LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
ADVENTURES

THE MONOLITH
FROM BEYOND
SPACE AND TIME

THE **MONOLITH** FROM **BEYOND** SPACE AND **TIME**

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

THIS ADVENTURE is my homage to Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is a well-trodden path that I walk down now, but anyone hanging around in the Old School Renaissance is used to that. Besides, it is not how frequently you encounter something that makes you sick of it, it is the low-quality retread element that creates fatigue. Yes, plush Cthulhu kills the mystique, and every RPG and its sister putting Things Man Was Not Meant to Know in their adventures these days makes people fall into a boredom-induced coma.

But uninteresting is uninteresting no matter how original the topic, and interesting is interesting no matter how unoriginal the topic. Making it interesting is the difficult, but important, bit.

So while preparing this adventure, I reread S. T. Joshi's *The Rise and Fall of the Cthulhu Mythos*. Joshi's rather rude style is both entertaining to read and demands engagement and response. The book basically destroys the idea that good Lovecraftian stories need to remind the reader directly of Lovecraft's own work. Basically, if your work depends on referencing a Lovecraft story in order to make sense and move forward, Joshi contends that you are merely writing second-rate fan fiction, publishing deal or not.

I cannot say I agree completely with Joshi's opinions, but the idea of making a Lovecraftian adventure without leaning on the usual trappings of Lovecraft's mythos was very appealing. No Cthulhu, no *Necronomicon*, none of it. Just take the concepts that these things were vehicles for communicating, and use those. It is sort of like making a variation of a very popular role-playing game and leaving out the familiar bestiary and magic items lists.

So if you do not tell your players in advance that this is a Lovecraftian adventure (and you shouldn't!), they will be unlikely to recognize it as such. But like the characters in a good Lovecraft tale, the player characters in this adventure will encounter a bit of strangeness and as the oddities become more prominent, there will be a mounting sense of dread as they wait for the hammer to drop. A twist or two will momentarily break the tension until the ramifications set in, and then they hit climax where they realize that they cannot win. They are doomed, and were doomed from the moment they got involved.

You do not want to do this to your players very often, mind you. You probably do not want to do it to them at all. You are their Referee, likely their friend, and feelings would be hurt. Well that is what I, as the author, am here for. You are not doing it to them. I am. You are not responsible. You did not write this horror—and a horror it is, as it breaks all the standard rules of adventure writing. But if you follow the standard rules of adventure writing, all you will ever get is a standard adventure.

Do not wimp out. The players need to make that hard final choice. And in making that choice, they will remember this adventure for the rest of their lives.

If you do run or play this adventure, drop me a line at lotfp@lotfp.com and let me know how it went.

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THE VALLEY

PLACING THE MONOLITH IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Monolith and the surrounding valley are a teleporting, dimension-hopping, time traveling phenomenon. It can be placed anywhere in any campaign without the need to be adjusted to fit a specific flavor. This is a completely pre-packaged, self-sufficient adventure module.

A few possibilities for placing *Monolith* in your campaign include:

℃ As an entry in random wilderness encounter charts

℃ As a placed element in a sandbox campaign

℃ The player characters are hired by local authorities to investigate this odd valley that mysteriously appeared near a settlement

℃ The player characters hear rumors of an expedition that went off in search for treasure in the direction of the valley and never returned

THE MONOLITH is located in a valley which is surrounded by a ring of low hills. If circumnavigating the hills, the valley would seem to be about a mile in diameter. The valley itself is heavily forested, with a climate and vegetation consistent with that of a mild summer day in a temperate climate, no matter the climate and terrain outside of the valley.

From the crest of the hills the entire valley can be seen. A cloud of fog, about 200' in diameter, rests at the center of the valley.

EFFECTS OF THE MONOLITH

The appearance of the valley is, if not normal (thanks to the fog cloud and possible seasonal and geographic variations inside and outside), at least mundane. This will change as soon as anyone enters the valley. There is a distinct border differentiating "inside" and "outside" of the valley. The surrounding hills, while not especially difficult to navigate, are rocky and devoid of vegetation. One enters the valley by stepping off the last rock onto its flat soil. However, one does not exit the valley until reaching the crest of the hills on the way out.

While the valley is a mile wide if measured from outside, it varies in size every time the valley is entered. Any time that the valley is entered, roll on the following two tables to discover the diameter of the valley:

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER		TABLE 2: THE UNITS	
1	d4	1	Feet
2	d6	2	Yards
3	d8	3	100s of Yards
4	d10	4	Kilometers
5	d12	5	Miles
6	d20	6	Leagues (3 miles)
7	d100	7	10s of Miles
8	2d100	8	Astronomical Units
9	4d100		(92,955,807.3 miles)
10	d1000		

The minimum size of the valley is 200' across. If the rolled size of the valley is smaller than this, then as the player characters enter the valley, they exit on the opposite side without ever having actually been in it.

If a group exits and re-enters the valley, its size also changes. Roll again on the table.

If the members of a party enter the valley at different times (say, more than 10 minutes apart), the valley will be different sizes for each group.

There will be an additional effect that takes place when the valley is entered. Roll on the following table:

1	Doom of Hierarchy
2	Displacement
3	Life Slows
4	Light Defeats Distance
5	Magical Sentience
6	Mutation
7	Time Moves Backward
8	Time Moves Forward
9	Weather Out of Time
10	Wish Fulfillment

EFFECT 1: DOOM OF HIERARCHY

Free will is a concept unknown in the dimension from which the Monolith hails, and its presence on our world brings its order to us.

When the party enters the valley, each member must roll d20, rolling tiebreakers in cases of a tie. All characters must instantly and without question obey the letter (but not the spirit) of any direct, unconditional command given by a character with a higher roll. In any matters of opinion, lower-rolling characters will always defer to higher-rolling characters.

Any long-term command given will only be obeyed while the commanding player character is present. If a character is ordered to stand on his head forever, he will do so to the best of his ability (until he passes out or dies!) until the commanding player character leaves. Similarly, if a player character is commanded to fetch water from a nearby stream, he will cheerfully move to do so, but as soon as he leaves the commander's possible field of vision, it is no longer a compulsion.

Retainers are automatically considered to have rolled one half-point lower than the player character that employs them. Other NPCs should have rolls made for them to determine which of the player characters they will obey, but NPCs will be (perhaps uncharacteristically) unassuming around the player characters and not order them around.

Charisma does not affect this roll, as Earthly personality is of no significance in otherworldly terms.

This effect lasts until the character that rolled the highest leaves the valley.

EFFECT 2: DISPLACEMENT

The Monolith exists in infinite realities at once, and its presence causes the valley itself to exist in infinite realities. When the player characters leave the valley, they will no longer be in their home world, but in some other. Break out one of those other settings on the bookshelf, and do not filter anything out based on rules system or genre.

Because the player characters do not belong in their new environment, they will lose one point from a random stat each day that they are away from their home reality. These points are instantly restored upon their return home.

EFFECT 3: LIFE SLOWS

All living things and processes slow to a crawl in comparison to inanimate objects. Water in streams will seem to rush by supernaturally fast, the wind will seem terrible and its shaking of the trees will make the noise unbearable. Clouds will speed across the sky and the sun and the moon's movement will be clearly visible across the sky. If objects are thrown by player characters they will have incredible velocity from the point at which they leave the thrower's hand.

If in combat with non-living opponents, the opponent automatically wins initiative and has double the usual number of attacks.

Missile weapons gain a four point armor penetration (meaning that four points of armor is ignored) and Dexterity modifiers to AC against missile attacks are ignored due to this effect.

This effect lasts only while the player characters are in the valley.

EFFECT 4: LIGHT DEFEATS DISTANCE

This condition prevents characters from traveling across space during the day no matter how far they travel. Whatever destination the player characters have in mind, when they travel, they will appear to cross distances (and intervening terrain), but they will never get any closer to their destination and in fact will have not moved at all. They have effectively been walking in place the entire time.

Thrown or discarded objects (or spells!) will be observed as traveling to their destination, but will never arrive. If something is tossed (or shot) from one person to another, the one throwing/shooting will perceive the object as reaching its target, while the character on the receiving end will perceive the object as having been wildly misdirected. The object will not be found again. Items can be physically passed from person to person normally.

Speech occurs normally under this effect.

Only by blinding themselves somehow (hopefully the characters think of blindfolds before sharp objects) or traveling at night will this effect be canceled. If some characters in a group blindfold themselves and others do not, what happens is that the blinded characters are able to cross distances, but the player characters who can see still cannot, but they do not separate as a group.

Good luck describing that to your players!

This effect lasts only while in the valley.

EFFECT 5: MAGICAL SENTIENCE

Because magic is itself a force pulled from another dimension by a spellcaster and shaped into a desired effect, the presence of the Monolith interacts with spells and gives them a power that they did not have before: Sentience.

Any Magic-User (or Elf) spell prepared

when a spellcaster enters the valley, whether prepared beforehand or not, becomes self-aware. When the spell is cast, the spell becomes a creature (HD = spell level) that can cast itself at will.

This effect lasts until all currently memorized spells are disposed of, even if the player characters leave the valley.

EFFECT 6: MUTATION

All times and possibilities touch the Monolith, and this influence permeates the valley. Exposure to this environment can cause a character to hyper-evolve in some way, taking on a specific characteristic that his race will have millions of years into the future. Roll once on the following table every day that a character is in the valley. The effects take effect almost immediately. These effects are not subject to *Remove Curse*, *Dispel Magic*, or other countermeasures; this is a result of natural evolution (albeit cherrypicked traits from all possible futures rather any single one) and will only disappear when the Monolith has been banished—leaving the valley does not end the condition.

1	Acidic Spots
	The character's skin breaks out in open sores through which acidic pus oozes. The ooze does not hurt the character, but will begin to eat through everything that he is wearing or holding, destroying it in a matter of minutes. This will not protect against weapon-based damage in combat. Only earth, stone, and glass are immune to the acid.
2	Allergic to Iron
	The character becomes unable to stand the touch of iron or steel. Even a momentary touch causes blistering, and extended exposure causes one point of damage per round. Damage taken from metal weapons is increased by one. If a character is wearing a lot of metal, even if not in direct contact with it, he will become ill, suffering a one point Constitution modifier penalty until the metal is discarded.
3	Allergic to Moonlight
	The character will have a negative reaction to moonlight. If exposed to direct moonlight, the character will break out in a terrible rash which will last several days, be unable to sleep, and if exposed for more than a few minutes, the character will suffer a point of damage. If exposed for an entire night, the character will suffer 1d4 damage.
4	Allergic to Organic Material
	Organic material (defined for this purpose as being, or being made from, plants or animals) causes the character extreme discomfort, and with extended exposure, physical harm. Even touching such material causes pain and blistering, and extended contact causes a point of damage per round. Damage taken from wooden weapons is increased by one.
5	Allergic to Silver and Gold
	The character becomes unable to stand the touch of gold or silver. Even a momentary touch causes blistering, and extended exposure causes one point of damage per round. If a character is wearing a lot of these metals, even if not in direct contact with it (such as coins in a pouch or sack), he will become ill, suffering a one point Constitution modifier penalty until the metal is discarded.
6	Allergic to Sunlight
	The character burns almost instantly in sunlight. Momentary exposure will merely turn the skin red, but longer exposure will do a point of damage

every hour, he will go blind for the duration of his exposure plus another 1d10 hours, and his skin will become so sensitive to touch that anything so much as brushing against him will cause excruciating pain.

