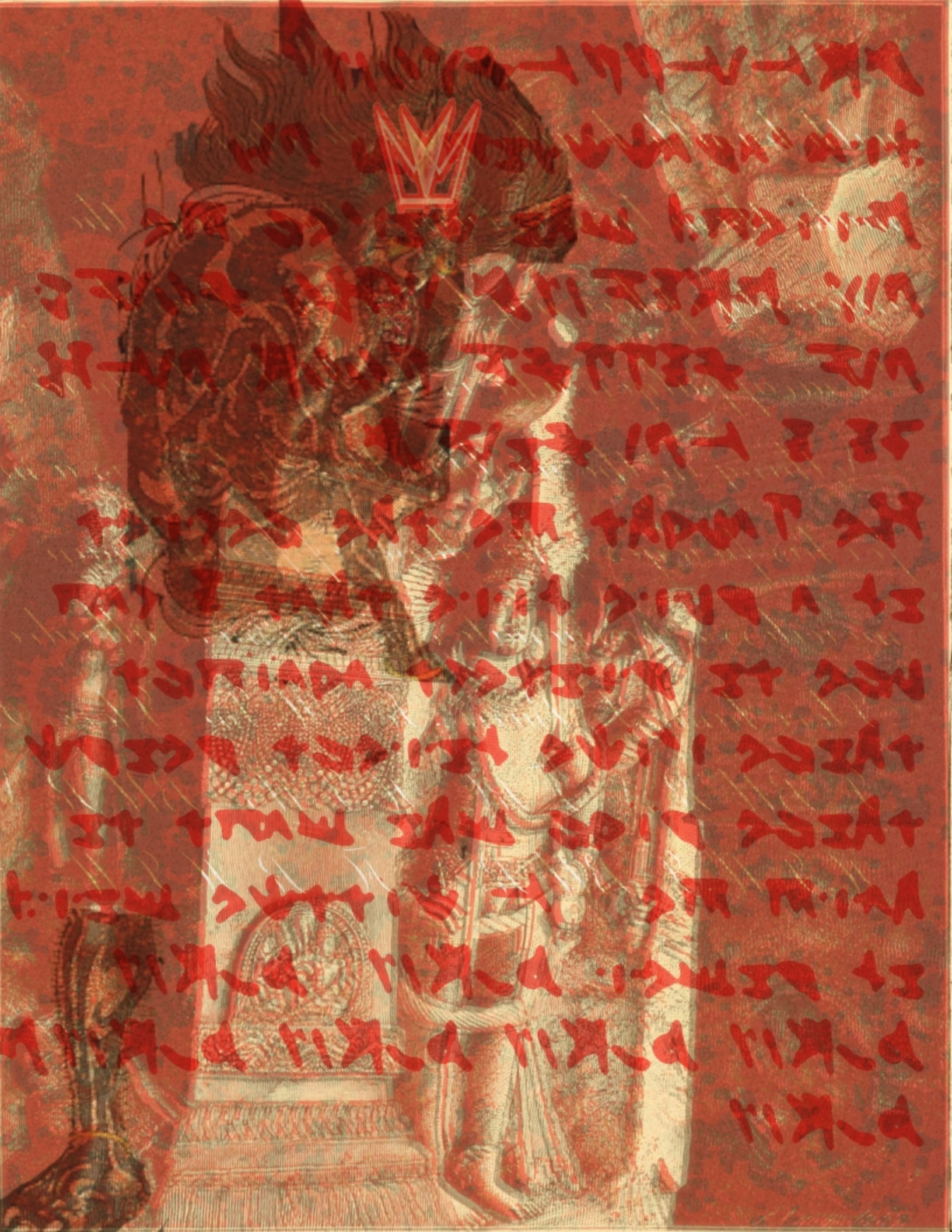


The Cursed Hearth



An Adventure in
The North
From KingTycoon Methuselah



Secret of the Cursed Hearth

For the Referee – This is a brief series of encounters that could serve as a side-mission in any campaign or function as a standalone adventure for a single session. It's best deployed against a party of adventurers whose average HD is 4 or 5.

Sequence -

Part 1 – To the Cursed Hearth: The PCs are drawn into a strange village where devils walk the streets.

Part 2 – Secret of the Hearth: The PCs learn of the hearth's power & history & must make a decision

Part 3 – Return to the Village of Red Hell: The PCs must traverse the Infernal Village in order to face an evil spirit.

Plot –

Mah-Gi is an old lady who lives in seeming isolation in a cottage on a hilltop. Sometime long ago members of her family cursed the hearth of their cottage so that it could commune with the unrepentant dead. The hearth is a tool for communicating with damned ancestors who serve punishments in *Inferno* the red hell of punishments. Mah-Gi proved to be extremely gifted at using the hearth to commune with the damned & especially with their jailors. Over the course of her long life she has become romantically involved with **Dravappalyon** a guardian devil who holds the doors to Inferno shut. Recently Mah-Gi has performed the fateful spell that has brought Dravappalyon's village into the world so that the two may be together.

Naturally the sudden appearance of a hellish village full of damned souls causes some turmoil which is of interest to adventurers.

Presentation -

Players should encounter this area as part of their travel between locations. It's a small village just slightly off the beaten path. The adventure presented here is meant to stand alone as a self-contained adventure but nothing prevents you from making the Infernal Village a recurring location in your adventures.

