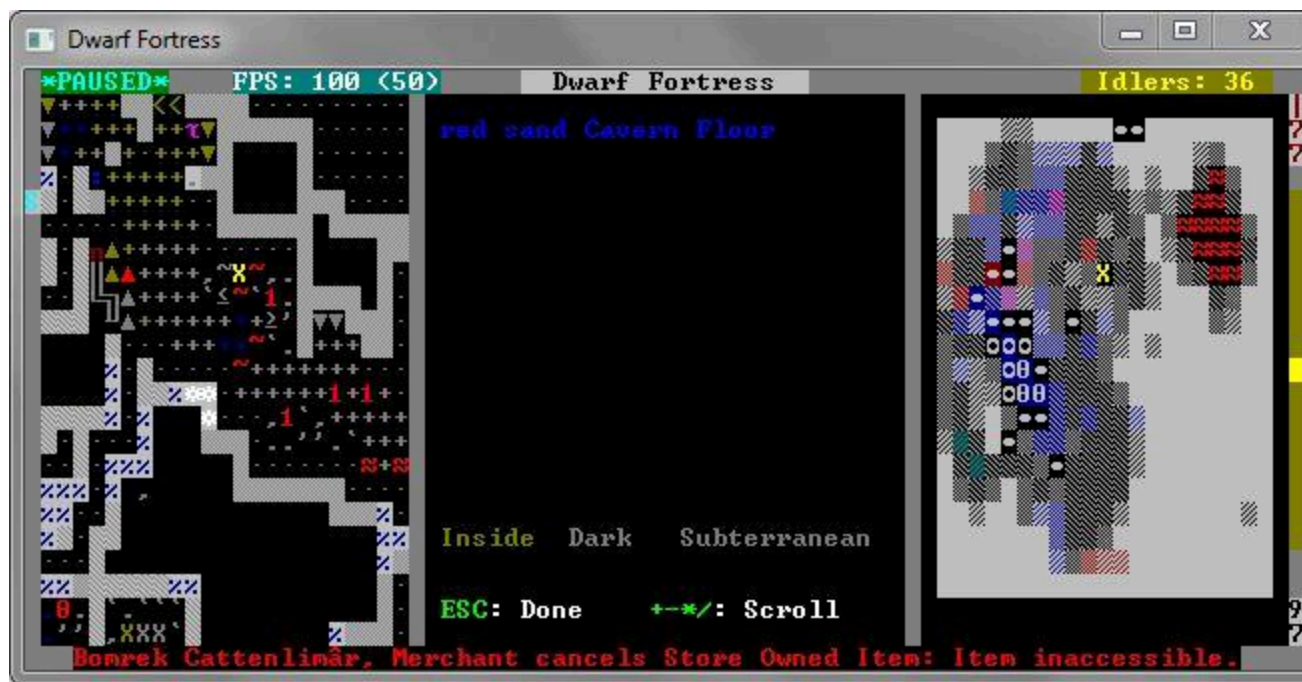
“A section of the cavern has collapsed!”

My decision to leave the lake undrained now threatens disaster. Occasionally the magma will obsidianize a square of water that is not joined to any support, causing it to plummet a single level down to the bottom of the lake. However, in minutes the magma will reach a part of the lake that is directly above literally all of my stockpiles. Food, booze, stone, wood, animals, tools, everything.

Thus, I have decided to drain the lake and hope for the best.

Unfortunately, due to another series of cave-ins, the seal on one of the drains was compromised, causing magma to drain prematurely. I’ve had to halt flooding of the dome so the seal can be repaired, which will give me an opportunity in the meantime to fix the lake drainage issue.

Draining of the magma continues - the buildup of magma in the northeastern dome takes a while to equalize into the rest of the fortress. However, as the magma recedes, I’ve noticed something quite fascinating:



Those are tiles of red sand, where originally there was only bare rock. I believe this is a result of first flooding with water, thus producing muddied stone, which then becomes muddied floor fungus/cave moss. The magma burns away the vegetation, which results in red sand (no idea why it is specifically red, but it seems to be the same fortress-wide). As an additional side effect, the mud has been removed, so instead of having brown colored tiles of fungus, they are the proper yellow/teal when they grow back in!

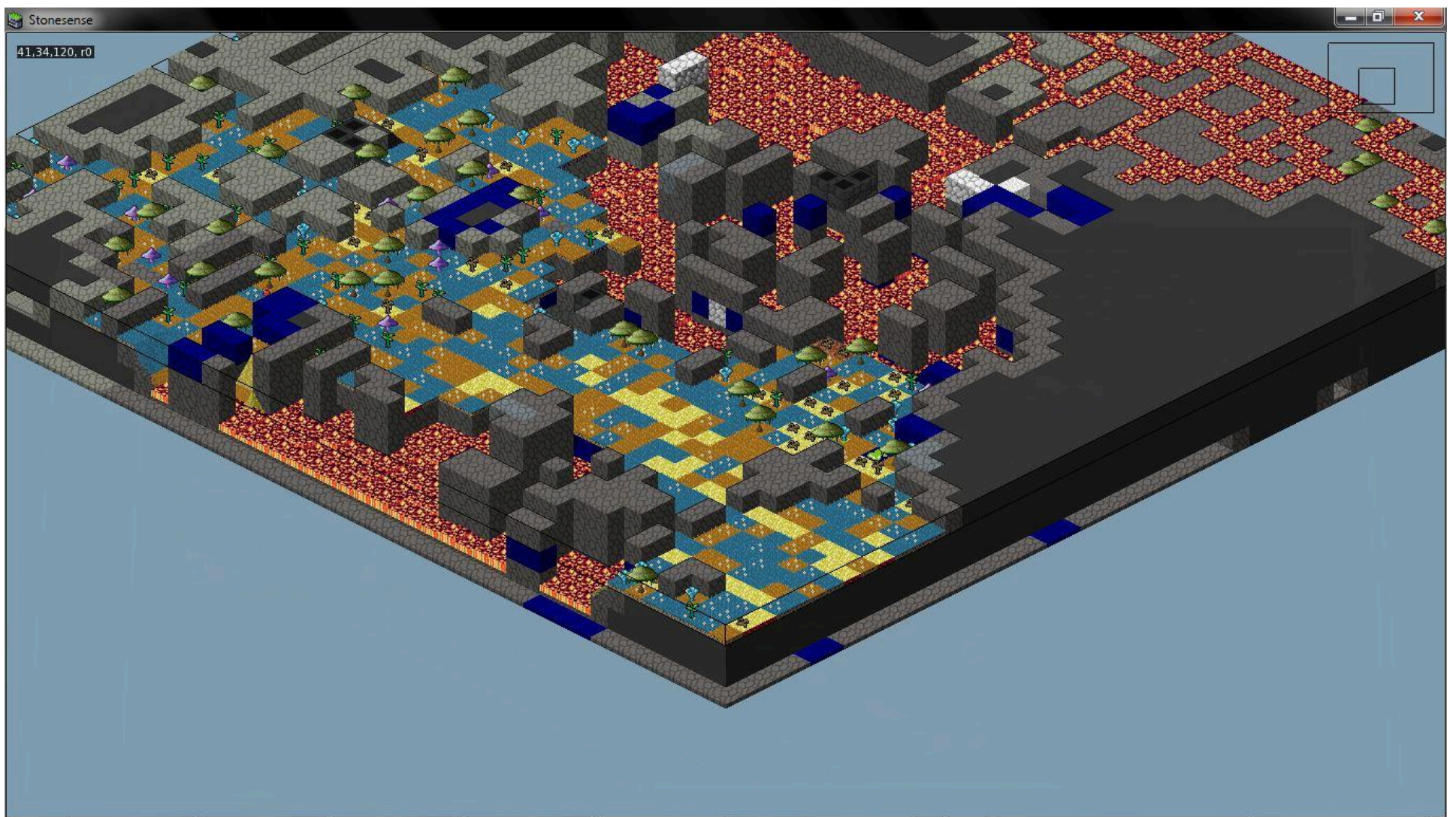
As magma recedes from the actual cavern floor, there are tiles of silt. It appears that the red sand is only present when the original tile (before irrigation) was raw stone. This could be used as an exploit to produce glass on maps with no sand - only rock, water, and magma is needed.

So far, 19 merchants have been recruited to the fort, along with all their goods. So far, they've proven to be useful as nothing but haulers (even then, I can only alter their labors via Dwarf Therapist). The caravan guards, however, despite not being able to be enlisted in the fortress military, can have their labors altered in game, and have been having strange moods - the first the fortress has seen in decades. Among the new artifacts are The Ferocious Shame, an adamantine figurine of dwarves; Dreamedbeaks, an obsidian throne; and Failedhushed the Music of Balding, a light yellow diamond coffin.

The merchants appear on lists to assign them rooms, but not on the lists to assign them to squads in the military. They participate in fortress activities, such as parties (which are thrown frequently, and are heavily attended), and are making friends in the fort. I'm currently digging out a new suite of rooms in the barracks, which will house naturalized merchants.

With all known leaks fixed, a new seal in place at the bottom of the lake, and the ability to completely drain water from the dome, flooding can commence as soon as some hauling jobs have finished.

It's the year 190, mid-spring, and flooding has commenced!



That's the cavern floor, one of the lowest points in the dome. The magma on either side of the isthmus occupies what was originally a lakebed. I've set up a system by which the lake can be drained or filled with water on a whim. Obviously, in preparation for the dome's filling of magma (this being the third time this has been attempted), the lake has been drained of water.

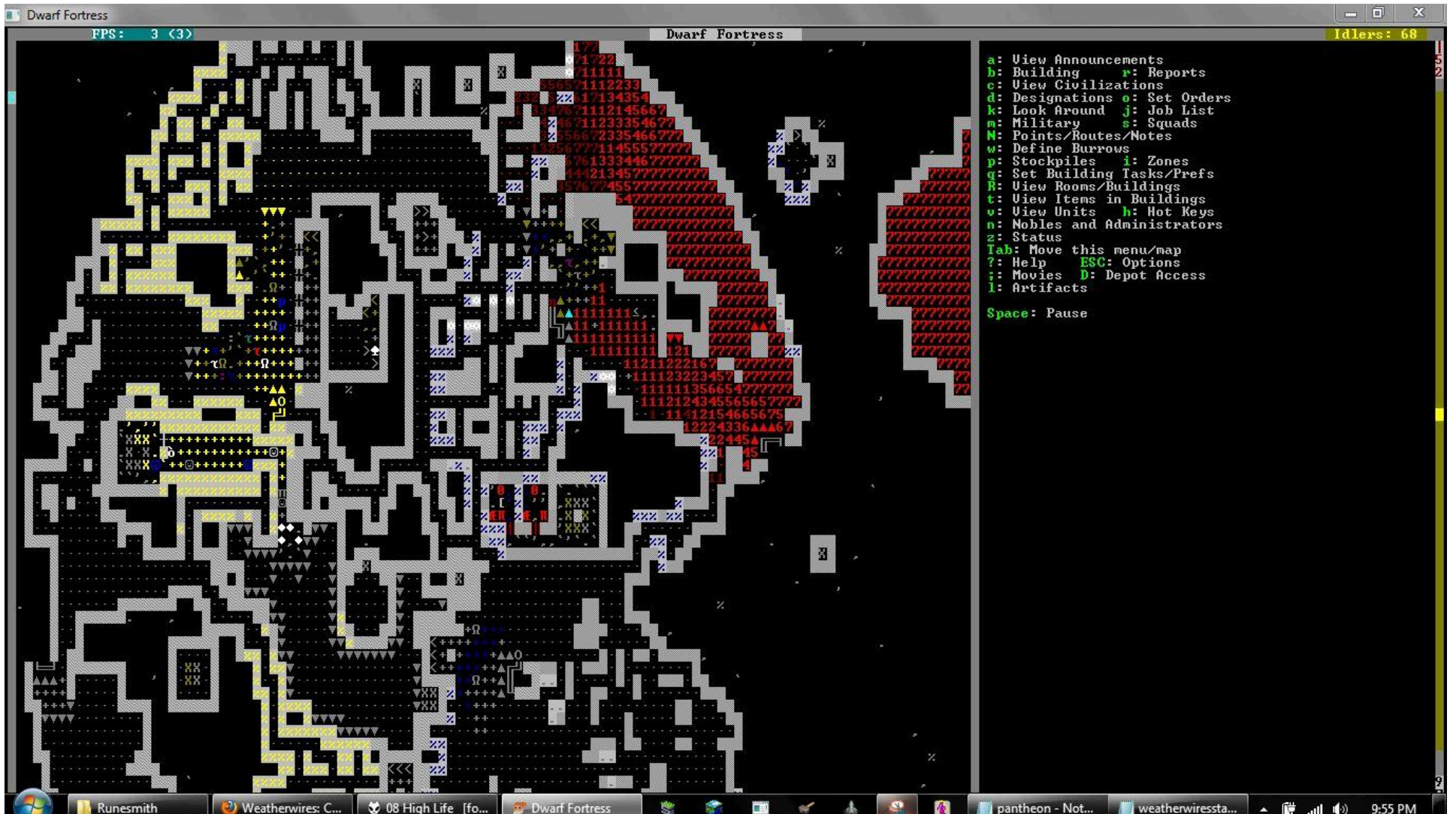
Going is slow, so it might not even be all filled by tonight. Or tomorrow.

Girlinhat: "Can you assign bedrooms to the recruited merchants? If so, can you provoke a marriage?"

Yes, so ostensibly. I've done it before, when I attempted an 'arranged' marriage between the eldest Murdershot girl and another dwarf born in the fortress. They did become lovers, but never married, as they both died in the great tantrum spiral of 135. I've had the dwarves working nonstop since I've

started recruiting the merchants, so it simply hasn't been a possibility, or a priority. Now that the dome is flooding, and all the dwarves are living inside it (which has long been my primary goal), I can start work on all these other things.

Here, you can see how the magma clogs up on the right, slowly spilling along the avenue and draining into lower portions of the dome.



It's getting hot in here...



While the new rooms were being dug out, the game paused. "Digging designation cancelled: warm stone located."



Flooding is progressing nicely. While it continues, I thought I'd post the results of an experiment I conducted during the first flooding, after the dome was first excavated, concerning the magma-safety of nether-cap.

3rd Moonstone, 149 Early Winter - Showing 69,500 stones. The magma has begun to reach the entry hall to the Murdershot Citadel, which contains an array of crafts and buildings made of nether-cap, in an attempt to test nether-cap's magma-resistance.

21st Moonstone - All of the nether-cap buildings and items remained unharmed! Buildings which contained items, such as the coffin containing the remains of Id Zonlerom, remained unharmed, but the items inside spontaneously combusted from heat. The same for loose items: syrup boils in barrels, copper weapons melt in bins, and the gem bin currently contains 8 'magma's and 2 !!rough light yellow diamonds!!. A hen in a nether-cap cage bled to death, ostensibly from the heat.

14th Hematite, 153, Early Summer - A cyclops has arrived. Three megabeast attacks in three consecutive years? He was easily slain by the same dwarf that slew the previous two. Also, the nether-cap bins, after cooling back off, reveal interesting results: the bin which contained a copper shield, which melted into a glob of molten copper during the flood, now contains a single unit of 'copper.' This stone can apparently be designated to be melted. Also, a gem bin, which contained 2 rough yellow diamonds and 8 other gemstones originally (which melted into 8 units of 'magma,' and the diamonds spontaneously combusted) now contains, again, the original 8 gemstones. The gems are cut - I don't recall if they were originally or not. Further tests must be conducted.

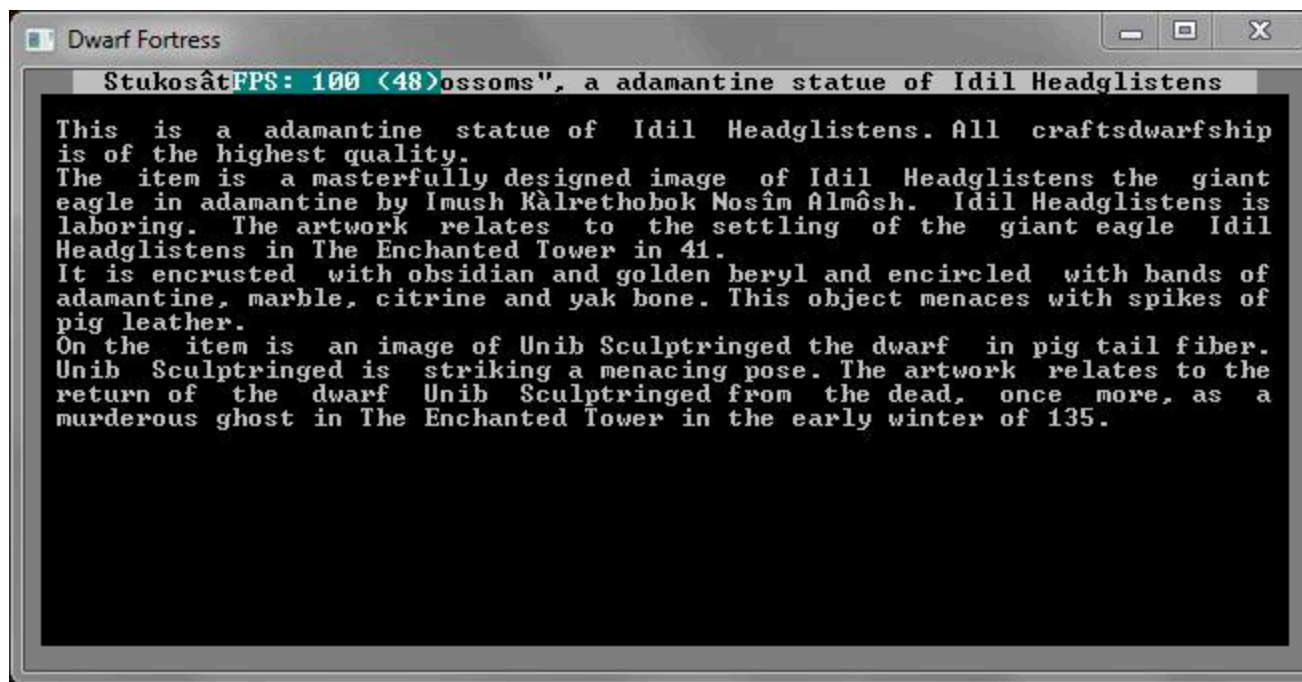
So far, the flooding has been successful, if extremely slow. As an offering to my fortresses gods (a diverse bunch, the chief deity of which is Onol, the yak goddess of the mountains), all the cages containing goblins and trolls have been placed somewhere which will be very hot, very soon.



As well, construction of the new dining hall, located at the bottom of a hollowed out portion of the central mesa, has been recently completed. The hall itself is currently below the surface of the magma.

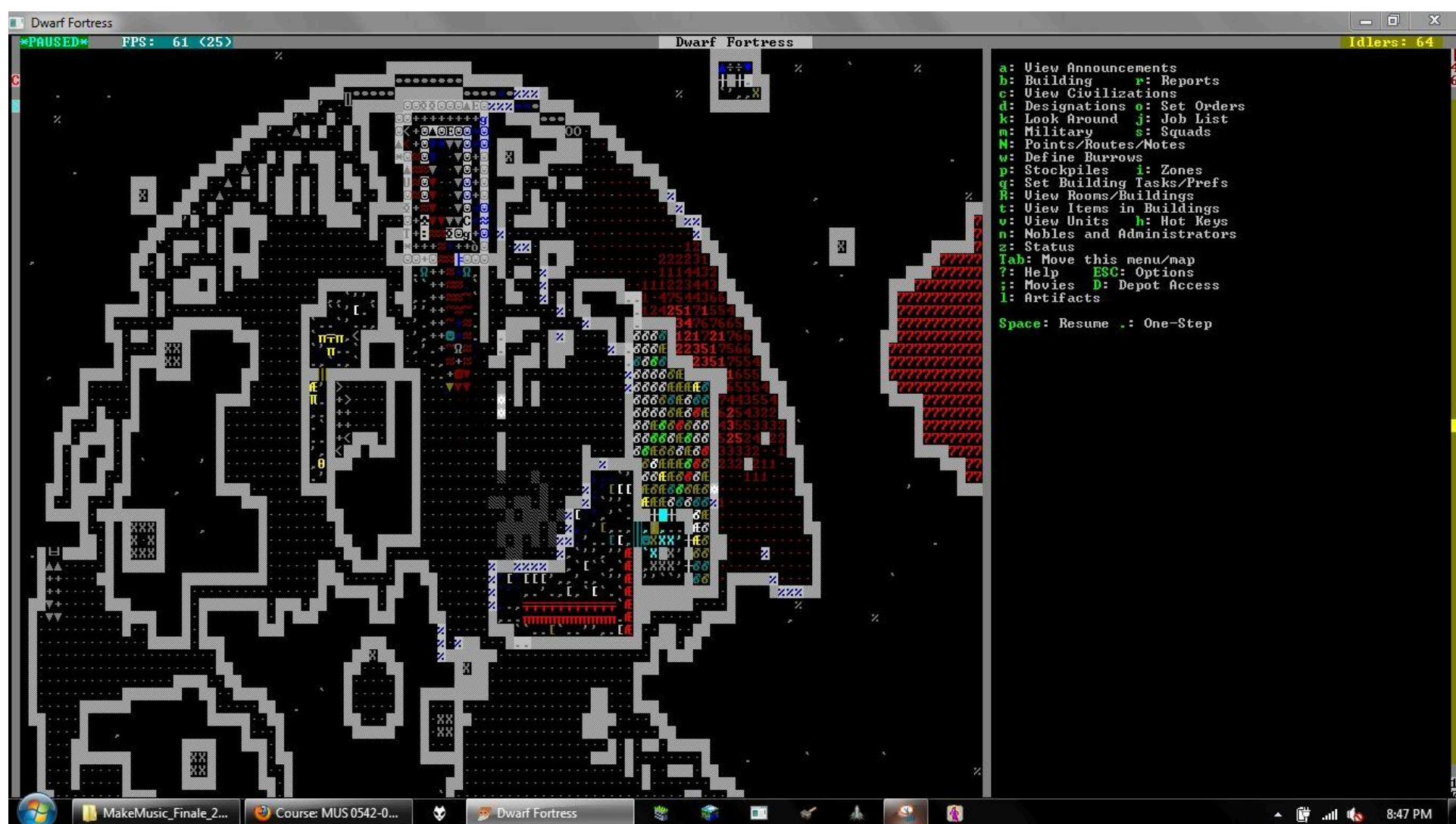


The highlight of the dining hall is Stukosâtrid, an adamantine statue.



As I have been 'recruiting' every group of merchants that arrives at the fortress, my current population is 158. It feels a little like cheating, but oh well.

My setup (detailed in the previous post), didn't go at all as planned. The cages melted before the prisoners could bleed to death, and a small horde of partially melted, occasionally on fire trolls and goblins burst forth into the heart of the fortress. The invaders left broad trails of blood and grease behind them as they poured into Murdershot citadel, and the red guildhall.



Oddly enough, all the goblins ran north, into the citadel. The prince himself, armed with a masterwork adamantine battle axe he had named the Kingdoms of Satin (go figure), and clad in the artifact adamantine breastplate Healrelieved the Flag of Zeal, stood alone in defense against the foul creatures. He slew three, his first kills since he began training.



The other goblins were slain by the legendary warrior Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes, who has sixty-three notable kills, and wields The Orb of Fires, a masterwork adamantine spear. The carnage reached nearly all the way to the Murdershot memorial chamber, where there is basically a constant party (1 z-level above this screencap).



The real danger came in the form of several trolls (one of which was fully on fire) who stormed the red guildhall.



While the prince was busy defending the citadel, the rest of the military was scrambling to make their way to this guildhall. Nobody was there to defend it... nobody, except Cog "Gloveowners" Hammerfuture, furnace operator.



Cog fought off two trolls simultaneously, while the other fiends went through the building, smashing nest boxes and statues. By the time the military arrived, the furnace operator had suffered no more than a few bruises.

An especially exciting part of the whole affair was when Onol Inkswallowed the Worried Feral Berry of Rasps rushed out of the guildhall and onto the causeway to fight a troll. The two duelled along the edge of the avenue, just adjacent to a drop into the magma.



In the end, there were no casualties, except a few toppled buildings and a peacock that got set on fire. There is, however, a curious matter of a stack of 33 molten copper lying where the cages were, previously...

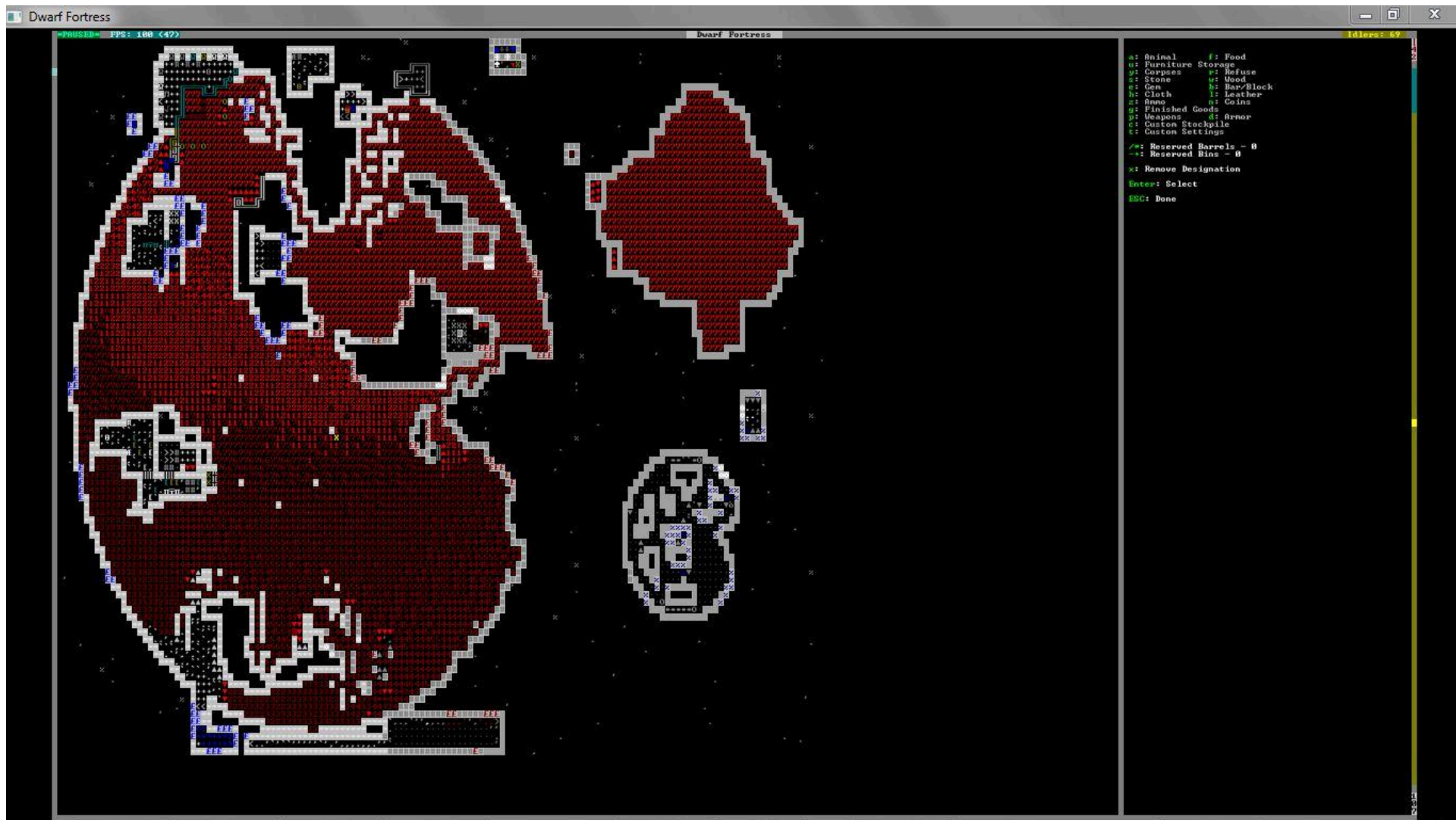


And, as always, the dome continues to fill.

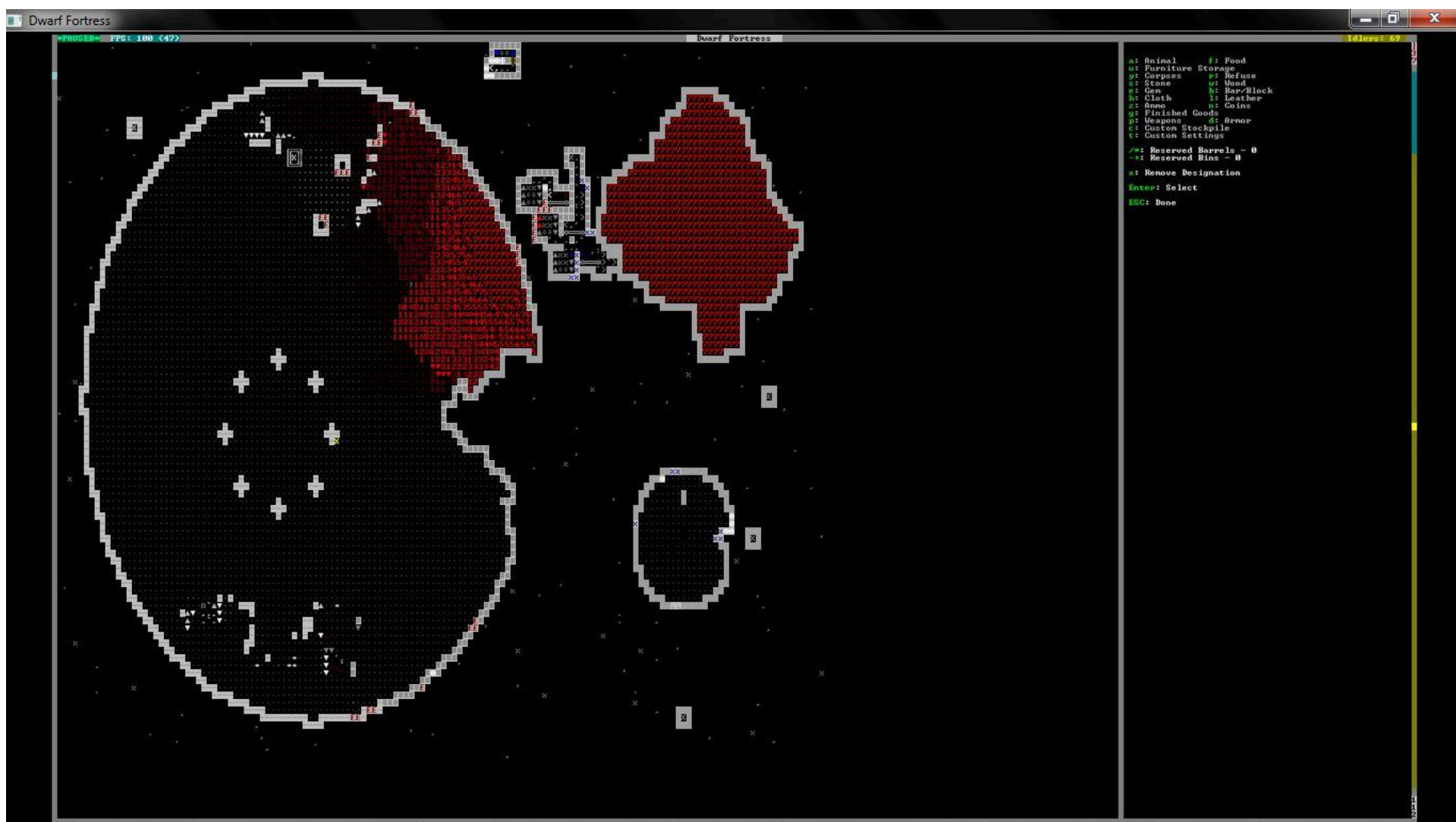


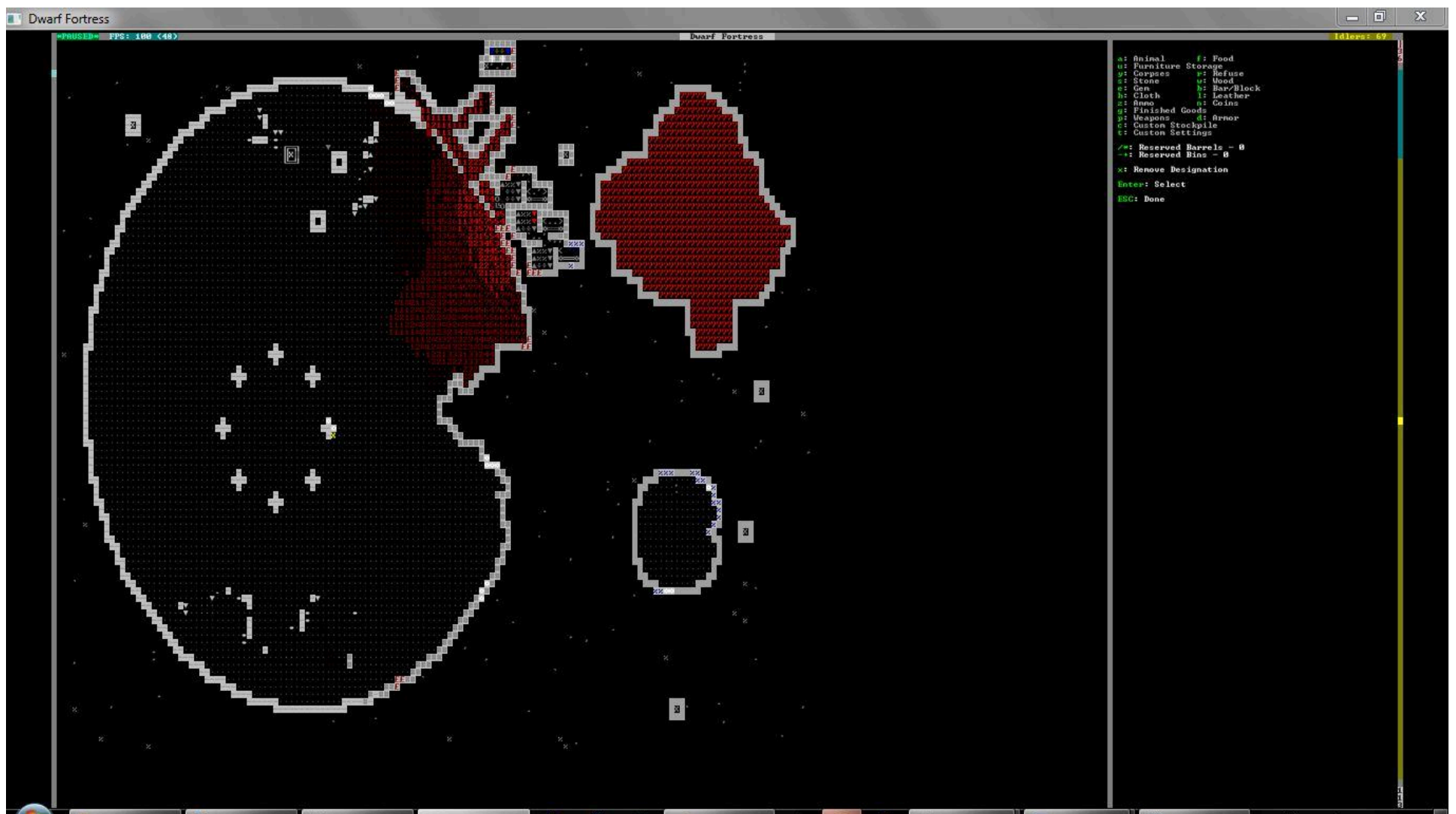
Uh oh. I'd forgotten about that. I hope poor Cog doesn't get *too* upset.

I let the game run all day while I was at school to see what would happen, and here it is:









These are seven consecutive z-levels showing the patterns of flooding once the magma finally reaches the tops of the buildings. I'd bet that the entire dome will be finished flooding sometime this evening. The sheer volume of molten rock involved in this process is truly staggering.

The dome *would* have been filled with magma by now, but the volcano has been drained down to the level of the pumps. There are currently 2-3 levels left below the 'high magma mark,' so to speak.

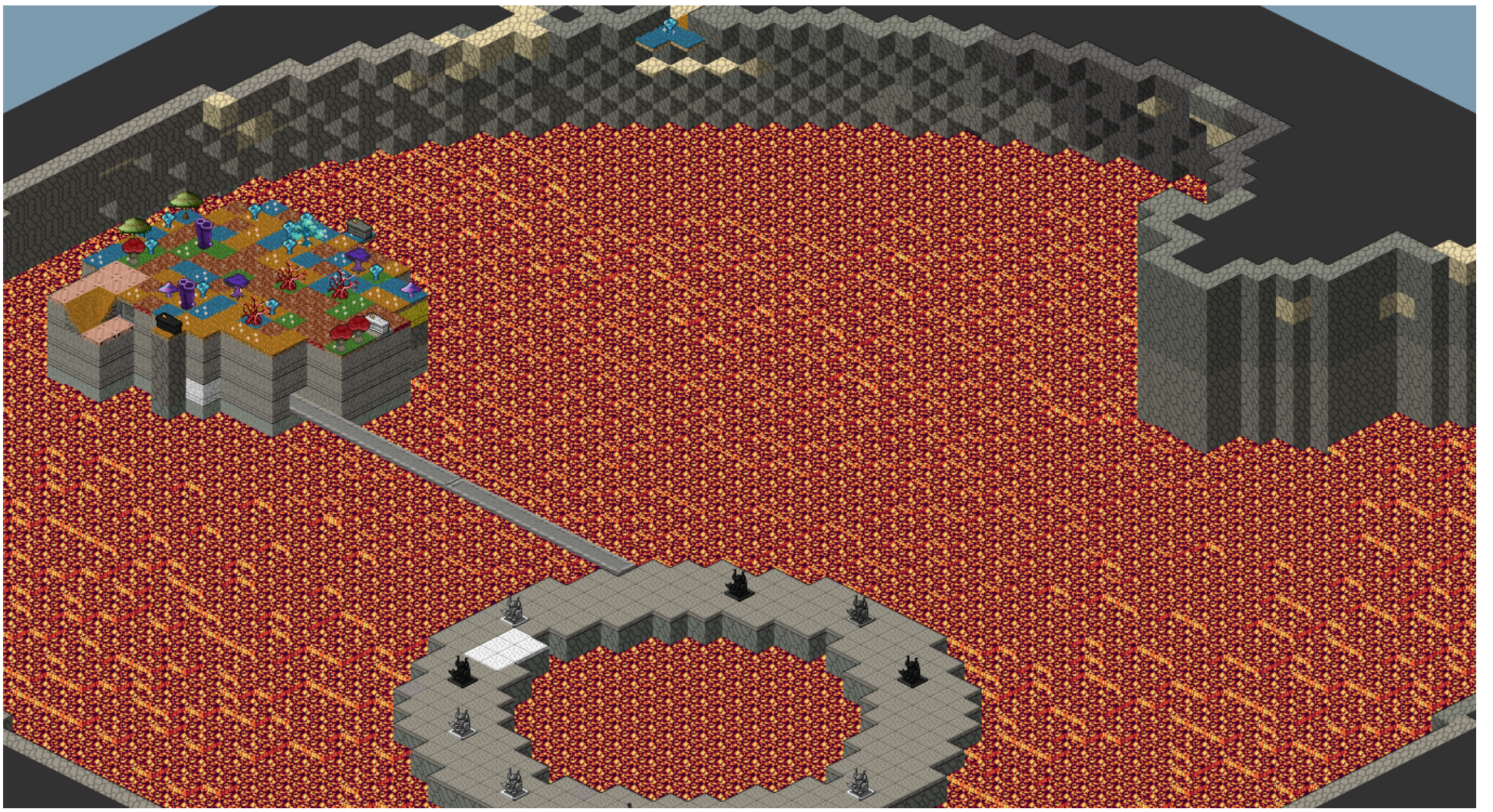
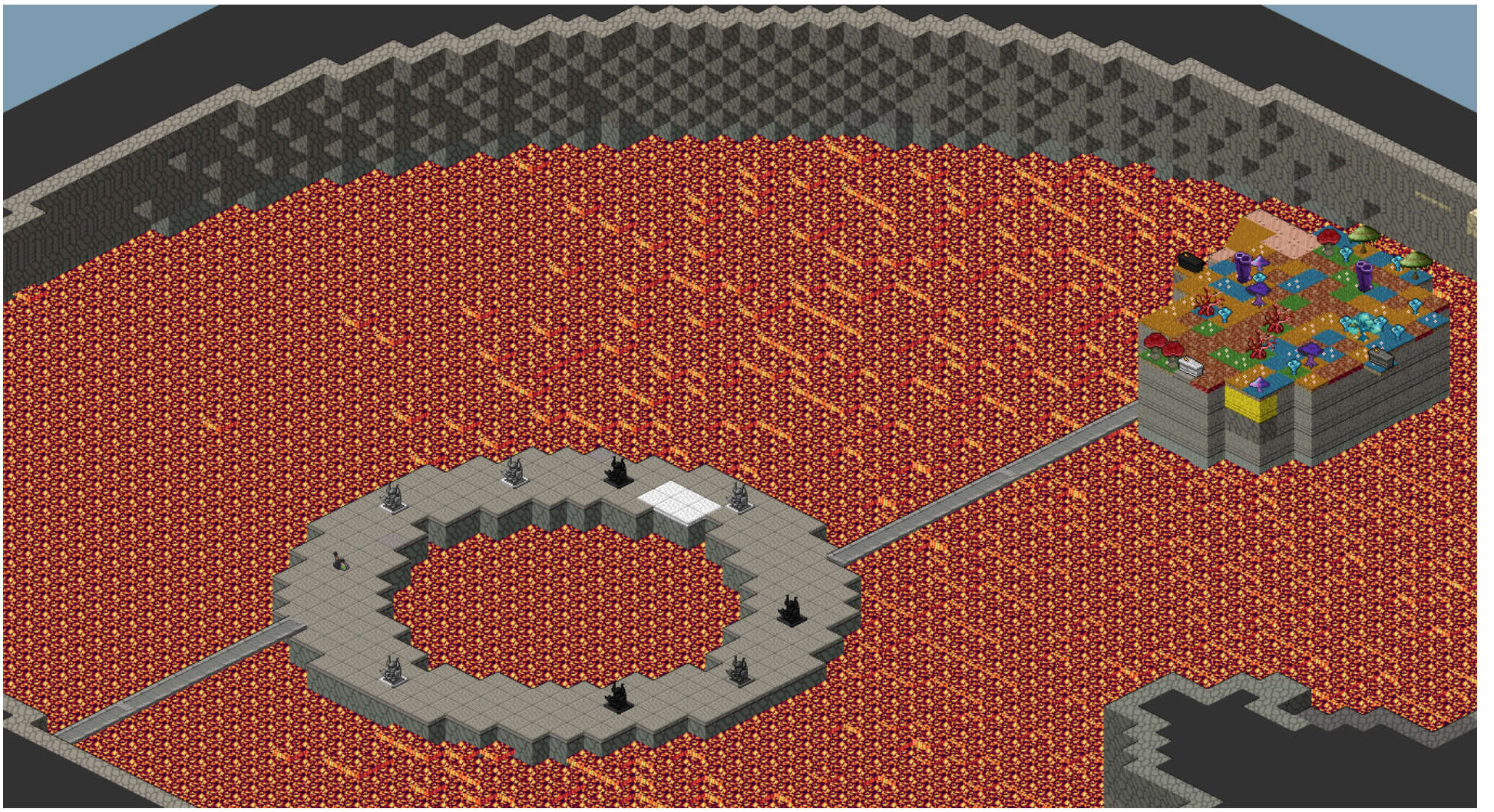
Taking advantage of the absence of molten rock in the upper fortress, I've been carving out what will soon be the *only* entrance to the fortress. When the volcano is filled to the normal level, it will be submerged beneath magma - however, when the top few levels of the volcano are drained off (via a brand new Fuck-the-World device, a la Boatmurdered), it will be accessible for as long as the magma remains low enough.

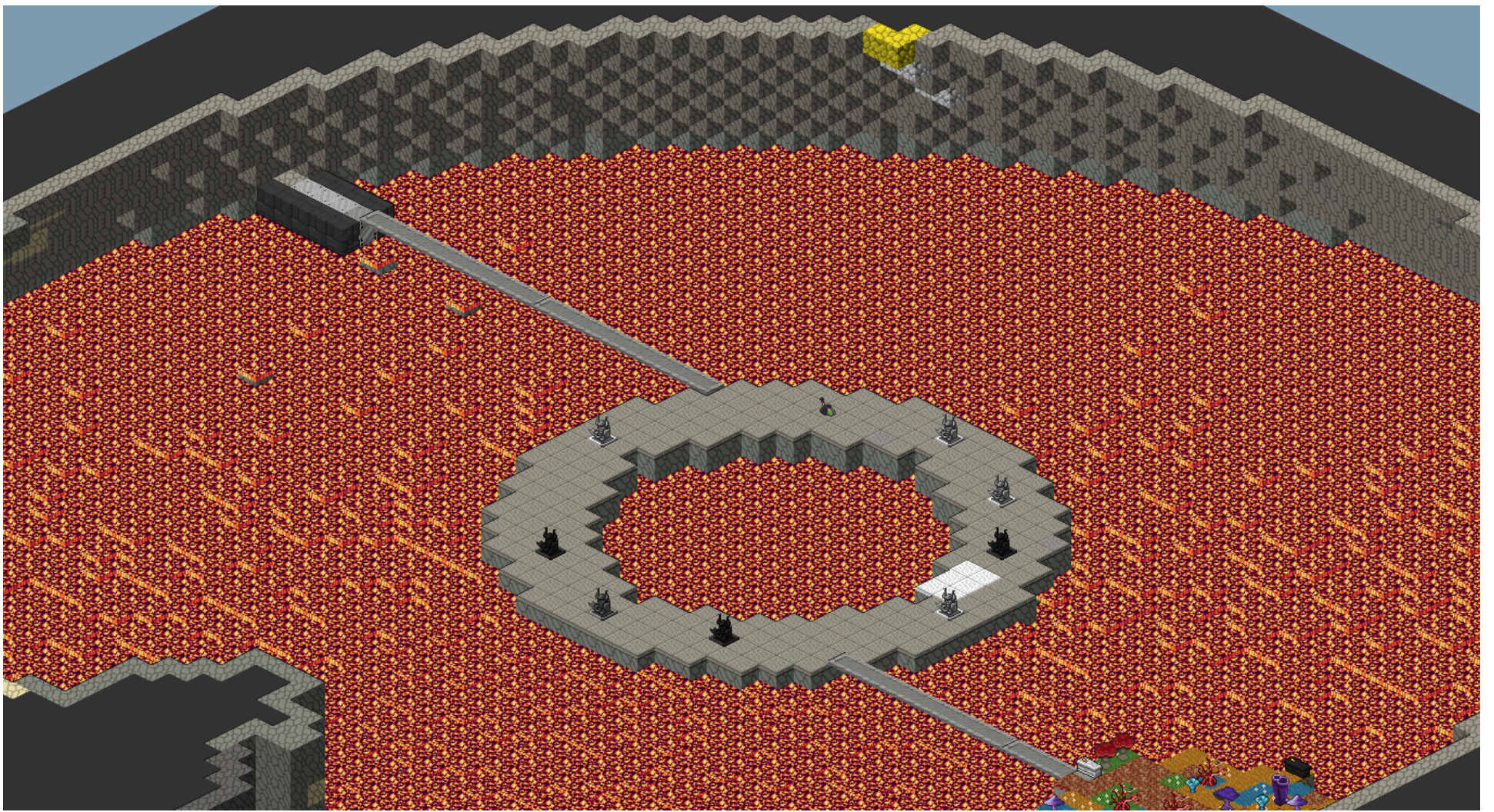
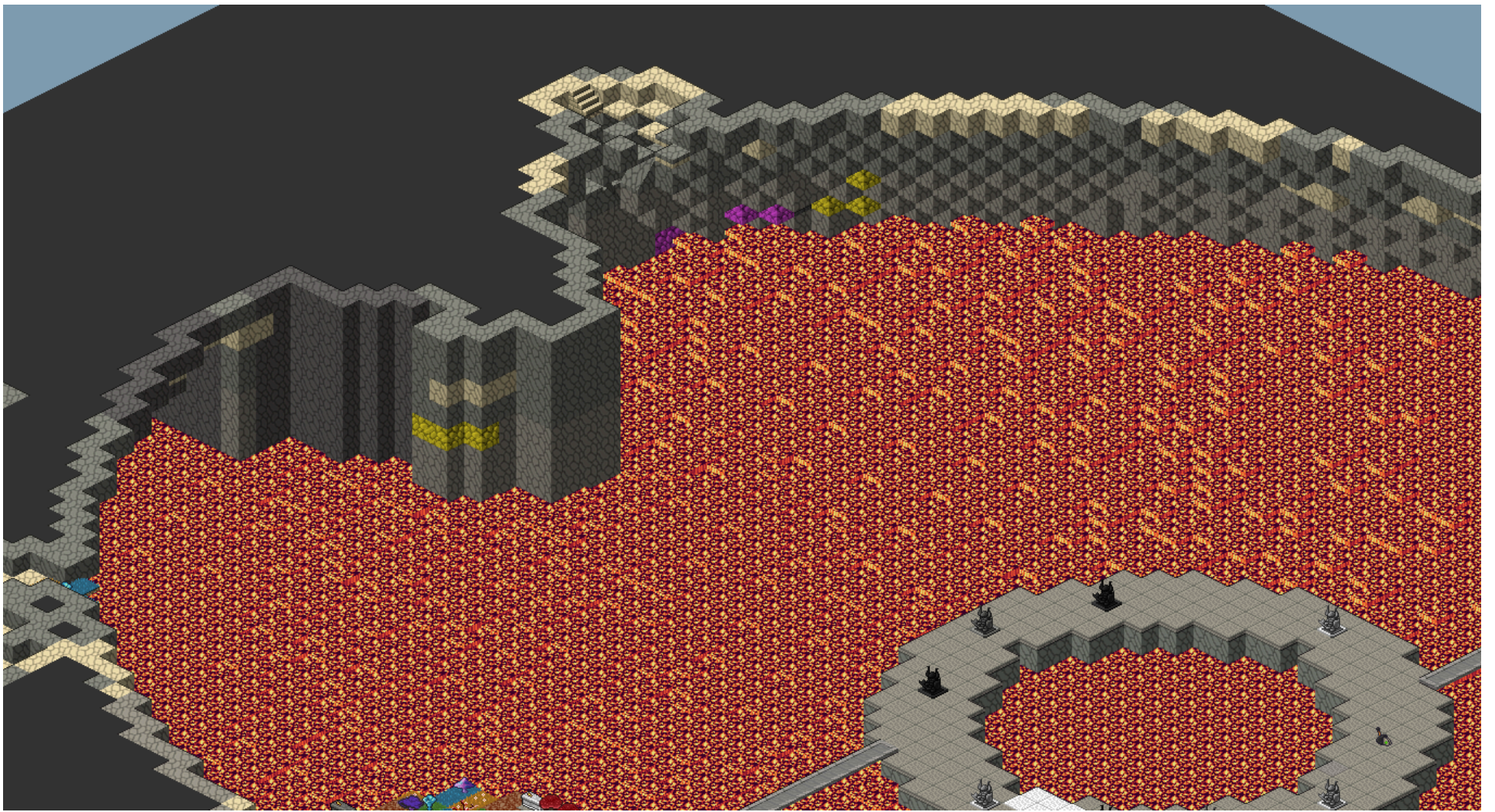
The dome is almost filled!

I've increased the size of the area viewable in Stonesense to 100x100, but it still isn't enough to get the whole dome in a single shot. Unless there is some way to zoom in and out (I haven't seen anything to suggest there is), and so long as the entire map screenshot function is broken, I'll have to settle for taking multiple individual screenshots in Stonesense.

In this case, I've taken four shots in Stonesense from different angles of the artificial magma sea. Visible as well is the temple, the top of the citadel, and the bridges connecting them to the only current exit from the fortress. None of the shots fully capture the entire dome, but together they give a pretty solid idea.

The first picture is oriented to the northwest, and the point of view rotates 90 degrees clockwise afterwards.





In my haste to finish the filling of the dome I did not account for one thing:

Magma pressurization.



On the upper right, there, is the prince's quarters. His bedroom is built over a channeled out vein of hematite, covered over with steel grates. When the dome was filled to the level of the pumps, the pressurized magma spewed up through the grates with such force that it struck the ceiling. The room flooded within seconds. Luckily, Prince Asmel had just left the room to fill his waterskin...



...but now the magma is flowing down the adjoining corridor and into the rest of the citadel.

The city was designed to be magma-proof, but the red guildhall is now much, much hotter than it was ever meant to be. Molten rock flows up ramps and into the stairwell...



...and drops down to begin filling the farms.



Nish Degzasit rushes down the long, long corridor to the map room, where he will pull the lever that ceases the pumps.

How many dwarves will die in the heat before he gets there?

[This](#) is the face of pressurized magma.

Unfortunately, there's a bug. The game crashes every time the magma gets pressurized and surges into the inside of the buildings (I've tried it 3 times). I got a dwarf to the lever in time to stop the pumping before the last layer filled up, and so far, no crash. Disappointing.

19th Obsidian, 196, Late Winter - A goblin siege came quick and thick enough to bust through the weapon and cage traps. Onol Closechannels, the last remnant of the once-great clan Laborlured, was slain by a goblin swordsman before the military could make it to the defense. Onol was the last of seven children to perish in Weatherwires.

16th Timber, 197, Late Autumn - In my attempts to develop a set of statues representing the full dwarven pantheon, I've been enabling certain crafting skills on dwarves that worship gods of whom I do not yet have statues. A brief summary of the pantheon of the Merchant of Echoing is given here, in the format of "name-representation-portfolio."

Onol - yak cow - mountains.

Ral Coppercanyon - female dwarf - metals.

Ilon Crushseizes - male dwarf - war, fortresses.

Risen Boulderrock - male dwarf - minerals.

Idrath Silverrocks - male dwarf - trade, wealth, jewels.

Thir - female dwarf - balance.

Amug the Rumored Owl - male dwarf - lies.

Baros Buriedplagues - male dwarf - rebirth, death, murder, day, light.

Iltang - female dwarf - misery, torture.

Thoth the Labyrinth of Whispers - male dwarf - night, dreams.

Thiken the Vigor of Lessons - female dwarf - speech, persuasion, poetry, writing.

Medtob the Virtue of Shell - female dwarf - charity, sacrifice, generosity.

Statues of all except Ral, Thir, Baros, and Iltang have been produced by masons, blacksmiths, potters, or glassmakers in the past. Newcomers have been found who worship Ral and Thir, but apparently there are none who follow either Baros Buriedplagues or Iltang in any measure.

The order of the list above is the same as they appear in legends mode, though it seems to have no effect on the personal faiths of particular dwarves. Ilon Crushseizes is the most popular god in the fort, so he seems to be a sort of patron deity. On the other hand, Iltang and Baros Buriedplagues (who has what I consider to be an extremely interesting portfolio) lack any followers, so far as I can find.

I figure Onol is either a chief deity, some kind of progenitor elder god. All statues of Onol include dwarves prostrating themselves before her, as opposed to the various statues of Ilon where he's making faces. It could be skewed, too, by the fact that my head mason and blacksmith both worship him, so naturally I have many statues of him, and few of Onol. It would be ridiculously painstaking to go through and count the number of worshippers for each... if only there was a utility for that.

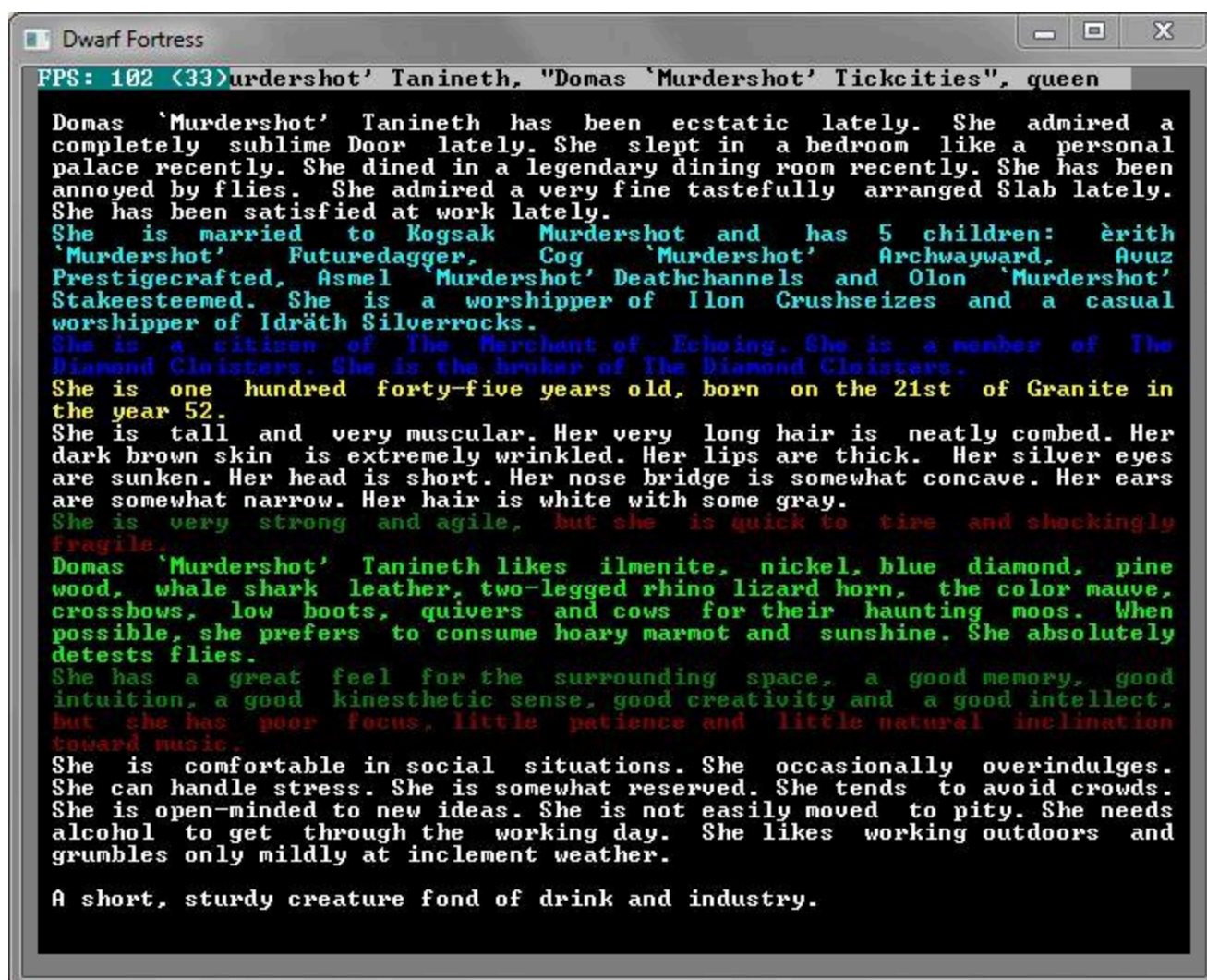
A goblin siege has just arrived. Coincidentally, the magma has just reached the top of the caldera, and the sealed passage isn't working properly, so I'm going to have to drain off the top few levels so construction can be done.

I should note that the magma will drain off onto the plain outside the fort, which the goblins must cross in order to reach the bridge.



The goblins siege was broken easily by the traps, so it looks like the drainage won't do much except clean up the exterior of the map for me.

Thought I'd take this chance to give some background on one of the fort's most important dwarves: the queen, Domas Tickcities.



Domas Tickcities is one of the most long-lived dwarves in the fortress, and currently the reigning monarch of the last remnant of the Merchant of Echoing. In the early spring of 126, Domas and six other dwarves (founding a group known as the Diamond Cloisters) embarked upon the volcano known as the Fire of Channels. They struck the earth and founded *Nugrethshorast*, Weatherwires in the dwarven tongue. Among the seven were also Kogsak Murdershot (carpenter/woodcutter) and Logem Buriedboard (cook/brewer, currently the only other surviving member of the founding seven). Domas

herself was the mason of the group, as well as possessing a skill at appraisal. That very spring, she and Kogsak became romantically involved.

In the summer of the first year the first group of dwarves immigrated to the fortress. Among them was Udil Bandwires, a dwarf with some skill with a battleaxe, and Tun Towerhollow, of no real repute. Due to poor living conditions in the winter of 127 (and the death of a pet, if I remember correctly - this happened sometime early this past summer, 2011, so it's been a while), Udil threw a tantrum and slew Tun with her copper battle axe. To prevent further deaths, Domas Tickcities was appointed to the position of sheriff. In a brutal beating, she slew Udil with only her fists. Shortly thereafter, she was removed from the position. To this date, this has been Domas' only kill.

Domas and Kogsak married in the autumn of 131. In the early winter of 132, Kogsak became the baron of the Diamond Cloisters. Due to the lack of any other royalty in the Merchant of Echoing, this made Kogsak the *only* ruler of dwarves. In 133 he rose to the rank of count, and in 134 the rank of duke. Domas bore him 5 children:

Èrith Futuredagger, eldest daughter, b. 132 d. 150
Cog Archwayward, second eldest daughter, b. 133
Avus Prestigecraft, youngest daughter, b. 134 d. 136
Asmel Deathchannels, eldest son, b. 135
Olon Stakeesteemed, youngest son, b. 136 d. 151

In early 135, the massive dome project was designated - layer by layer, the outline of the dome was calculated and drawn. Due to a despondency amongst the citizens of Weatherwires, massive parties were thrown, and idleness became the norm. Friendships formed, and lovers multiplied. It was during this year that the old dining hall was graven with images by the master engravers. Various masterwork crafts and equipment were made by the dwarves. Unknown to the dwarves, this year would be the last of an era for the Merchant of Echoing.

In the late autumn of 135, the goblin civilization known as the Scorpion of Recreations attacked the Diamond Cloisters at Weatherwires. The goblin Stozu Nobleticks led the attack. Though the siege was broken quickly, seven dwarves who were outside the fortress perished in the attack. Later that season, the dwarf Stukos Girderopen was struck down by the dwarf Udil Rimlulls the Purged Contingency with Fallengrasp the Poetic Illnesses. This was the only dwarven kill made with the Purged Consistency (a silver warhammer), but it marked the beginning of a legendary tantrum spiral which resulted in the death of the majority of the population at that time.

Due to the death of many of his friends, in the midwinter of 135, Kogsak Murdershot went insane. He refused drink, and died of thirst later that winter.

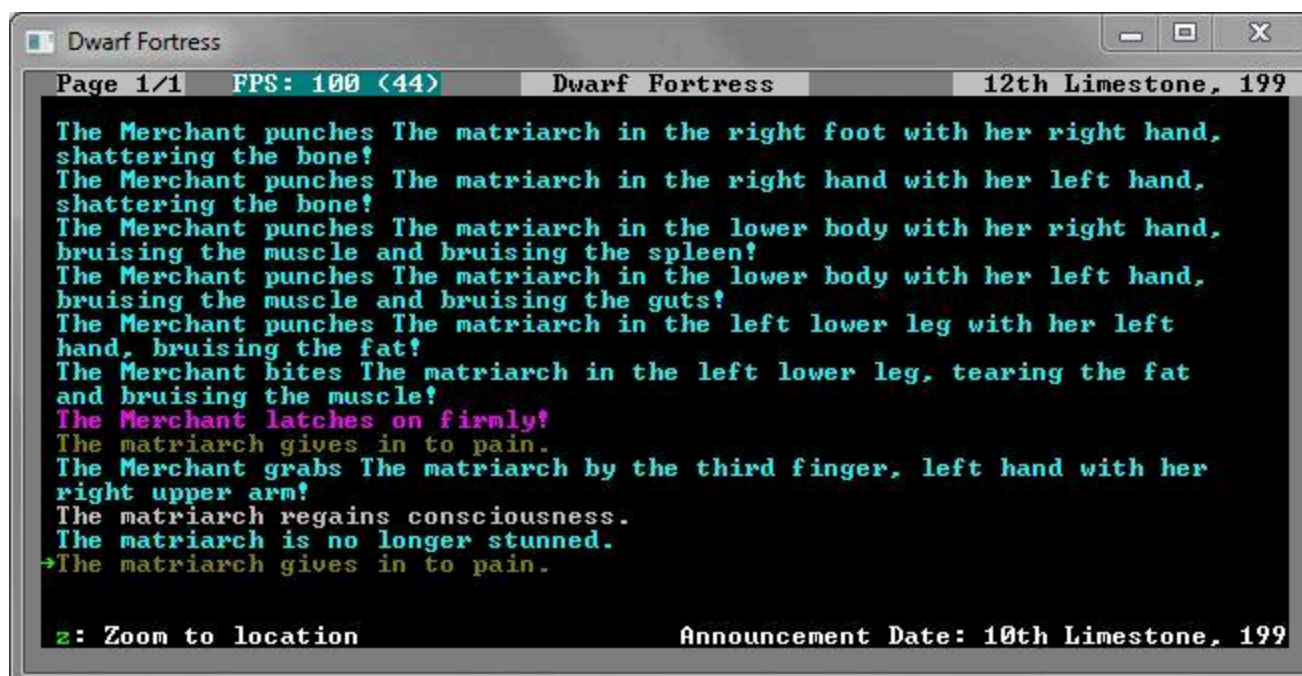
Domas Tickcities endured the tantrum spiral, and has survived so far, being the last remnant of the dwarven monarchy.

6th Moonstone, 198, Early Winter - The draining off of the top levels of magma, despite resulting in a scorched wasteland outside the fort, has not yet revealed the would-be primary entrance to the dome - the volcano refills only slightly slower than the magma is draining. Expansion of the drainage tube should solve the issue.

I keep underestimating the rate at which the volcano refills. The method of drainage will have to allow for a really massive amount of magma to flow out of the caldera at once, otherwise it will take years for the seal to be broken.

Vucar Nokzamkikrost, Miner has died after colliding with an obstacle.

And then, his corpse and pick melted into the sea of magma that currently covers the floor of the second cavern layer. One would think that I had learned how to properly designate the digging of channels over empty space. Apparently not.



The merchant who was tasked with making a statue of Ral Coppercanyon produced over 60 silver statues, none of which were of her only worshiped deity, and about a third of which were of oysters. It turns out that the merchant absolutely hates oysters, so I suppose that's the reason why, but now I've got about 20 silver statues of oysters. I had the remaining statues melted back down into silver, with the idea that I might have an 'oyster room' at some point.

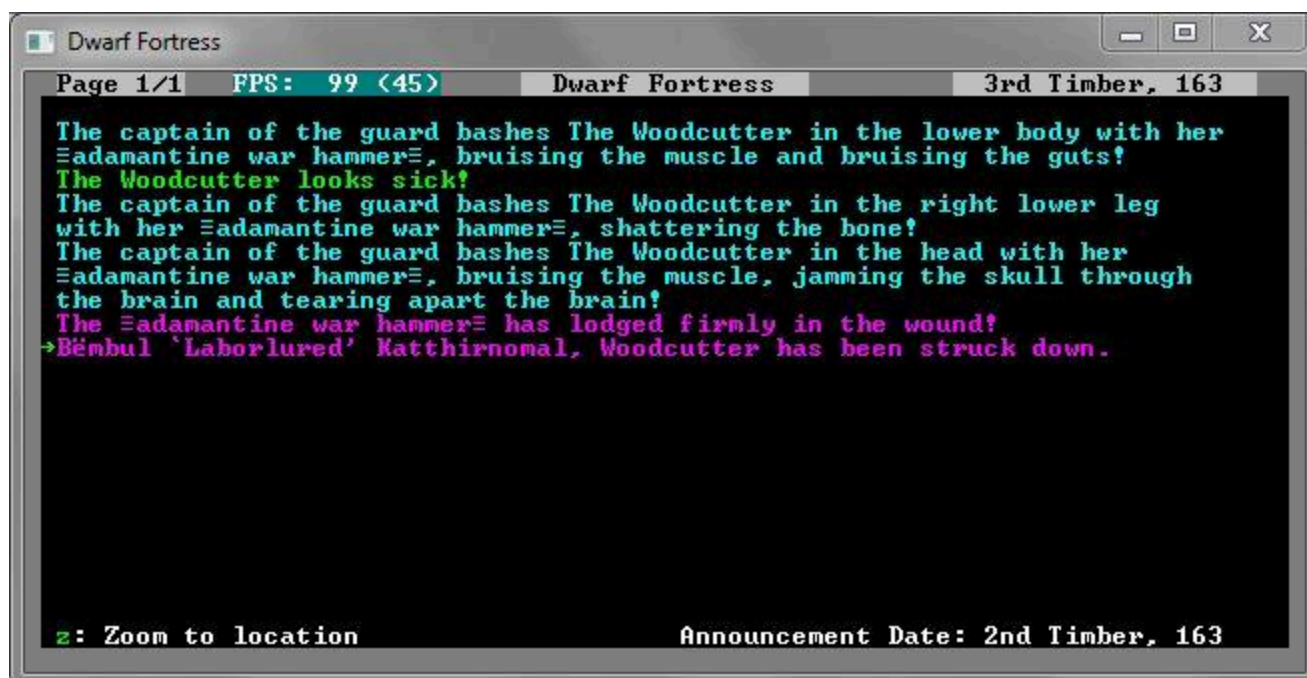
Now the merchant is furious, and throwing tantrums. In the pic above, the merchant was wailing on Ineth Lensbeaks, matriarch of the Thunderbridge clan. She once had seven children, and has been the mayor of the fortress for much of its history, as she is now. The merchant currently has been having the 'Attend Meeting' job, but then throws a tantrum and beats the mayor. Now they are in the hospital, and it is only a matter of time before she flies of the handle again.

I've installed a series of one-tile drains, sealed with nether-cap floor hatches, which connect the magma tube with the second cavern layer, which I might as well start calling the sewer of Weatherwires. All drains lead to the second cavern layer, both water and magma, so the entire cavern is littered with obsidian walls. The bottom z-level of the cavern is a layer of obsidian, which is under a layer of water, which is under a layer of obsidian, which is (currently) under a lake of magma about five or six z-levels deep, and quickly filling as the drains do their work. Near where the water lake was drained from the dome, the walls are encrusted with blocks of obsidian which formed during the second filling, when magma and water flowed through that drain simultaneously. The entire area is just a disaster zone, really.



Now that the top of the caldera is drained, I can fix the entry-way so that it works properly. Also, adding more one-tile drains will make the draining process quite quick indeed.

As well, I have been adding many ropes and chains around the fortress in preparation of the appointment of a dwarf to the captain of the guard. The recent beating of Ineth Lensbeaks was more serious than I thought, as Ineth was also the manager of the fort. Production ground to a halt before I could figure out what was going on (she's been the manager for many decades now). Justice must be served (the merchant deserves a solid beating), but about half of the fort is guilty of some crime or another that has gone unpunished since the last time I had a captain of the guard, when this happened:



So, I plan to lock down the entire fort so I have as many idlers as possible. Once dwarves begin to be chained up, I need to have as many others as possible able to provide food and water to those imprisoned. It will be a dark and dangerous time for Weatherwires, when a reckoning-long awaited finally arrives.

It's mid-winter in the year 200, and as the second century draws to a close, the dwarves of Weatherwires might be reflecting upon what has been accomplished in the past seven and a half decades. An excavation project unlike any other has been successfully planned and executed, amidst

tragic and terrible setbacks. Nearly every threat that happens upon the fortress is destroyed, including two titans, a hydra, a dragon, a minotaur, and countless forgotten beasts.

Work will continue through the turn of the year - too much still has to be done for any celebration to be allowed just yet. When, in 226, the fort reaches its hundredth year, there will be plenty of time to party.



Avuz Siguneral, Woodcrafter has died of old age.

Avuz Tourvessels was born in 50. In the midsummer of 133, seven years after the fort was founded, she settled in Weatherwires.

In the midsummer of 136, in the midst of the Great Tantrum Spiral, the mayor, Rigoth Hazecraft, went berserk with rage. Avuz slew her with only her fists.

In 146, Avuz created The Fair Dagger, a spore tree cup. Thereafter, she produced countless masterwork wooden bolts for the marksdwarves' practice.

Now, after nearly seven decades in Weatherwires, she has died at the age of 150. She may have been the oldest of her kind, born scant decades after the crushing defeats at Whiskergloves. Her death marks the beginning of the end for the dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing.

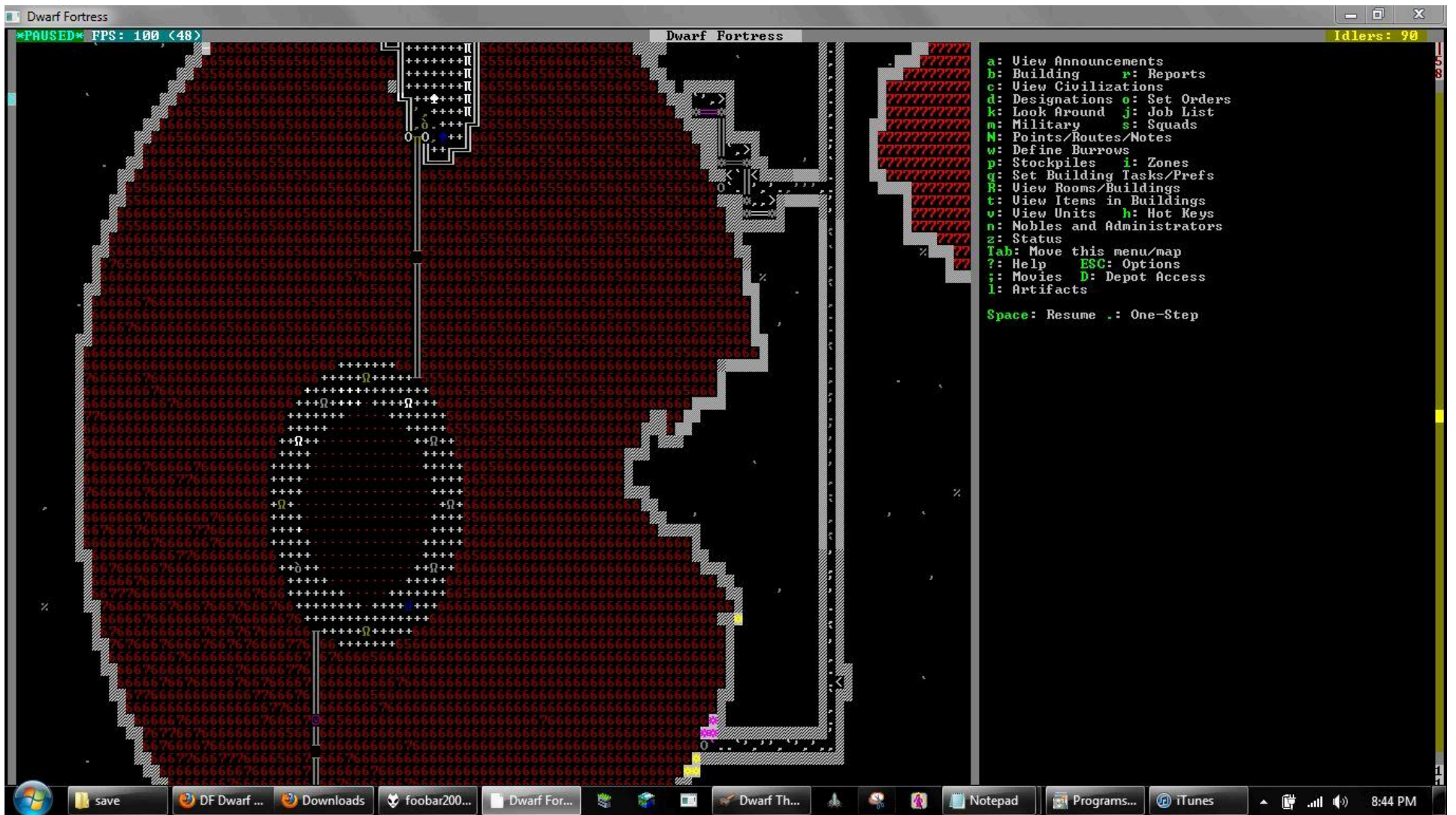
The traps on the surface have been deconstructed, and their components transferred into the stockpiles beneath the dome. A few of the green glass axe blades had dozens of kills, with one getting nearly one hundred. The dwarves have retreated through the sealed passage, their paths covered by the rising tides of magma that flood what is now the only way in and out of the dome. The dwarves of Weatherwires, are now alone in their plight, sealed off from the world outside, forever.

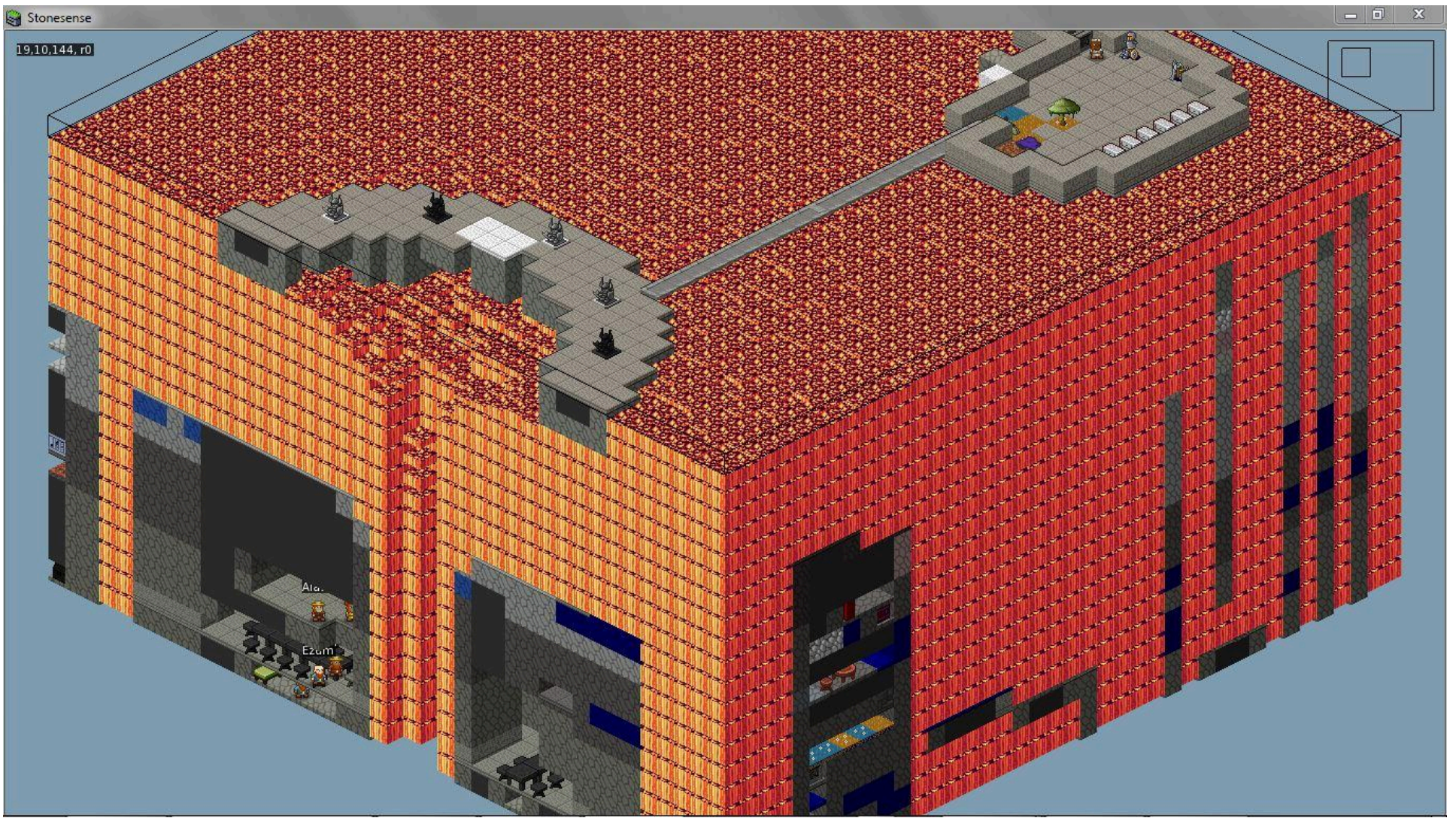
The dome was meant to be a utopia - a spectacular city of hewn stone amidst an ocean of magma, where dwarves would not fear death at the hands of goblins, or titans, or nameless evils beneath the earth. Now, their utopia has become their grave, the final resting place of an entire civilization. From this point forth, if any visitors should happen upon Weatherwires, all they will find is an abandoned fortress built into the caldera of a volcano, littered with priceless gems and finished goods that were left behind by a race that disappeared overnight.

Now, the final stage of the fort can occur: the draining. The first point of drainage is the hole atop the central mesa. When drained to that level, the tops of all the buildings will become accessible. Since

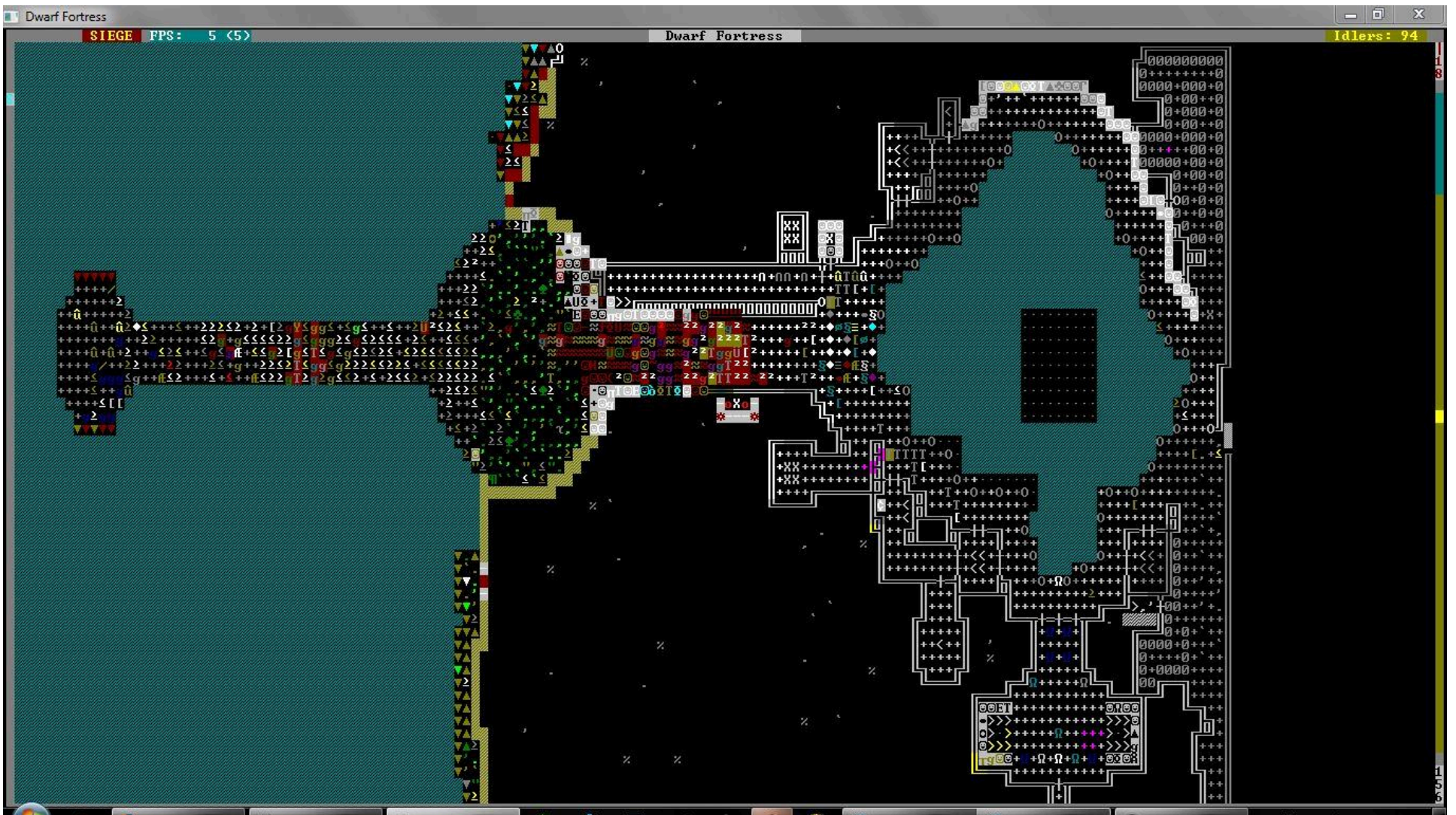
they have been previously flooded with water, they were muddied, and grew swaths of fungus. As I've discovered, when magma is applied to muddied stone that has been allowed to grow fungus (not constructions, as I have discovered), it burns away the fungus and leaves behind a tile of soil - in my case, either silt or red sand. Thus, the tops of these buildings, once the magma recedes below them, will first be covered with a layer of ash, which will deteriorate into sand or silt, and then begin to grow fresh fungus. This is extremely desirable from my point of view, as aesthetics are an important part of this fortress, and muddied tiles are perpetually brown - not the teal or yellow of cavern fungi.

Here are a few screenshots of the draining:

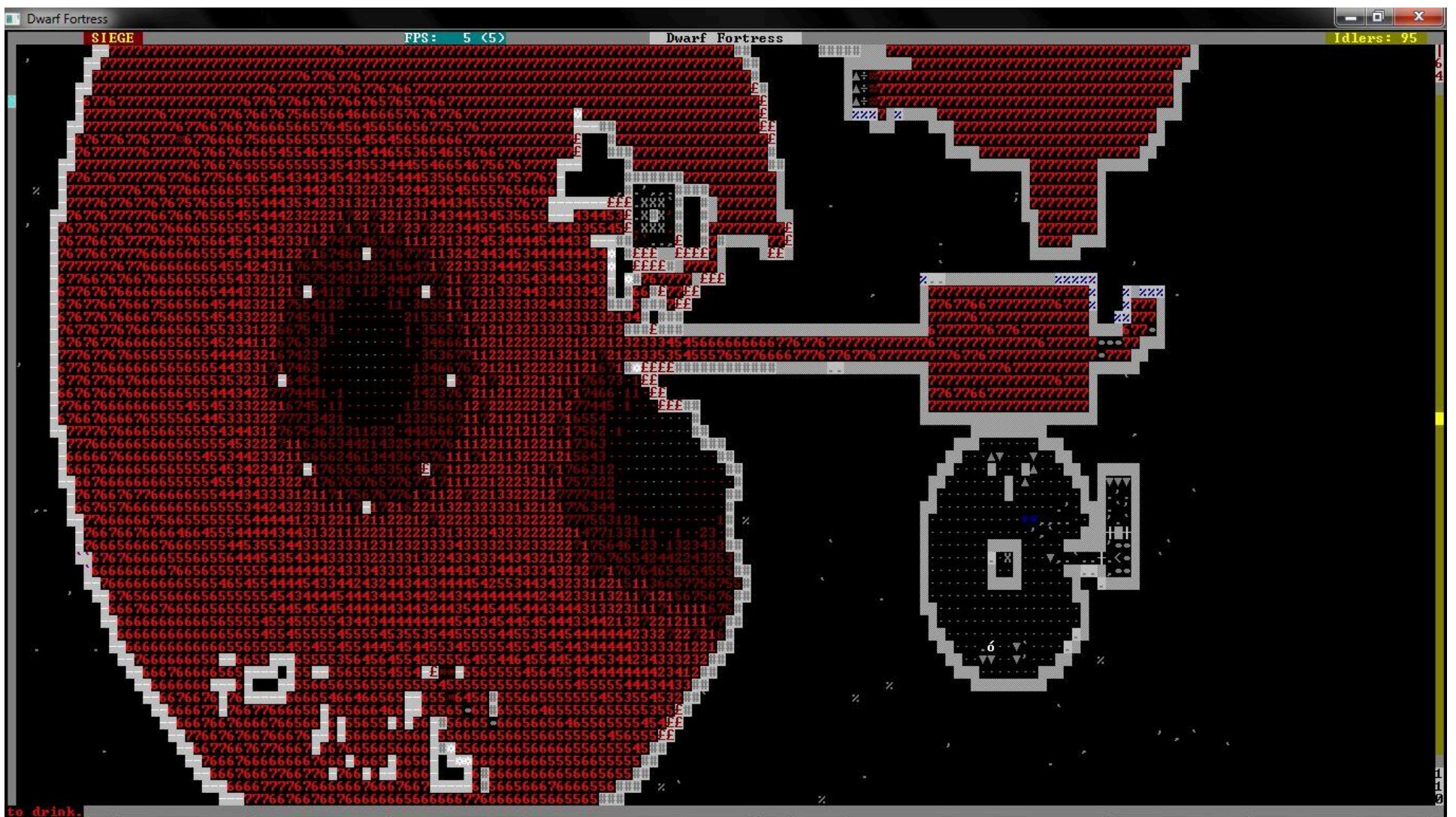




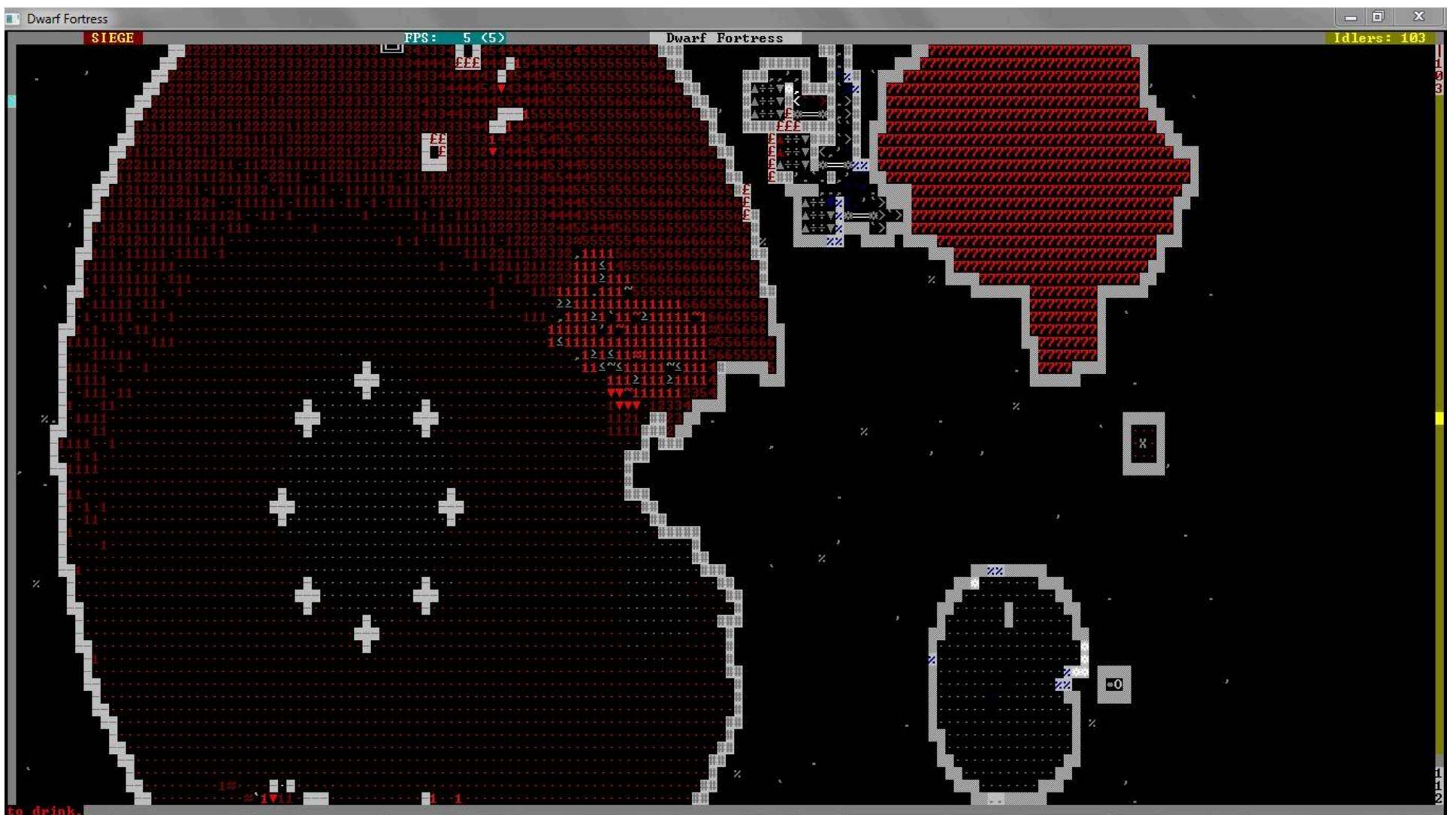
A goblin siege arrived. They stormed the bridge, expecting the same row of traps... only to find an empty swath of obsidian blocks, stained with the blood of the countless sieges before them. Now, the foul invaders stalk the corridors of the fortress they were never able to breach, their enslaved trolls idly smashing in doors as they walk by.



