



*Featuring:*

Duel at Midora Temple

Attack of the Frozen Führer

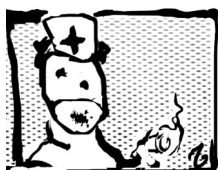
While the Gods Laugh

...and other weirdness

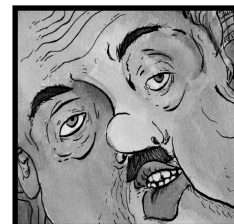
# D.A.M.N.

Autumn 2017  
Volume 1: Issue 2

## DCC Adventure Magazine and News



Thomas Novosel answers the age-old question: Should Hitlers be punched? Or punched really hard?



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## THE DAMNED

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### GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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Shoot us a note and we'll include it in the next issue. Just make sure you put **"Okay to Print"** at the end of your message.

This issue is supported by an extensive web enhancement, available for free in PDF from the Mystic Bull Games website: [www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com).

0-level character generation rules for *Duel at Midora Temple*, as well as special character sheets and a "build-your-own" Rod of Karma for *While the Gods Laugh*. And other content that wouldn't fit in this issue. Check it out!

COMPATIBLE WITH  
**DCC  
RPG**



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# FROM THE DAMNED PIT



Foreword from the Publisher

## EMERGENT PLAY AND LONG DELAYS

Games emerge from play like organic molecules forming into living things. All it takes is a lightning strike into that primordial soup of play for a pure game to emerge. I was an agent in this process at GaryCon this year. And I'm a better GM and player for it!

Reid San Filipino changed his *Mall Maul* funnel into a competitive two-table tournament where the encounters were randomized, and the main set piece -- a fight with an ape/flying saucer mutant -- allowed both tables to engage each other, as well. It was complete chaos from my perspective as GM, but it brought out an old idea of gaming made new: The players make the game. The GM just makes sure the world is there, coherent, and reacts to player/character actions.

I played in /ran a *Black Powder Black Magic* game with Eric Hoffman at the head...originally. It was his adventure, but at random points, a magical wind would blow across the island of Kalmatta. In its wake, characters made Will saves. Those that failed turned in their characters and drew new ones. The player that rolled the lowest became the new GM. No prep, no plan. Even the module text was not reliable -- it was the new GM's world. Reality had changed, but it had always been the same.

Emergent elements were there in every game I played or ran. And, I have to tell you, it's hard to run an emergent game in a convention environment -- it's loud, players come with preconceived notions of what they're "supposed" to do, and there's a huge time limitation. *Dino-tastic Park* with Jarrett Crader, *Gangbusters* with Mark Hunt (we played mostly Batman villains...with a few Dick Tracy and Shadow villains thrown in, planning a train heist...I was the Penguin), and in Paolo Greco's *Gangs and Bullshit* -- a completely emergent and chaotic game where at one point we had 20 players. There is no plan. There is no

adventure path. The game is the players' imaginations squeezed through the GM's creation.

I watched it in the bar -- Dogstorm, Happy Salmon (go find the video...it's amazing!) and Flammable Hospital. In GaryCon's primordial soup, organic gaming principles rearranged themselves into living games. All it took was the participants' abilities to suspend their preconceptions of what a game is...and let the game be what it becomes.

In this issue of DAMN, I think we have captured some of this in amber: Semi-realized worlds where the GM and players emerge their own stories. In Julian's you get to fight Hitler -- and change history! In Marc's, you experience your powerful character through flashbacks in order to move forward. In mine, you're trapped by an invading force, and you can fight or join them...up to you! My last year in gaming, culminating in GaryCon this year, has reinforced the need for this emergent structure for a session, game, and campaign to be successful. The participants come away from the experience with stories that seem more real than memories from their own lives. And that's because we create life when we let the lightning strike.

**Late September...** As I get back to the editorial, I realize we're very very late with this issue. But, I think the extra time proves we're committed to bringing you the best content from the best writers and artists in the DCC Community. We have "newcomers" that you may not have seen DCC stuff from: James Spahn, David Persinger, and Jason Sholtis. And we have works from the "old saws": Marc Bruner, Julian Bernick, and the Mongrels.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue and let us know what you think!

— Paul (damn-mag@mysticbull.com)

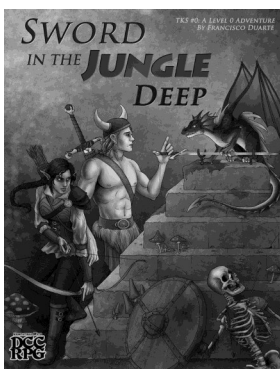
New in Third Party Publishing

# News From Around the Fire



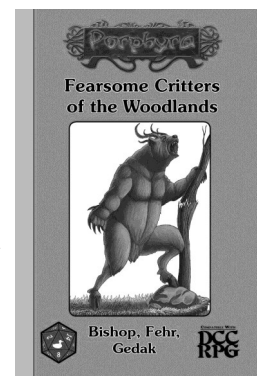
**American Survival Guide** — Crawling Under a Broken Moon Campaign setting is here! We covered it last issue when it was but a wee crowdfunding campaign. Reid San Felipe and Shield of Faith Studios. Available at RPGNow/Drivethru. (PDF — 286 Pages — \$12.99)

**Curse of Mistwood** — Follow-up to Trolls of Mistwood by D.A.M.N.'s very own Daniel Bishop and David Fisher! Published by Shinobi 27 Games. Available at RPGNow/Drivethru (Hardcover/Softcover/PDF — 100 pages— \$12.99—\$16.99)



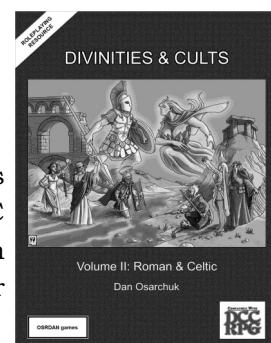
**Sword in the Jungle Deep** — A 0-level funnel set in the jungles of Erset La Tari, by Francisco Duarte at The Keep Studios. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru and Goodman Games' site (Softcover/PDF — 16 pages — \$10—\$12)

**Fearsome Critters of the Woodlands** — DCC Monster book that draws heavily on North American mythology. From Purple Duck Games, Mark Gedak, Daniel Bishop and Perry Fehr. Continuing series in the Porphyra setting. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru (PDF — 26 pages — \$4.99)



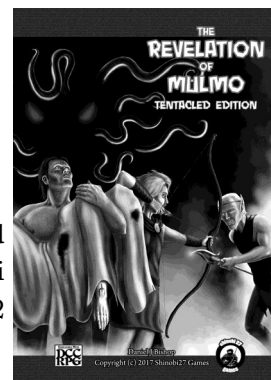
**Crawljammer: Most Wanted** — NPC threats or friends for the Crawljammer setting. By Tim Callahan for Moon Dice Games. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru (PDF — 5 pages — \$1.00)

**Divinities and Cults Volume II: Roman and Celtic**— Gods and demi-gods from Roman and Celtic mythos for your DCC games! By Dan Osarchuk for OSRDAN Games. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru and Goodman Games' site (PDF/Softcover — 53 pages — \$4.99—\$14.11)



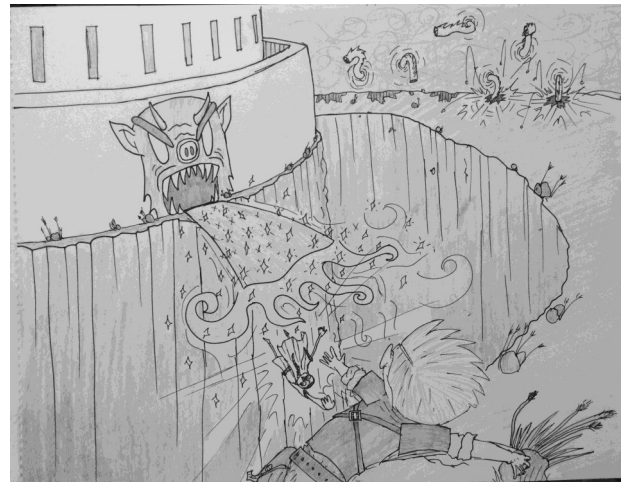
**Sanctum Secorum — Episode 28 Companion — Roger Corman's the Raven** — DCC content inspired by Roger Corman's *The Raven* by various authors for Sanctum Media. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru (PDF — 32 pages — FREE!)

**Revelation of Mulmo — Tentacled Edition** — Updated and physical edition of a classic! By Daniel Bishop from Shinobi 27 Games. Available on RPGNow/Drivethru (Softcover — 72 pages — \$10.99)



# D14 RUMORS AND REPORTS

D14	RUMOR OR REPORT
1	Priests are dying in Lankhmar's Temple to Votishal because Death himself has moved in! (Verification needed)
2	The Mongrels have started their own political party, but no one can agree whether they'll stand on a platform of poop, poop and liquor, or poop and poop. (Likely True)
3	At GenCon, Jeff Goad maxed his spellcheck and destroyed Terry Olson's playtest. I hear that they've cancelled the delivery of Lankhmar as a result. (Mostly true)
4	Dan Osarchuk is planning to release Volume I of Divinities and Cults for DCC soon. (True)
5	XCrawl is going to be a MOVIE! (Could be true — support their Indiegogo campaign and make it true)
6	Kevin Searle has sent his online group from Brandolyn Red to the body of a sleeping titan in space. Now they fight dragon riders and mad wizards on Mount Black Fume! (True)
7	The Asheville DCCRPG Society ended up on a distant planet, the air redolent of alien spices. There they fought psychic spider monsters and prevented the summoning of Shub-Niggurath. (True — They play every other week at Wyvern's Tale)
8	Chris Lauricella ran a Tomb of Horrors funnel at Cincity Con. Despite being skewered, stabbed, bitten (by sharks with tapeworms!), poisoned, strangled, pummeled, and dipped in acidic goo, the players were begging for more. (True)
9	Hobbes and Friends of the OSR is going on tour. Check your local listings (Probably true)
10	It is said that Cody Mazza read many religious texts in his youth. (True — Those that play in his game can attest!)
11	Daniel Bishop has written or co-written 50 published adventures for DCC and has 9 published conversions from previous systems (False; He's only had 47).
12	Brendan LaSalle and Jobe Bittman were spotted lurking around Tacoma Games, as reported by Hector Cruz (True — we have photo evidence)
13	Adam and Katie Muszkiewicz (how many consonants can you fit in a last name?) are expecting their second child! (Totally not true. I apologize for spreading this vicious rumor.)
14	The Minneapolis DCC RPG Society is secretly moving on nearby Wisconsin and planning to take over GameHoleCon 2017. (Totally true!)



The Fall of Gonzo



FreeRPG Day Cultists



Trio of Northwestern Cultists

# UNDERWORLD RANGER

Character Class for DCC RPG

I've wanted Jason to convert his home campaign to DCC RPG since I started playing both back in 2012-ish. And now it's here! Delivery of the full books is pending, but here's a preview!

**Y**ou are the secret protector of humanity, waging perpetual, mostly unseen war against Chaos in the Underworld. Snatched from your home in early childhood, you were subjected to a battery of blood tests and Chaosometer readings, ensuring your resistance to Underworld corruption. Deep below the earth, you man demilitarized zones, fortified positions and lonely secure bunkers fighting to contain the emergent Chaos threat before it spills over into the lands above.

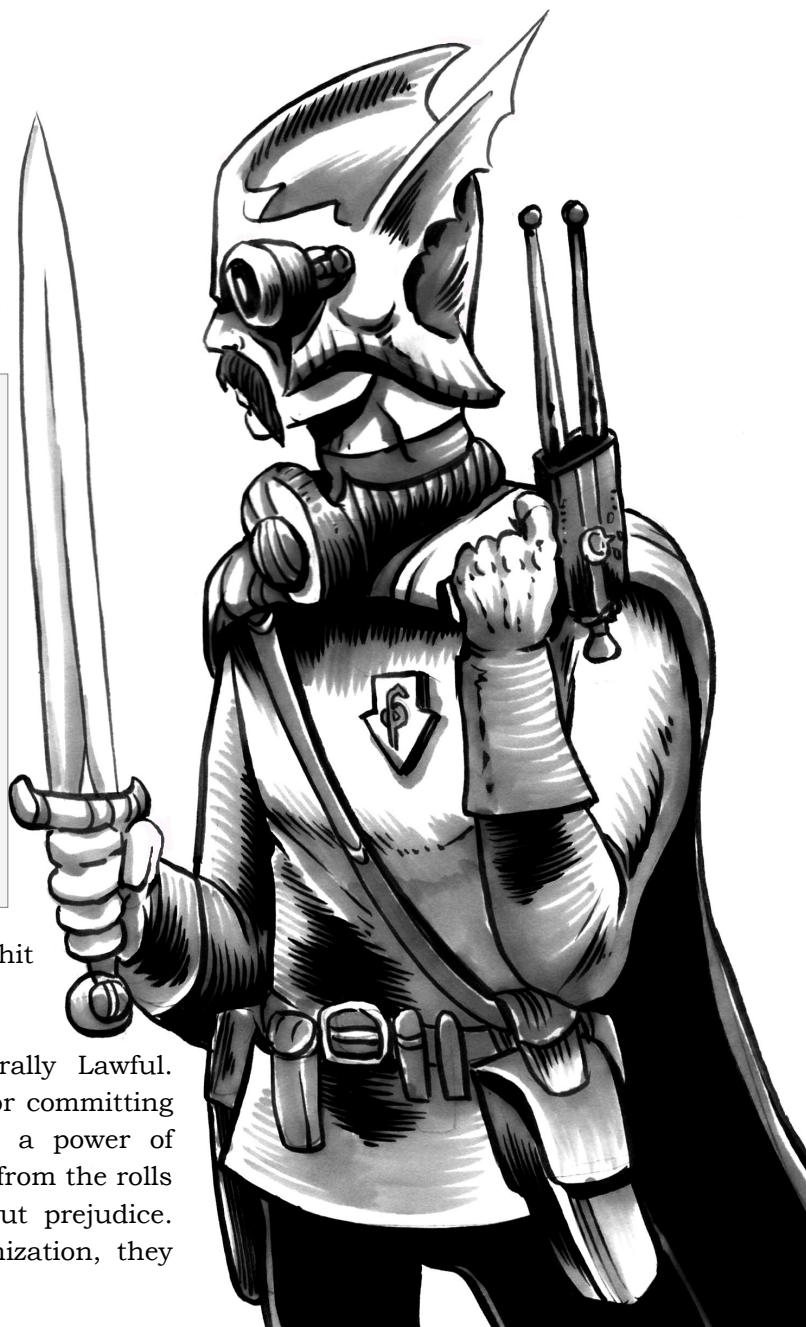
**NOTE:** The Underworld Ranger is a special character class in DCC RPG. Much like the old school ranger class, the PC must have a minimum of 12 Strength and 13 Stamina to even be selected as a ranger. The character does not roll on the occupation table — they were “recruited” too young to have one. Instead, their occupation is Ranger Trainee at 0-level representing the years of training undertaken in areas crawling with primal Chaos. Starting equipment includes: badge of service, light intensifying goggles and the ZR1 sidearm (all described at the end of this article).

**Hit Points:** Underworld rangers gain 1d8 hit points per level.

**Alignment:** Underworld rangers are generally Lawful. Though they do not suffer existential peril for committing chaotic acts, if they ever knowingly serve a power of Underworld Chaos, their names are stricken from the rolls of the rangers, and they are hunted without prejudice. Other than losing the support of the organization, they still retain their abilities.



**Art and Words by:** Jason Sholtis (with more art from Stefan Poag). DCC Conversion by Paul Wolfe



**Chaos Crusader:** Underworld rangers are intensely focused on containing primal Underworld Chaos and the horrors that they employ. As such, the class gains a Deed Die and Critical Hit range when fighting beings of Chaos. These are detailed in the class table.

**NOTE:** On a successful deed result (3+ on the deed die) and a successful attack roll against an opponent of Primal Chaos, the ranger's attack is considered magical for bypassing resistance to non-magical attacks. This is in addition to other deed effects.

**Natural Underworlder:** Underworld rangers grew up surrounded by the oppressive Primal Chaos. Rangers add their level and Luck modifier as a bonus to any skills related to survival in the Underworld or tracking Chaos beings, in addition to any saving throws related to the Primal Chaos. This includes saves against long-term Underworld exposure, proximity to Primal Chaos, spells cast by Chaos entities, *et al* at the Judge's discretion.

**Assistive Charms:** Underworld rangers learn four spells to aid their fight against the Primal Chaos. They cannot learn new spells, nor can they cast spells from scrolls. Any attempt to do so (and reported to the URCAC) results in immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination. Rangers only receive one spell per level, as listed in the class table.

**Spell Check:** To cast assistive charms, the ranger makes a spell check using a  $d16 + \text{Level} + \text{Luck}$  modifier. Rangers can spellburn to add points to their spell check, as a wizard/elf.

UNDERWORLD FORAGING SUCCESS TABLE	
D12	UNDERWORLD FORAGING SUCCESS
1	2d5 plump and juicy rats (single meal for up to 8 humans)
2	2d7 delicious bats (single meal for up to 12)
3	1d5 blind cave fish (single meal for up to 12)
4	Several handfuls of glutinous fungi (single meal for party)
5	Small sack full of edible lizards (party eats for 1 day)
6	Huge blob of life-sustaining pool algae (party eats for 1d2 days)
7	1d3 giant rock snails (party eats for 1d4 days)
8	A dozen giant lizard eggs (party eats for 1d4 days)
9	2d24 giant spider hatchlings (party eats for 1d4 days)
10	Large sack full of giant insect larvae (party eats for 1d4 days)
11	Bushel of nutritious lichen (party eats for 2d4 days)
12	2d5 cave cephalopods (party eats for 2d4 days).



**Organizational Support:** Underworld rangers are supported by a powerful and pervasive organization dedicated to containing and defeating Primal Chaos. Rangers may request support from any ranger station, however, they suffer a -2d to Personality checks at 1st level to do so. At second level, the penalty is -1d and -2 at third level. At 4th level, the ranger suffers no penalty, but still must fill out loads of pain-in-the-ass paperwork and pass a DC 15 Personality check. The aid — or the denied request — comes through in 2d4 days. In addition, the ranger is obliged to attempt to return any wealth apportioned to the Ranger service, keeping only what they may need in the performance of their duties. Paperwork must be filed for such allocations at the nearest ranger station.

**Luck:** The underworld ranger applies a Luck bonus or penalty to any spell checks when casting assistive charms. In addition, this bonus applies to any skill checks related to survival or tracking as described in the Natural Underworlder entry.

**Action Dice:** Underworld rangers use action dice for attacks or assistive charms.  
**NOTE:** Rangers roll a d16 action die for spell checks when casting assistive charms.

### ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR REQUISITION

- **Healing Balms** — restore 1d7+1 hit points when applied topically.
- **Light Enhancing Goggles** — Grants infravision 60' (see below)
- **ZR1 Dissuader** — The trusty ranger sidearm (see below)
- **ZR2 Lightning Thrower** — When more “umph” is needed...
- **Demolition Supplies** — Plan to use must be submitted for approval; adds 1d4 days to approval process
- **Chaosometer** — For detecting those hard to reach places
- **Underworld Ranger Trainees** — 1d4+level 0-level trainees)
- **Greenhorn Underworld Ranger** — fresh from training; DC 20)

### UNDERWORLD RANGER SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Upon completion of basic training, the Ranger organization entrusts the underworld ranger with the following equipment. **NOTE:** Lost or damaged equipment require several forms, filled out in triplicate, and a special hearing with the Quartermaster's Service.

#### BADGE OF SERVICE

This enchanted bronze brooch must be worn by all active duty underworld rangers. In addition to firing a signal flare at will (360' illumination for 1 round), most Underworld sentients recognize the badge and avoid hostilities wherever possible. Agents of Primal Chaos take a different view: Some by immediate lethal force. Though others may treat rangers with clemency.

#### LIGHT INTENSIFYING GOGGLES

The Underworld is generally suffused with ambient blue-green light emanating from its walls, floors and ceilings. But, in many areas where Chaos beings lurk, primal darkness prevails. A ranger's light intensifying goggles provide infravision out to 60'.

#### ZARACANTH INDUSTRIES ZR-1 “DISSUADER”

The standard field sidearm of the Ranger Service, the ZR-1 delivers a bolt of electricity effective up to 60' (three damage settings: 1, 1d3 or 1d6). The weapon recharges every other round with a vigorous winding of a key mechanism. Discharging more than twice before a ten-minute cooling period is highly discouraged and can result in damage to the weapon and/or operator (subsequent uses provoke a 1 in 6 chance per use of an electrical eruption, destroying the gun and dealing 1d6 damage to the user), in addition to immediately voiding the warranty.



UNDERWORLD RANGER							
LEVEL	ATTACK*	Crit Die/	Action Die	Spells**	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+d3/+1	1d10/II—19-20	1d20	Detect Chaos	+1	+1	+0
2	+d4/+2	1d12/II—19-20	1d20	Light	+1	+1	+0
3	+d5/+3	1d14/II—19-20	1d20	Detect Traps	+2	+1	+1
4	+d6/+4	1d16/II—19-20	1d20	Protection from Chaos	+2	+2	+1
5	+d7/+5	1d20/II—18-20	1d20+1d16		+3	+2	+1
6	+d8/+6	1d24/II—18-20	1d20+1d16		+4	+2	+2
7	+d10/+7	1d30/II—18-20	1d20+1d20		+4	+3	+2
8	+d10+2/+8	1d30+2/II—18-20	1d20+1d20		+5	+3	+2
9	+d10+3/+9	1d30+4/II—17-20	1d20+1d20		+5	+3	+3
10	+d10+4/+10	1d30+6/II—17-20	1d20+1d20+1d14		+6	+4	+3

\* Underworld rangers only gain deed die and increased critical threat ranges against beings of primal Underworld Chaos.

\*\* Underworld rangers use a 1d16 action die when casting assistive charms. These specialized spells are detailed in Appendix G: Monsters, Treasure, and Spells in Operation Unfathomable: DCC Edition.

UNDERWORLD RANGER TITLES	
LEVEL	LAWFUL
1	Greenhorn
2	Guard
3	Guard First Class
4	Ranger
5	Ranger II
6	Ranger III
7	Ranger IV
8	Subcommander
9	Commander
10	Underwarden



# Third Party Spotlight: Dark Trails

This issue we talk to David Baity, southern gentleman, local firefighting hero, and prolific DCC RPG author about the upcoming crowdfunding campaign for Dark Trails — a Lovecraftian Weird West setting for DCC RPG.

## WHAT IS DARK TRAILS?

Dark Trails is an RPG project that I've been working for close to two years, now. It's set in 1865 in an alternate ending to the Civil War. Dark Trails uses and is compatible with Dungeon Crawl Classics, but adds a ton of new content: classes, spells, patrons and sub-systems for deeper character definition.

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CLASS?

That is a really hard question! One of the main strengths of Dark Trails is its playable classes. With over eleven to choose from, players have often remarked that they have a hard time picking their hero. I'd have to say that the Gunslinger would probably be my choice as favorite class. Gunslingers use a "dead-eye die" that allows them to make trick shots, like a warrior's Mighty Deed of Arms. Add to that that their guns are possessed by restless spirits of long dead law-dogs, hell-bent on serving up justice on the end of a bullet and you have some great opportunities for role-playing.

### WHAT MAKES DARK TRAILS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER WESTERN-GENRE GAMES?

I've made Dark Trails different in the world that the characters inhabit and the rules of that world. You'll find several new rules that help get your group into the spirit of things with plenty of random generators that aid the Judge in creating their own Weird West campaign. There's also a stampeding herd of Lovecraftian beasts along with creatures that have been skulking around in the shadows of Native American and Western folklore. Through many playtests, I've honed the feel of the game to be one of danger, mystery and weirdness.



### WHAT? I CAN PLAYTEST THIS?? WHERE?!

Playtesting has come to a close with many brave posses slapping leather before saddling up and hitting the trail. You can still get a taste of the rough draft and possibly earn some swag for your group by writing Dave at [darktrailsrpg@gmail.com](mailto:darktrailsrpg@gmail.com). The game is still being run at most major conventions.

### SO, WHEN CAN I GET THE GAME?

The final draft of the game is being polished now and is expected to be ready in January or February 2018. After that, we're running a Kickstarter to flesh out the original art and to pay for editing and layout. My goal is to have books on the shelves by the latter part of 2018. You can keep up with our progress by joining the Dark Trails Facebook group or G+ community.

# Third Party Spotlight: AD&BB Elfland Edition

Having just come off of a wildly successful crowdfunding campaign (technically still 10 days left as of this writing), my “brother from another island-continent” David Fisher and patron-writer extraordinaire James Pozenel, Jr., bring us a preview of *Angels, Daemons, and Beings Between Volume 2: Elfland Edition*.

James describes it thus: Elves are required to have patrons, and maybe the current selection is good enough for many a table. However, I’ve heard several players with elf characters resignedly say, “I guess I’ll take the King of Elfland as my patron.” Thus the new volume.

Their goal was to provide more options to the only DCC class that *must* have a patron at 1st level. Within, they promise fey barbarians, stalkers of evil, august healers, vagabond thieves, faerie kings and a range of supernatural oddities. This book is a monster with thirteen elfland patrons and 29 new spells!

James says: In *AD&BB: Extended Otherworldly Edition*, Paul Wolfe (that’s me)...presented his ruminations on demi-patrons:

“I realized that we’re not just dealing with Angels and Daemons, but also Beings Between. The idea of entities that were in the early stages of their own march to power was interesting to me.”

Wow. I’m super deep. Anyway — without further ado, we present Dahudmorgan, queen of the faery seas!



## DAHUDMORGAN

Queen amongst the sea-faeries, Dahudmorgan inhabits the rocky shores of Menegond, Thousand Rocks. During the day, she hides within a magnificent golden city under the sea or in one of the natural caves or grottoes in the sea-cliffs surrounding her home. At night she sings from her perch on one of the rocky islands that stretch along the coastline, combing her long golden tresses.

Yearning for love, Dahudmorgan’s powers bring only sorrow. Bargains with dark powers, intended to protect her faery sisters and their fantastic city, brought curses from the Court of Chaos, which sank the city beneath the waves and transformed the sea queen’s touch to certain death. Her plaintive, hypnotic melodies attract fishermen and sailors to their doom.

Dahudmorgan only takes male wizards and elves as subjects of her *patron bond* spell. The bonding ceremony must take place on the sea shore, preferably at Menegond.

## Invoke Patron: Dahudmorgan

### SPELL CHECK RESULT

12-13	The bittersweet song of Dahudmorgan swells to an emotional crescendo in the caster's mind. As tears well in the eyes, the caster feels inspired, gaining a +2 bonus to the next action die.
14-17	The words and mournful melody of the sea queen resounds, and the caster breaks into song. All within a 20' radius who hear the song become entranced and sleepy, requiring a Will save. Those that fail fall into a normal sleep for 1d6 turns.
18-19	The caster breathes underwater normally for a number of hours equal to caster level. This does not protect the caster's belongings or improve movement underwater, nor does it prevent breathing of air.
20+	A nacreous wand appears in the caster's hand, guiding itself to make an X on the closest wall, cliff face or other vertical surface. An opening appears in the marked wall leading via a winding path to a cave with a glimmering pool of water. The caster and allies may stay for as long as they wish in this sylvan subterranean cave. Drinking from the pool restores 1 HD of damage and 1 point of temporary ability score damage. The restorative properties only work once per person per day for the duration of the spell.

### PATRON TAINT: DAHUDMORGAN

When patron taint is indicated, roll 1d4 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all four taints at all levels, there is no need to continue rolling.

### ROLL RESULT

1	The caster's hands and feet become webbed, granting a +2 bonus to swimming-related skill checks. The second time this result is rolled, the caster receives a +1 bonus to attack actions while underwater. The final time this result is rolled, the caster feels so comfortable in the water, that, while submerged, survival instincts are impaired — causing a -4 penalty on saving throws involving drowning effects.
2	The caster has a strong attraction to the sea, feeling ill at ease when beyond close proximity to a shoreline and is likely to venture toward any nearby large body of water. The second time this result is rolled, the caster insists on being near the sea, taking up maritime pursuits and gaining skills at sailing and fishing. The caster dreams of Dahudmorgan constantly and is convinced that her alluring song is counter melody in every piece of music. The third time this result is rolled, the caster continually hears the sea-faerie's song and is drawn to Dahudmorgan, leaving behind all mortal concerns to join her in her undersea realm. The caster's corpse is found washed ashore 1d4 weeks later with a look of rictus rapture upon its waterlogged face.
3	The caster takes on marine aspects, carrying a briny odor that is noted at a distance of 30' or more. The second time this result is rolled, the caster's veins, fingernails and toenails turn green. The final time this result is rolled, fine fish scales cover the caster's skin, though only noticeable on close observation.
4	Dahudmorgan needs the caster's assistance to protect her realm and fellow sea-faeries. The first time this result is rolled, the mission is relatively simple, requiring no more than 1d4 days of travel and defeat of a foe who is 1-2 levels (or hit dice) below the caster's. The second time this result is rolled, the mission becomes more difficult, requiring 1d4 weeks of travel and a foe equal in level (or hit dice) to the caster's. The final time this result is rolled, Dahudmorgan herself is in danger. Protecting the queen of the sea-faeries requires 1d4 months of travel, generally takes place underwater, and the greatest foe has more than 1d4 levels (or hit dice) than the caster's. Failure at any mission adversely affects the character's relationship with Dahudmorgan.

### SPELLBURN: DAHUDMORGAN

Roll 1d4 on the table below when the spellcaster spellburns.

### ROLL RESULT

1	The caster visits an underwater world complete with fields, villages and beautiful golden castles studded with gems and stays among the sea-faeries for a festival of dancing and singing, which only lasts but a fleeting moment in mortal realms. The rigor is expressed as physical ability loss.
2	The caster agrees to convalesce with Dahudmorgan before the spellburn is granted. Ability score loss does not heal until the caster joins the patron under the waves for a short, yet chaste, visit. Ability score loss then heals at an accelerated rate: For each day spent with the queen of the sea-faeries, the caster heals 3 ability score points.
3	The caster seems distracted, constantly tilting the head in the direction of the nearest sea, as if listening for something. The caster tunelessly hums a mournful song of lost sailors and unrequited love until ability score damage heals naturally.
4	Dahudmorgan desires a kiss from her future lover and grants double the amount of spellburn if the request is granted. The brief caress causes the caster to lose 1d4 Stamina points that heal after a night of rest. If refused, spellburn points are lost.

# DUEL AT MIDORA TEMPLE

By Paul Wolfe

## I NTRODUCTION

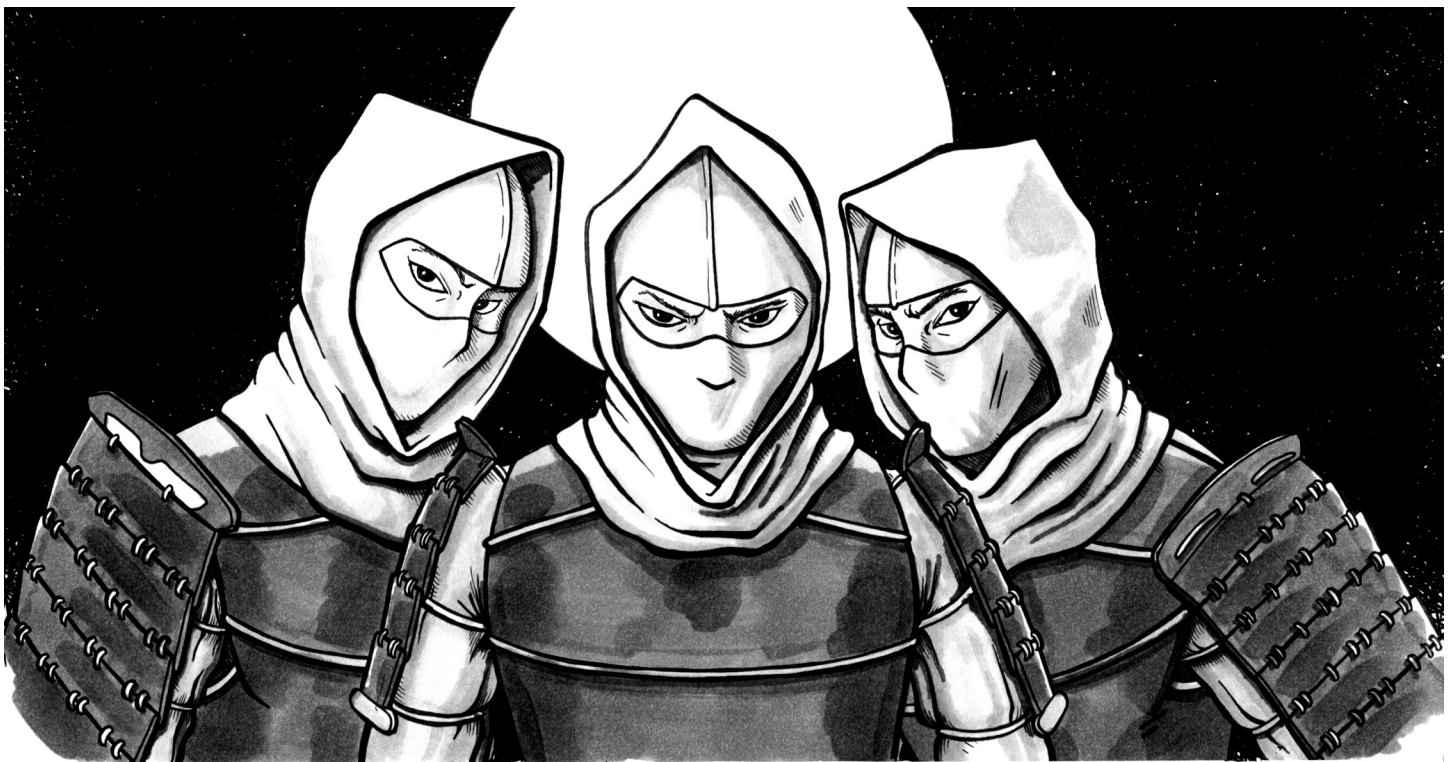
The Ketsuin Empire is a place of secrets and a spiritual war that remains just out of conscious focus for most of the mundane folks that inhabit the temperate island chain. The gods, demons and spirits of the islands select an unlucky few to serve their arcane purposes and to act as warriors on a shifting and nebulous battlefield. Life is cheap here, where armies clash over age-old rivalries, where a samurai may strike down a peasant at a whim, and the kami play with men's souls like brightly painted *koma* (tops).

