Adventure
CHRONICLE

Interview With
James Sutter

Sci-Fantasy Adventure:
In Search of the
Sun Blade

The
SPACE JITTERS

5E COMPATIBLE

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

STARFINDER
COMPATIBLE

The Arcanarium ♦ Design Contest ♦ The Menagerie
Halloween Traditions ♦ Futuristic Haunts
22 Starship Malfunctions ♦ Mini-Adventures
The Gauntlet ♦ And More... Inside!

AAW
Games

Welcome Adventurers!

Chief Editor: Thomas Baumbach

Publisher & Community Manager: Jonathan G. Nelson

Contributors: Jacob Blackmon, Carlye Rall, Will Myers, Stephen Rowe, Michael Smith, Colin Stricklin, Rory Toma, Stephen Yeardley

Cover Artist: Mates Laurentiu

Contributing Artists: Jacob Blackmon, Mates Laurentiu, Justin Andrew Mason, Various Licensed or Public Domain Works

Graphic Design: Justin Andrew Mason & Thomas Baumbach

Layout: Thomas Baumbach

Contents

Publisher's Corner

Greetings goblins and ghouls, witches and warlocks! When I was about eight or nine years old I told my parents I wanted to be a punk rocker for Halloween, I had seen punks with pink mohawks on the streets of London when I was five years old but remembered little else thus was completely content having my hair dyed pink, being squeezed into lederhosen and a really silly German sweater then sent on my way. Little did I know I was terrorizing the neighborhood in an outfit more suitable for playing accordion and drinking out of steins than stomping boots and shrugging off the tyrannical oppressors of the world, at least I made off with some artificially colored/flavored high fructose corn syrup and I'm still a punk rocker at heart to this day (sans lederhosen).

Now that I've shared a story from my past I expect you, the reader to do the same! Send us your funniest or most embarrassing Halloween story either on the Adventureaweek.com forum or our page at Facebook.com/aawgames.

We're doing double duty this issue bringing you the haunted fantasy in the traditional medieval style, as well as space horrors and haunts for the brand new *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*!

Ye hath reached the season of the harvest and haunting and both shall be manifested within these pages including an interview with James Sutter (Starfinder Creative Director), a full space-horror adventure from Stephen Yeardley, "An Introduction to Adventure Writing" penned by Colin Stricklin, seasonally-spooky mini-adventures, and TWO Menagerie articles, one for Halloween, and one with a sci-fi horror theme.

Before I leave you, I wanted to share an article about Halloween penned by my best friend in both the spirit and material world. Enjoy!

Jonathan G. Nelson
Owner/Publisher
AAW Games

Halloween Practice

by Carlye Rall

Many different traditions celebrate during this time of the year, summer ends and winter begins. The pre-Christian religion believed that on Halloween Day, the barrier between the realm of the dead and the world of the living is the most transparent.

In today's modern society Halloween is the one day of the year in which we feel permission to let the hidden, repressed, and individual parts of ourselves be seen in public view without fear of being shamed or judged.

During this time of year the dark shadow that we all know within us is invited into the light. Although we all have dark and light inside, some of us experience fear of change, shame, guilt, anger, or insecurity. We look the other way trying to pretend these dark areas will fade but they exist. The good news is that light coexists right alongside it. The brighter your light the more visible your shadow.

Practice accepting your darker side, shine your light there and reintegrate light and dark. Feel the wholeness, the opportunity to be who you are without judgment. Come to terms with your hidden darkness and aspects of your collective consciousness that have been neglected for too long. Let this practice reflect the transparency of this season. Happy Halloween!

Opposite: Cover artist Mates Laurentiu shows a cleric's command over life and death.

James L. Sutter:
Writer, Musician, Space Cowboy

Jonathan had a chance to catch up with James Sutter, formerly of Paizo Publishing, Creative Director for their latest big release, the Starfinder Roleplaying Game. *We learned a bit about the origins of that new sci-fantasy RPG, James' musical proclivity, answered a few reader questions, and asked him about life after Paizo.*

For those clueless among us, what is the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*?

The *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* is a science fantasy game set in the same universe as the Pathfinder RPG, but thousands of years in the setting's future. While the rules are similar to Pathfinder's in many ways, and if you know one it should be quite easy to pick up the other, Starfinder is its own standalone game—you don't need to know the Pathfinder RPG at all to play.

Thematically, it's still about having adventures and fighting monsters—the base assumption is that you're the bold crew of a starship exploring the mysteries of a weird universe. There's still swords and spells, magic and monsters, but now there's also lasers and spaceships. (To other gamers, I often say that I want us to do for space opera what Shadowrun did for cyberpunk.)

What spawned the creation of this new game and setting?

It's something we'd all been interested in for a long time, and I know Publisher Erik Mona had the name for years before finally pulling the trigger on the starter gun. For me, I've been trying to slip science fiction into Pathfinder's fantasy since the very beginning—when I wrote the gazetteer of Varisia in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #3, I actually had a space elevator in there, and

Sutter has herded a nerf or two in his time.

James Jacobs and Wes Schneider had to take me aside and help me walk it back a few steps.

But a few years ago I got to write a Pathfinder campaign setting book called *Distant Worlds*, which designed the whole solar system for Pathfinder, and that let me properly stretch my science fantasy legs. To my delight, the fans really went for it, and the same thing happened when Jacobs ran the *Iron Gods Adventure Path*, which had androids and a crashed spaceship and a lot of similar SF flavors. So we got the sense

that there was an audience, but I think we were all still a little stunned when Erik proposed we do not just a science fantasy expansion for Pathfinder, but an entirely new game.

How was the idea received by the Paizo higher-ups? How did you pitch the concept, and who did you pitch it to?

Well, as I noted, it was really Publisher Erik Mona who decided to do the game. I have no idea how that initial pitch to the other executives went,

other than that they agreed to fund what's turned out to be one of our biggest endeavors ever.

For me, the real pitch was a few days after Erik's proposal, when I went to him and laid out why I should be in charge of the project. Fortunately, a number of factors (not least of which the fact that the setting was going to be based primarily on my work in *Distant Worlds*) combined to get me the title of Starfinder Creative Director. From there, I just had to figure out how to put together the entire game in a year. (Don't worry, the doctors say I should recover fully with time.)

What kind of top-secret awesomeness are you guys cranking out for the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* in 2018?

Dude, the first rule of secrets is *don't tell them to journalists.* But something that was recently declassified is our big Pact Worlds hardcover campaign setting book!

The Pact Worlds are Starfinder's core setting, the solar system at the heart of everything, and this will expand dramatically on what's in the Core Rulebook. But in addition to a bunch of awesome information on the various major worlds, from Absalom Station and Mars-like Akiton to tidally locked Verces or Lovecraftian Aucturn, there's also quite a lot of crunch in here for players and Game Masters: new starship designs; new playable races; NPC stats; new weapons and other items (both magical and technological); new spells, feats, etc.

What's more, this book is going to be gorgeous—I think the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* is one of the prettiest books we've ever made, and this one's going to give it a run for its money. So that hits in March, and we're in the middle of developing it right now.

I had all of 5 minutes during setup to relearn my parts... it remains one of my favorite Gen Con memories of all time!

My good friend Jonathan Weisnewski creates all the guns for the *Destiny* video game series by Bungie. I've spoken with him about a potential collaboration between the two of you crafting some *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible weaponry. Pending Bungie & Paizo approval it sounds like this might be a thing. What do you think? Are you down for this wild idea?

Uh… You know I'm down, and not just because I like Jonathan's band, Sandrider. But are you sure you want to promise that before it's set in stone? Anything could go wrong, and then the fans will hold us accountable. WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS LIVE ON THE EDGE, NELSON?

Speaking of music, you and I both play in local Seattle-area bands and grew up participating in the all-ages scene here. How old were you when you started playing music? What's your instrument of choice? What is the name of your current band and where can people listen? Any shows planned?

I grew up fairly musical—singing in school choirs and musicals, piano lessons, etc.—it wasn't until I played my first chord on a borrowed guitar at 15 that my brain exploded and I suddenly knew that I wanted to do this all the time forever. I spent my teenage years playing guitar and singing in a pop-punk band called slamDaddy (look, the early 2000s were a weird time for band names, alright?).

Weirdly, a lot of those early shows were actually at a teen center within walking distance of the Paizo offices. My early 20s were spent gigging furiously with a progressive metalcore band called Shadow at Morning, where I played bass and sang.

Since then, I've casually performed everything from folk to musical theater, and I currently play guitar and sing in a band called Brides of the Lizard God, which writes heartfelt screamo and hair metal and about dragons and spaceships.

We play live maybe once a year—we formed specifically as a just-for-fun project, a bunch of musicians too old to want to go big anymore—but it's honestly the most fun musical group I've ever been part of, and some of the best music I've ever written.

You can find all of the recordings I've done for free at jameslsutter.com!

We met at Gen Con 2015 playing as Rockonomicon along with Tim Hitchcock and Rone Barton. How did it feel to form a band, have a single practice, then play a show at the ENnies? Think we could pull it off again? How about forming a temporary local band of game developers? You play bass, Jon W. plays guitar, I play drums. Just sayin'….

That was such a crazy show! I still can't believe Rone pulled it off. It was especially funny because it was the first time in my life I'd ever played a 5-string bass. As I was walking onstage, Rone handed it to me and said, "It was all the rental shop had—you can play it, right?" So I had all of 5 minutes during setup to relearn my parts with that extra string. But the show went off without a hitch, and it remains one of my favorite Gen Con memories of all time!

As for forming a band of local game developers—any time, man! In the words of Gimli: "You have my axe!"

We reached out to the newly formed *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* community on Facebook and they had a plethora of questions for you.

Why Sci-Fantasy? (i.e. why not harder science fiction?)

Many reasons! Mostly it was that these are the stories we wanted to tell. I love magic and weirdness, and seeing how that blends with alien cultures and advanced tech is more fun for me than doing just one or the other. When we first

Rockonomicon's first live performance, opening The ENnie Awards at Gen Con 2014. Photo by Carlos A. Smith.

Band members: Rone "Jack Of All" Barton on vocals, James Sutter on bass, Jonathan G. Nelson on drums and Tim Hitchcock (hidden behind the lectern) on guitar. Not pictured: backup singer/dancers for the evening, Division 20 models Annastasia Wright, Gigi Werner and Jennacide Rogers.

were conceptualizing the game, my tagline was that I wanted "space wizards and laser ninjas," and I think we've stayed true to that aesthetic. Then there's the additional element of wanting to keep it in Pathfinder's universe, which already has magic in it—for me, seeing how the setting has changed is a big part of the fun, and stripping the magic away would have ruined things.

Of course, a more practical aspect is that we're not physicists, and we know some of our fans are. If we tried to adhere too closely to real-world physics in a space opera game, we'd be constantly tripping over ourselves. So we decided to focus on what we do best. If you want a realistic space game, play Kerbal Space Program. If you want weird aliens attacking you with magic swords, we've got you covered.

(Wise words, James. Check out this issue's 'Greater Than Its Parts' article by Stephen Yeardley for more genre-bending insight. -Ed)

So many things, so little space in the book… If you could have added that "one more thing," what would it have been?

More equipment and magic items! But if you mean something entirely new… then mech rules.

Someday…

Why did you choose to exclude some core races such as elves and dwarves but include humans?

We didn't exclude them! You can find rules for playing elves, dwarves, and all of the core Pathfinder races in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, in

Send Us Your Comments!

Adventure Chronicle wants your feedback! Let us know what you think of the magazine, your reactions to articles, or anything else you've got to say! Send your comments to jonathan@aawgames.com with the subject "AC Comments."

Now Accepting Submissions

Adventure Chronicle is now accepting submissions from freelancers and AAW.com subscribers! We're looking for new talent, and this is your chance to get your great idea into print.

The top-priority articles we're looking for are substantive content about RPGs; articles with titles like, "How to GM for Strangers" or "Writing a Better Adventure."

We're also on the lookout for unique, in-depth RPG content, like: creature ecologies, new planes of existence, exploration rules subsystems, or gazetteers.

And we're always looking for creative magic items, monsters, and traps to fill out our Menagerie, Arcanarium, and Gauntlet columns.

But we'll look at almost anything! Fiction, reviews, gamer DIY, recipes, anything you can think of that might be of interest to roleplayers.

Visit adventureaweek.com/write to read our submission guidelines.

Next Issue: Winter Is Coming... Again!

Explore the frozen north, discover creatures, hazards, and magicks with a frigid twist, and Return to the Wintery Gale with official new content!

Get your copy free for a limited time. Visit AdventureAWeek.com for details.

In Search of the
Sun Blade

An adventure for 4-5 PC of level 12-13　　　　　　By Stephen Yeardley and Thomas Baumbach

I n the wake of a dark Necromancer's assault, wherein all life was destroyed or corrupted in the lands under his control, the guardian Diviners have become desperate and seek the PCs help in a final ploy to defeat the Necromancer.

When a bright ball of fire streaked a flame across the sky, directly into the Necromancer's domain not three days past, the Diviners saw just one phrase: "Otherworldiness binds the iron that embraces the light of stars, resting where majestic Life-to-Death did go." The Diviners sense an energy deep within the blasted forest, an energy that may be the legendary sun blade, a weapon capable of defeating the Necromancer.

What the Diviners sense is the downed aeon starship Tähtihohde. Warred over by the ship's inhabitants and assaulted by the Necromancer's minions, the ship is controlled now by a clan of svartálfar who are attempting to repair the ship.

Following the Diviner's instructions, the PCs discover a curved metal trapdoor in the middle of the dark forest. Opening it reveals stairs, 30 feet wide, leading down into a metal-lined corridor dimly lit from glowing floor runners (see Room 1).

About the Tähtihohde

The Tähtihohde is a small ship, by galactic standards, originally crewed by fewer than a dozen aeon and their paracletus familiars. Tasked with observing and collecting the lifeforms of myriad planets, the ship's hold still preserves a curious set of specimen. Some of those captured lifeforms, the svartálfar, survived the crash and now call the ruin home.

> **SF** *In Search of the Sunblade* is an adventure that's designed to allow a group of *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* characters to jump directly into the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*.
>
> While this adventure is written using the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* ruleset, it makes mention of certain rules that are exclusive to the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*. Look for the **SF** logo that highlights the differences in the rulesets.

With a DC 30 check the PCs can determine that the metal these rooms are composed of is unlike any other found on this planet, with strange energy conduits that flicker and flare seemingly at random.

All doors, unless otherwise noted, require a DC 15 skill check Disable Device or DC 30 Strength check to open.

As the PCs travel around the craft, the PCs might meet a creature, a futuristic item or threat, or find the ship itself taking a dislike to their activity. Where appropriate (or 1 in 6 chance), use the table below each time the PCs enter a corridor or approach a door.

Random Encounters in the Tähtihohde

01-20	The PCs encounter a proximity mine, planted by one of the svartálfar. See page 16.
21-40	A PC finds two *automatic arachnids*. See page 44.
41-60	A creature has escaped cryostasis. See Room 5.
61-80	A random horror-like effect. See "Space Jitters" on page 21.
81-00	Four security mannequins step from concealed alcoves, surrounding the party. See page 18.

The Space Elves

The svartálfar and the ljósálfar are species of elfkind that in ages long past lived amongst the stars. The details are lost to history, but as the elves' solar system collapsed from age, its people sought refuge throughout the galaxy. On one such planet, those elves became the svartálfar and the ljósálfar, rival clans that became distinct species. Millennia later, the aeon ship Tähtihohde, observed the struggles of the now-planet-bound elves, and collected a handful of them for further study.

Svartálfar Ambush

The svartálfar have endured the ship's dangers, repelled the Necromancer's minions, defeated the aeon who survived the crash, and they've even managed to gain some level of control over the ship's systems, but they're far from masters in this domain. They used what tech they could explore and gather resources from the surrounding area, but without ever straying too far, knowing that if they were ever to return home, they'd need the ship.

After observing the PC's early interactions with the ship, the svartálfar quickly decide the PCs can be useful guinea pigs for permanently disarming some of the ship's protections and troubleshooting malfunctions.

Using their superior Acrobatics, Stealth and *greater invisibility*, the svartálfar attempt to make it seem as though the attacks and spells are coming from the ship itself (or some other, more obvious assailant, such as the zombies or security bots).

The PCs are "ambushed" in this manner up to six times, once for each svartálfar. The DC to notice that these attacks aren't from the source the svartálfar intend them to appear as is equal to the svartálfar's Stealth check +20. If the svartálfar's invisibility is about to expire (or is dispelled), it ceases harassing the PCs and flees to Room 9.

I. Entrance and Bioform Scanning Section

The stairs leading into this chamber flatten to form a ramp, then rise again to form stairs, but the mechanism that drives this metallurgy must be malfunctioning, for the effect is disjointed and random.

Two large columns pulse and hum with blue energy at either side of the chamber. Near each column, a wraith-like figure writhes in conjunction with the hum and pulse of the column's energy. Each figure appears fixed in place by a raised circular sigil in the floor.

The aeon abandoned ship when it fell from orbit, using the transporter room to escape to the surface. The descent disrupted the control systems in the final moments, and two aeon remain trapped in the energy transfer. Appearing wraith-like on the transporter pads, the aeon writhe in agony.

A DC 25 Use Magic Device[1] check on the operations console frees the aeon, but it is a poor rescue. Trapped in an energy matrix, the passage of time—just a few days—seems like an eternity. The aeon have long since gone mad and attack the PCs. See "Aeon, Theletos" on page 18.

The damage to transporter systems and the time in stasis have altered the aeon's equipment, creating a hybrid veemod-aeon crystalstone.

The stairs are meant to form a ramp automatically when something wheeled approaches, but the malfunction creates difficult terrain and a trip-floor trap.

