

THE BLACK KNIGHT

ReadZone Books Limited

First published in this edition 2015

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data (CIP) is available for this title.

Printed in Malta by Melita Press.

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ISBN 978 1 78322 079 3

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by Mick Gowar
and Graham Howells

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Chapter One

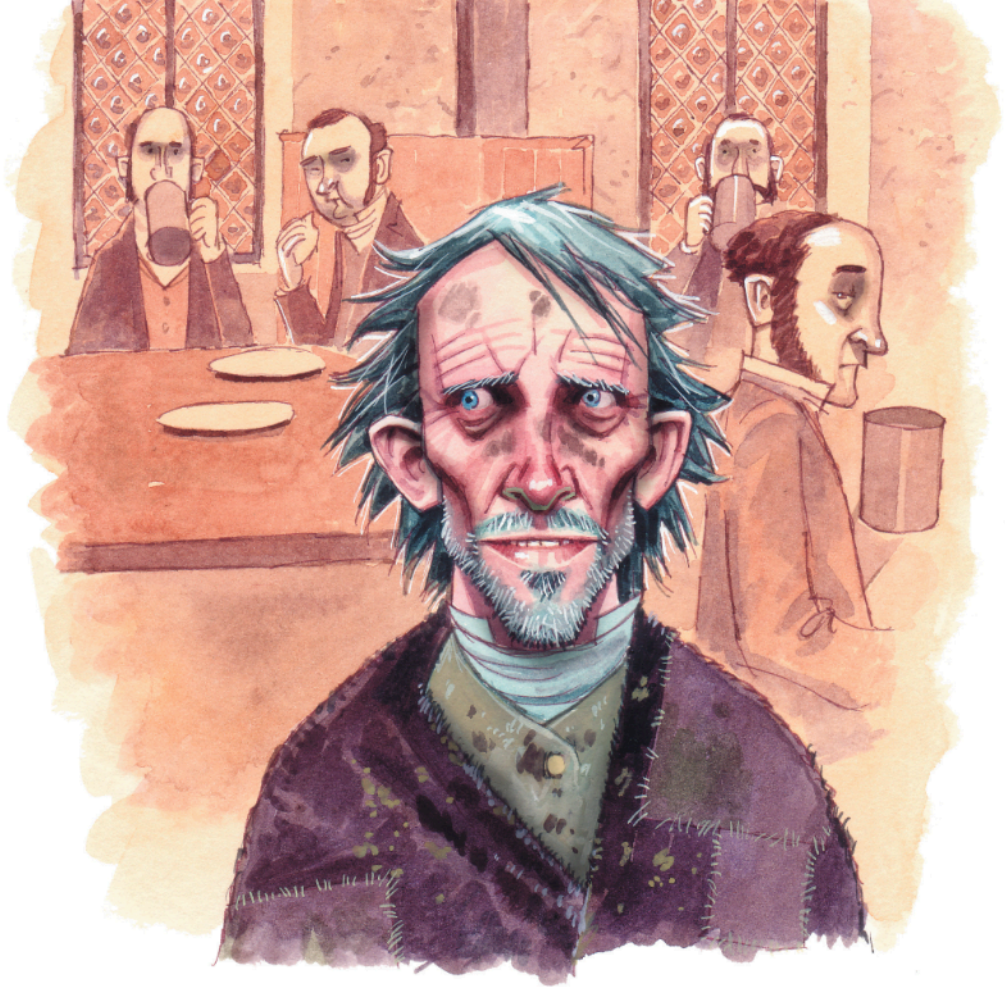
At the edge of the village of Wandlebury is an inn called *The Green Man*. Weary travellers can rest at the inn and have a meal, a drink and a bed for the night.

On top of the hill behind the inn is an ancient fort. It doesn't look much like a fort. The walls fell down long ago.

All that's left is a circle of bare earth surrounded by ditches. The people of the village never go up the hill to the old fort. This is why.

There was once a boy called Tom, who lived at the inn. Tom's uncle was the innkeeper. Tom worked all day as a potboy. He collected the empty mugs and plates from the tables and washed them up. Tom had never been to school, but he dreamed of leaving the village. Travellers from far away often stayed at the inn and Tom loved listening to their stories. He wanted to travel and see all the wonderful places he'd heard about for himself.

One dark night a stranger came into the inn. Some of the men in the inn were drinking, some were eating, and some were singing a silly song. But they all



stopped what they were doing and stared at the stranger. His face was unshaven and dirty. He was dressed in a ragged patched cloak.

“What do you want?” asked the innkeeper, suspiciously.