



THE CURSE

OF THE **STATUETTES**



An Adventure for





THE CURSE

OF THE *STATUETTES*



An Adventure for **Tails of EQUESTRIA**

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Starlight shone through the clouds, spilling a pale glow across the Badlands. As she stood amongst the jagged silhouettes of cliffs and crags, a cool breeze fluttered through Moonbeam's cloak and mane. The Unicorn pony did not move. She had not moved for five minutes.

Her eyes were closed, her head raised, the hood of her cloak sliding back over her ears. Fwoosh. The soft crackling of Unicorn magic broke the night's silence as her horn ignited in shimmering electric blue.

"There it is again," Moonbeam whispered to herself. "The strange magic energy... it's coming from that cave!" She opened her eyes. Set deep into the base of the Dustmane Ridge, the mouth of the cave loomed before her, and a powerful magic presence pulled her towards it.

A brilliant ray of light from Moonbeam's horn pierced the pitch black interior of the cave, casting strange flickering shadows against the rock walls. Illumination did nothing to make the cave look more inviting.

Moonbeam felt a flicker of doubt, but quickly dismissed it. "No, I can't stop now; not after everything I've been through," she thought. "I have to find the source!" The clapping of her hooves against stone echoed down through the cave as she crossed the threshold.

Moonbeam soon lost track of how much time she was spending in the cave. Wandering through countless caverns and passageways, she descended deep beneath the mountains, stopping every few minutes to pick up the trail of the magic source. Deeper and deeper she went, passing pools of inky water and thick patches of unfamiliar fungi. She began to find small trinkets and stone artifacts engraved with strange carvings. "These look old, ancient even," she whispered. "Looks like nopony has been here in hundreds of years!"

Her horn lit up once more as she felt the magic drawing her near, more powerful than ever. "Soon that power shall be mine, and then nopony will be able to refuse me!" Her determination bolstered, Moonbeam pressed on into a deeper cavern.

Suddenly she gasped and stopped dead in her tracks. Towering before her, built into a high cavern wall, was a great circular stone door carved with intricate patterns. Standing before it, Moonbeam could almost feel magic power humming in the air around her. The door glowed gently as if in greeting. A grin spread slowly across Moonbeam's muzzle and her eyes grew wide.

"I've found it..."

INTRODUCTION

The magical land of Equestria is a place filled with friendship and wonder, but recently it has been afflicted with a strange problem. All across the land, ponies have been suddenly transforming into miniature statuettes of themselves with absolutely no warning or obvious reason.

To determine the magical source of the so-called 'Curse of the Statuettes,' Princess Twilight Sparkle and her closest friends have left Ponyville for the distant Badlands, a barren, rocky region of Equestria. Despite their best efforts, they have gotten into big trouble, and the Pony Characters (PCs) will need to launch a rescue mission, racing after them into the Badlands.

While there, they will have to contend with the harsh landscape, unpredictable weather, and a menagerie of dangerous creatures! They'll also have to deal with ancient magical artifacts, relics of Equestria's forgotten history, and mysterious shadowy figures—not to mention nefarious archaeologists!

This is an adventure module for *My Little Pony: Tails of Equestria*. It is intended to be a direct follow-on from *The Pet Predicament*, an adventure found in the main *Tails of Equestria* rulebook. However, it is not essential to have played *The Pet Predicament* first (though that is a great way for the game master (GM) and players to learn how to play!) *The Curse of the Statuettes* can also be used as a standalone adventure, or as part of a longer series—whatever your gaming group prefers!

The Curse of the Statuettes is for pony characters of Level 2—characters of a higher level may find themselves overcoming many of the challenges in the adventure easily, so if you want to play with higher level ponies, the game master should increase the difficulty, or frequency, of the tests and challenging encounters. Try raising test difficulty by one or two levels for a more difficult adventure, but bear in mind the PCs' current dice values—making it too hard won't be fun for the players! Feel free to adjust the difficulty as you play.

This book is intended to help you—the game master—tell a story with your players, but it's not meant to be the be-all and end-all! We encourage you to customize and improvise as you go, reacting to the actions of the players. It will help to be familiar with the rules of *Tails of Equestria* so you don't have to stop and look up anything in the middle of the game—if you forget a rule, make a decision on the fly and keep the story moving. That way it will be more fun for everyone! You should make sure to read through the whole adventure before you start playing so you're familiar with the storyline; this will help you understand how the actions of the players will affect the bigger picture.

Reading the 'Adventure Overview' is a good place to start, as it will outline the main progression of the storyline including important characters, locations, and events, as well as tips on how to run the game.

Before you start, remember this: There is no winning or losing in a game of *Tails of Equestria*. The goal is to tell a great story with your friends and, most importantly, to have fun!

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The Curse of the Statuettes sets the Pony Characters on a wilderness adventure that could have come straight from the pages of a Daring Do book! From the moment they arrive in the Badlands, the PCs will start to uncover the truth behind the source of the titular curse. Investigating the camp site of the Mane Six, they will encounter the powerful Unicorn Moonbeam, who is manipulating the magic of the curse to transform ponies into figurines so she can play with them. As the PCs will find out, this is what has happened to the Mane Six.

They will meet with members of an archaeological expedition working in the area, eventually discovering it is being led by the villainous Dr. Caballeron, a greedy and selfish treasure hunter. Despite this, the expedition dig site will prove a useful source of resources and information for the players. Following the trail of a runaway professor, the PCs will embark on the Trials of the Badlands, a rite of passage that will lead them closer to the source of the curse.

Learning of the existence of an ancient city called Umberfoal, the PCs will descend into caverns far below the Dustmane Ridge to seek out the forgotten pony sanctuary; clues indicate that it might contain the source of the curse. In fact, the magic behind it was originally cast as a form of protection to keep the ponies of Umberfoal safe from the chaotic reign of Discord over a thousand years ago. Recently the tampering of Moonbeam has released some of this magic, spreading it across Equestria without control (though Moonbeam herself has not realized this).

The adventure will (hopefully) end with the PCs making their way to the great door of Umberfoal to stop the curse, showing Moonbeam the error of her ways, and rescuing the Mane Six.



IN THE TIME AFTER THE GREAT WIZARD WAS LOST, WHEN DISHARMONY'S REIGN WAS CAST ACROSS ALL LANDS AND NOT EVEN THE TWO SISTERS COULD SAVE US, TO SILENCE AND SAFETY WE RETREATED, AND THERE WE WILL SLEEP UNTIL AWOKEN.

Writings from an ancient stone tablet found in the Badlands

The Lost City

Unbeknownst to the ponies of Equestria, deep below the mountains of the Dustmane Ridge there lies a hidden city, lost in the forgotten history of Equestria. Built within vast underground caverns, the city was a sanctuary for all ponies; a safe haven against trouble and strife. It was called 'Umberfoal,' though no pony remembers it now.

Long ago in Equestria's history, the land was not the same peaceful place that it is today! Before the Elements of Harmony were located, many threats troubled the ponies of Equestria, including the chaotic reign of the Draconequus Discord. In this time, a community of ponies in south Equestria decided to build a new home underground within a series of massive interconnected caves. Calling it 'Umberfoal,' they retreated almost entirely from the world above. Without ponies to tend the land and sky, the once verdant region became a harsh, inhospitable, rocky landscape known as the Badlands.

In order to protect the ponies of Umberfoal further, and allow them to re-emerge when Equestria was once again safe, powerful artifacts were assembled and a great enchantment was cast over all the ponies gathered there, transforming each of them into a miniature statuette of themselves. In this form they would always be safe and never hungry, and would sleep peacefully until it was safe to wake up.

Scratching the Surface

Recently an archaeological expedition, led by the nefarious Dr. Caballeron, set out into the Badlands to search for lost treasures. Caballeron has a team of workers at a dig site looking for treasure; he also has his henchponies searching for somepony in the Badlands. A former colleague and senior expedition member, Professor Gully Trotter, has disappeared after discovering an ancient stone tablet at the expedition dig site. Professor Trotter learned of Dr. Caballeron's selfish motives and, believing the tablet to be of great historical importance, fled into hiding in order to keep the tablet (and its knowledge) out of the wrong hooves.

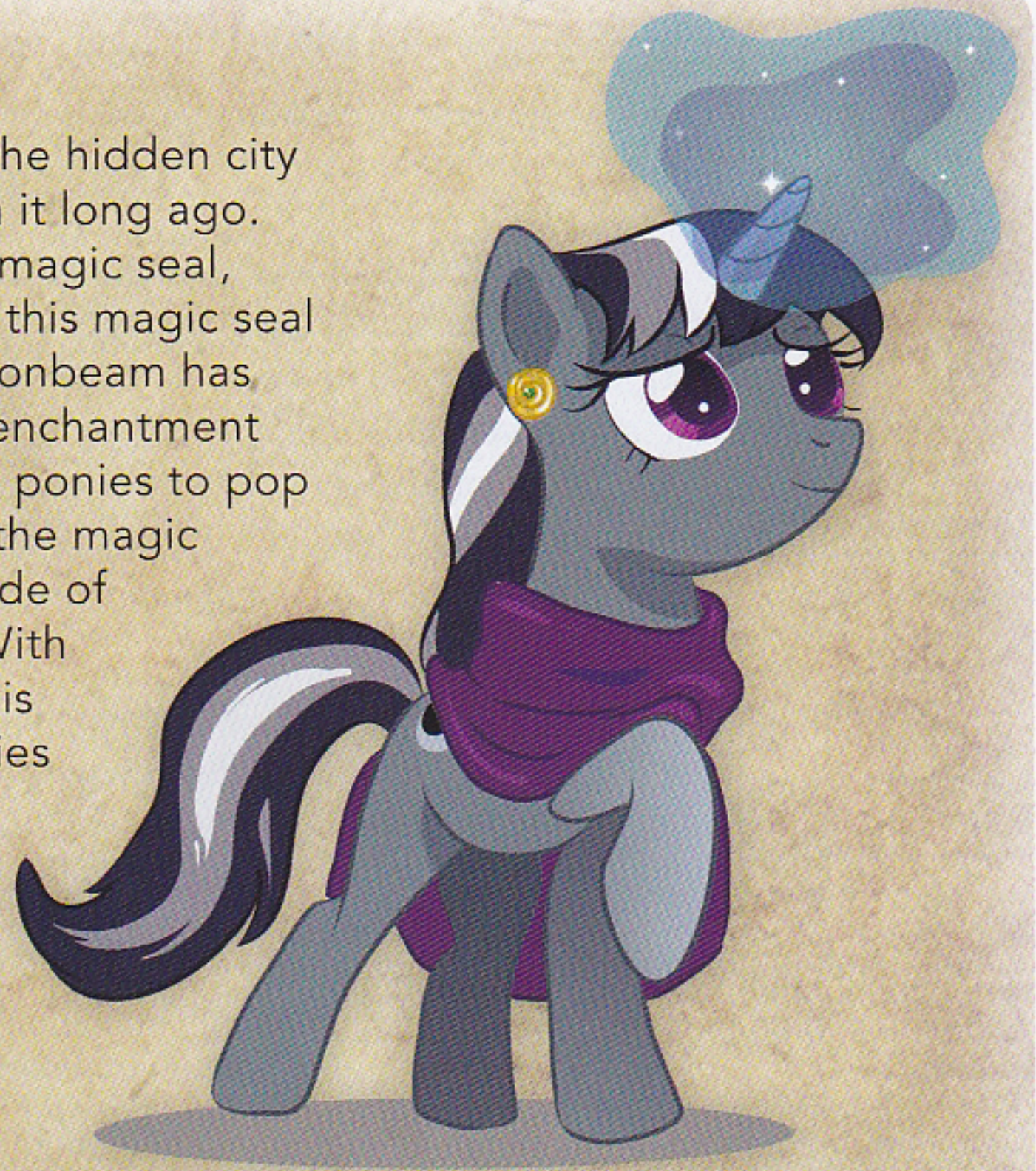


The Curse Revealed

The source of the 'Curse of the Statuettes' is actually the hidden city of Umberfoal and the enchantment that was cast upon it long ago. The great stone door that leads into the city acts as a magic seal, containing the enchantment within the city. Over time this magic seal has become weaker, and recently a Unicorn called Moonbeam has partially broken the seal. Without proper control, the enchantment from Umberfoal is spreading across Equestria, causing ponies to pop in and out of statuette form seemingly at random. As the magic seal is not fully broken, the enchantment is weak outside of Umberfoal; it can only transform ponies temporarily. With the seal getting weaker and weaker, the enchantment is spreading further across Equestria every day. The ponies of Equestria have started calling it the 'Curse of the Statuettes,' having no idea of its true origin.

Moonbeam has a great talent for and sensitivity to magic. Recently, she has found herself drawn towards the Badlands and the powerful magic she sensed coming from that location. She tracked the source to the cave where the hidden door to Umberfoal lies, though she didn't know of the city's existence beforehand. Within the cave she found fresh flowing water (a rarity in the Badlands) and flourishing vegetation, as well as strange carvings, trinkets, artifacts, and a great stone door.

Sensing the magic that had lured her there was coming from the door, she began to study it to try to gain entry. Through manipulating the ancient magic, she gained access to some of its power, but at the same time cracked the seal that had been placed on Umberfoal to contain the enchantment.



IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Moonbeam

Moonbeam is a Unicorn mare. She's a talented user of magic, and has been drawn to the Badlands by a powerful magic energy. She doesn't understand the power of true friendship, and has been using the magic she discovered to transform ponies into statuettes to be her friends! Without knowing it, she's released this 'Curse of the Statuettes,' which is now spreading across Equestria!



Professor Gully Trotter

Professor Gully Trotter is a Pegasus stallion. He is an older Pegasus, but doesn't shy away from getting his hooves dirty with some field work! He studied archaeology at a prestigious academy in Canterlot, and his knowledge of Equestrian history is impressive.

Dr. Caballeron hired him as part of the expedition in order to use Professor Trotter's skills for his own benefit. However, the professor learned of Caballeron's selfish motives, so when he uncovered a seemingly important ancient stone tablet at the dig site, he kept it to himself and fled into the Badlands to keep it away from Caballeron.