> **Veaeon Crystalstone:** The merging of a *veemod crystal* and an *aeon stone*, these hybrid items exhibit traits of both while functioning in either capacity. The aeon that once piloted the Tähtihohde used *iridescent spindle aeon stones* and *brown veemod crystals* set into their space suit visors.

TRIP-FLOOR TRAP	CR 1

Type technological **Notice** Perception DC 0;
  Disable Engineering[2] DC 35 (repair central conduits)
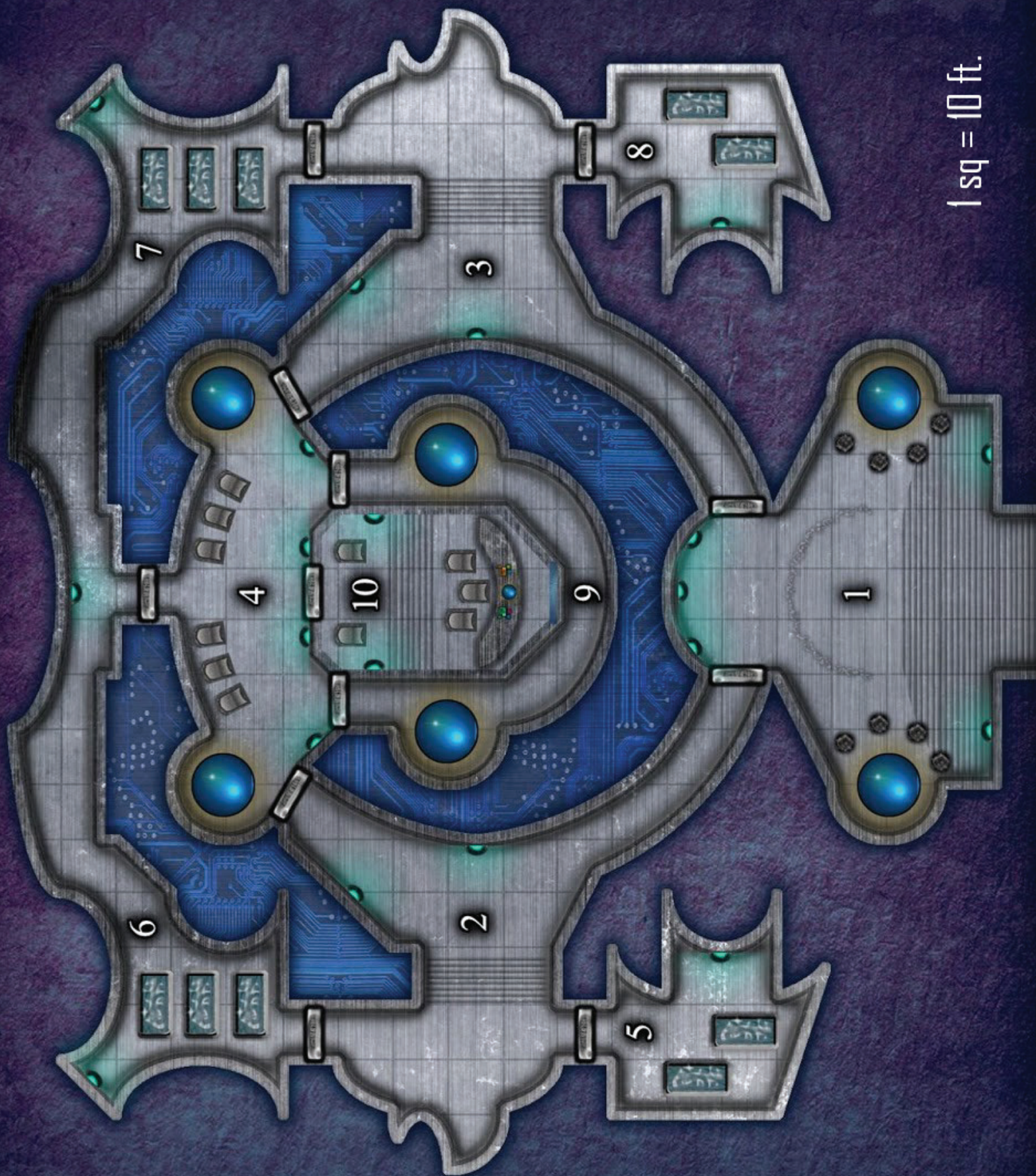**Trigger** location; **Reset** immediate
Effect difficult terrain, knocked prone; Reflex DC 13 avoids

---

[1] A character familiar with such tech would use the Computers skill in SF; in most cases, Use Magic Device is an auto-success for a SF character.
[2] The Engineering skill encompasses Disable Device and Knowledge (engineering).

The Tähtihohde

1 sq = 10 ft.

Automated biometric sensors scan the PCs as they cross the threshold into the room; a malfunction in this system causes "organic" magic items, such as potions and salves, to potentially become inert—a DC 20 Fortitude save resists this effect.

While the PCs explore this room a paracletus studies them, keeping its light dim and hidden near the glowing drift drive shafts. This paracletus is the last of the ship's original inhabitants, and has observed the svartálfar and the other crash survivors. While it's primary objective is to observe lifeforms, it recognizes that its task is fruitless if the ship's databanks are forever trapped on this planet.

Should the PCs discover the paracletus, it retreats through an access duct, but after a short time will continue to observe the PCs.

2. Superstructure

Silhouettes of humanoid forms and dark scorch marks decorate the walls. Cables ripped from panels in the walls periodically pulse with faint energy. Dark stains mar the floor.

Malfunctions and tampering by the svartálfar have created an electrified floor trap near the center of the room. When the trap is triggered, the lights go out and a void mist, a stellar stowaway, emerges from the access panels.

A panel on the wall near the stairs, found with a DC 18 Perception check, holds medical equipment.[1]

ELECTRIFIED FLOOR	CR 12

Type technological; **Notice** Perception DC 32; **Disable** Engineering DC 30 (cut power)
Trigger location; **Reset** none or immediate (see below)
Effect 10d8 electricity damage (Reflex DC 25 half) to anyone touching the floor; typically electrified floors trigger only if a creature attempts to

step over or move the source; electrified floors connected to a generator have no charge limit, otherwise it has enough energy to function once with no reset.

Void Mist

A noxious mustard-colored vapor emerges from the air ducts; a chill fills the air.

VOID MIST	CR 10

XP 9,600
NE Gargantuan aberration (air)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 6
(+5 Dex, +1 dodge, -4 size)[2]
hp 127 (15d8+60); fast healing 5
Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10
Defensive Abilities amorphous, negative energy affinity; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** acid, electricity, sonic

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)
Melee touch +7 (6d6 acid plus 6d6 negative energy)[3]
Space 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
Special Attacks create juju zombie, engulfing mists (DC 22, 6d6 acid plus 6d6 negative energy)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 7, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped)
Feats Ability Focus (engulfing mists), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness
Skills Fly +25, Perception +25
Languages Common (can't speak); telepathy 30 ft.
SQ gaseous

ECOLOGY

[1] These items would appear arcane to pre-technological characters, but they may figure out how to use them, especially after meeting some of the ship's denizens: SF 1d4 tier 3 medicinals, 2 mk 2 healing serums. However, in PF hit points aren't quite the same as they are in SF, where stamina points represent avoiding lethal damage and hit points represent injurious damage.
[2] SF combatants have Energy Armor Class (EAC) or Kinetic Armor Class, and which AC you target depends on what kind of weapon you're using. It's possible that the PCs could have picked up some future tech by this encounter that would target the Void Mist's EAC, but you can use its AC in a pinch.
[3] SF streamlines the damage types (though it makes allowances for alternate types): There are two categories of damage types: energy and kinetic. Acid, cold, electricity, fire and sonic are all energy damage types, and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing are kinetic damage types.

Environment any
Organization solitary, pair, or horror (3-5)
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Engulfing Mists (Ex) A void mist can engulf foes. A creature engulfed by a void mist does not gain the pinned condition and can move normally—such a creature is in danger of suffocating (see void madness) and as long as it begins its turn engulfed, it takes the void mist's touch damage. A void mist's vapors obscure sight as per the spell *obscuring mist*. The save DC to avoid the engulfing mists is Constitution-based.

Gaseous (Ex) A void mist has a body composed of vapor. This form grants it the amorphous defensive ability and allows it to pass through small holes or even mere cracks with no reduction to its speed, but it can't enter water or other liquids. A void mist doesn't have a Strength score. It can't manipulate or wear objects, and it is treated as a creature three size categories smaller than its actual size (Medium for most void mists) for the purpose of how wind affects it.

Void Madness (Ex) Similar to breathing in a toxic atmosphere, inhaling a void mists causes images of the infinite void to course through the victim's head, causing void madness. This is a poison effect.

Void Madness

Type poison (inhaled); **Save** Fortitude DC 22
Track[1] Wisdom; **Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds
Cure 2 saves

[1] Diseases, drugs, and poisons use an "affliction track" to track their effects on a character, and often that track is tied to an ability score. In 🜨 Void Madness would deal 1d3 Wisdom damage every round for six rounds, but in SF, instead of taking damage, the victim degrades in health. Defeating the poison with medicine, magic, or good old fashion saving throws, remains the same.

: -2 Will saves and Wisdom-based checks; DC of spells and abilities decrease by 2; lose access to highest level spells (Wis-basded casters).

: Apply the effects of weakened twice. (-4 Will saves, lose two highest spell levels, etc.)

: Gain the confused condition.

: The victim can't experience reality and can't be woken.

: The victim's brain stops working, and he dies.

3. Superstructure

Several wall panels have been opened here, revealing storage lockers. Several lockers appear to be empty, their contents—curious suits of black fabric armor—lay strewn about the floor.

A panel on the wall near the stairs, found with a DC 18 Perception check, holds medical equipment.

The svartálfar donned the aeon space suits on a recent expedition into the Necromancer's dark wood, thinking the suits might protect them from the local magic. Now zombies, the svartálfar wandered back to the ship, and have "guarded" this passage since.

Both the east door from Area 1 and the corridor beyond show clear signs of use.

Svartálfar Zombies	CR 6

XP 2,400
Init +6; **Senses** lifesense 60 ft.; Perception

DEFENSE

AC 22 touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +2 natural, +4 armor)
hp 66 (14d8+3)
Fort +4 **Ref** +10 **Will** +9
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee slam +12/+17 (1d6+3)
SA quick strikes, chilling strike

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 23, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +10; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 28
Feats Toughness

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Quick Strikes (Ex) Whenever a fast zombie takes a full-attack action, it can make one additional slam attack at its highest base attack bonus

Chilling Strike (Su) Three times per day as a free action after hitting with a slam attack, a fast svartálfar zombie can deliver its former-life spell-like ability *chill touch* through its arm. This deals an additional 1d6 damage plus the target must succeed a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage.

4. Viewing Chamber

The columns of this chamber pulse with radiant blue energy, similarly to the columns you encountered upon first entering the complex, but much brighter. There are several opalescent apparatuses that appear designed for sitting.

The chair-consoles in this chamber mold themselves to fit whatever humanoid sits in them. From these consoles a user can view any portion of the ship, or anywhere within range of its sensors. The svartálfar have been using this chamber to monitor the Necromancer as well as the PCs progress through the ship.

One of the few ship systems that remains intact, the remote viewing consoles are also one of the only ship systems the svartálfar have successfully bent to their will. Instead of the console shifting to fit a new user, any non-svartálfar that sits upon a console suddenly finds themselves being absorbed into the ship. Once a single console is activated, all consoles alight and threaten the room, becoming an aggressive biomorphic console.

Aggressive Biomorphic Console	CR 7

XP 3,200
N Large ooze
Init -1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -3

DEFENSE

AC 6, touch 6, flat-footed 6 (–3 Dex, –1 size)
hp 155 (10d8+110)
Fort +19, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2
Immune electricity, ooze traits

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.
Melee slam +13 (1d6 plus 1d6 acid)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks engulf, paralysis

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 5, **Con** 30, **Int** 4, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5
Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 10 (can't be knocked prone)
Skills Stealth +10
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness
SQ transparent

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid (Ex) An aggressive biomorphic console's acid does not harm metal or stone.

Engulf (Ex) Although it moves slowly, an aggressive biomorphic console can simply engulf Large or smaller creatures in its path as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The aggressive biomorphic console merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the cube, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity can attempt a DC 14 Reflex save to avoid being engulfed—on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the cube moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the cube's paralysis and acid, gain the pinned condition, are in danger of suffocating, and are trapped within its body until they are no longer pinned. The save DC is Strength-based.

Paralysis (Ex) An aggressive biomorphic console secretes an anesthetizing slime. A target hit by a cube's melee or engulf attack must succeed on a DC 22 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The cube can automatically engulf a paralyzed opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Transparent (Ex) Due to its lack of coloration, an aggressive biomorphic console is difficult to discern. A DC 15 Perception check is required to notice a motionless aggressive biomorphic console. Any creature that fails to notice a aggressive biomorphic console and walks into it is automatically engulfed.

5. Cryostorage I

A series of glass sarcophagi stacked on top of each other fill this room. A metal strut, bent and collapsed, pierces the side of one sarcophagus through which pours cold blue mists, filling this chamber. The other sarcophagi appear filled with the same mist, obscuring what lies within.

The decades of cold fusion that powers this cryogenic chamber have encased the room in frost. While this has no permanent effect on those entering the chamber, it has caused the cyrobeds to malfunction. Attempting to open one causes the capsule to erupt in a violent explosion of super-chilled atmosphere
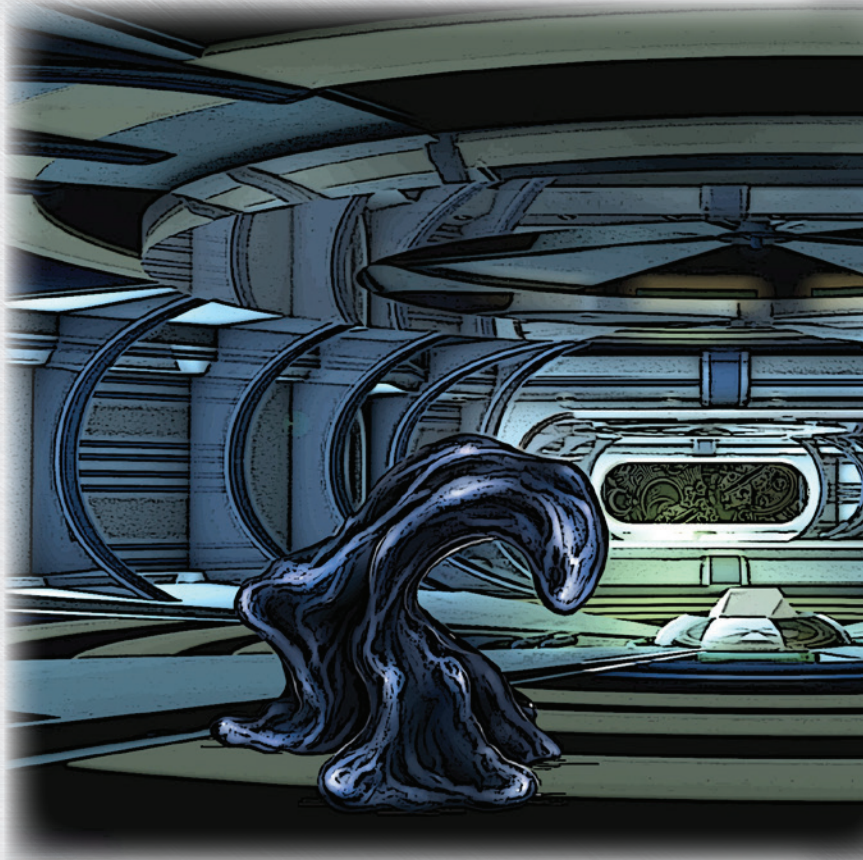
MALFUNCTIONING CRYOGENIC CHAMBER   CR 7

Type technological; **Notice** Perception DC 30;
  Disable Engineering DC 24 (release pressure
  slowly)
Trigger touched; **Reset** none
Effect explosion (6d12 F); Reflex DC 18 half; multiple
  targets (all targets within 20-ft. radius)

The cryobeds contain lifeforms collected by the aeon from distant planets decades ago, when the Tähtihohde traveled the galaxy. Nine of the twelve beds contain something, though exactly what can only be determined by opening the capsule.

Cryobed Inhabitants

1-3	Bed is empty or damaged.
4-8	A ljósálfar
9	A chernobue qlippoth
10	A derghodaemon
11	An omox demon
12	A balisse angel

Aavistus, a ljósálfar, makes this chamber his home, having awoken here when his cryobed malfunctioned during the Necromancer's recent display of power, much as the svartálfar did in Room 8 when the ship crashed. The other of Aavistus' people remain trapped in cryofreeze in Room 8. See "Ljosalfar" on page 20.

Aavistus will hide here, in a shadowy corner behind a cryobed, observing the PCs as they explore the room. Once he's able to determine their intentions, he'll reveal himself and beseech their help in securing the ship, after explaining what the ship is and where he's from. Aavistus knows he can use the viewing consoles in Room 4 safely, though he hasn't had the opportunity. From there he's certain he can discover how to repair the ship.

For many weeks now Aavistus has learned all he can of the ship and how he might return it to the stars, after dealing with the svartálfar first. He knows the aeon's paracletus are capable of restoring ship's systems; he's even seen one floating around, but he doesn't know if the svartálfar have enslaved it or even if it's functional.

6. Aeon Laboratory

This room is dark save for the flickering running lights along the floor. This chamber's wall panels and cables appear to have been stripped, exposing the complex's structural skeleton.

This was once a laboratory full of consoles and sensing equipment for examining lifeforms, but the svartálfar cannibalized this section of the ship to make limited repairs elsewhere.