On a hillside not far off the main road you can make out the silhouette of a small village, all the more visible in the dusk & twilight owing to the fact that it is burning. By daylight the village smolders & smoke billows from it. For the better part of a day this village on a hillside burns just at the edge of your notice. The road makes a turn that brings you around the hill itself, where you discover a spur of road that winds up the hill to the burned village. (The players can see the village burning in the distance through the night & into the day as they walk nearby – the only reliable access to the village is this switchback road up the hillside) Letting them watch the fire from a distance allows them to anticipate what they might do, declare that they wish to rush to the village's aid or refuse to demonstrate even a spark of interest. You can embellish the scene by allowing them to make d8 & d10 search checks to perceive something in the distant blaze. On a successful search, accomplished by rolling a 1 (or a 2 if they've got elf equivalent senses) you can describe some individual scenes discernable at range. You can choose or roll randomly:

Scenes at a Burning Village	
Roll	Scene
1	A pair of people walk around the perimeter holding hands - seemingly at peace.
2	A cacophonous music - comprised of wailing trumpets & blaring horns emanates from the fire.
3	Burning people tumble out of view as they run, blazing.
4	The fire that limns the buildings & the smoke rising from it shapes itself into bizarre runes.
5	People at the village are fighting- visibly - with creatures that aren't apparently people.
6	A figure crowned in fire & tall as a house wanders through the village.

These scenes aren't exclusive to one another & depending on how perceptive the players are or how forthcoming you wish to be they may be able to perceive all of these signs & wonders.

Where the Road Splits –

At the base of the hill stands a small encampment of escapees from the village's conflagration. They are **Benzel** – antagonistic & injured religious man. **Basalt** – seriously singed loner dwarf smith. **Bingo** – terrified Halfling lady. These folk have only just barely survived & only just made it to the base of the hill. They're seem quite flustered & in a terrible state of shock & horror. If asked they cannot keep their stories straight – they reveal that they've been burned, attacked, maimed & seen the village in flames.

Here's what they won't talk about:

- ✎ None of them have any family in the village on the hill & they don't know anyone else in the village.
- ✎ None of them will agree to a name for the village & mainly just call it 'the village'.
- ✎ None of them trust each other – they'll say that one or another of the survivors was the culprit behind the conflagration.

Here's what they will do:

- ✎ If the player characters seem robust & capable & armed – they'll try to persuade them to go to the village to hunt down the witch who brought about the burning of the village. They're all quite certain a witch did this.
- ✎ If the player characters give some indication of knowledge concerning hell, fire or devils, each of these NPCs will express concern that the village is a dangerous portal to hell.

Here's the relevant background:

- ✎ Bingo, Benzel & Basalt are all Doomed Souls sentenced to be punished in the inferno of the Red Hell.
- ✎ The three escaped when a witch (Mah-Gi) opened the portal to Inferno in her cottage on the hilltop.
- ✎ The three are evil-spirits who are trying to trick anyone they can into going up the hill to break the enchantment, allowing them to remain in the world free from their damnation.
- ✎ They are all *evil* – that is, they will lie & deceive at every opportunity & they are quite good at doing so. They will attempt to read the PC's motivations & play upon those foibles to get them to seal off the portal to hell.
- ✎ The Spirits can't move outside of the village – this crossroads is as far as they can go & they cannot cross the road – though this is not easy to notice.
- ✎ Benzel in particular is well aware of Mah-Gi & her romance with Dravappalyon. He is her great-great grandfather & once led a sinister murder-cult, of whom Mah-Gi is the last scion. Benzel is highly invested in the PC's killing Mah-Gi, and if they can – Dravappalyon. He would prefer this outcome if he must choose between it & escape.

Up the Switchback Path –

The path up the hillside switches back & forth rising steadily. It makes 3 sweeps across the hillside's face. While traversing this 2 mile path the PC's are likely to encounter at least a few interesting sights.

1st Switchback – *The path is narrow & barely sufficient for a wagon to travel upon. It's a dirt track that's been worn into the hillside over long years but isn't exactly a road.* Characters who are used to travel may observe these facts, you may also allow search checks using a d6:

- ✎ This is a path, not a road – any village would require a more substantial track than this.
- ✎ There are footprints intermittently worn into the path – they're all the same, as if the road was only used by a single person.
- ✎ The person who used this path was an old lady or a small man who walked with a cane.

The 1st switch has a tree stump which is worn & has clearly been used as a resting place for a long time. The stump is worn smooth by someone resting on it over the course of years. Searching (d6 search roll) the stump reveals something concealed within its roots – a clay bottle of distilled spirits which has been marked & scribbled upon in some esoteric script. The bottle is a *Potion of Hell's Ease*. When someone drinks from the potion have them roll a d8. They HP equal to the amount rolled & also gain an equivalent amount of resistance to fire. When damaged by fire they deduct the value from the potion before applying the damage to their HP. If the imbiber rolls a 1 – they get the effect of having rolled an 8 but the potion is consumed completely & cannot be used by anyone else.

2nd Switchback – *The path switches again, rising steeply upward toward the smoke-shrouded village. At the switch the path widens & you find a felled log which has been roughly hewn to serve as a crude bench.* Any attempt to search the log easily reveals confusing runic symbols carved into it. These are hard to decipher but magical characters may recognize it as an *Evil Language* which, when recited aloud casts a spell. This spell grants characters who are chaotically or evilly aligned unholy resilience – granting them increased vigor. For the rest of the day any chaotic or evil characters who hear the recitation gain +1 to all of their statistics & +1 HP per HD they possess. Good & Lawful characters are oppositely affected if they fail a Save vs. Spells. They have their Statistics reduced by 1 and suffer a reduction to their HP equal to -1 per HD. Neutrally aligned characters are unaffected by the spell. (Should characters have conflicting alignments – e.g.: they are both Good & Chaotic – the effects cancel one another out & if a character is both Chaotic & Evil they only gain the benefit once). It's entirely possible that the characters could decipher the magic & understand its power without inadvertently casting the spell – this is a matter for you to determine based upon their actions & ability checks used to decipher the magic.