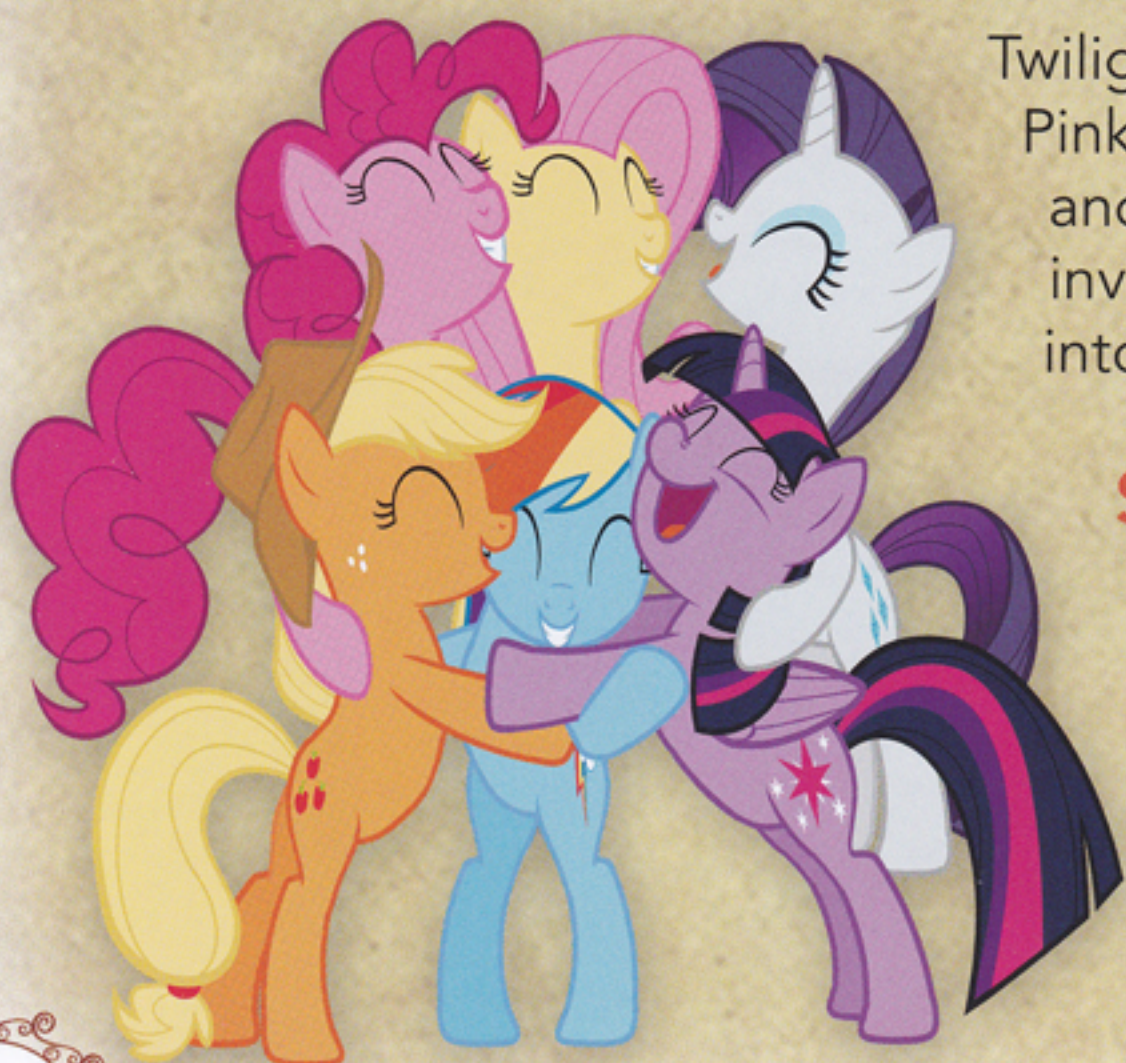
Dr. Caballeron

Scholar, trader, and fortune hunter: Dr. Caballeron is a frequent antagonist of Daring Do. He is charismatic and knows how to get what he wants from almost anypony! He has a talent for seeking and uncovering rare and valuable treasures, though all he really cares about is amassing a great wealth of bits. He recently organized the expedition that's currently digging in the Badlands after hearing of potential lost treasure to be found there. Hoping to find these valuable treasures, he has arranged a buyer with plenty of bits. He employs his three most trusted henchponies to do his dirty work: Withers, Biff, and Rogue.



The Mane Six

Twilight Sparkle, Rainbow Dash, Fluttershy, Applejack, Rarity, and Pinkie Pie: the physical representations of the Elements of Harmony and Equestria's staunch defenders. They left for the Badlands to investigate the curse, but got into big trouble and were transformed into statuettes themselves!



Spike

Spike is the faithful assistant of Princess Twilight Sparkle. He's loyal and determined to a fault. He's the only one who escaped from the Badlands after going with Twilight on their mission to investigate the curse, and now he's asking for the PCs' help! Maybe this time he'd better stay home and take care of the pets...



Adventure Summary

Big Trouble (page 10)

Spike returns to Ponyville with bad news: Twilight and her friends are in big trouble! He asks the PCs to rescue them.

Preparation and Travel (page 12)

The PCs gear up and head for the Badlands. They meet an archaeologist traveling to the dig site in the Badlands and journey there with him. On the way they pass through the dangerous Dodge Canyon!

Looking for Clues (page 20)

The PCs find the camp site where the Mane Six were staying. Moonbeam, who has transformed the Mane Six into statuettes, tries to transform the PCs as well!

The Dig Site (page 24)

The PCs arrive at the archaeological expedition's dig site and have a chance to rest and recuperate. By talking to workers there, they'll hear that the curse is also affecting them, and some ponies have completely disappeared! They'll meet Dr. Caballeron who'll ask them to find one of the missing ponies—Professor Gully Trotter.

The Runaway Professor (page 28)

The PCs try to track down Professor Gully Trotter. They encounter a baby roc with an injured wing. If they help it, it'll lead them to the professor.

The Trials of the Badlands (page 34)

Meeting with Professor Gully Trotter, the PCs discover Dr. Caballeron's selfish motives. The professor has found an ancient stone tablet that contains clues about the lost city of Umberfoal. In order to find it, the PCs must complete the three 'Trials of the Badlands,' challenges that will test them on all they have learned so far.

Searching for Umberfoal (page 42)

Having completed the trials, the PCs will be pointed towards Umberfoal's hidden location by a magic staff. Both Dr. Caballeron and Moonbeam show up at the last second. Moonbeam captures more ponies as statuettes; following both her and the staff they are led towards Umberfoal.

Moonbeam (page 44)

Moving through labyrinth-like caverns, the PCs discover the door to Umberfoal. They find where Moonbeam has been hiding out and a huge play set with all the statuette ponies she's collected arranged within it—including the Mane Six! In a final confrontation, the PCs must stop Moonbeam and the curse once and for all.



BIG TROUBLE

The adventure begins with the PCs all gathered in Fluttershy's cottage, having just rescued the Mane Six's pets in the previous adventure, *The Pet Predicament*. Just as they are settling down, Spike rushes in with bad news! When you are ready to begin the adventure, read the text in the box below out loud.

Note: If the players have not previously played *The Pet Predicament*, the following scene takes place in the center of Ponyville, where the PCs are enjoying some shopping, a picnic, or any other activities they can think of. Spike rushes into town and approaches the PCs for help (he thinks they look like capable and adventurous ponies!). Other than the location, the scene is more-or-less the same.

Read Aloud:

After a hectic day, the cottage finally begins to calm down. Unfortunately, the peace doesn't last long! Just as you all sit down to relax, there is a mighty crash from the front door. A few animals that were resting nearby suddenly jump away at the sound.

Peering over towards the sound you see the wooden door has swung inwards, and standing in the open doorway is a short figure looking extremely panicked! It's Spike the dragon; he looks tired and has dirt, scratches, and bruises all over. Looking wide-eyed around the room, he spots you and yells:

"You've gotta help! Twilight Sparkle and the others are in big trouble! I'm the only one who escaped! They need your help right now!"

Spike takes several deep breaths then, with a trailing sigh, falls flat on his face and begins snoring loudly—he seems exhausted!

What are you going to do?



Bad News

Spike is lying on the floor right inside the door, which is still wide open. At this point it's probably getting quite late into the evening, so the PCs might not want to rush off unprepared quite yet!

A chilly breeze is blowing in through the door and many of the animals look unsure or worried about Spike. Hopefully the PCs will try to help their friend Spike, at least by picking him up off the floor, getting him a hot drink and a blanket, watching over him until he wakes up, or anything else the PCs suggest. If they can't think of anything, PCs can make a **Mind test (Difficulty 2)** to find something that will help: blankets, pillows, hot chocolate, etc.

If you think one or more of the PCs have done a particularly good job taking care of Spike, you should award each of them with a **Token of Friendship**.

You should let the PCs discuss the new developments, and how to take care of Spike, for a while. Spike won't wake up until the next morning, so at some point the PCs might want to get some rest themselves.

Once the PCs are finished discussing the situation, skip ahead to the next morning and read the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

The following morning as the sun rises, Spike begins to stir and mumble in his sleep; he frowns as if he's having a bad dream. Suddenly he sits bolt upright with eyes open wide.

"Twilight! Oh... that's right!" Spike looks around in confusion for a moment, seemingly having forgotten where he is. He once again spots you.

"Thanks for helping me, but Twilight and the others need your help even more! They've been pony-napped! We had made in into the Badlands and were making camp for the night when somepony attacked us!"

Spike looks at you expectantly.

What Happened?

This is a perfect opportunity for the PCs to ask some questions about what happened, and how they might be able to help. If no one says anything, try suggesting that they might want to get some info from Spike. (You can suggest that if the players are ever stuck, they should ask questions—this is great advice for playing any story-telling game!).

Here are the most important pieces of information the PCs can learn from Spike:

- ♥ The Mane Six had been investigating the 'Curse of the Statuettes,' as it has recently been spreading across Equestria, transforming ponies into tiny statues!
- ♥ Twilight Sparkle had discovered that the source of the curse is somewhere in the 'Badlands,' a remote area in southern Equestria.
- ♥ No pony knows the reason why the curse started spreading, or what might be causing it in the first place. There is seemingly no pattern indicating whom the curse is affecting, when it happens, or for how long the effect lasts (though it has so far never been permanent).
- ♥ After a long, tiresome journey into the Badlands, the Mane Six and Spike were set upon by a mysterious cloaked and hooded figure late at night. It was impossible to identify the figure, but he or she was definitely a pony with dark coloration.
- ♥ There were flashes of magic energy. The Mane Six were transformed into statuettes. Twilight managed to teleport Spike away at the last second with a powerful spell, but he was the only one who got away.



PREPARATION AND TRAVEL

Be Prepared

After getting up to speed from Spike's report, the PCs will need to figure out how to get to the Badlands. They can do this by talking to Spike, or looking it up elsewhere (perhaps the library?). Alternately, perhaps one of the PCs might know already, particularly if he or she is a well-read pony like Twilight.

Remembering information about the Badlands is a **Mind test (Difficulty 8)**. It's not a very well-known area, and very few ponies actually travel there. Applicable talents to use for this test would involve things like **Keen Knowledge** in geography or history, for instance.

PCs can always use one or more Friendship Tokens to introduce a reason they might know more, if they can come up with a good enough reason.

If any PCs want to do some further research they might remember that Twilight's castle has an extensive library, which would be a good place to start! Gathering information about the Badlands from the library is much easier than trying to remember it. Have any PC who is researching make a **Mind test (Difficulty 4)**. If successful, they manage to find a handful of useful books, or perhaps even Twilight Sparkle's own checklist—the one *she* used to prepare for the original mission. If all the PCs fail, they will still be able to get *some* information; it will just take them quite a long time.

There are a few bits of information that the PC's will find useful:

- ♥ They might find a map of the Badlands. It is not very detailed, with only a few landmarks on it.
- ♥ The quickest way to get to the Badlands from Ponyville is by taking the Friendship Express train to Dodge City, then hiking further south through Dodge Canyon.
- ♥ The Badlands is a harsh region. It's very hot during the day, there are frequent dust storms, and there are many dangerous creatures that live there—including diamond dogs, dragons, and a huge stony bird called a roc.
- ♥ It is recommended that anypony traveling to the Badlands brings adventuring gear, sturdy horseshoes for wilderness trekking, and hoods or cowls to keep the heat and dust off. These items can be easily found at a shop in Ponyville for a small amount of bits (around 75). If they gear-up properly, traveling in the Badlands will be easier for them.



♥ Any PCs who roll an **Amazing Success** (double or more) will learn of an archaeological expedition that has recently starting digging in the Badlands, looking for historical artifacts. One of the senior ponies on the expedition is called Professor Gully Trotter, a fairly well-known scholar from Canterlot (one of the PCs may have heard of him).

As soon as they are ready to leave, the PCs can easily catch the Friendship Express from Ponyville Station. It takes a short time to get from Ponyville to Dodge City, which is the closest stop to the northern entrance of the Badlands.

As the train moves south, the PCs notice that the greenery and lush plant life is slowly replaced by dry, rocky terrain with only a small number of hardy-looking plants dotting the landscape.

Once they arrive in Dodge City, the PCs will need to make their way south into the Badlands. As they step off the train onto the small platform, read the following 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

Stepping off of the train carriage, you feel a wave of heat wash over you. It's very hot and very dry here. Welcome to Dodge City!

Walking along the small wooden platform, you notice a stack of crates being unloaded from the rear of the train. A group of three Earth Ponies are busying themselves around the cargo.

Moving slightly closer, you can see that some of the crates have words on the sides stamped in red; they say 'EXCAVATION SUPPLIES' and 'DIG SITE STAFF ONLY.' You also notice one or two crates with the words 'BADLANDS' clearly written on the side.

What would you like to do?

Getting out of Dodge

The crates that the PCs notice are bound for the expedition dig site in the Badlands. The PCs may realize this based on very successful research, or they may choose to investigate because of the 'Badlands' mention. Either way, if they can tag along with the crates, it will be a great way for them to get to the Badlands without walking, which would take much longer.

The cargo will be loaded onto a wagon nearby. Two of the three ponies wear reins and neckerchiefs. They take up positions at the front of the cart, ready to pull it. The third pony, who wears adventuring gear, sits atop the cart in front of the cargo. They are workers for the archaeological expedition and have returned to Dodge City on a supply run.

