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THE GURONDU by Tim "Turgenev" Hartin.

Armour Class: 6

Hit Dice: 5**

Move: 120 ft.

Attacks: 2 claws / 1 bite

Damage: 1d4 + 2 / 1d4 + 2 / 2d4 + 2

No. Appearing: 1-6

Save As: Fighter: 5

Intelligence: High (14)

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: M (x10) individuals, D, S, T

Alignment: Chaotic

Size: Large (7' tall, very broad)

XP Value: 425

The Gurondu are a race of large, intelligent albino carnivorous apes that have an innate connection to the Negative Plane. This connection allows the gurondu to exert control over the undead. They are treated as Clerics of equal level for the purpose of influencing and beguiling undead. Automatic turn and destroyed results means that those undead are automatically controlled by the gurondu. Any failed roll to control (aka turn) undead means the undead ignore the gurondu.

This natural connection to the Negative Plane also allows the gurondu to cast any of the following once per day: invisibility to undead, animate dead, speak with dead, and animate dead monsters. Gurondu have a strict code against animating their own dead. To animate a dead gurondu is one of the greatest crimes a gurondu can commit.

The gurondu prefer to dwell in extravagant underground fortresses often carved from the surrounding rock. They hate full daylight and attack at a -1 when in sunlight. The gurondu have exceptional infravision (90' range). They are known to raid the surface to take prisoners to work in their underground mines. They speak their own language and often will know Common as well (75% of knowing Common).

Gurondu society consists of a strict caste system. Gurondu clerics or magic-users hold the most power (often with the most powerful out of the two groups acting as Alpha Male for the clan). The warrior caste who defend their underground fortresses and who raid the surface are next on the society totem pole. They are followed by the scribes who record gurondu history (who often work for the higher-ranking clerics and magic-users), and then are the domestic servants who deal with the cooking and cleaning duties. At the very bottom are the manual labourers. Gurondu hold nothing but contempt for non-gurondu beings.

Gurondu Clerics worship the Great Ape, Shuvadû. The highest level possible for a Gurondu Cleric is 7th level. Gurondu Magic-Users worship the Arcane Ape, Ungothû. The highest level possible for a Gurondu Magic-User is 6th level.

*Editor's Note - (more of Tim's gaming related work can be found at www.paratime.ca)



The Burglar – Variant Class for Holmes Basic

By Scott Moberly

Description: The Burglar is a common City dwelling thief, more skilled at the arts of petty thievery and break-ins than dungeon delving. That being said, one could be found who wanted to risk the rewards of adventure and strike out with a party

Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice	Thief Abilities
Level 1 (Sneak)	0	1-4 sided	A
Level 2 (Filcher)	1200	2-4 sided	B
Level 3 (Burglar)	2400	3-4 sided	C

Explanation of Thief's Abilities

A) open lock 25% remove trap 18% pick pockets 35% move silent 25% climb sheer surfaces 87% hide in shadows 25% hear noise roll of 1-2

B) open lock 30% remove trap 20% pick pockets 38% move silent 27% climb sheer surfaces 88% hide in shadows 28% hear noise roll of 1-2

C) open lock 35% remove trap 22% pick pockets 41% move silent 29% climb sheer surfaces 89% hide in shadows 31% hear noise roll of 1-3

Weapon and Armor Restrictions - Limited to the use of a dagger, spear, hand ax, or short sword. Unable to proficiently utilize any type of ranged weapon beyond those already listed in a thrown fashion. Armor; may use leather armor. No shield.

Gather Information skill – When in an Urban environment - May attempt once per week to try and gather information on a given person, cult, relic, place, item etc. A) 30% B) 35% C) 40%

* Does not have the 'backstab' ability of the normal thief



The Iounic Loop – Reimagining the Ring of Gaxx

by

Allan T. Grohe Jr. (grodog)

“Sh’ven-ump-thra’an-and---and thus Gax denounced the final curse of binding and true name, and the Once-Lord of Cacodaemons twisted in thrice-fold agonies: flesh flayed from bone, spirit sundered from soul, and entropies crept betwixt the lashes and barbs born of its own mnemosynes---now shredding, forlorn, forgotten. Gax glittered with bright hates---orrery shards and cabrir dreams ringed his wisdom, his hand seethed with storms, his outstretched finger seated with cruel purposes.”

Thus The Fables of Burdock speaks of Gaxx, and his Ring, and the Fall. And here and here alone do I scribe the truths wrested from Gresil’s own horns: Gaxx’s ring---its double hoop, is itself its clue made manifest: that the ring and the stone are twins both conjoined and disjoined, and that the stone---and its brethren---are crystal tears born into Oerth’s past from its last hours, from its days of looming demise. The ring’s talisman power can snare and bind the dying Oerth’s ioun stones---can its singularity similarly wrack the Cabrir? Dare I be wrong?

- The Witch of Perrenland, The Demonomicon

History and Lore: What is Thought to be Known

The Iounic Loop is a powerful artifact that has been known across the ages by many names, often attributed to its often-infamous wielders. The most common, perhaps, of these common names is the Ring of Gaxx. Of Gaax himself little is truly known, but his name appears in codices as Gax, Ga’ax, Gaxx, and Gax’x; as Gaz or Ga’z; and is sometimes even as Xa’ag, Xag, or Zag. For simplicity’s sake, “Gaxx” is used throughout when his identification is required. According to legendry, Gaxx was the first wielder of this ring, and is said to have marshalled forces in battle upon the planes of Pesh (and upon the sides of Chaos, but that is another tale...).

Among the most well-informed of sages, the Ring of Gaxx is named The Iounic Loop, in honor of the ring’s two most prominent properties---the ring’s unique double loop architecture, and its ability to control ioun stones. Lesser scholars speak of the Iounic Ring or the Ioun Ring, and some wags further debase this nomenclature with “ionic” permutations.

Appearance

Regardless of the name attributed to the ring, it is of singular manufacture. At a glance, the ring features a double-loop platinum band that sports a dark blue spinel in the setting. The spinel is described as having both eight and nine facets in reliable lorebooks and magical catalogues.

Upon closer observation, the double loop is curiously unjointed, but remains flexible yet also inseparable. The two loops meet at the shoulders and bezel of the ring, and usually remain at rest at a 45 degree angle (although this angle can and does change during the use of the ring, or when worn by different wielders). The stone is usually described as set into the bezel, but with a setting that allows the facets of the stone to be rotated 360 degrees in any orientation or direction (a property which is curiously unreplicable, and which has driven more than one artificer mad in the trying...). Some sources mention ornately detailed designs and engravings on the insides and/or outsides of the loops and sometimes along the edges of the bezel as well, but most do not. Still rarer sources describe the spinel as floating above the setting, rather than physically attached to it.

As a piece of platinum and spinel jewelry, the ring would be valued at approximately 2500 gp by a reputable dealer.

Even under expert scrutiny, the metal of the ring will likely appear to be platinum, and its gemstone a very fine and rare, deep blue spinel. However, upon examination by the most astute gnome or dwarf, or a sage or jeweler or gemologist with experience spanning the planes, it may be discovered that neither the stone nor the metal, nor the craftsmanship can be identified--that they may in fact be alien in origin (from the perspective of Oerth).

Recorded Powers and Side Effects

According to both The Eldritch Catalogue of Ancient and Powerful Wizardries, purportedly penned by Umbrian Elb with the assistance of Zagig Yragerne (despite the fact that they lived centuries apart), and Zagig's even more abstruse Guide to the Dungeons of Oerth and their Masters, the Ring of Gaxx is endowed with significant magical powers. Both sources agree on the enumerated powers of the artifact: 3 minor benign powers, 2 major benign powers, and 1 prime power, balanced out by 1 minor malevolent effect, 1 major malevolent effect, and 1 side effect.

Both sources also agree that the ring's powers and abilities are random in nature, and cannot be predicted until which known face has been determined to be in the proper position for usage (for the facets do, in fact, rotate one to the other as their magicks are invoked; this knowledge assumes that the wielder does in fact know all of the ring's powers, and that he or she knows the order in which they manifest relative to one another). In addition to the facing of the spinel changing through usage, the gemstone of Ring of Gaxx was said to shift its orientation when the ring was donned or removed, or when its wielder went to sleep (or awoke, again, depending upon the source--the latter may account in part for the tales that Zagig went for years without sleep during his tenure as Mayor of the Free City of Greyhawk). Elb states that even usage of

the ring's powers will cause the facing to rotate to an unknown setting, although Yrageme does not corroborate this interpretation in his later work.

Umbrian Elb's unpublished annotations condense the accounts of the Ring of Gaxx into the following list of magical feats and effects that it may perform:

- 3 Minor Benign Powers: Detect Traps and Secret Doors, Fly, or Wizard Eye. Usable at will.
- 2 Major Benign Powers: Conjure one elemental, djinn, efreet, or invisible stalker once per day. Power Word stun once per day.
- 1 Minor Malevolent Effect: User attacks anyone within 20 feet.
- 1 Major Malevolent Effect: The item destroys from 50% to 100% of the treasure of its owner by consuming it in order to sustain its own power.
- 1 Prime Power: Finger of Death with no saving throw twice per day.
- 1 Side Effect: User cannot touch or be touched by any type of [Oerthly?] metal, it simply passes through him with no effect.

Curiously, Elb's and Yrageme's volume does not mention an inability to touch metal, although this side effect appears in Elb's unpublished annotations in his personal copy of The Eldritch Catalog; and where, perhaps uncoincidentally, the number of faces on the ring's spinel is stated as eight. Even more oddly, Yrageme's second volume does not detail any specific powers that can be attributed to the Ring at all (and it numbers them at nine, a count that matches its count for the facets of the spinel). Both sources also disagree on where and how the magic evoked by the ring manifests: Elb's notes state that the facets of the spinel "can be turned so that any of the eight faces point forward" (and spinels are known to form naturally in octahedron shapes), while Yrageme's Guide indicates that "each facing of the gem gives a different power/effect when it is faced towards the top (the finger end) of the ring" (page 160).

The full powers of The Iounic Loop will be revealed in my forthcoming dungeon adventure, The Iounic Caverns, which will be published by Black Blade in 2014.

Chronological Sources

Gary Gyax and Brian Blume. Eldritch Wizardry (TSR, 1976).

Gary Gyax. Dungeon Masters Guide (TSR, 1979).

