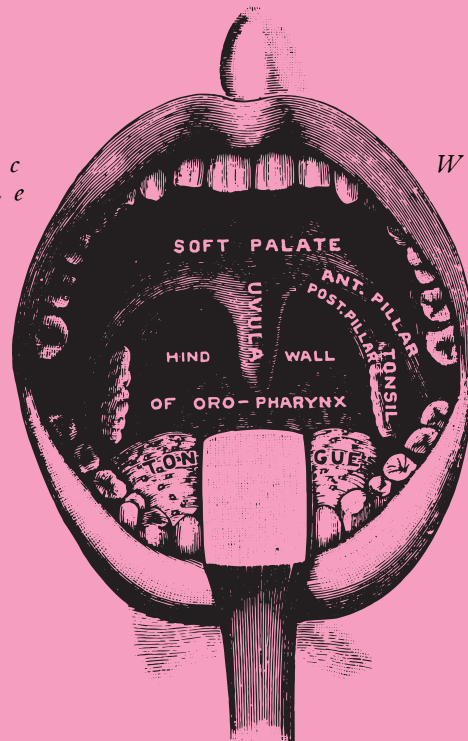


# Penicillin

*Eclectic  
rpg zine*

*Winter  
2019*



*Issue  
two*

# AN EDITORIAL

Look not at *Penicillin*, child. It will  
grasp your mind and shape you into  
one that would spread its word.

3 <i>Merchants</i> .....	<i>Chuffed Chuffer</i>
<i>Plague Eater</i> .....	<i>Thriftomancer</i>
<i>On Halflings</i> .....	<i>Micah Anderson</i>
<i>Wizard Familiar Generator</i> .....	<i>John Battle</i>
<i>Lib-Tombs of the Mad Lords</i> .....	<i>Micah Anderson</i>
<i>Sit Not, Vicious Dog</i> .....	<i>John Battle</i>
 <i>Layout</i> .....	 <i>Micah Anderson</i>
<i>Art</i> .....	<i>From the Public Domain</i>

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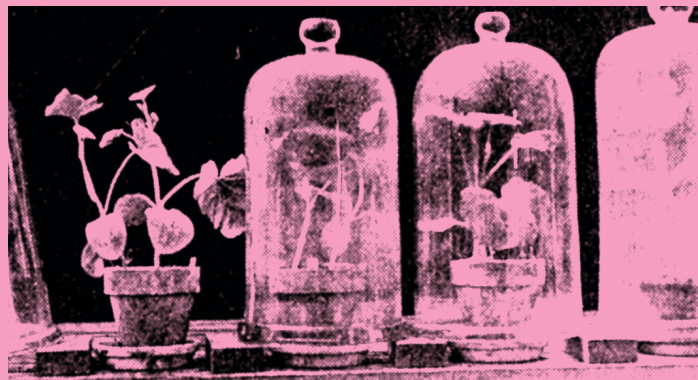
Futura

# Three Merchants

1. A man is trapped in a bell jar that he doesn't fit in. His limbs are contorted and when he speaks, you can tell expanding his lungs pains him. You recognize the man - the butcher from your village, or a friend of your grandfather's. "He's not as he seems!" his plump Mouseling keeper shouts at you. If you greet him as an old friend, he'll reach out to shake hands, but if you reach out then the Mouseling woman will smash the top of the bell jar down with a wooden mallet and the force of it will sever the man's hand - allowing you to see that it's entirely two dimensional. The man will offer to sell you memories you haven't made yet - where you stored the treasure, how you cast the spell, which stone triggers the trap - for a price paid in attempts on his keepers life. If you fail, you've paid your price and he'll give you the memory. If you succeed? We all pray that you don't.



