

Here idden away from prying eyes, the faithful of the Righteous Plague gather in their unholy places. They call on him by name, and entreat him to send his diseases and blights to their foes. They call on him by name, and beg to be reprieved from his epidemics. They call on him by name, and plead to be spared from the ravages of the plagues he bestows. They call on him by name...

# **BUBONICA**

...Chaos God of Disease, Plague, and Pestilence. Described herein with his adherents for *First 5 Fantasy Roleplaying* and other Basic OSR games.

# CHA®S CUL+S BUBONICA

"Who will been holle and kepe hym from sekenesse And resiste the strok of pestilence, Lat hym be glad, and voide al hevynesse, Flee wikkyd heires, eschew the presence Off infect placys, causyng the violence; Drynk good wyn, and holsom meetis take, Smelle swote thynges and for his deffence Walk in cleene heir, eschewe mystis blake."

> A Diet and Doctrine for the Pestilence, John Lydgate

#### CREDI+S

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# PAC+S WI+H CHA@S G@DS

There are many reasons for which a mortal might form a pact with a Chaos God. Firstly, clerics of Chaotic alignment need a deity to grant them spells, but the gods are not just gods of divine spellcasters. For every cleric, there are many more priests, priestesses, shamans, acolytes, and so on, who may have no access to divine spellcasting, yet they preach the teachings of their religion to their flock. The faithful themselves may have no formal place in the hierarchy of a cult or church, and certainly no access to divine spells, and yet they too have made a pact of sorts with their god.

In most human and demihuman societies throughout the multiverse, the gods of Law and Neutrality are predominantly worshipped by clergy and ordinary folk alike. Their religions have high social status, and often form into hierarchical organizations - churches, which draw upon vast material resources as well as the divine powers of their patron deities. The majority of ordinary people in such societies belong to these churches dedicated to the respectable gods of Law and Neutrality. It might be said that the difference between a church and a cult is social respectability. The Cults of Chaos Gods are often persecuted, driven into the shadows, hidden away from respectable society. This is not merely because ordinary folk are narrow-minded - rather, it is because they are afraid.

And they are right to be afraid. The Chaos Gods tempt mortals with promises of terrible power and dark gifts all righteous folk would eschew. They are more likely to actively involve themselves in the affairs of their mortal worshippers than the socially acceptable gods of the established churches, and their involvement is generally horrific and destructive. Chaos Cults lurk in the shadows, but from the shadows they are most dangerous, building their power, spreading their pernicious influence, waiting for the perfect time to strike at the mortal society around them. Great are the promises of the Chaos Gods to mortals; but great too is the price they may claim in exchange for their assistance, for the Chaos Gods are fickle and malicious.

# BUBONICA

Bubonica is a God of Plague, Disease, and Pestilence. He torments mortals with his corrupting creations, defacing their physical forms with pustules and sores, leaving pain, sickness and death. He blights beasts and plants too, destroying crops and livestock, fathering famines. From his personal plane, he creates sicknesses and sends them forth to the worlds of mortals, waging war on the creations of Law by blighting them and twisting their forms, perfection giving away to decay, life to death, stasis to Chaos.

Even as his plagues lash at them, there are those mortals who raise their voices in prayer to Bubonica. Many are prayers of supplication, the desperate begging to be relieved of their suffering or spared infection, offering sacrifices in the hopes that thereby Bubonica will be appeased and their families spared the worst of



his spite. Less sympathetic are the prayers of praise, by the spiteful who delight in the sufferings of their rivals who sicken from plague and disease, or worse still, by perverse cultists who laud and honour Bubonica in the hopes of being granted command of the diseases and pestilences the god sends to the mortal world. These cultists, who seek to share in their god's dark, Chaotic power, do Bubonica's work by helping to spread disease on the worlds of mortals, and many outbreaks of plague are either caused by or accelerated by the clandestine efforts of Bubonica's devotees.

Nobody knows what Bubonica truly looks like, since no mortal has ventured to his plane and escaped. He is depicted in a variety of ways by the cults devoted to him, most commonly in the form of a rat or toad, but also in humanoid forms or those of other "unclean" animals. On the rare occasions he visits other planes, Bubonica broadly takes the form he believes he will be expected to take, so that he can be recognized and receive the deference due to him as a Chaos God. This avatar form often combines both beastial and humanoid elements.