3rd Switchback - *At this switch the village is clearly visible upon the hill's nearby peak. Indeed the village seems much larger, looming & almost hanging over the hillside. The fire that consumes the village's timber buildings burns lightly & from the village you can hear the shrieking of people who are desperately fighting the fire.* There's nothing upon this switchback to search or find – but it is a safe place for characters to retreat to & rest if they run into problems & wish to retreat from the village. A few of the creatures in the village will follow PCs here if they are already engaged – but none patrol here.

The Village –

The village is a cluster of narrow buildings that all seem to lean upon one another. Tall peaked roofs hang out over the narrow, twisting paths within the village & though they smolder & burn – these buildings aren't quite consumed. The village seems to be roasting, slowly. The windows of the houses reveal people within & the doors of the many homes are open – likewise revealing people inside – all of them seem to be burning alive & they scream for help. Patrolling the streets of the village are dozens of man-sized birds – all with a pair of horrific fore-claws. These birds seem to be burning & covered in spines.

You may wish to surprise your players with the **Cicinfernats** that have infested the village – having them spring out only after the players have entered. There isn't much here to do besides fight, however. The village's well & any rain barrels that can be found are full of burning sand & gravel & the rain gutters run with molten pitch. Entering a house to rescue those inside will do the players no good at all as each of them is an Infernal Denizen – a tortured soul cursed for their crimes. These attack whenever anyone enters their house & try to keep them within.

Wandering around the village is a confusing & difficult endeavor. The winding routes through the narrow streets quickly deprive any traveler of easy view of the route into the town. You can use the encounter table here to provide scenes – or work through each encounter sequentially. You needn't force players into each of the scenes here, but you should be aware of each as a possibility.

The Village is indeed surrounded by a narrow circle of fiery coals. It may seem to PC's that this somehow contains the village this is almost true – in fact the line of fiery coals marks a rift between the Real World & Inferno – a hell reserved for punishing the wicked.

The fiery coal circle contains many gems which may be retrieved with serious difficulty. Attempting to gather any one gem results in d4 points of fire damage being inflicted. Even if implements are used cleverly – they can't outwit the malicious flame which scorches hands & melts or burns objects that are thrust into the smoldering flame. That said – each gem is a large, beautiful & hopelessly flawed example of either ruby or jet. Any given stone is worth d4X10 ₶. For every 1,000 ₶ worth of gems taken – 5 Cicinferants escapes into the world. If more than 10,000 ₶ The village & all its inhabitants create a permanent gate between Inferno & the Real World.

NPCs Encountered Here –

- 🔪 **Doomed Souls** – these are damned people who must serve out their terrible punishments in Inferno. Many are penitent & do not seek to escape – many are still defiant & driven by their wicked aims & so seek to leave. Players will encounter them throughout the village & they are unlikely to make much sense if spoken with. Many speak in archaic language & with old-timey inflections.
- 🔪 **Infernal Denizens** – When the flame has purged a person of their wickedness in inferno the flame becomes a corrupt shade – an *evil* fire that contains the wickedness of the soul after the soul's departure. These infernal denizens are irredeemably wicked & they inflict suffering upon others for pleasure.
- 🔪 **Cicinfernats** – These are creatures native to Inferno, they are diabolical animals – but only animals.
- 🔪 **Dravappalyon** – A jailor-devil. This giant is wreathed in flame & malice. Though he is a vicious, monstrous devil he follows a strict code of honor. Principally he will only seek to allow the wicked to come to harm. His devotion is to keeping the denizens of Inferno trapped until their punishments are delivered. He won't prevent anyone from entering Inferno & he won't pass judgments beyond recognizing good & evil people.
- 🔪 **Surri** – A fallen god. This being is a tutelary spirit for a village that was defeated & razed by a prince some centuries ago. The prince demanded that the village submit & the local god Surri, commanded that her occupants & acolytes refuse & that they instead attempt to assassinate the prince. This plan didn't go well and the village was destroyed, for her hubris & murderous nature Surri was condemned to Inferno to burn. She manifests as a haughty priestess within the village sometimes though this is only a manifestation as she is the village itself.

The monsters encountered here are detailed in their own section at the end of the adventure. For the most part the Cicinfernats, Doomed Souls & Infernal Denizens aren't individually particularly competent combatants – their threat lies in their large numbers & swarm tactics.

