

The Gongfarmer's Almanac



The 2020 Gongfarmer's Almanac:

A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by
the DCC RPG Communities



DCC Adventure Time #1

VOLUME 1 OF SIXTEEN BOOKLETS

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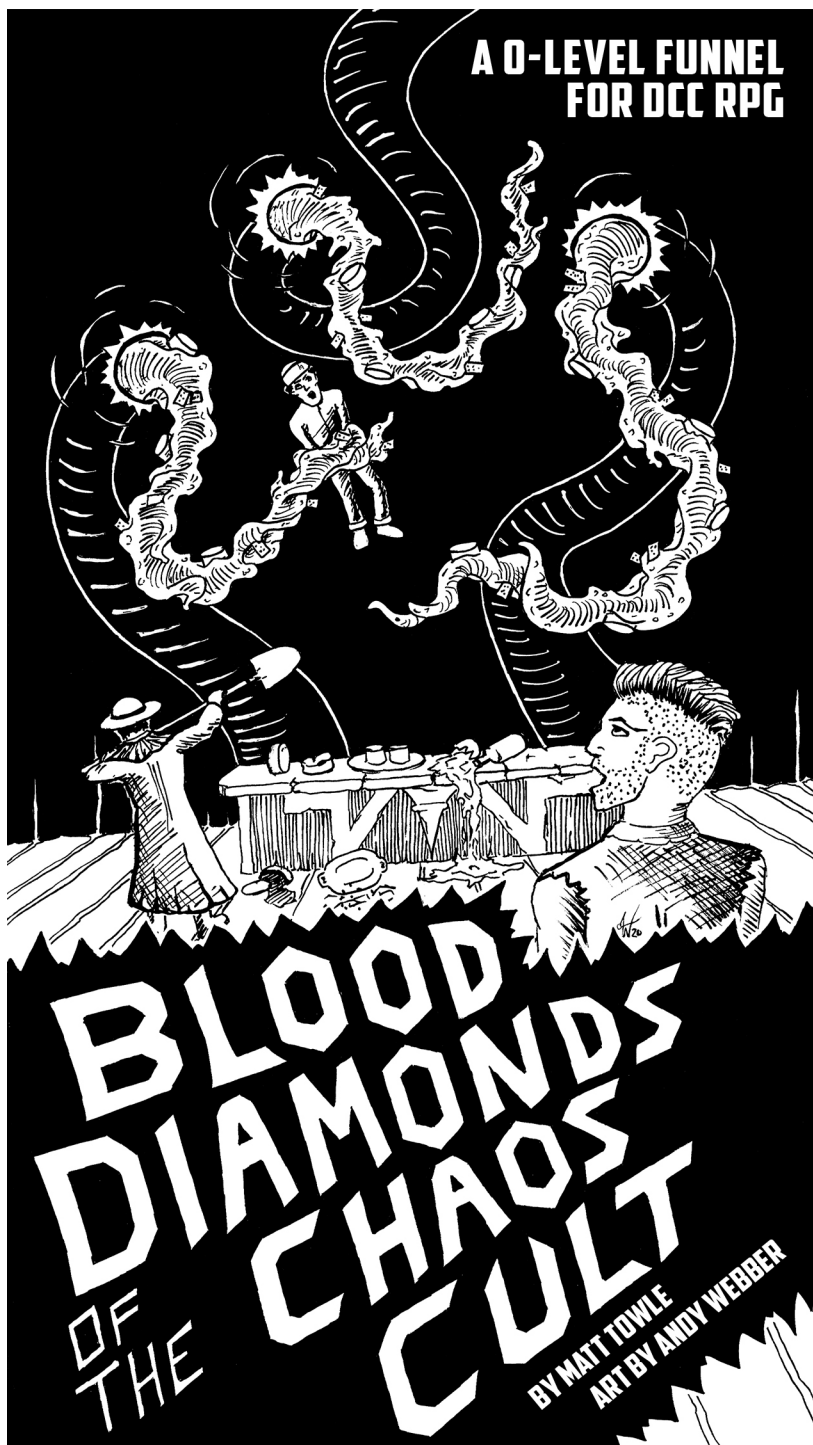
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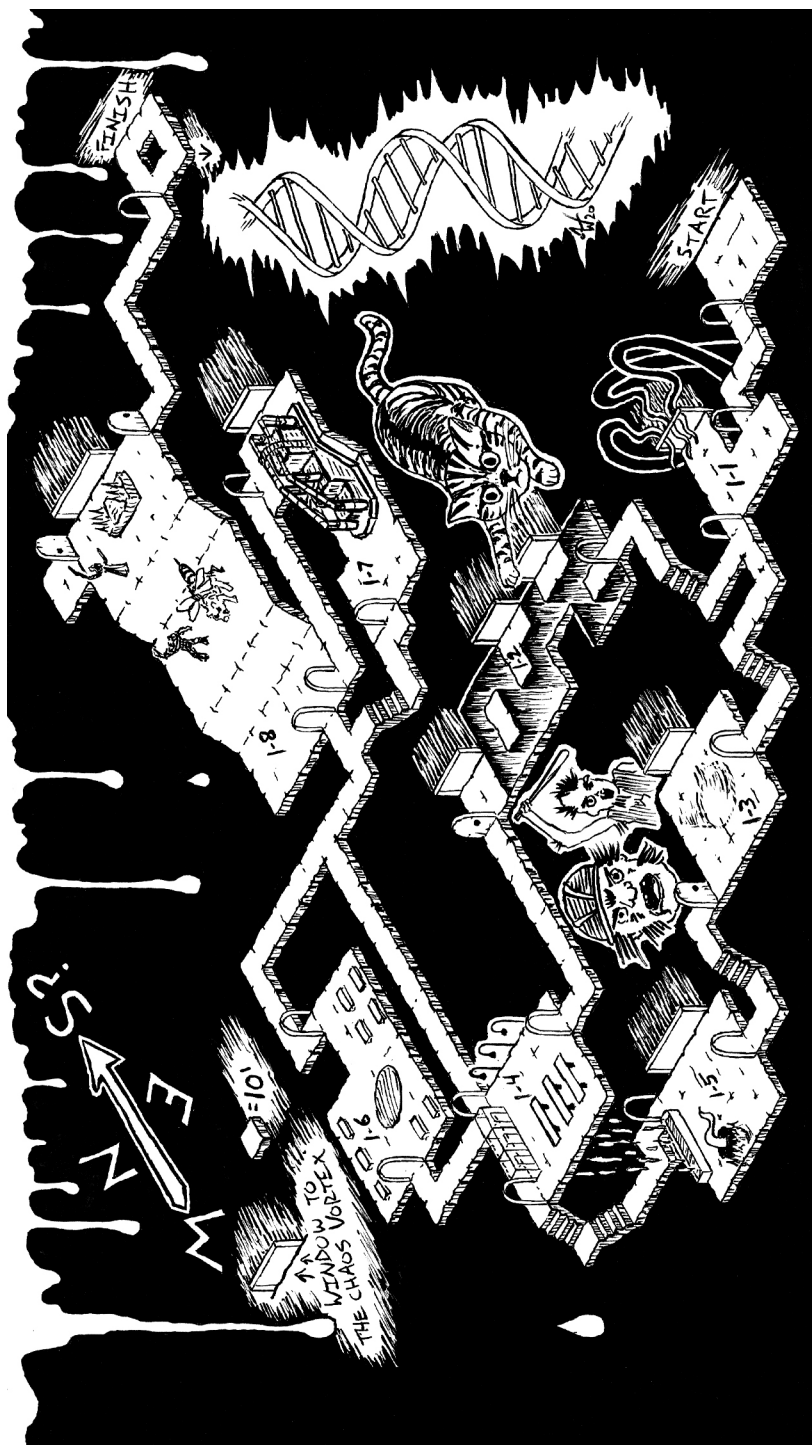
**A O-LEVEL FUNNEL
FOR DCC RPG**



BLOOD DIAMONDS CHAOS CULT

**OF
THE**

**BY MATT TOWLE
ART BY ANDY WEBBER**



BLOOD DIAMONDS OF THE CHAOS CULT

By Matthew Towle, art and cartography by Andy Webber

A Zero-level funnel for Dungeon Crawl Classics.

Part One of the Blood Diamonds Cycle.

For months, you have been slaves in the diamond mines of the Chaos Cult! Torn from your ordinary lives in your ordinary villages, you were chained, and force-marched to a forbidding mountain that has been your home, and your prison, ever since. But today, your life of hardship and servitude ends! A colossal explosion of light and magic has ripped through the mine. All the Blood Sorcery employed by the cultists has gone awry. Now a vortex of pure Chaos has opened up within the mountain, transforming everything it touches. The tunnels have twisted; the guards are gone. Will you seize this chance to escape the slave mine of the Chaos Cult?

This scenario is written for 15-20 zero-level characters with only basic clothing and no weapons or other gear. A party of first-level characters with no gear might do just as well, but the action in the mines is violent and deadly, and replacement PCs may only be found in Chamber Six, the Sorcerer's Workroom.

BACKGROUND NOTE: THE CULT

Who are These Fanatics?

The Chaos Cult has been operating in one form or another in the tunnels honeycombing the mountain for decades. They did not build the complex, although they did expand it, as will be seen in *Beyond the Diamond Veil* (q.v.). Their fortunes have waxed and waned, and they are vulnerable now, as this colossal mistake has brought ruin to their headquarters and many of their members.

Their current operations include harvesting slaves from villages within a couple days' hard ride from the mountain (the PCs in this adventure were abducted less than a year ago). The cult uses the

diamonds that are not used in ritual magic to finance their efforts to expand, funding mercenaries and supplies used to keep the blood rituals flowing in the mountain.

One aspect of the Blood Magic is the creation of Blood Diamond Artifacts (q.v.), which serve both as tools of the elite cultists of the Cult and as a further source of revenue, as wizards across Aereth will pay handsomely for any artifacts the ‘Cult is willing to part with, even though they know the source paid an evil price to create them.

