



# QUARANTINE Vol 2 ZINE

HEROES

THE SOCIAL DISTANCE COLLECTIVE  
PROUDLY PRESENTS:  
THE TUNNEL

COMPATIBLE WITH

DCC  
RPG

BAU

# QUARANTINE ZINE



The Social Distance Collective

COMPATIBLE WITH  
**DCC  
RPG**

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Quarantine continues and so does QuaranZine! Inspired by Goodman Games' release for free of the classic funnel "A Portal Under The Stars" as part of the DCC Quick Start rules, we decided to create our own brand new funnels for you to run for friends and strangers alike. All the adventures are designed to fit in the usual 4-hour convention slot, and we've tried to stay true to that fantastical, genre-bending, DCC-style. Each of these adventures contains everything you need to kick-start a new campaign or introduce a group of new players to the magic of the DCC system.

Much of the RPG world is still stuck at home without much to do, but since the last volume was released, some of us found we were able to do more gaming than ever! With so many more people getting their game time online, we had more opportunities to test out our homebrew. Life always manages to get busy, but the DCC RPG community once again banded together to make a homemade zine celebrating the game that we've been prevented from playing in person for now, and maybe raising a bit of money for a good cause in the process.

The following content is pulled directly from our home games, creative projects, and isolation-addled minds, and we hope it helps entertain you through this insane timeline we're currently stuck in. Any proceeds from sales of this product will go to GiveDirectly, a highly-rated charity that sends the money directly to families in need of assistance to pay basic living expenses through a special COVID-19 fund (visit <https://www.givedirectly.org/covid-19/> for details or to donate). Our first issue raised over \$450 for COVID relief, and we look forward to adding to that number with this edition. Thanks for reading, stay safe, and please STAY AT HOME until it's safe to adventure once more!

- Judge Stefan & Judge Yossarian

PS - We welcome feedback on the adventures, fun stories of how you used our content, and interest in contributing to a future volume; just email [socialdistancecollective@gmail.com](mailto:socialdistancecollective@gmail.com) !

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Davin Kluttz • 2020

# ***INSECTOIDS FROM OUTER SPACE!***

**A level 0-1 DCC RPG adventure**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This is a DCC RPG module for 12-24 0-level or 4-6 1st level characters. The PCs must escape an abduction by alien insectoids who snatch them and their fellow villagers to suck their brains for food. There are multiple endings and a possible patron to serve.

## **BACKGROUND**

An intelligent species of alien insectoids evolved millions of years ago to reach the stars. Establishing their colonies inside asteroids, they convert the interior into their hive and install insectoid technology to transform the space rock into a spacecraft. Their Queen pilots the ship with her incredible brain as they search galaxies for sentient life to feed on. Due to the size of each colony and the ease with which they multiply an insectoid infestation can potentially wipe out life on an entire planet.

Insectoids feed on the brains of intelligent life. Their vision is bad, even worse in bright light, which will scramble their antennae. The antennae is their most important organ, used for scanning for brain waves, manipulating insectoid silk, and communication through pheromone detection. Insectoids do not fear death as their numbers are strong. They live and die for the colony.

*The Queen* is large-sized. A sack hangs from the end of her enormous physogastric abdomen where wet, sticky, fertilized eggs drip from. She can sense brain waves on a planetary scale from a lightyear away. She pilots the ship with her incredible brain, connected by tentacles to an organic engine created from advanced insectoid technology.

*Drones* are medium-sized. They are the defenders of the colony, with thicker carapace and larger claws to grab and crush victims and decapitate prey before sucking their brains out. They are the only other insectoids that can fly besides the Queen. Drones fertilize eggs, and when they are finished, the Queen will eat them.

*Workers* are medium-sized and the most common. They have larger mandibles used for carrying eggs and livestock and constructing and maintaining the hive ship. They can spit a silken webbing used for hive construction and wrapping and storing prey for the long space journey. They're job is to tend livestock, keeping it sedated and fed with glutinous sugar which they produce inside their proboscis. The sugar can keep the brains of prey alive for long periods of time, allowing the hive to survive in deep space where food sources are scarce, but travel is necessary.

*Nymphs* are small-sized. They live in the burrow networks connecting the deepest parts of the hive, feeding on leftover brain material and flesh. They metamorphose into adults within 30 days.

*Grubs* are small-sized. They feed on flesh and bone before metamorphosing into nymphs. They are insatiable and in large numbers are very dangerous. They metamorphose into a nymph within 10 days.

*Mutants* are the prey of the Queen who have given her their fealty in exchange for their lives. They've betrayed their kind and now unquestionably serve and obey the Queen. Over time the corruption of her influence slowly mutates their bodies to look more like an insectoid.

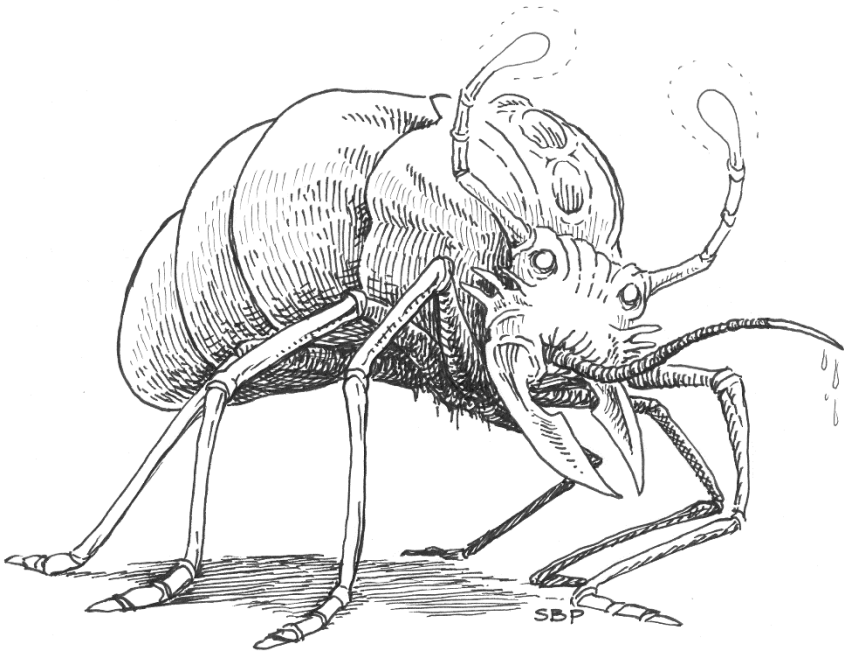
**PC Intelligence:** Optionally, target characters with the highest Intelligence rather than the lowest Luck. Insectoids can detect brain waves and the more intelligent brain, the louder the signal is. As the Judge, ask each player the Intelligence scores of their PCs and mix it up with Luck scores for targeting them.

**Brainwave Scan:** Adult insectoids scan for brain waves with their antennae up to 60'. When PCs attempt to sneak or do something that would require not causing attention, the PCs must make DC 12 Intelligence checks to avoid being detected. Insectoids have poor vision but can find prey with their antennae.

**Bug Parts:** Creative players may attempt to use insectoid body parts. The shells and chitinous parts are durable and last a long time but the fleshier pieces decompose. PCs who want to use bug parts are only able to get one off each insectoid:

- **Insectoid Antenna** (*worker* or *drone*, manipulate insectoid silk)
- **Insectoid Mandible** (*worker*, 1d4, melee)
- **Insectoid Sugar** (*worker*, 1 hp when ingested, -1d for one action)
- **Insectoid Shell** (*drone*, +1 AC, shield or helmet)
- **Insectoid Claw** (*drone*, 1d6, melee)





## PLAYER START

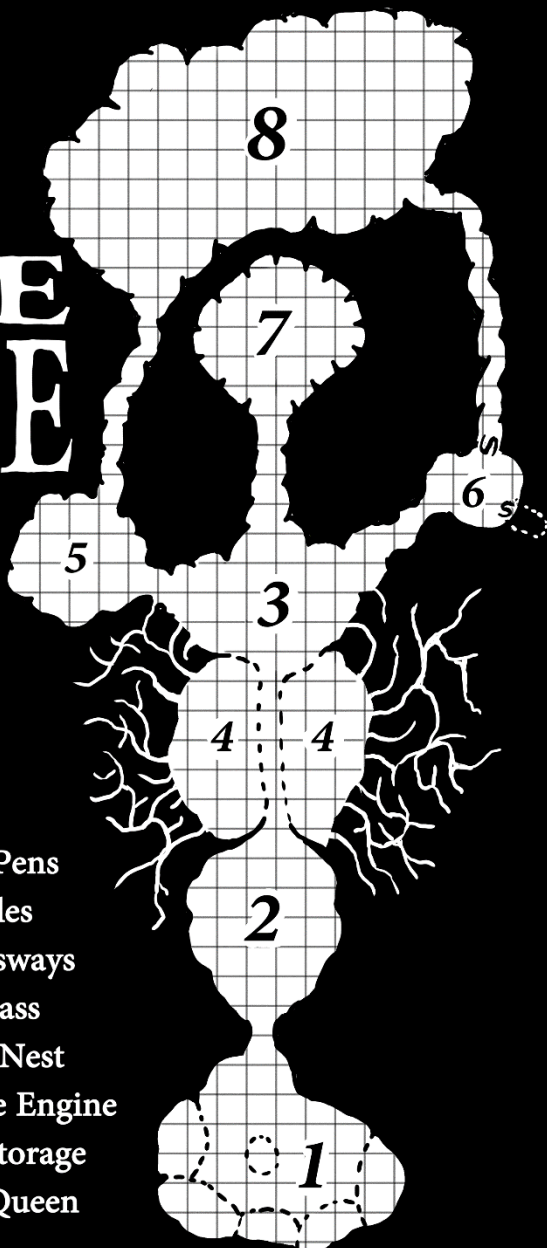
Have players go around the room and share what their characters do in the village. Ask them follow up questions. Get them to build up the village and care about it. Once the players have done this, give them a depiction of a normal, unexciting day at it's end, just before the invasion.

When you are ready, read the following:

*A thunderous crack from the sky woke you up. It was just before dawn. You looked outside to see mountainous rock had crushed into the ground where the markets are. You left your hut to inspect the damage, as did your neighbors. Panic settled in quickly, as terrifying swarms of shadows poured from the craters of the monolith; the townsfolk found themselves the targets of a chaotic raid. Something hit you and knocked you out. The last thing you remember seeing was an insect the size of a man.*

# THE HIVE

1. Holding Pens
2. Junk Piles
3. Hive Crossways
4. Grub Mass
5. Insectoid Nest
6. Asteroid Hive Engine
7. Livestock Storage
8. Insectoid Queen



## AREAS OF THE MAP

**Map Features:** The asteroid hive ship interior is covered with prismatic crystals, infused with colorful bioluminescence providing enough light for the PCs to see as if in candlelight. Insectoids use this bioluminescence as a communication channel using the color of the light it emanates. The asteroid stone is black and porous.

Each lair of the hive is connected by a main tunnel network, big enough to carry prey through. However, there are smaller burrows, some big enough for PCs to crawl there, inhabited by nymphs.

Each square on the map is 20 ft, if it matters to you.

**Inspecting Burrows** Any PC attempting to crawl into a burrow must make a Luck check. On failure, they are surprise-attacked by a nymph currently in the burrow for 1d3 DMG, no combat initiative is rolled and the nymph runs away unscathed. On success, no nymph is present and the PC ends up temporarily lost in the burrow system, even if they have only stuck their heads in it. The amount of antennae activity in the burrows is so intense that those who unwittingly venture in become confused and time seems to pass much slower for them. Have the player set that PC aside for now; they can emerge from the burrows confused some point later in the adventure, at the Judge's discretion. Forgotten characters left in the burrows will eventually be eaten by nymphs.

**Insectoid Nymph:** *Init +3; mandibles +1 melee (1d3); AC 14 (shell); HD 1d3; hp 1; MV 30`; Act 1d16; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; AL C.*

Another alien species has been snatched by the insectoids and are among the captured villagers where characters find them. We encourage creating your own alien species, but have

provided one below. Roll 3d6 for each stat if and when they are needed. Otherwise, use the stat block for **Gray-skinned Alien**. If a Gray-skinned alien becomes a level 1 character, treat them as a small human and have them learn a new language.

**Gray-skinned Alien** *Init 0; Atk Punch (1d3); AC 12; HD 1d4; MV 25; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +2; Languages known: alien;*

**Area 1 - Holding Pens:** The PCs themselves have been snatched, tied up, and ready for processing. They have been left unconscious in a holding pen. The room has many of these holding pens, but this is the last group that needs to be processed for livestock.

Before the PC awake, describe to the players one or two dream sequences showing an insectoid raid on the alien species.

When the table has completed the visions read the following:

*You wake to find yourself trapped in a pen with your neighbors. The air is cold and lit by a red luminescence that looks alive on walls around you. White cables or rope hold you securely inside. Everyone's hands are bound by the same thing. Looking further out into the larger chamber, you see more of these pens. They are all empty, except for a body slumped on the ground.*

The insectoids have already moved villagers from the other cells to storage in **Area 7**. PCs looking for hidden doors notice a portal on the floor in the center of the lair. This opens up to the village below. It can only be opened by killing the Queen or from the Engine Room in **Area 6**.

If the body is inspected, it is a wise village elder named Yoin. He looks like he struggled and has a large hole in his head with his brains sucked out.

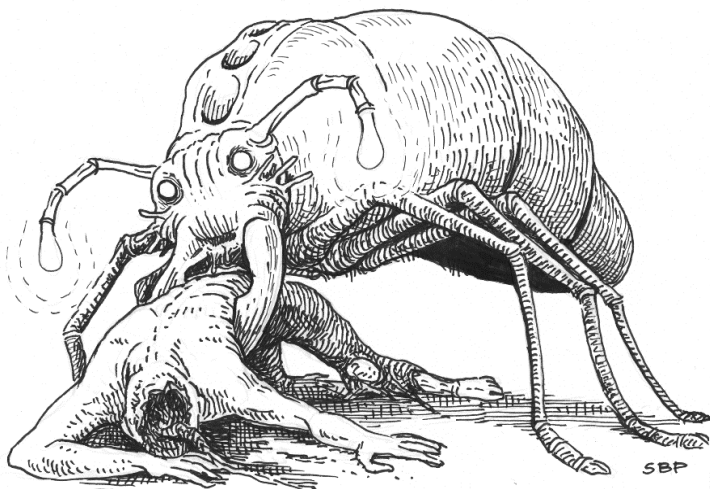
PCs can attempt to get out of their bindings with a DC 15 Strength check or the bindings can be cut by something sharp

without a check. Allow PCs to have anything from their list of items on them if it's no bigger than a dagger, but they need help getting it out of their pocket or must make a Luck check if they remembered to keep their lucky dagger in their boot.

Allow only a few PCs to get out of their bindings before they are interrupted by 4 workers. The workers can open the pens with their antennae. If all PCs are recaptured, move them to **Area 7** and put them in the honeycomb chambers.

**Insectoid Worker:** *Init +1; Bit +1 melee (1d4) or Silk SP or +1 Sting melee (1d3) SP; AC 14 (shell); HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Silk ranged 40' DC 12 Ref save, on a fail target is entangled in a silken net; entangled characters can spend an action to try to escape with DC 15 Strength check; SP Sting victim must pass a DC 14 Fort save or -1d for 1d4 rounds; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL L.*

**Area 2 - Junk Piles:** The lair is filled with heaps of junk raided from countless alien planets by the insectoids. A lot of it is unrecognizable, broken, or decomposed. Though, there are things found by a PC looking for something useful. Have them make a Luck check. On a success, roll 1d30 on the Random Useful Junk Table.