Make sure the PCs have a chance to speak with the expedition ponies before they leave. If asked about what they're doing in the Badlands, they'll say they're researching historical artifacts. They will let the PCs ride with them into the Badlands if they pay 150 bits. A PC can attempt to lower this cost by making a **Charm test (Difficulty 5)**. If successful, the cost for traveling will be reduced to 100 bits (or even less for an Amazing Success!). A

Alternatively, if the PCs mention they are investigating the Curse of the Statuettes, they will be allowed to travel for free. The Earth ponies become visibly nervous at the mention of the curse, and will explain that a number of their colleagues have been turned into statuettes, some for only a few hours, some for days! What's more worrying is that some ponies have even disappeared completely. They will happily bring the PCs with them if it means a possible end to the curse.

If the PCs can't charm or buy their way onto the wagon, they'll just have to go by hoof. It's a long walk to the Badlands. The PCs must pass a **Body test (Difficulty 3)** or lose **1 point of Stamina**.



Into The Badlands

If the PCs managed to get a lift on the wagon, they have a short while traveling before arriving at Dodge Canyon, which is the only way to get into the Badlands from the north without climbing a mountain. If for some reason the PCs ended up walking by themselves, the wagon will pass them on the road, giving them another chance to hitch a ride.

Before reaching the canyon, the PCs might want to have a conversation with the wagon driver. The driver's name is **Sunny Saddle**. If the PCs ask her any questions about the expedition, she will answer as well as she can. She does know Dr. Caballeron's name, and might mention it if the PCs ask the right questions, but she doesn't know anything about Caballeron's true intentions. She will also mention that Professor Gully Trotter is one of the ponies who have disappeared recently—just about a week ago.

Sunny Saddle might also mention why they are running supplies—the expedition lost a large amount of equipment when a huge monster attacked their first dig site! Apparently, the creature has taken up residence in 'Site A,' as the now-abandoned dig site is called. Dust and rocks were flying everywhere, so Sunny Saddle didn't get a good look at the creature, but apparently it was massive and had a long snake-like body.

As the wagon rolls on through hot, rocky desert, the sun beats down on the PCs. On the horizon they can see the darkened silhouette of a mountain range, curving in a wide 'U' shape from peak to trough. As the day wears on, it grows larger and larger before them.

Eventually, the wagon will reach the entrance of Dodge Canyon. As soon as they move into the canyon, the curse strikes one of the wagon-ponies, transforming him into a statuette and causing the wagon to crash! This sets off a chain reaction, resulting in the PCs having to race through the canyon and dodge falling boulders—it's called *Dodge Canyon* for a reason! After a short time traveling, read the following 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

Eventually the wagon arrives at the very foot of the mountain range, and you see a tall canyon with vertical rock walls rising up on either side of the bumpy road you've been traveling along. The wagon approaches the entrance and continues along the road, now made narrow by the steep cliffs. You can see smashed rocks littering the sides of the canyon.

Fwoosh. Suddenly you hear a crackling sound, and a spark of magic energy explodes like a firework in front of the wagon! One of the wagon-ponies seems to disappear before your eyes, but then you notice a tiny pony-shaped statuette bounce off the ground and land next to you.

Caught off guard and unbalanced, the remaining wagon-pony careens off to the side of the canyon and crashes into the rock wall!

[illegible]

Dodgy Driving

Everypony on the wagon has to make a **Body test (Difficulty 6)**. Any of the PCs who fail lose 2 points of Stamina each from the bump—ouch! You don't need to roll for the NPCs.

What's worse is that as the dust settles, the PCs hear a deep rumbling coming from all around them—boulders are beginning to fall into the canyon!

The PCs will need to avoid falling rocks, get the wagon moving again, and get through the canyon without becoming pony pancakes! Just as they get back on their hooves after the crash, there's a rock fall directly above them. Each PC needs to make another **Body test (Difficulty 4)** to dive out of the way. Any unlucky ponies who fail lose another 2 points of Stamina, and find themselves climbing out of a pony-shaped hole in the ground with stars floating around their heads! Sunny Saddle makes sure to pick up the wagon pony statuette.

To get the wagon moving again, somepony will have to replace the wagon-pony who was transformed—the biggest, strongest PC will likely be the best for this role. The other PCs could help steer by taking the reins, or keep a look out for falling boulders. Just as they get the wagon moving, another boulder falls right above them—PCs who are pulling the cart or steering need to make a **Body test (Difficulty 4)** or **Mind test (Difficulty 4)** respectively to move out of the way. If any PC succeeds, the cart is maneuvered safely. If they all fail, everypony on the cart loses 1 point of Stamina, and the wagon takes a hit. If anypony is concentrating fully on looking out for boulders (i.e. not steering or pulling the cart), these tests are **Difficulty 3**, not 4.

If the situation isn't bad enough already, it's about to get even worse—one of the rear axles was damaged in the crash and the wagon wheel begins to come loose. The PCs notice the wagon shaking and shuddering, and will have to try and repair the axle while the cart is still moving, or improvise another solution. Depending on what the PCs try to do, they will have to make a **Body or Mind test (Difficulty 6)** to repair the axle.





If PCs fail twice to repair the wagon axle, the wheel will fall off. The wagon won't stop moving, but any roll made to dodge falling boulders with it will now be **Difficulty 5** instead of **4**. If the wagon gets hit by boulders **3 times** (including the previous test), it will completely fall apart! The PCs, along with the expedition ponies, will have to 'hoof it.'

Continue to describe the many near-misses and sharp turns the PCs make with the wagon, and have them roll to avoid **3 more boulders** in quick succession. Each of the 3 dodge attempts is a separate **Body test (Difficulty 4)** for anypony pulling the wagon, or **Mind test (Difficulty 4)** for anypony steering the wagon using the reins. As before, these rolls are **decreased in difficulty by 1 step** if somepony is on lookout duty, and if all PCs fail they lose 1 point of Stamina each for each boulder.

Shortly after this, the PCs make it out of the other end of Dodge Canyon and into the Badlands. They now have a chance to catch their breath.

When the PCs reach the end of Dodge Canyon (whether or not they are on the wagon), move on to the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

Finally making it out of Dodge Canyon, you enter into the Badlands – you've made it!

Stretching out on either side of you, long mountain ridges border the Badlands almost completely. Ahead, you see wide plains of rock and dust dotted with craggy outcrops of reddish-brown rock.

The road that led through Dodge Canyon continues into the Badlands ahead, though it's not much more than dirt and loosely packed stones. There don't seem to be any other roads or pathways.

Sunny Saddle holds up the statuette of the wagon-pony in her hoof. "Oh, dear! We'd better be getting a move on now, we need to get him and these supplies back to the dig site." Tucking the statuette back into a pouch, she gestures down the road.

The Badlands

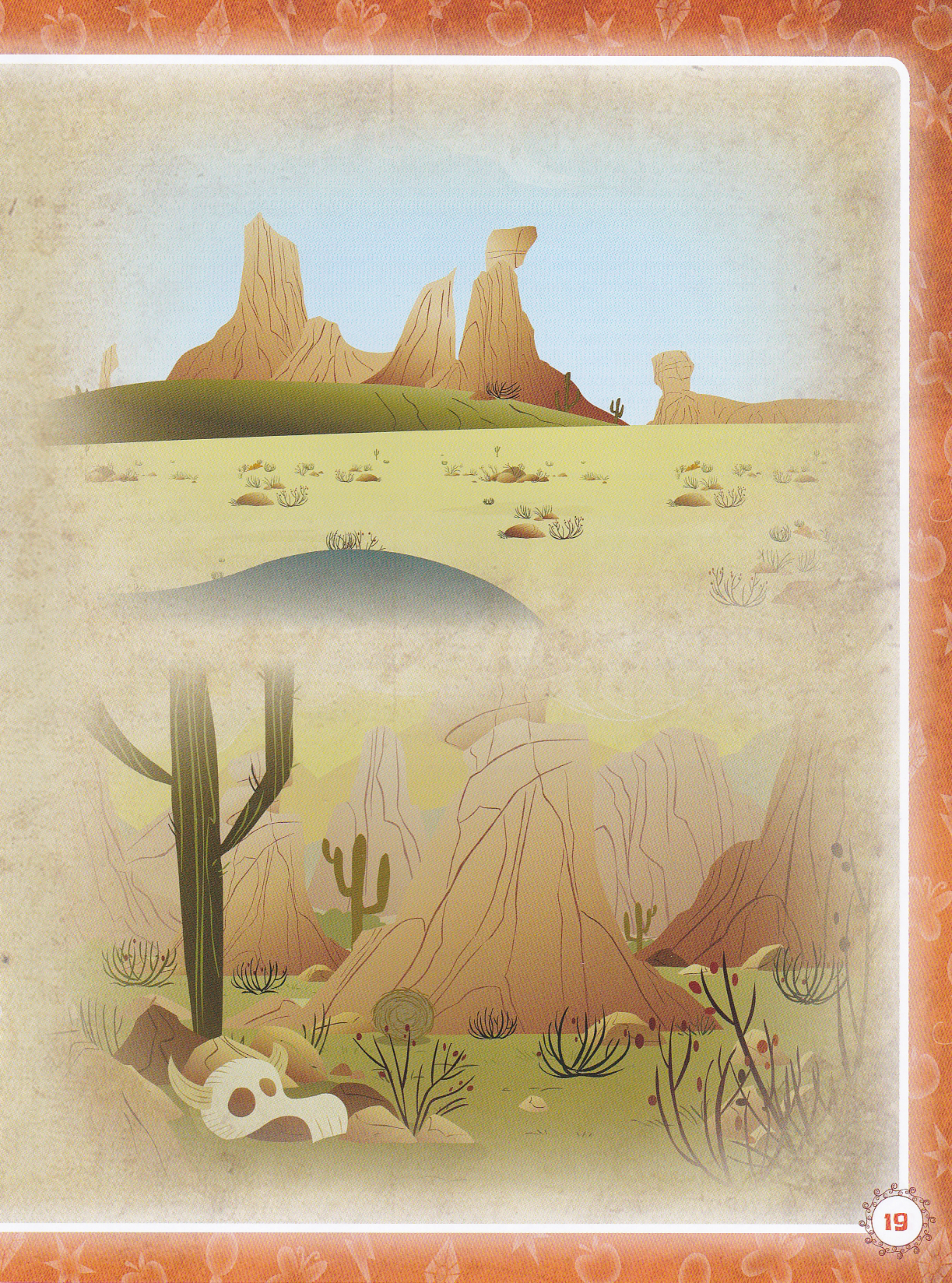
Much like the Everfree Forest, the climate and weather of the Badlands are not controlled by ponies. This lack of control has caused the region's conditions to worsen over time; nowadays it's a hot, dry, dusty, and very dangerous place for unprepared travelers!

Whenever the PCs are traveling around the Badlands, and at least once per day, you should roll on the following **random event table**. It contains a selection of troubling turns and challenges that could occur at any time. The Badlands is an unpredictable place!

When using the table, roll a **D20** to see what challenge the PCs will have to face. It's really up to you how and when you use this table, so have fun with it!

THE BADLANDS RANDOM EVENT TABLE

Roll	Event
1-2	While traveling, the PCs get turned around and become lost ! A successful Mind test (Difficulty 3) gets them back on track. Failure means the PCs take a long time to reach their destination and will need to restock their traveling supplies before making another journey.
3-4	A heatwave passes over the area. Long journeys are very tiring; the PCs must pass a Body test (Difficulty 7) or lose 3 Stamina for the long trek. For PCs with hoods, cowls, or anything else for beating the heat, the difficulty is reduced to 5 .
5-6	There is a rock slide from a nearby outcrop. The PCs must pass a Body test (Difficulty 4) to avoid falling rocks or lose 2 Stamina points.
7-8	The PCs find some blackened scorch marks on the ground. Investigating is a Mind test (Difficulty 4) . Successful PCs discover that the marks came from a powerful magic spell, and will also find a pony statuette—it's one of the expedition workers!
9-10	The PCs stumble into a nest of snakes ! They're not happy about the intrusion. Snakes have a Body and Mind of D4 .
11-12	A group of hungry quarray eels emerge from holes in a nearby cliff and attack! Roll 1d4 to determine how many. (See core rulebook for stats).
13-14	The PCs find a cluster of pretty gems in a rock. Roll 1d10 to determine how many. Each gem is worth 20 bits.
15-16	A group of sneaky diamond dogs appear from a nearby den and try to swipe any valuable items the PCs are carrying. Roll 1d4+1 to determine how many. (See the core rulebook for stats).
17-18	A mighty dust storm blows through the area. The PCs see it on the horizon before it reaches them. The dust makes it very hard to see anything or find landmarks. PCs lose 1 point of Stamina every few minutes until they get out of the storm, up to a maximum of 5 . Any delicate gear is likely damaged if it's exposed for too long.
19	The ground shakes beneath the PCs' hooves; in an eruption of shattered stone, a tremendous, terrifying tatzlwurm appears and attacks! (See page 30 for stats).
20	Roll twice on this table; both events occur!



LOOKING FOR CLUES

Moving into the Badlands, it won't be long until the PCs spot an abandoned camp site sheltered under a small rock outcrop by the side of the road. This is the camp site that was used by the Mane Six before they were transformed and captured. It matches the location that Spike described if the PCs talked to him earlier.

If the PCs decide to stop and investigate, there are a number of things they can find. The expedition ponies aren't keen to hang around for long, but realizing that this might lead to a solution for the curse, they agree to wait.

Searching the camp site confirms much of what Spike told the PCs earlier (if they spoke to him). Everything looks as though it has been dropped and left; 3 tents are set up in a semi-circle against the outcrop and a small cooking pot sits on a stand over a pile of firewood. Bedrolls, saddlebags, and clothes are scattered across the ground and in the tents. There are faded black marks across the ground. These scorch marks have been left by the use of magic spells—this matches Spike's description of the flashes of magic energy just before the Mane Six were transformed into statuettes.

An initial investigation will reveal that one of the sealed pots still has some tasty-looking vegetable stew inside! It is cold, but still good (even better if the PCs have a way of heating it up). A few full water bottles are easily found as well. If the PCs **rest and eat** here for a little while, they each **recover 6 Stamina points** (or **8** if they heated up the stew—yum!).

As well as food and drink, some of the Mane Six's traveling gear is still here. If the PCs wish to look for anything in particular, they can easily find the most basic equipment, such as a length of rope, a bag, or a hat. If they want to try and find something a bit more unusual, perhaps they could apply one or more **Tokens of Friendship**, as long as they give a good reason for it to be there.