7   Allergic to Water
Touching water, even a few drops, causes one Hit Point of damage to the character. Ingesting, or immersing a body part in water, causes 1d4 points of damage. Full immersion causes 1d6 points of damage per round. This does not remove the character's need for water, although the character's own fluids do not harm him.

8   Colorfade
Color ceases to exist for the character. His skin, hair, and eyes all become pale grey. Not a spot of color exists anywhere on or in a character's body (including organs, blood, tattoos, etc.). The character also becomes colorblind.

9   Deafness
The character goes completely deaf as the ear canal closes completely and the eardrum disappears.

10   Fatigue
The character's body becomes intolerant of stress and exercise, causing extreme fatigue after minimal exertion. The character is considered one step more encumbered than would otherwise be the case, and must rest one full turn after every three of movement or work.

11   Fused Joints
The character's joints become stiff and hard to bend. The character should be considered one step more encumbered than would otherwise be the case, and his Dexterity modifier is reduced by one.

12   Hair
The character grows a very long, thick, and curly mass of hair from his body. Only the palms of his hands, soles of his feet, and the immediate areas around his eyes and other orifices will be free of hair. The character's current clothing and armor will not fit, and those not already familiar with the character will consider him to be some sort of monster.

13   Internal Pressure
The insides of the character want to burst out—any attack against the character does 1d4 extra points of damage as they take the opportunity to do so.

14   Overheating
The character's body temperature increases to an uncomfortable level. The character must consume five times the usual amount of water a day in order to quench his enormous thirst. Any period of strenuous activity (battle, running) must be followed by a full turn of rest to avoid heat stroke.

15   Scent Changes – Animals Attack!
The character gives off an odor which causes animals to become enraged and attack if they come within 40' of him. Assume the character will move at half the usual rate due to the annoyance of small birds, rodents, and other pests, but every hour there is a 1 in 10 chance that a larger animal (1d10 HD) will be in the area and attack. Any pack or companion animals present will also immediately attack the character, of course.

16   Soft Bones
The character's bones become flexible and soft. Roll 1d6; this is the number that is subtracted from a character's Dexterity and Strength, but all damage

taken from blunt or crushing attacks is also reduced by this amount.

17 Spinal Curve

The character's spine curves so that he must move around on all fours—but the limbs do not adapt to this situation. Movement is one-fourth normal, the character is −3 to hit in mêlée combat, and is always attacked as if from behind.

18 Third Eye

The character grows an extra eye in his face. He suffers a d6 penalty to his Dexterity Modifier and an extra −2 to hit in mêlée (−4 in missile) combat for 1d4 weeks until he becomes accustomed to having trinocular vision.

19 Visions

The character experiences hallucinations and flashes of light and shadow. This is manageable most of the time, but in high stress situations the character will become confused. In combat, when striking at an enemy, there is a 25 % chance that the character becomes disoriented and strikes at an ally instead.

20 Webbing

A membrane grows between the character's wrists and hips, up to his armpits. Wearing clothes or armor is impossible (and any character who does not strip as it initially grows takes 1d4 damage and cannot move until anything covering this webbing is removed), although the character's swimming speed increases by a fourth.

EFFECT 7:
TIME MOVES BACKWARD

Once the characters enter the valley, time moves differently for them than it does for the world outside of the valley. Time behaves normally for those within the valley, but as time moves forward within the valley, it moves backwards at the same rate outside of the valley.

Any actions the player characters have taken in the rewound time will be erased. People/monsters that they have killed will not be dead, people will not remember meeting/talking to the player characters, and anything that the player characters have taken/bought/looted will still be in the original owners' possession. Such objects will not disappear from the player characters' possession, though.

It will not be possible for the player characters to meet themselves in the outside world, although all sorts of other paradoxes and strangery are possible.

EFFECT 8:
TIME MOVES FORWARD

For every day that the player characters spend within the valley, a greater amount of time passes outside the valley. Each day, have each player roll a die—the die type is up to them.

☾ If different die types are rolled by different players, two days pass outside the valley.

☾ If different die types are rolled by different players and any of the players roll matching numbers, one week passes outside the valley.

☾ If different die types are rolled by the players and all but one of the rolls results in a matching number, one month passes outside the valley.

☾ If different die types are rolled by the players and all of the dice come up with their maximum values, one year passes outside the valley.

☾ If the same die type is rolled by the players and none of the rolls come up the same, one week passes outside the valley.

☾ If the same die type is rolled by the players and some of the rolls match, one month

passes outside the valley for each die that matches another.

☾ If the same die type is rolled by the players and they all roll the maximum value, one century passes outside the valley.

Player characters will only age according to their local time inside the valley, and as far as they are concerned time is passing normally. All spell durations, etc., will last their normal time inside the valley as well.

EFFECT 9:
WEATHER OUT OF TIME

Within the valley, the weather is, to say the least, unseasonable. And pleasant. And severe. All at the same time.

Sunny, cloudless skies during a tropical hurricane as several feet of freezing snow drops could be described as a typical occurrence as different weather types occur concurrently. Similarly, oppressively arid air during a downpour is also possible. As is everything freezing over as the biggest heatwave ever rolls across the valley.

Effectively, what this means is that just being in the valley for any length of time is painful, that extended exposure is dangerous, travel is difficult, and there is simply no way the player characters or anyone else can properly prepare for all of the elements that they be will exposed to. If the characters enter the valley unprepared for its extremes of weather, they will move at half speed and lose 1d4 Hit Points per day due to exposure, but if they came prepared, for example with heavy clothing and tents to sleep in at night, they will lose just one Hit Point per day. However, it is impossible to properly rest in this weather.

EFFECT 10: WISH FULFILLMENT

The reality from which the Monolith originates is propelled by thought, not action, and so when its influence saturates the valley, so too does thought move reality here.

Anything that the player characters can imagine, whether externally (from the things that they say or do) or internally (taken from the table chatter of the *players*), comes to pass. For example, if the belief is expressed that it's too quiet and something dangerous will happen any time now, then something dangerous happens. If someone makes a joke about meeting a druid in this valley, then they will indeed meet a druid with the appropriate powers (even if the game being played does not include them!).

As they realize what is happening, the characters (and players!) will likely start to "abuse" this ability. They might imagine coming across a flying craft (or a space ship!), or a great treasure, powerful magic, or what have you. This should be encouraged as truly spectacular and ridiculous situations are a good thing in these circumstances. After all, the player characters are experiencing hyper reality, and it is supposed to be better and more exciting than normal everyday life.

This is all an illusion, however. The first time that a character doubts that what is happening is real, the effect ends for all of the characters. When it does, the player characters will find themselves still in the same spot where the effect first started, with no time having passed. Personal changes (earned experience, changes to appearance, etc.) will be retained, while

external changes (money, equipment, spellbook additions, etc.) not.

For every reality-breaking situation that the characters participated in during this time, each involved character must make a saving throw versus Magic or suffer a –1 permanent Wisdom loss for each failed save.

LOCATIONS AND ENCOUNTERS IN THE VALLEY

One of these encounters will happen within an hour of entering the valley (before reaching the Monolith in any event). Every game day thereafter (or game hour, if the valley is small enough to be traversed in a day), the Referee should ask for a d6 to be rolled (the players can fight over who makes the roll). On a 1, an encounter happens.

1	Mist
2	The Owl's Service
3	The Plateau
4	The Pool
5	Shadows of the Past and Future
6	Terror from the Deep
7	Timelines

> The Referee is encouraged to invent his own locations/encounters within the valley. In fact, it could be said that the Referee is running the adventure wrong if he does not.

MIST

The mist which surrounds the Monolith occasionally spreads to other portions of the valley.

If the Mist is encountered, it swiftly rolls over the player characters and they are transported to a random point within the valley. No matter which direction they attempt to travel or how they attempt to mitigate the effects of the mist, they will in fact be traveling to a randomly determined direction. The effect only ends when they end up moving onto the hills surrounding the valley, thus leaving the mist.

There is only 30' of visibility within the mist.

(This one might be a tad unfair if the size of the valley is currently measured in astronomical units. In this case, it is up to the Referee to ignore this effect.)

THE OWLS' SERVICE

The party arrives in a strange clearing that seems slightly different from the "normal" characteristics of the valley: beneath an eerie brass-clear sky of harsh blue if the valley is constantly misty; blood-warm if the valley is cold; distorted visually along the long axis if the valley normally distorts time or gravity or some other sense.

Either seven or eight statues of brownish stone ring the clearing, each nine feet tall and leaning inward toward the center of the vale. They look like owls, with hunched wings and cruel beaks, wide staring stony eyes, a hint of feathers – although the carving is either so crude or so eroded that it is not entirely certain the statues began as depictions of owls, precisely. Although the stone appears friable, like sandstone, on closer examination (especially by dwarves or other stone-friendly sorts) it is quite hard and looks almost slick, like malachite or marble. But it feels rough, slightly cooler than the air (or warmer, if the air is distinctly cool). Attempts to count the statues always return a result of either eight or seven. Demolishing a statue is quite difficult, though possible after mighty spells (likely three or more spells in tandem or series) or hours of labor. This does

not affect the counting of the statues in any way.

Thick, green vegetation surrounds the clearing on all sides, clustering ever thicker the farther one heads from the clearing. As the party enters the clearing, it becomes impossible to determine the path back out. Hacking too deeply into the vegetation merely strands the would-be trailblazer in the midst of an undifferentiated mass of tangled, clutching plants – newly hacked paths quickly and visibly grow back over. The vegetation – partially shrubs and small trees, and partially aggressive ground cover like kudzu or trailing ivy – all feels simultaneously sticky and dusty to the touch, as if the leaves, branches, vines, and roots are coated with both thick pollen and oozing sap. The leaves, at least, also end in cruel barbs like the talons of small predator birds. They do not damage armored characters, or even those wearing thick clothing (1d2 damage per round of exposure to bare flesh), but they tangle loose threads and links of mail, even those of magic or nonhuman work. Slicing through the plants slowly drains HP through sheer exhaustion: 1 point per hour, or whatever is necessary to deliver the message. Parties or players desperately interested in prolonged, miserable combat with an unkillable foe too wet to burn and too deeply rooted to extract should be rewarded: suitably crawly wandering creatures, down where the plants hide them, begin striking for heroes' Achilles tendons. Meanwhile, sap takes the polish off metal or lacquer surfaces as vines entangle straps and buckles holding armor on. The kindly Referee can provide a fighter's corpse, pinned by thousands of plant roots and vines, the body slowly becoming the thing that killed it. If players seem particularly slow to get the point, the fighter wears ruined armor just like one player's, down to the same maker and year stamped on a rivet or vambrace: armor now a

useless, scummed-over basin for more plants. Moving back toward the clearing is considerably easier: the plant barrier effect seems directional.

