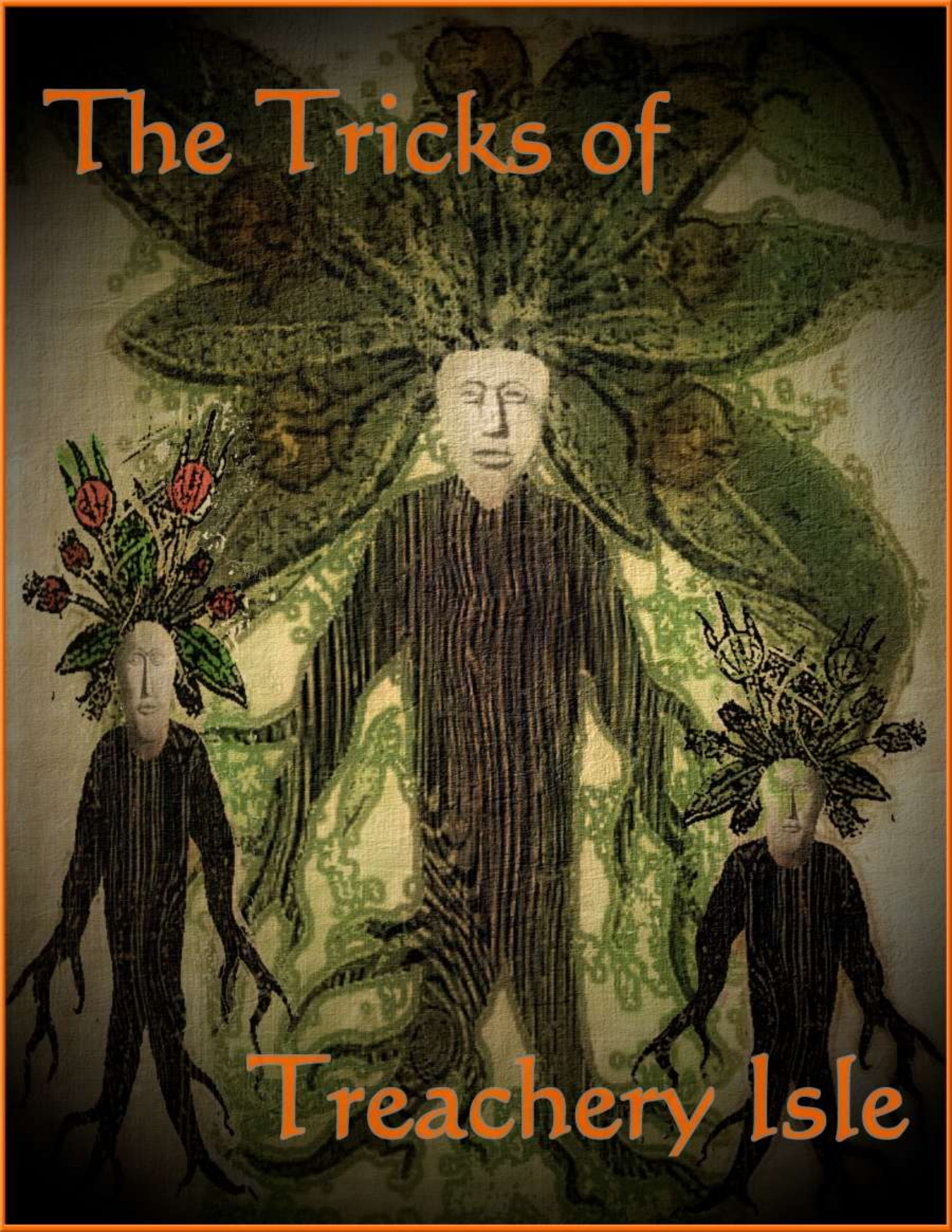
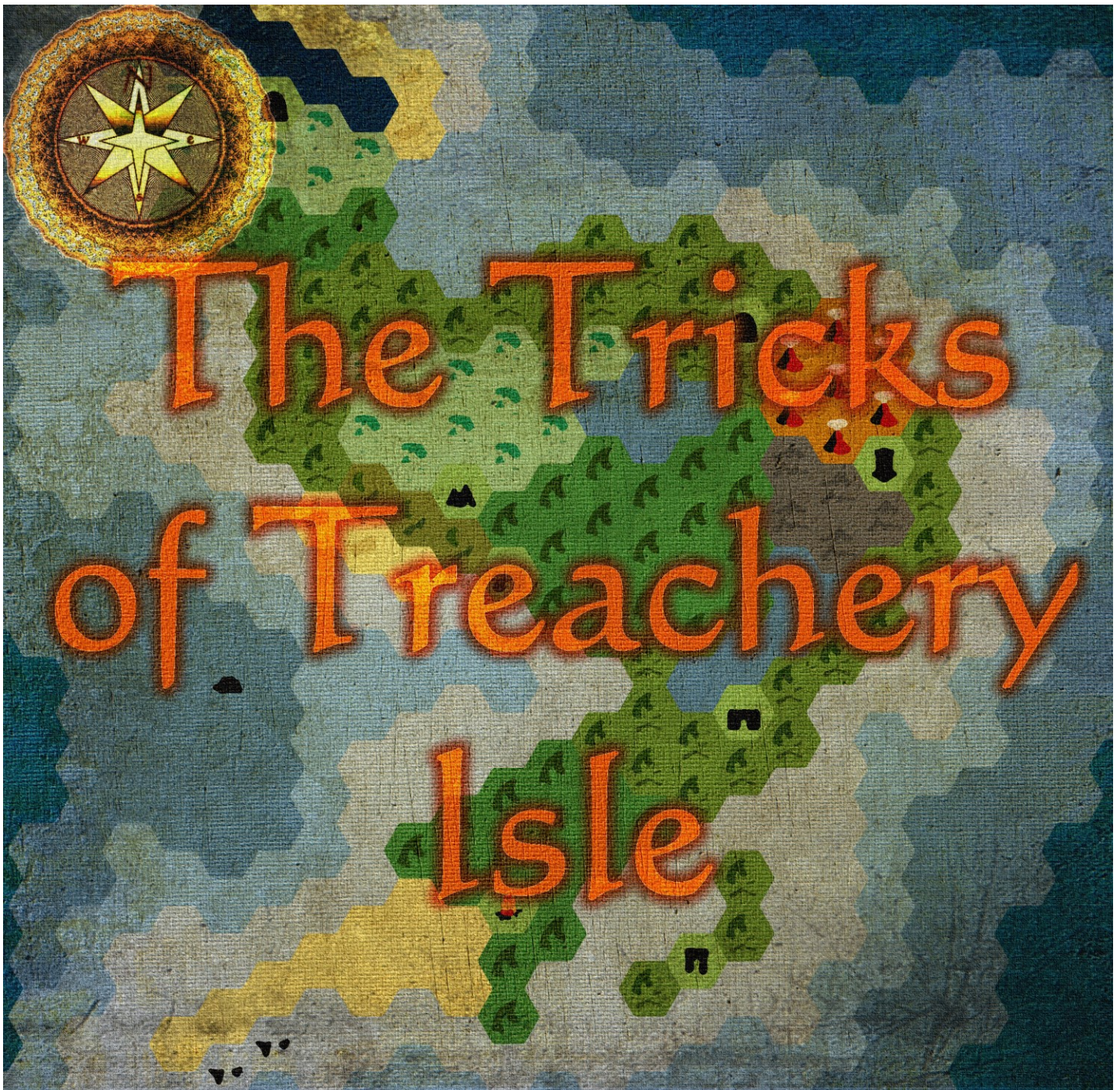


The Tricks of

Treachery Isle





Nothing is what it seems and no one can be trusted on Cormorant Isle! And yet you find that you must rely on dangerous strangers if you hope to leave the Isle alive. Who are these tricksters and what is the secret that they will kill to keep hidden?



The Tricks of Treachery Isle is an adventure for the Game of the North suitable for fledgling characters who are just leaving for the North. The adventure is difficult for parties of fewer than 4. Most of the players should know the Nordagh language.

The Tricks of Treachery Isle takes place on Cormorant Island – a remote isle a ways south of the equator. PCs arriving on the isle do so on their way to the Fabled North. This adventure can help neophyte PCs to come into their own on their way to the North.



The adventure takes place entirely on Cormorant Island – a remote island that is nevertheless inhabited by disparate, conflicting groups.

The island itself is a small volcanic shield with a temperate local climate & an overcast, wet & dreary atmosphere. Mists rise from the ground in the mornings & steam rises from the lava fields through most of the day. Aside from fresh water the island has abundant lumber.

If you wish to elaborate on the local flora & fauna you can draw from the provided list – or you can roll randomly from the list to set the scene as players work their way through the island's wild terrain.

Table 1	
1	Abundant toads - Many & loud & very persistent. They vary in form but the largest are hand sized.
2	Aspen Grove - higher up on the hillsides, they sing in the wind and rustle pleasantly.
3	Beech Grove - The tallest trees here are beeches and the local sort grow very straight & tall.
4	Birch Grove - White & black with peeling bark and tiny leaves, they're useful and abundant.
5	Colonial mice - The local mice build colonies like ants & bees. The Mice-hills are often large & labyrinthine.
6	Dense briar - better to circumvent, but sometimes it's the fastest way.
7	Eagles - Big fishing birds, majestic but indistinctively brown. Their cries & feathers are common in the forest.
8	Feral cat - Abandoned cats are a dwindling invasive species. They're no match for the big squirrels.
9	Feral Dogs - Abandoned here & now a dangerous invasive species.
10	Steaming Volcanic Vent - Deadly if you fall in, but easy to avoid - lingering nearby is bad news.
11	Squirrels - Local variety - raccoon sized & distinctively piebald they're just as shy as any squirrels.
12	Silkworm Infestation - Trees shrouded by worm-silk looks like cobwebs, thumb sized pupae dangle throughout.
13	Seals - Big, loud and a bit on the smelly side, there are many sorts on the rocky beaches.
14	Sandpipers - Long-legged shorebirds that eat beach bugs but nest in the woods. There are a lot of them.
15	Sandbank - There are banks & bunkers of sand on the island interior. The sand is black & lustrous.
16	Rocky Beach - The beaches are long, low & rocky rather than sandy. Pebbles & mud make up the beaches.
17	Pine Grove - The local pines tend to be small & ancient they exude abundant sap that beads into amber.
18	Penguins - Small variety with absurd crests & waddles. They winter here before leaving the island to breed.
19	Obsidian Outcropping - There are 1 or 2 of these big outcrops but shards of obsidian are easy to find on the ground.
20	Nesting Seabirds - On rocky shores there is intensive nesting of many, many kinds of birds, mainly terns.

For best results you should roll on both Table 1 & Table 2, combining the results into a unique tableau.

Table 2	
1	Native Bears - Small, shaggy climbers. Nonaggressive -but dangerous when cornered.
2	Migratory Birds - Immense swarms fly overhead, concealing the sun from time to time. They don't nest or linger.
3	Local Crows - White beaked & Red Footed, they have impressive white crests & some have learned human speech.
4	Lavender - Very abundant & found in very large shrubs throughout the island. Pleasant smelling.
5	Lava Pillows - Large black rock formations that resemble pillows, some are warm to the touch.
6	Lava Flow - A slow cascade of red-hot molten rock, fringed with black. Nothing to toy with.
7	Indigenous Snakes - Bold & Fearless, but small. Usually pale green with arrow-shaped heads.
8	Freshwater Spring - There are a few of these. The local water is sweet & refreshing with a distinct, peculiar flavor.
9	Feral Horses - A few runaway horses have set up a single feral herd. It is not thriving.
10	Feral Goats - Escaped & running wild, there's one large herd that is prospering.
11	Misty Waterfall - small streams riddle the island & fall precipitously down into small pools, producing plumes of mist.
12	Turtle Migration - The turtles are leaving their eggs! They are making their way to the sea, go little turtles!
13	Walrus - A distinctive marsh-variant that graze in the marshes and resemble large stones when idle.
14	Water snakes - Thick & broad headed, they're aggressive & territorial. They're mean and will bite.
15	Wild Blackberries - Plump & sweet with a distinct lingering taste that can't quite be placed.
16	Wild Gourds - Big & multicolored- the largest are pumpkins.
17	Wild Grapes - Quite tart but make an excellent wine.
18	Wild Onions - Grow abundantly in a wide area.
19	Wild Pears - Sweet & tart in a nice proportion, they're often half eaten on the branch.
20	Wild Potatoes - Small & more bitter than most, they're almost spherical.

Traversing the Island

Encounters on the Island are uncommon but you can include them when you'd like. In general there can be one encounter between any two locations that the PCs travel to on the map. You can generate quick encounters by rolling two d6.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 – Some Wild Children | 1 – In a natural amphitheater |
| 2 – Gygis Templars | 2 – In a fairy ring of mushrooms |
| 3 – Runaway Capra Knights | 3 – In a shallow cave |
| 4 – Castaway Impervious Crew | 4 – Butchering the prey |
| 5 – Red Cloud | 5 – In a high tree |
| 6 – Goat Herd | 6 – Stalking the party |

Act I - The Haunted Castle

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.

As the adventure begins: *You have been sailing steadily for the North for more than three months, the past month aboard the unfortunate ship - The Impervious - has been a waking nightmare - an uncanny calm has overtaken the sea & the ship has remained stranded, unmoving in open waters for weeks upon weeks. Captain Zeyba Zeleyja is now guiding the Impervious toward a remote island in a last desperate hope that you will be able to find food and water enough to complete your voyage to the North alive.*

You can introduce Captain Zeyba Zeleyja & let the PCs become acquainted with one another here. Unless they find land soon the ship is doomed. Should the PCs decide to advance a plot themselves here, that's fine – any effort they make to find land though, should result in them finding Cormorant Island & landing at the Burning Beach – which is the first scene of the adventure itself.

If the PC's aren't quick to engage – you may wish to take the role of the Captain & press the PC's with questions. Zeyba Zeleyja is a profoundly curious person and will be interested to know about his current customers. He'll confess that his greatest fear is to be becalmed, as he is currently, and that he is terrified of dying from starvation & exposure. He'll lead off with that & inquire as to whether the PC's fear anything at all, and what exactly it is that they fear. Try to set the tone for a

scary story, have the captain ask these questions by dim candlelight below-decks, muttering forlornly – whatever you prefer & whatever helps you get the party acquainted with one another.

I – The Burning Beach

For the past day you've been steadily heading for an island – smoke rises over it and as you've come closer and closer you can see that there is a battle taking place upon the beach. Captain Zeba Zeleja shares his spyglass with you so that you can take turns watching the battle unfold. By the time your ship, The Impervious lands at the beach the battle has concluded – the remnants of three ships are burning on rocky shore & you see the last living combatants finishing the struggle – one holds another under waves, he finishes drowning his adversary as you are finally ready to disembark onto the island.

The drama surrounding a combat that they cannot actively participate in is intended to cue the players to impending adventure. They'll also get a good view of the ruthless tactics of the Knights-Capra & their Leader – who is drowning his enemies with his bare hands. This is Sir Kostkosa – of the Capra Knights he has just finished off a rival of his Sir Sungol of the Gulo Knights. Sir Kostkosa is superficially dashing: *The Knight is a nobleman & looks & acts like one, he is well proportioned, well dressed & effortlessly*

assertive. His left & right eyes are different colors, which some claim are a sign of his nobility. He wears a horned helmet and shining albeit blood-smeared armor. Sir Kostkosa isn't looking for a fight at all so long as he doesn't believe that the PCs are on the island for the same reason that he is. If they decided to bluff him – or if they botch their first impressions he may choose to challenge them – but is more likely to run to area 2 – where his people are camped to get their help.

It's altogether more likely that Kostkosa will regard the PCs as valuable potential allies and ask them to join his cause – which appears, at first blush, to be completely noble: *"I was sent here by my father a king of the south to rescue my sister, who was kidnapped by knights, such as these"- he gestures at the bodies of the dead upon the beach – "They have a fortress on this hidden island, we plan to take it for ourselves- with your help it can be done- Will you consider assisting us? The profit in such a venture will be considerable."*

As a show of good faith he lets the party take their pick of the bodies on the beach. A total of 14 swords & shields & suits of light armor. They bear either the Wolverine sign or the Goat sign as well as 4 rings, 5 cloak pins, 4 belt buckles and 8 necklaces – all amounting to 500 ₴ worth of valuables.

Captain Zeyba of the *Indomitable* won't leave his ship unguarded but he & his officers will go into the forest to search for water. He won't depart the island without the party – but he isn't interested in helping the Capra & is suspicious of Kostkosa's having no boat of his own.

The Beach is rocky & broad, here it is a spit of land cast into the sea. Further inland you can see a forest rising up out of the sea and climbing up the great black mountain that comprises the island. High above, smoke & steam issue from vents in the mountain's bare rock surface while fog swirls within the dense autumnal forest. Kostkosa glances backward a few times as he starts his stumbling run over the rock-strewn beach, heading toward the sheltering woods.

Kostkosa will gossip about the mad witch of the Island who has burned up all the ships that have landed – including those currently burning on

2 – Capra Camp

Here at the edge of the woods there's a camp with a monumentally large bonfire. The camp is in disarray as it seems the battle you'd initially witnessed upon the beach has expanded here, or, it may be that this is the location of the main battle. The combatants here struggle with one another in the fading light & fog – horses cry out and men are shouting in their wrath & death throes. Kostkosa lags back behind you as the battle rages – he asks for your aid in getting his injured men out of danger.

Depending on the temperament of your players this scene will set the tone for the entire adventure. Nothing is forcing the players to do anything here at all but the choices they make establish the tone of the adventure thereafter. Some likely options:

the beach. He has no idea why the witch of the island would do such a thing except that she is mindlessly hostile to all who arrive here. He has no real knowledge of her, but speaks to the PC's as if they have already encountered her & have experience with her (Kostkosa suspects anyone he meets on the Isle of being affiliated with the Witch & tries to play coy).

In short order the witch does appear & she does try to burn up the ship. ***From out of the sky comes a figure, a witch who is riding upon a huge flying sword. She descends from the darkening sky and from her hands & mouth sprays fire out over the Indomitable. Captain Zeyba Zeleyja is in a furious panic & rushes from the woods, dropping his unfilled water-pails. Frantic, he & the crew struggle to put out the fires as the witch, sailing around high in the sky watches, grimly as she rides around on her great flying sword.***

Capra – They help the Capra outright, killing the Gulo. They may supplant Kostkosa as the Capra leader
Kostkosa – Obeying Kostkosa's direct instruction will embolden him, he relies on them hereafter
Betrayal – They could decide kill or ransom Kostkosa – or any sort of thing to team up with the Gulo. You can substitute Kostkosa & the Capra for Procus & the Gulo. They're statistically interchangeable & their goals are very similar.
Negotiation – They can try, and likely succeed at bringing about a truce between Procus & Kostkosa. A truce creates a difficult problem for you, the Ref – because you'll run double the NPCs – Procus & the Gulo are statistically identical to Kostkosa except Procus is not as strong & is much more noble (1 less HD and has a more pleasant goal on the island).

The PCs can help put out the fire – in which case only the sails are damaged. Irrespective of the sort of help they provide.

