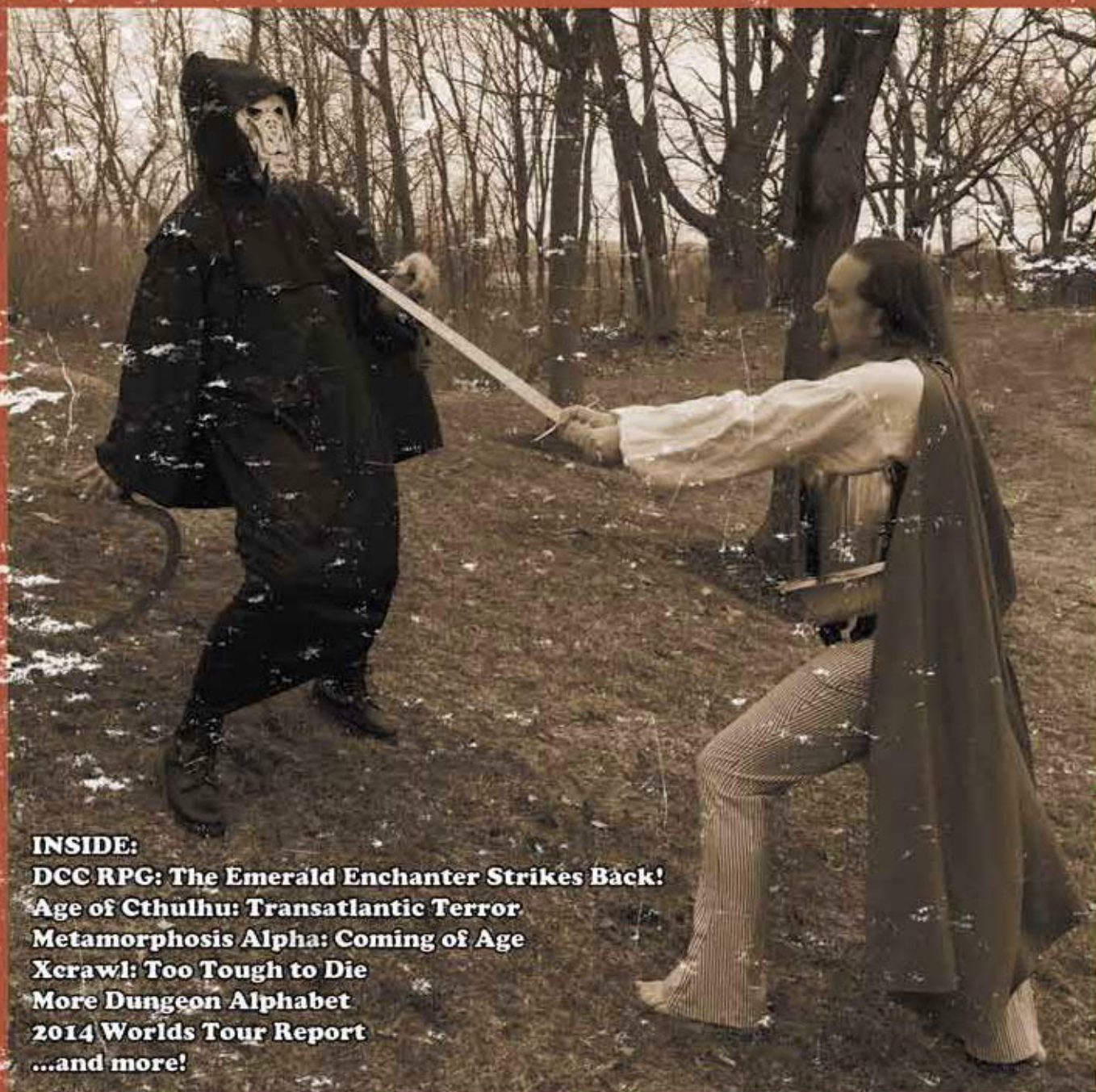




GOODMAN GAMES

GEN CON 2014 PROGRAM GUIDE



INSIDE:

DCC RPG: The Emerald Enchanter Strikes Back!

Age of Cthulhu: Transatlantic Terror

Metamorphosis Alpha: Coming of Age

Xcrawl: Too Tough to Die

More Dungeon Alphabet

2014 Worlds Tour Report

...and more!

GEN CON LUCK CHART

Roll 1d20 while at the Goodman Games booth to see what you get! Use your lucky die! Only one roll per person per program book purchased. Roll must be made in presence of Goodman Games booth crew.

TABLE GG: GOODMAN GAMES LUCK CHART

Roll	Result
1	Fumble and The Dark Lord's Disapproval. -1 to all rolls for rest of con and you must wear the "Dark Lord's Disapproval" badge ribbon.
2	Give Doug a hug at his booth in the art show. Maybe he'll give you something in return. (Hmm...)
3	Save \$1 on your purchase from the Goodman Games booth! (Minimum purchase \$10)
4	Fame and fortune! Well, fame anyway. Maybe. Give Doug a character sheet for one of your DCC RPG fatalities. He will select one of the winners to appear in The Band in a future DCC module. Only the first winner can claim this. Re-roll with Doug if the supply has run out.
5	Relic of the ancients. Roll again on sub-table R.
6	A personal reply from Archmage Abby. E-mail her abby@goodman-games.com with your woes. She'll send a personal reply.s
7	Get this program book autographed by at least 5 Goodman Games contributors, and save \$1 off your next purchase for every autograph. (Valid on only one purchase; minimum purchase \$10.)
8	Freebie! Roll again on sub-table F.
9	You may rub your lucky die on one person of choice behind the Goodman Games booth. Not sure what it will do but let's find out!
10	Save \$50 on your next purchase at the Troll Lord Games booth! *Note: offer not endorsed by Troll Lord Games. Tell Steve that Joe says hi!
11	Save \$50 on your next purchase at the Fat Dragon Games booth! *Note: offer not endorsed by Fat Dragon Games. Tell Tom that Joe says hi!
12	Save \$3 on any print at Doug's booth in the art show.
13	Save \$2 on your purchase from the Goodman Games booth! (Minimum purchase \$10)
14	You have won a game of Puerto Rico, Nuclear War, or Carcassonne with Doug and Joe. This requires scheduling in advance and needs to be at a con we attend (probably Gen Con next year). Please email us at info@goodman-games.com with your contact info, because we ran this same offer last year and lost our scribbled notes in the chaos of the booth so email is definitely a better route. If you were the guys who won this at Gen Con 2013, well, sorry dudes, we lost your info. Get in touch and we'll sort it out.
15	You owe us. Uh-oh. Roll again on sub-table U.
15	Drawmij's Fame: Email us your name at info@goodman-games.com. We will place an anagram of your name in an upcoming adventure
16	\$1 off a copy of Dieter's latest Drunk'n'Sailor album. Track down Dieter to buy one.
17	Save 10% on your purchase from the Goodman Games booth.
18	Your purchase of this program guide is free!
19	Save \$3 on your purchase from the Goodman Games booth! (Minimum purchase \$10)
20	The Dark Lord's Approval. +1 to all rolls for rest of con as long as you wear the "Dark Lord's Approval" badge ribbon.

SUB-TABLE F: FREEBIES!

Roll	Result
1	Free DCC module (except new Gen Con releases)
2	Free Age of Cthulhu module (except new Gen Con releases)
3	Free systems-neutral product (<i>Dungeon Alphabet</i> , <i>Random Esoteric Creature Generator</i> , etc.)
4	Free 4E product
5	Free 5E product
6	Free dice bag!
7	Free DCC module (except new Gen Con releases)

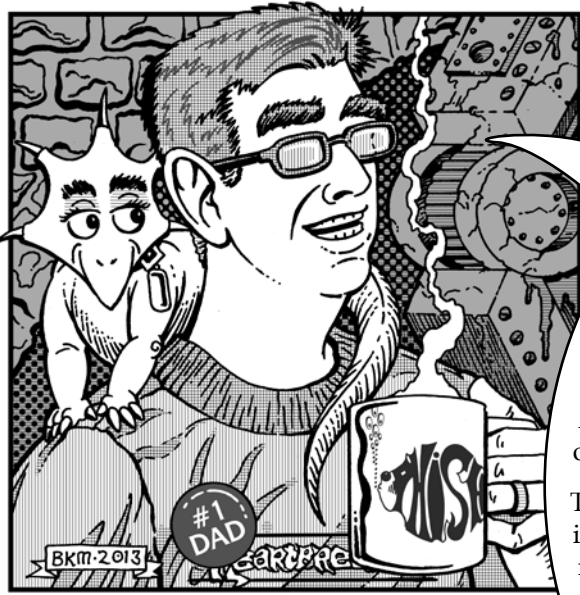
SUB-TABLE R: RELICS

Roll again on Luck chart if item already claimed. *Must stop by at close of booth on Sunday to claim it.

Roll	Result
1	Hugh Heftblade poster from booth.*
2	Shana Dahaka poster from booth.*
3	Printer proofs, <i>Peril on the Purple Planet</i> .
4	Printer proofs, <i>The Chained Coffin</i> .
5	Printer proofs, <i>Dragora's Dungeon</i> .
6	The original printer proofs for the book in your hands.
7	Random die from Harley's dice bag.
8	One con banner from the Tube Of Old Banners.

SUB-TABLE U: U OWE US

Roll	Result
1	Your soul is claimed by Goodman Games. You must change your middle name to "Goodman."
2	DCC RPG is in your blood. Buy an extra copy of the core book for your grandkids-to-be. Or else.
3	You must get a tattoo of DCC RPG art. (Jobe Bittman did it! Why can't you?)
4	Provide Doug with a pint of your own blood to be mixed into his paint for the next DCC RPG cover.
5	Provide Harley with a vial of your own bile to be mixed into his own inkwell for writing his next module.
6	Give Mike the strangest word you know.
7	Give Dieter a sword, mace, or other real medieval weapon.
8	Hook Brendan up. Talk to him about what.



On the cover: cover model Dieter Zimmerman as Hugh the Barbarian, battling Jobe Bittman as the goat-faced necromancer.

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and [facebook.com/xcrawl](https://www.facebook.com/xcrawl)

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Dungeon Crawl Classics
Role Playing Game on G+



Joseph

Goodman here, happy to welcome you to another exciting Gen Con! We're in **booth #525**. Come on by! This is the thirteenth anniversary of Goodman Games, and it's really great to be back at the Big Show once again. Wow, thirteen years! That pact I made to start the company has some deliverables this year. Anybody got a wavy cult knife I can borrow? The booth will be open Friday at midnight for a brief ceremony...

Our biggest news at this year's Gen Con will be announced at our seminar, "What's New With Goodman Games." The seminar is Friday night at 8:00 PM. Attend so you can find out about two deluxe hardcovers in the works! Then visit our booth on Saturday/Sunday for stickers to put on the mystery boxes on page 88!

This Gen Con, we have a huge stack of new releases. As I type this we are bumping up against final printer deadlines. Check out page 2 for the full list of new releases. Fingers crossed that everything makes it! (And yes, those two modules are for 5E!)

In other news, this Program Guide features **new** material: **three** new adventures, new fiction, the return of Archmage Abby, bonus material for *Dungeon Alphabet*, and a Doug Kovacs cover design showcase. Plus there are previews...and more!

This year's entertaining cover image comes from some hijinks at Gary Con. See page 26 for some fun photos from the shoot. Don't worry, no necromancers were harmed in the production of this book!

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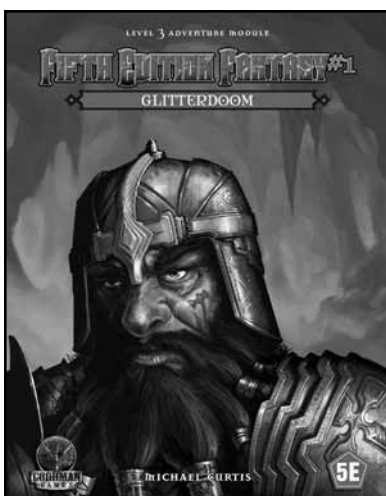
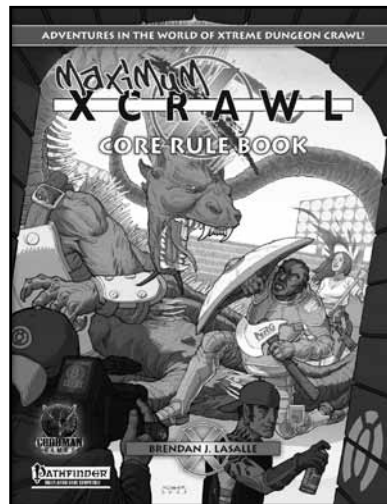
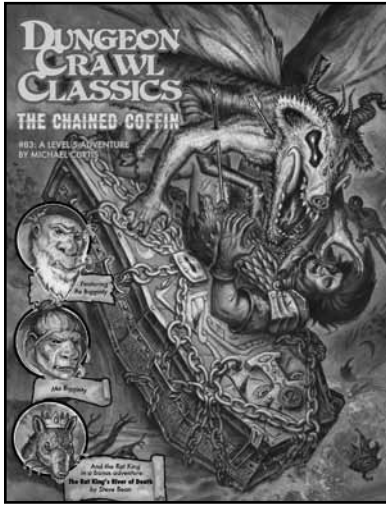
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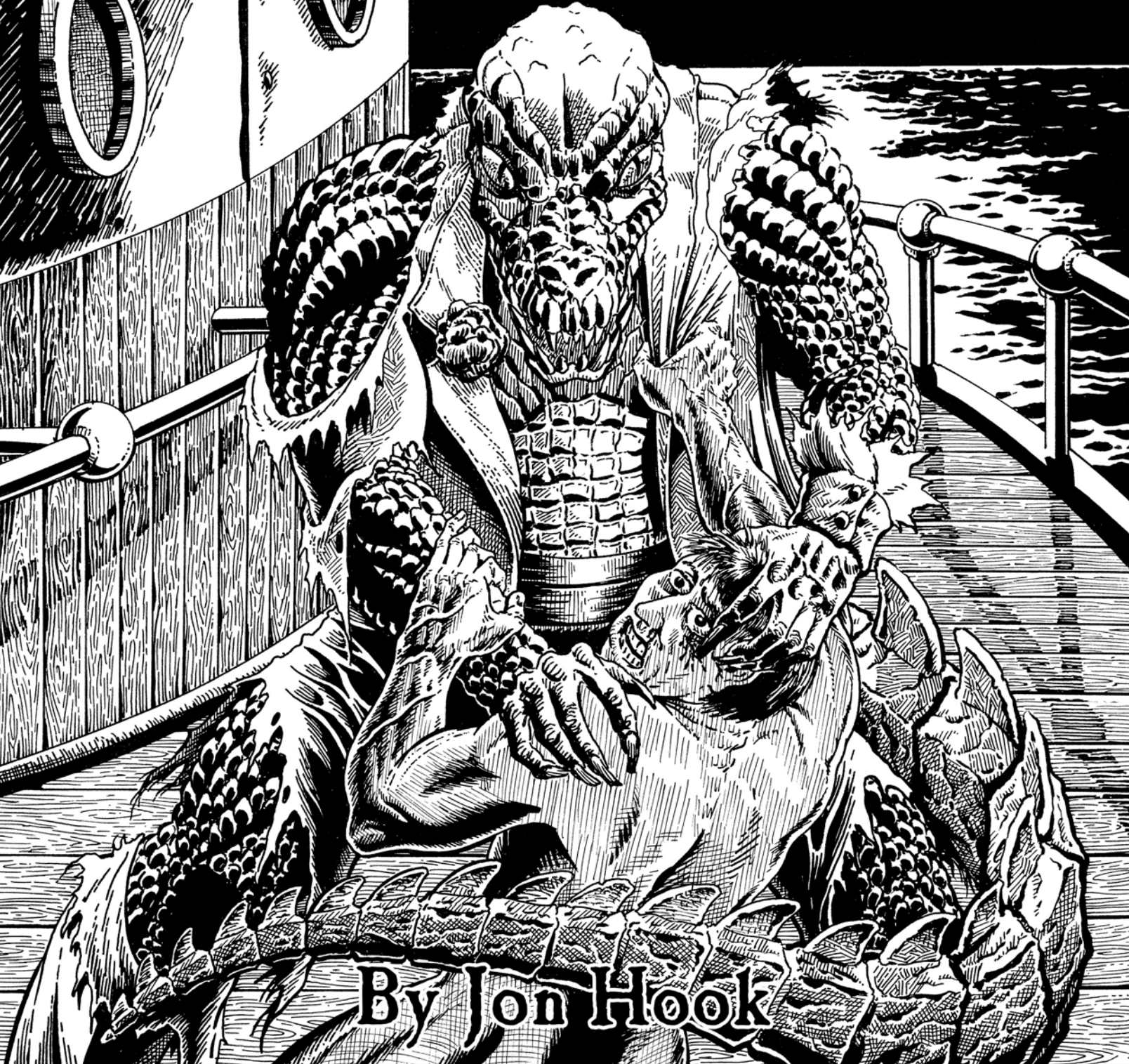
Checklist of Gen Con Releases

Collect 'em all!



A GE of CTHULHU

Transatlantic Terror



By Jon Hook



Age of Cthulhu: Transatlantic Terror – A 1920s Call of Cthulhu Adventure

By Jon Hook

Editing: Mathew Pook

Cover Art: Bradley K. McDevitt

Interior Art: Bradley K. McDevitt

Cartography: Tom Martin

Art Direction: Joseph Goodman

Graphic Designers: Bradley K. and Jessica A. McDevitt

Playtesters: Hugh Ashman, Maxwell Mahaffa, Mike Medwick, Brian Murphy, Randall Padilla, Jim Phillips, Ed Possing, and Jonathan Powell

Dedication

To Mom,

You'll live, laugh, and love in me and through my children, forever and always.

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Introduction

The sun and salty ocean spray greets all of those who seek to enjoy the amenities of A Deck aboard the majestic R.M.S. *Adriatic*, en route to Belfast on its second day out of New York. However, one First Class passenger has chosen not to join the throng of other 'monkeys' as they parade about in the sunshine. Joanna Ostermann draws closed the curtains over her cabin portholes and then the clandestine meeting begins her fellow conspirators, Daniel Kelly and Lester Shaw, a pair of stewards for whom she herself was able to secure employment aboard the *Adriatic*. Joanna asks, "Are you ready?" To which Lester replies, "I am."

Pleased with his response, Joanna nods; she then crosses the room to open her attaché case. She withdraws a small glass vial containing an iridescent blue liquid. She gives the vial to Lester and says, "Take this. Add it to his drink and the monkey will become more compliant." Lester takes the vial and smiles as he says, "Soon I shall shed this skin and be reborn as the new Joseph Taft."

Keeper Information

A trio of Serpent People sorcerers is crossing the Atlantic aboard the R.M.S. *Adriatic* and they have decided to murder Joseph Taft. The young man is the nephew of the current Chief Justice of the United States and former President, William Howard Taft, and the sorcerers plan for one of their number to consume his likeness and thus become Joseph Taft. They believe that the persona of Joseph Taft will grant them access to certain people and places that will allow them to further the agenda of the Serpent People. That future agenda is not addressed in this scenario, but the murder and consumption of Joseph Taft is.

The Keeper who is building a campaign may consider using this short scenario if the investigators were already planning to travel from America to Europe. The Keeper could use this scenario prior to running **Age of Cthulhu vol. II: Madness in Londontown**, **Age of Cthulhu vol. III: Shadows of Leningrad**, **Age of Cthulhu vol. IV: Horrors from Yuggoth**, or finally **Age of Cthulhu vol. VII: The Timeless Sands of India**. The exact date of the transatlantic crossing is not specified in this scenario so it can be flexible enough for a Keeper to use it whenever would be best, although ideally, it should be before 1928 when the R.M.S. *Adriatic* is converted to a 'cabin-class' ship and no longer conveys First Class passengers.

Investigation Summary

The investigators in **Transatlantic Terror** are all First Class passengers aboard the R.M.S. *Adriatic*. The pre-generated investigators in this scenario are all fictional dilettantes from some of America's finest families. The scenario is divided into a mix of required and optional scenes, as marked below.

Player Beginning, page 6: In which the investigators are introduced to the ship's amenities, and meet with several key non-player characters.

Scene 1 – The Invitation, page 7: In which the investigators are invited to the Farnsworth/Copperfield wedding. (**Required Scene**)

Scene 2 – The Wedding, page 8: In which the investigators attend the Farnsworth/Copperfield wedding. (**Required Scene**)



Scene 3 – Hysterical Mrs. Dodd, page 8: In which Mrs. Dodd has a public display of hysterics as she declares that Mrs. Ostermann is an imposter. (*Optional Scene*)

Scene 4 – Into the Ocean, page 8: In which the investigators witness Steward Daniel Kelly dumping a bag into the ocean that quickly vanishes from sight. (*Optional Scene*)

Scene 5 – Mrs. Ostermann’s Cabin, page 9: In which the investigators search Mrs. Ostermann’s cabin. (*Optional Scene*)

Scene 6 – Belly of the Beast, page 10: In which the investigators discover the Serpent Person that is currently digesting the late Joseph Taft as it conducts the Consume Likeness ritual. (*Optional Scene*)

Modified Skill Rolls: There are instances when an investigator’s skill roll might need to be modified. All game mechanics, including any modifiers to a skill roll, will be noted in bold text, for example: **Navigation (-10%)**. Thus, that skill roll would be reduced by 10%. Unless otherwise noted, all applicable bonuses and penalties are combined to calculate the final modifier to the skill roll. No skill can be modified below 1% or above 100%; a roll of a 1% is always a success, and a roll of 100% is always a failure.

Critical Successes & Fumbled Skill Rolls: This scenario may include notes to the Keeper about skill rolls that may be ‘critically’ successful, or may be ‘fumbled’. A critical success is a skill roll that is 1/5th of the skill’s current value. If the skill is being modified for this roll, it would be 1/5th of the modified skill value. Critical successes usually impart a special bonus in the game. A fumbled roll is a roll of 96% to 100%, or possibly only 100% if the skill being used has a value greater than 95%. Fumbled skill rolls usually impart a special disadvantage in the game.

Group Luck Roll: There are instances in this adventure when a Luck roll is required for a group of investigators. Instead of the Keeper asking for individual Luck rolls, he can instead ask for a single or Group Luck roll. This works like a standard Luck roll except that it is calculated by averaging the Luck value of the investigators currently participating in the scene – rounded down to the nearest 5 percentiles. Whatever the outcome of the roll, it affects all of the investigators present in the scene.



Serpent People and the *Consume Likeness* Spell

The Serpent People are an ancient race of reptilian humanoids that pre-date the age of dinosaurs. They are master sorcerers and alchemists. They prefer to use stealth and puppet mastery to achieve their goals, but will fall back into an aggressive combat mode if pushed into a corner. As a race, the Serpent People are extremely intelligent, but their long lives, arrogance, and apathy towards mankind results in them overlooking the finer details of humanity.

Serpent People have observed humans long enough that they recognize that humans change their skins (that is, clothing), on a daily basis, but subtle things like haircuts, hair styles, and make-up are lost on them. When a Serpent Person eats a human for the purpose of the *Consume Likeness* spell, that Serpent Person gains the ability to assume the likeness of that human. This includes the haircut, hair style, make-up, and scars that the human had at the time of his death. However, due to the ever-evolving trends in fashion and design, eventually a Serpent Person who has assumed the likeness of a human will become dated... out of style... and that makes it possible for the true nature of the Serpent Person to be discovered by the strange monkey-men that surround him.

If an investigator ever crosses paths with a Serpent Person that is disguised as a human from more than fifty years ago, then that investigator can attempt a **Psychology** skill roll. With a successful roll, the investigator has a niggling feeling at the back of their mind that “*something just isn't quite right*” with person he has just encountered. Further, if the encountered Serpent Person is disguised as a human from more than a century ago, then the investigator can attempt a **Psychology (+20%)** skill roll. With a successful roll, the investigator will be positive that there is something wrong with the person he has just encountered. With a successful **Psychology** skill roll (from either scenario), then the investigator can also attempt an **Idea** roll. With a successful **Idea** roll, the investigator will not only realize that the person's hairstyle and general look is quite dated, but on subsequent encounters with the disguised Serpent Person will also recognize that his facial look and hairstyle has not changed.

Conversely, if an investigator fails the **Psychology** skill roll after encountering a disguised Serpent Person, then that investigator has failed to notice anything out of the ordinary. The Keeper may judge that the investigator can receive another **Psychology** skill check if something occurs that would raise doubts in his mind as to the identity of the ‘person’ in question. For example, if the investigator witnesses someone raving about the false identity of a person, then that could be enough to trigger an investigator to reassess the person in question. This is in addition to a Serpent Person's true identity possibly being revealed if a strong light source should cast their true shadow. (See the *Consume Likeness* spell entry in the **Call of Cthulhu** core rulebook for more information).

When a Serpent Person is conducting the ritual for the *Consume Likeness* spell, that Serpent Person must be wholly focused on the ritual, and thus is completely vulnerable to attack. It is common practice for at least one other Serpent Person to guard the other during the course of the ritual. It takes five days for a bloated Serpent Person to fully consume an average sized human adult, and thus complete the ritual spell.

Player Beginning

The scenario opens on the afternoon of the second day of a nine-day cruise out of New York, bound for Belfast in Northern Ireland before sailing on to Liverpool in the United Kingdom. It will take the Adriatic eight days total to reach Belfast where it will dock for twelve hours. The ship will then continue on to Liverpool which will take approximately eight hours. As First Class passengers, the investigators have access to a wide range of amenities. The Keeper is encouraged to allow the investigators to explore the ship and enjoy themselves.

First Class Amenities

While the R.M.S. *Adriatic* was not the largest of The Big Four – the quartet of ocean liners built for the White Star Line

between 1901 and 1906, it was the fastest, and it was the only one to have such modern facilities as a Turkish bath and a swimming bath (also known as a ‘swimming pool’ in modern vernacular). Below is list of the amenities available to all First Class passengers.

Activity	Availability	Cost
Squash	No Restrictions	Free
Shuffle Board	No Restrictions	Free
Lounge Room	No Restrictions	Free
Turkish Bath	12:00 PM – 08:00 PM	\$1.00/Session
Gymnasium	09:00 AM – 08:00 PM	Free
Skeet Shooting	12:00 PM – Sunset	\$0.50/Hour



The lounge is primarily used for reading, letter writing, card games, and conversation. A four-piece orchestra plays in the lounge from 12:00 PM to 05:00 PM, and bridge tournaments are scheduled daily. The fee for the Turkish bath session covers the cost of the masseur. The gym also includes the access to the large Turkish soaking bath from 09:00 AM to 12:00 PM when it is used as a swimming pool. For the skeet shooting, a passenger must schedule an appointment with the steward who is currently working the skeet shooting station at the stern end of B Deck. Ten minutes before the booked time on the schedule, a steward will seek out the passenger to inform him that his turn at the skeet shooting is now at hand. When not in use, the shotguns are secured in an arms locker in the Enquiry Office.

Two Parker shotguns are available for use with the skeet shooting, both in an over/under double-barrel configuration. Of the two, the 20 gauge is regarded as a ladies' gun.

Shotgun	Base	Damage	Range	Attacks	Rounds	HPs	Mal.
20 gauge (2B)	30%	2d6/1d6/1d3	10/20/50 yds.	1 or 2	2	12	00%
12 gauge (2B)	30%	4d6/2d6/1d6	10/20/50 yds.	1 or 2	2	12	00%

Dining Room & Dance Hall

The dining room serves three meals a day; Breakfast Service begins at 08:00 AM, Dinner Service begins at 12:30 PM, and finally Tea Service begins at 05:30 PM. A six-piece orchestra performs through the Dinner and tea services. Starting at 08:30 PM the dining room has a third of the tables removed thus converting the room into a dance hall and cocktail lounge. The dance hall is open until 01:00 AM.

Starting the Scenario

The Keeper should familiarize the players with the ship's amenities to see if they have a preferred method for their investigators to begin the scenario. The opening scene should begin after the Tea Service in the dining room has been completed. The goal of the opening scene is to introduce the investigators to the pleasures aboard the ship and introduce them to several non-player characters. The investigators should be introduced to Joseph Taft (the pending victim of the Serpent People), Joanna Ostermann (a disguised Serpent Person), Elizabeth Dodd (friend of the real Joanna Ostermann), Captain Robert Barclay (captain of the R.M.S. *Adriatic*), and the happy couple, Judith Farnsworth (bride) and Jonathan Copperfield (groom).

The investigators should also interact with some of the *Adriatic's* First Class stewards, including Daniel Kelly and

Lester Shaw, both of whom are disguised Serpent People. None of the artificial lighting aboard the ship is intense enough to throw a sharp enough shadow that could reveal either of the Serpent Person's true likeness. Nevertheless, all of the disguised Serpent People will do everything they can to avoid direct sunlight in order to minimize the possibility of casting a true shadow. See the **Serpent People and the Consume Likeness Spell** sidebar above for more details.

NOTE: The opening scene is intended to be an open and free-flowing scene. Once the Keeper and players are ready, the Keeper should initiate **Scene 1 – The Invitation**, which takes place during Tea Service. Two of the scenes for this scenario are required to drive the story, and four of the scenes are optional and should only be run if the investigators meet the right conditions. Between the scripted scenes, the Keeper should utilize the ship's amenities and introduce other First Class NPCs to enhance the investigator's experiences aboard the *Adriatic*.


Scene 1 – The Invitation

REQUIRED SCENE – This scene opens after the investigators have been seated in the dining room for Tea on the second evening of the cruise. When the investigators enter the dining room, Steward Daniel Kelly (one of the disguised Serpent Persons), will escort them to a table. If the investigators ask to be seated at the Captain's Table, the steward will seat them there without hesitation; bribes or skill rolls are not required. Daniel Kelly has no concept of protocol, so he does not understand or care about whether it is right or wrong to seat people at the Captain's Table uninvited. If the investigators are seated at the Captain's Table without an invitation, for the remainder of the voyage, they suffer a penalty of -10% to their Credit Rating skill.

If the investigators are seated at the Captain's Table, their host, Captain Barclay, will also be joined by Joseph Taft, and Joanna Ostermann. If they are seated at any other table, they are joined by Judith Farnsworth, Jonathan Copperfield, and Elizabeth Dodd.

Conversations are light and polite. After the main entrée is served, Jonathan and Judith stand up as Jonathan lightly taps his wine glass with his knife to gain everyone's attention. It is then that Judith announces that she and Jonathan are going to be wed in two days, right here in the grand dining room, with Captain Barclay conducting the services. Everyone in First Class is invited to the wedding and the reception that follows.





The mood in the dining room becomes quite joyous after Judith's announcement and invitation. Captain Barclay calls for champagne to be served to toast the happy couple. All of the stewards working the dining room rush to bring every guest a flute of champagne. Steward Lester Shaw (the other disguised Serpent Person), brings Joseph Taft a glass that has been spiked with a drug that will make his mind open to suggestion. The drug takes an hour to set into his system. An hour later Joanna Ostermann (the lead disguised Serpent Person), will touch Joseph's hand and quietly suggest that he retire for the evening. Lester Shaw and Daniel Kelly follow him to his cabin, but before he enters they suggest that he follow them to the cargo hold in the belly of the ship.

If Joseph is not alone, the Serpent People return to Joseph's cabin later with a stack of towels, and then ask him to follow them to the cargo hold. Once in the cargo hold, the Serpent People smother Joseph to death, and then Lester Shaw reverts to his original Serpent Person form and then begins the *Consume Likeness* ritual. Beginning with the morning of the third day of the cruise, Joseph Taft is nowhere to be seen. There is a "Do Not Disturb" placard on his cabin door, but he is not inside.

Scene 2 – The Wedding

REQUIRED SCENE – This scene opens at 11:00 AM in the dining room on the fourth day of the cruise. The wedding ceremony runs for about an hour. The reception begins immediately after the ceremony; the reception in the dining room replaces the regularly scheduled Dinner Service.

Unless the investigators are already aware of Joseph Taft's absence, each investigator should make an **Idea** roll during the reception. With a successful roll, an investigator will notice that Joseph Taft did not attend the wedding and is currently not at the reception.

Joanna Ostermann attends the wedding as a guest, but the stewards, Daniel Kelly and Lester Shaw, are not present. If the investigators question any of the other stewards, none of them have ever worked with Kelly or Shaw previously. This was their first voyage with either man. If an investigator makes a successful **Persuade** skill roll while questioning a steward, that steward also informs the investigator that both Kelly and Shaw were hired because Mrs. Joanna Ostermann vouched for them.

During the reception, Elizabeth Dodd tries to have a

private conversation with Joanna Ostermann. Years ago, Elizabeth and Joanna vacationed together in Paris. An investigator needs to make a successful **Listen** skill roll to eavesdrop on their conversation. Elizabeth tries to reminisce with her about Paris, but Joanna does all she can to distance herself from Elizabeth. Joanna eventually hisses into Elizabeth's ear, telling her, "*Keep away from me, you prattling cow. You are nothing to me.*" Only investigators who are explicitly watching the pair will see Joanna whispering into Elizabeth's ear; a critical success with a **Listen** skill check is necessary to hear what Joanna whispered. Elizabeth immediately leaves the reception, stifling tears. If neither **Listen** skill check is successful, with a **Psychology (+10%)** skill check, an investigator will note that Elizabeth Dodd is upset. Mrs. Dodd will retire to her cabin where she will hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on her cabin door and refuse to answer it should anyone knock. Eventually she will dry her tears and decide what to do next – go to the authorities, which the investigators may witness at their next meal.

Scene 3 – Hysterical Mrs. Dodd

OPTIONAL SCENE – Run this scene during any of the meal services. Mrs. Dodd is pulling Captain Barclay into the dining room, shouting at the top of her lungs that Mrs. Ostermann is a fraud. "*I don't know who this woman is, but she isn't Joanna Ostermann! Of that I am sure!*" Mrs. Dodd wants the captain to place her under arrest. The captain refuses. Eventually Mrs. Dodd will attempt to fight with Mrs. Ostermann, in a vain attempt to dislodge a mask or wig she believes the imposter is using. Captain Barclay will then order the stewards to restrain Mrs. Dodd and escort her to the infirmary, where the doctor can administer some sedatives.

The captain will welcome the investigators help if they volunteer to help escort Mrs. Dodd to the infirmary. If the investigators are able to question Mrs. Dodd, she recounts the encounter she had with Joanna Ostermann at the wedding reception.

Scene 4 – Into the Ocean

OPTIONAL SCENE – Run this scene during any evening, after 09:00 PM, after the wedding reception if the investigators are walking around on either of the First Class decks, (A Deck or B Deck). The investigator must be near the stern of the ship, and must be able to see the area where skeet shooting is conducted during the daytime. With a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, the investigator notices that a steward has tossed a bag out into the ocean. The bag

The Ship's Detective

Detective Reginald Fenster has an office on B Deck, and can be found there 40% of the time during the day. At night, he is in his cabin on C Deck. If at any time the investigators need to find the detective, the stewards can find him within half an hour. Reginald is a good-natured man who recently retired as a New Scotland Yard detective and was appointed as a detective for the White Star Line aboard the *Adriatic* after the previous detective retired.

Reginald was thrilled to get this job, because he still thinks that it will be a life on the high seas meeting beautiful women. While he is a knowledgeable and skilled detective, he is in awe of his new found position and life aboard ship. He routinely carries a blackjack on his person, but does not think that he will have cause to use it. He owns a Webley & Scott .32 M.P. semiautomatic pistol which he keeps locked in a safe in his office.

Reginald has trained himself to take everything anyone tells him with a grain of salt. He does not believe that people are intentionally lying to him, but he does believe that most people are usually too distraught to accurately recall whatever event it is that they are trying to recount to him. So, Reginald never believes anything until he can verify it with his own eyes or through irrefutable evidence.

contains Joseph Taft's clothing and has been weighed down with a handful of nuts and bolts, so the bag quickly disappears into the dark water.

If the first **Spot Hidden** roll resulted in a critical success, the investigator will be able to identify the steward as Daniel Kelly; otherwise a second **Spot Hidden** roll is required. After dumping the bag, Kelly will return to the cargo hold where the Serpent Person previously known as Lester Shaw is in the process of consuming Joseph Taft. A successful **Stealth** roll is required to successfully follow Kelly without being noticed. If Kelly notices that he is being followed, he will do everything he can to escape the investigators. If all else fails, Kelly will resort to the use of *Spectral Razor* to escape.

Scene 5 – Mrs. Ostermann's Cabin

OPTIONAL SCENE – Run this scene at any time if the investigators choose to search Mrs. Ostermann's cabin. If Joanna Ostermann is currently in her cabin, she will never grant access to the investigators to enter her cabin, even if they “just want to talk”. If the investigators persist on entering her cabin, she will threaten to contact the ship's detective, but in reality she will prepare a spell to deal with the investigators. If Joanna is not in her cabin, a successful **Locksmith** roll will grant the investigators access to her cabin. The lock only has a **STR 7**, so it is possible for an investigator to break the lock and gain entry.

Joanna Ostermann has almost no personal effects in the room. She has one suitcase that contains a mink stole and one fancy hat. There are no other clothes or other personal belongings in the suitcase. There is also one attaché case in the room; inside it are two small glass vials containing an iridescent blue liquid, and one small glass vial containing a



clear liquid that leaves a slight oily residue on the inside of the vial.

The blue serum is a version of the Serpent People domination serum noted in the **Call of Cthulhu** core rulebook. Completely odorless, when this serum is added to any alcoholic drink, it loses its blue color. It takes an hour to become effective, but once it does, the victim is susceptible to commands given by a Serpent Person. (The victim will react as normal to anyone else who attempts to give him commands).

The clear serum is a powerful mutagen. The vial contains only a single dose of the serum. If a human ingests the serum he must make a **CON** roll on the Resistance Table against the **POT 13** serum. With a successful **CON** roll, the victim takes 1d6+1 damage. With a failed **CON** roll, the victim takes 2d6+1 damage and begins to grow a chitin exoskeleton. It takes nine days for the exoskeleton to fully harden. The victim must make a **CON**×5 roll each day; a failed roll restricts the victim to bed due to wracking pain. After the ninth day, the victim has a hard brown exoskeleton. The victim's **INT** is permanently reduced by 2d4, and his **DEX** is reduced by 2d6+1; neither attribute can go below 1. The victim's movement is reduced to 2. The victim must also make a **Sanity (1d6+1)** check. Anyone viewing the victim's metamorphosis must also make a **Sanity (1d3)** check.

Scene 6 – Belly of the Beast

OPTIONAL SCENE – Run this scene at any time if the investigators search the cargo hold after Joseph Taft has gone missing. Finding the cargo hold will not be too difficult for persistent investigators as the ship's crew does not imagine that anyone from First Class would ever want to go there. The Serpent Person that is consuming Joseph Taft is hiding in a corner of the cargo hold, behind some parked cars. This Serpent Person is completely helpless and is absolutely unable to defend itself. If the investigators are searching the cargo hold, there is a 90% chance that Daniel Kelly is guarding his Serpent Person companion (unless previous events have removed Daniel). Otherwise, there is 20% chance that Joanna Ostermann is guarding the Serpent Person. The Serpent Person disguised as Joanna Ostermann knows that if two First Class passengers were missing, that could create a situation where the whole ship might be searched, so she is rarely in the cargo hold. The cargo hold reeks with the musky smell of a snake or reptile, which can be identified with a **Natural History** skill check. Anyone in the cargo hold has a 40% chance of pinpointing the source of the smell.



If Daniel Kelly is guarding his companion, the investigators need a successful **Sneak** skill roll to approach their corner of the cargo hold unnoticed. Daniel Kelly will use every resource available to him to protect his companion and kill the investigators, beginning by grabbing a nearby crowbar.

Conclusion

Either the scenario ends with the investigators discovering the Serpent People or with their failure to do so. If the Serpent Person consuming Joseph Taft is not discovered, the ritual spell will be completed on the seventh day of the cruise. The new Joseph Taft will attend Tea in the dining room that evening. On the eighth day of the cruise, the *Adriatic* arrives in Belfast. If the Serpent People suspect that the investigators are overly interested in them, they will disembark in Belfast, otherwise they will disembark the next day when the ship docks in Liverpool.

If the investigators have created a commotion that has



gained Captain Barclay's attention, then the *Adriatic* will stay docked in Belfast an extra day as the Irish authorities come on board to question the investigators. If the investigators are witnessed killing any of the disguised Serpent Men, then they will be detained by Detective Fenster and confined to their cabins until a proper investigation can be completed.

Rewards

Discover that Daniel Kelly and/or Lester Shaw is a Serpent Person	+1
Destroy the Serpent Person known as Daniel Kelly and/or Lester Shaw	+1d3
Discover that Joanna Ostermann is a Serpent Person	+1
Destroy the Serpent Person known as Joanna Ostermann	+1d3
Panic the First Class passengers	-1d2
Cause the arrest of Joanna Ostermann, Daniel Kelly, or Lester Shaw	+1d4
Prevent the death of Joseph Taft	+1d6

Appendix I – Pre-Generated Investigators

Each pre-generated investigator only has a brief set of skills listed. Excluding Cthulhu Mythos and the current list of skills for each investigator, each player can add 15% to five new skills to finish fleshing-out their investigator.

Name: Richard J. Rockefeller, Dilettante
Sex: Male **Age:** 28

STR: 11 **CON:** 13 **SIZ:** 12 **Idea Roll:** 70%
DEX: 14 **INT:** 14 **POW:** 14 **Luck Roll:** 70%
APP: 12 **EDU:** 15 **MP:** 14 **Know Roll:** 75%

Damage Bonus: None **Hit Points:** 13 **SAN:** 70

Skills: Accounting 30%, Credit Rating 55%, Persuade 40%, Shotgun 35%, Swim 40%

Description: Richard is suave and debonair. The Rockefeller Empire was built through keen financial investments. Richard has attended many of the same social functions as the other investigators in this scenario, but has a keen friendship with Catherine Kennedy. Gossip columnists have followed them on several private outings. They are currently not romantically involved.

