

FIGHT on!

welcome to skull tower



for Fantasy Role Playing Campaigns played with Pencil, Paper and Your Imagination

Issue #4

Winter 2009

dedicated to David A. Hargrave,
who took a troll to lunch,
opened the Plateau of Forever to all corners of the Multiverse,
built a world with room for anything,
and showed the rest of us how to do the same.

A Rumble Tummy's raised high in your memory, old teacher!

1946-1988



The *very essence* of fantasy gaming is its *total* lack of limitation on the scope of play, both in terms of its content and in its appeal to people of all ages, races, occupations, or whatever. So don't limit the game...

- *Welcome to Skull Tower*, pg. 99

Glodeen Hartley, 20th level paladin, clutched Stormbringer in his left hand and Mournblade in his right. Battered but not broken, he stepped over the corpses of Loki and the Fenris Wolf and thrust his blades skywards, an army of Vikings and Valkyries roaring at his back. “Ragnarok is ended!” he cried. “The prophecy is broken! The forces of life stand ready to begin another cycle!”

Smiling cruelly, Loki’s dead mouth twisted into a rictus. “Darker forces yet remain, mortal champion...” Deep under the sea, something broke. Dread Cthulhu rose from under the waves even as Yog-Sothoth and Hastur floated downwards from some nameless outer dark. Star-spawn, mi-go, deep ones, and shoggoth oozed from every pore of earth and sky, ready to give the soldiers of Odin and Thor their comeuppance.

Then the half-elven witch Tamra Shadowfire flew in, landing next to Glodeen. “It looks like you could use some help,” she whispered, smiling at the handsome master of the runeblades. “Arduin stands with you against the forces of madness and destruction.” Over the rise behind them came the Beast Shield Band, Silverlock Snowtyger at their front, a dozen barbarians to match Conan or Fafhrd at their core, and the half-triton mage Aurloch Drakken and the great druid Balathon Blackwind at their flanks. Behind them came a hundred more of the multiverse’s greatest heroes. Glodeen and Odin smiled grimly, and Stormbringer pointed forward.

“FIGHT ON!” screamed Thor, and the second round of the final battle began...

Welcome to issue #4 of *Fight On!* For this issue, Emperor’s Choice Miniatures and Games has kindly given us permission to celebrate the legacy of Arduin and its legendary GM, Dave Hargrave. EmpCho owns *House of the Axe* and *Chrysolia* and has loaned us several pieces of artwork for this issue. Once again we also thank M.A.R. Barker for his blessing in publishing material for *Empire of the Petal Throne*. In general *Fight On!* asserts no rights at all to any games or other intellectual property that get mentioned in its pages. Except where otherwise noted, our authors and artists own all their own work. Contact us at iggyumlaut@gmail.com if you want to contact one of them about using their creation.

Most abbreviations herein should be familiar; we use DC to indicate Defense Class. Some of the material in this issue is a little more ‘adult’ or ‘edgy’ than is our norm; there’s nothing really hard-core, and this does not represent a change in direction so much as a desire to honor Dave’s legacy, but we thought you ought to know. *Fight On!* is a journal of shared fantasy. We who read and write for this magazine are a community of role-playing

enthusiasts unified by our love of the freewheeling, do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970’s. We game. And you’re welcome to join us.

-Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

Table of Contents

Delvers Delve (David Bowman).....	3
Silver Knights of the Eld (Beaudry and Calithena).....	7
Knights & Knaves (Keshner).....	10
House of the Axe (Calithena).....	12
Random Rooms (Michael Curtis).....	37
Dungeons and Librarians (Jason Vasché).....	38
Dungeon Home Remedies (Jeff Rients).....	41
The Spring Temple of Ai (Gabor Lux).....	42
Education of a Magic-User (Douglas Cox).....	45
The Tower and Spells of Duvan’Ku (J. Raggi IV).....	46
Creepies & Crawlies (Jeff Rients).....	52
Ghost Stories (Geoffrey O. Dale).....	54
Vault of the Magic Goddess (Matthew Riedel).....	57
Tables for Fables (Age of Fable).....	65
Proclamations of the Fomalhaut Oracle (G. Lux).....	66
Magical Weapon Drawbacks (Wayne Rossi).....	68
Carousing Mishaps (Jeff Rients).....	69
Fungoid Gardens of the Bone Sorcerer (G.McKinney).....	70
These Mean Streets (Baz Blatt).....	79
Oceanian Legends (Del L. Beaudry).....	91
The Airships of Mistworld (Steve Marsh).....	95
The Kitsunemori Campaign (Alex Schroeder).....	96
Chrysolia (Monty St. John).....	100
The Darkness Beneath (James Maliszewski).....	106
Merlin’s Mystical Mirror (Jeff Rients).....	117
Guest Editorial (Calithena).....	118
Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments (J. Raggi IV).....	120

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Delvers Delve

rules options by David Bowman

One interesting part of fantasy roleplaying games is exploration. Being able to interact effectively with the environment is important for all characters. For instance, dungeons, crypts, and catacombs are often full of traps. In my games, all characters have a 2 in 6 chance to detect such if they say they are looking for them. (As always, this is a rule of thumb: some traps may be easier or harder, or require special procedures.) On the other hand, some characters are better at these sorts of tasks than others. What follows are optional rules and approaches for the exploratory portion of the game.

The Dwarf: Dwarf characters are able to note certain features of the dungeons in which they are adventuring: recent construction, slopes in halls, moving walls, and traps. The Dwarf fills an important role in dungeon delving and exploration. The ability to note traps in particular is an immensely useful and often overlooked aspect unique to the Dwarf. While any character has the chance to locate a trap if he or she announces one is being searched for, only the Dwarf has a “sixth sense” which warns him that a trap is near. The best example of a similar power is the common Elf ability to sense secret doors. Sensing does not necessarily equate to locating; it simply means that the character has sensed that something is amiss. In the case of the Elf, perhaps he or she detects an air current shift or a change in the temperature; and in the case of the Dwarf, perhaps features of the stone or block seem out of sorts, or perhaps he has sensed that the weight of the world above has increased. The exact location of the trap or secret door must still be found. Elves are twice as proficient at finding secret doors while searching as other characters, and I would suggest that Dwarves should be similarly proficient with traps. (Do keep in mind that even the Elf ability to sense a secret door is an optional rule.) There is a 2 in 6 chance for an Elf to sense secret doors, and a 4 in 6 chance of an Elf locating secret doors when searching: assign similar probabilities to Dwarves with traps. Such odds are of course to be adjudicated by referees, but these probabilities provide an effective baseline when judging tasks undertaken while dungeon delving. No range is provided for these abilities, and the referee would have to determine whether a Dwarf even had a chance to sense a trap before he or another character tripped or triggered it.

The Trap: Whether one even needs to sense, search for, or locate a trap assumes that the trap in question is difficult to find in the first place. Traps do not need to be devilishly designed and hard to spot. A simple open pit, in a dark corridor through which a band of delvers might be hurrying in order to avoid being eaten, can be



just as effective as the most ingeniously devised falling block trap. A ten foot pole and extra light sources might be effective against an open pit in the hall ahead, but what about the pit that has a well-designed trap-door, with a three second delay, that is only activated after 200 lbs in weight has triggered the simple cog release mechanism below? You might want a Dwarf around to sense such things. Other traps might have clues to their presence; corpses, iron crossbow bolts sunk into a wall, scorched areas, dried pools of blood, pock marks, smashed bones, etchings in the stone, or even the perfectly obvious but impassable traps consisting of mechanical lethality daring to be tampered with. Completely hidden traps are often limited to small devices, such as poison needles in door handles or chest hasps. These then would often be the most difficult to not only detect, but also find. As any experienced player knows, though, these are often the traps most actively searched for. Doors and chest lids are heavily scrutinized by player characters.

If one looks at early fantasy roleplaying manuals, there are examples which can be extrapolated to suggest that a character has avoided a trap by noticing something amiss at the last second, having incredibly quick reflexes, or just plain getting lucky. Furthermore, traps may not trigger unerringly in all cases. Perhaps a malfunction or design flaw tips off the would-be victims, or maybe the trap simply fails to activate, becoming jammed, broken or otherwise ineffective. For whatever reason, I follow the regular procedure of having traps only activate or trigger on a roll of 1 or 2 on the d6 when a character passes over or by them, including pits. Using this system

allows a referee to consider the marching order of the adventuring party and possibly bring some hurt to those unlucky blokes in the second or subsequent ranks.

Pits have always seemed to be synonymous with dungeon crawling in general. Again, though, the early rulebooks state that damage from falling into a pit can be avoided on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d6, the only drawback being that a turn must be spent clambering out of such a trap. This is not a case of avoiding the trap, but a case of falling in and avoiding the damage. One could assume that this is a shallow pit trap, and perhaps the example is not meant to be conveyed as a guide for avoiding all falling damage. Nonetheless, one could also assume that those who do set off a trap still have a chance to avoid its effects. What I have taken away from this passage is that when in doubt, grab a d6, make a judgment call, and then roll. If a character has set off a trap, does it strike unerringly, or is there some chance to avoid its effects? If some chance to avoid the trap is conceivable, I'd rule that the character might still do so, even after triggering it, with a 2 in 6 chance. Certain traps are not as forgiving of course, but I like the idea of rolling more dice and maintaining the intensity level during play rather than just telling the players that Roberto the Ranger has fallen into a 60' pit trap and died. Referees should always allow a saving throw to avoid the effects of deadly traps. Traps which potentially deal a predetermined amount of damage should also be treated in the same manner, in my opinion, but by using the 2 in 6 roll, which I refer to as Avoid Trap. It is also a perfectly acceptable extra option to create an extra layer of suspense between characters and 'save or die' type traps (making the avoid trap roll before the save).



Trap Rolls

Find Trap: a 2 in 6 chance to locate a trap, if the character is looking in the right way and/or place.

Spring Trap: a 2 in 6 chance to trigger or spring a trap when a character passes over or by a trap.

Avoid Trap: a 2 in 6 chance to avoid a trap or even the potential damage from a trap after it has been sprung.

Disarm Trap: a 2 in 6 chance to destroy, defuse, bypass, or otherwise neutralize a previously located trap.

The Thief: It may surprise some to discover that there is widespread (though by no means universal) animus towards the traditional thief class. Little of this stems from moral concern about thievery, or a lack of love for Bilbo, Cugel, or the Grey Mouser. More common objections stem from character overspecialization and grafting skills on top of the simple, elegant class systems of early fantasy roleplaying. But recent observations have caused me, formerly in the anti-Thief camp, to reconsider. I do enjoy the archetype of a sneaky, stealthy, lightly armored adventurer who brings mechanical know-how to the expedition. The trouble is that with early versions of the thief, every ability except the silent strike from behind is one already open to every other class of character! Taking these abilities away from other characters has a substantially negative effect on open-ended exploration, but not taking them away seems to render the abilities assigned to the thief in many rulebooks both overly fiddly and redundant. I'm firmly committed to keeping these possibilities open for all characters, but there's no reason one can't also have a distinct character type who's especially good at them. I present my version of the thief at the end of the article.

A Half-Dozen Options and Alternatives

1. Dungeon Tasks: Develop a simple mechanic for addressing mundane tasks undertaken by delvers. I prefer to use a d6, with a roll of 6 resulting in automatic failure. This roll should be made by the referee except in the case of Remove Traps, Climb Walls and Open Lock.

Find Traps: While there is no defined method for doing this in early fantasy roleplaying rules, trapfinding can be handled in the same manner as searching for secret doors. The odds of success might be adjusted by a number of factors. Are the characters searching in the correct area or manner? Is the trap well hidden or somewhat obvious? Is it even possible to locate the trap without triggering it? Has it been set off once, but still not located? A baseline 2 in 6 chance is sound.

Remove Traps: Bashing, opening or jamming traps that have been located is feasible, and I would suggest a

chance of 2 in 6 to remove a trap, once it has actually been located. A roll of 6 normally indicates that the attempt has set off the trap in question.

Move Silently: Any character able to tip-toe should be able to perform this task. For all intents and purposes, whenever there is no monster nearby to actually hear the characters, the noise they create is irrelevant. This is essentially a reverse Hear Noise check made by monsters close enough to hear a sneaking character. The referee might place some restrictions on this task, with consideration given to armor and encumbrance. Again, 2 in 6 is a safe range, possibly modified by Dexterity.

Hide in Shadows: Much as with moving silently, this task only matters when a monster is actually present to see the character. It is, in essence, a reverse check made by monsters to see if they notice the hiding character. Hiding does not equate to invisibility! A monster might still sense a hiding character through smell, hearing or other means. A suitable hiding spot must be accessible, and then a character might have a 2 in 6 chance to hide provided he has no light source and remains stationary.

Climb Walls: One of the more contentious and debated Thief skills, Climb Walls when employed as a mundane dungeon task is best judged on a case by case scenario. Given time to employ gear, be it rope, spikes, grappling hooks or other tools, nearly any surface may be traversed in relative safety. If a referee judges that there is a reasonable level of danger, I would begin with 5 in 6, adjusted downward by the difficulty of the surface, down to 2 in 6 for climbs of the worst sort. Optionally a roll may be made every 10 or more feet, if it makes sense to break it down this way. Failure indicates that no upward progress was made, while a roll of 6 indicates that the character has slipped and fallen (second trap or saving roll to avoid damage and possibly catch on partway down). In my own campaigns, no one including thieves can scale sheer surfaces without ample time and gear.

Hear Noise: Rules are already set out for this in early fantasy roleplaying manuals.

Open Locks: Non-magical locks may be jimmied or forced open. I handle such mundane obstacles in the same manner as stuck doors (using Open Doors as a

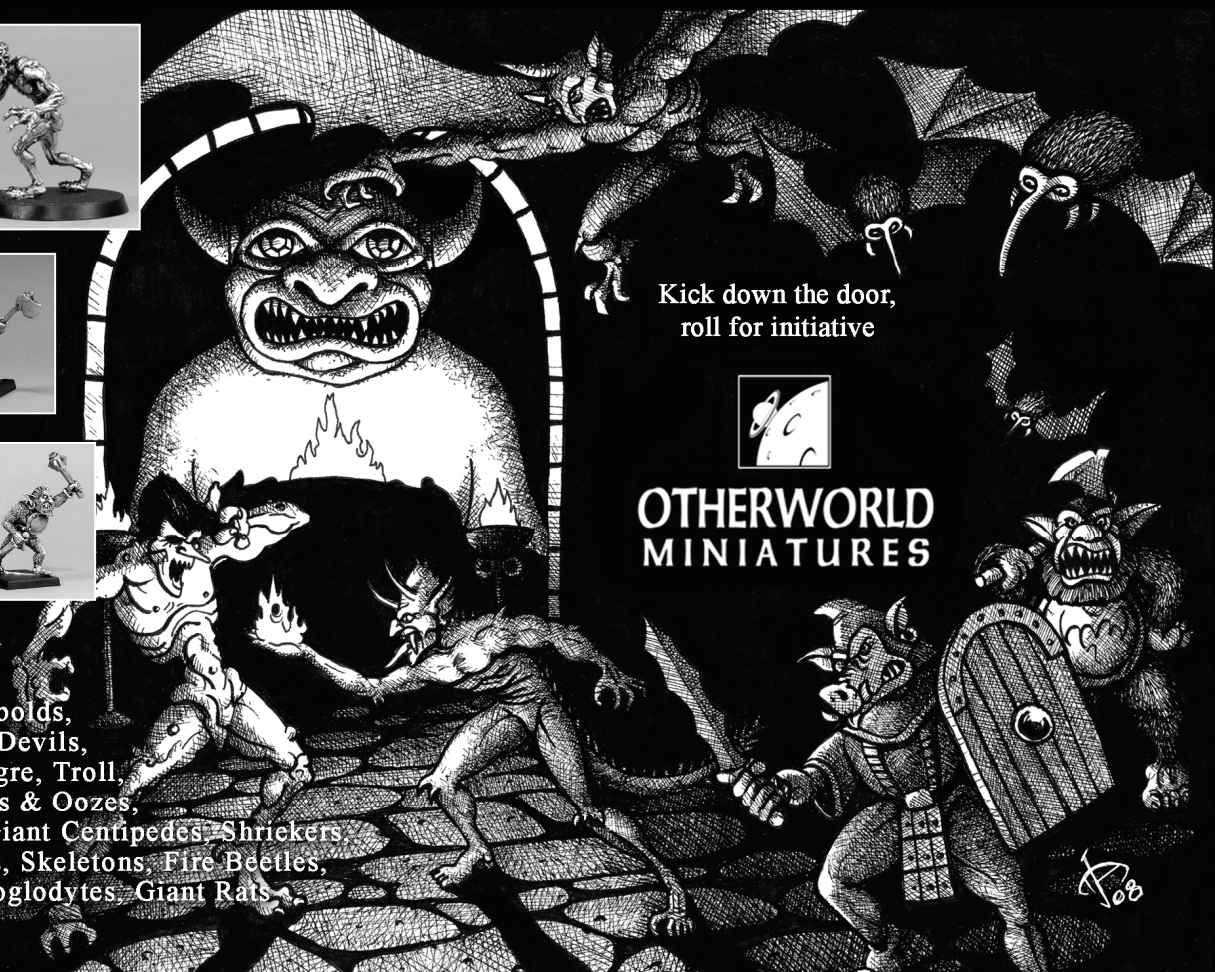


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guide) unless the lock is sturdy and of a type which might be difficult to force or pry. A Mage with a Knock spell, a Thief hireling, a ring of skeleton keys, or better yet, the actual key designed to open said lock might be the best chance for adventurers to open locks which confound them. A roll of 6 indicates that no further attempts may be made, or that, at the referee's option, the lock has become jammed entirely.

Pick Pockets: The chance for accomplishing this task should be based upon the prevailing circumstances. 2 in 6 is a good starting range, adjusted by circumstance and possibly modified by Dexterity. As with Move Silently and Hide in Shadows, Pick Pocket is a reverse check, this time to see if the action of pilfering is noticed by the target. If the referee judges that there is no chance to notice such an underhanded act, there is of course no need to roll for failure. A roll of 6 indicates that not only was the pick-pocket detected, but nothing was even grasped in the first place.

2. Optional Modifiers: A referee might allow characters with high attribute scores or of certain races bonuses to perform Dungeon Tasks, as follows:

Find Traps: Dwarves are more adept at this task in underground settings, locating traps on a 4 in 6 chance.

Remove Traps: Depending upon the type of trap and the method used to disarm it, Strength or Dexterity might contribute to success.

Move Silently: Elves are more adept at this task, with a 4 in 6 chance of success. Dexterity might also modify.

Hide in Shadows: Both Elves and Hobbits are more adept at this, succeeding on a 4 in 6.

Climb Walls: Both Strength and Dexterity can modify.

Open Locks: Strength might help force some locks, while Dexterity might help pick them. Prybars should give a bonus to attempts to force locks in most cases

3. The 2 in 6 Check: Readers may have noticed a prevailing theme with the above Dungeon Tasks suggestion. It would be perfectly reasonable to do away with the individual segments on delving tasks, and simply employ the 2 in 6 Check for all such undertakings. Success is achieved on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d6, with a 6 indicating automatic and possible further failure. This applies to nearly every rule presented here.

4. Character Generation Skills: Referees might enjoy allowing a character's background or history to give +1 to tasks where it is relevant. Choose one or two pertinent modifiers based on a character's background, or

add such modifiers to your background tables if you use them. Some examples: Outdoorsman – +1 Climb, +1 Hear Noise; Locksmith – +1 Open Locks; Mason – +1 Find Traps, +1 Remove Traps; Hunter – +1 Move Silently, +1 Hide in Shadows; Convict – +1 Pick Pockets; Carpenter – +1 Open Doors, +1 Find Secret Doors.

5. Delving Experience: Continued dungeon delving might help a character develop their skills. For example, a referee might allow players to choose modifiers for their characters, or he might even assign bonuses based on actual game play and experience. A possible system like this might allow a modifier of +1 to be assigned every even level (2, 4, 6, etc.), or every third level (3, 6, 9, etc.), as characters progress in their chosen class. A maximum of +1 to any single task might be instituted, as the referee sees fit. The idea is that as the characters continue their career, they become more skilled in commonly used tasks. This list could certainly be expanded to include searching for secret doors and opening doors, or even beyond for those so inclined.

6. Home Brew Classes: This is always a good approach. Here's my version of the Thief - **the Delver!**

Delvers are a class of characters devoted to furthering the exploration and plundering of the underworld. Delvers explore and plunder; they are not trained in the more common skills of melee or magic, nor are they devotees of any particular faith other than personal gain. Their kind is more often than not encountered in regions dominated by entrances to the dismal depths which entice the fortune-seeking. A party in such an area which lacks a Delver amongst their ranks may wish to hire one into service. It is recommended that they be Men or Dwarves, with the latter limited to the 8th level of advancement.

Delvers use priestly experience, hit dice, attack and saving throw tables, with a bonus of +1 on any save involving a trap. They are limited to small weapons and light armor, and may not use shields. A Delver using any prohibited equipment loses all of the class modifiers detailed here. The skills of a Delver are as follows:

- +1 Search (for checks on finding traps or secret doors)
- +1 Hear Noise
- +1 Open Doors (including rolls to force or jimmy locks)
- +2 Spring Trap (in other words, 4 in 6, unless the Delver specifies that he or she is actively trying to avoid traps)
- +2 Avoid Trap
- (Optional) Strike from Behind Ability

Delvers gain an additional +1 to a dungeon task of their choice at each level after the first. This must be a different task at each level. Ω



Silver Knights of the Eld

advanced class by Del L. Beaudry and Calithena

In our *Advent* campaign, elvish warriors who reach 4th level have a special option for continued advancement. The elves of the Eldwold do not maintain a large standing army as humans do. Rather, every able-bodied elf serves voluntarily in a superbly drilled militia, ready to embark on short notice in the face of threats to their forest enclave. A number opt to for regular tours of duty as scouts and border guards, while a far smaller number serve as full-time soldiers, battling human and humanoid raiders. A smaller number still belong to knightly orders,

drawn almost exclusively from the nobility. The Silver Knights are the most famous and prestigious of these.

The *Eldirani*, or Silver Knights of the Eld, are the sworn protectors of the Lilac Rood, as the elvish court at Eldamar is known. Selected from the bravest and boldest of elvish gallants, the Silver Knights are admired by the populace as paragons of chivalry and wisdom. In times of peace, they are a questing order, traveling far and wide on missions of utmost importance to the Rood. Slaying fierce monsters, reclaiming elvish relics and righting wrongs inflicted on the far-flung elvish diaspora are among their signature tasks.



When war comes, as it did during the Wrath of Surrotram, the Knights serve as the vanguard of the Eld's military power. They are the elves' primary cavalry, fighting on horse or hippogriff or in cunningly wrought battle chariot, armed with lance, sword and bow. Each gallant accepted into the order is granted a unique marque, or *kballen*, by the hand of Queen Ermazhad herself. This sigil, displayed proudly on shield or tunic, identifies the wearer as *Eldirani* to any who understand elvish heraldry or script. The *kballen* is the symbol and source of a Silver Knight's power: temporal, magical and spiritual. Should it be rescinded, all special abilities of the class are lost (see below).

Elvish heroes, especially (or, at GM option, exclusively) those who do not also use magic, may attempt to become Silver Knights upon attaining 4th level. Hopefuls may not be evil in outlook or past deeds. There is also significant prejudice involved. Normally only elves of the Eldwold are even considered, and then usually only those of good family. Very occasionally – perhaps once every few centuries – an elf of the diaspora is asked to join, invariably due to superlative heroism on behalf of the elvish people. Only once in history has a half-elf, Sir Nividar Lothlann, been called to serve the Lilac Rood. In all cases aspirants must be sponsored by another *Eldirani* or member of the Lilac Rood, approved by Queen Ermazhad herself, and either be of noble elvish birth or perform a quest or major service to the Eld. Silver Knight levels “stack” with warrior levels, such that a 4th level Elvish Warrior admitted to the order and

gaining a level would become a 5th level Silver Knight. Silver Knights continue to attack and gain hit points as warriors of equivalent level.

Silver Knights may reach a maximum of level 8. All silver knights are expert mounted fighters and receive +1 to attack and damage rolls when charging mounted with a lance. They are immune to fear and give their allies +2 to saves against same due to their calming presence. They also gain the following abilities as they rise in level:

Level 5: Special Mount. All *Eldirani* attract exceptional steeds. Such will typically be elven light warhorses with 4 hit dice and speed +6 over the norm, but giant eagles, hippogriffs, or similar creatures may also serve at the GMs discretion. One compromise if something unique is desired would be to send the newly minted Silver Knight, mountless, on an adventure to find it.

Level 6: Smite! Once per day a Silver Knight with this ability can take a special attack against enemies of the Eld, at +2 to hit and inflicting triple damage if successful. This attack must be with blade, bow, or lance. The exact definition of this group is at the (cont'd) DM's discretion, but in general traditional enemies of the elves or the Eldwold (goblins, orcs, dark elves, humans of Sarmis and Valyr, dwarves, beastmen) are in the group unless they are elf-friends or directly involved in a project which benefits of the elven race or homeland, and others are not in the group unless they have a history of enmity towards elves or are directly involved in a task which harms the elvish race.

Level 7: Call Allies: *Eldirani* of level 7 or 8 can summon 2d4 otherworldly elvish fighters armed in mithril (+2 attack (sword or bow) and defense). They gladly fight enemies of the knight until they or their opponents are slain or until 1 hour has passed, whereupon they vanish with all their equipment. This ability is usable once/day.

Level 8: Ermazhad's Blessing: The most powerful Silver Knights gain the blessing and attention of the Queen of the Elves herself. They become immune all non-enchanted weapons except those wrought from cold-forged iron, as well as to energy drains, death spells, and similar life-based effects.

Silver Knights are expected to adhere to a code of chivalrous conduct. Any Silver Knight who willfully commits an evil act, behaves manifestly unchivalrously or betrays her duty to the Eld (to whose collective spirit the *Eldirani* owes allegiance, even above the person of the monarch) loses all special abilities (including her mount) and becomes a normal warrior once again. An atonement, quest and the will of the Queen are necessary to restore *Eldirani* status. Ω

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Knights Knaves

by Keshner

Redbeek, the Birdbear Bandit

Genesis of a Villain – Redbeek is justly feared throughout the Eastern Tradeway between Ult and Badabask for his maniacal demeanor and the depredations of his debased followers. He was once a normal human bandit named Bill Redbeard who, with a ragged band, preyed on lone travelers and small, poorly-guarded caravans. Fifteen years ago, however, Bill and his gang ambushed a group of adventurers and after a short battle slew them. The group's conjurer, though mortally wounded, motioned Bill closer and pressed a glittering ring into his bloodstained hand, mumbling something about “destiny” and “safekeeping”. As Bill sneered through yellowed teeth and slipped the ring on his finger, the mage giggled liquidly, sighed, and expired quietly on the forest floor.

Bill screamed and dropped writhing to the ground. He gripped his head with both hands, smearing blood across his face, and uttering a terrible howl transformed into that most dreadful of creatures – the owl-headed birdbear! His cruelly hooked beak was stained a bright crimson, and his eyes rolled wildly as he rose up and slew his former companions. Ring still glittering on his ursine paw, he lurched off into the forest hooting madly.

For years he fought and rutted with other birdbears deep in the woods, until he had driven out or killed all rivals. With fewer distractions, his shattered human consciousness began to reassemble itself and he decided to resume his old trade. Gathering his favorite mate, a crow-headed birdbear whose ugliness was rivaled only by her psychopathic devotion, and their two children, hideous human/birdbear hybrids filled with cunning and terrible desires, the jaggedly screeched name of Redbeeeeeeeek! swiftly became a source of fear and trepidation for all travelers on the Eastern Tradeway.

The Method in their Madness – Currently the gang favors ambush tactics involving knocking over trees and hurling the decomposing heads and flaming, pitch-covered skulls of former victims at victims while howling at the top of their lungs. They'll dispose of the most obviously dangerous opposition first, though if Redbeek even suspects that someone might be a mage, he'll stop at nothing to shred them limb from limb, regardless of



what else is going on; if they flee, he'll pursue them. If more than one person appears to be a mage, choose whomever you deem to be the most flamboyantly mystical. Any victims left alive after the initial attack, male or female, young or old, will be handed over to Redbeek's sons to slake their hideous urges. Any particularly shiny treasures will be gathered up, more out of habit than need, and carted off to their lair – a ruined manor house deep in the gloomy forest, containing 8,000 gc worth of mixed coins, 3d6 gems/jewelry, and a battered knight's shield chased in silver and gold, displaying the figure of an intricately worked steel pelican – 100 gc, possibly more to a scion of the Fisher King).

Redbeek the Birdbear Bandit: DC 4, HD 6, DMG +3 due to strength; on an 18 or better, hugs and bites for two dice. Redbeek wears scraps of scavenged armor and a glittering, cursed ring of *Polymorphication*: Anyone wearing it instantly turns into a monster, randomly generated on the table of your choice. It's hard to see on his hand in his current form, but if he's slain the ring will slide off onto the ground and Redbeek will become Bill one last time. The ring glitters so alluringly that a save vs. Magic must be made by all who see it to avoid claiming it as their own. If more than one viewer misses their save, obvious complications may occur. **Redbeek's Mate:** DC 5, HD 5, DMG +2 due to strength; on an 18 or better, hugs and bites for two dice. This crow-headed birdbear is hideous, even for a birdbear, and is fanatically loyal to Redbeek. Should he be killed, she'll attack with the utmost ferocity, gaining a +2 to hit and doing two

dice of damage on a regular attack, +3 on a hug/bite. **Redbeek's Sons:** DC 7, HD 3, DMG +1 due to strength. These two disturbing birdbear/human hybrids are, hopefully, unique. Roughly 7' tall, thickly muscled, and covered in a patchy mess of bristly hair and feathers, their recognizably human features are complimented with ragged fangs and crazed yellow eyes. They wear random pieces of clothing picked off their victims, and have built their own weapons (a black oak bludgeon studded with bits of splintered masonry and a +1 ash spear with a cruelly-barbed head carved from the horn of a slain unicorn). Their carnal desires are profligate; they will attempt to sate them on any unfortunate creature who falls into their clutches.

Hook-Hand Jack

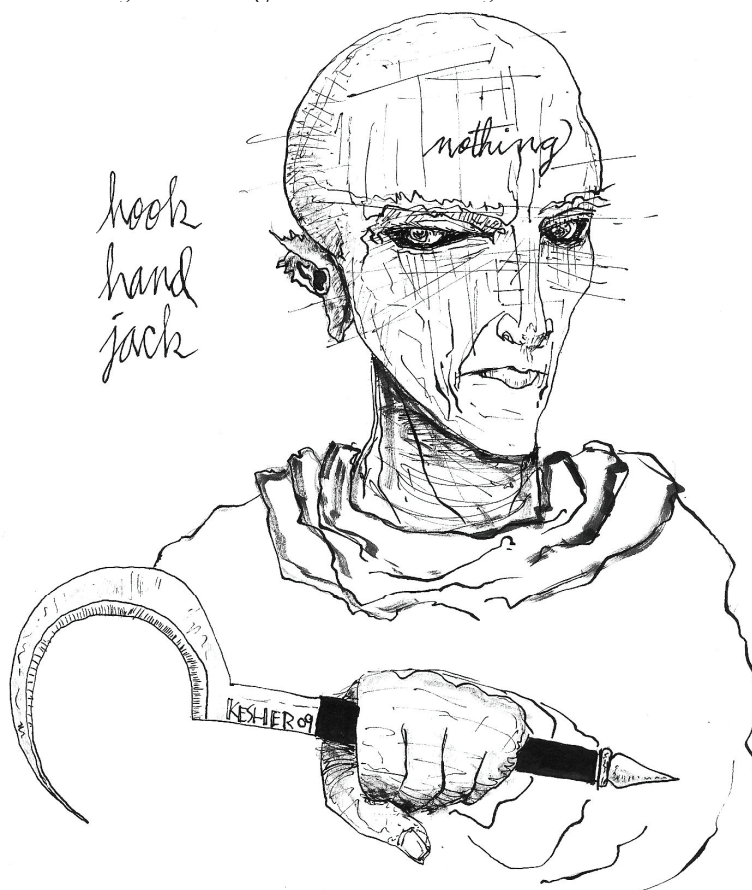
The Death of Love, the Birth of Nothing – Mentioning the name “Hook-Hand Jack” in the wharfside taverns and twisting alleys of the Obsidian City will earn you a hard stare and muttered curse, if not the twitching of some holy sign in the smoky air. A bogeyman almost, huge, probably a half-ogre, with a predatory grin and a barbed eponymous hook ready to snatch his current bounty, he’ll hunt down whatever quarry he’s paid for, and never think to question the motives of his patron. Many fear him, plenty claim to have seen him first-hand, some even say they’re his friends, but no one wants to hear that the Hook-Hand is looking for them...

It’s more accurate to say that Jack is a ghost, a shadow, a rumor come to life through patient, careful manipulation of fear and possibility. An amoral bounty hunter does indeed hunt the black alleys of the Obsidian City, and he wears the tale of the Hook-Hand like a magical cloak, a deception fostered by him to aid in his hunting. He is an elf who calls himself “Nothing.” He loved a human woman who did not return his affections and, in the way of some elves, he could not restrain himself. He forced himself on her and, after all was done, she threw herself from a window to her death below. Consumed by grief, he cut off his white hair and the long, tapered tips of his ears, rounding them into an approximation of human shape, and wandered on the edge of the Tall Grass for several decades. Unable to reconcile his deed, Chaos consumed him, and he embarked on a questionable path to reparation: If, as he believed, he was a predator, then as a predator would he make amends.

Keeping his head shaved he moved into the churning, ancient life of the Obsidian City and sought out those willing to pay gold for the capture and return of others. Hook-Hand Jack was born from his nightmares, an alter-ego he used to make deals from the shadows, built of stilts, the rasp of a long unused voice and a sickle sharpened to wicked edge. Silently he watches his prey as rash with fear of Jack they bolt, abandoning safety and

anonymity. At their most vulnerable he strikes, and they are handed over to those who desire them still dazed, never understanding who the lean, melancholy figure that captured them was. Deaf to any pleas, unyielding though not unkind, he remains only a stain on their dreams. The bounty is sent without comment to the wondering family of his heart’s fatal desire.

“Hook-Hand Jack”: Chaotic Elf Warrior 6/Mage 4. “Jack” is tall and lean, with a shaved head of white stubble. He has disfigured ears heavy with scar tissue, moon-colored eyes, straight nose, a gentle, implacable smile, a soft, rasping voice and an easy, dauntless grace. His armor and gear are black. At any given point when encountered there’s a 70/30% chance that he will be functioning as a Warrior or Mage. If a Warrior, he’ll be garbed in +1 leather armor and fight solely with his thornwood sword. If a Mage, he’ll use spells, wands and rod as needed. **Thornwood sword:** This elvish weapon has become corrupted. Shaped from a blackish wood, it acts as a +1 blade causing its target to save vs. Poison or suffer an additional die of crippling pain on a successful hit. If he focuses for one round, he can cause thorned ivy to burst from the sword, wrapping and incapacitating a single target if they fail a save vs. death. This effect can be used thrice daily. Uncorrupted elves recovering this blade might be able to restore it to greater (though different) powers. **Wands:** Levitation (16 charges), Paralysis (23 charges), Fear (12 charges). **Spells:** *Hold Doorway, Charm, Light, Slumber, Invisibility, ESP.* Ω





House of the Axe

4th-10th level Arduin adventure by Calithena

Also known as the Slaughter House, “all who have ventured within have died horribly.” (*Runes of Doom*, pg. 94)

Fight On! wishes to thank Emperor's Choice for permission to publish this adventure, which took one of the top prizes in a contest they ran many years ago. This is the first time it has seen print. It is suitable for play with most traditional fantasy roleplaying systems, though full explanation of some entries may require consulting the Arduin Grimoires. — Ignatius

Introduction: This adventure takes place at the House of the Axe, an eerie, abandoned manse in the heart of a forbidding swamp. As I have written the adventure, a famous ranger has guided the party to the edge of the lake where the House is situated. GMs are free to violate this and other presumptions to make this adventure work in their campaign. The GM is encouraged to set it in the same sort of inaccessible region it occupies in Arduin, where it sits on the edge of the Lost Lake, in the middle of No Name Swamp, at the heart of the Bonewood Forest. The Lost Lake, about two miles across, is

very like the Lochs of the Scottish highlands, “bottomless, cold, and dark.” No Name Swamp for its part combines “the worst that the north and swamps have to offer: cold, mud, and a brutal ecosystem where life is cheap and generally short...There is volcanic activity under the entire area while freezing temperatures roar through the swamp” (M. Burton). The Bonewood is not a particularly safe place either - a separate adventure might be made of the trip to and from the House.

History: A century or so ago, the mage Pthak sought seclusion from the world. He built a house in the middle of the No Name Swamp, and for a time lived peacefully there, protected from the terrors about him by his mighty magicks and worldly wealth. Yet inquisitiveness proved his undoing. During his career Pthak had seen the power of high technology in the hands of adventurers and among the peoples of other dimensions. He was not fooled by the protestations of the Technos that their practice was simply another form of magic. Pthak knew that as great as they were, these powers were somehow natural, and he wished to uncover their secrets for himself in order to create devices synthesizing wizardry and technological lore.

The Technos' League could not tolerate this infringement. The attempts of lesser mages to harness their knowledge could be laughed off, but Pthak was renowned for intelligence and persistence. After gentler attempts at persuasion were rebuffed, the Hierophantic Council of the Technos' League hired assassins. Disguised as a visiting wizard and entourage, the killers came to the House, promising valuable lore. Pthak's right hand, the dwarf warrior Loden Grimlock, suspected foul play, but his warnings could not overcome Pthak's lust to know. They struck before dinner was served, slaying Pthak and his household to the man. The wizard might have defeated them, but the assassins made sure to poison his cup, and save Loden the rest were no match for trained killers. The dwarf fought valiantly, taking all but two of the assassins with him, but was slain in the end. These last two staggered bleeding away from the house; only one made it as far as Rosewater to report success. The Technos' League paid off hand-somely, and the whole matter was hushed up and soon forgotten as the world went on its course.

But Loden's spirit, wrenched with anguish, could not go quietly. The dwarf had guarded others his whole life, and no-one under his charge had ever been slain before. Insane with grief over his own death and that of his master, Loden came back as a ghost, driven to keep Pthak's manse inviolate. The creatures of the swamp over time have proved too numerous to drive out, but the rare human interlopers, so far, have not. Over the subsequent century the manse has decayed, along with Loden's spirit. Some few explorers who have come as far as the front entry hall have seen Loden's great axe now hanging over the three doors leading inward, and 'axe' has replaced 'Pthak' as the house's eponym.

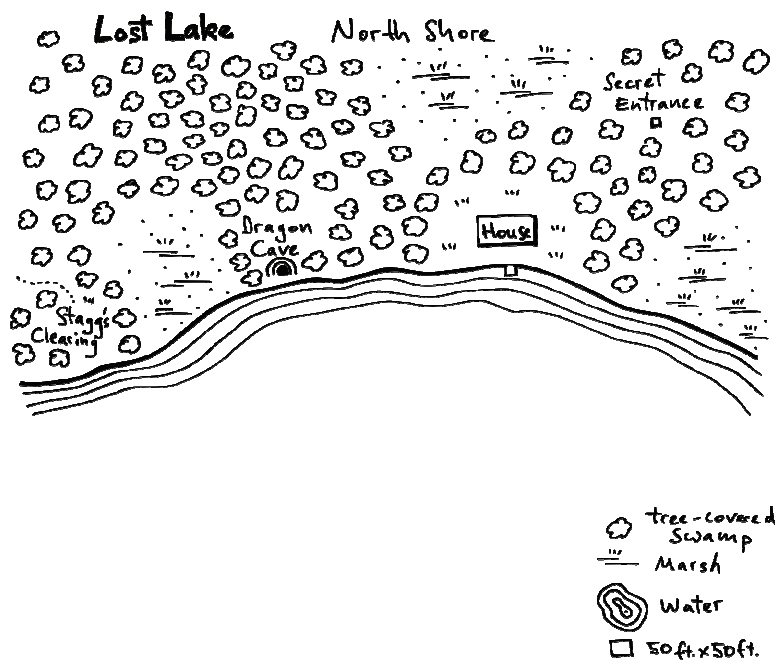
Slogging through the murk of No Name Swamp, the lake breaks abruptly upon you, cool waters lapping the toes of your mud-soaked boots. Torell Stagg, lean and hawklike, takes it in. "The Lost Lake," he says. No wonder: none of you saw it even from ten feet away. Gurk, Torell's dogsbody, looses a skiff from his back onto the water's edge. Gurk's crude, almost goblinoid features and thick pelt mark him as a Haggorym, though it seems impossible that this quiet sturdy creature could hail from so savage a race. You take in the cold lake and the thick mist clouds still dissipating from its surface as Torell points out your destination.

"There, to the left, on the north shore – that's the place." You turn to see a tall, dilapidated two-story house, perhaps forty feet tall, rising out of an open space in the bog. It is everywhere overgrown with vines and flowering creepers, and whatever paint once tinted it has rotted away, leaving only rich yellow stucco and dark sienna rooftile. Torell smiles grimly. "The House of the

Axe. Remember the deal. I have business of my own in the Bonewood. Gurk and I will be back in forty-eight hours, no more, no less. If you aren't here, I won't wait for you. I expect first pick of one item from the House, or, if nothing strikes my fancy, five hundred gold sovereigns. Now go, and may Skirin watch over you."

He turns away and then looks back. "Whatever you do, don't row out to the middle, and don't hug the shore. Just take a straight line from here to there and you shouldn't have much trouble." With that, he disappears into the bog with the Haggorym shuffling behind, leaving you to your fate.

The Edge of the Lost Lake: Take a minute here to make sure character sheets, spells, items, etc. are set. If heroes keep to a straight line there shouldn't be trouble. If they veer towards the center of the lake, feel free to assault them with a half-dozen elasmosaurs, a kraken, a pair of megalodons, a water demon, or similar monstrosity – they asked for it. Keeping the boat upright in a savage battle may require die rolls (1-2 on a d6, +1 for maritime experience, +1 for wilderness experience, +1 for high strength, -2 if character is trying to fight or cast spells). On the other hand, if they hug the shore, the Maggoth that normally dwells there is currently outside the House, so they will not have problems. Furthermore, the most plausible lookout (non-rower) should make a roll to see if they spot a black dragon's cave entrance in the rushes. If they decide to explore that instead of the house, well and good: go to area D-10 and assume the dragon is awake, hungry, and heard them coming because of the boat-noise. Unless they wake the monsters at the center of the lake, or discover and elect to penetrate the house through the dragon's cave, they will soon arrive at the Slaughter House's rotten dock...



Outside the House: Lethal Landing

Your skiff glides silently towards the shattered dock below the House of the Axe. It is a large structure, about forty feet tall, overgrown with vines and flowering creepers. What seemed to be windows are in fact decorative indentations, window-shaped but made from the same substance as the walls. A broad double-door, slightly ajar, is the only apparent means of ingress.

As the building comes into view you see that a horrible battle has recently taken place. More than a score of corpses are strewn about the swampgrass, weapons buried in their heads, arms torn loose from their bodies, rivulets of blood twisting their way down to the lake. The bodies are freshly slain, all humanoid, though few if any actually human. Half or more are swamp saurigs, big, stupid, muscular lizard men with long tails, axes clutched yet in their mortified claws; the rest are a roughly even mix of gnolls, gnores, and half-orcs. One gnoll abruptly frees itself from under a dead saurig and lurches up on its elbows, only to vomit out its life in blood and black bile. As your boat moves in towards the dock, the far side of the House comes gradually into view. Still more corpses lie there – and something else, a great wall of grey and yellow mottled flesh more than fifty feet long, feeding on the dead. Its black eyestalks flicker up to take you in, and its orange maw yawns wide even as your skiff slams into solid ground and digs a deep line in the boggy shore.

While the players take in the Maggoth on the shore (HD 12+1, hp 55 or roll, AC 5, Speed 15, Spit Acid 90' for 6d6 or Swallowing Bite for 2d12 + swallows on hit roll 2 greater than needed, take 1d12/round in acidic stomach until escape, horrible smell, ¼ damage from normal weapons, double damage from fire & easily set aflame, immune to acid and poison), the character in the rear of the boat should roll to hear two elasmosaurs (HD 6, hp 26, 17 or roll, AC 6, Speed 6/18 swim) approaching silently from the rear, attracted by the prospect of a midmorning snack. If he fails, both will take surprise attacks against that character. The Elasmosaurs will follow the part onto the shore, but the Maggoth will switch to attacking them as soon as they do so, whereupon they will probably flee (and the Maggoth will revert to attacking the PCs). Party members may decide to flee for the open front doors. A very fast character can do this in one round and all could do it in two. If that happens, the Maggoth may rumble after them, but provided they close the door behind them and take one of the three portals in fairly short order they should not have trouble. The Elasmosaurs will leave within fifteen minutes of the party's disappearance, but the Maggoth will stay for several hours, feasting on the leavings of the battle. If the party fights and wins, they may explore the

house grounds. Unless they make a lot of noise they should be safe doing this for up to half an hour; after that, begin rolling regularly for random encounters according to the following table.

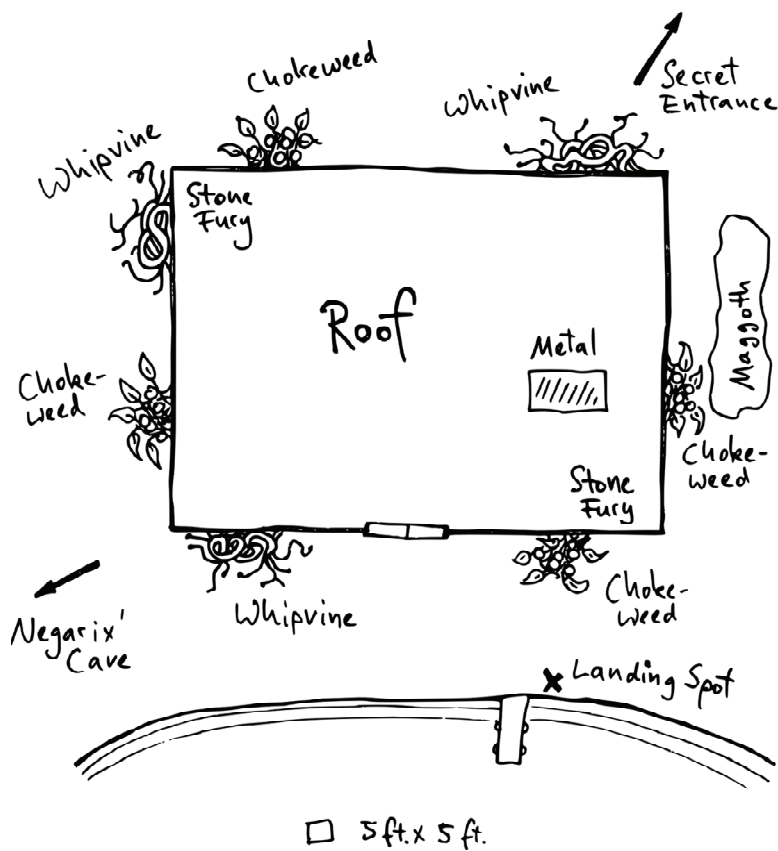
No Name Swamp Encounter Table

Moving parties have a 1 in 6 chance for an encounter every 15 minutes; loud parties have a 1 in 3 chance every ten minutes; camped and camouflaged parties check 1 in 10 each hour. Roll 1d20:

- 1-2 Natural Hazard
- 3-4. Dangerous Vegetation
5. Snakebit!
6. Black Dragon (Negarix - see D-10)
7. Deodanth Bandits (Azhrarn and Chuzel - see D-9)
8. 1d2 Elasmosaurs if within 20' of The Lost Lake; otherwise 1d4 Allosaurus or Megaraptors
9. 2d4 Grey Horrors
10. Greyish Ooze
11. Frost Hydra, 6 headed
12. Maggoth
13. 2d4 Morghouls
- 14-15. Swamp Saurig Warband: 4HD Leader + 4d4 2 HD Warriors (treat as Lizard People or see AGI)
16. Vampusa and Five Moondogs (Durnzhen - see B-25)
- 17-18. 3d4 Vroats
19. Will-o-the-Wisp
20. 2d4 Yellow Perils

Named creatures are inhabitants of the House out and about. Grey Horrors, Maggoth, Morghouls, Saurigs, Vroats, and Yellow Perils are detailed in *The Arduin Grimoire* and also occur elsewhere in this adventure. For **natural hazards** roll 1d4: 1 is quickmud (treat like pit trap, with risk of drowning if you fall in), 2 is boiling quickmud (as previous but also does 1d6/round to those immersed), 3 is a cloud of burning sulfur (1d6 and save vs. breath or 2d6 more when inhaled), 4 is a sudden cold snap (lasts 10-60 minutes and causes numbness, inattention, and possibly 1d6 subdual damage each 10 minutes). For **dangerous vegetation** roll 1d3: 1 is 1d4 whipvines (see outside of House, next page), 2 is a patch of chokeweed (ditto, or *Runes of Doom*), 3 is 1d20+10 rot slugs hidden in the slime and lichen. If **snakebit!** is rolled a small venomous snake must be avoided as per a trap before it bites a character's ankle. If it strikes save vs. poison with bonuses for hard boots and plate mail; efficacy of poison is up to the GM.

The Corpses: Characters looting the bodies may obtain normal weapons from them (axes, tridents, and nets from the saurigs, shortbows, arrows, axes, and daggers from the brigands), as well as d10 copper and silver pennies per brigand corpse. There are ten brigands still outside the Maggoth's gullet. The gnolls, gnores, and half-orcs wear badges on their cloaks, round red disks of



metal with golden eyes painted at their center. Any character with a ranger or thief-type background will know what they are, and they may roll to remember the sigil: these are the men of Zalag Yargoe, an infamous Gnoll bandit with a 15,000 gs reward on his head.

The House: The House of the Axe is a long, uniform rectangle, 45' tall, 90' deep, and 135' across the facing. Searching reveals no windows or doors other than the great double door, 15' tall, hanging ajar at its entrance. Its sienna-tiled roof has a modest slope, with cruel-looking female gargoyles vaguely reminiscent of harpies, at each of the four corners. Its walls are stuccoed stone three feet thick and magically reinforced. The building is easy to climb provided that the various patches of whipvine and chokeweed dotting its perimeter are dealt with. The whipvines will strike out at anyone within 20', and may pull characters near the chokeweed, which will then explode. Characters must inspect and have appropriate knowledge to recognize the plants as inimical before finding out the hard way. Whipvines look more or less like stout ivy, have 3 HD and AC 6, and roll to lash out at and entangle characters within 20'. They try to pull them towards their center once they are entangled, and do damage every round. Chokeweed is a blue-green leafy plant with yellow holly-like berries and plenty of pollen, 1d8 hp and AC 6. If caught in the 10' cloud of released spores characters must save or choke to death; even a successful save causes 1 point damage per round for d12 rounds. Orcs and half-orcs are immune, but

halfings take d4 per round for d20 rounds and are -4 on everything in the meantime. If burning (even magical burning) is used to clean it out, the cloud will be 20' and have full effectiveness, though the plant will burn.

Searching the lakefront west of the house for 'secret doors' eventually reveals the cave of the dragon Negarix (D-10). There is one other hidden entrance to the house, the patch of loam from which Durnzhen and his Moondogs (B-25) emerge to hunt at night. Characters searching thoroughly behind the house might find this on a very difficult check, or a regular one if they search for and find the hunter's track first. If characters start exploring the swamp in earnest like this, however, the GM should start rolling for random encounters. If characters scale the manse, read this:

The horrid feminine gargoyles seem to leer down at you hungrily as you approach the rooftop, though they do not move. The roof itself is made of the same heavily constructed and magically reinforced stone as the rest of the building, with one exception: a 10' x 20' strip of interlocking pieces of metal in the southwest quadrant.

This metal strip can only be opened manually from the inside, but it is significantly easier to bash in than the walls, breaking with about 30 points of appropriate damage. However, it is trapped with a horrible Blackfire Trap: anyone damaging or tampering with the metal must save vs. magic or take 1d8 damage and lose a level. This goes on every round for 15 rounds until a save is made as a ghostly black flame envelops the target! In addition, two of the statues will animate if the metal screen or roof are tampered with (HD 7, hp 20, 17, AC 2+2, Speed 6/18 flying, mindless magical construct, immune to petrification, 2 attacks with claws or breath a cloud of petrifying gas in a 60' cone, save or get stoned). If the trap, the furies, and the metal barrier are all dealt with, the characters will find themselves in area A-3.

In the House: Most encounters in the House of the Axe are pegged to particular locations. Random encounters may occur on the ground and basement levels. Unless characters leave doors open to let things through, random encounters should never occur on the apartment or dungeon levels. They occur on a 1 in 6 chance checked no more frequently than once every ten minutes. Roll 1d8 on the following table:

1. The Ghost!
2. 2d3 Grey Horrors
3. Greyish Ooze
4. 2d4 Morghouls
5. Vampusa and Five Moondogs (Durnzhen, B-25)
6. 3d3 Vroats
7. Will-o-the-Wisp
8. 2d3 Yellow Perils

The Ghost! The greatest recurring terror in the house is the ghost of Loden Grimlock. Loden is a cunning and vicious foe, bitterly resentful even after a century of the deception that led to his and his master's deaths. Loden has no set location within the House, patrolling it ethereally instead. To represent this a 'ghost chance' is specified for each room, right next to its name. This is the chance of encountering Loden along with whatever else is present. Loden's visitations become increasingly severe each time he is met with. In addition, if the party has encountered Loden even once and tries to leave by the front door, he becomes aware of it and blocks their way as per the 4th manifestation below. However, if the party leaves through the retractable roof in A-2 or the secret tunnel in B-29 Loden only has a 40% chance of realizing what is going on in time to stop them. If they escape from any exit he cannot follow. Loden does not know about the dungeon level, so if a party is found and enters it quickly from the basement level he will not know where they have gone. Of course, the only other

way out from the dungeon level is through Negarix' lair. Loden's manifestations progress as follows:

1st manifestation: Loden notices the party and tells the vampusa Durnzhen of their presence. Loden will stay ethereal, so the party should not even notice him unless they have some way to detect ethereal undead.

2nd: Loden appears before the party with eyes blazing, silent and ominous. This will be surprise unless the party has relevant detect abilities. He uses his *dread gaze* after appearing and then vanishes as soon as he has another chance to act. While he is doing this he will also use telekinesis to tear holy symbols, wands and staffs, and drawn weapons out of the hands of their users as a way of protecting himself (1 item/round, automatic).

3rd: Loden uses his telekinetic ability to open and close doors and guides five Yellow Perils (HD 5+1, AC 5, Speed 15, attack w/ poison bite (1d6 + save or 5d6 add'l), tail (1d12 plus constriction), or acid spit (30' with



10' cone front, 1d12), immune to acid, ½ from poison) to attack. He will manifest around the corner and use his *terrible moan* while he sends the centipedelings charging forward. He will disappear the round after moaning; if any PCs come into view he will take a free telekinetic attack against them as he returns to the ethereal.

4th: Loden arms himself and floats through walls to find the party, fighting to the death. Gamemasters are free to design additional encounters with Loden to torture and terrify the party before the final showdown if desired.

Loden Grimlock: 8th level Ghost Dwarf Warrior. Turns as 12 HD/special undead. Float 12, move from ethereal to incorporeal material at will. Can use telekinesis every round regardless of what else he does to grab objects and throw them. AC 2+4 and all non-magical and 50% of magical attacks (most magic weapons and spells) miss due to incorporeality. HD 8, 44 hp. Attacks with telekinesis and +2 magic axe, *dread gaze* (save or age d20 years), or *terrible moan* (save vs. fear or go into panic for 2d4 rounds). +3 on all saving throws and immune to fear, cold poison, sleep, all mind attacks, all death attacks, etc. Loden has a +2 axe which does double damage on 19-20, +2 full plate, a +1 shield, and a magic cloak which gives +1 to AC and saves. These are incorporeal with him when encountered but if he is defeated they materialize and can be claimed as booty.

Ground Level: The Slaughter House

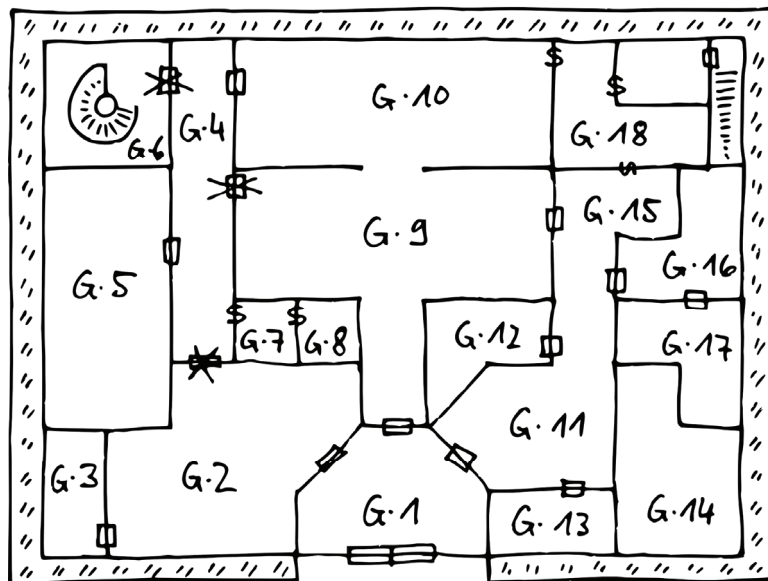
G-1. Entry Hall (Ghost Chance: 0%)

Coming through the loose double doors in front of the house you find a 30' by 20' room with the far corners cut diagonally. Beautiful parquetry is now ruined, though the three interior doors, of stout wood bound with brass, seem in good shape. Above the center door hangs an exquisitely constructed greataxe, dripping blood.

The doors are not trapped, though all are locked. Players will obviously be interested in the axe. The blood is fresh (gnollish). It detects as +3, which it is, but it is also doubly cursed: on a natural 1 attack roll, it twists on its haft and strikes its wielder for triple damage. When it is discarded or its wielder dies, it teleports back to this spot. Only powerful magic will reveal the axe's horrible curse. This was Loden's, and he placed the curse on it.

G-2. The Meat Locker (5%)

This largish room exudes a horrific charnel stench. A narrow path between mounds of rotting bone and meat lead to a smashed doorway. Grinning skulls, curdled eyes, maggot-infested mounds of flesh, scorpion tails, centipede heads, flayed and desiccated crocodiles, and other horrors protrude from the heaps of decaying flesh.

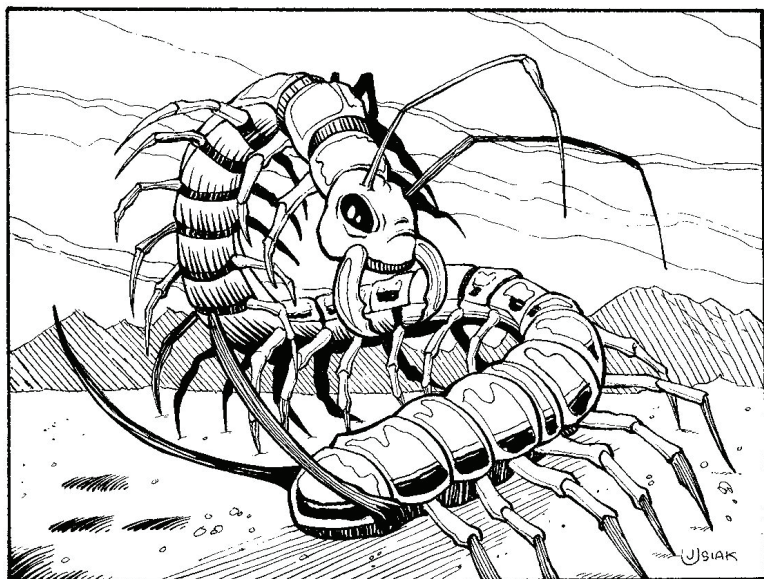


✕ smashed door
□ 5 ft. x 5 ft.

Loden telekinetically piles carcasses from the house in this room. There are five morphouls (HD 4+1, hp 22, 19, 16, 15, AC 3, Speed 9, attacks cause reg. damage plus rotting at 1 point per turn (cured by advanced healing or magic only), turn as wraith, immune to fear and paralysis, half damage from acid and poison, 1d10 from holy water) who will claw forth from the bodies and try to attack. The morphouls and indeed the entire room stink horribly. Digging through bodies forces a save to avoid contracting morphoul rot. Many dead Morphouls are in the pile, along with adventurers of various races, croc-odilians, vroats, yellow perils, grey horrors, and more obscure creatures. Extensive digging reveals the follow-ing: in the recessed west wall of the room, behind a mountain of corpses, there is an unlocked door leading to a cloakroom. In the center of the south wall, a twisting stone statue of a young dragon is covered by corpses – one of Negarix' nest-mates, turned to stone in ancient times by the guardians on Pthak's roof. Finally, those who declare that they are looking through the bodies for special items may find a pouch with 10-100 gold sovereigns 75% of the time or a minor magic item 25% of the time. GMs should roll on the random encounter table and/or start imposing additional saves against rot after a while if ghoulish characters seem determined to dig through the entire pile.