7. Aeon Workshop

Three large tables, lit with arcane blue highlights, sit in this room. Where the rest of the complex has panels missing from the walls and cables strewn about the floor, this chamber appears pristine.

This room is both workshop and equipment locker for the Tähtihohde. The aeon constructed equipment as they encountered a need for it, using these replicator tables. The tables require a blueprint schematic of the item requiring a DC 20 + the item's level Computers check. The tables have numerous schematics loaded, but the svartálfar are only able to create the items

already loaded on each table: an armored space suit, a perihelion laser rifle, and a proximity mine. Using the replicator requires a DC 30 Use Magic Device check.

Proximity Mine	**CR 9**

Type technological; **Notice** Perception DC 33;
  Disable Engineering DC 28 (defuse explosive)
Trigger proximity (any, 5 feet); **Reset** none
Effect explosion (8d12 F); Reflex DC 18 half; multiple targets (all targets within 20-ft. radius)

8. Cryostorage II

Large fixtures holding numerous glass sarcophagi dominate the center of this room. Within each glass capsule swirls a blue mist. Several of the sarcophagi are empty of their contents. Here and there about the room green patches of… mold? clay? cling to the walls, floor, and capsules.

When the Tähtihohde crashed, several of the creatures held here in cryostasis here were freed, among them the svartálfar and the void mist. They don't know who or what is in the remaining cryobeds, but they've since rigged them with cylex to explode, just in case.

The green substance is the cylex. A PC inspecting the "mold" may mistake the substance for green slime, unless they succeed on a DC 30 skill check[1]. Even if successful, they PCs only learn that the substance is advanced alchemy unlike any they've seen before. The svartálfar possess remote detonators for the cylex, but it will also explode if exposed to energy damage of any type.

9. Holodeck

A faint light glows below the surface of the polished onyx walls of this corridor. A quiet hum reverberates through the chamber. Images of exotic places and unfamiliar beings briefly flash on the wall panels, illuminating the chamber.

When fully functional, this chamber was an interactive holo display, used by the aeon to train and develop strategies for interacting with alien life. It its current state, anyone entering the chamber, and for each round they remain, must succeed a DC 27 Will save or become confused for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting effect.

---

[1] In 🐉 this skill check would be Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Craft (Alchemy), but in 🆂🅵 it's Engineering.

The svartálfar, after individually harassing the PCs throughout the ship, regroup here for a final confrontation; each of them is protected from the holodeck's malfunctions by the aeon spacesuit. Up to six of them remain. See "Svartálfar" on page 19.

Depending on the PCs interactions with the ship, the svartálfar either wish to capture and enslave the party (and force them to aid in repairing the ship) or eliminate them entirely (either because they're too great a threat or because they've proven useless in dealing with the ship).

10. Systems Control Section

Two pillars humming with blue energy sit to the left and right of this central chamber. Blinking consoles line the walls. A central throne faces away from the door you just came through, looking upon a darkened window. Here and there about the room are signs of habitation: someone's been living here.

The consoles here are similar to those in Room 4, except the svartálfar have not tampered with them. These consoles control ship systems, though they're currently not functional. The svartálfar have made the bridge their lair, and have gathered a reasonable treasure horde in their decades here.

Treasure 47 pp, 442 gp, 414 sp, ivory (55 gp), jade (80 gp), jasper (60 gp), topaz (550 gp), masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus), *masterwork heavy crossbow, masterwork scale mail, +2 breastplate, +1 club, dragonhide plate, +1 ghost touch greatclub, +2 heavy crossbow, oil of light, oil of remove paralysis, ring of climbing, +1 tower shield*[1]

Conclusion

Aavistus is as keen to see the ship repaired as the svartálfar were, but he's only marginally more capable of seeing it done than they were. If the party is able to convince the sole surviving paracletus to help, they will eventually learn that by shutting down malfunctioning systems, the ship can repair itself enough to take off. Dealing with the Necromancer or surviving any galactic encounters... well that's another adventure! ✺

Other Conversion Considerations

While this adventure is a fine thematic introduction to the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*, it barely scratches the surface of differences in the rules sets between it and the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

Hit Points & Stamina Points: In 🝓, a character's loss of hit points represents taking lethal damage. Losing stamina points represents turning damage from an attack into a near-miss, or a glancing blow. As a result, characters gain fewer hit points than in 🝓 but gain a healthy reserve of stamina points to make up the difference. Monsters and foes generally don't use stamina points.

Resolve Points: Characters also gain resolve points, used for things like recovering stamina and powering abilities. Monsters and foes only have resolve points to power special abilities.

Attacks: In 🝓, characters (normally) only get a single attack in a round, no matter their level or base attack bonus, though abilities and options can still grant extra attacks.

Skills: 🝓 condenses the list of skills down to just 20! New skills like Computers and Piloting offer new options and abilities, and a whole new Profession skill is useful to more characters.

Big Minutia: Tactical movement, combat action economy, magic & spellcasting, combat modifiers, armor class, weapon types, starship combat, equipment levels, and more are found within the *Starfinder Roleplaying game*!

Be sure to check out the Compatibility/Conversion Rules in the Game Mastering chapter of the *Starfinder Roleplaying game* core rulebook if you want the full conversion experience.

---

[1] Though a party truly making the transition to 🝓 space will find that much of this wealth is useless in a galactic marketplace.

The Menagerie

MONSTERS FOR YOUR ADVENTURES
^ sci-fi!

This special sci-fi edition of The Menagerie presents a SF *conversion for the security mannequin and the theletos aeon, plus Stephen Yeardley delivers for* 𝕯 *the ljósálfar, counterparts to the svartálfar of Norse legend.*

SF Security Mannequin

CR 3   **XP** 800

Aggregate security AI mannequin robot
LN Medium construct (robot)
Init +6; darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE   HP 40

EAC 15; **KAC** 16
Fort +0; **Ref** +2; **Will** +3
Defensive Abilities construct immunities
Weaknesses vulnerable to critical hits and electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee 2 slams +4 (1d4+2 B each)
Ranged stun gun +6 (1d8 So)
Offensive Abilities precision targeting

STATISTICS

Str +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** —, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2
Skills Bluff +10, Culture +6, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +3 (+11 to appear human), Engineering +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +16, Profession (soldier) +11, Sense Motive +16
Languages Binary, Common, +1 additional
Noncombat Abilities holoskin
Gear integrated stun gun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Holoskin (Ex) A security mannequin's holographic epidermis gives it a +8 bonus on Disguise checks to appear human.

Precision Targeting (Ex) Security AI add their Intelligence bonus to ranged attack rolls.

SF Aeon, Theletos

CR 7   **XP** 3,200

Four bandy limbs, each splitting at the elbow into two three-fingered forearms, emerge from this creature's crystalline body.
N Medium outsider (aeon, extraplanar)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE   HP 95

EAC 20; **KAC** 19
Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12
Defensive Abilities fast healing 5; **Immunities** cold, critical hits, poison; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)
Melee 2 slams +13 (1d6+4 B), 2 tentacles +8 (1d4+2 B plus fate drain)
Offensive Abilities wreath of fate
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +10)
At will—*daze* (DC 13), *fatigue* (DC 13), *telepathic message*
3/day—*dispel magic*, *entropic grasp* (DC 14), *inflict virus* (DC 14), *see invisibility*
1/day—*daze monster* (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1
Feats Combat Casting, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will
Skills Acrobatics +14, Intimidate +13, Mysticism +12, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +14
Languages envisaging
Noncombat Abilities extension of all, void form

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fate Drain (Su) A theletos possesses a pair of flexible crystalline tentacles with which it can drain a creature's sense of fate and destiny. Whenever it strikes a foe with these tentacles, the creature struck must make a DC 17 Will save or take 1d4 points of Charisma damage. Until a creature's Charisma damage from this ability is healed, the victim

takes a –2 penalty on all saving throws (regardless of the actual total amount of Charisma damage it takes). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Wreath of Fate (Su) As a full action every 1d4 rounds, a theletos can release a 60-foot cone of energy from its chest. Any intelligent creature struck by this cone must make a DC 15 Will save or become nearly overwhelmed with the knowledge of various fates that destiny has in store for him—there is no way to make sense of these myriad dooms and boons, and as a result, the victim is staggered. As long as this condition persists, the victim may choose to make two rolls when attempting an attack roll, a saving throw, or a skill check—he must accept the worse of the two rolls, but in so doing the wreath of fate passes from his soul and he is no longer staggered by this ability. Wreath of fate is a curse effect, and as such can be affected by spells and abilities that affect curses. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Svartálfar

This hairless, black-skinned elf-like creature has an expressionless face and wields an eerie ebon sword.

Svartálfar	CR 8

XP 4,800

LE Medium fey (extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 84 (13d6+39)

Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

DR 10/cold iron; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 19

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +9/+6 (1d8+4/19–20)

Special Attacks bane, quickened spell strike, sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +18)

At will—*chill touch* (DC 16), *corrosive touch*

3/day—*frigid touch, shadow step, vanish*

1/day—*force punch* (DC 18), *greater invisibility, ray of exhaustion* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Casting, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth), Stealthy, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+25 when jumping), Bluff +21, Escape Artist +25, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (nature) +20, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +21, Stealth +31; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics when jumping

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Sylvan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bane (Su) Once per day as a swift action, a svartálfar can imbue one of its weapons with the *bane* weapon special ability. It must select one creature type (and subtype, if choosing humanoid or outsider) when it uses this ability. This lasts for 1 hour. This ability only functions while the svartálfar wields the weapon.

Quickened Spell Strike (Su) Three times per day as a free action after hitting with a melee weapon, a svartálfar can cast and deliver one of the following of its spell-like abilities through the weapon: *chill touch, corrosive touch, force punch, frigid touch,* or *ray of exhaustion*. If the attack is a critical hit and the spell-like ability deals damage, it deals double damage.

Ljósálfar

Fair-skinned and elfish, this creature wears a smile that is both sincere and menacing.

Ljósálfar	CR 8

XP 4,800
CG Medium fey (extraplanar)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +5 natural)
hp 84 (13d6+39)
Fort +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10
DR 10/cold iron; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 19
Weaknesses vulnerability to negative energy

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee *+1 rapier* +12/+9 (1d6+4/18–20)
Special Attacks quickened spell strike, smite evil 3/day (+5 to attack, +8 to damage)
Spell-Like Abilities
    CL 13th; concentration +18)
At will—*align weapon* (chaos only), *forbid action* (DC 16)
3/day—*freedom of movement, remove paralysis, spear of purity* (DC 17)
1/day—*dimensional anchor, sands of time, searing light*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22
Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Deceitful, Great Fortitude, Throw Anything, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse
Skills Acrobatics +21(+25 when jumping), Bluff +25, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +25, Knowledge (geography) +20, Knowledge (local) +20, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +21, Use Magic Device +21; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics when jumping
Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Positive Energy Plane)
Organization solitary, pair, unit (3–4), or troop (5-8)
Treasure NPC gear (*+1 rapier*, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Channeled Unpredictability (Su) Once per day as a swift action, a ljósálfar gains a +2 luck bonus to AC, attacks, checks, damage, and saves. This lasts for a number of minutes equal to twice its Charisma modifier. This ability only functions while the ljósálfar wears no armor.

Protected Past (Sp) Ljósálfar distance themselves from their past and ancestors, instead focusing on the future. A side-effect of this forward thinking is that it's harder to use Divination (scrying) magic and abilities to find a ljósálfar. A ljósálfar gains a +4 circumstance bonus against all Divination (scrying) spells and effects.

Quickened Spell Strike (Su) Three times per day as a free action after hitting with a melee weapon, a ljósálfar can cast and deliver one of the following of its spell-like abilities through its weapon: *dimensional anchor, forbid action, sands of time,* or *spear of purity.* If the attack is a critical hit and the spell-like ability deals damage, it deals double damage.

In the dawn of time, before the stars were born, the svartálfar, or dark elves, were banished from the Seelie Court.

Yet still, recessive genes being what they are, feykind will on rare occasion give birth to these dark elves. In such cases, the child is sanctified, its skin bleached clean of the darkness that fills its veins, and sent to live at Court. There, under the watchful eye of all of Álfheim, the child learns to harness its cunning, to embrace its tumult, and to hunt the svartálfar.

At court, the youngsters are trained to be fleet-footed, quick-thinking improvisers able to hunt down and destroy the deep-living svartálfars. When training ends, a ljósálfar is equipped, shown the path to the Underworld entrance, and sent off with the Seelie Court's blessing. From then on, a ljósálfar embraces its purpose: to end the Unseelie.

Ljósálfars struggle to feel love or real friendship, due in part to their dark heritage, but also for their "outcast" nature. Despite that they're often focused and utterly driven, they are considered by many fey to be a "necessary evil" despite their demonstrable kindness.

Ljósálfar seldom work together. However, should two ljósálfar encounter each other on the hunt, a partnership forms until the job is done. As one svartálfar kill often leads to another, the "job" may last decades. In this way, ljósálfar avoid close ties, but manage to form relationships. ❁

SPACE JITTERS

Stephen Yeardley kicks off this spooky anthology with twenty-two starship malfunctions to convey a paranoid atmosphere. Jacob Blackmon examines being scared at the table, and Rory Toma brings haunts into the realm of sci-fi.

Whether it's failing environment controls or repair nanobots run amok, an derelict starship can feel as haunted as any abandoned mansion. Here are 22 starship malfunctions to inspire dread in deep space.

A small **bulb of bright light** floats suddenly just in front of the PC, up near the ceiling, lighting her path. It gently bobs as she walks, hovers when she stands still, repositions itself to just above her left shoulder if she sits down, and winks out of existence if she lays down, only to reappear when she next sits or stands up. Occasionally it drops to ankle level and casts looming shadows.

A gray, opaque mist swirls around the floor: diluted cryogenic sleep-inducing gas for those undertaking long journeys. A PC entering the cloud must succeed on a Fortitude DC 22 save or fall asleep for several hours.

Doors open silently when a moving object gets within 5 ft. and close after it passes. There is a one-in-ten chance that as a door opens, a **desiccated body** slumps from behind it.

The ship's artificial gravity device has partially failed and **items drift through the starship** as a result of the damage to the various stabilizers and dampeners. However, the localized nature is a mystery. The effect lasts for 1d3+1 rounds, at which point everything falls back to the deck. PCs must make Reflex DC15 checks if under objects, or be pierced or bludgeoned by falling items as appropriate.

Holograph screens once showed randomly generated empathetic personal mood enhancers as crew members passed. PCs moving by them see hazy images and forms of either their "dream setting" or "nightmare environment" as the ship tries to read their minds. Either way, a Will DC 14 check is required to avoid being fascinated (dream) or frightened (nightmare) for 3d6 rounds by the images.

The ship's holo-displays create **ghostly, insubstantial figures** who pay no attention to the party: the ship is displaying its former crews' log entries, without sound.

Whatever disabled the ship caused its AI crew to evaporate, leaving behind a **complex network of plasma-nerve chains**, rendering them effectively incorporeal. They continue moving around the ship completing their original tasks, from which they now cannot be reprogrammed. The remaining wraith-like security droids are a particular problem, as they protect the ship's corridors from all intruders.

The temperature here in the starship is much hotter or colder than elsewhere, seemingly for no reason. **Frost covers view screens and steam rises from floor panels.** The glitching climate control system thumps and hums as it tries to repair itself.

Every now and then, **a blast of hot air**, as if from an explosion,, or a frigid wind, as if from a hull breach, sweeps through the corridors, along with the distant rumble of energized atoms. Beings must make a Will DC 12 check or be shaken for 2d2 minutes. Those vulnerable to either fire or cold must make a Will DC 15 save or be shaken for 3d4 minutes.

Fixtures and furniture are now animate thanks to **malfunctioning nanobots**. Aggressive toward the PCs, the animate objects will obey a control device if one can be found or created.

The starship's crew monitoring system is malfunctioning: a glowing **holographic name tag appears** for each PCs moving about the ship. The tag's color indicates the PC's true class or alignment, possibly giving secrets away. But occasionally the tag is completely incorrect.

Faint, incongruous, earworm-style

"**muzac**" fills the section. It's leaked from the entertainment holodeck, and reflects whatever is going on, in style and volume. This may be inspiring or hindering, granting a +2 bonus or -2 malus as the GM decides.

Lines of glowing, intangible symbols stream through the air. They ricochet like lightning when they come into contact with anything solid, but pass through anything flesh-and-blood. A Reflex DC 18 check dodges them, otherwise they cause 3d4 damage and "infect" a PC with a creeping pain that does 1 hp damage per round until magical healing is administered.

A **vibrant jade gas** is present in this section, leaking with a loud hiss from a series of metallic columns and pipes attached to the ceiling. The gas gathers on overhead gantries, occasionally billowing down. At floor level, it reduces visibility to 2d4 ft., proving difficult to dissipate. It is methane, extracted from the ship's microbe purification tubes, usually ejected into space, but now leaking from its processing chamber. PCs must make a Fortitude DC 22 check or be sickened for 2d6 minutes. Any who fail by 5 or more are affected for 2d6 rounds as if they had swallowed green slime, and then are sickened for 2d6 hours.

Pulses of light and dark energy and stores of contained light and dark matter, thrum near the ship's engineering section. They are disconcerting at their lowest level, but more intense surges cause humanoids to see each other as abominations of limbs and orifices.

Energy crackles between four **cold iron spheres** set on mithral rods around the room, providing light but the chance of arc lightning.

In the distance, the sound of crackling flames is swiftly followed by a number of loud "pops" and the hiss of several streams of liquid. Turning a corner, the party finds a fire being brought under control by a substance that acts exactly like **brown mold**. Suddenly, transparent emergency screens slam across the corridor to cordon off the section containing the fire, leaving the PCs at the mercy of the "retardant" and a reducing air supply.

A fault in the ship's holo projector and shield refractor system has led to **intangible doors and invisible walls**, severely hampering movement throughout the ship.