Traversing The Hellish Village

Roll	Scene	Encounters
1	<i>Turning around a corner you stumble into an dead-end alley where burning people are arguing, they turn to address you as you come upon them. Their voices are screams that spray fire at you.</i>	<i>d6 Infernal Denizens attack senselessly</i>
2	<i>You wander into what appears to be a festival, or a dance. People, on fire, swing around madly & sing, their voices like blaring trumpets - they call out to you and try to get you to join them.</i>	<i>20 Doomed Souls try to draw players in</i>
3	<i>The road abruptly ends at a rough-hewn fence embedded with glowing embers. It's too high to see over but not so high you couldn't climb it. Suddenly a clutch of the horror birds turns the corner and chases you.</i>	<i>2 Cicinfernats per PC come running around the corner</i>
4	<i>Leaping over a fence you find yourself in a peculiar garden, something like a cemetery. There are many bright red & yellow flowers growing in clumps & each petal has a single letter drawn upon it in black ink.</i>	<i>3 Liars are summoned here by studying the flowers</i>
5	<i>At the edge of a garden where it meets the street you find many burning people fighting a squadron of the hellish birds. The fight is intense & sprawling, it engulfs you.</i>	<i>d6 Infernal Denizens, d8 Doomed Souls, d6 Cicinfernats battle</i>
6	<i>A battle between the hellish birds, the burning people & some fiery ghosts is broken up by a fiery red giant with a crown made of flame & smoke. It leers at you horribly & speaks with a tongue of flame. It laughs & this is the sound of clashing steel. It speaks to you saying: "Run!"</i>	<i>Dvarappalyon</i>
7	<i>Fleeing, you round a corner & find yourself in a secluded alley behind some burning buildings. A small shrine stands at the end of the alley & in its alcove is a pale white statue depicting a lion-faced angel. From its eyes flow endless tears of clear, fresh water.</i>	<i>Surri & d6 Cicinfernats per PC appearing suddenly</i>
8	<i>Pushing through a partly open door you enter one of the burning houses in an attempt to flee your pursuers. You are met by a half dozen dead-eyed, translucent people. They demand that you open the cages they are held in & remove their shackles.</i>	<i>6 bound Infernal Denizens D8 open locks checks free them</i>
9	<i>You push through a burning house & out the other side. There you find the end of the horrible village. A wrecked cottage made of stone with a thatch roof stands some distance away near the forest.</i>	<i>d6 Cicinfernats pursue PCs over open ground</i>
10	<i>In the ground at the edge of the village you find a line of blazing coals embedded in the ground. You can see that this arc of burning stones describes a circle around the village. Among the burning coals you can see a handful of precious gems - rubies & polished jet.</i>	<i>d8 Infernal Denizens appear when someone tampers with the rocks</i>

The Cursed Hearth –

The pleasant stone cottage at the very edge of the village stands amidst a low fieldstone fence & is pleasingly decorated with many potted flowers & flowering fruit trees. Thin white smoke rises from the chimney & the shutters are barred but the red-painted door lies partly open.

This is the home of the **Ninarta Clan**. The last resident member of this clan – **Mah-Gi** is the cause of all the trouble here. Mag-Gi, using her ancient family's mystic lore continuously corresponded with her wicked grandfather **Benzel**. Benzel was an accomplished wizard & sinister governor among the secret chiefs of the earth. In death he is subject to an eon of torments in Inferno. Mah-Gi has been able to pierce the veil to speak with him & gain knowledge – but – she has also been corresponding with the guardian of punishments Dravappalyon. This ongoing contact has blossomed into a trans-dimensional romance. In order to bring about their union Mah-Gi has endeavored to bring this realm of Inferno into the Real World so that she and her lover can be united.

Naturally no-one is going to offer this information to anyone, least of all violent, unsympathetic PC's – but the Cursed Hearth is a place where this information may be discovered.

The Damned Village, as an adventure, has many ultimate conclusions that provide some type of satisfactory closure – each involves a final confrontation with one of the main adversaries.

The cottage is a single room affair, it stinks with the ageless scent of intergenerational destitution. A single fireplace occupies the entire north wall of the structure & within it there smolders a flickering fire over which a burned cauldron hangs. A pallet of greasy furs & quilts lies near the fire. Otherwise the cottage is filled with the cracked & aged implements of a solitary life in the wilds.

While the cottage is safe from the dangers present in the village – it provides its own treacherous threats. Players who spend more than a few minutes in the cottage must save vs. spells or become hypnotized by the sliver of flame in the hearth. Hypnotized characters fall asleep & remain asleep irrespective of any intervention until the next dawn.

While sleeping, characters are visited by & interact with their wicked ancestors. If a PC has a defined back-story including any wicked ancestors – those forebears appear to them & interact with them in a convoluted dream in which the ancestor is punished mercilessly by devils & connives in search of escape. If a character has no ancestors they simply sleep & gain no insights. If a character has devilish ancestors they witness their predecessors inflicting punishments upon the wicked. You can use the chart below to provide a character with a wicked ancestor if they have no defined evil progenitors.

Interactions with ones ancestors grant insights which grant peculiar benefits but have a maddening effect upon those who witness what they ought not to have seen. Every interaction with an ancestor grants a +1 increase to one statistic besides WIS but decreases WIS by 2. PC's can attempt a Save Vs. Spells at the next dawn to remove the effect. If they fail this save the changes are permanent. In all cases the character has a 5% chance each sleep of communing with the ancestor again. You may determine that the statistical insight effect should apply again in future sessions.

If PC's have gained insight – it is possible also to return to the village to interact with the ancestor. Whatever ancestor & punishment they've witnessed is taking place somewhere in the village. Every ancestor communed with seeks escape & pleads with the PC to secure their release.



Random Wicked Ancestors

Roll	Ancestor	Insights
1	<i>Melisine - the Rumormonger - having spread wicked lies that led to the murder of more than one young man, Melisine tells lies & relishes the destruction of innocence. She is tormented by having her tongue removed endlessly.</i>	+1 CHA / -2 WIS
2	<i>Namothet - the Plagiarist - stealing the works of others & using their own works to benefit himself, Namothet enjoyed a life of plenty through such theft. He is tormented by having his words & actions dictated him by a chorus of devils.</i>	+1 DEX / -2 WIS
3	<i>Oto - the Judge - an evil judge who accepted bribes & who inflicted unjust punishments to derive perverse entertainment. He is punished by being accused of outlandish acts while compelled to deny them to no effect.</i>	+1 INT / -2 WIS
4	<i>Pymon - Keeper of Secrets - an evil child who prevented the truth from being exposed so that innocents could be unjustly judged & others would suffer from loss. He is punished by having his eyes gouged out repeatedly.</i>	+1 INT / -2 WIS
5	<i>Robail - the Warrior - a ruthless soldier who committed constant atrocities & brutally subjugated the helpless through force. He is condemned to constantly fight & loose.</i>	+1 STR / -2 WIS
6	<i>Sollay - the Princess - a haughty ruler who forced her subjects to starve while she enjoyed their bounty. She is punished by never being allowed to eat or drink or sleep.</i>	+1 CON / -2 WIS
7	<i>Timor - the Trickster - a con-artist who posed as a holy-man to trick people out of their money & to enslave their children. He is punished by being drowned in molten gold ceaselessly.</i>	+1 CHA / -2 WIS
8	<i>Vanna - the Thief - an urban socialite who cunningly stole heirlooms & precious mementos from her friends leaving them to punish their servants & mourn their loss in secret. She is punished by having her body continuously disassembled by devils.</i>	+1 DEX / -2 WIS