G-3. Coat Closet (0%)

This 10' by 20' closet contains several light and heavy crossbows hanging from the wall, a sheaf of old hunting spears piled up in the corner, and dozens of pegs containing old, rotten cloaks. It appears to have been a ready room for the manse's hunters in times of old.



Yellow Peril

The spears are still useful, but the crossbow strings have all rotted out. Inspection or magic detection reveals that one of the cloaks on the pegs in back is an intact +1 Cloak of Defense. This cloak belonged to Loden in life, and if the characters take it his ghostly form will lose its ethereal double (reduce AC and save bonus by 1). Taking the cloak forces an immediate 25% ghost chance check, as Loden is likely to notice his cloak vanishing.

G-4. Back Hall (5%)

Three of the five doors in this hallway are smashed. Dusty and bloody prints of every imaginable kind form trails across the floors, concentrating especially around the shattered northwesterly door.

If noise is made here or the open door to G-9 is passed, the Grey Horrors in that room will attack the party.

G-5. Parlor (5%) The door to this room is locked.

This long, tastefully appointed chamber is full of landscape portraits, dusty and somewhat rotten stuffed leather furniture, and a great billiards table, as well as a burning fireplace without a chimney. An elegant case of cut crystal glasses and a bar laden with crystal and silver decanters underscores the elegance.

Some small teak-and-silver boxes around the room contain ancient and decayed cigars. The cigars are no longer valuable, but the boxes could command 20 gs each. Two of the landscapes are minor masterworks by the painter Daeff Argurieff, which could be sold for 800 gs or more each in a large city. It would be difficult to loot the crystal without breaking it, and the pool table weighs half a ton. The fireplace sheds no smoke, nor for that matter heat: it is a minor magical decoration. Much of the liquor at the bar has evaporated, but two

unbreached bottles of high value remain: one of mind-bendingly potent (160 proof) Eye of the Beholder Bourbon, and another of the even more potent (190 proof!) and silky-smooth White Warg Vodka, which would curl the toes on an iron golem. These are worth 50-80 gs each to connoisseurs. (More information on each may be found in *The Lost Grimoire*.)

G-6. Stairway Down (5%)

Here a spiraling metal staircase leads down into darkness. It is only broad enough to pass single file.

The ground floor of Pthak's manse has a regular ambience of light caused by enchantments in the wood. This does not extend to the underground level where the servants lived, which was lit with oil and torches. Characters will have to provide their own light sources below. The staircase reaches area U-1, after 20 feet of descent.

G-7. Secret Chamber I (0%)

This nondescript and unfurnished room has no markings nor exits save a pair of eyeholes on the south wall.

These eyeholes currently open upon the rotting head of a Vroat, a horrid hybrid of giant toad and crocodile. Behind it lie other corpses, blocking the view of G-2.



Morghoul

G-8. Secret Chamber II (10%)

This nondescript 10' by 10' room has no markings nor exits save a pair of eyeholes on the north wall. Its only furnishings are a small wooden chair and simple table.

The eyeholes command a clear view of G-9. If the players have not been there, read the description below minus the last sentence. Otherwise there is nothing here.

G-9. Sitting Room (5%)

This room has recently been the scene of a horrible battle. The walls are scarred with fire and acid, and a monstrous twelve-headed hydra with crimson and ebony scales lies dead upon the floor. Strewn about the room are half a score torn, battered, and charred bodies of gnolls, gnorcs, and half-orcs. Brutally mauled and burned, their corpses and that of the hydra are already being devoured by four large gunmetal grey spider-scorpions. Their wicked stingers rise in anticipation as they look up at the fresher meat now arriving...

Remaining here long enough to inspect anything requires doing battle with four Grey Horrors (HD 5+1, AC 4, Speed 15, attacks with claws, bite, and sting, the last of which does 5d6 poison damage in addition to normal damage if no save is made, immune to poison, half damage from fire, acid, and cold). After these foes are dispatched, the corpse-littered room may be inspected in more detail. Once filled with very lovely furniture, nothing remains of it now save charred and bloodied bits of cloth and wood stuck in the room's corners. The bandits are from the same warband as the others, and like the others carry d10 cp & sp each. If inspected, it is clear that the hydra was overcome by main force, as many lesser strokes and several dramatic axe-wounds in its neck-stalks attest. Recent bloody boot-prints lead into G-10 and up to the eastern door, which is closed.

G-10. Dining Room (5%)

A grand mahogany table thirty feet long, flattened against the floor and so besmeared with dirt and blood as to resemble an abstract painting, takes up most of the center of this room. At the southern opening into the sitting room, fresh and bloody footprints track about everywhere in a ten feet cone from the door, but go no farther; the rest of the tracks are older. Torn paintings, shredded wallpaper, smashed chairs, and a thousand crystal shards from a once-spectacular chandelier gather dust in the corners. However, one intact door is set into the wall at the western end of the 20' by 50' dining hall.

This is Pthak's ancient dining hall, where the wizard was murdered. No traces remain of his body or the event and nothing of value is to be found. If characters find the secret door and listen at it they hear muffled conversation and occasional quiet clicking and scraping

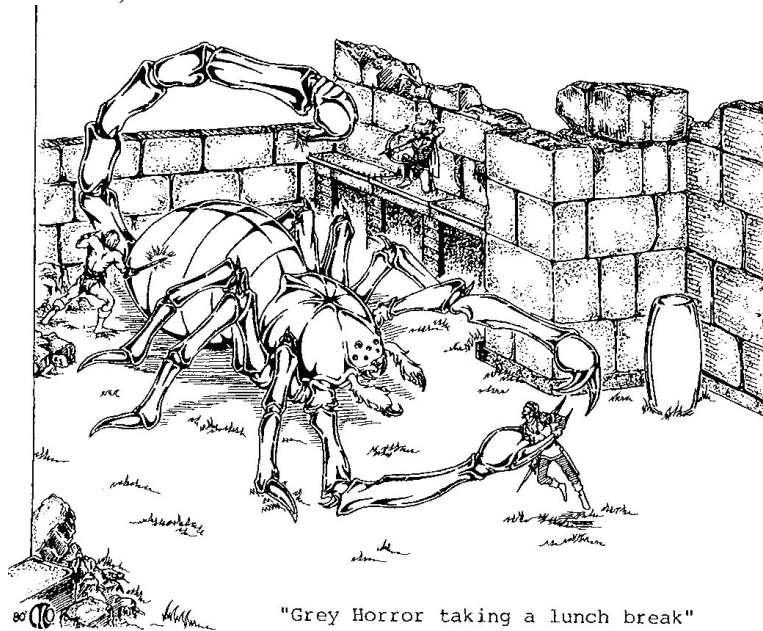
noises (Zalag Yargoe and his remaining crew trying to pick the locks to the upper story in G-18). If this room is entered before G-9, the Grey Horrors there will attack.

G-11. East Hallway, South Wing (5%). This dusty area remains relatively unmolested. A large open area with a cloak rack on the NW wall (running diagonally) and several doors are the only items of interest other than the tasteful oak paneling.

G-12. Butler's Quarters (5%)

This 10' by 20' room may have once been appointed in spartan elegance, but now its décor is just spartan. Termites, still present, are gradually eating the bed and dresser, which have collapsed under their own weight.

Players searching among the clothes in the rotten dresser may find a Gauntlet of Paralysis that Pthak made for his butler, allowing its wearer to deliver a paralyzing touch twice per day. Nothing else of note or value is in the room, and there are no other exits.



G-13. Hard to Find Good Help These Days (5%)

This frilly room is decorated with ornate furniture and pink and lavender lace. A maid's outfit lies over a mirror. In the rear of the room, a fine if ancient bed appears to have been tangled into a foul, twisted nest. The troll who occupies it, who has inadvertently donned the maid's old bonnet in his sleep, is even now rising to greet you!

The former maid's quarters has become the temporary nest of a foul troll (6+4 HD, AC 4, regenerate 3hp/round) traveling through the No Name Swamp. He starts in the southern diagonal part of the room and charges the party, hoping to kill them all. If the going gets too tough and escape is convenient he'll flee.

G-14. Chamber of Chaos (20%)

Opening the door into the 10' entry hall of a 20'x20' chamber spreading out to the south, your eyes are greeted with an amazing sight. The room is an unbelievable tangle of destruction, with sheets, furniture, stones, wood segments of the walls, skulls of fantastic beasts, smashed pottery, tangled and shredded tapestries, notched old weapons and shields, and here and there an odd coin covering the room from end to end. The room calls nothing to mind more than the depredations of a berserk air elemental outfitted somehow with claws.

Loden's former room was once the nicest chamber on the first floor, but is now completely ruined. Vague emanations of magic and unease fill this place due to its long occupancy by the mad and malign spirit of the house. However, unless the 20% GC is hit, nothing actually transpires. If the mess is searched small sums may be found (2-12 sc/gs per minute searched). If characters decide to organize and loot the whole mess their totals will come to 300 gold, 200 silver, and a healing potion, but this takes an hour and will bring on the ghost.

G-15. East Hallway, North Wing (5%)

As you come into the northern part of this long hallway, you see clear signs of recent humanoid activity. Bloody footprints mar the floor along the entire north end of the corridor (which ends in a cul-de-sac) and 10' downward from there, spattering blood before the northernmost doors in the hall on its east and west walls. There is a clear track going through the east door, but none going through the west nor leading into any walls.

The prints fill the corridor and cover the ground before the doors to G-9 and G-16. Anyone examining them realizes that the humanoids who came through cleaned their boots before moving on. Characters who listen at the secret door hear muffled conversation and quiet clicking and scraping noises as at G-10.

G-16. Accountant's Antechamber (10%)

This L-shaped room contains a large desk facing the door. To the north of the desk is the base of the L, which contains several drawers and cabinets; to the south is a large and thickly constructed iron vault door.

The cabinets and desk are full of papers detailing purchases, inventories, and so on. Characters who analyze these discover numerous spell components among the listings. In addition, many rare minerals and metals were bought at different times, as well as huge shipments of iron and stone. No amount of searching will reveal any sort of key or combination to the vault door, which is cast of four-inch-thick iron, sealed with a mundane lock of excellent quality, magelocked, and magically trapped. (Only two keys to this room existed,

one belonging to Pthak, the other to his accountant. The latter is lost, but the former may be found upstairs in A-5.) Breaking down the door is next to impossible (storm giant/titan strength might get a normal try). Magical opening spells can work (one for the mundane lock and one for the magical) but trigger a Blackfire trap on the caster/lockpick (does 1d8 and drains one level each round for up to 15 rounds until save is made). Each pick attempt or magical spell sets off a new Blackfire. (Smashing attempts do not.) Beyond the door lies Pthak's worldly treasure, unmolested after all this time...

G-17. The Vault (5%)

This 10' by 20' room is lined with four large chests at the ground level and shelves on the walls, as well as four large bolts of expensive cloth leaning against the west wall. On the shelves are several small coffer, many loose gems, and piles upon piles of rare and valuable swamp herbs, some rotted but others carefully sealed in jars and other containers. A hoard appears in the offing!

This room contains much of Pthak's non-magical treasure from a long and successful career. It includes:

- one chest containing about 50 gs worth of copper (a few thousand each of pennies, ha'pennies, and minums);
- two chests containing about 400 gs worth of silver coins each (mostly pennies, but with a liberal scattering of larger bucklers (8/gs), heaters (3/gs), and rounds (2/gs), as well as electrum ovals (2/gs), as well;
- one chest full of oddly shaped rocks, many with minor crystal growths. Pthak picked these up on strolls around the swamp; most are worthless, but careful searching reveals 2-4 worth 10-40 (90% chance) or 100-600 (10 % chance) gs each, either as gems or as fossils;
- two bolts of rubycloth (weighing around 15 lbs. each and worth 1000 gs each, fit to tailor a king);
- two bolts of finest silk (same weight, 500 gs each);
- four coffer of gold, containing 200 gs each;
- two coffer of finest dwarfish platinum, each containing 60 platinum stars (worth 15 gold each!);
- two coffer full of inexpensive gems, totaling 200 gems of an average of 5 gs value in all;
- several dozen silver and gold chains, totaling 400 gs;
- 40 gold bars, minted in Arduin, worth 25 gs each;
- one large and long coffer containing 89 adamantium lunars, rare coins worth 125 gold sovereigns each. These could be used to smith magic items, if somehow melted;
- a jeweled necklace worth 900 gs, next to a fine pair of silk gloves (these radiate magic and detect as +4 Gauntlets of Dexterity, but are actually -4 Gauntlets of Clumsiness. These never display their real magic until a life-or-death situation); and,
- several rare swamp herbs and plants, dried and stored in jars and bags. What has not rotted here would be very useful for potion ingredients and/or spell components (GM adjudication), and are worth perhaps 300 gs in all

G-18. Secret Chamber (5%)

Having found the secret door, you pass into a simple L-shaped room. Ahead of you a half-orc kneels before a wall, tinkering with something at its midpoint. Near him, a short, mean-looking gnoll in red plate mail and red shield with a yellow eye embossed upon it is flanked by another gnoll and a savage gnorc, both in lighter armor. Snarling with surprise, the humanoid leap to the attack!

Zalag Yargoe and his three surviving bandits (Jakkohl, Bludzu, and Null) are brutal and dangerous killers. Yargoe's head, worth 15,000 gs, is perhaps the single most valuable item in the House right now; those of his henchmen are worth 200 gs each in addition. They communicate with one another in Gnoll, their only shared language, during battle. Zalag and Null also know Common and Orcish. Bludzu and Jakkhol charge into battle with Zalag activating his boots of speed and then following. Null will hang back and fire his bow until the crowd collapses, at which time he will try to sneak around and stab people in the back. Zalag will attempt to flee if the alternative is death and he thinks he can get away, but he never surrenders; if Zalag runs the others will soon follow. Bludzu also never surrenders, but if the others are both dead Null and Jakkhol might do so to spare their lives, serving treacherously at best.

Bludzu is a 4th level axe-wielding Gnorc warrior with 25 hit points and AC 6. He is totally immune to fear and attacks in a berserk rage with +2 to hit and damage.

Jakkhol is a 4th level Gnoll Forester with 20 hit points, AC 5, and a +1 flail. He also bears a heavy crossbow, 20 gs, and three fragments of chrysoprase worth 35 gs each. He is an expert tracker and able to move unseen.

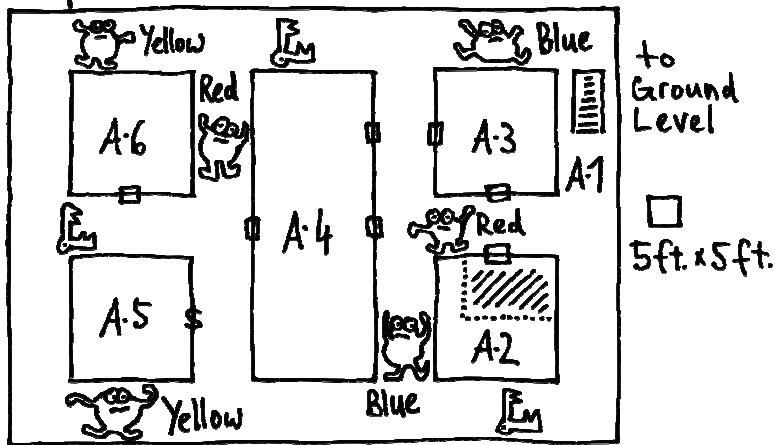
Null is a 5th level Half-Orc Thief with AC 6 and 23 hit points. He is an expert shot with his small bow and has a +1 *Ring of Protecting*. He also has 150 gs, a gold & ruby earring worth 450 gs, a 50' silk rope and the group's last two remaining magical healing poultices. If he sneaks up behind someone with his dagger and lands a successful blow (at +4) he does triple damage.

Zalag Yargoe is a Gnoll superhero (8th level Warrior) with a +2 axe, +4 vs. goblinoids who usually gets double attacks due to his magic boots (give 10 rounds of speed per day, 8 left today). He has 42 hit points and AC 2+5. He wears +2 plate mail and has a *Potion of Heroic Exploits* which he will drink if pressed, but his most potent item is the Shield of the Eye (+3, Chaotic, Intelligent, can speak or communicate telepathically as well as perform clairvoyance 3x/day, bearer cannot normally be surprised, locate objects within 120'). He has 100 gs and 2300 gs worth of gems on his person.

Six months ago, Yargoe's band teamed up with that of Gruesam Bloody Jaws to plunder a military supply caravan moving between Rosewater and Khurahaen. While counting loot and eating captives, Gruesam let the location of the House slip (?) to Zalag, intimating that he and his band would be the first to loot it next time he was bored of the easy pickings on Arduin's roads. When Null joined Yargoe's band, the gnoll decided to attempt to upstage his more famous ogrish colleague, and the result is this encounter. Because Null was attempting to pick the lock on the secret door when the party entered, it should be much easier to find than normal.



Apartment Level



EM Metaljaw Bubble Man

Upper Level: Pthak's Apartments

A-1. The Upper Halls. Ghost Chance: 5% each entry

The open spaces on the upper floor are paneled in light-stained oak with dark-stained moulding. Next to the stair painted white walls, gone ivory with age, rise on your left; this appears to be an interior room or apartment of some sort, though no door is immediately visible.

All interior walls are magically reinforced. The doors and frames on this level are stained the same color as the moulding and magelocked. An opening charm will open them smoothly (except when they are trapped) but the only other way is through the difficult and noisy process of chopping them down. This is problematic because Pthak's guardians are still quite active. These constructs include four Metaljaws, large, bear trap-like golems, and six Bubble Men, two each of blue, yellow, and red. When PCs first enter, none of these creatures are visible

or aware of the PCs. That will change quickly! These mindless constructs follow a program: wander randomly; whenever you see someone who isn't Pthak, get rid of them; investigate disturbances in the hallways; don't go into the rooms for any reason. So, whenever a party comes within sight of a Bubble Man or Metaljaws, that construct moves to investigate and then attack; if truly loud vibrations are created (chopping down doors, battle), every creature on the level will move to investigate the source of the disturbance. This could get very ugly very fast, like an eighties video game, if the players stand and fight, but if they make their way into the rooms instead they should be okay: after 2 melee rounds of waiting outside a door, the constructs return to their 'wander randomly' routine. Once there is a disturbance they all start moving until they see something. Stealthy parties coming around a corner will only be spotted if constructs face them (roll randomly). **Bubble Men** have HD 1+2, AC 7, and float about at Speed 12. They self-destruct to unleash devastating area attacks; if slain with missiles, etc. before they get close they will explode where they are destroyed. **Red** bubble men blow up with a 60' diameter cloud of sleep gas that lasts 1d100 minutes; even if save is made victims will be woozy for 1d4 rounds and at -2 on everything. **Yellow** bubble men explode in poisonous gas (save or take 8d6) in a 45' diameter, while **Blue** bubble men simply explode in a 45' diameter 8d6 fireball (save for half). **Metaljaws** have HD 8, AC 2+2, Speed 6/Jump 12, and do 2d8 damage on a successful attack (it's a giant bear trap closing on you!). They are immune to fire, acid, poison, and non-magical weapons, as well as all mental effects and life drains. Cold does not damage them but instead paralyzes them 1 round for each full 5 points of damage inflicted. If taking a leaping charge they can move 24 and take a big chomp in the same round.



A-2. Observatory (Ghost Chance: 10%)

Beyond this door is a wondrous astrological laboratory. Within are a great telescope, a massive model of the solar system some 15' across, and a small writing desk and bookshelf. The telescope is mounted on a giant metal frame and stretches up 20' from the ground even in its current, retracted position. A seat allows one to look through its eyepiece in comfort and record notes on a built-in metal desk. Above its lens, a sheet of metal 10' wide by 20' long replaces the normal ceiling. The model of the solar system is perhaps even more impressive, showing Khaas in its orbit around Syraath and surrounded by its silver, red, and blue moons, along with a long and odd orbit stretching to the limits of the system with a strange black ball upon it. The model is incomplete, however, showing only sun, planet, and moons: the rest of Arduin's solar system is not shown.

The telescope and solar system model are both items of wonder, but probably much too large for any party to recover. Each would be worth a small fortune if rescued (GM adjudication required, but tens or hundreds of thousands of sovereigns would not be out of line.) Using the scope requires an open roof and nighttime. One or several rolls (perhaps on those old tables for figuring out technological wonders) will be required to actually understand this device. Failing that one may pull levers at random. In this case roll 1d10: 1 rotate left, 2 rotate right, 3 raise scope, 4 lower scope, 5 extend scope (20% chance to break if ceiling closed), 6 contract scope, 7 adjust focus, 8 fire five magic missiles at ceiling (there are 44 charges remaining on this device, which is integral to the scope and cannot be removed), 9 activate shield spell on person sitting in the chair, 10 retract metal roof. Retracting the roof allows people to get out that way and use the telescope at night; if left open, it may eventually also let horrid flying beasts (will-o-wisps, flying bog octopi, etc.) into the upper floor. The bookshelf and writing desk contain Pthak's astrological and astronomical notes. These books are bulky, weighing about thirty pounds, but are worth perhaps 500 gs and may have use as references to some characters. The telescope radiates magic at its base; the solar system model does not. The only other magic in the room is on the metal sheet, which is trapped with a Blackfire spell on the outside (see "The Roof" for details.) This trap will not activate from the inside even if violence is used against the roof.

A-3. Library (10%). The doors to this room each have traps which go off whenever opened from the outside by anyone other than Pthak. (Acid Web Projector: fires 10' wide, 25' long acidic webs (entangle plus 1d6 acid damage/rd.) A dweomer on the doors can be detected. Acid projectors are not triggered by leaving from the inside.

Passing into Pthak's library, you are overwhelmed at the number and quality of volumes here available. Thick, brass-bound tomes, slender volumes in red dragonskin, and piles upon piles of black-bound vellum librams stack endlessly on the high shelves everywhere about this room. Manuals of magic, of history, of genealogy, of the rudiments of higher technology, of gemstones, of demons, and many other subjects are all here available.

These volumes are valuable and heavy. The whole collection (not including Pthak's spellbooks) is probably worth in the neighborhood of 15,000 gold sovereigns. The collection as a whole weighs well over 600 pounds, however. A very careful search will reveal that astrology and alchemy texts are underrepresented in the collection and that the books dealing with 'techno magik' are out of sequence and incomplete. Pthak's spellbooks should be quite a find, though their exact contents are left up to the GM. Some of these spells should be distinctive and unique (perhaps taken from the *Arduin Grimoires*), and you should have a generous selection of normal spells available as well: perhaps 2d4 of each appropriate level up to 6th or 8th (depending on your rules). The 5th and 6th level spellbooks are in D-6 far below, however.

A-4. Laboratory (5%)

This cavernous 70' by 30' chamber is filled from end to end with shelves and tables filled with rare herbs and metals, potions, strange half-constructed devices, alchemical concoctions, and perhaps a score of books. To those who lack arcane lore it seems a wizard's workshop, but magi recognize that it is something more: in this place spellcraft has been mixed with some foreign art, haphazardly, to what end you cannot gainsay. However, your reverie of inspection is abruptly interrupted by a massive zombie, sewn together from the flesh of dozens of different corpses, lurching out of its century-long rest with seven skeletons at its sides.

Anyone who has seen a Flesh Golem or knows what one is will realize what the "zombie" actually is. The "skeletons," however, require deliberate study and a roll to notice strange chalk-marks and hints of wire at their rear. None of the creatures detect as undead, however, and only the Golem detects as magical. These are not actually skeletons at all, but technological constructions called "shock bones" which run as automata and try to grapple their victims and explode in an electrical blast – with the side effect of regenerating the Flesh Golem! Golem: 45 hp, AC 6, Speed 9, damage 2d6 and can smash strong objects, can only be hit by magic weapons, regenerated by lightning/electricity, immune to all other spells except fire and cold magic which slow it to Speed 3 for 1d6 turns. Shock Bones: HD 1, AC 6, Speed 12, if its attack hits roll damage and then roll a second attack to see if it grapples and blows itself up for 3d6 in a 10'

diameter area, if it is killed it automatically blows up in the same way, only takes 1 point damage from piercing weapons and ½ damage from slashing weapons, immune to all mind-affecting and life/death/undead-affecting spells. The shock bones will delay or even forfeit attacks so as to move with the Golem. Hopefully a cleric or paladin will burn a valuable turning attempt on this crew before the electrical explosions make it obvious that they are not what they seem. The Flesh Golem will move to attack the nearest combatant, and the skeletons will stay around him in a “U” pattern (occupying every square except his front) as they go.



There are no traps here. Investigation makes it clear that Pthak was experimenting beyond the bounds of normal arcane lore. Characters familiar with high technology will recognize that Pthak was trying to synthesize it with magic. Little of this work was yet complete when Pthak was slain. However, a few odd trinkets are still present:

- The missing texts on alchemy and high technology are here. The former are easily worth 1000 gold sovereigns; they weigh perhaps forty pounds in all. The latter are even more valuable and include courses in mechanical and electrical engineering with numerous notes and applications and the lab manuals of two high-level technologists. Taken together with Pthak's brilliant if often misled musings on magical/technological synthesis, these books and papers are worth perhaps 2500 gs in all, though their weight again is about fifty pounds. If the Technos' Guild discovered that such things were in PC hands, however, they would offer a choice between a reasonable buyback of all the materials (at 2000 gs, possible haggling up to 2250) or a new batch of hired assassins. Remember, as far as the Technos are concerned, these materials are theirs!

- A Hand Laser with seven charges (does 20 hp/shot).
- Two wind-up toys that walk by somersaulting. These would fetch perhaps 50 gs each as curiosities.
- Three doses of *Forkham's Fabulous Fast-Acting Memory Potion*, which provides a perfect photographic memory of the day before it is drunk for that day and the day afterwards. Aids spell learning, and see the *Lost Grimoire*.
- A beaker of holy water (3 vials equivalent)
- 2 vials of *Oil of Instant Immolation* (3 minutes after spread on a small area it bursts into super-hot flames, doing 6-60 damage and melting steel. See the *Arduin Grimoire*).
- Potions of Super-Healing and Breathe Water.
- One stone which explodes with a temporarily deafening thunderclap when thrown.

A-5. Pthak's Bedroom (15%) The secret door to this room is magically locked and reinforced. It is also trapped with a Prismatic Defense Alarm. Opening the door without either disarming the trap or saying the password (“Skull Tower” – this is not recorded anywhere in the House and can only be learned by magical means) produces an audible alarm at an odd vibratory frequency that will attract every remaining Metaljaws and Bubble Man. This alarm also triggers prismatic walls to cover the entire inside of the bedroom's east wall; they will remain in existence for two and a half hours after triggering. Pthak's room also is proofed against teleport/dimension door.

Pthak's bedroom is both sumptuous and elegant, though somewhat diminished now by a century's worth of dust. The room is dominated by a large bed, 15' square, which occupies the center of the room's western wall. Various dressers and wardrobes take up the rest of the room. In each of the eight corners of the chamber a small mirror cutting off the corner and facing the room's center dully reflects the whole complex' muted ambient light.

The room's silks are old and rotten now, as are most of the clothes in the various drawers. However, certain of Pthak's magical adjuncts still remain in this chamber. Characters searching the night-table on the south side of the bed will discover a large cut-crystal decanter, filigreed with gold, with a faint smell of evaporated whiskey within (300 gs value). Those searching the top drawer of the nightstand will discover a Potion of Wholeness (restores ALL lost hit points) and a Potion of Spellpower (allows drinker to recover 8 levels worth of spells immediately) within, as well as the key to G-17. Finally, in the bottom drawer of one of the dressers an intricately carved teak box lined inside with blue silk (45 gs value) contains three expensive necklaces of gold and ruby (1500 gs value each) and two of platinum and emerald (2500 gs value each). Finally, the mirrors are magical: despite their dull sheen they are made of mithril and serve as Teleport Wards for the room.

A-6. Trophy Hall (10%). The door is trapped with an Acid Web Projector like that at A-3.

Within this chamber is a spectacular collection of curiosities: mounted bodies, statues, pelts, a shield, and three pedestals covered with glass, set in a triangle in the room's center, upon which rest arcane oddments.

There are nine wall-mounted pieces and three pedestals to examine here. Moving clockwise from the door entry, these objects are as follows:

Mounted Phraint: A tall insectal warrior, with green chitin and a sharp face, stands ready to leap into battle here, javelin ready to release in one hand and two-handed sword half-drawn in the other.

Shield: Embossed with the arms of Talismonde, capital city of Arduin, this is a +2 Shield that can automatically block any single attack if its bearer forgoes his own. Taking the shield off the wall triggers a spear trap in the roof above unless it is disarmed.

Urn: This ancient piece of pottery is marked with dire sigils of the Black Pantheon (aka Cthulhu Mythos). Within is the staked heart of a vampire Pthak slew who served these fell masters.

Mounted Dragon Head: This laminated dragon's head with scales still intact is from a rare breed, having violet scales and golden-red eyes with slit pupils. The head is truly massive, and the dragon which once wore it must have been truly terrible to behold in life.

Crossed Swords: These swords do not radiate magic, but they are made of the silvery-blue metal Stellaine, which gives them +1 attack and allows them to hurt monsters affected by silver or magical weapons.

Obelisk: Fifteen feet tall, this ominous splinter of ancient black stone is covered with chalky glyphs. It radiates an aura of malaise and insecurity when persons approach within 5'. If they insist on touching it anyway, they must make a save vs. wands or go insane. Attempts to decipher the runes without touching the obelisk require a save vs. spells. If it is missed the character is afflicted with a confusion spell, but if it is successful the character gains a permanent +1 to Intelligence and a deep and harrowing understanding of the obelisk's malevolent nature. Only one character can do this and if the party spends too long on research it starts trying to charm them into touching it. This is another device Pthak recovered in his adventures against the Black Pantheon.

Mummy: This free-standing, dried-out human corpse was once the wizard Ashmor, one of Pthak's rivals. Despite the inevitable panic that mummies cause among PC's, this one is just a mummy – a dried out human corpse with no special features – dressed in once-rich but now thickly embalmed and dusty silks.

Mounted Thaelastra: Another bit of Pthak's taxidermy, this creature is a bizarre alien. Standing 7' tall, it is completely hairless, with milky-white skin, green, two-pupilled eyes, and Buddha-like ears. It wears a red jump-

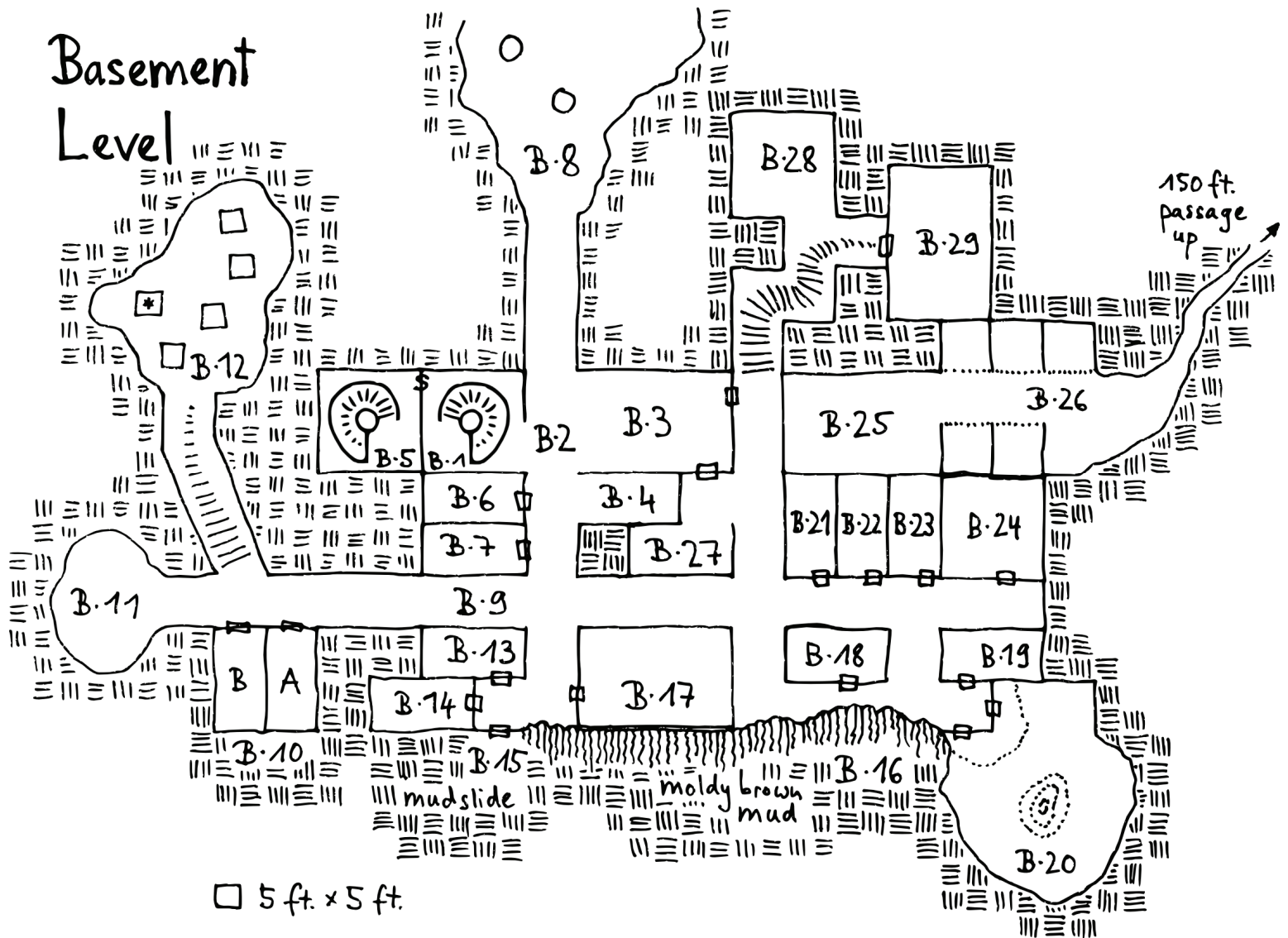
suit and carries an odd tech weapon in its right hand. (The Thaelastra are interstellar slavers. This creature was the source of Pthak's laser pistol; the tangling-weapon it bears is destroyed, and characters investigating it will note the crude steel plates used to patch it together. The jumpsuit is still useful, and functions as +2 non-magical leather armor. The Thaelastra's body will fall apart while removing the jumpsuit.)

Iron Barrel: This large, sealed iron barrel looks somewhat strange and unremarkable, but is in fact a complex mechanical mini-submarine! Particularly intrepid players whose GMs don't mind doing some extra work might use this to investigate the Lost Lake.

Pedestal 1 – Twisting Cube: On this pedestal rests a particolored cubic puzzle with nine sections per side, manipulated by twisting the sides. This is a dangerous cursed item. Should a party member pick it up, they will feel compelled to try to solve it – they may make a saving throw to put it down in the first few minutes of futzing with it only, after that no save. Roll every half-hour against intelligence to see if it is solved, or else hand the player a Rubik's Cube and tell them to solve it in real time while the adventure progresses. The curse on the item is such that the character will only put it down to defend herself, and even then will always effectively forfeit the first round of combat putting away the Twisting Cube and drawing her weapons and/or shield. After combat she will resume trying to solve it. Once the cube is solved, it will teleport away to bedevil someone else. If the character tries to beat it by breaking off a corner and reassembling its pieces, it will explode in a 10 die fireball (no save for person under its curse) before teleporting away and reassembling elsewhere. Remove Curse gives the person holding the cube a second saving throw to rid themselves of it.

Pedestal 2 – Heavenly Mead: A single golden cup sits on this pedestal, full of a fresh and richly fragrant mead. It radiates magic but not evil. Only 5th level and higher divinations and wishes will reveal its true properties. If it is drunk, the player should roll high/low to raise/lower his character's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma 1d6 each. If any characteristic is reduced to zero, the character dies. The cup will disappear after the mead is drunk, or if it is packed away for later use. Only one character may drink, and a mortal who drinks heavenly mead twice in their life dies instantly and irrevocably.

Pedestal 3 – Claw of the Ghoulish Queen: Under glass here is a slender, feminine hand, seemingly intact despite its advanced state of putrefaction. If a character is willing to hack their own hand off and replace it with this one, they will gain a claw attack which does normal damage as well as causing paralysis and morghoul rot unless a saving throw is made. The claw radiates both magic and evil, and will continue to radiate both after it is attached to even a good character's stump.



Basement Level: The Lurkers Beneath

Unlike the upper levels, which are dimly lit by Pthak's ancient enchantments, the basement level is dark. Because of Loden's tendency to let strange monsters into the manse and let them forage upon one another, this lower level is especially thick with bloodstains, bones, and rot, the refuse of a century of random violence. Be sure to describe it in full and gruesome detail as the players march along: bones kicked aside in the hallways, boots stuck in mounds of flesh, and so on.

B-1. Jumping Jaws (Ghost Chance: 5%)

A colony of Vroats currently wanders the cluster of rooms at the bottom of the stairs, looking for something to eat. If adventurers are moving silently or scouting ahead, they will hear the toad-crocodiles moving about in areas B-2, B-3, and B-4 and may plan accordingly. If the Vroats become aware of approaching adventurers (automatic if no precautions taken) they all gather in B-2, hiding just out of sight of the doorway. In this case they attack the first character(s) through the door with a +2

to surprise. If the adventurers reach the bottom of the stairs without being noticed, they will see the Vroats moving around in the hall, kitchen, and pantry from the bottom of the stairs. The room itself is a simple 20' x 20' chamber, occupied mostly by the spiral iron staircase.

B-2. West Corridor (5%)

This corridor runs N-S along the length of the basement level, ending in the sulfurous boiler cave (B-8) at its north end and in the muddy cave-in at its south. Dripping, stinking pipes run from B-8 into B-3. When the area is first encountered there will be six Vroats (HD 4+1, AC 5, Speed 9/Jump 15, bite for 2d6, immune to fear, half damage from acid & poison (or +4 save)) hanging about the general vicinity of the kitchen/pantry/staircase area: two in B-2, three in B-3, and one in B-4. All will attack as a single unit.

B-3. Kitchen (5%)

Two doors open into this three-walled 20' by 30' chamber. Piping snakes around the corner of the room's

open western end, dripping horrible yellow water that stinks like rotten eggs into two huge stone sinks. A large, wood-burning stove occupies much of the middle of the north wall, its clogged chimney filled with mud and dirt. Counters and hanging copper and iron cookware cover the rest of the room. The floor is strewn with the dried blood, bones, and chitin of various creatures.

Except for the Vroats detailed above there is nothing here of interest. The chimney came out right behind the dining room on the north end of the house. It has long since filled in and grown over with plants, however, and attempts to use the stove will create great amounts of smoke. Neither of the doors are locked or jammed.

B-4. Pantry (0%)

This 10'x20' room, open at the east, was the house's pantry. Bones, blood, smashed shelving, and ancient, long-rotten foodstuffs are strewn about the floor. The northeast corner contains an especially thick pile of shelving and crockery, along with some strange detritus.

There is nothing here of interest except the pile. If a PC goes to investigate it, have them roll to notice that the pile covers a large patch of bright purple cauliflower bunches, set tightly together. If the pile is disturbed (with knowledge of the mold or otherwise), it will collapse, and the disturbing character and any adjacent to the pile (i.e. in the back 10' of the pantry) will get a faceful of Purple Mold! Characters afflicted with such must save vs. poison or find their bodies starting to rot away at 1 hp/round for the next d100 melee rounds. Only Remove Disease or the topical application of a curative potion (no healing, but stops rot) can stop its progress once it takes hold. Characters wearing leather armor or other non-magical clothing made from animal products should save for those as well.

B-5. Secret Staircase

Ghost Chance: 5% when the room is entered from B-1 only. Loden does not know of this room, and if the PC's go from B-1 to here quickly and close the door, the dwarf's ghost cannot follow. The spiral iron staircase here is single file; if the characters came here from the ground floor mention that it is identical to the one descending to B-1. It leads to area D-1.

B-6. Kitchen Servants' Quarters (0%)

This 10' by 20' cell contains two bunk beds, three large dressers, and a writing table. All are now quite collapsed and in varying stages of advanced decay.

The door to the room is stuck. Searching the dressers turns up stashes of coin, the servants' savings: 48 silver pennies in the first, 22 sp and 4 gold sovereigns in the second, 36 sp and one 50 gs gem in the third.

B-7. Head Cook's Quarters (0%)

This door is closed firmly but not stuck. Hearing checks with a penalty will be necessary to hear the Morghouls within, who ducked away from the Vroats outside. These Morghouls are primed for a fight.

This room, draped in now-rotten middle-class finery, is redolent with the stink of death. A single collapsed bed and an old table greet your eyes, but the stink does not come from them – it rises rather from the three rotten-faced ghouls leaping towards you!

Morghouls: HD 4+1, hp 16 each, AC 3, Speed 9, attacks cause reg. damage plus rotting at 1 point per turn (cured by advanced healing or magic only), turn as wraith, immune to fear and paralysis, half damage from acid and poison, 1d10 from holy water. They have no special goods, and there is nothing of value in the room save an above-average tapestry of a maiden and a unicorn. This is somewhat frayed with age but still in decent shape, and might command 200 gs if cleaned. It weighs 50 lb.

B-8. Bubbling Mud Cave (5%)

Old, corroded piping leads north from the kitchen down 30' of rough-hewn corridor into a large, dark cave. As the cave grows closer, the floor becomes spongy under your feet. The stink of sulfur is nearly intolerable at the cave's entrance, and without some protection going any farther will be a health hazard. The pipes reach back into the cave and plunge into its muddy floor.

This bubbling cave, roughly 50' by 60', has no exits, though characters will not quite be able to see its northeast corner from the landing. If the room is entered, the sulfurous stink requires a save vs. poison at +2 from each party member to avoid becoming nauseated (-2 to everything for d6 turns). In addition, there are two boiling quickmud pits in the room (PCs get rolls both to notice and avoid falling in). Once in, the character takes 1d6 damage per round and must roll to swim out or drown in 3d4 rounds. Those aiding non-magically run a risk of falling in themselves. To make matters worse, there is a Sulfuric Mud Elemental (HD 8, hp 39, AC 3, Speed 15, attack does 1d6 normal and 2d6 acid damage (armor must save or be destroyed), non-magical weapons which hit it must save or be destroyed nauseating stink as per room, immune to poison, sleep, and paralysis) living in the cave, who will assault the first party member to travel 25' or more within. It will attempt to bull rush characters into the boiling quickmud pits when opportunity presents. No treasure.

B-9. Central Corridor (5%)

This long corridor runs about 170' from end to end. Because it is open and exposed, and is the major thoroughfare of the basement level, loiterers should be exposed to wandering monsters more frequently than is

otherwise the norm for the House. Roll every minute or so. Its local details should be described as the party encounters them rather than all at once.

B-10. Men's and Women's Privies (0%)

As mind-numbingly bad as the stink may be in other parts of this swamp dungeon full of rotting corpses, it is worse here. Characters opening the doors to either privy (clearly marked with the usual silhouettes) force the whole party to save vs. poison to avoid the -2 to everything nausea for d6 turns. Both of these rooms contain outhouse-style toilets, sinks with no running water and empty buckets. There are three items of graffiti written on the rear wall of the men's privy (10B): "Dragon in the Deeps", "Dungie Was Here", and the letter A enclosed within a circle. Nine giant bombardier beetles (HD 2, hp 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 8, 7, 6, 5, AC 5, Speed 12, bite or spray acid in 10' cone for 1d6) live in the mounds of ancient offal in the cavern below the toilets, periodically scavenging the dungeon for food. They will assault characters who spend more than one or two rounds in a privy, but must come up through the toilets one at a time, making them vulnerable to parties commanding positions over the jacks. One will exit through each toilet (one in 10A and one in 10B) each round. The beetles know how to open the doors and if the PCs only have one privy open the beetles will emerge from the other soon enough as well. They are mindless combatants and will seek simply to eat PCs, dragging corpses back down through the toilets to feed the larvae below. They have no treasure in the cesspit below.

B-11. Shower Cave (5%)

The long central corridor of the basement level ends in a chalky-walled cave with a tiled floor, tapering out 20' from the entrance to a 30' wide rear wall. A large metal trough hangs from the ceiling, dripping water through several old pipes with spray-nozzle heads. Greenish slime hangs over the side of the ancient water-container.

Despite appearances, there is no danger here. The green slime is unexceptional cave sludge.

B-12. Naga Baths (5%)

The floor of this large natural cavern is covered with red tiles, offset by the green-tiled borders of eight small bathing pools. Several benches and urns are scattered about the edges of the cavern, and the fixtures of the cave are in surprisingly good repair, though the pool-water seems somewhat brackish. The water in the two rearmost pools is boiling, creating a mild steamy haze. From the pool on your rear left, about forty feet from the entrance, a half-dozen identical nagas rise, crimson-banded black bodies topped by hideous serpentine heads! Waving their bodies in precise unison, they appear to be casting some kind of spell...

Within the top left pool (marked with an S on the map) reclines a Spirit Naga. An unwholesome being of chaos and evil, she will prepare for the party when she hears them coming down the steps. She will cast Mirror Images (getting 5) and Shocking Bite (adding 1d8+6 of electrical damage to her bite the first time it lands). Once they arrive she will start moving around the room peppering the party with Lightning Bolts and Mystic Missiles, counting on her mirror images to keep her safe until her foes are vanquished. As a last resort only she will use Rosy Mist of Reason, or perhaps even Disguise to assume the form of a Water Naga while using her Charming Gaze to convince others of her harmlessness. Spirit Naga: HD 9, hp 32, AC 5, Speed 15, Poison Bite (1d6 + 3d8 poison, save for half), can Charm as spell with her gaze, infravision, spells (as 6th level caster): Mystic Missile, Shocking Bite, Detect Magic, Rosy Mist of Reason, Mirror Images, Invisibility, Lightning Bolt, Disguise. Disguise is a persistent illusion which totally transforms one's appearance and requires magic to detect (i.e. it can't just be 'disbelieved'). The Rosy Mist of Reason causes everyone, including the caster, to save vs. magic at -4 or stop fighting and start discussing things 'rationally'. The Naga's treasure glitters on the bottom of the pool: 1200 gs, 3 eye agates worth 7, 9, and 10 gs, one piece of smoky quartz worth 30 gs, three beautiful Aquamarines worth 700 gs each or 2500 gs as a matched set, a +1 Scimitar of Spell Storing (currently contains Blindness), and a Potion of Invisibility.

B-13. House Servants' Quarters I (0%)

This filthy room is filled with destroyed furniture and the flayed, rotting skin of a score of animal species. Several slime-ridden assemblages of the trash suggest that it is a nest for some sort of unholy creature.

And so it is: this is a Morghoul lair, currently empty. Searching the refuse will yield some bit of wealth (d6: 1-2 – copper penny, 3-4 – silver penny, 5- gold sovereign, 6 – costume jewelry worth d100 silver pennies) each turn; however, each check after the first produces a 10% cumulative chance that 2d4 Morghouls will return to the place, necessitating combat.

B-14. Cocks of the Rock (0%)

The rear wall of this former servant's cell has melted away into mud. The room itself is stripped of furniture, but three horrid grey roosters, bat-winged and lizard-tailed, peck at gristly bones scattered about the floor!

The Morghouls pen a flight of cockatrices (HD 5, AC 6, Speed 9/Fly 18, peck 1d6 + petrification) here, finding their petrifying peck occasionally useful against more dangerous interlopers. The cockatrices cannot open the door, so if the adventurers have the werewithal to slam it in their faces they can bring this encounter to a quick

end. On the other hand, if a pitched battle against the Morghouls develops, these may be brought in as reinforcements. There are no other items of interest.

B-15. Mudslide! (0%)

To all outward appearances this door is like others on the level. About 5' east of this door the wall is replaced with seeping mud and stone, filling a corridor which once ran south, east, or both and blocking further passage in that direction. Investigation can reveal unusual pressure against the back of the door, but there are no obvious traps and nothing to disable. If characters force the door or do more than ten points to it with slashing or bludgeoning weapons, it will explode outward as a few tons of new mud and rock seep into the basement complex. This does 2d6 to the character opening the door and 1d6 to all other characters standing in the 10' square between B-13, B-14, and B-15. After the mudslide is complete B-13 and B-14 will effectively be cut off from the rest of the dungeon; only a tiny sliver of corridor B-2 will remain open to access B-17.

B-16. Moldy Brown Mud (0%)

The 40' of wall south of B-17 is caved in, giving way to mud from the lake. The middle 20' of this area has bulged out to the point where the passage is only 5' wide. The area near this 20' is uniformly very cold, and creatures coming within 5' of it (i.e. standing in the narrow walkway, or within 5' of it on either side) take 3d6 of cold subdual damage! The cave-in disguises a huge patch of Brownish Mold! Fires brought within 5' of it will cause the patch to grow across an additional 5' of mud each round (towards the fire), while cold spells will wipe out the mold in whatever area they touch.

B-17. Recreation Room (5%)

Ancient, shredded furniture, bones, and offal fill this ghoulish-redolent chamber. At the center of the room, a single table still stands, flanked by two creaking chairs. These chairs are occupied by two repulsive yellow-green forms with rotting appendages and rime-covered slits where their noses and ears once rested. They are playing at chess, and look up from their game for only a second as you enter. At the GM's option she may set up a chess position for the players to solve while they do battle.

As they enter this room, the central home of the House's Morghoul tribe, the party is assaulted by five of the dread beasts. The two playing chess (the largest and smallest of the tribe) will continue their game for the first two rounds of combat, at which point the smallest Morghoul wins the game. On the third round they will join the fight. In the event that the other five are slain before their action on the third round, the two will start another game of chess instead, ignoring the party even in the event that they start rifling the nests. At the GM's

option she may set up a chess position for the players to solve while they do battle. Morghouls: HD 4+1, hp 24, 19, 17, 15, 9, chessplayers 22, 7, AC 3, Speed 9, attacks cause reg. damage plus rotting at 1 point per turn (cured by advanced healing or magic only), turn as wraith, immune to fear and paralysis, half damage from acid and poison, 1d10 from holy water. The Morghoul tribe has accumulated various bits of treasure over its decades in the House of the Axe, much of it stored here. A party may search in the filth for treasure up to sixteen turns; each turn roll on the following table (d10):

- 1- Sharp Sliver! Make save vs. wands (+2 if wearing plate gauntlets or magic gloves) or contract Morghoul Rot.
- 2-3 - Small sack with 2d6x10 silver pennies.
- 3-4 - Small sack with 1d6x10 gold sovereigns.
- 5- Random gem
- 6- Random art object (roll as jewelry)
- 7- Random minor potion
- 8- Miniature Swan Boat (becomes full size once)
- 9- Wand of Lightning (27 charges)
- 10-+3 Chain Mail Shirt

Items 8-10 may not be obtained more than once; if one of these items is rolled a second time nothing is found that turn. The piles of filth are truly huge and disgusting.

B-18. House Servants' Quarters II (5%)

Another filthy Morghoul's nest. The three undead monsters in this room (hp 20, 11, 10) break off their unholy cavorting to assault the party.



Loden is watching...

B-19. House Servants' Quarters III (0%)

This room is identical to B-13 in every respect.

B-20. Sunken Cave (5%)

Behind the south and east doors a crumbling landing falls away into a deep cave which bottoms out into a large dark pool. Streams of brackish water trickle down the south wall, slowly but gradually filling the cavern. Strewn about the pool are a jumble of bones and metal objects, including weapons and armor, roughly centered about a single living creature: a strange reddish anemone about ten feet tall, draped with long, lazy blue fronds.

The anemone is a carnivorous and semi-sentient creature called a Moutharm (HD 10, hp 48, AC 5, Speed 6, attacks with 4-20' long tentacles doing 1d8 plus paralysis (save) and entanglement (open doors to break free)). It will wait for the adventurers to enter the cavern, knowing that it cannot quite catch them at the chamber's entrance from its position by the life-giving pool. As soon as they start down the slope, however, it will lurch to the attack. If spells or missile weapons are fired at it from a distance it will start up the slope towards the party. Scattered around or in the pool on the floor of the cavern are 73 gs, a 50 gs tourmaline, a normal greataxe and dagger, a rotten heavy crossbow (useless); a pouch with twenty silvered sling bullets, a finely worked scimitar, longsword, and greatsword, a +2 Dart (lost by Azhrarn and Chuzel from D-9 when they tried to fight this thing); human-sized normal plate mail and leather armor, and dwarf-sized +1 plate mail. Most of this was left by an adventuring party which met its end here.

B-21-23. Hunters' Quarters (5%)

These three rooms are more or less identical: all have been the site of battle and death and all have been cleaned out to the point where only shards of bone and long-broken furniture remain. This is contested territory: the Morghouls periodically try to expand their nests here, but Durnzhen and his Moondogs inevitably chase them out. If the party takes their time exploring all three rooms the GM should roll for wandering monsters.

B-24. Head Hunter's Quarters (10%)

The door to this room is strong and locked. Durnzhen will be here only if not alerted to the party's presence, playing solitaire at his table. If he has been alerted he will be in B-25 with his Moondogs, prepared for an assault.

This well-tuckpointed stone 20'x20' chamber has a large and very lumpy double bed against its western wall. A round table, a small writing desk, a large iron-bound wooden chest, and a giant boar's head mounted on the wall complete the room's décor. It is neatly kept up, though the furniture is old; only a slight whiff of the grave pollutes the moist underground air in this place.

If present Durnzhen will leap to the attack; see B-25 for statistics. The only items of interest here are the bed and the chest. When the covers are removed from the bed, it is revealed that fresh dirt fills the entire space within its four walls where the mattresses should be. If characters dig in the dirt, a grand mahogany coffin will be revealed. The untrapped but locked chest contains three fine silk robes (75gs each) and four sable-trimmed silk cloaks (120gs each), as well as a small silk bag with five gems: a 1000gs fiery yellow corundum, an 800gs garnet, a 300gs black pearl, a 130gs amethyst, and a 60gs bloodstone.

B-25. Hunters' Ready Room (10%)

The outer door to this room is locked.

The walls of this room are covered with mounted crocodile and vroat heads. Several rough wooden tables and benches have been pushed to the wall, clearing a path to an open area at the rear of the room.

Assuming that Loden has informed Durnzhen of the party's approach, he will be waiting here with his five Moondogs at the ready. They will be waiting in total silence and will attack with surprise if they hear the party coming. Durnzhen will begin such a battle with the Moondog pack in between himself and the PC's, using the slaver's lash from range, but he is not averse to closing ranks where his magic sword and energy-draining poison headsnakes can be brought to good effect. If Durnzhen has not been alerted, perhaps because the characters came in through the dragon cave, then the Moondogs will be in B-26 and Durnzhen in B-24. The hounds will immediately start their wailing howl in such an event, alerting Durnzhen to the party's presence if he has not yet been dispatched. Durnzhen: HD 7+1, hp 36, AC 2, Speed 9/Fly 18, Gaze turns to stone as Medusa, Slaver's Lash out to 20' strikes for 3d6 plus 1 hp/round bleeding and causes target struck to save v. fear or surrender, at close range attacks with magic sword +2 and poisonous headsnakes which do normal damage plus save or die vs. poison and 2 level drain as per vampire regardless! Immune to non-magical weapons, cold, poison, mind control/charm/sleep, death effects and drains, turns as vampire, in general anything a vampire or medusa can do it can do. In addition to its lash and sword he has a scarab of life drain resistance (3 levels nullified – no use to it), a gold chain of office w/ keys to B-24 & B-25 (150 gs value), and a red sable-trimmed silk cloak (200 gs value). The five Moondogs are HD 2+1, hp 13, 11, 11, 10, 7, AC 5, Speed 12, bite causes normal damage plus save vs. poison or 5 x Intelligence chance of going insane, howl causes all creatures below level/HD 5 to save vs. fear.

B-26. Kennels (5%)

Five huge kennels filled with bones are found here, their walls and chest-high stone gates well-scored with tooth-

and pawmarks. The kennels open on one end to a hunter's ready area, and on the other to a narrow, upward-sloping passage thick with moss, loose stone, and roots.

As these kennels served Pthak's hunters for their dogs a century ago, they now provide homes for Durnzhen's Moondogs. The narrow tunnel leads gradually upward over 150' to the hidden secret entrance detailed in "The House" section of "Outside the House."

B-27. Butcher's Table (5%)

This L-shaped room, with an open section in its east wall and a door in its north, contains two large stone tables and a trough which drains into the floor. Several hooks, two with ancient, desiccated chunks of gristle, hang from the ceiling. As you enter the room, three rat-sized centipedes scurry down the drain!

Here Pthak's hunters prepared meat for the kitchen staff. The drain winds and twists, through tunnels only a few inches wide, into several subterranean pools and into area D-3 in the level below. Shrunk or gaseous characters may try to track the centipedes to their lair or scout ahead in this manner.

B-28. Cold Storage (5%)

This stone-walled room was once the refrigerator of the House, but now it is quite warm due to its proximity to B-8; the enchantment Pthak used to cool it has long since worn off. There is nothing of interest in it save three more hungry Vroats (HD 4+1, hp 19, 14, 14, AC 5, Speed 9/Jump 15, bite for 2d6, immune to fear, half damage from acid & poison (or +4 save)), happy enough to dine on PCs with nothing better in the offing.



B-29. Wine Cellar (5%)

This room has a stone door with an excellent lock.

Coming through this room's vault-like entrance, you see that it contains a wine cellar! Row after row of excellent bottles with a century's aging are racked herein. Even the merest tyro in oenology recognizes several vintages of supremely distinguished provenance in Pthak's cellar.

Over nine hundred bottles of wine of distinguished origin and good to excellent vintage are in this room. Roughly one-quarter have spoiled in the past century, leaving perhaps seven hundred drinkable. Of these about thirty are of the highest quality: The Sapphire Circle's Private Reserve, White Rose, Simple Sorrow, Romanee-Conti, Falling Star, d'Yquem – fine bottles made by creatures of every race and clime and worth d10x1000 gs each. The remaining bottles will fetch 2d10x100 gs each. A careful search will spy a single green-black bottle, set top and rear and away from the other bottles in one of the rearmost racks. This wine detects for magic, and is in fact a bottle of the legendary Whimsey Wine, with enough inside for four glasses. In addition to the properties noted there, this Whimsey Wine has a secondary enchantment which forces any character trying to use its magic for a second (third, etc.) time to save vs. polymorph or turn permanently into a toad.

Dungeon Level

D-1. Entryway

Coming down the spiral staircase, you come into a well-built area thick with dust and cobwebs. To your south, a 10' passageway has collapsed in on itself, and is now stuffed with mud and rubble. To the east is a 10' passage leading into a 20' x 20' antechamber, from which two doors leave, one to the north and one to the east.

This bottom level of the dungeon contains Pthak's secret apartments and summoning area, as well as his prison cells and a tunnel to the lair of a black dragon. There is nothing much of interest in this front room. Both doors are locked and the eastern one is trapped as well: any contact with it will cause 1d8+1 electrical damage. Remember that Loden Grimlock does not know of this level and will not discover it unless he sees the PCs going down to it, or they leave the secret door which leads here open, in which case a 10% ghost chance can be assumed for each room on the level. It is actually possible to wend one's way through the semi-collapsed southward corridor. Dwarves can figure this out if they think about it, as can others if they make a roll. Alternatively, if someone just goes that way after GM warnings, they will succeed, finding that the corridor ends in an oaken door swollen shut with mud and moisture. The deodanth in D-9 will almost surely hear characters coming this way.

D-2. Kitchen

This spacious 20' by 40' room is a separate kitchenette, full of cabinets, a large firepit, shelves of long-since-rotten food, and a single table with two chairs upon which rests a mug. Something scuttles southward out of the room on the other side as you enter, disappearing.

The scuttling creature is a tiny centipede.

Whimsey Wine: roll d24 (d12 + hi/lo die):

- 1-permanently add/subtract 1-4 points to Strength
 - 2-“ to Dexterity
 - 3-“ to Constitution
 - 4-“ to Intelligence
 - 5-“ to Wisdom
 - 6-“ to Charisma
 - 7-“ as a natural bonus/penalty to a random saving throw
 - 8-character physically ages/becomes younger 1d20 years, with no change in mental state (but characters who become younger past 0 can only be brought back with wishes, and physical stats can be effected profoundly)
 - 9-character gains/loses 1d3 experience levels
 - 10-character changes sex
 - 11-character gains random new alignment (d10): 1 LG, 2 NG, 3 CG, 4 LN, 5 N, 6 CN, 7 LE, 8 NE, 9 CE, 10 reverse of current
 - 12-character's head permanently changes to that of random animal (d6): donkey, boar, wolf, rat, parrot, or lion. As a freak, they take a -6 on reaction rolls, and while they can still speak in humanoid tongues they will sound like the animal in question while so doing
 - 13-character becomes permanently hasted or slowed
 - 14-character permanently surrounded by glowing
 - 15-character becomes permanently deluded that one characteristic is 8 points higher than it actually is: (d6) 1-2 Strength, 3-4 Intelligence, 5-6 Charisma
 - 16-character becomes deluded that they are the long-lost heir to a kingdom or barony; 10% chance it's true!
 - 17-character gains the use of a random spell once per day as a special ability, caster level=character level; roll a single spell as on a minor scroll
 - 18-character grows fully functional giant eagle's wings
 - 19-character's legs become long, greenish, and web-footed: gains long-distance jump ability
 - 20-character gains psionic ability, or if psionics rules are not in play gains ESP usable at will
 - 21-character's skin turns bright yellow, green, red, or blue, white with pink polka-dots, or obsidian (roll)
 - 22-character turns permanently invisible, as spell
 - 23-character instantly transformed into different creature: roll on reincarnation table in *Welcome to Skull Tower* or *Fight On!* #3
 - 24-going down the windpipe the wine turns into a lethal poison: save or die.
- This table can be used to adjudicate other random magical outcomes as well.