FIRST EDITION FANTASY

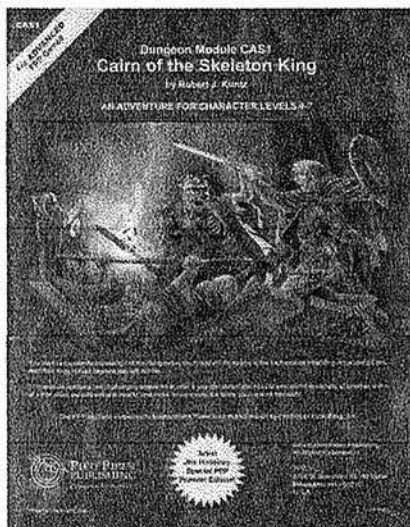
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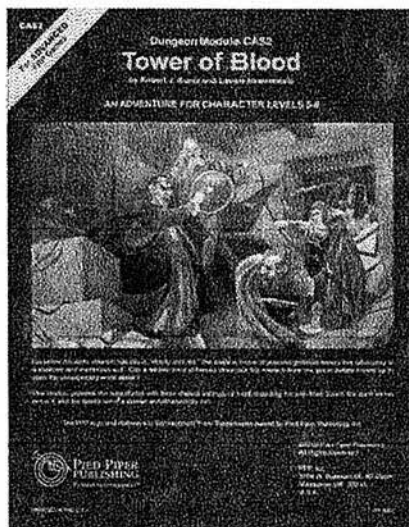
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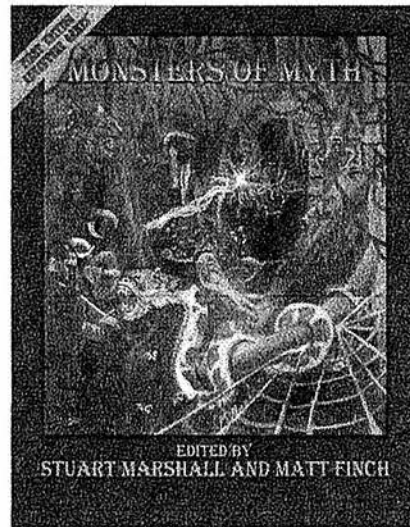
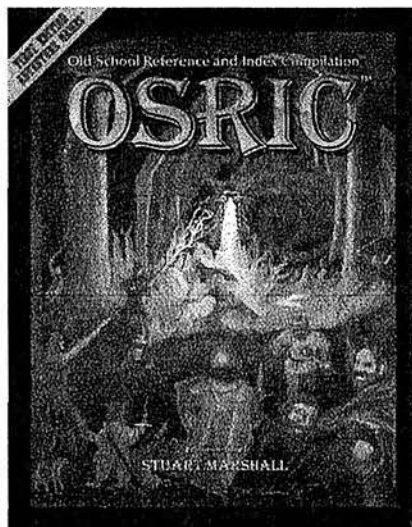
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A BLIZZARD IN THE SAHARA

By Aleister Crowley

"A Blizzard in the Sahara," first appeared in the short lived Crowley edited publication, Bystander on March 1, 1911. It serves to illustrate the perilous adventures and dangers of the path of the Adept. It was in the same region of the desert near Bou Saada where Aleister Crowley invoked the Angels of the Aethyrs, a story told in Liber 418 The Vision and the Voice.

On my first visit to the Sahara just over a year ago, the local proverb ran: "It never rains south of Sidi Aissa." A month's tramp did little to dispel this dream; we had a perfect time, so perfect that last December, having brought "The Rites of Eleusis" to a fortunate conclusion, I said: "Let me return to the desert." Therefore did I don the breeches of buckskin and the ancient coat, loaded the Webley, and filled the rucksack with tobacco. Therefore did I speed into Bou Saada and seated firmly but gently in front of the hotel, besought Allah to provide me with a baggage-camel. I got one; but it was Eblis who sent it! I also had an interpreter, named Mohammed, but he soon faught us to call him "Lloyd George." Two days later we started for the desert.

The first halt, Sidi el Hamel, is a Saharan University. There was a "marabout," a holy man, and he received me brotherly and regaled me with Kous-Kous, which I permitted my faithful disciple to share. (I always travel with a disciple; it saves trouble. I let his beard grow and shaved his head, except for two tufts on the forehead, to make him look like the Devil. He did. The natives were very much impressed.)

From el Hamel we wandered southward to Ain Semarq, Ain Meleh, and Ain Rich. From Ain Rich there are no villages until Sidi Khaled, distant one hundred kilometres-- which considering the bad going, is worth one hundred miles. It was a beautiful morning, with but a touch of north-west wind. We were feeling fit; I had forgotten all about England, and we began to congratulate ourselves on another pleasant journey. I suppose the north-west wind was eavesdropping.

We had some food in an unexpected and decayed hovel about noon; for the wind had got up sufficiently to make it too cold to sit about. An hour later we struck for the mountains. It was a really fine mountain pass; the descent a splendid gorge, precipice-walled. The camel-driver wanted to pitch camp about three o'clock, and we had trouble with him.

Camel-drivers have no sense at all; in England they would get either the Embankment or the Home Office. This imbecile had been all his life in the desert, and had not yet learned that his camel needed food. He never took any with him, and having reached a suitable spot thirty miles from the nearest blade of grass, complained of hunger. I had hoped he would have found some thistles.

This by parenthesis. We wandered on, and presently emerging from the gorge came upon an Arab, who spoke of a Bedouin encampment down stream. This we found a few minutes after nightfall. The wind was violent and bitter beyond belief, but no rain fell. "Rain never falls south of Sidi Aissa." So we fed and turned in.

Our tent was an Arab lean-to, a mere blanket propped on sticks, some necessary to its support, others designed to interfere with the comfort of the people inside. My disciple, fatigued by the day's march, fell asleep. As it happened-pure luck, for he had no more sense than the camel-driver; disciples never have! -he had chosen the one possible spot.

As for us, I woke in almost half an hour to feel the most devilish downpour. It was as bad as Darjeeling and the ridge that leads to Kichen janga. We had pitched the tent in a fairly sheltered spot under the walls of the river; but the rain ran down the props of the tent and through the tent itself, and soaked us. In the morning, after a night spent in that condition when one is half asleep from exhaustion and half awake from misery, the storm still blew. We waited till nearly nine. The Bedouins told us that four miles on there was a village. We thought of coffee, and made tracks.

So off we went over the sopping desert and reached the "village" in an hour. There were palms and gardens- and one deserted hovel, with no door. The roof, made of boughs weighted with big stones and made tight with mud, was half broken through. A giant stone hung imminent, half-way fallen. All day we waited for the rain to stop falling in the place "where it never fell." Night came, and the blizzard redoubled it's violence; but the shelter allowed us a little sleep until the mud dissolved, and the roof became a sieve. The rest of the night was a shower-bath. In the morning there was no great sign of improvement. I had to kick the camel-driver into action and chase the camels with my own fair feet. He had a million excuses for not going on, all on a level.

"The camels would catch cold." Good from the man who had left them all night in the rain! "They would slip." "They would die." "They were too hungry." From the man who hadn't brought food for them! "They were tired -and so on. But I got the party off at last, and came in a couple of hours to a tomb with a coffin in it. There they sat down, and refused to stir. I simply took no notice.

My disciple took one camel and I took the other and went off. We left them in the tomb, grouching. Steering by map and compass, I judged a good pass through the next range of mountains, and made for it. The flat desert was standing in water; and the streams were difficult for the camels, who hate water as much as disciples do. It was better on the mountain-side. Near the top of the pass we perceived our men following, as the lesser of two evils. I was sorry, in a way; it would have been a fine adventure to worry through to Sidi Khaled with those two brutes and a daft Davie!

It was just at the top that I said, without any apparent reason, "The storms over." My disciple did his Thomas act. There was no opening in the furious grey of heaven; the wind raged and the rains poured. But I stuck to it; I had felt the first contention of the south wind in a momentary lull. And I was right-as I always am. (If my readers want modesty, they must pay for it at separate higher rates.) The descent of the pass was far from easy. The "road" crosses and recrosses the bed of the river as often as it can; sometimes even follows the course. And this stream was a furious spate, slippery and dangerous for men, impassable for members of the Alpine Club, and almost impassable for camels.

It was nearly nightfall before we left the gorge, and a barren plain confronted us. It was useless to struggle on much further. The rain still poured; the desert stood six inches deep in water. The hills were a mass of snow. (We heard afterwards that many houses had been washed away at Ouled Djellal in this unprecedented storm. Traffic was interrupted by snow on the East Algerian Railway, and the Marechal Bugeaud was forty hours late at Marseilles, having had to beat up under the Spanish shore for shelter.)

So I picked out a good big tree by the stream, and we pitched camp. We had little hope of lighting a fire; but there is in the desert a certain impermeable grass, and by using this as a starter we got it going. No sooner had the blaze sprung up, filling the night with golden showers, than the envious stars determined to rival the display. Every cloud disappeared as by magic. But the fire remained the popular favorite! All night I toiled to dry myself and my clothes, refreshing the old Adam with coffee, potted pheasant, and Garibaldi biscuits at not infrequent intervals.

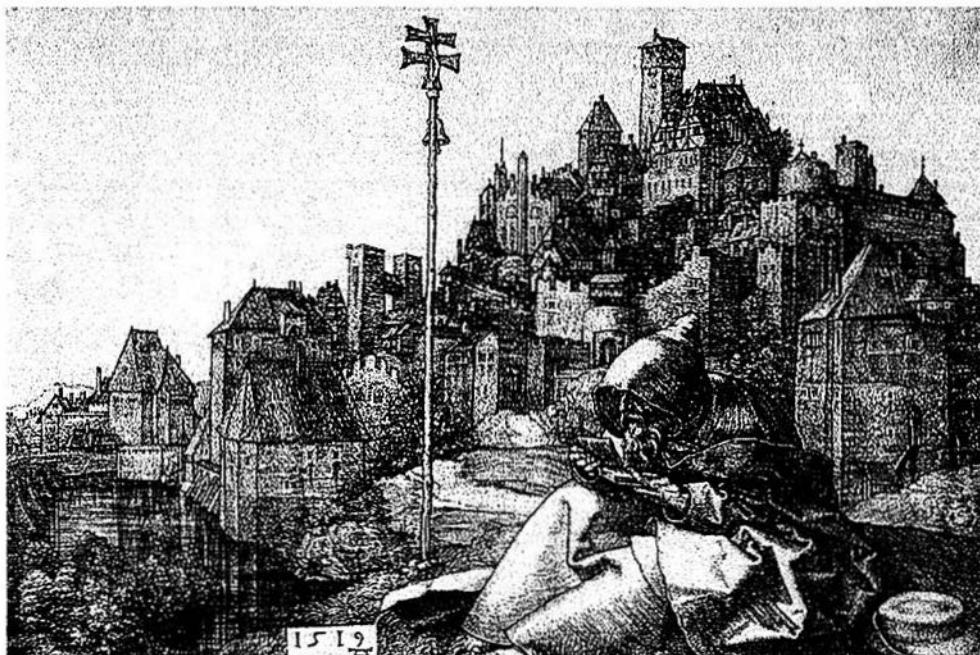
The morning was ecstasy. The light came over the sand, wave upon wave of grey. The desert was dry. There was no water in the stream, save in rare pools. We struck camp early. We glanced up at the path which we had traveled; the ranges still glowed with unaccustomed snow; from the north-west the wind still struggled fitfully to assert its dominion; but we, with joy and praise in our hearts, turned our glad faces, singing to the assurgent sun.