#### Avatar of Bubonica

AC 2, HD 55\*\* (250hp), Att 1 scythe (2d8) or breath, MV 120' (40'), SV As F30, ML 12, AL Chaotic, XP 32,000, # Appearing 1, Treasure None

- **Cleric Spells**: The Avatar of Bubonica casts spells as a 17th level Cleric
- **Breath Weapon:** The Avatar of Bubonica can belch a cloud of noxious gas 50' long, 40' wide, and 20' high once per encounter. Save vs breath or take 3d6 damage to Constitution (applying any reduction to hit points caused by changes to Constitution modifiers instantly). If a character is reduced to 0 Constitution or below, they die. This damage is in the form of multiple simultaneous diseases of the most horrific type. These diseases and the Constitution damage can only be restored by magical spells and effects like cure disease.

# THE PLANE OF BUBONICA

How can one describe the plague of Bubonica? It is a realm of famine and pestilence, a dark and corrupted mirror of a mortal kingdom, where the people eternally suffer with plague and disease, whose crops fail and livestock die through unspeakable blights, where death lingers everywhere but never comes, prolonging the agony of the twisted, suffering souls banished to Bubonica's plane. These victim-subjects are the incarnations of mortals sacrificed to Bubonica in dark rituals by his cults on the worlds of mortals, drawn from across the multiverse to perpetually starve and suffer. In their agonized bodies, Bubonica incubates new and ever more vile creations, fresh diseases to unleash upon mortals on their myriad worlds. Some lucky few may be spared the full panoply of infections so that their emaciated bodies remain strong enough to serve as slaves to Bubonica's monstrous servants - the rot cyclopes and the locustmen.

The landscape of this blighted realm is peppered with hamlets of giant shacks, wherein dwell families of rot cyclopes. No more than a few families of rot cyclopes live together in the same hamlet. An indolent but cruel warrior race, the rot cyclopes exist to defend their master's realm and to assist his cults across the mortal worlds, and when they are not on assignment, they do little else but wallow in their own muck. Each hamlet has dozens of slaves, who toil in the surrounding fields to produce just enough edible

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food to keep their vicious masters well-fed, with just enough scraps left over for the slaves themselves to subsist in a condition which allows them to keep working. Still, these slaves count themselves lucky to not be counted among the perpetually-but-never-dying.

So too do the slaves of the locustmen count themselves lucky, although perhaps not as lucky as the slaves of the rot cyclopes. Whereas a rot cyclops has little interest in the small, unfortunate creature which labours to feed it, locustmen often pay rather too much attention to their slaves. These sadistic creatures often torment their slaves as a pastime. The hives in which the locustmen live are mostly clustered around the fortress of Bubonica himself, making cities of warped and unevenly shaped skyscrapers. Each hive houses dozens of locustmen families, and unlike the hamlets of the rot cyclopes whose slaves are collectively owned, each family of locustmen has slaves of their own, who labour and live among them in their hives.

Surrounded by this ring of locustmen hive cities, Bubonica himself resides in a black keep at the heart of the Plague Castle. Guarded by rot cy-

clopes and attended by locustmen servants, Bubonica spends his time concocting new and ever more terrible diseases to visit upon the mortal worlds. Living incubator slaves of every intelligent species in the multiverse are held in cages, dreading the moment when they are forcibly infected with Bubonica's latest invention. His locustmen assistants also develop blights and diseases of their own, mostly experimenting on beasts and plants brought to the plane from every mortal world. When he deigns to hear the entreaties of worshippers, and often even when he doesn't, Bubonica opens portals to other planes, and unleashes his vile creations upon their mortal inhabitants.

# **M⊕NS+**€RS

FORMAT OF MONSTER STATISTICS

Monster statistics are presented in green boxes in a "Basic" format intended for use with *First Five Fantasy Roleplaying*, *Labyrinth Lord*<sup>TM</sup> or *Old School Essentials*.

AC = Armour Class, HD = hit dice, Att = attacks, MV = movement in turn (round) format in feet, SV = saving throws, ML = morale, AL = alignment, XP = experience points for defeating the creature, # Appearing = number appearing when encountered randomly (or in a lair - in brackets), **Treasure** = treasure type to be rolled on the Treasure Table.

