

CONSPIRACY THEORIES



A SURVIVE THIS!! Zine

Issue 1: The Dark Door

Brandt

Conspiracy Theories

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The Dark Door

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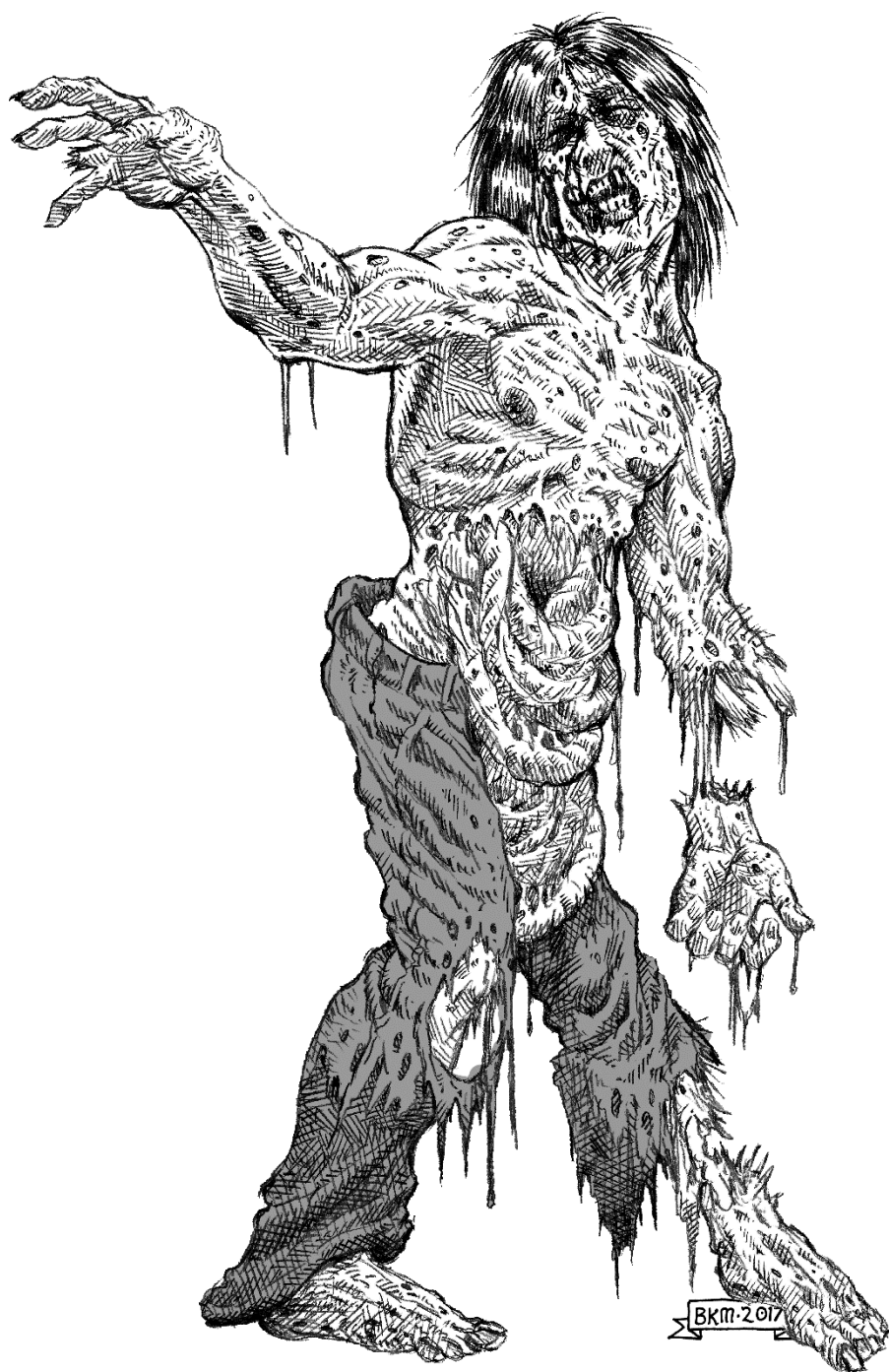
Conspiracy Theories – A SURVIVE THIS!! Zine
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“Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.”
~ Lewis Carroll ~



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Welcome! Come in. Have a seat by the fire and settle in for the inaugural issue of **Conspiracy Theories - A Survive This!! Zine** devoted to uncovering all the dark secrets that lay buried at Bloat Games headquarters.