Other interactions in the Cursed Hearth –

Players can search the cottage & doing so they will discover some of Mah-Gi & her forebear's treasures.

On a search roll of:

3 - The ersatz bed contains a collection of journals & books which detail Mah-Gi's communications with her great-grandfather Benzel. She also speaks about her burgeoning love for 'her friend' Dravappolyon – who teaches her a magic spell to protect her from the predators in the woods. The spell **Devil's Lash** is detailed in the journals & can be learned.

2 – The cottage's loft contains several beds that haven't been occupied in a long time. Among the ruined possessions can be found a clay jar full of 300\$ & a finely made box that contains a silver-edged knife.

1 – The walls of the cottage have a spell embedded into them – a complex scroll which details an intricate spell – this **Hell-Gate** spell is an extremely high level spell that must be cast over the course of many years in observation of specific celestial phenomena. A cursory version of the spell can be transcribed by players. If they wish to add it to their spellbooks, players can learn the spell **Infernal Communion**. The spell, woven into the walls is the cause of the hell-gate & it was cast by Mah-Gi over the course of her life.

The PC's may have as much time as they like inside the cottage. There are no provisions & it is certainly cursed to cause them to visit with the damned souls of their ancestors – but it's otherwise safe from outside danger.

When the PCs leave the house they will always be confronted by Mah-Gi – who is returning to the Cursed Hearth to recover & to prepare for her journey back to the village. Since the arrival of the village on the hilltop she has made several forays into it in an attempt to meet with Dravappalyon. The latest of these ventures was successful & she's been gifted with a charm that protects her from the fire & attacks by the creatures of the village. She plans to rest in the cottage & return to the village thereafter. She's extremely displeased by people snooping around but will also realize that they can help her.

An indignant old woman glowers at you as you depart what is quite obviously her house. She makes obscene gestures & curses at you – demanding to know why you’ve been in her house & who you think you are. She doesn’t care who they actually are. If they attack or harass her she is a competent spellcaster but not much of a combatant. However, if PCs do strike her down they earn the everlasting enmity of Dravappalyon. If the PCs are able to calm her down she will reveal that she needs their help & will be forthcoming with information that should fill in any gaps in their understanding. Here’s her story:

“When I was a little girl my grandmother taught me how to call to the fire & hear the voice of her father. She said that our family had always been able to call to their ancestors through the fire. When I talked to him though, I could see him as well as hear him – they said I had a gift for calling out to the netherworld. I didn’t much like talking to Benzel but his jailor Dravappalyon and I became very close. We’ve talked to each other for many years now & I’ve finally been able to call his section of Inferno into the world so that we can be together. Now I’m going to join him for as long as I’m able before he has to be separated from me again.”

She knows that her great-grandfather Benzel has learned a spell that would allow the Village to remain in the Real World but that he’s left & can’t be found. If the players are willing to find him – she offers to teach them some of her magic – indeed she’ll make any bargain (though not necessarily keep any bargain) to get the players to help her. Her one true love is the Gate-Devil Dravappalyon & this love is reciprocated.

From here – The PCs can do any number of things here are a few options along with their likely consequences:

- ✂ Defeat Benzel – who will battle the PCs mightily along with his fellow escapees. **Result** – Mah-Gi & Dravappalyon are united & return to Inferno with the village.
- ✂ Go back to the village to combat & banish Dravappalyon. **Result** – Surri & the damned souls all remain in the Real World. Mah-Gi seeks to kill the PCs.
- ✂ Defeat Mah-Gi. **Result** – Surri & the damned souls all remain in the Real World. Dravappalyon seeks to kill the PCs.
- ✂ Defeat Surri. **Result** – Mah-Gi & Dravappalyon are united in the Real World. The condemned souls remain in The Real World but the village vanishes from reality.

Notes on Running the Adventure –

Since this module relies mainly upon PCs interacting with NPCs & Monsters it’s a good idea for you to have a distinct voice & characterization for each of these – it’s worthwhile to try and ascribe motives & sensibilities to Mah-Gi, Benzel, Dravappalyon & Surri. Some cues that might help you:

- ☞ Mah-Gi is secretive & angry but below the surface is extremely romantic & idealistic, starry-eyed & hopeful. She is interested in love & regards characters who are in love with a special kindness.
- ☞ Dravappalyon is dutiful & serious with a faint rebellious streak linked to his deep feelings of romanticism. He is sensitive about this rebellion & regards it as a failing but is also somewhat proud of his secret transgression.
- ☞ Surri is mad – both insane & furious. She hates people & regards them as parasites at best & deserving of subjugation at worst. She is intensely focused on acts of betrayal as she regards loyalty as the only virtue that people are potentially capable of.
- ☞ Benzel is hateful & deceptive. He continues to practice his bizarre heresy which focuses on robbery & murder. His goal to escape Inferno is not based upon fear of torment – but rather a wish to continue his murderous work.