Name: Catherine Kennedy, Dilettante
Sex: Female **Age:** 23

STR: 12 **CON:** 14 **SIZ:** 10 **Idea Roll:** 75%
DEX: 11 **INT:** 15 **POW:** 16 **Luck Roll:** 80%
APP: 15 **EDU:** 16 **MP:** 16 **Know Roll:** 80%

Damage Bonus: None **Hit Points:** 12 **SAN:** 80

Skills: Art (Painting) 50%, Credit Rating 60%, Natural History 40%, Pilot (Boat) 30%, Psychology 55%

Description: Catherine is bold with a bright smile for all who meet her. The Kennedy Empire was built on politics. Catherine has attended many of the same social functions as the other investigators in this scenario. She is a firecracker who enjoys the company of powerful men, but she currently has no interest in being pinned-down to only one man.

Name: George R. Hearst, Dilettante
Sex: Male **Age:** 30

STR: 14 **CON:** 15 **SIZ:** 15 **Idea Roll:** 60%
DEX: 13 **INT:** 12 **POW:** 10 **Luck Roll:** 50%
APP: 11 **EDU:** 14 **MP:** 10 **Know Roll:** 70%

Damage Bonus: +1d4 **Hit Points:** 15 **SAN:** 50

Skills: Credit Rating 55%, Listen 50%, Fist/Punch 65%, Fast Talk 45%, Rifle 55%

Description: George has traveled the globe on safari. He has a larger-than-life personality. The Hearst Empire was built on journalism. George has attended many of the same social functions as the other investigators in this scenario. He is stocky with ruddy cheeks and a wide nose; George is no stranger to the seedier side of the street.



Name: Felicity Morgan, Dilettante

Sex: Female **Age:** 27

STR: 11 **CON:** 17 **SIZ:** 12 **Idea Roll:** 70%
DEX: 15 **INT:** 14 **POW:** 11 **Luck Roll:** 55%
APP: 13 **EDU:** 17 **MP:** 11 **Know Roll:** 85%

Damage Bonus: None **Hit Points:** 15 **SAN:** 55

Skills: Credit Rating 50%, First Aid 60%, Library Use 65%,
Other Language (French) 45%, Pharmacy 35%

Description: Felicity is quiet, thoughtful, and cautious. The Morgan Empire was built through aggressive investments. Felicity has attended many of the same social functions as the other investigators in this scenario. Felicity has long had a crush on Augustus Vanderbilt, but has yet to act upon it. She is slim with mousy brown hair and deep green eyes.

Name: Augustus J. Vanderbilt, Dilettante

Sex: Male **Age:** 30

STR: 14 **CON:** 14 **SIZ:** 14 **Idea Roll:** 85%
DEX: 16 **INT:** 17 **POW:** 15 **Luck Roll:** 75%
APP: 17 **EDU:** 16 **MP:** 15 **Know Roll:** 80%

Damage Bonus: +1d4 **Hit Points:** 14 **SAN:** 75

Skills: Credit Rating 70%, Fast Talk 40%, Locksmith 30%, Other Language (Spanish) 65%, Sneak 45%

Description: Augustus is inquisitive, and loves to pry into other people's personal lives. The Vanderbilt Empire was built on journalism. Augustus has attended many of the same social functions as the other investigators in this scenario. Augustus has a million dollar smile, and has used it to gain access to people and places that a journalist usually cannot get into. People tend to underestimate Augustus because of his looks and wealth, but beneath it all is a keen businessman with determined focus on his future.

Name: Joanna Ostermann, Disguised Serpent Person

STR: 13 **CON:** 12 **SIZ:** 11 **DEX:** 14
INT: 17 **POW:** 14 **MP:** 14 **HP:** 12

Damage Bonus: None **Armor:** 1 (Scales)

Weapons: Bite 35%, damage 1d8 + poison POT = CON

Skills: Hide 45%, Sneak 60%

Spells: *Cause Blindness, Cloud Memory, Consume Likeness*

Sanity: 0/1d6 to see a serpent person, or 1/1d6 to witness a serpent person transform from a human disguise into their natural serpent person likeness

Description: This Serpent Person is intent on reaching the United Kingdom alive, and will distance herself from the other Serpent People if need be. The Joanna likeness looks to 58 years old. Her deceased husband made his money in the automobile transmission industry. The Serpent Person assumed the Joanna Ostermann likeness only six month ago, so the Joanna likeness is a perfect replica of modern fashion. This Serpent Person has three previous likenesses that can be used; a 40 year old man (consumed 80 years ago), a 23 year old woman (consumed 110 years ago), and a 33 year old man (consumed 190 years ago).

Name: Daniel Kelly, Disguised Serpent Person

STR: 12 **CON:** 13 **SIZ:** 13 **DEX:** 13
INT: 15 **POW:** 13 **MP:** 13 **HP:** 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4 **Armor:** 1 (Scales)

Weapons: Bite 35%, damage 1d8 + poison POT = CON;
Crowbar 25%, damage 1d8+db

Skills: Hide 35%, Sneak 50%

Spells: *Consume Likeness, Deflect Harm, Spectral Razor*

Sanity: 0/1d6 to see a serpent person, or 1/1d6 to witness a serpent person transform from a human disguise into their natural serpent person likeness

Description: This Serpent Person is intent on protecting his companion, and is quick to use force. The Daniel likeness looks to be 33 years old with a handlebar mustache. The Serpent Person assumed the Daniel Kelly likeness forty years ago, so the Daniel likeness is a little bit out of fashion. This Serpent Person has one previous likeness that can be used; a 35 year old man (consumed 95 years ago).

Appendix II – Non-Player Characters

Name: Lester Shaw, Disguised Serpent Person

STR: 12 **CON:** 12 **SIZ:** 10 **DEX:** 11
INT: 16 **POW:** 15 **MP:** 15 **HP:** 11

Damage Bonus: None **Armor:** 1 (Scales)

Weapons: Bite 35%, damage 1d8 + poison POT = CON

Skills: Hide 40%, Sneak 50%

Spells: *Consume Likeness, Wither Limb*

Sanity: 0/1d6 to see a serpent person, or 1/1d6 to witness a serpent person transform from a human disguise into their natural serpent person likeness

Description: This Serpent Person knows he desperately needs a fresh likeness, and thus is intent on completing the Consume Likeness ritual. The Lester likeness looks to be 35 years old with an unfashionably thick black beard and long dark curled locks of hair. The Serpent Person assumed the Lester Shaw likeness one hundred years ago, so the Lester likeness is very much out of fashion. This Serpent Person has one previous likeness that can be used; a 19 year old woman (consumed 235 years ago).

Name: Judith Farnsworth, Bride – age 20

STR: 8 **CON:** 14 **SIZ:** 8 **DEX:** 15
INT: 13 **POW:** 16 **APP:** 16 **HP:** 11

Damage Bonus: -1d4

Skills: Art (Dance) 40%, Credit Rating 55%

Description: Judith is young, blonde, and the daughter of an oil tycoon.

Name: Jonathan Copperfield, Groom – age 22

STR: 10 **CON:** 12 **SIZ:** 11 **DEX:** 16
INT: 13 **POW:** 12 **APP:** 13 **HP:** 12

Damage Bonus: None

Skills: Credit Rating 60%

Description: Jonathan is a British citizen, and the son of a diamond baron.

Name: Joseph Taft, Nephew of President Taft – age 27

STR: 11 **CON:** 13 **SIZ:** 12 **DEX:** 13
INT: 11 **POW:** 13 **APP:** 14 **HP:** 13

Damage Bonus: None

Skills: Credit Rating 80%

Description: Joseph has a reputation as a drunk and a braggart. His money and family influence have opened many doors for him, and he is more than happy to milk them for all their worth.

Name: Elizabeth Dodd, Mrs. Ostermann's Friend – age 60

STR: 9 **CON:** 10 **SIZ:** 9 **DEX:** 11
INT: 12 **POW:** 10 **APP:** 9 **HP:** 10

Damage Bonus: None

Skills: Credit Rating 65%

Description: Mrs. Dodd is spry, but hard of hearing. She has fond memories of vacationing in Paris with Joanna Ostermann.

Name: Captain Robert Barclay, White Star Captain – age 46

STR: 12 **CON:** 10 **SIZ:** 15 **DEX:** 16
INT: 16 **POW:** 10 **APP:** 12 **HP:** 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Skills: Navigate (Air/Sea) 50%, Pilot (Boat) 60%

Description: Captain Barclay is slightly overweight, balding, generous, and kind.

Name: Reginald Fenster, Ship's Detective – age 46

STR: 13 **CON:** 12 **SIZ:** 13 **DEX:** 12
INT: 12 **POW:** 16 **APP:** 10 **HP:** 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

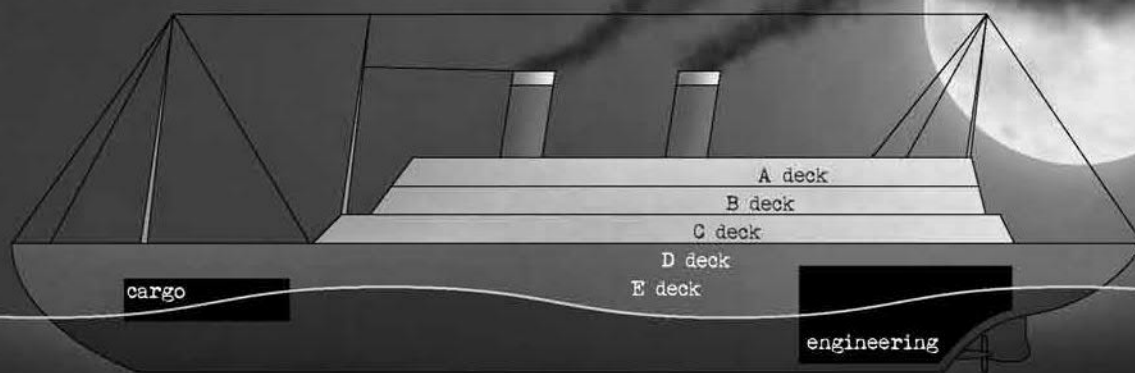
Weapon: Fist/Punch 55%, damage 1d3+db; Blackjack 40%, damage 1D4+2+db; Webley & Scott .32 M.P. semi-automatic pistol 65%, damage 1d8

Skills: Law 55%, Law (Maritime) 25%, Handgun 65%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 45%

Description: Mr. Fenster is clean shaven with dark hair and blue eyes. He was recently hired by the White Star Line to replace Mr. Longman who retired six months ago.

R.M.S. ADRIATIC

side view



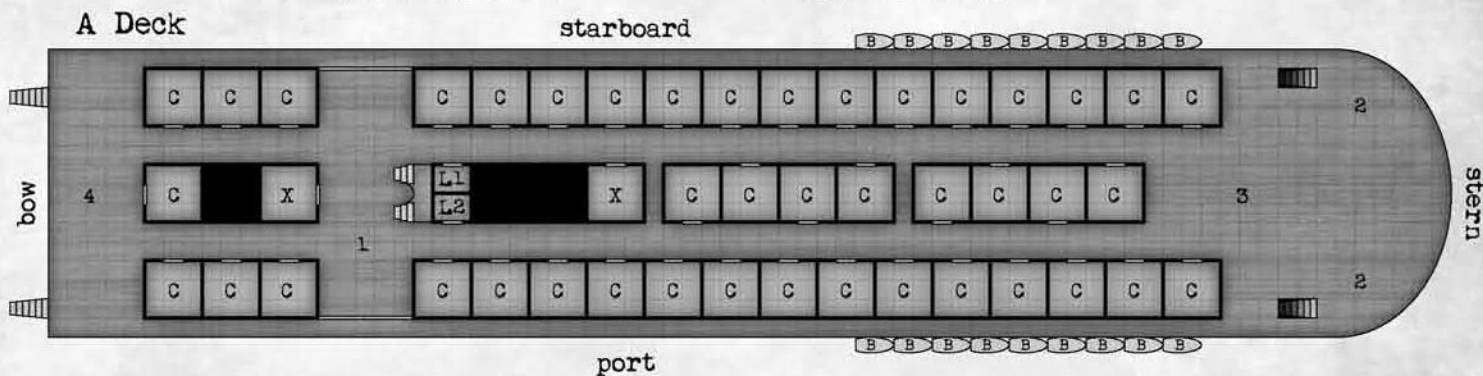
100 feet

R.M.S. ADRIATIC

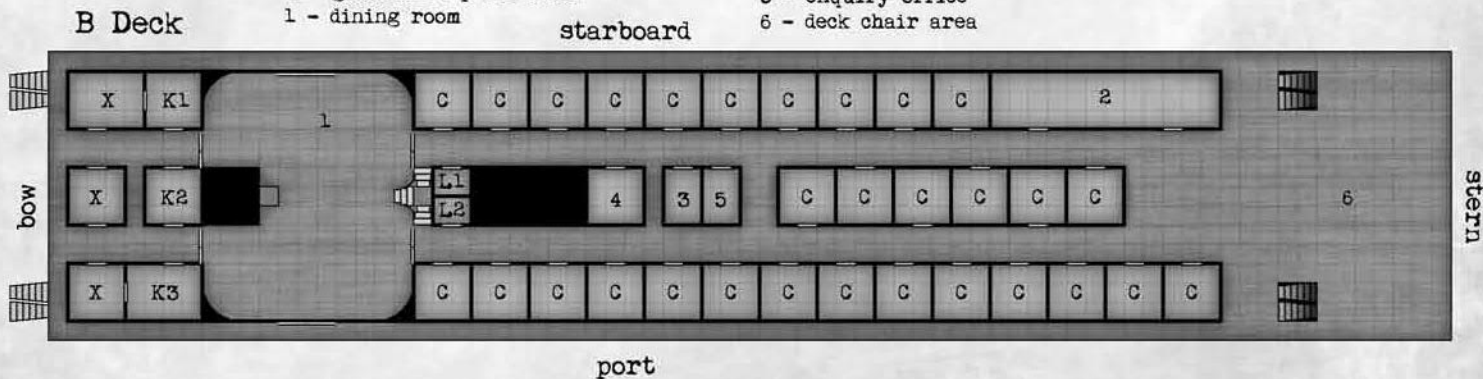
decks

□ - 5 feet

- C - cabins
- B - life boats
- L1 & L2 - elevators
- X - general ship use area
- 1 - lounge
- 2 - skeet shooting area
- 3 - deck chairs area
- 4 - shuffleboard area



- C - cabins
- K1, K2, K3 - kitchens
- X - general ship use area
- 1 - dining room
- 2 - turkish bath / gymnasium
- 3 - detective's office & holding cell
- 4 - infirmary
- 5 - enquiry office
- 6 - deck chair area





Do you have a problem with life, love, or your D20 combat matrix? Archmage Abby is here to help! Every day she uses her powers of divination to answer questions from all walks (and slithers) of life. Here is a selection of her missives since last publication in Level Up #3. If you need advice on your own personal matters, do email her at abby@goodman-games.com.

Dear Archmage Abby,

I have a 5th level dwarf in my party who just gained another action die, but he and I are confused about his deed die. In the "attack modifier" section for the dwarf, the DCC rulebook says, "When the dwarf has multiple attacks at higher levels, the same deed die applies to all attacks in the same combat round." That seems pretty clear to me. However, in Table 1-14, the deed die values have an asterisk which says, "A dwarf's attack modifier is rolled anew, according to the appropriate die, with each attack." Do both the d20 and d14 actions use the same deed die result, as the attack modifier section instructs, or do the d20 and d14 attacks get separate deed die rolls, which is a possible interpretation of Table 1-14? Our elven barrister demands a clear ruling on this!

Thanks for your help,
Jumbled Judge

Dear Jumbled Judge,

I just double checked this, so you can take my word for it, or come to my office and read the entrails yourself: the deed die modifier is rolled once and applied to every die. That "attack" in 1-14 should be "attack round," so the axe strike is the same to hit and damage as the shield bash. Now you and your little barrister friend go and play nice!

Dear Archmage Abby,

I'm a dwarven smith who recently met a beautiful elf archer at the Battle of the Many Armies. She put an arrow through my heart - literally! Ever since a Priest of Moradin resurrected me, I can't stop thinking about her. I'm so distracted I keep accidentally hitting my thumb while working at the anvil. She feels the same - I got it straight from the Magic Mouth - but our families do NOT approve. How can I forge on?

Yours, Under Mountain I Can't Tell Which Way Is East

You have it bad UMITWWE. Tell you what - if you don't at least try to make it work, you will spend the rest of your life making sparks nowhere but at the anvil. Take it slow - ask her out for a quest? In forty or fifty years, start try inviting all four parents over for a loot-divvying pot luck, and take it from there. But be careful - it sounds like your archer knows an even quicker way to a dwarf's heart than gold! Good luck Umitwwe - the Archmage throws you a +1.

PS: Umitwwe is the name of my new familiar. Called it!

Dear Archmage Abby,

I have been having an ongoing argument with another player in my DCC game about music. Who is better: Rush or Styx? When our Judge revealed that the ship our characters had climbed aboard was actually a starship, I thought that sealed the argument in my favor. Styx! But, in the next session we found an artifact that turned out to be a banned musical instrument before the overlords had assumed control. Now my friend says he was right, and Rush is better. What should I do? I really want to keep all my friends and play more DCC but I still think Styx is the best. Thanks in advance, love your column.

(random roll for Pen Name) Mystiqueria the Mystiquirious

Dear Mystiqueria,

Seriously, Styx better than Rush? Go sit in your corner and just think about what you said. Then go out, buy a copy of 2112 and listen to it until Present You is mad at Past You for ever humming along with Too Much Time On My Hands.

Domo arigato,
A.A.

Dear Archmage Abby,

My girlfriend and her girlfriends gather every Monday night to play DCC in my kitchen. It seriously interferes with my football time! Some show up scantily clad, wearing Spock ears, and wielding my kitchen cutlery as if it were daggers. What's a guy to do? I try to be open minded: I mean, my girlfriend can have her hobbies. I guess she isn't hurting everybody. One time I thought, "Hey, I'll see if I can join them." When I asked to sit at my own table, they told me I smelled like a "phlogiston disturbance" and sent me off. What gives? And what is a "phlogiston disturbance"? These women and their "Good Man" chanting make me uncomfortable. I am a good man! Can't they just be, you know, normal? How do I reconnect with my gal?

Sincerely,
Just Wants To Join The Party

Dear JWTJTP,

Good on you for trying to jump in, but nobody is going to let you play if you smell like a gong farmer. Time to clean up your act! Get yourself a good scrub and a haircut, roll up a decent character, and go catch up to your lady love! That goes for all of you reading at home as well. Remember: our tribe spends a lot of time living in the mind, but the mind lives in the body, so you have to take care of it.

Dear Archmage Abby,

I can't seem to get a hang on killing player characters. Just last night they played through Emirikol Was Framed without any major losses. It seems that they always get a 20 on magic shield or missile and I fumble. Also, they slew poor Emirikol with a poisoned dart due to the fact that I forgot that his shield blocked mundane projectiles. I am lousy Judge.

What should I do?
(random roll for Pen Name) Mazor the Plaid Avenger

Dear MPA,

Well It just sounds like your players had an extremely lucky night, and you had some bad dice. That's going to happen to everyone now and again. And I won't even take my +1 yardstick to the back of your hand for forgetting that shield bonus. Characters die when it's their time, and if you are a good Judge you just need to be patient and eventually every character goes on to his eternal rest in that Great Filing Cabinet In Your Mom's Basement in the sky. Every Judge must judge themselves, and what really matters is that you and your crew had a great night rolling dice. They'll probably tell the story about the night they ran roughshod over of the Judge they call Mazor the Plaid Avenger and brought mighty Emirikol down with a clerical error for years to come. I know I will. Anyway, use this as an opportunity to fine tune your game and make it even more lethal fun.



Dear Archmage Abby,

I'm old and grey, and have outlived most of my human friends. My halfling buds keep telling me to ditch the shield and pick up a short sword, or two, and fight like them. Their dirty ranger friends seem to agree. While the stocky stoners encourage me to keep up my sword and board dwarf fighting style. How do I tell these half-pints and scat-kickers to zip it? Or should I reconsider?

Ernest and grey,
Ernest the Grey

Dear Ernest,

The archmage rules that you should tell the whole lot of them to keep their tiny, dirty, stoned opinions to themselves. If you survived this long you must know what you are doing. You are part of a team and that matters, but ultimately, you have to be yourself. So go out there with your shield and show those creeping horrors the importance of being Ernest.

(This next letter came by snail mail. Isn't that precious?)

Dear Archmage Abby,

Hello I have a bit of a dilemma that you may be able to help me with. First of all I really enjoy your column but I have no internet access of any kind.

Here's the root of my question. In Dungeons & Dragons Essentials - Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms there is a build for a Druid, around level 13 the Druid of Summer gains a paragon feature that says:

Benefit: Your reach increases by 1 for melee weapon attacks.

My druid has a quarter staff and I have Staff Expertise which says:

Benefit: ...When you make a melee weapon attack with a staff, the weapon's reach for that attack increases by 1.

Since my paragon feature gives me a reach of one for melee attacks and the feat I have gives my weapon a reach of one, do these two things stack giving me a reach of 2 for melee staff attacks? Am I correct on this? If not could you explain to me why so that I can further understand the way I should play my character. If you could, please mail me my response to (REDACTED!)

Respectfully yours,
Xavior Green (gamer fanatic)

Thanks for dropping me a line! Nice to hear from a fellow gaming fanatic.

To business: the Archmage rules in your favor. If your GM is letting you take abilities out of the Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms book, you can combine that Druid of Summer Paragon ability with the Staff Expertise so your reach with the staff becomes 2. My advice: combine that with a feat that gives you multiple attacks of opportunity and a shillelagh and you become a whirlwind of good old fashioned back-to-nature organic 100% whole grain man-thumping.

I hope this helps. Take care of yourself and thanks for reading!

Good gaming,
Archmage Abby

Dear Archmage Abby,

Ever since our group got together, the other PCs seem to be under the impression that I have a sordid past as an entertainer. Even the DM drops hints that I am tainted, soiled, and of ill-repute. He even had a beggar in Punjar act as though he recognized me, informing the party cleric that people with diseases deserve what they get, and that dipping your spoon in a pig's trough is a sure way to catch filth fever. I'm not sure where he was going, but the other PCs just laughed at me. The other female in our group, Kayleth, looks the other way when Titan, Devin, or Marek are mocking me. What should I do?

Kevika, 4th level Invoker of the Raven Queen

Dear Kevika,

The Archmage sees two ways to handle this.

1. Out of game. Tell your friends that you are feeling disrespected and ganged up on. Ask them to knock off the sordid past junk and let you make the decisions about your character's past. And if they don't quit at that point, it might be time to strike out and find a new group. Don't play with folks who won't respect you, ever never ever.

2. In game. Use your imagination for ways to solve this through

role play. You could get with the GM about your character's past, and eventually you could let it slip that you had a skanky twin sister or look-alike who is the cause of your shady reputation, or that your history is a campaign of rumor-mongering done by your enemies. What you should NOT do is embrace the reputation that your crew invented for you if you don't want it. Do, and they will never respect you and the game keep getting more and more uncomfortable.

And to all of you gamer boys out there: this kind of immaturity is why many girls avoid the Hobby, and I promise you that the Hobby is much more fun with the ladies than without. Titan, Devin, Marek – the Archmage is Watching. Sisters unite!

Dear Archmage Abby,

I'm an infamous Anti-Palidan with lots of evil responsibilities: raising goblin armies, making sure my castle on Ciniste Crag keeps on crumbling, and scheduling which princesses to kidnap from which kingdoms. The problem is that ever since I was a stripling youth being taught to torture prisoners I've felt – in my heart of hearts – that I'm really a cavalier. I dream about unicorns, hum ballads to myself, and can't stop begging favors from the damsels I threaten to ravish. I've kept my minions on the lookout for a Mirror of Opposition but so far, no luck. How can I engender an alignment change?

**Yours,
Just-Gotta-Be-Mean?**

Dear JGBM,

Wow – so you feel like you have goodness bubbling up inside you, but you can't quite let it out? My oh my. Well, for starters don't feel like you have to be evil. Every world needs its share of blackguards and villains, but if you put down the skull and crossbones you can rest assured that some other creep will step in to your shoes and keep on the traditions of well-poisoning, town-pillaging, and stuffing freshmen in lockers.

My question to you is: are you ready to go out there and do right? Think about this carefully – being a hero is a big commitment, and not one you should enter into lightly. Why don't you start small. Next time you take prisoners, why don't you give one of them a bowl of soup instead of 30 lashes? If that feels right, just keep making baby steps.

Need some gaming advice? Send your questions to Archmage Abby! Email to abby@goodman-games.com. We reserve the right to edit letters for size and content. Letters are posted anonymously, and if you do not provide us with a topical nick name for yourself one will be generated for you by rolling randomly on Table 15-9: Archmage Abby's Pen Names for her Darling Gamers. Sending a letter to the Archmage does not guarantee publications. All content becomes property of Goodman Games. If you wish a confidential reply, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.



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Why is it the Worlds Tour (plural)? See the sidebar on page 81!

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Mar. 27-30

Apr. 4-6

Apr. 11-13

June 5-8

June 11-15

June 21

July 2-6

July 18-20

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Nov. 7-9

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Coscon

GaryCon

MepaCon

ConGlomeration

North Texas

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TALES FROM THE ROAD CREW

From Mark Bishop: I was running a DCC game at CincyCon in Ohio for a table of six. Three of the participants were a dad, a mom and their 15 year old daughter, who had never played a table-top RPG before. As we all created characters and began the story, it was funny to watch this young lady set aside her cell phone and texting as she became lost in this strange new world with her mom and dad. I think that everyone enjoyed watching her discover the fun of role-playing games as much as playing the game itself. In that same fifteen year old, I think we all saw ourselves discovering the excitement of exploring dungeons and rolling funny-looking dice for the first time. It became a genuine bonding moment for that family when she dropped a chandelier on a group of advancing skeletal dwarves and saved the party single-handedly! Good for her! And because of that... it was good for all of us.

From Jen Brinkman: The campaign started with the party taking over their local village's economy. They have since revived another town's livelihood by restoring and laying claim to the brewery, and have continued promoting their imports at every port of call (any day spent at a pub is considered research/marketing).

Most notable combats: *First 2013 Road Crew game:* An eldritch oak tries to kill the departing adventurers. Groot the Pious calls for Divine Aid. Natural 20! Lightning strikes, and the tree explodes down to its roots. Sadly, wizard Viktor is still inside the tree, and rolls a 1 to escape. *Playtest, December 2013:* Storming an NPC (with a groan-worthy name), the NPC rolled a devastating critical failure that resulted in him mutilating his own fell hound, making an already tense scene even more disturbing.

Most memorable PCs over the past year, and their defining moments:

- An inspirational dwarf who saved 28 of his fellow villagers by giving such a rousing speech (nat 20!) to get them to revolt against the beastmen leading them to their slaughter.
- The crazy halfling who discovers some skulls that light up in the presence of Chaos, and wears one strapped to his helm as a warning device — topped with the crown of Sezrekan. This is the same halfling who fell in love with an evil sorceress and calls himself a widower after tossing her head down a ravine.
- The warrior who took Quenn's coat and an alchemical blast to the face (unrelated), now calling himself "Captain Bloodbeard."
- A reproachful cleric who willingly changed his alignment at his deity's request.
- A brave dwarf who remembers a leftover explosive charge at just the right time for a "hail mary," saving the party despite his own probable death.
- And the first cleric of the Carnifex to be seen in centuries.

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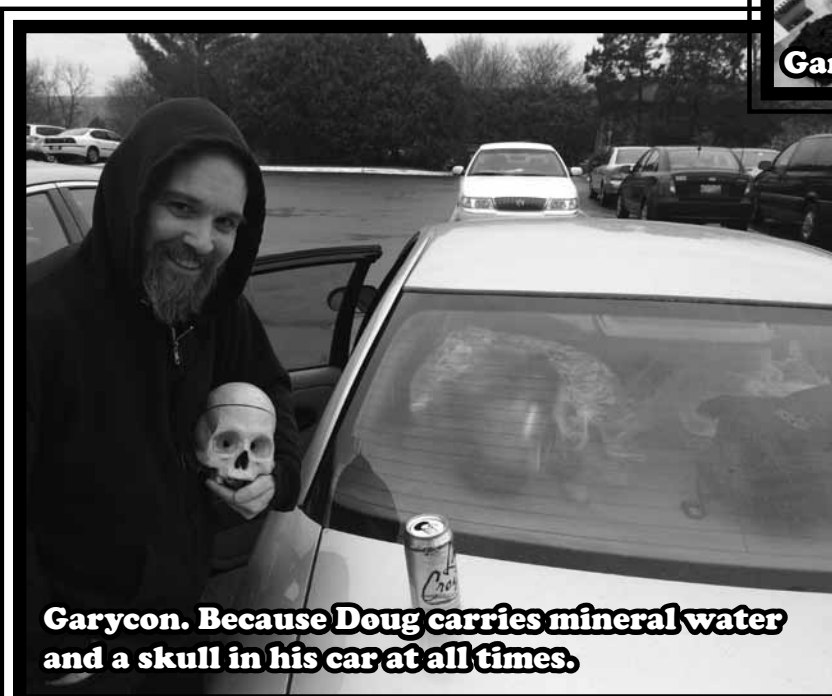




Garycon. Dieter in Jim's game.



Garycon. Mike in action.



Garycon. Because Doug carries mineral water and a skull in his car at all times.



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Garycon. A bunch of dudes playing dress-up in a hotel room. See front cover and page 26 for the result.

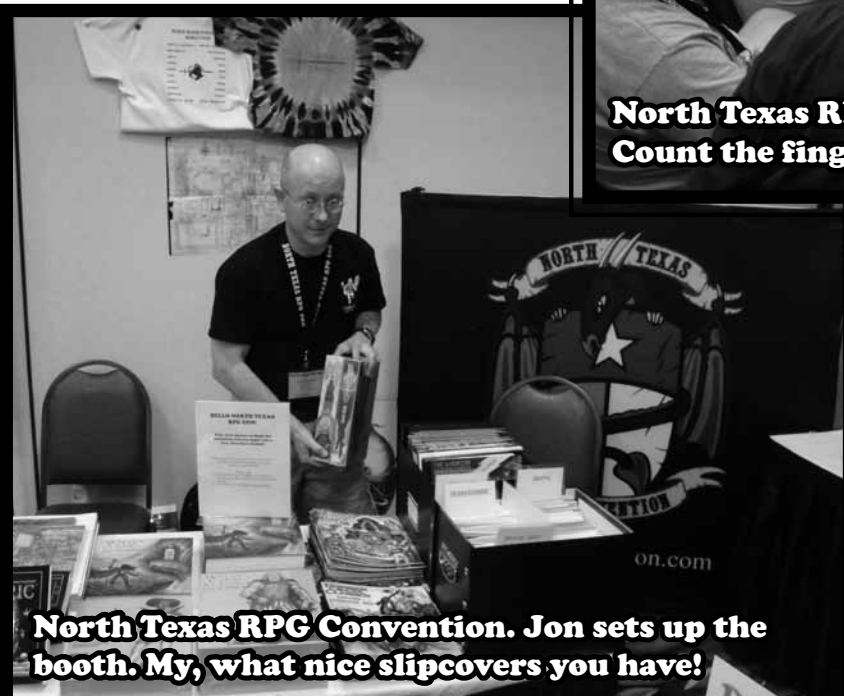


North Texas RPG Convention. Mike decrees doom.

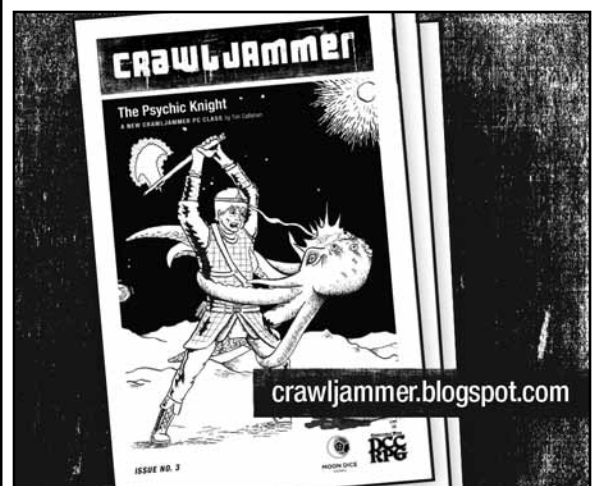
The Well of Souls
 A level 0 adventure for DCC RPG
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North Texas RPG Convention. Doug kills you. Twice. Count the fingers.



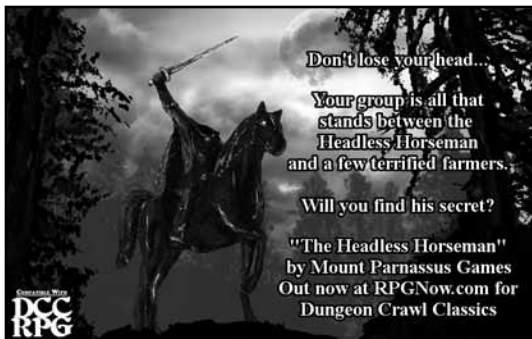
North Texas RPG Convention. Jon sets up the booth. My, what nice slipcovers you have!



THE CURSE OF MANY FACES

Where poor Hugh was cursed by a hideous crone to wear many faces before he could return to Gen Con. Hence he traveled around the country to many cons, until he was photographed with his 1,000th face and the curse was broken!

Featured on these pages are Hugh as Joseph Goodman, Michael Curtis, Doug Kovacs, Peter Mullen, Brendan LaSalle, Jon Hershberger, and Tim Kask, among others. Who can you identify?





GET YOUR PHOTO TAKEN AS HUGH AT THE GOODMAN GAMES BOOTH!

Or punch through his
face. Whatever. It's cool.



THE BATTLE OF GARY CON

Where brave Hugh Heftblade led the Band in a final attack on the foul necromancer.



The Band advances on the necromancer.

CRAWLING UNDER A BROKEN MOON

A fanzine dedicated to bringing gonzo post-apocalyptic content for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG from Goodman Games

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Hugh leads the charge!

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DCC BONUS ENCOUNTERS



Earlier this year, Goodman Games released bonus postcard encounters for customers who pre-ordered select adventures. The physical postcards featuring these bonus encounters are hard to find. For those who didn't pre-order, here are the bonus encounters reprinted for your use.

DCC 80: INTRIGUE AT THE COURT OF CHAOS

Glimpsed by Chaos: Run this encounter prior to beginning DCC #80. It can occur anytime the party discovers a stone object (pillar, plinth, ruined wall, etc.).

Inscribed into the stone surface of the object are five strange symbols placed in asymmetrical fashion. The glyphs depict a pair of clasped six-fingered hands, a single baleful eye, a fearsome horned war-helm, a grotesque theatrical mask, and a wedding ring fashioned from a noose.

Lurking nearby is a clutchculus, a nauseating humanoid terror composed of several scores of severed hands arranged in 5' tall, man-like shape. An entity of Chaos, it pounces on the party, attacking from surprise with its stealth. It grapples its victim, automatically shredding pinned opponents on subsequent rounds with the fingers that comprise its "mouth." Three of the hands comprising its body have precious metal rings worth 5 gp, 10 gp, and 25 gp.

Clutchculus (1): Init +2; Atk mouth fingers +2 melee (automatic hit if opponent is grappled; dmg 1d6+1); AC 13; HD 3d8; HP 17; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP superior grappler (+7 to grapple rolls), stealthy (+10 to sneak), suffers 1/2 damage from non-magical attacks; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -2; AL C

The glyphs are the sigils of the Host of Chaos and they radiate both magic and evil to divination spells. The sigils serve as scrying devices for the Host of Chaos. Unbeknownst to the party, the Court observes their battle with the clutchculus via their sigils and decides to employ them as their patsies against the Scions of Law. The Host dispatches the Tatterdemalion to collect them shortly thereafter, leading to the first encounter in *Intrigue at the Court of Chaos*.



Hugh corners the necromancer!



Hugh delivers the killing blow!

Actors: Jobe Bittman, Marv Breig, Michael Curtis, Joseph Goodman, Jon Hershberger, Dieter Zimmerman

Director: Doug Kovacs

Special thanks to Curt Duval and Dieter Zimmerman for costume and prop assistance!



DCC 81: THE ONE WHO WATCHES FROM BELOW

Bonus Area 2-15 – Magic mouth: This area can be added to the adventure by adding a door to the west end of the kennel in area 2-12. The door is barred from the kennel as if to keep something locked inside. Read or paraphrase the following:

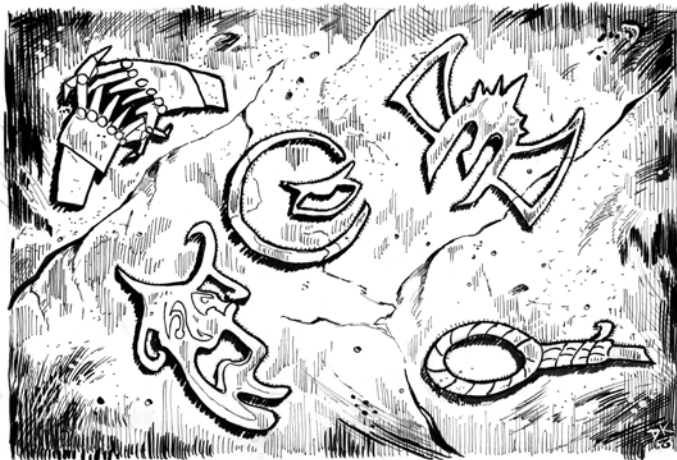
At the bottom of a short set of carved steps, you reach a limestone cavern lined with stalactites and stalagmites at the south end. A large wooden butcher block stands near the center of the chamber splattered with dark red stains. Animal bones litter the floor.

Calciferous deposits coat every surface of this chamber with a slimy white film. The stalactites camouflage the teeth of a 15' wide giant mouth that can move along walls like those afflicted with the Curse of the Emerald Eye. The mouth grabs prey within 30' using a prehensile forked tongue. Then it either bites or swallows its quarry whole. The mouths are quite numerous in Shigazilnizthrub's other vaults of power, but this is the only one in this complex.

When adventurers enter the chamber, the mouth remains motionless. It is accustomed to being fed by the halfling hybrids that leave dead and wounded kennel animals on the wooden block. A successful Luck check will alert PCs of the creature's presence. If the PCs exit without leaving food, the mouth attacks.

Anyone who enters the mouth's stomach may discover a dwarven helm (+1 AC) with a successful Luck check.

Giant mouth: Init +3; Atk tongue lash +3 melee (1d6+3, range 30', successful attack grabs target); AC 15; HD 6d8; hp 27; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP crit table M, d12, bite (adjacent or grabbed target) +6 melee (2d8+3), swallow (grabbed target, DC 12 Fort save or swallowed, 1d3 damage per round until freed); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; AL CH (chaotic hungry).



DCC 82: BRIDE OF THE BLACK MANSE

With a freshly severed hand and the dweomered wax (found in area A-4a) the PCs can create a *Hand of Glory*. The rite only works with the hand of a living humanoid, though the victim need not be willing. The victim can die afterwards, but must be alive for the completion of the ritual.

Lit, the *Hand* casts a 30' diameter sphere of murky light. A *Hand* burns a total of 5d5 rounds, and may be extinguished between uses.

The adventure provides for powers by the original owner's alignment, but at the judge's discretion, flaming, wax-covered hands also display powers based upon species:

Elf: Elven hands spit and flare with weird violet flames. Any spells or magical effects cast within the light fail, and character attempting to use an item's magic power must first succeed on a DC 10 Will save.

Dwarf: The leathery flesh of dwarven *Hands* slowly melts to reveal golden bones (worth a grisly 15 gp). The bearer of the *Hand* can detect gold or magic within the range of the hand-light; the bearer and his allies receive +3 to all attack and damage checks made against targets within the glow of the light.

Halfling: Lit, the hand glimmers with soft silvery light. The bearer is able to burn Luck as a halfling. The PC does not regain any spent Luck spent in this manner unless the *Hand's* flame is kept lit through the following day. (Keeping the flame alive for 24 hours obviously requires a great number of severed hands, but not all the hands need belong to halflings.)



