

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

JANUARY 2015



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GM's MONTHLY MISCELLANY: JANUARY 2015

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own Borderland of Adventure campaign, the GM's Monthly Miscellany series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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Thank you for purchasing *GM's Monthly Miscellany: January 2015*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

Published by Raging Swan Press
January 2014
ragingswan.com
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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign, this instalment of GM's Monthly Miscellany presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **Alternate Dungeons: Mystic Ruins** Alexander Augunas.
- **Urban Dressing: Port Town** Josh Vogt.
- **Village Backdrop: Edgewood** Mike Welham.

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FOREWORD

Welcome to 2015! I hope you had an excellent holiday season and that by the time you get this you've hurled yourself into the New Year with wild enthusiasm.

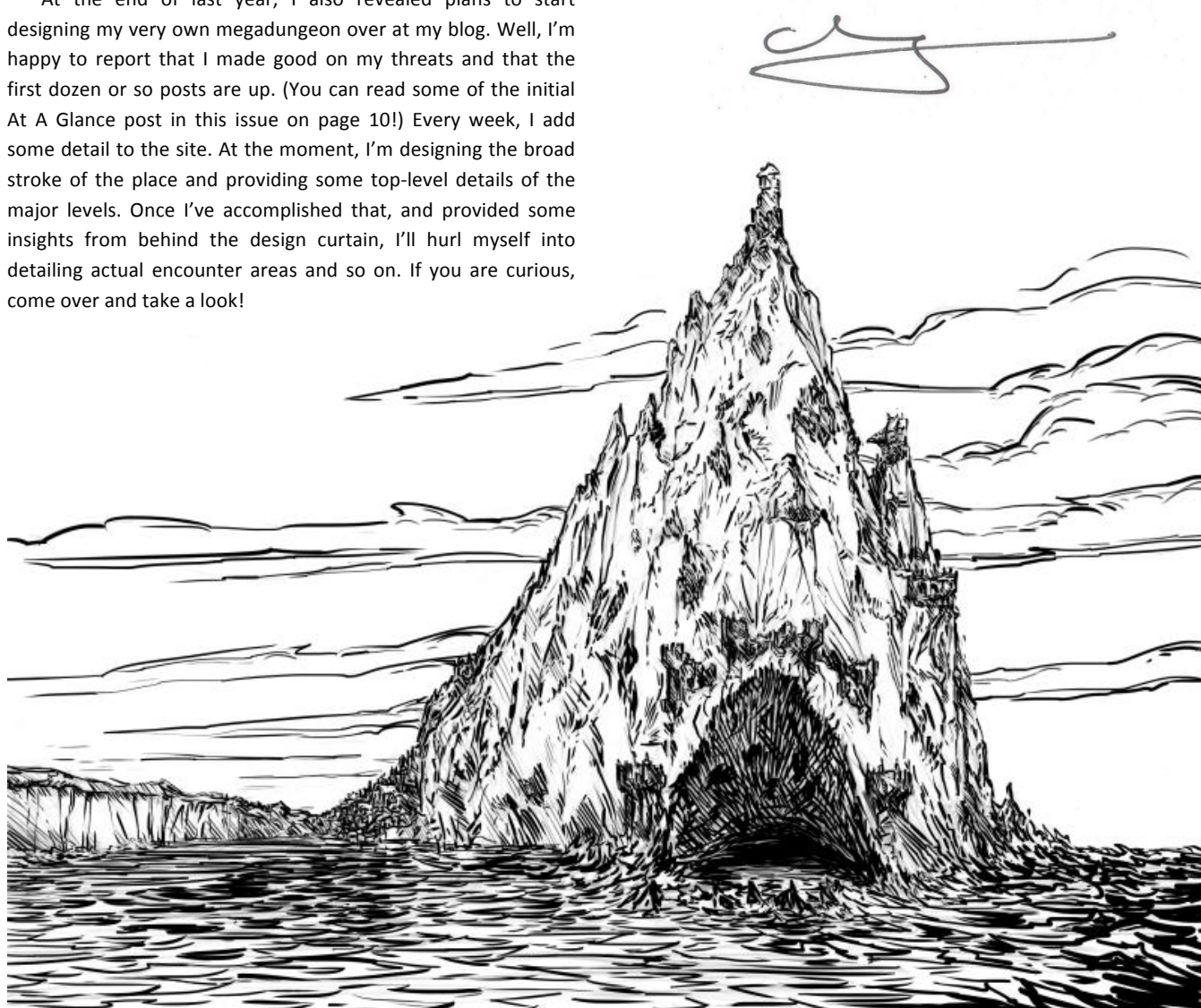
The GM's Monthly Miscellany series was jolly successful for Raging Swan Press last year. Crammed as it is with free Pathfinder content, it's a no-brainer download. If you know someone who might enjoy it, please pass on a link.

This month, you'll find excerpts from many of Raging Swan's newest products. This month (shockingly) we've got extracts from every January release including *Village Backdrop: Edgewood*, *Alternate Dungeons: Mystic Ruins* and *Urban Dressing: Port Town*. I've also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly on my blog. If you want to check out what I'm posting, and join the conversation, head over to creightonbroadhurst.com.

At the end of last year, I also revealed plans to start designing my very own megadungeon over at my blog. Well, I'm happy to report that I made good on my threats and that the first dozen or so posts are up. (You can read some of the initial At A Glance post in this issue on page 10!) Every week, I add some detail to the site. At the moment, I'm designing the broad stroke of the place and providing some top-level details of the major levels. Once I've accomplished that, and provided some insights from behind the design curtain, I'll hurl myself into detailing actual encounter areas and so on. If you are curious, come over and take a look!