HIGH VALUE TREASURES

By Scott Moberly

(roll 1d12)

1. Gold plated Medusa Head. Eight inches tall with multi-faceted black gem eyes (1350gp)
2. Heavy Bronze Rams Head Door Knocker (700gp)
3. Silver Beholder miniature. Two foot diameter on a square stone base with a rod attachment (1100gp)
4. Fine Oil Painting depicting a nude female human. Voluptuous with long straight flowing black hair (1600gp)
5. Emerald Eyeball. Multi-faceted Six inch diameter (2400gp)
6. Crystal Prism. Twelve inches long by Three inches by Three inches. Emits a rainbow luminescence when held to normal sunlight (525gp)
7. Hollow Copper etched Globe of an unknown planet. Two feet diameter (600gp)
8. Fine quality large collapsing bronze Telescope. Four feet long (550gp)
9. Large chunk of raw Malachite carved crudely to resemble a stag. One foot tall (1900gp)
10. Golden Harp decorated with Angelic figures (2625gp)
11. Set of Four Pewter Goblets encrusted with baguette diamonds depicting a scene of chivalry (1925gp)
12. Hand crafted Violin of a highly skilled make and sound in a brown leather case (2100gp)



THE PURLOINER

A New Thief Subclass for AS&SH™

By Jeff Talanian and Colin Chapman

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The following concept was presented to me by veteran game designer Colin Chapman, whose contributions to the *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea™* game have served to enhance game play for many AS&SH enthusiasts. Keep an eye out for a much larger AS&SH project by Colin in the near future. What follows is a new subclass for the AS&SH game, followed by a mini-adventure for 0th level characters that might aspire to take up this class. Note that all table and header references point to the AS&SH game proper, as this new subclass and its various features are specific to that system; however, it is easily adaptable to traditional forms of the world's most popular fantasy RPG and its modern simulacra, such as OSRIC™ and *Swords & Wizardry™*.

PURLOINER (Thief): Oft dedicated to a deity of larceny, the purloiner is a thief who practices the divine sorcery of a cleric. Whether in service to a mystery cult seeking to appropriate rare artefacts, serving a thieves' guild as its spiritual leader, or double-dealing as a thief for one organization and a priest for another, the purloiner combines the expertise of a thief with the sorcerous abilities of a cleric. In Hyperborea, such divine thieves inevitably pay homage to Rel, "The God of Thieves", though it is not unusual for purloiners to worship Xathoqqua.

Attribute Requirements: Dexterity 12, Wisdom 12

Prime Attributes: Dexterity, Wisdom

Hit Die Type: d6

Alignment: Any non-Lawful

Armour Allowed: Light

Shields Allowed: Small

Favoured Weapons:

Axe (hand), bow (short), club (light), crossbow (light), dagger, dart, flail (horseman's), hammer (horseman's), mace (horseman's), pick (horseman's), sling, sword (short, falchion, long, broad)

Saving Throw Modifiers: Avoidance +2, Death +2

Purloiner (Thief)

Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice	Fighting Ability	Turning Ability	Casting Ability	Spell Levels		
						1	2	3
1	0–2,749	1d6	1	—	1	1	—	—
2	2,750–5,499	2d6	1	—	2	1	—	—
3	5,500–10,999	3d6	2	1	3	1	1	—
4	11,000–21,999	4d6	3	2	4	1	1	—
5	22,000–43,999	5d6	3	3	5	1	1	1
6	44,000–87,999	6d6	4	4	6	1	1	1
7	88,000–175,999	7d6	5	5	7	2	1	1
8	176,000–351,999	8d6	5	6	8	2	2	1
9	352,000–527,999	9d6	6	7	9	2	2	2
10	528,000–703,999	9d6+2	7	8	10	3	2	2
11	704,000–879,999	9d6+4	7	9	11	3	3	2
12	880,000+	9d6+6	8	10	12	3	3	3

Purloiner (Thief) Class Abilities:

Agile: +1 AC bonus when unarmoured and unencumbered.

Backstab: An attack from behind with a class 1 or 2 melee weapon (see table L43.) with which the purloiner is skilled. If the target lacks vital organs (e.g., **automaton, skeleton, zombie**) or a discernible “back” (e.g., **black pudding, green slime, grey ooze, ochre jelly, otyugh, purple worm**), this ability is ineffective. The target must be unaware of the attack; this may be the result of *hiding* or *moving silently* (qq.v.). The attack is made at +4 “to hit”. Weapon damage dice are multiplied according to the purloiner’s level of experience (1st to 4th levels = ×2; 5th to 8th levels = ×3; 9th to 12th levels = ×4). Other modifiers (strength, sorcery, etc.) are added afterwards.

Clandestine Tongue (Thieves’ Cant): The secret language of thieves; a strange pidgin in which some words may be unintelligible to an ignorant listener, whilst others might be common yet of alternative meaning. This covert tongue is used in conjunction with specific body language, hand gestures, and facial expressions. Two major dialects of thieves’ cant are used in Hyperborea: one by city thieves, the other by pirates; commonalities exist betwixt the two.

Detect Secret Doors: Find a secret door on a base 3-in-6 chance.

Magic Item Use: Can utilize magic items normally restricted to clerics.

Scribe Scroll: To scribe a familiar spell onto a scroll, creating a single-use magical device, at a cost of 500 gp + 100 gp per spell level. Materials vary; some purloiners engrave thin tablets of stone, whilst others use vellum or parchment, a fine quill, and sorcerer’s ink, such as sepia. Scribing a scroll requires one week per spell level and must be completed on consecrated grounds, such as a shrine, fane, or temple.

Sorcery: Purloiners memorize and cast spells, but they do not ~~maintain~~ spell books; rather, they might bear the scriptures of their faith in prayer books, sacred scrolls, or tablets. They begin their careers with knowledge of two level 1 spells, sacred mysteries revealed upon initiation into a sect, cult, or religion. These spells are drawn from the **Cleric Spell List** (see table II.3.). A purloiner develops two new spells at 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th levels. Typically these are acquired via spiritual revelation, piecing together abstract theologies, or otherworldly favour. Such spells are automatically learnt, with no need of qualification rolls. To learn a new spell outside of level training, refer to **VOL.II, SPELLS, acquiring new spells**. Purloiners of high wisdom cast a greater number of spells per day (see **ATTRIBUTES, wisdom**).

Turn Undead: At 3rd level, a purloiner of Good or Neutral alignment can exert control over the undead and some dæmonic beings, causing them to flee and/or cower. Evil purloiners covet the submission and service of these foul creatures. In either case, the purloiner must stand before the undead and boldly speak the commandments of his faith, displaying his holy symbol whilst doing so. At 3rd level the purloiner has 1st-level *turning ability* (TA 1); at 4th level he has 2nd-level *turning ability* (TA 2); and so on (see **VOL.III, COMBAT ACTIONS, turn undead**).

Stronghold: At 9th level, a purloiner who establishes suitable headquarters (building, dungeon, tower, etc.) will attract a band of reprobates: 1d12+12 thieves of 0th level (1d4 hp, each with a smattering of nascent thief skills) who serve without pay; in fact, they will tithe up to 50% of their earnings to him. The headquarters might be in a city, town, or village. If said headquarters are part of his stronghold, castle, or fortified manor, with a 5- to 10-mile radius of control, the purloiner is also eligible to attract a small body of men-at-arms, 0th-level fighters of 1d8 hp each. Here follows a typical troop:

- ★ **10 infantrymen** (*chain mail, small shields, light crossbows, long spears, short swords*)
- ★ **10 halberdiers / pikemen** (*splint armour, halberds or pikes, hand axes*)
- ★ **10 shortbowmen** (*studded armour, short bows, short swords*)

Attracted units include one officer, a 3rd-level fighter responsible for the unit and for communication betwixt the lord and his men. If the reputation of the lord is favourable, further troops may be attracted. Men-at-arms receive 10 gp per month for their service, plus 100 gp for the officer. Conunon inhabitants of the purloiner’s domain provide 5 sp in taxes per person per month. Once control and reputation are established, the purloiner attracts 1d2 apprentice purloiners (0th-level) who petition him for learning. **N.B.:** If the purloiner’s headquarters are established in the vicinity of a thieves’ guild, and the purloiner is not tithing an agreed percentage of all earnings to said guild, then he is guilty of subversion; severe repercussions are likely.

Progressive Thief Abilities: The following thief abilities progress as the purloiner advances in levels of experience. By the 12th level, the purloiner has achieved his full potential in these abilities (see table L13.).

Climb: To ascend or descend sheer cliffs or walls without need of climbing gear. If vertical, the surface must be rough or with cracks. At least one check must be made per 100 feet of climbing. Failure indicates the climber has slipped and fallen at about the midway point of the check (see VOL. III, DAMAGE, falling damage).

Decipher Script: To translate texts otherwise not understood—maps are interpreted, instructions decoded, and so forth. Ancient and alien languages, however, may remain unintelligible, lacking any basis for comparison.

Discern Noise: To hearken at a door and detect the faintest of noises on the other side, perceive the distant footfalls of a wandering monster, or distinguish a single voice in a crowd. Six rounds (one minute) of concentrated listening are required to potentially achieve success.