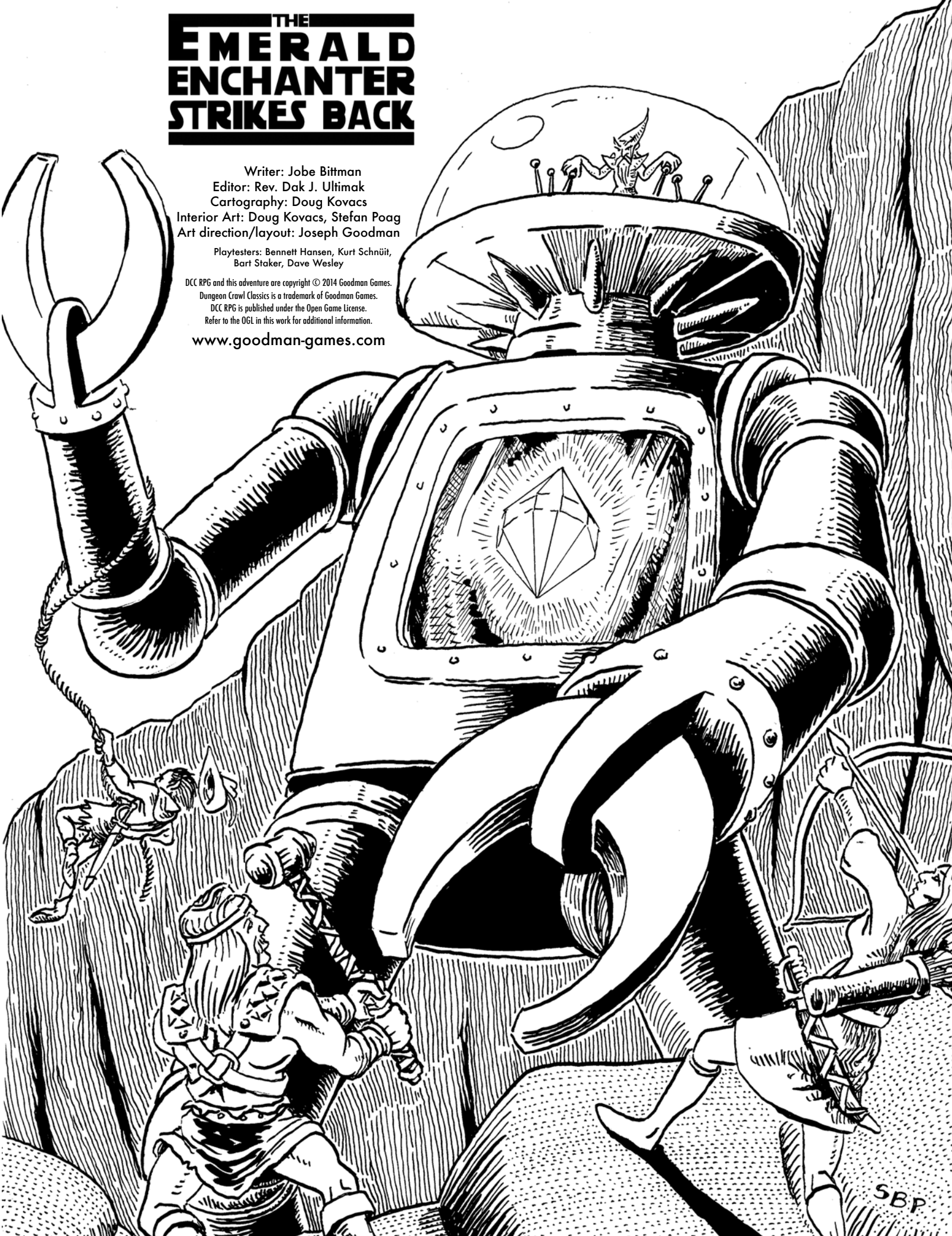
THE EMERALD ENCHANTER STRIKES BACK

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INTRODUCTION

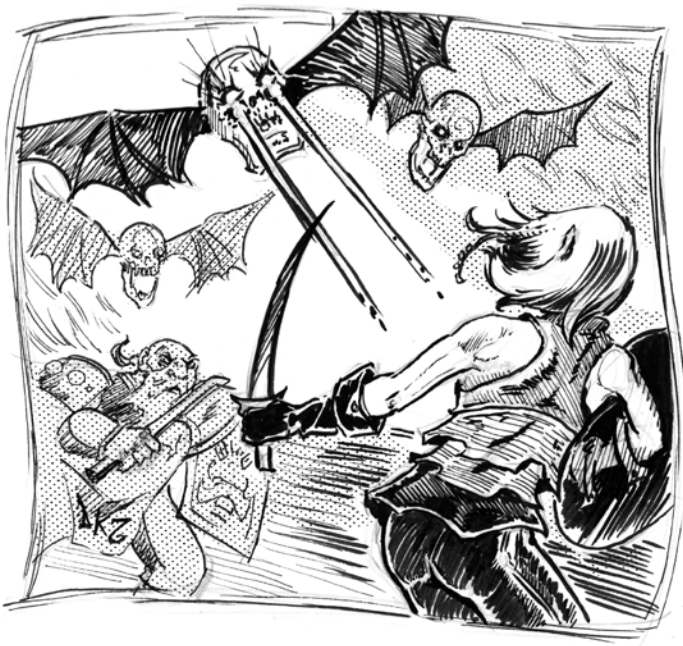
Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

The Emerald Enchanter Strikes Back is designed for 8-10 2nd-level characters as a follow up to *DCC #69: The Emerald Enchanter*. While the action picks up after the events of the previous adventure, the judge is not required to have run or even read the previous adventure.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventurers must hunt down the villain over a large hex map. Judges should read the entire text beforehand to solidify the broad strokes of the adventure in their minds. Also, make sure to understand the section "Enter the Emerald Titan," which details the encounter where the characters infiltrate the Emerald Enchanter's animated armor.

A central theme of this adventure is improvisation. The open-ended nature of a hex map begs the judge to make snap decisions about the unfolding story based on logic and the player characters' previous actions. I challenge all judges to incorporate new adventure elements on the fly. In fact, the gemstone nightmare encounter requires the invention of new monsters on the spot. The prelude to the final encounter, "Enter the Emerald Titan," necessitates situational adjudication. There are too many ways for the player characters to take on the titan to outline them all.



BACKGROUND

Recently, the adventurers ran afoul of the schemes of a green-skinned sorcerer who was attempting to build an army by transmogrifying kidnapped villagers into mind-controlled emerald eidolons (for more information, see *DCC #69: The Emerald Enchanter*). The party ended the mad mage's reign of terror and quested onward, but reports of the wily enchanter's demise appear to have been premature. The green-skinned corpse in the enchanter's citadel was an emerald-infused clone created with the evil mage's latest experimental techniques. While the battle raged in his transmogrification lab, the real Emerald Enchanter sipped sherry and cursed his fortunes protected in a subterranean bunker.

The Emerald Enchanter brooded for days. His stronghold was in ruins and his army shattered. He counted his options and they totaled one: Activate doomsday protocol alpha and take revenge on those who brought him so low. The mage depressed a brass plunger. Then, the citadel shuddered. The walls crumbled to reveal massive armor plates concealed within the masonry. The metal plates rose into the air amidst a thundering crescendo of imploding walls and billowing dust. When the cloud settled, the enchanter's secret weapon stood at the locus of the devastation: a titan metallic-green suit of armor twice as tall as a storm giant. Atop its shoulders, a giant glass dome was affixed in place of a head. Within, the ruddy-faced enchanter sat upon a gleaming throne working a mass of levers and switches. The green giant shook its fists at the night sky in rage to the sound of grinding metal on metal.

JUDGE'S NOTES

The majority of the adventure plays out over a large area map. The party will need to use sight to get the lay of the land. The average human can see nearly 3 miles under ideal conditions (e.g. clear day, flat land). Since each hex on the map covers 2 miles, the characters should be able to easily see one hex in all directions most times. A spyglass multiplies the range of eyesight twelve times. With a sufficiently elevated vantage point and line of sight, most characters with a spyglass can distinguish human-sized figures up to 36 miles away (or 18 hexes).

Travel is an integral part of this adventure. Pedestrians can travel up to 24 miles per day on flat terrain (12 hexes); horses or ponies increase the range to 32 miles (16 hexes); and warhorses further increase it to 40 miles (20 hexes). Difficult terrain reduces the range by 50% or more. Other modes of transportation are detailed in the "Overland Speed" section (*DCC RPG rulebook*, p. 308). Completist judges may also want to review the mounted combat rules (*DCC RPG rulebook*, p. 91).

The evil enchanter has designs on all the local towns. One week after the adventure starts, the titan attacks Hirot at night leaving the same device as in Riverdown (Area 1-5). Philbin will fall another week later.

PLAYER START

The adventure begins days to weeks after the last encounter with the Emerald Enchanter. It assumes the mage was killed at the conclusion, and the characters have moved onto another region.

It can't be true. You saw him die. The peasant hunches over, panting to regain his breath. After several long wheezes, he gazes up at you with the same pleading expression. "Didya hear me? I come a long way to bear this message. You brought a terrible curse 'pon the land. He's exacting vengeance on us all for what you done. The Emerald Enchanter yet lives. "

The peasant begs the adventurers to return and finish the job they started. He first appeals to the adventurers' sense of duty, then their honor, then finally threatens to inform the nearest authorities if they received any monetary rewards regarding the evil mage's extermination. The peasant recounts wild tales of a green monster stalking the woods near the citadel. People are disappearing without a trace. It can only be the work of the Emerald Enchanter. The peasant assures the adventurers that if they investigate, they will learn his tales are true. Once the party agrees, the peasant draws a map with a shortcut leading to the player start area near area 1-1.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Locating the Emerald Enchanter is a bit like looking for a needle in a haystack while blindfolded. The wily mage only attacks under the cover of darkness and conceals his titan armor in the dense forests during the day. Meanwhile, the mage continues to release his "experiments" into the wild to harry his detractors.

In addition to the keyed locations on the map, there is a chance of a random encounter with the unknown. Staring with a base chance of 0%, each hex traversed cumulatively increases the likelihood by 5%. For example, after moving one hex the chance of a random encounter occurring is 5%, after two hexes it increases to 10%, and so on. If the roll determines that a random encounter occurs, roll once on Table W: Wilderness Encounters. Afterward, the base chance of a random wilderness encounter resets to 0% and increases by 5% cumulatively for each hex traversed. Also note, there are two zones on the map: A and B. Refer to the proper column on Table W for the zone of the current hex if applicable. The Emerald Titan is only found in Zone B unless the party lays a clever trap.

Flying emerald skulls (2d4): Init +4; Atk bite +1 melee (1) or eye-beams +2 missile fire (1d3); AC 16; HD 1/2d8; hp 3 each;

TABLE W: WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

D30	Zone A	Zone B
1	Web-footed tracks lead west.	Large footsteps lead north.
2	Aquamarine skeletons attack simultaneously from east and west.	
3	Crystal thralls shamle toward the party.	
4	A lone grizzly bear howls and attacks.	
5	Dried mud preserves hoofed tracks.	A path of felled trees is visible to the north.
6	Emerald eidolons attack.	
7	Gemstone horrors incoming.	
8	A gemstone nightmare attacks.	
9	A dead body propped against a tree. A small coin purse holds 1d6 gp.	
10	Something heavy was dragged from here to the north recently.	A metal green giant thunders the ground as it walks east. Go to Area 2.
11	A flock of flying emerald skulls descend from the forest canopy.	
12	Two groups of gemstone minions attack at once.	
13	A soiled backpack is stuffed in a nook. Roll 3 times on Table F.	
14	Barking sounds become stronger then fade away.	
15	Light glints off a large figure to the north-west.	A giant suit of green armor runs east a mile north of the party. Go to Area 2.
16	Two grizzly bears rush the party.	
17	You find an item. Roll once on Table F.	
18	A gemstone nightmare howls one hex north. It hasn't seen the party.	
19	Gemstone minions surprise the party.	
20	Four-toed footprints lead west.	Toppled trees form an alley heading northwest.

MV fly 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +2; AL N.

Grizzly bear: Init +2; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6) or claw +4 melee (1d6); AC 15; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 3d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

Emerald eidolons (1d4): Init +2; Atk sword +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 30'; SP death throes (reverts to human when killed); Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

Crystal thralls (2d4): Init +3; Atk improvised weapon +6 melee (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

Aquamarine skeletons (2d3): Init +4; Atk shard claw +8 melee (1d8); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

Gemstone creatures: The generic stat blocks below are used for improvised monsters. To flesh out the creation, the judge should pick a random gemstone. Then, pick an animal or monster. Try to incorporate player choices into the description. If the players speculated about the origin of tracks found in the adventure, use this creature. You can also press players for the contents of their character's dreams when they camp or use a feared monster from the character's past.

Gemstone minion (2d6): Init +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6) or +1 missile fire (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N.

Gemstone horror (1d4): Init +4; Atk +4 melee (1d10) or +2 missile fire (1d8); AC 15; HD 2d10; hp 12 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

Gemstone nightmare: Init +3; Atk +8 melee (2d6) or +10 missile fire (1d10); AC 18; HD 4d12; hp 28 each; MV 25'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

Found items: The table below provides a list of random items for characters to discover.

THE OVERLAND MAP

Area 1-1 - Inn: Smoke rises from the chimney of a rustic, three-gabled building to the north. A wooden shingle that reads "The Winsome Wench" creaks in the wind. The odor of tobacco and hearty stew wafts from the open front door.

The innkeeper, Curtis Ekim, puffs a meerschaum pipe behind the bar. He is a tall, gregarious man with a deep voice and infectious laugh, but starved for company. He interjects whenever there is a lull in the adventurers' conversation. Business has slowed to a trickle recently. No one has been visited for over a week. Nita, a scraggly waif with two missing front teeth, takes food orders - ostensibly the innkeeper's daughter and ironically the inn's namesake. Rooms are 5 sp/night. Stew is 1 sp with a choice of fish or chicken. For any characters that eat the fish stew, the judge should make a secret DC 15 Fort save twenty-four hours later to determine if food poisoning sets in. The condition causes a severe case of "the runs" and inflicts -2 penalty to all rolls until the character gets a full night's rest.

Area 1-2 - Riding corpse: A cloaked rider trots down the road toward you, crouching low in the saddle.

The rider is slumped forward, hidden beneath a cloak. The horse will not resist any attempts to grab its reins. Under the cloak is a grisly sight: a dead human male in nightclothes. Pale blue crystals pierce his skull, jut from his eye sockets, and impale his upper torso. The rider succumbed to his injuries shortly after escaping the destruction at Riverdown (see area 1-5).

Area 1-2A - Beaten path: A lightly used trail breaks off the main road here and leads north towards the tree line.

Area 1-3 - Crossroads: A skeletal corpse with missing hands hangs from a dead oak marking the crossroads of Pilgrim's Pass and the King's Way. Nearby, a weather-beaten signpost indicates the towns of Riverdown, Philbin, and Hirot lie to the north. A tremendous granite mesa towers above the evergreens to the northwest.

TABLE F: FOUND ITEMS

D30	Found Items				
1	Cooking pan	11	Claw hammer	21	Jar, moonshine
2	1d6 copper pieces	12	Heavy wrench	22	Pry bar, 5-foot
3	Heavy rope, 100'	13	Baling wire	23	1 gold piece
4	Candle	14	Spyglass	24	Smoked mackerel
5	Wineskin	15	15' pole	25	Canoe
6	Kitten	16	Pipe and tobacco	26	Tanned animal hide
7	Chamber pot	17	Waterskin	27	Spade
8	Crowbar	18	Clean clothes	28	Fishing pole
9	Spoiled meat	19	Shiny rock	29	Herb pouch
10	Random weapon (DCC RPG: Table 3-1)	20	Random equipment (DCC RPG: Table 3-4)	30	Random mount (DCC RPG: Table 3-5)

Anyone with ties to the region knows the plateau as Flat Rock. The site is unused except during solstice festivals. Craggy handholds make it easy to climb from all sides, but a gentle brae on the northwestern face is the safest entry point. Riverdown, Ferryton, and the Emerald Enchanter's citadel can be seen from the apex. The skulls in area 1-4 may attack here or on the roads north and west.

Area 1-4 – Flat Rock: Flying emerald skulls from the Emerald Enchanter's ruined citadel now roost at Flat Rock feeding off the sporadic road travelers. The skulls swoop down on the party as they travel along roads adjacent to Flat Rock. They prefer to attack with the sun at their backs to surprise opponents.

Flying emerald skulls (10): Init +4; Atk bite +1 melee (1) or eye-beams +2 missile fire (1d3); AC 16; HD 1/2d8; hp 3 each; MV fly 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +2; AL N.

Area 1-5 – Riverdown: *Columns of brown smoke stream from several smoldering huts in the river port. The streets are silent and empty. A plaque reading "Riverdown" hangs askew from a bent signpost.*

Riverdown is the most recent victim of the Emerald Titan's fury. A 12-inch thick, invisible force field creates a perfect circle around the town. The barrier is impenetrable, but only extends 20' into the air and 2' below the ground (or water on the riverside). Traveling to the town square reveals a staff set with a glowing pale blue gem driven into the ground at the center of the barrier's circle.

Villagers trapped within the barrier are slowly turning into aquamarine thralls of the Emerald Enchanter. Crystalline shards of aquamarine grow through their bodies, pulsing with light in time with the staff in the square. The villagers hide in buildings during the day and wander like automatons through the dark alleys at night. The villagers are nimble-footed, and wait for outsiders to stroll into town before ambushing in a small group with whatever makeshift weapons they have on hand (e.g. farmer with pitchfork, butcher with cleaver, or candle maker with candelabra). Each time a building is entered, there is a 30% chance of

encountering more thralls, and some salvageable items; roll 1d3 times on Table F: Found Items. A group of 1d3+1 thralls is always milling around the town square.

Crystal thralls (2d4): Init +3; Atk improvised weapon +6 melee (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

Smashing the staff gem in the town square drops the force field and releases the villagers from its spell. The shards stop glowing and the villagers fall to the ground. Depending on the extent of crystalline growth, the villagers have a 25-50% chance of dying after 1d3 days. Cleaning and bandaging wounds reduces the chance by 10%. Use of healing magic and potions completely negates the effects. Survivors' memories are foggy, but a few can recall brief flashes of the attack; roll on Table S: Survivor Stories.

If the staff is left undisturbed, the transformation completes in one week; the transmogrified monsters look like aquamarine golems with a skeleton encased within.

Area 1-6 – Ferryton: *You spot a small fishing village nestled among the reeds of the riverbank. There are no signs of activity.*

Ferryton was the site of the Emerald Enchanter's first bloody reprisal. The thralls have long since wandered off in service of their new master. A staff with a dull gemstone is staked in the center of the village, its magic long since exhausted. There are 12 ratty wooden shacks arranged in a semi-circle facing the water and several rowboats and canoes dragged to shore. Each shack holds common household items and one salvageable item; roll once on Table F.

Area 1-7 – Philbin: *A series of switchbacks lead up a rocky escarpment. At the top of the mountainous formation, you spot a lookout tower beyond a rough-cut palisade. A muted horn blast from above heralds your approach.*

A fundamentalist sect of Daentharr, the Mountain Lord, established the town of Philbin. Most of the town's income comes from logging. Philbinians prefer a life of isolation and prize rugged individualism. They are suspicious of outsiders, but willing to engage in trade – they have a

TABLE S: SURVIVOR STORIES

3D6	Survivor Stories
3	A giant golem attacked then left by walking northwest through the river.
4	Doom! Doom! Ground go boom!
5	A huge green dragon razed the town.
6	It was YOU! Guards! Help! Someone stop them!
7-14	No recollection whatsoever, or utter nonsense (e.g. unicorn stampede).
15	The ire of Justicia is upon us. We are all sinners. Repent!
16	Storm giants raided our village.
17	It was too dark. Something came from the north that shook the earth.
18	A wizard and a green giant attacked. It must be the Emerald Enchanter!



well-stocked general store – and share knowledge of recent events.

The townsfolk refer the adventurers to Treesha Mangrave if questioned about recent events. Treesha retired from adventuring many years ago and is seen as the best person to puzzle out ill portents. As a matter of fact, strange happenings do seem to be afoot. Lookouts have spotted trees swaying west of the river when the wind was calm. Also, fires were spotted near Riverdown, but no one has requested assistance. Treesha gets permission for the adventurers to use the lookout tower and telescope if requested. Treesha guides the viewer through points of interest: **Ferryton**, a fishing village across the river, looks deserted; **Riverdown**, the local port of call, cannot be directly viewed due to a cluster of tall spruce, but thick brown smoke rises from the general vicinity; the **citadel** of the recently deceased Emerald Enchanter is barely discernible on a clear day as a speck on a cliff far to the northwest; **Hiro**t, a small town to the north, is obscured, but the wispy smoke of cook-fires hang in the air.

When the party departs, Treesha's sons, Sage and Guder, eager to embark on adventures of their own, offer their services as hirelings (4 cp per week each). The brothers come equipped with leather jerkins and hatchets. Neither can fail a morale check when the other is present.

The Brothers Mangrave (2): Atk hatchet +1 melee (1d6); AC 12; hp 3 each.

Area 1-8 – Hirot: Earth mound fortifications encircle a grubby town topped by a vicious wall of sharpened logs. Desperate wattle-and-daub buildings and ramshackle hovels cower shoulder to shoulder within, held together by a rat's nest of clotheslines and human filth.

The town of Hiro

t was first explored in *Dungeon Crawl Classics* #66.5: *Doom of the Savage Kings*. Characters who previously played through the adventure will discover not much has changed; all their previous contacts are still there. For detailed information about the town and its inhabitants, reference DCC #66.5.

The gates of Hiro

t open at dawn and are barred at dusk. Unless the characters are known to the night watch, the gates will not be opened after curfew. The entire town is on edge. Loud crashes awoke the townsfolk last night. A guard swears that a green-skinned giant was staring at him from above the tree line, but disappeared into the woods.

Area 1-9 – Ruined Citadel: Piles of cracked masonry and the skeletal frame of the outer walls are all that remain of this once-proud citadel.

The site of the Emerald Enchanter's former cliff-top stronghold commands a sweeping view of the river valley below. The source of the citadel's destruction is not apparent. The utter devastation and strewn rubble indicate a large explosion. However, there are no scorch marks or charred remains. The site has been abandoned for some time.

ENTER THE EMERALD TITAN



Locating the titan is only half the battle. The adventurers must breach the armor to end the Emerald Enchanter's bloody career once and for all. The armor has several weak points if the characters take the time to uncover them.

Once the titan is found, the judge should allow the players ample time to formulate a plan of attack. Observant characters may spot the chinks in the titan's armor with a DC 10 Intelligence check. Sneaking in, luring the titan into a trap, or rushing headlong into battle heedless of danger are but a few of the possibilities. Evaluate the players' plan and assign a difficult class to a few key points. After the first adventurer breaches the armor, hand wave or simplify other party member's skill checks.

The titan armor is a marvel of arcane engineering. From the inside, localized gravity allows one to walk on the walls as if under the effects of centrifugal force. Hatches separate the lower limbs, upper limbs, torso, and head.

Emerald titan: Init +6; Atk punch or stomp +10 melee (1d20); AC 24; HD 20d12; hp 130; MV 55'; Act 1d24; SP immune to mind effects and critical hits, crit on 20-24; SV Fort +18, Ref +17, Will Immune; AL N.

Area 2-1 – Lower Limb: The right ankle and the left forearm of the titan's armor have loose plates; DC 15 Strength check to open. Soon after the party regroups, the room begins to flood with brackish water as the titan submerges the limb in a lake or river and proceeds to thrash it about. There is a risk of drowning, and the characters must make a DC 10 Strength check to avoid getting knocked off their feet.

Area 2-2 – Upper Limb: Each upper limb contains 1 **green-skin warrior** (stats below). Every other round the titan pokes a splintered tree through a crack in the armor. A random creature must succeed in a DC 20 Reflex save or take 1d10 damage from impaling.

Area 2-3 – Torso: An enormous glowing emerald spins on its axis at the center of the large chamber. Destroying the gem (AC 22; hp 20) causes the titan to shutdown, but doesn't prevent a dome launch (area 2-4). A loose plate on the back can be popped off from outside with a DC 20 Strengthcheck. The room contains 2 **green-skin warriors**. In round 2, a hive of angry bees is pushed in via a crack in the armor (-1 to all rolls as bees harass PCs).

Area 2-4 – Glass Dome Head: The Emerald Enchanter holds one last trick up his sleeve. After combat starts, the mage launches the glass dome to an unknown destination.

You enter the glass dome and spot the Emerald Enchanter sitting on a throne covered in buttons and levers. He is larger than you remember, and his flesh is a healthy pink. Verdant silken robes flow over his shoulders to the floor. "Fools!" the mage cries. "You are too late." Glowing red letters float in the air above his chair counting down: 10... 9... 8...

Combat tactics: The Emerald Enchanter casts *magic shield* prior to the party's arrival.

Round 2: The countdown reaches zero. The glass dome detaches from the titan armor and rockets into the air, propelled by eldritch thruster engines.

Round 3: The dome is 10' above the titan's shoulders.

Round 4: The dome is an additional 20' higher.

Round 5: The dome gains another 40' of height.

Round 6: G-forces halve all movement. The dome gains 80'.

Round 7: G-forces pin everyone down. All occupants of the dome are prone and immobile until the dome reaches its final location.

Green-skin warriors (10): Init +4; Atk crystal claw +8 melee (1d10+1); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 17 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

Emerald enchanter (high-level wizard): Init +2; Atk wizard staff +3 melee (1d4+6) or dagger +3 melee (1d4+2) or dagger +2 missile fire (1d4+2); AC 11; HD 6d4+4; hp 24; MV 30'; SP spellcasting (see below), familiar (see below), patron (Azi Dahaka), wizard staff (+2 to saves, +2 to spell checks on *magic missile*), above-average ability scores (Str 14, Sta 14, Int 16, Luck 7); Act 1d20+1d14; SV Fort +5 (+7 vs. poison), Ref +4, Will +5; AL C.

Equipment: wizard staff, padded armor, 6 daggers, *potion of slow falling* (no damage from a single fall), *green rabbit's foot* (+2 Luck checks), iron skeleton key.

Spells: Spell check +8 in general; +9 on *invoke patron*, +10 on *magic missile*. Spells known: (level 1) *cantrip*, *find familiar*, *invoke patron* (+9 spell check), *magic missile* (green arrows; +10 spell check due to wizard staff; cast without motion due to mentalism aspect of mercurial magic), *magic shield*, *patron bond* (2/day), *runic alphabet (mortal)*, *spider climb*, (level 2) *wizard staff*, (level 3) *make potion*.

Familiar: Scorpion. Atk sting +2 melee (1d4 + poison, DC 15 Fort save or death), AC 14, HP 1.

Treasure: 1 small **locked chest** containing 2d30 gp, 1d100 sp, and 3 flawless rubies (30 gp each). A **bulky backpack** with extra strength straps and a pull cord contains several books of fiction and dirty laundry. Swiftly pulling the cord, releases the contents to the floor.

CONCLUSION



The end of the adventure is open-ended. Will the adventurers jump from the glass dome before slaying the enchanter, or attempt a crash landing using the strange control panel? Maybe they buckle in for a ride on the dome's pre-programmed course. The destination is up to you: Moon Base Zeta, the Lost Isle of the Old Dragons, another published adventure, or parts unknown. Use your best judgment and go with the flow.

THE EMERALD ENCHANTER STRIKES BACK



ZONE A

ZONE B

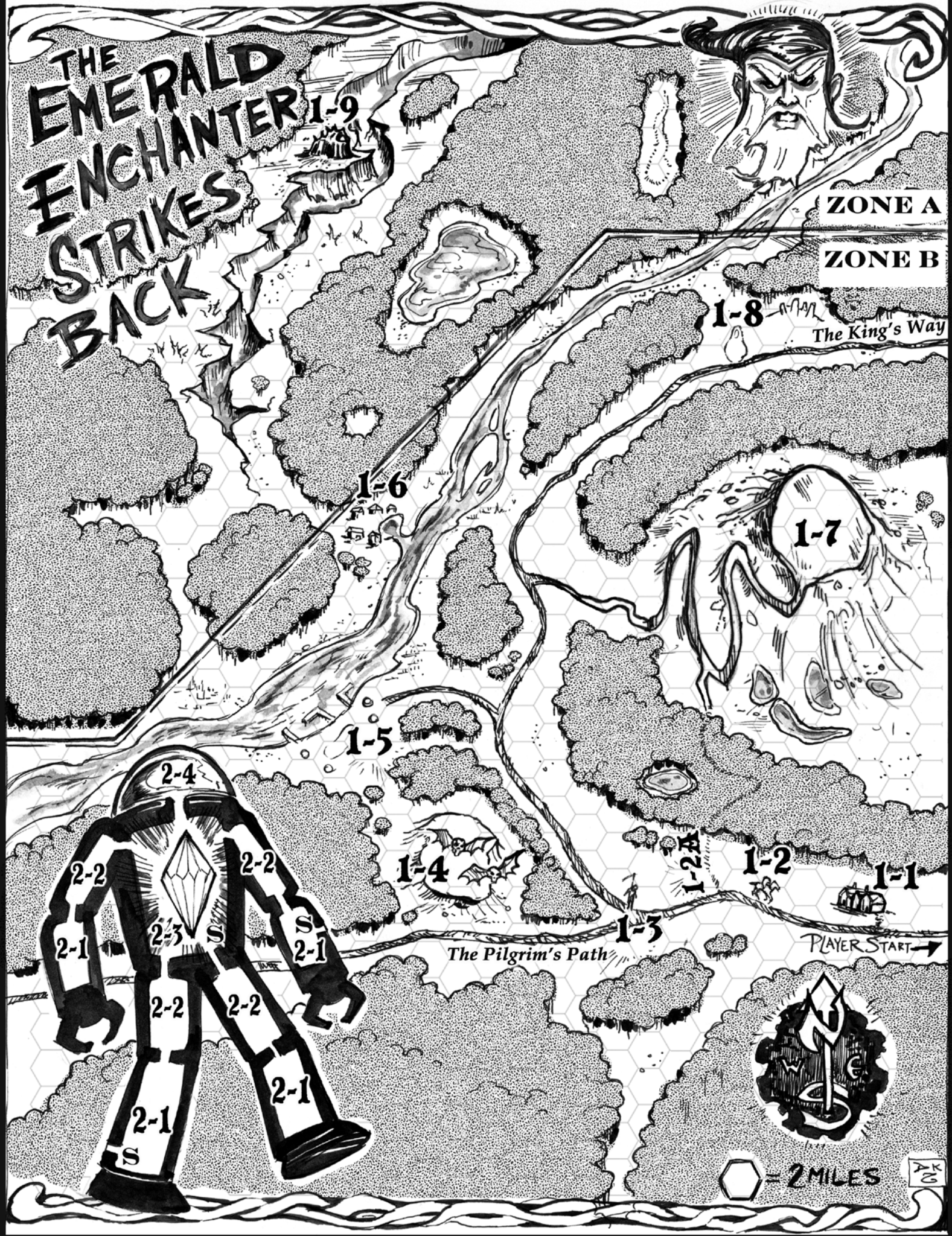
The King's Way

The Pilgrim's Path

PLAYER START →

⬡ = 2 MILES

AK 8



2014 MAILING LABELS

If you've ever ordered from the Goodman Games online store, you've experienced the excitement of getting a package in your mailbox with one of our custom mailing labels! Here are the labels used in 2014. Collect 'em all!



THE DCC COVER DESIGN PROCESS



he design process behind Doug Kovacs' amazing covers for Dungeon Crawl Classics involves constant collaboration. Doug is the mastermind and artistic visionary, incorporating input from author and publisher toward the finished product. Typically the author provides a brief designating one or more possible cover ideas, all derived from the adventure manuscript. Doug reads the manuscript and interprets the author's suggestions visually. There are several steps in this visualization, which are described below. Joseph, as publisher and "guy who has to make sure this stuff sells," then provides suggestions from a marketing perspective. Doug then rails about f***ing writers and publishers for a bit, then turns in something brilliant. The end result has been spectacular for many years in a row now.

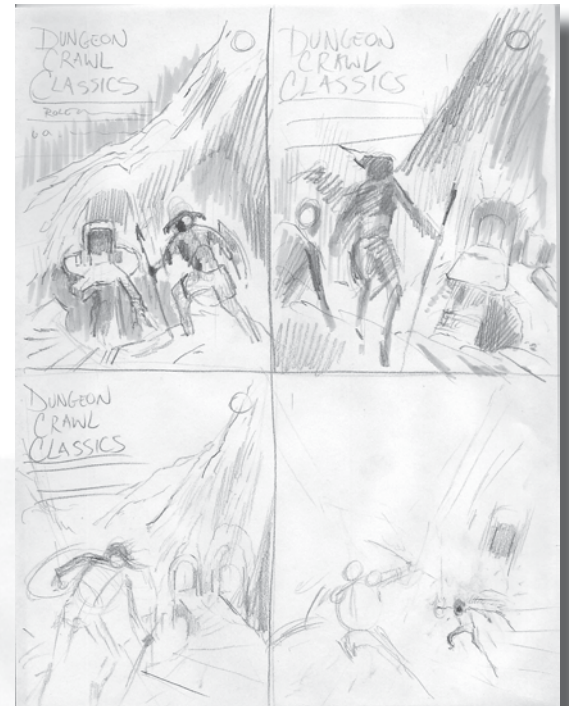
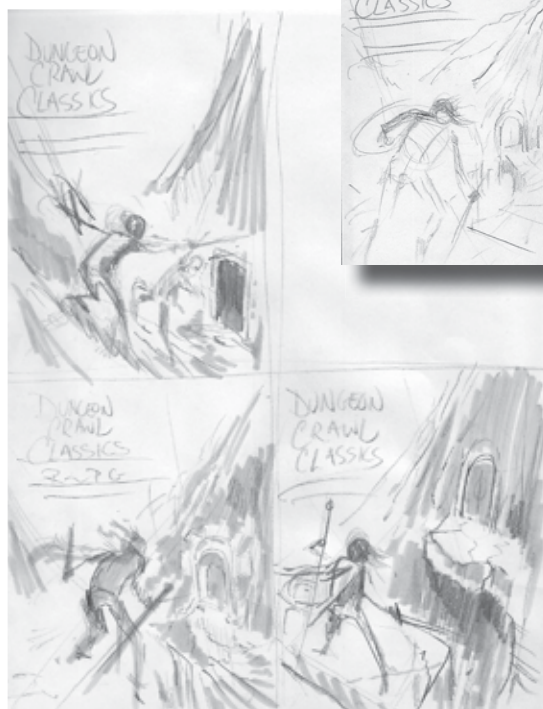
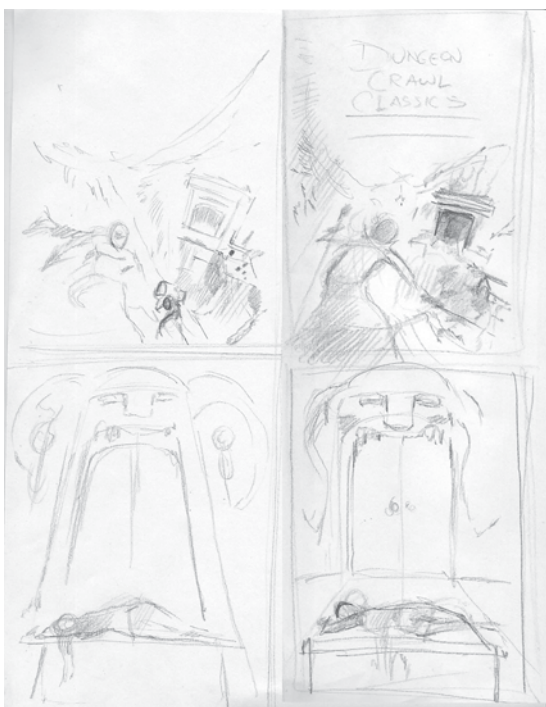
On these pages, we are presenting sketches and stages in the evolution of several well-known DCC cover images. These are selected from some of the publisher's favorite images that Doug has completed in recent years. His process typically involves a series of very rough thumbnails, showing only basic concepts and image placement. From there he progresses to a loose pencil sketch. That pencil sketch is then tightened up into an image which, if it weren't destined for painting, would be suitable on its own for publication as a pencil image. That image is then ruoghed - sometimes digitally, sometimes in paint - to show a color palette, which is a subject in and of itself (not covered here). Finally, the tight pencil image is painted to generate the finished image.

Here, then, are those various stages for the DCC RPG core rulebook cover art, the gold foil cover art, the covers to *Sailors on the Starless Sea* and *People of the Pit*, and the cover to *One Who Watches From Below*. The sketch imagery provided here was originally scanned at low resolution, since it was not intended for publication, so the renderings are rough.

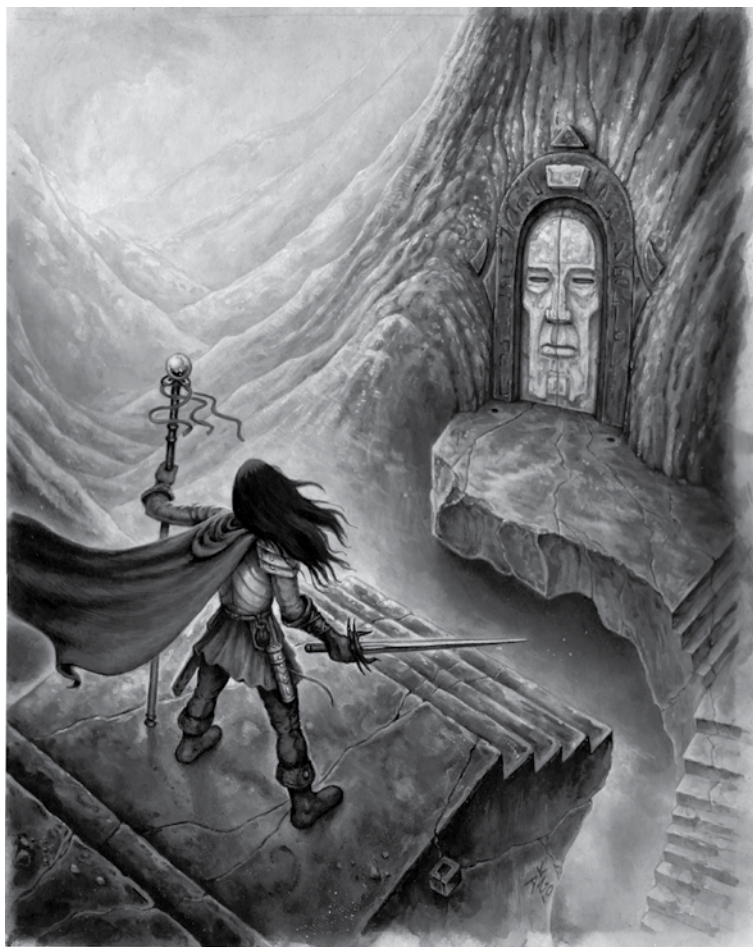
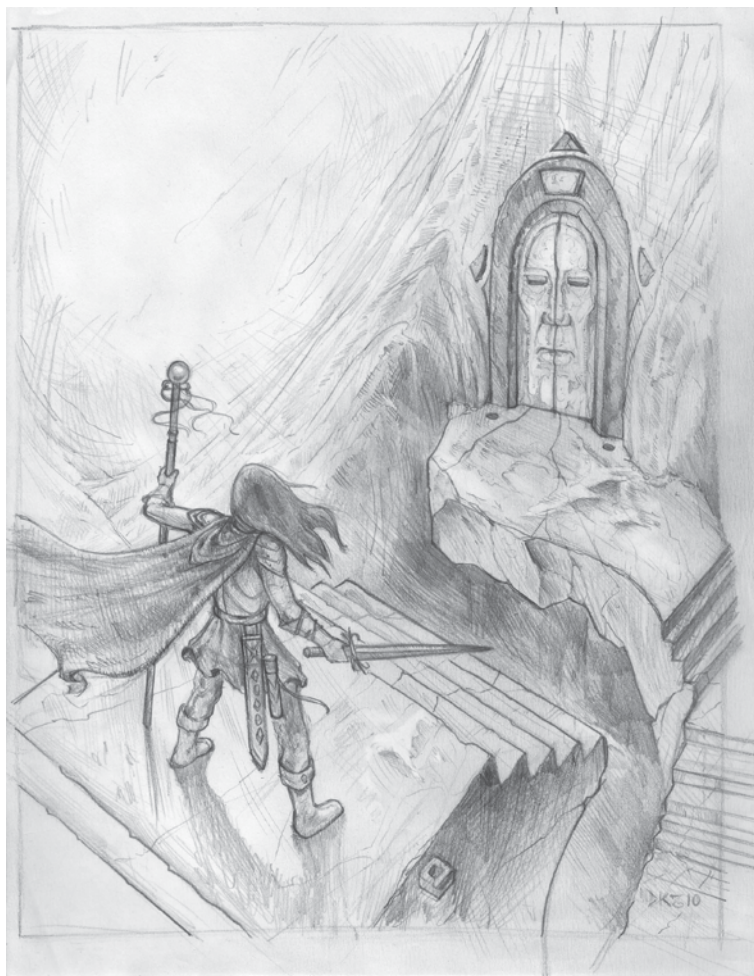
DCC CORE BOOK, COLOR COVER



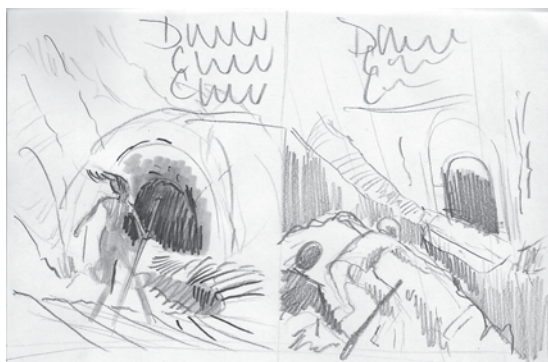
hown here are several pages of Doug's original rough thumbnails. As you can see, he went through many designs. They all featured the basic ideas of a looming portal and a lone adventurer. Game designer Joseph Goodman wanted to emphasize the single-adventurer nature of Appendix N, which has been lost over the years in modern "heroic party" depictions of fantasy role-playing. The looming portal symbolizes the promise of unknown adventures ahead. And of course the stairs form a path toward that adventure for both adventurer and reader / viewer.



The sketch to left was the basis of the final design.



Shown above is the tight pencil illustration, next to the finished art. Of course you also own the finished art in hardback form, right? You can also compare that to the pencil sketch above.



In all sketch versions, the face of the adventurer was deliberately concealed. This reflects the open-ended nature of the game: this character, and your character, can be whoever you want him to be. Given the roots of DCC RPG in Appendix N, keeping the face hidden also avoided a complicating factor. DCC RPG intentionally departs from many of the visual archetypes of modern depictions of D&D. Designer Joseph Goodman did not want a character who could be “pinned down” in a modern D&D class. This is also why the character carries both staff and sword: is he fighter or wizard? Clearly both or neither: hence you need to turn the page to learn more...