D-3. Lounge-Nest of the Centipedes

The room before you seems to twist and crawl, as if the floors and walls were literally alive. Suddenly the mass of beasts lurches forward, threatening to engulf your party!

The long-rusted couches and tables that once filled this room now serve as a skeletal frame for a nest of 300 centipedes (1 hp each, AC 6, bite does 1 hp and each character bitten must save or lose 1 point of dexterity for 1 day – 1 save/rd max regardless of number biting). The room is overflowing with the creatures, and they will move to assault anyone disturbing their nest. If a quick-thinking wizard uses a fireball, this encounter may be short indeed; on the other hand sheer numbers and poison may make this a difficult battle indeed if a more methodical approach is taken. Both doors out of the room are locked, but neither is trapped.

D-4. Spare Bedroom

This simple room contains a large bed, a nightstand with reading glasses and a copy of *The History of Khorsahr* by Mallendar d'Orien. Some long-rotten linens are laid out on an almost-as-rotten chair. Doors in the south and east walls provide the only egress.

Another more-or-less empty room, this was a spare bedroom used by Pthak when he wanted to get away from his household for an important experiment.

D-5. Bath

This room, ornately floored in gold-flecked white marble, has a large and cracked marble bathtub 8' x 8' filling up most of its northern end. Small nozzles and spouts fill the tub, promising different kinds of treatment. Towels and racks of oils and perfumes cover the walls, which are dressed in rich light-brown tile.

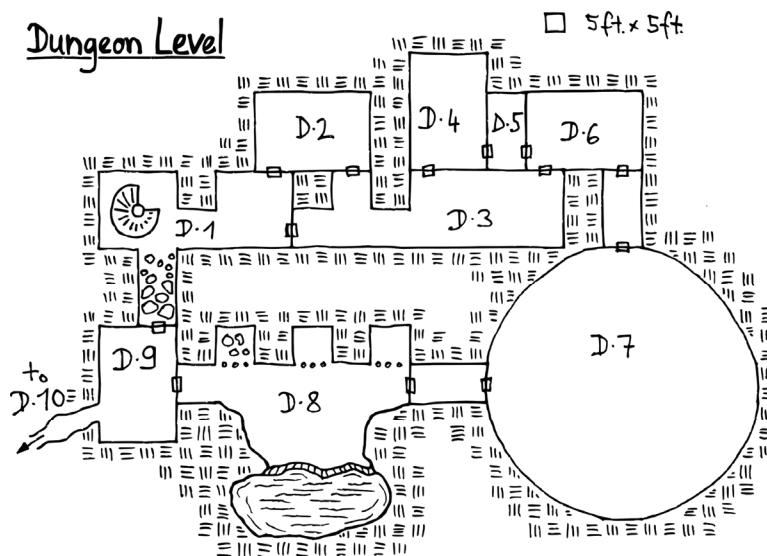
This lovely facility, alas, no longer works. The cologne and perfumes are valuable, and could be resold for 250 gs. The small bottles which contain them way perhaps three pounds in all but are somewhat fragile. No matter what the party does, nothing but vague hissing sounds will come from the bath-knobs: the water and steam-jets are long since destroyed from lack of maintenance.

D-6. Wizardly Study

This long room contains a large table with several books and scrolls laid out upon it. A medium-sized bookshelf rests against the east wall. A pearlescent silver-grey misty cloak hangs on a peg in the wall, swirling with dull inner light. Various arcane sigils mark the walls, and a feeling of eldritch power fills the air.

Mages who make a roll can tell that the focus of the magic studied here was conjuration. The scrolls disintegrate at one's fingertips when touched, but the

Dungeon Level



books include both planar lore and Pthak's missing 5th and 6th level spellbooks, which certainly include such spells as conjure elemental and other summoning charms. The cloak, if investigated, is a Cloak of Never – wearers can wrap themselves in it and 'wink' out of time for d100 minutes (on an 00 reroll for d100 days instead). The bookshelf on the wall is an Imitator, a magical beast which takes on the shape of an ordinary object: HD 7, hp 28, AC 7, attacks adhere to target allowing free shots (no hit roll) every round thereafter, weapons which hit it also stick to it, strong alcohol will dissolve the adhesive.

D-7. Summoner's Sanctum

Assuming an approach from D-6, read the following:

Leaving the wizard's second study from the eastern door, you come into a narrow passageway, ten feet long. Before you stands a mighty vault door worked in black silver, with a turnstile handle.

The door is of pure iron coated with black silver (silbony) and is virtually impossible to break down (no chance for normal strength). Magical means will almost surely be required to pass. However, there is a magical trap on the door: if a knock spell is cast against it, a Blackfire trap (save every round for 15 rounds or take 1d8 damage and lose a level; engulfed in ghostly black flame) will immediately be sprung against its caster or the person using the item it came from. This trap also automatically dispels the knock. However, it only resets once per day, so a second knock spell will open the door for ten minutes. Other magical methods of attaining the room (dimension door e.g.) should work unless they go through the door (like passwall), in which case the relevant spell is not dispelled but the Blackfire trap will still trigger. Once actually entered the room is as follows:

Before you lies a great, circular summoning chamber eighty feet in diameter, with a magic pentagram taking up the middle fifty feet of that. On the walls are fine

tapestries of goldcloth and around the perimeter of the room are long-extinguished braziers. A nude man reclines in the middle of the pentagram, filing his nails. His skin is a deep bronze, and his goatee makes him quite handsome; were it not for the horns on his forehead he would present quite a compelling picture.

The being in the chair is an Efreet who has disguised himself as an incubus in hopes of getting a better deal on his escape. Lox is his name, and he loathes granting wishes. He has polymorphed himself into his current form. If players rush to the attack, breaking the pentagram, Lox will either attack or teleport back to the City of Brass, depending on his estimate of the party's strength. He will do the same if attacked with missile weapons or spells from outside the circle, which also breaks the enchantment keeping him imprisoned. If serious enough damage is unrequited, he may seek revenge on party members at some future date. If not attacked, Lox will invite the characters to join him in the pentagram for a glass of wine. (Acceptance breaks the pentagram and sets him free.) If this fails Lox will ask to be set free. If this likewise meets with no success, Lox hints that he can reward the party well for their service. He will not specify the exact limits of his ability to reward them, and will grimace as the requests get larger, indicating that he only carries a certain amount of clout in the demonic hierarchy. Lox is a very hard bargainer and will let the party walk out if they try to bully him by leaving him there: he is proud, and one hundred years of solitude have not broken him yet. If the party realizes that he is an Efreet, it will be up to the GM to determine whether he will actually offer his wishes to escape or not.



In the event that a paladin or the like in the party does not wish to free him because he is a demon, Lox will change his shape to that of a female Djinn before the party's eyes. "Dulcet" the djinn will then report with sad eyes that she assumed the party was evil when she adopted her disguise; alas, she cannot grant wishes, as some of her kin can, but she may be able to obtain something for them in exchange for freedom... She will still detect for evil, however. Lox may take on his Efreet form and offer wishes if a paladin or good cleric refuses to free him on the sole grounds of his evilness, primarily out of interest in seeing how the rest of the party reacts to the goody-two-shoes' unwillingness to take such a reward. Ideally this is a role-playing encounter, resulting in the party gaining 1001 days of service (the worst of all from Lox's point of view), 3 wishes, some intermediate reward, or nothing at all as the Efreet escapes. In the event that rude or trigger-happy PCs manage to piss Lox off enough to get him to attack he may be treated as a 12 HD efreet with the additional ability of being able to polymorph himself into any form 3x/day.

The five tapestries in the room weigh 50 pounds each and are worth 1000 gs each for their exquisite construction. The braziers are normal, though as a parting gesture Lox may use his produce flame ability to make them all spring alight. There are two exits from the room, the vault door in the north wall and a standard door in the west, mageocked but not trapped. This latter door leads to a short corridor with another door in it, which opens to a strong push from this side but is a one-way door. It cannot be opened from the other side save by magic.

D-8. The Forgotten Prison

This corridor is filled with the brackish stench of stagnant lakewater. Its southern side is a cave, which appears to rise to a high shelf at its back side. On the north side of the corridor are three barred cells, each containing piles of ancient human bones and cloth. The only apparent exit from this place is a west-leading corridor, half-collapsed and filled with mud and rock.

The shelf overlooks an underground pool which lets out from the lake and which is the home of a Ghost Crab (HD 8+1, hp 28, AC 2+2, Speed 10/Swim 15, attacks with two claws for damage and level drain, turns as vampire, immune to non-magical weapons, fear, confusion, paralysis, etc. (it's undead). There is a 50% chance that the crab will be in its watery lair each time the party enters the room. If they investigate the shelf, the thing will attack them from the water. On the other hand, if they investigate the cells first, it will first hide by submerging itself at the edge of the shelf in an attempt to gain surprise when they investigate or, if they do not investigate, will eventually charge to the attack. Parties approaching from D-10 will discover a hairline crack in

the wall in the 10' space at the east end of the corridor by the last cell if they search for secret doors; otherwise this is a dead end. Parties coming from D-7 will find that their only real egress (besides swimming through the ghost crab's lair out into the lake – a bad idea) is through the passage. If they fight the ghost crab or if the deodanths in D-9 hear them coming, the Deodanths will be completely ready for the party when it arrives in D-9.

D-9. Azhrarn and Chuzel

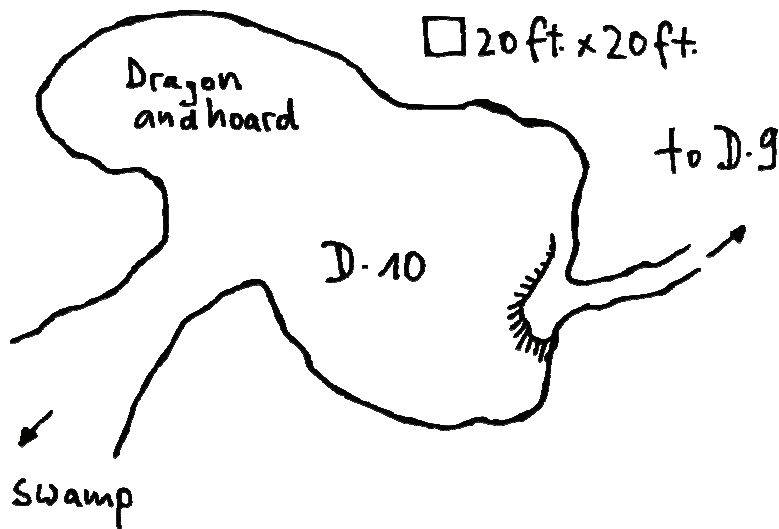
Behind the well-stuck door you discern a breathtaking sight: an exquisitely appointed room, 20' by 30', with exotic tapestries, lush carpetry, and silk pillows strewn everywhere. Unlike most of the rooms on this level, this one is very dimly illuminated by phosphorescent lamps made from fire beetle tails. There is another door like the one you came in through across the corner from you, and at the far end of the room a small hole opens into a cavelike passage leading outward. Two large chests with brass appointments rest in one corner, and an onyx coffer on a night-table promises more wealth still. The room is redolent with the scent of sandalwood incense.

This sumptuously furnished room is the home of two Deodanth bandits. The GM will need to add their description to the above if they are somehow caught in the open, but they will probably be invisibly waiting to give the party a nasty surprise. With a dragon at their front door and the House of the Axe at their back, the pair use stealth and magic to sneak in and out with new treasure. Negarix knows of their existence and would like to be rid of them, but is not sure what their powers are nor where their cave is. For their part, they consider the dragon part of an ideal situation, and prefer to keep her around. If they hear the party coming (highly likely), they will immediately take the actions outlined below. The doors have rusty locks that do nothing, since the doors are jammed. (If the first thing the Deodanths hear is the door getting smashed down, roll initiative as normal.) If the party is heard at a distance, Azhrarn will put his ear to the door and listen carefully for whether they are coming down the hall. If it is determined that they are, then the pair prepares as follows: Round 1 - Chuzel casts Haste on Azhrarn; Azhrarn climbs the rough wall above the door the party is coming and hides (effectively invisible unless a light is shined directly on him because of his Ring of Night). Round 2 - Chuzel casts Invisibility on himself while maneuvering to the opposite wall from the open door.

When the party enters the room (which the Deodanths will try to time fairly closely, hoping to have several rounds of haste left for the battle): if the party has no ability to see invisible they will see neither of the Deodanths, and so the pair will get surprise. Their surprise actions will be for Chuzel to fire a lightning bolt

(becoming visible) and Azhrarn to draw his rapier, drop silently, and stab a party member in the back for triple damage. Whenever the Deodanths finally appear, the GM should describe them as obsidian-skinned creatures with blood-red eyes and silver teeth and fangs, bald-headed, a mixture of elf and vampire and something feline and menacing. One wears mithril chainmail and brandishes a rapier, while the other wears bracers and silken loincloth. Keep in mind also that light conditions in the room are low unless magical light is created. If the party can see invisible, they will immediately spot Chuzel. A party will only spot Azhrarn in the event that someone with a relevant ability says they are looking up. If an item detects these things for them, it will warn them of both bandits, but Azhrarn will still have some chance at a surprise attack unless the item informs its user of the precise location of invisible targets. If the situation becomes extremely desperate, first Chuzel and then Azhrarn will flee towards the dragon's cave, hoping to hide and play their foes off against Negarix. If they are sorely pressed in their flight towards the dragon's cave they may throw a dart at the dragon to wake it up and then Time Slip, hoping that by the time they reappear the party and Negarix will be too busy fighting each other to bother with them. Azhrarn: Male Deodanth Warrior 5/Thief 6, hp 27, AC 2+1, Speed 18, 50% magic resistance, immune to life drain and fear, can 'time slip' for d3 melee rounds (just disappears and reappears after the time lag), has +1 Mithril Chainmail (allows thief abilities), +1 Rapier, Ring of Night (makes character invisible in shadow or at night), Bag of Containment, Hood of Thievery (gives all secret door/trap/etc. detection abilities of a dwarf and elf, as well as +5 to all saves vs. mind-affecting spells), Potion of Super Healing, 3 darts, Medallion w/2000 gs ruby, 2000 gold sovereigns, 500 platinum stars. Chuzel: Male Deodanth 7th level Mage, hp 21, AC 2, Speed 18, 50% magic resistance, immune to life drain and fear, can 'time slip' for d3 melee rounds (just disappears and reappears after the time lag), has Bracers of Protection AC 4, a Wand of Confusion (8 charges), Potion of Super Healing, 5 darts, a silver earring set with a black opal worth 700 gs, and carries the following spells: Read Magic, Lockjaw (save or mouth locked shut), Monkey Climb, Charm, Detect Invisibility, ESP, Invisibility, Haste, Lightning Bolt, Dimension Door.

There are many items of value within the room aside from those the Deodanths carry. The carpets and silks are worth several hundred gold sovereigns at a minimum, though they are probably too heavy to carry. The chests are filled with ten thousand or so silver pieces each, the less valuable coins they have taken on bandit raids. The onyx box has a Poison Needle Trap. Within this coffer are four perfectly matched mithril and emerald rings worth 2000 gold pieces each.



D-10. The Cave of Negarix

This vast, vaulted cave, filled with wisps of steam and sulfur amidst hundreds of crushed giant skeletons and pools of fetid water, is clearly the lair of a dragon. There are several crocodile carcasses rotting in pools here and there about the room. Dim glittering near the rear of the chamber suggests the obligatory mountain of treasure...

Negarix, a large very old black dragon, spends most of her time in a recess which allows her to see both the lakeshore entrances and the concealed tunnel from the Deodanth cave, of which she is aware. Roll location:

- 01-15 Home, sleeping
- 16-50 Home, napping (describe as sleeping but awake)
- 51-65 Home, active
- 66-70 Just leaving: will come upon characters coming in from lakefont but -10 to notice those coming from Deodanth lair.
- 71-75 Just returning: will be seen in air approaching by characters outside and will come upon characters arriving from D-9 as normal.
- 75-90 Gone, but will return in 3d10 minutes.
- 91-00 Gone, and will not return for d4 hours.

Negarix is basically a mean-spirited caustodrake, but she likes her treasure: if she has a party badly beaten she may allow them to live in exchange either for all, or for ridding her of Azhrarn and Chuzel. She is not particularly likely to honor any long-term elements of such a deal except out of laziness or self-preservation. She has 8 HD and 48 hp, with a breath weapon doing the same damage, and she is immune to acid and 1st level magic spells. AC 2. She speaks and uses magic (1st level spells only) and I usually give dragons multiple attacks. She is very stealthy and will try to hide and ambush if she knows people are coming. Negarix maintains a rather small hoard. Behind a mountain of acid-fused copper and silver lie 2900 gs; seven glittering stones laid out neatly on a ledge (a large 110 gs chunk of raw amber, three 90 gs red spinels, two matched 40 gs zircons, and a

30 gs bloodstone); a Potion of Invisibility in a glass vial; and a Stone of Recall which will allow re-use of one 3rd level spell each day. If the party has come in from the outside they may decide to camp here. If they try this there is a 60% chance they will be unmolested and a 40% chance that the Deo-danths will come silently during the night. Confronted with dragonslayers the Deodanths will only attack if the party seems especially weak: otherwise they have a 20% chance to attack anyway, a 60% chance to prepare an ambush in their lair for several hours later (in which case they will not be audible as the party comes up the corridor), and a 20% chance simply to quit the complex with their treasures during the night and stay away for a few days.

Conclusion: GM's who have situated this adventure in their own milieu can end things as seem fit. The presented scenario, where Torell Stagg (or a similar figure from your own world) has guided them through the woods to a nearby place and will guide them back, requires them to get out in time and give Torell an item. Torell will take the most historically interesting item (not necessarily the 'best') if the PCs are honest, or the gold if nothing strikes his fancy. He is an 18th level Forester and his Haggorym sidekick is an 8th level Warrior, so fighting them would be unwise. He will almost certainly see through any scams the PCs try, though you never know. Enjoy your forays into the House of the Axe! Ω



Random Rooms

useful tables by Michael Curtis

Over the course of this hobby's history, there have been more than one set of guidelines published for randomly generating a dungeon's layout. Tables have also been made available for determining the contents of those randomly generated rooms. Like many GMs, I've taken advantage of those tables and guidelines when my own personal muse has gone on holiday.

Despite these helpful guides, there seems to be one aspect of random dungeon creation that has been overlooked: the purpose of the rooms generated. Knowing a room's original purpose is very helpful when sitting down to flesh out the dungeon in one's game notes. It gives the GM ideas about what might be found in such a chamber besides monsters, traps, or treasure.

When looking at the results of a random design, there are rooms that just don't "pop," meaning the referee draws a complete blank about what function these rooms might have served before the monsters moved in. The rooms are either just too plain or too weird to suggest something, and the DM ends up staring at the graph paper until beads of blood appear on her forehead. Having had this happen to myself recently, I went about crafting a solution to this problem. To facilitate inspiration, I created a set of tables to randomly determine the function of any given room - a "wandering chamber table," if you will. The tables are composed of diverse type of rooms likely to be found within a dungeon and divided into categories based on the functions of said rooms.

Table 1 - Room Category	
D%	Table Result
01-03	Audience - <i>Sub-Table A</i>
04-08	Captivity - <i>Sub-Table B</i>
09-15	Entertainment - <i>Sub-Table C</i>
16-25	Functional - <i>Sub-Table D</i>
26-60	General - <i>Sub-Table E</i>
61-65	Military - <i>Sub-Table F</i>
66-70	Religious - <i>Sub-Table G</i>
71-75	Scholarly - <i>Sub-Table H</i>
76-00	Utility - <i>Sub-Table I</i>

Sub-Table A – Audience Rooms	
D8	Room
1-3	Amphitheater
4-5	Audience Chamber
6	Court Room
7	Hall, Great
8	Throne Room

Sub-Table B – Captivity Rooms	
D6	Room
1	Bestiary/Zoo
2-3	Cell, Prison
4	Kennel
5-6	Pen/Prison

Sub-Table C – Entertainment Rooms	
D10	Room
1-2	Banquet Chamber
3-4	Game Room
5	Harem/Seraglio
6-7	Music Room
8	Torture Chamber
9-10	Trophy Room

Sub-Table D - Functional Rooms	
D10	Room
1	Gallery
2	Hall
3-4	Lounge
5-6	Reception Chamber
7-8	Salon
9-10	Sitting Room

Sub-Table E – General Purpose Rooms	
D20	Room
1-2	Antechamber
3-6	Bedroom, Average
7-8	Bedroom, Elite
9	Cistern
10	Dressing Room
11	Privy
12-13	Servants Dormitory
14-17	Storage
18-20	Waiting Room

Sub-Table F – Military Rooms	
	Room
1	Armory
2-3	Barracks
4-5	Guard Room
6	Training/Exercise Room

Sub-Table G – Religious Rooms	
D12	Room
1-2	Cell, Monk
3	Chantry
4	Chapel
5-6	Crypt
7-8	Meditation Chamber
9	Robing Room/Vestry
10	Scriptorium
11-12	Shrine

Sub-Table H – Scholarly Rooms	
D20	Room
1-2	Classroom
3	Conjuring Room
4	Divination Chamber
5-6	Laboratory
7-9	Library
10	Observatory
11-12	Office
13-16	Study
17-20	Workshop

Sub-Table I – Utility Rooms	
D12	Room
1	Bath
2	Closet
3-4	Dining Room
5-6	Kitchen
7-8	Meeting Chamber
9-10	Office
11-12	Pantry

One could use these tables to determine the function of every room on a dungeon's level, but the results would likely lack verisimilitude. These tables are better employed to break up any creative log-jam that the GM encounters during the design phase. As an example, recently I was staring at part of my dungeon map and I just couldn't figure out what a whole section of rooms might have been used for in the original construction of the dungeon. I rolled the dice on the above tables to get an idea. My first result produced "Dining Room." With that in mind, it seemed logical that a nearby smaller room would be a kitchen. Another room would be a lounge where guests gathered before the meal, and a small, nearby cave would serve as a natural "cool storage" pantry. Eureka! This would make the entire adjacent section of the dungeon a support wing, with two larger rooms as a servant's dormitory and a common area! I had gone from a complete blank to a fully fleshed-out section of the dungeon in just few minutes. Trusting the dice to help you determine what your players encounter over during an adventure is one of this hobby's oldest traditions. With these guidelines and a little bit of ingenuity on the part of the GM, you can continue that tradition the next time your dungeon map starts looking more like an unsolvable crossword puzzle, and less like a location for exploration, danger and high adventure. Ω

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Dungeons and Librarians

variant rules and tables by Jason Vasché

There comes a point in every adventure when the PCs will set foot in a library or archive of some sort, whether in a wizard's or sage's tower, large city, monastery, dungeon complex, or elsewhere. Besides the obvious campaign uses – clues, background information, and so on – these repositories of learning hold, amidst their dusty shelves, interesting opportunities for referees and player characters alike. The following tables and suggestions are intended to add variety and excitement to what might otherwise be seen as routine and humdrum. The various tables below are primarily focused on the descriptions of the materials contained within the repository. For random determination of general building/room features, there are numerous "dungeon dressing" tables that are suitable for the task.

Library Items (d10)	
1	Books/Codices
2	Scrolls
3	Woodcuts/Etchings
4	Maps
5	Bones/Sticks (characters carved directly on surface)
6	Tapestries
7	Tablets (wax, metal, or stone)
8	Ephemera (weapons, instruments, jewelry, art, etc.)
9	Magical (object magically imbued with information)
10	Special

Special Properties of Library Items (d6)	
1	Cursed
2	Protected (pages blank unless magic word spoken)
3	Intelligent/Sentient
4	Psionic Parasite (drains 1 Int per consultation)
5	Blessed
6	Locked/Trapped

Books – Binding Material (d4)	
1	Hide/Skin
2	Wood
3	Metal
4	Stone

Books - Size (d8)	
1	Folio (30-38 cm height)
2-3	Quarto (25-30 cm)
4	Octavo (20-25 cm)
5	Sextodecimo (15-20 cm)
6	Miniature (<15 cm)
7	Oversize (>38 cm)
8	Irregular

Scroll/Map Case (d8)	
1	Wood
2	Bone/Horn/Antler
3	Metal
4	Leather
5	Other Hide or Skin
6	Stone or Mineral
7	Oilcloth
8	Petrified Leaves

Subjects (d30)	
1	Agriculture
2	Alchemy (theory)
3	Alchemy (recipes – potions, powders, etc.)
4	Archaeology
5	Art
6	Astrology/Astronomy
7	Bestiary (general)
8	Bestiary (specific creature)
9	Biography
10	Cartography/Atlas
11	Cultural Survey
12	Demonology
13	Drama
14	Engineering
15	Geography
16	Herbalism
17	History (specific time period, region, etc.)
18	Journal/Memoir
19	Magic (history)
20	Magic (theory)
21	Magic (spellbook)
22	Medicine
23	Music
24	Myths and Legends
25	Natural History
26	Poetry
27	Political Commentary
28	Religion (specific)
29	Treatise (on specific craft – e.g. fletching, cooking)
30	Warfare (strategy, tactics, sieges, etc.)

Unusual Library Features (d6)	
1	Permanent <i>Invisible Servants</i> (1d3) for mundane tasks
2	Mystic Mouths
3	Guardian
4	Permanent magical light in library
5	Permanent magical silence in library
6	Security Doors

Library Monster Encounters (d8)	
1	Dust Bunnies
2	Giant Silverfish
3	Brain Mole
4	Ghost
5	Lich (Librarian)
6	Eater of Thoughts
7	Giant Dust Mites
8	Yellowish Mold



Of course, books, manuscripts, scrolls and such are not the only things found in libraries. A library will have defenses against both bibliotheft and the natural forces of decay; these may take the form of physical guardians (e.g. golems, homunculi, or animated statues), traps, or magical effects. It should be noted that any defensive precautions will be designed not to damage the library collection; explosives, acid, fire, and water are generally avoided. More common are poison darts/blades, paralysis triggers, trapdoors, localized electrical shocks, and non-corrosive gases (sleep, poison, paralysis, etc.). Libraries found in ruins, dungeons, or other locales similarly abandoned by civilization are likely to have creatures lairing within their shadowy chambers.

Active libraries will have one or more custodians. In a private collection this would be limited to the owner (wizard, sage, etc.) and his assistants, if any; publicly-accessible libraries would most likely be run by one or more Librarians (see below). These public institutions will also have a regular coterie of users, whose makeup depends on the institution's scope; access to special

collections may be limited at the referee's discretion. *Mystic Mouths* may be strategically located near the exits of the library. The mystic mouth most often serves as an alarm if it senses abuse of library materials or attempted bibliottheft. Additional duties of a magic mouth might include serving as an "information desk" or "card catalog", or shushing noisy, disruptive users. A Security Door may be triggered if a library patron approaches a door with library materials in hand. The door will quickly slam shut and resist opening as if Magelocked. The only way to deactivate the Door is to either replace the book on the shelf or touch the appropriate pass-token (i.e. "library card") to the door. Permanent magical effects are often placed on materials or the rooms in which they are housed. These effects are usually preservative in nature – protection from fire or water, temperature and humidity control – but might also include light or silence.

New Monsters:

Dust Bunnies: N 2-8, DC 7, HD1-1, Damage 1d3. SD: edged weapons cause them to split in two; fire does double, and damp rags or feather dusters destroy them. SA: save vs. poison or suffer severe attack of sneezing, coughing, and choking for 1d4 rounds (all actions at -1). Giant Silverfish: N 1-4, DC 4, HD 1+1, Damage 1d6. SD: none; SA: acid, +1 damage. The bane of libraries everywhere, these silvery armored cousins of the giant centipede love to eat paper, book bindings, glue, textiles, hair, and other starchy substances. If disturbed, they will attempt to escape; if trapped, they will defend themselves with their snapping jaws, which secrete an acid well-suited for breaking down fibrous materials. Giant Dust Mite: N 2-7, DC 6, HD 1, Damage 1d6 + blood drain. SD: jump ; SA: blood drain 1d6/round. Not normally found in dry locations, as mites tend to thrive in more humid conditions.

The Librarian: The Librarian is related to the Sage, although his emphasis is on the accumulation and preservation of physical knowledge – books, scrolls, and other information. To this end, the adventurer Librarian gains double XP for information-related treasure (books, scrolls, etc. magical or non-), ½ XP for fighting monsters, and normal XP otherwise. The Librarian fights, saves, and advances as a Mage of the same level. As part of his training and study, the librarian has at his disposal a limited selection of spells relevant to the identification and preservation of library materials and the maintenance of library facilities. Prime Requisite is Intelligence. At the referee's discretion, the Librarian, being well-read in a variety of subjects, has the ability to recall bits of information relevant to any given situation. The base chance of success is equal to the Librarian's level x 5%, with a bonus of 1% for each point of Intelligence greater than 14. Success yields useful information, but not necessarily an outright solution.

Level Titles: 1 – Page, 2 – Clerk, 3 – Bibliographer, 4 – Cartographer, 5 – Researcher, 6 – Archivist, 7 – Librarian. Librarians do not advance beyond the 7th level of experience, but at level 7 the Librarian may elect to found his own library, which will be initially staffed by 1d6 Pages and 1d3 Bibliographers. The library must be in a city or near an academic community (monastery, temple school, university, wizard's college, astronomical observatory, etc.)

List of Librarian Spells:

Level 1: Detect Magic, Dispel Dust, Dispel Mold, Fortify Materials, Identify Item, Invisible Servant, Light, Read Languages, Read Magic

Level 2: Constant Light, Locate Item, Magelock, Opening Charm, Protection From Fire, Protection From Cold, Summon Dust Bunnies

Level 3: Control Humidity, Control Temperature, Dispel Magic, Dust Devil, Perfect Memory, Silence 5m Radius

Level 4: Locate Information, Dust Cloud, Mystic Mouth, Silverfish Swarm

Control Humidity/Temperature alters the relative humidity of an enclosed space by up to $\pm 5\%$ per level or the temperature $\pm 5^\circ$ F per level. *Dispel Dust* removes all dust from an area equal to 1' square per level of the caster. *Dispel Mold* does the same with mold, if cast on a mold- or fungi-based creature it causes 1d6 damage per caster level. *Dust Cloud* creates a cloud of dust in the midst of his foes up to his level x 10' diameter. All creatures in the cloud must save vs. Dragon Breath or suffer reduced visibility and severe allergy symptoms – sneezing, coughing, choking, etc. *Fortify Materials* makes a single library item temporarily strengthened against the destructive properties of time and the elements. The duration is one week per caster level. *Locate Information* immediately locates texts pertinent to a particular question or topic within a collection. *Perfect Memory* allows a Librarian to remember everything he reads, hears, sees, and experiences for his level in hours. *Silverfish Swarm* summons a horde of ravenously hungry silverfish that will devour all starches in their path – paper, hair, glue, etc. They also eat leather and textiles down to the last scrap. Targets must save vs. Spells or have all their clothes, hair, leather armor, and susceptible objects (spellbooks, maps, sacks, etc.) destroyed. *Summon Dust Bunnies* summons 1d3 Dust Bunnies per level; the Bunnies will attack at the caster's command and fight until destroyed or dispelled. The Bunnies will disappear after one combat.

New Magic – Lens of Literacy: These glasses radiate a faint dweomer and come in several varieties: Monocle, spectacles, and magnifying glass. The Lens is imbued with a permanent Read Languages ability (as per the first level spell). There is also a 5% chance that the Lens will enable the user to decipher magical spells. Ω

Home Remedies for Common Dungeon Ailments

by Jeff Rients

Green Slime: The cross-eyed poacher says “Vigorously rub the fat of a bear upon any exposed skin to protect against the green slimes. Reapply every hour or two for maximum protection.”

Following the poacher’s advice gives a 2 in 6 chance of the slime sliding right off, reduced to 1 in 6 if it has been more than three hours since it was applied. Exposure to flame is a hazard, as the fat will literally fry you (+1 damage from fire attacks). Also, reeking of bear fat isn’t going to win you any points with the ladies. Ox fat is well-known as a suitable substitute and more readily available for purchase in town, but the smell of the stuff tends to send trolls into a berserk feeding frenzy.

Rot Grub: The reeking alchemist advises “Pour powdered lye down the burrow holes to kill rot grubs.”

Lye in your flesh yields a 50% chance of saving your sorry ass, but man it hurts. Take 1d6 damage and writhe on the ground in agony for 2d6 rounds. Still, better than having your heart devoured by attack maggots.

Ear Seeker Attack: The wart-nosed goodwife declares “Sprinkle your ear with sugar and ground rose-petals to repel the earbugs.”

This one plain doesn’t work. Some old wives’ tales are just bogus, you know?

Ghoul Paralysis: The leprous druid opines “Wrap a lock of dryad hair around your ring finger to keep away the ghouls.”

Such a totem allows +2 saves versus ghouls, but good luck explaining to the missus why you covered up your band of gold with hair obtained from some woodland tart.

Petrification: The one-eyed herb-witch chants “Seven widows’ circling lament can undo the gorgon’s breath.”

The widows must be dressed all in black and veiled as they circle the petrification victim. At sunrise, noon, and sunset for three days the widows must walk a circuit around the statue in a churchyard, temple court, sacred grove, or the town square (if the latter a priest must *bless* the public space before each session of mourning). The mourners must wail piteously and ardently petition their gods for the victim’s return to fleshy life. The petrified character is then allowed a new save to recover. If

successful the newly un-stoned party is expected to be charitable to the widows to the tune of at least 1000gp per character level, otherwise all future saves vs. petrification will be at -2. Failure indicates the party who organized the ritual will need to pony up at least half that much (500gp times the level of statue boy), or be similarly cursed.

Lycanthropy: The drunken blacksmith mumbles “Blessed water tintured with silver and wolvesbane root is the perfect ward against howling lunacy.”

‘Perfect’ is perhaps too strong a term. A vial of holy water prepared with a pinch of powdered silver and a like amount of ground wolvesbane root allows a saving throw versus poison to prevent the onset of lycanthropy. The warding effect lasts 2d6 turns and the stuff must be imbibed prior to the were-attack to have any effect. Note that this admixture counts as a potion for purposes of miscibility. Also overuse can result in toxic levels of silver building up in the body.

Mummy Rot: The toothless farmer offers “Mummy rot can be undone by rolling around in dragon dung.”

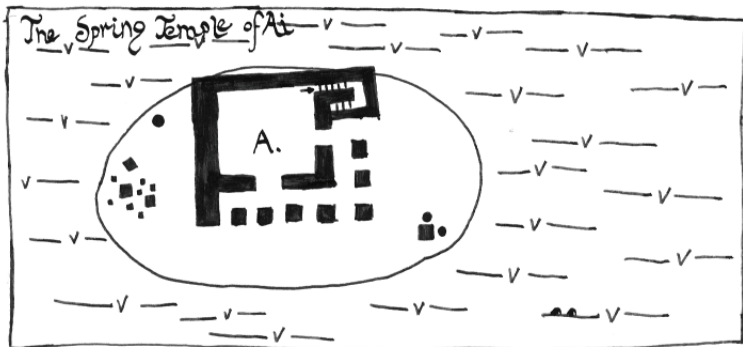
This one doesn’t work either. The toothless farmer has a weird sense of humor.



The Spring Temple of Ai

mysterious locale by Gabor Lux

In the southern jungles stands the Spring Temple of Ai. It is a broken ruin generally unknown due to hostile surroundings and lack of local interest. The only people who regularly seek out this place are those with an interest in magical mysteries, divinations and alchemical knowledge. The inhabitant of the temple, the water naga Daepheros, is said to drive a fair bargain for the fruits of its wisdom: a visitor must prove to be worthy by defeating the shrine's guardians and answering the riddles put forth by Daepheros, one for every question a visitor wishes to ask. Those who fail in the latter task are enslaved and serve as future guardians for the naga.

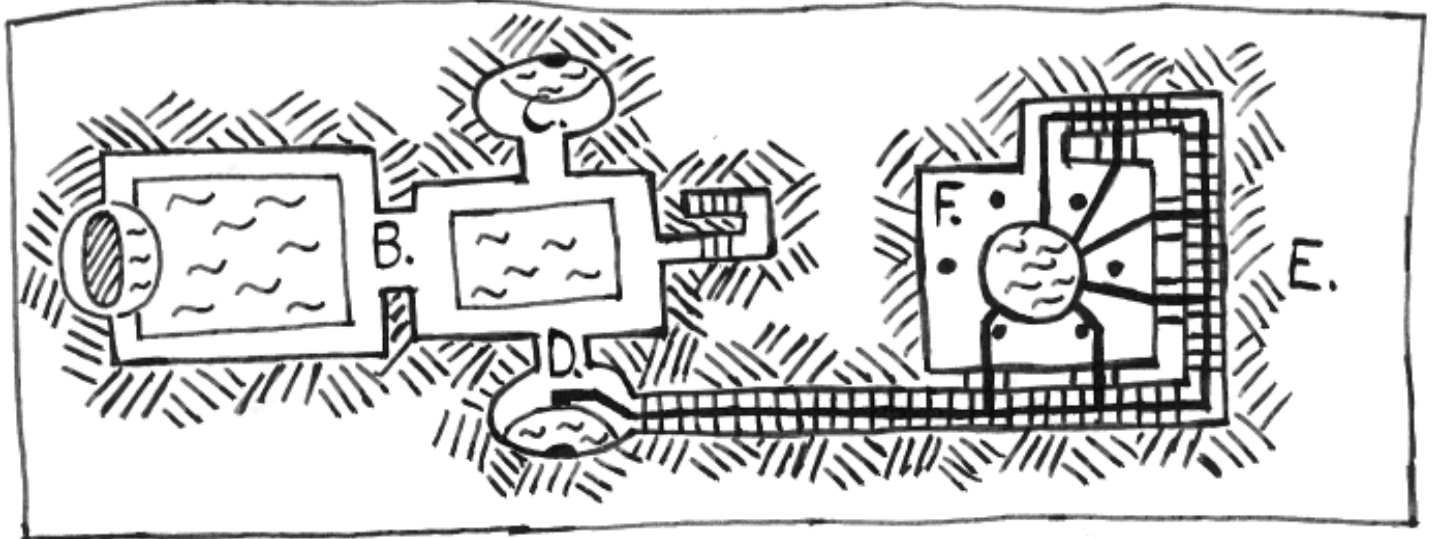


A. Swamp Island: The Spring Temple of Ai stands on a round island surrounded in all directions by waters and swampland. Visitors must therefore use rafts, rowboats or similar means to reach the ruins. The temple is an ancient, low building with a flat roof and a colonnade of thick, square columns. The whole structure is in a bad shape and it is slowly sinking into the ground. Piles of debris, broken columns and fallen statues dot the island it is located on. Characters approaching the island must battle the inhabitants of the swamp, 50 killer frogs. Five frogs emerge every round as the PCs get ready to disembark, appearing from the murky water and

pursuing opponents to the temple entrance. To complicate things, Maestran the Magic-User is also about, and uses his spells to hinder, disable or kill intruders. Maestran is a former visitor to Daepheros who fell under its charm spell. He hides inside the ruin and prefers to hit foes with his lightning bolt (usually hitting 1d3+1 PCs), block the temple entrance with webs and retreat inside to cause further trouble when (and if) the PCs are victorious. His sole possessions are a dagger, torn clothing (blue robes, leather boots) and a spellbook hidden somewhere in the rubble outside (memorized spells are marked with asterisks). **Killer Frogs** (50): HD 1; hp 4 avg; DC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec leap 20'; AL N. **Maestran**, Mage 5: hp 13; Spd 20 (due to limping); DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; AL N; Str 12, Dex 7, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 9. Spells: detect magic, mystic missile, light, sleep, opening charm, levitate, create webs, lightning bolt. The interior walls of the temple are covered in peeling blue stucco depicting marine life, waves and a ship, where a man dressed in the vestments of a patriarch raises his hand in worship before a smoking brazier. The whole room is otherwise empty, except for a blanket, some pots full of oil and the remains of Maestran's campfire.

B. Sanctum. This long, domed chamber continues with the watery motifs of the entry hall. It is pleasantly cold due to the large pools and the ever-flowing springs, whose murmurs are the only sound to be heard. Maestran has spilled oil just before the stairs, so anyone who steps into the chamber carelessly must roll a saving throw or land in the first pool. The pool is 20' deep and it is inhabited by a 4 HD giant frog (hp 16; DC 8; Atk bite 1d8; Spec leap 20'; AL N).

The second pool is fed by a large bas-relief in the form of a bearded human head. This image of gigantic proportions depicts the god Poseidon, to whom the Spring Temple is consecrated. Silvery vapours seem to rise from



the basin the water flows into, although this is an optical illusion. However, valuables deposited into the basin or the pool vanish, to appear before Poseidon in his watery court. Woe be to anyone who offends this great deity with inappropriate sacrifice, for he will send a hydra (HD 5; hp 24 for the body and 8 each for the heads; DC 4; Atk 5* bite 1d6; AL CE) to punish the infidel at once!

C. First Spring Chamber: Within this domed chamber is a spring with magical waters. The waters heal 2d4 points of damage to anyone who samples them, but this enchantment only works one time a day for a person.

D. Second Spring Chamber: As above, but the healing waters here spill out from their pool and flow down a groove cut into the stairs leading down. If Maestran is still alive, he makes his last stand here, attacking from above after casting levitate.

E. Stairs. These stairs are slippery from the waters; anyone who walks fast or runs here will slip and suffer 1d6 points of damage. At five locations, arched windows allow one to look down into the lower spring chamber.

F. Lower Spring Chamber: The streams of water which flow from above through the stairs and from the windows collect here in an opalescent pool glowing with an unearthly radiance. The spring chamber has a high, domed ceiling supported by green serpentine columns and partly obscured by the water's haze. Floor tiles are azure and the rim of the pool is a golden yellow. Daepheros the Water Naga lives in the waters and emerges to greet visitors. Its serpentine body is emerald-green, with a pretty female head supported by the long neck. Daepheros is open to questions from approaching characters on its usual terms: a character wishing to ask something must first answer one of its own questions himself. A character who fails to answer a riddle will become the Spring Temple's new guardian. A few riddles are presented for use by the Referee, but others may be easily invented:

- "He washes his riches in a basin of stone, a tasty morsel alive and alone." (clam)
- "Diamond sheaves on a black field, never harvested but always withering to flower once again." (stars)
- "The treasure of the seas that grows on trees, a golden prison with a dazzling burial." (amber)
- "An invincible army guards the waters; without their charge, they flee your hand." (sand)

If attacked, Daepheros fights from the pool with spells and poisonous bite. If wounded below ½ of its total hit points, it flees to its abysmal depths. Daepheros prefers to keep at least one character alive to serve as guardian.



Daepheros: HD 7; hp 30; DC 5; Atk bite 1d4+poison; AL N. Spells: charm person**, identify item, floating lights, ESP, cloud of fog, mesmeric pattern, paralyze, suggestion, polymorph other (into some tasty, small animal). Those who slay Daepheros can claim its treasures provided they can retrieve them from the bottom of the well 100' below. The treasure consists of 5000 sp, 900 gp, a great silver vessel worth 1500 gp, a javelin of impaling, and a lightning wand (12 charges). Ω

Random Facial Hair (d20)

by Jeff Rients

1	Clean shaven - poor bastard
2	Stubble - eternal five o'clock shadow
3	Basic chevron moustache
4	Bushy walrus moustache
5	Handlebar: 1-3 small, 4-5 large, 6 enormous
6	Fu Manchu: 1-2 basic, 3-4 long, 5-6 long & braided
7	Franz Joseph
8	Mutton Chops: 1-3 basic, 4-6 w/moustache
9	Goatee: 1 basic, 2-3 doorknocker, 4 vandyke, 5-6 imperial
10	Beard, short cropped: 1-4 w/moustache, 5-6 w/o moustache

11	Cathedral Beard (shaggy front, cropped sides): 1-4 w/moustache, 5-6 w/o moustache
12	Full beard w/o moustache
13	Full beard w/moustache
14	Full beard w/large handlebars
15	Forked beard: 1-4 w/moustache, 5-6 w/o
16	Braided full beard w/o moustache
17	Braided full beard w/moustache
18	Braided full beard w/large handlebars
19	Extra long full beard: 1-4 w/moustache, 5-6 w/o moustache
20	Extra long braided beard: 1-4 w/moustache, 5-6 w/o moustache

Optional Rules: Dwarves get +1. After rolling a beard with accompanying moustache, roll d4+2 to determine specific type of moustache.





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Education of a Magic-User:

Part the third: Spell Research



The Tower of Duvan'Ku

1st -2nd level adventure by James Edward Raggi IV

Some easy money, or perhaps a deathtrap masquerading as an adventure, for those who suffer the delusion that all adventure locations are meant to be solved..

The Environs: The tower is located in the middle of the woods, about a day's journey from any sort of civilization. Around the tower is a clearing; the woods suddenly break into an idyllic, tranquil field. Somehow it always seems to be breathtaking here, either with strong sunlit rays breaking through dark clouds, scanning the ground like celestial spotlights, or soft rain through gentle sunlight, forming rainbows. Butterflies flutter everywhere, and on the opposite side of the clearing deer and bunnies leap away as intruders near. Around the base of the tower are dense, thornless rose bushes, with thousands of bright red roses in full bloom at all times.

The tower itself is a massive structure, fully fifty feet wide, with impressively thick walls. They'd better be thick – they look to be in utter shambles, with large chunks having fallen to the ground over the centuries and vines growing all over the structure. The tower is made of some sort of rock that no one can identify – it is vaguely bluish-grey and speckled with reflective crystals that make the entire structure shimmer in the sunlight. In fact, until it is approached, the thing might not look like a solid physical construct at all. The tower has a conical, closed roof and the only real breaks in the wall are the door at ground level and a solitary window near the top. Guarding the door of the tower is a great misshapen *thing*. It is roughly human-shaped, approximately ten feet tall, with gigantic talons and a giant sharp-toothed maw. However, it is an ancient creature which is quite weary of its duty, broken in body and spirit, and completely ineffectual in a fight. It will engage any intruder, but will not pursue beyond the clearing. (DC 10, Speed 15, HD 10, hp 54, #AT 1 claw, D 1d4, immune to normal missiles, if killed will rise again at sunset the next day, the sarcophagus on level four must be blessed to prevent this, AL NE.) The tower has five levels, with the window on the fifth.

The Door: The tower's door appears to be made of very heavy, sturdy warped wood with rusty iron banding. There is a very ornate lock on the door. It is actually a strange shape-shifting creature which mimics the appearance of a door. It will attack, with pseudopods, anyone who touches the door, unless the *Key of Love* is placed in the lock, in which case it will remain a door. The creature has been charmed to behave this way, and if this charm is dispelled for some reason, it will attack even if the key is used. (DC 7, Spd 0, HD 7, hp 31, #AT 1, D 3d4, whatever touches it sticks like glue, AL N).



First Level: The first thing that anyone entering the tower notices is that rats crawl everywhere along the walls. The cracks in the walls are large enough to allow rats free access, and this will be constant throughout the tower. The first floor room is bare except for four statues, each in the shape of a vaguely fairy-like princess figure in various dance poses. The statues have a greater amount of crystal flakes in their composition than the walls so they will particularly shine when exposed to light. The statues form something of a perimeter around a central point, and they all face that point. In the center of the statues is a carved circle. If someone stands in the circle, then the statues will speak in succession:

Statue One: "Those who would have a kingdom must be pure in heart, trusting and peaceful."

Statue Two: "One must throw away the weapons of war and don the garments of love!"

Statue Three: "Only the pure and the worthy may break the seal and awaken the princess."

Statue Four: "To the princess' groom will pass the right to rule over the Kingdom of Duvan'Ku and possess its treasures."

There is a ladder leading to a trap door to level two. The trap door is slightly stuck and will take one round to push open, and it will automatically swing shut (and become stuck again) once it is closed.

Second Level: This room is filled with many racks, which are half-filled with rotted, torn white robes of unknown composition with woven patterns all over them. Carved into the walls are bas-reliefs of a courting ceremony, with a succession of carvings showing a great general surrounded by soldiers discarding his armor and weapons and putting on ceremonial robes with distinct markings (matching the pattern of the robes on the racks). He then walks by two guardians alone, kneels at the foot of a great stone box where he drops several flowers, opens the box, embraces a beautiful woman, and finally is crowned and festooned with gold and jewels. There is a bin here with all sorts of armor and weapons dumped in, all useless and in various stages of decay. There is also a ladder that leads to a trap door to level three. The trap door is slightly stuck and will take one round to push open, and it will automatically swing shut (and become stuck again) once closed.

Third Level: This room is empty except for the trap door down, the stairs up, the guardians of the stairs, and some ancient remains of those who attempted to pass without following the rules. Two skeletons in ratty, torn chain mail, swords (in a strange and heretofore unknown style), shields, and slung bows and (bone!!) arrows stand guard by the stairs. They stand motionless, and if a character is alone and dressed in the correct manner they will allow him to pass. If more than one character approaches, or if a single approaching character is

unrobed or has visible arms or armor (the robes are tattered enough that armor and all but the smallest of weapons will be visible), they will stand and fight anyone who approaches. They will not pursue anyone who flees, and they will not abandon their post. The guardians are not undead, but rather constructs, similar to what could be considered a bone golem. If destroyed, they will reform at the next sunset unless the sarcophagus on level four is blessed. They are DC 3, Speed 6, HD 5, hp 23, #AT 1 sword or 1 bow, D 1d8 or 1d6, immune to spells as if undead, unable to be turned, non-magic weapons do half damage, AL N. If the guardians kill anyone, they will wait until the next sunset, and then take the body and any equipment upstairs and dump it all behind the curtain. Oh yeah, one more thing... they will attack anyone coming down the stairs.

Fourth Level: This room is the resting place of the princess. On the opposite side of the room from the entry stairs is a stone sarcophagus on a raised platform (the platform and sarcophagus are actually one large carved piece, and part of the floor as well), with carvings depicting wizards putting a woman to sleep and placing her in... the sarcophagus. The detail of the carving is so great that one can see the carvings on the sarcophagus in the carving, and elves can see that repeat four or five times. If looking at it with magical sight, a character can see that this actually goes on *forever* (anyone who sees this must make a save versus spells or become mentally disoriented, suffering a two point penalty to attack rolls, armor class, and saves for 2d6 rounds, and spellcasting will be impossible – but characters will not know they are thus affected until they enter combat or attempt to cast a spell). Behind the sarcophagus is a curtain made up of a heavy cloth of unknown origin. Behind this curtain is a very large pile of bones, and if one digs through the bones one will find badly decayed, and finally powdered bones at the bottom of the pile. Surrounding this platform is (what appears to be) a thaumaturgic circle, with many glyphs and sigils along its border, carved into the floor. The indentation of the carvings is completely lined with the reflective crystals so it will seem to glow to anyone entering the room with a light source. This is actually decoration and has no magical power at all. Hanging from the ceiling is the remains of a crystal chandelier, broken some ages ago. Crushed glass covers the floor (a lot more than the chandelier would account for, if anyone were to know how big the chandelier actually was). When the door to this level is opened, the glass on the other side of the door will crinkle loudly, and characters must intentionally be stealthy or else the glass beneath their feet will snap and pop. The amount of reflective crystals in the stonework in this room is massive, so anyone coming up here with a light source will cause the entire room to become a shimmering spectacle.

In the sarcophagus is the princess, but unfortunately for any suitors, she is an undead *thing* (DC 5, HD 4+3, hp 27, 1 attack, 1d4 damage + level drain, immune to non-magical or non-silver weapons). And she never sleeps. If there was any noise made while approaching the sarcophagus, she will know they are there, and will achieve automatic surprise if the character lifting the lid of the sarcophagus does not declare any caution. She will attack anyone opening the sarcophagus. She really doesn't care about the ritual, as the entire legend is a complete fabrication, and the woman was in life a streetwalker who was kidnapped, murdered, and corrupted into this form specifically as bait to lure greedy people to their deaths. The souls (or spirits) of those killed by her, because they were doomed by greed (the want of an underserved kingdom) or lust (the hand of a woman they have never met) are delivered to some foul god to be tortured for eternity. If "killed," the undead creature will reanimate at the next sunset unless the sarcophagus is blessed. The round after killing someone, the princess places the body behind the curtain (it will not rise) and replaces the sarcophagus lid and returns to rest. Rats, which have climbed through the cracks in the structure of the tower, will eat away at the body until it is just bones, and they will carry small items and valuables (especially the *Key of Love* if present), into a deep subterranean lair where their mythic rat lord masters, worshippers of the death gods of Duvan'Ku, will collect them. These masters will then see to it that the (entirely invented) legend is spread in the new area, and then introduce the *Key* again so new victims will travel to the tower, repeating a cycle that has gone on for millennia.

Fifth Level: This room does not connect to the rest of the tower. Inside the room is magical darkness, which engulfs the entire room and ends just at the window. The room is empty except for the floor which is covered with all sorts of spikes, broken blades, caltrops, splintered bones, and other sharp items. It is impossible to step anywhere without stepping on something; the floor is covered several layers deep. Anyone stepping inside the window with their full weight takes d3 damage and must make a paralyzation save or fall down, taking a further d6+1 points of damage. Once a character has fallen, he must make a petrify save (with wisdom bonus applied!) to remember which way the window is, and failing this save means he takes d3 damage as he shuffles through the sharp stuff. This save may be attempted every round until successful or the character is dead. Anyone who dies here will have rats crawl into the room and gnaw their bodies and possessions into manageable bits, and that too will be carried away...

How It Might Happen: Here is one possible way of getting a party to the tower. Sir Fondleroy Addleton and his three retainers show up somewhere one stormy night when the characters are present. Maybe it's at a roadside

camp, maybe it's at an inn. Addleton will inform the characters that he is looking for some hired help for an expedition into the forest. He requests a meeting away from where the retainers can interrupt. He will offer each of the PCs 250 gp to simply act as bodyguards and escort him to a location in the forest. That's all. There is no mission to accomplish, no expected danger. Just get him to his destination. "Will you do it?"

Of course PCs aren't going to say yes without more information... will they? If so, then alter the chain of events offered below. If they say no, then that's the end of this adventure. If they say no and then follow the guy, have Addleton recruit some other riffraff and improvise based on the information below. If the PCs want to know about his relationship with his retainers, he will confide that he doesn't know them so well, having hired them in the last city he passed through because he considers it unwise to travel through the countryside alone. He has overheard them talking amongst themselves and he is worried that they are brutal thugs. He doesn't want to anger them or cause trouble for firing them, as being tough guys is what he hired them for, but he doesn't trust being alone with them on such a, ahem, sensitive mission.

If they want to know the full story, he will tell them. He was traveling in the southlands when he began hearing about the legend of a lost ancient city called Duvan'Ku. It was ruled by a goodly King Porgotna. He had a beautiful daughter, a kind and gentle soul named Princess Turuvna. When she came of age she began accepting suitors. But every time she chose someone to marry, they ended up committing a horrible crime. It was a scandal throughout the kingdom. Finally the Princess' final suitor was a great general in the army, who after gaining the heart of the Princess led a savage massacre against helpless peasants. The King became incensed, and seeing his daughter fall to pieces yet again, decided that enough was enough. He had his daughter put into a magical sleep so that her misery would no longer trouble her, and declared that only a man of great intellect and conviction, with a honorable and peaceful spirit, could break the spell and claim his daughter. He sent his daughter away to his most remote and secret outpost and had her laid to rest at the top of its tower, and charged his two most trustworthy guardsmen to make sure no harm came to her. He then had his court wizards fashion a key to that tower that would only work for a man worthy of his daughter's love and then had it hidden. He declared that the man to break his daughter's spell would be able to rightfully claim her in marriage and inherit the kingdom and all its treasures. The evil general sought to find the Princess himself, but in his lust and greed was transformed into a wicked caricature of his old humanity. Apparently he found where the Princess was, but being unable to enter the tower, his

hate sustains him and he acts as an obstacle to any that would enter the tower. The King, so overcome by guilt over what his daughter had suffered and what he had done to end that suffering, died soon after and Duvan'Ku began a swift descent into the obscurity of ancient history. Addleton can provide a series of parchment fragments that confirm various parts of the story, including one that gives compelling evidence that the spell the Princess was under would sustain her for all time, until it is broken. Away from anyone else's sight, he produces a heart-shaped key made of unknown metal (the *Key of Love*). He says he was the henchmen of an adventuring expedition that went to reclaim an old church that had been overrun by undead. He found the key in the church's vaults, and spent tens of thousands of gold pieces consulting sages and finally learning the location of the tower where the Princess is kept. He decided that was too dangerous to keep written down, so he's memorized it. He says he just needs the PCs to get him into the tower. That's the goal.

During the trip to the tower, Addleton will tell of all he has heard about Duvan'Ku, saying the legends tell of riches beyond compare and crafted magic that is as commonplace as woodwork is in the current lands. He says that even if the legends have been exaggerated ten times over the truth, that they should all be very wealthy men. If the PCs are predominantly male, he will talk about all the beautiful women he's bedded, and hypothesizes how the princess will compare. He jokes about giving all the PCs appointments in his royal court if the legends turn out to be accurate.

When reaching the clearing, Addleton will direct the party to engage the guardian creature and draw it away from the door so he may enter the tower, with his retainers supplying supporting missile fire and guarding the horses in case goblins are attracted by the sounds of combat. Because he doesn't want to screw up the prophecy, he directs the adventurers to not enter, and that he will call for them after he has achieved his goal, or when he needs them. He assumes that the princess' chamber is in the top of the tower, where the window is. If the PCs do what he says, the creature will move to engage intruders and move away from the door. A round after the battle is joined, Addleton will go to the door, use the key to open it, take the key while leaving the door open, and go inside. If there is battle, the PCs will not hear the statues' speech. Assume it will take Addleton one round to listen to the statues, one round to enter each new floor of the tower, and two rounds to change clothes on the second level. He shouldn't last long once he reaches the fourth level, as he will be so eager to gain his prize that he will throw all caution to the wind and he will be surprised. The round after Addleton enters the tower, the PCs will hear a commotion by the horses – the retainers know of the

gems that Addleton was carrying and two of the retainers have decided that now would be a wonderful time to grab them and run. One of the men is honest and tries to stop them. If nobody interferes, the two thieves will kill the honest one and then ride off with the treasure. If any PC enters the tower, it is imperative that the referee communicate with this player in secret. It is to be made clear that the player(s) in question can not give other players any information about the inside of the tower until their characters reunite! They will of course find Addleton's armor and weapons in the bin on the second level, but likely there will be no trace of him once they reach the fourth level – unless they look behind the curtain. The key will already be gone if his body is there. **Sir Fondleroy Addleton:** DC 5 or 4 (chain mail and shield), Warrior 3, hp 23, 1 attack, 1d8 (longsword) or 1d6 (bow) damage, LN. Important equipment includes his medium warhorse, chain mail, shield, longsword, longbow, and twenty arrows. He keeps 3d20 gold and 2d20 silver on him at all times. In his saddlebags are his rations and supplies, as well as a pouch with 10 pearls worth 250 gp each. These pearls are what Addleton was going to pay the PCs with, and what the retainers attempt to steal. He also has the parchments with the legend fragments and the *Key of Love* on him at all times. **Three Retainers:** DC 8 (leather armor), Lvl 0, HP 5 each, 1 attack, 1d8 (longsword) or 1d6 (bow) damage, NE, CE, and CG. Equipment of note includes their light riding horses, leather armor, longsword, short bow, and twenty arrows each. Each has 3d6gp on his person.

