# TAKEN FROM DUNWICH

by Jeffrey Talanian

An adventure in HYPERBOREA designed for 4-6 characters of 4th to 7th levels

For use with ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN & SORCERERS OF HYPERBOREA™ and other traditional fantasy role-playing games

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Taken from Dunwich is a system-neutral adventure compatible with most traditional fantasy role-playing games (c. 1974 to 1999) and their modern simulacra. The author suggests trying *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea* as a rules system. *AS&SH* is inspired by the fiction of authors such as Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, and Clark Ashton Smith. Game rules and conventions are informed by the original 1974 fantasy wargame and miniatures campaign rules as conceived by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

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#### THE HOOK

The party find themselves in the Gal Hills, where prevails the Keltic race. At a local village, they take dinner in a mutton house. There they are observed and approached by a druid whose hierarchical religion is prominent in the region. The druid requires the service of intrepid adventurers. He offers land and title if the group can rectify a recent unfortunate calamity in the neighbouring village of Dunwich, a few mere days away. Assuming he captures the party's interest, he reveals the circumstances (see **BACKGROUND for PLAYERS**, hereafter). *N.B.:* If the party contains a druid, they may be obliged to help; too, a bard might be similarly oathbound.

#### BACKGROUND FOR PLAYERS

(to be read or paraphrased)

Three days ago, the small Keltic village of Dunwich (population 180; formerly 218) was brutally attacked by a score of vhuurmis, degenerate quasi-men covered in umber-coloured fur, whose faces are disturbingly human. The attack was unprecedented. The vhuurmis inhabit the hoary peaks of the Spiral Mountain Array, and they are not known to wander from their cliff-side lairs. Typically, they will howl, beat their chests, and cast warning stones at the sight of men, and if their warnings are not heeded, they can become violent, but never have they been known to assemble, travel, and make war on a human settlement. By all accounts, their race is too primitive, too savage. The attack on Dunwich transpired on an inclement night whilst a dozen of the village's finest fighting men were hunting musk oxen in the hills. Upon return, the men were wroth. They gathered their axes and spears and set out to exact vengeance. None returned.

#### Other Details: (also revealed by the druid)

- Each humanoid wore a thick, dull grey circlet set with strange, intermittently glowing gems of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The colours blinked in succession from left to right.
- \* Armed men who were not slain outright were dragged away.
- \* The humanoids also gathered axes and swords of Keltic steel.
- \* Two vhuurmis were slain, but these, too, were dragged away.

- \* No other looting was reported, save one exception: From Olav the town jeweller, the humanoids took and wheeled away a small cart full of raw corundum (a mineral from which rubies and sapphires are derived).
- Recently, a merchant named Samarros arrived in Dunwich offering five hundred gold pieces per undamaged vhuurmis pelt. A trio of huntsmen from a neighbouring village accepted his offer and made out well; however, a subsequent quartet of huntsmen never returned. Samarros has not left his room at the inn. He fears the locals intend to lynch him, and he is right.

#### BACKGROUND FOR THE REFEREE

The vhuurmis are indeed a primitive race of humanoids. In æons past, before the rise of man, they had advanced as a species and ruled Hyperborea from cliff-side palaces, but over time they regressed to savagery. Then arose the Hyperboreans, a race of tall, gaunt sorcerer-kings and witch-queens who hunted and drove the savages to nigh extinction. The vhuurmis retreated to Mount Vhuurmithadon, a treble-coned volcano in the heart of the Spiral Mountain Array, and there for countless centuries they sequestered themselves in lofty cave dens.

Presently vhuurnis tribes thrive anew, and they proliferate across the Spiral Mountain Array. One migratory band recently chanced upon an open cave high on the vertical face of a mountain. Within they discovered a network of caves and caverns interconnected by sloping chutes. In one such chamber they activated a machine (the **master computer**) which in turn roused its controller: an otherworldly member of the **Great Race of Yith**. At the sight of this frightful alien, the quasi-men kneeled and at once submitted to its terrible will.

The alien controller soon programmed the **master computer** to manufacture headbands (circlets) set with stones of clear corundum. Each humanoid was fitted with a headband through which it received signals. Now the otherworldly scientist from Yith requires more slaves—human or humanoid, it makes no difference. Too, it requires more raw corundum, the stone used in the circlets. The Yithian learnt of the Dunwich jeweller and his cache of raw corundum, so the recent raid was ordered to gather the mineral and slaves. The next raid is intended to enslave the entire village, then the next village, and so on.

#### **MONSTER STATISTICS**

Monster statistics are abbreviated as follows:

AL = Alignment	hp = Hit Points
SZ = Size	#A = Number of Attacks
MV = Movement Rate	<b>D</b> = Damage
<b>DX =</b> Dexterity	SV = Saving Throw
FA = Fighting Ability	ML = Morale
AC = Armour Class	<b>XP =</b> Experience Point Value
HD = Hit Dice	Special = Special Abilities

#### NPC DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

**Malvek:** Druid (8<sup>th</sup> level) who summoned party to resolve situation. He is a broad-shouldered fellow with knotted red hair and a greying beard. He wears a bearskin cloak and a helm affixed with antlers. He carries an unshod staff and a falcata. *Malvek's Reward:* At the Gal Hills periphery, in the hills south of the plateau of Xin, lie the ruins of an old Viking settlement. This is the land he would grant to the PCs, as well as authority over the surrounding territory in a four-mile radius.