The program that projected the outside **stars on to the ceiling, walls, and floor** of the mapping room occasionally affects the whole ship. The first time this happens is quite a shock, as it initially seems that the ship has disappeared.

Much of the spaceship has a low-level current running through it as electrical cabling snapped and came into contact with the floors. Living creatures tingle with static electricity, which does not hurt but does make ones **hair stand on end**. Occasionally there's a sudden burst of energy that burns the recipients (2d6 damage, Reflex DC 14 for half).

A relay of **secret security cameras** suddenly turn their attention to one of the PCs, whose actions are shown on view screens throughout the ship.

The party finds heavily-protected door behind which is a 10-ft-cube room. The visible walls and ceiling are each studded with flat grids formed of gemstone and metal. A PC who touches a grid must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or become imprisoned within a dimensionally transendental cage, simultaneously releasing the previous prisoner into the PC's body. The PC can see and hear what goes on in the room, but otherwise can't effect an escape. ✴
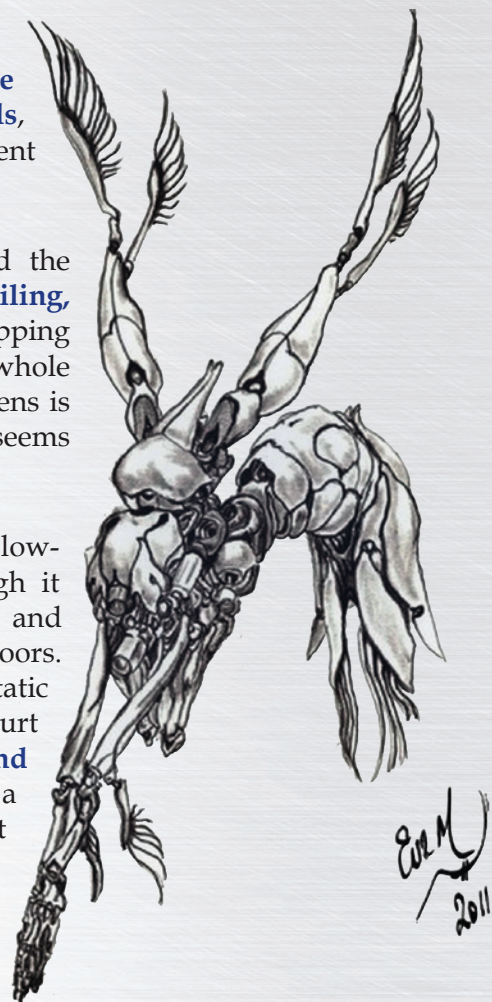
Why Aren't You Afraid?

By Jacob E. Blackmon

All too often, players will shrug off the attempts of a Game Master to bring fear and horror to bear. They stiffen their lips, raise their chins, and delve into the fear with swords drawn and spells at the ready. After all; why should they be afraid? It's not like the fearsome event happening to their player characters is real. More often than not, the only time a player experiences fear in a campaign is when they see their character only has 1 hit point remaining.

Introducing horror into a tabletop game is difficult to say the least. Horror is supposed to induce a feeling of genuine fear, apprehension, or suspense. Certainly, there are conditions in the game—cowering, frightened, panicked, and shaken—to help GMs inspire the PCs to experience fear; but their players are another matter. The players will accept the penalties their characters currently possess, but continue acting normally; moving forward despite the fearsome state their characters are suffering. Overcoming fear is certainly a heroic quality, but surely something else is at play.

How Fear is Shown

"Slashers" are the easiest form of horror to produce. Basically all one needs is a powerful enemy that can get anywhere and everywhere with ease and delights in killing its prey using gruesome (and often messy) methods. Blood, guts, and dismembered body parts coating the floors, walls, and ceiling are easy to describe, but ultimately lose their thrill and serve to disgust players rather than inspire fear.

"Psychological Thrillers" are often some of the most difficult and complex forms of horror to simulate. The point of a psychological thriller is for the hero(es) to be treated by everyone as if they are insane, while the hero (or at least the player) knows they are not. But to truly achieve this level of horror, a GM would need intimate knowledge of their players and characters.

"Supernatural Phenomenon" is one of the most popular methods of using horror in a gaming campaign. Ghosts, vampires, and other undead are the usual suspects in this form of horror, but aliens and strange visitors from beyond human understanding serve this role as well. Unfortunately, as most campaigns tend to use monsters as regularly-featured villains, it is difficult to use the same types of monsters to inspire fear as a true horror campaign should.

Fear Is Felt, Not Seen

With these genres of horror in mind, here are a few tactics a GM can employ to instill fear in her players.

Break the rules! Ignore the rules. Ignore the laws of physics. If the PCs witness a mysterious figure following them everywhere they go, have the mystery man escape when the PC attempt to confront him, even if it should be impossible. It's important not to break these rules without restraint, but to do so in service to the story gets the players' attention.

Tone down the gore. The line is a fine one to draw to keep players from being "bored" of gruesome scenes. Don't go into bloody detail, but don't forget it's there, either. Sprinkle the details through out the scene, rather than front load it all into a room description. Remind players that things are sticky, or that the room has a metallic smell.

Keep the players in the dark. Utilize a supernatural threat by obscuring the creature or its motivations. Just a glimpse of a shadow at the edge of vision, or a string of unconnected victims creates a sense of uncertainty.

Take the PCs completely **out of their comfort zone**. Challenges that aren't easily solved by rolling dice, especially while something is trying to kill them, promotes tension and suspense.

Nightmare visions: Trapped in a sequence of insurmountable odds, repeatedly failing, witnessing the consequences, possibly even dying... then waking up to find it was all a dream. Use this tactic too often and it's annoying, but using it to foreshadow a difficult adventure let's the PCs know that challenges await. ✷

Haunting the Stars

By Rory Toma

With technology comes many new ways to explore, to fight, to heal, and to die. The same mystic energies that exist in the worlds also can cause those that come to traumatic ends to haunt the places where they have died – even in space.

DERELICT SHUTTLE HAUNT |XP 2400| CR 6

The party encounters a derelict shuttlecraft, with a single, skeletal occupant sitting behind a console

CE haunt (10ft. by 10ft shuttlecraft)

Caster Level 6

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the slight hissing of escaping air)

Hp 12; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered by entering the shuttle, the navigation system begins to go crazy, showing random navigation hazards on the screen. The air in the shuttle leaks out, causing the targets to become subject to Suffocation.

Destruction If the personal logs of the pilot are brought up on the console (DC 15 Computers) the target can read about the heroic antics of the pilot, which lead enemies away from the ship into a debris field, where the attackers crashed. Unfortunately for the pilot, his atmosphere was compromised, and he died, too.

SELF-DESTRUCT HAUNT |XP 1800| CR 5

A lab complex is filled with gruesome corpses, several of which are alien.

CE haunt (20ft. by 20ft room)

Caster Level 5

Notice Perception DC 20 (to see a small timer counting down on one of the screens)

Hp 10; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered by entering the lab, a counter on one of the console counts down from 60 seconds to zero. When the counter reaches zero, a radiation burst engulfs the complex, requiring all targets to make a DC 22 Fortitude Save each round.

Destruction A DC 20 Life Science check can be used identify and separate the corpses. To permanently destroy the haunt, the alien corpses must be removed from the complex.

DATA CENTER HAUNT |XP 6400| CR 9

The party comes across a vast data center, powered down and devoid of life.

CE persistent haunt (very large room)

Caster Level 9

Notice Perception DC 25 (to find a discarded printout describing emergency shutdown procedures.)

Hp 40; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered by any inspection of any equipment, the machines begin to power on. Any target with cybernetic augmentations will be subject to nightmares. Every night they must make a DC 27 Will Save or take 1d10 points of damage, gain the fatigued condition, and be unable to regain spells. This happens every night until the haunt is destroyed.

Destruction The computers must be shut down and the data crystals removed. This requires a DC 25 Engineering check.

CARGO ROOM PERSISTENT HAUNT |XP 3200| CR 8

A few crates of cargo lie around this room near teleporters.

CE haunt (40ft. by 40ft. room)

Caster Level 8

Notice Perception DC 30 (to see shadowy figures near the edges of the room)

Hp 34; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered by touching the cargo, the shadowy figures become a little more solid, and begin to fire lasers at the party. These lasers do no damage. After the initial volley, the party will find itself trapped in the Drift.

Destruction The cargo must be delivered. The delivery manifest can be found with a DC 20 Computers check, and the navigation system programmed from the cargo room or bridge of the ship. There is only one destination that is allowed, and that is the cargo's destination, and the crew must travel to the vast (5d6 days) with a 30% risk of a random encounter. Once the ship arrives, the cargo can be teleported down to the surface, and the crew can resume normal navigation, including getting back to their own ship. ❀

Greater Than Its Parts

Genre be damned, just tell a good story.

By Stephen Yeardley

Elves or Vulcans? Goblins or Ferengi? Orcs or Klingons? Whether the tale is stark science fiction or a flight of high fantasy, the common elements of story structure and theme help inform your tabletop adventures. Behold:

A young man, raised on the edge of civilization, is aware of a mystical older man with beyond-normal abilities. Through him, the lad gets caught up in what initially seems like a small task, but grows over time. After engaging with the mystic, he leaves home with friends, covering vast distances, some literal, some internal.

Along the way, the group he's with grows, as do his capabilities. Facing many foes–some of which he's not aware even existed—he completes the task to which he was charged.

But this is just the start of his journey; he continues with a larger group that soon falls apart, until he is left with only one or two close allies. At times he doubts his competence and resolve, but he persists.

After his mentor suffers at the hands of the enemy, he must fulfill a task to end the advancing dictatorship of a cruel and faceless foe. His new ability to battle on, figuratively and literally, sees him mature during his journey. Eventually he completes his task in an unconventional way.

The war is won, friends return, the world is saved.

Does this sound like a familiar story? It should, because it's basic plot of *Star Wars.* And *Lord of the Rings.* And the whole Harry Potter franchise. And surely many others too numerous to mention.

What I'm suggesting here, naturally, is that the essence of a good story is transferable across genre, whether science fiction, high fantasy, or modern-day magic. Once the tale is in place, the mechanics of the settings mesh seamlessly. And the masters of fiction have shared with us the formula.

THE FIRST SEVEN

For over a century, the common wisdom, broadly considered and detailed by the writer Arthur Quiller-Couch in his 1916 book, "On the Art of Writing", suggests that there are just seven basic stories in all of storytelling. Paraphrased, these stories are:

1. Protagonist against nature
2. Protagonist against itself
3. Protagonist against its twin
4. Protagonist against its opposite
5. Protagonist against the supernatural
6. Protagonist against society
7. Protagonist caught in the middle

Here's a simple matching game. Align these adventure plots to Quiller-Couch's stories:

A. Suddenly there's a second adventuring party in town; work—and fame—are now a commodity.
B. The PC's home town is at risk of being washed away by a flood.
C. The party must arbitrate between colonizing miners and resident natives.
D. The party must slay a dragon.
E. A paladin must atone for failing to uphold his code of honor.
F. A false deity wages war on the PCs.
G. The party stands accused of heinous crimes, and must prove their innocence.

Answers: A=3, B=1, C=7, D=4, E=2, F=5, G=6

The Second Seven

While controversial in many areas of his writing, Christopher Booker's "The Seven Basic Plots" presents a sound alternative take on Quiller-Couch's ideas:

Overcoming the Monster—Hero learns of a great evil threatening the land, and sets out to destroy it.

Rags to Riches—Surrounded by dark forces that suppress and ridicule him, the Hero slowly blossoms into a mature figure who ultimately gets riches, a kingdom, and the perfect mate.

The Quest—Hero learns of a great MacGuffin that he desperately wants or needs to find, and sets out to find it, often with companions.

Voyage and Return—Hero heads off into a magic land with crazy rules, ultimately triumphs over the madness and returns home far more mature than when he set out.

Comedy—Hero and Heroine are destined to get together, but a dark force is preventing them from doing so; the story conspires to make the dark force repent, and suddenly the Hero and Heroine are free to get together. This is part of a cascade of effects that shows everyone for who they really are, and allows two or more other relationships to correctly form.

Tragedy—The flip side of the Overcoming the Monster plot. Our protagonist character is the Villain, but we get to watch him slowly spiral down into darkness before he's finally defeated, freeing the land from his evil influence.

Rebirth—As with the Tragedy plot, but our protagonist manages to realize his error before it's too late, and does a Heel-Face Turn to avoid inevitable defeat.

Of course these themes are interchangeable to a certain extent. Thus we should think of these ideas as the vertical and horizontal axis of a grid. All of Quiller-Couch's seven stories fit within any one of Booker's themes, and vice versa. Placing your plot on these axes lends your campaign a proven structure. Now you're writing exciting setting elements, seamlessly weaving a fiction without worrying over structure.

The Masters

Nigel Kneale[1] exhibited the power of such writing in his 'Quatermass' dramas, with feet—or perhaps, tentacles—firmly in the horror and science fiction camps, while the tension of the creatures had a distinct fantasy feel about them. As Stuart Barr—an insightful UK film reviewer—states,

A deep connection to the ancient combined with an interest in the future runs like a mineral seam through some of Kneale's best work.

In "Quatermass and the Pit" (1958-1959) this theme emerges in an incredibly sophisticated way. The find is some kind of space craft, and it contains the mummified remains of an insectoid species. Although long dead, the alien remains seem to exert a malign influence on all who come into close proximity.

From the uncanny events in the dig, Quatermass brilliantly extrapolates the origins of both human intelligence and the notion of the devil.

In a similar vein, in a 2006 Guardian article, Mark Gatiss, currently best known as a writer for the BBC's Doctor Who and Sherlock, wrote, "What sci-fi piece of the past 50 years doesn't owe Kneale a huge debt? ... The 'ancient invasion' of *Quatermass and the Pit* cast a huge shadow ... its brilliant blending of superstition, witchcraft and ghosts into the story of a five-million-year-old Martian invasion is copper-bottomed genius."

As we can see, the combination of fantasy, horror, and sci-fi leaves us in an uneasy place where we don't quite know where to turn, and an adventure written in such a way should do the same thing to the players: should they use wisdom from the past, skills and abilities from the present, or extrapolated intelligence about the future to see them through a problem or situation? Is the "insectoid creature" their PCs are facing from the fantastic yesterday, the futuristic tomorrow, or just a here-and-now issue? And therefore will the ancient wand of burning hands, current spells, or modern laser pistol be the way to deal with it?

To pique the imagination, Hans Ruedi "H. R." Giger is the perfect painter and artist to turn to. Inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 2013, his artwork drew on themes we can all recognize from the three areas we are considering: sci-fi, fantasy, and horror. His combinations would leave any role-player

---

feeling uneasy about the 'enemy' in front of them and nervously unsure as to how to deal with them. Giger's amalgamation of the past, present, and unknown future gave us all an insight as to how the lost past easily influenced both the horrors of the present and the path of the future. If a few images of a creature that cannot be placed in space and time can inspire a multi-billion dollar franchise—remember *Aliens?*—such forms and ideas can help us produce interesting and effecting adventures that straddle the three milieus.

In this writer's opinion, the 1997 film *Event Horizon* hits all the markers. Clearly set in the future, while based on our (then) current understanding of various scientific works, the film has deep roots in a horrific, fantasy-focused past, with the gore-from-a-massacre horror scenes sat side-by-side with elements that can easily be based in fantasy gaming: teleportation portals, insanity, hallucinations, madness, and references to Hell and other other-worldly dimensions, as well as the notion of "sentient objects".

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

Where do we go when combining these three game factors? Looking for otherworldly protagonists that have roots in a "fantasy past" yet are "of the future", and combining those ideas, is a good starting point. Monte Cook suggests that you, "...don't reinvent the wheel every time. Simply take an existing monster and tweak it than create something new every time. There's something more interesting about a fire-breathing basilisk than creating a new monster that breathes fire and turns you to stone. The former plays upon concepts the players already know. That's a powerful tool."

The same goes for the plot. In many fantasy settings there is a sense of "time standing still", with hardly any technological development. You might present an enemy that appears from space in a futuristic craft that has existed for longer than your world's longest-lived elves, bringing weapons, magic, and tech far beyond that of your world's most renowned dwarven inventors. With meaningful and sensible links between the two genres, the players have a more far-reaching setting to explore. No longer is your game "fantasy" or "sci-fi", but is greater than the sum of its parts. ✦

Sutter

the "Pathfinder Legacy" chapter. But it's true that for Starfinder, we chose different "core races" to focus on. The main reason for that was that we didn't want this game to just be "traditional fantasy RPG in space"—that felt too much like something we'd all seen and played before. We wanted people to be able to play races like androids or the insectile shirren or four-armed kasatha that had a more innately SF flavor. Plus, while some of the new core races had already been introduced in Pathfinder, we wanted the chance to build up interesting new cultures and keep the game fresh and interesting for us as creators.

What bits of real science had the greatest impact on Starfinder, and how?

The planets of the Pact Worlds were heavily influenced by elements from real-world astronomy that I find fascinating. What would life be like on a tidally locked world, where the same side always faces the sun? What about on a tidally heated moon, where simple gravity creates massive volcanoes, or a planet with an eccentric orbit where you're sometimes much closer to the sun? The Pact Worlds started out as me trying to answer those questions, while also exploring more fantastical ideas (like an airless world populated by undead, etc.).

Every good story needs a villain. In space that is typically an outsider species. Can we expect to see an heretofore unknown hostile species to begin moving into our territory?

Absolutely! The *Starfinder Core Rulebook* presents a number of system-wide threats, from the hive-mind Swarm and militant Veskarium to the Azlanti Star Empire. But part of the fun of Starfinder is that you're still at the dawn of interstellar exploration. There are all sorts of new cultures out there waiting to be contacted. Some may well be terrifying threats to all life in the Pact Worlds. But then, to some of them, you'll be the invaders!

