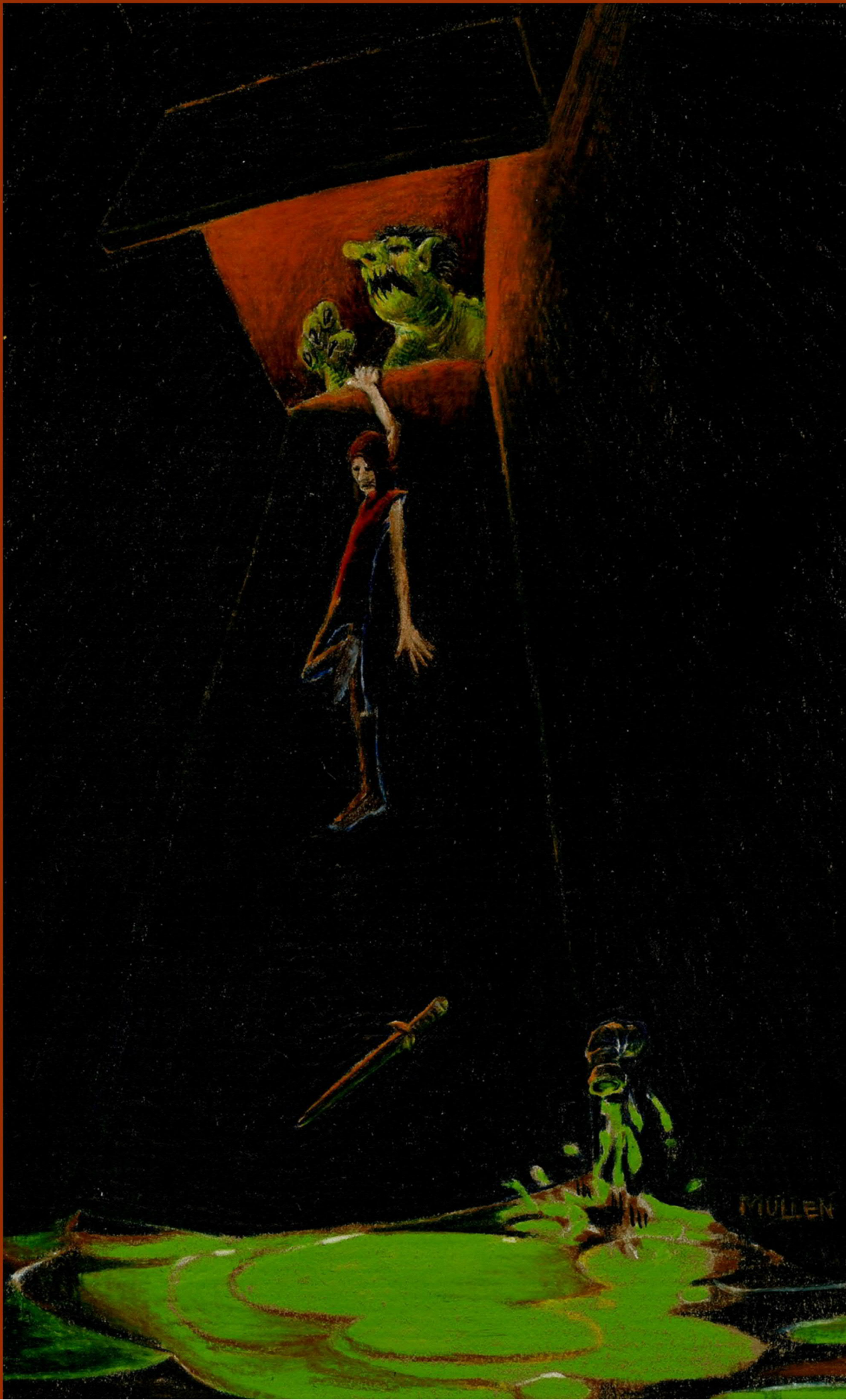


ISSUE #7  
FALL 2009

For Fantasy  
Role Playing  
Campaigns  
Played with  
Pencil, Paper  
and Your  
Imagination

# Fight on!



Dedicated to M.A.R. Barker,  
who brought Tékumel to life  
to stand as exemplar  
of what a fantasy campaign can be



The referee must take care not to people (or perhaps “creature”?) his Underworlds with beings so powerful that no player can emerge alive! The objective is an interesting adventure, with enough danger for excitement (and also to punish the unwary and the foolhardy), but not simply to massacre the players....Any campaign can be made much more enjoyable by the construction of a rough “scenario” into which players can fit themselves. Countries, parties, temple factions, nonhuman races, etc., etc., all will have objectives of some sort, and the referee should sketch these in....Thus, players will encounter members of different factions within the Imperium, various foreign agents with schemes of their own, individuals with a variety of plans and goals, nonhumans, and other beings. These can be further detailed in play if need be...

- M.A.R. Barker, *Empire of the Petal Throne*

Out of deep caverns and strange eons it came, obsidian claws pulling its ferocious, sinewy bulk onto a high windswept plateau of the Chang Tang. Atavistic hairy men chanted atonally and huddled in fear at the end of the world. The demon roared, stalking the antediluvian temple. The priests were gone; the Heart of the World, which they once guarded, lay unprotected. The monster out of time slithered through the portal, a nightmare of muscle, claw, and scale. It gazed triumphantly at the pulsing ruby – and stopped up short, hissing.

Two slender humans with long hair, one male and one female, chanted eldritch hymns from either side of the dais. Between it and the demon stood two men, one tall and paunchy with coke-bottle glasses, the other, smaller and rougher, wearing camouflage and a scowl. Both bore ancient blades of meteoric steel.

The taller spoke: “The race of men is not yet ended.” The nightmare of black scale rumbled. There was no sorcery left in this world to oppose him! He rose to strike...

...and screamed his last as the Mayan dagger plunged between the scales at his nape. Striking from the roof, a fireplug-shaped woman with close-cropped hair had struck true. The demon’s writhing threw her from his back, but this spared her the burning embrace of its acid blood. The monster quivered, thrashed, died: the world was saved.

“Are you OK, Sarah?” called out the female chanter.

“Turned my ankle, but I’ll live.” She got up and dusted off.

“Dumbass didn’t check for ambush,” said the smaller warrior.

“No old-school RPGs in hell. Makes you complacent,” the long-haired offered. “Come on! I hear there’s a pizza place in Gertse.”

---

Welcome to *Fight On!* #7! Another fine issue awaits within, brimming with adventures and other goodies to keep your game rocking harder than a chlen-hide coat! We would like to thank this issue’s dedicatee, M.A.R. Barker, for his blessing in publishing material for the original *Empire of the Petal Throne* game and Dan Proctor for similar permission for *Mutant Future*. This issue has a little more ‘adult’ material than usual – nothing really crazy but we thought you ought to know. Our abbreviations should be broadly recognizable to lovers of old-school fantasy games. We use DC for Defense Class. *Fight On!* is a quarterly publication. Our authors and artists own all their own work. *Fight On!* only asks for the right to print your work in the issue it’s originally published in, in perpetuity. Authors and artists own all other rights and may re-use and resell their work as they see fit. If you want to contact our authors or artists, drop us a line and we’ll put you in touch (or just contact them directly yourself). *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 are wargamers who write our own rules and fantasists who build our own worlds, weekend warriors sharing dreams of glory and authors collaborating on tales of heroism and valor. We talk, paint, draw, write, act, costume, build and roll dice in service of our visions. We game. And you’re welcome to join us.

-Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

## Table of Contents

Legend of the Dullahan (Matthew Riedel).....	3
Creepies & Crawlies (Zach Houghton & Douglas Cox).....	7
Temple of the Sea Demon (Gabor Lux).....	9
Knightly Orders (Robert “Treebore” Miller).....	14
The Shaman (James Maliszewski).....	16
Thrazar (Steve Zieser).....	19
The Devil’s in the Details: Pé Chói (Baz Blatt).....	20
Former Gnomish Caves (Alex Schröder).....	25
A Part of the Tsuru’um (Baz Blatt).....	26
Barony of Northmarch (Coffee).....	27
Rad Expanse of the Broken Moon (Brian Isikoff).....	28
Song of Tranquility (Jerry Stratton).....	29
Tables for Fables (Age of Fable).....	35
Maze Master’s Miscellany (Beaudry, Random, & Rients).....	36
Grogard’s Grimoire (Ragnorakk & Mistretta).....	37
Beware the Lord of Eyes (Allan T. “Grodog” Grohe).....	38
The Forgotten Entity (Geoffrey McKinney).....	44
Mooning Ixtandraz (Peter Schmidt Jensen).....	45
Wandering Harlot Table (Adam Thornton).....	46
From Tekumel’s Underground (Aaron Somerville).....	48
The Search for Lord Chúrisan (Krista Donnelly).....	52
Taking it with you (Lawson Reilly).....	61
The Duchy of Briz (Akrasia).....	63
Darkness Beneath: The Fane of Salicia (Lee Barber).....	66
The Four M’s (Calithena).....	77
Critical Misfortune (Clovis Cithog).....	78
One Charge Left (Lee Barber).....	79
One Time at D&D Camp... (Harnish & Robbins).....	80
Finding Players (James Edward Raggi IV).....	82
Merlyn’s Mystical Mirror (various).....	85
Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments (Green & Calithena).....	88

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# Legend of the Dullahan

by Matthew Riedel

Legend tells of a headless black-robed horseman, roaming the countryside by night. Named the Dullahan, it carries its head with it, clutched in its black-gloved hand or propped on the pommel of its saddle. The head is gruesome, cheese-like in composition with horrifying black eyes and a hideous perpetual grin. In its other hand it wields a fleshy human spine as a whip. At midnight the Dullahan can reputedly take life from the living simply by stopping before a mortal's home and uttering the unfortunate's name. Still darker legends claim that the Dullahan terrorizes remote settlements demanding (and receiving) headless human sacrifices. This article details the Dullahan and a vision of its terrible realm.

## **Dullahan** - "The Headless Horseman"

Defense Class: 0

Speed: 12

Hit Dice: 10

Attacks: 3/2

Damage: 1-10 (+6)

Immunities: fire, cold, non-magical weapons

Magic Resistance: 75%

More terrifying than legend, the headless horseman causes fear in a 50' radius (save at -2). Those meeting the gaze of its head's terrible eyes are blinded in one eye (save at -2): affected characters fight at -1 and may only be cured by *removing* the Dullahan's curse. The Dullahan is possessed of great strength and speed, wielding its indestructible human spine at +3 to hit and +6 damage. Once per night, the Dullahan's head may utter a single word. If that word is the name of a mortal within 50' of the Dullahan, and that individual has 60 or fewer hit points, it dies. The Dullahan uses its own decapitated head as a lantern, radiating dim light to 50'. A Dullahan may be 'turned away' as a vampire. They are repulsed by the sight or touch of gold. A Dullahan will not attack anyone prominently displaying a gold item, and a priest with a golden holy symbol can 'turn away' as if the Dullahan were a wight. Even a non-priest may attempt to turn it as if it were a vampire with such a symbol! It rides a terrible and nearly invulnerable hell-steed (DC -4, Spd 18 (cannot fly), HD 8, Attacks two hooves and a bite for 2d4 each, plus smoking breath which forces a save or -2 on all attack rolls during combat).

If the Dullahan encounters a strong party, it may engage briefly to measure their strength and then ride off to attack again another night. Often the Dullahan employs spies (usually banshees, witches, or werewolves) to learn the names of its enemies. If the Dullahan is slain, it (along with its steed) immediately disintegrates. Only its head remains.



## **Domain of the Dullahan**

**A. The Covered Bridge:** At the southeast bend of Willie's Moat, Dead Isle Road crosses a covered wooden bridge. The forest is thick to the east and west, and the nearby drop-off to Willie's Moat is steep. The bridge itself is old but made of sturdy wood. It is 20' wide and spans 100' across the moat to Dead Isle. A good deal of ash is visible on the bridge. Characters traveling across the bridge toward the island will trigger an illusion when they reach the halfway point. The horrifying image of the Dullahan, will appear at the far end of the bridge. The horseman will appear atop its baying, fire-breathing hell steed, head in one hand and spine in the other. The illusion includes visual, audio, and sensory elements. Characters must save vs. spell or flee in terror. This programmed illusion will last for three rounds or until it is struck once (DC 0), whereupon it disappears. Characters fleeing back the way they came will be ambushed by a pair of trolls (DC 4; Spd 12; HD 7, hp 35, 30; regenerate 3 hp/round) hiding on each side of the road. The trolls are familiar with the illusion and experienced in ambushing fleeing victims. A trail just off the road leads to their hut.

**B. Troll Hut:** A large crude hut constructed from fallen branches and brush is hidden here. Three large stools rest on the bone-covered floor. An extensive search through these bones may reveal a +2 long sword, an amulet which protects from fear, and a soiled leather book containing legends of the Dullahan and the Werewolf. The inside



cover of the book is scrawled with the phrase “repelled by Au”. If the characters haven’t slain the two trolls from **A** they will find them here. The sound of combat or searching is likely to draw the attention of the third troll (hp 33) who is usually nearby (4 in 6 chance) and will likely surprise PCs who failed to post a guard.

**C. Willie’s Moat:** A steep ravine encircles Dead Isle, leading down to Willie’s Moat. Although a forest stream deposits its water here, no current is detectable. The water is thick and murky and surprisingly deep. The smell of rot and decay is everywhere. Crossing Willie’s Moat by water is very dangerous, whether swimming or by boat – 4 in 6 chance for an encounter from the following table (d6):

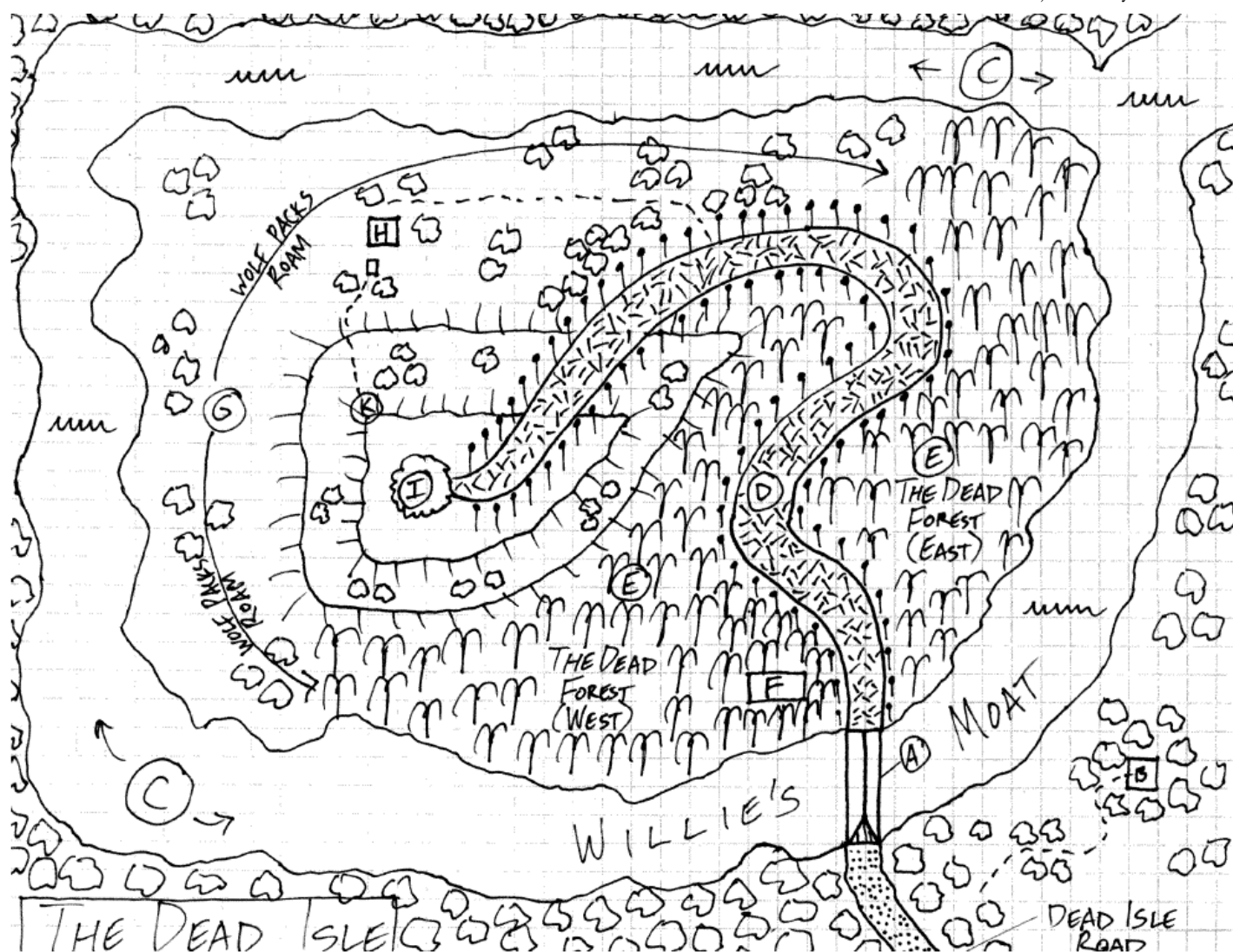
1	1d3 Swamp Elementals (HD 9, special abilities)
2	2d4 Giant Pike (HD 4, powerful bite)
3	2d6+1 Giant Frogs (HD 2, swallow whole on 20)
4	Giant Two-Headed Snake (HD 6, 2 poisonous bites)
5	2d8+3 Aquatic Ghouls
6	Roll twice ignoring further 6’s, groups may or may not be allied with one another

Crossing the moat either way by air (w/spell, magical device, etc.) is also hazardous (2/3 chance to roll 1d6):

1-4	13 Giant Ravens (HD 3+2, tear out eye on 20, serve Dullahan & report back after 50% losses)
5-6	1d3 Wyvern (HD 8, poison stinger)

**D. Bone Road:** The surface of the road beyond the bridge is different from the road leading to it. It won’t take the party long to realize they are treading on a road of pulverized bone. Staked human heads line each side of the road. Like the head of the Dullahan, these heads have a rotting, cheese-like appearance. Just beyond the stakes can be seen countless leafless oak trees.

**E. Dead Forest:** Barren oaks are everywhere. In the Dead Forest no bird sings and no plant grows (except in **F**). Characters straying off the path to investigate a staked head or deciding to move into the forest are subject to attack from huge Withered Treemen (DC 0, Spd 12, HD 12, hp 60 each, 3d6 damage, never surprised). Any character stepping off the path will be attacked by one of the Treemen in d6 rounds, and he will be joined by another





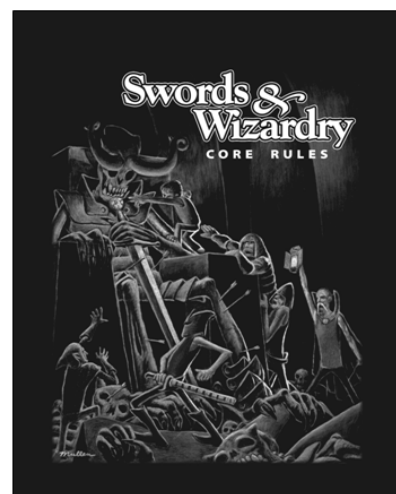
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every d10 rounds. They will try to force the party further and further into the forest...

**F. Grave of Rajin Bajorg:** This small green clearing is the only area where the party may find solace in the Dead Forest. None of the monsters, not even the Dullahan, will pursue the party here. A pair of proud trees (one oak, one ash) stands at the center of the clearing. Between the trees is a mound covered in wild herbs. A stone slab marks the mound as a grave with these words: "Here lies the druid, Rashin Bajorg." Bajorg's +2 mace lies well-hidden beneath the plants. Characters eating of the herbs will be healed for 6-27 hp, once/day. Herbs taken beyond the clearing immediately wilt and lose all healing properties.

### Is your coin pouch a little light?



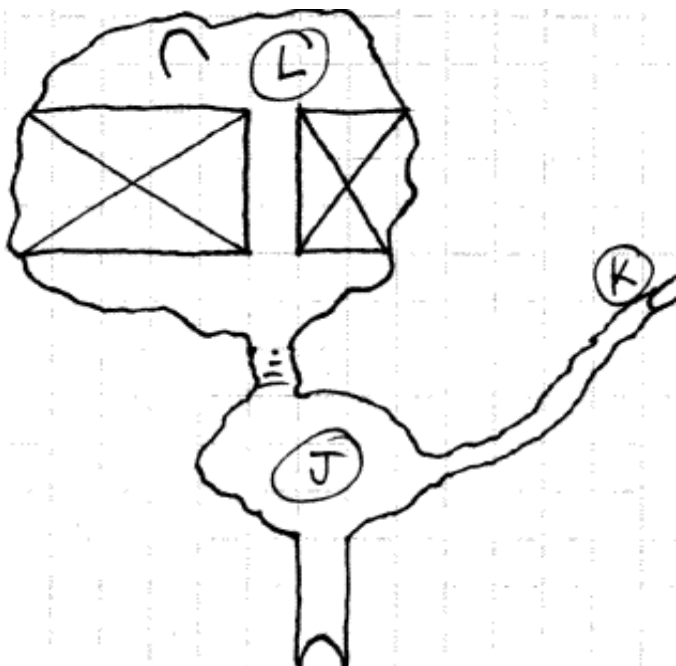
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**G. Wolf Packs:** Two semi-starved and aggressive wolf packs consisting of a half-dozen wolves led by a worg prowl this sparsely forested area of the isle. The party will encounter one of the wolf packs within 7 – 12 rounds of arriving in this area (including stretches of the Bone Road beyond the Dead Forest). All but one lone wolf will attack on the first round. This wolf will howl for two rounds to alert the second pack, which will arrive in 7 - 12 more rounds. The worgs dominate the wolves but defer to the werewolf. The wolves fight until either both worgs are slain or their total numbers are cut to less than half. If it is night, the werewolf (see **H**) will be leading one of the packs (determined randomly). The werewolf will flee if reduced to less than half his total hit points.

**H. Werewolf's Cottage:** This cottage is a small one-floor, two-room brick structure with a chimney. It includes a front room and bedroom. A wooden shed lies south of the house. By day, a normal middle-aged man named Burt lives here. Burt will tell the party he's resided here for years, living too modest a life for the Dullahan to take note of. He'll answer most questions, but the party probably won't hear anything they haven't learned (or guessed) already. Burt is actually a werewolf (DC 5, Spd 15, HD 4+4, hp 23, silver or magic weapons to hit) and a spy for the Dullahan. He will entertain the party with food, music, and conversation while attempting to learn names to deliver to the Dullahan (which he will do shortly after the party leaves). Burt wears a leather necklace with two keys under his tunic. One of the keys opens the lock on a trunk under his bed; the other opens the lock on the door to the shed. The trunk is always locked and trapped with a poison needle (save v. poison). Inside the trunk are 10 250 gp gems, a quiver of 20 arrows (10 silver tipped and 10 +1), a +2 dagger, and a solid gold cross worth 250 gp. The shed is also always locked. It contains some the carcasses of his most recent victims, too gruesome to describe. By night, the cottage is empty as the werewolf stalks the darkness.

**I. Chestnut Tree:** An enormous chestnut tree with black roots stands atop this hill. Several headless human corpses are suspended from the tree. The bone road leads directly into a gap in the roots, with great piles of fallen leaves blocking any view beyond. Disturbing the leaves animates three scarecrows (DC 6, HD 5, hp 30, 28, 18, Dam 1d6 + gaze/touch opponent to inaction) made of branches, leaves, and pumpkin heads. The Dullahan's lair is beneath this great tree. The scarecrows serve the Dullahan and their destruction will serve as a warning upon its return. Once the leaves and scarecrows are cleared, a downward-sloping tunnel is revealed. Thirteen giant ravens are perched throughout the huge tree (see **C**, reducing the number if some have already been slain). They will report the party's movements to the Dullahan. If it is daytime, they will move down through the tree's hollows to give it messages while it sits in the cavern below. If it is night, they will find it before it returns.

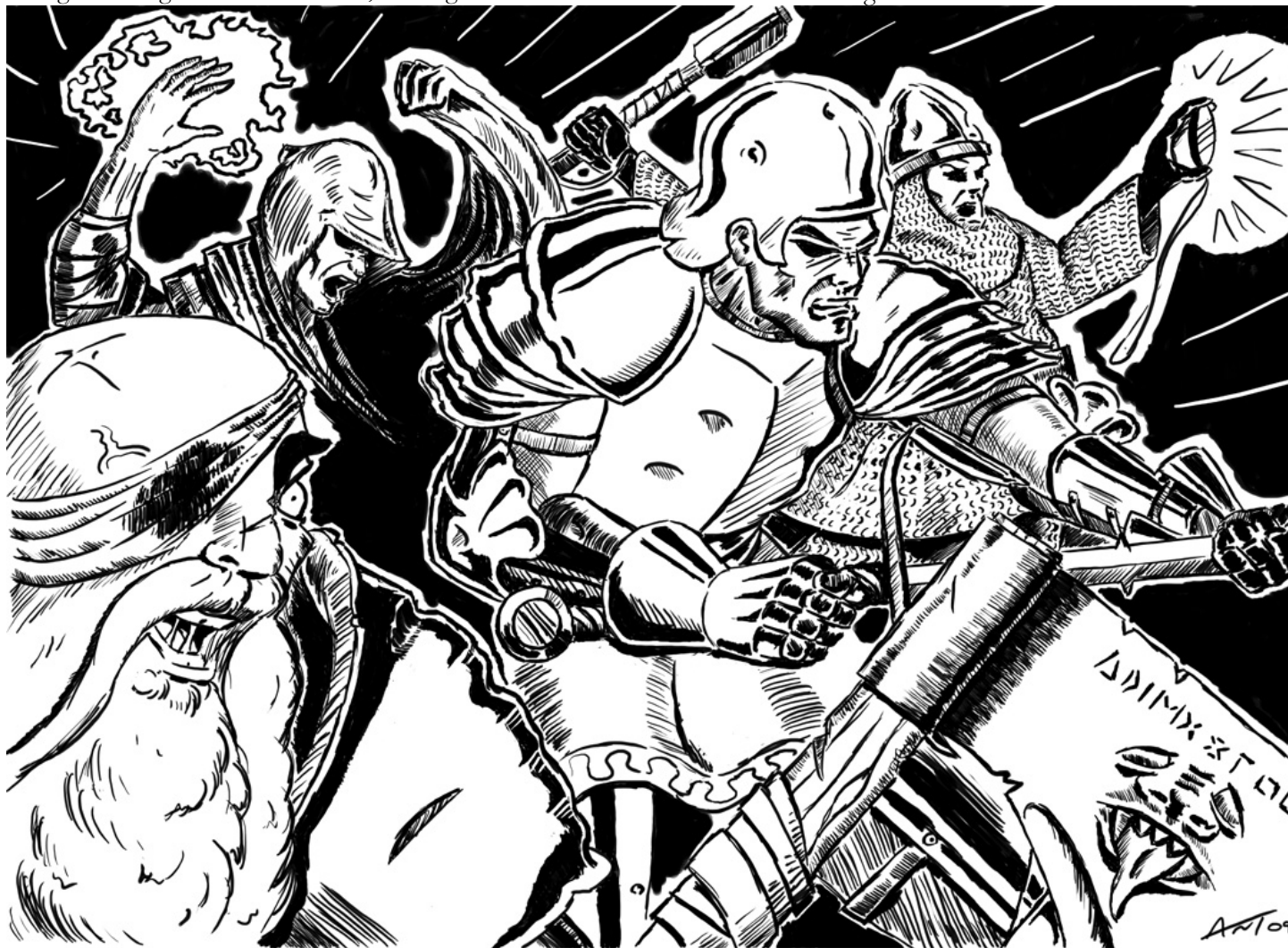


Another downward passage is directly across from the entrance; to the right a small cavern opens into darkness.

**K. Werewolf's Entrance:** Only the werewolf knows of this hidden entrance. Traces of silvery wolfhair are evident.

**L. Dullahan's Chamber:** Chestnut roots and ripe or rotting fruit hang everywhere. By day, the Dullahan also abides here. (At night it will be away terrorizing the countryside or party). Most of the floor is a trap; only a narrow walkway in the middle is safe for approach. The "floors" on the left and right are hidden nets which are strong enough to hold the fruit but collapse under a character. Characters falling into the pit take 1-6 and are assailed by undead. Each pit contains 3 shadows (DC 7, Spd 12, HD 3, hp 15., damage + drain strength, only hit by magic weapons) and 3 ghouls (DC 6, Spd 9, HD 2, hp 9, attacks paralyze, immune to sleep and charm). The Dullahan will use its knowledge of the room to advantage. The Dullahan's treasure includes an enormous black onyx worth 5,000 gp and a jeweled scepter worth 10,000. A +5 holy sword, wrapped in black cloth, is hidden behind the throne. The Dullahan does not have the means to destroy it. Any characters foolhardy enough to sit in the throne must save vs. magic or become a Dullahan themselves. Ω

**J. Hell Steed's Cavern:** This rough cavern is home to the Dullahan's steed (DC -4, Spd 18, HD 8, Att hoofx2/ bite plus smoking breath forcing a save or -2 on all attacks). This nightmare is always here during the day and attacks on sight. At night it will be absent, bearing the Dullahan.







by Zach Houghton and Douglas Cox

## BrickBat

Number: 2-24

Defense Class: 5

Hit Dice: 2

Attacks: Bite (1d8), Smash (1d6)

Speed: 3/10 (when flying)

Description: Not quite as large as a Greater or Giant Bat, the BrickBat is enveloped in a noisome, chitinous shell with bits of short mottled fur sprouting out between the armored plates. The wings are the only unarmored portion of its body. Its oversized, protruding maw is terrible to behold. Slow-moving and a relatively poor flier, the BrickBat uses its bite and sheer mass to stun and kill the mammals and large insects it preys upon.

## Dancin' Bones

Number: 1-8

Defense Class: 7

Hit Dice: 1

Attacks: Strike (1d6)

Special: Immune to sleep and charm

Speed: 0

Description: These enchanted guardians of tombs and graves are fixed in one place, appearing as collapsed skeletons. When intruders pass next to them they animate, performing a ghastly, lethal dance and striking out at all around them. Their clattering and rattling makes them difficult to hit, even though they are not ambulatory. Some are accompanied by strange, disembodied music.

## Lurching Dead

Number: 1-100

Defense Class: 9

Hit Dice: 2

Attacks: Claw/Bite (1d8) (twice per round)

Special: Immune to sleep and charm

Speed: 2

Description: This sub-type of zombie shambles incredibly slowly, but once in melee range of fresh brains and blood they unleash a flurry of attacks (2/round). Easy prey at a distance, they are immensely lethal up close. They are often summoned in hordes by necromancers, trapping their victims by sheer numbers.

## Possessor

- all attributes as per host -

Description: The Possessors are an ancient race of body-hopping undead. They may possess any being in sight of their current host unless a saving throw is made. The only way to kill one is by way of priestly exorcism performed on a body currently containing it – or by killing the host. They have their own agenda and memories, but use infallibly all and only the abilities of the body they currently inhabit.

## Pumpkin Bombers

Number: 2-12

Defense Class: 3

Hit Dice: 1-10

Attacks: Explode

Speed: 12 (flying only)

Description: These flying, flaming bat-winged pumpkins are created by witches to cause dark mischief at Samhain. They fly into the midst of their foes and then detonate themselves. They can be found either patrolling or on their vine; if on the vine, any one pumpkin's detonation may detonate any or all of the other pumpkins on the vine along with it. A Pumpkin Bomber is roughly 6" in diameter for each hit die it has. Its explosion does 2d6 per hit die in a 5' radius per hit die, save vs. fireball for half. (Thus a 4 HD pumpkin bomber does 8d6 damage in a 20' radius). They automatically explode when slain, so they are best countered with missile weapons and magic.



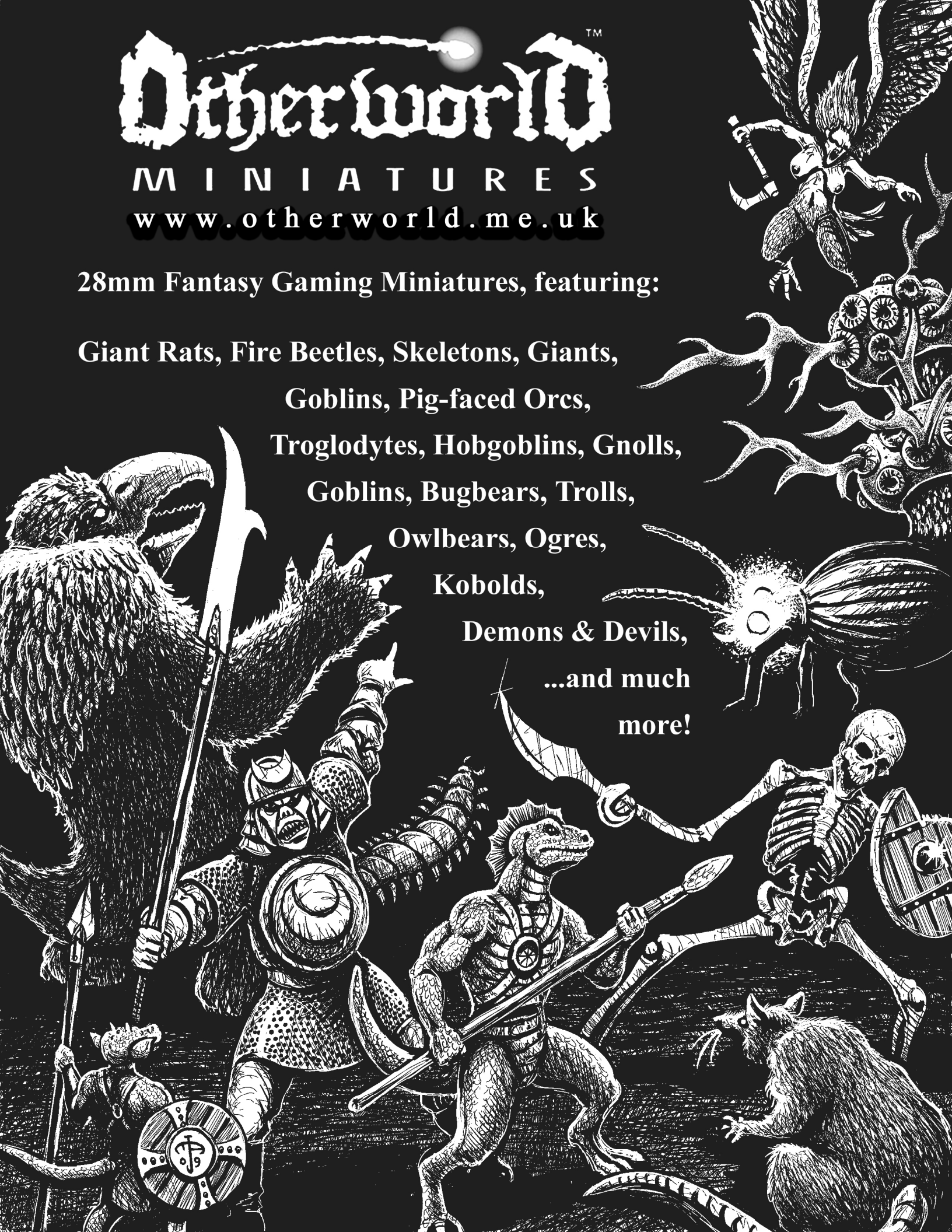
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# The Temple of the Sea Demon

by Gabor Lux

**Playtesters:** Gabor Acs (Hawk the Etunian, Archer/Thief 2/1), Kalman Farago (Harmonos, Follower of Karttekeza, Archer/Illusionist 2/1), Laszlo Feher (Licar del'Avellos, Mage 3), Gabor Izapy (Beristo Akelis, Priest 3 of Mereskan), Gyorgy L'Aune (Gorulga, Barbarian 3), Tamas Szabo (Kher'tar, Mage 3).

**Introduction:** The Temple of the Sea Demon, which has stood in its abandoned plaza since time immemorial, may not be approached through ordinary street or passage: only those who wait until the foreordained night and then follow certain dreams may walk new ways through the dark and silent city, through the Market of Kagmek Khotoummi and the Plaza of Uthul Yaros. Then by an alleyway unseen one can approach the temple's plaza and see the great stone pillars before the windowless houses, each a different height and bearing the statues of ancient kings. There, the domed temple beckons. Those few who arrive may consult the bearded priests and receive dark blessings and visions from a great pool dedicated to the destructive aspects of the sea. Those who arrive without a call are slain by the vigilant guardians, and even those who triumph over the temple may be hunted until they find a power strong enough to shield them. The men of the temple are tireless in the perpetual night, and each fights with the strength of three men. The priests patrol the lower level – but don't venture upstairs unless given permission! The high priest, Zemon, is a powerful spell-caster in his own right. All priests wear dark blue robes.

**Priests (9):** Fighter 2; DC 10 (robes); Atk 3\*trident 1d6+1; hp 9, 8, 14, 8, 20, 8, 8, 15, 13. **Zemon:** Pr 6; DC 8 (*cloak* +2); Atk 3\*trident 1d6+1; Str 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Con 14, Dex 8, Cha 12; Spells: 1: *blessing*, *divine command*\*2, *create water*, *sanctuary*; 2: *chant*, *paralyze person*\*2 (by exhaling a cloud of cold mist), *silence* 3: *curse*, *pray*; hp 25.

**1. Temple:** Blue and green eyes in the bronze dome cast beams of filtered light into the great pool of water. The floor is covered with blue and yellow tiles, and there are old brass candelabra, tall and gnarled, by the walls. There is a 1:2 probability 1d3 priests are here walking their rounds around the pool and chanting. Zemon is also here with a 1:3 probability, standing over the pool atop the stairs in silent contemplation; otherwise he is in his quarters on the second floor, across the bridge. The pool, which draws in light with a weird distortion effect, has the following powers, which any of the priests may call on while staying in the temple: *cloud of fog*\*4, *hypnotic array*\*2, *lesser*

*healing*\*4, *locate thing*\*2 (no range restriction), *identify item*, *divination*, *sea demon's blessing* (subject miraculously avoids drowning once in future, if such a fate befalls him), *conjure undine* (only Zemon is allowed to attempt this, but a disciple who is desperate enough may try, with a 1:3 chance of success). These powers replenish every 12 hours.

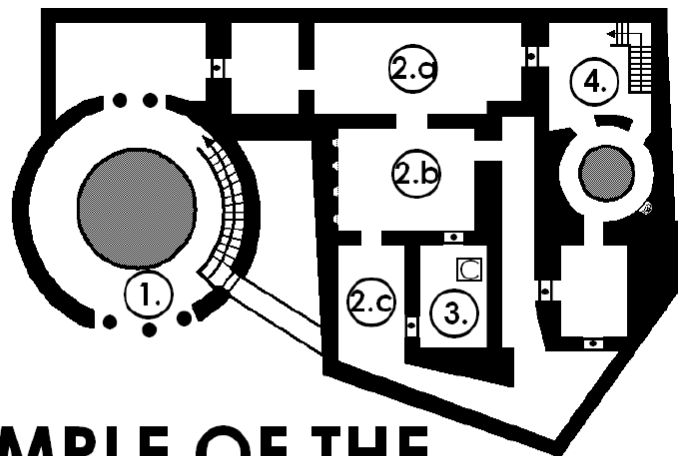
The pool is very deep, and an experienced swimmer will take 2 minutes to reach its bottom. Here the following treasures may be found: 550 sp, 500 ep, 250 gp, dagger with golden grip (40 gp), silver vessel (500 gp), copper idol of a globular conglomerate (the deity Yol, 180 gp), gold-inlaid silver plate (80 gp), green-bladed *longsword* -1, *chainmail* +1. One item may be recovered on each try, 5:6 chance. However, each time the pool is disturbed there is a 1:6 chance the undine awakens to destroy the interlopers.