To make a thorough investigation of the camp site, have the PCs roll a **Mind test (Difficulty 4)**. A successful PC will discover two things:

- ♥ Scraps of **tattered brown fabric** that doesn't match any of the Mane Six's clothes—it's easy to tell because *Rarity* made a matching set of fine cowls for them all.
- ♥ An antique-looking **bangle with distinctive markings** and patterns. It doesn't match any kind of design the PCs have ever seen.





Both of these finds were left behind by Moonbeam after she captured the Mane Six at the camp site. The fabric was torn from her cloak, and she wore the bangle around her foreleg. She didn't mean to leave either behind.

On an **Amazing Success**, a PC will find strands of navy hair that don't match Twilight Sparkle's. This also came from Moonbeam. PCs can make multiple rolls to investigate, but more rolls equal more time spent at the camp.

After the PCs have had a chance to rest and recuperate, move on to the next 'Read Aloud' box. Don't read out the text in *[square brackets]*.

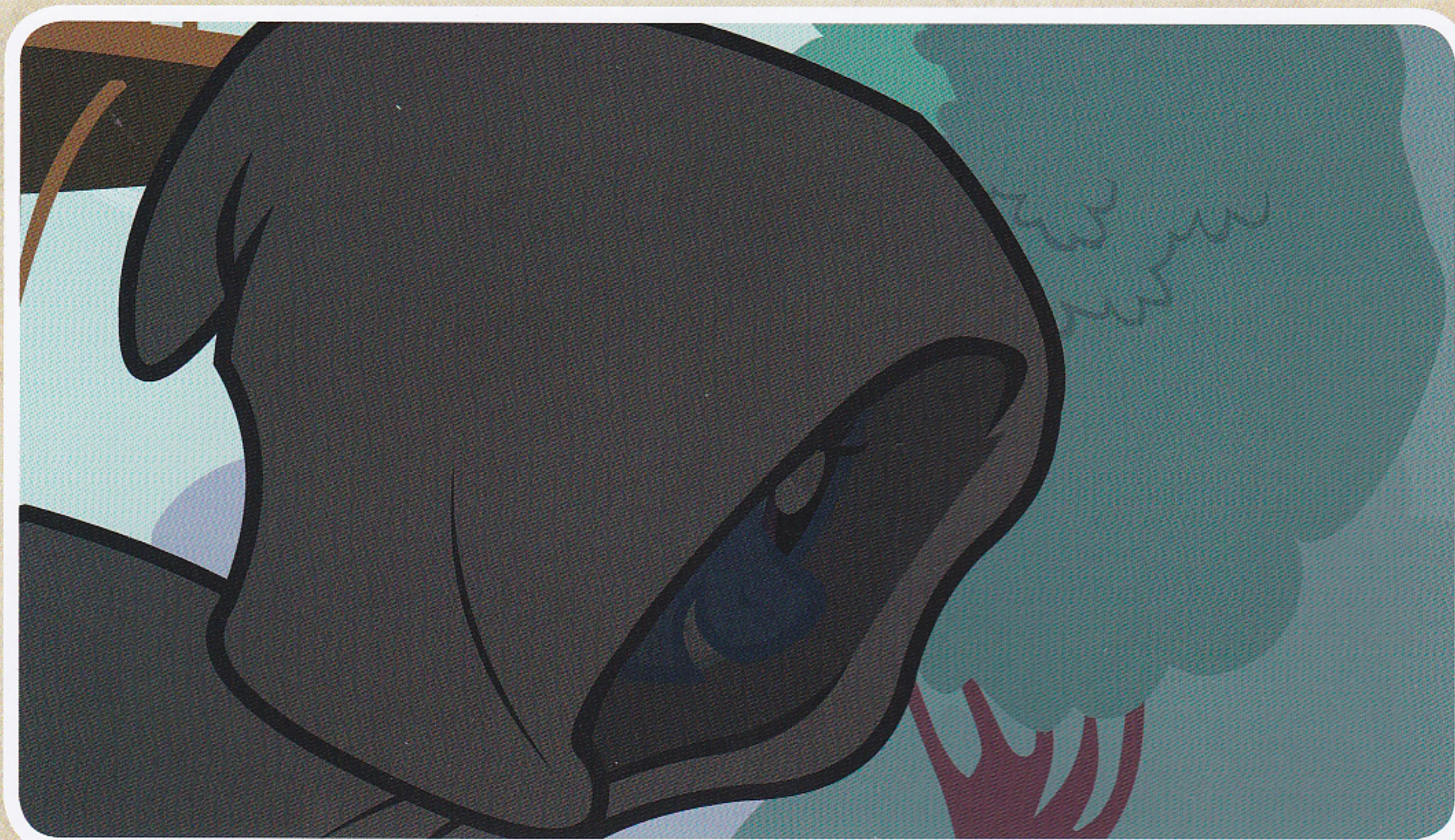
Read Aloud:

[GM: Choose the PCs with the highest Mind trait].

You keep thinking you see something moving around outside the camp site. It started not long after you arrived, but this time you're sure of it—there's somepony, or something, watching you.

A short distance away you see the shape duck down behind a large rock. It's always the same—as soon as you catch a glimpse of whatever it is, it disappears!

What would you like to do?



An Interested Party

If any PCs want to investigate, have them roll a **Mind test (Difficulty 5)**. After a short while, they will once again notice something moving—any PCs who succeeded can make out the shape of a hooded and cloaked figure roughly the shape and size of a pony. The figure will disappear behind a rock as soon as it is noticed. Anypony who heads to where the figure was spotted will find more scraps of cloak.

This mysterious figure is Moonbeam (see the box on page 23). As evening falls, Moonbeam will close in on the camp site and try to transform the PCs into statuettes.

Suddenly there is a loud crackling sound and a bolt of blue magic streaks down into the camp. It hits the ground right next to where one of the PCs is standing, leaving a black scorch mark. Moonbeam stands on part of the overhanging outcrop, looking down into the camp.

She wears a tattered brown hood and cloak, and has a dark, charcoal-gray coat. If a PC succeeds on a **Mind test (Difficulty 5)**, or if the PCs cause Moonbeam to lose her cloak for some reason, they will catch a glimpse of her navy hair.

Jumping down from the rock, Moonbeam attempts to blast the PCs with her magic. The second bolt of magic goes straight through the middle of the camp and hits the second wagon-pony, who is **transformed into a statuette** with a flash of light! Sunny Saddle will stay behind the wagon to try to avoid getting hit.

Moonbeam will make use of **Force Field** and **Stun Ray** spells to keep the PCs at bay. If they close in on her she will **Teleport** to safety. After a brief encounter, Moonbeam will grab the wagon-pony statuette with **Telekinesis** and run away! If the PCs try to capture her, she will escape using **Teleport**.

An Introductory Encounter: This encounter is designed to introduce Moonbeam, and to link her with the 'curse.' It's not supposed to get one of the PCs captured, as it's not very fun for a player if their Pony Character can't do anything! Avoid having Moonbeam capture any of the PCs or turn them to Statuettes. In this encounter she wasn't expecting the PCs to be so prepared for her, and she's not keen for a head-on fight, so it makes sense for her to run away pretty quickly.

From this point on the PCs might catch glimpses of the cloaked pony throughout the Badlands, mostly in the evening or at night. She will not approach so openly next time, and will be more wary of encountering the PCs in the future. She always has an exit strategy (usually involving teleportation), so she is extremely difficult to capture!

Note: *There's a chance that the PCs don't investigate the camp site right away. If they decide instead to go to the dig site or explore elsewhere, don't worry! The clues and the encounter with Moonbeam can be introduced whenever they return. If they are taking a while to return, perhaps nudge them towards it by recalling what Spike told them.*



Moonbeam

Body: D6

Mind: D12

Charm: D4

Stamina: 18

Talents: Forcefield (D10), Keen Knowledge: History (D6), Stunbeam (D10), Telekinesis (D8), Teleport (D10).

Quirks: Supershy

Special: Can cast a spell which transforms the target into a statuette. The spell can renew the effect if cast again, effectively keeping the pony as a statuette. If the spell is not renewed, the statuette effect lasts D20 hours.

Moonbeam is a Unicorn mare. She is about the same age as the Mane Six. As a filly, she spent almost all of her time studying and practicing magic, and her only friends were her many dolls and figurines. She never properly learned how to make pony friends (sound familiar?). Unlike Twilight Sparkle, she shied away from every opportunity to meet new ponies or experience new things.

She was often overlooked by most ponies around her and eventually, feeling as though she would never fit in, she left her home to travel Equestria alone. Without friends to keep her company, she became more and more withdrawn and isolated. Eventually she was drawn to the Badlands after detecting a strange magical presence there.

Oblivious to the spreading curse, Moonbeam now controls to statuette magic to some extent herself. Driven by isolation, misunderstanding, and loneliness, she attacks anypony who comes into the Badlands, transforming them into statuettes so she can play with them—so they can (in her mind) be her friends in the only way she understands.

Roleplaying Moonbeam: Moonbeam's main motivation is loneliness. She doesn't know how to make pony friends. She's also been by herself for some time. She might act slightly crazed, especially when using the transformation spell to turn ponies into statuettes, but she really just wants them to be her friends. She doesn't have evil intentions, but her lack of understanding about how to interact with other ponies, and her desire to learn more about the strange magic in the Badlands, drives her current actions.

THE DIG SITE

Digging the Dirt

It's likely that the dig site is the next major location the PCs will head to. It is further south along the same road they entered the Badlands on. If Sunny Saddle is still with the PCs, she will take them on the wagon (though they may have to pull it themselves!). If the PCs separated from the expedition workers, they will have marked the dig site on a map for them. It's not too hard to find. Along the way, the wagon-pony who was transformed into a statuette in the canyon will suddenly return to pony form. If asked, he will mention that being a statuette is almost like being in a very deep sleep—he couldn't see or hear anything going on around him.

The site itself doesn't lie next to the main road, but has been built at the base of a huge column of rock. The terrain is more uneven here than where the camp site is, and there are many gullies, cliffs, and other rock formations. The dig site, officially called 'Site B,' is currently home to around 25 ponies who are all a part of the expedition team. The site itself is made up of a camp area with temporary shelters and canvas tents, as well as the quarry where most of the team's digging is taking place. The quarry has been dug quite deep into the ground, forming a crater-like pit with several interconnecting layers of wooden walkways.

Thankful that the PCs helped her out, Sunny Saddle will arrange a tent for them to stay in. At the quarry, the PCs can rest and recuperate. Sunny Saddle tells the PCs they are welcome to stay, though she says the expedition leader Dr. Caballeron will have to hear about their arrival when he returns.

The next day the PCs will have free reign to explore the dig site, talk to the expedition ponies, and gather information as well as they can. Most of the ponies are busy working in the quarry, and the PCs will have a little trouble getting any to stop and talk for too long. An observant PC might notice that quite a few of the ponies here look nervous; there is a definite air of unease around the dig site. A **Charm test (Difficulty 3)** will encourage any worried-looking expedition workers to talk. Helping out in the quarry will also make the expedition ponies easier to talk to.





PCs can describe ways they might help out; have them roll a **test** if appropriate. If they spend a good amount of time investigating, the PCs can learn more about what's been going on here, though they'll likely have to talk to a few of the workers before getting the full picture:

- ♥ *Whispers are going around about ponies that have turned into statuettes. They transform at random—there doesn't seem to be a pattern connecting them. These ponies seem to return to their normal form after some time passes.*
- ♥ *Ten ponies have disappeared completely. They were all last seen on the outskirts of the site in the evening or at night.*
- ♥ *Three of the ponies that disappeared were found just outside the site, but they had all turned into statuettes! The PCs will be directed towards Dusty Stone, the pony who most recently found one of the missing workers. He heard some strange sounds and went to investigate. When he arrived he's sure he saw a mysterious cloaked figure running away. He found the statuette of the missing pony on the ground.*
- ♥ *There are black scorch marks on the ground where the statuettes of the three missing ponies were found. Dusty Stone will direct the PCs to these locations, where they can see the marks for themselves—they match those made by Moonbeam at the camp site.*
- ♥ *One of the ponies who went missing was Professor Gully Trotter, a senior member of the expedition with a great knowledge of history and archaeology. That was about a week ago.*
- ♥ *Ever since Professor Gully Trotter disappeared, Dr. Caballeron has been leaving the dig site regularly, accompanied only by his three closest assistants.*

As the PCs are exploring the site and talking to the workers, they will have to be wary of Forepony Hardhoof, who is overseeing the operation until Dr. Caballeron returns. He will get angry at the PCs if he sees them distracting the workers. Let the PCs come up with a way to avoid Hardhoof, making them roll a **test** if appropriate. If they don't succeed, Hardhoof will yell at them, and any further rolls to talk to the workers will be **Difficulty 4** instead of **3**.

While they're in the quarry, the PCs overhear a group of expedition workers laughing about something, which cuts against the generally uneasy atmosphere at the site. If they investigate, they find one of the workers telling jokes—more specifically dragon jokes! Apparently he heard them from a baby dragon in Ponyville. For example:

- **Q:** "What do you get when a dragon sneezes?"
- **A:** "Out of the way!"
- **Q:** "Why are dragons so good at storytelling?"
- **A:** "Because they have such long tails!"
- **Q:** "What do you call a dragon in Manehattan?"
- **A:** "Lost."

These dragon jokes will actually be helpful for a challenge later on in the adventure.

After the PCs have spent some time investigating, move on to the next 'Read Aloud' box. They don't need to have learned absolutely everything, as they'll have more chances to dig up information before they leave the site.

Read Aloud:

You hear some commotion and the clattering of hooves towards the outskirts of the dig site. Four Earth Ponies arrive at the camp area. Three of them look particularly tough, and seem to be following the orders of the fourth pony. The leader has a dark gray mane and tail, and a lighter gray coat. You seem him speaking to the other three, and then to a handful of ponies from the camp who trot up to meet him.

You see one of them point in your direction, and the leader looks right at you. He says something briefly to the three tough ponies following him, who then start coming towards you.

As they approach, one of them speaks out. "Dr. Caballeron wants to see you in his tent." Another joins in, saying, "Yeah, he's looking forward to meeting our unexpected guests." The third says, "We'll take you there right away."

The three ponies stand around you, waiting for your response.

What do you do?

The Doctor Will See You Now

The leader is Dr. Caballeron, who is running this expedition, and the three ponies that come to talk to the PCs are his most trusted henchponies: Withers, Rogue, and Biff.