3. There's a hole in the forest, a pit ten feet deep. A little girl in a yellow dress sits at the bottom and asks you to come play. If you look over the side without speaking to her, she'll climb up the walls until her face almost touches yours and you can smell her sour breath and swear she looks just a little too reptilian. She'll tell you it's rude to stare and ask you to bring her some food. You will, sooner or later we all do. You'll bring smoked meats, fresh bread, hard cheeses, cakes, milk, wine - the whole feast. She'll say she's happy, but you'll know she's not. She'll never actually ask for it, but you know what she wants. You can't, it's terrible! But you will. Sooner or later we all do. Just like everyone else, you'll sneak into the woods at night as if the whole world doesn't know where you're going and you'll bring her the body of a child. In exchange, she'll tell you a secret - always a big one, always a good one. Then she'll ask you to leave so she can eat in private. You really should, and you probably will the first few times. Eventually, you'll get curious, you'll think you want to see and hear. So you'll pretend to walk away so you can creep up to watch after she thinks you're gone. You'll wish you hadn't, but sooner or later we all do it.



2. The Chief Medical Officer sleeps in the church attic - he can cure you of any ails, physical or mental. The attic is dark and empty, save for a lone snake charmer's basket. When you approach, the lid floats off lazily and the Doctor rises up to greet you. His lower half is that of a snake as thick as your leg, his top half is the body of a centipede. His legs are his hands, they're chitinous, sharp, and nearly three feet long. He giggles nervously after any mention of his medical practice and the sound of his insect mouth approximating a laugh hurts your teeth. Show him your wounds or tell him what mental ailments afflict you and he'll stab his leg hands into your back to lift you off the ground and suckle your wounds, noisy with decadent moans. When he has finished, he'll shudder in ecstasy and remark on the sumptuous wounds and succulent injuries you brought him. Your physical wounds will grow over with a yellow moss and it will cause you agony - save not to rip it off. If you rip it off, your wounds come back. If you don't, you'll feel a little woozy for a day/per HD of damage healed and then feel better than ever - stronger, faster, smarter for the first hour after sunrise from there on.





# PLAGUE EATER

It takes a moment--jellied, attenuated seconds clawing through the haze of fever-- To determine if the woman approaching your bedside is real. She is, and her eyes are kind.

Her movements are smooth and precise, observed detachedly through the heat shimmer of your illness. She presses a kiss to your forehead, grasps a fistful of hair with one gloved hand, places the other splayed over your nose and mouth, and pulls-

Deep in your chest something resists, digging barbs into your heart, your lungs, gouting sparkles of pain as she drags its coils out from your flesh. She brings her hand from your mouth to hers, trailing a mass of fine strands. Green-black and wetly iridescent, like beetle wings spun into thread. She gorges on it, drawing out yard after yard and slurping them up like noodles.

With each foot extracted, shards of lucidity rasp at the edges of your inflamed mind and congeal. Your breath comes easier. Your trembling chills subside. When she finishes her eyes glimmer with an edge of mania, a shadow of the fever she took from you. She takes a breath, coughs lightly into the back of her hand, then leans forward to kiss your brow again.

*"Be well."*

A Plague Eater heals the sick by drawing out illnesses and containing them encysted within their own bodies. The ritual required to consume disease is simple and can be learned by anyone so long as they find a teacher or detailed instructions.

Plague Eaters may consume as many different diseases or cases of the same disease as they like.

Consuming a disease takes as long as a short meal, completely heals the patient, and stores the disease within the Plague Eater. Stored diseases aren't contagious and the Plague Eater can't die from them, but a stat of their choice is reduced by 1 for each disease they hold. They also suffer an attenuated version of the symptoms ( $1/4$  strength) that accumulates. Healing 2 people of different diseases will cause the Plague Eater to take 2 stat damage and feel a quarter of the symptoms of each disease. Healing 4 people of the same disease will cause 4 stat damage and the Plague Eater will suffer the full brunt of the disease's symptoms.

Plague Eaters can use their stored diseases two ways:

They can vaccinate others, granting immunity to any of their stored diseases. Every vaccination causes them to feel more symptoms. One quarter each time, after 3 vaccinations of the same disease they feel full symptoms.