The PCs can interfere with the Witch - she's very difficult to hit with any ranged attacks & impossible to hit with any hand-to-hand attacks as she is flying 100 meters above the party. She conspicuously does not attack people - only ships. If the PCs attempt to attack her she will not engage but only ride away – toward the mountain. In this scenario the ships are more seriously damaged (though not destroyed).

In all cases – the damage to the ship wrecks Captain Zeyba's plans & he is forced to attempt to seek help & supplies from the isle's interior. The prospect truly upsets him & Kind-Hearted PC's may wish to volunteer to help him and allow him to stay near his ship.

Peace isn't likely to last though – as the lack of a boat to escape the island becomes a pressing matter. You may offer the Good alignment to PCs that try negotiation.
Nothing – Sitting & watching or just leaving the scene means that the Capra Knights & Kostkosa win – but with half the numbers listed. There will be only 5 remaining Capra & Kostkosa will be injured (at ½ HP. However there's plenty of loot to take off of the wounded & dying.
Opportunists – As with Nothing, above, but they move on the injured after the battle is ended. If this is what the PCs do, offer them the Evil alignment.

Treasure: A total of 28 swords & shields & suits of light armor. They bear either the Wolverine sign or the Goat sign as well as 12 rings, 20 cloak

pins, 19 belt buckles and 12 necklaces – all amounting to 1500 ₪ worth of valuables. There is also a locked & trapped (poison-needle) chest with 250 ₪ stamped with the likeness of a king who resembles Kostkosa. Gulo carries 3 beautiful spears with a silver filigree & a shield with the wolverine crest, likewise in silver filigree - his kit is worth an added 500₪. Kostkosa has

a golden-lined helmet and a pair of gold-edged spears that are worth a combined total of 500 ₪ as well.

If the PCs take a side – that side wants to get to the Hilltop Fort at Area 4 on the map as quickly as possible, though they are very wary of traveling on the island after dark.

If the PCs witness a massacre or participate in it- someone with their dying breath asks for a letter to be carried to the fort. The letter will be among other papers & includes a crude map of the island. The letter is written in Nordagh which is the language that of all the humans on the island speak.

3 – The Haunted House on the Hilltop

This is an old fortified house – a small castle on the island that could be easily defended – if it weren't abandoned. When the Party arrives here – presuming they come here directly from the beach – they arrive at night and the mischief of the island's irascible, suspicious Witch can begin. Otherwise the area is as described here – less the troubling interventions of **Zasimus the Witch**.

The Approach

Here you find a fortified house built upon a hill surrounded by a gray expanse of newly harvested farmland. The cut stalks of the hay poke through the ground & the gourd vines & onion patches have all been harvested. And yet the fields have no haybales and the farmer's huts lie in burned ruins. All that remains of what must have once been a community of some size is a small castle upon a steep hill. Smoke rises from its chimneys and the autumnal scent of woodsmoke is strong.

Examining the Walls

The wall around the villa is tall, formed of thick slabs of quarried black stone stacked without mortar. The rock is porous & at points there are sufficient gaps that you can make out an interior courtyard. The walls are thick & tall but rough & would provide little defense against sustained attacks by an armed force, but decent protection against animals & casual brigands. There is no sound or sign of movement beyond the walls, there is a listless pallid fog building behind you in the lower fields, it sweeps in as the cool air of the ocean displaces the formerly sunlit fields. The cloudy dusk is ushering in a palpable, impenetrable darkness.

1 - The Entry

The entry doors are unbarred, they swing pendulously on their squealing hinges. The doors are heavy and only grudgingly give way but they are not locked, the place is open to you and anyone else who happens by. Kostkosa is troubled by this and urges you to aid his investigation. The entry hall is a defensible bailey – murder holes above and archer's windows to either side – you enter unchallenged as Kostkosa calls out the names of his people.

Kostkosa is wary of an attack here – he will try to cajole the PCs into going first, and failing that will send his men inside. His knights deploy through the whole manor in teams of two – make a note of this to the PCs as they appear throughout the other scenes in this series of encounters. Should the PCs somehow end up using this area for defense – the various ports & murder holes grant +2 to hit & +5 to AC. The Portcullis can be closed from within the guard posts to either side of the entryway – opening it with the mechanism requires a STR d12 check. Opening it without the mechanism requires a d20 STR check for every person allowed to squeeze under.

2 - The Courtyard

The courtyard is a sullen place, there are no lights save one bare flickering candleflame in the uppermost window of the tall stone house. A stable, apparently empty has been built against the wall to your left, to your right there is a windowless barracks and ahead there is the house itself. An exterior stairway climbs up to the main entry while a cellar door lies open just in front of you. All of the various doors are open and Kostkosa's men rush off to explore for themselves. Whenever the party returns to the courtyard they have a different experience. *The dark of the courtyard is palpable – there's only the dulllest light emanating from the heavy clouds overhead where the moons shine valiantly behind them.*

Intermittently the Red Moon shines full through a gap in the clouds, huge & looming near on this hilltop. There are a few knights gathered in the corners, hiding. They whisper & call out to you sotto-voce to quiet yourself, to hide. They are afraid. Something has terrified them utterly. The men have been startled by the curses of Zasimus – and some of them have been badly disfigured – with missing fingers, arms & hands. Multiple returns to this area mean more of the knights can be found here, frightened. As well, the Portcullis closes & it's mechanism is wrecked after the 3rd or 4th return to the Courtyard.

3 - The Stables

The man-doors on the sides of the stables swing wide open, but the sliding barn doors are shut up tight. Above, there is an open hay-loft with a crane – the rope hangs from it frayed & burned.

Horrible sights await those who enter the stables. *The horses have been... destroyed is the word that comes to mind. They have the appearance of being crushed, shattered even. Their flesh is thrown around the barn in shreds, while the floor is so saturated with blood that it has become mud. As horrible as this is – the response of the two knights who've been searching in here ahead of you are completely out of line. They wallow in the mud, clambering over each other in an almost comical rush to escape while they sob in unbelievable terror. They are too afraid even to scream.* The men

can be calmed with d20 CHA checks. They make a scene and eventually manage to escape the barn. Exploring this area reveals some clues as to what is happening:

On a search result of 3 – A letter is found – fixed to the wall with a dagger. On a search result of 2 – The horse tack is found- 4 saddles, 4 bridles, stirrups and 200' of rope (\$ 150)

On a search result of 1 - All of the above as well as a pouch of silver nails & a silver hammer – (\$ 300)

4 - The Barracks

You enter through the front door & find a room full of shattered furniture – as if a terrible fight has taken place here. Besides the rubble of what once was a barracks there is a door in the north wall & a staircase leading upward. The staircase has been broken as well & the door at the top is partially barricaded with broken furniture.

It's slightly difficult to get around in this room. Through the doors to the north a pair of knights can be heard arguing & beginning to fight. Their argument is developing a hostile edge & they are about to come to blows. They begin to fight instantly if the PCs make to intervene. The walls are lined with bunks & there are a dozen chests arranged at the heads of each bed. The two men are apparently fighting over one of the chests. A d20 CHA check can stop them from fighting and will reveal that they are fighting over a mirror that was in one of the chests. The stairs lead to the stairwell area 12.

Searching this area reveals:

On a result of 2: The chests contain personal effects- random clothing & toiletries. (20 SP)

On a result of 1: Buried in the floor under one of the beds is a pouch of small gold coins (240 SP)

5 - The Well

There's a wide brick pillar here with some windows in it – the pillar is also a partially functioning well. It's not very deep & the water drawn from it is fresh – but quite muddy. Wrecking this feature will collapse the whole house.

When the Cormorant Island Leshen took over this castle they interred the comatose residents of the place in this well. Players who for whatever reason decide to descend into the well will discover, quite quickly, the terrible

secret of Cormorant Island. Stacked like wood all around the periphery of the well are bodies – emaciated human husks. **They are – hollow – for lack of a more precise term, light & empty. Something vital has gone out of these people and yet... And yet there is a subtle discernable sigh that emanates from the walls, from the dozens of people stacked against them. They are breathing, all as one, somehow – still alive.**

Potions of healing or healing magic that removes afflictions can restore these people, though it may take a tremendous amount of time. Award 150 Xp for every person so revived. There are a total of 60 people stacked here – they will recount a story, their story, of some curiously shaped pumpkins that were harvested not long ago. These pumpkins strangely resembled human infants and somehow they were highly regarded by some of the women of the settlement. Those women who took the pumpkins in and treated them as their own children. That was the last notable thing that any of these people remember happening. Each of these people is represented by the followers of Count Gygis in his settlement.

6 - The Cellar

What must have once been a well-stocked cellar & kitchen has been completely ransacked. There is no food, no pots, no pans. The fireplace is even partly dismantled and the shelves lining the walls have even been stolen.

The fireplace is in the northwestern corner – the chimney is integrated into the exterior wall – but it is partly collapsed. Very clever characters d20 INT check can determine that whatever happened in the castle began here- someone came down the chimney. Behind the closed door in area 7 the PCs can hear screaming & fighting.

7 - Latrine

The door to this room is locked – beyond you can hear shouting, and struggle. Opening the door is a d8 Open Locks test or a d20 STR check. Once inside: **This is a privy. It's got a pair of stalls & a carved stone sink with running water flowing through it. It's also got a pair of Capra knights trying to drown each other in the sink.** These two can't be talked down. They do what they can to kill each other. If PCs try to restrain them they need two successful d12 STR checks – if either one fails then the free knight continues to beat the restrained one. They need to be tied up or they won't stop fighting until one of them is dead.

Fighting NPCs – The effects of Zasmus' curses have a powerful effect on the weak-minded. It drives some victims to a berserk state. PCs who are astute may put together that these effects are linked to reflections – that the spells have been cast on mirrors & that the reflections in the water & the pools of blood were the spell's triggers. Things that weren't in the castle when it was cursed won't share this effect. NPCs who are prevented from fighting have the opportunity to make another save. If they keep failing their saves then they won't recover from the spells until sunrise. Tying them up is the best plan in this case.

8 - A Parlor

The door that grants access to this room is thick, sturdy & bound with heavy iron straps. It would be very formidable, if it weren't wide open.

Going inside reveals a very nice parlor – the lovely thick rugs & the highly polished furniture are all quite nice. The window mounted near the door is rustic and tinted a pale red. There is no source of light in the room & the two doors that lead off of this parlor are both locked, and both are quite formidable. Accessing either door requires a d6 Open Locks or d20 Strength roll.

9 - The Conservatory

The ceiling of this room is made of the slightly pink glass that comprises all of the windows of the house. The room is pleasant. Thick rugs, soft furnishings. Under other circumstances it would be quite hospitable.

If the PCs are using any type of light in this room the shimmering of the glass & their own reflections seem to come alive and to attack them. This is a curse effect inflicted by Zasimus. PCs must save vs. Spells or take d4 damage and they are subject to a fear effect.

10 - The Dining Room

A long table with seating for a dozen people, this is a very imposing room – the goat-symbol of the Capra knights is repeated as a motif throughout the room & is part of the dishes & the chairs & the table. It recurs over and over throughout. As you gingerly enter the room a sudden clash & a furor arises – four of the Capra knights burst through the door, stumbling over one another – all of them have blood on their mouths. As they see you in the open door they rush forward and struggle to get past you, they do not scream or cry out or make any noise at all, they simply run and you are filled with a certain dread – that there is something terrible at work in this house, that there is something terrible within this house.

There are two at the opposite end of this room – one leading to the stairwell beyond – from which the panicked knights debark and one which is securely locked & barred. A d0 Open Locks check or 2 d20 STR checks are needed to enter the room (PCs can try to enter through the exterior window as well, if they wish – this is trivially easy if they don't mind breaking the window – requiring only a d6 Scale Walls check)

PCs can chose to search this room and they will find, without any effort, a good deal of silver plate & cutlery. Any PC choosing to loot these things must save vs. spells (unless they somehow can avoid looking directly at

the silver as they loot). Those who fail the save take d4 points of damage as their nerves are shot by the uncanny presence of a dark figure behind them in their reflections. They are also afflicted by a fear effect.

Without searching PCs can find 500 ₪ worth of silver dining service

Searching reveals:

On a result of 2: Under the table, glued to its underside is the banner of the Gulo Knights – this is what the Gulo were on the island to retrieve.

Kostkosa will pay 100 ₪ for it, and any living Gulo knights will pay double that.

On a result of 1: One of the chairs can be pulled apart, revealing several hidden weapons – including a pair of steel headed maces, 4 long knives or short swords & two broadswords.

(100 ₪)

11 - An Office

This locked office was once the center of this community, a place where the leadership would make determinations & perform deliberations. ***You enter an office – there are several large desks arranged in what amounts to a maze. They are piled up with long scrolls & quills & ledgers. There are a few iterations of the goat-head symbol that you've seen throughout the castle – a few framed icons & the like. In general this place gives you a feeling of undisturbed disarray.***

Make a note of the windows and the nice view of the Courtyard in area 2 – let the PCs see Knights running around terrified, and let them see disturbing figures in the shadows, just out of vision haunting the scene and startling the terrorized knights.

Searching the room with a light provokes the trapped reflective curse from the darkened windows. PCs in the room must Save vs. Magic or suffer 2d4 damage & be subject to Fear.

Searching the room potentially reveals a variety of interesting items:

Search result 3 – You discover some ledgers & documents describing the production of the settlement's farms, their populations & their personal details. It looks like there were 60 adults in the settlement and maybe 15 or 20 children. These documents recount the last harvest as particularly bountiful.

Search result 2 – There are 7 golden signet rings bearing the goat-head symbol and a jar of red ink as well as a set of gold pens. (1200 ₪)

Search result 1 – A peculiar silver icon depicting a kind of satyr with long & twisting silver horns. This statue fills you with a sense of unease. (800 ₪)

12 - A Stairwell

The towering house is mostly tower & this staircase winds up through a large, open area that has few features. The uppermost portions of the house are above this room and then above the next room – the peak of the house – its roof – is a room built atop a larger room which is built atop the largest room.

You take the stairs up and out- the next floor of this house is a massive, cavernous room that the staircase circumscribes – something like a tower, but completely open. Far from being empty – the space between the stairs is hung with silken nets & lofty hammocks. This is a strange room, as if built for huge spiders as the silken nets glisten faintly in the flickering light cast by torches that line the stairs. At the top of the stairway – some forty feet just above you comes the sound of more of the Capra knights getting the worst of it. Indeed, before you can even speak two of the knights tumble from the upper doorway & take a fall through the nets & hammocks. They hit the ground more or less unhurt, but their fall has ruined half the nets.

Kostkosa or the Knights will indicate (if they can be coherently spoken with) that this arrangement is common for the nobles of their kind – as a descent from Caterpillars is styled an indication of noble heritage. The silk is just silk – the hammocks merely hammocks. PCs can gather up a goodly amount of silk, should they chose to – and some of it is very faintly patterned – though all of it is white, undyed.

Going up the stairs after the collapse of the hammocks is tricky – requiring a d12 DEX test. PCs can also chose to make a d10 Scale Walls test to get to the top without help. While running this scene – play up the wind in the castle, the rain picking up, the storm stirring outside. This part of the adventure should have menace without actual danger, at least no direct danger. At the top of the stairs – the doorway to the upper room is swinging wildly on its hinges – the wind is picking up a gale.

Searching here is easy – the only thing of value to be found is the silk – 300' worth of silk rope can be had.

13 - The Widow's Walk

The doorway from the stairwell below is banging in the wind. Beyond the door there is a wide, open balcony that leads around the highest house of the castle. From this high vista the PCs can see quite a few things. Toward the tower – the balcony is a low stairway that circles the high house which gives the balcony a precarious, slanted feeling though it isn't innately unsafe. *Off beyond the tall walls of the castle you can see the edge of the island – illuminated in fits by the lightning coruscating through the heavy clouds overhead. You can spy a ship skirting the island's northwestern edge, it seems*

After this point the castle has been completely explored. Any of the curses that have yet to be activated will expire at sunrise – as will anyone's debilitating fear. This includes all of the Knights who rally at

that it is struggling to remain at anchor in the growing storm. Off to the north you can see the great mountain of the island rising up even higher. Across its flanks in the dark you can spy the molten red stone flowing down its banks in rivers. To the West, the forest goes on, and the darkness becomes impenetrable to your squinting.

There are banks of doors into the high house on either stretch of the balcony. These are locked tight against the gale requiring d6 Open Locks or d20 STR checks to open.

14 - The High House

Perched at the highest part of the castle is a small, complete house. It has within it its own table, chairs, a small library & a pair of beds – a ladder climbs into a loft at the southwest corner. The house is crudely furnished compared to the rest of the castle. The table & chairs are rough, hand – hewn affairs. The shelves contain crude earthenware dishes & wooden plates.

The Capra & Kostkosa cannot explain the purpose of the High House – it's anomalous to them as well. Windows to the exterior aren't glassed but shuttered.

Here Zasmus' bat is hiding. It tries to listen in on what is happening in order to report back to its master. If detected it attacks & flies outside in that order. Once outside it attacks for another few rounds before it tries to flee. If it is captured it shocks everyone by being able to talk.

Searching here reveals:

Search result 3 – Some polished stones and some strange foreign coins all in an earthenware jar (100 SP)
Search result 2 – Zasmus Bat- it's found and begins to attack.

the first light & shakily make their camp in the castle's courtyard. By whatever means they're able to discern Gygis house – they will plan to go there, in force. Kostkosa & his men speculate that the 'heretic' has

Search result 1 – A hidden map detailing all of the locations on the island.

15 - The Top Loft

Climbing up the shaky ladder into this wind swept loft is difficult. It requires a d12 WIS check in order to accomplish – given the willpower required to climb into a precarious high perch in high winds in darkness. From this vista there is a strange, mystical light that grants those who've come up to this point the ability to see the island as if the sun were shining high in the sky. *You take great care climbing the ladder into the top loft. This is a tall steeple like structure that is open to the elements. Wind whips through with a terrific force and it's all you can do to hold onto the shaky ladder. As you ascend something miraculous happens. It is as if the sun has burst into the sky – you can see the island clearly – illuminated by a tower of light in the middle of a lake. The light from this tower extends like a sheet – it reaches across the miles & lights up the terrain. You can make out another settlement to the west, a swamp further out and to the north... To the North you see a great sinuous fire, a flying serpent spitting fire – it corkscrews in a spiral and rushes over the mountaintop. The tower of light's illumination begins to fail in rainbow streaks of bright light and you can see it, clearly, as it grows dim – an obelisk of quartz standing on an island in the lake.*

The dragon won't come for the players at this point & it is very difficult to signal it in any way. The ocean is not lit by this illumination and there is no sign of *Impervious*.

captured the people of the castle. They offer the PCs wealth & influence for their help.

Act II – The Isle's Deceptions

And travelers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see

4 – The Vanishing Temple of Gygis

Gygis' Temple sits at the base of a valley that leads to the ocean. Where the lands meets the sea there is a precipitous decline –effectively a cliff – though not very tall – it does descend onto broken, dangerous stones. As such – this area is extremely difficult to approach by sea – requiring a few d20 Stat checks just to sail near enough followed by 2 d8 Scale Walls checks.

By land it is easily approached – though there are no roads to this location.