Although the ‘Cult is mostly concerned with arcane power, they are not oblivious to widening the scope of their political power. Already the villages within 20 leagues are accustomed to their visits. T, and towns and cities more than 50 leagues away have heard tales of their power. Their riders are feared in many towns, and their chains have enslaved men and women of all walks of life.

DEATH IN THE DIAMOND MINE

The uncontrolled entropy unleashed by the Blood Sorcerers creates unpredictable effects. Any time a PC dies, their body rapidly (less than one round) putrefies, Bones turn to paste. Flesh decays to jelly. Most of the mass vanishes into the air. Anyone examining the body closely will see something glittering deep in the mass of gelatinous offal: a Blood Diamond Artifact! The magic of the Chaos Cult has labored for years to create such things, but the entropic maelstrom now creates a random item each time a PC dies. Roll 1d12 + luck modifier on the following table for each death, if the body is examined:

BLOOD DIAMOND ARTIFACT TABLE

(roll d12+luck modifier, or judge’s choice)

1. A Blood Diamond dagger, nigh-unbreakable (1d5)
2. A Blood Diamond arrow, nigh-unbreakable (1d7)
3. A Blood Diamond piccolo. May be played as a normal instrument. Alternatively, one hit point may be sacrificed (the character bleeds at the lip) to attack a single target within 80’ that the user can see. Roll d20 +user level +Luck modifier. The

target must make a Fort save against the result or deafened until magically healed.

4. A Blood Diamond monocle. May be used normally to aid close reading, or the user may sacrifice a hit point (bleeding from the eye socket) to read any language for 1d16 rounds.
5. A pair of scissors, just 6" long, made of Blood Diamond. Never dulls from normal use. For one hit point (bleeding from the fingernails), the user may "snip" the vocal cords of a target within 60'/visible range. Roll d20 +user level +Luck modifier. The target must a Fort save against this, or cannot talk until magically healed.
6. A piece of Blood Diamond shaped not unlike the handle of a suitcase, or the handle of a door. For one hit point (user tastes blood in back of throat), the handle will stay wherever it is, unmovable, nigh-unbreakable, until someone else grasps the handle and sacrifices another hit point. It may be "attached" to any surface, or even suspended in air. The handle will support whatever weight the PCs manage to burden it with.
7. A Blood Diamond wand. If the user sacrifices one hit point (bleeding from nose), they may pull a fraction of the "essence" from any single target within 80' that they can see. Roll d20 +user level +Luck modifier. The target must make a Fort save against this value,, otherwise 1d3 damage per point they missed the save by.
8. A Blood Diamond ring. If the user sacrifices one hit point (blood around fingernails), they may throw a ring of fire around a single visible target within 60'. Roll d20+ level + Luck mod. The target must pass a Ref save against this value, or suffer 1d5 damage, and have their arms constricted, causing a -4 to attacks or spells for the duration of the encounter..
9. A Blood Diamond flat flask (½ pint, with stopper). May be used as an ordinary flask, or, at the cost of one hit point (bleeding from the gums), user may drink a tart tisane (hot herbal infusion) from the flask that enhances one physical ability(Strength, Agility, or Stamina) of the user's choice by +8 until the end of the encounter. Note: if Stamina is chosen, this will result in additional hit points, which will be lost first in combat.

10. A jagged, single-edged long knife of Blood Diamond. May be used as a short sword (1d7), and is nigh-unbreakable. By sacrificing one hit point (paper-thin cut along the forearm), the user may rip a hole in spacetime, creating a deadly disturbance affecting up to two adjacent, visible targets within 70'. Roll d20 +level +Luck modifier, and the target must make a Ref save against this value or suffer 1d3 damage per point they missed the save by, and be knocked prone. If this damage is enough to kill the target(s), the bodies are sucked through the rupture and vanish into the wilds of spacetime.
11. A bracelet of Blood Diamond. By sacrificing one hit point (pin-pricks of blood on the wrist), the user may call down a lightning bolt at up to three adjacent, visible targets within 80'. Roll d20 + level +Luck modifier. The targets must pass a Ref save of equal difficulty, or suffer 1d3 damage per point they missed the save by, and be deafened for the duration of the encounter.
12. A single gauntlet of Blood Diamond. Gives +1 AC when worn, may be used to strike in combat for 1d5 damage. By sacrificing one hit point (pain shooting up arm past shoulder, approaching heart), the user may "charge up" the gauntlet, giving it a sinister red glow. For the rest of the encounter, the gauntlet is +2 to hit, +2 on damage, and may strike targets otherwise immune to normal weapons (ghostly undead, creatures out of phase with reality, "invulnerable" hide or scales, etc). Against such creatures, it will crit on a 17-20 (if it hits) and uses a crit die TWO steps up the dice chain.

NOTE: All Blood Diamond Artifacts suffer these limitations:

- If the user is killed, the item is likely useless. The plunderer must pass a DC 15 Luck check or the item is flawed. It is still usable as a mundane item, but has no special powers.
- The artifacts are things of Chaos. A Lawful Cleric or church will regard the items as unholy and desire their destruction.

BACKGROUND NOTE: ROCKS

Just What Exactly IS Blood Diamond, Anyway?

Blood Diamond Artifacts are creations of Chaos Magic that require diamonds in great supply, a source of arcane energy, and both the pain and death of sentient beings. The Chaos Cult has codified their

generations of research, and have been able to forge artifacts with specific powers. The PCs, however, are escaping a mine filled with a vortex of chaotic energy, and the normal rules for item creation are suspended during this catastrophic event.

The artifacts are indestructible under normal circumstances, unless their power is destroyed along with their wielder, at which point they become merely diamond-hard items of high quality. Each artifact varies in appearance between almost totally transparent to deeply red and merely translucent, as the judge likes.

THE ACTION BEGINS

The action begins in a tunnel complex of tunnels that has been transformed by uncontrolled Chaos Magic. The eponymous Cult has, after decades of entropic incantations, finally pushed its luck too far. A Chaos Vortex, a swirling double-helix of shimmering, silvery anti-energy, has appeared in the center of the mountain, and changes everything it touches. Many of the cultists have died, others hideously mutated., and eEven the tunnels themselves are no longer in the “right” places,(although some remain recognizable) although some remain recognizable. There is a way out, but peril unlike any the miners have ever seen lies between them and their goal

Just before dawn, the PCs are awakened by a massive earthquake, accompanied by groaning rock, dust and pebbles falling from the ceiling. A pervasive sense of dread fills their hearts, as if their very existence has been called into question. When the quake has ended, they will see an unusual light streaming from the guards’ chamber adjacent to them, a pearly glow not heretofore seen in their underground prison.

CHAMBER ONE: GUARDS’ WRECK ROOM

Or: Whiskey Tentacles Take My Mind!

This chamber,a simple break room for the brutal guardsmen, now has a giant “window” facing the Chaos Vortex in place of one wall. It is thus lit by the unreal radiance of the Vortex.

The weird window shows a view of a vast underground space, perhaps a mile from base to peak, a hollow in the midst of the mountain filled with motes of dust, floating rock, and a colossal double helix of pearly white light, swirling as if alive. Strange tendrils branch off from the helix, occasionally reaching out toward other windows within the mountain. This view is seen from many of the chambers in what is left of the mine. Rooms with “a view” are the most altered by the runaway Entropy.

Near the “window” wall, a long table laid with food and drink available only to the Diamond Guards has been affected by the weird magics swirling nearby. A half dozen knives (1d3), forks (1d2), and ceramic mugs (1d4 once, then 1d2) are on the table next to a minor feast of tinned meat, crackers, mustard, and whiskey.

Only 1d3 rounds after the PCs have begun to explore the area, three tentacles push through the window Grey and slimy outside the chamber, they assume the material of those things closest to the window the moment they pass into the room. These tentacles become composed equally of canned meat, crusty crackers, jellified whiskey, and spicy mustard. Now the “spamicles” reach deep into the room and grapple or stab the PCs.

CHAOS TENTACLES (3): Init +3; Atk +3 grab and squeeze melee (1d7) or +3 stab and drain melee (1d5); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP double damage from fire or chopping weapons; ; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

If enough damage is done to “kill” a tentacle, it withdraws through the window, and back into the swirling maelstrom of entropy.

In addition to the tables, the chamber contains five battered lockers used by the guards. One of them contains a burlap sack filled with woolen socks, clean but with holes in heels or toes. One locker contains a dagger in a sheath, a bronze helmet (+1 AC), and a club made of black wood. The last locker contains a whip (1d4) and pickaxe (1d6), along with a pair of high, hard boots.

An archway opens into a dark, ill-lit corridor, leading to freedom, or death.

CORRIDORS IN THE MINE

All corridors in the Mines of Chaos have smooth, finished floors, but rough walls and ceilings, and are 10' wide and 15' high. If the PCs linger in the corridors, the judge may choose to create a random encounter. By default, the corridors are deserted.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE MINE

1. Scuttlemutt: Init +1; Atk +2 bite melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 9; Act 1d20; MV 30'; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N. These dogs are composed of rough diamond, and act much as dogs do, though they only eat ore.
2. Diamond Ooze: Init -1; Atk +2 glorp melee (1d6); AC 10; HD 3d8; hp 14; Act 1d20; MV 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +0; AL N.
3. Earth Tremors! Dust and shaking and the whole place is coming down! Oh, it stopped.
4. One PC is overcome with sneezing and coughing. Mine Fever! PC must pass a DC 10 Fort save or -1d to everything until recovered/healed.
5. 2 Scuttlemutts, as above.
6. 3 skeletonized guards, still in uniform, but their bones are diamond, and fused. One of them has a random Blood Diamond Artifact (see table)

CHAMBER TWO: CONFIDENCE COURSE

Or: A Cat May Look at a King

This chamber has been drastically affected by the Chaos Vortex. What once served as a storeroom and home to a few mice (and cats!) has now become a deadly obstacle course, where failure will result in a long fall to oblivion (see map).