**Undine (Water Elemental):** HD 12; DC 2; Dam 5d6; +2 or better wpn to hit, -1 damage/die outside water, hp 74.

**2. Quarters:** The living quarters of the priests, dark cells in the cold stone building. All priests who are not in the temple are found here.

**a.** A room of prayer: here are found supplication mats around a giant silver bowl of water (400 gp, 200 if melted), a selection of ceremonial cups (10\*15 gp), dark blue tiles, and lead idols in shadowy recesses. The scent of incense wafts through the cold air. Unless upset, the bowl of water emits a silvery mist if strangers enter. After 1d3 rounds, the mist attacks as a silvery noose at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of ability; if it hits, the victim must save vs. death. One of the lead idols contains 6 doses of *meditation incense*, but the idol must be broken to retrieve it.

**b.** A room of rest: here large cushions, blue and vibrant yellow, are piled for the disciples. A total of 2d6\*30 gp of personal items may be found. There are dark recesses cov-



## TEMPLE OF THE SEA DEMON

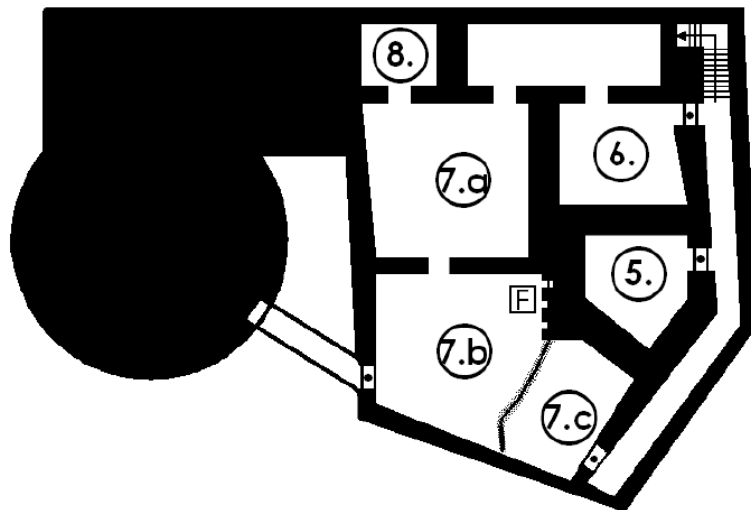
-ered by thick grilles in the western wall; prayers written on bits of parchment have been stuck through. One is a scroll with the *exorcism* spell (used on the temple pool, it dispels the elemental and allows the scroll's user to draw forth all magic within, available as one-use bonus spells); another is magical but blank (an application of holy water reveals a *greater healing* spell; unholy water reveals *greater harming*).

c. A brass altar case holds a small set of scales and silver weights used to measure holy and unholy water. The set is worth 160 gp, but one of the decorations, a silver serpent, bites with a deadly poison if the items are stolen (attacks as 3 HD, save vs. poison).

**3. Archives:** The temple archives are packed with ancient cabinets overflowing with holy writings dating back several centuries. Most are concerned with sinister astrologies, and one who studies them will learn things that are not to be known. These secrets are very useful to the character, but the more he studies, the greater the chance of even darker realisations: six secrets may be so learned, with a cumulative 15% probability per secret the character must save vs. death or pluck his eyes out in a paroxysm of hysteria and seek the comfort of watery death in the great pool. An iron box in a small compartment holds 6 pearls of 120 gp value each, a silver goblet (22 gp) and a *ring of protection* +2. A trap door leads up, covered by a great quantity of pillows (open door check required).

**4. Lesser Pool:** This set of rooms is unnaturally cold, and an acoustic effect focuses sound to a strange but perfect pitch – speech cuts like a knife and footsteps echo with ponderous significance. If the characters are completely silent and keep lights low, a formless, glowing phantom will emerge from the air and reach towards a random character (attacks as 4 HD, ignores armour). The touch of the apparition leaves a golden handprint on a PC's chest, which is experienced as a heavy weight. Only a blessing from a 9<sup>th</sup>+ level priest can safely remove this burden; other attempts to remove it require a save vs. death to avoid having the PC's heart magically torn from his chest. Whether it succeeds or not, the apparition disappears with a heavy sigh. *Exorcism* drives it away, and causes a segment of the wall in the circular room to fall, revealing a cavity with a shrivelled body still bearing a *necromancer's staff* (this heavy brass staff has 23 charges, and may be used to cast *detect undead*, *animate dead*, and *converse with dead* for a charge each, but the bearer will return as an undead monster of hit dice equal to his experience level if he dies carrying it). The porous cadaver has half-metamorphosized into heavy golden dust, and may fetch 1200 gp for the sweepings, or 3000 gp if sold intact to the right buyer.

In the circular room, a small pool is lined with yellow and dark blue ceramic. Through the water's distortion, room 9 in the dungeon is visible, and it may be reached in two rounds of swimming. However, the interior of the well is



lined with invisible blades, and if their location is not ascertained before diving (by probing or *detect magic*, which makes them glow with a faint radiance), there is a 2:3 chance to suffer 4d4 points of damage.

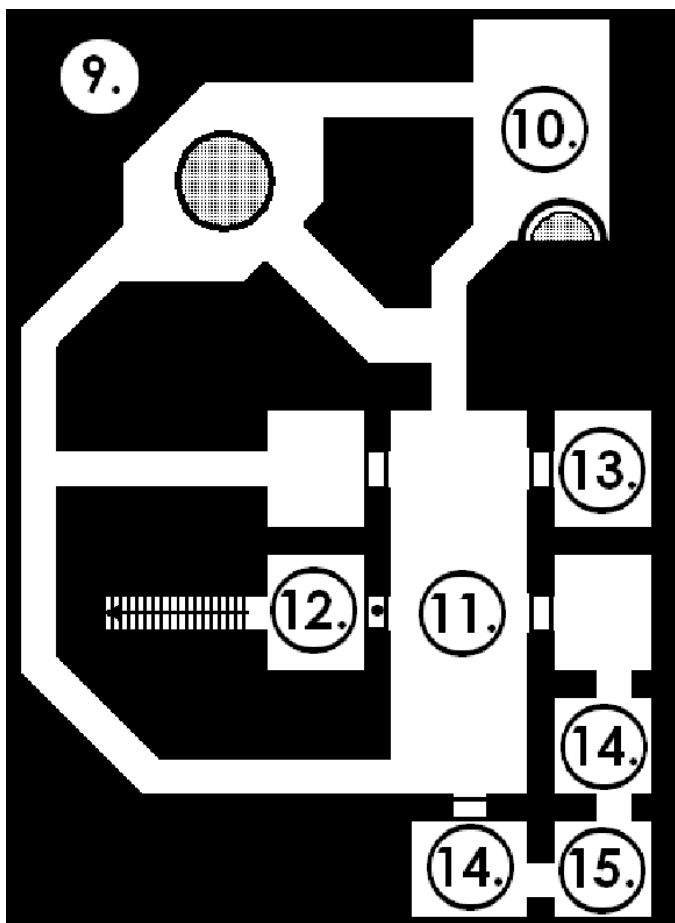
**5. Domed Room:** Beams of silver light are focused on a pedestal holding a silver decanter with alchemical symbols. There are 10 doses of holy water in the decanter. The lights are filtered through the clear, faintly bluish glass “eyes” of a small dome; these eyes are faintly magical and are used to create holy water over a month-long distillation process. These are worth 2400 gp if all are extracted without damage; the non-magical decanter is worth 500 gp.

**6. Bath:** Water flows from a bearded satyr's head into a large basin in the SW. Lead pipes carry away the excess water; brass and ceramic ornaments decorate the walls. A collection of bathing salts (300 gp) lies on a small table, next to rare oils kept in long-necked glass vials (6\*40 gp oil, 6\*30 glass). One is enchanted: applied to the eyelids, it allows one to see through illusions and invisibility (3 uses).

**7. Zemon's Quarters:** As with the entire upper floor, these quarters are forbidden to priests other than Zemon. The rooms are stocked with a great quantity of rugs, pillows and carpets. The more valuable pieces would be worth 1400 gp total, but a single unencumbered person could only carry up to 400 worth.

a. A low wooden table (with a half-opened compartment containing a set of polished lenses and a flat box full of glass dust – 150 gp) lies at the centre of the room, surrounded by comfortable and colourful pillows. On the table, there is a silver censer (140 gp) containing scented ash as well as several pieces of writing in a disorderly heap. These outline a method of reaching hidden sections of the city in one's dreams – a plaza of the dead, a magical well, a palace that subtly works against the standing administration, and a further possibility only hinted at with ominous circumscription. An ewer of violet dream-wine, scintillant and of a deep and troubling aroma, lies next to the table.





**b.** The NE part of this room serves as a sleeping chamber, with a pile of pillows over a trapdoor leading into the archives. Next to the pillows are niches with small figurines – these grotesques are made of lead and worthless, but a panel behind the northern one opens into a recess containing a jade box (200 gp) with 500 gp worth of opium and a water pipe. Faint movement within the glass bowl of the pipe turns out to be a faint shimmering vapour – slightly sweet upon inhalation but with no discernible effect. However, a rolled-up sheet of black parchment turns out to be painted with glowing stars, and if the character has partaken of the pipe, he will see a personal omen within their configuration that, if followed, may bring great sorrow (1:3), enormous power (1:3), or vast wealth at the cost of doom to many others (1:3).

**c.** This curtained-off area has been converted to wine storage, with a selection of good vintages. 8 heavy amphorae with the sigil XOΣ contain 40 gp worth of wine each.

**8. Altar Nook:** This bare area holds a font of clear water. Three tiny vials are arranged on the edge in a triangular configuration. Although they seemingly contain water, they are magical: #1 functions as a *potion of water breathing*, #2 as a *potion of lesser healing* and #3 as a *potion of watery death* (save vs. death or drown instantaneously, cough and spit water for 3d6 rounds if successful; this liquid can also be used against the undead, which must save or be dispelled).

**9. Dungeon:** The well opening from the lesser pool (4) leads here, the column of water suspended in the air by some miraculous influence. The passages and rooms of the dungeon reverberate with a sinister presence.

**10. Font:** Waters rush from a small opening, to drain away through gaps at the bottom of the font. If observed carefully, a gurgling sound comes from one; a sapphire ring worth 600 gp is stuck there and may be removed with some ingenuity (1:6 to 1:2 to catch it before it gets swept away depending on method).

**11. The Hall of Wells:** Eight plugged stone wells are found along the western and eastern wall, sealed with soft lead. Under a layer of clear water, they contain liquid light that burns without heat in extravagant colours. This light can be shaped with one's willpower as hot wax – even a mild effort such as contemplating their purpose effects some change, which may be increased through intense concentration. The shape that is created is inherent to the particular liquid, and the shaping process becomes harder and harder as one gets closer to its conclusion. Three saves are needed vs. spells at +4, +0 and -2; 1d6 damage if the first is failed, 3d6 for the second, and the character collapses into protoplasmic mush if the third is unsuccessful. Failing any save means the light-stuff is ruined, becoming clouded and worthless; so does “letting go” of the light after passing the first save. The hues and potential forms, clockwise from the north, are:

- 1 – mauve – *wand of charm*, 12 charges.
- 2 – incandescent green – *kaleidoscope*, causes *suggestion*, 6 uses before rendered ordinary.
- 3 – pink – gelatinous intelligence (Int 15), telepathic, may be consulted on various problems, dries out in 2d4 weeks.
- 4 – hot orange – *shortsword* +3, melts after 2d6 battles.
- 5 – hypnotic cube – droning hum in cone-shaped emanation functions as *hypnotic array*, 11 uses.
- 6 – azure – ray-caster, 3d6 damage in narrow cone via entirely silent vibrations, 18 charges.
- 7 – transparent black – 8 doses healing gelatin, 3d6 each.
- 8 – purple – doppelganger, obedient.

The liquid light is radioactive, and with each well opened there is a cumulative 2% chance of radiation sickness.

**12. Descent:** Beyond the old brass door set with a sigil of an eye in a clawed hand, stairs lead down to the unknown.

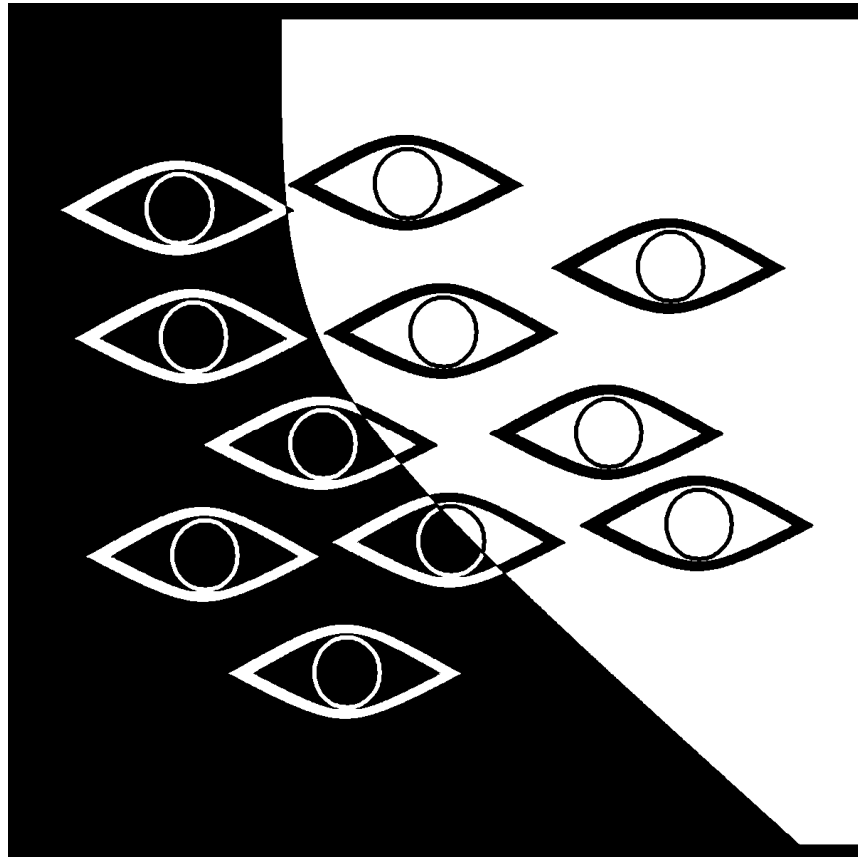
**13. Storage:** A place of old odds and ends: slabs of semi-solidified glass with bubbles of encased light (faulty experiments with the wells?), pews, rusty tridents, amphorae, ceramic jars, candelabra and brass ornaments. A cherry wood box contains several sorts of coloured chalk, and an oilskin bundle holds a ream of good parchment.

**14. Rooms of Lateral Transference:** Both domed chambers are decorated with yellow and blue ceramics. Arches

allow characters to see the treasure room and the valuables within. However, upon stepping through an arch characters emerge through the other in the other room marked **14**. An inscription in fine mosaic on the floor reads “MAY ONLY THE LIGHT OF YOUR PURPOSE LEAD”. Only if all light sources outside the treasure room are extinguished is it possible to step into **15**, guided only by the light within. (Note: if a light is brought from **15** into **14**, the transference effect is reactivated, and characters in the treasure room are trapped until the lights are re-extinguished or removed from the area!)

**15. Treasure Room:** The ceramics are richest here: culminating in a peaked black dome, they are set with golden patterns of watchful eyes that look down with dispassionate vigilance. The room itself is also a place of many wonders: in the centre, there is a basin of red and gold fish, the waters glowing with smooth amber radiance. Further sources – six rods of twisted glass – are also set with lights, magical in origin and a soft purple in hue. Around the basin lie the weird treasures of the temple:

- six heavy silver decanters standing on a long bench (6\*150 gp): the water within is intoxicating, and if carried outside one decanterful may re-vivify the dead.
- a giant iron chest holding 7800 ancient silver coins, each worth three regular ones.
- three sets of polished bluish plate armour.
- a curved *scimitar* -1 sheathed in a mother-of-pearl-inlaid scabbard.
- glass prisms placed on a brass table in a seemingly random arrangement; removing any breaks a sacred harmony and looses a baleful force that will soon be manifested in the overworld (however, it may possess a degree of gratitude towards its benefactors – 1:2 probability).
- two fully loaded laser pistols in a flat bakelite box, with 3 extra cartridges.
- finally, a conch-shell horn, the major treasure of the temple, is set on a green glass pedestal. This gold- and silver-bound item is worth 900 gp for its workmanship,



and its dirge can call the formless black monstrosities of the deep seas to do the holder's bidding, or create a force bubble that allows descent into formidable depths. However, blowing it requires a save vs. death to avoid breathing in waters that bring swift oblivion.

The sea's demonic influence, a palpable malevolence, is strongest here. If a character spends more than a minimum amount of time (such as what is needed to grab one item and retreat discreetly) in the chamber, there is a 1:6 chance for each item handled or disturbed (or each time there is loud conversation or sudden movement) that the demon of the temple awakens. This invisible force first manifests as a sharp pressure and a taste of metal in the mouth, emanating unseen from the eyes above. Thereafter, those who do not run are attacked at the 12<sup>th</sup> level of ability, suffering 4d6 damage per hit as they are rent by invisible forces. Characters must run towards the column of water without hesitation or pause: doing so, or taking wrong turns, invites attacks. The Referee should of course pay attention to the distribution of sources of light, both in

terms of lightless navigation and of the consequences of some PCs bringing light into the anterooms while others remain in the treasure room (see **14**). Preparation and swiftness is the key to surviving this segment. An *exorcism* spell keeps the demonic influence at bay for 1d6+6 rounds: other methods may also be effective, but no spells or weapons will avail.

The demonic influence pursues interlopers through the dungeon level. After that it requires 1d6\*10 minutes to emerge into the temple, and if the latter has been significantly desecrated,

some days thereafter to begin its merciless pursuit. What sort of forces may shelter the characters if they become subject to demonic attention – and they will sense their coming doom – is a good question; at what price this security may be obtained is probably more fascinating still. Through time and space lie secure shelters: yet there must be a method to turn and fight, and knowledge and means to make that fight meaningful. These considerations, however, lie outside the scope of this module. Ω

# Knightly Orders

player options by Robert "Treebore" Miller

Attaining knighthood can be a good way for players of warriors to personalize their characters and, if it was earned, to feel like they've accomplished something in play. Here are two knightly orders from my own campaign.

**Order of the Lunar Knights:** This order was established to defend elven and friendly kingdoms from the forces of organized Evil. Although their membership is primarily made up of elven warriors, members of all classes and many races have entered their ranks. In addition to general service towards their goal, members are expected to answer any call to arms put forth by the order and to tithe 10% of their annual income (minimum 100 gp/year) to it.

Many benefits accrue to a Lunar Knights in exchange for this support. Members may receive sanctuary at any of their strongholds, many of which are secret and in useful locations. Any member of the order may issue the aforementioned call to arms, which may allow them to ral-



ly helpful NPCs or even their own army if there is time enough to manage it. The Lunar Knights are well-respected throughout the elven kingdoms and beyond, and can access such wonders as trained griffins and enchanted elven items, though these may come at additional cost in funds or questing. In general the Lunar Knights are well-connected among all those who serve the cause of Good.

Upon becoming a Lunar Knight a player may choose one of the following three abilities for his or her character:

- proficiency with the scimitar, regardless of class;
- the ability to see clearly under the stars or in other low-light situations, using the ultraviolet spectrum;
- the ability to call forth light once/day.

Leadership of the order is very loose. Essentially, positions are filled by those willing and able to fill them. They use simple military ranks to make these distinctions: a Knight Sergeant commands a squad of up to 20, a Knight Lieutenant commands up to 5 Sergeants and their squads, and a Knight Captain may command 2 or more Lieutenants, etc. or else be charged with the defense of a kingdom or other important land. When the full order assembles for battle, Commanders holding office over 3 Captains or even Generals commanding as many knights as can be mustered may be appointed. Once a title is gained it is kept, even after the battle has ended and a knight returns to ordinary (errant) service.

At all times, however, the order's Commander General serves as supreme authority over the Lunar Knights. Perhaps surprisingly, the current Commander General, Callis Roaning, is of human descent. A fiery red-haired Paladin dedicated to the Grim Lord Tyr, she wears armor that makes her nearly invulnerable in battle and seems to also have made her immortal – she is known to have lived for at least 300 years. She is capable of calling on Tyr to resurrect the dead or to heal all injuries and ailments. She is also known to possess the Eyes and Ears of Heimdall (a battle helm), as well as Tyr's sword (*Justice*) and Book of Judgment. Divination spells reveal nothing about her. Though Roaning has made it known that she no longer wishes to serve as Commander General, no-one has stepped forward to take her place.

**Order of the Phoenix:** Whereas one may become a Lunar Knight by doing a significant deed of valor and obtaining the sponsorship of a current member, one must either be born into the Order of the Phoenix or win the approval of a Fire Lord or the Eternal Flame to join. Phoenix Knights are almost exclusively human warriors, and receive special level titles (see table, facing page). A Phoenix Knight may stay at any chapter house of the order without pay for a month, each of which has extensive libraries and a smithy of quality unrivalled outside dwarfholds. (Longer visits require in-kind service as courtesy for board.)

### Level Titles for the Order of the Phoenix:

Level /Position	Title
1 <sup>st</sup>	Knight of Ash
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Fire Knight
5 <sup>th</sup>	Knight of the Red Flame
8 <sup>th</sup>	Knight of the White Flame
10 <sup>th</sup>	Knight of the Incandescent Flame
Chapter House Command	Fire Lord
Command of Order	Eternal Flame

The libraries are of superlative quality as well, specializing in heraldry going back for centuries as well as engineering, armor and weapon smithing, leadership, tactics, and combatting battlefield magic. Each also contains a full list of every chapter house ever established, and maps to them. If you use knowledge skills in your game, a month spent in these libraries can bestow such a skill on a PC. Knights can make their own arms and armor in the smithies for half cost, or buy such from the chapter houses at 20% off. If you play with expertly crafted or masterwork weapons or armor, those can be made here as well, as can plated, inlaid, or gem-bestudded armaments. Any knight born to the order (again, the vast majority) will be at least passable and often expert as a weaponsmith, and most of the rare few who join later in life will put time into studying the art as well. Furthermore, chapter houses often partner with leather-workers, jewellers, goldsmiths, saddle makers, etc. to provide what skills their members might lack.

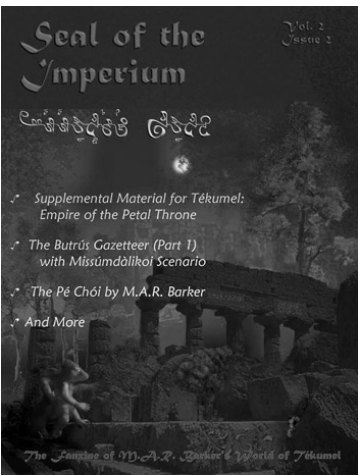
The Order of the Phoenix is old and wealthy and its members regard one another as an extended family. Perhaps no order responds to a Call to Arms as quickly as they, and any member of the order may raise around 20 knights in as short as two weeks time, or even more if the GM is amenable. Also, members of the Order support each other even across national boundaries, so any Phoenix Knight will always have political support of some kind in any kingdom which hosts them.

Phoenix Knights are strict servants of Law and follow the knightly code to the letter, with an stronger than normal emphasis on honor, largesse, and loyalty. Knights violating the code are expelled from the order, and although theoretically atonement and reinstatement are possible, even their own impressive libraries contain no records of such.

Their love of lore has earned the order a few friends among wizards. Though these abilities are not standard, a small fraction knights have learned charms thematic to their order, such as commanding their weapons to flame once/day, creating a fiery burst of pyrotechnics, or immolating themselves in a final fiery explosion when they are slain. Whether these are available and to whom is up to GM adjudication. Ω



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# The Shaman

a class for the original *EPT* by James Maliszewski

*Empire of the Petal Throne* assumes, for the sake of convenience, that all beginning player characters are foreigners who have arrived at the great Tsolyáni port city of Jakálla. Though foreigners, not every starting player character will necessarily be a “barbarian” -- some might well come from cultures that are older even than Tsolyánu! -- but some will be, not least because the opportunity to portray a Tekumeláni-style Conan, aghast at the byzantine complexity of Tsolyáni society, is too rich an opportunity to pass up. The warrior class can be used as written for such characters, but what if a player wishes to play a magic-wielding barbarian? *EPT*'s two spell-casting classes are clearly products of highly civilized societies such as the Five Empires and make little sense in less sophisticated realms.

That's where the shaman comes in. This new class is an “uncivilized” spellcaster, with its own spells and skills, many of them unique to it. Because these shaman rules modify those in *Empire of the Petal Throne*, the information below is organized according to the section numbers of its rulebook. If a section number does not appear, assume that no changes have been made.

## 310. Alignment

Depending on the remoteness of the shaman's native culture from the Five Empires, he or she may not serve one of the Tlomítlanyal or Tlokiriqáluyal but rather a different deity (or deities) or no god whatsoever (taking “spirits” of some sort or another as patrons instead). Consequently, the choice of alignment is not as straightforward for a shaman. The player of a shaman character must therefore choose the alignment that he or she feels most closely approaches that of whatever beliefs the shaman possesses.

## 320. Choice of Sex

Shamans can be either male or female, depending on the nature of their native society. Some foreign cultures are strongly patriarchal, allowing no role for women as shamans, while a few are matriarchal, allowing no role for males. Of course, other societies may consider shamans “outside” the normal social strictures for different genders, whatever they may be. In the end, choice of sex is entirely up to the player, subject to referee approval.

## 430. Specific Professional Skills

Use the following list for shaman player characters:

**Control of Self:** This skill is identical to the magic-user skill described in section 433 of the *EPT* rulebook..

### Shaman Professional Skills

*control of self*

*detect traps*

*detect magic*

*produce flame*

*speak with animals*

*nature control*

*cure light wounds*

*medium*

*neutralize poison*

*cure disease*

*commune*

*reincarnation*

**Detect Traps:** The shaman is able to locate any traps, whether natural, magical, or mechanical, within a radius of 3 inches. Duration: 2 turns. Usable three times per day.

**Detect Magic:** The shaman is able to detect any magical energy, whether placed on a person, place, or object within 6 inches. Duration: 2 turns. Usable twice per day.

**Produce Flame:** The shaman can create a small flame in his or her palm. The flame is roughly the same heat and brightness as a lantern or torch. The flame so created does no harm to the shaman, but it will burn flammable materials which it touches. The shaman can hurl the flame up to 3 inches, after which it will go out. The shaman can extinguish the flame at will and has a maximum duration of 2 turns times the level of the shaman.

**Speak with Animals:** The shaman is able to speak with any type of animal, gaining complete understanding of what it says. “Animal” refers to any creature described in section 1128 of the *EPT* rulebook. Animals are not necessarily co-operative and may conceal information or lie. Usable twice per day. Range: 3 inches. Duration: 6 turns.

**Nature Control:** This skill is identical to the magic-user skill described in section 433 of the *EPT* rulebook.

**Cure Light Wounds:** This skill is identical to the priestly skill described in section 432 of the *EPT* rulebook.

**Medium:** This skill identical to the magic-user skill described in section 433 of the *EPT* rulebook.

**Neutralize Poison:** The shaman can eliminate the deleterious effects of poison in one individual. Usable twice/day.

**Cure Disease:** The shaman can cure any one disease from a single person. This ability is usable once per day.

Commune: The shaman may use this skill to commune with immaterial spirits and ask the answers to up to three questions. The spirits do not lie, so the shaman can be certain of their veracity, although they may at referee discretion conceal the truth. Spirits are not omniscient and may lack knowledge or be mistaken. Usable once per day.

Reincarnation: The shaman returns a dead character's soul to a new body as determined by the table below. This spell must be used within a month of death. Usable once/day.

d20	Reincarnated as...	d20	Reincarnated as...
1	Páchi Léi	11	Human
2	Pé Chói	12	Ahoggyá
3	Swamp Folk	13	Hlýss
4	Pygmy Folk	14	Chnélh
5	Hláka	15	Dzór
6	Tinalíya	16	Rényu
7	Hlutrgú	17	Sérudla
8	Shunned One	18	Feshénga
9	Ssú	19	Thúnru'u
10	Shén	20	Qól

## 500. Bonus Spells

### Group I:

1. ESP: The shaman can read the thoughts of other beings at a distance of up to 6 inches. This spell cannot penetrate either stone or metal. Duration: 12 turns.
2. Water Breathing: The shaman can breathe underwater for up to 12 turns.
3. Clairvoyance: This spell enables the shaman to see through up to 2 inches of any solid matter within 6 inches.
4. Clairaudience: This spell enables the shaman to hear through up to 2 inches of any solid matter within 6 inches.
5. Derangement: This spell drives the target permanently insane, but the target does receive a saving throw. If the target fails, the referee determines how he or she behaves. The spell has a range of 30 feet and is ineffective against a target using the Control of Self spell. The insanity can be cured only through the use of a Remove Curse spell.
6. Acclimatization: This spell protects the caster from the adverse effects of weather, such as extreme heat, cold, rain, snow, etc. for up to 6 hours.
7. Favouring: This blessing grants its target two 6-sided dice worth of "phantom" hit points, which last for 2 turns. These hit points are the first to be removed if the target takes damage and will dissipate regardless at the conclusion of the spell's duration.
8. Cure Serious Wounds: This spell heals two six-sided dice worth of damage.
9. Minor Fetish: The shaman can create a disposable fetish that stores the magical energy of a single Group I spell. The spell can then be used later, after which the fetish is used up in the process. The fetish is usable only by the

shaman who created it or another shaman capable of casting the spell stored in the fetish.

10. Comprehension: The shaman gains the ability to speak and understand any language for 5 turns. This excludes languages from the Latter Times, as well as the language of the Mihállí. The shaman also gains the ability to tell whether a scroll or other written item is cursed *before* he reads it.

11. Light and Darkness: At the choice of the shaman, this spell creates either a powerful light that illuminates a 30-foot area for 5 turns or an impenetrable darkness that encompasses the same area for the same length of time. Each magical effect can be dispelled by the casting of its opposite on the same area.

12. Nutrification: This spell creates sufficient food and water to feed up to 24 human beings (or their equivalents) for 1 day.

13. Phantasms: The shaman can create illusions that have a 70% chance of being believed by unintelligent creatures and a 50% chance of being believed by intelligent and semi-intelligent ones. Artificial beings, such as automatons, androids, and robots, are never fooled. Damage taken from illusions believed by their targets is treated as real damage. This spell has a duration of four turns.

14. Fear: This spell is identical to the bonus spell of the same name described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.

15. Spider Climb: The shaman gains the ability to climb walls and ceilings at half his usual movement rate. The spell lasts for 1 turn.

16. Enlarge: The shaman can double the size of any living thing on which he casts the spell. While under its effects, the target doubles its hit points and damage, but attackers gain a +4 bonus to hit it. The spell lasts for 1 turn.

### Group II:

1. The Blessing of the Planes: The shaman creates a 10 foot diameter sphere of magical energy around himself. Anyone within the sphere gains a bonus of +2 to attacks, damage, and saving throws. The blessing lasts 2 turns.
2. Domination: This spell enables the shaman to control the actions of any intelligent or non-intelligent being within 12 inches and lasts for three turns. A saving throw is permitted to any creature having the same or greater hit dice as the shaman. A creature with 1-2 hit dice less than the caster gets a saving throw only if it first rolls 50 or more on the percentile dice; a creature with 3-4 dice less must roll 65 or more; a creature with 5-6 dice less must roll 75 or more. If the target has 7 or more dice less than those of the shaman, it cannot make a saving throw at all. Domination cannot force a target to perform self-destructive actions, however.
3. Desiccation: This spell dries up the bodily fluids of its target, causing internal damage that incapacitates the target if he or she fails a saving throw. The target is incapacitated for a number of days equal to two six-sided dice, but a Cure Serious Wounds spell will restore mobility if applied.

4. Far-Seeing: The shaman gains the ability to see objects up to 300 feet away as if they were only 3 feet away. This spell lasts for 1 turn.
5. Invisibility: The shaman becomes invisible for 2 turns, during which time he adds +2 to his saving throws and all attacks against him suffer a -1 penalty. The shaman, while invisible, can only be detected by those naturally able to perceive other planes or by the magic-user spell Seeing Other Planes.
6. Fetish: Like Minor Fetish, except that it works for either two Group I spells or a single Group II spell.
7. Necromantic Domination: 1-20 undead beings can be controlled for up to 6 turns, although a saving throw is permitted for any undead creature with more than 3 hit dice. This spell has a range of 30 feet.
8. Sending of Evil: This is identical to the Group III Bonus Spell described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.
9. Alter Self: The shaman can change the appearance of one living creature (including himself or herself) into that of any other living creature, provided they are roughly the same size and general shape. The spell lasts for 1 turn.
10. Stealth: This spell enables the shaman or another living being on whom he or she casts the spell to move in complete silence for 3 turns.
11. Curse: This spell enables the shaman to bestow a permanent execration upon an object. Any member of a particular group chosen by the shaman, such as "followers of Sárku" or "Ahoggyá" who touch the object immediately suffer three 6-sided dice of damage.
12. Seeing Other Planes: The shaman can see other planes, dimensions, invisible objects, and other "out of phase" objects and creatures within 20 feet. The spell lasts 2 turns.
13. Psychometry: By casting this spell on an object, the shaman gains the ability to see and hear people and events associated with it. The stronger the connection to a particular person or event, the clearer the knowledge the shaman gains. Thus, the bone of a deceased person will give greater knowledge about that person's life than shreds of clothing he or she once wore. The spell lasts 1 turn.

### Group III:

1. The Silver Halo of Soul Stealing: This is identical to the Group III Bonus Spell described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.
2. The Demon: This is identical to the Group III Bonus Spell described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.
3. Zoomorphy: This is identical to the Group III Bonus Spell described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.
4. Etherealness: The shaman can enter a trance and send his spirit forth to observe -- but not interact with -- the world within 3 miles of his current location. The spell lasts 2 turns, during which time the shaman's body is very vulnerable to attack, as it is utterly insensate. If the body is destroyed before the shaman chooses to return his spirit to it, he is irrevocably dead and cannot be restored to life by any means.

5. Insubstantiality: The shaman can turn his body or that of one living creature insubstantial, allowing them to pass through solid objects without any difficulty. While insubstantial, the creature cannot interact with any solid objects or creatures but can interact with -- and attack -- other insubstantial objects or creatures. The spell lasts 2 turns, after which the character returns to corporeality wherever he happens to be at that time -- even if inside a solid object, such as a wall!
6. Stone to Mud: The shaman can turn natural stone or earth into mud for 3 turns. The area of effect is a 10-foot diameter circle. Creatures moving into the mud with become stuck, moving at 10% of their normal speed.
7. Feeblemind: This spell works only against spellcasters, such as priests, magic-users, and other shamans. If the target fails a saving throw, their Intelligence is reduced to 20 and they lose the ability to cast spells. The spell has a range of 12 inches and lasts until Dispel Magic is cast upon the unfortunate victim.
8. The Eater of Souls: The shaman conjures up a twisted mannikin that seeks out a single target (shaman's choice) until it finds it, after which it attacks until either it or its quarry is destroyed. Use the statistics for a Yéleth (p. 69 in the EPT rulebook) to represent the Eater of Souls.
9. Enchanted Armor and Weapons: This spell allows the shaman to convert a single chlén-hide weapon or piece of armor into one with the hardness of iron or steel, imbued with magical energy. Roll a 6-sided die to determine the magical bonus: 1-3 = +1, 4-5 = +2, 6 = +3. The hardness and bonuses are not permanent, but last for 5 turns.
10. Weather Control: This is identical to the Group III Bonus Spell described in section 510 of the EPT rulebook.

### 610. Experience Point Bonuses

Any shaman with a psychic ability of 81-95 adds 5 percent, and a shaman with 96-100 adds 10 percent.

### 630. Levels of Experience

Shamans use the same experience table as magic-users.

### 700. Hit Dice

Use the following table for shaman hit dice:

Level	Hit Dice
I	1
II	2+1
III	3
IV	3+2
V	4
VI	5+1
VII	6
VIII	7
IX	8+1
X	9

**MAKE IT COUNT....MAKE IT COUNT....  
BY THRAZAR. MAKE IT COUNT!!!**



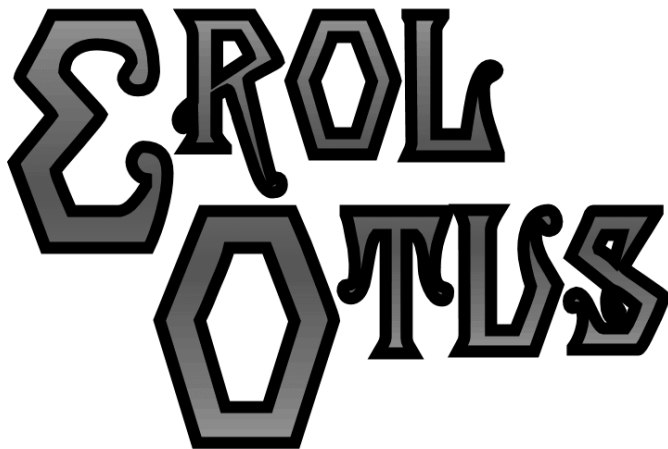


# The Devil's in the Details: Pé Chóí

non-canonical character options for Tékumel by Baz Blatt

Pé Chóí are tall six-limbed insectoids with a sea-horse like head. Males are black and females white, and they are the alien species most at home in Tékumel's human societies, living in human cities, doing all kinds of jobs, even joining the priesthoods and running their own clans or joining human ones. Pé Chóí can be found at the very highest levels of society as advisors to the Court of Purple Robes in Avanthár itself. Most do not reach such dizzy heights, of course, and many live a wild tribal life in the forests of Do Chaka and eastern Mu'ugalavýá with little or no human contact. Pé Chóí have more sensitive hearing and vision than humans and also have a natural psychic sense that gives them uncanny awareness of their environment. Their chitin-like exoskeletons are tough, but also hard to repair, making healing from injuries slower, and their open spiracles for breathing mean that they drown very easily and are unsurprisingly usually afraid of water.