As part of the project, I obviously needed some original, atmospheric artwork and I'm delighted to show off Matt Morrow's Mottled Spire below. I think Matt's done a great job of capturing the sinister mood of the place. Next month, I'm planning to show off a fantastic image he's created of the Twilight City – one of the main locales within Gloamhold and somewhere your PCs will no doubt be keen to visit (and plunder).

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany. More importantly, I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



PLAYER ADVICE: CLEVER USES FOR MUNDANE ITEMS

Dungeons are dangerous places. Most adventurers lust after magic items and the power they bring. Just as often, though, humble, mundane items can spell the difference between life and death...

Clever adventurers use every item at their disposal to gain advantage during their explorations and delves. Some items have obvious uses - the 10 ft. pole or caltrops for example - while others seem relatively useless or to only have one use at first glance.

Listed below is a small selection of clever uses for mundane items:

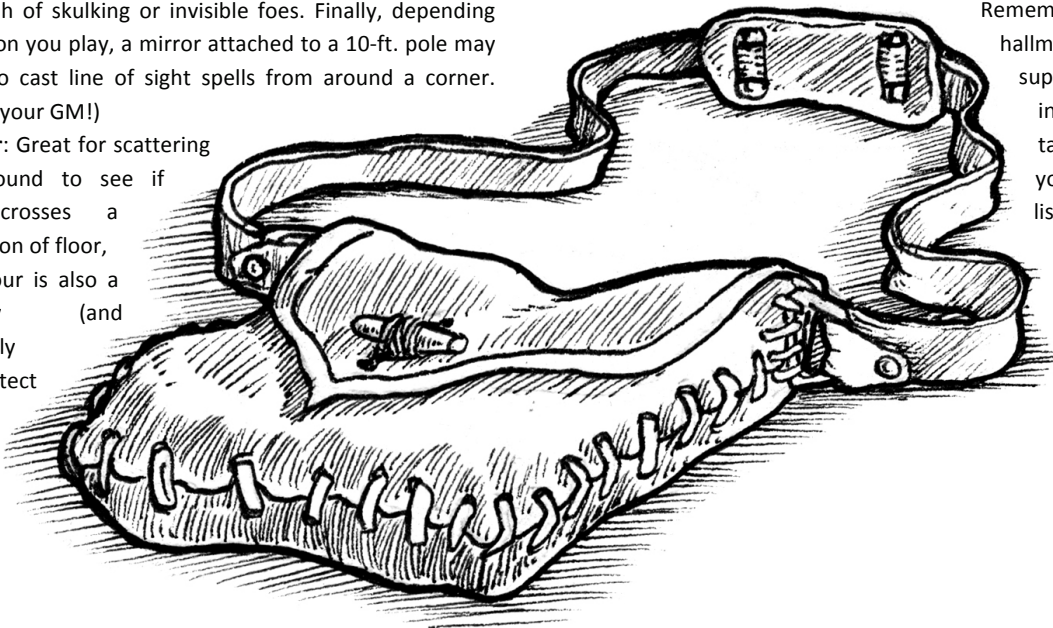
- **Wine Flask:** Flasks of wine are handy things for adventurers to carry. Obviously, they hold wine - which is nice to drink after a hard day slaying orcs, but they can have other uses. Wine offered in parley is a great way of ingratiating yourself with a dungeon denizen. It's also handy when fleeing - many sentient creatures will stop to pick up a wine flask hurled behind a fleeing party. Really cunning adventurers keep a special wine flask doctored with sleep poison for just such eventualities.
- **Rations:** In a similar fashion to wine, rations can be a handy bargaining tool when meeting creatures not immediately hostile to the party. Drugging or poisoning food left to distract pursuers is also a clever plan.
- **Mirror:** Mirrors are great for looking around corners when you don't want to expose your entire body. They are also handy for signalling and can be devastating when used against a medusa or basilisk. The glass in a mirror can also be used as a rudimentary alarm system. Scattering broken glass in the doorway of the room in which you are resting may warn you of the approach of skulking or invisible foes. Finally, depending on the edition you play, a mirror attached to a 10-ft. pole may allow you to cast line of sight spells from around a corner. (Check with your GM!)
- **Bag of Flour:** Great for scattering on the ground to see if anything crosses a certain section of floor, a bag of flour is also a rudimentary (and tremendously cheap) detect invisibility spell — if

hurled into the right area. Hurling in the air, flour can also reveal hidden air currents (which in turn might indicate the presence of hidden doors or niches). A bag of soot gathered from a campfire can perform the same tasks (and is free!)

- **Oil Flask:** Oil is obviously flammable, but it's also slippery. Coating the top step of a set of stairs with oil virtually guarantees anyone not spotting it will slip and fall down the stairs. We once used this tactic against a pack of trolls chasing us. Of course, we also put a wall of fire at the bottom of the stairs and all three trolls slipped, fell and slid straight through the wall of fire. Hilarious (for us) and fatal for the trolls as they landed prone and rather battered and scorched at our feet.
- **Marbles:** See oil flask above. Marbles can also reveal if the floor is level. This might in turn reveal the presence of a cleverly hidden trap or hidden area. Hurling at the feet of your enemies can stop them dead in their tracks or even render them prone, which in turn stops them pursuing you (or fleeing).
- **Chalk:** Using chalk to mark your way is a classic explorer's tactic. However, you can also use different colour chalk (if your GM allows it) to indicate different things - perhaps red chalk indicates danger ahead, blue means water and so on. Scouts probing forward of the main party can even scribe different coded symbols on the walls so the main body knows what to expect as it advances.

I've only scratched the surface of clever uses for mundane items.

Remember, one of the hallmarks of a superior player is inventive play - take a look at your equipment list and see what hidden capabilities it holds!