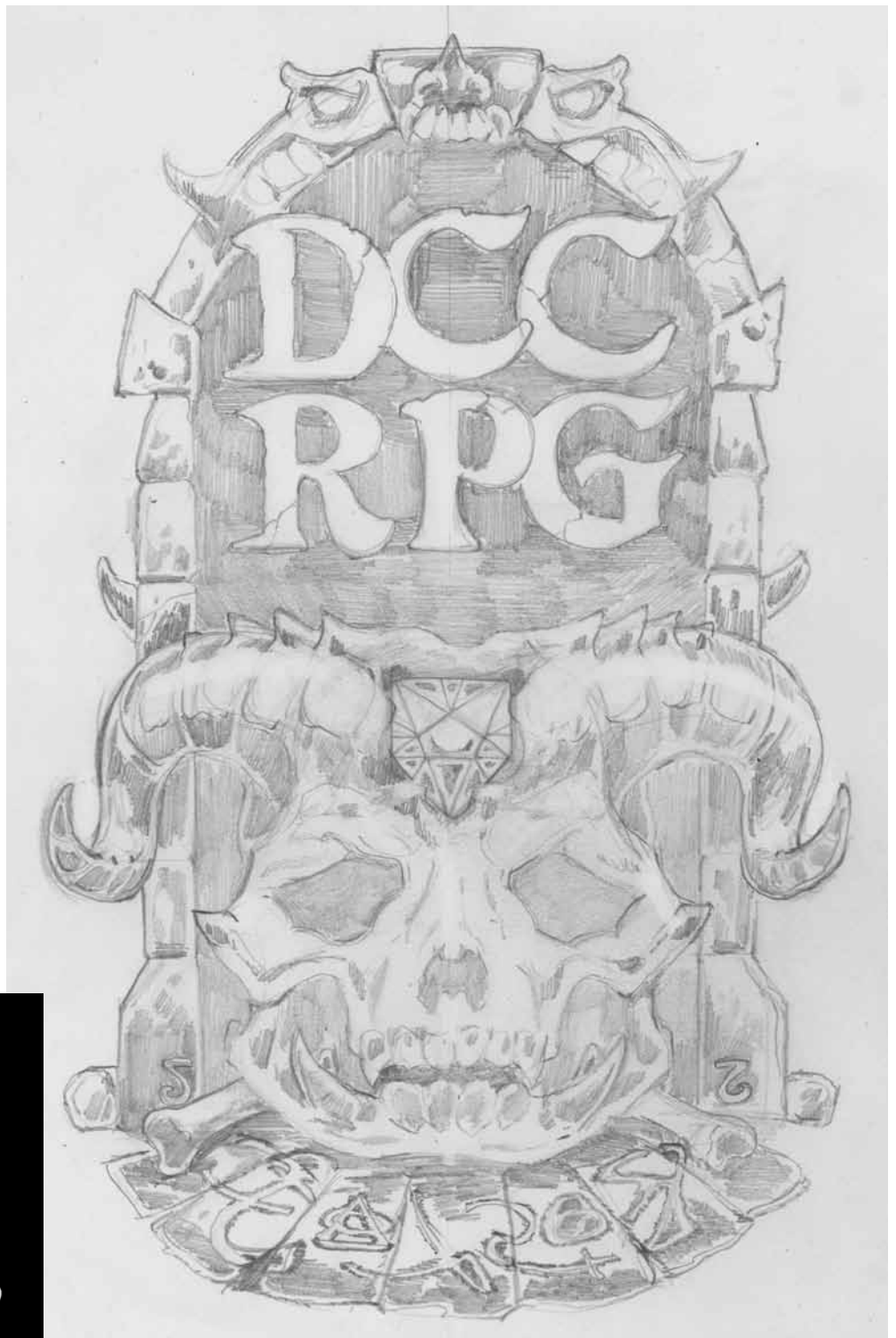
DCC CORE BOOK, GOLD FOIL COVER



ere are Doug's thumbanils for the gold foil cover image. The tight pencil is shown on opposite page, next to an inset of the finished image. This "demon skull" image has now become closely identified with DCC RPG.



The secret message in the demon skull cover is "ROSLOF," written backward in the tiles at bottom. The R is on far right, and the word reads to left from there. It is a tribute to legendary TSR artist Jim Roslof. Jim was not only one of the earliest artists working on D&D, he was also the TSR art director for many years, and mentored most of the other famous D&D artists you know. His wife, Laura Roslof, was also an artist for TSR, and provided some of the illustrations that resulted in the legendary banned edition of *Palace of the Silver Princess*. Goodman Games had worked with Jim Roslof for several years prior to DCC RPG. Jim provided the very first published illustration for DCC RPG, which was used for a flyer at an early GaryCon (and later printed on page 13 of DCC RPG). Jim passed away in 2011. At the time of his passing he was working on four illustrations for DCC RPG, which were published on pages 76, 88, 110, and 205 of the core book. Several are unsigned, as Jim was not able to complete them before passing. At GaryCon 2011, Joseph, Doug, and Harley visited his house to pay respects to Laura. Jim had an amazing studio filled with wonderful art from both his fantasy career as well as his time in more mainstream advertising illustration. His studio was also filled with custom-painted antique bicycles, which was another of his passions.



COVERS FOR "PEOPLE OF THE PIT" AND "SAILORS ON THE STARLESS SEA"



he adventures DCC #67: *Sailors on the Starless Sea* and DCC #68: *People of the Pit* were two of the earliest DCC adventures completed. Both were written in the early playtest stages of DCC RPG, and changed multiple times as the rules evolved. The two adventures also resulted in the now-infamous "tentacle ban" on DCC modules.

Joseph, as publisher, has to review all manuscripts to ensure authors don't inadvertently cover similar ground in their submissions. Bans are periodically levied and then lifted on subjects that appear too often. Past bans have included stirges, lighthouses, chain devils, and ziggurats, all of which have become zeitgeist material that invades one too many DCC module in short succession.



The tentacle ban came about partly because both modules featured prominent tentacle encounters, but also because the core cover art concepts for both modules involved tentacles. In fact, the cover to *People of the Pit* actually started as the cover to *Sailors on the Starless Sea*! Here's how...

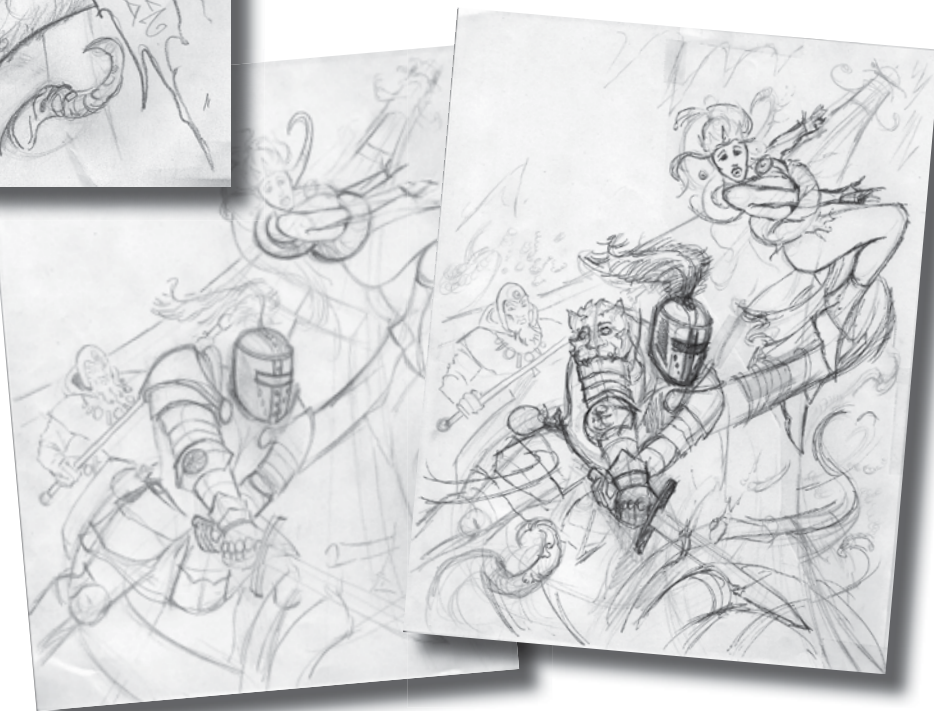


o the left is Doug's first tight sketch for the cover of *Sailors on the Starless Sea*. Yes, you read that right — this was *not* the cover to *People of the Pit*. The cover passed through thumbnails and all the way to tight sketch before Joseph realized...

...there are even more tentacles in *People of the Pit*! If any cover is going to feature tentacles, it should be that one, since there's basically nothing else in the adventure. But these two adventures come out in succession. So they can't both feature tentacle-themed covers!

And thus came one of the moments when Doug muttered "f***ing publishers": Joseph asked that Doug keep the basic layout of the cover, but convert the sweeping arc of the boat to a sweeping arc of a staircase. This would fit the same concept to *People of the Pit*.

From there came the rough sketches below:



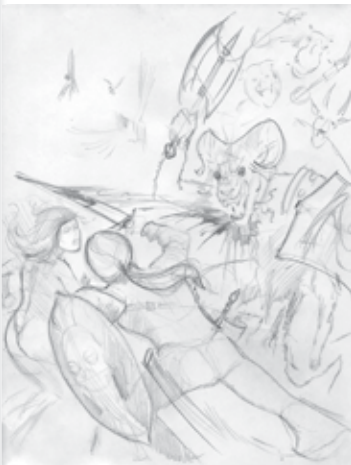
Note: Early on, the DCC RPG logo was used as a placeholder in the upper left of all cover designs, as you see above. The graphic design for module titles was not yet completed.



From those rough sketches, Doug completed the tight sketch to left, which eventually became the cover to *DCC #67: People of the Pit*. Note the arc of the boat that became the arc of the staircase.



Meanwhile, Doug began working on a sketch to the new *Sailors on the Starless Sea* concept. This started as a battle with the beastmen featured in the module (shown below). From there Joseph wondered if Doug could take Harley's chaos warrior descriptions and transform them into something visually awesome. Doug's ideas quickly morphed into a battle against a chaos creature (shown below)...



...and from there came many concepts for chaos warrior heads (below).



Then the rough "beastman mockup" was modified to feature the chaos warrior (below)...

...and finally the tight sketch for what became the final cover was completed (to left). Based on Doug's amazing depiction of the chaos warrior, Harley revised his descriptive text in the module to match.

(Publisher's note: See the ziggurat? Ziggurats have been appearing in DCC modules since very early on: DCC #8

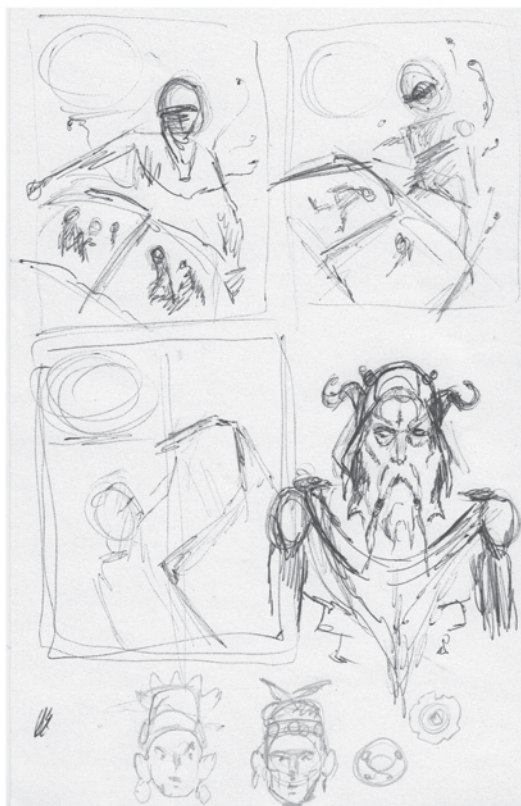


features a lich's ziggurat, and of course DCC #23 was titled *The Sunken Ziggurat*. At Gary Con 2014, DCC #82: *Bride of the Black Manse* was released printed with a backup adventure featuring a serpent-man ziggurat, and after announcing a Metamorphosis Alpha module entitled *Death Ziggurat in Zero-G*, I issued a ban on ziggurats. Because so many first impressions of DCC RPG are formed by *Sailors on the Starless Sea*, the tentacle ban has still not been lifted.)

COVER FOR "THE ONE WHO WATCHES FROM BELOW"

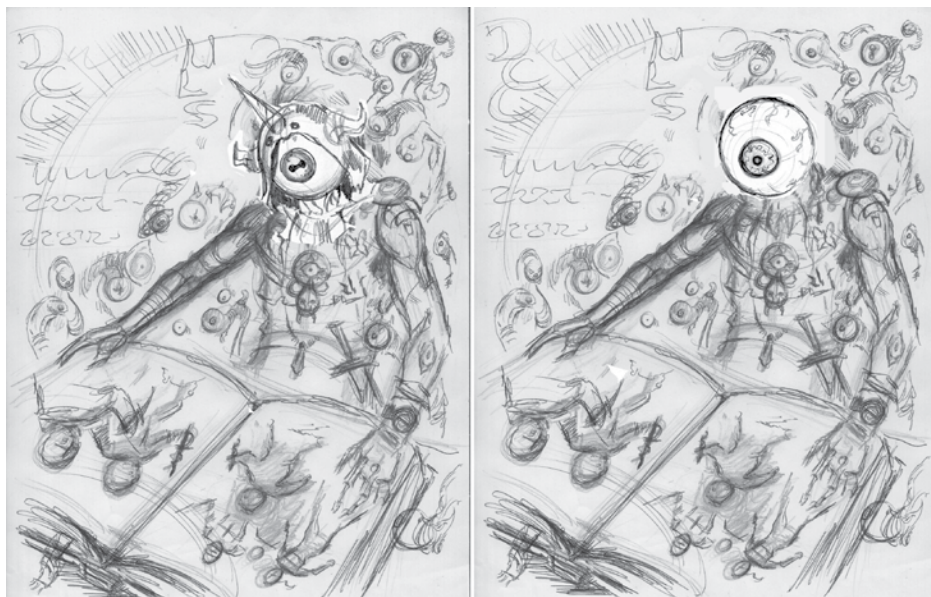


his adventure module by Jobe Bittman won our Mystery Map Adventure Design Contest run on Free RPG Day 2012. It is a terrific adventure that features a strong visual theme related to eyeballs. Jobe's original cover concepts centered around the wizard Whately reading a book, with swarming eyeballs behind.

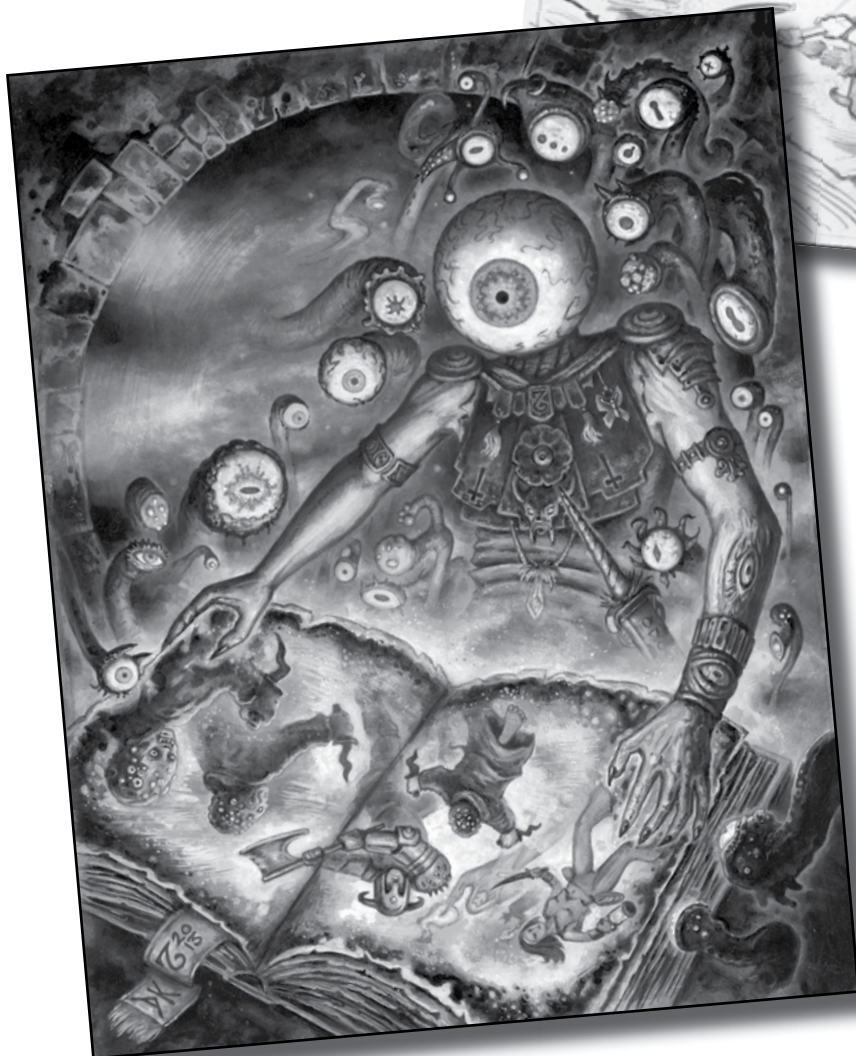


At this time, Jobe's manuscript featured Whately as a (relatively) human wizard. When Joseph saw the rough cover sketch (to right), he asked: "Can we give him a giant eyeball for a head?" This would create a more distinctive cover on a retail shelf, and hopefully grab the attention of more casual passers-by in a store. Plus it would just look cool. Of course, the module didn't actually feature a wizard with a giant eyeball for a head...yet.

Doug took the idea and ran with it. He produced two concept sketches, shown at right.



From there, Doug produced the tight sketch shown here. Jobe updated the manuscript with Doug's visual depiction, to give Whately an "eyeball-head" form. And from this collaboration was born what may be the strongest DCC module cover to date!



THE ABECEDARIAN ADVENTURER

One of the most popular books published by Goodman Games is **The Dungeon Alphabet**, by Michael Curtis. Combining inspirational text with incredible art, it is a powerful source for creative dungeon design.

Building on the popularity of this format, we are currently working on **The Monster Alphabet**. Written by Jobe Bittman with contributions from Michael Curtis, **The Monster Alphabet** is a font of inspiration on innovative monster designs.

In the next few pages we offer several special subjects for fans of these books! First is an all-new addition to **The Dungeon Alphabet: O is also for Omen**, never before published, and a great continuation of the wonderful first book.

This is followed by four preview spreads from **The Monster Alphabet**!



IS ALSO FOR OMEN

Additional material for The Dungeon Alphabet by Michael Curtis.

Omens, supernaturally-produced signs and portents indicating future events, are occasionally glimpsed by adventurers—far more so than those who pursue more mundane occupations. Due to their frequent delving into strange locales rife with mystical energies, adventurers regularly skirt the boundaries between the earthly and the spiritual. Adventurers who pursue aims of a higher nature—the service of a deity or the quest to right a horrible wrong—witness omens more frequently than those driven by simple avarice or bloodlust. The ineffable powers beyond the earthly veil step forth to provide guidance to these worthies, assisting them in their efforts.

Not all omens are the product of spirits or godly powers, however. Some mortal magics can conjure up glimpses into the future to provide guidance. The signs these magical incantations produce are cryptic and of limited knowledge, but can nevertheless provide insight when the proper (or less lethal) course of action needs to be determined. Omens invoked by mortal magic are less reliable than divinely-inspired ones, and wise conjurers know never to place their full trust in their own auguries. This allows the game master the opportunity to cloud the future and provides a convenient excuse when events don't necessarily unfold as anticipated.





A DOZEN ODD OMENS

D12 An Omen...

- 1 A portion of the caster's divination tools (runes, tarot cards, joss sticks, etc.) burst into uncanny flames, rot before his eyes, turn black and scorched, or are otherwise lost. The destroyed implements are those pointing towards a treacherous path, unwise course of action, or lethal decision. The tools linked to a less lethal choice remain unharmed.
- 2 The party discovers the dead bodies of another group of adventurers. The corpses are of equal number to the party and contain the exact same composition of the group's races and professions. Even their personal possessions closely resemble those of the party. The slain adventurers are discovered at an important juncture in the living party's quest, and are found closest to the most dangerous path.
- 3 A ghostly figure is seen by one or more of the party. The spirit bears horrific injuries (acid burns, rending claws marks, blood-drained pallor, etc.) inflicted by a formidable creature in the party's path. If the party takes heed of the figure, they can properly prepare for what lies in wait.
- 4 One member of the party sees phantasmal injuries or death signs on his compatriots. These injuries or death marks appear on his fellows most unprepared for what lies ahead (or most likely to perish in an encounter). Only the chosen PC witnesses the illusion, and it persists so long as the party maintains their current course of action. The vision fades if they turn aside from danger.
- 5 A single spell prepared by one of the party's casters reverberates or throbs in his mind as if demanding to be cast. The spell is one beneficial to the party in an event about to occur (a fire resistance spell as they approach a flame demon's lair, for example). If cast beforehand, the spell grants the party an increased chance of avoiding death or injury in the forthcoming encounter.
- 6 Naturally-occurring markings on the dungeon walls (niter deposits, mold, mineral striations, etc.) seem to depict symbols or images. These marks foreshadow a creature or trap situated ahead of the party and can be either clear depictions or cryptic hints. If the marks are defaced in any manner, the forthcoming encounter increases in difficulty.
- 7 The party's shadows, regardless of their light sources' positions, recoil from a specific direction. The shadows grow shorter or vanish entirely depending on the threat located in the indicated direction. Changing course away from the threat causes the shadows to return.
- 8 The caster's mouth fills with an abnormal taste upon casting his divination. Depending on the outcome of his prediction, the taste might be fair (the metallic taste of precious metals) or foul (ashes and blood). The taste lingers, intensifies, or vanishes depending on the future actions and directions of the party.
- 9 The party's torches behave strangely, throwing their flames in a direction against the draught or changing the strength of their brightness. The flames either guide the party towards beneficial discoveries or warn against danger. Through careful observation of the flames, the party can determine how close the encounter is and the size of its threat or windfall.
- 10 A recently slain opponent stirs briefly, raising its head up to speak cryptic prophecy to the party. The words may be a warning of what lies ahead, its body a temporary conduit of supernatural agents working in the group's favor, or the adversary's postmortem portent of the doom they are sure to suffer for their murderous crime.
- 11 The party's equipment manifests strange hints of events about to come. A pending encounter with a monster unharmed by ordinary weapons might result in traces of rust appearing on a warrior's sword, while a fiendish undead creature or evil object in the party's future causes the priest's holy water to glow with divine radiance.
- 12 A response to the caster's augury manifests in the innocuous statements of his confederates. The supernatural replies appear mixed into the ordinary speech of others, who are unaware of speaking them. A question as to which direction to venture may be heard by the caster as "Shall we go east *FOR SLITHERING DEATH LIES WAITING DOWN THE WESTERN STAIRS?*" In this example, the speaker has no memory of, nor himself hears, talk of the slithering menace. This omen requires collaboration between the game master and speaking player, but can be extremely effective and unsettling if done properly.





is for Android

The universe is an expansive unfeeling she-wolf spewing its molten pups into the pitiless black void of space. The sun, the moon, the planets, the stars in the night sky, and the celestial bodies beyond perception—all are birthed from this cold mother. In the history of the cosmos, this world is but a mewling whelp. Before even the time when the Old Dragons ruled the land and the great land masses parted ways, races without number have bubbled up across cosmic space. Rising from primordial froth in violent fits and starts to erect mud huts then mighty civilizations, the dominant species must always take to the stars or perish. For this is the curse of all mortals: to consume all resources available and endlessly expand their demesne, or fade into infinity. Their rocket engines thunder in unison like a howl to the heavens as they spread ever outwards, always preceded by their machines—their magic machines.



Roll d6 A-1: SIX FANTASTICAL ANDROIDS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN WORLD

- 1 A giant flying disc lands, accompanied by a fanfare of fabulous multi-colored lights. A spindly figure garbed in flowing robes strides down a telescoping gangplank, metallic skin shining in the sun. The figure pulls a pale lavender mask from a pocket stretching it over its skull. Soulless black eyes peer through the expressionless mask of a human woman. The gynoid represents the last vestige of an ancient race that once ruled this planet. She seeks the lost power sources of her creators' once-great cities that must still crackle with energy somewhere deep below the ground.
- 2 Green-skinned saurians in gold lamé jumpsuits hiss and claw the air with thick three fingered hands, quick to savage any that would threaten their sacred caves. Their strength is in numbers, as they are easily felled by axe and sword, their flesh splitting open to reveal tangles of wire, blinking lights, and whirring gizmos.
- 3 The dust hardly settles before the rubble shifts and one huge fist bursts free. This is impossible. You saw it die. The hill giant lumbers to its feet much changed. Great sheets of flesh hang loose revealing a gleaming metal skeleton just beneath the surface. The brute's face, sheared off by a falling boulder, has been replaced by a grinning silver skull. Murderous red eyes that glow like a smithy's forge. The stainless steel golem struts forward unbowed.
- 4 What manner of elf be this that does not bleed? Pinning down the convulsing form, you lever a crowbar at the curious hexagonal carving on its chest. With a hiss of steam and a high-pitched whine, the chest swings open like a door. Inside, a motionless creature with an overgrown head stares blankly at the sky, tiny levers still gripped in its pale tentacles.
- 5 Your throwing hammer's aim is true. The pulsing crystal shatters like glass, sending a thunderous shock-wave through the chamber. Where the grimy kobolds once stood now appear squat animated suits of armor with glowing blue eyes, clutching their spears and nets in arms that move like snakes.
- 6 After several blows, the sarcophagus lid slides open with a hiss of freezing vapor. A spindly figure wrapped in layers of gauze bolts to a sitting position and slowly surveys your group. A female voice suddenly echoes through the temple in a soothing foreign tongue, and then is drowned out by the hiss of countless other opening sarcophagi.







is for Breath Weapon

When the elder Dragon rears its mighty head, every seasoned adventurer knows what's sure to come next: the breath attack. No other weapon has the same knack for decimating an entire party in one fell swoop. Will it be roiling blooms of searing Flame or hoary blasts of immobilizing Frost? The players hold their breath in anticipation until the first vile winds belch forth. Foul deed! An almond-scented verdant smoke jets across the lair obscuring all the exits. Their rings of elemental resistance are worthless against a poison cloud. With an evil chortle, the judge declares, "Save or die!" and then the coughing begins...

Roll d12 **B-1: TWELVE PARTY-WIPING BREATH ATTACKS**

- 1 Grave wind: A gloomy miasma, buzzing with corpulent flies, creeps along the ground. The putrid stench of decay invades your nostrils as bilious saliva claws its way up your esophagus. The reeking air eats away at the flesh of all living creatures that remain within its area of influence. Corpses touched by the miasma are tainted by the curse of undeath. Mindless zombies arise in the following round to feast on the flesh of the closest living creature.
- 2 Beast breath: A swarm of vicious critters bursts from the lips of the monster in a torrential outpouring of feathers, fur, or scale: 1 – winged skulls; 2 – a murder of crows; 3 – rot grubs; 4 – venomous snakes; 5 – diseased sewer rats; 6 – rabid bats; 7 – angry bees. The attacking swarm harries a target for 1d4 rounds of combat inflicting ongoing damage and debilitating conditions. Tougher swarms may warrant a place in the initiative order until dispersed.
- 3 Heat ray: A pink nimbus flares around the beast's muzzle, just before a concentrated beam of crimson light fires in a straight line. The ray burns with the heat of a dying star, searing a smoking hole through anything caught in its path. Non-magical shields and armor literally melt when struck by the awesome light, leaving excruciating rivulets of molten metal that burn into the wearer's skin. The intense heat radiates 5' in all directions from the target, possibly setting adjacent creatures' possessions ablaze (20% chance to ignite one random flammable item).
- 4 Spore cloud: A powdery fungal brume wafts forth in slow motion. As the microscopic spores come to rest on a surface, tiny stalks sprout and rapidly mature into clusters of mushrooms — milk caps, stinkhorns, earth stars, and more. Inhaling the spores has a powerful soporific effect. Those who succumb to the magical torpor experience vivid hallucinations of the Fairy Queen's court. If the sleeper is not removed from the area, endophytes work their way into the skin over the course of a day seizing control of the nervous system. Encrusted in toadstools, the host rises in a dream-like state to serve as thrall to the Mushroom King.
- 5 Blizzard blast: A flurry of snow and hail blows in an enormous cone. Targets within the blast are flash frozen inside blocks of ice. A critical hit shatters the ice block like glass, including the victim inside. Due to the similarity of effect, spells or magic items that reverse petrification also work against a supercooled victim.
- 6 Charged air: A most strange effluvium blankets the area, stinking of ozone. The adventurers' hair bristles and stands on end, but otherwise they feel no ill effects. The effluvium builds up a massive imbalance of electric charge within its zone. Melee and touch attacks are arrested 6 inches before contact by an arc of electricity that inflicts a painful electric shock and hurls the attacker backwards.
- 7 Swirling vortex: The creature inhales so deeply that a swirling funnel forms, careening wildly from side to side. Anything hit by funnel is quickly sucked into the creature's mouth. Boulders, people, and even entire pools of water are no match for the bucking vortex. The creature generally attacks by spitting items in its mouth back at enemies, though it has been known to make a quick morsel of lightly armored adventurers.
- 8 Arc of slime: Rearing its head from side to side, disgusting mucus spews from this damned thing's gullet in revolting globules. The slime quickly hardens into a glue-like substance that holds fast, immobilizing targets until they can free themselves.
- 9 Stench smog: A rank fetor billows from this creature's nostrils in a repulsive wave. Any targets caught in the path suffer a -1 penalty to all attacks and must resist the urge to immediately flee the zone.
- 10 Corrosive steam: Hot steam shoots forward in a white plume. Metal weapons and armor touched by the corrosive vapor weep tears of rust; one random non-magic metal item carried by the target completely disintegrates in 1d3 rounds.
- 11 Alchemical ray: A wide beam of brilliant green light harmlessly passes through all physical objects. One type of metal worn or carried by the target is transmuted into another random metal. Roll a 2d4 twice on the following list. The first roll determines the affected metal. The second roll determines the transformed metal. 2 – gold; 3 – silver; 4 – copper; 5 – iron; 6 – lead; 7 – steel; 8 – vaedium. The weight of the transmuted metal may drop the owner to the ground.
- 12 Must of ages: A moldering wind blows with hurricane force. When the wind subsides, all targets are aged 2d3 years and immediately gain appropriate badges of age (e.g. grey hair, wrinkles, or dementia).







C is also for Crossbreed

The natural world has many examples of unnatural reproduction. Were it not for the grace of magic, creatures such as the centaur and owlbear could never exist. Whether the pairings are the result of arcane compulsion, the products of deific infidelity, a magic experiment gone wrong, or a misplaced love potion is of little import. There is a place in this world for all of nature's fantastic creations.

The tables below constitute a framework for creating magical half-breeds. Roll a d30 twice on the Polymorphistic Donor Species table to determine the beasts to interbreed. Then, roll another d30 to check if the crossbreed has any additional traits.

Roll d30 C-1: POLYMORPHISTIC DONOR SPECIES

1	Ant	11	Frog	21	Orc
2	Badger	12	Golem	22	Owl
3	Bat	13	Gorilla	23	Slug
4	Bear	14	Hill giant	24	Shark
5	Bull	15	Horse	25	Snake
6	Camel	16	Hound	26	Spider
7	Crocodile	17	Human	27	Turtle
8	Dire wolf	18	Lion	28	Vine
9	Dragon	19	Mammoth	29	Warthog
10	Falcon	20	Octopus	30	Roll again



Roll d30 C-2: ADDITIONAL TRAITS

1-19	None.
20-24	Weapon specialization: Through an innate ability or dogged determination, the crossbreed has become adept with a prized weapon. Roll a d12: 1 – Battle axe; 2 – Club; 3 – Flail; 4 – Javelin; 5 – Halberd; 6 – Mace; 7 – Longbow; 8 – Sling; 9 – Spear; 10 – Sword; 11 – Staff; 12 – War hammer.
25-26	Size variation: Most crossbreeds fall somewhere between the origin species in physical size. However, trans-species crossbreeding is not an exact science. Anomalies and freakish fluctuations have been known to occur. Roll a d6: 1 – Tiny (sparrow); 2 – Small (halfling); 3 – Medium (human); 4 – Large (giant); 5 – Huge (adult dragon); 6 – Colossal (tarrasque).
27	Substance: While the monster wears the shape of several amalgamated creatures, it is formed from some other substance altogether. Roll a d7: 1 – Shadow; 2 – Gemstone; 3 – Metal; 4 – Magma; 5 – Ethereal; 6 – Gelatin. 7 – Clockwork.
28	Mutation: The weird magical synergies that produced this creature unlocked latent, recessive traits. Roll a d10 and flip to the section of the book: 1 – B is for Breath Weapon; 2 – E is for Eyeball; 3 – F is for Flame; 4 – F is for Frost; 5 – N is for Noxious; 6 – O is for Ongoing Damage; 7 – P is for Psionic; 8 – Q is for Quills; 9 – T is for Tails; 10 – Y is for Yuck.
29	Taint: The arcane energies that created this abomination continue to radiate a corrupting blight to this day. Roll a d5: 1 – Feral: wildlife in vicinity become more aggressive; 2 – Unholy: poltergeists and the souls of the damned are drawn to this creature. 3 – Earth corruption: the creature draws life force from living things. Plants wither; soil dries out and cracks; 4 – Madness: neurons misfire in the creature's presence, thoughts turn dark, and reactions become sluggish or clumsy; 5 – Wild magic: enchantments are amplified, diminished, or completely warped.
30	Archon: The crossbred monstrosity shares a powerful bond with one randomly determined creature type from its genetic lineage. The monster walks among these creatures as a lord walks among subjects. In the case of intelligent creature types, the beast lord commands an entourage of 1d8 followers that act as guardians and servants. Otherwise, the beast lord can summon 1d6 of the creatures per day and give them simple commands such as scout or attack.

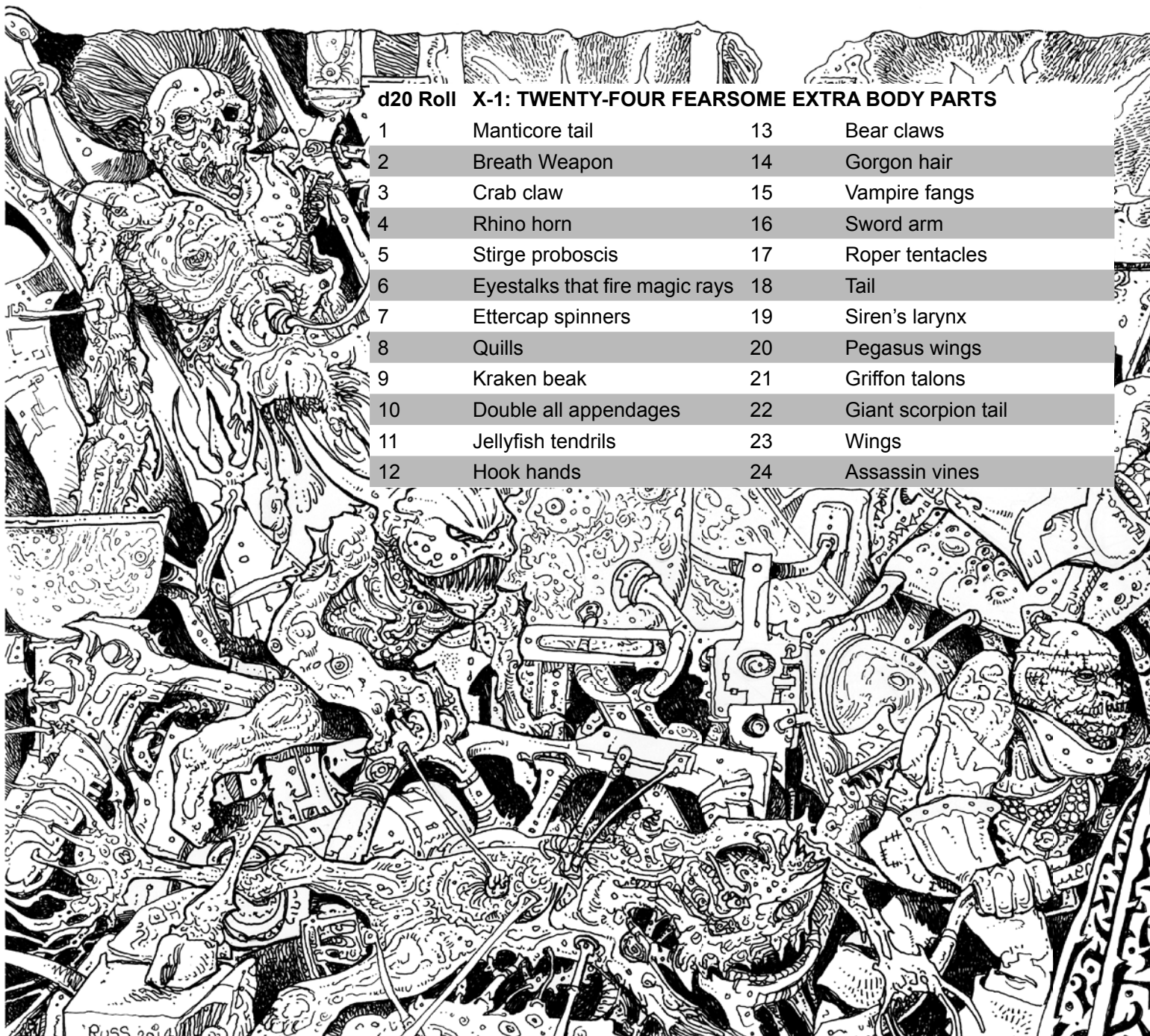


is for Xenotransplantation

Among all the specializations of magic, no discipline is as little understood as biomancy. There are no treatises or tomes of reference available to inform the neophyte. The knowledge is hard won through years of painstaking research and every scrap of information is guarded jealously. For in the hands of the biomancer rests a power normally restricted to the gods – the power to reshape life itself.

The most difficult effect to achieve is xenotransplantation, the implantation of organs and body parts from and into different species. Grafting the tail of a giant scorpion onto a warhorse, for example, requires intimate knowledge of anatomy, surgery, and spellcraft to manipulate the applicable skeletal, muscular, and vascular systems. Never mind the inherent difficulty of conjoining a vertebrate mammal and an arachnid exoskeleton.

Though less frequent, xenotransplantation can also occur as the result of a curse, deific fiat, spell taint, and prolonged exposure to otherworldly magic. No matter the cause, the effect is unsettling.



d20 Roll X-1: TWENTY-FOUR FEARSOME EXTRA BODY PARTS

1	Manticore tail	13	Bear claws
2	Breath Weapon	14	Gorgon hair
3	Crab claw	15	Vampire fangs
4	Rhino horn	16	Sword arm
5	Stirge proboscis	17	Roper tentacles
6	Eyestalks that fire magic rays	18	Tail
7	Ettercap spinners	19	Siren's larynx
8	Quills	20	Pegasus wings
9	Kraken beak	21	Griffon talons
10	Double all appendages	22	Giant scorpion tail
11	Jellyfish tendrils	23	Wings
12	Hook hands	24	Assassin vines



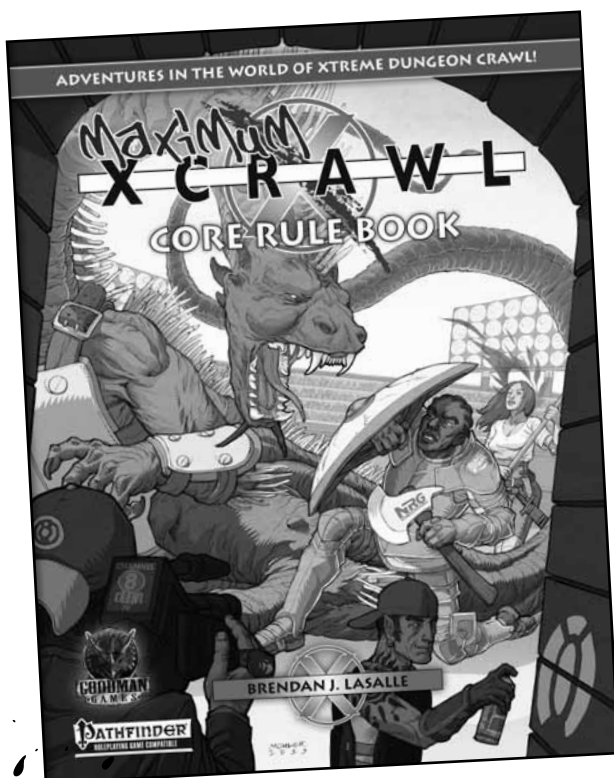
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IN XCRAWL, THE PLAYERS ARE SUPERSTAR ATHLETES TAKING THEIR CHANCES IN A LIVE-ON-PAY-PER-VIEW DEATH SPORT. IT'S A MODERN-DAY WORLD WITH A FANTASY TWIST, AND THE GAME IS SIMPLE: THE DUNGEON JUDGE, OR DJ, CREATES AN ARTIFICIAL DUNGEON UNDER CONTROLLED – BUT LETHAL – CONDITIONS. HE DESIGNS THE MAZE, AND STOCKS IT WITH MONSTERS, SECRET DOORS, MAGICAL TRAPS, TREASURE AND PRIZES. THE PLAYERS MUST GO THROUGH THE DUNGEON AND FULFILL WHATEVER CONDITIONS THE DJ PUTS FORTH IN ORDER TO WIN.

XCRAWL IS A SPORT AND THE CHALLENGES ARE CREATED, BUT THE DANGER IS NO LESS REAL. IF YOU DIE, YOU DIE. THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES. CITIZENS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN EMPIRE TUNE IN EVERY WEEK TO WATCH THEIR FAVORITE CELEBRITIES GET EATEN, PARALYZED, TURNED TO STONE, AND RIPPED APART. THE NATION'S HUNGER FOR BLOOD AND MAYHEM GROWS WITH EVERY CONTEST. HOW WILL YOU FARE?



TOO TOUGH TO DIE

BY C. L. WERNER • ART BY CHAD SERGESKETTER

'No, I don't do spiders.'

It was the way Janice's face turned pale; the way her green eyes widened that told Robert van Richter that there was no arguing with the woman. Janice Deveraux was an accomplished wizard, one of the most iron-nerved spell-slingers he'd ever worked with. He'd seen her stand solid as the North American Legion while tossing firebolts at a charging minotaur. It wasn't money or fame that had drawn her into Xcrawl, it was the excitement. She was an adrenalin junkie, all the death-traps and monsters just fed into that addiction. Janice wasn't happy unless something was trying to rip her face off.

Such a pretty face, too, all soft and innocent with just a hint of the sultry vixen about the eyes, maybe a bit of unspoken arrogance in the curl of her lips. Long blonde hair, like a stream of spun gold, dripped from the Mages' Guild-sanctioned conical hat she wore, its side proudly sporting the logo of Banderstock Broomsticks. It wasn't about the money with Janice, her long, flowing robes were remarkably free of sponsorship patches, but she had a relative who was a vice-president of Banderstock and agreed to wear their logo as a favour. Maybe it was a bit of the snooty mage showing through, wizards tended to look down on Xcrawl as a spurious sideshow, not something any serious student of the black arts would squander their time on. She was professional enough when in the dungeons, but between competitions she could be irritatingly condescending about the whole sport.