They can inflict diseases on others. When a Plague Eater inflicts a disease it's expelled from their body. They lose access and immunity to it, regain a stat point, and all of the immunities they granted for that disease end. The disease becomes contagious again. They can only inflict a disease on creatures that can normally catch it.



The only way for a Plague Eater to recover their lost stat points or decrease the severity of their symptoms is by revoking immunities they've granted or purging themselves by inflicting diseases. They don't recuperate naturally from stored diseases and outside healing has no effect.

If a Plague Eater dies their stored diseases die with them, harmlessly contained in the body forever.

If a Plague Eater gets sick, actually contracting a disease instead of consuming it through their ritual, they will feel completely fine. All symptoms from their stored diseases will vanish and they'll begin to take 1 damage to their lowest stat each day. When that stat reaches 0 the Plague Eater disintegrates into an infectious dust, releasing all their stored diseases to be spread as an airborne vector. This can be averted by getting treatment or by inflicting all of their stored diseases on others.





# HALFLINGS

They look like children, and once were. But no longer.

Hobbits, hobbledehoy, hauflin, halflings. Wizened, half-living corpses of kids made sentient by symbiotic fruiting bodies growing in the brain stem. Their parasitic nature causes their once-healthy flesh to sink and wrinkle, mummify on their living bones. Downy mold grows like short fur on them, parti-colored peach fuzz. Cordyceps made benign and mischievous. They understand what they once were, and are vaguely sympathetic and apologetic about their transformation. All halflings have a nebulous guilt that they eventually learn to shed, over time.

It is considered a taboo to be rude to a newly formed halfling because of this, even though you may feel betrayed or disgusted at your once-child. It isn't their fault; they didn't choose to be reborn.

The change vector comes as a mist. Like fine ash or dust. Swirling and malevolently intentious. A cloud of fungal spores released from the far-off interiors of hothouse jungles into the upper atmosphere, carried by uncharted currents and deposited in random locations.

When the sporewind comes, all animals are affected. Some have an immunity (cattle, goats, most livestock), some die after a week of bloody foam from the lungs, and some are transmogrified into carriers. Humans, dogs, birds. The fungus twines around their organs and eventually bursts from their skins. They are feral and mad with pain and hunger, burning from their own quickened metabolisms.

But the children do not die. Their brains are elastic, psyches able to adapt. The fevers and hacking coughs boil their insides and lacerate their throats, but eventually they come through the other side, seemingly unaffected.

A newborn halfling carries the same knowledge of the world as their host, but driven by an alien mind. They seek information, and trade it like gold. Halflings are voracious readers and garrulous speakers. They chose names based on their deadlife identities, or things they've read, or deeds they've done. They usually stay with the others from their turned communities, or seek out others of their kind in tightly knit, manageable colonies. Halfling libraries are some of the most famous and stringently protected in the world.

A halfling will eat molded fruit and vegetables, the matter sitting in their dormant stomachs as the grown tendrils of their brains leach the nutrients out. They can eat meat, but choose not to because of the resulting sensory overload

of all the lingering thoughts and biochemical impulses of the dead creature. They eat the brains of the dead to preserve their greatest knowledge. A funeral rite that requires a stabilizing potion made from the extracts of the glands of an alzabo.

They live in holes, in the warm wet ground, where they can sleep and digest in peace. The fungus wanes in bright sunlight, weakening. Hobbit holes are dark and cozy, filled with mementos and knickknacks. Small, child-sized tunnels leading to rubbish rooms and libraries, mildewing vegetables pulled from underneath some poor farmer's fields.

They cultivate their mold-fur. Shave it in some patches, grow specific colors by soaking themselves in brines or sugar-waters and inks. Geometric tattoos of chromatic fuzz, fruiting bodies. Halflings can pass as human children, with a few hours of preparation depending on how old they are.

An hour soaking in a bath of salts and preservative-tinged water to plump themselves back up, get rid of wrinkles and the ravages of time.