There are four obstacles in the room: a climbing net, a set of monkey bars, a swinging roundabout, and a leap of prodigious faith. A platform lies just before and after each of the tests. The real danger lies while occupying each platform; the Cavern Cats will attempt to swat a PC occupying a landing once each round.

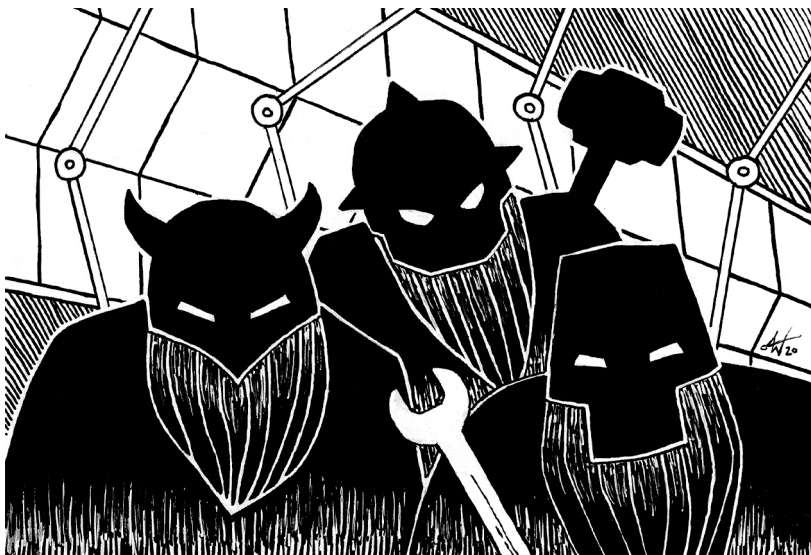
The Cavern Cats are just visible, lurking high above the accessible areas of the room. Originally domestic cats, the Chaos Vortex has touched them, and they are now huge (18' long) cats: a shadowy grey and black, a calico, and huge yellow tomcat missing most of both ears. Full stats follow, but the cats function here as a room hazard, and will only bedevil the players as indicated in "Running the Gauntlet", below.

Cavern Cats (3): Init +4; Atk claw melee (2d8) or bite melee (2d10); AC 14; HD 6d8; hp 28; MV 35' or 60' pounce/leap; Act 2d20; SP unearthly agility (20 Agi), SWAT!; SV Ref +9 Fort +3 Will +2; AL C.

Running the Gauntlet: The four obstacles can be passed by a simple DC 10 save: Will for the climbing net, Fort for the monkey bars, Ref for the swinging roundabout, and Fort for the leap of prodigious faith. Failure on these saves requires a second DC 12 Ref save, or the PC falls to his doom in the darkness below. Each time a PC passes an obstacle, they will have to occupy the platform for one round, allowing the Cavern Cats to SWAT! Clever players will move multiple PCs through the obstacle course at a time, as only one Cavern Cat will pounce each round that a PC occupies a platform.

The SWAT!: Any time a PC ends a round on any of the platforms, one Cavern Cat will SWAT at them. If more than one PC rests there, the Cat will target the one with the lowest luck. The affected player must make a DC 13 Ref save, or be swatted clean off the platform. Sadly, the platforms are suspended over a pit that plunges more than 200' down into the depths of the mine. Falling damage is 20d6.

The last platform gives access to a door made of stone and bronze, unlocked and untrapped, and painted green. Adjacent to the door is a bronze rack with a two-headed club, wrapped in leather painted blue and red (d10, d16 initiative for the wielder) and a stretchy suit of red padded leather armor (does not cover the knees or below, short sleeves, but functions as leather armor) hanging on pegs.



CHAMBER THREE: DOWN TO THE CROSSROADS

Or: Degenerates and Dancing

This cavern was once a mined-out chamber. Simply a crossroads, no active mining had occurred here for years. The Degenerates here were once miners, but have been touched by the Chaos Vortex. Now they are devolved, primitive humanoids, and attack everything they don't understand.. Which is, in fact, nearly everything..

The center of this chamber is no different from the rest, except that it exists slightly out of phase with the rest of the mine. Anyone who enters it is immune to attacks from anyone outside of it, and vice versa. Missile weapons moving through the center appear to move incredibly slowly to those outside the field. Movement in the middle is normal, but all those outside the circle appear suffused in a dark violet hue (the dreaded "Deep Purple Shift"). The Degenerates are only semi-intelligent now, and shy away from the center of the chamber instinctively.

Dungeon Degenerates (6): Init +0; Atk +2 pickaxe handle melee (1d4+1 hp); AC 12; HD 2d10; hp 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; AL C.

Appear to be devolved humans and dwarves, with protruding eyebrow ridges, long, knuckle-dragging arms, and inconveniently vigorous hair growth. Still wearing leather outfits they have outgrown in awkward ways, they look disturbing, enjoy dancing around saying “ook”, and smell hideous.

If the “armor” of the Degenerates is salvaged, it will serve as Leather armor, but smells repulsive and will attract vermin and other pests, as the judge deems fit. The pick handles make excellent clubs (1d4).

At the far end of the chamber is a door made of bronze and stone, painted red, untrapped and unlocked. Other passages from the room are evident, but the Degenerates have filled them up with rubble and stone (room for the Judge to expand) and are impassable.

BACKGROUND NOTE: REAL WORLD EVIL

What has all this to do with REAL Blood Diamonds?

Blood diamonds, or conflict diamonds, are an evil of our own devising. Sources of diamonds co-opted and controlled by warlords and dictators in Africa are used to fund arms purchases from all over the world, including the U.S. and other “peaceful” democracies. Although no blood sorcery is involved, these warlords force children to become soldiers, force others to work the mines as slaves, and kill any who stand in the way of their military and political goals. Interested readers should visit the website for GLOBAL WITNESS, a watchdog organization, or seek out other organizations working to end these atrocities. Blood Diamonds of the Chaos Cult, while somewhat light-hearted in tone, was inspired by a desire to draw attention to atrocities in our world. In roleplaying games, it is possible to defeat an organization like the Chaos Cult by taking decisive, direct action. This is less true away from the gaming table, and the struggle against these cruel warlords goes on.

CHAMBER FOUR: HIT THE SHOWERS

Or: It's La-Trine. From the French.

This chamber is a rare oasis of peace in the Mines of Chaos. The PCs will recognize the chamber, although the corridors leading to it have changed. One wall contains rough showers that were used by the PCs (forcibly) once a week, and fed by fresh water from an unknown source streaming down from the ceiling. The opposite side of the chamber, separated only by low wooden barriers, is an entire wall of rude outhouse-style toilets, each "hole" leading down (see Chamber Five, below)

PCs here may avail themselves of the showers and/or commodes as they wish. Stairs just outside this chamber lead down to the Galley.

CHAMBER FIVE: GALLEY

Or: Something's in the Kitchen with Dinah

This chamber contains what is left of the main kitchen for the Mines. A large cauldron dominates the room at one end, while another wall has "water" seeping down it continuously. Perceptive players will note that the fluid dripping down from above is coming from the chamber just above this one, i.e., the toilets, and is serving as the apparent source of "water" for the kitchen. Whether this was always the case, or is now only due to the influence of the Chaos Vortex is beyond the scope of this narrative, but allow the PCs to connect the dots.

There are tables and counters throughout the room, containing a few salvageable weapons (a meat cleaver (1d6), a hammer (1d5), 3 long iron spikes (1d4), and a stringed instrument, much worn but playable, with five strings.

The danger here lurks in the cauldron, as the Chaos Vortex has touched the multi-gallon brew on the fire, creating a GRUEL ELEMENTAL, a creature of amorphous but deadly form. (use Otyugh mini if you have one)

Gruel Elemental (1): Init +0 or +3; Atk +3 hot tentacle slap melee (1d8); AC 10; HD 4d12; hp 26; MV 20' or 20' climb vertical surfaces; Actions 1d24+1d16; SP immune to mind-affecting magic; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3; AL C.

The Gruel Elemental lurks in its cauldron until either prodded by a PC or 1d3 rounds have passed. It will then leap out of the cauldron and attack with its tentacles, gaining a +3 on initiative for this encounter. It looks vaguely humanoid, with two stumpy feet and two long tentacles. It smells as if composed of toilet water and leftover scraps a dog would not eat, warmed over a fire until pungent, then given life by someone with singularly poor judgement. Its eyes seem to be two sheep's eyes of different sizes. Probably sheep.

CHAMBER SIX: SORCERERS' WORKSHOP

Or: Heads, We Dance

This chamber once housed a number of sorcerers, all working to advance the knowledge of the Chaos Cult. It has gone unused in recent years and served, until recently, as a storeroom for supplies, and as a holding area for the occasional soon-to-be-sacrificed.

Strapped to stone slabs throughout the chamber are 1d14 prisoners (or enough to ensure all players have at least two PCs each, as the judge desires) held bound and gagged. In the middle of the slabs, there is a circular area with a smooth, polished floor (suitable for dancing or wrestling), and a container holding an ancient bronze dagger, pieces of white chalk, and a single, silver coin (depicting a faded queen on one side, and lion facing a unicorn on the other).

***Note:** in playtest, no elves or halflings were available as initial PCs, as the Chaos Overlords considered them poor miners and slaves. All the zero-levels here were halflings and elves, as they were set aside for sacrifice. The judge may follow this pattern or allow all character types at both stages of the scenario, as desired.*

Other than fresh bodies, each PC may make a luck roll. Successful rolls allow them to find one random item from the random starting equipment list (DCC, p.73), or from any other list the judge likes. A mixmaster or digital calculator from modern times, a com-badge or

tricorder from the distant future, or a pirate hat with crossed flippers from a parallel dimension, all might be found in this magically-charged nexus.