**Random Useful Junk Table:** When a PC attempts to use unknown alien technology and fails they must roll a Fumble (d12) until they succeed with it. Describe alien technology to the best of your ability without giving it away.

d30	Random Junk
1	Broken sword (1d5-1 melee)
2	Pogo stick
3	Metal box filled with 4d6 small bearings, nuts and bolts
4	25' worn rope
5	Rusty metal sheet with a handle (AC +1, shield)
6	Leather sack filled with rocks (1d4 melee)
7	Solar-powered flashlight (12 hour battery life)
8	Pipe wrench (1d6 melee)
9	Damaged space helmet (AC +1)
10	Double-headed shovel (2d3 melee)
11	A plastic storage box with 1d4 glass vials filled with a blue-color liquid acid (2d6 per vial)
12	60' of nearly indestructible fibrous cable
13	Flak jacket (AC +2, Check Penalty -1, Fumble Die d8)
14	Holographic replicator (as <i>Mirror Image</i> p. 182 DCC core book, 3d3 charges)
15	Exploding ball (3d5, throw, 10' explosion radius, anything killed by the explosion is incinerated; ball recombines itself after exploding; all fails are fumbles d16)
16	Hydraulic arms (+2 Strength modifier bonus)
17	Enormous Bone (1d12 melee, -5 move)
18	Teleporter with a small pressure switch teleports the user to a random location 50' away when pressed
19	Grenades (1d10, 20' explosion radius, 1d6 grenades)
20	Curved golden blade with a black leather hilt (two-handed, 2d6 melee)
21	Laser gun (1d3, exploding 3s, ranged, 2d10 charges)
22	Resizer rifle with red switch on the side that changes the charge between shrinking and growing a target by half or twice their size; pointed outward <i>shrink</i> (+2 AC, HP and DMG halved), pointed inward <i>grow</i> (-2 AC,

	<i>HP and DMG doubled</i> ); duration 1d4 rounds, range 100', 1d5 charges)
23	A futuristic metal sword hilt with a button that activates a laser blade when pressed (3d4, melee)
24	Jetpack that flies briefly with 1 charge up to 1000', has 2d8 charges
25	Crystal prism that casts the following spells: <i>Chromacast</i> p. 35, <i>Devour</i> p. 38, <i>Plant Growth</i> p. 40, <i>Quaranzine Vol. 1</i> or a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level spell from the DCC Core Book
26	Heavy space battle armor (AC +3, Check Penalty -3, Speed -5, Fumble Die d16)
27	Biometric helmet that forms to the wearers face and appears in the shape of the wearer's skull and shoots lasers from the eye sockets, 2d5 ranged, +1 AC, SP infravision
28	Portal gun that fires 2 shots, each the entrance and exit of a portal; this effect lasts for 1 day, with 1 use per day
29	Missile launcher (2d10 ranged 5000', 1d4 missiles)
30	Sapphire ring that casts magic from the <i>Return Magic to Mystery</i> spell table p. 32 <i>Hobomicon #2</i> , or a random spell from the DCC Core book or any other source material

**Area 3 - Hive Crossways:** *A bridge made of knotted and thick white webbing reaches out into the darkness, held on the other side by who knows what. The rope-like bridge looks narrow, uneven and difficult to walk along. The echoing sounds of squirming and chewing are rising up from below the rope. Ahead, only the sounds of the group moving and talking echo forward.*

The bridge extends over 100' over a pit. Insectoids can crawl across it with ease but humanoids who haven't trained themselves on a tightrope would have a very difficult time traversing it, requiring a DC 10 Agility check to successfully cross. On a fail, the unlucky PC will fall 30' below into the Grub Mass in **Area 4**. No falling damage is taken as they land on the soft, squishy bodies of grubs, however they are immediately attacked by the grub mass, and one per round for each round in it (1d6-2).

Reward player creativity (such as allowing an antenna to manipulate the bridge for a safe crossing or someone's acrobatic), however crawling does not make the DC any easier. Halfway over the bridge, PCs will notice that it leads to a platform, where they will see 2 insectoid drones and the 3 tunnels that lead to **Areas 5, 6, and 7**. The drones won't become aware of the group until they reach the platform.

**Insectoid Drone:** *Init +0; Atk Claw +2 melee (1d6) and Grab (SP); HD 2d6; hp 7; AC 14; MV 20'; Fly 20'; Act 2d20; SP Grab on a successful attack target must pass a DC 12 Strength check or be incapacitated. Grabbed PCs can be crushed for 1d3-1 dmg as an action without an attack roll; PCs must use an action to escape; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -1; AL L.*





**Area 4 - Grub Mass:** Any PCs falling into the nursery are eventually eaten by hundreds of hungry grubs, as the grub mass attacks immediately and will always attack first in combat rounds regardless of initiative rolls. The grub mass automatically rolls for damage on each PC within it at the top of each round (1d6-2). PCs can use their action to escape into one of the many burrows in the walls (see *Map Feature*) or climb the walls with a DC 12 Strength check, or stand and fight (probably a bad idea!).

**Insectoid Grub Mass:** *Init 0; Atk bite (auto 1d6-2); HD 2d50; hp 55; AC 8; MV 5'; Act 3d16 (per target caught in the mass); SV Fort +5; Ref -5; Will +5; AL C*

**Area 5 - Insectoid Nest:** *This larger lair has dozens of burrows of various sizes along the walls and ceilings. The ground is littered with bones and debris. You see a large man with crazy eyes holding the claw from one of those bugs. He's pressing his fingers up to his lips to shush you as you enter this lair. Next to him is what appears to be a little gray-skinned humanoid with huge black eyes on an oversized head.*

*"They're sleeping,"* he says as he points upward. If the group makes a ruckus while in this room, make a brain wave scan. On a failed check 4d6 workers come out of the burrows to chase the PCs out of the nest. They don't follow if the PCs flee from the area.

The man is able to tell the PCs the following:

- *He's from the village, he's Clegan the big, burly baker!*
- *He calls his gray humanoid friend "Moop" because that's all it says*
- *He tried to escape in the burrows with some of the other villagers, but only he and Moop survived*
- *He hears voices in his head telling him to join the colony*
- *He saw the insectoids bring you into the ship through the entrance in **Area 1**, but doesn't know how it opens*

- *He says he thinks the fleshy thing in Area 6 powers the rock somehow*
- *He's says there is a giant bug in a lair up ahead, it freaked him out so he ran this way*

**Area 6 - Astroid Hive Engine:** *In the center of this small lair rests a pulsating mound of pinkish flesh. One wall has five small, irregular shaped knobs jutting out of it, and every once and awhile one of the knobs pulsates with bioluminescence (magenta, blue, green, purple and yellow). Four thick tentacles rise from the top of the pinkish flesh mound and into small ports in the ceiling.*

PCs searching for hidden doorways notice two on the opposite sides of the lair. One is a secret door opening to **Area 8**. The other is a hidden sleeping lair with 2 Insectoid Mutants inside, who will join the queen if combat is initiated with her, so long as they are alive.

The pinkish flesh is the asteroid hive ship engine. It is organic (3d20 HD; hp 36) and if damaged a green acid explodes from it (1d6, 10' range), melting flesh to the bone and damaging the floors.

If the engine is destroyed the hive ship begins to rumble as the systems become overloaded; steam shoots from burrows, killing nymphs and other insectoids inside; the bioluminescence in the ship's surfaces shifts from red to yellow; a loud, repetitive click is heard in each area. The ship explodes in 1d50+10 minutes, killing everything inside and destroying the village below. If any PCs are paying attention the yellow knob is now bright orange.

Destroying the engine angers the Queen who detaches herself from the connectors and her abdomen, allowing her to move from her lair. She arrives in the Engine Room to inspect and shut down the system; she tries to kill the PCs and won't converse with them; the two mutants in the elevator join the fight when she is at half hp. Should she kill the party she overrides the system and the workers make repairs.

Engine Controls	
<i>Magenta Knob:</i>	The PCs hear heavy sounds of rock and stone grinding and feel vibrations below their feet; in <b>Area 4</b> the floor of the nursery opens up to the village below, dumping the grub mass on top of it; the grubs eat everything they land on. The floor will close back up, and raise itself up to the platforms, replacing the bridge.
<i>Blue Knob:</i>	Opens the entrance portal on the floor in <b>Area 1</b>
<i>Green Knob:</i>	The hidden doorway on the other side of the room slides open revealing a make-shift bedroom with 2 insectoid mutants inside. The bedroom is reminiscent of bedrooms you see in the village huts.
<i>Purple Knob:</i>	Opens up the hidden doorway to the queen in <b>Area 8</b> .
<i>Yellow Knob:</i>	Safety button that shuts down the system if overloaded. Otherwise when pressed it makes a click sound and flashes orange.

**Insectoid Mutant:** Init +0; Atk claws +4 melee (1d8) or +2 to cast a spell; AC 13; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP: spellcasting (see below). SV Fort +3; Ref +2; Will +5; AL L.

*Spells known: Silk (+2 spell check, Level 1 spell Insect Queen Patron); Sting (+2 spell check, level 2 spell Insect Queen Patron); Mind Probe (+2 spell check, level 3 spell Insectoid Queen Patron)*

**Area 7 - Livestock Storage:** *The lair walls are lined with honeycomb chambers. Most of them are sealed with a white wax. Few are opened and empty. You notice a bug crawling back into one of the empty honeycombs and disappear.*

The bug crawls into a burrow. The surfaces of the room are clean, as this is the storage area for their food. If PCs wish to inspect honeycombs, roll 2d4 for how many honeycombs appear to have something inside them. For each investigation of a honeycomb, roll on the Honeycomb Chamber Table.

**Honeycomb Chamber Table:** Roll 1d4; Villagers and aliens are unconscious when found but can be woken up without needing to make a roll.

d4	Honey Chamber
1	Dead body - Nymph attack! (1d3 dmg immediately, nymph runs away)
2-3	Villager
4	Alien

**Area 8 - Insectoid Queen:** *This lair is huge, inhabited by a gargantuan bug - thick legs, armored thorax, an enormous abdomen dripping with wet eggs into a huge pile next to it. Four tentacles reach from its head and disappear into the ceiling. It turns its attention to the group.*

The Queen can speak in any language telepathically, and can understand any language, having absorbed knowledge of intelligent life after feeding on their brains. PCs who try to resist her will only amuse her, as she is incredibly intelligent, fearless, and strong.

Before she attacks, she will offer the PCs an opportunity to join the colony. Any PCs that accept her offer are immediately stung by her and must roll on the Insectoid Mutation Table and she becomes their patron (see *Insectoid Queen Patron*). If combat is initiated, all mutants are compelled to protect the colony, rather than their village and friends. She will repeat the offer to join the colony if the PCs are losing or to try to spare her own life.

Refusal to join the colony will amuse her and initiate combat. At the start of combat, the queen uses 1 action to teleport in the 2 insectoid mutants from the secret elevator in **Area 6** if the mutants were not killed earlier. These minions will not attack unless combat is initiated.

d6	Insectoid Mutation Table
1	Mandible nubs appear on the gums
2	Chitinous skin patches
3	Tiny, useless wings tear from skin on the back of the shoulders
4	Antenna nodules sprout from the forehead
5	One hand hardens into a claw
6	Small proboscis forms in the throat

**Insectoid Queen:** *Init +5; Atk Claw +2 melee (2d4) or SP Telepathic Sting +4 (1d6) or Enfeebling Sting (1d4); HD 6d10; hp 33; AC 12; MV 10'; Act 3d20; SP Rage; SP Fly; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will +10; AL C*

*Telepathic Sting:* The queen pierces the mind of a victim, causing searing pain in their brain; Victim's use AC 10 + Intelligence modifier to defend against this attack.

*Enfeebling Sting:* The queen's stinger is inside her proboscis, it extends out like a bullet up to 20' in front of her; On successful hit, victim must make a DC 12 Fort save or become weakened until the end of combat (-1d).

*Rage:* If all the Queen's eggs are destroyed, she will immediately go into a rage until combat is over; While enraged, all non-magical damage to her is halved and she cannot use her *Telepathic Sting* attack.

*Fly:* (MV 50') If the queen becomes detached from her abdomen, she will spread her wings and fly.

**Insectoid Eggs:** *HD 1d100; hp 55; AC 6; SP Queen's Rage*

PCs damaging eggs angers and frustrates the Queen; she is unable to use her *Telepathic Sting* in the same round the eggs are damaged and turns her attention immediately to them. If all the eggs are destroyed she, her Rage is initiated (see Insectoid Queen SP rage).

**Insectoid Queen Abdomen:** *HD 2d10; hp 11; AC 8; SP Explode*

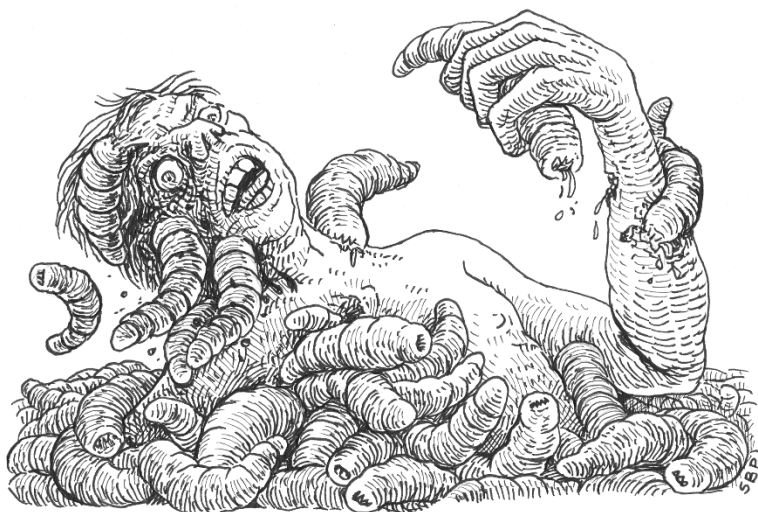
The Queen's abdomen is squishy and easy to hit, but she doesn't need it to live and can use an action to detach from it (and the cables), enabling her to Fly. If the abdomen is destroyed, it explodes; all within a 20 ft range of the abdomen must make a DC 14 Ref save or take 1d4 acid damage.

## CONCLUSION

**The Queen Is Dead!** The PCs open and find the hatch to escape in **Area 1**. The workers initiate the asteroid hive ship auto-pilot. It slowly levitates up into the sky, disappearing into the clouds and never to return.

**The Engine Explodes!** The asteroid hive ship explodes, obliterating all inside and the entire village below.

**Escaped!** The asteroid hive ship flies off into the atmosphere in a flash, with a loud crack just as it arrived, with all the villagers inside. The PCs discover there is no one left except for them, the village ransacked of all life and valuables.





## INSECTOID QUEEN PATRON

The Queen demands loyalty; to form a bond with her one must accept a part of her inside them and over time they metamorphose into her vision. She demands minor acts of fealty related to feeding her brains and enslaving intelligent beings or she eats them instead.

### *Invoke Patron Check Results*

12-15 The Queen probes the planet on behalf of the insectoid mutant, alerting them of the current location of the target they seek.

16-19 The Queen sends telepathic pheromones that invigorates the insectoid mutant, healing their wounds for 1 HD per CL.

20-23 The Queen sends telepathic pheromones that invigorates the insectoid mutant and the rest of their party, healing all wounds for 1 HD per CL.

24-27 The Queen sends her drones in aid; 1d3+1 drones teleport next to the insectoid mutant until combat ends. They attack all enemies of the colony within their space. (See *Insectoid Drone* stats from *Insectoids from Outer Space!*)

28-29 The Queen's grubs are starving; she teleports a grub mass to an area size of 40' x 40' that the insectoid mutant points at for 1 round per CL. (See *Insectoid Grub Mass* stats from *Insectoids from Outer Space!*)

30-31 The Queen teleports to the caster's location, flying and without her abdomen. She remains for 2d6 rounds during which time she fights ferociously. (See *Insectoid Queen Stats* from *Insectoids from Outer Space!*)



32+ The Queen teleports to the caster's location, flying and without her abdomen. She remains for 2d6 rounds during which time she fights ferociously. The caster gains +6 bonus to Intelligence as long as the Queen is present. (See Insectoid Queen Stats from *Insectoids from Outer Space!*)

## **PATRON TAINT: INSECTOID QUEEN**

When patron taint is indicated for Insectoid Queen roll 1d6 on the table below. When the caster has acquired all taints they will have become a mature insectoid mutant and this will no longer be required.