Greasepaints and makeups, to remove the faintly greenish cast to their skins and add back the color of life.

A close shave to remove the fuzz and fruiting bodies (this hurts, vaguely, like trimming your fingernails too short, but does no lasting damage).

They still seem precocious, and know too much about certain things. Their blood is still pale and milky. And they still smell of fertile loam. These things cannot be helped.

If you want to run halflings in your game, keep them as normal. Maybe remove an effect so you can add the eating-things-to-gain-their-memories, if they have the potion. Otherwise it's just a cloud of overbearing feels and sensations.

Depending on the type of fungal growth each halfling is, they may also have the following properties:

- Inky cap halflings drip atramentum from their eyes and mouths like inky tears. Can't drink alcohol or suffer immediate alcohol poisoning.
- Amanita halflings cause death in those who ingest their flesh, no save, in three day's time.
- Psilocybin halflings cause introspective hallucination-trips when ingested. They are immune to most hypnotic effects.
- Shaggy mane halflings grow feathery fuzz. They dissolve on death into an inedible sludge.
- Devil's tooth halflings excrete a bloodlike substance that can heal for 1d4-1 HP. Save vs. mutation.





# WIZARD FAMILIAR GENERATOR

Familiars are normal woodland creatures and critters. Foxes, toads, stray cats, crooked ravens. The kinds that become roadkill. They're normal in the sense that they exist, but beyond that it's hard to tell where the normal ends and the \*odd\* begins. Maybe somewhere between flesh and blood.

>>>WHAT DOES THIS FAMILIAR LOOK LIKE RIGHT NOW?<<<

d6	APPEARANCE	TRAIT	ANIMAL
1	Fat	Lazy	Rat//Snake
2	Scarred	Fast	Cat//Raccoon
3	Burnt	Horrifying	Toad//Raven
4	Black//White	Wise	Owl//Dog
5	Long	Sly	Fox//Iguana
6	Old	Silent	Squirrel//Skunk

To gain a Familiar you must kill it. Hunt it. Stomp it out. Crush it with a rock. Snare and maim it. Run it over with your car. Each one is different and it's hard to really know what will and won't work with any particular Familiar until you try it. It's quite amazing the first time you take a pocket knife to a toad only for the guts to whisper curses at you before sealing up the wound.

>>>>>>>>>How DOES THIS FAMILIAR DIE?<<<<<<<<<<

d10	CAUSE OF DEATH
1	Stomped by black boot
2	Crushed by heavy rock
3	Twisted by ungloved hands
4	Torn by unnatural methods
5	Pulled by opposing forces
6	Cut by personal knife
7	Dragged by vehicle
8	Brutalized by child
9	Sliced by opposing blades
10	Ground into pulp by big machine



## >>>>>>>>>WHAT NEEDS TO BE GIVEN?<<<<<<<<<<

d6	SACRIFICE
1	Tip of the finger
2	Pint of your own blood
3	Eyeball
4	Your dead pet's collar
5	Burning pages of your diary
6	Friendship bracelet

## >>>>>>>>>WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN?<<<<<<<<<<

d6	COLLATERAL
1	Its heart
2	Its liver
3	All of its blood
4	An important bone
5	Entire head
6	Its skin

When the transfer is complete then you and the Familiar become one. It will come alive again missing what you took and sporting what you gave. It cannot speak because “it’s just a normal animal”, but it can live inside of your body, treating your flesh like warm blankets. It can act autonomously as long as you “let it off the leash” or tell it to go fetch something.

Familiars do not like taking order but do so because they have to. It might be helpful to imagine the Familiar as a hand that you have detached from your body and sent to go do a task. Only, this “hand” can read the ancient words without going crazy and pump them into your subconscious so you can learn them in your dreams.