Characters who wish to loot bodies & seek treasure may do so. This is ordinarily a d6 search check against the target indicated by the monster’s stat-block. Searches require a player to roll equal to or lower than the number indicated with some abilities modifying the roll downward. You can use the player’s roll & consult the table below to award random treasure applicable to this module.

Treasure Table	
Search Result	Treasure
1	d4 gemstones - ruby & jet worth d4x50 \$
2	d4 ENERGIE Alchemy Reagents
3	d4 VISCERA Alchemy Reagents
4	d4 random personal items

Supplemental Rules –

Potion of Hell's Ease –

Effect – Grants recovery of d8 HP & grants equivalent amount of Fire-Resilience (pseudo-HP that are consumed before one's HP are affected but only vs. fire damage).

Uses – The Potion is consumed completely if, when applying it, a 1 is rolled on the die. In such a case it provides 8 Fire-Resilience & restores 8 missing HP.

Creation – The potion can be created with a Level 3 Imbue Spell: ***Create Potion of Hell's Ease***. Or it can be fashioned using Alchemy. It requires 3 Parts ENERGIE & 4 Parts VISCERA reagents as well as a successful d8 Alchemy check or a d20 INT check. The potion requires 4 days & nights of curing before it is ready to be used.

Wicked Blessing – Level 5 Benediction Prayer

Effect – Grants all Evil & Chaotic characters who hear the blessing to gain +1 to all statistics & +1 HP per HD they possess. The effects end at sundown. It oppositely affects good & lawfully aligned characters who suffer -1 HP per HD & -1 to all six statistics if they fail a save vs. spells

Casting – This is an Evil Benediction which may be granted to a character capable of casting Prayers. It is a 5th level Benediction & requires 5 minutes to cast.

Devil's Lash – Level 2 Curse

Effect – Causes fiery tendrils to lash out from the caster's body inflicting d4 fire damage to everyone in an adjacent space.

Casting – The spell requires 1 turn to cast.

Improved Devil's Lash – Level 3 Curse

Effect – Causes fiery tendrils to lash out from the caster's body inflicting 2d4 fire damage to everyone in an adjacent space. If a 4 comes up on any damage die it indicates that the subject(s) of the spell are on fire & take an additional d4 damage at the start of their turns until the fire is put out or the damage die rolls 1.

Casting – The spell requires 2 turns to cast & it inflicts damage on the second turn. It has Verbal & Somatic components.

Hell Gate – Level 10 Summoning Rite

Effect – The spell conjures a 1 mile by 1 mile region of *Inferno* to manifest in the Real World. When the ritual is performed at least 10,000 \$ worth of rubies & jet must be formed in a circle around the target region.

Casting – The spell requires 10 years of cumulative casting time split among all its casters. At least one caster must be in *Inferno* & one in the Real World for the spell to be successful.

Dismissal – The Spell is ended if the component jewels are removed.

Ancillary Effects – *Inferno* is a realm of punishments & fire. Ordinarily entering into a region of *Inferno* causes a subject to begin to burn & to take fire damage. Casters of the spell are immune to this fire damage – as are many natives of *Inferno*. While the spell is active people & monsters may move freely between the imported region of *Inferno* & the Real World – when the spell is dismissed everyone in the imported inferno is transported along with the region back to that dimension.

Infernal Communion – Level 2 Summoning

Effect – This spell allows a person in the *Real World* to communicate perfectly with a target in *Inferno* irrespective of language barriers or lack of vocal or auditory apparatus. The infernal target of the spell may Save vs. Spells to avoid its effects if desired. This communication lasts for 2 hours.

Casting – The spell is cast over the course of a 20 minute interval & requires that the caster shed 2 HP in a ritualistic bloodletting.

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Benzel

Legendary

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	7d10+6	# Appearing	2d6	Attack #	5
HP	66	Morale	18	Attack Mod	+5
AC	19	Treasure	6	Initiative	4+d20
SPEED	14	Parley	2d6	Saves	15
Tags	Soul, Ghost, Evil, Boss, NinartaSoul, Ghost, Evil, Boss, Ninarta	Terrain		Stats	14
		Location		Skills	4

Attacks & Maneuvers

+4 Vicious Gaze of Death - d8 - Benzel can stare with a contemptible fury which strikes out against targets up to 8 spaces away. This attack's damage is unaffected by any resistances.

Greater Devil's Lash - Benzel uses this spell up to 4 times if he is able. The Spell deals d6 damage to every target within 3 spaces of her when it is cast. This damage is doubled against Evil opponents.

Wreathed in Flame - Enemies that attempt to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the Benzel take a point of damage at the start of their turn(s) as the fire that surrounds the creature burns them.

+4 - Touch of Corruption - d4* - Benzel can touch an opponent & deal un-resistible corruption damage. This damage cannot be removed through the application of potions or magical healing. Each day a character may recover 1 point of the damage dealt by succeeding a d12 CON check. Characters defeated by this attack immediately cause an Infernal Denizen to appear.

Description

Benzel Ninarta is the wicked soul that is all of what remains of the evil high priest of a fallen sect of religious murderers. Benzel appears to be a normal, if severe looking middle aged man dressed in outmoded clothing & wearing strange icons. When his sinister - true nature is revealed though - he becomes a fiery shadow of his neutral appearance - a lashing furious being consumed with hate & fear. Benzel's goal is to escape Inferno & he will promise anything to achieve this - but he is quite wicked & not bound by any oaths.