1. The caster grows wings; at first they are small and useless but eventually grow into usable wings allowing them to fly (MV 50') in 30 days.
2. The caster grows small mandibles from their mouths; at first they are useless but grow into full mandibles in 30 days, allowing a 1d20 bonus *Act Bite (1d3)*.
3. The caster grows a small proboscis from their throat; at first it is useless but it grows into a full proboscis within 30 days; the caster now has a taste for brains and can only eat brains for sustenance once the proboscis is matured. Eating a human-sized brain that has not been dead for more than a few minutes will heal the Mutant 1d4 hp.
4. The caster's hands turn into claws; at first their fingers begin to fuse but morph into a full set of sharp claws (1d8, *Act 2d20*) in 30 days.
5. The caster's skin becomes chitinous; at first they have small patches but these grow into fully armored chitin in 30 days, granting a +2 AC bonus, a -2 Ref save penalty and losing all their body hair in the process.
6. The caster grows antenna nodules on their head; they eventually grow into fully formed antennae in 30 days and provide light in the darkness; the caster can also use them to mark things with their pheromones or do Brain Wave scans.

## **PATRON SPELLS: INSECTOID QUEEN**

The insectoid Queen grants three unique spells for colony mutants.

**Level 1:** Silk

**Level 2:** Sting

**Level 3:** Mind Probe

## **SPELLBURN: INSECTOID QUEEN**

**1** The insectoid Queen needs brain synapses for energy, extracting a small portion of energy from the mutant from afar (expressed as Intelligence, Stamina, or Personality loss).

**2** The insectoid Queen demands a special brain for sucking. The mutant is granted the spellburn bonus, but must find a victim with an intelligence of at least 9 to give to their queen. This victim is picked up by the colony within a day after processing. Until this sacrifice is made the insectoid cannot regain burned stat points.

**3** The Queen requires the ancient dance of a thousand swarms; time slows and space pulls apart around the caster, who instinctively knows how to perform the complex dance of its insectoid ancestors, maneuvering sharply through the patterns. Upon completing the invocation, the mutant appears back in normal time and space. No time seems to have passed, though it finds itself weakened by the exertion of the ancient dance patterns, using whichever ability score points for spellburn.

**4** The mutant falls to its knees as it vomits out wet, slimy insectoid eggs, leaving them exhausted from exertion (expressed as Stamina, Agility, or Strength loss).

## **SILK**

**1** Lost, failure, and patron taint.

**2-11** Lost. Failure.

**12-13** The insectoid mutant produces a 50' strand of silk that can be used as a rope for climbing or binding. The silk can be broken with a Strength test against the DC roll result. The silk strand is temporary and deteriorates over a period of days.

**14-17** The insectoid mutant produces mendable silk that can be used for one small, non-permanent structure or object, such as rope, a cage that could fit a small sized dog, or a face mask and gloves.

**18-19** The insectoid mutant produces sticky globules of silk that they can spit or throw. One medium-sized target up to 50' away must make a Ref save or be caught up in the globules. Strength check DC roll result to break free as an action on their turn.

**20-23** The insectoid mutant produces sticky globules of silk. Target one large or three medium-sized targets within 5' of each other. Strength check DC roll result to break free as an action on their turn.

**24-27** The insectoid mutant produces thick globules of silk. It can be shaped and hardened immediately into a bludgeoning weapon or tool for 1 hour per CL before disintegrating. (1d10+CL melee).

**28-29** The insectoid mutant produces thick globules of silk. It can be shaped and hardened into armor for +1 AC per CL for 1 hour per CL before disintegrating.

**30-31** The insectoid mutant produces copious globules of building-grade silk. It can be used to construct a simple structure no bigger than 15' x 15' for up to 1 day per CL before disintegration. The material is strong and would take a Strength check against the result to break.

**32+** The insectoid mutant produces copious globules of building-grade silk. It can be used to construct a complex structure no bigger than 50' x 50' up to 1 day per CL before disintegrating. The material is strong and would take a Strength check against the result to break.

## **STING**

**1** Lost, failure, and patron taint

**2-11** Lost. Failure.

**12-13** Failure but the spell is not lost.

**14-15** The insectoid mutant produces a poison that could be applied to any weapon or their claws (+1 DMG per CL) that poisons a target for 1 turn.

**16-19** The insectoid produces a single dose of poison in a bubble from their mouth or proboscis. The poison can incapacitate a target for 1d3 + CL rounds upon ingestion or absorption through the skin with a DC 11 + CL Fort save. The poison can be applied to an item or weapon, and can last in a glass vial or equivalent for up to 3 days before expiring. Insectoids are immune.

**20-21** The insectoid mutant produces a single dose of serum in a bubble from their proboscis. The serum can heal 1 HD upon ingestion. The serum can last in a glass vial or equivalent for up to 3 days before expiring

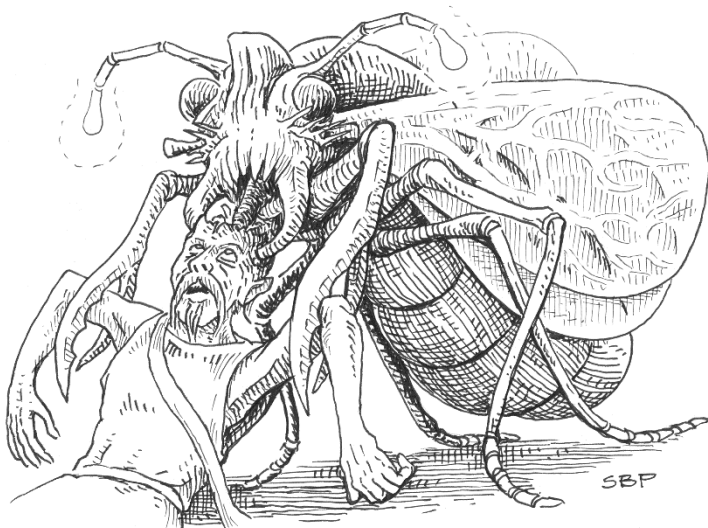
**22-25** The insectoid mutant spits acid that can eat through one inch of metal or stone and eats away at flesh (1d4 per CL) of one target for 1d3 rounds.

**26-29** The insectoid mutant vomits acid that can eat through one inch of metal or stone and eats away at flesh (1d4 per CL) up to 3 targets within 10' of each other for 1d3 rounds.

**30-31** The insectoid mutant's body bursts with foul-smelling acidic poison. All within 5' range of the insectoid mutant take 1d4 per CL damage.

**32-33** The insectoid mutant's body secretes a foul-smelling acidic poison for 1d3 + CL rounds. For every successful attack on the insectoid mutant the attacker takes 1d4 + CL damage in return.

**34+** The insectoid mutant's body secretes a foul-smelling acidic poison for 1d3 + CL rounds. For every successful attack on the insectoid mutant the attacker takes 1d4 + CL damage in return. Additionally, the attacker must make a Luck check; on a failure their weapon is destroyed by the acid in the poison.



## MIND PROBE

**1** Lost, failure, and patron taint.

**2-11** Lost. Failure.

**12-15** Failure but the spell is not lost.

**16-17** The insectoid mutant penetrates one target's mind; they writhe in pain and make their next action with -1d.

**18-21** The insectoid mutant penetrates one target's mind; they writhe in pain and make their next action with -1d. Additionally, the target takes 1 damage per CL to one of the following ability scores chosen by the insectoid mutant: *Intelligence, Stamina, Personality*.

**22-23** The insectoid can read the surface thoughts of one target. If the target is about to attack the insectoid gains +1 AC per CL as they know the target's next move, or the insectoid gets +1 per CL towards their next attack against the target or the target forgets their action for 1 round.

**24-26** The insectoid can read the surface thoughts of multiple targets (1 per CL). If the target is about to attack, the insectoid gains +1 AC per CL as they know the target's next move or the insectoid gets +1 per CL towards their next attack against the target.

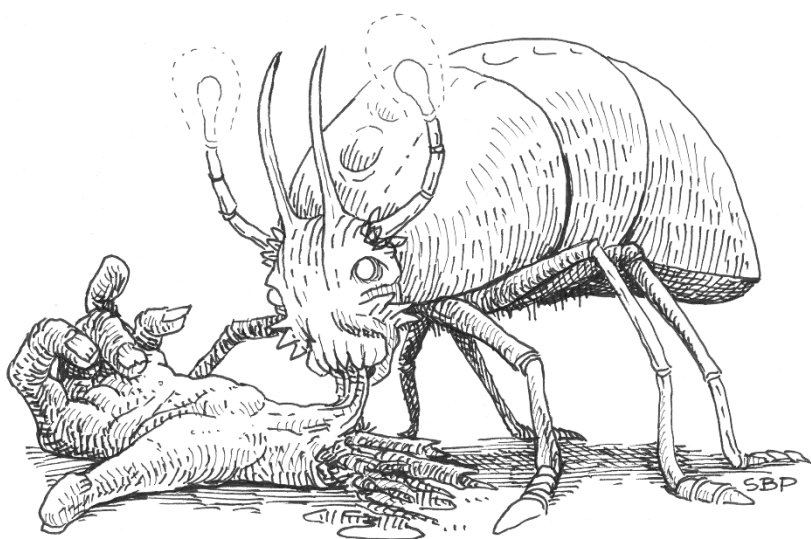
**27-31** The insectoid probes deeply into the mind of one target and learns its deepest, darkest secrets or next moves. If the target is about to attack the insectoid gains +1 AC per CL as they know the target's next move for the next 1d3 rounds or the insectoid gets +1 AC per CL towards their next 1d3 attacks against the target.

**32-33** The insectoid probes deeply into the mind of all targets in the area and learns their deepest, darkest secrets. If the

targets are about to attack the insectoid can relay this information telepathically to the rest of the party; the party gains +1 AC per CL as they know the target's next move for the next 1d3 turns or the insectoid mutant party gets +1 AC per CL towards their next 1d3 attacks against the target.

**34-35** The insectoid mutant invades the mind of a target, controlling their brain and body while the target is conscious, for 1d3 + CL minutes. DC Will save against the result.

**36+** The insectoid mutant invades the mind of a target, controlling every part of their brain and body while the target is still conscious, for 1d3 + CL minutes. DC Will save against the result. Additionally, once the insectoid leaves the target's mind, they take 1 permanent damage per CL to one of the following ability scores chosen by the insectoid mutant: *Intelligence, Stamina, Personality*.



# THE IMMORTAL OOZE ENGINE





A level 0-1 DCC RPG adventure  
by Stefan Surratt  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This adventure is a Dungeon Cradle Classics RPG adventure intended for 12-24 0-level or 4-6 characters of 1st-level. The adventure concerns a 300-foot-wide ooze that roams the land, absorbing everything it touches. At the center of the ooze is a lighthouse which rises out of the top of the ooze while on the move. This slow-moving threat must be stopped. Will the party find the riches of all those absorbed, or become another collection of slimed bones?

## **BACKGROUND**

The Immortal Ooze Engine was created as a means to an end by the grand thaumaturge Irlyntuk. He sought to make right his blighted homeland and made a foolish pact with a demon known as Icandra, Pontiff of the Joyless. The pact made way for Irlyntuk's greatest arcane accomplishment, that is now both his sanctum and his prison. His body has fully gelatinized, leaving Irlyntuk only capable of keeping his humanoid form by wearing a full-body leather suit that feeds him via tubes that inject him with a paste made from the ooze's victims.

Currently, Irlyntuk pilots the great ooze across the land, absorbing all life that it touches. He uses the Immortal Ooze Engine to process and extract both raw material and intellect from its victims, though he is unable to fully comprehend the

many disparate minds. He still seeks to add to his collective knowledge even though he no longer remembers why.

## PLAYER START

Begin the adventure by reading the following:

*A great, blinding beam of light affixed its gaze on you as you slept last night. You did not know what it was but quickly rose from your slumber and attempted to flee this strange hunter. After dawn broke, you saw a massive, gelatinous predator. The beam originated from a lighthouse that emerged from a great ooze that looked to have a girth of two or three hundred feet.*

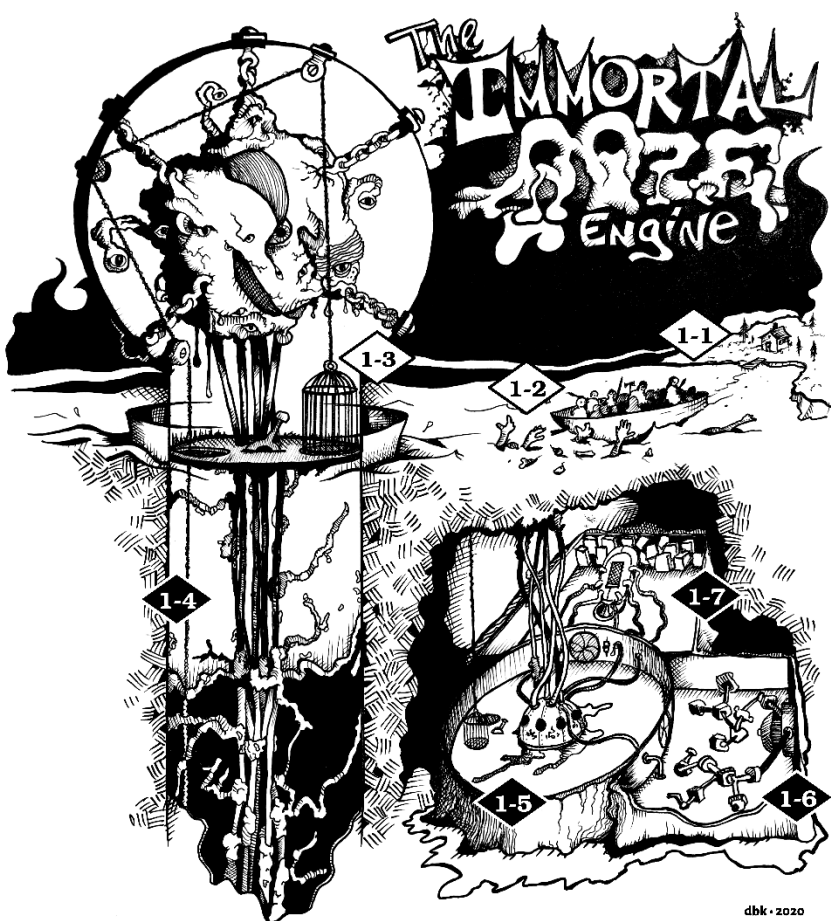
*After hours of running, the monstrous ooze finally stopped and the great eye that gazed upon you began to slumber. The tower descended deep into the ooze; it's bulbous peak now resting just above the water, seemingly the only hopeful means of entry. Now is your first, and perhaps only chance, to end this before this strange creature awakens and begins its chase once again.*

## THE ABYSSAL LAKE

**Area 1-1 - A Placid Shore:** *The ooze seems to have stopped in the middle of a small lake that you passed in the early morning hours. A layer of water now rests above it, you can see many fish swimming near the surface in between fallen trees and other detritus. The peak of the tower is a hundred and fifty feet away from where you stand, ankle deep in what was once the edge of the lake. A small fisherman's shack rests nearby, but it is now partially submerged in the risen waters.*

The ramshackle wooden shack is about 10'x 10' and filled with about 2 feet of water. There are two row boats outside that are tied to a short pier that is now underwater, but the oars have floated away. Each rowboat has an AC 12 and 15 hp. The row boats can fit up to 12 people but will be incredibly cramped.

PCs searching the shack can make Luck checks to find useful items in the disorganized shack or in the mucky water. The cabin contains 2 fishing poles, a fisherman's short bow and 5 arrows, a tackle box full of fishing lures, a leather pouch with a serrated knife (1d5 dmg), a 15' square weighted fishing net (-2 melee, 0 damage, target is entangled requiring a DC 12 Reflex save to escape or DC 16 Strength check to destroy), one coil of rope 50' long, a flask of whiskey, and two spare oars.



**Area 1-2 – Lake of a Thousand Corpses:** *The tower's domed peak sits above the water. Thankfully, no light can be seen from inside it so the great eye that was seeking you out must be at rest. As you row closer to the spire, detritus begins to float closer to your boat. Bones, sparsely covered in muscle and stinking like rancid jelly, rise from the waters and swarm around you. The dissolved victims of the ooze begin to rend your craft apart.*

There is about 10' of water over the top of the ooze. The ooze contains a thousand corpses that envy the living and seek to steal the life from any they encounter. When the PC's craft is about 50' away from the tower's dome peak then the Hands of the Claimed attack, seeking to tear apart the craft and pull all the PCs down to their deaths in the depths of the ooze. It will take 4 more rounds of steady rowing to reach the tower unless the PCs focus their efforts on gaining speed via Strength checks to rowing or some other clever roleplay.