From a distance it is easy to spot as it lies at the bottom of two hillsides & is nestled within a forest of scrub trees which do not rise high enough to overshadow the impressive building.

The Temple – for this place could be described as nothing else – is distinctly out of place, here on this remote island. It is solidly constructed of stone & brick with a high, arching dome. It's inconceivable to you that it was constructed here, in this remote place.

Astute characters will note that the limestone & brick of the temple is by no means native to the island & that the entirety of the place must have been quarried & shipped here – an effort that must have taken a hundred years, at least. *You can see movement, around the temple – there are people in long flowing robes meandering about – seemingly aimlessly. There are no gardens, no paths surrounding this place – it is a monumental temple, seemingly totally out of place.*

The people outside are the followers of Count Bijel – who during this first encounter seem merely odd. Those outside the temple are predominantly human though the humans are always uncertain about which among them has been changed. If PCs approach they are treated according to the reaction roll's results & the behavior of the PCs.

These people speak Oss exclusively

If they are well disposed toward the PCs they will offer them masks & insist that these are important, necessary accoutrements.

If they are indifferent to the PCs they will leave masks for them but make no effort to get them to wear them.

If they are negatively influenced - they will retreat into the temple and try to bar the door against PC entry.

1 - The Masking Porch

The people here have a very distinctive look. Their clothing appears to be made of bark, to hang on them like robes. They wear clay masks that betray no expression & they mill about almost silently – and certainly aimlessly. A few of them are lazing about on this porch.

If the PCs have angered them – these people retreat indoors. Otherwise they gesture to the stacks of masks lying nearby. *Stacked up at the base of one of the tall columns are dozens of the same nondescript, crude clay masks that the locals are wearing.* Kostkosa & other Capra knights really dislike this mask business – they mutter *heresy* and spit.

There are 6 of the Count's Staff & 8 Leshen.

On a search Result of 1 the PCs will recognize some of the clothing under the bark robes of one of the Leshen as belonging to the Capra – there is the recurrent goat symbol or some other obvious sign.

2 - The Shaded Porch

The sun doesn't shine on this part of the temple – it's shaded by the roof and the nearby hills & trees, over the stone a great swathe of moss & fungus has grown & hanging all over the columns are yet more funguses, some of them are enormous fans a few feet across. The overgrowth here seems to have dissuaded the locals from spending time here – as none of them venture near.

The lack of sunlight makes this place unappealing to the Leshen & the Count's Staff follow the Leshen's lead – lest they be identified as human.

Searching here reveals:

Search result 2 – Some edible mushrooms – enough for 5 meals

Search result 1 – Buried in the slime is a metal box, in it is a pair of shears and a letter written in Oss.

3 - The Entry

The doors are shut up tight all of the time. It's possible to sneak past if the locals decide to return here and lock up for reasons. If not the doors require a d10 Open Locks check or 3 consecutive d20 STR checks. *The doors are very large, fifteen feet high & bound in steel & barred. They are imposing indeed. One of the 4 doors also has a grillwork in it, large enough for a doorman to see & be seen – as well as a slot for passing things through.* PCs will tend to be noticed if

they approach the door (d8 Hide in Shadow to avoid detection) at which point they will be hailed by the Count himself. If they are unmasked he pleads that the PCs take a mask and slides some through the door. If they are masked he speaks with them (he knows most human languages) to determine why they are present. If they carry on about the Capra and Kostkosa he will laugh bitterly and seem almost amused and somewhat hysterical.

Attempting to break down the door or open the lock without sneaking up will provoke the Count & his staff & his 'guests' the Leshen. They will simply wait on the other side of the door & then attack as people enter.

The count, 5 of his staff & 6 Leshen at least are present for such a skirmish, with 5 more staff & Leshen appearing each round for the next four rounds.

The Count will speak if the PCs wear masks – Kostkosa won't want to and will possibly be angered if the PCs don't take an aggressive tone with Count Bijel. Defusing the situation seems to be the Count's primary concern. He'll insist on masks though and if pressed about them he will say that he cannot say and offers: "You can't let them see. They can't see or they'll hear." He wants to take them to area 12 to talk.

The temple beyond opens up before you as you cross the threshold into the interior. It's a massive round room – a large hole in the center of the roof allows light to shine down in a column, illuminating the whole massive space. Around the room the wall is marked with numbers and you realize that you are within a very large sundial. The open roof has allowed the wilderness in – a carpeting of moss & mud & grass partly covers the mosaic floor & the frescoes covering the walls are in turn covered by vines. You can see that at regular intervals around the vast room – alcoves have been designed into the structure – corresponding to the different hours marked on the dome

above them. There are at least 20 people in this room, they lay about seemingly idle.

4 - A Hiding Place

Discovering this room requires a 1 or 2 on a search check in either area 1, 3 or 11 – as all three can access this room through hidden doors. The room itself is substantial enough – easily big enough for 5 or 6 people to fit inside. It is otherwise dark & featureless – save for the hidden weapons, clothing armor & packs that are arranged here. Most bear the mark of the Capra & it seems like these stashed supplies have been placed here in case of some kind of emergency. A last ditch contingency.

There are 8 swords, 10 backpacks with 5 days of rations each, 12 blankets, 4 suits of mail, 2 shirts of scale & Three wineskins here. There are also 4 wooden shortbows & 50 crude arrows. (5 200)

5 - A Hidden Place

This room mirrors the room at area 4 above save that it's not been discovered by any of the temple's residents. It provides secret access to the temple for intrepid PCs – and it contains an amount of treasure.

Searching here reveals:

Result of 3 – There are two other entries into the room – you can bypass the main door using this chamber.
Result of 2 – A series of basins built into one of the walls have been filled with silt over time but digging through them you find that each contains a knuckle sized amethyst. (600 SP)
Result of 1 – Underneath one of the larger pieces of mosaic in the floor you find a hidden cache, inside is a scroll made of thinly beaten gold. The writing on the scroll is in the form of a series of punched holes. The scroll is wrapped around a foot long amethyst wand. (2500 SP) The scroll is written in Caclulaat. It explains how the temple was brought into this world from a plane of mineral & rock. Reading the scroll in the Calculaat language grants a permanent increase of +1 to Intelligence – to a maximum of 18.

Each of the gates here resembles an elaborate entryway & threshold that is merely a façade – a decorative flourish – except when the time is right & the sun is shining into that alcove – at which point the façade becomes a real door to a different place – the Night Temple

6 - The Dawn Gate

The big façade has flowers growing out of the silt filled basins surrounding it.

D6 Leshen and d6 Staff can be found here. If it is near dawn – then the mosaic doorway becomes a real doorway into the Night Temple. The night temple is identical to the temple that the PCs have entered – except that instead of the sunlight shining in a beam there is a confusion of light cast by the four moons into the chamber. This confusion of light is disconcerting – Save vs. Devices or become *hindered* – and able to only move half your normal speed.

7 - The Morning Gate

This is effectively the same as the Dawn gate – the flowers are different (irises) and the threshold only opens during the morning.

8 - The Day Gate

As with the Dawn & Morning gates, this gate is superficially different than the others & it opens in the late morning.

9 - The Afternoon Gate

As with the other gates – this one opens just afternoon. In the silted basins surrounding it there are wildflowers & vines – but also some minor treasure.

On a search result of 2 – You find, hidden in the silt here a pouch of small gems (575 SP)

10 - The Evening Gate

Like the other gates – this one is inactive except around dinner time.

11 - The Dusk Gate

This gate is broken. The wall has been smashed here & rebuilt with mismatched, apparently local stone. It is piled up extensively & is extremely asymmetrical – making the whole temple seem somehow lopsided – and profaned.

12 - The Noon Gate

If the PCs arrive here directly after spending the night in the abandoned castle of the Capra – they arrive at the temple at noon – when this gate is active. From the main entry at area 3 this appears to be a doorway into another room of the temple. This is where Count Bijel wants to lead the party to talk.

Across the huge expanse of the temple the light of the sun falls like a spear on the doorway opposite you. It seems that there is a room beyond this expansive area. The leader of these people gestures for you to follow him, he guides you across the room into the darkened chamber beyond. Assuming they follow they enter the Night Temple. ***The room beyond is not a room – but somehow a dark reflection of the place you were – it is a dimly mirrored version of the sunlit room behind you, lit not by the sun but the four moons – the room swims in and out of focus in the crazed light – There's something wrong.***

The Night Temple

This area is identical to the temple described above except that there are no servants & the Leshen do not appear to be people and are unmistakably – Monsters. In the center of the room is a tiered altar & in this altar is imprisoned the specter Pritzak Dohh.

The count will attempt to reason with anyone who will listen – explaining that this night-temple was the source of the Leshen – that they came into the world while people slept & replaced them – he shows the PCs where the sleeping forms of his actual servants are stacked

up – and fearfully gestures at the other Leshens – which move around the room with an uncanny – horrific malevolence. “It’s something in that altar. They can’t see you if you wear a mask, they think you’re one of them, if they can’t hear you. It’s the altar that they worship – it’s what has done this.”

Anyone tampering with the Altar awakens the evil spirit of Pritzak Dohh Elementalist of the Hermene Qlipht. He is aided by 2-4 Leshens per party member.

The ghost of Pritzak Dohh will scream & bluster liberally in ancient Sundus – which smart PCs may be able to interpret. He exclaims that the age of the flesh is over & that the Jack-o-lantern men – the Leshen are the new way. He insists that a new dragon will be born and that his Secrets – the Great Secrets will never be revealed – that his guardian is too powerful.

If Pritzak Dohh is defeated Count Bijel will rush to his sleeping lover Stirga – while, if he is present – Kostkosa will do the same. The two men will fight furiously if there is no PC intervention.

Here the Kostkosa / Bijel / Stirga story will be revealed. Stirga loved Bijel – a heretic who preaches an end to clans & the cult of the forefathers – preferring instead the Anti-Rites of Denouncing. Kostkosa is not particularly religious – but he has come for Stirga – because he needs her to marry in order to advance his own political agenda. Stirga is religious and hostile to the noble she is supposed to marry, but while she’s sleeping she can’t speak up for herself. Both men insist they are right – if it’s left for Stirga to decide something must be done to help her wake.

Defeating Pritzak Dohh allows the PCs to gather his treasures.
The Wand of Fire – a d10 ranged weapon that inflicts burning
The Ring of Earth – a non-encumbering shield that is worn as a ring
The Phial of the Sea – a glass bottle that holds fifty gallons of water, though it encumbers as a single bottle

The Song of Wind – A beautiful singing & speaking voice held in a bellows.
The Pile of Loot – statuettes, jewelry, coin & trinkets in abundance.
(total value of all loot 6500 SP)

The only way out of the Night Temple is to go through the broken wall at area 11. Leaving the night temple the PCs find themselves in the forest well after dark. There is no sign of the day-temple at all. Count Bijel explains that the temple cannot be found except in the day. It migrates out of this world into the *Hermene Qlipht* – a kind of hell on the moon.

As they emerge into a clearing in the forest they will find themselves surrounded & ‘captured’ by Stealer & the Wild Children who will angrily command anyone they find to follow them to their Headquarters.

5 - Camp of the Wild Children

A littered clearing in the woods – debris & trash are tied into bundles & hanging from the trees. Half burned jack-o-lanterns & several fresh ones are arranged around the area without any pattern. From up in the treetops you hear a commotion, someone is scurrying in the branches – laughing, crying out and trying without success to remain hidden. An obsidian outcropping in the middle of this clearing has been painted with dozens of crude representations of people in masks.

If the PCs have been led here by Stealer & the other Wild Children the scene continues playing out: ***Stealer climbs, with visible effort, onto the obsidian outcropping. “Gather up! Gather up Kids! We found these Mask-O’s in the place where the bad count lives. They know about a boat so don’t throw stuff on ‘em.” At this point the trees shudder & quake as a few dozen children***

between the ages of 4 and 14 fill the clearing. They look like they've not eaten well in a long time. A few of the kids start painting on the black glass boulder – it looks like they're trying to depict your arrival.

PCs who choose to fight the children or treat them with needless hostility should be offered the evil alignment. The children won't stick around to be killed – but they aren't exactly helpless and they likely outnumber the PCs by a significant margin. Kostkosa, the Capra & the Count all turn on the PCs if they choose to battle with children.

Here, the PCs can get some answers. The Kids have been around the island and most of them were born here. They explain that they were on their holiday pilgrimage to the fire's edge in celebration of the harvest when their families were (apparently) taken by the Leshen. The cleverest among them realized that somehow wearing masks kept them safe. In the intervening months they've been searching for their parents everywhere on the island – they know a little about all the locations on the island but their information isn't reliable.

1 – The Beach – *Used to be a good place to fish, warriors showed up and they knew to avoid warriors*

2 – The Camp – *Warriors are too dangerous to approach – they can't be trusted around children.*

3 – Home – *It got robbed by monsters – probably that creepy Witch did it.*

4 – The Vanishing Church – *It disappears each night & is full of Mask-O's – they're mystified but scared*

5 – The Children's Camp – *Nobody knows, but maybe the witch? The witch might come. Better wear masks*

6 – The Watchtower – *It lights up but magically, it doesn't really light up. It's important but dangerous.*

7 – The Witch Cave – *We've seen the witch around there you have to really watch out, don't go there. Or do.*

8 – The Dragon's Lair – *We never believed it was real! But it's been flying around! What do we do!?*

9 – The Sea Cave – *The swamp is dangerous, sure, but the cave is special, it's really cool. That's where the ship will end up – everything does because of the current. That's why there's neat stuff in the cave.*

10 – The Haunted Island – *You Can't go there. People who go there all die*

The Kids live off of jetsam & hunting – they aren't exceptionally gifted at foraging or hunting so they're pretty hungry. Most of them haven't had a good meal in more than a month. If pressed they'll say that some of their gang have already died and that they're terrified of what will happen if winter comes.

Stealer is more dismissive of the fears that the others have & is set on finding out what the Vanishing Church is all about – if that's been discovered & explained – Stealer becomes obsessed with getting to the witch. If the witch is at hand or has been dealt with then Stealer tries to get the kids to go to the haunted island to try to rescue the adults. PCs who return to the camp more than once will find that this progress has occurred: The kids go to the vanishing church – the kids go to the witch – the kids go to the haunted island. In this sequence they have a 25% chance of succeeding at each phase. If they fail at any of these phases - they will die.

6 – The Guide Tower

A strange relic of prehistory, the Guide Tower has a powerful magical influence over the island. Exploring the tower is innately dangerous owing to the presence of the Waxed Skeletons. The tower is also the key to the entire island. The cardinal points on the island are made accessible by the tower's intervention. Without the tower's influence the Temple of Gygis, the Wizard's Cave, the Sea Cavern & The Dragon's Lair cannot be accessed. Their presence in the world is not *actual* in a certain sense – these places exist in the Hermene Qlipth – a series of pseudo-elemental dimensions. The Qlipth of Air is the vanishing temple of Gygis – the Qlipth of Earth is the Cave of the Wizard, the Qlipth of Fire is the Dragon's Lair & the Qlipth of Water is the Sea Cavern. These locations are never accessible at the same time – and while one is open – the others are closed. Within the Guide Tower these locations can be opened & closed and more importantly seen. From the Guide Tower the PCs can gain a certain control over the island. Of course this control is difficult to win.

1 - The Entry

The monumental door of this building is at least 20 feet high and appears to be made of bronze. It is carved with markings & signs in an obscure... language? It might be a language – but it's cryptic and these signs swim before your eyes as you look at them. Behind you the lake is clear & the forest beyond is still. The tower looms over you and this door – looks to be virtually impenetrable.

A d12 Open Locks check will open the door instantly without trouble. Characters who know the Calculat language can roll a d8 instead as the door gives an amount of instruction on how it should be opened. Failing the Open Locks roll – PCs can enter the tower by making Four d20

STR checks to pull the door off of it's track & break its hinges. The best & most efficient way of entering the tower is to ignore this door altogether & to scale it to the open area at it's peak.

- ★ This requires 4 moderately difficult Scale Walls tests – all at d8.
- ★ If any of these checks fails – have the PC make a d12 CON check to endure hanging on.
- ★ If that fails they get a last ditch d20 CON check to avoid falling
- ★ If they fall they take d10 damage per successful Scale Walls check that they had initially made.

Beyond the front door is a vestibule where a trap has been set up to hinder unwelcome guests. A d8 Find Traps on either the front door or either of the interior doors will reveal the trap's presence – otherwise opening either of the interior doors (both unlocked) will trigger it – sword-like spikes recessed in the ground spring up – they deal 2d8 damage – a save vs. devices avoids this damage.

The vestibule beyond the main door is a disconcerting panic of sculptural reliefs & recessed doors – it's asymmetry is instantly jarring & the undifferentiated, polished blue stone floor is so reminiscent of the sea that you are instantly anxious of walking on it. Across from the front door are a set of double-doors – a mere 15 feet high they are together almost a match for the massive exterior door – to the right there is another door, also shut – all of these seem to be composed of thick clouded glass.

The reliefs depict strange asymmetrical beings – three and five and seven limbed humanoids – some with confusing multi-faced heads, some without heads at all. Whether these are realistic depictions of some ancient monstrous species or pure fantasy is unknown. All of the figures in

these reliefs seem to be somehow struggling against something far above them – the sky?

In fact the depictions show a race of aquatic people contesting with unseen surface dwellers. There is nothing to explain any of this to the PCs though.

2 - The Battleground

The door swings open and closed with a will of its own as you pass through – the door swings abruptly & forcefully making it tricky for your companions to follow you. The room beyond has no ceiling – the open tower extends above and all of the dim light in this room is provided by the sun, shining through the peak of the tower. The walls are again covered in reliefs of these strange asymmetrical beings – these though, seem to show the creatures suffering terribly and being defeated.

Entering the room is tricky for any PCs after the first. It takes a d12 DEX check to enter unharmed & only one person can enter per turn. No ranged attacks can be made through the doorway. The doorway can be forced & held open by anyone willing to endure the d8 damage that it deals when it slams to a halt.

As soon as a second PC is in the room:

The walls all suddenly begin to melt. Apparently composed of wax the reliefs drip and ooze into a puddle of wax that pools in an ugly mass and as this happens, the structure of the reliefs is revealed- for the wax sculpture hid skeletal remains, remains which grope & reach from the walls, stumbling through molten wax as they animate and attack.

This happens quickly and with little warning – unless the PCs know about the wax-walls already they will have to endure a surprise round while they arm themselves. They are attacked by 14 Skeletal Atrocities & 3 Wax Calamities.

All of these creatures will mindlessly pursue through the spinning doors – taking damage without thought.

The Ghost Albatross only intervenes in this fight if it has already been woken. A fight in this area won't wake it.

If the PCs successfully defeat these threats they will notice the stairway that spirals up around the structure's interior above them. They will also have the opportunity to search this room:

Search Result 3 – In the recesses where the skeletons were entombed there are alcoves full of grave goods. The majority of these appear to be strange pearls – flat disks of pearl with a hole through the center. There are hundreds of these. (♠ 1600)

Search Result 2 – Beyond the weird pearl-coins there are a set of 5 cestus – fist covers – made of big thorny conch shells. They are easy to use, once it's determined what they are. (♠ 800)

Search Result 1 – Hidden in the molten wax are some prodigies. Crystalline water-gems. These jewels are water that has crystalized without freezing. They are snowflake like jewels – perfectly transparent and hard as steel. There are 12 of these (♠2400)

3 - Under the Stairs

The staircase hading up th tower provides ceiling for these rooms – which are a series of oddly shaped alcoves & pantries. This was the storage area for the weird beings that previously inhabited the tower which is, it happens, the last remnant of their species – the final bastion of their kind.