**Olav:** The Dunwich jeweller, a small, bent-back man, whose establishment was raided. He says that the creatures seemed to be looking for something, and that they hooted and barked when they found his cart of raw corundum in the backroom of his shop. They wheeled it away. He says they did not rob him of the two **1,000-gp star sapphires** recently cut from the corundum. Olav has a reward of his own for the party: He will give them one of the gems if they can help the village.

If questioned about the corundum, Olav claims that typically he disposes it or sells it for small money, as it is sometimes used as an abrasive (for sanding, polishing, etc.) by other tradesmen. If asked about his gem mining operations, he says that for 10 years he has mined the local mountains for gemstones, that he has always taken care to avoid the vhuurmis, and that they have never troubled his operations in the past. In fact, he says that his greatest concern has always been **fomorians**, brutish giants who consider the Kelts their most bitter enemies.

**Brin:** A miller's son, age 13, a dirty-faced kid with a wolfish look to him. He will approach the party at some point as best decided by the referee. His father is one of the missing: **Droon**, who was brained and dragged off with a handful of other captives. The boy says he knows where the monsters took his father, because he found

the ruts of the cart they wheeled away. He followed the trail nine miles through the hills to the foot of the mountain. He wants to rescue his father, and says he can hunt, fight, and shoot a bow.

**Brin** (0<sup>th</sup>-level fighter with some hunting and tracking skills): AL CG; SZ M; MV 40; DX 15; AC 8; HD  $\frac{1}{2}$  (hp 4); FA 0; #A 3/2 (short bow) or 1 (dagger); D (per weapon); SV 17; ML 9; XP 7. *Gear: dagger, short bow, 12 arrows.* 

**Samarros:** The merchant from Khromarium. Holed up in the inn, he has been paying the innkeeper to bring him his food and empty his chamber pot. Scared for his life, he says his bodyguard was killed during the attack, and the villagers blame him for the incident. Samarros is a tall, sallow-skinned, heavyset man of ill health. (He coughs a lot.) He hopes all the fuss will die down so he can slip out of town. He does not understand what has happened or why. He claims to be an honest businessman, acquiring furs since he was a young man. He says vhuurmis pelts are in demand, currently fashionable in Khromarium and Port Zangerios. He confirms that he paid out 2,000 gp to a trio of huntsmen from a neighbouring village. He claims ignorance and innocence regarding much else and is quick to blame the town jeweller.

**Finn, Ulster, and Cooley:** The village elders, former drivers and herders now quite old, desperate for help but too proud to beg for aid from neighbouring Keltic villages. They feel that aid from a neighbour will indebt Dunwich and undermine its independence. Finn makes the final decisions on most matters, but defers to the druids, for he is a man of faith.

#### THE JOURNEY

The adventure site is about nine miles away from Dunwich. The journey is through craggy, perpetually windv hills that contain dangerous wildlife. It is assumed that the party will (in some fashion) utilize the intelligence provided by the boy, Brin. The attack happened on a rainv night. The ground was soft and the ruts left by the cart remain due to a subsequent frost; not as obvious are the faint tracks of some 20 humanoids. A ranger can follow the tracks without fail; likewise other character classes if their background includes hunting and trapping. Of course, the boy can do the same, if the PCs allow him to accompany them. Unskilled adventurers can trace the frozen ruts with a 4-in-6 chance of success per three miles (so, three checks in total). If they become completely lost, the referee can speed up the action by having Brin emerge to shew them the right way, the stubborn boy having followed them.

**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS:** There is a 1-in-6 chance of an encounter per three miles travelled, so three checks in total. If a random encounter occurs, roll a d8:

d8 Roll Encountered Monster
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- 1 Aurochs (1)
- 2 Deer, Red (5d6)
- 3 Deer, Giant Elk (1d4)
- 4 Fomorian (1d4)
- 5 Musk Ox (2d10×10)
- 6 Spider, Giant Wolf (1d6)
- 7 Tiger, Sabre-Tooth (1d2)
- 8 Wolf, Dire (1d6)

#### **Random Encounter Descriptions:**

**Aurochs:** Massive ox, black and furry, stands six feet at the shoulder, weighs up to 2,000 pounds; renowned for its wide spread of forward-turning horns. Temperamental and aggressive. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 9; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 20); #AT 1 (gore); D 1d10; SV 15; ML 6; XP 90. *Special: Initial gore as* charge attack *at +2 "to hit" and doubled damage dice. Can gore two adjacent foes on a single attack roll.* 

**Deer, Red:** Deer with red (summer) or grey (winter) coat that stands three to four feet at the shoulder and weighs 250–350 pounds. They flee from most everything, though a cornered hart can butt with its antlers. AL N; SZ M; MV 70; DX 13; AC 8; HD 1 (hp 5); #A 1 (antlers); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 3; XP 13. *Special: Charging gore attack results in doubled damage dice.* 

**Deer, Giant Elk:** Giant deer that stands 7–10 feet at the shoulder and has an antler spread of 12–15 feet. Giant elks attack only if threatened. AL N; SZ L; MV 60; DX 7; AC 7; HD 4 (hp 19); #A 2 (antler / antler); D 1d8 / 1d8; SV 15; ML 7; XP 90. Special: Can attack two adjacent opponents with a single charge attack, doubling damage dice for each victim.