## Congratulations Winners! The



Art Challenge has concluded. Our champions:

**First Place, Color:** Mark Allen

**First Place, Black & White:** Mikko Torvinen

**Second Place, Color:** Raven Daegmorgan

**Second Place, Black & White:** Steve Robertson

**Third Place, Color:** Stefan Poag

**Third Place, Black & White:** Steve Zieser

**First Honorable Mention, Color:** Peter Mullen

**First Honorable Mention, Black & White:** Lee Barber

**Honorable Mention, Color:** B. Ingle, K. Mayle, Atom, A. Schröder, S. Turnbull, and K. Vito

**Honorable Mention, B&W:** Bat, P. Fini, K. Green, Kesher, S. Kisko, A. Stiller, and J. Weigel

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants!

**Stereotypes:** Humans usually think of Pé Chóí as being a somewhat more delicate and quiet version of their own species. They respect Pé Chóí intelligence and their easy adoption of human culture when in their lands, but also regard them as a little inscrutable and hard to fathom, and consider them inclined towards physical cowardice, more inclined to debate and think than to act decisively.

**The Reality:** Pé Chóí are not as delicate as many humans think. There are Pé Chóí Legions in the armies of Tsolyánu and Mu'ugalavýá which can outfight many a human legion, and the wild Pé Chóí of the forests are downright savage when aroused. Pé Chóí have a range of peculiar emotional states that are only vaguely related to anything a human would experience – such as 'Ntk-dqékt', an all-encompassing pain of existence with overtones of resilience and resolution. There is much they cannot explain to humans, who are endowed with only the crudest and most direct forms of psychic ability where they have any at all, especially about their instinct for 'appropriate action' which enables Pé Chóí societies to function with barely a word spoken, as all perform the tasks necessary for harmonious survival.

**Clan and Lineage:** There are broadly two classes of Pé Chóí; the urbanised ones who use clan and lineage as humans do, and the tribal Pé Chóí who live in traditional forest villages. There is some overlap between the two in Do Chaka, where the people of some Pé Chóí villages have traditionally been granted Imperial citizenship. All Pé Chóí clans include the Long Tails, Blue Carapaces, Branch Walkers, the Clan of the Valley of Tket, and many others. A number of human clans have Pé Chóí lineages, including the Sliver Lightning, Plume of White and Black Hand.

**Religion:** The Pé Chóí have two gods of their own, the Father of Nests and the Black Old One, who represent Stability and Change respectively. Neither has dedicated priests, and their worship is simple and unfussy in the typical Pé Chóí fashion. Pé Chóí can join the priesthood of any Tsolyáni temple, but tend to gravitate towards Hnálla, Thúmis, Hrü'ü and Ksáru, worshipping their own deities as aspects of these greater gods.

**Names:** Pé Chóí have names in their own language, which is just barely pronounceable by humans in a simplified form. Pé Chóí speak through several spiracles at once, click certain joints in their carapaces and make extensive use of gestures; few humans have learned any more than the odd common word and to pronounce the names of their Pé Chóí acquaintances. Sample names: Ktik Kté, Sdekt'p'we, Nchekt'tk, Trrkeqt.

**Rules:** Pé Chóí can be any class, and due to their natural psychic ability they are especially talented sorcerers. Their natural ESP ability can be used to sense hidden, plane-

shifted or invisible creatures and sense whether there are enemies beyond a door or round a corner. Note that they can also have the Priest skill ESP on top of this, giving them a higher chance of ESP three times a day. They are also better than humans at noticing secret doors and traps, in game terms having the ability at a lower level of Intelligence and getting a level bonus. Pé Chóí do not roll for Original Skills as humans do, but roll on the table below for number of skills and again for maximum skill level at first level; this maximum goes up by 1 at third level and each level thereafter. At first level they must choose at least one skill from the Pé Chóí table, and automatically gain one skill per level with a 50% chance of gaining two. Pé Chóí are not required to have all the skills in the professional list or their own racial list before they can gain the next higher one; they can pick and choose as they like, and can make more than one choice at a given level if available. Note that a Pé Chóí will have two Comeliness scores, one for his own species and another for how he looks to humans and other species.

#### Pé Chóí Starting Skills:

% roll	# of skills	max. skill level
01-10	2	3
11-30	3	4
31-70	4	5
71-90	5	6
91-00	6	7

#### Attribute Score Generation:

**Str** 1d100  
**Int** 1d100 x 0.9 + 10  
**Con** 1d100  
**PsyAb** 1d100x0.9 + 30  
**Dex** 1d100 x 0.8 + 20  
**Com** 1d100 (x0.5 to other species, if applicable at all)

#### All Pé Chóí start with:

- 1d100 Gold Kaitars
- +1 AC due to chitinous skin
- Can see in semi-darkness
- Natural ESP - PsyAb/5 +1d3% per level
- Detect secret doors – if Int 61-80 then 20%, Int 41-60 then 10% and +1d3% per level
- Detect Traps – if Int 81-95 then 25% chance, Int 61-80 then 10% and +1d3% per level
- -20% chance of revivification
- +10% of healing spell/eye failing
- -2 damage healed per dice of healing spell
- Double damage from drowning, scared of water
- Can sense Pé Chóí dying within 1 mile

**Optional:** Pé Chóí start with +3 HP, but on the second and subsequent level roll HP as usual and use the higher

score as the current maximum HP as you would for a human. Pé Chóí do not gain any extra skills or skill levels until they reach third level.

#### Skills

- 1 Speak Mu'ugalavyáni  
Speak Tsolyáni
- 2 Accepted Alien status if a 'wild' forest Pé Chóí
- 3 Any Class I trade except Merchant and Winemaker  
Barkchewer (Pé Chóí craft, traditional hut building)  
Hunter  
Woodcarver
- 4 Magical Senses (+additional 2d3% ESP)  
Keen Sight (+Int/10 chance spot secret doors/traps)
- 5 Forest-born (tracking ability and +PsyAb/10 and +Int/10 to all special skills, ESP, etc. while in a compatible forest environment), OR  
Urban Pé Chóí (choose a Class I craft as above, and +PsyAb/10 to Comeliness towards humans as can empathise with them and understand their etiquette)
- 6 Any Class II trade or profession  
'Appropriate Action' (intuitive knowledge of correct action in any given circumstance, +1d6% to success in any skill roll, characteristic check or success for any task outside combat, magic, or magical abilities)  
Use Two Weapons (if Warrior – attacks are at -1, only one handed weapons may be used, can also use two small shields at once for double shield bonus)
- 7 Deep Ntk-dqékt (+PsyAb/10 to ESP and spot hidden when target is Pé Chóí, sense Pé Chóí death within 5 miles and Pé Chóí in serious distress within 1 mile)  
Speak an extra two modern human languages
- 8 Any Class III crafts  
Uncanny Perception (+PsyAb/10% to spot secret doors/traps, +1 save vs Illusions)
- 9 Enhanced Psychic Sensitivity (can use ESP to detect magic, nexus points, illusions and demonic activity at half normal percentage)  
Pé Chóí Medicine (if Priest or Sorcerer – negates penalties when using healing magic on a fellow Pé Chóí; penalty to revivification remains)
- 10 Tíi-pétk (negotiator with human authorities on behalf of own people, +PsyAb/10 Comeliness to humans)
- 11 'Enhanced Appropriate Action' (additional +1d6% to success in any skill roll, characteristic check or success in any task outside those listed above)

12. Nipw-nchópk (leader among own kind, many tasks and duties, but great respect and suggestions are automatically listened to, +1d10 Com)

**Many Pé Chói (roll 1d20 3 times):**

1. Do not like the Ito clan of the Chákas, regarding them as the cause of much woe to ordinary people of the region.
2. Are loyal to the Ito, the traditional rulers of Do Chaka and protectors of deep forests against human intrusion.
3. Cannot bear to be around Ahoggyá, finding their loudness and peculiar personal habits even more irritating and disgusting than humans do.
4. Are socially awkward due to their difficulty reading human emotions and the disturbance caused by the chaotic human psyche: -2d10 Comeliness to humans, and can inadvertently cause offence from time to time.
5. Are extremely diplomatic and can smooth over almost any argument with their poise and polished manners - +2d10 Comeliness to humans.
6. Collect things as a hobby, and are passionate about the object of their obsession.
7. Know the uses of many herbs and plants in the local forests and hedgerows.
8. Love gardening, and have a quiet indoor or roof garden to retreat to.
9. Dress in the latest human fashions.
10. Can sit absolutely still, hardly breathing, for hours.
11. Are unusually vehement in their religion, despising Pé Chói of the opposite alignment.
12. Are virtually atheists, adopting a heretical philosophy that regards the abstract forces of stability and change as primal and the gods as mere anthropomorphisms created for the benefit of the simple by wiser heads.
13. Are extremely loyal to their spouses and only ever have one.
14. Are neuters, having lost all sexual interest and ability and turned greyish in colour (this may spontaneously occur at any time and spontaneously reverse).
15. Claim to have had a vision or dream of the Forest of Hh-kk-ssá, the Pé Chói equivalent of heaven.
16. Are believers in a form of Geomancy something like Feng Shui, and arrange their homes 'harmoniously with the octaves of the soil.'
17. Can whittle simple and elegant tools from almost any piece of wood.
18. Have incised patterns of shallow grooves in their chitin which they fill with chalk or soot based paints.
19. Are excellent at climbing trees and balancing on branches using their middle limbs as legs.
20. Have problems with their feet when walking on hard human roads/pavements and use a walking stick or staff.

**Some Pé Chói (roll d16 once):**

1. Remember the lost Pé Chói state of Etk-mnúkt-ssâ and conspire to restore it and be independent of humans.
2. Can read and write in the old Pé Chói alphabet using a stylus on a cylinder of clay or soft wood.

3. Have a refined sense of aesthetics, superior to that of humans, especially with regard to music and visual art – they rarely appreciate poetry and literature however.
4. Are valued informers for the Omnipotent Azure Legion or the Mourners in Sable – their quiet demeanours and acute senses make them good at overhearing secrets.
5. Have learned to keep their tails above watery surfaces, and can get out of streams and rivers without panicking.
6. Have a selfish streak that decreases their psychic abilities (half PsyAb when working out the success percentages of such skills, half score for 'appropriate action' bonus), but enhances personal magic, adding 9+1d6% to the chances of successful spell casting.
7. Love eating meat as humans cook it and will pay good money to eat a meal cooked by a famous chef, preferably with a fine wine.
8. Habitually chew a mildly narcotic tree bark which they say enhances their natural sense of 'appropriate action', and get bad tempered when they can't get it.
9. Can act as 'Psychic Reservoirs', enhancing the chances of sorcerers they assist to successfully cast spells by PsyAb/10%. This does not apply to their own magic.
10. Have a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, getting anxious if they cannot perform the daily routines they see as 'appropriate action.'
11. Are exceptionally calm, cool and collected, never angry, always being patient and polite under the most trying circumstances – these individuals are often deployed by the civil service to deal with complaints.
12. Are excellent mimics, making all kinds of sounds with their spiracles (except the gurgling of Ahoggyá).
13. Can, in cases of emergency, transmit a brief telepathic message to a random Pé Chói within 5 miles.
14. If they sense a Pé Chói dying (even at long range) will not rest until they have found his/her name and said a prayer for him/her to the appropriate Pé Chói deity.
15. Are very shy and self-effacing and miss many chances to be promoted in their chosen profession.
16. Have dry, droll senses of humour

**Pé Chói sometimes carry (roll d16 for 1d3 items before buying equipment):**

1. A pouch of seeds, of herbs and flowers and fruiting bodies of fungi, from the depths of the Chákan forest.
2. A bone strigil for cleaning one's carapace.
3. A pair of comfortable leather shoes.
4. An item of fashionable human clothing adapted to fit.
5. A compartmented pouch for storing herbs.
6. A bead of amber with an insect or leaf allegedly from the Forest of Hh-kk-ssá trapped inside.
7. A diamond shaped wooden buckler.
8. An elegantly carved wooden bowl and spoon.
9. A pouch of narcotic Ytiipk bark to chew.
10. A collection of 1d6 objects of the same kind.
11. An abstractly carved wooden bracelet or arm ring, the significance of which is not easily explicable to humans.

12. A small stone pendulum for measuring the harmonious octaves of the soil and trees.
13. Paint for one's ornamental carapace scarification.
14. A plain black or white stone on a simple leather thong, representing one of the two Pé Chóí deities.
15. A brick of dried Ukt'iq leaves for making a bitter but refreshing tea curing aches and pains, esp. in the feet.
16. A pair of leather gloves for the second pair of hands; useful if one has to adopt a four footed gait.

Pé Chóí armour and equipment is available in most large Tsolyáni cities. They use leather, chainmail and plate as do humans, but usually prefer lighter and partial armour to give them more scope for rapid movement (-1 AC) and use small bucklers, sometimes two at once held by the secondary arms (double shield bonus). They can use human weapons but find them poorly balanced and heavy to use, and prefer ones made by their own species. Pé Chóí equipment can cost from 50% to 150% more than the standard kind, depending on the local Pé Chóí population.

**Playing a Pé Chóí:** Some GMs will rule that the psychology and motivation of non-humans is so bizarre that they should not be used as PCs. If Pé Chóí are allowed I suggest the following as a rough guide to playing them:

- I'm so sensitive. Pé Chóí see things others don't – literally in the sense that they can see in the dark and notice tiny details that escape others, and in a more abstract sense in that many claim they can perceive such ephemera as invisible demons, psychic auras, ley-line like octaves in the earth and rock, nuances in music and in voices that betray inner truths of the universality of Ntk-dqékt, and so on. They can even survive in five-dimensional alternate universes, where mere humans are mentally scarred by brief exposure to four dimensions. This trait can be pretty annoying to other species, even where they take advantage of it.
- Passion is for lesser species. Pé Chóí are always, or almost always, calm and reasonable. When all about them are losing their cool and screaming in panic, the Pé Chóí instinct for 'Appropriate Action' comes to the fore and they can save the day (or themselves and damn the rest, depending on how dedicated to the Black Old One they are). They can verge on being psychopaths in this respect, never letting emotion cloud their judgement.

**Pé Chóí in Traditional Fantasy Games:** As forest-dwellers with mystical powers Pé Chóí are similar in niche to elves, but with many alien quirks that make them resemble that other pointy-eared know-it-all species – the Vulcan – as well. I suggest Pé Chóí be allowed to reach 11th level as Mages, 7th level as Warriors and 7th level as Priests, with the option of being a 'forest shaman' who can combine Warrior and Mage in the ways that elves often can. Like elves they may be more formidable than some other character types, if somewhat fragile.



### Sample Pé Chóí NPCs:

#### Tukt'tk hiPii'keq of the Sliver Lightning Clan

Level I Priest of Thúmis, 2nd Circle Administrator  
Str 35 Int 71 Con 45 Psy Ab 82 Dex 65 Com 66/38  
+1 to hit, +0 damage, AC 8, HD 1+3, HP 7

**Abilities:** +1 AC due to chitinous skin; can see in semi-darkness; natural ESP 18%; detect secret doors 23%; detect traps 11%; -20% chance of revivification; +10% of healing spell/eye failing; -2 damage healed per die of healing spell; double damage from drowning, scared of water; can sense Pé Chóí dying within 1 mile; spell success 50%

**Skills:** Tsolyáni, Mu'ugalavyáni, Urban Pé Chóí, Perfumer, Produce Light, Detect Evil

**Equipment:** Comfortable shoes, dagger, three scrolls of calligraphy, pen box and inks, embroidered grey silk loincloth, flask of Purú oil

**Description:** Tukt'tk hiPii'keq is a newish acolyte at the Temple of Thúmis in Jakálla. His ancestors have been members of the well-to-do Silver Lightning clan for centuries, and entering the priesthood is a tradition for the sons of his lineage, but his heart is not in it. He has been reading far too much abstract philosophy and is moving

toward the heretical position that there are only two deities, one of change and one of stability, and that all the statues, temples and sacrifices are just a delusional excuse to make money. On the other hand, priesting is a pleasant job, giving him time to browse the libraries and meet other people who share his interest in fine calligraphy. He hangs around with an 'arty' set, and currently sports the latest fashion – a loincloth with an epigramme embroidered into the front tabard – and anoints himself with Purú oil. He amuses his fellow acolytes with his uncannily accurate impersonations of his priestly superiors and their sanctimonious ways, something which will earn him a beating one of these days. He may take the plunge into the Tsurú-úm as an amusing adventure to relate later at a dinner party, but his life is currently quite comfortable and he has no need to take such risks. If he gets into trouble at the temple, as well he might, his circumstances will change.

### **Hrrq Iipetk, Clan of Wooded Vale of Clear Springs**

Level IV Warrior, worshipper of the Father of Nests  
Str 62 Int 52 Con 55 Psy Ab 78 Dex 85 Com 36/18  
+2 to hit, +1 damage, AC 4, HD 4+1, HP 16

**Abilities:** +1 AC due to chitinous skin; can see in semi-darkness; natural ESP 30%; detect secret doors 22%; detect traps 4%; -20% chance of revivification; +10% of healing spell/eye failing; -2 damage healed per dice of healing spell; double damage from drowning, scared of water; sense Pé Chói dying within 1 mile; +1d6% Appropriate Action Bonus; forest bonus +13%; two attacks at -1 to hit

**Skills:** Forest Born, Axe, Sling, Hunter, Magical Senses, Keen Sight, Appropriate Action, Two Weapon Fighting

**Equipment:** Two axes, two bucklers, partial chainmail, amber bead with leaf from the Forest of Hh-kk-ssá, pouch of narcotic Ytiipk bark

**Description:** Hrrq Iipetk is a male neuter from a village in Do Chaka currently working as a caravan guard for a human merchant from Chéne Ho. He is a quiet, shy individual, easily ignored, and he likes it that way. He is always calm and collected and does his job well, solving practical problems for his boss like damaged chlén carts and lost trails without fuss or fanfare. His taciturn nature does turn somewhat surly when he has run out of chewing bark or someone messes with his meticulous routines, but otherwise he is as inscrutable as a Tiu tree. It is in the forests that PCs will notice his value: he spots small game scurrying in the undergrowth and picks it off with a single sling shot, picks Dnélú lairs, and senses when Zrné and Bith are silently lurking nearby. He will scout ahead by scuttling up a tree himself and slipping through the branches high above, and will sit motionless just outside the light of the campfire, staring into the dark. City Pé Chói may get rather romantic about him, describing him as 'one who hears the harmonious octaves of the land' and 'a very twig from the trees of Hh-kk-ssá', but in fact his woodcraft is nothing special compared to the tribal Pé Chói of the really deep woods and he knows it. He has a very healthy respect and fear for these potentially dangerous savages.

### **Ukti'ik 'the Witch', Clan of the Spotted Diamond**

Level IX Sorcerer, Worshipper of Hrü'ü/Black Old One  
Str 22 Int 97 Con 62 Psy Ab 104 Dex 38 Com 66/28  
+1 to hit, +2 damage, AC 7, HD 7+2, HP 27

**Abilities:** +1 AC due to chitinous skin; can see in semi-darkness; natural ESP 44%; enhanced ESP 22%; detect secret doors 76%; detect traps 53%; -20% chance to revivify; +10% of healing spell/eye failing; -2 damage healed/die of healing spell; x2 from drowning, scared of water; can sense Pé Chói dying within 5 miles, or suffering within 1 mile; 115% spell success; Ntk-dqékt bonus +10%

**Skills:** Magical Senses, Tsolyáni, Mu'ugalavyáni, Control of Self, Illusionist, Telekinesis, Deep Ntk-dqékt, Pé Chói Medicine, Enhanced Psychic Sensitivity, Nipw-nchópk, Scholar: History, Read Classical Tsolyáni, Read Classical Mu'ugalavyáni, Orator, Nature Control, Control Person

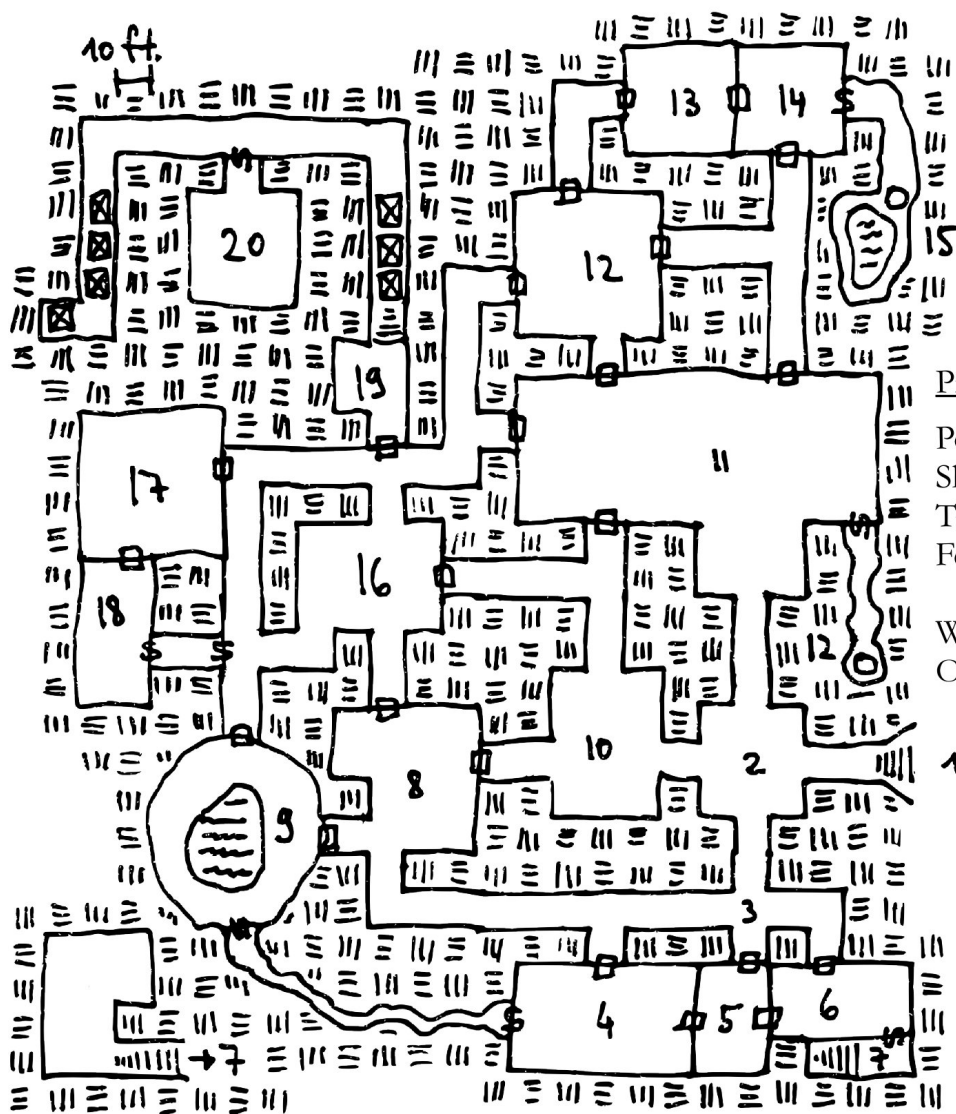
**Spells:** I Heal Minor Wounds; II Cold, Sleep; III Change Self or Others, Mind Bar.

**Equipment:** dagger, partial leather, abstract wood bracelet

**Description:** Though born into a low clan, Ukti'ik rose quickly in the clergy of Hrü'ü due to her penetrating intelligence and dedication to research. She is an expert in the Time of No Kings and has travelled to libraries on both sides of the Tsolyáni/Mu'ugalavyáni border, consulted remote archives in Pijéna and Yan Kór, and accessed records at Avanthár concerning the reign of Nríga Gaqchiké. Her major work, the *True Gospels of the Black Old One*, has been suppressed by the Court of Purple Robes, and she is avidly sought by the Omnipotent Azure Legion, the Ito clan and the Temple of Hnálla. Her thesis is that the ancient state of Etk-mnúttikt-ssá worshipped the Black Old One, but the religion was suppressed first by the Ito and then by the Imperium itself, only to re-emerge in the reign of Nríga Gaqchiké. The worship of the Father of Nests is a product of Engsvanyáli propaganda, and there is in fact no such deity. This has been aimed at keeping Pé Chói submissive to humans, whereas in the Time of No Kings the Pé Chói actually ruled a mostly human empire, a peaceful utopia guided by Appropriate Action as interpreted by Pé Chói theocrats. Many historians dispute this vehemently, and her attempts to win self-rule for the Pé Chói of Do Chaka and Mu'ugalavyá have won her few friends, though the Royalist Party was initially supportive. She is thought to be the mastermind behind a wave of sectarian riots in Pé Chói communities across Tsolyánu, the vandalism of Ito Necropolis by Pé Chói nightwatchmen and the assassination of a high-ranking tax collector in Tumíssa. She can be recognised by the clan scars on her upper arms, in the form of a curve-sided diamond with a square spot in the middle. With her illusion magic she could appear as human or almost anything, however. Rumours among her adherents in Do Chaka say she has found her way to the Forest of Hh-kk-ssá itself and cannot be found by mere humans, though a Pé Chói answering her description has been seen in Chaigári several thousand miles away. Copies of her book are still available, it is said, but only as clay cylinders inscribed in Pé Chói cuneiform. Ω



# Former Gnomish Caves



## Random Encounters

1. ogres (1-6)
2. rats (1-6)
3. snake (1)
4. kobold slaves (1-6)
5. bats (1-6)
6. chicken (1)

## Prisoners Room

Ponom	4	halfling
Shasa	11	wine
Tarper	11	merchants
Fenson	11	
Waspheart	13	forest elf
Oakleaf		

1 Eventually the ogre mage Barziddom will return.

Some ogres are on a hunting trip. Total ogres is about 20.

1. gnomish gate with leaf carvings; dead and eaten humanoids
2. ogre guard wearing a ring of charm person
3. dark passages filled with leaves, branches, bones, rats, and snakes
4. two ogre females with kids mistreating a halfling prisoner (Ponom)
5. full of rubbish, crack in the wall reveals hidden compartment containing gnomish coins (500 sp, 30gp) and a viper
6. empty bookshelves, one of them concealing a secret door
7. stairs down, empty bookshelves and a lab, grey ooze destroyed everything, will hide and try to cut off a retreat
8. abandoned lair of some wild animal
9. water hole 20 ft. deep, the ground around it is thin, a break-in possible, helping a drowning man may cause further break-ins
10. room destroyed by ogres and used as an indoor grill
11. ogre lair, five ogres, asleep, cages for two halfling prisoners (Shasa and Tarper), a dead halfling on a spit, half eaten (Ben)
12. old dancing room with high vaulted ceiling and support beams, lying hidden on a beam is gold stolen from merchants (1000gp)
13. four ogres and a naked elf badly broken chained to the wall (Waspheart Oakleaf), some silver pieces hidden in a pouch (30sp)
14. a gnomish wraith lingers here, whispers "I was left behind and took four days to die!"
15. water pool and crack in the ceiling that provides an escape route, three stirges
16. empty
17. halfling in a cage (Fenson) who is afraid of an ogre mage returning, skulls, candles, shrunken heads, pots of undefined goo
18. table with magic sword recently taken from a paladin who had been charmed by dryads
19. empty
20. corridor trapped with multiple spiked pits, the secret room has the gnomish family treasure

# A Part of the Tsuru'unim

Drawn by Gremnér  
of Malcháiran

(aka Baz Blatt)

We came from the west, from the tunnel  
under the T tower of Girkuen.

This tunnel was an alley once, buried in the last  
Ditana. Lots of doorways and windows blocked  
with stones, floor filled with wet and broken slates,  
bad footing for a fight.

Saw the spoor of men, or maybe Mirur, saw the  
slime of the Mu'agh and heard the clicking of a  
Diagó. All must pass this way, but we saw  
none, all praise to the Fiery Father.

We did not dig out these doorways,  
and do not know what lays within

K'it'pchwé said this was the place;  
had the slaves dig it out and throw the spoil up  
against the west wall. He was wrong - all we found  
was centuries old jars, all smashed, and a Mu'agh.  
[late Hulchahän.

In this room we fought a Shédra  
- it had eaten the brains of three  
poor Nakomé.

Stank of Kirgha this way,  
and our path lay elsewhere

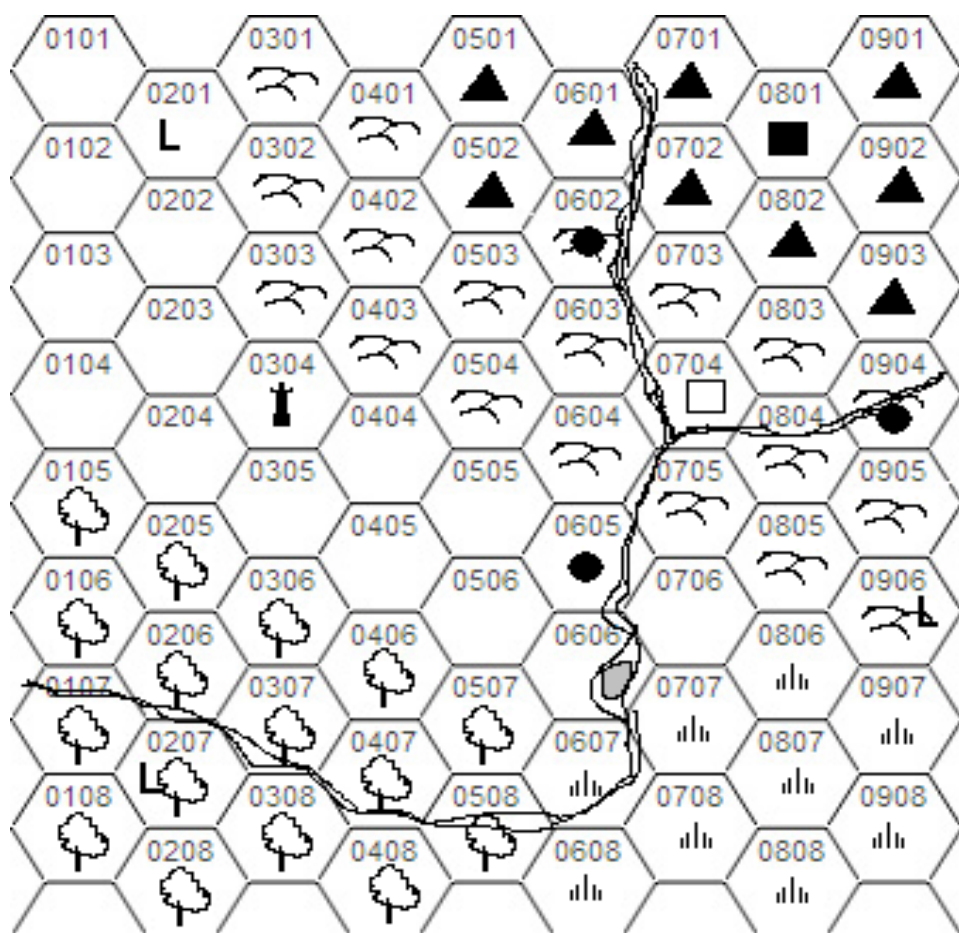
Found a káitar in the rubbish in this alcove;  
maybe more lay among the stones?

Came up out of the water in this shrine. Magic red lamps had been burning for  
centuries and there was a silver beetle thing the size of ch'len with a tongue of  
lightning. Juzúku said it was a demon before it took his head.  
Found lots of red gems, one exploded and blew my left hand off, got some gold  
as well. Couldn't find the hidden magic sword without the priest or the  
Pé Chói, a fuck up all round. Will kill that Su'unim when I see him.

Antechamber to the secret  
temple of the Bloody Blade,  
statues and a pool. K'it'pchwé  
wouldn't go in the red water  
so we left him and dived into  
the sunken entrance, the old  
'Baptism of Blood' the  
Su'unim told us about.  
When we got back we  
found him dead...

Dug out this room as the Su'unim suggested.  
Found the statuette of Karakán he said would be here.  
We set the obsidian beetle going and he scuttled east.  
The Pé Chói found the secret door right away, the trap was too old a broken to spring, all omens were good.

# Barony of Northmarch (or North March), by the Coffee Swillin' Analog Gamer



**Wandering Monsters:** Roll 3d6. Forest: +2, Mountains: -2, others as is.

- 1 - Red Dragon, 1
- 2 - Hill Giants, 2d4
- 3 - Dwarves, 3d6
- 4 - NPC Party
- 5 - Patriarch w/ 2d6 Retainers
- 6 - Patrol from Castle, 20, mounted
- 7 - Bandits, 4d6
- 8 - Ogres, 2d6
- 9 - Goblin Scouting Party, 3d6 (from 0906)
- 10 - Orc Scouting Party, 2d6 (from 0201)
- 11 - Goblin Raiding Party, 6d6 (from 0906)
- 12 - Orc Raiding Party, 4d6 (from 0201)
- 13 - Merchants, 3d6
- 14 - Antelope Herd, 5d6
- 15 - Wizard w/ 2d6 Retainers
- 16 - Foreign Troops, 3d8 (mtd on 1-2 on d6)
- 17 - Elves, 3d6
- 18 - Unicorns, 2d6
- 19 - Treants, 1d4+2
- 20 - Green Dragons, 1d2 (from 0207)

## Legend:

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Clear      | □ Castle  |
| Grasslands | ● Island  |
| Hills      | L Lair    |
| Mountains  | ■ Ruins   |
| River      | ⚓ Tower   |
| Woods      | ● Village |

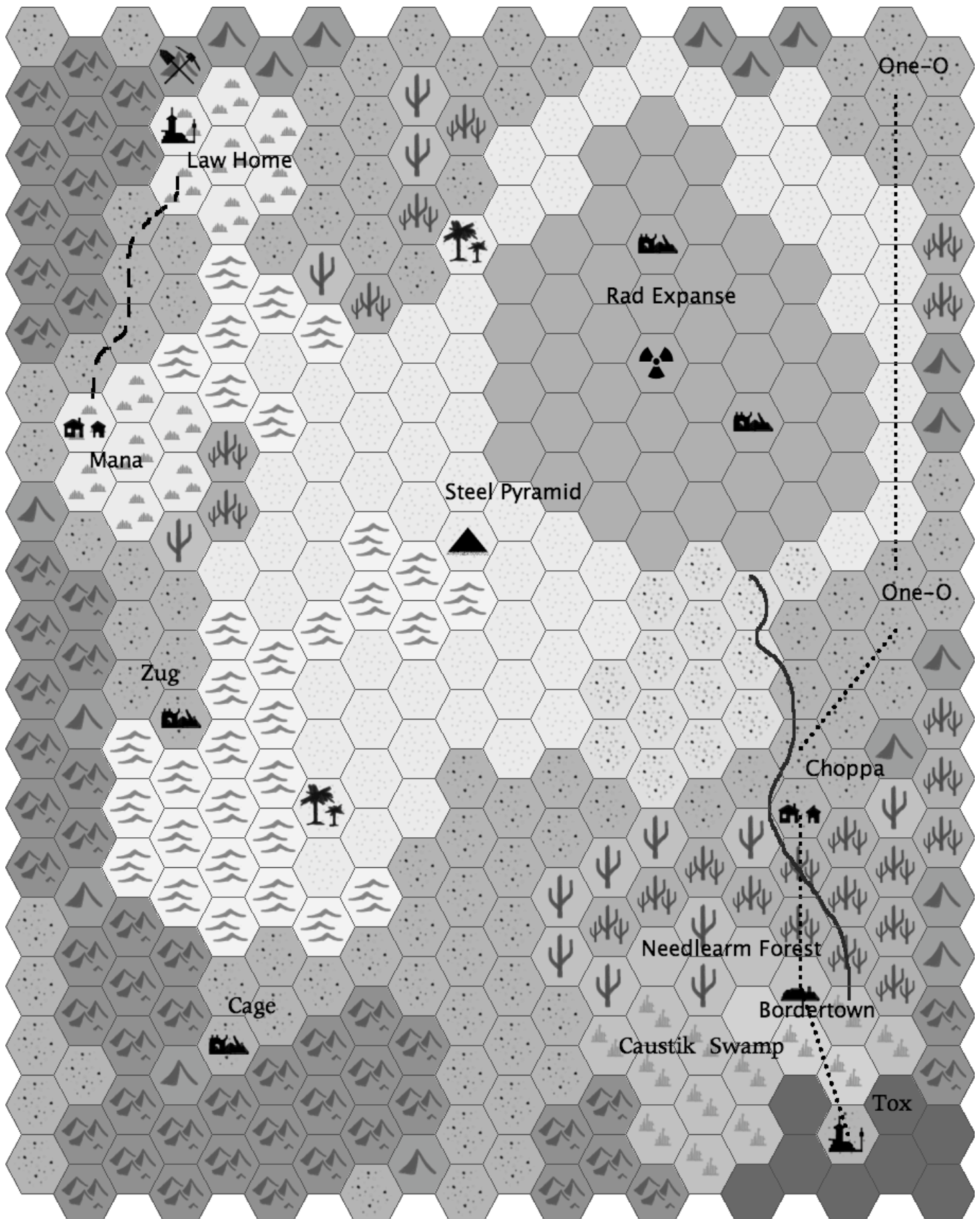
## Hex Key (1 hex = 5 miles)

0101. **Clear:** slightly rolling hills.
0102. **Clear:** slightly rolling hills, wild dogs.
0103. **Clear:** smells slightly of sulfur.
0104. **Clear:** growing wooded more to the south.
0105. **Woods:** heavy virgin forest; no undergrowth.
0106. **Woods:** virgin forest.
0107. **Woods:** forest with river
0108. **Woods:** forest
0201. **Clear / Orc Lair,** population 300 (or roll as normal). Ditch & palisade.
0202. **Clear:** Orc hunting grounds
0203. **Clear:** Nothing ever happens here. Single most boring place in the entire barony.
0204. **Clear:** Dotted with small ponds, good fishing.
0205. **Woods:** Infested with owls.
0206. **Woods:** Trees very large here.
0207. **Woods / Green Dragon Lair,** Mated pair, possibly with young?
0208. **Woods:** Thick growth of younger trees.
0301. **Hills:** Wild sheep can sometimes be found grazing here.
0302. **Hills:** Lightning hits here more often than any other hills.
0303. **Hills:** A series of small caves lead to a central chamber.
0304. **Clear / Tower** of the Wizard *Wreckspire the Wred*. Abandoned?
0305. **Clear:** Foundation of old wizard's tower.
0306. **Woods:** Chance of meeting 'Wizard Experiment' monstrosities.
0307. **Woods:** Anyone camping here will suffer mice.
0308. **Woods:** Large rocks abound, oddly.
0401. **Hills:** Giant tracks.
0402. **Hills:** Several ponds toward the east.
0403. **Hills:** Three perfect circles of scorched earth, where nothing grows.
0404. **Clear:** Short grasses, some shrubbery.
0405. **Clear:** Lightly forested.
0406. **Woods:** Heavy woods, with many songbirds.
0407. **Woods:** Dark and silent.
0408. **Woods:** Dank and mostly silent, with the occasional shrill call.
0501. **Mountains:** Rugged and snow-capped.
0502. **Mountains:** Less rugged.
0503. **Hills:** Strewn with rocks and boulders.
0504. **Hills:** Copses of trees abound.
0505. **Clear:** Strong winds from the Northwest.
0506. **Clear:** Prairie dogs abound.
0507. **Woods:** More open and airy, has been forested. Undergrowth.
0508. **Woods:** Swampy near the river.
0601. **Mountains:** Craggy Mount, looks just like John of Northmarch.
0602. **Hills / Craghill Village,** population 100
0603. **Hills:** Roadbuilding crew working their way north to Craghill.
0604. **Hills:** Some cultivation of southern slopes.
0605. **Dolders Village,** population 300
0606. **Clear / Haunted Isle:** Locals never go here.
0607. **Grassland:** With river, almost swampy but not quite.
0608. **Grassland:** Big cats.
0701. **Mountains:** Goats.
0702. **Mountains:** More goats.
0703. **Hills:** Some cultivation of southern slopes.
0704. **Hills / Castle Northmarch:** Pop. 200. Baron John of Northmarch. At confluence of North and East Branch Rivers (North continues)
0705. **Hills:** Well traveled and patrolled.
0706. **Clear:** Light scrub, rabbits.
0707. **Grassland:** Cats
0708. **Grassland:** Counter current of air brings scents of the jungle.
0801. **Dwarf Mine.** Abandoned over 100 years ago.
0802. **Mountains:** Sharp and craggy.
0803. **Hills:** Lightly wooded; Baron's hunting preserve. No poaching!
0804. **Hills:** More rolling.
0805. **Hills:** Rolling.
0806. **Grassland:** Goblin hunting grounds.
0807. **Grassland:** Non-native Lizard Men come through here sometimes.
0808. **Grassland:** Snakes and small lizards.
0901. **Mountains:** Normal mountains.
0902. **Mountains:** High, cold lake with very tasty fish.
0903. **Mountains:** Eagles dwell here.
0904. **Benten Village,** population 400. Goblin attacks
0905. **Hills:** Light shrubbery. Rabbits and voles.
0906. **Hills / Goblin Lair,** population 400 (or roll as normal)
0907. **Grassland:** Pretty much normal.
0908. **Grassland:** Punctuated by small streams.