>>>>>WHAT DOES THIS FAMILIAR WANT RIGHT NOW?<<<<<<

d10	SHORT-TERM GOALS
1	Food
2	Peace and quiet
3	To be alone
4	Blood
5	A soda pop
6	Candy
7	To see something painful happen to you
8	To watch something die
9	To take a piss
10	To fuck

>>>>>>>>>WHAT ARE ITS LONG-TERM GOALS?<<<<<<<<<<<<

d8	LONG-TERM GOALS
1	Your death. And it must be long and agonizing.
2	A nice nest in The Woods where it can die old and fat
3	To lead to the downfall of a former master
4	Entering the mind of a Giant
5	Eat the brains of seven intelligent wizard
6	Gather monster parts for a homunculi
7	The polar opposite of your goals.
8	Gather one of the ancient tomes

>>WHAT'S STOPPING IT FROM ATTAINING ITS GOALS?<<

d8	CONFLICTING DESIRES
1	Burn a forest down
2	Desecrate a church
3	Break a dark mage from prison
4	Curse an innocent man
5	Dig up an old king's corpse
6	Personal vendetta





Despite their general dislike of you and what you've done to them, they are rather agreeable if you help them with their short and long term goals.

>>>WHAT WILL IT DO FOR YOU IF YOU HELP IT?<<<

d8	BOONS
1	Teach you a random spell
2	Mutate a part of your body
3	Kill a small critter
4	Poison a random drink
5	Procure an unidentified potion for you
6	Lead you to a place of ancient magic
7	Tell you a semi-relevant secret
8	Translate a few new spells that you've found

>>>WHAT WILL IT DO TO YOU IF YOU DON'T HELP IT?<<<

d8	BANES
1	Steal a spell and sell it to a fae
2	Give your True Name to some demon or devil
3	Give you a horrid nightmare
4	Slip some contraband into your bag and call the authorities
5	Start punching your insides
6	Pout, and remember this for later...

Familiar relationships tend to end horribly, but if you really want to be a wizard it's smart to learn the ins and outs of such a parlay. Navigating the labyrinthine workings of the Familiars might lead to currently unknowable magical discoveries. Deep and forgotten Giant minds. Pits that lead to space.

Who knows?

# LIB-TOMBS OF THE MAD LORDS

1. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
2. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
4. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
5. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
6. VERB \_\_\_\_\_
7. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
8. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
9. PLURAL NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
10. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
11. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
12. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
13. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
14. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
15. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
16. PERSON IN ROOM \_\_\_\_\_
17. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
18. PLURAL NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
19. ANIMAL \_\_\_\_\_
20. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
21. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
22. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
23. ADVERB \_\_\_\_\_
24. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
25. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
26. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
27. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
28. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
29. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
30. COLOR \_\_\_\_\_

31. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
32. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
33. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
34. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
35. NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_
36. LETTER OF THE ALPHABET \_\_\_\_\_
37. PERSON IN ROOM \_\_\_\_\_
38. ADVERB \_\_\_\_\_
39. VERB \_\_\_\_\_
40. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
41. NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_
42. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
43. MONSTER \_\_\_\_\_
44. VERB \_\_\_\_\_
45. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
46. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
47. MAGIC POWER \_\_\_\_\_
48. NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_
49. VERB \_\_\_\_\_
50. ANIMAL \_\_\_\_\_
51. COLOR \_\_\_\_\_
52. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
53. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
54. ADVERB \_\_\_\_\_
55. ADJECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_
56. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
57. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
58. PLURAL NOUN \_\_\_\_\_
59. NOUN \_\_\_\_\_