Caballeron's henchponies have strict instructions to bring the PCs to his tent, so if they act like they might try to escape, the henchponies will drag the PCs there themselves if they have to. They won't resort to muscle if they don't have to, though!

When they arrive in Caballeron's tent, the PCs find it comfortable and nicely decorated on the inside. From a side cabinet, Caballeron offers them a drink of ice-cold water as he greets them. He acts very courteously, trying not to raise suspicion from the PCs. He will ask the PCs about what they are doing, showing interest if they tell him about their mission. The PCs can also try to get information out of him, but it will be quite tricky. This will require a **Charm challenge** against Caballeron. (See the box on the opposite page for information about Dr. Caballeron).

Noticing their adventuring skills, Dr. Caballeron will ask the PCs to help him find Professor Gully Trotter, one of the missing ponies. He tells the PCs that he's worried for the professor's safety. What he doesn't

tell the PCs is that Professor Gully Trotter wasn't captured, he ran away! The professor learned that Caballeron just wanted to sell whatever treasure they found, so when he uncovered an ancient stone tablet in the quarry, he hid it and left the dig site at the first opportunity. The professor believes that the tablet has great historical importance and doesn't want Dr. Caballeron to get his hooves on it. If any of the PCs try to sense Caballeron's true motives, they will have to succeed on a hard **challenge** against his **Charm** and **Smooth Talking**. If a PC manages to succeed, they might detect that Caballeron isn't telling them the whole truth. If the PCs need a bit more prompting, Caballeron says he thinks Professor Gully Trotter discovered something about the 'Curse of the Statuettes' before he disappeared (this is actually true, but Caballeron doesn't know that, he's just trying to get the PCs to do his work for him!).

Caballeron believes that the PCs will lead him to Professor Gully Trotter and the treasure he found, as well as other potential artifacts. He plans to swoop in and take the treasure at the last second!



Dr. Caballeron

Body: D6

Mind: D8

Charm: D10

Stamina: 14

Talents: Keen Knowledge: Treasure Hunting (D12), Keen Knowledge: History (D6), Creative Flair: Smooth Talking (D10).

Quirks: Oooohhh...shiny!

Dr. Caballeron is an Earth Pony stallion. He has a dark gray mane and tail and a lighter gray coat. His cutie mark is a golden skull, which represents his talent for treasure hunting. He studied archaeology when he was younger, but now he spends his days trying to make a fortune by selling ancient artifacts so he can retire in splendor.

He set up the expedition to the Badlands after hearing about the potential lost treasure and historical artifacts that could be found there. Though he is aware of the spreading 'Curse of the Statuettes,' he won't stop his expedition just because some of the workers have been transformed! He knows how to get what he wants out of almost anypony, and uses his smooth talking to avoid getting into trouble. Withers, Rogue, and Biff are his trusted henchponies, whom he employs to do his dirty work.

Roleplaying Dr. Caballeron: Caballeron's motivations revolve around finding treasure and selling it for bits. Amassing a huge wealth is his ultimate goal. He doesn't particularly care about the wants of other ponies, but will entertain them if he thinks it will benefit him in the future. He's smooth and suave, and knows how to use his words to get what he wants. He won't often reveal his true intentions to anypony.



Withers, Rogue, and Biff

Body: D8

Mind: D4

Charm: D6

Stamina: 12

Talents: Scuffling (D8).

Caballeron's henchponies. They follow his orders to a fault. Caballeron employs them more for their brawn than their brains.

THE RUNAWAY PROFESSOR

A Mountainous Problem

Dr. Caballeron will indicate a location southeast of the dig site where he believes Professor Gully Trotter may be found, based on his searching so far. He'll mark it on a map if the PCs have one. He'll also allow the PCs to resupply from the dig site if they need to, and even give them **2 pots of Ponybalm** (see equipment table in the *Tails of Equestria* rulebook).

There's a problem though! Caballeron believes that to reach the professor, the PCs might have to scale part of Dustmane Ridge, mountainous terrain that is dangerously steep in places. The wind is also very strong around the Dustmane Ridge, making extended flying dangerous for Pegasi. He mentions that the expedition brought along some specialized climbing equipment; called a **'Pony Grappling Harness,'** this gear allows non-Pegasi ponies to access hard-to-reach places. It was designed by Professor Gully Trotter himself! Unfortunately, when the professor disappeared, he had the last Pony Grappling Harness with him.

The expedition had originally brought a whole crate of the harnesses with them, but they were all left at Site A—the original dig site they had set up. Dr. Caballeron explains that a huge monster has taken up residence at Site A, and nopony can get anywhere near it now. They had to abandon a lot of the supplies they had brought with them. He describes the monster as a massive snake-like creature with a great big mouth—scary! It had a purple scaled body, a red frill, and a pink head. There's a chance that a very knowledgeable pony might identify the creature based on this description. If a PC passes a **Mind test (Difficulty 8)**, they correctly determine it to be a **tatzlwurm**. It's a very rare creature, so not many ponies have heard of them.



A Dangerous Business

Obtaining the Pony Grappling Harnesses will greatly improve the PCs' chances of making it up the Dustmane Ridge, so they might want to travel to Site A and retrieve them. When the PCs arrive at Site A, move on to the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

As you approach the abandoned Site A, you begin to see what looks like buildings clustered together in a kind of makeshift town. Getting closer, it appears that this site is more built-up than the dig site you've just come from. There are tents but also temporary wooden buildings, seemingly thrown together when the expedition arrived. It looks bigger and longer-lasting than Site B; you get the feeling that the team must have lost most of their equipment and supplies when they had to abandon this place.

To the left of the 'town' is a high hill which rises up into a steep rock face. The sheer cliff circles around to the opposite side of the town from where you are standing.

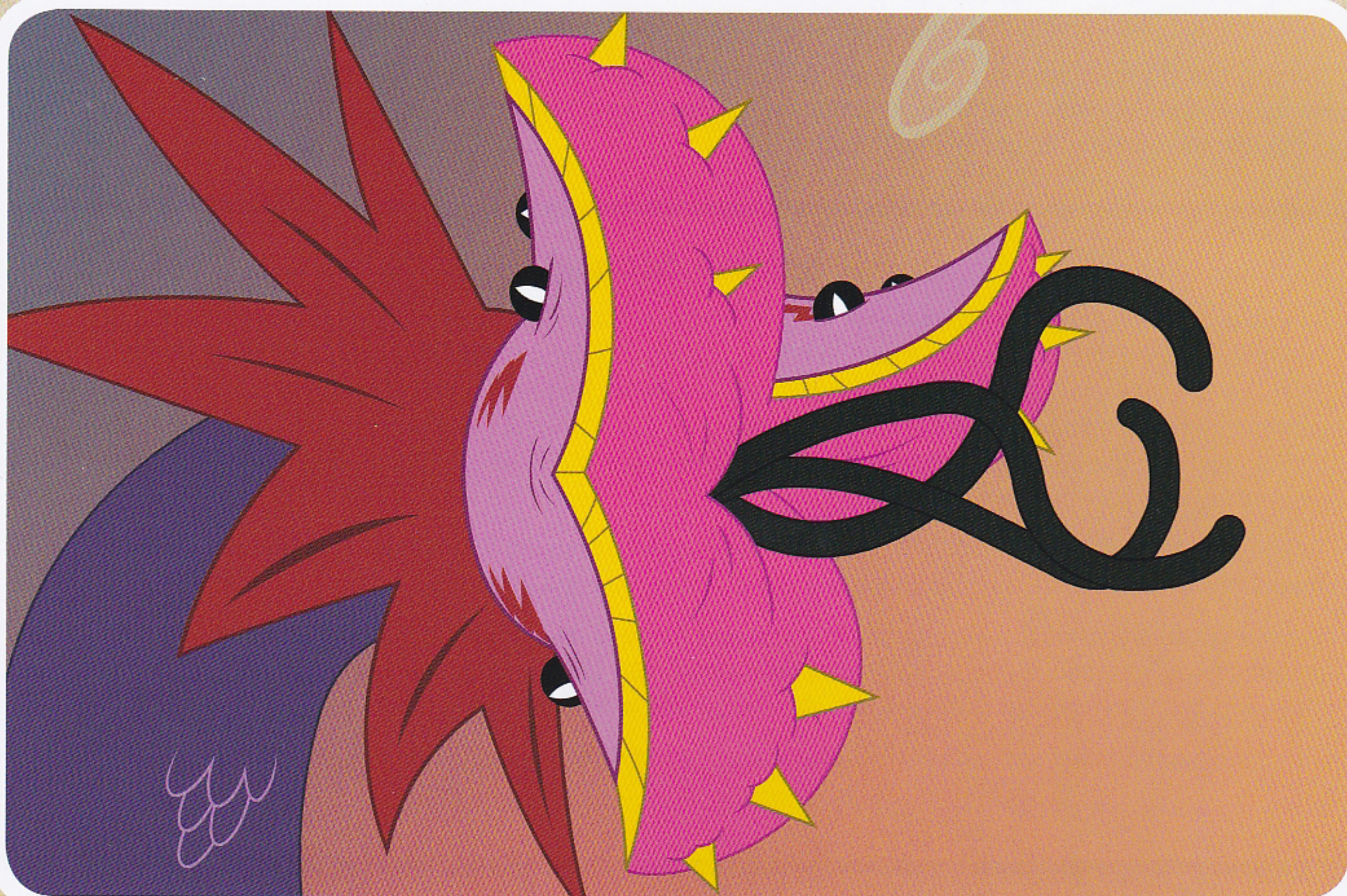
Reaching the edge of the site, you can't see any huge snake creatures; in fact the town is extremely quiet—too quiet. A ball of tumbleweed rolls between the dig site buildings. The silence is unsettling; each gentle breeze feels like the shallow breath of a terrifying monster!

Still nothing. You can see what looks like a stack of wooden cargo crates in the center of the town.

What do you want to do?

The **tatzlwurm** is a burrowing creature, so though the PCs can't see it yet, it's lying in wait beneath the ground. It has the ability to detect vibrations in the ground—this is how it knows if anything, or anypony, is moving around on the surface. If the PCs are too noisy, if they step too loudly, or if they cause any sort of commotion in Site A, the tatzlwurm will detect the vibrations and burst out of the ground in the middle of the town, leaving a great tunnel behind it.





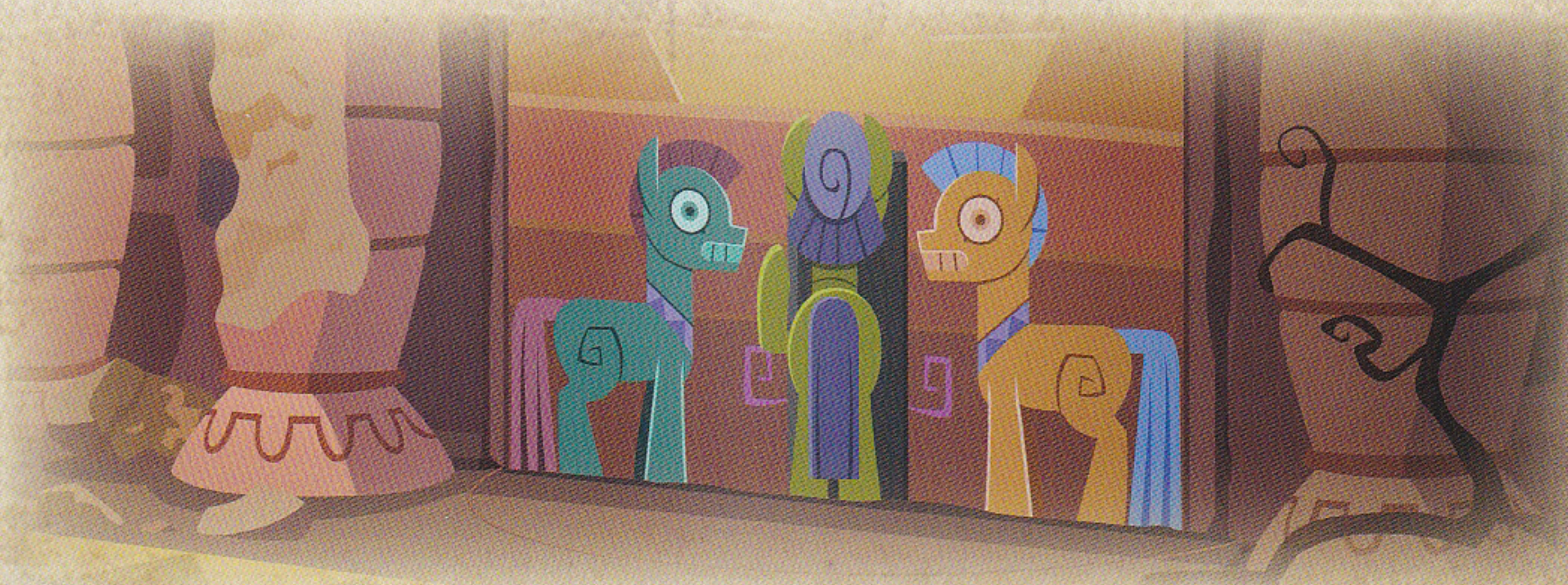
Any action that could generate noise must be done very carefully! If the PCs don't try to move stealthily, have the tatzlwurm appear as soon as they get into the town. You could hint that the PCs might want to stay quiet by describing how loudly their steps echo around the abandoned area.

To move around quietly, the PCs must pass a **Body test (Difficulty 4)**. A Pegasus who stays in the air won't risk being detected by the tatzlwurm, unless they accidentally bump into something! (Though it's unlikely the PCs know about its Tremor Sense ability). If the PCs are moving together, sneaking can be considered a group task; however there's still a chance somepony might make a noise, even if everypony else is quiet! Moving in a group increases the **difficulty** to **5** (but as normal if anypony succeeds, the whole group succeeds). If everypony fails, mark **1 strike**.

If anypony gets a **Bad Luck** result (i.e. rolls a 1), it counts as an automatic failure for the whole group! Mark **1 strike**, as that pony has unfortunately stepped in a bucket, knocked over a tent, or caused some other commotion!

- ♥ After getting **1 strike**, the PCs hear a low rumbling echoing around the town.
- ♥ After getting **2 strikes**, the PCs feel the ground shake, and hear louder rumbling like boulders being cracked and ground together.
- ♥ After getting **3 strikes**, there is an almighty crash as an explosion of dust and rock goes off near the center of the dig site. The tatzlwurm appears with a terrible screech and comes after the PCs—time to run away!