Lining the walls of this room & the rooms beyond are oddly staggered & strangely placed shelves & cubbies. They're carved into the wall & in some cases appear to be sealed over with some

kind of shell or pearl rind. Searching the area under the stairs thoroughly causes the pearl rinds to rupture with a loud timpanic echo that will certainly wake the Ghost Albatross and cause it to join any ongoing battles – or to simply begin flying around the interior of the tower.

Searching this area yields an amount of loot:

Search result 3 – In the alcoves are strange writings seemingly relating to the people who once lived here, they are indecipherable by most means. The writings are all in the form of scrimshaw cones – walrus tusks which are apparently the usual medium for these folk. There are 18 of these (360 SP)

Search result 2 – Breaking open the pearl rinds reveals a melange of presered & jellied eggs. Simply handling these by making this search check causes 2d6 HP to be regenerated. D10 doses of the potion can be gotten this way. (720 SP)

Search result 3 – Concealed in the floor are yet more cubbies & shelves at strange oblique angles. Within is contained a pair of spherical copper buckets. These buckets condense water from the air & are replenished with fresh water every 3 days. Each contains 1 day's supply of water. (1300 SP)

4 - Waterlock

The doorway from area 2 slams open & closed but the doorway beyond is firmly shut as is the doorway into area 5. This area is an airlock, or waterlock more exactly. Opening the door into this room requires a d8 Open Locks check or 4 d20 STR checks – as th bronze door is quite sturdy. If the door is unlocked: ***The room beyond is interesting –there are irregular recesses in the floor – as if it were made of a very firm & rigid sponge. The walls are likewise porous – in the northwest wall***

there is another large bronze door. The two doors do not operate independently. Opening one closes the other – unless either of them have been broken – in which case the room becomes much less dangerous. Opening the door into area 5 causes the other door to slam shut & for the room to begin filling with water. It fills completely in 3 rounds after which a PC can survive for one round per successful save vs. death. On a failed save they drown unless they have some means of breathing water. Closing the door to area 5 will cause the water to drain out of the room over 3 rounds – before the other door can open. If the enry door has been broken – the room cannot completely flood – but then neither can the door to area 5 be opened.

5 - Sea Room

This area is a pressurized, water-filled chamber. Entering through the door requires either that area 4 is filled with water or that the door is tampered with – Open Locks d8 to open. Doing so causes the door to burst open – like a trap – Save Vs. Devices or take 2d8 damage. The door cannot be opened with brute strength – it would take a team of horses to pull the door open even slightly. ***The unlit chamber is completely full of fresh clear water. There is no way to see inside this room & it is extremely difficult to sense anything in the amniotic dark.*** The room had some kind of ritual significance to the people who once lived here. It is very difficult to find anything in this room except for unpleasant death. A Character can survive by holding their breath for 2 rounds before needing to begin to make death saves to survive. ***On a Search Result of 1 – There are sharp, scalloped edges around the last remant of a monstrous clam. It can be opened with a d20 STR check. Within***

lies an enormous glimmering pearl that illuminates the entire room.

If they can see in the room they see that *The walls are made of an ugly dull coral that has covered over the remnants of yet more skeletons – and while these cannot break free – they do seem to move and possess some faint consciousness.*

Breaking the door in area 4 and then opening the door into area 5 will cause the water to pour out and partly flood the entire first floor – which gives a significant advantage to the Ghost Albatross – who is roused by anything happening in this area.

6 - Where They All Finally Died

The room beyond the doorway has an open ceiling allowing light from the higher windows of the tower. The room is large & is dominated by a massive, irregularly shaped table. You recognize the form as that of an exceptionally large sea-star, now bleached & apparently dead. The chairs around the table are made, likewise, of huge dessicated sea-stars arranged into strangely contorted chairs. Sitting in each of these chairs are the skeletal remains of this place's former occupants.

It is not clear how long ago they died. There is nothing indicating what could have killed them as the room is otherwise bare (having been stripped of all other material by the Ghost Albatross). The stairway that circles the interior of the tower & which climbs to the peak begins in this room:

On the outer edge of the wall a wide stairway has its beginning – it rises up into the tower's heights with intermittent landings. Up in the shadows beyond you can make out the movement of something large – something indistinct.

7 - The First Landing

The winding stairs circle the tower 7 times – and each of the landings is on an opposite side of the tower so that there are a total of 14 of them. Each is 20 feet higher than the last. Falling off of one allows a Save Vs. Petrification to avoid falling all the way – but in any case a PC will take d6 damage per 20 feet of falling. Bearing in mind that upon the stairwell the Ghost Albatross will be constantly attacking & trying to knock anyone on the stairwell down.

8 - The Mezanine

Around the first flight of stairs there is a balcony overlooking the interior of the lower level. This platform is an ideal spot for anyone to fight all of the monsters in the tower at once. There is little here except for cover & elevation & good illumination.

9 - The Tower's Peak

The stairwell ends with a complicated hatch in the ceiling – this is a complex puzzling lock that can't be bypassed with an open locks check as it is magical in nature. There is no mechanism to the hatch – rather it dissipates into non-existence once conditions are met. The hatch has a four pointed star comprised of gold on

its surface. Each of the points has a different sensation – heat, cold, wet & dry. To open the door each of the edges has to be made to correspond to one of the elements.

Blow Air on the dry point

Hold fire on the heated point

Rub earth on the cold point

Apply water to the wet point

Once this is done the hatch vanishes for a day – allowing access to the peak of the tower.

Within the tower's top the symbols on the hatch are recapitulated on the floor. In order to activate the tower the elements must be placed in substantial quantities – a fire, a bucket of water a heavy stone or piece of metal & an empty jar or pail will do the trick. Once these are placed the Guide-Tower's interface comes online – a mechanical gear lowers from the ceiling and allows the tower to be 'rotated' In fact this is not the tower itself but a lower-dimensional facet of the tower that exists as a projection of light – appearing to be a 7 faced prism.

Moving the gear has a vertiginous effect on everyone within or outside the tower. Those experiencing the shift must save vs. Petrification or be knocked prone. Outside this movement corresponds with one of the principal locations on the map & will cause a plane of light to transect that position which in turn causes it to open. The possible positions are –
Zasimus' Cave – Earth
Vanishing Temple – Air
The Dragon's Lair – Fire
Mereid's Pool- Water

Act III – Masters of the Isle

Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever
And laugh—but smile no more.

7 – The Witch's Cave

Upon the basalt eastern slope of the mountain lies a hidden cave entry. The cave itself is open & almost in plain sight – it's by a trick of the light & perspective that it remains totally unseen except when illuminated by the Guide-Tower's rays. Searching this area is a nearly fruitless endeavor – the Search Result required to find the cave entry is 0 – so that only those with enhanced senses, such as gained through a racial ability, can even hope to find the cave even in the best of circumstances.

When observing the cave entry:

When the cave mouth is illuminated by the Guide Tower it is visible for a great distance. A jagged hole ripped into the mountainside here reveals a deep & narrow tunnel ripped out of the mountainside. The path before you descends into deep darkness.

The entry tunnel is quite long but is completely straight as it descends at a steep angle of decline down into the mountain. Going down is an easy enough task – climbing back out requires a d6 scale-walls check if a rope or other help hasn't been installed.

The Witch – If the PCs arrive uninvited the Witch stalks them through the cave. Whenever the PCs enter a new area roll a d8 – this indicates which area the

witch is in. Whenever the PCs and the Witch occupy the same area – the witch uses stealth to try and remain concealed unless the PCs tamper with any of the Witch's possessions in which case battle ensues. A d6 Hear Noise check notices that the Witch is present.

1 - The Entry Cave

The sloping chimney of stone deposits you in a hollowed out chamber, you find yourself standing in a thick patch of very fine powder a few inches deep. Before you you can just make out rock structures, holes & breaks in the volcanic stone backlit by a flickering flame just behind. The powdery floor is here and there overtaken with a carpeting of tiny yellow-glowing mushrooms. The irregular sides of the chamber spill out in various directions.

The mushrooms are not good to eat – save vs. death or be poisoned – when eating them.

2 - The First Station

Circling the obsidian column you begin descending as the cave forms into a bowl-like recess. In the middle of this hollow is a large and strangely smokeless bonfire. The fire is as tall as a man & seems to be using bales of the glowing mushrooms as fuel. The flickering flame coruscates with streaks of violet & green. It casts your shadows long into the cavern interior & lights the obsidian walls as they reflect the light

back darkly. The obsidian walls of this area are functional mirrors & anyone attempting to examine them must save vs. Spells or be subject to one the Zasmus' curses. They take 2d4 damage and are subject to a fear effect for 1 round.

The fire is an illusion of light – attempting to interact with it – it is clear that it offers no heat and only light & that it does not consume its fuel. Placing a hand or any other body part into the fire is possibly dangerous as the fire functions as a doorway to the other fires at areas 5 and 7. Depending on whether the Witch is present in the caves – a PC putting in a hand can be pulled into one of those areas to face the Witch alone. A Paralysis save prevents this happening.

3 - The Cavern Deep

The cave descends in a series of lowering chambers the total decline is more than 30 feet & while making it down is fairly easy, returning up the hill requires a d6 scale walls test.

Here the cave descends, the low roof remains the same but the floor lets out in a widening, steepening ramp.

At the bottom of the defile is the Witch's root cellar.

Piled up in mounds are dried mushrooms & tubers, roots of varying description and a few dozen clay jars.

The arrayed ingredients here are useful in spellcasting & all told provide a 400 ¤ worth of material reagents for Wizardry spells. (¤200)

The masonry jars however are traps – tampering with them causes them to burst open like puffballs – drugging everyone present with a horrific mind-poison. Save vs. Death or be afflicted with d10 Madness.

4 - The Crumbling Walls

This treacherous patch of cave is the Witch's final defense against intruders. The walls are shaky & easily crumble if manipulated causing a cave in. A fairly obvious trap - d6 Find Traps test – in the middle of the floor will cause the walls to collapse dealing 2d8 damage to everyone who fails a save vs. devices. If the witch is present in this room with the PCs – they trigger the trap automatically.

The jagged walls are crumbling here, where the weight of the mountain rests uneasily. Great cracks as thick as your forearm scar the face of the basaltic rock.

5 - The Witch's Prison

The long corridor to the south leads to a chamber which is bisected by a series of wood-plank walls. These are wedged between the floor & ceiling of the cave quite snugly – creating a wall, impenetrable to children. Behind this fence there are 4 wild children – trapped by the witch & kept here for 'safekeeping'. The Witch cares for them all somewhat indifferently and if asked, isn't quite sure why these kids are needed, just that: "Perhaps an apprentice would recommend themselves from one of these – or perhaps a hero?" The children are terrified & silent, they respond positively to other children if they are present and if they can be coaxed into speaking plead to return to Stealer.

The northern spur of this section has a deep hole carved into it – it is a privy and it doesn't smell nice at all.

The fire is an illusion. Placing a hand or any other body part into the fire is possibly dangerous as the fire functions as a doorway to the other fires at areas 2 and 7. Depending on whether the Witch is present in the caves – a PC putting in a hand can be pulled into one of those areas to face the Witch alone. A Paralysis save prevents this happening.

6 - The Mirrored Pillar

The column of stone in this area is a block of shimmering obsidian and within it swims your own image, reflected back in somnolent darkness. - anyone bringing

a light into this room is likely to see their own dark reflection in the black glass provoking a save vs. Spells. On a failed save the PC becomes Frightened and loses a finger – as they chew through it trying to stifle their terror.

Arranged in recesses all around the perimeter of this room are dozens of masks – all marked & studied, they are the remnants of the Leshen that the Witch has been examining. Notes revealing the results of these studies are encoded on the masks in the Czerwa language. A d20 INT check can be used to decipher the writing sufficiently to discern that the source of the Leshen is the island at area 10 – the Secret of Cormorant Isle. And that they have somehow supplanted & replaced the human population here.

8 - The Witch House

Here in the deep volcanic recess of the mountain there stands a true prodigy – a cottage stands among the reeds and muddy banks of a swamp. Overhead the stars & moons whirl in the sky – you've entered into another world somehow

within the mountain itself. This is not an illusion. The Witch's cottage exists in the swamps of the island but is accessed through this mountain cave. Knowing well that the Guide Tower could bring anyone to the Mountain Lair the witch hid the house in the swamp and made it accessible only through the mountain. **The lights in the house illuminate a figure on the porch, menacing and huge, gripping a massive sword – swathed in shadows and glowering. The Witch!** Assuming they've not yet encountered or defeated the witch the PCs can make an attempt to influence the NPC and try to make a good impression. The witch is neutral toward people, so long as they are here – in their place of power. Should the party attack or alienate the Witch... Then things go poorly. Alligators attack as does the Witch – this time relying upon the great Zweihander & a few specialized magical attacks. This will be a serious & very dangerous battle – but the Witch will accept surrender. If the Witch is defeated the connection between the mountain & the swamp is severed – the PCs are stranded in a random Swamp hex on the main map.

The witch's house contains all her loot:

Search result 3 – There are dozens of bottles and jars labelled and arrayed throughout the house – they all hang from copper wires in the rafters. 5x d8 Healing potions, 2x Antidotes (remove poisons), 4x Serenity Potion (removes fear/madness), 3x Speed potion (doubles initiative & movement speed for 2 rounds – unconsciousness follows for 3 subsequent rounds). (2400 SP)
Search result 2 – The Witch's sword sticks out of the ground and instead of yielding to your grasp it seems to swim through the earth. The sword is a heavy weapon that also functions as a mount.

Search result 1 – The **Yellow Book** of Curses is concealed under a floorboard

along with a pouch full of pearls & amber beads (₪3600)

Allying with the Witch results in the Witch seeking to form a pact with the party. The Witch's proposal is that the PCs go to the Dragon and offer it the pouch of pearls & amber in exchange for attacking the Leshen in their place of power. This is a good plan & will work, if the PCs can make a good enough impression on the dragon. The witch will offer half the potions as well as the **Yellow Book** in exchange for the PCs help in accomplishing this mission.

8 – The Dragon's Lair

The Dragon of Cormorant Isle is perhaps not what many PCs (especially very experienced PC's) might expect. The dragon is about the size of a horse with wings ten yards apiece. It slithers like a snake in the air & it spits fire. In behavior the dragon acts much like a particularly clever bird. It mimics speech, covets anything shiny, hunts for prey & is uninterested in companionship. Whatever species the dragon is – its advanced age are what allows it to speak at all, and it does so in a halting way. It isn't smart enough to lie, and isn't dangerous enough to stalk people who outnumber it considerably. It will fight – furiously, if cornered.

1 – The Entry

The rocky flank of the mountain has little in the way of brush or cover that isn't charred or burned away entirely so this tunnel-like hole in its side is easy to spot. The cavern is a tube in the rock with glassed over edges, fringed with jagged obsidian petals. Heat radiates from this hole in visible, shimmering waves.

Entering the tunnel is foolhardy & bold. It isn't spontaneously dangerous – but

it is extremely hot. Going into the tunnel & the chambers beyond has the adverse affect of reducing one's maximum HP by d4 for every hour spent inside – as the heat robs one's breath & overwhelms the body. If this reduction would bring a character's HP to 0 or lower they faint from heat exposure.

2 – Cavern of The Flaming Pillar

The tunnel itself is only about 20 feet long & it empties into a larger chamber that is lit by flowing magma. The red-hot stone seeps from out of the obsidian walls of the cave & a massive pillar in the middle of the large chamber seems to bleed burning rock. It is both beautiful & eminently deadly. Ahead of you lies an even hotter area, with a blazing light that you can barely dare to look at, to the right, the cavern has a spur, likewise lit with burning rock.

If the dragon hasn't been encountered elsewhere on the island it can be found here, wrapped around the burning column. It wraps itself around as well as it is able & while once it's body probably circumscribed the thing, it now just hangs about halfway along. The dragon is not shy about interacting with people in this room & it may become hostile if those entering the cave seem somehow vulnerable. Details as to how the dragon fights & how it makes use of this chamber are found in its entry.

Searching here yeilds small quantities of peculiar treasure.

Search Result 3 – Shards of obsidian can be found everywhere here – the total sum of valuable pieces is 30 & they are worth 20 ₪ each (600 ₪)
Search Result 2 – There are scores of old dragon scales & of these about a third of them are useable in some type

of craft. The most obious use is as an arrowhead – as they have the shape & size of such a thing, though they are quite light. There is enough here, also, to craft up to 3 suits of scale-armor. Individual scales are worth 3-5 ₪ depending on the quality – the total amount that may be gathered is 3d% & with an average value of 4 ₪. (600 ₪)
Search Result 1 – Two entire dragon skins from previous moults are concealed under some gravel. Various uses can be imagined but in either case the skins could be sold at a high price to any number of collectors for at least 1000 ₪ apiece (2500 ₪)

3 – Lava Incubator

The heat that was so brutal in the exterior chambers is amplified to a ridiculous level – you deem it utter folly to continue in this direction as you feel your hair begin to ignite. Should they continue: ***The heat does not give way as you proceed, but your eyes do adjust to the source- a pool of molten stone bubbles here & within you can see a clutch of steel eggs, each the size of a barrel.***

Simply being in this area causes all combustible items to burn. Wooden weapons, armor & anything made of cloth all ignite due to the impressive radiant heat. Liquids, including potions boil away to steam. Characters within this room take d6 fire damage each round and add a d6 for every item they have that is affected by the heat (a character with a wooden bow & wearing flammable clothing would take 3d6). This damage is applied each minute they spend in the room.

If the dragon is injured elsewhere – or if it seems that it will be defeated in area 2 – it retreats here, where it recovers d6 HP each minute.

The dragon eggs are exceptionally difficult to retrieve. Anyone attempting to somehow reach them will instantly die as they are roasted alive. Tricks involving magic, fire-resistance & so on can certainly work. The dragon eggs are steel & very hot to the touch. If they are kept heated for another hundred years or so they will hatch into dragons. If they are removed & cooled they can be made to hatch by being placed in a similar environment at a later time, but again, they require another century of incubation. If they are cooled & broken open they are found to contain a 'white' of molten gold & a 'yolk' that is a fist-sized jewel that is unlike any other – resembling both a ruby & an emerald. Individual eggs are worth up to 5,000 ₶ to a collector & the contents of an opened egg are worth 2,500 ₶. There are 4 eggs in the pool (average value is 10,000 ₶). Under no circumstance will the dragon allow these to be removed if it is alive to prevent it.

4 – Grave of a Brave Knight

A ten foot flow of lava lies before you & the heat off of it is incredible. You imagine you could try to leap over the flowing mass of molten rock but such a feat might easily prove fatal. Nevertheless you're tempted to attempt it given the strange statue that lies beyond. A sculpture of a knight, extremely lifelike & rendered in gleaming obsidian. He is thrusting his sword forward in a lunging strike – draped over him are several necklaces & a mound of coins lies at his feet.