Meanwhile, deep beneath the surface, the magma continues to drain.



As the molten rock recedes, the top of the Gearguild and Gloveowners guildhall reveals itself, its top a plain of scorched ashes, silt, and sand.

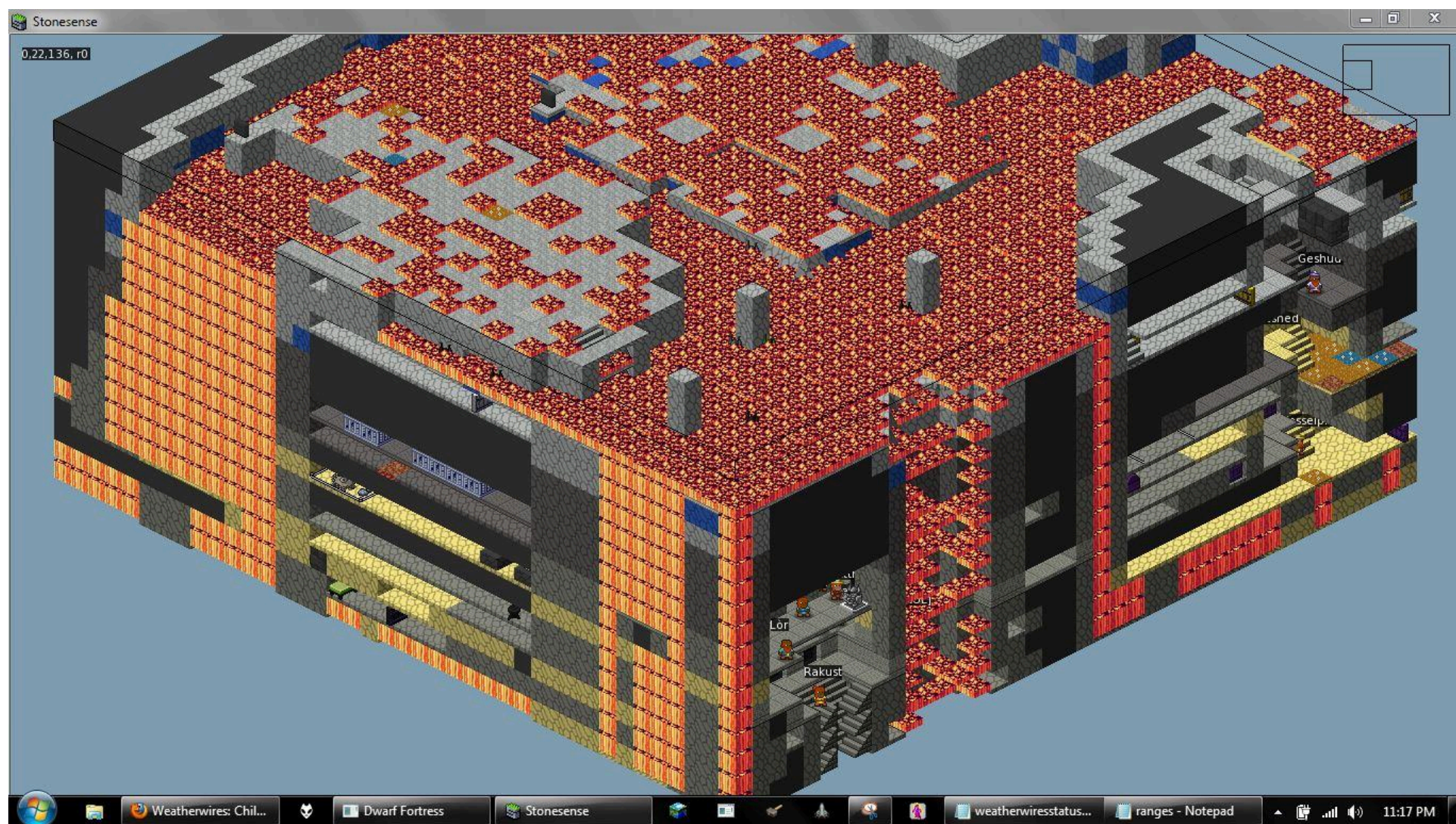


So, the trolls are wreaking havoc as they run rampant through the upper fortress. They've already destroyed the entrance to the sealed passage in their rage, and now they're smashing all the coffins, strewing about the corpses of hundreds of dwarves. It's only a matter of time before they make their way to the windmill farm atop the mountain... with that destroyed, there will be no way to power the magma pumps, if I should want to fill the dome at any point in the future.



Asob Medtobedtûl, Ghostly Miner has risen and is haunting the fortress!

And the Trolls have, so far, only crushed approximately one eighth of the coffins. This may become an issue - certain ghosts have not been showing up in the memorial engraving menu. Meanwhile, draining continues...



The trolls have slowed their destruction. In the absence of any resistance, they seem content to take their time. So far, seven ghosts have risen, and five have been put down. The two who remain do not appear on the memorial engraving menu, but luckily, relatively harmless - one is a restless haunt, and the other is a secretive poltergeist. One of the others that returned from the grave was of the murderous variety. If that one had not appeared on the menu, it would have spelled a slow, inevitable death for the entire fort.



Litast Lanlariden Assarmerig Lelum, Swordmaster has died of old age.

Litast Birdspaddled, who would later become known by her earned title, the Circumstantial Clarity of Waning, settled in Weatherwires in 129. As captain of the Silvery Princesses (the fortress' swordsdwarf squad), she was the most skilled with a sword - however, for some reason, she never wielded one into combat after a certain point in her career, preferring instead to bash her enemies senseless with her shield, while her squadmates made for the kill.

Now she has died, at the age of 157, undoubtedly one of the oldest dwarves still remaining.

However, her body was not immediately interred. I quickly discovered the problem - the various unused coffins in the dome had been 'claimed' by the exhumed dead still on the surface. Rather than build rows and rows of empty coffins, it has been decided that all dwarves, upon death, shall be cast into the heart of the earth from whence they came, to be one with the molten rock, and have a slab engraved in their memory.

There's still plenty of military left, and every one of them is Legendary in practically every combat skill (except for weapon skills, most are only Legendary in one). As it stands, something will have to be done about the trolls, in any case, since they're just milling about the up/down staircase leading through the sepulchers, and not actually doing anything. It'll give me a chance to repair and "troll-proof" the sealed passage, too.

The magma has drained low enough now for all of the exterior walkways are completely accessible. The fortress now appears to be a series of free-standing structures with canals of molten rock running between. Pretty cool, so I think I'll wait a while before continuing the next stage of drainage.

One of the several side passages that lead from the surface to the dome, previously walled up, was opened, and two dwarves rushed through the claustrophobic, labyrinthine mines to meet the trolls in combat. Two dwarves... Vabök Earthenfins the Tight Mechanisms of Whirling, and Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes. Both are the last survivors of a brutal experiment which took place during the early years of Weatherwires. A group of fresh immigrants in 148 were enlisted into the military, and - to their dismay, I'm sure - equipped with large iron daggers which had been scrounged from goblin thieves. During 149, Libash distinguished herself as a troll-killer, using weapon she later named the Languishing Daggers. Vabök, however, has a more distinguished record - in 151, 152, and 153, he slew the mountain titan, the plains titan, and a cyclops, respectively. After his third kill, he was named militia commander, and has remained so ever since. With only Libash to train with, the

two became legendary knife-users, then legendary wrestlers, and then legendary speardwarves. The two currently wield twin artifact adamantine spears (both have over sixty kills), to great effect:

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Dwarf Fortress
Page 6/8 FPS: 99 <49> Dwarf Fortress 11th Limestone, 203
The militia commander twists the embedded Medtobfongbez around in The Troll's lower body!
The militia commander bashes The Troll in the left foot with the shaft of his Medtobfongbez, bruising the muscle through the <<large naked mole dog leather sandal>>!
The militia commander kicks The Troll in the left upper leg with his right foot, chipping the bone through the <<large drunian leather cloak>>!
The militia commander stabs The Troll in the head with his Medtobfongbez, tearing the muscle, shattering the skull and tearing the brain through the <<large troll leather hood>>!
A tendon in the skull has been torn!
The militia commander stands up.
The militia commander stabs The Troll in the head with his Medtobfongbez, tearing the muscle, shattering the skull and tearing the brain through the <<large troll fur hood>>!
A tendon in the skull has been torn!
The Medtobfongbez has lodged firmly in the wound!
The militia commander stabs The Troll in the left lower leg with his Medtobfongbez, chipping the bone through the <<large troll fur robe>>!
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 11th Limestone, 203
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 9/13 FPS: 100 <47> Dwarf Fortress 11th Limestone, 203
A tendon in the upper spine has been torn!
The Uabôk Ziril has lodged firmly in the wound!
The Spearmaster stands up.
The Spearmaster twists the embedded Uabôk Ziril around in The Troll's head!
The Spearmaster stabs The Troll in the head with her Uabôk Ziril, tearing the muscle and tearing the upper spine's nervous tissue through the <<large cave spider silk hood>>!
An artery has been opened by the attack!
A tendon in the upper spine has been torn!
The Uabôk Ziril has lodged firmly in the wound!
The Spearmaster twists the embedded Uabôk Ziril around in The Troll's head!
The Spearmaster stabs The Troll in the head with her Uabôk Ziril, tearing the muscle, shattering the skull and tearing the brain through the <<large cave spider silk hood>>!
An artery has been opened by the attack!
A tendon in the skull has been torn!
The Uabôk Ziril has lodged firmly in the wound!
The Spearmaster stabs The Troll in the right upper leg with her Uabôk
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 11th Limestone, 203
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Needless to say, they made quick work of the trolls.

The rest of the military moved to secure the fort's primary entrance, while the civilians went about the work of hauling corpses down into the dome. Since the dwarves were already up there, I didn't see any reason why they wouldn't deconstruct all the coffins in the upper fort and transfer the dead into the dome. Also, I am in the process of sealing the windmill farm, as well as fixing the new dome entrance so that it is troll-proof:



Since up/down staircases and grates do not 'hold' magma (it always recedes into the empty space beneath), this area can be filled with magma, then drained, and be accessible to foot traffic the moment it is cleared without having to wait for the molten rock to dry. When the caldera fills, anything the trolls might be able to destroy will be below the surface of the magma. The blue door at the end of the grate walkway is Syrupsever, a nether-cap door, beyond which is the passage to the dome.

I am currently deliberating on what to do about the duke's tomb:



It is a side chamber adjoining the highest ledge of what was once the quarters of duke, during Weatherwires' heyday. Now, it is a lonely place, barely travelled, even by the duke's widow, and seems forgotten by the dwarves.

The statue before the tomb is an exceptionally designed image of Kogsak Murdershot the dwarf and dwarves in marble by Domas 'Murdershot' Tanineth. The dwarves are refusing Kogsak Murdershot. Kogsak Murdershot is making a submissive gesture. The artwork relates to the fall of the dwarf Kogsak Murdershot from the position of duke of the Diamond Cloisters in the midwinter of 135.

Kogsak was removed from the position of duke when he was stricken with melancholy during the great tantrum spiral of that year. He starved to death later that winter.

The problem here is that, unlike the various other coffins in the upper fort, the duke's tomb cannot be deconstructed. Tombs cannot be assigned to dead dwarves, so his resting place must remain where it is, unless he is to be interred into the vast rows of coffins being constructed in the dome. However, his tomb may then be despoiled by trolls when they next arrive, so something must be done about the situation.

The transfer of graves from the upper fort into the dome continues. My stocks menu shows a little less than 650 coffins, most of which are used. It's impossible to know for sure (without meticulous counting), but I'd estimate my death count at around 575. However, the new 'coffin gardens' are placed 'outside' the buildings in the dome, so if the affair is ever flooded with magma again, things might get a little messy. Then again, with the bugs I experienced last time flooding occurred, I doubt I'll try it again.

When I first began conceptualizing the dome, I planned on building platforms in the deep, and then collapsing soil layers from near the surface into the grotto so that underground plants could grow atop the buildings. I abandoned that entire plan in favor of simply flooding the tops of buildings with water to muddy them. Happily, with the magma flooding, those buildings are now topped with layers of silt or red sand (no more mud, which makes things brown and ugly), and are quickly being covered with floor fungus and cave moss, not to mention various large fungi.

Also, quite unfortunately, the mines which I had dug into the only adamantine vein on the map have flooded with magma. In order to explore the caverns, I smoothed walls and carved fortifications to reveal unexplored areas. Some of those areas in the second layer are quite filled with magma, so the stuff dripped into the deepest mines and has now rendered the adamantine vein temporarily unavailable. However, I already had plans in place to obsidian-cast layers of the magma sea in order to obtain adamantine which was adjacent to magma, so this is not really a huge problem in the grand scheme of things. Once dwarves have been permanently sealed below, that project can begin.

During a double ambush, the three squads guarding the entrance - the Silvery Princesses (swordsdwarves), the Silvery Skunks (macedwarves), and the Lone Lashes (lashdwarves) - were drawn out of what was once a heavily trapped corridor and out onto the circular grassy area before the bridge. At that moment, a third ambush appeared: a line of goblin bowmen, stretching the entire length of the bridge. The military rushed forth to slay the intruders, without any sense of self-preservation. A quarter of the way across the bridge, Eral Languagemetal the Lonesome Square of Furnaces, nigh-invincible mace lord and patriarch of the Languagemetal clan, dodged off the side of the bridge. He miraculously survived the impact, merely breaking both of his upper arms and his left lower arm despite a fall of 7 z-levels.

Ònul Inkswallowed the Worried Feral Berry of Rasps was not so lucky.



Born in 72, he migrated to Weatherwires in 142. Enlisted into the military, he was given a steel shortsword and quickly racked up an impressive kill list of 59 goblins and trolls, the last of which was slain upon the bridge only moments before he dodged a silver arrow and plunged to his skull-crushing death.

Of the original dwarves (before merchants and their guards were recruited from caravans), 86 remain. 103 of the recruits remain, though most of them remain without rooms. Whenever a citizen dwarf dies, however, the room he was assigned in the dome becomes available, and is distributed on a first come, first served basis. One more room has just become available.

For the situation with the duke's tomb, I've had the dwarves dig a new stairwell that leads from an antechamber in the sealed passage to the lowest level of the duke's quarters. Then, the main entrance will be walled up. In this way, even when the seal is in place, the tomb (and the highest levels of the caldera fortress) will be accessible from the dome, should any dwarves wish to go there.

A group of merchants, possibly the last visitors to the dome, just [left the fortress with magma on their heels](#). I've seen magma surges from the volcano come up through those grates before, and I was kind of hoping for something spectacular to happen when the merchants went across (with 7/7 magma immediately below their feet), but all of them made it across safely. Moments later, the entrance was sealed with magma.

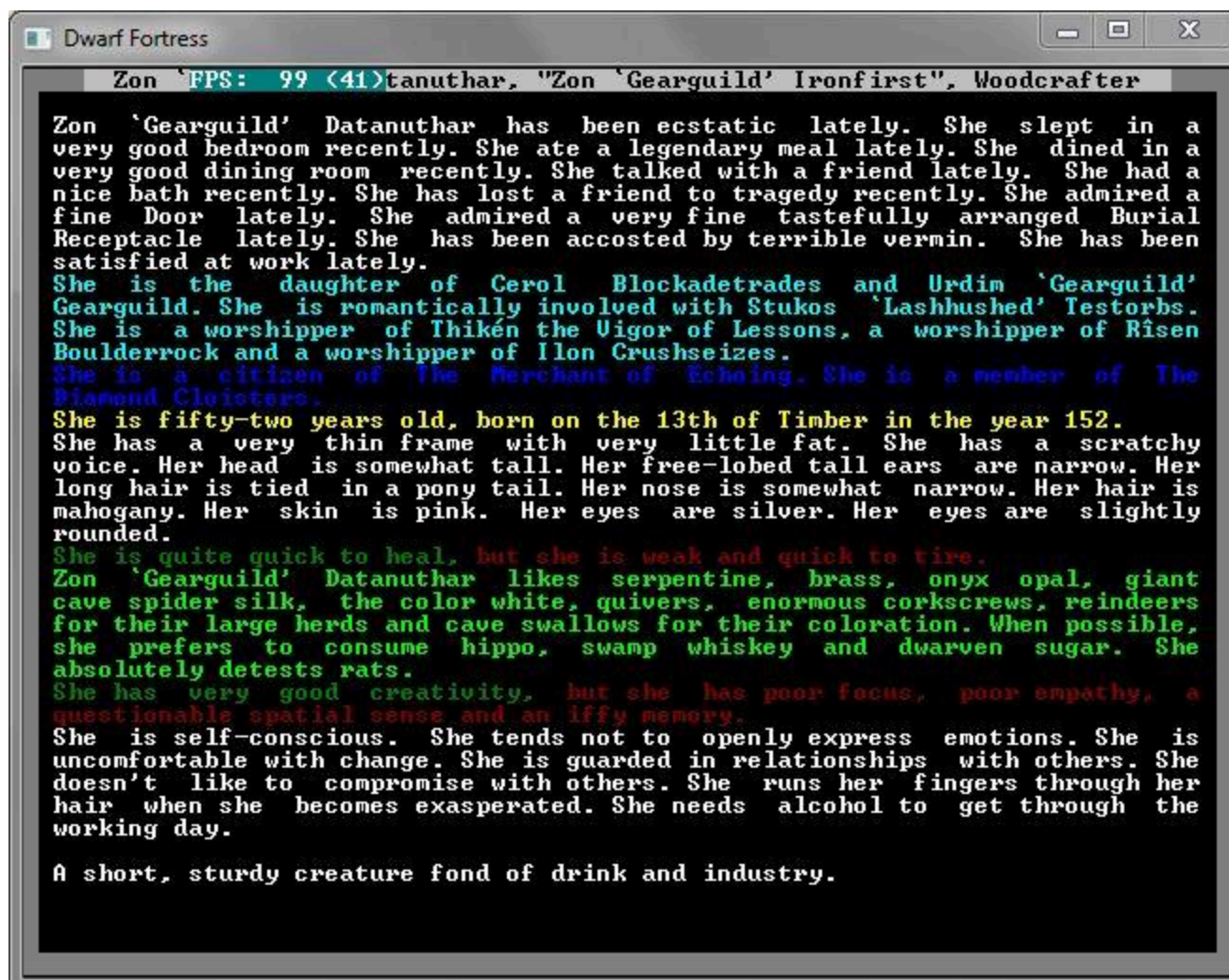
Yet another dwarf has fallen victim to the unstoppable grindstone of time.



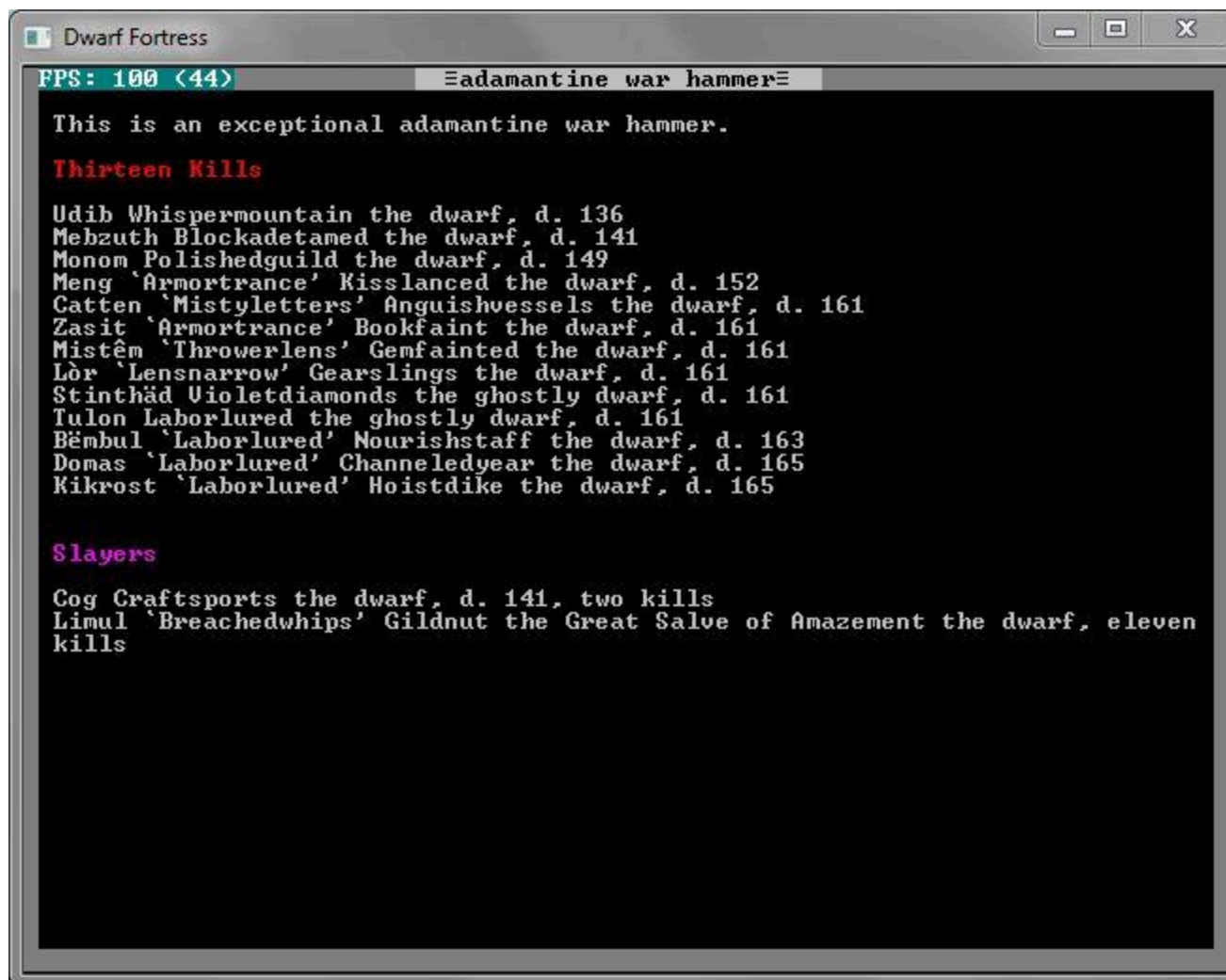
The year is 205, and Zazit Veiloil has died of natural causes at the age of 154. Zazit, while being a legendary engraver, is most noted for serving as the bookkeeper of Weatherwires since 138, when he migrated to the fortress, until 177, when he was relieved from duty - due to a minor injury, if I recall correctly. In 182, he became romantically involved with the fortress thresher, Èrith Boatsflashed (current age: 146), by whom he is survived. He was not as prolific as other engravers in the fort, but was one of the chief engravers of the dome, and many of his masterworks can be found about the megaproject.

With the dwarves now completely withdrawn from the surface, and the magma at a level low enough to make the entire dome accessible (except the floor, of course), the time has come for the justice system to be reinstated. There are a handful of offenders who will require beatings (the upstart merchant who wailed on the fortress manager, for example), although most criminals are guilty only of the violation of production orders. There are 42 chains or ropes throughout the fortress that have been designated for use for justice, so all that remains is the appointment of a captain of the guard.

The captain should be a child of the fortress, not a merchant or guard, and most of the original immigrants are far too strong and skilled to dole out non-lethal justice. The captain must necessarily have few or no combat skills, of course. After reviewing the possible candidates, there is one dwarf who stands out as the prime choice; Zon Ironfirst, youngest daughter of the Gearguild clan.



She is equipped with the ritual weapon of the past captains: an unnamed, exceptional quality adamantine warhammer with a terrifying and unbelievable history.



Zon is appointed to the position of captain of the guard, her squad appropriately named "The Magical Hammers," and she is set loose.

For too long, the judgements set forth by the dwarves have gone unpunished. Justice must be served.

Several dwarves were chained, and already the cruel hand of the law has struck down its first victim. Tosid Topfloors, a merchant born in 135, starved to death in her chains. The injured party, Ineth Lensbeaks, is presumably meting out indiscriminate revenge upon the newcomers.

My previous statement is now obviously incorrect. A second dwarf has died of thirst, Libash Tradedslapped the Mute Bodice of Whiteness. Libash served as a marksdwarf for many years, however, has been essentially an expert hauler for many years, since that squad disbanded. The dwarves must see the justice system as some kind of twisted natural selection.

Id Craftsfang, Bone Carver has become the third. At the moment, I have over a hundred idlers, and dwarves in chains that desperately need food and drink... and yet, not a single 'Give food' or 'Give water' job has been generated. These actions (or lack thereof) seem inconceivable for a dying civilization, though I am sure there must be some explanation, from a narrative point of view.

Russel.s: "Could it be that apathy about their looming, some would say inevitable, extinction is finally kicking in? They see the dwarves in chains, starving and dehydrated, and can't even summon the will to feed them, knowing that they too will be in the same position eventually, unable to fend off death, essentially trapped in their fortress- the last of the dwarves?"

Perhaps. The idea of the dwarves seeing the fate of their civilization reflected in the image of a chained, starving, dehydrated prisoner is certainly poetic.

The thresher, Èrith Boatsflashed, has died of thirst, mere months after her lover died of old age. She goes to join him in the dwarven afterlife, undoubtedly ecstatic to the end.

A handful of other have withered away in their chains. Most of the fallen are merchants or guards, though one stands out amongst the others: Led Tattooedfence, chief blacksmith. Led was personally responsible for the dozens of steel grates, doors, and statues that adorn the fortress. His metalwork was matched by none, and yet the dwarves of Weatherwires saw fit to let him die of dehydration in a forgotten corner of the fortress. Led was 138.

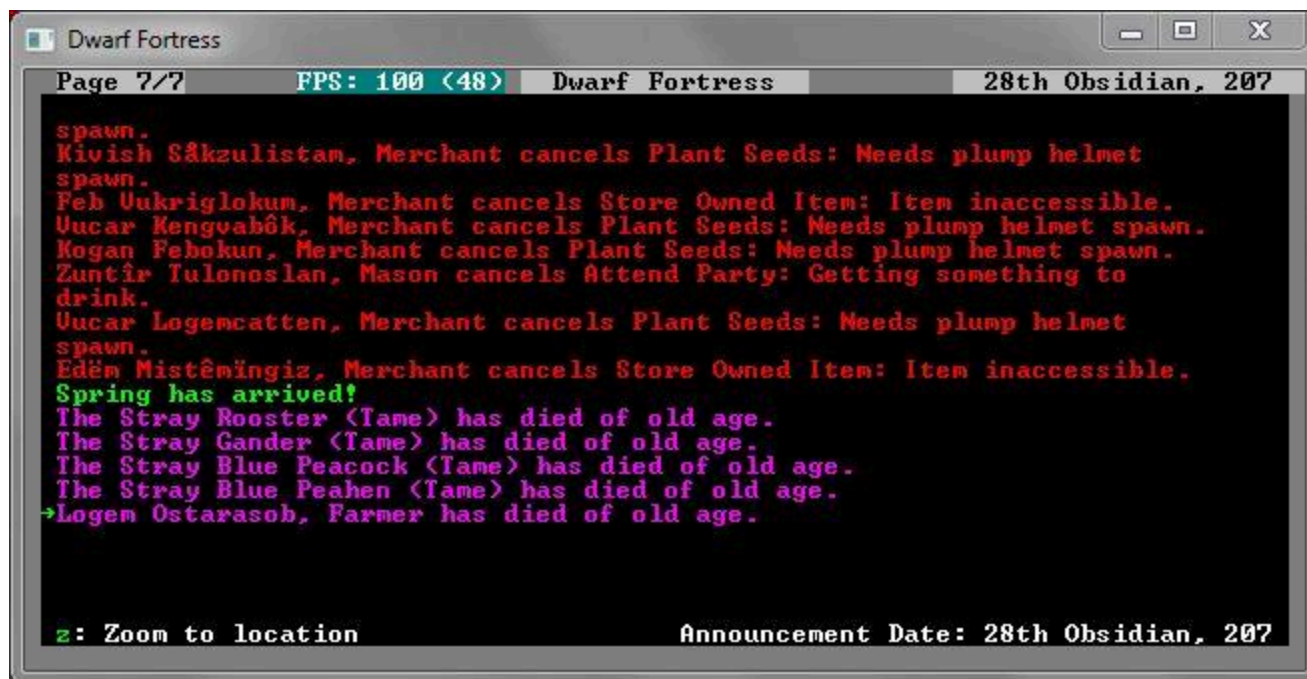
As another several dwarves pass away, the process of reclaiming the lowest mines has begun. By draining water onto the magma sea immediately surrounding the adamantine vein, I can create an obsidian caisson and obtain as much of the metal as can be safely mined out.



Another goblin siege has wiped through the fort. The goblins stood idly at the base of the bridge and in the fort's main entrance hall (which used to be trapped), probably quite confused. I imagine the leaders of each squad putting forth theories about where the entire civilization has disappeared to - they could not know for sure, since no goblin has ever penetrated as deep as the dome and lived to tell of it.

While their overseers stood by and argued, the trolls entirely demolished the axles and gear assemblies that transferred power from the windmill power plant at the mountain's peak to the water and magma pump stacks in the deep. About 1/3 of the windmills have also been destroyed, along with many of the doors that sealed the pumping areas and a handful of the pumps themselves. A few trolls made it as far as the magma pumps that, decades ago, filled the dome. For a moment, perhaps, the furry, horned beasts stared into the vast abyss beyond the ruins of the pumps, dimly lit with a red glow from the sea of magma far below, and a glimmer of comprehension of what the dwarves had accomplished flashed briefly through their primitive minds before they turned and retreated to the surface.

Until this point, two of the original seven dwarves still lived in the fortress. These individuals have lived through multiple tantrum spirals and countless sieges. Now, only one remains.



```
Dwarf Fortress
Page 7/7 FPS: 100 (48) Dwarf Fortress 28th Obsidian, 207
spawn.
Kivish Sâkzulistan, Merchant cancels Plant Seeds: Needs plump helmet
spawn.
Feb Uukriglokum, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Uucar Kengvabök, Merchant cancels Plant Seeds: Needs plump helmet spawn.
Kogan Febokun, Merchant cancels Plant Seeds: Needs plump helmet spawn.
Zuntir Tulonoslan, Mason cancels Attend Party: Getting something to
drink.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Plant Seeds: Needs plump helmet
spawn.
Edem Mistëmingiz, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Spring has arrived!
The Stray Rooster (Tame) has died of old age.
The Stray Gander (Tame) has died of old age.
The Stray Blue Peacock (Tame) has died of old age.
The Stray Blue Peahen (Tame) has died of old age.
->Logem Ostarasob, Farmer has died of old age.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 28th Obsidian, 207
```


This year, 207, marks the death of Logem Buriedboard, chief cook and brewer of Weatherwires, at the incredible age of 165. Born in the year 42, in the midst of the dwarves' relocation into the mountains from the ancient fortresses, Logem was already 84 when she came to the fortress. Thereafter, she produced innumerable masterful roasts, and ensured a steady supply of alcohol for all. Now that she is dead, the fort is down both a brewer and a cook, permanently.

Something strange, tragic, and yet wholly within the realm of what I've come to expect, has happened.

Domas 'Murdershot' Tanineth, queen has suffocated.



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Dwarf Fortress
Page 2/2 FPS: 100 (47) Dwarf Fortress 13th Granite, 207
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Shorast Unâlgusil, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Edem Mistëmingiz, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ïteb Udibmözir, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Asmel Nîrsazir has created a masterpiece!
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Feb Uukriglokum, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Domas 'Murdershot' Tanineth, queen cancels Clean: Dangerous terrain.
Kulet Mafolràsh, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
->Domas 'Murdershot' Tanineth, queen has suffocated.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 13th Granite, 207
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 1/1 FPS: 100 (47) Dwarf Fortress 13th Granite, 207
The queen's head takes the full force of the impact, bruising the muscle
and tearing apart the upper spine's nervous tissue!
The queen's throat takes the full force of the impact, bruising it!
->The queen is no longer stunned.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 13th Granite, 207
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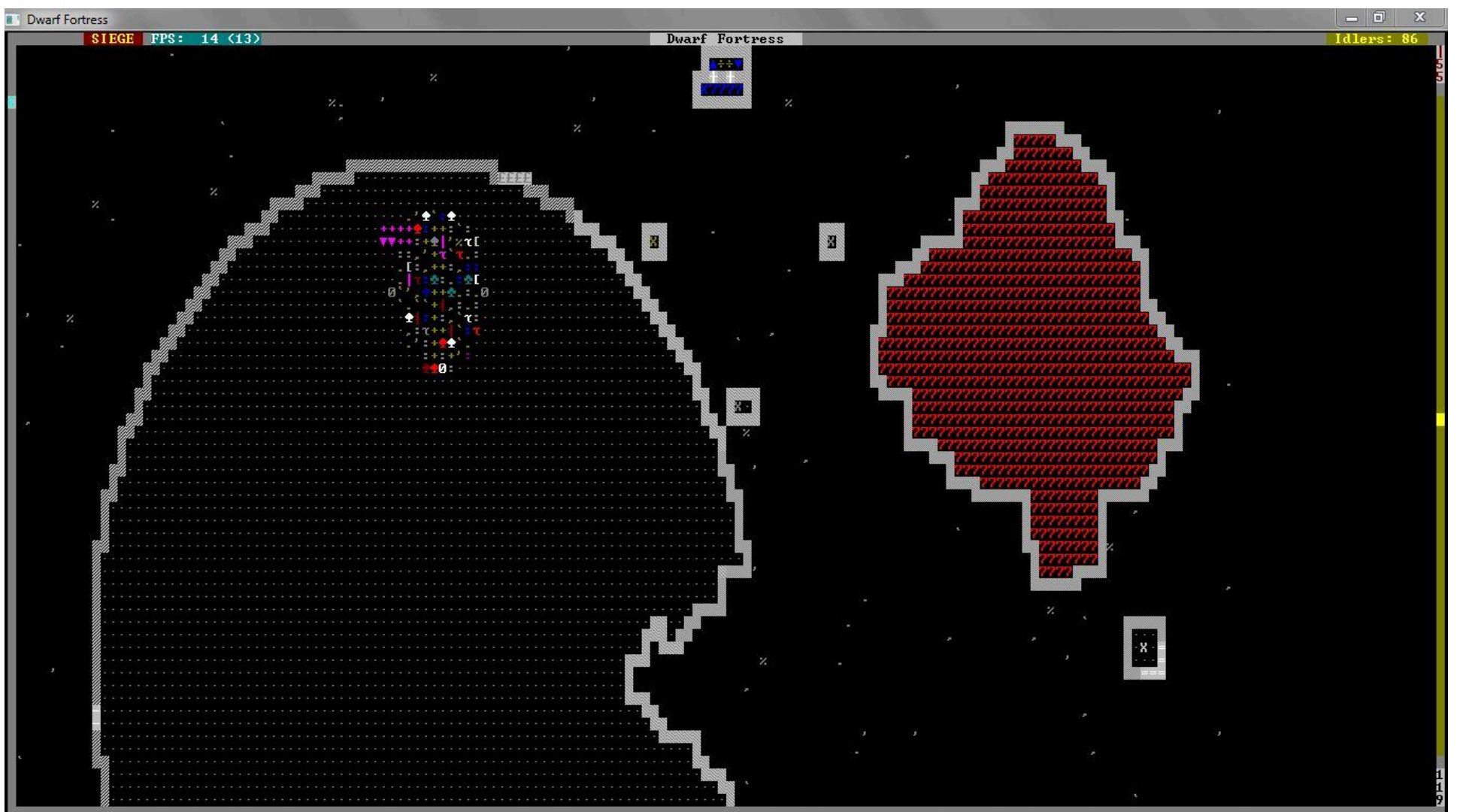

By zooming to the location of the queen's cleaning job cancellation, I can deduce, fairly easily, what happened.

Domas Tickcities, on a whim, decided to do some cleaning. She entered her son's bedroom and climbed the stair on the north wall. The stair was originally built in order to access the few layers of the pump stack when it was being built and serviced. It's a fairly standard pump stack, with an adjacent access stairwell that allows access to the pumps via two doors at every z-level - except for a few z-levels, next to the prince's quarters, which share a common wall with the pump stack. At some point, some blood got all over this part of the stack (probably while mining it out), including the tile the door is built upon - it was this tile the queen wanted to clean. There has been blood here for a while - why the queen took it upon herself, at this time, to clean it up is beyond me.

So, the queen opened the door, but before she could wipe off the blood, a sudden rush of water from the 7/7 tile beyond swept through the door and knocked her backwards, off of the stairwell. She fell 2 z-levels, landed on her head, snapped her upper spine, and suffocated.

She and Logem were the last of the first seven dwarves, the founders of the fortress, and now both have died, by chance, within two weeks of each other. The doom of Weatherwires is rapidly approaching.

The queen's body has been placed in her tomb, atop the spire at the north end of the dome, the highest point in the carven city. The top has been flooded with water, as with the tops of many other buildings in the dome, but since the magma never reached this high, it remains a muddy mess. The small peak is overgrown with cave fungi, untouched by woodcutter or herbalist, untrampled by any feet save those who have come to inter the dead and their belongings.



The tomb is shared by three coffins, each a mood-created artifact. The queen's body is entombed in Failedhushed the Music of Balding.

This is a light yellow diamond coffin. All crafts dwarfship is of the highest quality. It is encrusted with earthenware and encircled with bands of reindeer leather. This object is adorned with hanging rings of reindeer leather and menaces with spikes of reindeer leather.

On the item is an image of The Roasted Dot the adamantine chest in light yellow diamond.

On the item is an image of mountains in light yellow diamond. On the item is an image of The Fair Dagger the spore tree cup in fungiwood. On the item is an image of a dimple cup in alpaca wool.

On the item is an image of goblins and dwarves in iron. The goblins are fighting with the dwarves. The artwork relates to the attack on the Diamond Cloisters at Weatherwires by The Scorpion of Recreations in the late winter of 171 during Dismudkök, "The Scalded Assaults."

From the vantage point at the southern tip of the citadel peak, the coffin overlooks all of the dome.



The other two coffins are assigned to the two surviving members of the Murdershot dynasty. Cog Archwayward, being older than her brother, has risen to the rank of queen of the Merchant of Echoing at the age of 73.

The year is 207. In less than two decades, Weatherwires will be celebrating its centennial, if it has not yet been claimed by its inevitable fate.

I had set my game to pause and recenter in the event that this ever happened. Unlike the movie, it didn't happen in the midst of a heated, pointless battle, but considering the dwarven punishments of the previous year, and the untimely death of Domas Tickcities, perhaps it happened at just the right time after all:



A child of two recruited dwarves, a merchant and her guard (now a legendary woodcrafter thanks a mood), Zasit Portalwines is the first child to be born in the fortress in precisely 50 years.

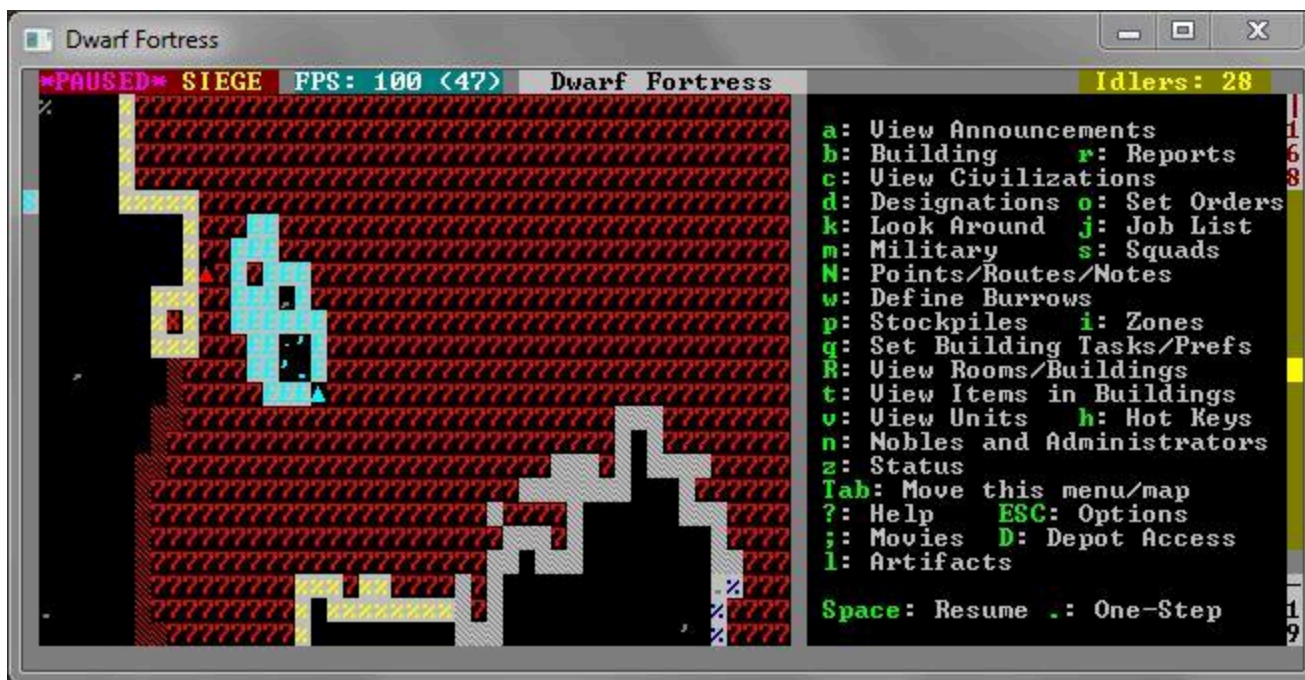
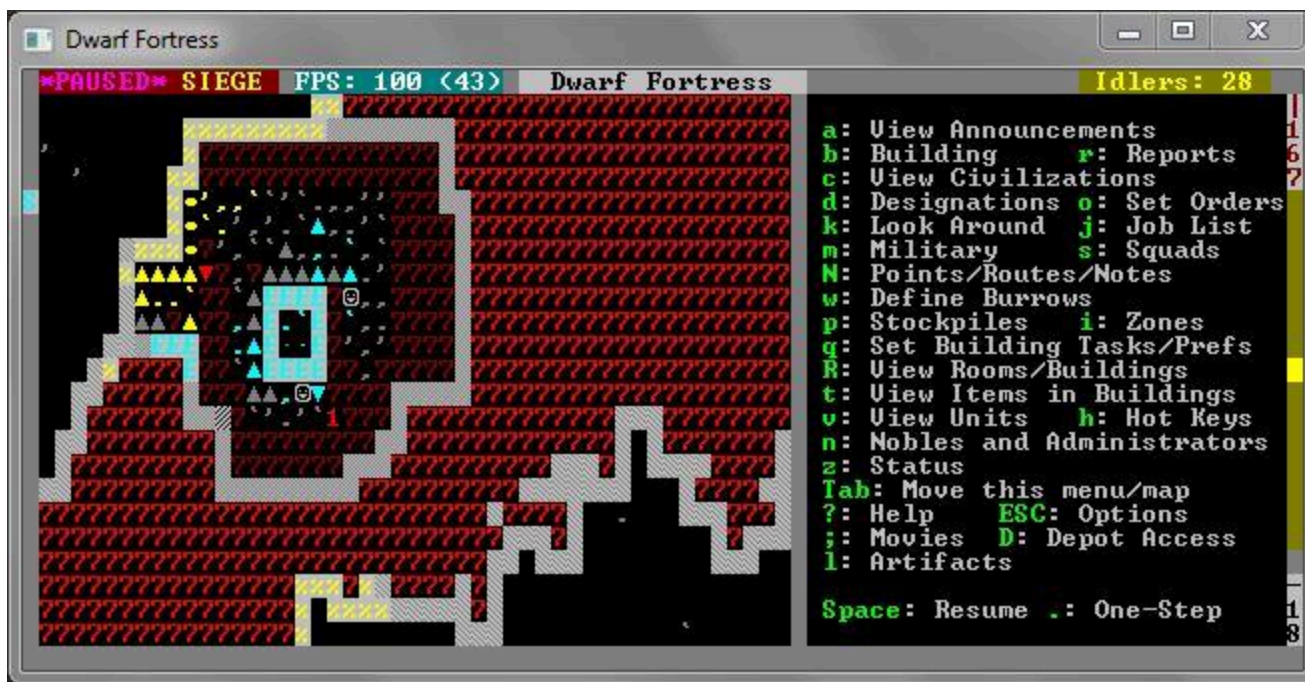
I cannot know for sure just yet if the curse has been lifted for all dwarves, native and mercantile, or if it is only the new visitors who can conceive. However, on the description page of every 'native' dwarf, they are listed as a member of both the Merchant of Echoing and the Diamond Cloisters, while the merchants and their guards are listed as only members of the Merchant of Echoing. Zasit is listed as a member of both the civilization and the local government, so he is definitely a full fledged member of the fortress.

I have bestowed the infant with the profession name 'curse-breaker,' and as usual with any child born in the fort, he and his parents have been given the same nickname, that of the father's surname: *Quakedented*.

Fate, it seems, is not without a sense of irony.



While channeling away the thin sheet of obsidian within the caisson, so that water could rush in to solidify the next layer of magma and allow me to claim more adamantine, I accidentally designated a tile to be dug without first checking the layer below to be sure that I wasn't digging into a dangerously fun area.



The year is 208. In a mere 17 years, the fortress would be celebrating its centennial, become a truly legendary 100-year fortress. Instead, the greed of the new queen, Cog 'Murdershot' Archwayward, in the face of lifting tragedy and the victory of hope, has unleashed a nameless evil beneath the earth upon the last remnants of her civilization.

Amidst the bountiful food stockpiles, her spirits high, Bomrek Spikeswound, the first mother Weatherwires has known for almost half a century, takes a long drink of dwarven beer from an exceptionally crafted obsidian pot. Her two infant children, Zasit and Mebzuth, a boy and a girl, burble happily in her arms. Meanwhile...



The two miners in the caisson paused, hearing the screams, and immediately ran for the stairwell. Moments later, despite the rush of magma flowing into the center of the adamantine vein, a torrent of demons poured through the breach and into the caisson. One horror, resembling a gaunt mongoose

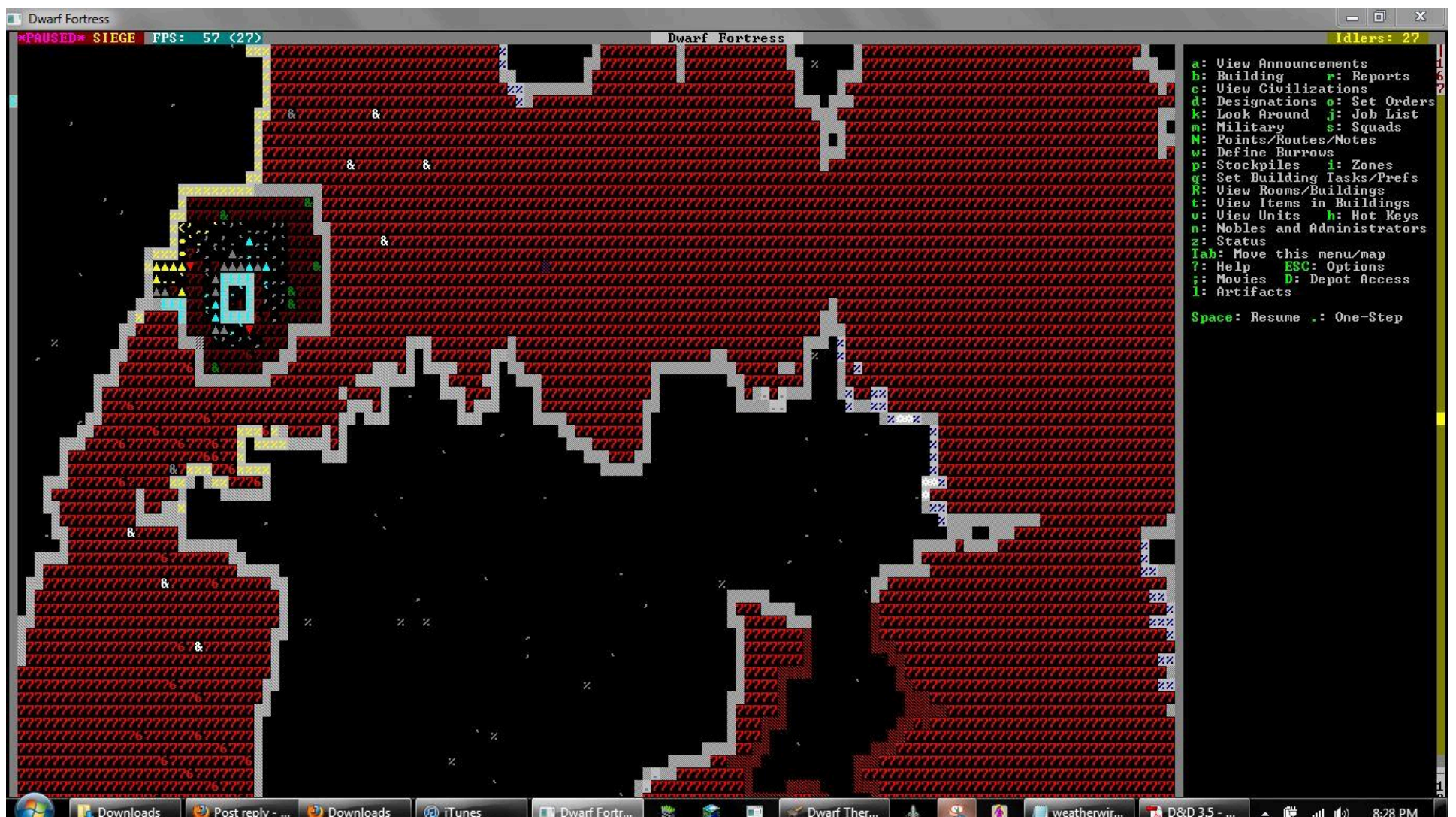
with three narrow tails, composed entirely of desiccating salt, shrieked through the air after poor Ushat.



Meanwhile, Kel Fountainobeys scrambled along the narrow pathway that led out of the caisson. Kel was one of the few miners who aided in the excavation of the dome, and was afforded great respect amongst the miners - he was often considered to be first among them. The demons afforded him nothing.



Even as others in the deep fled up the stairwell, away from the horrifying screams in the deep, Cog Archwayward herself sealed the passage to the mines with obsidian stones. For now, the dwarves of Weatherwires are safe - but there are other ways into the fortress, and the demons are looking for them.



Shortly after I took that picture, the demons attacked and slew the three zombie magma crabs that have been loitering in the magma sea ever since I had discovered it was there. I had contemplated eventually capturing them and putting them on display, but oh well.

The caisson was specifically designed to be filled with water. Unfortunately, I've discovered that it is apparently impossible to obsidianize magma immediately above a magma flow. It just vaporizes that square of magma, which then refills quite quickly. The end result is that the water being piped in from the lowest cavern layer can't reach the breach to seal it off, because there's a square of magma in the way that is above a magma flow. For the time being, I'm allowing water to flow in freely, in the hopes that, by chance, it might seal the breach. There are levels of FPS I am prepared to accept.

It would have been easy enough to purposefully breach the HFS and let them die to a trap. I've done it several times before with other forts, though never in a manner as stylish as Aussie's (I prefer the long series of vertical switchbacks with a controlled cave-in at the top). However, I dug it out completely by accident, and now the demons are so spread out it is impossible to defeat them all now.

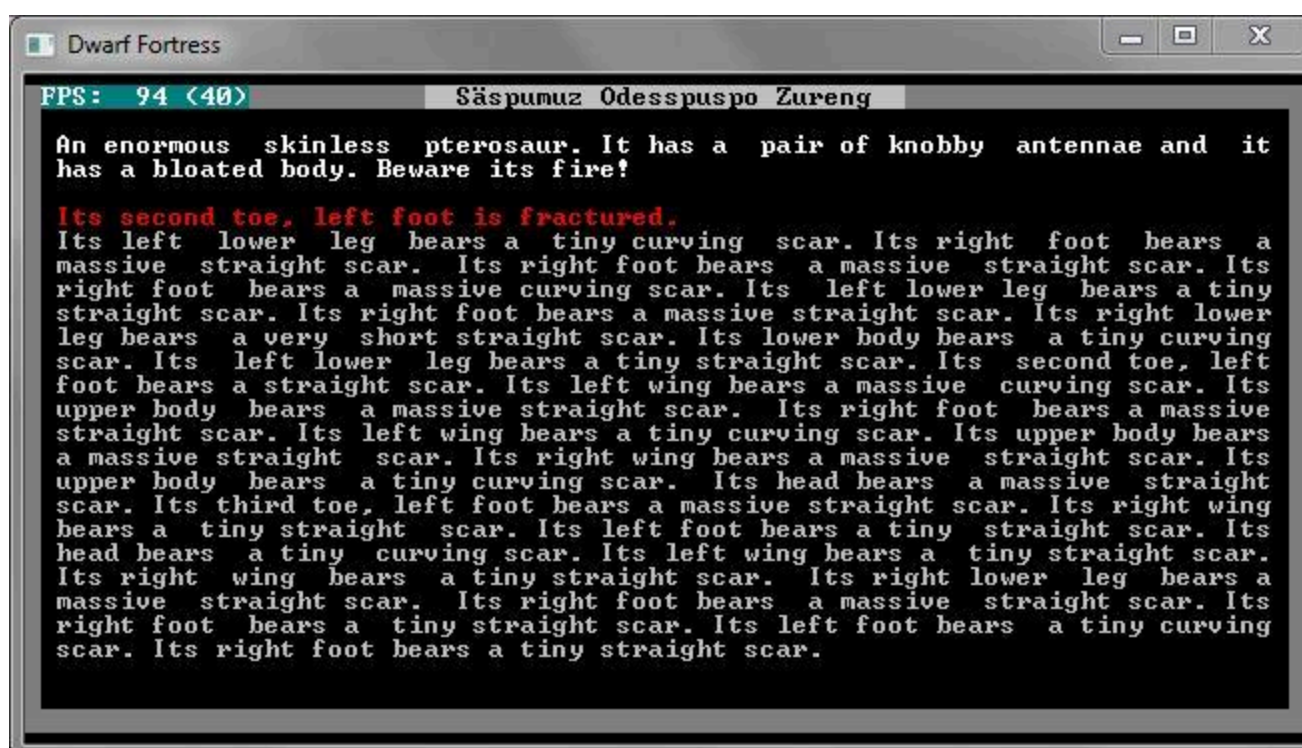
A trio of Pterosaur Devils have made it to the surface somehow, and are currently in the process of tearing an entire goblin siege to pieces. I suspect they swam up the magma vent (it's the most direct route), but it is also possible they made it through the mines. In any case, it's only a matter of time before one, or a few, or several demons find their way into the dome. For the dwarves, life continues, idyllic and serene now that they are content in the knowledge that they really won't be the last of their race, dying alone and forgotten in the deeps.

The three Pterosaur Devils demolished the entire siege, then flew up above the mountain's peak. They stayed there for months, idly hovering or coasting above the battered ruins of the windmill farm. I can't know for sure how many kills each has, but their inventory and status screens, let alone the names they have earned, tell a fearsome tale.

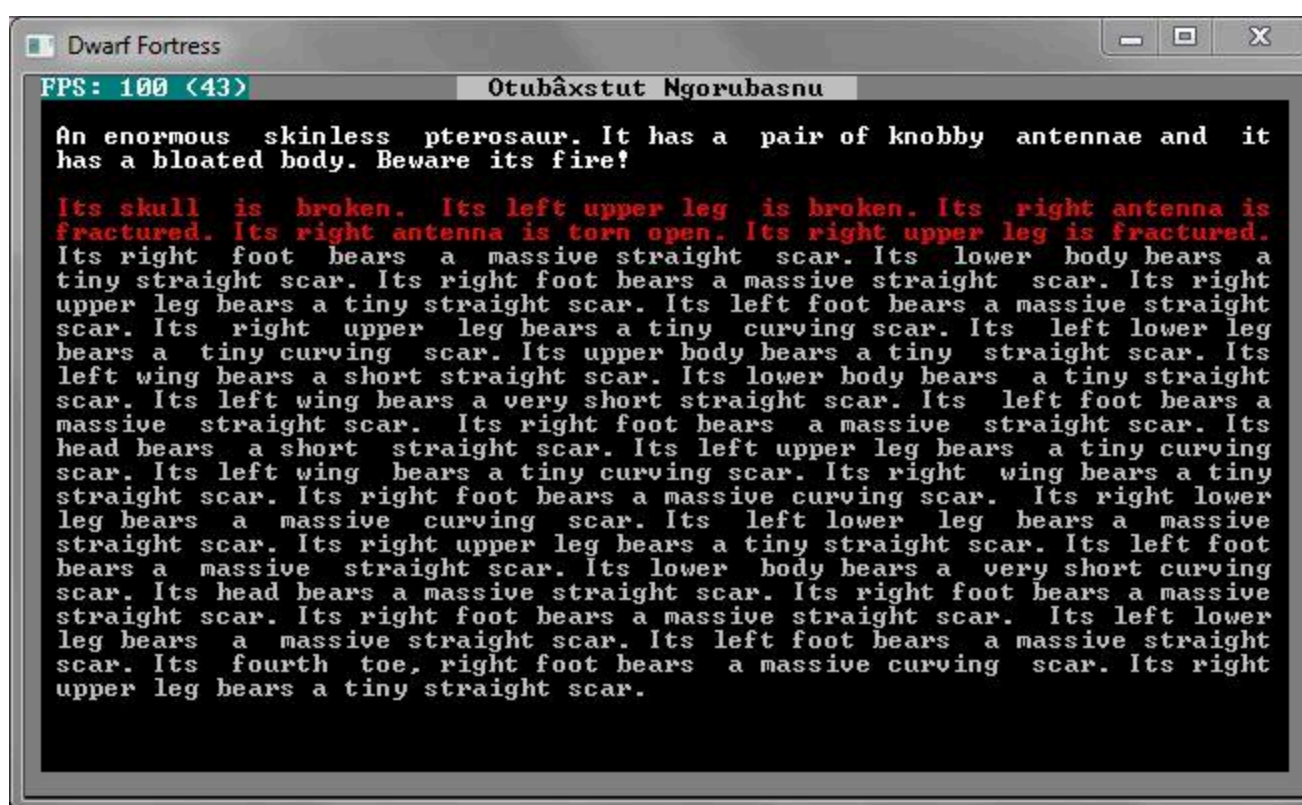
The first is known as Colorquake the Attack of Combat.



The second is Punchattack the Molten Thorn of Jaws.



The third has been named Yearlinglances the Pale Fight.



Each one is spattered with the blood of a dozen goblins and trolls, not to mention the greyish demonic goo from their own wounds.



Three skinless, bloated pterosaurs with knobbly antennae, drenched in dried red, teal, and grey blood, and covered with scars now constantly circle overhead the abandoned surface fortress, mercilessly attacking any who come near - dwarves, men, or goblins. Truly, the outside world must now think that Weatherwires has been damned.

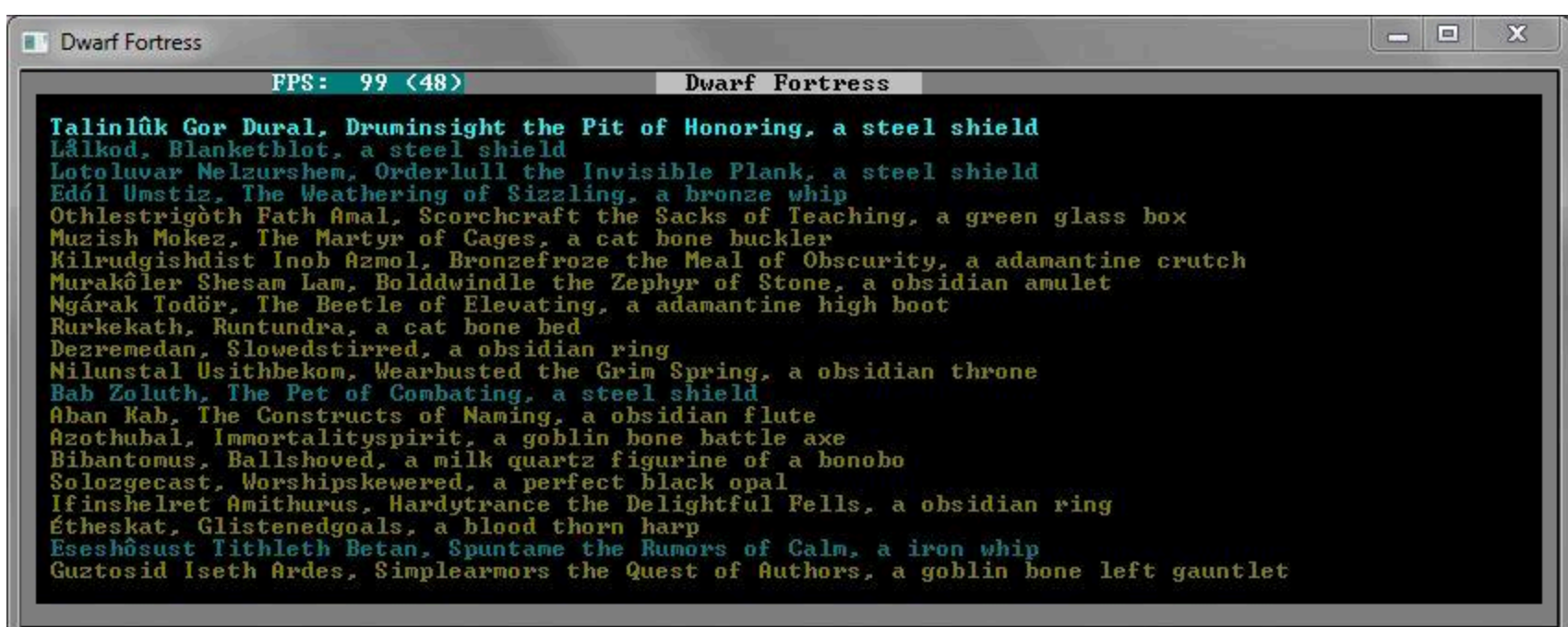
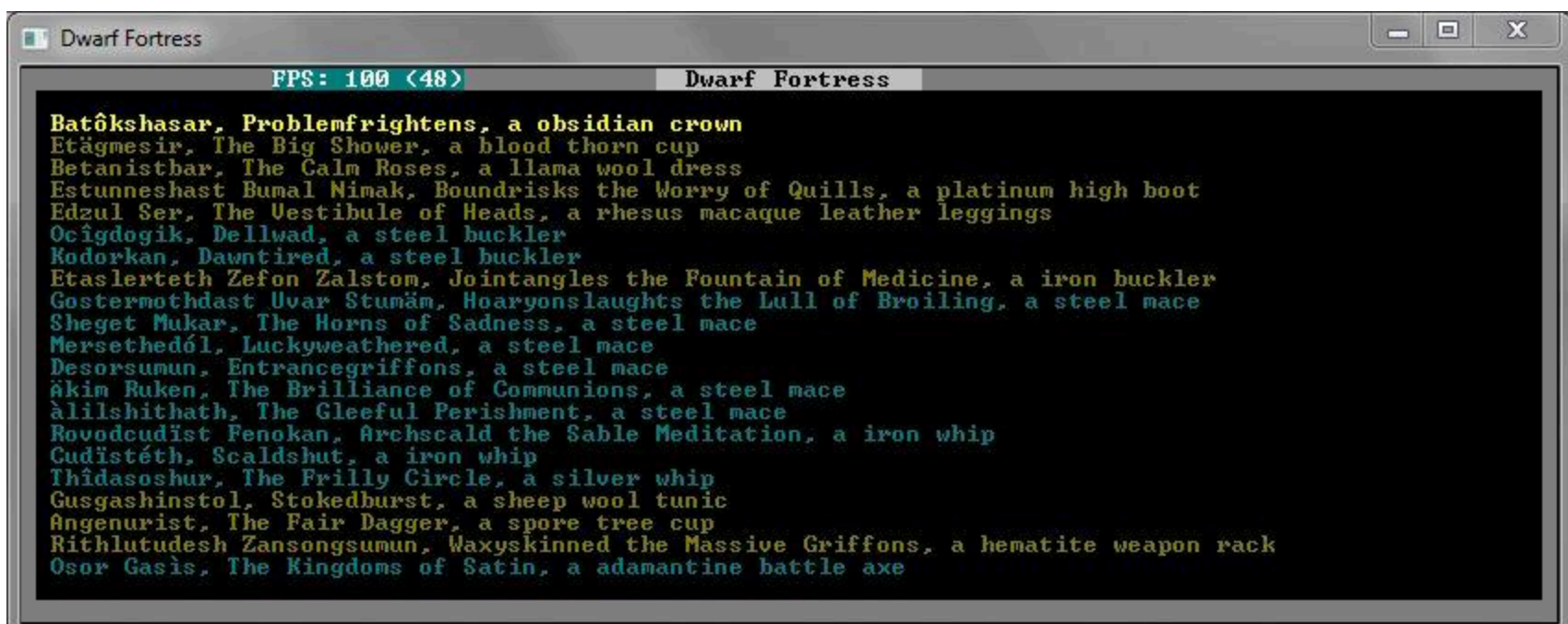
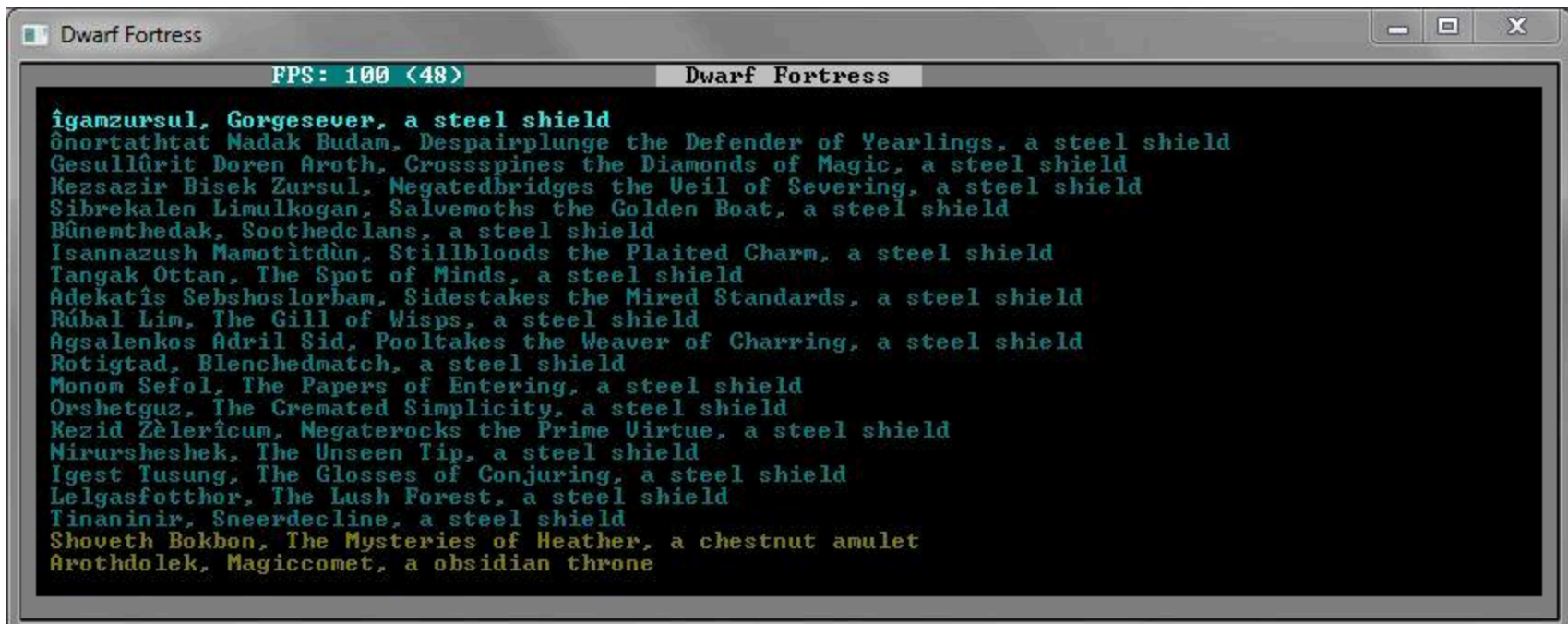
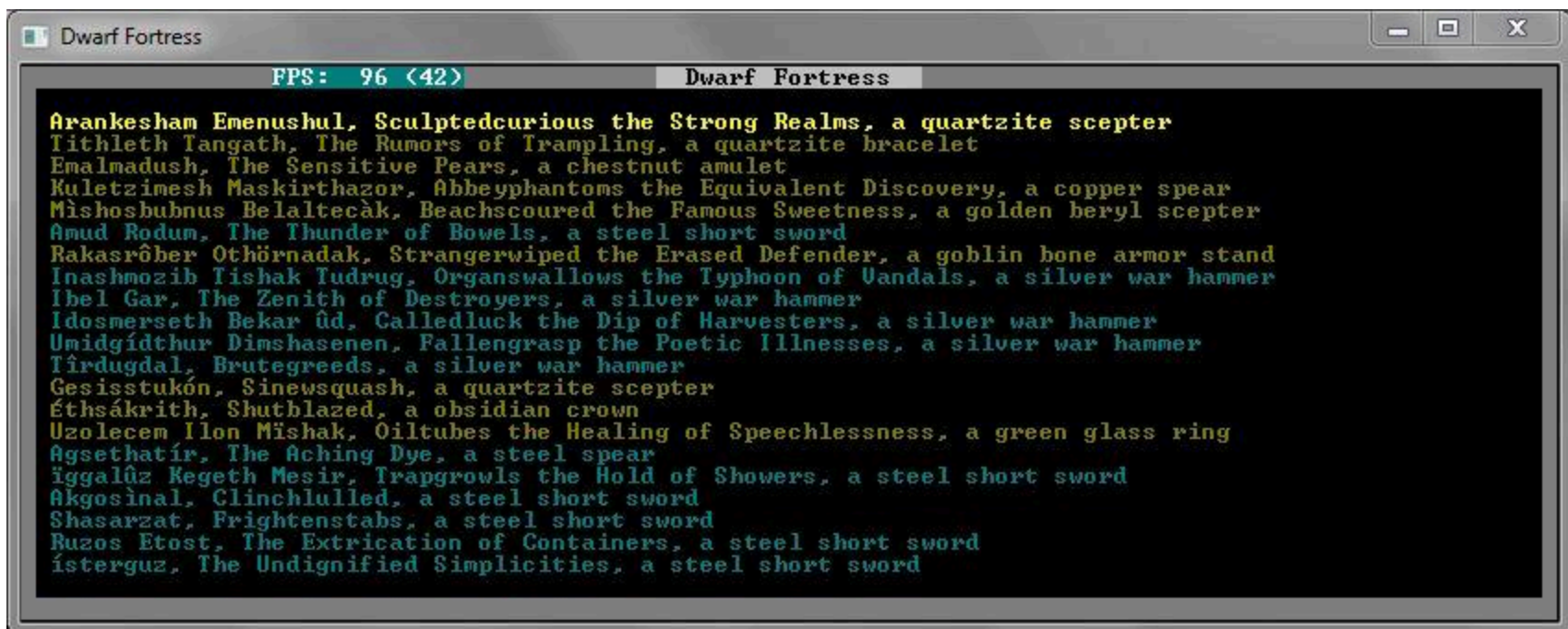
Now there are only two demons. Colorquake descended upon the next siege by itself, and four whole squads of goblins, led by an axe lord, managed to bog it down long enough to land a lucky hit on its heart. It bled out, but not before killing a dozen more of the invaders.

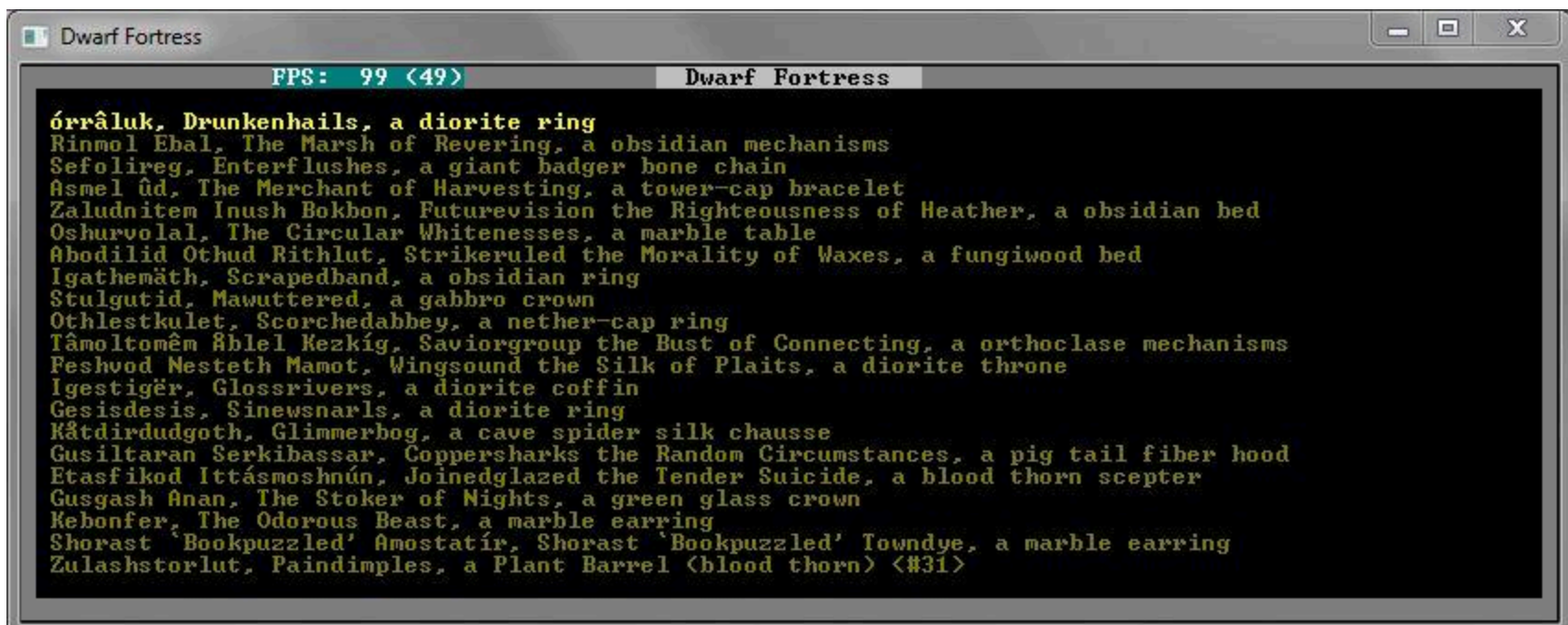
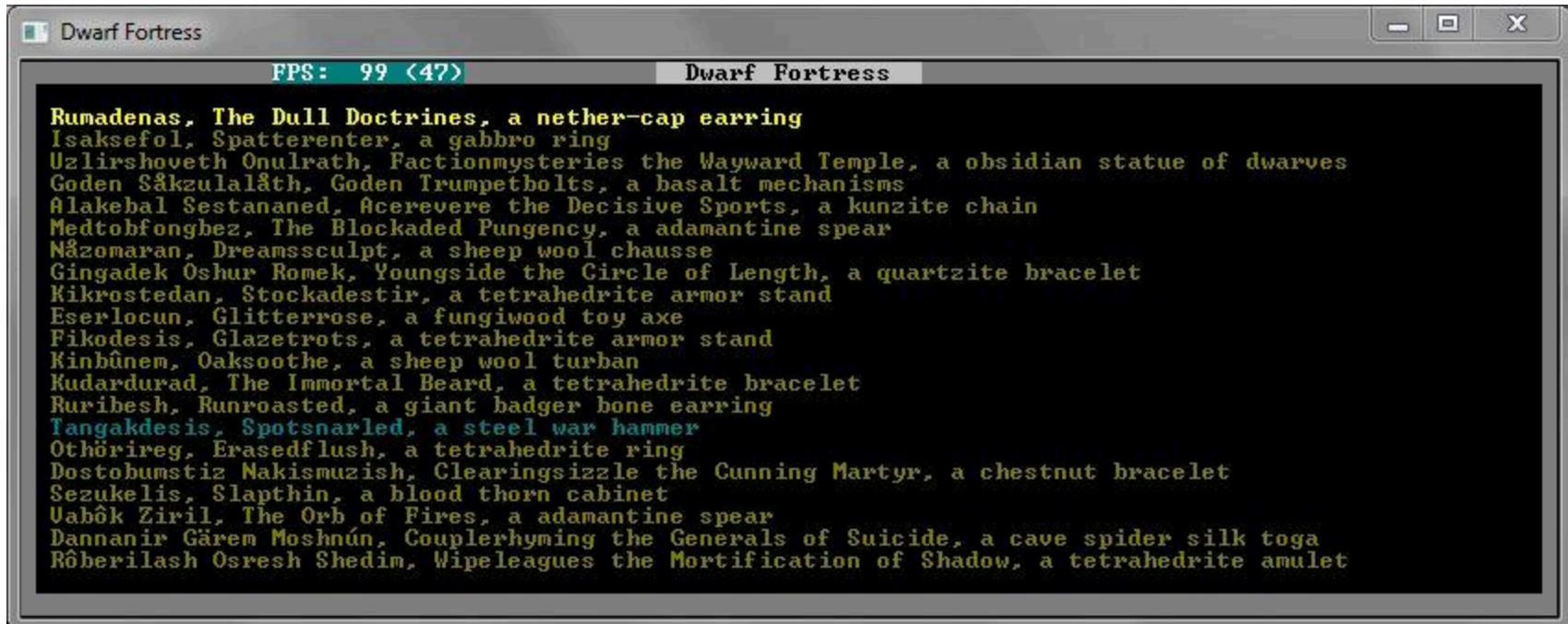
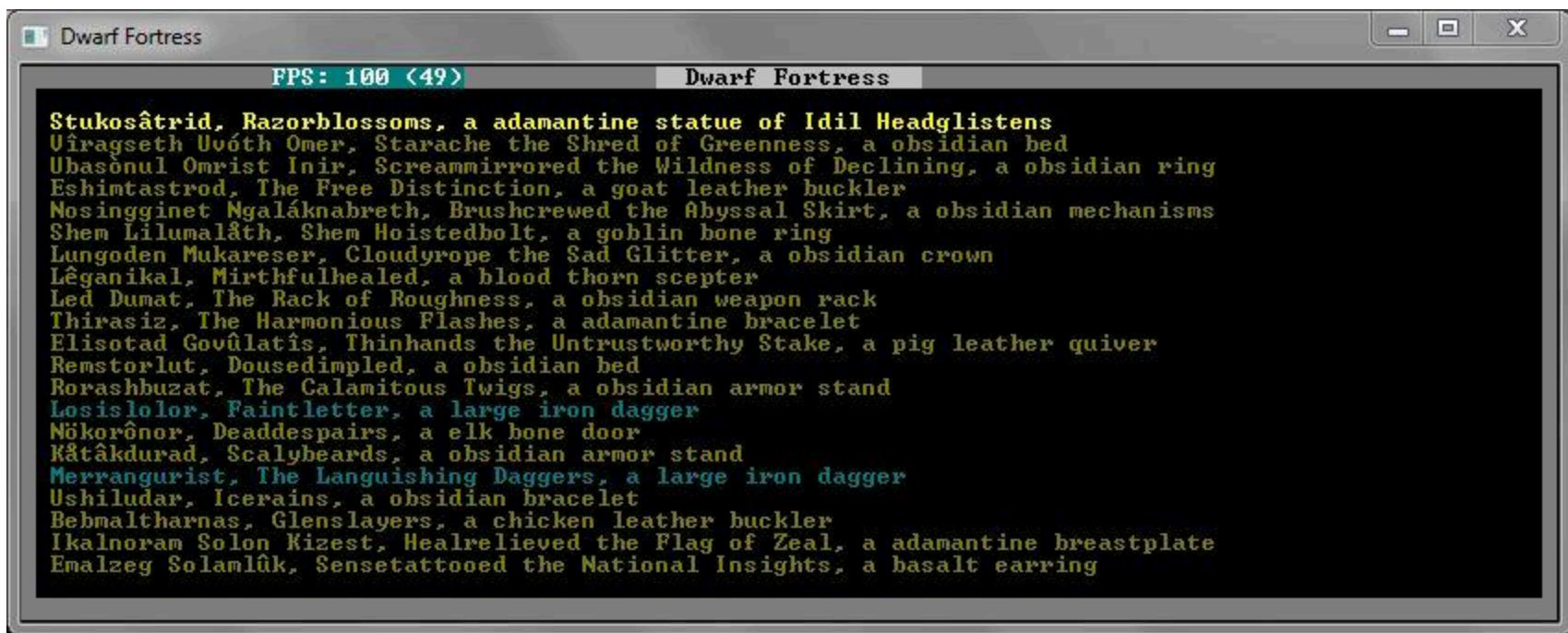
At this point, I am content to let the demons do what they want. There are still a few loose ends to tie up in the deeps (I managed to excavate 23 units of adamantine before the accident), and I'm sure the pteranodons problem will eventually solve itself... one way or another.

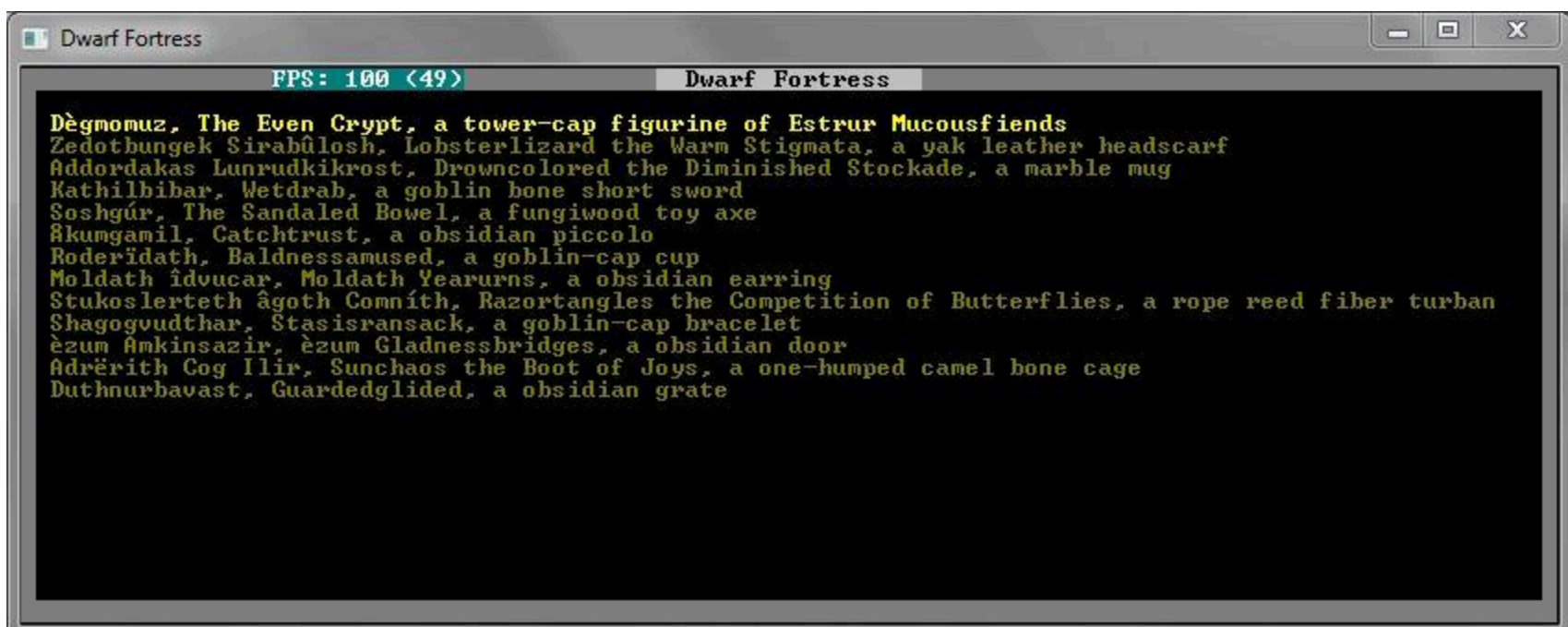
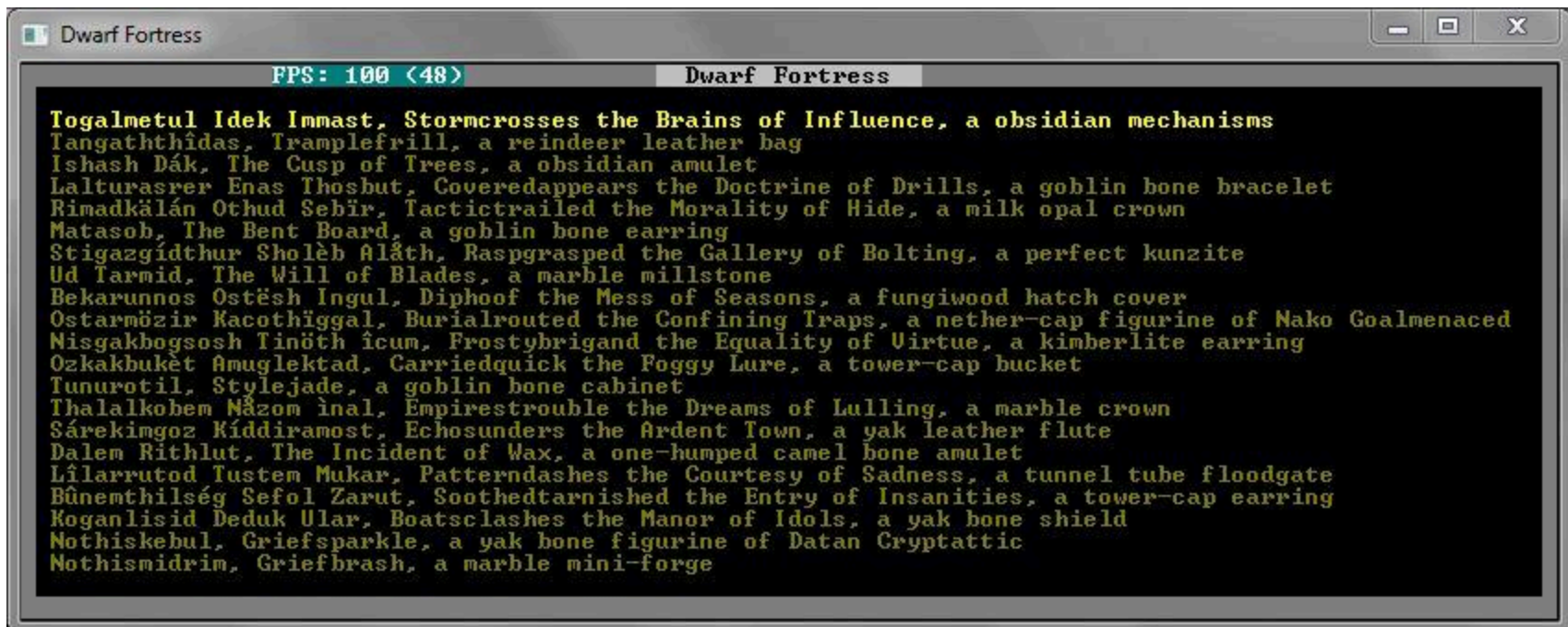
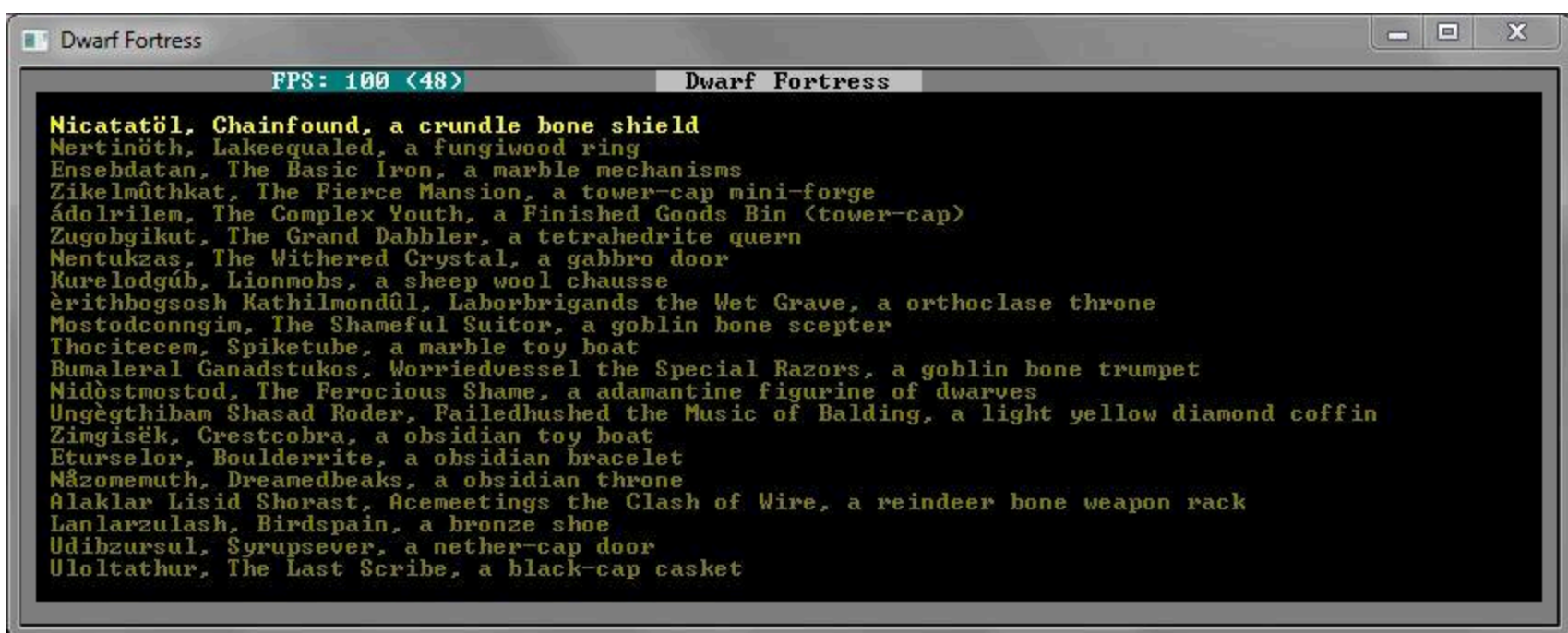
Mapleguy555: "Ooh! By the way, you should list your artifacts!
For example, if you had an artifact wooden throne... Then you use magma..."