However, it is quite possible that the party never braves the plants' resistance: The owls gaze at a central tableau, and this may draw the characters' attention. In the middle of the clearing, a skeleton crouches in prayer or supplication before a sharp stone with a slanted surface. Its skull is split by the stone and the bones have fallen slightly further from the rest of the skeleton than normal, as though some great thing forced its way out of the body through the crack. Blackened, crusted rags and tatters are tangled around one arm, and cling to the pelvis and lodge between vertebrae. The skeleton seems oddly proportioned; the skull, as best can be determined, is not human, or elven, or dwarven, or any race that the player characters might know or will have heard of. If the Referee feels the situation requires punctuation, searching reveals a copper or brass ring on the skeleton's left sixth finger, chased with a completely unfamiliar design. It does not seem magical (nor detects as such) in this place, but outside of the valley, who knows?

In truth, the entrance path (or, rather, the exit path) does not appear at set times or according to any pattern, but rather when the players have been suitably creeped out by the clearing. Ideally the Referee should choose the appearance of causality: the path appears when the characters find the ring, or when one of their number dies, for example. Once open, the path winds uphill through the vegetation for a few hundred feet, then slowly grows to resemble the "normal" paths around the Monolith.

The true effect of the clearing occurs after this adventure concludes, when the party has returned to the normal world. Every spellcaster, either arcane or divine, dreams of the

clearing and its owls. (The stone and skeleton do not appear; nor does the vegetation as such.) This lasts, again, until the Referee feels that the players are suitably creeped out. Then it escalates. The spell-caster awakens to find his highest-level spell slot already filled by the owls. Attempts to read from spell books or pray for guidance prove to be fruitless. If the caster increases in level, the filled slot rises to match.

"Casting" the owl spell produces a very vivid hallucination of the clearing and statues (incapacitating the caster for 1d6 minutes), but expends the power of that slot for that day.

After a week or a month or a year, the caster awakens, again after dreams of the owls, with her two highest spell slots filled. Eventually, the dreams begin to point to a specific spot known to the caster, a spot where there is a good sharp rock just the right height to smash out her own brains…

Solutions? Explanations? The Monolith owes you none. It can provide none; the owls came here from outside the Monolith, and found themselves trapped in its metaphysical wake, weeds trailed by the passage of universes around it. They know that they can escape through minds tuned to the arcane and the hyper-human; that is how they have spread from world to world. The vegetation grew up to contain them; it might be a Monolithic defense mechanism or just the product of eons of evolution under strange biologies and physics.

THE PLATEAU

When the Monolith arrives in a new place, it transforms its surroundings to form the hill-ringed valley that the player characters will explore—sometimes this transformation happens quickly, sometimes not. Sometimes the untransformed terrain of the other places that the Monolith is also occupying intrudes upon the rest.

In this instance, when the cliff is encountered,

the player characters will one minute be in the woods on level ground, perhaps seeing the hills rising in the distance depending on where they are and where they are facing, and the next minute they are on the edge of a cliff that drops a 1d1000 feet (minimum 50) to the bottom, able to see for miles ahead of them.

Turning around and going back is not an option, as this is actually a plateau, perhaps a couple hundred yards across (which means it is potentially wider than the valley it sits in!). The cliff walls, while steep, are far from smooth and give a one point bonus to Climb checks.

Any attempt to descend slowly, be it by climbing down, being lowered by a rope, or through magical means such as *Levitating* or *Flying* will note interesting conditions. As they descend, there will be a stiff wind upwards, growing stronger until it is tremendously powerful near the ground. If the character touches the ground, they take damage as if they fell the entire distance from the top.

Jumping off the cliff is completely safe; in fact, anyone jumping (or falling after a failed Climb check) will feel as if they just took a normal step to arrive at the bottom of the cliff. If a character jumps off the edge in despair with the serious intent of committing suicide (Referee judgment), the character of course does not die, and they get to reroll all of their ability scores, keeping any results that are greater than the original values.

When everyone from group has left the plateau, it disappears, its connection to this reality severed.

THE POOL

Here is a small pond, around which a hundreds-strong community of ever young hedonists has taken up residence. They spend all of their time feasting and fornicating and sleeping. They will see the player characters as new playmates in their activities and be *very* friendly, offering

water, fruit, and fresh meat, as well as loving companionship.

These people will not be offended if someone does not wish to join in their "celebrations." They will suggest that, "the valley is large and there is room for us all, so let us play and you go elsewhere to do as you will."

All of their needs are provided by the environment. No inclement weather beyond the occasional soft warm rain spoils their idyll. Strange wild berries and fruits grow from plants native only to the area around the pond. These people have nothing in the way of possessions—and that includes shelter, belongings, and even clothes.

> The commune's pansexual nature might be off-putting to some, as its members really have no taboos. Blood relations, race and species differences are no obstacles for most of the people here. Play this up to (but not beyond) the point of player discomfort.

Ah, the berries! They are a mild intoxicant which makes any sensation register as pleasure. Any character that eats a handful of berries and subsequently takes damage must make a saving throw versus Poison. If he succeeds, he only suffers half of the damage (round up) and feels intense pleasure rather than pain. Should the character take further damage, he can choose to make the saving throw versus Poison in the hope of not suffering as much damage.

However, while under the influence of the berries, all movement is at half speed and there is a −2 penalty to all to-hit and skill rolls while under the effect of the berries. The effect lasts for 1d4 turns. In addition, the berries make women hyper-fertile (even those who are normally infertile for whatever reason). Any sexual contact with a male (and the definition of "sexual contact" should be very liberal—surely a list here is hardly necessary?) will result in conception. Those who are regular users of the berries (say, several dozen doses) will conceive even from an utterly unnatural pairing and come to term within 1d12 hours. Birth will be relatively simple; complications do not happen here. Upon birth, the child will be taken away and cooked, the meat then passed out amongst the revelers.

If confronted about this last practice, none of the people here will show any guilt or concern—any who would have left. "We never age here, so they'd never grow up! No good for them, no good for us, and this way we don't have to waste time hunting!"

If offered violence, roughly half the group will flee and half will simply collapse, unable to process what is happening to them. As the party attacks them, they will merely lie there wailing and screaming, "WHY????" at their attackers. Under no circumstances will they raise so much as a fist to protect themselves.

If any members of the commune are taken away from the glade around the pool, they will attempt to return—they must be first restrained and ultimately imprisoned on a long term basis to prevent this. They are committed to their lifestyle and will never give up their quest to return to their utopia.

SHADOWS OF THE PAST AND FUTURE

If this result is rolled, then there is another group of explorers, consisting of three ex-sailors, that is already in the valley. If this result is not rolled, these explorers have never existed.

Noam George is the group's leader. He is a rather rude man, unwilling to share any booty, but always willing to have some extra bodies watching his back in a place like the valley. His

face is horribly scarred and he wears an eye-patch over his ruined left eye.

Peter Cavanaugh is an older man who has seen and done it all, from the honorable and brave exploration of unknown seas to the raping and pillaging of native settlements. No matter what happens in the valley, Cavanaugh will keep calm and state that the situation reminds him of this other situation that he has been in. Of course, he will want to tell anyone within earshot all about this previous experience. Peter's arms are heavily tattooed with all sorts of seafaring-related images.

Sherlock Tomson is very young to be hanging around these other salty old dogs, but he has been through a lot despite his not having reached his eighteenth year—as the hook that replaces his missing left hand shows.

Together the party of explorers has managed to suitably equip itself for travel and survival in the valley. They have packs with food and travel gear, including warm clothing to fend off the effects of the valley's strange weather, as well as armour and mêlée weapons. Cavanaugh is the only one armed with a missile weapon, a light crossbow. What the group lacks is money. In fact, cash is their motivation for being here.

The player characters will encounter this party after they have already crossed the ridge into the valley and entered the woods. The three sailors will be attempting to hide as the party passes, but as none of them have any appreciable Stealth abilities (Cavanaugh is a 2nd level Fighter, George a 1st level Fighter, Tomson a 0 level man), the chances are that they will be discovered. They will behave as though they can take the party (even if heavily outnumbered), but have no intention of actually fighting—George just does not want to appear to be a soft target.

If engaged in conversation, the trio will explain that they have been wandering the valley for over a week, but have not yet been able to find their way to the mists at its center. They will also say that they have made camp in a cave just below inside of the valley's ridge and have left another colleague, Harold Jones, there to guard it. From their description of the cave's location, the player characters will realize that it matches exactly the point where they entered the valley. None of the player characters will be able to recall seeing a cave anywhere near where they entered the valley. This is because the cave did not exist until mentioned by these men.

George, Cavanagh, and Thomson are so spooked by the strangeness of the valley they are willing to join the player characters as henchmen for a share of any loot found. Of course, the trio will never admit to being unnerved about their current circumstances.

At a certain point, whether entering the mist around the Monolith, or entering another listed encounter area in the valley, or leaving the woods around the valley, the men will simply disappear. If the player characters are not specifically keeping an eye on the men, there will be no explanation. If they are being watched, they will seem to just fade away…

If the cave is sought after meeting the men, it will be easily discovered near where the player characters entered the valley. In the cave is an old campsite with four corpses around it. They will be identifiable as the three that were met earlier, plus another man with eyeballs the size of his fist bulging out of his head. They have been dead for some weeks, and the condition of the corpses and that of their shoes and leather supplies are in tatters with visible teeth marks on them would seem to indicate that the men starved to death.

If this situation is encountered more than once, the sailors will have no recollection of ever having met the player characters previously. They will reappear, if this encounter is rolled more than once, even if the men have been killed during a previous encounter.

TERROR FROM THE DEEP

A shallow brook less than two inches deep during most of the natural year (the time of year the presence of the Monolith defaults to), and maybe four inches deep after a winter thaw, runs through the valley. Because of an anomaly caused by the Monolith's presence, the brook has no definite location and whenever the player characters encounter this brook, they will always encounter the same stretch of it no matter where they are in the valley.

The Monolith has also opened a portal from within the deepest of ocean trenches to the brook. This is a one way gate, from the trench to the brook.

A giant deep-sea anglerfish has discovered this spatial disturbance and has been using it to hunt surface prey, its efforts helped by twenty-five million years of evolution happening instantly the first time it went through the gate. This has given it a tremendous advantage in its natural environment, and it has grown incredibly large (20' around, 40' long) and wise.

There is a 1 in 3 chance that the fish will sense the nearby prey whenever the player characters encounter the brook. When someone (or something) enters the brook, it will surface. There will often be ample warning as the cold, cold deep sea water explodes out of the brook preceding the anglerfish's attack, so normal surprise chances apply.

Giant Anglerfish: AC 14, HD 8, 45 HP, #AT 1 or 2, D 1d8 (bite) or 1d4 + grapple (with 30' long sea plant frond-appearing appendages), ML 9. The appendages are AC 12 and have 8 HP each.

The fish has four dangling filaments, each ending in a transparent luminescent sac which appears to house a very human-like eyeball. The eyeball emanates a power which causes everyone within 30' to be paralyzed; make a saving throw each round to act.

Only by looking directly into the eye will the effect be nullified. Yet because there is only one actual filament/eye and the others are illusory mirror images, there is only a 1 in 4 chance that anyone attacking the anglerfish will be looking into the real eye.

If the fish successfully grapples a character, it will pull that character to it in 2 rounds, and then submerge on the third round to feed. Once this happens, the grappled character dies instantly as he finds himself well beyond crush depth in the deepest sea. This will also happen to any character who is at all touching the fish at the same time that he enters the water (must be submerged to be transported to the deep sea). If a character is already touching the water before touching the fish, he cannot be transported, even if the fish submerges (a character grappled by the fish is of course touching the fish). If the fish somehow is dragged from the water, it will not be able to return to its home as there is no portal from the brook to the trench. As long as the fish remains in the water, it can completely submerge at will and return to the deep sea even as everyone else is in a brook two inches deep.