**Fomorian** *(Hill Giant)*: Massive humanoids, 12 feet in height, weighing up to 1,500 pounds. They are oft misshapen and warty, with thick, hairy hides. AL CE; SZ L; MV 40; DX 8; AC 4; HD 8 (hp 40); #A 1 (weapon); D 4d4; SV 13; ML 8; XP 680. Special: Can hurl a boulder to a range of 100 (or up to 200 at -2 "to hit") for 2d8 hp damage. **N.B.**: Weapon damage is an abstraction intended to convey high strength and massive weapon size. **Musk Ox:** Large, wild oxen with long, shaggy coats. Bulls stand five feet at the shoulder and weigh up to 800 pounds; cows are smaller. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 7; AC 7; HD 3 (hp 14); #A 1 (gore); D 1d6; SV 15; ML 5; XP 35.

**Spider, Giant Wolf:** Nine-foot-long arachnids; aggressive hunters, notorious for chasing down prey and pouncing. They are brownish in colour, with long, stout, hairy legs, and four pairs of eyes, one set being much larger than the others. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 19); #A 1 (bite); D 2d6; SV 15; ML 8; XP 255. Special: Bite victim must make death (poison) save or be paralyzed in 1d2 rounds, lasting 2d6 turns. Wound becomes necrotic in any event, with 3-in-6 chance of infection unless cure disease is cast. After 30 days victim must make another save or die; otherwise, infection subsides.

**Tiger, Sabre-Tooth** *(Smilodon)*: Enormous and powerful cat built for strength; has short limbs, thick, powerful body, and sabre-shaped canine teeth of 10-inch length. The hindquarters are striped, the front thickly furred with spots. Adults measure up to 12 feet long and 4 feet at the shoulder, weighing 800 pounds. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 6; HD 8 (hp 38); #A 3 (claw / claw / bite); D 1d6+1 / 1d6+1 / 2d8; SV 13; ML 8; XP 840. Special: Superior stalkers; able to surprize on a 4-in-6 chance. If both claw attacks hit, rear claws automatically rake for 2d4 hp damage each.

Wolf, Dire: A larger, heavier, more ferocious wolf, up to five feet at the shoulder and 500 pounds, and seemingly possessed of semi-intelligence. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 10; AC 6; HD 4+1 (hp 20); #A 1 (bite); D 2d4; SV 15; ML 8; XP 150.

#### THE MOUNTAIN

**CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN:** The cart path leads to the base of a mountain that presents a shallow gradient for some 2,000 feet. It is too treacherous for horses to ascend and must be hiked by foot (though a pack mule or donkey can make this climb). Piles of broken stone, scraggily bushes, and some stunted trees present. At the top of the shallow ascent rises a steep cliff; at the foot of this face lie the broken remains of a cart. A cleft some 200 feet up the face is where the boy, Brin, observed the humanoids entering.

**MAIN ENTRANCE:** This is a 10-foot wide cleft that leads to encounter **#1: ENTRANCE HALL**. It is on the cliff face of the mountain. The cleft is 200 feet up, a vertical rise. A succession of ledges (2–5 foot depth and 7–12 foot width) lies at the 30-foot, 90-foot, and 150-foot elevation points.

**SECRET ENTRANCE:** The second entrance leads to encounter **#5: POSTERN ENTRANCE**. This is hidden unless one has *true seeing*. It lies 225 feet west of the cleft (to **#1**), and some 150 vertical feet up the face from where the mountain's shallow slope meets the sharp cliff face. This entry is obscured by an *illusory wall* that shews rough granite.

#### **DUNGEON FEATURES**

**Rooms** are sheathed in dull grey metal (a zirconium alloy with traces of lead) of half-inch thickness; this material is resistant to spells such as *detect evil* and *detect magic*, and it has ductile properties. Unless otherwise noted, each room is dimly lit by long, narrow ceiling panels that emit muted (and sometimes flickering) green light.

Doors are 15 feet high, 15 feet wide, and 3 inches thick, composed of the same dull grey zirconium alloy. With a sharp hiss, they slide up into ceiling recesses when approached within five feet (unless locked or stuck). Beside each door is a small  $(6 \times 6 \text{ inch})$ , recessed control panel with nine blinking buttons: three rows of three triangular buttons. Each button is engraved with an alien character. Control panels have the same four-key combination to unlock each door: top row, middle button; top row, left button; bottom row, right button; middle row, middle button. They can also be locked or unlocked by the master computer (see #15). The control panel can be removed and picked (hotwired, as it were) by a thief. Otherwise, to force (lift) a door requires an extraordinary feat of strength. A pry bar can increase this chance by +8%. Up to three men can lift together for a single cumulative roll.