Leaping the lava requires a d20 STR check. It can be reduced to a d12 if enough people get involved & attempt to help – bearing in mind that leaping back will likely be more difficult if it must be accomplished alone.

The 'statue' is actually the obsidian encased corpse of a knight that the dragon slew many centuries ago.

Searching here reveals treasure

Search Result 3 – lying in a mound are tokens & coins given the knight as offerings by the islands many generations of inhabitants. There are around 200 ₶ in coins of many mintings. Another 200 ₶ in religious trinkets have been draped over the statue – including icons & holy-symbols. (400 ₶)

Search Result 1 – The 'statue' is effectively hollow & within can be seen the armor & weapon of the deceased knight. Breaking open the statue (by dealing at least 10 points of damage with a blunt weapon) allows one to access these treasures. Along with a god deal of ash one can retrieve The Magical Sword & Shield of an Ancient Knight as well as The Mail of a Fallen Hero. These items are magical & have their own entries in the treasure section at the end. (15,000 ₶)

9 – The Mereid's Pool

Long, long ago a species of aquatic angels lived in the sea here. The last of their kind still lurks in the waters, seeking to rescue sailors who've become trapped on the cursed island. The Mereid has little need for material possessions – and little understanding of things like art or construction. Its wealth lies in stories, music & the movement of water. Because of its extreme isolation & strangeness it is very difficult to interact with or relate to – but it isn't hostile – at least not needlessly. Its pool though, is very difficult to traverse & the mereid is not good at gauging the abilities of those who it attempts to help. More people

have died under the mereid's care than have escaped the island with its help.

The whole area depicted on the map is not a cavern or cave – rather it is a region of connected pools within a densely overgrown marsh. The marsh is extremely difficult to navigate & full of wandering monsters & dangerous terrain. The locations shown are quite a bit easier to navigate & characters can walk (at the edges) or swim through these areas with greater ease. Attempting to traverse the swamp toward what appears to be a derelict boat will result in being swept to area 1.

1 – A Torrent

As you attempt to cross the dense foliage you make a misstep & fall into the quickly flowing waters. Rather than be drug under you are carried forth by an uncanny current. This torrent pushes you toward an imposing stone column, overgrown with vines & hung with ferns.

Characters who are being swept along must Save vs. Devices. On a failed save they are carried to area 4. On a successful save they manage to grab onto the vine-covered column & are able to get the lay of the land. The column can be climbed & the area surveyed with a d10 Scale Walls check.

2 – The Mereid's Bath

Here the waters are still but clear & beautiful. In the surface of this lagoon you can see your reflection flawlessly. It's rather a bit more beautiful than you expected. You find that you're having a hard time looking away.

Characters here must Save vs. Spells. If they succeed their WIS score is improved by 1 to a maximum of 18. If

they fail their CHA score increases by d4, but if this would increase it beyond 18 they become trapped, immobile & unable to look away from their reflection. They also suffer a d10 maddened effect. If they are taken away forcibly they will do everything they can to return & will feel a terrible longing to revisit this place for the rest of their lives. They suffer a d10 maddened effect that is permanent.

The water here is normal, has no special effects when removed & there is no treasure to be found. Searching the area after making the save provokes a second required save.

3 – The Mermaid's Lair

The overgrown edges of this pool fringe the water with many vines & tendrils. The pool is covered over in a layer of slime. From this mat of slime & debris rises a creature both terrible & beautiful with half a dozen wings & a pair of shapely arms, this angel has a snake's tail for legs & it is upon this tail that it rises from the waters.

The Mermaid is not aggressive but will certainly fight if provoked. Mostly it seeks to help – but it cannot speak any language known to the PCs & its gestures are difficult to understand. It also can't understand drowning & will lead characters into danger without thinking.

4 – A Mass Grave

The flowing torrent ends here in a calm pool. The deep waters here are filled with bodies, wrecks & debris, what's more the water is clear enough that you can see beneath you the mouldering corpses of what must be thousands of people. They writhe & move down in the depths & bubbling up to the surface is a

horrific song that they all bellow in unison.

The corpses aren't exactly dangerous – only characters swimming down to attempt to loot them face any difficulty. Those that do so must save Vs. Devices each turn that they spend diving & on a failed save they are held under by the embracing arms of the greedy dead. Escape is difficult, requiring a d20 STR check followed by a successful Save vs. Devices.

Treasure

Despite the appearance of material wealth the bodies here have very little. A bit of jewelry isn't corroded & useless, but virtually everything else is rusted beyond use.

Search Result 1 – Taking their lives in their hands by searching for treasure here yields some loot. 20 rings & 10 necklaces worth an average of 15\$ apiece & a pair of coin-purses – one with 50\$ & one with 120\$. (620\$)

5 – The Only Hope

Floating in the middle of this large, still pool is a boat. An open longboat with an unsailed mast. At a glance it seems to be seaworthy.

The boat is capable of carrying up to 30 characters off of the island, though it can't easily leave the marsh without the Mermaid's aid. She will aid any characters who wish to leave so long as they have accomplished something for her – she wishes for the Leshen & the Hay Snake to be destroyed. If characters get into the ship & attempt to sail it away without encountering the Mermaid, she appears & uses her watery powers to guide the ship out of the marsh & through deadly rocks – but then forces the ship around the island to beach upon the isle at area 10 & will

not allow the boat to be sailed away unless the Haysnake is defeated.

6 – A Terrifying Portal

A flow of water here pulls you forward. The rush of waters is soon intense enough to pull you from your feet. (save vs. Devices of fall & be drug into the portal). ***The rushing waters lead to a lagoon of churning water deep in the marsh. Characters entering the pool one way or another: The pool is churning with energy & it pulls you down – further & further into its depths so deep that you feel the pressure of the water crushing the remaining air from your lungs, battered by debris the flowing current seems to be alive, hateful & bent on killing you utterly. You are nearly pulverized by the flood and then... You find yourself lying in a puddle, apparently at the top of a high tower.***

The portal is terrifying – people who go through it must save vs. Spells or suffer a d4 maddened effect. The tower is the Guide Tower (area 6 on the map) and characters have emerged at its peak. If they have not been here already they must battle their way through (or solve the puzzle of the tower's tricks) to escape.

10 – The Secret of Cormorant Island

Seen from the mainland: ***Marching through the rainy autumnal forest you can see the waves lashing at a spit of land out in the sea – a barrier island crowned with golden-leaved forests. From out of the canopy rise menhirs – big slabs of basaltic rock arranged in a circular pattern. The arrangement defies easy explanation as it's both immense & inconvenient. To get to the island you estimate you'd need a good half hour of hard swimming through***

rough seas. Getting there is indeed difficult. It requires a d12 CON test if the PC is disrobed and 2 d20 CON tests if they carry up to ten pieces of gear. For every piece past ten add another d20 CON test. Two sequentially failed tests indicate that the character is drowning – they must save vs. death or lose half of their remaining HP – they do this until they succeed at the save and then at the CON test in sequence. PCs can use a raft or logs to float allowing them to make STR checks instead of CON. - Up close: ***The island is rocky and a furrowed path climbs up its side in a crevasse of stone & tree roots, it's difficult going but you can reach the island's top without too much difficulty. Once there, the place takes on a new & sinister demeanor, you're not quite certain you should have come here. The path you've taken leads up & into the interior of a series of nested henges, a broken stone theater. At the edges of your vision you can just make out the moving shapes, the restless motions of this place's revelers & denizens.***

Here the party has stumbled upon the court of the Leshen. These plant-creatures are a stranded varietal of

plant that have developed a malignant sentience. They swim in the earth & replace people with their own changeling offspring. It's a peculiar puzzle & here in their place of power they can be defeated utterly – by battling successfully against their god **The Hay Snake.**

Encounters here are intentionally difficult & lethal - aside from the leshen & the hay-snake there are numerous physical hazards – including slipping into the ocean, being pinned or crushed under falling menhirs & being struck by lightning. Battles here are climactic & dangerous – the wind whips through the air & the silent & horrific leshens prowl in the haunted dark.

Treasure:

It isn't difficult to search here – requiring only a result of 3 or less in order to discover all that's been hidden in the cave.

On a search roll of 4+ - nothing is found at all.

On a search roll of 3 – The PCs find two sturdy sea chests full of coins, textiles, spices & incense. (1790 ₪ in coin –

large bolts of silk & cotton worth 500 ₪, five pouches of spice worth 40 ₪ & two large incense cones worth 100 ₪.

On a search roll of 2 – All of the above plus a niche cut into the stone where several earthen jars are stashed all full of a variety of medicines & potions. They comprise: 4 Healing elixirs that provide d8 HP when used – on a roll of a 1 they dispense 8 HP but are used up. 2 Regenerative Salve – Causes a lost limb to regenerate over the course of 1d6 days- the salve is consumed by one use. 3d6 Potions of Never-Drowning – which cause the imbiber to grow functioning gills & to make a save vs. Paralysis or become permanently aquatic over the course of d4 years' time as their lungs atrophy. Combined value of all these is 4,000 ₪

On a search roll of 1 – All of the above plus a wooden pommel stuck into the earth – it is the **6th Relic - Blade The Knife of Knayute The Bird Tamer** – a magical knife, which, when withdrawn from the stone by a mortal hand, begins to bond with its wielder. This relic is detailed in the appendix of this book.



Background for the Referee

If you wish to run this adventure you should read through the descriptions of the various scenes & encounters once or twice.

This adventure takes place entirely on Cormorant Isle- a remote volcanic island that can be placed anywhere in a campaign that has an ocean. Cormorant Isle is a locus for the elemental forces of the Hermene Qlphth – the elemental hells. These forces are recently awakened & causing quite a stir. In the midst of these forces are two magical rivals – both caught up in trying to master these forces. Zasmus the Witch has been haunting the isle & is trying to flush out Count Gygis – the leader of a religious cult that operates in secret on the isle.

Into this mix come the Capra knights & the Player Characters. Kostkosa, leader of the knights has led his crew to the isle in a race against a rival knighthood to take control over the isle's castle. The Capra knights are on hand to make a name for themselves & to take vengeance upon Count Gygis for kidnapping Kostkosa's sister. When they discover that the people of the island have vanished & that their former base on the island has been cursed they sensibly chose to blame Gygis. In the meantime the actual perpetrators of the kidnappings are Leshen – elemental plant monsters that have awakened & who are trying to awaken their elemental god – the Hay Snake – which may destroy the world, given the time & opportunity.

The theme of the adventure is autumn & specifically Halloween – the island's children have evaded the fate of their parents by wearing masks & hiding out in the darkness. The witch Zasmus has the archetypal witch look and is using her haunting magic to scare off anyone who tries to stay on the island. The Knight Kostkosa & the noble Count Gygis are neither what they seem – they're both putting on a show of being highborn leaders but neither is truly what they seem. Of course the masked Leshen – who pose as humans are masquerading as well – albeit somewhat unintentionally.

Right off the bat you might notice that this adventure has many parts & these don't seem immediately related. This is intentional. The adventure as it is presented is intended to progress in a generalized sequence as indicated by the numbered areas. 1- Characters arrive on the island. 2- Characters meet & join with the group of knights. 3 – Characters venture to the haunted house & encounter the witch. 4 – Characters explore the island. 5 – Characters subdue the major threats of the island. This last part is best performed if followed in a specific sequence.

But this isn't the only way that this adventure can be run. A simple & straightforward modification would include the knights, the haunted house & the leshens of the island. One could forgo the haunted castle & simply focus on the elemental focal points on the isle – the guide tower, the dragon's lair & the mermaid's marsh as well as the Leshen's henge. What's best is to leave these decisions to the players & to give them the option to explore the island & make the choices for themselves.

While there aren't a wide array of monsters on the island there are more than a few creatures that could be considered Boss-Monsters. These are difficult to face & the adventure itself is fairly hard for any group, a large group of adventurers will have better results & a small group will need to be considerably skilled to survive. Your players should have total levels or hit dice between 14-20.

Captain Zaba

Zejeja

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Professional,
Captain, Helpful,
Sailing

Dour & glowering, the man's wide expressive mouth is frequently twisted into a frown, though this belies his amusing deadpan humor.

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

HP



10

AC



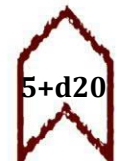
13

Hit Die



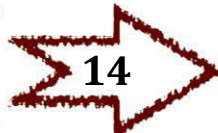
2d8

Initiative



5+d20

Movement



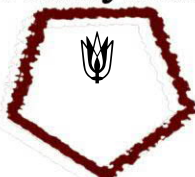
14

To-Hit



+3

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +2;

Preferences: The captain likes to make **Bargains** & is highly resistant to **Coercion**. He seeks a path forward for everyone together.

Personal Quality: Deadpan Humor;

Positive Reaction: "It's uncommon that I encounter someone with such... Verve, such grace.";

Negative Reaction: "Have you no dignity? You are like a dog.";

Goals & Attitudes: His ambition at the moment is to merely survive.

Phys / Ment: 12 / 14

Traits: Smart & a little creaky but not weak. If challenged he tries to outwit someone rather than overwhelm them physically. He doesn't try to run but rather tries to sneak ahead of the race, so to speak.

+3 Saber 1d8

His strong preference is to duel with sabers if pressed into a fight. He'll try to push a challenge of honor & will duel to the death.

The captain is a highly superstitious person but also quite private & secretive about this. He prays to the ocean god in private.

Excellent Sailor & owner of the ship Impervious. Swims

Charming & magnificent hat, plain, well-used saber, Whimsical belt buckle, Spyglass, Astrolabe, Compass



Imperivious

Officers

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Expert, Officer,
Helpful, Sailing

Of the 3 officers - one is tall & one
is short & one is fat & one is
cheerful & one is sorrowful.

Number Appearing

3

Description

HP



AC



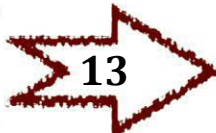
Hit Die



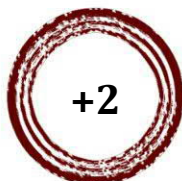
Initiative



Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +2;

Preferences: Officers are weak to any **Coercion** or **Deciet** checks that point back to their secret backgrounds - they don't like being known.

Personal Quality: Genuine kindness;

Positive Reaction: "Nice to meet you, welcome to our ship."

Negative Reaction: "What's wrong with you." "How did you get this way?"

Goals & Attitudes: At this moment, merely survival

Phys / Ment: 12 / 12

Traits: All around average with a bit better than ordinary abilities aboard ship. They like playing games of chance & gambling.

+2 Saber 1d8

They aren't capable duelists & defer to the captain, but will answer if sufficiently challenged.

These officers all pray to a variety of gods & they are in a frequent argument over which oceanic deity is the best. Some of these seem to be made up.

Sails. Swims. Endures most weather

Crude but effective sabers, ragged uniforms



Impervious

Crew

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Follower, Helpful,
Sailing

Haggard men who've been lost at sea for far too long, they are feeble looking & desperate.

Number Appearing

2d6

Description

HP



3

AC



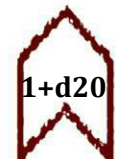
11

Hit Die



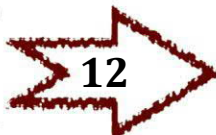
1d6

Initiative



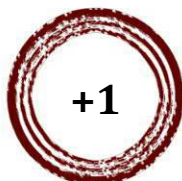
1+d20

Movement



12

To-Hit



+1

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +1; Preferences: Crew Members follow orders in the form of **Coerce** type statements & they follow them without difficulty -they're very suspicious of any attempts to **Flatter**.



Personal Quality: Expectations of competence;

Positive Reaction: "Ah, you're welcome at the table, have a drink!";

Negative Reaction: "You're filthy you are, you're garbage.";

Goals & Attitudes: Simple, hard working sailors, they are superstitious, fear the opposite gender



Phys / Ment: 12 / 8

Traits: Degenerate gamblers to the last, they also busy themselves with climbing races and balance-based dares on the bow of the ship.



+1 Saber 1d8



They aren't capable duelists & defer to the officers.



The crew is religious, superstitious & overt about all of it.



Sails. Swims. Endures most weather



Rusty sabers, ragged clothes



Sir Kostkosa

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Rival, Warrior,
Knight, Armored,
Heroic

The Knight is a nobleman & looks
& acts like one, he is well
proportioned, well dressed &
effortlessly assertive. His left &
right eyes are different colors.

Description

Number Appearing

Unique

HP



30

AC



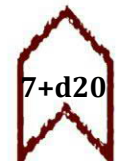
16

Hit Die



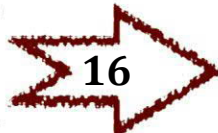
5d8

Initiative



7+d20

Movement



16

To-Hit



+7

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: -4

Preferences: **Flattery** works wonderfully on him. He's secretly cowardly & **Coerce** checks (if they're plausible) will also work. He is cunning though & sees through **Deceit**. He simply won't **Bargain** at all with anyone of a lower station.

Personal Quality: Authentically curious about other people;

Positive Reaction: "There's a small fortune in it for you if you're available to help me.";

Negative Reaction: "Defenseless curs. I'll take what you have. Surrender at once.";

Goals & Attitudes: He's here for the goats, his religion is very unfortunate & his sister has run off - leaving him in a bad situation politically. He thinks he hates Gygis

Phys / Ment: 15 / 15

Traits: If challenged physically he prefers to grapple & he is quite able as a grappler. He'll use his greater strength & cunning to hold someone down & will often wrestle to the death.

+7 Spear d10

+7 Longbow d8

+7 Brawling d6

He's an avid duelist & will prefer a long-form tournament style contest but will settle for any type of duel. His go-to technique is to use his impressive physique & will frequently wrestle others to death.

Kostkosa is spiritually quite underdeveloped. His interest in religions purely derives from his conformist ways.

Spear & Shield - The knight pounds his spear on his shield & recovers d10 HP;

Trip - everyone around him save vs. paralysis or falls prone.

Behead - Targets that the Knight has brawled with must save vs. death or have their heads cut off

Dash Apart - A target failing their save vs. Paralysis is thrown d6 feet - taking a point of damage for each foot

Giant-Ram mounts

Tassled Spear, Fancy Sword, Heavy Shield, Plate Armor, Goat Harness, Collection of handkerchiefs & ribbons, locket with engraved image of his sister & parents



Capra Squires

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Expert, Knight,
Armored

The squires dress & act in a peculiar, outmoded way - they use old-timey weapons & armor & speak with an affected gentility

Number Appearing

4d6

Description

HP



6

AC



12

Hit Die



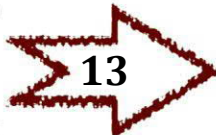
1d8

Initiative



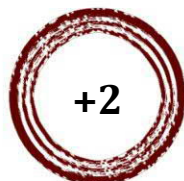
3+d20

Movement



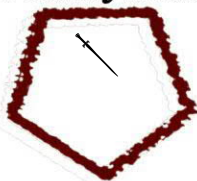
13

To-Hit



+2

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: -4

Preferences: **Flattery** works on them. They're not able to **Bargain**, but they absolutely refuse to be intimidated & **Coerce** fails if used against a group of them.