Note that "touching" can be done with an implement, including weapons, and does not only mean bodily contact.

Because its normal environment is the deep sea, the fish reacts oddly to the air pressure and its skin will pulsate and quiver oddly. If struck for damage by an edged weapon, the internal pressure of the beast will explosively force a great amount of internal viscera through the wound. The fish suffers an extra 1d6 damage from the wound, and the attacker causing the wound (if it was a mêlée attack) must save versus Breath Weapon or take 1d4 damage from being blasted with fish guts and deep sea worms.

Anyone who gets covered in the worms must save versus Poison to avoid ingesting them. If

he fails he swallows several of them, and then the pain begins. The worms burrow into the character's joints, reducing all of his movement rates by 25%. Whenever the character is damaged, the resulting adrenaline release affects the worms according to the amount of damage sustained in that particular instance (instant death effects such as poison count as twice the character's current Hit Point total for this purpose):

1 point The worms release eggs which block blood vessels. The character suffers an additional 1 point of damage.

2 points Worm secretions leak into the eyeball, save versus Poison or be blinded for 1d3 turns.

3 points The worms build up a toxin as a result of this shock, and exactly 24 hours later will release their toxins doing 3 more points of damage (which do not trigger further worm activity).

4 points The damage causes the worms to lock up the character's wrist and finger joints. Any objects held are dropped and the character cannot pick up or hold anything in his hands for 1d4 turns.

5 points The worms release a chemical which causes the host's skin to flash momentarily. Everyone within 10' must make a save versus Paralyzation or be blinded for 1d6 rounds.

6 points The shock to the worms causes the host's skin to instantly erupt in boils which last 1d4 days. These are so sensitive that no armor can be worn or equipment carried anywhere but in the hands or the character lose 1 Hit Point per hour.

7–9 points No immediate effects, but the character's healing will cause a number of worms to burst. Save versus Poison or take 1d4 damage for each point healed.

10–14 points A number of worms rupture, releasing acidic discharge into the body which will prevent any healing (even magical) for 1d6 days.

15–24 points The shock causes the worms to secrete a weird ooze which loosens the host's tendons and ligaments, making it impossible to exert force. Strength and Dexterity modifiers are reduced by 3 each for 24 hours.

25–49 points The massive shock to the system kills all the worms, releasing their fluids into the host body. The effects and damage suffered in this attack are nullified, but the vulnerability caused by the toxins cause the next 2d6 successful attacks against the host to do double damage.

50+ points The worms are liquified by the trauma, releasing energy that not only cancels all effects and damage suffered in this attack, but grants the character full immunity to this attack type in the future.

The effects will continue until the character has taken fifty cumulative points of damage, or a *Dispel Magic* or *Remove Curse* is cast on the character (because of the altered nature of the host fish, this infestation does not count as a mundane disease).

When the fish comes to the brook, the gate it uses travels not only through space, but also through time. Whenever the fish appears, it will have its full Hit Points and will not be suffering from any lingering effects of previous encounters. If the fish is killed, it can still appear the next time that the player characters encounter the brook! In this case, it is simply not possible to kill the fish or remove it from

the water or do anything that would make its appearance impossible for the (from the creature's perspective) later time in which the player characters encountered and killed it. Killing blows simply miss, spells have no effect, and so on, as the timestream works almost as a capricious Game Master to prevent a time paradox from happening.

If a time paradox does occur with the fish, the campaign world and all connected universes fold in on themselves ending everything. Not only is this game over, but the Referee in question can never run an RPG session again, with any system, because all their possibilities have been canceled.

TIMELINES

It is said that every person has a duplicate in every other dimension. This is false. However, nowhere escapes the reach of the Monolith.

If this encounter is rolled, the player characters will encounter a version of themselves from a dimension where the player character group existed. This though, will not be as a set of the traditional duplicates, but rather a single duplicate that amalgamates all of the party's best features—and more! Thus, this group amalgam has the following:

- The highest score from the group for any particular stat.
- As many Hit Points as the entire party (including retainers) has combined.
- All the same spells prepared as every spellcaster in the party had at the beginning of the day.
- The greatest levels in each skill found within the party.
- The fighting ability of the highest level fighter in the party.
- All other abilities at the greatest level found within the party.

- All of the combined memories of the party (with some details being slightly changed, such as "duplicate" parents becoming aunts and uncles).
- Exact copies of every piece of equipment carried by the party. If there are overlaps or duplicates that make no sense, the amalgam merely has the best one. These will not be able to be looted, as they are the exact same pieces of equipment the player characters are already using. However, if a player character loses an item during the fracas, that item can be looted from the amalgam because there is then no duplication.
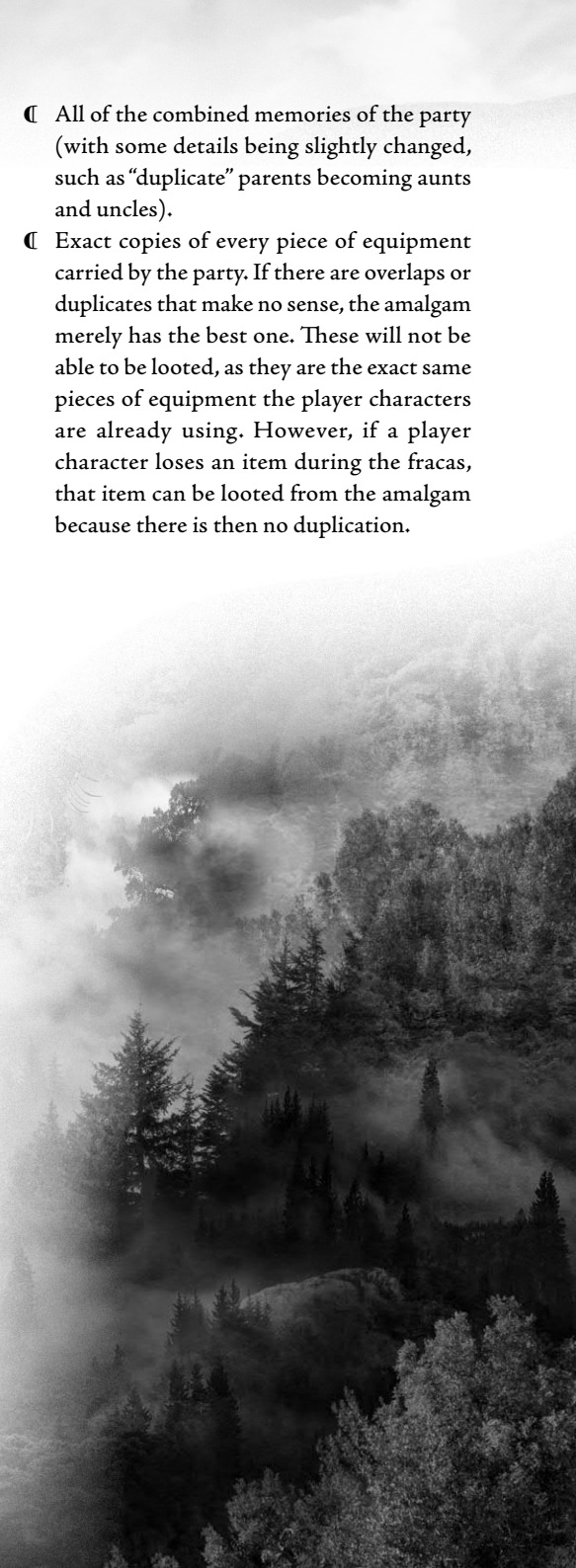
THE MONOLITH

THE MONOLITH is a great slab of material looking like something between a rock and a slab of rotting flesh. It appears approximately 20' tall, but it is impossible to rise above the Monolith. If levitating or flying, or even if the Monolith ends up next to a taller structure (climbing is impossible, see below), the Monolith will always appear to be about 20' taller than where the character currently is. Even if characters are at the same time looking at it from multiple vantage points (say, one is on the ground and another flying 200' in the air), it will appear to be 20' taller than each character's current vantage point.

The Monolith is surrounded by a cloak of mist which extends to a 100' radius around the Monolith, but reaching up only halfway to a height of 10'. While the top of the Monolith can be seen over the mist from some distance away (even from the surrounding ring of hills in most cases), it is only visible through the mist from about 30' away—and then strange things happen. See the section, Seeing the Monolith, below.

A nonexistent yet dangerous entity from within the Monolith, which we shall call The Guardian, is a danger to mortal beings that get within 50' of the thing. See The Guardian, below.

If the Monolith is examined from close range, the surface will seem to shift and morph, with the occasional silently screaming face appearing momentarily.

If someone attempts to touch the Monolith, they will find that it is effectively not there.

They pass straight though where the Monolith seems to be without resistance or affecting the surface of the Monolith. In fact the body part in question is entering the Monolith's world. If the character's head passes into the Monolith (the character's head, specifically the eyes, is what determines whether the character is "in" or "out"), then that character is in the Monolith entirely. See The World Inside the Monolith, below.

SEEING THE MONOLITH

Dwellers of the infinite dimensions seek to infiltrate ours for various reasons. The Monolith, acting as both antenna and transmitter across the infinite voids, allows greater access for these strange travelers.

Most of these interactual explorers are incompatible with our reality, being either unable to successfully exist among matter or simply unable to interact with it on any discernible level.

But there are exceptions.

One race of beings has developed craft which surf rays of light, navigating in our world through the detection of thought waves.

Anyone within 30' of the Monolith will see it clearly, unobscured by the mist. All such characters will automatically be invaded by such lightsurfing craft which travels into the character's eye and through the optic nerve straight into the character's brain. The craft will then receive all of the character's sensory input and thought output. It will have the ability to control the flow of both of these, but these beings are here to study and observe (for now), not interfere. Unless of course, their mission is threatened.

The first craft to land and "dock" in this manner will then charge the character's immune system to repel the trillions of craft riding the light behind it, who will of course all fight to gain control of the body. A great war inside the character's body is fought (instantaneously to our awareness of time, the equivalent of millennia to the nanoscopic cosmic psychonauts involved in the fight). Once a victor is determined, the winning crew (now expanded to an entire civilization within the body) will utilize the character's immune system against other invaders, creating an impregnable fortress for itself.

None of this will be known to the characters involved (but it is not irrelevant—see below). The noticeable effects of seeing the Monolith are taking d4 points of damage (damage from the war) and gaining one level of experience. The character becomes immune to any and all diseases and magical effects (effects from the valley and Monolith still affect the character!), including those granted by magical items. Magic-using characters are still able to cast spells and magical items can still be used.

Note that this magical resistance works against *Dispel Magic*, *Remove Curse*, and similar magic. An *Anti-Magic Shell* would cancel the effects of the invaders, but only while the *Shell* is in effect.

When an inhabited character falls asleep, there is a regime change within, and the observers become possessors. Any similarly afflicted characters within sight of the sleeper also falls asleep as the creatures communicate cross-body and the coup spreads. They will awaken at sunrise, when the observers again gain internal power. Any missing Hit Points are restored, and any injuries (including permanent scars or missing or maimed body parts!) are healed when the character awakens. The character will remember dreaming about the Monolith and flying through a red space among the stars.