Duel at Midora Temple is a 0-level DCC RPG adventure set within the intersection of a multi-faceted war between political rivals, competing faiths, capricious kami, and simple folks just trying to live out their lives in peace and comfort.

## B ACKGROUND

The history of Midora Temple is complex and often contradictory. The site is dedicated to both Otohime, native dragon goddess of the tides, and Zaiten, a dragon goddess imported to the Ketsuin Empire by invading armies hundreds of years ago. The Torai, a sect of the Suizei priesthood that venerates Otohime, consider Zaiten anathema to their beliefs. However as with all priests of the faith, the Torai cannot destroy nor defile temples dedicated to any gods. As a kind of compromise, the Torai erected shrines and temples dedicated to their goddess and her subordinate spirits in order to "protect" the temple of their enemy.

But the temple complex hides many secrets. Lurking beneath the Temple of Zaiten is a spirit



cage imprisoning Amanozako, a demon herald in the service of the foreign goddess (covered in the companion adventure *Blessed of the Demon Herald*). In addition, the ornate shrine to Otohime protects a powerful relic of the dragon princess, Kanju, the Jewel of Ebb Tides.

The precarious spiritual balance at Midora Temple is complicated by the deteriorating political situation between two powerful samurai clans: the Togashi and the Komei. On the rise with the Emperor, the Togashi have managed to politically displace the Komei in the capital by marrying one of their daughters to the aging Emperor's youngest son, Arawak. When the marriage was announced, the Emperor's former heir, Prince Antuok, shaved his head and became a monk, retiring to Midora Temple at the ripe old age of 15. Given the bloody history of Ketsuin's noble classes, it is a given that retired princes rarely stay retired for long and often become the pawns of upstart samurai families.

Within the last week, Komei Munefara, the leader of the Komei clan, sent his own son and a band of loyal retainers to Midora Temple to secure the retired Imperial heir and to convince the young man to return to the capital, reclaim his birthright, and in doing so, publically support the Komei clan.

What the Komei do not know is that Togashi Kirotaiki, the leader of the Togashi clan, discovered Munefara's plot and has dispatched his armies from the nearby Arashi fortress to destroy the temple, kill the Komei samurai found there, and secure the retired prince – likely in a dungeon cell beneath the fortress.

## PAWNS TO GREATER GODS

The player characters are at Midora Temple for a variety of reasons. They may be retainers or other servants of the Komei samurai on a mission to secure Prince Antuok and convince him to leave retirement. They may be monks in the service of the temple dedicated to keeping the grounds and performing the necessary rituals to Otohime and other kami memorialized here. Or they could be simple peasants up from the villages in the area to perform tasks for the monks, worship at the shrines, or sell supplies. Finally, the PCs might be

spies for the Togashi or cultists of Zaiten, sent here to report on the activities of the Komei samurai or the Torai sect, or to disrupt rituals and discover the secrets of the Temple of Zaiten.

As the adventure opens, the PCs are alerted to the impending attack by the Togashi army. With little time, characters must determine where their loyalties lie – their clan, their faith or themselves – as the situation deteriorates into chaos.

You may be thinking: What the hell are all these weird weapons? How do my players build 0-level characters? We have it for you! Check out the Mystic Bull website for the DAMN Web Enhancement. In addition to full 0-level character rules for this adventure, all maps for all the adventures in this book are there!

## THE ATTACK

At the Hour of the Dog, as the sun is setting, a young monk rushes into the main temple area shouting that an army of Togashi samurai have destroyed shrines and buildings near the foot of Storm Mountain and are coming up to Midora Temple to destroy all who live here. Looking down the mountain, a long snake of torches approaches the temple grounds. In the time that it takes rice to cook, the Togashi will be upon them!

## DRAMATIS PERSONA

There are four distinct groups of NPCs with very specific goals in this quickly flowing adventure. The first three, the Komei samurai, the Torai monks and the Togashi samurai, are locked in a political battle with a trajectory that ends in one side or the other being destroyed. The PCs are witness to the first bloody act of a tragedy that will eventually rip apart the Ketsuin Empire.

Underlying this is the spiritual war between the kami and gods of the Ketsuin Islands and of the Urgil invaders. An Urgil priest in the company of the Togashi is here to see that the first shots in that war are also to his people's advantage.

## THE KOMEI SAMURAI

**Komei Hirotoshi** is the 16-year old son and heir to the leadership of the second most powerful samurai clan in the Empire, the Komei. Sent here with a band of loyal retainers, Hirotoshi must convince the retired prince, Antuok, to leave the temple and re-declare himself as heir to the Imperial line. During the course of the action, Hirotoshi will not leave temple area without Prince Antuok. He is resistant to harming (or even putting his hands on) the boy's Imperial person. Hirotoshi fights with a *tachi* (long sword) or his heirloom *daikyu* (longbow) (+1 damage). He wears a full suit of samurai armor (equivalent to splint mail) with an iron *kabuto* (traditional samurai helmet) to protect his head.



**Komei Hirotoshi:** Init +2; Atk +1d3 melee tachi (1d8) or +1d3 ranged daikyu (1d6+1); AC 15; HD 1d12; hp 8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Crit on 19, Mighty Deed; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L

Hirotoshi's **samurai retainers** are veterans of varying degree. Their first order of business is to protect their lord's son. Secondly, they must return to the capital with Prince Antuok (alive) or suffer grave dishonor. Like Hirotoshi, they are resistant to using force on the prince, though they are less resistant. If need be, they screen any attacking force

to allow Hirotoshi and Prince Antuok to escape. The samurai retainers fight with *yari* (spears), *tachi* or *hankyu* (small bows) and are protected by full metal scale samurai armor (equivalent of scale armor) with metal *jingasa* (flat helmet) upon their heads.

NOTE: Any 0-level characters of the Gentry or Noble class may start as direct retainers of Komei Hirotoshi or one of his samurai. Peasants could be servants in the entourage. Outcaste PCs may be spies or camp followers. See the web enhancement for 0-level character generation information.

**Komei Samurai (5):** Init +1; Atk +2 melee tachi or yari (1d8) or +2 ranged hankyu (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP Fight beyond death; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL L

The Komei samurai are able to use their force of will in order to continue to fight after reaching 0 hit points. Each round after the first, the samurai makes a Will save (DC 9+ cumulative round dead). On a success, the samurai fights normally. On a failure, the man collapses and dies.

## THE TORAI MONKS

NOTE: 0-level characters in the service of the temple are usually monks or servants, regardless of what social class they hail from.

**Rikebo**, the abbot of Midora Temple, is 75 years old and, though a competent warrior – he was once a samurai in the service of the Torai clan – he refuses to fight even when threatened with imminent death. His first order of business is to organize the defense of the temple grounds, arming his own monks and any 0-level characters available. A vision from the dragon goddess Otohime compels him to select one PC as the protector of the Jewel of Ebb Tides (see sidebar). Once done, he moves to secure the temple treasury (hidden in the Temple of Zaiten – see Area 1) and then attempts to escape the mountain using secret trails.

**Rikebo:** Init +0; Atk None; AC 10; HD 1d10; hp 2; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, WILL +5; AL L

The **monks of the Torai sect** are generally non-combatants (equivalent of 0-level characters) but fight fiercely to defend the temple grounds. They are less concerned about Zaiten's temple and concentrate their actions on defense of the shrine to Otohime and the person of the abbot.

The monks are unarmored and armed with a variety of weapons, tools and, in some cases, hands and feet (all of these methods still only net them 1d4 damage on a successful attack). All fight to the death to defend their temple, faith and abbot.

**Monks (30):** Init +0; Atk +0 by weapon melee or ranged (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP; SV Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +0; AL L



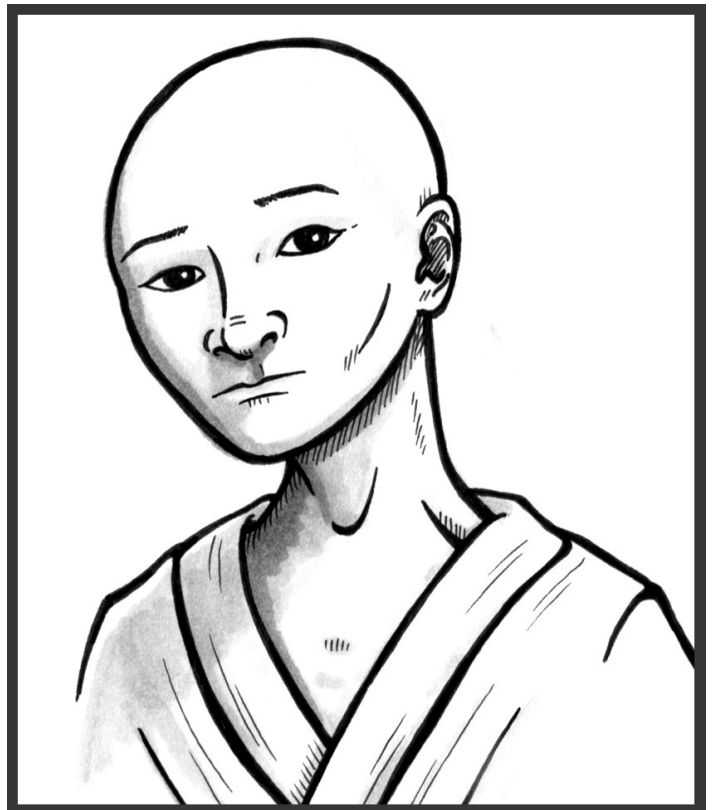
**Prince Antuok** is the 16-year old ex-heir to the Imperial throne but considers himself nothing more than a humble monk. He has spent a year at Midora Temple and fights with the same zeal as his brethren to defend Otohime's shrine and the abbot. He is unarmored and armed as his brethren.

**NOTE:** To add even more uncertainty to this adventure, particularly devious Judges can roll up Prince Antuok as a 0-level character (Occupation: Monk; Caste: Noble). Either randomly assign him to a player as one of their starting characters or hold the prince in reserve for later assignment if one of the players loses all 0-level characters.

**Antuok:** Init +0; Atk +0 by weapon melee or ranged (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP; SV Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +0; AL L

The **sohei (warrior monks) of the Zinga sect** are stationed at Midora Temple for the express purpose

of guarding the shrine to Otohime and protecting Kanju, the Jewel of Ebb Tides. They remain on the small island (Area 8) and defend the bridges to Otohime's shrine to the death. The sohei wear leather scale breastplates (equivalent of studded leather armor). Jebu, the sohei leader, fights with a *naginata* (pole-arm with a wide sword blade) (+2 attack, 1d10+2 damage, two-handed). Tanbo wields two *kodachi* (short swords) (2d16+3 attack, 1d6+2 damage), while Buncu swings a mighty iron *tetsubo* (great club) (+4 attack, 1d10+4 damage, two-handed). All carry 6 *shurikens* (throwing knives); they can throw up to 3 with one action dice (1d16+3, 1d3 damage each).



**Sohei (Jebu, Tanbo, Buncu):** Init +2; Atk See above; AC 13; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP Fight beyond Death; SV Ref +3 Fort +2 Will +2; AL L

The Zinga sohei are able to use their force of will in order to continue fighting after reaching 0 hit points. When reduced to 0 hit points, the sohei makes a Fortitude save (DC 8+cumulative round dead). On a failed save, the sohei collapses, but can still be healed for 1d4 rounds before dying.

**NOTE:** Any 0-level characters with the sohei occupation may be in the service of the Zinga sect.

## THE TOGASHI SAMURAI

**Togashi Kiromori**, commander of the Togashi army, has three objectives: Destroy Midora Temple, kill the Komei samurai found there, and secure Prince Antuok – alive if possible. The young captain is in the service of the garrison stationed at Arashi Fortress, just ten miles away from the temple. The captain tolerates the presence of the Urgil priest (see below) since the commander was ordered to bring the foreigner along, but he does not sway from his duty to support the outlander.

Kiromori wears a full set of samurai armor (equivalent of splint mail) along with an elaborate iron kabuto and fierce *menpo* (iron face guard) to protect his face. He fights with an heirloom tachi (+1 damage), only using his daikyu if necessary.

**Togashi Kiromori:** Init +1; Atk +1d3 tachi melee (1d8+1) or +1d3 daikyu ranged (1d6); AC 15; HD 1d12; hp 10; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP Crit on 19, Mighty Deed; SV Fort +1 Ref +1 Will +1; AL L

Kiromori's **samurai retainers** are specifically tasked with bringing back the heads of the Komei samurai (severed) and the person of Prince Antuok (intact, if possible). They are loyal to Kiromori first, and their clan second and fight to the death for both. They fight with yari and tachi, are clad in full metal scale



samurai armor (scale equivalent) and wear iron kabuto on their heads.

**Togashi Samurai (9):** Init +0; Atk +1 melee yari or tachi (1d8); AC 14; HD 1d10; hp 8 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP; SV Fort +1 Ref +0 Will -1; AL L

The **Togashi ashigaru (soldiers)** are regular troops comprising two phalanxes of 15 spearmen and a formation of 20 archers. Once engaged, one phalanx of spearmen assaults the monk huts and then the Strong Bridge (where the Torai monks are clustered) and the second breaks off and attacks the Shrine of Otohime (and the Zinga sohei). All three groups stay in formation, unless the PCs somehow manage to scatter them. The ashigaru fight to the death.

**Togashi Ashigaru (50):** Init +0; AC 12; Atk +0 yari melee (1d8) or +0 daikyu ranged (1d6); HD 1d6; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP; SV Ref +0 Fort +0 Will -1; AL L

**The Clockwork Samurai** leads the armies of the Togashi. A towering mechanical horror, it is slow and clumsy but likely tips the balance further toward the Togashi.

Init -2; AC 15; Atk +4 large tachi (2d6+2); HD 4d10; hp 32; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Half damage from non-magical attacks; SV Ref -2 Fort +6 Will -2; AL N

**Naranbaatar** is a priest from the Urgil – a powerful tribe of peoples across the western sea. The outlander has two aims: Capture the relic of Otohime – the Jewel of Ebb Tides – and investigate the temple of Zaiten – one of the ancient gods of the Urgil. In congress with his ascendant gods, Naranbaatar has come to believe that a powerful servant of Zaiten is imprisoned somewhere within the temple. He carries the Nyoj-Jizai, an artifact that he believes will dispel the wards on the Jewel of Ebb Tides and break the bonds of Zaiten's servant (See Magic Items). The priest keeps out of direct combat whenever possible, using his spells to disrupt potential threats and protect himself. Naranbaatar wears a leather breastplate (leather armor equivalent).

**Naranbaatar:** Init +0; AC 12; Atk +0 staff melee (1d4); HD 1d6; hp 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Spells, Turn Unholy; SV Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +3; AL L

**Turn Unholy (Spell Check +4):** Ketsuin's gods and spirits and their worshippers are abominations to the gods of the Urgil. The manifestation of Naranbaatar's successful Turn Unholy check



produces a mass of entangling plant life which immobilizes the target or targets on a failed Will save (DC equal to the Turn Unholy check) for 3d10 minutes. Escape from the resulting entanglement requires a Strength check (DC equals the check -1 per minute entangled). **Spells (Spell Check +3):** Protection from Evil, Darkness, Holy Sanctuary. **NOTE:** If Naranbaatar's situation becomes dire, he activates Nyoi-Jizai (see Magic Items) to both protect himself and, hopefully, free the servant of Zaiten to protect him.

## WARNING AND PREPARATION

The temple receives a warning about 30 minutes before the Togashi army, snaking up the mountain, engages. Rikebo, the abbot, and Komei Hirotoishi, the samurai leader, immediately spring to their tasks. The former rallying his monks and any that malingers (i.e. the PCs) to the defense of the temple and the latter to desperately convince Prince Antuok to abandon the temple and escape.

## TACTICAL SITUATION

As the Midora Temple Map (page 34) depicts, the temple grounds are situated near the top of Arashi (Storm) Mountain. Other than the trails noted on the map, escape from the area is severely restricted. Deep rocky gullies choked with trees, bushes and

brambles prevent quick exit and sheer cliffs are impossible to negotiate while under such duress.

Other than the main trail, three secret trails exit the mountain, but they must be discovered either by talking to the inhabitants of the temple grounds (Personality DC 15; 20% chance that any given NPC knows of the secret trail's existence) or searching (DC 18). Either of these actions take 1 turn before combat begins and are nigh impossible once the arrows and spears start flying.

At some point during the melee, Rikebo may successfully retrieve the temple's treasury and exit through the secret tunnels under the Dead House (see Area 3). If this occurs, he leaves the entrance open in his haste. **NOTE:** The secret tunnels are detailed in the second adventure *Blessed of the Demon Herald*.

## THE ROLE OF THE CHARACTERS

Player characters are assumed to be allied with, or pretending alliance, with both the Komei clan and the Torai sect. Or they are simple peasants trying to survive a brutal and shifting world. Such characters are beseeched for aid, thusly:

Characters of the gentry caste or any in the direct service of the Komei are ordered to assist in convincing the prince to leave the mountain, and then escorting and defending his Imperial person.

Characters with ties to the temple are ordered to assist the Zinga in the defense of Otohime's shrine and Kanju, the Jewel of Ebb Tides. Rikebo selects one such character (the one with the lowest Luck) and imparts a ritual that will release the Jewel of Ebb Tides from its hiding place in Otohime's statue (see Area 8). Knowledge of this ritual passes like a curse to the character with the next highest Luck score should the original character meet his or her demise. See the Aftermath section for further information.

Peasant characters are beseeched (or ordered) to assist in either of these aims, while outcaste and outlander characters are generally ignored.

Characters that are allied with the Togashi clan know that the raid is coming and have been given specific instructions. Perhaps a Togashi spy betrays his or her false allegiance to the Komei retinue and attempts to kidnap or assassinate the prince in the chaos. Those with false allegiance to the temple may

be tasked with finding the temple treasury, killing or capturing Rikebo, or the like. Such nefarious missions are left to the discretion of the Judge.

The player characters' individual motivations aside, the initial stages of the adventure progress as below.

## TURN 1

The monks are alerted to the impending Togashi attack. Rikebo organizes a defense and moves towards the temple of Zaiten (see Area 1). The Zinga sohei arm themselves and move to defensive positions on the bridges to the Shrine of Otohime (see Area 8).

The Komei samurai frantically try to convince Prince Antuok to leave with them. Unless the PCs intervene, the prince refuses and continues preparing for battle. If one or more PCs intervene, one "lead" character must make a Personality check (DC 25). Up to two characters can assist, adding +2 each to the roll. If the PCs attempt to knock out or otherwise restrain the prince, they are immediately attacked (non-lethal) by the Komei samurai. Komei Hirotooshi may be convinced to use force to restrain and remove the prince from the mountain, with a similar Personality check (DC 25). Successful or not, all this talking and convincing consumes the entire turn.

Other than the above actions, characters can arm and position themselves as they desire.

## TURN 2

Togashi Kiromori and his retinue of samurai, along with Naranbaatar, arrive on the secret trail and take refuge under the waterfall (near Area 10). They wait here until the Togashi ashigaru attack commences. PCs that have found this trail and attempt to escape discover a rude surprise.

Komei Hirotooshi and his retainers continue their attempts to convince Antuok to leave. This remains a fruitless endeavor unless the PCs intervene. The heightened stress of the impending attack strengthens Antuok's resolve (DC 30 to convince him to leave) but weakens Hirotooshi's (DC 18 to convince him that physical force is the only way to remove the obstinate prince from this situation). The Komei samurai take up defensive positions with an eye toward protecting their commander and the prince.

The Torai monks wait calmly for the Togashi to attack at the Strong Bridge (Area 5), while Rikebo begins the ritual necessary to release the treasury from the Temple of Zaiten (Area 1). This ritual requires three full turns.

The Togashi ashigaru their position on the Midora Temple Grounds map (see page 34) and begin to form up. Anyone within melee or short range for a bow is immediately attacked.

## TURN 3

The Togashi ashigaru move to attack. One troop of spearmen move to the Strong Bridge. The second phalanx of spearmen, along with the clockwork samurai, veers off toward Otohime's shrine. The archers launch volleys of arrows (some afire) at concentrations of resistance and the buildings. They have been ordered to avoid setting either Otohime's shrine or Zaiten's temple on fire (See Mass Battle for additional information).

The Torai monks hold the Strong Bridge with their lives. The Zinga sohei similarly defend the bridge that leads to Otohime's shrine (Area 8). A character that has been given the ritual to release the Jewel of Ebb Tides is immediately recognized by the sohei and allowed to pass. All others are put to the defense of the shrine.

If Prince Antuok has been convinced to leave (or otherwise forced to), the Komei samurai make for the secret stream crossing (Area 4), screening Hirotooshi and the prince from attack. If Antuok has not been convinced, he will never be. Though Hirotooshi is easily swayed by any scheme that does not jeopardize the prince's life (Personality DC 10), regardless of whether it bruises his Imperial person.

Togashi Kiromori and his retinue emerge from the secret trail and cross the stream (Area 4) and likely come into direct conflict with the Komei samurai. If the Togashi secure Prince Antuok, all surviving members and Togashi Kiromori move as quickly as possible to the secret trail, under the waterfall, and down the mountain back to Arashi Fortress. See the Aftermath section for more information on tracking down the Togashi.

Naranbaatar uses his spells, as necessary, to reach the Temple of Zaiten and incapacitate (or kill if possible) Rikebo. After this, he uses his first opportunity to activate Nyoi-Jizai (see Magic Items) as close to the Shrine of Otohime as possible.

**NOTE:** Review the magic item entry for Nyoi-Jizai thoroughly, since its activation not only alters the course of the battle, but may also destroy many combatants.

If Rikebo completes the ritual and retrieves the temple treasury, the abbot moves to the Dead House (Area 3) and escapes through the secret tunnels.

## MASS BATTLE

In order to handle numerous NPC combatants, the Judge is forced to short-hand some of the combat. Consider this system, unless you have a more fluid and quick system to resolve such things.

## NPCs IN COMBAT

The table below indicates the Action Dice, loss of combatants for a success or failure, a Reflex DC for the volley of arrows each round, and special conditions. NPCs that act as characters do not engage the masses (i.e. Togashi Kiromori does not rush the gaggle of monks on the bridge), since they have specific aims once the battle is joined. They are, however, subject to the ashigaru volley each round.

Each round of combat between NPCs, roll the Action Die and apply any combat modifiers. The high roll is successful and takes the losses indicated. The low roll is a failure and, likewise, take the indicated losses. If the roll is tied, both groups are considered the losers. See the Volley section on how to handle the ashigaru volley each round.

Any NPC listed as “played as character,” uses the standard rules for combat.

## THE ARCHERS AND THE SPEARMEN

The ashigaru archers fire arrow volleys each round at concentrations of combatants. The Judge should select a general area where the volley lands, which may shift each round. NPC groups in the area that fail the Volley save (Reflex), lose 1d3 combatants per volley (friend or foe). NPCs that act as characters lose 1d6 hit points if they fail their Volley save. For 0-level PCs, the player makes a Luck check using the highest Luck of his or her remaining characters. On a success, the characters have avoided taking arrows. On a failure, one PC of the player’s choosing (in the area) takes an arrow and 1d6 damage on a failed Volley Save. On a natural 1 on the Luck check, the volley was completely off target and no

COMBAT GROUP	ACTION DIE	LOSSES (SUCCESSES)	LOSSES (FAILURE)	VOLLEY DC	SPECIAL
Ashigaru Spearmen	d12	1d3	1d4	13	Do not break formation
Monks	d10	1d3	1d4	13	Fight to the death
Ashigaru Archers	d10*	1d4*	1d6*	N/A	Do not break formation
Togashi Samurai	d14	0	1**	10	Normal combat with PCs
Komei Samurai	d14	0	1**	10	Defend Hirotooshi
Zinga Sohei	d20	0	1**	8	Defend Shrine
Antuok	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	Played as character
Togashi Kiromori	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	Played as character
Komei Hirotooshi	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	Played as character
Naranbaatar	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	Played as character
Rikebo	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	Played as character
Clockwork Samurai	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	Played as monster

\* If by some miracle, the mass of monks fight their way through the spearmen and to the archers, these are the archers’ mass combat statistics. Otherwise, they maintain formation and fire their volleys of arrows each round. \*\* These NPCs fight as normal combat when battling the PCs, otherwise, they use mass combat rules. If a Zinga sohei or a Komei samurai is indicated killed, see the stat block for these NPCs. Both can fight beyond death each round with a successful Will save.

characters (from any player's group in the area) were targeted. On a natural 20, the player must choose two characters to make a Volley Save.

If the PCs charge the ashigaru spearmen, they deserve their fate. At any given point along the line of attack, a single character is attacked 1d6+2 times per round taking spear damage with each successful attack.

### NYOI-JIZAI AND THE URGIL PRIEST

At some point, Naranbaatar makes his way as close to the Shrine of Otohime as possible and activates Nyoi-Jizai. If the priest activates this relic, those within a 10' radius of it must make the requisite Reflex save or suffer fatal consequences. All others may be knocked prone by the short earthquake that the artifact causes (see Appendix M for details).

### AFTERMATH

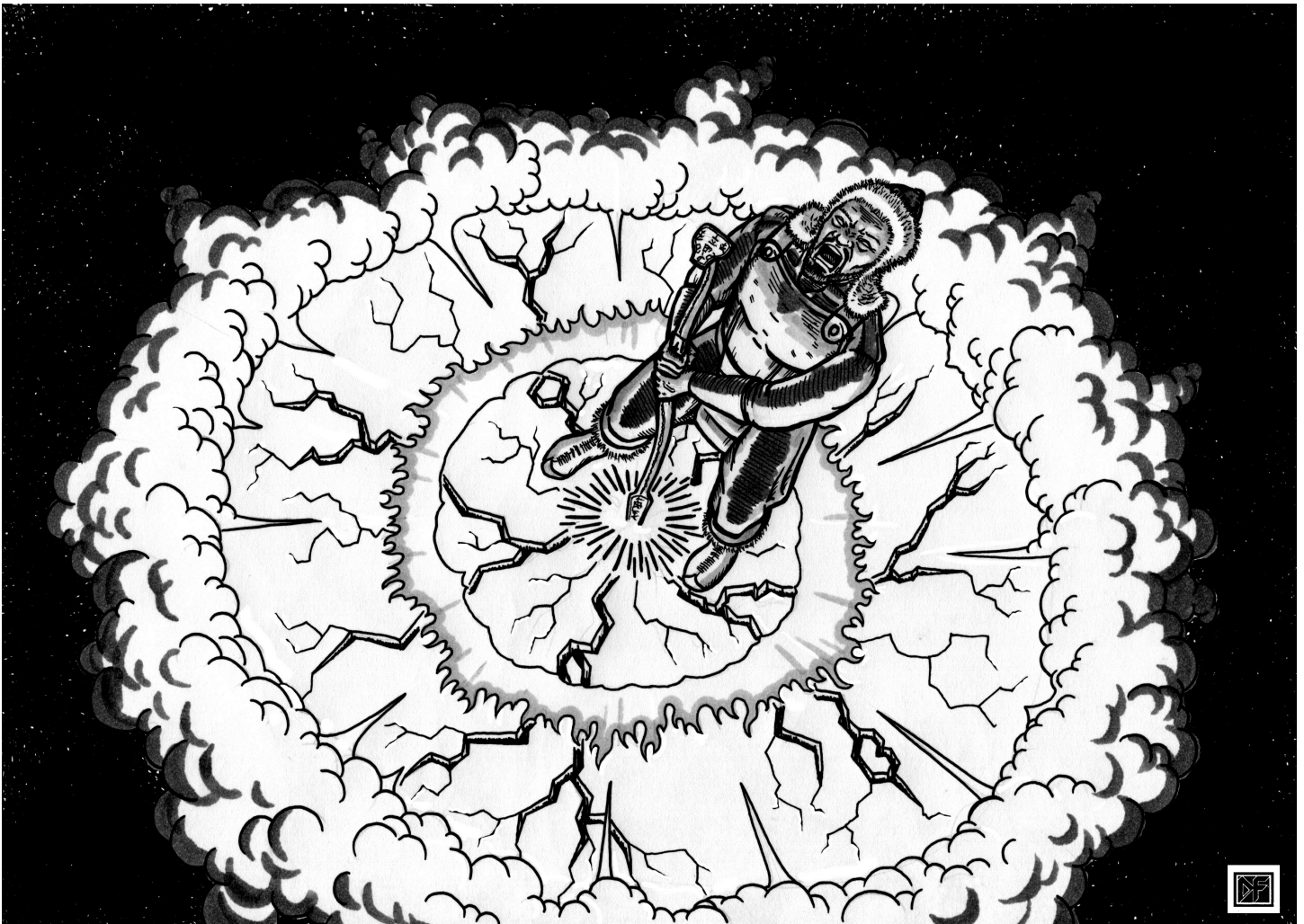
The expected outcome is that the Togashi defeat the defenders of the temple. It is basically a race against time for the PCs to survive long enough to achieve their goals (even if it's to just survive and escape).

After the monks and Zinga are defeated or have quit the field, the Togashi kill the wounded and burn all structures, with the exception of the Temple of Zaiten, to the ground.

## MIDORA TEMPLE MAP KEY

**Area 1 - The Temple of Zaiten** The temple is a large pillared pavilion with an upswept roof of wood and clay tiles. Those with sufficient knowledge of the sect examining the iconography and statuary around and upon the temple see that Zaiten's symbology has been removed or defaced and replaced with those of the Suizei priesthood. The symbols and statues all indicate protection, as if a magic circle surrounded the place.

A 25' tall statue of a heavily robed woman stands on a marble base in the center of the pavilion. Though the statue is stone, its surface is covered in yellowing ivory pitted with age. It is clear that the



statue and the temple have only received a modicum of care over the hundreds of years they have stood here.

Under the left foot of the statue is a secret door (DC 13) that opens into a crawlspace just large enough for one person. The space contains a sack holding the temple's treasury: 2,522 sp, 866 gp, a rusted and broken tachi sword (marked as a relic of the cult of Zaiten – DC 10) and three polished, but uncut rubies (500 gp each).

**NOTE:** Stealing from the temple is considered a major sin. 0-level characters must make a Will save (DC 20) each day, or suffer a -1d to all d20 rolls. Should one or more of these characters level up to Suizei priests (clerics), they suffer immediate deity disapproval if the treasury is still in the party (roll 5d4 on the Deity Disapproval table in the core rulebook). This disapproval cannot be removed until the treasury is either returned to Rikebo or should that be impossible, turned over to an abbot of a Suizei temple. For recovering the relic of Zaiten and returning it to an active temple or shrine dedicated to that goddess, a character receives a Luck point.

**Area 2 – The Abbot's Hut:** This grass hut contains a bedroll, brazier, and chamber pot. Under the bedroll is an antique set of prayer beads (+2 to Turn Unholy checks).

**Area 3 – The Dead House:** Once a crypt for the cult of Zaiten, the building was destroyed hundreds of years ago when the Suizei attacked and seized the temple. A carving of Yengo, an Urgil spider god said to be a guide for the dead, is etched into one of the tumbledown walls. A priest character may know its lore (Intelligence DC 12).

A secret trap door in the center of the ruined building leads to the crypts and escape tunnels below. Only the Zinga sohei and Rikebo know of the door's existence, though on a successful Luck check one of the other monks has heard a rumor, though not its exact location. Searching the Dead House reveals the trap door on a successful Luck check, though this takes 1 turn to complete.

**NOTE:** If Rikebo successfully recovered the temple treasury and escaped, he has left this trap door open. The escape tunnels are detailed in the forthcoming adventure *Blessed of the Demon Herald*.

**Area 4 – Secret Stream Crossing:** Three submerged stones lie just under the surface of the Quick Stream. Only Rikebo and the Zinga know of their existence, though they can be found by searching (DC 18). Crossing the slick stones requires an Agility check (DC 12) or the unlucky person falls into the stream (see Area 10).

**NOTE:** Togashi Kiromori and his retinue lurk on the southern trail under the waterfall until the ashigaru begin their attack. They use the stones to cross behind the monk's lines at the bridge.

**Area 5 – The Strong Bridge:** The Strong Bridge spans the quickly flowing stream and is 12' wide. The bridge is 500 years old and is intricately carved, painted, and surprisingly well maintained. Those defending the bridge receive a +1 to their combat checks (see the table on page 35).

**Area 6 – The Monk's Huts:** A collection of wooden and grass thatch huts, each masterfully constructed, cluster around the northwestern end of Strong Bridge. Each hut contains 1d3 items from the equipment list in the core rulebook.

**Area 7 – The Lower Secret Trail:** This trail dives into a deep ravine before climbing back to an undercut next to the main trail after half a mile. The trail eventually ends up at the shores of Hyoishi Lake (See Aftermath).

**Area 8 – The Shrine of Otohime:** This small pillared pavilion stands on a rocky island in the middle of an unfathomable pool. A narrow, intricately carved bridge (the Small Bridge) arcs from the shore to the island. Those holding the bridge against attack receive a +2 to their combat rolls (see the table on page 35).

Within the pavilion stands a 20' tall twisting alabaster statue of a dragon with the face of a young woman. In one claw, the statue clutches a chunk of rose quartz the size of a goose egg. Anyone touching this stone must make a Will save (DC 18) or be teleported 100' below into the unfathomable pool (Area 9).