Hide: To hide in shadows, camouflage oneself, or flatten one's body to a seemingly impossible degree—all whilst remaining still as a statue. Only the slightest of movement is permissible (unsheathing a blade, opening a pouch, etc.). Hiding is impossible in direct sunlight, or if the purloiner is actively observed.

Manipulate Traps: To find, remove, and reset traps both magical and mundane. Separate checks must be made to accomplish each facet of this skill: *find, remove, reset*. Also, a new trap may be built if the mechanism is simple and the parts available; anything more complex will require the assistance of an engineer. Thieves' tools are required when practicing this ability.

Move Silently: To move with preternatural quiet, even across squeaky floorboards, dry leaves, loose debris, and the like. This skill is executed at half the purloiner's normal movement rate.

Open Locks: To pick locks or disable latching mechanisms both magical and mundane. Thieves' tools are required. Picking or dismantling a lock may be attempted but once; if the attempt fails, the purloiner cannot try again until he has gained another level of experience. Most locks require 1d4 minutes to pick; complex locks might necessitate 3d6 minutes.

Pick Pockets: To filch items from a pocket, pouch, backpack, or garment using sleight of hand and distraction. Failure by a margin of 3 or greater indicates the attempt has been observed, though not necessarily by the victim. If successful, the referee determines what has been procured. If a purloiner attempts to pick the pocket of a higher-level thief (or legerdemainist or purloiner), a penalty equal to the difference in levels must be applied to the check. This skill also covers the gamut of "sleight of hand" trickery the purloiner might employ to deceive onlookers.

THE LAMIA'S HEART

*An Adventure in Hyperborea
For 2–5 Thieves of 0th Level*

By Jeff Talanian

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Mission: To steal a rare gem

Location: The City-State of Khromarium

Playing Time: 2–4 hours

Play-Testers: Dan Berube, Jonas Carlson, and Mark Merida

Background (To Be Read or Paraphrased to the Players): A new Thieves' Guild has sprung up in Khromarium's underground. It was founded by one Tull Kamtose, an affluent fellow originally from Port Zangerios. Tull is regarded as a master thief, a collector of rare artefacts, and a hallowed priest of

Xathoqua. In Khromarium he owns and operates a storage warehouse (*Tull's Boat Storage and Supply*), a tavern (*The Sleepy Toad*), and a doxie house (*The Pleasure Palace*). Too, his operatives have their hands in several other affairs throughout the city, including a bare-knuckled fight club at the docks every Saturn Day night.

Presently, Tull seeks to expand his interests, hiring mercenaries and training new thieves. Among the latter, he seeks apprentices – young men and/or women who would train to become *purloiners*, thieves possessed of divine sorcery. However, most aspirants believe that Tull's unsanctioned operations will soon garner the attention of Khromarium's official Thieves' Guild; indubitably this will lead to bloodshed – unless Tull concedes to incorporation.

The player character (PC) party is comprised of aspiring thieves (and possibly purloiners) who have been selected by Tull to "acquire" a heart-shaped topaz known only as The Lamia's Heart. It is located somewhere in the home of a fleshy-jowelled merchant called Goll Garros. If the PCs procure the gem, Tull will accept them into his guild.

Tull is a tall, lean man, corded with muscle, with long curly hair (possibly a wig) and piecing grey eyes. He has a cocksure smile, and is regarded as both chrismatic and arrogant, depending on whom you ask.

He has supplied the party with 2 vials of poison (*Ingestible Type III*, 1d4 rounds before onset, 3/10 chance of detection, +1 saving throw modifier, 6d6 damage failed save, 3d6 damage successful), 2 potions of healing (2d4+2 healing for full dose, 1d4 healing for half dose), and the following illustrations: the "Lamia's Heart" gem (heart-shaped topaz set in gold pendant on gold chain); Goll Garros (short, heavy-set, wispy beard, in his mid-fifties); and Lady Garros (tall, shapely, long black hair, in her mid-forties). Lord and Lady Garros are said to have two young children (boy and girl), a small servant staff, and guard dogs.

Referee's Background: At a recent auction, Tull Kamtose (a 9th level purloiner) prized a heart-shaped topaz set known as The Lamia's Heart, but he lost the bidding war when the merchant Goll Garros was abruptly declared the auction's winner following a bid of 1,000 gold pieces. The auctioneer claimed that Tull did not submit his next bid promptly enough; in truth, this was all part of a set-up orchestrated by the city's official Thieves' Guild. They wish to catch Tull or one of his operatives red-handed in an "unsanctioned" theft, the final proof needed to absorb or take him down. Tull actually suspects as much, but he still craves the gem; hence, he is sending some unknown trainees (the PCs) to acquire it. If they are caught, he has no ties to them, but if they succeed, they are indeed worthy of membership in his fledgling guild. Notwithstanding, Tull apprehends that his operations in Khromarium are in peril, and he intends to eventually submit to the authority of the Thieves' Guild, but for now he enjoys thwarting them as long as he can.

Khromarium: The City-State of Khromarium is a major port city, its harbour being the largest known in Hyperborea. Khromarium is a dismal, seedy place, choked by the smoke of its factories, and poverty and homelessness account for the largest segment of the city's population. Many of the destitute take sanctuary in Old Khromarium, where once dwelled the most affluent of families; that is, before the Green Death decimated the city's population a thousand years ago. Centuries later barbarians reclaimed the lifeless city and its favourably located port, but much of the old city remains a place of mystery and death.

Creating 0th Level Thieves/Purloiners: This adventure calls for the use of 0th level thieves and/or purloiners. As such, the characters in this adventure may be rolled up as normal, with the following notables and exceptions: As 0th level characters, their saving throws and fighting ability are as 0 HD characters. They may roll a d4 for hit points, this total potentially increased at 1st level (if they survive) if the d6 HD roll results in a greater score.

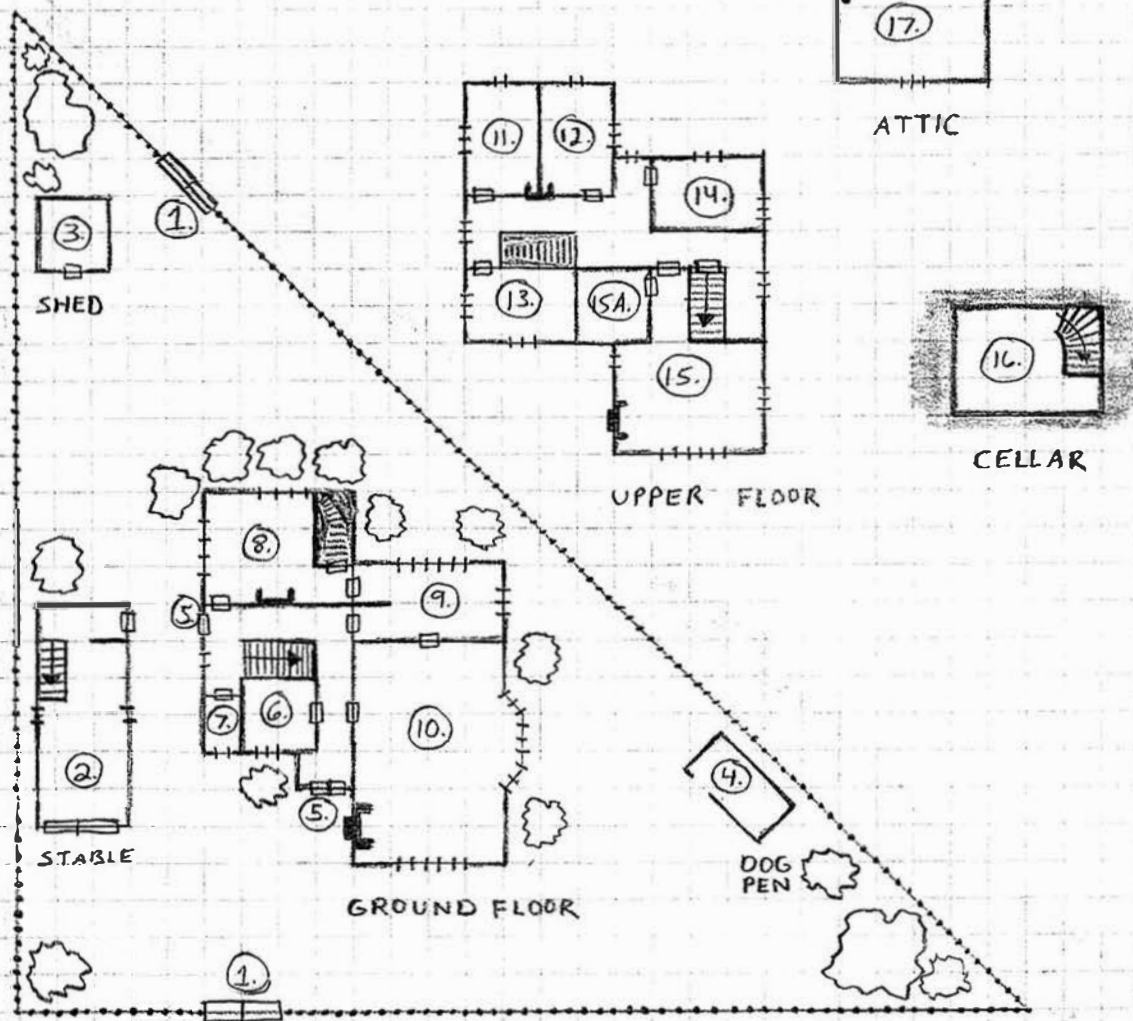
These 0th level thieves are in the early stages of their training, and as such they possess any two of the following thief abilities: *agile*, *backstab*, *clandestine tongue* (*thieves' cant*), *detect secret doors*.

They also possess any four of the following progressive abilities: *climb*, *discern noise*, *hide*, *manipulate traps*, *move silently*, *open locks*, and *pick pockets*. These are all employed at 1st level ability.

HYPERBOREA

10/13

Jeffrey Salanin



KEY

□ = 5 FEET

⊞ = DOOR

⊞⊞ = DOUBLE DOOR

☁ = SHRUB

⊞ = WINDOW

⊞ = STOVE/FIREPLACE

! = LADDER

⬇ = STAIRS DOWN

⬆ = STAIRS UP

§ = SECRET DOOR

GARROS MANSION

Being a merchant's mansion
in the City-State of Khromarium



Aspiring purloiners (or even *legerdemainsts*, with referee approval) have not yet learned to cast spells; a work in progress, as it were. Gold can be rolled up as normal, and appropriate equipment purchased; essentially, these are 0th level characters on the cusp of becoming professionals (1st level characters).