EDGEWOOD AT A GLANCE

Edgewood rests on the east side of the vast Shadetimber Forest. A wide stream flows from the forest, marking Edgewood's northern border. The forest and stream provide plenty of game and fish for the villagers, who make their living growing fruits and vegetables and harvesting honey from hives standing a quarter mile south of the village proper. Edgewood trades most of its goods to neighbouring villages and towns and has prospered since its founding nearly 100 years ago. The village seems immune to major upheavals affecting the region and has thrived through major droughts, wars and monstrous incursions.

Despite its prosperity, Edgewood has not grown much in terms of population beyond the ninety original settlers. The village's success comes at a bizarre price, as every year one to three villagers succumb to a random, brutal attack by a group of creatures from the forest. At first the attacks occurred during one of the solstices and involved brazen attacks by wild animals, which ignored other villagers as they sought their prey. Once the inhabitants discovered the pattern and attempted to circumvent the attacks, the timing became utterly random. Those who openly discuss settling down in Edgewood hear ominous warnings from the current residents.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Mayor Velendra Arrisse

Government Autocracy

Population 154 (57 humans, 8 elves, 16 gnomes, 28 half-elves, 12 half-orcs, 33 halflings)

Alignments NG, CG, N, CN

Languages Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan

Corruption -1; **Crime** -5; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** -1; **Society** +1

Qualities Prosperous, superstitious

Danger +0; **Disadvantages** Night of terror (danger +10)

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking farmers. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Barth Poul (locations 1 and 6; N male human fighter 3) Barth, is Edgewood's bailiff, but his duties amount to little more than breaking up the occasional drunken brawl. He typically helps his wife, Quinna, at Edgewood Inn.

Cleaugard (location 3; LN male human ex-paladin 4) A haughty paladin who believed he could solve Edgewood's "curse." He instead became an agent of death by spontaneously transforming into a werewolf and slaughtering a child.

Glennon Clee (location 9; N male gnome druid 7) Son of the village's original settlers, Glennon oversees the beehives.

Mayor Velendra Arrisse (location 7; NG female half-elf aristocrat 2) Leader of Edgewood for five years, Velendra has two more years remaining in her term. She lost her partner 14 years ago to the yearly culling in the form of a pack of ghouls.

"Nattering" Nim Indra (location variable; CN male halfling commoner 2) Nim claims to know the truth of the village's yearly losses; fellow villagers regard him as a harmless conspiracy nut, so he only now shares his theories with visitors.

Quinna Poul (location 1; CG female half-orc expert 4) Quinna owns Edgewood Inn and is usually the first person who meets visitors to the village.

Zerb (location variable; NG pixie rogue 2) Zerb indulges Nim in his conspiracies and excitedly adds insane speculation.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Edgewood Inn:** Sitting on the only road leading through the village, Edgewood Inn is a charming, cosy destination for travellers.
2. **Eternal Lovers:** A pair of centuries-old oaks has entwined starting twelve feet from the ground, creating a massive home for birds and squirrels that harms neither tree.
3. **Sacrifice Square:** Cleaugard spends most of his time at this shameful reminder of a time when the villagers thought they could control what (or whom) got taken each year.
4. **Storage Houses:** Warehouses, protected from the heat and humidity, hold harvested goods ready for trade and sale.
5. **Honey Haven:** This tavern caters to visitors and offers a fine selection of mead; locals frequent the tavern.
6. **Bailiff's Office:** Ostensibly where Barth Poul works, this office is usually unoccupied.
7. **Mayor's Hall:** Velendra Arrisse's offices are here, but she usually wanders about the village and along the forest's bounds.
8. **Festival Grounds:** A previous mayor decided to celebrate Edgewood's prosperity and commissioned the building of this area, which hosts major festivals after harvests.
9. **Beehives:** Glennon Clee oversees druidic beekeepers tending two dozen hives; the druids render the bees relatively docile.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Farm goods, honey, hospitality

Base Value 650 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Edgewood, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *cure light wounds* (50 gp), *oil of magic weapon* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Divine)** *entangle* (25 gp), *speak with animals* (25 gp)
- **Wondrous Items** *feather token (tree)*, 200 gp

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Edgewood. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: A displaced group of wanderers founded Edgewood almost 100 years ago. The village sells high-quality fruits and vegetables, as well as regionally renowned honey.

DC 15: The villagers are friendly, and Edgewood provides an excellent waystation for those entering Shadetimber.

DC 20: Edgewood's residents suffer an unusual curse; at least one villager dies a year as the result of a savage attack. Even those who have left the village are potential victims.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Natives of Edgewood have a variety of skin tones, eye colour and hair, owing to the original settlers' diversity.

Dress Most villagers wear loose-fitting and utilitarian clothing. Quinna and Mayor Velendra Arrisse dress more elegantly, since they deal with outsiders more than most.

Nomenclature *male* Andras, Owain, Styv; *female* Fianne, Mika, Quinna; *family* Arrisse, Clee, Dyllan, Poul.