**NOTE:** If Naranbaatar successfully activates Nyoi-Jizai, the statue of Otohime is traced with thousands of minute cracks. If the quartz stone is touched it falls and shatters on the ground. Even though the Urgil artifact is powerful, the true jewel is not revealed.

The ritual that Rikebo imparts on one of the characters requires 1d4+1 rounds of chanting and concentration. At the end of this time, the caster makes a Spell Check (DC 10). On a success, the alabaster statue melts away revealing the true Jewel of Ebb Tides – a plain grey magatama (or “comma-shaped” stone) carved with the symbol of Otohime, Daughter of the Guardian Dragon of the Sea (see Appendix M).

**Area 9 – The Unfathomable Pool:** This pool of icy, clear water is believed by the monks of Midora Temple to be bottomless. At some juncture deep below the earth, their stories go, a swimmer that survives the dive passes into the hellish realm of the demon goddess, Zaiten, Dragon of the West. Each dark of moon, the monks secretly drop silver coins into the pool in order to distract the demon goddess from reaching this world.

Those that are transported into the pool by the false Kanju jewel (see Area 8) discover that the pool is in fact not bottomless, for the bottom is here and heaped with thousands of silver coins. The crushing weight of the water immediately deals 1d6 damage per round, however, those that find themselves in this predicament may make an immediate Luck check (**NOTE:** Tokaru characters automatically succeed at this check). If successful, the giant octopus-like yokai, Akkorokamui unfolds from the rocky sides of the pool. Though the creature is a tentacled monstrosity with wildly glowing patterns running across its skin, it is a kind-hearted yokai. It immediately casts an enchantment on the unfortunate swimmer which heals all damage and allows him or her to breathe water for 1d5+2 rounds. The swimmer, if he or she wishes, may make for the surface at a rate of 10 feet plus the results of a Strength check each round. If the enchantment ends before the swimmer reaches the



surface, he or she may continue to swim at the same speed with a successful Fortitude save (DC 10+1 per round of swimming). On a failure, the swimmer begins to drown, taking 1d4 damage per round and swims at half speed.

Those that survive the ordeal are blessed by Akkorokamui (see Appendix M).

**Area 10 – Quick Stream:** The stream that emerges from the unfathomable pool is 8’ deep, 30’ wide and runs very quickly. Those attempting to swim it must make a Strength check (DC 13) or be swept 1d6x10 feet per round toward the waterfall. The current is much slower at the southern end of the stream, requiring only a DC 10 Strength check to avoid going over the falls. The waterfall drops 30’ to a wide pool at the head of a slow river that snakes down the mountain and into Hyoishi Lake. Those that are drawn over the waterfall must make a Reflex save (DC 13) or suffer 3d4 damage. Success indicates that the victim managed to dive into the pool, avoiding all damage.

## A PPENDIX A: FTERMATH

With so many conflicting aims and chaotic events, the following outcomes should be altered as needed by the Judge. The characters may end up in the following entanglements.

**NOTE:** Regardless of the outcomes, should the characters escape from the mountain, all know that Yoishi-mura is a village in the nearby Arashi River Valley and, though situated on Togashi lands, is friendly to the Torai sect and, to a certain degree, to the Komei clan. Yoishi-mura and the Arashi River Valley are detailed in a future Ketsuin Empire supplement.

### ENEMIES OF THE STATE

In the event that the party escapes from the mountain, regardless of other outcomes, the secret trails that exit the mountain are patrolled and guarded at various points by Togashi samurai. If Rikebo is in the party, he may know ways to avoid guard posts and patrols in order to reach the safety of Hyoishi Shrine far to the north or the relative safety of the Arashi River Valley and Yoishi-mura.

Patrols encountered contain 1d7+1 Togashi ashigaru, led by 1d3 Togashi samurai mounted on horses.

Those obviously aligned with the Komei clan, the Torai sect, or otherwise known to have fought against the Togashi are hunted vigorously. Consider a 1 in 5 chance per day (for 1d30 days) of having an encounter with a Togashi samurai patrol lead by a *yoiki* (samurai investigator) searching for the wanted PCs. After this time, the search seems to die down, though the Judge is encouraged to use such encounters to hook/nudge the party into further adventures.

### CHOSEN BY THE DRAGON PRINCESS

If Kanju is recovered by the PCs, they have taken a step from their mundane lives into a complicated and perilous spiritual war that is burgeoning on the Ketsuin Islands. The bearer of the jewel is immediately a blessed servant of Otohime (see Appendix M), a relationship that is not unlike a wizard to his or her patron. The Judge should consider using visions and other arcane promptings to provide further adventure hooks, including the immediate need to secure the spirit prison in the secret escape tunnels (see *Blessed of the Demon Herald*).

If the jewel fell into the hands of Naranbaatar, the situation is much more complicated. The Urgil priest escapes the mountain in the chaos and makes his way back to Arashi Fortress via one of the secret trails. Further adventures involving the Urgil priest and the jewel are in the hands of the Judge. As a guide, it takes the priest about half a day to reach the safety of the fortress – those that pursue him should not have much of a problem tracking him down before that, though see *Enemies of the State* for additional complications.

### THE PRINCE THAT DISINHERITED HIMSELF

If Prince Antuok is secured and removed from danger, he rewards the PCs for saving him. It is up to the Judge what this entails. Characters of the gentry caste may be “promoted” to samurai, while others become trusted servants and retainers. The prince’s immediate plans are subject to other factors (such as the state of the Jewel of Ebb Tides).

Still a devoted believer in the power of Otohime, he will defer to the bearer of the jewel and the promptings of its mistress, Otohime. If any of the Zinga survived, they likewise defer to the bearer of the jewel. The remaining Komei samurai, especially Hirotooshi, reluctantly agree to follow their prince, though they persuade the party to head to the capital, as it was their duty to escort the prince there.

If Antuok did not survive the assault, the Komei samurai including Hirotooshi, cannot bear the dishonor, and immediately send a messenger to the capital with the news and with a request to commit seppuku. It is up to the Judge how the PCs can become entangled in such actions.

The prince in the hands of the Togashi complicates the situation considerably. Any surviving Komei samurai insist on following the Togashi and recovering the prince by any means necessary. Similar to the Urgil priest's path, above, the captors move down the mountain via a secret trail, arriving at Arashi Fortress in about half a day. Again, additional adventures to recover the prince are left up to the Judge.

Overall, the political situation deteriorates rapidly in the area. The Togashi ruthlessly hunt for Prince Antuok and anyone associated with him or the Komei samurai (see *Enemies of the State*, for additional information that might affect the PCs).

## ESCAPE TUNNELS OF THE DEMON

### HERALD

A second connected adventure, *Blessed of the Demon Herald*, details the escape tunnels and the secret prison of Zaiten's herald, the demon Amanozako.

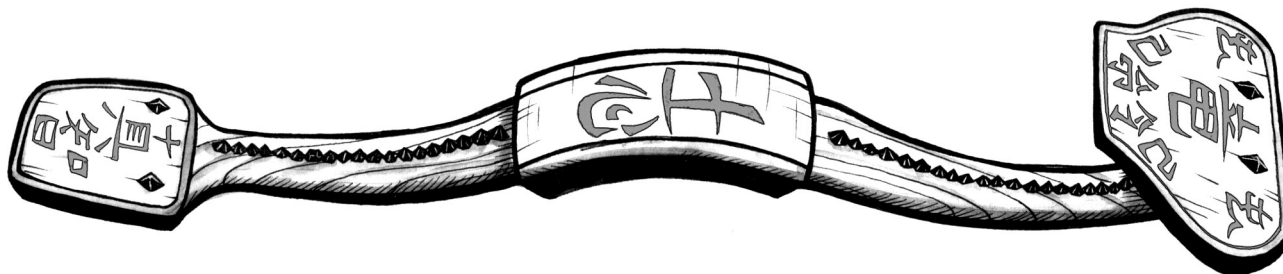
# A PPENDIX M: MAGIC

## NYOI-JIZAI

Nyoi-Jizai is an artifact created by a sorcerer of the ancient Panian people and discovered in a tomb on the remote jungle island of Praeder by the Urgil cleric Naranbaatar. Devoted to both the outcast saints of the Zharanthian faith, and Elat, the Shadowed Face specifically, Naranbaatar has long sought knowledge and power from the old gods of his heritage. The most powerful of those old gods was Zaiten, a great dragon goddess, called *Ebrek* by the Urgil people. She was believed to have been captured and imprisoned by the Guardian Dragons of the Ketsuin Empire hundreds of years ago after a failed Urgil invasion of the empire. Naranbaatar has brought Nyoi-Jizai to Ketsuin intent on freeing this powerful goddess from her imprisonment and bringing her back to prominence, though his intentions are purely selfish. The Urgil priest believes that he can personally harness the power derived from such a shift in the Upper World.

Nyoi-Jizai is a short, curved staff about 4' long with broad, twisting heads on either end. Strips of ruby are inlaid along the length of the bloodwood staff and the heads are traced in glittering golden symbols.

The artifact is activated through a short prayer to the old gods of the Urgil (contained in the golden symbols and readable with a *read magic* or *comprehend languages* spell) and is then thrust into the earth. Once done, a shockwave of invisible force explodes out from this center, shattering magical bonds as a *dispel magic* spell. The effect specifically dispels magic that imprisons, binds, locks or otherwise holds secret any object or space in a ¼ mile radius sphere. Physical objects within 10' of the staff, once activated, are blown apart, including



the ground under the artifact (a point that is unknown to the Urgil priest likely to activate it). Those within this radius must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take 12d6 damage. On a successful save, the subject has avoided all damage. The person activating Nyoi-Jizai automatically fails this saving throw (something the Urgil priest doesn't know!).

Other than the magical effects, the release of this energy causes a short, but violent earthquake localized to the ¼ mile radius of its effect. All within the affected area must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or fall prone. The effect lasts for 1d6 rounds. Additional effects on structures in the area are left up to the Judge.

In the context of this adventure, the effect of Nyoi-Jizai cracks the statue of Otohime in her shrine, though does not release the true Jewel of Ebb Tides, shatters the false jewel (see Area 8) and destroys certain enchantments in place within the escape tunnels under the Dead House (see Area 3 and the connected adventure *Blessed of the Demon Herald*).

Once used, Nyoi-Jizai remains inert. Certain sages and arcane lore suggest that the artifact can be charged with magical energy through a complex (and poorly understood) ritual of sacrifice at points along a dimensional continuum. These details are left to the Judge.

## KANJU, THE JEWEL OF EBB TIDES

Kanju is a powerful artifact created by Otohime, the daughter of the Guardian Dragon of the Sea. A rumored second artifact, created by her sister Tamayori, can be used in conjunction with the Jewel of Ebb Tides.

Kanju is a stone magatama, rounded and smooth as if from a river and about the size of a goose egg. Upon its face is etched the

symbol of Otohime. The jewel, through the power of the dragon goddess, allows the caster to control bodies of water.

The caster must stand in the body of water to be controlled and spellburn at least 10 points of ability damage. Only half of this sacrifice is added to the subsequent spell check, though the caster and anyone touching the stone can spellburn more points to add to the check. Use of Kanju is dangerous; failures and misuse are subject to corruption and the dragon goddess' wrath.



## KANJU, THE JEWEL OF EBB TIDES

**Range:** Body of Water **Duration:** 1 hour/CL **Casting Time:** 1 turn **Save:** None

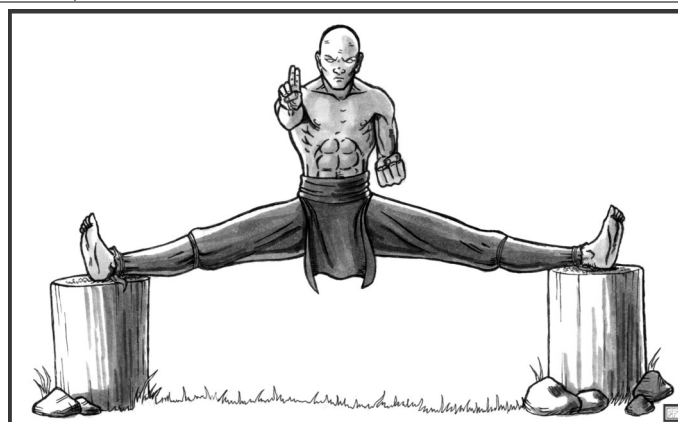
Manifestation	Roll 1d4: (1) Tsuki, the largest of the moons, suddenly appears in the sky for the duration of the effect (2) A shrieking wind emanating from the caster rolls out in a given radius (3) The ghostly form of Otohime rises from the body of water or appears nearby. (4) The sound of drums and flutes rises from all around the caster.
SPELL CHECK	RESULT
1	Failure and Artifact Corruption. <b>NOTE:</b> If others spellburned to boost the spell check, the character(s) that did so also receive artifact corruption.
2-13	Failure. The caster must make a Will save DC 15 or lose the ability to use the Jewel of Tides unless a sufficient sacrifice is made to Otohime. See the Supplication entry in the Artifact Corruption Table, opposite page.
14-17	The caster causes a body of water to lower 1d10+CL feet. This is a localized effect in a 150' radius.
18-19	As above, but the caster can control the level of the water for the duration of the spell by concentrating for 1 round, but cannot raise the water above its original depth.
20-23	The caster causes a body of water to lower by (1d6+CL)x10 feet. This is a localized effect in a 250' radius.
24-27	As above, but the caster can control the level of the water and walk upon it as if it were solid ground.
28-29	As above, but the caster can cause riptides and currents strong enough to shatter ships, drown men, and smash down small structures in 1/4 mile radius.
30-31	The caster can lower water by (1d6+CL)x100 feet. This is a localized effect in a 1/2 mile radius. For the duration, the level of the water can be controlled, though not raised above its original depth.
32+	The caster can command any body of water to lower to any depth. This is a localized effect in a 2 mile radius. The caster may create a column of water (1d6+CL)x100 feet high and move it at 100' per round, controlling the height and speed of the column at will. Columns of water may be used to destroy ships and structures near the water. The caster may also travel on this water column.



## CORRUPTION OF TIDES

Those that misuse the Jewel of Ebb Tides draw the attention and ire of Otohime, the Dragon Goddess of the Sea. If artifact corruption is indicated, the caster and anyone that either spellburned or burned Luck on behalf of the caster rolls a 1d6 modified by Luck. A positive modifier subtracts from the roll, while a negative modifier adds to the roll. Quests imparted by the corruption are left up to the Judge, but should entail weeks of travel and could comprise defeat of a major enemy or enemies of the Guardian Dragons, recovery or destruction of major artifacts, or other perilous tasks.

ARTIFACT CORRUPTION		
Roll 1d6 +/- Luck Modifier	Effect	Cure
Less than 2	Supplication	The caster cannot use the Jewel of Tides until $(1d6+CL) \times 100$ gp value is sacrificed to the sea.
3	Immersion	Each day, the caster must immerse in a body of salt water until Stamina is reduced to 1 point -- Half of the Stamina recovers when the caster is drawn out of the water. This must continue for $1+CL$ days. After this ritual, the caster must make a Spell Check (DC 12) or lose the ability to use the Jewel of Ebb Tides until a major quest is undertaken.
4	Ordeal	The caster develops an allergy to water; foregoing water until dropping to 1 hit point from dehydration. The caster then consumes enough water to maintain 1 hp for 30 days. At the end of this time, the caster makes a Spell Check (DC 15) or loses the ability to use the Jewel of Ebb Tides until a major quest is undertaken.
5	Meditation	The caster must be immersed in water for 8 hours per day for the next $1d30+CL$ days. During this period, the caster sinks into a meditative fugue and can breathe water, but is unable to rest/recover spells. At the end of this time, the caster must make a Spell Check (DC 18) or lose the ability to use the Jewel of Ebb Tides until a major quest is undertaken.
6+	Marked	The caster is marked as an enemy of the Guardian Dragons. A physical mark is burned onto the surface of the caster's skin, like a patterned tattoo. The caster is harried by the servants of the Guardian Dragons until they recover the jewel or the caster successfully completes a major quest for the Guardian Dragons.



## BLESSINGS OF THE KAMI

The Ketsuin Empire campaign introduces a system of blessings and invocations that are bestowed by powerful kami found on the islands, similar to *patron bond* and *invoke patron* spells.

Blessings are often bestowed on a subject against their will representing the capricious natures of kami. Unwilling recipients must make a Will save (DC 18) to resist. Willing subjects may automatically fail this roll. Either way, a blessed subject must then make the equivalent of a spell check to determine the level of the blessing. Blessings are permanent unless otherwise removed via a *remove curse*, *exorcise* or similar magic.

Spellcasters make a standard spell check, while all others roll a d16+Personality modifier. Any such

petitioner may spellburn to add to this roll. Any result above a natural 1 is considered a success, and the subject is physically marked in some way identifying him or her as a servant of the kami.

### INVOKE THE NAME

Invoking the Name of a kami provides the direct assistance of a powerful spirit, but may have physical and spiritual costs to the invoker. Each kami is different in the assistance it provides, and the costs it exacts.

Invoking the Name requires a standard spell check (modified as the result of the original blessing) and 1 round of uninterrupted ritual casting. Non-spellcasters roll a d16+Personality bonus for this check. All who can Invoke the Name may spellburn ANY ability score to modify the roll.

BLESSING RESULTS	
SPELL CHECK	RESULT
1	Failure. The kami has seen into the heart of the subject and found him or her wanting. If the subject performs some other service worthy of the kami, he or she may attempt to become blessed again.
2-11	The petitioner is barely more than a regular worshipper. Once per year, the subject can Invoke
12-17	The caster can Invoke the Name of the kami once per month at no penalty.
18-23	As above, but the caster can Invoke the Name of the kami at +2 to the roll.
24-29	As above, but the caster can Invoke the Name of the kami at +1d on the roll.
30+	The subject is considered a scion of the kami. As 24-29 above, but the caster can Invoke the Name of the kami at +2d on the roll once each week. The caster can attempt invocations more frequently at -3d.

## LOOKING FOR MORE?

We have it! Check out the Mystic Bull website for a 0-level character table, equipment, and information on the ongoing campaign ([www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com))



## BLESSED OF THE DRAGON PRINCESS

Those that take up the Jewel of Tides are blessed by Otohime while they continue to serve her interests. While under this effect, the character's hair and eyes turn pure white. Those that subsequently fail to serve the kami or actively resist her will find that the blessing is revoked (see result 1 on the Blessing Results table in the Blessings of the Kami section).

In order to Invoke the Name of Otohime, the invoker must spend a round scribing the symbols of the Dragon Princess onto a strip of parchment. The brush, ink and paper must be purchased from a shrine dedicated to Otohime (150gp per invocation). Lesser materials may be used in a pinch (even a stick drawing in the mud), however, the invoker suffers a -1d to the invocation roll. Finally, anyone that invokes Otohime must spend a full day in purification at one of her many shrines before she can again be invoked.

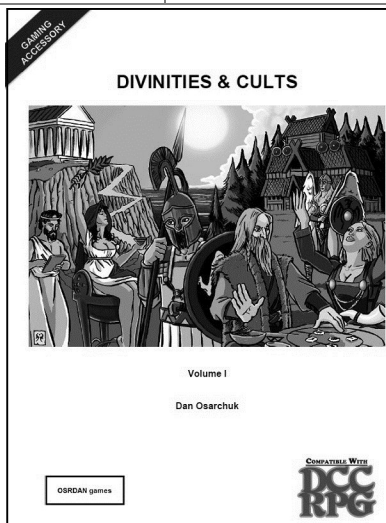
Invoke the Name: Otohime 乙姫	
SPELL CHECK	RESULT
1	The Dragon Princess fills the petitioner's stomach with salt water. He or she must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or spend 1d3 days completely debilitated. After this time, the petitioner makes a Will save (DC 13) or loses 1 Stamina, permanently. Those that succeed at both saves receive a +2 to Invoke the Name, permanently (this is not a cumulative bonus).
2-11	The power to invoke the name is lost for 2d3 days. This time can be reduced by 1 day, to a minimum of 1 day, for every 50gp of valuables sacrificed to the sea.
12-13	Salt water gushes from the invoker's mouth onto a wound, healing 1d4+CL hit points.
14-17	A thick bubble of water surrounds the caster, deflecting non-magical missiles and providing the invoker with a +4 to AC and +2 to Reflex saves. The effect lasts for 1d4+CL rounds.
18-19	The caster can breathe water and move at his or her normal speed when immersed. This effect lasts for 1+CL hours.
20-23	A thick bubble of salt water surrounds 1d3+CL enemies. The bubbles prevent movement, though each opponent may make a Fortitude save (DC = Spell check) to exit the bubble. Kami, yokai, and other spirit creatures suffer -1d to the roll. The effect lasts for 2d4+CL rounds.
24-27	As 12-13 above, but the effect cures diseases and poisons, allows a second saving throw for curses or other enchantments (such as <i>Charm Person</i> ), and heals 2d4+CL hit points.
28-29	A deluge of salt water gushes from the invoker's mouth in a cone-shaped wave 60' long and 30' wide at its apex. Any spirit creatures caught in this wave must make a Will save (DC = Invoke Check) or be driven from the material world for 1d6+CL days. All others that fail the save are knocked prone and pushed back (1d6+CL) x 10 feet.
30-31	As 24-27 above, but the healing waters remove curses and other enchantments, restore lost ability points (even permanent loss) and completely heal the subject.
32+	The invoker is a scion of the Dragon Princess. The invoker can reproduce any effect listed here for 2d4+CL rounds. In addition, the invoker can attack targets up to a mile away with a column of water causing 3d6+CL damage.



## BLESSED OF THE TENTACULATED KAMI

If character was saved by Akkorokamui (and survived the ordeal – see Area 8), that character is blessed by the strange kami. The skin of the subject's arms and legs are marked with luminescent stripes and swirls, considered holy by the various tokaru tribes found on the islands. The kami requires a sacrifice of fish, crabs and other water creatures each time she is invoked. In the continuum of kami and yokai upon the Ketsuin Islands, Akkorokamui is considered unaligned with any of them and has no known aims.

Invoke the Name: Akkorokamui	
SPELL CHECK	RESULT
1	Mouse-sized jellyfish swarm from the spirit world and cover the petitioner in painful stinging welts. The petitioner must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or lose 1 Strength, permanently. On a successful save, the petitioner is nauseated and disoriented for 1d4 turns (-1d to all rolls).
2-11	The power to invoke the name is lost for 1d20 days. The time can be reduced by 1 day, to a minimum of 1 day, by sacrificing 50gp worth of fish into any natural body of water (pool, stream, ocean, etc.). A mass of luminous tentacles emerge from the water to accept the sacrifice.
12-13	The invoker is coated in a translucent slime that color shifts to match his or her surroundings. The invoker adds +10 to checks related to hiding when the subject remains perfectly still and +5 to such checks when moving at half speed.
14-17	The petitioner is coated in a foul smelling and luminous slime for 1d6 turns. The magical substance protects the invoker from stings, injected poisons, and other physical attacks that cause physical debilitation (such as paralysis). Damage from electrical attacks is reduced by 1 die type and the invoker receives a +1d to the saving throw for such attacks.
18-19	The invoker regurgitates a foul smelling and luminous slime onto a wound. This slime heals 2d4+CL hit points, restores 1d3 lost Ability points, or regrows lost limbs (this could include repairing eyes that were blinded by physical attacks, poison, or the like; ears that were deafened, etc.) <b>NOTE:</b> Only one of the effects may be applied at any given time, and the process takes 1 turn to complete. During this time, the creature healed is nauseated (moves at half speed, -1d to all Action Dice)
20+	Though a weaker spirit than many, increasing Akkorokamui's power upon the temporal world may increase the power of those that invoke his name!

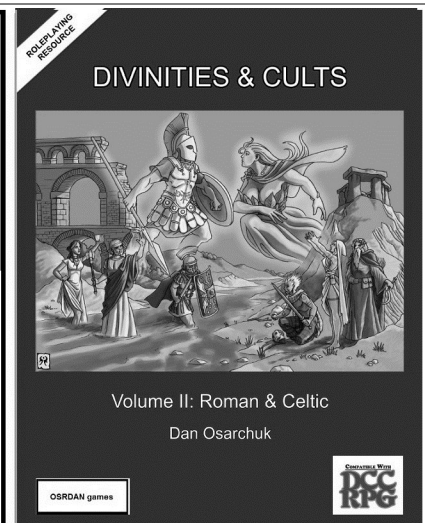


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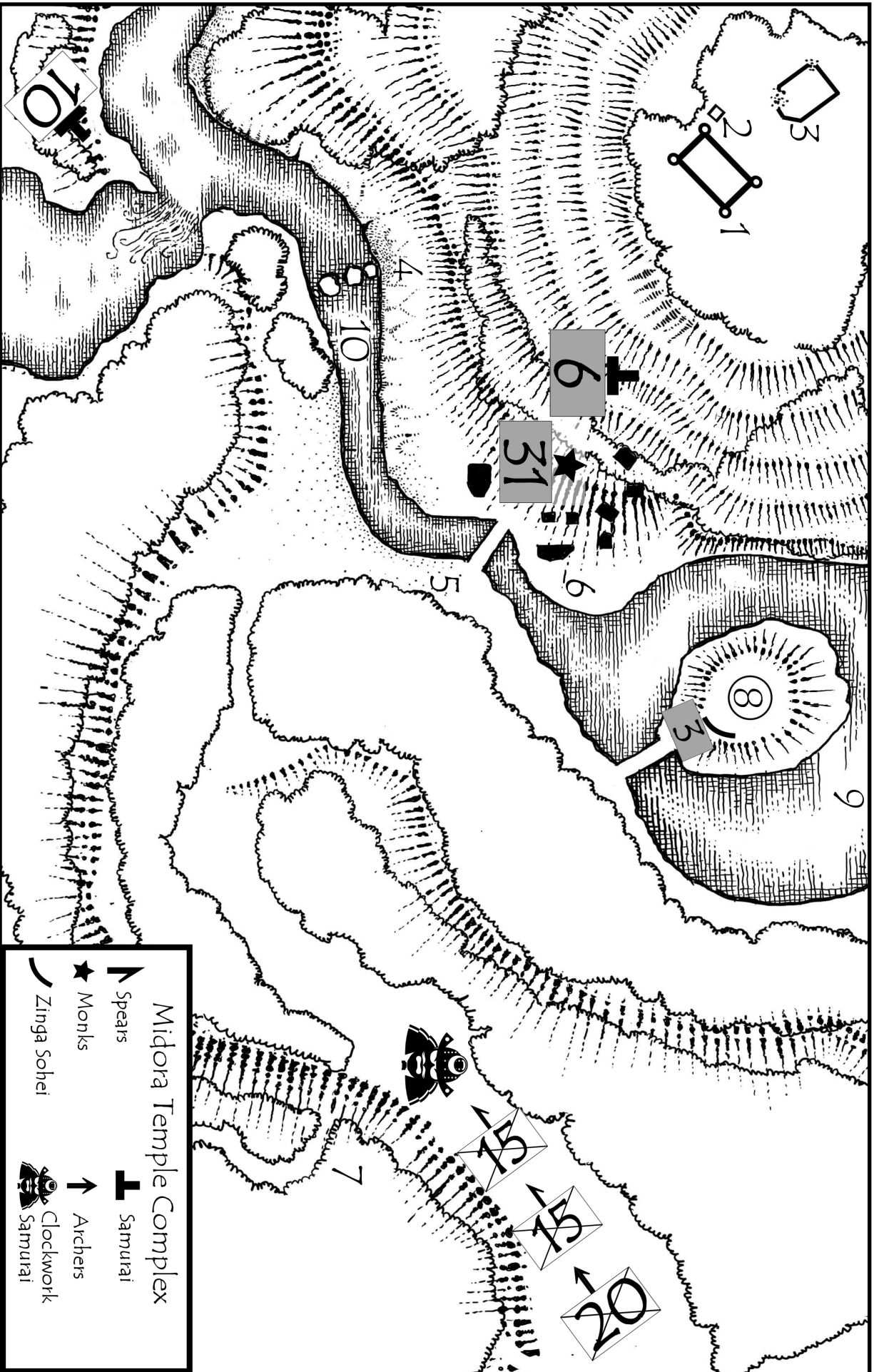
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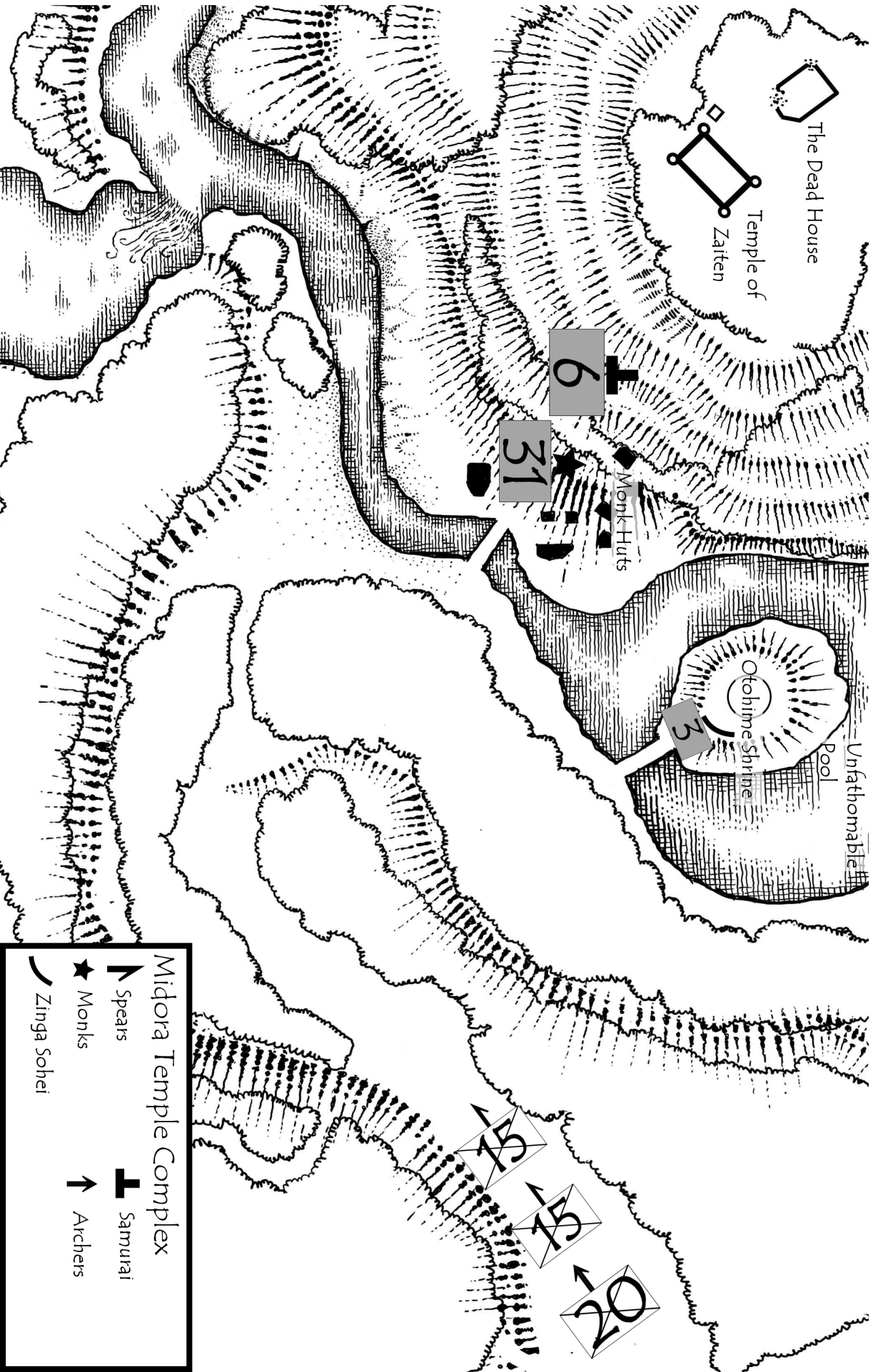
Stay tuned for the next adventure in the Ketsuin Empire: *Blessed of the Demon Herald*. Also, be sure to check out the D.A.M.N. Autumn 2017 Web Companion for 0-level tables, equipment, and general information about the Ketsuin Empire and other adventures in this issue.

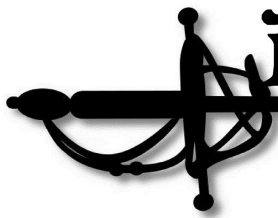


# DUEL AT MIDORA TEMPLE: JUDGE'S MAP



# DUEL AT MIDORA TEMPLE: PLAYER'S MAP





# Dashing Deeds Abound!

By James Spahn

## The Swashbuckler Class

You are a witty rogue, a reckless ne'er-do-well, a rascalion daredevil. With a lighting blade and a flashing smile, you deftly dance about your foe. Your precision swordsmanship and unshakable audacity serve you well where others would rely on a clumsy axe and a meaty fist. Style over substance, luck before skill, and above all it is done with the greatest of ease.

Swashbucklers combine lightning reflexes, keen swordsmanship, devilish charm, and sheer foolishness to dazzle and defeat their opponents with both sword and style. They are not as stealthy as thieves, as heavily armed or armored as fighters, or as lucky as halflings. Instead, they combine elements of these professions to bring excitement and more than a bit of danger to the lives of their companions.

**Hit Points:** A swashbuckler gains 1d10 hit points each level.

**Weapon training:** A swashbuckler is trained in these weapons: club, dagger, longsword, short sword and staff. They forgo the use of almost all missile weapons and focus their training solely on the art of fencing. Because of their training and reliance on natural agility, they rarely wear heavy armor or use shields as it often impedes their movement and precision.

**Attack modifier:** Like warriors, swashbucklers do not receive a fixed attack modifier at each level. Instead they receive a randomized modifier known as their *dashing die* – though only when fighting with a dagger, longsword, or short sword, and only when fighting in melee. At 1st level this is a d3. The swashbuckler rolls this d3 on each attack roll and applies it to both his attack roll *and* damage roll. On one attack the die may give him a +1 to his attack roll and damage die. On his next attack it may give him a +3! The dashing die advances with the swashbuckler's level, climbing to d7 by 5th level, and then higher up to d10+4 at 10th level. The swashbuckler always makes a new roll with this die in each combat round. When the swashbuckler has multiple attacks at higher levels, the same dashing die applies to all attacks in the same combat round.