# RAD EXPANSE OF THE BROKEN MOON

## Area Map



# Song of Tranquility

by Jerry Stratton; inspired by ERB's *John Carter of Mars*, HPL's *At the Mountains of Madness*, EGG's *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, Ridley Scott's *Alien*, and the Grateful Dead's *New Speedway Boogie*...

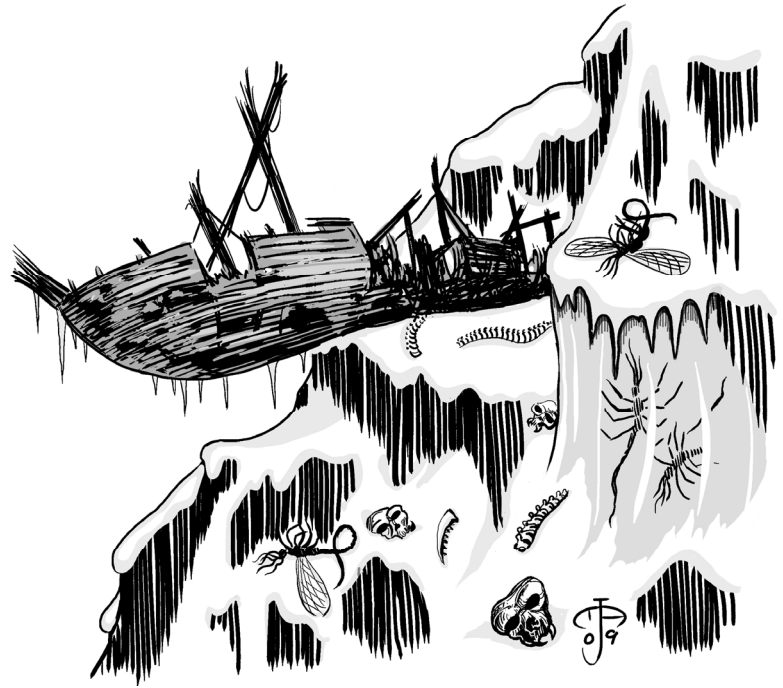
In a cold, windswept pass above the lesser peaks, there is a grave marked with a cross from an ancient ship's wood. Is this Noah's resting place? Or does something sinister wait at the wall of the world?

**The Mountain Pass:** The mountain is high, cold, and snow-capped. Few creatures live here. None go near the ship. The encounter chance is 2% by day and 5% by night.

01-16	Bobcat (1d2)	16%
17-28	Dire Wolves (2d4)	12%
29-39	Yeti (2d6)	11%
40-50	Ogres (1d8)	11%
51-59	Trolls (d4)	9%
60-66	Bats, giant (2d20)	7%
67-72	Dwarves (1d20)	6%
73-77	Gryphons (1d4)	5%
78-82	Wyverns (1)	5%
83-86	Manticores (1d3)	4%
87-89	Pegasi (1)	3%
90-92	Grey-hooked Bats (1d6)	3%
93-95	Petraids (d6)	3%
96-97	Cheimon (1)	2%
98	Rocs (1d3)	1%
99	Gakemai (1d6)	1%
00	Phoenix (1)	1%

The wind usually blows south to north. Nights are pitch-black. Most of the time clouds fill the air. The cold is deadly, and parties venturing here are far above the tree line, so there's little to burn. If adventurers can find warmth, shelter from the wind, and an enclosed space when they rest at night, and if they have warm clothing during the day, they'll be fine (if cold). Otherwise, they'll each need to make a health (system shock, etc.) roll every day in the mountains. A failure means they take one injury/hit point. A fire or other source of warmth in the night gives them a bonus on the roll, as do shelter and enclosed spaces. Inappropriate clothing means a penalty. Movement through the snowy pass is at half normal speed; snowshoes let them move at three-quarters.

**The Grave:** *Wooden planks form a crude ankh 120 yards up the west side of the pass.* If ankhs are not alien, choose a cross or some other symbol: it must be alien to what is normally encountered in your campaign.

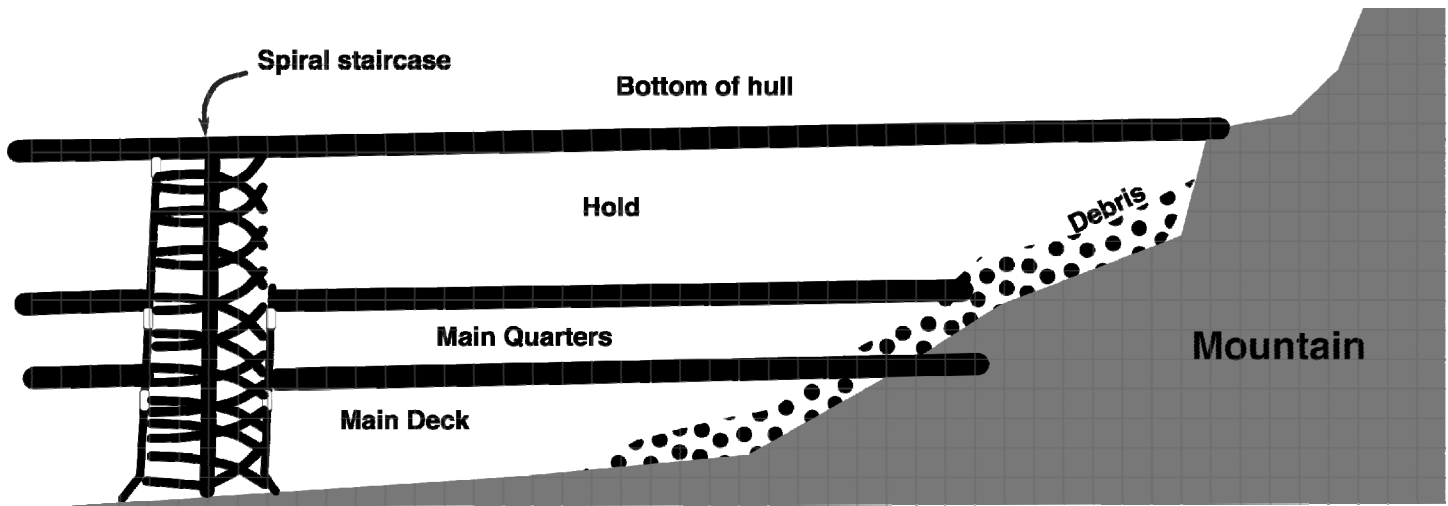


Scrawled on the front in Venusian is "Minister of Mars" (magical means of reading languages might not translate the location). Upside down, on the back of the arms of the ankh is, beautifully inscribed in a faded engraving, *Song of Tranquility*, the name of the ship (*Teké Li*). Buried four feet beneath in the hard frozen ground is the emissary from Venus to Mars. He is wrapped in sailcloth woven with mithril, and is buried with two matchlock handguns.

The arms of the ankh are from the outer hull of the *Teké Li* and are made of driftwood. If cleaned, they will not fall to the ground, no matter what is placed atop them; in fact, things put on them without any overhang will tend to fall gently towards the moon if it is in the sky, dropping back to the ground as soon as the plank is no longer completely between them and the ground. Parties reach the grave marking just before dark. The shattered ship is about a mile beyond; when they reach it, it's going to be bitterly cold and any shelter and/or fuel should be welcome.

**The Ship of Peace:** *Some distance up the mountainside, a great broken back of a structure hangs off the edge.* The ship is a quarter mile up the mountainside and it will take half an hour to an hour to reach it. It looks like it's been abandoned for centuries. Holes are rent through its wooden sides, and snow drifts through the holes. Wooden beams hang low throughout the interior. The ship is upside down. The ruins are 240 yards long, with about 155 yards of hull that hasn't been completely crushed on the mountain. The outer hull of driftwood is gone. A few bits remain scattered through the ruins. Most has drifted into space or far away. If they search near the ship in daylight (or with good light at night) they'll see the gnawed bones and mummified remains of strange creatures in the snow.





*Frozen in the ground around the structure are the torn, gnawed bones of long-dead men and women. But among these bones are stranger things: skeletons with great spines, long jawbones, and wide eye-sockets. Worse still are mummified remains of wasp-like creatures, with sharp pincers at the ends of eight spindly limbs. One or two still sport paper-thin gray membranes that might once have been wings, and a few have tails that snake away from their bodies. Their in-human faces, covered in string-like filaments, stare from ice and snow.*

The *Teké Li* was 1,027 yards long overall, 750 yards “length between perpendiculars”. The ship’s hold, including the lower deck, was 60 yards deep, and the ship was 100 yards wide. It was built in layers, with the outer hull made from driftwood. Inner layers are a hard Venusian wood similar to teak. The sails were of sailcloth woven with mithril. Driftwood blocks gravity, so that ships may sail in the air. Sailcloth catches sunlight just as normal sails catch wind. Mithril thread improves sailcloth’s ability to catch the solar wind. See “Silver Sail and Gold” at hoboos.com/driftwood for more about driftwood and sailcloth. The *Teké Li* was attacked near Earth by Gakemai from the outer asteroids. Their hull was breached so badly the ship splintered in two. Suddenly subject to gravity, the ship plummeted to the ground, and most died in the crash. Those who survived died in the fighting that followed and from the bitter cold of the mountain. The bodies that litter the area are Do’alas (the “normal” remains), Ta’alas (the lizard-like remains), and Gakemai (the wasp-like remains). The bones of the Do’alas and Ta’alas have been gnawed clean by the Bubbler (see below). The teeth marks seem to have been made by a small creature, but even characters with animal lore will not recognize them. They look almost human. Animals avoid the ship; the spoor of the bubbler frightens them away. The ship’s wood burns slowly, but will burn if parties have a magic fire to light it.

**Do’alas and Ta’alas:** The Venusians appear in this adventure only as corpses and illustrations in books. The Do’alas are the ruling race of Venus; the Ta’alas are their lizardman slaves. The Do’alas look human, yet oddly so,

and it isn’t just the red tint to their skin: the eyes are angled upwards, and the faces are just a bit rounder than normal. To the characters, it will be obvious that some parts of the ship are made for human-sized creatures (Do’alas), while others are for something much larger (Ta’alas).

**The Gakemai:** There are five Gakemai corpses in the snow which will rise and attack shortly after the PCs arrive. *Huge grey wasps five feet long dart towards you like drunken fireflies, thin membranous wings buzzing like the rending of ancient paper. Eight arms end in sharp pincers, and a sharp tail jerks menacingly behind them.* Ideally the GM should conjure some pretext for this, such as disturbance or the trace of holy or necromantic magic. **Gakemai Zombies:** HD 5; hp 32, 25, 14, 26, 30; SPD 12/24; Att 2 pincers and/or tail, 1d8/1d8 or 1d10; DC 3. Gakemai can attack three targets at once, but not the same target with both pincers and tail. When Gakemai walk they scuttle like beetles and can move up walls as quickly as on a flat surface. They also fly like hummingbirds, hovering in place or darting quickly. Their eight arms end in sharp pincers, and their prehensile tail is sharp as a scythe. When alive, gakemai vaguely resemble pastel-pink wasps with paper-thin pink and grey wings. They communicate through color shifts in the transparent, crystalline antenna-like appendages on their faces. Gakemai speak out loud to their slaves, but their voices resemble a high-pitched buzzing much like the noise that occasionally emanates from high-voltage power lines.

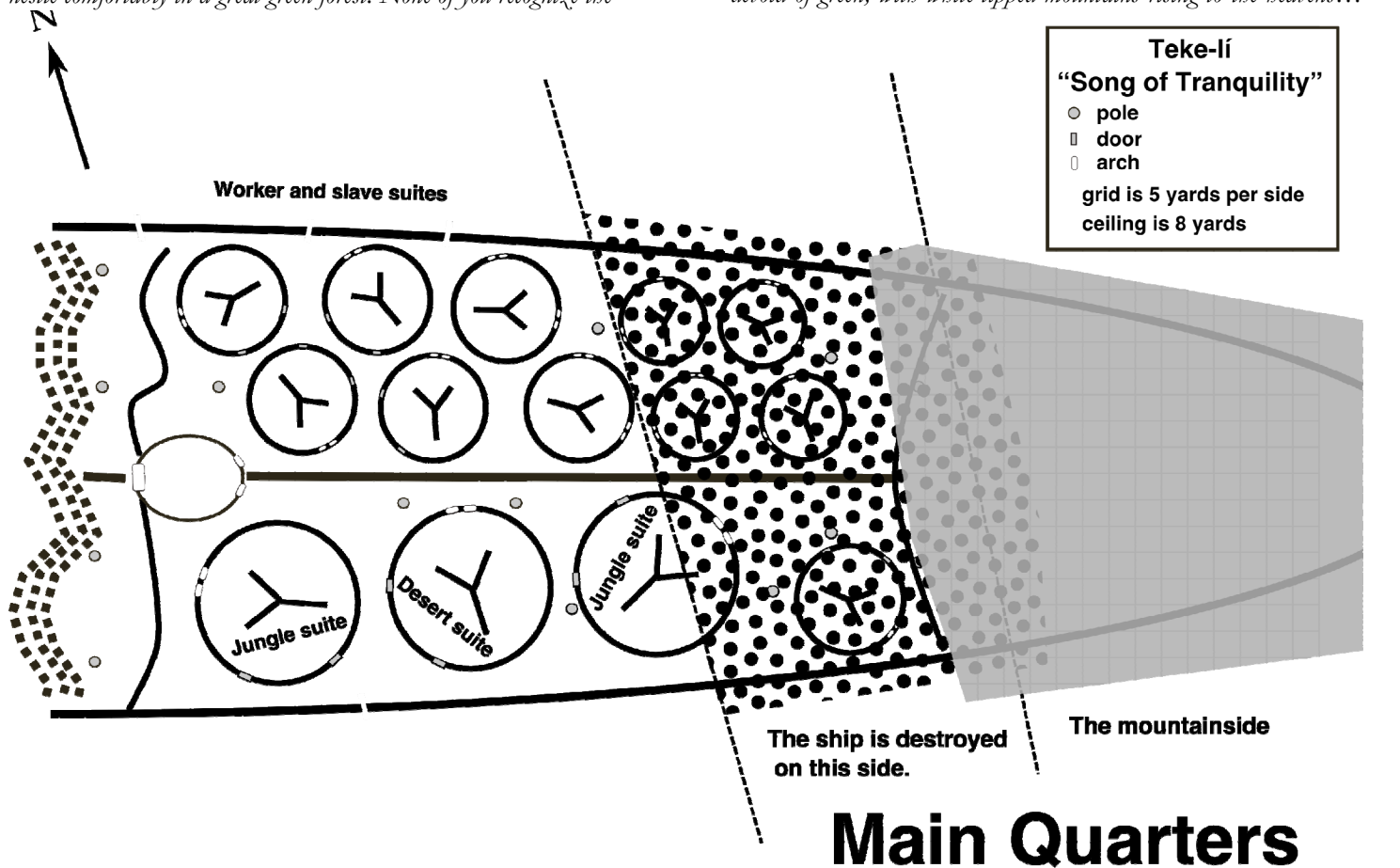
**The Hold:** PCs will most likely come in through the hold, as it is the easiest entryway. *A great hole has been staved through the shattered wood here, and lumber lies strewn across the snow. Beyond this hole is another wall ten feet ahead, and it, too, is pierced by a gigantic dark bole. Beams lie at angles across the space between the walls. You see walls many yards down on either side.* The main area of the hold is huge, with the highest point of the ceiling (down the middle) 26 yards up. *Your light doesn’t even rise to the ceiling, and both left and right fade into darkness. Wooden beams and debris lie everywhere. You see a few white bones mixed among them. Giant poles rise at various points throughout this*

massive structure, and a huge wall rises from the debris forty yards ahead of you. The wind whistles tunelessly through the holes in the outer wall, but the air here is still. There is no cargo left in the hold (unless the GM has something special in mind): it was lost or jettisoned when the ship broke in two.

**The Stairway Shaft:** The shaft contains the spiral staircase, but the ship is upside down and so are the stairs. The underside is not stepped, and although mostly smooth it is also heavily cracked. Walking down it will require an agility roll or appropriate precautions to avoid slipping and falling. The shaft is twenty yards (sixty feet) down to the ground. The floors between each level are three yards thick. Remember that the ship is upside down: the doors are on the “ceiling”, meaning that people going through them will have to drop down to the “floor”.

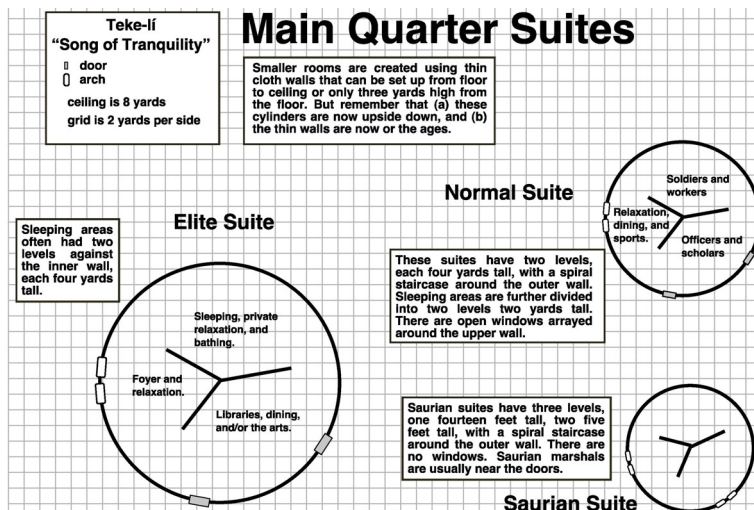
**The Main Quarters:** Great cylinders rise from floor to ceiling here, painted green and brown. The cylinders come in two sizes, twenty and thirty yards in diameter. Light pencils through from cracks in the side walls, just enough to show shapes and basic color. The cylinders were living quarters. Each cylinder was its own suite of rooms. Curtains, now part of the debris, partitioned the three spokes of a cylinder into smaller spaces.

On the south side, the first larger cylinder is covered with scenes from a Venusian jungle. *Wooden and stone buildings nestle comfortably in a great green forest. None of you recognize the*



*plants; the trees have wide, rounded leaves. Strange flowers hang rope-like from the branches. The buildings look vaguely Turkish, towers clustered together with rounded, onion-topped domes. There is a looped cross like the one in the snow on one building. Men walk together and lounge in chairs in gardens of unknown foliage; among them green lizardmen walk upright. Looking for more details reveals a red tint to the people’s skin, and that the lizard-like creatures, a foot or two taller than the humans, carry wood, stones, and wooden tubs in the background.*

The second large cylinder depicts desert scenes from Mars, including a prayer tree plantation. *A reddish-brown landscape, devoid of green, with white-tipped mountains rising to the heavens...*



*there is a grove of trees with branches reaching toward the sky like a priest in prayer. A long boat floats above the grove, its prow carved in the shape of some strange elongated bird. Working among the grove are tall, gangly men under supervision of more ordinary men. A few of the lizard-like creatures lift a carriage between sandstone buildings.*

The third large cylinder, partially destroyed, also has a jungle scene. In the rubble around the cylinder are ceramic shards with designs in various shades of green and yellow. Anyone digging deep in the rubble will also find a hypercube toy if a suitable roll is made. The rubble at the far end contains ceramics and Venusian supplies, such as three soup-can sized containers of driftwood oil.

**The Desert Suite:** The Martian minister lived in the desert-decorated cylinder with his wife and teenage daughter. The women (and a saurian servant) are dead within the cylinder. Because the ship is upside down, the arches and doors are on the "ceiling". Someone will need to climb or fly to the arch to get through or open doors. The wooden walls are two feet thick. Looking through an arch or door, the first thing they'll see is furniture on the ceiling. (Furniture was attached to the floor and some of it remained attached after the crash.) Studying the scene reveals the mother's corpse, frozen and dry, and lots of shattered domestic gear. If they lean in and peer around the partition they can see the corpse of the daughter and part of a bed. There are bits of driftwood amber floating in the air. *Honey-colored dots float in front of your eyes like giant sunbeam dustmotes.* The fifteen dots are a quarter-inch to a half-inch in diameter. Non-floating, they'd be worth 10-20 gs each. The corpses both wear simple cream-colored dresses with gold and green thread. The mother is 5'3" and wears a necklace of white gems resembling large pearls (200 gs); the daughter is 5'4" and wears a jade locket in the shape of an ankh (30 gs) and an emerald anklet (450 gs). The ankh opens to reveal a silver key that opens a small chest floating in the air in the room with the shattered bed. Slumped and dead half-off that bed, and (like the chest) not visible until characters have entered that area, is a small

creature like the lizard-things in the paintings. It is 5 feet tall, a young servant of the minister's daughter. He wears a ruby anklet carved from one solid piece of ruby (600 gs).

**The Hyperbox Chest:** This driftwood chest is lacquered with prayer tree sap. The wood is etched and pale. The etchings show a stark landscape of white, jagged hills. The built-in lock is on the front. The chest weighs nothing, no matter what is put into it.. Because it's made of driftwood, things that are above it float free from gravity as well. It is 12"x8"x8" on the inside, with 3/4-inch thick sides. This is a hyperbox: it has eight compartments and will align with a random compartment every time the box is unlocked. The compartments contain:

1. A Venusian doll, made of cloth and ceramic.
2. Three Venusian children's books: a story about a castle in the clouds and the children who live there; an inscrutable children's tutorial (*Left, Across, Away, Up*) on using hypercubes and hyperboxes, which humans lack the sense to fully understand; and an alphabet book with a picture of something for each letter.
3. A white dress with gold and green trim, for a thin 5'4" girl. It is folded and in good shape.
4. This compartment is empty.
5. A paint set with four brushes and seven colors: dark green, light green, brown, red, white, black, yellow. The paints are no longer liquid, but are dryish and sticky.
6. A pan-flute made of four reeds of a bamboo-like plant. There are two sheets of simple music, but the arcane symbols aren't obviously music.
7. An emerald necklace, a jade ring, and a thin silver wire tiara with a shiny black gem in the center.
8. This compartment is empty.

Whenever the chest is unlocked by key or magically), roll d8 to see which compartment it aligns to. The chest has a rounded indentation on top, and a ridge running through the center of the indentation; the ridge has a small hole in it for a carrying string. If the box is destroyed, the current compartment will fall into normal space. Other contents are only visible to those who can see the other dimension in which they reside. Disturbances in those dimensions may cause those contents to re-appear in normal space.

**The Jungle Suite:** Tables and divans intact and shattered are strewn from ceiling to floor here. In the relaxation area are books and wooden drums (split due to age if not the crash). In the far area are green baths, jade faucets, and mirrored ceiling tiles, all shattered. (These can be worth d20 gs each if they look for the best fragments, with 4-40 such locatable with an hour of searching.) This suite was used by the minister and visiting dignitaries. Amid the wooden, metal, and ceramic debris, a lacquered platter covered with an orange-hued sandy landscape lays lightly against the wall. The platter is driftwood, lacquered in driftwood resin. The landscape is of the Martian highlands. It looks a lot like Arizona, with deeper bands of color



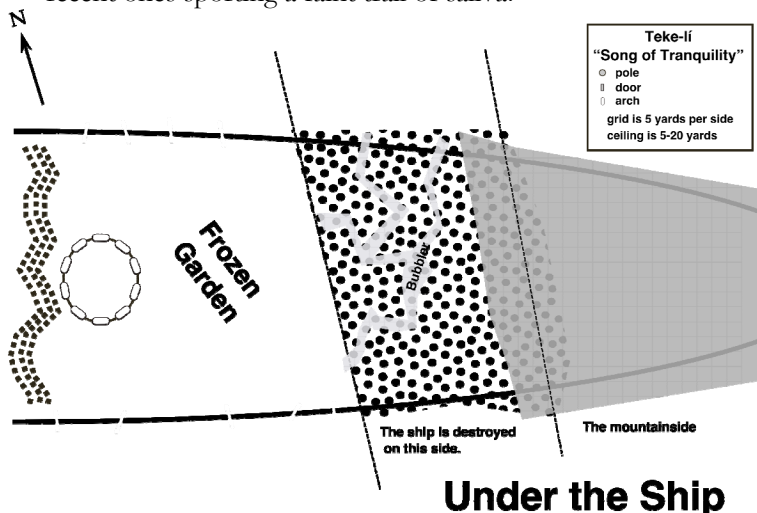
across the mesas. Books here include mapbooks of Mars, books about the government and people of Mars, and books about growing prayer trees and sailcloth.

**Driftwood platter:** Anything above the platter is unaffected by gravity. Unless secured, things on the platter will likely stay in place when the platter is moved, until the platter is no longer underneath and gravity tips them over. Items on the platter can be covered with a cloth draped over the sides to weight them down. There are three weak, thin magnets embedded in the platter to hold metal utensils or dishes with metal bottoms.

The toybox and platter need to be maintained once they're brought into the open. The cans of driftwood oil deep in the debris of the main quarters can be used for this. They can also be kept clean with magic. Otherwise, after a few weeks of use dirt and grime will build up, which will grab on to gravity. The wood will still block gravity, but the box and platter, while light, will no longer float.

**The Worker Suites:** There's less of interest here: more rubble and old tools. You might handle searching these cylinders as a single action.

**Under the Ship:** Strange plants are frozen to the ground in this desolate junk garden. Great beams of wood jumble together everywhere. Skeletons of lizards and humans, long nibbled clean, rest among this debris. Huge metal pipes (cannons) lie at angles; masts are scattered about, bits of sail still attached here and there by ragged ropes. The cloth is woven with mithril. This deck once held a ball-room, gardens, observation towers, several smaller towers, and the sails and wings of the ship. The giant onion dome of the main stairway tower still hangs broken from the ceiling, but the domes of the smaller towers have fallen broken to the ground. Shards, cloth, and glass lie scattered among the skeletons. Clear tracks reminiscent of a huge slug can be made out along the ground if parties look, recent ones sporting a faint trail of saliva.



**The Bubbler:** The bubbler has been hibernating for years, its lair hidden behind rubble. It will awaken if disturbed, if there is fire near it, or if there is a lot of noise on its roof (e.g. from characters in armor walking on it). While hibernating it is virtually immune to most attacks. The bubbler can climb through the rubble on the mountainside to enter any level, as well as to leave the ship. *An amorphous blob covered in myriad eyes, mouths, noses, gills, and ears, protruding from a slimy black mass. It roils and rolls across the ground towards you, its dark burbling form towering above you; it must be three yards or more tall, and four yards wide.* **Bubbler:** HD 8; hp 53; SPD 15; Att 3 bites x 1d6; DC 4; Special engulf attack 3d6, split into 2-4 mini-bubblers, resistant to weapons, energy, cold, and fire, regeneration. This bubbler is hungry. It regenerates one hp per minute/combat round. Sharp weapons do only one point unless a PC makes a called shot to its eyes (this can be simply declared or a special roll, depending on your mechanics), in which case they do half damage. Blunt weapons do no damage except when the eyes are attacked, when they do 1 hp. Cold does no damage; fire does half; electrical, magical, and psychic energy attacks do normal damage but increase regeneration to 3hp/round for as many rounds as the damage caused by the energy. If the bubbler chooses it may concentrate its full force on one target, engulfing that target for 3d6 on a hit and automatically doing same each subsequent round until the engulfed victim is digested or breaks free. It can break into smaller pieces with a minimum of 2 HD each, each of which gets a single bite but no engulf attack; it might do this to battle spellcasters. It can lift 2,400 pounds. Once the bubbler

awakens, it will follow the party. Its programming is to eat, but it is patient and very stealthy, and it will follow and study its prey for two nights before attacking. The bubbler might also feed on easier creatures such as wolves while building up to an attack on the party: the characters thus might hear wolves in the night suddenly cease howling. Conceivably the bubbler might stalk a party well beyond the ruins of this ship, creating a cat-and-mouse adventure stretching across the frozen wastes to isolated northern villages and beyond.

### **Cool Stuff to Find**

Items from this list may be found amidst the wreckage.

**Books:** Venusian books read left to right, top to bottom. They are tall, about 7.5 inches by 14.2 inches, and bound in Venusian leather.

*Mars Illustrated:* Orange sandstone buildings; ancient cities 25,000 years old, now abandoned; prayer tree groves tended by the tall, gangly natives and overseen by tough Venusian managers. Great mountains rising taller than any the characters have known. Wide gossamer birds flying across the amber sky. Flying sailboats floating over riverbeds dry but for a few days each year. Night scenes sometimes show two small moons, sometimes one or none.

*Venus Illustrated:* The great forests of the homeland. Strange onion-domed buildings shrouded in mist. Great cities of stone covered in green and yellow vines, trees rising hundreds of feet into the air. Gigantic creatures crawling and walking through the trees, huge lizard-like things with gaping maws and jagged teeth. Men riding giant, long-headed birds with tails that whip behind them.

*Mercury Illustrated:* Fiery valleys; the huge red sun hanging over the desert land. Seas of quicksilver and fire. Ochre worms hundreds of yards long tunneling through the orange ground. Mountains spew fire into the air. Black lakes as smooth as glass.

*Earth Illustrated:* The stark landscapes of the Earth's moon. The great cities around the pillar of civilization: Rome. The Caliphates. The great forests, deserts, and snow-covered mountains. The mysterious peoples living across the ocean. (This tome might alternately show your campaign world as it existed several hundred years past.)

*Sailing the Solar Wind:* Full of incomprehensible navigation maps, this book also describes the Gakemai. Gakemai speak by shifting the colors of their antennae. It also describes, with illustrations, the indestructible shambling slave creatures composed of all sensory organs. The creatures feast on the brains of their prey. The mind organs of [mentalist?] are a special delicacy to them. They are difficult to attack; hard to cut, as only their eyes are

vulnerable; and resist cold and fire. They can lift hundreds of pounds. During an attack by these creatures, the Free Guard will only provide indirect assistance: they feed on mental emanations; direct ectoplasmic discharges hurt them initially but strengthen them over time.

*The Tribes of Mars:* This book describes hundreds of Martian tribes, their cultures and known ruler.

*Managing Saurians:* This manual for slave-owners describes how to house, feed, and motivate Saurian (Ta'alas) slaves, with an addendum for Martian workers.

**Tools:** Cup-like lamps, some with traces of fat, were used for portable light. Within the worker area, there is the occasional hammer, saw, awl, and knife. The metal is a light-weight iron for most of the tools; the lamps are a copper alloy, and green. (There were ceramic lamps, but they shattered.)

**Sailcloth and Driftwood:** Sailcloth is woven from the thread of the sailmoth, which lives only on the red world's highlands. The best sailing thread is produced in the dry, rarefied Martian summers. Sailcloth catches the sun's wind. When their rivers dried, the Martians used sailcloth to continue sailing the dry riverbeds. Venusians discovered that when woven with silver or gold thread, sailcloth can take a sailing ship into the darkness between worlds. Driftwood is harvested from the prayer tree. The prayer tree grows best on Mars, but has been transplanted to the belt of tiny worlds beyond Mars and to the livable zones of Mercury. The wide, flat leaves and white flowers are used for decoration and for clothing. The leaves form every summer but the trees bloom into flower only every few years when the air is especially thick. Driftwood, once harvested, must be treated. The best treatment is a varnish made from prayer tree sap. Other varnishes may be used if they are mixed with a sufficient amount of sap. Care must be taken to ensure that the outer edge of any driftwood device is clean, or it will fail.

**Hypercube Toy:** This toy is a sandalwood-like wooden cube four and a half inches on a side. Each side has a four-inch hole. Each hole randomly aligns with one of the other holes. A character might look through one hole and see things on the floor or the ceiling, or around the corner. They can even thrust things through one hole and it will come out the random other hole. The alignment changes every time something is thrust inside and every time it is shaken or jostled. The toybox and hypercube toy are fourth-dimensional spaces. The Do'alas ruling family learn to manipulate these spaces when young. The young girl could align the hypercube's openings as desired. Normal humans can't manipulate these spaces, so the alignment of the compartment and openings are random every time those devices are used. Ω





## Pits & Similar Traps

(50% empty hole in the ground 50% d12 below)

1	The 'pit' is actually the mouth of a hungry creature.
2	The pit is empty, but dungeon inhabitants check it regularly and are likely to kill anyone they find.
3	Bottomless pit – find escape or fall forever.
4	The victim lands in Hell (or at least in an area whose occupants believe themselves to be in Hell).
5	Teleporting pit - roll on Teleportation table below.
6	Victim lands in the next lowest level of the dungeon. Roll again if the pit is itself on the lowest level.
7	The pit is filled with water.
8	As above, and a dangerous creature lives there (1-2 d3 sharks 3-4 giant octopus 5-6 20d10 piranhas).
9	The bottom of the pit is covered in spikes.
10	As above, but the spikes are poisoned.
11	There is a prisoner kept at the bottom of the pit – create or roll on Prisoners of Evil table in <i>FO!</i> #3.
12	The pit is filled with (1-2 spiders 3-4 snakes 5-6 scorpions; 1-3 poisonous (d4), 4-5 large (d2), 6 both).

## Teleportation (d10)

1	Back to the dungeon entrance.
2	To a cell somewhere in the dungeon, 50% chained.
3	The bottom of a high pit somewhere in the dungeon.

4	To an inter-dimensional arena, where they must fight the victim of a similar trap to the death unless they can make peace. Roll again to see where 2-4 arena exits go. (Treat arena as on level it was entered from.)
5	Hell (or some other extraplanar locale).
6	The rooms of a main dungeon villain, 90% chained.
7	To a safe place on the surface far from the dungeon.
8	A random dungeon level (reroll if same as current.)
9	The next level down (reroll if on lowest level already).
10	The very bottom level of the dungeon (reroll if there).

## Lingering Effects of Being Raised (d16)

1	Character comes back diseased (roll or determine).
2	Returns a 'Typhoid Mary', infecting others w/ disease.
3	An evil supernatural creature such as a doppelganger, demon, or ghost is brought into the world with the raised PC. They are unable to directly harm the character, but will work to bring about their death.
4	A close relative or friend of the character dies.
5	Character's return drains a level from someone near.
6	The character is disfigured.
7	Character gains occult knowledge which drives them nearly mad and gives them a haunted appearance.
8	Character initially OK but withers into undead being in d4+1 weeks unless wasting disease cured..
9	Character has uncanny good luck for the next month.
10	The character gains +1 wisdom and an air of holiness.
11	Character becomes uncannily brave for one year.
12	Character is given a glimpse of the future.
13	Character is severely weakened for the next month.
14	The character's body comes back inhabited by an evil supernatural creature.
15	Roll a magical fumble/botch result (e.g. from Effects of Powerful Magic on the Caster table in <i>FO!</i> #5).
16	Roll twice on this table.

## Angry Villager Table (d6)

Random

1	Tarred and Feathered (10% chance Chickened instead)
2	Stripped and Beaten (25% chance to death)
3	Hanged (15% also Drawn and Quartered)
4	Thrown in a Dungeon (35% and Key Thrown Away)
5	Simply Killed (20% with Preliminary Torturing)
6	Run Out of Town (75% Pelted by Vegetables)

## Random Djinn Table (d12)

Del L. Beaudry

1-2	Humble Page	9	Shrewd Effendi
3	Stolid Footman	10	Skeptical Caliph
4-6	Wily Chamberlain	11	Magnanimous Sultan
7-8	Arrogant Khan	12	Splendid Rajah



## Twenty Dungeon Enigmas (d20)

Jeff Rients

1	A patch of slime on the floor seems to be dripping upward towards the ceiling.
2	A message is smeared on the wall in fresh blood, written in a language dead 20,000 years.
3	Dusty spiderwebs clog a tunnel you passed through just minutes ago.
4	A random party member starts bleeding profusely out of their tear ducts.
5	You find a discarded hat that looks exactly like the one worn by the mentor of the party's mage.
6	A pair of rats wearing tiny jester costumes scuttle down the hall.
7	Three dragon skulls are found neatly stacked in front of a kobold lair.
8	During the next combat all party members bleed green when wounded.
9	You hear the sound of bagpipes from just out of lantern range.
10	The next monster(s) encountered call the party members by name.
11	The party's rations turn into scuttling beetles.
12	A bleating three-eyed goat begins following the party.
13	All fire on this level sparks and sizzles, as if some flammable gas taints the air.
14	Next room full of freshly dead monsters, all headless.
15	The hair/beards of all party members become 3d6 inches longer, as if they've been down here for <i>years</i> .
16	A party member sees the spirit of the last party member who died, warning them to leave at once.
17	The next time rope is desperately needed it unknots itself as mysterious laughter echoes through the level.
18	Down a long tunnel or across a vast chasm the party sees itself turn down a dark corridor.
19	A snowman is found in an otherwise warm chamber.
20	Suddenly no-one in the party can recall anyone's name, including their own.

# Grognard's Grimoire

spells by Ragnorakk, with an assist from Will Mistretta

**Breach** (Level 2; Range 10'): This spell has a 4 in 6 chance of reducing a door to splinters. It has a 2 in 6 chance of doing the same to magelocked doors, *if* the caster of *breach* is higher level. Parties *breaching* a door have +1 surprise.

**Ethereal Room** (Level 6; Duration 1 hour/level): This spell creates an ethereal room and transports the caster+1 additional being/3 levels to it (save if you don't want to come). Every hour that the ethereal room is occupied, there is a 1% chance that an ethereal encounter will occur. The spell leaves a magical anchor point where the spell was cast, and this point is where the caster will be returned at the end of the spell. The caster (and any targets of caster's choosing) may leave the room before the duration expires.