Benzel is a competent wizard & provided access to a spellbook is able to cast up to 4 level 4 spells each day.

Monster Record



Cicinfemat

Ecological

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	3d10+3	# Appearing	1d6	Attack #	4
HP	21	Morale	18	Attack Mod	+4
AC	13	Treasure	3	Initiative	3+d20
SPEED	13	Parley	2d6	Saves	15
Tags	Bird, Fire, Devil, Hunter, Chase Bird, Fire, Devil, Hunter, Chase	Terrain	Inferno & Hell-Gates	Stats	15
		Location		Skills	2

Attacks & Maneuvers

+4 Pierce 1d10 - The Cicinfemat strikes at a distance with its piercing - steel-hard bill. If the Cicinfemat rolls a 20 on its attack roll the target is immobilized & cannot move any distance until the Cicinfemat is defeated.

+4 Peel d8 - This attack is only performed against those who are immobilized by a Cicinfemat's pierce attack. It can be performed against a target immobilized by a different Cicinfemat. The monster(s) use their fore claws to peel away the flesh of the immobilized target.

Immunity to flame & other heat based attacks.

Wreathed in Flame - Enemies that attempt to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the Cicinfemat take a point of damage at the start of their turn(s) as the fire that surrounds the creature burns them.

Description

Cicinfernats are quasi-sapient bird-like creatures with long piercing bills & with a pair of rending claws that are wreathed in flame & drenched in blood. These creatures are unsubtle denizens of the inferno where they scavenge & hunt in small packs. They are the native fauna of Inferno but have absorbed some of the sinister spiritual residue deposited there by the damned which causes them to relish inflicting pain & misery. They are typically found in small groups of up to 10 individuals with around half of those serving as hunters & warriors for the troupe. Devils who reside in Inferno sometimes use them as mounts & sometimes as hounds - they are intermittently loosed upon the world at the whim of a devil to cause suffering.

Cicinfernats are hellish & so their size & other dimensions aren't well defined - however when they are loosed upon the mortal realm they appear in stature to be equivalent to a tall man.



Doomed Soul

Folkloric

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	4d6+1	# Appearing	1d6	Attack #	4
HP	21	Morale	8	Attack Mod	+4
AC	16	Treasure	0	Initiative	1+d20
SPEED	12	Parley	2d4	Saves	18
Tags	Soul, Ghost, Fire, Penitent, CorruptSoul, Ghost, Fire, Penitent,			Stats	10
		Terrain		Skills	1
		Location			

Attacks & Maneuvers

+2 Touch of Corruption 1*- This attack deals a single point of damage which cannot be healed through any means. Each day a character may attempt a d12 CON check to remove a single point of damage dealt by the touch of corruption. Characters defeated by this attack cause an Infernal Denizen to appear where their shadows were.

Fear of Flame - These creatures take double damage from fire & fire based attacks & they are desperately afraid of fire.

Immortal Penitence - These creatures cannot be killed. If defeated they reappear at dawn with 7 additional HP.

Description

Doomed Souls are the spirits of those who's wicked deeds in life caused them to suffer punishment in Inferno. In Inferno such creatures are pitiful & continuously tormented by the devils who serve there as jailors. When able to enter the Real World these creatures are a dangerous nuisance. They fear fire & will not approach an open flame - this serves to keep them at bay, somewhat counterintuitively as they appear to be constantly alight & burning already. While they are not especially good combatants, tormented as they are - their vile presence is anathema to life in the Real World & their mere touch inflicts a corrupting, harmful touch. Doomed Souls cannot be defeated until their punishments are finally meted out, at which point they are no longer doomed as they are rendered free. Proper atonement is difficult to achieve for any of these creatures & each has its own path toward redemption.

Monster Record



Dravappalyon

Legendary

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	5d30+7	# Appearing	1	Attack #	5
HP	87	Morale	18	Attack Mod	+5
AC	14	Treasure	4	Initiative	3+d20
SPEED	13	Parley	2d6	Saves	13
Tags	Devil, Penance, Fire, Giant, Lover Devil, Penance, Fire, Giant, Lover	Terrain	Inferno	Stats	15
		Location	Cursed Hearth	Skills	2

Attacks & Maneuvers

+5 Flaming Sword d12 - The Devil has a might sword wreathed in flames. If this attack deals 10+ damage the target is caught on fire & takes d6 on each of its turns. Fires burn out of if this d6 comes up as a 1. Immunity to flame & other heat based attacks.

+5 Molten Whip - d10 - Targets hit by this attack must save vs. Devices. On a failed save they are caught in the whip and cannot act until they make a d20 STR check to escape. While caught they take d6 fire damage on each of their turns & half of any damage dealt by further uses of this attack.

Crowned in Flame - Enemies in hand-to-hand combat with Dravappalyon take d6 fire damage at the beginning of each of its turns.

Penance Sense - Dravappalyon can sense evil & will attack anyone who is evilly aligned preferentially. It will only instigate combat against those who are evil.

Guardian of Gates - Once Per Year allies of Dravappalyon may call on it to appear in any doorway for 1 hour. It will guard & hold the door for an ally.

Punish Deceit - Anyone who lies to Dravappalyon must save vs. spells or take d6 damage immediately.

Description

Dravappalyon is a guardian devil who is tasked with jailing the spirits of the wicked until their sins are burned away in Inferno, its home dimension. In the Real World Dravappalyon appears as a giant horned devil with a forked tongue made of fire, a flaming sword & a whip made of molten steel. The devil sees evil & seeks to punish it whenever it is found. Dravappalyon deeply loves Mah-Gi, the old crone & will do anything it can to be with her. Dravappalyon may offer a boon or an alliance with any good or neutrally aligned characters who help it or Mah-Gi.