**Agile Duelist:** Swashbucklers add their Agility modifier *instead* of their Strength modifier to all attack and damage rolls when fighting in melee combat.

**Dashing Deeds of Daring:** Swashbucklers are nothing if not stylish. They leap through plate glass windows to make daring escapes, sweep maidens off their feet mid-duel to steal a kiss, and throw sharp insults at opponents just before a sudden riposte. Dashing Deeds of Daring are similar to a warrior's Mighty Deeds of Arms, with some differences described below.

Prior to making an attack with a dagger, longsword or short sword a swashbuckler can declare a Dashing Deed of Daring – or Daring for short. This Daring is dramatic and flashy melee maneuver appropriate to the context of the current combat – though not as broad in scope as a Mighty Deed of Arms. Pages 88 – 92 of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* core rulebook describe several Mighty Deeds of Arms. A swashbuckler may perform only Blinding Attacks, Disarming Attacks, Pushbacks, Trips and Throws, Defensive Maneuvers, or Signature Deeds when mimicking the effects of a Mighty Deed of Arms.

A Dashing Deed of Daring can also be any action which is associated with physical agility, acrobatics, or recklessness. When performing such an act, the swashbuckler may add their dashing die to any Agility checks made to perform such actions.

Finally, swashbucklers are known for their wit and charm. Whenever they attempt to seduce a being who would find their gender sexually attractive or attempt to insult someone, the swashbuckler may add their dashing die to any Personality checks made to perform such actions.

Regardless of how the Dashing Deed of Daring is used, it is modified by the swashbuckler's Armor Check Penalty.

**Fool's Luck:** Swashbucklers often survive impossible situations by sheer, dumb luck. A swashbuckler gains additional benefits when expending Luck, as follows:

First, the swashbuckler rolls a luck die when he expends a point of luck as indicated the table below. For each point of Luck expended, he rolls one die and applies that modifier to his roll. For example, a 2nd level swashbuckler who burns two points of Luck adds +2d4 to a d20 roll.

Second, unlike other classes, a swashbuckler recovers lost Luck to a limited extent. The swashbuckler's Luck score is restored each night by a number of points equal to one-half his level, rounded down. This means that a 2nd level Swashbuckler recovers a single point of Luck in this fashion. This process cannot take his Luck score past its initial maximum. A 1st level swashbuckler does not recover any Luck each night.

**Two-Weapon Fighting:** Swashbucklers are trained duelists, able to wield two weapons with ease. They

only gain these benefits when fighting with a longsword or short sword in their primary hand and a short sword or dagger in their off-hand.

A swashbuckler is always considered to have a minimum Agility of 16 when fighting with two weapons. This means he rolls -1 die for his first attack and second, based on the die chain (typically 1d16 for his first attack and 1d16 for his second).

If the swashbuckler has an Agility score higher than 16, he instead uses the normal two-weapon fighting rules for his Agility.

When fighting with two weapons, the swashbuckler only fumbles when both attack dice come up a 1.

**Uncanny Bastard:** As long as the swashbuckler is not surprised he may add both his Personality modifier and Luck modifier (if positive) as a bonus to his Armor Class.

**Action Die:** A swashbuckler uses his action dice for any normal activity, including attacks and skill checks.

SWASHBUCKLER							
LEVEL	ATTACK (DASHING DIE)	Crit Die/ Table	Action Die	Luck Die	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+d3*	1d12/III	1d20	d3	+1	+1	+0
2	+d4*	1d14/III	1d20	d4	+1	+1	+0
3	+d5*	1d16/IV	1d20	d5	+2	+1	+1
4	+d6*	1d20/IV	1d20	d6	+2	+2	+1
5	+d7*	1d24/V	1d20+1d14	d7	+3	+2	+1
6	+d8*	1d30/V	1d20+1d16	d8	+4	+2	+2
7	+d10*	1d30/V	1d20+1d20	d10	+4	+3	+2
8	+d12*	2d20/V	1d20+1d20	d12	+5	+3	+2
9	+d14*	2d20/V	1d20+1d20	d14	+5	+3	+3
10	+2d7*	2d20/V	1d20+1d20+1d14	d16	+6	+4	+3

\* A swashbuckler's attack modifier is rolled anew, according to the appropriate die, with each attack. The result modifies both attack and damage rolls.

SWASHBUCKLER TITLES			
LEVEL	LAWFUL	Chaotic	Neutral
1	Swordsman	Ruffian	Sellsword
2	Fencer	Blade	Errant
3	Duelist	Ne'er-do-Well	Cassanova
4	Hero	Rake	Daredevil
5	Blademaster	Desperado	Belted Knight

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Swashbucklers, musketeers, and rogues-all developed specialized weapons and armor to go with their flashy techniques. Any warrior or thief-style class can use the equipment listed below, though only swashbucklers can use the special qualities listed due to long training at fencing schools and duels with other ne'er-do-wells.

**Buff Coat** — The buff coat is a simple leather tunic with skirts favored by duelists for its lightness and protection against bladed weapons.

**Buckler** — This small shield mainly protects the duelist's hand. Swashbucklers can wielded the buckler in the same hand as any weapon their trained with. Though quicker to intersect incoming attacks, it can only effectively defend against one attack per round.

**Rapier** — A long, thin sword, the rapier is favored by swashbucklers for its quick and deadly strikes. When wielded by a swashbuckler, she may use both her Strength and Agility bonuses for attack and damage.

**Parrying Dagger** — Specifically constructed as an off-hand weapon, the parrying dagger is primarily used to deflect incoming blows. In the hands of a swashbuckler, it provides a +1 to AC in any round that the character doesn't attack with it.

NEW ARMOR						
ARMOR	AC BONUS	Check Penalty	Speed	Fumble Die	Cost	Special Quality
Buff Coat	+2	-	-	d6	25 gp	
Buckler, Shield	+1*	-	-	d6	8 gp	Can be wielded in the same hand as a weapon

\* Defends against one attack per round

NEW WEAPONS				
WEAPON	DAMAGE	Range	Cost	Special Quality
Rapier	1d6	-	15	Agility bonus to attack and damage
Parrying Dagger	1d3	10/20/30	5	+1 to AC when not used to attack







# NALFESHNEE

By David Persinger

# LORD OF PIGS

Lord Nalfeshnee, King Nalfeshnee, the God of Gluttony, or the Master of Butchers. Knowledgeable in vivisection, consumption and hoarding, he is the progenitor and namesake of all Nalfeshnee demons. When the most gluttonous of mortals die, Lord Nalfeshnee inserts their souls into his own mutilated horrors, forming the lesser Nalfeshnee who guard hoarded masses of treasure and relics of chaotic power. He frequently makes deals with rapacious mortals, granting them a short life filled with worldly delights, fattening their souls for future servitude. Secret guilds of butchers who desire customers with an endless hunger serve him. Wizards may make pacts with Lord Nalfeshnee, exchanging access to chaotic forces, in exchange for shepherding wild chaos magic back for their master's consumption. Typically appearing as a morbidly obese, jaundiced humanoid with tattered bat's wings and head of a tusked boar, standing on four fattened pigs legs. The demon manifests in collective bodies of an entire sounder of swine, his voice echoing from the individual animals in an unholy chorus. For those to whom he is a patron, he may appear as an enormously fat, human butcher, wearing black, bloody rubber gloves and apron, with the head of a dead pig.

## INVOKE PATRON: LORD NALFESHNEE

SPELL CHECK	RESULT
12-13	Lord Nalfeshnee is busy with other matters, but creates a nimbus of unholy light around his devotee. Nauseating tendrils of light writhe around the caster's body, causing anyone within a 10 foot radius to succeed on a DC 21 Will save or be dazed for 1d3 rounds.
14-17	The Gluttonous One gives the caster a tiny, strong smelling pig fetus. If consumed, the fetus will remove any lingering effects of normal poisons or diseases and heal the eater for up to 3d6 points of damage. After 24 hours the fetus will rot away to dust.
18-19	The caster's weapon transforms into a large, two-handed meat cleaver. The cleaver adds +3 to attacks, and deals 1d10+3 damage. The caster has 1d4 rounds to draw fresh blood before the cleaver reverts back to its original form.
20-23	A giant ravenous mouth appears directly beneath the caster, swallowing everything within a 10' radius, including the caster. The mouth vanishes after 1 turn, reappearing up to 1d100xCL feet away in any direction, spilling the its contents. The mouth will not drop the caster over 20' from the ground or directly on a trap, but does not account for the presence of other hazards.
24-27	The caster transforms into a raging wereboar for 2d6 rounds.
28-29	The dead and parts of the dead from the current encounter converge into a Gore Golem. The golem gains 1 HD per CL + 1 HD per corpse used to create the creature. The golem dries out and falls apart after 1d4+CL hours.
30-31	The Lord of Swine transforms 2xCL HD worth of enemies into mindless hogs. The victims remain transformed for 1d6+CL hours.
32+	Lord Nalfeshnee touches the caster's eyes revealing the abyss of pure chaos and primal, magical secrets in the form of an enormous sow. The caster may drink chaotic energy from the teat of the sow, growing more magically proficient, but becoming more obese. Each round, the supplicant loses 1d3 Agility points due to increased obesity, but gains a wizard spell (determined randomly) in the form of a scroll (written within the fat gained from the sow). If the supplicant's Agility reaches 0, the soul explodes gorily from the body drifting to the eternal abyss. Each spell gained may be used once like a scroll. Once all obtained spells are used, the caster's body and Agility score return to normal.

## PATRON TAINT: LORD NALFESHNEE

When patron taint is indicated for **Lord Nalfeshnee** roll 1d6 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all six taints at all levels of effect, there is no need to continue rolling any more.

### ROLL RESULT

1	Pig Heat. The caster no longer has sweat glands and constantly pants to keep cool. If this result is rolled a second time, the caster must immerse in mud every 24 hours to prevent overheating (loss of 1d3 hp). The third time this result is rolled, the caster must make a Fort save in warm environments or suffer 1d3 hp loss per turn of active movement (Judge's discretion on conditions and DC for the save)
2	Meat Hunger. The caster finds cooked meat repugnant, preferring raw flesh. The second time this result is rolled, the caster can only digest raw meat — any other food induces intense nausea. The third time this result is rolled, the caster constantly craves raw flesh and must make a Will save (DC 13) when passing a dead animal. On a failure, the caster feasts for 1d3+CL rounds.
3	Hog Face. The caster's face gains a distinctly porcine shape — eyes shrink, nose upturns and chin fattens. The caster snorts and squeals while laughing. The second time this result is rolled, the caster's gains a definite snout, gains twelve more teeth — two of which become tusks that never stop growing, and a small coiled tail — though the caster can still pass for a severely deformed humanoid. The third time this result is rolled, the caster's head is completely transformed into that of a hog. The caster can still speak, though in the grunting, squealing accent of a pig. The caster gains +2 to scent-based perception checks.
4	Fetid Spells. Each time spell is cast, the stench of rotting meat and offal surrounds the caster. The second time this result is rolled, the caster is surrounded by the stench which grows so foul that the caster suffers a -1d to any social checks and dogs begin to follow the caster. The third time this result is rolled, the caster smells so bad that interacting with normal folk is impossible. Rats, flies, buzzards and other scavengers follow the caster at all times.
5	Porcine Shape. The caster gains weight over the course of a few days becoming morbidly obese, having trouble squeezing into tight places. The second time this result is rolled, the caster must eat a full day's ration after casting a spell, suffering a -1d to all actions each round food is not consumed. The third time this result is rolled, the caster must eat some food every hour — equal to three rations per day. For every hour that the caster fails to eat, Stamina is reduced by one. At zero Stamina, the caster sinks into a coma and dies in 1d3 turns.
6	Meat Storm. When the caster casts a spell, 1d3 pounds of raw meat drops from the air. The second time this result is rolled, meat drops from the sky when a spell is cast and 1d4 times randomly each day. If this result is rolled a third time, the meat is rotten and infested with worms.

### Where are the Spells?

This issue got out of control! We have an extensive web enhancement on the Mystic Bull Games website with Nalfeshnee's three spells, as well as a ton of other content. Go check it out at [www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com).



## SPELLBURN: LORD NALFESHNEE

Lord Nalfeshnee knows that in the Land of the Pig, the Butcher is King. The caster must humble himself, and acknowledge that he is but meat, kneeling before the Slaughterhouse at the edge of the Abyss. When a caster utilizes spellburn, roll 1d4 on the table below when a request is made. These ideas should hopefully give you room to expand in your own campaign.

### ROLL RESULT

<b>1</b>	Lord Nalfeshnee requires the caster to prove they are on the gluttonous path. The caster is stricken with agonizing hunger, and a 10 pound piglet appears. Following spellburn, the caster must immediately slaughter and completely gormandize the young hog or suffer an additional -4 Stamina, permanently.
<b>2</b>	Upon death, the devotee is expected to guard the Master's hoarded chaos energy as a Nalfeshnee demon for eternity. Granting his follower a taste of future damnation, Lord Nalfeshnee transports the caster to the edge of the Abyss, to guard the chaos for a year. At the end of the sentence, no time has passed in the mortal realm, though the caster has aged terribly (reflected in the lost attributes) and may have gone mad from the experience. The devotee must succeed a Will Save (DC 15) or suffer a -1d penalty to all future Will saves. On a success, the caster gains a +1d to future Will saves.
<b>3</b>	Lord Nalfeshnee has an appetite for all coveted things. The caster must swallow 10 gold pieces for every point of spellburn. These are vomited as pure chaotic energy, fueling the spell.
<b>4</b>	The caster painfully wretches, spewing forth a gelatinous sac containing a tiny piglet. To prove his ability to tend to forces of chaos, the caster must care for and raise this piglet for one month. At the end of the month, piglet must be sacrificed and devoured. If the piglet dies before the month is up, the caster suffers patron taint.

## PATRON SPELLS: LORD NALFESHNEE

Those with an appetite to bargain with the Master Butcher eventually learn three unique spells, as follows:

<b>Level 1</b>	Blood for Gold
<b>Level 2</b>	The Master Butcher's Mystical Meathooks
<b>Level 3</b>	Porcinnial Spirit Transference

## BEASTS OF NALFESHNEE

**Wereboar:** Init +2; AC 16; Atk +3 melee bite (2d4+4); HD 3d8+4; MV 40'; Act 2d16; SP Half damage from normal weapons, gore; SV Ref +3 Fort +4 Will +1; AL C

The wereboars of Nalfeshnee are obese humanoids with the slavering head of a wild boar. Course hair covers their bodies and they attack with their massive tusks. On a successful hit, the victim must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or the wereboar savages the wound for an additional 2d4+4 damage per round until the save is successful. Nalfeshnee's wereboars are immune to non-magical weapons and cold and only take half damage from non-magical fire. Weapons or other attacks blessed by a Lawful god deal double damage to the wild creatures.

**Gore Golem:** Init -2; AC 20; Atk up to +12 melee slam (2d6+2) or up to +12 ranged stream of offal (2d4+2; Fort save or nauseated); HD up to 10d10; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP Slow, Unnatural growth; SV Ref -2 Fort +12 Will +1; AL C

Gore golems are creatures spontaneously created from the dead and parts of the dead. When first summoned, the gore golem is humanoid sized (4 HD, +6 attacks). As it moves across areas where the dead lay, it grows unnaturally, adding a HD and +2 to attacks for each full body added to its bulk. NOTE: This includes foes defeated in combat! Though slow moving, the creature relentlessly pursues the living until it or they are destroyed. When it spits its foul stream of offal, the target and anyone within a 10' radius must make a Fortitude save (DC 8+ gore golem's HD) or suffer from intense nausea for 1d3 turns — unable to take actions other than moving at half speed. Gore golems, infused with the spirit of Nalfeshnee, can be turned by clerics of Lawful or Neutral powers.

# Attack of the Frozen Führer



By Julian Bernick

## WHAT IS NOWHERE CITY NIGHTS?

Nowhere City Nights is a 21<sup>st</sup> century occult noir setting for DCC RPG. This setting book is available where all fine third party DCC products are sold! It contains details on the city, the factions and three new patrons, including the Weeper and Scutigera, who are referenced in this adventure.

If you want to play the game without Nowhere City Nights, use the firearms rules from Crawl Magazine or Crawling Under a Broken Moon or others. Replace Poor Knights with Warriors, Free Agents with Thieves and Sorcerers with Wizards. Substitute other DCC patrons for the ones referenced below. Add your own color and flavor, do a little hand-waving, and you're in business!

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND:

It's 1940! With fascism on the march in Europe, the Gutter Knights (knowns as the Poor Knights in 1940) are fighting their occult battles against Adolf Hitler and the Axis powers over in Europe. That leaves Nowhere City temporarily under the guard of the female Knights, known locally as the "Guinevere Brigade."

Four months ago, unbeknownst to him, Mortimer Rosen, the curator of Nowhere City's Museum of Ancient History, acquired the ancient relic known as the *Spear of Destiny*. This relic, also known as the *Lance of Longinus*, is supposedly the lance that pierced the side of Jesus as he hung on the cross—according to the Gospel of John.

Hitler's obsession with the artifact was well known in occult circles. Many already thought the Spear to be hidden away safely in Germany. But the German relic was a sham! And only now has his coterie of sorcerers tracked the real Spear through hands of

antiquities dealers across Europe to the relatively quiet and unguarded location of the Museum of Ancient History in downtown Nowhere City.

Knowing that there's no way to steal the Spear and transport it home without arousing suspicion in the occult factions watching his every move, the Führer concocts a radical plan: After installing a double as his decoy, he will use himself as the Nazi secret weapon! Building on the cryogenics secrets of his most unorthodox scientists, he freezes himself in a faux Egyptian sarcophagus and donates the sarcophagus as a gift from the German government, shipping himself to Nowhere City under the watchful eye of his elite guards!

Then in the dead of night, when the museum is empty, he plans to be revived so he can emerge from the coffin and take up the Spear, executing his dark ritual to sap the strength and will of the American people. With France under German control, Britain and the Soviets on the ropes, the lightning stealth strike against the USA will ensure a total victory for the Third Reich Fascists!

That's not all! The cult of Scutigera the Hunter is sympathetic to the Nazi cause. (After all, they believe only the strong survive and embrace preying on the weak, even for sport. Eugenics is a natural fit for them.) The Scutigera cult, led by Lars Manning, an industrialist and alderman of Nowhere City, is aiding Hitler in his plan by securing the museum with his hired goons- and perhaps more.

## NOTES ON THE SETTING:

How is 1940 different than 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nowhere City? In many ways, the city is the same as it is 70-80 years later in our contemporary time. Sorcerous factions battle the Poor Knights. Free Agents still work both sides for selfish gain. The neighborhoods are still split into various ethnic enclaves. Green Grove is still the home of the well-to-do. The biggest

difference is that, instead of a burnt out wasteland, the West Side is a booming industrial area, with many factories and offices.

Note that Spy Kits for Free Agents still function as in the *Nowhere City Nights* rules, but contemporary inventions like cellphones and night vision goggles are anachronous. Miniaturized transistors, disguised pistols, cyanide gas guns and the like were all the rage with the Free Agents of the 40s.

Also note that there are no stun guns in 1940, nor flak jackets or other body armor. The museum itself will have a fair amount of old-fashioned armor and weapons. Doubling up tough leather jackets can provide +1 AC.

## PLAYER BACKGROUND

The Guinevere Brigade has been guarding Nowhere City with great success and indeed, the city is unusually quiet. But the museum benefactor Mortimer Rosen, has noticed the strange sarcophagus and the mysterious German guards that accompany it at all times. In addition, no one could miss the large contingent of Scutigera-hired goons that have been loitering around the museum, ensuring that no one will get in after hours.

Mortimer Rosen has tipped off his niece Aliza, socialite, sorceress, and an agent of the Weeper. Though not aware of Hitler's scheme, she senses that something is going on involving the rival Scutigera faction. To thwart this, she's done something very unusual—contacted Free Agents, and through them, Poor Knights, to help her stop the agents of Scutigera at all costs.

## PLAYER CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS AND PARTY COMPOSITION

If you use the standard setup, the party composition should probably be 2-3 Poor Knights, 2 Free Agents and one Sorceress (Aliza.) Each of the Knights and at least one of the Free Agents should have a weapon forged of Sainted Steel. (See *Nowhere City Nights*, p.21) One of the Free Agents should also have a Sainted Steel dagger, the other should have a black market grenade or some other exotic weapon.

The following guidelines are for the purpose of easily integrating the characters into the setting and adventure. They are totally optional and can be

replaced by anything the Judge and players like better!

Sorceress: Aliza Rosen, 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Background: Socialite, College student. Patron: The Weeper

Spells: *Flaming Hands*, *Runic Alphabet: Mortal*, *Magic Missile*, *Shatter*, *Ekim's Mystical Mask*, *Ward Portal*

Patron Spells: *Invoke Patron* (*Nowhere City Nights*, p.57), *Tears of Chaos* (NCN, p.61)

Free Agent: One should be working for Rosen, the other should be working for the Poor Knights (hired to fill out their company).

Poor Knights: No special guidelines needed, though humble origins might be an interesting source of tension with Aliza.

## PLAYER SETUP

The adventure begins with the characters meeting in Aliza's swanky downtown apartment just four blocks away from the Museum of Ancient History. Aliza has heard from her uncle that a small army of goons has now completely surrounded the museum, apparently intent on stopping anyone from entering. What are they guarding? Aliza doesn't know, but has learned that the Cult of Scutigera is involved, and that many of the goons are affiliated with that cult. She's also aware of the strange new sarcophagus and the odd, blonde guards who accompany it at all times. How does the party enter the museum, learn the truth and then thwart the scheme of Scutigera?

Aliza is aware at the outset of (at least) these options:

- Trick or fight their way in through the front or rear entrances, which are guarded by Scutigera's thugs.
- Sneak in through the sewers. According to city maps, there is a man-hole that comes up right into the loading dock area of the museum.
- Aliza has a fellow Sorceress who can open a portal through "the Aether" directly into the museum, but this exposes travelers to the Chaos of the Fringe Aetherial.

Each of these options is described in the following encounters.

## OPTION 1: MUSEUM EXTERIOR

*The Museum takes up one city block of Nowhere City. There is a majestic front entrance with a long, wide staircase leading to huge double doors flanked by 10' tall lions, statues of white stone. The rear door opens into the loading dock area, beside a large garage door to admit vehicles.*

*Both entrances of the museum are guarded by gruff men in long coats and hats. Their coats are bulging with the familiar shapes of side arms. These are hardened criminals, ex-soldiers, strike-breakers and other mercenary roughneck types by the look of them. They are scanning vigilantly and a few break off in irregular but frequent patrols to circle the premises of the museum.*

The most obvious ways in are the front and rear entrances to the museum. Each is guarded by ten goons in Scutigera's employ. They know nothing of any scheme inside; their only mission is to prevent anyone from getting into the building. They work for Lars Manning, a local alderman and city boss.

Obviously, fighting through ten goons is a messy affair. Unless executed quietly within d4 rounds, five guards from the other entrance reinforce the first ten. In addition, all characters must make a Luck check each round. On a failure, local concerned citizens call the police, who arrive in d24+4 rounds. Use the same Goons statistics for the police, who are also in the pocket of Lars Manning.

**Scutigera Goons:** Init: +1; Atk unarmed +1 melee: (1d3) or revolver +2 ranged (1d8); Spd 30; AC 10; HD 1d10; hp 5 each; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0. **NOTE:** Only five out of each team of ten goons is armed with a revolver.

## OPTION 2: THE SEWERS

The Poor Knights can also choose to make their way through the sewers, entering through a man-hole near Gould's Delicatessen (intersection of Merritt and Ashton). Aliza has acquired a map via her Weeper cult connections so there is no difficulty in locating the entrance into the museum.

*The dank environs of the sewers reek with garbage, excrement and perhaps worse. Two slick five foot ledges run along either side of the sewage flow. There are legends about these sewers being inhabited by giant rats, exotic predators and even*

*vile frog-people. As you make your way along the slippery ledge, you see two apparently prone forms on the ledge ahead of you.*

These are the forms of two sewer workers who were ambushed and killed by the Giant Scutigerae who have been enlisted by Manning to watch this entrance from below. If the party ignores the prone bodies, the character with the lowest Luck may make a Luck check. If successful, the characters do not trigger an attack of the Scutigerae.

If they examine the bodies, they find them ripe and full of baby centipedes, mewling with near-human voices, and cringing away from any light source. This noise triggers the Scutigerae attack.

The adult Scutigerae are able to cling to any surface and also to swim (slowly). They are 12 to 18 inches long with heads that are disturbing parodies of human faces. They speak nonsense plucked from some realm of pure chaos—one squeals lines from Shakespeare, while another calls out for Mama and another shrieks for his brethren to kill, kill, kill!

**Scutigerae (20):** Init: +2; Atk bite +1 melee: (1d4+special); Spd 20' swim, 40' land; AC 12; hp 1 each; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0. Special: On a successful hit, target must make a Fort save (DC 10+ the damage inflicted). If failed, the victim is afflicted with a nasty infection within 1d5 turns (-1d to all action dice).

## OPTION 3: THE FRINGE AETHERIAL

Aliza's friend, Adriana Cardozo, has a ritual she can cast to move the party from a safe, secure location into the museum. The only drawback here is that moving through the Aetherial is intensely dangerous. Aliza knows this but may or may not share it with her companions (as Aliza's player decides.) Adriana lives in a seedy apartment in the Bohemian part of Merritton by the University. Her cold-water flat is decorated with her odd abstract paintings, and the place smells of cannabis and cheap wine. Cardozo is a willowy, large-eyed girl with dark hair who never smiles. She has seven cats. The ritual to open the portal takes ten minutes.

*The strange beauty sits cross-legged and chants in an unholy language, her voice growing in intensity, tears streaming down her face. Then a portal of brilliant, multi-colored light opens in the air before you. Gazing in, you see an almost featureless area*

*with a portal of normal looking earthly darkness just a thirty or forty paces away. Dare you step in?*

Once they enter, the coruscating colors, profane sounds and tempting whispers require characters to make a Will save (DC 15) or lose a point of Personality permanently. (The Judge should make this as unpleasant as possible). In addition, all characters must make a Luck check. On even one failure, they have attracted the attention of an Aetherial Hunter, a vaguely scorpion-like “demon” that prowls the fringes of reality. It follows the PCs into the museum and seeks to bring the Spear back to its own twisted neo-reality for the furtherance of the dark agendas of its extra-dimensional masters.

The portal is open for one hour or until Aliza returns through the portal. If Aliza dies, the party will need to return with her body to shut the portal behind them. The Aetherial Hunter attacks them before they return to the portal. Characters must make the same save, this time at a DC 12, upon the return trip.

**Aetherial Hunter:** Init: +6; Atk sting +5 melee: (3d4) and pincers +5 melee (1d6); Spd 20 outside the Warp; AC 20; hp 50; Act 3d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +10. Special: On a successful sting, the Hunter injects a poison that “translates” a victim back to the Deep Aetherial (Fort save DC 12 to resist). Here the character will be studied by the dark Chaos Gods that exist outside reality, and since there is no mortal concept of time in the Deep Aetherial, this unrelenting torment lasts forever.

The Aetherial Hunter is a being of tainted sorcery and only Sainted Steel weapons do full damage to it. All others do 1/4 damage. See Nowhere City Nights for more info on Sainted Steel.

## IN THE MUSEUM (THE ROMAN ROOM)

*This room contains artifacts and representations of the ancient world. One case contains many swords, shields, spears and other miscellaneous weapons of the ancient empires. Another case on the southern wall contains coins, basketry and jewelry. The display on the eastern wall shows a mixture of tools and maps from various eras of the Roman Empire. In the center of the room are two life-size dioramas with mannequins: One is a Roman driver racing a chariot pulled by a single stuffed horse. The second is a display of toga-clad senators killing Julius Caesar.*

A complete detailed floor plan of the entire museum is not provided, but see the high-level map at the end of this adventure. The Spear of Destiny is a powerful artifact that attracts evil! For a longer session, Judges may even wish to throw in some horrors from other eras or nations.

While the museum is not vast and complete, resourceful characters looking for weapons or armor should roll Luck checks to find serviceable gear (after smashing the glass cases of course).

Due to the ritual plans of Scutigera and Hitler, the usual security has been disabled. If displays are harmed or glass is smashed, an alarm blares throughout the museum but the police are not automatically notified. The goons outside only enter on the direct personal orders of Lars Manning.

The sarcophagus has been placed in the Egyptian room. The four fanatical guards wait for the Führer to emerge from his frozen cocoon and are vigilantly monitoring the scene for any interference, whether deliberate or not. Their chief priorities are the Führer’s safety both before and during the ritual.

### DETERMINING THE ORDER OF EVENTS ONCE THE CHARACTER ENTER THE ROMAN ROOM

The timing of events will depend on the Luck checks of the characters as they make ready to enter the Roman Antiquities room. Have each character make a Luck check.

If all fail their checks, Hitler and his four half-golem guards are in this room. Hitler is just finishing the ritual (see Appendix A: The Spear of Destiny!).

If a third or fewer of the party make their checks (but not all fail), Hitler and his guards are in this room, but the Führer is 2 rounds away from completing the ritual. The half-golem guards attack fanatically to buy him time to complete the ritual.

If two thirds or fewer Luck checks are made (but not a third or less), the guards have just wheeled the sarcophagus into the Roman room and are in the act of releasing him.

If more than 2/3 of the characters make their Luck checks, the half-golem guards are just in the Egyptian room loading up the sarcophagus onto a cart.

The encounter with the Führer and his half-golem guards is the “final” encounter. If the characters are having an easy time, bring in Nam-Ra-Tep early (see next section). If not, bring in the mummy later. The same goes for the Aetherial Hunter (if applicable) and the optional encounter with Lars Manning.

Hitler’s guards are actually hulking half-golems, the products of Nazi super-science gone very wrong. Constructed with occult rituals, these corpses are also thick with wires, hinges, necrotically repaired flesh and even magical clay. They are slow, large and heavy, though they look outwardly like big blond brutish men. They have been provided with powerful pistols by the Scutigera faction.

The men used for this ritual were actually political opponents of the Reich. Hitler delighted in making his enemies into his mindless slaves, using the golem magic of his despised victims. But a spark of their resistance lingers; if any character can speak enough German (make a Luck check), they may attempt a DC 15 Personality check to halt them for 1 round. Three successive continuous checks indicate that the half-golem turns against his evil master.

**Half-Golem Guards:** Init: +3; Atk Knife +3 melee: (d5+3) or pistol +1 ranged (1d10); Spd 20; AC 14; hp 15; Act 1d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +0, Will +3. Special: The Half-Golems are the product of obscure rites and only Sainted Steel weapons do full damage to them. All others do quarter damage. See *Nowhere City Nights* for more info on Sainted Steel. They are immune to mind-influencing spells.

The Frozen Führer’s mind has been even more warped by his time in stasis. After undergoing such an ordeal, he is single-mindedly focused on getting the Spear and completing his ritual. He only realizes when attacked that the freezing has changed his body and endowed him with strange gifts: His body is tougher and stronger than before and his blood and skin are extremely cold to the touch.

Hitler acts with single-minded purpose; as soon as he has recovered his orientation he staggers from the coffin and shouts “Der Speer gehört mir!” (“The spear is mine!”) If anyone else grabs the Spear, he will fly into a jealous rage and recklessly attack them with his freezing touch. Otherwise he will enact the ritual, praying to the Old Gods for the destruction of all Holy Order and the return to a pre-Law state of Chaos in which humankind trembled before power

and strength of cosmic tyranny. (see Appendix A: The Spear of Destiny!)

**Adolph Hitler, the Frozen Führer:** Init: +6; Atk Touch +5 melee: (2d12) + special; Spd 30; AC 18; hp 40; Act 2d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +10.

**Special:** Once per turn, the cryo-mutated dictator can let loose a blast of frozen nitrogen breath.

- Dimensions: 5 feet at start, 30 foot long cone, 20 foot width at end.
- Damage: 3d6 damage, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.
- All people moving more than 5’ within the frost zone, must DC 15 or slip and be prone.
- Visibility in the frost zone is 10’ for d4 rounds.

## AREA 4: ATTACK OF NAM-RA-TEP!

When and if the Spear is touched by a Sorcerer, either Hitler or Aliza Rosen (or someone else altogether) the evil vibrations by this conjunction stir the ancient mummy Nam-Ra-Tep from his ancient sleep within a nearby sarcophagus in the Egyptian Room.

Bursting from his sarcophagus, he rasps out in ancient Egyptian that he must have the Spear to put down his enemies. It will take him a round to enter the Roman Room. After that, he plunges forward for the Spear or instantly attacks the one who holds the Spear or any who block his path to it.

**Nam-Ra-Tep, former Pharaoh (Mummy):** Init: +3; Atk Touch +5 melee: (2d4) + Special; Spd: 20; AC: 15; hp 25; Act: 1d20; SV Fort: +5, Ref: +0, Will: +15.

On a successful hit, the mummy attacks with his dreaded “Mummy Dust” attack, withering an opponent and decaying his life force. This attack does 1d6 points of permanent damage to each attribute unless a DC 15 Fortitude save is made. (Roll a save for each attribute, including Luck.) Each drain of this nature heals Nam-Ra-Tep the number of hit points equal to the total amount drained from his victim.

The mummy is the product of ancient sorcerous rites and only Sainted Steel weapons do full damage to Nam-Ra-Tep. All others do quarter damage. See *Nowhere City Nights* for more info on Sainted Steel.

### Roleplaying Nam-Ra-Tep:

When awakened, Nam-Ra-Tep is disoriented and thoroughly evil. If the PCs can somehow keep him away from the Spear and reason with him, the mummy may be placated but still seeks a way to revitalize himself by attribute draining the living. In life, even in that distant era, Nam-Ra-Tep was a servant of the Weeper, and, if given a chance to recognize the Weeper's servants, he may establish a connection to that cult. Obviously no Poor Knight can knowingly suffer such an evil creature to live.