Each issue will add new adventure seeds, bizarre new npcs / creatures, and ever evolving new campaign content, all connected to the Survive This!! line of games.

In this Issue we meet a few creepy creatures ripe for any Dark Places & Demogorgons Halloween games you might have planned, or are now planning. Then we share two new adventure seeds for brand new Survive This!! Zombies 2nd edition rpg that focus on taking the fight against the undead to all new levels of moral decision making. And last, but not least, we take our first steps into the mysterious Crenshaw Wood, an ongoing mini setting for DP&D.

So, if you're brave enough to face the truth, grab a chair, firmly affix your tinfoil hat, and get ready to dive into these:

Conspiracy Theories.

Special Thanks to Eric Bloat and Josh Palmer for creating such a ripe playground in which to sow some chaos!

Dark Places & Demogorgons

All Hallows Eve: Creepy Creatures

What follows are a few new beastsies to add a little trick to your treat this Halloween season.

Jackyl Lanterns



These small, mangy, dog-like creatures stray amongst graveyards and cemeteries carrying rusty old lanterns. Their whimpering cries echo out across the landscape sounding suspiciously like the laughter of children sneaking about in the dark.

Jackyl Lanterns have haunted old burial places for centuries, giving rise to the myths of Kobolds and Will-O-Wisps. Their matted disgusting fur and terrifying visages bely the whimsical, mocking laughter that issues from their gnarled throats.

Armor Class: 11

Hit Dice: 1

Move: 12

Actions: 1

Attack Damage: 1d4 claws, Paralyzing Light*

Special:

1. Mocking Laughter - The weird whimpering laughter that each Jackyl Lantern emits, creates the effect of several children at play in the darkness. It is an undeniable lure for anyone passing by the cemetery in which the creatures are hunting. Any characters hearing the Laughter must make a Wisdom check (DC 12), or feel compelled to seek out the source of the noise.
2. Paralyzing Light - The ancient lanterns which these creatures carry will cause any player caught in their direct light to become frozen in fear, allowing the creatures to attack without reprisal. Each beam of light can affect up to 2 characters, during which they must make a Courage Saving Throw (DC 14) or be caught like a deer in headlights, paralyzed for 1d4 turns. The player is able to make a additional Courage Save each turn to try and shake off the Lanterns effects. If the Lantern light is ever directed away from a paralyzed character, the effect ends immediately.
3. Pack Mentality - Jackyl Lanterns travel in packs of 2d6 creatures and will always attack as a group.

Bonuses: +1 to hit, +4 to sneak

Terror: 12, Jackyl Lanterns are terrible to behold.

HDE: 4 as a group

Malbeings



Wisps of shadow, the quick movement at the edge of your vision, these little shades tease and terrify. They are the insubstantial spirits of murdered fey creatures, seeking to cause chaos and mischief. They are known to move objects when no one is looking to the most inconvenient places, like under your feet or in places beyond your reach. Something you are sure you placed on the kitchen table moments before, which is later found across the room hidden on top of a bookshelf, is the work of a Malbeing.

Armor Class: 14*

Hit Dice: 1

Move: 12*

Actions: 1

Attack Damage: -, Malbeings never cause physical harm directly, though they may set up situations in which the condition become hazardous.

Special:

1. Insubstantial - Malbeings can only be hurt with magical weapons, spells or psychic abilities.
2. Wisp of Shadow - These small spirits can move in and out of shadows at will, disappearing into one corner and exiting out of another.

Bonuses: -

Terror: 11, the mere presence of these creatures causes fear, even if they are not seen, the fact that things begin moving about seemingly by themselves is enough to terrify any red-blooded person.

HDE: 2

The Dark Door

SURVIVE THIS!! Zombies! 2nd Edition

Adventure Seed



The Dark Door

Supplies within the compound are growing dangerously low. All nearby sources have been picked clean, and the people are getting desperate. There is talk of moving elsewhere, but the prospect of moving such a large group over great distances is not one which interests you much. The risks are just too high to undertake such a journey, especially with the young ones tagging along. Then, one day, Brother James finds something not far from the compound. It might be nothing, but it could mean everything. In a field, about ½ mile from the survivor's holdout, there has been discovered a large metal hatchway lid, in the middle of a field. As you and your team go to investigate many questions arise:

Where does the hatch lead?
What is beyond its opening?
A bunker?
An old storage silo?
More of the walking dead?
A new haven for your fellow survivors?