At least her professionalism set her apart from Ulgri Flintfist. The dwarf rogue had been with the Sleepy Hollow Boys for three years and in that time his disdain for everything associated with it had only grown. Unlike Janice, Ulgri was all about the money. He never lost an opportunity to mug for the camera, never wasted the chance to promote himself for the benefit of the audience and, especially, potential sponsors. Robert looked over at the grizzled dwarf as he hung back from the doorway. It was almost an effort to pick out the dwarf's leathery face and bushy red beard from the riot of patches and logos that he wore, forget trying to find the suit of micromesh armour buried somewhere under all the advertisements. Most rogues tried to keep a low profile, tried to work their talents in the shadows, well away from the attentions of monster and referee alike. Not Ulgri, he wasn't about to waste audience time slithering in the dark trying to work his way around an orc's back or tip-toeing across a booby-trapped hall. That kind of thing wasn't flashy enough, and flash was what brought endorsements and sponsorships.

Truthfully, there'd been discussion about booting Ulgri off the team. He was a good lockpick, but an indifferent hand when it came to disarming traps. The dwarf didn't really have the patience for the art, Bundo Biggstuff used to always say. The halfling thief had been convinced Ulgri took a payout for a dive in Memphis, convinced the dwarf's uncharacteristic display of caution during that crawl had been solely to run up their time getting through the dungeon. He'd never been able to prove anything, though, try as he might.

Robert's face darkened as he remembered the halfling. There was one Sleepy Hollow Boy who wouldn't be leaving Arizona. He was laying six rooms back, bitten in half by a giant gila monster that had surprised them while trying to navigate a razor-wire maze. Dungeon Judge Zerstörer was infamous for his 'double jeopardy' situations, a positively sadistic love for piling hazard on hazard until you needed eight eyes to keep track of everything trying to kill you. He'd been booted from the New England circuit for his love of dirty tricks, and it was rumoured if he ever set foot in British Columbia again he'd be impaled by the Xcrawl commissioner there. Every DJ had a bit of the maniacal sociopath about them, but Zerstörer was a real piece of work. What could you expect from a guy who carried himself around like a Prussian officer in this day and age? Swaggering about like some villain from a Great War melodrama, clicking his heels together, slurring his 'v's and 'w's, it was easy not to take the man serious. That was very easily a mistake that wasn't repeated.

Zerstörer's new venue was Tombstone, a fifty-room death-pit carved out from the silver mines running beneath the old ghost town. Already the hell-hole had claimed Bundo and Melintheil Arrowgreen, their elvish sorceress. She'd been pasted with arrows from a mob of orcs while everybody was trying to navigate a piranha-infested pool. Even for Zerstörer, the added distraction of strobe-lights during the perilous crossing, forced to hop from one floating log to another, had been low. If the orcs hadn't been so single-mindedly fixated on killing the elf, it was doubtful any of them would have made it across.

With Bundo and Melintheil down, that left the team woefully understrength. Janice was their only spell-slinger now, Ulgri their only trap-sniffer. The rest of the team was made up of muscle. Bill Corrigan, the grizzled cleric of Mars from New Amsterdam, working out his anger issues by carving up monsters in the name of the war-god. Jay Stalkingbear, an Apache warrior from the Tucson area, a new recruit to the Sleepy Hollow Boys, an effort to import some local talent for Zerstörer's little rat-run. It was a sad fact that Jay was lighter on his feet than Ulgri, despite being a good two feet taller and hundred pounds heavier than the stocky rogue. The Apache spurned the heavy micromesh of the other fighters, trusting in his agility and maybe the protective powers of the war-paint smeared across his cheeks and forehead to keep him safe. So far it had done the trick.

Robert made the last man in the diminished team. He'd walked into the role of team captain early on. He liked to think it was because of his natural charisma and well-honed abilities that made the others defer to him. Some said it was nothing but the celebrity he brought with him – he'd been a quarterback on the New England Giantkillers before a knee injury forced him to look for another sport. The more cynical would say it was his aristocratic blood imposing itself on his commoner associates. His sharpest critics suggested it was the van Richter money that had pushed his career and helped the team's rapid rise through the divisions – even investigators from the Adventurers' Guild weren't above bribery and the van Richter fortune had a long reach.

Robert ran a hand through his close-cropped hair, his

rugged features twisting with pain as he felt the scabbed scar running across his scalp. Not all of the orc arrows had been directed at Melintheil. If Jay Stalkingbear hadn't grabbed him when the arrow glanced off his skull, he would have joined the elf in the piranha pool. The athlete scowled. Just because he was team captain didn't mean the Apache had to hover around him like a second shadow. If he'd show the same sort of concern for other members of the team, maybe Bundo wouldn't have become lizard-chow.

'Maybe there aren't any spiders,' Bill's feeble suggestion broke Robert from his thoughts. The five of them stood in a dank corridor of roughly hewn-rock, probably unchanged since the frontier days when Tombstone had been the largest city in the district of Arizona. Ahead of them, the doorway to another of the dungeon's perilous rooms yawned at them. Even from the hallway, thick, curtain-like sheets of cobweb could be seen. Janice glared at the cleric. 'Maybe they're just little ones,' he offered, the suggestion just as miserable as his first one.

'Well, we have to get past it one way or another,' Robert said, fingering the pearl-inlaid hilt of his sword. It was a beautiful weapon, the Appalachian steel of the blade holding an edge like no weapon he'd ever owned before. The elegance of the sword was as fine as anything that might be found swinging from the hip of a nobleman at the governor's ball, but with a workmanship that was practical first and foremost. It was a weapon for use as much as show. Only the North American Legion recruiting slogan etched into the steel marred the effect, but it wasn't wise to turn down a gift from Emperor Ronald I.

Janice fingered the cuff of her sleeves, chewing her lip nervously. Her eyes kept straying back to the sheet-like folds of cobweb hanging down from the chamber's ceiling. She exhaled slowly, releasing the breath she had been holding. Robert felt a twinge of sympathy. Her phobia of spiders was well known following their crawl in Los Angeles when the DJ there had stocked a room with gigantic tarantulas. Leave it to Zerstor r to capitalize on her handicap.

'Clock's running, Jan,' Ulgri griped, staring at his wristwatch. The mage shot him a sour look. The dwarf just grinned back and tapped his watch. 'I'm just sayin' I don't feel like losing because you're scared of creepy crawlies.' Robert moved toward the condescending rogue, intent on shutting him up, but hesitated. The abuse brought a flush of colour into Janice's face, a hardness into her eyes. Angry at Ulgri, it seemed she'd momentarily forgotten her fear. She flipped open the massive spellbook hanging from the chain about her waist. Soon, arcane syllables started to rasp past her lips.

A twinge of anxiety prodded at Robert's mind. Before Janice could finish her spell, he held up his hand. 'Wait a minute, Jan. Let me have a look before you do anything.' The mage fell silent, giving him a quiet nod.

Keeping his sword at the ready, Robert ducked into the cobwebbed room. Flood lamps set in the far corners of the cavern-like chamber did little to illuminate the room, instead filling it with weird shadows and distorted shapes. From floor to ceiling the room was coated in thick sheets of grey, wispy threads. Robert could see a burlap bag swaying amidst the webs, like some big fly caught by an even bigger spider. The treasure, a tempting little bit of bait to encourage them inside. Sloppy, Robert thought. Much too obvious and

obvious wasn't like Zerstor r. Above, in the darkness of the unseen roof of the cavern, something moved, making the webs tremble. That little note of alarm continued to pulse at the back of his mind. There was a trick here, if he could just get his mind around it. Try to think like that maniac. There was a clue here; it wouldn't satisfy the DJ's Teutonic arrogance to spring something on them without leaving some carefully hidden hint of what he was up to.

Robert looked at the hanging bag for a moment, then dismissed it. Overhead, whatever was lurking in the room was watching him. He could feel its eyes boring into him. Hungry. Evil. More malicious than any mere spider. That was good. If the thing was intelligent it would wait a bit, try to lure them all inside rather than pouncing on the lone athlete. That gave him time to try and figure out what Zerstor r was up to.

'Everything ok?'

Robert turned his head to find Jay Stalkingbear poking his head into the room. He waved the Apache back. The thing in the web hadn't sprung its trap for one victim, but it might for two. 'Just trying to figure this out,' he answered. 'Something's wrong here.'

As he said the words, he suddenly realized what was wrong. The walls, the walls were completely coated in webs, a depth of at least several inches of grey thread. The other rooms had all featured Arcane Viewing Screens in their walls, here there was no way an AVS would be able to see anything through the thick cobwebs. But why would the DJ have a room his audience wouldn't be able to see. Unless...

'Anybody in here?' Robert called out. Silence greeted his question. 'You better talk up now or we're not going to be responsible.' The warning echoed through the cavern. The thing overhead scuttled about its web. Was it dropping closer now? Robert called out again, repeating his warning.

'Hold on, we're coming!' a voice cried out from the darkness. Fighting their way through the webs, Robert saw a pair of men emerge from the shadows. One held a heavy television camera, the other a crook-armed boom mike. The athlete scowled at the men as they marched toward him, eyes fixed on the Non-Combatant tags they wore around their necks. A really low trick for the DJ to pull.

Robert ushered the two men from the room, trying his best to keep his eyes fixed on the ceiling. He could see long, slender legs moving along the webs. Whatever was up there knew something had gone wrong. He only hoped it didn't know what was coming next.

The rest of the team cried out in surprise when they saw the cameraman and sound technician frogmarched from the cavern. They glowered at the men, Bill smashing his clenched fist against the wall. 'That bastard!' he growled, punching the unforgiving stone again.

'Hey, we're just doing our job,' protested the sound man. Robert shook his head. It was a really damn low trick to be pulling. The sort of thing that probably got Zerstor r kicked out of New England and banned from BC. He pushed the two Non-Coms further back from the doorway.

'Not you fellas,' Robert told them. 'Different bastard.'

Once the men were away from the door, Janice moved forward. She started her spell again, the sinister words slithering off her tongue with a life of their own. A shimmer of heat-haze started to boil around her hand as she wove it through the air in arcane gestures.

'Wait a sec, Jan!' Ulgri lunged at the cameraman, tugging his arm downward until the lens was only a few inches from his bulbous nose. 'This immolation brought to you by Standardized Sorcery, the smart magician's supply centre!' The dwarf turned away from the camera to catch the irate glare of Bill Corrigan, the priest's thumb rubbing the edge of his sacred battle axe in murderous fashion. 'What?' protested Ulgri. 'I get three hundred gold eagles for that plug!'

Before the rogue could finish his protest, Janice finished formulating her spell. A sphere of dancing flame blossomed in the cup of her palm, swirling and growing with every breath. She let it linger there for a moment, then with a flick of her wrist sent the blazing ball of flame crashing into the cobweb-ridden cavern. The effect was like throwing a match onto a pool of oil. With a great whoosh, the room exploded into fire, the flames devouring the webs with ferocious savagery. A blast of heat billowed from the doorway, forcing the team and camera crew to retreat further into the dank gloom of the tunnel. A high-pitched wailing shrieked from the chamber beyond as the lurker in the web was incinerated.

They didn't wait long for the fireball to spend itself. There wasn't enough time to let the room cool down after the spell had worked its havoc. As soon as the fingers of flame licking at the doorway were gone, the competitors hurried into the cavern. Bill invoked the awful power of Mars in a minor orison, a nimbus of crimson light surrounding his axe as they entered the room. By its light, the team surveyed the devastation the mage's spell had wrecked. The flood lamps were jumbles of charred plastic and copper spaced along the walls of what was revealed as a massive cavern, its earthen walls pitted with the marks of pick and hammer from the place's long ago days as a silver mine. Heaps of blackened thread were crumpled all around the chamber, a mephitic stink rising from the shrivelled webs. In the centre of the chamber, something big and grotesque was curled up on its back, eight slender legs stabbing up at the still smouldering ceiling. Tendrils of stagnant smoke rose from the blackened husk. In body it was certainly spider-like, but there was a suggestion of a man-like torso poking from the mess. Robert had heard that the dread elves that lived deep beneath Montreal sometimes punished their criminals by polymorphing them into such abominations, centaur-like things neither elf nor arachnid. Whatever it was, it certainly wouldn't be bothering anybody again.

The team marched into the charred hall. Ulgri lifted the burnt husk of the burlap bag with the edge of his sword, shaking his head. The treasure, whatever it had been, was just so much ash.

'This, I think, would be what you call "overkill", *nicht war*?'

The sneering voice came to them from one of the walls of the cavern. The competitors turned to find the wall replaced by a flickering shimmer of magical energy. There was an AVS here after all, and Zerstörer was using it to mock them. The DJ's gaunt image squinted at them from the wall, his eye frosty behind the lense of his monocle. He gestured with a gloved hand to someone off screen. Abruptly a comely young woman wearing a white smile and scarcely more strolled into view.

'Fraulein Tiffany, please tell these impetuous fellows what it is they haf not won.'



The model slowly opened a white envelope, prolonging the simple motion for the benefit of the audience and the torment of the competitors. 'Chamber 13, the lair of the spider-elf Noch'latyl. Those who brave the spider-elf's venom will be rewarded with an all-expense paid trip to Tokyo courtesy of Kaiju Krunchies, the breakfast of dragons.' Her announcement made, the model smiled again and bowed her way out of view.

Zerstörer loomed across the view of the AVS once more. 'This prize, it is appraised at a value of 30,000 gold pieces,' he announced, bringing a groan from Ulgri. 'Ach, perhaps you haf better luck next time, yes?' The German's thin face spread in a smug smile.

'Damn you, Zerstörer!' Robert snapped at the image. 'You planned all this! You knew about Janice's fear of spiders! You were planning on it! If I hadn't checked the room first, she would have cooked your camera crew along with the rest!' The outburst brought gasps from the cameraman and sound technician, both men going pale with horror as the came to grips with the grisly fact. The sound tech pressed the panic button on his Non-Com badge, winking out of sight as he was teleported out of the dungeon. The cameraman just had time to look around for his companion before he did the same. It was just as well, the room smelled bad enough from the burnt cobwebs. The camera crew didn't need to make it any worse by being sick in it.

A look of hurt came over the DJ's expression. 'That is terrible accusation to be making,' he said. 'It is against the rules of the league to be deliberately harming non-combatants.'

'And we would have been disqualified if we had,' spat

Robert. The observation brought oaths of outrage from the rest of his team. Now that he said it, they all realized exactly what the DJ had been plotting. Sure enough he'd been planning on Janice using one of her patented proximity-blast fireballs to clear the room. The camera crew would have been caught in the explosion and the Sleepy Hollow Boys would be disqualified. In the book of sleazy tricks, it was about as low as a DJ could go.

'You haf proof of this?' Zerstörer's smile was back on his cadaverous face as he saw Robert expression become more enraged. 'Not to fear, I'll not hold it against you. I'm a fair man, after all. Ve just say this fantasy come to you because of heat of the moment and forget about it.'

'I wouldn't bet on it,' Robert hissed. Zerstörer took Zerstörer a sadistic pride in the fact that no team ever beaten one of his dungeons. Over the years, many companies had come forward to offer huge prizes to the first team that did. The long list of competitors buried in Tombstone's Boot Hill didn't stop new teams from descending on the ghost town every year to try.

'It would be poor form if I were to bet on mine own dungeon,' Zerstörer replied. 'I might try to tip the odds in my favour.' The DJ gestured with his gloved hand at Ulgri, still standing there looking dejected with the ruin of the burlap bag dripping from his hand. 'As amusing as your conversation is, I think you should bear in mind the advice of your little billboard there. The clock is most certainly ticking.'

Robert scowled at the smirking image on the wall. Somehow, somehow, he was going to wipe that smile off Zerstörer's face. The way that would hurt the DJ most would be to do the impossible and beat him at his own game.

Zerstörer seemed to read the thoughts behind Robert's eyes. 'They used to say that Tombstone was too tough to die. That became something of a motto here. Maybe you think you're the same way. You aren't. I've given Tombstone a new motto. "Nobody gets out alive". Think about that. Give up now, there's a no-go door off to your left. Boot Hill is running out of room for you people.'

'We're staying,' Robert snarled, shaking his fist at the AVS. 'We're going to beat this damn place, and we're going to beat you!'

The DJ sighed and leaned back in his chair. 'Interesting,' he said. 'Always they are picking the hot-head for being team captain. Maybe the next room will help cool you off.'

The arcane screen shimmered and faded into darkness. Robert glared at the now empty wall. They'd beat him. They had to, they owed Bundo and Melintheil at least that much.

You had to provoke him,' groaned Ulgri. The dwarf was hugging his sponsor-covered shoulders, his beard a mess of frost. They were in a long hallway. Big refrigerating coils loomed against the walls, a layer of ice and snow carpeting the ground. Icicles jutted down from the ceiling like little frozen fangs. At least most of them were icicles. Twice already Ulgri had spotted little light beams against the floor, almost invisible to the eye. Each time he warned his comrades back while he tripped the intangible wires. Instantly some of the 'icicles' broke free and shot downward. Not ice, but steel, they stabbed deep into the floor. It didn't take much imagination to realize what they would do to somebody if they struck home.

'He said he'd have to cool you off,' Ulgri cursed, kicking a pile of snow with his foot. 'Unfortunately, that includes the rest of us too!'

Robert shook his head. 'I hardly think Zerstörer had this room whipped together in half an hour just because of me. He'd like us to think he did, but I had thought we were all smarter than that.' The remark brought chuckles to Bill and Janice; even the brooding Apache Jay Stalkingbear cracked a smile at the dwarf's expense. Ulgri just glowered back and continued looking for light beams on the floor.

'The man's a sadist,' Janice said. There was a nimbus of energy about her, a small spell to keep the chill out of her bones. Dressed in her thin mage's robes, the cold would have ravaged her otherwise. Still, it made for an eerie sight, watching artificial snow sizzle as it fluttered into the invisible shell of heat. 'It has to be, what, 110 outside.'

'In the shade, maybe,' Jay answered. The Apache kept watching the walls, the ceiling, the floor, trying to keep his eyes focused everywhere at once. Of them all, he was taking the cold the worst, the unaccustomed atmosphere sapping his energy like a leech. Somebody who could cross the Sonora desert without batting an eye was seriously out of his element in this giant freezer. That was probably why Zerstörer had really put the room together.

'At least he has an eye for art,' Bill commented. The cleric moved from the centre of the path, looking at a line of ice sculptures ranged along the north wall.

They were uncannily life-like, little dog-headed creatures with pointy tails, maybe the size of a small child. The craftsmanship was remarkable, the scaly texture of the skin, the rotten little fangs in their muzzles, all rendered with amazing detail. Robert started to walk toward one of the sculptures. Instantly he felt Jay Stalkingbear's hand close on his shoulder. The athlete started to pull away, but the Apache gestured down the hallway. Puzzled at first, Robert finally smiled when he made out exactly what it was Jay had seen. Some wag on Zerstörer's construction crew had built a little snowman from the artificial snow, complete with a cowboy hat and little wooden six-shooter.

Robert and Jay approached the strange little figure, incongruous in its setting of industrial refrigeration equipment and professional ice sculptures. As they came near, however, the formerly quiet hall erupted into song. Not a person on the team didn't jump when the strains of an old Winter Solstice song about an enchanted snowman began to creak from previously unseen speakers. His comrades laughed, but Robert felt his fingers tighten about the grip of his sword. Another DJ and he would pass off the episode as a bit of humour, a joke to break the tension of the deadlier rooms. Not Zerstörer, his idea of humour *were* the death-traps. No, the whole spectacle was another one of his sick riddles, his way of teasing his victims with an as yet unseen threat.

A sharp scream sounded from behind him and Robert spun around. Janice was rushing toward the line of ice sculptures, Ulgri struggling to hold her back. He couldn't see Bill; the cleric was lost in the midst of a great cloud of icy mist that was shooting from the wall. Robert's eyes went wide with horror. Those hadn't been sculptures! They had been living creatures; kobolds brought in by Zerstörer to test one of his despicable traps, then left behind as one of his left-handed



warnings to the competitors. The hiss of gas exploding from pipes in the wall gradually subsided. Robert clenched his fist as the mist slowly settled. A new statue loomed over the kobolds, and this one was in the image of Bill Corrigan, flash-frozen by a blast of liquid nitrogen!

Before the cleric's death could fully register with the team, the sharp clang of a portcullis dropping down boomed over the strains of holiday cheer crackling from the speakers. The tunnel into the hallway was sealed off. A platform slowly rose from the floor at the other end of the corridor. Robert could see a dark-haired woman standing on the rising platform, shivering in the frilly saloon-girl outfit she was wearing. The athlete cursed, quickly spinning back around. 'Look sharp!' he yelled. Ulgri dropped into a crouch, releasing his hold on Janice. The mage stared at Bill's frozen body, her lips moving in some whispered enchantment. Robert groaned as he realised what she was about. The suddenness of Corrigan's death had upset them all, but Janice was letting emotion over-rule common sense. She could thaw the cleric out from now to doomsday and he'd still be just as dead. And they didn't have that kind of time to fool around. This oversized refrigerator had some more tricks about it. The presence of the saloon-girl 'damsel in distress' proved it.

Robert rushed down the icy floor, sprinting to reach Janice before anything took advantage of her distraction. An arctic chill swept down the hall, telling him it was already too late. Part of one of the walls slid back, exposing a big cell that was, if anything, even colder than the freezing corridor. A heavy, animal stink wafted out from the gloom of the cell. The athlete tried to penetrate the gloom behind the opening, but couldn't see whatever was inside.

'Jan, snap out of it!' he roared. The mage ignored him, pressing her hand against Bill's chest. Robert could see the pulses of eldritch energy seeping from her palm into the frozen priest. He cursed, doubling his effort. He grabbed the woman's arm, trying to pull her away. Janice fought back, resisting him with stubborn tenacity. 'He's dead,' the athlete snarled.

'Not if I hurry!' Janice insisted. Some of the frozen nitrogen was dripping off the cleric as her magical energies swept through his body. Robert cursed again, keeping one eye on the open cell.

'We'll take him with us, then,' he said, trying to appease the mage's fixation. If they hurried, maybe they could get clear before whatever Zerstörer had waiting for them got an opportunity to strike. Robert turned his head, finding Jay Stalkingbear in his customary place behind him. 'Help me with her, and let's get out of here!' he snapped.

A shrill, piercing cry thundered from the depths of the cell. Robert could see eyes glaring out from the darkness now, crimson in the reflected light of the corridor. The musky animal stink intensified. Something huge lumbered out from the cell, straightening its gigantic body as it emerged into the high-roofed corridor. Robert felt his stomach drop as he saw the thing. Towering ten feet if it stood an inch, its shoulders broad enough to land a small plane on, its arms so thick they looked like telegraph poles, the claws on its enormous paws bigger than butcher knives. The thing was covered in a shaggy white coat of mangy fur, its ape-like head tapering to a narrow-peak. There was a savage, primitive intelligence in the red-rimmed eyes that flanked its monkey-like snout. The

fangs that hung down from its jaws gleamed like old ivory in the pale light of the hall. Another exotic monstrosity brought by Zerstörer to ensure that he would catch the competitors off-guard, this one so fabulous that most monster hunters considered it a legend. Robert shook his head at the DJ's sick idea of a joke. The snowman, the song and now this, the monster most people called 'the abominable snowman', the fabled yeti of mystery-shrouded India!

'Stick to the centre of the room!' Robert called out. 'Stay away from the walls! Make it come to us!' He spun Janice away from Bill's half-frozen body. 'I'm sorry,' he told her, 'but if we don't pull it together, that thing's going to kill all of us.' The mage nodded, wiping away the tears that had frozen at the corners of her eyes.

'I was just starting to think Zerstörer was taking it easy on us,' grumbled Ulgri. The dwarf fingered his hammer, slapping the heavy peen against his calloused palm. He quickly looked over his shoulder to confirm the position of the AVS. If he was going to get mauled by a mythological snow-devil then he wanted to make sure he showed the audience his best side – the one with the logos of the highest paying sponsors.

The yeti stalked slowly toward them, feral fury shining in its red eyes. Janice let it take a few more steps, then stretched her hand and pointed at the beast. A word of arcane power hissed through her perfect teeth and a blue sizzle of energy crackled from her extended finger. A jagged spear of electricity sped across the corridor, slamming into the hulking ape-man. The yeti's shriek of pain boomed down the hallway, the reek of singed fur and burnt flesh overpowering the pungent linger of liquid nitrogen in the air. The beast staggered, its chest blackened where the sorcerous lightning had struck. For a moment, Janice dared to hope that one blast had been enough to topple the monster.

Bestial fangs grinned in a grotesque snarl. The yeti's paw-like hand smacked against its breast, pounding against its ribs like a drum. Janice felt a thrill of unease as she watched the brute stalk forward once more, its primitive brain already forgetting the pain of its injury as primal rage seized control of its mind. The mage waved her hands through the air, ancient incantations hurrying across her lips. Little balls of scarlet light winked into existence all around her. At a gesture, the spheres shot forward, blinding in their speed. The magic missiles smashed into the yeti, knocking it back with each crushing impact. Blood burst from the beast's bruised flesh, staining its pale coat along its left side. With another howl, the brute flopped onto the frosty floor.

Janice smiled, turning toward Robert. 'Piece of cake,' she said, snapping her fingers. The rest of the team released a protracted sigh of relief, but Robert's face darkened with suspicion. She was right, it was easy. Much too easy. He looked at the yeti's slumped body, at the thin trickle of blood oozing from its side. Then he looked again at the cell that had held the monster. As if on cue, a spotlight sputtered into life, shining full onto the door of the cell. Robert's eyes went wide with alarm. The entire surface was covered in cruciform symbols, ankhs and crosses, the blazing sun of Apollo and the black raven of Odin. Signs and runes from a dozen religions, all of them marks against evil. Wards to contain denizens of the demonic realms.

Robert looked again at the yeti's sprawled body. The trickle of blood had stopped; indeed, the body seemed to be





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absorbing the gore back into itself, the fur growing pale and bright again. Before he could shout a warning, the yeti leapt up from the ground, covering nearly a dozen yards in its jump. Knife-like claws flashed through the frosty air, raking against Ulgri's chest, throwing the dwarf through the air like a rag-doll. He landed in a heap of curses and obscenities. Janice hurriedly swept one of the mystic talismans hanging around her neck across her brow. As the yeti's claw swiped at her, it crashed against an unseen barrier, a phantom shield that kept its talons from chewing through the mage's throat.

Jay Stalkingbear pounced on the berserk ape-man, slamming his iron-headed tomahawk deep into the thing's shoulder. What erupted from the wound wasn't entirely blood, but a dank, blackish ichor that reeked of wet dog and bubbling sulphur. The yeti's huge paw reached over its back, trying to grab the Apache as he fought to free his weapon. Jay gave a cry of shock as the beast's claws slashed against his cheek. With a defiant shout, he jumped back, leaving his weapon imbedded in the monster's flesh. A huge, serrated-edge combat knife was in the warrior's hand almost before his feet hit the ground. The yeti spun about, snarling at the man. Robert could see now that the beast's eyes weren't reflecting the light in the room; they were actually glowing with a hellish luminance of their own. Not content with simply employing a normal yeti against the competitors, Zerstörer had one of his wizards bind a demon into the thing!

'Keep back!' Robert warned. 'It's going to take more than steel to hurt that thing!' The athlete's shout brought the monster's head spinning around, its infernal gaze burning into his. All of a sudden, the sword in his hands felt about as useful as a gnomish utility blade. A rope of yellow drool

slopped from the yeti's jaws as it growled and lunged.

The monster's claws slashed into Robert's armour, gnawing into the micromesh as though it were butter. Ceramic plates cracked under the impact, chemically-bonded carbon-steel links broke apart. The internal layer of Kevlar was scoured by the beast's talons. The undershirt beneath ripped as the brute's paw tore free. Already darting back, Robert was stunned to find himself still alive. Another inch and it would be his guts, not his armour lying shredded on the cold floor of the freezer. For what it was worth, he slashed the monster's arm as it recovered from the attack, dealing it some pain if not any lasting damage.

Jay Stalkingbear was slashing at the yeti's legs before it could attack Robert again, the Apache dropping beneath the beast's claws as it lashed at him. 'Take your own advice, van Richter,' the warrior cursed. 'Keep clear of this thing!' The Apache's knife tore into the yeti's hip, slashing it down to the bone. The monster's retaliation nearly opened him from calf to belly. He limped back, trying to fend off the yeti's approach with his knife.

Another salvo of magic missiles crashed into the monster's back, turning it away from Jay Stalkingbear. The missiles didn't have quite so pronounced an effect as the first time, but at least the scarlet energy orbs were holding its attention. Robert could see sweat dripping from Janice's brow as she struggled to maintain the frantic rhythm of her attack. Beside her, Ulgri was trying to assemble his pistol-gripped crossbow. More coloured curses spilled from his mouth as he saw that the weapon had been damaged by the yeti's attack.

'Don't waste time with that!' Ulgri yelled when he saw Robert start to round on the yeti from behind with his sword. 'Try and find something that might actually have a chance of doing more than just piss him off!'

The athlete rolled his eyes. With its body corrupted by some fiendish influence, the best weapon they could have used against the monster was the white energy of divine power. Unfortunately, Bill was in no position to rebuke the yeti with the power of Mars. Robert glanced at the cleric's frozen husk. A reckless plan came to him. He only hoped it would work.

'I've got an idea!' he shouted to his team-mates. 'When he goes for me, keep back and cross your fingers.' Ulgri nodded his understanding; Janice managed a slight smile, her attention focused on maintaining the barrage of mystical energy slamming into the yeti's body. Robert circled back around the monster, keeping a close eye on the position of the line of frozen kobolds and the deadly pipes behind them. When he was in position, he closed his eyes and muttered a prayer to Apollo. He might not be a priest, but he hoped the god heard him. He certainly needed the help.

Robert's war cry echoed through the corridor as he charged at the yeti. Both hands locked about the hilt of his sword, he brought the weapon slashing into the yeti's body, slicing into its hip. The monster barked in pain, spinning around in a display of maddened ferocity. Robert didn't wait to see more than the yeti's simian head turn toward him. The athlete was already running, racing across the treacherous, frozen floor, toward the gruesome line of ice statues. He could hear the yeti's enormous paws slapping against the slick tiles, feel its fetid breath against his neck.

Ten feet, then five. Robert's lungs burned with the same



panic that coursed through his legs. The monster was right behind him, any instant it would strike him down with one sweep of its grisly claws. He clenched his teeth, fighting down the urge to scream. Caught between Set-Typhon and the deep blue sea, Robert knew he would have only one chance to come out alive. As he reached the line of statues, Robert threw his arms around a kobold's neck, using the statue as a fulcrum. His body whipped around, his feet sliding on the icy floor. Spinning back around, he released his grip on the statue, slamming to the tiles as he pitched headlong across his own path in the ice. The yeti was already charging past him, its momentum plunging it straight toward the wall. Robert scrambled away, hardly daring to watch as the pipes released their hideous gas.

The reek of liquid nitrogen intensified as a second blast of freezing vapour poured into the room. The hulking yeti vanished in the shimmering fog, its howl of surprise drowned out by the hiss of escaping gas. Robert slumped to the floor, fist clenched in triumph. There was something decidedly satisfying about using Zerstörer's own trap against him.

Robert's fist slowly opened, his victory turning bitter in his mouth. Something huge and hairy lumbered out from the mist. As it walked, the tomahawk buried in its shoulder cracked and crumbled, shattering into so many shards of ice. The monster itself, however, didn't even seem to have noticed the intense blast of freezing vapour! The thing was frost-proof!

'I said find something that wouldn't piss him off!' Ulgri roared. The dwarf had finally managed to fix his crossbow. He fired the weapon at the yeti as it stalked toward Robert. The bolt slammed into the cheek just below its eye. The yeti's shriek of agony was ear-splitting. It doubled over, pawing at the steel shaft buried in its face. Robert scrambled away from the reeling creature, under no illusion that the dwarf's attack would do anything but enrage it still further. When the ape-man finally wrenched the bolt from its face, its eyes were pits of hate, and they were fixed solely upon Ulgri Flintfist.

'Perfect!' the rogue spat, his numb fingers trying to fit another bolt to his weapon. He looked up at Janice, his face screwed into a sour expression. 'Isn't there anything in that book of yours that could turn him into a butterfly or something?' The mage shook her head.

'Only if I want to get a lot closer to him than I feel comfortable doing,' she answered. Another salvo of scarlet spheres went rushing across the corridor to slam into the monster. 'If you were curious, I can't keep this up much longer either.'

'Great, now the wizard's batteries are running low!' Ulgri moaned. 'This just can't get any worse!'

As the rogue cursed, the wall behind him flashed into life, an AVS that had now been instructed to display an image as well as transmit the efforts of the Sleepy Hollow Boys to win through the DJ's trap. Zerstörer's skeletal face grinned at the competitors, a gloved finger tapping the side of his chin.

'Things are bad looking, Herr Flintfist, but their worst?' Zerstörer chuckled, a sound like the rasp of a cobra choking on a rat. '*Nein mein Herr, this is the worst!*'

Suddenly the floor of the corridor sprang into life, dozens of beams of light criss-crossing the icy tiles. Unlike the dimly seen sensor beams Ulgri had disarmed before, these shone a blazing orange, impossible to miss. A lattice work of death

spread out across the hallway. The dwarf looked down, cursing to find beams all around him. One move and steel spikes would be released from the ceiling. He scowled as he looked back at the yeti. Zerstörer had someone paying very close attention. The lights were shut off as the yeti neared them, flashing back into life as it passed. Naturally Zerstörer had no sense of letting his monster face the same hazards as his victims.

'That should more interesting be making things, *nicht war?*' Again the DJ's sinister chuckle echoed through the hall. 'I would say *auf wiedersehen*, but I fear this is about as far as our acquaintance is going.' The AVS faded out on the image of Zerstörer's wicked grin. The old winter solstice ditty creaking from the loudspeakers was replaced with a chorus of German children singing *Hänchen klein*.

'I'm going to kill that psycho,' Janice snarled, unleashing another barrage of sorcery against the oncoming yeti.

'Not if I get to him first,' Ulgri growled back. He threw his crossbow away in disgust, digging in one of the pouches hanging from his utility belt. He smiled as he withdrew a set of tiny mirrors. His smile flickered as he dug into some of the other pouches. 'Hey, Jan, got any gum?'

Jay Stalkingbear locked his arm around Robert's, trying to hold the athlete back. Robert struggled to free himself from the Apache's powerful grip.

'We've got to help them!' he cursed.

Jay shook his head. 'What good will it do anybody if you rush over there and get yourself killed?'

Robert cracked his fist against the Apache's face. 'You bug out through the No-go door then!' he spat. 'I'm not leaving them!'

The Apache raised his knife, thrusting it into Robert's face. A little bead of blood welled up where its point touched the athlete's nose. Robert glared back at Jay, refusing to cower before the man's threat. After a moment, Jay shook his head. 'You're no good to me dead, pale-eyes. Your family is paying me good money to make sure you come out of this in something resembling one piece.'

So that was it! That was why the Apache had been taking such pains to watch out for him. Robert felt sick inside, repulsed by the idea his family had infiltrated someone onto his team for the express purpose of watching out for him. How much had it cost them already, having one man in the group who didn't even care about how far they got, that didn't have his mind on the game? Maybe if he'd been watching out for everyone instead of just the man he was paid to protect Bundo or Bill or Melintheil would still be alive.

He wasn't going to loose anymore friends to Zerstörer, regardless of how much of the family fortune was tied up in keeping him safe. Nobody else was going to die, and if Stalkingbear didn't see it that way...

'I'm not leaving them and we're not quitting,' Robert snarled again.

'What can you do, smart man?' Jay snapped back. He pointed to where Janice and Ulgri were pinned down. The yeti was taking its time marching toward them, wading through the spheres of arcane malevolence Janice was throwing at it as though they were spitballs. Ulgri was labouring at the floor, trying to disarm the sensor beams that had sprung into life all around them. The only place they could retreat to was the north wall, where the DJ has his liquid nitrogen trap.



Robert looked at the sword in his hand, the pride he had felt at being honoured by the Emperor with such a weapon turning bitter as he realised how worthless it was against Zerstörer's possessed yeti. He looked along the hallway again, desperate for anything that might look like a weapon. His gaze fixed on the saloon-girl damsel standing on her platform. Zerstörer might have entrusted the model with some sort of prize to hand out when the team 'rescued' her from his monster. But was it something they could use or was it simply another lifetime subscription to the carnivorous mold of the month society?

'Try to distract it again,' Robert told Jay. There was no time to explain his plan. The athlete was dashing down the corridor, leaping over the orange beams that criss-crossed the tiles. Behind him he could hear the Apache yelling at the yeti. If the monster understood even half of what he was saying, it would rip him apart. Robert hoped he'd be back in time to keep that from happening, however much Jay had compromised the team's chances.

The platform with the damsel was only a dozen yards away when Robert froze. The orange beams were gone. He risked a look above, seeing no sign of icicles on the ceiling. The little alarm bells started going off in his head. He stared hard at the floor. Beneath the layer of frost, only a few feet from his own boots was an iron grate. While he watched, something that looked like molten snow started bubbling up from beneath the grate. He wasn't sure what new trick of the DJ's this was, but he didn't have the time to wait for it to explode in his face. Robert darted back into a stretch of corridor rife with sensor beams. He braced himself, knowing that if he mis-timed even a single step he would trip a beam and send a steel rain of spikes dropping down on his head. When he was ready, he sprinted through the trapped hall, each step landing firmly in the little square of safe ground between the beams. When he reached the end of his run, he launched himself across the open space with the grate, jumping over the suspect stretch of floor. As he leaped, the molten snow congealed together, stretching flabby pseudopods upwards in an effort to grapple him.

Some kind of man-eating jelly, Robert realised, dyed to blend in with its frozen surroundings. Even without face or limb, he could tell the abomination was frustrated by his escape from its formless clutch. The thing lashed about wildly even as more of its mass continued to bubble up from the floor. He decided he didn't really want to think about how big it would get. That would have to wait until he solved the problem of the yeti.

Beyond the concealed slime-creature, the cylindrical platform rose from the floor. The dark-haired damsel smiled nervously at him as he grabbed the iron rungs set into the side of the platform and started to climb up. He made certain to spot her Non-Com badge before starting his ascent – Zerstörer had already tried to trick them with a fake 'princess' in one of the other rooms.

'Uh, you're not supposed to rescue me until after you beat the monsters,' the woman told him. Robert lifted himself onto the platform, nodding his understanding, but gently nudging her aside.

'I'll get to that in a minute,' he said. 'Right now I need to see what's in the box.' Over the damsel's half-hearted protests, Robert brought the edge of his sword slamming

down into the old-fashioned lock that drooped from the front of an iron-bound treasure chest. He shouted with triumph when he saw what was inside, slamming his sword back into its scabbard, he reached down and lifted the bulky object from the chest. A Hachiman 4600, one of the finest chainsaws the Japanese Empire ever put on the market. He could even see the fire-scorched seal of approval on the blade.

'I'm not supposed to give you that until you rescue me,' the saloon girl reminded him.

'I'll just borrow it then,' Robert laughed, hopping down from the platform. Suddenly the AVS lit up again. It showed Zerstörer stalking around in what looked like a sociopath's toyshop. Several ugly-looking humanoids with grey-green skin and bestial faces were busily constructing all manner of fiendish implements of death and torture. Robert could tell it was some pre-recorded skit the DJ had filmed to torment the competitors if they got this far. As he watched, one of the humanoids approached Zerstörer. Robert could see now that it was a hobgoblin wearing the tunic and battle fatigues of a Great War Axis grenadier. In the powerfully-built creature's hands was the Hachiman 4600.

'We got a bomb that'll fit nice inside the saw, *Hauptmann*,' the hobgoblin growled, his brutal, snout-nosed features twisting into a cruel leer. 'Soon as they start it up...' The humanoid made an explosive gesture with its free hand.

A look of mock outrage crept onto the German's gaunt features. 'Vhy, ve couldn't do that Thok,' Zerstörer said, his voice carrying the note of scandalized sensibility to the extreme. 'Take the bomb out before you put it in the ice room,' he told the hobgoblin. Zerstörer's face sneered from the wall. 'Ve wouldn't vant them thinking us to be cheating, *nicht war?*'

Robert cursed, turning his back on the distracting AVS. The last thing he needed. A weapon in his hands that might actually do some damage to that hell-beast and now he had to worry about it blowing up in his hands! Planting an explosive inside what was supposed to be treasure wasn't something any respectable DJ would do, but Zerstörer didn't care a damn about respectability. His stunt with the camera crew proved that much. Still, it would suit his perverse humour to hand out something the team desperately needed only to have them fail to use it because they were too afraid.

The hell with it, Robert thought. They were all as good as dead anyway. Shouldering the heavy chainsaw, he braced himself to repeat his jump across the amoeboid monstrosity. It had expanded to nearly twice its original dimensions. He'd cleared it easily the first time, now the athlete wasn't so sure. He dared to glance at the No-Go door. Not too late to quit, live to fight another day. The sharp cry of Janice decided him. Taking a deep breath, he sprinted toward the undulating mass. At the last instant, he jumped, sailing over the roiling glob. He felt its pseudopods slapping against his leg armour, mercifully sliding free as they corroded the skin of ceramic with their acidic touch.

Robert landed hard on the other side of the glob, his bad knee crumpling under him. He pitched forward, nearly falling across one of the beams. He bit down on the pain, closed his mind to the flare of panic that welled up inside his mind as he realised how close he had come to triggering the trap. There was no time for all that. Ahead of him, he could see the yeti closing on Ulgri and Janice. Behind him he could hear the glob slithering after him, frost sizzling as it undulated across

the floor.

Forcing his injured leg to obey him, Robert hopped through the maze of orange lights. He could hear spikes dropping from the ceiling as the glob pursued him. The steel spears didn't stop it, barely slowing it down as its shapeless body simply oozed around the spikes. It was like trying to stab mud, and as ineffective.