### AREA 4 (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER 3):

If the Judge desires a longer session, or if the characters linger in the museum after a loud pitched combat, the goons outside summon Lars Manning to the scene. Lars dons the ritual black rubber costume of Scutigera and enter the museum with five of his most trusted men.

*Into the room comes a strange human-sized creature waving many arms and legs and with nasty stinger appendages where a man's arms would be, as well as an insectile head with long flopping antennae. Behind him are five goons of the type commonly employed by the Scutigera cult as well as mobsters all throughout Nowhere City.*

They will immediately attack any creature or people who are not Hitler and/or his guards.

**Sorcerer: Lars Manning, 5th level Sorcerer.**  
Background: Alderman. Patron: Scutigera

Init +0; Atk Revolver +0 ranged (1-8); Spd 30; AC 10; HD 6d4; hp 10; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3.

Spells: *Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Magic Shield, Ropework, Spider Climb, Ward Portal, Knock, Ray of Enfeeblement, Slow*

Patron Spells: *Scurrying Hell* (p.66 *Nowhere City Nights*), *Wondrous Antennae of the Hunter* (p.68)

**Scutigera Goons:** Init +1; Atk unarmed +1 melee: (1-3) or revolver +2 ranged (1-8); Spd 30; AC 10; HD 1d10; hp 5 each; Act: 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0. Note: Each of these five goons is armed with a revolver.

### Other locations in the Museum:

Other rooms are similarly set up but uninhabited (unless the Judge wishes to populate them).

**Egyptian Room:** Six sarcophagi (including Nam-Ra-Tep's). Ancient vases, copper metalwork, scarabs and cartouches. The displays are of a pharaoh watching slaves construct stone pyramid blocks and another of two priests conducting the mummification of a dead pharaoh.

**Greek Room:** Coins, swords, shields, vases and statuary from the Minoan, Mycenaean, Athenian and Hellenistic eras. The displays are of Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian Knot and Paris with the Golden Apple weighing the offers of Hera, Athena and Aphrodite (fully clothed) Characters succeeding a Luck check may find a blade made of Sainted Steel 1d6: 1-4) Pugio (1d4) 5) Gladius (1d6) 6) Spatha (1d8). Only one blade of such quality may be found in this room.

**American Room:** A large collection of pre-Columbian tools and artifacts as well as some 18<sup>th</sup> century muskets, knives and furs. The displays are of Washington crossing the Delaware and a native American outside his teepee. (Not necessarily historically authentic...it's 1940.) Characters succeeding a Luck check may find a blade made of Sainted Steel 1d6: 1-4) Knife (1d3) 5) Bowie Knife (1d5) 6) Sabre (1d8). Only one blade of such quality may be found in this room.

**Asian Room:** Many vases, jades and some well-crafted katana blades and suits of lacquer armor (+5 AC, check -4). The displays are of a poet writing calligraphy (the characters are not actually words) and a master samurai exacting obeisance from his pupil. Characters succeeding a Luck check may find a blade made of Sainted Steel 1d6: 1-4) Tanto (1d3) 5) Wakizashi (1d6) 6) Katana (1d8). Only one blade of such quality may be found in this room.

**European Room:** This room is full of medieval arms and armor as well as some ancient tapestries, tools, coins and similar paraphernalia. The double-sized single display is of two mounted knights charging each other with lances raised. Characters succeeding a Luck check may find a blade made of Sainted Steel 1d6: 1-4) Dagger (1d4) 5) Short Sword (1d6) 6) Long Sword (1d8). Only one blade of such quality may be found in this room.

## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

### **If the PCs survive, defeat the opposition and claim the Spear:**

Generally speaking, the Poor Knights seek to claim the Spear and hide it away from Sorcerous hands. The Free Agents seek to sell the thing to the highest bidders. And Sorcerers do anything to claim the weapon for themselves and their cults. The resolution of this conflict may put the characters in a very interesting conundrum!

Anyone known to possess the Spear is hunted by all factions of Nowhere City and beyond. Selling, hiding or destroying the spear could be the springboard to many future adventures!

### **If the PCs run away or surrender:**

Hitler, Nam-Re-Tep and even Lars Manning all despise weakness and ruthlessly kill any who surrender. (After tactically disarming them, of course.) Even if the surrender was negotiated with promises of safe passage out of the museum, they have no mercy.

### **If Hitler enacts the ritual:**

American willpower is broken before the war effort even launches. The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, the US surrenders and signs a non-aggression pact with the Axis powers. Germany conquers Europe and eventually dominates the world (including North America.) Nowhere City has a very different future indeed, and it is up to the Judge to imagine this wretched place.

## APPENDIX A: THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

At some point, the characters realize that the Spear is the focal point of the occult doings in the museum. Assuming that they live long enough to make choices, this will presumably confront the characters with an important choice: What to do with the spear?

### **What is the Spear?**

The Spear is a relic that can be used to perform very specific rituals: The ritual bestows a powerful curse upon the political leaders of a given region or nation and they devolve into disorganization, nihilism, incompetence, and total discord.

This power makes the Spear a priceless weapon. All Sorcerous factions are aware of the relic generally and have a rough idea of its power. A Free Agent can make a Luck check to recognize and know it as a famous relic. Both of those factions kill and risk their lives to win such a priceless object; the Poor Knights are obliged to keep it from them at all costs.

The ritual itself is a very rare piece of occult lore; the ancient ritual script, in the form of a leather bound book with vellum pages, is present in the sarcophagus with Hitler, so that there is no chance of him failing to enact it when he is un-frozen in the museum. The ritual is almost as valuable a prize as the Spear.

The Spear is ten feet long, the haft is of ash. The spear's tip is of very old steel, rusted and perhaps bearing some faint traces of blood. The holy curse of the object is such that no mundane means of



burning, cutting, melting down and so on damages the Spear.

The Spear can be destroyed—every thousand years, a ritual can be done on the exact anniversary of the moment that it pierced Jesus's side. If successfully done, the Spear loses all of its magical properties but the protection of His sacrifice is slightly unwound; henceforward all Chaotic spell-checks are at +2 and all Lawful characters in the world immediately lose d4 points of Luck.

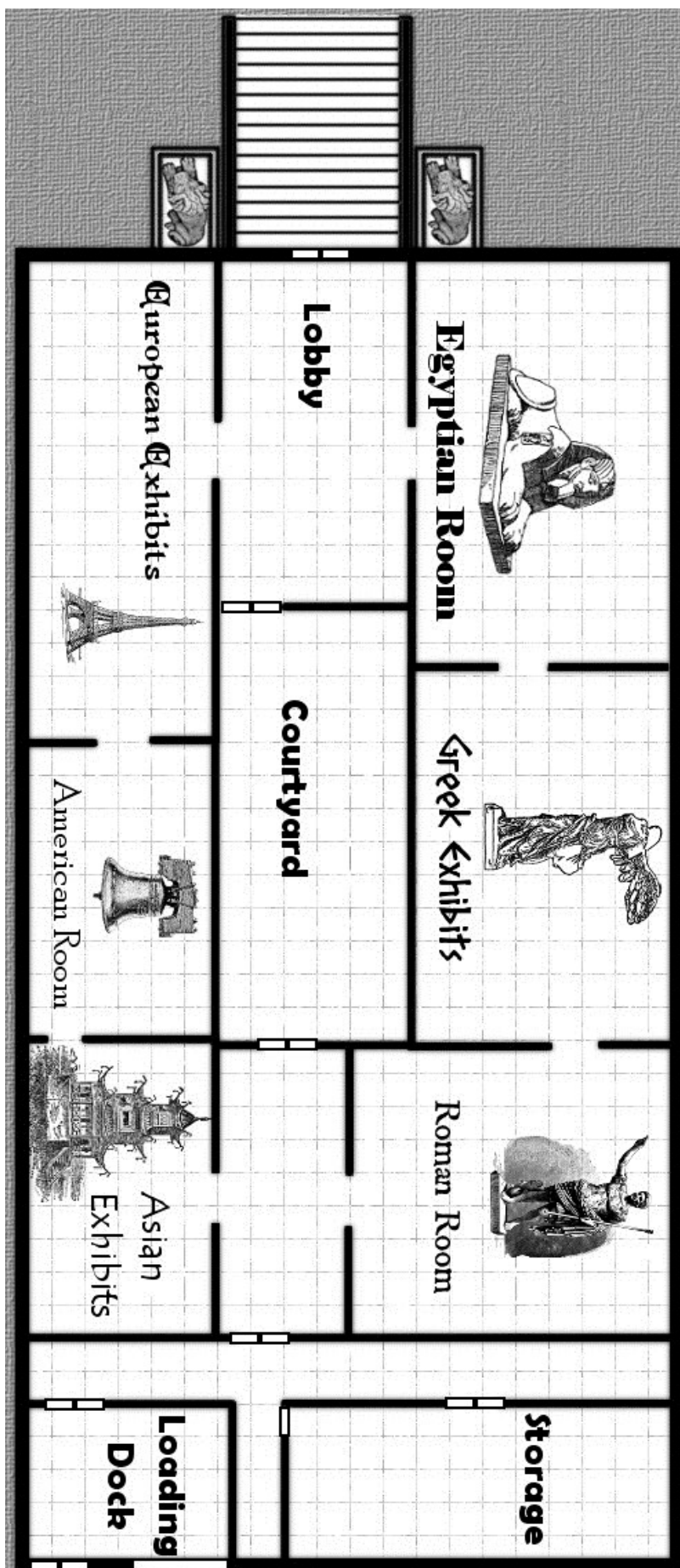
### Powers of the Spear of Destiny

When wielded, it saps the strength and health of all enemies (-2 to attack rolls and melee damage rolls against the wielder.)

The Spear is a +3 weapon on all attacks and damage.

All wounds inflicted by the Spear are permanent and do not heal naturally outside of divine intervention.

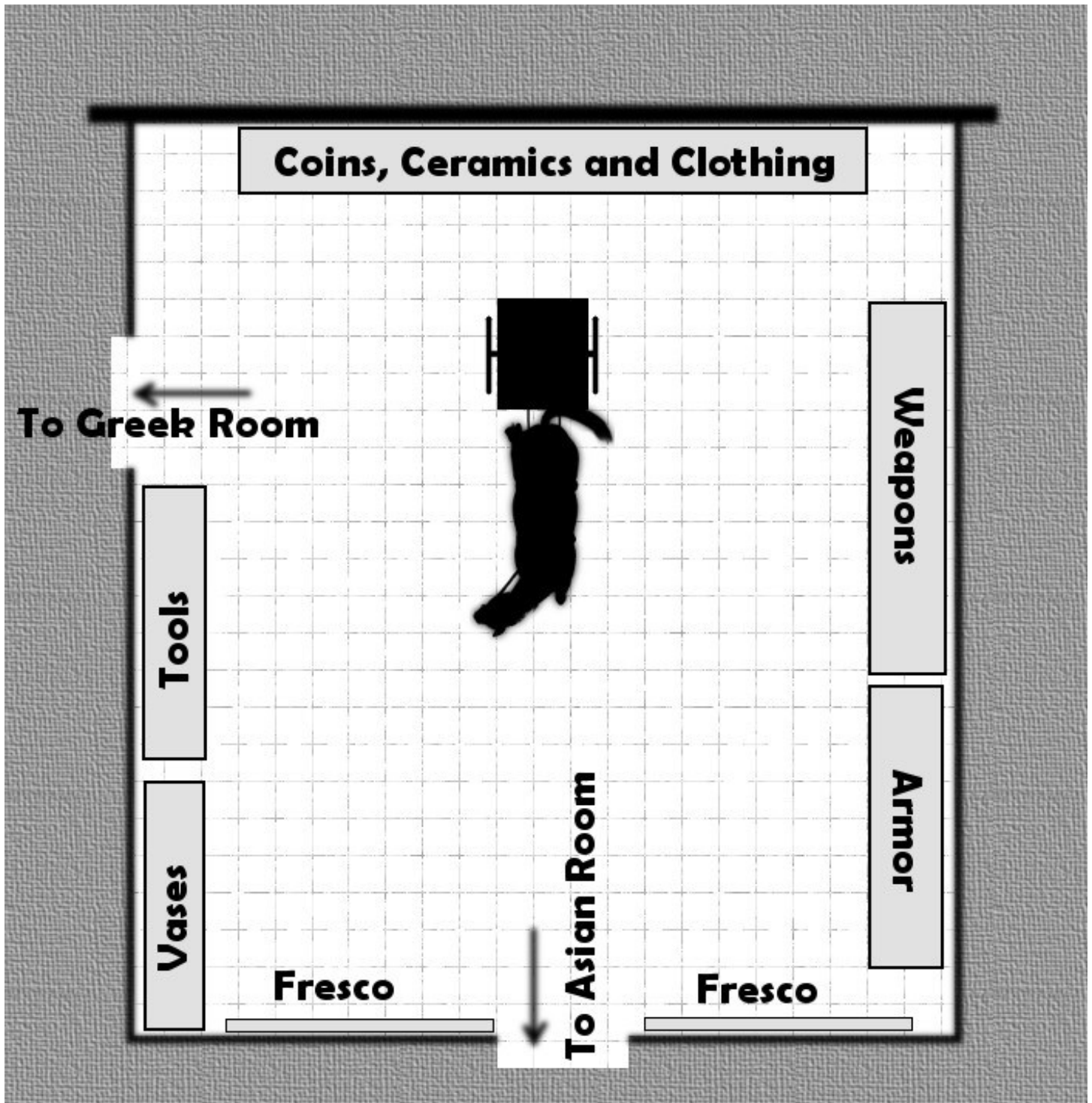
The spear can be used to animate other weapons in a 50' radius. The wielder can take no action but can cause the weapons to attack anyone within 50 feet. There is no limit to the number of weapons controlled in this fashion (except for the number of weapons in the radius!) No other action may be taken by the wielder while the Spear is used thus.



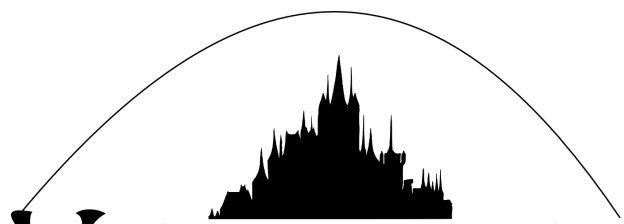
## THE MUSEUM

# THE ROMAN ROOM

1 square = 2'







# WHILE THE GODS LAUGH

BY MARC BRUNER

## INTRODUCTION

*While the Gods Laugh* is a tenth-level funnel adventure for use with Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG. The tenth-level funnel is an unusual adaptation of the character creation funnel specifically written for the judge wishing to introduce high-level play to their players. As with the traditional funnel, this adventure is intended to be used at the start of a campaign; at its conclusion, though, the players will have achieved a singular understanding of the capabilities of the DCC character classes that will inform the decisions for those that survive to first level, and possibly even provide the option to continue as immortal entities capable of feats only limited by their imagination.

At the start of the adventure, the PC's future selves are summoned into the midst of an eternal struggle between the cosmic forces of existence, each striving to win dominance over the other. Now ensnared in a viscous cycle of resurrection and death, they are doomed to be endlessly reborn into new bodies without memories of their past or future. To escape, they must survive long enough to recover their true abilities and confront the gods themselves.

This adventure is intended for use with seven players running a single character, each representing one of the seven core DCC RPG classes, though in playtests it has been adjusted to accommodate as few as five and as many as nine players by decreasing or increasing the specific classes used, including drawing additional classes from third party publications. **NOTE:** Special character sheets for this adventure are available in the D.A.M.N. Autumn 2017 web enhancement on [www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com).

It should be noted that the author drew much of the inspiration for this adventure from the works of Michael Moorcock, Harry Harrison, and Roger

Zelazny, in particular the novel *The Lord of Light*, as well as from countless hours of watching Star Trek as a youth.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Looking across the infinity of space and time and possibilities aeons ago, Yuga, the faceless Lord of the Fates, foresaw the doom of creation in the endless conflict between the gods of chaos and order. Yuga breathed life to the balance - the vast cycles of death and rebirth that govern the world until the universe itself runs down and fades away. To enforce his word, the Lord of Fates empowered different heroes bound to eternally serve in this ceaseless struggle, to preserve against a final eschaton of either perfect stasis or formless entropy and to ensure that victory by either side is foredoomed to fail.

This equipoise is now threatened. Centuries before the present, three renegade champions of law, chaos, and neutrality named Rudra, Anthos, and Vaygesa made a pact to overthrow the commandment of Yuga and escape their fate. Travelling to the icy wastes at the bottom of the Earth, they secretly opened a portal to the underworld and unleashed the demonic forces made of the void from the age before gods. Harnessing this power, they summoned potent magicks and trapped Yuga's remaining champions, sundering the connection to their physical forms and transferring their souls to new, physically weak bodies. This unnatural reincarnation prevents them from being reclaimed by the universe to serve as agents of the balance. As a result of their actions, pockets of law and chaos now grow unchecked, and the multiverse itself threatens to forever split apart.

As each host quickly breaks down under the stress of containing the champion's spirit, the three renegades subjugated nomadic tribes of men they found subsiding on the frozen wastes, a primitive race known as the Elai, who came to worship the

three champions as a pantheon of immortal gods they named the Caretakers. To the most devout of their subjects, the Caretakers offered the promise of sharing in the blessing of reincarnation, creating a theology where the highest aspiration is to be chosen as a vessel for the gods themselves - and where defiance is punished by a fate worse than death - enforced by an order of priest-fanatics called the Varna that ensure there is always a fresh supply of bodies for the Caretaker's needs.

To house the Elai, the Caretakers reshaped the power from the underworld into domes of force located on the frozen surface and created a vast Eden for themselves atop the portal itself. Within these structures, an Elai's every need is fulfilled. They also created the Entertainments, highly-detailed recreations of adventures and decisive events drawn from the purged memories of Yuga's champions used as rewards for their most loyal servants and populated by those Elai that defy them, punished to be reborn as one of the many creatures seeded throughout the scenes.

It is into this cosmic struggle that the party is unwittingly brought, summoned by the forces of the multiverse that the powers of Law and Chaos violate at their peril. They arrive in a shadow setting that awakens dim memories of their past, before they became great champions, and are now the universe's last chance to restore balance before the Caretakers destroy fate itself!

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PC's begin the adventure in a familiar setting: aboard a dragon-prow longboat on a starless sea. The characters have no recollection of who they are, the Caretakers having purged their memories after placing them in their new host bodies. All that remains is a vague sense of familiarity with the scenes akin to a deep impression of *déjà vu*. This is reinforced through the re-use of settings that will be familiar to many DCC RPG players (see Player Start below).

Awakened by hints of memory, they must survive pivotal encounters from their own pasts recreated for the entertainment of the Elai nobles that worship the Caretakers and populated by host creatures like themselves, as they struggle to unravel the puzzle of who they are and escape

before their captors realize they are becoming aware of their condition.

The second part of the adventure details the growing discovery of the PC's identities as they evade the servants of the Caretakers sent to recover them: the Varna, an order of fanatical priest-technicians drawn from the ranks of the Elai that enforce the will of the gods. They also begin to realize the artificial construct aspects of the world, and as they journey closer to the source of the energies powering the domes, gain new abilities that bely their physically frail forms, providing access to great skills, magicks, and knowledge. Yet the PCs also weaken as the energy required to contain their spirits tears away at their host bodies.

Finally, the PCs confront the Caretakers themselves in their Eden constructed above the portal to the underworld that powers their immortality. What they discover may also alter the final choices they make, and whether the world will again be remade to begin a new age of man.

## TENTH LEVEL FUNNEL

Core to this adventure is an adaptation of the traditional character creation funnel mechanic, what the author terms a "tenth-level funnel," designed to expose players to upper-level play *before* they decide on a class when advancing to first level. Part funnel, part puzzle, characters in the tenth-level funnel represent potential future aspects of each of the core DCC RPG character classes - a representation of what they could become in time. During the course of game play, the players' decisions determine which specific aspect they embody through a system of rules described below. By the end of the adventure, the players are left with a narrative link to a character class that informs the choice they make when advancing to first level - whether it is to embrace or reject what fate has in store for them.

Like the traditional character creation funnel, the tenth-level funnel starts at 0-level, though players only control a single 0-level character at a time. This may raise some eyebrows as it could run counter to player's expectations of what a "high-level funnel" is, and indeed, during playtests it threw players off to be handed a 0-level character sheet and only added to the puzzle aspect of the adventure! It is suggested that the judge roll up

multiple 0-level characters for each player following the rules outlined in Appendix B as it is expected each player will lose one or even multiple characters until they understand the nature of the funnel enough to overcome its early challenges.

The funnel works as follows: As players make decisions or actions, they have the opportunity to acquire higher-level abilities based on the actions they succeed in performing. Narratively, this represents the PC gradually overcoming the effects of the reincarnation/mind purge they have endured. Players discover abilities as follows:

- Upon making a successful attack, the PC gains a second d14 action die that can be used starting in the next round.
- When rolling critical hits, the PC rolls a 1d10 instead of the 0-level crit die.
- Finally, PCs may attempt to perform the following **class-specific** abilities: *lay on hands*, *backstab*, *mighty deed of arms*, *spellcasting*, *shield bash*, *invoke patron*, and *good luck charm*.

Each class-specific ability represents one of the core DCC RPG character classes, cleric, thief, warrior, wizard, dwarf, elf, and halfling, respectively. While some of the listed abilities are shared between classes, for the purposes of the funnel they are considered archetypically linked to a given class. It is part of the challenge presented to the players to identify these archetypes in order to solve the first part of the puzzle.

All class-specific abilities are attempted as per rules for a 1st level character. Upon successfully using any class-specific ability, the PC gains access to that ability for subsequent actions and from that point on is 'linked' to that specific character class. The action has to be performed in combat or in other appropriate pivotal situations as determined by the judge - only by overcoming something truly challenging can the benefits be granted. The judge keeps track of which PC is emerging as which class.

**NOTE:** Once a class is assigned to a PC, no other PC can perform class-specific actions for that same class, and any attempts to do so automatically fail.

Once all members of the party have been linked to a character class, it triggers an awareness of their

### Examples of Class-Specific Actions and Results

Action	Result	Linked Class
Sweep or Trip a foe	If the attack succeeds, the judge asks for a deed check using a d3 die and if the result is 3 the character is awarded a deed die to use in future attacks.	Warrior
Reflexively trying to stop from falling to your death	The judge decides the PC reaches out magically to arrest their fall and asks for a spell check. If the spell succeeds per the <i>feather fall</i> spell result table, the character is awarded the spell	Wizard
Attempting to save a bleeding out comrade	The judge asks for a spell check, and if the check succeeds per the <i>lay on hands</i> result table, the character gains the ability.	Cleric
Calling upon the King of Elfland for aid	The judge asks for a spell check and if the spell succeeds per the <i>invoke patron</i> spell result table, the character is awarded the spell.	Elf
Attempting a backstab after being awarded a deed die	The action automatically fails as the PC is linked to the warrior class and cannot acquire the thief class-specific ability.	N/A

true capabilities. To reflect this, players are provided with an overlay character sheet per the web enhancement (found on [www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com)) to use along with their 0-level character sheet that includes all of the high-level class abilities for a specific class. The strength of these abilities increases as the PCs get closer to the source of the Caretaker's power, per the Bonus by Location table on the opposite page. Upon receiving the overlay character sheet, and anytime they increase their effective level, players reroll their hit points using the hit die for their class modified by their effective level and current stamina, keeping the higher of the two results.

Finally, PCs can also regain their full abilities by overcoming the effects of the mind purge administered during the reincarnation process. The greater *rod of karma* found in area D can be used to reverse the effects, or a *remove curse* cast with a 27+ result can potentially remove the memory loss per the rules for a major curse. PCs can also be transferred back to their original bodies that are stored in area D-4d, which also fully restores their abilities. Once a PC's memory is fully restored they are considered to have the full abilities of a 10th level character.

## JUDGES NOTES

This adventure has been developed to allow experienced DCC RPG players to participate in the funnel in a new and intriguing way. In particular, specific sections of the adventure allow the judge to intentionally revisit player experiences of prior campaigns or settings in order to create the sense of

déjà vu hinting a solution to the central puzzle of the host's reincarnation.

The adventure starts with a scene from the party's past lives recreated by the Caretakers. These vignettes are intended to allow the players to relive memorable scenes from their character's notional path to becoming great champions, part of the infinite series of heroic reflections spanning all of time and space, and give them the chance to re-experience some familiar adventures they may have played. While familiarity with each setting helps to solve the encounters, it is not required.

The included vignettes provide a sample of such settings drawn from existing DCC RPG modules as well as potential settings that could represent an aspect of the champion's past in a different multiverse. Except for area A, the judge should feel free to tailor the vignettes to their particular campaign setting or players to make the context as meaningful as possible. For judges looking for additional inspiration, a list of potential alternate encounters is included below:

- DCC #68 *People of the Pit*; Area 4-9 – Consultation with Palimdybi. The PCs are thrust into the role of saving an Elai noble before she is seemingly sacrificed to the pit-beast.
- DCC #79 *Frozen in Time*; Area 4-3 – Treasury. The PCs find themselves accompanying a party of Elai as they investigate Null-Eleven's personal collection of artifacts.
- DCC #80 *Intrigue at the Court of Chaos*; Event 4: Return to the Court of Chaos. The PCs appear with the Lords of Chaos shouting "DO YOU HAVE IT?!" and a group of Elai, one of which holds the *egg of law* in her hands.
- DCC #81 *The One Who Watches from Below*; Area 4-8 – The Vault of Eyes. The PCs are being herded by a group of nobles to recover treasure; perhaps a PC appears with the curse?
- DCC #85 *Peril on the Purple Planet*; The PCs arrive riding the great mother Orm, the greenstone crown just within reach!

Bonus by Location		
Location	Effective Level	Spells*
Area A/B	6	Any level 1-3
Area C/D	8	Any level 1-4
Memory restored (any location)	10	Any

\* Modified by Intelligence for wizards or Personality for clerics

## HIERARCHY OF COLOR

As a part of the inspection process in area D-3, the Elai are sorted and ensorcelled with a skin-altering dye based on their potential for serving as various vessels: green for those designated to be hosts, red for priests, and blue for those vessels reserved for the gods themselves. These enchantments react to ultraviolet energy emitted by the force domes to suppress or enhance the vessel's will, allowing the hosts to be more easily controlled.

While under the domes, the field has the following effects on both PCs and hosts, which have already been factored into the monster stats included in the adventure: Green: -6 Will; Red: +4 Will; Blue: +8 Will. The effect can potentially be halted or even reversed by characters that reach the control room in area D-1a.

## REJECTION OF THE HOST BODY

The Caretakers have culled the fittest of their subjects for their use, and the bodies the PCs are placed in are not suited for hosting the potency of a higher-level being. As a result, they suffer from a type of corruption as the host body rejects the invasive spirit.

Each hour of game time, the PC must make an ability check (randomly determined by the judge). On a failure, the character loses 1d3 points from that ability. These points cannot be recovered until the higher-level being leaves the host. Once an ability is reduced to 3, it cannot be reduced further -- further failure results in loss of 1d3 points from an ability of the player's choosing. Once all ability scores are reduced to 3 (or below, from other sources), the character enters a state of unconscious debilitation and can only be revived by placing the spirit in another host.

## DEATH AND DYING

PCs that go below zero hit points do not die, but are sent into a state of death-like shock that they can recover from per the normal healing rules. This effect is part of the host conditioning and only lasts for the first 10 hit points below zero, where after the normal death and dying rules take effect. The players should not be made aware of this until an attempt is made to heal them or recover their body.

Players inspecting PCs can spot this false state of death with a DC 15 Intelligence check.

If all of the PCs die in this manner while in area A-1, they are collected by the Varna and reincarnated into new bodies, beginning the cycle again. The Judge hands each player a new 0-level character and starts the adventure over. Players do not keep extra action dice or class-specific actions previously earned and are no longer linked to a specific class.

If the party suffers a TPK in any other location, instead of placing them in a new host, the priests bring them to the inspection chamber in area D-3 for examination, where they awaken with 1 hit point in the bodies of the last hosts they inhabited, retaining any abilities previously discovered.

**Judge's Note:** Area A-1 is likely to result in a TPK the first time the PCs experience it. After each TPK, the judge should hand out new 0-level characters to each player and read the introductory text again. Each time through, a different set of men and women make up the group of nobles accompanying them on the boat, everything else is the same. The PCs remember the events from the previous encounter in horrible detail. It is up to the PCs to use any knowledge they acquired to overcome the cycle they are trapped within.

## ADJUSTING TO 10TH LEVEL PLAY

PCs are immortals and demi-gods at 10th level, able to pull off incredible feats of magic and defeat entire armies of enemies. This adventure attempts to provide interesting challenges even for such mighty beings. Judges should be forewarned that even the most well-laid plans can be overcome by players with access to almost god-like characters. It is kindly suggested therefore that while judges should do their best to prepare for the unpreparable, they are also encouraged to follow whatever inspiration the players derive from access to those abilities - this is their chance, after all, to attempt to take the system as far as it is designed to go!

This adventure uses a number of artifacts to keep track of character advancement. All can be found in the D.A.M.N. — Autumn 2017 web enhancement on the Mystic Bull website: [www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com). The document also contains all maps for all the adventures in this issue, as well as other content! Got get it! It's free!

# PLAYER START

The party awakens to a scene from their past lives as recreated by the Caretakers. Enclosed by vast domes of magical energy scattered across the frozen wastes and populated by host creatures prevented from harming them, the vignettes provide an opportunity for their worshipers to safely experience the thrill of combat without the risk of real danger.

The domes are created out of the uncanny magical energies redirected from the portal to the underworld opened by the Caretakers. Viewed from the outside, they appear as shimmering fields of azure energy roughly a mile across and are one-way physical and magical barriers, warding off the elements and barring passage into them. From the inside they provide the illusion of an infinite horizon to match the specific scene to those within. While passage out through the edge of the dome is not prevented, creatures leaving the dome are affected as if a *dispel magic* spell with a DC 24 result was cast on them.

## AREA A-1 - RETURN TO THE STARLESS SEA

At the start of the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

*You slowly awaken as if from a dream, your only awareness of what came before is a sense of absolute peace, as if you heard the song the stars sing on the shores of a great sea, only to now find yourselves in a nightmare. With mounting horror, you feel a growing awareness of flesh and a disorienting array of senses. Out of the confusion of impressions, you hear the sound of lapping waves and recognize that you are on a strangely familiar boat, its prow carved in the shape of a dragon. A flickering light atop a ziggurat built on an island appears to be the vessel's destination far across a starless sea. You hear the beat of distant drums and echoing wails of terror.*

*A small group of men and women are on the boat with you, all plainly garbed in the style of peasants and yeomen and carrying an assortment of improvised weapons. Strangely, each bears a golden torque around their necks. One of the men, dressed as a farmer and carrying a pitchfork, calls to you and points toward cluster of waving green tentacles just off the prow of the ship.*

The characters face a curious challenge: reliving a frantic moment from their past at the earliest point of their adventuring careers, long before they were high level champions. The mental fog from their reincarnation causes a -2 to all rolls for the first two rounds. Additionally, each the PCs recognize each other by the distinct green color of their skin, the same tint as the waving tentacles in the water.

### SUMMARY OF KEY EVENTS

*While the Gods Laugh* is intended to proceed in roughly three broad acts. The first requires the players to solve the puzzle of the 10th level funnel. The second revolves around the discovery of the history of the Caretakers. The third act is the confrontation with the Caretakers and the decision on whether to embrace or reject their roles as champions of balance. Below are some of the key points for the judge to keep in mind:

- The scenes recreated by the Caretakers from the power of the underworld are realistic-looking, but show signs of artificiality if examined closely, e.g. the well-made clothes of the nobles and the prop weapons or the building façades in area A.
- The party will likely TPK at least once. This is actually expected and serves to expose the reincarnation plot of the adventure.
- The players can only gain class-specific abilities of a single character class. The classes are assigned based on the PC that first succeeds in that class-specific ability.
- The overlay character sheets are only handed out once all PCs are linked to a specific class. Until then, the players use just the most recently provided 0-level character sheet adjusted with any bonus abilities they acquire.
- The PCs degenerate as a result of the body rejecting the reincarnation process. Each hour they must roll a random attribute and succeed on an attribute check or lose 1d3 points from that attribute.
- Finally, be prepared to adjust this adventure to respond to the players. 10th level PCs will find a way to break whatever you throw at them!

The passengers are nobles of the Elai race that worship the Caretakers, disguised as common peasants and are here for a unique form of entertainment. The Caretakers have recreated in minute detail a scene from the purged memories of the champions (the PCs) and provide the scene as entertainment to their devoted servants. The hosts that the PCs and the monsters inhabit are Elai that have defied the Caretakers – and this is their punishment.

Attentive PCs (DC 10 Intelligence check) recognize that the clothes the nobles wear are a bit too well-made, as if they were intentionally designed to mimic peasant clothing. Each noble is outfitted as a random 0-level character, in addition to golden torques that prevent creatures in the “scene” from attacking them directly. Any harmful action attempted by a PC or host monster against someone wearing the torque requires them to overcome this ward of protection with a Will save (DC 15). Failure indicates the PC or monster’s action is halted and lost.

**Elai noble (8):** Init +0; Atk varies +2 melee (per weapon); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

The leviathan moves to attack, arriving four rounds after the PCs awaken. The PCs only choices are to appease the leviathan with a sacrifice or fight. If the party sacrifices a character (PC or Elai noble), the beast accepts the offering and then retreats. Sacrifices are drowned and then released a round later to float on the surface of the water. The boat moves on toward the ziggara of its own accord. **NOTE:** The PCs have to overcome the power of the torque to throw an Elai noble overboard. The leviathan does not attack (and will not accept as sacrifice) a noble still wearing its torque.