**Feral Charm** (Level 1; Duration 1 minute/level): A single target domesticated animal must save or revert to a wild and untutored state. The animal's rider or handler may make this save if present and of higher level. Horses will buck riders, birds will fly off, dogs will pounce or flee, etc.

**Hiltbite** (Level 2): The weapons in a target's hand start biting their wielder, doing 1 point per weapon per round they are held and causing -2 on attack rolls with those weapons. Magic weapons get a saving throw, but if they miss it they add any damage bonus to the bite.

**Liquefy Metal** (Level 6; Duration 10 seconds/level; Range 5'/level): This spell liquefies up to 1 pound/level of non-magical metal. (Magical metal gets a saving throw.) If not contained it will spill to the floor, returning to its natural hardness (though not shape) when the duration expires.

**Riddle** (Level 3; Duration varies): With this spell, the caster presents a riddle to 1 target/3 levels within hearing range. The caster must use a language the targets understand – but the spell does transmit the voice through ambient noise that would normally impair the communication. Targets suffer a -1 to all rolls and cannot attack the caster at all until they solve the riddle.

**Silverglade's Forcebolt** (Will Mistretta; Level 3; Range 100' + 10'/level): Upon casting this spell, a fist-sized ball of pale green “fire” darts from the mage's outstretched hand and unerringly strikes a single targeted creature or object within range, blossoming into a small (one foot diameter) concussive explosion upon impact. Creatures struck suffer 1d6 damage/level of the mage, with a saving throw allowed for half. The extent of damage to inanimate objects is best assessed by the referee on a case-by-case basis (optional rules for item saving throws may be helpful

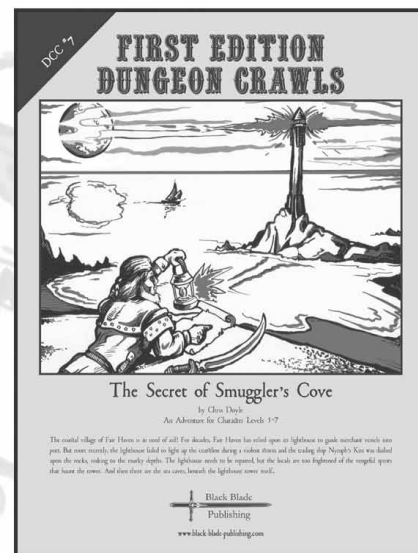


here). Despite its appearance, this spell is a form of visible telekinetic force, not a true flame.

**Suppress Magic** (Level 2; Duration 1 minute/level): A target persistent spell or magical effect is suppressed and inactive for the duration of this spell. It has a 50% base chance of success, modified by the difference between the casters' levels x 5% (e.g. a 4<sup>th</sup> level mage has a 15% chance to suppress an enchantment from an 11<sup>th</sup> level caster). Ω

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# Beware the Lord of Eyes

contest winning adventure by Allan Grohe Jr - playtested by Philip Grohe II, Brian Grohe, and Alexander Anesko.

**Background:** Lord of Eyes Zavax was recently forced to move from his lair many miles away north by northwest due to a minor earthquake which destroyed it. Zavax wandered a while before settling in this region of the underworld, finding it a suitable location: hidden and secure but still near the primary trade routes. The lair was already inhabited by a flight of gargoyles; Zavax took possession of the lair by killing or charming these beasts. He began to raid passing trade caravans, seeking treasure, news, food, and relief from boredom. In addition to his flying servants, Zavax has charmed two trolls as well as a rust beast, who serve as his personal guards. They are nearly always (80%) in his company. Roll this independently for each of the three bodyguards at the beginning of the adventure. If one or both of the trolls are not with Zavax, they are in their lair (6); if the rust beast is not present with Zavax, determine its key location randomly (2d4). Zavax will investigate any battles or other noisy disturbances in his lair within 5-15 (2d6+3) rounds. In my campaign, the PCs were sent as expendable diplomatic envoys by a dark elven noble house to persuade Zavax to cease his raids upon their merchant caravans. Your campaign will likely vary, so adjust the behavior of Zavax and his minions accordingly. Zavax can be dealt with through parley, but in order to speak with him, the PCs are likely to need to fight through the gargoyle front-line guards. If the PCs gain a favorable reaction, Zavax will allow them explain their quest, and he may well spare them. If so, Zavax will demand recompense for his slain guards (500 gp for each gargoyle, 1200 gp for each greater gargoyle, 8000 gp per troll, and 5000 gp for the rust beast in precious metals, gems, jewelry, or the equivalent value in magic items). If brokering a deal similar to the one in my game, Zavax will keep a PC hostage to insure cooperation (likely an MU or thief – someone sufficiently weak to be intimidated by the trolls and gargoyles) and attempt to charm that hostage once/day while things are worked out. If seriously threatened, Zavax will not hesitate to sacrifice all of his minions, collapse cavern ceilings between himself and the PCs, disintegrate a fresh escape route straight up or down, etc., in order to save his miserable life.

## Zavax and His Minions

**Zavax, LE Lord of Eyes:** DC 0/2/6, SPD 3, HD 14, hp 67, Atk 1-12, eyerays petrify (reversible; central eye), charm, death ray, anti-magic, fear, cause heavy wounds, illusion, repulse, pyrotechnics, telekinesis, chill metal, disintegrate.

**2 Trolls:** DC 1 (rustproof mithral jacks), SPD 12, HD 6+6, hp 42, 31, Atk 3 for 5-8/5-8/3-12, Special regenerate 3 hp/round 3 rounds after first hit, only surprised 1 in 6.

**Rust Beast:** DC 2, SPD 18, HD 5, hp 34, 2 AT for rust.

**Gargoyles – 2 Greater:** DC 2, SPD 6/12, HD 6, hp 40, 26, Atk 4 – 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8, Special 80% invisible near stone, magic weapons to hit; and **17 Lesser:** DC 5, SPD 9/15, HD 4+4, hp 22 ea., At 4 – 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4, mag. weap. to hit.

## The Eye Lord's Powers

All Lords of Eyes have 1 central eye and 7-10 eye stalks, each of which has a randomly determined power. There is a 75% chance each for eyes possessing the following:

- death ray
- charming gaze
- anti-magic cone
- fear

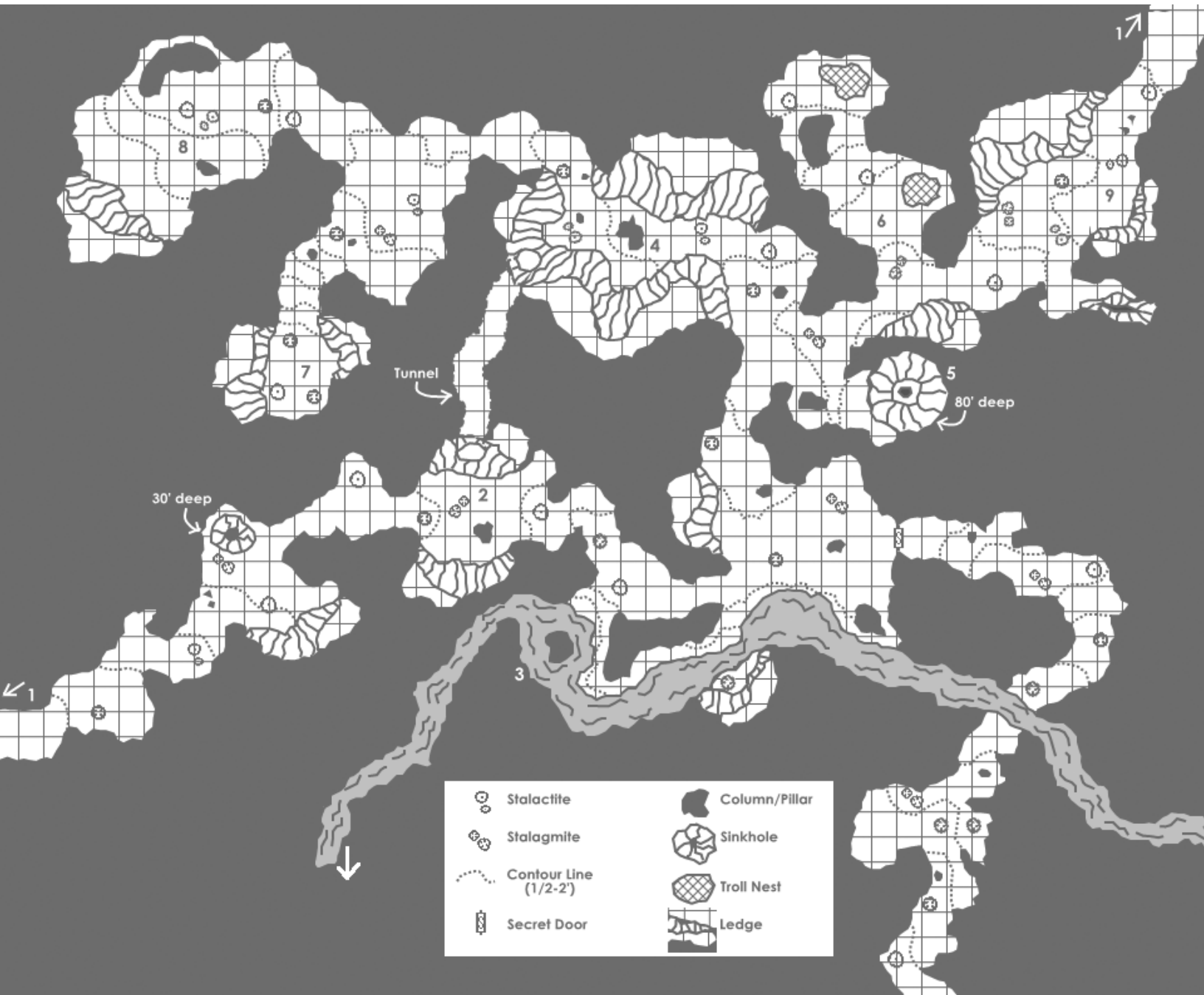
For the remaining 4-7 eye rays roll d20:

1	cause heavy wounds (save v. poison for half)
2	telekinesis (~270 pounds maximum weight)
3	petrification (25% chance reversible)
4	Disintegration
5	slow movement
6	paralytic gaze
7	sleep (up to 6 HD)
8	Enervation
9	create illusions (10% can make permanent illusions)
10	light burst (as per pincer aquan eyeknight)
11	Pyrotechnics
12	blindness (can negate other Lord of Eyes eye attacks)
13	repulsion
14	fumble curse
15	vampirize (see below)
16	icy blast
17	rot (as per indigo mushroom touch)
18	reverse gravity
19	heat/chill metal (45% chance of either, 10% both)
20	GM option (e.g. turn bones to jelly or green slime, animate dead, change alignment, temporal stasis, random mutation powers from post-apoc game, etc.)

The vampiric ray requires two saving throws. If the first (breath weapon) is passed it misses and no damage is done (though as with all rays it may hit a secondary target). Otherwise take 3d8+6 and roll a second save (death magic) or lose a level. The Lord of Eyes recovers all damage done by this ray, plus 10 if the level is drained as well. For duplicate results, either re-roll or increase the effectiveness/save penalty of the rolled power (and reduce the number of eyes by one with each such result).



# The Lair of Zavax, Lord of Eyes



**Zavax's Lair – Map Key (S2/43):** If your campaign features an extensive ‘underdark’, Zavax’s lair is perhaps best placed just off the beaten path, but sufficiently close to provide easy access to primary and secondary passages and merchant traffic. The chance for random encounters in/near Zavax’s lair is 1 in 12. If an encounter is indicated, roll on an appropriate table (such as a tertiary passage table); intelligent creatures will be wary due to the presence of the Lord of Eyes. The map includes a detailed key, indicating various ground contours which I treat as small steps or ledges, not as gradual slopes. These make travel throughout Zavax’s lair somewhat treacherous, especially for wagons, some pack animals, and running PCs. The scale is one square = 10 feet.

**1. Tertiary Passages.** Lead into and away from the lair.

**2. Cavern with Ledges.** 3 gargoyle scouts lurk here. They will not attack, but will instead travel down the connecting tunnel to **4** to report the PCs’ races and numbers, baggage train, position, equipment, etc.

**3. Small Stream and Pool.** The water here contains blind cave fish, brown, green, and bluish in color. At the bottom of the pool covered by silt is the mostly-buried corpse of a strange amphibian humanoid. On or near it are a slightly rusty *dagger* +2, a silken pouch of 58 pp, and a blue, lavender-tinged trident of fine workmanship (mithral, 200 gp).

In the cavern just north of the pool cavern, a secret tertiary passage intersects with Zavax’s lair in the eastern wall. The secret door blends seamlessly with the cavern walls, and cannot be detected without magical aid or prior knowledge of its existence. It is also locked with a phenomenal device (-65% to open, or two simultaneous knock spells, due to complexity). Even armed with the knowledge that the door exists, discovering the opening mechanism’s method of operation requires 2 to 5 hours of careful searching (reduced if searchers employ magical sight or location devices; this secret door is akin conceptually to the secret tree-entrance to the “Pit of Despair” from *The Princess Bride*). Zavax is aware of this secret door, as well

as its opening and locking processes, and may use it as an escape route if necessary.

**4. Cavern of Pillars.** Many stalactites, stalagmites, and pillars are in this cave. The walls vary in hue (blue/grey/brown) and are covered with pockets of quartzite (smoky yellow predominates). The floor is strewn with picked-clean bones, debris, and glittering coins. Nestled upon the ledges above are 12 lesser and 2 greater gargoyles (the latter named Zak and Eek, respectively). They will wait until the party is well into the room before swooping to attack (greater gargoyles will surprise 4 in 6). Combat noise may draw one or both trolls from **6** (2 in 6, check every round) if they are in their lair, and not with Zavax (20%).

Strewn among the bones on the floor are 14 ep, 82 sp and 306 cp. Upon the ledges are heaps of bones, broken weapons, useless armor, etc. Secreted amongst this mess are 472 gp and 3 gems (1 base 2000 gp jade, 1 700 gp jasper, and 1 400 gp tourmaline). The greater gargoyles’ ledge has, in addition, a small chest (unlocked, and obviously forced in the past). In it are several severed heads and skulls (many dark elven, 1 bugbear, 1 ghoul, 2 dwarf), a dark elven *shortsword* +4, and several boots (only 2 are a matched pair, dark elf-sized).

**5. Sinkhole.** – This 80’ deep pit is used as a garbage disposal by the inhabitants. A fall into it will only cause 5d6 damage due to the cushioning effect of the refuse and many corpses within. Living within the carrion, and attracted to any movement, are 91 flesh grubs (DC 9, SPD 1, hp 1, burrow to slay in 1d3 turns unless killed by fire [1d6 damage to victim] or *heal disease*). Detailed physical searching of the sinkhole’s contents, in combination with detect magic, may discover some loot (in addition to the flesh grubs...). A *magic detection* will help to reveal the following (10% chance for one item per full hour of searching from within the sinkhole; from without magic can be detected if within range, but the source of the magic cannot be located from outside the hole):



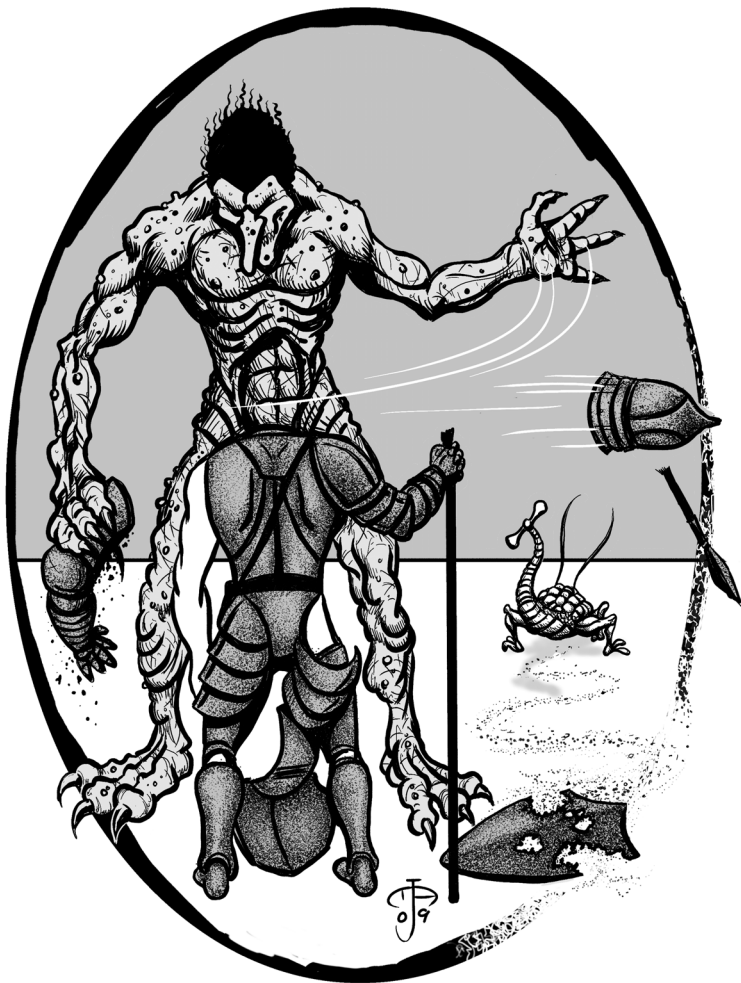
- 1 An *elvish boot* (left, human-sized).
- 2 A potion which makes you think you are levitating, but actually has no effect.
- 3 A missile globe which either stuns or slows (the latter if save is made) all in its explosion radius (20')
- 4 A miniature token of feathers and string which can one time be commanded to become a real object of similar shape: a bridge, crown, or pair of wings are all good possibilities, or GMs may use their own creativity.

Finding these will require hours of digging and sifting and will inflict each searcher with 1-3 random parasitic infections within 2-7 days.

**6. Stinky Cavern.** This unkempt cave is home to Zavax's two troll bodyguards, who sleep in two smelly nests/beds of furs, skins, rotting food, bones, and such. The floor is relatively clean, however, as Zavax periodically forces the trolls to clean up (into the sinkhole at 5). One nest hides a broken dark elven mace and a heavily-soiled dark elven cloak, while the other contains a heavy morningstar (+2 to damage rolled over norm). The second troll will hurl this at a PC if confronted in its lair (4" range, 10-16 damage on a successful hit).

**7. Side Gallery.** This section of cave was once a stream bed, and is therefore smoothly-floored and -walled, although perceptive PCs will notice a fine layer of dust over much of the floor along with a few small and sharp stones. The ceiling is unsafe and could collapse if damaging spells are used in here. Simple loud noise will cause some dust to filter down from the ceiling... A collapse inflicts 15-36 damage (7d4+8), save versus petrification for half. If 30 or more points of damage are taken by a PC, the victim is unconscious and buried alive under 2d4+2 feet of stone, debris, and dust; unless rescued, buried PCs will die from suffocation in (Str + Con)/6 rounds.

**8. Zavax's Demesne.** This large cavern has been Zavax's home for the past two months, and it shows: the place is a terrible mess. Corpses, boxes, bones, crates, broken stalac-



tites and stalagmites, two small carts (both missing a wheel disintegrated by Zavax during his attack), rock debris, miscellaneous loot and normal weapons, and petrified statues (several partially broken/disintegrated, including two strange cave oxen with yokes) clutter the cave. Zavax is a fat, slovenly slob-of-a-lord-ofeyes, and he knows it (think Baron Vladimir Harkonnen of *Dune* fame). He is a dark grey, with grey-green and green-blue scales; his central eye is yellow with a black iris and is continuously bloodshot. If encountered with his trolls and rust beast (80% chance for each), a troll or Zavax will release the rust beast's leash during the first round of combat; the leash is

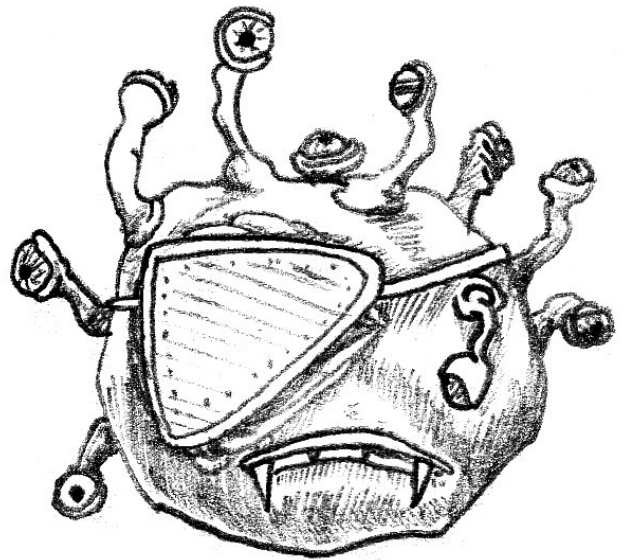


normally wrapped around a stalagmite.

Zavax's personal treasure is stored in an open coffer upon the southwestern ledge that contains 700 pp, 11 gems worth 7250 gp, and 4 pieces of jewelry (2 dark elvish clan pins, 1 silver ring inset with a 300 gp tourmaline, 1 brass tiara inset with bloodstones (druidical work, 1800 gp), and 4 potions (you-think-you're-flying-but-you're-not, curing, ESP, and clairvoyance; 1 dose each). He won't hesitate to use the latter three potions if necessary (via his telekinetic eye). Scattered throughout the cavern can be found more loot from two dark elven merchant trains:

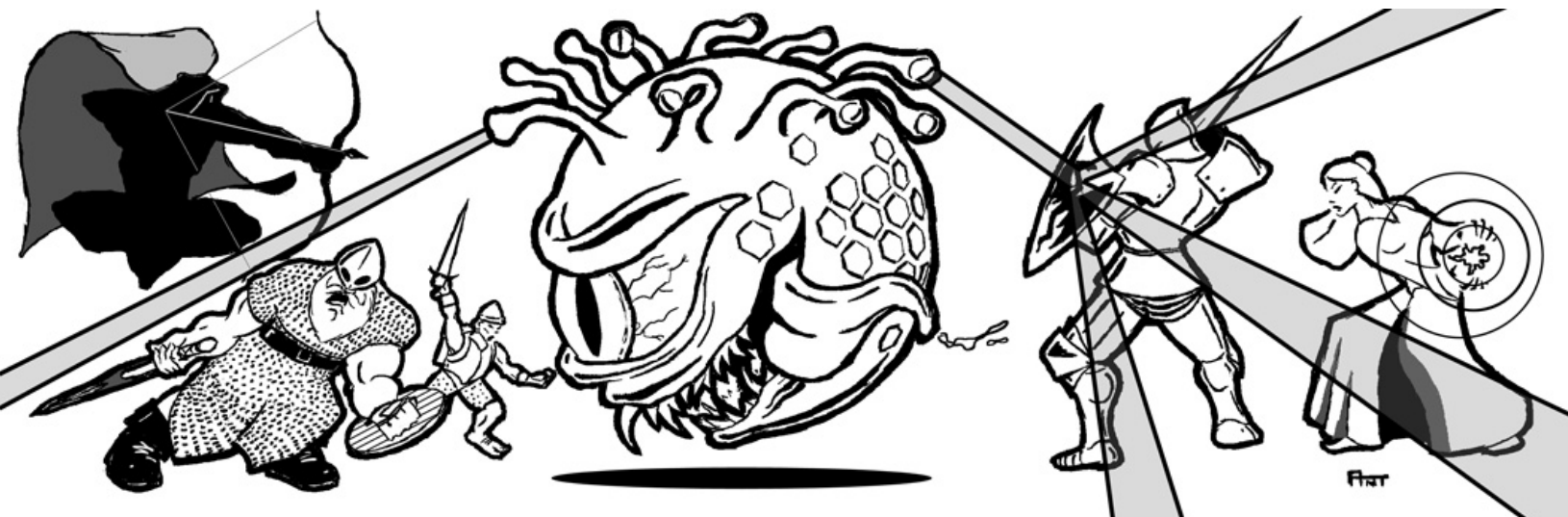
- Various bodies, partial sets of armor, a scattering of non-magical, normal dark elven weapons – hand crossbows, darts, javelins, a small supply of sleep poison (4 doses), some short swords and bucklers, a chain shirt or two, etc.; to sift through the dead, empty crates, stoned victims, and miscellaneous uninteresting debris will require at least 6 man-hours
- A heavy mahogany coffer with golden lock, handles, and hasp (450 gp value; weighs 460 pounds with contents); contains 45 gold ingots of 100 gp weight each; each ingot is worth 400 gp and stamped with dark elven characters indicating purity/weight.
- Two heavy ironwood chests bound with corroded bronze (both locked and trapped with brown mold spray compartments in the fore of the chest; the mold releases in an arc eight feet deep and ten feet wide, centered on the lock; each chest weighs 1100 pounds); each contains 111 silver ingots (as above) worth 90 gp ea.
- A two-foot-long tube of cairngorm (blue smoky quartz) with a closed screw-on cap (300 gp value); it contains a carved teakwood *rod of magic cancellation* (Zavax is not aware of this item's true nature, and will not employ it against the PCs).
- A black polished metal box containing several books and a large assortment of papers — miscellaneous account records, mostly; a map to an interesting location in the underearth; and two scrolls mixed in with the various other papers: *defense against possession* and a priestly scroll with *stonemeld*, *holy sanctuary*, and *augur* (7th level casting).
- A small chest of oak, worked in demonic visages, intertwining tentacles, maws, etc. (worth 200 gp); a leer-

ing lupine pincer-clawed demon with tongue lolling out is carved into the wood front-and-center on the lid. To open the chest, the tongue must be pressed down. It is, of course, trapped: if “shakkaz” is not spoken before opening the chest, a glyph arcs lightning outward from the demon's eyes and chars anyone within 5 feet of the box for 8-32 hp damage, no save; anyone with 10 feet takes 1-4 hp, no save (*dispel* attempts on the glyph oppose 13th level). The chest contains 12 padded compartments, each of which firmly holds a steel test-tube vial with a screw-on cap. The vials are not labeled and are all potions: *bump of direction* (1 dose), *mind restoration* (3 doses), *pain suppression* (1), *elixir of youth* (1), *oil of elemental invulnerability* (1), *greater curing* (2), *invulnerability* (1), *elixir of health* (1), *clairaudience* (2), *curing* (1), *ethereality* (1; not an oil, must be drunk), and *treasure finding* (2). If the trap is set off, the potions must all save vs. lightning at -1 (due to their metallic containers) or be destroyed.



- Scattered throughout the remainder of the Eye Lord's lair are a *cloak of many colors* (elf-sized), a scroll of *defense against demons*, and a *potion of vampire control* (1 dose, in a black skull flask of bone filled with silver, worth 700 gp).

**9. NE Entrance Cavern.** This tertiary passage contains 2 gargoyles (as 2, above). Ω





# The Forgotten Entity

moral mayhem by Geoffrey McKinney

**Introduction:** Do you need something disturbing... disquieting...chilling? Are your players no longer frightened of the undead? Then use this inscrutable entity in lieu of your standard undead. Simply place it in an appropriate part of one of your dungeons or underground areas.

**Description:** The inky blackness of the subterranean earth is here stained with a blot of deeper darkness, 60' in diameter. This darkness is invulnerable to spells, and no light can pierce it. Those foolhardy enough to enter the unnatural darkness will suffer the loss (while within) of all sense of hearing, smell, and taste. Their sense of touch is numbed to the point of feeling only an intense cold (inflicting 1 point of damage per hour of exposure), and eyesight is extinguished save for the perception of the ENTITY. In the darkness abides a pale violet 4-sided pyramid, 6' tall. Its featureless sides are absolutely frictionless and cold to the touch.

The pyramidal ENTITY is absolutely impervious to all forms of attack (physical, magical, psionic, etc.), wishes notwithstanding. For inhumanly long eons it has stood quiescent. From prehuman eras degenerate cults have built shrines around it, sacrificing treasures to the ENTITY and worshipping it in an ecstasy of blank idiocy.

Intense scrutiny of the pyramid will reveal the faint outline within of a cadaverously thin semi-human body. Otherwise impassable, the surface of the ENTITY can be breached by naked hands for the sole purpose of touching this body. If PCs try, it can even be pulled from the pyramid. Though the body is motionless, whether it is alive or dead cannot

be ascertained within the unholy darkness. If taken outside this darkness, the body immediately crumbles to ash.

Removing the body from the ENTITY will awaken it to ravenous hunger. An anti-life force will begin to slowly emanate from the pyramid. This force will inexorably travel (in an ever-expanding sphere) 1 mile per year (which is a little over 7 inches per hour). Absolutely no biological life can survive within this anti-life force. As it advances, any living thing will die and crumble into fine gray dust (no saving throw). Unless stopped, this force will eventually engulf the entire campaign world.

If low-level characters awaken the ENTITY, stopping it could become a long-term campaign focus. Perhaps the luckless neophytes who disturbed it can return years later (as mighty lords, wizards, and patriarchs) after searching the far reaches of the earth to find the lost secrets of returning the ENTITY to its eons-long dormancy. High-level characters might be presented with their terrible error as a sort of immediate moral quandary. Either approach can be fairly effective at almost any level, however.

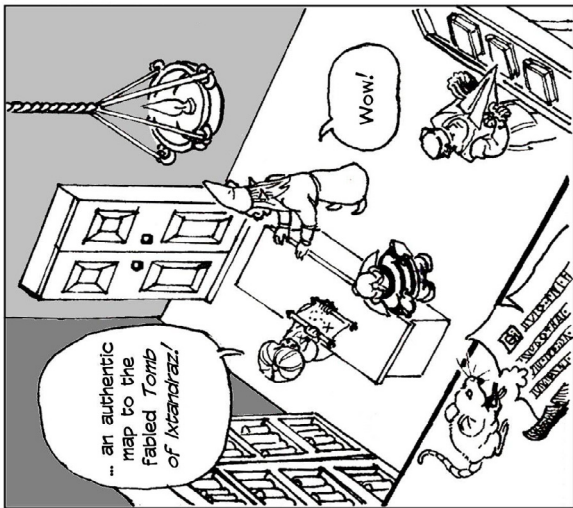
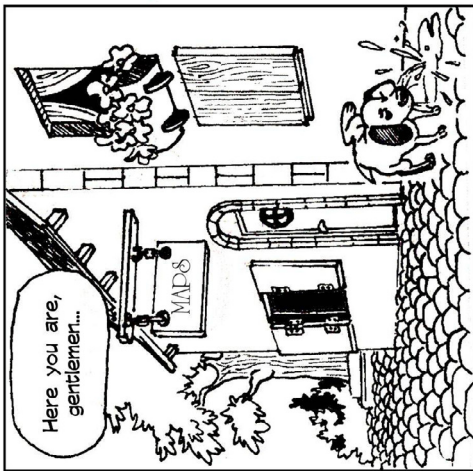
Unfortunately, your players will not like the solution: A willing victim must sacrifice himself to endless, harrowing suffering. Such a one can walk unharmed through the sphere of anti-life force surrounding the ENTITY, and thereafter merge himself into the ENTITY's pyramidal form. Therein his torments will be ineffable and unending. His anguish will soothe the ENTITY into torpor, and the anti-life force will recede at the same rate that it swelled.

The body within the ENTITY was a willing victim in prehistoric times who sacrificed himself to preserve proto-humankind from extinction. Across whole geologic eras only tortured silent screams filled his consciousness. When carried beyond the darkness by the PCs, he was released from his torment, instantly decaying with ancient age.

**Comments:** GMs should probably not encourage PCs to remove the body from the ENTITY in any way. If players bring something like this upon themselves, it should be their own fault for disturbing what was better left alone.

If, over several years or centuries of the sphere of death expanding, no PC volunteers himself to stop the spread of death, and you as GM wish to preserve your campaign world, choose an especially beloved and demonstrated good NPC to sacrifice herself for the greater good. This outcome may bring experience or alignment penalties on the PCs. This can be an especially tough test for paladin PCs. GMs should consider whether lawful good heroism is really compatible with going around finding someone else to martyr themselves to eternal suffering. Likewise, if a PC sacrifices himself convincingly for the greater good, some bonuses to their next character may be in order. This one, however, shall howl across countless ages. Ω

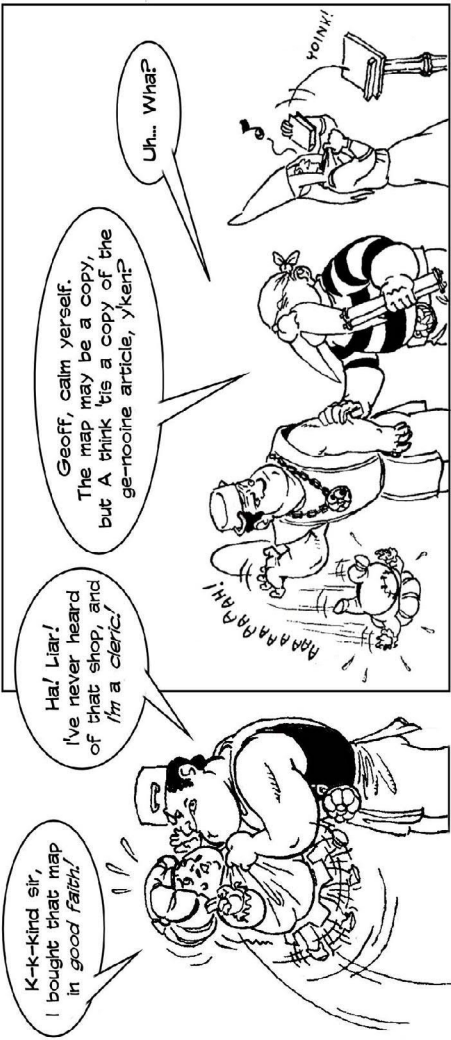




## Moaning Ixtandraz

### PROLOGUE

(With apologies to Lee Barber)





## The Wandering Harlot Table

### Compensated Companionship for *Mutant Future* by Adam Thornton

Usage: In the “Gender” entry, “H” means “Hermaphroditic” (at least one of each gender’s genitals), and “N” means “Neuter” or “Not Applicable”, meaning no genitalia at all, or a reproductive system bafflingly foreign to human concepts of sexuality. For a hermaphroditic plant, roll once on each of subtables E and F. Mutated Animals and Humans should proceed to Mutation Subtable P after the harlot subtable type has been determined. Mutated Animals should roll on Mutation Subtable Q to determine the base animal type.

If you don’t have a standard Harlot subtable, just remember phrases like “slovenly trull”, “wanton wench”, and “brazen strumpet,” and you’ll be fine: make up your own values for Subtable A.

#### Wandering Harlot Table

d100	Type/Gender/Subtable
01-14	Pure Human / F / A
15-20	Pure Human / M / B
21-58	Mutated Human / F / A
59-61	Mutated Human / M / B
62	Mutated Human / H / C
63	Mutated Human / N / D
64-75	Mutated Animal / F / A
76-78	Mutated Animal / M / B
79	Mutated Animal / H / C
80	Mutated Animal / N / D
81	Mutated Plant / F / E
82	Mutated Plant / M / F
83	Mutated Plant / H / E+F
84-88	Mutated Plant / N / G
89-92	Android / F / H
93-94	Android / M / I
95	Android / N / J
96	Sapient Monster / F / K
97	Sapient Monster / M / L
98	Sapient Monster / H / M
99	Sapient Monster / N / N
00	Other / - / O

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable A - Female

d100	type	Price (gp)
01-94	Per standard Harlot subtable	varies
95-97	86ed Barfly	3d6
98	Nun	10
99	Party Member's Sister (if possible)	8d8
00	Party Member's Mom (if possible)	1d3

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable B - Male

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-11	Busted Gambler	4d4
12-16	Hopeless Crackhead	1d2
17-79	Republican Politician	1d3-2
80-89	Televangelist	4d8
90-92	Flamboyant Queen	10d6
93-95	Unctuous Gigolo	3d20
96-97	Drunk, Curious Fratboy	2d12
98	Priest	10
99	Party Member's Brother (if possible)	2d6
00	Party Member's Dad (if possible)	1d4

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable C - Hermaphroditic

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-25	Big-titted Chick-with-dick (hottish)	10d4
26-84	Slender ladyboy (hottish)	4d20
85-91	Bearded Lady	1d10
92-98	Mid-op-Obese-Transsexual (not hot)	1d8
99	Siamese Twins, one of each gender	1d100
00	Ancient Tiresias	1d4

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable D - Neuter

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-25	Simpering Eunuch	6d4
26-52	Androgynous Bowie Clone	10d10
53-79	“Pat”	1d6
80-97	Angelic-voiced Soprano Castrato	10d8
98-00	Horrific Chainsaw Accident	1d2

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable E – Female Plant

d100	Genital Resemblance	Price (gp)
01-25	Venus Flytrap	3d8
26-40	Georgia O'Keefe Flower	10d10
41-45	Box Elder	2d6
46-55	Pussy Willow	4d8
56-62	Yew Bush	1d10
63-70	Slippery Elm	5d4
71-79	Splintery Knothole	1d4
80-89	Fleshy Pitcher Plant	10d8
90-94	Melon with Hole	8d6
95-00	Trumpet-shaped flowers	4d6

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable F – Male Plant

d100	Genital Resemblance	Price (gp)
01-10	<i>Amorphophallus Titanum</i>	10d6
11-15	Fuck Yew	1d10
16-45	Prickly Cactus	2d8
46-55	Mangrove roots	3d4
55-63	Cucumber	1d6
64-69	Cucumber (waxed)	4d6
70-73	Humorously-shaped gourd	2d8
74-79	Lodgepole pine	2d4
80-87	Fleshy Fungoid	2d12
88-93	Maize	2d6
94-00	Fiddlehead Fern	3d6

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable G – Neuter Plant

d100	Resemblance	Price (gp)
01-23	Oak	1d6
24-39	Honeysuckle	2d8
40-59	Hibiscus	1d10
60-63	Redwood	1d20
64-72	Puffball	10d10
73-80	Chili Pepper	4d8
81-92	Dandelion	1d4
93-95	Ragweed	1d2
96	Mother-In-Law's Tongue	5d8
97	Peyote Cactus	4d100
98	Banyan	3d8
99	Rosebush	10d4
00	Lamb's Ear	3d8

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable H – Female Android

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-10	Sultry French Maidbot	8d6
11-25	Brazen Strumpetbot	3d4
26-32	Solvent-added Slutbot	2d2
33-37	Robostewardess on day off	4d10
38-49	Saucy Tartbot	3d6
50-55	Luscious Femmebot	12d20
56-62	Demure Geishabot	4d20

63-68	Badly Confused Warbot	1d8
69-77	Sleazy dude in silver paint/fake boobs	1d4
78-87	Psycho Hosebot	3d12
88-91	RealDoll Mk. XVIII	2d100
92-96	Ghetto Hobot	4d3
97	Depraved Nunbot	10
98	<i>Really</i> broken Slot Machine	1
99	Unemployed Vacuumbot	2d4
00	Wanton Wenchbot	1d10

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable I – Male Android

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-08	Hairy Bearbot	6d4
09-22	Laid-off Bending Robot	1d6
23-44	BoyToy 3000	7d6
45	HolmesBot 12-incher	1d20+30
47-68	Ubiquitous RonJeremyBot	1d4
69	J. Edgar Hoovertron DX	5d6
70-72	Hobo in cardboard robot suit	3d4
73-79	Industrial Painting Robot in new career	1d6
80-85	Robot from <i>Moonwalker</i> video game	4d4
86-90	Navybot on shore leave	1d8
91	Peter Northbot	3d10
92-96	Tin Woodsman	3d8
97	Chatterly GardenerBot	4d10
98	CNC Drill Press on the lam	1d10
99	Protocol Droid/Astromech double-team	6d12
00	Dirty PriestBot	10

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable J – Neuter Android

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01-10	Toaster	1d4
11-25	Refrigerator	3d4
26-32	Juicer	2d2
33-37	Blender	4d4
38-49	Rice Cooker	3d2
50-55	Microwave Oven	3d4
56-62	StenographerBot	1d8
63-68	Automated Taxicab	4d4+4/mile
69-77	Suicide Booth	1d10
78-87	Washing Machine	3d6
88-93	GardenerBot (ungendered)	2d2
94-97	DentistBot	3d3
98	1963 Volkswagen Bug with insane AI	1d8
99	Locomotive	3d10
00	Tankbot	4d20

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable K – Female Sapient Monster

d8	Type	Price (gp)
1	Brain Lasher	2d12
2	Eye Bitch	2d6
3	Humanoid Mass	3d8
4	Medusoid	2d10
5	Pod Plant	2d8
6	Sky Ray	2d20
7	Walking Dead	3d3
8	Xeno Cow	2d8

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable L – Male Sapient Monster

d100	Type	Price (gp)
01	Brain Lasher	2d12
02	Eye Dog	2d6
03	Humanoid Mass	3d8
04	Pod Plant	2d6
05	Pumpkin Man	2d8
06	Sky Ray	2d20
07-98	Spidergoat	1d3
99	Walking Dead	3d3
00	Xeno Bull	3d20

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable M – Hermaphroditic Sapient Monster

d4	Type	Price (gp)
1	Fungoid	4d6
2	Humanoid Mass	8d8
3	The Irradiated	1d6
4	Kamata	4d4

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable N – Neuter Sapient Monster

d10	Type	Price (gp)
1	Carcass Scavenger	1d3
2	Burrow Tuber	1d3
3	Fungoid	4d6
4	Gamma Wyrn	8d10
5	Humanoid Mass	1d8
6	Insectoid Eye	2d8
7	The Irradiated	1d6
8	Narcolep	4d8
9	Stalker Plant	1d6
10	Walking Dead	1d2

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable O – Other

d10	Type	Price (gp)
1	Being of Pure Energy	4d8
2	Green Slime	2d6
3	Gray Ooze	2d8
4	Ghost	2d12
5	Transdimensional Alien Being	9d4
6	Time-Space Anomaly	1d10
7	Airborne Jellyfish Thing	1d20
8	Amoeboid	3d8
9	Sonic-based Lifeform	4d10
10	use Raggi's <i>Esoteric Creature Generator</i>	1d6x1d100

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable P – Mutations

d12	Mutation
1	Additional genitals (if applicable)
2	Prehensile genitals (if applicable)
3	Triple-Jointed
4	Intoxicating Pheromones
5	Empathy
6	Prehensile tongue (if applicable)
7	Vibrating muscle tissue
8	Localized temperature control
9	Telepathic stimulation of brain pleasure centers
10	Enlarged primary/secondary sexual characteristics
11	Telekinesis
12	Roll twice on table

#### Wandering Harlot Subtable Q – Base Animal Type

d12	Type
1	Bat
2	Crow
3	Dog
4	Cat
5	Pig
6	Cow
7	Moose
8	Rhino
9	Narwhal
10	Clam
11	Spider
12	Cockroach

# Notes from (the Tekumel) Underground

non-canonical Tékumel encounters by Aaron Somerville

**Introduction:** For my home campaign using the original *Empire of the Petal Throne* rules (still acquirable through Tita's House of Games) I developed two underworld settings. The main area, around which the initial phases of the campaign were centered, was the Jakalla underworld. It was there that the original character group (still largely together) sought their fortune and undertook several notable ventures. The second area is located below a long-abandoned temple of Vimuhla in the forest-jungle of Gilraya. The campaign continues as of this publication.