Ahead, Janice was concentrating on a new tactic. Ulgri had used a set of mirrors to redirect some of the sensor beams to free a greater space for them to work in. At the same time, Janice had used one of her spells to call down a rain of frogs. The unfortunate amphibians had crashed all around the corridor, triggering the spike traps all around them. Several of the spears had struck the yeti; he could see their cruel ends sticking out of its body in several places. The tactic seemed to have been the idea of Jay Stalkingbear. While Robert watched, the Apache was throwing coins, buttons, keys and anything else he could find in his pockets at the beams, lending his efforts to those of the frogs. Whoever was killing the sensors for the yeti was having a hard time keeping up with all the confusion, as the damage already suffered by the creature proved. Finally they abandoned the effort entirely, the orange lights faded away abruptly.

The absence of light didn't go unnoticed by the yeti. The traps that had been sprung all around it and which had, on occasion, struck its own massive body, had taught it a measure of caution. Now it roared with feral delight, beating its chest once more with its monstrous paws. Its entire gigantic body bunched into a murderous coil of tensed muscle and primitive hate.

Crossing his fingers, Robert pulled the cord of the chainsaw. He half expected it to blow up. Instead he heard the grating snarl of the tool as it chugged into life. The yeti rounded on him as it heard the sound. Robert glared into the beast's baleful eyes.

'You'll look good on my wall,' Robert spat, bringing the whirring blade slashing across the yeti's neck. Icy black ichor splashed him as the saw bit home. The floor seemed to shudder as the yeti's huge body slammed down into the tiles.

'Robert, get down!' Janice cried. The athlete didn't waste a second thinking about the command, but dove to his left as soon as he heard the shout. An instant later, searing heat blasted over his head. A fiery light exploded across his vision. When sight came to him again and he picked himself from the floor, he saw a puddle of smoking slag behind him, blobby life slowly oozing from the burnt morass of the man-eating jelly.

'You might have used the fireball on the yeti,' Robert said as the mage and the dwarf came walking toward him.

'I was saving it in case there were more spiders,' Janice replied. 'But I decided you needed it more.' She looked over at the dying pool of charred mush. 'White pudding, a kind of arctic amoeba. Supposed to taste good with asparagus.'

Robert chuckled and hugged the mage. They'd come through a bad spot, the worst yet. Hurt, hardened and not without losses, but they'd come through just the same. He looked over at Ulgri, the dwarf standing poised with one foot planted on the yeti's chest; a scene he no doubt hoped would wind up on at least a few magazine covers. He nodded his gratitude to Jay Stalkingbear. The man might be playing for different stakes, but at least he was playing for the same team now.

The AVS crackled back into life. Not a recording this time, but Zerstörer's own image. The DJ didn't look particularly happy as he surveyed the ruin of his yeti and glob-monster. 'It seems you are a bit more capable than I anticipated,' he said, each word seeming to be dragged from him by some supreme effort. 'This was the last room of the first level, the final challenge of the course. You should feel accomplishment, nobody else got this far.'

That news brought a mixture of celebration and anxiety to the competitors. Was Zerstörer telling them that none of the other teams had completed the course? Had the madman really managed to kill six entire teams? DJs regularly changed the traps and monsters for each team and there was a hollow feeling in each of their stomachs as they considered just how tough some of the challenges the other teams faced might have been. Then there was the brutal fact that no doubt was the cause of the smile that wormed its way onto Zerstörer's face. Even if the other teams were eliminated, the Sleepy Hollow Boys wouldn't win a thing unless they defeated the rest of the dungeon. Two more levels of unholy creatures and diabolical traps.

Zerstörer pointed his gloved finger at Robert. 'Even if you did things a bit out of order, I congratulate you on your achievement.' The DJ's hands came together in a fragile applause, the sound barely carrying across the AVS. 'Perhaps,' the German conceded, 'you really are too tough to die.'

Zerstörer's face contorted into an expression of such malignity that it was far colder than anything in the refrigerated corridor. 'It will be a pleasure putting that claim to the test.' He shrugged as he leaned back in his chair.

'If not, there is still a little room on Boot Hill.'



METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA®

The tiny speck of the first colonization starship moved sluggishly through the cold depths of space. There was much mankind didn't know about the stars, and one of those mysterious effects slashed into the starship Warden 300 years ago. Now the ship drifted through the darkness, lost and in trouble. While many intelligences move about its decks, none of them work to help the starship find its way.

Generations later, you are a native on the starship Warden. As a true human, mutant, or robot, you fight to survive, unaware that the radiation-saturated world around you is in fact a starship, one of mankind's greatest achievements. Can you uncover the secrets of the starship Warden and steer it back on course, or will you simply try to live another day?



The very first sci-fi RPG returns in a deluxe oversized hardcover featuring the original 1976 rules plus loads of extras and new material!

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This edition also features the very first publication ever of Mr. Ward's original playtest notes for the 1976 edition of the world's first science fiction RPG!

If you missed the Kickstarter launch, look for it in stores later this year. Here is a preview: the new adventure *Coming of Age* by legendary TSR designer (and *Metamorphosis Alpha* creator) James M. Ward.



COMING OF AGE

AN INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE FOR METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA

By James M. Ward / Art by Jim Holloway and Doug Kovacs

Author's Note: This is one of the most popular scenarios I have ever designed for a RPG. I have run something like this for literally hundreds of conventions. There is no need for the players to know anything about the adventure or even what rules system they are using. If the actions of the players and their characters go as they usually do, your friends will have smiles on their faces from the beginning to the end of this adventure.

SUMMARY OF ENCOUNTERS

Area 1 – Razor Grass & the Pedestal
Area 2 – The Tool Shed & the Arm Band
Area 3 – A Patch Of Death & Destruction
Area 4 – Dead Bodies & Mushroom Humanoids
Area 5 – Stacks of Poison-Dusted Stuff
Area 6 – 12 Intensity Radiation & Crystal Trees
Area 7 – Picking Berries... *Not*
Area 8 – Chance at the Shorties
Area 9 – Invasion of the Ratmen
Area 10 – A Field of Pleasant Purple
Area 11 – Pure Battle Random Encounters
Area 12 – Pure Random Role-Playing Encounters
Area B – The End Is Near

INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following:

With your birthdays last week, you have become adults in your primitive village of 200 true humans and mutants. Now you must go on your Destiny Walk. Upon becoming an adult, each member of the tribe walks into the Thorn Valley. If they man-

age to reach the other side of the valley, they will join the tribe to become useful members. If they died on the walk, they weren't fated to grow further. The chief of the tribe gives each new walker a well-made bone spear, a carry bag of water and food for three days, and a specially prepared turtle-shell shield. Each walker can then hug their parents one more time and advance into the thorn warren.

Your parents whisper in your ear, "Do you want the poison antidote or the healing salve?" You must answer quickly and quietly and you are handed what you asked for, knowing your parents weren't supposed to do that.

You know if you try to back out of the Thorn Valley before completing your journey, the chief will kill you instantly. Thus you begin your first steps into the thorn maze. You know from living near the maze valley all of your life that the thorns are attracted to blood. If you are pushed into the thorns, they contract, inflicting massive damage. Your goal is to walk through the maze and pick up a different item from two different encounters to take with you as proof you have explored the maze.

The bone spear does 1d6+4 damage. The turtle shell shield is AC 5.

Poison Antidote: Two applications cure any poison injected into the body.

Healing Salve: Cures up to 10 points of physical damage.

The thorns inflict 40 damage on contact.

AREAS OF THE MAP

AREA A – BEGINNING OF THE MAZE:
The trail you see is 10 yards wide. The thorn brambles form a tunnel for you to move through. The village is filled with legends about Thorn Valley. You know it's filled with deadly creatures and useful de-

vices, if you can figure them out.

You hear some giggling in the brambles and know the Shorties are watching you. As you grew up, you would often see small glowing figures moving from vine to vine. The Shorties weren't more than six inches tall. Each one was a winged humanoid. It was said if one could gain the friendship of the Shorties, he or she would be very lucky all of their life.

The first step in was the hardest. You wave to your tribe and see tears in your parents' eyes. You know you must walk out of the thorns on the other side of the valley. If you succeed your parents will be there, waiting for you.


Game Master Notes: You are explaining what your player characters see in this adventure. Spend a few moments explaining the thorn brambles. The thorns are several inches long and tinged with a blood-red poison sap. The brambles are thick and lush with thick large leaves and vines. The thorn maze is made of tunneled paths and at the places where there are numbers on your map the thorns open up to form large glades. Generally, except for all of the area marked 11, the creatures in the encounters do not come out and attack the characters. Note that it is perfectly possible to walk past every encounter except for the area marked 11.

AREA 1 – RAZOR GRASS & THE PED-ESTAL: Read or paraphrase the following:

From where you stand in the middle of the path, an area to your left and south opens to form a clearing about 30 yards by 30 yards wide. The entire area is covered in foot-tall purple grass. In the center of the area is a three-foot-tall pedestal. On top of the pedestal are several fist-sized devices.

The razor grass rips and cuts through most leather footwear. The grass is purple

COMING OF AGE

 = 10 yards

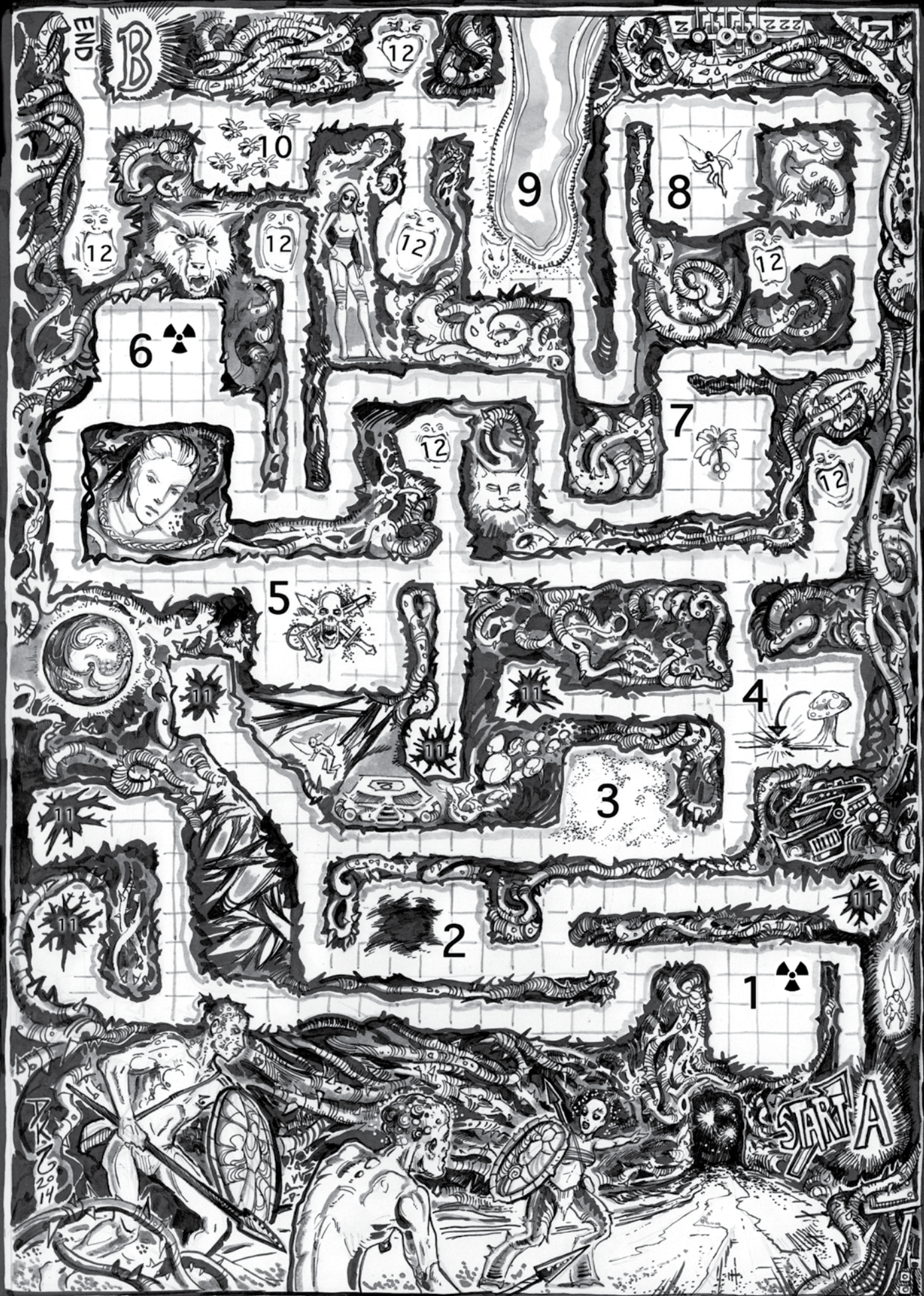
 12

pure
role-playing

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pure battle
encounter

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in color and covered in Intensity 4 radiation. Remember, in the first 10 seconds, it's intensity 4, in the second 10 seconds of exposure it's intensity 5, and it increases every 10 seconds. Because of this factor, characters with 6 or less Radiation Resistance take damage in the first 10 seconds. If the characters go out of the grass then return, the radiation intensity starts over at 4 when they go back into the grass area.

Author's Note: For beginning players, radiation is highly deadly. Consider not killing your characters at their first exposure to radiation and randomly mutating them with useful mutation and no defects.

The pedestal is a greed trap. The objects on the pedestal appear to be grenades of different colors. When grasped, they glow with a random color, but cannot be removed from their positions on the pedestal. The designers want the characters to be exposed to the radiation and the ripping action of the grass.

AREA 2 – THE TOOL SHED & THE ARM BAND: Read or paraphrase the following:

From where you stand in the middle of the path, an area to your right and north opens to about 40 yards by 30 yards. Much of the area is dominated by a large building made of an unknown substance. There is an obvious door in the middle of the south wall. Alongside the door, about chest high, is a green strip about four inches by two inches. Bare earth marks the area around the shed between the building and the thorn maze. A patch of inky blackness 10 feet wide and long moves out to the path and a voice comes from it. "I'm called Darkness, and I could use some help with this building."

Darkness is a mutant who wants to trade for the help it needs. It will lend a green color band to the human character and explain how the bands work. It wants the first two picks of the devices in the building and then it leaves the party. It's perfectly capable of fighting the group if they want a battle. The mutant expects to get the color band back after the door opens. Darkness asks the characters to destroy the robot in the center of the area and wants them to give him the large laser cutter and a five gallon sprayer of plant destroyer stored on the east side of the building. It doesn't want to go into the tool shed. The Darkness character warns the group not to

talk with the computer in the tool shed.

Horticultural Center Tool Shed #7: When a human character with a green wrist band puts it up to the green strip, he hears the following: "Horticulturalist Robinson, welcome to horticultural center number 7. Please come in; the level's A.I. is waiting to talk to you." The door opens and Darkness asks for the band back. The Darkness doesn't want the characters to do anything but give him the color band and the two things he asked for.

Inside the Tool Shed: Imagine a packed tool shed. The robot and the cutter take up most of the space at the center of the well-lit shed. Along the west wall are three distinct pallets of 100-pound bags. There is a push spreader hanging on the wall above each pallet. Pallet 1 is plant killer. Pallet 2 is fertilizer. Pallet 3 is heightened growth stimulator.

Along the long north wall are racked tools of all types: tree limb saws, hedge clippers, shovels, post-hole diggers, heavy mauls of many types, ladders, collapsible ladders, and axes of many types.

Along the east wall are 500 spray containers of plant killer. They range from 1 to 10 gallon versions.

There is little or no way for the characters to know what these chemicals do.

Along the south wall is a computer system, and the group hears the words of a crazed A.I. This being wants the group to cut through the thorns with the many cutters in this tool shed. If the group attempts this, the thorns throw vines at the characters and strikes for 40 points of damage to each character until they are dead.

Ecology Robot "Garden" model: Hit Points 150, Energy Cell good for 24 hours of constant operation, anti-grav capacity allowing it to be propelled at 25 miles per hour, soil analysis sensors, fertilizer and chemical defoliants of 10 sprays each automatically killing plants with the defoliants, horticultural tools allowing four different sets of cutting tools doing 15 points of damage each per strike, insecticides with 10 sprays automatically killing any bug, and light sources.

This robot activates every 48 hours and cuts away at the thorn maze. It only defends itself if it is out of the building and cutting the thorns. In the storage shed it must remain passive and take damage.

NPC MUTANT HUMANOID: THE DARKNESS

Armor Class: 3

Movement in Spaces: 4 Hit Points: 101

Radiation Resistance: 17 Constitution: 18

Mental Resistance: 20 Strength: 17

Dexterity: 15

Defect: Fear Impulse for Fish

Mutations:

Illusion Generation. **Special Note:** This mutant is able to gather darkness around him in a sphere of twenty yards in diameter. He can't use any of his other mutations while doing this, but he can use weapons and see out of his own illusion.

Telepathy

Reflection Power – reflects bullets

Appearance: He's always cloaked in a black kinetic fabric that gives him an armor class of 3 and resists blows. He appears human except for his head that is twice the size of a normal human head with all of his features in proportion.

Normal Reaction: In battle he uses two paralysis rods. When talking to new beings he uses his illusion ability to hide in darkness. He's a loner and has extensive knowledge of the ship levels. It is rumored he has a safe haven somewhere on the ship and it's filled with valuable bits of technology. When he talks to characters he asks them about where they found their wrist-bands. He is greatly interested in the fabled four captain's rings. He says he's willing to give rewards to the person who can give him one of those rings. He has a fear of robots of all types and stays well away from such devices.

AREA 3 – A PATCH OF DEATH & DESTRUCTION: Read or paraphrase the following:

At this point, the soil of the path changes to sand. Ahead and to the left and north is a large sandy area. The open area to the left seems to be 30 or so yards long and wide. On the path 10 yards ahead is a dead lion. In the patch to the right are green cones of some type. There are various sizes of cones with the largest one three feet wide at its mouth. You see smaller versions sticking up in the sand all around. There must be at least 20 of them growing out of the sand.

The lion was killed when it bit down on one of the funnels and it exploded. If the characters inflict damage to a funnel, they



receive a blast from the plant.

The sand is about a foot deep. Digging into the sand reveals the connecting tendrils of the plant. The character should easily be able to get past the dead lion and this patch of danger if they ignore everything.

MUTATED PLANT CREATURE: BOMB CACTUS

Armor Class: 5

Movement in Spaces: 0 Hit Points 83

Radiation Resistance: 9 Constitution: 18

Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 3

Dexterity: 3

Defect: Explodes for 40 points of damage in a 20 yard area when more than 11 points of damage hits the plant.

Mutations:

Poison Thorns (11 intensity)

Seedlings (when the plant explodes the seed thorns are spread far and wide. The seeds are capable of growing in the flesh of a living being and it does 20 points of damage to pull them out.)

Appearance: The cactus grows in round nodules about 5 feet wide and tall. While the ten to twelve nodules are all connected, it is possible for only a single pod to explode, doing no damage to the

other surrounding pods. Each of the pods is funnel-shaped and a blast follows the shape of the funnel and explodes out all in one direction. In a large, connected mass of these cacti there are always several pods aimed in every direction from the base of the cactus.

Normal Reaction: The plant has an ugly habit of growing in and around doorways of all types. It takes very little soil for the plant to take root. The plant has been known to take root and grow large on the protein of the dead body. After one year of growth, the plant matures enough to grow exploding pods. Those pods are filled with seeds and the slightest touch can set them off. There are examples of this plant growing in three or four nearby doors in a hundred yard mass of cacti.

AREA 4 – DEAD BODIES & MUSHROOM HUMANOID: Read or paraphrase the following:

You see a large white mushroom in the corner of this grassy area. It must be at least 10 feet tall and 10 wide. Near the mushroom are three dead humanoid bodies. The bodies appear to be in some type of armor and there are slung weapons on their backs. The bodies are stacked up on each other in a haphazard fashion. The area in front of you is grassy with no other distinctive features.

The giant mushroom only attacks if it is physically attacked. It's able to stretch 30 feet and smash down with its head for 20 points of damage. The mushroom can't be destroyed. When the bodies are disturbed, one-inch-tall mushroom men pop out of the necks of the dead bodies to the tune of 10 little mushrooms. These are harmless unless they touch the flesh of any being. In that case they flow into the skin and 20 days later, 20 mushroom men pop out inflicting 40 points of birthing damage.

Game Master: Have lots of fun with the harmless little mushroom men. They constantly follow the characters. They throw their little bone spears at the characters. They leap up to three feet and bounce against the legs of the characters.

The equipment on the bodies includes the following:

- Protein disruptor rifle inflicting 15d6 with each of the 5 shots
- Laser rifle inflicting 10d6 with each of the 7 shots
- Slug projector rifle inflicting 4d6 with each of the 10 shots
- 6 acid grenades inflicting 6d6 in a 10-yard radius
- 3 energy knives inflicting 10 blasts of 20 points of damage from the hydrogen energy cell

AREA 5 – STACKS OF POISON-DUSTED STUFF: Read or paraphrase the following:

The area to the south and left opens to around 40 yards by 40 yards. In this grassy, open area are five shelves with lots of materials neatly stacked on them in four levels per shelf. Half of the items are clothing and the other half seem to be physical weapons of many types.

Game Master notes: All of these materials are covered in black dust. Be sure to tell the players some of the dust comes off when the clothes are taken from the shelves. The dust is intensity 7 poison fungus. A dose comes on the skin of the characters that handle the clothes. If they continue working with the clothes and boots it becomes intensity 8 and then 9 as more poison flows into the system of the victim.

The other shelves have finely crafted weapons of all types from metal axes and swords to crossbows and javelins. These weapons are covered in the poison dust that can barely be noticed. If weapons are taken, every ten minutes the intensity of the poison goes up a point.

AREA 6 – RADIATION & CRYSTAL TREES: Read or paraphrase the following:

The area opens to your left and north. It seems to be a 30 by 30 yard patch of land. The area is covered in orange grass. Small foot-long machines, about six of them, are cutting the grass to a one-inch height. Three other of these little machines are trimming back the thorn vines at ground level and being covered in blood red sap from the thorns ineffectively striking the body of the oval machines. There are nine trees spread out in the area. These trees seem to be made out of crystal and appear to have once been oak trees.

Touching the trees, grass, or robots exposes the characters to intensity 12 radiation.

Trimmer bots: These bots can be controlled by the commands of a true human. All the robots can do is slowly trim the grass or cut back the brambles. The radiation doesn't bother the bots, but touching the bots without washing them first exposes the character who does so to intensity 12 radiation.

AREA 7 – PICKING BERRIES... NOT: Read or paraphrase the following:

You see six evenly spaced giant flower-



ing bushes in this 25 by 30 yards area. It's clear these plants have been planted and trimmed by someone or some thing. There is bare ground in and around the plants. The flowers are bright whites and burgundies, and each flower is roughly 10 feet long and 15 feet wide at the cone mouth. The flowers are on long stems, and there is a lot of the root system exposed above the ground. There are three fist-sized berries at the lip of each flower and many more berries lower down in the flower.

MUTATED PLANT CREATURE: DEATH HEALER

Armor Class: 7
Movement in Spaces: 0
Radiation Resistance: 18
Mental Resistance: 3
Dexterity: 10

Hit Points: 88
Constitution: 15
Strength: 18

Defect: Attraction Odor from True Humans

Mutations:

Aromatic Powers

Dissolving Juices

Special Berries

Increased Senses

Appearance: This is a flowering tree with unusually large flowers that grow red fist-sized berries in long clumps out of the bowls of each of the tube flowers.

Normal Reaction: The berries are always positioned so there are three berries

on the very edge of the flower and clusters of berries deeper into the flower bowl. When one of the three berries is picked, the plant readies a brace of razor-sharp thorns under the flower. Pulling berries from deeper into the flower causes the flower to close and the thorns to kill the grabber. The thorns do twenty points of damage a combat round until the creature dies or rips their limbs from the thorns. If the plant is physically attacked it is capable of moving several of its plant limbs with flowers to cover the attacker and close thorns on them.

Each berry instantly heals 11 points of physical damage to anything eating it. Eating three of the berries at one sitting, and not needing healing, can "youthanize" the body by five years permanently.

AREA 8 – CHANCE AT THE SHORTIES: Read or paraphrase the following:

There is a large grassy field near an open area to the left and south of you. In the field is a gaggle of flying shorties. All of them are perfectly formed humanoids about six inches tall. Each sports a large pair of wings that easily keeps them in the air. On the ground are two different teams of shorties. One side is dressed all in red and the other is dressed all in purple. They are kicking around a one-inch sphere. As a team gets the sphere near a set of netting, one side or the other flying in the air begins to cheer. Suddenly, out of the thorn

bushes, come two oval metal things. They mow down the grass as they make a path toward the nets. Many of the little shorties swoop down and try to pull the small machines away from their path. But even the combined effort of many shorties has no effect. What do you want to do?

If the characters do nothing, the nets are destroyed and the bots go back into the thorns. The flying creatures vanish into the thorns as well. If the characters help stop the bots, the shorties end their game of soccer and make a great deal of the characters being heroes of the world. From then on, the characters are blessed by the Shorties. Every morning the characters can have their choice of five extra hit points or the +1 ability to strike anything they aim at during the daylight hours.

SHORTIES (MUTATED HUMANOIDS)

Armor Class: 4
 Movement in Spaces: 6 Hit Points: 55
 Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 18
 Mental Resistance: 11 Strength: 6
 Dexterity: 18

Mutations:

Shorter

Wings

Sonic abilities

Heightened precision

Defect: Glows in the dark

Appearance: Six inches tall, each shorty is a perfectly formed humanoid dressed in spider-web silks. Each has a pair of six-inch-long wings that are extremely tough and easily able to keep them aloft for hours on end.

Normal Reaction: The shorties try hard to stay out of the affairs of characters of any type. They can most often be found in areas where their glow-in-the-dark defect won't hurt them, like thorn bushes and other berry patches. Normal animals love the shorties and often serve as guards for their villages.

AREA 9 – INVASION OF THE RATMEN: Read or paraphrase the following:

To the left and north, an area opens into a clearing. There is a pond of sorts in the middle, and around it is a pebbled beach. Suddenly a large tentacle reaches out of the pond and slams down on part of the

thorn bramble. In an eye blink, a mass of furred creatures rush out, bite at the thick tentacle and sever it from the body of the creature in the water. Blood gushes everywhere as the cut tentacle is pulled into the brambles and vanishes.

If the characters make the mistake of walking into the area, they are attacked by the sling stones of the Ratmen. It seems all the pebbles on the beach make for perfect sling stones. Ten gray rats come out of the brambles and begin slinging stones at the characters.

As long as the characters stay in the area, they are attacked by 10 ratmen who stay far away and hurl sling stones at the characters. These mutants do not follow the characters into the bramble tunnels. Killing some of the ratmen causes others to appear in other areas of the pondside brambles.

The pond is a couple of hundred yards wide and long and very deep. The beach of pebbles surrounds the pond and extends at least 100 yards in all directions around the pond.

RATMEN (RAT MUTANTS)

Armor Class: 6 (1)
 Movement in Spaces: 8 Hit Points: 44
 Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 11
 Mental Resistance: 6 Strength: 9
 Dexterity: 17

Mutations:

Heightened touch

Heightened dexterity

Heightened precision

Heightened balance

Defect – No Sensory Nerve Endings

Appearance: These ratmen move blurprisingly fast on all fours. Their fur matches the surroundings they are currently living in. As intelligent as true humans, they stand on their back two limbs when doing battle. Averaging four feet long, they have large front fangs that can rip into any protein material. Their favorite attack is some type of missile weapon followed by closing with prey and biting them to death.

Normal Reaction: Their slings inflict 8 points of damage +2d6. Their fangs inflict 10 points of damage a combat round. They are wise enough to retreat from a group that proves dangerous.

AREA 10 – A FIELD OF PLEASANT PURPLE: Read or paraphrase the following:

The large field is filled with huge purple flowers. Suddenly, you are impacted with an incredible and tantalizing smell. You sense something amazingly delicious. You are instantly hungry and you know those purple flowers are just the perfect things to eat.

Have the characters try to roll a 13 or more on 3d6. Failing to roll that number or higher means the character feels the need to try and eat those flowers. Those that fail can be held back by any characters that passed the saving roll.

MUTATED PLANT CREATURE: LIE LACKS

Armor Class: 7

Movement in Spaces: 2 Hit Points: 33

Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 9

Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 3

Dexterity: 3

Defect: Attraction Odor from True Humans

Mutations:

Aromatic Powers

Dissolving Juices

Mobility

Increased Senses

Appearance: This is a flowering purple plant. It's able to move slowly on long, above ground root systems. Adults are three feet tall. There is usually a mass of ten to fifty younger shoots growing around every adult.

Normal Reaction: The flowers generate a paralytic intensity 9 poison. If it works, the plant moves over to the victim and smothers them. For every body the plant kills, a new parent plant grows from that body. Two different plants move off in opposite directions to attract new victims. The poison puffs out of the flowers to a distance of five feet when prey comes nearby. Often the plants can be found near bodies of water and sometimes the plant floats on the water with roots in the bank of the stream or pond.

AREA 11 – PURE BATTLE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS: Read or paraphrase the following:

This area opens into a 10-yard by 10-yard dead-end area. Suddenly you are attacked!

Roll 2d6 to pick a random encounter. These random encounters are all designed to be deadly experiences for the characters. The creatures here attack first as the player characters walk into the “11” encounter area. These monsters don’t run. Each keeps attacking and following the character group until the player characters are dead or each of these has been destroyed.

Author’s note: When you are running these creatures, look first at their mutations. Often they lead off their attacks with one of their mutated powers.

2d6 Random Encounter

- 2 Mutated fungi: red rage dust
- 3 Mutated fungi: ebon fungi
- 4 Mutated fungi: spore funnel
- 5 Mutated fungi: spear lichen
- 6 Mutated fungi: death dust
- 7 Mutated creature: white claw (polar bear mutant)
- 8 Mutated mineral: death sphere
- 9 Mutated mineral: blood webs
- 10 Robot: deranged forest bot
- 11 Shocker beast (bob cat)
- 12 Piercer (black bear)

(RESULT 2) MUTATED FUNGUS CREATURE: RED RAGE DUST

Armor Class: 7
Movement in Spaces: Special
Hit Points: Special
Radiation Resistance: 3 Constitution: 3
Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 0
Dexterity: 3

Defect: none

Mutations:

Intensity 17 poison

Appearance: This appears to be a red patch of fungi approximately 10 yards in circumference and always filled with marble sized fungi balls.

Normal Reaction: At a touch, the fungus balls burst and blast 17 intensity poison dust into the area. On the bodies it has killed, the fungus grows new patches. If the fungus spores are not washed off they can also grow on the body of living victims. When the patch is a foot in circumference the victim must save once again at a 10 intensity poison.

Things: In two different spots among the red patch, there is a foot-tall pile of hardened white dust. In the mass of dust are a white color band and a brown color band.

(RESULT 3) MUTATED FUNGUS CREATURE: EBON FUNGUS

Armor Class: 7
Movement: 0
Hit Points: 101/10 ft²
Radiation Resistance: 3
Mental Resistance: 10 (14)
Constitution: 18
Strength: 3
Dexterity: 3
Mutations:
Physical Reflection (heat/laser)
Physical Reflection (electricity)
Physical Reflection (radiation)
Dissolving Juices
Symbiotic Attachment
Mental Defense Shield
Heightened Intelligence
Telepathy

Defect: Attraction Odor (True Humans & Humanoids), Mental Block to Rabbit types

Appearance: The fungus grows in a fifteen-foot-tall leaf-like flap. Totally black, it has absorbed all of the plant matter in the area below the fungi leaf.

Normal Reaction: The leaves smash down for 4d6 damage. This successful smash spills acid all over the victim doing a further 4d6 in damage every ten minutes until the acid is washed off. The smell of the creature is so tempting to humanoids that they often rush to the side of the plant to see what smells so tasty; the mutant fungus uses telepathy to send sensations of hunger and thoughts of food. Eating the

plant instantly kills the taster.

Things: Among the fungi matter are two tanks with nozzles. The tanks spew forth five galleons of a highly flammable gel.

(RESULT 4) MUTATED FUNGUS CREATURE: SPORE FUNNEL

Armor Class: 4
Movement in Spaces: 0 Hit Points: 50
Radiation Resistance: 3 Constitution: 10
Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 3
Dexterity: 3

Defect: None

Mutations:

Poison Throwing Thorns (9 points of damage with intensity 11 poison)

New Senses

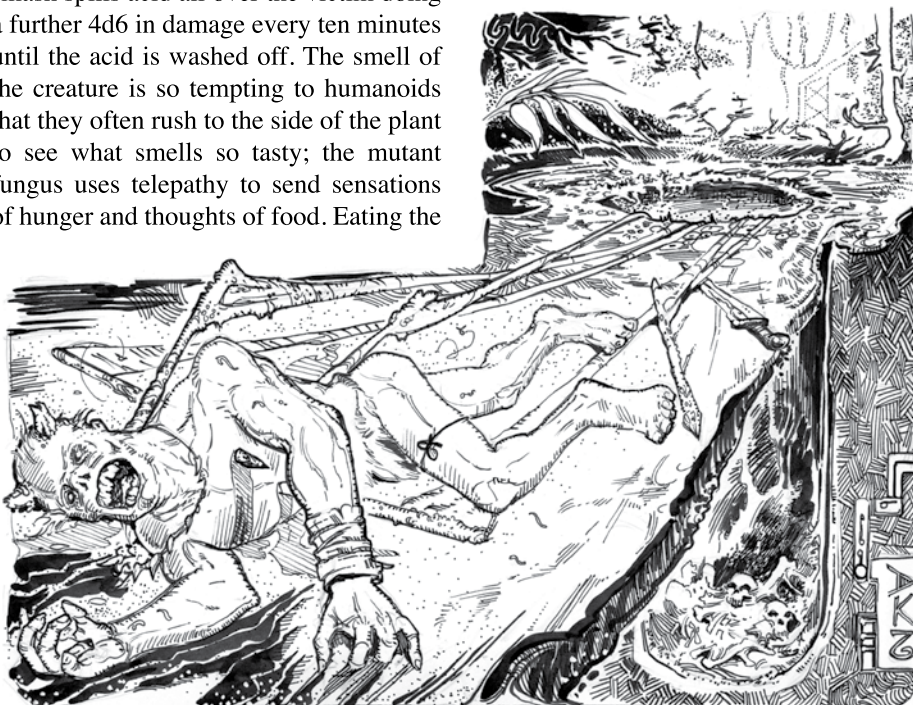
Physical Reflection

Tangle Vines

Appearance: It’s a small plant, at only two feet tall. There are numerous bright red and green cone-shaped flowers bearing a mass of deadly seeds.

Normal Reaction: A mature flower blasts its thorn seeds at a living being. If the being is killed, the vines of the flower pull the dead body near the base of the plant where it slowly digests the flesh and bones. If the seeds aren’t carved out of a living body, those begin to extend tendrils that will eventually kill the victim in three days.

Things: In amongst the spore funnels is a





two-yard-wide cube. There is an electronic lock that responds to voice commands to open. Out of the box pops a ten-inch-long oval of 10-intensity radiated matter.

(RESULT 5)
MUTATED FUNGI CREATURE:
SPEAR LICHEN

Armor Class: 4
 Movement in Spaces: 0 Hit Points: 90/patch
 Radiation Resistance: 3 Constitution: 18
 Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 18
 Dexterity: 3

Defect: None

Mutations:

Poison Throwing Javelins (9 points of damage with intensity 11 poison)

New Senses

Physical Reflection

Tangle Vines

Appearance: The lichen grows over depressions and holes in the ground. It appears to be a mat of light green lichen spreading over a flat surface. However, it is filling a hole or depression that could be ten to as much as twenty feet deep.

Normal Reaction: Just touching the lichen causes 1d6 javelins of hard fungi matter to shoot from the patch. These javelins are attached to the patch with vines.

The javelins are pulled back into the mass. The dead creatures attached to the projectiles rot and give the fungi many nutrients. Those creatures still living and struggling (Strength vs. Strength) to get free get automatically hit by a javelin every combat round until they are free or dead.

Things: In a brown hip bag are four fully charged paralysis darts.

(RESULT 6)
MUTATED FUNGUS CREATURE:
DEATH DUST

Armor Class: 7
 Movement: Uses Wind Hit Points: 10
 Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 3
 Mental Resistance: 3 Strength: 3
 Dexterity: 3

Defect: None

Mutations:

None

Appearance: This fungus appears as a black cloud of dust hanging over a dead body.

Normal Reaction: A touch of the dust acts as an intensity 10 poison on bare flesh. Other touches when wearing suits of armor or space suits cling to the material. When the character takes off the uniform they are exposed to the poison. Often the dust is almost invisible when it settles on a

suit of any type. This fungus grows in jungle environments but can spread to other areas with just a few spores as they settle in the crevasses of a person's clothes. The decay of a normal dead body of any type releases gases that stimulate the growth of the fungi and it can spread to a large cloud in 24 hours.

Things: Under the dead body is a dural-loy shield.

(RESULT 7)
MUTATED CREATURE:
WHITE CLAW (POLAR BEAR
MUTANT)

Armor Class: 3
 Movement in Spaces: 7 Hit Points: 133
 Radiation Resistance: 11 Constitution: 18
 Mental Resistance: 10 Strength: 18
 Dexterity: 11

Defect: None

Mutations:

Multiple Body Parts (6 limbs)

Sonic Abilities

Physical Reflection (all energy types)

Heightened Balance

Appearance: This six-limbed white furred mutant is ten feet tall at the shoulders and 15 feet long. While the bear shape remains otherwise unchanged, the creature

can stand and strike out with four of its limbs for 3d6 damage for each claw.

Normal Reaction: The type of mutant loves the taste of Wolfoids and goes to great lengths to sniff out those types of creatures. It's highly intelligent and doesn't try to battle bands with lots of deadly weapons. It's been known to dwell on all the levels of the ship. The largest cluster is found on the water level. It rarely attacks other humanoids and has been seen helping true humans to survive in the wild.

Things: Wrapped around one arm of the creature is a tough backpack filled with the following: heavy hatchet, water canteen, bottle of matches, large flashlight, bandages for many types of wounds, pills to heal 10 points per pill (12), useless compass, micro-thin energy absorbing blanket, and a blue wrist band.

(RESULT 8)

MUTATED MINERAL CREATURE: DEATH SPHERE

Armor Class: 2
Movement in Spaces: 8 Hit Points: 101
Radiation Resistance: 9 Constitution: 18
Mental Resistance: 9 Strength: 9
Dexterity: 18

Defect: None

Mutations: None

Appearance: This is a multi-colored sphere, four feet in diameter. It rolls and bounces around the countryside looking for moving objects.

Normal Reaction: The sphere has animal instincts and enjoys bouncing against other moving objects. Striking for ten points of damage, its hardened surface makes it difficult to strike in return. When damaged below its hit points, the creature turns into dust and begins turning whatever surface it landed on into more nano-tubes. In ten hours, two new Death Spheres have been created and go their separate ways. The spheres naturally avoid each other. They seem to delight in floating on water surfaces. They bounce very high during rainstorms.

Things: 2 glowing daggers stuck in the ground (8 points per successful strike).

(RESULT 9) MUTATED MINERAL CREATURE: BLOOD WEBS

Armor Class: 3
Movement in Spaces: 2 Hit Points: 88
Radiation Resistance: 17 Constitution: 16
Mental Resistance: 15 Strength: 14
Dexterity: 18

Defect: None

Mutations:

Modified Life Leech

Heightened Dexterity

Physical Reflection

Reflection Power

Appearance: This is a set of nanobots that appears to be a thick set of black webbing filling a doorway or the space between two trees. The size of the web can change from two feet to forty feet long and wide as the space requires.

Normal Reaction: The nanobot webs respond to touch. Once a line is tugged, the entire web wraps around the target and begins sucking 6 points from the prey. If the prey is not alive, for instance if it is a vehicle, weapon, or other device, that object is subjected to tremendous compression and any power systems are sucked dry of energy. The webbing then begins to try and pull useful minerals from the prey to grow more nanos. Larger versions reach out and tangle more and more open spaces to get in touch with more victims.

Things: five-pound bag of plant defoliant

(RESULT 10)

ROBOT: DERANGED FOREST BOT

Armor Class: 3
Movement in Spaces: 5 Hit Points: 100
Radiation Resistance: 11 Constitution: 11
Mental Resistance: 18 Strength: 3
Dexterity: 3

Appearance: The robot was radiation-damaged and lost all of its wilderness programming. It is now convinced that it is a Bigfoot creature. The machine has covered itself in thick animal furs. It has two operating tentacles and each holds large tree limb clubs it barely has the strength to carry (WC 1, 5 points of damage)

Robotic Attachments: Glowing lan-

terns for night movement, treads for moving, two tentacles, and several mangled equipment ports.

Normal Reaction: Once a day the insane machine comes up to a creature and tries to kill it. Its attempts at mayhem happen at random times. If the kill is successful the robot tears apart the flesh and stores it in a rear storage compartment. This gives the machine a nasty odor. The robot ignores the orders of humans because of its lost programming.

Things: Bag of grenades with 4 frags (5d6 in a 20 foot area), 6 paralysis grenades (paralyze field like 5 intensity poison in a 10 yard area), 6 heat grenades (anything flammable burns in a 20 yard area for 9d6 damage)

(RESULT 11)

SHOCKER BEAST (BOBCAT)

Armor Class: 7
Movement in Spaces: 12 Hit Points: 18
Radiation Resistance: 17 Constitution: 5
Mental Resistance: 17 Strength: 11
Dexterity: 17

Appearance: The beast looks like a normal bobcat with coloring that blends into the surroundings.

Normal Reaction: The beast is fearless in attack. Its claws strike for 2d6 and its eyes blast two 5d6 lightning bolts per combat round. If the beast starts taking damage it runs away.

Things: The beast was eating a huge dead golden bear.

(RESULT 12)

PIERCER (BLACK BEAR)

Armor Class: 5
Movement in Spaces: 8 Hit Points: 48
Radiation Resistance: 11 Constitution: 11
Mental Resistance: 11 Strength: 11
Dexterity: 11

Appearance: Starting as a black bear, the piercer stands 9 foot tall. It has rows of arrow-sized quills on its arms and shoulders. Its fur always matches the area around the mutant.