Personal Quality: Effusive with blandishments

Positive Reaction: "You'd do well among us, you've got the right qualities."

Negative Reaction: "Pitiful, wretched, ugly, misshapen. You're a travesty of a living being."

Goals & Attitudes: The squires want to dominate others for religious reasons, they hate & especially fear witches.

Phys / Ment: 13 / 13

Traits: Fleet of foot but sensible enough to always stay a step behind their leader, they're not weak & not dumb but they're hardly exceptional

+2 Spear 1d8

While not incapable, they prefer to defer to their leader. These squires all have gallant ideals & will duel - so long as their knight is not on hand to do it for them.

The squires are quite devout, but their devotion is to Kostkosa & to their knightly ideals of valor & gallantry.

Spear & Shield - The squire pounds his spear on his shield & recovers d10 HP

Giant-Ram mounts

Fine but plain swords & shields, goat-horn helmets, heavy mail, goat harnesses



Count Bijel

Galeb

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Rival, Sneaky,
Trickster,
Charlatan, Cultist

The Count has a haunting, almost alien presence. He is very large and dark. His features are strangely out of synch & his gaze is intense.

Number Appearing

Unique

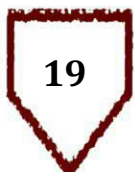
Description

HP



36

AC



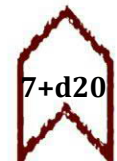
19

Hit Die



6d8

Initiative



7+d20

Movement



17

To-Hit



+7

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: -4;

Preferences: He's quite credulous so **Deceit** is the most clever way to get him to do anything. He doesn't care for flattery & is at the end of his rope so he's not afraid of **Coercion**.



Personal Quality: Interesting & Entertaining;

Positive Reaction: "You are welcome to my home and my island.";

Negative Reaction: "You'll certainly be locked up for your crimes."

Goals & Attitudes: A false noble - also a heretical cult leader, He just wants to be left alone.



Phys / Ment: 12 / 15

Traits: Extremely clever, the count is playing chess against everyone else playing checkers. He will try to engage those who combat him in tests of wits - principally in games of strategy or trivia.



+7 Dagger 1d6 + poison



In pure contests the Count's preference is to get into a **Staring Contest**. This is a test of nerves & will which he excels at. He'll attempt to duel anyone with this type of contest. For every card he draws, the Count decreases the saving throw roll for his Enchant & Embrace powers by +1 against all who observe the duel.



Spiritually, the count is intense & experienced. He will attempt to lead those who allow him to on a journey of spiritual awakening, in which those under his thrall may traverse & experience the **Heremene Qlpth** - the hell of 4 elements, a place he is drawn to.



Enchant - Save vs. Spells or lose your next turn

Embrace - Save vs. Spells or be charmed & friendly with the Count;



Occasional access to teleportation



Ornate silver knife, 5 vials of poison, luxurious black robes, ten gaudy gold rings



Gygis Templars

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Expert, Knight, Cultist

Men & women in heavy black-painted mail. They have a fanatical look in their eyes.

Number Appearing

d6

Description

HP



4

AC



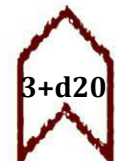
12

Hit Die



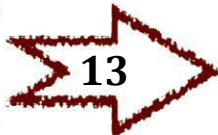
1d8

Initiative



3+d20

Movement



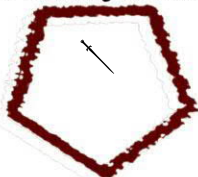
13

To-Hit



+2

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +1

Preferences: Easily drawn in by **Deceit** these cultists are suckers. They're pretty fearless though & **Coercion** doesn't work on them too well.

Personal Quality: Dutifully helpful

Positive Reaction: "Have you heard the words of the prophets? They tell of the plan for your life.";

Negative Reaction: "Our faith is beyond you, you lack the wisdom to experience divinity"Goals & Attitudes:

Desperation has left them all in a grim panic, they are certain death is near & wish to die gloriously

Phys / Ment: 13 / 13

Traits: Just average all around, they don't especially excel at anything.

+2 Sword 1d8

The templars make a fuss about dueling in a classic style, with seconds & judges. They duel to the blood & rarely to the death.

The cultist-followers of the Count are spiritually awakened to the different hells but they cannot achieve awareness of them without the count's aid. They work with him whenever he attempts an astral-body séance.

Giant-Ram mounts

Old fashioned broadsword, heavy kite shield, heavy mail, prayer beads



The Count's Staff

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Follower, Cultist

Mask wearing people, they are attired in simple but refined robes.

Number Appearing

3d6

Description

HP



2

AC



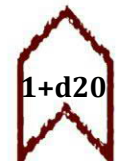
11

Hit Die



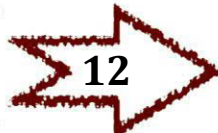
1d6

Initiative



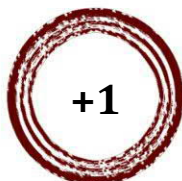
1+d20

Movement



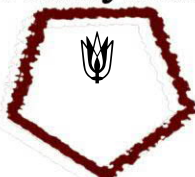
12

To-Hit



+1

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +2

references: **Coercion** is the main way to interact with them. They'll follow when they're commanded.

Personal Quality: Quick with kind words;

Positive Reaction: "What's been going on with you? Are you okay?";

Negative Reaction: "You would do that, someone like you.";

Goals & Attitudes: They exist in a strange & petty hierarchy in which they all want to rise & to diminish others.

Phys / Ment: 10 / 8

Traits: Not at all clever & poorly educated, they're reasonably competent to perform menial tasks

+1 hand tools 1d6

These simple servants prefer to avoid all confrontation & won't duel anyone. They may get into a matchup with someone to determine something esoteric - like who's the most polite or deferential to the count.

The cultist-followers of the Count are spiritually awakened to the different hells but they cannot achieve awareness of them without the count's aid. They work with him whenever he attempts an astral-body séance.

;;;

Their worship causes the regions they operate in to become sanctified.

Prayer beads, Red robes



Zasimus the Witch

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Villain, Magical, Flying, Witch, Mad

A very tall woman in a shapeless black dress with a tall pointed hat, she has a sword that's longer than she is tall.

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

HP



40

AC



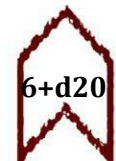
16

Hit Die



8d8

Initiative



6+d20

Movement



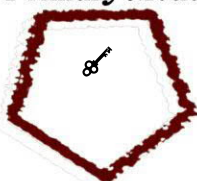
17

To-Hit



+6

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: -6

Preferences: Socially inept, the mad witch is hopeful of striking a **Bargain**. Attempts to **Coerce** her usually drive her straight to an attack. She can be reasoned with & will listen to **Flattery** but is confused by it. She sees through **Deceptions**.

Personal Quality: Conspicuously Brave

Positive Reaction: "Let me tell you all about this island."

Negative Reaction: "Die!"

Goals & Attitudes: Zasimus wants the Leshen threat destroyed, the Capra to leave & the dragon to be calm. Above all else the Witch wants to learn the Hermene secrets of Pritzak Dohh.

Phys / Ment: 10 / 16

Traits: What she lacks in physical force she makes up for in bluster. She'll try to badger people into making mistakes if they ever get in contest with her.

The Yellow Book of Curses. She casts 10 levels of spells from this book each day. She also has access to ritual casting & can cast Yellow Book spells remotely on those from whom she has mystical links e.g.: hair, nails, blood.

+7 Zweihander - d12

+7 Wicked Bat - d6 The witch's familiar swoops down & attacks, allowing the witch to attack simultaneously

Zassimus' dueling strategy is nonexistent. She's unaware of any conventions but in a challenge of this sort she'll go straight to a magical **Witch Fire**. This is a ball of fire she produces which gets bigger and bigger until someone strikes first. The ball could easily grow to a size that would cause her to suffer its burning damage as well. It deals d4 for each card drawn in the duel by both her & the opponent.

The witch's spiritual power is profoundly weakened by her madness. She attempts Vision-Journeys into the **Hermene Qlph** but fails without more expert guidance. Her spiritual journey is not mirrored by the island the way it is for others - instead she is drawn into the **Thanot Qlph** - the hell of death which is difficult to escape.

Local Effects: Initiative 10 - **Her Uncanny Cackle** - beings within the rang must save vs. Spells or suffer a d4 fear effect. Initiative 1 - **She Vanishes** - she becomes invisible & leaves the room, if able.

Flies (upon her sword)

Huge ancient sword, rugged cassock, pointed hat, handmade wooden totems & rope 'jewelry'



Zasimus' Bat

Familiar

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Animal, Magical,
Pet, Familiar

An espeically ugly pig-nosed bat
that's also notably large for its
kind.

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

HP



16

AC



15

Hit Die



4d6

Initiative



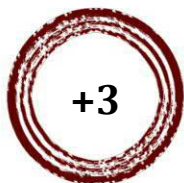
2+d20

Movement



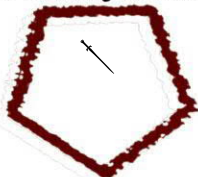
15

To-Hit



+3

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: -8;

Preferences: **Bargaining** by offering food is the only thing that works. Everything else is either not understood or regarded as a danger to flee from.

Personal Quality: Leaves 'presents

Positive Reaction: "Skree."

Negative Reaction: Bites;

Goals & Attitudes: The bat is an obedient creature, it's searching & spying on Zasimus' behalf.

Phys / Ment: 8 / 10

Traits: It's tougher than it looks and smarter than it has any right to be - but it's still no match for a capable person. Evasion - The bat can make a stat check to avoid all damage if it is fleeing

+3 Bite d6

-2 Drop d12 - The bat drops a random item from high up on a target from a great distance

The bat's duels are reserved for other animals, it can't be drawn into single combat by anything besides another animal.

The bat's entire existence is a spirit-journey of love & devotion to Zassimus.

Flies

A single silver coin



Stealer

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Expert, Sneaky,
Child, Heroic

Stealer is a culture hero among the cormorant island children. A skinny, underfed orphan

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

HP



AC



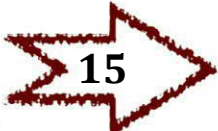
Hit Die



Initiative



Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +2;

Preferences: **Coercion** is all the children really understand, they can be made to obey with adult-voiced commands. They believe even outlandish lies so **Deception** works but often not well. They don't understand **Bargaining** well enough to make a reasonable deal & they're accustomed to **Flattery** and it doesn't change their views.

Personal Quality: Share & share alike;

Positive Reaction: "Lemme show you something neat"

Negative Reaction: Silently attacks;

Goals & Attitudes: Stealer just wants to survive and to keep the other kids alive as long as possible.

Phys / Ment: 8 / 12

Traits: He's just a little kid, a clever & charming one but still...



+5 Sling - d6+1 - Stealer is a dead shot & somewhat merciless in the use of the Sling

Stealer, if pushed to defend the other kids will try to challenge antagonists into a Hunt in which he tries to get them to pursue him, instead of the other kids. For every card drawn he moves his speed into the woods.

Stealer hasn't had any spiritual awakeneng's per-se, but the sudden loss of all parents on the isle is profoundly affecting. The **Premature Adulthood** he is facing is a serious quest that has no obvious resolution.

Boo! - Stealer can come out and surprise the unwary with a pretty effective jump scare - Save vs. Petrification or be forced to move at full distance away from Stealer on your next turn. ; ; ;

Moves quickly using shortcuts & hides excellently.

Rocks, twigs a sling & some scraps of food

The Wild Children

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

NPC

Tags

Sneaky, Pack,
Child, Follower

Children on cormorant Isle learned that the Leshen of the isle do not replace those who wear masks. They've been wearing their masks assiduously for

Descript

Number Appearing

4d6

HP



2

AC



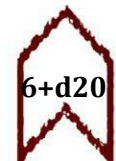
18

Hit Die



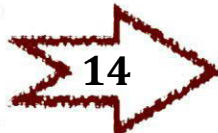
1d6

Initiative



6+d20

Movement



14

To-Hit



+4

Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +2;

Preferences: **Coercion** is all the children really understand, they can be made to obey with adult-voiced commands. They believe even outlandish lies so **Deception** works but often not well. They don't understand **Bargaining** well enough to make a reasonable deal & they're accustomed to **Flattery** and it doesn't change their views.

Personal Quality: Share & share alike

Positive Reaction: "There isn't much but you can have some"

Negative Reaction: Attacking from hiding

Goals & Attitudes: The kids want to live another day.

Phys / Ment: 8 / 8

Traits: Little kids, capable & intrepid since they've been forced to be but still just little kids.

+4 Slings - d6 - The wild children hold back & use their slings to attack, they're deadeyed shots with slings.

They will defer to Stealer if able, but will also engage in the Hunt if forced to single combat. They disperse & one among them may be chased.

Isolated, lost & afraid, the children have poor spirits that need support.

Chilling Antic - The spooky children in their sailcloth masks dash & sneak through the nearby woods - scaring everyone. Save Vs. Paralysis or roll a fear effect for 1 turn

Moves quickly using shortcuts & hides excellently.

Rocks, twigs a sling & some scraps of food



The Dragon of the Isle

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Ecological /

Tags

Dragon, Fire, Lair, Old, Flying

A heavy scaled serpent with a lion-like head. The dragon is blazing red in color & heat washes over it in waves. It corkscrews through the sky, flying without wings.

Number Appearing

Unique

HP



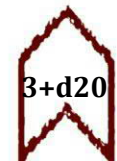
AC



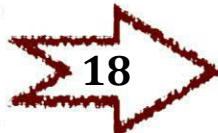
Hit Die



Initiative



Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



Modifiers to Checks: +0;

Preferences: **Bargaining** in the form of offering jewels will cause the beast to halt its attacks, but it is not easily won over.

Chirps & speaks much like bird that can mimic speech. It spits fire & writhes furiously when it isn't sleeping or idle. Once it had an intellect but this has faded.

Phys / Ment: 16 / 6

Traits: A fiery coiled monster it is powerful but dull witted & losing its mind.

+6 Snap Up - d12 - The dragon snaps up its prey in its jaws. If the dragon hits with this attack it can forgo making this attack on its next turn to attempt to eat the same target - dealing the d12 damage without rolling

+6 Whipping Tail - d12 - This is the dragon's favored melee attack - it has considerable range. i

The dragon has faced many lone & brave warriors who have attempted to defeat it. None have succeeded. The Dragon's dueling strategy is to merely Breathe Fire in a continuous stream over its opponent. This deals a d6 per card drawn - as it is drawn.

The Dragon has an innate name: **Kantall Yaga**. Knowing it by seeking it through the other planes of fire & knowledge can grant significant advantage over it. For those who use its name - it reduces all the attack & damage rolls performs by -2.

Drop - The dragon hunts this way - by dropping its prey from a great height. They take d10 damage per 20' dropped.;

Spit Fire - The dragon spit a stream of fire that fans out into a billowing cloud. It deals 4d8 points of damage & has modest range

Local Effects: Initiative 1 - **Healing Fire:** Recovers 2d6 HP from the heat of its cavern. Initiative 10 - **Burning Rock:** causes magmatic eruptions, 20% for a character to be near to the magma. Save vs. Devices or take 3d10 fire damage. Initiative 20 - **Clouds of Smoke**, Smoke engulfs the cavern giving all creatures within +2 AC but -5 to move speed. Flies. Healed by fire rather than harmed.



Pritzak Dohh

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Legendary

Tags

Ghost, Magical, Villain,
Elemental, Hermene,
Evil

The Ghost of Pritzak Dohh appears as a gloomy spectre in grave-clothes, but with flame & ice & wind & rocks swirling all about him.

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

HP



19

AC



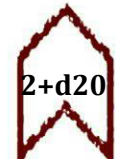
18

Hit Die



8d6

Initiative



2+d20

Movement



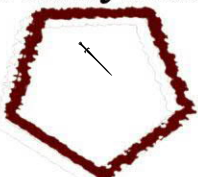
14

To-Hit



+3

Primary Mode



Truly a villain, he wishes for destruction for those who've imprisoned him in the deathly netherworld but cannot blame the true culprit (himself). He simply wishes to do harm to others.

Phys / Ment: 14 / 16 Traits: Ethereal & ghostly, it can manifest with the force of any of the 4 elements, becoming a spectre of fire, a statue of stone, a mist or a watery being.

Six Color Metamorphosis - The ghost can cast 10 levels per day from this book.

+3 Palorous Hand - d6 - The ghost strokes your hair with false affection, chilling you to the bone. Possession - Pritzak Dohh can inhabit the body of a living person for a round. In its place of power the ghost always makes this attack on initiative turn 30. Save Vs. Spells or Pritzak Dohh determines all of your actions this round. +3 Dolorous Affections d8 - The ghost reaches into your body and strokes your

The Ghost Wizard will duel mystically with other magical characters. This entails the use of Pure Magical Will. The Ghost stakes a quantity of its daily spell allocations against another character's similar stake. For every card drawn in the duel each character loses the use of a spell level for the day. If they have no spell levels to wager each card instead reduces INT by 1.

Encounters with Pritzak Dohh in the spirit world are intensely dangerous. Vivid & powerful in the netherworld between worlds, his specter looms near to bodies & seeks to possess them. Those who become lost in the spirit lands beyond the world forsake their bodies to him.

Possession - Pritzak Dohh can inhabit the body of a living person for a round. In its place of power the ghost always makes this attack on initiative turn 30. Save Vs. Spells or Pritzak Dohh determines all of your actions this round.; Hermene Eruption -

Flight. Specter, unimpeded by doors or other objects. Can't leave the temple.

Cormorant Island Leshen Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Sneaky, Plant,
Double, Insidious

At first glance this is a strangely attired person - wearing a long gown that seems to be made of birchbark & wearing a peculiar clay mask.

Number Appearing

4d6

Description

HP



12

AC



22

Hit Die



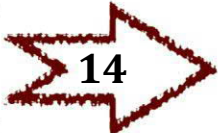
3d6

Initiative



0+d20

Movement



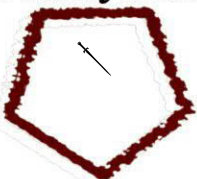
14

To-Hit



+4

Primary Mode



Seemingly masked people, they are actually plants that are involved in a horrific conspiracy to end the world.

Phys / Ment: 14 / 6 Traits: Physically tough, even woody - fibrous. It is virtually incapable of any mental process beyond its weird instinctive drives.

+4 Thorns - d8 - The Leshen whips with it's thorny appendage.

A duel with the Leshen involves a test of personality as an individual Leshen reveals its face which resembles the person it looks upon. This is a CHA based duel in which the weak minded find themselves seriously disadvantaged. upon losing a duel a character will sleep for a number of weeks equal to the number of cards drawn.

As a group the Leshen can summon forth the Hay Snake but only in their place of power. The summoning of the snake is a ritualistic effort to end the world - as the snake, when left to grow on its own, will grow large enough to constrict the world.

Replace - The Leshen is very good at posing as another person, so long as its face can't be seen. Those who peer at its uncovered face must save vs. Petrification or become stunned for a round - a the Leshen's face is always that of its observer.; ; ;

Can bury themselves underground and remain buried for decades

Red Cloud

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Ecological

Tags

Animal, Swarm,
Bug

A bulbous mass of red-carapaced
beetles - each as big as your fist.
The whole swarm has the
appearance of a roiling red cloud.