**Chutes** (long, slanting passageways betwixt chambers) are carved of coarse granite, 15 feet in diameter and angled at 25–45°. The chutes are laced with cracks due to seismic shifting. A character with climbing ability (thief, barbarian, etc.) can ascend and descend without need of special gear. Characters lacking climbing ability must use crampons, ropes, spikes, grappling hooks, and so forth if they wish to ascend or descend without risk; if they lack such gear, they must make *tests of dexterity* every 60 feet. Climbing up and down a chute is done at a rate of 60 feet per turn (half the standard dungeon

rate), assuming the climber is unencumbered. As most doors automatically open when approached within five feet, one who tumbles down a chute will in most cases land in a room.

Circlets are electronic devices manufactured by the master computer, as programmed by its Great Race controller. If a PC dons a circlet, the device forcibly clamps a round stud into each temple and immediately sends a signal to the wearer's brain (if humanoid). The wearer must make a *device* saving throw (wisdom modifier applies) or become mindless thrall to the machine, accepting its directives. Processing a new wearer to become an active drone requires 1d4+1 days. Removing a circlet necessitates a test of strength. This is cause for a trauma survival check, or the result is death. Even if the subject survives circlet removal, this abrupt action induces catalepsy (a rigid, listless trance) for a period of 1d6+6 turns. A circlet can be broken with heavy impact. This causes an electric spark and a brief smell of ozone, and then the corundum stones cease to glow. Each band contains thin wires and copper filaments.

**KEY TO ENCOUNTER AREAS** 



**#1: ENTRANCE HALL.** Ten feet beyond the cave mouth is a doorless encasement of dull grey metal, measuring  $15 \times 15$  feet. The encasement is damaged, and if inspected, one might note a recess of three-inch thickness along the top of the frame. To a thief, this might suggest some type of portcullis no longer in place. Beyond the threshold is a 60-foot long, 30-foot wide chamber with arched 30-foot ceiling. Blinking lights are glimpsed within. **10 vhuurmis** (hp 14, 14, 14, 16, 16, 19, 19, 19, 22, 22; see **APPENDIX A**) wielding broad swords of Keltic steel stand idle, their eyes rolled back to whites, their mouths agape. About their brows, the circlets' gems blink colours in a rapid left-to-right pattern: red, orange, yellow, green, blue. In their torpor these

humanoids are being further programmed by the **master computer** (#15). Whispers and quiet movement will not wake them. They are surprized on a 3-in-6 chance, but undue noise will arouse them, at which point they will attack. If a humanoid is awakened, the master computer is unaware, as the creatures have not progressed to the point of sending return signals. They fight with unflagging morale (ML 12).

Two metal doors, each  $15 \times 15$  feet and with accompanying key pads (see **DUNGEON FEATURES**, *doors*), are at the back end of this hall. Each opens when approached within five feet, revealing a stone chute (see **DUNGEON FEATURES**, *chutes*). The chutes descend to the following locations:

- \* Descending east, bends west, to door of #2
- ★ Descending west, bends east, to door of #8



#2: STORAGE CHAMBER. This round, 60-foot diameter chamber with domed 40-foot ceiling is piled with tin crates, boxes, and drums. Searching them all will require 6 turns (1 hour). Most contain strange gears, implements, cords, and machinery unidentifiable and unrecognizable to men. Amongst these can be found an electric torch (see APPENDIX B). One crate holds 72 krill packets. Each contains a tiny, fishy-smelling food bar of compressed krill. Each bar is equivalent to 1 day's worth of iron rations. Another crate holds a small, green metal box ( $10 \times 5 \times 5$  inches) engraved with curvilinear designs. The interior is padded in felt and contains 9 ampoules and 3 syringes. The ampoules are cure disease (x3; as the spell), cure poison / radiation (x3; as the neutralize poison spell, but also cures radiation sickness), and healing (x3; as the heal spell). These are the equivalent of highly concentrated potions. They can be injected using a syringe. If ingested, the imbiber must make a test of constitution or immediately vomit; otherwise, they are effective.

This room has three 15  $\times$  15 foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- \* Ascending east, bends west, to door of #1
- ★ Descending east to door of #3
- ★ Descending west, bends east, then west, to door of #10



**#3:** LOUNGE. The smell of recently burned spruce and pine is redolent here. This round, 60-foot diameter chamber with domed 40-foot ceiling height is heavily damaged. The walls are scarred with ages-old blast marks and rents that expose the granite behind the halfinch metal sheathing. A crescent-shaped table, 5 feet high and 20 feet long, is toppled over. Set beside the table are four concave pedestals of soapstone, each 6 inches tall and 10 feet wide. (These are Great Race "chairs.")

At the south side of the chamber stands a stove carved of black stone, with metal ductwork that penetrates wall and ceiling. A fresh pile of wood is stacked eight feet from the stove. A pile of bones and skulls is also here (red deer, to the trained eye). Amongst this refuse can be found a  $1 \times 4$  foot soapstone plaque intagliated with strange, cone-shaped beings lined in procession. Four appendages project from the top of each cone creature, two with claw-like nippers, one with trumpetlike extensions, and one that ends in a tentacled head with three large eyes. A ranger who has received training in otherworldly menaces may identify these creatures as members of the **Great Race**, enemies of mankind.