Normal Reaction: It regenerates wounds at 3 points per melee round. When it has lost over half its hit points, it blasts forth with a sonic force causing fear as a mental attack of 14. Its claws inflict 4d6 +12 as the quills inflict extra damage.

Things: Toy humanoid robot with 100

hit points. The robot is 20 inches tall and can move twice as fast as a human. It's powered by the "sun." It doesn't attack anything, but it can pickup things and carry things on command.

AREA 12 – PURE ROLE PLAYING

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS: Read or paraphrase the following:

You come into a 10-yard open area. There in the middle of the area is a being showing a peaceful stance. You have time to get in an attack first if you wish. What do you want to do?

Roll 2d6 to determine a random role-playing encounter. These random encounters are all designed to be role-playing experiences for the players. Each one of these beings talks to the characters first to determine how much they like the player characters. If the player characters act aggressively at all, these wandering characters open up with their weapons and try to take out the party.

2d6 Random Encounter

- | | |
|----|---|
| 2 | Mutated creature: winged biter (python) |
| 3 | Mutant humanoid: The Death Bringer |
| 4 | Mutant humanoid: Clarios, humanoid #7 |
| 5 | Mutated creature: purple beast (gorilla mutant) |
| 6 | Android: Alice, the pleasure android |
| 7 | Wolfoid (wolf mutant) |
| 8 | Singing vine (mutated sun flower) |
| 9 | Shorty shaman |
| 10 | True human: Lost Georgia |
| 11 | True human: Two-Gun Allison |
| 12 | True human: The Wise Warrior |



(RESULT 2) WINGED BITER (PYTHON)

Armor Class: 4

Movement in Spaces: 5 Hit Points: 12

Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 5

Mental Resistance: 18 Strength: 9

Dexterity: 17

Mutations:

Smaller

Wings

Heightened balance

Precognition

Heightened intelligence

Telepathy

Defect: None

Appearance: The Biter averages 3 feet in length with a feathered wingspan of 4 feet. The snake is resistant to all forms of paralysis and poison.

Normal Reaction: This one needs to save its eggs.

Situation: Just before the characters reach area 12, they receive a telepathic broadcast that fills their minds.

"Help! I need help right away. My babies have been stolen."

The group knows whomever is calling for help is in the area tall grassy meadow in front of them. As they move into the meadow, a large Winged Biter rises out of the grass. The characters have a choice. They can attack the obviously dangerous monster or they can wait a bit and leave themselves open for a dangerous attack.

Attacking the Monster: The Winged Biter assumes the worst if the attack happens and stops communicating with the characters. Three other Winged Bites come from other directions and surround the characters.

Waiting for a Moment: The characters come to realize the clearly intelligent mutant snake is asking for their help. It seems Ratmen mutants have stolen her five eggs. They are struggling into the thorn hedge with the eggs, but it is slow going for them. They are only ten yards deep into the hedge. If the characters can find some way to lift the thorns they can do battle with the Ratmen and save the eggs. Naturally, the Winged Biter will help.

(RESULT 3) NPC MUTANT HUMANOID: THE DEATH BRINGER

Armor Class: 1

Movement in Spaces: 6 Hit Points: 120

Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 18

Mental Resistance: 11 Strength: 18

Dexterity: 16

Defect: No Sensory Nerve Endings

Mutations:

Radiated Eyes (17 intensity)

Heightened Dexterity

Force Field Generation

Military Genius

Cryogenics

Appearance: Dressed in a special Gil-lie suit, this humanoid tries to constantly blend in with her surroundings. She physically appears as a human female except for her double sized red eyes that always glow brightly.

Normal Reaction: She hunts down wolfoids in and around the Emerald City on Level 14. She is a loner, but will join groups going in to explore the city and the wolfoid population. She has several different types of radiation weapons:

- Radiation Rifle (WC 7, intensity 15 blast, Ranges – short 1-50 yards, medium 51-100, long 101-175)
- Radiation Grenades (WC 5, intensity 17 blast in a 10 yard radius), Radiation Claymore (WC 6, 18 intensity blast)

She says she is a member of the Vigilists (see page 97) and she is constantly planting images of a triangle with an eye at its center around every area where she has raided. She won't tell people where the Vigilists live, but is known to have helped members of that large tribe as they wandered the levels of the ship.

(RESULT 4) NPC MUTANT HUMANOID: CLARIOS, HUMANOID #7

Armor Class: 3

Movement in Spaces: 4 Hit Points: 89

Radiation Resistance: 4 Constitution: 16

Mental Resistance: 17 Strength: 15

Dexterity: 15

Defect: Hemophilia

Mutations:

Poison Claws (intensity 10)

Heightened Hearing

Force Field Generation

Pyrokinesis

Appearance: Except for his long sharp claws, Clarios appears to be a human. He likes wearing orange jump suits that he found in a security area. He uses a specially prepared flail soaked in the poison he generates with his poison glands (WC 3, 11 points of damage plus 10 intensity poison).

Normal Reaction: Clarios likes to explore and has no problem handling encounters in a friendly manner first. He has a mutant wife and nine children, all showing the mutations Clarios has. Clarios controls a large village of mutated females. It is his short-term plan to generate a large population of Humanoid #7 mutants to take control of every ship level. Clarios and his people live on a destroyer craft attached to the Warden. There are a lot of resources on that military ship that Clarios and his family has learned about. The military ship has a wide assortment of stealth gear that Clarios uses to explore the Warden.

(RESULT 5)

MUTATED CREATURE: PURPLE BEAST (GORILLA MUTANT)

Armor Class: 3

Movement in Spaces: 6 Hit Points: 144

Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 38

Mental Resistance: 18 Strength: 18

Dexterity: 17

Defect: Deep love of true humans

Mutations:

Taller

Multiple body parts

Regeneration

Electrical generation

Heightened precision

Heightened balance

Appearance: It's a ten-foot tall purple-furred gorilla. It has six arms, six eyes, and is double jointed in all of its arm and leg joints.

Normal Reaction: The creature is highly intelligent and enjoys living in the forests. Currently there is a tribe living on a large forested island on the water level. The beast wants to study and understand the ways of true humans. It is mentally incapable of harming true humans.



(RESULT 6) ANDROID TYPE: ALICE, THE PLEASURE ANDROID

Armor Class: 8

Movement in Spaces: 4 Hit Points: 100

Radiation Resistance: 9 Constitution: 9

Mental Resistance: 18 Strength: 9

Dexterity: 8

Appearance: Alice is always dressed in sexy silk garments that highlight her very womanly shape. She never carries weapons, as she has a group of nine different mutated pets that are constantly with her and protect her with their lives.

Normal Reaction: Alice is a spy for Vigor and easily finds her way into other groups and sends back news on their weaknesses and strengths.

(RESULT 7)

WOLFOID (WOLF MUTANT)

Armor Class: 5

Movement in Spaces: 12 Hit Points: 58

Radiation Resistance: 17 Constitution: 13

Mental Resistance: 15 Strength: 18

Dexterity: 17

Mutations: Fur Reflects Laser energy

Heightened Strength

Heightened Balance

Heightened Intelligence

Appearance: A new mutation of wolfoids has started spreading all over the ship. This version is 8 feet tall, has gray fur, walks on its rear legs, and its front paws have turned into taloned hands. Commonly these wolfoids wear a bandoleer and always have technological items in their mix of equipment.

Normal Reaction: These wolfoids always try to appear peaceful. They offer to go with the group and fight with them as friends. Eventually they want to see the player group wounded and in bad shape so that they can attack from behind and kill them and take their equipment.

(RESULT 8) SINGING VINE (MUTATED SUN FLOWER)

Armor Class: 2

Movement in Spaces: 4 Hit Points: 75

Radiation Resistance: 10 Constitution: 10

Mental Resistance: 19 Strength: 3

Dexterity: 3

Mutations: Larger Than Normal

Increased Senses

New Plant Parts

Manipulation Vines

Defect – The plant dies when a gallon or more of salt water is thrown on the body of the plant.

Appearance: Adult forms are 15 feet tall with a large face filled with seeds with a human head shape. Branches are six feet long and are able to grasp things. The plant moves along on root vines and the plant's senses are much like a human's.

Normal Reaction: These plants want the characters to take some of their seeds and plant them near beaches. If attacked, the plant trills a song that acts as a mental attack and if the character doesn't make a save, they are filled with love for the singing vine.

(RESULT 9)

SHORTY SHAMAN (MUTATED HUMANOID)

Armor Class: 5

Movement in Spaces: 8 Hit Points: 75

Radiation Resistance: 18 Constitution: 18

Mental Resistance: 17 Strength: 8

Dexterity: 18

Mutations: Shorter,

Wings,

Sonic abilities,

Heightened precision

Defect: Glows in the dark

Appearance: Six inches tall, each shorty is a perfectly formed humanoid dressed in spider-web silks. Each has a pair of six-inch-long wings that are extremely tough and easily able to keep them aloft for hours on end.

Normal Reaction: The shorties try hard to stay out of the affairs of characters of any type. They can most often be found in areas where their glow-in-the-dark de-

fect won't hurt them like thorn bushes and other berry patches. Normal animals love the shorties and often serve as guards for their villages.

Situation: Two huge dogs are trapped in vines and whining in pain. A shorty Shaman is chopping for all its might using a small blade on the attacking vines. If the characters come in and save the dogs, the shaman is extremely grateful. He offers to heal them completely of any damage they have suffered so far.

Dogs (2): Hit Points 100, 11 in all of their stats, AC 4, Bite does 20 points of damage. They are totally loyal to the Shaman.

(RESULT 10)

NPC TRUE HUMAN: LOST GEORGIA

Armor Class: 5

Movement in Spaces: 5

Radiation Resistance: 9

Mental Resistance: 9

Dexterity: 18

Potential: 18

Hit Points: 83

Constitution: 17

Strength: 14

Leadership

Appearance: She is seven feet tall, with long red hair. She is never far from her longbow and quiver of 20 crystal arrows (1d12). Humans naturally follow her and she has a large enclave near a huge waterfall on the water level.

Normal Reaction: She is totally lost and confused in the wilderness. She has no problem joining and helping the group.

(RESULT 11)

NPC TRUE HUMAN: TWO GUN ALLISON

Armor Class: 3

Movement in Spaces: 4

Radiation Resistance: 12

Mental Resistance: 12

Dexterity: 18

Potential: 17

Hit Points: 70

Constitution: 14

Strength: 10

Leadership

Appearance: Six feet tall and a well-shaped true human, Allison always wears buckskins and a cuirass. At her hips are two hand-made pistols (WC 6, 4 shots, 10 points of damage per shot). She is an albino with long white hair in a war braid.

Normal Reaction: The leader of a small tribe of true humans, Allison shoots first when dealing with mutants and robots. She's very willing to talk to other true humans. On the ship, she is working to take over the city level. However, it is controlled by a powerful band of Wolfoids. She is cur-



rently living in the mountains of the level and growing her band of freedom fighters. She enjoys making quick, slashing attacks on the city. She has managed to tame several golden bears and they often follow her to other levels and watch her back.

(RESULT 12)

NPC TRUE HUMAN: THE WISE WARRIOR

Armor Class: 1

Movement in Spaces: 4

Radiation Resistance: 9

Mental Resistance: 15

Dexterity: 11

Potential: 14

Hit Points: 101

Constitution: 18

Strength: 17

Leadership

Appearance: Almost seven feet tall, Wise is a massively strong true human. He uses a duralloy shield and a specially made electro-sword (WC 4, when powered it does 15 points of energy damage). He wears specially made black plant-fiber armor. He enjoys working with electronics

and robots of all types. There are always a medical robot and an engineering robot at his side as he explores the ship.

Normal Reaction: Wise is friendly with everybody and everything. He has positive relations with several tribes on several of the levels. He seems to have a knack for coming to the aid of groups having robot problems. Wise has a fortified up enclave near the main ship's elevator on a forested level. He has been successful in ringing in friendly fighters to expand his band of warriors. Wise has searched for years for a special communications rod that will help him control robots of all types.

AREA B – THE END IS NEAR: Read or paraphrase the following:

You have succeeded! Your parents wait for you outside the thorn brambles. There is a joyful cheer from members of the tribe, friends, and your family. It's good to join the tribe as a true adult. You will never forget this moment. **MA**

COMING SOON FOR DCC RPG

What's in the works for DCC RPG? Our web site has details on publicly announced products. Here are previews of titles still in the design and playtesting stages.



For hundreds of years, war has raged on Mezar-Kul. Countless factions have vied for supremacy over this broken world, until only a few survive. Now, four of them contend for the broken ruins of a dead city, and the outcome hinges on the magical powers of a band of intrepid adventurers from a distant world, who can turn tide of the final battle, for good or for ill. As they explore the ruins, which are home to a still-functioning monorail system and a hidden missile silo, their choices can bring new life to Mezar-Kul, or make a grave of an entire world.

The Overlord rules minions from his metal fortress, and Itai the Oracle fights a last-ditch battle to save its people. Vor the Teknikat creates cybernetic horrors, and Da'Brok the alien scientist seeks the wisdom of peace through the study of the war, while guarding a means to achieve final peace and bring new life to the ashes of Mezar-Kul.

This 5th level adventure for the *Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game* casts the adventurers into the midst of the fray, with no option but to pick a side.

Designer Notes

When Joseph Goodman contacted me about doing an Appendix N project of my own, I was thrilled. I originally thought I might write something inspired by R. E. Howard, an author whose work I knew and loved, but the project ended up being something quite different: A post-apocalyptic/swords and planets adventure inspired by the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Sterling Lanier, and Fred Saberhagen, among others. Of the books he suggested, I had read none, so this was also a chance catch up on my Appendix N fiction. The number of choices made available by the literature was daunting. I wasn't sure exactly where I wanted to take the adventure, and my writing process was slowed greatly by this ambivalence. I had a basic idea what I wanted to

AGAINST THE ATOMIC OVERLORD

By Edgar D. Johnson III



do: an adventure oriented around competing factions in the last throes of a desperate war, and a group of outsiders who arrive and change the power dynamics for everyone involved. Try as I might, the details eluded me. The story had no heart.

I tried out my initial ideas in play sessions with the Metal Gods of Ur-Hadad gaming group, but felt like most of them were mediocre, at best. It's not an easy thing to hate your own writing, and then to run a game based on what you wrote and find out that you hate that, too. Mind you, this was happening when I finally had a chance to publish a Goodman Games adventure with my name on it. I didn't want to blow the chance, or I might not get another one. Luckily for me, DCC RPG has a great community of fans and authors, and people were very supportive when things got rough. Doug Kovacs in particular helped me to figure some things about my own creative process, and to get over my mental block. Soon, my work started to feel right, and it kept getting better as I went on.



The 998th Conclave of Wizards

By Jobe Bittman

Hail, wizard of Aereth! Forget everything you think you know about magic. Mastery of the occult lies beyond the comprehension of your world's primitive societies and warring kingdoms. Your cantrips and legerdemain are mere parlor tricks in the face of true power. The Magician's Cabal, peerless practitioners of the arcane arts, has extended a rare invitation to join their ranks. Hurtling through the cosmos in a marvelous flying city, the magicians are revered as lords of creation by the starfaring races of a thousand suns. Ascend to the stars and seize your rightful seat at the vaunted halls of power...if you dare.

Designer Notes

Several months ago, Joseph Goodman sent me a cryptic email in the middle of the night (as he is wont to do): "Who is your favorite Appendix-N author?" I immediately responded, "Jack Vance." After a spate of emails, we arrived at the outline of the adventure that would eventually become *The 998th Conclave of Wizards*. The adventure is largely influenced by Vance's "Rhialto the Marvellous" stories, but it contains shades of the entire *Dying Earth* series (as well as a dash of *Roadside Picnic* by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky for good measure).

I would classify *The 998th Conclave of Wizards* as more of an adventure locale than a straight-up adventure. There is a definite adventure path, but enough of the setting is fleshed out that a judge could riff several levels worth of his or her own adventures. The core concept comes from the last Rhialto story, "Morreion," in which the magician and his associates journey to the edge of the universe in a flying palace. What's not to love here? Wizards in space! I expanded the idea of the palace to become an enormous space-traveling city populated by a constant churn of star traders and alien immigrants. Order is kept in the chaotic city by a force of red robots called the Briggers. (You won't have to squint too hard to see the Briggers share a lot in common with Maximilian from *The Black Hole*.) Add to that a colorful cast of magicians that endlessly bicker and scheme, an archdemon yearning to escape a demiplanar prison, and elder gods clawing their way into the universe. Did I forget to mention new spell duel rules expanded for higher level play? DCC fans are in for a wild ride.

About the Author

Jobe Bittman is a beaten and half-starved scribe-slave pressed into service by a sadistic demon prince. By day, he breaks all the internet. By night, he toils at freelance writing assignments and transcribes game designs at the behest of his dark master. His work has appeared in publications by *Wizards of the Coast*, *Goodman Games*, *Lamentations of the Flame Princess*, and *Kobold Press*. Please send meat.

In the end, I feel really good about this adventure. There's a pretty decent story in there, and though I am no Sabrehagen, no Lanier, no Burroughs, I believe the result is very much in the spirit of the works that inspired my own. I hope the people who buy this adventure think so as well. The core themes are sacrifice and redemption, mutually exclusive interests, irreconcilable worldviews. A machine built to dominate carries on an endless war because it has no choice. A desperate AI who has gained sentience and a conscience seeks to save its city and its people. An alien scientist who wants to understand war in order to avoid it guards the key to life itself. An engineer who wanted to fix her desolated city has instead become a monster in search of immortality. When you add your players to this mix, the story has the potential to go in a variety of interesting directions, for good and for ill. I've tried my best, in the space available, to give judges and players something they could enjoy in many different ways, and not just a railroad toward a predetermined climax. That said, I also made sure to include a monorail... just in case.

About the Author

Dr. Edgar D. Johnson III is a professor at Georgia Regents University, in Augusta, Georgia. He started gaming in 1979, when he bought his first D&D basic set (and still has the six-sided die from it). This is his first major title for Goodman Games, though he has written a short adventure, *Blood for the Serpent God*, as part of Harley Stroh's DCC #83 *Bride of the Black Manse*. He also contributed content to the stretch goals for Harley's latest adventure, *Peril on the Purple Planet*. He is a co-author, with Adam Muszkiewicz and Wayne Snyder, of the *Metal Gods of Ur-Hadad* DCC RPG fanzine.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF AERETH

By Harley Stroh



he sages aver: another world lurks beneath our sunlit lands. A world ruled by elephantine monarchs in the service of chaos lords, where magic has replaced the spoken word, the weakest slave is like unto a superman, and ancient streets of gold and stone are lit by a smokey orb that hangs in the dusky firmament.

How the sages know this, few can guess, for while many have sought the fabled vistas of Lost Agharta, none have returned.

In the grand tradition of Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures, *Journey to the Center of Aereth* is an epic expedition into the depths of Aereth's fantastic underworld. Deadly foes, alien ecosystems, and the perils of a world bereft of light await the heroes. In order to survive, parties will need to pit all their cunning, planning and courage against the forces of the Unknown. Those who carry the day will rise as conquerors of an ancient empire, while those who fall



will spend the remainder of their days enslaved to Aghartan Masters.

But before the PCs can stride the dusky causeways of Lost Agharta, they must first contend with the Journey.

FROM THE CREATOR: ALIEN PLANETS



ne of the core principles behind DCC RPG is returning to the primary sources of Appendix N as inspiration. Over the four decades since D&D was first published, the essential plot elements experienced by players – monsters, spells, magic items, and dungeons – have been codified within fairly narrow boundaries by generations of iterative depictions. At the time of Appendix N, however, those boundaries did not exist, and the perception of players was much less defined. It was up to the judge to describe an orc, as there simply was no visual reference in the players' minds.

One of the ways D&D has codified an Appendix N theme is the idea of “planes.” D&D created a cosmology of planes, carefully defined in the core rules, which established a system of relationships for supernatural places. Where does this idea originate in Appendix N?

While a few prominent Appendix N titles feature magical planes, an equally common idea is alien planets. Edgar Rice Burroughs' three entries in Appendix N all deal with exotic locations of planetary significance: Mars, Venus, and the center of the Earth. Poul Anderson's *The High Crusade* features medieval knights and clerics stranded on an alien planet. Several of H.P. Lovecraft's works are set on horrific alien planets. Jack Vance, whose eponymous magic system is closely identified with D&D, sent his wizards to alien planets in search of ioun stones. P. J. Farmer's tiers are arguably closer to planets than planes, as are Zelazny's worlds. And there are many other examples. The work of Michael Moorcock is perhaps the *only* Appendix N material that clearly presupposes the concept of planes in the modern D&D sense.

It is for these reasons that I recommend the inclusion of alien planets in your adventures. You will find that many Dungeon Crawl Classics adventure modules over the coming year align with this recommendation. Already announced is Harley Stroh's *Peril on the Purple Planet*. Multiple other authors are also working on adventure modules that depict alien planets, as you have read over the preceding pages. As the creator of DCC RPG, I encourage you to continue exploration of Appendix N and its vision of “fantasy,” for that vision is extraordinary and can guide you (and your players) to many fabulous and alien places.

And that's enough for this year. Next year there will be another facet of Appendix N to explore.

– Joseph Goodman



Designer Notes

The adventure draws its inspiration from a range of Appendix N sources. The elephantine Aghartans owe a debt to the Yag-kosha from Robert E Howard's *Tower of the Elephant*; the fouled descendants of the former Aghartan slaves were inspired by the fell beings in *Worms of the Earth*. Lost Agharta itself, hidden deep inside the world's core, echoes with traces of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Pellucidar and H.P. Lovecraft's *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*.

More than a dungeon crawl, *Journey* aims to produce an adventure that plays like an *expedition* (or a campaign, in the military sense) with all the associated challenges. The Aghartan underworld is no place for surface dwellers and once the PCs commit to the adventure, there is little opportunity to retreat. With threats on every side, sometimes the only sane solution is to plunge deeper into the abyss.

From the city's brooding elephant-like masters, to the prides of fell rakshasas, the PCs must run a gauntlet of alien foes. Some aim to bend the heroes to their will, while others are simply looking for an easy meal. Some challenges can be overcome with cunning, or judicious use of magic, or with a quick blade. However the PCs choose to tackle the factions of Agharta, their decisions will influence the adventure's outcome and make the difference between life and undeath in the underworld of Äereth!

About the Author

At the age of 8, Harley Stroh lost his first PC to pit-rats in the Caves of Chaos. Author of 40-odd adventures, short stories, articles and supplements, he has survived urban camping with Doug Kovacs, studied saber-fencing with a Polish mystic, and ollied through a pane of sugar-glass. Harley spends his free time recovering from skateboarding injuries, playing with his daughter, and hiking the Rocking Mountains with Lady and the Hound of Hirot. His next DCC project is the long-awaited *Punjar* city set.

HOLE IN THE SKY

By Brendan J. LaSalle

Follow an invisible bridge for days over the unforgiving sea and you will arrive at the Hole in the Sky, the gateway to the extra-dimensional prison of Drezsta, a transcendent being of chaos. The Lady in Blue, a mysterious figure of immense power and unknowable influence, would see her ancient ally freed from captivity to aid in the perpetual war against the forces of Law. To this end she enlists a band of simple peasants with dreams of glory and riches willing to risk their lives in order to become her allies. Death awaits all but the bravest, strongest, and luckiest, but the reward the Lady offers is a prize beyond all the riches of the world: the chance to change the stars they were born under, and thus change their destiny.

Hole in the Sky is a zero level adventure that will lead the adventurers to perils and riches beyond the mortal world. Many shall perish but those who live shall spin the Wheel of Fortune and rise to heights they could never before attain – or find themselves destroyed utterly!

Designer Notes

*"I'm looking through a hole in the sky
I'm seeing nowhere through the eyes of a lie
I'm getting closer to the end of the line
I'm living easy where the sun doesn't shine"*

Those are the opening lines to *Hole in the Sky* by Black Sabbath, a great song from my all-time favorite Sabbath album, *Sabotage*. (Fun fact: Ozzy Osborne claims to have no memory at all of recording any of the songs.) Not only is my first DCC adventure named after the song, but the lyrics became a kind of a mental blueprint for me when I wrote it. The original idea sprung from a conversation I had with a member of our group after I ran our first-ever session of DCC RPG (*Sailors on the Starless Sea* by my brilliant homeboy Harley Stroh). My friend really liked his surviving character, but was dismayed when I told him he could never change their Birth Augur, which was, unfortunately, useless to his character. Our conversation made me think about the old adage of "changing one's stars" – in other words, can a human change his destiny through his actions? Can any of us rise above our birth circumstances? It made me think that the chance to change a character's birth augur – and other fundamental things about them, things that are normally static like their race or age or birth status – would be a fine reward for a hard-fought zero level victory. And that ultimately led me to the premise of *Hole in the Sky*.

Heavy metal absolutely shaped this adventure. I went through an intense period of heavy metal fandom in my teens, and while I am no longer the biggest headbanger in the universe, I still love the hard rock bands I grew up with, Black Sabbath especially. I always loved the imagery in Sabbath songs, and to me the lyrics of *Hole in the Sky* were

full of possibilities. A DCC adventure module influenced by Sabbath lyrics seems appropriate, because the DCC RPG is simply the most Metal role playing game ever written, period. Joseph Goodman and his crew of artists and writers went back to Appendix N and created a new game from the same mold that Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson used to create Dungeons & Dragons – that was deliberate. But did the Goodman Games crew mean to create the metal game of our age? I flip through the pages of the DCC RPG core book, in my mind I hear Judas Priest and Dio, Armored Saint and Grim Reaper, Kickaxe and Motörhead. I made up this amazing metal playlist and listened to it obsessively through every stage of the creation of *Hole in the Sky*, and I think the influence is clear.

The adventure's other big influences are the Dying Earth stories by Jack Vance. In particular, I wanted to play with the sense of scale you see in some of Vance's work – the characters in *Hole in the Sky* begin the game as these tiny entities at the mercy of much larger forces, but they ultimately hold the key to changing the balance between Law and Chaos. Characters in the Dying Earth are mortals, but through their cunning they can create artificial life, pass through dimensions, and break the physical laws of the universe. I love the juxtaposition of large and small forces this game system allows. I love that a DCC character can call upon beings of great power for direct intervention – and I love that sometimes those beings don't appreciate being bothered, and that the consequences can be dire indeed.

The Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG really gives designers a lot of freedom to break out of the old D&D paradigm. *Hole in the Sky* breaks so many of the conventions of traditional introductory fantasy adventures: it's a zero level adventure with multiple high level villains, it has an organic hook that essentially presses the characters into willfully throwing their lives into a struggle between cosmic entities, it avoids all of my favorite dungeon tropes and in their place takes the characters to an unfriendly alien world where nothing can be trusted. To me, DCC and *Hole in the Sky* feel like unearthed artifacts from my childhood of gaming, when our imaginations constantly overruled the game as writ, and my players and I had no expectations or boundaries on the stories we would tell.

I have run *Hole in the Sky* for all of my home groups, and for a more than a dozen different groups at various conventions around the country. I have seen some brilliant successes, some hideous failures, and some of the worst dice luck I have laid eyes on in my 36 years of gaming. Most groups start off the same way, but I haven't seen any two groups take the same path to victory. Color me a proud parent.

I hope you enjoy playing *Hole in the Sky*, and the Dungeon Crawl Classics system. I love the game, I love designing in the system, and I love how it just sets my imagination free. May it do the same for yours. Oh, and I hid an Easter Egg in the adventure – just a silly reference, but one that makes me laugh every time my eye falls on it. Forgive me, I'm a goof and hiding in-jokes and references in my writing is a weakness that Joseph G. has indulged in me since I wrote my first

DCC adventure all those years ago. If you find the Easter Egg let us know – I'll see if I can't get Goodman to pony up some primo swag for the first one to get it 100% right.

About the Author

Brendan J. LaSalle has been writing and publishing in the game industry since 2001. He has written for Goodman Games, Fat Dragon Games, Troll Lord's Games, Pandahead Publishing, and Hand Made Games. His publication credits include many adventures and source books, including the award-winning *Age of Cthulhu: A Dream of Japan*. He is the creator of *Xcrawl*, which will be reintroduced in its new edition with this Kickstarter. He lives in Salem, MA, with his wife, dog, and cat.

The Dread God AL-KHAZADAR

By Daniel Bishop

To save a city... to save a world!



he end is nigh. A shadow falls on Punjar, and panic fills the streets. This doom cannot be fought, and it cannot be outrun. If you cannot find the means to defeat this unbeatable opponent, you will all die. And the only way to defeat this opponent is to usurp part of his power...and share his fate!

From the lightless depths below the city streets to an ancient ruin in a steaming jungle, you must find the way to the alien world of Madkeen, there to learn the secrets that will save you – or to perish. This adventure pits adventurers against the manchine of Al-Khazadar, the savage hordes of the P'quothe, the indifference of the fate-denying Madka, and the mutated behemoths of the hideous wasteland called the Smoking Mirror.

The clock is ticking; if you cannot win through in nine days, you cannot win at all. It takes a god to defeat a god, but divinity comes with a price. Without the courage, cunning, and strength to face an immortal, your souls will surely fall prey to the Dread God Al-Khazadar!

Designer Notes

You always expect action and excitement from a *Dungeon Crawl Classics* adventure. *The Dread God Al-Khazadar* focuses on looming desperation and sacrifice.

Joseph Goodman asked for something that drew on the *Sword & Sorcery* of Robert E. Howard and the planetary romances of Edgar Rice Burroughs. He wanted an unbeatable foe that required a specific tool to defeat, like the Kraken being defeated by Medusa's head in *Clash of the Titans*. And he wanted the PCs to travel to another planet along the way.



If your players are anything like mine, they would run as soon as they realized that they couldn't beat the Dread God in a straight battle. In *Clash of the Titans*, Perseus is motivated by his desire for Andromeda. I had to come up with something that would prevent the PCs from simply running. There was really only one possible choice – running is ineffective.

The adventure also hinges on a necessary sacrifice. For all the PCs to succeed, one of them must agree to fall. As a strong proponent of meaningful choice in an adventure, I wanted to make sure that the adventure offered real choices – the end is not pre-determined. For a sacrifice to be meaningful, there has to be a clear way to avoid it, and that way must also come at great cost. Then the players involved get to decide what they value most.

In Burroughs' planetary adventures, there is always a princess to rescue. I used to think that this was just to give the hero something to motivate him, but these characters also allow the protagonist (and readers) to learn about the alien setting. Introducing a pair of royal siblings to the adventure allows for some role-playing, some necessary exposition, and even possible love interests if any of your players are ready to go into full Burroughs Hero mode.

You still get all of the action that Goodman Games adventures are known for: cool combats, interesting locations, traps, weird things to deal with and interesting places to explore. I tried to give players in *The Dread God Al-Khazadar* opportunities to allow greed or indolence to interfere with success. The Madka of planet Madkeen embody this very human tendency, refusing to admit that their time is limited while they spend their remaining hours engaged in sensual pursuits. The clock is always ticking, though. Those who stay focused will succeed.

About the Author

Daniel J. Bishop began playing role-playing games with Holmes Basic D&D on Christmas Day 1979. His first published role-playing game work appeared in *Dragon Roots* #0 in January 2008. When he discovered *Dungeon Crawl Classics* he leapt in with both feet. His first published work for DCC was *Bone Hoard of the Dancing Horror* for Purple Duck Games, and he hasn't looked back. Having published DCC material with Purple Duck Games, Mystic Bull Games, Brave Halfling Press, and Dragon's Hoard Publishing, as well as in the pages of *Crawl!* and *D.A.M.N.!*, Daniel's first work for Goodman Games was *The Imperishable Sorceress* for Free RPG Day in 2013. He lives in Toronto.

THE MAKING OF THE GHOST RING

By Michael Curtis



To save a soul and forge a ring! A ghostly enchantress calls for aid, her salvation hanging in the balance. Brave heroes are needed to complete the creation of a magical ring, a process that will take them from gritty city streets to sun-scorched deserts to the ruins of an ancient fortress atop a windswept peak. Are the adventurers up to the task or shall a sinister demon claim the souls of not only the enchantress but the heroes as well? Only luck, courage, and wits will triumph against adversity and allow the adventurers to claim the Ghost Ring for themselves!

Designer Notes

The Making of the Ghost Ring came out of a conversation between Joseph Goodman and myself about the creation of magical items in *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. In other fantasy role-playing games, creating a magical object has largely been reduced to a simple expenditure of time, money, and experience. Joseph wanted to put the mystery back into crafting magical items and was gracious enough to allow me the opportunity to explore one possible way of making magical artifacts. The result was *The Making of the Ghost Ring*.

In writing this adventure, I wanted to play with the short story format so common to the Appendix N source material. Rather than an adventure taking place in a single location, I wanted the party to be leap-frogging around the world, encountering new foes and different challenges during each phase of the ring-crafting process. There's a little Leiber in this one, a smidge of Egyptology, and a smattering of King Kong/ Godzilla films all for good measure. By



the time the dust settles, the PCs will hopefully feel they earned the Ghost Ring through their efforts. *The Making of the Ghost Ring* is also serves as an instructional resource for judges seeking to introduce magical item creation in their campaigns. Even if the adventure itself isn't run by the judge, the framework can be adapted for use in the making of other magical items or as a blueprint for designing one's own artifact creation quest. I had a lot of fun writing this one and I hope the DCC RPG fans find it to their liking.

THE FOUR PHANTASMAGORIAS

By Michael Curtis



he call to adventure reaches out from the land of dreams, asking the heroes to answer. A world stands on the brink of extinction and only daring souls can turn onrushing doom aside. From a mysterious appearance of glowing sigils carved in the adventurers' flesh to the ultimate showdown on a funereal world, *The Four Phantasmagorias* is the first multi-part adventure for *Dungeon Crawl Classics* RPG. Designed to be played as part of an ongoing campaign, *The Four Phantasmagorias* takes place entirely in the Slumberlands, the chaotic realm lying beyond the veil of sleep. The PCs will discover new powers, odd foes, and grand battles as they strive to assist the enigmatic Cabal at the End of the World. If they triumph, a world will be rejuvenated, but should they fail, they too may succumb to the lurking doom at the heart of the Slumberlands.

Designer Notes

The Four Phantasmagorias breaks new ground for *DCC* RPG. Although Goodman Games has produced multi-chapter adventures in the *Dungeon Crawl Classic* line, *The Four Phantasmagorias* is the first series of connected adventures designed by Goodman Games for the *Dungeon Crawl Classic* role-playing game. I'm thankful that Joseph Goodman entrusted me with the responsibility. But, unlike a lot of the linked series of adventures on the market, we wanted to do something different with this one.

The Four Phantasmagorias isn't designed to be played in succession, with each adventure leading directly to the next. Rather it's written as a sub-campaign which occurs in the background of the judge's main campaign. From time to time, the powers and quests of the Slumberlands reach out to draw the PCs back into the events of *The Four Phantasmagorias*, providing a short break from the main campaign. Each chapter is designed for a different level party, occurring when the PCs reach the appropriate level in their classes and ready to tackle the next quest. Hopefully the players will find these occasional breaks from the "reality" of the main campaign a pleasant and challenging diversion.



Writing *The Four Phantasmagorias* allowed me to play in the world of dreams, giving me the opportunity to build new facets to the DCC RPG game and introduce unique powers and worlds for the PCs to gain and explore. I delved into dream dictionaries and books of symbolism to plunder inspiration for *The Four Phantasmagorias*, as well as giving call outs to classic fantasy authors such as Lovecraft, Moorcock, the Brothers Grimm, and Jack Vance. The result was a delicious and weird stew ready to be served piping hot to the players. I hope they enjoy the dish! So tuck yourselves in with a glass of warm milk on the nightstand and get ready to step into the world of dreams. *The Four Phantasmagorias* are waiting just beyond your closed eyes...

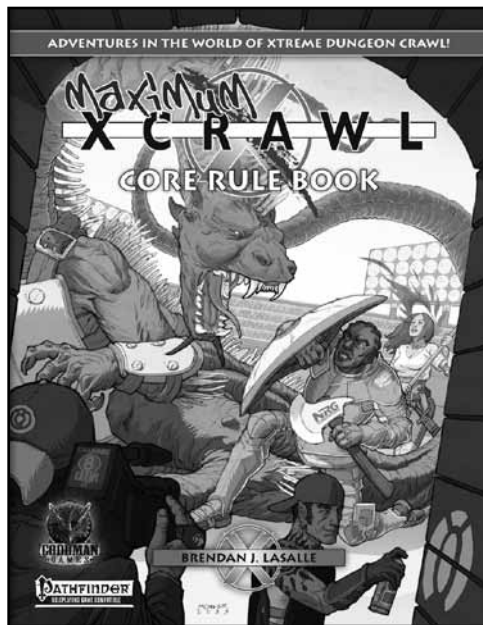
About the Author

The Four Phantasmagorias and *The Making Of The Ghost Ring* are both written by Michael Curtis. Despite rumors to the contrary, Michael Curtis is not (A) a manifestation of the collective human unconscious, (B) a thaumaturgy-

powered mechanical man created by Albertus Magnus; or (C) a heap of ferrets. Michael Curtis has been playing role-playing games for over thirty years and a freelance writer and game designer since 2008. He has written or contributed to nearly forty roleplaying games, supplements, and articles. Best known for Goodman Games' *The Dungeon Alphabet* (for which he was awarded the 2011 Three Castles Award for Game Design) and *Stonehell Dungeon*, he's also worked on the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* RPG, Goblinoid Games' *Realms of Crawling Chaos* and *MAJUS*, and Chapter 13 Press' *Tales from the Fallen Empire*. He is the author of many DCC RPG adventures including *Intrigue at the Court of Chaos*, *The Chained Coffin*, *The Making of the Ghost Ring* and *The Four Phantasmagorias*. Michael's upcoming projects for Goodman Games include *The Level of the Lost* and *The Adventurer's Almanac*. He lives in Suffolk County, NY, with the requisite number of cats for a writer and far too many books.

OTHER PRODUCTS COMING SOON

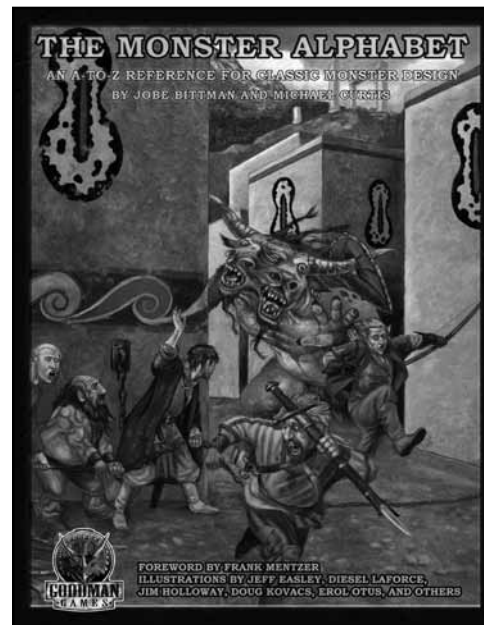
In addition to DCC RPG, we have a number of other products in the works!



Maximum Xcrawl
More info on page 56



Metamorphosis Alpha
More info on page 66



Monster Alphabet
More info on page 48



The Adventurer's Almanac

By Michael Curtis. Set a date for adventure with *The Adventurer's Almanac*! An entire year's worth of adventure awaits you inside its pages, complete with magical items, interesting personalities, strange festivals, and dangerous sites to explore, all presented in a system-neutral format suitable for any fantasy campaign. *The Adventurer's Almanac* also includes a fantastical calendar to bring structure to your game seasons loaded with more than 300 adventure seeds and a complete astrological system that gives characters personality traits, interesting benefits, and troublesome disadvantages to contend with. Don't let time run out on your campaign. Get the *Adventurer's Almanac* today!

It can be argued that time is both our greatest gift and worst enemy. The passage of the seasons not only—hopefully—brings us wisdom, but reminds us that our span of days is finite. This is true for both ourselves as gamers and for our imaginary counterparts who dwell in the fantastic lands of the campaign world. Nevertheless, despite the importance of time, it is something often overlooked in roleplaying campaigns, aside from the calculations of how long a spell will last or the length of a journey from one adventuring locale to another. At their very worst, fantasy campaigns become static places where nothing outside the adventurers' scope ever seems to occur.

The Adventurers' Almanac attempts to correct this oversight by presenting the game master with not only a wondrous calendar useable in most fantasy games, but by also providing him or her with an entire year's worth of adventure seeds, new monsters, unique magic items, interesting NPCs, and

momentous occasions. With this book as part of your gaming library, you have access to a simple, yet evocative, way to count the days and a go-to source for adventure ideas when your imagination needs a kick-start.

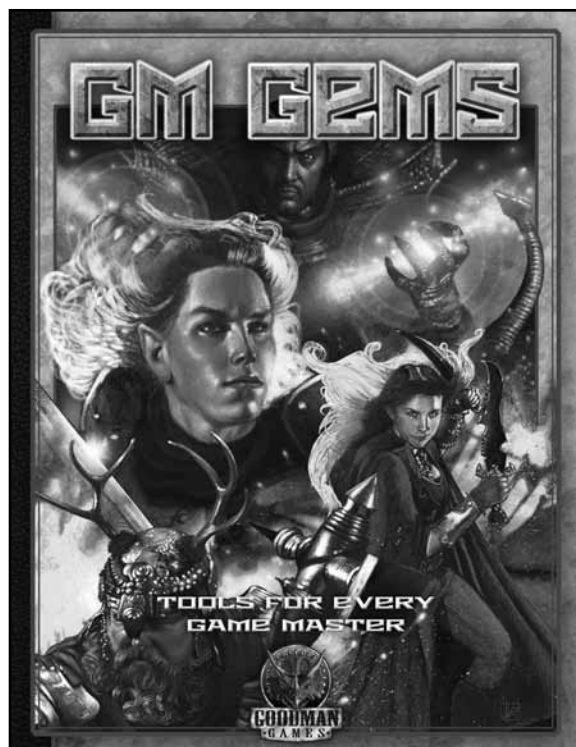
Written in the similar vein of *The Dungeon Alphabet*, *The Adventurers' Almanac* is not a hard and fast "this is how things should be done" gaming supplement, but a spring-board for your own creativity. With a little mental elbow grease, it's possible to turn the hundreds of adventure ideas waiting inside its pages into full-blown, epic campaigns that will keep your players entertained and waiting to see what happens next.