Anyone in a rowboat who fights using melee needs to make a DC 8 Reflex save to avoid falling overboard. Any who fall in the water will be pulled down into the ooze within 2 rounds unless a DC 12 Strength check is made to pull themselves or be pulled back into the boat.

**Hands of the Claimed (1 per water vehicle):** Init +3; Atk rend +3 melee (1d5+1); AC 10; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV' 20 or swim 30'; Act 1d20 special; SP rends all targets within 20' x 20' x 20' volume, half-damage from non-area attacks, un-dead traits; SV Fort -2, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C.

**Area 1-3 - The Gazer's Prison:** *The bulbous dome of the tower peaks out of the waters, with a narrow walkway encircling it. The tower is constructed of frosted glass and wrought iron, but there is no obvious doorway or entry portal.*

A 3' wide walkway encircles the 40' wide dome peak. There is no door to the inside of the tower, but glass panels can be removed with a DC 6 Agility check or broken with a single attack to create an entrance.

Inside this 40' wide circular room is a pungent, bulging mass of veiny muscle and eyes, far too numerous. The monstrosity is bound in chains that lash it to the walls and ceiling. Thick pipes rise up from far down the tower and are forcibly lodged into the underside of this turgid horror and fetid yellow pus dribbles down around the pipes and chains.



An iron cage elevator, eight feet in diameter, hangs by chain over a wide hole. Within arm's reach of the elevator is a lever on the floor. A few feet away is a second identical hole. A vertical chain disappears down the hole into darkness.

The monstrosity is an Elder Brain that has been completely dominated and broken by Irlyntuk. Once PCs create an entrance to the interior and begin peering into the room then the creature will sense their presence and telepathically probe all creatures present, requiring a DC 15 Will save from them. All who fail take 1d4 temporary Int damage and feel like they have been evaluated as one would livestock. The dominated Elder Brain will only do this once to each individual unless attacked. If attacked, it will continue to telepathically probe any attackers until it is safe or dead. It has 31 hp, AC 14, +6 Fort, automatically fails Ref saves, and +8 Will.

Up to 12 humanoids can fit in the elevator at a time, but it would be so cramped that movement would be impossible. The gaps in the cage elevator allow PCs inside the elevator to reach the activation lever. The lever activates the cage elevator's descent. However, the lever has a hidden button on the grip that hides a poison needle. The needle will inject itself into anyone not correctly gripping the lever. A DC 10 Intelligence or find traps check reveals the trap in the grip. Anyone hit must make a DC 10 Fort save or take 2d6 poison damage. If a PC dies then all of their flesh and muscles will dissolve into a pinkish-yellow liquid, leaving behind bones and the PCs inventory.

**Area 1-4 - The Tower's Throat:** *Your descent is accompanied only by the clinking of the chains that hold the elevator. Another vertical chain can be seen across the tower interior, also clinking as it ascends up to the apex of the tower. The vertical pipes in the center of the tower bulge with build-up from the pus that drips down around them. From the lumpy growths, strands of muscle and flesh extend out to*

*the walls of the tower's interior, growing thicker and more common as your descent continues.*

While the cage elevator descends, a second one will ascend. The chains that hold the two elevators are connected and constructed to that one elevator can always be at the top and another at the bottom.

In this area and after, there is no natural lighting and a torch or similar lighting will be needed to see. The fleshy “ropes” vary in size, between 3” to 12” in width. They crisscross throughout the tower's interior. The lumpy build-up from dried ichor dripping down from the subjugated Elder Brain. The strands have become the homes of the parasitic Hateful maggots that feed on the hatred the Elder Brain has for Irlyntuk and Icandra, and its envy of those who are free.

Three of these ropes will catch the elevator mid-descent, however, if the PCs are in the second elevator that was not initially present in 1-3 then they bypass this encounter. Once caught in the ropes, the chain will continue to crank. For every round that the elevator remains stuck then it will cause it to fall 10' once it is released from the flesh ropes, due to slack in the chain. All those inside the elevator take 1d6 bludgeoning damage unless they can make a DC 6 Reflex save. Those who successfully save are able to brace themselves against the elevator and take no damage. If any ropes are cut then hateful maggots, lamprey-mouthed creatures approximately 2 feet in length, will burst out and attempt to devour any nearby living creature.

If more than 8 people occupy an elevator at once, then it will be so cramped that two-handed weapons can only be used at -2d and one-handed weapons at -1d.

**Hateful Maggots (2 per cut rope):** Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 + anticoagulant); AC 7; HD 1d6; hp 3; MV' 15; Act 1d20; SP anticoagulant (DC 10 Fort save or wound bleeds until

bound or healed. Each wound causes the loss of 1 hit point per round); SV Fort -2, Ref +2, Will immune; AL C.

**Area 1-5 - Reclamation Chamber:** *The cage elevator finishes its descent and opens into a 50' diameter circular room that looks to be entirely made from black iron. At the center of the room is an embossed metal machine in the shape of a half-sphere. The strange machine is dotted with round bubble windows and large pipes that seem to draw solid material from the ooze and transport them through different pipes. Some of the more rusted pipes in the room are leaking a yellowy-pink liquid onto the floor.*

*There are two circular doorways in this room. Both of these circular doors are shaped like a mechanical iris and have a lever to the right. A pipe near the door to the north has broken open and that door is deeply crusted in filth and rust. The door to the east is much cleaner, albeit mildly rusted. You can hear rumbling and hissing coming from past this door.*

The machine in the center of the room sucks different material from the ooze and sends the materials through different pipes for processing. The bubble windows on the machine allow one to peer into the depths of the ooze and see countless creatures and objects being slowly dissolved.

If PCs examine the embossing, paraphrase the following in the way you believe the PC would interpret the pictographs:

*The machine is embossed with pictographs that show a story of a man who made a pact with a demon for great power, the demon taking everything except power away from the man, the man binding the Great Eye monstrosity, constructing this structure, growing the ooze, the process of the Great Eye monstrosity evaluating targets, the ooze absorbing a village, the processing and extracting of raw materials from living bodies, and the piping of that material to a great chair in which an imposing figure sits.*

Characters with arcane or religious training may make a DC 12 Intelligence check to recognize the demon as Icandra, Pontiff



of the Joyless, who is known for having deserted from Nimlurun's templars of filth.

The door to the east leads to **1-6** and will open if the lever is pulled. The door to the north leads to **1-7** but is in such a state of disrepair that the nearby lever cannot open it. If using a crowbar or similar tools, then a DC 23 Strength check may be made to force open the door in its current state. If a strong acid or similar agent is used to remove the crusty filth and rust, then the lever will work.

Anyone who touches the yellowy-pink liquid dripping from the pipes will need to make a DC 13 Fort save. Failure results in 1 damage, but either way the appendage that came in contact with the ooze has its bones mildly gelatinized to the point of being more akin to cartilage than bone. The judge should adjudicate this depending on the affected body part. A single finger may suddenly feel like it is made of jelly, legs may result in a movement speed reduction, or arms may result in some actions being performed at -1d. However, a gelatinization may be as just beneficial as it is detrimental. An individual may gain the bonus of fitting in spaces too tight for a normal body, becoming resistant to acid damage, or other bonuses as the Judge adjudicates.

**Area 1-6 - Ancillary Arcanum:** *The room is crowded with more dark and rusty pipes that make its size difficult to determine. The pipes interconnect to many different pieces of machinery, such as open vats, boilers, centrifuges, cooling tanks. The clamoring machinery hisses and groans against its age. The organization of machinery turns the room into a series of metal corridors.*

The machinery in this chamber refines and extracts all material absorbed by the ooze. All the pipes eventually lead to other rooms except for a single disposal pipe that sends unwanted material back into the ooze for further dissolution. Strong acids can be found in many vats and boilers, which could be used to unseal the door in the Reclamation Chamber that leads to **1-7**.

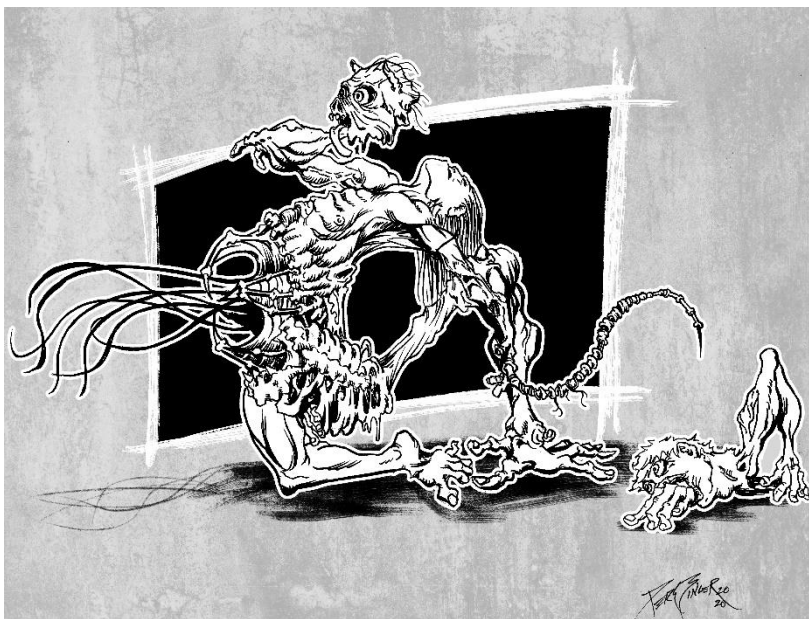
If the PCs sabotage the machinery or cause extensive damage, then a cautious Irlyntuk will emerge from his chamber and arrive 1d3+1 rounds later to investigate and attempt to fix the machinery. However, any PCs who try to sabotage components might cause them to burst. Unless a DC 10 find traps or Intelligence check is made to determine what the safest course of sabotage is then the machinery violently explodes. The saboteur must make a DC 10 Reflex check to avoid 1d4+1 damage from the bursting machinery.

Enterprising PCs can find various items stuck in pipes by opening maintenance hatches or by fishing them out of open vats. Have each PC roll a 1d10 + Luck modifier. Count duplicate results as equivalent gp x5.

1d10 + Luck mod	Result:
0 or less	Inheritor Parasite attacks before moving down the pipe. DC 10 Ref save or take 1d3 dmg
1	Glass eye
2	Prosthetic hook hand (as dagger)
3	Hand manacles chained to leg irons
4	Mirror face mask
5	4 silver horseshoes (20 sp each)
6	2d14 gold teeth in half-melted dentures
7	Open iron flask filled with ooze acid
8	Mithril cutlass (as longsword)
9	Jade bee talisman (+1d Fort save once per day)
10	Iron warhammer with "DEAD" embossed on the hammerhead's face. +1d4 damage to the living. -1d4 damage to un-dead.
11+	Magical Moustache (DCC Annual p. 186)

A hand-written note can be found on the floor near some boiler control valves. It says, *"Remember! Flush the machinery and clean it with acid at least once a week! Too many things are getting stuck in there and the impure paste isn't as potent!"*

After the third check to find an item, several Inheritor Parasites crawl out of different pipes, vats, and other machinery to attack. They are a “offspring” byproduct created by Irlyntuk’s fusion with the Immortal Ooze Engine. They want to absorb organic material to add to their own mass. These creatures resemble puddles of flesh and ruined bones covered in a multitude of horrific visages.



**Inheritor Parasite (3):** Init -2; Atk engulf +3 melee (1d3 acid + slime) or spittle spray +2 missile fire(1d3 acid + slime, range 15’); AC 9; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV’ 20; Act 1d16+1d12; SP slime (DC 12 Fort save or retch for 1d3 turns. -2d to all rolls while retching), darkvision 20’; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -2; AL C.

The noise of a loud fight (or sabotage) will alert a victim of the ooze that is stuck in the pipes. A maintenance hatch on the pipe can be opened, allowing the PCs to see a man stuck against a mesh grate inside the pipe. He was incorrectly processed by the great engine, which has allowed him to survive while all

his bones have been melted and extracted. His name is Tomas Fletcher. He was hunting a stag in the forest when the ooze rolled over him. He can describe being pulled by a current into the center of the ooze and then being sucked into a large pipe before getting stuck here. While he was being “processed” he briefly experienced the thoughts and memories from various woodland animals that were also absorbed. While he is now effectively a boneless blob, he thinks this change is quite chipper about the whole situation and what possibilities it brings to his life. If asked to help, he could squeeze into the door to 1-7 and force it open.

**Area 1-7 - The Wizard’s Cockpit:** *The 20’ x 50’ rectangular chamber is dominated by a large reclined chair made entirely of pipes that sits in the center of a raised platform. The walls of the room exude rusty piping that flows down to the floor and form the chair in the center of the room. A humanoid form rests in the pipe chair, completely sealed in a full-body suit made of dark leather with golden filigree. Fleshy ropes connect pipes from the chair to various points throughout the figure’s body.*

*The figure rises from its chair; arcane sparks flare from the figure’s body as tubes disconnect from his suit, hissing, popping, and dripping ooze. A gust of wind ushers forth from behind you, forcing you into the room and shuttering the door behind you. “Good. I haven’t had any visitors in a long time. The great engine always dissolves the bones before I can get to them, and I do need some replacements.” He begins to lurch towards you.*

Irlyntuk’s bones have dissolved over the course of his long communion with the great ooze, but the Immortal Ooze Engine dissolves all claimed bones during processing. He is intravenously fed life-sustaining paste via the tubes connected to his suit. In addition to sustenance, he is also fed the knowledge and memories of those that the ooze absorbs, which grants him extra actions. However, all the added knowledge has made it difficult for him to focus and cannot act with anything better than a d14. Irlyntuk will have already cast gust of wind to force all the PCs into the room, which will also

cause the door to close unless it was propped open with a sturdy object. In the second round of combat, an Inheritor Parasite will emerge from some of the piping on the ground and defend its progenitor.

**Irlyntuk, Host of Many Forms:** Init +0; Atk; AC 13; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; MV 15'; Act 3d14; SP spellcasting (spell check +7, spells known: (level 1) *choking cloud*, *flaming hands* (as spouting acid) (level 2) *levitate*, *Nythuul's porcupine coat* (level 3) *gust of wind*), resistant to acid, darkvision 30'; SV Fort +3, Ref -6, Will +6; AL C.

**Inheritor Parasite:** Init -2; Atk engulf +3 melee (1d3 acid + slime) or spittle spray +2 missile fire (1d3 acid + slime, range 15'); AC 9; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV' 20; Act 1d16+1d12; SP slime (DC 12 Fort save or retch for 1d3 turns. -2d to all rolls while retching), darkvision 20'; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -2; AL C.

## CONCLUSION

If Irlyntuk has been slain and no one is controlling the engine it will begin to catastrophically fail after 1 turn. Pipes will burst and boilers will erupt, causing the interior to begin flooding with the caustic ooze. The only way to prevent this is for someone to don the communion suit and sit in the pilot's seat, which will automatically reattach the flesh tubes to the suit and re-engage systematic control of the Immortal Ooze Engine. The new pilot will also begin to receive knowledge concerning the function of the machinery and some latent memories of Irlyntuk's life. Much of the machinery is still in dire need of repair. Without further intervention, the engine will break down in 3d7 months. However, if the PCs slay Irlyntuk and the great engine is destroyed then the gods of Law will reward all survivors with +1 Luck.

If the imprisoned Elder brain is freed then it will worm its way away from civilization until it can find a deep, dark home for itself. There is a cumulative 1% chance each day that Icandra,

Pontiff of the Joyless, discovers that her “gift” to Irlyntuk is now free and will come to subjugate the Elder Brain. As a Type III Demon, Incandra will be able to easily accomplish this and will then learn of what the PCs have done in this adventure.