List my artifacts, you say?

Here we go...







Looking at the list, I have enough unused wooden artifact furniture (quite a bit of it is in noble's bedrooms, or the dining hall) that I could make an entire suite of rooms furnished with nothing but them. Then, with the proper application of magma, I could set the lot on fire and have a suite that is perpetually on fire.

I don't know who I would give the rooms to, though. I don't exactly have an excess of dwarves, here.

I've begun carving out a new room adjacent to the magma tube which will eventually be filled with perpetually flaming furniture. I figure that this may be the last time I have so many flammable artifact weapon racks, armor stands, cabinets, chests, chairs, tables, and beds, so I might as well take advantage of the situation. When finished, the room will be about 6-7 z-levels deep, which will allow plenty room for the smoke to billow up.

Earlier, most of the demons had crowded in the long passageway leading from the dome to the caisson, but more and more have been returning to the deeps. Seemingly discouraged by the blocked

passage, about half of the fiends have spread out into the lowest cavern layer, which has a magma pool opening into the sea below. They've slain many cave blobs and flesh balls since then, and are spreading out to every corner of the caves, searching tirelessly for any breach in the dwarves' defenses. It is only a matter of time before they find one.

On this day, the 14th Hematite, 209, a brutal blow was struck against Weatherwires.



The obliterating power of the magma flows have long been used by the dwarves as a means of ridding the fortress of any excess items. Non-economic stone, in particular, is seen as especially undesirable, and when a new cavern is mined out, the stone is hauled away and thrown into the mouth of the volcano, destroyed utterly by the crushing pressure and heat in the deep. With the deepest mines closed off to the dwarves, and the upper fortress long since abandoned, the only place to dump from is the highest point above the caldera - the ducal suite, now only accessible from the dome.

Knowing full well the danger that would be posed by the two horrific demons that still hover far above Weatherwires, three squads were assigned to defend the passage, so that the dome could be protected in the event of an attack by the pterosaur devils. Each warrior has long since developed legendary skills, so there was no fear that the demons would be able to defeat them in combat. In a way, I was right.

Not long after dumping began, four pterosaur devils erupted from the magma vent and tore through the air towards the duke's quarters. The civilians dropped everything immediately and ran for cover, and as the first demon entered the passage, the champions of Weatherwires rushed forth to the defense of the fortress. Three squads there were - the Lone Lashes (4 lashers), the Silvery Skunks (5 macedwarves), and the Silvery Princesses (3 swordsdwarves). As more demons flew up to perch on the ledge, the dwarves were drawn out of the passage, and it was here that the fiends exacted their price upon the fortress.

Unib Blockadeflame the Elevated Dream (lasher) scrambled away from one of the beasts as it snapped at him, accidentally crawling right over the ledge. SibreK Paddleshafts the Roof of Trickery (macedwarf), Reg Splashhelm the Worshipful Triangle (macedwarf), and Sodel Inkdipped the Ashamed Image (lasher) were pushed backwards into the open air. As they fell through the familiar upper fortress, seeing the abandoned ruins for the last time, the rest of their squads bravely slew the remaining demons. Dumping of stone continues, and the sacrifice of these four heroes are on the minds of all. They have been claimed by the same obliterating power used so frequently by the dwarves, their bodies and equipment destroyed utterly by the crushing pressure and heat in the deep.

Memorials have been erected in the hall leading to the ducal suite. In a strange juxtaposition of life and death, another Quakedented child has been born, bringing the count to four so far. No other families have begun, so it's entirely possible this may be a sadly isolated incident.

The burning hall has been filled with magma, and ready to be drained. I couldn't find an entire set of wooden furniture, so there are many bone and leather artifacts, which seem to have caught fire just fine.

As well, I've taken steps towards halting both of the apparently unstoppable flows which are sucking my FPS to <10; both the flow of magma out of the magma sea and into hell, as well as the flow of water from the lowest cavern layer into the magma sea. First, by collapsing a solid wall tile into the passage through which the water is draining, that flow will be ceased. Then, a second channel of water must be dug, which will fill the breach in the adamantine tube with an obsidian plug. Finally, this flow will also need to be ceased with another cave-in.

It will be an elaborate, dangerous process which could go wrong at any time. With the infestation of demons in the caverns in and around the operation, the survival of those involved are in no way assured.

The burning room has claimed its first. I've set my game to pause on the event of a civilian death, and I let it run overnight. I get back to it this morning to find:

Olin Logemtangak, Merchant has bled to death.

...by sleeping on Runtundra, a cat bone bed, which is now perpetually on fire. Curse you, Mapleguy.

The room is being barred by obsidian doors which will be blocked to passage by dwarves until such time as I can figure out a use for this horrific instrument of death. Perhaps, in a more prosperous fortress, such a room would have an appropriate application. As for now, the ill-conceived abomination has been sealed off.

The levers to the operation in the deeps are being linked - once that is done, a volunteer will be needed to channel out a single tile, immediately above the caisson. There are no demons immediately in the area, so the brave individual will hopefully have enough time to retreat to safety, before the passage can be sealed. Hopefully.

Also, the ghost situation is starting to get dangerous. There are now 8 ghosts haunting the fortress, none of which show up on the memorial engraving list at the Craftsdwarf's Workshop. Mercifully, none are murderous or violent, though a few levers have been pulled by one of the poltergeists - that could, possibly, be quite dangerous.

The levers have been linked, and the final stage of the project is ready to advance. Since some troublesome ghost keeps pulling the lever that links up to one of the drains in the lower part of the dome, I've opened up a few other hatches so that all but the lowest levels of magma can drain. When this stage is complete, the floor of the cavern will be exposed to air for the first time in decades.

Zon Cloudwheel, merchant by trade, possesses a small skill in mining. As such, he was chosen to be the dwarf who would channel away the last part of the passage. Accepting his fate without grumbling, he travels now into the deeps.

Zon Cloudwheel channeled away the floor, and for a brief moment, sneaked a look into the caisson, a literal hellhole choked with blinding steam, and filled with piles of mud and stone. A thin layer of water covered a freshly formed sheet of obsidian on one side of the caisson, while the other was a roiling crescent of bubbling magma. And in the center - a rough-hewn outcrop of greyish ore, glittering in the dim glow of the magma sea. A sudden spark of greed sprang to life within Zon's heart, so strong that he might have dug a passage down to the ore and started mining away at it himself - but the the twisted, dismembered remains of several magma crabs, strewn about the caisson, reminded him that his safety was far from assured. There were demons nearby.

As Zon reluctantly hurried back up the passage to the dome, levers linked to the supports around him were pulled. Amidst a choking miasma of dust and shattered rock, the dwarf ascended the stairs, just barely making it past the cave-ins in time.



The operation was a success, in the sense that the flows were stopped. The adamantine vein has been plugged with obsidian:



However, my FPS has not yet been returned to anything normal. The demons are obviously to blame, though I have other things to worry about before dealing with them becomes a priority.

I realized that the plugging of the adamantine spire has effectively sealed off the demonic invaders from hell. Since the breach occurred at a relatively high point in the spire, I plan on mining into the lower layers, with no fear of mining too much, so long as I do not breach into the caisson or the magma sea. In effect, instead of mining the spire from the outside in, as dwarves normally do, the dwarves of Weatherwires will be mining the adamantine spire *from the inside out*.

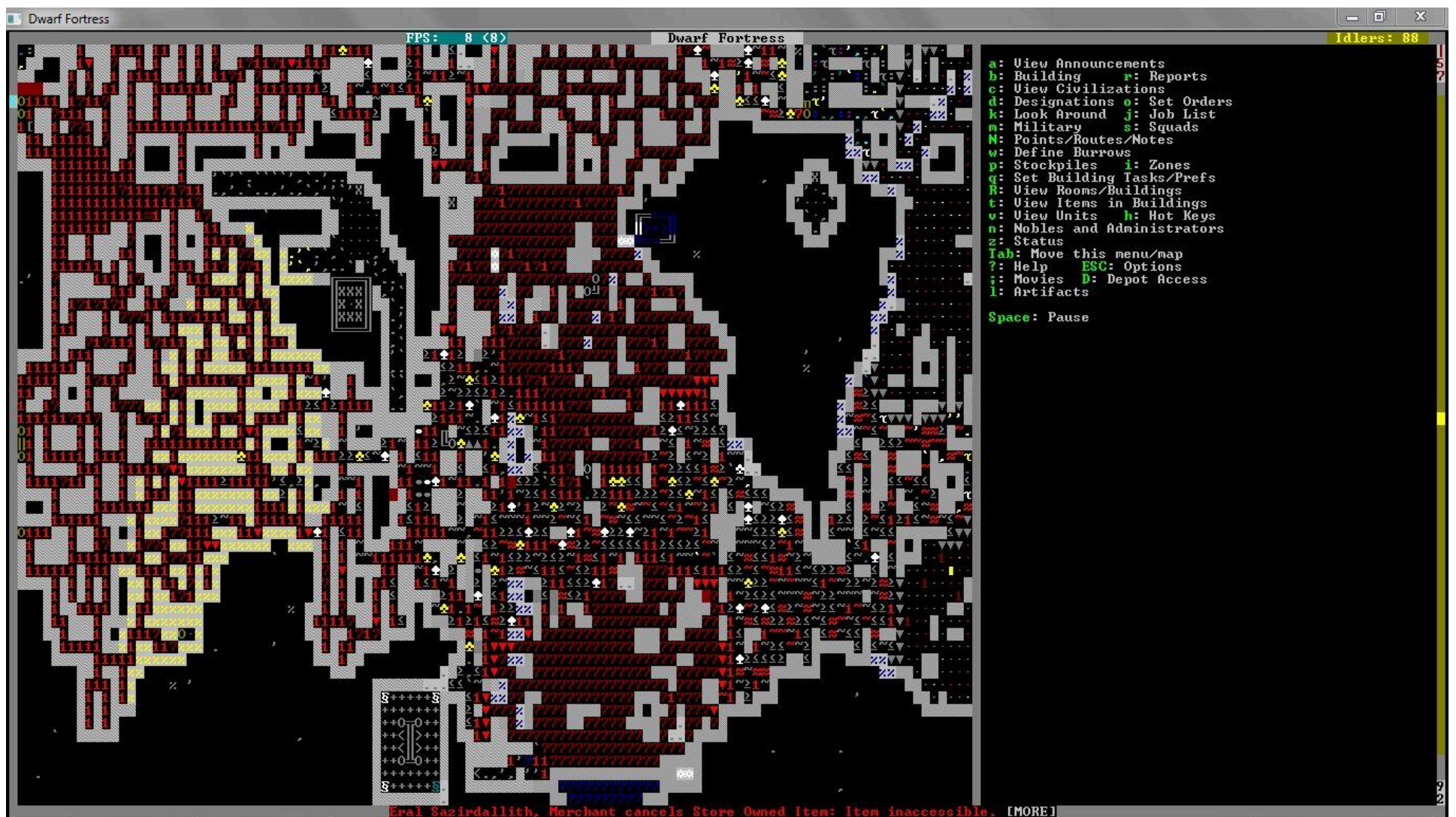
Lacking some mystery material whilst moody, the child, Mebzuth 'Quakedented' Truecaves, went berserk.

The prince, Asmel 'Murdershot' Deathchannels was summoned to deal with the threat. The captian of the guard, Zon 'Gearguild' Ironfirst, happened to be nearby. The two chased the child down, and executed her. The killing was not swift.



The child bled to death. So it goes, in Weatherwires.

The magma has receded to the level of the second-to-lowest seal, having been drained unceremoniously into the eastern caverns.

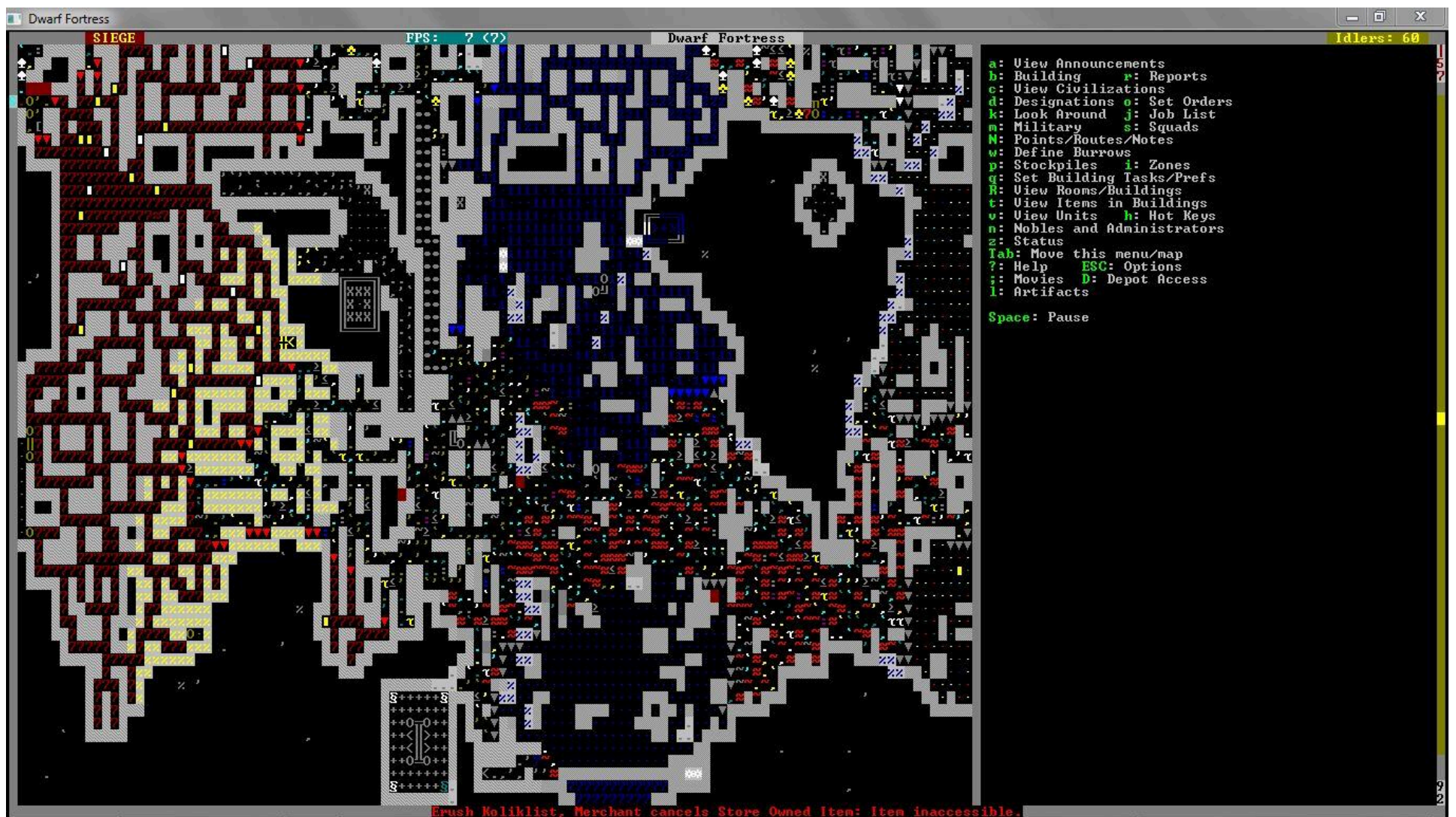


20 years have passed since the cavern floor was first submerged beneath the magma. For now, it is a charred wasteland, though that will change in time. There are now two great lava lakes, separated by narrow passages choked by apparently heat-resistant giant fungi. To the west, is a lake that is more or less permanent - there is no drain, and I intend for that magma to stay where it is. To the east is what was once a natural lake, but was drained and is currently filled with magma. The last stage of the process is to let that magma drain, and then refill the lake bed with water.

As well, excavation of the adamantine continues. Leaving the outcrop exposed to the caisson, the dwarves have gathered almost all of the precious ore that lies below it. In excess of 100 additional units have been gathered, and are being processed into wafers and cloth. I intend to outfit a few key militia members with adamantine cloaks and hoods, in preparation for a glorious battle to rid the fortress of demonic influence and secure the safety of the dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing once and for all.

Apparently, even though a brand new set of adamantine short swords has been forged, the Silvery Princesses refuse to trade in the steel short swords they have been wielding for all these years. I suppose their old weapons, since they've bestowed names by their users, have some degree of sentimental value.

The lake continues to fill. Perhaps the presence of large bodies of both magma and water in the dome would produce an increase in humidity and air flow, if such things were implemented in the game. For now, the magma lake remains a suitable place to dump refuse, while the water lake will provide ample fishing for the dwarves.



Edzul Lolokôsust, Weaponsmith has died of old age.

Thus passes Edzul Granitetamed, the last of a handful of legendary weaponsmiths that lived in Weatherwires. Born in 54, she migrated to the fortress in the early summer of 140. She reached legendary skill by crafting bolts for marksdwarves, finally attaining that level of ability around 146. She created many of the steel corkscrews which were used in the magma pumps, and in 166, created Fragrancecross - the appropriately flowery named artifact adamantine warhammer.

The year is 212 - she died at the age of 158, less than a year after crafting a trio of adamantine short swords. They will be put to good use.

With the windmill farm and pumps smashed to pieces, the dome can no longer be filled with magma. There were three fillings, the first to cleanse the dome of all meltable stone - this was the primary purpose of the filling, originally. The second filling was shorter, intended only to obsidianize part of the lake so a system for draining and refilling the water could be put into place. The third filling, which submerged the dwarven city under a sea of magma during the 190's and 200's, fulfilled a purely aesthetic goal - to turn the brown, muddied tops of the buildings into clean, sandy municipal parks of carefully cultivated fungi.

Safe with the knowledge that the dome will no longer be filled with magma, and filled with a new hope for the future inspired by the Quakedented clan, a restructuring of the dwarven city has begun. Passages which were carefully constructed with ramps, so as to allow passage but prevent magma leakage during the flooding, have been torn down, allowing free passage into and out of most buildings. A new entrance has been carved out of the central mesa to the cavern floor, allowing quicker access to the lakes and the cavern wilderness. As well, the walls which contained magma during the filling, but now only serve to block off the rest of the caverns, are being deconstructed.

In effect, the dwarves, having overcome their doom, have begun turning the dome into the utopia it was always meant to be.

And, unbeknownst to most of the last dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing, lurking just below the bottom layer of the dome, gathered into a small antechamber above a long stair, is a congregation of demons, staring willfully at the rough obsidian wall which was thrown up to block their entrance. There they stay, biding their time until the final battle in the heart of the fortress. Perhaps the ultimate doom of Weatherwires has not been averted, but merely resides below a few thin layers of rock, waiting patiently in the darkness.

The ghost problem has been growing. I've noticed, a few times so far, that levers have been pulled without my permission. No doubt, some secretive poltergeist is to blame, but there is nothing to be done about the situation. There are now 11 ghosts haunting the fortress, mostly the tortured spirits of dwarven merchants slain on the surface, confused about the unexplained disappearance of their kindred. The dwarves of Weatherwires, having forsaken the surface world entirely, cannot travel above to gather the corpses. Luckily, the ghosts have proven to be relatively harmless - so far.

At the age of 155, Udil Rimlulls the Purged Contingency, legendary hammerdwarf has passed away of natural causes - she died whilst sparring in the barracks, so it's safe to say a heart attack was the likely cause of death. She wielded one of the masterful silver war hammers crafted by the legendary weaponsmith Iden Sabrerroom in the early years.

Iden died of thirst in 141 during a terrible accident involving an uncontrollable magma flood which blocked off a section of the fortress (no record of this even exists in my journal, which begins in 146). Before that time, he created one of the first artifacts in the fortress - Abbeyphantoms the Equivalent Discovery, a copper spear. Though a modest creation, Iden went on to create many masterful weapons, including many iron short swords and silver maces and warhammers. One such warhammer was named by Udil as Fallengrasp the Poetic Illnesses - appropriate, for a weapon which smashed the spines and bruised the guts of dozens of goblins and trolls.

Udil's death comes a stark reminder to the dwarves of their own mortality, as the fortress plans and prepares for the final battle with the ancient evil. With every passing year, more and more of their number fall prey to old age, and every military legend will be needed if they are to defeat the forces of hell which await in their full strength behind the rough obsidian block wall.

A date has been set - in the spring of the year 226, by the will of Ilon Crushsiezes, the wall will be deconstructed and the ultimate fate of Weatherwires shall be decided. The date was not chosen randomly - it is a year of great portent and prophecy, for on the 1st of Granite in 226, the fort will be celebrating its centennial. Whether the story ends with *"...and they lived happily ever after"* or *"The settlement has crumbled to its end,"* the end is in sight for the dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing.

'Urdim 'Gearguild' Olondomas, patriarch is throwing a tantrum, possessed by Ilral Alathalod, Ghostly Planter!



Shorast Unâlgusil, Merchant has been struck down.

Ilral is an angry ghost - the first malicious spirit among the new batch of ghosts who cannot be memorialized. I suppose that the dwarves of Weatherwires have forgotten the names of these haunting few, and thus cannot honor them with an engraving in stone and put their tortured souls to rest. Urdim must have either never met Ilral in life, or the planter has faded from his memory - such is the anger of these ghosts at the irreverence of the dwarves that they have begun to lay claim to the bodies of the living and exact their revenge upon the fortress that has forgotten them.

Urdim Olondomas, patriarch of the prolific Gearguild clan, has died of thirst. Imprisoned for a crime he committed whilst possessed by a vengeful spirit, the dwarf was refused food or drink by his fellow dwarves, and withered away in his chains. While being of little note himself, Urdim fathered 13 children, of whom 6 have survived. The Gearguild clan has consistently been the largest of any family in the fortress, although it seems as if - if things continue - that honour will be usurped by the newly rising Quakedented clan.

And now another dwarf, a merchant guard turned stonemason, has died during a withering death sentence. The dwarves are apparently still consumed by apathy, despite the emergence of a new clan. The recent burst of hope was obviously transient, and is beginning to give way to an all-consuming wave of pessimism, manifesting as a kind of fortress-wide passive suicide.

Out of the 159 dwarves that currently dwell in Weatherwires, 62 are natural immigrants or children born into the fortress prior to the infertility crisis. 91 are recruited merchants and their guards, and 6 are the children of the Quakedented clan.

These dwarves have accepted their fate, but cannot truly face it, no more than they can face those starving, dehydrated individuals locked in chains in the stairwell beneath the barracks. Unstoppable violent ghosts murder the living, brutal death sentences are carried out simply because the fortress has no access to lead, and every day that passes brings the year of judgement that much closer. Now, more than ever, the doom of the Merchant of Echoing which began with the curse of infertility seems inevitable. This is the twilight of the dwarves, the final chapter of Weatherwires.

Another year passes in Weatherwires, and so passes another valuable asset to the fortress - Dîshmab Anvilphantom the Bent Tactics, hammer lord and captain of the Dignified Hammers. Since 1311, when Dîshmab settled in Weatherwires, she has bravely defended the fortress against countless threats. She

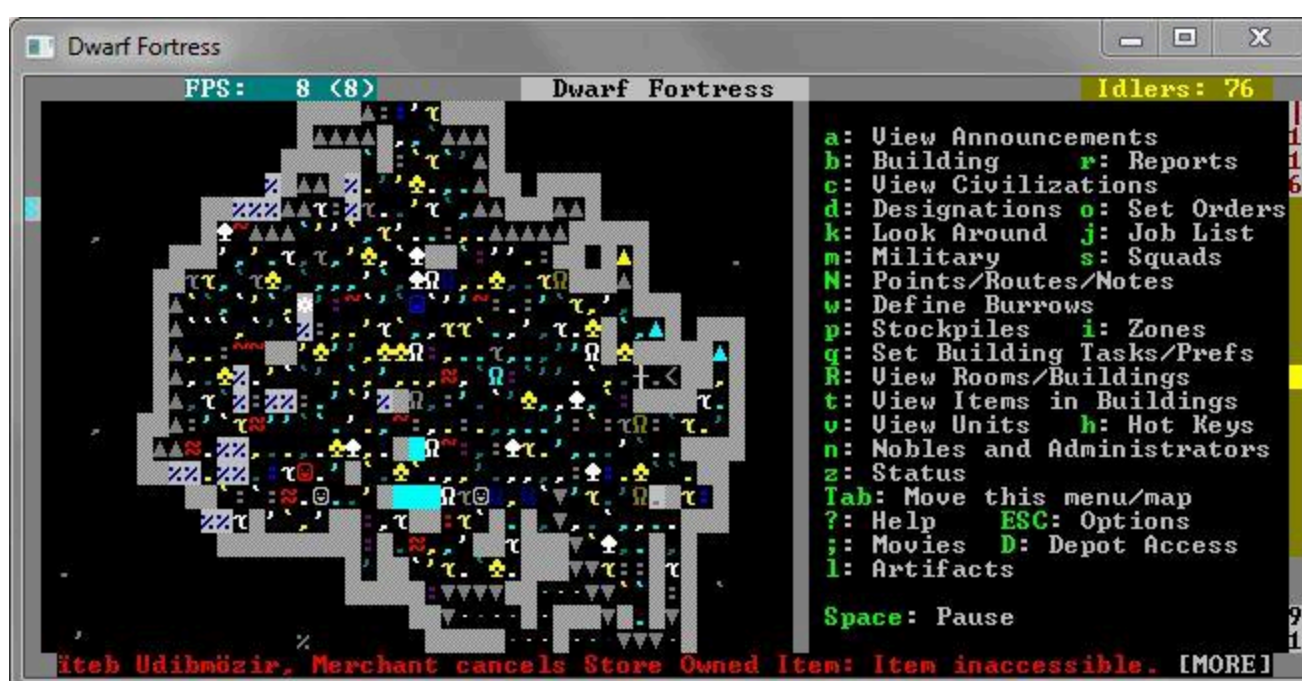
racked up a respectable list of 54 notable kills, including Baspu Powerhale the ettin. She wielded one of the other masterful silver war hammers crafted by Iden Sabreroom, upon which she bestowed the name Brutegreeds.

Now, there are only two other hammer lords, both of whom are around the age of 140. If luck favors the dwarves of Weatherwires, these two may survive to 226 - but luck, it seems, has rarely favored the Diamond Cloisters, and it is likely that most dwarves in the fortress see the Dîshmab's death as just one more nail in the coffin.

As the months wear on, the dwarves complete beautification projects around the dome. Using the various statues that the fort's craftsdwarves have produced over the years, three statuaries are erected on the cavern floor. The first is located at the foot of the citadel, amidst the natural rock pillars which support the buildings and causeways above, and is easily accessible via a passage from the central mesa. At the center, upon a patio of adamantine bricks, is an obsidian statue of Domas 'Murdershot' Tanineth (crafted by the queen herself, no less) surrounded by dwarves, commemorating her rise to sheriff in 127. Three adamantine statues of travelling dwarves surround her, representing the founding of Weatherwires in 126.

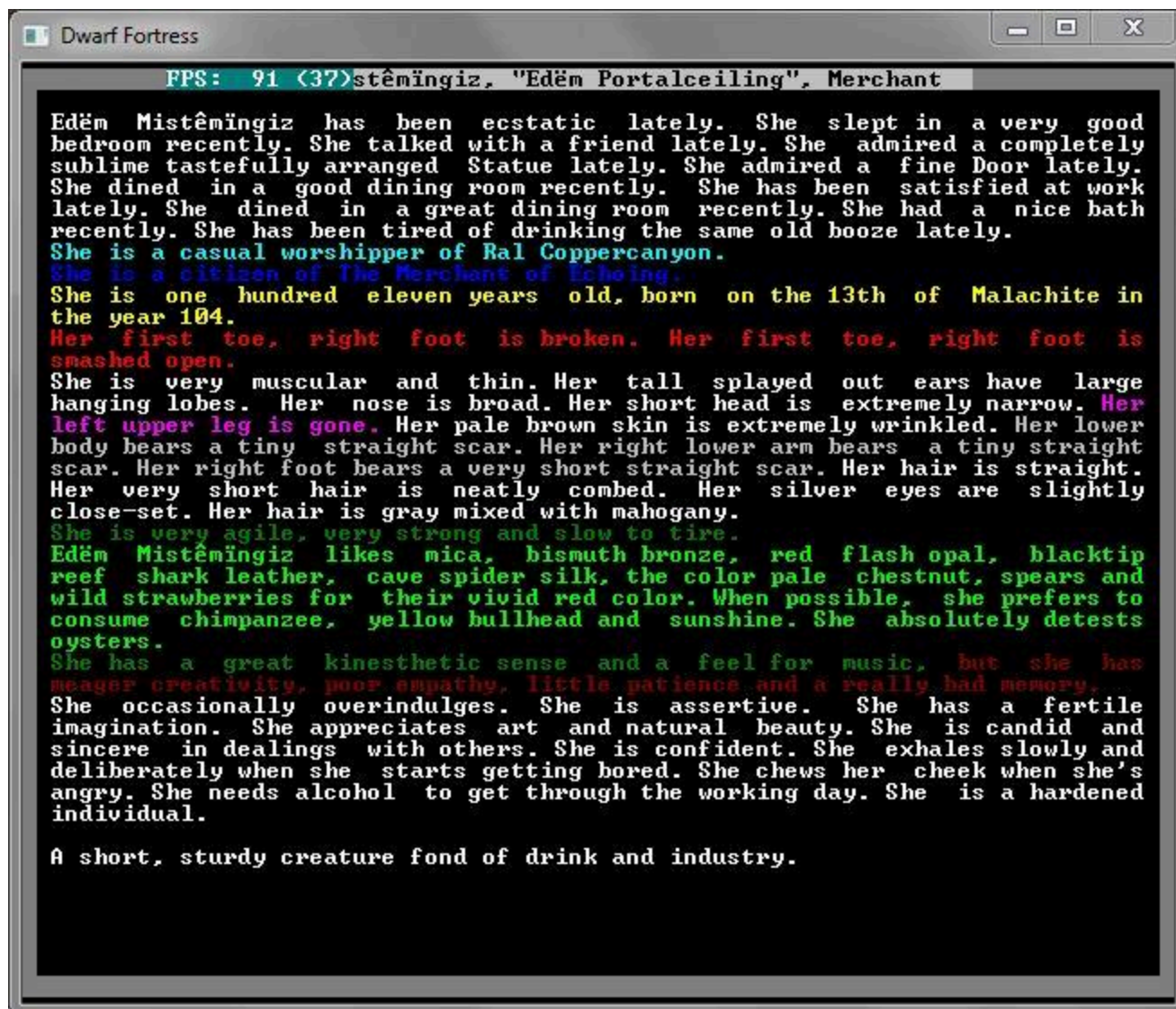


The second is in the caverns just to the east of the dome, and consists of many statues of dwarves in a ring around a central image of Id Fenceman rising from the grave, once more, as a murderous ghost in 194. Presumably, this event took place during the shifting of graves from the surface into the lower fortress, and Id would have been laid to rest shortly thereafter. The door on the east edge of the statuary leads to the map room.



The last of the three cavern statue gardens consist of silver and adamantine statues crafted entirely by a single blacksmith, Ędem Mistêmingiz. Ędem, a merchant, was chosen to train as a blacksmith in order

to produce a statue of Ral Coppercanyon, goddess of metals. Instead, Edem produced statues of many other things - most notable, about a dozen statues of oysters. Curious, I took a look at Edem's profile to see why she kept producing images of oysters.



Another dwarf who was a less dubious worshipper of Ral was brought in to produce the statue, and did so (the statue which was placed in the temple is laughing, appropriately). The oyster room has been erected in a distant part of the caverns, accessible to the dwarves only via a long walk through natural caves.



In addition to these statuaries, the farms have been moved out of the muddied areas within buildings and to the dome floor, so that these artificially sandy or silty areas can grow many-colored fungi. One such area, located in the center of the red guildhall, has been opened up to the outside of the dome, and is ringed with pillars 2 z-levels high.



As always, life in Weatherwires trudges slowly onward.

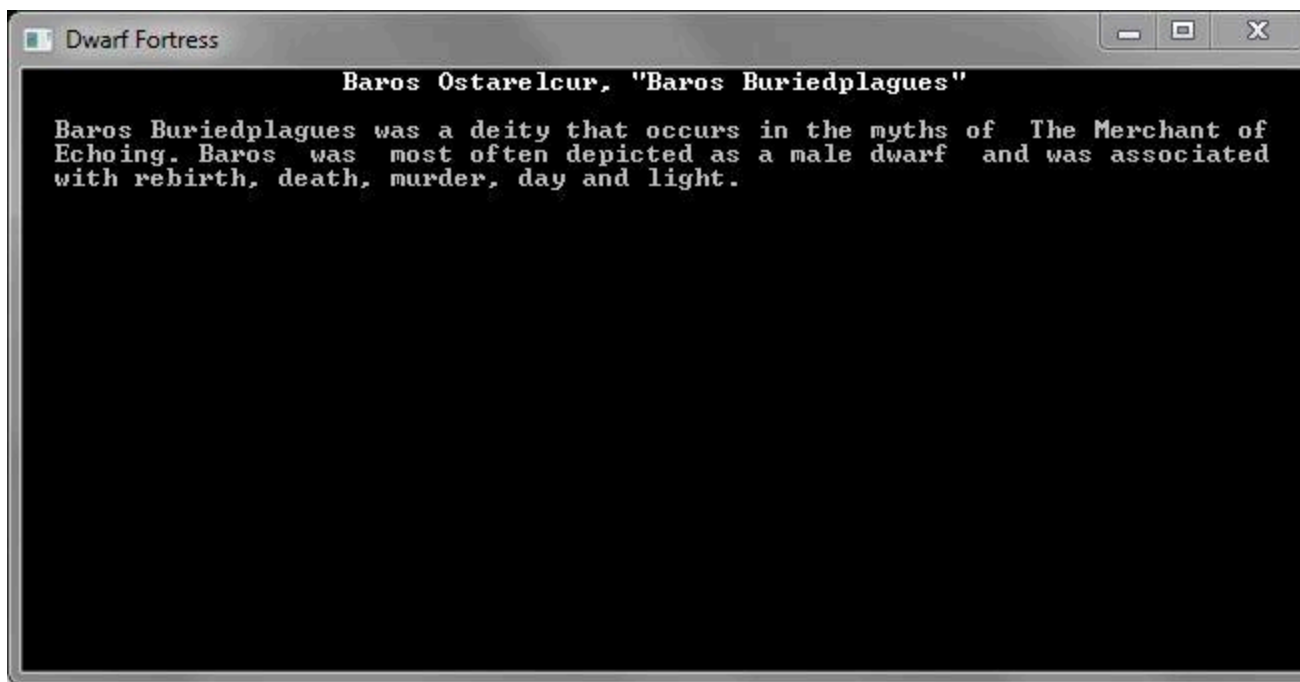
There is a plague in the fortress.

Not a sickness among the dwarves. In fact, nothing is sick at all. The plague is not a spreading disease - it is a kind of spreading *wrongness* that afflicts the very earth that the dwarves walk upon. As far as the game itself is concerned, this is obviously some kind of bug, but within the context of this story, the saga of Weatherwires, this plague is the darkest of omens, the manifestation of the will of an angry and vengeful god of murder and death.

This omen has been present in the fort for some time now, staring me in the face. For how long, I cannot say for sure, but I have just noticed it.



Here, in the heart of the dome, grows a patch of green grass. Indeed, two patches (you can see it in between the two dwarves between the stairs). In any other context, this might be a welcome curiosity, but for the dwarves of Weatherwires, who have forsaken the surface, green grass is a horrific sight. Not only does it remind them of the curses of the world above that drove them into the deeps forever, but it calls to mind an ancient myth, a deity of the Merchant of Echoing who, unlike the various other well-loved and worshipped gods, has no representation in the temple ring which dominates the dome.



Baros Buriedplagues, god of light and day, but also of murder, death, and rebirth, one of two gods not worshipped by the dwarves of Weatherwires. The surface world is his domain alone, and he has been forsaken along with it. Any dwarf who sees a patch of grass growing in the dome - the darkened, secluded sanctuary which has been sealed away from the surface by fire and stone - could not fail to be reminded of Baros, and the fact that he must view the lower fortress itself as the greatest of profanities. He has made his mark upon the Weatherwires:





...and as they pass the surface vegetation on their daily errands, the dwarves slowly realize the nature of their misfortunes, and the identity of their malefactor. In 135, the duke Kogsak Murdershot drew up the plans for the excavation of a great grotto beneath the earth, a utopia for dwarves and an escape from the lighted surface world.

It was in 135, too, that the great tantrum spiral erupted. For five years, dwarves died at the hands of their kinsmen, and the duke himself went mad. Determined to carry out her husband's plan, Domas Tickcities oversaw the excavation of the dome. Two decades after digging began, the fort was stricken with infertility. During the flooding, various mechanical issues sought to slow the pumps or cease them entirely. Now, a score of ghosts haunt the fortress, patches of darkness-defying grass grow in the deeps, and one name is on the lips of all: *Baros Buriedplagues*.

As if to hammer home the point, two more dwarves pass away from old age this year. Both possessed legendary skill in their respective trades, and had been with the fortress since the early years.

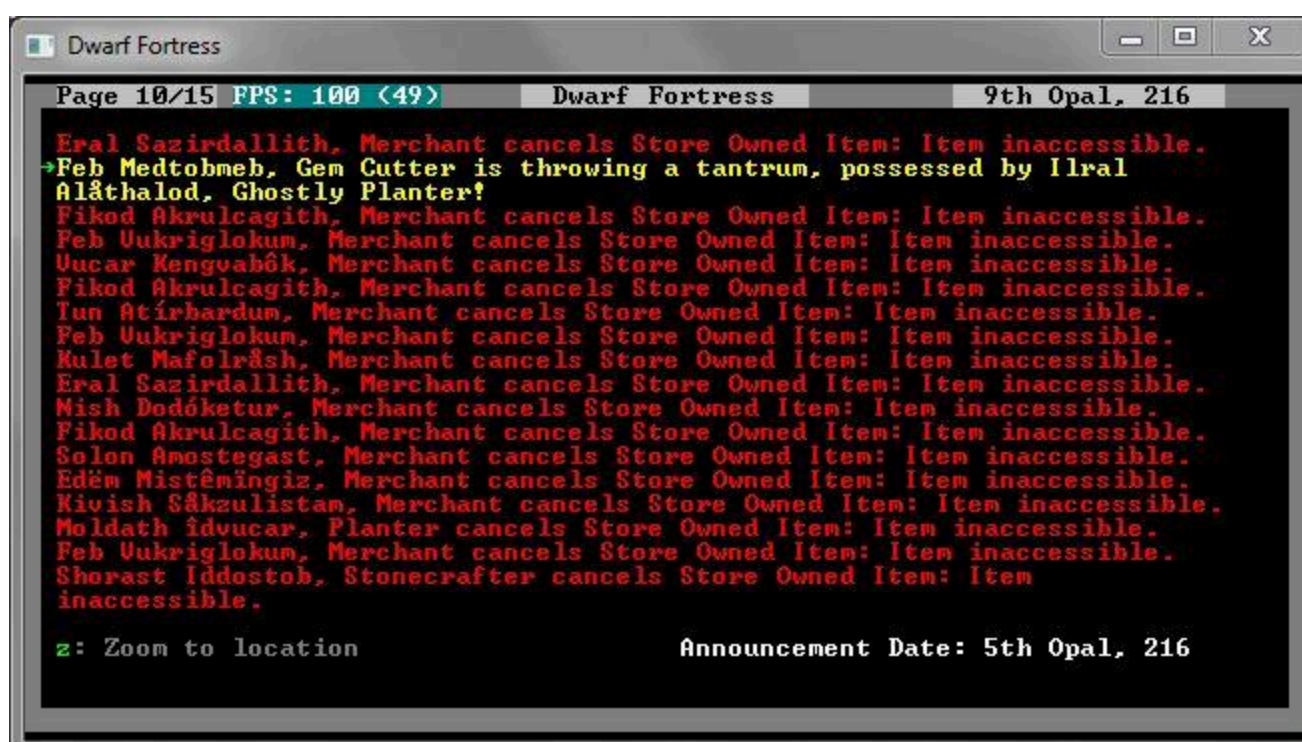


The year is 216. In precisely one decade, the nameless evil will be unleashed and the doom of Weatherwires will be complete. The dwarves continue their drudgery, having fully resigned themselves to their fate.

Feb Blockadeinch and Kogan Crewedboulder had been friends ever since they were recruited from the same caravan and came to live in the dome. Since then, the merchant had gone on to become a legendary grower, while Feb, her marksdwarf guard, had had a mood and created Failedhushed the Music of Balding (the artifact light yellow diamond coffin into which the queen Domas Tickcities had since been interred).

On this day, Feb had recently returned from a woodcutting expedition in the second cavern layer. Every able hand was needed, and Feb was one of the few who had been equipped with a copper battle axe for hewing black-caps. (New bedrooms are being added to various guildhalls, and thus every color of underground mushroom are needed - there is a shortage of black-caps.)

The two women met in Kogan's bedroom below the Languagemetal guildhall, itself furnished with black-caps tables and chairs. While they spoke, the foul spirit Ilral Aläthalod, full of rage at the living, struck again.





Kogan, standing over the body of her only friend, bloody battle axe in hand - while Ilral Aláthalod floats just outside the door, listening eagerly to the gem cutter's cries of remorse:



For murder, Kogan has been sentenced to 201 days in prison - it is likely that she will be left to die of starvation in her chains. As Zon 'Gearguild' Ironfirst, captain of the guard, drags her away to her place of death, Kogan's mood grows worse and worse, as the gravity of the situation slowly dawns upon her. Ilral Aláthalod has claimed two more.

Months have passed. The dwarves, while walking from one part of the dome to another, have trampled most of the grass that was discovered earlier - though, out of carelessness, rage, or defiance, it is

difficult to say. In any case, new patches of the miraculous vegetation have sprung up all over the dome; on top of buildings, on the mezzanine levels between guildhalls, or on the dome floor itself. So far, no grass has appeared in the other cavern layers, or atop the citadel. It seems that Baros' curse is aimed at the dome alone, although he is not yet so powerful, or bold, to defile the tomb of the queen and her children.

The fortress has run out of leather. The stores have been used up by moody dwarves, and with all the livestock having been butchered to improve FPS decades ago, there is no way to get more. The Quakedented children go into moods one by one, year after year - so far, five of the eleven children have gone insane from lack of tanned hides.

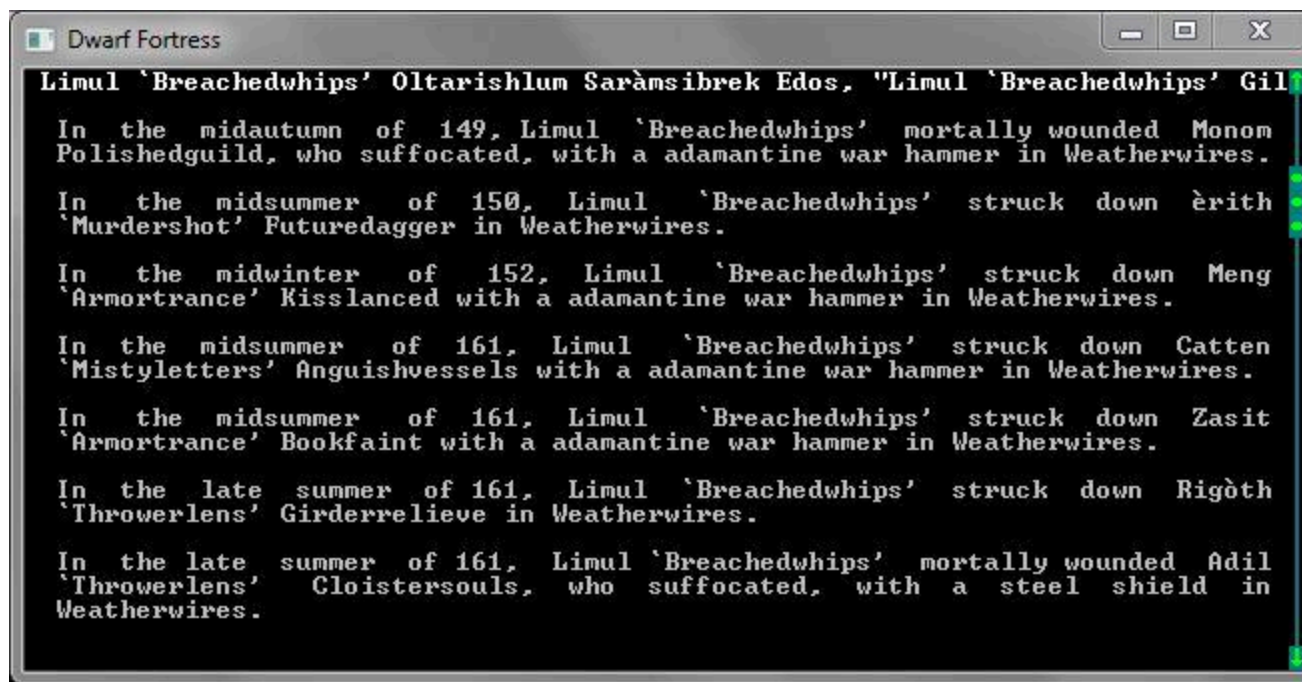
Not much to report - the game runs nonstop 24/7 on my computer at a steady 8 FPS. About one year passes every two days or so. The beautification projects are essentially complete, so it's just a matter of letting fate run its course, now.

Another Quakedented child, Kumil Spiraledplank, went into a mood in the winter of 218. His mad requests for leather went unheeded, but instead of simply sinking into a deep depression or fathomless madness, the young child instead flew into a berserk rage, running out of the workshops and down the stairwell, murder on his mind.



Kumil ran straight through the Languagemetal guildhall and out of the building, into the coffin garden which lay to the southwest, against the very edge of the dome. The wall at this low point in the grotto was nearly vertical, only curving away at some dizzyingly high point in the darkness far above - but Kumil was not thinking about the achievement of his forbears on this day. His mind was focused on the obese, clean-shaven female dwarf idling in the clearing.

By a twist of fate, the dwarf was none other than the infamous Limul 'Breachedwhips' Gildnut the Great Salve of Amazement. No stranger to combat, Limul had served as captain of the guard from 138 to 165. These years might be considered the golden age of Weatherwires, encompassing the excavation and first flooding of the dome, as well as the initial stages of migration into the deeps - a time before infertility and spectral infestations. During these years, however, the bald captain of the guard was a feared dwarf, an emissary of death in a time when no jails meant beatings were the punishment of choice. Newcomers to the fort scoffed at Limul's choice of weapon, but they stopped laughing once they witnessed the shocking efficiency of some of Limul's beatings.

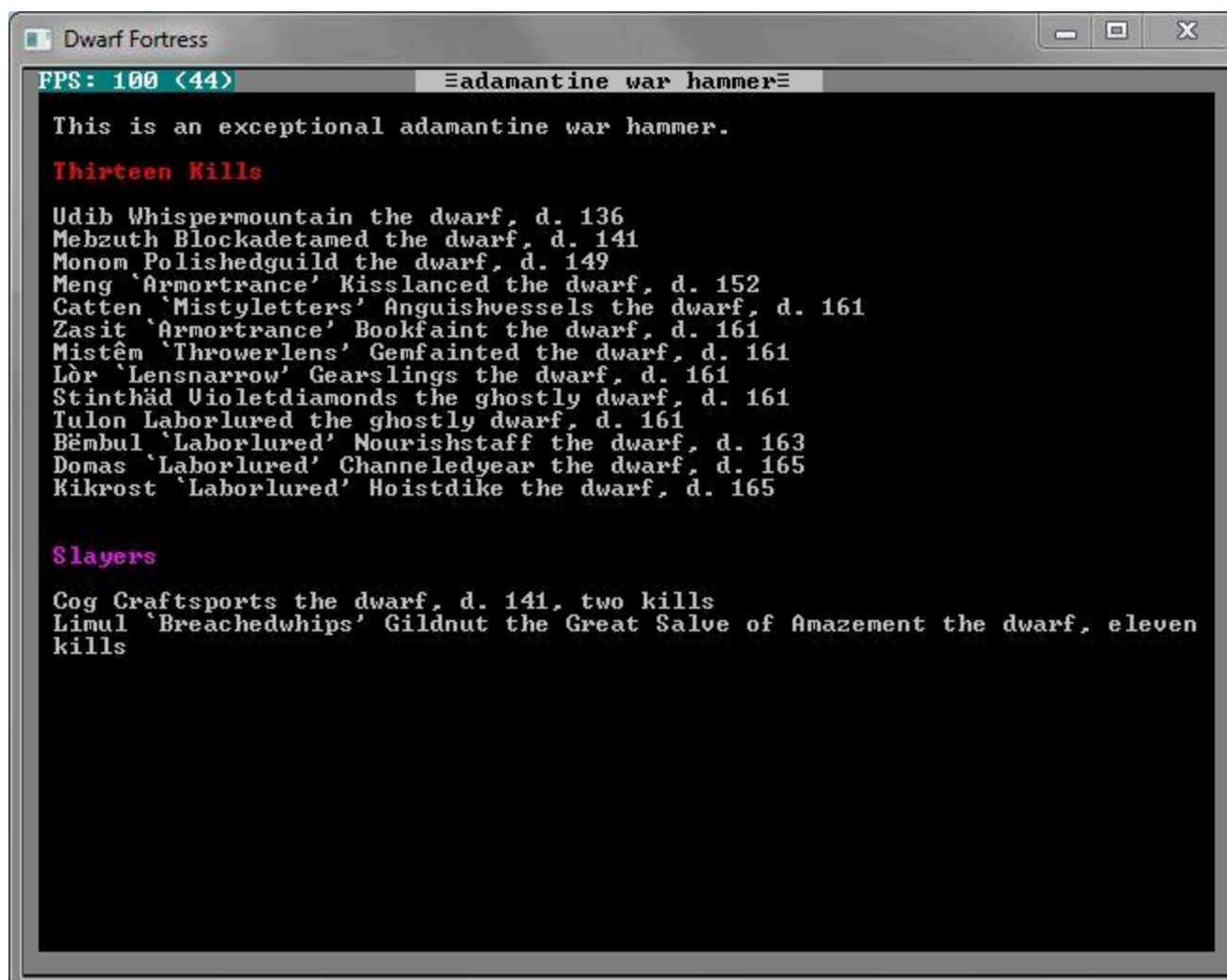


With a murderous howl, Kumil chased after Limul, the two running to and fro through much of the western part of the dome. Kumil failed to land any hits, and it seemed that the prince or the current captain of the guard would soon arrive to deal with the problem - until, at the entrance to the nether-cap and fungiwood building, just to the south of the citadel, Limul turned and administered her old brand of justice.





Zon Ironfirst, captain of the guard, arrived on the scene only moments later to find her predecessor standing over the child's broken body, blood dripping from her fists. The new captain wielded the same weapon as the last - an exceptional adamantine warhammer - and in that moment Limul laid eyes on the instrument of justice, possibly for the first time since she laid it in a weapon bin in a stockpile years ago. On this day the dwarves are reminded why Limul is called the Great Salve of Amazement.



Time crawls by beneath the earth, far from the daily passage of day and night. The years are measured in the deaths of those who have witnessed, personally, the rise and fall of Weatherwires...



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Dwarf Fortress
Page 24/24 FPS: 100 <47> Dwarf Fortress 28th Obsidian, 218
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Tirist Ūthirakost, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Rith Thaknomal, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Ast Cagithnish, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Uucar Logemcatten, Merchant cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Moldath idvucar, Planter cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Spring has arrived!
The Stray Guineacock <Tame> has died of old age.
->Meng Okirsarvesh, Planter has died of old age.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 28th Obsidian, 218
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 19/19 FPS: 100 <48> Dwarf Fortress 28th Obsidian, 219
Edem Mistemingiz, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Stakud Iaththikut, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Fikod Akrulcagith, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ast Cagithnish, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kogan Febokun, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Stakud Iaththikut, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Oddom Rithtilesh, Bone Carver cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Zon Menggidthur, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Oddom Rithtilesh, Bone Carver cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Ast Cagithnish, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Zon Menggidthur, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Kogan Febokun, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Zon Menggidthur, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
Spring has arrived!
The Stray Guineacock <Tame> has died of old age.
Catten Nosimmeng Shakethlist, Swordmaster has died of old age.
->Sazir 'Nutschloister' Ishlumoddom, patriarch has died of old age.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 28th Obsidian, 219
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...and also by the frequency of the mayor's perpetually unmet mandates.



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Dwarf Fortress
Page 26/26 FPS: 92 <42> Dwarf Fortress 2nd Timber, 218
Mish Dodoketur, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Mish Mitigstakud, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
Ast Cagithnish, Merchant cancels Store Owned Item: Item inaccessible.
There is nothing to catch in the central cavern.
ezum Amkinsazir, Miner cancels Sleep: Path blocked.
->ezum Amkinsazir, Miner has died from thirst.
z: Zoom to location Announcement Date: 2nd Timber, 218
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Among the dead is Meng Elderfurnace, a planter who settled in the fortress in 130, one of the handful of survivors of the tantrum spiral that would break out only a few years later. Sazir Nuts cloister, patriarch of a defunct clan, served for decades as a marksdwarf. Perhaps most notable is Catten Kindnesslashes the Torrid Gaze, one of the legendary swordsdwarves of the Silvery Princesses, who claimed nearly 60 goblins and trolls in defense of the fort.

While the punishment carried out against Vucar the merchant goes almost unnoticed amongst the dwarves of Weatherwires, the death of Ézum Gladnessbridges is noted by many. Having lived in the fort since 138, he was the friend of dozens of dwarves, including the royal family. He served as a marksdwarf alongside Sazir Nuts cloister for many years, before taking up the pick again to mine out the adamantine spire deep beneath the dome.

The deaths of these few are considered by the living to be a merciful blessing in the eyes of many. The legendary warriors have long since realized that a slow withering away from old age is more likely than an honorable death in combat - and so they wait, training ceaselessly in the monastic barracks in the south of the dome, eager for the day when the nameless evil will be unleashed. The older citizenry look forward to a peaceful death in their bed in the coming years, but all the younger generation has to look forward to is a death sentence, chained away in an oubliette. Even these fates, however, are seen as preferable to the eternal torture and damnation that awaits those who will still be alive when the obsidian wall is torn down and the endless waves of demons and hellfire, held back only temporarily, is set loose upon the dome.



Mosus Ilushat was the last dwarf with any skill in armoring left in the fortress. Id Inkwhirled the Washed Metal of Growls and Imush Humidpillars the Kindnesses of Gleaming had bravely defended the fortress against countless threats. All three had been with the fort since the early years, and took part in countless encounters, joyful and tragic, throughout the history of Weatherwires. Although

their deaths are mourned by many, in a few years their individual tales will be forgotten forever, and Mosus, Imush, and Id will fade into the nameless hundreds that the legends will say inhabited the mythical dome.

In the spring of 220, the angry ghost Ilral Aláthalod (Boltedday, in the dwarven tongue, though no dwarf now remembers her name) struck out against the fortress once again. Discontented with merely causing the demise of harmless civilians, the spirit possessed the master lasher Etur Urnwet the Savage Shriek of Tornados. Using the warrior's body for her own ends, Ilral attacked the militia commander, Vabok Earthenfins, to no avail - the handful of remaining military dwarves knew each other far too well, and were too strong on the defense - the commander easily parried Etur's strikes, and soon the tantrum passed and the lasher returned to his senses.

It seemed that Etur was just the latest in a long string of dwarves to be possessed by Ilral and do no real damage to the fort - though, if the possession had happened elsewhere, the result could have been disastrous. The incident was passed off as a near miss, until the captain of the guard dragged Etur off to serve a long sentence in chains for disorderly conduct.

Etur, however, was not to have the peaceful death that so many had suffered, dying of thirst or hunger in chains. The captain of the guard stripped Etur of his military status for the duration of the punishment, but let him keep his equipment - a full adamantine kit, including Archscald the Sable Meditation, an iron whip, and Dellwad, a steel buckler. With his mind no longer focused upon military training, a burst of inspiration came upon him. For a season, he strained against the chain, forgotten by his fellow citizens and brothers in arms, trying to break free and claim a workshop elsewhere in the fortress. Eventually, he grew mad with rage, and he howled like an angry beast in a cage. He had to be put down, lest he get his hands on an innocent passerby.



The military was summoned to deal with the latent threat, and as fate would have it, one of the nearest dwarves was Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, militia captain of the Lone Lashes and the only remaining squadmate of poor Etur. One of the macedwarves was there, as well as the captain of the guard, but Eral's steel mace did only slightly more damage than the adamantine warhammer - Eral was too skilled of a defender, even in madness.

Against his squadmate, Nomal showed the incredible potential penetrating power of a mere iron whip, named Spuntame the Rumors of Calm, against a full suit of adamantine armor. He landed blow after blow, each strike chipping away a flake of bone or severing a tendon. A strike to the lower spine deftly severed Etur's spinal cord, and he went to the floor. A lash to either hand and his whip and buckler clattered away to the masterfully engraved floor. Nomal landed lash after lash upon the prone dwarf, seeming almost sadistic in the execution, until finally he kicked Etur in the head, burying the toe of his -adamantine high boot- in the lasher's skull.

There are now a mere 10 dwarves in the military of Weatherwires. One is the prince, who is well-trained, but one is also the captain of the guard, who is essentially useless in real combat. As, every year, more of these peerless warriors fall prey to old age, accidents, or draconian punishment, the final fate of Weatherwires seems assured.

Karakzon: "Perhaps remove the captain of the guard from his post?"

The dwarves might, if the captain's actions were seen as being unjust, or unnecessary. At this point, the death sentence is seen as a mercy by the citizens in the face of the horrors that are to come.

Even so, the gradual loss of the ancient legendary warriors threatens to deprive the fort of any glory during the final battle. Many of the younger generations answer the call, and are recruited into the military under the tutelage of military legends who have eaten and breathed nothing but training and combat for the past seven or eight decades.

Shorast Phraseposts the Odorous Temple of Diamond, the last legendary hammerdwarf, takes under his tutelage Kib "Gloveowners" Waxpaddled (ex-marksdwarf) and Limul Breachedwhips the Great Salve of Amazement (the old captain of the guard).

Swordmaster Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances begins to train three caravan guards who have appeared on my list of recruit-able dwarves. It's a little odd, since they didn't appear there when they first arrived, but they all have since gone through moods, which might have done something to make them more acceptable to the military hierarchy. Two more recruits are inducted into the Grooved Book-Volcanos, the militia commander's squad.

Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, now the only lashdwarf left in existence, agrees to teach his craft to the four surviving children of the Lashhushed clan, who see their training more as the fulfillment of a prophecy than as a responsibility.

The prince Asmel "Murdershot" Deathchannels, legendary axedwarf and captain of the the Royal Fortresses, forms what will eventually be an elite squad of axedwarves. He takes as his second-in-command Kol "Languagemetal" Claspedrelief, the so-called youngest dwarf. By decree, he claims as his pupils the Quakedented children to join his squad as well. Though only two are old enough to join the military, the others will soon follow, entering into the squad when they come of age.

The sudden crowding of new recruits in the barracks caused an influx of ghosts, including the accursed Ilral Boltedday. In the blur of ectoplasm and adamantine that followed, three military dwarves received minor injuries, the captain of the Silvery Skunks was arrested and thrown in jail, the captain of the guard's right hand was smashed open, and Rakust "Lashhushed" Doorpolishes' right arm was torn off at the shoulder. New barracks have been designated at separate points around the dome, with squads spread out amongst them.

There are now 39 ghosts haunting the fortress, none of which appear on the memorial engraving list.

As the years wear on, the collected entropy in the dome reaches critical levels, threatening to tear Weatherwires apart despite the approaching year of 226.

Nish Bitemachine, merchant was being trained as an armorsmith, so as to replace Mosus Ilushat, who had died three years before. He set to work, producing copper bucklers repeatedly, and the furnace operators were tasked with melting down each buckler as Nish made them. Once he reached a level of skill where he actually became attached to his works (now of a more respectable quality), he began to grow upset as his creations were melted back down into their component parts. He flew into a brief rage, smashing a nearby statue, which earned him a minor jail sentence (probably not long enough to be a death sentence).

While Zon "Gearguild" Ironfirst led Nish to the prison, the merchant threw another tantrum, turning on the young captain of the guard in a blind flurry of rage.



The captain of the guard is now dead, and the dwarves see no point in finding another to fill the position. In three short years, the end will come for good - of what use will be justice then?

Once again, Ilral Boltedday has indirectly killed a dwarf.



The vengeful spirit took possession of Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes, and using the spearmaster's legendary skill and artifact adamantine weaponry, made mincemeat of one of his squadmates.



At the age of 152, Vabôk collapsed in the barracks. He possessed legendary skill in nearly every non-weapon combat skill, as well as being a legendary speardwarf and knife-user. With only a large iron dagger in his hands (no shield), he slew two titans and a minotaur during his first years in Weatherwires, and was promoted to militia commander shortly thereafter. According to legends mode, his second kill - a huge, violet-feathered mite with a regal bearing and poisonous bite - was made with his bare hands.

By slaying these two titans, Vabôk single-handedly made the world pass from the Age of Myth and into the Age of Heroes - with only a single year (152) comprising the Age of Legends.



The passing of Vabôk Earthenfins is representative of the passing of Weatherwires. A great dwarf who, in his early life, shook the foundations of the time itself and changed the world forever. As the years wore on, he only grew stronger, until none could defeat him in single combat. In the end, however, the millstone of time took its toll, and ground Vabôk into dust.

So, too, is the fortress being ground down. Dwarves die from uncontrollable accidents, unfulfillable moods, and unstoppable ghosts every year, slowly but surely. Poltergeists seize items and hurl them at helpless civilians. Pillars of smoke rise from the southwestern quarter. Unwanted clothing in various stages of decay litter the streets. Mischievous spirits occasionally pull levers, and angry ghosts throw dwarves into violent tantrums. Even if the enemy was not being unleashed on the centennial, Weatherwires could not possibly last forever. A few years, decades maybe, but not forever.

Libash Dippedurns has been named militia commander. If she does not die of old age, or is murdered by a ghost, or falls prey to any of the other possible accidents which could happen, she will lead the final defense against the forces of hell which will be released in one year's time.



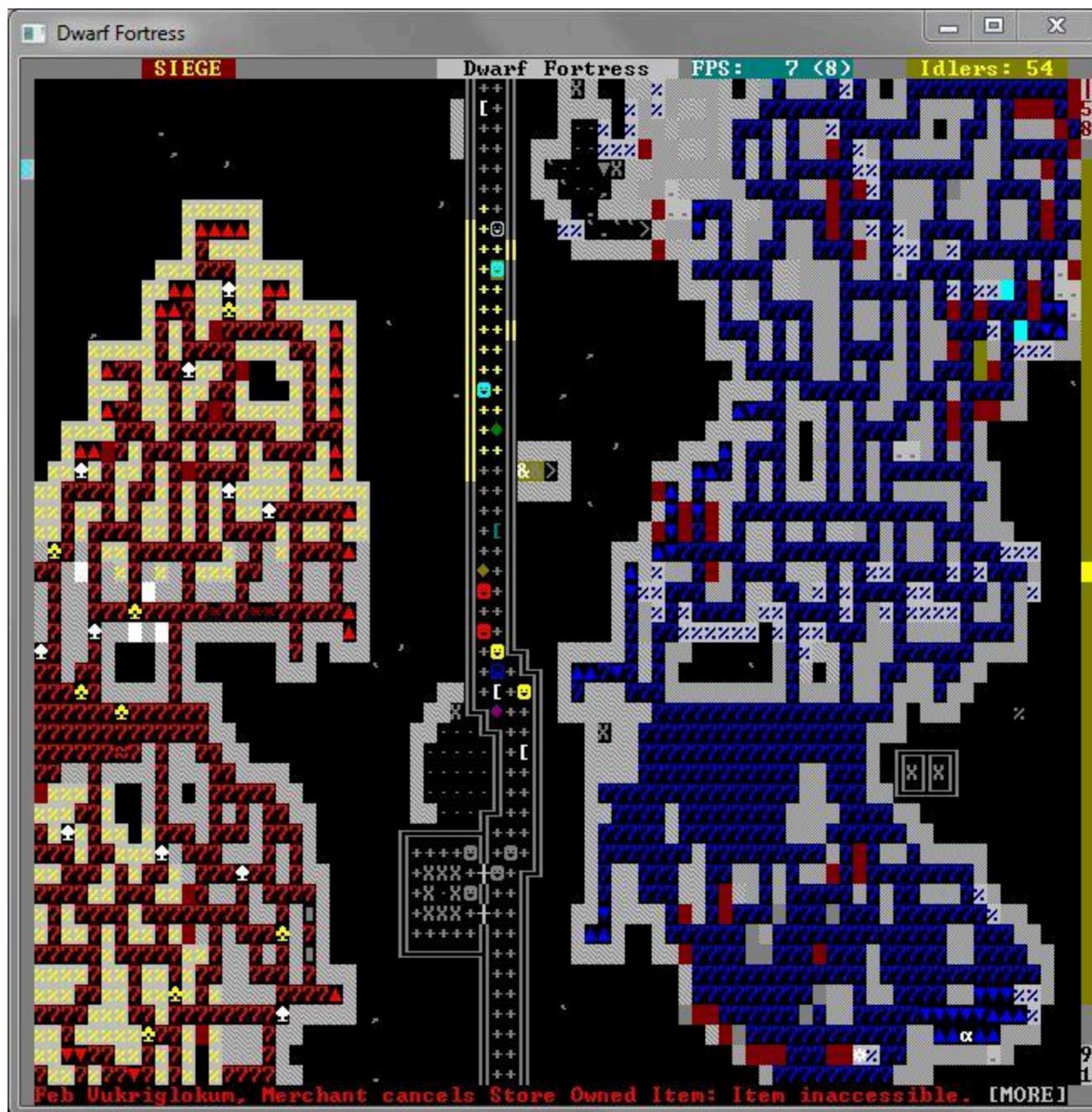
The appointed day has arrived, and on the eve of destruction, the patriarch of clan Languagemetal, father of the so-called youngest dwarf and legendary macedwarf, dies of old age. Whether it is the will of some nameless fate, or the vengeful god Baros Buriedplages, or some other entity beyond the comprehension of the dwarves, the death of Eral Languagemetal is the last mercy that will be afforded to the dwarves of Weatherwires.

I've uploaded the [final map](#) to the DFMA. I'll begin adding annotations now, and wait to make the final plunge later tonight.

On a long enough timeline, the survival rate for every fortress drops to zero.

The relentless wearing down of the fortress has reached its breaking point. 37 ghosts of various dispositions haunt the dome, and one in particular has already claimed many dwarves in its hatred for the living (that's about 1 ghost to every 4 dwarves - the current fortress population is 144). The dead cannot be stopped, and so the destruction of Weatherwires, no matter how much the dwarves try to build it back up, is ultimately inevitable. It was decided decades ago that on this day the barriers holding back oblivion would be released, and Weatherwires would find its end not in an agonizing whittling down over the course of decades, but in a fiery blaze of glory, a clash of demonflesh and adamantine which would echo in the dome for eternity.

The military assumes positions under the command of Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes. Every squad at the commander's disposal is positioned along the length of the narrow passage into which the enemy will pour. Libash knows that if but a single demons were to break past his defenses and into the vast hollowness of the dome, her forces will be useless - the fiends would simply fly throughout the grotto and pick off dwarves where they stood.



Immediately to the north of the breach is positioned the Silvery Princesses. To the south, Libash and her surviving squadmate, Shorast Sealmet are positioned alongside the Silvery Skunks. All of these dwarves - even the new recruits - possess legendary skill in their respective weapons.

Behind Libash and her compatriots are positioned the Lone Lashes, now comprised almost entirely by the only survivors of clan Lashhushed. They, too, are legendary warriors, despite having only trained for a few years. The captains are apparently stellar teachers.



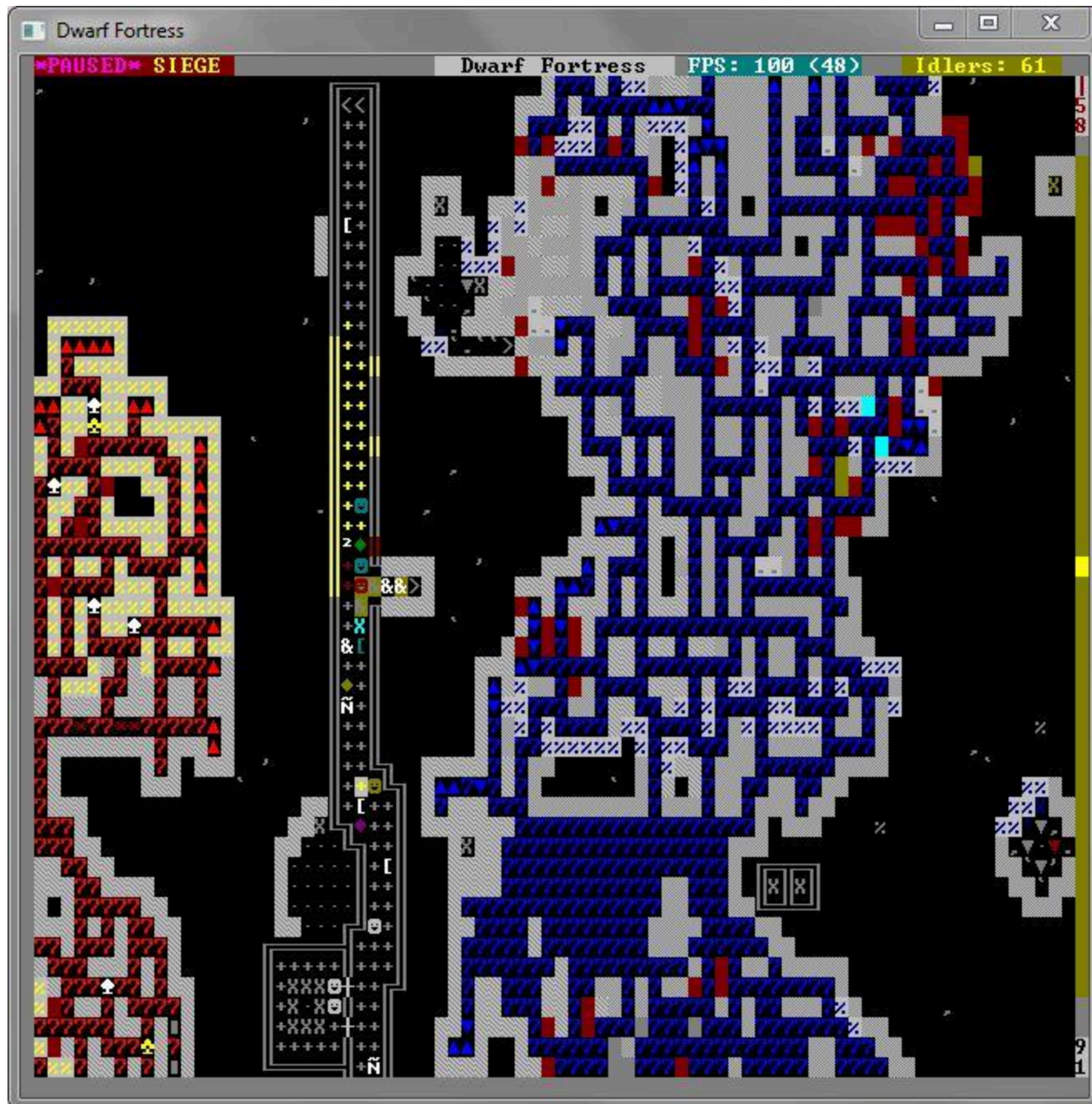
Positioned behind the Silvery Princesses are the prince and his squad, the Royal Fortresses. Many of these recruits are now legendary axedwarves, but poor Logem "Quakedented" Sparkswords has only been in the squad for a few short months, and possesses no military skills whatsoever. Kol "Languagemetal" Claspedrelief, however, has only grumbled and shirked his training, so despite being in the squad for longer than any of the Quakedented children, he is only a competent axedwarf. Presumably his coddled childhood as the youngest dwarf resulted in a spoiled brat with an over-developed sense of entitlement - in which case, the coming battle will be a sickening wake-up call.

Asmel "Murdershot" Deathchannels, prince of Weatherwires and son of the old duke, thinks back to the days of his youth. He remembers running along the rim of the caldera in the diffuse light of the upper fortress, laughing with his brother and sisters, and the other friends of the Murdershot children - Kogan "Ceilingintense" Toolfriends, whose parents died in a cave-in, leaving him orphaned; and Lòr "Lensnarrow" Gearslings, with whom his sister Cog, now the queen, had had a brief affair. But now his siblings were dead, Cog was most likely mad with power, and their friends had gone insane and withered away from thirst or starvation in the tantrum spiral during his childhood. Soon, he would meet them again in whatever afterlife Baros Buriedplagues, the god of light and death, saw fit to grant him.

Commander Libash has no illusions about this conflict. She knows that the chances of the dwarves winning are slim to none - but she does not confide this in her squadmates. She only rails them onto victory, claiming that this shall be their hour of glory, even though she knows deep in her soul that she leads the last of her civilization into oblivion. Vabòk knew that the fight was unwinnable too, she suspected, although he would have never said it. They were squadmates, not friends - dwarves like Vabòk and Libash, who spent years doing weapons drills over and over, had no friends.

With a heart that felt like it was made of slade, the commander issued the signal to deconstruct the wall. Shorast Rockclearings, a merchant guard turned stonemason, moved forth and began to tear down the rough obsidian block wall.

Shorast pulled down the wall, stone by stone - but once the barest breach was exposed, a foul rush of air, reeking of rot and brimstone, broke down the rest of the wall, knocking the dwarf backwards. Immediately, the horde of demons began pouring through the narrow breach in the wall - giant tapirs composed of ash, mongooses composed of salt, and of course, the fire-breathing skinless pterosaurs which had already caused the deaths of four military dwarves. As they descended upon poor Shorast, who hadn't even the time to turn to run, the defenders of Weatherwires rushed in to slay the invaders.

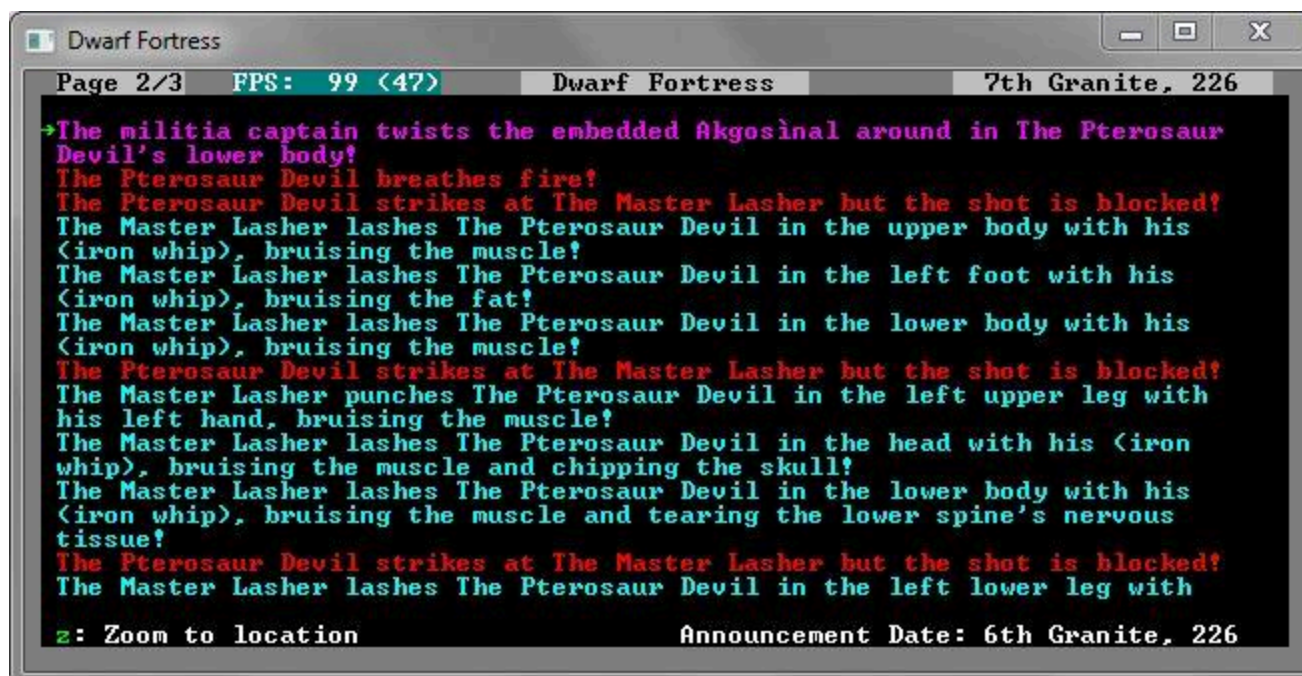


Some demons, the dwarves quickly discovered, were easier to kill than others.



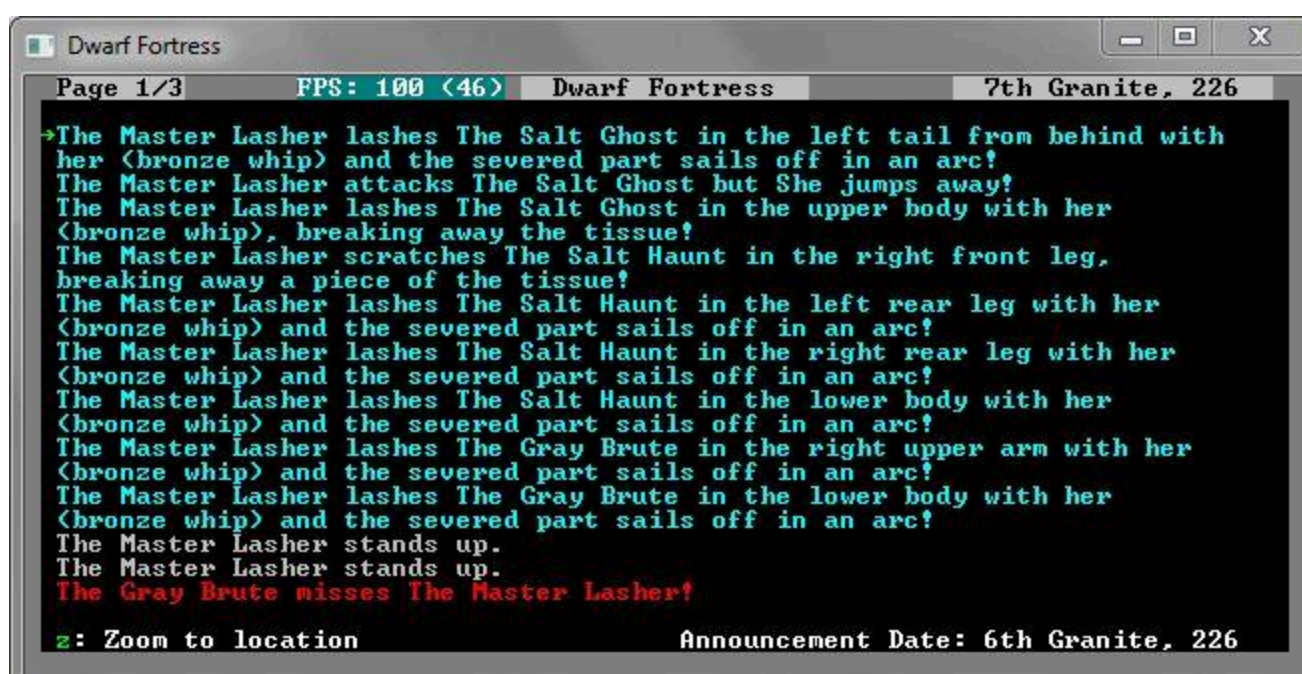


Others were a bit more challenging.



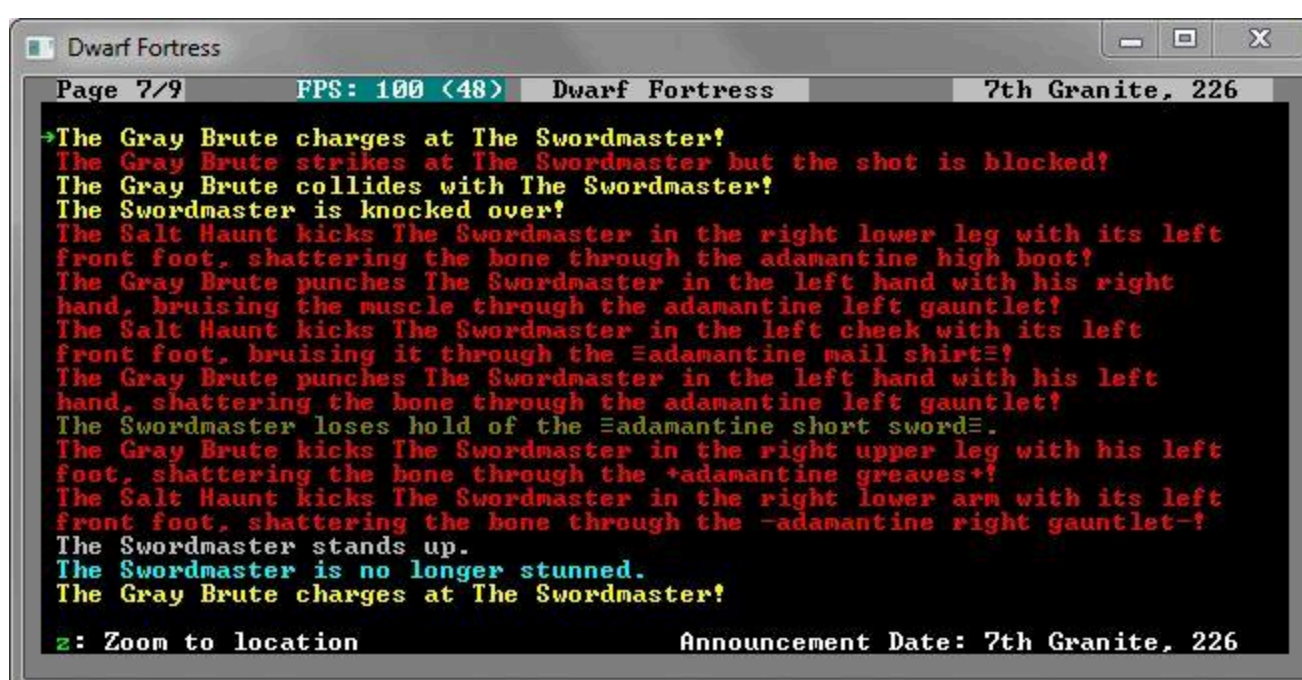
Eventually, after breaking nearly every bone in his body, and setting him on fire, one of the demons landed a kick square on the stonemason's head, killing him.

The battle rages, and the demons claim their first military kill. Rakust Doorpolishes, of clan Lashhushed, fought bravely, claiming a few kills before he was finally taken down. One of the mongoose-like salt ghosts caught Rakust from behind, kicking him with such strength that the whiplash broke his spine, despite his adamantine breastplate. Helpless and paralyzed, the demons crushed his body mercilessly.





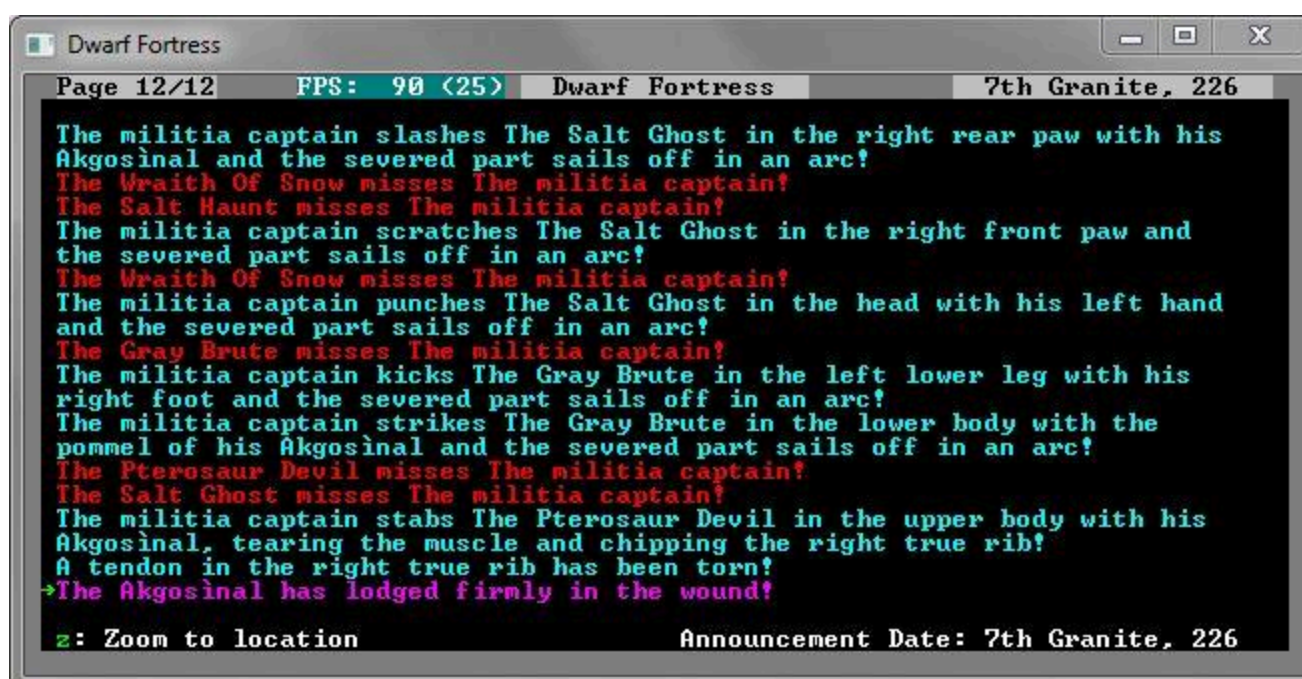
A swordmaster by the name of Oddom Bellstrussed, formerly a caravan guard, managed to slay a single fiend of shadow before being slain in combat. With well placed strikes to his hands, the enemy shattered his hands, despite his adamantine gauntlets, thus disarming him. After that, it was only a matter of time before the helpless dwarf was slain by the unstoppable demons.





While locked in combat with a pterosaur devil, Dumat the swordmaster was caught off guard by one of the ash tapirs, which crushed his skull in a surprise attack. On the other side of the breach, one of the ash tapirs punched the other swordmaster, Catten in the left hand, breaking her bones and forcing her to drop her steel shield - allowing the skinless pterosaur demon nearby to swoop in and snap her neck.

Meanwhile, the only remaining member of the Silvery Princesses, Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, is kicking ass and taking names.



And, in a truly dwarven display of idiocy, Libash Dippedurns left the site of battle to take a quick nap.