Suitable for any fantasy roleplaying game, *The Adventurers' Almanac* is the perfect resource for any game master lacking in that most precious of commodities—Time, itself. So make you sure your dues are paid to the "Order of Adventurers, Explorers, and Treasure-Seekers," stop by your local chapterhouse for your copy of *The Adventurers' Almanac*, and get ready for a year of unforgettable adventure!

—Michael Curtis, *Day of the Raccoon*, 30th day of Wealwind

GM Gems

Our popular book of gamemaster inspiration returns to print in hardcover format! Featuring an all-new cover by TSR icon Laura Lakey, *GM Gems* is filled with a wealth of information and ideas to empower every aspect of your game. Never run boring, vanilla games and never be caught flat-footed! It includes 64 pages of tables and ideas, covering such diverse topics as alchemical mishaps, empty rooms worth describing, extraordinary campsites, familiar creatures with unfamiliar faces, short encounters for short attention spans, unique taverns and inns, unusual holidays, 100 unique treasures, and more. The popular first printing sold out several years ago, and now we are happy to bring it back in a new format. In addition to Laura's outstanding cover art, this edition also features new endsheets by Peter Mullen.



AGE OF CTHULHU

THE LOST EXPEDITION

By Jon Hook

In 1923, Roy Chapman Andrews discovered nests of dinosaur eggs in the Gobi Desert. The discovery brought fame and notoriety to both Andrews and the American Museum of Natural History. Dr. Samuel Norris, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, desperately wants the fame and notoriety that seems to come so naturally to Andrews. So Norris convinced the Field Museum of Natural History to fund an expedition to The Singing Hills in the Gobi Desert. There, Norris hopes to make discoveries that will make national headlines.

Dr. Norris' dig has been extraordinarily fruitful, and he has sent several fossils back to the museum for examination. But something is wrong with the fossils. They appear to be altered, and the museum now suspects that Dr. Norris is modifying the fossils to further sensationalize his findings. The museum has decided to call Dr. Norris and his expedition home, but they seem to be missing. The Field Museum of Natural History is desperate to resolve this issue, for an academic scandal could ruin future funding to the museum. The investigators are hired to discover what exactly happened to the Norris expedition.

Setting out from Peking, the investigators head west to The Singing Hills of the Gobi Desert. Mongolian legends tell of strange creatures that come when the hills begin to sing, and when the investigators arrive, the hills are indeed singing. The investigators uncover a 65 million year old mystery that transported the expedition into The Great White Space. There, the investigators discover a land where Cretaceous period dinosaurs still roam, and a herd of Troodons surgically altered by Elder Things are hunting them down. Can the investigators survive long enough to rescue the lost expedition?



AND TWO MYSTERY RELEASES TO BE ANNOUNCED AT GEN CON!

We have two exciting hardcovers that will be announced at our Gen Con seminar, "What's New With Goodman Games." **The seminar is Friday night at 8:00 PM.** Make sure you attend, so you can find out what these deluxe hardcovers contain! And visit the Goodman Games booth on Saturday or Sunday for stickers to put on the mystery boxes below!



Hint: Encounters that are humorous, but grim.



Hint: The pegasus, on an installment plan.

D40 QUESTIONS: THE GOODMAN GANG



o help you get to know “the Goodman gang” a little better, we’ve put together some interviews. And what better way to do it than a randomized table?

The table on page 90 contains a menu of possible questions that each contributor was asked to answer. Each of us rolled 1d40 five times on the table, and answered the five questions that came up. We didn’t all answer the same questions, but I think you’ll find that these interviews help “get to know us” nonetheless!

(How do you roll d40? Roll d20 and 1d4 together. On the d4, 1-2 means you take the d20 at face value, and 3-4 means you add +20 to the result.)

Play it at home, kids! You can use this table as an icebreaker at your own game sessions. Go around the group rolling on this table and answering aloud. If a question doesn’t apply, re-roll.

A special thanks goes out to the fans on our forums who helped put together this list of questions based on what they wanted to learn about us.

JOBE BITTMAN



First roll: Question #22. What die is not used enough, in your opinion? In my opinion, the least used polyhedral, and most undeservedly so, is the forty-sided die. However, it looks like Goodman Games is looking to buck the trend with this table of random questions.

Second roll: Question #14. In what seedy place of ill repute do ye retire when the world can go

gong farming? I’m not sure how to answer this question. The entire world is a gong farm. In fact, the Bureau of Unsubstantiated Statistics claims that 9 out of 10 readers of this sentence are bloviating imbeciles. The odds increase by 10% for the crafters of such sentences.

Third roll: Question #33. Which RPG monster was most terrifying to you as a kid? Skeletons! I remember having a terrible nightmare after seeing the animated TV version of “The Hobbit” for the first time. I must have been six years old. The entire dream was animated. I was a wee hobbit lad getting ready for bed. My mother admonished me not to go outside after dark, but I slipped out the window and ran to climb a fence. When I reached the fence, I was suddenly surrounded by clattering skeletons. They danced in a circle around me and started eating my flesh. With every bite, I

could see the bones beneath my own skin. Finally, I was a skeleton too and we all danced off into the night.

Fourth roll: Question #3. Ekim has his mystical mask, Hepsoj his fecund fungi. Describe a spell based on an anagram of your own name. *Eboj’s Tortuous Transmogrification.* At the highest levels of this spell, the target’s body turns semiliquid and slowly melts as the skin of the head peels back to the chest like flower petals. The skull bleaches and becomes brittle. Then, the brain cracks from the shell like a newborn chick emerging from its egg. The target’s brain can be brought to heel as an intellect devourer, or exploded in a spray of pulpy viscera like one of Gallagher’s watermelons.

Fifth roll: Question #40. About that van again...how often is it vacuumed? What van are we talking about again? If it’s Doug Kovacs party van, vacuuming won’t be enough. I recommend Luminol, a black light, bleach spray, a respirator, a squeegee, and a bulletproof alibi.

MIKE CURTIS



First roll. Question #8: If a sitcom based on Goodman Games was produced, who would be your choices to play you and your fellow GG crew members? Harley Stroh would be played by Tom Hardy as Bane. Doug would be portrayed by an angry R2-D2. Wil Wheaton would be Joseph, just to confuse Doug. Archival footage of Yul Brenner would appear as Jon Hershberger. Jobe Bittman would be entirely CGI. We’d get Lemmy to play Dieter. I’d want Tommy Flanagan to play me if Brian Blessed was unavailable.

Second roll. Question #22: What die is not used enough, in your opinion? Across all RPGs, that’d be the d12, but in DCC RPG it’s the d7. The most commonly-available d7 is just an ugly, ugly die, but hopefully the new, better looking Impact version will take the seven-sider out of the dice gulag where it’s been confined for so long.

Third roll. Question #31: Which creator(s) had the most influence on you? How? If we’re talking fantasy literature, it’s hands-down Fritz Leiber and Clark Ashton Smith. There’s a sense of humanity and humor in Leiber’s work that I find missing in a lot of fantasy literature. C.A. Smith has such a wonderful command of language and imagery that, as Farnsworth Wright used to complain, his work is almost prose poetry. If we’re talking role-playing game design, aside from the obvious (Gygax, Arneson, Petersen, Jackson, Miller, and Hite), I have profound respect for the super team-up of Greenwood and Grubb on the original *Forgotten Realms* boxed set. Opening that set and reading through its contents had such an impact on my psyche that

Roll	Question
1	Are you now or have you ever been in an evil cult or circle of necromancers?
2	Describe your favorite Mighty Deed so far (either as performed by your PC or one of your players).
3	Ekim has his <i>mystical mask</i> , Hepsoj his <i>fecund fungi</i> . Describe a spell based on an anagram of your own name.
4	Elucidate your interlocutors with self-depiction in sesquipedalian Gygaxian prose.
5	From “back in the day” when some of the general public associated D&D with devil-worship, describe your experiences with D&D and going to hell.
6	Give us your stats if you convert yourself to DCC RPG.
7	Hugh the Barbarian needs a catch phrase. What should it be?
8	If a sitcom based on Goodman Games was produced, who would be your choices to play you and your fellow GG crew members?
9	If Goodman Games sponsored a little league team, what would their name be?
10	If we get 666 DCC RPG brass belt buckles in one room at the same time, what do you think will happen?
11	If you could officially add up to 3 books/authors to Appendix N, which would they be and why?
12	If you were wealthy and owned a resort where you could invite your closest friends to a week of solid fantasy role-playing, what three adventure modules would you select to take them through? Why?
13	In a dream, you’re running 4-6 famous personages (live or dead) through a funnel. Who are they and what happens?
14	In what seedy place of ill repute do ye retire when the world can go gong farming?
15	Is there a house rule or rule from another game that you mix into your DCC RPG sessions? What is it?
16	It seems like any kind of weird die is possible now (d9, d11, etc.). What, if any, would you like to see added to the DCC dice chain, and what would it be used for?
17	It’s 1974 and Dorothy Stratten says she’ll take a ride in your van if you paint something awesome on the side. What do you paint on it?
18	Joke contest! Quick, “tell” the first joke you can think of. See if you can top Dieter Zimmerman’s “What do you call an alligator in a vest?” (an in-vest-i-gator)
19	More DCC art should feature which of the following? (a) mullets, (b) platform soles, (c) terry wrist bands, (d) tigers, (e) moustaches, (f) afros, (g) kung fu, (h) other (what?).
20	Tell us about the first character of yours that died in an RPG – who were they and how did they die?
21	Tell us the song your character rides into battle to.
22	What die is not used enough, in your opinion?
23	What is the best monster created in a DCC module that you did not write?
24	What is your biggest inspiration when creating fantasy content?
25	What music do you listen to in order to get psyched up for a DCC game?
26	What was the first work from Appendix N that you ever read, and what did you think of it?
27	What was your favorite episode of the <i>Spellburn</i> podcast?
28	What’s the most embarrassing, or funniest, role playing moment you have ever experienced? (You pick embarrassing or funniest.)
29	What’s the most unusual thing you’ve assigned game stats to, and what were the stats?
30	Which character from DCC RPG best represents the heart and soul of DCC RPG?
31	Which creator(s) had the most influence on you? How?
32	Which film / book / song most inspires you to create?
33	Which RPG monster was most terrifying to you as a kid?
34	Who do you like best: Jesus, John the Baptist, George W. Bush, or Tiamat? Why, in brief?
35	Who is your favorite PC, and why? Tell us about the vital stats, items, and other aspects that made them special.
36	Who would win in a staring contest: you or Doug Kovacs?
37	Would you walk up to that van if you didn’t know who owned it?
38	You’re told pre-game that you can equip your DCC character with any mundane, non-magical, anachronistic items. Tell us the unconventional things you’d take.
39	<p>You’re in an enormous cave lit by several torches placed in naturally-occurring sconces. Before you, you see three pools of liquid making up small (roughly) 20 foot by 20 foot “lakes.”</p> <p>Pool 1 appears to be normal, clear water. Despite nothing being in the liquid, you occasionally see odd ripples across the top of the surface as if an invisible hand were randomly caressing it...or something transparent were briefly surfacing...</p> <p>Pool 2 has a crimson-red liquid – but it’s obvious to you it’s not blood, as it never congeals. The surface bubbles as if the liquid were rapidly boiling. Hovering six feet above the scarlet liquid is an large, elaborate bronze key about the length of your hand. You don’t know what it unlocks.</p> <p>Pool 3 appears to consist entirely of razor blades—they gleam and glint wickedly in the wan light, shifting and cresting as if to their own mysterious tide. On an earthen island in the middle of this lake of razor blades, however, is a large pile of gold.</p> <p>Which pool do you choose, and why?</p>
40	About that van again...how often is it vacuumed?

I can still remember what music I was listening to and what I was eating while paging through the booklets and poring over the maps. I credit Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb with teaching me the basics of world design thanks to that set.

Fourth roll. Question #32: Which film / book / song most inspires you to create? There is no single source to jumpstart the creative process. Creatively appears like an alley basher, springing from the shadows to crack you over the head with a blackjack of inspiration. If there was a single wellspring to drink from, my life would be far less complex.

Fifth roll. Question #37: Would you walk up to that van if you didn't know who owned it? That depends. If the van was a rockin', I wouldn't come a-knockin'.

JOSEPH GOODMAN

First roll. Question #15: Is there a house rule or rule from another game that you mix into your DCC RPG sessions? What is it? Interesting question for the designer of the game! Yes...all of them! More seriously, though, lately I have been mulling over the idea of patrons and how they are acquired.



The game presents a supernatural process, but Appendix N has examples of warriors and thieves with patrons. And *patron bond* as a spell does allow the caster to bond other characters, without respect to class. The idea of patrons for non-wizards (and associated mechanics) is something I'd like to explore.

Second roll. Question #11: If you could officially add up to 3 books/authors to Appendix N, which would they be and why? Clark Ashton Smith, of course; that's a no-brainer (and arguably he was omitted unintentionally to begin with). William Hope Hodgson, who wrote excellent seafaring horror stories and who is considered to be an influence on Lovecraft. And finally, Mark Schultz, the modern comic book artist and writer who created *Xenozoic Tales*. Although best known as an artist, his storytelling is terrific, and he's publicly credited several Appendix N authors as his own inspirations (notably ERB and REH). Re-read *Xenozoic Tales* with an eye to Appendix N and you'll see the influence.

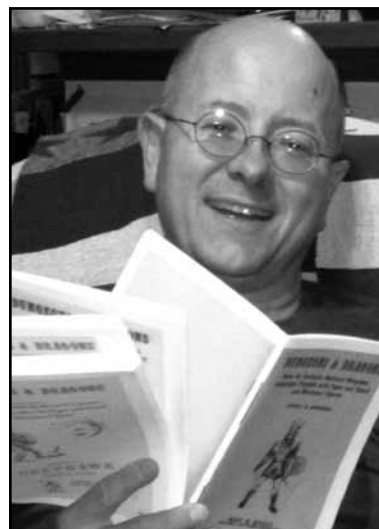
Third roll. Question #28: What's the most embarrassing, or funniest, role playing moment you have ever experienced? I was just reminded of an Xcrawl game I played many years ago. Xcrawl is a setting where dungeon crawl-

ing is a live-on-pay-per-view event in a modern world with magic. The creator, Brendan LaSalle, ran a game at Gen Con. For some reason I decided to play a dwarf wizard named Dr. Pepper. Xcrawl characters have sponsorships and, well, you can see who sponsored Dr. Pepper. He carried around a 12-pack and every time he cast a spell, he would pop open a can and spray Dr. Pepper soda as part of his spellcasting ritual. Mostly I remember making a lot of can-popping motions and funny fizzing noises for the entire evening.

Fourth roll. Question #16: It seems like any kind of weird die is possible now (d9, d11, etc.). What, if any, would you like to see added to the DCC dice chain, and what would it be used for? Well, first of all, I'd just like to get the Goodman Games DCC RPG dice finally into production! If all goes well you should find them on sale here at Gen Con. As for a specific die, I have always been slightly bugged by the lack of options above d40. Seriously. We need a d40.

Fifth roll. Question #31: Which creator(s) had the most influence on you? How? Definitely not Tolkien, unlike many other people. I actually didn't enjoy his work growing up; I found his style too dense. I suppose my biggest influences growing up were artistic rather than literary. I took art lessons from grade school to college, and for some time intended to "be an artist when I grow up." I grew up immersed in many of the great comic artists of the 80's (Mark Sylvestri, John Byrne, and Walt Simonson immediately come to mind).

JON HERSHBERGER



First roll. Question #26. What was the first work from Appendix N that you ever read, and what did you think of it?

I think that was probably Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, in 1980 or 1981. I absolutely loved *The Hobbit*, and then it was on to *The Lord of the Rings*.

Second roll. Question #21. Tell us the song your character rides into battle to. Wilhelm Richard Wagner's *Flight of the Valkyries*, of course.

Third roll. Question #20. Tell us about the first character of yours that died in an RPG - who were they and how did they die? My first RPG character to die was an otherwise average half-orc fighter whose only redeeming feature was his 19 STR. He died a very inglorious death, the details of which have been lost to time.

BUT, my most recent character death was the death of a doughy Dwarven fighter. It was GenCon 2006, my first

GenCon, and I was playing in a lesser known DCC, DCC #35A The Halls of the Minotaur. This would be my first, and last, game of D&D 3.5, not because of the game itself, or the rules system, or even the loss of the Dwarf. It's just that my old gaming group from high school had recently reconvened and we would stick to our game of choice: first edition AD&D. But I digress...

Now about the death of the Dwarf...we were a band of 0-level peasants sent out to the abandoned keep on the edge of town, ostensibly to deal with a Minotaur that was menacing the region by stealing and devouring livestock. At a crucial moment in the battle, the Minotaur proving to be a worthy adversary for our band of brothers, my brave Dwarf charged the Minotaur single-handedly in an attempt to draw him toward a rooftop catwalk. Undaunted by my Dwarven battle-cry and the sweep of my battleaxe, the Minotaur held his ground and in one fell swoop ended the life of my doughy Dwarf. The DM in this exciting game: none other than the author of DCC #35 himself, Harley Stroh!

Fourth roll Question #9. If Goodman Games sponsored a little league team, what would their name be? The Crawlers...The Night Crawlers!

Fifth roll. Question #39. You're in an enormous cave lit by several torches placed in naturally-occurring sconces... etc.... Which pool do you choose, and why? Pool 2, because Pool 1 is more likely acid than water, and Pool 3 is full of razor blades....but Pool 2 guards an elaborate bronze key...the key will unlock something, somewhere, and I'm betting it's worth A LOT.

KEITH LABAW



First roll. Question #18: Joke contest! Quick, "tell" the first joke you can think of. See if you can top Dieter Zimmerman's "What do you call an alligator in a vest?" (an in-vest-i-gator) How many clerics does it take to fix a broken lamp? One, to cast Cure Light.

Second roll. Question #23: What was the first work from Appendix N that you ever read, and what did you think of it?

The first was Tolkien, but

that's pretty predictable so I'll relate the tale of the second: I read the Elric saga when I was probably around 8th grade. I have to admit that I was unimpressed at the time. I think I may have been looking for an easier read with elves and wizards and dragons and stuff. I re-read the saga about 10 years ago (in my 30s) and was floored by how good it is.

Third roll. Question #34: Who do you like best: Jesus, John the Baptist, George W. Bush, or Tiamat? Why,

in brief? Tiamat. Jesus is an Oracle, John is a Cleric, and George is a barbarian with 4 dump stats. Who wouldn't take a dragon goddess of chaos over those guys?

Fourth roll. Question #19: More DCC art should feature which of the following? (a) mullets, (b) platform soles, (c) terry wrist bands, (d) tigers, (e) moustaches, (f) afros, (g) kung fu, (h) other (what?). Mullets. Clearly.

Fifth roll. Question #8: If a sitcom based on Goodman Games was produced, who would be your choices to play you and your fellow GG crew members? Tough one for me to answer. I'll propose a slightly younger Bruce Spence for myself.

BRENDAN LASALLE



First roll: Question #4. Elucidate your interlocutors with self-depiction in sesquipedalian Gygaxian prose. Wait, whut? Er, hang on let me stretch a bit. Okay, that's better. Ready? "In a superlatively lived life, one shall encounter brave men of conviction that shall lead mankind into the future, true titans of intellect that shall see the boundaries of the age fall before their keen de-

duction, gentle souls who will teach mankind to love in the face of death and despair, roguish wits who will be ones greatest sources of both exasperation and inspiration, and beautiful souls that will confirm all our best hopes for the nature of the Universe. You also might run into Brendan, this huge goofball who loves cat videos and Jagermeister."

Second roll: Question #12. If you were wealthy and owned a resort where you could invite your closest friends to a week of solid fantasy role-playing, what three adventure modules would you select to take them through? Why? I would run Descent into the Depths of the Earth, the Vault of the Drow, then skip the Shrine of the Kuo-Toa and go straight to the Queen of the Deamonweb Pits. That's the series I loved the most as a kid, the one I fantasized about actually seeing through to the end - whether as a player or GM. I have never finished the series all the way through fairly. One time my gang tried it, and our whole party died fighting mind flayers and wererats. We all bitched, complaining that the adventure was inherently impossible. So the GM let us go through with heroes from Deities and Demigods - I had Hiawatha and Rako, somebody had Sir Galahad, and our wizard was Sheelba of the Eyeless Face. We beat that adventure down so bad we quit after two encounters, it was just too easy. But even then we didn't fight The Queen.

Third roll. Question #20: Tell us about the first character of yours that died in an RPG - who were they and how

did they die? Okay, I have played since '77 and have some very fuzzy memories of the old days. The first one I remember dying that I can really put a name to would be Andrew Vendi, a 1st edition half-elf fighter-magic user. He was first level, and he and his two companions (no idea what they were called, but one was a paladin who had somehow scored psionics) decided that they would buy some gear, head out to that old keep on the borderlands everyone was talking about, and get rich. Somebody mentioned a nearby hotspot called the caves of chaos and we were off. Well, it turns out that the first tree you come to is full of kobolds, and they jumped down and just offed us. They rolled surprise, and poor Andrew went down in round one. I didn't even get a chance to cast my *sleep* spell.

We were all pretty miffed. So, we decided roll up new guys and go back, this time with two characters each (a party of six! What could stand against us?). I made up "Jakeel Vendi," the full elf, full wizard cousin of Andrew. We geared up and set out for revenge. Jakeel and his crew would eventually go on to raid the slave pits of the undercity, and the barrier peaks. That game was left off once I left for college, but I imagine that old Jakeel and his friends are still out there somewhere, fighting the good fight.

Fourth roll. Question #33. Which RPG monster was most terrifying to you as a kid? I remember thinking the Morkoth, that cavern dwelling hypnotist beast, was kind of insane. There is a reason no one ever used it; the Morkoth is something out of a nightmare that combined drowning and being eaten. It's the most Lovecraftian of creatures in the 1st Edition MM.

Fifth roll. Question #38. You're told pre-game that you can equip your DCC character with any mundane, non-magical, anachronistic items. Tell us the unconventional things you'd take. Any? Well, lets start with 10.2 mm climbing rope with a 400-KG rated folding carabineer grappling hook, a water purification filter, a tablet computer, a solar battery charger, an MP3 player loaded with my personal DCC mix (mostly Motorhead, Accept, Kick Axe, and Black Sabbath), a chainsaw, a left-handed chainsaw, a two-handed chainsaw, a monster truck that is somehow also solar powered and runs off that same charger, an AK-47 with ten thousand rounds of ammo, and a really good pair of cross-trainers. Then and only then will I feel ready to return to the black manse.

DOUG KOVACS

First roll. Question #8. If a sitcom based on Goodman Games was produced, who would be your choices to play you and your fellow GG crew members? I'm not very good at knowing actors or comedians. Maybe a young Robin Williams could play Harley. And, one of the actors from the Time Bandits could play me. Joe? It's okay to choose a muppet right? They are just as real as most people. So, Joe is probably Bert. Michael Curtis can be changed into the token super attractive female, so pick any actress from Madmen to your tastes.

Second roll. Question #25. What music do you listen to in order to get psyched up for a DCC game? All kinds of shit, but with incredible restraint I'll just give you one, Joe Goodman style: Recently I've been on a **Blood Ceremony** kick... it's a doom metal band with a female singer who plays keyboards and the flute...f***ing Jethro Doom! Plus they are Canadian. Hard to beat. (*Publisher's note: Doug is also a huge fan of Yanni and Steve Winwood, though he hates to admit it. - Joseph "Bert" Goodman*)



Third roll. Question #39. You're in an enormous cave lit by several torches placed in naturally-occurring sconces...etc.... Which pool do you choose, and why? What? Why do I need to choose a pool? If this s**t could suddenly exist in the world I live in, I'll need to rethink absolutely everything. I may no longer even be me at that point. If I wasn't me I would pick the razor blade pool without a fuss.

Fourth roll. Question #11. If you could officially add up to 3 books/authors to Appendix N, which would they be and why? First is obvious: Clark Ashton Smith... Why? Necromancers. But after that #11 is a hard question. I like to imagine a world where D&D included a lot more questioning of assumed rules in its culture instead of so much focus on minute and silly hang ups, so I'll add Philip K. Dick and Kurt Vonnegut...and one more, we should add Philip Jose Farmer's Riverworld in there, at least the first one: *To Their Scattered Bodies Go*.

Fifth roll: Question #22. What die is not used enough, in your opinion? The coin toss? Number questions are boring. Let's answer #18, too. Here: How do you get a %\$#% to ^&\$ a ""#\$^ ? Punchline: Take a !##? in their *&^?<*&. That's how.

BRAD MCDEVITT

First roll: Question #9. If Goodman Games sponsored a little league team, what would their name be? The Dinosaurs, of course.



Second roll: Question #10. If we get 666 DCC RPG brass belt buckles in one room at the same time, what do you think will happen? 666 gamers' pairs of pants would all fall down simultaneously.

Third roll: Question #16: It seems like any kind

of weird die is possible now (d9, d11, etc.). What, if any, would you like to see added to the DCC dice chain, and what would it be used for? D3.14

Fourth roll: Question #17: It's 1974 and Dorothy Stratten says she'll take a ride in your van if you paint something awesome on the side. What do you paint on it? Absolutely anything she wants, as long as I get to use her as a model.

Fifth roll: Question #36: Who would win in a staring contest: you or Doug Kovacs? Depends. Are we close enough during this contest I can step on his toes?

PETER MULLEN



First roll. Question #1: Are you now or have you ever been in an evil cult or circle of necromancers? That depends on how you look at it - I'm Irish.

Second roll. Question #22: What die is not used enough, in your opinion? I've got one of those weird non-spindle d7's. I love it and try to work it in at every opportunity in our games!

Third roll. Question #26: What was the first work from Appendix N that you ever read, and what did you think of it? The first book was *A Princess of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs. I was about 9 years old when I read this and for weeks after reading it I remember having these vivid dreams where I would be wandering these strange alien landscapes full of odd colors and animals. It seemed that I was merely an observer in these environments and had no active role other than to look around and see it in all its grandeur.

Fourth roll. Question #32: Which book most inspires you to create? My cousin gave me the book, *Dark is the Sun*, by Philip Jose Farmer and I have to agree with him that pound for pound this story has more adventure ideas than just about any book I can remember reading. Another book that does this well is Jack Vance's *Planet of Adventure* series. Both have a lot of great ideas but Farmer's packs it all in one novel! Awesome book!

Fifth roll. Question #35: Who is your favorite PC, and why? Tell us about the vital stats, items, and other aspects that made them special. After playing a group of characters throughout middle school and high school in a long-running campaign that just made it through the *Giants Series*, my older brothers went to college and my cousin and I were left at home with no GM. So we determined to run *Tomb of Horrors*, as a lark, because it was so ridiculously deadly. We ruled up a couple of high level guys for what we decided would be the *Suicide Squad*, since we didn't

want to run our precious veteran PC's and have them killed off in the first tunnel!

I rolled up an elven fighter/magic user of mostly mediocre scores (the 10 through 13 range with a 16 or 17 for Strength as his "best" score), based arbitrarily around the color purple. Instead of pantheons of gods and demi-gods he was only interested in furthering that which he thought was important to the violet hue. Having only a 5 for Wisdom seemed to make this about right.

Nurple the Purple was born and strife and adventure would be his! I think what made these characters different and meaningful for us was that we embraced them with a "warts and all" mentality. We had to rely on playing them smarter and not just blasting through everything because they were super powerful and had all this magic to use! We also decided that everything in this world should resemble the weirdness of an Erol Otus drawing or painting. Needless to say, we've run these characters ever since.

We never did take them through *Tomb of Horrors*!

STEFAN POAG



First roll. Question #40. About that van again... how often is it vacuumed? Vacuum the van? Certainly not! That would just eliminate some of the "atmosphere."

Second roll. Question #22: What die is not used enough,

in your opinion? Time was, I would have said the d12... but then DCC came along and Joe introduced me to a whole lot more freaky dice, so now I would probably give the d16 or the d5 the vote.

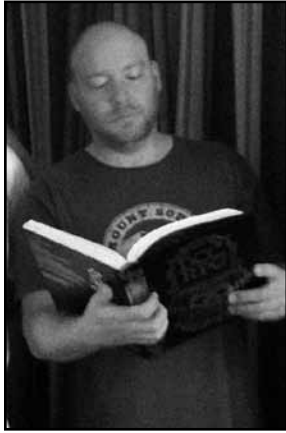
Third roll. Question #1: Are you now or have you ever been in an evil cult or circle of necromancers? Well, "evil" is such a loaded word. I mean, sure, we seek to raise the dead, but so far we haven't succeeded so calling us "evil" seems a bit premature.

Fourth roll. Question #33. Which RPG monster was most terrifying to you as a kid? The intellect devourer. A big brain that walks around on puma legs? Gave me the freakin' willies. Although my sister had a jester doll that scared me more than anything in the *Monster Manual*.

Fifth roll. Question #19: More DCC art should feature which of the following? (a) mullets, (b) platform soles, (c) terry wrist bands, (d) tigers, (e) moustaches, (f) afros,

(g) kung fu, (h) other (what?). DCC needs more mullets. Perhaps one could combine "The Mullet" and "The Afro" by adding an iconic DCC character who has a Jheri curl? For "other," I'd add fringed vests and headbands and those dangly things with feathers and beads that women used to wear in their hair.

HARLEY STROH



First roll: Question #5. From "back in the day" when some of the general public associated D&D with devil-worship, describe your experiences with D&D and going to hell. I was 8 years old when my babysitter ran me and my little brother through *Keep on the Borderlands*. A week later, his parents discovered D&D was satanic, and demanded he throw away his books. Instead, he left them all to me. I never looked back.

Second roll: #27. What was your favorite episode of the Spellburn podcast? Episode 11, when I rolled a nat 20 in the final spell duel between Sezrekan the Mad and Emirikol the Smoked. In our pre-show ramble, Michael schooled me 2 duels out of 3, but when it came down to the money shot, Ol' Sez stepped up...

Third roll: #29. What's the most unusual thing you've assigned game stats to, and what were the stats? Journey to the Center of Aereth (where it is easy for PCs to become stranded without rations): Cannibalism, and the dangers and benefits of eating the meat of your friends versus that of weird monsters. If you want the stats, buy the adventure.

Fourth roll: #20. Tell us about the first character of yours that died in an RPG – who were they and how did they die? Strongbow the Fighter, who fell into a pit and was consumed by rats in the first hall in the Caves of Chaos.

Fifth roll: #23. What is the best monster created in a DCC module that you did not write? Here's a Goodman Games' secret: Doug Kovacs comes up with all the best monsters. I wrote *Sailors on the Starless Sea* but it was Doug that created the awesome chaos lord that emblazons the adventure's cover and drives the adventure's finale. Multiple times I've seen gamers pick up the adventure, take in the cover and remark in disbelief, "This is for zero-level characters?!"

DIETER ZIMMERMAN

First roll: Question #24. What is your biggest inspiration when creating fantasy content? The books I read. My favorites are often ones that subvert fantasy and literary tropes: Elric, Game of Thrones, Joe Abercrombie's *First Law* trilogy. My fantasy adventures/settings will have a lot that's familiar, but one or two things that are quite different that you expect them to be.

Second roll: Question #10. If we get 666 DCC RPG brass belt buckles in one room at the same time, what do you think will happen? Were there that many DCC belt buckles made? I have no idea. We might have to borrow some belt buckles from our alternate universe selves to make that happen. But if we managed to do it, it would alter our reality so that 1970's fantasy would take over. It wouldn't be like, "Hey,



stripey bell-bottoms are cool again. Weird!" It would change the past so that they were *always* cool and no one even notices or questions it. It wouldn't be a powerful enough effect that we'd lose all the science and technology we've gained since the 70's, but magic would be available as another means of solving problems. The United States is meddling in the business of your desert country? Well, patron bond your entire citizenship to Azi Dahaka and he'll put a stop to that. Of course there will be a fraction of a percent of the world who are not affected and remember that this is not how things were. They will band together in a secret underground organization trying to put things back, and eventually they'll turn to the King of Elfland for aid. Since he's not a very popular patron in the modern industrial society, he'll agree to help undo what has been wrought. He sends one brave soul back in time to just before the 666th belt buckle entered the room, and the bearer of the final buckle is slain. Poor Harley.

Third roll: Question #23. What is the best monster created in a DCC module that you did not write? It's not the most original or craziest monster in a DCC, but I have a special fondness for the demon toad trapped in the door in *Jewels of the Carnifex*. That toad has dragged someone into the chasm every time I've run that adventure.

Fourth roll: Question #5. From "back in the day" when some of the general public associated D&D with devil-worship, describe your experiences with D&D and going to hell. It was a total non-issue for me. My family did not subscribe to any particular religion, and most of my friends' families were the same. One of the guys I played with in high school was a regular church-goer, and his family was pretty devout. But still...no problems. It never came up.

Fifth roll: Question #3. Ekim has his mystical mask, Hepsoj his *fecund fungi*. Describe a spell based on an anagram of your own name. Reteid's Procrastination Invocation: the results of any action taken by the target of this enchantment do not occur until minutes, hours, or even days after the action is taken.

THE VANDROID

By Joseph Goodman



As I write this, Dark Horse comics just released *Vandroid* #3. The premise speaks to me: a 1970's custom van designer builds a killer android that is imbued with his consciousness after he dies. The creature is called Vandroid, and it chugs perfume for sustenance. The comic is a cross between *Terminator* and some weird 1970's custom van theme show.

As you surely know, Appendix N is filled with examples of adventurers journeying to alien worlds. In some cases these journeys expose medieval characters to futuristic alien technology. "Futuristic alien technology" can mean laser rifles...or Ford vans! And thus: The Vandroid, a new monster for your DCC RPG campaign.

THE VANDROID



The vandroid is a robot created from the components of a classic 1970's Ford custom van. A vandroid stands nearly seven feet tall, is an anatomically perfect male specimen, and is massively strong (treat as STR 22). The vandroid can be mistaken for a huge man, and always wears aviator sunglasses because its soulless optical sensors are clearly not human eyes. Vandroids are imbued with the consciousness of their creators, who are typically insane mechanic-artists hunting rare components for their further creations. The masterfully crafted weapons and armor of fantasy adventurers - especially their magical artifacts - are an irresistible draw to a vandroid. "Imagine the horsepower if I retrofitted the carburetor out of that warrior's magic sword..."

Vandroid: Init +2; Atk pummel +6 melee (1d8+4); AC 16; HD 3d8+3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP custom back art with special power (10% chance of front art, too), unusual sustenance, motherboard sensitivity; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will -2; AL N.

Intelligence. A vandroid has human-level intelligence, at the brink of insanity (if not actually over it). The creation ritual completely unhinges the creator's sentience, which is already a little deranged: in their mortal lives, most vandroid minds lived only for their vans, and now they choose a half-life of android to continue their pursuit of mechanic-artistic perfection forever. The vandroid is intelligent, but not always rational.

Custom art. Every vandroid's back has an airbrushed illustration of some fantasy or sci-fi scene. This grants some benefit when revealed. Sometime during the course of combat, a vandroid will rip off its shirt to expose characters to the power of its painted back. The special effect triggered by exposing the custom art can only be used once per day. 10% of vandroids are also created with a chest-image which can have a second effect. Roll 1d4 to determine the specific image and its effect:

Roll Custom image and effect

- 1 A Frank Frazetta painting of Death Dealer. The rendering isn't perfect but everybody knows the artist was going for a Frazetta. The vandroid enters a death-dealing rage! It receives a +2 to attack and damage for the next 2d4 rounds.

- 2 A Star Wars mural. Luke looks a little weird, but what the hell, maybe it's his *Empire* face. The vandroid was manufactured with a laser-blade in his wrist. When his back-art is exposed, the laser-blade springs forth! The vandroid has enough power to run it for 1d4+1 rounds. It attacks at +5 to hit for 2d5 damage, and any critical hit indicates one of the target's limbs is severed.
- 3 The wizard van! For the next 2d4 rounds the vandroid can launch magic spells from its fingertips. The effect is randomly determined each round (roll 1d4): (1) *magic missile* at +6 to hit 1d4+1 targets for 2d4 damage each, (2) *fireball* at +5 to hit all within a 30' sphere for 2d6 damage; (3) *choking cloud* at +10 to hit all targets in 30' sphere for 1d4 ongoing damage until a target makes a DC 14 Fort save; (4) *lightning bolt* at +15 to hit a single target for 2d16 damage.
- 4 Playboy model. The vandroid emits a charming effect. All humanoid within 100' must make a DC 14 Will save or become friends with the vandroid. Members of the opposite gender suffer a -2 penalty to the roll.

Combat. The vandroid may employ some basic strategems to gain access to the characters' equipment. Ultimately, however, it wades into battle, employing its powerful fists to smash and destroy.

Immunities. The vandroid is a semi-robotic entity and is therefore immune to mind-influencing effects. It is also immune to pain. No matter how much damage it takes, it feels no pain. Critical hits and special effects that are debilitating based on inducing pain do not apply to the vandroid.

Sustenance. The vandroid survives by consuming an exotic liquid of some kind. It can ingest normal food but receives nutritional value only from its exotic power source. A vandroid may be encountered in desperate pursuit of sustenance, which can provide a motivation for encounters. Roll 1d5 to determine each vandroid's source of sustenance: (1) perfume, (2) STP motor oil, (3) holy water, (4) chili, (5) Tang.

Motherboard sensitivity. "Don't make fun of my motherboard." All vandroids are sensitive to jokes about their motherboards. Taunting a vandroid about its motherboard requires the creature to make a DC 16 Will save. Failure indicates it flies into a clumsy rage, charging blindly into combat and abandoning all strategy. While in this rage it receives a +2 to attack and damage, but a -2 to Will saves and initiative.

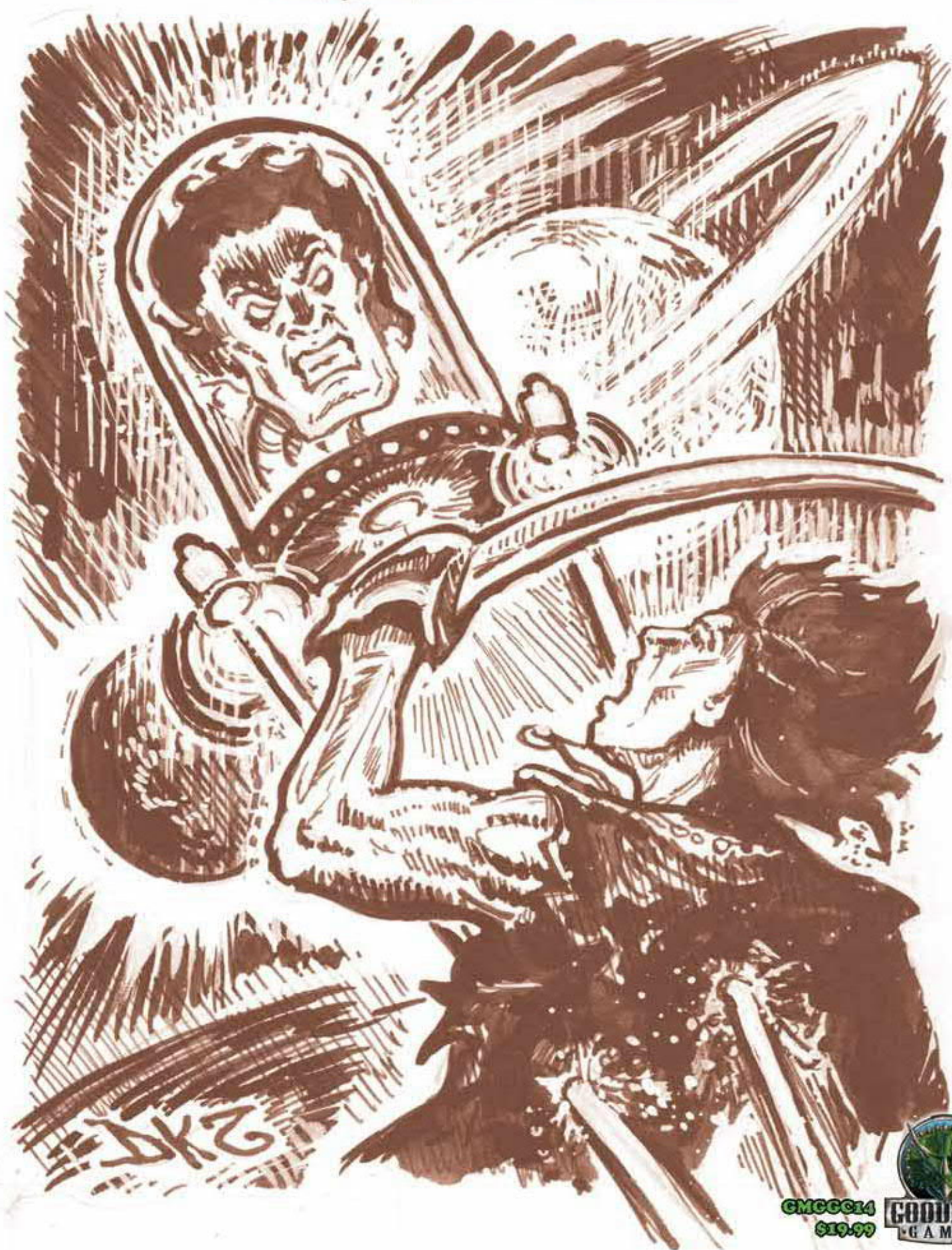
Creation ritual. The creation of a vandroid requires a home computer, a 5" floppy drive, a custom van, a mechanic and artist (must be one person with both skill sets), the spell *create vandroid*, and the robotic body of the vandroid. The final stage of the ritual transfers the mechanic's consciousness to the vandroid's body, at which point the vandroid is sentient.

The robotic body of the vandroid must be scavenged from the parts on a custom 1970's Ford van. The van must be a Ford. No ritual has been successful with any other model (although there may exist such a process just not yet discovered). The van must be in good working order. Otherwise the ritual fails.

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