GARROS MANSION

This large, two-storey affair is located some five city blocks away from the harbour. It is of brick masonry build with a slate-tiled roof and barred windows (astute observers may note that the attic windows are not barred). The property is enclosed by an iron-wrought, spiked fence, which contains a stable, shed, dog pen, and of course the mansion proper. Several large shrubs grow on the property. The house interior is of fine workmanship, and candle sconces are found in each chamber and passage.

Streets of c. 20 feet surround the property, meeting the fence. There is decent foot, horse, and cart traffic during the day, but at night it is quiet. If the players express a desire to observe the Garros Mansion from a neighboring building, the referee is at liberty to create these. There may be a few other similar mansions in the area, but mostly commercial buildings, and possibly a storage yard. There may also be a vacant building, this occupied by a dozen or so beggars.

Spying on the Garros Mansion: Lengthy observation reveals two security guards who do a perimeter check every few hours. Garros himself (see #12) often arrives and leaves, always with his personal bodyguard. The staff (stablemaster, cook, and housekeeper) are also be observed. The stablemaster cares for the dogs, the Lord's steed, and the grounds, while the cook and housekeeper mostly stay indoors, attending domestic duties.

Keen observers may note that lady of the house (perhaps seen through the windows by night) does not appear to match the illustration of Lady Garros. This woman appears younger, thinner, more athletic in build, not as tall, her hair auburn. She wears a pendant, it revealed by a low-necked blouse (this is the Lamia's Heart, but that is confirmed only by closer observation). She moves about lithely, with alert, darting eyes. No sign of the children (they and the real Lady Garros have been sequestered elsewhere in the city). The husband and "wife" take dinner together, but observant spies may also note the Lord does not sleep in his own bedroom.

GROUNDS and OUTBUILDINGS

1. Iron Fence and Gates: The fence is iron-wrought, 8 feet tall, spiked at the top, 6-inch aperture between bars. Each gate is composed of iron-reinforced hardwood with a sturdy lock. Each gate has a bell.

If the bell is rung, 3 guard dogs promptly arrive, growling, eyes narrowed, short ears pinned. These are followed by Killian the Stablemaster (see #2). When not working, this old Kelt dwells in his loft apartment in the stable. He will ask what business visitors have. If he's unfamiliar or unsure, he calls security (see #6).

Guard Dogs (x3): Large, short-haired beasts, 3 feet at the shoulder, 150 lbs., in leather harness. AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 13; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 7); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 9; XP 20

2. Stable: Tall wooden structure with loft apartment. The lord of the mansion has a horse and cart. His bodyguard is his driver. The stable is equipped with extra saddles and harness, various tools and grooming equipment, sacks of feed, a trough, and a few barrels of water. Stairs ascend to a loft apartment. Killian is a cantankerous old man, and he does not get along well with the other staff. He doubles as a groundskeeper.

Killian the Stablemaster: AL N; SZ M; MV 30; DX 10; AC 9; HD ½ (hp 4); FA 0; #A 1 (dagger); D (1d4); SV 17; ML 6; XP 7. He holds keys to #1, #2, and #3.

3. Shed: Simple wooden structure with locked door. It contains tools and various implements. It also contains feed and grain, as well as peat and firewood.

4. Dog Pen: A simple shelter for the 3 guard dogs noted above.

MANSION – GROUND FLOOR

5. Entrances to Mansion: Each entrance is of bronze-bound hardwood. The front entry is a double door. The same key unlocks the front door and side door. The front entrance has a bronze knocker fashioned to the likeness of Xathoquua, the toad god.

6. Buttery: This room is stacked with blocks of peat and firewood, various cleaning supplies (brooms, mops, brushes, etc.), and casks and bottles of wine. A small, battered table is set by the barred windows. Here lurk a pair of guards. Goll Garros has hired 2 security guards to bolster home defense in light of current circumstance. However, they are not always attentive to their duties – sleeping on the job, drinking, and card playing are commonplace when the lord of the mansion is out (usually during the day). Furthermore, the guards fear the dogs and won't patrol the grounds unless the stablemaster pens them.

Security Guards (x2): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 7 (leather); HD 1 (hp 7); FA 1; #A 1 (short sword); D (1d6); SV 16; ML 7; XP 10. One holds the key to #1.

7. Water Closet: This small chamber has a fancy chamber pot and a small water basin fed by a rooftop cistern.

8. Kitchen: This room has a large water basin (draws water from rooftop cistern), counters, cabinets filled plates and cutlery, and an iron stove (pipes heat to bedrooms above). From morning to day, the elderly cook works in here (and often his wife, the housekeeper), meeting all the needs of the Garros family. Note that one cabinet contains a set of gold cutlery valued at 50 gp. By night (9:00 o'clock or so), the cook and the housekeeper retire to their bedroom (#14). Note that stairs lead down to the cellar (#16).

9. Dining Room: This is where Lord and Lady Garros take their dinner when it is just the family (Lord, Lady, two children). The room has a table, finely carved chairs, and 4 pewter candlesticks (15-gp value each).

10. Great Hall: This large chamber with bowed windows and fireplace is where the family holds parties and entertains dinner guests. It is also used for other important functions. A large, ornate table with overhanging chandelier is centered in the room. There are 3 trophy heads in here – sabre-tooth tiger, dire wolf, and brown bear (100-gp value each). Furthermore, a 6 x 6 foot gold-headed tapestry (500 gp value) hangs on a wall.

MANSION – UPPER FLOOR

11. Guest Bedroom: Empty. Contains bed, dresser, mirror, and armoire. Heat pipes in from stove below.

12. Children's Bedroom: This is where Goll Garros has been sleeping of late, because he does not want to risk being too close to the Lamia's Heart, and because Kallisto, the assassin who wears and protects the gem would not allow the fat merchant to share a bedroom with her (he's made some advances, Kallisto has half a mind to kill the man if he does so again). Note that Garros is usually out by day, attending his various business interests. Like the guest bedroom, heat pipes in from below.

The Merchant, Goll Garros: AL N; SZ M; MV 30; DX 10; AC 9; HD 0 (hp 2); FA 0; #A 1 (dagger); D (1d4); SV 17; ML 6; XP 7. Garros wears some 500 gp in jewellery.

13. Bodyguard's Bedroom: This is the chamber of Corc the Bodyguard, a broad-shouldered Kelt who protects Goll Garros and functions as his assistant. Corc goes wherever Goll goes. He is a surly man with drooping moustaches and bloodshot eyes. He keeps his money (32 gp, 305 sp) in a sack in his dresser.

Core the Bodyguard: AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 9; AC 6 (studded leather); HD 2 (hp 12); FA 2; #A 3/2 (short sword); D (1d6+1); SV 16; ML 9; XP 24. Holds the key to #1, #5, and #15.

14. Cook and Housekeeper's Bedroom: This is the bedroom chamber of the cook and his wife, the housekeeper, both elderly but hard-working. They often bicker. They go to sleep by about 9 o'clock at night, both snoring loudly. They send all their money to their grandchildren, elsewhere. The old woman has a key to #15.

15. Master Bedroom: The door to this room is kept locked. This is the bedroom of Lord and Lady Garros, except neither have been sleeping in it of late. The Lady of the house and their children have been staying with relatives. The Lord has been staying in #12, to keep him away from potential danger, and because Kallisto would not permit him in the same bed chamber as her. Kallisto, a Kimmerian assassin, wears the "Lamia's Heart" gem. She lurks about the house waiting for someone to try to steal the gem she wears on a pendant around her neck. She intends to execute deadly force to any would-be thief.

Kallisto the Assassin: AL LE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 15; AC 7 (none); HD 3 (hp 13); FA 2; #A 1 (+1 dagger); D (1d6+1); SV 15; ML 9; XP 47.

15A. Master WC: This is a large master bedroom water closet. It contains a water basin fed by a rooftop cistern, a fancy chamberpot, full-size mirror, and a shelf stacked with linens.

CELLAR

16. Cellar: Stocked with a wine rack that contains 30 fine wine bottles (*5-gp value each*), and 12 very fine wine bottles (*50-gp value each*). Also here is a 30-gallon cask of ale, and two 2.5-gallon casks of honey mead. Other barrels contain pickled beef, fish, and vegetables.

ATTIC

17. Attic: This attic functions as Garros' painting studio. He considers himself a fine art painter, but in fact he is quite terrible. The attic is cluttered with paint, sheets, canvasses, and painting supplies. A ladder leads to locked (iron bar) 3 × 3-foot trapdoor that accesses the roof. No one goes up there unless there is a problem with the rooftop cistern. The windows of the attic are not barred, but the wooden shutters are locked with interior latches. When Garros is painting, he opens the shutters. The secret door to #18 is a sliding wall panel that measure 4 × 4 feet.

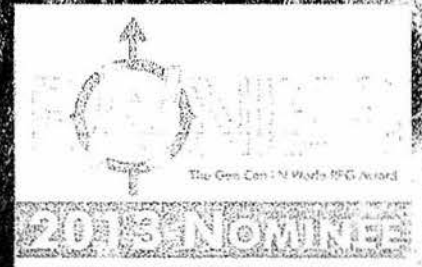
18. Secret Chamber: Here is where Garros keeps his stock of stolen paintings and sculptures. There is some 1,000 gp worth of art in here.

ROOF (*Not Mapped*)

Here is a slanted, slate-tiled roof on which rests a pair of 40-gallon cisterns for collecting rainwater. A 3 × 3-foot trapdoor leads to the attic, but it is locked by an interior iron bar.

COMPLETING THE MISSION: If the party acquires the Lamia's Heart for Tull Kamtose, he welcomes them to join his operation with open arms, impressed by their skills and nerve. He will even take on potential *purloiners* as his personal apprentices. He admits that his operation may soon be overrun by the official Thieves' Guild of Khromarium, but for now he's enjoying calling his own shots. He promises further work for his new "partners" . . .

ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN & SORCERERS OF HYPERBOREA

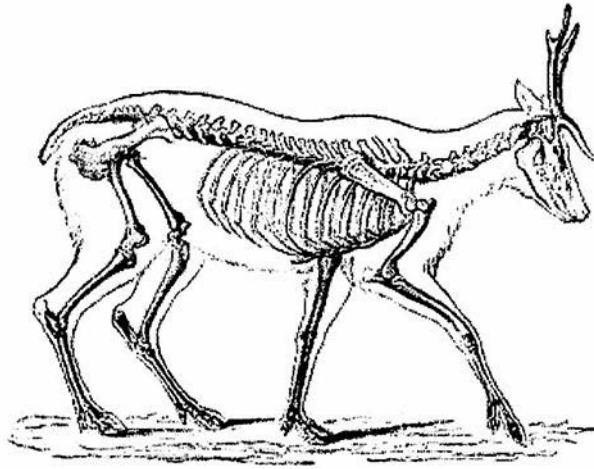


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ONE SENTENCE PLOT HOOKS FOR SANDBOX GAMING



1. A Black Dragon is rumoured to be lairing amidst an ancient ruin outside of a village named New Bedford (Scalydemon)
2. A persistent rumor is going through the Old City--someone wants you dead and is paying handsomely for it to happen.(Bodanay)
3. Its nearly midnight and you can hear a huge caravan leaving the city.(Spinachat)
4. A hunter spotted two dragons fighting in the skies and both crashed into the forest as he fled.(Spinachat)
5. On the morning after the storm, you can see three damaged ships listing on the horizon.(Spinachat)
6. The old mage who hangs out at the pub will gladly pay good coin for bits of odd monsters- feathers, skulls, claws...you name it.(Madalch)
7. A strange fog has rolled into town from the wilderness and the sheppard's young son is missing.(Ancalgon)
8. The mill is on fire.(Stik)
9. At the stroke of midnight, during the Hunter's Moon - an explosion was seen off into the wooded foothills. (Scalydemon)
10. Elders from the tribe folk have spoken of a weeping face in Hell's Gash that has large rubies for eyes, gems for tears and a mouth that contains a gateway not of this realm. (gronkthebold)
11. Seenerd the Eunuch is auctioning a map to the fabled topaz of Zacharb tomorrow night at the Silver Goblet.(makofan)
12. The Isle off the coast of Hardby is possessed by Sirens, Evil Statues and Witches - Many a treasure was wrecked on her craggy shores in aeons past..(Scalydemon)

THEME FOR A JACKAL

By Scott Moberly



An adventure set in Hyperborea for a party of adventurers, levels 2-3

Hook– Mid-summer's day. Just having started out the party is en route to Gal from Dunwich through the dark craggy foothills of the piney forested **Gal Hills** to follow up on a purported for hire job. Once they eventually reach Gal - It involves transporting two crates of unknown goods to the **House of Bhengali Keshemarov**, a mysterious Conjuror's manse amidst the sea-worn crags of the **Broken Coast**. The mysterious crates are 7' long x 1' x 1' and each weigh 300lbs. If pried or forced open enroute they contain various rods of metals of an unknown chrome-like alloy. A cart will be likely necessary as well as a mule.

Whilst travelling en route to Gal, a few days in they encounter in the forest road five dead, slightly bloated, dusty Ziege Men (7–8' tall barrel-chested, horned goat men), with their tongues hanging out; horse flies swarm in the heat of the day. A dead hippogriff lying on its back can also be seen near-by, its hind legs lewdly sprawled in the air. The beast is peppered with crossbow quarrels. An ancient looking vellum diagramed Map marked * '**Lost Cult of Golgotha**' with a bold starred point (*) marker is rolled up in a large sack that the largest of the Ziege Men carries at his belt. The Ziege Men also carry a total of 112 gp and a crude purple gem (60-gp value). Six broadswords can be found amidst the bodies, and four heavy crossbows with 17 salvageable quarrels. Other marked symbols can be found on the area map, but much further away, one reads '**Hall of the Hyperborean Mountain Kings**' and another '**Last Crown of Atlantis**' (*see AFS #1 re-issue for this adventure and its location).

The map's nearest starred marker* titled '**Lost Cult of Golgotha**' is just three miles off into the piney foothills from where they stand currently. A thin trail (which can be found fairly easily near the scene) leads east, eventually to a semi-concealed clearing in the light forest (room 0.).

DM's background note: The Jackal Men encountered in this adventure are really merely pawns or squatters – inhabiting the ancient vacated under dark dwelling of the **Cult of Golgotha** - A now defunct group of followers from Ganymede that worshipped a Deity of Eternal Suffering and a self-deprecation of pain and forlorn misery.

Jackal Men –

HD: 1-1

AC: 7

Atk: 2 claws 1d3, or bite 1d4; 30% chance use javelin or dagger

No. Appearing: 4d4

Move: 9" (30)

Wiry, scampering jackal men. Known to inhabit plains and foothills. Orange, brown and tan fur. Bi-pedal, they walk erect on hind legs. They typically will only attack if they outnumber foes by two or

greater. Carry silver and small gems; fond of potions. Their yips and howls can be heard echoing off the hills late at night. Prone to scavenging corpses.

LEVEL 1a

Unless otherwise noted, corridors are 10 feet wide and the ceilings are 15 feet high. The dungeon construction is of 2 × 3-foot, pitted grey stone blocks and smells of damp must. Doors are generally constructed of a dark hardwood similar to Walnut and have stood the test of time well.

0. (Surface/ Dungeon Entrance) A 25-foot grey stone statue of a winged somber man clutching his hands in anguish dominates this overgrown courtyard from aeon's past. 20' wide broad stone steps lead down directly in front of the hulking form. 50% likely to encounter 1d12+1 jackal men in the open area. A search of the general area reveals broken pottery, bleached, pitted dull grey cyclopean blocks, broken weapons such as javelins, hatchets, wooden shields with a red crescent moon design, etc. which are obscured amidst the dry, straw-like mattocks of tall grasses that grow in the surface level ruins.

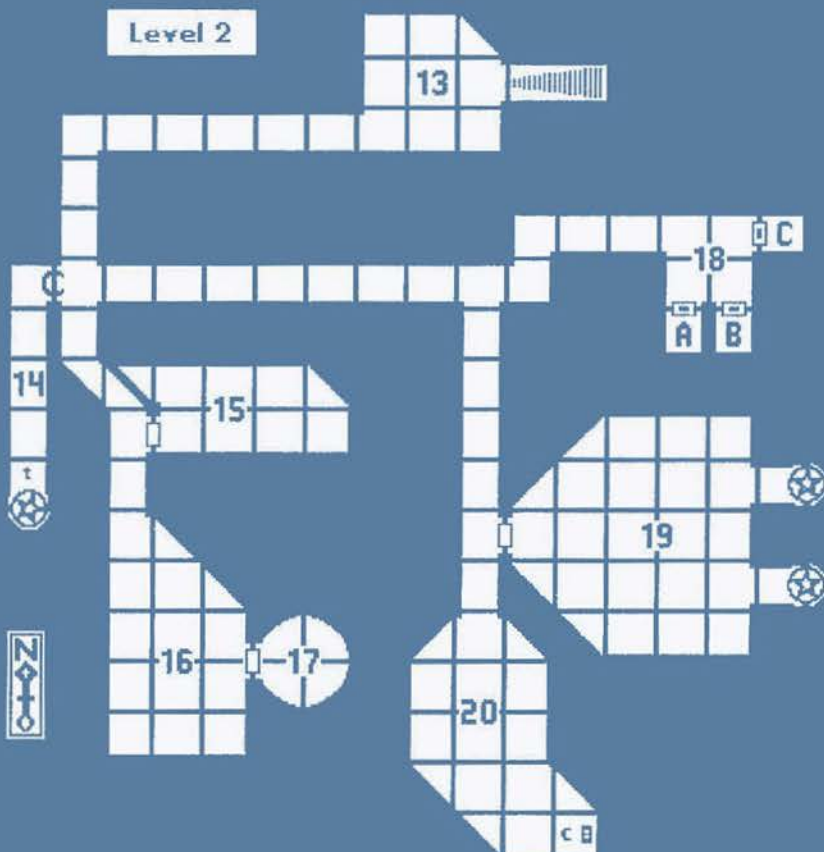
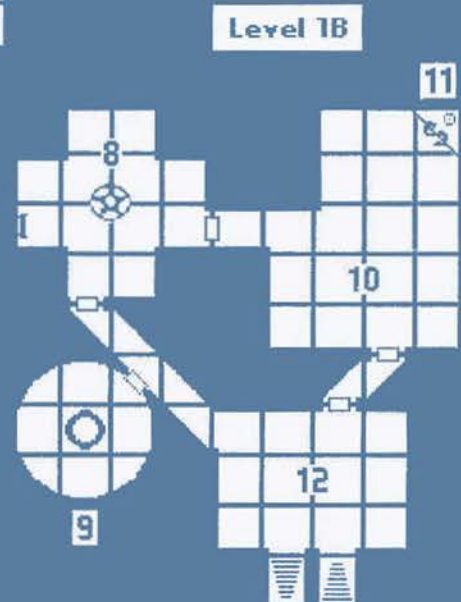
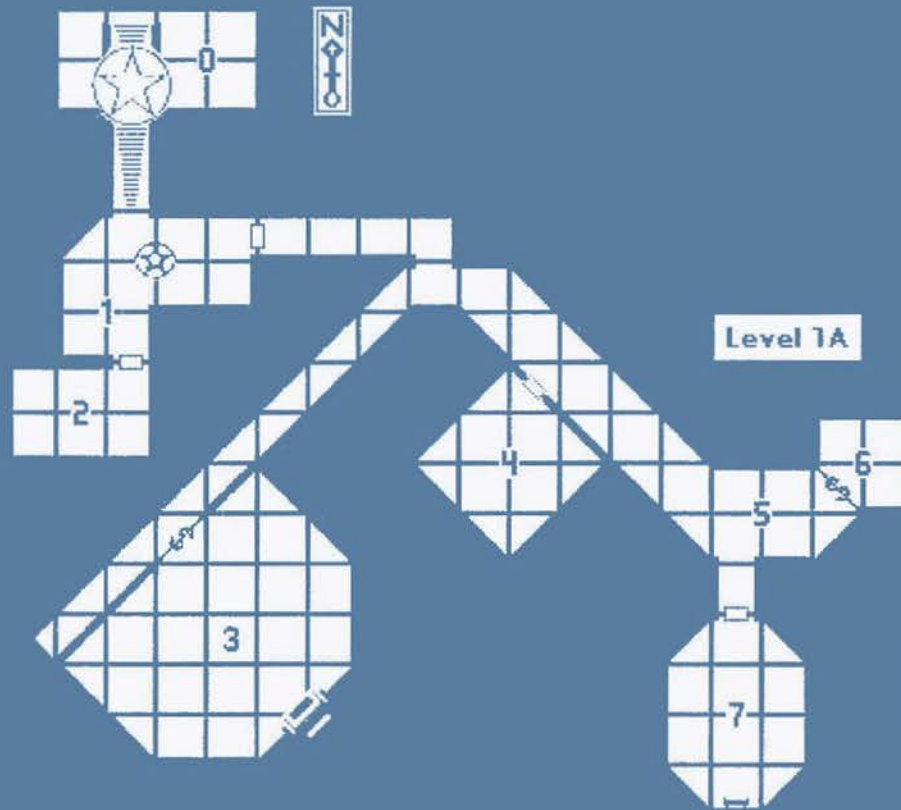
Level 1a Wandering Monsters: Roll for wandering monsters every six rounds spent exploring in 1a. On a dice roll of 1 a wandering monster occurs. A 4 in 6 chance is of encountering a patrol of 2d4+2 **Jackal Men**. A 5 or 6 is a **Giant Hog Snake**, dull tan in color and 20' long who has wandered in from the gloomy forest and slithered down the steps; 3HD, HP 12, ATK 1 BITE 1D4 + SAVE VS POISON OR DIE. SPECIAL ATK: SWALLOWS PREY WHOLE ON A NATURAL 20, 1D4 AUTO DMG PER ROUND IF SWALLOWED.