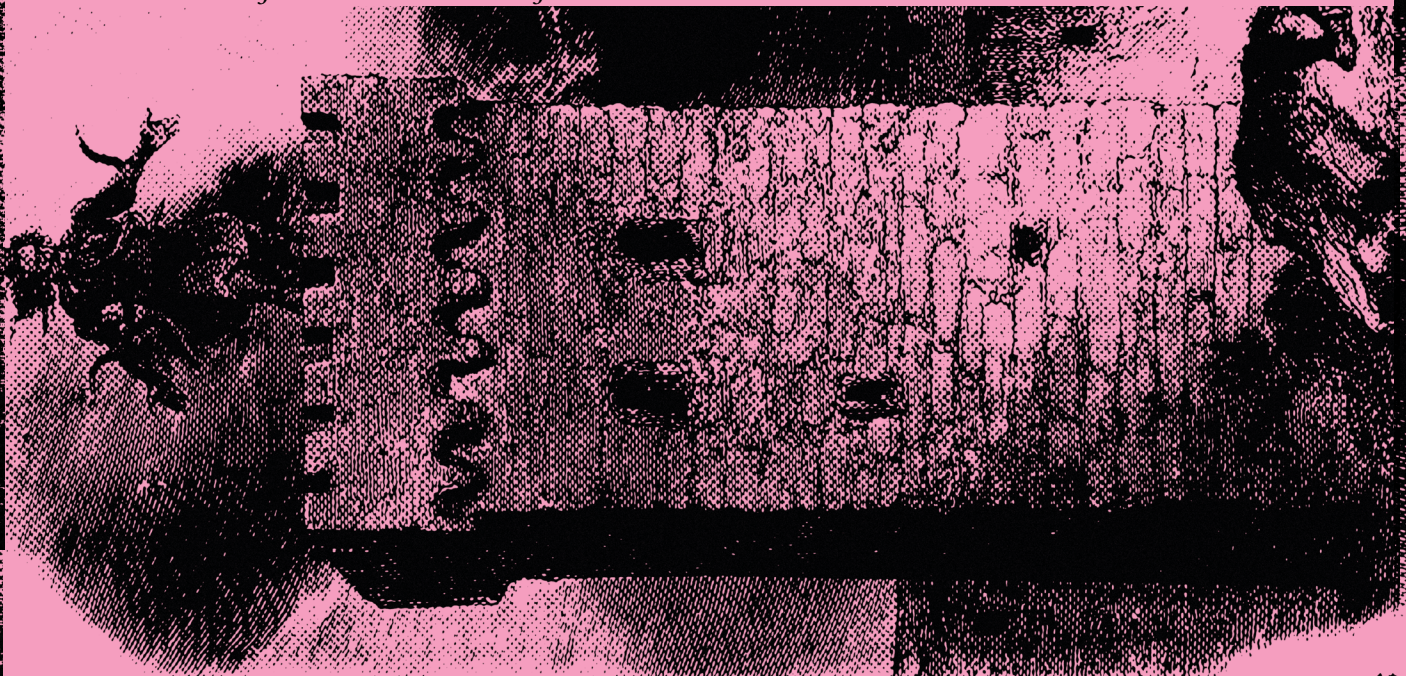


The                       at the            tavern sold you a           . It wasn't a           ! After  
*adjective* *noun* *adjective* *noun* *noun*  
a day or so of travel, you            upon the entrance to the            of the                      .  
*verb* *noun* *adjective* *plural noun*

The first room you entered was            and           . Your            couldn't penetrate the  
*adjective* *adjective* *noun*  
           deeper in. In the corner was an                       and some bloodstains spelling out  
*noun* *adjective* *noun*  
          . Yuck!  
*person in room*

The next            was tiled in mosaics depicting            committed by the           -men who  
*noun* *plural noun* *animal*  
built the dungeon. Halfway down, the            rumbled, and a/an                       came down  
*noun* *adjective* *noun*  
           from the ceiling. It was a trap!  
*adverb*

The hallway split after the            trap. The left            looked            and           , while  
*noun* *noun* *adjective* *adjective*  
the right was            and lit with                       light.  
*adjective* *adjective* *color*







To the left! The \_\_\_\_\_ wound and turned, leading to a room. When you entered the \_\_\_\_\_, there was a/an \_\_\_\_\_ blocking the path forward. Two gentlemen named \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are trying to get it out of the way.

*noun* *noun* *adjective* *noun* *number* *letter* *person in room*

“Help us,” one of them \_\_\_\_\_ said, “and we’ll \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ for all time!”