CHAMBER SEVEN

Or: Don't Try This at Home

***Judge's Note:** This encounter is optional for timed or convention games. In playtesting, a four-hour time block was adequate to run every encounter listed in this scenario, but only just. Judges are urged not to penalize players by including this encounter if that will mean skipping the confrontation with the Architect of Chaos in CHAMBER EIGHT, below.*

This chamber contains what is left of the mighty Engines of Mis-Chance, steam-powered devices that somehow increase entropy in a barely-controlled fashion. For generations, the Cult has powered their sinister magicks with the dual power of blood and entropy. Now, near the feathered, fractal edge of Everything, three surviving Mechengineers struggle to maintain control of a power that is running amok.

The Engines occupy three tiers, ascending into the long, high-ceiling chamber. Their sinister red light provides the only radiance here. Clustered at the highest Engine are the three surviving Mechengineers. Once dwarves, they are now 7' tall humanoids as dense and broad as any dwarf. Immensely strong and heavy, they are clad in thick black chain hauberks, and armed with the hammers and wrenches of their trade.

The Engines of Mis-Chance are 15' high each, pumping pistons and belching steam and smoke and grit into the air, clamoring with harsh metallic clanks and thumps. Shouting is the only form of verbal communication that will succeed here.

If the party attempts to bypass the encounter, the Mechengineers are less watchful than other threats they have faced so far. The PCs may succeed in slipping out the door at the top of the chamber if the PC with the lowest Luck passes a Luck check.

If combat is initiated at range, two of the Engineers will seize the third and toss him bodily at the largest cluster of players. Up to three adjacent PCs may be thus threatened, requiring a DC 13 Ref save, or targets are “bowled” over by the Engineer, take 1d5 damage and fall prone.

Any fumbles by a PC or Mechengineer in this chamber result in the Engines of Mis-Chance activating. Likewise, if any player attempts to manipulate the Engines (e.g., to shut one down, or to break it), then roll a d5:

ENGINES OF MIS-CHANCE ENTROPY TABLE (d5)

1. PC is drawn into the Engine stretching their body impossibly thin, appearing as a ribbon (very briefly) that swirls about the room, then is fed into the Engine’s “maw”, never to be seen again.
2. PC loses primary arm as it explodes wetly, briefly deafening the character and splattering bits of flesh on all within 20’. The arm is replaced by a diamond stump that can move, and to which a prosthetic arm may be fitted as if it were flesh. Fighting with the “wrong” arm is -1d until the next adventure, at which point the character will have adapted.
3. PC has all possessions ripped off their body. The items turn to dust and orbit the player briefly before being drawn into the Engine’s “maw.” Some of the dust is then ejected from the machine’s exhaust port (on top) and settles on the player, permanently coating them with a thin blood diamond sheen. Still flexible and functional, but now granted a permanent +2 AC (before armor or other bonuses/penalties) and -1 to Personality
4. PC experiences bio-plasmic agony while their frame is twisted by the Engines of Mis-Chance. After one round of screaming, the character is transformed into a (d5):
 1. Hairless halfling
 2. Four-armed badger-person (extra d16 action die, no shield bash, otherwise as Dwarf)
 3. Fluttering sprite (1’ tall humanoid (fey) w/ dragonfly wings.

- Fly 30', d4 hit dice)
4. Giant dwarf (7' tall w/ d12 hit dice, +6 to Str, -6 to Agi (except for tossing people), weigh 500 lbs, similar to Mechengineers below)
 5. Sasquatch (7' tall hair-covered, long-limbed humanoid, +4 Str, -1d tool use, natural 1d6 claw or pummel attack, d10 Hit Dice, otherwise as Warrior)
5. All characters (PC and NPC) in the room roll d30. If the roll is under their luck score (treat NPCs as having luck 10) then they permanently gain a 1d7 hit die as muscle and flesh swell along their torso, arms, and legs. Those that fail instead grow a new eye in the back of their head, fully functional, and useful for keeping an eye out.

Mechengineers (3): Init +1; Atk +3 tool smash melee (1d10); AC 14; HD 3d8+3; hp 15; MV 35'; Act 1d20; SP Giant Dwarf Bowling; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

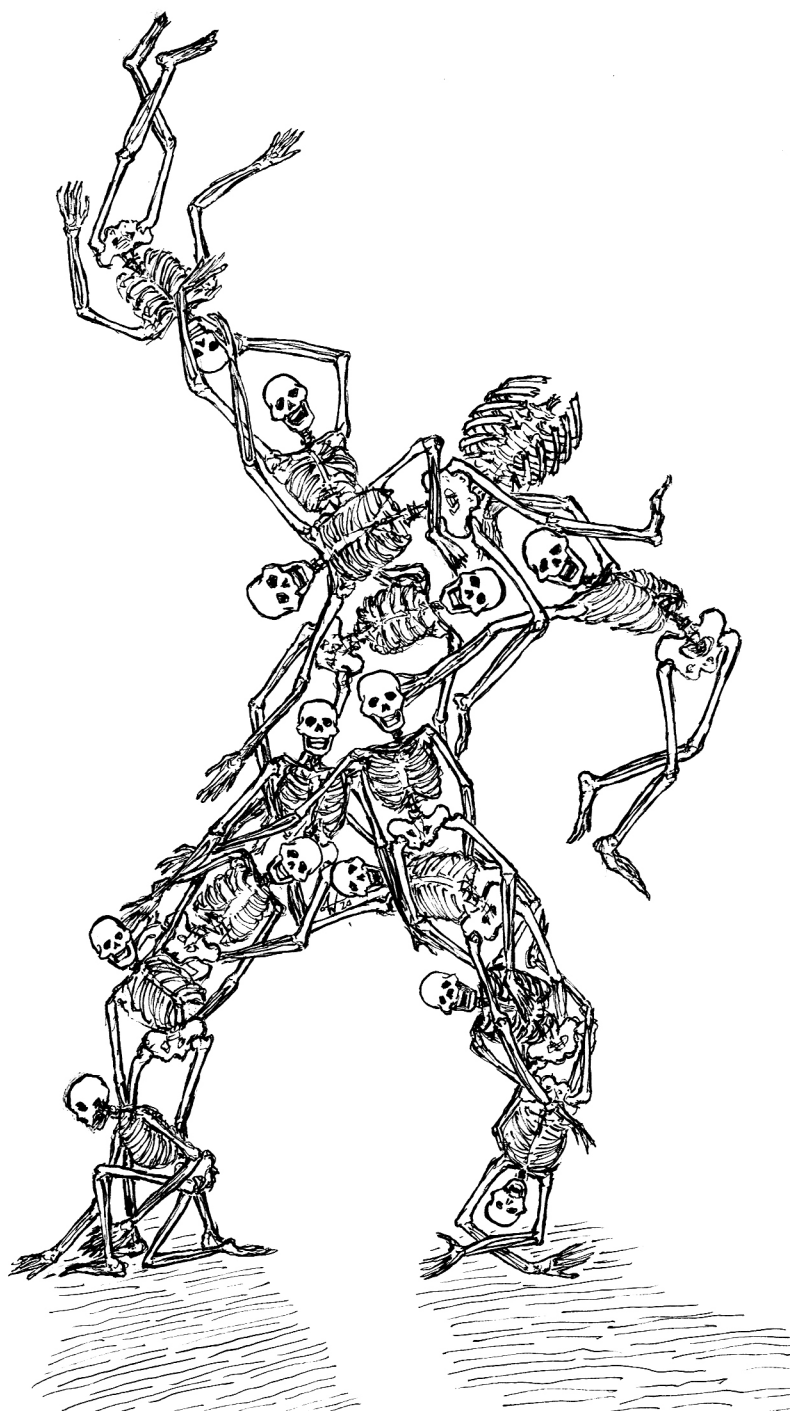
The chain hauberks worn by the Engineers are too large and ill-proportioned for use by the PCs, but if a suit is taken with the Band, a blacksmith or other talented craftsman could, given time, rework it into something suitable. The armor functions as chainmail, but half again as heavy, an additional -1 to skill checks, and providing 1d3 points of damage reduction (roll only once, upon creation of the hauberk)

The hammers and wrenches used by the Engineers may be taken and used as two-handed weapons by the PCs if desired. The judge is encouraged to customize them if desired, otherwise treating them as a Polearm (DCC p.71).

CHAMBER EIGHT

Or: To the Window! To the Wall!

This large chamber is both temple and workshop for the Cult of Chaos. At the far end lies the dreadful Altar of Pain. Behind it, where once was a wall illustrated with images of Chaos, now lies another window to the Chaos Vortex!



Note that the altar lies at the end of the long room, and the PCs, should they wish to finish the Architect of Chaos once and for all, will have to fight through his chaos beasts to earn that right!

As soon as the Band enters the chamber, roll for initiative as normal. Take note of how many rounds it takes before a player is within striking distance of the Architect, as that affects his powers. Two chaos beasts stand in the way of the party, each a terrifying sight:

Chaos Chimera: Init +2; Atk +3 boar tusks melee (2d5) and +3 leopard bite melee (1d10) and +3 yellowjacket sting melee (1d5 + DC 13 Fort save or paralyzed 1d7 rounds); AC 12; HD 3d12; hp 20; MV 20' or 40' flying; Act 1d24 (tusks)+1d20 (bite)+1d16 (tail sting); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

An amalgam of a giant boar (primary, head, body, and forelegs), a leopard (head and midlegs) and a Yellowjacket (4 wings, hind legs, and tail w/ sting), this terrible beast will fly at the players and engage them head on, landing near any grouping of targets worthy of its time.

Bone Beast: Init +2; Atk +3 bony stab melee (1d7); AC 10; HD 5d6; hp 22; MV 25'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP immune to mind-affecting spells, Un-dead; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; AL C.

Composed of the still-recognizable skeletons of many men, women, and children, this 12' high creature resembles nothing so much as an effigy of man, striding about awkwardly, and stabbing at those who have the effrontery to resist it. Its eyes glow with an orange light, the color of embers on a sacrificial pyre now dying.