While the character sleeps, the possessors are able to charge the body with power, making it effectively invincible in this world. They are

also deeply paranoid, and will use the body to kill any non-possessed intelligent beings that come within 100' of the character.

From the character's point of view, he will awaken in the morning to find himself surrounded by the mutilated remains of whatever victims were present (or who have come along). No one will be spared. The character will be covered in blood and gore; the violence is dealt out his with hands and teeth, not his weapons.

When the characters return to civilization, things will get even worse. If within a solid structure such as a building, the possessors will reset their "kill" boundary to the walls of the structure instead of 100', but everyone within those walls has got to die.

If the characters sleep in an inn, they will wake up to find everyone in the place slaughtered. It might be best dramatically to have no one outside the inn aware, although having someone start thumping on the front door shouting a hearty "Anyone in there?" after the situation sinks in would be particularly stress-inducing (and therefore should be done!).

If staying someplace that is not quite so self-contained (say, a ruler's castle, a military camp, or similar), it will not be so clean. The characters will awaken surrounded by victims, but there will be witnesses who got away. The player characters may find themselves surrounded by a perimeter of scared and angry foes who have witnessed the player characters butcher their friends and comrades in a manner most maniacal.

If the Monolith is closed, the invaders go dormant and all effects cease (including the gained level, magic and disease resistance, nightly blackouts and associated healing), but any healing performed before that time is not undone. The effects resume if the Monolith is reopened.

Note that if a character is pregnant when viewing the Monolith, the child will be born with these creatures living within it, and closing the Monolith will not cause them to go dormant. It kills during sleep as any other infected person would.

THE GUARDIAN

There is one more thing that has learned how to cross through the Monolith into our world. The trick is that it does not exist.

Anyone within 50' of the Monolith (for the Guardian cannot move further from the Monolith than that) will come under attack. It can only attack one target at a time, and it attacks as a 10 Hit Die creature, doing 1d4 points of damage on a hit. It can move anywhere within its 100' diameter area effortlessly, so if there are multiple targets the Referee should randomly determine which is attacked every round.

Physical attacks made against it will simply miss as it is not there. Magical effects will not work either as they operate on our physical reality and this creature is simply somewhere else. Even *Detect Invisibility* will not work as the Guardian is not invisible, it is not there!

Anti-Magic Shell would work in stopping the Guardian's attacks for the duration of the spell, but it will return when the spell ends. Note that if the Monolith is within the spell's area of effect, it will become inert (just another regular weird natural formation) for the duration of the spell, which will have the same effect as closing the Monolith.

While this is in effect a per-round trap of sorts in that someone is likely to be damaged and there is not a lot anyone can do about it, it is important to run the situation as if it was a true combat to keep the players (and their characters!) in the battle frame of mind. Roll to hit for the Guardian, let the players roll to hit (even if they roll a 20 and still miss), and so on—all the usual procedures.

THE
WORLD INSIDE
the MONOLITH

WHEN PASSING INTO (or out of) the Monolith, there is no sense of transition. One moment the character is in one place, and the next everything has changed.

All spell effects expire when passing between the Monolith and the physical world. All effects of the valley, and the possession of the psychonauts, are suspended when a character passes into the Monolith, but are reinstated when passing back to the physical world.

Once inside the Monolith, there is nothing to be seen, but a 15' diameter featureless white tube that goes infinitely forward. There are no branches, splits, turns, no dead ends. Just an infinite maze made up of a single smooth tube.

There is a soft illumination that seems to emanate from the very air and the temperature is quite agreeable.

CHARACTERS
INSIDE
the MONOLITH

Because beings from the physical realm are now in an utterly alien environment, several things will change.

Time does not move here. The presence of the characters is already straining this reality with their concepts of "past, present, and future" interfering with the local reality and making things occur sequentially when they normally do not. Nevertheless, actual time does not pass. Aging does not occur, spells that have any duration at all now last forever (while in

this world, anyway), torches and lanterns never burn out, no food or water is ever needed, nor will they spoil, etc. Any timepiece carried by a character will appear to both be stopped and moving at the same time.

Clerics cannot cast spells, and Cleric spell scrolls do not function. The source of their power cannot penetrate this realm.

Magic-Users cast spells as if they were three times their actual level, and their spells are not expended when they are cast.

Any spells which involve contacting higher beings, other worlds, outer planes, or anything involving communication with or travel out of the Monolith simply do not work.

TRAVEL INSIDE THE MONOLITH

While the world inside the Monolith would seem to be a single infinitely long tube, it is in fact an infinite maze. The way that the characters see upon entering the Monolith is not just a corridor, but The Way.

No matter which way a character faces, the single corridor stretches out before him, with no turns. If the character turns in place, he will see that walls are indeed present, but as soon as the character is still, the tunnel is directly in front of him, as it always was. Even if the character intentionally stops to attempt to look at the wall, the tunnel will be directly in front of him. The walls are indeed present and quite solid if they are touched without being looked at.

A character with closed eyes (or blindfolded or otherwise impaired) becomes trapped as the corridor no longer exists for them; there are only infinite walls. They cannot move, and cannot be led by others as the blinded character cannot pass through the walls which now surround them.

AN EXAMPLE OF TRAVEL WITHIN THE MONOLITH

Bob (playing Jake the Fighter): So we both see this featureless tunnel?

Referee: Yes.

Sarah (playing Veronica the Specialist): I look at the wall to my left.

Referee: There is no wall. It's just a passage going forward.

Bob: I have an idea! We get back to back.

Referee: OK…

Bob: Now we will both walk forward, away from each other.

Referee: Sarah?

Sarah: Yeah, I'll do it.

Bob: After I walk ten paces, I turn around.

Referee: You see a featureless white tunnel going forward into infinity.

Bob: But do I see Sarah's character?

Referee: Oh yes, she's right in front of you. Looking at you.

Bob: What?

Sarah: What do I see?

Referee: You were still walking down the passage, right? You don't see anything, but the passage.
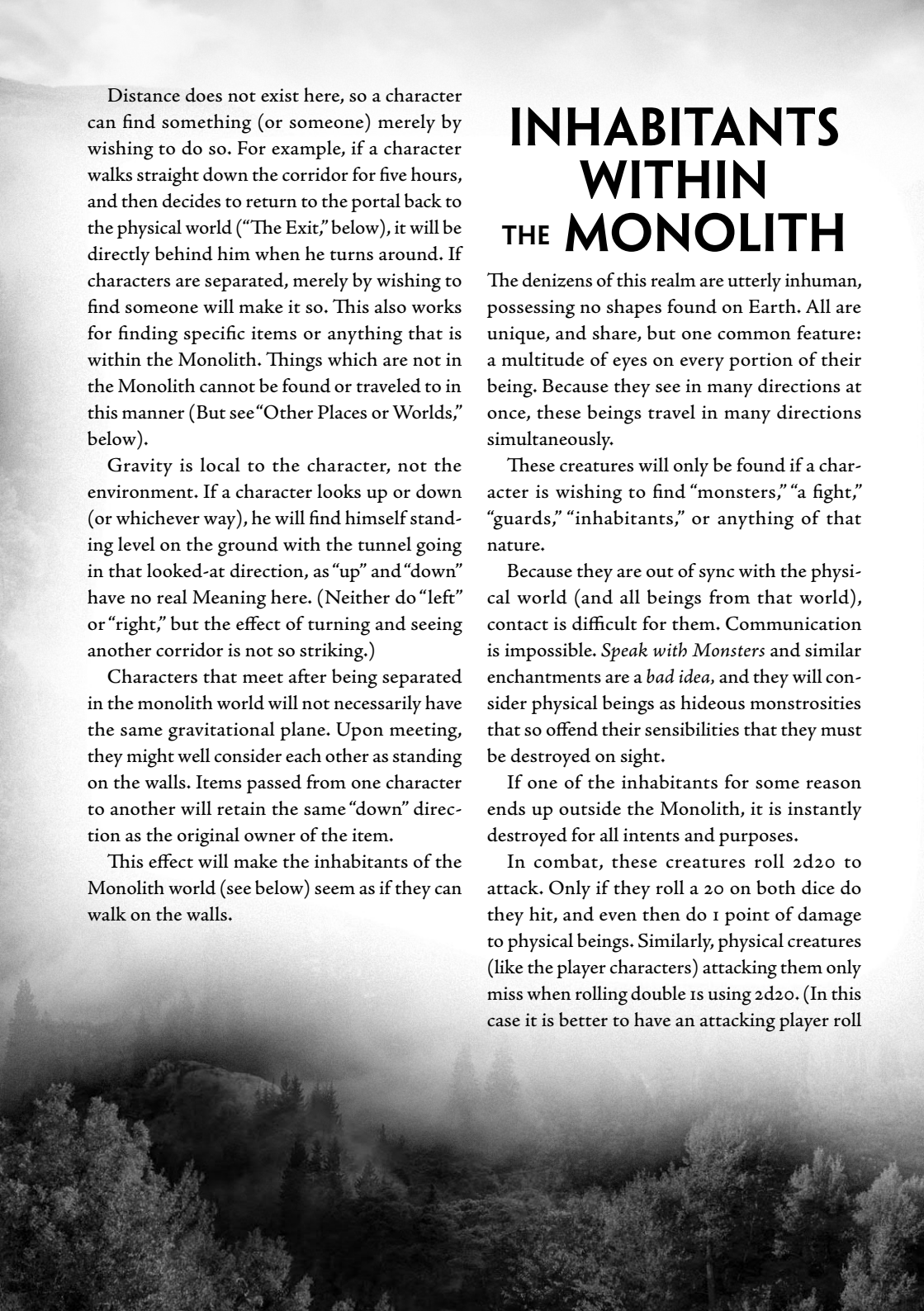
Bob: What? She's right in front of me though?

Referee: Yes.

Sarah: I don't see Bob in front of me?

Referee: Well you do now. You are looking at each other now face to face.

Characters can move in different directions this way, even though none of them can perceive that there is more than one path. Once on a different path, they are separated from the other characters; looking back where the others "were" results in finding yet another empty featureless corridor.

Distance does not exist here, so a character can find something (or someone) merely by wishing to do so. For example, if a character walks straight down the corridor for five hours, and then decides to return to the portal back to the physical world ("The Exit," below), it will be directly behind him when he turns around. If characters are separated, merely by wishing to find someone will make it so. This also works for finding specific items or anything that is within the Monolith. Things which are not in the Monolith cannot be found or traveled to in this manner (But see "Other Places or Worlds," below).

Gravity is local to the character, not the environment. If a character looks up or down (or whichever way), he will find himself standing level on the ground with the tunnel going in that looked-at direction, as "up" and "down" have no real Meaning here. (Neither do "left" or "right," but the effect of turning and seeing another corridor is not so striking.)

Characters that meet after being separated in the monolith world will not necessarily have the same gravitational plane. Upon meeting, they might well consider each other as standing on the walls. Items passed from one character to another will retain the same "down" direction as the original owner of the item.

This effect will make the inhabitants of the Monolith world (see below) seem as if they can walk on the walls.

INHABITANTS WITHIN THE MONOLITH

The denizens of this realm are utterly inhuman, possessing no shapes found on Earth. All are unique, and share, but one common feature: a multitude of eyes on every portion of their being. Because they see in many directions at once, these beings travel in many directions simultaneously.