*adverb* *verb* *noun*

If you helped them then a \_\_\_\_\_ HD \_\_\_\_\_ ambushed you. “Oh no!” one of the gentlemen said. “This creature can \_\_\_\_\_ like no other!”

*number* *adjective* *monster* *verb*

When you were close to defeating the creature, a/an \_\_\_\_\_ appeared, granting you \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. This was the boon of the \_\_\_\_\_ God.

*adjective* *noun* *magic power* *number* *verb* *animal*

To the right! The \_\_\_\_\_ light got \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ until you came into a/an \_\_\_\_\_ parlor, decorated with \_\_\_\_\_ bones! The necromancer who lived there was cold but professional, offering you \_\_\_\_\_ in return for bringing him \_\_\_\_\_ as test subjects from deeper in the \_\_\_\_\_.

*color* *adjective* *adjective* *adverb* *adjective* *noun* *noun* *noun* *plural noun* *noun*





### DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut along the dotted line.
2. Stab eyeholes.
3. Duct tape it to your head
4. Find the others
5. Scratch and bite each other bloody
6. Find the moon and become one
7. Run free

## Stand Up

It's not a difficult command to follow, dog, so keep up. Keep moving. Do-not-sit-down.

This is paramount. If you are to hold on to your flesh, you must be the weight on your heel. The ache of your arch. The crick in your ankle. No matter how long it takes or how deep the weakness itches your bones, because to sit is to give in. To let go of civility and culture and all the human bits and bobbles of you that society has built around your brain. To sit is to be lost in primality, a void so open and welcoming that it hurts to look away. To sit is to tear the shirt from your chest and scream angry at the pale blood moon on a cold, fall evening, running on all fours hairy through the woods, ice aching in your lungs.

To sit is relief. From the consistent and growing ache that you must ignore growing behind your knees. It is not important to think of it and it must be cast away and forgotten and do not dare remember the pleasure of your chair, or your bed. Do not lie naked on your floor as the hot-shower steam rises from your skin. Do not fall happy onto your sheets, embraced in the arms of lust.

Do not feel joy. Nor happiness nor elation. Do not seek bliss on those long steps. Do not eat with family or enjoy solace in an empty coffee shop.

You are to stand, dog. Stand and stand until you die as a statue. This is an easy task for thirty minutes. An hour. Two hours. Hopefully you have not been standing at your job all day. Hopefully you're not there now. Better to be sitting at your job all day, but then who's to say that your legs will be ready?

Surely you can toil away for a time to distract your mind from the blood that is sliding around your veins with a heat that makes you sweat. There must be things to distract you from that tearing sensation just behind your grinding teeth. The watering in your mouth at the thought of squeezing down on something...tasting the pulpy, red juice that cracks from tiny, little sitting things.

As long as you keep reading this you'll be focused. You'll remember what you're taught to do.

But after?

How long can you keep it in the space between forehead and brain before another swimming word pushes its way in and you're riding the train to another thought and suddenly you're hungry and you go to the kitchen to fix dinner after your long day and the words inside of this book are drifting every further and further away from you and the food is nice and warm, even more time away to bring it back to your computer and put the plate down and move the things from your chair and...