Does Absalom Station have an equivalent of the First Guard? Can we expect a detailed setting release for Absalom Station in the Dead Suns AP?

Yup! Absalom Station has its own security, and beyond its borders, the Stewards are the official interplanetary peacekeepers in the Pact Worlds, warrior-diplomats who try to keep things working while maintaining the sovereignty of individual planets. Of course, there are also other idealistic military organizations like the Hellknights, the Skyfire Legion, and the Knights of Golarion, all with their own particular agendas.

As for a detailed gazetteer of Absalom Station—you'll get it in the first volume of Dead Suns, and I wrote it!

BUT YOU'VE LEFT PAIZO! That's a huge deal man! Can you tell us more about your big leap from Paizo into the unknown realms that await?

Well, I know it surprised a lot of folks (including my coworkers), but I just felt like the time was right. I've been working at Paizo for 13 years—literally my entire adult life—and as much as I've loved getting to be one of the folks in charge, I've known for a long time that eventually I'd need to leave in order to devote myself fully to writing. A while back I promised myself that I would do whatever it took to help make Starfinder a success, but that once it was safely out in the world, I would take the plunge and move on to new adventures. And that's exactly what happened—getting the game off the ground was a huge undertaking, but the big launch at Gen Con was a heck of a victory lap, and I feel tremendous pride in the reception the game has been getting. But that's all the more

reason to take a bow and ride off into the sunset. Talk about leaving on a high note!

You talked about writing novels and comic books. What do you have planned? Any juicy tidbits for our readers on what's next for you?

I've got a lot of different projects lined up, from video game work and Paizo freelance (you didn't think I was done writing about Starfinder, did you?) to some potential comics projects and tie-in fiction, but the big thing for me is going to be focusing on writing some creator-owned fantasy and science fiction novels. I've got a young adult SF novel halfway done right now that I'm really excited about—it's basically The Hunger Games meets Judge Dredd and Minority Report. Of course, you never know if a book is sellable until it sells, but I've got a good feeling about this one, so stay tuned!

Will we be seeing more of you in the coming years? Perhaps doing some writing for AAW on secret projects and whatnot?

You never know! I'm really forcing myself to ramp back on RPG projects in order to make room for novels, but I've only got so much willpower, so anything could happen...

Thank you for all that you have done over the years, I can speak for

all of the fans of Pathfinder and Starfinder RPG saying we are incredibly grateful for all your time and creative energy creating fun and exciting products that we have enjoyed at our gaming tables. The journey has not yet come to an end... for your story is just beginning! Good luck my friend!

Thank you so much! I feel so lucky to be a part of this community!

ADVENTURE CHRONICLE SHEET

SUBJECT: JAMES L. SUTTER
CLASS: ENVOY
RACE: CALLIPYGIAN

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
-0	-1	+1	+1	+1	+2

PROFILE

FAVORITE POLYHEDRON: OCTAHEDRON

FAVORITE GAME: MY RPG HEART IS ALWAYS WITH D&D AND PATHFINDER (AND NOW STARFINDER!), BUT I ALSO LOVE DREAD FOR ITS SIMPLE, ELEGANT MECHANIC AND BRILLIANT CHARACTER CREATION. FOR MINIS GAMES, I LOVE HEROSCAPE!

FAVORITE FOOD & DRINK: CHEESE PIZZA WITH EXTRA SAUCE! ALSO PLAIN OMELETS WITH FRIED POTATOES (OR SWEET POTATOES!), CHIPS AND SALSA. ANY TYPE OF BERRY.

Something's A Drift

A **STARFINDER COMPATIBLE** mini-adventure for 4-6 1st level PCs   By Rory Toma

Nothing much happens in this small, sleepy town. Lately, though, several townsfolk have disappeared for a while, and can't seem to remember where they were. Now townsfolk have gone permanently missing, including the town technomancer, Motlei. He was last seen headed towards his underground workshop, where strange sights and sounds have been known to happen. They seem to be happening more often, and the locals are afraid to investigate.

Background

The technomancer Motlei has been experimenting with using pure magic to power Drift teleportation. One of his experiments backfired, and now a contemplative has taken control of the workshop.

1. Turret entry. Two turrets are here, each containing a small laser that only activate if someone tries to open the door to 2 or 4a. When a target gets within 5 feet of one of the doors, an announcement booms out, "Warning. Entry is Prohibited." The turrets then turn to train on the door.

Turret Trap	1 CR	400 XP

Type technological; **Notice** 10; **Disable** Engineering DC 15 (disable firing systems)
Trigger proximity **Reset** 1 round; Initiative +0
Effect 2 x laser +6 ranged (1d4 F)

2. Drift Teleporter. A computer console here requires a DC 17 Computers check to gain entry. It is equipped with a *dimension door* spell gem. Logging in and running the program teleports the user to Room 11. There is a 25% chance that an additional contemplative appears in Room 12 each time this teleporter is used.

3. Toxic Suit Room. Four containers are here. One of them is open and empty; the other three are closed. Each of the remaining three contains a full suit that protects the target from the Drift Engine effects in Rooms 5-9.

4a. Keypad Access Door. A small keypad is on the wall that reads "NO ACCESS" in red blinking letters. Entering the correct keycode or disabling it unlocks 5d and slides open the door leading to 4b and 5d. The door to 4b can be noticed with a DC 16 Perception check, and either door (4a or 5d) can be opened with a DC 15 Engineering check (short circuit lock) or a DC 20 Strength check (break door) If the door is broken, the gas from 5 leaks out into this Room.

Keypad Trap	1 CR	400 XP

Type technological; **Notice** 19; **Disable** Computers 19 (generate correct keycode)
Trigger touch; **Reset** auto
Effect 4a and 4b are filled with toxic gas from Room 7 that only dissipates after the Drift Engine has been shut down.

5. Drift Engine Coil. Each of the other doors at 5a, 5b and 5c has a keypad as 4a. They are not trapped, but require a DC 19 Computers check to open. Otherwise, the doors can be opened with an DC 15 Engineering check or DC 20 Strength check as above. A green haze runs quickly around the circular loop. Those not wearing suits must make a DC 13 Fortitude Save or become sickened. The effect lasts 1d4+1 rounds after leaving the green haze. Opening one of the doors while the Drift engine is running fills the entire complex with green haze, which dissipates 1d4 rounds after the door closes or the Drift engine shuts down.

6. Arcane Batteries. Four large batteries are in this Room, one in each corner. They all connect to the ceiling by wires, and all are leaking. Three of them have humans wired to the battery, while the fourth, in the NE corner is empty. The humans appear alive but unconscious. They can be freed either by disabling the batteries through the console in Room 10, or cutting them down, though that may hasten the trap's reset.

Battery Trap	2 CR	600 XP

Type technological; **Notice** 20; **Disable** Engineering DC 19 (disrupt power);
Trigger proximity **Reset** 1 minute
Effect DC 18 Reflex Save or arc of electricity strikes target, paralyzing the target and doing 1d4 electrical damage per round until freed.

If the humans here are healed, they regain consciousness. One of them is Motlei. This lab is an experiment in using arcane power to access the Drift. During an experiment, they were quickly captured by the contemplative that they teleported into the lab from the Drift. The contemplative are now conducting their own research, but it is unclear if they are trying to get home or exact revenge for bringing them here.

7. Mixing Chamber. The fumes from the power core and Drift gate intermingle here, causing an extremely toxic atmosphere. Targets in this area must make a DC 14 Fortitude Save or become unconscious, taking 1d4 damage per round until removed from Room 7. A successful save causes the target to be sickened for 1d4 rounds. Those in suits are granted a +10 circumstance bonus to the save.

8. Drift Gate. This teleporter tries to magically teleport into and out of the Drift.

9. Arcane Power Core. This is the power core that drives the Drift engine. It is run off of arcane power. There are two status consoles which give the state of the arcane engine. Targets that walk directly between two of the posts that are North-South of each will trigger an arc of arcane power.

Arcane Power Trap — CR 2 — 600 XP

Type hybrid; **Notice** 26; **Disable** Mysticism DC 19
Trigger proximity; **Reset** 1 minute
Effect Arcane blast does 1d4 force damage to all targets within 30'.

10. Control Room. There are three consoles here that control the teleporters, the batteries, the power core and the Drift engine. A contemplative is currently operating the console. All of these systems can be controlled via a DC 17 Computers check to sign in to the console. Once signed in, separate DC 15 Computers checks can be made to control the systems. A DC 15 Computers check can be used to disable the force field in 12. A DC 13 Computers check can shut down the Drift Gate in Room 8. The contemplative can use the console to summon another contemplative into Room 8 that will arrive in 1d2 rounds.

11. Teleporter. This teleporter connects to the one in 2, via a short trip through the Drift.

12. Incoming Drift Teleporter. This teleporter connects directly to the Drift. If no additional contemplative have been teleported here (see Room 2) there is at least one here. This Room also has a one-way force field. Targets can enter Room 12 freely, but in order to leave, they must do 100 hit points of damage to an AC 5 energy field.

1 The contemplative appears in *First Contact* the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* preview, available free from Paizo.

Contemplative[1] — CR 2 — 600 XP

N Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +1; blindsight (thought) 60 ft; **Perception** +7

Defense   HP 18

EAC 13; **KAC** 12; **Fort** +1; **Ref** +3; **Will** +7 (+11 vs mind-affecting effects)

Offense

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Melee claw +5 (1d4 S); **Ranged** diode laser pistol +7 (1d4+2; crit burn 1d4)
Offensive Abilities applied knowledge
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th); —*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *mind thrust* (1st-level, DC 15); —*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic, psychokinetic hand*

Statistics

Str -2; **Dex** +1; **Con** -1; **Int** +5; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +2
Skills Computers +7, Engineering +7, Life Science +12, Mysticism +12, Physical Science +12

Special Abilities

Applied Knowledge (Ex) 1/day before attempting a skill check or saving throw vs an opponent, a contemplative can use its bonus for the skill associated with that creatures's type in place of its normal bonus.

Atrophied (Ex) A contemplative can't properly wield two-handed weapons without using its telekinetic powers, and even then does so with a -4 penalty to the attack rolls.
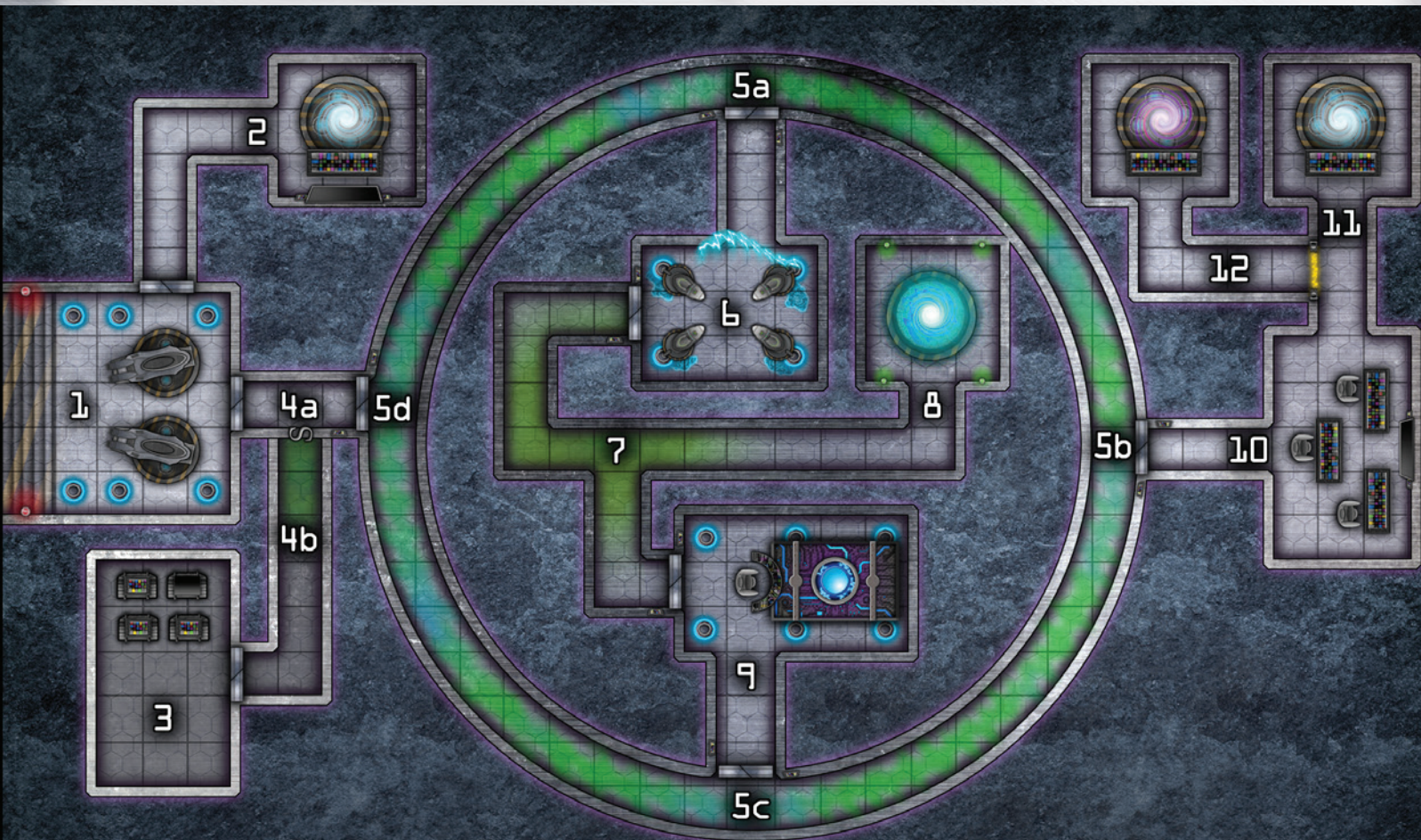
This Halloween-themed Menagerie features a living banshee from Gaelic lore by Jacob Blackmon, a mischievous fey from Stephen Rowe, and a gourd-based construct from Will Myers.

Bian Sidhe: The Hag of the Mists

The bian sidhe of Celtic legend is a denizen of the mist-covered hills. This horrifying creature heralds death with an unearthly shrieking. While some describe these women as undead spirits, they are in fact similar to hags.

Bian sidhe are women wearing green or red dresses. Their garb is spotted with blood. They have long, disheveled hair that is used to hide their frightful visage. A bian sidhe can choose to appear young and beautiful if she chooses.

Bian sidhe are solitary creatures. They only gather in groups upon the impending death of a great hero or holy saint.

BIAN SIDHE   CR 5

XP 1,600
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13
Aura fear (30 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; (+3 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 52 (7d10+14)
Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8
DR 10/cold iron; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
Melee 2 claws +11 (1d4+4)
Special Attacks wail
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)
Constant—*fly, pass without trace*
At will—*dancing lights, disguise self* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 14)
3/day—*death knell* (DC 16), *fearie fire, fog cloud, gaseous form*

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24
Feats Ability Focus (wail), Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Toughness
Skills Bluff +14, Fly +16, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Perception +13, Stealth +13, Survival +13
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate hills
Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wail (Su) Once per day, at night only, a bian sidhe can scream out a wail that can be heard up to 1 mile away. All creatures within 40 feet that hear this must make a successful DC 19 Will save or be affected as per the *wail of the banshee* spell. Those that make their save take 3d6+7 sonic damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

5E BIAN SIDHE

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +5
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The bian sidhe's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *dancing lights, dissonant whispers*
2/day: *faerie fire, fog cloud, gaseous form*
Magic Resistance. The bian sidhe has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.
Illusory Appearance. The bian sidhe covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the bian sidhe takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies. The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the bian sidhe could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, the creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) heck to discern that the bian sidhe is

disguised.
Wail (1/day). The bian sidhe releases a frightful scream, provided that it is during the night. This wail has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, the creature takes 10 (3d6) thunder damage.

Gremlin, Tretix

This squat ridiculous looking creature drags a bulging sack behind it and seems to be wearing a poorly made monstrous costume.

TRETIX GREMLIN	**CR 2**

XP 600
LE Small fey
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11
   (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)
hp 18 (4d6+4)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4
DR 2/cold iron; **SR** 13
Weaknesses treat

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee +1 sack +4 (1d6+2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3, concentration +3)
1/day—*disguise self, phantom trap*
Special Attacks trick

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14
Feats Nimble Moves, Power Attack
Skills Acrobatics +9, Craft (traps) +7, Intimidation +4, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +7, Stealth +13
Languages Common, Sylvan
SQ sack

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground or urban
Organization solitary, pair, pack (3-8), or infestation (9-16)
Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Treat (Ex) Whenever a creature offers a tretix gremlin a piece of candy or valuable gift, it must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or regard the creature as a trusted friend and ally (treat its attitude as friendly) for 1 day. The gremlin receives a +5 bonus on its saving throw if it is currently being threatened or attacked by the creature or its allies. This otherwise functions as the *charm person* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Trick (Su) A tretix gremlin doesn't require gold to create any mechanical traps with a CR of 1 or less. It can create any trap with a CR of 1 or less in 2d4 rounds. Six tretix gremlins working together can create any mechanical or magical trap with a CR of 3 or less in 1d4 rounds. A tretix gremlin may only have one trap created in this manner at a time. If it creates a different trap, the previously created trap is immediately destroyed.

Sack (Su) Each tretix gremlin owns a burlap sack it uses to carry its candy and trophies. In the hands of the gremlin, the sack deals damage as a *+1 club* wielded by a Medium creature and can hold up to 8 cubic feet or 80 pounds while never weighing more than 5 pounds. It otherwise functions as a bag of holding. The sack has hardness 5 and 3 hit points. If the gremlin is killed, the bag becomes an empty nonmagical burlap sack containing the gremlin's possessions. If the sack is destroyed, the gremlin can create a new sack by spending one hour crafting (no materials required).