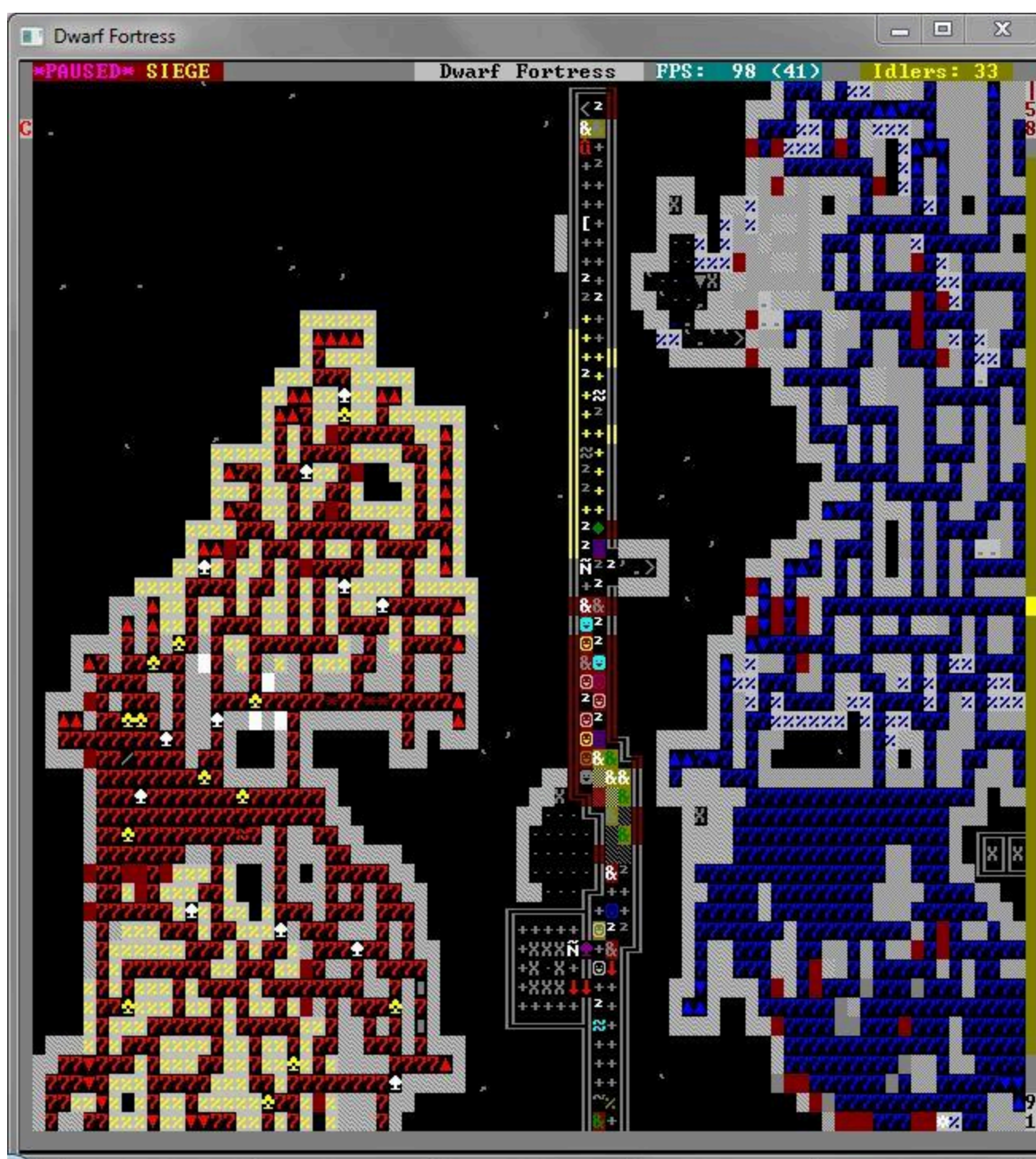


A handful of non-military dwarves are struck down as they try and rush in to collect the dead, and the refuse of the slain demons. The remaining fiends take advantage of the opportunity for carnage presented by the noncombatants, and slay dwarf after dwarf that they can see. The military is stretched thin along the corridor, each warrior fighting many foes single-handedly, and so it is impossible for them to protect the innocent civilians who have strayed into the corridor.





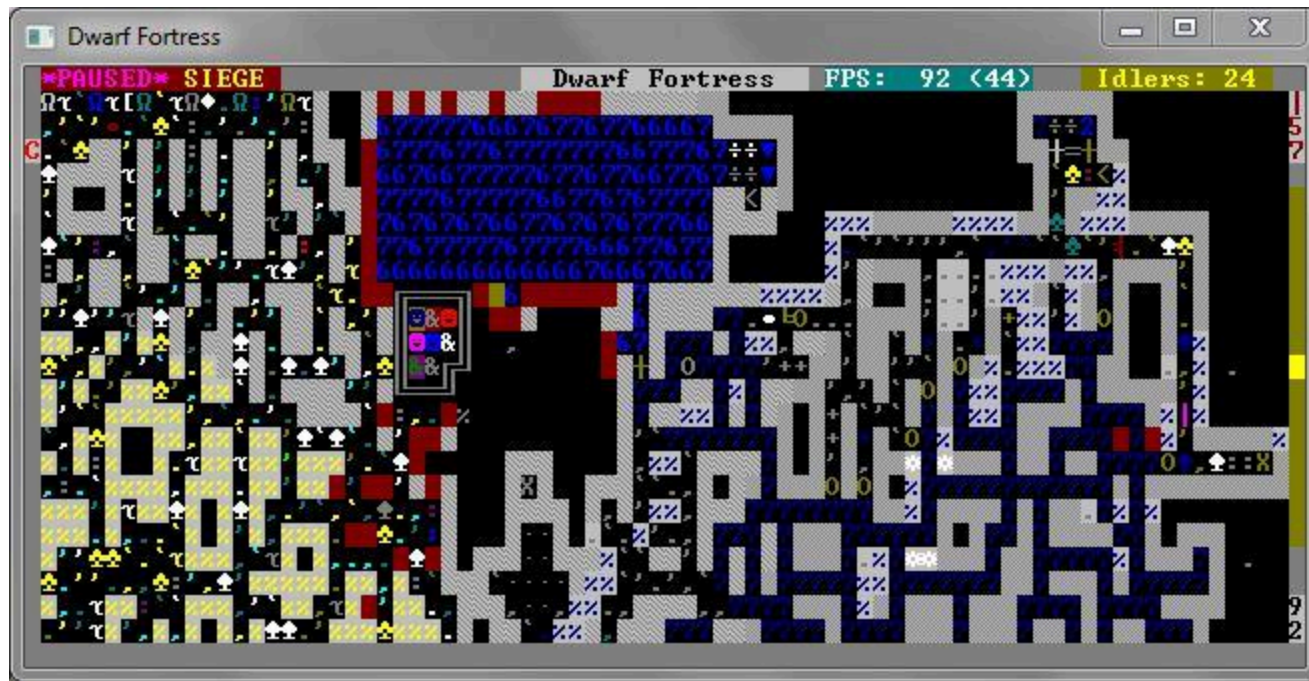
Amongst the fallen is Ineth Lensbeaks, matriarch of clan Thunderbridge and long-time manager of Weatherwires. She was appointed to that position in 138, seven years after her arrival, and has filled it more or less since then. Since the the transition to the dome, she has also been elected repeatedly, year after year, as mayor - and thus, her endless mandates for lead items have proven to be the death of Ilon knows how many dwarves. Perhaps unjustly, she was served a strong blow and a quick death - more than her victims were ever afforded.



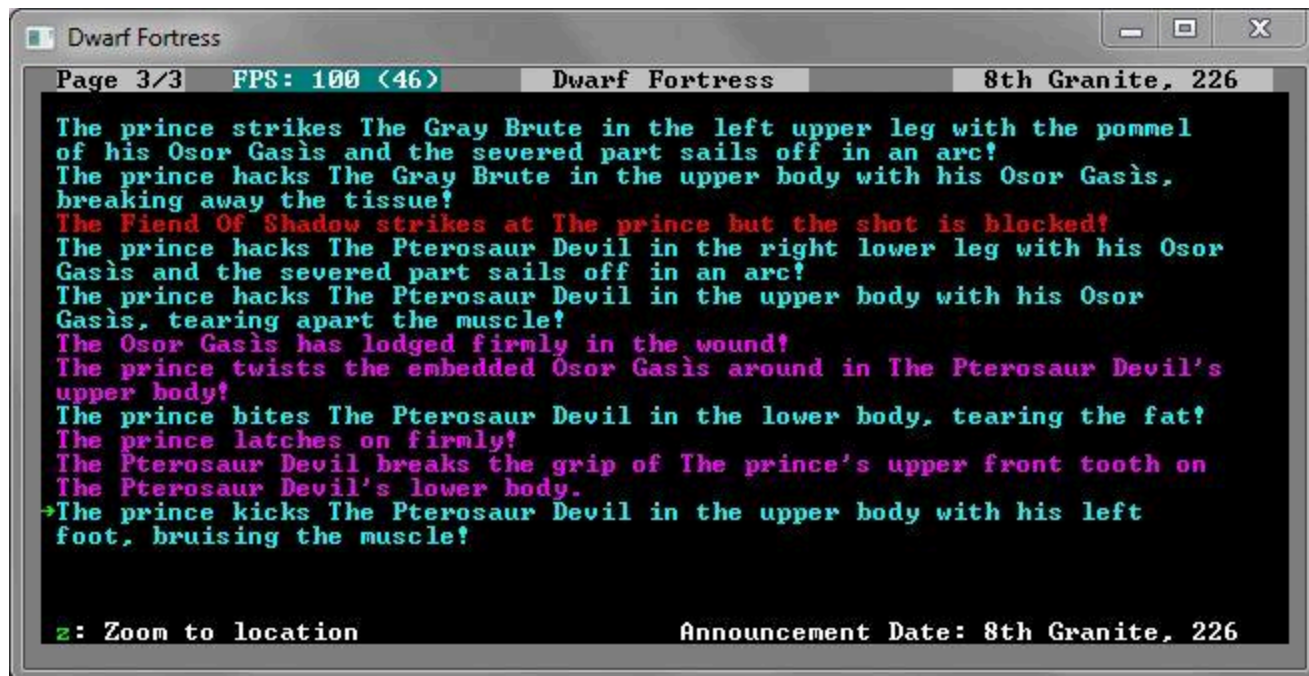
In the north, the first line of defenses have been broken. The mace lord Shorast Sunstorches the Fair Spikes, captain of the Silvery Skunks, fought bravely to hold back the demons, but in the end they were too powerful. Overrunning him, a fiend of shadow the dwarves have now dubbed "Reksasinrus," *Sinpoison*, a towering earthworm composed of ash, leads the demons up the stairwell and into battle with the Dignified Hammers and the Royal Fortresses.

In the south, the military scrambles to defend the helpless civilians who have crowded into the hallways. Whether they are truly drawn there by their need to arrange the bodies there into the various stockpiles about the dome, or by their desire to find a glorious end to their civilizations' slow and soul-crushing failure, it is impossible to know.

The prince leads the Royal Fortresses and the Dignified Hammers into combat against the demons, determined not to let them breach the citadel and the dome itself.



The prince himself goes toe-to-toe with a pterosaur devil, hacking away with his masterwork adamantine battle axe. Already, he has slain two demons - this only offsets the two Quakedented recruits the demons have killed, however, not to mention the civilians who have died in the tunnels further to the south.



The true battle rages here, immediately outside of the stairwell leading into the heart of the fortress. Alone, without the aid of any other dwarf, spearmaster Shorast Sealmest defends against *seventeen* demons of various shapes, sizes, and colors.

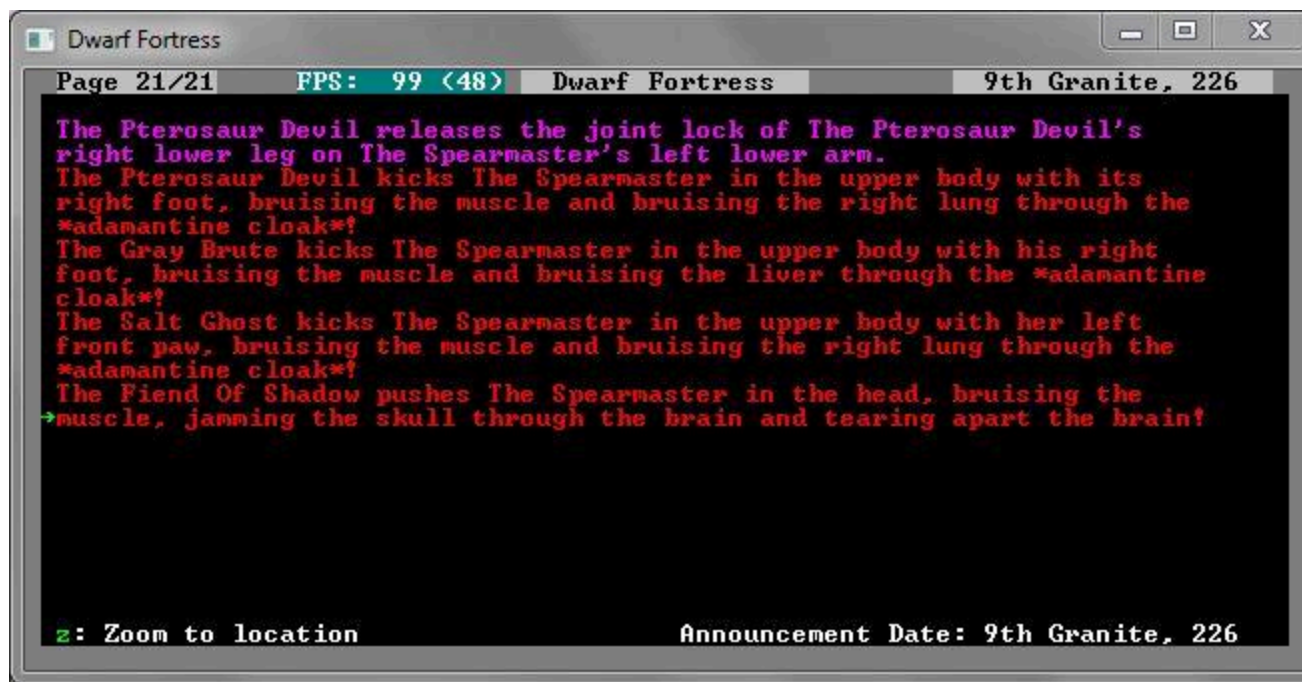


In the southern passage, a single demon clogs the passage, dubbed "Figulovus," *Glandmolds* in the dwarven tongue. An enormous, horned humanoid composed of snow, *Glandmolds* has lost both its arms and its left leg - its ineffectual hopping would be humorous, if it had not already claimed four dwarves in battle.



With a mighty blow, Prince Asmel Deathchannels cleaves through the last of the demons who attacked through the northern passage. Leading what remains of his own squad and the hammerdwarves who fought alongside him, he charges south through the passage to lend aid to the militia commander.

Little does he know that Libash is absent from her post, and Shorast Sealmet has been slain, outnumbered by a terrifying array of demons.



With Glandmolds struck down in the south, and Sinpoison's push halted in the north, the only threat to the fortress is in the middle, at the primary stairwell. The stair leads from the dining hall in the hub-like central mesa, to the food stockpiles below, while also having side passages leading to the barracks and citadel - it is this passage where the battle has been occurring so far.

From the north, Asmel Deathchannels, now known as the Feral Years of Continent, hacks through the last of the demonic onslaught which sought to break through the citadel. In the south, Stukos Testorbs of clan Lashedhushed slays Glandmolds and leads his brethren through the narrow passage towards the stairwell.

With the remaining military in a pincer attack against the enemy, the remaining handful of demons in the corridor stood no chance whatsoever. In the final moments of battle, Commander Libash returned from her nap and casually slew five demons. Her absence is overlooked by the other dwarves who, in the heat of battle, probably did not notice her absence at all.

The defense of the fortress has been a success - for the time being. The effect of the deaths of about fifty dwarves - nearly a third of the fortress population - remains to be seen.

While the military was distracted, a lone pterosaur devil found its way to the food stockpiles. It didn't manage to kill anyone, and when the prince went to get a much-needed drink after the sobering battle, it was clear he had had enough of the demons.



The only demons left in the fortress are in the deepest part of the mines, either lying in wait or ignorance of the dwarves' weakness. The current fortress population is 93, with 13 soldiers dying in the battle - compared to a hundred demons slain, one might call the battle a victory, but for the dwarves of Weatherwires, even triumph over the forces of hell leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

For a day, the fortress shakes and echoes with the clash of battle below. Despite the flood of hell that pours into Weatherwires, the mighty warriors of the Diamond Cloisters hold strong, and the wave of demons eventually breaks and rolls back. The smoke and miasma fade after a few days, and the dwarves begin to go about the business of entombing the fallen, wading through the piles of ash, salt, and dismembered body parts which clog the narrow passage.

The skeletons of those who were caught behind the obsidian wall when hell was first breached are given a proper burial, and a handful of ghosts are laid to rest. Despite the hopes of any who went back into those passages to search for the dead, the body of the planter Ilral Boltedday is nowhere to be found.

Kib Waxpaddled, legendary hammerdwarf and matriarch of the now defunct Gloveowners clan (her only surviving child was slain in the battle) resumes her old position of mayor, which she held in the earliest years of the fortress. She meets with the surviving Quakedented children individually, and puts her high mastery in the skill of consolation to good use. A few months after the battle, morale springs back and there is no immediate threat of a tantrum spiral.

The Royal Fortresses and the Lone Lashes are disbanded for the time being, allowing the Quakedented and Lashhushed clan a chance to recuperate and contemplate their losses.

As her compatriots go about their duties, Melbil Cryptshaft returns to the caisson to mine out the last of the adamantine. The only other remaining legendary miners were slain in the battle, and Melbil is getting on in years - she could die of old age any season now. She migrated to the fort in 138 and was immediately put to work in the dome as a miner, quickly reaching legendary status. At some point during the years, she was bitten by a cave spider, and has suffered from dizzy spells since then. As well, she is the survivor of two separate cave-ins, and has lost use of her left leg - she has walked with a crutch for decades now. The wear of the years shows more on Melbil than other dwarves, but she is well-respected in the fortress as one of the miners who participated in the great excavation - and now, the last of all those heroes, she delves once more into the deeps to satisfy her race's unending, all-consuming greed.

ArKFallen: "So where does it go from here?"

Queen Cog sits silently in her throne room, looking out over the tops of the guildhalls, thick with well-tended fungi and tastefully arranged statues, and contemplates the events of the centennial. Faced with a soul-crushingly slow and inevitable demise, she made the ultimate decision to cut the dwarves off from the land of the living, and thus end their collective agony. The overwhelming forces of hell, she had thought, would give them a glorious end. Indeed, many dwarves had finally found rest - but she had not, nor had her brother Asmel, although he had consistently been in the thick of the fight.

Deep in thought, her eyes involuntarily came to rest on a small, innocuous patch of bright green vegetation on the top of the nearest guildhall. Despair mixed with fury crept slowly across her face. *He would not let them die.* The accursed god of daylight and death had smote them down countless times, and yet the fortress' continued existence was undoubtedly his will. He would try to draw out the fortress' ultimate destruction for as long as possible, she realized - but only if they let him.

He had sent a third of the fortress to hell. Cog resolved to spit in the face of the vengeful god and send the rest of the Merchant of Echoing there too, as far from the bright, hateful surface as they could go. The pantheon they would erect there would be a testament to the strength and will of the dwarves - that, even after a century of tragedy and misfortune, their dying race could defeat the armies of hell itself and leave their footprint in the abyss forever. The construction would be the final act of the Diamond Cloisters, and would undoubtedly be bathed in the blood of Cog's subjects. She nodded to herself - a fitting end for the children of the mountain, who had overcome all challenges and created the wondrous dome of Weatherwires.

Musashi: "... and as a cruel twist of fate, vanquishing and surviving the legions of Hell, without any plan for what comes next."

Precisely. After suffering the various tragedies that have afflicted the fortress during the previous decades, the dwarves are not even afforded the mercy of a death in combat.

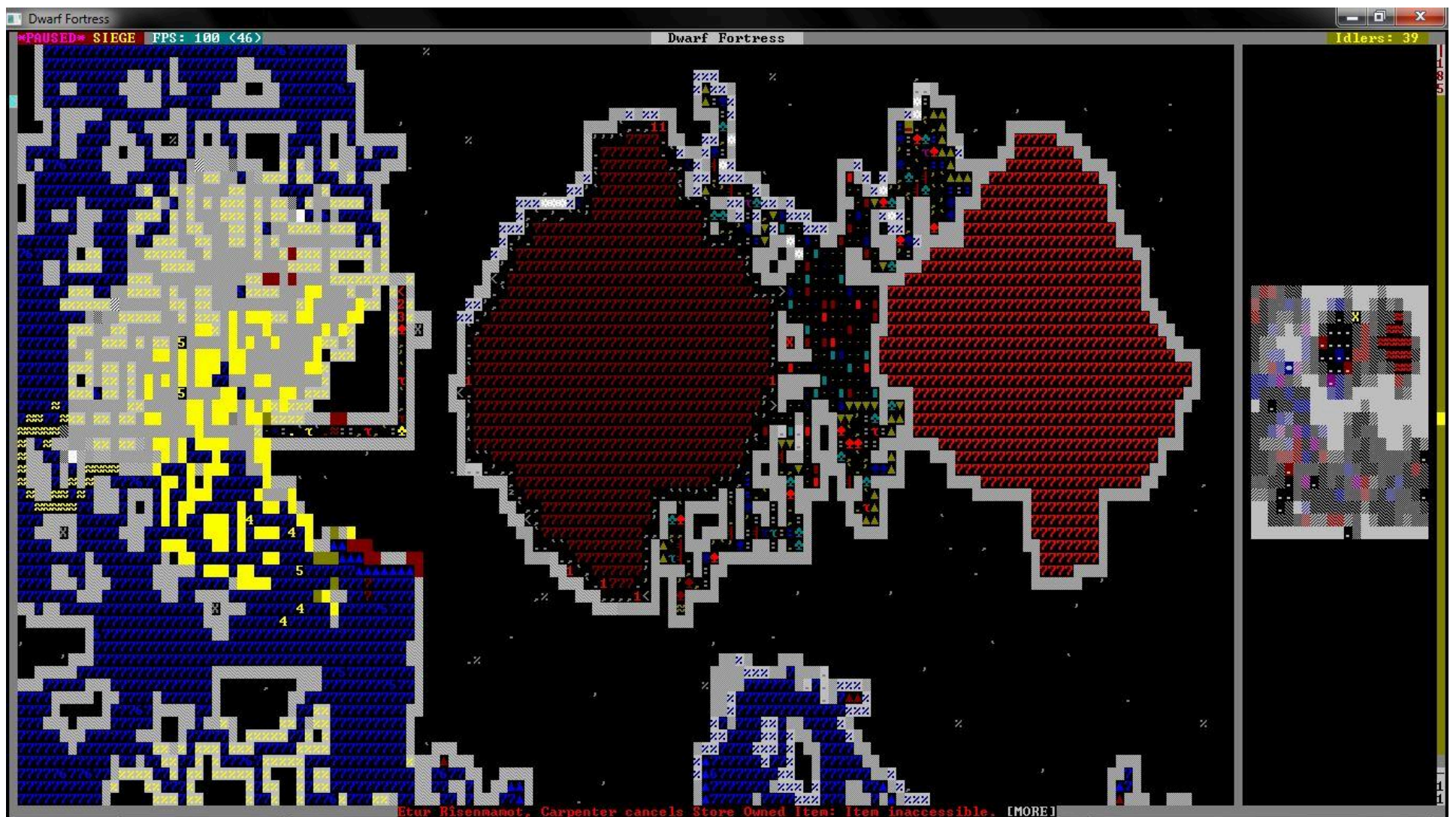
The fortress is currently in the process of smelting all of the stockpiled iron into steel, which will be used to construct the temple. During construction, there will be no walling off the edges of the map - the dwarves will have to rely entirely upon the military for defense.

A great stairwell is being constructed by the dwarves. When completed, it will stretch an unbroken 115 z-levels, from immediately below the dome to the floor of hell itself, taking up a 2x2 area on each level. This will provide the dwarves with the shortest possible route to the underworld, which will aid in the construction of the great temple.

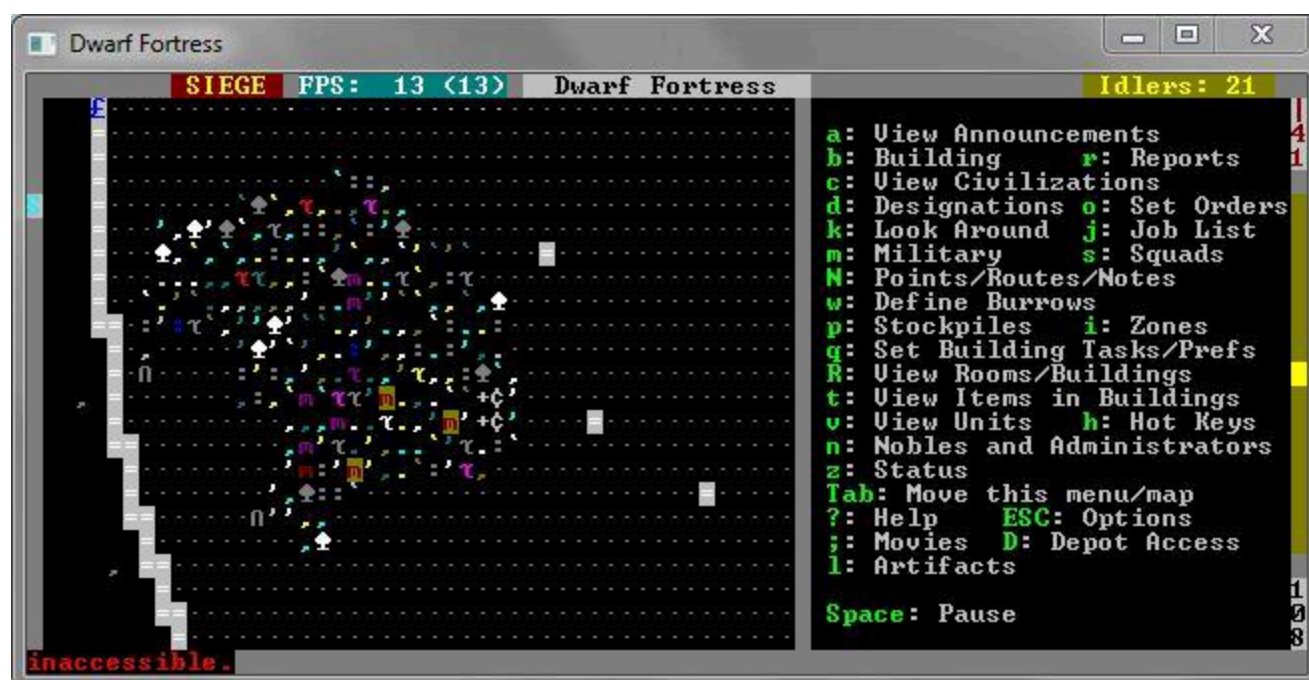
While passing by during their varied tasks, the dwarves glance through the gaping hole into the depths. Occasionally they spot a demon traversing the endless, featureless grey landscape. These demons are apparently different than those invaders who sought to annihilate the fortress - it is suspected that the creatures of the underworld are divided into a military and domestic forces, similar to the dwarves themselves. One such creature is the *Topazolite Fiend*. A towering quadruped composed of [topazolite](#) which squirms and fidgets. It might be admired as a creature of beauty, were it not for its inherently evil disposition.

Another creature has been spotted in the deeps - the *Antelope Fiends*. A towering antelope with external ribs, a short trunk, and a bloated body covered with patchy, spring green hair. They also possess a stinger, presumably venomous.

In order to complete the stairwell, I had to drain some passages which had been filled with magma for quite some time. The result of draining one passage into the third cavern layer was a rather interesting similarity of shape between the obsidianized lake, a magma vent, and the volcano's lava tube. The pattern had a kind of aesthetic that struck me as pleasing, so I saved a picture of it.



Also, before the battle with hell, I had set up cage traps in the second cavern layer in an attempt to capture something with skin which could be tanned into leather - all I caught, however, were plump helmet men. Since then, other creatures have wandered into the traps; a couple blind cave ogres, which were used as training for the recruits, a few rutherers, which did indeed provide leather, and a veritable army of crundles. After the battle, however, another batch of plump helmet men were captured and tamed, and shortly thereafter their numbers began to boom.



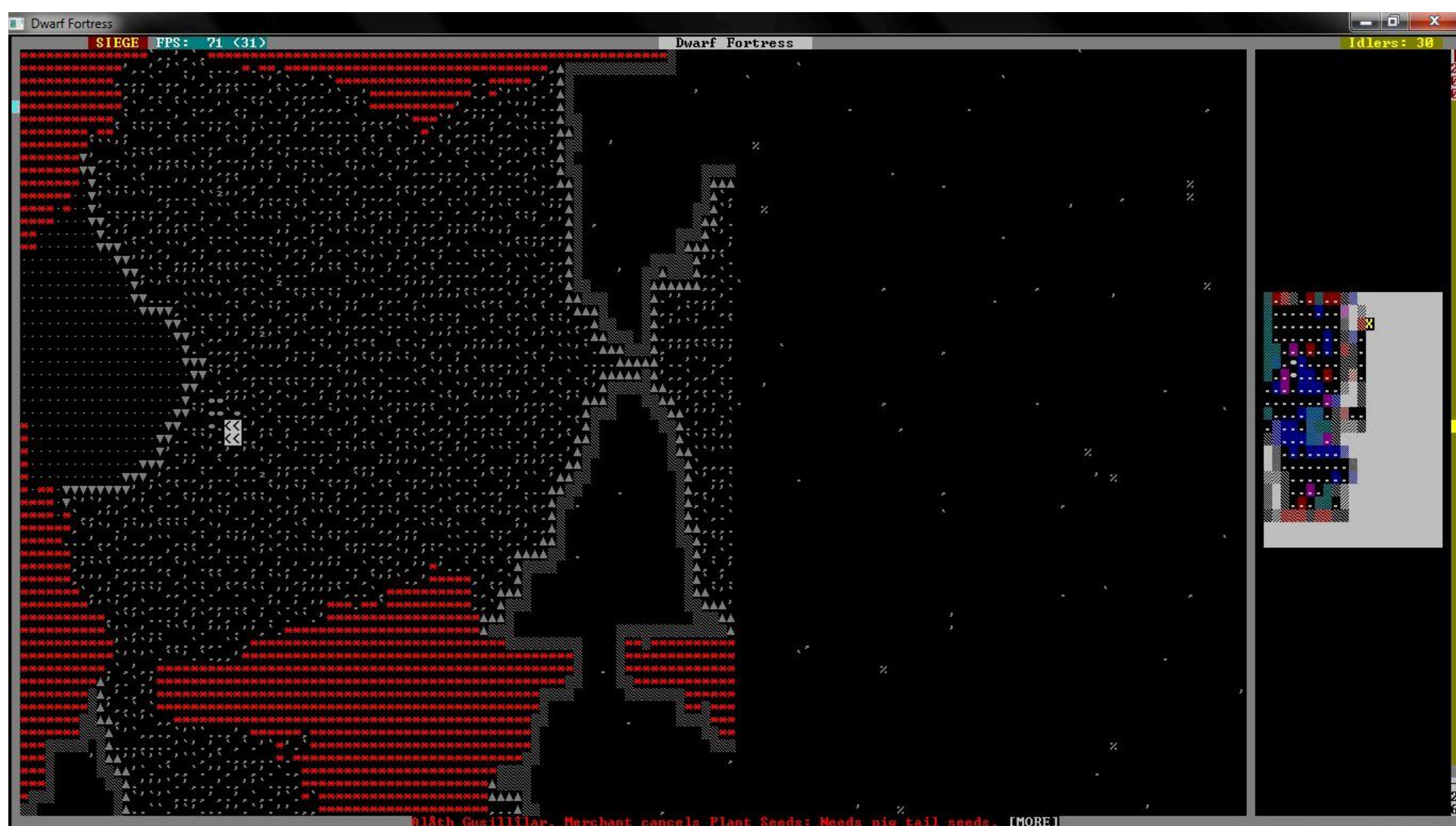
There are four adult females and only one male. There is a male child, but five of the six babies are females. Perhaps the plump helmet men only comprise a small percentage of the species? In any case, the females gave birth while the adult male was still in the cage - and the male child was born before the adult was captured at all. I suppose that plump helmet men are the only creatures in the game for whom the 'reproduction by spores' theory is legitimately appropriate.

As construction of the great stair nears completion, the ghostly planter strikes again. Taking control of Èrith Minedtribe of clan Gearguild, Ilral Boltedday struck down the master lasher Stukos Testorbs, the last remnant of the Lashhushed clan. Èrith, who had been recently recruited to the Silvery Princesses, had already reached legendary skill with his adamantine short sword - a skill which was put to vicious use by the angry spirit.

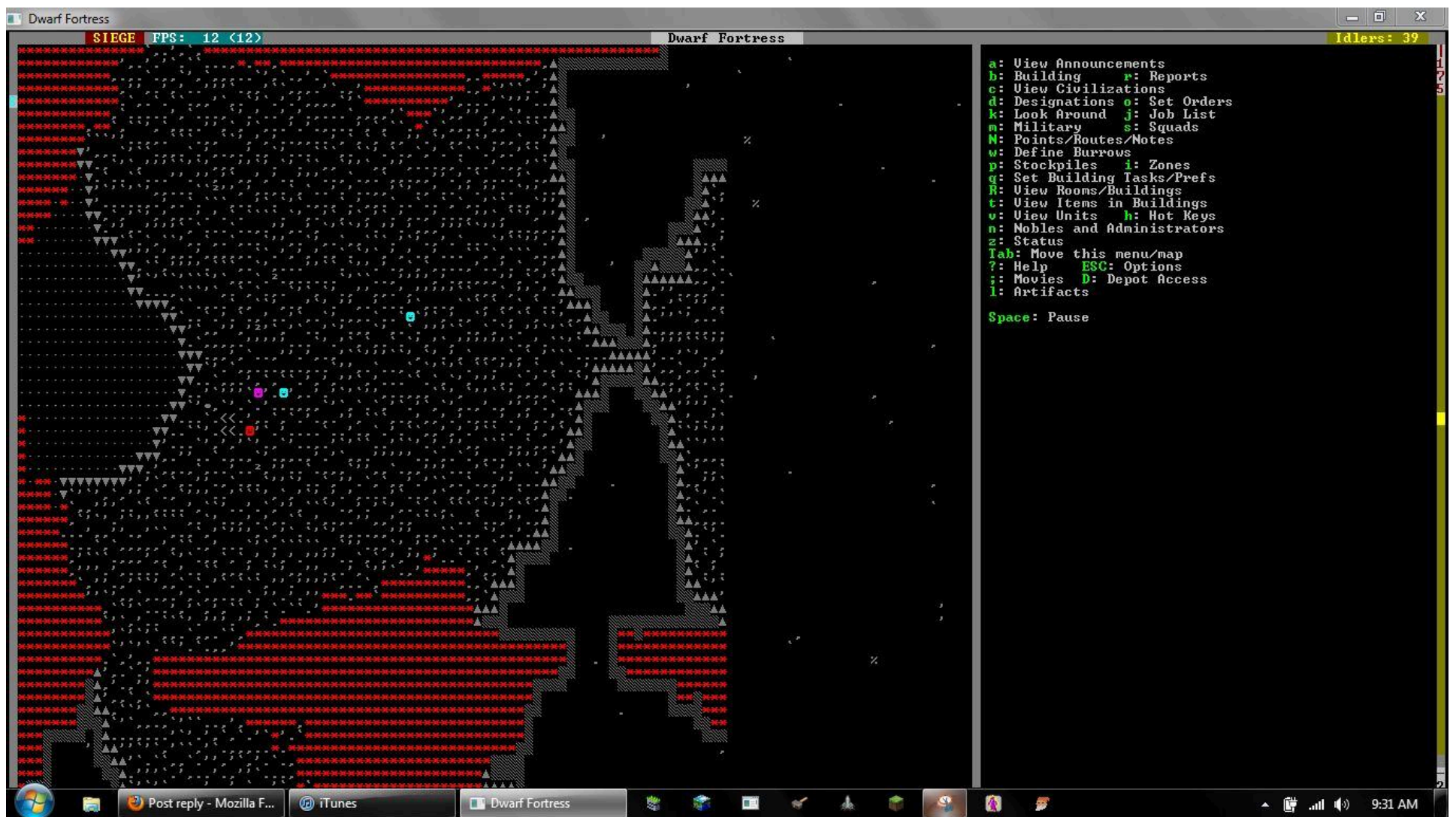


Also, a third type of demon has been spotted in the deeps: the *Mite Brute*. A great, scaly, slavery mite with thin wings of stretched skin. Truly, the underworld appears to be full of foul creatures.

The great stair is finished, except for the lowest level. It extends in a solid, unbroken column from an engraved chamber below the dome, through the second cavern layer (though it is hidden behind a solid obsidian block wall), through the caisson and the magma sea, and to the base of hell itself.



The Grooved Book-Volcanos, led by the militia commander Libash Dippedurns, goes into position at the top of the stair, in case some fiends should strike immediately. The structure is connected to the featureless grey surface of the underworld with a final steel stairwell - no demons are apparently nearby - forming a direct and permanent route directly from the fortress and into hell.

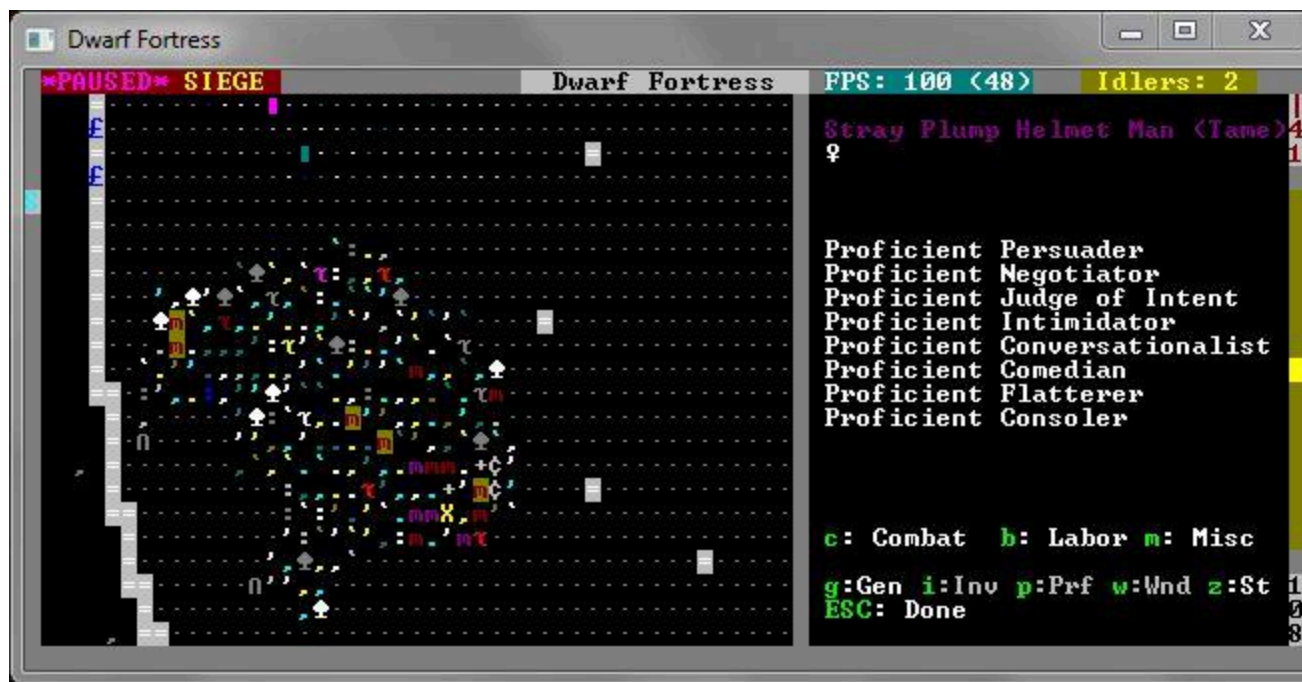


Two squads journey bravely into the waste: the Silvery Princesses, led by Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, and the Dignified Hammers, led by Shorast Phraseposts the Odorous Temple of Diamond. The Hammers will guard the stairwell from invasion, while the Princesses will perform the first ranging - Èzum leads his squad through the abyss, exploring the area, so that the prime location for a temple can be found.

The region of the underworld that lies underneath Weatherwires has been explored, but a suitable site for the temple remains to be selected. The location of the structure will of course depend on its nature - size, complexity, use, etc. - which also remains to be determined.

After a desperate battle with an Antelope Fiend, captain Èzum and his squadmates discovered that the demons are generally too large for any single warrior to defeat. Instead, a lone warrior would simply be batted around by the fiend, until one wrong step sent the dwarf tumbling into one of the mysterious glowing pits which marred the underworld's otherwise featureless surface. Though Èzum's squad suffered no casualties, the captain was forced nearly to the edge of one of these pits, and so further precautions are being made. A steel curtain wall, surrounding the base of the stairwell, will ensure that any squad who guards the entrance to the fortress will have a small area, protected against those howling, swirling vortices of light, where they will need not fear an accidental plunge deeper into the abyss. Once this curtain wall is finished, a small barracks, complete with a supply of food and drink, will be erected so that the militia can train and eat, even while stationed in the deepest of deeps.

As the dwarves toil away, smelting iron into steel bars which are then hauled into the deeps to be added to the constructions there, the peaceful and tamed mushroom folk, confined to the top of the southwestern building, are building the foundations of a new society.



Although they cannot speak, they can apparently communicate, probably via spores. This particular individual is the oldest - according to Runesmith, she is aged 43 - and is also the most skilled.

I'm not great at interpreting the raws, so I bumped over to arena mode, removed the [ARENA_RESTRICTED] tag from their entry (this is the second change I've made, after adding the [PET] tag), and wrestled a plump helmet man in order to better determine their body layout. From what I can tell, they have no facial features whatsoever - just a head. As well, they have no individual toes or fingers, and no division between an upper or lower arm. Just a head (the mushroom cap, presumably) an upper and lower body, and arms and legs, terminating in fingerless hands and feet, respectively. They are all (always) a plain purple.

Based on these findings, it can be deduced that the plump helmet men are simple creatures possessed of a kind of intelligence completely alien to that of the sentient races, including dwarves. They communicate with spores, which is also presumably how they tell one another apart, and reproduce. They are simple creatures, in body and spirit.

The curtain wall is completed, and as the scaffolding is being torn down, an armor stand is placed next to the base of the stairwell and each of the four remaining squads ordered to train in hell.

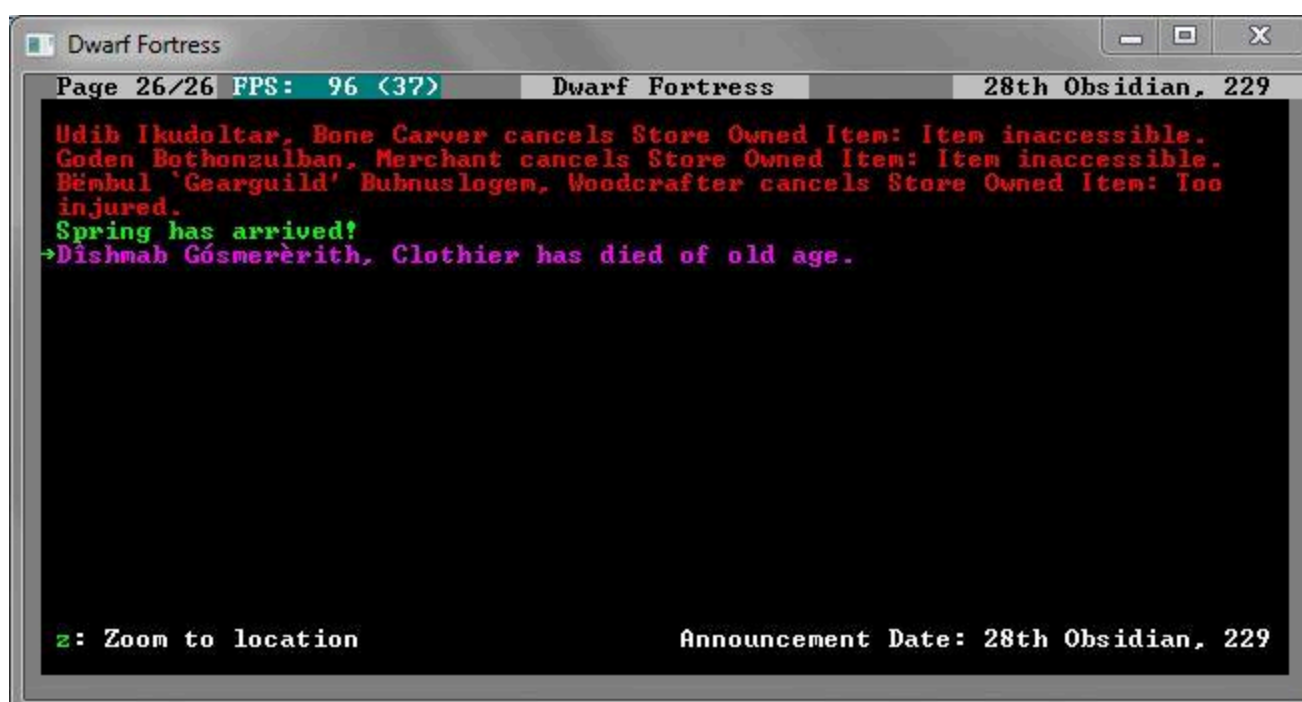
...not a moment too soon, as a barrage of seven demons assaults the fortress.



In the battle, the scions of the Vesselplayed and Thunderbridge clans are wounded - though, luckily, a few broken bones are the only wounds suffered. Kol Claspedrelief, the youngest dwarf and the only survivor of clan Language metal makes his first two demonic kills - a pair of mite brutes.

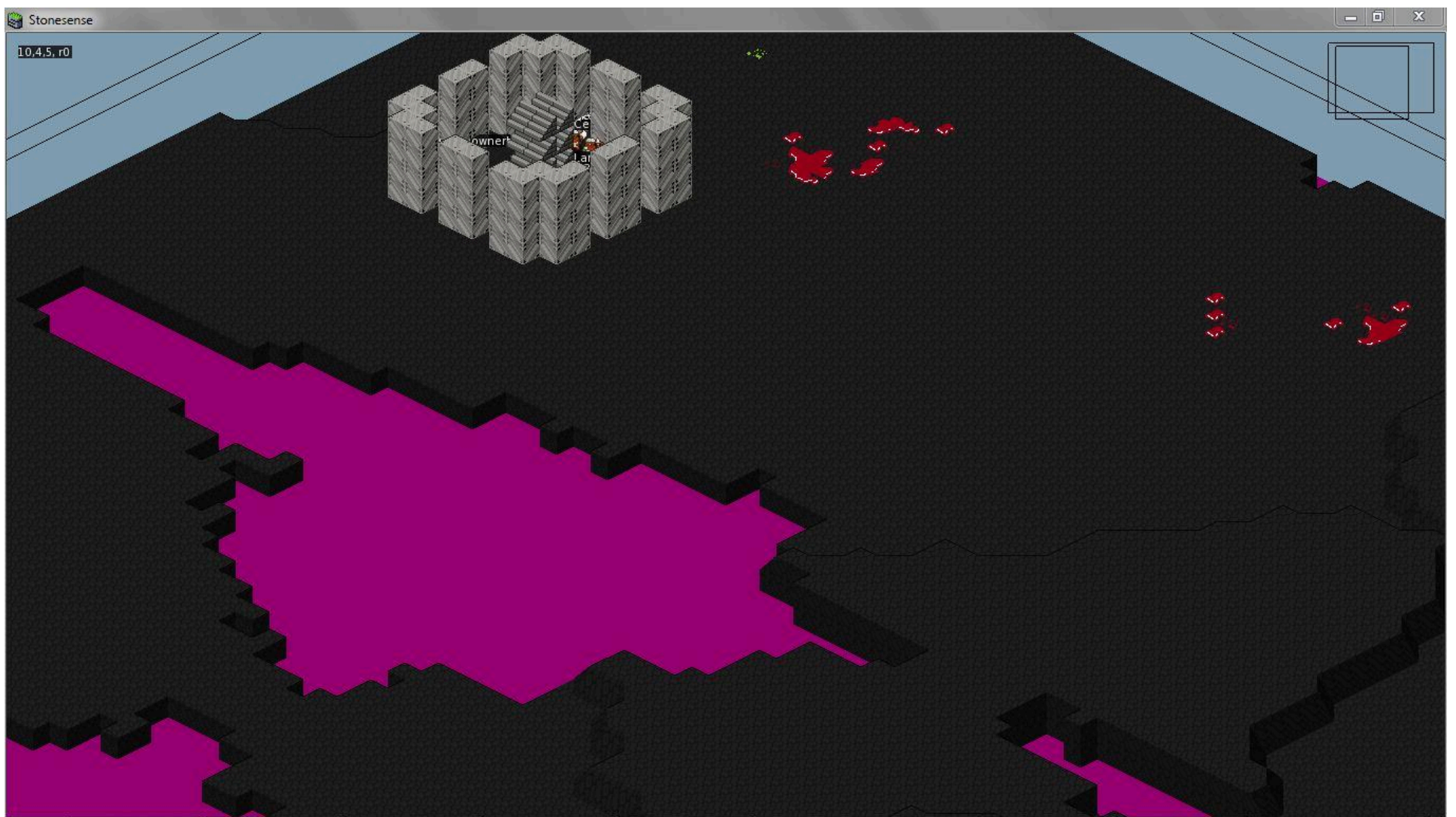
Now, the last construction - the final effort of Weatherwires.

Years pass. Old age claims another dwarf - a clothier who has lived in the fort since 144.



Those years seem distant now, part of another age. A time, long passed, which now is only a vaguely remembered dream amidst the despondent hell which is Weatherwires.

The scaffolding which was used to construct the curtain wall is removed.



Only one task remains to the dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing.

I was struck with food poisoning last night, so you can imagine my utmost disgust and horror when I boot up DF and four of these things attack:



Apparently the previous onslaught was found wanting, and the overlords of hell ordered in what might pass as siege engines amongst the fiends - the bloated, undulating vomit of a thousand demons, given sentience and malevolent will by whatever evil force was contained in the underworld.

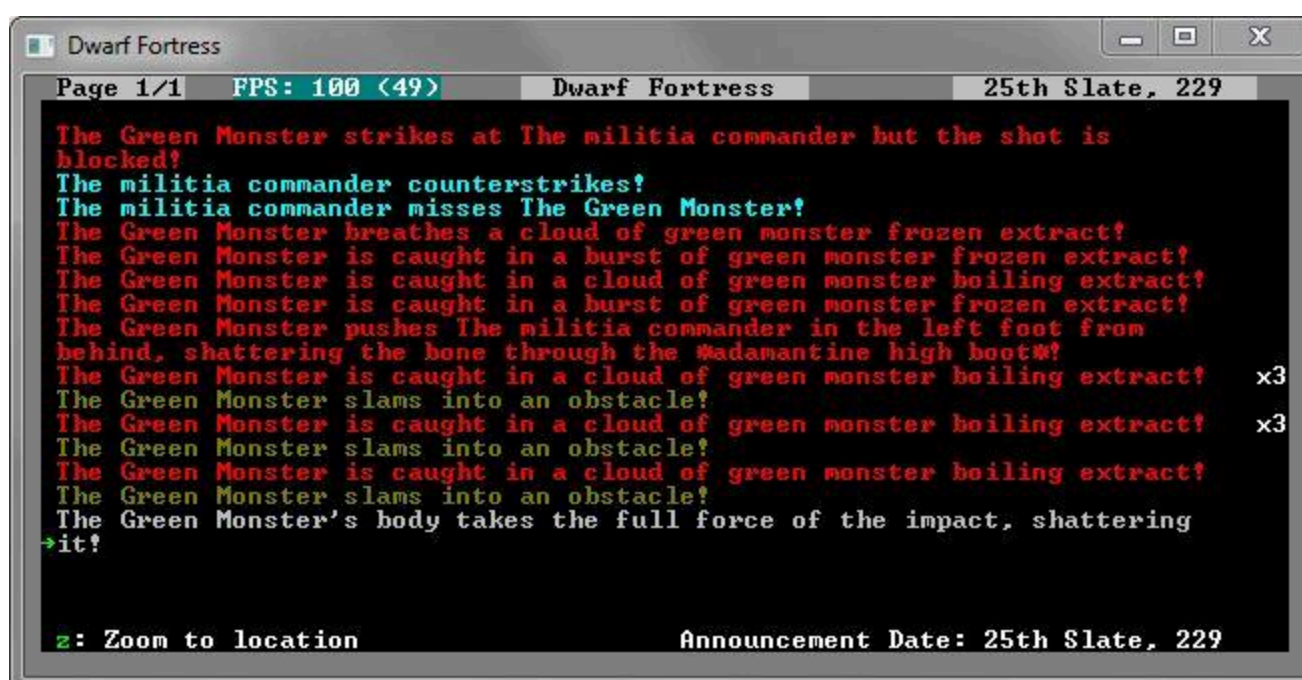
The green monsters struck quickly, and militia commander Libash Dippedurns and a mace lord by the name of Rovod Craftlabor the Sour Tusk (wielding Entrancegriffons the steel mace) sprung to the defense. Although the demon's fragile bodies offered no resistance, every time the warrior's landed a strong blow, the thin, vile film which held together the monsters would release a spray of demon bile which knocked the dwarves off their feet, sometimes high above the slade floor, only to come back down with a crunch.



Ironically, it is the monster's strength which proves to be their undoing. As the rest of the military rushes in to aid in the defense, Commander Libash strikes a long slice into one of the fiends with the Blockaded Pungency, the artifact adamantine spear once wielded by Vabôk Earthenfins, and the jet of loathsome spew hurled the four demons into the air. The creatures fell back to the surface with a splat, leaving pools of steaming vomit on the black slade. One of the beasts heaves forward, still not quite dead - or whatever passes as death for a blob of vomit.

The creature struck swiftly, crushing the curse-breaker Zasit Portalwines, first child of the Quakedented clan, between itself and the slade floor. 21 years have passed since Zasit was born, and since then no other clans have formed. In all, 20 children were born into the clan, although now only 9 remain, and with their patriarch slain, that number will only grow smaller.

The last green monster collapses to the ground in a burst of its own vomit, and ceases to undulate.



Two topazolite fiends attacked the fortress, and the Royal Fortresses, led by prince Asmel, maneuvered to the defense. Kol "Languagemetal" Claspedrelief was perhaps a little too eager to join into the fray, and rushed ahead of the rest of his squad. The fiends caught him and crushed his bones beneath their towering mineral limbs. The so-called youngest dwarf was struck down by a well-placed blow that crushed his skull and propelled his body dozens of feet away. The prince and the Quakedented children destroyed the interlopers without further trouble.

Within a day of the previous attack, two wraiths of snow struck from the west. The enormous, snowy humanoids rushed towards the curtain wall, and the military, always ready, prepared for the attack. While they were preoccupied, one of the wraiths moved *around* the base of the stairwell, killing a

passing merchant who was participating in the construction of the temple. The two demons were quickly overcome, however - but it seems that when one threat is neutralized in hell, another appears to replace it.

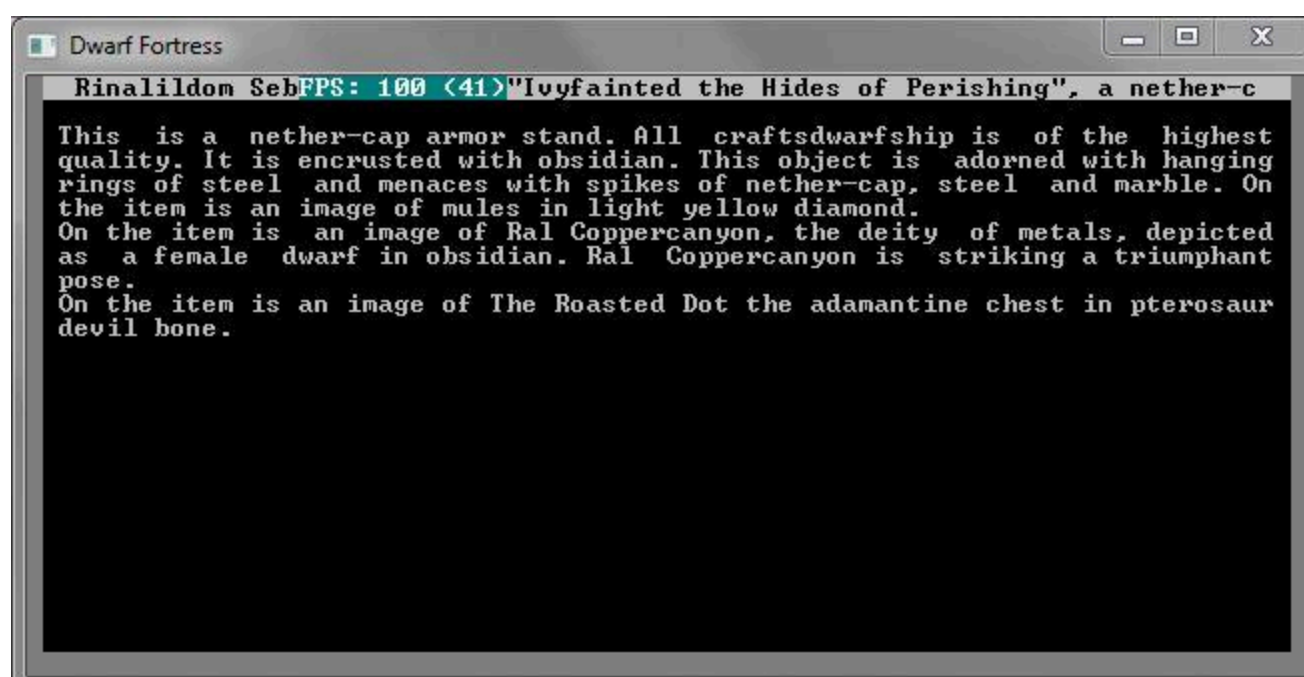
For no sooner than the wraiths been destroyed, five of their snowy kin appeared from the north. The fiends took flight, shrieking out of a purple vortex towards the line of dwarves hauling the body and equipment of Kol Claspedrelief back to the fortress. The military, fresh from one battle, moves across the barren landscape to eagerly join another. The civilians scatter, and four of the demons choose the closer targets presented by the fortress' warriors, and are quickly slain. One ranges far, however, and kills two dwarves before it can be caught and destroyed.

With the military away, chasing after the wraith of snow, the forces of hell sense a weakness. A mite brute strikes from the west, and manages another kill before it can be neutralized.

When the adamantine spire was breached, the demonic army struck in force, but it was turned away like a copper arrow striking a steel shield. Now, perhaps, they have found the weakness of the dwarves, and strike blow upon blow, content to win the battle against the dwarves through attrition.

As the dwarves retreat to the relative safety of the curtain wall, the prince surveys the hellish abyss. The plain, greyish landscape is littered with various pieces of equipment, and the maimed and severed body parts of those dwarves who dropped them in an attempt to escape their final fate. Commander Libash and a handful of military dwarves are in traction in the dome far above, and the steel foundations of the temple, rising amidst a swirling haze of purple light to the south-east, remain woefully unfinished. Perhaps it will always remain so - a final testament to the will of the dwarves, that after a hundred years of grinding fate, it was only the forces of hell, in the underworld itself, that could bring that proud race to its knees. If the temple was never completed, it would serve as a reminder to whatever damned adventurer who found his way this deep into the earth - *this* was what killed the dwarves, so begone, lest ye suffer the same fate.

In the hospital, while waiting to be diagnosed by a physician, Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes, for the first time for several decades, is temporarily relieved of her military duties on account of her injuries. As she lets her mind drift from the seemingly endless years of repeated weapon drills and bloody combats, a muse of inspiration descends upon her, and her nigh-forgotten skills as a carpenter, developed in the years before her migration to Weatherwires, come back to her in a flash. The militia commander, despite two broken legs, a broken arm, and a smashed ribcage, drags herself to a carpenter's workshop. Ignoring the protestations of the chief medical dwarf, Libash moves to and from the stockpiles about the dome, hauling raw materials for an artifact. Her creation (appropriately surnamed "The Hides of Perishing") may be the last that Weatherwires ever sees:



In the mid-summer of 229, a little over three years after the centennial, the dwarves elect a new dwarf to the position of mayor; Cog Archwayward, daughter of the old duke Kogsak Murdershot, and since the death of Domas Tickcities, queen of Weatherwires. Of late, the queen has been training with the Silvery Princesses, and her skill in swordfighting is quickly nearing legendary status.

Later that summer, as the medical staff of the fortress was preoccupied with cleaning and dressing the wounds of the various other dwarves who had not crawled from the infirmary to craft an artifact, Libash Dippedurns the Ageless Deep of Rhymes, last of the original squad of knife-fighters and wrestlers, led by Vabók Earthenfins the Tight Mechanisms of Whirling, succumbed to the wounds inflicted upon her by the vomit demons.

There are 81 dwarves left in Weatherwires - construction of the temple continues.

The horror!



While slaying the zombie kin of those fungal humanoids in the dome above (whose number has increased to 22), the Silvery Princesses suffered a tragedy. The zombies were hassling haulers who were gathering wood from the lowest cavern layers, and had to be dealt with.

Shortly after slaying the last of the plump helmet zombies, Ducim Lucidbooks of clan Gearguild spotted a zombie magma crab swimming along the surface of the magma vent. He ran along the narrow obsidian edge of the caldera towards the undead creature. There, standing but inches from the edge of molten death, he did battle with the creature that calls the magma sea its home.





A dwarf until the end, Ducim performs a heroic and fearless leap attack into the magma vent. Were the crab a living creature, such a blow might have killed it, but instead the dwarf scraped across his undead foe and sank into the deeps. A death in combat, and to be entombed in the semi-molten rock, is an honorable end, an end achieved by many dwarves throughout the history of Weatherwires - so it goes in a fortress built upon a volcano.

The crab still lives - after a manner - but the Diamond Cloisters holds no grudge. The dwarves of Weatherwires are above grudges or revenge - they are focused entirely now upon the completion of the temple. It will not need to be gaudy, or large, or an engineering masterpiece - the dome itself is example enough of all of these. No, the temple will be modest, in contrast to what the dwarves have achieved elsewhere in Weatherwires. Although, any who look upon it will marvel at its existence, and wonder at what methods the dwarves managed its construction.

Without warning, one of the accursed vomit fiends stuck directly against the base of the stairwell itself. If any dwarf had seen it coming, they would have met it at the edge, or just outside of the curtain wall - but somehow, it managed to penetrate the primary defense. With a violent huff, similar in spirit, no doubt, to the formation of the creature, the green monster filled the interior of the curtain wall with a buffet of deadly vomit dust.

In a single blast of its breath (if you could even call it that), two dwarves are killed and four others injured. Id Whisperstrongs, one of the Quakedented recruits, and Shorast Towndye, last of the Bookpuzzled clan, perish when they are thrown against the steel curtain wall headfirst. As the surviving military bears down upon the blob of vomit, another deadly green cloud rises to the north - the fiend did not come alone.



Mercifully, the attack is resolved without further injuries - the warriors destroy the monster who had already attacked, and the one in the north dies to a blast of its own vapor. Injuries suffered, however, render the military effectively defeated. A few dwarves, including the prince himself, suffered several broken bones. All those who took part in the battle, however, suffer from a kind of chronic dizziness - likely a result of exposure to some terrible contaminant brewed in the cornucopia of bile in the interior of the green monsters. Every dwarf suffering from dizziness has left his post to rest in the infirmary, leaving the entrance to the fortress, and the construction of the temple in hell completely undefended.

A squad was kept in reserve for just this occasion. The Silvery Princesses, who have been training in the dome for years, are finally given the order to make the descent. Led by Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, and the other three members are of no small note: Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, last of the lashdwarves, now wields an adamantine shortsword with equally deadly skill; Érih Minedtribe, one of the only two surviving dwarves of the once mighty and prolific Gearguild clan; and of course, Cog 'Murdershot' Archwayward, recently elected mayor, daughter of the duke Kogsak Murdershot and queen of Weatherwires.

peskyninja: "DS I've missed some posts, what are you planning to do in hell?"
Musashi: "Dine."

Since there are food and drink stockpiles for the military, I suppose they have been dining in hell, yeah. [/anticlimax]

While throwing a tantrum over the death of his siblings, the axedwarf Athel Standtorch of clan Quakedented stormed into the apartments of the Thunderbridge clan, and beheaded Fath Tightnessdyes while he slept in his tunnel tube bed.

Urvad Pagekissed, last of the Thunderbridge clan, was the most skilled speardwarf in the Grooved Book-Volcanos when Libash Dippedurns succumbed to infection. Urvad has been appointed to the rank of commander. Hopefully her lame leg will not prevent her from excelling in combat - who knows? Perhaps her legendary skill at crutch-walking will do some good.

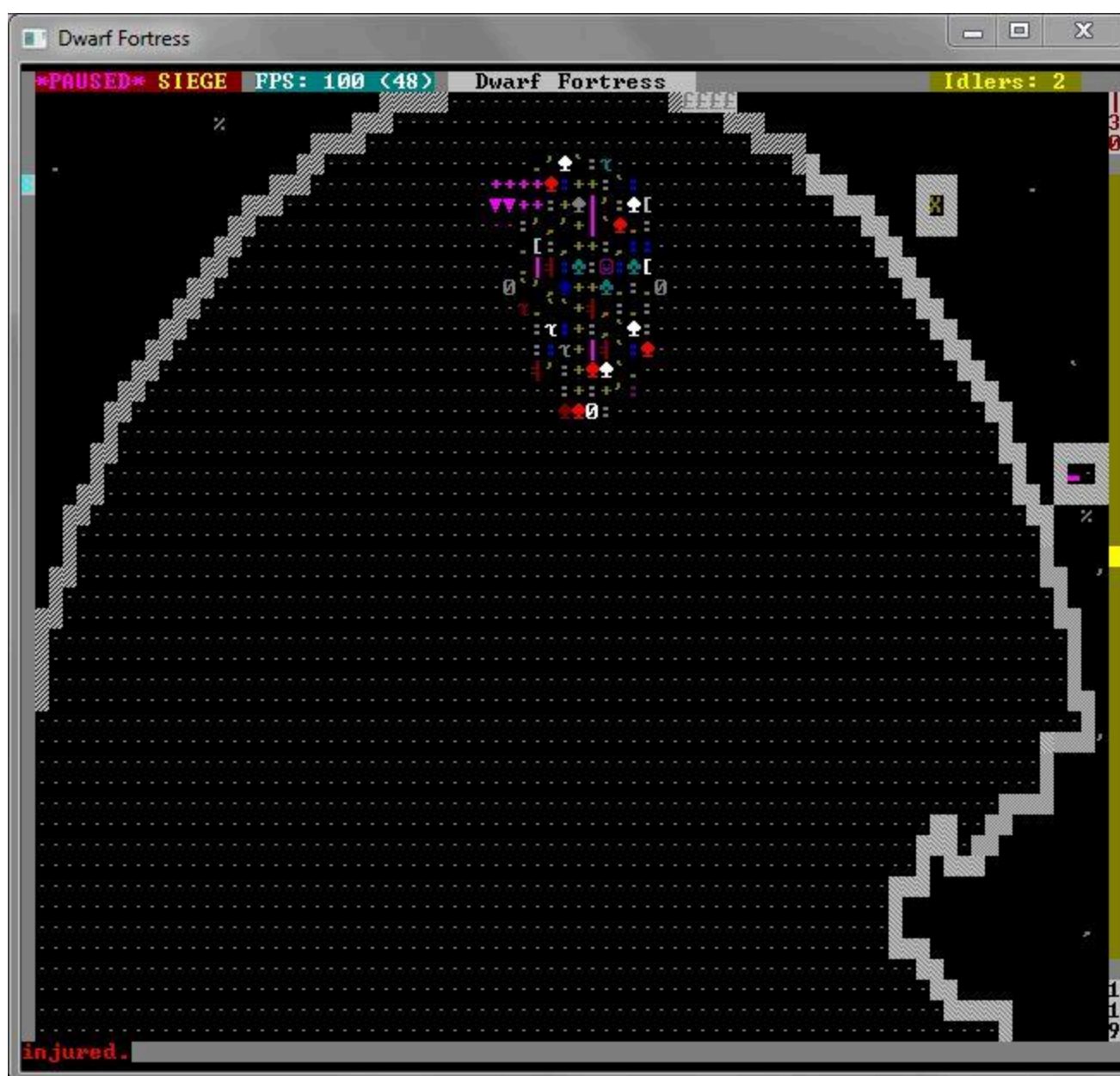
In the deeps, the sudden appearance of Salt Ghosts - enormous, jagged-toothed lizards comprised entirely of desiccating mineral - forces the military into action to defend the progress the dwarves have made upon the monument. The dignified hammers strike down the interloper without difficulty.



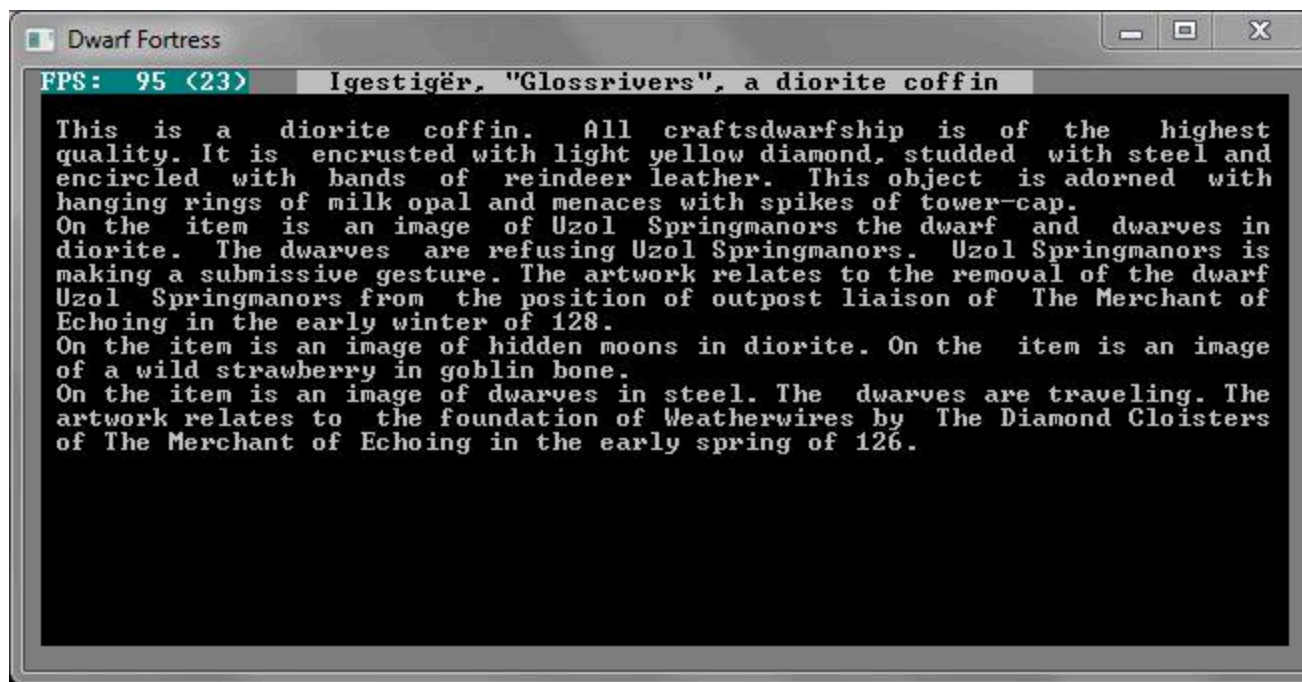
Meanwhile, in the infirmary, far away from the clash of combat and the neverending howl of infernal wind, Asmel Deathchannels, son of Kogsak Murdershot and prince of Weatherwires, succumbs to the infection of wounds inflicted upon him by the bilious fiends. He lived in the fortress his entire life - nearly a hundred years - and knew nothing else.

When his sister, the only surviving member of the royal family, learns of his passing, her mood hardly changes. She merely shrugs it off and returns to sparring. The dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing have long become accustomed to tragedy, and the Murdershots are no exception to this. So it goes, in Weatherwires.

Asmel Spiralropes, recently appointed manager, and also the only dedicated herbalist the fortress has had since anyone can remember, carries the prince's body to his tomb atop Murdershot citadel. It is the first time since the queen's death that any dwarf has trod that ground. The entire precipice is overgrown with untended mushroom trees and dense fungal groundcover.



He is laid to rest in the artifact coffin on the eastern edge of the tomb - *Glossrivers*.



The Royal Fortresses are disbanded, and the Quakedented children assigned to train under the tutelage of commander Urvad Pagekissed. The queen takes account - 76 dwarves remain.

Shortly thereafter, one of the merchants was attacked by a lone crundle, which managed to tear his throat out and kill him. The crundle has been named Dedukducim by the dwarves, but I can't see the translation just yet, since he got caught in a cage trap. I've got scads of trapped crundles. 75 dwarves remain.

Construction continues.

As the line of dwarves passed to and fro from the abyssal work site, the Dignified Hammers, led by Shorast Phraseposts the Odorous Temple of Diamond, watched over the steadily increasing construction. Suddenly, one of the horrendous mite brutes flew over the area and settled atop the the curtain wall surrounding the area. As workers dropped steel bars and ran for their lives, the Dignified Hammers bravely climbed atop the wall and did battle with the foul creature. Two of the hammer lords were pushed aside to fall a few z-levels to the slade floor, breaking many bones. The mite brute was finally struck down by none other than Limul "Breachedwhips" Gildnut the Great Salve of Amazement, ex-captain of the guard and adamantine warhammer murderer. With a mighty kick, she drove in the creature's skull, allowing the workers to return to their tasks.

The damage had already been done, however. Kib Waxpaddled the Shower of Noses, matriarch of the Gloveowners clan, suffered a broken arm and left her post to be hospitalized. Shorast Phraseposts' upper spine snapped, and he slowly asphyxiated in the shadow of the steel construction. Shorast settled in the fortress in 142 and had served in the military ever since.

The spring of 230 arrives, and master carpenter Urdim Fordedroofs passes away at the age of 157. She had lived in Weatherwires since 143, and produced countless barrels and bins for the fortress.

With only one active member, the Dignified Hammers are removed from their post at the construction site, and the Silvery Princesses are sent to replace them. The first phase of construction is nearly finished. 73 dwarves remain.

A surprise attack by four topazolite fiends catch the dwarves unawares. The Silvery Princesses slay the gem-like monstrosities, but not before three of their kin are slain by the demons - merchants and ex-merchant guards, all.

Shortly thereafter, Kib Waxpaddled the Shower of Noses, matriarch of the Gloveowners clan died of thirst in the infirmary. All the other dwarves were in the deeps, slaving away upon construction of the monument - any distraction, even feeding one of their kin, is a waste of time in comparison to their final effort. They will all die eventually - what is the point of trying to stave off the inevitable?

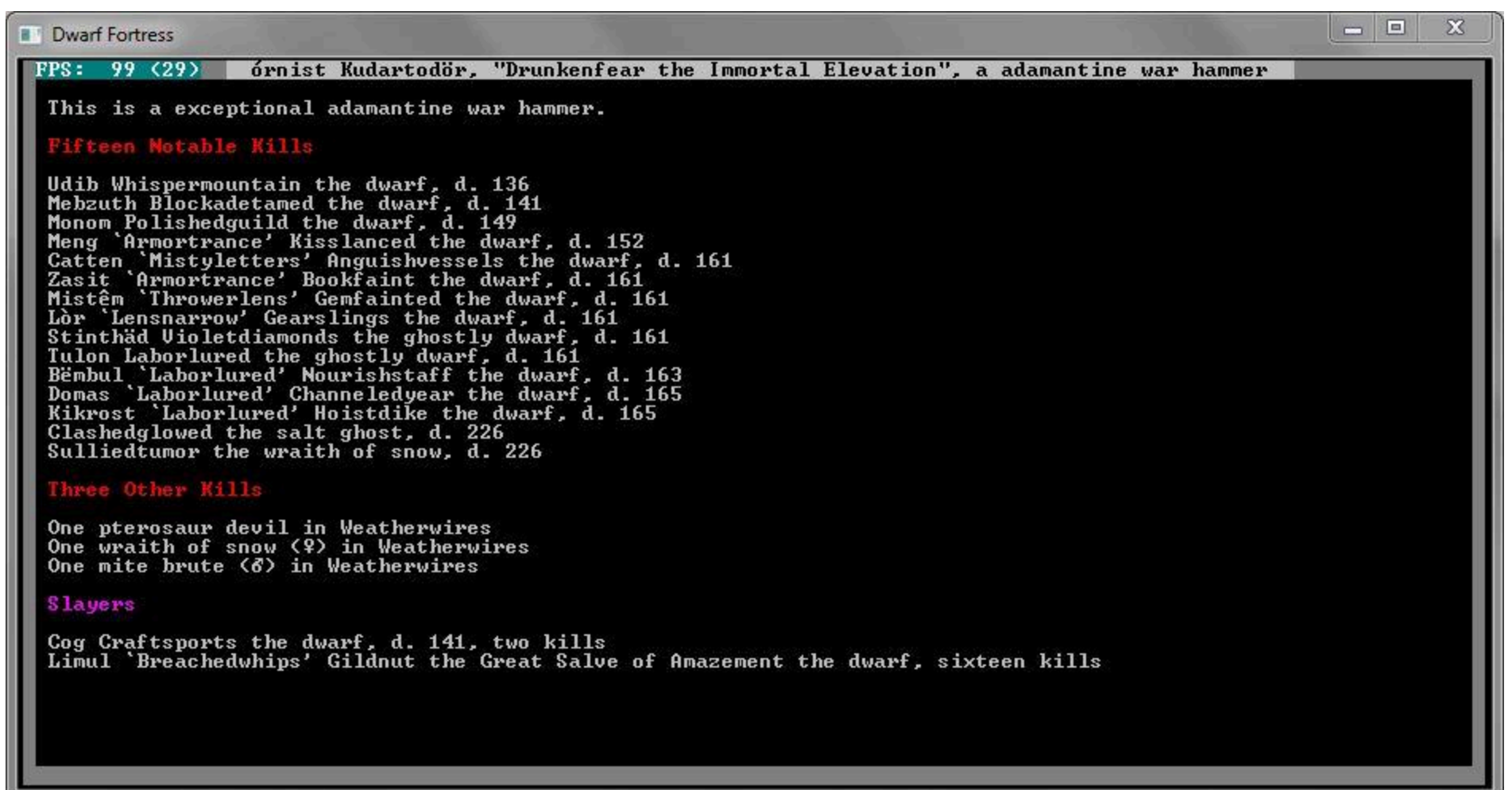
Kib was a historic figure in Weatherwires: she arrived in 131, and was recruited to the militia as a marksdwarf, taking part in a battle against the goblins during the very spring of her arrival. During the great tantrum spiral, she slew two dwarves with her copper crossbow. Mercifully, she herself survived, but her husband, Goden Gloveowners, and two of her four children were not so lucky. In 143, Kib was elected mayor of the Diamond Cloisters, a position she held for 34 consecutive years, until 177.

Kib was last of the Gloveowners. So passes another of the clans of Weatherwires.

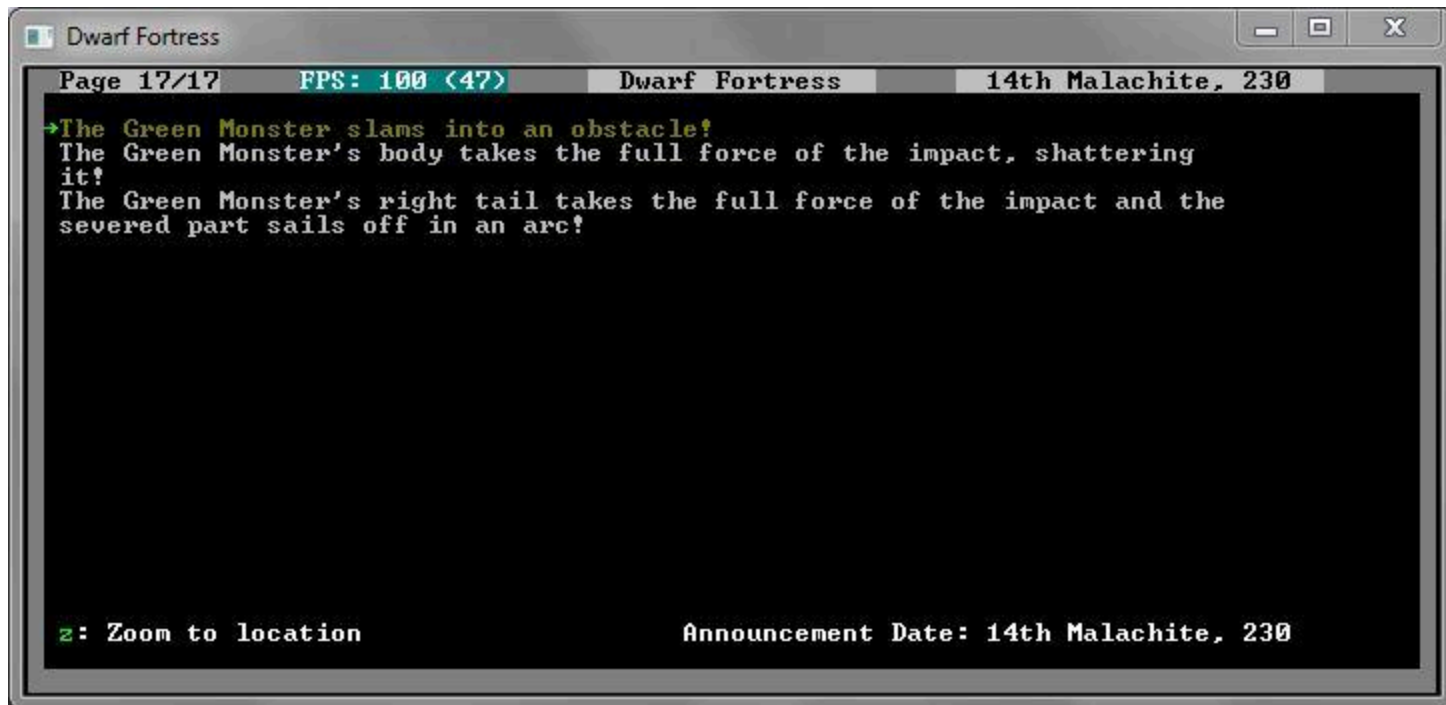
At about the same time, due to a "workplace accident," an ex-merchant guard fell into one of the deep chasms, her body disappearing amidst whorls of purple light. There are 68 dwarves left in Weatherwires.

An attack by a duo of green monsters upon the construction site results in the death of three dwarves before the military can react. One of the fiends dies in a blast let out by its counterpart, leaving only one demon. Knowing that the vomit fiends do more damage to themselves than to the defenders (indeed, a group of dwarves can be slain by just one of the demons), the Diamond Cloisters sends in Limul "Breachedwhips" Gildnut the Great Salve of Amazement, de facto militia captain of the Dignified Hammers.

Limul arrives at the summit of the slade hill, the center of the construction site, and sees the green monster dubbed "Nettledepressed," crushing a woodcrafter beneath its bulk. The ex-captain of the guard charges the creature, striking it again and again with her warhammer - but alas, what is this? Instead of wielding one of the masterwork silver war hammers, crafted in Upper Weatherwires in the days of yore by the legendary weaponsmith Iden Sabrerroom, Limul has in her hands an *exceptional adamantine warhammer, the same warhammer she wielded for decades as captain of the guard, the hammer with which she slew eleven dwarves in the name of justice, the hammer which has so far claimed five demons in her service, the hammer upon which she has bestowed the name: **Drunkenfear the Immortal Elevation.***



The creature wastes no time gloating over the hammer lord's crushed body. It turns towards a civilian nearby and lets out another blast of vomit - which carries it backwards, slamming it against the wall, and destroying it.



Ghosts abound in Weatherwires. 36 spirits haunt the fortress - far more than half the number of those dwarves still left alive. Multiple angry ghosts send dwarves into violent tantrums, and reckless spirits overturn coffins or statues. Mite brute extract, left strewn about from constant battle with the fiends, is tracked into the fortress and up the stairwell, gathering on the bare feet of dwarves. Soon after a combat, a dozen dwarves will turn up in the infirmary, dizzy and fainting, with blisters covering their feet. They soon recover, mercifully, though a dwarf often dies of thirst in the hospital, while his comrades continue laboring in the deeps. Also, lack of any hospital care tends to leave injured dwarves to die of infection in their wounds (Athel Standtorch of clan Quakedented suffered this fate during the combat). These factors, combined with the constant demonic assaults and the passing of the elderly every year, threaten to destroy the dwarves of the Merchant of Echoing before their final task is completed.

It has finally happened: one of the roving spirits haunting the fortress has directly struck down one of the living.



With no way to memorialize the dead, this murderous spirit is the personification of death for the dwarves of Weatherwires. It will claim the living, one by one, until none are left.

Melbil Boneguild, last of the Vesselplayed clan, dies of infection in the infirmary. The dwarves begin to suspect that there is a virulence present somewhere in the deeps, but make no move to combat it. At this point, the stairwell to hell is slick with blood, vomit, and slime, contaminated thoroughly by the

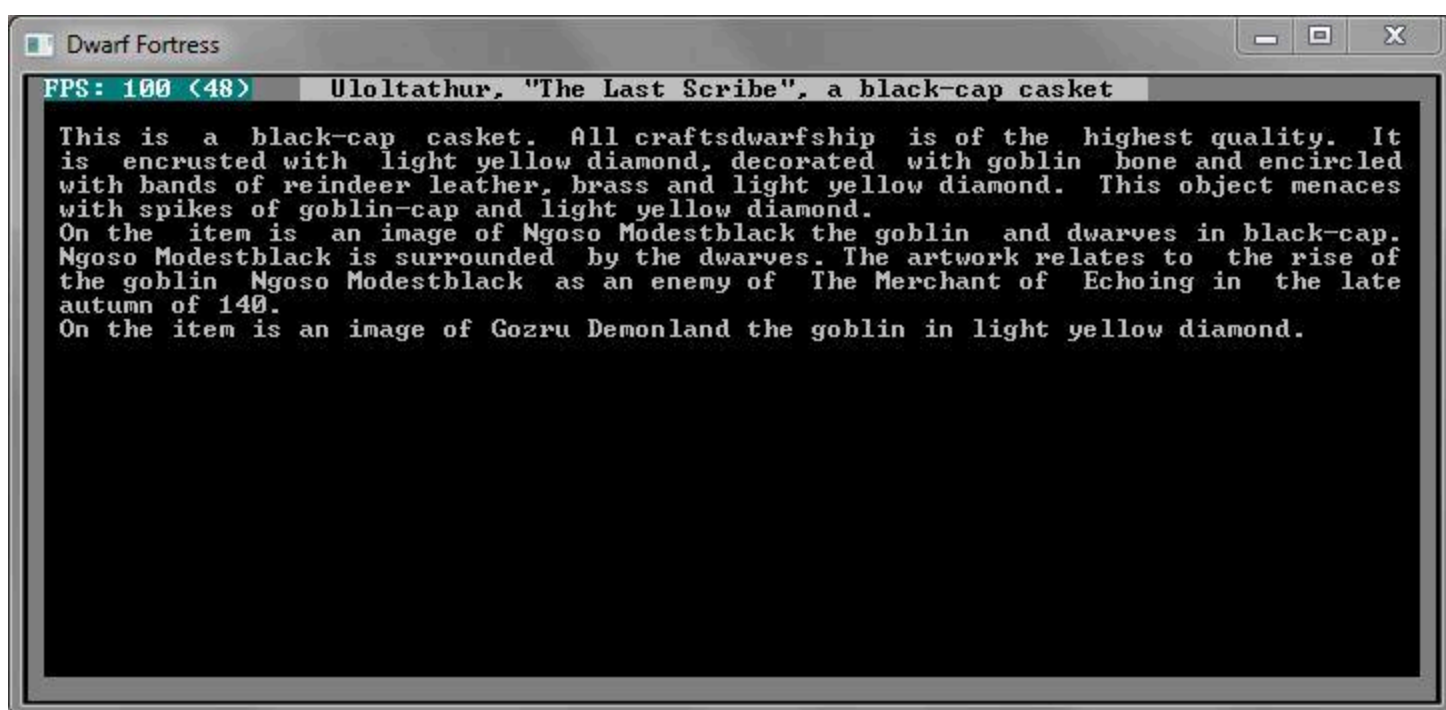
dwarves who tread dust and extract out of the abyss and into the fortress. Such a cleaning effort would be an unwelcome distraction from the completion of the final effort.

There are 60 dwarves left in the fortress.

The long shadow of tragedy has hung over Weatherwires for nearly a century, claiming countless dwarves through tantrum spirals, spectral possessions, and demonic incursions. Now, another soul has passed into the shadow, and one more crippling blow has been struck against the Diamond Cloisters.

The attack came from the east - three demons of a relatively rare breed known as the Golden Yellow Monster: a gigantic monkey covered with oval-shaped overlapping scales, twisted into humanoid form. They ceaselessly chant in the unintelligible abyssal language, and their sharp teeth drip poison. The Silvery Princesses retaliated swiftly, and at first their victory seemed assured. Queen Cog Archwayward, last of the royal Murdershot clan, decapitated one of the fiends with little effort, but a surprise attack by one of the other demons caught her offguard. With a single lucky strike of its claw, the twisted monkey slashed open her skull, sending the queen to the slade floor amidst a pool of demonic goo. The rest of her squad successfully managed to slay the remaining demons, but the damage was been done. The mayor and monarch of Weatherwires is slain.