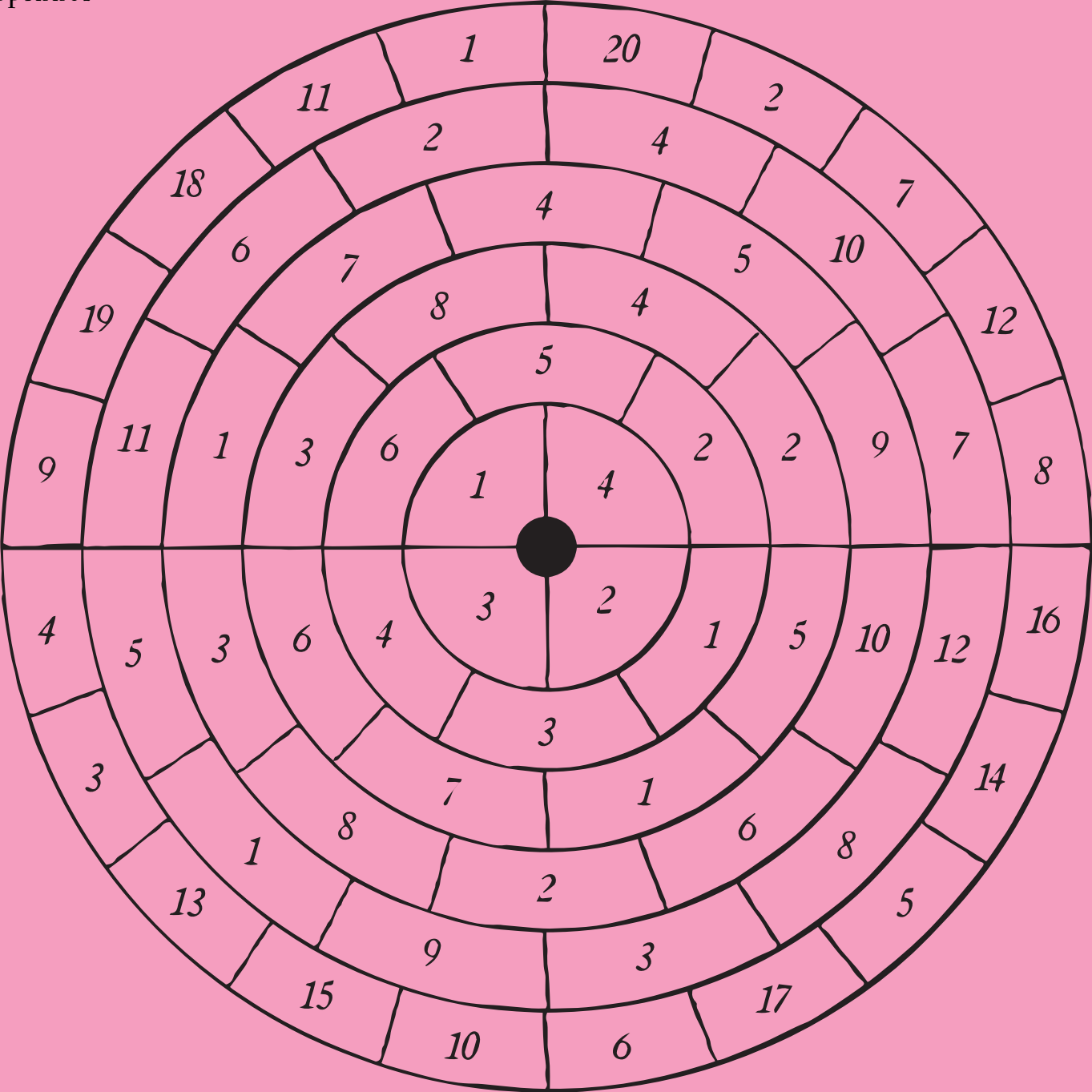
Will you remember then?  
Remember how easy it is to let go.

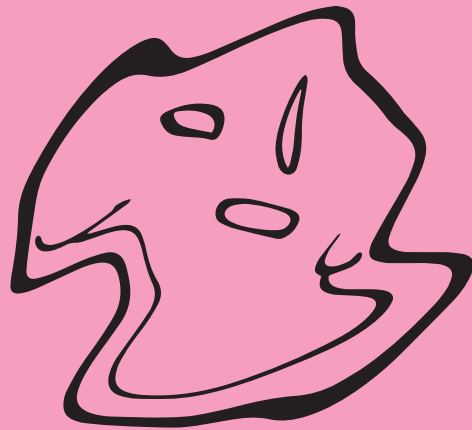
And sit down.



DICELESS ROLLER

Cut this out, stick a pin through the middle, and use a paperclip as a spinner





THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!  
THANK YOU!