5ᴇ Gʀᴇᴍʟɪɴ, Tʀᴇᴛɪx

Small fey, lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 45 (7d6+21)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +3
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The tretix's innate spellcasting ability score is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

1/day: disguise self, silent image

Magic Resistance. A tretix has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magical Weapons. A tretix's weapon attacks are magical.

Sack. The tretix's sack can hold up to 8 cubic feet of material or 80 pounds while the gremlin carries it, and it always weighs 5 pounds.

Treat. The tretix can be charmed (save DC 10) for 1 day by any creature that gives it candy or a valuable gift.

Trick. The tretix can create any setback-level mechanical trap with a severity equal to or less than 4th level in 1d4 rounds. Six tretix gremlins working together can create dangerous-level mechanical or magical traps with a severity equal to or less than 4th level in 1d4 rounds. A tretix gremlin may only have one trap created in this manner at a time. If it creates a different trap, the previously created trap is immediately destroyed. Tretix gremlins cannot create complex traps.

ACTIONS

Sack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4d6+1 bludgeoning damage.

Tretix gremlins are greedy little pranksters that tend to bully small communities into a fearful coexistence. The gremlins seem like a minor enough threat at first, being easily propitiated by offerings of candy or valuables. However, the voracious desires of the fey

ensure someone is likely to fail to appease them sooner or later. The tretix then take the opportunity to make an example of the stingy individual, ensuring they can barely take a step without running into a malicious prank. Such targets often have to go to extreme and humbling degrees of effort to regain the gremlin's good graces.

Traps laid by tretix are rarely truly dangerous, but have been known to gravely injure. However, the fey universally refrain from punishing children in any way, instead encouraging them to dress up as the gremlins do in order to take advantage of the adult's fear of reprisal. Enterprising tretix even organize specific holidays, where legions of willing, costumed kids sweep through town collecting treats. Naturally, the little organized candy crime lords expect a bit of the take, but let the children keep almost everything. Adults who try to confiscate the somewhat ill-gotten gains quickly earn the gremlin's ire.

Teenagers are a special case. When a child who's worked with one or more tretix thinks they are ready, the gremlins teach them how to properly prank. The tretix set them up to be the enforcers for the younger kids, essentially acting on behalf of the gremlins to spook and punish anyone refusing to pay up. Naturally, some teens take the opportunity to levy a little payback toward particularly righteous or pompous authority figures. Most eventually grow out of childlike desires for candy or destruction. The tretix know what while they lose a minion, they gain a new mark, happy to dole out goodies to the next generation.

Tretix tend to prefer spending time in stereotypically creepy locales, such as crumbling ruins, abandoned mansions, or graveyards. They put extra effort into decorating a lair. The gremlins have been known to train spiders to put up webbing, set up dancing skeletons on wires, and even cut deals with spirits in order to get a place authentically haunted.

Pumpkin Golem

A twisted mass of vines and pumpkin gourds formed into a mockery of a humanoid form, this golem moves with unnerving grace and agility.

⬡ PUMPKIN GOLEM	CR 8

XP 4,800
N Large construct (plant)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, Perception +0
Aura frightful presence (60 ft., DC 21); fear aura (30 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 mage armor, +4 Dex, +1 natural)
hp 76 (8d10+30)
Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +5
DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, plant traits, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, and stunning
Special Defenses permanent mage armor

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee slam +12 (2d6+4) or scythe +12 (2d4+3/x4)trip

TACTICS

When acting as a guardian, the pumpkin golem keeps to the ground, looking like nothing more than a small pumpkin patch. It rises and uses its frightful presence and fear aura while attacking with its scythe. Once a target is prone, it uses its slam attack to pulverize the

victim.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** +25 (30 vs. trip)
Skills Perception +18, Stealth +10

ECOLOGY

Environment any
Organization solitary or gang (24)
Treasure none

CONSTRUCTION

The pieces of a pumpkin golem are assembled from vines harvested fresh from a pumpkin patch, with their gourds still attached. The gourds are woven throughout the vines, with one each for the torso and head of the golem. The components are dusted with a mix of rare powders and herbs worth at least 500 gp.

CL 12th; **Price** 9,000 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A pumpkin golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, with the exception of spells and spell-like abilities that have the Fire descriptor, which affect it normally. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature as noted below.

—*Warp wood* or *wood shape* slows a pumpkin golem (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6 rounds. (no save)
—A *plant growth* spell heals the pumpkin golem for 1d6 points per caster level.

Frightful Presence (Ex) The very presence of a pumpkin golem is unsettling to foes. Activating this ability is a free action, usually done as part of an attack or charge. Opponents within 30 ft. who witness the action must make a DC 14 Will save or be shaken for 5d6 rounds; creatures with 4 Hit Dice or fewer are panicked instead. This ability does not work on those with more Hit Dice (8) than the pumpkin golem. An opponent that succeeds on the

saving throw is immune to that same golem's frightful presence for 24 hours. Frightful presence is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Fear Aura (Sp) A pumpkin golem may activate its fear aura three times per day. This aura manifests itself visually as an arcane flame erupting from within the golem's "head", shining a sickly, flickering light from its eyes and mouth. The flame is a *prestidigitation* effect and causes no damage; in all other regards this acts as a *fear* (DC 17) spell.

Pumpkin golems were the favored guardians of Mad Mage Hensley. Those intrepid enough to wander near to the mage's mansion would often be found screaming in fear, reporting that a walking mass of vines with the flaming head of a pumpkin was the last thing they saw. Rumor has it that the disappearance of Hensley's Mansion, together with its mysterious reappearances on harvest moons was the result of Hensley trying to create an army of these golems for some unknown nefarious purpose.

A pumpkin golem is crafted from pumpkin gourds and the vines upon which they grow, assembled into a roughly humanoid body with articulated limbs. A favored golem amongst the arcane community lower on the financial scale for the ease of securing the raw material at an easy cost, the pumpkin golem is typically crafted within the patch that its raw components grew. A pumpkin golem stands 7-1/2 feet tall and weighs on average between 300 to 400 pounds.
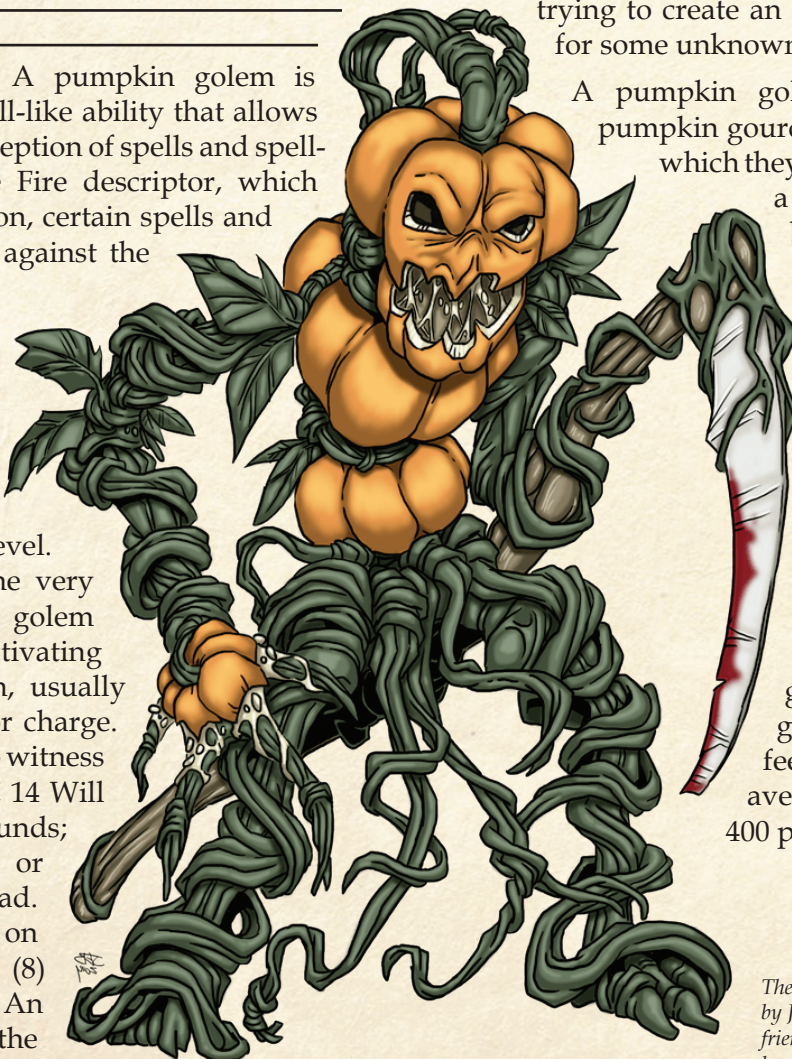
The Pumpkin Golem was inspired by Joshua Gullion. Rest in Peace my friend for your legacy shall continue long after you are gone. — Jonathan

5E Pumpkin Golem

Large construct, neutral

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 78 (8d10+32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing weapons from attacks not made with adamantine weapons
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; passive Perception 12
Languages –
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Scythe. Melee weapon attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 11 (2d6+4) and shoves the opponent prone

Slam. Melee weapon attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4)

ACTIONS

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the pumpkin golem's choice that is within 30 feet of the golem and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the golem's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. This manifests itself visually as an arcane flame erupting from within the golem's "head", shining a sickly, flickering light from its eyes and mouth.

Limited Magic Immunity. A pumpkin golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, with the exception of spells and spell-like abilities that have the Fire descriptor, which affect it normally. In addition, *warp wood* or *wood shape* slows a pumpkin golem (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6 rounds. (no save), and *plant growth* heals the pumpkin golem for 1d6 points per caster level. ❋

Nothing says jumpscare like a Rory Toma trap, and this issue he delivers four magic death traps that prey on humanity's instinctual fear of the great beyond.

Weary Web Trap

The entropy evident in this crypt saps energy from those who enter. Even the cobwebs conspire to make intruders weary.

WEARY WEB TRAP	CR 1

Type magic; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25
Trigger touch; **Reset** auto
Effect Target becomes fatigued for 1d4+1 rounds after making contact with webs. (DC 10 Fortitude Save negates) It requires a DC 18 Acrobatics check to move through the webs untouched.

5E WEARY WEB TRAP

Magical trap
A successful DC 10 Arcana check reveals the webs to be arcane in nature, identifying the enchantment.

Target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer from level 2 exhaustion) A DC 10 Acrobatics check allows passage without contact.

Bones in the Box Trap

Would be grave robbers are in for a nasty surprise from this grave. Inscribed on an ornate marble gravestone are the words, "My distractors shall flee before my presence". A full sized human skeleton springs from the ground, howling and spraying dirt in all directions should anyone tamper with the headstone or grave itself.

BONES IN THE BOX TRAP	CR 5

Type magic; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29
Trigger proximity (alarm); **Reset** none
Effect Targets within a 30' cone become panicked for 7 rounds. (DC 21 Will Save negates) On a successful save, targets are shaken for 1 round.

5E BONES IN THE BOX TRAP

Magical Trap

Investigation DC 13 to spot freshly disturbed dirt. A DC 13 Dexterity check will disarm the trap, while a DC 13 Arcana check will reveal the enchantment) Creatures within a 30' cone are frightened for 1d6+2 rounds unless a DC 13 Wisdom save is made.
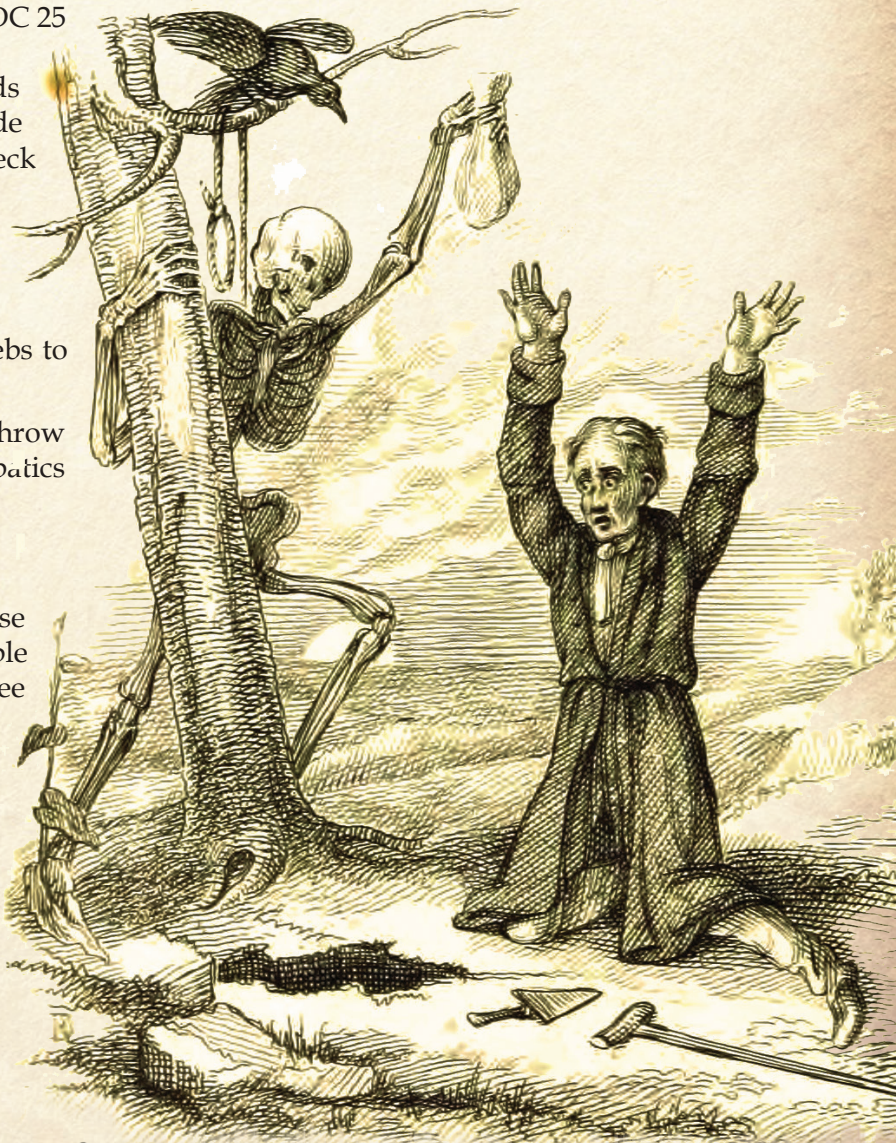
Headstone Portent Trap

Several of the gravestones in this cemetery have engravings that are seemingly illegible, swirling around on the headstones or obscured by moss. As the PC's get closer, the words come into startling focus.

🜂 HEADSTONE PORTENT TRAP   CR 6

Type magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30
Trigger visual; **Reset** none
Effect Target within 30' sees his own information written on the gravestone in his native tongue, detailing the means and time of his death that takes place within 1d4 days. Target takes 1d6 charisma damage that can only be restored once the predicted time of death has passed. (DC 22 Will Save to treat ability loss as normal).

5ᴇ HEADSTONE PORTENT TRAP

Magical Trap

A successful DC 15 Arcana check reveals the swirling writing to be an illusion, and identifies the enchantment) Creatures within 30' of the gravestones see the means and date of their own demise in 1d4+1 days on the gravestone. This causes disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls until the date of death passes. A successful DC 15 Wisdom save causes the disadvantage to only apply to the next ability check or attack roll.

Walking Dead Trap

In the center of the graveyard, a ghostly lich form appears, beckoning you to follow.

🜂 WALKING DEAD TRAP   CR 10

Type magic; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34
Trigger proximity (alarm); **Reset** none
Effect Targets within 90' of the apparition must make a DC 28 Will Save or they are compelled to stand near and follow the apparition for 17 rounds. Affected targets will not put themselves in jeopardy, and they will defend against attacks. Otherwise, they will take no action other than to follow the apparition, which will move away from the graveyard at a rate of 30' per round. Those viewing the targets who are unaffected must make a DC 28 Will Save or the targets will appear as zombies following the call of their undead master, walking towards the apparition with outstretched arms. A dispel magic (CL 17) will dispel the effect.