Other Possibilities: The above adventure assumes that a referee really doesn't want to goad the PCs into entering the tower themselves. Of course they will do so on their own anyway, but that's the point – this is intended to be a horror adventure, a Weird Tale if you will, and not an example of high adventure and derring-do. The referee must set this up correctly. The *Key of Love*, and the legend, must pass into the players' hands somehow, whether as an enticement to go to the tower, or in the hands of another that let it be known where they are going and why. The key points: There is no legend of treasure or magic to be had. The prize is the princess, and specific steps to free her must be taken. It must be stressed that if more than one person enters that tower, they are not going to be able to awaken and rescue the princess. The idea is that whoever goes up that tower dies. It is not intended to be solved or defeated, and there is no reward for doing so. And really, anyone who puts on rotting clothing to satisfy some skeletal guardians in order to marry a woman they've never heard of until the day before... some on. They deserve what they get. It is recommended that the PCs have few if any magic items when they undertake this adventure. Horror doesn't work if the protagonists can muscle their way through. Ω



The Dread Sorceries of Duvan’Ku

Duvan’Ku was a magical place, and its inhabitants created many a bizarre and transgressive spell. This knowledge of Duvan’Ku is spread throughout the world, in ancient spellbooks held captive in dragon hoards, lich’s libraries, and the like. However, some also survive on scrolls, and the mischief that the Dead King seeks to perform from beyond time allows some of these to reach the world in much easier manners... All of these spells are for mages, as the gods would never directly grant powers to anything borne of Duvan’Ku.

Level 1

Aura of Good: The target of this spell will radiate a good (or lawful, or both, as appropriate) aura when the subject of detection devices or spells. Nothing short of a dispel magic will allow a detection spell to detect anything other than good on the spell’s target.

Dangerous Toys: This spell causes a minor demon to inhabit a very small inanimate object. The demon wakes up, animating the object, when it is touched by a child. At that point the object will attempt to slay any living thing it comes across. The object has DC 8, Speed 12, HD 1, #AT 1, D d6.

Infanticide: This spell slays any creature with one hit point (maximum, not current) within 10’/level without any mark or a scratch on it – it just stops breathing.

Oath: Oath solidifies an agreement between two parties, ensuring by magical means that both parties keep to the agreement. For the oath spell to take effect, all parties must be in full control of their mental capacities (no oathing under charm, for example) and be aware that the spell will be binding them. The terms must be explicitly laid out, and the important thing is the letter, not intent, of the agreement. The spell will remain in effect as long as it takes to see that the agreement is honored, and can include as many people as are willing to take the oath. If any party breaks the oath, they will suffer a one point permanent loss from a random ability score. No save.

Vomit: A single target within 10’/level begins to vomit a thick, disgusting black chunky liquid and is unable to take any other action. The effect continues, every round, until the target makes a saving throw. (Saving on the first round simply negates the spell.)

Level 2

Longevity: Casting this spell erases the previous year of aging. The caster must bathe in the blood of a number of virgins equal to the actual age of the caster at the time of casting. This blood must be fresh and the act of collecting it must kill the virgins, and the caster must spend one hour soaking in the blood.

Protection from Living Creatures: This spell creates a living barrier around the target which repels living creatures. Any living creature attacking the target suffers a -2 penalty to hit, and the target receives a +2 saving throw on any effect caused by a living creature. Living creatures which physically strike with a body part (claw, fist, bite, etc) may not attack at all. Note that extra-planar creatures, undead, constructs, magically-imbued beings, etc, are not considered “living” creatures for the purposes of this spell. This protection moves with the target and lasts 3 rounds per caster level.

Level 3

Army of One: The recipient of this spell is able to make one melee attack against every opponent directly engaging him for 1 round per level of its caster. Each attack must be against a different opponent.

Black Blood: This spell causes a target’s blood to become a thick and expanding gel, causing intense pressure and pain. The target must be within 50’. This will cause 1d4 damage/round until the pressure is relieved. While in great pain, the character can act normally. The pressure is relieved when the target is hit by a piercing or slashing weapon or when someone intentionally slices the character open to bleed him (can be done for no initial damage). Once this happens, the character becomes unable to take any action and merely convulses for three full rounds as a disgusting, viscous black ichor spews from his wounds, covering the entire area. At the end of the third round, the character takes 1d6 damage and then may act normally. Save negates.

Blood Oath: As *Oath*, but if any party breaks the oath, they will immediately lose one level/hit die. No save.

Bloodless: The living target of this spell takes half damage from all attacks for 1 round per caster level.

Death Breath: The character spews forth a 20’ toxic cloud of green-black gas from his mouth, doing 1d4 points of damage for every level of the caster, with a saving throw for half damage applicable. Because it is a gas most gags will not stop the spell from working, and no hand motions etc. are needed to cast it.

Level 4

Protection from Living Creatures, 10’ Radius: As per the level 2 spell *Protection from Living Creatures*, except with a 10’ radius and lasting one full turn per caster level.

Steal Spell I: One random spell (of level 1 – 3) is erased from the memory of the target and the caster of this spell gains the ability to cast it as if he had memorized it. The gained spell must be cast, and can not be transcribed or stored in any way. No save.

Vomit Guts: The target of this spell (within 10'/ caster level) begins to vomit up their insides, with the target being unable to move and suffering 1d10 damage every round until they make a saving throw.

Level 5

Death Pact: As *Oath*, but if any party breaks the oath, the will immediately die, with no possibility of raising, resurrection, or reincarnation.

Steal Spell II: As *Steal Spell I*, but the spell is level 1-4.

Level 6

Animate Dead II: Casting this spell on a corpse causes it to rise as a wight (if it is an intact corpse) or a wraith (if it is not) under the control of the caster. One undead per two levels of the caster may be raised, provided there are enough corpses at the site of the casting of course.

Steal Spell III: As *Steal Spell I*, but the spell is level 2-5.

Level 7

Animate Dead III: Casting this spell on a corpse (or the site of a death if the body was destroyed) causes its spirit to rise as a spectre under the control of the caster. One undead per four levels of the caster may be raised, provided there are enough bodies (or spirits) at the site of the casting of course. Note that a spectre is completely aware of its status as an undead creature, and although it will be compelled to obey the caster, it will not be happy about it... at all.

Steal Spell IV: As *Steal Spell I*, but the spell is level 3-6.

Level 8

Steal Spell V: As *Steal Spell I*, but the spell is level 4-7.

Level 9

New Mind: This spell completely erases a touched target's mind (no save) and replaces it with whatever the caster wishes. When the spell is complete, the creature should re-roll intelligence, wisdom, and charisma from scratch, and a new alignment should be randomly determined. All of the creature's memories will be wiped out, and the caster will be able to create an entirely new set of memories as he pleases. The character will begin again at level one in a random class, although retaining its previous hit points and saving throw numbers until it gains a level greater than its original. Alternately, the spell can be used to simply erase the mind of the target, making him a mindless idiot. It takes half an hour of contact to erase a mind and a full hour to reprogram it.

To Challenge the Gods: This spell strips any one extraplanar being of all special powers and abilities for one hour. No items or levels are affected. Save negates. Ω



malevolent monsters by Jeff Rients

DRAGON, PURPLE

Number Appearing: 1d4

Intelligence: low to high

Outlook: neutral or chaos

Speed: 9, charge 15

Defense Class: 2

Hit Dice: 10 to 12

Special Characteristics: Breathe Fire, 9" x 3" cone;

Talking/Sleeping: 85%/20%; Magic: 15%, 1st-3rd level

Damage: 3d12 (bite) or 1d6 plus poison (stinger)

Size: S to L

Description: The existence of the Purple Dragon has been all but ignored by the great sages. The wizard Nerrep Yrag was one of the few to document the existence of this beast and then only as a brief mention: "Finally, the Purple, or Mottled, Dragon is a rare, flightless wyrm with a venomous sting in its tail." The Purple Dragon can bite and sting in the same round of combat, but they are not so flexible as to direct both attacks against a single foe the size of a man.



GRISLY SPHERE

Number Appearing: 1

Intelligence: average

Outlook: chaos

Speed: 12 (15 downhill)

Defense Class: 9

Hit Dice: 5

Special Characteristics: trample, bite weapon

Damage: 1d6 bite or 2d6 trample

Size: L

Description: The Grisly Sphere is an evil brain at the center of a roundish pile of severed heads. In melee the heads can bite, making one attack on every foe in hand-to-hand combat. It may opt to bite melee weapons instead of their wielders. This creature's preferred method of attack is to roll over foes. It can attempt to trample as many man-sized or smaller foes as it can reach in a round's movement. When rolling down a steep incline the Grisly Sphere does 3d6 damage instead of 2d6. Anyone killed by a Grisly Sphere's trample attack has their head added to its horrid collection.

POISON WRAITH

Number Appearing: 3d6

Intelligence: low to average

Outlook: chaos

Speed: fly 15

Defense Class: 5

Wound Dice: 3

Special Characteristics: undead immunities, choke cloud

Damage: 1d6 plus poison

Size: M

Description: These vaporous spirits appear in clouds of poisonous fumes 10' in diameter. Anyone within the cloud's radius must save against poison each round or be unable to act due to choking and wheezing. Those caught in the clutches of a poison wraith must save or take an additional 2d6. Anyone killed by a poison wraith is added to the legions of the undead d6 days later.

RUST ELF

Number Appearing: 2d6

Intelligence: average to high

Outlook: neutral

Speed: 12

Defense Class: 7

Hit Dice: 1 or more

Special Characteristics: Elf abilities, Rust effects

Damage: 1d6 (spear or arrow)

Size: S or M

Description: These creatures appear similar to other elves, but they always use non-metallic equipment, such as bark armor, thorn-tipped arrows, and bone spears. Once per day they may use a rust attack similar to the well-known monster, but with a range of 30 feet. Additionally, their blood contains traces of the rusting agent. Every time a Rust Elf is struck in combat their is

a 1 in 6 chance of rusting the offending weapon (if metallic) and a 1 in 20 chance of a splatter striking the attackers shield, helm, armor, etc. Wood Elves consider Rust Elves to be kinsman and mixed companies of the two are not unknown.



WAMPLER

Number Appearing: 1-6

Intelligence: average to high

Outlook: chaos

Speed: 9 but fly 6

Defense Class: 7

Hit Dice: 4

Special Characteristics: weak vampire characteristics

Damage: 1d6 plus level drain

Size: small or medium

Description: The plague of vampirism is generally found only among the filthy humans, but recently a strain of the virus has mutated. Though weaker than typical vampirism, this new affliction can inflict the the fey folk, transforming them into Wamplers. These poor souls have the powers of a vampire, but to a much more limited extent. They can turn to mist, but strong winds blow them away. Garlic buds burn them for 1-6 points of damage while Holy Water utterly melts them. They can summon but a single bat, rat, or wolf that acts much like a familiar. Light type spells force them to check morale or flee. Any fey folk struck by a Wampler must save versus death or lose a level. Other creatures are immune to the drain, but anyone slain by a Wampler has a 50% chance of rising 3 days later as one. Wamplers generally appear as pale and gaunt specimens of feykind, with fierce fangs and ears shaped much like batwings. Ω

Ghost Stories

tables for tales of terrors by Geoffrey O. Dale

Phantasms are the incorporeal remnants of dead sentient creatures which lack the negative energy or other Outer Planes connections that sustain *true undead*. A phantasm can manifest an incorporeal appearance, may be able to create aural sounds, and a few many be able to affect material objects telekinetically, but they are insufficiently substantial to directly inflict physical harm. A phantasm has zero HD, zero hp, has no defense class, cannot be injured by any weapon or spell, and is unaffected by the undead-turning power of Priests and Paladins; likewise the phantasm has no attacks, either physical or psychic, and cannot inflict physical harm against anyone. Both phantasms and true undead are created from the extraordinary circumstances surrounding a horrendous death, where the deceased has important unfinished business on the Prime Material Plane. When incorporeal beings are called for in your game, the following random tables can be used to identify the creature's characteristics and create its back-story.

Type (d100): Phantasm 01-77, True Undead 78-00

True Undead Type (d100): 01-07 Will O'Wisp, 08-15 Poltergeist, 16-40 Specter, 41-44 Aura, 45-62 Wraith, 63-84 Ghost, 85-92 Spirit, 93-98 Vision, 99-00 Banshee

Race (d100): 01 Cyclops, 02-03 Dryad, 04-11 Dwarf, 12-20 Elf, 21-23 Frog-Men, 24-29 Giant, 30-40 Gnome, 41-48 Goblin, 49-54 Half-Elf, 55-61 Halfling, 62 Harpy, 62-83 Human, 84-85 Kobold, 86 Leprachaun, 87 Lizard-Man, 88 Mer, 89-91 Minotaur, 92 Nymph, 93 Ogre, 94-97 Orc, 98 Pygmy, 99 Satyr, 00 Selkie

Sex (d12): 01-08 Male, 09-11 Female, 12 Neither

Age at Death (d10): 1 Small Child, 2 Child, 3 Adolescent, 4 Young Adult, 5 Adult, 6 Early Middle Age, 7 Middle Age, 8 Late Middle Age, 9 Old, 10 Ancient

Marriage and Children: Adolescent and older females and Young Adult and older males died married if a second d10 rolls equal to or less than the age die (though a 10 means unmarried regardless of age). Make this roll a second time to determine if this was a first or second marriage. Make this roll a third time to see if the incorporeal had any children (1 child for adolescents, d4 for young adults, d4 with an additional d4-1 on every successive 4 for older incorporeals). Whether any spouses or children are still alive will depends on Time Dead (below); if a random roll is desired roll equal to or over the age roll for spouses and/or children to yet live.

Outlook (d12): 01-04 chaos, 05-09 neutral, 10-12 law

Social Class (civilized creatures only, 1d100): 01-03 Slave, 04-10 Serf, 11-36 Peasant, 37-78 Free Man, 79-93 Merchant, 94-98 Gentry, 97-99 Nobility, 00 Royalty

Time Dead (d100): 01-06 1d100*1d4 months, 07-12 1d100*1d6 months, 13-20 1d100*1d10 months, 21-32 1d100*1d20 months, 33-44 1d100*1d4 years, 45-62 1d100*1d6 years, 63-85 1d100*1d10 years, 86-95 1d100*1d100 months, 96-98 1d100*1d20 years, 99-00 1d100*1d100 years

Manifestation Capability (d100): 01-62 only during the Night, 63-74 at Dawn and Dusk only, 75-89 only during Daylight, 90-100 at any time

Profession Prior to Death (d100): 01-06 Adventurer, 07 Artist, 08-09 Bandit or Freebooter, 10 Bodyguard, 11 Bounder, 12-13 Bounty Hunter, 14-15 Caravan Guard, 16 Caravan Worker, 17-19 City Guard or Watch or Militia, 20 Craftsman, 21 Crusader, 22-23 Explorer, 24 Freedom Fighter, 25 Farmer, 26-27 Forester, 28 Government Official or Agent, 29-30 Guide, 31 Herbalist, 32 Hermit, 33 Holy Man or Monk, 34-36 Hunter, 37 Itinerant Merchant or Craftsman, 38 Itinerant Musician, 39 Itinerant Preacher, 40-41 Mage, 42-46 Mercenary, 47-48 Minstrel, 49 Missionary, 50-51 Monster Hunter, 52-54 Other Profession, 55 Physician, 56 Pioneer, 57-58 Priest, 59-61 Rebel, 62 Ruler, 63 Sage or Savant, 64-66 Settler, 67 Sheriff, 68-69 Slave or Servant, 70-81 Soldier, 80-82 Specialist, 83-84 Surveyor, 85 Teacher or Tutor, 86-91 Teamster or Sailor, 91-92 Townsman [Burgher], 93-96 Treasure Seeker, 97 Wanderer, 98-00 Woodsman

Direct Cause of Death (d100): 01-03 Accident, 04-06 Ambush, 07 Burial, 08-09 Burning, 10-40 Combat, 41-44 Disease, 45-46 Drowning, 47-55 Environment [Falling, Frostbite, Heat Stroke, Quicksand], 56-68 Execution, 69-77 Murder, 78-82 Poison, 83 Ritual [Other], 84 Ritual Sacrifice, 85-87 Spell, 88-92 Starvation, 93 Suicide, 94 Trap, 95 Venom [Animal or Plant], 96-00 Weather [Blizzard, Earthquake, Flood, Hail, Lightning, Tornado].

Special Circumstances Surrounding Death (roll 1-2 on d6 to activate this table, then roll d100): 01-02 Adultery, 03-05 Attack [Elemental, Dragon, Giant, Fantastic Beast], 06 Banditry, 07-13 Betrayal, 14-16 Crime, 17-19 Curse, 20 Challenge or Duel, 21-22 Defiance, 23 Demon or Devil, 24-28 Divine Command, 29-30 Drugs, 31-36 Duty, 37-41 Enemy Actions, 42-48 Family Squabble, 49-50 Finest Hour, 51-53 Geas or Compulsion, 54-58 Greed, 59-61 Hatred, 62-63 Honor, 64 Hopeless Defense, 65-67 Jealousy, 68 Kidnapping, 69 Kingship, 70-71 Last Stand, 72 Lover's Pact, 73 Lovers Separated, 74 Lover's Spat, 75-76 Lover's Triangle, 77 Lust [Forbidden], 78 Madness, 79 Massacre, 80-81 Murder, 82-83 Dispute over Power, 84 Prophecy, 85-86 Protect the

Innocent, 87 Promise or Oath, 88 Rebellion, 89-91 Revenge, 92 Riots, 93 Schism, 94-95 Sibling Rivalry, 96 Succession, 97 Vision, 98 War, 99 Roll Twice, 00 Roll Three Times. The special circumstances are generally known (local tales, legends, songs, stories, etc.) on 1-2 on 1d6, otherwise they must be discovered through divination or detective work.

An incorporeal is bound to a PLACE on a d100 roll of 80+; an incorporeal not bound to a Place is bound to an OBJECT on a second d100 roll of 70+.

Place of Binding (d100): 01-15 Birth Place, 16-19 Catacomb, 20-24 Chapel or Church, 25-26 Crossroad, 27-50 Death Site, 51-62 Dungeon [level or sub-zone], 63-68 Dungeon [whole], 69-74 Family Land or Estate, 75-76 Favorite Location, 77-85 Grave Site, 86-89 Home Site, 90 Laboratory, 91-93 Magic Circle, 94 Monument, 95-96 Other Place, 97 Place of Summoning, 98 Shrine, 99 Tomb, 00 Work Place

Object of Binding (d100): 01-03 Altar, 04-10 Armor [d8 item: Belt or Girdle, Boot, Breastplate, Buckler, Gauntlet, Helm, Shield, Shirt], 11-12 Bier, 13-14 Book, 15-17 Blood [includes blood-stained object such as clothing], 18 Brazier, 19 Buckle, 20 Candlestick, 21-27 Clothing [1d8 item – Blouse, Cloak, Dress {Woman's}, Gloves, Hat, Shirt or Tunic, Shoes, Vest], 28-31 Coffin or Chest, 32-33 Crown or Tiara, 34-37 Earth or Ground or Dirt, 38-39 Furniture [1d6 item – Armoire, Bed, Chair, Couch, Desk, Table], 40-51 Gemstone [1d10 item – Bloodstone, Citrine, Diamond, Emerald, Jade, Moonstone, Opal, Pearl, Ruby, Zircon], 52 Goblet or Stein, 53-55 Holy or Unholy Symbol, 56 Lantern, 57-58 Medallion, 59-61 Other Object, 62-63 Painting, 64-69 Ring, 70-80 Relic [personal – bone piece, hair, skin, teeth], 81-84 Staff, 85-86 Statue, 87-93 Sword [1d6 item – Claymore, Cutlass, Long, Rapier, Scimitar, Short], 94-99 Weapon [1d6 item – Bow, Club, Mace, Javelin, Morning Star, Spear], 00 Wagon [includes coaches, conestogas, hackneys, and other wheeled conveyances]

Range of Binding (inc. must stay within - d100): 01-05 1d100*1d6 FT, 06-14 1d100*1d10 FT, 15-50 1d100*1d20 FT, 51-85 3d100*1d20 FT, 86-95 1d100*1d12*1d6 FT, 93-96 1d100*1d100 FT, 97-99 5 miles, 99 10 miles, 00 25 miles. An unbound Incorporeal still has favorite haunts which they do not generally leave without reason; determine their usual travel distance using 1d100*1d100'.

Conditions of Release (d100): 01-05 Achieve Quest, 06-07 Achieve Revenge, 08-09 Banishment Spell, 10-14 Bless Body or Bones [Holy Water], 15-20 Break Curse, 21 Build Chapel or Church or Shrine, 22-24 Burn Body, 25-27 Bury Body, 28-30 Bury Child/Lover/Spouse, 31 Collect Debt, 32-34 Defend Place, 35-39 Deliver Message or Warning, 40-44 Descendant's Forgiveness,

45-50 Destroy Object of Binding, 51-52 Destroy Other Object, 53-55 Destroy Place, 56-57 Enemy's Forgiveness, 58 Find Guardian, 59-63 Find Heir, 64-67 Fulfill Oath, 68 Fulfill Prophecy, 69-73 Holy Man's Blessing, 74-77 Kill Enemy [enemy descendant], 79 Kill Monster, 80 Magic Ritual, 81 Make Pilgrimage, 82-85 Make Sacrifice, 86-87 Other Action, 88 Pay Debt, 89 Play specified Music, 90-93 Religious Ritual, 94 Restore Honor, 95 Retrieve Object, 96-97 Return Bones or Body [rebury], 98-99 Return Object, 00 Sing specified Song. True Undead reduced to 0 hp reform after 3d100 hours.

Form of Communication (inc. can communicate on 1d6 roll of 1-2, otherwise only can be reached by magic if at all, roll d20): 01 Sign Language, 02-04 Telepathy, 05-09 Verbal, 10-14 Visual Projection, 15-20 Written. Only half of communications are intelligible.

EXAMPLE: As an example (listing only the results and not the die rolls): True Undead, Ghost, Gnome, Female, Middle Age, Married, Second Spouse, 1 Child, Child Predeceased, Merchant Class, Neutral, 192 Years Since Death, Manifests Only at Night, Caravan Guard, Death in Combat, Special Circumstances – Kidnapping, Bound to Object – Bloodstone, moves 500 FT, Released by Achieving Revenge, Cannot Communicate. The GM needs this ghost for a lonely wilderness pass high on a ridge in a highland moor, the ridge forming the boundary between Clan Ordshir and Clan Dummfryst; there is some friction between these clans but at the time of the Incorporeal's death they were not at war.



The GM then constructs back-story as follows: The Ghost of Dalphonia is found haunting the ruined remains of a two-story stone watchtower. She was employed escorting a caravan of woolen goods from Guirnsbagh to Hollybrake when Glorinna, the 14 year old daughter of the caravan master, was kidnapped from their campsite. Dalphonia, Herbrock, Tolnius, and Vergil tracked her abductor for about 12 miles to the guard tower. The abductor was discovered to be the notorious amazon bandit Melinara A'Shannora and her gang. Melinara was wearing green and silver tartan, pinned with a magnificent silver-and-bloodstone brooch. Dalphonia was killed in the ensuing brawl, though she did slash through Melinara's prized brooch, dislodging the large bloodstone (13,000 gp value) within. Glorinna was rescued and Melinara's gang slain, but the amazon herself escaped. The bloodstone can be found (roll) wedged in a crack in the interior west wall of the tower ruin. Delphonia had been married to Herbrock, also a caravan guard, for 9 years; her first husband Merrick and son Branborn died during a cholera epidemic when she was 30. She can be released – and the fantastic gem she inhabits made usable - by finding and killing Melinara's direct male descendant Pettiborg (N Minstrel 5).

New Monsters

Phantasm: 0 HD, 0 hp, DC N/A, immune to priestly turning and almost everything else. The only thing phantasms can do is manifest according to the following tables (d100): 01-15 Appearance Effects only, 16-29 Area Effects only, 30-40 Magical Effects only, 41-53 Sounds only, 54-63 Appearance and Area Effects, 64-70 Appearance and Magical Effects, 71-79 Appearance and Sounds, 80-87 Area Effects and Magical Effects, 88-95 Area Effects and Sounds, 96-98 Appearance and Area Effects and Sounds, 99-100 All Ability Types. Appearance Effects (d10): Bony Hand only [bodiless], Color-Changing, Enlarging, Glittering or Sparkling, Frightening [panicking], Head/Face only [bodiless], Hideous or Disgusting [nauseating], Pulsating Body, Stunning Beauty [transfixing], Transforming Body [different creatures]. Area Effects (d8): Disorientating, Hair-Raising, Nauseating, Numbing, Stench or Odors, Stuck Doors or Locks, Very Cold, Very Warm. Magical Effects (d12): Darkness, Fires Quench (15 FT), Icing on Liquids, Ignite Flammables (8 FT), Letters appear on Walls, Slime appears on Walls, Slippery Floors, Smoke and colored Mists, Telekinesis (minor, 5 pound limit), Teleporting Objects (10 pound limit, 12 FT limit), Thick Fog, Wet or Dripping Walls and Ceiling. Sounds (d20): Bagpipes, Baying Dogs, Bells, Butter Churn, Burning Fire, Chains, Cracking Whip, Creaking Doors, Crying Baby, Dirge (singing), Flute, Gongs, Heartbeat, Heavy Footsteps, Hideous Moans, Keening, Maniacal Laughter, Terrified Screams, Thunder, Whistling. GMs who wish to give true undead some of the abilities of phantasms to enhance their 'haunting' ability should feel free to do so.

Aura: NA 1, Neutral, HD 6, DC 6 (requires silver or enchanted weapons to damage), Speed 12, 1 Chilling Touch Attack which does normal damage and requires a save vs. paralysis. An Aura with a defenseless foe will not kill it, but rather drain its ethos (so that its outlook becomes purely neutral). Auras are man-sized incorporeal humanoids with long noses, droopy ears, tangled dark hair, seven-fingered hands. They glow with a pale yellow light and dressed in grave clothes, and are attracted to persons of strong good or evil. Turn as mummies.

Poltergeist: NA 1, Chaos, HD 3, DC 4 (silver/enchanted to hurt) Speed 15, 1 attack with Undead Rod (+1 weapon which knocks target out on natural 20, whistles while striking) or claw (normal); can use Telekinesis at will on any single object up to 50 lb. or a cloud of small objects within 120'; can levitate at will and possesses true sight. Priests and paladins automatically are aware when a poltergeist is within 75'; they turn as wraiths. They may become invisible at will unless a silver object is brought within 25' of them. When killed they explode for 1d12 to all within 20'; they will reform the next night unless the scraps are found and burned. They appear as short, slight men with a muscular torso, thin bony arms and legs, a black skull head with glowing yellow eyes, wrapped in a white tunic with black belt. They seek release and will make deals to obtain it.

Spirit: NA 1, Chaos, HD 8, DC -2 (immune to wood weapons, non-enchanted weapons do -2 damage), Speed 9, touch drains a level permanently and 1d3 Wisdom for 3d4 days while regenerating the spirit 1d6 (elves with Wisdom 17+ are immune). Can create Aura of Fear causing all who see her to save at -4 or panic, 40% magic resistance, strong light magic or daylight directly on her causes 2d8. Rarely active during daylight, spirits are quasi-incorporeal, normally female humanoids glowing with pulsating white light, with glossy waist-length hair and long mournful faces with glowing lidless green eyes. Spirits usually dress in tattered knee-length gowns of archaic design and exhibit skeletal hands. A background of guttural moans, weeping, grunts, and wails is heard around the Spirit out to 50'. Turn as vampires.

Vision: NA 1, Chaos, HD 10, DC N/A (unharmful by material weapons – requires ethereal or incorporeal blades, which hit as if DC 5), Speed 18, its attack is a weird hypnotic touch/gesture that drains 1 point of wisdom; when wisdom is reduced to 0 the vision possesses the target for 2-5 months and then leaves, whereafter the body dies in 1-3 days. It takes half damage from fire and electricity spells but double damage from priestly magic. Turns as specter (can be exorcised with a turning at -3). A translucent incorporeal skeleton standing 7' tall, with an oversized skull head with wild yellow-glowing hair and pulsating red eyes, only manifests at night or in dark places. Ω

Arcane Vault of Isis

contest winning adventure by Matthew Riedel

This adventure is designed for a balanced party of high-to-very high level characters, and can be set in the desert of any campaign world.

The Sandstorm and the Sage: News of a recent sandstorm with monstrous ferocity quickly reaches the player characters. Nomads trading on the outskirts of the desert tell of a monolithic structure rising out of the desert sands in the aftermath of the storm. A wise and aged sage hurriedly requests an audience with the player characters. The sage will explain his lifetime of research has long hinted at an ancient, but unknown, civilization in the desert. He believes the storm and the monument signal the revelation of powerful secrets forgotten by men. But, news travels fast. The secrets may only be revealed to the first adventurers to arrive on the scene. All the sage asks in return for this information is for the party to return with their tale...



Lonely Plateau Approach: A mysterious ring-shaped fissure in the earth lies at the heart of the desert wastes. A roughly cylindrical mass of earth is isolated by this break in the landscape. While the gap between this lonely mass of land and the wastes that surround it is just 40' wide, the 200' deep knife-shaped chasm below make it seem a world away. Before the storm, the monument was buried in the sand and the chasm completely filled with sand. Such was the force of the storm, that the tons of sands burying the monument and filling the chasm were carried away in but a moment. When the party arrives, they see the Ankh Monument and a lone human man on the plateau across the chasm (see area D). On both the east and west edges of the fissure, directly across from the plateau, a thin layer of sand hides a lever within a 3' stone slot horizontal to the ground. Each character searching the area has a 1 in 6

chance of discovering the lever. Characters pulling the lever will cause a metallic bridge to span the gap, connecting the wastes with the plateau.

A. West Bridge: Once the lever is discovered and pulled, a 3' wide arched bridge connects the wastes with the Lonely Plateau. The characters will need to walk single file across the bridge. Hidden in the sand at the other end of the bridge is a large button. Pressing the button will retract the bridge to the other side of the chasm. Another 3' stone slot with a lever will be revealed. Hence, the bridge can be expanded from either side of the chasm, but retracted only from the plateau. Any character falling into the chasm (i.e. the bridge is retracted while a character is crossing) will take 20d6.

This past summer, an adventure contest was sponsored by



OTHERWORLD MINIATURES

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FIGHT ON!

Our judges included gaming legends Frank Menzer, James M. Ward, and S. John Ross, as well as Richard Scott of Otherworld Miniatures and Ignatius. Competition was fierce, and we had many great submissions competing for the fabulous Orc Tribe Boxed Set and other prizes generously provided by Otherworld. Eventually the dust settled, leaving the following ten entries standing as our winners:

Honorable Mention:

Arcane Vault of the Magic Goddess, by Matthew Riedel

The Haunted Chateau, by James Maliszewski

Badlands of the Bandit Kingdoms, by Robert Lionheart

Beware the Lord of Eyes, by Allan Grohe

A Giant Dilemma, by Frank Farris

First Honorable Mention

The Hobgoblin God's Crown, by James Quigley

Khas Fara, by Jason Morningstar

3rd Prize

The Blocks of Quox, by Tony Rosten

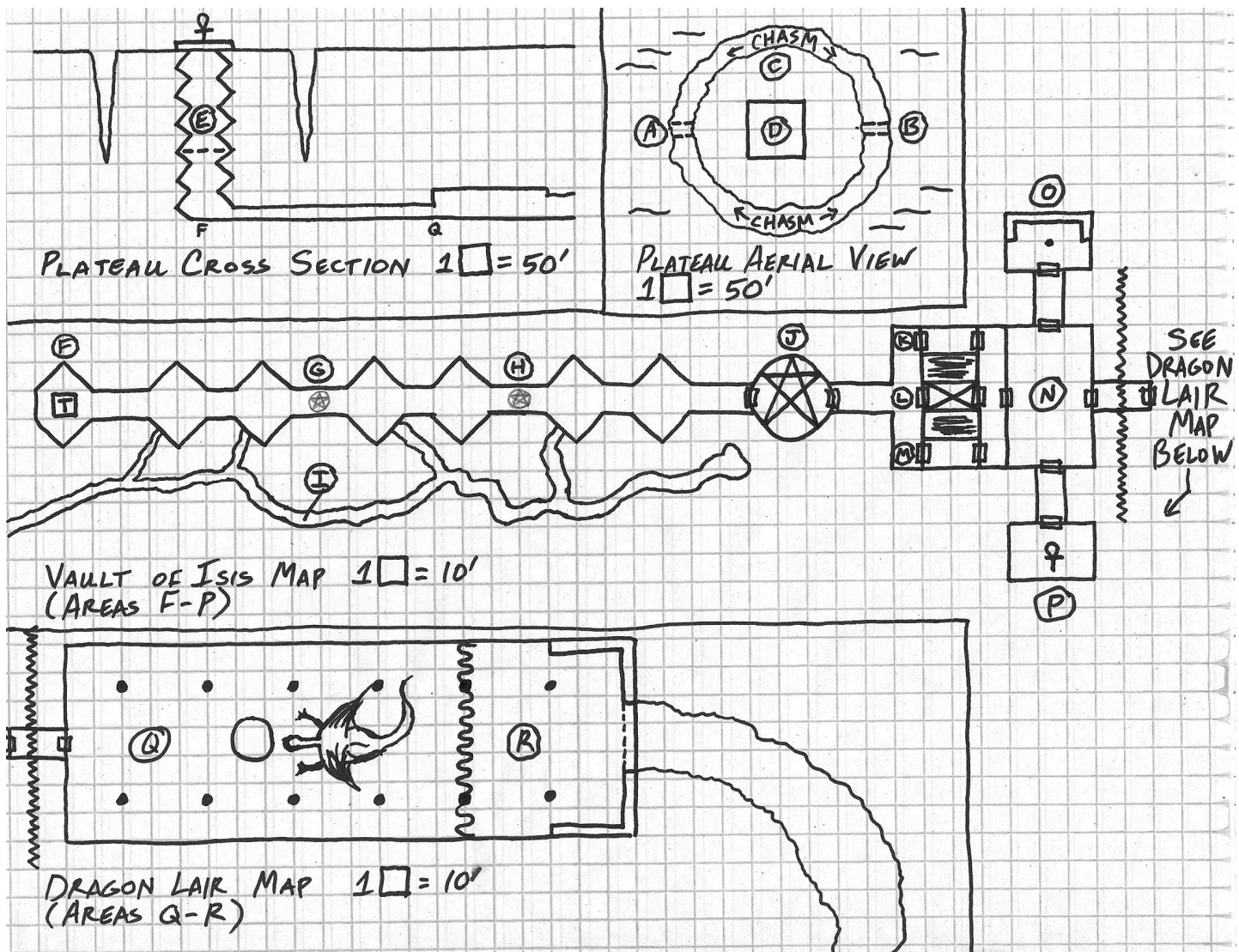
2nd Prize

The Tomb of Ixtandraz, by Lee Barber

1st Prize

Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men, by D. Bowman

Congratulations to all of our winners, and keep looking out for their creations in upcoming issues of *Fight On!*



B. East Bridge: The East Bridge is identical to the West Bridge.

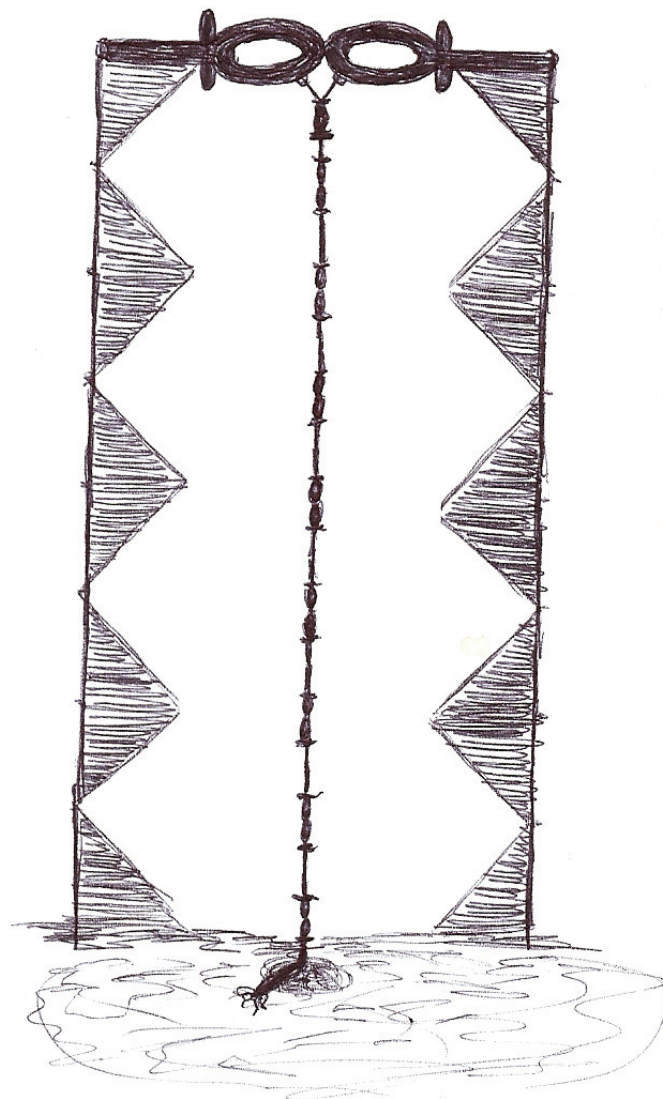
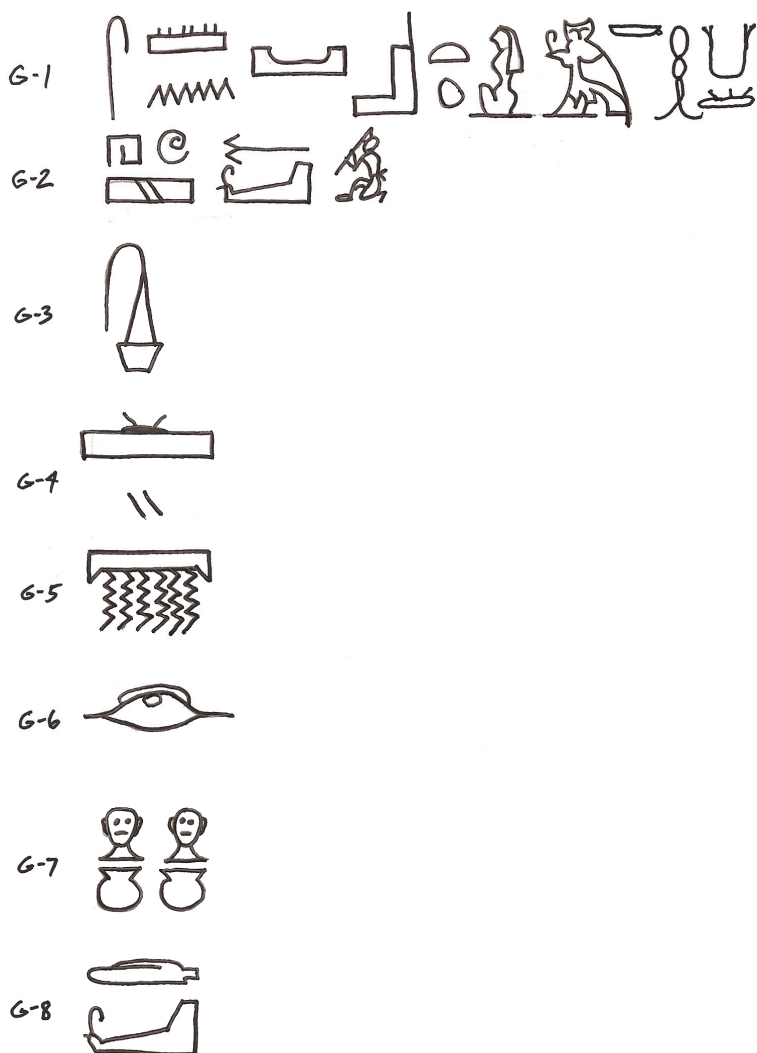
C. The Lonely Plateau: The isolated plateau is roughly 300' in diameter. It is barren except for the two hidden bridge slots and the Ankh Monument at its center.

D. The Ankh Monument: A 100' square, 10' thick stone slab lies in the middle of the plateau. Its dimensions are perfect and its corners are precise, even sharp to the touch. A red, seemingly metallic ankh rises 30' from the center of the stone slab. The ankh is composed of an element not native to this world. No actions by the characters short of wishes will damage, alter, or affect the Ankh Monument in any way. The monument is an ancient tribute to the goddess Isis. Despite its sharp corners and perfect condition, the slab and monument are thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of years old.

Standing before the monument and upon the stone slab, is a lone human man. His name is Hanocpta (DC 2, Priest 8, hp 48, Spells: heal light wounds, detect magic,

sanctuary blessing, augur, locate traps, silence, dispel magic, pray, nullify curse, heal heavy wounds, cure poison) and he is a priest of Isis. Hanocpta is dressed in a scarlet tunic and scarlet breeches. He wears decorative magical bracers (AC 2) with finely engraved hieroglyphs. A mace +3 hangs from his waist. He is traveling light, with a backpack not containing more than three days' food and water. He will not hinder, nor will he help, the party's efforts to cross the divide. He will be engrossed in performing religious ceremonies upon the slab, stopping only when the party crosses over to the plateau. Hanocpta will be polite but evasive. He will not reveal his identity as a priest of Isis unless the characters threaten him or gain access to the Arcane Vault of Isis (see below). He will not reveal he is waiting for a party of high-level followers of Isis to arrive (see Appendix A). If Hanocpta is threatened in any way, he will warn the party that Isis protects him and they will regret harming her servant. While on the stone slab (or in the vault below), Hanocpta will make attacks and saving throws at +2. All attacks against him will be made at -2. No mind altering or mind reading spells will work against him.

Furthermore, any characters in a party that inflict harm on Hanocpta while he is on the stone slab will be cursed. Cursed characters will attack at -2 and save at -2 while on the slab or in the vault. All attacks made against a cursed character while on the slab or in the vault will be made at +2. A remove curse spell cast on a cursed character will negate these effects. Hanocpta will not willingly leave the stone slab for any reason. Hanocpta stands over a hieroglyphic inscription on the stone slab. If the party discovers the inscription, he will not prevent them from examining it and will move aside if asked. Show the players Glyph Illustration G-1 (below). An understand languages spell will translate the glyphs to "Halt, Isis protects magical powers". An opening charm will open a magical 10' X 10' gap in the stone slab for 24 hours. A chain, constructed with the same material as the ankh, is magically suspended from the gap in the block. The chain hangs down into the darkness. After 24 hours, the gap will close and it can only be re-opened from either side via another opening charm or similar spell. Hanocpta will not join the party's descent into the vault. He will warn the characters that the vault is dangerous, especially to those not loyal to Isis.



E. Edged Shaft: The chain extends down a 300' shaft. The shaft is bored through the earth in a recurring pattern of perfectly shaped octahedrons. Just over 150' down, in the middle of the fourth octahedron, there is an incredibly strong magnetic field. While the chain is unaffected by the field, characters holding metal objects (i.e. weapons) will find them ripped from their hands and pinned to the wall with incredible force. Those wearing metal armor smash into the wall for 3d6 damage and find themselves hopelessly pinned. No amount of force will free pinned weapons or characters from the wall. The magnetic field can only be released by pulling the lever on the landing below (see area F).

F. Landing: The end of the chain dangles just 3' above the floor. Any character touching any part of the floor in this area will trigger a flame strike that sends fire roaring 30' up the shaft. The character touching the floor and any other characters in range take 6d8 hit points of fire damage. A 3' stone in the shape of a half moon protrudes from the floor in the center of the room. A lever is set into the stone and currently in the up position.

Pulling the lever to the down position will negate the magnetic field above. Any metal objects pinned to the wall above will fall to the landing. Armored characters pinned to the wall while the magnetic field is released may attempt to use the contours of the walls to reduce their chance of falling to 1 in 6. Unlucky falling characters will take 10d6 hit points of damage when they hit the landing. Pulling the lever back to the up position will reactivate the magnetic field. The flame strike trap will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area.

G. Titanium Golem #1: A 12' statue of grayish metal stands in this stretch of the long, oddly contoured hallway. The statue is extending both of its arms and hands forward, palms up. A long sword, unattached to the statue, lies across the statue's outstretched palms. The blade is crafted out of the unknown red metal previously encountered (the ankh and the chain). If the party leaves the sword undisturbed, this titanium golem (see Appendix B) will not activate. The sword's name is Cygnus; it is +3 and detects good and evil in a 30' radius. If the sword is removed from the hands of the golem by any means, the statue activates immediately as a titanium golem (DC 1, HD 18, hp 80, D 3-30/3-30, SD only hit by +3 or better magical weapons, resistant to most magic). The golem attacks the party relentlessly, although it will not pursue the characters into the labyrinth (see Area I). If the character(s) flee the golem towards Area F, remember the flame strike reactivates 10 rounds following the party's exit from that area.



H. Titanium Golem #2: Another 12' statue of grayish metal stands some 70' down the hallway from the first statue. The statue is extending both of its arms and hands forward, palms up. An enormous open book lies across the statue's outstretched palms. Any character passing the statue (including characters that are fleeing Titanium Golem #1) while the book is still in its hands will activate the statue as a titanium golem (DC 1, HD 18, hp 80, D 3-30/3-30 SD only hit by +3 or better magical weapons, resistant to most magic). It too attacks relentlessly but will not pursue the characters into the labyrinth. This golem only fails to activate if it is passed while the book is absent from its hands. Characters examining the book will discover it is a dictionary of hieroglyphics. But, they will not recognize the ancient language the hieroglyphics are translated to. However, a character using a comprehend languages spell will find the book understandable, but still massive. A character in possession of the book and using an understand languages spell is 5% likely per point of intelligence of understanding the glyphs found elsewhere in the vault and 3% likely per point of intelligence of pronouncing the names of the glyphs in the ancient language. The inside of the book's back cover contains a pocket containing a key made of the mysterious red element and a scroll with the spells understand languages (x2), opening charm, slow, excavate, and pass wall.

I. Labyrinth: The base of the southern wall of the passageway is broken in several places. The cracks in the floor lead to the labyrinth below. Each fissure can allow the passage of one human-sized character per round. The golems will not pursue characters into the labyrinth. Characters cursed by their actions on the Ankh Monument will not be affected by the curse while in the labyrinth. The labyrinth is the home of a powerful earth elemental (DC 2, HD 12, hp 80, D 4-32, SD only hit by +2 or better magical weapons) who has lived in this world since before the dawn of men. There is a 1 in 6 chance of encountering the elemental for every turn spent in the labyrinth. It will be in no mood for visitors. The southwest tunnel of the labyrinth leads away from the vault of Isis to some other dungeon of the Game Master's creation...

J. Entrapment Room: The curved stone door leading into this circular chamber is marked with a hieroglyphic inscriptions. Show the players Glyph Illustration G-2. An understand languages spell will translate the hieroglyphic script to "Danger, imprisoned enemy." The room itself is a 30' diameter circle partially clouded by an otherworldly mist. The floor of the room is outlined with a perfectly shaped pentagram. The lines of the pentagram are composed of the impervious red metal. The pentagram emits a strong dweomer. Characters peering into the mist will be able to see the vague form of an arcanitrans (see Appendix B). The arcanitrans is imprison-

ed within the pentagram, a victim of long forgotten magical rites. The dweomer may be dispelled, but treat the magic of the pentagram as if it was cast by a 20th level mage. When the characters first enter the room, the arcanitrans (DC 3, HD 5, hp 30, D 2-5/2-5, SA stun wave, spell drain, magical banishment, SD only hit by magical weapons, 50% resistant to magic) is in a deep, almost comatose, sleep. It will immediately awaken the instant any character (or object) crosses the plane of the pentagram. It will also awaken if the magic of the pentagram is dispelled. The moment the arcanitrans are awakened it will innately sense any wizards in the room and attempt to use its powers against them. If the arcanitrans are awakened, but the pentagram's magic is not dispelled, it will be confined to movement within the pentagram. It may use all of its attacks against characters inside the pentagram. It may only use its ranged attacks (Stun Wave and Spell Drain) against opponents outside the pentagram. It will prefer to attack mages unless compelled to self-defense. If and when the pentagram's magic is dispelled, the arcanitrans may move freely inside the room and beyond. It will be able to use all of its powers against the party, typically saving Magical Banishment for the party's most powerful wizard. The door at the opposite end of the room is magically locked until the pentagram is dispelled or the arcanitrans are destroyed. An opening charm will also open the door.

K. Fire Glyph Passage: The stone door to this passage is protected by a fire glyph. If the characters are using a find traps spell, show them Glyph Illustration G-3 as they approach the door. Characters successfully using the book of hieroglyphic translation, will learn the glyph is called "afit". If this word is spoken prior to opening the door, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the door and triggers the fire glyph for 40 hit points of flame damage. The fire glyph will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area.

L. Wizard Lock/Pit Trap Passage: The stone door to this passage is magelocked. If the characters succeed in passing the door there is a 2 in 6 chance for each character walking down the passage to trigger a pit trap spanning the length of the entire passage. Characters falling into the pit will suffer 2d6 points of damage. A suit of plate mail +3 is among the clutter at the bottom of the pit. A giant spitting cobra (DC 5, HD 4, hp 20, D 1-3, SA poisonous bite and a 30' jet of poisonous spittle) is coiled up in the armor. If the plate mail is disturbed, the head of the snake will emerge from the suit's helm and spit poison at the nearest character.

M. Cold Glyph Passage: The stone door to this passage is protected by a cold glyph. If the characters are using a find traps spell show them Glyph Illustration G-4 as they approach. Characters successfully using the

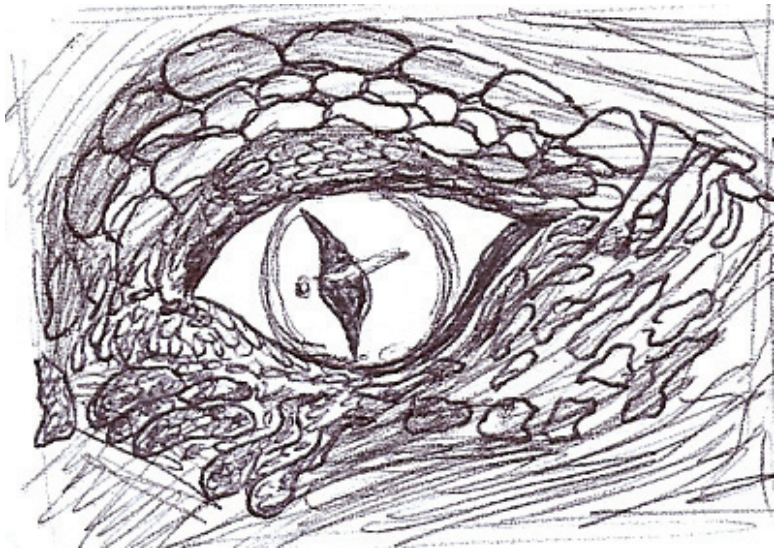
book of hieroglyphic translation will learn the glyph is called "hutchai". If this word is spoken prior to opening the door, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the door and triggers the cold glyph for 40 points of damage from a cold blast. The cold glyph will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area.

N. Chamber of the Feline Gargoyles: This rectangular chamber is empty save the stone doors located in the center of each of its four walls. The north, south, and east doors are wizard locked. Each of the three magically locked doors is flanked by a bas-relief cat-like figure carved into the wall on the right and left side of each door. The ceiling is carved with row upon row of the bas-relief cat-like figures. The cat figures are actually gargoyles (DC 5, HD 4, hp 24 each, D 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4, SD only hit by magical weapons). An unsuccessful attempt to open any of the doors will activate all six of the cat-like gargoyles carved into the wall. They will emerge from the walls and attack the party. Each subsequent unsuccessful attempt to open the doors will activate two additional gargoyles from the ceiling to descend upon the party. The gargoyles will fight relentlessly until they kill the party, the party leaves the room, or they themselves are destroyed. The gargoyles will not leave the room. After the characters exit, the gargoyles will return to their places on the wall.

O. Library: The stone door to the library is protected by a lightning glyph. If the characters are using a find traps spell, show the Glyph Illustration G-5 as they approach the door. Characters successfully using the book of hieroglyphic translation, will learn the glyph is called "s-tehen". If this word is spoken prior to opening the door, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the door and triggers the lightning glyph for 40 hit points of electrical damage. The lightning glyph will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area. This rectangular room is a library. The west, north, and east walls are lined with shelves filled with ancient books. A locked book lies on a cylindrical stone pedestal at the center of the room. The lock on the book is protected by a glyph. If the characters are using a find traps spell show them Glyph Illustration G-6 when they view the book. Characters successfully using the book of hieroglyphic translation will learn the glyph is called "shep-t". If this word is spoken prior to touching the book or the lock, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the book or lock and triggers the blindness glyph. Unlike the others the glyph on this lock will not reset. The book is a Tome of Unknown Spells (see Appendix C).

P. Portal Room of Isis: The stone door to the portal room is protected by an energy drain glyph. If the

characters are using a find traps spell, show Glyph Illustration G-7 as they approach the door. Characters successfully using the book of hieroglyphic translation, will learn the glyph is called “henhen”. If this word is spoken prior to opening the door, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the door and triggers the energy drain glyph stealing one life level from the offending character. The energy drain glyph will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area. The key from Area H opens the lock. The door is impassable to normal mortals. Only characters resourcefully using powerful spells (i.e. pass wall, dig, etc.) or a wish will gain access to Isis’s ancient portal room. The room is empty save a 10’ pattern of the ankh traced in the now familiar otherworldly red metal in the center of the room. The room serves as a portal for Isis’ minions, and even Isis herself, to enter this world. Characters remaining in this room for long periods may attract the attention of same. At GM discretion, the characters may be visited by powerful surrogates of Isis, or even the goddess herself. Woe to characters that enter this room if they harmed her priest on the Ankh Monument!



Q. Lair of the Titanium Dragon: The stone door to the lair of the dragon is protected by a paralysis glyph. If the characters are using a find traps spell, show Glyph Illustration G-8 as they approach the door. Characters successfully using the book of hieroglyphic translation, will learn the glyph is called “s-aat”. If this word is spoken prior to opening the door, the glyph will not be triggered. Otherwise, show them the illustration after the first character touches the door and triggers the paralysis glyph. The paralysis glyph will reset itself 10 rounds after the party leaves the area. This is the largest room in the vault. It is 70’ wide, 200’ long, and 70’ high. The massive chamber is supported by six paired columns, each 10’ wide. The fifth set of columns is draped by an enormous red scintillating curtain obscuring the rest of the room

from the sight of the characters. A 15’ diameter pool lies in the center of the room. The pool is filled with pure blue water. Lying behind the pool is an ancient titanium dragon (see Appendix B) named Lawextum (DC -3, HD 12; hp 96; D 1-10/1-10/6-36; SA Breath Weapon). The dragon awoke the moment the party opened the passage to the vault (see area D). Lawextum is bound by an agreement to protect the wizard Eknoku (see Area R). He has lived up to his agreement well, defeating all manner of intruders for thousands of years. The dragon has lost interest in magic and does not have any memorized spells. He has even forgotten why he agreed to protect Eknoku so many ages ago in the first place. Nevertheless, the passing years and forgotten memories have not affected his resolve. Lawextum will communicate with the party telepathically. He may try to determine how many years it has been since he last woke (actually, it was 1,000 years ago when he aided Eknoku in imprisoning the arcanitrans). In all things, save his unwillingness to allow the party to pass beyond the curtain, the dragon will be most agreeable. Once the characters have been warned, any who attempt to pass (or succeed in passing) the curtain will provoke the titanium dragon to attack the entire party with all his might. The waters in the pool in front of him have strong healing properties. Every time the dragon drinks the waters he is cured of all his wounds save 1d4 hit points. In combat rounds in which Lawextum drinks from the pool, he may only use his claw attacks. Characters endeavoring to drink the waters will experience the same effect. The waters, however, only heal when drunk directly from the pool and only while Eknoku lives. Lawextum has a singular liking for platinum and has discarded or given away all other treasure over the years. He lies on a heap of platinum coins, bars, statues, etc. totaling the hefty sum of 10,000 pp.

R. Eknoku’s Research Laboratory: Behind the enormous curtains lies Eknoku’s magical laboratory. A gigantic library of thousands of ancient books is assembled here occupying rows and rows of shelves spanning to the ceiling. Eknoku was appointed by Isis as her chief wizard/priest on this world. However, that was thousands of years ago. Since that time, Isis’s influence on this world and her attention to it waned. So immersed in the magic did Eknoku become, he forgot about Isis. By discovering the power of eternal life through the waters he created (see area Q) and making a deal with Lawextum, he was able to continue his research indefinitely in protected solitude. Eknoku (20th Level Mage/Priest, DC 10, hp 3) will hide in the curtains until either the dragon is killed or the party is killed. The curtains, along with an improved invisibility spell and an amulet of undetectable location, will make him nearly impossible to find. Only after the dragon is slain will Eknoku show himself to the party. He will appear as a middle-aged man cloaked in black. Every

character will sense something inexplicably odd in his gaze. Like Lawextum, he will communicate with the party telepathically. His ultimate goal will be to see the party leave as soon as possible. Despite his power, he is completely uninterested in battling the party and will not engage them with spells or physical force (though the characters will not know this). Instead, he will offer rewards to the party in return for their agreement to swiftly exit the vault and never return. He will offer new spells to the wizards in the party: up to five spells of levels 1 – 3, up to four spells of levels 4 - 6, and up to 3 spells of level 7 - 8. To the other party members he will offer coins and gold bars totaling up to 15,000 gold pieces. He also has a shield +3 and a cloak of invisibility (obtained from the last adventurers to do battle with Lawextum). Once the deal is made, Eknoku will reveal the illusionary part of the book shelf on the east wall and show them the large cavernous exit from the vault. In his “youth”, the dragon used this tunnel to leave the vault and take to the skies, every few hundred years. If the party slays Eknoku or betrays their end of the bargain, his body will fall to the floor, dematerialize, and the black cloak will emit an odd vapor. In the round following Eknoku’s demise the party will hear a loud rumbling from above. The water in the pool will evaporate, the shelves and thousands of books will turn to dust, and the illusion on the east wall will fade. Sand will begin pouring into the room from above. In 5-8 rounds the ceiling will give way and the room will be buried. Anyone still inside will take 20d10 (a death trap to those who are not able to escape through the exit). It is unlikely the characters will ever really know exactly what happened to Eknoku...

Appendix A – Followers of Isis: Hanocpta was the first of Isis’s ancient order to learn of the appearance of the Ankh Monument. He immediately sent word to Isis’s most powerful followers on this world and then proceeded to the monument to await their arrival. A high-level party of Isis followers is on the way to meet Hanocpta, explore the vault, and reclaim it for Isis. They have considerable lore related to the vault, but do not have all the answers. The Game Master may wish to create this NPC party, tailoring it to the standards of his or her campaign and giving it strength on par with the characters in the party. Players that move through the vault quickly should be rewarded by making it through before the Isis followers arrive. Additionally, players that reset the magnetic field, avoid activating the golems, and do not slay the arcanitrans will also buy additional time. Players that play slowly, and perhaps overly cautiously, may find a high-level party at their heels. If the parties meet and Hanocpta was slain, this party will be inclined to take revenge. Otherwise, Hanocpta will be with the Isis followers and they will be more likely to negotiate, or even work together. If the vault is destroyed as a result of the party’s actions, the characters may provoke

the vengeance of the Isis followers. The Isis followers may attempt to track down the party and exact revenge in her name.

Appendix B – New Monsters:

Titanium Golem

DC: 1

Speed: 90'

HD: 18

ATT: 2

DMG: 3-30/3-30

SA: See Below

SD: See Below

MR: See Below

SZ: Large (12' Tall)

Description: Except for the variances in the statistics above and in the descriptions below, the titanium golem is identical to an iron construct. This golem is constructed of titanium and has more protective armor (AC 1) and speed (2 attacks/round) than its iron cousin. Only a magical weapon of +3 or better can be used to strike a titanium golem. Only magical attacks using electricity will affect the golem adversely. An electrical spell (i.e. lightning bolt) will slow the golem for three rounds. During this period, its movement rate is cut in half and it will be reduced to one attack per round. In addition to the requirements for creating a golem of iron, the constructing mage must discover a titanium deposit, employ a haste spell, and expend an extra month of construction time.

Arcanitrans

DC: 3

Speed: 150'

HD: 5

ATT: 2

DMG: 2-5/2-5

SA: stun wave, spell drain, banishment

SD: See Below

MR: 50%

SZ: Small (3' – 5' Tall)

Description: This arcanitrans is an extremely rare and unusual creature. It is said to occupy several dimensions at once. Reports of an arcanitrans’s appearance vary. However, most reports agree that its body seems somewhat vague and insubstantial. Perhaps it is continually phasing its being from one dimension to another. Arcanitrans are traditionally described as hairless white humanoids. They are very slight of frame, save for a much over-sized head with large black eyes. The repeated use of mage spells, the use of high level spells, and especially the combination of both can attract the unwanted attention of an arcanitrans. The forces evoked by such repeated and powerful magic can disrupt their inter-dimensional travel and greatly disturbs their psyche. The GM may develop checks customized to his or her



campaign to determine if the spell casting of a character draws the attention of an arcanitrans. When an arcanitrans is disturbed by magic use and locates the source, it will simply phase into the dimension and enter the wizard's world in the area in which the wizard's last spell was cast. Its ultimate goal is to use its magical banishment power (see below) on the wizard that disturbed the arcanitrans in the first place. Powers:

Interdimensional Travel: The arcanitrans may freely move from one dimension to another, at will.

Wizard Sense: The arcanitrans innately senses the presence and level of all mages within a 100' radius.