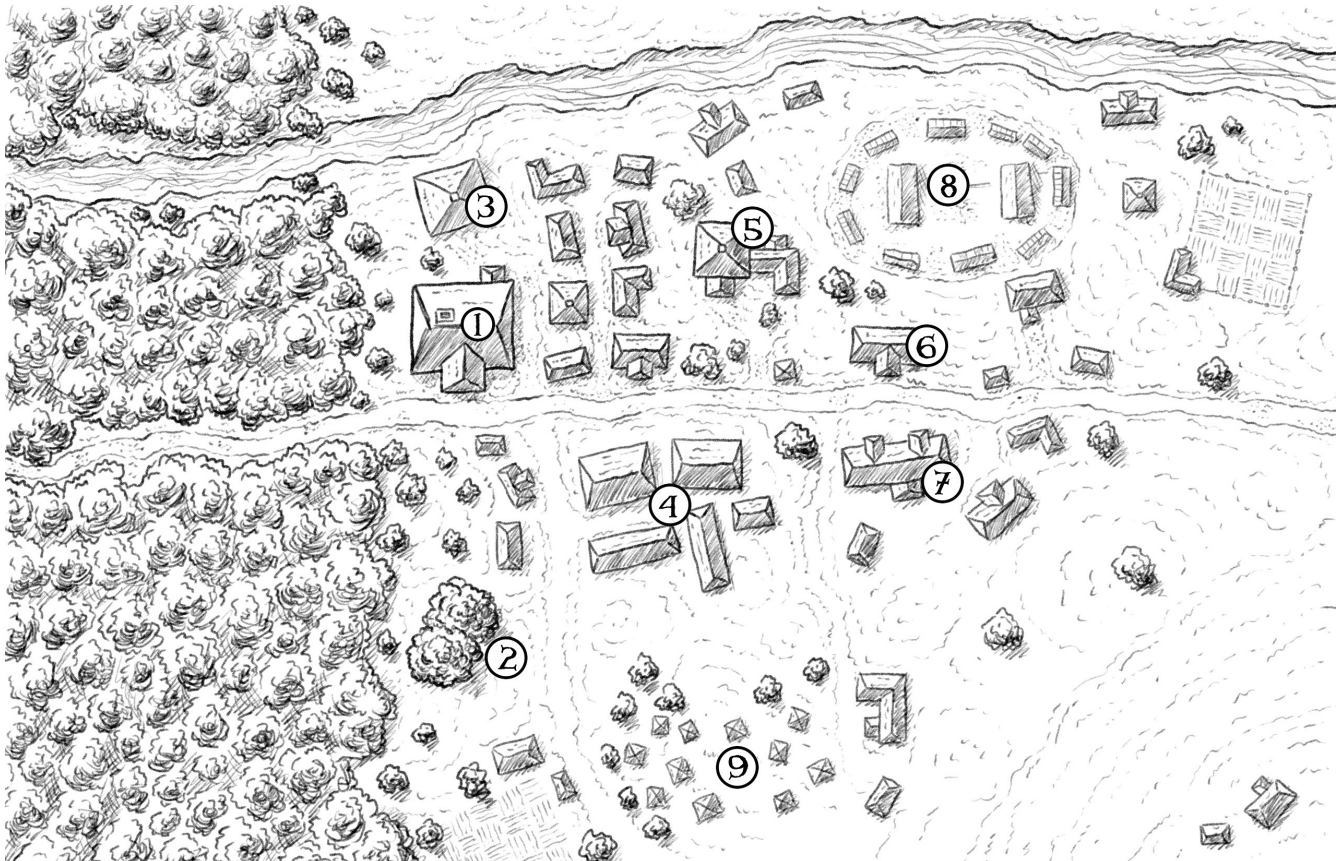
WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Edgewood and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6 RUMOUR

1	The former paladin, Cleauregard, cannot truly regain his powers until he removes Edgewood's curse.
2	Nim claims the yearly deaths are an experiment conducted by extraplanar beings.
3*	One of Edgewood's founders suffered from a terrible curse that killed all those he loved. When he died, the curse transferred to the village.
4	Another of Nim's wild theories holds that the bees know the truth of the village's situation, but one must speak their language to learn the secret.
5	Two years ago, a visiting cleric restored one of the victims to life, but she and the cleric died two days later.
6*	Since the yearly attacks only take the lives of Edgewood's residents, Velendra has struck upon the idea of making all visitors honorary residents to save her people.

*False rumour



MYSTIC RUINS: DRESSING

The appearance and characteristics of a mystic ruin are vital to highlighting the site as a unique, exciting place to adventure. Whether the mystic ruin is the remains of an ancient wizard's laboratory, the site of a horrible magical catastrophe or inhabited by eldritch beings whose very presence warps and changes reality itself, choosing appropriate dressings for the mystic ruin helps to establish the tone of the adventure and player expectations for what terrible secrets might lurk in the ruin's depths.

FUNCTION

Most mystic ruins have been partially reclaimed by nature and serve as homes for aberrations, animals, oozes, undead and vermin. Because of their strange, eldritch powers, unique locations and the potential for amazing treasures and discoveries, adventurers and scholars often seek out mystic ruins. In some cases, these trespassers are radically warped by the strange powers at play within the mystic ruin and go mad, becoming too addled to leave. Below are some common examples of how a mystic ruin's inhabitants utilize their home.

Field Work: Mystic ruins present a unique opportunity for those interested in the affects of arcane magic on the natural world to see first hand the wonders (and horrors) befalling a location if magic is left unchecked. Although goodly wizards sometimes set up shop to study the consequences of the mystic ruin's presence, many use their study selfishly to develop new spells for their personal use. In their arrogance, however, many learned spellcasters accidentally accelerate the mystic ruin's degenerative properties on themselves with their experimentation and become reduced to gibbering, broken souls who lose all intention of ever returning to their former lives.

Forgotten Guardians: Many mystic ruins are inhabited by timeless beings created to protect the mystic ruin before it was ruined. Constructs and oozes are especially well-suited to this task, but occasionally undead are left behind as tomb guardians or vestigial remains of whatever souls dwelled in the mystic ruins before it fell into disarray.

Survival: The majority of a mystic ruin's inhabitants are animalistic creatures dwelling there for no other reason than to find food and shelter. Despite the dangers, a mystic ruin attracts a large number of fauna and possesses prebuilt structures suitable for animal dens. Animals dwelling around a mystic ruin are forever changed from the exposure, growing to impossible sizes or becoming supernaturally strong from arcane energy. In time, many such animals and vermin become transformed into horrifying aberrations or terrifying magical beasts from the ruin's influence.