5ᴇ WALKING DEAD TRAP

A successful DC 20 Arcana check identifies the apparition as an illusion and the enchantment bound to it, this grants advantage on any saving throws against it if the information is communicated) All creatures within 90' must make a DC 20 Wisdom Save or they will follow the apparition for 10 rounds. They will not put themselves in jeopardy and will defend themselves, but will take no other action than following at a rate of 30' per round. Those who are unaffected must make a DC 18 Arcana or DC 20 Wisdom Save or they will see the followers as mindless zombies, following the apparition with outstretched arms. A dispel magic with DC 19 will dispel the effect. ✸

For more of Rory's horrific traps, check out Trap-A-Day.com.
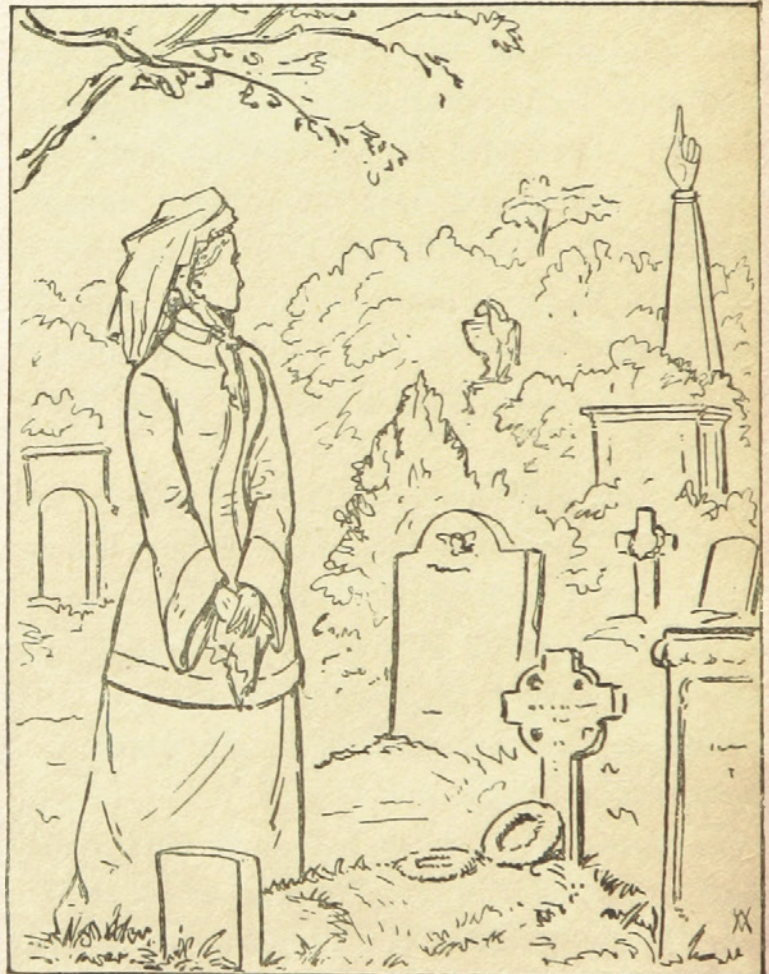
Cult of the Bloody Pumpkin

A **Pathfinder** mini-adventure for 4-5 characters of 6th level.

By Michael Smith

The autumn wind whistles and blows through the branches of now barren trees. In the light of the harvest moon, orange and red leaves can be seen dancing through the streets; a tell-tale sign of winter's approach and summer's end. As the party leaves the local tavern to make their way to the inn of this small village they have chosen to stop at for the night, they hear strange chants originating beyond some thick bushes to the south of the village. Jet black clouds begin to form and swirl above what appears to be firelight in the distance, and a woman's scream echoes out, pleading for mercy…

Area 1: As the party makes their way through the thick brush, they emerge into an opening that is lit by the flickering of torches carried by four villagers. A pumpkin patch can be seen immediately to the south, and a large corn field surrounded by a fence can be seen to the southeast. The villagers look at each other quickly, eyes darting nervously to the entrance to the corn field, and then back to the party. Any attempt by the party to ask what they are doing, or where the scream came from will result in the villagers immediately attacking, as will any movement towards the entrance to the field to the southeast.

Cult Villagers — CR 3

"Pilgrim", *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*

Area 2: Pumpkins and gourds litter the ground before the party. A DC 15 Perception check will reveal that many of the vines have been forcefully pulled from the ground. Bloody hand prints can also be seen on the pumpkins and gourds that remain in this disheveled pumpkin patch. The chants are clearly coming from the southeast, and are becoming more rhythmic and louder.

Area 3: Upon approaching the entrance to the field the party will notice a large scarecrow to the right of the entrance, its arms blowing back and forth with the force of the wind. The jet black clouds seen earlier are swirling over the corn field, mere inches above the corn stalks. When the party gets within 10 feet of the entrance the scarecrow's eyes begin to glow as its body jerks back and forth and it comes down from its perch.

Scarecrow — CR 4

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4

Once the scarecrow is dealt with, the PCs will note that the corn field is actually a corn maze. Inspection of the corn itself will reveal that it is hard as a diamond. Additionally, the jet black clouds that swirl just above the maze are solid and impenetrable, essentially leaving navigation of the corn maze the only option for the PCs to get to the source of the screams.

Area 4: A camouflaged pit trap sits about halfway down this corridor in the maze. Three villagers stand near the southwest end of the corridor, beyond the cleverly disguised trap. When they see the PCs they immediately run around the corner attempting to goad them into pursuit, but will immediately return to attack any PCs that do not fall into the trap.

Camouflaged Pit Trap — CR 3

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook

Area 5: As the party approaches the end of this last corridor of the maze, they can see firelight flickering to the left of the end of the corridor. The sounds of the chanting has become like a melodious hypnotic hum, the sound of which sends chills down the PCs spines. Each PC must make a DC 25 Will save or be struck by fear

for 1d4 minutes as they regain their composure. As they approach the end of the corridor a blood curdling scream echoes out, and then silence.

Area 6: As the PCs peek around the corner into the center of the corn maze, the following scene lays before them. A human woman is perched upon a wooden cross; her arms and legs sprawled out and bound with pumpkin vines. She is eviscerated; her entrails lying before her lifeless body on top of a large pile of blood soaked vines and pumpkins, and a large scythe. Her face is frozen in horror, clearly showing that she was disemboweled while still alive and conscious. Standing in front of this horrific scene is a man in dark robes with a bloody silver dagger in his right hand, and a blood soaked leather-bound tome in his left, his back to the PCs. He addresses a group of ten villagers with the following statements.

It is done, our sacrifice is complete and a successful harvest is guaranteed for next year; our village and children will survive! Thank the god of the harvest for sending us this rite through our savior Hensley!

The last few years have been rough, and many have died due to poor harvests and not enough food. The villagers believe that they have performed a ritual to ensure their harvest next year will be an abundant one, albeit through a very dark and vile act. What they do not realize is that the ritual they have performed is to create a Pumpkin Golem. The spirit of the woman that was sacrificed has now inhabited the mass of vines her lifeblood was emptied upon. Immediately following the speech, the Pumpkin Golem comes to life and begins attacking everyone, villagers and PC alike. The villagers will attack the Golem and PCs as well, creating for a very hectic battle within such a confined space. If the PCs do not stop the Golem it will make its way through the corn maze and kill anyone and everyone that crosses its path. ✸

CULT LEADER	CR 2

"Cultist", *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*

PUMPKIN GOLEM	CR 8

See "Pumpkin Golem" on page 35.

Introduction to
Adventure Writing

By Colin Stricklin

The adventure writer and the poet are basically the same beast. Both creatures have a tendency towards obsession. Both speak in strange voices: both enjoy the challenge of restrictive writing; both have equally unkempt facial hair.

If you've tried your hand at a sonnet, a villanelle, or (if you're feeling especially heroic) a bit of dactylic hexameter, then you realize the amazing workout you give your brain when writing within the confines of form. Writing within form—obeying the laws of meter and rhyme, breaking them only with utmost care—is essential for a poet. It's counterintuitive, but when you place arbitrary restrictions upon yourself, denying yourself license to write anything you imagine, you're forced to come up with creative solutions to put your idea onto the page. Searching for a rhyme or trying to cram a thought within a few haiku-short syllables demands innovative word combinations.

Writing an adventure is the same thing.

Suppose you've decided to write an adventure for low-level characters. Right away you've cut off access to great swath of opponents. No great wyrm dragons or epic encounters with Orcus for you! Instead you're dealing with a narrow band of potential antagonists, topping out around cave giants, wood golems, or a bog-standard troll. Now you've got to figure out how to jazz up those ripped-straight-from-the-bestiary baddies. You've also got to put in the standard bunch of combat encounters, exploration opportunities, and intriguing NPCs that gamers expect. This isn't a fantasy novel after all. It's a game, and you've got to provide a gaming experience in the midst of all that interesting story. In other words, you've got to develop a narrative and a game simultaneously.

Begin With Ideas

You can start with a concept (a town's river has dried up), a creature (a gibbering mouther), or a theme (the PCs must face their greatest fears). It doesn't particularly matter where you start, you're going to visit them all before the end. The important bit is choosing something to build around. By choosing a starting point you're already organizing your thoughts, focusing your creativity toward a specific task. In short, you're bypassing writer's block.

Niel Gaiman offers this vision of writer's block:

My idea of hell is a blank sheet of paper. Or a blank screen. And me, staring at it, unable to think of a single thing worth saying, a single character that people could believe in, a single story that hasn't been told before.

Staring at a blank sheet of paper.

Forever.

The only way to avoid this fate is to simply start writing. Pound keys until you get yourself out of that mindset. You can always come back and clean up later. Writing without form or plan—a mad dash away from blank paper hell—is the best way I know to turn off your internal censor and let the ideas flow.

Be as the noble barbarian. Revel in the chaos. The ideas in your head are formless and chaotic. Put them on the page and watch them collide in interesting ways. Because we all have different experiences and points of reference, your version of "generic low-level adventure" will be in some way unique. The practice of reveling in the chaos will draw out your unique vision.

Take, for example, the "gibbering mouther" starting point. Cling to that creepy blob monster like it's a life raft, and figure out what it's doing in your adventure. Start asking questions.

How did it get into town? Well it's an eldritch abomination, so obviously we can thank the Cthulhu cultists.

Suddenly you've got an evil organization and a monster. Now expand.

What is interesting about these cultists and that gibbering mouther? What drove these guys crazy? Was it the gibbering mouther itself? What are the clues

USEFUL EXAMPLES

Think of a published adventure you've run that you remember fondly. What made it easier or harder to run? What elements of the adventure do you most distinctly remember? Maybe you appreciated the "how to run this encounter" sidebars, or the timeline of events synopsis.

Look through your collection of adventure modules and draw inspiration from them, but don't forget to tailor your design a bit. If you know what company you're pitching to, look at some of their products. If they've got a house style, it's good to keep that in mind as you begin to develop your loose assemblage of ideas into a playable adventure. Asking these kinds of questions and critically dissecting the published adventures you enjoy will help you structure your own writing.

are around town to discover the cultists? Perhaps the cultists have tattoos? Maybe the tattoos look like the sign hanging over a certain bookseller's shop?

Each question's answer leads to the next question, and so on until you've linked several encounters along a cohesive plot, and now you've got something resembling a synopsis.

THE OUTLINE

While outlining may or may not be useful in other forms of writing, starting with an outline of your adventure is the best way to make sure your adventure is organized and flows coherently from one section to the next. That's because adventures are little more than expanded outlines, meant to guide a GM from one place in a story to another.

As blank lines become bullet point ideas, the adventure takes shape both on the page and in the writer's mind. Now you can picture the plot flow and add or remove content as needed, before you've pumped thousands of words into a first draft. The outlining process might initially seem extraneous, but it keeps ideas compartmentalized and ultimately saves time in connecting the dots.

THE PITCH

Once you've got a working outline, it still isn't quite time to design. It's time instead to put on your marketing hat, because you've got more questions to answer.

Why is this adventure an amazing idea? Why would anyone want to buy this product?

Answering these questions is part of the process of pitching. To pitch your outline, follow these simple steps:

Choose an intriguing **title**.

Write an Adventure Background. What happened before the PCs got involved? Establish history and breathe life into the story.

Adventure Synopsis. A brief synopsis of each stage of the adventure. No need for details here, save that for later!

Hook(s) and Introduction. Who or what gets the PCs involved? Are there multiple hooks? Set the stage for the PCs.

The Villain. Setting up a central antagonist goes high on my personal list of priorities. This NPC is very often the driving force of the story, so fleshing out their character is essential.

Adventure Location(s). What are the big set-piece encounters? What kinds of mage's sanctums and golem factories populate this adventure?

Cast of Characters. I'll often list out my NPCs as I go. It's useful to reference as you write, and it's intriguing for publishers to see "awakened chicken coop" listed alongside "Horsk Neloki, evil cultist and half-starspawn."

Getting these introductory sections at least part-way polished will help keep you on track as you tackle the rest of the adventure. Even better, most of this stuff isn't wasted effort. It'll likely wind up as the first few pages of the adventure and the back cover blurb. ✧

Stephen Yeardley conjures the entire Arcanarium this issue, with two creepy items for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, *a useful item for the* Starfinder Roleplaying Game, *and a bonus spell.*

AUTOMATIC ARACHNIDS

Type Hybrid**; Price** 36,000**; Bulk** L

These tiny spiders are constructed from silver-plated steel with a glowing ruby adorning each leg joint. *Automatic arachnids* serve a variety of purposes, but in general are designed to provide minor protection and insight for the owner. These programmable items are able to cast cantrips, enhance skills, check passages, and provide assistance in combat.

Automatic arachnids possess 8 charges, one for each leg. Each time a charge is used, one ruby on the arachnid's leg ceases to glow. When all charges are expended, the arachnid retains enough charge to return to its owner, before folding its legs under its thorax and waiting for a recharge.

A charged *automatic arachnid* has access to the following abilities:

Spellcasting: The *automatic arachnid* can cast any 0-level spell it is imbued with. To imbue a spell, a caster simply concentrates for 1 minute while holding the arachnid. The arachnid can know up to three 0-level spells.

Assist: The *automatic arachnid* spends a full action examining the situation, then can grant the user a +2 bonus to one physical skill. The arachnid assists by pointing out obvious pitfalls to avoid, freeing the user to concentrate on the task at hand.

Explore: The *automatic arachnid* functions as a spy drone, but only with a range of 300 feet.

Trigger: The *automatic arachnid* can be commanded to activate tripwires, plates, symbols, and other traps with a proximity trigger. The trap usually destroys the arachnid.

Attack: The *automatic arachnid* adroitly maneuvers across the battlefield, moves on to the targeted foe. While the arachnid is incapable of damaging most foes, its attack is enough to distract, imparting a -2 penalty on attack rolls the target makes.

ORB OF DESTINY

Aura strong divination; **CL** 17th
Slot none; **Price** 15,300 gp; **Weight** 1/4 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Translucent flakes of some organic material pool in the bottom of these simple, delicate glass orbs. The flakes, when disturbed, settle into an image of prophecy, depending on how the orb is moved.

When shaken with purpose, the flakes form the image of the next combatant the user will face. The orb holds the shape until purposely disturbed, or the vision becomes no longer true. No other details are shown, beyond the image of the user's next opponent in combat.

If the orb is shattered, the flakes burst into a cloud, showing the form of the creature that will kill the user. The shape is held for 1 minute, or until the vision becomes no longer true; then the flakes vanish. No other details are shown, beyond the image of the user's killer.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *foresight*, Craft (glassblowing) 5 ranks; **Cost** 7,650 gp

◈ MONSTROUS SIREN CALLERS

Aura faint to strong conjuration (summoning); **CL** 1st to 17th

Slot hand; **Price** 1,080 gp (1st), 6,480 gp (2nd), 16,200 gp (3rd), 30,240 gp (4th), 48,600 gp (5th), 71,280 gp (6th), 98,280 gp (7th), 129,600 gp (8th), 165,240 gp (9th); **Weight** 1/4 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A *monstrous siren caller* is a bone tube banded with metal through which runs a thin filament, like a strand of muscle, used to cast *summon monster*. The tubes are different lengths depending on the level of spell cast into them and work by slowly tipping the internal membrane to one end, and then inverting it quickly so the membrane drops the length of it. As it does so, the membrane forces the air in the tube past itself, creating the sound of the creature being called. Using a *monstrous siren caller* is a full-round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

A *monstrous siren caller* can be used three times a day.

A bard with a total Perform (percussion instruments) skill rating of at the caster level used to create the item can instead use a *monstrous siren caller* as though it were a bardic performance with regard to the number of times per day it can be used and the action used to activate it.
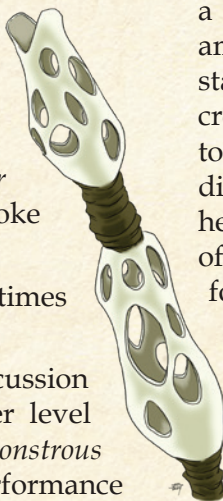
CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster* (as appropriate for the caller's level), Perform (mimicry) 5 ranks; **Cost** 540gp (1st), 3,240 gp (2nd), 8,100 gp (3rd), 15,120 gp (4th), 24,300 gp (5th), 35,640 gp (6th), 49,140 gp (7th), 64,800 gp (8th), 82,620 gp (9th);

◈ NEW SPELL: LAST GASP

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 5
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (set of lungs)
Range 40 ft.
Area cone shaped cloud
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Will half; **Spell Resistance** yes

On squeezing the final breath of foul air from a set of decayed lungs, this spell inflicts 5d8 points of damage + 1 point per caster level (maximum +25).

Unlike other spells that inflict damage, victims of *last gasp* don't have to be within 30 feet of each other. If a damaged creature's hit point total is at a negative amount less than its Constitution score, it doesn't stabilize but can be brought back to life if it dies. If a creature's hit point total is at a negative amount equal to or greater than its Constitution score, the creature dies and cannot be brought back to life. Creatures healed or brought back to life after suffering the effects of last gasp gain a temporary negative level that lasts for 1 day.

Since undead are powered by negative energy, this spell cures such a creature of a like amount of damage, rather than harming it. ✳
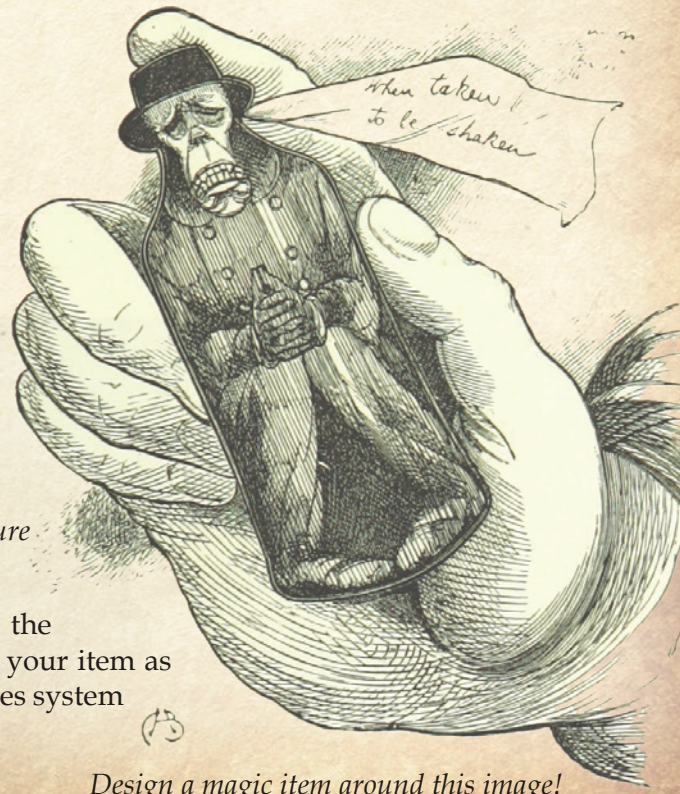
Arcanarium Design Contest

The Challenge: Design a magic item around the image to the right. AAW's design team will pick the best write-up to win The Prize!