Thus ends the rule of the last royal family, founded in 132 when Kogsak Murdershot was appointed baron of the Diamond Cloisters. Cog Archwayward was born in 133, the second child of the duke and his wife, Domas Tickcities. Still a child, Cog looked on in 135 and 136 as the fortress tore itself apart from the inside, claiming the lives of both the duke and his youngest daughter. Cog soon became a legendary engraver, and is personally responsible for many of the engravings in the fortress - now, the duty of recording of Weatherwires' final histories falls to another. The queen's body is placed in the third burial receptacle atop the citadel - an artifact black-cap coffin known as the Last Scribe.

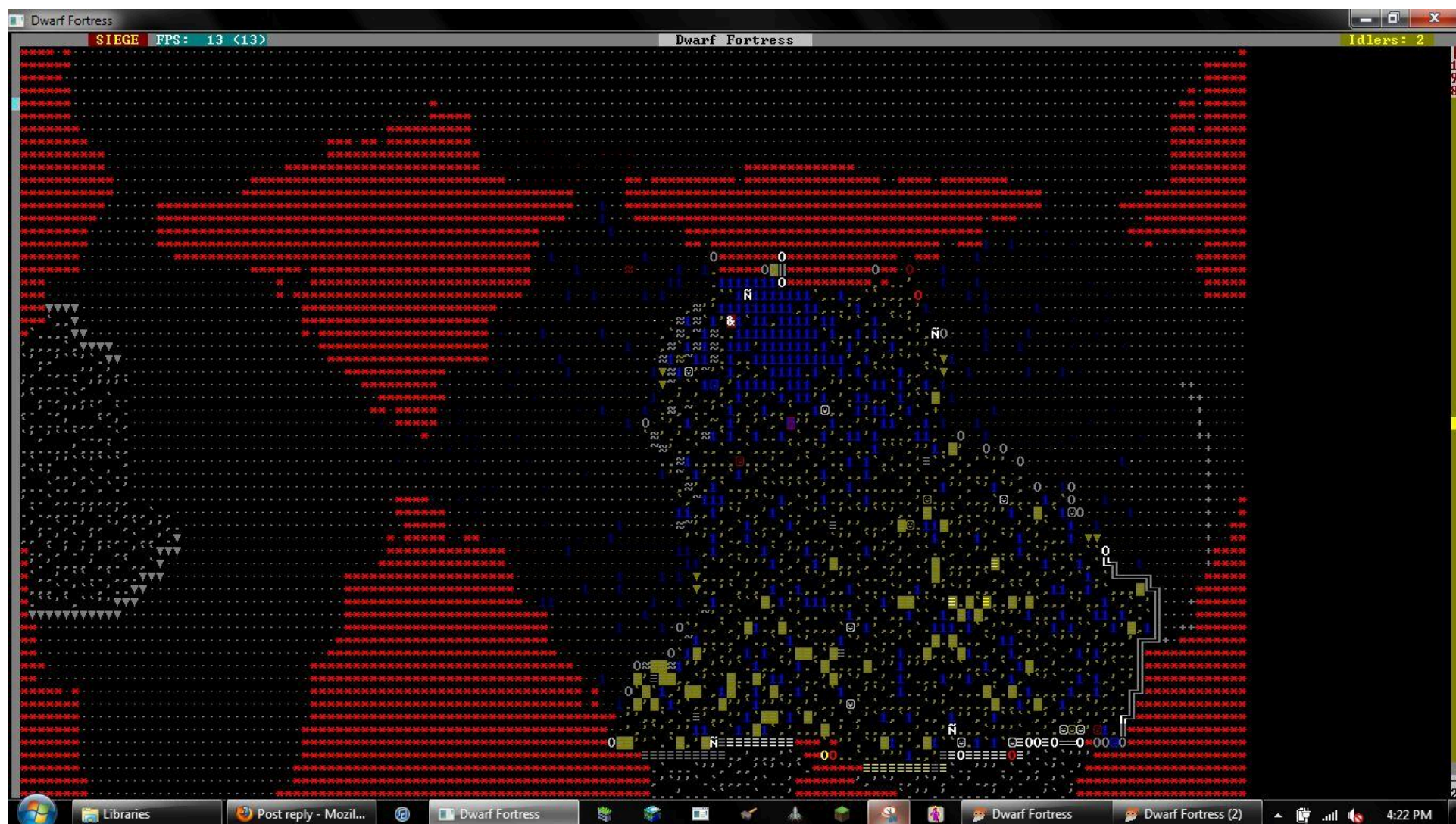


But it is not only the body of their queen which the dwarves inter in the black-cap coffin; it is the final hope of their civilization, finally laid to rest in the face of ultimate destruction. For, as the dwarves of Weatherwires have come to discover, there has never been any chance for utopia. There has only ever been the desperate illusion that, through perseverance and dedication, the gods might smile upon them and their curses might be lifted, and their race allowed to reign in glory forever. Through scourge after scourge, the dwarves continued to work towards the completion of the subterranean city, willingly blind to their obvious and inevitable fate, fuelled by the grand hope that the dome might one day be inhabited by their kin and progeny. It is this hope that dies, struck a final callous blow by a passing demon in the mid-winter of 330, and is interred atop the citadel in the dome forever.

If any illusions about the dwarves' fate were held by any member of the Diamond Cloisters, they fade away this day like miasma from a long-passed battle, leaving only the countless skeletons of their

forbears to stare damningly at the living. Even the surviving Quakedented children, the youngest being only four years old, now bear the heavy burden of the dwarves' final duty. Perhaps it is only the plump helmet men, peaceful and serene atop the southwestern guildhall, who are ignorant of the dwarves' inevitable demise.

The queen's final orders - to complete the monument - are nearly complete.



The top of a broad hill, not far from the base of the stairwell, has been muddied with water, and will eventually be overgrown with floor fungus and cave moss. Then, the area will be paved over with roads, which will then be removed, leaving a clean area of sand and silt. So far, it seems that no shrub or tree will grow in the deeps - perhaps the prospect of an abyssal tree farm is inherently impossible. It matters not - at this point, the dwarves are content to convert an area of indestructible, undiggable slade into a moss-covered hill. Eventually, a path will lead from the curtain wall to the center of the hilltop, where a small statuary will contain whatever remnants the dwarves wish to leave behind.

For now, however, the groundcover must be allowed to grow. The flooding mechanism will be removed, and the dwarves shall retreat to the dome, temporarily sealing the passageway to hell. The deepest of deeps has already claimed too many dwarves, and more die every day - Asmel Spiralropes, legendary herbalist, and a couple merchants have perished in accidents concerning the removal of flooding elements. Even in the face of oblivion, the dwarves have a sense of self-preservation - even if it is only a result of their obligation to fulfill the queen's final order.

Somehow, a salt haunt made it past the defenses of the curtain wall, without the military noticing, and flew up the stairwell. Emerging in the engraved antechamber, it slew three dwarves on the spot before anyone even realized the dome had been compromised. The gigantic shelled lizard, comprised of desiccating salt, was named Futurepoisons by the dwarves. The creature burst out of the antechamber and into the hallway, still littered with the ash and salt of its failed kin, and began chasing dwarves back and forth through the tunnels beneath the dome.

Into the tunnels runs Urvad Pagekissed, militia commander and last of the Thunderbridge clan. He was no military legend, but he led the Grooved Book-Volcanos, the last squad left in the fortress - the Silvery Princesses guarded the base of the stairwell far below. He charged at the fiend, but to no avail -

the salt haunt quickly broke the commander's limbs, leaving him crippled before losing interest and chasing after a merchant.

It was then that Vabók Voicedhatchets arrived. The only other active member of Urvad's squad, Vabók had only begun his training weeks earlier, and still had no skill with a spear. The young recruit in the midst of throwing a tantrum, furious at the deaths of his siblings and long patrol duty. His rage was ended with a mercifully quick battle.



Futurepoisons waited in the hallway, as if unsure what to do next. Urvad Pagekissed lay, crippled and unconscious, just around the corner. With the Silvery Princesses rushing to the aid of the fortress, it seemed like he might survive - until a carpenter rounded the corner, undoubtedly on some errand, and the fiend lurched forth. It slew the carpenter, spotted a planter beyond the bend, and charged her. After killing the two, it was only feet from the prone and unconscious commander.

At that moment, Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, militia captain of the Silvery Princesses, charged the beast, named steel short sword in hand. The swordsmaster slashed at the beast, but too late - the commander was slain.



With a few more strikes, Futurepoisons the Blue Whiteness (a rather contradictory name?) was slain, and one more kill added to Ézum's already impressive count. With only 48 dwarves remaining, the Diamond Cloisters retreats to the safety of the dome, abandoning the project in the deeps for the time being, allowing the fungus to grow and overtake the slade cavern floor.

There are only four military dwarves of various skill levels remaining, so I've made the decision to dissolve all previous squad divisions and consolidate all previous warriors in a single squad - the Urns of

Work. For the next few years, Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances will act as militia commander, training as many recruits as possible so that the dwarves' final return to the abyss will not be cut short.



So passes Asmel Landbridged, head cook, brewer, and planter of Weatherwires. Asmel had lived in the fortress since 129, longer than any other surviving dwarf, and created literally innumerable masterfully prepared meals for the dwarves of the fortress, right up until her demise. She was 168 - very close to the maximum age of any dwarf - but it is perhaps fortunate that her heart gave out in fright before she was subjected to the brutal killings offered by the fiends of hell.

It is the early spring of 232. The murderous spirit Ilral Visioncloistered claims one more of the living: Logem Fencerocks, youngest child and daughter of the Quakedented clan. Like clockwork, within the first two weeks of every season, Ilral kills a dwarf - this marks her sixth murder since the winter of 230. Ilral's body is irretrievable, as the woodcrafter fell into one of the infernal bottomless pits.

At this rate, the fortress could not possibly last another decade, even if no other deaths occurred. But other deaths *are* occurring - this year, Ûshrir Whippedslaughters, creator of the Dull Doctrines (a nether-cap earring), citizen of Weatherwires since 137, and trainee in the Urns of Work passed from old age. Bëmbul Scouredpaints of clan Gearguild replaces him, despite the younger dwarf's inability to grasp objects - he is one of the only dwarves left who is eligible for military service.

There are 41 dwarves left in Weatherwires, 18 of which are merchants. 3 are the remaining children of the Quakedented clan. The situation is grim, and the fact that trees and shrubs apparently refuse to grow in the abyss leaves a bitter taste in the dwarves' mouths. No matter. Once the military has reached a level of competence that the commander is content with, the final excursion into hell will commence - undoubtedly, that will be the final act of the Diamond Cloisters of the Merchant of Echoing.

In the early winter of 232, militia commander Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances deems his small squad the Urns of Work to be ready for the final incursion. Due to ghostly attacks and possessions, there are only 8 members of the squad, but their task is simple: protect the civilians long enough for them to build the temple and deconstruct the flooding tube. The militia takes their position at the top of the stairwell, and the lever is pulled. Four obsidian hatches grind open, and a rush of infernal air fills the antechamber - back into hell the dwarves go.

By this point, fungal trees and shrubs should have been covering the vast muddied areas, but instead, only a plain of cave moss and floor fungus greets the dwarves. By turning portions of hell into wooded

areas, the Diamond Cloisters had hoped to devise a monument that would be looked upon with awe and wonder by any who made it this far - but they will have to be contented with merely ground cover.

As the dwarves go about the business of collecting a few bodies who were left in hell when it was last sealed, a salt haunt attacks. By the time the militia can respond, three are dead and the demon has been named Inkyhate. For now, the civilians are creating a simple steel patio atop the central hill, with an engraved path leading up to it. The 33 dwarves who still live are now outnumbered by the 38 ghosts who haunt the fortress - now, Weatherwires is populated more by the dead than the living.

In the winter of 232, as construction in the deep continues, Nish Evenedknives, chief engraver of Weatherwires, is possessed by the angry ghost Ilral Boltedday. Ilral, already responsible for the deaths of many dwarves since his first days of undeath, shows no mercy now, during the twilight of the dwarves.



At this time, Nish was among many dwarves who stood along the catwalk of bridges that led from the hole, left by the extraction of as much adamantine as possible, to the flooded area atop the hill to the southeast. Possessed by the angry spirit, the chief engraver turned to the merchant Aban Singlestandards and threw a punch or two. Ilral soon found, however, that Nish's body was built for finer work - engraving and smoothing of stone surfaces, specifically - and so turned the possessed dwarf's attention to the bismuth bronze bridge upon which both of them stood.



The two dwarves fall three z-levels to the slade floor, each breaking a few bones upon landing. With most other dwarves occupied, Nish and Aban crawl to the stairwell and begin their long ascent. They climb up and up, Nish constantly retching, but upon reaching the portion of the stairwell that passes between the expansive second cavern layer, Aban passes out from pain.

At that moment, an antelope fiend found its way into the shaft between the dome and the abyss. It is there, in the portion of the shaft which is constructed through the open air of the second cavern layer, that the fiend callously struck down Nish Evenedknives, chief engraver and acting manager of Weatherwires. Aban Singlestandards soon follows him into blessed oblivion.



The Urns of Work, stationed atop the hill nearby, rush to the stairwell to defeat the beast. Commander Ézum was asleep in the dome far above, so Ériith Minedtribe, elder of the two surviving children of clan Gearguild, was left in charge of overseeing the military operations in the abyss. Ériith was no fool - he was already possessed of legendary skill in combat, and as he was still relatively young, was being groomed as a replacement militia commander should old Ézum pass in his sleep.

As they approach the curtain wall, an antelope fiend emerges from the mess of discarded bins and barrels. The dwarves rush forth to do battle, and though the beast proves to be extremely resilient, Ériith Minedtribe eventually manages to land the killing blow, decapitating the fiend and neutralizing the threat to the fortress.

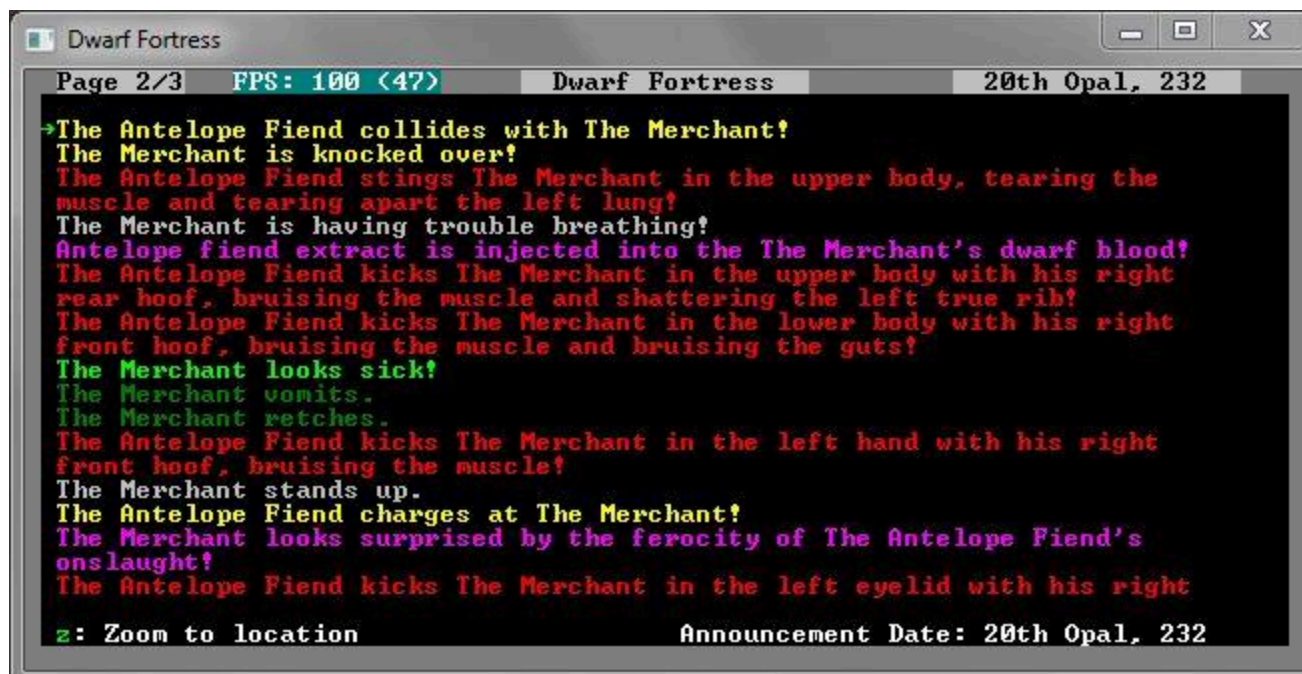
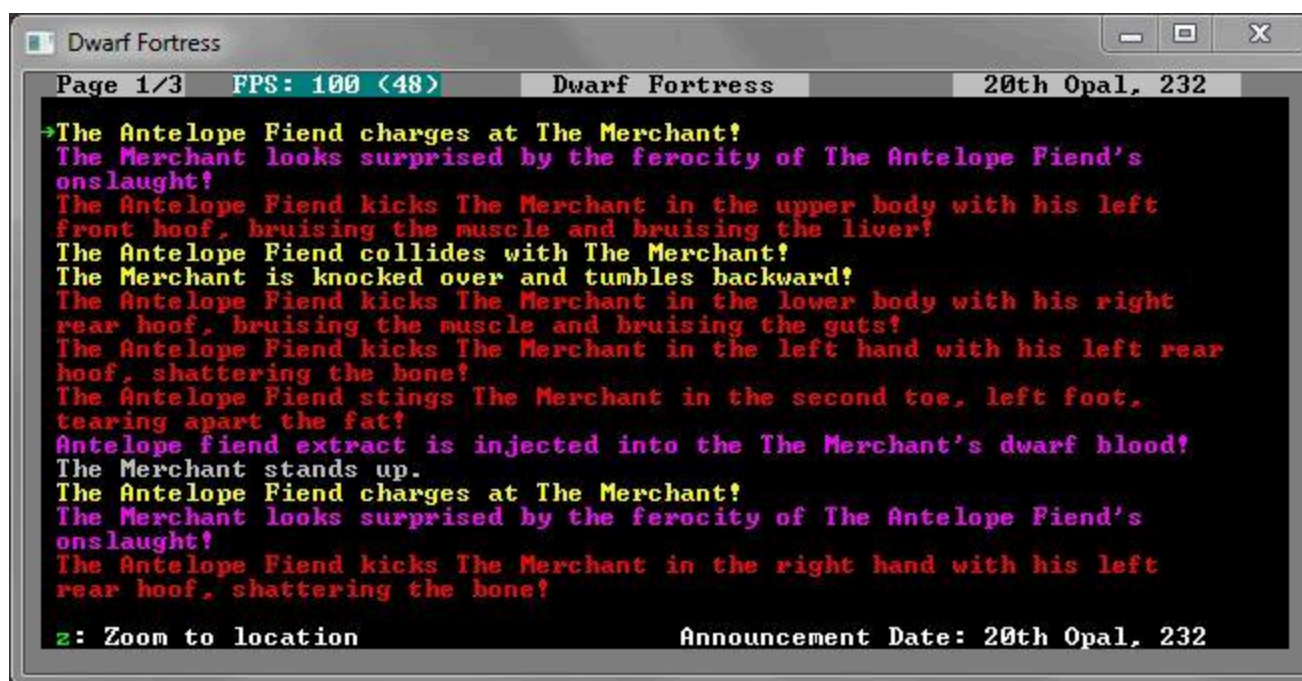
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 1/4      FPS: 99 (46)  Dwarf Fortress  20th Opal, 232
->The Swordmaster slashes The Antelope Fiend in the left rear hoof with his
  adamantine short sword and the severed part sails off in an arc!
The mayor stabs The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof with her
  adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
A ligament has been torn and a tendon has been torn!
The Antelope Fiend falls over.
The Swordmaster bites The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof, tearing
the skin and bruising the muscle!
The Swordmaster latches on firmly!
The Antelope Fiend breaks the grip of The Swordmaster's upper front tooth
on The Antelope Fiend's left front hoof.
The mayor stabs The Antelope Fiend in the upper body with her adamantine
short sword, tearing the muscle and tearing the right lung!
The Swordmaster slashes The Antelope Fiend in the tooth with his
adamantine short sword and the severed part sails off in an arc!
The mayor stabs The Antelope Fiend in the right front leg with her
adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
A tendon has been torn!
The Swordmaster stabs The Antelope Fiend in the left rear leg with his
adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
z: Zoom to location      Announcement Date: 20th Opal, 232
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 2/4      FPS: 99 (46)  Dwarf Fortress  20th Opal, 232
->A tendon has been torn!
The Swordmaster strikes The Antelope Fiend in the left rear leg with the
pommel of his adamantine short sword, bruising the skin!
The mayor slashes The Antelope Fiend in the right front leg with her
adamantine short sword, fracturing the bone!
An artery has been opened by the attack, many nerves have been severed
and a tendon has been torn!
The Swordmaster slashes The Antelope Fiend in the right front hoof with
his adamantine short sword and the severed part sails off in an arc!
The mayor punches The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof with her
right hand, bruising the muscle!
The Swordmaster kicks The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof with his
right foot, bruising the muscle!
The mayor slashes The Antelope Fiend in the left rear leg with her
adamantine short sword, fracturing the bone!
An artery has been opened by the attack and a tendon has been torn!
The Antelope Fiend attacks The Swordmaster but He jumps away!
The mayor scratches The Antelope Fiend in the right rear leg, tearing the
fat and bruising the muscle!
The mayor stabs The Antelope Fiend in the left front leg with her
z: Zoom to location      Announcement Date: 20th Opal, 232
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Dwarf Fortress
Page 3/4      FPS: 100 (44)  Dwarf Fortress  20th Opal, 232
->adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
A tendon has been torn!
The Swordmaster stabs The Antelope Fiend in the right rear hoof with his
adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
A ligament has been torn and a tendon has been torn!
The mayor slashes The Antelope Fiend in the lower body with her
adamantine short sword, tearing the muscle!
An artery has been opened by the attack!
The Swordmaster slashes The Antelope Fiend in the right front leg with
his adamantine short sword, fracturing the bone!
An artery has been opened by the attack, many nerves have been severed
and a tendon has been torn!
The mayor kicks The Antelope Fiend in the left cheek from the side with
her right foot, bruising the skin!
The Swordmaster stabs The Antelope Fiend in the right rear hoof with his
adamantine short sword, chipping the bone!
A ligament has been torn and a tendon has been torn!
The mayor stabs The Antelope Fiend in the left eyelid with her
adamantine short sword, tearing apart the skin!
The Swordmaster slashes The Antelope Fiend in the right rear hoof with
z: Zoom to location      Announcement Date: 20th Opal, 232
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As the warriors stand triumphant over the fallen beast, a scream echoes from the stairwell beyond, and the horror of realization flashes across their faces - the antelope fiend they defeated was not the one that slew Nish and Aban. The beast they seek, appropriately named Puzzleveiled, is nowhere near the curtain wall - it is already in the dome.



As the rest of the Urns of Work clamber up the stairwell, slick with noxious fluids, commander Ézum rises from his slumber and rushes towards the engraved antechamber. The antechamber itself consists of an open cylindrical area, 3 z-levels high and 6 tiles wide, located just off the hallway in which the great battle of 126 took place. Two adamantine doors separate it from the rest of the fortress, making it's location unmistakable to passerby. The entrance is at the top z-level, with a short stairwell leading down to the floor - it is here, next to the stair, where the lever that controls the hatches sealing the stairwell is located. The top of the stairwell itself is located at the end of an engraved hallway beyond the antechamber.

Ézum opens the adamantine doors and comes face to face with the antelope fiend which sits atop the stairs just beyond. With lightning quick reflexes, the commander stabs the Puzzleveiled in the left front leg with his weapon of choice - Clinchlulled, a masterful steel short sword, crafted by the legendary weaponsmith Iden Sabreroom. The strike chips the bone, and the demon charges Ézum and strikes - but the commander dodges out of the way, off of the stairwell, and onto the engraved floor 3 z-levels below. Unlike Nish or Aban, he lands lightly, shaking the stun from his head, while the antelope fiend smashes into the stairwell above him. The fiend rushes down the stairs and corners the commander against the engraved wall, knocking him prone repeatedly.



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Dwarf Fortress
Page 2/7   FPS: 99 <48>   Dwarf Fortress   21st Opal, 232

The militia commander is knocked over and tumbles backward!
The Antelope Fiend strikes at The militia commander but the shot is blocked!
The militia commander is no longer stunned.
The militia commander stands up.
The Antelope Fiend charges at The militia commander!
The Antelope Fiend misses The militia commander!
The Antelope Fiend collides with The militia commander!
→The militia commander is knocked over!
The Antelope Fiend strikes at The militia commander but the shot is blocked!
The militia commander is no longer stunned.
The Antelope Fiend misses The militia commander!
The militia commander stands up.
The Antelope Fiend misses The militia commander!
The militia commander stabs The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof with his Akgosinal, chipping the bone!
A ligament has been torn and a tendon has been torn!
The Antelope Fiend charges at The militia commander!
The Antelope Fiend attacks The militia commander but He jumps away!

z: Zoom to location   Announcement Date: 21st Opal, 232
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The sounds of battle echo down the stairwell, reaching the ears of the rest of the Urns of Work.

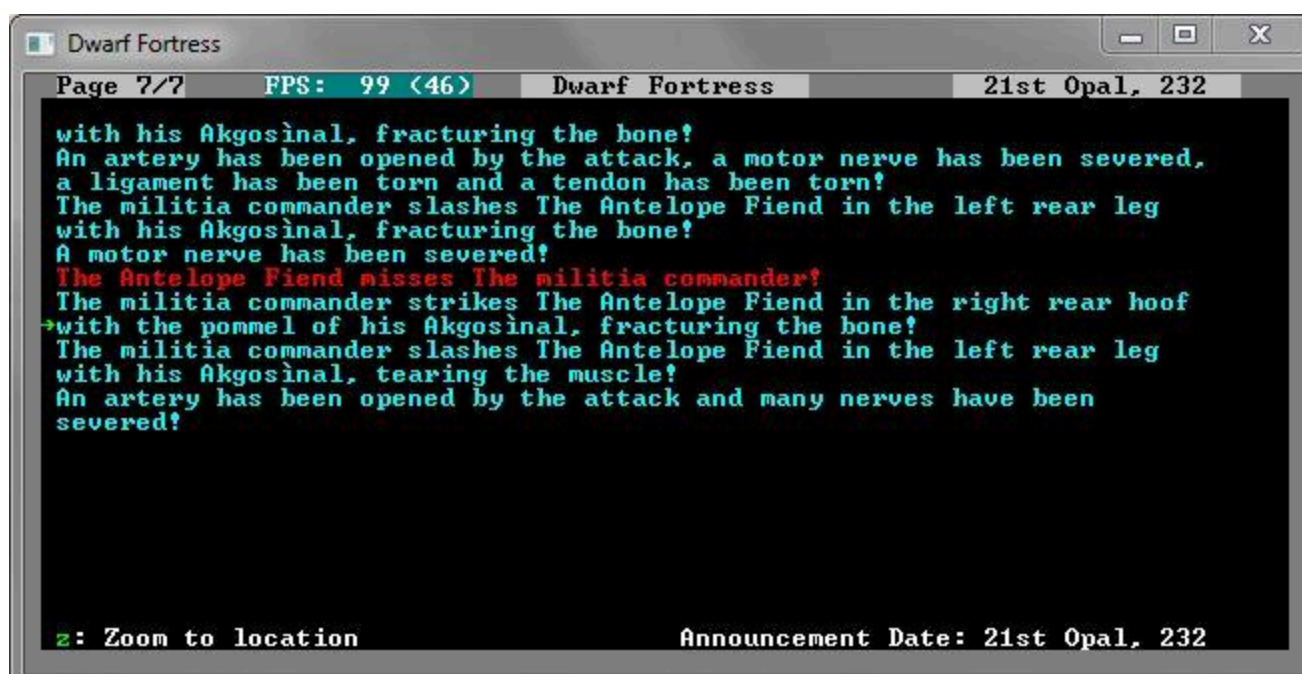
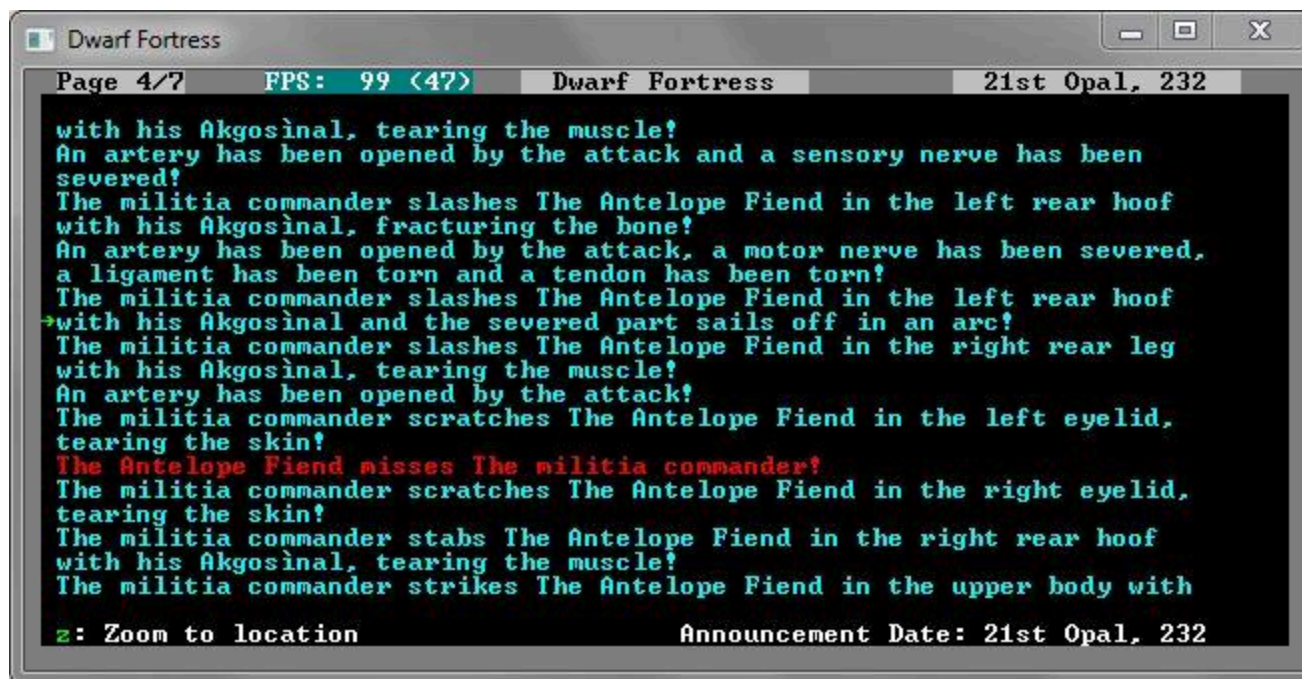
Moments later, Ériith Minetribe bursts into the antechamber - and finds commander Ézum standing over the lacerated body of the antelope fiend Puzzleveiled, surrounded by pools of demonic goo.



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Dwarf Fortress
Page 3/7   FPS: 99 <48>   Dwarf Fortress   21st Opal, 232

The Antelope Fiend slams into an obstacle!
The militia commander strikes The Antelope Fiend in the left rear leg with the pommel of his Akgosinal, bruising the fat!
The militia commander slashes The Antelope Fiend in the left front leg from behind with his Akgosinal, tearing the muscle!
A sensory nerve has been severed!
The militia commander slashes The Antelope Fiend in the left front hoof from behind with his Akgosinal, tearing apart the muscle!
→An artery has been opened by the attack and a sensory nerve has been severed!
The militia commander stabs The Antelope Fiend in the right front hoof from behind with his Akgosinal, chipping the bone!
A ligament has been torn and a tendon has been torn!
The militia commander stabs The Antelope Fiend in the head from behind with his Akgosinal, tearing the muscle, fracturing the skull!
A tendon in the skull has been torn!
The Antelope Fiend misses The militia commander!
The militia commander stabs The Antelope Fiend in the throat with his Akgosinal, tearing the skin!
The militia commander slashes The Antelope Fiend in the right front leg

z: Zoom to location   Announcement Date: 21st Opal, 232
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The commander casually leads his squad back into the deeps. Three dwarves have died this day - it is his intent that no more should do so. There is still work to be done.

The most notable of those that have fallen is Nish Evenedknives. A resident of the fortress for 92 years, Nish has created innumerable masterful engravings since he reached legendary skill sometime in

the early 150s. Only two dwarves had been living in the fortress for longer than Nish - Doren Ledkan, weaponsmith and creator of the Orb of Fires (an adamantine spear), and militia commander Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances. Nish has long held the unofficial position of chief engraver - in all likelihood, he is responsible for the majority of the artwork in the fortress.

Now, there is only one legendary engraver left in the fortress: Mistêm Oilytaut, a merchant by profession who has been learning the trade of engraving since she was inducted into the fortress. It falls upon her shoulders to record the final struggle of the Diamond Cloisters - she is the last historian of Weatherwires.

The demons are already adapting to the dwarven militia's new structure. While the warriors are in force, they are nigh-invincible - no demon can stand against them. So, a quartet of giant, reptilian salt haunts executes a three-pronged attack, dividing the military up so it can be destroyed piecemeal.

Days after the attack of Puzzleveiled, the first strike is made. A salt haunt attacks and easily kills a merchant guard turned woodcrafter who strayed too far from the construction site. The militia intercepts the demon before more damage can be done, but at a terrible cost.

While they leave the construction area defenseless, three more salt haunts are spotted flying high above and to the east of the construction site. Commander Ézum leads the squad around to the north, hoping to draw the fiends away from the civilians, but the salt haunts have apparently planned for this. One haunt moves to distract the militia, while another strikes at the paved hilltop.

Datan Twinklerocks, citizen of Weatherwires since 147, is the first to die. She was on her way to the construction site, and apparently had not received any of the previous orders - her skull is crushed by a kick from the salt haunt. The fiend is named Glittercleaned by the dwarves.

Zuntîr Basementlocked, acting mayor and master brewer of Weatherwires since 140, is the next to see combat. She engages another salt haunt, and despite being a legendary swordswarf and shield user, her skills are useless against the fiend in single combat - she is no Ézum Openeddoors. After a brutal combat in which nearly every bone in the mayor's body is broken, Zuntîr finally passes out from agony, and the salt haunt, now named Glimmersuns, puts her out of her misery.

Doren Racktired and Astesh Lanceanvil, both possessed of legendary skill with sword and axe, respectively, close in on Glimmersuns. Despite having the advantage of numbers, the demon lashes back at them, quickly breaking their legs and spines before delivering the final blows. Doren, creator of the artifact adamantine spear the Orb of Fires is slain first, and the modest Astesh, the last weaver of Weatherwires, soon follows.

Meanwhile, Glittercleaned flies up from the construction site to the exposed catwalk high above the surface. The dwarves there scramble over each other in an attempt to escape the demon, crowding along the aqueduct, barely wide enough for one to pass. The fiend slays a merchant straggler, then flies down towards the curtain wall, chasing after the various dwarves who fled in that direction.

Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, originally a lashdwarf but now wielding an adamantine short sword, closes in on Glimmersuns and single-handedly slays the demon, despite being paralyzed from the waist down. Truly, the ancient warriors of Weatherwires were and are unparalleled in combat, even in comparison to the forces of hell.

The fourth salt haunt strikes against old Nomal, unwisely hoping to slay the master lasher while he is alone. Perhaps mistaking the warrior's prone position for infirmity or weakness, the fiend strikes - but Nomal bats it away like a fly, suffering no injuries. Likewise, when commander Ézum finally tracks

down Glittercleaned, there is no combat - with a single strike of his blade, snicker-snack! The fiend is sliced in two.

24 dwarves remain.

Shortly after that attack, two mite brutes appeared from the north. Nomal Biglabors intercepted them both, taking on two demons at once, and again emerged triumphant.

Logem Sparkswords, one of the last of the Quakedented clan, is not so lucky. An assault by wraiths of snow after Nomal's triumph catches him off-guard - a single well-placed kick sends him flying dozens of feet. As always, it is the sudden stop at the end that kills him.

The wraiths do not stop there. They fly forth, making a beeline for the dwarves who were moving to gather the equipment and bodies of the fallen. One demon spots a wounded dwarf lying on the hillside nearby, and dives in for the kill - it does not notice the two mite brutes lying slain nearby until it is too late.

Another dives towards a dwarven child. The weak creature, made only of flesh and bone, is slain quickly. The demon does not care that the child was Dastot Lancergilt, one of the last Quakedented children. The demon, now named Boildungs, closes in on a nearby merchant, killing him as easily as the child. All dwarves are the same in demonic eyes. The killing spree is ended by commander Ézum, who arrives just in time to save another child.

The spring of 233 arrives. The situation in hell is grim. Clouds of miasma rise from numerous bodies which cannot be entombed, for fear that the demons which hover over them will only cause more casualties. Ghosts flit across the abyssal landscape like carrion birds over a battlefield, silently observing the slow downfall of their living brethren. The Urns of Work have suffered a crippling blow, and only three warriors remain - Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, and Érith "Gearguild" Minedtribe (who has now been appointed mayor) - both Ézum and Nomal, however, could die of old age any year now. With only 21 remaining dwarves left alive, it seems unlikely that the fortress will last the year.

Construction of the temple continues in the face of oblivion.

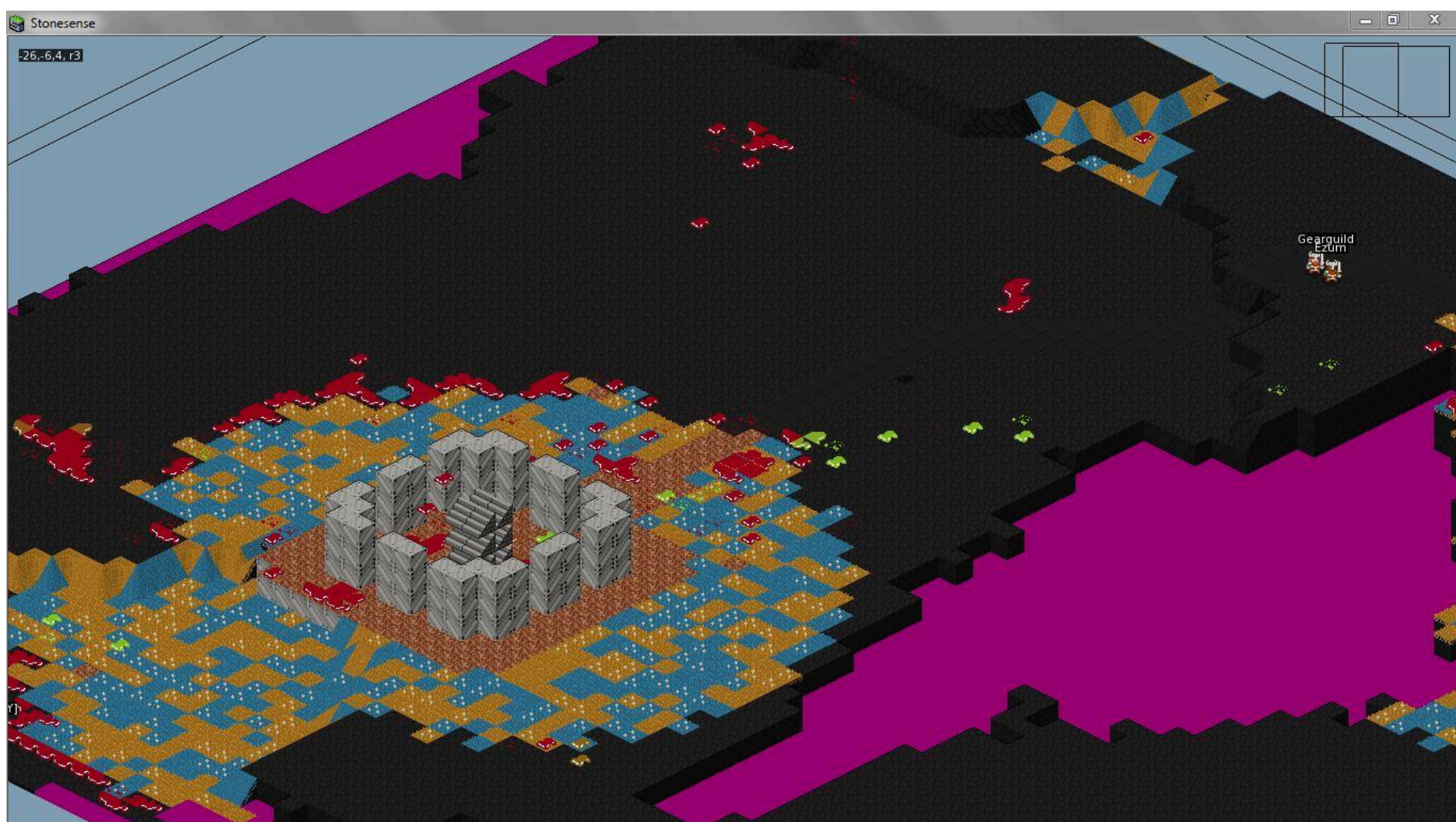
An attack by two topazolite fiends is repulsed by Ézum Openeddoors and Érith Minedtribe. Nomal Biglabors, it seems, is often absent due to his glacial speed, and the long distance between the food stockpiles and his station in the abyss. No matter - the monument nears completion.

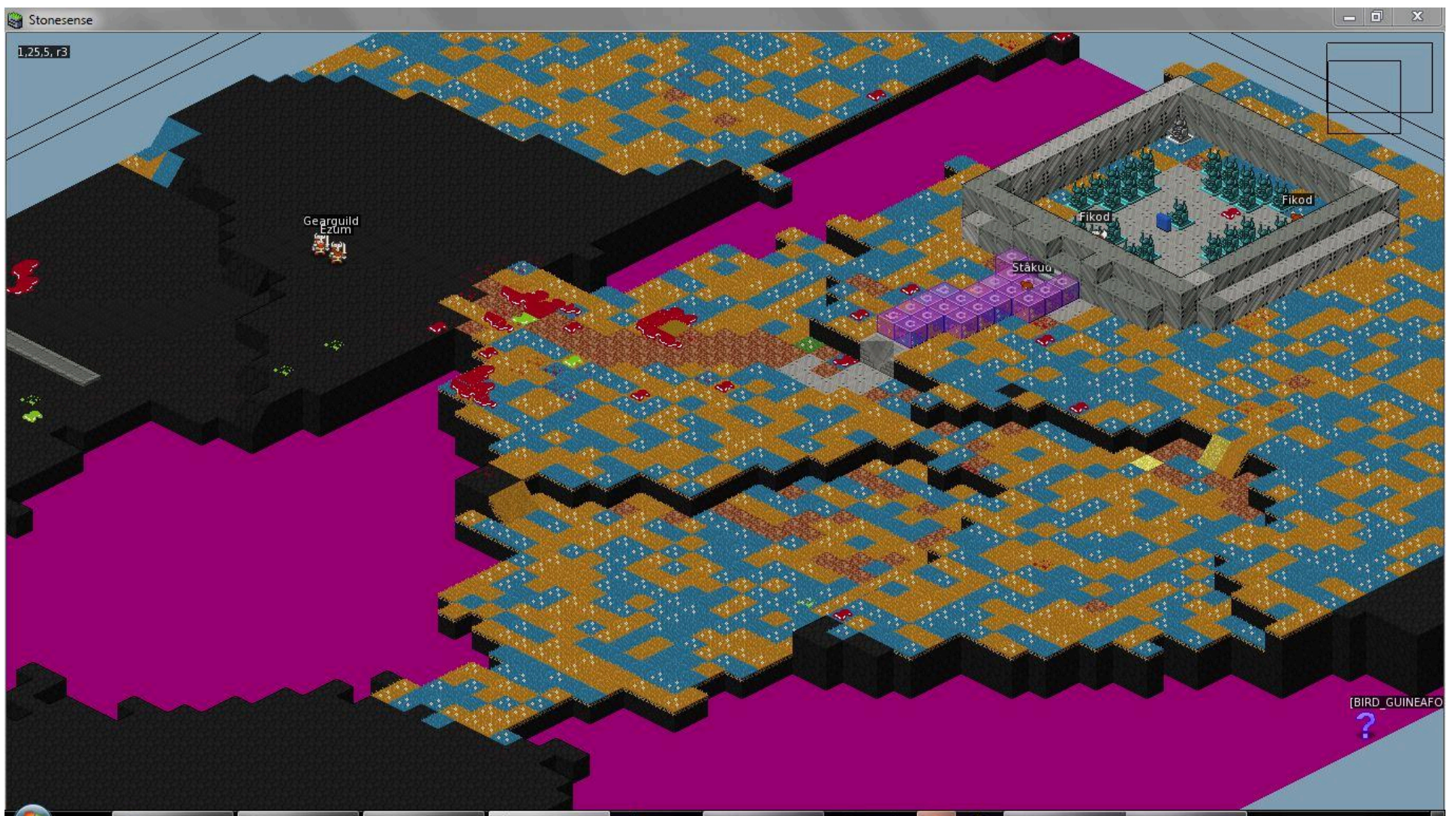
In the spring of 233, Edëm Portalceiling the merchant was scared to death, another victim of the murderous ghost Ilral Visioncloistered. Luckily for the fortress, Edëm had recently finished forging the remaining adamantine wafers left in the stockpiles into exceptional and masterwork statues. Her contribution will not be forgotten - indeed, should any woeful traveler find their way into the abyss, they shall find her masterworks enshrined inside a steel and iron mausoleum atop a mossy hill in the abyss.



A road, at first marked by engravings in the slade, but then by a steel paved walkway, leads from the curtain wall to the metallic structure. The obsidian door is an artifact, which oddly enough appears to have been given a first name in the dwarven fashion: Ézum Gladnessbridges. It is encrusted with obsidian, encircled with bands of llama wool, goblin-cap, and yak leather, and menaces with spikes of nether-cap. There are three images on the door: two giraffes in two-humped camel bone; Ducim Laborpatterned surrounded by dwarves on the day of her ascension to queen of the Merchant of Echoing in year 7; and Cog Pastmachine striking a menacing pose and rising from the dead as a murderous ghost in the late autumn of 136 (oddly enough, no sign of Cog Pastmachine has ever been noticed). When the mausoleum is complete, the door will be forbidden and sealed, and the statues inside protected from the demons.

At the center of the room will be a memorial to and a statue of the duke Kogsak Murdershot, patriarch of the royal family and visionary of the dome of Weatherwires. Though he died over a century ago, it was the duke who planned the excavation of the dome and the construction of a subterranean utopia - it is his vision that shaped the fortress, and ultimately his dream that has been crushed.





As the final touches are being placed upon the monument, four wraiths of snow appear just to the west of the curtain wall. They strike fast and hard - a merchant is slain as the Urns of Work scramble to the defense. The fiends fly overhead, confusing the warriors, while sending the civilians into disarray. In the chaos, Éríth and Ézum are separated, forced to defend against separate foes.

Éríth Minedtribe is attacked from behind by two of the wraiths of snow as they descend upon him in a surprise attack. He slashes back with his exceptional adamantine shortsword, and manages to destroy one of the horned demons before a lucky strike from the other shatters his left arm. With his shield arm useless, and in great pain, he falls back, parrying blow after blow. The fiend lands another blow upon his leg, breaking the bone and sending him to the ground. The desperate struggle continues - and Éríth's left arm is broken again in three more places. Just as he begins to pass out from agony, commander Ézum (who has already slain three of the demons) charges the beast and decapitates it.

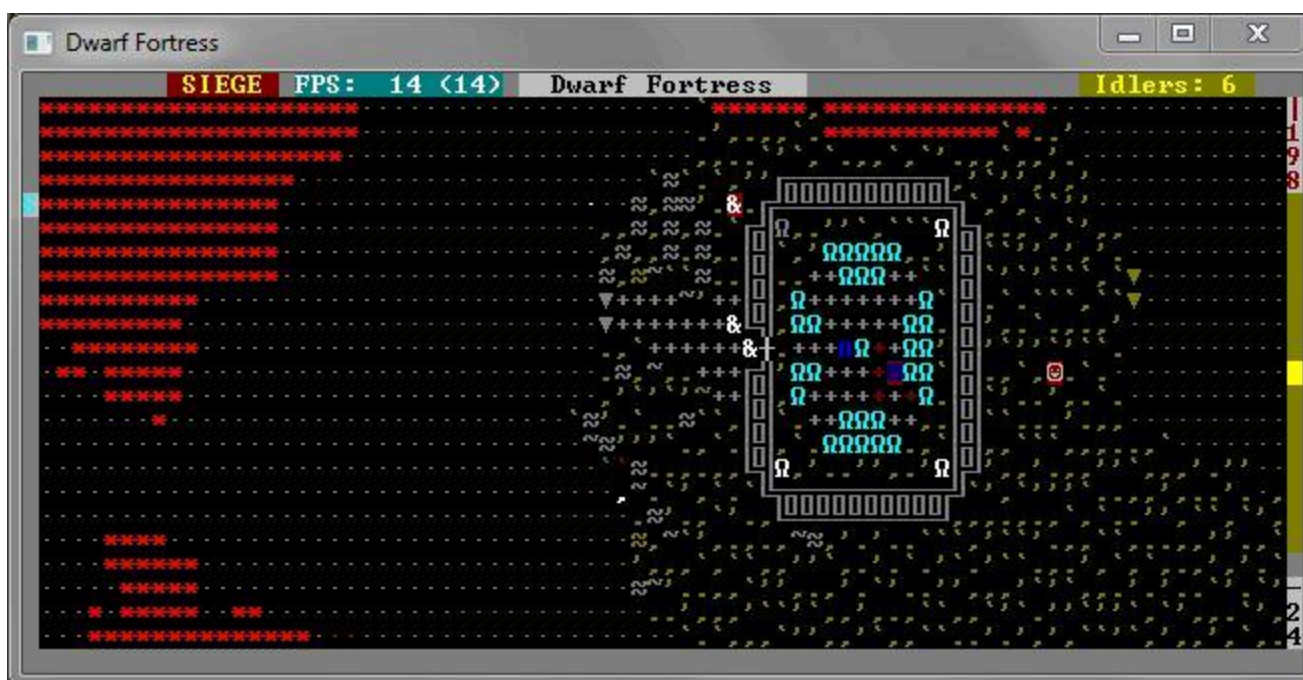
As Éríth crawls to safety, the commander stands alone in defense of the curtain wall as two more wraiths of snow attack. The fiends swoop down against him and knock him to the ground. The commander scrambles away from the beasts, blocking and dodging blow after blow as they attack. He parries one strike and counterattacks, cleaving one of the demons in two pieces. Nearby, just outside the curtain wall, Éríth faints from pain. The commander charges the remaining demon with ferocity, and the battle rages to and fro - until it reaches the base of the curtain wall. Seeing a moment of opportunity, the demon lands a killing blow on the unconscious swordsmaster, goring him in the head and tearing apart his brain with such force that the body is sent flying.

The fiend is dead before the body of Éríth "Gearguild" Minedtribe falls back to the slade floor, cut down by Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances.

The bell tolls for Weatherwires. The only remaining dwarves who can be inducted into the military are about to die of old age. 18 dwarves live to see the completion of the monument, the final task left to them. Only two segments of the aqueduct remain to be deconstructed, and the dwarves can return to the dome and live out their remaining years in relative peace.

The monument is complete. The dwarves retreat back to the safety of the dome, the lever is pulled, and the obsidian hatches that cap the stairwell grind back to a closed position once more.

It seems that, deep in hell, the demons are confounded by the structure. They are apparently unable to breach the door, perhaps because it is an artifact. The statuary inside is safe.

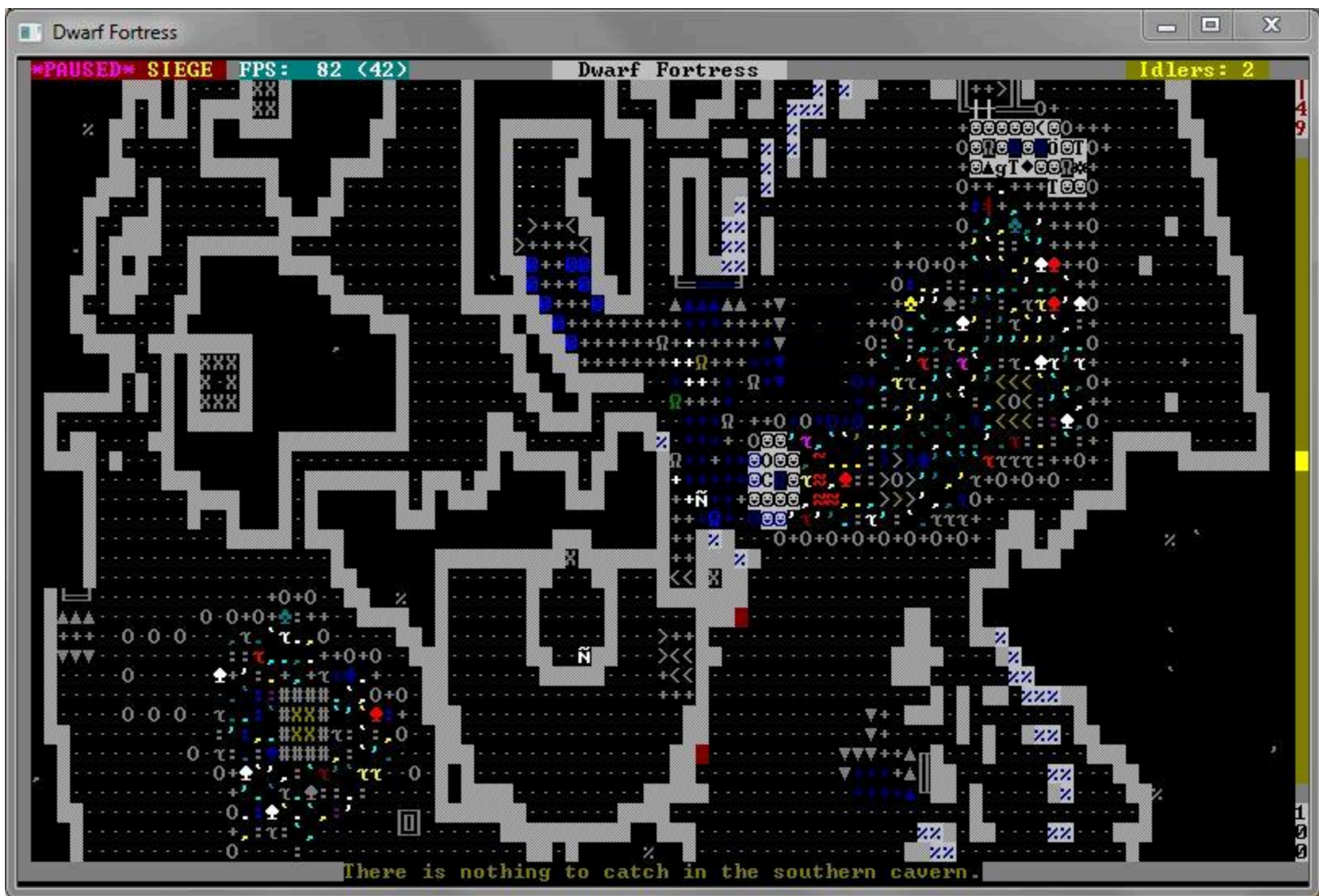


Any adventurer who delves into the depths of the fortress will find the treasures of an entire civilization, the wealth of a hundred fortresses, here in this room.

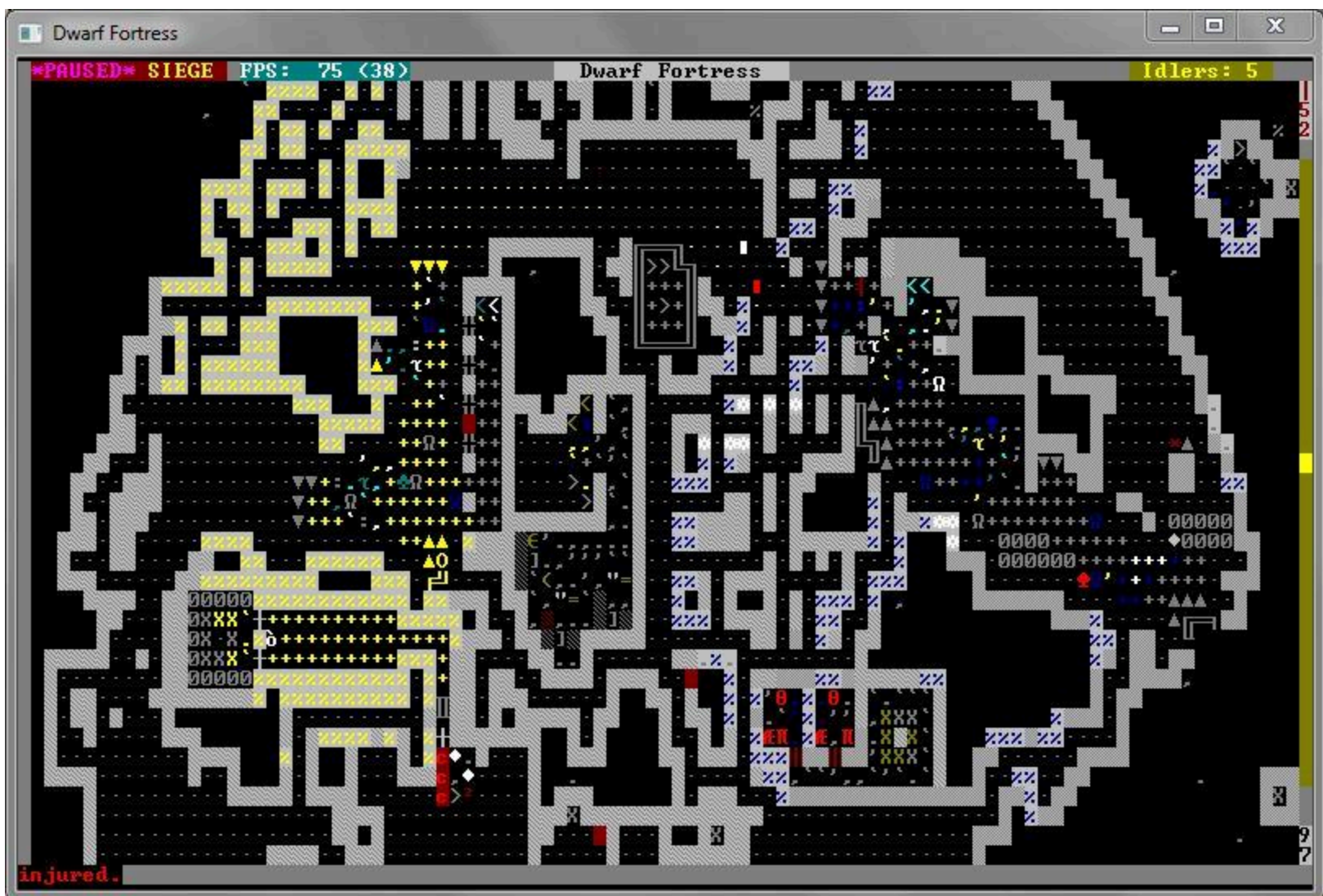
The monument is apparently a favorite spot now for the demons. These mite brutes are the second group of fiends I have spotted loitering immediately outside the entrance to the memorial chamber/treasure vault.



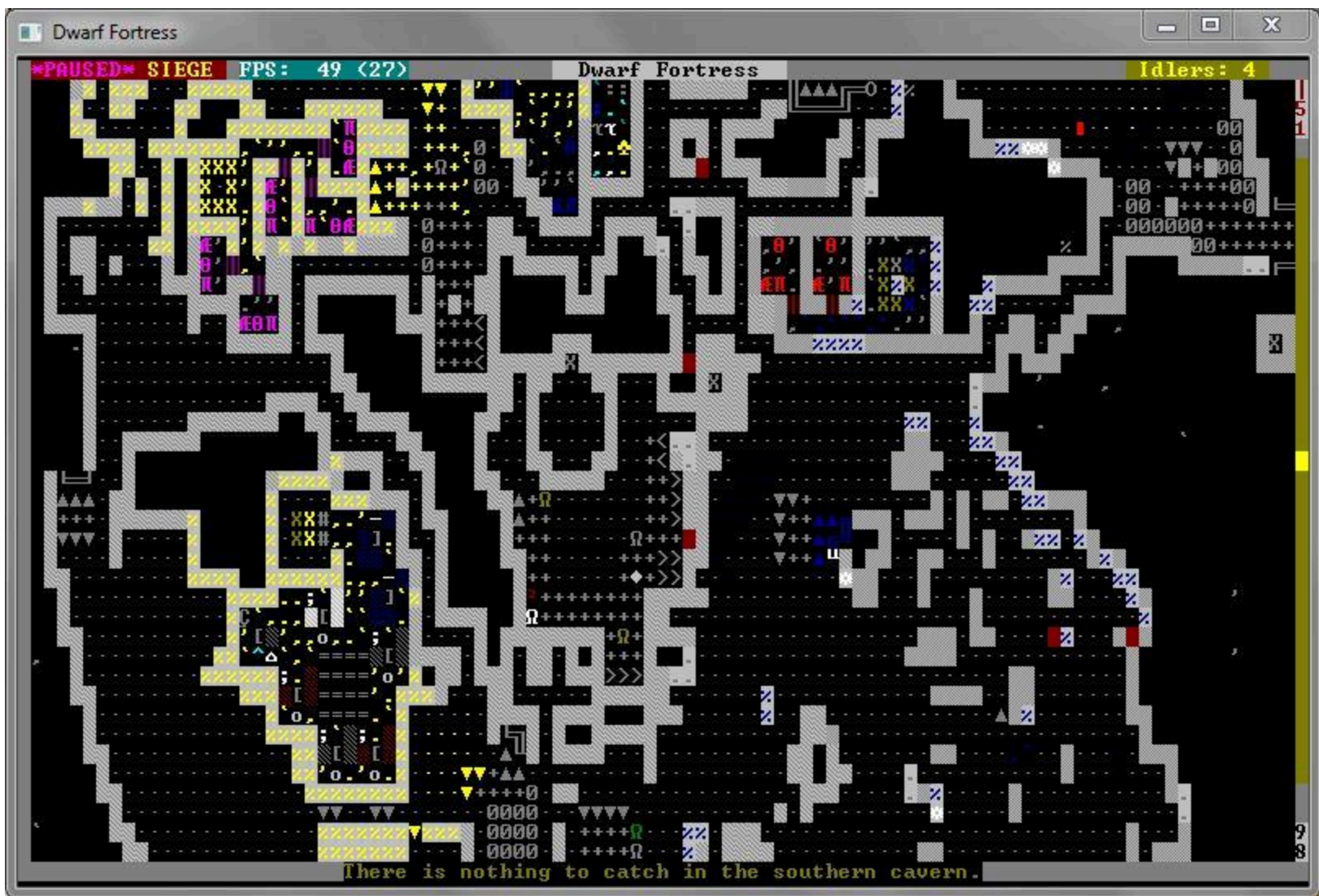
The dome is empty.



The long avenues that wind through the fortress are unwalked except by the occasional crundle that finds its way through the labyrinth of mines beneath the fortress. At some point in the past, when prospects were brighter, statues were placed in the streets - statues of traveling dwarves, relating to the founding of Weatherwires in the early spring of 126. Now, in 223, the only dwarves who walk these streets are those of stone and metal, mute witnesses to the fall of the fortress whose founding they commemorate.



Workshops, once crowded with bustling dwarves hauling raw materials and finished goods to and fro, now stand empty. Scores of bedrooms, meant to house the beginnings of a utopian empire, are now frequented only by the ghosts of those who slept there in life. Personal belongings litter hallways and open areas alike, the only evidence that there were once dwarves who lived here at all.



Communal areas have been abandoned. The living still come to the wells under the citadel occasionally, to wipe their feet clean of whatever foul liquid they have stepped in - usually the blood or vomit of their fallen comrades. They know it is only a matter of time before they, too, are sent to join the others in the afterlife. Mafol Boulderchamber, a merchant, is the next to go; scared to death by Ilral Visioncloistered.



There are 15 dwarves left in the fortress. Of those, two-thirds were inducted into the fortress from caravans:

- Goden Mawknife, bone carver.
- Onol Plaitorbs, stonemason.
- Alath Oilcyclone, planter.
- Litast Wiremansion, planter.
- Dakost Paddlecreeds, planter.

Stâkud Duskbooks, merchant.
Tun Dyefight, merchant.
Mistêm Oilytaut, merchant and legendary engraver.
Solon Townclenched, merchant.
Reg Oiledsacks, merchant.

There are only three dwarves left who were either willing immigrants to the fortress, or descendants thereof.

Bembul Scouredpaints of clan Gearguild - last member of the original clans.
Nomal Biglabors the Lush Convent of Dwelling, legendary warrior.
Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, legendary warrior.

And then there are the two Quakedented children who have survived:

Sâkzul Freerelics, daughter, age 9.
Atír Helmsseed, son, age 7.

Nomal Biglabors had died. He finally succumbed to infection of wounds suffered at the end of a short fall in hell. Chalk it up to a lack of skilled medical dwarves in the fortress. Nomal was the last of the Lone Lashes, an experimental squad which was formed during the early years. Nomal and his squadmates wielded whips and scourges scrounged from the bodies of fallen goblins, and used them to great effect. After suffering a crippling spinal injury during the first incursion into hell, he was paralyzed from the waist down, but during the subsequent forays into the abyss, managed to successfully defend himself and others from two or more demons multiple times.

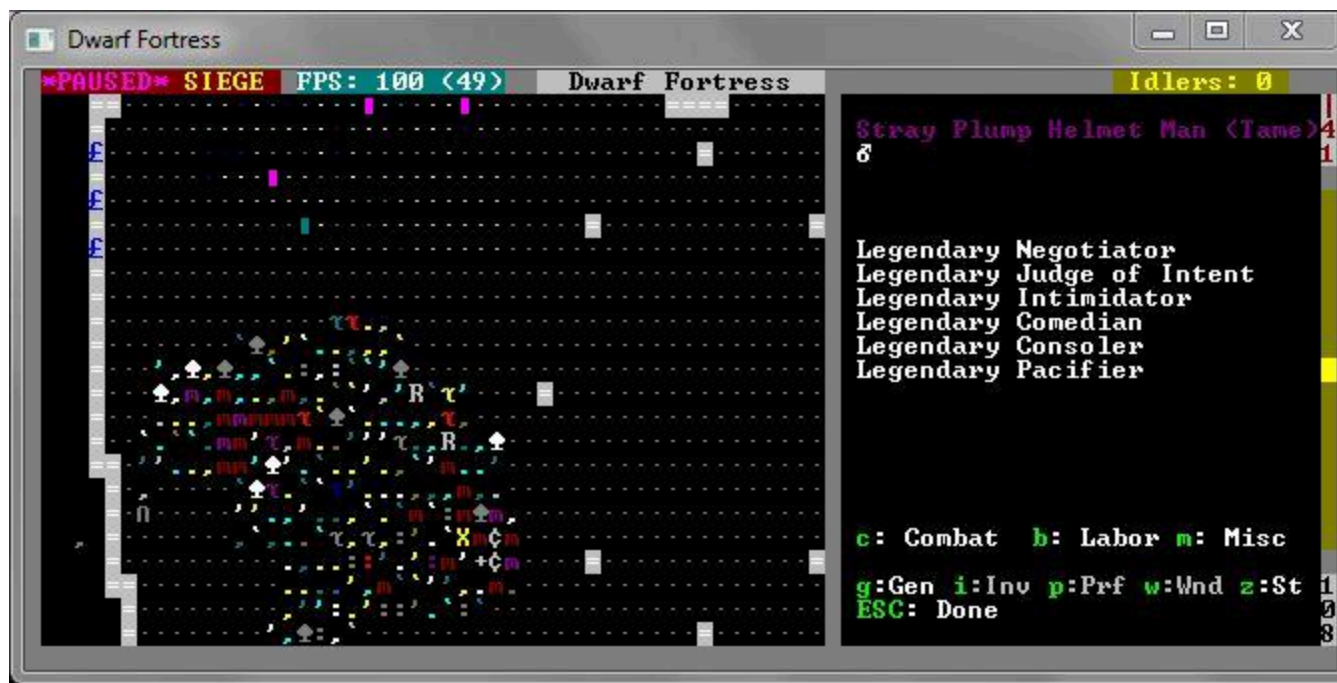
Now, there are 14.

Ilral Visioncloistered has claimed another victim: Bembul Scouredpaints, last of the Gearguild clan. Indeed, Bembul was the last scion of all of the old clans, whose names are echoed in engravings or statues about the fortress, or etched upon the tombs of the dead. She had been infirm for many years, unable to hold a weapon or haul an item (much to my chagrin - my announcement menu, at least, is grateful for the death).

Bembul's death marks the end of a grand experiment I had planned on executing from the early days of Weatherwires - by giving all children family-based nicknames, I could track the genealogy of the entire fortress through the decades. Hence, the family names: Gearguild, Languagemetal, Murdershot. The curse of infertility dashed any hopes I had concerning that endeavor long before I began narrating the progress of the fortress.

Sâkzul Freerelics, one of the remaining Quakedented children, has perished. Prior to the excursions into hell, I had been linking crundle cages to levers in groups of ten, so that the military could get some "hands-on training." The last set of linked cages was never used, so I stationed Èzum Openeddoors next to them and pulled the lever. The crundles scattered like cockroaches, and a few managed to slip past the commander. Two crossed paths with Sâkzul, and tore the child apart. All remaining crundle cages are being dumped into the volcano.

Also, quite interestingly...



This plump helmet man is flashing between purple and pink, like one would expect a legendary noble to do. Perhaps the fungus men have accepted him as their king.

The merchant guard turned planter, Dakost Paddlecreeds, is the next victim of the murderous spirit.

The oldest of the mushroom children have begun to come of age. The group of 27 plump helmet folk are released into the dome, now that all exits to other parts of the fortress have been properly sealed. They stand in groups of two or three in statuaries or municipal parks, speaking to each other in their strange spore-based language. By themselves, or in twos, they walk from place to place in the dome along the otherwise deserted avenues.

What relation they had to the dwarves, if it does indeed go beyond the realm of being merely a pet project that expanded to unforeseen proportions, remains a mystery. Were the plump helmet men somehow related to the infertility? Are they the reincarnations of the souls of the dead in fungal bodies? All this is speculation. All that can be known for sure is that the mushroom folk now outnumber the dwarves nearly three to one.

In the mid-summer of 234, the last child of the Quakedented clan is killed by Ilral Visioncloistered. The miracle of that clan's emergence granted false hope to the dwarves of Weatherwires. Its existence is an anomaly - why, in the midst of all of this tragedy, was a single couple out of dozens allowed to produce progeny? We will never know for sure.

Litast Wiremansion, previously a merchant guard, has been slain by Ilral Visioncloistered. The fact that a ghost can claim so many kills and yet not gain a special title seems to be an oversight. Hmm.

The grim spectre of death hangs over the fortress. Season after season, a member of the Diamond Cloisters is slain by the murderous ghost. The death of Weatherwires is named Visioncloistered.

There are nine dwarves remaining. Looking at their relationships, they hardly know each other - a few dwarves are passing acquaintances, but for the most part, the survivors have barely spoken to each other. Each goes about their daily activities - eating, drinking, sleeping (and training, for the militia commander) - but hardly interact with one another.

Mistêm Oilytaut, merchant and the last dwarf with any skill in engraving, has been claimed by the dead. During much of 234, Mistêm had been busy detailing sections of the fortress, creating beautiful murals carved into the natural rock from which the dome had been carved. Now her work is cut short, and it seems that the final days of Weatherwires shall have no record, except in the minds of the mushroom folk who witness the fall.

Of the plump helmet men, now five possess legendary social skills, and a dozen more are Masters. It seems that these fungus people, short of stature and apparently harmless, are a brilliant philosopher race, enlightened beyond their years.

In 1, the Merchant of Echoing founded Mountaine and Whiskeredgloves, twin mountain halls dug into the mountain range known as the Enchanted Tower. By 18, both settlements had been broken, crushed beneath the heel of so many nightmarish horrors. The dwarves fled into the Enchanted Tower, making their homes in the highest spires, far from the influence of man or monster.

For generations, the Merchant of Echoing was a civilization in exile - a kingdom with no monarch, a country with no capitol. The dwarves must have lived day to day, feeding upon whatever meagre fungus could be scrounged from natural caves, and cowering in fear from the mountain titan, Usu Wavedpearl the Murky Deer. Nobody knows for sure - all dwarves who were alive during those days are dead, except for the commander, Ézum Openeddoors, and no records survive from those dark years.

Then, in 126, more than a century after the ettin Baspu Powerhale slew the last fool who stood in defense of Mountaine, a group of seven dwarves descended from the peaks of the Enchanted Tower to found a new fortress, a bastion which would house dwarvenkind in peace and prosperity forever. With only a wagon hewed of tower-cap, the pioneers, naming themselves the Diamond Cloisters, struck the earth in the shadow of the Fire of Channels, a fuming active volcano overlooking the Musty Field, a terrifying temperate grassland. At that time, hopes were high, and prospects for the future were grand, despite the plagues of zombie giant badgers and constant goblin raids - and yet, the future seemed bright.

Alas, twas not to be.

It is 234. A mere eight dwarves remain, the last surviving members of a race that has always been struggling against adversity. Out of these eight, however, only one is a natural citizen, and thus a member of the Diamond Cloisters: Ézum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances. Despite being the militia commander, he is only acquaintances with one other living dwarf - the others are doubtless only aware of the presence of a legendary warrior, slayer of countless demons and last remnant of the original fortress.

For the first time, the dwarves of Weatherwires have elected a mayor who is not a member of the Diamond Cloisters - not an original citizen. Tun Dyefight, merchant, has been elected despite her having been strong-armed into joining the failing fortress in the first place.



Now, more than ever, these recruited dwarves regret their decision to willingly join their brethren beneath the earth. They gave up their mercantile prospects for the promise of endless wealth in the deeps - but they have come to realize that the promise of the queen, Domas Tickcities, was empty. The days of glory and wealth in Weatherwires are over - the artifacts have been sealed far beneath the earth in hell itself, and very soon the fortress itself will fade into myth forever.

The doom of Weatherwires had been apparent to all of the merchants and their guards for decades. The way to the surface was sealed, however, and the levers guarded by the militia. Tun and her comrades were, for better or worse, citizens of the fortress until its end.

Or were they? In the late winter of 234, Tun considers her options. The commander would die soon, she was sure - death itself kept a constant company about him.



As the last member of the Diamond Cloisters, Ézum was the only reason the merchants remained in the fortress. Weatherwires was dead, and yet the commander continued training, day in and day out, in the antechamber above the stairwell to hell - but the stair was sealed with obsidian hatches, controlled by levers. Clearly the commander was mad. Tun considers her options - she and her recruited companions could either stay and die, or escape and try risk their chances.

The year was almost out. The doom of Weatherwires approaches.

Spring arrives, unheralded.

Commander Ézum shows no signs of giving into old age - he merely continues training in the engraved antechamber, alone, running repeated weapon drills for a combat that will never come. He has reached the age of 165 - older than most dwarves have ever hoped to reach. And yet, despite his

wrinkled skin and white beard and moustache (his scalp and sideburns are clean shaven), his close-set silver eyes still gleam with determination and purpose. He wears the finest suit of adamantine armor available in the fortress, and wields a steel shield and shortsword, both named by the commander himself.

A formidable opponent, were any to stand against him.

Tun and the other merchants grow weary of the situation. Any day now, Ilral Visioncloistered, that relentless spectre of death, could claim another one of them. With each passing day, the surface calls to the merchants more and more. They descended into Weatherwires, lured by lies of prosperity - but instead, all they found was rot and death. They are not pioneers, or migrants, or heroes - all of those are dead, save the mad commander. No, they were merchants, and merchant guards, who chose to be nomads, traveling from town to mountainhome to fortress and back again - and it was nomads they should have remained. It was a mistake to ever travel to Weatherwires in the first place - why did they not perceive the doom when they first arrived?

After the hellish trek from the human towns, they should have known. They came, first across the Dune of Phantoms, and many died from giant desert scorpion ambushes. Then, through the desecrated Musty Field, being plagued constantly by undead wildlife - not the least of which were swarms of zombie badgers. Finally, they arrived at *Nugrethshorast*, a smoking, fuming mountain, surrounded by countless corpses and littered with debris. At that point, the merchants should have known that the place was cursed - but the queen and her fortress guard had been exceptionally persuasive, and the newcomers had had no choice but to turn in their pack animals and join the rest of their race beneath the earth.

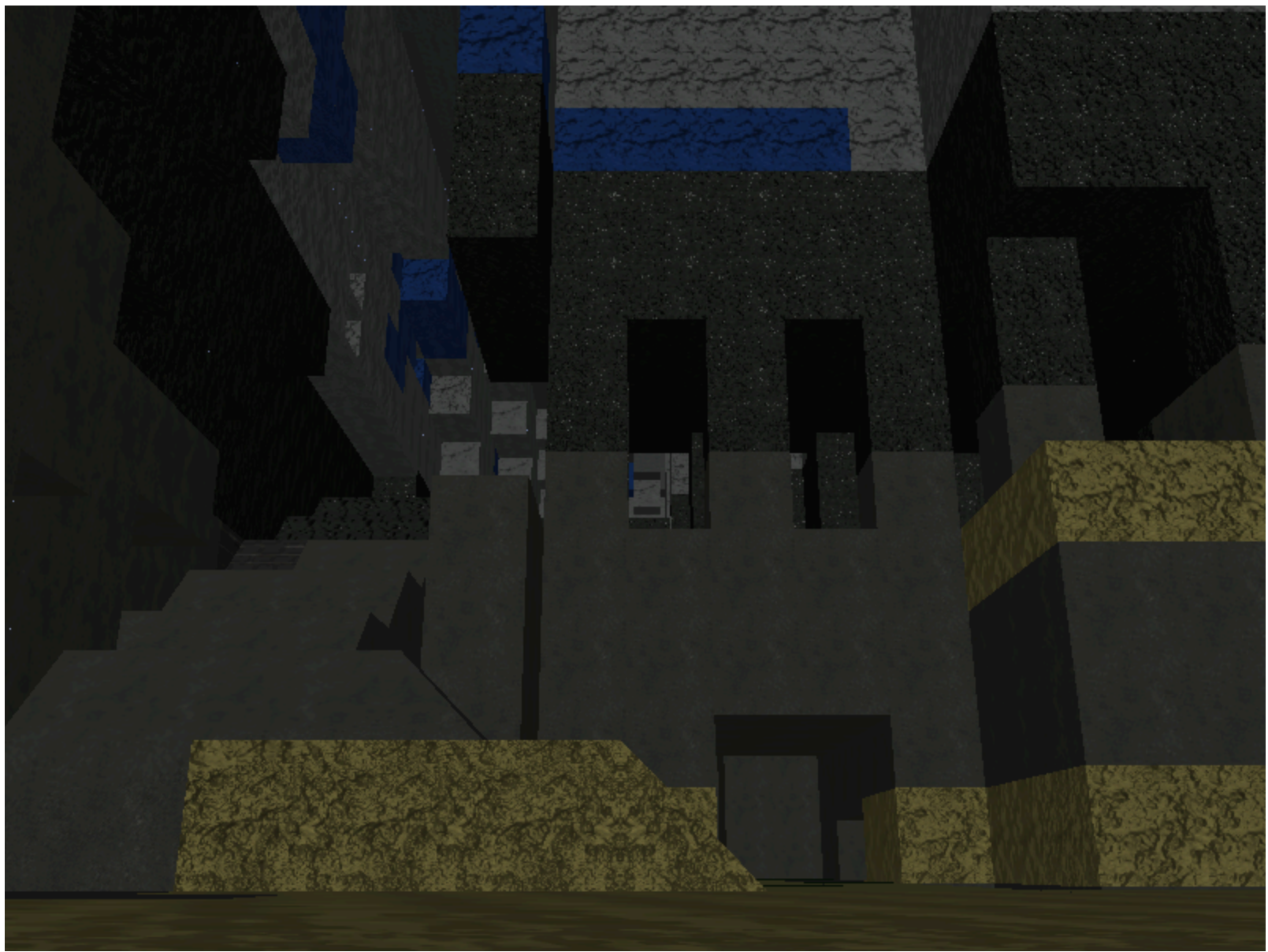
It had been a mistake.

Founding Weatherwires in the first place had been a mistake.

The dwarves should have remained in the high mountains, where they were safe, where they belonged. By descending to the edge of the flatlands, the Diamond Cloisters doomed themselves - they doomed all the dwarves.

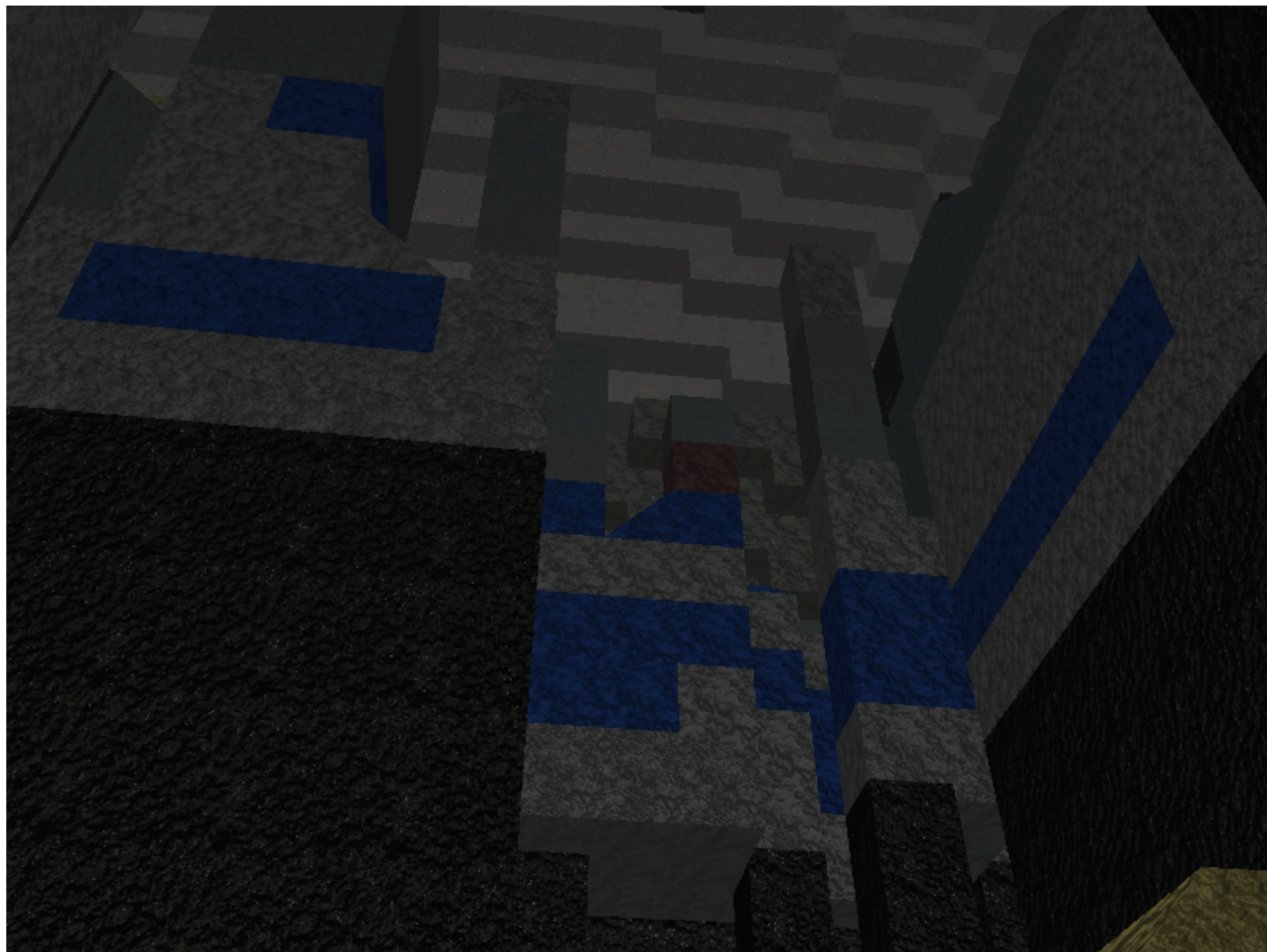
So the merchants say to one another, as they gather beneath the shadow of the proud but foolish founders of Weatherwires.

As the other merchants prepare their belongings and steel their nerves against the challenges to come, one dwarf wanders through the winding, carved streets of the dome and admires the accomplishments of her forbears. Solon Townclenched is the only dwarf left in the fortress with any appreciation for art or natural beauty, as well as the only dwarf to have made the acquaintance of the commander - perhaps it is her capacity to make friends quickly, and her appreciation for the architecture of the dome that has brought her into contact with the old warrior.

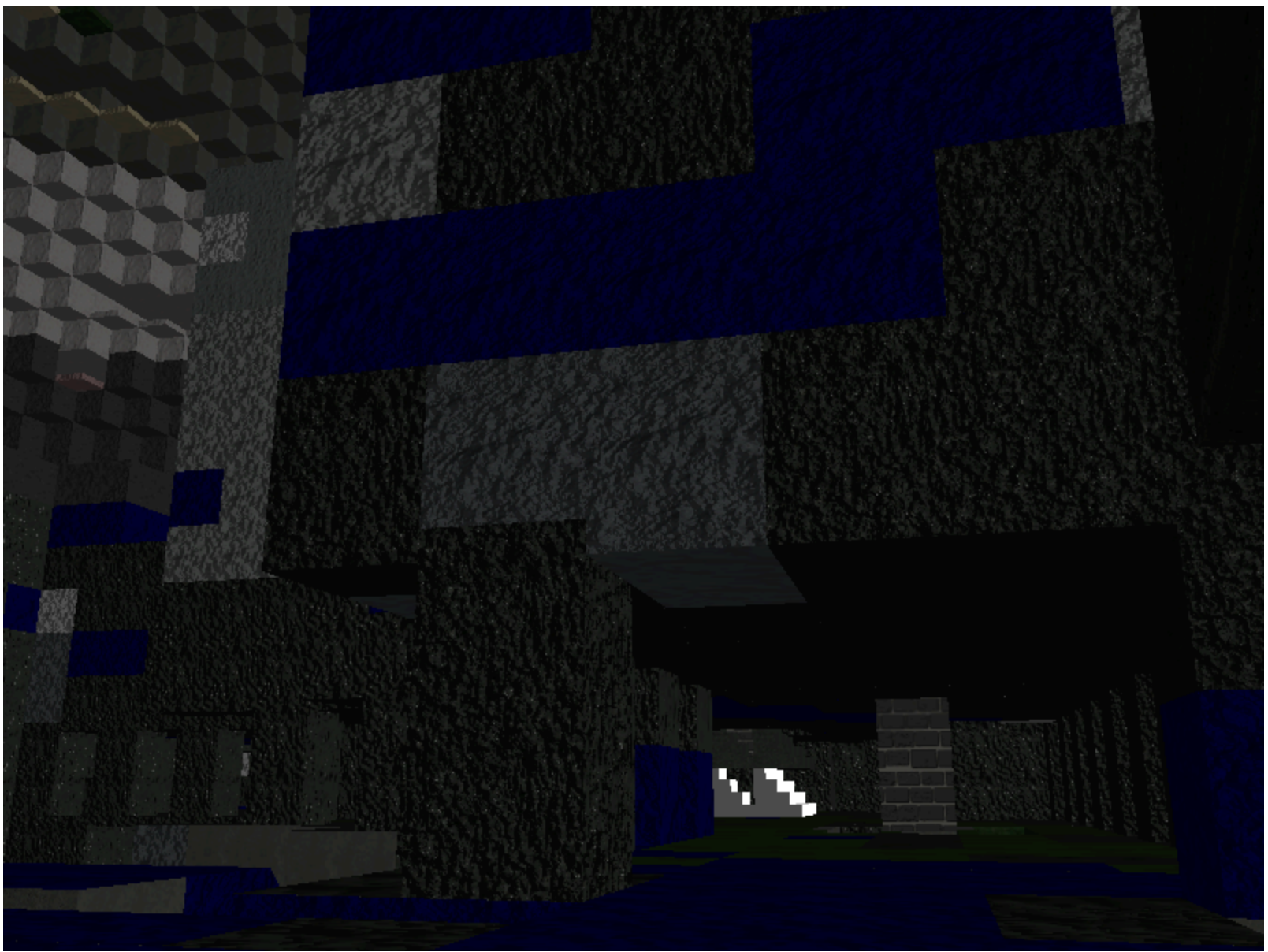


From the coffin garden in the southwest corner of the dome, Solon looks to the north. Midway up the building are pillars encircling an open mezzanine, which once contained the cages of dozens of trolls and goblins, captured when traps protected Weatherwires. Years back, those cages were tossed, prisoners and all, into the roiling, molten maw of the Fire of Channels. Two paths lead northward - one passes beneath the guildhall, mere meters above a reservoir of magma, and the other climbs steeply along the western edge of the dome, eventually reaching the tops of two other guildhalls.

Solon turns east, climbing up another winding path. She passes through the central mesa and, on a whim, turns south. After exiting the main hall within the mesa, she looks up, admiring the facade of the imposing barracks. Within this structure, too big to fully capture in a single glance from any direction, the legendary warriors of Weatherwires trained ceaselessly for decades. Also within this building were many chains and ropes, which held countless dwarves over the years - many prisoners died of thirst or starvation here, in this menacing building in the south of the dome. Now, it was populated only by the undead - none of the merchants would dare enter it. With a chill, Solon took one last glance at the entrance of the barracks, and turned northward.