Willing Mutants: Although the ideas of allowing one's self to become mutated seems horrifying to most, some creatures relish the "gifts" bestowed upon themselves and their young by a mystic ruin's unchecked arcane powers. Troglodytes, goblins, lizardfolk, boggards and other primitive creatures often use a mystic ruin as a holy ground and a spawning ground so their young (and hopefully their old) will become bigger and stronger as a result of the mystic ruin's influence.

DRESSINGS

Use the table on the following page to generate interesting characteristics for your mystic ruin. Some of the features listed below may be inappropriate for your mystic ruin based upon its setup – ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

Expensive Materials: Some of the dressings described on the following table include descriptions of eldritch regents and strange mutations that can be valuable to arcane schools and curious minds. Typically the dressings below have a maximum gp value equal to the party's APL –2, although the exact value for such items is subject to GM approval.

Harvesting Dressings: While most of the dressings on the following table are part of the terrain or located on living creatures, most can be harvested by canny PCs. In order to harvest a dressing from a mystic ruin, a PC must make a skill check with a DC equal to 15 + the average CR of an encounter set within the mystic ruin. The skill check used should be appropriate for the object being harvested and failing by 5 or more ruins the dressing.

Modifying Statistics: Some of the dressings described on the following table provide bonuses to creatures encountered there. Generally speaking, a creature must spend a minimum of one uninterrupted month living in a mystic ruin, eating food grown or hunted in or around the ruin, bathing within its water and so on. Even then, it is far more common for these dressing bonuses to be imparted to creatures conceived, born and raised within the mystic ruin. At the GM's decision, some of these bonuses may fade away if a creature spends too much time outside of the mystic ruin or is not exposed to an adequate enough of raw eldritch energy.

Multiple Dressings: Although most mystic ruins only possess one of the characteristics noted on the following table, at the GM's decision each result on the table might correspond to a single area within the mystic ruin (such as one encounter location). Instead of rolling on the table, a GM may choose to simply pick appropriate dressings to implement.

D%	MYSTIC RUIN DRESSINGS
01	The ruin's denizens are hardier than most, granting creatures living there a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution while within the ruins.
02	The ruin's denizens are smarter than most, granting creatures living there a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma while within the ruins.
03-05	All creatures living in the ruin have vibrant colourations and unusual markings.
06-08	While PCs are within the mystic ruin, it feels as though something is tickling every inch of their exposed skin.
09-10	The mystic ruin is filled with cracked and shattered objects.
11-13	All of the surfaces within the mystic ruin are made from flawlessly cut stone bricks.
14-16	All plantlife within the mystic ruin possesses bioluminescence that glows as brightly as a torch.
17-20	Sunlight within the mystic ruin is dispersed into the colours of a rainbow.
21-23	Ancient, timeworn books litter the floor in the mystic ruin, their pages long since rotted.
24-26	All mould within the mystic ruin is uncomfortably sticky and is considered difficult terrain.
27-28	A coloured haze fills the mystic ruin. This haze does not impair vision, but it burns unprotected eyes slightly.
29-30	1d4 of the PCs' names are scrawled in grime on every wall within the mystic ruin.
31	Each day, any creatures resting for 8 hours within the ruin gain a random minor spellblight (DC 16 Will negates).
34-36	An enchanting melody endlessly haunts the mystic ruin's halls.
37-38	The mystic ruin's walls are covered in strangely coloured grime.
39-40	Creatures encountered within the mystic ruin are covered in oddly shaped scars and possess puss-filled growths.
41-45	Glowing runes emanating an abjuration aura line the walls.
46-50	A stream of sunlight enters a crack in the roof of nearly every room within the mystic ruins.
51-54	Creatures encountered within the mystic ruin are semi-resistant to magic and have spell resistance equal to 13 + their Hit Dice.
55-59	Water endlessly drips into a small puddle or pool within the mystic ruins with an audible plop.
60	Creatures encountered within the mystic ruin gain a +4 circumstance bonus on attack rolls against creatures benefiting from a spell effect.

61-63	The skin of all creatures encountered in the mystic ruin is translucent.
64-66	All water within the mystic ruin is over 90 degrees in temperature, including rainfall.
67-70	The terrain within the mystic ruin bears signs of acid damage.
71-73	All magic auras within the mystic ruin are visible, as if all creatures possess a constant <i>arcane sight</i> effect.
74-76	Creatures conceived within the mystic ruin possess a mutation, granting them one ability from among those granted by <i>beast shape II</i> .
77-70	Unattended wood within the mystic ruin immediately bursts into flames.
71	Gases with an otherworldly colour billow up from every crack in the mystic ruin's floor.
72-75	Pungent air within the mystic ruin disorients creatures, bestowing a -2 penalty on all Will saves the creature makes. A creature becomes immune to this penalty after spending 1 week within the mystic ruins.
76-80	Vines have completely naturalized one or more sections of the mystic ruins.
81-83	The mystic ruin's floor is coated with a thin layer of slime.
84-86	Creatures encountered within the mystic ruin have one fewer (or one more) digit on each appendage than is normal for their kind.
87-89	Every manufactured object found within the mystic ruins possesses a faint magical aura (determine the school randomly). The aura fades 1d4 hours after it is removed from the ruins.
90	The blood of any living creature conceived within the mystic ruins is infused with magic, granting them the sorcerer creature template.
91-93	Each hour a creature spends within the mystic ruin, it becomes 1 inch shorter. This cannot make a creature small enough to reduce its size category.
94-95	The PCs' shadows do not cast on any surface within the mystic ruin.
96-97	When a creature dies within the mystic ruins, a mindless ooze with a CR equal to (or lower than) the slain creature's CR emerges from its corpse.
98-99	Roll twice and apply all results.
100	Roll three times and apply all results.



PORT TOWN: SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Use this table to generate the sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about the port town. Ignore inappropriate results and simply re-roll.