The communion suit’s golden filigree tube ports and golden filigree could be worth up to 100 gp, but the ornamentation also acts as a “spellbook” and can be studied to learn the spells that the Irlyntuk knew. A DC 11+ spell level Intelligence check and a full week’s study per spell level is required to learn each spell. Learning the spells can be attempted more than once, but additional attempts take an extra cumulative month of study for each additional attempt to learn a spell.

# CRYPT

of the

PICKLE  
WITCH



# CRYPT OF THE PICKLE WITCH

A level 0-1 DCC RPG adventure

By Judge Yossarian

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Lawful Smuggler

## INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed for 15-20 0-level characters or 8-10 1st-level characters. For a more powerful party, consider increasing the number of enemies, and for a weaker party (or if the party fares poorly) consider letting the party rescue some captured villagers in room 3-3. There are several ways the adventure can conclude, and players should not be punished for choosing to run rather than fight; the story hooks may indeed be even more interesting if the party fails in their quest and survives.

When a young girl goes missing in the deepest part of the woods, a group of unsuspecting villagers are forced to confront years of suspicion and rumor, and face off against the undying horror fermenting deep below the forest. Terror, danger, and briny death are near certainties... but those who survive will have stories the town taverns will retell for decades.



## BACKGROUND

The woods known as the Green Span are home to a powerful witch, at least ten centuries old. She draws her occult power from Cisalv the Preserver, a mighty entity from another plane (more details on him follow). She extends her life by drawing it out of living things, leaving them in a state of permanent stasis. At Cisalv's direction she conducts experiments to find new ways of preservation and mummification of living things.

She is functionally immortal, but her body does slowly age; every 150 years or so, she kidnaps a girl-child, usually an infant, and conducts a ritual to swap her conscious mind into the child's young body. The reeve's daughter would normally be too old for her purposes, but she has grown bored of her solitude in the woods. If she succeeds, she will return to the camp in 12 hours or so in the girl's body and impersonate her perfectly, then spend a few decades corrupting and eventually drawing the life force from everyone in the village.

### SCENE 1: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A GIRL-CHILD

*You set off from your village imagining the delights of market day in town and hoping for a quick and easy journey. Maybe a few wild animal attacks, a restless night in the woods, or even a halfhearted extortion attempt by some bandits, but then coin in your pocket and several days of food and entertainment. The distance from your village to town is long, however, and it is necessary to camp for the night halfway through, in the heart of the thick woods known as The Green Span. The campsite is a cleared area just off the road, well-used by travelers and caravans like yours. The journey here was entirely uneventful, as you had hoped.*

*Well, maybe not entirely...*

# RUMORS

Each player may roll a d10 to see what strange incident or experience one of his characters had on the way to the campsite. Some are true, some partially true, some complete nonsense, but the ones in bold are those potentially useful to the party.

d10	Result
1	Uncommonly dry weather for this time of year. Or is it uncommonly wet? You never were one for almanacs...
2	<b>You notice a flock of white storks flying overhead. Bad luck, storks... some say they steal babies from their cradles and replace them with changelings!</b>
3	An odd, sour, cheesy smell seems to permeate from the ground for a few hundred yards just before you reach the campsite. You're pretty sure it isn't you... you had a bath just a few weeks ago.
4	You hear a rumor that the reeve's youngest is touched in the head- hardly talks, and when she does, nonsense. He's taking her to see if he can find a cleric to pray over her.
5	One of the group, a hunter, saw a scrawny doe cross the track and took a shot at her. Got her clean through the neck, he did, but she just kept on running! No blood either...
6	Some of the oldsters were telling the youngsters tales about the old woman of the woods... lives out here in a great big hut, that walks around on chicken legs! What nonsense.
7	<b>One of the hired caravan guards tried to fill his waterskin at a spring along the way, and pretty much ruined it. The water bubbling out of the spring was salty as the sea and knocked him out like a light when he tried to drink it.</b>
8	<b>During a break in marching, an older guards tells you a family story about his great-great-aunt, who as a child wandered off into these woods and never returned. There were sightings of her for decades- a disheveled woman wandering amongst the trees- but she never came home.</b>
9	The reeve's little girl has been babbling away ever since you made camp; chatting away to some imaginary friend. You make out a few words: "...no, no, I don't like them! Salty and sour, eughhh.... But hey, why you got so many legs?"
10	(Roll twice more, take both results)

*At dawn, the village reeve, who is leading the caravan, frantically awakes the group. His daughter is missing. She was last seen during the second dog watch; one of the ox-drivers stepped out to do his business, and the girl was staring out into the woods as if in a trance. One of the hired caravan guards has found her trail, a set of small footprints leading off into the murky woods.*

*The guards must stay to watch the goods, and the reeve insists on waiting at the camp, in case she should wander back. He orders you, good townsfolk, to follow the trail and see what has become of his daughter. You know he's a fair man and loves his daughter much; success will be rewarded, and failure could mean ostracization, exile, or worse.*

*Gather your party and venture forth!*



## SCENE 2: THE LIFELESS CLEARING

*Following the trail for the better part of an hour, you suddenly come upon a broad clearing. A crooked path, framed by dead trees and brambles, leads between a squalid, pot-bellied hut on one side of the clearing and an old open well on the other side. A dozen paces from the well, a pile of wood sits beside a well-used fire-pit, crowned with a large wooden frame.*

The clearing is the above-ground portion of the witch's vile domain. She does not visit the surface much, no longer needing to sleep or eat herself, but Cisalv's power keeps the clearing preserved as if in constant use. No birds or other animals can be heard here. The plant life is dried and withered as if in late autumn, strangely without any leaves having fallen. There is no evidence of rot or decay on the deadfall libs or stumps.

**Area 2-1 - The Boucan:** *The fire-pit is cold, but coals remain from past fires, and the rocks are black with charcoal soot. Above the pit is a frame of thick branches, bent and lashed together over the fire, and hung with scraps of cured, smoked, and dried meat.*

This is where the witch experiments with smoking and heat-curing creatures alive. Only scraps remain, fused to the frame by the heat, but many a being has met its painful end here. A DC 10 Intelligence check (occupations like butcher, cook, or healer get a +5) to detect pieces of roasted human flesh amongst the boar and venison scraps.

Inspecting the fire pit itself will reveal pieces of burnt bone and cloth amongst the coals. Upon digging through the coals, a PC will find a shriveled human ear, with a large earring on it, made of a dull grey metal. Hanging from the earring is a two-inch radius charm in the shape of a trine ( $\frac{1}{3}$  of a circle). It belonged to one of the three Temporal Assassins (see sidebar). She was smoked alive by the witch, and later fed to one of her captured comrades as a sick experiment. Leaning on the

woodpile is her cuirass, charred black by the smoke and the straps ruined, but the front and back plates can be separated and used as small handheld bucklers (+1 AC, -1 Check Penalty).

## **SIDEBAR: CISALV AND HIS ENEMIES**

The witch of the woods is pledged to a powerful patron named Cisalv, an inhuman entity from another plane. Cisalv is called “the Preserver” by occultists because of his obsession with halting natural processes such as life, death, decay, and some say the passage of time itself. He is not quite a god in terms of power, but aspires to godhood, and grants power to mortals who help him develop new techniques of preservation and grow his power. In the rare cases he appears as an avatar on this plane, he resembles a 15 - 20-foot-high ethereal humanoid figure with the head and wings of a stork.

As often occurs with pretenders to godhood, Cisalv has made enemies of many existing deities. His ideology is generally neutral evil, but neutral nature gods abhor him, and his greatest foe is the lawful god Choranus, the Seer Father<sup>1</sup>, who has dominion over time. Choranus cannot reach Cisalv in his home Plane of Stasis, so he sends Temporal Assassins after his servants to frustrate their work and limit Cisalv’s power.

Not too long ago, three of these assassins were sent after the witch, wielding an amulet blessed by Choranus called the Eye of Hindsight which allowed them to see through the witch’s glammers and resist her hexes. However, they underestimated her power, were captured and made subject to her experiments and torture. Two are now dead and their bodies can be found in **Areas 2-1** and **3-3**; their leader is alive and lives in **Area 3-4**,

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<sup>1</sup> Feel free to replace Choranus with another deity of time from your campaign’s particular pantheon.

though violently insane and rendered invisible by side effects of experimentation. If the party can retrieve and assemble the pieces of the Eye of Hindsight, the final battle with the witch will be rendered much easier. Its wearer receives the ability to see through some illusions (at the judge's discretion) and it can be used by a cleric as a holy symbol of Choranus, granting the "Second Sight" spell at level 1.



Davin Kluttz - 2020

**Area 2-2 - The Brine Well:** *This old well is mostly unremarkable; it is too deep and dark to see the bottom, but a faint sour smell wafts up from it. There is an old wooden frame above, but no bucket or rope.*

Observant PCs (DC 8 Intelligence check) inspecting the well will notice that the wooden frame is cunningly and purposely whittled so it will not bear weight. If the PCs use it to anchor a rope to descend the well, the beam will break while the last PC is descending, causing 1d3 fall damage (if no marching order is given, choose the PC with lowest Luck).

Very observant PCs (DC 13 Int check) will notice two holes in the stone rim, approximately 3 feet apart, lined with steel grommets, and scratches on the stone showing that something had often been anchored there before. The rope ladder from the hut hooks in here and allows PCs to climb down with no risk.

**Area 2-3 - The Squalid Cabin:** *A squat, pot-bellied hut, round and roughly 12 feet in diameter, sits in a corner of the clearing, a faint wisp of smoke ascending from the chimney. The roof is thatch and the walls are a mix of stone, daubed clay, and wooden beams. As you approach the shabby building you notice that the door is partially ajar, and through it, you can see, partially, a jar. In fact, a whole shelf filled with jars.*

*As the door creaks open, you see a surprisingly neat interior, although there is a light coating of dust on everything, and a sharp, acidic smell pervades. A shelf immediately across from the door is filled with dry goods such as rice and flour, as well as preserved vegetables and fruit in glass containers. A hearth in the center of the room is surmounted by a wooden mantel, from which hangs strands of dried herbs, and on top of which sits a well-made taxidermy squirrel.*

*A small table sits in the center of the room, cluttered with dried plants and flowers. On one wall, a shabby straw bed lies unmade. Next to the bed, mounted on the wall above an enormous mottled-brown bearskin rug, another shelf holds several small, brass-bound kegs and amphorae.*

The fluid on the shelf is enchanted brine. If drunk, characters must pass a DC 5 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1d4 days. While unconscious, they cannot be woken by mundane means. If the check is passed, they gain +3 Stamina and cannot take damage for 1d12 hours. However, keep track of damage taken; it will be doubled and inflicted upon the PC at the end of 12 hours, unless another dose is taken. If they die and are somehow revived, they take the patron taint of Cislav, or major corruption, at the judge's discretion. One amphora is already open, and at the bottom of the brine is a copper key to the door in **Area 3-2** (on a roll-under luck check PCs see it shining at the bottom).

Under the bed is a rope ladder, with metal hooks on the top. It is designed to hook into the depressions in the rim of the well outside.

The dried herbs, vegetables, and supplies here are mundane and can be safely consumed. They have no magical or healing properties but are worth about 50 cp if collected and brought back to town. There is also a large cleaver on the table, still sharp, and usable as a hand-axe.

The squirrel is not actually taxidermied, but in stasis. It can be sold for as much as 50 gp if properly appraised, and if the witch's grimoire is deciphered or Cislav is taken as a patron, it can be activated with a spell check as a 1st-level guardian-type familiar per the core rulebook. If unappraised, it will sell for 2 gp as a piece of folk art.

Looking under the bed or disturbing any of the casks or amphorae will trigger the hut's security, the bearskin rug, which is actually a bear which was tortuously deboned alive by the witch for this purpose. It cannot chase the PCs from the hut but will attack whoever is standing on it immediately.

**Animated Bearskin:** Init +6; Atk Maul +3 melee (1d8); AC 7; HD 1d10+1; HP 7; MV 3'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -2; AI N.

Observant PCs may notice that the hearth is unlit, and appears to not have been lit recently, despite the smoke coming from the chimney. Below the bear is a trapdoor leading to **Area 3-2**, the root cellar.



## SCENE 3: THE BRINEY DEMESNE

**Area 3-1 - The Well's Bottom:** *As your eyes adjust to the darkness at the well's bottom, you notice it is mostly dry, with a small pool of greenish liquid in the center. A strong sour, acidic odor burns your lungs. A stone archway leads off to the east, while the south side of the circular chamber is walled floor-to ceiling with iron bars. A gate in the center is locked from the outside with a heavy iron latch.*

The liquid here is the same as that in the casks and amphorae in the cabin. Peering through the metal bars, characters will see a murky room littered with rags, bones and refuse, and may make out the outlines of shelves. They also have an odd feeling of being watched.

The latch is easily openable from this side and leads into **Area 3-4**. The archway leads to a hall, on the opposite end of which is the locked door to **Area 3-2**. Halfway down the hall, a double door to the south leads to **Area 3-3**.

**Area 3-2 - The Root Cellar:** *The trapdoor reveals an old but uncorroded copper ladder, leading to a stone-flagged cellar. The room is filled with rows of crates, shelves, and cabinets overflowing with fruits, vegetables, plants, many of which are exotic and unrecognizable to you, and even cheeses, cuts of meat and sausage. They are all preserved in some way; smoked, dried, pickled or salted. A copper pipe runs down from the ceiling in the center of the room, and continues along the back wall, disappearing into a fitting on the west wall beside a small wooden door.*

The pipe in the room carries the exhaust from the witch's steam plant to the surface, to be expelled from the chimney of the hut. The door is locked with a small copper padlock.

The door can be unlocked with the key found upstairs or picked with tools and a DC 12 Agility check. It may also be broken down with three DC 10 Strength checks (only one person may attempt per round). However, this noisy process

will trigger the room's security, the Cursed Animated Preserved Foodstuffs, as will an attempt to ingest any of the food in the room.

**Cursed Animated Preserved Foodstuffs:** Init +5; Atk Choke - 5 melee (1 plus choking); AC 7; HD 4d8; HP 18; MV 0'; Act special; SP attempt to force-feed and choke all targets within the room, SV Fort +0, Ref+0, Will +8; AL N.

If hit, a target takes 1 damage and begins to choke as the animated food item rams itself down their throat; target cannot move or act and takes 3 damage per round. Target receives a Fort save against the original attack roll each round to clear their gullet, and allies may make a Strength check against the same to perform a Heimlich maneuver, with a +5 to trained healers or food service professionals. Once the foodstuffs take 18 damage, they will lose enchantment, and crumble to dust.

**Area 3-3 - The Pickling Floor:** *Coming through the double doors, you discover the strangest room you have ever been in. A massive copper vat of bubbling liquid sits to your right, expelling a sour-smelling steam, and hooked up to a copper-piped apparatus on the wall. An eerie fire burns beneath it with no visible fuel. On the opposite wall, a series of long cylindrical glass tanks with large, unfamiliar shapes silhouetted within. The floor and walls are delicately shaped stone, the ground laid with large green and black rugs covered in unidentifiable symbols and patterns. There is a wooden door on the west wall, midway down the room, and another metal door on the east wall at the end of the room.*

The bubbling vat is enchanted formaldehyde. It is distilled here for the witch's experiments, and is also a part of her steam plant, which is used to power the other machinery in the complex. The secrets of this machinery were revealed to her by her extraplanar patron. There is a wheel on the piping leading up to the formaldehyde still. Tightening the valve shut with this wheel will turn off the steam, disabling the other machinery. It may be loosened again to let the steam resume, so long as the piping is intact and the magical fire lit.

The glass tanks are actually not glass at all- they are cylindrical volumes of formaldehyde contained in an antibiotic magical force barrier. Any PC attempting to put a limb through this barrier will find it shriveled and atrophied when they withdraw it; the appendage will be uselessly crippled and will drop off on its own accord within 1d4 hours, leaving a pale gray stump.

Deactivating the steam also deactivates the barriers, causing the formaldehyde to splash out onto the floor, and freeing the contents of the tanks. One has a dead human body in it- the other has the still living Pickled Wolf Zombie, which immediately attacks.

**Pickled Wolf Zombie:** Init -2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 14; HD 2d6+1; hp 10; MV 40'; Act 1d20, SV Fort +4, Ref+1, Will +0; AL N.