Jan-kixx, High Priest of the Upper Temple, Blood Speaker, Grand High Architect of the Chaos Cult: An imperious, hatchet-faced man, Jan-kixx wears the scarlet and black robes of the Cult, complete with black satin slippers and scarlet satin gloves. Upon discovery of escapees in the Temple, he has turned his attention away from taming the chaos outside his doorstep, and has been drawing power from the Double Helix into himself. Each round his servants delay the PCs, his power grows:

Round	Bonus
-------	-------

1	+1HD, +1 Attacks, +1 Spell checks, +1 damage per attack
2	+2HD, +2 Attacks, +2 Spell checks, +2 damage per attack
3+	Repeat pattern as needed

Jan-kixx: Init +2; Atk +2 serrated scimitar melee (1d6) or +5 Flaming Eye ranged spell(1d14, 50'); AC 12; HD 4d6; hp 14; MV 30';Act 1d20+1d16;; SP Black Curse; SV Ref +3 Fort +1 Will +4; AL C.

Black Curse: As an action, Jan-kixx may choose a target within 50'. That target must make a DC 14 Will save or take -2d on all actions for 1 turn.

***Judge's note:** Jan-kixx should provide a reasonable challenge to the PCs. He is not frighteningly powerful unless they do not hurry to engage him as he gathers power. The judge may choose to set a reasonable maximum on power he can absorb, (say, 5 rounds worth).At which point, he will turn and stride confidently into battle alongside any surviving minions.*

It should be clear to observant PCs that the Chaos Vortex outside is only getting bigger, with numerous tentacles (see Chamber One) emerging from its central mass. One channel of energy seems to be leading directly to the Great Architect. It is now or never!

Loot here includes the scimitar and robes of Jan-kixx, and fragments of bone from the minions. The chimera will collapse into three separate heaps, and decay rapidly, leaving bone and sinew and a giant stinger, which may be used as a spear. The Bone Beast will fall apart completely, exposing the skeletons of the many innocents that died to form it, and a massive garnet (500 gp) that served as its heart. The altar trappings are of bone,wood, and stone. Ancient discolorations on the altar betoken a decades-long history of blood sacrifice.



Those brave enough to peer out the window, (if they can take their eyes from the Vortex), can see a broken staircase leading down and around the gaping hole in the mountain, ending at a shaft with odd machinery leading up and out. A lift-shaft!

Two doors in this chamber still exist. One leads only to a robing chamber used hours ago by Jan-kixx contains clothes suitable for hiking, (including boots, socks, etc.), and a bronze telescope of ancient design, inscribed with eldritch runes in a twice-dead language. The other door leads into a corridor that quickly becomes a staircase down and around, losing one wall to the chaos in just 20', and offering the PCs a path to freedom!

Depending on the judge's needs, the bronze telescope may have a connection to a chaotic patron with an outer-space feel (providing the spell Patron Bond), or to a deity of similar style (e.g. Azathoth, Cthulhu, or a Star-God of the judge's own devising). It may serve as inspiration for a surviving character when it comes time to choose a class. At the judge's discretion, mastering the telescope (surely a task requiring time and effort, perhaps a quest) may provide insight into various spells, or provide a bonus to spell checks for certain thematic spells, or affect the user's luck or health in certain environments (allowing the user and/or companions to breathe on an airless moon, for example). The sky is the limit, or not, as the judge prefers.

Once off the lift and out of the mine, the party will notice the ground begins to tremble constantly. Within six hours of the PCs' escape, an eruption of chaotic energy tosses rock and dust a mile in the air, and lays waste to half the terrain within a mile of the exit. After everything settles, no obvious point of entry are apparent. The threat of the Chaos Cult will be ended. For now.

Final note: it is recommended that all surviving PCs be given 10 xp, thus allowing them to advance to level one. Although little in the way of gold or silver is to be had here, any surviving Blood Diamond Artifacts the Band possesses are certainly priceless treasure, and a few other items may have made it out. A sequel to this adventure, *Beyond the Diamond Veil*, is suitable for level 2 PCs, and is set two years after the Band escapes the diamond mine. It is incumbent on the judge to provide adventure for the players until

they reach that august milestone. Until then, may your dice fall like thunder, and your dungeons run hot with blood!

LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER...

THE SECOND TIME AROUND

A FUNNEL ADVENTURE FOR 8-12 LEVEL 0 PCs

AUTHOR - JASON BASILE

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The Second Time Around

A level 0 funnel 5 room adventure for 8-15 characters

By Jason Basile, art by Andy Webber

Background

I wanted to create a quick yet entertaining funnel adventure that could be used either independently or could be dropped into any corner of a map. I used the ‘Five Room Dungeon’ concept with a few random generators that I then embellished on and created an interesting boss monster. Embellish on the narration and remember the five senses! If you are not familiar, you can read more about five room dungeons at <https://nerdsonearth.com/2017/12/5-room-dungeon/>

Adventure Background

Hangos is a small backwater village which is dominated by a large church surrounded by a few squat buildings which give the citizens enough to live on. The harsh landscape surrounding the village includes several natural geological sites that certain undesirables have taken up residence in... one being the Hangos Cave, which is known to have an entrance about a mile outside of the village. Rumors that “a powerful old man that worships an ancient demon” has taken up residence in the cave, the citizens of Hangos have taken it upon themselves to rally and drive out this menace.

Area 1: Entrance

The cave entrance is obscured by foliage and a DC 10 Intelligence check is required to find it. On a failure, the party is attacked by d3 Swarms of Confused Rodents before they successfully find the entrance.

Swarm of Confused Rodents: Init -2; Atk bite +0 melee (1d8 + plague); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP swarm: received half damage from normal weapon attacks; plague: After combat, characters bit by rates must make a DC 13 Fort Save or

suffer a cumulative -1 to a random physical stat each day until healed by lay on hands or by other magical means, and do not heal with normal rest. There is a 1 in 20 chance per day for the disease to spread to another member of the party; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N; Attack Priority: toughest, closest

Once the entrance has been found, the leaves and brambles are pulled away to reveal the entrance to a dark and dusty space beyond. Inside, a terrifying sight:

Halfling-sized creatures, made from nothing but bones, and seem to be held together by glowing threads. They are shackled together at their necks by a chain.

One of the skeletons is wearing a silver skull necklace with glowing green eyes. While the necklace is unbroken, skeletons will revive (GM should roll the HD of the creature upon revival and reroll their initiative) in d3 turns after being defeated.

Skeletons (3): Init +0; Atk longsword +0 1d8; AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will +2; AL C; Crit Table: U | 1d6

If the PC's move in to engage the skeletons, their movements also disturb an angry bat, which also attacks the party, and will not target the skeletons.

Swarm of Angry Bats: Init +2; Atk bite +0 melee (1d8); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30' fly; Act 1d20; SP: Cannot be blinded; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N

Area 2: The Pit

Falcor, a local of Hangos village and well-known alchemist and inventor, is locked in a cage suspended by a rope 9 feet above a pit in the floor of this room. He has been missing from the village for a couple of weeks and has been driven mad by his captivity. The cage hangs by a rope from a pulley in the ceiling, and the rope tied to a spike driven into the wall. The pit is an illusion created by Zarrdeontrum Ravenskull, the magician who has taken up residence in these caves. A large supply of grain is also stored in this area, and

are piled in a corner of the room.

The cage is heavy and if the rope suspending it is untied from the spike, it will fall to the floor, causing 1d6 damage to Falcor and smashing the cage, freeing him. If the cage is let down safely, no damage is done to Falcor but the cage must then be opened with a DC 10 lock picking check. The bags of grain can be placed under the cage to cushion the fall.

If Falcor is released, he will give the party his spectacles claiming they will “help you to see the truth”. They are missing a lens. (**Falcor’s Spectacles:** +1 to spot hidden things, +2 if missing lens is found)

Falcor is frightened and too out of his mind to help the players beyond giving them the specs. He knows of the magician taking up refuge in the cave whom he simply calls “the old man”. He does not know what the magician is up to but has heard screams of agony coming from the room beyond. After giving the players the specs and telling them in a cracked and hoarse voice “they will help you to see the truth...” he hastily escapes the cave by way the characters came.

Area 3: The Chasm

Dangerous rock debris from a collapse covers a large chasm that spans the entire room. A wooden door set into a deeply carved door frame stands on the opposite side of the room. PCs may climb over the debris with a DC 10 Agility check. On a failure, the PC slips and falls to their doom in the chasm below. They can be saved by a DC 10 Reflex save, but the attempt to cross the chasm must then be made again.

Area 4: The Lair of the Magician

The door to this area is locked and requires a DC 10 pick locks check to open or a DC 12 Strength check to bash open, but opening the door by force will alert the occupants of the room, giving them time to ready a surprise attack.. The room is scattered with all manner of bizarre things and random objects used in the magicians’

research. Tables containing various bottles, apparatus, candles, crystals and strange things in jars line the walls. Rotted bookshelves and dusty tapestries abound. A large magic circle has been scrawled on the floor in blood and the room is brightly lit with large braziers. As the PCs enter, the magicians' guardians attack the party, consisting of 3 skeletons and 2 hobgoblins.

Zarrdeontrum the wizard is a slightly hunched, gaunt man in his 40s but appears much older. He has a long nose, thick hair along his cheeks and yellowed teeth. There is a purple pall over his eyes. He wears a wide brimmed, crooked conical hat and long, black dusty robes emblazoned with magical sigils. When the PCs enter, he is stooped over a long table with a vivisected body strapped to it. He is chanting a long dirge which is interrupted by the entrance of the



characters. He turns to face them and exclaims: “When your bodies are strapped to my table, my work will finally be complete! Guards! Attack!!” He should be included in the initiative order as he will fight when he has to but will be more concerned with raising his guards and casting spells on the PCs.

Necrotic Skeletons (3): Init +1; Atk +0 rusted shortsword (1d6+1); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP: Necrotic Wounds. For every hit, 1d2 points are necrotic and cannot be normally healed. SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will +2; AL C

These skeletons are almost human shaped, but have unnaturally long arms. Their bones are marked from what looks like the gnawing of many small, fanged jaws. They each wield a rusty short sword and wear an old iron helmet over their bare skull.