The Prize: Your item description in the next issue of *Adventure Chronicle*, plus a 1-month subscription to AAW.com!

The Details: Send your entry to jonathan@aawgames.com with the subject "Arcanarium Contest". No attachments, please, just enter your item as the text of the email. Also be sure to include your name and the rules system your item is designed for. One entry per email, please.

The Deadline: December 1st, 2017.

Design a magic item around this image!

Halloween Traditions

By Thomas Baumbach

From the Celtic festival of Samhain, the Roman Catholic observance of All Hallows' Day, to Jacobian England's Guy Fawkes Day, and the Mexican Day of the Dead, Halloween as we know it today is inherited from several different historical cultural traditions. These traditions are based in ancient beliefs, in primal superstitions, in religious doctrine. They convey a sense of "the dark past," a time where open flame was the only protection against the night, where ghosts and demons were as real as thunder and lightning, and magic was. Collected from—or at least inspired by—real-world practices, the following Halloween traditions are useful fodder for conveying this same sense of terror into your campaign.

I. During the festival of **Samhain**, a village believes the door to the Land of the Dead is open, and all the souls of those who have died in the last year are finally able to find their rest. Candles and lanterns light the way from homes of the recently deceased to their graves, reminding the dead to depart. The villagers don masks and costumes, appearing as spirits, to both protect themselves from the restless dead, and lead them away from town.

II. A traveling spell component merchant collects all his wares on just one day—or rather night—each year: **All Hallow's Eve**. As the sun sets, he gathers all the town's children to collect "treats" for him, and in exchange offers them candy. The children don the disguises of mighty adventurers or costumes of the animals they're trying to capture, while the adults protect their livestock and pets from mischievous children. The merchant collects all manner of flora and fauna, from acorns and death lilies to newts eye, pig's feet, and black cat bones. It's likely he would pay a premium for components harvested from more dangerous prey.

III. During the **Festival of Death and Life**, the common folk celebrate the harvest, make plans for the future with weddings and pacts, and honor the sacrifice of their dead who watch over them. The emotional tumult of this day is so great, that it is known to lure demons and devils from the underworld, who stalk the revelers for three days, attempting to break vows and pacts, and cause folk to dishonor their ancestors. Only the light of a consecrated flame shown thrown a harvest crop keeps the corruptors at bay.

IV. Witching Day is a day of portent, where even a common maid or crone gains the power of prophecy. Laurels of rosemary, cracking of nuts over open flame, observing the trails of slugs and snails, leeching, and more are practiced in every household as they seek to know their futures.

V. Villagers wear costumes when there are strangers in town for the **harvest festival**. There is a delight in watching the strangers try to remember who is who, and children are encouraged to prank and scare the strangers to further confound them. But when evening sets in the revelry fades, but the costumes remain. Tiny candles alight the windows as the townsfolk tell fireside tales, and keep their guests entertained, for on this night evil spirits wander and seek to harm those who don't belong. The villagers are protecting the outsiders, where every home is lit as an inn, and everyone in the street is a stranger.

VI. Many a cross-roads town has tales of deals with devils by moonlight. But on the **Devil's Night**, one village fills the town center with food and offerings, holds vigils by candlelight, and speaks not a word from dusk till dawn. In the dark center of town, one can hear the faint sound of stamping hooves. ✷

At the Court of the Heartless Queen

A 🐉 adventure for 5-6 characters of levels 18+

By Stephen Yeardley

Banished to an extradimensional labyrinth, the PCs are the victims of a powerful *maze* spell. Only by exploring the maze and solving its mystery can they escape.

As the PCs fight in a vast, shadowy rotting forest against horrific undead such as nightshades and arboreal versions of bone ships comprising colossal juggernauts [(earth); change (e.g.) "churning waters" to "roiling soil and stones"; change (e.g.) "sailors" to "hunters"] they are driven towards vast groves of zygominds (at least 3 per PC) that form an enormous, dense barrier around a *maze*. Appearing as trees rather than fungi as the PCs move through them, the plants bombard them with their Fascinating Aura, Seamless Reality, and *greater create mindscape* abilities. Then the PCs find themselves sliding down a steep, muddy slope (appropriate check DC 50 to stay upright, DC 40 to slide on your back, otherwise tumble over and over), ending up at one of the gates.

As a last resort, the zygominds use Soporific Spores on those who survive these mental attacks, waking them once the Seamless Reality is in place. A PC that fails a relevant check doesn't notice it, as the created alternative reality is entirely plausible, despite its sinister appearance. As the PCs work through the maze, they encounter the grotesque characters and wicked inhabitants within.

Gates A, B, and C are 20-ft. square and open inwards; once closed, they bind with the maze walls. On the outside, all are engraved with monstrous woodland characters and misshapen humanoids of unusual size. The insides are plain except for three keyholes of different sizes. Once bound, a relevant DC 45 check opens a lock, but when a PC opens a second lock, the previous one relocks. The doors need three wooden keys (in areas 1, 2, and 3) to get the locks undone at the same time.

The paths are a little under 20 feet wide and high, with the walls and roof seemingly made of thousands of assassin vines of untold thickness. Oddly, the fruits are all shaped like humanoid heads; the main vines are like torsos; the minor ones like arms; and the leaves even more hand-like than usual. If a PC gets within 12 inches of a fruit, which only hang from the roof, it is clearly a head, and it will speak to the PC, usually to insult him or tell her to, "Get a move on, your body will be our lunch!" In fact all of the creatures encountered in the maze are unlike their usual form.

A. As the gate shuts behind the PCs, they see a 5-ft.-tall, thickly muscled creature hopping towards them on misshapen feet. Rabbit-like, it looks covered in coarse white fur, but as it closes, it seems its skin is pale and flayed into thousands of tiny strips. It has a strange metal disc on its right arm, like a shield covered in numbers and thin spikes. In its left hand it has an adamantine rod. Getting nearer the party, it cries, "I'm late! I'm late!" If a PC blocks it, it bashes him with its "shield" to move him. If this doesn't work, it strikes with the rod, casting *time stop* (CL 20), during which it hops away.

CEL NANTEUIL.   AN.
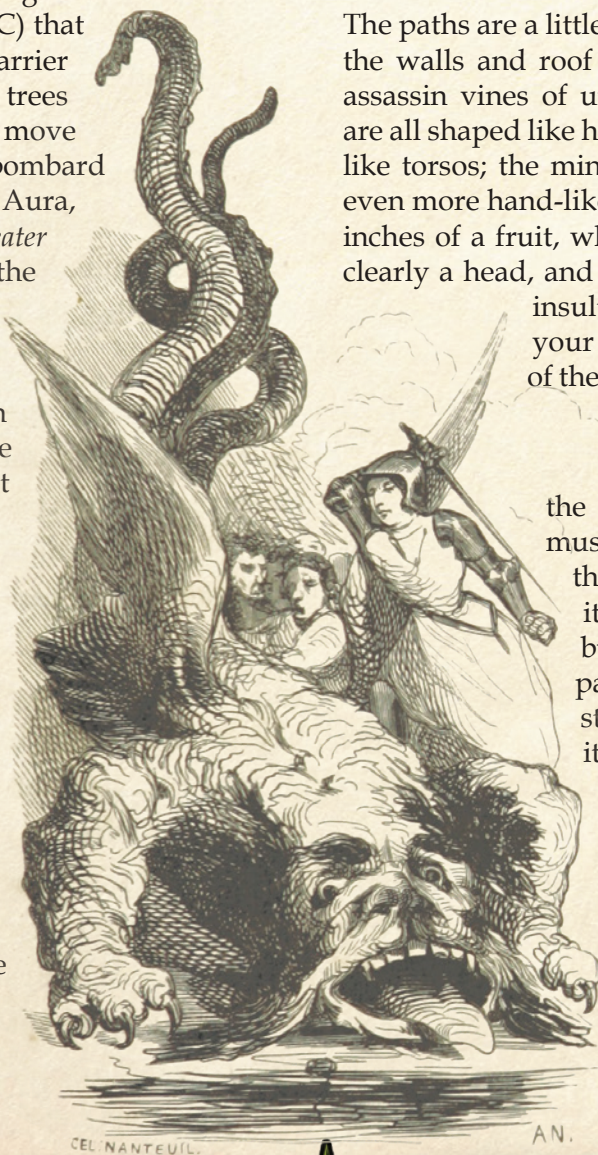
B. As the gate binds to the maze frame, the PCs hear a conversation from around the corner. 50 feet or so along the path, an enormous beast (with rocky, armoured plates forming a shell on its body, barbed flippers for feet, and a crown of barnacle-formed horns on its horrific head), is in deep conversation with a humanoid comprising: a lion's head, body and legs; the eyes, nose (a beak), and arms and hands like the legs and claws, of a great eagle. They are both laughing wickedly when the PCs spot them, but soon stop when they notice the party. The turtle-like creature gets out a scroll and reads a mocking poem, then both approach the PCs menacingly, the humanoid ahead. The poem acts like a skull blast trap, although rogues, bards, or anyone with a Perform (vocal) skill can perceive the trap. Simply blocking the ears disables it. Undead aren't healed by it, if present.

C. As this gate closes, the PCs see two liveried humanoids in animated conversation. A 12-ft.-tall blue-skinned woman with a head like a fish is talking with a frog-faced man half her height. The woman's uniform moves like waves about her, while the man's drips slime. At first she orders him away, but as the PCs approach, he hops over her head as batlike wings unfurl to aid his charge. She bellows, "Where are your invites? Her Majesty DEMANDS to see them!" However, neither of them know what the invitations look like, so refuse to accept anything not "fit for a queen" as one.

D. As the PCs walk along an 80-ft.-long section of the maze (around the letter D and covered by 7 the blue motes), they are all subjected to 4 traps (1 per 20 feet). However, no more than 2 work per PC; after 2 work, any left are ignored. Unlike the spell, effects DO stack, combining to become mythic. A medium creature that fails two becomes tiny, while a small creature becomes diminutive.

PATH OF REDUCTION (x4)	CR 14

XP 38,400
Type magical; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*mass reduce person* heightened to 9th level; DC 23 Fortitude negates) plus nausea for 3d4 rounds (DC 23 Will save negates)

1 sq. = 20 ft.

A trap is disabled by capturing two blue motes (two rolls) in a solid, opaque vessel, where they become inert. If six are captured, the final trap fails. Size changes revert after 3d4+6 minutes.

E. As the PCs walk along an 80-ft.-long section of the maze (around the letter E and covered by 7 the blue motes), they are all subjected to 4 traps (1 per 20 feet). However, no more than 2 work per PC; after 2 work, any left are ignored. Unlike the spell, effects DO stack, combining to become mythic. A medium creature that fails two becomes huge, while a small creature becomes large.

PATH OF ENLARGEMENT (x4)	CR 12

XP 38,400
Type magical; Perception DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34
EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (*mass enlarge person* heightened to 9th level; DC23 Fortitude negates) plus nausea for 3d4 rounds (DC23 Will save negates)
A trap is disabled by capturing two blue motes (two rolls) in a solid, opaque vessel, where they become inert. If six are captured, the final trap fails. Size changes revert after 3d4+6 minutes.

1. A gargantuan apple tree is in the middle of this space; next to it is a huge oak tree. Under the former, 5 creatures are having a tea party. Each guest is wearing bizarre headgear of some kind; a short man with the most outsized of hats is racing round swapping them about every minute. If the PCs talk with them, the behatted man adds them to his antics while asking confusing, answerless riddles. The guests comprise: the short man, a grumpy-looking march hare (it claws act as the hooked hammer), a dormouse that seems sleepy but throws the nearest item to it at PCs; a charming young woman who change sizes via her *hair ribbon of disguise*; and a white rabbit who spends time talking with the young woman and a nearby tree. All the creatures fulfil their "Before Combat" entries as

part of their conversation and tea party. They attempt to subdue the PCs if attacked, flee if losing and follow at a safe distance, or talk in riddles about the maze if asked. However, they are a distraction from the apple tree, which is the real concern here. The small man has a wooden key which he will give to the party in exchange for any magical headgear.

2. This grove holds an odd type of willow tree that changes shape every round. It is formed from 50 twigjacks that have leaves and thin branches wrapped around them instead of thorny vines. Each uses them as whips (+3 to hit, no damage; 15-ft. reach to disarm and trip) and fires splintered parts of branches instead of brambles. In the branches is a strange marmalade cat that grins at the PCs as they fend off whips, splinters, and the claws of the swarming fey. The variant catoblepas has a feline head with long, pointed ears that it uses horns, and tiger's paws. It can also *fly* and become *greatly invisible* at will, and is immune to all energy types (CR16). If the party attacks, it disappears to leave only its head moving around the tree on the end of its long neck. At the base of the tree is a medium sized-seeming rotund woman wearing extravagant red courtly robes and a garish crown (her headband), and touting a sceptre (her mace) and orb (a heated rock). She's hurling abuse at the cat in the tree, who just grins back, but they join forces to overcome the party. The queen has a wooden key hanging from her belt.

3. This area holds eight statues on 5-ft.-square pedestals, and a 30-ft. diameter fountain full of a staggeringly beautiful, still, violet liquid. It is so beautiful any who view it must make a DC30 Will check or burst into tears for 10d12 minutes and be sickened with joy for 2d12 rounds. The statues are humanoid-like, dressed in red-and-white uniforms, carrying heraldic banners, with their faces hidden. They are xenopterids. If a PC touches the fountain or a pedestal, the banners fade and the beasts spring to life, misshapenly mimicking

the party as they attack under the ichor's control. The pedestals are ringed by entangling slime to a distance of 5 feet. A wooden key sits on the fountain.

4. Even if they have been defeated in area 2, the Red Queen is here on a floating disc above the tree at the north end of this space, and the marmalade cat's face is seen in the tree (relevant DC 20 check). The Queen's royal court, 24 turnkeys (no gauntlet or sap), is also here. Seeing the PCs, the Queen snarls, "Decapitate them all!" She and the cat disappear immediately afterwards. The guards follow the Queen's order to the letter, trying to remove a PC's head with each attack of their guisarmes (-2 to hit, targeted strike, head effect) while charging around pushing the PCs about. Each courtier has one of 4 symbols on their tabard (a bow, a battleaxe, a mace, and a rapier), and a number of them ranging from 2 to 7. This tells you how many blows from what type of weapon it takes to incapacitate the courtier. In addition, each courtier has a bunch of three wooden keys hanging from his or her belt; one from each bunch opens the gate to area 5.

5. The gate to this area has the shapes of 24 different keys carved into it. The keys are in area 4. As they are placed in the door, the sounds of locks opening, bolts sliding, and latches rising are clear. Otherwise, a relevant DC 36 check opens them all in one go. Beyond the gate is a 30 ft.-by-40 ft. stone dais with a 20 ft.-by-30 ft. wooden daybed on it. Built into the daybed is a huge hookah, while lounging on the bed under silk sheets is a legless, winged, white-eyed wyrm. The hookah's water looks fetid (relevant DC 25 check notices), and the air smells vaguely putrid. The creature gives a snaggle-toothed grin towards the party, and beckons them on with a nod of its head as it inhales a mouthful of smoke through the water. The creature is hungry, and ready to snack on the PCs, and breathes on them as soon as they are in range.

6. In the 30-ft.-square space beyond the second secret door, three pairs of storm cloud-hued, blue-eyed, yellow-haired humanoids (elder) dance to macabre-sounding tune coming from a huge organ that plays itself. To the right is a pond and flowing fountain that smells of the sea and costal ozone.

Each grabs a PC as the party enters (if one is left over, it sits at the organ and plays it. If another is left, it flies above the dance). The music gets wilder, swirling and crashing. The elementals grapple the PCs to keep them close and in a 15-ft. space. If 5 elementals dance with PCs, there is always one pair in the water around the fountain.

After 4 rounds, during which the tempo increases and the fountain overflows to flood the whole space to a depth of six inches, the organ erupts like a *lightning bolt* trap. The movement becomes more frantic if the PCs attempt to keep out the water while the bolts burst around them. A PC who takes electrical damage during at least 2 rounds find's himself subject to another problem: an *irresistible dance trap!*

Random Encounters in the Maze

Use the table below each time the PCs turn a corner and there is more than 60 feet of path in front of them. There is an encounter on a roll of 1 on a d6.

01-20	The Knave of Hearts is in a bad mood, and challenges a single PC to a duel. The loser has to hand over a magic item of the winner's choice.
21-40	The guardian of gate A is returning after running an errand and doesn't want to be held up
41-60	The Duchess has visited the Queen, but now tries to charm a PC to leave with her, removing any opposition
61-80	A bandersnatch followed the party into the maze, and has now found it. It's annoyed at wasting so much time on the PCs.
81-00	The maze walls suddenly close around the party creating a chamber of thorns trap (CR15 as DC30 to notice and DC35 to disable)

THE VILE QUADRILLE	CR11
XP 12,800

Type magical; **Perception** DC34; **Disable Device** DC34

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*irresistible dance* heightened to 9th level; DC23 Will partially negates)