

# Embra Hilly Places of Interest 1:

## Palace Heights

Palace Heights is a great, stepped-cliff, rocky hill, and is an important place in Embra city. It can also be a very strange one, for it does not always appear as shown on this map, where it seems quite abandoned. There are, for instance, many grassed-over, linear and circular-ring mounds all across its summit, overgrown with vegetation and trees, apparently the ruins of some huge castle or similar structure, and while a roadway leads right up to the eastern foot of the cliffs, it does not ascend them, yet there seems a worn and grassy pathway near the top which could be a continuation of it. Those familiar with Embra will either know or realise that this is the same hill on which stands the ruling heart of the city ordinarily, the Crepuscular Palace (Constructed Places 1; see that separate map for details). The Palace cannot be entered directly from this map, but GMs may wish to allow possible access to it in some fashion, because of the Law of Similarity, and the fact this is indeed an identical place to where the real Palace lies, but as if projected hundreds of years into the future, when the Palace has long fallen into ruins and reverted to a wild state.

Notes on the labelled map features follow. First though, some more general points.

The misty edge to the mapped area is because, like all the Embra Places maps, Palace Heights does not link directly to any other specific location in the city. Instead when leaving the mapped zone (or sometimes only when passing some form of threshold within it - GM's choice), the party can return either to the Hilly Places map, or the Embra Official Guide map, from where the GM can select a new location for the players to visit.

While scales are provided alongside the map, accurate to the features as drawn, and directions in these notes refer to the standard pattern of north being towards the map's top as viewed, east to its right-hand edge, and so on, none of these elements need be considered strongly fixed. Such things in the Faerie Realm can be quite fluid, to fit whatever the GM may prefer.

The featured text also beside the map could be used or ignored, as the GM might wish, although it does provide an additional element beyond what the map illustrates. It reads: "Many intricate webs shroud the rocks, specially created by magical spiders, which add stars that glow by night in the webs."

For greater clarity, note that the FCW file has a toggle to allow the on-map labels to be turned-off, if desired.

### Aspects of Palace Heights

\* **Legion Copses:** Several patches of open woodland that lie across the northern part of the map, north of the River Clack.

\* **Palace Heights:** This is the main part of the hilltop, where all the grassed-over low remains of walls and roadway lie. Their layout, while distinctly incomplete, is more or less

identical to that of the Crepuscular Palace mapped hilltop, except that there are no upstanding walls visible, and much is covered with trees and shrubs. As noted above, the roadway ends at near-sheer cliffs on the hill's eastern side, and there is apparently no easy way to ascend from there on this map (see under "Palace Rock" below, however). The hilltop rises in a shallow dome towards its approximate centre. Digging into the wall-mounds, or what would have been interior places, may reveal damaged to, in places, intact stonework identical to that of the Palace, much of it red or pink sandstone. Other potential finds here can be safely left for GMs to allocate, if required.

\* **Palace Rock:** These are the steepest slopes and cliffs closest to the south bank of the Clack, although their nature is similar all the way around the edges of Palace Heights' hill. The hill rises in four distinct, near-sheer, cliff-lines to the summit, made from a crystalline grey volcanic rock similar to granite, although it is actually a Faerie version of that rock, which makes it unexpectedly difficult to climb. Climbing ropes, well-hammered-in pitons and grapples will mysteriously come loose at random moments, climbers lose hand- or footholds as they slide back into the rock, and so forth. However, befriending the magical spiders whose webs adorn the cliffs may provide a means to ascend them, by using their webs as ladders. Unless the spiders are so allied though, they will contribute to the impossibility of the climb, as they have a magically-potent poisonous sting, aside from being able to spin or remove webs quickly and in many intricate patterns. And there are a great many of them. The cliff heights can be chosen as best-suits the storyline, though a useful rule-of-thumb would be to assume each cliff-line is between roughly 50 and 75 feet high (15 to 23 metres).

\* **Palace Walk:** The hard-packed dirt roadway at ground level that leads to what was the eastern entrance to the Palace, although that entrance and the ascending road to the hilltop have all disappeared, and the roadway itself has very battered, overgrown edges, so is not so wide as that on the Crepuscular Palace map.

\* **River Clack:** The Clack often appears variable in size and nature from the different Places maps on which it features, but it is always the same river that names the vale in which Embra lies. Here it is apparently surprisingly narrow, and runs by the northern foot of Palace Heights. The Clack usually flows east to west, right to left when viewing the map.