Hobgoblins (2): Init +1; Atk +0 flint dagger (1d4+1) or bomb +2 ranged (1d6-1); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 4; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP bomb: each hobgoblin carries a single bomb, which will deal full damage to a target on a hit and will deal half damage to everyone within 15’ radius of blast. SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1; AL L
Attack Priority: spellcasters, toughest

These hobgoblins stand about five feet tall, have dark green skin, and flashing yellow eyes. Their snouts are broad and flat, their ears are pointed and long hairs trail from them. They are dressed in good quality clothing that has been clearly stolen from the local villagers. They are armed with jagged stone daggers and each carries a bomb.

Zarrdeontrum Ravenskull, Magician of the 7th Order of the Secret Guild

He has been holed up in this cave fervently researching for the secret to immortality, and he has almost found it.

Init +0; Atk dagger -1 melee (1d4-1) or harmful spell (see below); AC 11; HD 3d4; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP cantrip, magic missile, raise dead; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL varies.

Spells: Magic Missile, Animate Dead (3/day): Zarradeontrum will cast animate dead on fallen allies 3 times per day as a free action. This will automatically succeed, reviving the fallen ally with full hit points.

If the party vanquishes him, they find an old key on his body (this is the key to the cage in room 2).



One of the hobgoblins carries a small glass lens in a pouch, which is the this is the missing lens to Falcor's Spectacles. Returning the lens increases the usefulness of the spactacles to spot hidden from a +1 to +2.

Area 5: Treasure Room

The door to this room is hidden, cleverly concealed as a slat in the wall and covered by a decrepit tapestry. DC 10 to find the door (Falcor's Spectacles will give +2 to the roll if the missing lens has been found)

In an unlocked chest in the room:

- 50 cp
- 2 sp
- A Cursed Scroll of Feather Fall (lv 1 Wizard spell). This scroll may be cast by reader at normal casting result. Once it has been cast, the scroll unleashes Tog'tholloth, a demon that hunts the caster (this could be a hook for future adventures).

New Creatures

Thog'tholloth, Goblinoid Watch-Demon (Type 1):

Init +1; Atk charge +3 melee (1d6) or sting +3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 4d12; hp 24; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP demonic traits, infravision, darkness: can cast the spell darkness with a +4 modifier, takes half damage from non-magical weapons and fire; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +1; AL C



HON! SO!T BABA

BY KARIM GUE,

*Tel parle de la guerre qui ne scet pas que c'est;
Je vous jure en mon ame que c'est un piteux fait,
Et que maint homme d'armes et gentil compaignon
Y ont perdu la vie et robbe et chaperon.*

- chanson picarde

Honi Soit Baba is a level 1 DCC RPG adventure for 4 to 5 non-magical* PCs in a semi-historical low fantasy setting.

* For judges wanting to implement supernatural elements, players can pick a cleric who would only have access to magical features like “lay on hands” or “turn unholy” (no spells) **inside** the reed field.

Judges should introduce these features step by step while experiencing the strange things happening to the party. This can prove useful against advanced cases of corrupted creatures in a more combat-oriented session.

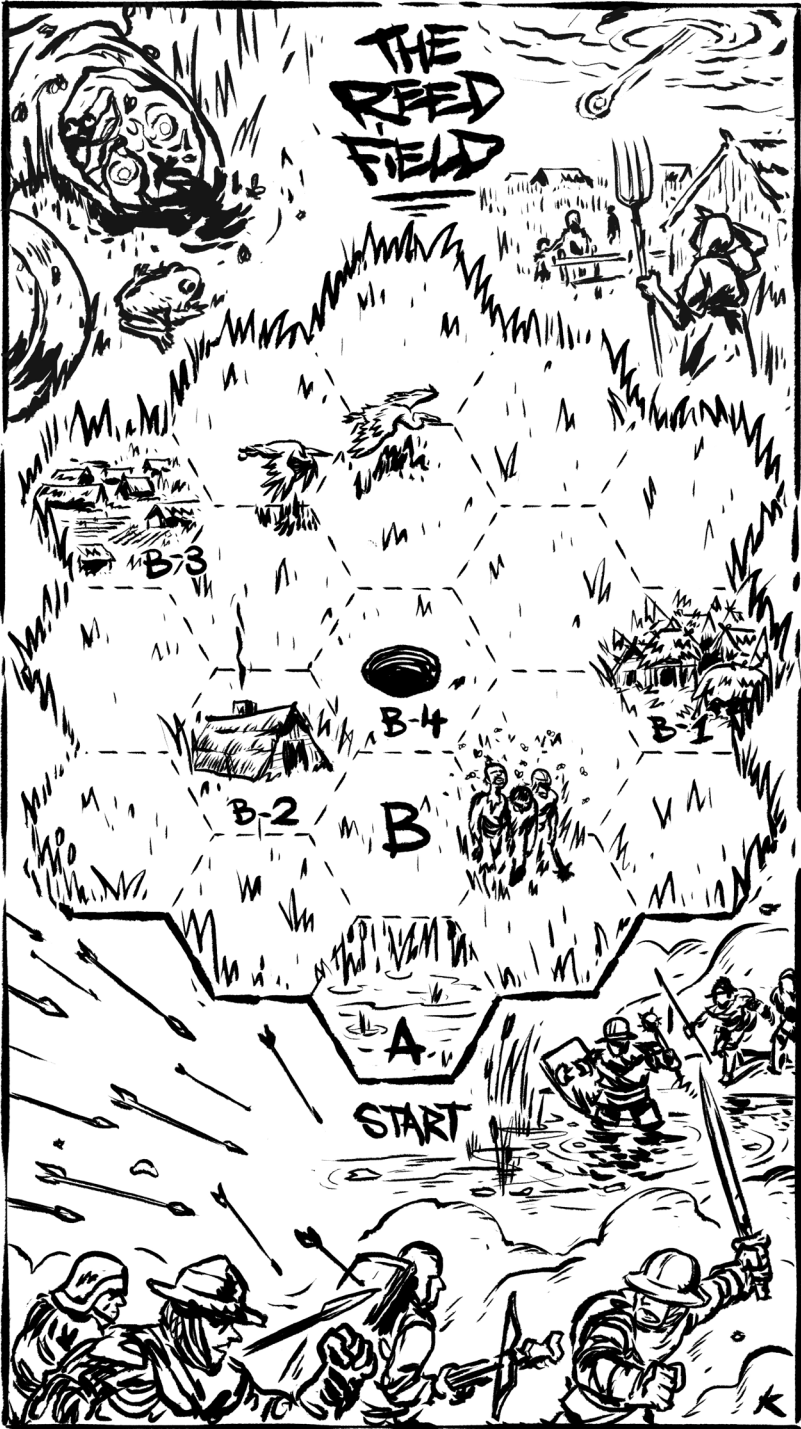
Writing & Art: Karim Glue

Editing: Michael Harrington

Layout: Dan Steeby

Thanks to:

Clockwork Goblin, Julian Bernick, and Claytonian for their feedback, and to the GFA 2020 coordinators for the amazing opportunity and their hard work.



INTRODUCTION

You're a warband of mercenary soldiers hired by the Kingdom of France in dire straits against the English Invasion in the XIVth century.

Pinned down by enemy archers, you follow your captain away from the battlefield, dodging arrows raining down on you through the thick mist and buzzing flies.

Soldiers are closing in and you hear screams of agony from everywhere yet something gets your attention. In the distance, a silhouette holding a dim lantern yells and waves at you, then immediately starts running away, disappearing into the mist. Knowing you won't find glory standing against a victorious army, you rush towards the mysterious figure.

Area A – The Lake: *After hours ploughing the mud with excruciating effort, you break the mist line, knee deep in a lake. In front of you a wall of reeds stands high, the soft breeze drying the sweat pearling your faces.*

PCs can take a moment to introduce themselves.

When ready, and if looking around carefully, one PC may spot blood flowing in front of them or hear lapping nearby.

If the PCs follow these cues they'll find:

Sixty feet away a body twists half inside the reeds, the other half suspended in the water, disgorging a red cloud of blood.

A soldier clutches his innards, a bolt sticking out of his chain mail, to his side a lantern laying on dry land. He points and speaks to you in French:

*“Across this field... is the way to Chateau Caneteau... *gasps* ... inform the garrison, but beware of... *inaudible grunt* ... ”*
He passes out, as you hear shouts in English coming from the mist behind you.

Apart from the lantern, the dying soldier carries a waterskin, flint & steel, oil and a short sword.

Before PCs enter the field they'll be spotted by a patrol of 1d6+2 **English soldiers** in 2 rounds. Thereafter they will be spotted by a patrol every 6 rounds.

The party can enter the field from the sides swimming with 60% chance of being discovered by the patrolling soldiers. Using the dead body to hide their passage reduces the risk to 40% or less with creativity.

English soldiers: Init +0; Atk sword +1 melee (1d6) or bow +2 missile fire (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d8; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL L.

Area B – The Reed Field: As soon as the PCs enter the field, they feel dizziness and disorientation which lasts for a few minutes. The sky is a grayish haze and the air is still.

Little do the PCs know that there's a chaotic force making exit from the field impossible.

The reeds by the water are about 2 meters tall - any PC sitting on another PC's shoulder has their field of view limited beyond a kilometer. There are no landmarks visible.

Travel from one hexagon to another takes 2 hours. Each time the party moves to an adjacent hex, the Judge rolls in the random encounter table.

Since exiting the field is virtually impossible, if the PCs reach the edge of the hex map, just bounce them away to a random hex by rolling a d6 or pick any hex of your choice.

The adventure starts at midday and the judge can decide when night falls, as this triggers the demon hag to hunt for any prey roaming the field.

Traveling at night with a lit lantern automatically attracts the creature (see details about the **Demon hag** on page #1-48).