The human corpse was one of the Three Temporal Assassins (see sidebar). It is dressed in odd black robes with no clear seams or fasteners, and its skin is shriveled and grey. It has gaping wounds on its neck and torso. It is wearing a necklace of dull grey metal, with a 2-inch radius charm in the shape of a trine. If the party also recovered the trine earring from the firepit on the surface, they will find the two charms interlock to form  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a circle, after which the seam disappears, and they cannot be separated. On its belt is a beautifully uncorroded, curved, serrated dagger of an unknown metal (non-magical, works as a +1 to-hit dagger).

The western door is not locked but wedged closed with a heavy oak bar that is easily removed from this side. It leads to **Area 3-4**. The eastern door is made of a coppery metal, and swings open with a hiss when a wheel in the center of the door is loosened. It leads to **Area 3-5**.

**Area 3-4 - The Haunted Storeroom:** *This room, unlike the previous rooms, is not neat but littered with detritus; small animal bones, rags, what appears to be dried excrement. Something clearly had its den here at some point, but no creatures are visible. A few broad shelves hold pouches, bags, jars, crates, and barrels of all manner of powders, dried plants, and shining crystals- reminds you of the village herbalist's shop, although she was never so well stocked. A barred door leads out to the north, and a stout wooden door to the east.*

This is the curing supply room. In here is a stock of glass jars of varying size worth 15 gp, and an organized shelf of alchemical ingredients, with sacks of salts and reagents. These are worth 300 gp if appraised at DC 16 Intelligence check; someone with a suitable background gets +5 (if unappraised, whoever buys them will certainly lowball and offer only 3d30 gp). They are also valuable as spell ingredients for patron bond for Cisalv, granting +5 to that check.

A small black pouch in the corner contains unstable reagents; if not appraised, the character who carries it will take 3d4 explosive damage next time they are hit and lose 1/3 of their fragile items.

Once the PCs enter this room, the invisible lunatic who lives there immediately begins to stalk them silently. After 10 minutes in the room, or when the PCs start to dally, he attacks the character with the lowest luck or agility attribute. That character gets a DC 15 Ref save to detect the pitter-patter of steps behind them; otherwise they are subject to a backstab from the madman before combat begins.

**Invisible Lunatic:** Init +3; Atk Claws +2 melee (1d4, or 1d10 backstab); AC 22; HD 1d12+2 HP 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref+6, Will -2; AL C.

The Invisible Lunatic was the leader of the Temporal Assassins sent to kill the witch. The witch kept him starved in this room so that she could feed him the results of other experiments—part of a commission from Cislav to find ways to transfer life force. The side effects of the experiments gave him unnaturally long life, lengthened his nails into twisted claws, turned him entirely invisible, and also drove him stark raving mad. He has no shred of humanity remaining and will attempt to kill and consume any living thing other than the witch herself, who terrifies him. He retains his assassin's reflexes but most of the strength has been starved out of him.

The Lunatic attacks by sneaking around the room silently and backstabbing a random target each round (+5 to backstab, 1d10 damage). While he is invisible, he can only be struck by a critical hit, and can always backstab. After he has made a kill (or two successful attacks), the blood on his claws makes him partially visible, reducing his AC to 17. If the PCs somehow render him fully visible, for example by scattering one of the sacks of fine alchemical salts over him, his AC is reduced to 12 and he can no longer backstab, instead making a regular attack

at +2. If the PCs flee the room, there is a 25% chance he sneaks out with them, stalking them and waiting for the opportune moment to strike again. Otherwise he remains to feast on the corpses of the fallen.

If the lunatic is killed, and his (still invisible) body is carefully looted, a metallic bracelet can be found partially embedded in his swollen, mutated wrist. On it is the third 2-inch radius trine charm. When combined with another piece, or both, it becomes visible again and joins with them seamlessly. Each of his claws can also be removed and used as a dagger by PCs, which has normal stats for a dagger but remains permanently invisible.

Both doors out of this room are barred from the opposite side and can only be opened by extraordinary means (like the bag of unstable reagents).



**Area 3-5 - The Fermenting Reservoir:** *You peer into a long rectangular room bathed in an eerie green glow. You see two narrow metal catwalks in the shape of an "L", raised about six feet above the surface of a deep pool of dark green, bubbling, phosphorescent liquid. At their corner is a metal platform, on top of which is a stained metal table with chain restraints. Next to the table is a glass pedestal connected to a copper pipe which disappears into the far wall. At the other end of the L-shaped catwalk is a metal door, similar to the one you entered by.*

The metal table is the witch's operating and dissection table. Tangled in one of the straps is a red hair ribbon, which party members recognize as belonging to the reeve's daughter. A close examination of the table finds none of the bloodstains are fresh.

Next to the table is a crate full of sinister looking but well-made medical tools, worth 12 gp to a twisted enough buyer. A few pieces from the set will serve well enough as thieves' tools.

The glass pedestal next to the table has two long metal levers attached to it. One controls the brine level in the chamber, and another opens the doors to the chamber. They only function if the steam plant in **Area 3-3** has not been disabled.

The catwalks are narrow and have no handrails. They must be navigated single file, with each character making a DC 5 Agility check once to see if they can balance. On a failed check, adjacent characters may make a DC 12 Reflex save to catch them, but a result of 6 or less sends them in as well. Fallen characters can be easily fished out, but entering the brine awakens the Brine Elemental.

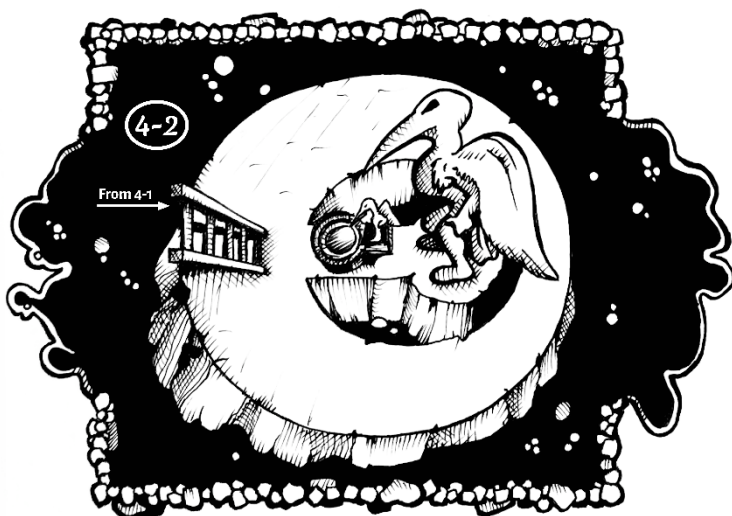
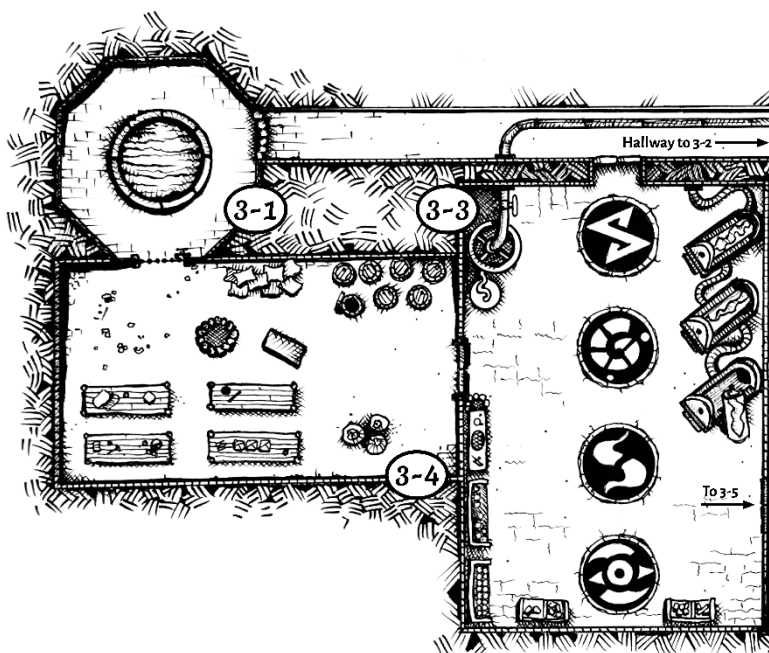
**Brine Elemental:** Init +3; Atk Engulf +10 (1 + stasis); AC 16; HD 8d8; HP 33; MV 0'; Act 1d20; , SP half damage from piercing weapons, stasis (target paralyzed for 1d12 rounds); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL N.

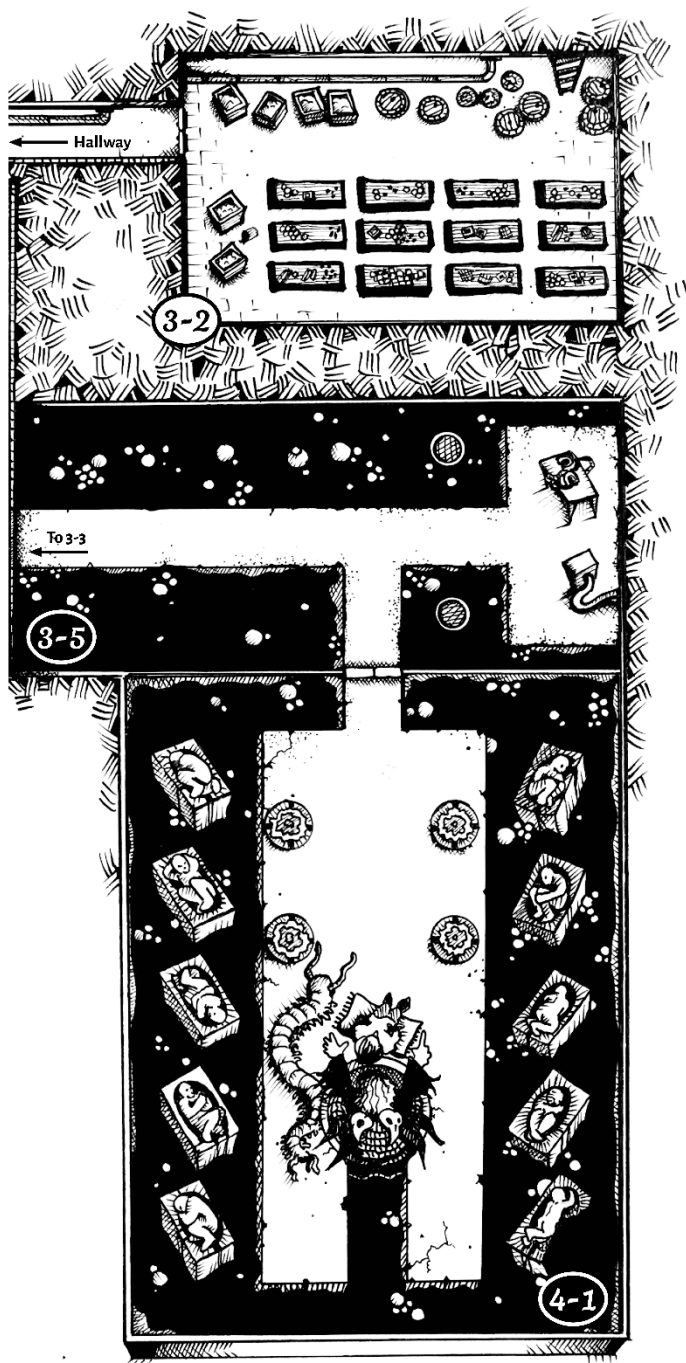
A towering, malevolent humanoid shape made of bubbling brine, this creature was formed when the souls of the witch's victims were drawn out into the liquid, they were preserved in. It attacks anything that breaks the surface tension of the brine, attempting to engulf them and force itself into their open orifices and wounds. If it succeeds, it paralyzes the victim, and those in the brine will drown unless rescued within a number of rounds equal to their Stamina bonus +1.

It is highly unlikely the PCs can kill the Brine Elemental, but if the room's machinery is still powered, they can easily banish it by pulling the lever in the pedestal (see below) to drain the brine from the chamber. The creature can attack anywhere in the room, but cannot leave the room by any means. If all living and unparalyzed PCs leave the room for three or more turns, the elemental will resume its slumber until awakened again, and Agility checks are not required again on the way back to safely use the catwalk.

The metal door on the far side leads to **Area 4-1**, but has no latch, knob, or other obvious means to open it. It can only be opened with the lever on the glass pedestal, or via an emergency lever above the door. The emergency lever will cause the door to swing inward violently, flinging whoever is within five feet of the door into the brine; the PC who pulled the lever gets no save, but PCs behind him get a DC 10 Reflex save to keep their balance.







## SCENE 4: THE ZESTY CONCLUSION

**Area 4-1 - The Salty Tombs:** *You step into a massive rectangular chamber forty feet wide and hundreds of feet long, dimly lit by a shimmering moat of phosphorescent brine ringing the walls. Ten rectangular pedestals emerge from the moat, surrounding a large stone platform. In the middle of the platform, on a huge throne of woven wicker topped with black feathers and bird skulls, sits an ancient crone, her damp and withered skin a deathly mottled grey. A large red centipede is perched carefully on her shoulder. From under a mass of matted white hair, she leers at a young girl seated quietly on her lap- the reeve's daughter at last!*

*Upon noticing your entry, she cackles, and in a raspy voice, calls out, "Imbeciles! Primitive bumpkins! You think to stop me, and rescue this child? You are too late! We are joined now, and if you harm me, the girl shall die! If you value her life or yours, flee now!"*

*A halo of sickly green light rings the crone's head, and a green ray links it with a similar halo around the girl's head. Suddenly, the whole chamber seems to shake with the grinding of stone on stone, as the tops of the pedestals open, and withered forms begin to climb out!*

The Pickle Witch is here, with her giant centipede familiar on her shoulder, and the missing girl in her clutches. She is actually extremely concerned that the PCs have made it this far and confronted her at her most vulnerable. She has just spellburned significantly to complete the ritual to transfer her consciousness into the girl's body, leaving her very weak, and she needs to stall for time for the ritual to finish. She is bluffing about the link between her and the girl being dangerous- in fact, the only way to save the girl is to kill the witch immediately, before the ritual is complete.

To gain time and protect herself, she has released her previous ten host bodies from where they rest in stasis in the brine. They are perfectly preserved 150-200-year-old human bodies, inhabited by the feral minds of the children she kidnapped.

The fully assembled Eye of Hindsight allows the wearer to see through the magic, and in their mind, they receive a hard to define but clear image of how the ritual is proceeding. They know that the witch is bluffing and how much time remains before the girl's mind is lost.

**Pickled Ancient Feral Child (10):** Init -1; Atk thrash -1 (1d3 damage); AC 11; HD 1d8+1; hp 6; MV 35'; Act 1d20; SV Fort+3, Ref +1, Will -2; AL N.

The withered hosts are entirely insane. Once released, they will swim across the moat and rush towards the exit of the chamber to try to escape, blindly thrashing at anything that gets in their way. If the PCs all stand to one side (and clear the single-file catwalk in the next room) the creatures will rush past them without incident.

If the brine in the preceding room has been drained, there are only a few inches remaining and the creatures cannot swim. They will scream from their pedestals for one round, then on the following round will attempt to jump the moat (1d20+1 against a DC 8 Agility check). Those who succeed rush towards the exit as normal, but those who fail are dashed to pieces on the stone 15 feet below.

To the wielder of the fully assembled Eye of Hindsight, the creatures appear as bawling, feral children rather than old crones.

**The Pickle Witch:** Init -2; Atk claw -2 melee (1d4-1) or *Cisalv's Stasis* +8 (special); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 14; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP *Cisalv's Stasis* (Will save against spell check or paralysis for 1d12 rounds, range 30'); SV Fort +2, Ref+0, Will +8; AL C.

The witch will clutch the girl and avoid close combat as long as she can, casting her paralysis spell each round that she isn't in melee.

After six rounds, the ritual will finish, and she will have swapped bodies with the little girl. From the perspective of the group, the girl will bite the crone's arm and jump away, and the crone will shriek and dash towards the exit. If this happens, the most probable result is that the PCs kill the crone (with the child's mind inside her body dying with her) and rescue the girl (with the witch's mind inhabiting it). The witch will then impersonate the girl almost flawlessly and return to the village in her place (a possible story hook for a continuing campaign).