These creatures will only be found if a character is wishing to find "monsters," "a fight," "guards," "inhabitants," or anything of that nature.

Because they are out of sync with the physical world (and all beings from that world), contact is difficult for them. Communication is impossible. *Speak with Monsters* and similar enchantments are a *bad idea*, and they will consider physical beings as hideous monstrosities that so offend their sensibilities that they must be destroyed on sight.

If one of the inhabitants for some reason ends up outside the Monolith, it is instantly destroyed for all intents and purposes.

In combat, these creatures roll 2d20 to attack. Only if they roll a 20 on both dice do they hit, and even then do 1 point of damage to physical beings. Similarly, physical creatures (like the player characters) attacking them only miss when rolling double 1s using 2d20. (In this case it is better to have an attacking player roll

1d20 and only have him roll again if the first result is a 1. Roll both dice when attacking the player characters though. This should appear more worrying for them than it really is!) One hit from a physical creature will kill, regardless of the weapon used, or the size or power of the combatants.

Monolith inhabitant: AC d10+10, HD d20, #AT d6, D d8/attack, ML 12.

LOCATIONS INSIDE THE MONOLITH

There are unlimited locations in this dimension that are separate from the continuous tunnel—it is an entire universe—but most of what the locations are for and what they are called have no physical world equivalents. Humans and other races from our dimension are incapable of conceiving such things in an abstract sense, let alone imagine them as places. A few places can be discovered by those that think to look for them.

CONTROL ROOM

If there is a wish to find a "Control Room," "Headquarters," "Bridge," "Leader," "Master," or anything of the sort, a character will find himself in an odd corridor: The walls and ceiling are made out of a grey spongy material lined with blue translucent tubing that has some sort liquid flowing through it. Every few seconds lightning travels down the corridor along one of the surfaces in either direction.

The character has, of course, been transported into his own brain. Note that other characters wishing to find the "control room" will be transported to their own brains and will not join the original character. If they are alarmed that the original character disappeared and wish to follow, then they will travel to join that character in that character's brain. They can intentionally enter each other's brains at will as well.

While it will probably be obvious to the players that they are now in a brain-like environment, it is crucial that it not be revealed as to whose brain they are actually in, or even that they are really in someone's brain rather than some brain-looking chamber.

A character's body does not dematerialize when the character goes inside a brain, but it will seem to disappear to anyone present. Those wishing to find the character join him inside whichever brain he inhabits, but if trying to find the character's body specifically will find the character in the middle of a featureless corridor, standing slack-jawed and blank-eyed.

A character in his own brain that realizes where he is can search for forgotten information. Anything that the character has ever heard, seen, experienced, etc. can be found—the Referee must provide such details as to what the character witnessed. This can include maps of explored locations (pieced together from "replaying" the journey), the full "transcript" of every conversation the character has been a part of, etc. Outsiders in a brain can search for such things too, but it takes a long time. Roll a d20 for every turn that the character keeps looking. The information is found only on a natural 20.

Exiting from the brain and returning to the Monolith is merely a matter of wishing to do so if the character is in someone else's head—the character simply re-inhabits his own body as if nothing was amiss. If a character wishes to exit from their own head back to the Monolith, they become disembodied. Their body collapses and immediately goes to 0hp if no one else is inhabiting it. A disembodied character has a chance to permanently leave the physical multiverse (see sidebar).

When a character is disembodied, he sees the Monolith differently. Instead of a featureless corridor, it now seems like an infinite three-dimensional circuit board, with electrical current of an infinite variety of colors streaking this way and that. There is one pathway back to the Monolith as seen by a mortal form. Does the character wish to remain mortal or become one with the multiverse? This is an irreversible decision, and the player should be told that returning allows them to continue playing their current character, while joining the multiverse effectively removes the current character from play and gives an unspecified benefit for the player's next character.

If the player chooses to allow their character to join the true Monolith, the benefit for the next character should be substantial, but never the choice of the player involved. Some ideas:

- The new character begins play with d100/2 % more experience points than the previous character had.
- The new character begins with 0 experience at first level, but only needs half the usual amount of experience to gain levels (do not inform the player of this until after a class has been chosen).
- After the new character's ability scores have been generated and finalized, the player gets to reroll each stat individually until they get a result equal to or greater than the current stat, and then they keep that new roll. If one score was originally 18, it is automatically advanced to 19 (+4 ability score modifier).
- The character distributes 78 points amongst the ability scores (minimum 3, maximum 18 for any stat) instead of rolling.
- All Hit Point rolls for the new character when gaining a level or creating the character are rolled three times. The best roll is kept.
- The new character only fails saving throws on a natural 1.
- The new character's base AC is three points better than normal.
- The new character can read and use Cleric or Magic-User scrolls no matter what the character's class.
- The new character heals four times faster than normal and healing magic is four times as effective on the character.

A disembodied character within the mortal realm of the Monolith travels and perceives as before, but is on the same "reality wavelength" as the Monolith inhabitants now. A reaction roll must be made when coming into contact with the inhabitants. If the reaction is neutral, the character is still alien to the creature and will be ignored. If positive, the Monolith creature will be very friendly and be happy to discuss much about the Monolith, however the character must make a saving throw versus Magic or take 1d4 points of damage as the conversation rends his psyche. If the reaction roll is negative, the creature is hostile and will attack. All physical contact with Monolith inhabitants for a disembodied character is now real. The disembodied character is assumed to use his Charisma score as Hit Dice, with attacks doing 1d4+Intelligence modifier damage when in combat with Monolith inhabitants.

Monolith inhabitant: AC d10+10, HD d20, #AT d6, D d8/attack, ML 12.

Traveling into another character's brain can be done automatically, but returning to one's own brain after becoming disembodied is more of a chore. If nobody else is in the character's mind, the character must make a saving throw versus Magic to re-enter. Failure does not prevent re-entry, but it does drain d100 experience points for every point the save was failed by on the roll. If someone else is in the character's mind, the re-entry of the character causes the formation of a guardian (see below), but there is a split as the guardian and the character exist as separate entities, each with full power, and the guardian must be defeated before the character can re-inhabit his own body.

A character inside another's brain can attempt all sorts of shenanigans, as the blood flow and electrical activity can be usurped. However, the mind is guarded. If a character exists in normal consciousness and another attempts to enter his brain, this guardian will be an avatar of the character's mind. It will defend against any tampering (anyone can loiter or search memories without harassment). Psychic combat is done as follows:

- ☾ Each side rolls 1d10, plus level, plus Charisma score.
- ☾ The loser of this roll loses 1d4 Charisma points. On a tie both lose 1d4 Charisma.
- ☾ When Charisma falls below 3, the mental avatar vanishes and the character falls unconscious. If Charisma falls to 0 or below the character dies.
- ☾ If multiple characters are involved, then each duels individually (for example, in a two-on-one situation, the outnumbered character gets to roll against each of his opponents).
- ☾ Lost Charisma returns at a rate of one point per day (this recovery will not be accelerated by any means).

If a character must fight his own avatar in his brain, then the fight happens as normal, but the Charisma losses are tracked separately for the avatar and the "real" consciousness of the character. The avatar's Charisma is "phantom," and the destruction of the avatar does not affect the character as a whole as long as the "real" character's consciousness is present.

Mind-affecting magics such as *Charm Person* do not function within the brain as the micro-scale of the casters in this state cannot overcome the macro-blah blah blah. (No normal brain spells while already inhabiting someone else's brain, OK?)

A character within his own brain can properly retake control of his body by wishing to see out his own eyes or otherwise wishing to assume full and normal control; this realigns the character's consciousness with his body and all returns to normal. Another character which has defeated the brain's guardian can also do this, completely becoming the character in every way while retaining his own consciousness (but that character's original body remains inert).

A character can interrupt the electrical charges moving through the brain by inserting a metal object into the electric pathways. If someone is holding the object as electricity passes thought it (the charges occur in any particular spot several times a minute), two things happen: The character whose head is being inhabited loses d100 × character level experience points, and these points are gained by the one holding the metal object. That character must make a saving throw versus Breath Weapon or suffer d6 × character level points of damage from the psychic feedback.

The blood vessels in the brain can likewise be tampered with. Puncturing the veins has no real result, as they seal soon enough. Causing major damage is another matter entirely, and this will do 1d4 points of damage to the

brain's owner. Drinking this blood transfers some essence of the victim to the drinker: The victim must make a saving throw versus Paralyzation or lose one point from a random ability score (permanently!), with the drinker receiving one hundred experience points per level of the victim. This blood can also be collected in a container and brought out of the brain. Splashing the liquid on the ground (and it must be all of the blood collected, not just a few drops…) will grow a complete replica of the original character (*sans* equipment) who will have the same attitudes as the original except it will have a violent burning hatred of its duplicate.

Of course a character can just start randomly vandalizing the brain matter around him; this does 1hp damage to the targeted character per round.

If a character dies (bodily or mentally) while someone (even himself) is inside his brain, all activity stops and everything goes dark. Whoever is inside the brain (including the character who owns the body) must make a saving throw versus Paralyzation (Charisma modifiers apply) or die as well.

Entering the brain of a Monolith native results in the character needing to overcome its mental projection just as if the player characters are trying to overtake each others' brains. The stats this time are real and there are no special rules (use the creature's usual Hit Points and not any experience total)—the playing field is now even.

Monolith inhabitant: AC d10+10, HD d20, #AT d6, D d8/attack, ML 12.

Nothing of human or near-human value can be gained from the brains of these creatures. Too alien.

THE EXIT

The exit from the Monolith to the physical world is simply a hole in the passageway, with the mist that surrounds the Monolith in the physical world giving the hole a very dreamy veil. A great stone door (opening into the Monolith) stands open beside the hole.

The door of the Monolith can be shut by anyone or anything inside the corridor quite easily. When this door is closed, the Monolith ceases to exist in the physical world. It, the fog, the Guardian, and all time/space effects of the valley end, and any lingering effects or cranial habitation occurring in characters disappear as if they never were.

Any being from the physical world who touches this door from the inside of the Monolith is utterly immune to magic and immune from attack by inhabitants of the Monolith world. Further, the inhabitants cannot open the door if it is being held by a physical being from the inside.

If the door is opened again, all previous conditions and effects are immediately reinstated, no matter where or when the previously afflicted characters are.

A character cannot hold the door or fasten anything to the door while leaving the Monolith. The character is either in or out. Fastening a grapple to the door, for example, and then attempting to leave and pull the door shut will not work, as once the character leaves the Monolith there is no connection between that character and anything inside.

If someone is foolish enough to cast *Dispel Magic, Dispel Evil, Anti-Magic Shell,* or any similar spells on the door from the inside, the entire portal will blow open as the barrier between worlds disintegrates. The entire valley outside will cease to exist in an apocalyptic explosion, leaving only a permanent rift between the worlds. The creatures inside the Monolith will be made flesh (the stats given

when characters have organic material exposed are now used in all cases) and will surge towards the gaping wound between worlds and will flood into the world at the rate of thousands every hour.

The door cannot be shut (or opened for that matter) from outside the monolith.

HEALING ROOM

If a character searches for a place to rest or heal, they will find themselves in a small chamber (with a featureless white tunnel exit visible in any direction a character looks), in the middle of which is a featureless round pod, one side open.