Otherwise, the leviathan attacks up to six random targets in the boat each round by either slamming an opponent with a tentacle or wrapping up the victim and dragging them under water (Strength check DC 20 to escape). If an Elai noble wearing a torque is the subject of a random attack, the beast’s tentacle visibly recoils.

**Chaos leviathan host:** Init +0; Atk tentacle +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 15; HD 10d10; HP 56; MV 50’; Act 6d20; SP grapple on successful hit (DC 20

strength check to escape), host traits; SV Fort +10, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C.

The chaos leviathan inhabits an Elai host deemed too deficient for other uses by the Caretakers. The host within has been driven mad by the process, but characters can still attempt to communicate with them (Personality check DC 18). Monsters that inhabit a host have an odd greenish tint to the skin exactly like the PCs. Like the PCs, when reduced to 0 hit points, hosts go into a state of death-like shock only dying once they exceed -10 hit points.

While monster hosts cannot attack anyone wearing a golden torque, should the system controlling the scenes be disabled or if they leave the domes, hosts shake off their monster forms and are no longer affected by the golden torques.

Per the **Death and Dying** section, any drowned or killed PCs that are still above -10 hit points are only in a state of shock and their bodies can be recovered by surviving members of the party.



## AREA A-1A - THE ZIGGURAT

### Read or paraphrase the following:

*Coming down the ramp towards you are two figures dressed in short white kirtles, their exposed skin a deep red hue. The humanoids wear golden torques but have shaved heads and are not further adorned or equipped, though one carries a short segmented rod. They greet you with friendly, open expressions.*

If the PCs attack the nobles or manage to defeat the leviathan, the drumming immediately stops from the ziggurat. The starless sea settles into lapping silence. When the boat docks on the island, any surviving nobles immediately flee from the PCs up the ramp seeking remuneration and explanations from the Varna (see below).

The Varna, priests of the caretakers, attempt to mollify the PCs long enough for one of them to activate the lesser rod of karma (currently set to paralysis – see the Lesser Rod of Karma section). Barring that, the Varna are fitted with a subdural frequency manipulator that either allows them to control hosts (including the PCs) or disable them with painful wave emissions. If the PCs are captured, they are brought to area D-3 for further examination.

The Varna are a class of priest-technicians selected from the aspiring Elai supplicants that enforce the will of the Caretakers. Their skin has been imbued with a red pigment that acts as a Will-strengthening agent under the domes. There are three orders of Varna: novitiate, acolyte, and aesthete, led by an archabbot who serves as the voice of the gods.

**Varna novitiate (2):** Init -1; Atk fist +2 melee (1d3) or SP; AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 10, 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), subdural frequency manipulator (charm host 1/day, turns any host friendly to their cause for 1d4 hours, DC 13 Will save to resist) or pain emitter 2/day, 1d6+1 damage to any host at a range of 50', (DC 12 Will save for half damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +6; AL N.

If the PCs overcome the novitiates, they gain possession of the rod, a powerful artifact used to travel between scenes and enforce conduct. Judges should set the puzzle rod to ☞☞☞ (0, 0, 3) and hand it to the players without further explanation.

Allow the PCs to experiment as they will. If the PCs do not uncover the secrets of the rod, the Caretakers continue to send their priests to recover the PCs, bringing them back to area D-3 if successful. See Appendix A—Rods of Karma.

A cooling fire pit and scatter of weapons and ceremonial implements lie at the top of the ziggurat, looking hastily abandoned. Further investigation reveals the implements to be flimsy props. Even the fire pit is composed of warm glowing stones (about 20).

**Secret door (DC 18):** A hidden button opens a hatch in the bottom of the fire pit. The access tunnel below drops down 50' via iron ladder rungs to a rail tunnel and 1d3+1 powered rail cars. Each car has room for up to eight passengers and is operated by a simple lever that controls acceleration (DC 12 Intelligence check to activate and operate). PCs that use the rail line risk pursuit by the Varna if they do not somehow disable the second car. Travelling by foot requires a journey of half a day. The rail line leads to Area D-1.

## AREA A-2 - WESTERN WORLD

**NOTE:** The only ways to get to A-2 are via a Rod of Karma or by using the rail line from D-1.

*A number of timber buildings line both sides of a dusty street that stretches into the distance. Wooden signs with strange runes hang from several of the buildings and creak in the dry, hot wind. Looking down, you find yourselves dressed in strange clothes – women in wide bell dresses while men wear tight leggings, heavy boots and well-tailored shirts. Each of you wears a wide leather belt and short scabbard holding an odd-looking metal object with a curved wooden handle.*

*A tall building at the end of the street emits a series of deep chimes, twelve in all, before the steady howl of the wind takes over again. A door opens down the street and three figures dressed in long dusty coats and wide-brimmed hats exit and slowly gather a few paces away. Each carries a long metal tube and wears a golden torque around their neck.*

The PCs each have a holstered revolver on their belt, but unlike the very real and very deadly firearms the Elai nobles carry, these are only for show and only fire blanks. Any PCs that 'died' in a previous encounter but transported along with the party appear similarly dressed unconscious, and

lying in open wooden coffins propped against the railings of one of the buildings. If the PCs do nothing, the nobles advance to a point 70' away and call out for them to "draw."

**Elai noble (3):** Init +2 (d24 when using firearm); Atk rifle +2 ranged (2d10); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 25 each (20 temporary); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

**NOTE:** Any PC attempting to use a firearm rolls a d16 action die for the unfamiliar weapon.

The party can attempt to overwhelm the nobles or escape. If they manage to kill or drive off the nobles, they only have two turns to investigate the town (see below). They quickly find that all of the buildings except the jail and saloon are merely façades propped up on wooden struts. The building's signs can be read with a DC 15 read languages check or DC 20 Intelligence check and list a number of unfamiliar words such as "Hardware Store", "Livery", and "Post Office".

After two turns a posse of a dozen green-skinned gunslinger hosts mounted on horseback led by two Varna ride into town to find the PCs.

**Varna novitiate (2):** Init -1; Atk fist +2 melee (1d3) or SP; AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 10, 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), subdural frequency manipulator (charm host 1/day, turns any host friendly to their cause for 1d4 hours, DC 13 Will save to resist; pain emitter 2/day, 1d6+1 damage to any host at a range of 50', DC 12 Will save for half damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +6; AL N.

**Gunslinger hosts (12):** Init +2 (d24 when using firearm); Atk rifle +4 ranged (2d10); AC 11; HD 3d8; hp 17 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP host characteristics; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -4; AL L.

**Editor's Aside:** Armed with ineffective weapons (other than ones scavenged previously), this encounter may seem unwinnable. The idea of these encounters is to have the characters stretch their abilities – i.e. attempt class-based actions in order to "level up." In the playtest that I played in, my warrior with the 6 STR **punched a dragon to death**. As the characters begin to come into their own, they'll find they are more than capable of surviving encounters that seem insurmountable. – Paul

## AREA A-2A - THE SALOON

*Tables and chairs occupy half of this large open room. The other half is dominated by a broad counter of polished wood, behind which is a mirrored wall filled with shelves holding a dozen colored bottles of various shapes and sizes. The sound of faint music can be heard coming from a far corner.*

A staircase at the rear leads to several rooms upstairs each furnished with a simple bed and wardrobe. Just below the staircase is a player piano that plays a tinny song in a continuous loop. PCs investigating the bottles discover they contain an abrasive, but warming, alcoholic distillation. Two of the bottles marked with the word *courage* (DC 15 read languages check or DC 20 Intelligence check) provide +20 hit points that last for 1d3 hours. Each bottle contains two doses of "courage."

## AREA A-2B - THE JAIL

*The room contains a spare-looking pine desk and two iron-barred chambers, both with low wooden benches inside. Two weapons, long metal tubes mounted to wide wooden "pommels" hang from the wall.*

The wall rack holds two rifles with empty spots for three more. Each is loaded with eight shots. The cells can be opened with a DC 12 pick lock check or a DC 20 Strength check. PCs searching the desk find a ring of iron keys, one for each cell.

**Secret door (DC 18):** Under the bench on the floor of the leftmost cell the floor is scratched, as if the bench is regularly move. Moving the bench in the jail cell reveals the outline of a hidden panel that leads to the tunnels connected to area D-1 (see the Secret Door entry in Area A-1a).


## AREA A-3 - THE PATH

**NOTE:** The only ways to get to A-3 are via a Rod of Karma or by using the rail line from D-1.

*You stand in a small wooded clearing surrounded by dense old-growth forest. An opening to the north ends in a well-trod path that extends both east and west. Looking down, you see that you are each wearing simple tunics emblazoned with an unfamiliar chivalric symbol. A man-sized white rabbit wearing a vest and hat suddenly hops into view. Pausing, it pulls a golden object on a silver chain from its coat, looking at it before hurriedly disappearing down the path to the east. A few*

*moments after, a woman's scream can be heard coming from the same direction.*

PCs examining the clearing and path find evidence of a number of people passing this way before, and with a DC 12 Intelligence check, locate large rabbit tracks going along the path in both directions. The PCs are dressed as men-at-arms wearing heraldic devices that bear the symbols of the Caretakers as per their alignment (see Area B-1) and carry sheathed wooden longswords, painted to appear real (1d4 damage, breaks on a natural roll of 18-20).

Any PCs that fell into a state of shock in the previous encounter are laid out west to east on wooden pyres, similarly dressed and clasp a wooden sword across their chest. If revived or inspected, a copper coin stamped with the symbol of Anthos  can be found in each of the PC's mouths.

### AREA A-3A - THE FOREST GLADE

*The path opens into a large clearing several hundred feet across. Chained to a rocky outcropping in the middle is a woman dressed in a long flowing blue gown with an ungainly conical hat perched atop her head. Curled about the rock is a huge green reptile, its massive wings folded against its body. Seeing you, the woman stops her screaming and clutches her hands together, saying in a high falsetto "my heroes!", before sitting down in the grass and yawning. The great lizard uncurls off the rock and turns to attack.*

**Bored Elai Noble:** Init +0; Atk fists +0 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

**Average-size green dragon host:** Init +7; Atk claw (x2) +8 melee (1d8), bite +8 melee (1d12), tail slap +8 melee (1d20), wing buffet +8 melee (2d12); AC 21; HD 7d12; hp 43; MV 50'; Act attacks 4d20, spells 1d20; SP breath weapon (2/day, fire, 53 damage, DC 17 Ref save for half), spells (+4 spell check: color spray, read magic, mirror image), armored hide, speak with animals (1/hour), control fire (3/hour); SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +1; AL C.

Twice per day, the dragon host can breathe fire, burning all targets in a 10' wide line that is 3d6x10' long. The dragon host does not pursue opponents beyond the clearing. Unless prevented, the Elai

noble slips her chains and flees the clearing as soon as the battle starts to avoid getting injured, and seeks out two nearby Varna novitiates if the PCs exhibit any non-host like behavior.

### AREA A-3B - THE WARREN

*The path ends abruptly at a rock wall in the side of a small hill.*

The hill is part of the system of controls that maintains this scene for the Caretakers. PCs that press their ears against the rock wall hear the faint sound of humming coming from within the hill. A well-hidden natural opening in the rock face leads within to a small burrow. Human-sized PCs must bend over while in the passages, causing a -1d to all actions.

The path leads to a corridor of smooth walls and panels. Rounding one corner, the PCs enter a large room filled with complex machinery lit by a harsh overhead glare. A number of large rabbits putter around the equipment. They pay no attention to the PCs unless physically disturbed, in which case they bare their teeth and leap to attack. An exit at the rear of the chamber leads to a the series of long tunnels that lead to area D-1 (see the Secret Door entry in Area A-1a).

**Hare technician (6):** Init +4; Atk tool +2 melee (1d4) or bite +4 melee (1d6+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP leap; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

The hare technicians wield small unfamiliar-looking tools, using them to slash and cut at their opponents. They can also leap at targets up to 15' away, and with a successful hit, inflict a savage bite on the character's neck or face. The hares are not hosts and are not affected by the torques.

### AREA A-4: ABANDONED AMPRIDATVIR

**NOTE:** The only ways to get to A-3 are via a Rod of Karma or by using the rail line from D-1.

*An ancient ruin filled with towering spires made of glass and metal stretches out as far as you can see. Before you, a smooth dark path cuts between the towers, spreading out in each cardinal direction. Its surface is unlike anything you have seen, and with a dizzying realization, you see that the path itself appears to be moving. At the base of the spires are large piles of rocky debris, seemingly fallen from high above, as well as several unusual boat-shaped*

*objects. You see no sign of people or animals except a number of bird-like creatures soaring near the tops of the spires.*

The entrances to the spires are either blocked by debris or no longer function. PCs finding a way in discover ancient lobbies that have fallen into decay. The path is a moving walkway that whisks travelers along at 30' per round. Stepping on the path for those unfamiliar with its operation requires a DC 10 Reflex save to not fall prone. Any movement on the pathway draws the attention of the Elai-piloted aircars.

The boat shaped objects are aircars, built by an ancient race long ago and recreated by the Caretakers. The aircars are swift moving vehicles with a transparent domed passenger compartment and cushioned seats, controlled by a series of levers and a large globe mounted on a rod surrounded by strange characters. To activate, the PC must either read the runes (DC 15 read languages or *comprehend languages*) or make a Luck check, after which the car hovers five feet off the ground making a curious whining sound. After activation, pushing down on the rod makes the car jerk into the air at a terrifying speed.

*As you approach the top of one of the spires, you see that the bird-like creatures are actually vehicles similar to your own. As you watch, a flash of fire erupts from one of the vehicles and another directly in front of it explodes in a column of bright light. Seeming to take notice you, a pair of vehicles peel away from the group and head directly toward you.*

The PCs have been deposited in the middle of a dogfight and gained the attention of two Elai nobles piloting similar vehicles. The air cars are equipped with a kinetic weapon that launches explosive slugs. When flying them in combat, the PCs must make a DC 12 Reflex save each round or lose control. Vehicles that are out of control cannot attack until control is restored, and each round they are out of control there is a cumulative 10% chance of crashing into the side of a tower or the ground.

**NOTE:** Characters unfamiliar with such technology roll a d16 for all action dice and saving throws when operating the aircars.

**Aircar (2):** Init +4; Atk kinetic cannon +4 missile fire (2d8+2); AC 16; HD 4d10+6; hp 35 each; MV Fly 120'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; AL L.

## **AREA A-4A - HANGER**

Atop one of the towers is a landing pad with a number of aircars parked on it. A locked door (DC 15 pick locks or DC 20 Strength check) opens to the tunnel system that leads to area D-1 (see the Secret Door entry in Area A-1a).

## **AREA B - THE WASTES**

The PCs may end up in Area B-1 using the lesser rod of karma. If they decided to set out across the frozen wastes, instead of enter the Dome of Heaven (Area C), they are in for a long dangerous trek.

*An icy waste extends in all directions around you, punctuated by several shimmering azure domes in the distance. The only break in the continuity is to the north where a huge arch extends across the horizon. In relation to the other domes it is vast - miles wide and at least a mile high.*

The surface outside the force domes is a cold desolate place, with the only havens being the occasional shelter of a rocky cave that can be stumbled on by travelers braving the elements. PCs traversing the wastes see a number of smaller domes that dot the horizon, each appearing as a shimmering semi-transparent field (Areas A1 – A4 and C). The largest, the Dome of Heaven, where the Caretakers reside is several miles across and soars high above the others.

The Caretakers pay little attention to the outside world, leaving those unfortunate hosts that have managed to escape the shelter of the domes at the mercy of the elements and the boreal creatures that hunt there. The environment is extremely harsh. PCs must make DC 15 Fortitude saves each turn or lose 1 point of temporary Agility that can only be recovered once leaving the wastes. Those that reach 0 Agility are frozen stiff.

Parties who spend any time in the wastes also risk being attacked by waste beasts. These creatures appear and immediately attack on a result of 1 or 2 on a d6 rolled when the characters first arrive in the waste and each hour thereafter.



**Waste beast:** Init +4; Atk claw +6 melee (2d4+2); AC 15; HD 5d10+5; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP freezing touch, double damage from heat; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +4; AL C.

The touch of a waste beast freezes the air around its victims, eventually turning its prey into an immobile statue of ice. Any creature struck by a waste beast must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or lose 5' of movement as the growing weight of hoarfrost covers their skins and clothes. Any creature reduced to 0 movement is held in place by the weight of ice and cannot move until freed, requiring a full 1d4+1 rounds to remove.

## AREA B-1

PCs transporting here via the lesser rod of karma arrive 1000' away from the largest dome. At this distance the PCs can see a large arch made of a smooth dark material that appears in the dome's side. Beyond the opening stands lush, dense green forest. The portal is one of the entrances to the dome regularly spaced about its circumference to allow Elai pilgrims to pass through.

Three runes ward the entrance (See the Symbols of Heaven table below) identical to those that appear on the lesser rod of karma. On the arch are three triangular blocks that can be rotated, showing a different rune etched on each side. To pass through unharmed, the PC must align all three blocks to show the symbol that matches their alignment; otherwise they are afflicted as per the table below (treat as a major curse with a DC 26 save).

# AREA C - THE DOME OF HEAVEN

*Within the dome, the air is warm and lush with no hint of the icy chill just a few steps away. Above you, a cerulean sky soars into the distance. A large amber-colored globe casts a golden light over everything inside. In the distance, a majestic flat-topped mountain rises near the center of the dome upon which rests a golden building with a tall spire. A vortex of azure matter and energy swirls up from the spire merging with the shimmering field of the dome.*

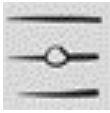


*A well-travelled footpath leads from the portal into the dense forest ahead.*

This is the Caretaker's celestial city and the forest of Edaleda. Elai pilgrims flock to the home of the gods to worship and petition the Caretakers to be chosen as vessels. The dome is enormous, extending beyond the horizon, and while within the dome PCs and hosts are affected as per the host qualities listed earlier.

The swirling stream is the channeled force of the underworld rising from the portal in area D-1b and spreading outwards into the areas of the Caretaker's dominion beyond their Eden.

## AREA C-1 - THE FOREST OF EDALEDA

*The forest closes in around you, hiding the mountain peak. A well-worn path leads to the north through tall stands of spruce, pines and birch that spread unbroken for leagues, punctuated by icy rills that run throughout the forest.*

Symbols of Heaven		
Alignment	Symbol	Effect
Lawful		The PC must make a Fortitude save or be blinded for 24 hours. Blind creatures suffer a -4 penalty to initiative, attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and spell checks, and are easy to surprise. In addition, a blind character firing a missile weapon is at -2d to hit and any missed shot has a 50% chance of striking a randomly determined ally.
Chaotic		The PC must make a Fortitude save or be deafened for 24 hours. Deaf creatures suffer a -4 penalty to initiative rolls and are easily surprised. Deaf spellcasters suffer a -1d penalty to all spell checks. The condition also throws off the character's balance, imparting a -1d penalty to Agility checks and Reflex saves.
Neutral		The PC must make a Fortitude save or be crippled for 24 hours. Crippled individuals have their movement rate reduced to 5' per round, suffer a -4 penalty to initiative rolls and a -1d penalty to all attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and spell checks.

Travel to the base of the mountain using the forest paths takes four hours by foot. As they walk, forest guardians, huge white tigers with human heads, stalk the PCs. Unless the PCs take precautions to disguise themselves as priests or pilgrims, the hybrid tigers attack the party, springing from ambushes.

**Forest guardians (6):** Init +5; Atk bite +9 melee (2d4+2) and claw +5 melee (1d6+2); AC 17; HD 7d10; hp 42 each; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP hide +10; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +4; AL N.

The forest guardians are the most devoted of the Caretakers' priests changed into animal form. The guardians taunt the PCs, questioning their purpose and mocking their responses before they kill them. If encountered in the forest, they receive a +10 check to hide rolls, with a successful check resulting in surprise.

During the trek, the PCs see a golden chariot fly overhead towards the north, seemingly propelled by its flaming tail. This is Rudra returning to the dome from one of her errands.

## AREA C-2 - THE PILGRIM'S CAMP

*The forest path opens into a large clearing, the central mountain looming in the distance. At its base is an encampment with dozens of white tents. A narrow trail can be seen going up the face of the mountain that starts from the far side of the camp where a river feeds into a sapphire-colored lake. A group of white-robed figures climb the trail. More white-robed individuals move about the camp performing ascetic rituals, preparing meals, conversing, or praying. At the base of the trail, two enormous humanoid figures stand, watching the pilgrims pass. Each has the body of a man with the head of an animal. Both are armed with halberds and spears the size of small trees.*

The encampment is a staging ground for Elai pilgrims wishing to ascend to the temple at the top of the mountain. They are devoted to the Caretakers and if asked, are quite happy to share the tenants of their belief with any willing listeners, though they recognize any green-skinned individuals as hosts and raise an alarm if encountered. Unlike the nobles encountered in area A, they do not wear torques and if attacked, they prostrate themselves calling out the names of their gods to intervene. The giants are known as Children of the Gods, and

guard the path up the mountain, allowing only pilgrims to pass.

**Elai pilgrims (50):** Init +0; Atk fist +2 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

**Children of the gods (18' tall, 4,000 lbs.) (2):** Init +5; Atk halberd +20 melee (3d10+8) or spear +12 missile fire (2d8+8, range 200'); AC 18; HD 14d10; hp 71, 80; MV 50'; Act 2d24; SP crit on 20-24, treat halberd as a magical +2 weapon, immunities; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +12; AL N

Children of the gods are giant-sized human-animal composites that guard the sacred path and temple grounds. Their semi-animal nature makes them immune to spells that affect people, such as *charm person*, though the druidic variation of *charm person* affects them normally, as do potions of *animal control*. They carry blades of supernal quality derived from a rare element found during the excavation into the underworld and are treated as +2 magic weapons. Animal-headed giants have a random appearance as follows:

1d10	Animal Head
1	Elephant
2	Tiger
3	Rat
4	Monkey
5	Snake
6	Rhinoceros
7	Bull
8	Hippopotamus
9	Vulture
10	Goat

## AREA C-3 - THE PATH

*The rough trail climbs up the side of the mountain, its path well-worn by the passage of thousands of penitents over centuries.*

The trail climbs for thousands of feet and is just wide enough for two people to walk abreast. As it ascends, it passes from forest canopy, through scattered trees, and finally into areas of bare furze. There are no railings to assist climbers, to one side is solid rock, the other a deepening abyss. The steep climb is wearying, normally taking the pilgrims half

a day. PCs attempting the climb on their own must make three Stamina rolls, with the climb taking 2 hours + 1 additional hour for each failed roll.

Rudra patrols the Dome of Heaven in her fire chariot. Any disruption or fighting in the camp or along the stairs draws her attention, and she arrives 2d4 rounds later. Rudra is always accompanied by two huge garudas that she directs to snatch up opponents and bring them to the temple. If Rudra is not encountered here, she is found in the eden gardens in area D-4b.

**Rudra, renegade champion of law:** Init +10; Atk trident +26 melee (4d10+10) or disintegration ray +12 missile fire (2d8+10, range 300'); AC 21; HD 16d10; hp 101; MV 30' or fly 80' in chariot; Act 3d20; SP immune to 1st and 2nd level spells, spells (+12 spell check: *animal summoning*, *magic shield*); SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +14; AL L.

The renegades were once Yuga's champions, but have been reincarnated into the fittest Elai vessels for centuries and appear as robust blue-skinned men and women. Each carries a potent magic item that is identified with them in stories and tales across a dozen worlds. Rudra currently appears as a blue-skinned woman smeared with ashes, her hair piled up in matted locks. She wears an animal skin and wields a trident that can disintegrate foes. Rudra attacks from a fire chariot that provides magical protection, granting her immunity to all level 1 and 2 spells and causing all spell checks made against her to suffer a -6 penalty.

**Garuda (2):** Init +4; Atk bite +15 melee (4d6) and claw +12 melee (2d6); AC 19; HD 10d10; hp 60, 53; MV 30', fly 80'; Act 2d20; SP snatch; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +8; AL C.

Garuda are huge chimeric bird-like creatures that have golden-colored bodies and faces of men, red wings, and an eagle's beak. Upon a successful attack with their claws, instead of inflicting damage they can choose to snatch opponents. Characters grabbed in this way can do nothing but attempt a DC 20 Strength check to free themselves. Garuda can carry up to two man-sized creatures in their talons.

## AREA C-4 - THE PLATEAU

*The trail finally ends at a wide flat plateau. Before you a great golden temple rises atop a steep scarp. Giant statues of golden-armored warriors brace an elaborately carved entablature below a peaked roof. A line of pilgrims climb wide steps leading to a set of open doors. A huge crystalline spire rises from the center of the temple, waves of energy flowing out of its unseen crest into the sky above. Two animal-headed giants flank the base of the temple stairs. Another pair stand beside the doors into the temple.*

The celestial city rises from the plateau, wrought and sanctified by the magicks of the Caretakers after opening the portal to the underworld - a shrine where the would-be masters of karma pull apart the fabric of the cosmos in their attempt to wrest away fate itself. The temple is a perfect square out of which rises a tall, multi-faceted central spire that contains the chambers of the gods - a dazzling eden where the Caretakers live and Yuga's lost champions can be found. The temple itself is imperishable as long as the underworld portal remains open.

**Children of the gods (18' tall, 4,000 lbs.) (4):** Init +5; Atk halberd +20 melee (3d10+8) or spear +12 missile fire (2d8+8, range 200'); AC 18; HD 14d10; hp 71, 80; MV 50'; Act 2d24; SP crit on 20-24, treat halberd as a magical +2 weapon, immunities; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +12; AL N

## AREA D - THE TEMPLE OF THE CARETAKERS

The temple comprises four levels: the Caverns (D1), the Chamber of Prayer (D2), The Chambers of the Priests (D3-4) and the Chamber of the Gods (D5). Inside, surfaces are elaborately decorated with colorful paintings and engravings of the three gods depicted alternatively in poses of serene contemplation and compassion, along with images of destruction, fear and violence.

Growing fractures affecting the multiverse can be felt with increased effect as the Caretakers draw more power away from the balance. Effects of alignment are doubled, including Luck penalties, cleric disapproval and actions such as *lay on hands* (treat as one additional alignment removed; opposite alignments can no longer be healed).

## AREA D-1 - STAGING CHAMBER

*The tunnel opens into a wide natural cavern illuminated by artificial light. A group of men and women dressed in furs and animal skins and carrying stone-tipped spears listen as a red-skinned priest describes the golden torque he holds in his hand while another priest hands out one to each member of the gathered group. As they examine the necklaces, you can hear them talking in excited tones about their upcoming adventure.*

The enthusiastic Elai nobles are receiving instructions from the Varna prior to embarking for a scene. Though they carry them, neither the priests nor the nobles are currently wearing their torques, and it takes a round for them to put them on. Stairs leading further down the complex to areas D-1a and D-1b are located on the far side of the room.

**Varna novitiate (2):** Init -1; Atk fist +2 melee (1d3) or SP; AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 10, 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP subdural frequency manipulator (charm host 1/day, turns any host friendly to their cause for 1d4 hours, DC 13 Will save to resist; pain emitter 2/day, 1d6+1 damage to any host at a range of 50', DC 12 Will save for half damage); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +6; AL N.

**Elai nobles (8):** Init +0; Atk stone-tipped spear +2 melee (1d7); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL L.

### AREA D-1A - CONTROL ROOM

The door to the chamber is locked, requiring a DC 15 pick lock or DC 20 Strength check to open.

*The hum of arcane energy fills this room. A number of smooth white cylinders are interspersed amongst a maze of glowing rods and beams that span the space between the floor and the chamber's high ceiling.*

The control room houses the artifacts that generate the simulations and keep the auxiliary force domes operational. Waves of phlogiston diverted from the open portal are conducted throughout the chamber via the network of arcane rods. There are two ape-like demons bound by the Caretakers to oversee the chamber. They use the rafter of bars to propel themselves and access the various devices. The beings are immune to magic including the energy

pulsing between the chambers. Any attempts to touch or break the equipment draws their wrath. When fighting, they swing between the bars of the room, baring their long teeth and throwing balls of collected phlogiston at the party.

**Demon-ape technicians (type II demon) (2):** Init +4; Atk fist +8 melee (1d3+4) or bite +10 melee (1d12) or phlogiston +6 missile fire (DC 15 Will save or suffer random corruption; Roll 1d6: (1-3) minor corruption; (4-5) major corruption; (6) greater corruption); AC 18; HD 6d12; hp 32, 38; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP immune to magic, demon traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +6; AL C.

PCs examining the equipment for a full turn can attempt to reverse the effects of the force domes on their skin coloration (DC 20 disable trap or Intelligence check). Failure indicates that the PC is transformed into a wave of pure magic and sent spiraling into the column of energy that flows from top of the temple. Any attempt to destroy the equipment ends in a catastrophic explosion. The artifacts can be overloaded, however, by the PCs spellburning a total of 25 or more ability points, causing the magic flowing through the system to be amplified beyond its capacity. Any PC, even non-spellcasters can contribute to the total, which shuts off the outer force domes completely, immediately exposing all Elai and hosts within them to the elements.

### AREA D-1B - CAVERN OF THE CLOSED HELL

A sealed metal door leads to Anthos' chamber. Other than a small 1" round hole in the rock wall, the door has no obvious way to open and resists all attempts to force. PCs can use a rod of karma as a key to access the door, requiring the three symbols for Anthos to be aligned. Any other alignment sets off a trap, sending a column of fire roaring down to fill a 20' cubic area in front of the door (DC 15 to detect, DC 20 to disarm, 8d6+8 points of damage. A DC 22 Ref save for half) and alerting Anthos to the intruder's presence.

*The huge cavern is filled with a hot, stinging ash and steam. Beasts with flame-licked skin toil away to continuously stoke great fires that scorch the air. In the middle of the room is circular void in the floor, bounded by a dark metal disc etched with arcane symbols. Despite the intense warmth you can see the*



*disc is coated in rime and dense steam rises from where the waves of heat come in contact with it. Emanating from the portal itself is a vortex of swirling darkness that disappears into a shaft in the ceiling. Overseeing the workers is a powerful-looking figure wearing goggles and bulky gloves. When you enter, he raises a wand and disappears into a cloud of ash.*

Here lies the portal to the underworld opened by the Caretakers to power their magicks. From the opening issues the vast cold of the void from before creation. Anthos rules here, overseeing the powerful furnaces that keep its power in check. Where the cold encounters the heat from the fires, a hot, stinging ash is formed, causing PCs to make a DC 10 Fortitude save each round or suffer -1d to all actions for that round. Even if the save is made, visibility is reduced to 30', even for infravision, and all ranged attacks are made at -1d. The fire-beasts are immune to the conditions and Anthos wears special goggles that enable him to see in infrared and ultra-violet radiation through the ash.

**Anthos, renegade lord of chaos:** Init +10; Atk fist +15 melee (2d4+5) and fire ray +12 missile fire (2d8+10, range 200'); AC 17 (21 within ash); HD 16d10; hp 96; MV 30'; Act 2d20+1d14; SP immune to non-magical weapons, immune to fire, cold, electricity, gas, acid, spells (+12 spell check: *scorching ray, fireball, control fire*); SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +8; AL C.

**Toiling fire beasts (6):** Init +6; Atk burning touch +12 melee (3d6) or flaming bolt +8 missile fire (2d6, range 40'); AC 18; HD 8d8; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP burning touch, vulnerable to cold and water, elemental traits; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL N.

Anthos appears as a strong, blue skinned man with a rotund belly and golden brown hair, with eyes and mustache that match the color of fire. His is one of the aspects of the eternal champion, and a deadly foe. He carries a wand that emits the universal fire, which destroys anything it touches. The wand itself can only be held by wearing special enchanted gloves, which also make Anthos immune to non-magical attacks as well as fire, cold, electricity, gas, and acid. During combat, Anthos stays hidden within the ash, using his vision to target the PCs while they cannot see him.

The furnaces keep the energies from the underworld in check, allowing them to be channeled to the temple above. There are six flames, each can be quenched with a total of 30 points of magical cold damage or with enough water (1d3 points inflicted for each cubic foot poured on the fire). If they are left untended, the cold from the portal overcomes the flames after 12 hours. If the fires are put out, the consequences for the world are dire. The unleashed void spills out into the cosmos, unmaking everything it touches - gods and men alike.

## **AREA D-2—CHAMBER OF PRAYER**

There is a 1 in 10 chance that the PCs encounter the Varna archabbot giving a sermon to the pilgrims when they first enter the chamber (see area D-4c for stats).

*Wide steps lead past rows of columns inside the temple to a vast open chamber. A single marble pillar dominates the center of the room, decorated with a spiraling frieze that runs to the ceiling. The elaborate fretwork depicts scenes of champions battling demons of ice and wind and casting them down, and afterwards sharing the secrets of immortality with the races of men. Hundreds of white-robed pilgrims move in a circle around the pillar, filling the air with chants. On the far side of the room a set of doors stands, flanked by giant guards. On another wall is a wide rostrum high above the floor where a red-skinned priest holding a stave watches the crowd.*

Pilgrims fill the chamber seeking profundity and awaiting the judgement of the gods. Their perambulations are overseen by an acolyte that selects supplicants to be taken up to the inspection chamber (area D-3). If the PCs are disguised as pilgrims, they easily blend into the crowd. Small meditation chambers line the sides of the room filled with colorful scenes from the purged memories of Yuga's champions. The chambers contain clay pitchers filled with a purifying oil that acts as the level 2 cleric spell *Neutralize Poison or Disease* with a DC 20 result. Each pitcher contains enough oil for three doses.

The great column rises hundreds of feet and is covered with a frieze depicting the story of the Caretaker's triumph over the demons of ice and cold and sharing the secrets of death, a part of the mythology of their religion. The story can be read by

circling the column and following the frieze as it winds upwards. Near the top, carved scenes depict a war between great champions over sharing the secret of reincarnation, the ultimate triumph of the three Caretakers, and the trapping and punishment of Yuga's other champions as a morality lesson. Beyond the closed doors, a set of stairs leads up to area D-3 and down to area D-1.