D%	
1	The incoming tide sloshes beneath the docks; moored ships strain at their mooring lines.
2	A group of sailors get into a brutal brawl, fists and teeth flying, blood splattering.
3	A one-man dinghy skims the waves, bobbing across the harbour like a skipped pebble.
4	A set of sails appears on the horizon, but in the dusky light their colour remains unknown.
5	A rocky "mound" clinging to the dock wall is actually a barnacle as big as a human head.
6	Coarse laughter rings out amidst the sound of giant crab shells being cracked with massive hammers.
7	A dock worker shouts in warning as a crate tumbles and smashes to the cobbles.
8	A well-dressed dockmaster stands at the end of a pier, surveying incoming vessels.
9	Every single dock in the harbour appears taken up, and more ships wait out on the water.
10	There's not a single ship lashed to the docks, nor any anchored out in the bay.
11	The sea is choppy today, cloudy green water whipped up by the scouring wind.
12	A long ledge of grey and black clouds looms on the horizon, coming closer.
13	Dozens of dorsal fins break the surface of the water, sleek forms lurking below.
14	Hundreds of tiny, multi-coloured flags are strung between the shops along this street.
15	A massive ship just swept into the bay, looking like it could contain the whole town.
16	An imposing military fleet hangs back in the waters just beyond the harbour wall.
17	A ramshackle ship at the far end of the docks lists slightly to one side.
18	A man hollers down from where he's been strung up on a ship's mast.
19	Dock guards tromp past, rusted armour grinding and squeaking as they patrol.
20	Most walls around have a thick layer of salty grime crusting them.
21	Sailors and shipwrights' apprentices hang from ropes to scrub barnacles off hulls.
22	Tarboys run along ship lines, as nimble as circus tightrope acrobats.
23	Countless wagons have lined up to be loaded with the latest shipment.
24	Half-a-dozen rats scamper up an anchor chain and disappear into a ship's hold.

25	A crew recruiter wanders the town, calling out that various ships that are hiring.
26	A captain wearing a fine silk coat staggers past, stinking of whiskey.
27	A vendor calls out from his stand where he sells "guaranteed accurate" sea charts.
28	Only the top half of a mast shows where a scuttled ship lies beneath the surface.
29	Smoke rises and sailors scatter as fire engulfs a ship and writhes up its sails.
30	At low tide, a deadly reef is visible beyond the harbour mouth.
31	Fishermen haul their catch up onto the docks, where customers pick over the flopping wares.
32	Wooden barrels rumble as bare-armed sailors roll them down a gangplank.
33	A horse-drawn cart tumbles by, a ballista being carried in the hay-stuffed bed.
34	A member of the sailor's union bellows against the low pay and poor conditions they endure.
35	Elven sailors refuse to let human workers anywhere near the crates of wine they're unloading.
36	Two merchants argue over who provides the cheapest and cleanest deliveries of water stores.
37	Men eye bags and barrels of sand being measured out as ballast.
38	A man paces along the docks, glancing every other second out at the horizon.
39	A woman dressed all in black tosses a tear-soaked handkerchief into the waves.
40	A wide cobbled street shoots out from the docks straight through town.
41	A heap of rusted anchors block off this crooked side street.
42	The sound of snoring emanates from underneath many coils of rope.
43	A reek of week-old fish is coming from a barrel sitting off to one side, covered in slime.
44	Hundreds of live crabs scabble as they try to clamber out of water-filled buckets.
45	Pelicans swoop above the waves, occasionally dipping to scoop up fish in their beaks.
46	The recent chill has turned the docks slick with rime and frozen a few boats in place.
47	A sailor chomps on what looks to be strands of fresh seaweed.
48	These strange prickly fruits are squishy to the touch but taste like fresh pie.
49	A meat vendor claims he gets his spices from lands on the other side of the world.
50	Shipwrights inspect a recent arrival, tallying up necessary repairs and cost estimates.
51	A bright white flag flaps above the docks, showing which way the wind is blowing.

52	Seagulls soar overhead, their haunting cries echoing across the town.
53	Packs of feral cats prowl through the town, pouncing on any dropped scrap of food.
54	Prostitutes wearing silk and pearls flutter handkerchiefs and eyelashes at recently arrived sailors.
55	You overhear a few sailors discussing how best to shanghai a victim.
56	Many of the inns and taverns have "sailors welcome" written on boards out front.
57	A boy marches past, wearing an oversized ship captain's hat that almost covers his eyes.
58	A bunch of kids scream playfully as they pretend to be pirates boarding a ship.
59	A bosun's whistle shrieks through the air before being abruptly cut off.
60	Perceptive folk hear thumps coming from inside a nearby hull.
61	Bells toll out over the town, and everyone pauses to see if it's in warning of a particular danger.
62	A bonfire burns steadily atop the lighthouse set at the end of the jetty.
63	Sailors rouse themselves from a stupor for another chorus of their favourite drinking song.
64	Cranes creak loudly as they haul pallets of supplies into the air.
65	A lone lantern gleams up at the house on the cliff overlooking the harbour.
66	In this stormy weather, waves crash against the docks with a thunderous roar.
67	Several children play in the dust with an impressively large and intact shell collection.
68	Guards carefully inspect the merchants carting wares out beyond town, wary of smugglers.
69	This restaurant advertises fish soup, shark soup, mermaid soup, selkie soup and other delicacies.
70	The sign for this shop appear to be nothing more than a rotting shark carcass.
71	The town's market offers an impressive array of fresh fruit and vegetables from distant lands.
72	A wide channel cuts away from the bay, forming a convenient river inland for smaller boats.
73	Slaves trudge out of a ship hold under the watchful eyes of their owners.
74	A pile of random cargo appears to have been abandoned in this alley.
75	An auction has begun, with items sold coming from confiscated or abandoned shipping gear.
76	An eerie blue-green fog has settled over the whole harbour.
77	A nearby shop has a sign advertising carts and wagons for rent.
78	Every member of this crew wears multiple blades on their hips and looks eager for a fight.