Below are detailed some of the encounter areas I included. After each description I have included notes on the thematic purpose or intent of the area, as well as a report on the encounter in actual play. One fact of note is that the adventurers are of the Lo'Auk Shu'An race, an island fishing people who traded with the Tsolyáni. Their homeland was destroyed by the Hokun, and most of their race perished in the exodus. What few remain made their home in the squalor of Jakalla's foreign quarter until the intrepid adventurers formed the Red Sky Clan and led their people to a new beginning in the forest-jungle of Gilraya. The Lo'Auk Shu'Ani primarily worship Avanthe and Vimuhla (the virgin and the volcano), and share some attitudes with the Tsolyáni, but not all.



**The Stone Face:** The first level of the Jakalla underworld, in an area which may be classed as an "undercity" of collapsed cellars and disused basements, is but one of many places where one might encounter a strange entity known only as The Stone Face. This being manifests as a lifelike face of carven stone, about six feet long, appearing on an otherwise blank wall. It appears as a satyr-faced old man with leering eyes and a dubious grin. The Stone Face can speak any language and will introduce itself cordially, if smugly, to the party. It will make small talk for a moment and then get to the point: it wants to make a trade. The Stone Face offers to answer one question about the Jakalla underworld; in return, it demands the sacrifice of a nubile human female of attractive appearance and virginal status. The girl is to be brought to the face, and in return it will answer their question. The face will answer truthfully and accurately about virtually anything pertaining to the Jakalla underworld. The true scope of its knowledge is left to the Referee. By nature, The Stone Face is not native to this plane and is immune to magic and weapons. However, it will not fight, and it really has little ability to do harm. It can manifest itself on any blank wall anywhere within the underworld (and perhaps elsewhere), so if cheated out of its 'bride' it could cause a significant amount of trouble for a party. When the sacrifice is brought to the face, it will insist that she be brought close. When this is done a ropy, stone-like tongue will shoot out from its mouth and encircle her waist, drawing her screaming into its mouth. The mouth will close as her shriek reaches maximum volume, and the face will fade back into the wall. The girl will never be seen again. Whether The Stone Face will be seen again by a particular group is up to the Referee.

**Notes:** The Stone Face is mainly intended to evaluate the moral character of a play group. What the face has to offer is truly valuable (information about the underworld can be hard to come by, and can be a true life saver), but what it demands (a human life) is of greater value still. What is important about The Stone Face is that the action of giving up a girl to it is, at least in this life, consequence-free. The face itself of course represents human perversity, made all the more frightening by its age and knowledge.

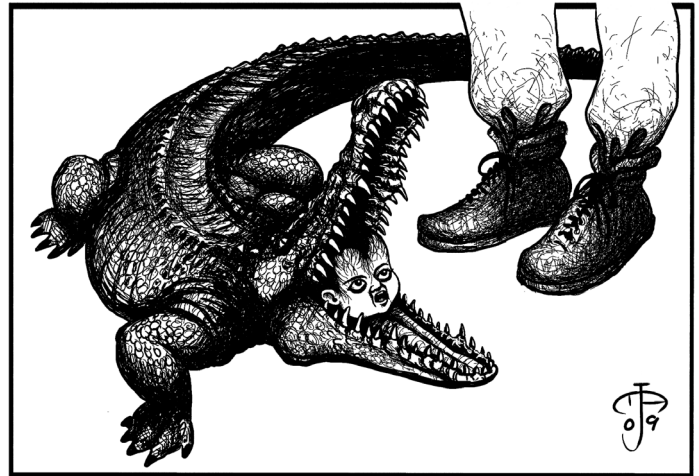
**In Play:** The Lo'Auk Shu'Ani found the face's bargain acceptable. They were searching for two desperadoes in order to take their heads for bounty; they could not find these men and were running out of money. So they went to the upper world and purchased a slave girl in the market: she was enslaved to cover her father's debt due to the failure of his shop. She was of Tsolyáni descent. The party callously checked her body over, even her teeth. Though she was a docile slave, when she was brought before the face she became extremely frightened. Impassive, the party forced her at spear point to present, and the face hungrily finished her off. Afterward, the players felt rather disturbed – perhaps even remorseful?

**The Mechanical Guardian:** On the second level of the Jakalla underworld an inquisitive mechanical guardian may be discovered. It is not native to the undercity but is in fact unspeakably old, having been passed down through generations of sorcerers and sages as a prized, if single-minded, servitor. Its last owner died long ago, and now it guards a room which is no longer of any value. The guardian is an ancient mechanical being of conical shape possessing four spindly legs and a single red eye-gem. The metal substance of which it is composed is old, gray and pitted, yet extremely hard; it cannot be identified by current materials science. From a single tiny aperture below its eye a hoarse, croaking voice is emitted. The room which the guardian protects is entirely nondescript except for a gold-inlaid spiral pattern in the middle of the floor. The guardian squats in the center of this pattern, challenging any who enter in a croaking monotone. It speaks first in N'lyssa, then Engsvanyali, then archaic Tsolyáni, then modern Tsolyáni. It says simply "One, one, two, three, five, eight, thirteen, next." It will repeat the challenge in each language a second time, then move on to the next language. It will take the first number said in any language it understands as an answer. The correct answer is "twenty-one". If an incorrect answer is given, or if the droid is attacked, it will slay the offender. From its eye emanates a beam of the same potency as an *Eye of Advancing Through Portals*; it may fire this once per round indefinitely. It cannot be coaxed into using the beam for any other purpose. The droid has the following attributes: AC 0, HD 10, HP 60, Move 6".

**Notes:** This is a simple puzzle meant to test the players' knowledge of the Fibonacci sequence. What would the underworld be without a brain teaser? Of course, the punishment for ignorance is a swift death. The reward? Survival. This puzzle is a fairly easy one, but probably appropriate for the second level.

**In Play:** The leader of the Lo'Auk Shu'Ani, a Vimuhla priest named Raimane, answered rightly as all the others kept silent. He had previously solved the riddle of a skeletal servitor of Durritlemish and used the scroll of Petrefaction acquired thereby to slay (ironically) the High Priest of the Black Abode of Putrescence Triumphant, a minor temple of that deity on level one. He is the go-to man for puzzles in the group.

**The Apartment of Erotic Compulsion:** Down on the fourth level of the Jakalla underworld is a terrible shrine to Dlamélish. It is accessed by a single passageway at the end of a maze. The first area 50' long by 20' wide: the passage enters on the center of the north wall, and there are walls to the west and east. These walls all bear murals of the disgusting rites of the green goddess. There is no south wall. Instead, there is an expanse of inky blackness; this gulf is 50' in length with a second area visible at the south end. When one looks into the gulf, a starry pattern will be seen. However, this induces some vertigo, as wherever in



the gulf a person looks he always thinks himself to be seeing the middle. The vertigo has no effect except unpleasantness. The area at the other end is 30' wide and 20' long. There are several other notable features. Centered on the floor on both the near and far sides of the gulf there is a 5' x 5' square of translucent purple glass. It cannot be pried up; if removed somehow it becomes merely normal glass. If the glass is stepped on by a male character, a bridge of purple light will appear (imagine it as if drawn in wire frame graphics). This bridge is solid and safe, and 5' wide. However, if any other character steps on the glass square the bridge will disappear (causing anyone already on the bridge to fall). An Agility roll could be made to hop from the ledge to the bridge in order to avoid stepping on the glass toggle (a roll is needed for the bridge is strange and it is hard to tell where it is exactly). The bridge will not appear for female characters.

The strange starry distortion effect in the black gulf is actually a disturbance in local space-time caused by the corrupt influence of Dlamélish. Anyone falling into the gulf will be squashed into nothingness by extreme but highly localized gravitic forces. At the far area is another glass toggle (stepping on it will toggle the bridge on/off) as well as a large statue. It is about 8' in height. The statue looks very much like the Venus of Willendorf except as if sculpted by the like of Praxiteles...and bearing a crocodile's head. Above and behind the statue is a prized item or artifact appropriate to the Referee's campaign. A few moments after a male character sets foot on the other side of the gulf, the huge statue will animate and become as flesh. It will chase the character with surprising speed. An Agility roll is necessary to avoid it; however, if the character takes hold of the artifact/item he will be automatically caught by the statue if it is pursuing him. The statue has prodigious strength and will automatically overbear any character. It cannot be harmed by weapons or magic. Once the statue has overborne a character, it will tear away his clothing while holding his head in place with the grip of its horrible crocodilian jaws (it has fetid breath, of course). The statue's faculties as an avatar of Dlamélish



cause the generative powers of the grappled character to become activated no matter how deep his disgust. The statue will very roughly impose itself upon the fellow. If the character resists (the Referee should ask him "Do you resist?") the crocodile jaws will crush his head like a rotten tomato, killing him instantly. After the statue has 'done its business' it returns to its original position and de-animates. Later in the game (at least nine hours!), the character when alone will be visited by a new addition to his family... the son of Dlamélish! This creature can only be seen by those whom it chooses to allow to see it. It appears as a small crocodile. However, when it patters up to the character who fathered it, it will open its jaws... and where its maw should be, there instead is a child's face! Its human face is a virtual copy of its father's, though young and perpetually covered in drool. The child is quite fluent in all languages, and adores both its father and mother (who it will say speaks highly of his father). The child will insist on tagging along and will attempt all the normal sorts of interactions of father and son; it will display no knowledge of the disturbing dimensions of its appearance. Obviously, if he is harmed Dlamélish will be very upset.

**Notes:** This encounter has the aspects of a puzzle, a trap, and an encounter with the gods. Usually, encounters with

the gods should leave characters changed in some way. In this case, the character has been violated (unless the party gets two characters over to the other side and successfully distracts the statue with one while the other attains the prize...difficult but not impossible) and a new entity enters play: the Son of Dlamélish. The Son is good for disturbing interactions, but could also help the party in virtue of his potent concealment ability. He also presents the possibility of really getting on Dlamélish's bad side. Nothing is as vindictive and unreasonable as an evil goddess.

**In Play:** This was a fun one all the way around. One of the party's fighters, a dynamic character named Tsokalon (played by Jeff Dee, and pictured at left), crossed the bridge alone (as luck would have it, the party was too paranoid to step on the toggle, so he survived the crossing). He tried to evade the statue, but eventually she caught him as he grabbed the artifact. He wisely decided not to resist. Some time later, back in Jakalla, he was visited in his apartment by his child. He was so horrified by its appearance that he drew his flaming sword (the Gladius of Entropy, a weapon of Change) and tried to kill it. It is a slippery beast, and it ran down the stairs and into the streets. Naked but armed, Tsokalon chased it down into the sewers, where he eventually got the idea of compelling it to come to him by his authority as its father. The child pitifully complied, and Tsokalon slew it. For this, the enraged goddess Dlamélish cursed him with impotence. Eventually he found out that the only way to lift this curse was to deliver to the temple of Dlamélish "the head of the one he loves the most", which in the context of Tsokalon's lifestyle was obviously himself. However, as of this writing he is well on his way to completing this quest: as luck would have it he was slain in the Ksarul-dungeon beneath the Temple of Vimuhla in Gilraya. He was reincarnated as a Shen (who now calls himself Shokar) and the party's priests saved the original head of Tsokalon. It has been salted and may some day be returned to the temple of Dlamélish for vindication.

**The Model City:** This city may be encountered on the first level of a dungeon beneath an abandoned temple to Vimuhla located in the forest-jungle of Gilraya. The temple above is ancient and carved like the Angkor ruins; it is quite old and the carvings are weathered. Inhabiting the temple is the cult of the Fire Bat, a group of fanatic warriors who fight in the nude (but have elaborate bat headdresses) and speak in archaic Tsolyáni; they tend to carry on about the Fire Bat and little else. Within the temple, the main fire pit is maintained by an aging priest of the Fire Bat who knows the Shriveling spell (though it manifests as burns). Below the temple is a dungeon full of things pertaining to Ksarul, quite strange for a location underneath a Vimuhla temple (albeit one overrun by here-tics). The Model City itself fills an entire room which is 30' by 50'. It is accessed by three doors and is at a choke point in the dungeon. The Model City is up to knee height and



depicts a pristine and perfect Tsolyáni city, complete with nobles, peasants, markets, temples, etc. There are tiny figures in the city. While being observed, the figures do not appear to move, though attentive characters may note them shifting position ever so slightly between blinks of the eye. Actually, the figures do move, but only when no one is looking at them. They carry out daily life in the Model City, but have no personality beyond their role. They can be contacted by telepathy if the party has that spell; the figures have only rudimentary personality ("I am junior priest number five", "this is The City", etc.) but will be in awe of booming voices and other displays of might from the giants who tower above the city (the party). The Model City has been proofed against interference. If anyone touches any of the figures in the diorama, they must roll a Save vs. Spells or be transported into the diorama as a figurine. Roll to determine their fate: 1 - man on the street; 2 - city guard; 3 - noble on palanquin; 4 - painter of sacrifices; 5 - priest of Vimuhla; 6 - sacrificial victim. In the latter case, they will soon be thrown into a fire pit and be consumed. When a character touches a figure and is transported, say only that he disappears. If they specifically ask whether he is in the diorama, let each person looking make an Intelligence check to find him. For the person thus transported, his arms and legs will feel heavy and it will be as if he is drugged. However, he can still think and act inefficiently and weakly. If he is removed from the room, he will revert to regular size. If one of the other figures is removed, it loses its magic until replaced in the city. To cross the city without touching a figure, a character may attempt to tiptoe among the models. This is a straight Agility roll; a failure indicates that a figure has been touched. However, the players may think up all sorts of schemes to make things easier; it is suggested that the Referee be generous with bonuses in this regard.

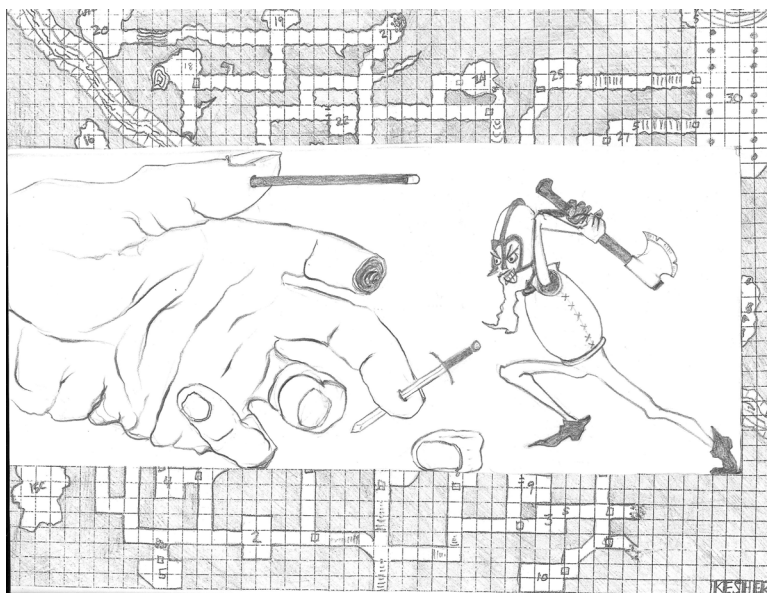
**Notes:** Well, I rather like models. The Model City truly is a model city... it is an idealized version of city life, just like



a model one might see in a civic building. The models have truncated lives because the idealization of the city is only on the surface...there is no underlying purpose which the city serves relative to itself. Part of the magic though is that the tableau will be different every time you go back to it.

**In Play:** My players really impressed me with this one. After Tsokalon/Shokar (now in his form of a Shen...and yes, there were Godzilla jokes) picked up a figurine, he failed his Saving Throw and became a sacrificial victim! Melina, an Aridani of Dilinala, spotted him in time. Then G'steth, a priest of Vimuhla, amazed the figures by tapping the haft of his mace before them (which stunned them). After the priests let go of Shokar, Olika the sorceress (pictured at right with Reef, her pet dinosaur) lifted his figure out of the room with Telekinesis. Then G'steth contacted one of the priests with Telepathy and told him that they must clear the streets, for the gods would be walking through the city. This worked and they were able to cross the room without incident.

*The Red Sky Clan:* G'steth, one-armed priest of Vimuhla, brave but fond of women; Melina, warrior of Dilinala, brilliant and beautiful; Olika: sorceress serving the One of Eggs, trainer of Reef; Raimane: Clan head and priest of Vimuhla; wise but burdened with command; Reef, a voracious dinosaur of brilliant red and blue, given as an egg to Olika by a mysterious Shen – amazing metabolism, pesky, currently about 6 HD; Silouani, priest of the Shadow Gods, sickly but inhumanly strong; Tsokalon/Shokar, warrior of Vimuhla, bears the *Gladius of Ruin*, slain and reincarnated as a Shen. Ω



# The Search for Lord Chúrísan

non-canonical Tékumel adventure by Krista Donnelly

**Introduction:** The inspiration for this scenario came from the historical search for John Franklin. This is a scenario for 2-6 players, set several years after Mirusíya becomes Emperor. It starts off in Avanthár where the characters have a chance to gather information and supplies. Then they arrive at the tubeway station and nexus point in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, where they have a chance to investigate the fate of the second expedition and may find some clues relating to Chúrísan's party. Lastly, there's the ice world on the other side of the nexus point. Here they'll have a chance to gather more clues, deal with the environmental dangers, and encounter the Mu'ugalavyáni.

Last year Lord Chúrísan set out on a mission for the God-Emperor Mirusíya. He took with him a semétl of soldiers from the elite First Legion of Ever-Present Glory and went by tube-way car to explore what was rumored to be a stable nexus point in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm in south-eastern Sa'à Allaquí. His mission: To find out where it went and if it could be utilized to enhance the power and well-being of the God-Emperor. He has not been heard from since. After a month passed, a second expedition was sent to investigate. This expedition also did not return. The Court of Purple Robes and the Emperor debated the merits of the case at length. Six months later, a third expedition was sent. They quickly returned. They reported that the second expedition had gotten no further than the tube-way car station at the embarkation point. They had been slaughtered to a man. This third expedition claimed that there was no nexus point. For returning without discovering Lord Chúrísan's fate or explaining the deaths of the second expedition, the God-Emperor had them impaled. The fate of Lord Chúrísan weighs heavily on the mind of the Emperor Mirusíya. Men of his caliber don't simply succumb to the desert. Something is out there. In addition, he is a member of the Sea Blue clan. His lineage is powerful; his wives are numerous and vocal. Added to that, Ever-Present Glory is pressing to redeem its honor after the ignominious fates of the earlier expeditions. And so it came to pass that exactly one year after he left, a fourth expedition was formed to find Lord Chúrísan. You are that lucky fourth expedition.

**The Story of Chúrísan hiKetkolél's Expedition:** While fighting on the Chákan front, Chúrísan captured a Mu'ugalavyáni intelligence officer. Interrogation revealed useful information about local activities. But the officer was contemptuous. "You might stop us on the west, but would

you ever expect an invasion from the east?" The officer was soon sacrificed over Chúrísan's objections. He couldn't find another prisoner to admit knowing anything about an eastern invasion. But only two months later he was furloughed to Avanthár and heard the rumor of a stable nexus point to the east. He immediately went to explore it. They took the tubeway car, marched into the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm and found the nexus point. Stepping through it they discovered an ice world. This was an intense disappointment to Chúrísan, as this obviously could have no link with Mu'ugalavyá. It seemed like the intelligence officer was merely having fun with him. But Chúrísan was both thorough and stubborn. This may be a hell of Vimúhla, but he would give it a day's exploration to confirm that it was worthless and harmless. After all, due to warnings of the temple of Belkhánu, the pack slaves were carrying furs. So he allocated furs to all his men, left one soldier to guard the nexus point and watch over the slaves, planted a legion standard to mark its location in the endless white, divided his men into two groups, and set off to explore. The tirrikámu (sergeant) Dhuktému led one group and Chúrísan led the other. Dhuktému's group marched as fast as they could since they could only travel for half a day before turning back. Unfortunately for them, they were travelling through crevasse country. There was a covering of hardened snow over a number of the crevasses, and they unwittingly passed over them safely, but one finally gave way. The last three men in line broke through, and without ropes tying them to one another, they plunged down twenty feet before hitting a ledge and dying from the impact. Dhuktému decided it was too dangerous, and they started back. But the weather was against them, and in no time whiteout conditions prevailed. The storm did not relent until three days had passed. By that time they had all died of exposure, huddled within a canvas tent.

Chúrísan's group set off in the direction of the Mu'ugalavyáni outpost. They were soon spotted by a guard, and an ambush was quickly set up. The Mu'ugalavyáni were more experienced at cold weather fighting and killed his men, though the battle was not without casualties. They managed to capture Chúrísan alive. He refused to give them any information, though they guessed he came through the other desert nexus point. He was taken back through their nexus point and is now a prisoner in Tlárkét Mréggu, near the city of Tlár, where he enjoys the company of Lord Ss'üdish Dza'a, the general commanding Triumphant of Terror. Due to his nobility, he has been treated well, but even after a year, he has not cooperated. The Mu'ugalavyáni were never aware of Dhuktému's group. They took the bodies of Chúrísan's men through their nexus point and buried them in the Great Desert of Galái.

**The Story of the Mu'ugalavyáni Outpost:** The Mu'ugalavyáni have built a base in the ice world around the nexus point that opens into the Great Desert of Galái. It's been in existence for several years and is staffed by soldiers

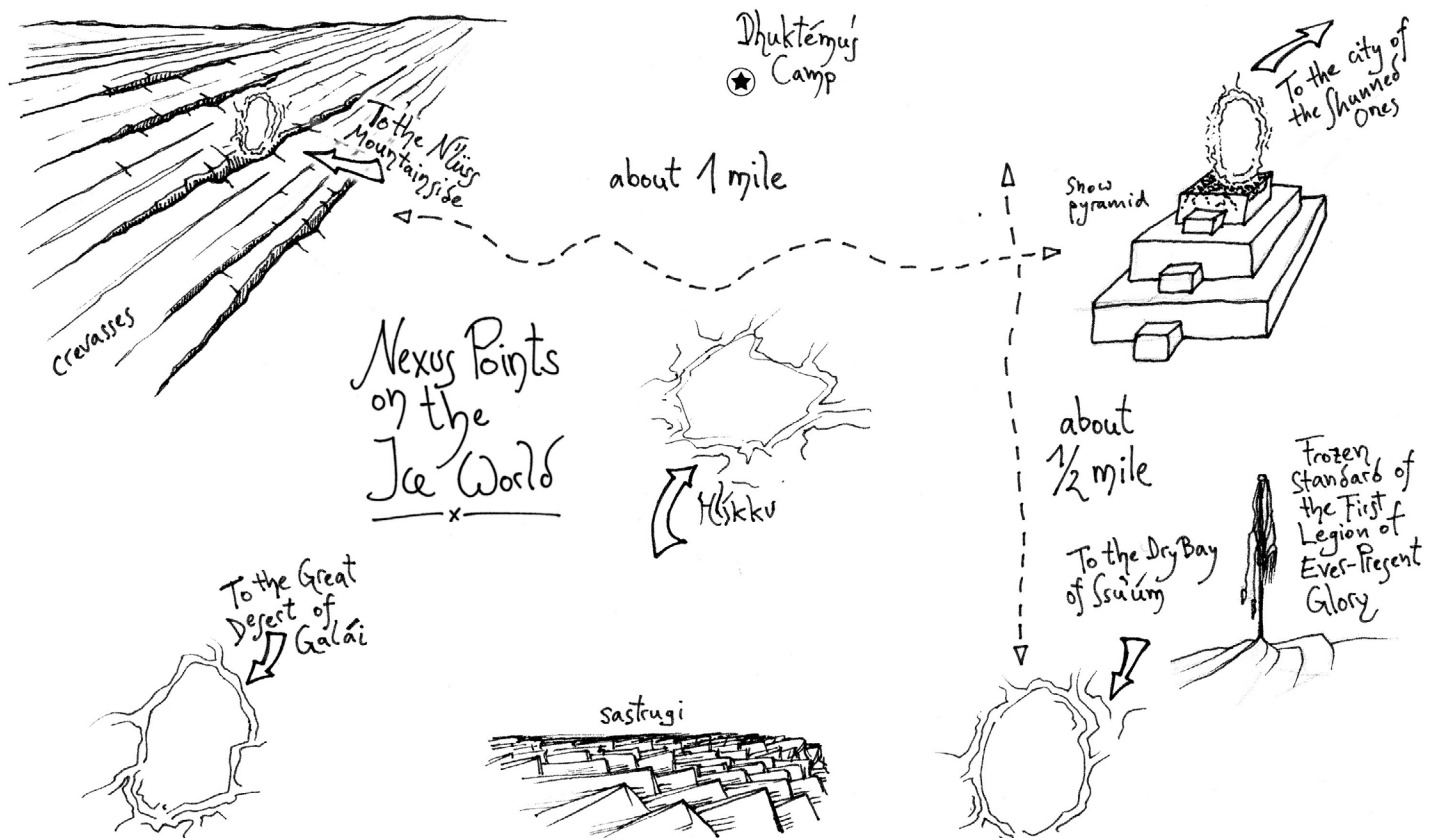
from “Triumphant of Terror,” the Third Legion of the Third Palace. This legion is devoted to Gariyáldi Ssá, a local form of Dlamélish. They wear helmets and cuirasses of chlén-hide, cowls of soft leather, and carry shields depicting the 32 Unspeakable Acts. They use long, barbed spears, war-hammers, slings and metal ammunition. In their fervor, this legion had the habit of sending units into the terrible wastes of Chürstállu. One of these units accidentally stumbled through the nexus point. Once the Captain [Emkétlish] Kseménish Chnékku realized the nexus point was stable, he immediately recognized its potential. From here, a base could be established which would serve as a springboard for annihilating the Chürstáli once and for all. Food stored here would stay preserved. There was an unlimited source of water. And it would be a place of safety to which they could retreat if things went badly. It took some convincing, but Ss’üdish Dza’á, their General, finally agreed. At first, they puzzled over how to build the base and gathered rocks from the surrounding desert. Then one of the sergeants suggested treating the hard-packed snow as if it were bricks. So they built their traditional houses but with big bricks of snow, topped off with low-pitched slate roofs. The base is a huge compound. There are neat 1-story houses of hard-packed snow with tile roofs, 2-8 rooms each, and separate storehouses and out-buildings enclosed within a walled compound. The storehouses are mainly filled with food. At one point, a lieutenant decided to try hunting to see if provisions could be found here. The hunting parties didn’t find any creatures, but they did find another nexus point. This one was some 20 feet up in the air. It was discovered by observing anomalies in how the snow fell. Curious about where it led, they constructed a stepped pyramid of hard-packed snow blocks topped with a platform beneath the nexus point. When they stepped through, however, they quickly retreated, coughing and choking. They kept it under observation and several days later, to their horror, a party of Shunned Ones emerged, levitating to the ground. To their great relief, the Shunned Ones ignored them and traveled off at a 45 degree angle from their base. That was how the Red Hats discovered the nexus point leading to the Dry Bay. By the time they’d worked up the courage to traverse this nexus point, the Shunned Ones were no longer in sight. The lack of foot-prints was interpreted to mean that they’d continued their levitation. It was obvious that this nexus point didn’t lead to the Great Desert of Galái since this desert had sandy dunes while the Great Desert was a gravelly wasteland. Since the legion is keeping this nexus point a tightly guarded secret, they have not been able to question anyone knowledgeable enough about Tékumel geography to identify it. After Chúrisan appeared, they guessed it leads to the Desert of Eyági around Fasiltúm. The appearance of the Shunned Ones changed everything. Casual exploration and fruitless hunting trips ceased. Accordingly, they have never discovered the nexus point leading to the mountain range in N’lüss or the one leading to Hlíkka. They have kept a close watch ever since on the

other two known nexus points. The Shunned Ones have appeared only twice more, each time ignoring their observers and going straight to the other desert nexus point, returning weeks or months later. It was due to this watch that Lord Chúrisan was quickly spotted, and the ambush set up. Due a natural phenomenon known as “green sky,” the Mu’ugalavyáni believe this enterprise to be blessed by their goddess. When the sun is close to the horizon, the sky is cloudless and there is snow on the ground, a large band of the sky turns a beautiful grass-green. While the green sky is in effect, there is no morale check for the Mu’ugalavyáni, and they gain +1 to hit.

**The Mu’ugalavyáni:** The original plan of clearing out Chürstállu has been overtaken by recent events. With all the energy bent towards conquering Livyánu and invading Tsolyánu, permission to continue the raids into Chürstállu has been rescinded. Lord General Ss’üdish Dza’á is still turning over in his mind how to exploit this find to maximum advantage. In the meantime, he’s maintaining a skeletal presence so that their absence from the battlefield can be explained. The intelligence officer Chúrisan spoke with was a lover of Ss’üdish who was exaggerating the minimal information he knew in an effort to strike fear into Chúrisan’s heart. These are soldiers, not philosophers or sorcerers. They have no knowledge about the nature of the nexus points, nor do they care to speculate upon it. They’re there and they work. That’s all the Red Hats care about. Verifying the Mu’ugalavyáni’s base and their approximate numbers stationed here is critical information to relay back to the emperor. Anything else the characters can find out about the history and purpose of their enterprise here will earn high praise indeed.

**Officers by Rank and Clan:** Emkétlish [Captain] Kseménish Chnékku, Sweet Fragrance of Joy; Purélish [Sergeant] Maku’élish Birédnya, Blazing Sun of Day; Purélish [Sergeant] Mrussálish Kra, Red Sword; Purélish [Sergeant] Re’ekmáinish Grénu’u, Red Sword; Purélish [Sergeant] Kurukkúmish Drússa, Heat of the Flame

**Kseménish Chnékku:** Level V Warrior, Gariyáldi Ssá (Dlamélish), 34 years old; Triumphant of Terror, Legion III of the Third Palace. Str 81, Int 71, Con 92, Psy Ab 61, Dex 81, Com 62; AC 2, HD 5 + 1, HP 26; +4 to hit, +3 damage. Equipment: Plate armor, chlén-hide shield, long spear, war hammer, sling. *Description:* Kseménish is a civilized man. He has a slight difficulty in that his previous fear of cliff heights (stemming from an unfortunate incident on the N’lüss border) has translated into a fear of deep crevasses. While he led the ambush on Lord Chúrisan, he is no longer convinced of that this strategy of total annihilation was the best way to follow, particularly since Chúrisan has been so unwilling to cooperate. When news is brought to him of Ibásh Tlakotáni, he will resolve to capture him as a present for his general. This is due to Ibásh’s stunning looks. Since they do not outnumber the



Tsolyáni (unless Cheggukál has suffered losses already or the party has split), he will try to avoid a pitched battle. If possible, they'll hold back and watch, letting the ice world take some victims. If they do attack, they'll prefer to do so when the party is split, either by dividing up while within the ice world or when they send people through a nexus point. If a battle turns against the Red Hats, they'll conduct a strategic retreat through their nexus point, hoping to lead the Tsolyáni into another ambush in the Desert of Galái.

**The Shunned Ones:** These powerful sorcerers are the bogeymen of the region. Highly dangerous if confronted, they have little interest in the activities of lesser beings. They use the “short-cut” through the ice world as a way of gaining quick access to the tube-way car station in the Dry Bay. From here they roam the world in search of powerful artifacts and technology of the ancients to keep their crumbling domed city running. The characters will not encounter the Shunned Ones unless they go through their nexus point and stay to explore in the poisonous atmosphere within the city. And if they do that, then they’re asking for whatever comes their way. Verifying the presence of the Shunned Ones is an essential piece of information to relay back to the emperor.

Temple of Qón, fighting their arrogant dismissal of her ideas. Though the Qón priests scoffed, she knew she could travel the Other Planes using knowledge she'd gained from an ancient Sunúz manuscript she'd unearthed in the temple archives. Striving to prove herself, Fáthmei carried out the most complex of the spells contained in her tome and sent her spirit-soul off on a long journey. For several weeks her body lay dormant until her spirit-soul returned, and she described a trip all the way to the Isles of the Excellent Dead and back. Her recounting of this feat made its way to the Emperor's ears, establishing her credibility. What she held was what she experienced as her spirit-soul returned. Something stirred out in the Unending Gray. She felt a presence, wild and exhilarating. It called to her, and she nearly followed it. Only her strong desire to return home and prove her critics wrong restrained. Once home again, she cast another spell from the tome, seeking out the presence. This seeking led her to the nexus point which always remained there. The nexus point is suffused with the energy of that mysterious presence. Fáthmei is certain that whoever goes through it will encounter her presence. She is too cautious to go herself and has sent Sáyi instead. She has imprinted a memory of the presence in Sáyi's mind so that Sáyi can recognize it. She has also placed Sáyi under a Mind-Bar to pursue the presence until she finds it. Sáyi is aware of this and accepts it. If she returns, Fáthmei has promised her the Sunúz tome. Sáyi feels it is worth the danger. There are a total of five stable nexus points. In Tékumel, they are spread out over great distances. Four form the corners of a rectangle: one is in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, one in a Shunned Ones domed city north of Yán

Kór, one in the mountains of N'lüss, and one in the eastern Galái desert. The final nexus point resides in the center of this rough rectangle and leads into the heart of Hlíkkú, the city of the Mad One. All five nexus points lead to a single plane of existence, an ice world. In this world, they are very close together, with only a mile along the long edges of the rectangle and half a mile along the short edges. The presence Fáthmei felt was the Mad One of Hlíkkú. The nexus points have been generated by it for its own unknowable reasons. They will stay for the length of the scenario, and perhaps for many more years, even centuries. There is no way for them to be replicated.