The risks seem too high, but then the possible rewards are also very enticing...

What do you do?

The Dark Door is an adventure seed which is designed to test players courage and resourcefulness. It should be placed in the campaign once supplies have begun to run out and answers need to had. It requires stealth and resource management, in that the players don't have much to go on and exploring this new-found location could make or break the entire survivor community.

This seed is a freeform set up. No map of the new location is provided and it is up to the Game Master and Players to decide what, if anything, is hidden within.

Possible contents found beneath the hatch can be determined by rolling 1d10 and consulting the table below.

ROLL 1D10	RESULT (see descriptions on next page for details)
1	Nothing
2	Weapons Cache
3	Food and Clothing
4	Wild Animals
5	Zombies!
6	Living Quarters
7	Water Filled Pit
8	Other Survivors
9	Science Facility
10	More Zombies!

Nothing - There is nothing but a deep dark pit located beneath the hatch. What is was previously used for is not known. It is approximately 60 feet deep and is cooled by the surrounding earth. It's possible for use as a hiding place or natural refrigeration if needed.

Weapons Cache - Beneath the hatch is a storage room filled with weapons of all makes and models. There are 1d12 functioning weapons located within. Determine which weapons randomly from the *Survive This!! Zombies* 2nd edition rulebook.

Food and Clothing - Hidden within several large storage containers is a multitude of canned foods and clothing for both men and women. 2d10 Clothing items are included as well as enough food to feed a dozen people for about a month.

Wild Animals - What the hatch's original intent was is lost to you, but beneath it now is just a large burrow of small woodland animals, many of which could be used as a food source if the PC's are willing to kill and process them. (roll 1d4 to determine type of animals)
1: Rabbits, 2: Bear Cub, 3: Badgers, 4: Feral Cats

Zombies! - 1d10 walking dead are found within and immediately attack when opened. Looks as if someone had trapped them here long ago and now they are ravenous with their hunger for flesh.

Living Quarters - Housed beneath the surface of the hatch is a large complex filled with rooms that had once served as living quarters of some type. They are all abandoned and stripped of useful materials and food, but the structure itself is still sound and will house up to two dozen folks quite comfortably.

Water Filled Pit - Whether this was a well of some sort or some other structure that just now happens to be flooded cannot be determined. There is a 50% chance that the water is safe to drink. Either way it is extremely cold.

Other Survivors - A small band (2d6) of other survivors are holed up in this underground facility. They have several rooms decked out with food and clothing supplies, which is only enough to support their number. Taking on more survivors would only increase your troubles, and there is not enough room to join them below.

Science Facility - This overly large complex is filled with scientific gadgets and paraphernalia. Included are microscopes, centrifuges, assorted chemicals, and lab gear.

More Zombies! - As above only now contains 2d8 undead.

When The Lights Go Out:

SURVIVE THIS!! Zombies! 2nd Edition

Adventure Seed



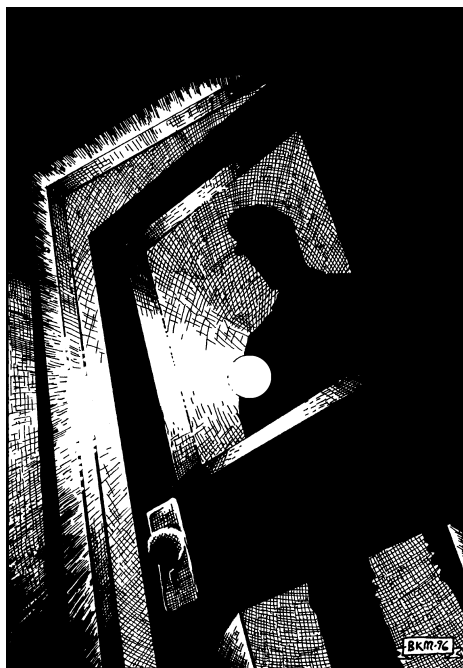
A tentative calm comes from time to time among your fellow group of survivors. A time when the hungry dead seem far away and life slowly resumes to what you can only now, after the fall, call normal.