It is uncertain if devils of *Inferno* have discrete identities or if they are each manifestations of a higher-dimensional consciousness. The statistics presented here are transferrable to any number of low-tier officers within the jailer hierarchy of that dimension.

Monster Record



Infernal Denizen

Ecological

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	4d6+1	# Appearing	1d6	Attack #	5
HP	21	Morale	18	Attack Mod	+5
AC	16	Treasure	3	Initiative	1+d20
SPEED	12	Parley	2d4	Saves	18
Tags	Infernal, Ghost, Fire, Evil, Remnant		Terrain	Stats	10
			Location	Skills	1

Attacks & Maneuvers

+2 Fiery Tongue - d6 - If this attack deals 6 damage the target of the attack is on fire & takes d6 damage at the beginning of each round until a 1 is rolled on the die & the fire goes out or until they put the flame out. This attack deals double damage against evil characters.

Immunity to Flame & other heat based attacks.

+2 Burning Shadow - d8 - The Infernal Denizen leaps from out of the character's shadow & strikes with surprising energy. This attack can only be used if a light source allows a shadow to be cast. If the monster uses this as their first attack in a melee it deals double damage. It deals triple damage if the target is also evilly aligned.

Wicked Sense - These creatures unerringly sense evilly aligned characters & target them preferentially.

Description

Infernal Denizens are the fires that remain intact when a soul is finally purged of their evil through the torments of Inferno. Each of these creatures is keyed to a particular act of evil - deception, hate, cruelty, oppression, violence & greed - the sins that have been stripped from the soul. Each of these spirits are irrevocably linked to a specific act of one of these transgressions & can cause those who've committed similar acts to suffer. Inferno's flames are comprised of these beings who's long existence in the afterlife has caused them to loose their distinct identity.

You can approximate the specific crime that the denizen represents by rolling randomly:

Sin: 1 - Murder 2 - Assault 3 - Theft 4 - Abuse 5 - Neglect 6 - Lies

Victim: 1 - Stranger 2 - Friend 3 - Spouse 4 - Parent 5 - Child 6 - Animal

Monster Record



Mah-Gi

NPC

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	4d6+3	# Appearing	1	Attack #	3
HP	19	Morale	17	Attack Mod	+3
AC	16	Treasure	5	Initiative	7+d20
SPEED	14	Parley	2d8	Saves	16
Tags	Old-Lady, Witch, Infernal, Fire, Lover			Terrain	13
	Old-Lady, Witch, Infernal, Fire, Lover			Location	7
				Stats	
				Skills	

Attacks & Maneuvers

+4 Cane - d4 - if compelled to hand-to-hand fighting Mah-Gi will use her cane to try and ward off attackers until she may be saved by Dravappalyon.

Devil's Lash - Mah-Gi uses this spell up to 4 times per melee if she is able. The Spell deals d4 damage to every target within 2 spaces of her when it is cast. This damage is doubled against Evil opponents.

Description

Mah-Gi is an old woman & among the last of the Ninarta clan who has a small amount of magical skill. Aside from a few simple charms to tidy her appearance & to keep her goats alive she knows some magic learned through her communion with hell. She is a gifted oracle who can use her cursed hearth to commune with Inferno.

Mah-Gi is a competent spellcaster & depending upon the scenario is likely to have access to other spellbooks & is capable of casting up to 4 level 2 wizardry spells each day.

Monster Record



Surri

Legendary

Liminal Tier

Monster Name

HD	7d10+6	# Appearing	1	Attack #	6
HP	66	Morale	18	Attack Mod	+6
AC	21	Treasure	6	Initiative	4+d20
SPEED	14	Parley	2d6	Saves	14
Tags	God, Ghost, Evil, Village, PenitentGod, Ghost, Evil, Village, Penitent	Terrain		Stats	14
		Location		Skills	4

Attacks & Maneuvers

+4 Touch of Contempt - d10 - When Surri manifests as a person she makes this attack - a simple touch that inflicts grave harm.

Grotesque Tableaux - When Surri's opponents are within her boundaries she can afflict them with horrific visions of the terrible slaughter that occurred here. Targets must save vs. Spells or suffer a d12 Frightened Effect. If this attack is used upon someone already suffering the effects of it, they suffer a d12 maddened effect instead. The visions that are provided are grotesque scenes of violence & murder inflicted by a stern & righteous prince.

+4 Kiss of a Traitorous God - d6 - Those who approach Surri & are taken in by her deceit are offered a kiss. Those subject to this attack must save vs. devices or suffer a d10 sickened effect.

The Penitent Waters - People who are bathed in or who drink Surri's tears have their corruption damage removed & are granted a +1 on To-Hit rolls within her boundaries. They must also Save vs. Spells or suffer a d10 maddened effect.

Incarnation - This incarnation of Surri can appear & disappear anywhere within her boundaries instead of moving.

Description

Surri is a damned aspect of the Genius Loci of the village that shares her name. When she manifests as a person she appears to be a statuesque lion-headed woman whose tears flow endlessly, leaving a trail of puddles in her wake. Surri is both evil & mad & has no real objectives beyond tormenting the living - a class of people she regards as weaklings, cowards & failures. Her fate was sealed by the weakness of her former residents & she suffers now because, as far as she believes, failed to defend her against attack. This is not quite the case but she's a god & far beyond mortal reasoning. She attempts to drive those within her mad in the vain hope that they'll somehow be able to defeat Dravappalyon - her jailor. If he is defeated she will become a village again & may treat her saviors gently.