Any character inside the pod when the door is closed falls into a deep slumber. Upon awakening, the character will be fully healed and can open the door and exit the pod. Roll on the following chart to find out how long the sleep lasts:

1	The character is awake and out of the pod before the door is closed.
2	d6 rounds
3	3d6 rounds
4	d100 rounds
5	d12 turns
6	3d12 turns
7	d12 hours
8	d100 hours
9	d10 days
10	d100 days
11	d4 years
12	Forever

This is the time as perceived by those outside the pod; the character inside the pod does not notice the passage of time.

The pods are completely opaque, and nothing that happens outside the pod can awaken the character; only opening the door can do that. If the door is opened before the sleeper awakens, roll on the following table to determine what happens to the character being forced awake:

1	System Shock!
	Reroll the character's regular Hit Point total.
2	Interrupted Dream:
	The character will attack the one who opened the pod (and anyone who attempts to interfere) for 1d4+1 rounds.
3	Sneaking Home!
	The character is naked, and any possessions the character had no longer exist.
4	Wet Dream:
	The character is now deeply in love with and most visibly in lust with the character opening the door.
5	I Didn't Study!
	The character loses a level.
6	I'm (Not) a Girl!
	Character's physical sex changes.
7	Flying!
	The character will be able to fly (base 480' rate) for as long as the sleep would have lasted.
8	Falling!
	It is common knowledge that if you do not wake up before completing a fall in a dream, you will never wake up. And you have just landed as the door is opened. The character suffers damage as if just having fallen from 1d6x10' height.
9	That Was Brilliant Oh Crap I Can't Remember It Anymore!

Character can make a saving throw versus Magic to attempt to solve a single conundrum.

10	Stabbed in the Back:
	At one future time when the awakened character depends on another character present when the pod was prematurely opened, the Referee calls for a saving throw versus Poison (Referee decides which character rolls). Failure means the awakened character will be betrayed in the worst possible way.
11	I Dreamed the Future and Can Change It:
	At any one point the character in question can dictate what happens with a five word sentence, with no rolls necessary to be completed. Any more words and the Referee can instead dictate with a ten word sentence, any less words and the Referee can add as many words of his choosing to the sentence. Such sentences must be directly relevant to whatever situation the character is in at the time.
12	I Dreamed I Visited a Small Town with Weird, Hostile Residents and I was Chased, but I Escaped but then I Returned and Turned into a Fish Man! Nothing happens.

If the pod is destroyed, the character resting inside is not actually in it, and is safely resting in another pod in another healing room.

If multiple characters want to rest, they will find themselves in their own rooms with one pod each. If a character does not want to rest, but wants to find one of the other characters, they will find the room filled with hundreds of identical pods—the player characters are not the only ones in the Monolith. The first pod opened will always be the one containing the originally sought character.

None of the other pods contain physical-world beings.

If two (or more) characters are ever in the same pod when the door closes, they will combine into one being—twisted, deformed, with the weakest ability scores and class features of each of the original characters. Randomly determine which personality retains control of the body.

OTHER PLACES OR WORLDS

When facing the exit (while open) and wishing to be somewhere other than the valley where the Monolith begins the adventure, the Monolith can be transported wherever the wisher desires. Time and distance are no obstacles; this thing can be anywhere and anywhen.

The only restriction is that the Monolith can only appear outdoors, with no artificial construction within 30'. It cannot be made to appear within a castle, palace, or dungeon, to name some examples, but it can be made to be a short distance outside of these things.

The mist and Monolith Guardian are also transported with the Monolith, and all those seeing the Monolith are subject to its regular effects.

Note that if the Monolith moves to another world, it is considered "closed" to those in other worlds. Moving the Monolith back to a world where it previously existed makes the Monolith "open" to the people in that world again.

THE PAST

Because time has no meaning within the Monolith, characters can find places, people, and things at will along The Way, but it may also find them at any point in their existence. Whatever is done in the past is actually also being done in the present, so whatever changes are made are experienced real-time without affecting anything else.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE PLAYTEST OF THIS MODULE

One player had already decided to splatter the head of Carter Holmes (see below) after deciding nothing good could come of it. Later on, after the splattering player character had tried to go to sleep and ended up with long grey hair, all the player characters were standing around the destroyed head debating what to do. One player character wanted to retrieve the head so looked for the past when it was intact. She saw the original player character before her (as he originally was), ready again to destroy the head. She jumped at him to stop him, and found herself against the character as he was later on with the long hair. Carter's head was therefore intact on the floor. The other player characters watched this happening, not noticing any transition, but seeing it all as if it was always that way.

If a character wants to return to a specific point in time, even for moments that happened within the Monolith, it happens.

THE FUTURE

Time does not move by itself in the Monolith, but if someone with a sense of time (remember the player characters and their world are utterly unique in the multiverse because they sequence and measure time!) wishes it, time will move.

After traveling to the future, one random person present will be dead, their blood splattered all over the survivors. Everyone else will have aged 1d100 years (check each character individually). One random present person will gain 1d8 levels, just so there is someone to argue against simply traveling back to the past.

ADVENTURE

If a character finds the Monolith a little too strange and expresses a desire for something a little more normal (not to be confused with a desire to find "monsters" or "a fight," which is handled above), the Monolith will accommodate. Go to your library of adventure modules—do not exclude any on basis of system or genre—and randomly select one. Flip to a random page. The character is now there. All continuing effects of the Monolith apply.

Different characters wishing this, even at the same time, will be transported to different adventures.

Characters must discover where the Monolith is in their new world and physically travel to it in order to again be together in the same reality.

SOLUTION

Wishing to find "the solution to the adventure," whether expressed in in-character terms or out-of-character meta-game terms, will bring the character to The Exit.

ARMORY/WEAPON

Wishing to find an armory or desiring something of martial value will bring a character to an infinitely large chamber (with a featureless white tunnel exit visible in any direction a character looks), in the center of which is suspended a chest-sized case made of unknown transparent material.

The case has no apparent openings or hinges. It is indestructible, but one panel will pop right open if anyone wants to open it. Inside is a rather grotesque 10' otherworldly being most closely resembling tapeworm, perhaps 1 cm in diameter. It writhes and convulses in the case as if it is in its death throes. If anyone approaches the case it will appear aggressive, ramming into the side of the case attempting to get at those nearby.

Next to the case is a 6' tall (or 100' tall; who can say?) pylon covered with runes. A *Read Magic* spell is necessary to decipher them at all. Even with a *Read Magic* they will be mostly unintelligible (understanding them would undo a mortal mind) except for one line/concept:

"*This is a weapon of great power. Its wielder is also its sheath.*"

If the case is opened the worm will immediately move to "interface" with the one opening it. A save versus Paralyzation is required to avoid this fate, otherwise the worm will enter the character through the most convenient orifice. If the save is successful (remember no save is necessary if a character does not resist!), the worm is exposed for the round so normal combat is possible. After the first failed attempt, the worm will randomly choose among those present for another would-be host.

After invading a host, the worm will enter into a psychic battle for control with the character, who must make a save versus Magic to dominate the worm's will.

A being occupied by the worm gains the following benefits (which will become known to the host after the "interface"):

☾ While the worm is inside its host, animals (including physical-world monsters which possesses no supernatural abilities) will find the character repulsive. Such creatures will not consider the character suitable prey and will avoid being close to the character, even fleeing the area if necessary (but would still defend a lair or fight to protect young). Any companion animals (trained dogs, etc.) will no longer be obedient, however. Other humans (but not demi-humans or humanoids!) will be uncomfortable with the character when in close contact. This is only a minor inconvenience in most social situations, but intimate contact with

the character will be absolutely out of the question.

ℂ The worm is immune to all attacks from slimes, oozes, jellies, goops, and similar type creatures. In the presence of this type of creature (within 30' or so), the worm will vacate the host body (again, by the most convenient orifice) and drink it (taking one round per Hit Die of the slime, ooze, or whatever). It will then return to the host, who will then need no food or water for a number of days equal to the hit dice of the absorbed slime creature as the worm's waste excretions nourish its host.

ℂ In combat, the host can command the worm to vacate its body and fight.

ℂ The host may receive an occasional adrenaline rush from the worm. Damage inflicted by the host after a successful mêlée attack can be rerolled once per day.

ℂ If the host won the initial battle of wills (and there is only one attempt allowed), it can direct the worm to invade another intelligent being within 30'. If the target fails a paralyzation save, it must then make a save versus Magic or be *Charmed* by the original host. If the paralyzation save is made, the target can attack the worm. If the magic save is made, the worm will vacate the intended victim and return to its host.

There are of course drawbacks (which will not be known to the host):

ℂ Any retainers, followers, or others employed by the infested character must make a loyalty check upon witnessing the worm entering the host here. If the loyalty check is failed they will desert the character at the first safe opportunity.

ℂ Any non-Chaotic NPC (not counting those who saw the original infestation in the Monolith, those are covered in the previous point) witnessing the worm entering or exiting the host will be repulsed and will be actively hostile to the interests of the character, and immediately violent if being so does not seem immediately suicidal. Chaotic NPCs must roll a positive reaction check to continue associating with the character (no roll is necessary if a Chaotic NPC has a vested interest in continuing the association).

ℂ If the host is ever *Charmed* or otherwise controlled, the worm will consider the caster/controller of that effect to be its new true host and will vacate the current character when the spell or effect ends.

The Worm: AC 18, MOVE 240', HD 2, 9 HP, #AT 1, D orifice infiltration or d6, ML 12.

THE HEAD OF CARTER HOLMES

If anyone in the party thinks to look for "treasure," "reward," a "spellbook," or anything of the sort (or "someone in here to talk to," "prisoner," "human inhabitant," "someone else," "head in a jar," or anything similarly appropriate), they will find themselves entering a round chamber. In the center is a pedestal (made of the same material as the walls of the Monolith's world), its top covered by a black cloth of unknown composition (worth 100sp if sold).

Under the cloth is a head in a bell jar. Once the cloth is removed, the head's eyes will snap open and the head will begin to speak.

The head belongs to Carter Holmes, and he has been under that cloth for what feels to him like eternity—and indeed it has been eternity by any standard of measurement outside the Monolith.

Holmes is mad from his experience and rather upset about not having a body. He desperately wishes to die, and if he cannot convince the player characters to kill him outright, he will further tempt them. He will claim he is an evil person (true) who got what he deserved when he was beheaded (true) and brought into the Monolith, and now deserves death (also true!). He will list his crimes and misdemeanors (the Referee is free to invent these so as to most effectively enrage his players) in hopes that the player characters will want to destroy him. If they still do not, or show signs of just leaving him to his face, he will point out that eating parts of his brain will imbue some of his magical knowledge in the devourer.

Carter's brain can only transfer power if Carter is still alive when the particular piece of brain is removed. Smashing Carter's head open will kill him, so more creative ways of getting to the brain must be discovered. Carefully pulling brains out through the nose or ear will work, as will cracking open his skull in a pseudo-surgical manner. Holmes will feel this as any

other person would, and will both scream in agony and encourage the characters on as this happens.