79	A filthy urchin lines up buckets of live bait as he calls out various prices to passers-by.
80	Hundreds of crates have been stacked along this street, creating a makeshift maze.
81	Several seagulls struggle to free themselves from the rotted netting in which they are snared.
82	Dock labourers sing a work chant as they toss grain sacks into piles.
83	This dock has a large arch at the far end of it, with a gate poised to drop from a chain.
84	A hundred rusty harpoons are leaned up against the wall here.
85	This statue bears the face of a popular religious figure, but he has tentacles instead of legs.
86	A sailor wearing a dapper outfit struts down the road.
87	Every member of this crew is clad in nothing more than sodden, bloody rags.
88	A ship's captain, his arms clasped in chains, is led along by dock guards.
89	The cloudy water in that large glass tank parted just long enough to give a glimpse of the mermaid within.
90	A tiny octopus climbs up and slips into a barrel of rainwater.
91	A sharp citrus smell wafts over from a row of jugs lined up on a windowsill.
92	The breeze just turned so salty, your nostrils are burning.
93	Sailors stride along, shouting as they try to outdo one another's tall tales of sea-bound adventures.
94	Many storefronts are decorated with polished shells in spiralling designs.
95	A huge barbed chain is stretched across the mouth of the harbour.
96	Animals, many of them sickly, in wheeled cages are rolled along the docks.
97	A rowboat is being lowered from a triple-mast ship that refuses to dock for some reason.
98	A dock worker whips coloured flags around, using semaphore signals to guide a ship in.
99	A foreign ambassador disembarks from a ship gangplank, retinue in tow.
100	From prow to stern, this ship appears constructed entirely of bleached bone.

GLOAMHOLD: AT A GLANCE

Glowering amid dark rumours and terrible stories of desperate adventure, death, betrayal and glimmering treasures squat the unutterably ancient halls of Gloamhold.

This crumbling, benighted, haunted dungeon complex of unknown, but undeniably vast, extent is buried deep within the grim and brooding spray-drenched headland of the Mottled Spire. It is a place of legends, madness and death.

Even reaching Gloamhold is difficult. By land, adventurers must negotiate miles of trackless, jagged crags and sullen, dark gorges, chasms and valleys. Those approaching by sea have it no better. They must brave over a mile of savage, foam-flecked waves. Tides about the headland are notoriously treacherous; wrecks of ships large and small driven to destruction litter the seabed. Winter storms render Gloamhold all but inaccessible by sea for several months every year.

A harsh chunk of limestone rearing hundreds of feet into the perpetually cloudy sky the Mottled Spire looms over the turbulent waters of Hard Bay like a malevolent giant. The several attempts to colonise the barren headland all ended in failure and death. Surrounded by crumbled outbuildings, a now ruined lighthouse – now colloquially known as simply “The Shard” – stands atop the promontory’s highest, most wind lashed bluff. Elsewhere, on the spire’s landward side, languish the weed choked, tumbled ruins of Greystone – a fortified village abandoned decades ago. Occasionally, redoubtable bands of adventurers poke around both sets of ruins. Some return, while others simply disappear – perhaps finding certain secret connections rumoured to lead into the upper levels of Rivengate and from thence deeper into Gloamhold’s lightless depths.

LOCALES WITHIN GLOAMHOLD

Although much of Gloamhold remains unknown – nothing more than the subject of wild whispers and rumours – knowledge of a few locations has come to light through the explorations of brave (or foolhardy) adventurers.

Rivengate: Of dark and forbidding aspect the lower portions of the once mighty Rivengate collapsed into the sea long ago. Built by unknown hands to protect Gloamhold’s approaches remnants of the citadel yet cling to the upper cliffs.

The Murkwater: Only skilled or lucky captains dare to sail into the gloom of Rivengate’s gaping maw. Within flows the dark and treacherous Murkwater; the seething, foam-flecked waters below Rivengate are particularly hazardous with jagged rocks fallen from above, savage rip tides and more lurking to catch the unwary or the unlucky.

The Twisted Warrens: Honeycombing the rock above the Murkwater, the Twisted Warrens are a confused and convoluted network of (mostly) natural caverns and passageways inhabited by derro, troglodytes, dark creepers and worse.

The Breathless Narrows: A network of flooded, fractured caverns radiate outwards from beneath the Murkwater. The water therein is only fractionally above freezing and explorers need magic to survive for any length of time in this airless, lightless world.

The Twilight City: Buried in an immense cavern at the very heart of the Mottled Spire, the Twilight City sprawls across a series of low islands struggling above the cold, dark waters of the Sunless Lake. An ancient place of stone ziggurats, fetid and twisted canals and cyclopean architecture, troglodytes built the city when the world was young and their great empire straddled much of the known world.

THE SURROUNDING AREA

Gloamhold doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Several locales of note stud the megadungeon’s immediate surrounds:

The Mottled Spire: This huge chunk of granite glowers over Hard Bay’s treacherous waters like an angry giant. Difficult to reach by land or sea, the Mottled Spire shelters Gloamhold deep within its bowels.

Hard Bay: A wide and deep bay renown for stormy weather and savage tides, Hard Bay is aptly named. Its bounds are a tangle of rivers, rocky headlands, wooded isles and small, stony beaches.

Greystone (Ruined Village): The creeping tendrils of human civilisation did not linger long on the Mottled Spire’s rocky slopes. A nameless aura of fear and decay smothers these crumbling, wind-blasted ruins. Persistent rumours of the inbred descendants of the original inhabitants lingering in the ruins are commonly held as truth among Languard’s populace.