# INSEC+ SWARM

Huge swarms of insects often precede the arrival of locustmen or other servants of Bubonica. Insects are sent to torment those already suffering, and to weaken those still hale and healthy before they are stricken with Bubonica's diseases.

#### INSECT SWARM

**AC** 7, **HD** 2 to 4 (9/13/18 hp), **Att** 1 swarm (2 or 4 hp), **MV** 30' (10') or Fly 60' (20') , **SV** As Normal Person, **ML** 11, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 20/35/75, **# Appearing** 1 (1d3), **Treasure** None

- Size: 10' x 30' area
- **Immunity:** Only harmed by fire, extreme cold, sleep spells, smoke (which drives them away), or other attacks as judged by the referee.
- Swarm Attack: Automatically hits and damages characters within the swarm area. 4 hp damage if unarmoured, 2 hp damage if armoured.
- Warding Off: Brandishing a weapon at the swarm reduces damage by half. Brandishing a torch does 1d4 hp damage to the swarm.
- **Escaping:** Characters keep suffering damage after exiting the swarm until they spend 3 rounds swatting the insects still biting them! Alternatively, the character can submerge themselves in water for one round to drown the insects (they still take damage that round).
- **Pursuit:** An angry (i.e. damaged) swarm will pursue characters until they are out of sight or inaccessible.

#### Locustman

**AC** 4, **HD** 2\* (9 hp), **Att** 1 weapon (damage as per weapon) or 1 jump (1d4) or 1 spit, **MV** 60' (20') or Fly 180' (60') , **SV** As Fighter 2, **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 25, **# Appearing** 1d4 (2d4), **Treasure** D

- **Jump:** Locustmen can jump up to 60' then fly away rather than make an attack. Alternatively, they can jump into an enemy, moving up to 60' to do 1d4 damage (roll to hit as usual).
- Spit: 10' range. The locustman rolls to hit against AC
  9 irrespective of the armour worn by the target. If the locustman hits, the target must make a save vs death or be covered in stinking spittle, which makes them so violently ill that they cannot act for 1 turn. Until the spittle is washed off, those who come within 5' of the victim must make a save vs death or vomit violently.
- **Insectoid:** Locustmen resemble giant, human-sized and shaped insects. They can pass through insect swarms without being attacked or otherwise suffering any ill effect.
- Poison Immunity: Locustmen are immune to poison.

# L@CUS+MAN

Locustmen are bipedal insectoid creatures, sharing the general size and shape of a human, but with otherwise monstrous features resembling a giant insect. Cruel intelligence flickers in their eyes. Locustmen are sadistic creatures who enjoy inflicting suffering on other creatures, especially other intelligent creatures.





#### PLAGUE RA+ Rats have carried plagues across countless worlds throughout the multiverse, often undetected in their mundane ubiquity.

Whereas ordinary rats are only sometimes carriers of dangerous diseases, plague rats are always carriers. If a plague rat successfully bites its foe, their foe will sicken and possibly even die from a horrible disease.

PLAGUE RAT - NORMAL-SIZE AC 9, HD 1 hp, Att 1 bite per pack (1d6 + disease), MV 60' (20') or Swim 30' (10'), SV As Normal Person, ML 5, AL Chaotic, XP 8, # Appearing 5d10 (2d10), Treasure L

#### Plague Rat - Giant-Size

**AC** 7, **HD** ½ (1d4 hp), **Att** 1 bite (1d3 + disease), **MV** 120' (40') or Swim 60' (20') , **SV** As F1, **ML** 8, AL Chaotic, **XP** 11, # **Appearing** 3d6 (3d10), **Treasure** C

• **Disease:** Every plague rat (of both sizes) carries a virulent disease. If a plague rat causes damage to a character with their bite attack, the victim must save vs death or die of the disease in 1d6 days. A successful saving throw indicates that the character falls ill and is bedridden for 30 days, with a 1 in 4 chance of dying at the end of that time. Cure disease can cure victims of the plague, whether they succeeded on their saving throw or not.