The witch's familiar will hide inside her clothes. If the witch is killed without the familiar being killed, her soul will flee to the familiar's body and disappear into a crack in the floor (to the true altar to Cisalv). The familiar will flee the same way if the ritual is completed (it will rejoin its master later).

**Centipede Familiar:** Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3+poison); AC 14; HD 1d4+2; hp 5; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Centipede poison (DC 13 Fort save or permanent memory loss); SV Fort +2, Ref+3, Will +8; AL C.

If the witch is killed before the ritual is completed, the girl will happily tell her rescuers of her trials, and they may return her to her father for a great reward!

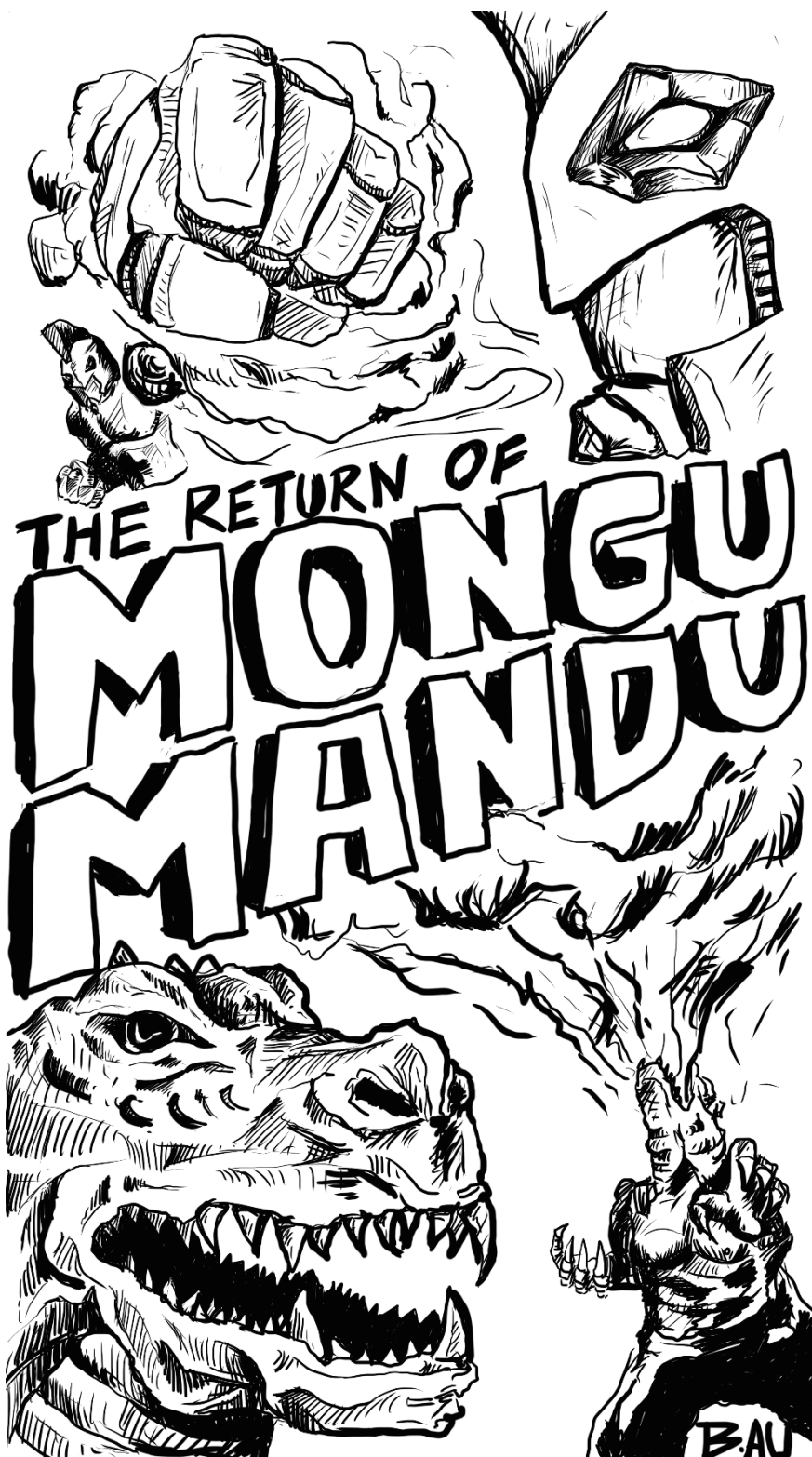
There is a hidden lever behind the throne, findable with a DC 9 Intelligence or detect secret doors check. It opens a trapdoor to **Area 4-2**.

**Area 4-2 - The Altar to Cisalv:** *Proceeding down a small ladder, you find yourself standing before a massive altar on a promontory rising above an endless subterranean lake of glowing brine. A font of the liquid wits at the feet of a 20-foot statue depicting a stork-headed winged man in tattered robes, carved from what appears to be pure salt. On the edge of the font lies a large black book, and on top of the book is a miniature copy of the statue.*

If the witch and her familiar were killed, or the ritual was completed, the altar is dormant. The black book is the witch's grimoire; it appears to be blank, but when brine is applied to the pages they reveal the spell knowledge for *paralysis*, and the information needed to bond with Cislav as a patron, adding +8 to a spell check for patron bond with it. It also reveals the nature of the witch's ritual and her reasons for kidnapping girls.

If the witch's familiar was not slain, the characters will see it standing on the altar, then leaping into the brine font, hissing shrilly in the witch's voice as it dissolves into steam. The font will begin to bubble, and two rounds later, the Avatar of Cislav will appear to take its revenge. The avatar, a greenish ghostly effigy of the statue, will slowly chase the PCs from the complex as it crumbles and collapses.

The PCs need to RUN at this point; the avatar cannot be damaged by mundane weapons, moves at 25' per round, and everything it touches is paralyzed for 1d12 rounds. Rooms collapse behind it as it passes through them, and it will pursue the PCs all the way to the surface, but not beyond. In the event of a TPK by the avatar, consider a creative result- perhaps they awaken on the plane of Stasis, chosen by Cislav to accomplish some goal, or perhaps they awaken 20,000 years later in the world of Mutant Crawl Classics!



# THE RETURN OF THE MONGUMANDU

A level 0-1 DCC RPG Adventure

By Boson Au

Cartography and Illustrations by Boson Au

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## INTRODUCTION

Chosen by the village elder as the next heroes/sacrifice, the players find themselves exploring an underground temple that is in fact, the body of a deactivated automaton who is designed to be awakened in an appointed time to face an impending threat. The players face traps and wards, insects warped by magic, as well as a final confrontation against a gargantuan monster hellbent on demolishing their village.

This adventure is designed for 10-15 level-0 characters or 4-6 1st-level characters with slight modifications.

## BACKGROUND

Four hundred years ago, the archmage knight Ichohn Cote did the unthinkable: They bested the great Mongumandu, a terrifying monster that came from the Blackest Sea. Unfortunately, the battle did not end in the death of Mongumandu. Instead, the behemoth only sustained enough injuries to retreat into the Blackest Sea, biding its time to return to continue its path of mayhem.

Predicting that the eventual return of Mongumandu will occur long after their death, Ichohn Cote set about constructing a golem that will be able to defend the known world upon its revival. They then buried the golem deep underground and



armed the interiors of the golem with wards and traps to deter thieves and stray animals. Next, they placed on it a spell that will reveal the entrance of the golem when the time is right. Finally, they settled near the Blackest Sea, where their offspring remained guard against the eventual resurrection of Mongumandu.

And wouldn't you know it, Mongumandu is awake, and ready to finish what it started.

## PLAYER INTRODUCTION

*Author's note: I've made a conscious decision to omit actual "read aloud" sections. I feel that the abrupt change in tone and language (when reading verbatim) is usually jarring and breaks immersion. Instead, I hope to provide enough details for the Judge to then use to paint a mental picture in the style of their own choosing.*

A fortnight ago, Uncle Eesop, the wise man of the village summoned abled bodied villagers to the town square and explained the return of Mongumandu (No one questions the validity of Uncle Eesop's declarations.) They all convene at a particular outcropping in the jagged mountainside surrounding the village. When the moon reaches its peak, the stone outcropping forms an ominous passageway inside the mountains, floors covered in ruins. Insist that they are the chosen ones, and that they ready themselves for their destiny.

## THE TEMPLE OF COTES

**General Features:** The underground Temple of Cotes (aka the Golem) is dark and dry, mostly made of stone. While it has been sealed for four hundred years, gradual cracks appeared and various wild creatures sought refuge here, only to be warped by the spell casted by Ichohn Cotes to become wandering guardians. The walls are adorned with pictographs depicting Ichohn Cotes fighting Mongumandu, Ichohn holding feasts, Ichohn creating a village, etc...

**The Red Cellmites:** Pestilent insects have claimed the temple as their home, and a particularly orderly colony of termites have been warped by Ichohn's powerful wizardry into rather formidable guardians.

They patrol the temple and will encounter the PCs if they stay in one place. If PCs linger too long, roll 1d6, a 1 indicates the red cellmites have found the party and will attack if threatened. The threshold for failure will increment by one on every roll. (i.e., first, it's 1 then a 2, etc...) They travel in packs of 3 or 4, usually with one soldier and the rest workers.

They stand uptight at around 4' with 6" long pinchers. Their abdomen, which stores toxic chemicals used for defense, gives off a faint blue glow. Even though they have been magically enlarged, they still have the ability to slip between cracks in walls and floors.

**Red Cellmite (Worker):** Init +0; Atk bite +0 melee (1d4-1); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; AL L.

**Red Cellmite (Soldier):** Init +2; Atk bite +3 Melee (1d6) *or* spear +2 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP 20% might have poisoned stinger: (+3 melee, dmg poison: DC 16 Fort save or 2d4 Stamina); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -3; AL L.

The Red Soldiers have larger pinchers, as well as the ability to carry and use weapons. They are usually armed with sharpened wooden spears.

**Self-destruct Explosion:** When a termite reaches 1 HP, there is a 50% chance they will choose to sacrifice themselves to protect the colony. They will expel the excrement in their abdomen with enough force to explode. Anyone within 5' will need to make DC 10 Ref save or take 1d4 acid damage.

### **E - Entrance (Reception):**

The passageway from the outcropping is about 10' wide and about 12' high. It looks as if it has been completely carved from the bedrock of the mountain. Arcane runes carved in an ancient language glow faintly amongst the floor and walls. It eventually leads about 50 feet further into a 30'x30' room. In the center of the room is a lever with an encrusted crystal ball on top. Careful inspection shows a slight separation in the rocks at the entrance of the room, as well as the floor all alongside the wall.

While walking along the passageway, if asked about the runes, at a DC 10 Int check summarize the story of Ichohn Cotes subduing the terrible Mongumandu into the sea.

If the characters enter the room, the lever will change color. At 10 characters it will change to yellow, and at 12+ it will change to green.

If the PCs pull the lever, two things happen: Either nothing (if less than 10 characters are standing in the room) or the magic that formed the entrance will begin to dispel. A noticeable rumbling is felt and in one turn, the entrance to this waiting room will be closed (rocks that were pushed out will be pushed back in.) Those not standing in the waiting room will effectively be buried, ending their adventure.

Characters can pry the crystal ball (worth 15 sp) off the lever. Doing so however, will remove the visual cue of the "minimum" participants needed.

Once the entrance is closed, a slight humming and groaning sound is heard as the "waiting room" descends down a tightly fitted chute that opens up gradually into the **Body (B)**.

### **B - Body:**

As the players descend, the walls eventually open up to an enormous open pentagonal room made of stone. The room is illuminated by a faint glow from unseen sources. On each corner of the room lies a colored door: red, blue, yellow, green and black. The rest of the room is barren except for the center, where a stone square pedestal, about 3' by 3', rises to some 4' off the floor. The sides of the pedestal then come together into a pyramid with a tip where a heart, carved out of the same stone, sits. On each sloping side of the pyramid is a space to set a stone.

The goal is for the players to best the challenges of each room and place the reward (a gem) into each respective socket. Doing so will make the black door more translucent, and eventually disappear. Players can try all sorts of things to open the obsidian door, but it will not budge. Of course, while players are trying, remember the red cellmites are patrolling. Ideally, the players will venture out to the other rooms.

### **LL - Left Leg (Yellow):**

The door to the chamber is shut by mechanical means (DC 30 Strength check to lift it up, due to lack of purchase in the door to grip it) The switch on its right (wooden, with leather grips to insulate against electricity) will open the door, as well as fill the interior of the room with a bright and pleasantly warm yellow glow. Letting go of the switch will allow it to revert downward, closing and shutting down the room.

The room itself is built entirely of stone. Its walls and floor are covered with intricate silver and gold veins weaving across the surface. Players can attempt to pry out some gold and silver. A DC 15 Strength check may be made to gather 5 gp worth of gold and silver. The veins all lead to a cylindrical pedestal made of silver, brass, and copper.

The pedestal rises up about 20' high to the middle of the room, with a matching column coming down from the ceiling, meeting in the middle where a fist sized topaz suspends in midair between the ends of the columns. It is the source of the humming.

Climbing the pedestal to reach the topaz is relatively easy (DC 10 Agility check) as is retrieving the topaz. The difficulty lies in escaping.

It is assumed that when the characters enter the chamber, the lever outside is pointing up (aka ON). Initially, removing the topaz from the pedestal while the room is ON will trip a breaker, cause the door to slam shut, as well as leave the room in the dark. Replacing the topaz will once again, power the room.

Ideally, the players will wise up and send someone outside to flip the switch after someone else retrieves the topaz. There is a problem: If the switch is turned ON while the topaz is not suspended, the room is electrified. Those touching the pedestal (or the column in the ceiling) will take 2d6 electricity damage, while others in the room, standing on the floor, need to make a Luck check or take 1d4 electricity damage from the silver and gold veins acting as weak conductors. Moving on the floor while it is live will trigger the Luck check at every 10' (or 1 square.)

Flipping the switch outside to OFF turns off the electricity but closes the door almost instantly.

Allow players to come up with ingenious ways of NOT touching the floor or propping the door open. Prying enough inlays or coming back with items to prop the door open are both options but remember that the cellmates are patrolling.

### **RL - Right Leg (Red):**

The players will find the door slightly ajar, and the lever mechanism swings freely. Originally, the room was designed to be an oil trap: various pressure plates sewn around the room would activate oil repositories in the ceiling that would then trigger flaming arrows. However, due to the passage of time, the lighting and arrow mechanism has rotted, and the oil repositories were accidentally triggered afterwards, releasing a steady supply of oil, which renders the floor both extremely slippery, and flammable. Additionally, age and the steady erosion allowed a colony of termites to extend their nest from outside to here. Parts of the walls were obviously dug out by the termites. On the far end of the chamber a common spider, warped by the magic of the temple into a larger, smarter predator, has made the rear of the chamber her home. The area is covered entirely in webbing, and she hides amongst the cracks and debris.

On the web are the remains of termites that have been captured by the spider, wrapped in webbing. Players can find 1d4 spears if searching.

Unfortunately for the players, the key (a red ruby the size of a fist) is on the web. The spider has fed on the termites that attempted to breach this room. Getting the key will require climbing on the web (reflex save vs DC 12 or become *entangled*, prohibiting any movement as well as incurring -1d in attack and giving attackers +1d). Even if resisted, the web is considered extremely hard to maneuver in: movement is halved. The spider is hidden in a nook near the web and will use its *spider sense* to detect prey.

Attempting to cross the room to reach the web requires a DC 10 Agility check. Failure in checks should net the following random events (1d6):

1d6	Result
1	Player attempts to recover from losing control and accidentally propel themselves towards the web. They are entangled.
2-4	Player slips and falls prone.
5-6	Player flails wildly but remains standing. If in combat, they will incur a -1 to hit or Agility checks.

**Giant Spider:** Init + 3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6 plus poison); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 20/40 web; Act 2d20; SP poison (DC 14 Fort save or 1d4 Str damage), spider climb, spider sense; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will -1; AL C.