This room has three  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- \* Ascending west to door of #2
- \* Descending east to door of #4
- ★ Descending west, bends east, then west to door of #6



**#4: MEETING ROOM.** This round, 60-foot diameter chamber has a domed 40-foot ceiling. The room is dominated by a central table that is 5 feet tall and 20 feet in diameter. Seismic shift has warped and cracked some of the metal walls here. The table is carved of smoothly polished black granite inlaid with yellow ivory. Surrounding the table are six concave pedestals carved of soapstone, each 6 inches high and 10 feet in diameter. The walls are set with massive panels of a thin, glassy material. These are broken and cracked, with traces of wire exposed. Strange geometric shapes and curvilinear designs are etched in the metal walls above each panel.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- ★ Ascending west to door of **#3**
- \* Ascending east to door of #5



**#5: POSTERN ENTRANCE.** This  $40 \times 40$  foot room with arched 25-foot ceiling is guarded by **6 vhuurmis** (hp 15, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22; see **APPENDIX A**) armed with Keltic steel battle axes. The chamber is lined with aluminium lockers that appear to have been ransacked long ago, and it is from these lockers that the vhuurmis emerge once this chamber is entered. Fearlessly they fight (ML 12), with no regard for their lives, as they are programmed to guard. Most lockers are empty, save one that contains a human skeleton, and another that

contains a pterodactyl skin satchel with an extremely long strap. Inside is a piece of velvet cloth, inky black of colour: a **portable hole**.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors:

- Descending chute west to door of #4
  - Postern exit south. When this door opens, a dead-end tunnel of raw granite is viewed. The south end, however, is an *illusory wall*, beyond which lies a 5-foot lip, then a 150-foot drop to the foot of the cliff.



**#6: LABORATORY.** This round, 100-foot diameter room with domed 50-foot ceiling appears to be a laboratory. This research facility was once used by the Great Race for biological, biochemical, and chemical experiments, focused primarily on men and quasi-men. The room is piled with decayed, broken, and tarnished implements: beakers, glass phials, metal vats, petri dishes, retorts, and the like. Small cages appear to hold the bones of rats and other small mammals and reptiles.

The most remarkable feature is in the centre of the room: a metal table that stands five feet from the floor, upon which lies an enormous, white-furred ape with four arms (**albino ape superior**, hp 50; see **APPENDIX A**). Heavy bands of steel confine the beast to the table, as well as a thick strap of mammoth hide that gags its enormous mouth. A circlet set with intermittently glowing gems (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) is fitted to the beast's head. The beast draws shallow breaths as it squints at the party with black eyes.



If the party search the lab they will find a small metal case that holds 6 **ampoules** and 2 **syringes**. Each ampoule contains a sedative; make *death* (poison) save or suffer extreme lethargy / sleep for 1d6+6 turns. The single Yithian that dwells in this mountain has been attempting to establish domination over the albino ape superior, but is failing.

If the party removes the circlet, no ill effect ensues. If the party removes the gag, deeply the beast speaks, slurring its words. It says it was abducted, and it asks for release, for freedom to rejoin its clan deep in the mountains. Beneath the table is a red button that causes the bands to at once retract into the table. If released the monster attacks, for it is thoroughly evil and hates mankind.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- Ascending east, bends west, then east to door of #3
- Descending east, bends west to door of #7

#7: HOLDING CELL. This 40 × 40 foot chamber with arching 25-foot ceiling contains a 20 × 10 × 10 foot cage of iridescent blue-green metal. The cage has a 5 × 3 foot door with a most curious lock: a thin slot above which are nine buttons, each with an alien character (numbers). Within the cage are 18 men (Kelts) wearing grey tunics and belts with hand axes. (One is Droon, father of Brin.) They stand perfectly still with their eyes rolled back, mouths agape and drooling, hands flat by their sides. Each wears a circlet with gems glowing red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. Outside the cage is a five-foot-tall, crescent-shaped desk, behind which rests a round, soapstone pedestal, 6 inches high and 10 feet in diameter. The desk is scattered with various documents-strange, translucent sheets. These contain notes written in an alien language. On the table is a thin metal cartridge. This is the key to the cage.

If the cage is touched, an electric shock is delivered (2d6 hp damage per round). If the cage is opened using the cartridge, the men remain listless. If prodded, they



can be herded to walk as sheep, for their programming is incomplete. If one attempts to remove a circlet from one of them, all their eyes clear and they attack, fighting as **wild berserkers**: AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 10; AC 8; HD 1+4 (hp 10); #A 2 (battle axe); D (per weapon +2); SV 14; ML 12; XP 24. *Special: +2 "to hit" bonus,* +2 damage bonus on all attacks. These men cannot be saved unless the **master computer (#15)** is destroyed. If a circlet is forcibly removed, the subject must make a *trauma survival* check; failure indicates death. Even if the subject survives circlet removal, this abrupt action induces catalepsy (a rigid, listless trance) for 1d6+6 turns.