#### R@+ CYCL@PS

A rot cyclops is a giant, hulking creature, misshapen and oneeyed. Its flesh generally appears rancid, and can range in colour from yellow to green to grey. Rot cyclopes are the shock troops of Bubonica, who guard the Plague Castle and are sent out across the planes to the worlds of mortals to support Chaos cults doing the bidding of their dark master.

#### ROT CYCLOPS

**AC** 4, **HD** 13\* (59 hp), **Att** 1 smash (3d8) or vomit (3d10), **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** As F13, **ML** 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 2500, **# Appearing** 1, **Treasure** F

 Vomit: 3 times a day, a rot cyclops may vomit in a cone shape 30' long and 10' wide at its widest point. Those caught in the cone take 3d10 damage and suffer a -4 penalty to hit for the rest of the encounter (those who save vs breath take half damage and suffer no further penalty).

## SPU+Uff CRAWLER

The sputum crawler is a disgusting blob of slimy yellow-green mucus which somehow takes a quadrupedal form like a large dog. They are possessed of animal-like intelligence, and like to loiter in dark places like caves and sewers to stalk healthy creatures which happen to enter. They are frequently employed by Chaos cults dedicated to Bubonica to guard their lairs.

#### Sputum Crawler

AC 8, HD 3\* (13 hp), Att 1 touch (2d8), MV 90' (30') or Swim 60' (20'), SV As Fighter 2, ML 12, AL Chaotic, XP 50, # Appearing 1 (1d3), Treasure None

• **Plague Touch:** After a successful attack, the victim must make a save vs death or immediately contract an acute disease. If they fail their save they contract a virulent disease, and will be incapacitated for 1 turn after the next 1d4 rounds. After that, they must rest every third turn, as they are exhausted by the disease. This effect continues for 1d20 days, or until the disease is cured by the cure disease spell.





#### BUBONICAN CUL+S

There are many Bubonican cults scattered throughout the worlds of mortals across the multiverse. A cult will typically be granted a specific plague or disease by Bubonica and charged with spreading it - these are often given colourful names like the Bloody Flux or Black Death. Every cult is different, but there are a few common types of Bubonican cults which might be encountered.

#### THE UN+OUCHED

The Untouched have made a terrible deal with Bubonica to spare their own lives (and perhaps those of their loved ones). In exchange for their preservation from Bubonica's plagues and diseases, they worship the God of Plagues by sacrificing their city to his vile concoctions. The Untouched do everything they can do to clandestinely facilitate the spread of plague in their community. The souls of those who perish to the illness are sometimes so unfortunate as to find themselves on Bubonica's plane in the afterlife, doomed to suffer there for all eternity. When the plague has finally run its course, the Untouched are among the final citizens still alive.

# THE WANDERING LEPERS

The Wandering Lepers have been infected, and have pledged themselves to Bubonica to preserve their lives. Although they may be horribly affected cosmetically, perhaps badly pockmarked or even covered by festering sores, the Wandering Lepers are spared the life-threatening parts of the disease. In fact, they are spared the life-threatening parts of any disease - including old age, so long as they uphold their end of the bargain with Bubonica. By spreading infection wherever they go, the lives of the Wandering Lepers are extended by weeks for every victim claimed by the contagions they unleash. While they can keep finding and infecting new victims, the Wandering Lepers will live forever.

#### THE VERMIN

The Vermin have sunk so low in life that there is little if anything in their behaviour to distinguish them from rats. Living underground in nest-like squallor, the Vermin have turned to Bubonica



out of sheer hatred for the rest of their kin, ordinary folk who look down on them as little better than filthy animals. Forgotten by society, Bubonica grants the Vermin their revenge by unleashing disease and pestilence on the civilised folk above. The Vermin kidnap and trap mortals, and sacrifice their souls to Bubonica by drowning them like rats, and in exchange, the Disease God grants them their revenge by infecting the mortals who once looked down on them with his deadly plagues.

### THE MIDWIVES

The Midwives are women who attend the childbeds of the highborn, who may even have stumbled onto the worship of Bubonica through the innocent search for white magic to assist them in their profession. Bubonica blesses their hands with the ability to deliver healthy babies in exchange for infecting the mothers they tend with childbed fever. Some unscrupulous members of highborn society even seek out the Midwives to tend to expectant mothers they would rather not survive the childbirth experience. The Midwives tend to move around so that people do not notice the pattern of fever they leave behind them. Any child delivered by the Midwives is extraordinarily resistant to diseases and invariably lives to reach adulthood providing they do not perish by some misadventure, accident or violence.