Stun Wave: An invisible wave of energy will be emitted from the arcanitrans in all directions. All creatures in a 20' radius are affected as if by a power word stun. This is usable twice per day and allows a save vs. magic.

Spell Drain: Twice/day this creature may target a single wizard within 30'. All memorized spells will be wiped unless a save vs. magic is made.

Magical banishment: A successful "to hit" with the arcanitrans allows it to grasp its target and transport itself and its target into the "anti-magic void". While the arcanitrans can move to and from this void, the wizard cannot. The nature of the anti-magic void is the subject of much speculation. Once/day, no save.

Titanium Dragon

DC: -2

Speed: 100'/300'

HD: 12

ATT: 3

DMG: 1-10/1-10/6-36

SA: Breath Weapon and Magic

SD: Nil

MR: None

SZ: Large (60' Long)

Description: In ancient times, titanium dragons were thought extinct. Now, they are extinct even from the pages of epics and the words of songs. But, titanium dragons did exist. Before the dawn of men, they were once masters of a world nearly devoid of chaos. Titanium dragons are lawful neutral. They hold the order and the law above all else (perhaps with a stringency that contributed to their extinction). Once a titanium dragon makes a promise, enters a contract, etc. there is no force (non-magical or magical) that will prevent it from honoring its agreement. The attack of a titanium dragon can be a claw/claw/bite combination or one of its two breath weapons. It can attack with a breath weapon up to three times per day. It breathes fire in a 100' X 30' cone. It also can breathe spherical electricity (a/k/a ball lightning). This breath weapon emits a floating 5' diameter sphere of lightning. It sets off a chain reaction of electrical charges affecting all creatures within a 50' radius of the sphere. The ball lightning lasts for two rounds. Creatures within 50' of the sphere for two rounds will be affected twice. Titanium dragons communicate telepathically. 50% of titanium dragons use magic. Titanium dragons like to sleep and do so at least 50% of the time.

Appendix C – New Magical Items – The Book of Unknown Spells: This ancient tome may only be used by magi. Any mage reading the book for the first time will find it contains spells previously unknown. The book can be read only once per mage. Roll 1d6 to determine what new spells the mage finds in the book:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | One 1 st Level Spell |
| 2 | One 1 st , One 2 nd |
| 3 | One 1 st , One 2 nd , One 3 rd |
| 4 | One 1 st , One 2 nd , One 3 rd |
| 5 | One 1 st , One 4 th , One 5 th |
| 6 | One 3 rd , One 6 th , One 7 th |

The table is cumulative (i.e. a die roll of "4" means the wizard may obtain 4 1st level spells, 3 2nd level spells, and two 3rd level spells). Magi reading the book may either memorize the spells (subject to level limitation) or transcribe them into their spellbook. Once a mage memorizes or transcribes a spell it disappears from the book. Additionally, if another mage looks upon the book it will be blank to any mage who has previously read the book. The new reader should consult the above table. A wizard's guild will probably find this book quite valuable. Ω



City Encounters – Sewers (d24):

1	A city guard (1-3 he's alone 4-5 there's another guard within shouting distance 6 there are 1-6 other guards within shouting distance. They're likely to have been sent down here as punishment.)
2	A specially-trained patrol of 2-7 city guards. They are likely to have superior 'thief'-type skills.
3	A sewer worker, going about his or her job.
4	1-6 sewer workers, clearing blockage.
5	Illegal gladiatorial games (1-3 involving animals 4-6 involving humans or other intelligent creatures).
6	A giant slug.
7	A lone thief (1-2 going to a job 3-4 returning from a job 5-6 smuggling goods).
8	2d6 thieves (1-2 going to a job 3-4 returning 5 smuggling goods 6 murdering one of their own).
9	A pack of 6d6 rats, with diseased bite.
10	A crocodile, descended from an unwanted pet.
11	1-6 wild dogs (who may carry disease).
12	1-6 wild cats (who may carry disease).
13	A giant spider in its web. There is a 50% chance that the web blocks the entire tunnel.
14	One giant rat.
15	One giant centipede.
16	A water spirit (1-5 evil due to contaminated water 6

	it bravely maintains a small area of pure water).
17	3d6 bats.
18	Lurker Under the Surface. An octopus-like monster. It will flee from light.
19	A corpse - human, or another intelligent species.
20	A hole in the sewer wall (1-3 made by thieves 4-6 made by the inhabitants of a dungeon).
21	A cache of goods, hidden by thieves.
22	The meeting-place of an evil cult (someone is there if a 6 is rolled on 1d6).
23	Wererats' Nest: 2d6+2 wererats.
24	Animated garbage monster.

No Fishing (2d3):

In the wilderness, if the heroes try fishing, they might attract the hostility of a guardian (1 in 6?). Characters skilled in magic and/or wilderness lore might be able to tell whether a given place will have a guardian.

1st roll	2nd roll	Result
1-2	1-2	A priest/ess, outraged that the characters have fished in waters sacred to their god.
1-2	3-4	As above, but accompanied by a crowd of worshippers.
1-2	5-6	The god/dess him/herself is outraged.
3-4	1-2	The fish are intelligent, and naturally resist this attempt to kill and eat them.
3-4	3-4	As above, but the 'fish' are actually magi who have taken on fish form.
3-4	5-6	The fish are led and protected by a non-extinct freshwater demon.
5-6	1-2	A dryad allows no killing in her territory.
5-6	3-4	A fish noble appears, demanding that the characters pay treasure to compensate for the loss of his kinsfolk.
5-6	5-6	The water is alive, and treats the characters as if they'd attacked it.

Proclamations of the



Oracle: Fifty Adventures

1. The captain of a galley is looking for oar-slaves on a short note, and the extravagant prices he is offering has attracted the attention of multiple parties.
2. Rubbery-black, winged monstrosities are swarming from karst sinkholes in the nearby hills. The horrors prey on sheep, but have recently also attacked caravans.
3. Crumbling little towers in the sea cliffs house smugglers. This rag-tag company has recently organised, and is offering increasingly higher quality wares.
4. Returning to a previously visited city state, the characters notice subtle changes (e.g. in architecture or society). The citizens are unaware and in denial of this alteration.
5. Out of vanity, the local overlord orders every local and traveller to cut off their hair under pain of death.
6. A larger area suddenly experiences a cold spell which shows no signs of passing.
7. While reinforcing crumbling ramparts, workers unearth an old, battered metal door. The authorities have posted two guards to watch this entrance, and plan to explore it with a company of soldiers the next day.
8. The ornaments of a large silver vessel found in a treasure hoard outline a map.
9. Wererats kidnap from a tailor's shop and hold ceremonies before a gem-eyed idol in their subterranean lair.
10. Sea currents carry an immense iceberg near warmer shores; amidst the jagged ice, frost-covered battlements and walls are visible.
11. Due to an uprising or other such calamity, the food supply of a larger city state is in peril. Sensing the opportunity, mercantile interests, criminals and con men try to reap a profit, including an enterprising illusionist.
12. The characters periodically experience strange collective visions (hallucinations? dreams?). These signs manifest themselves in the gradual dissolution of reality and a shift towards surreal events and circumstances. The visions are thematically similar, but the same motifs are experienced in widely different contexts.
13. A person under veil of invisibility warns a character that he is being hunted; recommends absolute discretion.
14. In the last few months, it has become *de rigueur* to own one or more of the tiny black stone statues found under the sea, and the wealthy are competing to get their hands on them. The fad has led to the proliferation of fakes, and it is only a matter of time before someone turns to radical methods to obtain one of the rarer pieces.

15. The daughter of a silk merchant is carried to the court of the mummy-merchants, who profit from the dusts of the dead. As the court and the surrounding tenements are legally autonomous due to ancient statutes, the merchant hires the characters to get her daughter back (50% PROB: who, under a strange influence, is determined to stay).

16. The colossal corpse of a gigantic, unknown creature drifts high on the winds, followed by a multitude of birds of prey tearing the flesh of this enigmatic carrion.

17. The master of the city holds a grand fete to celebrate the acquisition of a rare prize, the corpse of a distant ancestor. The characters are invited to the grotesque display (and they'd best come, or else!), where the cadaver turns out to be intelligent and highly malevolent.

18. A sponsor of the characters, who has always paid them in full and never asked for anything openly evil, is proven beyond all doubt to be a powerful demon.

19. With darkling enchantment, a hypnotist forces unwitting victims to commit good deeds.

20. Adventurers leave for the western mountains in pursuit of great riches, but its survivors return to the civilised world as the prophets of a new faith.

21. A walled-up tower stands in the old city, half-forgotten... until now: in the last weeks, hundreds of birds have started to gather around, hurling themselves again and again against the brick-filled windows.

22. An eccentric potentate known for a large garden of exotic plants has not left his villa for a long time.

23. A forgotten exile returns to his homeland to exact his masterful plan of vengeance... in a changed world which is no longer about the injustices he suffered.

24. A stray dog runs across the characters, disappearing into the alleyways of the slum – and it is carrying a human hand with a fabulous gem ring!

25. Three brothers become involved in a feud over inheritance; the estate in question is the meagre wealth of their father, which is also burdened by heavy debts. The brothers are fanatical in pursuing their share.

26. In an exclusive auction, the subject of bidding is Panak, a slightly obscure, senile but definitely authentic demigod.

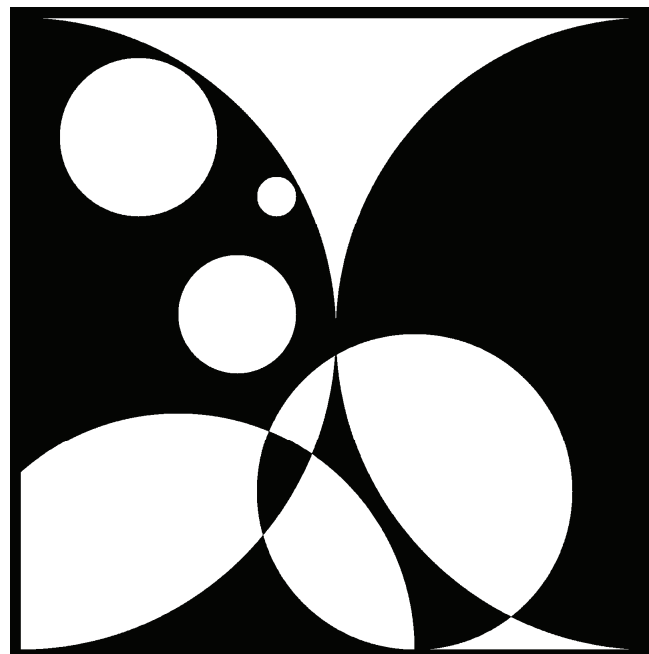
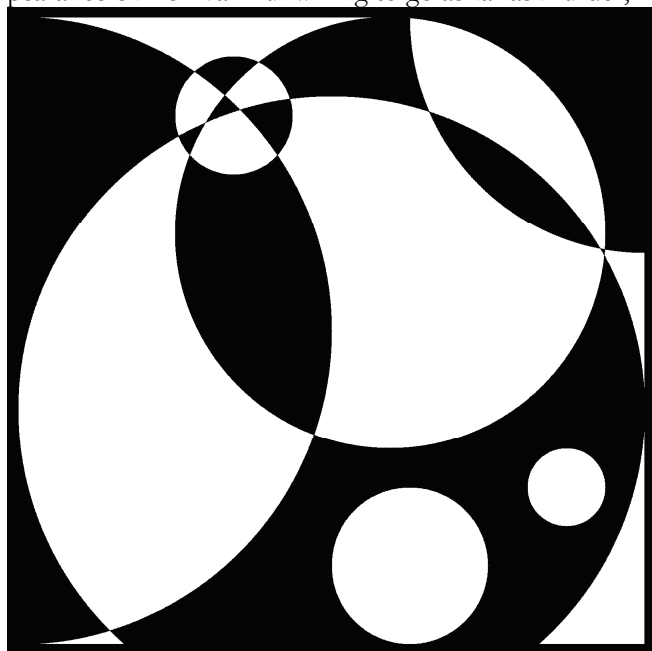
27. At the funeral of a notable, an assassin kills four in the mourning crowd, followed by a new victim every second day. The widow has chosen this peculiar way of making the city state remember his husband.

28. Wine of excellent vintage and high antiquity is recovered from a sunken galley. Those who taste the golden liquid experience identical dreams, walking the halls of an opulent palace populated by shadowy forms and uncertain concepts.

29. An enemy of the characters flees to a foreign dimension, carelessly (?) leaving open his means of escape.

30. An unknown party hides valuable stolen goods in the caravanserai room the characters are staying in, later falling afoul of forces who mercilessly extract his secret.

31. A pitiful little cult happens on a cache of laser weapons at an undisclosed location.
32. Two merchants in the healing balm business are fighting for market share and monopoly in the city. One is a spy of foreign interests; the other mixes addictive hallucinogenic drugs into his own brew.
33. Decades ago, the entire population of a secluded mountain village was walled into a stone tomb for nameless sins. In their place came new settlers, but recent news from the isolated region indicate a revival of olden superstitions.
34. Some days ago, a young thief openly pleaded to the faceless and reclusive clerics of the Sea Demon to hear him and let him find their hidden, desolate plaza. On the next morning, slaves found him before a tall stone spire with a broken back, obviously fallen from the looming battlements.
35. The characters are hired by a mysterious collector to recover certain items; however, their hirer desires to collect them instead, sending 3 invisible stalkers in pursuit.
36. Yesterday, sixteen men of divers station and rank happened to meet in the market, all in the same pale red garments – and the largest surprise at this peculiar development was their own.
37. An old, influential potentate would like to adopt one of the characters as his son (legally speaking, this may also apply to women).
38. A small fishing village is beset by giant crabs, which arrive with the morning mists and slay the inhabitants. Behind the horrid events is a wronged girl of newfound sorcerous powers.
39. A few weeks ago, an Amazon princess was escorted under heavy guard into a nearby stone fortress of the Talaiote half-men. When the stars are right, she will be sacrificed before the image of their stern god.
40. A jilted lover offers good money for the disappearance of his rival – unwilling to go as far as murder,



but showing no concern for the wishes of his loved one.

41. A character in the party is followed by an increasing number of snakes which obey his commands. Unless kept absolutely secret, the character is sought out by pilgrims, supplicants, etc. as usual. After a few months, the powers vanish just as suddenly as they came.
42. Armies of pariahs, numbering in the thousands, march against civilisation, destroying or assimilating all they encounter.
43. A merchant extending the wine cellar under his villa discovers an underground passage leading to cyclopean vaults and pits full of bones. The remains show the distinguishing characteristics of both goat and man.
44. Pilgrims have brought a mysterious idol into the city, which grants wishes to those who seek it out, granting happiness and tranquillity. However, wishes and desires *before* and *after* the visit are not always identical.
45. A young woman, Sfandora of the Ruby Feathers, has pronounced a darkling prophecy; ever since, no man has dreamed in the city and its lands.
46. In a quarry, the miners unearth the streets, statues and opulent villas of a lost city. As it turns out, the city is still inhabited.
47. Sixty slaves escape from their master, carrying with them both of his children.
48. A stranger, approaching the tyrant of a small city-state, asks for an extravagant boon: to assume command of the city. The tyrant, after pondering the request, acquiesces.
49. After a planetary conjunction, the sea casts out a dozen corpses, all clad in old-fashioned finery. The trail leads to an abandoned island, reputed to be uninhabited for fifty years.
50. The despot of the city is murdered before the characters' eyes by armed men from the future, who then flee through a time gate. There is still half a minute before the glowing portal closes. Ω

Magical Weapon Drawbacks

by Wayne S. Rossi

In fiction, sometimes the downside associated with a magical item is as memorable as the enchantment. Depending on how frequently you wish a drawback to arise, you may choose to limit them to 1 out of 3 or fewer magical weapons. Drawbacks are often not detected through ordinary methods. Roll d20:

1. The weapon welds itself to its owners' hand. The curse must be removed to wield a different weapon.
2. There is a 10% chance per combat that the owner suffers delusions for 1d6 turns afterwards. This may include phantom enemies, secret doors that aren't there, etc.
3. On misses wielder takes weapon bonus in damage.
4. For 1d6 turns after it is used in combat, the weapon causes an eerie ambient sound, making it impossible for the characters to act quietly or hear low noises.
5. The weapon doubles chances of wandering monsters.
6. Wielder automatically targeted by largest foe.
7. Animals are automatically hostile to the owner.
8. Wielder takes +1 damage from all targeting him/her.
9. The wielder has delusions of grandeur and must save v/spell to withdraw from combat; otherwise he is compelled to continue fighting until all enemies are defeated.
10. Once used in combat, the weapon glows brightly (as a torch, but cannot be extinguished or covered with a scabbard) for 1d6 turns afterward.

11. During combat the weapon makes a keening wail. This gives both monsters and henchmen -2 morale.

12. After the weapon is first used in combat, it permanently switches the sex of its owner.

13. Rats are compelled to follow the owner (but are not under his/her control). 10% per day to catch disease.

14. The weapon becomes white-hot during combat, and after 6 rounds burns anything it touches (including the wielder) for 1d6 damage. It can be quenched in water.

15. Any creature slain with the weapon has a 10% chance of being reanimated 1d6 turns later as a zombie. Such are not under control of the owner.

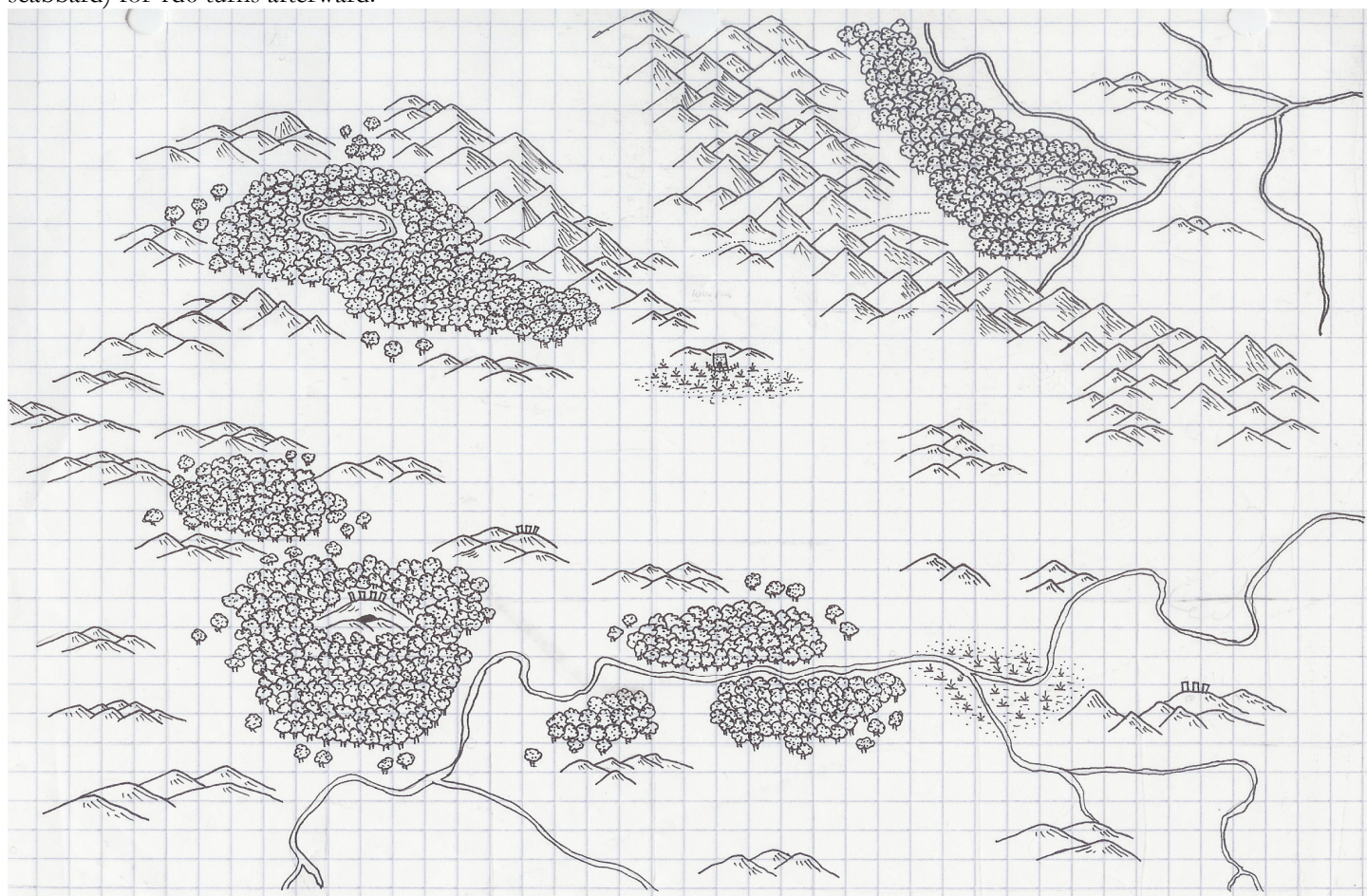
16. The owner develops an uncontrollable mental condition, such as paranoia, schizophrenia, compulsive behavior, etc. Magic must be used to remove this curse.

17. Artificial light sources (torches, lanterns, candles) within 20' of the weapon operate only at 50%.

18. There is a 10% chance that any creature killed by the weapon will turn to stone rather than die. If this happens it takes 2d6 turns to extract the weapon.

19 - The weapon is made of a hard gem material (obsidian, jade etc) and there is a 1% chance with each successful hit that it explodes, doing 2d6 to everyone within 10' (save vs. dragon breath for half damage).

20 - The weapon requires its owner to kill living beings every day of HD equal to its bonus. If this is not done, the owner must save vs. spells (-1 penalty per day after first) or go on a berserk rampage until it is satisfied. Ω



Carousing Mishaps

by Jeff Rients, w/input from VacuumJockey and Cali

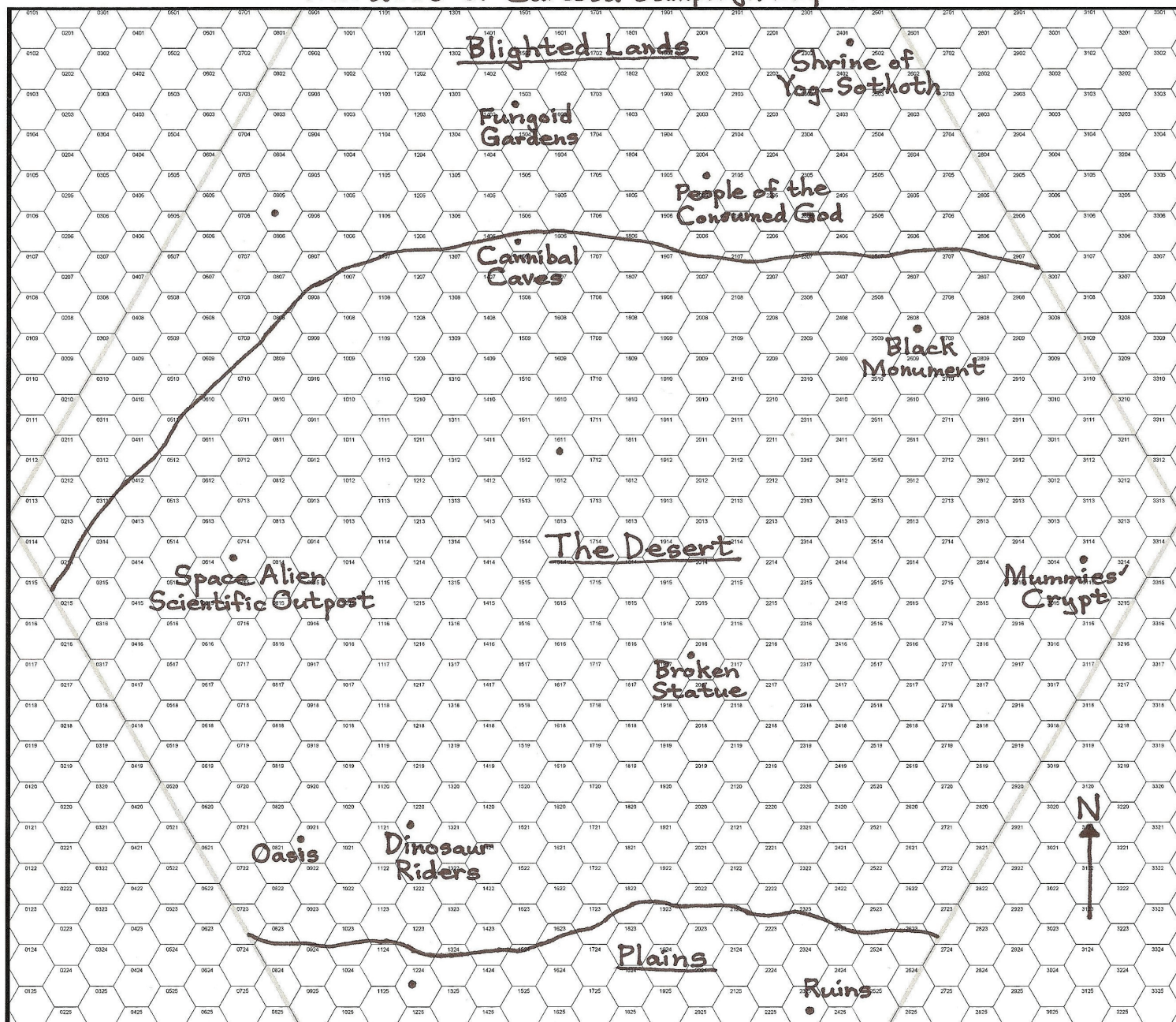
Nothing frustrates a player more than ending an adventure a few points shy of the next level. Consider allowing PCs to spend d6 x100gp between expeditions on ale and wenches, gaining experience equal to the amount spent. Alternately, a PC in a city can debauch much more efficiently, spending double (or even triple in a large city) that amount. Thieves who are members of the local guild can add +2 to their roll, while their friends may add +1. Being mobbed up gets you first crack at the really good lotus powder, etc. However, all carousers must save versus poison or roll d20 on the chart below:

1. Make a fool of yourself in public. Gain no XP. Roll Charisma check or gain reputation in this town as a drunken lout.
2. Involved in random brawl. Roll Strength check or start next adventure d3 hit points short.
3. Minor misunderstanding with local authorities. Roll Charisma check. Success indicates fine of 2d6 x 25gp. Failure or inability to pay indicates d6 days in town jail.
4. Romantic entanglement. Roll Wisdom check to avoid nuptials. Otherwise 1-3 scorned lover, 4-6 angered parents.
5. Gambling losses. Roll the dice as if you caroused again to see how much you lose. No additional XP for the second carousing roll.
6. Gain local reputation as the life of a party. Unless a Charisma check is failed, all future carousing in this town costs double due to barflies and other parasites.
7. Insult local person of rank. A successful Charisma check indicates the personage is amenable to some sort of apology and reparations.
8. You couldn't really see the rash in the candlelight. Roll Constitution check to avoid random venereal disease.
9. New tattoo. 1-3 it's actually pretty cool, 4 it's lame, 5 it could have been awesome but something is goofed up or misspelled, 6 it says something insulting, crude or stupid in an unknown language.
10. Beaten and robbed. Lose all your personal effects and start next adventure at half hit points.
11. Gambling binge. Lose all your gold, gems, jewelry. Roll Wisdom check for each magic item in your possession. Failure indicates it's gone.
12. Hangover from hell. First day of next adventure is at -2 to-hit and saves. Casters must roll Int check with each spell to avoid mishap.
13. Target of lewd advances turns out to be a witch. Save versus *polymorph* or you're literally a swine.
14. One of us! One of us! You're not sure how it happened, but you've been initiated into some sort of secret society or weird cult. Did you really make out with an emu or was that just the drugs? Roll Int check to remember the password and secret handshake.



15. Invest all your spare cash (50% chance all gems and jewelry, too) in some smooth-tongued merchant's scheme. 1-4 it's bogus, 5 it's bogus and local authorities think you're in on it, 6 actual money making opportunity returns d% profits in 3d4 months.
16. Wake up stark naked in a random local temple. 1-3 the clerics are enraged at the affront, 4-6 they smile and thank you for stopping by.
17. Major misunderstanding with local authorities. Imprisoned until fines and bribes totaling d6 x 1,000gp are paid. All weapons, armor, and magic items confiscated.
18. Despite your best efforts, you fall head over heels for your latest dalliance. 75% chance your beloved is already married.
19. When in a drunken stupor you asked your god(s) to get you out of some stupid mess. Turns out they heard you! Now as repayment for saving your bacon, you're under the effects of a *quest* spell.
20. Accidentally start a fire. Roll d6 twice. 1-2 burn down your favorite inn, 3-4 some other den of ill repute is reduced to ash, 5-6 a big chunk of town goes up in smoke. 1-2 no one knows it was you, 3-4 your fellow carousers know you did it, 5 someone else knows (perhaps a blackmailer), 6 everybody knows. Ω

Hex 2005 of Carcosa Campaign Map One



Large Hex: 10 miles north to south

Sub-Hexes: 704 yards across

FUNGOID GARDENS OF THE BONE SORCERER

adventure module by Geoffrey McKinney

Herein are details of some points of interest in hex 2005 of Carcosa Campaign Map One. As the large hex is 10 miles north to south, each sub-hex is 0.4 of a mile (or 704 yards) from one side to its parallel side. A central swathe of the large hex map is sandy desert. The northern part of the hex

is the rocky, empty terrain of the Blighted Lands. The southern part of the hex is plains.

BLIGHTED LANDS

WANDERING MONSTERS (BLIGHTED LANDS)

- 1 Yellow Men
- 2 Ochre jelly
- 3 Black pudding
- 4 Green slime
- 5 Gray ooze

- 6 Mi-Go
- 7-8 Spawn of Shub-Niggurath (randomly select or choose from the list of twenty spawn appended to this module)

Sub-Hex 0805: A bare human skeleton has been turned into an unknown black stone.

Sub-Hex 1503: FUNGOID GARDENS OF THE BONE

INVOKER: In a rocky defile is a wide crack in the earth, out of which a cool, steady breeze blows. All sorts of fungus (mushrooms, yeasts, molds, etc.) coat the walls and ceilings of caverns 1-16 to a depth of 1' to 2'. A relatively hard layer of pulverized fungi about 1" to 2" thick coats the floors.

WANDERING MONSTERS (CAVERNS 1-16)

- 1-2 Giant slugs or giant snails (1 HD)
- 3-5 spawn of Shub-Niggurath (randomly select or choose from the list of twenty spawn appended to this module)
- 6 Apprentice from cave 12 (60%), Black Alchemist from cave 5 (25%), or Bone Invoker from cave 10 (15%)
- 7 White Lotus zombies
- 8 Fearful Fungi (roll on table below)

FEARFUL FUNGI

- 1 Spores cause forgetfulness of everything that has happened within the last month.
- 2 Spores put to sleep.
- 3 Spores inflict blindness.
- 4 Spores inflict drooling insanity.
- 5 Spores knock unconscious.
- 6 Spores inflict terrifying hallucinations.
- 7 Spores disorient (sense of direction completely gone).
- 8 Spores inflict weakness (deduct 3-12 points from both strength and constitution).
- 9 Spores inflict one die of damage.
- 10 Spores inflict a random mutation.
- 11 Spores inflict paralysis.
- 12 Spores make victims behave like beasts (all fours, grunting, pawing, etc.)
- 13 Spores inflict sickness (unable to fight or run, walking at half speed only).
- 14 Spores change skin color.
- 15 Spores disfigure (deduct 3-12 points from charisma).
- 16 Spores cause random alignment change.
- 17 Spores give sorcerers a clue to a random ritual. Others have only a horrific daydream.
- 18 Sticky fungus immobilizes.

- 19 Entwining stalks squeeze, causing one die of damage per turn.
- 20 Leech-like (lose 1 hp/hour for 1-6 hours; causes 2 hp damage to pull off, though fire removes it harmlessly).

Save vs. poison to avoid effects of Fearful Fungi. Spore clouds are 5' in diameter. Unless otherwise noted, effects of Fearful Fungi will last for 1 die turns (20%), 1 die hours (60%), 1 die days (19%), or will be permanent (1%). The Black Alchemist has a 50% chance of curing anyone suffering from Fearful Fungi. Each week that one lives in the Fungoid Gardens grants a +1 on saving throws vs. Fearful Fungi (until eventually immune, as are the Bone Invoker and his human servants).

1. BONE CAVE: Bones (human, animal, and otherwise) thickly litter the floor.

2. CAVERN OF BATS: Hundreds of harmless bats twitter and hang from the ceiling.

3. YELLOW MOLD: Patches of yellow mold grow in the areas marked with a Y.

4. ALCHEMY LABORATORY: Tables, desks, benches, and chairs are set throughout. Most of their surfaces are filled with alembics, glass funnels, beakers, retorts, vials, vats, crucibles, cauldrons, etc. Many of these are full of bubbling, steaming, variously colored liquids. Small piles of powdered fungi also can be found throughout. If any of the liquids or powders are handled, there is a 25% chance of it being dangerous. Roll on the Fearful Fungi table for results.

5. BLACK ALCHEMIST'S QUARTERS: Here resides a Black alchemist employed by the Bone Invoker to help discover sorcerous secrets from the caverns' fungi. The Black Alchemist has one HD, no armor, and a poisoned dagger (save at +2 or die).

6. WHITE LOTUS SLAVES: Thirty White Lotus zombies (mostly Yellow Men) enslaved to the Bone Invoker quarter here. They wear threadbare garments and are armed with clubs and knives. At any given time 3-12 will be here.

7. WHITE LOTUS GARDEN: White Lotuses grow here, tended and harvested by the Invoker's White Lotus zombies. At any given time 3-18 will be here.

8. MERE OF THE LAKE GOD: Within the 20' deep dark waters swims a 12' long Lake Monster (2 HD). The Bone Invoker worships it and sacrifices a Yellow infant or young child to it once per month.

Fungoid Gardens of the Bone Invoker

1 square = 10'

Entrance



9. GREEN SLIME CAVERN: A vast lake of green slime fills most of this cave to a depth of 12'. Green slime also drips from the stalactites above.

10. DOMICILE OF THE BONE INVOKER: The cultivator of the subterranean fungoid gardens is a neutral Bone Invoker. He wears plate mail and is armed with a neodymium beam pistol (6 charges). In melee he wields a large spiked club.

The Bone Invoker knows the following rituals:

The Blasphemous Sacrifice

Summon the Amphibious Ones

Imprisonment of the Putrefying Corpse

Imprisonment of the Putrefying Corpse: This ritual allows the sorcerer to maintain indefinite control of the Amphibious Ones he summoned and bound through the Summon the Amphibious Ones and The Blasphemous Sacrifice rituals. The corpse of the sacrifice is kept in a semi-preserved state by a rare, poisonous dolo fungus. Once every month this ritual must be renewed, which

brings the corpse back to a semblance of life, and the sorcerer must torment the reanimated corpse, after which life leaves it once again. The Amphibious Ones get no saving throw, but the sorcerer must save vs. spells or physically age one to five years. Note that the sorcerer's saving throw needs to be made only when the ritual is first performed (not every month).

A desk drawer holds a small silver mirror. The Bone Invoker will consider taking other sorcerers as apprentices and fighting-men as guards.

11. GRAND FUNGUS FOREST: A multitude of fungi of sickly colors grows riotously throughout. The fungi are of all sizes, from extraordinarily small to the size of towering trees. The Bone Invoker has a humanoid robot (DC 2, SPD 12, hp 10) that he has reprogrammed to oversee the gardens. It has treads instead of legs, and attacks with tentacles or with the equivalent of an orange laser ray pistol (with 26 charges) built into its chest. Special



detection systems: infrared, chemical identifier, Geiger counter. Here grow most of the drugs with which the Bone Invoker experiments. He seeks to discover the secrets of sorcerous rituals while his mind swims through hallucinatory revelations from the drugs. Any who make a similarly concerted effort to gain knowledge from the fungi roll on the following table once each month:

01-83	No result.
84-92	Gain knowledge relating to a random sorcerous ritual.
93-95	Go insane for 1-19 days (or permanently if a 20 is rolled). No save.
96-97	Suffer a mutation (save vs poison to avoid).
98-99	Turn to fungus (save vs poison to avoid).
00	Poisoned! (save or die)

12. APPRENTICES' CHAMBER: The sorcerer has two apprentices (Ulfire Summoners) who wear chain mail and are armed with swords (and one has a short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows). Neither knows any rituals.

13. PROVISIONS CAVERN: Most of the fungus has been cleared away in this area of the caves. A cart holds a half-full wine barrel (containing 30 gallons of a deep purple wine) and 8 weeks of standard rations.

14. SHUNNED CAVERN: A well-trod pathway connects the two southern passages. Within lairs a semi-immobile spawn of Shub-Niggurath (DC 5, SPD 0, HD 5, Chaotic) which cannot quite reach any who stay close to the southern wall. The spawn looks like a swollen bilbao tree with thick, undulating limbs. Its smooth skin is dark green, and it is 16' tall. Without eyes or mouth, it lashes at any movement with its limbs. It is immune to normal weapons, to fire, and to all forms of electro-magnetic and elemental weaponry.

15. BARREN CAVE: Unlike the rest of the caverns, the dark gray stone walls, floor, and ceiling of this cave are completely bare of fungus. An undiscovered secret door opens onto a rough-hewn, 4' diameter shaft that runs straight down for 300'. At its bottom lies the 20' square crypt of an Unquiet Worm, which (having been trapped here for millennia) is quite insane. Formerly a Binder, the Unquiet Worm knows the secrets of the following rituals:

Banishment of the Lightless Chasm
Chaining of the Empty Maze
Conjure the Squamous Worm of the Pit

The Unquiet Worm greatly desires release from its crypt, as well as the secrets of binding or tormenting the Squamous Worm of the Pit.

16. RIVER CAVE: Here the Bone Invoker has permanently imprisoned 9 Amphibious Ones. They will allow only those with a token of passage from the Bone Invoker to enter the stream, which empties into the pool in cavern 17.

LAIR OF THE DEEP ONES

(caverns 17-27)

A phosphorescent fungus creates a uniform, pale green illumination throughout these caverns. Cool, humid air and damp surfaces throughout.

WANDERING MONSTERS (CAVERNS 17-27)

1-2	Deep Ones
3-4	Giant slugs or giant snails (1 HD)
5-6	spawn of Shub-Niggurath (randomly select or choose from the list of twenty spawn appended to this module)

17. POOL CAVE: Characters take no damage from being swept down the river to plunge over the 20' fall into the 10' deep pool.

18. COLUMNED CAVERN: A gray ooze lurks here.

19. GLYPH OF DEATH: A weird glyph inscribed upon the floor will slay any of the Deep Ones in cave 20 should they enter here.

20. INSANE DEEP ONES: The four unarmed Deep Ones that lurk here are insane, driven here by the other Deep Ones in the caverns.

21. GLYPH OF PETRIFICATION: A weird glyph inscribed upon the floor will petrify any of the Deep Ones in cave 20 should they enter here. A petrified Deep One stands near the south entrance.

22. SHRINE OF CTHULHU: At point C a 2' tall idol of Cthulhu glares down from a natural ledge. The idol is exquisitely carved from an extremely dark green (almost black) stone and weighs 150 pounds. The idol could fetch up to 1,000 g.p., though finding a buyer for such a horrific object might be difficult. A Cthulhu cultist might seek to slay any non-cultist owning the idol.

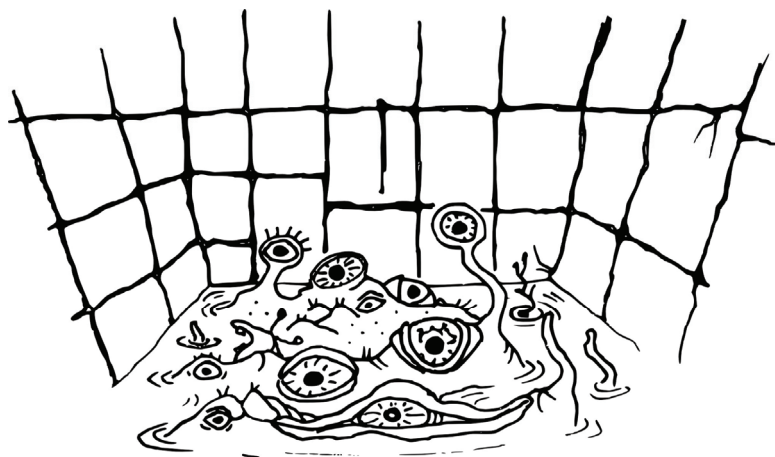
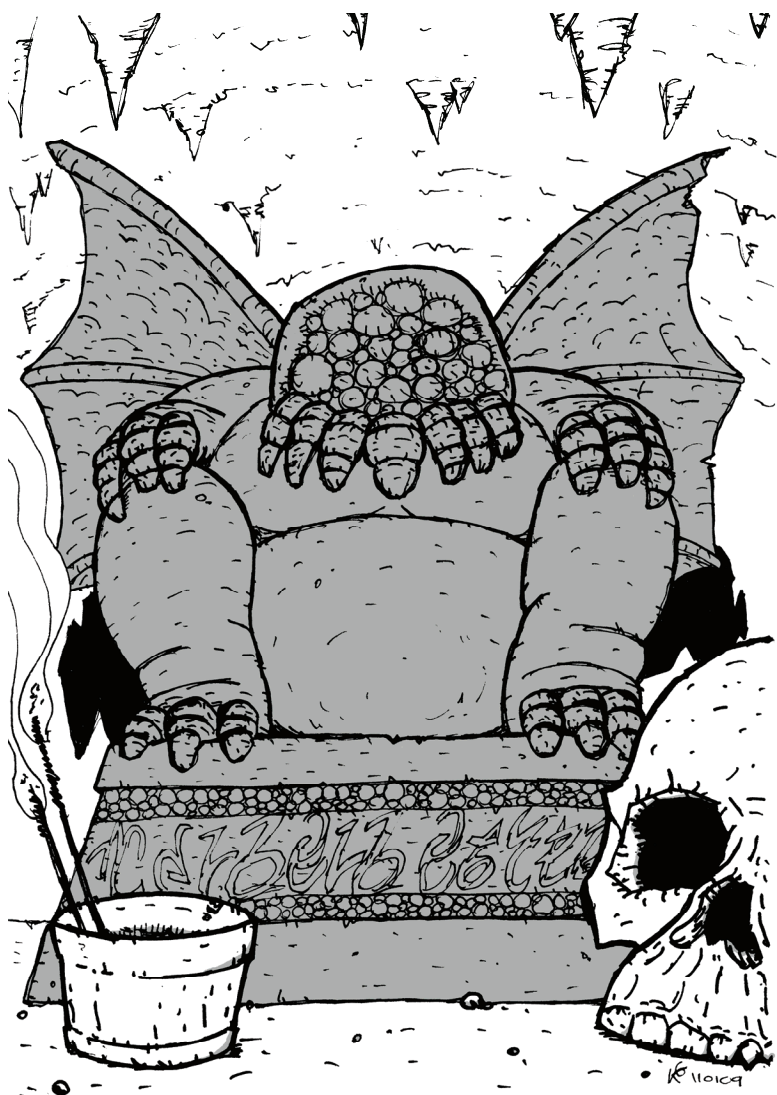
23. DEEP ONES: Six Deep Ones armed with spears reside here. Slugs cover the southeastern walls of the cavern.

24. CHARNEL CAVE: The dismembered and half-eaten body parts of at least a dozen Yellow Men litter the floor.

25. DEEP ONE KING: Here lair 6 Deep Ones armed with spears and daggers. The leader wears a strangely-wrought gold crown worth 250 g.p.

26. LAIR OF THE SPAWN: This spawn of Shub-Niggurath (AC 7, MV 6 [land], 12 [swimming], HD 4, Chaotic) is a splotched green batrachian with six purple eyes and no mouth. Its gaze causes confusion (save vs. spells or be confused as per the spell). It attacks by leaping and crushing opponents with its great bulk.

27. THE FORBIDDEN CAVE: The Deep Ones avoid this cave, and they will under no circumstances go down its eastern exit. The air is very still within, and an oily stink rises from the eastern passageway.



Sub-Hex 2004. PEOPLE OF THE CONSUMED GOD:

The village of 370 Yellow Men worships a spawn of Shub-Niggurath known as "The Consumed God". It lurks in a 20' deep watery pit, and sacrifices are thrown alive into the pit. "The Incomparable Crown" decrees who shall be cast into the pit on the night of each new moon. Typically rivals, criminals, the very old, or the very sick are the chosen sacrifices. Outsiders are prime candidates. In exchange for the sacrifices, the god secretes from its body a sweet substance like undercooked bread. It wells up around the pit each night and enough is harvested each morning to feed the village. The Consumed God (DC 6, SPD 3 [swimming], HD 10, Chaotic) is a colorless amoeboid covered with glaring ulfire eyes. The mere sight of it drives men insane (save vs. spells). It is psionic and can use 2-5 powers up to 5 times per day. The god is immune to normal weapons and cannot be surprised.

Population of the Village:

"The Incomparable Crown"

370 Yellow Men:

366 Normal Men

2 Veterans

1 Swordsman

1 Conjuror

Specialists:

Armorer

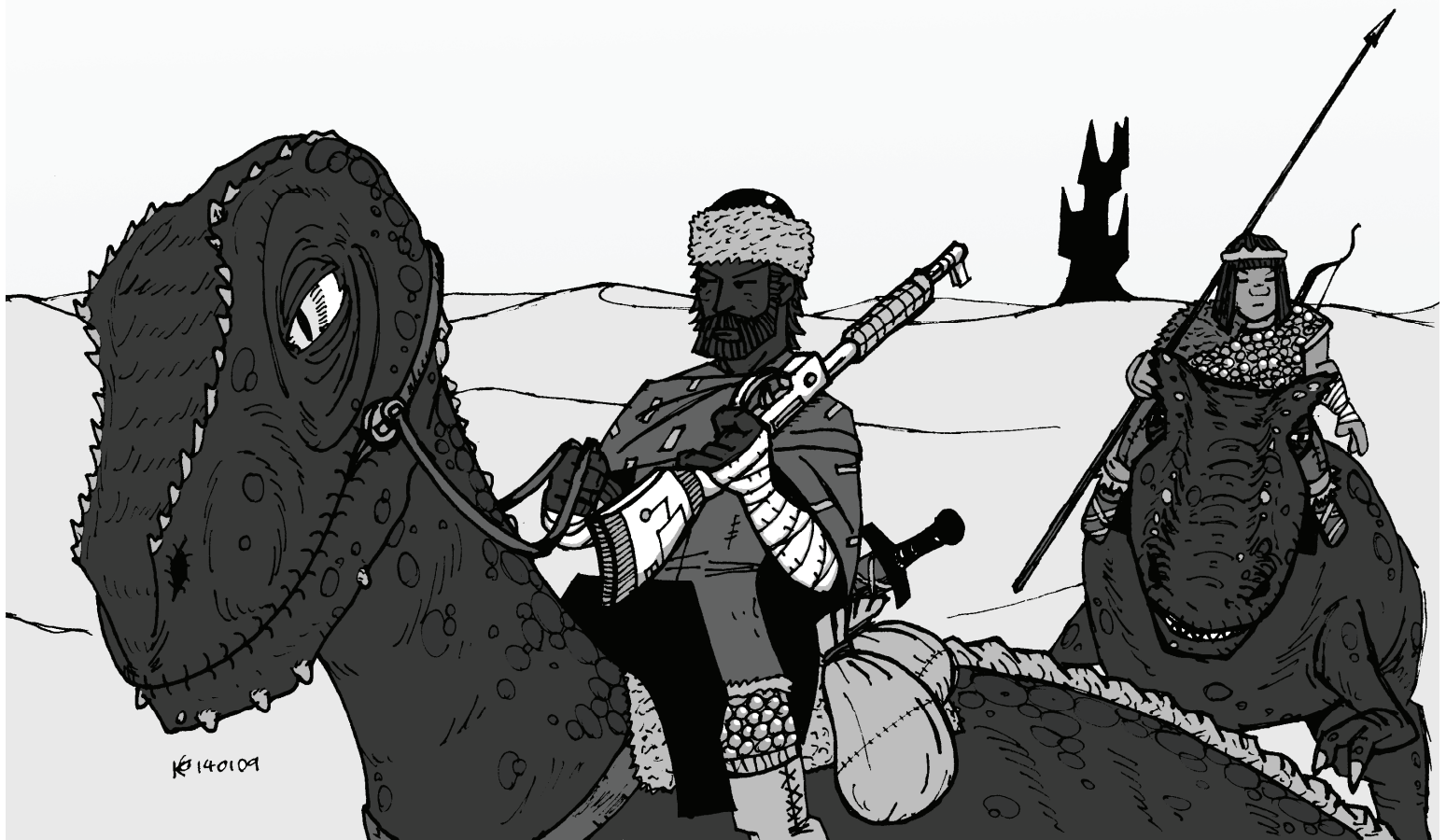
Assassin

Sage (can be employed by sorcerers)

Smith

Spy

Sub-Hex 2401. SHRINE OF YOG-SOTHOTH: A small, rough-hewn shrine cut from a rocky ledge. Within is an unworked stone bearing a vague resemblance to Yog-Sothoth. Blood and other stains discolor some of the shrine and the idol.



THE DESERT

WANDERING MONSTERS (DESERT)

- 1 Yellow cannibals
- 2-3 Dinosaur Riders
- 4 Space Aliens
- 5 Mummy
- 6 Species 23750
- 7-8 Giant scorpions
- 9 Purple worms
- 10 Spawn of Shub-Niggurath (randomly select or choose from the appendix)

In the desert areas of the hex can be found the following by those who know for what they are looking (1% cumulative chance per day for each individual type):

- 1. the pale green incense required for the Consign to the Lightless Lake ritual
- 2. the violet incense required for the Consign to the Lightless Lake ritual
- 3. the jale incense required for the ritual of the Summation of the Twelve Tinctures
- 4. the pale yellow hallucinogenic incense required for the ritual of The Leprous Dweller Below

- 5. the costly perfumes req'd for The Depthless Rite
- 6. the saffron incense required for the ritual of the Summation of the Twelve Tinctures
- 7. the various colors of the desert lotus

Sub-Hex 0714. SPACE ALIEN SCIENTIFIC OUTPOST:

A computerized and automated structure, 30' by 20', is the outpost of five Space Aliens. A 100 hp force field surrounds it. While these Space Aliens have no personal weaponry, the outpost has two permanent weapons batteries. On its north side is a blue laser pulse cannon on a 180 degree swivel. On its south side is a missile launcher with a 5 mile range on a 180 degree swivel. Full complement of missiles is 12, and each missile does 10 dice of damage. Either of these weapons will be destroyed if it is removed from the outpost.

Sub-Hex 0921. OASIS: Here is an oasis with a well and a stand of palm trees.

Sub-Hex 1220. DINOSAUR RIDERS: A band of 30 lawful Purple barbarians (treat as dervishes) live in the desert, led by a lawful Red barbarian Hero.

Twenty-four of the Purple barbarians are lancers, and six of them are bowmen. Each barbarian is mounted on a bright red allosaurus, weighing about two tons. The Red Hero is armed with a rhodium pulse rifle (31 charges). The Red Hero would like nothing more than to hang the Bone Invoker's carcass from a tree (on general principles alone). These barbarians hate anything reeking of sorcery or of the Old Ones, and they seek to slay the Bone Invoker and his minions, "The Consumed God", "The Incomparable Crown", and to decimate his village.

Sub-Hex 1506. CANNIBAL CAVES: In shallow caves is a band of 18 naked Yellow cannibals. They attack with their bare hands.

Sub-Hex 1611: Here lie mangled corpses of a dozen Purple Men, apparently killed a day ago with weapons and with large bites.

Sub-Hex 2016. BROKEN STATUE: Here is a broken and half-toppled statue of a clear-faced warrior fashioned from light gray stone. The Dinosaur Riders reverence it.

Sub-Hex 2608. BLACK MONUMENT: Here stands a black, rectangular monument: 18" thick, 4' wide, and 10' tall. It is pure black and covered with strange hieroglyphs that are visible only when covered in human blood. The monument cannot be damaged or moved, and it extends far down into the earth.

Sub-Hex 3114. MUMMIES' CRYPT: A long, low-lying crypt made of sandstone blends with the desert sands. The crypt is invisible to all but sorcerers. Within are four mummies (three Summoners and one Conjuror). Each of their ornate sarcophagi is worth 75 g.p. All of the mummies can perform the following rituals:

Cast into the Icy Vacuum
The God of the Primal Void

The Conjuror can also perform The Mad Domination of the Void. The mummies will readily initiate others (particularly sorcerers) into the unholy mysteries of Nyarlathotep. Conversely, they will readily slay any known lawfals.

PLAINS SOUTH OF DESERT

WANDERING MONSTERS (PLAINS SOUTH OF DESERT)

- 1-2 Ulfire bandits
- 3 Giant snakes
- 4 Giant tarantellas

- 5-6 Spawn of Shub-Niggurath (randomly select or choose from the list of twenty spawn appended to this module)

Sub-Hex 1224: A Brown Veteran, the last of his tribe, hunts here. He wears leathers and is armed with short bow and dagger. Of neutral alignment and friendly, he will join the player characters for a reasonable share of any loot taken.

Sub-Hex 2325. RUINS: Here tower the burned-out stone ruins of an abandoned keep.

TWENTY SPAWN OF SHUB-NIGGURATH

(DC 5, SPD 12 [land], 18 [swimming], HD 4, Chaotic): a dolm annelidoid covered with suckers, with two eyes and no mouth.

(DC 7, SPD 9, HD 5, Chaotic): a five-eyed smooth brown plant with no mouth

(DC 9, SPD 12, HD 1, Chaotic): a colorless fungoid covered with suckers, with two eyes and no mouth. It can be harmed only by fire.

(DC 5, SPD 15 [land], 9 [flying], HD 4, Neutral [intelligent]): amoeboid, covered in orange and dolm scales with two jale eyes and a beak mouth.

(DC 8, SPD 24, HD 5, Neutral [intelligent]): a blue ooze with yellow eyes, harmed only by fire.





(DC 4, SPD none, HD 5, Chaotic): a four-eyed red ichthyoid with smooth skin and a suckered mouth. It is immune to poison.

(DC 4, SPD 12, HD 4, Chaotic): a carapaced white arachnoid with two orange eyes and covered with small, fanged mouths. It regenerates 1 HD/rd.

(DC 3, SPD 9 [land, flying, and swimming], HD 2, Chaotic): a brown annelidoid covered in suckers and mouths. It has one great red eye.

(DC 9, SPD 21, HD 5, Neutral [intelligent]): a jale quadruped covered in suckers, with 6 white eyes.

(DC 8, SPD 12 [land], 15 [swimming], HD 4, Neutral [unintelligent]): a yellow octopoid covered with suckers. It has a gaping maw and five dolm eyes.

(DC 6, SPD 6 [land], 21 [flying], 12 swimming, HD 5, Chaotic): a smooth green hexapod with two eyes and a sharp beak.

(DC 7, SPD 18, HD 4, Chaotic): a three-eyed brown quadruped covered in suckers. It has a sharp beak, is immune to poison, and its touch causes paralysis.

(DC 4, SPD none, HD 3, Chaotic): a brown ichthyoid covered in suckers. It has three black eyes, a toothed mouth, and is immune to cold.

(DC 9, SPD 9, HD 1, Chaotic): a jale octopoid

completely covered in suckers, insectile eyes, and small mouths. The sight of it drives one insane (save vs. spells). It is immune to normal weapons, and it regenerates 1 HD per round. The only way to prevent it from regenerating is to burn it.

(DC 3, SPD 18 [swimming], HD 5, Chaotic): an avoid with blue scales. It has three grey eyes and a sucker-like mouth. Invisible until it attacks.

(DC 7, SPD 12 [swimming], HD 4, Neutral [unintelligent]): a black amoeboid with four green eyes and vast maw, immune to norm. weapons.

(DC 9, SPD 12 [land], 15 [flying], HD 3, Chaotic): a purple, jale, ulfire, and brown avoid covered in suckers. It has five eyes and a curved beak.

(DC 8, SPD none, HD 5, Neutral [intelligent]): an eyeless insectoid with a blue carapace and a beaked mouth. Its beak is diseased, and attacks from it cause sickness (save vs. poison to avoid) that causes the loss of 1 point of constitution per day until death when constitution reaches 0. It is immune to surprise.

(DC 7, SPD 6, HD 1, Chaotic): a gray slime covered with suckers and with a sucker-like mouth. It has six jale eyes and is harmed only by fire.

(DC 5, SPD 6 [swimming], HD 10, Chaotic): a three-eyed colorless ichthyoid covered in suckers with a great, gaping maw. It is surprised only on a 1, and it is immune to cold. Ω



These Mean Streets

adventure on Tékumel by Baz Blatt

Introduction: Jakállá's Foreign Quarter is a tough place, not quite lawless anarchy, but the authorities care little what happens to *nakomé* scum, foreigners and aliens and only shift themselves to intervene in crime when riots are threatened and inducements offered. This leaves the field free for 'freelance' law enforcement by the inhabitants themselves and opportunities for those down on their luck to haul themselves out of poverty by preying on those even less lucky. Tsolyánu may be a paradise to its citizens, who hymn the Emperor every day for his divinely mandated rule, but is a cruel place to the non-citizen, foreigner and outcast. In this adventure beginning *Empire of the Petal Throne* characters will have an opportunity for just such work! Here are some notes on running adventures in Tékumel, with a tip of the hat to Pelgrane Press' *Dying Earth* RPG:

Odd Customs: In the *Swords and Glory* sourcebooks Professor Barker describes a whole gamut of peculiar customs and folkways. Using these will help reinforce the feeling that Tékumel's nations are old, stratified and highly ritualized, and challenge the players to break out of their western liberal mindset and adopt the role of someone truly different. The GM could, for example, simply make a point of the various greeting gestures and phrases used by different religions, ethnicities and social strata, describe the peculiar facial scarifications so important in the Kraá Hills, get players terminally embarrassed over Yán Koryáni sexual mores, and so on.

Political Shenanigans: The Tsolyáni have a deity dedicated to lying and subterfuge and have institutionalised assassination and a tacit acceptance of peculation and bribery. In any situation at least one person is going to be following a secret agenda and/or hiding their true factional allegiance, perpetrating a scam, doing the dirty on a rival, looking for an opportunity for blackmail and so on. The Tsolyáni are a deeply honourable people, and don't you ever forget it if you wish to avoid getting involved in a duel, but in the quest to climb the social ladder they are willing to commit quite dubious deeds.

Punctilious Etiquette: The Tsolyáni are honourable people, they are touchy and liable to indulge in lawsuits and/or violence if they feel that this honour has been impugned and so they are always very polite and correct in their language. This correctness includes talking to lower caste people as if they were shit, and grovelling outrageously to anyone upper caste, never contradicting or disagreeing with them outright even when they are talking utter rubbish, partly for fear of impalement. I suggest in each scenario there should be at least one

awkward situation where players have to talk their way out of a sticky social situation with the possibility of death and mutilation for 'rudeness' a present threat.

Casual Cruelty: Tékumel is a fun place to visit, but living there would be hell. People are impaled for being rude to arrogant stuck-up pea-brained nobles, there is sexual exploitation of slaves, humans are sacrificed daily, people are born into rubbish jobs like latrine digger and expected to remain such the whole of their miserable lives, there is open racism and subtle sectarianism. At all levels of society you can encounter heartless oppression and cruelty. Make your players uncomfortable by showing this fact in their face every so often, and if possible require them to participate.

Weird Magic and Obtuse Technology: Tékumel is a magical place. People point at stuff and it explodes, they take over each others minds like puppeteers and the dead get up and walk. There are a lot of fraudsters making magical claims they cannot back up too, but once in a while you meet some magical phenomenon that will make your skin crawl and your mind reel. If the players ever start taking magic for granted remind them that it emanates from the mysterious gaps between the universes and mere mortals must be very careful with it lest they lose their very souls. Tékumel is also a scientific place. The whole planet is an artificial environment, its very gravity has been modified by technology, the staple food, *dná* grain, is a GM crop and there are androids and robots on the loose below most cities, zapping people with laser beams. Once in a while let the players come across a piece of familiar technology in this unfamiliar setting, a trick used by Professor Barker in his novels and in the Adventures on Tékumel series. What would medievally minded folk make of a mobile phone? A beeping flashing idol that lets you talk to god? What use would they make of an Eye of Retaining All Things Forever (a holographic camera)?