Every morning, PCs have 10% chance of suffering corruption: Roll 1d3 on the minor corruption table (see DCC RPG rulebook page 116 - Table 5-3: Minor Corruption)

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

(see the “field dwellers” section for details on following entries)

1. **Wildlife:** (1) horse, (2) heron, (3) hog, (4) frog
2. 1d4 **corrupted villagers**
3. 1d4 **deserters**
4. **Smoke signals** emanating from the deserters’ settlement a kilometer away
5. **Heron** swarm attack
6. **Trap** (ex. a dead body covers a spiked pit DC10 Ref save)
7. 1d6 **soldiers** patrolling: (1) French, (2) English, (3) bandits
8. The 2 **women** finishing off a soldier
9. **Black pit**, if no one’s wearing the mask, roll another random encounter. If landing next time on the women, they are throwing a body down the pit, thus making it visible.
10. 1d4 **Shamblers**





Area B-1 – Deserters’ Settlement: *When you reach the smoke signals, you find makeshift huts and a mirador packed together.*

Banners and flags of various allegiances fly on spears or cover the roofs. Some of these huts show recent signs of damage and to your surprise are tended by a group of soldiers both French and English.

Stunned, you don’t notice being surrounded by soldiers emerging from the fields.

They point bows, spears or crossbows at your heads.

“This bunch is fresh, lower your weapons brothers !”

Orders a stout man in French, a bandage covering both his eyes, pustules evident where skin shows.

Introducing himself as Georges, he tells you he is the settlements chief and begins to show you the encampment.

Georges explains that nearly a hundred people live here, and you see that the soldiers are dressed in heavily worn uniforms, their faces displaying various degrees of corruption.

Grimly, he tells you the men are defending themselves nightly against attacks from the demon, occasional shamblers and sometimes even from comrades who have lost their minds.

If PCs ask details about the geography of the field, Georges will wearily show the PCs a compass with a spinning or stuck needle, shrugging and saying “Here there are no directions.”

However, Georges will be able to point the PCs to the location of the **corrupted village** using a “milestone” system.

Georges asks the PCs to join his group and assist in hunting expeditions or any other helpful activities.

Proposed missions:

1. Hunting on 4 hexes (50% chance catching game or roll on **random encounter** table)
2. Patrol the settlement and drive off **shamblers** (and/or the **demon** at night) for 2 hexes
3. Craft weapons/make repairs for 6 hours, every 2 hours there's 20% chance of a **shambler** or a **soldiers' patrol** attack on the settlement.
4. Trade game for crops with villagers.
5. Research for countering the effects of corruption (alchemists, herbalists and clerics could craft potions or artifacts to limit corruption exposure for a limited time. This might prove quite useful before delving in the pit's tunnels)

If any of these missions is successful, your reputation improves and the party can then request a hireling or two (The judge may require the party leader to make a personality check) to join a mission of your own (attacking the demon at night, exploring the field, etc.)

Area B-2 – Women's Cabin: *This shack with a low thatching and a smoking chimney is barely noticeable outside the wall of reeds surrounding it. The smell of steaming cabbage and onion that pervades the air intensifies the growls coming from your stomach.*

When they arrive at the women's cabin the PCs are standing at the edge of a clear patch of land 40' away from the cabin.

The party can approach with "sneak silently" DC 20 but also have to look for traps DC10 on the way to the house. On failure, the PC releases a toxic gas - anyone immediately adjacent must make a DC12 Fort Save or be ill for 1d4 hours (-1 to all rolls while sickened).



Optional situations when approaching the cabin (The judge should refer to the details about the women in the field dwellers section):

1. They'll see a young woman cooking and tending the house through the logs and branches. If the PCs tarry, an older woman will enter through the door, carrying food.
2. The house is empty, there's food, water and barely any valuable belongings. Tools, a horn, hats, and clothes are hanging unevenly. If PCs diligently search, they'll find a box hidden from view and inside a light enamel mask with unsettling features and two small circular holes for eyes.
3. An older and younger woman asleep, weapons at finger's reach.

If they are disturbed, the old woman will blow a horn and grab weapons trying to send the party away. The old woman says that in any minute a horde of **shamblers** will arrive (2d6 shamblers will appear in 4 rounds every time she blows the horn).

The women will always be hostile to soldiers (especially males). However there's a 5% chance that one of the male PCs reminds the women of their lost son/ husband and they will appear unsettled while observing him.

This unique PC will have a chance to communicate with the women and/or be spared in a fight if the party's wiped in combat.



Area B-3 – Corrupted Village: The village keeps going with farming and crafting despite the continuing effects of corruption. The villagers, forever trapped in the field and maddened by their condition, can none-the-less be questioned about the field's corruption if approached diplomatically, (If the PCs for example, offer an original object from the “outside” world).

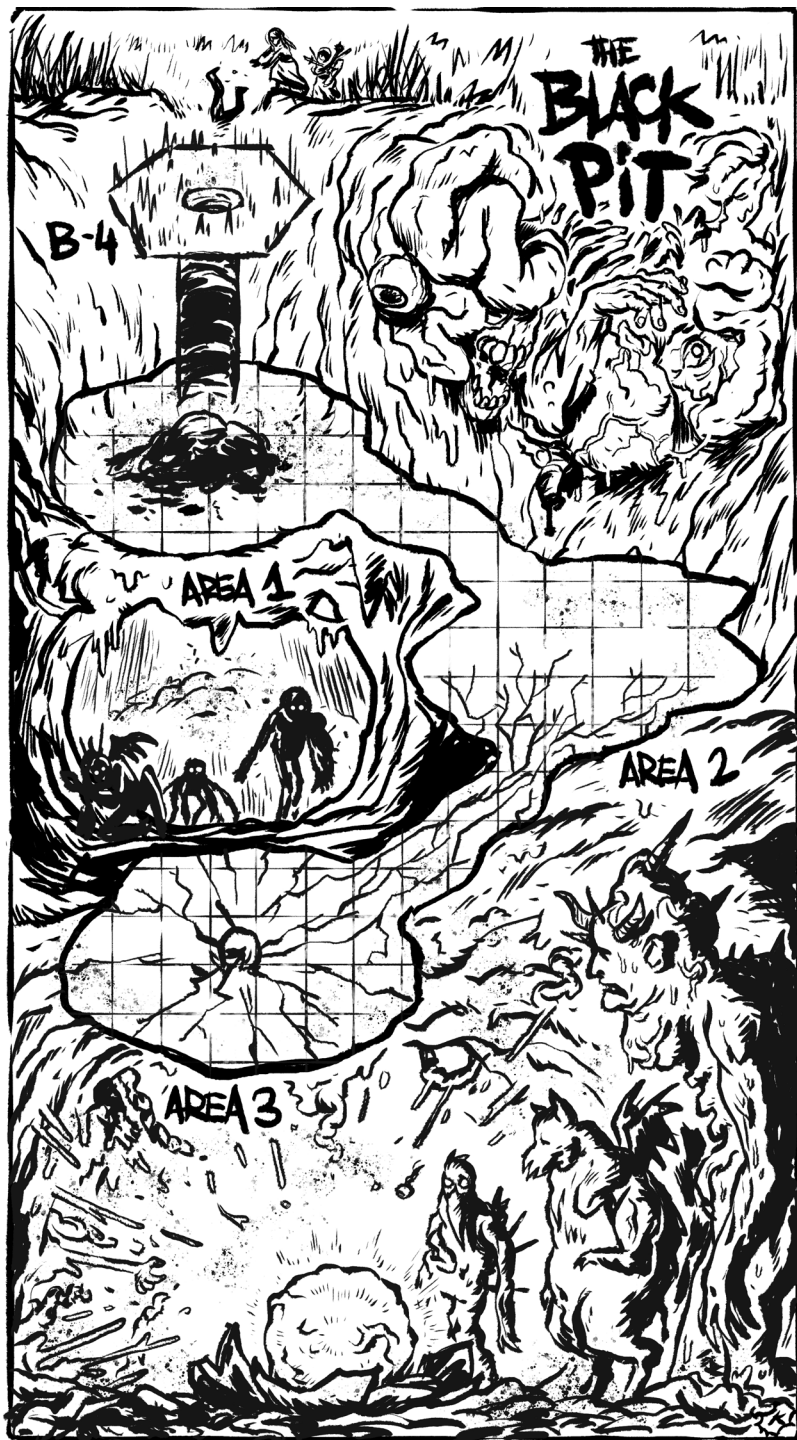
The villages can tell the PCs rumors similar to the below:

1. “These deserters brought something evil to our land, it must be these English strangers with their ungodly ways, are you one of them ?”
2. “ It all changed since the red shooting star crashed, - no one believes me”
3. “The women...I’ve seen their faces, and they don’t bear a single sign of corruption like all of us... and your lot very soon, it’s inevitable. I tell you.”
4. “It always happens at night, believe me, just stay away from whatever lurks out there... hey, have you seen my dog ?”
5. “These witches are sacrificing people to the devil, but no one knows where they dispose of the bodies, some say they’re eating them. Oh Lord!”
6. “It can’t be the women, especially the old one, she trades healing herbs and potions to soothe our pain in exchange for our crops, don’t listen to these fools!”

While the villagers are wary of strangers and especially bandits or patrolling English soldiers, they’ll enthusiastically trade any military equipment, banners or weapons you can get them for food and water.

“Useless” goods like gold coins and jewels are stored in a house in the middle of the village -this is loot the women trade. This war booty is worth between 200 and 300 gp at the judge’s discretion.

If the party has a dispute with any villagers, they’ll likely become hostile and drive the PCs away in numbers. If PCs steal or kill one of them they will retaliate and there are hundreds of them.



Area B-4 – Black Pit: It is a circular black void in the middle of the field only visible if the party stealthily follows the women while they ditch bodies in there or if any one PC wears the mask found in their cabin.

Although the stench is unbearable, there's an intense pull around the pit and anyone peering into it will have to roll on the minor corruption table if they fail a DC15 Will save. For every 2 hours spent there, the PCs must roll 1d5 on the table again.

If daring, the party can descend the pit which is 50' deep before landing on a mushy pile of rotting corpses.