Number Appearing

1d6

Description

HP



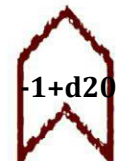
AC



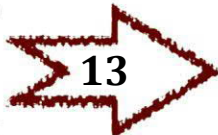
Hit Die



Initiative



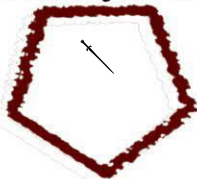
Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



A swarm of very large ladybugs that makes a terrific racket. When they fly the noise that they make is particularly displeasing.

Phys / Ment: 12 / 6

Traits: Masses of fist-sized ladybugs that clump together. Their shell patterns have a vague resemblance to a face & when they mass together they resemble a clustered horde of jack-o-lanterns.

+3 Swarm - d10 - The Red-Cloud descends on its target. The bugs don't actually attack people or even feed on animals. Rather the damage dealt is all the result of the tremendous weight of all the creatures crushing & suffocating their target.

Concievably, the red cloud could be dueled by anther swarm, or by a large & hungry insectivore.

Deafen - Those in the vicinity of the Red Cloud must save vs. Devices or be unable to hear anything for the duration of the encounter as the grinding/chittering sound of hundreds of huge beetles is overwhelming. Rolling a 1 or 2 on this save results in permanent deafness.

Flight

The shells of individuals are sometimes used to make hats or masks - as they are roughly the size of a

Autumnal Hay

Snake

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Giant, Plant,
Automaton,
Villain, Elemental

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

The Hay snake is an animate cylinder comprised of hay bales that's easily 50 feet long. It moves in a halting, sinuous fashion that's upsetting to see.

HP



AC



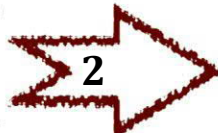
Hit Die



Initiative



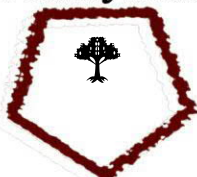
Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



It is like a gigantic serpent that writhes & menaces. It's manner is much like a coiling cobra & a sidewinding rattlesnake.

Phys / Ment: 18 / 8 Traits: Impossibly large & magically potent. It is a hundred foot long accumulation of baled hay & straw. The creature grows seasonally & could go on to envelop the earth.

+4 Constrict - d8 The Hay Snake quickly encircles its prey. Those encircled must save vs. Petrification or remain constricted. The Hay Snake can constrict up to 5 people at once.

+5 Smash - d10 - The Hay Snake has no face or mouth to bite with, but it does use its head & tail as bludgeons - it can use this attack twice per turn.

Duels against the Hay Snake are decidedly bad ideas. It is a profoundly gifted combatant. In a duel it's technique is to Constrict. This is a challenge whereby it attempts to crush a target while they try to rip it apart while being wrapped up in its coils.

Crush - Constricted targets take d8 damage. The Hay Snake performs this action for free on all of its turns

Local Effects: Initiative 1 - **Collapses the hillside**, reducing the map by 1 square. Initiative 10 - **Writhes furiously**, 20% chance to knock over a menhir, dealing 10d10 to anyone under it. Initiative 20 - **Lightning Crashes**, 10% chance lightning strikes a random combatant who must save vs. petrification or take 5d6.

Capra Ram

Mounts

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Ecological

Tags

Animal, Mount,
Warrior

The goats of cormorant Isle are island giants - bigger & much sturdier than any other similar beasts.

Number Appearing

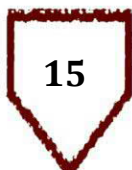
2d6

Description

HP



AC



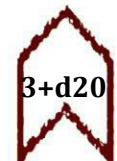
15

Hit Die



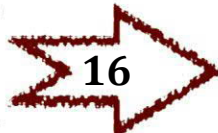
2d8

Initiative



3+d20

Movement



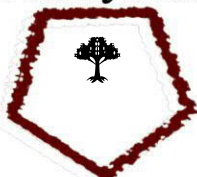
16

To-Hit



+4

Primary Mode



Huge rams the size of horses with long-shaggy coats & curling horns. They bleat incessantly.



Phys / Ment: 12 / 8

Traits: Tough & sure footed, they're decent runners but incredible leapers.



+4 Headbut d8 - The ram bashes with it's head.

+4 Ram - d12 - With a large enough head-start the ram headbutts with extreme force. The ram needs to move 5 spaces or more to use this.



The mounts will duel as part of a tournament & they are useful & helpful when one wishes to Joust. They also 'duel' each other more or less all the time.



Leap - When not being ridden these rams are capable of considerable feats of athleticism - they can jump & balance absurdly well.



Unimpeded by mountains



Big Bastard

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Ecological /

Tags

Animal, Boss,
Warrior, Mount

Biggest of the cormorant Island
Goats its beard hangs to the
ground & its horns curl around
themselves in five convolutions.

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

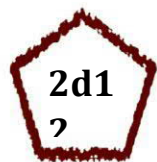
HP



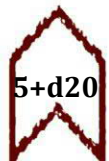
AC



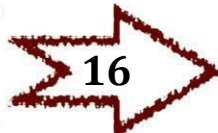
Hit Die



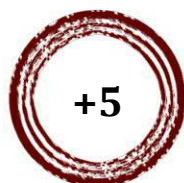
Initiative



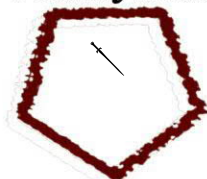
Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



Belligerent, aggressive & bloodthirsty, it waits for people to ram off of the mountaintop.

Phys / Ment: 14 / 10 Traits: Tough & sure footed, he's a decent runner but an incredible leaper.

+5 Headbutt - d8 Big Bastard smashes with its head
+5 Ram - d12 - With a large enough head-start Big Bastard headbutts with extreme force. The ram needs to move 5 spaces or more to use this.

Big Bastard will Ram, which is a strong physical duel that is difficult for non-rams to win.

Big Bastard is a notorious figure in Capra legendry - he is a sought after & much envied goat that has actually killed quite a few would-be riders. It has a grim reputation & an inner bloodlust.

Leap - Big Bastard is capable of considerable feats of athleticism, he can jump and climb impressively - even when ridden.

Bleat - Big bastard can command other goats - not just those in its herd. Save vs. Spells or any goats present join Big Bastard's side

Unimpeded by mountains

Skeletal

Atrocity

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Undead,
Automaton, Slime

Skeletal bodies of some strange
assymetrical beings - inhuman
but somehow all too human.

Number Appearing

2d6

Description

HP



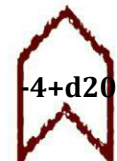
AC



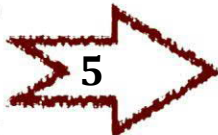
Hit Die



Initiative



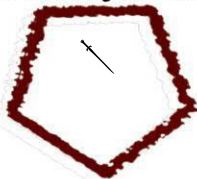
Movement



To-Hit



Primary Mode



The animate skeleton of an ancient being.

Phys / Ment: 15 / 3 Traits: Grotesque & mystically empowered to have preternatural speed, strength & toughness.

+3 Flail - d6 - The Skeleton whips its extra arms, thrashing furiously

These creatures can't really duel, but if drawn into one the dueling tactic of Dismissing their necromantic engery may prove successful.

Defensive Spin - the skeleton whips its limbs around furiously - anyone trying to attack it up close must take d8 damage.

Moves very slowly & is impervious to fire.

Wax Catastrophe

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Automaton,
Slime, Trap

An ambulatory puddle, an atrocious mass of enchanted ooze. It is hot to the touch & visibly glows with an interior fire. This catastrophe of wax is all that remains of the anima of the

Number Appearing

2d6

HP



18

AC



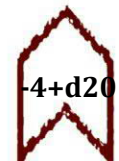
17

Hit Die



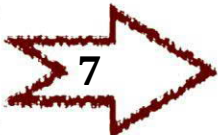
3d8

Initiative



-4+d20

Movement



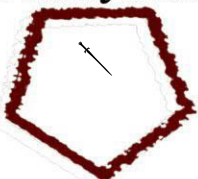
7

To-Hit



+1

Primary Mode



What appears to be the flesh of a peculiar being with too many limb, too much head & not enough humanity - is actually a mass of animate burning wax.

Phys / Ment: 15 / 3

Traits: Appears, at first, to be the flesh of a strange & ambulatory being - but it melts away & is, in the end, nothing more than a puddle of animate, burning wax.

+1 Flung Wax - d6 - The Catastrophe flings hot wax at its enemies

These creatures can't really duel, but if drawn into one the dueling tactic of Dismissing their necromantic engery may prove successful.

Molten Gout - The Wax Catastrophe sacrifices itself to deal 3d6 damage to everything adjacent to it. A save vs. breath avoids this damage.

Can cling to surfaces but shambles very slowly.



Ghost

Albatross

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Folkloric

Tags

Elemental, Ghost,
Fast, Flying, Bird

This is a ghostly apparition in the form of a massive albatross easily as big as a horse. It flies around the interior of the Guide Tower in a vain attempt to protect the

Description dead.

Number Appearing

Unique

HP



21

AC



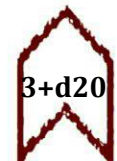
18

Hit Die



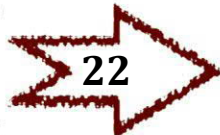
6d6

Initiative



3+d20

Movement



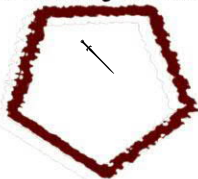
22

To-Hit



+2

Primary Mode



Screams endlessly it's keening cry

Phys / Ment: 14 / 8

Traits: Flies magnificently & commands the waters.

+4 Peck - d10 - The Ghost Albatross pecks with terrible might.
+4 Buffetting wings - d8 - the Albatross bashes with its wings - it can make this attack & its Peck attack simultaneously.

This creature can't really duel, but if drawn into one the dueling tactic of Dismissing their necromantic engery may prove successful.

Vomit Sea - The Ghost Albatross expells a stream of water from its mouth - it can fill a 20'x20'x20' area in a single round.

Geyser - The Ghost albatross can cause water to shoot out & up - this deals 1d6 damage to anyone standing in or above a pool of water & they must save vs. Devices or be knocked flat.

Flies

Spectral - is not inhibited by walls or objects & passes through them.

Is immune to fire.



Mereid

Monster Name

Liminal Tier

Legendary

Tags

Elemental,
Ancient, Water,
Angel, Aquatic

Number Appearing

Unique

Description

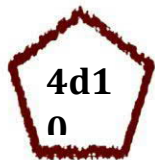
HP



AC



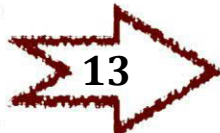
Hit Die



Initiative



Movement



To-Hit



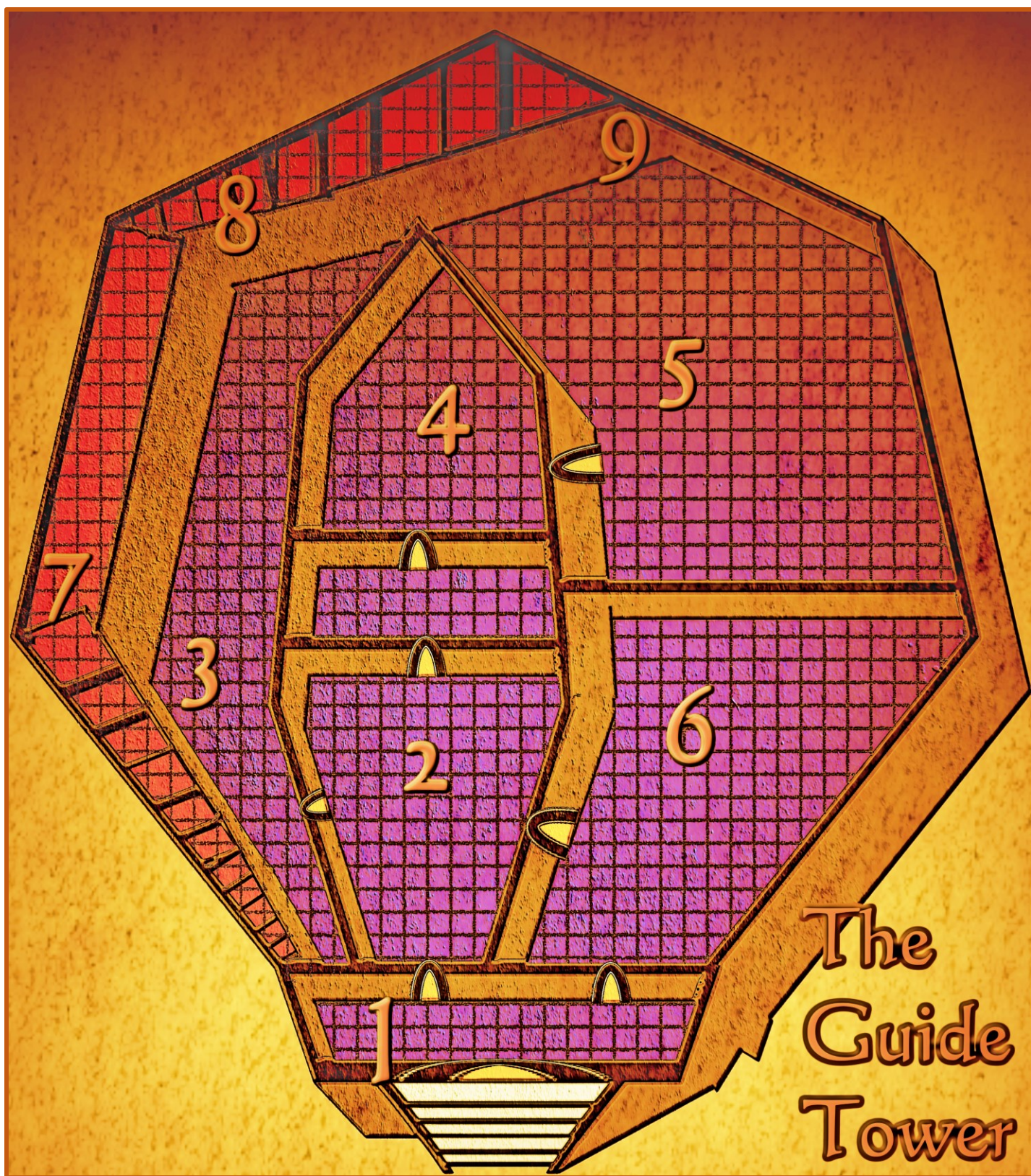
Primary Mode



Phys / Ment: 18 / 14 Traits: Although seemingly humanoid, she is about twice the size of a human. Remarkably strong she moves gracefully through the water using her wings & tail, but cannot fly, despite appearances.

Command over Wood & Water - she can part waters, raise them & control the rain. She has similar authority over living plants.





The
Guide
Tower

Zassimus Witch of the Isle







The Guide Tower

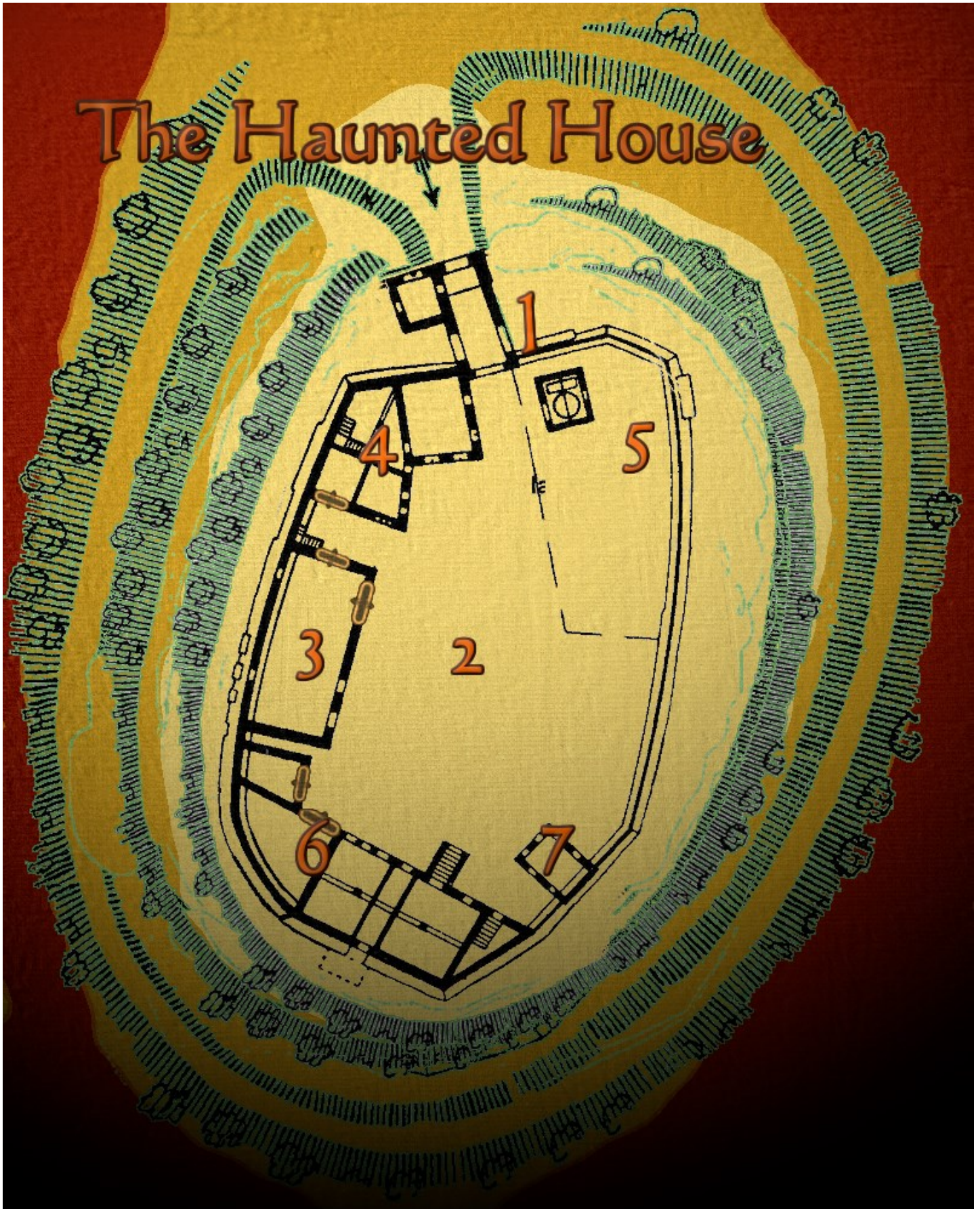
A sepia-toned photograph of a stone relief sculpture. The sculpture depicts a knight in armor, slumped over and holding a sword. The knight's face is partially obscured by a helmet or a burn. The background of the relief is highly textured and appears to be a natural rock surface. The text "Statue of a Burned Knight" is overlaid in a stylized, orange font with a dark outline.