Alien Vistas and Ancient Ruins: Tékumel contains animals and plants from at least 14 different planets, has 17 intelligent alien species, not counting the ones that have gone extinct, visit occasionally from other planes or pretend to be semi-intelligent at best to avoid hassle. Your chances of finding a familiar terrestrial type animal or plant on Tékumel is very slim. Remind the players of this regularly with outbreaks of strange alien wildlife and flora; paddy fields of *yáfa*-rice guarded against pests by semi-domesticated polyps, flute-trees which use sound to attract insect pollinators rather than bright flowers, pollinators which are not insects at all but gas-filled aerial molluscs. Tékumel is very old. The gap between the fall of Éngsvan hla Gánga and the rise of the Empire of the Petal Throne is 10,000 years, a span of time equivalent to the whole of earthly history from the first permanently settled villages in the hills of the Fertile

Crescent to the modern day. The Empire of the Petal Throne is 2300 years old; this is as if the Roman Empire never fell in earthly terms. Players should come across stupendously old buildings on a regular basis with five hundred year old clanhouses made of ever repaired and recycled mud brick a commonplace, a towns 'new' temple being a mere millennium old and an architectural curio decorated with bas reliefs of writhing feshénga and dancing girls in an unknown style and commemorating a king and kingdom long forgotten standing half-buried and used as káika-coop by the local peasants. Shelley's Ozymandias would feel right at home on Tékumel.

Exotic Food and Overstated Costume: Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* novels are full of descriptions of the fantastic meals and outfits that are the hallmark of its self-indulgent society, and the Professor likewise made great use of outlandish costume and cuisine in creating a similar atmosphere in his Tékumel novels. We should do the same in our scenarios, making the irruption of a temple procession into the world of off-white kilts and loincloths in the back streets of Jakállá a feast for the eyes with plumed masks and embroidered banners, the shaven scalps of the priests painted with icons and hordes of acolytes throwing flowers across the path. No official is properly dressed without his official headdress, covered in symbols depicting his role in the bureaucracy (even if he is supervisor of sewers and latrine pits), and everyone must wear something communicating their clan origin and religious allegiance. Make players describe their characters everyday apparel and ornamentation. And the food needs some attention as well – feasts are regular occurrence, so what do people eat? On a world where terrestrial-style vertebrates are a bit of a rarity and there are thousands of vegetables and spices from all round the galaxy all kinds of possibilities arise. A favourite starter in lands bordering the Gilráya Forest is wasp-nests; a certain species of wasp makes little nests 5-10cm across which have enough resin in their paper to stand being dunked into boiling water for 30 seconds or so. This poaches their grubs nicely and the nest can be served cut in two and the diner can remove the larvae with a wooden toothpick. Or aprai-melons stuffed with yakī beans? Aprai melons are toxic, yes, but the beans neutralise the toxins, you just have to make sure you use enough of them. Cooking and Toxicology are closely related disciplines on Tékumel.

Not every scenario is going to use all of these elements, but adding a few of them will make a simple little job like throwing a gang of squatters out of a run-down building into a true Tékumeli extravaganza.

The Situation: Jüggash Korolyágashmu is self-proclaimed 'Lord' of the Jakállá Salarvyáni exile community. He claims to be a scion of a cadet branch of the junior line of the Great House of Thireqúmmu, but

hides whenever a real Salarvyáni noble is in town. He is pretty 'in' with the Flat Peak clan and has persuaded them to let him manage their property in the Foreign Quarter which consists of some rather tumbledown tenement blocks. His contract is of course dependent on providing a good return on minimal investment, and if he does well he will eventually be adopted into the clan and granted citizenship.

Unfortunately one of these blocks is home to a large group of Salarvyáni exiles calling themselves the 'Ügre-mish clan'. These nakomé reprobates have been paying no rent for years and have the temerity to dispute the provenance of the title deed and contract papers waved in their faces by Jüggash. They say they rent the building from the last surviving member of the Golden Crab clan, who oddly enough cannot now be found. Jüggash wants the squatters removed, and the PCs are going to help him do it. How the GM involves the PCs in this unsavoury situation depends on their social status. If they are barbarians just 'off the boat' this kind of freelance thuggery is as good an offer of employment as any, and many a Very Low or Low clan member is hard up enough to consider such a job. They may even have their services offered to the Flat Peak by their clan elders as the Ügremish have been annoying some of the very low clans by undercutting their labour rates. Higher clan PCs may be involved as part of the city's bureaucracy or police force if Jüggash has a bit more money to spend and can afford a few bribes. He might even be able to get the odd legionary or temple guard involved.

Initial Encounter - Disputation at the Tower of the Red Dome (Punctilious Etiquette): There is a sudden flurry of activity around the Gate of the Black Stair; two gents lounging on palanquins appear with a body of men bearing clubs and two pushing a handcart laden with rakes and shovels. It is the dreaded Supervisor of Labour for the Glory of the Realm and the Lord of Easy Flowings (and their entourage)! (see Haruné and Eikó). Unsurprisingly, many of the crowd by the stair slosh away through the rain as nonchalantly as possible, but an unlucky few are bellowed at by Haruné and marshalled into a line by the armed men. They are marched between the two officials, who give them the once over; then their names are written down and they are handed shovels and fall resignedly into line. Once the retreating unemployed round the corner they break into a run and scatter into the alleyways and other refuges including the Tower of the Red Dome, where the PCs are either living or are dragged by the tide of fleeing people. This, it turns out is a big mistake, as these two worthies always make the Tower their first port of call after rounding up the beggars at the stairs.

At this point the PCs are trapped. Haruné yells obscenities in their general direction and a loud voiced

Jüggash Korolyágashmu

Lev 2 Warrior. Str 45 Int 70 Con 50 Ps 50 Dex 55 Com 60 Gui 85. Attack + 2 Damage + 1 AC 6, HD 2, HP 9, 10% detect unseen danger. Skills: Grocer, Merchant, Scribe/Accountant, Salarvyáni/Tsolyáni Interpreter, Spearman, Mace/Flail, Axe. Equipment: Club, leather armour, small shield, jewellery 150kt, cash 50kt

Jüggash is not an exiled noble; he was junior-most scribe in a noble's chancery in the city of Ajján and went on the run after committing fraud. After more frauds in the towns of western Salarvyáni and bit of armed robbery in Tsatsayágga he wound up in Jakállá and started getting sensible and looking to the long term. He spends most of his cash on clothes, knowing the first step to being respectable is looking respectable. He wears a fine black Salarvyáni style tunic, edged with red braid and a green and white striped conical cap. His belt is of Tsolyáni style, a set of linked chlén hide plaques stained green and white with a long pendant section in front down to the knees, with the sigil of the Flat Peak clan discretely picked out on the central buckle in black. His hair is the typical Salarvyáni work of art, long and oiled and passed through three linked silver rings at the back (a sign of minor nobility he isn't entitled to), but his chin is shaved in the Tsolyáni fashion, though he often sports a five o'clock shadow. He is invariably accompanied by two slaves and two flunkies. His flunkies are large Salarvyáni gents with the shaven heads of professional wrestlers who add to his ability to intimidate people no end. His manner is ponderous and slow and gestures large, in the fashion of Salarvyáni nobility who expect lesser types to listen to their every word closely.

Tirrikámu informs them that they have just volunteered to Labour for the Glory of the Realm. If they are of low status they will just have to put up with it, but mid status persons might be able to answer back (respectfully) and wheedle their way out of a day's hard labour in the sewers. They will of course have to explain to the City Guard Sergeant why they are in the Foreigners Quarter if they are persons of any status, and this may land them in even deeper and dirtier water...At a key point in the argument (before they are arrested, thumped, or marched off to dig) Jüggash appears. He too needs labour, and anyone who signs up with him has a halfway decent excuse not to dig as they are in effect being sworn in as deputies of the Guard to deal with Malefactors Against the Realm. This will of course cut no ice with Haruné, and Jüggash will eventually negotiate with Haruné (standing under his little waterfall and via the grovelling Arján) The PCs will not know the terms unless they can sneak up and overhear, but essentially Jüggash is selling the Ügremish clan to the Iron Helm at a knock down price as slave labourers – not that he owns them (yet).

Alien Vistas and Ancient Ruins: Jakállá in the Rain.

Jakállá, the City Half As Old As Time, Green Princess of the Eqúnoyel River, a place whose fame and glory spreads across the known world. People from all over the world yearn to see its mighty palaces, glorious temples, (allegedly) jewelled bridges, and beautiful Palace of the Ever-Living Lord. Many people who have lived there for years yearn to see them as well, trapped as they are in the infamous Foreign Quarter, surrounded by high city walls surmounted with impaling stakes and rotting corpses. Not that they could see much of the rest of the city on a day like this; it is not so much raining as the entire atmosphere has liquefied and carpeted the steaming city in a monsoon that lasts on and off for three months from Hasanpór to Didóm. Today one of Jakállá's less glamorous epithets, 'The City on the Yellow Mud', is most apposite. The streets of the Foreign Quarter run murky yellow and, where the sewers are blocked, brown as well. People are still out and about though, the petty market stalls covered with leaky rush matting, the shopkeepers squatting on upturned baskets to stay out of the mud. Barefoot plebeians, clad in loincloths and wide straw hats, wade through the streets towards the docks where they hope to earn a few qirgáls shifting goods. The crowd by the Gate of the Black Stair seeking access to the city proper is as thick as ever, men and women squatting on plank benches waiting their turn to dicker and argue with the gate guards. Beggars hold their usual posts on the corners, bony hands held out to all who pass, but as usual receiving little. Much of the yellow mud on the streets comes from the walls of the ramshackle buildings. In places veritable waterfalls flow off the roofs down the faces of the three and four storey blocks, carving gulleys into the plaster and revealing the baked yellow clay bricks beneath. The top and bottom floors of such buildings are often abandoned on days like this, when the water from the streets flows through the ground floor and the roofs are so leaky you might as well be outside. The ancient past of the city shows through. There are stubs of buried walls in the more rutted streets, remnants of the last ditlána where the whole city was buried and rebuilt, catching pools of water like little dams. On one corner the whole street has subsided into an alleyway built millennia before, then buried and forgotten. Some people seem to enjoy the downpour though. A procession of barbarians from afar are dancing naked through the streets, with bones through their noses and feathers in their hair, howling praise to whatever crude aspect of Avánthe they call their own. They shake everyone's hand as they pass, trying to break their torpor and fortify their procession. Some smile, but many recoil and wash their hands of any demon-taint in the muddy yellow water. A few watch the savages pass through circled fingers, a deep insult if only they knew it, and a sure method of spotting evil demons they may bring forth with their mispronounced prayers.



Overstated Costume and Odd Customs: Haruné and Eikó.

Tsolyáni officials love a nice hat, and these two worthies are no exception. Haruné hiJuyukkún, a member of the Iron Helm clan and follower of Hrü'ü, is Supervisor of Labour for the Glory of the Realm, a post that involves rounding up whatever labour is needed to carry out emergency repairs on the fabric of the city. He is often seen borne in his all-weather palanquin during the monsoon season as the sewers inevitably get blocked and sandbag defences need to be put round the government offices and palaces. City dwellers are drafted to help dig out drainage ditches in the nearby fields or to repair collapsing roofs and walls that need to be made safe and cleared away. Theoretically he can conscript anyone within the city; in practice he mostly takes nakomé in the Foreigners Quarter and very low clanners for little to no pay. Those who object to conscription are imprisoned, fined, or (if nakomé or extremely poor) enslaved. When on duty he wears a white chlén hide headpiece adorned with two curved truncheons supporting a seal of the Palace of the Realm surrounded by a golden sunburst, and his wide blue and gold collar is adorned with stylised motifs of builders and labourers

with a pyramid on each shoulder. He also wears a purple and blue robe and gilded workboots with silver studs in the soles while bearing an ornamental whip in one hand and a pointed swagger stick in the other, all symbolising aspects of his role. He never gets out his palanquin if he can help it, being very overweight, and summons people to talk to him where the rain running off its peaked roof falls in their faces. He never speaks directly to nakomé or indeed anyone below high clan. He bellows loudly at one of his minions who then bellows the message on.

Lord Eikó hiFershéna is a member of the Golden Dawn clan and a worshipper of Avánthe. He is Lord of Easy Flowings and responsible for directing work done to prevent flooding and digging out sewers and latrine pits. He has to accompany Haruné to make sure he gets the right number of 'volunteers' directs them to his current work sites. He is empowered to enter any building and inspect its drains and latrines, and actually does so, supervising his servants as they rod out drains and closely inspecting the impacted solids they extract. He uses the semi-magical art of geomancy to analyse these and locates the key blockages by swinging a magnetic iron talisman over them. This has two faces, one of a constipated demon in tears and one of a relaxed demon smiling happily. He is a tall skinny fellow, looming over most people when he gets out of his palanquin, with a permanent look of distaste on his wrinkled face (brought on by smelling so much shit according to his admiring minions). His headdress consists of a blue headband with little silver shovels alternating with ovoids on sticks in bronze. He wears a jewelled amulet shaped like a muck-rake round his neck and he too carries a whip – a real one, and he will use it if he feels his workforce is not taking the blockages seriously enough. Haruné hates him as he is a 'Lord' and Haruné a mere Supervisor even though he is of far higher social rank, and they address each other only through a long suffering flunky called Arján the Weary who must kneel every time he speaks to Haruné (as he is a noble) and clap his hands three times in the air and hold his nose when speaking to Eikó (to grab his attention and wave away stink, implying that Eikó is honorable and totally immersed in his duty).

This duo always appear with Arján, four palanquin bearers each, two workers with barrows full of tools, a scribe, a miscellaneous flunky with a rush mat on a stick to shield them from the rain should they wish to dismount, another flunky with a wooden step to assist the same, a Tirrikámu of the City Watch with a hand bell to summon assistance if needed, a Tirrikámu of the Legion of Kétl to supervise the removal and incarceration of refuseniks and four lesser 'clerks' of the office of Labour in light armour, helms and armed with stout staves for immediate suasion of those who dare to doubt that the Glory of the Realm needs their labour.

The Plan: Casual Cruelty and Political Shenanigans:

Having been rescued from a day's highly demeaning and unpaid labour in the sewers, the PCs will no doubt be curious as to what Jüggash has in mind. He ushers his men into the front room of a run down wine shop and explains the deal; evict the Ügremish, a bunch of no good Nakomé scum and he is willing to pay 40 hlásh, 10 up front, 30 on completion of job and bonuses for captives, 5 hlásh for a child under 14, 10 hlásh for a woman, and 12 hlásh for a man. There are 10 men, 12 women and 18 children as far Jüggash can tell. In the wine shop waits Yuni of the Flat Peak clan, a 3rd circle clerk in the Palace of the Realm who is acting as Jüggash's legal advisor (Int 75, Class II Lawyer skill, see Appendix 1). He explains that he has obtained a writ from the Foreign Quarter Magistrate to allow the eviction, but there are conditions and limits as to what can be done, and the last thing he wants is the Ügremish to launch a counter suit for 'shámmtla', bloodmoney, and fines exacted for insults against honour and reputation:

- Any verbal assaults, threats and insults are OK – the Ügremish are Nakomé, have no honour and can be called anything you like without incurring shámmtla.
- Injuries must be limited to minor contusions. Drawing blood or causing harm liable to stop the injured party from working for one full day or more will possibly incur shámmtla, even from a nakomé. If this does happen then Jüggash will cover it, but if someone is killed outright then that is your look out. Use clubs, not knives and don't get carried away in the heat of the fight.
- The building itself must not be damaged, and the Ügremish must not be allowed to damage it. Any damage you cause will be taken off your wages, and if it looks like they are going to burn the place down hit 'em hard if you can.
- Jüggash will not pay shámmtla to anyone who is injured while in his employ, that is the nature of the job, but will pay out if someone is killed or permanently maimed. This should not happen as these are squatters, not killers.
- If the Ügremish do injure you let Yuni know and he will assess the injury and put in a claim for shámmtla against the Ügremish on your behalf.

The Ügremish owe some 480Kt in back rent, plus the costs of the eviction and legal fees to a total of 50Kt. Yuni, in his capacity as 3rd class surveyor of Low Clan accommodations, will be inspecting the place for wear and tear to add on to this total should it need refurbishment (which of course it will). Yuni and Jüggash also hope that their impromptu bailiffs will get sufficiently knocked about for them to claim yet more shámmtla on their behalf. The Ügremish will then be forced to sell some family members to Jüggash to cover the bill, who will sell them on at a mark-up to the Iron Helm.

The Attack: The Ügremish have been expecting this kind of assault ever since Jüggash turned up with his rent demand and fake deeds, and have posted a couple of kids on the approach roads to the tenement building as sentries. These will run to the building as they spot Jüggash and his thugs coming and they will set about defending it. Four of the men, two of the women and four of the children will be out working – they clan still need to make money to eat – but a child will run round the Foreign Quarter and down to Músa Jakállá Docks looking for them to warn them what is going on. They will turn up at the building in an hour or so. Their plan is simple. The lower floor is occupied by the men who have a barricade to place over the front door. Three will hold this barricade in place while Ösh Ügremish the headman and two others make sure that no one comes through the downstairs windows by bashing anyone who tries on the head from concealed positions by the wall. Ösh will use his talent for being intimidating to promise that anyone who dares attack will be killed. Upstairs, the women and kids keep a continual barrage of bricks and buckets of slops falling on the attackers. If the lower floor is taken the defenders will run up the stairs and make a second defence on the first floor landing, Ösh in the front of the fighting while further rocks are hurled as appropriate. If it looks like too many attackers (6+) are coming at this point then the women and children will start enlarging a hole on the third floor into the building next door. The walls are pretty weak, being much riddled with Wall-Tongues (see box Alien Vistas: Wall Tongues). This will give them access to the building next door which is inhabited by a few Ahoggyá, who will be so surprised at the intrusion that they will fail to stop any of the fleeing people running down the stairs through their living area and out into the street. Ösh will hold out until the last moment, keeping his men at the attack: use normal Morale rules, but as long as Ösh is conscious and fighting give the Ügremish +10%. They will flee to the third floor, pushing at an exposed and weakened beam that will collapse the ceiling on their pursuers as they use the escape hole made earlier by the women.

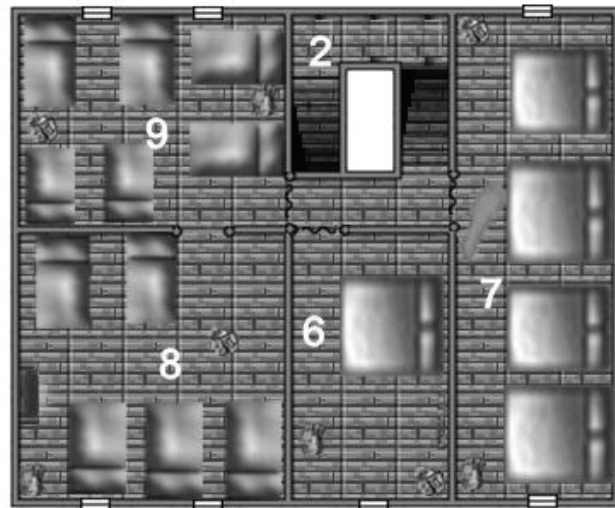
The attackers will consist of the PCs, backed up by Jüggash, and if the GM deems it necessary two of Jüggash's flunkies and possibly a few more thugs for hire. Use standard Lev 1 Warriors with leather armour and clubs. If the players stop and think about it they will be able to use planning and teamwork themselves, but GMs should not remind them.

The Clanhouse: The building lies on the eastern edge of the Foreigners Quarter, very near the city wall. The main entrance lies on the south side of the building on a small street, there is another entrance on a narrow alley to the north.

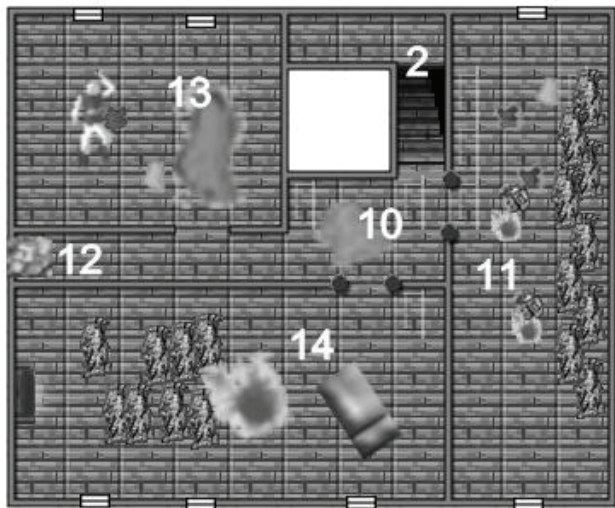
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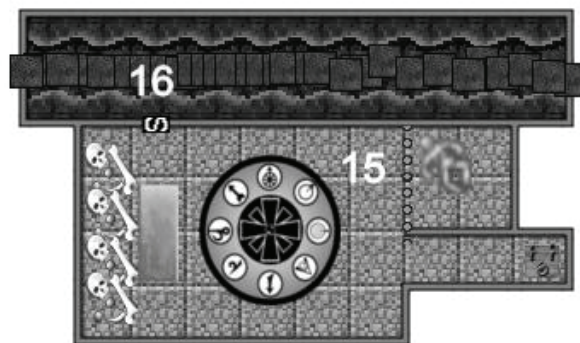
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Basement

1. Kitchen/Main Living Area. *The room is smoky from the cooking fire and reeks of a mix of boiled vegetables, incense and decaying meat. The floor is damp and there are splotches of mould on the ceiling where water drips through from the rain outside. The kitchen tables are covered in clutter, and a pot of some root vegetable sits boiling on the kitchen fire, which is burning dried chlén-dung, driftwood and a couple of sticks of charcoal. Observant PCs will notice that the smell is worst near the small grilles in the floor.*

The door to the south has been blocked by a large table held by three men, while Ösh and two others lurk between the windows on the south wall. These are 1m wide and 1.5m high and have wooden shutters which are hinged at the top to allow for ventilation. The barricade

can be pushed back by main strength using a battering ram (though it will have three Ügremish behind it pushing back), or chopped through with an axe; the door has 20 HP and takes half from blunt weapons.

2. Stairwell. *A very dim area lit mainly by light coming from a hole in the ceiling two floors above. The steps are quite shallow rising 1.5m in each stretch with a small landing halfway between each floor. The back door is only 1.2 m high and opens into a cramped space under the first landing, which is blocked off from the rest of the building by a pile of dried chlén-dung – the back door will not open and anyone kicking it in is in for a nasty surprise. Qigék (see Alien Creatures) scuttle about and there a couple of phosphorescent fungi on the underside of the wooden stairs.*

If the men in **1** are pushed back they will retreat to the first floor landing and defend from there, while the women in **6**, **7** and **8** come to the stairwell and drop their rocks on those coming up towards the first landing.

3. Workshop. *This room is full of smoke. The window shutters are open and black smoke pours into the alleyway from a smouldering conical heap of hmelu hides on the flagstone floor. There are sacks of a grey powdery substance piled against the south wall, and a low dais toward the west wall is piled with seaweed. Anyone entering the room must save v Con or start coughing uncontrollably.*

Further investigation reveals what is going on. The river estuary is always getting clogged with weeds and one of the ways casual labourers like the Ügremish make a living is by cutting it and selling it to the alum-clans, who slow burn it and extract chemicals from the ash. The Ügremish have been trying to make more money by doing this inexpertly at home. Yuni the lawyer loves this as the fire breaches building regulations and he can get a magistrate to slap a fine of 200Kt on the perpetrators for causing a health hazard. Any fighting that takes place in this room is at serious penalties due to the smoke.

4. Bathroom. *This house was originally relatively upmarket for the district as it has its own pump linked to the city aqueduct and its own washroom. This is a sunken brick recess in the floor with a tight fitting square wooden plug over a stone grille leading to the sewer below. The pump continually drips and has some unpleasant slime hanging from it, but for Nakomé this is luxury. A couple of laundry pounding stones sit on the edge of the pool and there is a pile of washing, small grey tunics worn by the clan-children.*

Ösh Ügremish, clan headman

Lev 2 Warrior. Str 65 Int 52 Con 85 Ps 25 Dex 43 Com 43 Gui 65. Attack + 2 Damage + 0 AC 9 HD 2 HP 12. Skills: Labourer, Fisherman, Spearman, Mace/Flail, Axe, Sword. Equipment: 2h Club (+1 damage), Dagger, 5kt.

Ösh is not a huge man, but his heavy brows, broken nose and sinewy arms make him look like someone it would not be wise to mess with, and he has a reputation down on the Músa Jakállá docks as a bit of a boxer. In fact he has had an impromptu bout or two for money down among the warehouses and come off very well. He is also no dimwit and has worked out a defence plan (+1 to any surprise chances for first 10 rounds).

The Ügremish Men; Level 1 Warriors, Str 60, HD 1+1, AC 9, Damage Club (1 dice) HP 5 each.

The Ügremish Women: Level 1 WarriorS, Str 50, HD 1, AC 9, Damage Club (1 dice), Rock (1/2 dice) HP 4 ea.

The Ügremish Children: Level 1 Warriors, Str 35, HD 1-1, AC 9, Damage Rock (1/2 dice) HP 3 each, -1 to hit.

Alien Vistas: Wall-Tongues and Qigékh. Qigékh occupy the same ecological niche in Jakállá and southern Tsolyánu as the rat and urban fox do in terrestrial ecology. They are shaped more or less like woodlice about six inches long and two wide, with a multitude of short sharp spines on their carapace and long antennae. Unlike a woodlouse they have pairs of legs specialised for different functions; at the back two pairs are thick and paddle shaped and are used for digging and at the front one long pair is viciously spined and kept folded up under the head until deployed to grab prey. The other seven pairs of legs are short and tough with spines and claws. They will eat anything, thriving in rubbish dumps and sewers and burrowing into granaries where they can. They are most fond of other, smaller vermin, and a certain low level presence is tolerated by storehouse managers. Their poisoned spines discourage terrestrial cats from attacking them, but Kurukú and Aschaunë-birds will kill and eat them, picking the flesh from inside their toxic carapaces.

Wall-tongues, or lusátimun, are harmless but unpleasant beasts that colonise run-down buildings in hot and damp cities like Jakállá and Penóm. They are a peculiar form of worm which burrows into soft rock or brick using acid, cementing themselves in place with exuded resin. They then evert their intestines which hang down the face of the wall resembling small pink human tongues with tiny red hairs. These hairs are covered in glue and any insect which lands on them is trapped, the tongue withdraws and the food digested. They spread quickly and in a matter of a few weeks a whole building can be fatally weakened by their burrowing. In most districts of Jakalla building inspectors are continually on the look out for them and will fine house-holders who do not take prompt action to remove them.

This room is very dim, and the window is only 45cm square and blocked by a cemented in wooden grille. This could be knocked out and a Tinalíya or Pygmy Folk could get in, but a human would have to be very small and flexible to use this as access.

5. Storeroom. *This room is shut off from the kitchen by a flimsy door with a wooden frame and rush matting panels. Inside it is cluttered with boxes, barrels and half empty sacks. Something scuttles in the darkness.*

The boxes bear the marks of several merchant clans; the Ügremish have obviously been pilfering from the docks. Yuni the lawyer is not so pleased about this, as it means the offended clans will press for impalement of any captives and Jüggash won't get his slaves. If any PCs realise that this is evidence of theft he tells them to hush or they won't get paid. The barrels are mostly empty but one has two gallons of soured hénka beer. The sacks

contain slightly mouldy *dná* grain, and some empty sacks have been nailed to a trap door by way of camouflage. Opening it will reveal a noisome hole reeking of bad meat and cheap incense, a crate at the bottom providing a step of sorts down to the passage below. The window is small and barred with a grille as in room 4 above and will provide access only for a tiny person. The scuttling is from more *qigékh*, the ugly spiny vermin common in southern parts of the continent.

6. Ösh's room. *This room, like the others on this floor, has a bamboo bead curtain hanging in the doorway. There is one large sleeping mat, much frayed around the edges, and one blanket. There is a shelf with various bits of clutter. And there is a pile of half bricks by the window.*

This room will initially contain three women and three children, one of whom will be chucking bricks out of the window at any attackers, while the others rush about screaming. If the attacking group makes it past the first barricade they will move to **2** and defend the stairs, then flee to **10** and **12**. This is usually the private room of Ösh and his two wives. There is little of value here; on the shelf is a bone comb and a small pot of very cheap black lip-paint, the colour preferred by *Salarvyáni* women, maybe worth a couple of *qirgál*.

7. Dormitory. *This room is strewn with dirty sleeping mats and few items of bedding. Water drips through in some quantity from the ceiling into a large clay pot near the door. By the south window is a pile of bricks ready to be hurled.*

This room has a further four women and six children, who will again shower rocks on anyone who tries to attack the building as noted above. One of the women is very old, maybe 60, and will be left behind when the others flee. The PCs will find her screaming incomprehensible insults at them and trying to brain them with a brick as they pursue the main body of the clan up to the second floor. This area is usually inhabited by the married men and women and the smallest children. There is nothing of value here, just the detritus of the life of the urban poor, a few objects such as clay cups, wooden spoons, a spare loincloth, needle and thread for repairing clothes etc.

8. Dormitory. *Another room strewn with bedmats. The walls are painted with crude graffiti and symbols. There is a fireplace on the west wall, but no signs any fire has been lit for years.*

This room is used by the unmarried men and older boys, and will initially contain eight boys and girls between 8 and 14 who chuck bricks down on any attackers before running to the upper floor. There is again little of value to be found in the room, a cheap knife, the odd *qirgál* (copper coin). PCs with reasonable knowledge of the theology of *Sárku* or *Durritlámish* might recognise one

of the symbols painted on the wall as being a symbol of Black *Qárqa*, a black skull with three eye sockets. Those with similar knowledge of *Avánthe* or *Dlamélish* and their cohorts will recognise among the rude pictures a few signs alluding to *Shiringgáyi*. None of the boys who use the room is literate and no further meaning can be gleaned from the marks. Yuni will add another 30Kt to his running total of fines for the vandalism. Those who look up the very sooty and dirty chimney will find a hidden bundle. This is made up of what was quite reasonable quality green tunic before it got covered in soot and slashed with some sort of weapon and bled over. It is wrapped round a child-sized *chlén* hide armlet inlaid with silver wire and lacquered in white and green. This has a sigil of the Green Opal clan amongst the design, and if taken to them will be recognised by tearful clansmen as belonging to a young girl of high lineage who disappeared some months ago. If the players show it to Yuni or *Jüggash* they will again want it hidden – the Green Opal will want *shámtnla* from the *Ügremish* at the very least, if not impalement of a few of the captives.

9. Dormitory. *Another room with bedmats, slightly cleaner and less chaotic than the others.*

This room is used by the younger women and girls of the clan and will not be occupied at the time of the initial attack as the *Ügremish* are not really expecting anyone to use the back alley. Anyone who climbs up who make sufficient noise will attract the attention of the people in **7** and they will charge in accompanied by the occupants of **6** and **8** to prevent them getting in if possible, or to hurl rocks at close range and raise a general alarm. The only item of value is a small statue of one of *Shiringgáyi*'s aspects done in green soapstone and placed in a niche in the west wall created by digging out a couple of bricks. This is worth 10Kt, and depicts *Shiringgáyi* as a pregnant female figure with a head shaped like a squid, the long tentacles curling down around her belly. *Jüggash*, who is a *Shiringgáyi* adherent himself, will tell the party it is *Hüggi* the Mother of Squid, an aspect worshipped in the fishing villages near *Tsatsayágga*. If kept and prayed to regularly by virgin females it will bring more squid into your fishing nets.

10. The Booby Trap. *There is a large rent in the ceiling at the top of the last flight of stairs and rain pours through onto the floor boards, which are covered in slimy algae. The plaster from round the door frames and joists has been chipped away and some of the bricks removed. A rope has been tied round the door frames and wooden beams in the walls.*

As the *Ügremish* retreat to **12** and escape the men and some of the women of the clan will haul on the ropes, hoping to cause the roof to collapse on any attackers. Roll % dice for each person. If it is below their STR then they have had some effect, five successful saves will

bring the house down. The roof collapse will bring tiles and brickwork down over **10**, **12** and **14** and the floor will give way in **10** and the top two flights of stairs will collapse in **2**, crashing through into the lower floor. PCs caught in this will take 2d6 damage, half if they save vs Eyes. Give the players a reasonable chance of spotting the danger and an opportunity to disrupt the Ügremish's efforts before they all get crushed. Jüggash will be pretty irate if this area gets damaged and will threaten to withhold pay; he says it will cost thousands to rebuild. Yuni will be more sanguine; the whole structure is unsafe and Jüggash's contract makes him and not the Flat Peak clan liable to pay for any repairs. This damage will effectively seal the fate of the Ügremish, they will all end up enslaved to defray the rebuilding costs.

11. Roofless Room. *This room has no roof at all and the floor is covered in rubble and rubbish, thoroughly soaked by the rain. The wooden beams are mostly rotten with fungus and the walls are infested with Wall-Tongues (lusátimun). The interior wall between this area and a chamber next to it (**14**) has been demolished to provide ammunition to resist the eviction.*

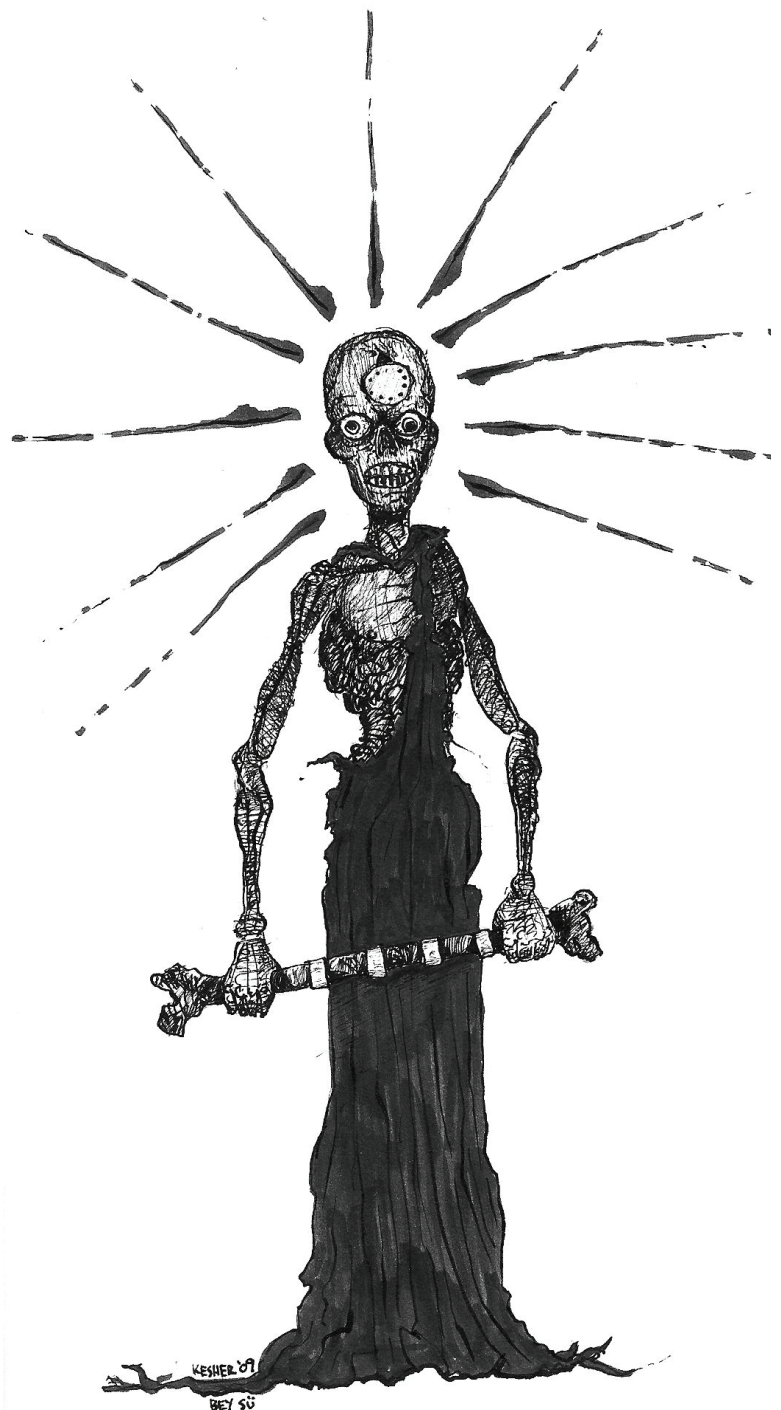
If the players look around they will find a long beam (about 4m) with planks nailed to it to make a kind of bridge or gangplank. There are also bricks removed from the east wall to make handholds, and dislodged tiles on the next door roof show where the Ügremish have clambered across. The reason for this will become clear if the players find the body in **13** – the Ügremish have been crossing next door's roof and using the bridge to gain access to the Foreign Quarter walls where the impaled bodies of criminals are displayed to steal them.

12. Escape Hole. *The plaster has been chipped away from the wall and the mortar dug out between exposed bricks. A stout piece of wood and a hand axe lay in the corridor ready for any fleeing Ügremish to finish the hole and get through into the next building.*

This is the final retreat of the Ügremish, and they will attack the wall in order to break through and escape. Roll % dice for each person. If it is below their STR then they have had some effect, four successful saves will make a hole large enough to get through. If the Ügremish managed to collapse **10** they will almost certainly get out of the building. Anyone investigating the hole after they have fled will meet an annoyed Ahoggyá, who will ask what is going on in very crude and severely accented Tsolyáni, though he will not attack unless met with hostility.

13. The Unfortunate. *This room smells bad. The source of the odour is a day old corpse lying under the roofed portion of the half ruined room. Wall tongues hang from all sides, and the floor is covered in whitish mould and is very wet and slippery.*

The summer heat in Jakálla means bodies decay very quickly and the number of insects means they quickly acquire a thriving community of burrowers. Those able to hold their gorge long enough to examine the body realise that it has a pole inserted in the anus projecting from the right side of his neck and the face is in a rictus of agony. This person was impaled and left on the wall of the Foreign Quarter as an example to other nakomé, only to have the Ügremish chop through the stake with an axe and steal the body during the night. They intended to move it downstairs to **15** in the next couple of weeks once a good part of the flesh had rotted away.



14. Collapsed Room. *The walls of this room have been partially demolished to provide ammunition, the roof is full of holes, and there is a sodden sleeping mat lying in the filth. Smoke comes up out of the ruined and partially blocked fireplace.*

There is nothing of interest in this room bar the odd Wall-Tongue and scuttling Qigékh.

15. Temple of Black Qárqa. *The passage stinks of incense and rotting meat and is utterly dark, the walls covered in streaks of black mould which trace out peculiar designs incised into the brick. The ceiling is only 1.5m high at the eastern end and streamers of slime hang down from the ceiling. The floor slopes down to a chamber 2m high; the smell here is even worse and there is curious sound, like very soft and slow heavy breathing.*

Grandpa Aqqá, Priest of Black Qárqa: Weird Magic

Lev 3 Priest. Str 25 Int 70 Con 42 Ps 87 Dex 35 Com 1 Gui 90. Attack + 0 Damage + 1 AC 7. 30% Spell failure, 10% hit wrong target on miss, HD 2+1 HP 8.

Skills: Labourer, Fisherman, Scribe, Tsolyáni, Livyáni, Bednjállan, Engsvanyáli, Modern Languages, Light, Detect Evil/Good, Cure Light Wounds.

Spells: Plague

Equipment: Tattered Robes, Club

Grandpa Aqqá is a pretty horrible sight, being most of the way along the road to transforming himself into a Shédra using the Book of Eternal Gratitude (see below). He is shrivelled and black, has no nose, eyelids, ears or lips and has a gaping hole in his forehead partially covered by a black chlén hide patch held onto his skull by corroded copper nails. It will take no mean sorcerer to overcome his magic resistance, and if anyone does cast a spell at him he will use the Speculum of Retribution (T:EPT) or target the enemy mage with Plague (OEPT). As the PCs enter his sanctum he will begin an awful death rattle like dirge waking his four M'rúr allies. One will join the fray per round until all four are in combat, and Aqqá can still fight while they are animating though he cannot cast spells.

M'rúr: AC6, HD 1+3 M 6" HP 8, 7, 7, 6. Regenerate in 2 turns unless burned. The M'rúr emerge one by one from a large pile of bones behind the altar and lunge through the shadows towards their prey, They are almost entirely skeletal and have been stained black (a practice common among followers of Black Qárqa) and have the symbol of the Third Eye of the Dead incised into the bones of the forehead. This staining makes them hard to make out in poor lighting (-1 to hit). Anyone who has not seen undead before will be required to make a morale check or immediately flee, gibbering in terror. Attempts to seize control of these undead or to destroy them by magic are countered by Grandpa Aqqá giving the M'rúr the same saving throw against spells as he has.

As the PCs venture further into the tunnel they will hear the sound of something moving. Torchlight will show little at first then shapes, horrible twitching shambling shapes, will emerge from the darkness and attack. Once the undead and their horrendous master are dealt with the PCs can make a proper search of the room. Against the west wall is a jumbled pile of black stained bones of all kinds, including a couple of fragments from non-humans, from amongst which the M'rúr emerge. There is the odd qigékh scuttling amongst them, making those of a nervous disposition think that yet more skeletons might be about to animate and attack.

In front of this is a low altar, a simple made up of three stone slabs. Beneath the top panel lie the temple treasures, four leather flasks with pewter fittings, a chlén hide box with incense sticks and cones, two scrolls, both rather stained and wormeaten, a book of some hundred or so black dyed pages with white writing, and a small pouch. The flasks contain a pungent-smelling oil: those with knowledge of the rites of Sárku and Belkhánu will recognise it as Thún oil, an embalming agent. Each flask is worth 30Kt. The incense is of the kind commonly used at funerals and in shrines of Sárku and is of low quality, a mere 5Kt for the lot. The scrolls are more interesting. The longer is in modern Salarvyáni and is a spell scroll with the Group I spell Locate Objects. The second scroll has no title and appears to be a page torn from a book. It is in Classical Tsolyáni and appears to relate to a protective magical diagram, the Sign of Repelling Chitinous Foes. It is worth 200Kt to a temple library even in its damaged state. This same sign is inscribed on the floor in white chalk – Aqqá has been using it to keep the Qigékh at bay as they have a nasty habit of chewing on his necrotic toes when he is meditating. The book is the prize find. It is called the Book of Eternal Gratitude and is in Bednálljan. It describes a long series of rituals, meditations and sacrifices that will, bit by bit, turn the user into a Shédra. The process is arduous, involving much time spent sitting in the darkness fasting, drinking ever increasing quantities of embalming fluid and numerous human sacrifices. He must trepan his own skull, cutting a hole in the forehead through to the brain without digging too deep and autolobotomising. Eventually at the climactic ritual the user wills his heartbeat to cease and becomes one of the undead. It could take years to complete the whole procedure and unless one is knowledgeable in the Theology and Ritual of Black Qárqa or a similar deity and knows the spell of Necromancy it is highly likely to fail. Those not following the procedure but merely reading it may gain some knowledge of Black Qárqa and his lore. Reading it results in a gain of 250XP if a good priest or magic user, 500 XP if an evil priest or magic user and 2000XP if a priest or magic user of Sárku or Durritlámish. This is worth at least 1000Kt to any temple, and those of Sárku and Durritlámish will be very

keen indeed to take it off your hands, or take off your hands if you don't let them have it. The pouch contains 27Kt in loose change and a medallion in the form of a thin copper disc incised with four slots. This is a key to the secret door on the north wall, and fits into a very hard to see keyhole near the floor.

Jüggash and Yuni will of course claim the goods in this room are part and parcel of the furnishings of the house and therefore their property. This is bullshit and they know it, and any reasonable argument from the PCs will make them back down and accept a mere 50% share in any proceeds. Jüggash will offer to fence the stuff for them – in which case they will be lucky to see 10% of the true value, but won't realise how badly they have been bilked. Jüggash will give the book to the temple of Sárku for free to curry favour. The cage on the east end of the room contains two boys about seven or eight years old. Both have been horribly mutilated, with eyelids, ears, nose and lips cut off. One is very near death; the removal of his left eyelid has left an infected wound and is crusted with dried pus. Both are completely traumatised and unable to communicate except in terrified whimpers. These were to be used as part of one the sacrifices mentioned in the Book of Eternal Gratitude. If the muck is washed off them they will be found to have Livyáni tattoos of the Uyzváz clan, another gang of nakomé refugees living at the Tower of the Red Dome. The family will not be entirely grateful to have them back. They sold the boys as slaves as they could not afford to feed them and needed the money to keep the rest of the family going. They will offer them to the PCs as slaves for the knockdown price of 20Kt each, going down to 5Kt, and then simply refusing to take custody of them and telling the PCs to take them away. The children are too badly mutilated and psychologically damaged to be worth anything as slaves, no slave dealer will take them and they will be nothing but a burden on their impoverished families. If approached directly the Temple of Dlamélish will express some interest, but only offer 50Kt. This whole room will put Yuni in rapture. Running an unlicensed temple or shrine merits a whopping fine from the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods and having unregistered undead on your premises is also a serious religious offence (all undead outside the precincts of a Sárku or Durrítlámish temple must have proper identity papers, a death certificate from the Temple of Belkhánu, an undeath certificate from the Temple of Sárku and be registered on the proper census along with a living 'guardian' who will take responsibility for any brains eaten, blood sucked etc.).

16. The Sewer. *This is a typical Jakállan sewer, an old alleyway roofed over in the last dítlána, paved with brick and with the ghostly facades of rubble filled buildings on either side. Here and there names and signs painted on the crumbling mould-stained plaster tell of ancient businesses and lost clans. The secret entryway*

opens through an old window a mere meter high and wide, large lumps of masonry serving as steps down to floor level.

There are any number of reasons a semi-undead priest of Black Qárqa might want a secret entrance to a sewer that will connect up to the tsurú'um at some point, and any number of nasty things that might inhabit it – the GM will no doubt have his own ideas to explore.

The Aftermath: What happens after the Ügremish are dealt with depends on how many and who escaped. If Ösh got away the PCs are likely to find themselves ambushed some dark night by a gang of Salarvyáni thugs out for revenge. If he was caught or killed then the rest of the clan will fade away into the Jakállan underworld, never to be seen or heard of again. If the party did not find the underground temple then they are in for bigger trouble. Grandpa Aqqá will be able to complete his transformation into a Shédra, and will then set about taking revenge on Jüggash, the PCs and finally the Flat Peak. The party may hear of rumours of something very very unpleasant happening to Jüggash, building workers refusing to go near the clanhouse to carry out renovations. If the party have been daft enough to rent the clanhouse from Jüggash at a knockdown rate in return for clearing out the Ügremish then they will find that the place is 'haunted', with regular incursions by undead until the temple can be deconsecrated. PCs may hear some time later that Yuni and the Flat Peak clan have claimed a 2000Kt reward from the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods for drawing their attention to the illegal temple and that an ecumenical deconsecration committee has been to the site to expunge any religious influence.

If all goes well then the PCs will have made some useful friends. Jüggash is a bit low rent as a patron, but he does have connections with all sorts of unsavoury people in the Foreign Quarter who will be handy to know if you need someone roughing up or discreetly unload stolen goods. If the party are canny enough to go round Jüggash and offer their captives direct to Haruné hijuyukkún of the Iron Helm as slaves then they will acquire a much more useful contact. Haruné is a proper noble and is engaged in climbing the ranks within the Palace of the Realm, he will have all sorts of dirty jobs to be done and lots of money. Disposing of the Book of Eternal Gratitude could also earn the PCs some status and favours. The best route will be to give it voluntarily to the Temple of Sárku or Durrítlámish. This will leave them owing a major favour to the party, and if one of them is a priest of these gods he can expect an immediate promotion of at least one circle. Gifting it to other temples will be regarded as a minor favour, but if the Temple of Sárku finds out you had such an item and gave it to someone else they will not be best pleased.

Appendix 1: Labourer and Legal skills in OEPT.

Labourer is a Group I skill. Tékumeli peasants are tough and can work all day in baking heat on a bowl of dná grain porridge and a sip of Chumétl; palanquin bearers can lug a heavy merchant or noble around all day; porters carry huge baskets and boxes of goods along the sákbe roads. Many soldiers have this skill as well, and work long and hard preparing the elaborate legion marching camps. Those lacking this skill will suffer penalties to their constitution if they attempt to emulate these feats of endurance.

Lawyer is a Group II skill; it gives a character knowledge of what is and is not legal in Tsolyánu and the ability to draw up contracts, handle sales of property, assess probable shámmtla and other everyday legal activities.

Magistrate/Advocate is a Group III skill; it enables a person to act on behalf of a client in court, to draw up pleas, apply for writs and handle other advanced legal documents and if the person is promoted to a suitable position in one of the Palaces to sit in judgement either alone or as part of a panel of jurists in legal cases. All of these functions are much enhanced if the person also has the skills of Orator, Scholar: Law, and/or Ancient Language: Classical Tsolyáni.

Appendix 2: Glossary

Black Qárqa – a deity of Salarvyá who combines characteristics of the Tsolyáni gods Ksárul and Sárku with a few unique elements of its own. Rites include necrophilia, ritual torture and human sacrifice, but of a more extreme kind than those practised by Sárkuites.

Chumétl – buttermilk from the goat-like hmélu with added spices. The typical drink of all social classes in Tsolyánu and many parts of the other Five Empires.

Ditlána – a great ritual ideally carried out every five hundred years in which an entire city or town is demolished and rebuilt.

Dná grain – Red high protein grain grown throughout the Five Empires. An incredibly productive genetically modified crop that can produce two or three harvests a year under the best growing conditions.

Éngsvan hlá Gánga – the theocratic state that preceded the current Five Empires. Saw the greatest advance in technology since the end of the Latter Times.

Feshénga – large reptile with numerous legs, a poisonous bite, and a bad attitude. Fills a similar ecological niche to the earthly python and crocodile.

Flat Peak clan – a low status clan made up of urban manual labourers working in bricklaying and carpentry.

Gilráya Forest – the large tract of jungle between Tsolyánu and Salarvyá. Noted for gigantic Ebzál trees.

Golden Dawn clan – a middle ranking clan of well-to-do urban professionals and small country landowners.

Héngka beer – beer brewed from dná grain. The drink of the lower classes.

Iron Helm clan – a high ranking clan of nobles devoted to the deities Ksárul and Hrü'ü and their cohorts.

Káika – domesticated bird similar to a small dodo.

Kraá Hills – area of northern Tsolyánu inhabited by Sárku worshipping peasants who use facial scarification to mark clan identity. They are also rumoured to indulge in ritual cannibalism.

Legion of Kétl – The legion that staff all the Tsolyáni prisons. Organised as a medium infantry legion but never actually called out to fight in the field, they are too busy keeping the empire's criminals under lock and key.

Livyánu – one of the Five Empires. A theocratic police state dominated by the temples of the secretive Shadow Gods. The natives tattoo themselves in elaborate patterns to signify their clan and temple allegiances.

Salarvyá – one of the 'Five Empires', a sprawling feudal state with little central control, effectively a collection of small kingdoms and petty principalities.

Shámmtla – money paid to recompense insult or injury, or even murder. Usually settled out of court. Amount paid depends on the status of the injured party. Someone unable to pay may be sold into slavery to compensate.

Shiringgáyi – the main deity of Salarvyá, who combines attributes of the Tsolyáni goddesses Avánthe and Dlam-élsh. Primarily a goddess of fertility, but with dozens of 'aspects' covering a wide range of divine responsibilities.

Thireqúmmu – one of the main families of Salarvyá controlling a large tract of land in its central region.

Tirrikámu – Tsolyáni military rank equivalent to a sergeant. Commands a semétl of 20 men.

Tower of the Red Dome – notoriously run down, unsanitary and crowded hostel for poor visitors to Jakálla.

yáfa-rice – A crop plant very similar to terrestrial wet-field rice, genetically modified to increase yields.

Yán Kór – one of the 'Five Empires', this northern country is a matriarchy, though its ruler is Baron Áld. Ω

Oceanian Legends

More than once Ignatius has remarked that for a goodly portion of Fight On!'s readership—which is to say, nearly all of you—Oceania represents terra incognita: It is, so to speak, a new world. He has therefore very logically suggested that a survey of basic information—geography, ethnology and so forth—would be to your benefit, increasing both knowledge and understanding.

No fan of logic, I objected strenuously. Surely, I insisted, many of our colleagues must have visited Oceania at least once or twice—perhaps even by the very same nexus that permitted Dave Hargrave's many journeys to Arduin. (While its exact location remains a closely held secret, Bay Area oldschoolers are all-too familiar with the inter-dimensional comings and goings which emanate from the Berkeley Hills.)

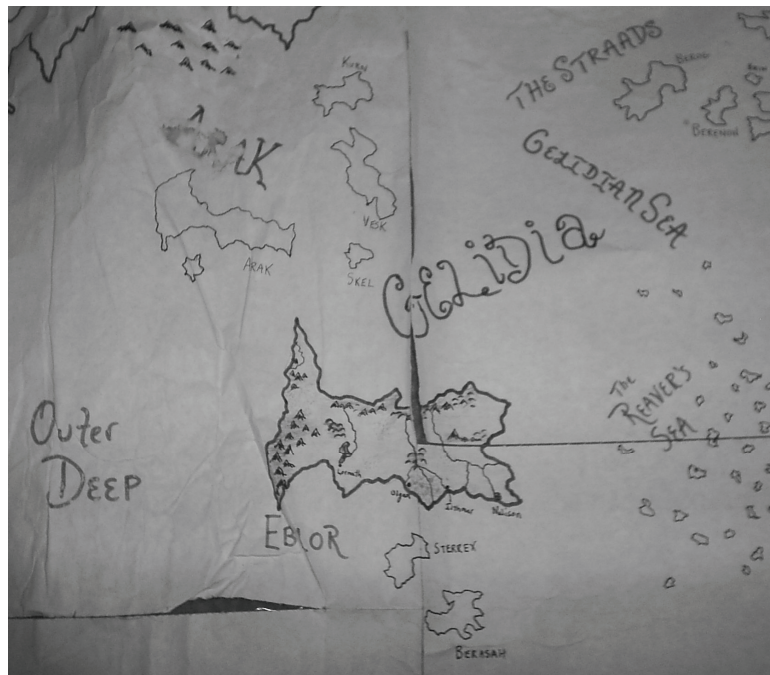
Besides, reports about Oceania have circulated for decades. Mention the name in proper company and the tales will tumble forth, some bright with wonder, others sullied by dread. Fight On! readers are necessarily both wise and perspicacious; to recite common knowledge would only waste their time.

In the end, Ignatius' position prevailed, though not on its merits. In fact, his incessant nagging and gruesome deadlines pushed me to the verge of nervous exhaustion. In my weakened condition I was unable to locate an affable tyro able and willing to ghostwrite this column in exchange for marginal future considerations. Happily, recent events have unleashed into our economy a veritable horde of dandified scribes each more desperate than the last to undertake any task that could—under the broadest possible definition—still be described as 'writing.' (Keep an eye out for notices on Craigslist or on the bulletin boards of leading English Departments.)

So remember this, stalwart gamers: Such mediocrity as follows accrues solely to Ignatius! I suspect that many of you will find this little more than lukewarm rehash; if so, many apologies!—you may want turn directly to the comics page. - Del L. Beaudry

Gelidia (Part 1)

Gelidia is mostly ocean. The region encompasses great stretches of storm-wracked sea broken here and there by clusters of rocky, wind-swept islands. Three distinct oceans make up its waters: the Gelidian Sea, the Aurora and the Outer Deep. The Gelidian is the smallest and easiest to navigate (though still treacherous). In summer, it serves as the main boulevard for a teeming trade with the Archipelago. The Aurora is far less hospitable: a vessel sailing from Aluet to Fornost must traverse 1200 nauts¹ of open water. Most traders wisely confine themselves to the north-south passage between Aluet and Lokad, which can be accomplished in a day or two, weather permitting. Beyond Eblor's western shores lies the uncharted expanse of the Outer Deep. Since it



borders no other civilized land, few sail the Outer Deep willingly. From time to time one hears of a storm-tossed ship that manages to return to port after hazarding its waters. Survivors describe pea soup fog, prodigious icebergs, gruesome storms, hungry sea monsters and—in several cases—boarding actions by Piscean raiders.

Climate and Geography. This is a cold, desolate region beset by storms. The glaciated continent of the distant north harbors hard weather, which sweeps down onto the exposed isles of Aluetia and the Straads. Winter temperatures may dip below -40° Fahrenheit; -10° to -30° is typical. Summer temperatures can reach into the low 80s; 50-60° is typical. Climate across most of Gelidia resembles that of Scandinavia or, in its northernmost sections, Iceland. Gelidian settlements follow a regular pattern. Most towns and forts lie on the southern coasts or in the windward shadow of the interior mountains. Growing season in such places is four arcs.² The northern (windward) sections are exposed to storms and hard winds year-round; winter conditions are dreadfully harsh. Locals occupy "the windwards" only seasonally. During the summer rush, bustling camps dot the coastlines, as hunters, whalers and fishermen work round the clock to harvest the copious fauna. By mid-autumn only a few scouts and trappers remain.

The island of Eblor is the exception. It lies at the Gelidia's southernmost reach (approximately 37 degrees north) and is blessed with a band of mountains that run along its northern coast, which catch the worst of the storms before they can sweep across the wide central

¹ A naut is equal to 5544 Earth feet, or 1.05 statute miles.

² The Oceanan year is divided into sixteen arcs of 24 days each.

valley. Climate here is gentler, the soil richer and more productive. Growing season is longer than elsewhere in the north—five or even six arcs—and allows for a range of crops to be cultivated. Coniferous forests cover much of the northlands. Eblor's climate resembles that of British Columbia and western Washington.

The small islets and cays that comprise the Reavers' Sea enjoy ample rainfall and moderate temperatures. The climate resembles Scotland's. Most islanders live in villages and towns along the coasts and rarely venture into the rugged interior. There, a tangle of dense foliage overruns steep capes and spills into sudden gullies. Bogs are everywhere, quicksand is commonplace, and bloodthirsty monsters abound. Navigation in the Reavers' Sea is notoriously difficult. Squalls strike without warning year-round. Shoals and reefs spiderweb the narrow channels that run between atolls; the slightest miscalculation can sunder a ship's hull from stem to stern.

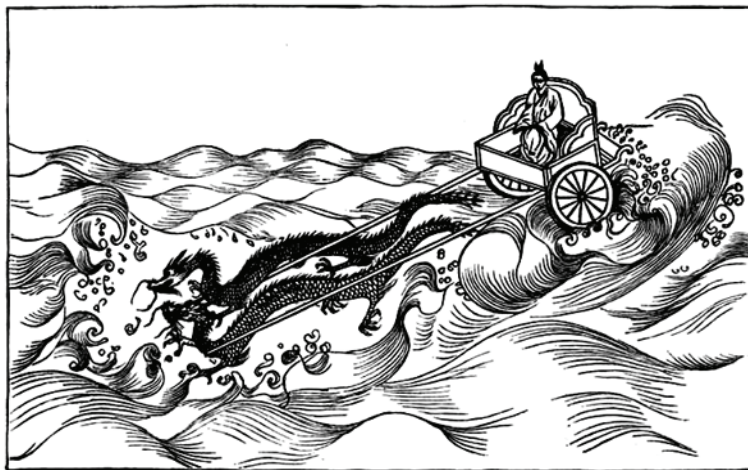
The People: Origins. If men inhabited the north before the coming of the ice, no sure trace of them has been found. Yes, there has been the occasional anomaly (the ossuary at Califf Door being, perhaps, the most provocative), but nothing which compels certainty or, for that matter, even thoughtful guesswork.³ No, the evidence—such as it is—presents to the scientific mind a simple, solemn conclusion: Whatever slight impression humankind may have made on the Gelidian landscape has long since been scoured away by the advancing glaciers, or driven before them and cast into the sea.

One would imagine, then, that most scholars would accept Byrin's basic account of serial migrations: one tribe after another was forced south by the advancing ice, the Berog being the most recent emigrants. Yet the myth of an ancient "progenitor" civilization persists, despite the absence of evidence. The refugees of this alleged nation—which would have flourished in the distant ante-glacial past—are held to be the forebears of the Valenites, who settled the Archipelago some eons ago. Such conjectures invariably cite Vicco Ilthanerros, the Selidarkan naturalist and compiler, whose *Oceanian Marvels* includes an account of an expedition to the north during the reign of the Emperor Qhualtis. Thereupon Selidarkan surveyors beheld "curious ziggurats, and ruined quays, and these in great numbers, and prized away a great sum of orichalcum, in bars of alien design." For centuries, this or that Valenite writer has cited Vicco

³ The paucity of material has in no way muzzled speculation. Kersanio, for instance, argues for a pattern of prehistoric settlement by Frankden tribes via Aleutia. By contrast, Pelleas the Shriven posits an arctic proto-race, which he calls "the Boreans," who are supposed to have occupied the northern continent before the advent of the Ice Lord. As is the rule here, neither troubles to provide evidence for his claims.

to argue that—contrary to all history and tradition—the Archipelago had in fact been settled by displaced princes and proud knights; that the Kards and Kormands and a dozen other Valenite tribes were actually heirs to a great, if mysteriously vanished, *ancien regime* and not the crude savages and bloodthirsty bandits every shred of evidence would suggest. Such schemes—baseless though they may be—will never be long out of vogue. They appeal to national vanity while also flattering the well-heeled patrons on whose scraps the scholar, dog-like, feeds. Today, three main races occupy the northlands:

The Araks: These folk are a savage race of bone-white, fair-haired barbarians. They make their stronghold on the frigid Gelidian island of Arak and from thence raid far and wide, constantly harassing both ship and town across northern Eblor and throughout Gelidia and even as far east and south as the Scatters and Uman! Araks speak their own language, rich in hissing sibilants, and regard all other tongues as the braying of livestock. It is said they hold bloody rites to honor their alien gods but more than this is unknown. Araki forge steel of unsurpassed strength and each year thousands die on their blood-hardened blades. Araks do not take prisoners.