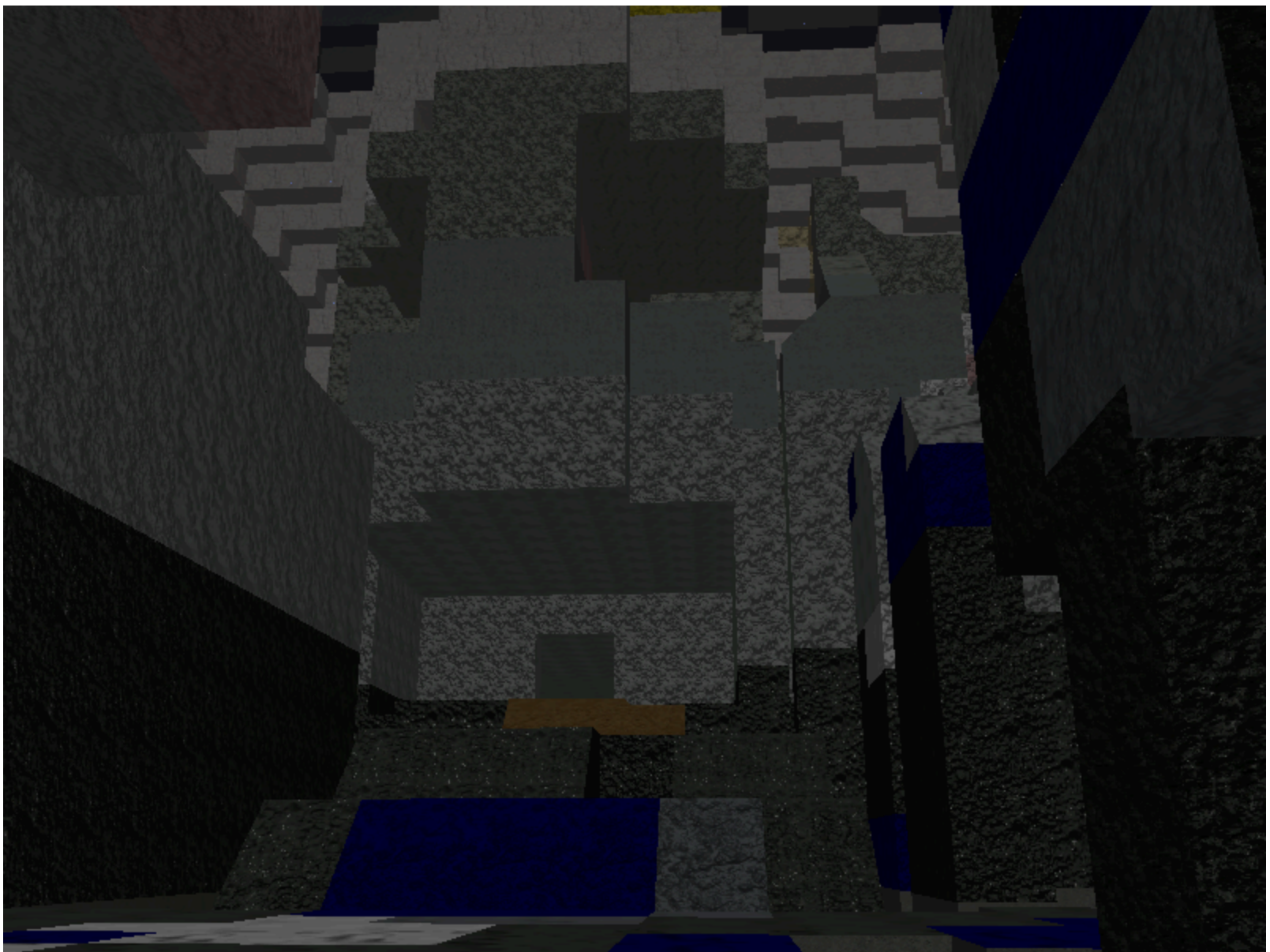


To the north of the mesa was the founder's square, decorated by statues of six of the seven original pioneers who formed the Diamond Cloisters. Solon glanced to her right, to the east, and into the municipal garden that formed the mezzanine level of the red guildhall - once populated by the Gearguild and Gloveowners clan.



She yearned for a better view. There was only one place to get it - the top of Murdershot citadel. It was as sacred a place as one could find in the dome, but it overlooked everything, and this might be her last opportunity.

She climbed the avenue leading to the north, up into the mouth of the citadel.



The citadel was silent except for the sound of Solon's footsteps, which echoed through the smoothed natural rock passageways like approaching thunder. Dust lay thick over every surface - nobody had come this way in years. The passage wound up through the citadel, and Solon passed bedrooms, memorial chambers, statuaries - all abandoned. Finally, she reached what had once been the queen's

quarters - still filled with furniture of the finest artifice. Levers there were, in various alcoves or positions around the rooms - Solon touched none of them. She passed through the suite, making her way to the lonely top of the citadel - the tomb of the queen and her two royal children.

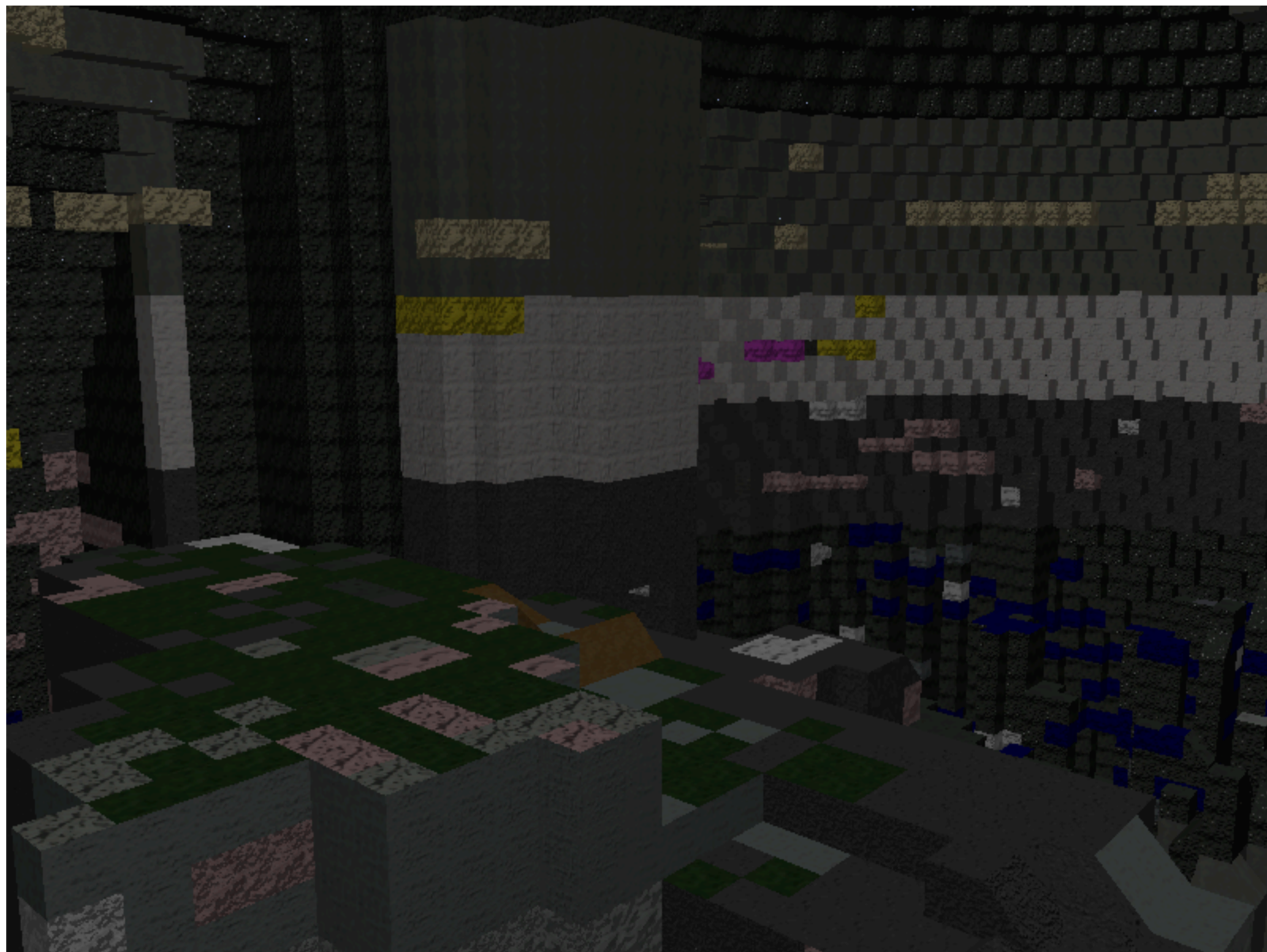


Solon had heard that the grove that grew atop the citadel was untouched by herbalist or woodcutter, but it was stunning to see just how overgrown the tomb really was. Fungus choked the smoothed pathway, blocking the intruder's view of the southern edge. Various bits of clothing, all showing some degree of wear, littered the few bits of muddy earth which were not claimed by fungi - the personal belongings of the Murdershot clan.

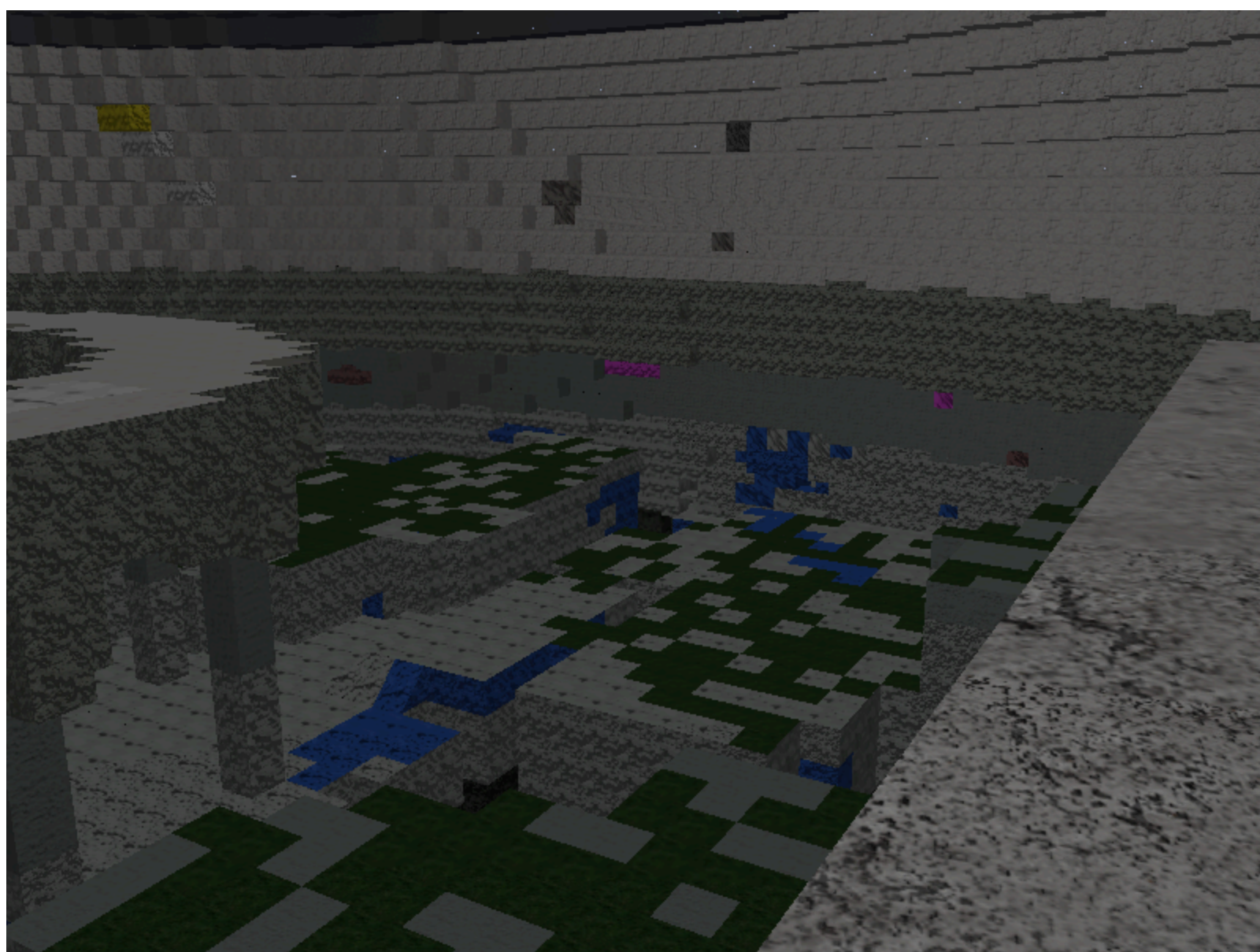
As she passed through the dense grove, Solon spotted the resting places of the two children. The princess, Cog Archwayward, had been interred into the black-cap casket known as the Last Scribe, on the western edge of the grove. On the opposite side was the diorite coffin, Glossrivers, which held the body of prince Asmel Deathchannels. Since they had been laid to rest, however, fungus had grown around and over their respective burial receptacles. Goblin-caps wound over the princess' casket, forming bulging veins of bright red that stood out against the black-cap artifact. Clumps of hardy black-cap had overgrown the prince's coffin, sealing the coffin shut.

At the southern tip of the citadel's summit, Solon found the queen's coffin, laid upon a smooth granite floor where no fungus would ever grow. Through the translucent light yellow diamond panels of Failedhushed the Music of Balding, the merchant thought she could almost make out the outline of the queen's skeleton - or maybe it was just a trick of the dim light cast off by the magma reservoir. She didn't look too long at the coffin, and instead peered southward out into the dome.

To the left, out over the red guildhall and the dome's main exit, through which mayor Tun was so eager to escape...



...to the right, over the tops of the other three guidlhalls, thick with fungus...



...and then straight south, to the ringed temple which dominated the center of the dome.



The view was exhilarating, but Solon couldn't shake the nagging feeling that she shouldn't be seeing it. This vantage point was meant for the queen, and the queen alone. She would forever be looking out over it through a pane of light yellow diamond. Unwilling to further disturb the royal dead, Solon quietly made her way back through the fungi-choked grove and back down into the ghost city, following the footprints she had left in the dust.

It is Felsite - late spring - of the year 235. The merchant mayor, Tun Dyefight, has been planning to abandon the fort for months - but the logistics of such an endeavor are daunting. There is so much of value in the dome - what do they take with them? What do they leave? Even besides the artifacts that were sealed away in hell, there are numerous sets of adamantine gear and weaponry, and various crafts made of steel and gold and silver; not to mention the countless prepared meals, cooked to perfection by Logem Buriedboard, chief chef and founder of the fortress. But what if the treasure of Weatherwires is cursed, and by taking even a part of it with them, they invite upon them and whatever dwarves who remain in the highest mountains that very same fate that befell the Diamond Cloisters?

There is no time for careful deliberation. On the 10th of Felsite, the merchant Stákud Duskbooks is scared to death by Ilral Visioncloistered. As mayor Tun stands in the dining hall over Stákud's body, beholding the merchant's final horrified, contorted expression, she resolves that this shall be the last of her mercantile kin to fall prey to Weatherwires. She gives the order for food and drink to be placed in the chamber atop the obsidian spire within the volcano, just behind the nether-cap door, Syrupsevers - enough food and drink to subsist upon during their long voyage back to the high mountains.

After giving the order, Tun stalks through the empty avenues and tunnels to the lever room, coming across no living thing - the dome is a dead place. If she had arrived at Weatherwires during the golden years, she might have stayed, and willingly given her life in defense of her home. But this was not her home, and she was realizing now that it never had been - the dome was a prison at first, and in the end, a tomb. Why had the Diamond Cloisters sought to bury themselves and their civilization within a mausoleum, even one so great? There might have been answers to these questions, but Tun would never know them.



Meanwhile, the body of Stákud Duskbooks is interred into one of the available coffins in the mortuary, high atop the barracks, the last dwarf to be given a proper burial.



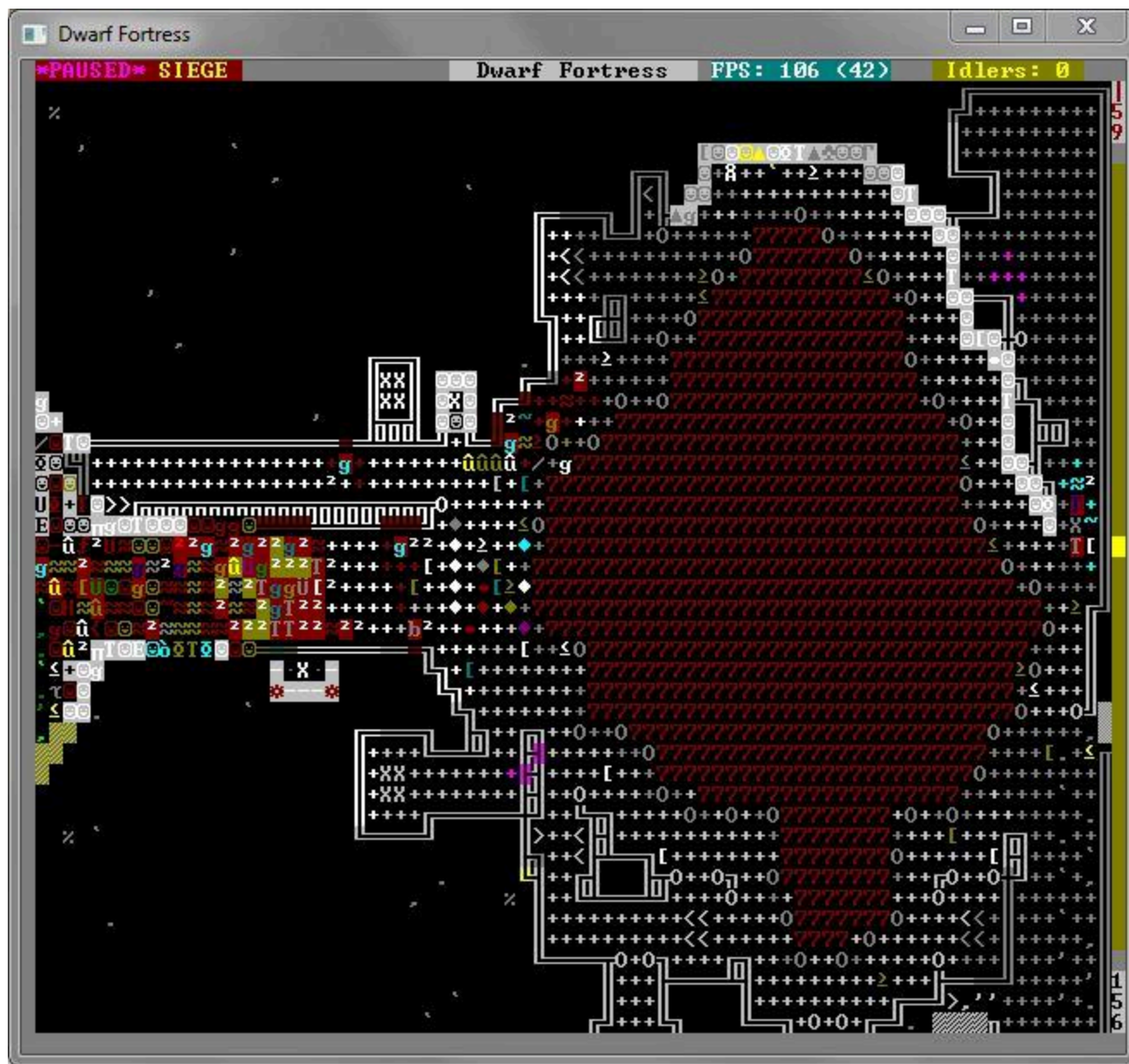
All the other dwarves busy themselves with moving about a hundred units each of alcohol and food - only two stacks of quarry bush leaf roasts and six barrels of dwarven wine and ale are sufficient for this. The merchant's spirits are high, as, for the first time in decades, they have hope - hope of survival. To remain in Weatherwires is not to invite death, but to welcome it with open arms.

All the other dwarves busy themselves - all except one. The commander, Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, continues his endless training in the antechamber above hell. He is unaware of the merchant's plan to abandon the fortress, and it is likely they they wish it so - he is 165 years old, as long as nearly any dwarf can be said to have lived, and will not last much longer. Why invite the old warrior to leave, to abandon the fortress for which he has seen every single one of his comrades die in defense?

No, the merchants all agree, it is better that he does not know.

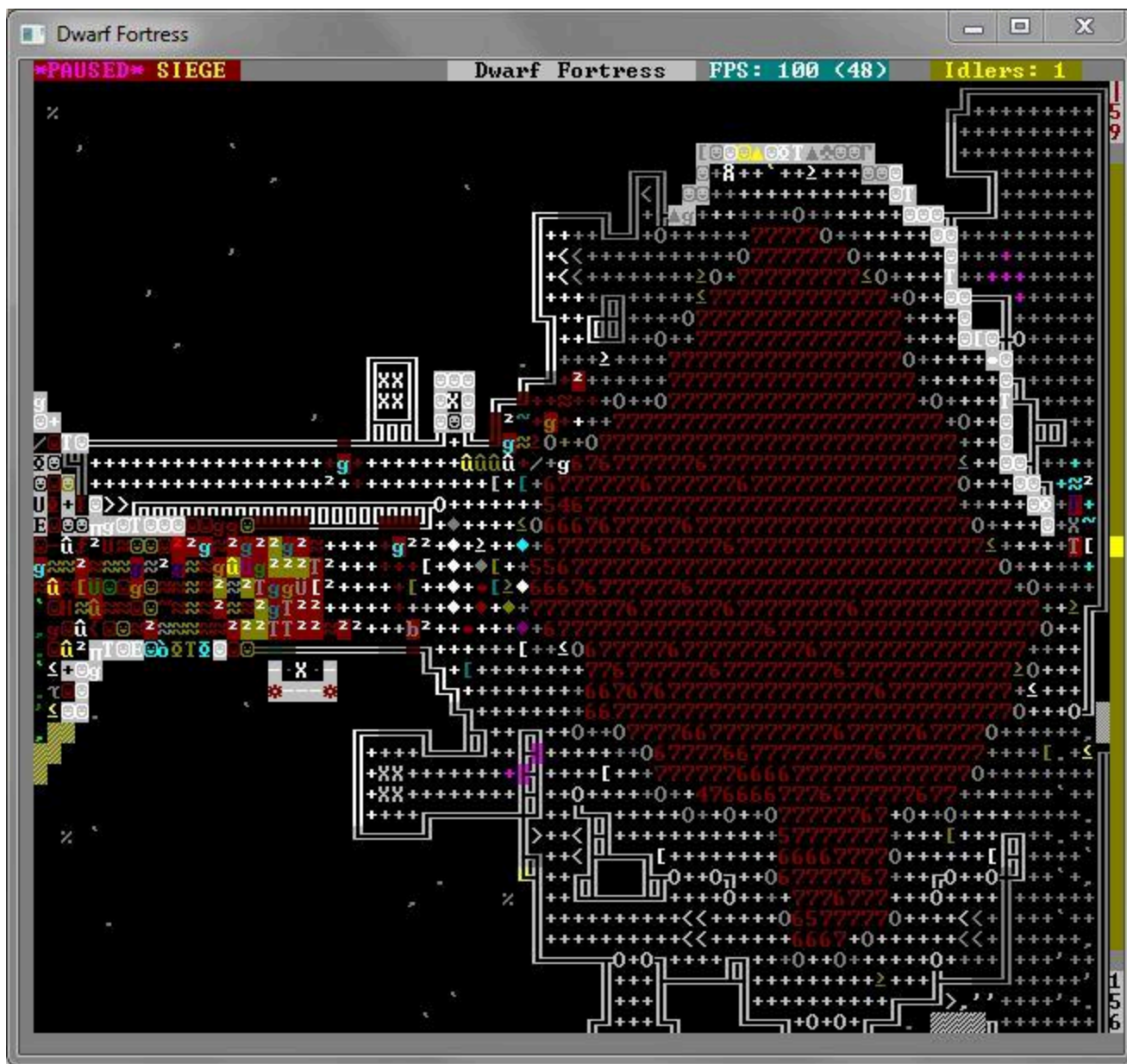
Tun reaches the lever room, and with a mighty pull, ten hatches in the deeps slide open.

The final chapter of the saga of Weatherwires begins.

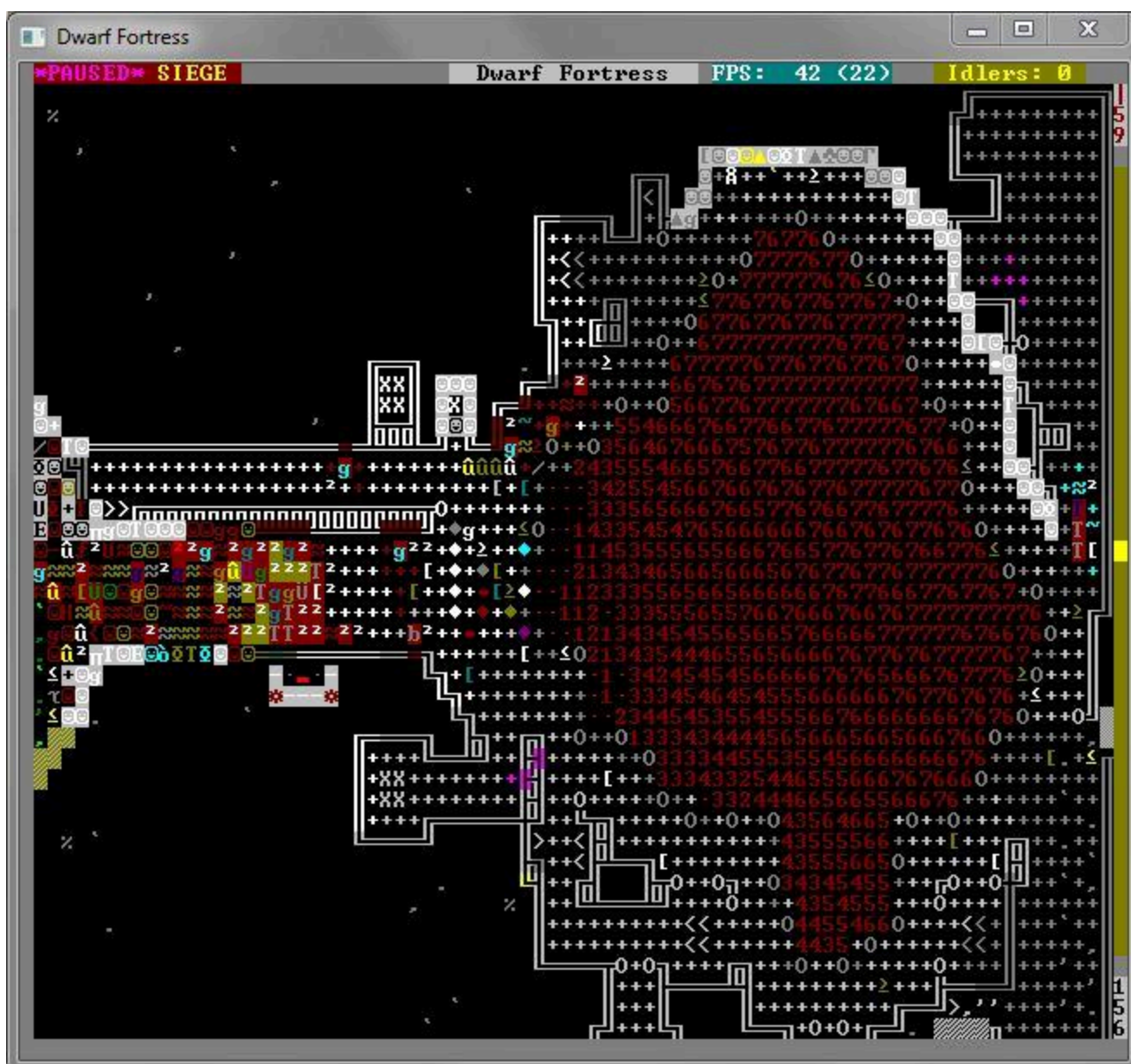


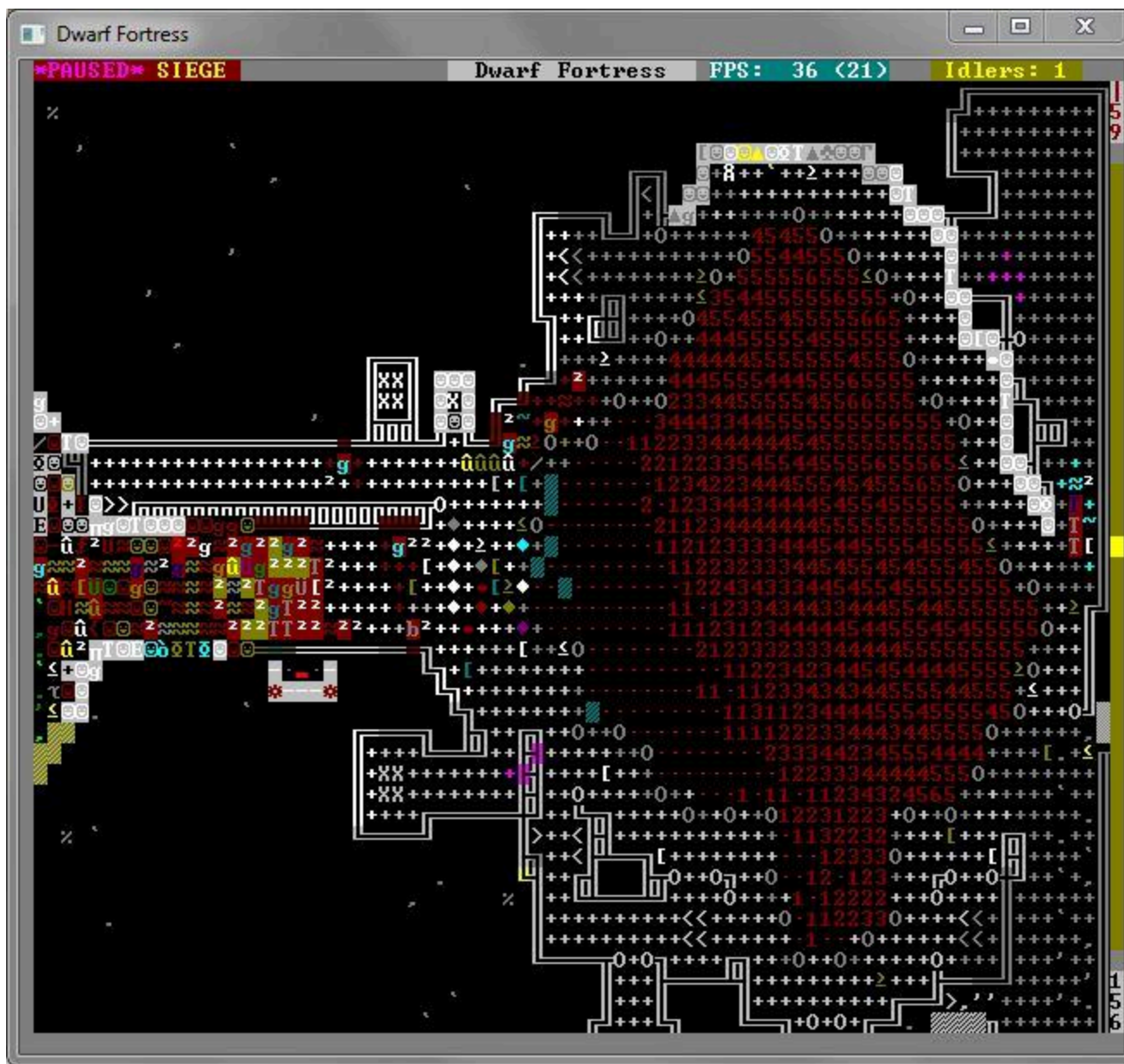
Far above the accursed darkness of the dome, the sun shines bright through the openness of the caldera, illuminating the pillared walkway that encircles the lava lake. A mountain goat walks calmly along the rim of the volcano - no dwarf has trod this ground in years, and even the goblins and trolls that once surged through these abandoned tunnels have moved on, baffled by their enemies' disappearance. The lava lake itself has remained still and serene throughout the years - at least, as still and serene as a lava lake can be. The goat moves along slowly, perhaps looking for a rope reed sock to munch upon.

Suddenly, a low rumbling emanates from beneath the earth, and the lava nearby ripples and bubbles. The goat looks on dumbly, as - slowly, but surely - the surface of the lava begins to sink.

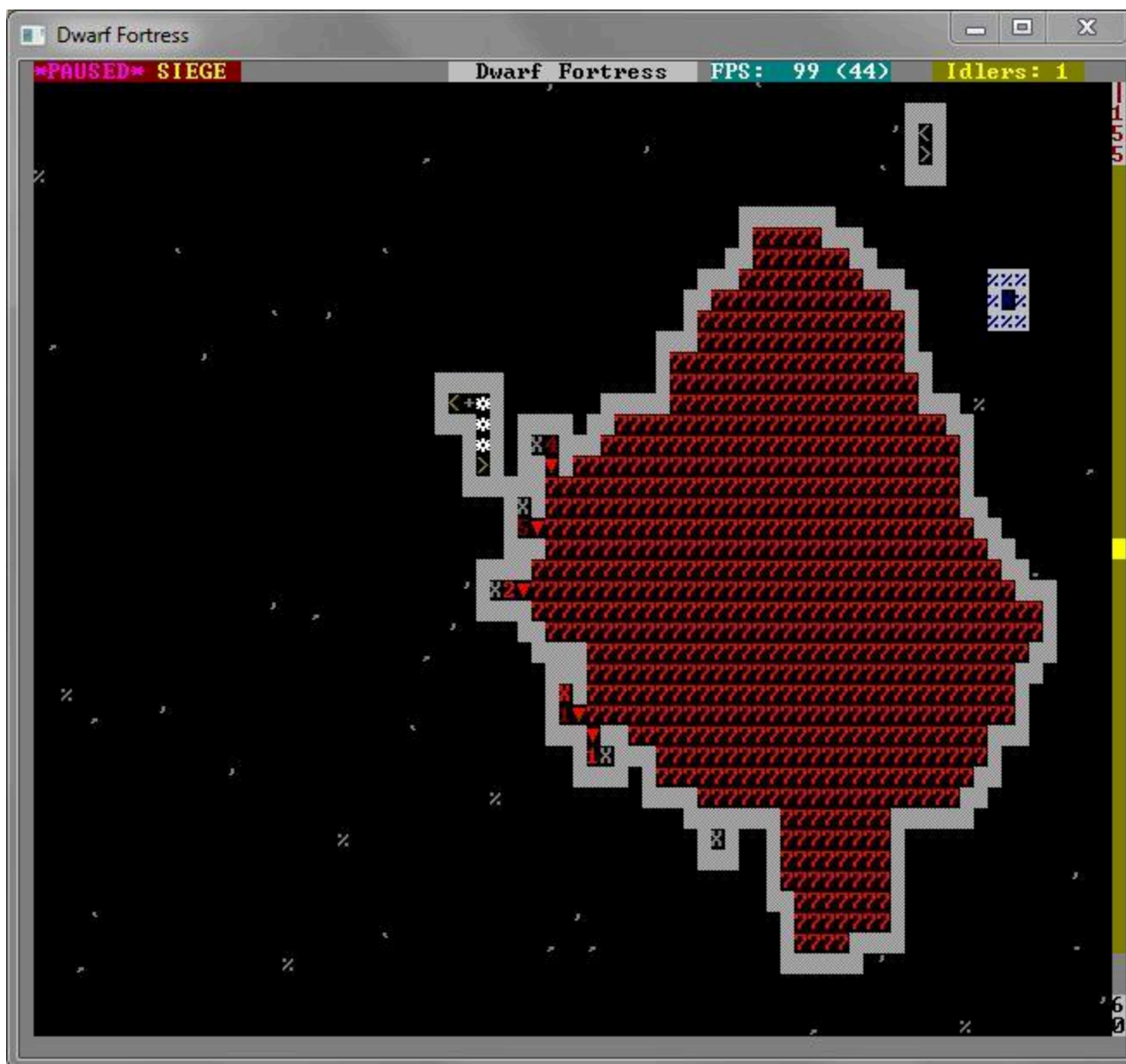


Soon, the surface is roiling and spitting with waves of lava that churn back and forth. Large bubbles of air, rise up from somewhere beneath and pop violently upon the surface. The surface sinks lower as the molten rock churns about inexplicably - the goat, obviously, has had enough.





In the deeps, the ten nether-cap hatches have opened, siphoning off massive amounts of magma into the second cavern layer, incinerating flora and fauna there.

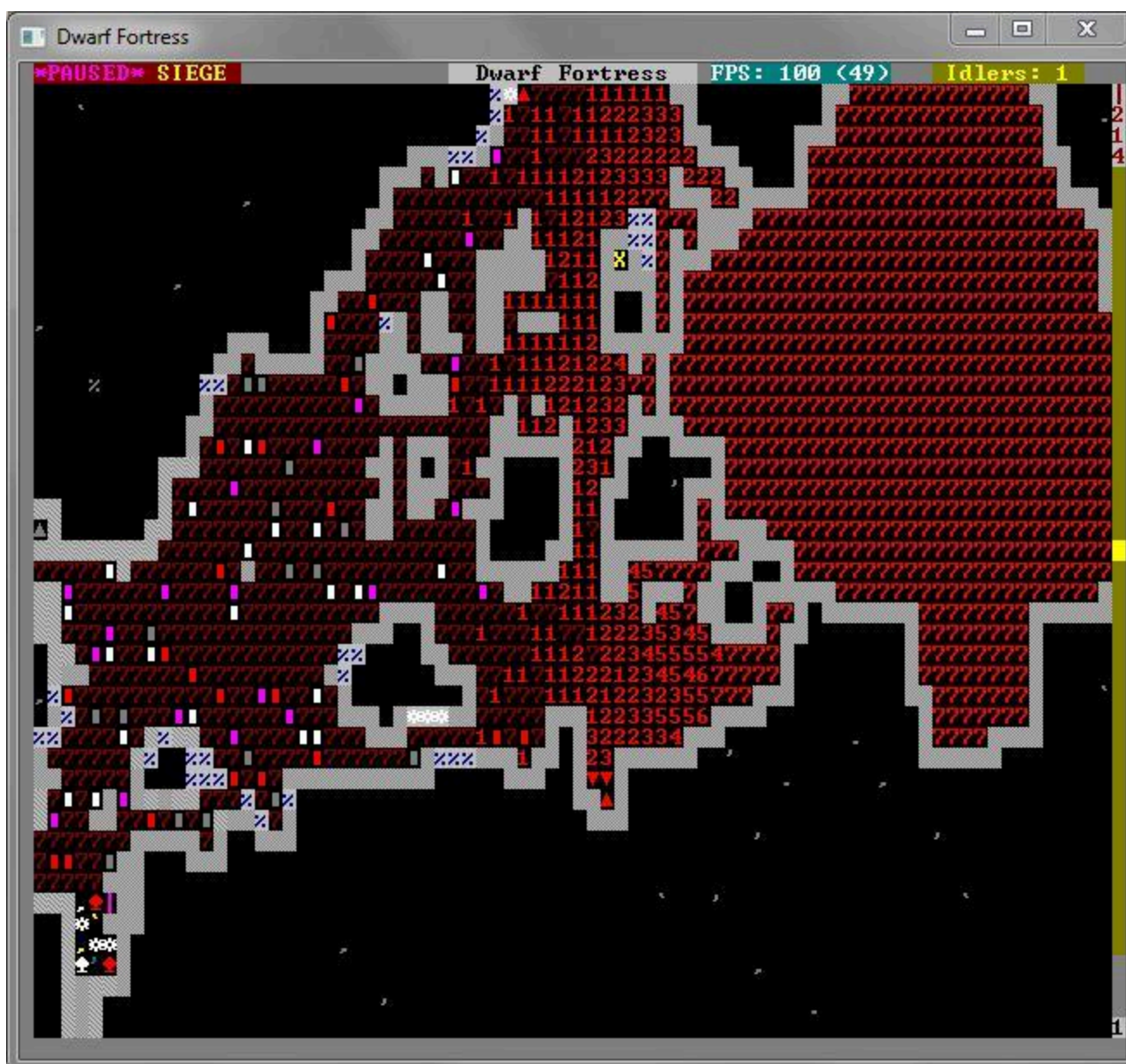
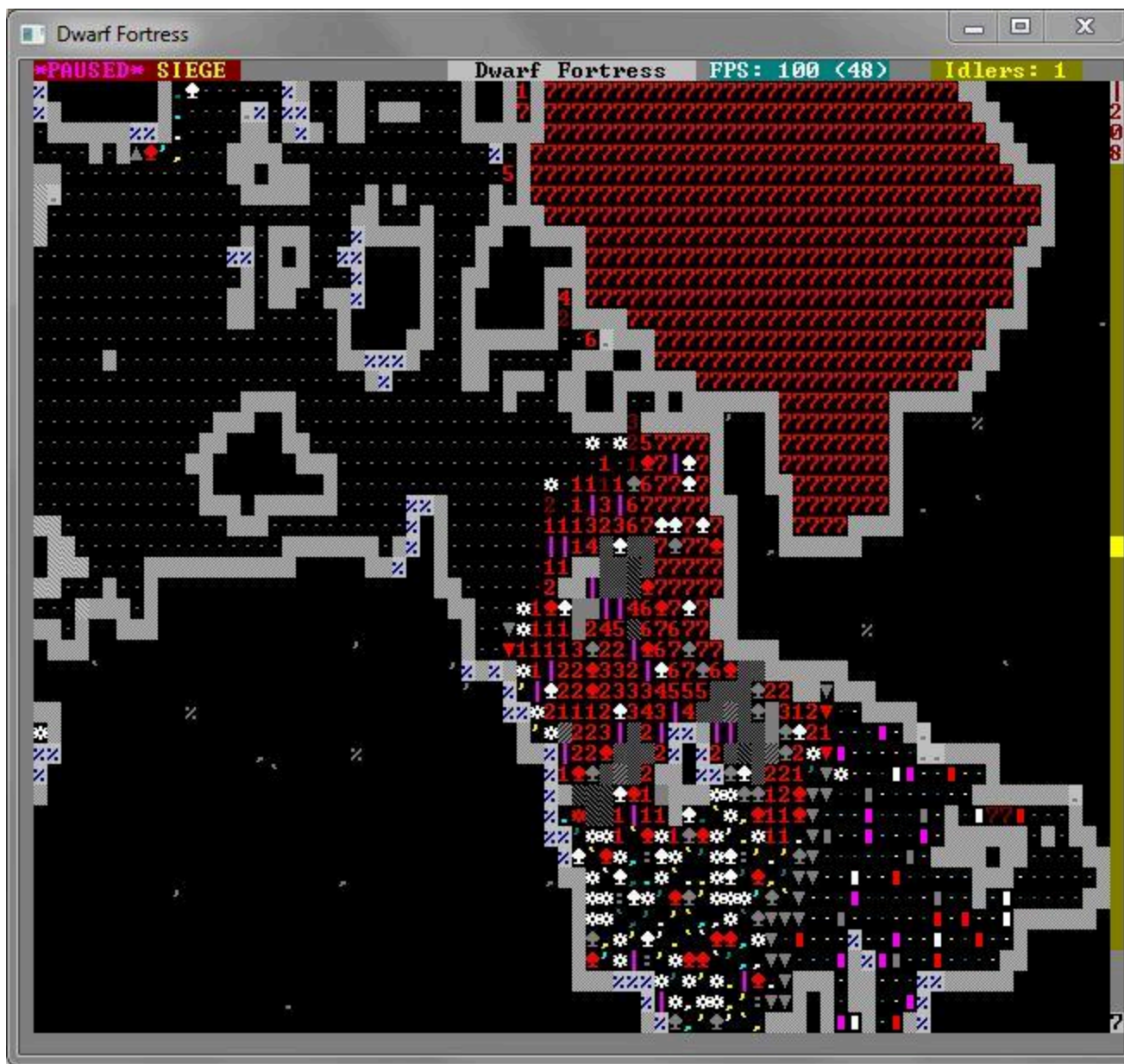




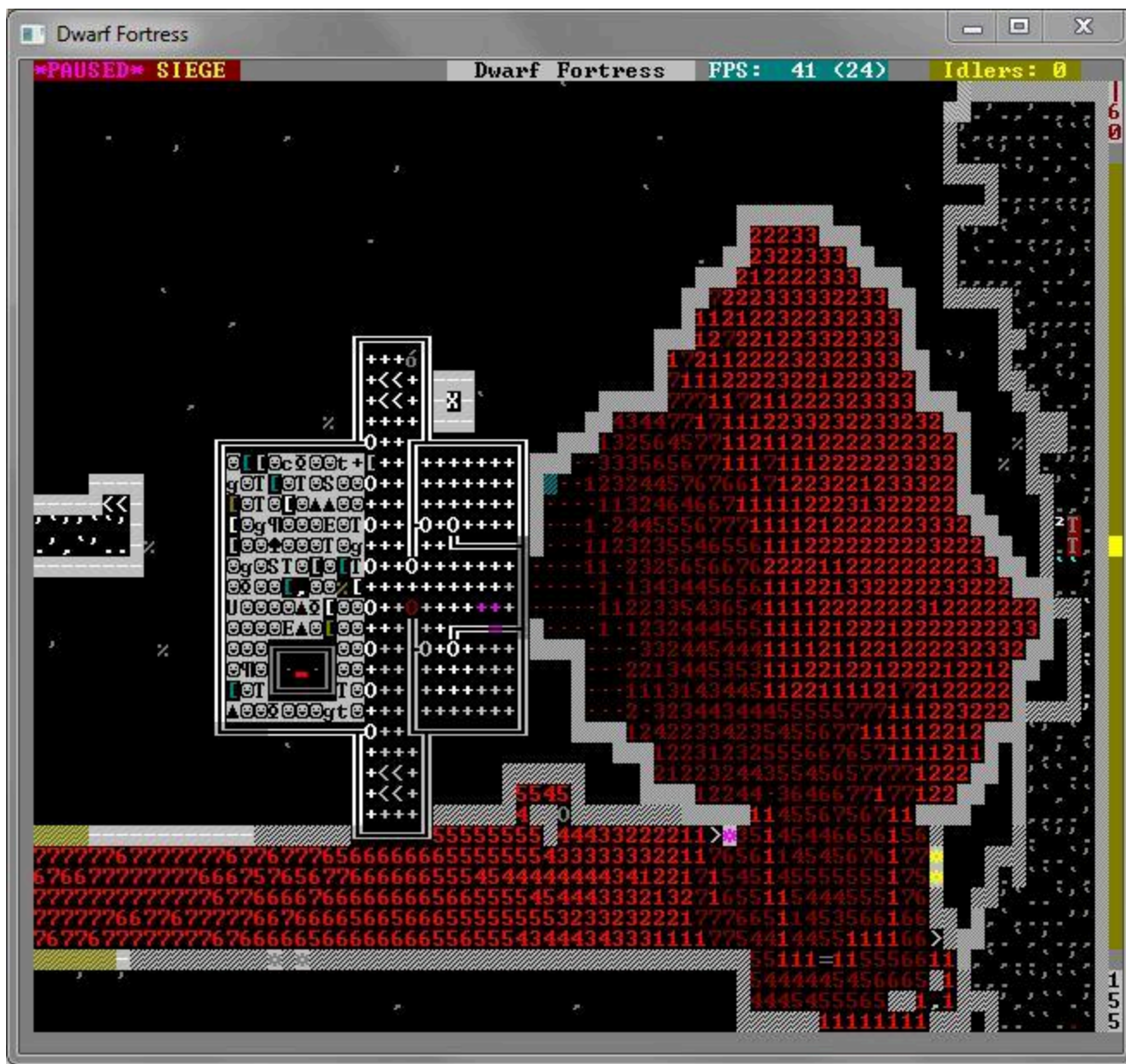
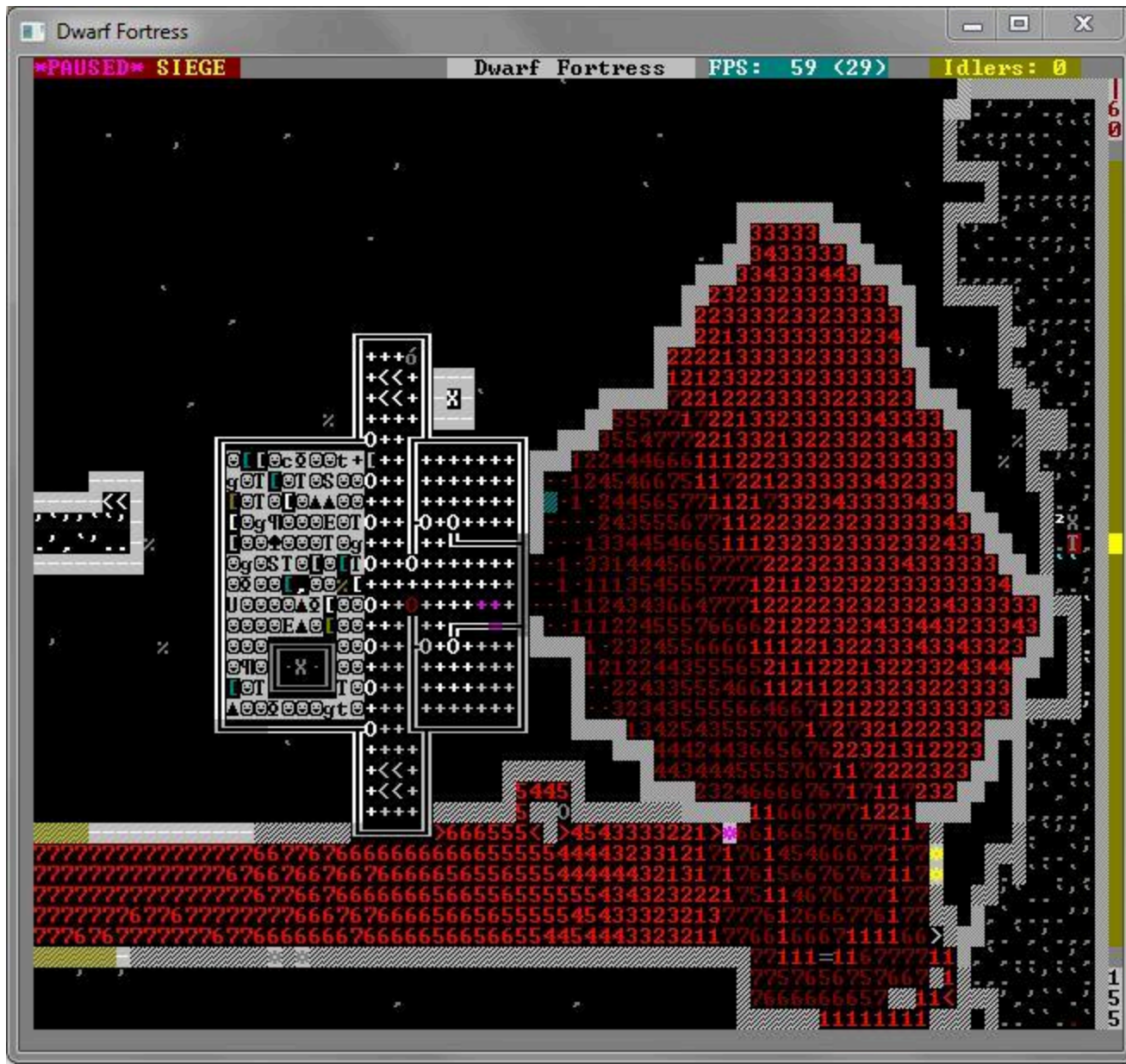
Ten columns of molten rock cascade down the sheer obsidian walls.

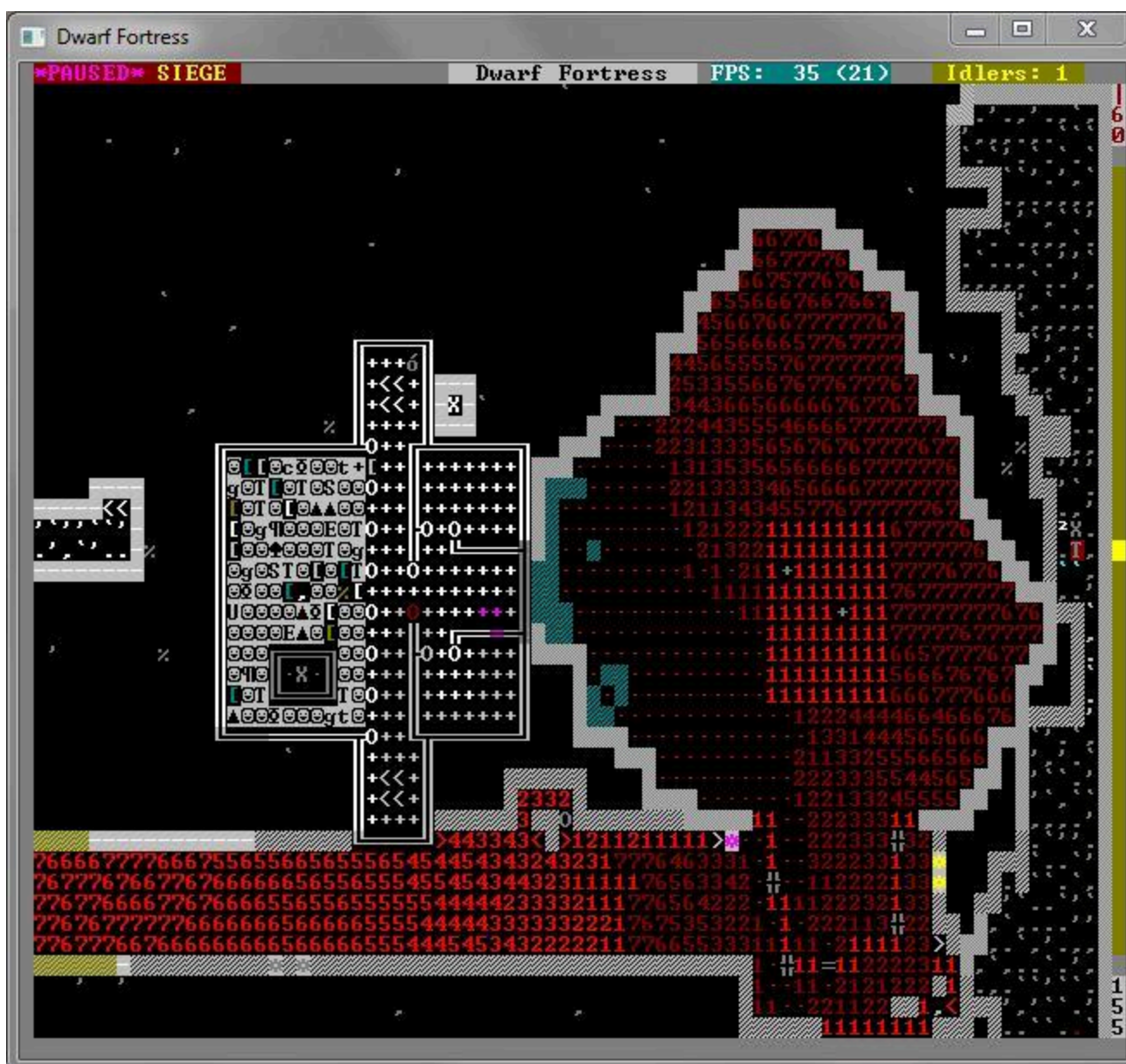
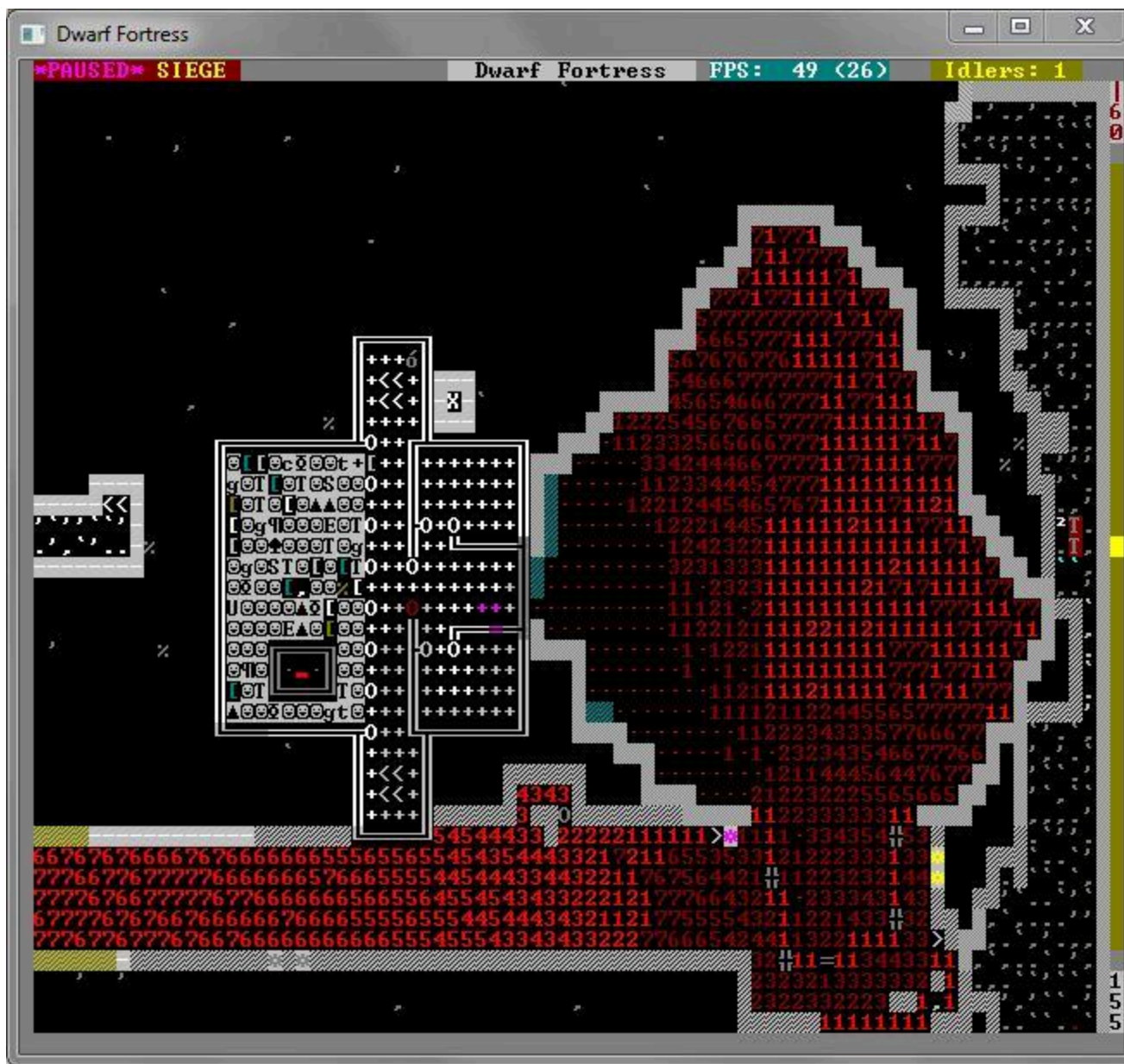


When the various mechanisms of draining the dome were put in place, all were linked, ultimately, to this cavern layer. These drains are no exception. Smoke fills the deeps as decades of cobwebs are incinerated, and the open area beneath the dome is turned into a magma lake.

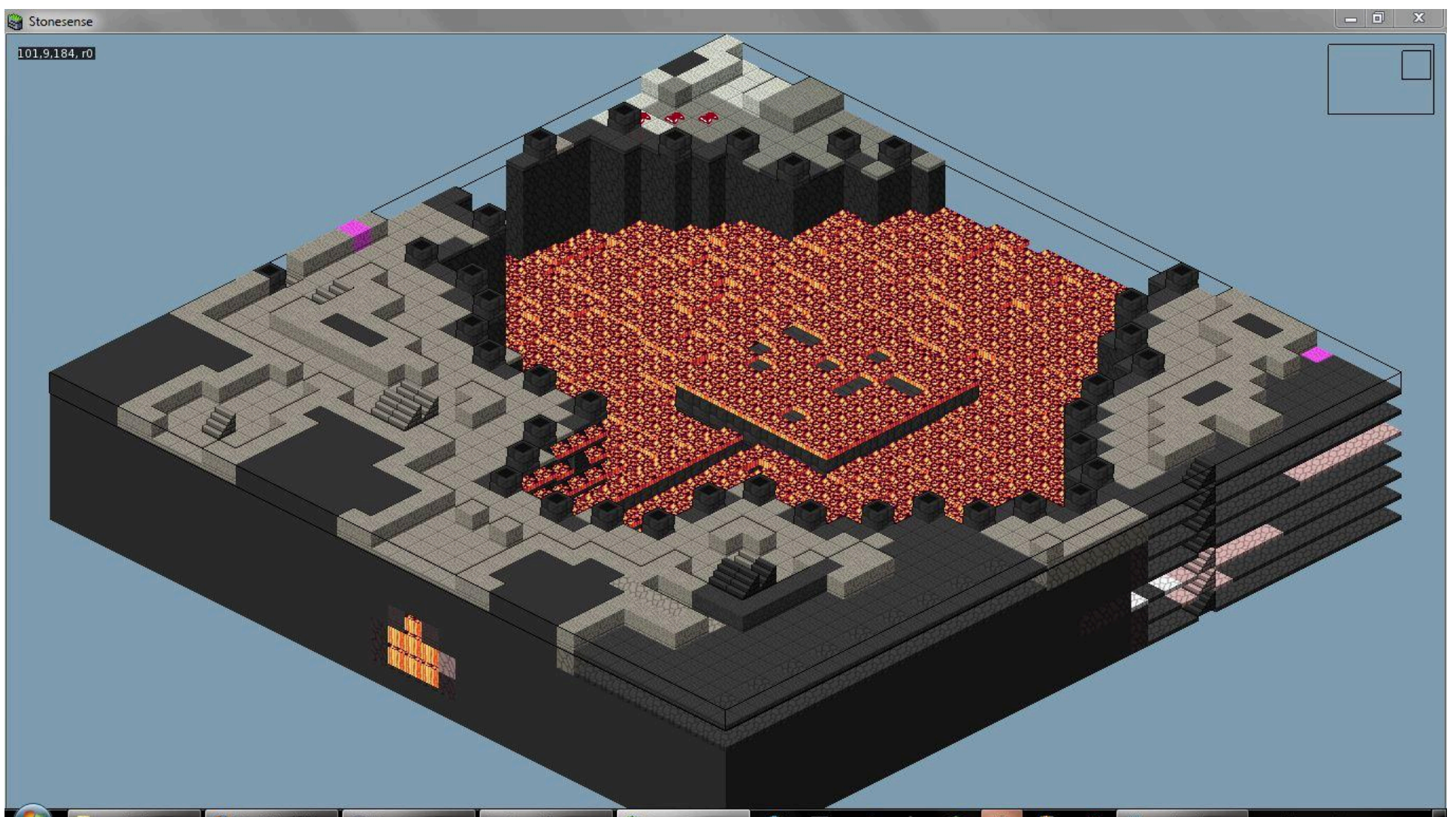
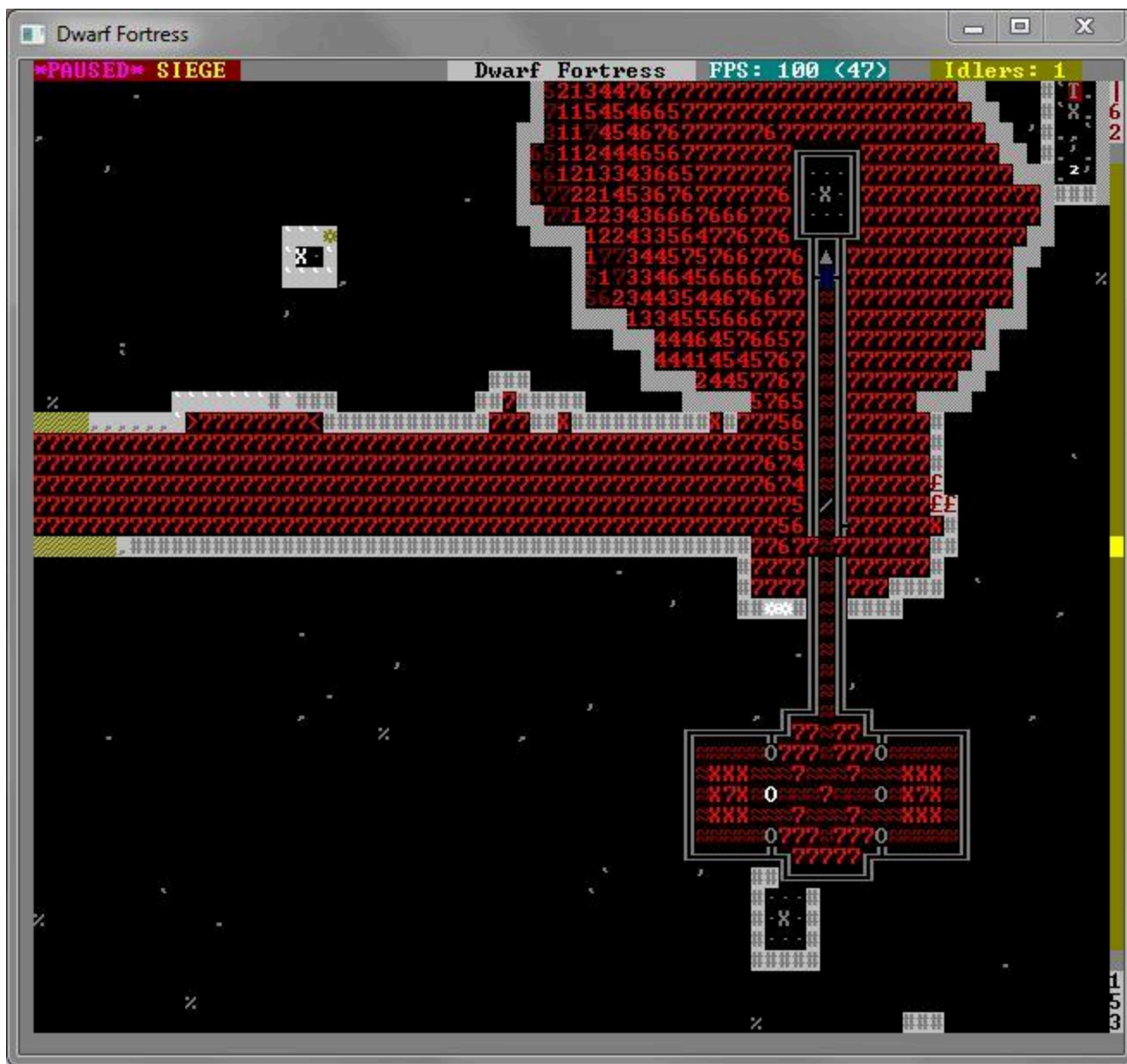


Even as the dwarves haul food and drink into the passage, the volcano continues to drain. The square top of the obsidian structure, the sealed passage itself, becomes visible as the lava recedes. The molten rock dries atop the structure, revealing a smoking surface of glossy volcanic glass.

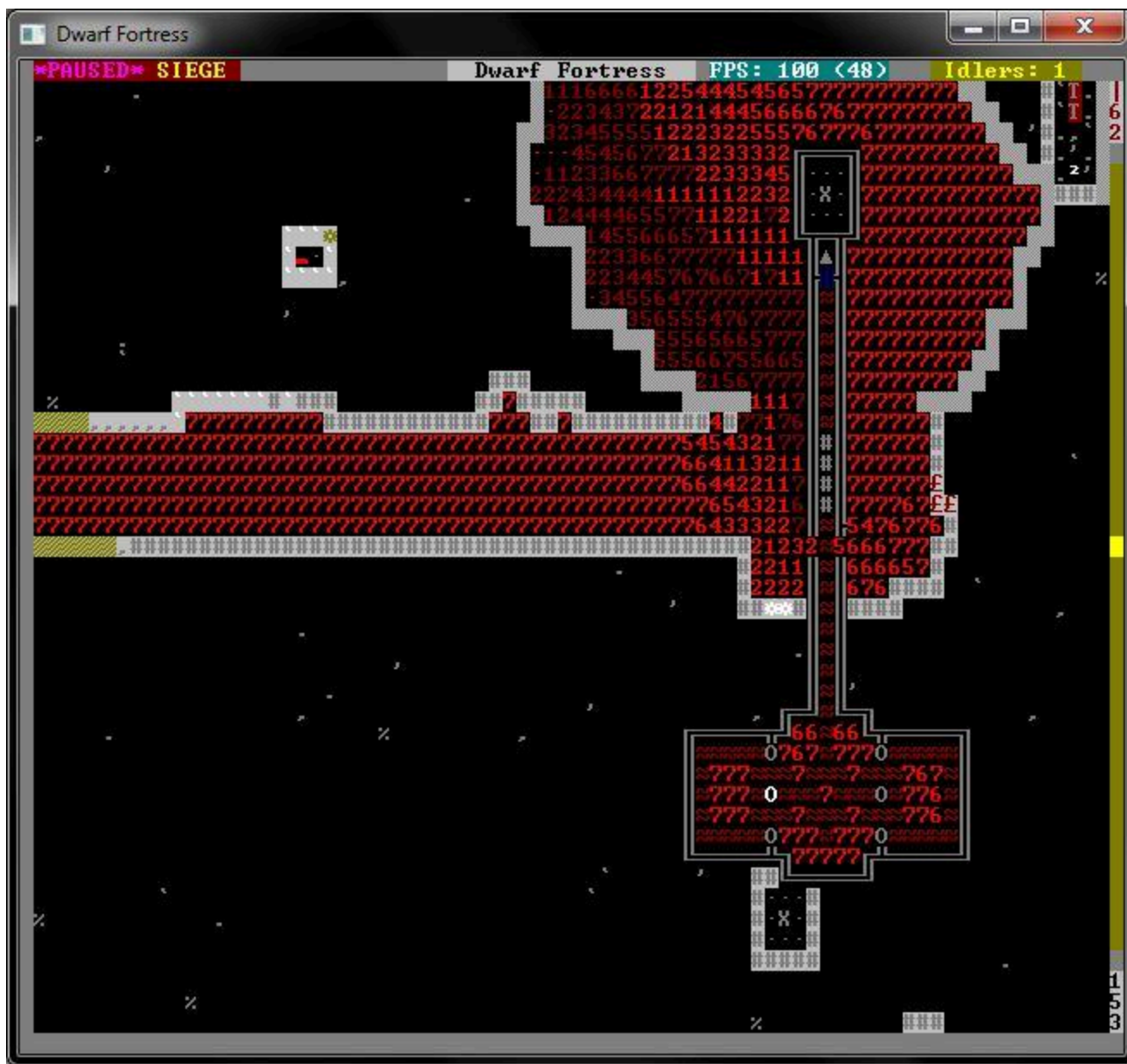




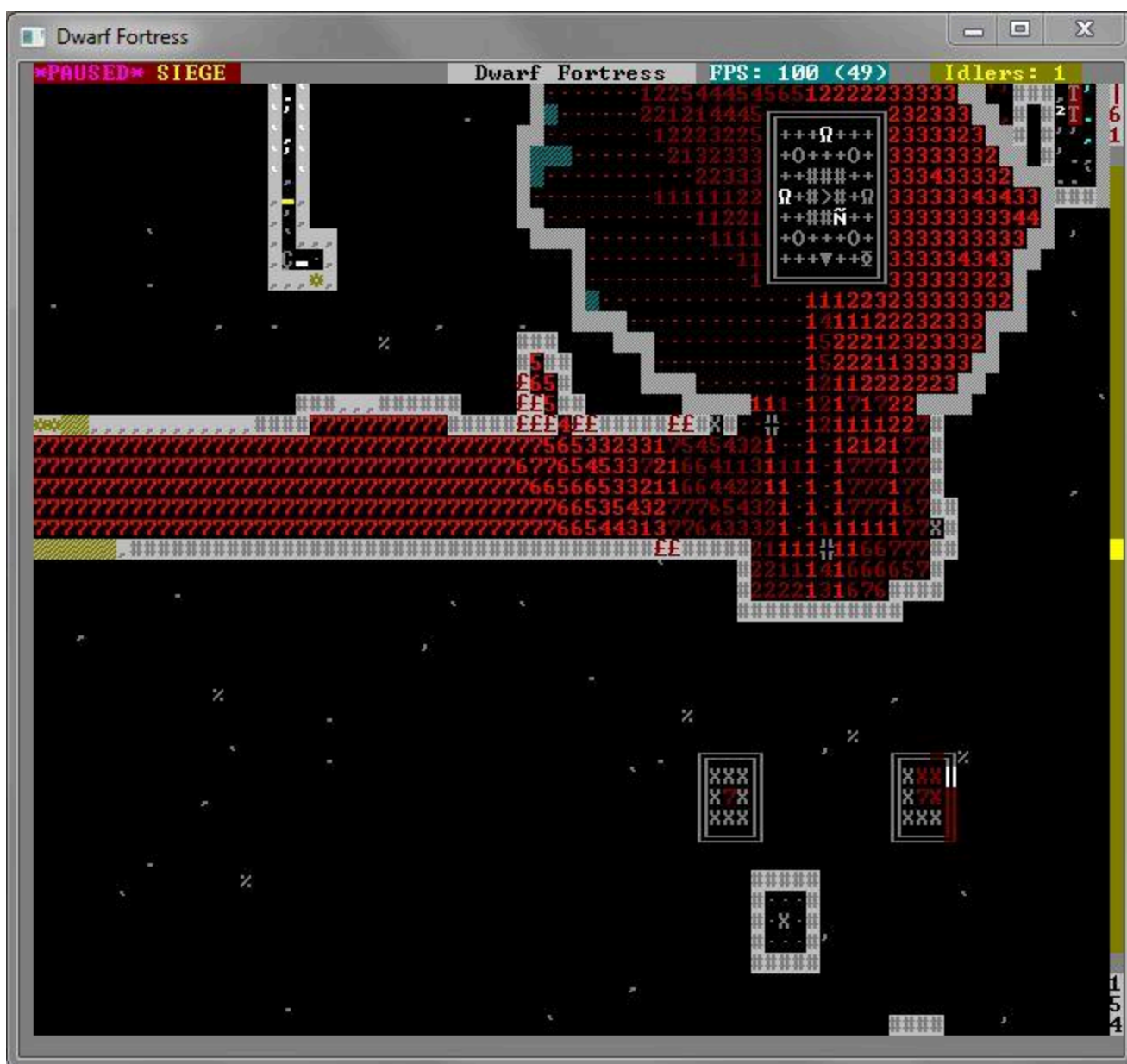
The passage itself, however, remains flooded with magma - thankfully, since the dwarves still haven't brought up all the food necessary.



Gradually, as the level of molten rock within the volcano sinks lower and lower, the steel grates of the walkway slowly become visible.

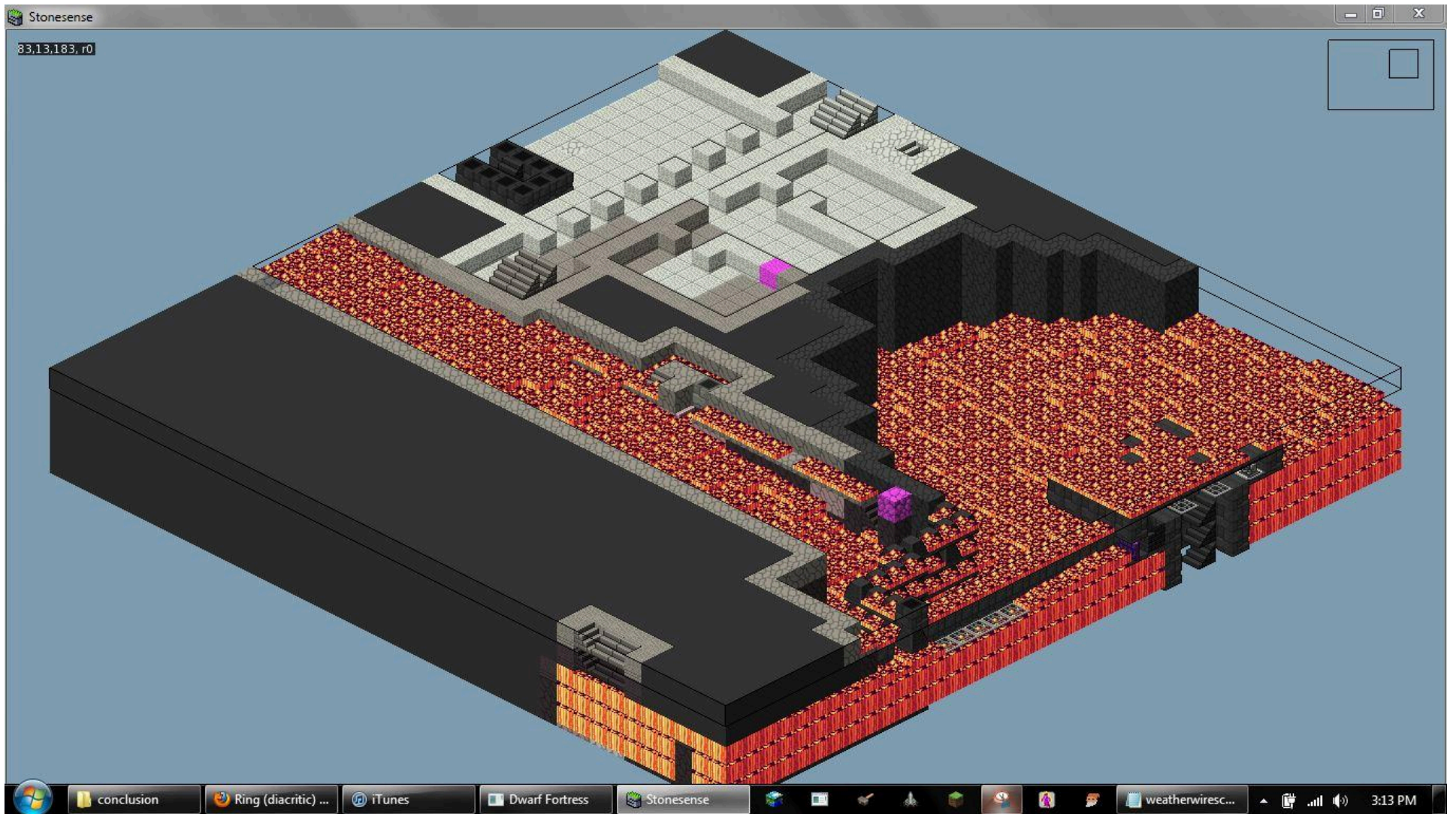


There is no time that the dwarves must spend waiting for the magma in the passage to dry. Once the lava has sunk below the grates, they are immediately accessible - although, the passage as a whole does not become accessible all at once. At this moment, only a portion of the causeway is exposed. The rest is still inundated with lava, as it pours over the obsidian support walls on either side of the grates.



In this Stonesense screenshot, the passage is clearly visible. To the right is the top of the obsidian structure, and the descending stairway to the dome. The causeway of steel grates extends across the magma tube (a few grates are visible), and into the grate-floored chamber which, for the moment, is still full of magma. To the far left is the stairwell which leads to the upper fortress.

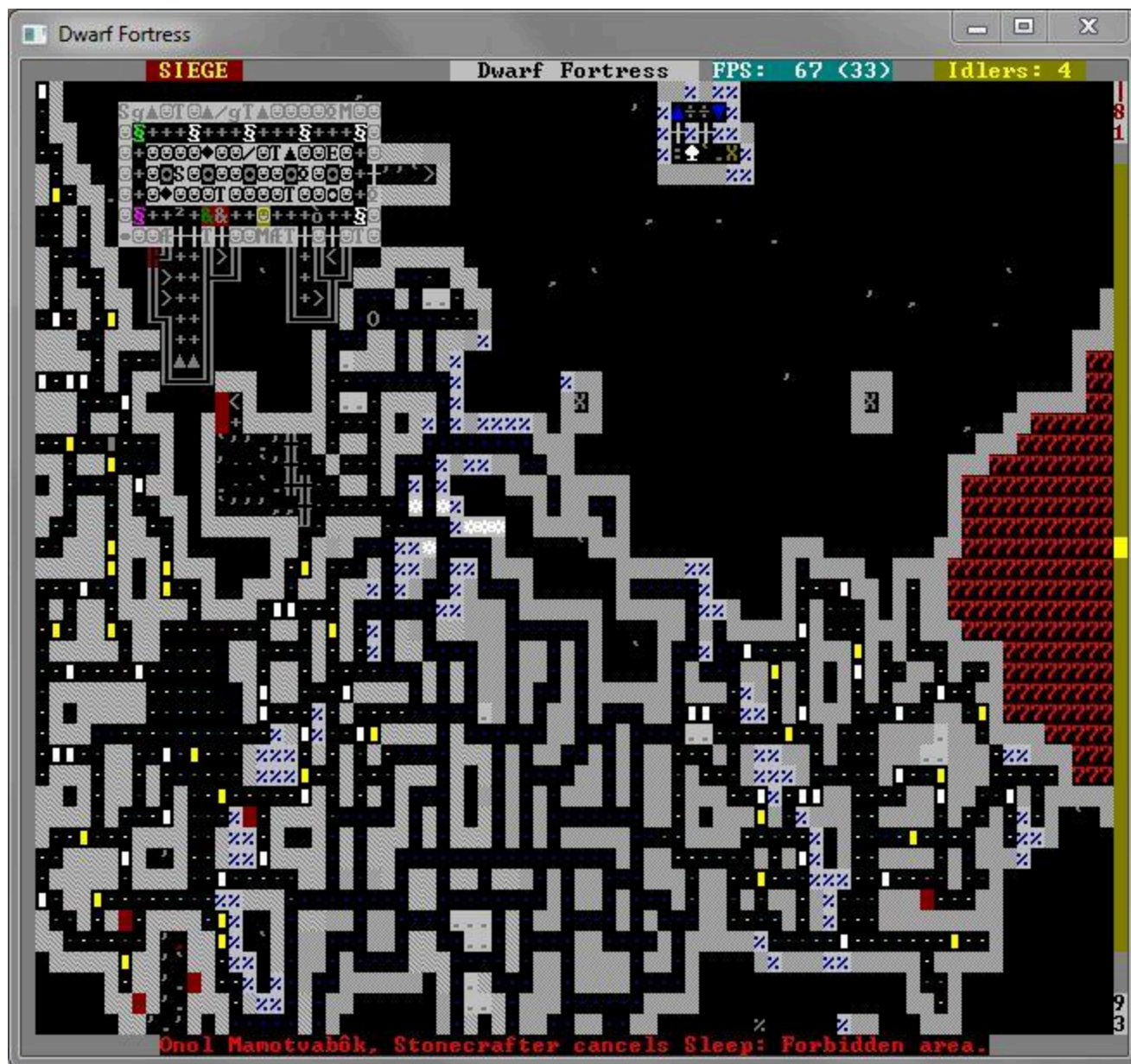
Note that the stairwell is 3x3, with an open space in the middle, and extends down below the level of the access chamber. This is so that, once again, when the magma recedes below the level of the grates, it becomes immediately accessible - it simply flows down to the lowest level of the stairwell. The open space in the middle is an aesthetic design which is apparent in multiple places throughout the fortress.



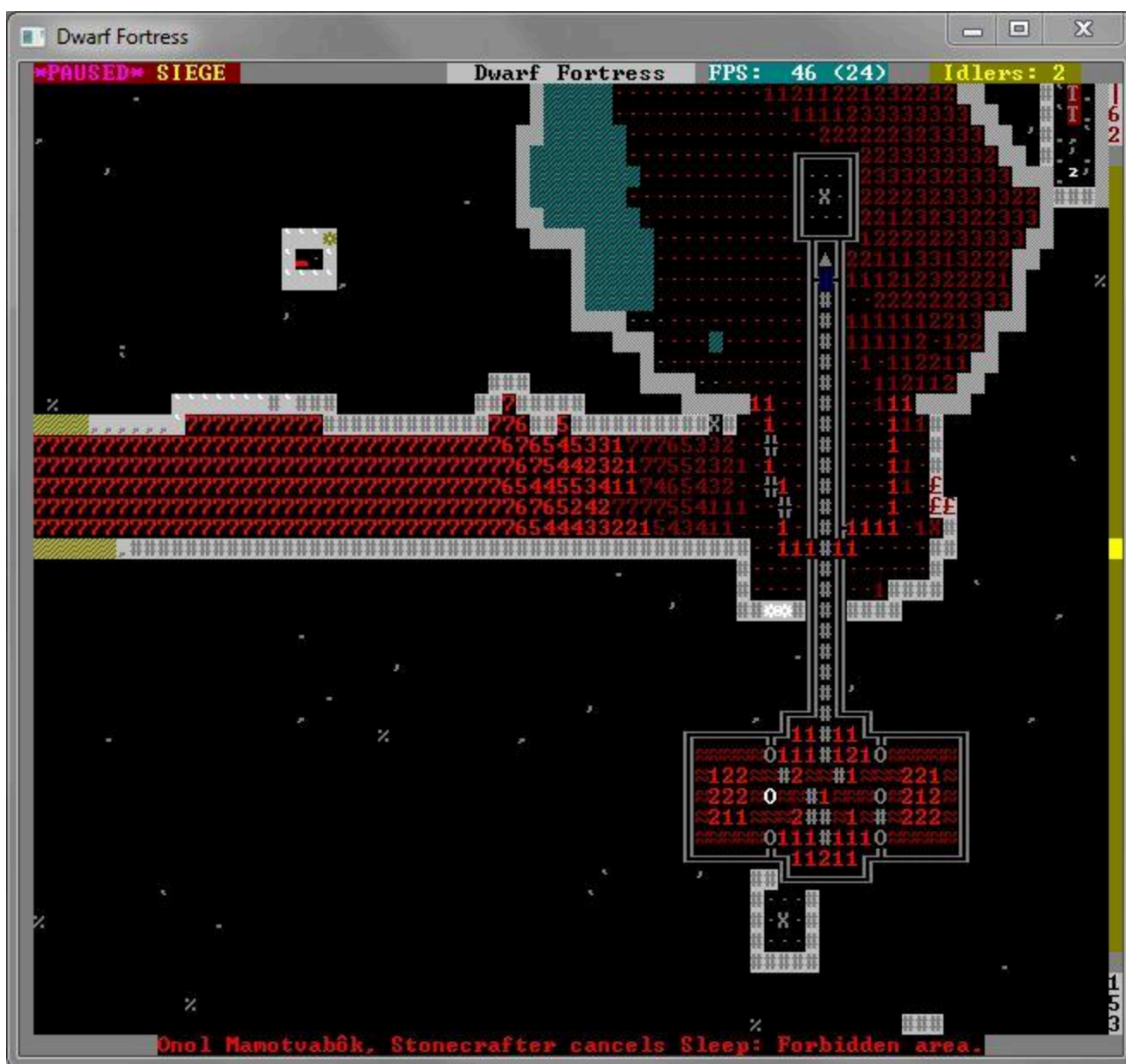
Soon, the walkway will be free of magma, and the way made clear for the merchants. Freedom is only a few short paces away.



Five of the six deserters wait in the chamber behind Syrupsevers, biding their time until the causeway becomes accessible. The last dwarf, Solon Townclenched, despite having days to find her way up to the sealed passage, is still in the citadel, moving slowly towards the exit. She crawls, having been paralyzed from the waist down during the dwarves' last foray into hell. It is possible she may not even make it in time.



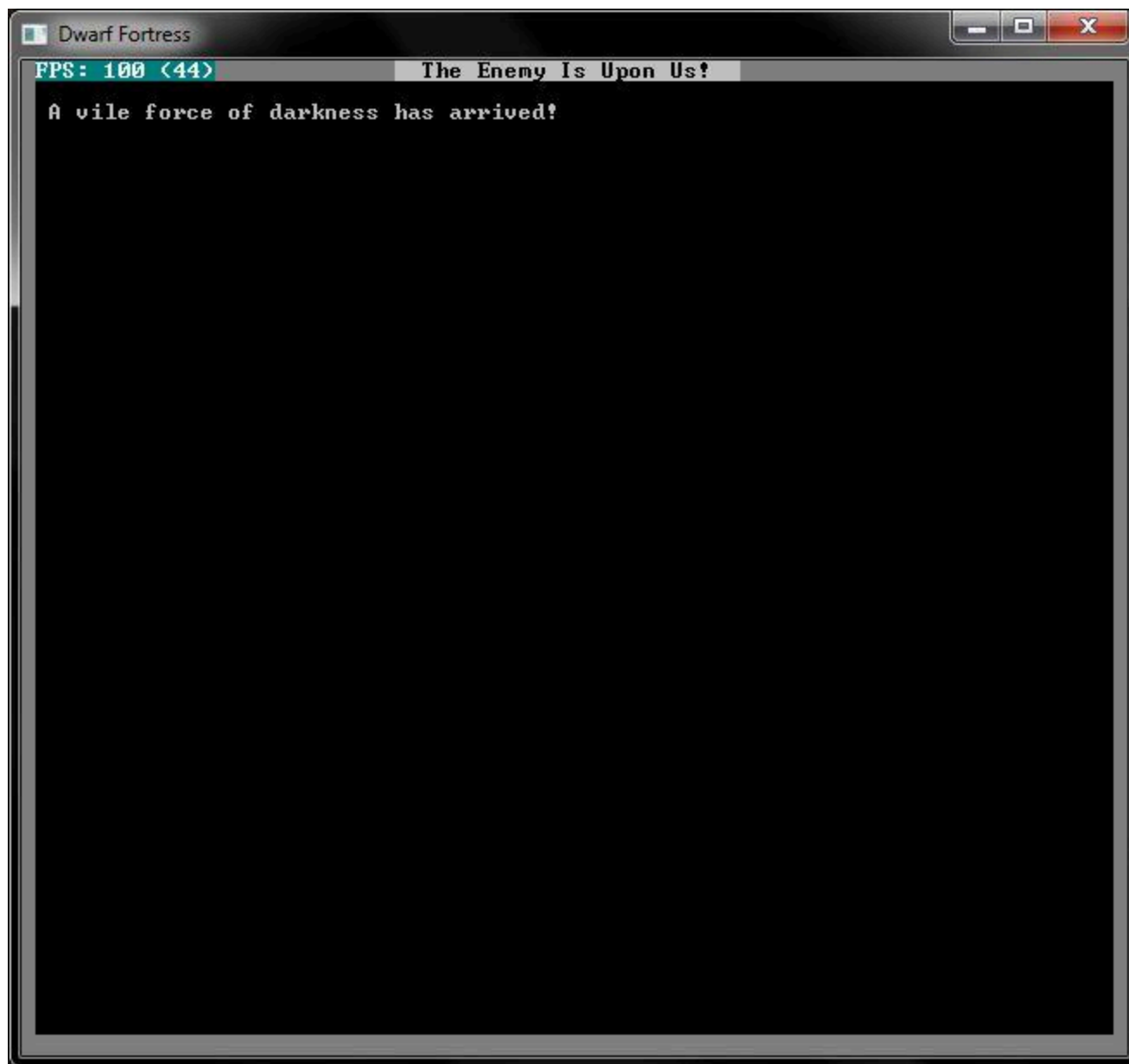
The only other dwarf in the dome is, of course, militia commander Èzum Openeddoors. Despite the clatter of machinery and the rumbling of magma echoing through the deeps, he continues training ceaselessly in the engraved antechamber. A dozen ghosts keep him company - a grim reminder that he, too, will soon join them.