Then there are times when all hell breaks loose and the chaos resumes. This is one of those times...

The electrical supply that has been powering your compound of survivors has finally given out. Whether that be through extensive use, worn out equipment, or via sabotage is a choice left up to the Game Master. What's most important is getting the lights back on so that your fellow community members have a chance at carrying on.

When The Lights Go Out Adventure Seed is designed as a way to introduce a puzzle scenario for your players and their characters to solve. First, they must figure out the cause of the power failure, then collect the resources necessary to complete the task, whether those resources are physical parts to repair the problem, or by reorganizing the community as a whole. Only then might life go back to a semi sort of normal, though it will not be an easy task to complete.

This adventure seed assumes that the community in question draws their power from a source larger than a small local diesel / gasoline generator.



1D4 POWER FAILURE CAUSE		
1	Over Use	There are just too many people drawing on too little power. The cure is either reducing the number of folks using the power source, or to increase the electrical capacity.
2	Worn Out Equipment	The generator or power plant that supplies the community is old and in need of a massive overhaul. Correctionary measures must be taking to ensure continued survivability of the community. In order to do so requires the players to replace the equipment or to move the community to a new source.
3	Sabotage	Someone, or something, has caused the power to fail. In order to restore order the players may have to discover and confront those who have cut the source. This could be a combat encounter or a purely diplomatic one. Either way the lights will have to be repaired.
4	A Bigger Problem...	<p>Somewhere, out there, beyond the bounds of the community is where the stem of the problem lies. This may be the key to a longer adventure path that could play out over several sessions, in which the players must travel beyond the confines of their safety zone to discover the true cause of the failure.</p> <p>Roll on the next page for: <i>A Bigger Problem Causes</i></p>

1D4		A BIGGER PROBLEM...
1	Power Plant Failure	It may not be a locally located reason for the loss of power, but a much larger one in which the plant which creates the electricity has been damaged or collapsed creating a massive outage over a much larger area. This is only possible if the survivors are drawing upon a system that is still lumbering on after the apocalypse.
2	Wildfire	It's possible that the loss of electricity has been caused by a wildfire which has burnt through the lines which supply the community. While this may be a straightforward problem to fix, a much larger complication in that of the community being threatened by a massive fire looms over the players.
3	Theft	Someone has tapped into the community's power supply and have taken their very lifeline away from them. This route may come to blows as the players confront a rogue group of thieves, or may evolve into a diplomatic mission to blend the two communities together and share resources.
4	Zombie Overrun	A massive group of the living dead have emerged and damaged connections to all manner of survivor communities. Their mere destructive migration in search of a food source has disrupted electrical supplies and brings a hefty decision to those affected. Does the community rise up and face the looming threat, hunker down and try to weather the storm, or uproot and seek other accommodations?

Crenshaw Wood

An introduction

Crenshaw Wood is an ongoing, evolving mini campaign setting for Dark Places & Demogorgons. It will feature new locations, villains, and malicious machinations for you to expand your game beyond Jeffersontown. Enjoy!

Twenty miles southeast of Jeffersontown, Kentucky lies the village of Crenshaw Wood, or rather, what was the village of Crenshaw Wood. Named after the dense forest that borders the village and butts up against Log Lake, Crenshaw Wood was once a busy village that fed the needs of the surrounding farmlands. In 1918 small grocers and restaurants had been established, as well as a bank, to act as a common gathering point for the local farmers and their families. Around about 1944 the village was abandoned and the buildings were left behind to rot over time. What prompted the decline of Crenshaw Wood is not known, but now the only inhabitants are the wild animals which have taken advantage of the free space and lodging.

Many folks still come to the village, mostly in summer, to camp, fish and swim in Log Lake. The Wood itself has always been foreboding and difficult to navigate due to the massive amounts of tangled undergrowth which thrives there. Many have said the place is haunted and that is why the villagers all abandoned place to return to their respective farmsteads. This, of course, is pure speculation, as haunted woods are fictional at best...

One newspaper article, which appeared in Jeffersontown in the fall of 1947 reads:

“Man Found Wandering Aimlessly Near Crenshaw Wood -
Tuesday morning Kentucky State Police officers discovered a man wandering down Oakwood Road, east of Crenshaw Wood. The man appeared to be delusional and lost, dressed only in what police are describing as ‘woolen breeches’ and mumbling something about a ‘wandering witch’. No name was given at this time for the suspect who appears to have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol. He is being held by the Kentucky State Police until his next of kin can be contacted.”