Statue of a Burned Knight

The Vanishing Temple



The Haunted House



The Haunted House Main Level



Capra battling Gulo





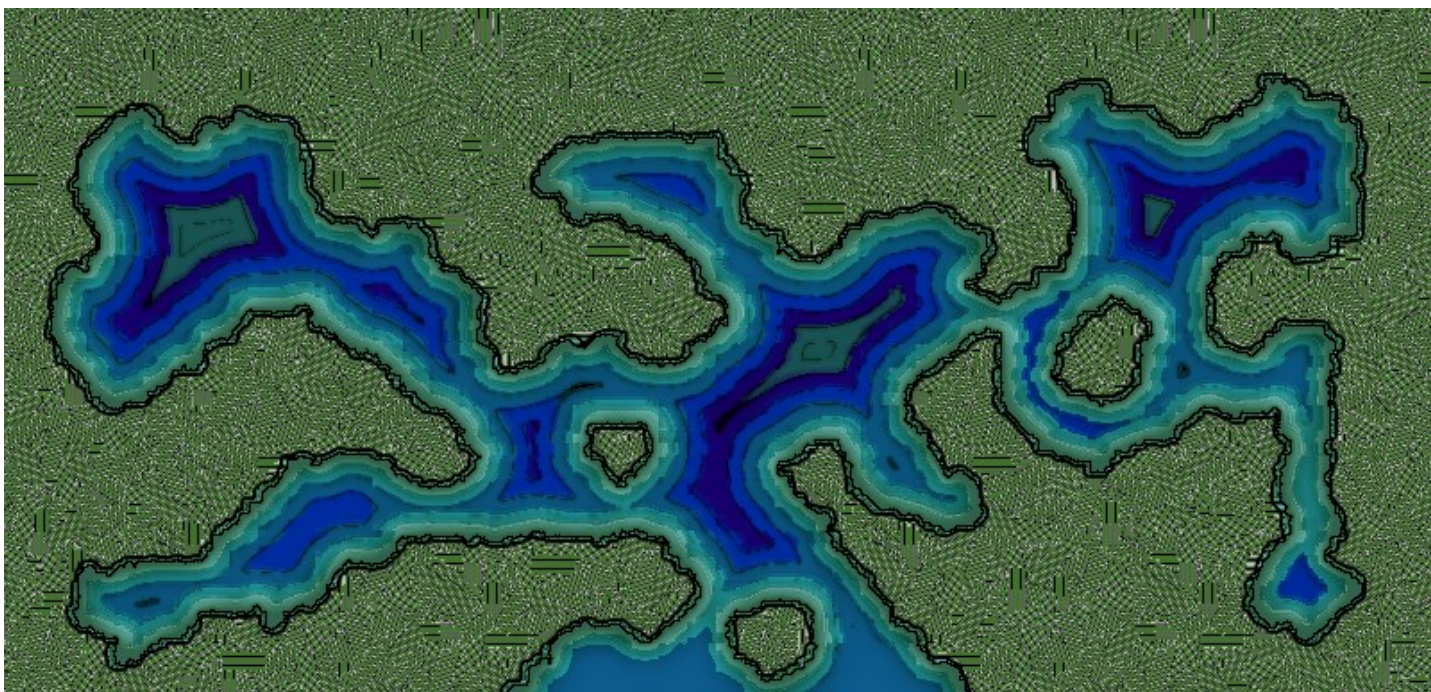


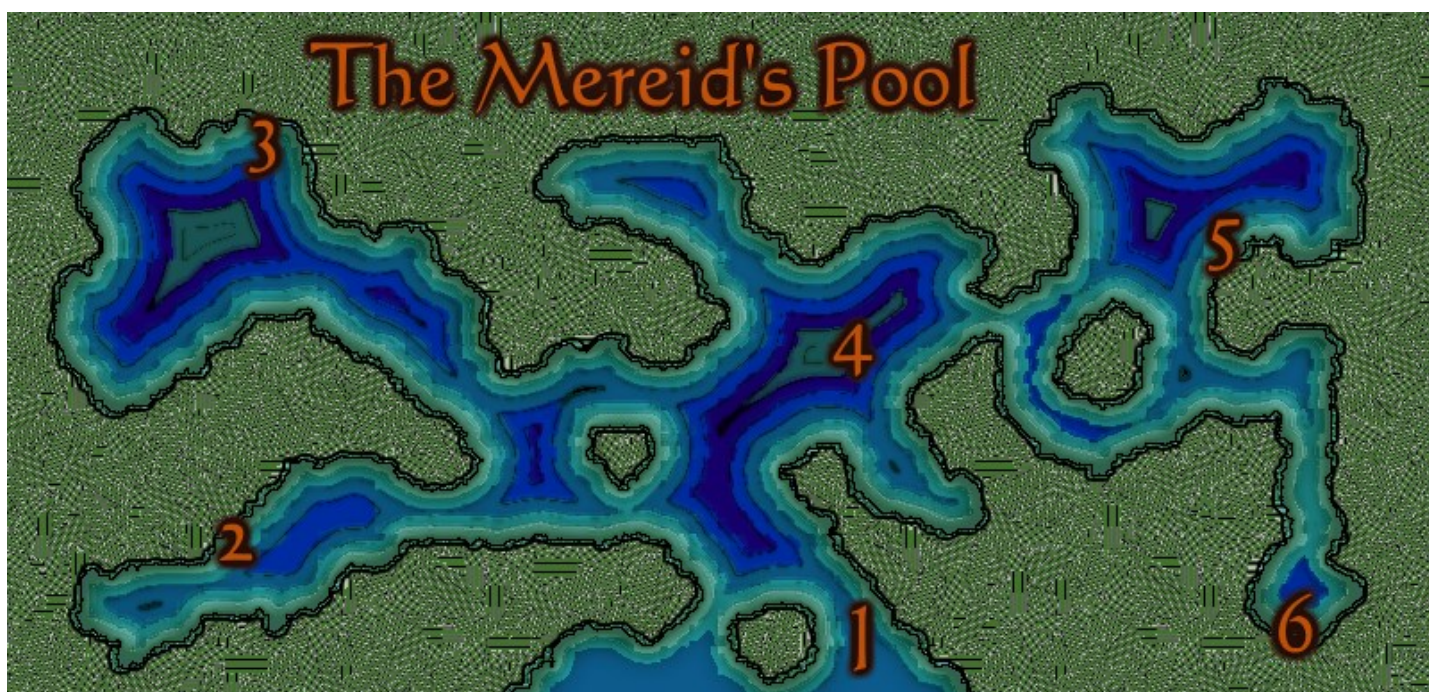


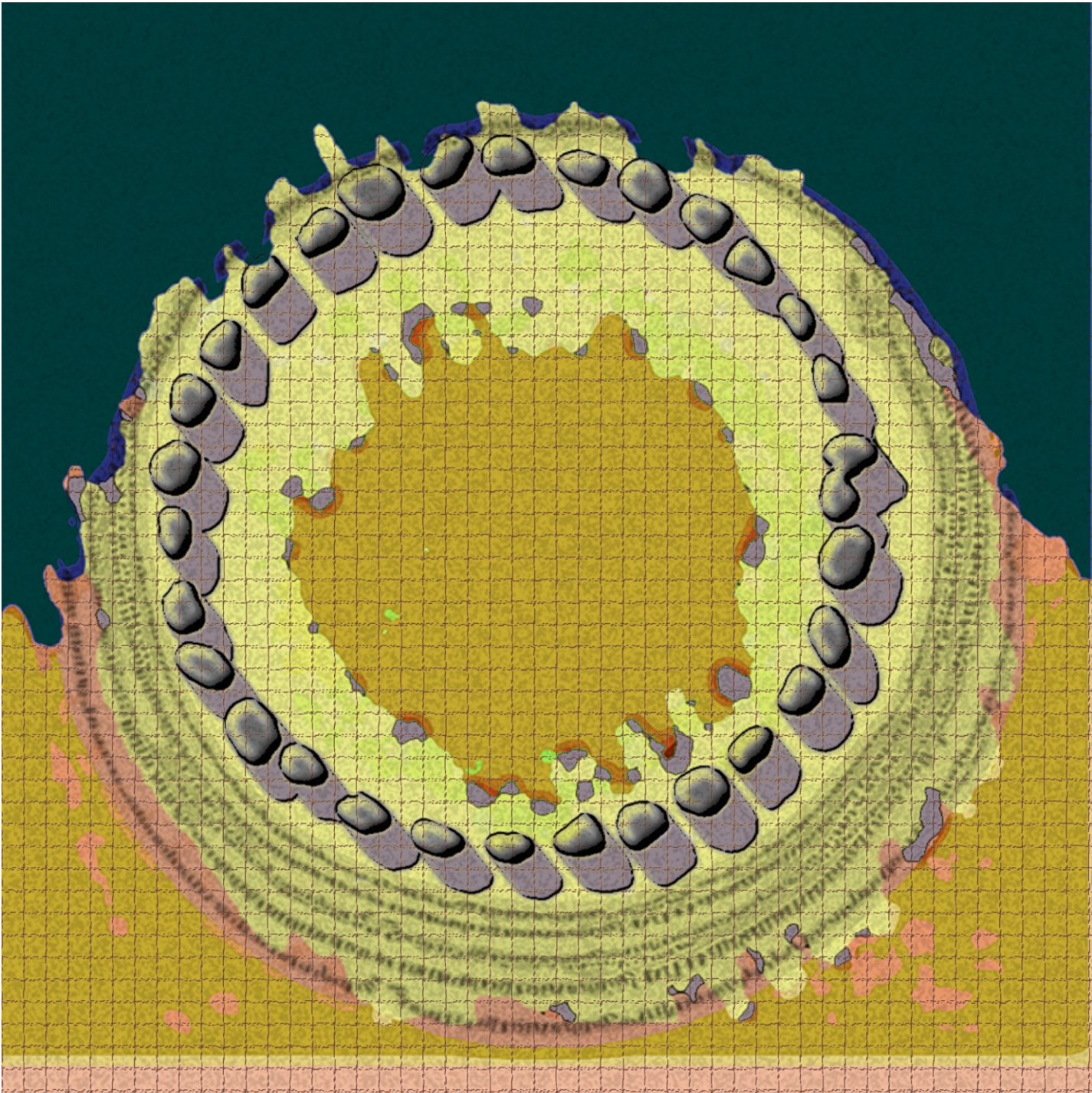
Kostkosa with the
head of Gygis



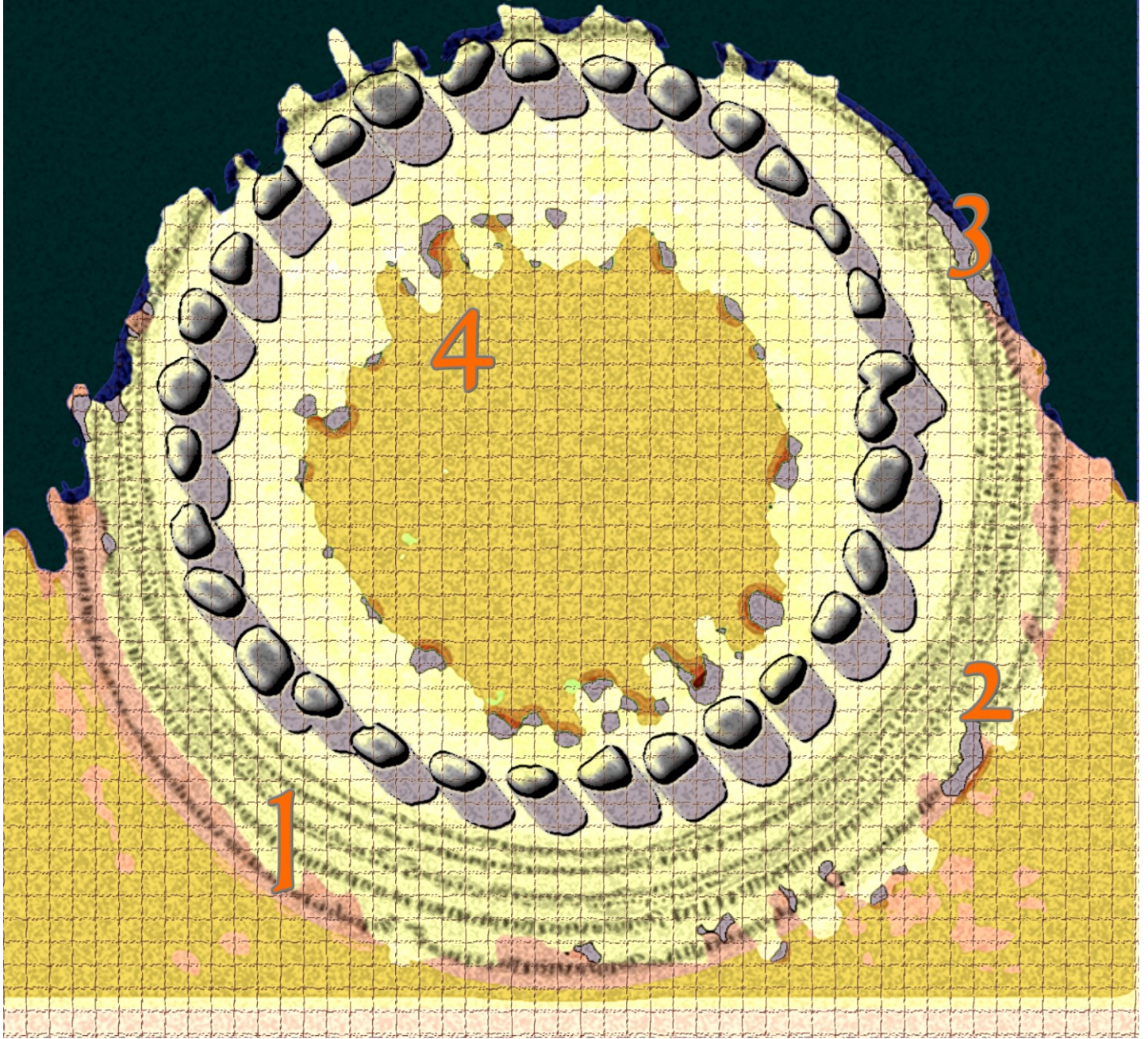








The Secret of Cormorant Isle







An Unpleasant Icon



<i>An Unpleasant Icon</i>			
Affinity	Xp Cost	Rites	Powers Granted
Finder	0-2,000	0-1	The Icon improves its owner's Spell save by 2
Receiver	2,001-5,000	2-10	The Icon begins to speak, it answers 1 question per month
Patron	5,001-10,000	11-20	The Icon Improves its owner's HP by 2 per HD
Follower	10,001-20,000	21-40	The Icon comes alive at night
Worshipper	20,001+	41+	The Icon becomes a divine living avatar

This silver carving of some obscene goat-god stirs with its own strange inner life. It has an unwholesome warmth and is simultaneously clammy and sticky. The icon depicts a divinity of some kind, unknown to you, but strangely compelling. You wonder, not idly, what liminal realms this figure commands.

Questions the Icon answers are according to the Referee's discretion.

The Icon's statistics when it comes to life or becomes an avatar, as well as its alignment, behavior & goals are likewise in the hands of the referee. Good Luck!

6th Relic-Blade: The Knife of Knayute The Bird Tamer



6th of the Blade-Relics of the Free-Folk of the Nordagh this knife was once carried by the hero Knayute the Bird Tamer – The Hangman’s Bane who by will and ability could never be executed.

The knife is a foot long and simple, more of a tool than a weapon – it’s blade and handle are the same length and each has carvings and markings upon it that make it resemble the spread wings of a soaring falcon. When the knife catches the light just so (it’s best seen under the light of the Blue & Red moons) there appears to be a holographic bird superimposed over the blade – a shimmering image that reinforces the knife’s design.

Those who carry the knife will find that they have a grey falcon’s feather knotted into their hair. It will come loose and be discarded but another feather always appears within a week.

Wielders of the knife can expend Xp to improve their attunement to the blade- but they must also tame birds – a difficult task requiring multiple (often difficult) successful social tests for each specimen. The knife is better disposed toward a wielder who has bird accomplices and will slowly increase the benefits it provides.

<i>The Knife of Knayute The Bird Tamer</i>			
Affinity	Xp Cost	Birds Tamed	Powers Granted
Bearer	0-400	0-1	The knife returns to your hand when thrown
Possessor	401-1000	2-3	The knife cuts any rope it touches
Weilder	1001-2400	4-5	The knife can fly, its range is 1 mile
Owner	2401-3500	6-7	Any bird you've tamed becomes a familiar
Tamer	3501+	8+	You can turn into any bird you've tamed

The knife returns on the same turn it is thrown

The knife flies as fast as a falcon – which means it covers a mile of distance in a round

The knife’s rope-cutting cannot be suppressed

Familiars are statistically improved pets

You can turn into a bird for your HD in hours per day

Magical Sword & Shield of an Ancient Knight



The Sword & Shield of a knight of no small valor who was killed attempting to challenge the dragon of Cormorant Isle at some point in antiquity. This knight's broadsword & kite shield are of an older style & yet they are untouched by the inferno that killed their wielder.

These items are faintly magical but they imbue their latest wielder with a deeper sense of courage & purpose. Those who take these weapons up & attempt to follow the knightly path find themselves advancing on a path toward honor, glory & nobility.

Aside from requiring that those who possess the arms be at least somewhat virtuous – they cannot be best used except by a wielder who seeks to right wrongs & perform deeds of notable gallantry. What's more – if they end up in the hands of a wicked person their magical functions are subsumed until such time as the wielder is penitent & forthright in seeking to do right once again.

The sword is a medium weapon – dealing d8 damage. The shield provides the normal +2 bonus to AC as well as the added bonuses indicated below.

Magical Sword & Shield of an Ancient Knight			
Affinity	Xp Cost	Valiant Deeds	Powers Granted
Squire	0-2,000	1-5	Increase To-Hit by 1 & AC by 2
Errant	2,001-5,000	6-20	Improve Saves by 1 & HP By +1 per HD
Knight	5,001-15,000	21-30	Gain Immunity to Fear Effects
Protector	15,001+	31+	Gain Immunity to Maddened & Sickened Effects. Increase To-Hit & AC by +3

Mail of a Fallen Hero

The splendid, unspoiled mail survived the conflagration that killed the knight who wore it & is not just intact but gleams brightly as if freshly polished. It bears no marks of smithing & no blazons of its former owner.

The Mail itself is medium armor & it is a full suit of same. It improves one's armor class by +4.

Though the mail has a magical spirit that gives it power, this is faint & barely aware. It requires that a wearer suffer for the cause of right. Those who wear the armor & intend to gain its benefits must receive injuries in order that others be spared. Each Sacrifice represents the loss of at least 10 HP in defense of others. Any time you receive the Defeated condition while attempting to protect someone you count this as 5 sacrifices.

Those unwilling to sacrifice anything gain no special benefit from the armor save the base +4 to AC it grants.



Mail of a Fallen Hero			
Affinity	Xp Cost	Sacrifices	Powers Granted
Squire	0-2,000	1-5	You reduce the die size of any affects that you endure to a minimum of 4.
Errant	2,001-5,000	6-10	Increase your AC by +2
Knight	5,001-15,000	11-15	Reduce damage dealt to you by -1 per die rolled
Protector	15,001+	16-20	Halve damage dealt to you by any source