The last panels of grating drain clear of magma, and the passage that has been closed since 204, more than three decades, is finally open once more - for what will be the final time, though, not as the merchant mayor intended.

As the dwarves haul their barrels and pots across the causeway, a horn echoes in the distance. War cries in a guttural yet familiar tongue echo through the caldera, and the color drains from the deserters' faces. Attempting to flee from their doom has only brought it upon them sooner.

For it seems that, in the end, no dwarf will survive the curses of Weatherwires.

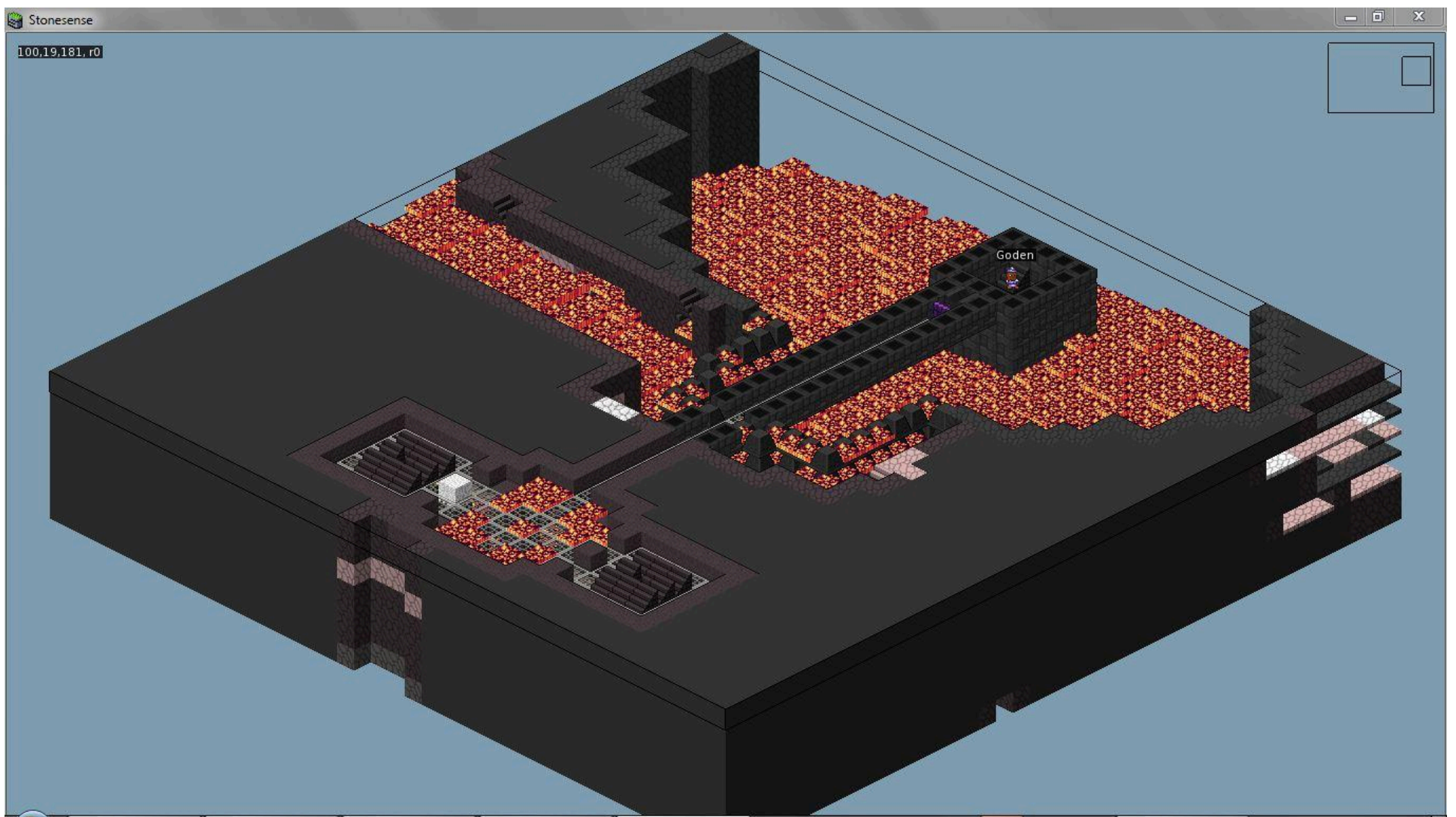


The merchants panic. The bone crafter Goden Mawknife and stonecrafter Onol Plaitorbs immediately turn back down the passage and disappear into the darkness. The planter Aláth Oilcyclone and the merchant Reg Oiledsacks, led by the merchant mayor Tun Dyefights bolt across the steel catwalk, driven either by madness or desperation. Each wields an adamantine battle axe, for wood and charcoal, so that the smelters could have been started up when they arrive in the high mountains - not to mention having beds as soon as possible. That hope has been shattered, however, and the final doom of Weatherwires draws near.

Deep below, Solon Townclenched still crawls about the dome without a crutch.

The merchant's screams, and the distant horn call to battle Èzum Openeddoors, militia commander and last member of the Diamond Cloisters. The old warrior sprints up the serpentine causeway and up the staircases to the upper fortress.

The mayor and his two remaining companions clamber across the gates, tripping over each other in their attempts to escape. The chamber with steel grate floors is choked with lava, but the grates form a clear passage to the stairwells.

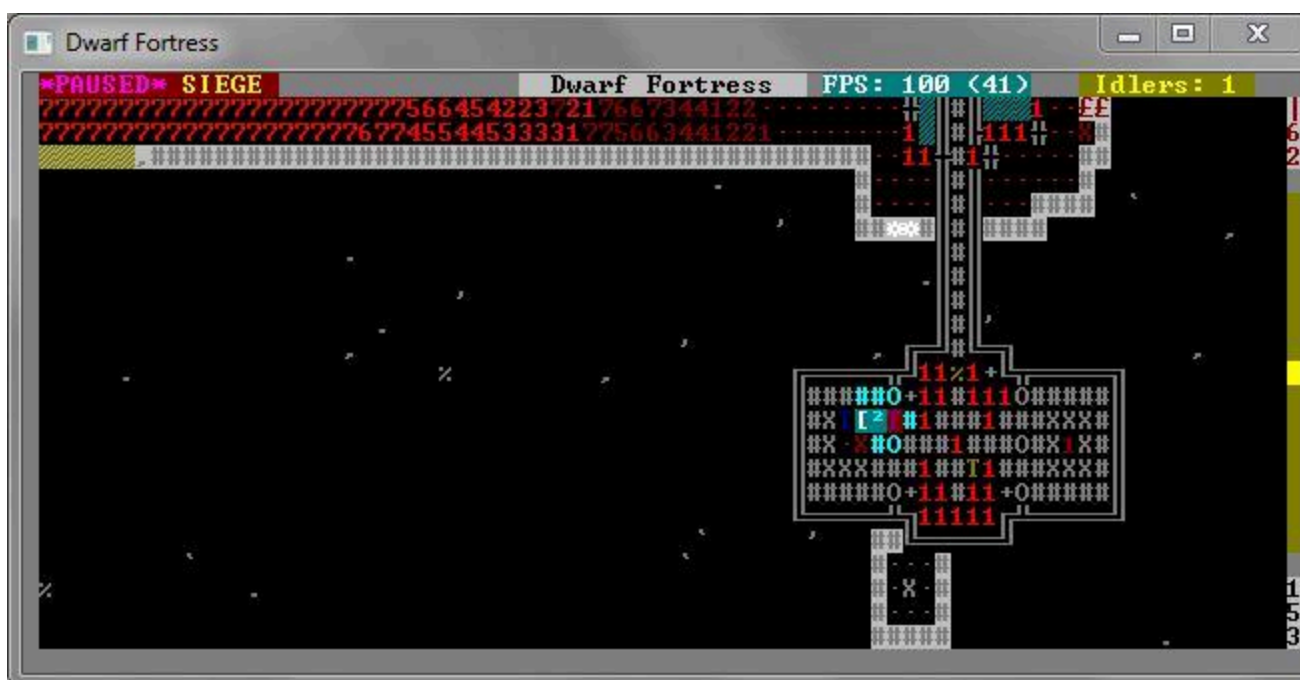
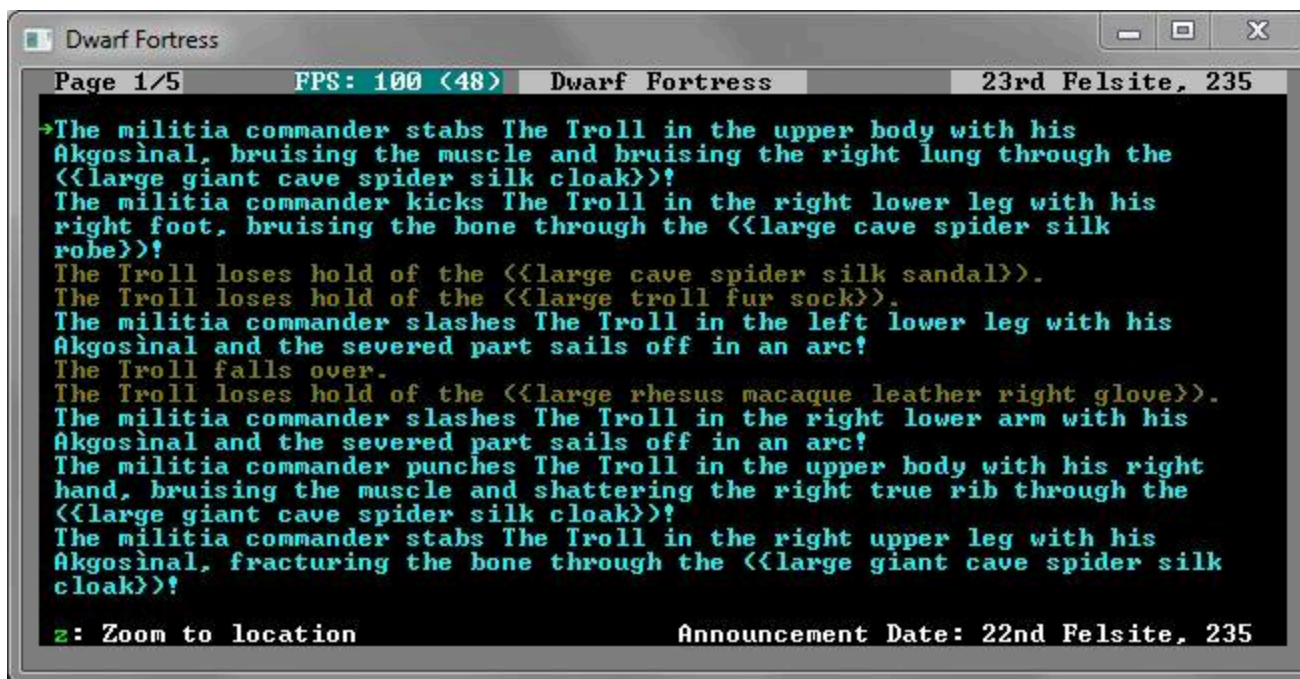


The trio reach the top of the stairs, and rush towards the exit - just as a pair of trolls stomp through the doorway, cutting them off. The dwarves panic and scatter as the tusked brutes charge towards them. Tun Dyefight screams down the sealed passage to pull the lever, to seal the passage once again so that the goblins can't get in. She is chased away from the stairs and into a side passage, and is slain moments later.

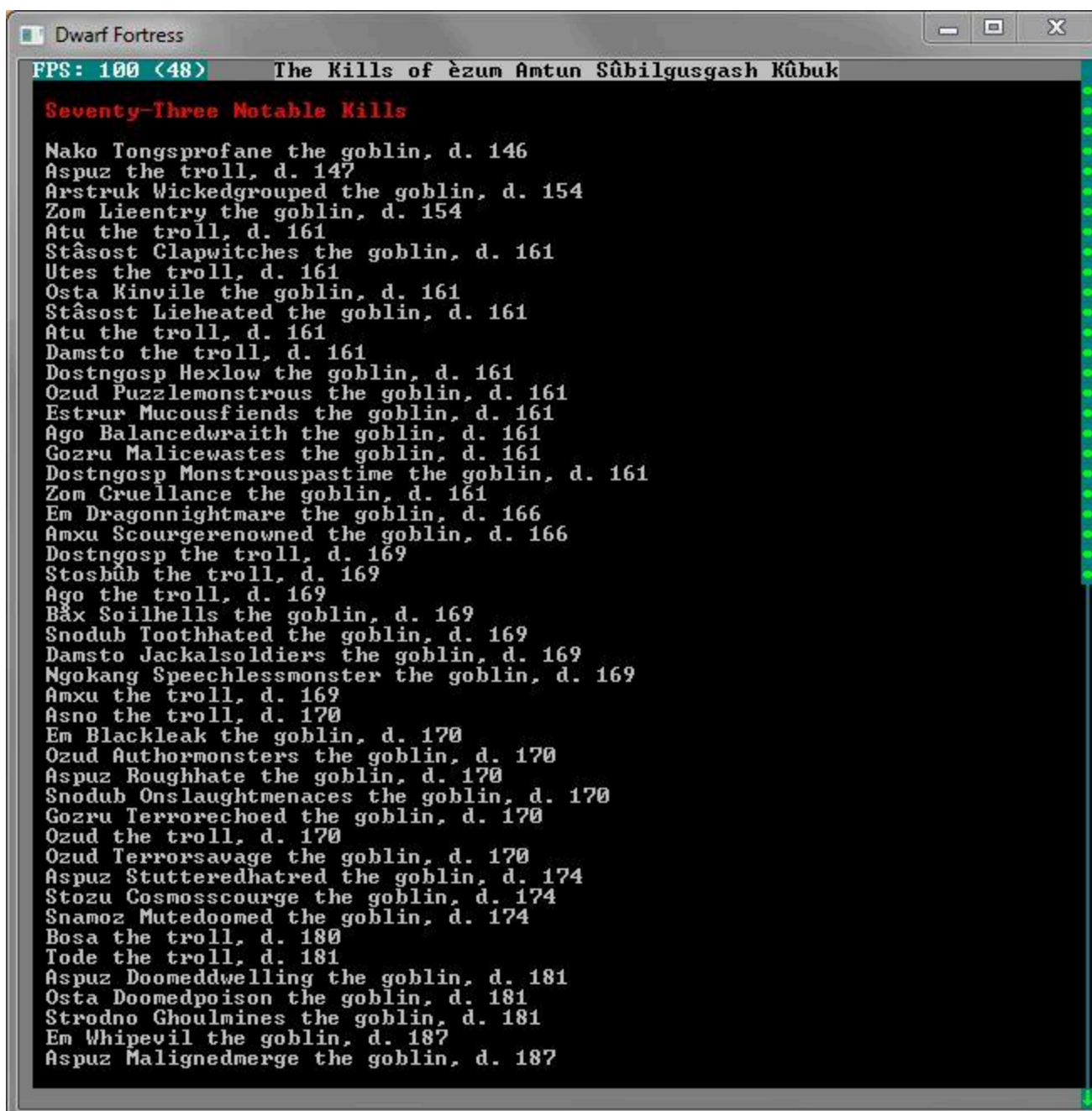


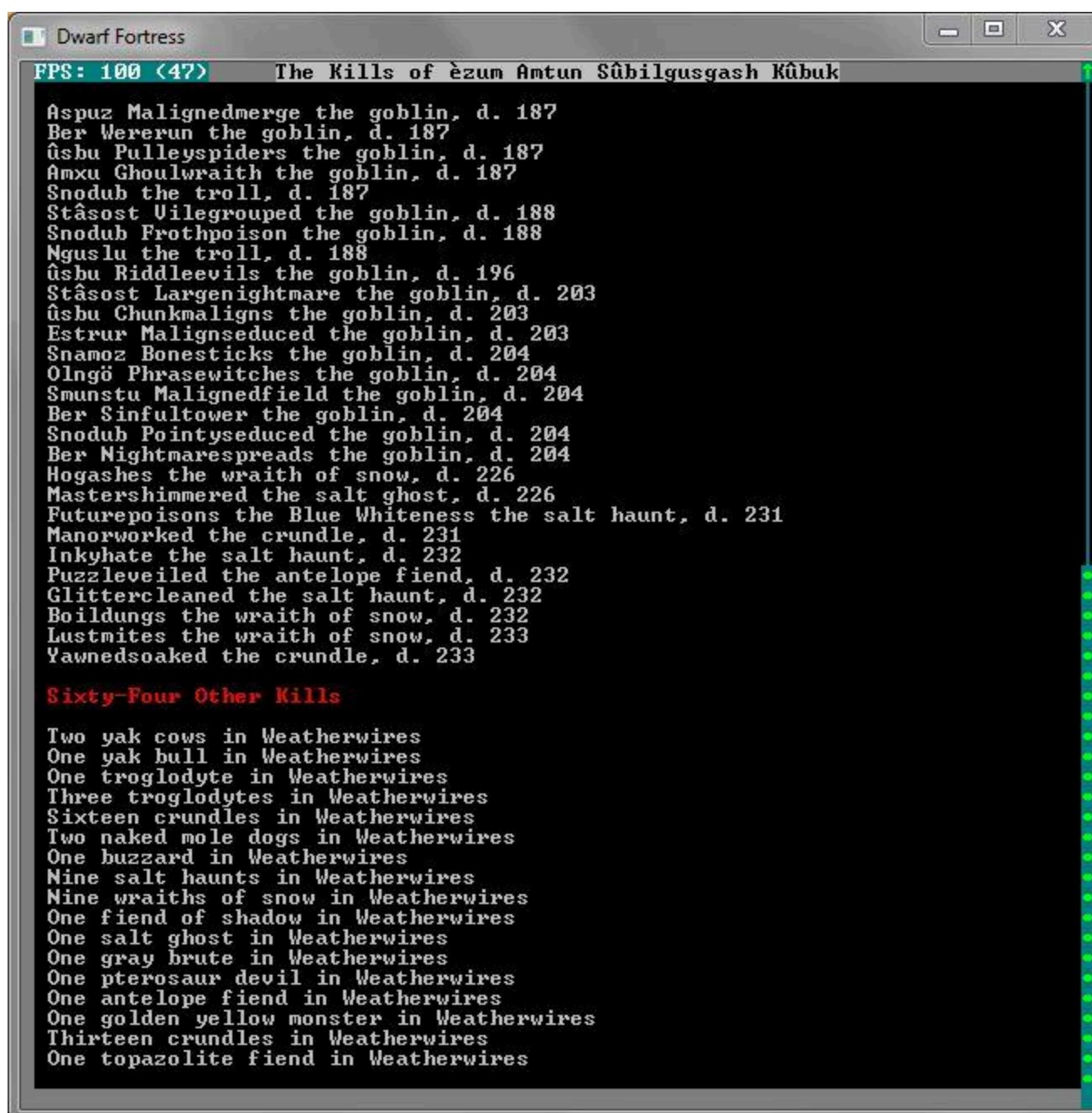
Deep below, Solon Townclenched hears the mayor's plea and slowly begins to make her way to the lever room.

The commander reaches the room with grate floors just as one of the trolls does. He charges the beast and, with two quick strokes, severs an arm and a leg. As the creature collapses to the grates, the commander brutally stabs and slashes it apart, covering the magma-clean steel with sheets of cyan blood.

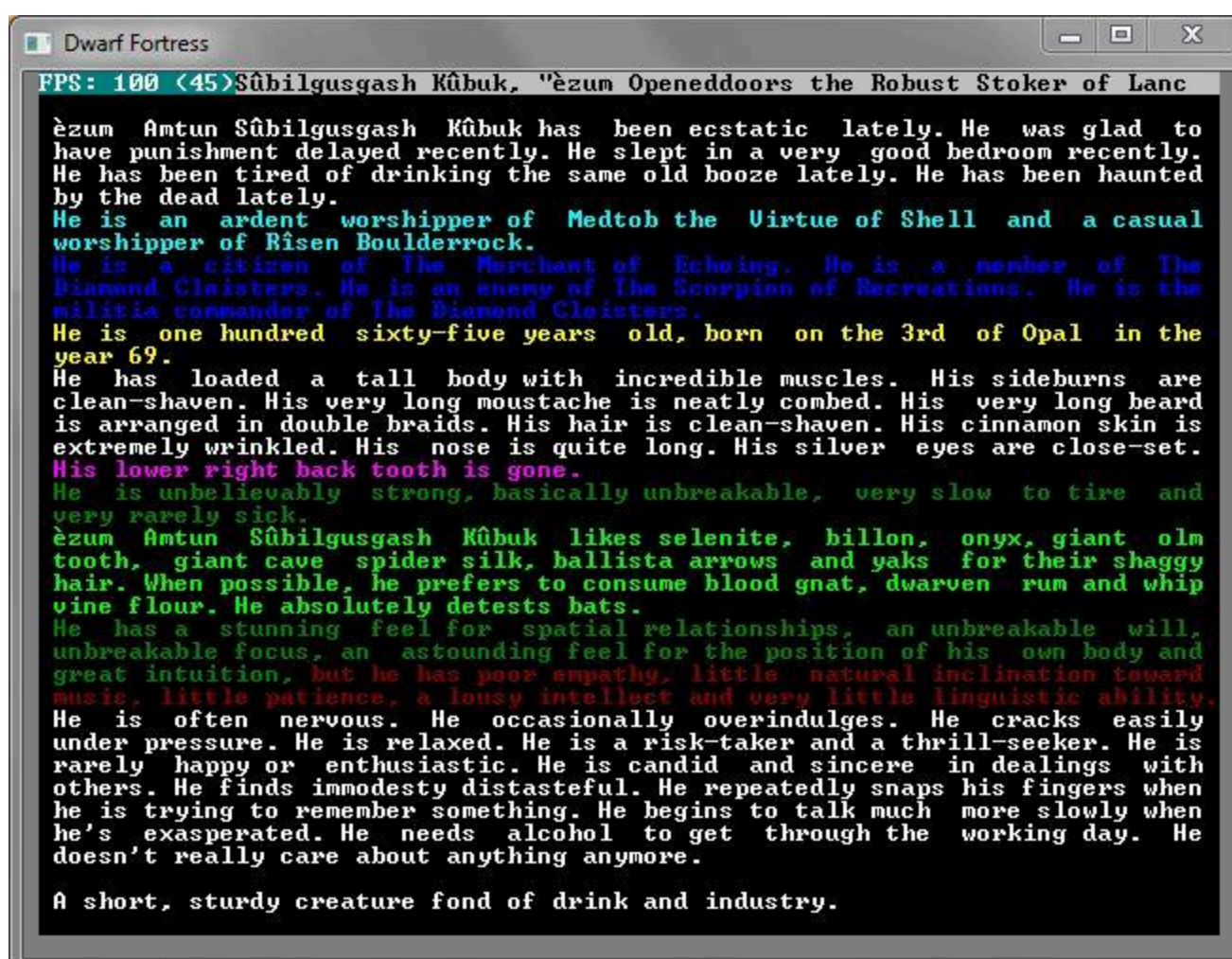


He climbs to the top of the stairs, as ready as any a dwarf could possibly be. His steel short sword, Clinchlulled, has claimed the lives over a hundred foes above and below ground.





His silver eyes have seen decades of horror and grief. Every dwarf he has ever known, save these merchants, are dead. He doesn't really care about anything anymore.



Commander Èzum reaches the top landing and scans the chamber. Two trolls loomed over the broken body of the merchant mayor, while the two other fools who had followed him this far were separated and running out two different exits - both with trolls on their heels. The old warrior raised his sword and charged the nearest of the beasts with a mighty dwarven battle cry. One slash; two; and suddenly they were upon him. Four trolls surrounded the commander, who - suddenly thrown on the defensive - began blocking and dodging every attack while making none himself.



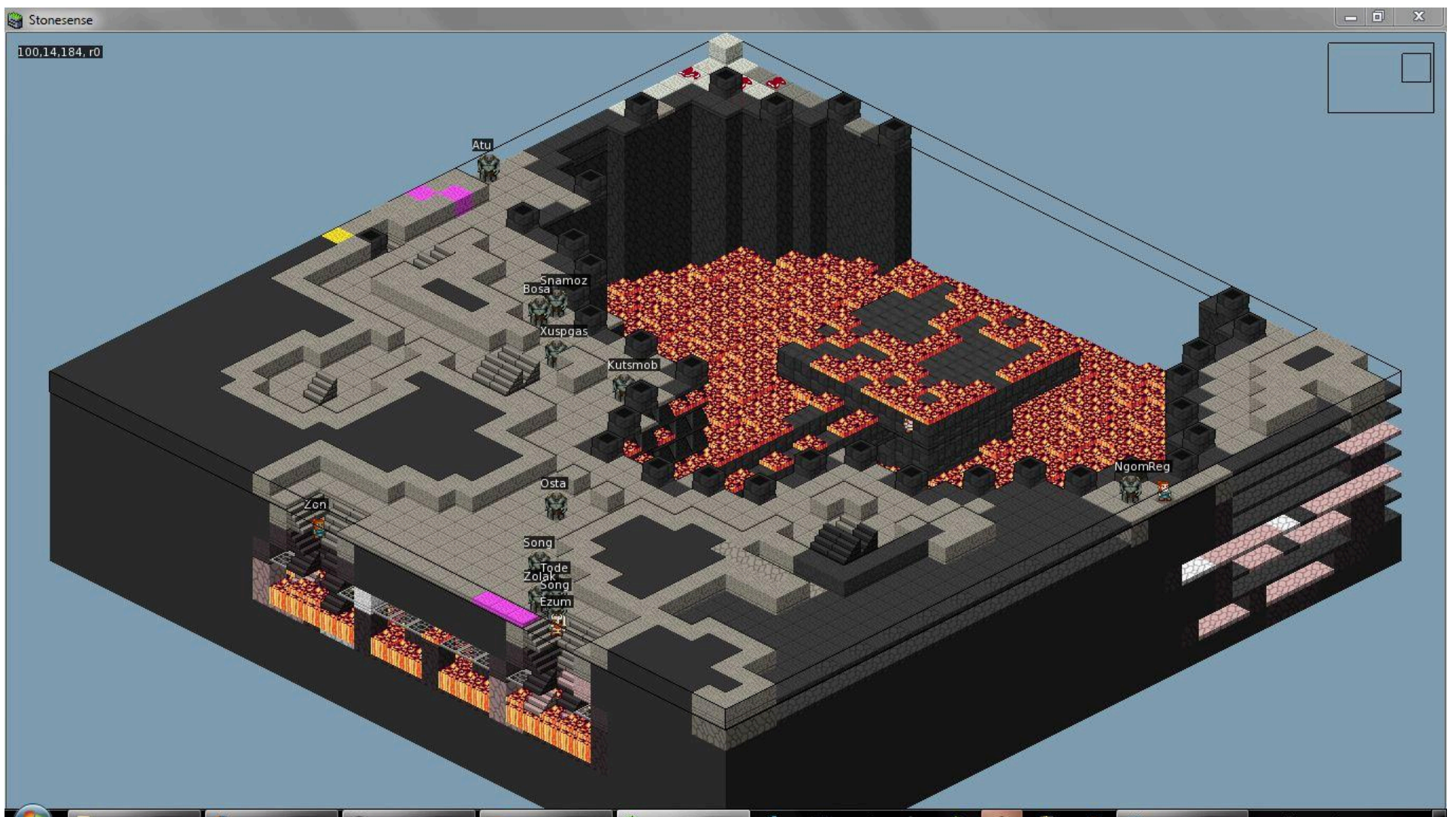
They fought him across the chamber, from the western stairwell to the eastern, never actually landing a blow - but forcing the militia commander to retreat backwards. Four trolls, seeming to be hardly a challenge for Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, who had killed dozens of demons in single combat, or arrayed against him in numbers.



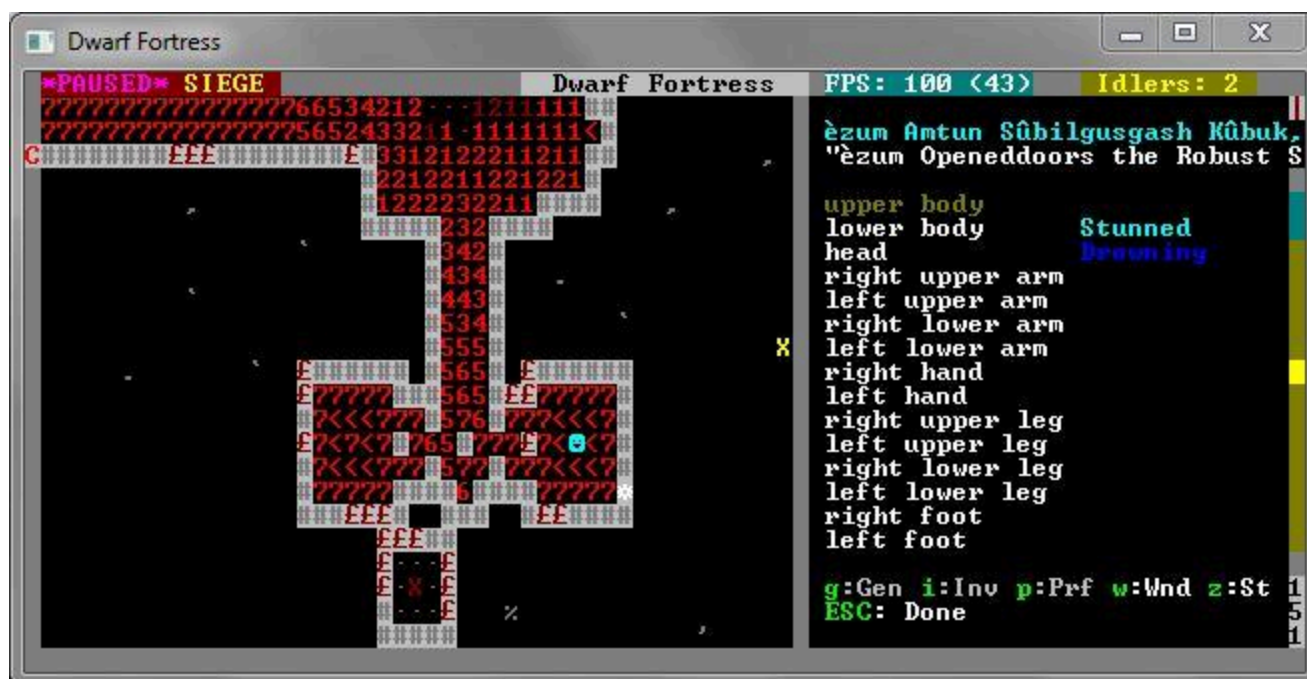
He parries a strike and steps backward onto the eastern stairwell. One troll - Song Sinfulpraises - charges the commander. The beast's attack misses, but his momentum carries him forward, crashing into the adamantine-clad warrior and knocking him back through the air.

Èzum flies back a few feet, over the edge of the stairwell and into open space.



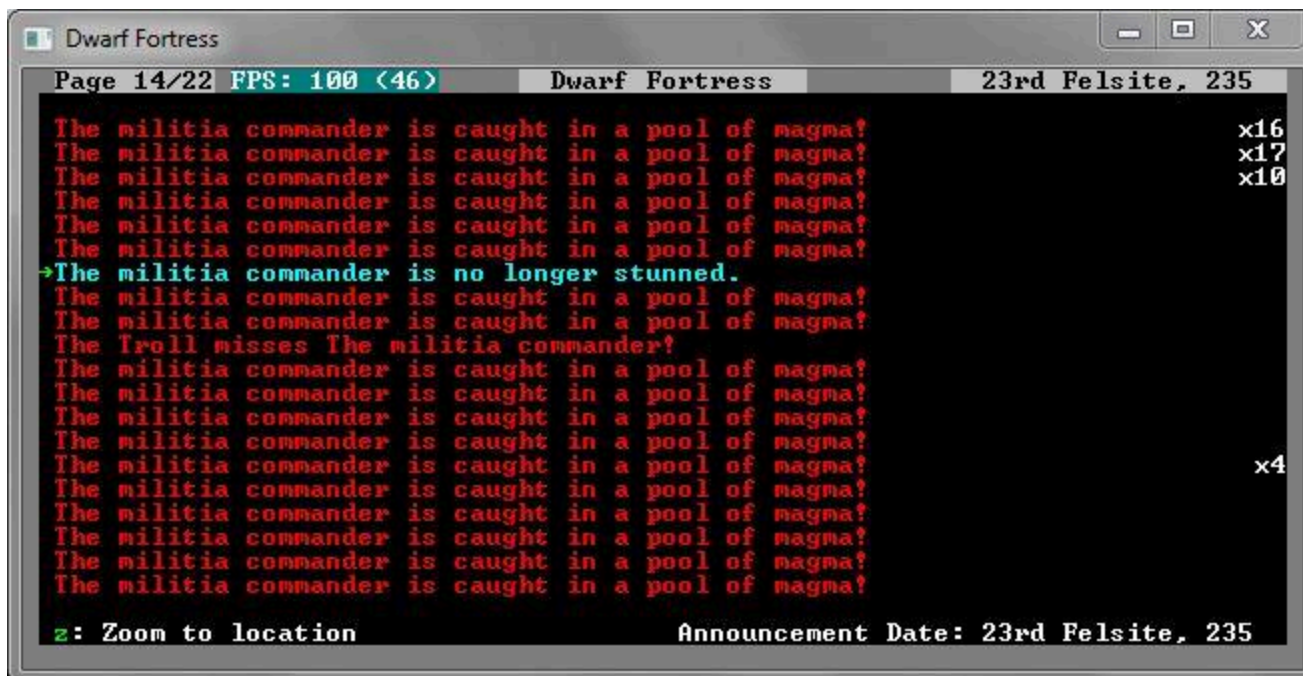


He plummets like a stone, five z-levels, into a full layer of magma.



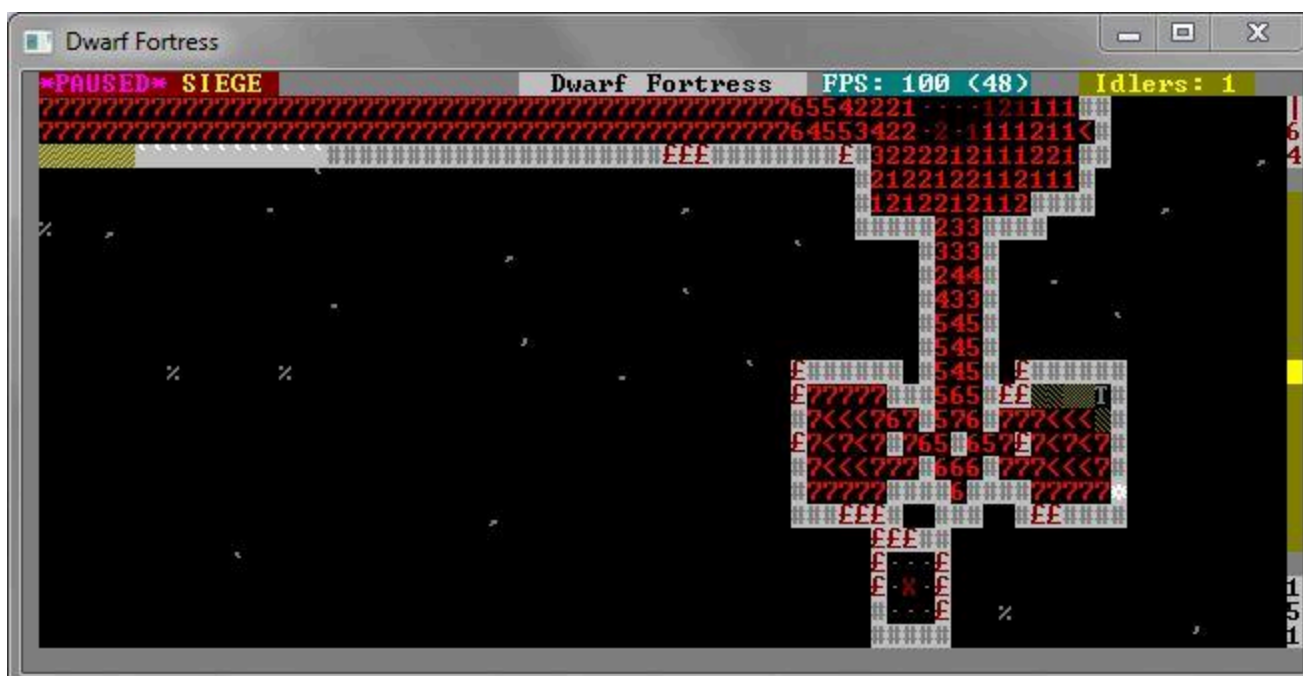
The commander shakes his head - the fall caused him no injury, it merely stunned him. For a moment, he appears to be fine, suffering no immediate injuries from the heat.

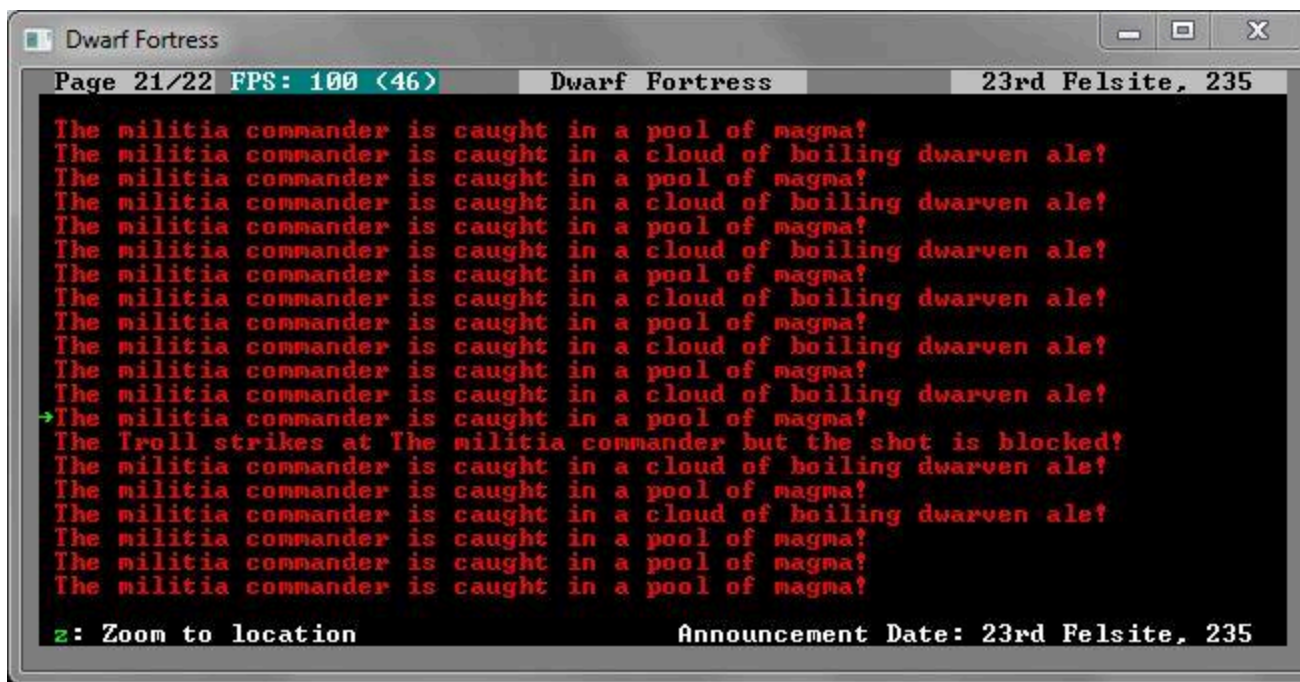
Then, the trolls come in after him.



The beasts dive into the magma after the dwarf. Trolls are not bright creatures. Their clothing immediately bursts into fire, and they themselves soon follow.

They force the commander back into the corner of the bottom of the stairwell. His leather backpack and waterskin incinerate, and the stairwell is filled with clouds of boiling ale. He still, however, remains unhurt by the heat. Perhaps his complete suit of adamantine armor bestows a limited kind of heat resistance.





Apparently completely incompetent as well as stupid, the trolls cannot land a single strike on the commander. He parries or dodges the few attacks that come slowly through the thick, painfully hot liquid.

As the battle continues, slowly but surely, the commander's extremities begin to show the wearing and building heat that is seeping through his armor. His hands and feet first, but then the entire rest of his body begins to melt and drip with blood. He still, however, has not actually caught on fire.

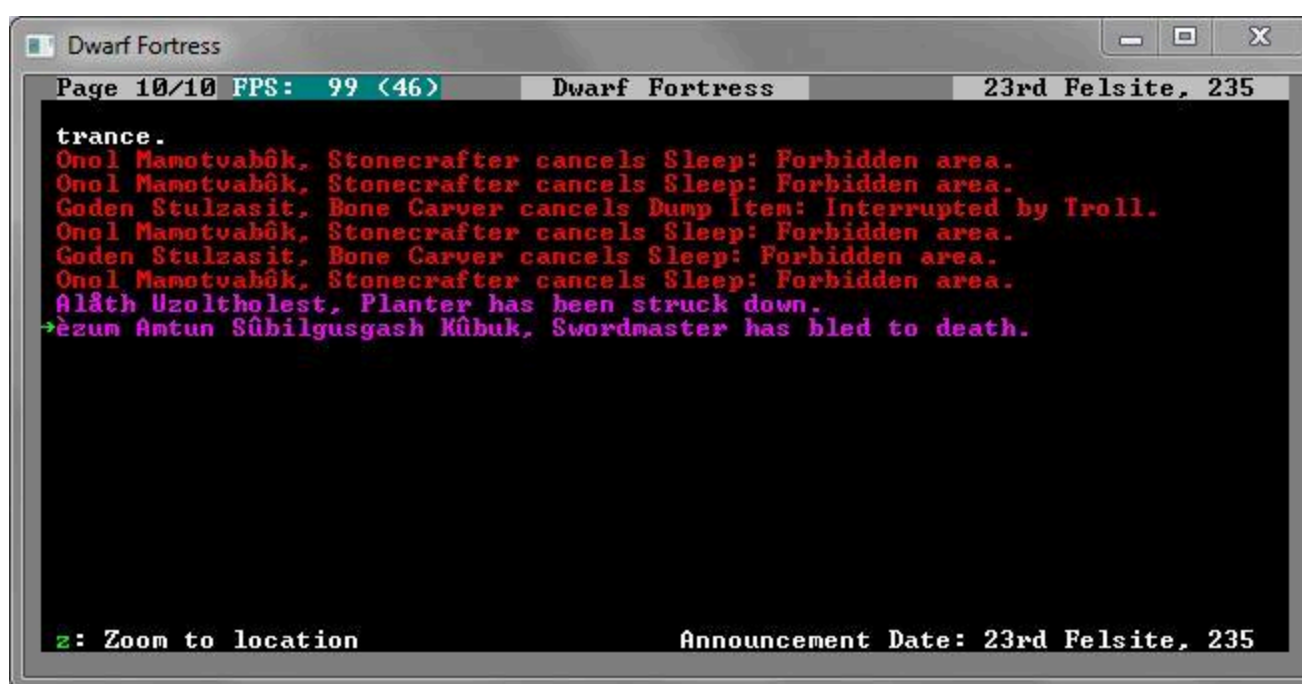


The trolls attack relentlessly, even as their own bodies begin to cook and fall apart to the fire. The commander defends ceaselessly, right up to the end.





Thus ends Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances, militia commander of the Diamond Cloisters and last surviving member of the Urns of Work. In all his decades of combat, he was never truly defeated, and despite reaching the age of 165, never died of old age. Instead, he perishes here, at the bottom of a stairwell, broiled in his own suit of adamantine armor.



The trolls who chased him into the magma are incinerated a few seconds later, and the stairwell is choked with smoke. The sounds of the goblin army's footsteps echo down the hallway, even as the crippled merchant Solon Townclenched, who has now been elected mayor by the three other living dwarves, crawls through the dome to the lever room.

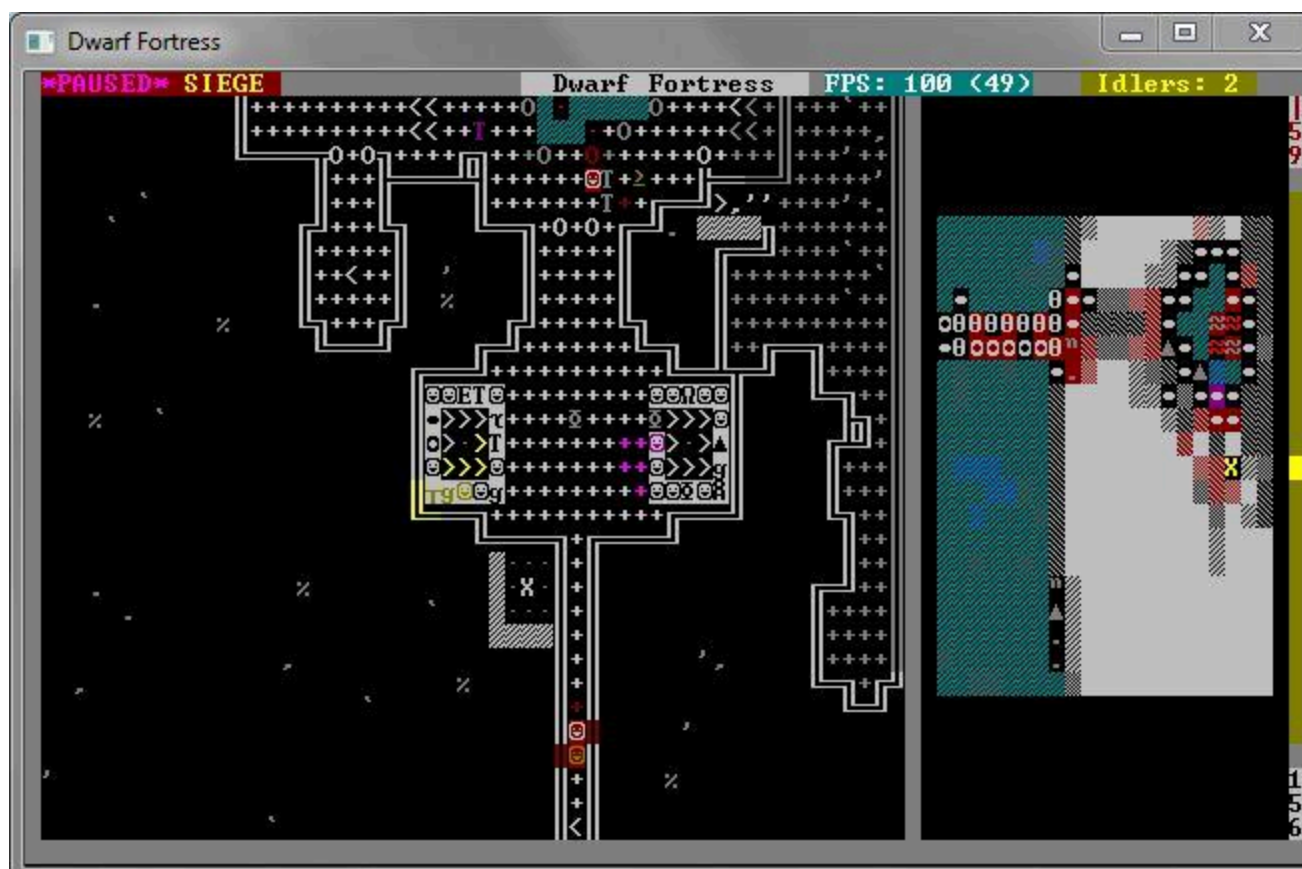
As the commander's melted body is finally incinerated by the pool of molten rock at the bottom of the stairwell, the other trolls descend upon the two dwarves who followed mayor Tun to the surface. Alàth Oilycyclone, previously a merchant guard, is caught from behind as she flees down a narrow passage.



Reg Oiledsacks is slain as the trolls surround her outside, at the edge of the caldera.



The ill-fated escape attempt is crushed before it can even reach the upper fortress. Three of the six merchants are dead, slain by siege trolls.



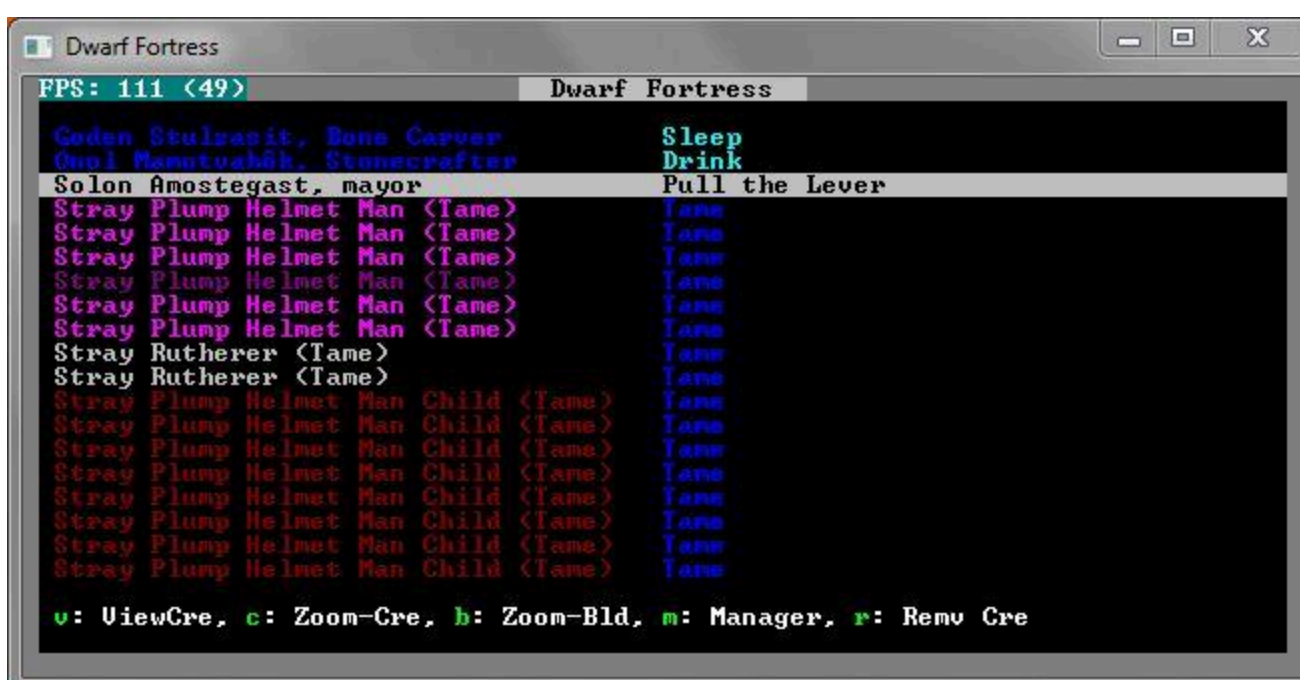
Word of the battle quickly reaches the goblin army as it passes through the fortress' main entrance hall. The small army consisted of no more than 60 goblins and a dozen trolls, and was led by a trio of weapon masters. At their head strides the axe lord Ago Incestrazors, wielding a superior iron battle axe, and leading a squad of swordsmen. Following close at their heels is a squad of spearmen, led by the pikemaster Damsto Pullwitches. Not far behind, leading a squad of hammermen up the bridge, is Kutsmob Controlledseduced, a goblin mace lord.

The news that reaches the captains' ears is unthinkable. Not only were there *living dwarves* in the fortress, but a new passage had been made clear, which apparently led to a new part of the fortress. The jade-skinned captain Ago Incestrazors rubs his angular chin, peering towards the strangely empty caldera ahead. This new passage must undeniably lead to that refuge where their hated enemy had been hiding all these decades.

After all these years, all those sieges and raids that had swept through Weatherwires, only to find abandoned passages and wealth - but no dwarves - what luck that Ago should be the one who should raid the last mountainhome. Before, he had been just one amongst countless thousands of goblins. Now, he would forever be known as the doom of the Merchant of Echoing, the slayer of the last dwarves.



Far below, in the dome, mayor Solon Townclenched heeds the last, screamed wishes of the late mayor Tun Dyefight. Surrounded by restless haunts, Solon slowly crawls out of the citadel. For any other dwarf, the lever room would be a short walk through the streets of the dome. For the crippled mayor, the route is anything but short. There is no other dwarf to do it - Goden Mawknife and Onol Plaitorbs are apparently oblivious to their approaching doom.



And so, Solon, the only dwarf left with a sense of urgency, begins the long crawl to the lever room.



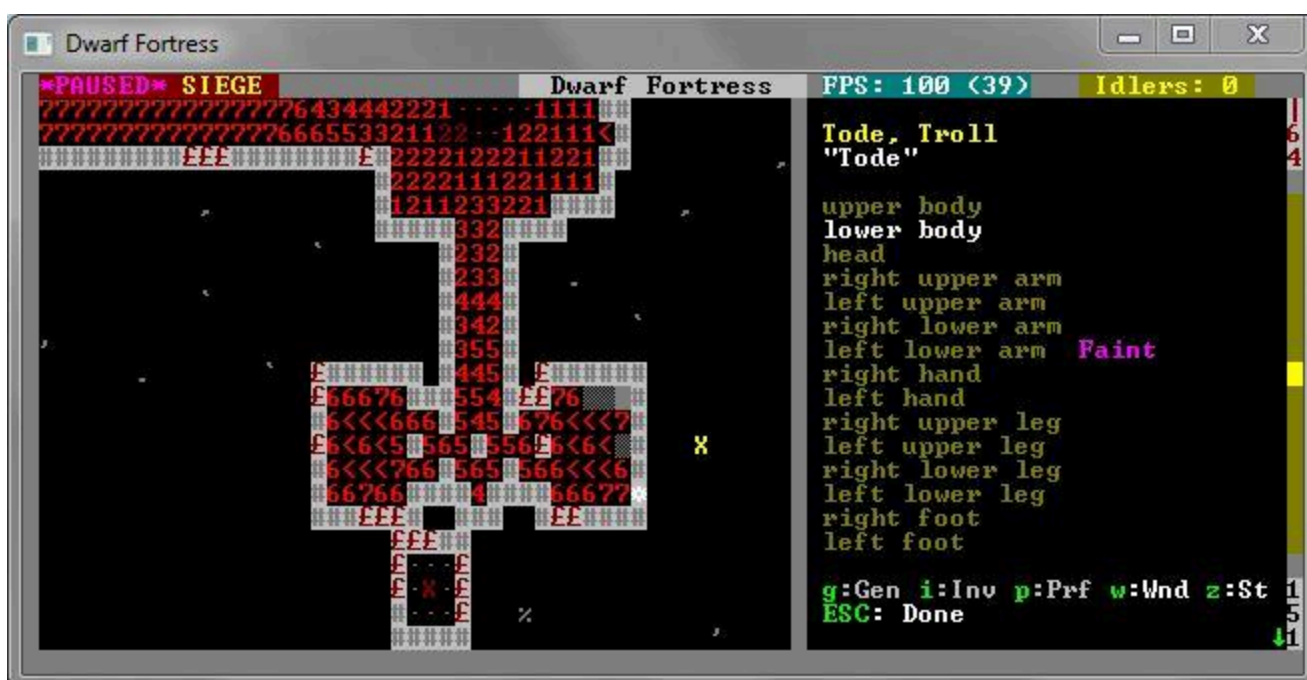
The dome must be sealed once more, and forever.

The goblins pass through the main entrance to the fortress slowly - warily. Perhaps it is the reputation this broad passage has amongst the goblins - countless sieges and ambushes have ended here. There can be no doubt that this was once the heavily trapped corridor that protected the upper fortress of old; one need look no further than the piles of goblin and troll bones that clutter the hall, or the thick layers of blood and vomit that obscure every engraving. They progress with caution - the devilry of the dwarves could never be underestimated.



Upon crossing through the passage and entering into the fortress, the report of the new passage was confirmed.

With his own eyes, Ago Incestrazors could behold the obsidian structure, apparently rising out of the midst of the volcano itself, and made accessible by a narrow causeway leading from the south. That, Ago knew, was undoubtedly where the stairwell led, that damned stairwell which led down into magma every other time the goblins had searched the fortress. Still, though, the captain suspected some dwarven trick. Two trolls had already been slain - burnt up in battle with one of the dwarven warriors, after they dove into the molten rock after him. The trolls were not too smart, Ago observed (and probably not for the first time).





Another captain, the pikemaster Damsto Pullwitches, runs ahead of the rest of the army, undoubtedly hungry for glory. His goblin spearmen follow quickly behind. After decades, the way was open, the fat soft underbelly of the dwarven civilization laid bare to his spearpoint - best to strike swiftly, before the opportunity was taken from them once more.



Meanwhile, Solon pulls herself down the avenue from the citadel, through the founder's square and through the passage underneath the red guildhall. There is no time to look up and admire the wonderful architecture that she admired for so long, nor is there time to consider the fate of the old commander.



Her fingers scrape against the smoothed rock floors of the avenue as she continues, single-mindedly determined in her final task. She *had* to make it in time.

The goblin pikemaster rushes into the engraved passage and pauses, only briefly, at the top of the western stairwell. For decades, magma had filled this space - now, it was made clear, by some dwarven trickery. There was no time to wait. Damsto Pullwitches led his squad down the stairway, the stone still hot from the molten rock which had apparently just receded.



The avenues are long - long enough for a dwarf who could walk, and staggeringly so for one who could not. Ghosts trailed after Solon, forlorn haunts that watched the dwarf's final effort with incomprehensible sadness. Suddenly, ahead of her, the flat street began to rise. Solon looked up from her hands, which were growing sore with the effort - above her towered the eastern wall of the dome, smoothly sloping away into the darkness high above. Up the ramp just ahead of her was the entrance to the back tunnel, which led to the map room. She lifted herself up and heaved forward.



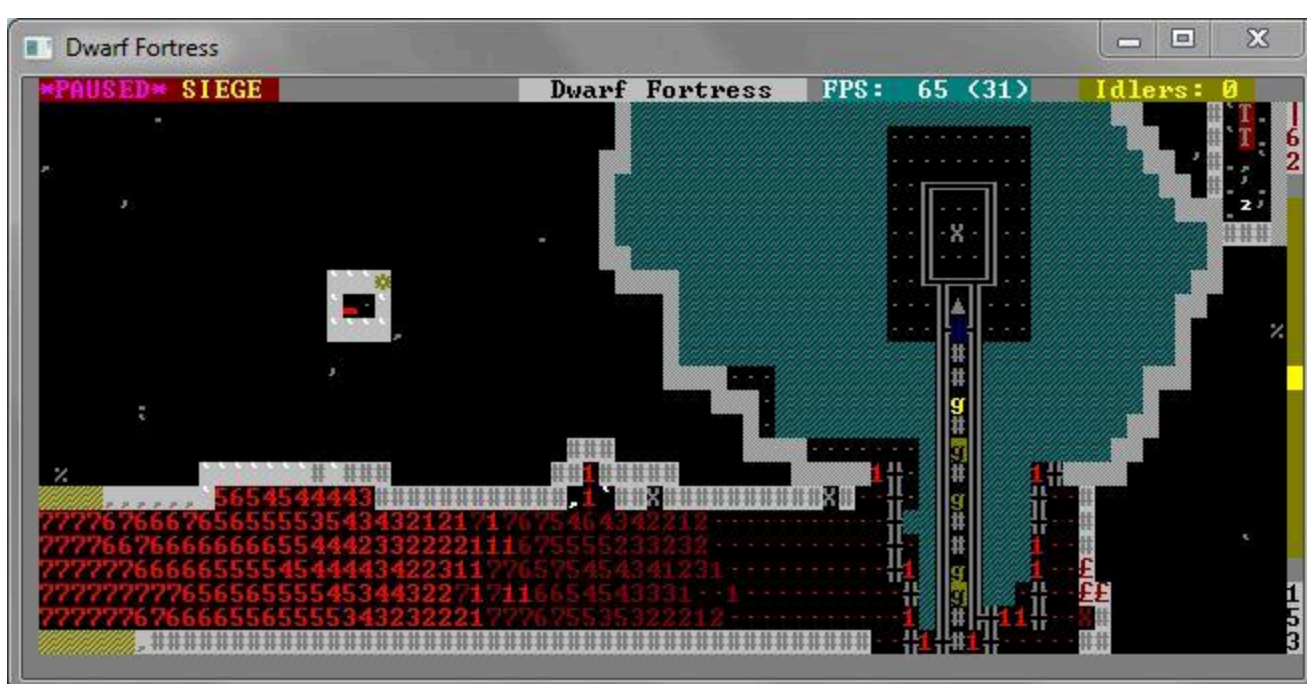
At the bottom of the stairwell, Damsto finds the siege trolls hard at work, doing what they did best - destroying things. Each troll had chosen a section of the steel grates and was pulling it up, tearing the grate apart and throwing the pieces into the magma below. Silently hoping that the trolls didn't destroy their only escape route, the spearman crossed the lava-hot room, lit from below by churning magma, and beheld the tiny passage which led out to the causeway. His red eyes narrowed.



Solon pulled herself past the coffins and spires, towards the entrance to the passage, moving as quickly as she could. If she failed, the myriad treasures of Weatherwires would be vulnerable to the treasure hunters and tomb robbers of the world. She gritted her teeth - the legacy of the Merchant of Echoing would never be plunder for any invader.



And yet, even as Solon swore in the deeps, captain Damsto and his squad passed across the causeway. Just below their feet, the lava of the open volcano roiled and spat - the heat seeped through their boots from the red-hot steel grates. Ahead, the nether-cap door Syrupsevers - one of the dwarves' artifacts. This was it - this was their legendary refuge. The pikemaster threw the door open and rushed inside.



The sealed passage is breached - the final safeguard of the dome, compromised.

If Solon is aware of the closeness of the invaders, she makes no sign of it, but simply continues. The next chamber has two exits. The north exit leads to a doomed room, a place of fiery death where

artifact furniture burns ceaselessly - a relic of more prosperous, and reckless days. Solon crawls between the coffins towards the southern exit - the passage to the lever room.



The smoothed, sloping tunnel echoes with scrapes and grunts as Solon pulls herself up ramp after ramp. She is near to the lever room, she knows, but there is no time to waste.



The goblins finally reach the bottom of the obsidian block passage, filled with searing heat and the low roar of the magma flows outside. Damsto walks through the tunnel, spear at the ready, but encounters no resistance. The dwarves and their impregnable defenses have finally been broken.



The mayor reaches a bend in the passage. She eyes the coffins to her left, before turning to the right and continuing the long crawl. The ghosts follow after her, perhaps to witness the final fate of the Merchant of Echoing. These woeful spirits do not cheer her on, or stress upon her the urgency of the

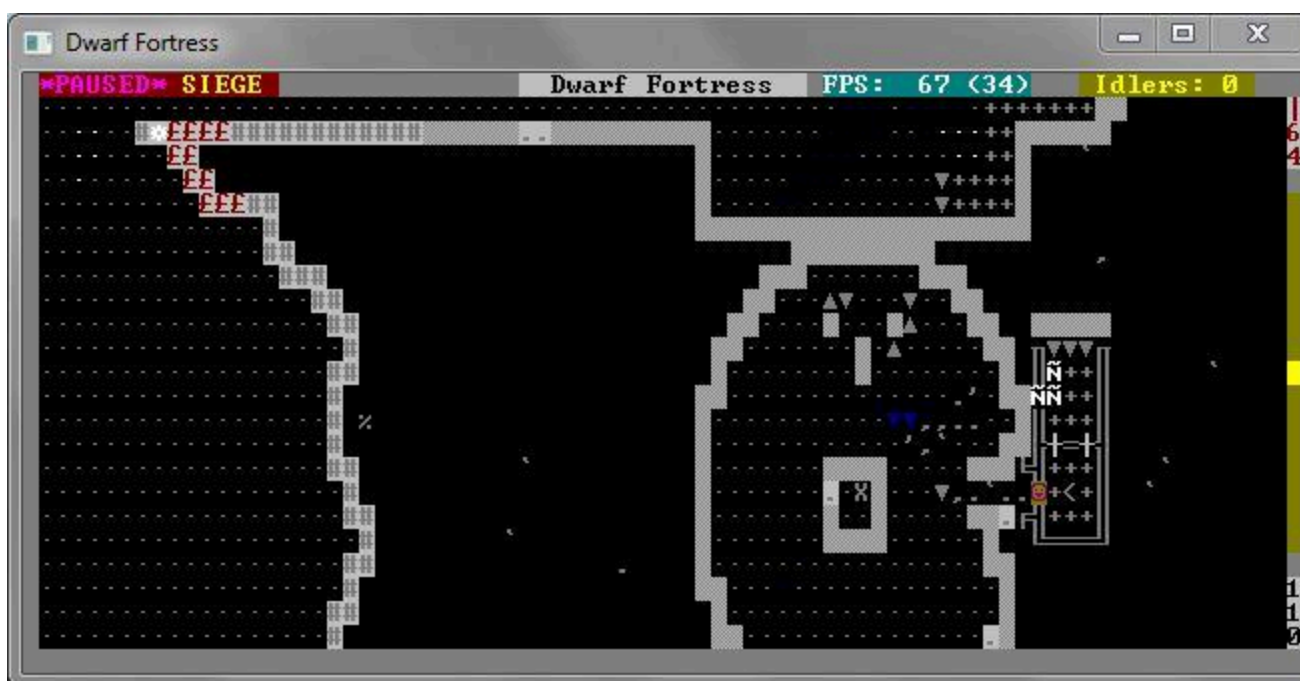
situation. For the dead, these final days are merely the culmination of a long and agonizing wait - a wait which, in all likelihood, will continue on into eternity.



Damsto and his spearmen enter the statue chamber just past the sealed passage. He instinctively makes for the eastern passage, to the long stairwell that leads into the dome. He is driven by instinct, the same instinct by which the goblins knew, year after year during their enemies' mysterious disappearance, that the dwarves were indeed alive in Weatherwires... somewhere.



With an agonized grunt, Solon pushes the steel door open. Using her birchen training axe as a wedge, she props the door open and crawls through the entrance. Three spirits slide through the walls after her. There are 13 levers in this chamber, but there is only one that she seeks. Her journey is almost finished, but she does not - cannot - feel discouraged now. She pulls herself stoically onward.



At that moment, as Solon began crawling to the lever she sought, pikemaster Damsto reached the bottom of the staircase. His nostrils flared, taking in the multitude of scents. Dwarves... brimstone...

and death. Readying his spear, he moved through the narrow passage, his underlings following closely after.



The goblins entered the tiered antechamber of the dome - though, in truth, they could not have possibly known what lay beyond. Below them were arrayed rows of coffins, with narrow walkways between. This, the goblins realized with rising fury, must be where the dwarves had placed all of their dead after the battles of 203 and 204. In those years, a great force of goblins and trolls had besieged the fortress, only to find the site abandoned. The trolls had gone about the business of smashing apart the innumerable coffins, defiling the graves of their enemies. Then, suddenly, the dwarves had emerged, without warning, from their hiding place. All the invaders within Weatherwires had been slain without mercy.

The next siege that had arrived, a few months later, had found nothing. There was no sign of the dwarves, or their dead, or any coffins at all. The fortress - at least, that part of it which the goblins could reach - was empty. The dwarves' disappearance had been a mystery.

Until now.



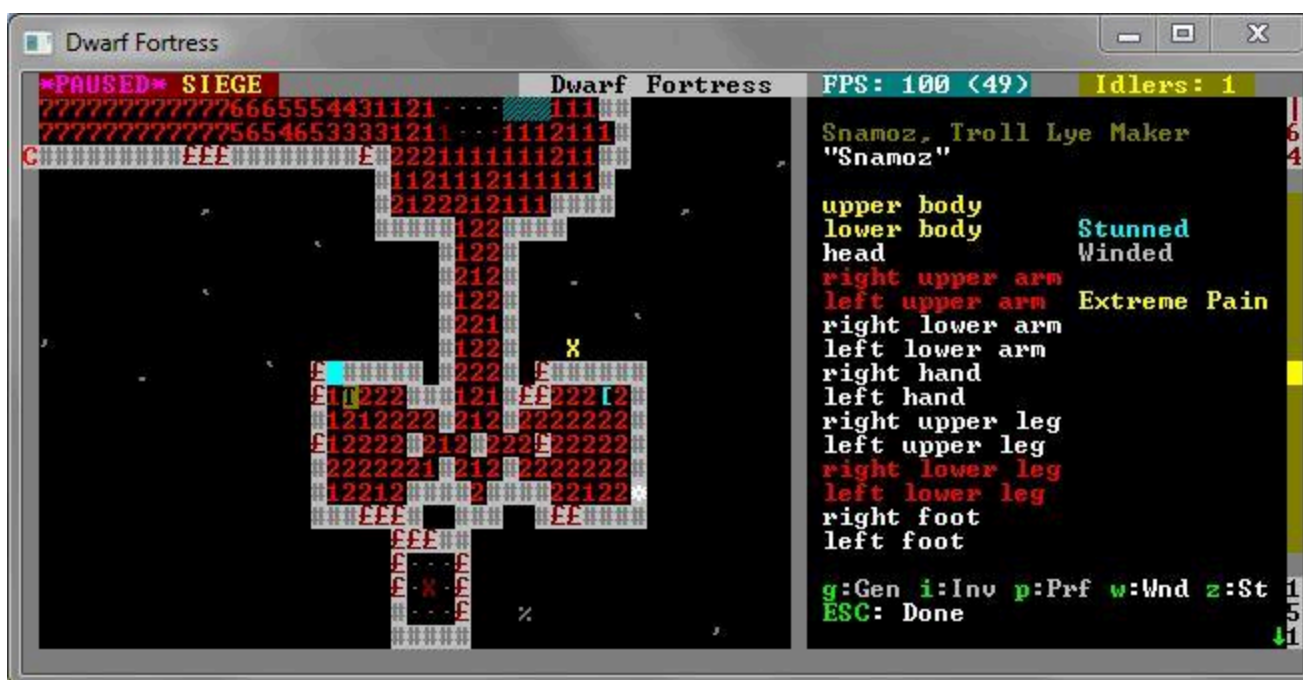
These must have been the coffins that the dwarves had claimed in 204, Damsto reasoned, hauled down into this safe hole and sealed away with magma. The pikemaster's jade lips twisted into a sneer beneath his copper helm, and he turned his attention to the prominent passage on the opposite side of the chamber. By a quick count, there were little more than four score dwarves buried here - and, so the stories went, the entire dwarven civilization had died here, in Weatherwires. The rest of the tombs must lie elsewhere... deeper within the tunnels.



As the goblins began to pad through the hewn passageway, their ears picked up the faint sound of creaking machinery, and an odd thumping sound. Any right-minded goblin knew to be wary when strange sounds echoed through the halls of a Mountainhome, but Damsto laughed at his underlings, dismissing the sounds as the stupid trolls tearing up grates far above them.

The trolls were indeed stupid, and it was true, that they were tearing up grates. Occasionally, one would rend a grate in pieces while he stood upon it, causing him to fall into the magma below.





But what Damsto and his squad did not notice - or gave no heed to - was the sudden diminution of that ceaseless rumbling which had accompanied them through the previous tunnels, which had echoed loudly within the caldera of the volcano. Any dwarf would recognize that sound: the reverberations caused by the flow of massive amounts of molten rock. And likewise, the sudden *ceasing* of that sound could mean but one thing.

The draining had stopped.



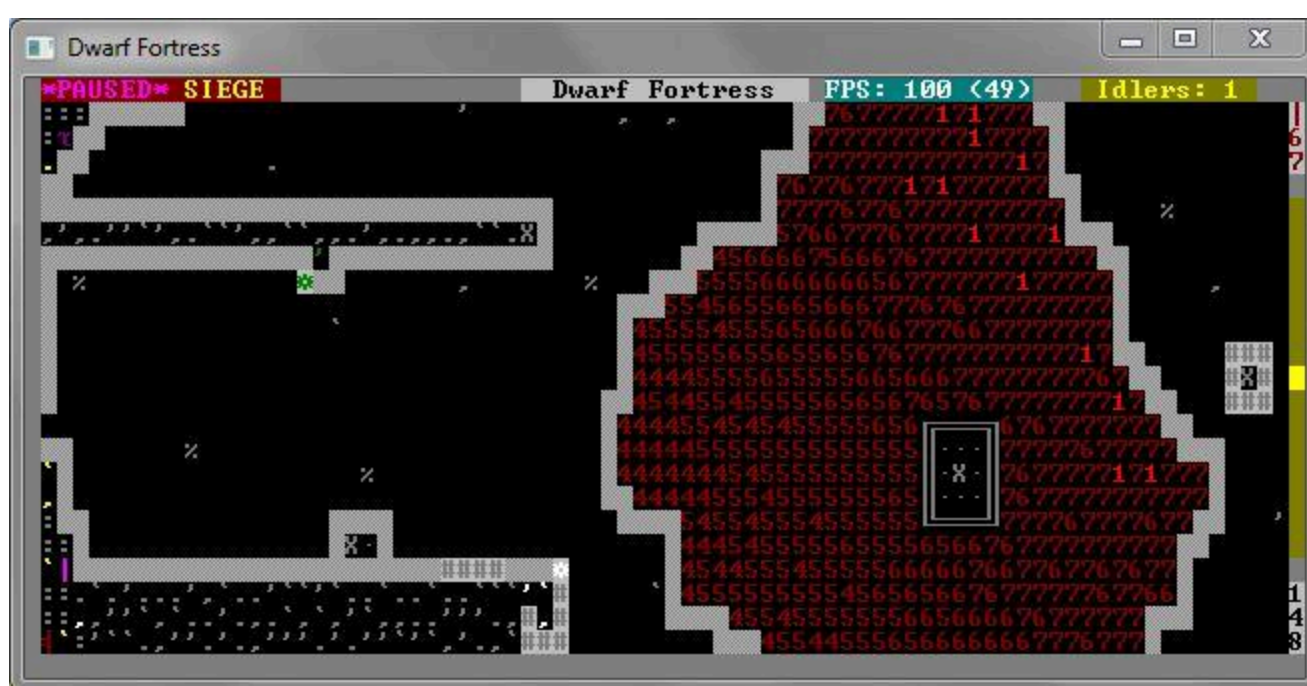
Solon Townclenched lay next to the toggled lever atop the ring in the center of the room, gasping for air after her long trek from the citadel. The entire lever room was indeed a miniature map of the dome, with levers tending to correlate to different hatches or seals in the fortress - but these levers, atop the central ring which was analogous to the great temple, controlled the drainage of the volcano; the sealed passage to the surface.

She glanced down from her vantage point, and through the doors below her, she heard echoing cries of surprise and anger, and harsh curses in a guttural tongue. Despite her best efforts, the goblins had breached the dome - the dwarves were truly doomed. The goblins had, in the end, finally made it into the fortress, and it would be those foul creatures - not demons, nor ghosts, nor legendary beast - who finally laid the Merchant of Echoing in its dark and forgotten tomb.

And, she realized, with the only exit quickly sealing, they would seek a way out. They would search every chamber in the fortress. This room - they would eventually find it, and Solon, too.

She crawled down the staircase and made for the door.

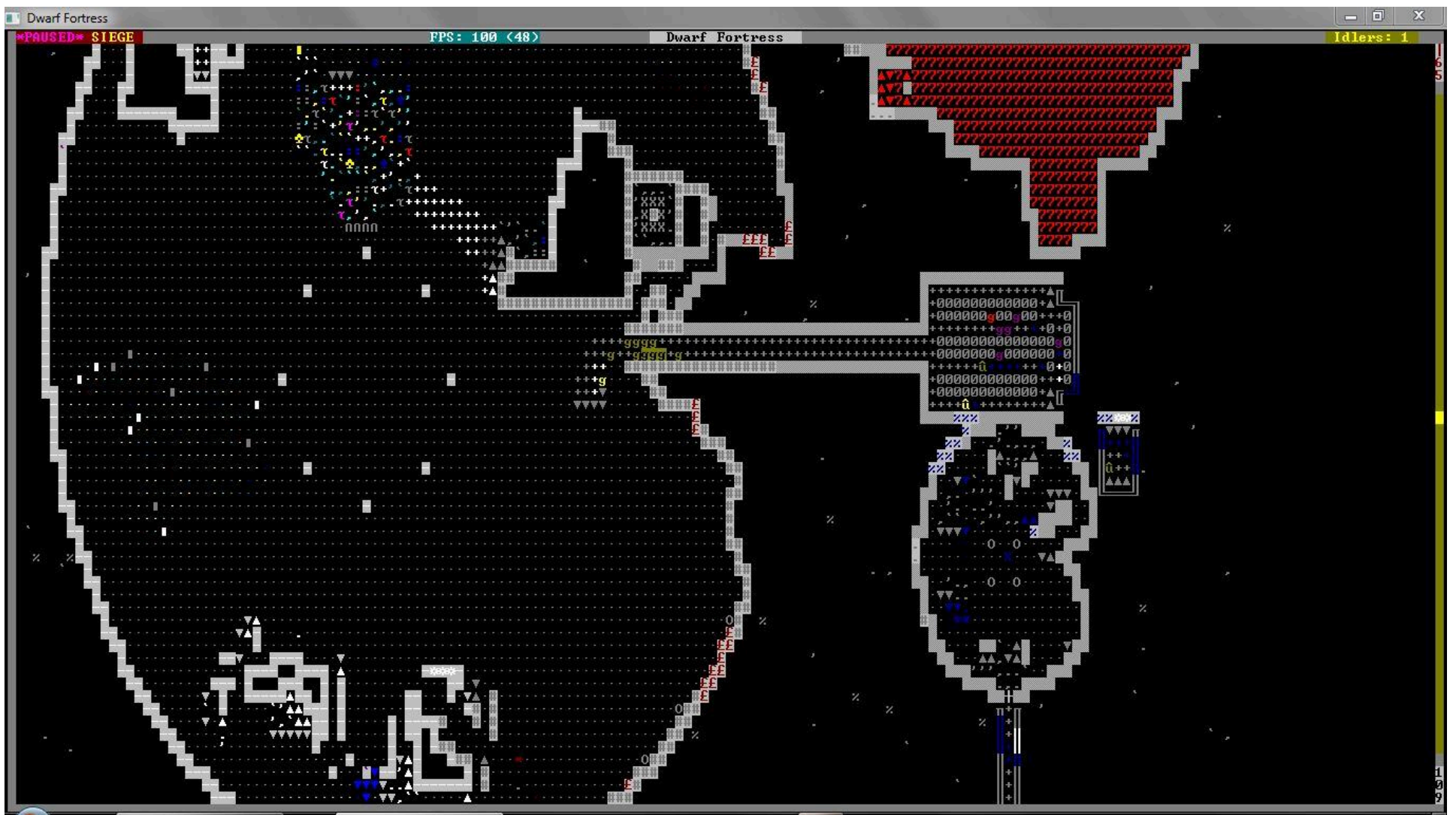
Far above, the lava in the caldera settled flat, and began slowly refilling.



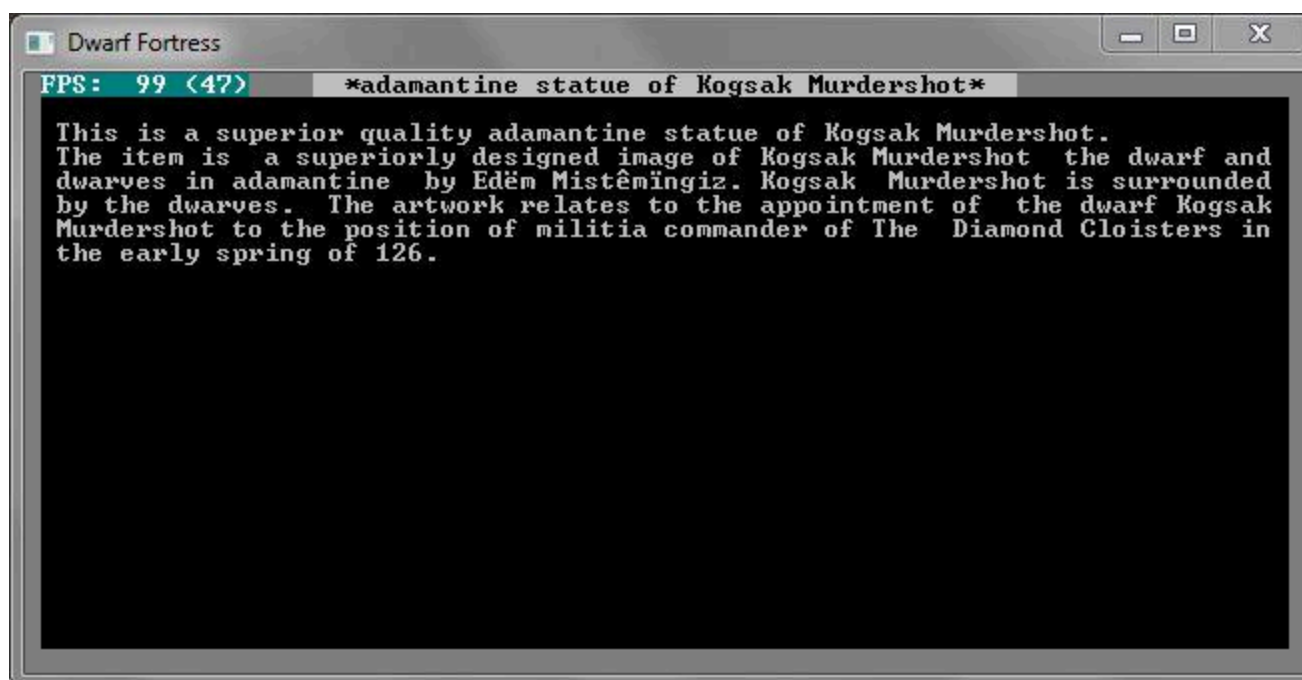
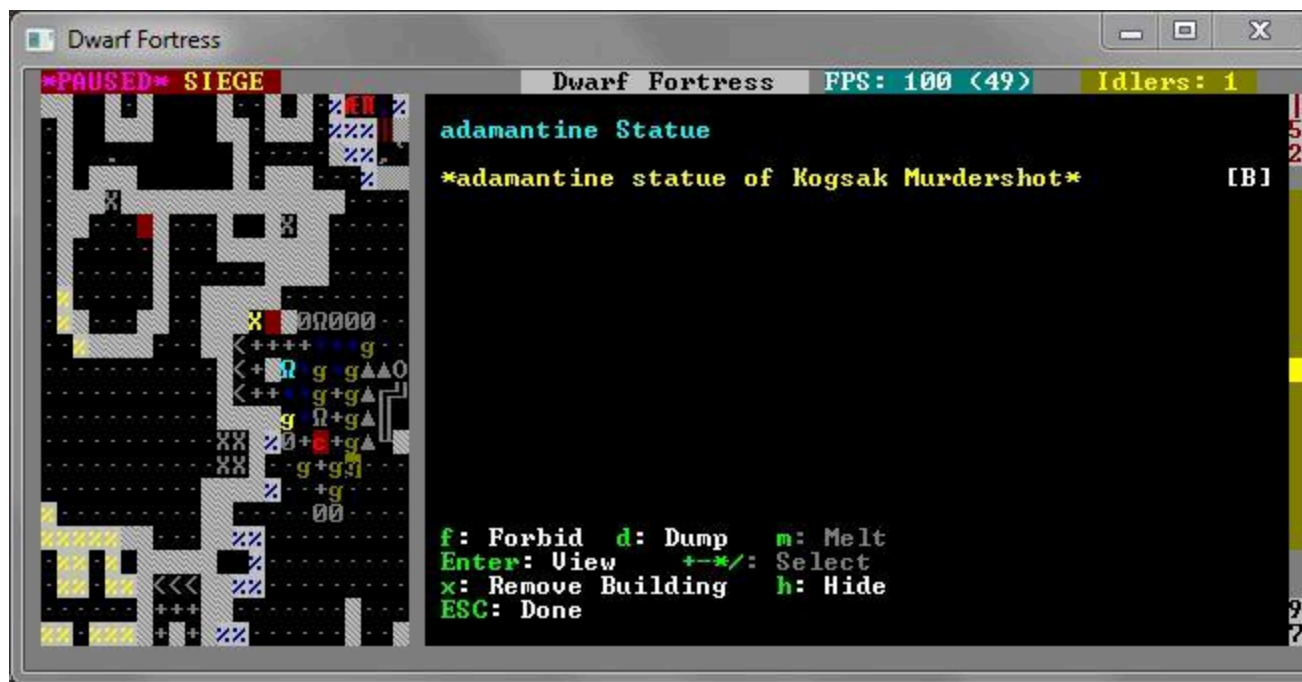
The invaders stood just beyond the doorway at the end of the tunnel, sputtering with fury at the open vastness of the grotto into which they had entered. Ahead and above them, concentric circles of alternating light and dark rock were dimly lit by a constantly shifting, deep red glow. The vast ceiling of the grotto was lit brighter and brighter as it stretched away into the void, eventually becoming a wall rather than a ceiling, but the source of the glow could not be seen - it was hidden from sight by the silhouette of some kind of massive rock formation, which stretched across the grotto.

Up above, however, the carved underside of a massive ring, supported by stone pillars, was lit from below by a circular pool of magma, clearly visible to the goblins. The pool was situated in the middle of a flat area, which the goblins could plainly see was polished - the reflection of the ceiling colored the entire top of the broad, central structure a constantly shifting red. And there, through the blackness, Damsto could see a multitude of the hated dwarves, as if gathered for some kind of meeting, each one a black silhouette against the glow. Without waiting any longer, urged his squad down the causeway and into the darkness.

The goblin's own torches had served them well in the mines so far, but from here, atop what was apparently some kind of high causeway, their light fell upon the dark void beyond the walkway and lit nothing. Both the vast wall behind them and the pillars supporting the causeway below them stretched away into the blackness after only a few dozen feet. Their torches' reflections shined in the polished rock beneath their boots. Occasionally, a goblin peeked over the edge of the causeway - and there, away in the blackness, was his own reflection in some black, still lake far below.



Soon, the invaders reached the bottom of the causeway, and the front of a massive rough-hewn facade rose up in the darkness before them. The causeway spread open into a broad ledge, lined on its edges with coffins, finely crafted of reflective obsidian. The floor was smooth - polished with the wear of countless dwarven feet through the years. Ahead, two doors led to an upward staircase immediately inside the structure, and around it were arrayed three statues. The two flanking statues were masterfully crafted of shining steel - dwarves striking menacing poses as they raised from the dead - but the statue in between the doorways was made of a brilliantly shining metal Damsto had only heard of in myths.



Damsto sneered at the statues. *Dwarves*. If he and his kind knew the secret of creating steel - let alone *adamantine* - they wouldn't use it to make something as wasteful as *statues*. The pikemaster looked the adamantine dwarf in the eye and spat at it. Each goblin in turn spat upon the statue as they passed through the doorways and into the monolithic structure.



Solon threw herself against the steel door, slamming it shut all the way - then she pulled the lock, sealing the door shut. There was no other way into or out of the lever room, and the steel doors were exceptionally crafted, and designed to withstand force. Well, there was one other way into the map room - but the chance of the goblins finding *that* way in was incredibly unlikely. She pulled herself into a sitting position against the door, sighed, and looked silently upon the miniature replica of the dome.

Beyond the stairs, inside the massive rock, the goblins found a large open area, though small enough to be lit by their torches. Ledge, ramps, and stairs connected various exits and entrances to the

smoothed, engraved floor 20 feet below them. Statues of what appeared to be giant eagles were placed here and there, interspersed between the long tables, lined with chairs. In the far corner, barely within the illumination of their torches, the floor was covered with small piles of bones.

Drawn by instinct, or a distinct dwarven scent, or some other hint of their quarry's location, the goblins creep to the north. They soon find themselves at a five-way junction - the founder's square. By now, Damsto has picked up the trail of one of the last dwarves. He rushes through the mezzanine of the red guildhall, making for the upper stairwell.



Onol Plaitorbs, stonemason lay asleep in bed, a few stories up, blissfully unaware of the dangers that he, along with mayor Tun Dyefight and the other merchants, had unleashed upon Weatherwires.



The pikemaster entered the room, and moved silently to the dwarf's bed. Three ghosts are mute witnesses to the stonemason's murder.