Crenshaw Wood is indeed a place haunted by deep mystery. Whatever drove the once profitable villagers away may never be fully known. What is known, is that something ancient and menacing lies within the Wood itself. From the outside, the forested area covers about 10 acres of land. Its borders are thick with brambles and thorny plants, but once beyond that edge the forest opens up into a deep green landscape, lorded over by looming Oak and Maple trees of dizzying size. As one wanders through, the forest appears much larger than its outward appearance would imply. It is rather easy to get lost in the forest and any experienced explorer finds that they get turned around in spite of any tools they might be using to navigate.

Some folks living nearby claim that Crenshaw Wood is alive and is one of only a handful of places on the planet that actively resists the influences of mankind. Lydia Farnsworth, who has lived west of Crenshaw Wood for the past 75 years claims that the forest is the home of The Wandering Witch, in addition to many other ancient spirits brought here long ago by immigrants from Europe. Myths and legends call these places Hinterlands, places unmolested by human influence.

In reality Crenshaw Wood is an alternate dimension, overlaying the current space here on earth. It feeds upon our history, community and collective fears and desires. It is massive on the inside and cannot be fully explored or mapped effectively. Time is also slowed within the Wood, and mere hours pass by in the outside world while those within have spent months working their way back through tangled pathways and disappearing trails.

Many, many spirits and creatures call Crenshaw Wood home and all of them have individual agendas for their place in the hierarchy of the forest. Throughout the breadth of this Zine, over many issues, we will explore and expound upon these inhabitants, describing their natures, desires and motivations. Each will be fully detailed, including stats, and ways in which you can incorporate them into your games of Dark Places & Demogorgons.

Barrow Mound Ghosts

Deep within Crenshaw Wood, to the Northeast corner (as far as any explorer can tell), lies five large earthen mounds covered in thick grass and ferns. Set in a semi-circular fashion, they surround a massive oak tree which rises some 200 feet in the air. They blend into the landscape and undergrowth fairly well until one gets within about 500 feet of them and their unique shapes become evident. Deep mystery surrounds these small mounds as they seem extremely out of place in the forest itself, and there appears to be no other structures like them elsewhere in the region.

If anyone comes near them the natural chatter of the forest dies away. The birds stop chirping, squirrels cease chattering and the wind falls still, but no other oddities seem to manifest. Only at night, once the daylight has fled and the moon peaks through the boughs high above, do the spirits of the mounds come forth. Anyone staying in the area, or passing through, during the evening hours will first hear the low mumblings of men and women speaking. Their words are indistinct and seem to come from far away. Soon after several milky white apparitions appear amongst the mounds near the base of the old oak tree. They seem to be looking for something, their heads cast down scanning the ground. They seem to be oblivious to any living intruders, until someone tries to interact with them...

Armor Class: 16*

Hit Dice: 2

Move: 10

Actions: 1

Attack Damage: See Special below

Special:

1. Incorporeal - The Barrow Mound ghosts are unaffected by normal weapons, and only take damage from Magic, Psionics, or very bright light. Illumination from sources like flashlights and or torches will cause the ghosts to shirk back towards any shadows, causing them 1d6 points

of damage, while enraging them and causing them to attack.

2. Unliving - The ghosts are unable to perpetuate any physical attacks, but their penetrating gaze can leech the very life from a victim. If faced by a Barrow Mound ghost, each character which can see the spirit, and of which it can see the characters, must make a Mental Saving Throw (DC 14), or lose 1d6 points of Constitution permanently.
3. Fearful of the Living - If some way can be found to circumnavigate the ghosts gaze attack, and a bright enough light source is present, the spirits will slip away into the ether, only to reemerge the following night.
4. Bound to the Wood - The ghosts will pursue those who have entered their sanctuary, but are unable to leave the boundaries of the forest itself.
5. Curse of Crenshaw Wood - Anyone who desecrates the mounds by digging into them or burrowing beneath them, will invoke the Curse of Crenshaw Wood.

Bonuses: -

Terror: 13, as long as the ghosts are provoked as noted above.

HDE: 4

GM Note: There is a theory that the Ghosts search every night for an object, thought to have been buried near the oak tree, that will free them from their prison. What that object is up to your imagination.