The Berog: The Berog are a rugged strain of norlander who occupy portions of the Aluets, Straads and certain of the Araki isles (though not Arak proper). The Berog are the most recent tribe to leave the Further North, arriving in Oceania in historical times. They are a rough but friendly people. Berog are noted as warriors, skalds, drunkards and most especially sailors. They are great voyagers, their triremes and galleys ranging far and wide, even into Lorath-Kabar and Equatoria in search of trade goods. The great timber stands of Berog and the Straads produces the finest wood to be found in Oceania. Once primarily raiders and freebooters, many Berog have taken to more settled lives as traders or crofters (at least upon those isles which can support a measurable growing season). Many also work as lumbermen, craftsfolk or hunters. Men are tall and hirsute, with and

tend toward stoutness. Their hair is brown or black, as are their eyes. Skin color is very pale or ruddy. They favor beards and tend to long hair, often worn in warriors' braids. They prefer heavy coats and hats of fur, and leggings of the same material or long skirts of broadcloth, with thick wool stockings beneath. Womenfolk also favor long hair, always worn pinned up or back, for the sight of long cascading hair is regarded as brazen invitation in the north. Both men and women pay much attention to jewelry and other ornamentation. Platinum, bone, ivory and volcanic glass are materials most commonly employed.

Among the Berog, men and women live very different lives. For the most part men hunt, fight and drink while women cook, tend the home and look after the home. While this might sound oppressive, the divisions are more customary than legal. True, Berog women are rarely warriors, but swordswomen are not unheard of and can join war bands freely. Women can (and often do) own property and occupy positions of social importance. Women landholders vote in tribal moots and can be elected to executive posts in villages and townships, though this is rare in practice. In matters of magic, women are sole authority. Berog males have a great taboo against sorcery and are never magi. Thus most wives pretend to a certain amount of witch-lore (most of which, excepting their knowledge of simples, is mere humbug and balderdash). The Berog embrace several related tribes, though interbreeding has diluted much of their unique racial character. Still several strains remain distinct in specific populations. These include the Aluet, who are rangier of physique and more fair, with skin nearly the color of bone; and the Straad, who are very tall (even to ten span), blue-eyed, and very fair.

The Urgels: The Urgels are the indigenous folk of the west. Though largely confined to Eblor and the Reavers' Sea in the present day, they once populated much of Arak and the Straads, if their sacred scrolls are to be believed. They have built their remaining stronghold of Eblor into a powerful nation, the better to cope with the incessant marauding of the Araki. Urgels are renowned as a rugged, hardy folk, well-conditioned to life in the northlands. They have ruddy skin, which to Archipelagan eyes seems rough and weatherworn, even among the young. Hair and eye coloration is various (perhaps owing to substantial cross-breeding with Araki and Berog tribes), with lighter shades predominating. Hair is rather more bristly and kinky than is typical of the Valenites; in fact, Urgels are somewhat hirsute, though not nearly as much so as the Berog. Urgels favor simple colors such as russet, charcoal and dun, with silver ornamentation. Men wear tunics and breeches or skirts, with helms or caps of leather, while the womenfolk favor long dresses of homespun and broadcloth and wear their hair long. The Urgels are renowned as

trenchermen, skalds, brawlers, timbermen, and pirates but these reputations are rather antiquated as Eblor in particular is less of a frontier than is believed in the Archipelago. The cities of Nalison and Ilthmar are thriving seaports, somewhat small by Archipelagan standards but larger by far than other cities of the west. Among the lawless cays and atolls of the Reavers' Sea, however, the Urgelic penchant for piracy survives.

The Islands: Gelidia's islands are clustered in five distinct chains: Eblor and its two smaller allies, Sterrex and Berasah; the many small islands of the Reaver's Sea; Arak and the Land of the Ice-Lord (sometimes collectively known by their Straad name, Skaven); the Straads; and Aluetia. Residents of an island group are linked by language, culture and commerce. Several constitute a single political entity.



Eblor, Sterrex, Berasah: At almost two million square nauts, Eblor is the among the largest of Oceania's islands. Despite long human occupation, much of Eblor remains frontier. Settlement is concentrated around its capital, Nalison, on the east coast, and in the farmlands of the verdant central valley. The countryside, particularly the western highlands, is famous for its rugged natural beauty. It is also notorious for its dangers: bandits, half-men, groon and worse roam the highlands freely. The west is dominated by the Aaratian Mountains, one of Oceania's great ranges, which hangs across the island's shoulder like a baldric. Its hummocked spine runs six hundred nauts north by south, from the tip the Deregon Peninsula to the southern

coast. Armored in glaciers, faces hidden in cloud and storm, the Aaratians have thwarted conquerors for ten thousand years: no empire—not even the Selidarkans—has ever occupied Eblor’s highlands. A second mountain range, the Dorrics, follows the north coast for most of the island’s length—from Deregon Trunk all the way to Kember Head. Though not so lofty as the Aaratian, the Dorrics are steep and treacherous nevertheless. Yet it is the Dorrics that ensure Eblor’s prosperity. Their mass blunts the worst of the northern storms during the winter while still providing an ample snow-pack. This in turn feeds the dozens of rivers and streams that flow down into Eblor’s great central valley. Chief among these is the Drazen, whose brown waters enrich the soil across a vast floodplain. It is here that farms, large and small, raise the cereals, squash and beans that have made Eblor the “bread-basket of the West.”

League after muddy league, the Drazen meanders east by southeast until it widens into a swampy delta of vast expanse known as Rats’ Nest—home to outlaws, heretics and numerous troglodyte tribesmen. At its southern verge, where the Drazen at last meets the sea, squats Olman, Eblor’s second-largest city. Originally a pirate camp, Olman has grown into a seedy metropolis by way of monopoly: it controls all transshipment into the interior—which goes by barge—and traders face stiff duties. The city is also well-known to aesthetes for its novel or even perverse construction methods. The earliest settlements were built on a string of low islands in the middle of the channel—berms of alluvial silt, really. It goes without saying that such a settlement is both unstable and insalubrious. Foundations are inevitably undercut by river and tidal action, its occupants exposed to floods from upriver and storm surges from the southern estuary. To ameliorate such shortcomings, the citizenry of Olman has shown remarkable ingenuity. Over the centuries its structures have been reinforced by a vast assemblage of improvised supports: stilts, rafts, pontoons, outriggers—anything that might prevent its buildings from tumbling straight into the river. The result is a floating city—albeit a leaky, fetid, foundering one—composed of hundreds of loosely connected segments. Getting from one to another often involves a ride by water-taxi, frequently at no small expense. Savvy tourists know to request a room on the third floor, if not higher—even at respectable inns the first two floors may turn out to be underwater at high tide!

Up the coast and west twenty or so leagues to the west lies Uemaug, a den of vice and villainy so infamous that its very name is shorthand for recklessness within the insurance industry. The so-called Uemag clause states: “This contract shall be considered null and void if said bondholder shall undertake any endeavor that a reasonable person should consider to be not merely foolhardy but by its very nature courting death. Such

cases include but are not limited to: arguing with dragons, insulting groon and visiting (of one’s own free will) the bandit-city of Uemag”

Eblor’s capital and chief city is Nalison, located near the mouth of the Skaum, a few leagues above the coast. While smaller than the great cities of the Archipelago, Nalison is no backwater. With a population believed to be in excess of 100,000, it is the largest city in Gelidia, indeed in all of western Oceania. Early on Nalison was not so much a city as a walled fortress. Its location was defensive—a flat-topped promontory overlooking the river. Much of the original stronghold—known as the Old Fort—remains, but over the years settlements have spilled down the hill sides and along the riverbanks. The city as it now exists makes no pretense at fortification. It has been three hundred years since Eblor’s last civil war—internal threats are unheard of. Roads are lightly garrisoned; city-dwellers and travelers come and go freely. The waterways are another matter. An incoming vessel must first call at Fort Duke, on Baffin Sound, where it will be inspected. If all is in order, a small pilot vessel guides it through the narrow channel that leads to Nalison Port. Sheer capes overlook the channel, these topped with towers and bristling with field pieces: ballistae; onagers and iron cauldrons that bubble with sticky fire. Such precautions have apparently discouraged reavers—no pirate has attacked in living memory.

Eblor has long been known for its excellent timber—black oak, hornbeam, ironwood, etc.—and in years past the city was the center of a thriving hardwood trade. Logs from the eastern forests were (and indeed still are) floated down the Skaum to be milled and seasoned in Whellkirk. The treated lumber then traveled to Nalison by barge, where it sold at auction to brokers from a hundred lands. Centuries of heavy logging have deforested most of the eastern woods and folk in those parts have abandoned logging in favor of farming or ranching. Eblor still produces the world’s best timber—logged on the rugged Dergeon Peninsula—but its journey to market now takes longer than it used to, and prices are much higher. As a consequence, other lands have seized much of the Gelidian timber trade; Berog in the Straads have been particularly successful in undercutting Eblor’s prices. Nalison has responded by diversifying: today it is the financial and mercantile capital of the west. The great banking houses of the Archipelago have established offices. Silks from the Slaver Isles, saddles from Hilidas, marjoram from the Quills, arcane trinkets and runesticks from distant Fornost, pearls from Equatoria—all these and more are for sale along the Overlook, home to Nalison’s finest emporiums. Tinker’s Corner and the Saps proffer less exalted goods—foodstuffs, leatherworks, utensils. The Warren—Nalison’s notorious thieves quarter—is home to diverse entertainments, some delicious, others perilous indeed. Ω

The Airships of Mistworld

by Steve Marsh

Mistworld resembles a ball of steel wool, formed as a side effect of shunting a supernova so that another world would not be destroyed. The filaments range from hundreds of miles across to so fine that they cannot be seen by the human eye, crossing and interconnecting like an Escheresque, three-dimensional spider's web. Upon this web are rocks, trees, rivers, life; all around it are a rust-like cosmic debris and haunting clouds of mist. In this fantastical setting, magic, monsters, technology, and much else have their own special character.

Mistworld is approximately 12,000 miles in diameter, though the Surface Layer is a mere 100 miles or so deep. The 'steel' in the wool on which the soil, rivers, etc. rest is an alloy whose dominant component is the super-strong synthetic metal Technicium. Mistworld has seven moons, each surrounded with a breathtaking nimbus of ice. About 35% of Mistworld's surface area is usable; this

consists of irregularly shaped strips of land breaking through the surface, climbing gently out from the deeper mists into the areas the sun reaches and then fading gently back in. A large number of the surface areas have sheer vertical drops on all sides. Some are themselves vertical (dropping toward the planet's core instead of wrapping around it). Smaller strands are often found in clusters formed by a strand shearing (resulting in many small islands). Strands connect or almost connect (allowing bridges and the like) rather frequently. The largest interconnected surface area is the size of California; the smallest is the size of a pinhead too tiny for angels to dance on. The largest connected area (including bridges) is the size of Europe. There are also regular balloon, gondola, bird cage and flying machine routes.

The Technicium alloy of which Mistworld is largely composed can be used to lay the keels of "boats" that will maintain their altitude. This is done by laying and enchanting a keel. Such a keel relies upon the presence of Technicium alloy (TA) in conjunction with sympath-

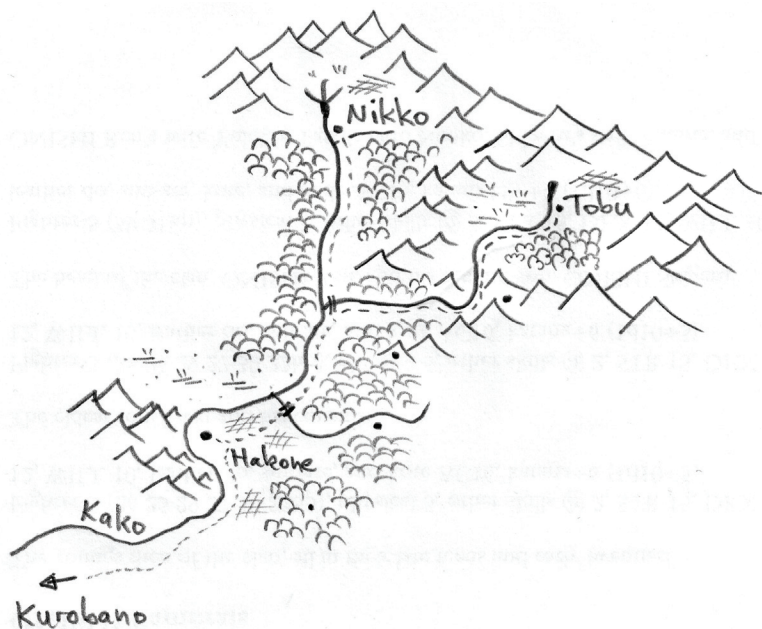


tic magic. Keels are usually laid into hardwoods to provide the underlying strength necessary, though some enchanters have used exotic metal alloys, crystals, or silicates. Each 2 cm by 1 cm by 1 meter strip of TA will support 100 kilograms. Strips can be connected end to end but must remain at least 2 meters away from any TA they are not connected to in order to work properly. (Some warships have long and wicked TA coated rams designed to destroy the ability of their targets to fly).

After the keel(s) have been laid, they are "given life" by enchantment. The enchanter must be a mage who knows the appropriate ritual (usually 4th level and requiring a day to cast). The Technicum gets a saving throw as a warrior of level equal to its length in meters minus the level of the enchanter. If it misses it is enchanted, while if it succeeds it gets a permanent +1 against future attempts to enchant it, cumulative for each success. There are large abandoned keels to be found in strange places with incredibly high resistance to enchantment. This bonus also accrues to new TA laid in the wood of the previous keel. With very large keels, enchanters sometimes employ assistants in casting the enchantment ritual, each of whom subtracts 2 from the Technicum's effective level on the save.

Once the enchantment takes hold, the metal becomes gravitationally inert, with no desire to rise or sink at any altitude. It does have a modest general inertia to overcome in any direction, a phenomenon which sages do not understand, but which is crucial in preventing even a giant gondola from sliding off westward when its passengers mount it ungingerly.

Gondolas are propelled horizontally by magic (flight and telekinesis spells work well, and there is a 2nd level spell (*Even Keel*) directly for that purpose). These spells move boats at the same rates they move people, or at Speed 12 for 8 hours in the case of *Even Keel*. Vertical movement in the gravitational field requires a more specialized technique. Assuming they know the keel's name, the sorcerers who enchanted the boat, magically trained persons who study the enchantment for a day, and master shipwrights who have learned the skill over years can all "talk" boats up and down. Given a strong wind, the talker gradually coaxes the boat upwards or downwards in the atmosphere, speaking words of power to it to gently move it up and down. Once a boat has been talked up or down in this way, it can always re-attain any altitude within its full range through normal means (flight, elemental wind, etc.). Some sorcerers use wind elementals to assist in talking up their gondolas to great heights and thereafter usually have no need to ever talk the keel up again. Most gondolas are enchanted to the altitude they are expected to be used at (as good talkers are rare). Ω



The Kitsunemori Campaign

by Alex Schroeder

Player Information

Nikko is where the players start. They are on pilgrimage to the Gassan shrine. A few farmers and fishermen live up here. The Chuzenji lake is very peaceful. There's a shabby tea-house that offers a room for rent. Every night there's gambling and drinking at the tea-house. The only merchant in town belongs to the Kawa clan that runs business along the Kako river.

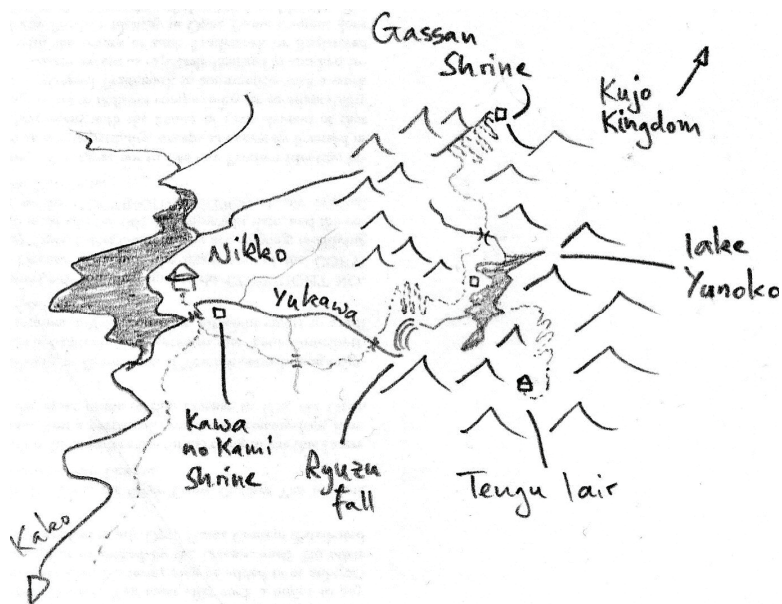
Hakone is ruled by the Onishi clan. There's a castle standing on an island in the middle of the river, connected to the city itself by a bridge. They hardly ever leave the castle. In addition to the rice farmers that work the inundated fields around the city there are a lot of lumberjacks that work the western forest.

Tobu is another little village belonging to the Onishi fief. There's supposed to be a tomb to the famous warrior king Ueshiba in a swamp near the village. It is said that Ueshiba fought the last battle against the swamp things using a magic sword he had received from a tengu prince.

Kurobano is the regional capital three days to the south of Hakone. The Fudo temple in Kurobano is known for the wisdom and power of its head priestess Katsuko.

Small Inari shrines dot the landscape.

The First Adventure: A tengu (bird man) has kidnapped the merchant's daughter. Up in the mountains the party can find a path leading up to the tengu's mansion high above Yunoko lake. In order to defeat it in



combat they might have to befriend one of the two kitsune (fox men) living in the area. They are called Umisachihiko and Yamasachihiko and despise each other. Umisachihiko is interested in killing either the tengu, his brother, or both, or the party. Yamasachihiko is interested in helping the party but opposed to treachery and violence.

There are rumors of kujo (hill giants) to the north, but nobody knows whether there's any truth to that.

Referee's Map

Caves: The area across the river to the east of Hakone consists of swamp wilderness. There are reports of a black dragon living in the caves to the west.

Ruin: There is a ruined castle in the swamps to the north west of Hakone. As nobody likes to cross the Kako river, nobody has ventured there in recent years.

Hakone: The Onishi household is under the sway of a kumo (spider woman) that has charmed all the men. As the women are unaffected it might be possible to contact them within the village if the guards are distracted. The youngest son Shigeru has also been unaffected by the kumo's charms and has been tied up in the tea house behind the castle, away from prying eyes.

Nikko: The Chuzenji lake houses kappa that will attack anybody on the lake or on the forest roads at night.

Old Bridge: There is a big guesthouse near the old bridge because it takes more than a single day's journey to travel on foot between Hakone, Nikko, and Tobu. All pilgrims and merchants stop here.

Morioka: The other powerful wizard in the area is Morioka. He lives in his tower in the forest with two

apprentices. His speciality is thunder and lightning. He is not interested in war and destruction.

Kappa Lake: The lake houses three kappa (turtle men) guarding some treasure and a magic cold iron weapon which they hate and avoid like the plague.

Bato is a small village by the last imperial bridge. They believe themselves the last civilized outpost in the north.

Gassan is a holy mountain. There's a famous shrine at the top. A long and winding stair leads up to the shrine. The locals only come here in times of need. Apparently a hermit lives up here somewhere but it has been years since anybody has seen him.

Musashi: In the hills north of Bato is a hidden old ruin. Musashi has managed to attract about a dozen bandits and is robbing lonely merchants and pilgrims.

Logger Camp: To the east up along the small river you'll find a camp of lumberjacks. They work for the Kawa merchants in Hakone. Their incursions into the forests aggravate the forest spirits and now they are being harassed day and night.

Owlbears: There are many owlbears north of Tobu, but they keep to the mountains.

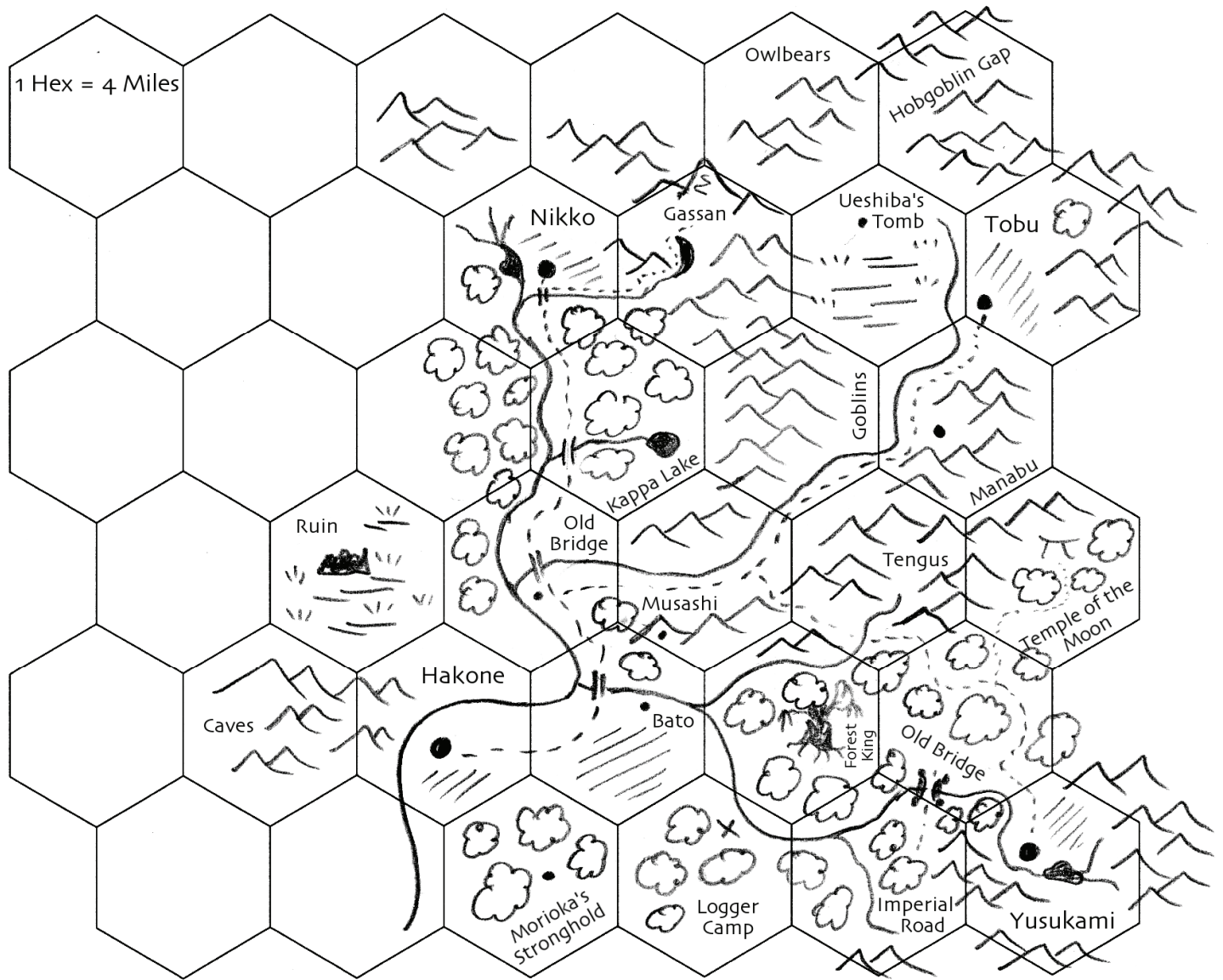
Goblins: The goblins living in the hills separating Nikko and Tobu are a nuisance but a guard or two will scare them away so there has never been a need to actually clear them out.

Forest King: There is a powerful treant that rules the wild forests to the east. There are many kappa with naginatas (glaives) and kitsune archers with powerful yumi (composite longbows) under his command. Apparently the Onishi clan has appropriated a horn of animate trees – a unique magic item that belongs to the forest king.

Ueshiba's Tomb: In the middle of the swamps to the west of Tobu is an old stone mausoleum. There are secret passages into the wet underground tunnels if searched for long enough, Ueshiba's magic sword of air and light can be found down here.

Tengus: These winged master swordsmen live up in the mountains. They care little for the affairs of men. A long time ago tengus were allied with men and fought against kappas and kumos, and other swamp things. But that was a long time ago.

Imperial Road: The ruined road is still visible after all these years. It runs south up to the Niemon Gap (not shown) where a robber baron has taken up residence in an old imperial guard tower.



Hobgoblin Gap: Further to the north is hobgoblin country. They are supposed to be great armourers. The hobgoblins worship the minotaur god Mithras in underground labyrinthine temples. There used to be a big war in the past and legend says that the swamp near Tobu is full of dead humans and hobgoblins.

Manabu: He is one of the two powerful wizards in the area. He is a dreadful necromancer and is currently raising a small army of zombies and skeletons from the swamps of Tobu. The ones that escape his control are sometimes found in the area around his tower. He has recruited three evil clerics of Izanami to lead the attacks against Musashi's castle, Tobu, and Nikko.

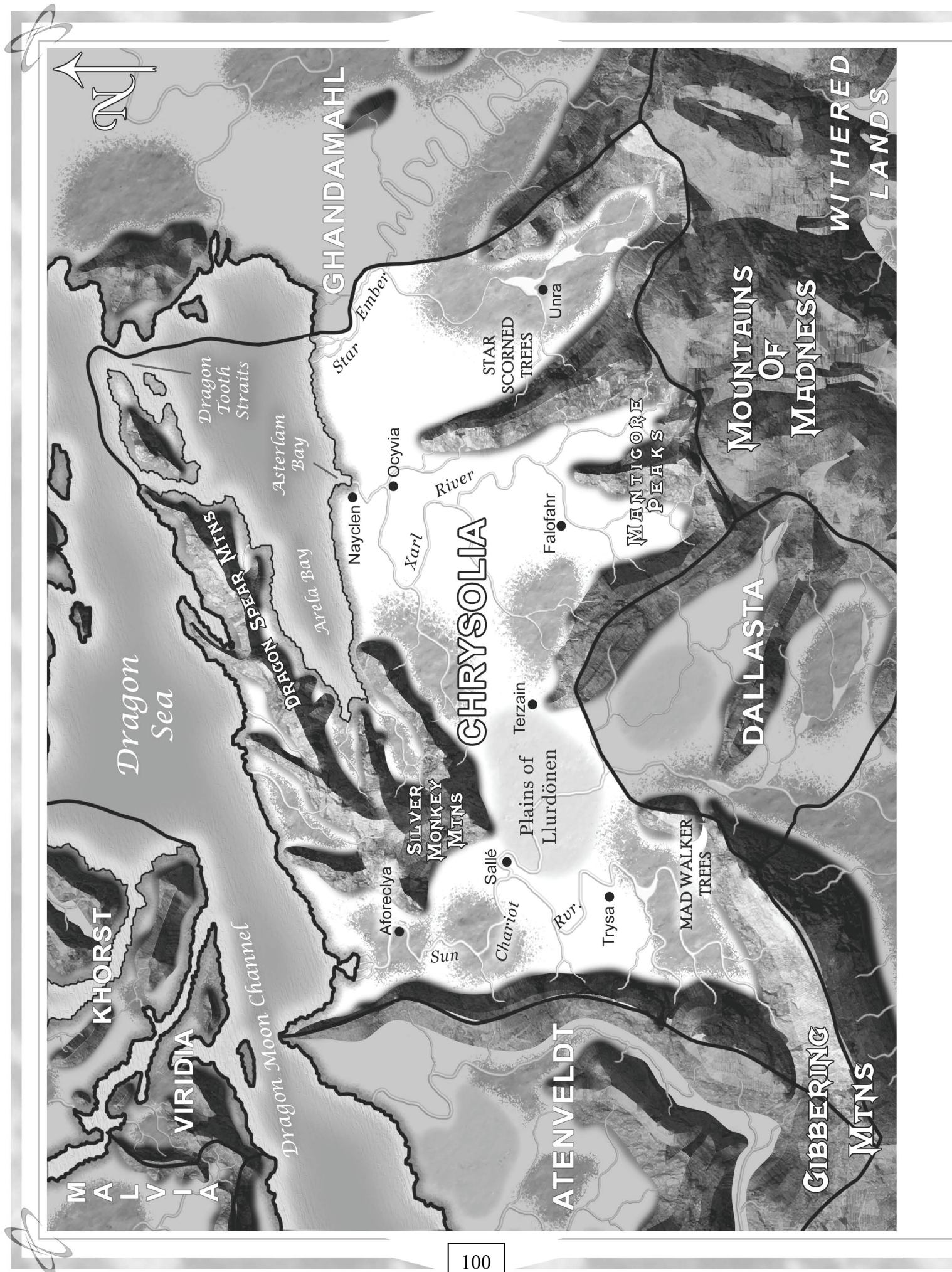
Old Bridge: There used to be an old bridge connecting the imperial road with the Temple of the Moon but much of it has crumbled and these days the bridge ends half-way across the river.

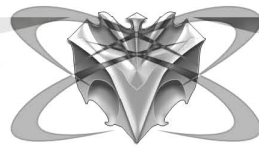
Tobu: Should any heroes serve Onishi well, they shall be rewarded with a yearly stipend. Effectively they gain ownership of a few peasant families around here.

Temple of the Moon: This is a remote haven of sylvan happiness. The priests have many contacts all over the country. They fear that the hobgoblins to the north might be trying an invasion sooner or later. Moonlight is also associated with graveyards and the undead, but nobody up here seems to harbor such dark secrets.

Yusukami: There's another feudal lord living up here in the north. Lord Yusukami has a daughter called Fumiko that might make a fitting bride for Lord Onishi's son Shigeru. There are agents at work that want to prevent this from happening, however. Ω







Chrysolia

Location: L7-8

Capitol: Terzain

Population: 4,900,000

Demographics: Humans 67%, Elf 6%, Amazon 2%, Dwarf 5%, Orc 2%, Goblin 3%, Hawkmen 1%, Ogre 2%, Throon 1%, Urukk 1%, Saurig 1%, Kobold 4%, Hobbitt 3%, Other 2%

Government: Plutocratic Monarchy [stable]

Technology: Low

Magik: Low

Religion: Megalon, Vanaan, Lady of the Silver Moon, Ta-Taru

Symbol or Heraldry: Gold stallion and wobra combatant on a silver field

Allies: Khorst, Malvia

Enemies: Aradnast, Dallasta, Atenveldt

An old prosperous land, Chrysolia is known for its valorous and honor bound people and ancient bloodlines that extend deep into the misty past of Khaora's early years.

Society

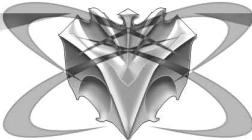

Chrysolia is centralized under a king and supported by a ruling class of wealthy nobles, civilians, and successful military leaders. This is a system of ruling that evolved early in their long history. The government as a whole is run in a militaristic and authoritarian style, where laws are strict but fair and even, applying upwards as well as down. The plutocratic nobility have certain rights over commoners and slaves have none, but all is right with this system in Chrysolia. After all what has stood the test of time since early after their founding cannot be wrong, can it? Thus follows Chrysolian thought, at least. The order of their land is built into them, blood and bone, from their birth to the last tottering steps of their death. They never fight it, accepting it is the 'way of life', that some will have privilege over others. They know their nobles and king have those positions due to divine right, founded on deeds of true nature untarnished by stain or misdeed. Those who do not live up to this image find their people unhappy and discontent, liable to revolt and 'cleanse' the stain away in blood to make it

right. The fact that they could and that no other noble would stand against it (if the cause was just and true) is just another salient facet of Chrysolia.

Chrysolia is an old nation, the twin to neighboring Atenveldt. Its founding is rooted in similar lines except its early history was one of upheaval and conflict brought on by the flood of divergent people clashing against the existing people in the land. To deal with this conflict and the vacuum that followed warring, the people of Chrysolia developed codes of honor and valor early in its history. These codes provided the necessary structure to deal with the struggles and eventually involved into strong laws. The leaders who towered above others in this disordered time took on noble status (and some, even mythical proportions).

The strong, predominately militant religion ensured the great majority of migrants flowing into their country after the fall of Archaela upheld the growing ideals of honor. It provided order for the land and ensured early on the ideals would do more than serve the ruling class, or became a means of glorifying war.

All nobility of the realm are landed, mostly through hereditary titles passed on generation to generation via the blood of the firstborn. Only the legitimate can inherit but bastards are not looked down upon. Bastards claimed by their father (or mother's) take upon an appellation similar to their sire. An example of such a case is the many bastards of Baron Teaal Margrith. They change the name of Margrith to drun'Margrith, a derivative to indicate their illegitimate status. Those with means can purchase a writ of lower nobility from the crown and establish a noble line, but must back up the writ with land commensurate to the title within one cycle or forfeit all. Since no lord seeks to lose land, many attempt to claim their tracts of land by wit or blade from Atenveldt or the great mountains. Bestowing a title of Siege lord to competent commanders is common to Chrysolia, and the title holds the status of lesser nobility, though the lands cared for are in the crown reserve and do not confer to the family. Such titles are given only to show royal favor and is



something earned with repeated and selfless service.

While Chrysolia and Atenveldt as neighbors rarely get along, it has worsened since Dallasta split away from Chrysolia in 75 CY Dragonus. Atenveldti nobles were implicated in the revolt of the region and the unproven rumors of Atenveldt dabbling in Chrysolia have the kingdom up in arms. Historically, both kingdoms have opposed one another for control of the coastline and other common ground. Yet, where this is accepted with Atenveldt, Ghandamahl is both feared and reviled. This land is viewed with a mixture of anguish and anger, mainly because the influence of Ghandamahl creeps slowly into Chrysolia every cycle and takes away land from her magnificent domain. The creep of the Ghandamahli taint seems unstoppable and its black soil is a curse heaped upon the head of enemies and that accursed nation.

The pedigree of a person's line is important in Chrysolia and the ability to count back to the founding of the noble line is not only expected but also necessary for important occasions. To enter into the armigers of the land, a scion of the noble families must prove his or her pedigree. Out of the armigers (those with the right to bear arms) come the various orders of knighthood, primarily supported by various noble families, the crown, or the religious orders. Those outside of noble bloodlines care much less for declining their pedigree from a historical sire but still place a certain amount of importance on their roots.

Slavery exists in Chrysolia though slaving within or outside its boundaries is looked upon a crime punishable by immediate death, without trial and on the field by any military officer or official of the land. Slavery is only entered into via the vehicle of the law in Chrysolia, and is the punishment of thieves, beggars, debtors, foreigners, and the utterly destitute. Slaves have certain basic rights, such as food, a place to sleep, and a certain amount of rest. Mistreatment of slaves is frowned upon heavily and many have a lot in life similar to the urban very poor or tenant farmers in Chrysolia.

The upper nobility and siege lords live in heavily fortified castles that guard their lands from attack, and the lesser nobility typically live

in fortified manors and villas. Commoners dwell in sturdy stone and wood two or three room houses, usually surrounded with fields and signs of agriculture. Cities are fewer than expected in such a rich land, but all are large and ponderous, the cycles of ages seeing addition after addition to the cities and creating a labyrinthine mess. Chrysolia makes use of round towers frequently detached from the main building and connected by stone paths, as well as numerous bas-reliefs for decoration.

Chrysolians eat many foods cold and serve most dishes in bowls or on plates. They dislike using their hands directly for eating and utilize knives and two prong forks for such things, always having each handy on their person. In a strange turn, Chrysolians do not make bread, or many cereal based products. Their main staples are a blood soup and vegetables or a gelatin derived from animal fat and mixed with peppercorn and a small pungent and spicy fruit called ghrama that grows everywhere here. Chrysolians consume large quantities of meat, dairy, and cheeses as well as a dish made from the reddish algae common in the Dragon Sea. Called Dragon Skin, this alga grows everywhere and is collected for food, dyes, and other uses.

Clothing comes in many fashions in Chrysolia depending on social status. However divergent the race, pedigree, or social rank, no Chrysolian feels comfortable out in the weather without the customary lèlèmon. This long, voluminous, quilted garment is also called the skin cloak for its facility in wrapping tightly around its wearer if desired. Heavy enough to provide warmth and repellent to inclement weather, the lèlèmon is equally cool in heated times if the wearer looses the fastenings and allows it to billow and stir in the wind.

Customs

On occasion, the crown notices a particularly noteworthy deed. This is something that occurs especially after wars. In these cases, the king notifies his sculptor to carve statuary dedicated to the act and places it on the avenue of heroes. Especially noteworthy deeds are further given status by allowing for a place in the royal crypt upon the death of the individual. Such a



dedication is rare, only bestowed to champions of the realm, and only five times in Chrysolian history.

Chrysolian internal conflicts are highly ritualized; the prelude to fighting often takes longer than the very act of combat. The conflicts are more of an art form than true battle, yet Chrysolians will utilize every tactic and strategy at hand to win. Against others outside their country, Chrysolians are utterly pragmatic, feeling foreigners are not worthy of the ritualized dance that preludes true war.

Chrysolians have many 'faces' and reserve some displays of emotion for close family or inner, personal displays only. The display of grief, for instance, is something shared privately, never publicly. Doing so brings shame down upon the person and their house. Love does not fall into this dominion of privacy but instead is an open and shared thing, admired with some ceremony and certain participation by friends and acquaintances. This element is expected in all romancing and rarely does a Chrysolian dally with anyone without taking the measured dance to display their affection and show their facility for composition through poetry, deeds of gallantry and valor, and commitment. When they do neglect this social ritual, it is only with whores and slaves, a relationship they deem worthless and derive no meaning from.

Education & the Arts

A strong education system exists and the colleges are highly regarded in the land, except for those of magik, technology, and related arts; these are looked upon with some suspicion and only uneasily trusted. There are however, some who view magik and the arts differently, and have a more open attitude. Generally, nobles and people of this nature are those bordering with Ghandamahl.

Chrysolian is the state language and the speech of other languages (aside from perhaps Elven) is looked upon unfavorably. Chrysolians delight in storytelling and oration, especially historical epics and ballads that relate great deeds and terrible defeats. Bards and rune singers have open room and board at any castle, and are often given patronage by lords and nobles. The depth

of Chrysolian poetry and prose is deep and varied, and serves as the basis for all their teaching.

Military

Chrysolia has a deep history of conflict and its lowest soldiers are often highly educated in warfare, tactics, and strategy. Chrysolian infantry fight in either chain or half-plate, carry shields, wield swords and or pikes, and serve as the foot soldiers in a type of 'everyman' unit. In Chrysolia's history, a medium infantry unit armored enough to withstand attacks from most enemies but mobile enough for exacting maneuvers is the most flexible unit in warfare. Chrysolian infantry march and fight in rigid, block formations, usually several ranks deep, the front three with swords, the rear ones with protective long pikes. (Not that they take to the field with these alone). Light horsemen with bows and arrows serve as skirmishing units, supported by a light, unarmored, highly mobile infantryman whose main use is against archer pickets, artillery, and arcane or religious casters. Chrysolia employs medium to heavy cavalry as well, mostly drawn from the noble orders and a corps of military knights. The charge of their cavalry is an inspiring and destructive force, but the heavy reliance on its power has kept the nation from delving too deeply into the surrounding mountains.

Earthen forts are typically raised to temporarily guard territory until permanent stone fortifications are built. Chrysolia has little to no oceanic navy, due to the numerous attacks by the drakes and sea beasts in the Dragon Sea and the dominance by island nations. This is not an overly powerful concern for the land, as they have little to no oceanic aspirations.

Commerce

A majority of Chrysolia trade flows through Khorst and Malvia, who are faithful trading partners. Malvia is the greatest conduit of commerce, and Chrysolia honors the pact originally signed with the kingdom of Krinnabröeng (from which Malvia, Kalesh and Viridia have formed). Malvia has equally stood by the old pacts and gratefully funnels most of their trade in turn into Chrysolia, providing



various luxury goods such as gems, jewelry, ivory, and oils, as well as a variety of foods, fruits and textiles for Chrysolian consumption. Even though Chrysolia despises Ghandamahl, her traders are allowed within the borders and they trade in goods as well. Chrysolia exports excellent armor and weapons, furs, jewelry, livestock, and vegetables and makes more than enough from the exchange to purchase all they need. With large deposits of minerals and a land rich with agriculture and animals, many of their needs are easily met.

Chrysolia has excellently maintained roads within her borders, which while primarily held for military use, are also heavily utilized for trade too. Way stations and inns exist between settlements of any size and even in backwater regions of the country.

Landmarks

Brynmark Weird – This odd place is a niche in the Mountains of Madness. Nothing more than a sheer cut in the side of the Steelpeak Mountain, a cleft cloaked by darkness within that light could never seem to cleave. It fires the imagination of every generation of Chrysolians, however, as this is the path a very famed hero of theirs took, on his quest to return the glory to the Brynmark name. Given nine deeds to fulfill, Broëd Brynmark entered this cleft in pursuit of his third deed and did not return. The anguish of his scion and the pain of his family are legendary, as is Broëd Brynmark's determination. Every tale says he toils still at his deed, the stubbornness within his body a match for anything the Mountains of Madness could ever demand. Some say the Silver Lady took pity on him or that Megalon has him for a foot soldier. Regardless, this harsh cleft in the stone calls to one or two heroes every generation, and they disappear within and never return. Sages opine it must be a nexus to somewhere, but to where is unknown. Broëd Brynmark's third quest was to 'gather shadow unsullied by light, untamed by fire, or riven by darkness.' How he determined to gather such a thing is untold. However, he did take two things that have persisted in all the tales: a cup of glass, unflawed in any way or imperfection and a decanter of water from the crystal springs outside

of Falafahr, supposedly purified by the nuzzling mouths of the steeds ridden by the Lighted Lancers.

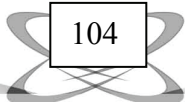
The Sentinel – harsh, blue-black gneiss protrudes out of the ground roughly 22 miles northeast of the capitol city on the Plains of Llurdönen. The southwest side of the twice titan-sized menhir is carved with the likeness of a long bearded face burdened with the cares of the world. Chrysolian legends say it waits, an eternal sentinel, until the time is needed for it to speak and rally all the knights of Chrysolia against a terrible foe.

Wall of the Lighted Lancers – In the city of Falafahr, the temple of the moon goddess has a great wall, carved with the legend of the Lancers of Galloping Light. It shows their majestic charge, riding on the horses formed by the moon goddess out of the light of the stars, against the army of hell that belched forth from the Beryllium Manticore Peak in the Mountains of Madness. Sometimes during Tai Taowyn, people say the riders come alive and gallop through the streets betwixt light and dark, reliving their charge once again. A similar tale exists about the Year of Tarsoris, where the Lighted Lancers ride from their stone niche to take up their weapons against the light of darkness and the tide of evil that sweeps the land during such times.

Regional History

An old nation, Chrysolia has a long and primarily noble history. It formed along the same time as Atenveldt did, taking form out of the refugees fleeing the destruction of Archaela during the Interstellar Wars. The arrival of people was noticed, and the migrants soon were embroiled in conflict with those dwelling in the land before them and against the great beasts of the plains, woods, and mountains. The terror inflicted upon Chrysolians by the journey across the ocean and the deaths beyond number in the jaws of the Dragons of the Dragon Sea forever soured Chrysolians to the water, and they have never pursued any interest in holding any dominion over the sea.

There were enough troubles with the savage and barbaric peoples the migrants displaced. These people did not go easily but





fought tooth and nail, as they were forced from their ancestral lands to make room for those from across the sea. Never of any definitive culture, many of the wildlings were subsumed into the nascent Chrysolian culture, which was evolving as their hold on the region solidified. While their culture budded and grew into something more than a mass of folk fleeing or fighting for their lives in a strange land against foreign beasts and wild people, a horrible event occurred to the east of them and something dark and fell was born into the world. Its reach would not wait long before it too touched upon Chrysolia. They suffered horribly when the power of the One (Caliban) was erected against their newly founded culture. Long they suffered under its dominion; this time in history is a grievous one for Chrysolians and not often retold. The young learn the tale so they can carry on its warning but are never told the tale more than once. The long hand of the One snuffed out many Chrysolian lives and their history of this period is sketchy but full of suffering and endless, useless rebellion that served more to amuse the unseen, but omnipotent, enemy. Its final destruction took the yoke from Chrysolia but it was many ten-cycles before Chrysolia returned to some semblance of its past.

Its glory in those years after the Time of Woe (under the yoke of the One) was a golden one, and in this age, Chrysolia came into its own. Wars were engaged and won, and Chrysolia fought with Atenveldt, Arvalessa, Krinnabröeng, Tharkhala, Tallassa, and many others. Dallasta, a kingdom formed as they did in the aftermath of the One's dominion soon earned their ire and the wars between the two would fill volumes and ten-cycles with tales of defeat and victory for both sides. The 29-year War of Tangled Fields, the 311-year Long Wars, the 12 Steeds War, and the Two Mountains War are but a sampling of the fighting between the two lands. In the end, Dallasta succumbed to Chrysolia shortly after fighting against the tide of Chrysolian might in the 119-year War of Sorrows. The ride of the Chrysolian Silver Shield Panthers and Prism Knights through the streets of Dallà is the stuff of heroes and came to be grist for the mill of many would-be heroes and heroines in their footsteps.

The Wars of When drew the Chrysolians as they did every other nation, drawn like moths

to the flame of Arduin. The mailed soldiers and knights on horseback made the way to the nexus in Arduin, warring and fighting for dominion of the country. For a time, they held Arduin against nine others, yet they could not continue. They lost it all to a Morvaenian general called Xaphide Brinemark. The name soon became a reviled word in Chrysolia as the same general defeated them twice more in major battles during the Nexus Wars. Such things are not forgotten in Chrysolia; they use 'Brinemark' as an epithet and curse word to show their frustration with someone. While they managed to control all of Arduin, like the other nations they could never hold it. When the Emperor-King Sörden High Axe of Viruelandia called them to peace, he did so with a sword in one hand and a draped, bloody banner of their kingdom in the other. He did so as a warning, for his generals had defeated their bogeyman, and he was indicating his ability and desire if necessary to do the same to them. The point was well taken, and the recalcitrant Chrysolians came to the table of peace. Their part in the Accords of Arduin was noteworthy and they send their best and most talented that would volunteer when settlers were called, unlike some nations who sent criminals and the riffraff of their lands. More than one former Chrysolian settler or their descendants stood bravely against poor odds for their new land, especially the Half-Hobbitt mountain men that chose to go. The mark of their bravery is what many other settlers were measured against.

Recently, the kingdom suffered a great upheaval in what is called the Barons' Insurgency. Six of the barons along the Mountains of Madness split away and reformed under the old banner of Dallasta. Secure in the Chrysolian fold for six cycles, the insurgency by the barons and their knights in 75 CY Dragonus was a complete and total surprise that not only succeeded dramatically but also was capped with the revealing of a legitimate child with ties to the Dallastan throne. Chrysolia is currently in an uproar over the breakaway and has attempted three times to retake the lands without success. Recent events point to Atenveldt support for Dallasta and Chrysolia has turned its head towards Atenveldt with a vengeful eye and a sword in hand.

THE DARKNESS BENEATH

Level 4: The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere

by James Maliszewski

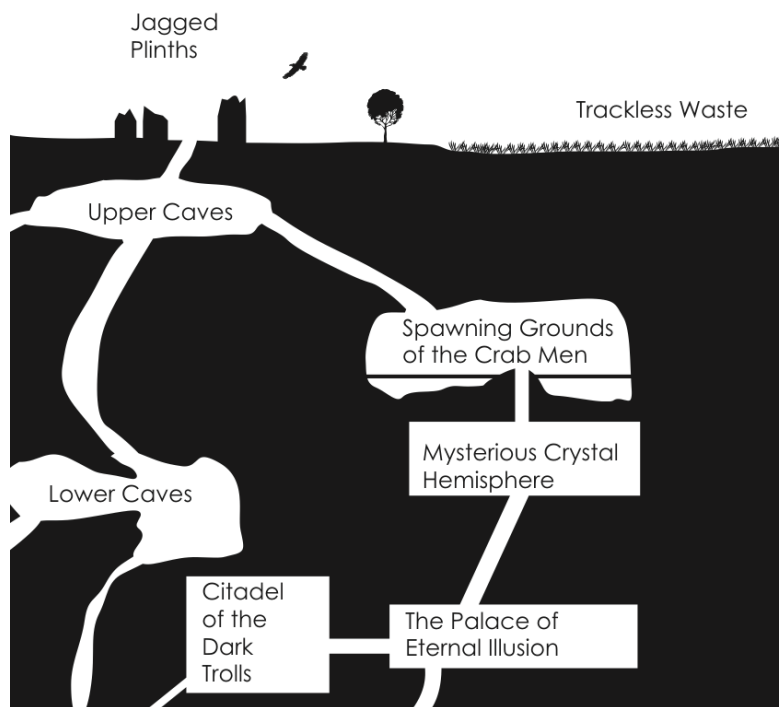
Introduction: Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere is a dungeon level designed for a party of 4th-level characters. Though written as the fourth level of *The Darkness Beneath*, it's an "interloper level," which is to say, it's a later addition to the megadungeon, having been created as a result of an extraordinary event in the comparatively recent past. Consequently, this level could easily be used either as a standalone adventure or as an addition to one of the referee's own dungeons, using the background presented below to explain its origins. Indeed, this level is based on an interloper level in my own *Dwimmermount* megadungeon.

Background: This level of *The Darkness Beneath* is wholly unnatural and literally otherworldly. Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere owes its name and its existence to a remarkable event: a failed incursion into this world from Outside spearheaded by a hateful alien species known as the Thelidu. The Thelidu are a race of conquerors who use their weird magicks to travel to other spacetimes in search of resources and slaves. Though feared on countless worlds and worshipped as gods on others, the

Thelidu are neither omnipotent nor omniscient. They are, in fact, quite mortal and fallible, even if their minds are so utterly unlike most other beings as to render their actions largely unintelligible.

Some time before the present day (the referee can decide for himself or herself), a Thelidu dimension ship set off on a scouting mission to the spacetime point *The Darkness Beneath* occupies. Unfortunately for the Thelidu, something went wrong and their vessel "crashed" -- partially entering several spacetime points at once and in the process creating instabilities in each of those points that rippled outward away from the dimension ship and threatened to destroy them all. From this accident was born this dungeon level. Recognizing their predicament, the surviving Thelidu used their mental powers to place themselves in hibernation, while they entrusted their vessel's Brain Complex with the task of effecting repairs. The Brain Complex is a network of cerebral tissue, suffused with alien magic so as to give it the vast, if singel minded, intelligence needed to operate a dimension ship. Acting on the orders of the Thelidu, the Complex employed a small army of artificial constructs and newly-acquired slaves to stabilize local spacetime and restore the vessel to full operation. To date, the Brain Complex has found both these tasks quite difficult, having only limited success at the former and no success at the latter. It is into this situation that the player characters inadvertently stumble when they venture into the Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere. It should be noted that Quimlin, the Bloated Alien Brain Mite found in the Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men (see *Fight On!* Issue #3 for details) is in fact a portion of the Brain Complex that attained an independent existence after the dimension ship's crash. Manifesting physically at this spacetime point as a creature that takes over the bodies of other beings, Quimlin suffers from a kind of amnesia that prevents him from remembering his origins. His obsession with the Hemisphere is an attempt to remember who and what he is, although he does not realize this. Referees using this dungeon in a different setting may feel free to ignore this information, as it does not effect the content below.

Features: This level consists of three distinct areas: a series of natural caverns into which the Thelidu dimension ship partially materialized, the chambers the Brain Complex is in the process of stabilizing through alien technology, and the eponymous Crystal Hemisphere itself. The caverns are natural limestone, much like the level above it, and their ceilings vary in height. Many of these caves contain lichens, molds, and fungi. The destabilized areas, on the other hand, generally have a more uniform appearance. They possess smooth, "organic" walls, ceilings, and floors that seem to glow with a dim greenish luminescence. The weird substance that covers these areas is quite obviously growing, coating



and transforming the limestone that can still be seen beneath. As their name suggests, the destabilized areas suffer from weird and unexpected effects – the result of the partial materialization of the Thelidu dimension ship. The Crystal Hemisphere is a semi-permeable bubble of green extraterrene crystal under which the Brain Complex has established an even greater degree of stability. As the Hemisphere expanded outward, it destroyed the surrounding rock, creating a comparatively smooth, vaulted ceiling under which the dimension ship now rests. Each area is governed by slightly different rules, as described below. All rooms include a parenthetical notation indicating the area to which they belong.

Natural Caverns: This area operates according to the usual natural laws. No special modifications are necessary. When rolling for wandering monsters in natural caverns, use the following table (d8):

1	Gray Ooze (1)
2	Ochre Jelly (1)
3	Troglodyte (1d8)
4	Cockatrice (1d4)
5	Cave Bear (1d4)
6	Giant Fire Beetle (3d4)
7	Giant Spider (1d4)
8	Giant Tick (3d4)

Stabilizing Chambers: This area is in the process of being assimilated to conditions more conducive to the Thelidu and, consequently, operates according to slightly different laws. Within these chambers, magic functions differently, owing to the unstable nature of space/time in the vicinity of the crashed Thelidu ship. Any time someone attempts to cast a spell or use a magic item that produces a spell-like effect, the caster/user must make a saving throw of a type appropriate to the spell/item being cast/used. If the saving throw is successful, the spell/item works and does so at 120-150% (1d4+1) normal efficacy. A roll of 20 on the saving throw results in double efficacy. If the saving throw is unsuccessful, the spell/item works only at 50-80% (1d4+4) capacity. A roll of 1 on the saving throw results in the spell/item affecting its caster/user (if it has a detrimental effect) or not working at all (if it has a beneficial effect). Spells which cannot realistically have a partial effect also fail on a missed saving throw. Because these effects are the result of the chambers being only partially harmonized to one space/time or the other, they can be avoided through the use of key bands (see below). Within the Stabilizing Chambers, use the following wandering monster table (d6):

1	Adamantine Guardian (1)
2	Black Pudding (1)
3	Troll (1d4)
4	Doppelganger (1d6)

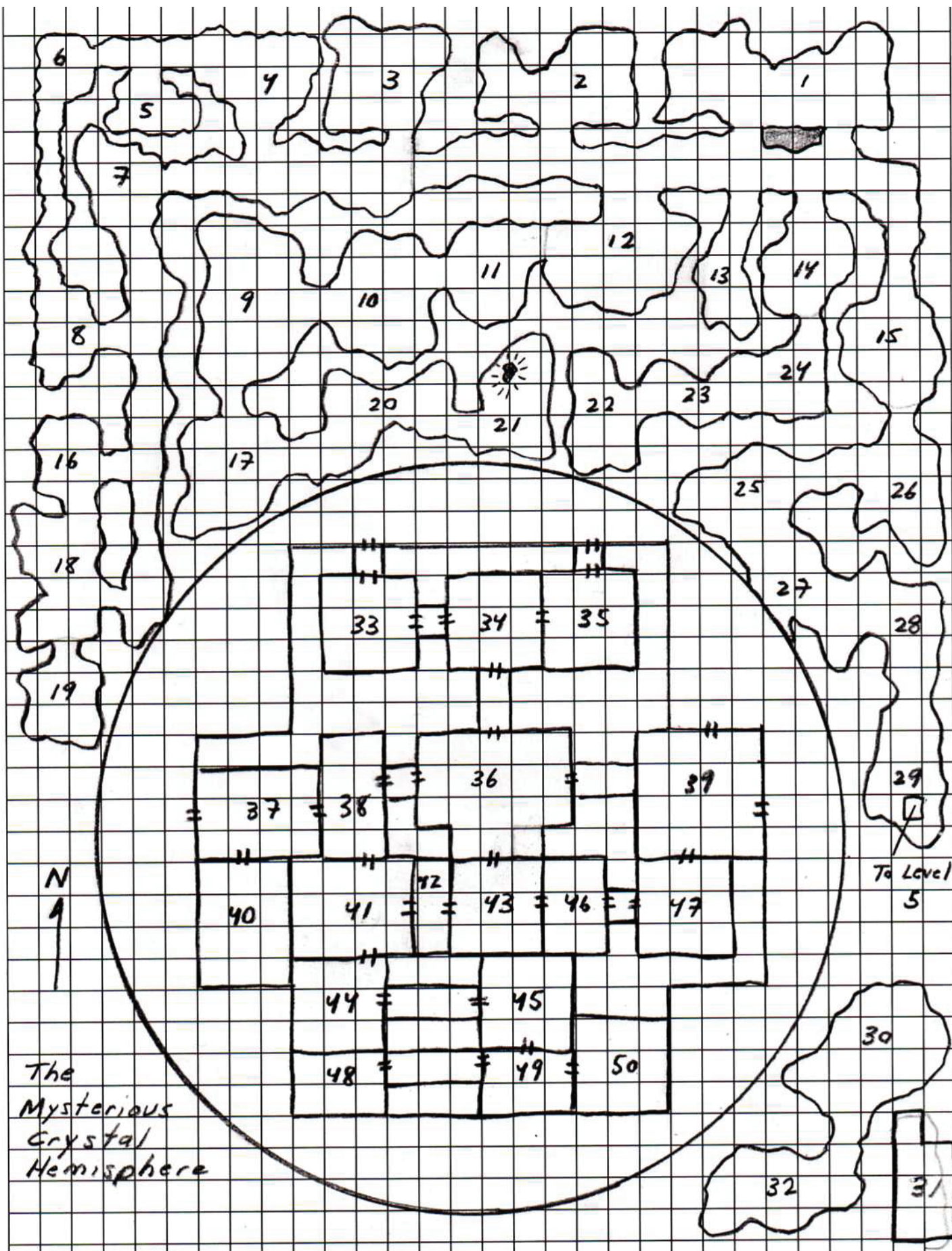
5	Owl Bear (1d4)
6	Enslaved Troglodyte (1d10)

Crystal Hemisphere: The Crystal Hemisphere itself is that area where the Brain Complex has seized near-total control, fully assimilating the environment to the native space/time of the Thelidu. This area consists entirely of smooth, organic-looking walls and floors glow dimly green. Characters can also hear a regular, if faint pulsing sound, almost like the beating of a human heart. The pulsation seems to grow louder the longer a non-Thelidu spends in the area. After 1d6 turns, if the characters are not wearing key bands (see below), the sound will slowly drive characters to distraction, resulting in a -1 penalty to all rolls while in the Hemisphere. Likewise, the rules for magic noted under Stabilizing Chambers above apply here as well, but all saves are made at a -2 penalty (again, unless key bands are worn).

The Crystal Hemisphere is a protective bubble of otherworldly crystal, a manifestation of the energy the Brain Complex has transferred outside the Thelidu dimension ship to provide stability to the damaged local space/time. Being made of extra-tellurian material, it does not permit objects and beings from the local space/time to enter it. This makes the Hemisphere an effectively impenetrable barrier – or rather it would if it weren't for the fact that the Brain Complex requires the assistance of non-Thelidu beings to achieve its goals. To that end, the Brain Complex has enslaved many species, most notably troglodytes, to serve as its “hands” in the caves beyond the Hemisphere. These slaves can pass in and out of the Hemisphere if they possess one or more Thelidu devices that harmonize them to its alien space/time. The characters must obtain these devices if they are to pass through the Crystal Hemisphere and make their way into it. The Hemisphere is, however, completely impenetrable by magic such as teleport, dimension door, etc. Within the Crystal Hemisphere, use the following wandering monster table (d6):

1	Adamantine Guardian (1d4)
2	Enslaved Troglodyte (1d12)
3	Enslaved Troll (1d6)
4	Adamantine Assassin (1)
5	Adamantine Worker (1d8)
6	Cerebral Sentry (1d4)

Key Bands: Throughout this level, the characters will encounter creatures wearing wristbands made of strange multi-colored metal unlike any they have ever seen. These bands serve two purposes. First, they harmonize the wearer to Thelidu space/time, allowing entry into the Crystal Hemisphere. In addition, each level of band acts as keys to compartments in the Thelidu dimension ship. There are three levels of key bands. They are, in ascending order: red, yellow, and orange. Each level



subsumes the functions of the levels beneath it, so a character who possesses a yellow band does not need to use a red one, while a character who possesses an orange band needs no other colors at all.

1. Entry Chamber (Natural Caverns). This cavern connects to room 48 of Spawning Ground of the Crab-Men (or an alternate setting of your devising) and is devoid of any inhabitants. There are, however, numerous glowing lichens and fungi here, which gives the cavern an eerie countenance.

2. Subterranean Pool (NC): This chamber contains a small freshwater pool fed by a spring that wells up from the northern wall of the cave. The water is potable and except for a metallic tang has no unusual properties.

3. Abandoned Lair (NC): This largish cave looks as if it was inhabited by some creature or other in the recent past. Scattered about the room are the bones of numerous species, especially troglodytes. If the characters take time to search the bones, they will find a red key band.