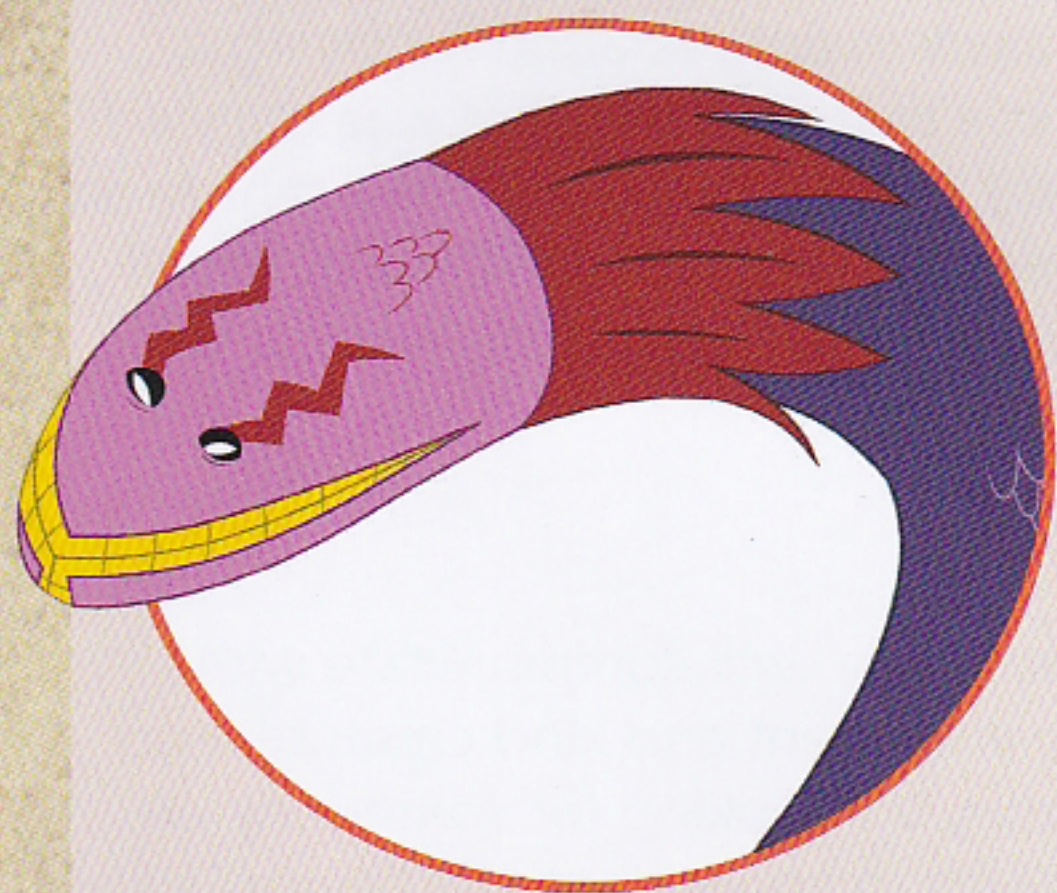
It takes one test to reach the center of town (if the PCs go directly there). When they arrive, they find a large stockpile of resources and equipment and are able to salvage what they want. A quick **Mind test (Difficulty 3)** will locate the crate containing the Pony Grappling Harnesses very quickly. It takes a successful **Body test (Difficulty 6)** to extract the gear without being too noisy, with failure adding



strikes as described previously. If the PCs are unsuccessful finding the harnesses at first, they need to roll two tests to stay quiet, but will still find the harnesses (after a longer time spent searching). It takes a final **Body test (Difficulty 4)** to sneak out of town.

This tatzlwurm is actually much older and bigger than most; it will play another role in the PCs' eventual search for Umberfoal—it's one of the Guardians that they'll have to face in the 'Trials of the Badlands' (see next chapter), though they won't know that yet. If one of the PCs gets very close the tatzlwurm's open jaws (not a good idea!), they might notice a white gemstone lodged inside. The tatzlwurm will try to swallow the PCs whole, smash them with its tail, or spray them with snot to make them ill (disgusting!). The PCs might try to distract it, hide, run, or do anything else they can think of; as soon as the tatzlwurm is aware of the PCs it will start using its Tremor Sense ability to *actively* seek them out.

Hopefully the PCs manage to grab a set of Pony Grappling Harnesses and make it out of Site A. The tatzlwurm will only pursue them for a short distance outside the town, since it only really cares about keeping the area to itself. After they leave, the tatzlwurm will go back to resting underground. If they don't get the harnesses, they might try to sneak back into Site A, or they'll have to resort to other means for climbing the Dustmane Ridge.



Tatzlwurm

Body: D20

Mind: D4

Charm: D4

Stamina: 24

Talents: Tremor Sense (D8).

Special: The tatzlwurm's Tremor Sense talent is used when it's actively searching for something, or somepony, by detecting subtle vibrations in the ground. If the target of the tatzlwurm is trying to stay quiet and unnoticed, they may roll their Body die against the tatzlwurm's Tremor Sense die, a success allows the target to stay unnoticed... for now.

The tatzlwurm can use its Body trait to try to spray a target with snot. If a PC is hit by this, they must succeed on a **Body test (Difficulty 5)** or come down with a case of the '**tatzl-flu**'; anypony who has tatzl-flu gets sick and turns bright green! Until they have a chance to rest and take some medicine, the affected pony's *trait rolls* are **downgraded**. The tatzlwurm snot has no effect on a pony that currently has tatzl-flu.

A Roc and a Hard Place

On the way to Dustmane Ridge, where the PCs have been told Professor Gully Trotter might be, they will have an encounter with a baby **roc**. A roc is an enormous bird-like creature, but instead of feathers, a roc has lots of stony shards covering its body. It has a jagged rocky beak and big talons, the tips of which shine like gemstones. It also has a gemstone frill on top of its head, though a baby roc's frill is stubby and dull, growing larger and shinier as it grows up.

At some point on the PCs' journey to Dustmane Ridge, they hear a shrill cry on the wind. After a few moments, they hear it again—it seems to be coming from somewhere nearby! A PC can make a **Mind test (Difficulty 3)** to determine that the call is coming from a creature in distress. Should the PCs choose to investigate, read the following 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

Getting closer, the cries begin to sound more like the squawking of a bird—it doesn't sound happy. The closer you get, the louder and clearer the sound becomes; it sounds as though the creature is upset or in trouble!

Coming to the edge of a small rise, you look down to see the creature at the bottom of a steep rock face below you. It looks like a large bird, only instead of feathers it has rows of stony shards covering its body as well as a big rocky beak and talons. It is indeed in some trouble, as one of its wings is trapped under a pile of rubble that seems to have fallen from the ledge you're standing on.

You can see a nearby path that leads down from the ledge to where the creature is.

What would you like to do?

Should the PCs agree to help out the poor baby roc, you can reward them each with a **Token of Friendship**, as they're acting in the true spirit of friendship and compassion. They will need to pass a **Body test (Difficulty 4)** to remove the rubble from the roc's wing. Though it is a little wary of the PCs at first, the roc will gladly accept their help. The PCs can work together to make this task easier. If they fail and need to try again, they can roll as many times as they need to, losing **1 point of Stamina** for each attempt they make past the first one—it is tiring work!

The fallen rubble isn't the only problem though. The baby roc will squawk in appreciation for being released, but he's clearly still in some pain. If the PCs inspect it, they see that the wing that was trapped has been injured—the stone feathers are crooked. If the PCs wish to try to treat the injury, they can do so with some basic first aid supplies, or even just scraps of cloth. A successful **Mind test (Difficulty 3)** will allow the PCs to bandage the wing. After a short rest, the roc will be just about able to fly again. If the PCs don't repair the wing, it takes a long rest for the roc to recover.

Reaching the Ridge

The roc is not able to speak pony language but can clearly understand it, and will communicate with the PCs as well as he can, using squawks and body language. He's an intelligent and kind creature, and is eager to help the PCs. He will stay with them, and if they mention they are looking for somepony on Dustmane Ridge, he'll pipe-up with an understanding squawk—he seems to know where Professor Gully Trotter is! He will fly off in search of the professor using his great eyesight. Shortly afterwards he will happily return to the PCs and motion for them to follow him!

Climbing the steep slopes of the Dustmane Ridge, the PCs will need to make use of the Pony Grappling Harnesses if they have any. There is a strong wind blowing here, which even makes it difficult for a Pegasus pony to fly up the mountainside. A PC attempting to climb or fly up the ridge must make a



Baby Roc

Body: D8

Mind: D6

Charm: D6

Stamina: 14

Talents: Fly (D6).

Special: The roc can fly in almost any weather due to his powerful magical wings of stone. The roc cannot speak pony language, but he can understand it.

Body test (Difficulty 6). For anypony using a Pony Grappling Harness, the difficulty is **reduced to 2**. A Pegasus pony is free to use their **Fly** talent in an attempt to brave the mountain winds (if they don't want to climb on their hooves). The harnesses work by throwing two grappling hooks up to a ledge; the hooks are attached to a harness that the pony wears around its body. It allows a pony to effectively 'walk' up the side of a steep surface. PCs can help each other out by holding ropes or pulling others up if they're the first to make it, for example. The baby roc will also attempt to push the PCs up, but he's in no state to carry anypony (though he is able to fly in the strong winds).

Eventually, the baby roc will lead the PCs to a flat ledge partway up a steep slope on Dustmane Ridge. The ledge leads back into a sheltered nook against the mountainside, where the PCs find a small cave opening. A flickering light can be seen from within, and once the PCs enter they find a ragged-looking Pegasus stallion warming himself by a camp fire—it's Professor Gully Trotter!



TRIALS OF THE BADLANDS

Trotter's Tablet

The Professor will be very surprised as the PCs arrive! He's been hiding out from Dr. Caballeron so he's worried that he'll be found. He'll get more worried if the PCs say that Dr. Caballeron sent them, as he knows Caballeron is likely just using the PCs to find him. After the PCs explain who they are (perhaps also making a **Charm test** if necessary), he will calm down.

Once calmed down, Professor Gully Trotter will describe the night he left the camp. He explains that he wasn't captured at all, but rather he ran away after discovering an **ancient stone tablet** in the quarry. The professor overheard Dr. Caballeron talking to his henchponies, and realized he had totally selfish motives; Caballeron was just going to sell all the treasure for his own gain! When the professor discovered the ancient tablet, he realized it must have great historical importance, and knew it belonged in a museum. Not wanting it to fall into Caballeron's hooves, he took the tablet and fled towards Dustmane Ridge, where he's been hiding out ever since.

Once he realizes the PCs are actually trying to stop the 'Curse of the Statuettes,' Professor Gully Trotter will show them the ancient stone tablet and tell them what he's learned. The tablet is carved with decorative patterns and writing. The PCs might notice that the **bangle** they found at the Mane Six's camp site has very similar patterns to the **stone tablet**, suggesting they may have come from the same place. The tablet reveals information about a lost city of ponies, forgotten in Equestria's history. It also gives the PCs some clues that this lost city may be the true source of the 'curse.'

PCs can read bits and pieces of the writing on the tablet, as it's written in common Equestrian language:

IN THE TIME AFTER THE GREAT WIZARD WAS LOST, WHEN DISHARMONY'S REIGN WAS CAST ACROSS ALL LANDS AND NOT EVEN THE TWO SISTERS COULD SAVE US, TO SILENCE AND SAFETY WE RETREATED, AND THERE WE WILL SLEEP UNTIL AWOKEN.



Professor Gully Trotter

Body: D6

Mind: D10

Charm: D6

Stamina: 16

Talents: Keen Knowledge: History (D12), Fly (D6).

Professor Gully Trotter is a Pegasus stallion. He has an olive drab coat and a dusty brown mane and tail, which are graying a little from age. He's quite a well-known archaeologist from Canterlot, and his knowledge of Equestrian history is second to very few.

Roleplaying Professor Gully Trotter: The professor has a strong will and wants to do the right thing for Equestria. He believes that historical artifacts should be open for study and appreciation in museums, not sold to the highest bidder by treasure hunters. He's an older pony, but that doesn't mean he's frail. He is polite and well-mannered, but his time spent in the wilderness of the Badlands has worn him down a little.

Professor Trotter remarks that the patterns and styles are unfamiliar, and he is very curious about the **bangle** that shares some of these patterns. He estimates that the tablet must be at least 1000 years old. After this passage, the writing becomes harder to read, as the stone has become worn over time. The PCs can make out a few disconnected words and phrases, and either by speculating themselves, or passing **Mind tests** (GM's call), they can piece together the information (you may even want to give the players scraps of paper with these phrases written on them!):

EQUESTRIA...IS TROUBLED...BUILT A NEW HOME...DEEP BELOW...SANCTUARY...
SAFETY...CITY...UMBERFOAL.

*A long time ago, when the lands of Equestria were not as harmonious as they are now, a group of ponies built a city 'deep below' (somewhere underground). It was a 'sanctuary' where they could live in safety. They named it **Umberfoal**.*

POWERFUL SPELLS...AN ENCHANTMENT OF PROTECTION...CREATED THE UMBER
ORB...WILL TRANSFORM US...FORM THAT CANNOT BE HARMED...LONG SLEEP.

*An artifact called the **Umber Orb** was constructed, and spells were woven together to create a powerful enchantment of protection. This would turn the ponies of Umberfoal into statuette form, and they would stay like this until it was safe to return to normal. Could this be the true source of the 'Curse of the Statuettes?'*

FIND THE DOOR...MAGIC SEAL...ONLY THOSE WHO COMPLETE THE TRIALS
OF THE BADLANDS WILL BE SHOWN THE PATH TO UMBERFOAL. SEEK OUT THE
GREAT GUARDIANS OF FIRE, WIND, AND EARTH. RECEIVE THEIR BLESSINGS, AND
BRING THEM TOGETHER WITH THIS TABLET. THE...REVEALED...BEWARE.....
HARMONY...AWAKE.

In order to find Umberfoal, and possibly the source of the curse, the PCs will need to face the 'Trials of the Badlands' and receive blessings from three 'Guardians,' then bring them back together with the tablet. These trials were set up by the ponies of Umberfoal to test the resolve of anypony seeking Umberfoal.