The Curse Of Crenshaw Wood: (Special Rule):

The Curse of Crenshaw Wood is an effect that can be invoked by many of the forests inhabitants and is one of the mysteries which have yet to be solved. Those who fall under the curse must make a Courage Saving Throw (DC 15) or become a part of the Woodland inhabitants, meaning that they are bound within the confines of the forest and may never leave until a cure for the curse is found.

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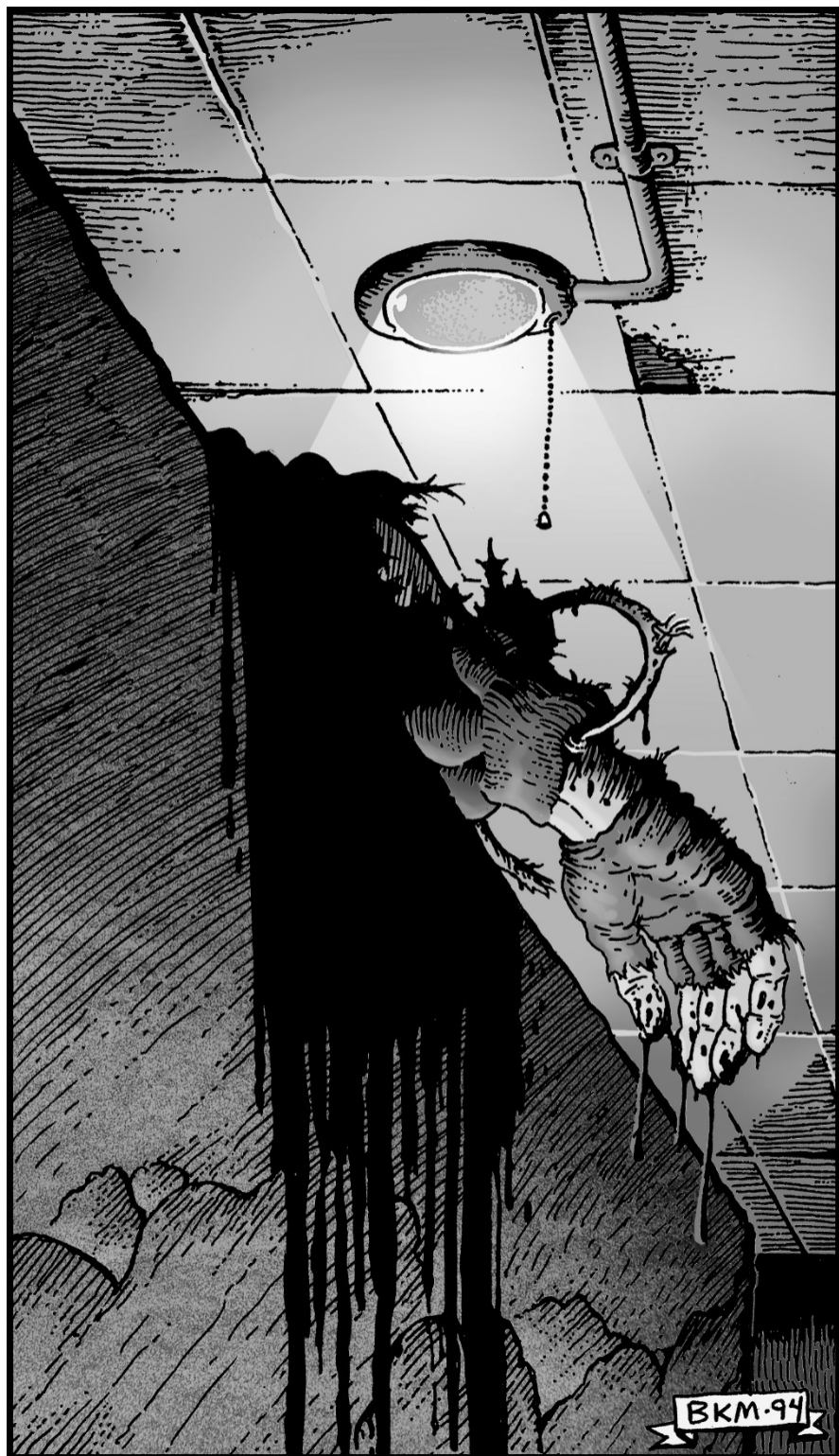
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