Ten brain bits may be picked from w head before he expires. Or the Referee can roll 1d10 for every bit of brain removed, and if the roll is equal to or less than the number of brain bits picked, Carter dies. As parts of his brain are removed, Carter's speech will degrade, beginning with a slur and ending up as completely unintelligible groaning. The Referee is encouraged to make this as horrific and disturbing for the players as possible.

Once he dies, the rest of his brain becomes inert and can pass on no knowledge.

If a piece of brain containing magical knowledge is consumed, roll on the following table to determine what power is gained from it:

1–8	*Fast Blood* spell
9–16	*In Place* spell
17–24	*Long Arm* spell
25–32	*Lost* spell
33–40	*Pass Door* spell
41–48	*Time Insertion* spell
49–56	Agelessness effect
57–64	Fast Healing effect
65–72	Fast Reflexes effect
73–80	Moving Between the Lines effect
81	Insight into Human Relations
82	Insight into Combat and Violence
83	Insight into Magical Research
84	Insight into Love and Romance
85	Insight into Navigation
86	Loving Memories of Fluffy the Cat
87	Memories of Performing Vivi sections on Humans for "Magical Research"
88–89	Treasure!
90–100	No Useful Memory (Referee: Invent some utterly mundane thing like eating lunch)

If a piece of brain is merely swished around in the mouth, licked, or otherwise tasted without being eaten, the knowledge contained within the brain bit will become known but the actual knowledge will only be passed to the person that eats it. If a piece of brain is split, it loses the ability to give knowledge to anyone—no sharing!

Eating a piece of brain that gives a spell, effect, or insight changes a character's alignment to Chaotic. Players should be informed of this before their characters decide to have their snack.

All effects are permanent. Because the effects come from Carter's sorcerous past and have nothing to do with the Monolith, spells such as *Remove Curse* will remove these effects, and all results from eating Carter's brain will not be dispelled by the closing of the Monolith.

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The following spells can be memorized simply by eating the appropriate portion of Holmes' brains. The spell can then be cast by the character. Non Magic-User characters will effectively have a one-use spell. Magic-User characters, if they do not cast the spell, can instead choose to transcribe the spell into their spellbook as if the memorized spell was a scroll.

FAST BLOOD

Magic-User Level 2
Duration: Instantaneous
Range: Touch
The subject of this spell can complete an action, any action, in the blink of an eye. Searching a room, reading a book, whatever the task is, it is done instantly. However, only tasks which could be completed by the subject in a day's time can be completed (although a day's work towards a longer task can be instantly done through this spell). This does not create or mitigate the need for any supplies or other costs.

IN PLACE

Magic-User Level 1
Duration: 1d6 + level rounds
Range: 10'/level
This spell causes the subject, if a saving throw versus Paralyzation is failed, to become rooted in place. The character can still move otherwise, including making attacks and defending himself, but his feet will not leave the ground (or slide across it) under any circumstances. This condition remains true even if the surface stood upon is normally loose or itself not connected to the ground; for the duration of the spell, the character and everything that he is standing upon stays put.

LONG ARM

Magic-User Level 1
Duration: 1d6 + level rounds
Range: Touch
The subject of this spell is able to make mêlée attacks against those that are 10' per level of the caster away from them as if they were in normal mêlée range. Those attacked by means of this spell are not able to respond with their own mêlée attacks if they cannot reach the attacker.

This spell does not allow attacks if there are any impediments other than distance between the attacker and his target. It does not allow attacks through walls, around corners, etc.

LOST

Magic-User Level 3
Duration: 1 day/level
Range: 10'/level
If the subject of this spell fails a saving throw versus Magic, they will be unable to move in the direction they intend to for the duration of the spell. If they do not have direct line of sight with their destination, then whenever they make a decision to move in a particular direction they will instead move in a random direction as determined by the Referee.

PASS DOOR

Magic-User Level 1
Duration: Instantaneous
Range: Touch

This spell causes the subject to be instantly transported to the other side of a closed or locked portal. The subject must be directly before the portal in question. The subject must make a saving throw versus Magic or else be stunned for 1d4 rounds after being transported.

This spell does not open the portal and provides no means to return back through the locked portal. Of course, if the subject is a Magic-User, he could re-cast this spell to pass back through.

Note that if the Monolith door is closed, this spell cannot be used to move past it as there is nothing beyond the door when it is closed. Alternately, the Referee can rule that the spell works and the caster merely ceases to exist.

TIME INSERTION

Magic-User Level 3
Duration: Instantaneous
Range: Touch

The subject of this spell is able to take one extra round of action for every level of the caster. These actions happen instantaneously, as the character is moving between time and cannot be seen or stopped.

None of the actions can involve attacking a living being any way or attempting to cast a spell during the inserted time. Doing so causes time to "catch up" to the moment when the extra actions were inserted and the spell ends immediately no matter how many rounds of actions the subject was supposed to be able to make.

❖

The following effects are automatically gained by eating the appropriate portion of Holmes' brain. These effects, both positive and negative,

If any recipient of these abilities seem a little too pleased about them, gently remind them that Carter Holmes obviously had all of these abilities and it did not do him much good.

can never be turned off, and for all intents and purposes become a natural part of the character's makeup. Note that a character tasting the brain bit will discover only the benefits of the particular ability, and *not* the drawback.

AGELESSNESS

The recipient of this bit of brains will no longer age or be subject to degenerative diseases. Barring a violent demise or infection, the character will live forever.

If the character is at less than maximum Hit Points when the Agelessness brain bit is devoured, the current Hit Point amount becomes the new maximum as the enchantment assumes the current condition as the normal baseline.

Due to the character's mind and body becoming more resistant to change, every time the character gains a level he must make a saving throw versus Magic or else gain no Hit Points for that new level.

If subjected to an aging effect, there may be overcompensation. The intended effect will never happen to the character, however a saving throw versus Magic must be made or else the character's age moves in the opposite direction as intended. For example, if some enchantment is supposed to age a character by d10 years, the character must make a Magic save or grow physically d10 years younger.

FAST HEALING

The character's natural healing processes will move faster, allowing the gain of an additional

Hit Point per night, or an additional two Hit Points per full day of rest.

However, every time magical healing is used, the character must make a saving throw versus Magic or the healing has only half effect.

FAST REFLEXES

The recipient will now have preternatural reflexes, giving them a +1 Dexterity modifier and a +1 to all individual initiative rolls. *Haste* type spells will have double the effect (but not duration) on the character, and *Slow* type spell effects will not be effective at all (but note that physical conditions which slow the character down will still hinder the character).

The character will also age twice as fast as usual (including aging effects having twice their usual power) and require twice as much food as other characters.

MOVING BETWEEN THE LINES

Any time the character wishes to move through a space otherwise too small (slipping between the bars of a cell or cage, fitting through a mouse hole, slipping out of manacles, squeezing under a door, and so on), the character simply does so if a successful saving throw versus Paralyzation is made.

However, if a 1 is rolled on the saving throw, the character is trapped between physical dimensions and cannot leave the confined space until a *Remove Curse, Dispel Magic,* or similar spell is cast, and even then the character will expand to fill the space, which may be painful or even deadly depending upon the circumstance.

———◆◆◆———

The following insights are misconceptions that Carter Holmes holds to be true. Eating these particular bits of Carter's brain will instill these misconceptions in the character's attitudes permanently. Tasting the brain bits will merely let the taster know that it contains the appropriate sort of insight; the fact that these are delusions will not be revealed.

INSIGHT INTO HUMAN RELATIONS

Carter Holmes was a diplomat and a manipulator, but also rather gullible. He believed himself too clever to fall for his own tricks, and because of this he became a disembodied head. The character who eats this portion of his brain will become a masterful liar, with NPCs having to make a saving throw versus Magic in order to see through any lie told with confidence. Conversely, the character must himself make the same saving throw, or he will believe any lie told to him with confidence.

INSIGHT INTO COMBAT AND VIOLENCE

Carter was a vicious and patient man. In his proper life, he wasted no motion, and struck always to deadly effect. In combat, a character that has eaten this portion of Holmes' brain must save versus Paralyzation at the start of every combat. If the save is failed, the character suffers a −2 penalty on all to-hit rolls, but will score +2 damage on a successful hit.

INSIGHT INTO MAGICAL RESEARCH

Carter was always good at making potions and scrolls from spells he already knew, but absolute crap at adapting the works of other Magic-Users for his own use. A character who eats this part of the brain will take only half as long to create potions and scrolls, but half again as long to transcribe spells into his spellbook from scrolls and other Magic-Users' spellbooks.

INSIGHT INTO LOVE AND ROMANCE

Carter Holmes was, once upon a time, a chauvinist pig. He believed all women wanted to exist for

the sake of men, and accordingly, he treated them as belongings. While interacting with people, he will not behave that way now (being stuck with no body under a hood in a jar makes certain distinctions unimportant…), but the ideas are there in his head, just waiting for a full and living body chemistry with which to interact.

If a character eats this portion of Carter's brain, Carter's attitudes will melt into the character's personality. He (or she—the distinction is worth making here) becomes unable to interact maturely and appropriately with women. Reaction rolls of 10 or less are given a −3 penalty (most women will be disgusted with the character) while a natural 11 or 12 will remain as rolled and inspire more interest and loyalty than such a result would normally indicate (some women like that sort of thing and just do not get enough of it…).

INSIGHT INTO NAVIGATION

Carter had no sense of direction and was also missing the sense to realize this, so he was often lost. Yet paradoxically, he had a masterful sense of spatial geometry. A character who eats this part of the brain has double the chances of getting lost in the wilderness, but underground will be able to make absolutely accurate maps while moving at the normal exploration speed.

LOVING MEMORIES OF FLUFFY THE CAT

Carter loved his feline companions, Fluffy the Cat in particular. Unknown to Carter, Fluffy was the Devil's familiar sent to monitor Holmes' studies, and its influence is still present in Carter's brain, bundled with his favorable memories of the cat. This causes the character eating this part of the brain to be considered an infernal creature (Chaotic!) for purposes of spells and effects, but the Devil's protection also allows the character to roll all saving throws twice, taking the better result.

MEMORIES OF PERFORMING VIVISECTIONS ON HUMANS FOR "MAGICAL RESEARCH"

Carter was a vile man who held no respect for life. In his time, he murdered hundreds of people on his examination table for the sake of his research (never mind the body count he has left in other situations) and is an expert on human anatomy and how people react to pain.

When attacking in combat, the character who has eaten this portion of Holmes' brain will roll damage twice and use the better result. However, if left alone with any neutral or hostile NPC, the character must roll 1d20, with a result of 1 indicating that the character will attempt kill the NPC and begin dissecting him, no matter how inopportune a time it is to do so. When entering a crowd, there is a 1% chance the character will see someone that Carter would have considered "perfect" for research, and the character will stalk them and seek to vivisect them.

TREASURE!

This piece of Carter's brain tastes like gold, and if a character eats it his teeth will all turn to solid gold. Each tooth (and humans normally have 32 teeth) is worth 250 sp, but of course a tooth can only be sold (or counted for experience purposes) if it is pulled out of the character's head.

If someone attempts to jump into Carter's head (as per the "Control Room" description), they will find his mental self is well protected: Carter Holmes was a 16th level Magic-User with a vast array of spells. He also has multiple personalities, developed over the aeons, as he had no one to communicate with and nothing to look at, so there will be a total of 1d6+2 16th level Magic-Users, each with different spells, ready to defend Carter's mind.

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