**N.B.:** If the master computer is destroyed before the party arrives at this location, the men lie in a heap on the floor of the holding cell, each in a sorry state of health. They will eventually escape on their own, but in this instance, 1d6 of them will die.

This room has one  $15 \times 15$  foot metal door. It opens to a chute:



\* Ascending east, bends west to door of #6

#8: HOSPITAL. This round, 80-foot diameter chamber with domed 40-foot ceiling was a medical centre for the Yithians. Three large cylinders are spaced within, each of 15-foot diameter and 18 feet high. Each is composed of a dense plastic material, capped with metal, and set with non-functioning control panels at the ninefoot mark. Each cylinder is cracked and broken and contains an oily residue. This was a fluid that healed and rejuvenated members of the Great Race. Under the base of the northernmost cylinder is a nest of 12 giant black centipedes, large, multi-segmented insects up to 2½ feet long, with a pair of legs projecting from each segment: AL N; SZ S; MV 20; DX 13; AC 9; HD 1/2 (hp 4); #A 1 (bite); D 1d2; SV 17; ML 7; XP 25. Special: Bite delivers poison; make death (poison) save or suffer an additional 2d6 hp damage—a painful, blood-boiling sensation. Breeding in the residual restoration oil has provided these creatures with maximum hit points.

This room has two 15 × 15 foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- \* Ascending west, bends east to door of #1
- \* Descending west, bends east to door of #9



**#9: STUDY.** This round, 60-foot diameter chamber with domed 35-foot ceiling appears to be empty, save for six concave, soapstone pedestals 6 inches tall and 10 feet in diameter. Lecterns six feet tall and carved of dull black stone stand before each pedestal, though three are toppled over and cracked. The half-inch-thick metal walls are damaged as though blasted with high-powered energy. The domed ceiling is embossed with strange geometric shapes, eldritch signs, and curvilinear patterns that, if studied, induce headaches and nausea.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- \* Ascending west, bends east to door of #8
- \* Ascending east to door of #10



**#10: FEEDING HALL.** This 80-foot long chamber bows out to the south to an apex of 50-foot width. Facing the arched wall are four concave, soapstone pedestals 6 inches tall and 10 feet in diameter. Before each pedestal, set in the floor, stands a transparent, open-top cylinder, six feet tall and two feet in diameter. If inspected, traces of small, shrimplike crustaceans (krill) will be found. The arched walls are set with thin glass panels cracked and fragmented, revealing wires, filaments, and tiny gears.

This room has three  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- Ascending east, bends west, then east to door of #2
- ★ Descending west to door of **#9**
- Descending east to door of #11



**#11: KITCHEN.** This round, 60-foot diameter chamber with domed 35-foot ceiling has walls lined with broken, computer-operated food dispensers, wires pulled free and with heavy scarring as though from an electrical fire. A large metal table of five-foot height stands in the centre of the room. Its surface is cluttered with gears, machinery projecting frayed wires, and other unrecognizable devices.

This room has three  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- ★ Ascending west to door of **#10**
- Descending east to door of #12 (does not automatically open)
- \* Descending west to door of #13



**#12: BOTANICAL LABORATORY.** The 15  $\times$  15 foot metal door that accesses this chamber is stuck. Picking (or hotwiring) the keypad does not help. The door must be forced open by way of an *extraordinary feat of strength.* A pry bar can increase this chance by +8%. Up to three men can lift together for a single cumulative roll. This effectively breaks or uproots the thick vines and roots that cling to the door.

This steamy, plant-filled garden chamber measures 70 feet north-south and 70 feet east-west, with tapered corners that produce an irregular octagonal shape. The ceiling, which arches to 40 feet, is set with massive panels that emit violet light. Creepers, vines, and broadleaf plants fill the chamber; the scent of herbs and flowers is redolent. The floor is set with three long metal grates, from which jets of steam intermittently erupt. If roots, vines, and creepers are cleared away, six **spinels** (100-gp value each) can be found under the central grate.

At **area X** there is a 2-in-6 chance of brushing against a **black lotus**, which will nod its blossom and release spores in a 10-foot radius; make *death* (poison) save or die in 1d4 rounds.

At area Y slumbers a shambling mound: AL N; SZ L; MV 20; DX 5; AC 0; HD 10 (hp 52); #A 2 (lash / lash); D 2d8 / 2d8; SV 12; ML 12; XP 2,050. Special: If both attacks strike the same target, victim entangled by roots that will suffocate him in 2d4 rounds; extraordinary feat of strength to break free. Weapon attacks inflict ½ damage. Immune to fire attacks; cold attacks cause ½ damage. Electrical attacks provide a 1d8 hp boost. Vulnerable to plant-related spells (saves at -2 penalty). This vegetal beast longs for warm, raw flesh. Loud noise will attract it, or if it is approached within 10 feet. Encased in the vegetal corpus of the shambling mound, and bubbling out shortly after its destruction, are 3 **IOUN stones: deep red sphere** (+1 *dex*), **pale blue rhomboid** (+1 *str*), **pink rhomboid** (+1 *con*).