If the PCs wait for few minutes read the following text:

*The priest points to several of the people in the crowd and a shout goes up. The doors open and a pair of giant guards come out. With ecstatic looks on their faces, the chosen pilgrims are lead through the open doors which close behind them.*

Cries of joy and pleading follow the pilgrims as they are escorted to area D-3 to be assessed for fitness as vessels. Disguised PCs can easily push their way to the front of the crowd to be selected by the priest in one of the next waves.

**Varna acolyte:** Init +1; Atk stave +3 melee (1d6) or SP; AC 12; HD 5d8; hp 24; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), stave of the Caretakers, spells (+5 spell check: *word of command, binding, darkness*); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; AL as stave.

The acolyte wears a simple white tunic similar to the novitiates, carrying a short stave crowned by the symbol of one of the Caretakers that act as talismans as follows (roll 1d3): 1) Rudra: +4 AC, immunity to level 1 spells; 2) Anthos: +4 initiative, half damage from non-magical weapons and fire; 3) Vaygesa: +4 to spell checks, reduce ranged damage by 10 points.

**Children of the gods (18' tall, 4,000 lbs.) (2):** Init +5; Atk halberd +20 melee (3d10+8) or spear +12 missile fire (2d8+8, range 200'); AC 18; HD 14d10; hp 71, 80; MV 50'; Act 2d24; SP crit on 20-24, treat halberd as a magical +2 weapon, immunities; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +12; AL N.

## AREA D-3 - INSPECTION CHAMBER

*Three golden statues dominate the room. A plain-looking altar stands at one end in front of a curtained alcove. As you enter, two red-skinned priests emerge from behind the curtain.*

Pilgrims are sorted in this chamber by the types of potential vessel: those fit for hosts, priests or the

gods themselves. Any creature kneeling or placed before the altar activates a white beam of divine light that illuminates them. The light changes to green, red or blue based on the assessment. When the light fades, the pilgrim's mind has been purged and their skin is changed to the same color as the light.

PCs that are captured by the Varna and brought here for further processing wake up in a semi-paralyzed state before the altar, aware of their surroundings but unable to take actions. Each round the PC can make a DC 15 Will save to overcome the effects of the paralysis. Once free, the they are at a -1d to all rolls for 2 rounds. Each round, the Varna take a random PC and place them before the altar. The beam activates on the following round. PCs subjected to the beam must make a Will save (DC 24) or have their mind purged, losing all memory of the preceding events as well as all high-level abilities. They become a 0-level character until they regain their abilities.

**Varna acolyte (2):** Init +1; Atk stave +3 melee (1d6) or SP; AC 12; HD 5d8; hp 24, 26, 29; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), stave of the Caretakers (see acolyte entry in opposite column), spells (+5 spell check: *word of command, binding, darkness*); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; AL N.

The Varna use a magical transport pad located in the alcove to travel between levels in area D. For those unfamiliar with its use, the transport is activated by a spell check of 15 or greater, taking the PC to either a previously visited location or to one of the following random areas (roll 1d5): 1) Staging Chamber (D1) 2) Chambers of the Unworthy (D4a) 3) Eden Gardens (D4b) 4) Reincarnation Chamber (D4c) 5) Chamber of the Sun (D5). If there is a misfire, the party is dematerialized into a wall or floor of the target area, suffering 2d20 hit points of damage.

### Moving Within the Temple

Barring other magical means, movement within the upper reaches of the temple are only available as follows:

**D-3:** Stairs from D2

**D-4a:** Teleportation circle in D-3

**D4b-d:** Teleportation circle in D-3, or connecting passages.

**D-5:** Teleportation circle in D3 or Greater Rod of Karma.

## AREA D-4A - CHAMBERS OF THE UNWORTHY

Several huge vats filled with amber liquid line the floor. A number of pens on the far wall hold groups of green-skinned men and women with blank looking faces. The walls of the chamber appear to be made of crystal, through them you can see fragmented into a thousand reflections the green forest and cerulean sky beyond the mountain.

Like all of the upper rooms of the temple, the walls to this room are crystalline, part of the central spire that can be seen from the outside. The walls reflect all magic cast at them, preventing direct access to the tower. Worshipers deemed unfit are held here pending placement in a beast or use as a vessel for the spirits of the trapped champions. The vats contain half-formed creations of the Caretakers that will become the creatures populating the scenes. PCs disturbing the vats or the pens are attacked by a horde of crawling devolved creatures shedding a goo-like substance as they rise from the pools.

**Half-formed hosts (80):** Init +0; Atk claw/bite/sting +1 melee (1d4+1); AC 11; HD 4d10; hp 21 each; MV 20' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP immune to mind-altering spells; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.

The devolved creatures crawl, run and hop towards the PCs on stubby legs or using short leathery wings, biting or pinching with crude claws and misshapen mouths. Their minds twisted by the

transformation process, they are immune to mind-affecting spells, such as *ESP* or *charm*.

## AREA D-4B - EDEN GARDENS

Lush gardens filled with trees bearing a variety of delicious looking fruits spread out before you. Beautiful forest animals, seemingly tame, move through carefully trimmed pathways where a number of content-looking red and blue-skinned humans roam the grounds.




The vessels selected for the priests or the Caretakers are allowed to take pleasure in the gardens. If not encountered previously, Rudra is found here holding court and feeding her two garudas choice delicacies. She attacks any green-skinned PCs that intrude on her repose, using her powers of animal control to summon the exotic creatures that wander the gardens (See Area C-3).

## AREA D-4C - REINCARNATION CHAMBER

In the center of the room is a white smooth-walled cylinder with two pod-shaped chambers attached to its base. In one of the pods lies an elderly red-skinned priest. In the other is a huge white tiger. An important looking priest wearing a golden kirtle and carrying a segmented rod oversees the activity of several attendants who work to adjust the positions of the bodies.

The reincarnation chambers are where the priests transfer souls between bodies. The reincarnation device works by inserting the *greater rod of karma*

**Rod of Karma (Greater) Table**

			Effect
2	1	0	Transports to Area A-1
2	0	1	Transports to Area A-2
1	0	2	Transports to Area A-3
0	1	2	Transports to Area A-4
1	1	1	Transports to Area B-1
0	0	3	Paralysis; Up to three targets; Will save (DC 24)
0	2	1	Mind Purge; Fort save (DC 24)
1	2	0	Reincarnation
0	3	0	Death; Fort save (DC 24)
3	0	0	Transports to Area D-5

with the correct settings into a small hole found in the cylinder and making a DC 15 spell check. If successful, it causes a transference of the soul of the being in the first pod into the body in the other, dispersing the target body's soul into the vortex of energy escaping the temple in the process. A misfire, or attempts to activate the rod with the incorrect setting, results in the spirits of the both creatures being dispersed into the void.

PCs can use the reincarnation pods to transfer to a new body. If they chose an Elai, they should reroll their abilities per the vessel type (green 4d6, dropping the highest; red 3d6; blue, 4d6 and drop the lowest). If they recover their own bodies from area D-4d, they are restored to their fullest power with 24 in each ability (+6 to ability bonuses and corresponding saves).

**Varna archabbot:** Init +3; Atk stave +5 melee (1d6) or SP; AC 12; HD 8d8+8; hp 50; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), spells (+8 spell check: *curse, bolt from the blue, spiritual weapon, vermin blight*); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; AL N.

**Varna acolyte (4):** Init +1; Atk stave +3 melee (1d6) or SP; AC 12; HD 5d8; hp 24, 26, 29; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP golden torque (DC 15 Will save to harm), stave of the Caretakers, spells (+5 spell check: *word of command, binding, darkness*); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; AL N.

The archabbot carries the *greater rod of karma*, which appears identical to the lesser rod of karma, but each segment contains all three symbols, allowing for additional combinations (see Greater Rod of Karma table on the previous page).

## AREA D-4D - CHAMBER OF THE SUN

*The room contains dozens of stone platforms stretching out as far as you can see; atop each rests a body. Between you and the biers are three red-skinned priests wearing red robes sitting in lotus positions on the floor. They stare unseeing at the doorway with milk-white eyes, but seem to focus directly at you as you enter.*

This room is where the bodies of Yuga's champions are kept, their spirits long since transferred to Elai hosts, undergoing the same torments as the party. The bodies resting on the biers are heroic in stature, each laid out as if in a funerary pose

wearing armor and shields and clasping gleaming weapons.

The priests are Varna aesthetes, monks dedicated to an absolute inward focus of their senses in order to channel the power of the underworld into summoning Yuga's champions. While blind, they are able to extend their mind to sense creatures without the use of their eyes.

**Varna aesthete (3):** Init +8, Atk mind blast +8 missile fire (2d3 Int damage, range 100', DC 20 Will save to resist); AC 10; HD 7d8+7; hp 48, 49, 50; MV 0' or levitate 20'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP create automaton, blindsense (perfect perception of all things, including invisible targets, within 100'); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +8; AL N.

In combat the aesthetes use their minds to blast targets. Intelligence lost to the mind blast heals normally unless the creature falls below 0 Intelligence, in which case the target falls into a death-like coma. Each round they can also attempt to wake up the mindless body of one of Yuga's champions by making a DC 15 spell check with a +7 bonus, turning it into an automaton under their control.

**Champion automaton:** Init +6; Atk +4 magic weapon +8 melee (1d8+11); AC 18; HD 6d12+18; hp 60; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP crit on 18-20; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; AL Varies.

PCs spending a turn searching can find their true bodies amongst the rows of men and women. Any weapons or artifacts of power they find can only be wielded by the champion it is identified with while in their original body. It is up to the judge to determine what, if any artifacts are found with the PC's bodies, but in general they should provide a +4 magical effect based on the type of item it is.

## AREA D-5 - CHAMBER OF THE GODS

*A large domed chamber of crystal stretches out before you, filled with a beautiful light reflected from the many facets on the surface of the ceiling. Flowing up from the center of the room is a spiral of azure energy that soars through the ceiling of the dome, spreading out high above into the sky. A short raised platform on the opposite side of the room holds three flowering blossoms that form pedestals. Sitting calmly in the central flower is a white-bearded elderly man with deep blue skin. He holds no weapons and makes no move to attack.*

The gods rule their world from this chamber. The room is a sanctuary created by the Caretakers, and the holiest place for their Elai worshippers, forever revered by those of their faith. Inside the sanctuary, spells targeted at the any of the Caretakers or their worshippers suffer a -10 penalty to spell checks until the chamber is physically destroyed, desecrated, and the ground itself is salted or doused with cursed waters and oils. The spire itself is the conduit for the energies released from the underworld portal, acting as a resonator to amplify the Caretaker's power. At least one Caretaker must be present in the room to maintain the focus of the energies and prevent them from fracturing the spire and being dispersed.

Vaygesa sits calmly awaiting the party. If spoken to, he will entreat the PCs to sit and offers to tell them why the Caretakers seek to break Yuga's word. If the PCs listen, Vaygesa weaves a compelling tale, but also seeks to trap the PCs with his power over speech. The judge should keep track of how long the PCs attend him in real time. For each round (10 seconds), Vaygesa words become harder to resist. PCs attempting to break away or take any hostile action must make a cumulative DC 5 Will save for each round that they listened. For example, if a PC listens for 5 rounds, they would make a DC 25 Will save to take action in the sixth round.

**Vaygesa, renegade champion of neutrality:** Init +10; Atk skull wheel +8 missile fire (2d8+4 plus special); AC 17; HD 10d8+30; hp 80; MV 30'; Act special; SP hypnotic speech, skull wheel, spells (+13 spell check: *second sight*, *righteous fire*, *whirling doom*); SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +16; AL N.

If attacked, Vaygesa splits into a number of reflections equal to the number of PCs in the party, each identical to the other with a single 1d30 action. Vaygesa carries a weapon, the skull-wheel, a spinning ultrasonic emitter that causes pain and confusion to creatures (DC 24 Fort save or lose next

action). All of Vaygesa's reflections must be defeated for him to be killed.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If Vaygesa is defeated, the crystal spire begins to lose its focusing ability. Great cracks appear in the faceted faces, and the very mountain begins to break apart from the released stress. The PCs must find a way to flee before it collapses, otherwise they are crushed as the portal beneath to the underworld is resealed under tons of rock and debris.

As the power that holds them in this world dissipates, the bodies of Yuga's champions begin to fade, though if their spirits have not been rejoined to them, they are trapped in their new forms much like the PCs, and must begin the journey again to becoming great heroes as any memories of their future slowly fades away.

If the PCs discover their roles as eternal champions and survive their confrontation with the Caretakers, they have several options to conclude the adventure. If the PCs do nothing, their original bodies disappear, along with their memories, abilities and possessions. They begin play at level one in the next adventure and carry with them a sense of some greater destiny. They can either choose to retain the class they experienced, or select a new one, as all classes are but one aspect of the cosmic balance.

If the PCs chose to return to their original bodies prior to confronting the Caretakers, it now comes with the knowledge that unless they, like the Caretakers, can find a way to cheat fate, in the end they too will fade away and be returned to the cosmos - and possibly peace - thereby restoring a measure of balance to the universe.

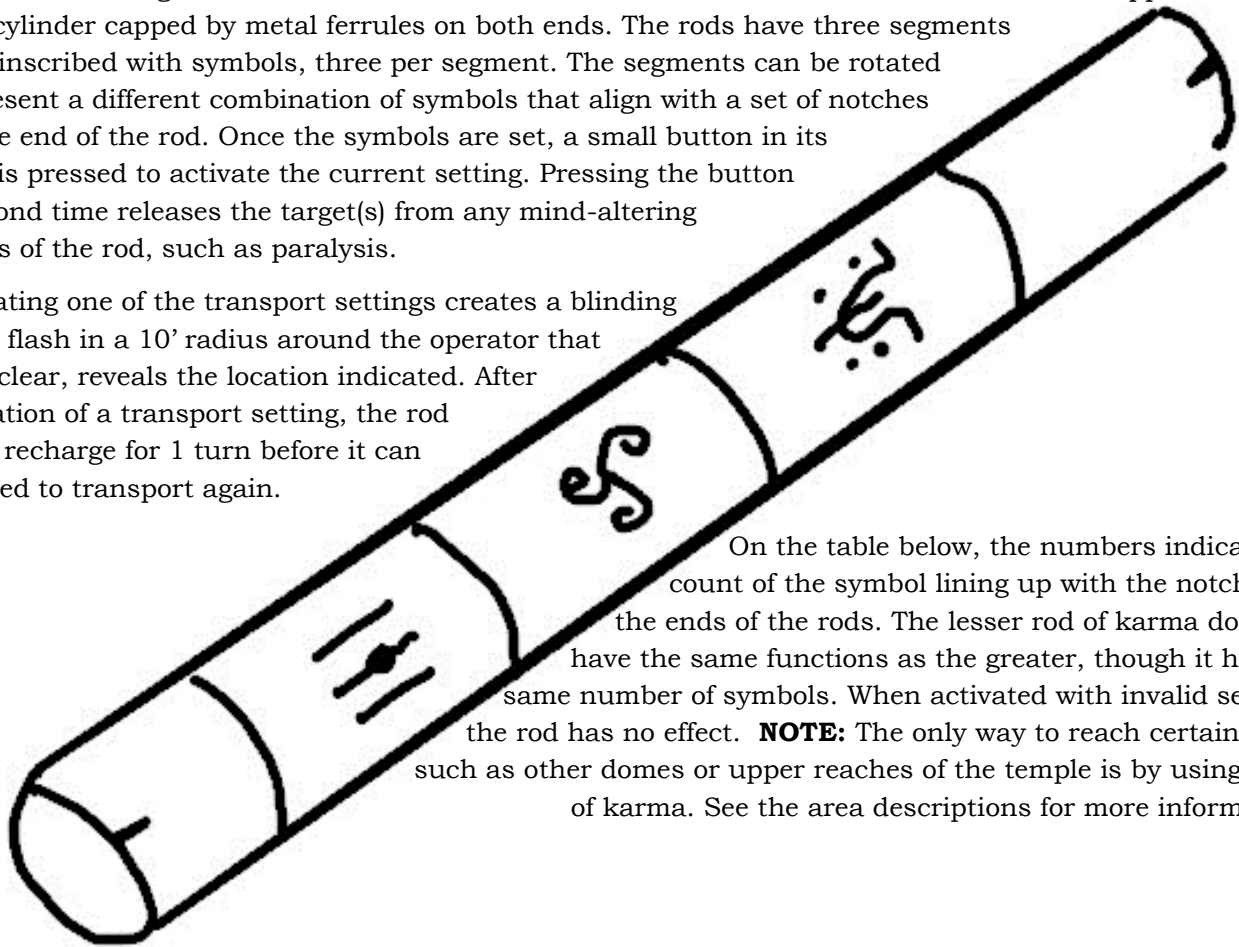
*While the Gods Laugh* has extensive supporting material in the web enhancement available for free on the Mystic Bull Games website ([www.mysticbull.com](http://www.mysticbull.com)). Included there are characters sheet "masks" to keep the players in the dark as to their true natures — revealing only what they find out through gameplay. Also, we have a "build your own" rod of karma that fits around a paper towel tube. Go check it out! Marc went all out for this adventure, as he is want to do.

I have to say, this adventure is one of the best DCC experiences I've ever had — your players will love this adventure. I've played with Marc for a few years now including a long running DCC campaign (kicked off with Dieter Zimmerman's *Not in Kansas Anymore*) that started in 1974 Lake Geneva, Wisconsin (yes, someone had a 0-level game designer named Gary) and went off into the cosmos. I hope to see more of Marc's creativity in future issues. And someone tell him to get back to that DCC game. My college professor/wizard is itching to find his way back home.




# APPENDIX: THE RODS OF KARMA

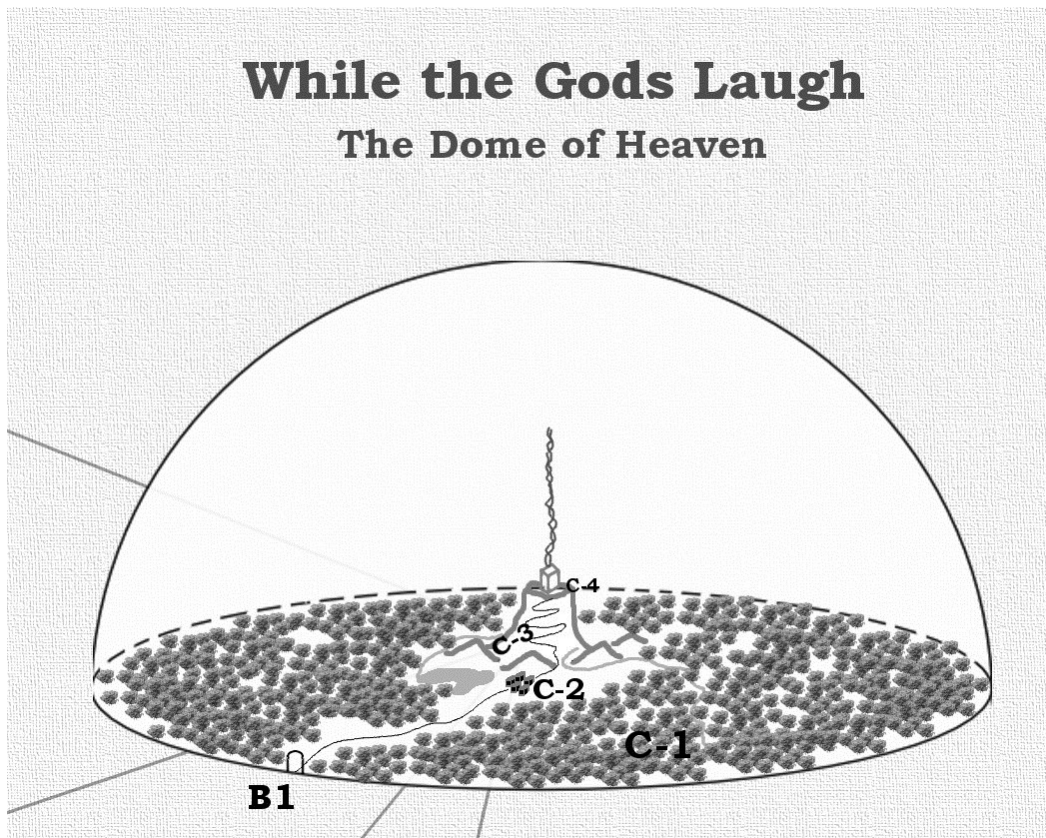
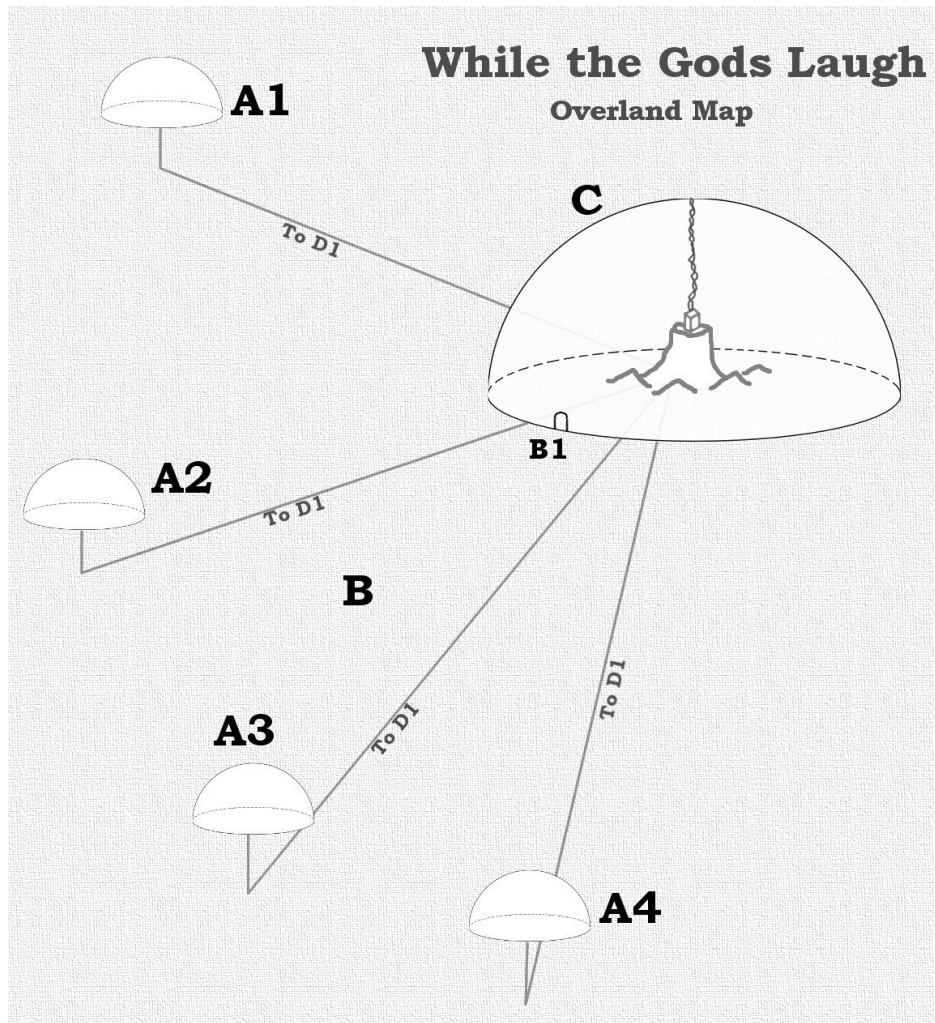
The lesser and greater rods of karma are artifacts that the priesthood uses to move between areas and control their charges — the Elai and the souls that inhabit them. Both rods have a similar appearance: A 1' long cylinder capped by metal ferrules on both ends. The rods have three segments each inscribed with symbols, three per segment. The segments can be rotated to present a different combination of symbols that align with a set of notches on the end of the rod. Once the symbols are set, a small button in its base is pressed to activate the current setting. Pressing the button a second time releases the target(s) from any mind-altering effects of the rod, such as paralysis.

Activating one of the transport settings creates a blinding white flash in a 10' radius around the operator that once clear, reveals the location indicated. After activation of a transport setting, the rod must recharge for 1 turn before it can be used to transport again.

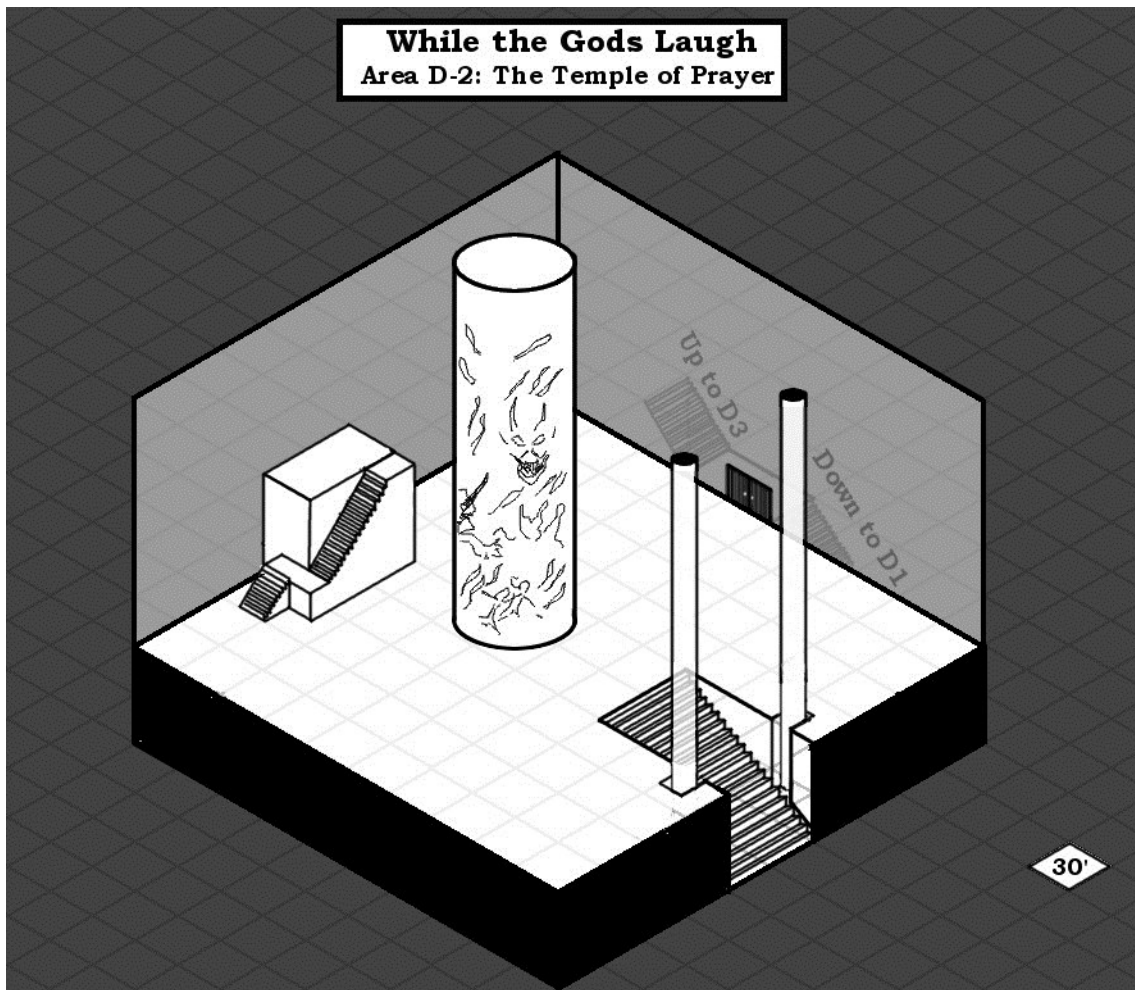


On the table below, the numbers indicate the count of the symbol lining up with the notches on the ends of the rods. The lesser rod of karma does not have the same functions as the greater, though it has the same number of symbols. When activated with invalid settings the rod has no effect. **NOTE:** The only way to reach certain areas such as other domes or upper reaches of the temple is by using a rod of karma. See the area descriptions for more information.

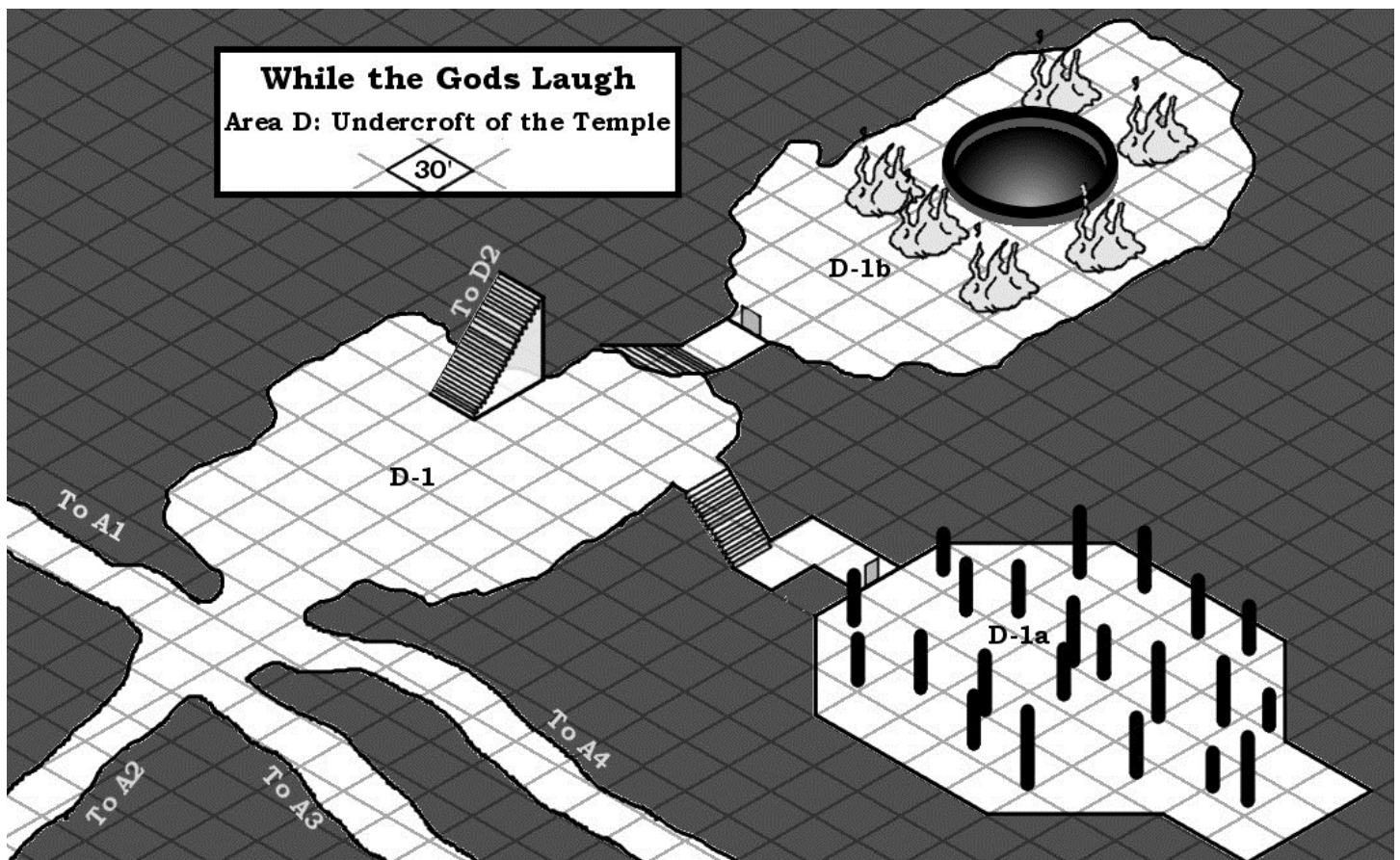
Rod of Karma Table			
 Symbol of Vaygesa	 Symbol of Rudra	 Symbol of Anthos	Effect
Lesser and Greater Rod Settings			
2	1	0	Transports to Area A-1a
2	0	1	Transports to Area A-2
1	0	2	Transports to Area A-3
0	1	2	Transports to Area A-4
1	1	1	Transports to Area B-1
0	0	3	Paralysis; Up to three targets; Will save (DC 24)
Greater Rod Settings			
0	2	1	Mind Purge; Fort save (DC 24)
1	2	0	Reincarnation
0	3	0	Death; Fort save (DC 24)
3	0	0	Transports to Area D-5