1. A 12' tall black stone **Statue of a nude human woman** is in the center of this vestibule. She is standing completely erect and her left hand hangs by her side. Her right arm is in a pose swiped across her eyes – As if she can't bear to witness. She stands on a 1' tall hexagon, gold-flecked black granite plinth.

2. Three **Red Veined Stag Beetles** lair here amidst a huge pile of dull grey pulpy wood debris with muted outlines of benches or pews and will mindlessly attack on sight (HD2 AC4 ATK 1 PINCER FOR 1D6+1 DMG, SPECIAL ATK: ONCE EVERY 4 ROUNDS CAN BELCH A FIERY ACID 12' RANGE FOR 1D10 DMG.). They are 4' long with oily black carapaces and throbbing red veins. A wispy, cloudlike cloak hangs on a peg on the western wall {cloak of draftiness (cursed), wearer always feels chilled down to the bone. Prone to sickness, 10% chance of contracting a disease each day. {ROLL 1D6: 1. Measles 2. Mumps 3. Chicken Pox 4. Small Pox 5. Shingles 6. Whooping Cough}. The south wall is dominated by a smashed pigeon hole type cupboard at one time painted white, but now cracked, faded and peeling. A search reveals only a low, black crush velvet hat with a dingy blue/green peacock feather.

3. This is a **Den of Jackals**. Ten + 1d6 Jackal Men loiter here at all times (HP 5 ea.), this being their main lair. They find it comfortable in this room and haven't bothered to explore much else in these passages. A large 'magical' fireplace in the southeast wall is lit at all times and produces a warm fiery glow to the room. Plush maroon velvet furniture, settees and wooden stands are the room's main decor. 8 empty quarts of ale, 2 full of sour pale yellow ale. brass lanterns hang on pegs on the wall as decor, on one end table sits a black clarinet of rat summoning (summons 2d4 giant rats in 1d6 rounds; they will hungrily attack the summoner, or anyone else nearby indiscriminately on sight). Treasures found in this room

Theme for a Jackal



Map Key	
c	Chest
⌂	Door
⌂	Door, Concealed
⌂	Door, Locked
⌂	Door, Secret
⌂	Fireplace
⌂	Magic Mirror
⌂	Magic Pool
⌂	Pedestal
⌂	Stairway
⌂	Statue
t	Trap Plate
1 Sq. = 10 Ft.	

Fingolwyn

upon search are 17sp, two medium silver candelabras worth 80gp ea. and 40 large 4" electrum discs etched with the scene of an alien planet(Ganymede) (worth 10gp ea.).

4. A seemingly empty 4' light grey, paper- ragged wasps' nest hangs suspended from the center ceiling on a wire meat hook. It is active, and upon entering the party is attacked by four **Black Wasps**, all that remains of this **Hive of Carnivorous Existence** (HD1 AC6, ATK FOR 1 BITE, 1 HP DMG + SAVE VS POSION OR DIE *) . A small dark brown bone chest is on the floor along the east wall. Locked, and trapped with a poison needle. The chest contains a white silk pillow with a single platinum ring. (**Ring of Zhalandron** this platinum ring is set with a large oval- shaped black onyx. The wielder can shoot a pencil-sized diameter ray of negative energy from the ring, which strikes like a magic missile; damage 1d3; 2d20 charges.) The chest itself is worth 50gp.

5. The entire east wall is comprised of a **multifaceted concave blue mirror**. On the center floor of the room is a mosaic done in golden stonework of a flaring alien sun, three feet in diameter. This mirror is a trap. If anyone stands directly in the middle of the room on the mosaic for more than a round, a beam of negative energy is generated from within the mirror and shoots out at the victim: 1d12 damage, save vs. death ray for half damage. The mirror recharges every 4 rounds.

6. Two wooden pegs are on the east wall in this **secret chamber**. A black hooded cloak inlaid with silver silk thread hangs on one (worth 20gp). On the other hangs a metal cilice. (worth 5gp to the right collector). A small inside pocket on the cloak contains a single brass key. This key unlocks doors 18a,b,c.

7. **Library**; books on conjuring ancient demons, a map of an old Hyperborean area, a scroll of cause blindness, and a knock scroll can be found upon careful search. A musty old book smell lingers here.

A rectangular, metallic blued mirror, 8' tall is bolted to the middle of south wall, facing north. It is covered with a black velvet shroud. If uncovered, the mirror gives a distorted reflective view of its gazer. One may step through this **magic mirror** to **teleport** seamlessly to room # 8. The Jackal Men are unaware of the mirror's power as they have contented themselves primarily to loitering in there comfortable Den.

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LEVEL 1b)

Level 1b Wandering monster: A Boney black mechanical spider drops noiselessly from a ceiling compartment in the north end of the corridor that leads from room 8 to room 12, pressure plate activated; 20% chance the back rank of party may detect its presence once it drops. It follows the party looking to attack the back rank at an opportune moment. **Mechanical Spider Construct:** HD 1+1 (hp 8), AC 5, atk bite 1d3 + save vs poison or die:. This is a trap meant to kill intruders and blasphemers constructed in aeons past.

8. A **12' tall stone Statue within a fountain** occupies the middle of the room. Water still seeps up from the bottom of the fountain, which is somewhat clear (potable). The statue is of a nude human male kneeling holding an unknown planet above his head, both hands upraised.

(note: identical magic mirror to room 7, but un-shrouded, acts as a one-way portal back to room 7.)

9. Circular magical pool ,inky black water, warm to the touch, a slight steam rises from it. Two feet deep. Cures disease and heals 1 hp per 2 hours soaking.

10. Banquet Room; This spacious room has a vaulted ceiling from which a tarnished, grimy crystal chandelier hangs. Worth 25gp if taken down, weighs 40lbs. A large rectangular wooden table is in the center of the room as are 3 wooden chairs. In the center of the table is a Hollow Copper etched Globe of an unknown planet (Ganymede), it sits upon a thin base. Two feet diameter (600gp)

11. Secret door opens to a small triangular room. A Golden apple sits atop a waist-high stone pedestal. This is the **Golden Apple of Asticots** (cursed). It appears as a ripe golden apple, with a slight warm radiance/shine. If bitten into 1d6 one-inch bone-white maggots immediately crawl down the eater's throat. The maggots each cause 1 pt of damage internally starting the next round; this damage reoccurs each round until they eat the victim's stomach out. They can be immediately killed by swallowing any form of alcohol or by a cure disease spell.

12. Two broad stone **staircases** are near the south wall. One set of stairs magically leads up to original entrance of 1a – and to the outside. The other set of stairs leads down to the level 2.

Level 2)

Level 2 Wandering Monster: A squad of **Eight Skeletons** endlessly patrols the corridors of level 2. Former adepts of the Cult of Golgotha. They wear black hooded robes and will attack on site with rusty sickles, 1d6 dmg. They babble noisily in their forgotten tongue speaking of blasphemers & impending doom.

13. A **large mosaic** adorns the center floor here. It depicts the moon of Ganymede glowing green in the night's sky.

14. A **concealed door** leads to this small ante chamber. The door slides and the 'handle' is a rough depression. An 8' tall statue of a coiled hooded snake can be seen at the edge of the party's torchlight, or light source at the south end of this corridor. Five feet in front of the statue is a pressure plate trap activated when > 100+ lbs is placed upon it. The trap causes the snake statue to animate and attack; **Hooded Snake Statue:** , HD 2; AC3; , # ATK 1 (BITE FOR 1D6);, EDGED AND POINTED WEAPONS DO ½ DMG. Explodes upon death causing 1d4 dmg in 10' radius, DEX check to avoid.

15. Two long wooden Benches sits near a burned out fire pit; in the ashes lies a melted bronze signet ring, size of large thumb ring. It represents the Goar minotaur tribe (from the Spiral Mountain Array) and is worth 30 gp. The walls in this room are tainted with black soot.

16. Statuary. Turned to stone adventuring party in fighting poses –, 5 people of various human races. They appear to be from a past age, and don antiquated weapons and crude bone-plate armor derived

from whales and dinosaurs. On the west wall directly across from the door to room 17, is a golden hued sickle mounted midway up the wall, resting on 2 short iron rods. This is a +3 sickle (1d6 dmg), which is also **cursed**. If removed from the wall it bestows a 'turn to stone' 20' radius once a day. A remove curse spell will break the curse on the weapon and it could be removed and used as a +3 weapon. One of the stoned adventurers is in a pose reaching his hand around the sickle (this should be a warning.)

17. This **storage room** is half filled with various crates, squat wooden kegs and large clear glass jars. The crates and kegs contain old quantities of flour, bone meal, dried corn, salt, tack nails and moldy nearly un-recognizable bread rolls. The clear jars are 30-gallon and contain huge tongues of an unknown sea creature preserved in a briny light brown solution.