**Preparations In Avanthár:** At the start of the scenario, the characters are gathered in Avanthár and last preparations are being made for their provisions. Stewards and lackeys of all sorts rush around them. Important people mill about, eager to see this brave and potentially doomed expedition off. If the players wish, they can ask for specific items to be packed (there are 10 bearer slaves carrying supplies and provisions) or try to gather information from the spectators. Let them know that to reflect the experience of the Chancery in preparing for these sorts of expeditions, twice in the adventure each character will be able to look for an obscure (non-magical) item and find it in the supplies. There are a number of questions the characters may wish to ask of those around them. Here are some of the possible questions and answers:

Where is the nexus point located? *In the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, in southeastern Sa'á Allaqí.*

Do the Sa'á Allaqiyáni know about it? *It doesn't appear so. The third expedition did not run into any sentries, no hints have been made in diplomatic circles and the reports from the spies in the king's court mention nothing about this region.*

How did Mirusíya first learn about the nexus point? *From the theories of a brilliant Belkhánu priestess from Thráya, Fáthmei hiAmiyála. It seems incredulous to some that she just came up with it out of thin air. Surely she's in possession of some ancient text that she should be sharing with the Imperium as a whole.*

Why do we think it's stable? *Again, this is Fáthmei's assertion. Whenever she has cast her sorcerous gaze about in search of nexus points, one consistently registered in this location.*

Do we know what would cause a nexus point to be stable? *No. If this knowledge could be gained, it would be priceless. The assumption is that great sorcery must be involved.*

Why does Mirusíya trust her? *He has not chosen to say why, but he clearly does trust her.*

Do we have any guesses as to what might be on the other side of the nexus point? *Fáthmei has cast many spells attempting to discover this information. She's said that it's very cold, but that the*

*atmosphere is breathable.*

What do we know about the second expedition? *They were a semélt from the First Legion of Ever-Present Glory. Intelligent, well-trained men with a competent Sea Blue hereksá leading them. As a simple retrieval team, they lacked any sorcerers. Their skeletons were found strewn all over the tubeway car station. The common speculation is death by Ssú. [They also had 10 slaves to carry extra gear.]*

How was the first expedition chosen? *Chúrisan, that brave soul, volunteered for it. Rumors were floating around everywhere about the assignment, and he was just back from an extended tour of duty fighting the Red Hats in Dó Cháka. Undoubtedly, he was interested in a change of pace. He took twenty of his own soldiers with him, plus the semélt's tirrikámu Dbuktému [plus 10 bearer slaves to carry extra gear]. They were good men, tried in battle.*

What is Chúrisan's reputation? *He's arrogant. He makes quick decisions and sticks with them. But he's rarely wrong and is very honorable. His men idolize him and obey him unquestioningly. He's ambitious, frustrated by how long it appears that Kettukál hiMraktiné will command his legion.*

What's the common opinion of the fate of Chúrisan? *That he's either dead or trapped on the far side of the nexus point.*

**In the Tube-way Station:** Ibásh has the disc with their destination. It will be an uneventful journey of a number of hours. It's been nearly a year since the second expedition was slain here. The bodies have completely rotted away, leaving bones and equipment, which have all been unceremoniously heaped. Examining the bones will reveal that a number of them were snapped in two. All of them show signs of having been gnawed upon by something large. Due to this desecration, it's hard to tell what originally killed them. Mixed in among their remains are some long, thin fins and rib bones that are not human. Other than this, there are no non-human remains, and no non-Tsolyáni weapons and armor. In addition to the weapons and armor, there are other metallic equipment such as stakes and cook pots. If they look closely, or specify that they're looking for it, they will be able to find and recover the disc used to operate the tube-way car. If any of the characters were to make an educated guess, they would assume (correctly) that the expedition died at the claws of a large, unintelligent creature(s). A careful counting of skulls, different types of bones, etc will reveal parts of 38 adult men. There are old blood stains soaked into the floor, but they are faint, as if someone tried to scrub them up. There is a great deal of sand in the chamber. Some of it is stuck to the walls by a substance long since dried (mucus from the Chürstállí). Brushing at the sand will cause it to fall off the wall.

**Fate of the Second Expedition:** There's a large, long tunnel, slanting downwards from the tubeway station to the desert. The expedition was unfortunate enough to



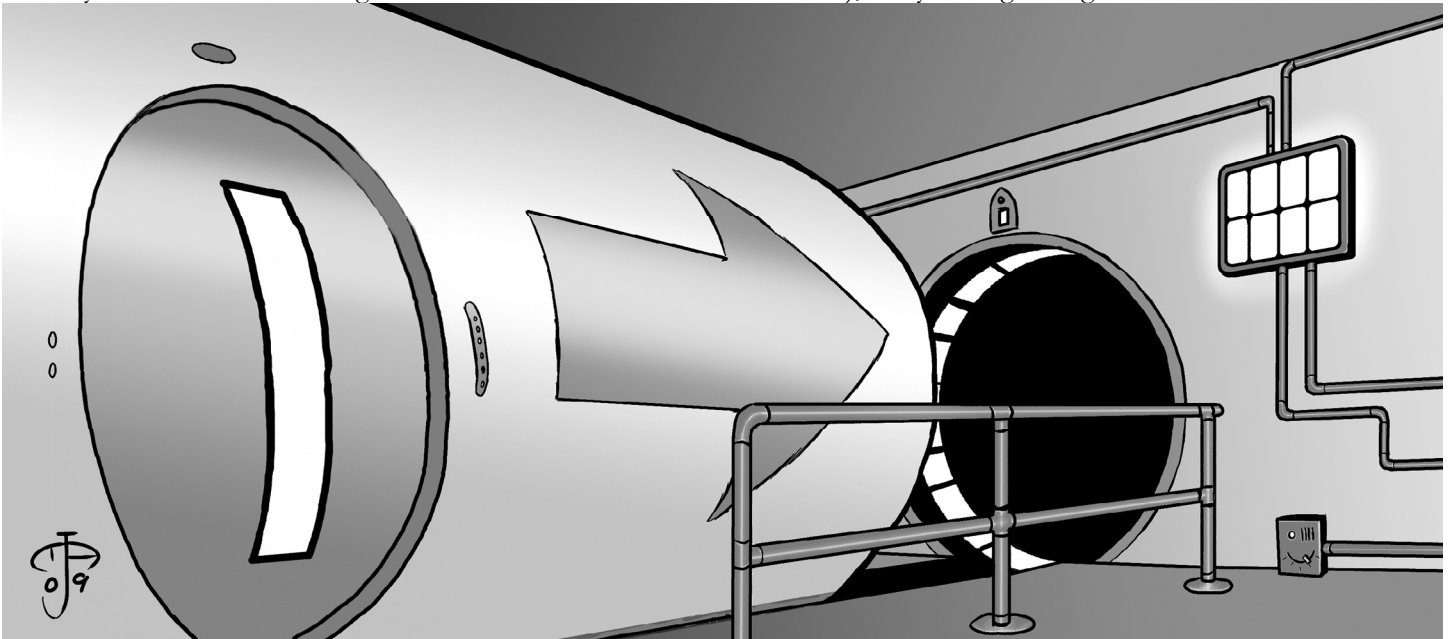
emerge from the tunnel only to encounter a starving Chürstállí which had sought refuge there. They were immediately set upon and a vicious fight ensued. The Chürstállí was a huge specimen of its kind, nearly 70 feet long. The soldiers injured it, but they really had no chance. Chürstállí are native only to the Great Desert of Galái, west of Mu'ugalavyá. None of the Tsolyáni even recognized what they were fighting. This poor creature had a long, complicated journey. One of the nexus points opens up into its homeland. It accidentally wandered through and into a snowstorm in the ice world. Bewildered, blinded by the snow and freezing to death, it stumbled around until by sheer accident, it walked through the nexus point into the Dry Bay. While the climate there was more to its liking, it could not find enough food to keep itself alive. It did find the dead bodies of the seven remaining slaves from Chürisan's expedition who had returned to the tunnel in the hopes that another tube-way car would appear, only to die of thirst while waiting. This sustained it for a while. It had settled down to sleep the day away buried in the sand outside the tunnel when the second expedition arrived. Eating their bodies, licking the blood from the floor, and eating any scrap of fabric or fur sustained it for a while, but no one else came and eventually it died of starvation. The long, thin fins and rib bones found mixed in with the soldiers' remains are parts of a land fish from the Galái desert which the Chürstállí feed upon. They like to use the bones as swords and daggers.

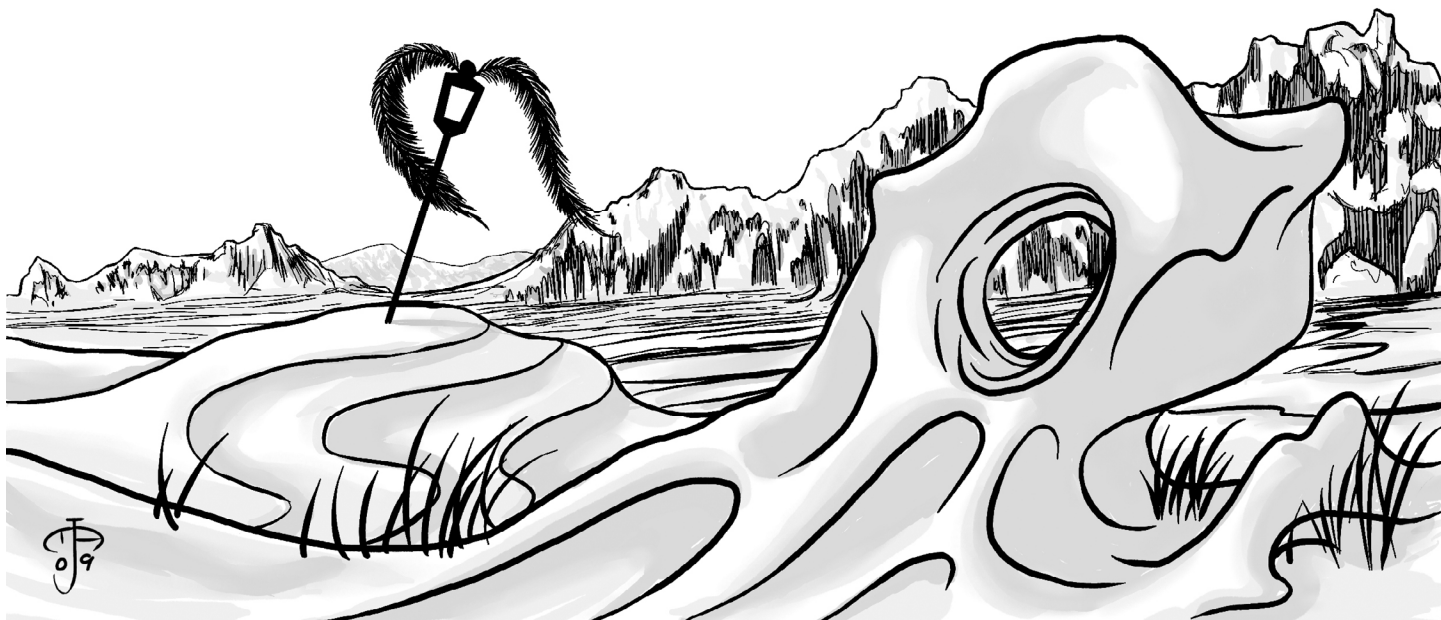
**The Dry Bay of Ssu'úm Nexus Point:** The desert here is a series of rolling dunes of brownish sand. They are truly in the middle of nowhere. None of the mountains surrounding the Dry Bay are visible. There are no people to encounter.

**Encounters in the Desert:** About half a mile from the tubeway station lies the hulking remains of the Chürstállí.

All that's left is the 70 foot long grey-colored carapace, the hard, sharp beak, and various bones. The carapace shows multiple signs of trauma, including long vertical gashes along its side. Cheggukál will recognize these as evidence of sword wounds. Bashán will be able to identify the remains and know that these creatures rarely travel further than two or three hundred tsán (miles) from their nesting areas in the Chüru Peak. Chüru Peak is, of course, many thousands of tsán distant. If they linger here for any appreciable amount of time, one of the bearer slaves will see an alásh snake slithering through the sand. The **alásh** is a tiny, red snake with lethal venom (NA 1, AC 3, M 12", HD 1, DAM poison bite, save or die, 3d6 damage if save made). If they decide to give a thorough investigation to any part of the desert, someone will fall prey to an erúnu, "the old woman of the desert." An erúnu consists of many blackish pods connected by tentacles, a skull-sized central ganglion and a number of prehensile tentacles that are used for locomotion and fighting. It typically digs out a cavity beneath the sand, fills it with a clear liquid that is a powerful acid, and covers it with a thin shell of sand that it's stuck together with mucus. When someone steps on the shell, he breaks through, suffers damage from the acid and then is seized and torn apart by the erúnu. It emits a high, cackling, laughter-like sound when it's feeding. There will be two other skeletons in the sand beneath the pit, the bones of adult men (slaves from Chürisan's expedition). **Erúnu:** NA 1, AC 6, M 4", HD 2, acid does 2d6 if save missed, 1d6 if made.

The nexus point is not visible to the naked eye. However, a skeleton of a man, partially covered by sand, lies near its entrance (see Nexus Point Camp below). They can find the nexus point by either experimenting with tossing sand or other things in the air and seeing if anything disappears (or accidentally walking through it, if they're not being careful), or by casting Seeing Other Planes or similar.





Characters with very high Psychic Ability will feel a strong sense of unease near the nexus point. This is the remote presence of the Mad One of Hlíkku. The nexus point is 20 feet in diameter, a truly immense portal

**The Ice World:** Stepping through the nexus point takes PCs to what can best be described as a hell of Vimúhla.

Before you stretches a plain of whiteness so brilliant it dazzles the eyes. You squint and then do a little dance as intense cold pierces through your boots. A breeze springs up, and a swirl of powdery, crystalline particles whips around you, stinging your legs. The bright sun overhead beats down, warming your shoulders. It's an odd contrast. As you take a step forward, your foot crunches through the frozen, crusty surface and you sink ankle-deep into the soft, slushy snow. You turn around slowly and spot unmistakable evidence of Chúrísan's presence. About ten feet behind you a legion standard is planted in the snow. It's planted very deeply. Almost half of the staff is buried. The standard of the First Legion of Ever-Present Glory is much tattered and frozen solid.

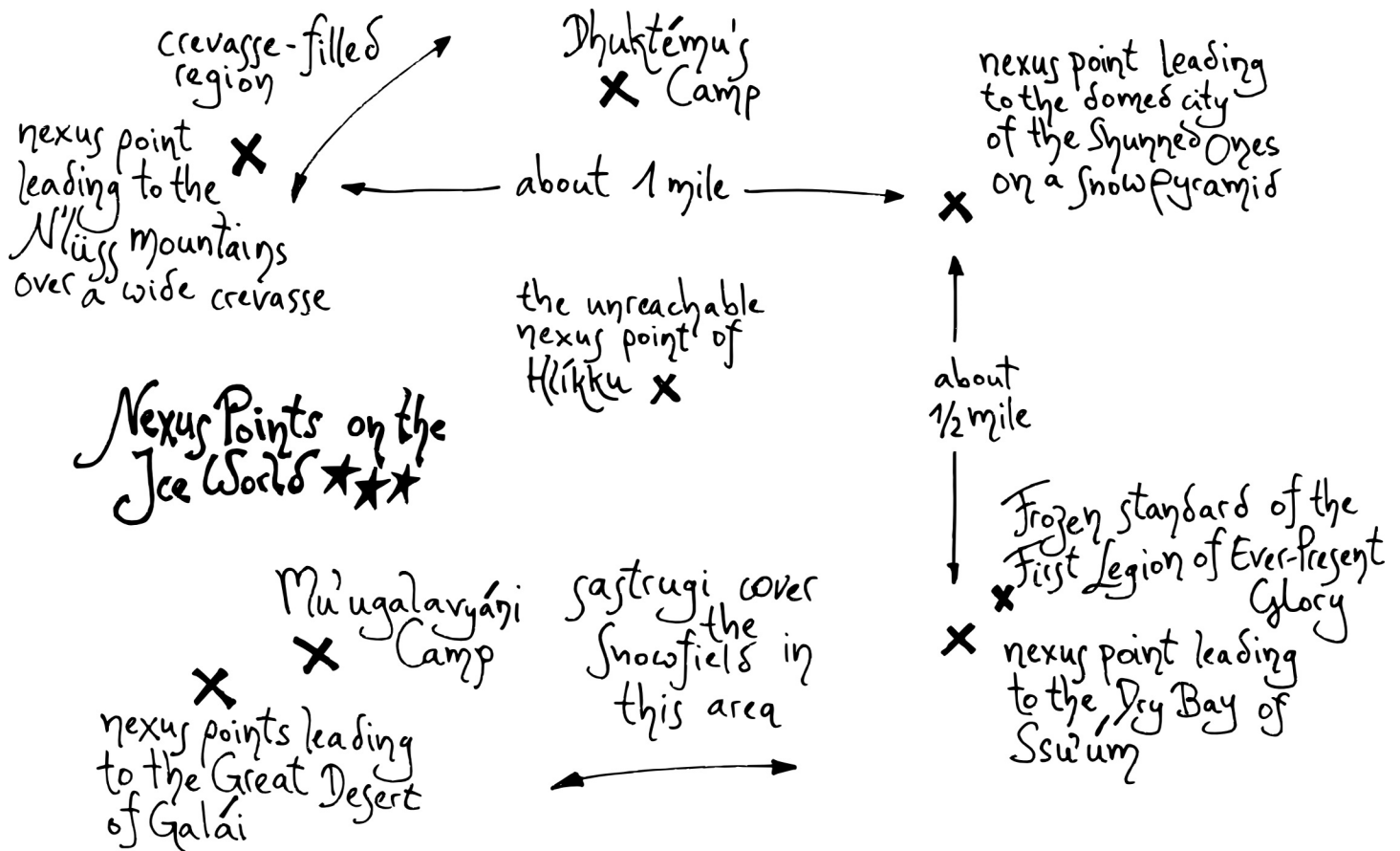
Now anyone with Psychic Ability 81+ will feel the unease, while those with 96+ will hear whispers within their minds and a distant howling in a language beyond comprehension. It will pull and tug at them. At regular intervals, whenever dramatically appropriate, have such characters make a Saving Throw against hypnosis. If they fail, they will be compelled to travel toward the nearest nexus point.

**Nexus Point Camp:** This is the remains of the camp that Chúrísan left when he and Dhuktému set off exploring. The soldier left guarding the legion standard and the slaves waited in vain for someone to return. When one slave fell asleep and froze to death, the other slaves panicked and decided to go back through the nexus point and wait in the desert. They took the body with them and buried it nearby

in the desert. The grave was unmarked, and the skeleton is now partially uncovered due to the constant blowing of the sand by the wind. By this point, the guard didn't prevent them, but he himself stayed out of his sense of duty. In the end, he nodded off and froze to death himself. (Several slaves were lost to the desert. The others huddled in the tube-way station waiting for another car to come. They eventually died of thirst.) If the players pull out the standard, they'll feel resistance, like it's hitting something solid. A short period of determined shoveling will uncover the soldier's body. There are no injuries. It's been well-preserved by the cold, and his face looks peaceful.

**Weather:** It's summer here in the ice world. It can reach as high as 40° F in the afternoon, dropping to around 10° at night. Wind is a big problem. It's usually around 15 mph, and a slight increase in wind speed creates blizzard conditions on the ground, even with a cloudless sky, as snow is picked up and moved around. These storms can blow up with little warning and reduce visibility to 5 to 10 feet. Once the players have taken in the landscape, one or more of them (likely the most comely) may exhibit "rainbow breath:" the ice crystals in their breath will catch the light at just the right angle to be seen by the rest of the characters as a rainbow shimmer. If a glacial field is covered by shadow after a period in the sun, it contracts explosively. Explosions can be single, or can occur in clusters. This should be described ominously, as in, "A shadow crosses over the ground, and you hear a loud series of explosions from somewhere beneath you."

**Terrain:** Although the snowfield looks flat, it's actually rippled with sastruggi, ridges of snow created by the wind, spaced apart 10 feet or so. Travel is thus constant walking up and down slopes. It is extremely easy for someone or something to hide "in plain sight" behind a sastruggi. This area is also in the middle of an enormous crevasse field. Crevasse are cracks in the ice, and are often very deep,



though they frequently have shelves and plateaus on the way down. Some are obvious; some are hidden under a thin crust of snow. The Mu'ugalavyáni have learned to use their spears as prods, testing the ground in front of them as they go. This practice also means they spend time every day on sharpening their points. Every quarter mile that the PCs travel, roll on this table (d100):

outside crevasse fields	within fields	result
01-50	01-25	No problems
51-80	26-50	Crevasse discovered, party must backtrack or circumvent
81-95	51-75	Crevasse discovered by accident, someone falls d10 feet and gets stuck or lands on a ledge
96-00	76-00	Two people are caught in a crevasse, roll d20 for each of them to see how far they fall

**Searching for Chúrisan's Expedition:** The first crevasse the PCs fall into or investigate which is not in the immediate vicinity of the nexus point will have 3 bodies in it from Dhuktému's party. They will be covered with ice, and the bloodstains and unnatural angles of the arms and legs draw attention to the traumatic injuries suffered in the fall. The bodies are on a ledge twenty feet down. Dhuktému's party can be found in virtually any location since the white-out

conditions of the blizzard would have allow-ed them to virtually re-trace their steps without knowing it. They will not be found on the paths between the nexus points that the Mu'ugalavyáni travel since otherwise the Red Hats would have discovered them by now. If several hours are devoted to searching, their camp should be found. It will first present itself as an odd hill standing alone. Digging down through the snow and ice will reveal the tent. Hacking through the canvas reveals the frozen bodies.

**Mu'ugalavyáni Guard:** The Mu'ugalavyáni maintain a constant watch on the Shunned Ones nexus point and the "Tsolyáni" nexus point. A pair of guards makes a slow circuit between them. There's a 15% chance he'll spot the party arriving. If the guards are not there, then their footprints, not quite covered in snow, will be visible. When the players are spotted, one Red Hat will head back to camp to warn the others. The other will try to stay hidden and keep an eye on the players. If he spots the players when they are following him, he'll try to lead them to a dangerous area of crevasses where he will tread lightly over the thin covering of ice and they are likely to break through. PCs with a strong background in military legions or perhaps higher-level warrior PCs will be able to identify the Mu'ugalavyáni legion based on their distinctive shield designs (depictions of the Thirty-Two Unspeakable Acts).

**The Five Nexus Points:** There are a total of five nexus points in close proximity this region. Four of them form a rectangle, which if drawn on a map of Téकुmel, places the

Yán Koryáni city of Hlíkku in the center. The fifth point is in the center of that rectangle. The nexus point centering over Hlíkku cannot be entered, though it can be detected. If Seeing Other Planes is cast here, Fáthmei's "presence" can be detected on the other side, and such characters will "know" that only one who is called by that presence can enter. Unknown to such PCs is that PsyAb 96+ characters called by the Mad One (see above) can pass through. If not restrained, such characters will be lost.

**The Shunned Ones City:** This nexus point is 20 feet up in the air. The Mu'ugalavyáni constructed a pyramid of hard-packed snow blocks which you can walk up to be level with the nexus point. The top of the pyramid has an intricate pattern of stones laid into the snow, forming a glyph. Magic-user and some priest characters can recognize it as The Glyph of Present Defense, meant to guard against demons. This, of course, offers no protection against the Shunned Ones. The Red Hats are ignorant of these matters and simply grasping at straws.

You can barely see. The air is filled with a yellowish fog which burns your lungs with every breath and sets your eyes to watering. The light is as dim as deep twilight and strangely suffuse. The dimness is heightened by the shadows cast by the tall structures a couple hundred feet away that surround you on all sides.

If they stay within the city square, they'll have five minutes before Shunned Ones emerge from the buildings and start converging on them. If they start moving toward the buildings, the Shunned Ones will emerge immediately. PCs will have time to notice that the ground beneath them is very hard and very smooth. Close inspection will reveal it to be a metal of some kind. This "city square" is warded by a powerful Guarding spell. No magic may enter or leave the city square. Telepathic and psychically sensitive characters are immediately cut off. Magic will operate within the circle and physical beings and items may cross its boundaries. The corrosive gas and dim light put the characters at -2 to all rolls. After half an hour, they'll take 1 HP of damage/minute from breathing the gas. When the Shunned Ones emerge to deal with the intruders:

A terrible stench hits your nostrils a moment before you catch sight the unnaturally tall and slender shapes that emerge from the buildings on all sides into the sickly yellowish twilight. Night-black robes flap about them as they raise their long, long arms and begin to move them in a strangely hypnotic pattern.

The characters will have time to flee through the nexus point if that's what they choose to do at this point. If anyone is ever close enough to see their faces, they are puckered and wrinkled like a rotting fruit, punctuated only by a pair of round, black pupilless eyes.

Shunned Ones are mighty sorcerers possessed of many magical devices seized from their relentless scouring of the ruins of Tékumel. They do not fear the lesser races and will swiftly slay any who dare intrude into their domed city. If the players stand and fight, they are doomed. A suggested attack plan of the Shunned Ones is:

- 1<sup>st</sup> round: 10 Doomkills cast at maximum range
- 2<sup>nd</sup> round: 10 Energy Bolts cast at maximum range
- 3<sup>rd</sup> round: 4 Walls of Swords, boxing PCs in
- 4<sup>th</sup> round: Shunned Ones cast Invulnerability on selves
- 5<sup>th</sup> round: Paralysis cast at 30 feet
- 6<sup>th</sup> round, etc: Physical assault

The Shunned Ones use this nexus point to gain access to the tube-way station which they use to travel to ruined sites. They are unconcerned about letting humans escape. Humans are like rats; there will always be more of them so just kill the ones that get into your home to keep it clean. They will keep a more vigilant watch and respond more quickly after they've been visited once. They'll also alter their tactics to respond to the threat that they're facing. They are AC 2, HD 2 and their spells never fail.

**N'lüss Mountainside:** The Mu'ugalavyáni have not discovered this nexus point yet because it's in the middle of a particularly crevasse-filled region. Once they realized how treacherous the terrain was, they avoided the area. The



nexus point is over a wide crevasse, about 20 feet across. Jumping through it will lead to the N'lüss mountainside, but requires iron nerves, good targeting and a strong jump (it's about 9 feet from the edge). The crevasse is several hundred feet long and its bottom can't be determined. Those using flight spells can easily go through.

You are standing on a ledge jutting out from the side of a mountain. The sky is crystal-clear, and the air bracing, not much warmer than the ice world itself. The wind whips and blows around you. Below you the mountain drops away in a sheer vertical plunge for several hundred feet. Above you the mountain stretches up impossibly high into the sky. The view is breath-taking but all you can see about you are more mountains.

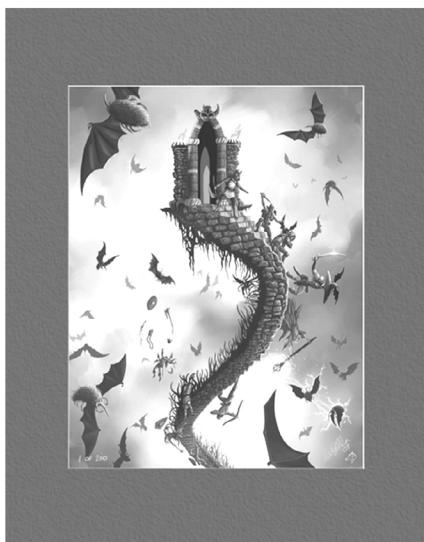
The ledge is about 20 feet long and 3 feet wide. It's reachable only through the use of mountain-climbing equipment. It's in a deserted, desolate region of N'lüss. To meet anyone here, they would need to climb down and the travel for days or weeks, depending on the direction they take. Someone who has been to N'lüss will recognize the pattern of the peaks; otherwise it's indistinguishable from the mountain ranges in northeastern Tsolyánu. Any Red Hat who's served on the N'lüss border will recognize the peaks. There are no easily accessible resources here.

## The Great Desert of Galái:

You step out into searing heat, but this is clearly not the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. In place of its sandy, rolling dunes, this is a gravelly wasteland as far as the eye can see. Scanning all around, you can see a single peak just visible to the north-west. It's impossible to tell how far away it is and thus how tall it is. Your best estimate is that it's several day's march away. Someone has built a cairn of stones next to the nexus point that's as tall as a man. The ground in front of it has been disturbed, as if dug up in a long, wide trench with the dirt then piled back into the resulting hole. Embedded into the sand at the foot of the stone cairn is a flat stone engraved with Mu'ugalavyáni writing.

If anyone can read Mu'ugalavyáni, the writing says "Here lie ten brave soldiers of the Legion of Ever-Present Glory." The Red Hats buried Chúrisan's soldiers who died in the ambush here. The cairn serves mainly to mark the nexus point for the Red Hats, but they are disguising that by also having it serve as a grave marker. The peak in the distance is Chüru Peak. Heading towards it is very perilous as that leads you straight into Chürstáll territory. Heading east will eventually take them to the Sákbe road from Khú to Tlár. They will run into patrols from Triumphant of Terror long before they'll reach the road. Ω

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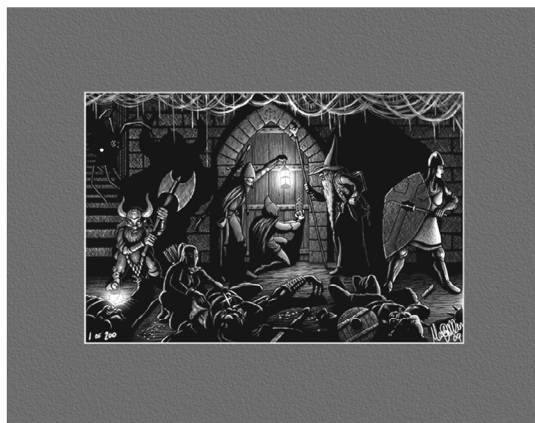
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# Taking It With You

by Lawson Reilly

Dungeons and other adventure venues notoriously contain accumulations of wealth in a non-portable form. Think of polished mahogany tables, wall-sized tapestries, gemcloth rugs, ivory thrones, ebony four-poster beds, mural-sized paintings, and gold-plated sarcophagus lids. The logistics of carting off this treasure are more daunting than facing the dragon who guarded it! Yet, someone must...it's not as if it can be left behind, for heaven's sake. But unless aided by high-level magic PCs can't do it alone. It's quite a trick to battle trolls with an eight-foot Persian rug strapped to your back, never mind a treasure chest with 10,000 coins.

The common non-magical solution to moving treasure around is that meanest of henchmen, the porter. Porters are, apparently, the dumbest of all creatures: willing to enter life-threatening (if not downright deadly) situations and do back-breaking labor (sometimes hauling the combined worth of several villages) for a (very) short stack of gold pieces. But hiring itinerant farmhands, incomprehensible migrants, and indigent drunks to fulfill this vital function would result in a poorly coordinated effort. Thus the Guild of Porters! Once a contract is signed, the party is supplied with a professional team of loadbearers for its duration.

**Organization:** The Guild of Porters has chapters in all cities and towns and many small villages. Each chapter is governed by the Guild charter and by a council of local Master Porters. Experienced members who have not yet reached master level are called journeymen, as in other guilds. Members pay monthly dues of 3 gp. In return they are provided with fraternity, social events, a gathering hall, guarantee of a decent funeral and at least some measure of protection against exploitative employers. Any team of porters will be equipped with a master supervisor and a 50/50 mix of journeymen and apprentices. In addition to monthly dues, the Guild takes 10% of all contract earnings. The remainder of the haul is split among the team.

**The Guild House:** Guild meeting houses vary from town to town, but share the following characteristics:

- A meeting room with a table large enough to accommodate the local chapter for meetings, events, and dinners.
- A smaller club room (w/bar) for casual social gatherings.
- A front room for meeting with clients.
- A records room and treasury (chests are well-trapped!).
- Indoor storage for handcarts, rope, block-and-tackle, etc.
- Outdoor barn for keeping beasts of burden (mules and donkeys) and larger animal-drawn carts. In small chapters, the local stable will be used instead.
- A "shingle" or sign hanging in front of the guild house with a picture of a treasure chest with wings.

**Clients:** Guild clients typically include adventurers, banks, and the nobility, but anyone with anything bulky that needs to be moved may hire them. When transporting valuables for banks, the Guild subcontracts with bodyguards for security. Nobles typically provide their own.

**Contracts:** The Guild of Porters uses three main contract types: firm fixed price (FFP), time and materials (T&M), and percentage. With an FFP contract, the Guild supplies a team to do a specific job and receives a set price for the service. An example might be a trip to the nearby evil temple specifically to transport the high priest's silver sacrificial altar. This price would be based on the daily T&M rate times the expected job duration with a 10% to 20% discount applied because the job is guaranteed income for a number of days. The Guild is generally reluctant to issue FFP contracts where (as usual) they have a monopoly.

When using a T&M contract, the party pays the Guild a set hourly or daily rate. Price discounts are available for hires longer than one week. Adventures of indeterminate duration (e.g. typical delves) are just right for T&M contracts.

Portage Team	Hourly Rate *	Daily Rate (8 hours) *	Weekly Rate (5 days) *
1 master + 1 porter	5 sp	3 gp	13 gp
1 master + 2 porters	7 sp	5 gp	38 gp
1 master + 3 porters	9 sp	7 gp	50 gp
1 master + 4 porters	10 sp	7 gp 5 sp	54 gp
1 master + 6 porters	12 sp	9 gp	70 gp
1 master + 10 porters	15 sp	11 gp	80 gp

\*Double for overtime (>8 hours/day, weekends, holidays).

Finally, if the Guild smells a great haul, they may instead demand a percentage of the total. As little as 1% would be acceptable and profitable for most ventures.

**Contract Terms:** Using history as a model, we find that one of the chief responsibilities of Middle Age labor guilds was ensuring that each member had a proper funeral. This commitment was taken very seriously. Therefore, besides payment terms, the primary stipulation in each contract is that the party is responsible for returning the bodies of deceased porters to the guild. Next, the contracts stipulate the duties porters must perform. These include transporting treasure and materiel. The duties will never include fighting, guarding, serving as medics, or being first through unexplored halls and doorways. If a party violates the con-



tract, the Guild employs standard methods such as hiring thugs or guild assassins to harass the party. Failure to return the body of a deceased porter is a particularly grievous violation. Such neglect typically results in the disappearance of at least one party member. The rest of the PCs will be anonymously provided with a keepsake that leaves no doubt as to the fate of their missing comrade.

**Equipment:** Porters supply their own equipment, the cost of which is factored into their rates. Equipment can include skids, stretchers, carts, dungeon carts (specially-built for 5-foot passage ways and low ceilings), beast-drawn wagons, block and tackle, ropes, cord, hooks, straps and buckles. In special cases they will bring crating material such as lumber, hammers and nails. The Guild will ask the party to explain their venture in detail so the team can bring the proper equipment. Typically porters wear no armor (though padded/leather might be called for by some extreme environments) and are armed only with a single dagger for self-defense (they never voluntarily fight).

Portage Team	Common Transport Equipment	Portage Capacity
1 master + 1 porter	1 small cart or skid	500 lbs
1 master + 2 porters	2 small carts or skids	1000 lbs
1 master + 3 porters	1 small wagon + 1 cart	2000 lbs
1 master + 4 porters	1 small wagon + 2 carts	2500 lbs
1 master + 6 porters	2 small wagons	3000 lbs
1 master + 10 porters	3 small wagons + 1 cart	5000 lbs

**Graft:** Most porters subsist at the lowest tier of society and have learned opportunism as a survival trait. They will not pass up a perceived safe chance to claim their due. Even lawful porters can justify surreptitiously taking their “fair share” after giving careful thought to their risk versus their meager compensation. In the most benign cases this graft is limited to pocketing dropped or looked-over coins and gems. In more chronic cases it can result in the loss of entire chests of treasure. Any party employing porters should expect a 10% loss in the haul. Particularly vigilant characters may be able to suppress this to 5%, but unless absurd and time-intensive precautions (counting every coin in a chest, etc.) are taken (wandering monsters!) it is not possible to eliminate this completely. Careless parties can easily lose up to 50% of their treasure. The GM must decide whether PCs still earn experience for gold lost in this manner. Outright theft is the most common form of graft, but Guildsmen may also recommend crooked appraisers or even subcontract with bandits to rob them upon exit!

**Scabs:** Any schlub can schlep a treasure chest. If parties try hard enough they can always locate an alternative to the Guild. The safest alternatives are the PCs’ followers and henchmen. They can be ordered to carry things, though this should provoke a morale/loyalty check if the items are heavy and distances long. Other options are less safe. Disgruntled former Guild members may offer their services as freelancers in order to cut out the Guild’s 10%. The Guild also contends with gangs of wise guys who try to undercut the Guild’s prices. And, sadly, the world is filled with folks desperate for work just to stay alive. The Guild takes a laid-back attitude toward these competitors and the companies which hire them. Such enterprise usually results in incompetence, dishonesty and utter lack of coordination. From the Guild’s point-of-view, the ensuing fiascos pay back the involved parties for their lack of patronage, in spades. The consequences of using non-Guild porting services can be any of the following:

- Higher levels of graft, or attempted graft
- Carts breaking down
- Fragile items dropped and destroyed
- Treasure spilt and lost
- Porters lost
- Massive delays
- Severe injuries from lifting (hernias and back problems), cart accidents, collapsing skids, dropped chests, and block and tackle mishaps

**Conclusion:** These rules provide a framework for hiring bearers. I hope the Guild of Porters will lend an additional whiff of authenticity to campaigns. It gives PCs a feasible way to attempt big hauls without *Bags of Efficacious Containment* while dispelling some of the absurdity of, say, pocketing suits plate mail. If nothing else, it provides ample opportunities for extra trouble and amusement, and maybe new types of adventure as well. Ω

# The Duchy of Briz

by Akrasia (akraticwizardry.blogspot.com)

The Duchy of Briz is a small, self-contained region taken from my Ilmahal campaign setting. It should be easy to insert into most 'standard fantasy' worlds. References to campaign-specific people, places, and gods can easily be substituted for as appropriate. For more information on Ilmahal, please consult my blog (url above).

**Island Overview:** The Duchy encompasses a medium-sized island (roughly 80 miles north to south and 40 east to west) off the eastern coast of the Island of Ilmahal. The northern third of the island is dominated by a grim and menacing woodland called the Maelvorn Forest. Beyond the forest on the northeastern corner of the island are the wild highlands called the Storm Ridges. The southern part of the island consists of fertile farmlands and river valleys, although sparsely settled rocky hills dominate the eastern and western coastlands. The island – called 'Brohn' in the ancient Morghain tongue – was inhabited by a peaceful, if primitive, Morghain clan for many centuries. It eventually was conquered by Aphorian legions, some twelve centuries ago. (Think Celts and Romans.) The island was abandoned by most human folk approximately four hundred years past, when the Aphorian Imperium withdrew its legions from Ilmahal. Much of the island was subsequently overrun by disorganized bands of humanoid savages. These bands settled in the abandoned Aphorian villages and forts dotting the island, and fought amongst each other for many years.

Approximately 225 years ago, a troop of mercenaries and adventurers led by the renowned warrior Flavius Briz landed in the ruined southern port of Irylond. Briz and his followers subsequently reconquered the southern part of the island, slaying thousands of humanoids and driving the remainder into the Maelvorn to the north or the Storm Bridges beyond. Briz then declared himself Duke of the island, renamed the port Irylond after himself, encouraged the resettlement of farmland, and established three guard towers to protect the southern island against future humanoid incursions. Over the subsequent decades, a number of freemen from southern Ilmahal, tempted by the prospect of establishing their own farms and businesses, settled in the duchy, contributing to its wealth and stability. Most of the duchy's human population dwells in the southern part of the island. The one exception is the fishing town of White Cove. The present Duke of Briz is Duke Aelig Briz II. A small number of furtive Waldleuti (diminutive forest folk – this might be gnomes, halflings, wood elves, or something else depending on your setting details) live in the southern Highland Forest. The nine towns of the duchy are as follows:

1. **Briz** (formerly called Irylond.): The capital and only sizable town in the duchy, Briz is a moderately cosmopolitan cultural and economic centre, and hence the only place where representatives of other lands and races have permanent trading bases. The imposing tower of Duke Aelig Briz II can be found on a small island attached to the town by a grey stone bridge. The 'Red Raven Inn' is a large and rowdy establishment, frequented by rogues, mercenaries, adventurers, and other dubious sorts. The 'Black Sail Tavern' is rumoured to be the headquarters of the local Thieves' Guild, led by the beautiful Amarrah Even-song and running a brisk smuggling operation. An order of scholars, 'The Grey Order,' has a college in the town. In addition to educating the sons of the petty aristocrats of the Duchy, the Grey Order has been known to hire adventurers to obtain rare items (lost relics, strange herbs, and so forth) for their esoteric researches. Some of the ruins of ancient Irylond are said to persist partially intact, hidden beneath the bustling port, allegedly holding lost treasures, forgotten lore, and dark eldritch horrors.