The Shard (Ruined Lighthouse): Destroyed decades ago at the height of a particularly vicious and prolonged storm of unnatural virility, the Shard juts from the Mottled Spire like a jagged, broken tooth. Occasionally, faint lights are glimpsed in its vicinity.

Languard (Small Town): Heavily fortified, Languard dominates the narrow strait separating Hard Bay from the open sea. Built over a series of rocky bluffs a stout stone curtain wall encircles the entire town and a rocky breakwater protects its harbour. Those choosing to dare Gloamhold’s depths often start their journey from Languard.

GM ADVICE: 6 MORAL DILEMMAS FOR YOUR PCs

Some of the best roleplaying experiences I've had stem from fellow players exploring their PCs' personalities and background. A good way to force the PCs to do so is through the judicious use of moral dilemmas.

Some of the most common moral dilemmas include:

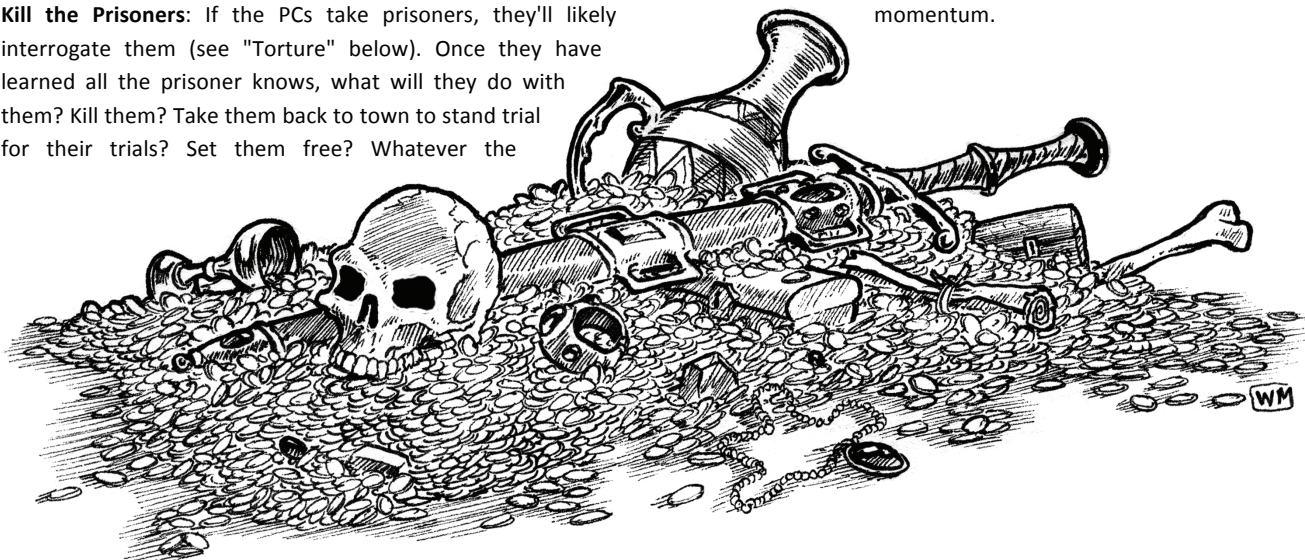
I've used moral dilemmas in my Borderland of Adventure campaign with great success. Not only have great roleplaying moments resulted, the players have had to delve into their PCs' personalities. For some of the dilemmas I posed them, they are still dealing with the consequences.

- **Kill the Innocents:** Lots of adventures are set in an evil humanoid's tribal lair. The PCs attack and kill all the warriors, loot their bodies and complete their quest. After the dust has settled, what should happen to the tribe's young and noncombatants? Depending on your worldview all orcs (for example) could be evil or they could just be predominantly evil. In any case, slaughtering the young (in particular) is likely to cause moral problems for some PCs. But, if the PCs don't kill them, what is to become of them? Will they be left to starve to death, are the PCs going to cast them out of their home, leave them to be preyed on by stronger neighbouring tribes etc.? If the PCs don't deal with them, what will the consequences of their inaction be?
- **Kill the Helpless:** After the battle is done and the PCs stand triumphant, the dead and the dying likely litter the battlefield. I've seen some PCs who -- after a hard battle -- like nothing more than a good beheading, but others might object strenuously to this practice. Beyond those they have vanquished in battle, the party could also encounter imprisoned evil doers (such as members of rival tribes), the ill, injured or infirm. Do they all deserve death?
- **Kill the Prisoners:** If the PCs take prisoners, they'll likely interrogate them (see "Torture" below). Once they have learned all the prisoner knows, what will they do with them? Kill them? Take them back to town to stand trial for their trials? Set them free? Whatever the

solution, it is likely to engender a lively debate.

- **Torture:** How far are the PCs willing to go to get the information they need? Lawful good types are unlikely to condone torture while for others it might be more of a hobby. However, if the PCs have captured someone who clearly has important information they desperately need (perhaps to save innocent lives) the issue becomes thornier.
- **Rescue the Prisoners:** The PCs are deep in a dungeon when they rescue some prisoners. The prisoners are grateful to be rescued and beg the PCs to escort them to the surface or nearby town. The prisoners are clearly weak and unable to survive without the PCs, but if the PCs retreat they give their enemy time to retreat or regroup. What should they do?
- **Work with Evil:** The enemy of my enemy is my friend. In some cases this might mean an evil NPC or group offers an alliance with the PCs against another evil group. Some PCs may balk at this, while others might be prepared to work with anyone to achieve victory. Working with evil raises many questions, including: can they be trusted? Why are they doing this? What do they want in return for their help?

At the end of the day, such moral dilemmas are not for all groups. Even in games when they come up, they shouldn't come up that often. The downside of introducing moral dilemmas into your game is that the ensuing discussion can go on for quite sometime. While this is fun on occasion, such rambling discussions can slow play dramatically and kill the game's momentum.



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