There's a narrow tunnel leading to 3 more cavernous areas, with plastered body parts all over the walls and ground. Each Step a PC makes causes them to sink into the decomposing flesh releasing nauseous gases (DC Fort 10 or puke; -1 to all rolls for 1d4 rounds).

The closer the party moves to the source of corruption without protective gear, potions or artifacts, the more they will party will be exposed to increasing levels of corruption:

In **area 1** roll 1d5 on the **minor** corruption table if PCs fail a DC15 Will save.

There's a visible trail carved in the body-covered ground leading to the next area. **Decaying shamblers** roam slowly throughout, some lying down, crawling or sitting - yet they don't pay much attention to the PCs.

In **area 2**, the effect of corruption is so strong that PCs must make a DC15 Will save or roll 1d5 on the **major** corruption table with (see DCC RPG rulebook, table 5-4 page 118).

The walls are pulsating and there's a faint red glow coming from area 3.

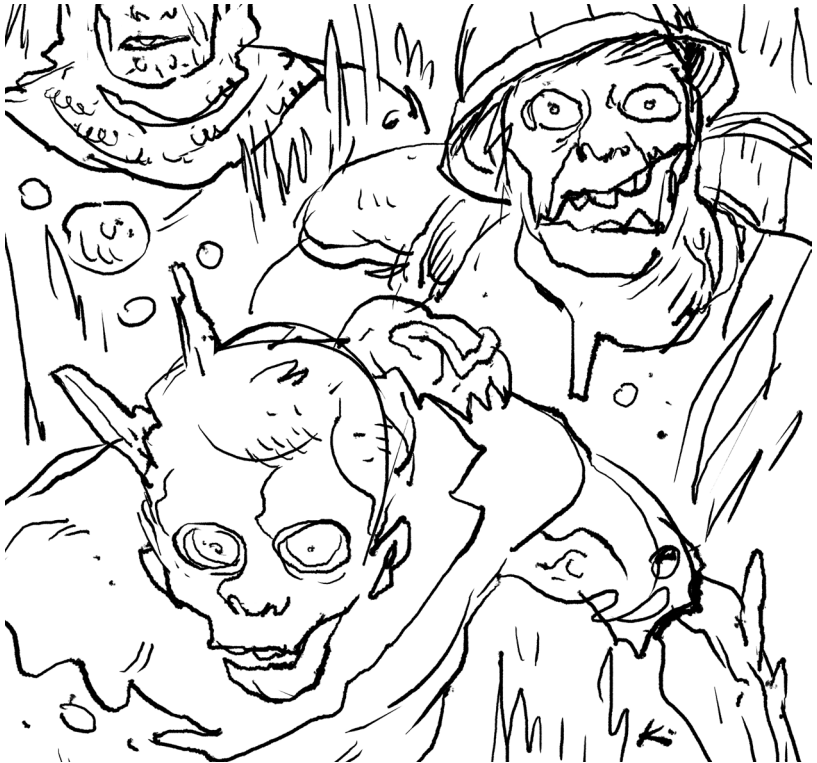
Area 3 is the source of corruption.

2d6 **decaying shamblers** stand in a circle at the center of the cavern, around an orb emanating a bright red light that slowly sucks at the surrounding flesh in a circular motion. Observant PCs will notice that the blood orb sits on bright broken pieces, like an enamel shell.

Every two rounds the PCs must make a DC15 Will save or roll 1d5 on the **greater** corruption table (see DCC RPG rulebook, table 5-5 page 119).

If the PCs attempt to destroy the orb, it will sense their intent and summon 1d8 **decaying shamblers** to defend itself.

If the PCs manage to destroy the red orb (HD 3d10) this ends its corruptive effect on the surrounding area.



FIELD DWELLERS

The Demon hag: Init -2; Atk claw +6 melee (2d8+8) or hurled body parts +4 missile fire (1d4+2, range 100', SP Paralysis on hit DC10); AC 16; HD 6d10; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP infravision, SP Gaze Mask (pick up opponent and use paralysis for 1d4 rounds); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; AL C.

There's a 70% chance of getting caught by the demon hag at night without a lit lantern. This chance is lessened to 50% if the PCs attempt to use stealth. This, however, doubles the traveling time. Otherwise roll on the random encounter table.

The demon hag can be summoned at night by the old woman when she wears the mask near the Black Pit.

The Demon Hag is actually an amalgamation of rotten bodies piled in the tunnels of the Black Pit that wraps around the old woman and leaving only the mask visible. This monster can grow up to 10ft. It feeds on human souls and will try to grab, paralyze and throw PCs in the pit.

The hag can attack by throwing amalgamated body parts at a PC. If hit by these, the concentrated corruption of the body party causes one round of Paralysis.

Any PCs in a 30ft radius of the Demon must make a DC 15 Will save or suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls until the end of the encounter.

The Demon Hag does have weaknesses that can be spotted by attentive PCs:

1. Hitting the mask with a successful mighty deed of arms will stun the demon for 1d4 rounds.
2. After hurling body parts 6 times, the giant demon will show a gap underneath the layers of flesh, revealing bits of the old woman, hitting that gap (DC18 or Mighty Deed) for 6 points of damage will destroy the demon, revealing the dying old woman donning the mask and body parts sliding away.

Optional rule: When the creature loses 80% of its HP, it walks closer to the pit and summons rotten bodies to patch itself up for 2d8 health points in one round before attacking or chasing the PCs.

The Women Hermits:

The old woman: Init +2; Atk sword +1 melee (1d6+1); AC 10; HD 1d4+2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL L.

The young woman: Init -1; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL C.

These independent women are the mother and wife of a deceased soldier, finding shelter in this field after years of grief and wartime abuse.

The older woman developed survival skills choosing lone soldiers wandering the fields as her victims. She then used the Black Pit to contain the people she killed with the young woman's assistance.

In return for her sacrifices, the demon inhabiting the Black Pit grants both women corruption immunity and an increased life span.

The old woman is very protective of the young one, vowing to protect her at all costs. If there are many soldiers/deserters showing up in the area, she will summon the demon from the black pit at night to tackle the threat (See **The Demon Hag** entry for more details).

The young woman, isolated from the rest of the "world" isn't aware that her mother-in-law is linked to the demon at night as she's sleeping "locked" in her dreams. She believes it's just a manifestation of the chaotic energy cleansing the field from soldiers.

Corrupted villagers: Init -2; Atk club -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL varies

For corruption ideas, roll or pick from on the Table 5-3: Minor Corruption toned down to a "believable" low fantasy vibe (see DCC RPG rulebook page 116)

Deserters: Init +0; Atk axe +1 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d8; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

This group of soldiers and mercenaries come from all sides, yet they're gathered in this settlement to survive and welcome newcomers in their ranks regardless of origin. Although the threats in the field are real, they never have felt this free and are holding strong despite taking losses during expeditions.

The levels of corruption depend on the length of stay. Although some soldiers believe they've been trapped for decades, they don't show any sign of aging except for various levels of physical corruption.

Shamblers: Init -1; Atk club +3 melee (1d4+2); AC 13; HD 1d8+2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

These are soldiers or villagers so thoroughly corrupted by chaotic energy that they have lost their humanity, and shamble through the field, slowly decaying. They will assault anyone in sight.

Decaying shamblers: Init -4; Atk claw +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 1d6; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP paralyzation, infravision 30'; SV Fort -2, Ref -4, Will -2; AL C

These survivors are suffering advanced cases of corruption from continuous exposure to the source of the Black Pit. These shamblers appear vaguely humanoid and bear the signs of greater corruption (see DCC RPG rulebook page 119) and decay, with animal-like heads, tails, beaks growing flesh and limbs that are sloughing off (think Hieronymus Bosch meets Zdzisław Beksiński listening to Primitive Man's Caustic album).

Although they won't engage the party, if a PC pushes or attacks a decaying shambler, it will retaliate with a poisonous claw the target must make a DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed, unable to move or take any physical action for 1d6 rounds.

Horse: Init +1; Atk hoof +2 melee (1d4+2); AC 14; HD 3d8; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

Heron: Init -2; Atk beak (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d6; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.

Heron swarm: Init +5; Atk swarming peck +1 melee ; AC 10; HD 4d6; MV fly 40'; SP attack targets within 40' x 40' space, half damage from non-area attacks; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.

Hog: Init +2; Atk tusk +2 (1d6); AC 10; HD 1d6; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.

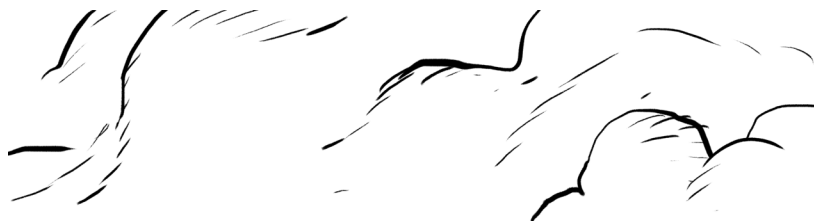
Frog: HD 1d4-1

CONCLUSION

The PCs can break the corruption grip on the field immediately by destroying the *blood orb* in the pit or they can stop the corruption by preventing the old woman from feeding the pit with bodies.

With the *blood orb's* influence removed, the gray veil in the sky will dissipate and a strong fresh wind will blow through the reeds. To the PCs it will be as if they can finally breathe after almost drowning and their field of view will expand enough to see the horizon beyond the reed field. These cues can prompt the party to leave to meet the garrison at Chateau Caneteau.

The party may decide to stay in the field and hide from the outside world if they show visible signs of corruption. Teaming up with the deserters is an option to establish a base. However, they risk better organised patrols or even an army (French/English) to punish the deserters and/or cleanse the field of ungodly corruption.



In late 14th century France, war rages as a group of fleeing soldiers and mercenaries find refuge in a massive field of reeds in the Camargue region. What looks like a safe haven might be the host of unspeakable occurrences.



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A Free and Unofficial Zine for DCC RPG