At the bottom of the tablet is a short description of each trial:

- SEEK OUT THE WIND GUARDIAN, PROUD SHINING PROTECTOR OF THE SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS, AND GAIN HER RESPECT.
- SEEK OUT THE EARTH GUARDIAN, THE GREAT AND FEARSOME TUNNELLER OF THE WEST, AND FACE HIM WITH COURAGE.
- SEEK OUT THE FIRE GUARDIAN, ATOP HIS SOUTHERN SPIRE, AND SHARE IN HIS JOY.

The PCs are free to face the trials in any order they want to, though the baby roc chirps up shortly after hearing of the Trial of Wind—perhaps it knows something? Professor Gully Trotter is not in a fit state for adventuring, so he'll stay where he is and suggest that the tablet remains with him for safekeeping. Trotter's research of the tablet suggests that the 'blessings' are physical objects that need to be brought together with the stone tablet to reveal the location of Umberfoal's door.

THE TRIAL OF WIND

Retrieve the blessing of the Wind Guardian

The Wind Guardian is a colossal adult **roc** that lives high up in the peaks of the Dustmane Ridge. The baby roc reacts as if it knows something when the Trial of Wind is described—the Wind Guardian is in fact his mother! The roc motions up the mountainside, taking flight and prompting the PCs to follow. It's a tricky climb and the PCs will need to make more climbing checks to make it up without losing Stamina points. It's a **Body test (Difficulty 12)** to climb, or **Difficulty 4** for anypony with a harness. Pegasi are free to try to **fly** up instead.

When the PCs reach the top, they step onto a great plateau. Ahead of them is a large wooden structure; it's taller than most of the buildings in Ponyville and seems almost woven together. As the PCs get closer, they realize it's built out of hundreds of interlocking tree trunks!

The baby roc chirps up again and motions towards a passageway that leads through the outer wall of the tree trunk structure. When the PCs follow, read the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

The tree trunk structure towers over you as you approach, blocking out the sun as you follow the roc through a winding passageway. Stepping over, under, and between the big tree trunks, you eventually make it out the other side of the wall. You're in a wide bowl-shaped space, with the wall curving around you in a complete circle.

Suddenly, you hear a thunderous sound, like a huge rush of air! *Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.* The sound comes in beats. A dark shape looms out of the sky, casting a shadow across the mountainside. Bursting through the clouds is an unbelievably big bird—it's another roc! Only this one is at least thirty times the size of the other, and it has a shining frill of gemstones atop its head. It lets out a terrific bird call and lands in the bowl with you, causing it to shake beneath your feet. Reaching its head down it screeches again, and you have to cover your ears from the volume! It eyes you warily.

What would you like to do?



Mother Roc (Wind Guardian)

Body: D20

Mind: D12

Charm: D6

Stamina: 32

Talents: Fly (D12)

Special: The roc can fly in almost any weather due to its powerful magic wings of stone. The roc cannot speak pony language, but she can understand it.

Much like the baby roc, the mother cannot speak pony language, but she can understand it. The easiest way to pacify the adult roc is to show her respect. She's a proud creature, and ponies that bow, act politely, and generally treat her with **respect** will be rewarded. Have the PCs describe how they interact with the roc, possibly making one or more **Charm tests** or **challenges** if you think it's appropriate. PCs could also make a **Mind test (Difficulty 4)** to figure out that respect is the key.

Play out the encounter as a conversation, increasing or decreasing the difficulty of tests based on how good an impression the PCs are making. Explaining how they helped the roc's chick will greatly improve her opinion of the PCs.

If you don't think the PCs impress the roc, she will start to treat them like her babies—trying to teach them manners and good behavior, keeping them in the nest until she's satisfied. As soon as you feel the PCs have suitably impressed the proud roc, she presents them with her blessing—a gleaming blue gemstone that seems to glow with a magical aura. All that remains is for the PCs to make it back down the mountain.

THE TRIAL OF EARTH

Retrieve the blessing of the Earth Guardian

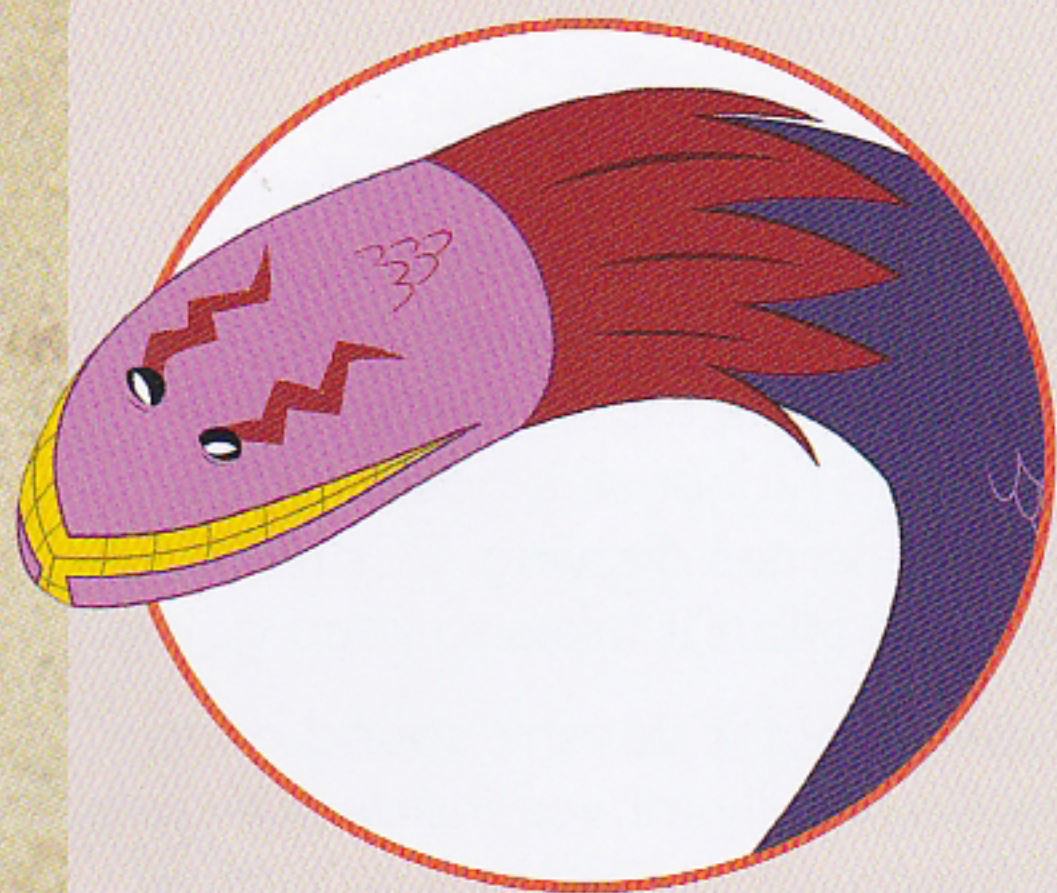
This trial is slightly different to the others. Instead of receiving a blessing as a gift, the PCs will have to earn the blessing of the Earth Guardian by facing it head on. The Earth Guardian is the giant **tatzlwurm** that the PCs faced before. At some point in the past, the ponies of Umberfoal who set up the trials pacified or captured the tatzlwurm and affixed the blessing (a white gemstone) within its great maw. This act is a test of strength and courage for anypony seeking the door to Umberfoal.

If the players need help figuring out that the Earth Guardian is the tatzlwurm, you could have the PCs make a **Mind test (Difficulty 3)** to recognize the description from the tablet. If the PCs have not yet faced the tatzlwurm, they will have to follow the “*tunneler of the west*” direction. Heading to the western Badlands, they’ll come across the Site A town (detailed in the section: ‘A Dangerous Business’). Only this time, the PCs won’t be trying to avoid the tatzlwurm, they’ll have to face it with **courage!**

The tatzlwurm will once again be resting underground, and won’t come out until it detects the PCs with Tremor Sense. If the PCs wish to sneak around the town, they must roll a **Body test (Difficulty 4)** to move a short distance. They might be able to set a trap without alerting the tatzlwurm! Setting a trap of some kind would also require ‘sneaking’ tests, and might be **Difficulty 5, 6, or more** depending on the noisiness of the gear they are using. The Earth Guardian won’t exactly ‘gift’ its blessing to the PCs. Inside its mouth, between its three-part jaws, a white gemstone is lodged—this is the Earth Guardians blessing.

There are a number of ways the PCs could get it, and they can have fun trying to come up with ways to do so. For example, they could try to make the tatzlwurm cough or sneeze, which might send the gemstone flying out of its mouth. They’ll have to be careful though, as getting covered in tatzlwurm snot will make a pony ill—the ‘tatzl-flu’. A very brave pony (or perhaps one who has been swallowed) could try to grab the gem right out of the tatzlwurm’s mouth! Or perhaps they might tire out the tatzlwurm by





Tatzlwurm (Earth Guardian)

Body: D20

Mind: D4

Charm: D4

Stamina: 24

Talents: Tremor Sense (D8).

Special: The tatzlwurm's Tremor Sense talent is used when it's actively searching for something, or somepony, by detecting subtle vibrations in the ground. If the target of the tatzlwurm is trying to stay quiet and unnoticed, they may roll their Body die against the tatzlwurm's Tremor Sense die, a success allows the target to stay unnoticed... for now.

The tatzlwurm can use its Body trait to try to spray a target with snot. If a PC is hit by this, they must succeed on a **Body test (Difficulty 5)** or come down with a case of the 'tatzl-flu'; anypony who has tatzl-flu gets sick and turns bright green! Until they have a chance to rest and take some medicine, the affected pony's *trait rolls* are **downgraded**. The tatzlwurm snot has no effect on a pony that currently has tatzl-flu.

having it chase them; it might just spit out the gem and go back underground. The tatzlwurm isn't the smartest creature, so they could also try confusing it. You should be open to the ideas the players come up with—they might surprise you!

Whatever the means, success will bag the PCs the Earth Guardian's blessing—a brilliant white gemstone that glows with a magical aura. If the tatzlwurm is still after them, it'll give up and go back underground after they get a short distance away from Site A. If the PCs haven't already collected the **Pony Grappling Harnesses**, they can do so now. This will help them greatly with the Trial of Wind.



THE TRIAL OF FIRE

Retrieve the blessing of the Fire Guardian

The Fire Guardian is a fully-grown blue dragon that lives on top of a tall spire in the southern Badlands. Traveling to the south of the Badlands, the PCs will eventually spot a tall, narrow rock spire that fits the description. It has a plume of smoke spilling from the top. Occasional deep rumbling bellows can be heard once the PCs are close enough; it seems the dragon is at home! The way up to the top of the spire is a very narrow spiral staircase that leads around the outside, climbing higher and higher as it goes. As the PCs ascend, the spiraling staircase seems to get narrower, and the height becomes dizzying. PCs must pass a **Mind test (Difficulty 4)** or lose **2** points of Stamina due to the mental effort it takes to keep going.

Closer to the top, the bellows become louder, seeming to shake the spire—but it doesn't sound quite like a fearsome roar, it's almost like a deep, hearty laugh! The staircase eventually moves *inside* the spire, continuing to curve upwards, but now with stone walls on either side. Eventually it becomes so narrow that the PCs have to walk single file. Inside, they can clearly hear something talking and laughing, seemingly to itself, up above. It's as if the dragon is having a conversation with itself!





Scalio—A Blue Dragon (Fire Guardian)

Body: D12

Mind: D6

Charm: D6

Stamina: 18

Talents: Fly (D8), Fire Breath (D10), Creative Flair: Comedy (D8).

Quirks: Oooohhh...shiny!

After a while, the PCs will reach the top of the spire, where the staircase leads out into a cavern with no ceiling. The spire has an open top like a volcano (luckily there's no lava!). When the PCs reach this point, read the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

Finally reaching the top of the long spiral staircase, you enter into a surprisingly lushly-decorated chamber. Sunlight streams in through the open ceiling and along the walls are many lovely tapestries, ornaments, and paintings.

On the far side of the chamber is a big pile of treasure—coins, chalices, treasure chests, and gems of all shapes and colors. Sitting on top of the treasure is a huge dragon with bright blue scales! This dragon is rather rotund—it's got a big round body in between a neck and tail as thick as tree trunks! It seems to be mumbling to itself, occasionally giving out a roar of laughter which sends a plume of smoke out the top of the chamber.

When it notices you its eyes go wide. In a big booming voice, it says:

"Well, hello there! I didn't see you come in! My name's 'Scalio.' It's been ages since I last had a visitor. Come, stay a while and listen! Now, what do you call a pony with a sore throat...? A little hoarse!"

The dragon bursts into a deep, rumbling laughter. After a few moments he stops, and says:

"Now, since you've come all this way I'll give you a challenge: if you can make me laugh, I'll give you a special reward! Jokes are just about my favorite thing in Equestria!"

What would you like to do?

At this point, you can let the players come up with jokes to try to make the Dragon laugh. You could also have them roll a **Charm test (Difficulty 8)** if they are having a really hard time coming up with anything, but being creative and **joyful** is what this encounter is all about!

The PCs might remember one of the expedition ponies telling 'dragon jokes' back in the dig site. If so, they can use those jokes to make the dragon laugh! You could let players take turns telling jokes, or have them work together to think of one. Bonus points for involving dragons! When you hear a joke you really like, the dragon will gift the PCs with his blessing—a dazzling orange gemstone from his hoard, which glows with a magical aura.

THE PATH TO UMBERFOAL

When the PCs have all three gemstones (the blessings from each of the Guardians), they will need to bring them together with the tablet. This will probably mean returning to Professor Gully Trotter's hideout in Dustmane Ridge. If the PCs do not know what to do, it may be worth hinting that Gully Trotter seemed to know the most about the gems.

The professor will be happy to see the PCs return safely, and will know what needs to be done: eagerly present them with the ancient stone tablet, as well as some food he's cooked, allowing the PCs to recover a little. When all three gemstones are brought together over the tablet, there is a burst of sparkling magic, and the tablet starts to glow. From the stone surface a beautiful golden staff is formed, rising into the air in front of the PCs. The Guardians' gemstones are fixed around the head of the staff. This staff acts like a dowsing rod, guiding whoever holds it towards the hidden door of UMBERFOAL. The top of the staff glows and points in the direction of the door. More writing is revealed on the tablet, revealing more information about the staff, the door, and the city of UMBERfoal.