4. Troglodyte Lair (NC): A dozen troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 7, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3) can be found in this cavern. Their hatred and fear of the servants of the Brain Complex (including enslaved troglodytes) is so great that they have allied themselves with two unscrupulous adventurers named Aralar and Mariaka, who promised to protect them from harm. Consequently, they will attack anyone who enters their chamber unbidden. They are not totally unreasonable, however, and they can be bargained with, particularly if offered evidence that their interlocutors hate the Brain Complex as much as they do. In such a case, they will deliver the characters to Aralar and Mariaka in 5.

5. Evil Adventurers (NC): This smallish chamber is the temporary home of two venal adventurers who, through force of arms, have convinced the nearby troglodytes that they will protect them from the Brain Complex and its minions. In truth, the adventurers, a male fighting-man named Aralar and his paramour, the magic-user Mariaka, are completely uninterested in the troglodytes, except to the extent that the trogs can be used to collect treasure for them, including Thelidu devices. The evil pair intend to stick around on his level of *The Darkness Beneath* until they have amassed what they deem a large enough fortune or until their efforts have resulted in the deaths of all the remaining troglodytes. Aralar will attempt to gauge the strength – and wealth – of the characters. If he sees them as a serious threat, he will use the troglodytes to attack them, hoping to kill them and steal their possessions. If he sees the characters as too powerful, he will instead offer to ally with them, offering up his “extensive knowledge” of the level to assist them in their explorations. In truth, Aralar does know a great

deal about the caverns on this level and will be as “helpful” as he can. Of course, he intends to lead them into various traps so that he and Mariaka (and the troglodytes) can slay them while they are otherwise occupied. Both Aralar and Mariaka are cowards and will flee if the situation turns against them.

Aralar (L6, DC 2, hp 40). He wears plate mail and carries a shield. He wields a flaming sword +1 and has two potions of healing in his possession. He also carries a Thelidu disintegrator (see below) with six charges. He also possesses a yellow key band.

Mariaka (L6, DC 8, hp 20). She wears a ring of protection +1 and a red key band. She has memorized the following spells: *charm*, *mage shield*, *mystic missile*, *slumber*, *levitate*, *webcast*, *fiery ball*, *hasten*.

6. Cobwebbed Cave (NC): This cavern is filled from top to bottom with enormous spider webs. The giant spiders who spun the webs were slain weeks ago and their rotting carcasses can still be seen hanging in them, which may give the false impression that they are still alive. There is otherwise nothing of value here.

7. Slimy Trap (NC): This circular chamber appears to be empty, but there is an ochre jelly (DC 8, HD 5, hp 28) hanging from the ceiling. The jelly will drop down on the first creature that enters the cave; no treasure.

8. Dimension Ship Compartment (Stabilizing Area): This chamber contains a single compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship. Characters who enter this area will see a strange, metallic object of undeterminate size that is “superimposed” over most of the natural cavern it occupies. In practical terms, it means the dimension ship compartment takes up space – that is, the characters can't pass through it – but it's also semi-transparent, allowing anyone who looks to see what's beneath it, which in this case is just an empty cavern, albeit one whose walls, ceiling, and floor are slowly being assimilated to Thelidu space/time. This semi-transparency does not allow anyone to look through its walls to see its contents, though. Somehow they only allow one to see what's “beneath” or “behind” them, creating an optical effect unlike any the characters will ever have seen before.

9. Teleportation Room (SA): This large cavern also contains a piece of the Thelidu dimension ship – a teleportation pad. When the characters enter it, they will find it mostly devoid of anything noteworthy, except a large reflective piece of circular metal that hums quietly. Should anyone step on it who is not wearing a key band, consult the following table (d6) to determine the result:

1-2	No Effect
3	The character is teleported inside the dimension ship compartment (15).

- 4 The character is teleported to a random room in Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men (or to another nearby dungeon area)
- 5 The character is transported to the Jagged Plinths above *The Darkness Beneath* (or to an area in the wilderness/town above the dungeon).
- 6 The character is transported to another plane/dimension of the referee's choosing.

If a character steps on the pad while wearing a key band of any type, he is transported to **19**, inside the dimension ship compartment present there.

10. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): This cavern contains another compartment of the dimension ship, although this time it bisects the floor of the room at an odd angle, emphasizing that it is not in phase with normal space/time. A single Adamantine Guardian (DC 2, HD 6, hp 36) can be found here. It will attack anyone not wearing a red or higher key band.

11. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): Yet another compartment of the dimension ship can be found here. This one is unusual in that there is an iris valve present on one side. If a character with a red or higher key band touches the valve, it will cycle open, allowing entry. The compartment beyond is small and somewhat cramped. It's filled with all manner of strange devices made from a combination of metal and the weird organic material found on the walls, ceilings, and floors of stabilizing areas. Every turn the characters are inside the compartment, roll 1D6. A roll of 1 indicates that the Brain Complex has managed to make contact with this disconnected compartment and is now aware of the characters inside. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will enter through a single door in the compartment, which is accessible to anyone with an orange or higher key band. Should the characters go through the door, they will find themselves inside the compartment in **30**.

12. Troll Lair (NC): Four trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 32, 29, 24, 20) make their home in this large cavern. They have so far resisted attempts by the Brain Complex to enslave them, which makes them even more vicious in combat than usual. If any of the characters wield Thelidu items or otherwise visibly give indication of being in league with the aliens, the trolls gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage against them. The trolls have a small treasure trove, consisting of 600 gold pieces, 3 gems worth 100 gold pieces each, 10 arrows +1, a potion of growth, and a pair of red key bands.

13. Enslaved Troglodytes (SA): 10 enslaved troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3), overseen by a doppelganger (DC 6, HD 4, hp 21), who also appears as a troglodyte, can be found in this room.

The trogs are setting up some strange devices whose function is completely unknown to the characters. The doppelganger is armed with a Thelidu mind stunner with 10 charges (see below). Unless the characters surprise the creatures in this chamber, the doppelganger will hide in the shadows, looking to assess the situation. If things turn against the troglodytes, it will assume a form designed to elicit sympathy from the characters until it has a chance to betray them by leading them into a cave inhabited by minions of the Brain Complex, at which point it will use its stunner to try to slay them.

14. Beetles (NC): This cavern contains 12 fire beetles (DC 4, HD 1+2, hp 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 4, 4, 3, 3). They are voracious opponents, but have no treasure.

15. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): This cave contains another fragment of the shattered Thelidu dimension ship. This fragment might not be visible upon first entering the cave, because it is transposed with the ceiling, approximately 10 feet above the ground. The compartment has an iris valve visible and, provided the characters can find some means to reach it (and have a yellow key band or higher), they can open the valve and climb inside. Once inside, their orientation relative to the rest of the world will initially seem odd, but they can quickly right themselves and move about normally. The compartment contains a variety of strange devices, including three fully-charged power discs for use with Thelidu weapons. Every turn the characters are inside the compartment, roll 1D6. A roll of 1 indicates that the Brain Complex has managed to make contact with this disconnected compartment and is now aware of the presence of the characters inside. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will teleport into the compartment, having been sent there from a location inside the Crystal Hemisphere.

16. Poison Gas (NC): This natural cavern contains a natural gas vent that, when it comes into contact with the lichens and fungi also present produces a noxious, invisible gas. Fortunately, the gas exudes an acrid smell that is hard to miss, even several feet outside the cavern. Any character who enters the cave and does not take appropriate precautions must make a saving throw against poison at -1 or die. The cavern has no inhabitants but it visibly has a small cache of items located against its western wall. The cache consists of 300 silver pieces, a scroll of protection against undead, and an orange key band.

17. Empty Cavern (SC): This chamber is completely devoid of any permanent inhabitants. It is, however, very close to the Crystal Hemisphere and there is a 2 in 6 chance every time the characters enter it that a creature from the Crystal Hemisphere wandering monster table

(not the Stabilizing Chamber table) is either entering the Hemisphere from this room or exiting into it (50/50).

18. Shadowy Chamber (NC): This natural cavern has a similar smell to **16** above, but is in fact devoid of the poisonous gas. Lurking inside, there are 8 shadows (DC 7, HD 2+2, hp 14, 14, 12, 11, 11, 10, 9, 6) which attack anyone entering. The shadows prefer to conceal themselves in the dark areas of the chamber, waiting until an entire party is within and then striking from surprise.

19. Empty Cavern (SC): Except for its shape, this cavern is very similar to **17** above, including the chance of encountering creatures entering or exiting the Crystal Hemisphere.

20. Work Area (SC): In this cavern, four adamantine workers (DC 4, HD 2+2, hp 14, 13, 11, 10) are placing numerous Thelidu devices in order to assist the assimilation of this chamber. Overseeing them are two cerebral sentries (DC 6, HD 4, hp 23, 19), which, if not destroyed within 3 rounds of the characters entering, will summon 1d4 adamantine guardians to deal with the intruders.

21. Chimney (SC): This cavern is empty save for a natural chimney that leads down toward Level 7, The Palace of Eternal Illusion (or a deeper level in a dungeon of your own devising).

22. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): Another compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship can be found here, this time an engineering section that is accessible through an iris valve keyed to a yellow or higher band. If the characters manage to enter, they will find the compartment is inhabited by six adamantine workers (DC 4, HD 2+2, hp 13, 13, 12, 11, 11, 9) who are attempting to repair some devices found within. There are two iris valves located within the room, both of which open only to characters who possess an orange key band. The left door leads to a compartment transposed over **24**, while the right door leads to a compartment transposed over **32**.

23. Empty Cave (NC): This natural cave is uninhabited and, aside from some luminescent lichens and fungi, contains nothing of any value.

24. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): This chamber is entirely filled with a compartment of the Thelidu dimension ship, but it's one that has no iris valve or other means of ingress. The only means to enter it is through the compartment found in **22** nearby. If the characters enter the compartment by that means, they will find themselves inside a large room filled with a wide variety of crystals of all shapes, sizes, and colors. These crystals, if touched, will change hue and activate, creating illusory projections that depict alien landscapes

and creatures. The projections are accompanied by telepathic voices that speak in a language that is utterly indecipherable, even by magical means. If the referee wishes, these projections could depict locations with which the characters are already familiar or they can be wholly mysterious alien vistas. There is a single iris valve in this compartment that requires an orange key band to open. The valve leads to a compartment in **30**.

25. Rubble (NC): This large cavern is filled with rubble – a consequence of the dimension ship's crash. For every turn the characters search through the rubble, there's a 2 in 6 chance that they will uncover 1d6 gems worth 50 gold pieces each. These gems can only be found once.

26. Spider Lair (NC): This cavern is the lair of 3 giant spiders (DC 4, HD 4+2, hp 26, 24, 20) that lie in wait for any creature unfortunate enough to enter the cavern. The spiders are quite cunning and will use surprise if possible. If faced with overwhelming odds, they will flee up into the recesses of the cavern's 20-foot high ceiling, hoping that their opponents will not pursue them. The enormous webs that fill the cavern contain the dried up husks of previous victims. If the characters take the time to search these, they will find 13 copper pieces, 16 silver pieces, 93 gold pieces, a dagger +1, and a red key band.



27. Sentry Post (NC): This section of cavern is very close to the Crystal Hemisphere, but has not yet been assimilated. Consequently, the Brain Complex has posted 6 cerebral sentries here (DC 6, HD 4, hp 23, 22, 22, 21, 20, 17). These sentries are assisted by an adamantine assassin (DC 6, HD 3, hp 17) that uses its invisibility to remain unseen until it can position itself to strike from behind against any intruders. The sentries will summon 1d4 adamantine guardians from inside the Crystal Hemisphere if not destroyed within 3 rounds of being engaged in combat. The surface of the Crystal Hemisphere is noticeably thinner here, almost to the point of transparency. If the characters possess any technological devices (like disintegrators, etc.) and use them against the Hemisphere in this area, they will punch a hole into it that remains open for 1d6 rounds, after which it closes again. The hole is large enough for the characters to pass through, enabling them to enter **43**.

28. Work Detail (NC): 10 enslaved troglodytes (DC 7, HD 1+1, hp 7, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3) are hard at work here, placing star-shaped metallic objects on the walls, floor, and ceiling of this chamber. These objects are the first stage in the Brain Complex's efforts to assimilate this area to Thelidu space/time. The troglodytes, because of their enhancements, are totally loyal to their Thelidu masters and will fight to the death if confronted. Should the characters remove any of the star-shaped objects from their locations, there's a 2 in 6 chance that the Brain Complex will take notice and send a creature from the Hemisphere wandering monster table to investigate.

29. Chute (NC): This narrow cave terminates in a steep chute that descends down into the depths of Level 7, The Palace of Eternal Illusion (or a deeper level in a dungeon of your own devising).

30. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): This chamber contains another portion of the fragmented dimension ship, which is lodged primarily in the eastern wall of the cave. There is no means to enter this compartment from the outside. The only way in is through the compartment transposed over **11**. The compartment here is obviously a laboratory of some sort. The room is filled with all manner of strange devices, gigantic multicolored crystals, and pallets on which one can assume vivisections might take place. At present, the room is uninhabited. A careful search of the room will uncover a small container of six blue pills. These pills act like potions of healing if consumed. The characters may also find a multi-tool (see below). There is a single iris valve that leads to **31**. This room is accessible only through the use of an orange key band.

31. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): This compartment is located within solid rock and cannot be reached except through the iris valve in **30**. This room is

a menagerie of sorts, where the Thelidu keep various species on which they wish to experiment. The room has six stasis tubes – large crystal cylinders pulsating with green energy – in the chamber, although, at present, only two are occupied. One contains a strange multi-limbed insectoid creature from another space/time. If freed (through the use of an orange key band to open its stasis tube), the creature will attempt to demonstrate gratitude to his rescuers, even though it speaks no known language and its language is beyond the capacity even of magic to decipher. The creature (DC 6, WD 7, wp 35) will accompany the characters and will use any weapons given to it to fight against the inhabitants of the Crystal Hemisphere. Its exact origin and nature is left to the referee to decide. The other stasis tube contains an elf named Illethian (L6, DC 9, hp 29). He has no possessions and has memorized no spells, but will gladly assist the characters if they free him. He explains that he was captured by the Thelidu (whom he describes as “vicious octopoid beings”) a very long time ago, although he has no idea precisely when. He has been subject to many experiments by these creatures, some of them quite painful. They seemed very interested in learning more about the natives of the world so that they might better prepare themselves for a full-scale invasion. He is grateful to the characters for rescuing him and promises them a reward (decided by the referee) if they take him back to his homeland on the surface.

32. Dimension Ship Compartment (SA): The dimension ship compartment is lodged in the floor of this cavern and thus inaccessible to anyone who does not enter through **22**. Within it, the characters may find what appears to be a storage area that contains 2 disintegrators, 1 mind blaster, 2 Thelidu jumpsuits, and 5 fully-charged power cells. Astute characters will see that the room once contained a great many more items but they seem to have been removed.

33. Cargo Area (Crystal Hemisphere): This chamber is filled with a large variety of seamless containers. They appear to be made of the same greenish organic material as the rest of the Thelidu areas. Examining them reveals no way to open them whatsoever. However, a character with a yellow key band or higher can place his palm on top of a container and cause it to slide open, revealing its contents. Roll randomly to determine what is inside (d6):

- 1 Metallic seals (see **42**)
- 2 Red tablets (poison)
- 3 Metallic cubes
- 4 Thelidu jumpsuits
- 5 Crystalline spheres
- 6 Soil samples

34. Teleportation Chamber (CH): This chamber contains a functioning set of teleportation pads (five in

all). There is a set of controls that require a red or higher key band to operate. If a character possesses such a band, he or she can activate the pads and any creature or object placed on them will be teleported to another location instantaneously. Since the characters cannot understand the Thelidu language, any use of the teleportation pads results in a random result (d4):

- 1 Teleported to another random room inside the Crystal Hemisphere
- 2 Teleported to a random cave outside the Crystal Hemisphere
- 3 Teleported to the level above (1-3) or below (4-6) this one (levels 3 and 5 in the full dungeon).
- 4 Teleported to the surface

If the characters activate the pads, the Brain Complex will now be aware of the presence of their inside the Crystal Hemisphere. It will then send 1d4 Adamantine Guardians to slay them. The Guardians will enter the compartment from one of the connection iris valves.

35. Force Field Room (CH): Four cerebral sentries occupy this room (DC 6, HD 4, hp 22, 22, 19, 15). If the characters enter the room and are not wearing an orange key band, the sentries will activate a force field to trap them in the room until 1d4 adamantine guardians can be summoned to apprehend them. The guardians arrive 1D6 rounds after the activation of the force field. The force field cannot be harmed by physical means by magical effects may succeed in bringing it down if they deal 100 or more points of damage in total. Once the guardians arrive, they will try to subdue the characters in order to bring them before the Brain Complex in **45**, where they will be interrogated before being enslaved and put to work in the stabilizing areas.

36. Bridge (CH): This room was, before the crash, the bridge of the dimension ship, from which the Thelidu captain and crew commanded the vessel. Now it is badly damaged, showing evidence of a vast conflagration – scorched surfaces, melted plastic and metal, etc. Entry into the bridge is only possible through the use of an orange key band and, even then, entering will immediately alert the Brain Complex to the characters' presence, resulting in 1d6 adamantine guardians being sent to apprehend them. The bridge contains comparatively little of use, since its contents were thoroughly removed after the crash.

37. Hibernation Chambers (CH): This room has several thick rows of crystalline tubes filled with a gelatinous green liquid. In the past, it was here that the Thelidu crew members of the dimension ship retired to rejuvenate themselves after many hours of activity. Currently, the tubes are all empty but can be opened by anyone possessing any type of key band. The green

liquid paralyzes any non-Thelidu who touches it and fails a saving throw. This paralysis last 2D6 turns. If the characters search the chamber, they will find a discarded Thelidu jumpsuit, inside of which is a yellow key band.

38. Healing Pool (CH): This large chamber is dominated by a pool filled with a grayish viscous liquid. Two enslaved trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 35, 30) are lowering an unconscious Thelidu into the pool while a pair of admanatine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 32, 26) look on. If the characters enter, the guardians will move to attack in the first round and the trolls will do so on the second, after submerging the Thelidu into the liquid. Combat will automatically alert the Brain Complex to the presence of intruders, resulting in the sending of two more admanatine guardians in 1d4 rounds. The Thelidu, while alive, is unconscious and badly wounded. He can be revived through the use of healing magic (currently at 0 hp), which will result in its attacking the characters. If it is not revived and left in the pool, it will regain hit points slowly (approximately 1 every 12 hours) until it reaches maximum hp. The Thelidu is beyond the capacity of even magic to communicate with, but any spells that detect alignment will ascertain it to be an extremely malevolent creature. The liquid neither harms nor benefits non-Thelidu who submerge themselves in it.

39. Communications Room (CH): This room is the trans-dimensional communications room for the Thelidu vessel. Characters who possess an orange key band can activate one or more communications crystals, which enable the user to send both visual and auditory messages across dimensions to other communications devices operating on the same principles. Since the characters are unlikely to know of any beings to contact in this fashion, the referee is free to have them accidentally contact anyone, from Thelidu in their native space/time to demon lords to the gods themselves. What consequences such contact might have is left to the referee's imagination. Activating the communications crystals will alert the Brain Complex to the characters' presence and it will send 1d4 adamantine guardians to subdue them in 1d4 rounds.

40. Meditation Chamber (CH): This room functions as a meditation chamber for the Thelidu. Here these beings relax and re-focus their minds to the task ahead, regaining much needed psychic potency after times of stress. Unlike the rest of the dimension ship, the meditation chamber is not organic in appearance. Instead, it is a bright – almost blinding – white and utterly devoid of any features except the two iris valves that allow entry into the room. Characters will find that the room is completely sound-proof, to the extent that no sound of any sort can be generated while in the room. Characters who spend at least 2 turns in the room will find their memorized spells have been refreshed and

everyone, including non-spellcasters, will regain 1D6 wound points.

41. Adamantine Factory (CH): It is here that the Brain Complex produces the adamantine servants it uses to exert it will over the dimension ship and the stabilizing areas. Inside there are multiple large vats filled with a molten silvery liquid, as well as devices that seem to be controlling the process by which the liquid is shaped into solid automatons. In the room are four adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 35, 33, 30, 30, 29, 21), which will attack anyone who enters the room and attempts to interrupt the process. The vats and related devices can take 200 points of damage before they cease to function, after which the Brain Complex will no longer be able to construct adamantine servants of any kind. That means that no further wandering monster encounters with these creatures is possible and that the referee should likewise ignore any references to the summoning of adamantine servants.

42. Sealed Compartment (CH): While every other compartment of the dimension ship under the Crystal Hemisphere is intact, this one is not. Unlike the other compartments that were ripped from the ship when it crashed and deposited elsewhere in the caverns, this one remains “attached” to the rest of the vessel. Unfortunately, its attachment is a source of grave instability, as it exists halfway in *The Darkness Beneath* and halfway in a roiling, chaotic space/time that is largely inhospitable even to the Thelidu. Both iris valves have been covered with larger, metallic seals that are emblazoned with purple glyphs that, while unintelligible to the characters, send out a subtle telepathic signal that they understand instinctively as “Danger!” The seals can take 150 points of damage before breaking, at which point the iris valves can then be opened with an orange key band or higher. Anyone who does so exposes the rest of the ship to the chaotic space/time, which attempts to suck in anything – and anyone – within 10 feet of the open valve. Characters within that distance must make a saving throw to avoid being sucked in. If they are, they are lost, presumably forever, in the chaotic space/time (though expeditious characters may be able to journey to this other realm and rescue them, at the referee's discretion). Unless the iris valve is closed, the chaotic space/time slowly begin to take over the dimension ship, advancing one 10-foot square per turn until it has consumed the entire ship, the Crystal Hemisphere, the caves, and eventually the entire world, if not stopped. The only way to stop the spread of the space/time is to close the iris valve and apply a new seal. New seals can be found in the cargo area in **33** and **48**. Naturally, any breaking of the seal will alert the Brain Complex, which will send 1d6 adamantine workers to deal with the problem.

43. Micro-Gravity Room (CH): This large, almost empty room contains a panel on its wall that may be activated through the use of a yellow key band or higher. If activated, the room's natural gravity will decrease quite rapidly, resulting in any occupants becoming near-weightless. All actions, including combat, undertaken while in this room incur a -2 penalty to the dice roll. The room's gravity can be restored by re-using the panel.

44. Guard Post (CH): This room holds 4 enslaved trolls (DC 4, HD 6+3, hp 38, 35, 30, 29), armed with Thelidu distintegrators. They are under orders from the Brain Complex not to allow no one but the Thelidu or their servants to enter **45**. They each have an additional fully-charged power cell to use in emergencies. The trolls, whose actions are at least partially under the control of the Brain Complex, will fight to the death rather than allow the characters to enter **45**.

45. The Brain Complex (CH): Located in this room is a gigantic vat filled with a liquid that bubbles unpleasantly and exudes greenish smoke. Connected to the vat is a network of crystalline webbing that pulses periodically with lights of various colors. This is the Brain Complex, the collection of cerebral tissue that acts as the “computer” of the dimension ship and has been attempting to repair the dimension ship after its crash. The Brain Complex has the following stats: DC 8, HD 8, hp 48. It has no weapons of its own, but it can produce a charm effect once per round, which it will use to enslave intruders. Protecting the Brain Complex are two adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 30, 26), but it can summon 1d4 additional guardians every three rounds, provided the Adamantine Factory in **41** is still functioning. The Brain Complex cannot communicate with the characters, as its thought processes are simply too alien. Nevertheless, the characters have an inexplicable sense of an intelligence occupying the vat – an evil and insane one at that! If the Brain Complex is defeated, the Crystal Hemisphere will cease to exist and the stabilizing areas will again return to their former status as natural caves. All adamantine servants will likewise cease to function and enslaved creatures will be free to act as they wish. Of course, this also means that the Thelidu survivors in **50** will be awakened and, weak though they are, they will be most displeased to discover that intruders have wrought such damage to their dimension ship.

46. Laboratory (CH): This chamber contains another laboratory, this one dedicated to the physical properties of worlds the Thelidu wish to invade. Characters who spend any time searching the room will discover a wide variety of rocks, gems, crystals, and bits of soil, as well as samples of plants, water, and other similar matter, all collected in many oddly-shaped containers. The precise value of these various items is uncertain, as most come from dozens of worlds, dimensions, and space/times

unknown to the characters. At GM discretion one or more of these items may be of value, monetary or otherwise, if taken to the right person.

47. Viewing Room (CH): This compartment is filled with a variety of large multicolored crystals that work together to produce an image of the world outside the dimension ship. Through the use of various controls (accessible to anyone with a key band of any sort), the image can shift from one location to another, showing exactly what's going on in that space. Anyone with an orange key band or higher can use the controls to look inside the dimension ship as well. Inside the room are three doppelgangers (DC 5, HD 4, hp 20, 19, 15), each armed with a mind blaster. They will assume the forms of humans, dwarves, elves, etc. in order to trick the characters into believing that they are escaped prisoners who are trying to make sense of the viewing crystals to aid their return to freedom. They will then falsely aid the characters in finding a room or object they have been looking for by leading them into places filled with Thelidu servants, at which point they will reveal their true forms and attack as well.

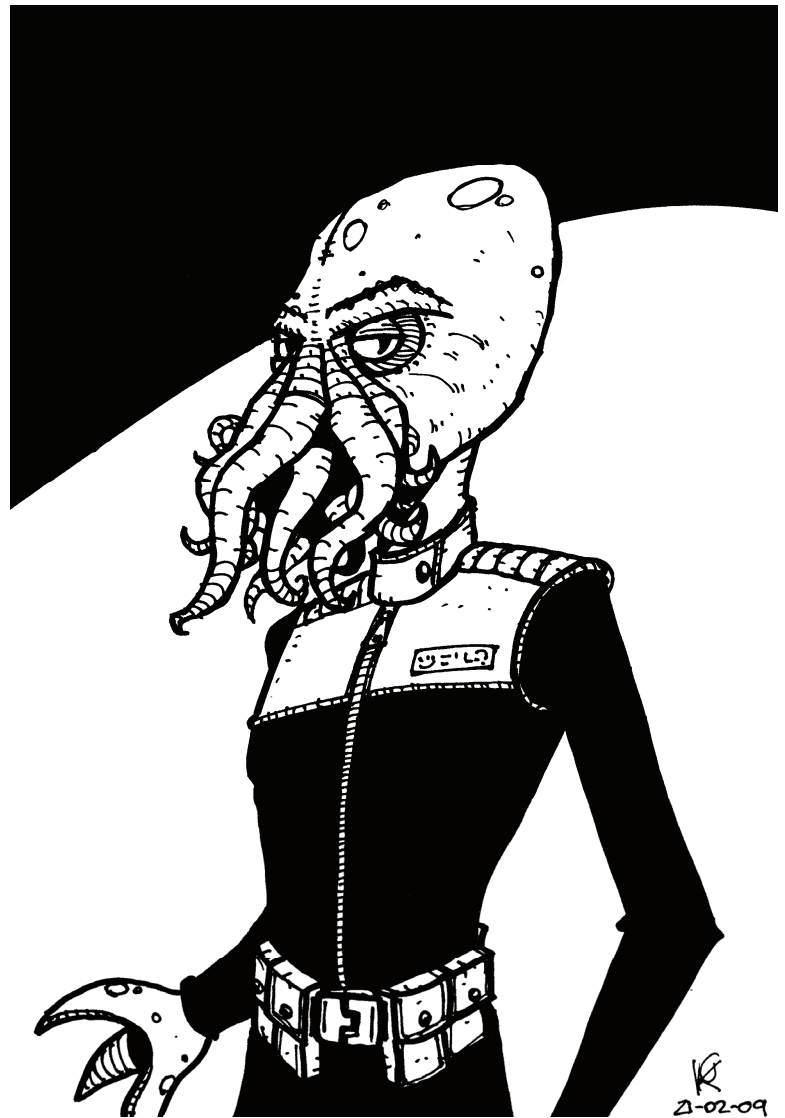
48. Cargo Area (CH): Except for its size and shape, this room's contents are identical to those of 33.

49. Guard Post (CH): This room contains four adamantine guardians (DC 2, HD 6, hp 31, 31, 26, 22) that protect the entrances to 45 and 50. They will attack relentlessly in order to ensure that no intruders enter either room alive.

50. Thelidu Chamber (CH): This chamber contains three wounded Thelidu (DC5, HD 4+3, hp 15, 13, 11), the survivors of the crash. Until the destruction of the Brain Complex, they were kept in hibernation – there are several tubes in the room – so that they could slowly heal until they were again ready to resume their mission of conquest. Now that they have regained consciousness they are preparing to deal with the intruders that have wrought so much turmoil on their vessel. The Thelidu are armed with disintegrators and wear jumpsuits. They will make good use of their mental abilities to turn the characters against one another before making use of their technological devices to slay them and extract their brains (with the intention of using their cerebral tissue to repair the Brain Complex).

New Monsters

Adamantine Servants: Adamantine servants are automatons created by the Thelidu to serve as soldiers, workers, and assassins. All types are quite intelligent, but somewhat singleminded, obeying their masters' commands to the letter. Nevertheless, the Thelidu have found them extraordinarily useful and adamantine servants form the nucleus of any Thelidu invasion.



Adamantine Assassin

Defense Class: 6

Hit Dice: 3

Attacks: 2 Fists (1d6 each) or 1 weapon (varies)

Special: Invisibility

Speed: 12

Adamantine assassins are rarely seen in their true form, as they can create an invisibility field at will that cloaks their presence. These stealthy automatons prefer to attack from surprise, sneaking up on their targets and catching them unawares or while in the midst of fighting another creature. The Thelidu consider assassins extremely useful and tend to place them in high security areas to ensure that intruders who enter them do not escape alive.

Adamantine Guardian

Defense Class: 2

Hit Dice: 6

Attacks: 2 Fists (1d8 each) or 1 force spear (1-10)

Special: Liquid Metal Blast

Move: 18

Adamantine guardians are the largest and most impressive of the Thelidu adamantine servants. Looking like hulking humanoids in skeletal armor, these automatons are relentless in their duties. They fight until destroyed and pursue intruders without tiring. Their great strength is maintained through a liquid metal hydraulic system. Any hit made with an edged weapon on an adamantine guardian sprays this metal at the attacker, resulting in 1d8 points of damage from the heat, unless the attacker makes a successful saving throw.

Adamantine Worker

Defense Class: 4

Hit Dice: 2+2

Attacks: 2 Fists (1d6 each) or 1 weapon (varies)

Speed: 12

Adamantine workers are mainstays of Thelidu invasions. They operate machinery, devices, and other technological artifacts, as well as constructing and repairing structures. They will attack if disturbed or ordered to do so, but they otherwise stay on task regardless of the situation around them. This quality makes them poor sentries, which is why the Thelidu rarely leave them unaccompanied in important areas.

Cerebral Sentry

Defense Class: 6

Hit Dice: 4

Attacks: Tentacles (1d4)

Special: Flight, Paralysis

Speed: 18

Cerebral sentries look like small floating eyes, with a mass of metallic tentacles hanging beneath their spherical bodies. Made entirely of metal, their role is to delay intruders and alert the Thelidu of their arrival. This they do by swooping down to paralyze their targets with an electrical charge emanating from their many tentacles. A failed saving throw paralyzes a target for 1D6 turns.

Thelidu (Brain Demons)

Defense Class: 5

Hit Dice: 4+3

Attacks: 2 Claws (1d6 each), Tentacles (1d4)

Special: Mental powers, Brain extraction

Move: 13

The Thelidu (the term is both singular and plural) are a hateful species of conquerors from Outside who use weird devices to travel to other worlds in search of slaves and resources. Possessing scaly, rubbery, vaguely humanoid bodies, the Thelidu have octopus-like heads and faces that are masses of feelers. Gelatinous green in color, these monstrosities are worshipped as near-gods on countless worlds -- and feared on countless more. Obsessed with the purity of their own species, the Thelidu regularly engage in internecine wars to exterminate the "unfit" in their midst, an activity they enjoy even more than conquering and enslaving other species. This

trait is one of the few things that have saved worlds from Thelidu conquest, as these alien beings are relentless in their campaigns of domination.

Thelidu are masters of the mind, which has earned them the sobriquet "brain demons," even though they are not in fact demons of any kind and indeed view demons are just another species to be conquered. All Thelidu are capable of using several abilities that mimic the effects of magic: charm (persons or monsters), clairaudience, clairvoyance, ESP, levitate, hypnotic suggestion. In addition, a successful melee hit on a single target with both claws and tentacles results in death in 1d6 rounds, as the Thelidu cracks open the victim's skull and extracts its brain, resulting in immediate death. The extracted brain is then added to cerebral devices known as Brain Complexes, of which every Thelidu band possesses at least one. The precise purpose of the Brain Complexes is unknown but some sages surmise that they create and/or power many of the other queer devices the Thelidu carry with them as they scour the cosmos for worlds to conquer. Whatever the truth of the matter, the appearance of these beings on any world ought to be a cause for alarm and swift retaliation, lest they gain a foothold from which they can never be dislodged.

New Treasures

Being creatures of an alien space/time, where the laws of reality function differently, the Thelidu employ a variety of technological devices instead of the magical items favored on some other worlds. A few of these items are described here.

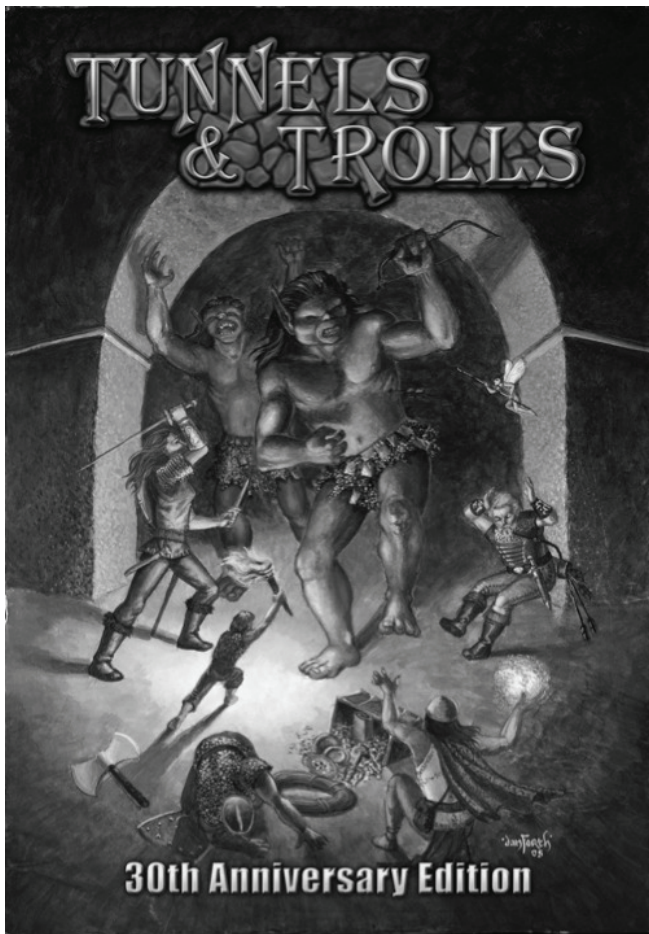
Disintegrator: This wand-like device shoots energy blasts at a range of up to 240 feet without penalty. Each blast deals 2D12 damage and drains two charges from a power cell.

Jumpsuit: This form-fitting outfit is made of a strange "living" material and so grows or shrinks to match the size of its intended wearer. Anyone wearing a Thelidu jumpsuit gains a +1 bonus to saving throws against fire, electricity, and other energy attacks.

Mind Blaster: This thin, tube-like weapon paralyzes a single target within 180 feet. The target must make a saving throw to avoid paralysis. Each shot drains one charge from a power cell.

Power Cell: These disc-like objects contain 20 charges which can provide energy for Thelidu devices. Ω

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Merlin's Mystic Mirror

reviews by Jeff Rients

Ken St Andre's *Tunnels & Trolls* was among the first published RPGs to attempt to rationalize many of the mechanical oddities of original *Dungeons & Dragons*. By my lights *T&T* is still one of the best such offerings, but that argument is beyond the scope of this review. Suffice it to say that despite passing through phases of relative obscurity, *T&T* has a pedigree no doubt coveted by many authors and publishers in the field. Despite being a fan of *T&T*'s general approach to gaming (encompassing good-natured humor, simple mechanics, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants adventuring and egregious dungeon violence) I held off buying the 30th Anniversary Boxed Set for a while under the mistaken impression that it was a nostalgia product. I'm all for celebrating the past glories of our hobby, but only in the larger context of an ongoing creative effort to play games and explore fresh angles. *T&T30* remains true to the landmarks that establish the particular territory occupied by St. Andre and his admirers. However, this edition does not rest on its laurels; new paths are blazed. The incorporation of a new Wizardry statistic that powers spellcasting neatly eliminates the previous character design problems created by tying magical ability to Strength. The alteration of the Monster Rating rules so

that combat adds no longer diminish allows even mostly dead dragons to still threaten PCs. Several other useful tweakings of the original *T&T* rules pepper the text. St. Andre's attempts to refine his game come off as a sign of a healthy mind still plugging away at his magnum opus. He manages to avoid the Scylla of over-reacting to past accomplishments (as perhaps Gygax did in his post-TSR game design) and the Charybdis of tinkering for tinkering's sake (a complaint that could be laid at the feet of both *Call of Cthulhu* and *Traveller*). At no point do I get the impression of design-by-committee, nor do the changes feel like they have been made to support marketing strategies rather than good gaming. Instead, the clear picture is of a designer that still has the chops to make good, solid improvements to a game that he largely got right the first time around. Kudos must also be given for the excellent production values. The game comes packaged in a delightful little 5" x7"x1" tin box with a hinged lid. The main rulebook is coilbound with a wonderfully laid out interior. Two other staple-bound booklets are included, a monster & spell compendium and a slim volume labeled 'Alternative Rules'. Don't like most of the new mechanics in the main text? Here's a second set of rules that rolls back most of those changes! Also in the box are some cute little dice, a couple of dungeon battlemaps, some very nice round 1" counters with full color character art, and a CD chock full of extra files. *Tunnels & Trolls* stands as one of the giants in our field and the 30th Edition Boxed Set offers a great opportunity to get in on a game that was great when it came out and even better thirty years later.

Is there a difference between a game being "old school" or "traditional"? This is one of the fundamental questions posed by *Forward... to Adventure!* The self-titled RPG Pundit first made a name for himself with online screeds against the excesses of the post-*Vampire* "indie" roleplaying scene. And while he may not consider himself a part of the movement to reinvigorate the original principles of roleplaying, he was the loudest of the voices in the wilderness during a time when the auteurs of so-called indie gaming sought to remake the entire hobby in their image. But though his internet vitriol challenged the indie movement, *Forward... to Adventure!* challenges the old school renaissance. This unassuming green book may have been written at least partially as a reaction to the indie scene, but flipping through my copy I feel like the cartoon character that has fallen into the water and is desperately splashing about, crying for someone to save him from drowning. Along comes RPG Pundit. 'Just stand up. The water is only ankle deep,' he says. Here I sit (no doubt along with many others) trying so hard to figure out what "old school" gaming means. Along comes the Pundit and he just does it. While many of us were busily calculating the airspeed



velocity of unladen swallows, he sauntered in and snatched the Holy Grail. Which is not to say that *FtA!* is flawless. I can't quite figure out if the skill-based stunting system is an actual improvement over *Tunnels & Trolls*'s saving throw mechanics or just another way for a set of skill rules to muck up an otherwise fun time. And I've tinkered with the random dungeon system just enough to decide that I prefer pretty much any other set of dungeon charts I own. Most of the rest of the rules are an unremarkable mish-mash of pretty good ideas most of us have seen a zillion times before: classes and levels, demi-human races, spell lists, a bunch of monsters, and some treasures. Now go forth and kick some ass. But that's the real beauty of it. It's an utterly unselfconscious distillation of one man's understanding of what it means to sit down and do some perfectly normal adventure roleplaying of the kind that's been going nonstop since 1974. You can't really call it "retro", "old school" or even "neo-retro" because the design wastes no time fretting over what came before it. In the introduction the author quickly acknowledges his influences and then gets to work on his lean, mean adventure gaming machine. I'd call this game "traditional", but applying any sort of pigeonholing to *FtA!* misses the author's point: *this* is gaming. Whatever else we do, at the heart of the hobby lies a handful of dice, a few pages of rules, and a sense of adventure. I call *FtA!* a challenge to the old school renaissance because the whole attitude of the game denies the need for labels like "old school" or that we need a renaissance. The lesson to be learned, I think, is that we should stop over-intellectualizing the meta-issues surrounding the hobby and just play the damn games. Ω

Gary's Greatest Disciple

guest editorial by Calithena

"In 1977, the late David A. Hargrave published *The Arduin Grimoire*, the coolest RPG book ever." —Jonathan Tweet

"Dave was a local gamemaster and, frankly, one of the best. He could narrate really well, keeping just enough suspense and surprise to make everyone enjoy it. He had a regular group he played with and they got to umpty-ump levels of power. I remember one of my friends telling me about the climax of an adventure wherein they were in a bolo tank fighting off Smaug and Shelob. I think that was the one where the player, Rory Root who owns a local comic store now, rolled three or five criticals in a row and destroyed the monsters and brought the entire umpty-levels of the dungeon crashing down on them all." —Greg Stafford

My title is meant to provoke, though I don't disavow it completely. Still, it's wrong in so many ways. Hargrave and Gygax criticized one another's work in public. Gary had a number of real disciples — I think of Rob Kuntz in terms of fantasy and Law Schick and Frank Mentzer in game design, and just slightly more distantly countless others — who collaborated with him directly in a meaningful way. And finally, it's not clear to everyone in what sense Dave Hargrave was 'the greatest' anything in the RPG field. Looking to TSR and the Judges Guild on one side, and to *Runequest* and *Traveller* on the other, what was Hargrave doing, even in the context of his times, that could possibly qualify him for this title? And with thirty years more history now behind us, why is this man anything more than a footnote to our history?

I think it's easy to underestimate Hargrave's influence on roleplaying. You can see the traces of Arduin in dozens of published fantasy worlds, including some of the most famous. Hargrave's rules innovations are a mixed bag, but some of them justly continue to inform mainstream design to this day, albeit usually without awareness of their origins on the part of the designers. And for my money, the monsters, spells, and magic items between the covers of any of the *Grimoires* exhibit as much or more creativity as any we've seen since. Even more importantly, a lot of his stuff has the value of showing you how to do things for yourself. Running a game? Here are some ways of thinking about combat, initiative, hit points — you don't have to agree, but at least we've got some issues laid out. Designing a fantasy world? Here are lists of inns, outlaws, notable NPCs, coinage types, legends. Now go and do thou likewise.

But important as that stuff was and is for some of my generation at least, it's not what I want to rest my case on. When Gary Gygax published *Dungeons & Dragons* and started TSR the 'make it your own' philosophy was firmly in place. The introduction told you to fantasize,

the conclusion told you to make up your own rules if you didn't like the ones in the book, and the general guiding principle of the thing was to do it your own way, have fun, and leave decisions about how things worked up to the GM and/or group, with fairness and common sense as the ultimate tribunals. You see this spirit of creative camaraderie clearly expressed in early play reports from Blackmoor, Greyhawk, *Boot Hill*, and so on, and of course in the games themselves.

Once it was published *De&D* spread like wildfire. Partly because it was new and confusing, and partly because that was what you were supposed to do with it, people made it their own. At the table, most games I saw were like man-to-man wargames that occasionally burst out into acted-out scenes, elaborate MacGyvering, recitals of spooky short fiction, Monty Python and Star Trek jokes, and long arguments about how such-and-such (fireballs, teleportation, halfling shields blocking the claws of tenton monsters) would work in the real world. (These arguments could suck, especially when some seventh grader brought in a college text to prove a point about orcish physiology from two sessions ago, but I'm not sure I don't prefer them to bloodless universal task resolution systems in the end.) But even within this broad playstyle, every GM seemed to have his own rules. And there were always those who pushed in their own directions, too: the ones just now finishing Volume III of the history of their world, poetic adolescents sharing romantic fantasies in groups of two or three, simulationists wanting to know exactly where the spear went through the abdomen and how deep, borderline schizophrenics who wanted their fantasies to be real.

For a while we all played together. Though I miss that time terribly, it probably couldn't have lasted forever, and maybe that's just as well. But during that breakup the spirit of these games seemed somehow threatened. TSR, seeking to consolidate market share and damaged by internal politics, moved away from that do-it-yourself spirit, criticizing alternative approaches to the game as flawed and trying to consolidate play around official rules and the tournament scene. A lot of the other top fantasy games wanted you to buy into some other guy's day-dreams as canon. Increasingly, too, new published games were so heavy with rules that it took an hour or more to get anything meaningful resolved, a problem which continues to plague much RPG design to this day. It seemed as though, in this most nonconformist of hobbies, conformity – to published rules, to the secondary world, to emulation – was now to be demanded. And beneath their differences, most tendencies in the RPG world seemed to be converging around limitations.

The *Arduin Grimoires'* great and fundamental service to our hobby was to publicly call bullshit on that whole line of thinking. In Arduin, it was pretty clear, any race, any

class, any level, any magic item, any spell, any high technology, anything at all really was on the table. Sex and violence were on the table. Forget "oh, you can't play an orc, but maybe a half-orc"; forget "dwarves max out at sixth level"; forget "no lasers" – I can be a frickin' 14th level phraint martial arts assassin driving a bolo tank! Does that mean I want to be that, or that I want to have all that stuff in my world? Not necessarily, although gonzo has its pleasures. (Hargrave, it should be noted, ran low-magic realistic campaigns along with the crazier ones he is famed for. We don't have to do the same thing every time out.) And how much graphic violence or sex to include in one's game is surely a matter of personal preference. But that's not the point; the point is freedom. Gygas's *précis* for *ODE&D* included the thought that "the best way is to decide how you would like it to be, and then make it just that way," but once money got into the hobby a lot of the top designers and companies (not just Gary, and not just TSR) effectively tried to take that back by editorializing and designing for conformity.

We live in a world in which many forces converge on stifling our creativity, unless it makes someone money or contributes to some academic debate. The beauty and wonder of fantasy roleplaying, to me anyway, is that it provides an opportunity for ordinary people to socially explore their imaginations. If it turns out that a lot of what we imagine is derivative, so what? It doesn't have to be about a contribution to Art or Science. It's about thinking up cool stuff with your friends and going wherever that process takes you. (Which, incidentally, is how some actual artists and scientists created the monuments that now texture our intellectual landscape.)

I love it when I see a game like *Paranoia* or *Lords of Creation* or *Everway* or *My Life with Master*. In a way the distance between Ken St. Andre or the brothers Chenault and Sandy Petersen or Ron Edwards is actually much smaller than the distance between some of their respective fans. Anyone who comes to this hobby authentically and finds a way to make it their own is really continuing in the original spirit of those three little brown books. And at the time when that spirit was most up for grabs, Dave Hargrave unleashed the *Arduin Grimoires*, three more little brown books, on the world like a shydra with twenty-four vorpal battleaxes, and said: take a troll to lunch. It's whatever you want it to be.

The genie is out of the bottle. So in the end the reason that I call Dave Hargrave Gary's greatest disciple is that you and I are Gary's greatest disciples, at least to whatever degree we're really playing these games the way we want to play them and letting our imagination and desire drive the action on the table. As long as we keep creating something that we ourselves love, we're playing it right. Now go and do thou likewise. Ω

Artifacts, Adjuncts, and Oddments: Fell Magick Items of Duvan’Ku

dreadful dweomers by James Edward Raggi IV

Bag of Spirit Holding: This functions as a bag of holding of the largest size. There is a 1% chance whenever it is opened that a spectre trapped within the bag will escape to attack the owner of the bag.

Book of Sacrifice: By reading this unholy text of exorcism, any curse whatsoever (or possession, or any undesirable state) is lifted from the target of the exorcism. The curse passes to the reader, and at that point can not be removed by any means short of a wish. Any reader attempting to remove his own curse instead makes the curse irrevocably permanent, and no means whatsoever can ever remove the curse.

Book of Unspeakable Shame: This text lists the crimes of Duvan’Ku against nature, the cosmos, the gods, and all of creation. The entire text takes two months to read, and after it is complete the reader must save versus spells or be feeble-minded. If this happens, the reader gains no benefits from the book and if healed must read the book again to attempt to gain the benefits. If the saving throw succeeds, the reader becomes immune from all mental attacks such as fear, charm, etc, forevermore. The reader also gains an 18 or 25 Wisdom (max for your rules). The book does detail literally unspeakable shame – the reader will never be able to articulate what he has seen in the book to any other, and any reading his mind must make a saving throw versus spells or become feeble-minded. 2d4 weeks after completing the book, 2d6 demons will appear to destroy the reader, as no mortal may have this knowledge.

Candle of Ill Lumination: This small candle illuminates as dimly or brightly as the possessor wishes, even to the point of being as bright as daylight. Undead in this light are invisible, even while attacking, and immune to any effects of this light.

Chalice of Great Health: If a good creature is ritually sacrificed and its blood immediately collected in this cup, the drinker will be cured of any curses and diseases, magical or mundane.

Chimes of Entrance: This acts as a normal chime of opening, but any dead bodies within range of the sound rise as skeletons or zombies, as appropriate.

Cloak of Many Fashions: This cloak transforms into whatever clothing the wearer desires, whether it be a fine ball gown, sleepwear, thick fur clothing for arctic exploring, or even any sort of (non-magical) armor (but not including a shield). When someone wearing this

cloak comes within 50’ of an undead creature that can see him, it turns into an entangling death shroud, completely immobilizing the character and leaving him unable to act or defend himself.

Crown of Duvan’Ku: Each former ruler of Duvan’Ku wore his own crown, and each crown has become corrupted and evil due to the utter depravity that they have been present for. This is but one such crown. Wearers of the crown may use the following minor powers: Speak with Dead (all spell effects are as if the wearer is a 30th level caster), once per week. They are immune to any sleep or hold spells (or any spells that commonly affect undead), and may Animate Dead once a week. The wearer also enjoys a two point bonus to his defense class. There are also these major powers: Twice a day, the wearer may Dispel Magic, and once per day may Heal. The wearer continuously causes Fear with his gaze whether he intends to or not. The crown’s primary power is Trap the Soul, once per month. There is a price for this power. All holy water closer than 10’ from the crown will instantly spoil and become normal water. The wearer’s touch kills green plants instantly (or inflicts d10 damage if combating a sentient example), and every month the wearer loses 5d6 pounds. Using any major or prime power ages the user 3d10 years. If the wearer dies from aging or weight loss, his soul departs for Duvan’Ku to serve the dead King who once wore this crown, never to be recalled again.

Dead Sign: The Dead Sign is an evil sigil that may be inscribed on (or sewn into!) any object. Those wearing the Sign are immune to curses, unnatural diseases, hold, charm, or any other mind-influencing spells. However, they can also be turned as undead of their level, and any holy water with 10’ of the sign becomes spoiled. The sign must also be openly displayed – any hidden Sign causes one point of damage, per round, to anyone carrying it, if they are aware they are carrying it. If someone who has knowingly carried the Sign for more than a moment then discards it, they take one point of damage, per turn, until they are dead.

Dead Sign, Greater: This Sign has all of the powers and drawbacks of the normal Dead Sign, but anyone who sees the sign will die of spontaneous fright the next time they are alone for longer than 2d20 minutes. However, if a second person sees the Sign before the first one is dead, neither onlooker dies, but the bearer of the Sign dies and the Sign itself disintegrates.

Elixir of Fleeting Love: This potion causes the drinker to fall in love with a specific person. Hair, fingernails, or some other personal tissue must be mixed in the potion and the drinker will then fall in love with that person. The drinker will be unquestionably devoted and completely in love, with a saving throw only allowed if there is

blatant abuse. The drinker will also age at twelve times the normal rate – one year for every month that passes.

Flute of Undead Pacification: The sound of this flute makes all undead docile and they will take no offensive action while the flute is being played and all else is quiet (and no other combat is happening!). The player must be still to play properly, and the undead will gather around the player... but when the playing stops (or something breaks the undead's concentration, or Silence is cast over the player), the undead will become vicious as usual. Bards playing the flute will be so skillful as to heal 1d6 points of damage to any undead hearing it, every round.

Gauntlets of Undead Power: These gauntlets drain 1d4 levels per hit when used in unarmed combat against a living creature. These levels are not transferred to the wearer of the gauntlets. If the gauntlets completely drain a creature, the wearer loses a level immediately. If the gauntlets are used against undead creatures, the undead are unaffected and instead the wearer loses 1d4 levels.

Gem of Lifeorce Sight: This gem acts as a gem of seeing, but when looking through the gem all living beings will be seen as slowly rotting and dying, and the viewer will be able to tell the how long the creature will naturally live. This insults the soul of the viewed, and any creature that will naturally die (of age or disease) within a month will rise as a wight or wraith to hunt the viewer. Anyone else viewed with the gem that dies within 24 hours will also rise as a wight or wraith and hunt the viewer, feeling the violation contributed to its death.

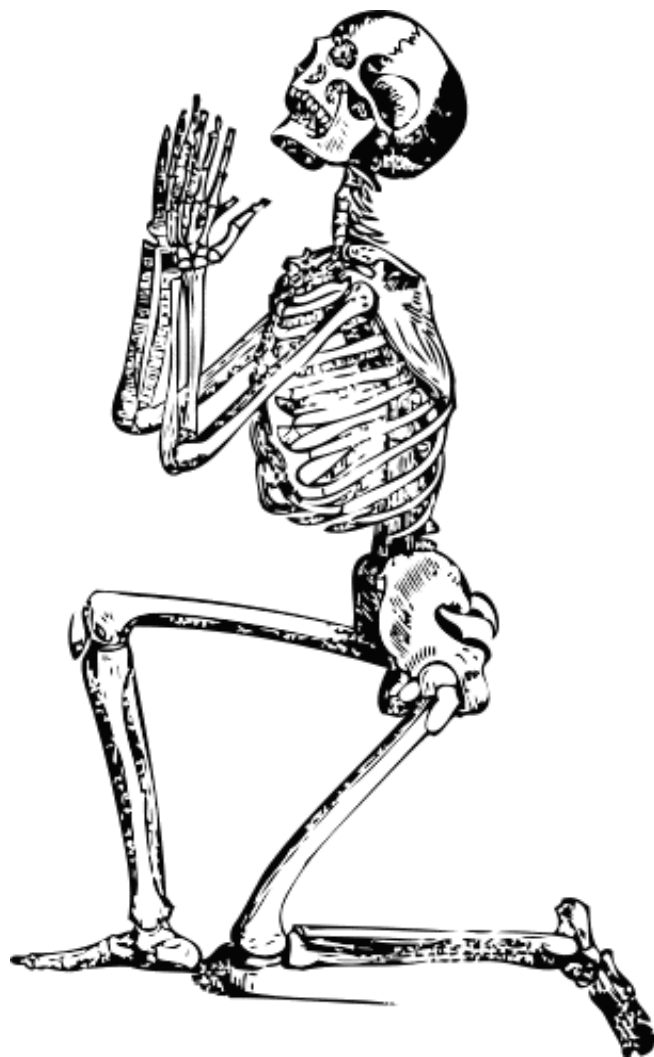
Gemstones of Duvan'Ku: These priceless gems are under an irrevocable curse – any who spy upon them becomes overcome by extreme violent greed. A save against spells is applicable, but a successful save means that the character wants to separate himself completely from the gems – he will not handle them. Characters who have taken an extreme and uncompromising vow of poverty may handle the gems without succumbing to the curse, but of course would not do anything with them. Those affected by the gem will first attempt to buy it, offering all the money and property they have in the world if possible (which usually won't amount to much, and the gems affect beggars the same way as they affect kings). Of course the possessor of the gems would never part with them, and if the gems can't be bought, there will be an attempt to steal them, and failing that, an attempt to violently take them.

Girdle of Fertility: If worn during intercourse (by either party), pregnancy will occur – even cross-species or if one party or the other is infertile. The child gestates as normal, but is a wight, and giving birth will kill the mother. In ancient times, the priest of Duvan'Ku would then carefully secure the baby in a floating cradle and

place it in a stream, with the idea that some passerby would seek to aid the baby, which would then kill them.

Grimoire of Walking Flesh: This text allows the creation of a flesh golem. It requires the parts of 10d4 fresh bodies, takes two weeks time as the parts are assembled, and then requires a strong electrical charge (a lightning bolt will do) to activate the body. There is no monetary cost to making the golem with this book, and an unlimited amount may be made. When the golem activates, the mutilated remains of the bodies used for parts will rise and seek to destroy the creator of the golem. The golem will not fight these undead. The risen dead will be zombies 50% of the time, ghouls 40%, and wights 10% (check each body individually). If the bodies have been utterly destroyed, then the creatures will be wraiths (75%) or spectres (25%).

Holy Symbol of the Church of Duvan'Ku: A cleric using this holy symbol automatically commands (not turns or destroys) any undead it is used against. However, after this power is used, the cleric's healing spells will instead cause harm instead of heal. The cleric must be exorcised for their spells to be righted once more.



Holy Symbol of the Church of Duvan’Ku: This holy symbol doubles the cleric’s effective level in terms of the number and level of spells that can be prepared, as well as spell effects determined by level. After using this power, if a cleric is ever in front of any altar and does anything (prays, blesses, defiles, etc), or casts a commune spell or makes any contact with an extraplanar source, or is in the presence of a gate, or says the name of any demon, then an entity (the demon named, a chief servant of the god the altar is dedicated to or contacted with the commune, or a random powerful creature from where the gate leads) will appear to destroy the wearer of the dread symbol of Duvan’Ku.

Horn of Battle: Blowing this horn summons undead (see chart below for what type) out of the ground and walls to fight for the possessor of the horn. Once that battle is over, the undead will turn on the blower of the horn and attempt to kill him. These undead may not be turned until the blower of the horn is dead.

Roll	Undead Summoned
01 – 75	4d10 Skeletons
76 – 80	2d10 Zombies
81 – 85	1d10 Ghouls
86 – 90	1d6 Wights
91 – 95	1 Spectre
96 – 100	1 Vampire

Periapt of Poison Immunity: This gives its possessor one hundred percent immunity from poison – saves are never necessary to survive. However, the referee should make a secret saving throw, and a failure means the next person the periapt’s possessor touches must make his poison saving throw or suffer the effects the possessor originally avoided.

Ring of Cannibalism: This ring functions as a +2 ring of protection, but after it is first put on, the character wearing it will only seek sustenance from the flesh of his own race. Similar (for example, demi-humans for a human) races may be used for nourishment if none of the wearer’s own race is available.

Ring of Dark Protection: This functions as a ring of protection +d6 (some are very powerful indeed!). The wearer takes 1d6 damage per round in sunlight and can only heal through natural means – magic will not help. Against undead, the ring lowers rather than raises DC.

Ring of Desires: Functions as a ring of wishes. The wearer gets his wish, uncorrupted and exactly as he wants, but there will be unintended disastrous consequences unconnected with the wish. A fellow party member will suddenly die, the most powerful magic item the character possesses will lose its enchantment, the

character’s home city will be overrun in a surprise attack, whatever would devastate the character most.

Ring of Murderous Intent: This ring functions as a +1 protection ring, but it also always causes the wearer to be seen in the most negative light possible when scrying or detection spells are used on him. For example, anyone using ESP on the wearer will believe the wearer intends to kill him, anyone attempting to detect alignment will always detect the most opposed alignment to his own, etc. If there is a result that will cause a violent or other extremely negative response, that’s the result the ring will cause people to get.

Ring of Scavenging Sustenance: The wearer of this ring may heal d8 damage by drinking the blood of a dead enemy, per enemy. The enemy must have been a living creature with blood (no golems, slimes, etc) that has very recently (say, in a combat the wearer was involved in) died. After the first time this is done, the wearer is forevermore unable to regain hit points any other way (rest, healing magic, etc, no longer works).

Ring of Essence Control: With this ring, a character may Charm any human or humanoid being as per the spell, with no saving throw allowed. When the charm ends (by any means), the victim also loses one level as if energy drained. The victim will know they have been bewitched, will remember everything that happened during that time, and will be aware of why they have lost a level. A character completely drained by the ring, or who died while charmed, will rise as an undead, as per the chart below. Roll d%, adding 10% for every level the character originally was in life, and add 25% if the victim died (by any means) while charmed.

Roll	Undead Type
01 – 50	Zombies
51 – 90	Ghoul
91 – 125	Wight
126+	Vampire

Scroll of Personal Protection from Undead: This scroll is indistinguishable from a normal Protection from Undead scroll. It works identically, except there is no area of effect; only the reader of the scroll is protected!

Soul Jar: A character may place his life essence into this magic receptacle. While the jar holds the life essence, the character can not be brought below 1 hp or die by any means whatsoever. However, the character may be turned as an undead creature of an equivalent level, and the character can not participate in “living” behavior such as eating, drinking, or having sex. When the character retrieves his soul, he will find that the receptacle leaks, and he will lose one level as if energy drained. Ω