This room has one  $15 \times 15$  foot metal door. It opens to a chute:

\* Ascending west to door of #11



**#13: LIBRARY.** This round, 60-foot diameter chamber with 40-foot ceiling is lined with 20-foot high metal bookshelves bolted into the floor. The shelves are empty. This room is heavily damaged, the metal-sheathed walls rent and charred as though by lightning. At the south end of the room are giant cobwebs. The giant spider that dwelt here has been slain by the vhuurmis.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- \* Ascending east to door of **#11**
- \* Ascending west to door of **#14**



**#14: GUARD ROOM.** This  $60 \times 60$  foot chamber with arching 30-foot ceiling is lined with doorless metal lockers. **9 vhuurmis** (hp 10, 10, 12, 12, 16, 16, 19, 20, 25; see **APPENDIX A**) are here. They stand listless, mouths agape, each in a locker (4 to the north, 5 to the south) until the room is entered. The humanoids wield short spears, and each is fitted with a circlet set with intermittently glowing gems (red, orange, yellow, green, blue). One is armed with a **laser crossbow** (see **APPENDIX B**), with 17 charges remaining in its magazine. If the lockers are searched, one is found to contain an extra 30-charge magazine.

This room has two  $15 \times 15$  foot metal doors. Each opens to a chute:

- ★ Descending east to door of **#13**
- Descending west, bends east. At the bend is a trap: If a hidden button on the wall is not pressed three times, jets of fire rise from the floor of the chute, extending in a 15-foot radius from the point of the bend. The fire inflicts 4d6 hp damage, with avoidance saving throws allowed for half damage. (One might quickly position himself betwixt the jets.) At the end of the chute the door of #15 is locked.



**#15: COMPUTER CENTRE.** The door to this room is locked. The nine-key keypad can be dismantled and picked to cause the door to open, if the correct wires are triggered. Within is a 90-foot long, cone-shaped chamber, 60 feet wide at its west base and 20 feet wide at its east end. The ceiling peaks to an apex of 40 feet.

The walls of this room are set with massive display panels, cracked and charred, with frayed wires exposed. On the floor is a massive pile of raw corundum, the gemstone used to make the circlets. Set halfway along the south wall is a large, glasslike cylinder (15 feet in diameter, 15 feet tall) with a metal-framed door brimming with wires. The narrow far side of the room is dominated by a massive machine covered with knobs, switches, blinking lights, display panels, vents, and wires. This is the **master computer**. Hunched over the machine is a massive, cone-shaped being of otherworldly origins: one of the **Great Race** (hp 60; see **APPENDIX A**). The creature recently emerged from its stasis chamber (the cylinder noted previously) after curious vhuurmis tampered with the master computer. Presently, it wheels around and releases a honking screech: "Intruders! You will be exterminated! Exterminated!"

It points its **iridium rod of paralysis** (60-foot beam, make *device* save or be paralyzed for 1d6+6 turns; 2 charges remain) and attempts to defeat the party whilst using its *blink* ability. The creature, however, is unaware that its device has but 2 charges. It may lose a round, confused, distracted, and annoyed by this occurrence; it will shake the thing and slap it against its flank. If the Yithian sustains more than 50% hit point loss, it must make a *morale check* (ML 6). Roll 2d6: If the result is equal to or less than the monster's morale score, it continues fighting. If the creature fails its morale check, it attempts to *teleport* away, shouting that it will have vengeance.

Whether the Yithian is dead or alive, the **master computer** will continue to direct the vhuurmis to capture more men and/or humanoids to be fitted with circlets. The machine is now programmed to build an army whose purpose the referee might devise to suit the campaign. This might entail further raids about the Gal Hills and then beyond. The master computer has drawers and small doors within which it manufactures the circlets used for mind control. If the computer is destroyed, the circlets cease to function, and the Kelts fitted with circlets (see **#7**) are freed.



#### APPENDIX A: BEASTS AND MONSTERS

#### APE, ALBINO, SUPERIOR (White Ape Superior)

No. Encountered:	1
Alignment:	Chaotic Evil
Size:	L
Movement:	30
Dexterity:	8
Armour Class:	4
Hit Dice:	8+4
No. of Attacks:	4 (claw ×4) or 2 (weapons ×2)
Damage:	1d8+2 (×4) or 4d4 / 4d4
Saving Throw:	13
Morale:	10
Experience Points:	1,400

The albino ape superior is a rare specimen of **albino ape**, always male. Born with six limbs—two pairs of massive arms and one pair of stout legs—it grows to nine feet and weighs up to 1,100 pounds. These apes are much as their cousins, though they can manipulate weapons and are possessed of slightly elevated intelligence (and no small amount of wickedness); some have learnt to speak the Common tongue of man. They oft assume leadership of albino apes, brooding ape-kings.

Special:

- \* Acute sense of smell; surprized only on a 1-in-6 chance.
- If all four claw attacks strike one opponent, strangulation ensues the next round, causing 1d8+2 hp damage per round. An extraordinary feat of strength can break the ape's grasp; serious damage may also compel the beast to let go. On the 3rd round of strangulation, the victim must make a death save or pass out, with a cumulative -2 penalty on each successive round (i.e., -2, -4, -6, etc.). Rare victims who survive this attack have been known to forever lose their voices.
- \* **N.B.:** Weapon damage is an abstraction intended to convey high strength and massive weapon size.