THE STAFF OF UMBERFOAL IS PRESENTED TO YOU WHO HAVE FACED THE TRIALS OF THE BADLANDS. IT WILL GUIDE YOU, IF YOU ALLOW IT, TO THE GREAT STONE DOOR OF UMBERFOAL ITSELF. THE DOOR IS A MAGIC SEAL, KEEPING THE ENCHANTMENT FROM SPREADING. THE STAFF WILL ACT AS A KEY, BUT ONLY THROUGH THE POWER OF TRUE HARMONY CAN THE DOOR BE OPENED AND THE ENCHANTMENT BE LIFTED.

As the PCs read, the staff begins to glow and gently points down the mountain. Just as the PCs are about to follow this new direction, read the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

As you turn to leave the shelter, you hear a voice call out to you.

"Thank you so much for doing all the hard work, my friends..."

Stepping out in front of you, Dr. Caballeron smiles gleefully. His three henchponies stand around him, blocking your path.

"...but I'm afraid what was briefly yours, is now mine. Hand over the treasure, and we can all go home—me significantly richer, of course." He laughs.

What are you going to do?





Having tracked their movements, Caballeron has swooped in at the last moment to make off with the treasure. A scuffle might ensue, or the PCs might stick to talking. Caballeron is not unreasonable, but he will send in his henchponies if he thinks it's the best solution.

[See page 27 for Dr. Caballeron and his henchponies' stats.]

Before Caballeron can get his hooves on the gemstones, there is a blinding flash of electric blue light in the middle of the group. Several spells are fired off in quick succession with a crackling sound—it's Moonbeam! Sensing the magic of the staff, she's burst onto the scene and has transformed Caballeron's henchponies and Professor Gully Trotter into statuettes!

[See page 23 for Moonbeam's stats.]

Chaos ensues in which the PCs will have only a short time to react—play up the confusion to make this an exciting encounter! Caballeron will try to swipe anything he can (possibly grabbing the tablet if Professor Trotter was still holding it) and make a run for it. Grabbing the statuettes of the henchponies and the professor with **Telekinesis**, Moonbeam will also start to run for it, using **Teleport** if she needs to. Once again, she's not keen for a head-on fight with the PCs, and only really wants to bring more statuette ponies back to play with. The PCs might notice the staff pointing in the same direction as Moonbeam is running. Time to give chase!

It's possible the PCs will choose to pursue Dr. Caballeron before following the staff and Moonbeam. If so, they'll be able to follow the staff to the door of Umberfoal once they're done.

MOONBEAM

Secrets

Both Moonbeam and the directions of the staff will lead the PCs down the Dustmane Ridge and to the hidden entrance of a cave system. Within the caves lies the secret door into Umberfoal. It's also where Moonbeam has been hiding out since she was first drawn to the powerful magic there.

The cave system is expansive, and becomes more maze-like the further in the PCs go. They will have to navigate carefully, using their own wits as well as the staff to guide them. Moonbeam knows the caves much better than the PCs, so will be able to get ahead of them and out of sight. The PCs will still be able to hear her footsteps echoing through the caves, so they can try to chase her that way. To make it through quickly, the PCs need to pass a **Mind test (Difficulty 4)**—otherwise they'll have a rough time finding the correct path. Sliding down slopes, getting stuck in giant spider webs, and squeezing through tight passageways will slow the PCs down and cause them to lose Stamina points (at the GM's discretion).

As Moonbeam flees through the caves, she calls back to the PCs, giving them hints about her lonely past and motives. She says things like, *"You won't take my friends from me,"* *"You don't understand,"* and *"I found this place; this magic is mine to control!"* She begins to convey to the PCs that she's lonely and scared (though not in plain terms like that). In the spirit of the Magic of Friendship, it's important that you allow the PCs the option of talking to Moonbeam when they face her later on, and trying to reform her.

Eventually the PCs will arrive in the deepest part of the cave system. As they descend, they begin to see more and stranger items, artifacts, and trinkets lying around the cave floor. Many of the items they find have writings and patterns in the same style as those on the bangle, tablet, and staff. This might indicate to the PCs that they have all come from the same place—they must be getting close! Investigating these artifacts requires a **Mind test (Difficulty 5)**. A successful PC will be able to glean information about the history of the Badlands and Umberfoal (see the 'Adventure Background' section). They detail how the trials were set up to test those seeking Umberfoal, how the enchantment was cast to protect the city, and how the door acts as a seal to prevent the enchantment from spreading.

The Door

At last, the PCs will arrive in a wide, tall chamber with no natural exits, but Moonbeam is nowhere to be found. Set into the far rock wall is a great circular stone door—the door to Umberfoal! The door also has markings that match the other ancient items the PCs have found. It glows with magic energy, and the air hums with low vibrations coming from the door. The chamber slopes down from where the PCs are standing and a series of wide carved stone steps lead up to the door. In the center of the door is a circular slot surrounded by patterns in the stone.

On either side of the door stand large statues of ponies, one on each side. These statues are roughly one and a half times the size of a real pony, which combined with their stern faces, makes them look quite imposing. They seem to be made from stone and metal and have mechanical joints in their legs, heads, and bodies (a bit like an action figure!). Anypony who succeeds on a **Mind test (Difficulty 6)** to inspect the statues can determine that the joints allow the statues to move (though they are perfectly still at the moment). A pony with magical expertise might identify the statues as **Pony Golems**, mechanical constructs that can be animated by magic.

The wide steps are beautifully decorated with carvings and patterns left by the ponies of Umberfoal, but there are some more unusual things in the chamber as well. Many of these look like they are recent additions; the PCs might deduce that they are Moonbeam's possessions. They find dolls, old photos of a young Moonbeam, and a diary. From what they find, they can piece together parts of Moonbeam's history: they realize she has never had any real pony friends, and that she was always overlooked—even in the study of magic, which she excelled at. As a filly, her only friends were her dolls, who appear in the photographs with her.

In amongst Moonbeam's belongings the PCs find a kind of makeshift play set. It has houses, castles, and streets—an imitation of a foal's toy. Inspecting the elaborate construct, the PCs notice it is filled with neatly arranged pony statuettes! All the ponies that have gone missing are here, including Professor Gully Trotter, the wagon-pony, and the Mane Six! They are all arranged like toys in the play set—this is what Moonbeam means by 'making them her friends.' Since the source of the curse appears to be within the city of Umberfoal, the PCs might want to focus their attention on the door. Perhaps they can repair the seal?

Inspecting the door, the PCs notice that something seems off about it. There are fractures in the stone that run across the surface, pulsing with bright magical energy—like a glass window that's about to shatter. The PCs might be able to piece together why from some of Moonbeam's notes or the writings they may have investigated earlier. The door is a magic seal, which contains an enchantment behind it. The enchantment turns ponies into statuettes, and was originally cast by the ponies of Umberfoal to protect them over 1000 years ago from the chaotic reign of Discord, allowing them to transform back unharmed when Equestria was safe again. Moonbeam found the door, and by tampering with it and tapping into its magic, she has cracked the seal, causing the enchantment to begin spreading. This is the true source of the 'Curse of the Statuettes'—it wasn't truly a curse originally, it was a choice! A protective spell that was never intended to be set loose.



Remembering the writing on the stone tablet will be of some help to the PCs here:

"...The door is a magic seal, keeping the enchantment from spreading. The staff will act as a key but only through the power of true harmony can the door be opened and the enchantment be lifted."

The PCs might figure out that the door's circular slot is the 'keyhole'. The staff is just the right size to slide in, leaving the end with the gems suspended outside like a handle. If they are having trouble figuring out what to do, the PCs can make a **Mind test (Difficulty 2)** to notice this. Any magically-inclined ponies will realize that the glowing cracks on the door indicate that the magic seal is partially broken. The door will react to the staff being inserted, pulsating with renewed magical energy—but it won't open. The staff cannot be turned no matter how hard the PCs try. The reason is found on the tablet: *"The staff will act as a key but only through the power of true harmony can the door be opened."* A display of harmony is needed for the door to open; for example the presence of powerful friendship magic. The PCs next encounter with Moonbeam is their best opportunity to display this (by reforming and befriendng her).

After the PCs have spent a short time investigating, move on to the next 'Read Aloud' box.

Read Aloud:

The door hums with magical energy. Its glowing light illuminates the two big pony statues standing to either side and spills out into the rest of the chamber. On the steps is Moonbeam's makeshift play set, containing the tiny statuettes of all the missing ponies. In the center of it sit the toy-sized transformations of Twilight Sparkle and her friends. Suddenly you hear a voice from behind you.

"Not another step! You ponies have been meddling with me since you arrived. Well you won't take my friends from me!"

It's Moonbeam! She gestures towards the play set.

"Since nopony has ever chosen to be my friend, I have to make my own friends. You can't take them away!"

Moonbeam looks visibly shaken, and the magic that spills from the door seems to be having an effect on her. She's glowing and crackling with energy, and her eyes shine with the same power. The chamber begins to shake from the intense magical energy, and rocks begin to fall from the ceiling!

"How about you join in too? Here are some toys to play with!"

As she finishes her sentence, two beams of light come from her horn and hit the two large pony statues in front of the door. The statues begin to slowly move, step down from their pedestals, and come towards you!

What are you going to do?



A Display of Harmony

The newly animated **Pony Golems** will attack the PCs under Moonbeam's orders; they aren't real ponies unlike the tiny statuettes. Moonbeam is controlling the mechanical statues with magic. She will hang back, sending **Stun Ray** spells towards the PCs.

In order to talk to Moonbeam and try to show her the error of her ways, the PCs will likely have to deal with the Pony Golems first.

While this is happening, rocks continue to fall from the ceiling.

Each time the PCs act, roll a **D6**. If the result is **2 or lower**, have the PCs roll a **Body test (Difficulty 3)**. If they fail they are hit by a falling rock and lose **1 Stamina point**.

[See page 23 for Moonbeam's stats]

The tablet said that '*the power of true harmony*' will lift the enchantment, thereby stopping the 'Curse of the Statuettes' completely, and transforming all the ponies back into their normal forms. The PCs can speculate about how to use 'the power of true harmony,' but the best way to achieve this is through working with Moonbeam. Teaching her the error of her ways, that she shouldn't force ponies to be her friends, and showing her the magic of real friendship—this will infuse the door with the power of harmony, causing it to open (and lifting the 'curse'). Reforming Moonbeam is the ideal outcome, and should be rewarded with **Friendship Tokens**.

If the PCs choose to deal with Moonbeam more harshly, perhaps they should *lose* Friendship Tokens, as that's not what friendship is all about. PCs that don't reform Moonbeam can still stop the curse by surrounding the door with the statuettes of the Mane Six—the Elements of Harmony. This is not the ideal ending though, so you should give them every opportunity to reform Moonbeam.

Once the Pony Golems have been dealt with, and/or when Moonbeam is clearly outmatched, the PCs should be able to talk her down, and use the magic of friendship to reform her. Have the PCs talk to her and explain their reasoning. You should convey the internal struggle that Moonbeam has been having, but in the end she will agree with them. As she does, magical rainbow energy springs to life around the PCs and Moonbeam—the magic of friendship! It reaches towards the door of Umberfoal and fills it; the 'curse' begins to reverse.

First, the statuettes of the Mane Six float into the air and return to their normal selves with a flash of light! The Elements of Harmony empower the Magic of Friendship even more, and all the other statuettes return to their pony selves.

Pony Golems

Body: D12

Mind: D4

Charm: D4

Stamina: 16

Quirks: Unliving



The Call of Adventure

With that, the PCs have finally solved the Curse of the Statuettes. The Mane Six, and all the other ponies that were captured, are extremely thankful (though initially very confused). Twilight Sparkle tells them she will hold a ceremony in their honor when they return to Ponyville. After things quiet down, the PCs might find Moonbeam by herself. She is crying—she does feel terrible for all the trouble she's caused, and she's still very scared about making friends and being accepted. The PCs could comfort her, introduce her to the Mane Six, or show her how to make friends. She will greatly appreciate their kindness. Noticing that they have the **bangle** she previously wore, she will tell them it's actually a magic item. During her studies of this chamber, she discovered how it worked. She tells the PCs to keep it as a gift. When a command word is spoken (*Shimmer*), the bangle will project light in front of the wearer like a torch.

While the PCs are speaking, the door to Umberfoal continues to glow with the magic of friendship. The energy seems to flow through the stone surface, eventually reaching the keyhole. If the staff is inserted, the gems suddenly flash with the same magic energy. The staff slowly rotates in the lock and the door splits in two down the middle. Still glowing with light, the two halves swing inwards, revealing a dark and fairly narrow passageway. On each wall a mounted crystal begins to glow with blue light, illuminating the corridor. A short distance in, a set of stone stairs leads down into the darkness.

The path to Umberfoal lies open.

NEXT TIME...

Will the PCs heed the call of adventure and descend into Umberfoal? If so, what lies in wait for them? And what else do the caverns beneath Dustmane hide? Why has Umberfoal been a secret for so long?

New adventures await your characters in the next *Tails of Equestria* episode. You can also use this as inspiration to create your own stories!

Moonbeam's Bangle

Magic Item. The bangle reacts to a command word set by the wearer. When the command word is spoken (*Shimmer*), a beam of light projects out in front of the wearer, illuminating dark places.





PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:



	MAX	CURRENT
STAMINA:

BODY

MIND

CHARM

TALENTS

CM:

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T:

T:

T:

PORTRAIT

QUIRKS

MAIN:

Q:

Q:

Q:

CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:



	MAX	CURRENT
STAMINA:

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CUTiE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:



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QUIRKS

MAIN:

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CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:

FRIENDSHIP

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CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

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CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:

FRIENDSHIP

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CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:

FRIENDSHIP

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CUTIE MARK



PONY SHEET



Pony Name:

Player Name:

Pony Type:

Level:

Element of Harmony:

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CUTIE MARK

THE CURSE

OF THE STATUETTES



Equestria is in trouble and desperately needs your help!

All over Equestria, ponies have started to turn into statuettes, figurine versions of themselves. No pony knows why, no pony knows when and, to make it all worse, no pony knows where the Mane Six have gone! It looks like it's up to you to travel to distant lands, overcome terrifying danger, and save Ponyville, neigh the world!

Tails of Equestria explores the Badlands with *The Curse of the Statuettes* adventure, perfect for Level 1-3 pony characters. Players will need to find ways to befriend or outfox the many ponies and creatures they encounter. Meet the roc, a mythical bird that uses its massive size and slate-like feathers to intimidate any pony who gets in its way, and the greedy Dr Caballeron, who cares more for wealth than for the good of ponykind!

The *Tails of Equestria* rulebook is required to play.



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