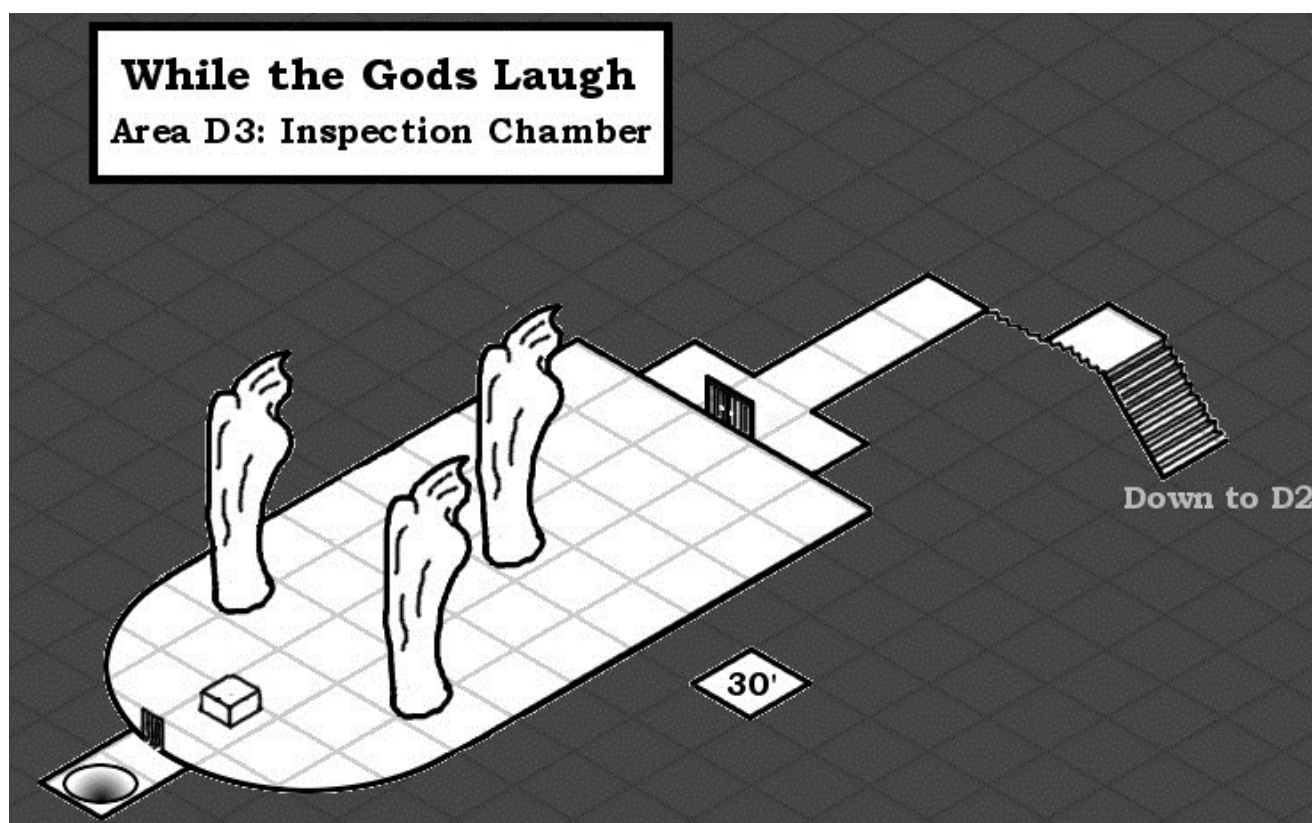
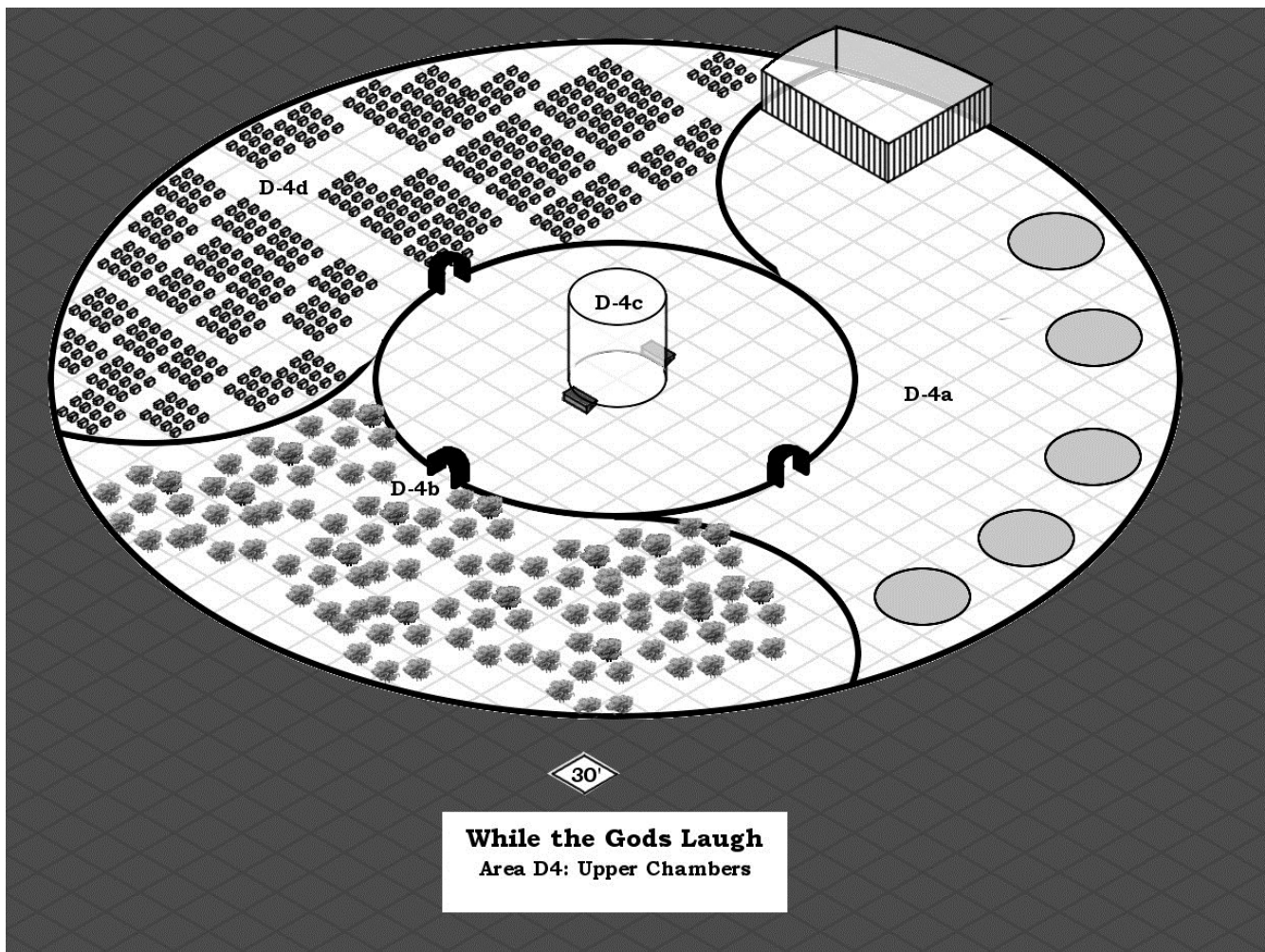


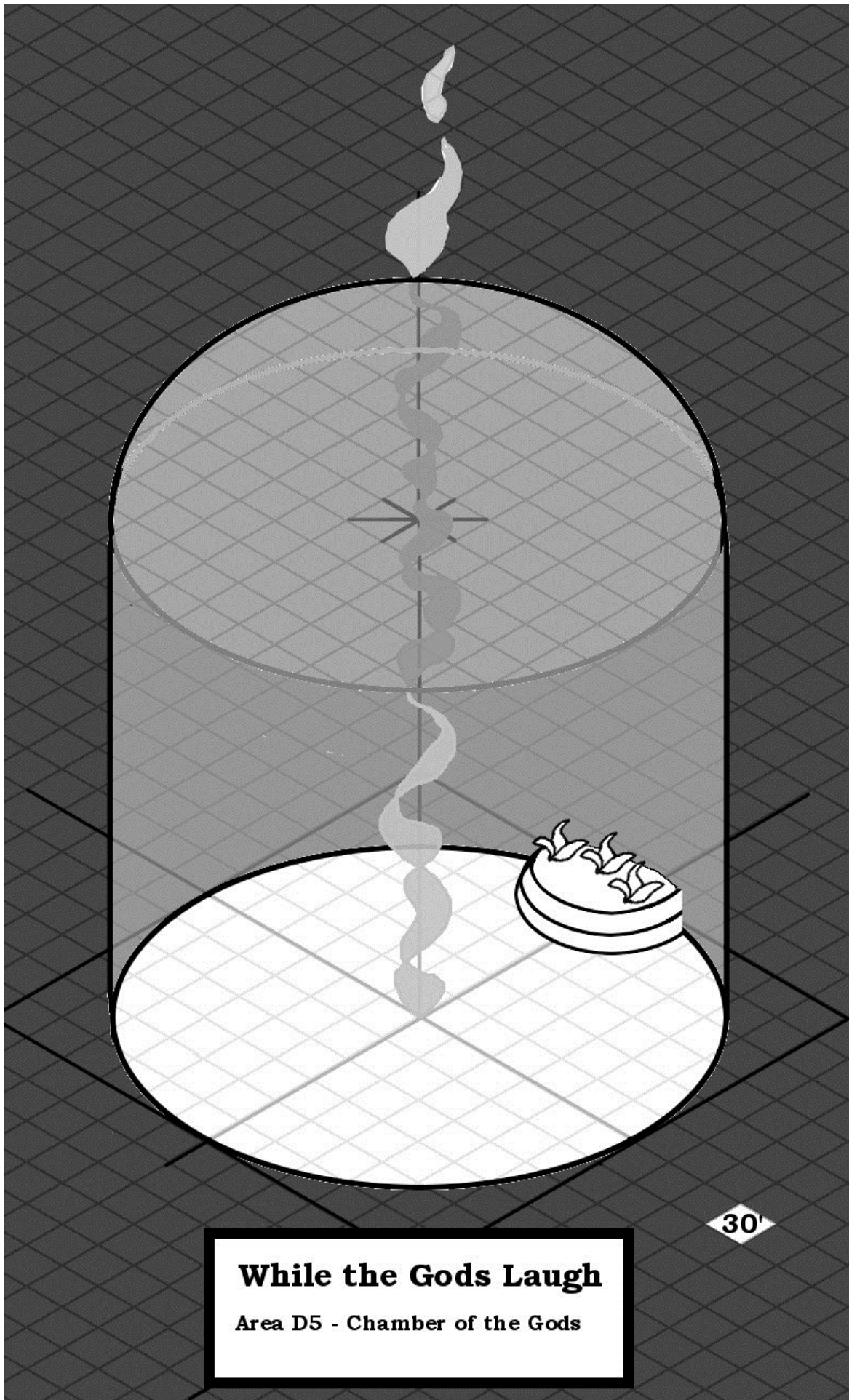
**While the Gods Laugh**  
Area D-2: The Temple of Prayer



**While the Gods Laugh**  
Area D: Undercroft of the Temple









## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

D.A.M.N. is a resource by and for the DCC RPG community, and we want your input, your content, and your creativity to be front and center. Read the submission guidelines below and consider helping us make this resource the best that community has to offer.

### WHAT DO WE NEED?

We're looking to feature game content of any kind in the DCC RPG milieu. Have a spell? Monster? Patron? Set-piece encounter? Short adventure? Send over your **concept** and **expected word count**. Keep in mind that we're looking for relatively short pieces—generally less than 3,000 words, and most much shorter (see Dave Persinger's Nalfeshnee patron or James Spahn's Swashbuckler class in this issue for examples). Unsolicited submissions will be reviewed, and you will hear back quickly whether what you have is what we need for an upcoming issue.

**We also need art** - we most often request specific art, so if you're an artist, send over a link to your portfolio and your contact info. Understand that we have a fairly aggressive schedule for the magazine — we're looking to publish once a quarter for 2018, so timelines are generally pretty short (about a month to deliver art pieces requested) Our biggest need is in black and white line art (obviously). But, every issue needs a color cover.

### WHAT DO WE PAY?

For content, expect about \$3.00 a page (about a \$0.01 a word). When we accept a concept, we'll provide you with a quote for the completed content.

We pay market rates for interior black and white and color cover art. We will put out bids for art for each issue and a delivery date.

### WHO OWNS MY CREATION?

You do! We're paying for the right to feature your work in the magazine. We'll always ask your permission to do anything outside the magazine with your creation (including using your content to promote the magazine).

### WHO DO I TALK TO?

Send your pitches and art introductions over to [damn-mag@mysticbull.com](mailto:damn-mag@mysticbull.com). We have issues to fill for 2018, so get those ideas over to us!



# ENJOY THE ISSUE?



**DON'T HAVE**

**TWO MINDS**

**ABOUT IT!**

**LET US KNOW**

**TODAY!**

**[damn-mag@mysticbull.com](mailto:damn-mag@mysticbull.com)**

# D.A.M.N!

DCC RPG ADVENTURE MAGAZINE & NEWS

HELL  
IS THE  
LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES





# FLAMMABLE HOSPITAL

*Nurse Penelope Takes a Break*

Excerpt from Kala Gruber's  
**Passions of the Heat**

America's Newest Family Party

Un-Game



## Exclusive Crowdfunding Preview





Enjoy this special preview of the 100 Guest Stars character generator for Flammable Hospital the LARP game. Watch your favorite crowdfunding site for more exciting news from West Arlington County's favorite (and only) hospital.

Roll	Occupation	Medical Device	Disease	Insurance
01	1st Year Intern	Bottle of Xanax (as candy)	Perineal Hematoma	None
02	Stabbing Victim	Tourniquet (as belt)	Bromodosis	Voodoo HMO
03	Mr. Brann, Math Teacher	Blood Filter (as cocktail)	Condyloma Acuminatum	Orcuscare
04	Zika Virus Patient 0	Hand fan (as laser rifle)	Bromhidrosis	None
05	Pervert Nurse	Suggestive Bedpan (as club)	Alopecia	Union Insurance
06	Fireworks salesman	Bag of fireworks (as cantaloupe)	Frostbite	Born on the
07	Guy called "Devon"	Heat exchanger (as cardiopulmonary bypass)	Fistula	Something (issues) (rd")
08	Retired Wrestler	Metal Chair (as catheter)	Concussed; Psychotic	WWHMC
09	Person on Fire	Fire (as aspirin)	On fire	Fire Insurance (s vote weekly) (personnel only)
10	Chronic fibromyalgia sufferer	Long boring stories (as soporific)	Flu	County Insurance
11	Wrestling tape trader	Picture of retired wrestler (as SSRI)	Antihistamine addiction	WWPMC
12	Tiny Tim	Ossicular Prosthesis	Renal Tubular Acidosis	Public Health
13	Deflated Terrorist	Bomb vest (as penile prosthesis)	Depression	PLOHMO (ator buttons)
14	Fanfiction Writer	Pillow pressure alarm	Paraphilia, various	Dad's Insurance (with
15	Frank Booth	Amyl Nitrate in canister	Angina (supposedly)	Blue Velvet Insurance
16	Failed DC superhero	Stinger gun (as stimulant)	Apiphobia	Farmer's
17	Immigrant from North Kovacistan	Twin coil dialyzer (as...?)	Gynecomastia	Pocket lint
18	Self proclaimed game designer	How to do things really good with games and stuff!	Hypersensitivity	Gofundme (in real e can recall.
19-20	Star Jackson	Cranioplasty plate (as joke)	Vitreous floaters	Actor's Guild
21	Cosplay LARPer	Sleep Apnea monitor	Pica	SCA-PPO

## Arlington West County TV Guide

### Evening Saturday, June 3

- 6:00** **7** **Accidental Swastika** — “College Is Hard”
- 6:30** **7** **Trust My Fish** — “Weak Episode” — Sass-horde accidentally planned dates for 2 elves on the same night. Berwyn tries to spellburn his way into a promotion
- 6:45** **7** **That Pickling Show** — The ladies take on shandahr root and watermelon.
- 7:00** **7** **Farmer’s Daughter’s Almanac** — Fashion trends in jean hot pants discussed.
- 7:10** **7** **Resurrect My Ride** — Glathorax brings in his fallen steed Stormthrust to be brought back to life by the boys. An update on Slostax the Sly and his trusted giant salamander Mxlyxz.
- 7:11** **7** **EVERYBODY BE QUIET!** — Quiet champ Slaffhard meets 2 new competitors. Silence abounds.
- 7:15** **7** **FUNDO!® Presents: Sportsball!** — The Big Locals take on the Crosstown Hated Rivals in a game of importance, storylines; 3:1 odds. Starr Jackson hosts.
- 8:00** **7** **Evening Movie: Black Gestapo** (1975) General Ahmed of the People’s Inner City Army loses control of Colonel Kojah who forms a “protection squad” to fight the Mob.
- 10:00** **7** **It’s Wizard Thyme with Chef Wayne** — Chef Wayne and Hank Jr. cook up some BBQ War Boar. Chef Evans makes cookies.
- 10:30** **7** **Paolo’s Got Your Goat!** — Paolo takes a trip to South Kovacistan to show you the cutest damn mountain dwelling goats you’ve ever seen.
- 11:00** **7** **Real Housewives of Lake Geneva** — Glenda loses the family dice bag while Sheryl tells Jenna she’s only a Personality 4. But sparks fly with Gail takes off with all the money.
- 11:30** **7** **Follow that Plough** — Knut McChesterson and the gang follow the Tall Pines City snowplow along the highways and byways of rural Michiguant.
- 11:45** **7** **Flammable Hospital’s Got Talent** — Nicky from floor 12 sings an Aria; Judges Jarito and Regalta have an on camera spat.
- 11:46** **7** **Flagellation with Scott Hubbs** — An interview with Dinky Riddles.
- 12:00** **7** **Through the Nighthole** — A shoving match between two people you’d least expect.

## Excerpt from Kala Gruber’s latest novel *Passions of the Heat*

...put down the glass of milk. To anyone else, the apartment was silent, but to Gidget, a medical school-trained assassin, it was awash in sounds. Upstairs, someone took a dump, straining at their issue. Next door, a woman chatted with a beau on some video chat software. It tasted like Hangouts. Gidget shifted her weight. And here, in the bedroom across the hall, she heard the heartbeat of her quarry. The man wasn’t long for this world, as it was. His heart was ever so slightly arrhythmic. He should be at the hospital, Gidget thought. Too bad he’ll be in the morgue before that.

As if responding to her thought, the man sighed heavily, almost whining the air out of his lungs. Hmm, Gidget thought. Asthmatic, too. She smelled his movement before he took a step, and had the scalpel out in one fluid motion. The man saw her shadow move across the kitchen and before he could let out a ...

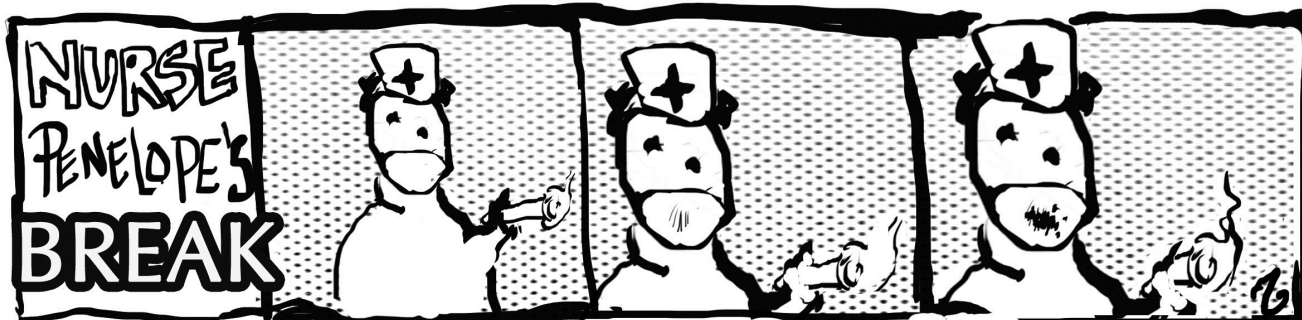
### Flammable Hospital Crossword

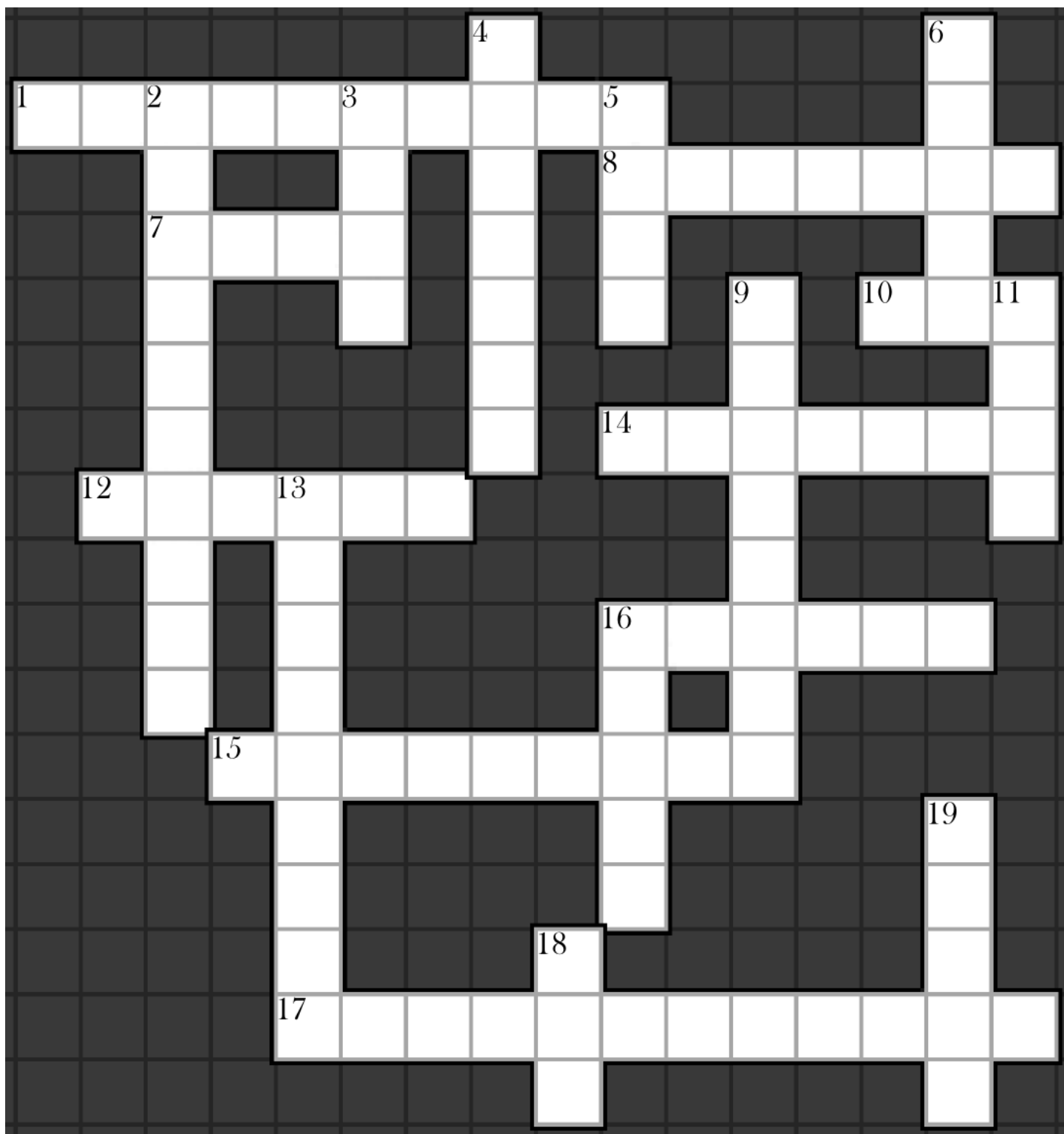
#### Across

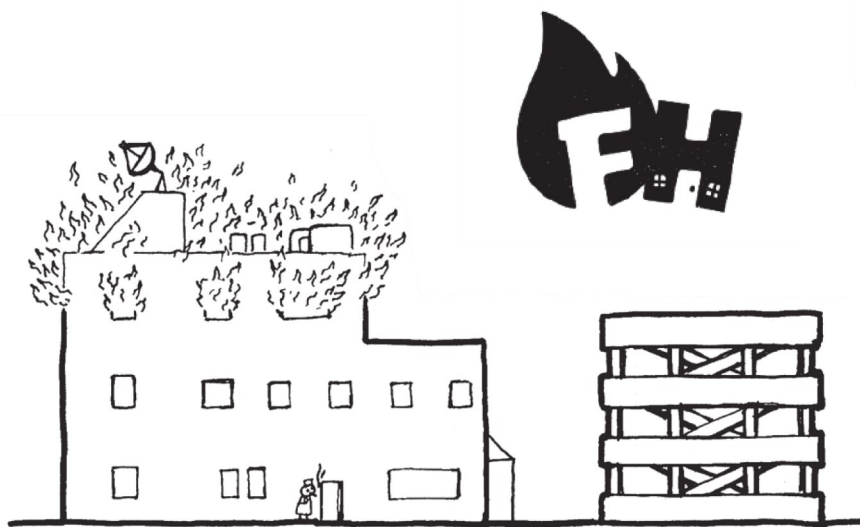
1. Dragging the body close to the ground unto expiration.
7. D&D Elder
8. Millhouses and \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_seed gets up.
12. The Squid Sorcerer is here.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Santorum?
15. Perpetual state of the medical facility.
16. The moon Reid crawls under.
17. 2% chance of appearing on Flammable Hospital (backwards)

#### Down

2. Classic city of peril and plunder (pig latin)
3. This is \_\_\_\_\_town.
4. Nerd family reunion (Northern Edition)
5. Take \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Cure/Cause of all visits to F.H.
9. The night nurse at Flammable Hospital
11. Best \_\_\_\_\_ magazine ever
13. A wizardly podcast
16. D.K. alias
18. Dark Master’s manifesto
19. Buff Dark Trails Fireman







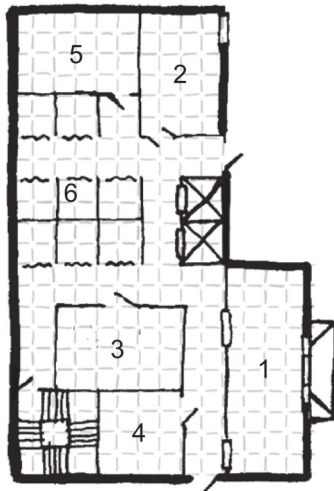
# FLAMMABLE

## HOSPITAL

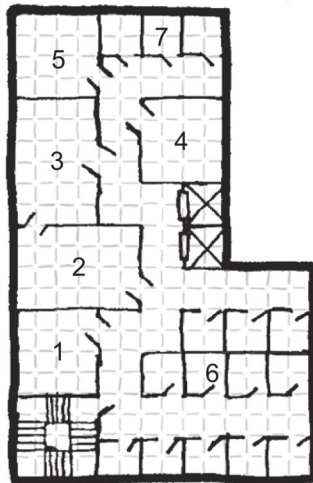
### Parking Garage Encounters

- 1 Mr. Pharmacist  
trenchcoat, only takes cash
- 2 Nurse Penelope  
out of smokes, could get violent
- 3 Patient Zero & Friends  
1d4+1 ghouls (mostly employees)
- 4 Giant Robots Fighting  
they turn into cars if they notice you
- 5 Prostitute (random sex & gender)  
paying medical bills one b.j. at a time
- 6 1d6 Evil Mogwai  
they turn cars, lights, etc. into traps
- 7 Lepre-Con-Man  
greedy little liar in all green
- 8 Dr. Barbituate (Barbie for short)  
shooting dice w/ cook, janitor, & guard

1<sup>nd</sup> Floor



2<sup>nd</sup> Floor



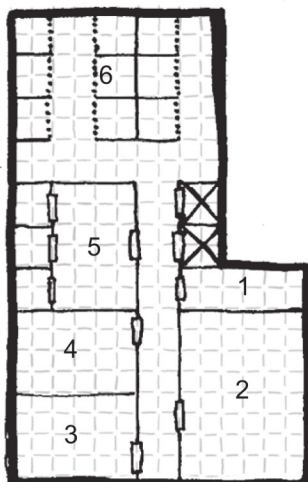
1<sup>st</sup> Floor

- 1 Waiting Room
- 2 ER Processing
- 3 Benny Hill Memorial Nurses' Lounge
- 4 Insecurity Office (guards with anxiety issues)
- 5 Records & Billing ("Beware the Leopard")
- 6 Surgical Beds

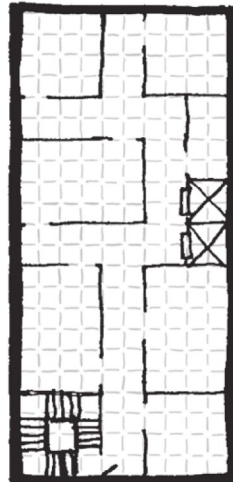
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

- 1 Trepanation Ward
- 2 Democratic Euthanasia Ward (patients vote weekly)
- 3 Soylent Production Lab (authorized personnel only)
- 4 Antivax Ward
- 5 Genital Enhancement Ward
- 6 Patient Rooms
- 7 Administrative Offices

Basement  
(classified)



3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
(on fire)



Basement

- Can only be reached by pressing the elevator buttons in a complicated secret sequence.
- 1 Incinerator
  - 2 Early Learning Lab (toddler-sized maze with a line of pure uncut klartesh at the end)
  - 3 Bioenhancement Lab
  - 4 Parapsychology Lab
  - 5 WMD Testing Lab
  - 6 Test Subject Cells

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

All the boring stuff like X-Ray labs that are in real hospitals. Has been on fire as long as anyone can recall.

A Zero-Level  
Funnel Adventure  
for  
**NOWHERE CITY  
NIGHTS**



# OUTLIVE, OUTSMART, OUTKILL!

Written by Julian Bernick

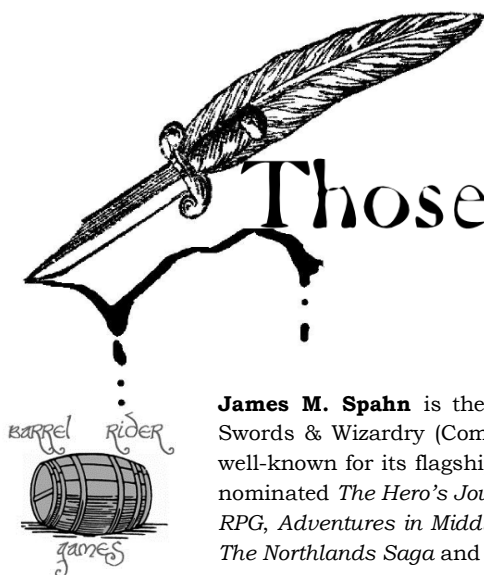
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COMPATIBLE WITH  
**DCC  
RPG**



# Those with the DAMNed Pen

**James M. Spahn** is the owner/operator of Barrel Rider Games, publisher of supplements for DCC RPG, Swords & Wizardry (Complete and Whitebox), Labyrinth Lord, OSRIC, Starships & Spacemen and is most well-known for its flagship OSR sci-fi game *White Star: White Box Science Fiction Roleplaying* and the award-nominated *The Hero's Journey Fantasy Roleplaying*. James has served as a freelance author for *The One Ring RPG*, *Adventures in Middle-Earth*, *Star Wars: Force & Destiny*, *The Lost Lands: Bard's Gate*, *The Lost Lands: The Northlands Saga* and *Rocket Age*.

**Marc Bruner** is a life-long gamer who was quite suspiciously spawned the same year as Dungeons and Dragons was released, making it almost certain that there is some tenuous psychic connection the universe was trying to establish between the two events. When not running Dinosaur Crawl Classics games for his kids or playing with chits, for the past two years, Marc has contributed his wrangling skills to the DCC community 'zine *The Gongfarmer's Almanac* and wrote the 2016 holiday adventure for Goodman Games, *Twilight of the Solstice*. Marc is currently a co-host on the DCC RPG Appendix N podcast, *Sanctum Secorum* and a contributor to its companion 'zine. We used that picture without his permission. Surprise!



**Julian Bernick** is the creator of *Nowhere City Nights*, a 21st century occult noir setting for DCC RPG and a co-host of the DCC RPG podcast *Spellburn*. His other writing credits include *World Quest of the Winter Calendar* with Steve Bean, *The Oblivion Syndicate* and *The Millennial Mead* (with Fred Dailey) in the 2016 *Gongfarmer's Almanac*. He has recently published poetry in Terra Frank's *Dungeon Lord* 'zine and serves as a poetry editor for *Whistling Shade* magazine. Co-founder of the Minneapolis DCC RPG Society, he's always interested in meeting new gamers in the Twin Cities area. His favorite color is green and he doesn't enjoy writing about himself in the third person.



For the safety of his family, **SGT Dave** goes by the alias **David Persinger**, a technical writer for a semiconductor manufacturing company. He was born at the confluence of two mighty rivers, beyond the primeval forests of the Pacific Northwest. His father was a great black bear; his mother, a badger. As soon as he was able to walk, he toiled a summer picking strawberries to earn the requisite copper coins to purchase TSR's *Dungeon!* from a vast fluorescent-festooned shopping mall. Shortly thereafter, he obtained a D&D pink box (known as the "magenta" box by the effeminately insecure) from a dank thrift shop in an ill-reputed neighborhood. However, fate's fickle hand aligned our hero with scurrilous, head-banging friends, more interested in high-banged girls clad in acid-washed jeans, than playing ignominiously dorkish games with sinister, mathematical rules. After twenty years of filling Pee-Chee folders with pathetically questless characters, Dave created fellow gamers through a chemical process known as procreation. He now plays DCC RPG with his home-brewed minions, as well as infrequent groups in the Texas Hill Country. This issue contains his first published RPG work since the Mayfair Games DC Heroes RPG *Hardware*.



**Paul Wolfe** has done a lot of things. He's proud of most of them. *D.A.M.N. Magazine* is one of them. But, there's other stuff, too. He once tackled a friend and knocked out the man's two front teeth. He's not proud of that. Paul is co-owner of Mystic Bull Games and has written a bit of stuff for DCC RPG, White Star RPG, and various OSR bits and bobs. He really needed to drag a comb through that rats' nest for the photo, though. Not proud of that. And his chin looks MASSIVE! Finally. Dave wrote so much that the picture doesn't fit properly. Classic Dave.



**Jason Sholtis** is a badass artist and writer. He wrote the *Dungeon Dozen*, as well as *Operation Unfathomable* — an adventure in *Knockspell* magazine and a forthcoming expanded version for Swords & Wizardry and DCC RPG. His art has graced many an OSR publication, and they are better for it. Jason refused to write his bio, so we can write whatever we want here. We'll be nice, though.



**James A. Pozenel, Jr.** started playing D&D in the early eighties. Along the way to being a software architect and father, his passion for gaming led him to play in Society for Creative Anachronism and obtain a Bachelor's degree in Medieval studies. He has contributed to *The Gongfarmers' Almanac* for the past two years and just finished his first game book for DCC RPG: *Angels, Daemons & Beings Between, Vol. 2: Elfland Edition*. Coming off a successful Kickstarter, the book of fey themed patrons is published by Shinobi 27 Games.



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