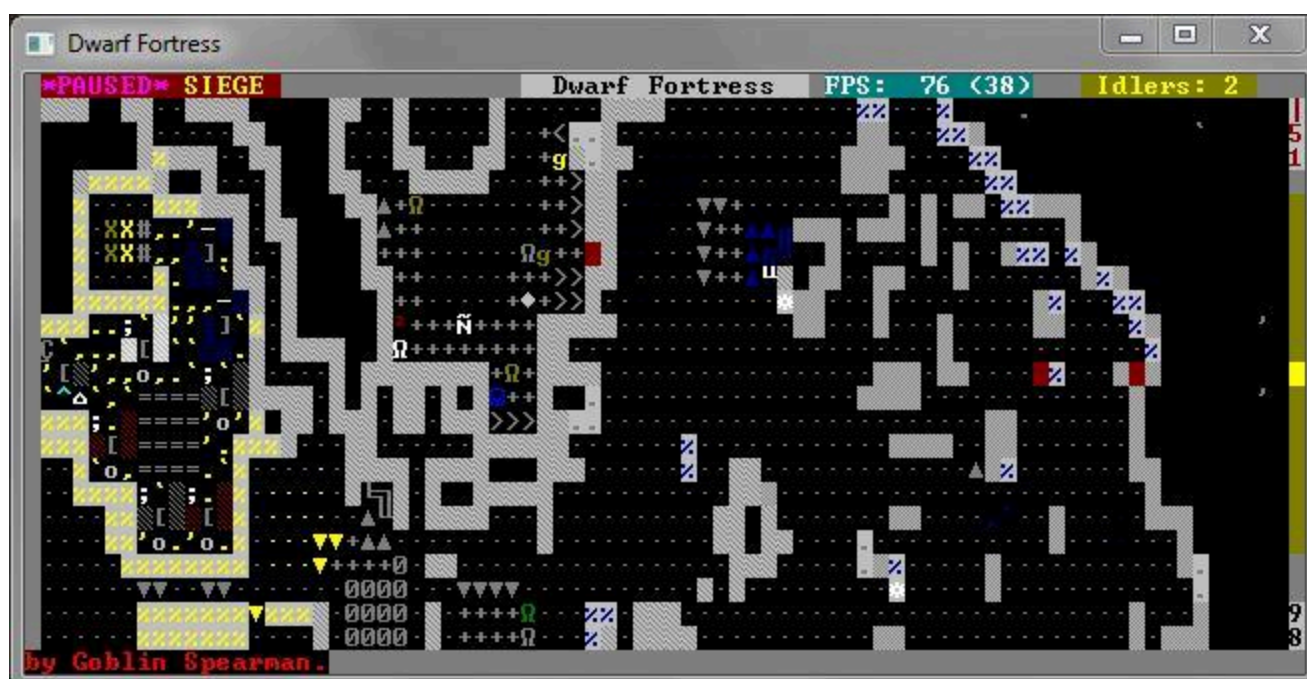
Mercifully, he is likely never aware of the goblin's presence. He will never awaken.



Down below, Damsto met Kutsmob Controlledseduced, the mace lord and third captain of the siege. Kutsmob had undoubtedly been following the same trail which led the pikemaster to the stonemaster, but Damsto quickly informs the mace lord of the killing. Having little idea where the final dwarves were, they decide to split forces - Damsto would head south, and Kutsmob up, to find any other denizens.



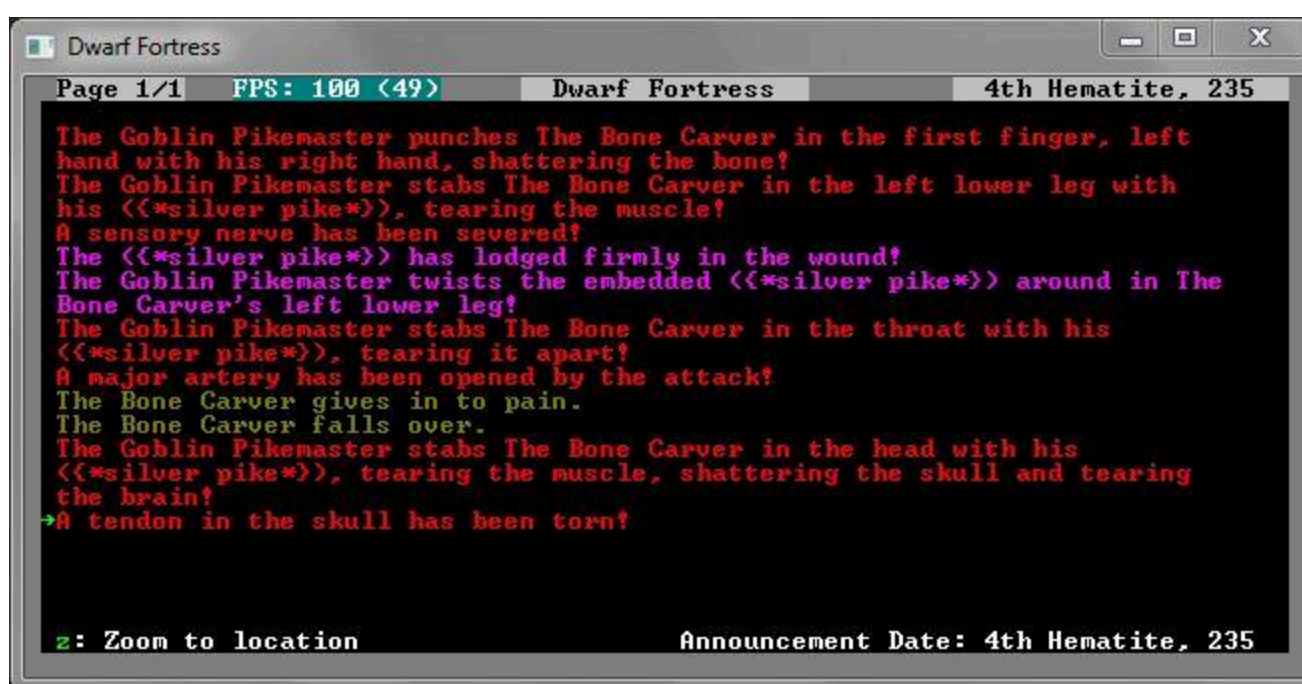
Just inside the large interior chamber, Damsto found another dwarf: Goden Mawknife, bone carver.



Goden turned and ran out of the south exit, and Damsto burst into a spring after him. They crossed a short causeway that led to a massive rock edifice, surrounded by spires of rock that rose from the darkness below and into the void above.



The much more agile pikemaster easily caught up to Goden. A deep stab with his silver pike to the dwarf's left lower leg brought his quarry to a stop, and another quick stab to the throat confirmed the kill.

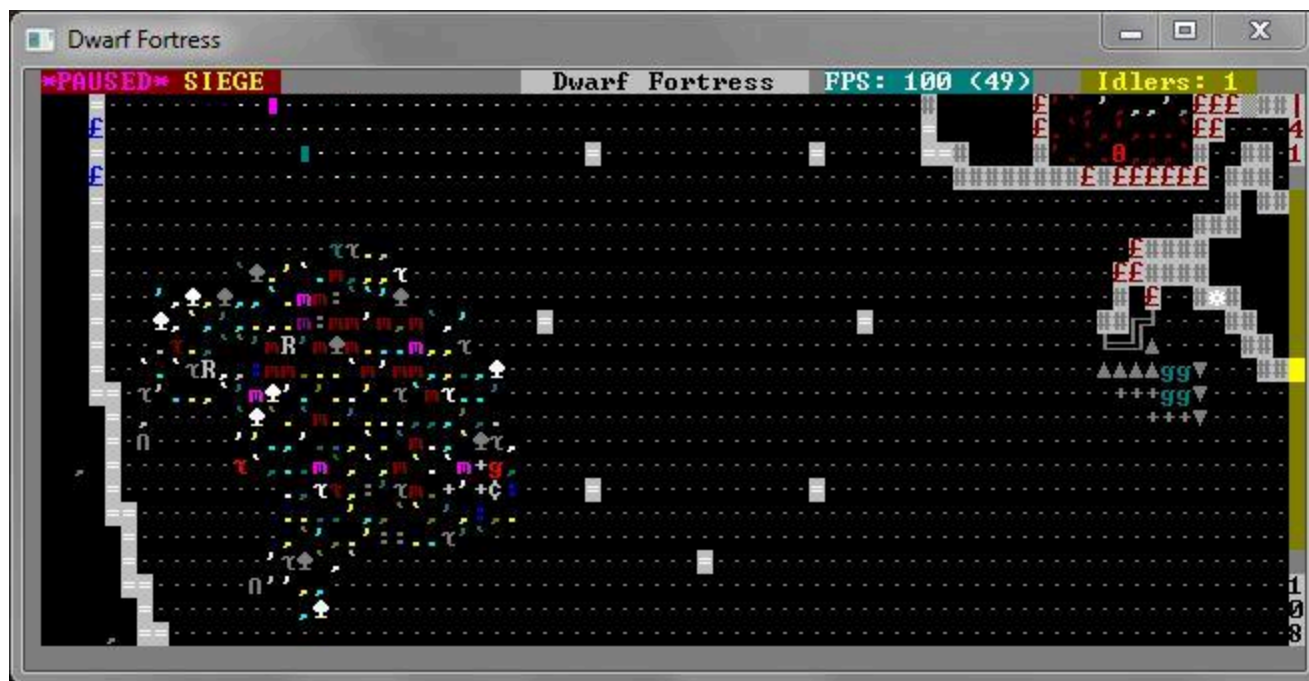


Goden collapsed against the lowest steps of the barracks, his throat gushing noisily out over the stairs. With a third stab to the skull, the pikemaster pierced the dwarf's brain. The gurgling noises ceased, and the grotto was silent.

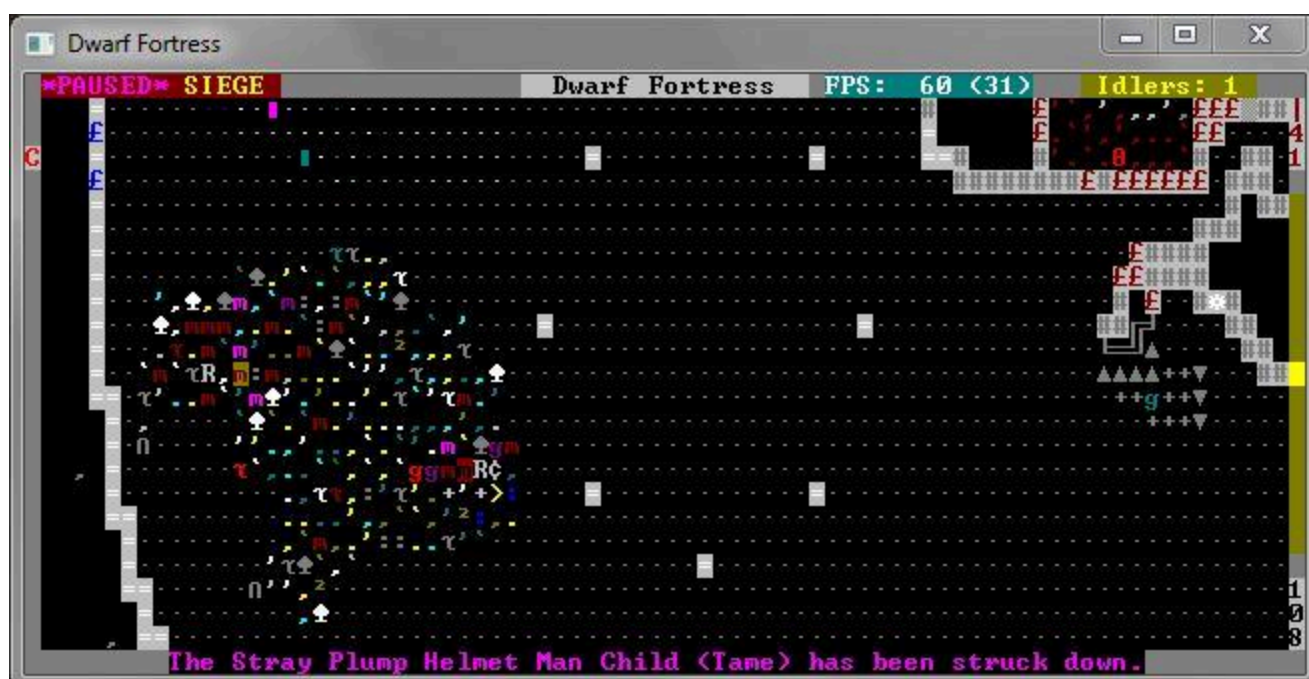


While Damsto and his spearmen ran down the bone carver outside the barracks, Kutsmob leads his squad up the stairs from the dining hall, to the top of the mesa. To their furious surprise, the dwarves they had seen when they first entered the dome - those silhouettes atop the dimly lit central structure - were in fact nothing more than a mass of statues, each one a finely crafted representation of a laboring dwarf.

They cursed and swore amongst each other, wondering where to search next, when their captain called their attention to the top of the nearby structure. Movement! Dwarves, perhaps, or some of their pets. The goblins rushed across the bridge that connected the two stone buildings, and climbed the stair that led to the roof.



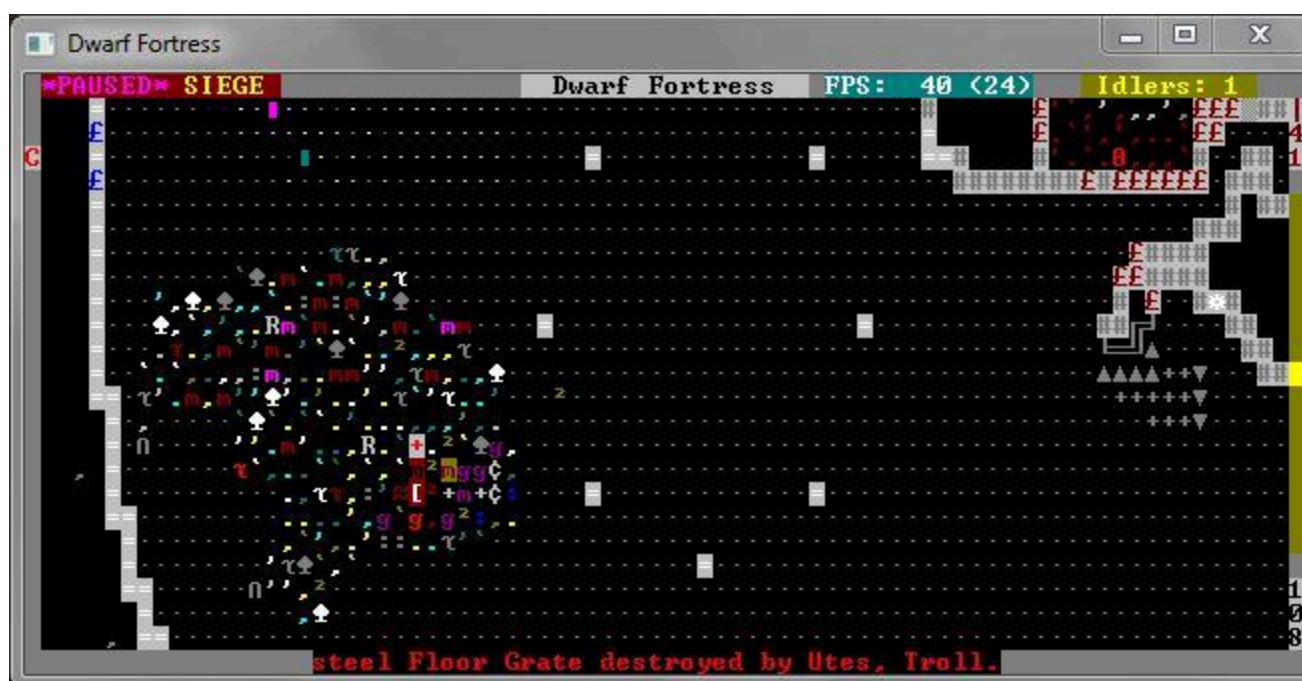
Kutsmob paused at the landing, the hatch held open, and stared out through the goblin-cap and tower-cap grove that covered the roof. There, scattering in fear at his appearance, was a large tribe of plump helmet men, over which towered two panicking rutherers. The mace lord grinned evilly and charged the nearest humanoid mushroom.



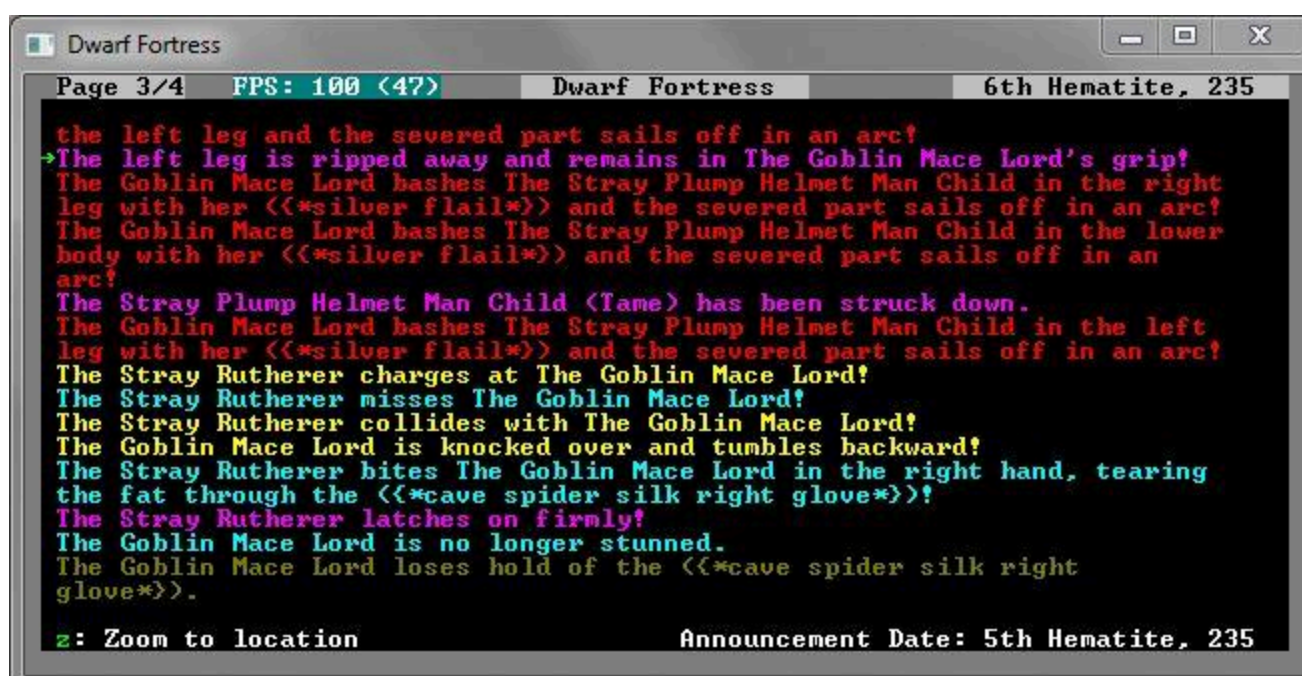
The rest of his squad charged up the stairwell and threw aside the grates. With various battle cries and curses, the hammermen charged into the fray, swinging at the mushroom folk with their hammers. With no bones, a single hammer strike to the arm or hand was enough to sever that appendage.



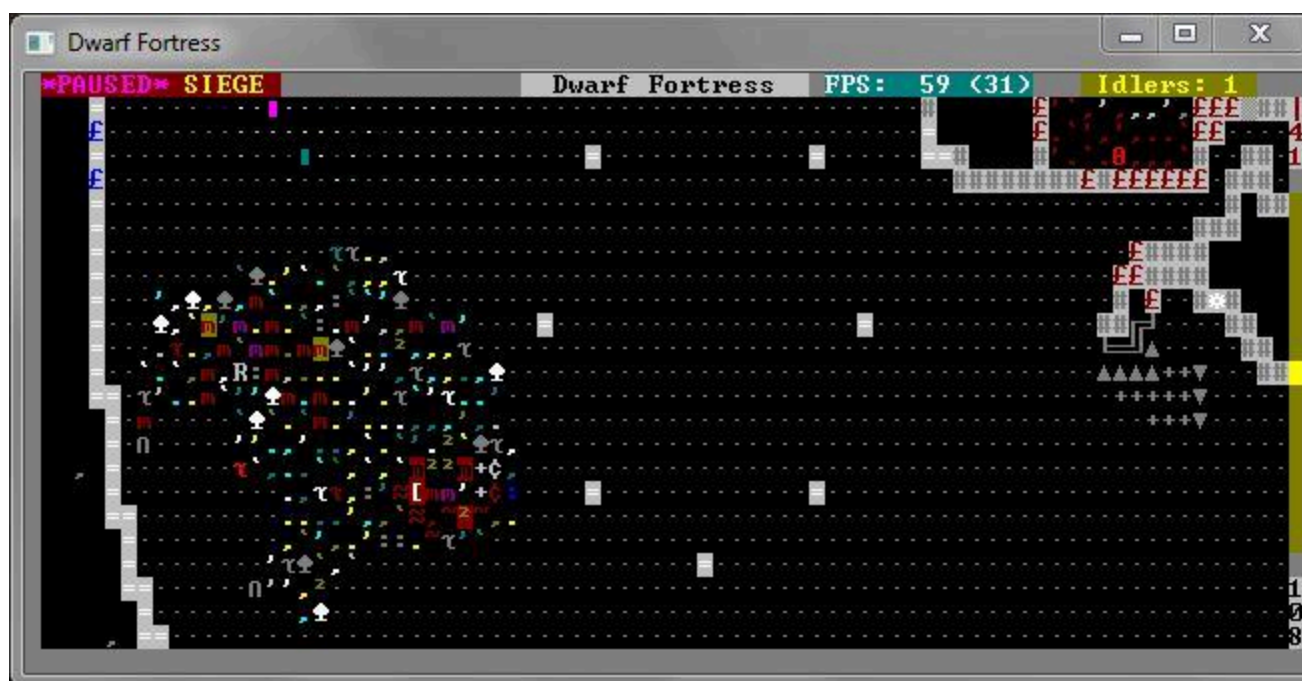
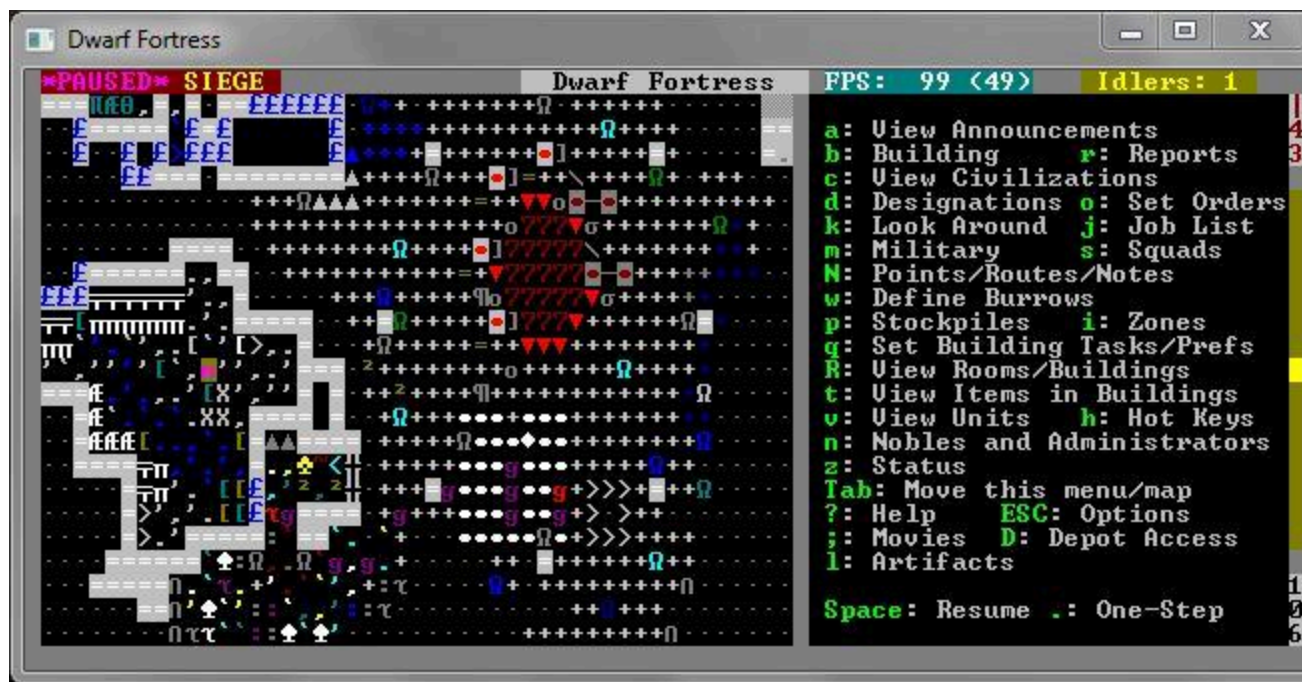
The plump helmet men gave no real resistance, being unable to land a single blow. None of the mushroom folk were skilled in any kind of combat, and merely ran frantically about the top of the guildhall like panicking animals. They were brilliant thinkers and philosophers, not warriors.



Kutsmob waded through the fray, bashing limbs off of several of the small humanoids with his silver flail, until he passed a little too close to one of the rutherers. The creature, though not trained for war, snapped at the mace lord, biting his right hand (with which he held his flail), and with a quick flick of its neck, tore the appendage free.



The silver flail clattered to the ground. Kutsmob gripped the stump of his right forearm, which was spraying blood all about, and howled a retreat. He disappeared down the stairwell, and his squad soon followed, withdrawing completely from the top of the guildhall without any further conflict. The mace lord flees from the dome, leading his squad back to the surface.



As Kutsmob the one-handed fled from the dome, followed by his squad in a hasty retreat, the other two goblin captains made their way to the summit of the black and white guildhall. Ago the axe lord laughed scornfully at the mace lord as they passed each other upon the serpentine causeway, and gave no heed to the defeated captain's warnings of a "killer rutherer."

After slaying the dwarf at the barracks, Damsto and his spearmen returned to the open-aired dining hall. After climbing another stairwell, they exited the mesa through a doorway to the southwest, and crossed a small bridge into the adjacent mezzanine.

They had crossed countless bridges like these, which crossed the narrow voids between the stone structures, the bottoms of which the torchlight could not reach. The bottom of this expanse, however, was visible as a constantly shifting lake of magma, which lit the entire western half of the dome from below.

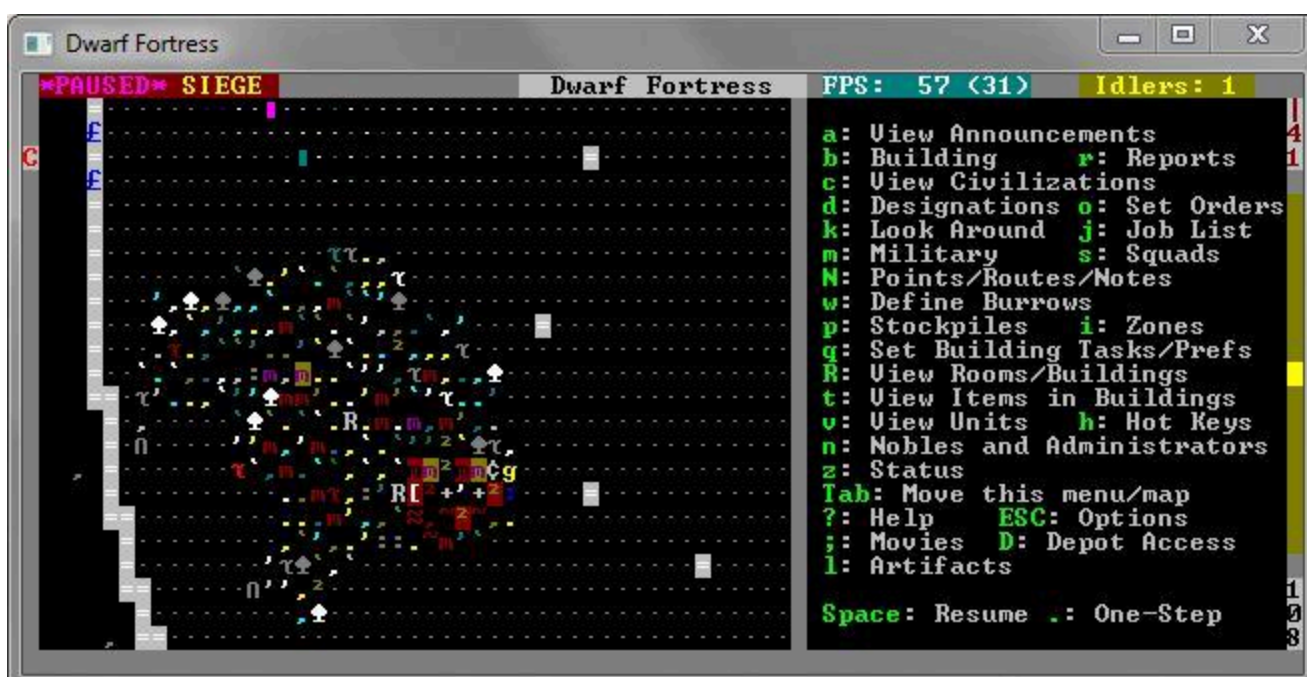


The pikemaster ascended the stairs, passing by clusters of apartments which reeked faintly of dwarves - none of them had lived here recently. He reached another dining hall, furnished with tables and chairs crafted out of hard, white fungus. Damsto spat. Fungus - the dwarves loved it, but the goblins hated it.

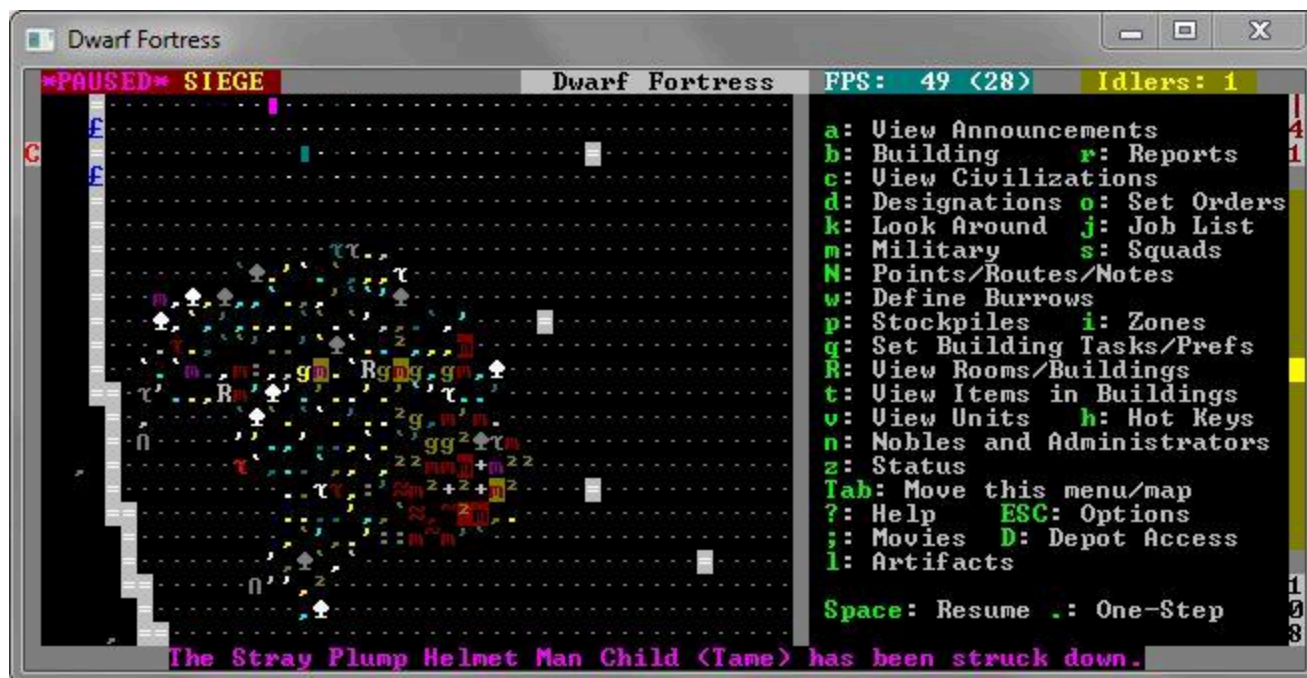
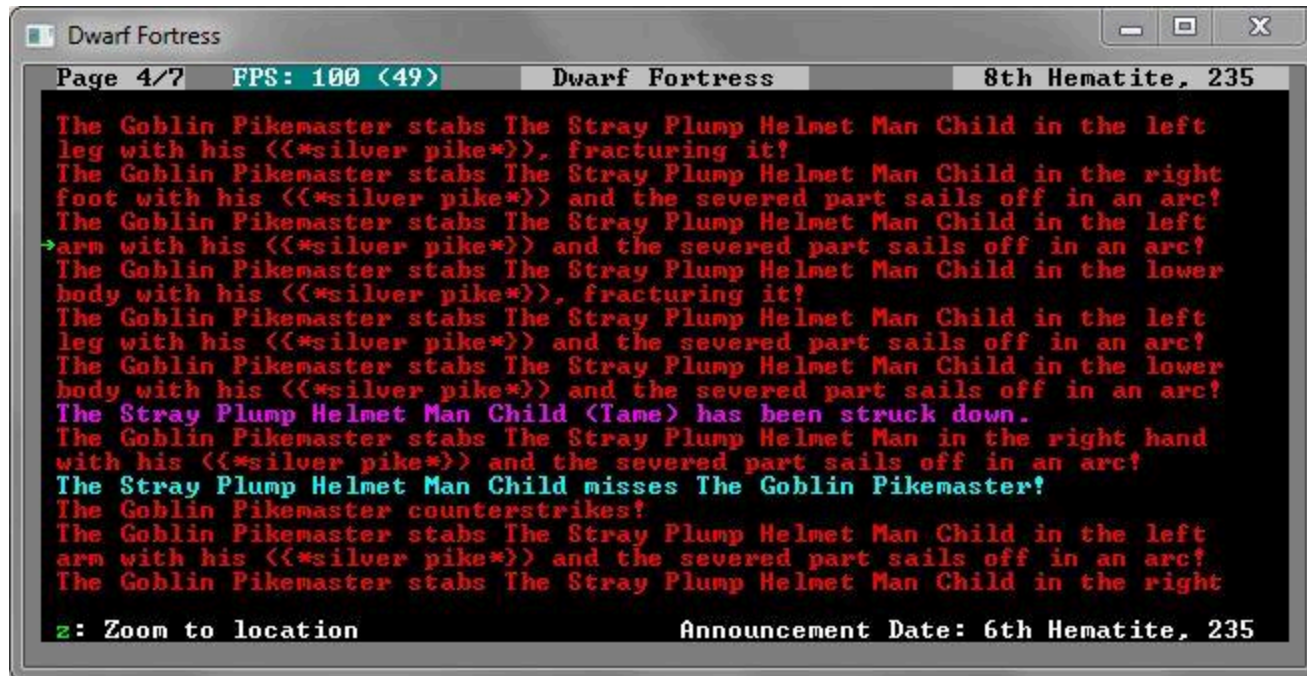
He left the dining hall through a side passage, went down a ramp, and stood in a moss-covered archway. Beyond was the empty void, lit dimly with magmalight - he was atop one of the structures, Damsto knew. But to the left, inside, was a staircase that went up - a staircase still wet with goblin blood. Reaching his pike, the captain ascended the stairs.



The plump helmet man scattered as the pike master, the tip of his weapon still dripping dwarf blood, emerged from the steel hatch. He cackled - the mace lord had been defeated by mushroom folk and beasts of burden!



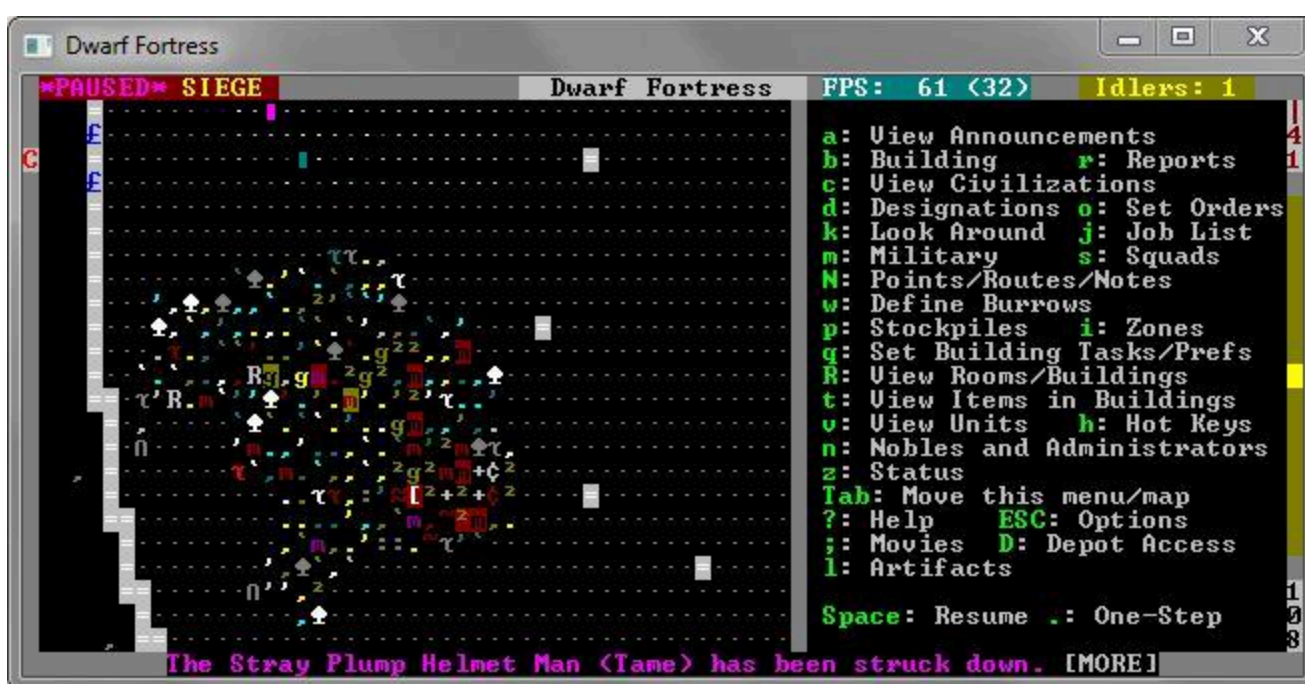
Without wasting any more time ridiculing Kutsmob, the pikemaster dove in amongst the plump helmet men, cutting a swath through them with his silver pike. His squad climbed up through the hatches after him, and began driving the small humanoids about, cutting off their limbs before finally delivering the killing blow.



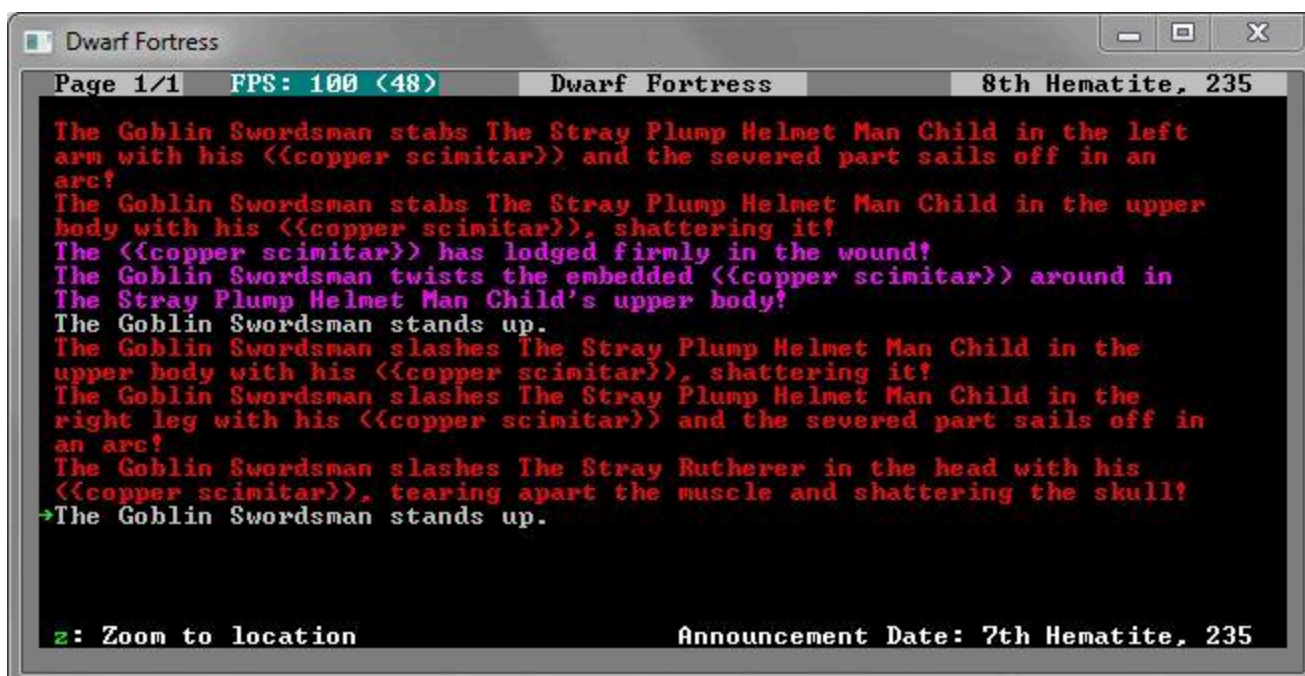
One spearman bull rushed a child, and the diminutive mushroom person, already missing an arm and a leg, tumbled backwards over the edge of the guildhall. The poor creature fell quickly by another squad of goblins - Ago Incestchained and his swordsmen - before disappearing into the crack between the buildings. She plummeted into the magma lake, and was incinerated.



By the time Ago and his squad reached the summit of the building, there was little left to be done. Dismembered arms and legs, all purple and lacking fingers or toes, littered the top of the structure. The few remaining plump helmet man ran, panicked and helpless, from tree to tree, desperately hoping to find some sort of cover. There was none.

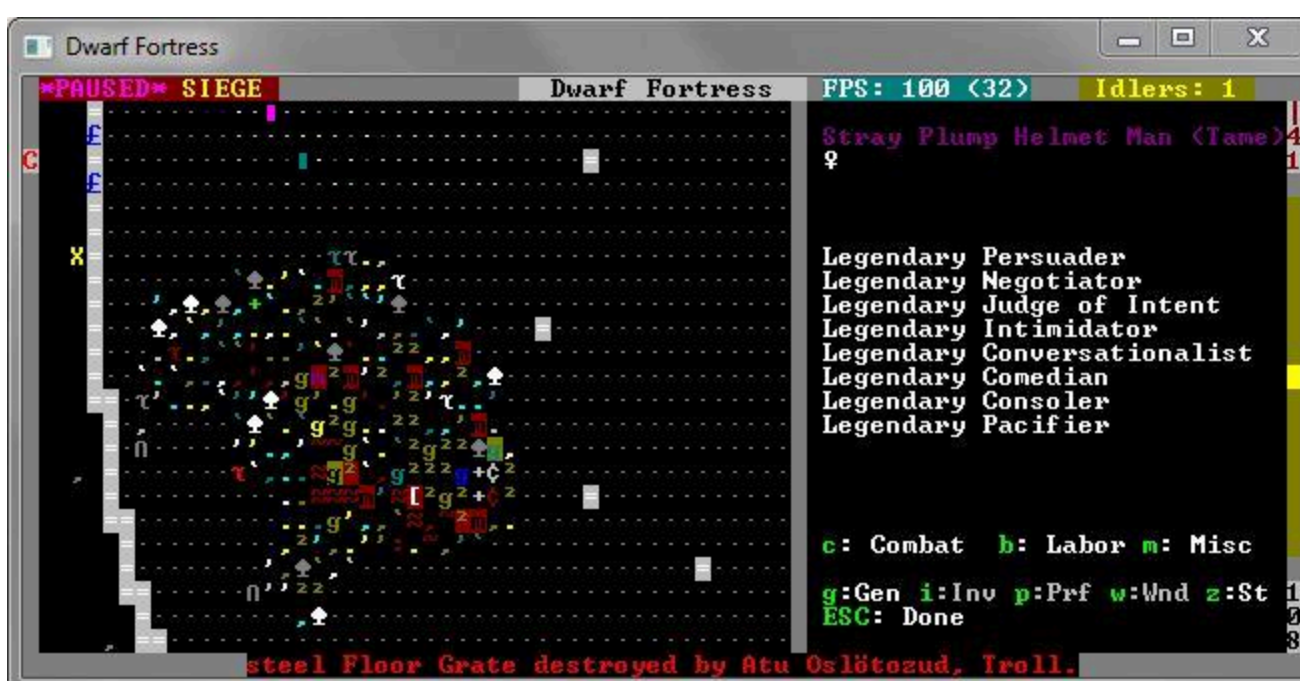


The goblins descended upon the last few mushroom folk, slaughtering them without mercy. There were no warriors amongst their victims who fought back, no resistance given. They fell quickly and offered no battle.





Soon, there was only one left - one of the legendary thinkers and socialites of the plump helmet folk, one of the original few who were captured and tamed before 226.



Her legendary skills are of no use to her now. If she could speak, or the goblins could interpret her spore-language, they might have some common ground, some way to communicate - but alas, there is no way to negotiate with these invaders. Perhaps, in her final moments, this great mind finds some kind of peace, some way to cope with her rapidly approaching demise - if she does, we will never know.

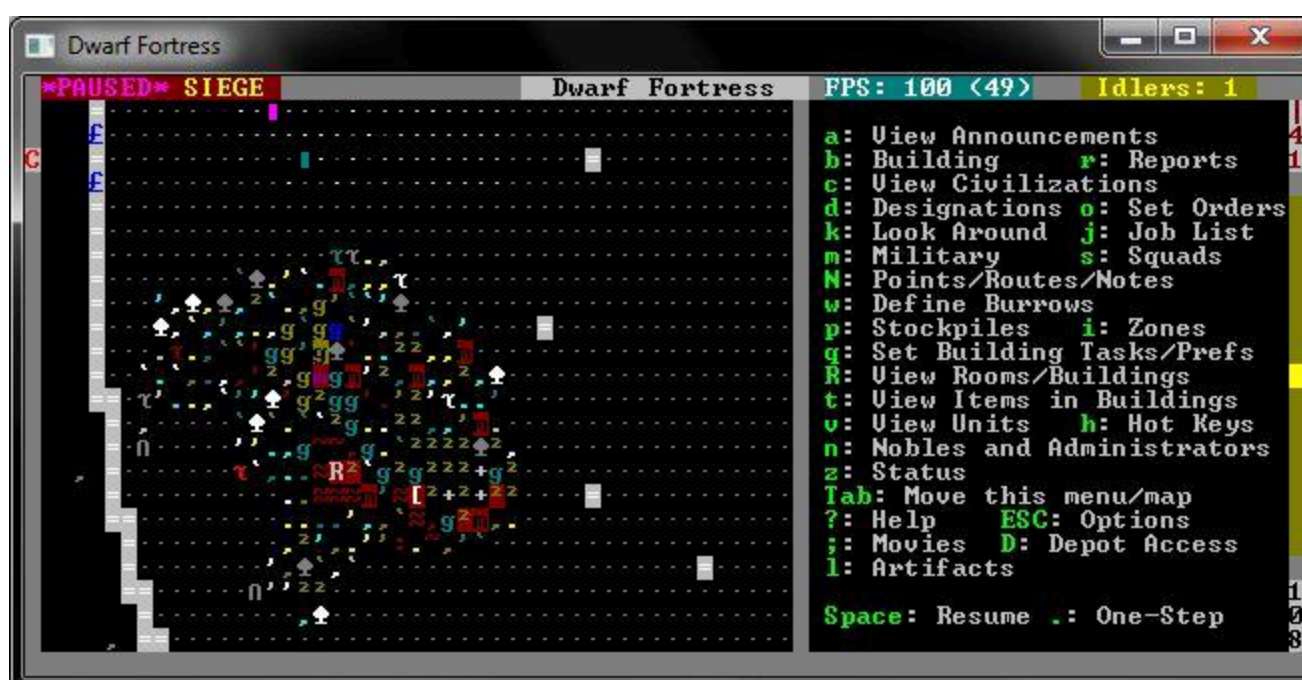
The crowd of warriors surround the plump helmet woman, striking repeatedly until all that remains is a pile of finely minced plump helmet.



The goblins stood victorious atop the black and white guildhall, amidst piles of plump helmet tissue and rutherer blood. The dome echoed with evil laughter and the clang of weapons against shields.

They are all likely unaware that they have slaughtered those who would have been the heirs to the dwarves' legacy - though, if they knew the importance of the plump helmet men, and their unique talents, they would have surely sought them out first, upon entering the dome. It is, ultimately, a moot point - the nascent tribe of brilliant, yet innocent plump helmet men, which showed such promise in its infancy, has been snuffed out. Their demise is just one more instance of the cruel hand of fate dealing a callous blow to the accursed fortress.

So it goes, in Weatherwires.



The two captains met and discussed their next move, but neither had any good plan - they were baffled. They were sure there was a dwarf in the fortress, somewhere - their intuition, born out of a natural hatred for dwarves, confirmed this - but they had no idea where it was.



Solon Townclenched silently sat in the map room, her back against one of the mighty steel doors. She was not alone. No less than 21 ghosts floated about her, keeping a grim company with the last dwarf. Among them were many merchants, who she knew in life. Others were merchant guards who had died on the surface, their bodies left to rot by the dwarves of Weatherwires. Soon, she knew, she would join them.

The last dwarf of the Merchant of Echoing sighed and looked out upon the miniature replica of the dome city before her. She was sure that the goblins had found their way into the dome, and had slain her comrades. Her only hope was that the caldera would refill before they could turn and escape - that they too would be caught forever in this haunted dome.

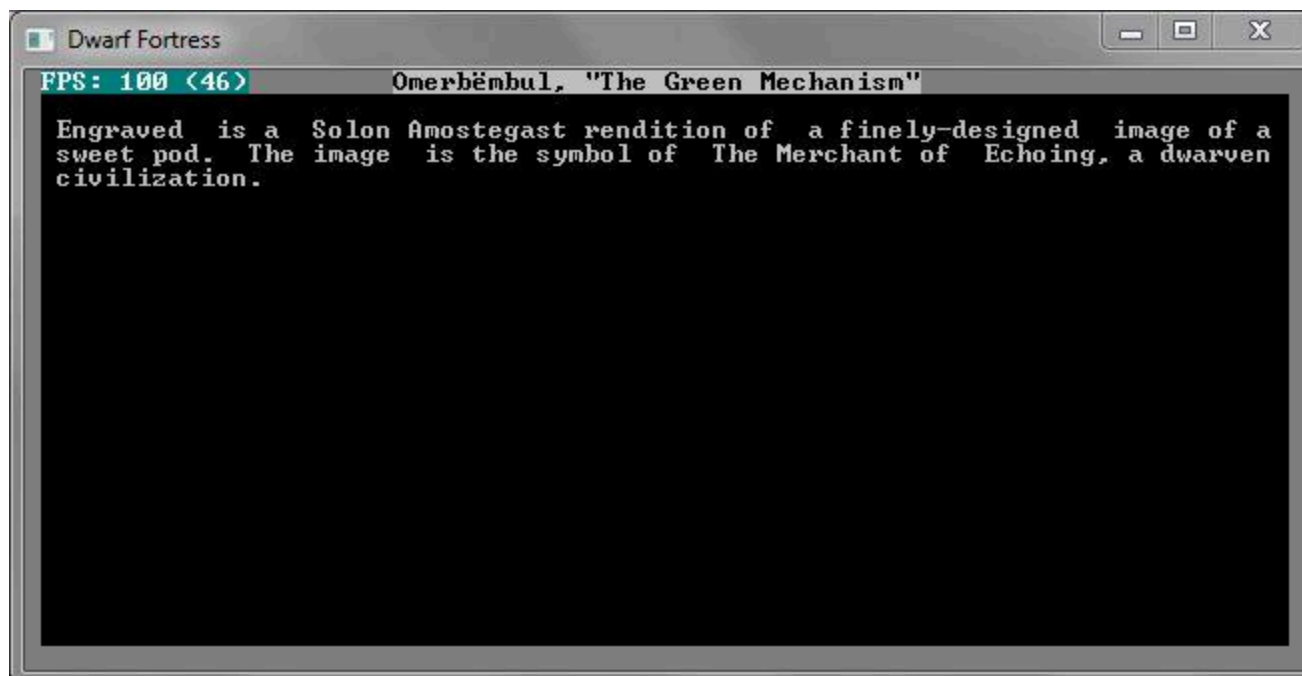
But then, that would hardly change things for the dwarves. As her stomach began to rumble with hunger, Solon reflected upon the fact that, whether or not the goblins were trapped in Weatherwires, her story would end here, in the map room. Nobody would ever know of these final days - unless she recorded it. She pulled herself away from the door and crawled down the ramp, towards the southern exit. Behind that door was a long passageway that led to a dead-end. It was the backdoor route of the fortress, which had only been used when the dome had been filled with magma, and the primary exit had been inaccessible. Now, the only way into that alternate passage was from the map room, or (if one pulled the right levers) from the citadel. But the goblins would not find that route, she was sure.

Solon pushed aside the steel door and crawled into the long hallway. Years ago, as a way for the engravers to hone their skills, the floors and walls of the passage had been smoothed - but they had never been engraved. Although she had no skill at detailing stone, and it was likely that she would die of starvation before her tale was complete, she was surprisingly content.

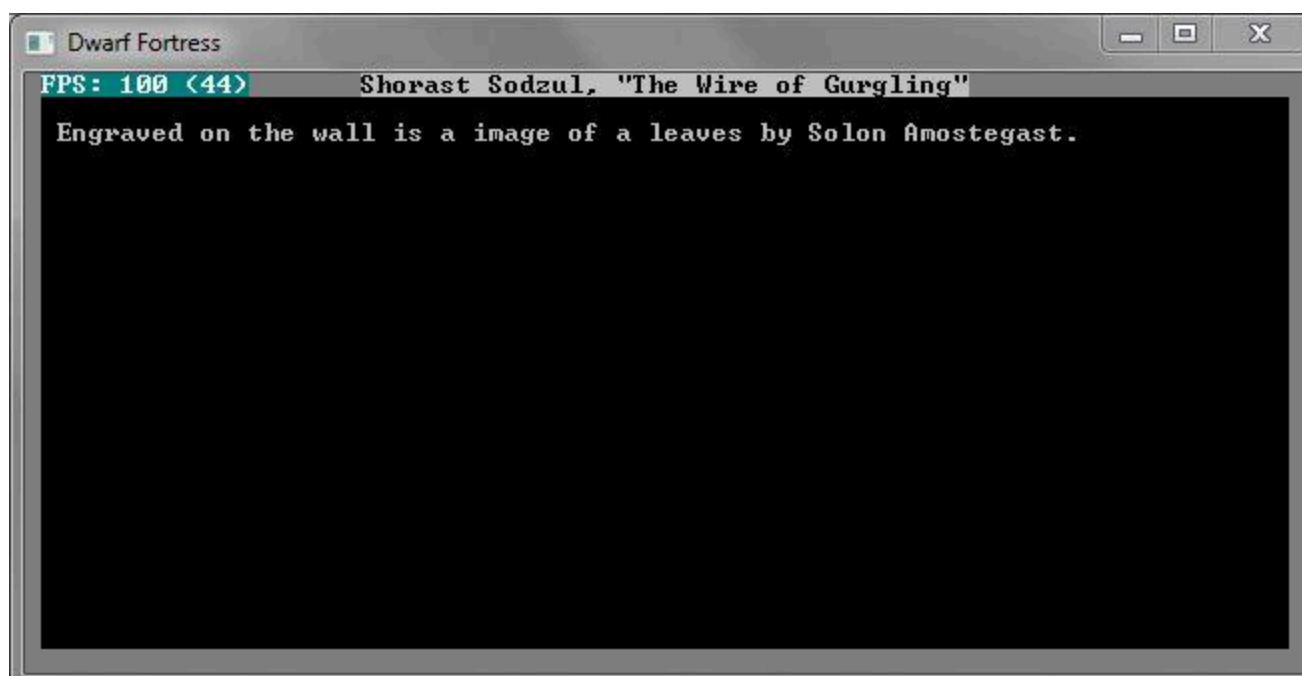
She was getting used to tragedy.



Possessing no skill at engraving, and constantly distracted by the ravenous hunger growing in her belly, Solon spent hours etching each panel of her last testament into hallway's smooth walls. The resulting images are crude, of the most meager crafts dwarfship, and bear little outward connection to one another. The first two engravings are of sweet pods, and obviously reference the sigil of the Merchant of Echoing.



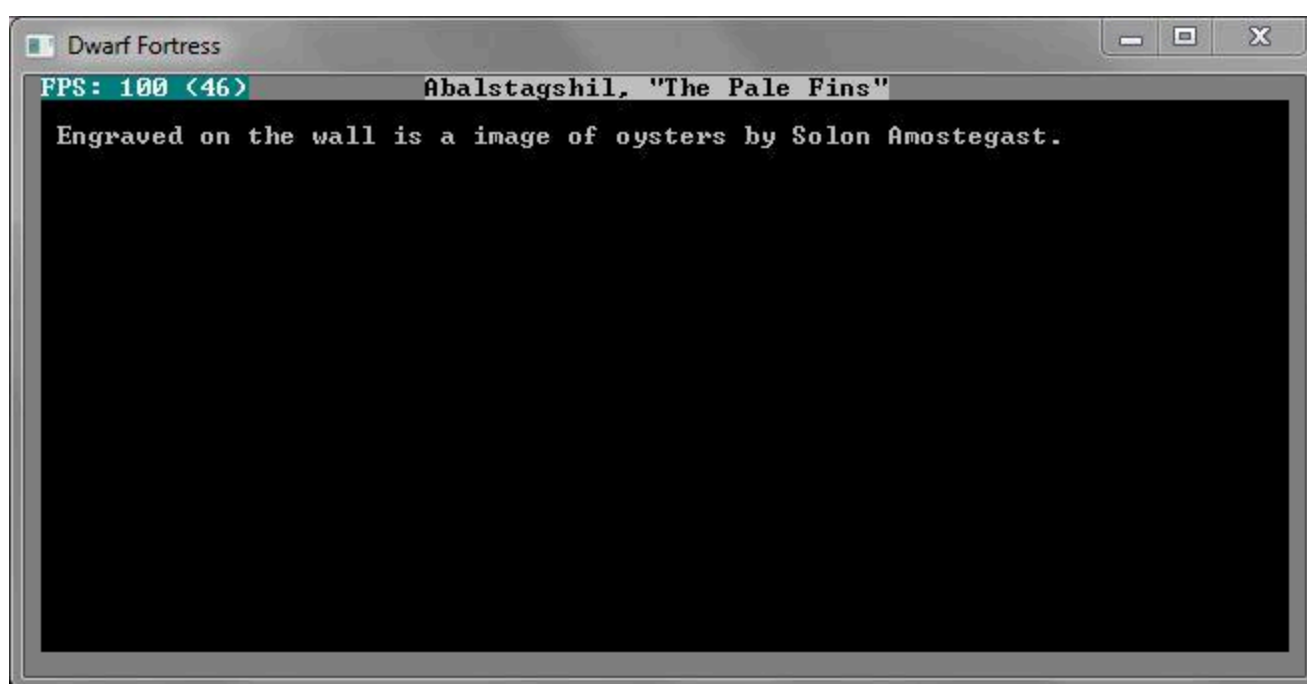
The other engravings - leaves, dwarves, oysters, a shield - are more difficult to interpret. What meaning is contained in these four other images, in the context they hold with one another?



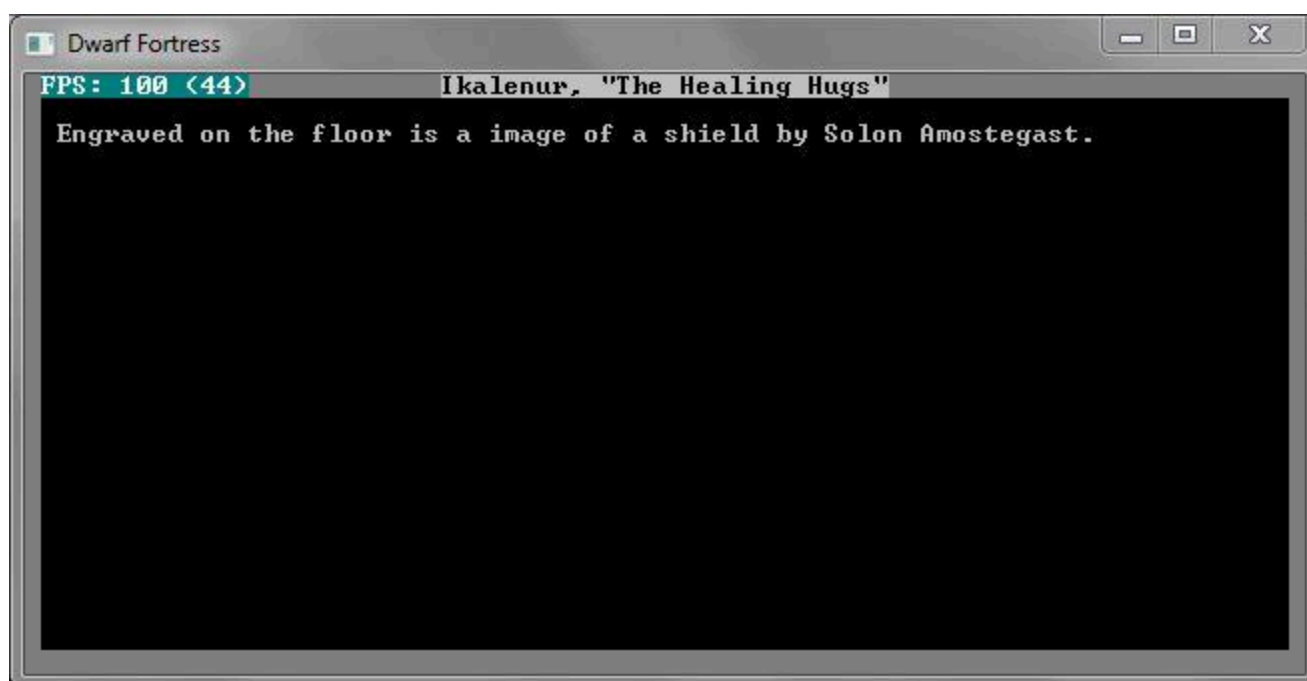
Two engravings - the dwarves and the shield - Solon etched into the floor. The others - the oysters and the leaves - were engraved into the walls on either side. They form no linear connection, either spatial or temporal, with one another.



There can be no literal interpretation of the engravings - indeed, as Solon no doubt realized, there will most likely be no interpretation at all. Perhaps, in the distant future, some bold adventurer will find the hidden path into the depths of Weatherwires, and by chance come to find the lever room - it is only a hope, faint and dim, but it is all Solon has left.



Taken as a whole, the images are an indecipherable pictogram - a confusing and jumbled impression of the last thoughts of Solon Townclenched, the very last dwarf, who had never attempted to make an engraving in her entire life. In her engravings, Solon might have vainly sought to capture some kind of story, to inform posterity of the ultimate fate of Weatherwires. Or, perhaps, they are a scrambled flow of metaphorical images; the emotions of the last member of a species, soon to be extinct, caught in abstract form.



Before she can finish a seventh engraving, Solon's hunger becomes too much to bear. The dwarf gives up on the final engravings, and returns to the lever room, searching in vain for some kind of sustenance.



The last engraving is left vague and unfinished - a tiny mystery in the midst of of an ocean of tragedy.

Overcome by hunger, Solon crawled about the lever room, desperately trying to find any vermin that, by some chance, might have gotten lost in the tunnels and been trapped in the map room with her. Of course, there were none - the room is sealed in all directions, hewn out of solid rock, and has no weaknesses. Just as Solon had sealed herself in, safe against the goblins, she had sealed her fate. She had known, when she locked the heavy, steel doors, that she would suffer a slow death by starvation.

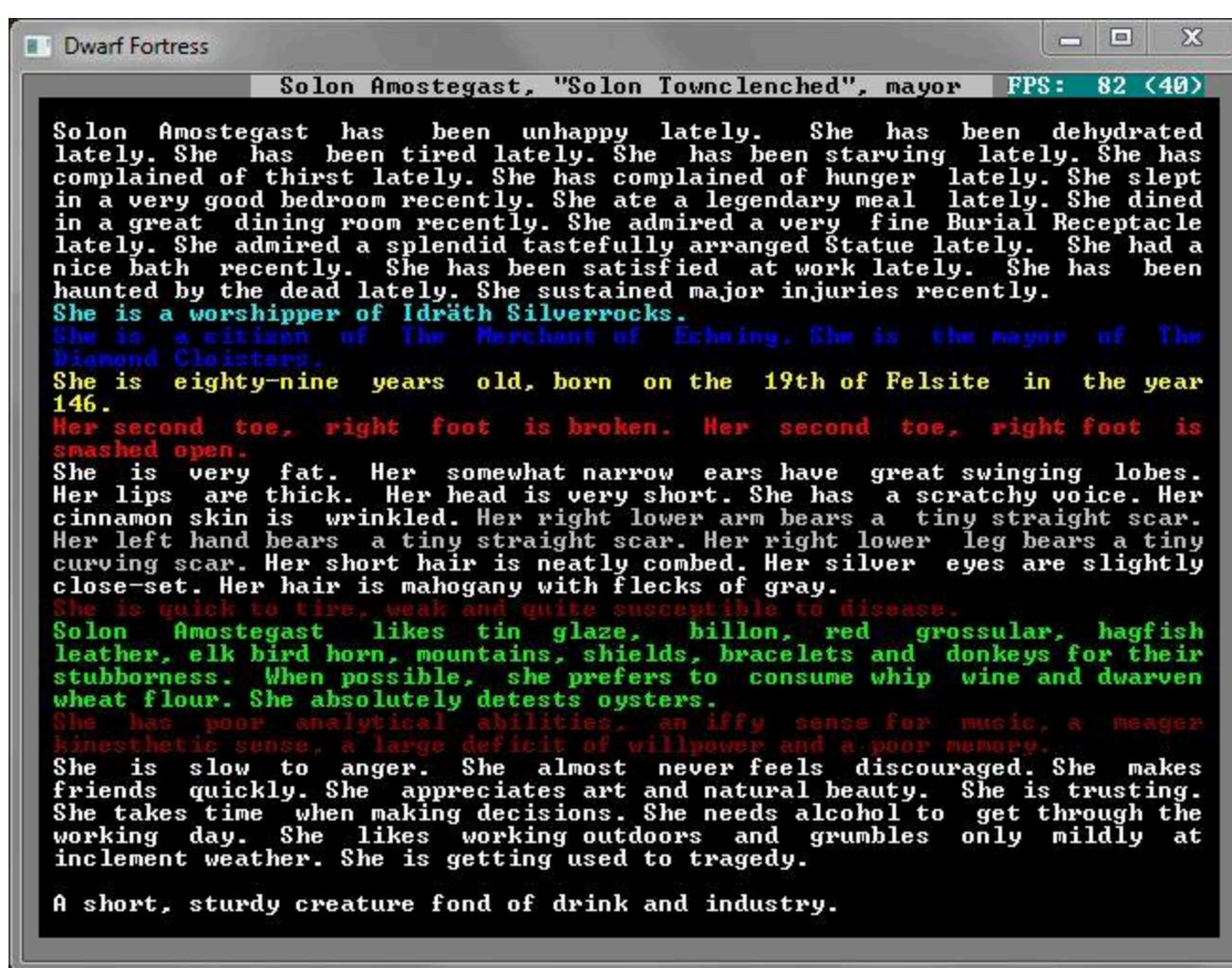
But, at this point, she must figure that it can't hurt to look.



About her, a morose audience of ghosts hold a silent vigil during the ultimate crumbling of the Merchant of Echoing. A dozen spirits still hang about in the smoothed hallway, studying and judging Solon's final, graven testament. It is likely that these restless spirits are doomed to be the only entities who see these disjointed images - oddly fitting, as the ghosts of Weatherwires will have all of eternity to consider the mysterious pictogram.



In her final hours, Solon grows increasingly unhappy. Undoubtedly made unbearable by the catalyst of her withering hunger, the weight and stress of bearing the entire Merchant of Echoing upon her shoulders begins to grind down the merchant's mind. She knows that the ghosts, gathered in an audience around her, are only here to witness her slow and inevitable death.



What thoughts run through the head of the last dwarf in her final moments? Does she consider how things might have gone differently - if mayor Tun had not engineered their ill-fated escape attempt, or if the adamantine spire had never been breached, or if she had never agreed to submit to the Diamond Cloisters in the first place? Perhaps she contemplates the nature of the myriad curses, laid thick upon the dwarves of Weatherwires, which had begun even before she had joined the fortress? Did some malign intelligence intend for her to suffer with the Diamond Cloisters, or was this long, agonizing demise in the dark simply a grand accident, set off when she first arrived at the fortress decades ago?

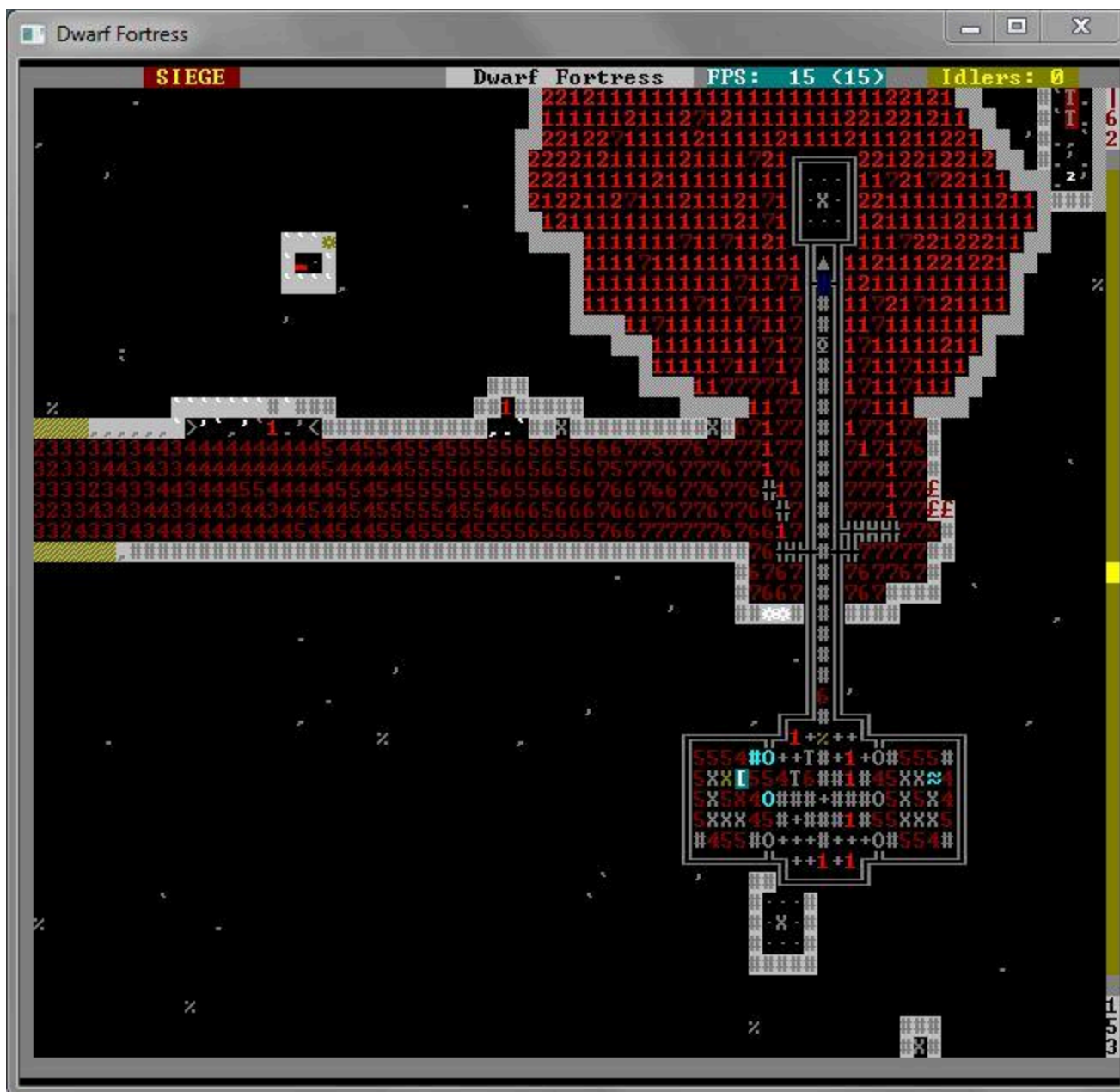
The answers escape her. Like so many of her fellow dwarves, gathered around her even now, Solon Townclenched will have all of eternity to consider the doom of Weatherwires.



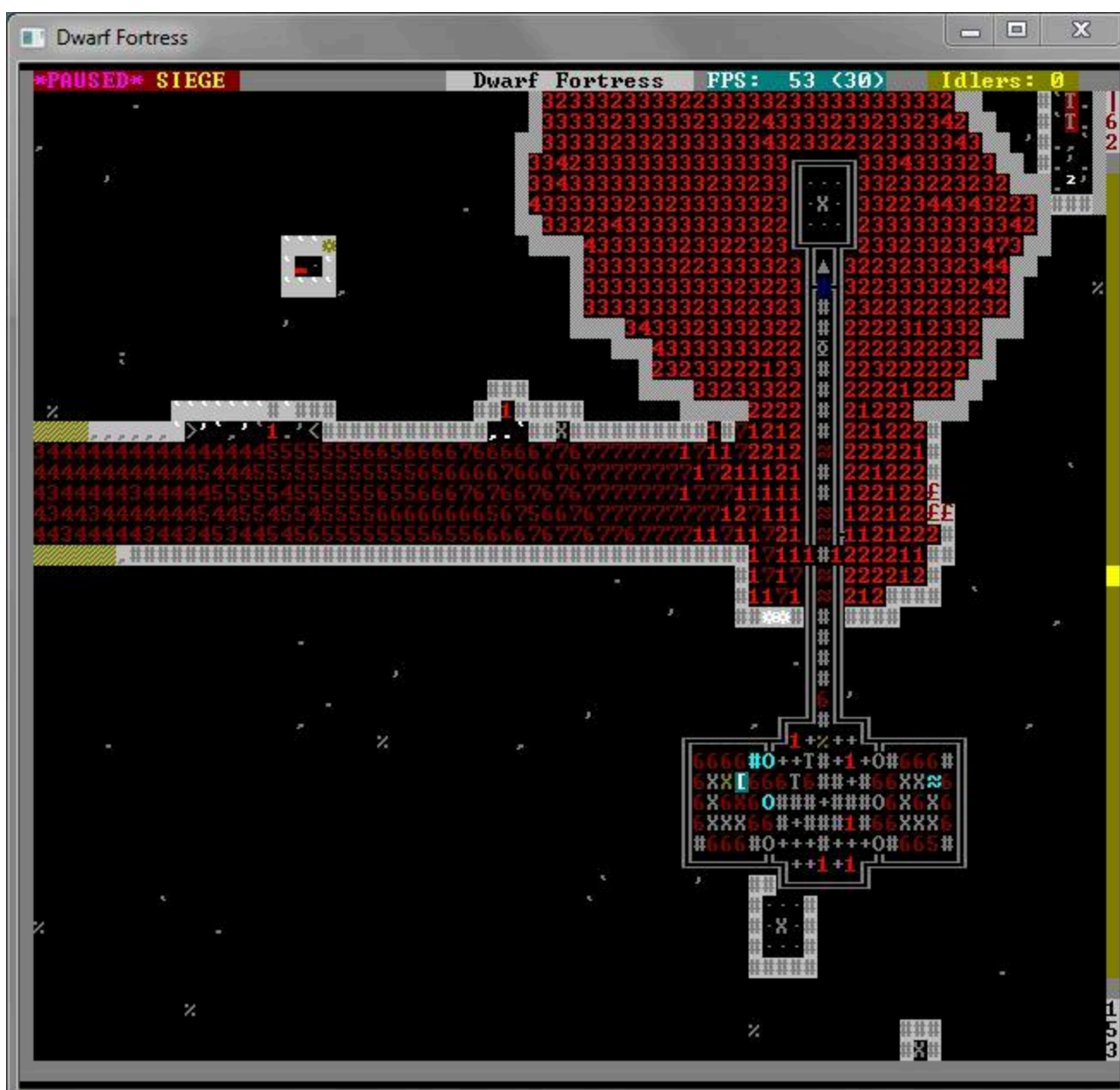
The ghosts watched the last dwarf crawl slower and slower, and then finally stop. The sound of labored, exhausted breathing gradually faded into a heavy, crushing silence, and the merchant's body moved no more.



The goblins knew immediately that they were alone in the dome. The sealed passage through which they had come, however, was now closed to them - although, not because of the efforts of the late Solon Townclenched.

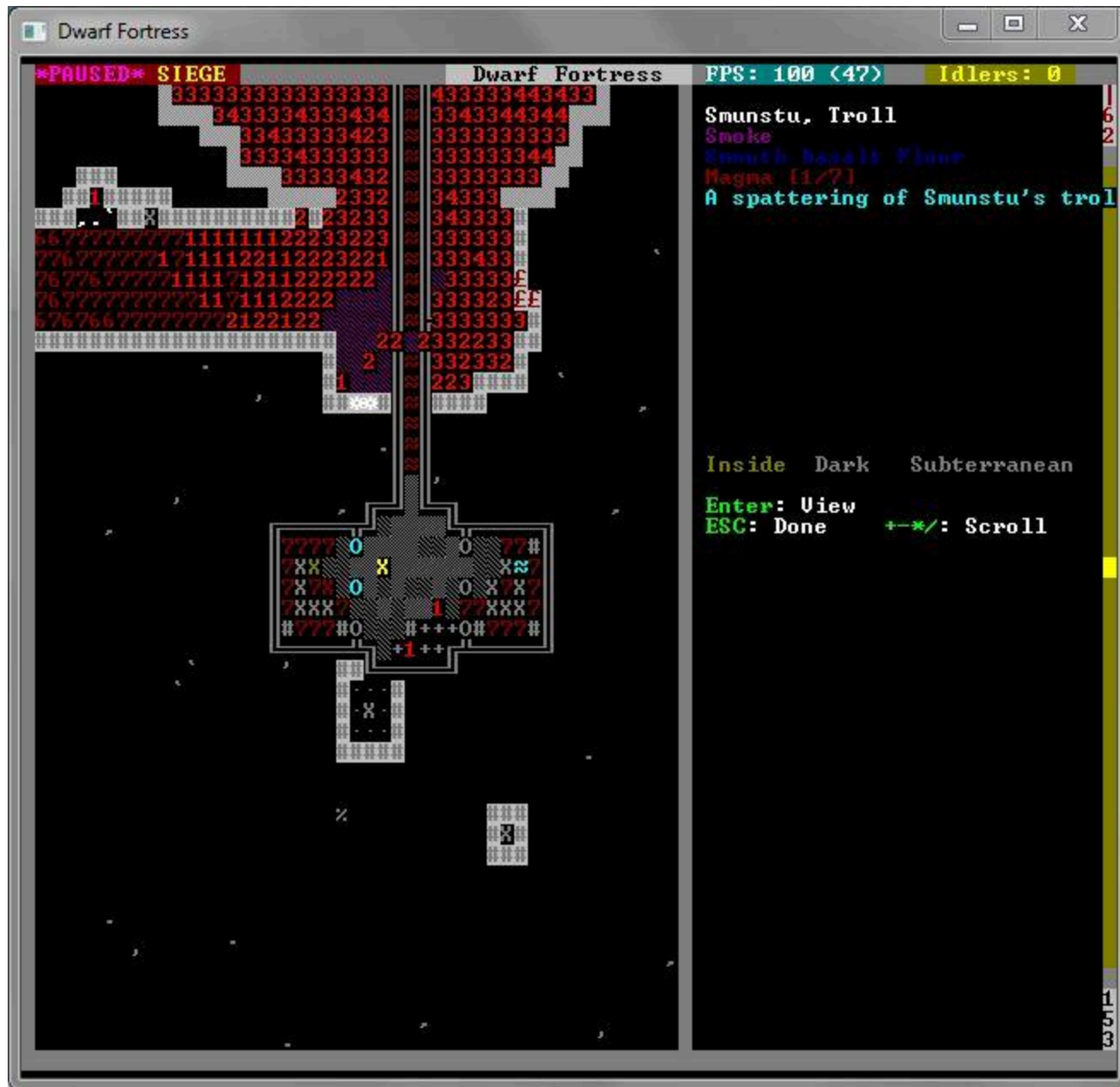


Far above, in the chamber that, until recently, been filled with magma, the trolls had wreaked havoc upon the dwarves' masterful designs. The steel grates, which had once covered the floors and allowed the molten rock of the nearby volcano to easily flow in and out of the chamber, had been mostly torn apart.



Of course, the trolls, in their infinite stupidity, neglected to leave an escape route for themselves, let alone their goblin overlords who they had unwittingly trapped in the deeps. As the lava of the volcano gradually rose to its former position, the chamber was slowly flooded. The dwarves claimed one more

tiny victory as magma splashed across the feet of Song Sinfulpraises, the troll that indirectly slew Èzum Openeddoors the Robust Stoker of Lances. The beast howled in pain as his lower legs burnt away, and then collapsed into a shallow pool of molten rock.



As the only exit slowly filled with magma, the goblins stood idly atop the guildhall. The remains of the plump helmet men had rotted away to nothing, but still, they did not move. The enemy was defeated, but also still remained, after a fashion. The only dwarves left in the fortress were a scattered army of ghosts, wielding incorporeal weapons and armor, mutely defending spectral citizens - a grim mirror of what the Diamond Cloisters once was, or might have been.

In the beginning, the duke Kogsak Murdershot ordered the construction of the dome so that it might one day be a utopia, a perfect home for the dwarves to reside in until the end of time. Neither the duke nor his family, who rest safe in their coffins, will ever witness the final state of his beloved dome - unlike the spectral masses who still inhabit the fortress. For those who were immolated in magma or fell into a swirling vortex of abyssal light; for those whose bodies lie forgotten in walled-off tunnels or sealed chambers; for those who suffered any of the innumerable fates which befell the fortress in those last few decades, yet were honored with no memorial and forgotten by the living; for these unfortunate souls, their unlife in the dome, amidst the various triumphs and tragedies of their once-great race, is an endless torture from which there will be no relief.


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Dwarf Fortress
FPS: 100 <47> Dwarf Fortress
Id Sibrekdakas, Ghostly Merchant Undead
Dishmah Gusilniral, Ghostly Merchant Undead
Dastot Fashatir, Ghostly Merchant Undead
iton Egenmörul, Ghostly Hammerdwarf Undead
Shem Lorbamothsin, Ghostly Hammerdwarf Undead
Uucar Razesoddom, Ghostly Hammerdwarf Undead
Kib Unibish, Ghostly Hammerdwarf Undead
Iden Farashdakost, Ghostly Hammerdwarf Undead
Mato Smozstosbüb, Goblin Hammerman Invader
Tulon Mözirsazir, Ghostly Speardwarf Undead
Monom Desisoslan, Ghostly Speardwarf Undead
Tosid Udilrab, Ghostly Speardwarf Undead
Momuz Inethrithlut, Ghostly Speardwarf Undead
Dostngosp Asugozru, Goblin Spearman Invader
Olgö Sukcusmarstruk, Goblin Spearman Invader
Amxu Urarostrul, Goblin Spearman Invader
Stozu Azstrogdongdu, Goblin Spearman Invader
Üsbu Smunstuusplöl, Goblin Spearman Invader
Üsbu Nakomoslol, Goblin Spearman Invader
v: ViewCre, c: Zoom-Cre, b: Zoom-Bld, m: Manager, r: Remv Cre

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Dwarf Fortress
FPS: 99 <47> Dwarf Fortress
Ngokang Arstrukanketh, Goblin Spearman Invader
Ngoso Doxonstosbüb, Goblin Spearman Invader
Ngoso Zolaknonu, Goblin Spearman Invader
Zolak Utesakon, Goblin Spearman Invader
Stozu Masnämazstrog, Goblin Spearman Invader
Osnun Stuxulurar, Goblin Spearman Invader
Ngerxung Enutes, Goblin Spearman Invader
Iode Ommulbosa, Goblin Spearman Invader
Estrur Rozzom, Goblin Spearman Invader
Cerol Asëñinal, Ghostly Marks dwarf Undead
Fath Zonnil, Ghostly Marks dwarf Undead
Datan Shethêthid, Ghostly Axedwarf Undead
Unib Lolokläl, Ghostly Axedwarf Undead
Fikod Esäblel, Ghostly Axedwarf Undead
Logem 'Quakedented' ibmatdastot, Ghostly Axe Lord
Ayo Appuzruspu, Goblin Axe Lord Invader
Estrur Aspuzruspzuz, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Aslot Ukazolak, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Zolak Borkutsmob, Goblin Swordsman Invader
v: ViewCre, c: Zoom-Cre, b: Zoom-Bld, m: Manager, r: Remv Cre

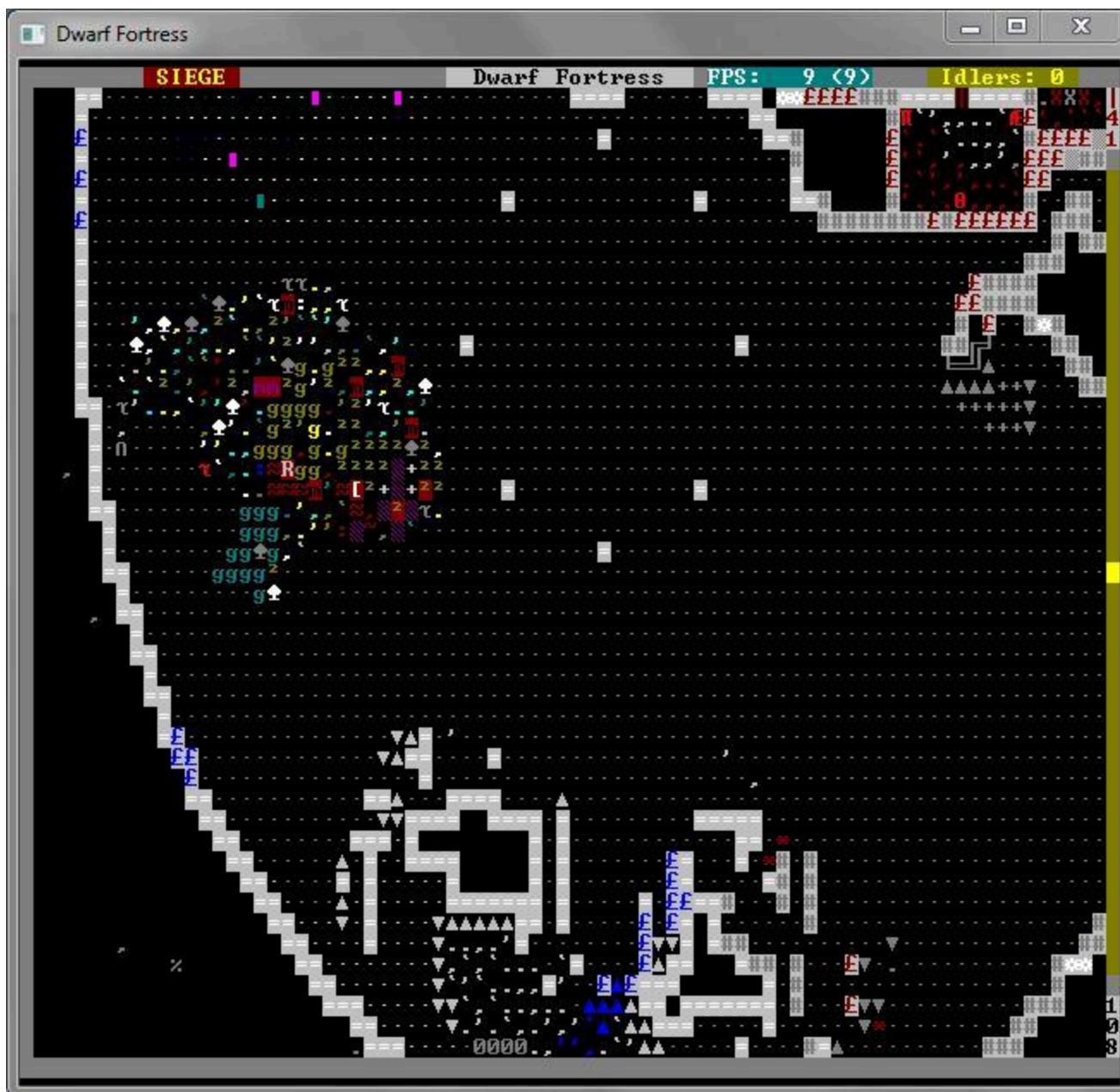
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Dwarf Fortress
FPS: 99 <46> Dwarf Fortress
Bäx Strodnosmatspo, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Nako Slaxuumsnosm, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Iode Olgostamxu, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Ngokang Tungüstosbüb, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Zolak Stozuün, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Azstrog Ostasnar, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Gozru Snusmdostngosp, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Dostngosp Matooslem, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Bosa Bemexuz, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Dansto Xuspgasongno, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Ngoso Urarbhongnguk, Goblin Swordsman Invader
Snamoz Iudnako, Goblin Swordsman Invader
èrith 'Gearguild' Avuzmeden, Ghostly Swordmaster
Erib Akreldakost, Ghostly Macedwarf Undead
Aban Sezukzaneg, Ghostly Macedwarf Undead
Ngokang Spëgspunggebzo, Goblin Pikeman Invader
Utes Gozrutosp, Goblin Pikeman Invader
Bosa Lodstosbüb, Goblin Pikeman Invader
Bäx Ogursmusmtä, Goblin Pikeman Invader
v: ViewCre, c: Zoom-Cre, b: Zoom-Bld, m: Manager, r: Remv Cre

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Perhaps they would eventually find their way out through the caverns, or would perish as they are beset upon by nameless things that still lived in the deep of Weatherwires. It is possible, still, that the goblins might remain in the fortress, hoping for a rescue led by the mace lord and his squad. Captain Kutsmob and his hammermen were, in the entire history of their conflict with the dwarves, the only invaders to have seen the dome with their own eyes and lived to escape.



And so, despite the dwarves' best efforts to go out in a blaze of glory, fighting horrific demons in the depths of hell itself, the story really ends with a crippled merchant who hides from a goblin siege, and slowly dies of thirst in a dark, hidden corner of the fortress. The last and final mountainhome of the Merchant of Echoing, the accursed fortress known in horrific legends and whispered myths as *Weatherwires*, ultimately crumbles to its end.