#### GREAT RACE (Yithian)



No. Encountered:	1d4+1
Alignment:	Lawful Evil
Size:	L
Movement:	30
Dexterity:	8
Armour Class:	2
Hit Dice:	10
No. of Attacks:	2 (claw / claw) or 1 (weapon)
Damage:	1d6+1 / 1d6+1 (or per weapon)
Saving Throw:	12
Morale:	6
Experience Points:	2,800

This time-travelling species present as iridescent cones, 10 feet high and 10 feet wide at the base, each with one ridged, scaly, and semi-elastic snail-like foot, expanding and contracting to allow locomotion along floors, walls, or ceilings with equal ease. From the narrow apex of the cone project four flexible, cylindrical members, each about one foot thick and ridged, which can contract or expand to a length of 10 feet. Two members terminate in great claws or nippers; the third in four trumpet-like appendages; and the fourth in a yellowish, irregular globe, two feet in diameter, with three black eyes along its equator. This globe functions as the head and is surmounted by four grey, slender stalks bearing flowerlike appendages; from its nether side dangle eight green tentacles, which the creature uses to manipulate fine objects such as writing implements. These alien beings are without garb, but will hang satchels or knapsacks from the apices of their conical trunks.

#### Special:

- Typically wields a crystal-tipped iridium rod, which shoots a 60-foot beam that can paralyze (1d6+6 turns) or disintegrate victims; device save allowed to resist.
- Can cast the spells blink, dimension door, passwall, and teleport at will (though only one at a time).
- \* Can cast temporal acceleration once per day.
- \* Can speak the language of any intelligent creature.
- Can transfer mind into a host once per year. \* The target must be seen; typically the Great Race use technological devices that function as crystal balls to view a target. The target must make a sorcery save or be possessed. Possession can last up to seven years; anything longer may be permanent and cause insanity. The mind of the possessed occupies the body of the possessor (typically confined or restricted in some way). By means of a ritual, the possessor may return to its original body; the possessed is likewise returned, but typically suffers a gap in memory, unable to recall his life amongst the Great Race. If either body dies, return is impossible, and madness inevitable.

#### VHUURMIS (Beast-Man)

No. Encountered:	2d6 (5d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Size:	Μ
Movement:	50
Dexterity:	11
Armour Class:	4
Hit Dice:	3+2
No. of Attacks:	1 (weapon)
Damage:	(per weapon +1)
Saving Throw:	15
Morale:	8
Experience Points:	105

The vhuurmis are a degenerate race of quasi-men that stand some six feet in height and are covered in shaggy, umber-coloured fur. Their faces are fur-hedged as those of baboons, except they are disturbingly human, with bright blue eyes, smooth ruddy skin, and pointed ears. The vhuurmis are amongst the more ancient races native to Hyperborea. Presently their savage tribes populate mountain lairs all about the realm. They wield primitive weapons, and they communicate via a complex barking and howling language. Typically they lair in caves that pock the faces of sheer mountain walls, these generally inaccessible to most other creatures.

Special:

- \* Can scale sheer surfaces at normal movement rate, 11-in-12 chance of success.
- ★ +2 saves versus cold-related attacks.



**APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS** 

**Crossbow, Laser:** This metal crossbow, originally of alien design, was later reproduced by Atlantean and Amazon engineers, though presently its manufacture is a lost science. It looks much like a light crossbow, except that it lacks a string, it is not loaded with traditional crossbow bolts, and 3-in-6 are equipped with laser scopes. A magazine is loaded into the hollow butt of the stock. Each magazine contains 30 charges; typically 1–2 spare magazines are found in the weapon's proximity. A **laser crossbow** is not a magical weapon; notwithstanding it can damage creatures only harmed by such. These weapons have a range of 75, with no range penalties applicable. A **laser crossbow** can be fired 3

times per round. Each laser inflicts 1d6+6 hp damage (considered fire damage). Those equipped with laser scopes grant a +4 "to hit" bonus, a small red dot marking the target. Laser scopes have a finite existence: On any natural 1 attack roll they have a 2-in-6 chance of burning out, essentially irreparable (hence the +4 "to hit" bonus is lost); also, they are delicate, easily ruined by dirt and weather.

**Electric Torch:** This two-pound, 12-inch long cylindrical device is the equivalent of a modern day flashlight, with a 90-foot beam that terminates in a 20-foot diameter spotlight. It uses a regenerative battery cell with a 72-hour life, of which one hour is recharged per hour of sunlight exposure (heavily overcast skies inapplicable). The **electric torch** is made of a strong and durable metal, able to withstand extreme heat and cold; too, it is submersible.

#### **APPENDIX C: OGL**

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### Taken from Dunwich

### Diagram



### HYPERBOREA



Murder, mayhem, and abduction! After the Keltic village of Dunwich is victimized by the vhuurmis, degenerate quasi-men covered in umber-coloured fur, local druids offer land and title to those brave souls who would repair the situation. The vhuurmis are considered witless savages, seemingly incapable of organized incursions, but these particular brutes attacked with purpose and precision, taking men from Dunwich, and slaying any who opposed their black will.





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