**Poison:** when bit, roll a DC 14 Fort save, failure means -1d4 strength, returning in 1d6+2 days. **Spider Climb:** Can climb sheer surfaces without difficulty, can move on the web without triggering entanglement. **Spider sense:** uses spider web as sensory input and cannot be blinded.

Note: a side entrance to the termite colony is hidden here. When golem is active and rises from the burial site, the colony will be exposed to the rest of the world. Resolve at the Judge's discretion.

Near the rear of the chamber the players can find the various tunnels dug in by the termites. One of those will lead to the green room (**RA**). The tunnels are small: only one can enter at a time and they will be severely affected by the lack of space to move (weapons larger than a short sword are useless, and backpacks must be removed). See the green room description for more information.

### LA - Left Arm (Blue):

Approaching the blue door, you are surprised to find that handle to the door is in the shape of a hand... extending to you as if a gesture of good faith.

The door is opened by pulling on the hand. It is not trapped.

When the players enter the room, they will find themselves in a stone chamber empty except for a chair and tables. Sitting in one of the chairs is a gigantic (15') stone statue, its hand extended and placed on the table as if to arm-wrestle. In its other hand it grips the sapphire keystone.

Only one character can sit in the other seat. Disturbing the statue by attacking it or forcing the left hand open with a DC 25 Strength check will awaken it will fight the players (one handed, holding the sapphire in the other). It will release the key if the PCs win the arm-wrestling contest. (Str contested check at +8) Losing the arm-wrestling contest will deal 1d4 to the character as the arm slams down, potentially breaking their arm.





The easiest way to solve this puzzle is to use multiple characters (each additional character can add his Str modifier or +1 to the roll, whichever is higher.) However, the statue does not like cheating. If the golem can see that they are cheating, golem fires a laser like beam at the person seated (1d8 fire damage), but it's eyes can be easily covered.

**Arm Wrestler:** Init -1; Atk punch +5 melee (2d4); AC 14; HD 4d6; hp 18; MV 40; Act 2d20; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -1; AL L.

### **RA - Right Arm (Green):**

The players will notice that the lever to the door is gnawed off. Careful examination of the mechanisms will indicate that the door is not locked. The door is shut but could be forced open with a DC 10 Strength check. However, this will cause a considerable amount of noise, and alert the termites inside unless precautions are taken.

Alternatively, the players can enter this room from **RL** via dug out termite tunnels. Allow players to hear the chittering of termites so to plan their attack. The cellmites are somewhat busy trying to open the case, and a DC 5 Agility check should be sufficient to sneak into the room.

The chamber was a workshop of Ichon Cotes. Most of the devices are non-functional, although careful searching would yield potentially useful items such as ball bearings, an oil barrel, cans of grease, a lantern, rope, nuts and bolts, tools, etc. It is in complete disarray, with notes, gears, rods, wires, bolts all strewn about.

In the center of the chamber is a pedestal with a fist sized emerald locked in a glass box. Piles of discarded devices lie around it. Six termite workers are being ordered around by a more upright soldier, wearing a glass tiara on its head. They are in the midst of smashing the cage housing the gem when the players enter. The upright termite, pointing at the PCs,

shouts in the common tongue, "ICHONAUGHTS! THESE INTERLOPERS ARE HERE TO PREVENT US FROM AWAKENING THE COTE! ATTACK! FULFILL YOUR DESTINY!" The termite workers stop their attack on the glass cage and shamle towards the PCs.

**Xythlythralli, The Queens Harbringer, The Upright Cellmite:** Init +2; Atk bite +3 Melee (1d4), spear +2 Melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP *spells* (as below); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; AL L.

**Spells:** The glass tiara on its head gives its wearer the spells *Force Manipulation* and *Charm Person*. (cast with -1)

**Charmed Cellmites (6):** Same statblock as Red Cellmites (worker)



B.A.U

**Glass Tiara of the Ichohnaughts:** Gives wearer *Force Manipulation* as well as *Charm Person*, 1d4 charges total per day. Rolling a fumble on the spell could shatter the tiara, roll an additional 1d10, a natural 1 will shatter it. Created by Ichohn Cote himself, it was one of the first proposed control mechanisms of the warden. It didn't make the cut and was discarded in this room.

Glass Cage with key: can be unlocked easily with the tiara acting as a key. Otherwise, it can be shattered. If PCs are using brute strength, let them attempt a DC 12 Strength check. It will break after 3 successful checks, but, for every attempt, roll to see if Patrolling Cellmites show up.

### **H - Head:**

Back in the main chamber, if the players insert all the keystones, a voice rings out:

*"Ichohnaughts! You are the chosen select few. Proceed past the ebony door into your destined place of control. It is time to choose amongst yourselves the five most worthy to receive the gift of Ichos."*

The players enter a round chamber, with five stone chairs, each adorned with a gem: ruby, emerald, sapphire, topaz, and obsidian. The chairs are equidistant alongside the walls. In the center of the room is a circular mat covered with arcane runes. A voice beckons the party to choose amongst themselves the most worthy to sit on said thrones. The rest of the group will stand on the mat, at which point a field of force will form a fence around the circle.

*You have chosen! Those left behind will be worthy sacrifices to empower the warden! Beware for the time to defend your life, and those you love, is at hand! The terrible Mongumandu has awakened once again, and once again the Ichohnaughts have been summoned to drive the beast back!*

The chosen five (or less) will be telepathically linked and will be able to see outside the warden, as the golem shakes, detaches itself from the ground, to emerge to face Mongumandu.

The remaining characters will be imprisoned within the mat, to be used as a battery-like reserve.

Describe to the players the rising of Mongumandu from the Blackest Sea, and the instant recognition of The Ichon Warden.

There is no escape. There is only battle.

**Ichohn Warden:** Init +2 (+Agi bonus\*), Atk +10 (+Str bonus\*) melee (unarmed) (4d4 +Str bonus\*), AC 20 (+Agi bonus\*), HD 14d10 (+ extra d10 for each Sta bonus\*), MV 60', Act 3d20, Crit on 19-20 (Crit table III), SP see below; SV Fort +6 +Sta bonus\*, Ref +3 +Agi bonus\*, Will +Per bonus\*

**\*Stat bonuses for Ichohn Warden:** To determine the Agil/Str/Sta/Per bonus, combine the relevant bonuses of five "pilots". Ignore the penalties if a pilot is woefully lacking in a particular attribute. For example, if the 5 pilots Str modifier are +1/-1/+2/0/0. Ignore the -1 and the final Str modifier is +3. The Ichohn Warden is considered proficient with unarmed and improvised weapons.

**Optional HP rules.** Divide the hp into 6 parts, representing the head, 4 limbs, and body. Allow individual limbs and head to be targetable by Mongumandu, and when a limb or head loses its hit points, the limb (or head) will be unusable.

Losing one of the arms will deactivate either ICHOHN PUNCH or ICHOHN MISSILE (losing the other arm will deactivate the other power) Losing a leg will slow movement (MV halved) as well as incur a -5 to AC and Agility checks; losing both will basically make the warden *prone* with -8 AC. Losing the Head will incur the *blinded* condition to the Warden, as well as deactivate ICHOHN RAY.

**Special Attacks:** To use a special attack, reference the table associated with the special and roll as if to cast the spell, assuming a caster level of 2, and has an automatic base +10 (+Int bonus) to spellcheck. Once used, the special will need to cooldown and remain unavailable for 1d4 turns.

**Misfire/Corruption:** There is no misfire/corruption for these powers. If failed on a 1, the special will be unusable, as the attack malfunctions and the relevant apparatus explodes, causing the associated effect.

Special	Spell Result	Fail on 1 Effect
ICHOHN PUNCH (hands engulfed in flames)	<i>flaming hands</i>	Hands explode, doing 4d6 dmg to self. Cannot grab.
ICHOHN CHEST BLAST (chest panel opens up and missiles fire)	<i>magic missile</i>	Lose -5 AC as chest explodes, doing 5d6 dmg to self.
ICHOHN EYE (laser beam from eyes)	<i>scorching ray</i>	Targeting functions suffer damage. Incur the <i>blinded</i> condition with 3d8 damage to self.

The Warden is a towering golem (at around 100' tall). It is fabricated to look like an idealized version of the original Ichohn Cote: a bearded warrior of old.

**Battery of Ichos:** The surviving characters who are not part of the chosen 5 are enclosed in a rather ingenious device called the Battery of Ichos. During a turn, the pilots of Ichos Warden can spend an action die to use the life force of one or more members to regain hp, cancel out the cool down of a power, gain extra movement, etc. Add together the remaining hp of these characters and consider the table below.

Judges are encouraged to come up with more uses for the Battery of Ichos.

Use	Details
Regain Health	1 hp = 1d4
Reduce Cooldown	1hp = 1 less turn per power
Repair Power	5hp to repair an overheated power.
Speed Up	1hp = + 10 mv, lasts 4 turns
Add to Resolve	1hp = +1 to all checks. This can be used outside of the turn, for example, as a reaction to a save. Lasts 4 turns
Repair Limb	5hp = repair broken limb (limb will be available on next combat turn)

**Mongumandu:** Init +2; Atk claws+14 melee (2d8+12), bite +18 melee (4d8+10), hurled stone +10 missile fire (2d8+10, range 200'); Fire breath + 10 breath (5d6+5), Fort save vs 20 or take 1d10 dmg per round for 1d4 rounds, AC 20; HD 18d10; hp 135 MV 50'; Act 2d24; crit on 20-24 (Crit Table DR); SV Fort +15, Reflex +5, Will + 5; AL C.

Some grandparents have described Mongumandu as a gigantic dragon that was not able to fly due to its size. Others speak of the greatest of apes whose surprising speed matches its unparalleled strength. Then there are the elders who were more blessed that would mutter about the fearsome floating head that shot fire and ice. The stat block above represents the dragon/lizard, but Judges could always come up with their own alternative version.

## SHOWDOWN

Describe to the players the nauseating warping of perspective as their collective consciousness is combined with their ancestor, Ichohn Cote. They will find themselves peering down at their beloved home, while inhabiting the body of a colossal 10 story tall magical golem. Behind them and beyond in the middle of the Blackest Sea, Mongumandu rises from the waters, and the final fight is about to begin.

The battlefield will be between the village and the blackest sea. There will be plenty of environmental weapons, as well as the village itself to act as a casualty. The warden has 3 action dice. It is recommended to rotate the action dice: one player to determine the action and roll a die, then another player to determine the action, and so on. Alternatively, a cohesive group could determine the warden's actions together.

## EPILOGUE

If Mongumandu wins, the golem will shatter, every pilot that passes their Luck check will find their seat transformed into a functional escape pod that survives the destruction. The beast will then descend upon their village and lay it to ruins, before stumbling off into the wild, to be encountered again at a future time.

If the players win, they may be able to discover that the beast's power still exists in portions of its carcass. If PCs search Mongumandu's corpse then they might find the following items, all of which are chaotically aligned:

1d8	Item
1	Scale of Mongumandu (shield) +1. +2 to saving rolls to resist fire, ignore up to 2 hp of fire damage each round.
2	Nail of Mongumandu (sword) +1. +1 Luck to its wielder. Considered a magical weapon.
3	Quill of Mongumandu (spear) +1. +2 against larger enemies. Considered a magical weapon.
4	Teeth of Mongumandu (dagger) + 1. Additional +1d4 poison damage (3 charges a day). Considered a magical weapon.
5	Eye of Mongumandu (crystal ball) +1 spell checks. Gain the spell <i>enlarge</i> . 1 charge per day. Failure on casting enlarge will cause cracks to appear in orb, and potentially shatter it (roll 1d20; at 1 it shatters, and every failure will increase threshold by 1.) There is no obvious way to “fix” the orb.

6-8 + roll twice. Can claim up to 5 items

The warden, having completed its task, will kneel down and the players will find themselves able to exit and climb down from its head. The warden will remain inoperable until the next threat appears.

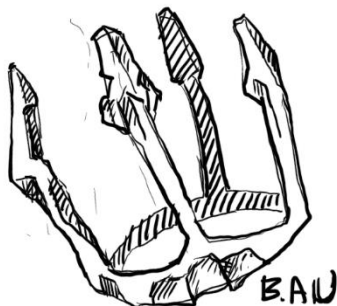
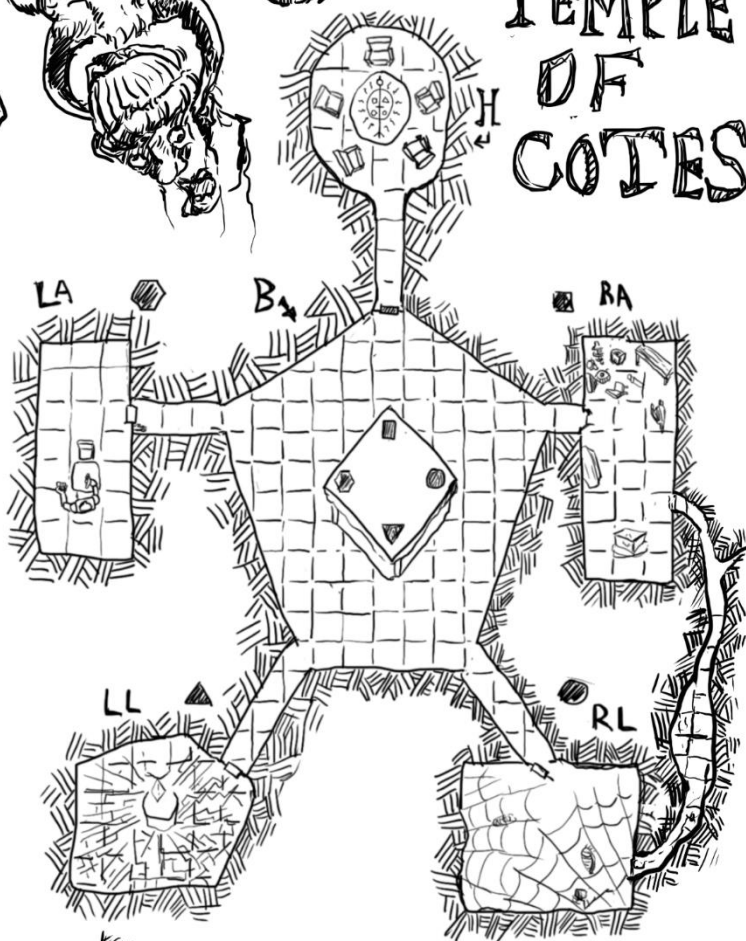
### Possible campaign idea:

Mongumandu is just the first of the many behemoths that Ichohn Cotes have defeated temporarily, and *something* is reviving them. Uncle Eesop might have some ancient maps and writings of Ichohn Cotes that can point to forgotten temple/laboratories. Players can explore those for upgrades to the Ichohn Warden in order to meet these increasingly more dangerous foes while investigating the source of the resurrection.





# THE TEMPLE OF COTES



## Art Contributor Links

**bygrinstow** has created over 100 DCC-compatible monsters on the Appendix M blog and elsewhere; the rumor is that he has a website at [www.bygrinstow.com](http://www.bygrinstow.com)

**Boston Au** did all his own work for his adventure and did a fantastic job at it. He is also the talented creator of this issue's cover. You'll also have seen his work in the GFA. Follow him at [www.instagram.com/typicalbreakfast](http://www.instagram.com/typicalbreakfast)

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**David Persinger** is an artist with a killer style. You might have seen his work for the past few years in the GFA where he's known as SGT Dave. Go check out his other work at <https://www.deviantart.com/skaldheim>

**Diogo Nogueira** has contributed both art and words to the Gong Farmer's Almanac, as well as created his own games (Solar Blades and Cosmic Spells, Lost in the Fantasy World, and more!). Go commission a piece or just check out his amazing artwork at <http://oldskulling.blogspot.com>

**Stefan Poag** has created loads of beautiful art for Dungeon Crawl Classics and created comics based on some Appendix N authors. Find him at <https://stefanpoag.com>

**Steven Gomez** has mastered a number of styles. If you look at his work here and then also at his insta. Go look for yourself at [www.instagram.com/meztoons](http://www.instagram.com/meztoons)

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## QuaranZine Volume 2

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The Social Distance Collective