#### THE DOOMBRINGERS

The world is filled with pernicious sinners, and is rotten to its very core, so preach the Doombringers. The Doombringers worship Bubonica as the Righteous Plague which will sweep over their world and purge it of sinners. Sickness is regarded by the Doombringers as a justified chastisement of the wicked, and they do whatever they can to further the redemption of their world through the annihilation of its people by the Righteous Plague. Though they too must die, most likely by the very same illnesses they help to spread, the Doombringers hope that Bubonica will show them some mercy in the afterlife, and that their righteous motives will be remembered when their god's servants sort out those to be tormented from those meant for other things.

### SPELLS

CALL F⊕R B∪B⊕NICA'S AID Type & Level: Cleric 1 Range: Touch Duration: Instant Reversible: False

This spell can only be cast on a plinth, altar, or other unholy place of worship consecrated to Bubonica. It summons assistance from Bubonica's plane. It does not grant the caster any power over the creatures summoned, however, so it should only be cast if the caster is desperate or is certain of Bubonica's assistance. Summoned creatures appear at the start of the next round, within 10 feet of the plint/altar/unholy place the spell has been cast upon. Roll 2d6 on the table below:

2 <i>d</i> 6	Creatures Summoned
2	Insect Swarm (1d3+1 HD)
3-4	3d6 Plague Rats (Giant)
5-9	2d4 Locustmen
10-11	3d6 Plague Rats (Giant) and 2d4 Locustmen
12	Rot Cyclops
33771	

INFUSE WI+H DISEASE Type & Level: Cleric 1 Range: 10 feet Duration: Permanent Reversible: False

This spell contaminates food with a Bubonican disease. The food gives no indication by its colour or odour that it has been contaminated. Anybody who eats the food must make a save vs death or contract a randomly created disease (or whatever disease the cult is spreading). One of the following may be affected:

- 6 quarts of drink.
- One trail ration (iron or standard).
- A quantity of unpreserved food for 12 human-sized beings.

S∪∏∏⊕N SWAR∏ Type & Level: Cleric 2 Range: 25 feet Duration: 1 turn/level Reversible: False

This spell summons an insect swarm or a swarm of 2d10 rats (caster's choice), which attacks all other creatures within its area. The swarm may be summoned so that it shares the area of other creatures. If no living creatures are within its area, the swarm attacks or pursues the nearest creature as best it can. The caster has no control over its target or direction of travel.



WEAKEN IMMUNE SYS+EM Type & Level: Cleric 2 Range: Touch Duration: 1 turn/level Reversible: False

This spell makes the victim more susceptible to disease and poison for a brief duration. The victim receives a -4 penalty to saves vs death caused by disease, poison, or similar triggers. While the spell is active, if they are re-exposed to a disease or poison they already successfully saved against, they must make a save again, with a -4 penalty.

# DISEASES

Bubonica and his servants send forth horrific plagues and diseases which may infect the player characters. Roll 1d20 on this table to randomly determine which disease has taken hold!

I	Bubonic plague	6	Smallpox	11	Consumption	16	Dysentery
2	Septicemic plague	7	Leprosy	12	Scarlet Fever	17	Grey Death
3	Pneumonic plague	8	Ague	13	Influenza	18	Lung Rot
4	The Red Death	9	Typhus	14	Yellow Fever	19	Cholera
5	The Great Pox	10	Measles	15	Bloody flux	20	Goblinpox

#### DISEASE SY⋔P+⊕⋔ GENERA+⊕R

Roll 1d3 times on each of the columns in the table on the next page. Some rolls are indicated as exploding rolls - these are normal rolls, but if the maximum number is rolled on exploding dice, that number is kept, and the dice is rolled again, and its result added. If the second roll is also the maximum number, the number is added and the dice rolled again, until a result other than the maximum number for the dice is rolled.