18. A.B.C. - Random magic items, good and cursed in small locked iron boxes. **Wizard locked** lead doors.

Each 10' square room contains a locked iron box 3' long x 2' high on the center floor. Cannot be bashed or forced open. Iron boxes: **Room 18a:** . **Wand of Direction**, a small brown wooden wand, somewhat knotted and gnarled. If pointed in any direction a telepathic voice comes to the user telling him exactly what direction the wand is pointing (ie. north, southwest etc.) **Room 18b: Codpiece of Truth and Deceit:** This enchanted garment becomes increasingly tent-shaped when its wearer is telling lies. Much prized by virtuous wives and braggarts alike. **Room 18c: Amon's Golden Coins.** 10 gold coins etched with a horned devil face. They are activated when picked up or moved. 10 minutes after being moved they begin to burn red hot. If stuck in a bag or pouch, back-pack etc, they will burn through the bottom of the container in 2 turns. Other items may also spill out, and there is a 1 in 4 chance the sack catches fire

DMs note: The knock scroll found in room #7 can be used to open one of these doors, or the brass key from room 6. These are the only forms of entrance.

19. Large room 2 shadowy alcoves east wall. A 10' mosaic is set upon the center floor depicting a crescent moon, done in white pebbles which glow dully in the darkness. The alcoves each contain a statue of a clenched fist(right & left hand), 6' tall comprised of white marble sitting atop a circular stone base. Fingernails are of an unknown reflective silver/chrome alloy, (can be pried loose and sold for 100gp per fingernail and 200gp for each thumbnail.) The hands are trapped. If a thumbnail is pried off it causes that hand to animate & attack. **Animated Hand** HD 2, HP 12, AC 3, atks, 1 grab and squeeze, 1d6 dmg initially and then 1d6 auto dmg each round until slain., Move 90'. Special defenses, slashing & piercing weapons do ½ dmg.

20. Hall of mirrors, A room of mirrors starts halfway across this room where it bends SE. It is haunted by a **Ganymedean Green Devil**; HD 4, HP 22, AC 4, atks 2 claws 1d4 each, or able to shoot beams of green raw energy from its hollow eye sockets once every 4 rounds, (dmg 1d10 save vs death magic for ½). Description; 5' tall leathery dark green skin, bat-like wings (vestigial), short bifid tail. Imprisoned here in the SE room corner. The mirrors cover all walls, floor and ceiling giving a distorted perception. It is hard to tell how far away the Green Devil truly is. It will parlay deceitfully in gruff tones with the party. It seeks release and offers the gem chest as collateral claiming he has been forced to guard it and has no interest in its belongings. The mirrors are of an arcane nature. Stepping into the southern portion of the room releases the Green Devil who will attack the party in his state of anger and confusion. If he is

reduced to less than ½ hit points he will seek to flee., Against the SE wall is a 2' tall medium green crystal chest, semi-transparent, locked. The chest is made from a very hard crystal element and cannot be smashed or forced open or otherwise damaged. it contains, 2 large rough cut moss green gems (500gp ea), 2 plain gold pinky rings, (25gp each) , and 10 4" platinum discs etched with an icon of the planet Ganymede (worth 50gp ea). The chest itself is quite dense and weighs 80lbs, worth 200gp.

*Designers note: Special thanks to Jeff Talanian for editing assistance and to the 'In Search of the Unknown' old school RPG group in Seattle WA for play-testing help (Travis, Rich, Josh, Sam, Ro & Andy).

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Crawling Without Hexes: the Pointcrawl by Chris Kotalik

Despite spending 1-2 hours a day sinking psychic energy into an rpg blog, I am still as much or more of a wargamer as I am a roleplayer. There have been too many years of pushing little lead men and cardboard counters to deny it.

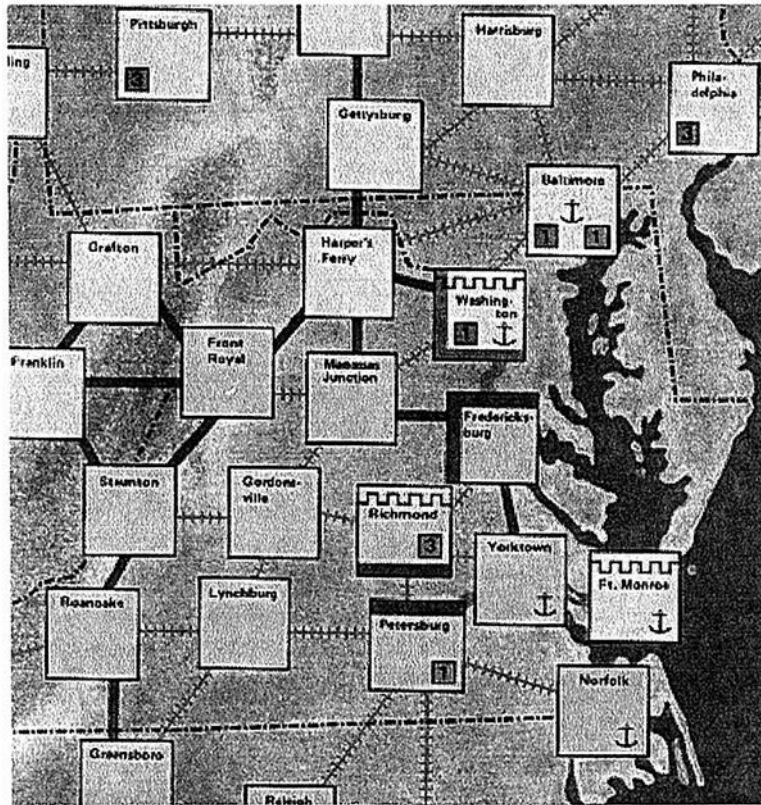
Hexes literally come with the terrain in both worlds. Yet as much as I love that old six-directional organization in my wargaming--where relative position is a top priority--I have to admit that I find them not terribly useful in running day-to-day wilderness exploration in my games.

Don't get me wrong, I still use hex maps, but they have been relegated to only one of several layers of maps I use in campaigns. Right below a top level "symbolic" map (a map, often shared with players, filled with out-of-scale markings and illustrations distorting things by their relative importance) is often a large-scale map of six-mile hexes.

Neither layer of map is what I actually use at the table.

What I actually use at the table are two kinds of hexless map systems: the first being a point-to-point system (the second a "vector" map akin to the West Marches to be discussed later).

What's point-to-point? Simple, it's a map that replaces hexes with locations and connectors only. Fortunately I didn't have to invent another wheel, but looked to some old favorite wargames. Take the map from the Civil War classic *A House Divided* pictured below.

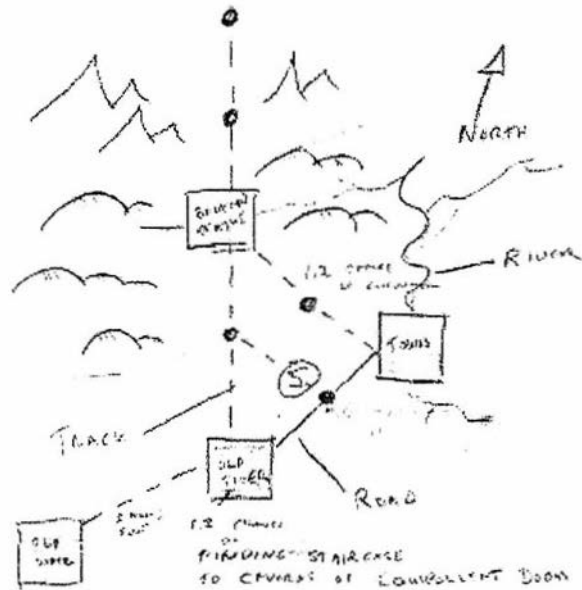


Why bother switching? Because a hex map places “empty space” areas, the countless hexes that may contain nothing much of interest, on the same semiotic level as interesting locales (and by interesting I mean a wide latitude of things from minor curiosities/landmarks to settlements or adventure sites, any point that is worth more than a cursory description). It reduces the amount of information I can see at a glance and the paper shuffling between hex map and gazetteer becomes a stage management nightmare for me when I run a game.

Secondly, hex maps tend to play down the fact that most overland travel is rightly conducted along some kind of track or road. Pathless travel is exhausting, massively disorienting, and dangerous to the point that even something as rough as a mule track or a game path is usually preferable.

Hex maps also tend to not be able to show impassable terrain on a granular level, cliffs or peaks that prevent a line of travel or wetlands areas where the water gets too deep. Note how paths bottleneck in mountain and coastal wetlands areas in the *House Divided* map. I want to be able to portray the situation where an area maybe be close by how the crow flies but involves a circuitous route by foot. I also want those bottlenecks—places of “strategic” importance to find or hold.

This is what my typical PbP map looks like ([click to enlarge](#)).



The squares represent the sites of interest and are color coded with map pencils for ease of reference. In this case, dark blue equals a settlement a town or larger (sky blue is for smaller ones), green is a landmark, and brown is a potential adventure site with its own sub-map.

I always draw in terrain as background under the grid (note the bands of hills and mountains) roughly to scale from the higher-layer hex map. This reminds me exactly where topography begins and ends if I need to use it in-game—and what type of encounter or weather chart to use. I use a wide range of terrain and vegetation type, so this is especially important for me.

Now let's look at the all-important connectors. Solid lines represent roads, double solid lines Roman-like roads with sturdy road beds. Broken lines represent tracks. I will add letters if I need to code the path further, "S" represents a secret or hidden path, for instance, "G" stands for a game path that the party will need an outdoorsman-type to find and use. Rivers and creeks can also be used as connectors.

The dots on connectors play a big role in simplifying things, they are the units of measurement between squares. They typically represent about six hours of unencumbered walking and three hours of normal riding time. If a connecting path is shorter or longer or more difficult I note it directly on the map. The typical foot time just happens to correspond to my encounter checks. The system lends itself to wanting to minimize too many dots, so I tend to brainstorm lots of green-coded minor landmark boxes to both give players more choice in direction and make travel seem more colorful.

The last thing you will note are random notes to myself (the chance for finding on a d6 the stairs to a cave system under the Old Tower square, for instance.) This on-map notation plays a big part in helping me run the game at the table and my actual maps will get very busy with them. Again I can't emphasize enough how helpful this is to ease play flow.

*Editor's note: More of Chris's writing can be found at www.hillcantons.blogspot.com