#### DISEASE SYMP+OM GENERA+ION TABLE

1 <i>d</i> 12	Cosmetic	Body Part	What Happens?
I	Red spots	Nose	Vomitting. Save vs death every time food or drink is consumed, or else vomit it back up in rd20 minutes. You do not gain nourishment from food you vomit. Lasts rd6 (exploding) days.
2	Turns pale	Eyes	Blindness. Lasts 1d6 (exploding) days.
3	Turns dark	Ears	Necrotic tissue. The affected body part may become necrotic. Unless the body part is removed, make a save vs death each day for 1d6 (exploding) days or die.
4	Hair loss	Fingers	Fever. Debilitated for 1d6 (exploding) days. Each day of the fever after the first, make a save versus death, or die.
5	Rapid hair gain	Arms	High sex drive. Lasts 1d6 (exploding) weeks, and 1d6 days.
6	Green spots	Chest	Madness. Lasts 1d6 (exploding) weeks, and 1d6 days.
7	Sores	Back	Diarrhea. Save vs death every time food or drink is consumed, or defecate it rapidly in 1d20 minutes. Every incidence of diarrhea dehydrates you as if you had not drank water for 1 day. Lasts 1d6 (exploding) days.
8	Pox	Stomach	Deafness. Lasts 1d6 (exploding) days.
9	Buboes	Genitals	Consumption. Lose 1d4 hit points per day.
IO	Swelling	Buttocks	Migraine. Debilitated for 1d4 (exploding) days.
II	Extreme dryness	Legs	Amnesia. Lose all memories (including pre- pared spells) for 1d6 (exploding) weeks, after which memories start coming back over time.
12	Warts	Feet	Immune deficiency. Roll 1d6 and suffer the result as a penalty to any saves made against any disease or poison of any kind. Lasts 1d12 (exploding) months.

# SEWER HIDEOU+

This example Bubonican cult hideout is suitable to "drop in" to a city in any low-level campaign. Every second turn, roll 1d6 for random encounters. On a 1, the party encounters 2d4 cultists, at least one of whom will be a cleric with 1d4 levels.



#### LOCA+ION KEY

#### (1)

Ladder down into sewers, shows signs of regular use.

# 2

Barrels full of plague-tainted food stuffs, infested with 2d10 plague rats (normal size).

# 3

Iron trapdoor in floor, with a fold-up 15' ladder. Underneath the trapdoor is a window-less pit, 15 feet deep. The cult keeps its prisoners here, awaiting sacrifice and/or experimentation. 1d4+1 prisoners.

# 4

Pipe down into the water below, the lair of 3 sputum crawlers. They are hidden in the sludge at the bottom of the pipe (r in 6 chance of being spotted by torchlight). They prefer to wait until intruders have their backs turned or have stepped back out into the hallway beyond before attacking by surprise.

# 5

Experimentation pits. Each grill conceals a circular pit 10' deep. Each pit contains a victim who has been infected with a different random disease. Each victim has a 1 in 4 chance of being already dead.

## 6

River of effluent, which spills forth from the pipe on the north wall. 3 in 6 chance of finding a group of 2d6 cultists (including 1 cleric with 1d4 levels for every 5 cultists), walking along the walkway on the eastern wall on their way towards area 7.

# 7

Apparent cave in when viewed from the opposite side of the river of effluent, when inspected from the north eastern corner of this room, a roughly hewn passage is visible. The cave beyond is naturally occuring.

8

A strange, smooth green stone plinth. Bubonican runes are painted on the surface of the stone. The cult worships Bubonica here. 1 in 20 chance of a dark prayer service in-progress if the cult has been taken by surprise (1 cleric with  $1d_4+1$  levels, 3d6 cultists). If the cult is aware it is under attack, a cleric will attempt to cast *Call for Bubonica's Aid* here.

# 9

Cult's accommodation, including a tent wherein resides the lead cleric (1d4+1 levels) and the other clerics of the cult (3 with 1d4 levels each). The lead cleric has a mace +1. Any clerics already encountered randomly elsewhere in the hideout will not be found here. In chests, crates, and barrels, there are untainted rations and water sufficient for a week. In the tent, asides from bedding and robes, there are 1d8 unholy symbols of Bubonica, 1d4 clerical scrolls, each with 1d3 randomly selected cleric spells (roll 1d3 to determine the spell level). If a spell is reversible, the "evil" version of the spell is the one inscribed in the scroll. At least one scroll includes the spell Call for Bubonica's Aid. Also hidden in the tent is a type E treasure hoard.

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