2. **Solan:** A fishing village on the southwestern coast of the island. A number of ancient Morghain cairns can be found southeast of the village, many of which are rumoured to be haunted by restless spirits. Treasure hunters sometimes venture into the cairns. They rarely return, and those that do generally wish to say nothing of their experiences in the hidden mounds of the dead.

3. **Riagad:** A fishing village on the eastern coast. Two small copper mines in nearby hills provide additional revenue for the town, which has a reputation for being dull.

4. **Ninian:** Another fishing village on the east coast, sometimes called 'Old Foggy' because of the cool mists perpetually rising from the coastal hills. The village is ruled by a mayor, Sir Bran 'the Melancholy,' an ex-adventurer. An important lighthouse lies a few miles to the northeast. A strange blue fire burns from the lighthouse's brazier at all times. Only the lighthouse's keeper, the taciturn Carthedon, knows the secret of the blue flame. The village's only inn, 'The Drunken Herring,' is known throughout the realm as a welcoming and lively place.

5. **Juvad:** A trading village surrounded by a number of grain farms. The ale and lager served by 'The Golden Grain' – owned and run by garrulous Liam 'Gutboy' Brewson – are famous throughout the duchy. A reclusive mage named Neveldar 'the Blue' lives in a mansion just outside of the town. His diminutive servant Roderick obtains supplies and news for his master, as the mage never leaves his manor. A faint blue mist emanates from the bricks of Neveldar's manor at all times. Strangely, as far as the villagers can tell, the mage has not aged a day since constructing and entering his manor some forty years ago!



**6. Envel:** A prosaic rural backwater, Envel is surrounded by farms. In addition to grain, some farmers near Envel grow an unusual crop – pumpkins. The pumpkin ale sold by ‘The Goblin’s Nose’ tavern is famous not only throughout Briz but in lands overseas. The owner of The Goblin’s Nose, Zethar ‘Orange-thumb,’ is a wealthy man, thanks to the money he has made exporting his ale.

**7. Maugan:** A small town located in the coastal highlands. It supports a few nearby silver mines, some of which are said to be haunted.

**8. Pereg:** A highland town surrounded by farms to the east and a large temple devoted to Amithos (the sun god) and the Solar Court to the west. Many religious subjects of the duchy make pilgrimages to this temple. It is well known for its potent whiskey (‘Pereg’s tears’), which is popular with the temple’s clergy.

**9. White Cove:** The second largest town in the Duchy, White Cove dominates a small rocky island to the north of the dreaded Storm Ridges. The tower of the powerful wizard Ulfor – a friend of the Dukes of Briz – overlooks the town. Ulfor is the formal ruler of the island, holding the title of ‘baron,’ although he typically delegates responsibility for day-to-day affairs to White Cove’s mayor, Sir Aidan. Ulfor has dwelt in his tower for over a century, and is widely believed to be the most powerful wizard not only in Briz, but in the surrounding reaches as well. Rumours claim that he is either half-fey or half-demon. Ulfor has been known to pay adventurers great sums for the retrieval of rare substances and items (lost artifacts, exotic herbs, rare gems, parts of magical beasts, and the like). Legends suggest that beneath the town of White Cove there exists a vast complex of natural caverns that were once inhabited by a depraved cult of worshippers of the Crab God. Even today, the occasional disappearance of a towns person is blamed on the black ‘Cult of the Crab.’

Three imposing guard towers stand at the southern border of the Maelvorn Forest to limit humanoid incursions into the civilized lands of the south. Other areas of note:

**Gentle Ridges:** A small range of rolling coastal hills that contain a few copper mines, most now abandoned.

Ancient Morghain ruins can be found in hidden vales throughout.

**Highland Forest:** A small wood made up of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. A number of small Waldleuti settlements are scattered throughout. The Waldleuti avoid contact with most outsiders. Some haunted Morghain barrows are said to exist in the wooded hills.

**Maelvorn Forest:** A dark and gloomy forest, the Maelvorn dominates the northern part of the island. Many tribes of humanoids live scattered throughout the woods, fighting amongst each other and occasionally raiding south into the rich farmlands of the Duchy. More dangerous and powerful creatures are rumoured to dwell deeper within the forest, including a sleepy but powerful emerald drake. Legend suggests that some ancient and beautiful – but deadly – non-human (perhaps even pre-human) ruins can be found near murky Lake Vorn in the centre of the forest.

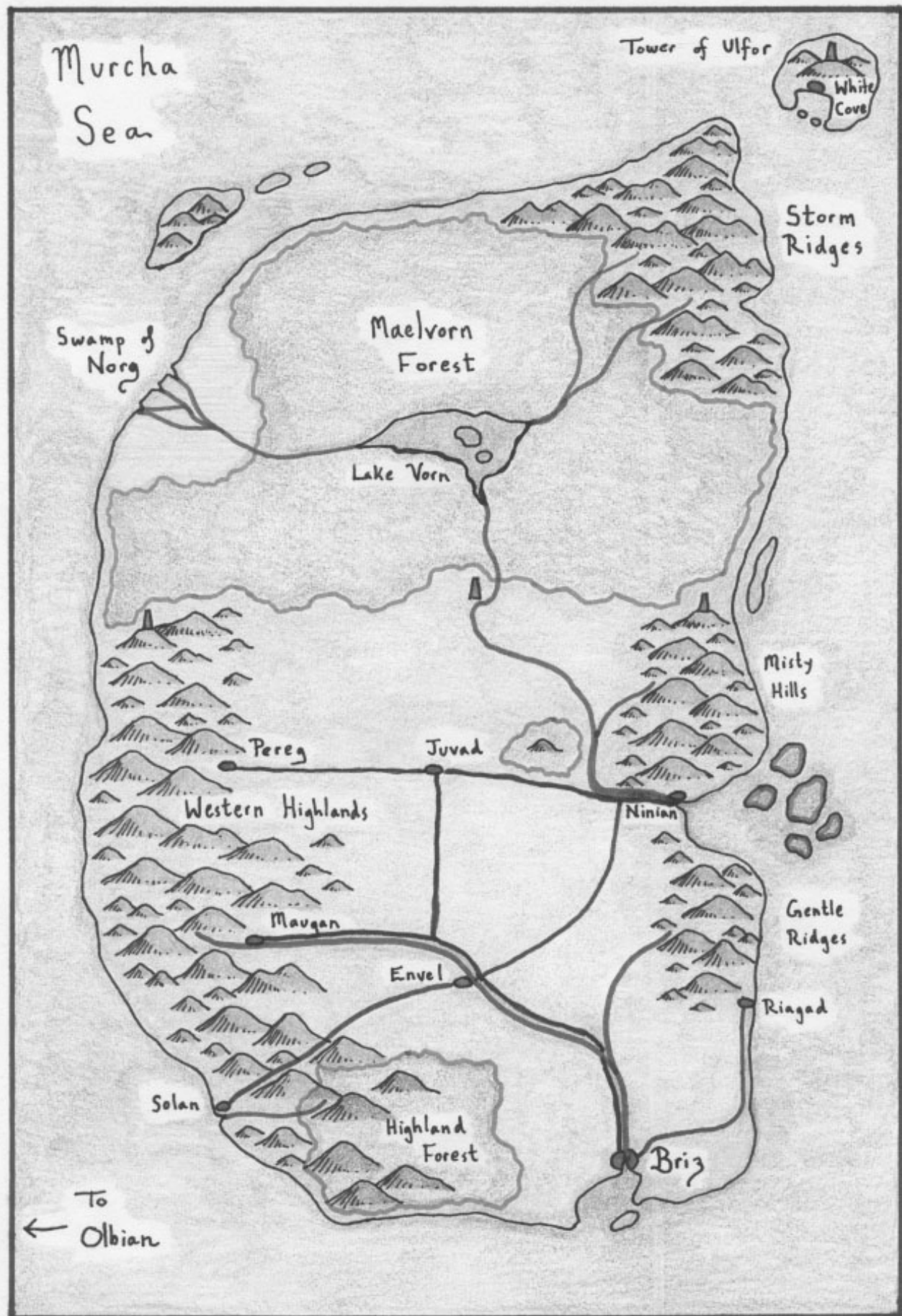
**Misty Hills:** As their name suggests, these hills typically are covered in mists formed by moisture blown in from the Murcha Sea. Some ogres are known to dwell within the caves that dot the hills, as they occasionally emerge to raid nearby settlements. Sir Bran, mayor of Ninian, has offered a bounty of one hundred gold coins for the scalp of every ogre brought to him. Off the coast of the Misty Hills lie five forested islands. As far as anyone knows, they are uninhabited by intelligent creatures, although it is believed that the ruins of an ancient Aphorian order of sages, the Amber Savants, can be found somewhere on one of them.

**Western Highlands:** An imposing range of rocky hills that dominates the western coast of the island. A number of ancient Morghain cairns can be found throughout the highlands. The cairns are said to be filled with treasure but haunted by terrible, restless spirits. Local tales speak of an ancient Aphorian monastery somewhere within the northern hills, concealed by mystical means.

**Storm Ridges:** An unpleasant, broken land with little vegetation, the Storm Ridges primarily consist of reddish and black rocky hills. Sailors and fishermen regularly report seeing a mysterious, ancient purple tower on one of the high hills on the northern part of the ridges, near the Maelvorn Forest. No one who has investigated the tower has ever returned.

**Swamp of Norg:** A fetid marsh covered in a perpetual miasma of malevolence. According to legend, the swamp was created many centuries ago following a great battle between a frog-like demon lord named Norg and a great Morghain hero named Cadifor Manus. A tribe of lizard men and a band of depraved frog people are said to dwell in the swamp. Sailors have reported seeing mysterious barges coming and going in recent years. Ω

# The DUCHY of BRIZ.



Scale: 1" = 10 miles





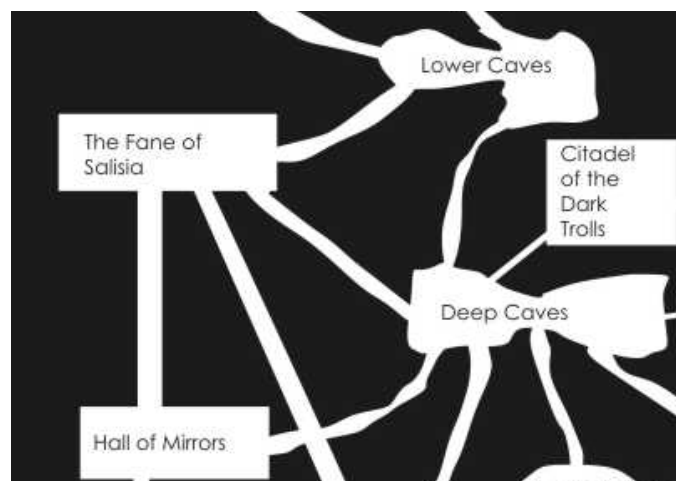
**Introduction:** Long before the dainty sandals of young women would step from behind the Fane's iron portals, a small regiment of phobic Duergar claimed this secluded area. All that is known of them can only be heard from the Lamia Noble who dominated by the power of her charm and deception. This evil beauty, properly addressed as a Priestess of Salicia, soon tired of the exaggerated fears possessing the Duergar and betrayed them. With the help of an equally nefarious suitor, a wizard investigating the depths on behalf of his Lich master, they tricked the infatuated dwarves into a battle with trolls. Although the newly arrived wizard, Myxod the Hellion, wanted to destroy both tribes of monsters, he was swayed to retract that plan by the Lamia's magic. In fact, for over seven years the growing troll stronghold would benefit from the "odd couple", receiving the content of the Duergar armory and having opposing monsters slain for arcane research. However, the serpentine priestess wasn't satisfied with this cozy existence, and devised a plan to establish a debauched shrine. Trips Myxod made to the surface were aided by a teleportation portal, the only one to be established in the dungeon by human hands. While on one expedition, a gang of condemned lycanthropes were recruited to waylay caravans and kidnap young women. At the same time, the Lamia assumed a fully human appearance, and secretly

spread the word about a "convent of concubines". Eventually, Myxod noticed the pacification of his life, and the threatening arrival of good adventurers in the upper levels. Leaving his laboratory guarded by his creations, he disappeared into a magical staircase leading to the Hall of Mirrors. Unfettered, the lascivious Lamia (now an Abbess of Salicia) continued her plan to transform nubile victims into her adepts or valuable slaves. Any adventurers knocking on her doorstep would be tricked into believing that the gloomy chambers are only for surpassing pleasures.

**Features:** The geometric architecture of the Fane and its stonework are not hard to identify as dwarven. (Even a surface-dwelling human might wonder why the lintels are so low.) Uncommon to such a place are the sand pit gardens, magical lanterns, sweet smells of perfume, and comestible treats. The secret doors in the Fane are twice as difficult to detect for non-dwarf PCs. The Fane has several connections to other dungeon levels. If used in conjunction with the other levels of *The Darkness Beneath*, one narrow corridor winds up to the Lower Caves, and is used by the priestesses to visit Longspear's Halfway Inn. This path is routinely checked by wererat guards. The other, wider tunnel descends to the Deep Caves, and is considered Dark Troll property. They use it to train young raptor steeds before pressing them into full service on the Troll Highway. Any party interrupting a training pack (2 Dark Trolls mounted on Blood Thumps and 2 juveniles) resting at the water pool is going to be attacked. A variety of skeletons can be found along the raptor run, victims of the trolls or hungry, giant cave insects.

### Legend

**1. Vestibule and Souvenir Shop:** At the mouth of the entrance tunnel, a few paper lanterns have been placed behind stalagmites, casting eerie beams of rosy light toward the pool. Other lanterns hang above the first iron double door, which is weakly lashed shut with a bit of rope. An inspection reveals that a locking mechanism once existed, but was bent out of shape. If the party is accompanied by the sultry adepts, they will be met at the portal by Malvin



Worfether, who will whisper an appropriate greeting. Malvin, outfitted in a sleeveless black robe and sandals, was once a splendid constable (War5) who nearly stopped the escape of the wererats now operating in the Fane. He was paralyzed with a spell after seeing Myxod's face and taken below to suffer the coriaceous caress of the whip and other instruments. Unable to resist the charm of the Lamia Abbess, and routinely distressed by immoral sights, the former captain spends his time sweeping away spiders and tending his cart of souvenirs. If the party has arrived without the escort of females, Malvin has been instructed to determine why they are visiting the Fane. Party response and apparent formidability will dictate how he knocks on the doors leading to **2**. One strike is a code for a likely attack, two strikes means caution, and three are for a vulnerable or wounded group. While the party awaits the priestesses, Malvin will try to sell his wares. Arranged on his cart are 12 small glass bottles circling a tall silver bottle. For 13 gp, one can purchase the former, which are filled with a few ounces of the scented oil the adepts use on their tresses. The big bottle is a magical trap containing an Asparan Genie, a type of wizard familiar in another realm (see Monster Appendix), and costs 1333 gp. Malvin will defend himself with a broom if attacked, although he will be joined by the wererats in **1a** if the battle lasts more than a round. He can be saved from his long stupor if he sees some of his old gear, which was traded to other dungeon denizens upon his capture. The *Lion Shield* +2 found in the Troglodyte King throne room (**24** in *FO!* #5) was his beloved treasure, and he will snap back to his former role if he sees it. The GM can add a recovered weapon if the shield isn't present if appropriate. He will feverishly relate that monsters hide behind the walls here, and women are being enslaved. Of course, the spying lycanthropes will try to cut short his disclosure.

**1a. Secret Guard Room:** The wererats of the Fane were notorious outlaws, and still maintain respectable skill at hiding and moving silently. A pair in human form (HD 3; hp 18, 18; DC 7; DMG 1d6 fang baton) are tasked with observing Malvin's interactions and shadowing the adepts' outings. Behind the secret door, the room holds a wide bench, one loaded crossbow, and a small metal cage riveted over a hole in the north wall. Inside the cage is a young Musqoad (see Monster Appendix), which will skitter up a burrow-like passage to **11a** if a release pin is triggered. Unless taken completely by surprise, warning the other wererats will be the first action taken by the guards if Malvin is slain or coughs up secrets. These two will try to sneak attack (or block a party retreat) if a fight erupts deeper in the dungeon.

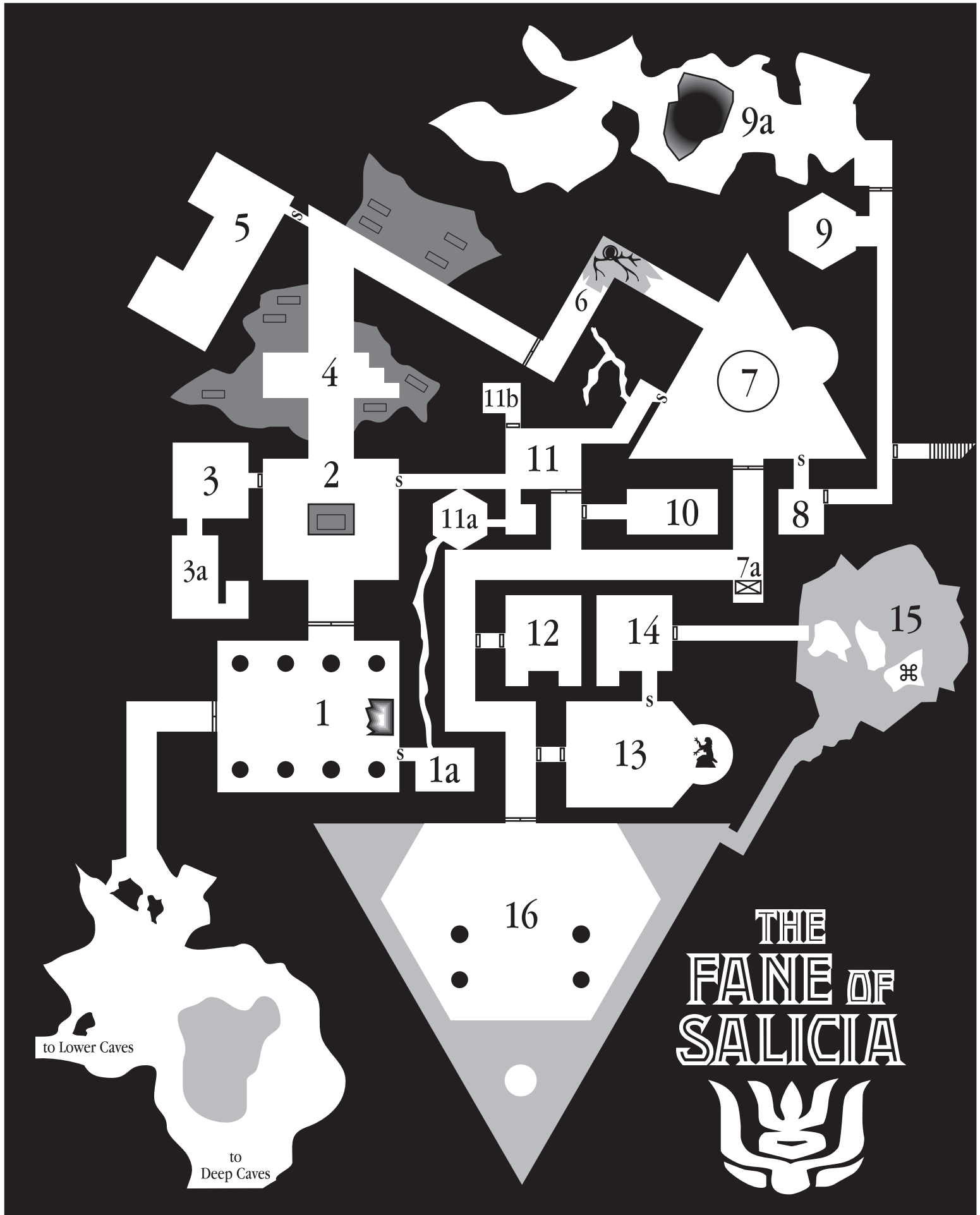
**2. Audience Hall of Salicia:** Breaking up the checkered tile floor in this square room is what appears to be a rock garden, set upon a textured field of crystalline sand. An open corridor continues north and a partially open door juts from the west wall. Five round pillows stacked two

high rest a few feet before the sculpted garden. A pair of bronze chains form an "X" across the low ceiling, holding up warm-colored lanterns. The manner of scene that takes place here will depend on Malvin's level of warning. The iron doors won't be unlocked until the Lamia Abbess and her forces are prepared. If her strategy is to seduce the party, the meeting will be very entertaining. Otherwise, the unwelcome heroes will be battling her entire cadre of monsters forthwith. The "salacious" itinerary is as follows:

- a. Adepts either with the party or appearing first will seat the party on the supplied cushions.
- b. All other adepts, in pastel robes of transparent silk, gather on the far side of the garden, acting very coquettish.
- c. The Abbess enters the chamber with her zither-like *guzheng*, which she sets beside her. She will ask for full introductions and send one girl to fetch wine from **3**.
- d. If the party requires healing, the Abbess will explain how treatments must be paid for, by willing participation in rituals pervaded with iniquitous acts of lust. The price is the same for information about dungeon areas or denizens. Uncompensated participation is also welcome.
- e. All party members must agree to the Abbess' conditions to stay at the Fane any longer than this first exchange.
- f. The adepts will interrupt to beg the Abbess to play music, so that they can dance for the guests.

All the priestesses appear to be dressed like bathhouse courtesans from ruttish tales. Their wispy robes and slit tunics couldn't hide the faintest blemish, and even more is exposed by short girdles of decorative buttons and scales. The largest part of the outfit is a crimson hat, tied about the chin or neck with ribbons. Unless the party has traveled widely, these girls are the most exquisite troupe of beauties seen by the PCs at one time. Although the Abbess has lost some of her youthful tone, she does the costume no disservice. She wears large earrings and a torc, and is the tallest of the women at 5' 6".

The Abbess of Salicia is a Lamia Priestess ten times the age of her prey. She is very pleased with her latest charade, and enjoys manipulating others into doing vile acts. Her true name, given in the ancient serpent-tongue, cannot be pronounced (Lamia Noble - Priest 6; HD 10; hp 72; DC 6; DMG by mace or spell; Special: Wisdom drain). Her personal items include green peridot earrings worth 400gp, a *Ring of Walking on Water*, *Sandals of Springing*, and a *Torc of Spiritual Tablature*. Also with her during most encounters is a lesser artifact, a twenty-string musical instrument much like a guzheng (see Magic Appendix). With the power of the Torc, the Abbess can cast her spells as melodies played upon the cursed lyre. At her disposal are the following: *Sanctuary*, *Protection from The Good*, *Detect Magic*, *Paralyze Person*, *Discern Alignment*, *Dolorous Hymn*, and a curse known as the *Scar of Temptation* (see Magic Appendix). The Abbess shares one weakness with all Lamia; her human guise is less effective against characters above 7th level. While playing music for her energetic adepts, the Abbess will be



THE  
FANE OF  
SALICIA



using her spells to prepare for combat or find out more about the adventurers. In the rare likelihood that a comely lass is one of the visitors, the Abbess will immediately strike a tune to place the female target under the influence of the *Scar of Temptation*. Although the music cannot be identified as spell use, her items radiate enchantment, and the cursed guzheng has an aura of overwhelming evil. Even without magic detection, a keenly observant party member might notice that one of the large white "rocks" in the sand pit is actually bleached bone. Buried beneath the artistic arrangement is the undead skeleton of a Gorlangterus (see Monster Appendix), which can extract itself from the sands one round after being magically animated. During the dance, the 9 adepts will remove their red hats, revealing long hair that hides the curse-scar on their necks. After the performance, they will leave crestfallen if the party doesn't agree to the rituals. PCs that stay will receive royal treatment from a girl (or three) of his choice, starting with many cups of drugged wine and lurid small talk. The list of girls, ranked from least to most experienced:

- a. YiYun (P1; hp 5; DC 8): An exotic teen with very long black hair she toys with constantly.
- b. Brighid (P2; hp 8; DC 8): A limber girl with red hair and nails speckled with gold dust.
- c. Argenta (P2; as above): A pale damsel with platinum hair and a fair grasp of Elvish.
- d. Cybel (P2; as above): A winsome brunette with an attraction to full-bearded fellows.
- e. Theoni (P2; as above): An athletic girl with chestnut hair and a healthy appetite.
- f. Junko (P2; as above): Another raven-haired lass, doesn't like goblins or trolls.
- g. Ninetta (P2; as above): A petite girl with auburn hair who prefers to share with Argenta.
- h. Garlinde (P2; as above): Extremely well-endowed, with blonde hair and a coin trick that never grows old.
- i. Ophira (P3; hp 14; DC 8; DMG 1-3 silvered hairpin): A corrupted woman that would remain evil even if freed from the curse. She will never surrender.

Four of the adepts have prepared *Lesser Healing*, while the others are ready with the damaging reverse. In a fight at the Audience Hall, the latter will all cast upon an enemy mage or priest before fleeing. The healers will try to offset any attacks striking the Abbess or Ophira. While Ophira intercepts melee, the Abbess will use the full power of the guzheng to animate the buried Gorlangterus skeleton (HD 6; hp 36; DC 7; DMG 4d4 tusks, 1d6 club tail) and seven of the similarly hidden Duergar Zombies from 4. The wererats and Musquads will also join the fray, entering from the secret door on the east wall.

**3. The Changeling's Kitchen:** After days in the rotten dungeon, some PCs may be more attracted to the smell of baked goods emanating from here than to the striking adepts. Alone in her toil here, a plain maid with black robes and short hair strides between copper pots and clus-

ters of diced vegetables. All the food here is pilfered from surface farms and trade caravans. The priestesses will offer a bogus explanation for this, that an indebted goblin brings food down to the Fane in an invisible wagon. If the party dines on any of the prepared dishes, the only effect will be a full stomach. However, the alcohol served is laced with a euphoric drug that makes troubling thoughts float away. The maid is not human, rather, a Doppelganger with the skill of a druggist (HD 4; hp 25; DC 5; DMG 1d8). The creature was hired by Myxod to mimic the other races living in the upper caverns, facilitating the theft of alchemical ingredients. Currently, the Abbess also employs her to clone visitors that might die "accidentally" on a ritual night, so suspicions are delayed.

**3a. Maid's Apartment:** Enthralled by human fashions, the Doppelganger's room is full of trinkets, discarded outfits, and chalk drawings on parchment. At a lacquer-topped desk are her powders and extracts for making poisoned wine. Beneath the cushion of a low stool are 30 small gems affixed in globs of wax, each worth 9-30 gp.

**4. Court of the Drying Dead:** A short distance beyond the audience hall is a cavern split in half by a landing encompassed with low balustrade. The railing is lit by small lanterns at each corner, with the deck space containing 5 chaises longues. The unpaved sections of the cavern floor are layered with salty sand, raked into miniature swirling dunes. Mere inches beneath the strange landscaping are Duergar corpses in armor, never interred in their nearby clan tomb. Five bodies are close to the furnished platform and four more are just around the sharp corner in a darkened bed of sand. Guests of the Abbess will be led here by the Adepts, if some seclusion for closer contact after dinner is warranted. The seemingly smitten priestesses won't mind heated revelry as a group, or their noises reaching the ears of any nonparticipants in 2. No smell of decay arises from the desiccated Duergar due to the composition of the sand. Of course, the reason for the necrotic presence is so the Abbess can animate them for battle. Once arisen, the zombie warriors will storm the platform seeking their targets (HD 2; hp 12,12,14,15,15, 16,16,16,16; DC 3; DMG 1d8 battle axe). Only Ophira and the Abbess are aware of the secret door to 5; the younger adepts will be too frightened to venture past it. The locked iron doors to 6 are trapped with poison spring blades, which inflict intense convulsions (1d4 damage for 1d8 rounds) upon a failed Save.

**5. The Forgotten Biers:** The featureless secret door leading to this tomb isn't trapped, but will make a sharp grinding noise if swung open. The unlit interior is home to two bizarre undead monsters. The first is a mummified Giant Stomatopod, a clawed crustacean that during its younger life was transplanted from the upper caves by Myxod. He transformed a few into undead defenders for his lab and this Duergar crypt. The reanimated Stomato-

pod (HD 4+4; hp 32; DC 4; DMG 1d8x2 mantis claws; Special: Turn as Mummy, +2 initiative) is in the middle of the room, and will attack intruders with astonishing speed. Two rune-carved biers are in the niches along the far wall. The coffins placed upon one have been smashed, and any contents of value looted. The second funerary display is pristine, with half a dozen caskets covered by a large linen tapestry. Unfortunately, this foul fabric is a Shroud Phantom that can easily kill an unprepared robber. The wight-like Shroud Phantom (HD 3; hp 18; DC 3; DMG 1d4/round suffocation; Special: Turn as Wraith, can only be harmed by silver or magic weapons) will envelop the closest target character, choking him like a twisting noose and preventing counterattack by weapon. Any other combatants striking blows to the Phantom after its successful snare will have resulting damage split between the monster and its immobilized prey. This malevolent undead absorbs slain characters, evaporating bodies and gear into an ethereal mist. The six coffins contain the remains of Duer-gar clansmen, each wearing a silver death mask worth 45 gp, and girded with a short saber. The scabbards used by this clan have a special feature: the lining is imbued with Salamander Flake, a pyrophoric chitin. Friction from drawing a blade ignites the flakes borne on its edge, giving the first slash a bonus of 1d6 fire damage. The sizzling flakes flare out immediately after. There are enough flakes in a sword scabbard for five independent incendiary attacks.

**6. Secret of The Love Tree:** The rituals of Salicia's Fane can be started immediately after the deal is made. The Abbess will not accept any delay longer than one period of rest after the welcoming dinner. The priestesses will return to their chambers before the first ritual is to begin, leaving the party with the Doppelganger. They will be instructed to leave any armaments, staves, or wands with her, or a cohort that declined the contract. Due to certain "physical limitations", a ritual can only be conducted with up to two guests at one time. Garlinde and Theoni will temporarily unlock the iron doors to **6** when all is ready, escorting the adventurers along a corridor featuring a weird potted tree. Actually an overgrown bush with branches drooping from the tight confines, this plant is the very rare Passion Mallow Bloom (HD 3+8; hp 20; DC 8; DMG: none), benign cousin to the poisonous purple death. The girls, still wearing their wide hats, will try to examine the delicate pink flowers...but will shriek in fright instead! Pointing towards the central cluster of fronds, the Adepts will say they've seen a menacing spider. This ploy is to get the players to move beneath the tree and disturb the branches. The adepts know that the Bloom exudes a sweet sap, which in contact with skin acts as a supercharged aphrodisiac (resistance to carnal enticement halved per failed poison Save). Even if the players don't touch the tree, vibration will cause droplets to fall to the floor, with a 25% chance of hitting anyone close. Searching for the scary spider incurs 1d4 exposures requiring saving throws. Nestled in the Bloom is a dead cave spider, brought in by

routine sweepings near the Fane entrance. The Adepts are protected from the sap by their one useful costume piece; they don't need the nature of their curse amplified by the poison. The girls will pause here until they are confident that the players are under the sap's influence.

**7. One Bed to Seduce Them All:** If the guests haven't degenerated into drooling dogs, they will see a large, pyramid-vaulted hall before them, clouded with steam and smelling of rich incense. A rounded alcove in the center of one wall appears to hold a low black stove, shimmering with blue flame. Copper water jugs are heating on its flat tempered top. The remaining far wall with an opening frames another set of iron doors. The main attraction of the space is a circular bed, hoisted nine feet above the floor on cylindrical trunks of gleaming bronze. With a twist, the Adepts can move between the spaced supports, although larger characters would be blocked. Underneath the tall bed is an equally gigantic bathtub, being filled by the remaining adepts, with the exception of Ophira. Naturally, the escorts will suggest that players still in armor make themselves more accessible. A closer look at the opulent bath reveals bronze "leaves" radiating from most of the pillars, forming a delicate exterior stairway to the roof of cushions. One plain pillar can sink into the floor, allowing man-sized individuals within the wet play pen. The Abbess, reclining out of sight on the bed, will jump down to "bless" her new companion(s) with a kiss. Thus she begins a pattern of intimate contact, alternating between her and the cursed adepts, that will drain Wisdom until all resistance crumbles. Aside from enhanced will-power or a rescue sortie, there are a few events that could ruin her seductive plan. First, there is a slim chance that a PC could hear the growling of Musquads behind the secret door to **11**. Second, the charmed mercenaries from **8** might interrupt, displeased that the ladies are seeking better "performances". Third, and most ironically, a randy player pressing the Abbess for intercourse will discover the limit of her illusionary skin, consequently finding himself in bed with an angry snake. If something (other than combat) happens to spoil the ritual, the priestesses will demand that the players repent before the image of Salicia in **7a**. Conversely, all players charmed by the Lamia's special power will be pressured into a mercenary role, fighting to secure her evolving interests. The Abbess knows not to confront her devotees with repugnant demands, like slaying a close friend or other deed that could ruin the enchantment. Immediate requests to retrieve treasure from renegade monsters will be worded to sound like charitable acts. Players that survive these deadly missions will eventually learn about the wererat raids and Salician curse. Within a year, the Abbess plans to bring strife to the upper dungeons, by having a squad of well-equipped assassins eliminate key personages.

**7a. The Painful Pinch:** Impuissant victims or strong votaries can be led here for a disabling surprise. At the end of



Wood log with  
iron rod core

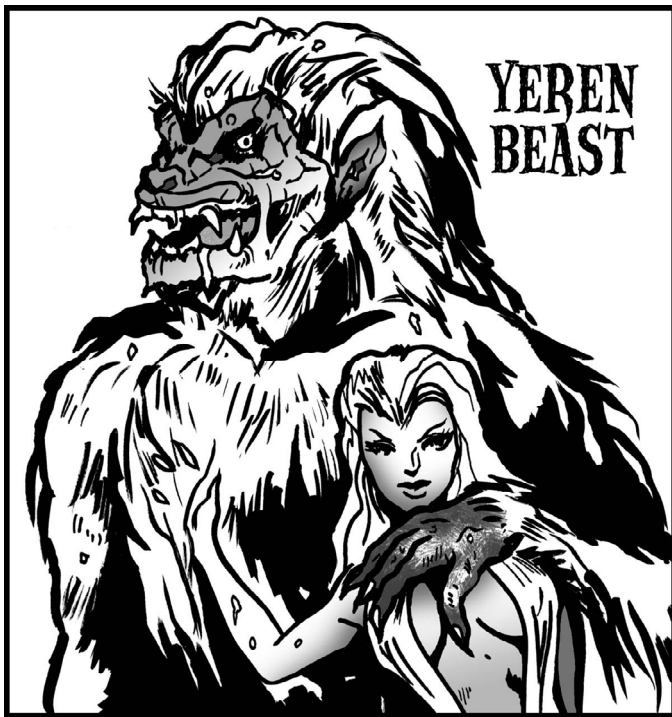
relief of  
Salicia

trap door

4.5 ft  
deep

walked through without harm. The same cannot be said about reaching the exit. For every person that enters during its current manifestation, an additional flight of stairs is added to the usual number it takes to reach the deeper dungeon. The current total is seven, which will increase if the party enters for more than a moment. The otherworldly effect for each flight of stairs can be rolled on the table on the next page.

71



**9a. The Duergar Mineshaft:** The cart tracks disappear under the doors to this dusty cavern, which have only been opened once since the Duergar were sacrificed. The mine was never a smart idea in the first place, given that it was centered above a Blasphemous Shrine of some Tentacled God. After being stripped of a few rich deposits, fissures in the lowest tunnels began to ooze a contagious white slime. This danger ceased any further digging, and triggered the clan's fears about an inescapable doom. Myxod tried to eliminate the pooling slime, but found a better use for it in his laboratory. The 260 foot deep pit would remain undisturbed for many years, until a man named Fletcher Shaystorm became a guest of the Fane. Fletcher, a charismatic space pirate from the future, materialized in the Looming (see the Lower Caves) and was invited to the Fane after being sighted by a group of adepts. Eager to assist the "alien dames", Fletcher joined them for a record-breaking ritual. Yet, the drugged wine made the pirate exceedingly brave, causing him to peer a little too far into the precipitous mine. Players can find where Fletcher land-

d20	Otherworldly Stair Effects
1	PCs experience zero gravity and spot chunks of the former "Bracken Spider" floating about, including his <i>Ring of Free Action</i> .
2	PCs enter a vacuum and must pass through immediately or take damage.
3	PCs are shrunk to 10% of their normal size, and must climb down 18 steps. They will return to normal size after reaching the base.
4	The stair flips on its axis, and PCs slide down a smooth surface into the next flight.
5	PCs see ghostly clones of themselves walking up the

	steps, stopping if they stop. They have no pupils.
6	PCs are struck by a wave of negative energy that inflicts 1d10 damage, repeating every three rounds.
7	PCs see a message written on the wall reading, "MYXOD WAS HERE DO NOT SPE ----". The last part is covered by brushstrokes in the same dull white that covers all the surfaces.
8	PCs pass by a Gnomish handyman wearing a white smock and dipping a paint brush into a pail of white liquid. He will only smile at the party, disappearing with a snap of his fingers. In his place will be a small sign that warns of "WET ECTOPLASM".
9	PCs must descend through a blanket of snow three feet deep over the steps.
10	Splintered from another reality, the front of a Grumman Avenger aircraft is caught in the side of the staircase. However, the propeller is running at full speed inside the dimension occupied by the party! The gap between the triple-bladed prop and the other side wall is 17 inches. Anyone hit by the mechanism takes 3d12+30 points of damage.
11	PCs witness a huge winged demon rise from the floor, only to smack its head, curse under its breath, and sink back down.
12	PCs that speak on these stairs will start the space to crack like an egg. Additional noise will destroy the stairs, sending the party to the Abyss.
13	PCs encounter a telepathic alien brain in a crystal sphere who wants to know where the Cygnus spaceport is. If the party spokesperson doesn't suggest a direction, he will be blinded by a radiation burst.
14	PCs find a coil of rope with one end cascading down to the last three steps, where a blackened pile of bones can be seen.
15	PCs enter a flight of steps covered in olive green shag carpet. On the steps are 3 thin picture books about a barbarian and a dumpling-sized piece of vivid yellow cake with a white center. If the items are touched, a man wearing a plaid suit and smoking a pipe will come into view at the bottom of the steps, and inform the PCs that the dog needs walked.
16	PCs must save versus magic or have the contents of their potion flasks shuffled randomly.
17	Instead of a staircase, PCs see themselves stepping down the front of a megalithic temple at sunset.
18	PCs are treated to scratchy elevator music and the smell of old leather shoes while on these steps.
19	Before descending, a small pot on a chain drops to waist height in front of the PCs. Engraved on its lid is a short message - "INSERT ONE GOLD". Anyone that doesn't place a coin inside before continuing is teleported to the entrance.
20	A cleric in the party will encounter an avatar of his Deity, who will demand that he hurry up.

-ed, because he didn't die upon impact. After a fall of about 70 feet, the intoxicated pirate landed in the web of a Monstrous Marbled Cyclosa (see Monster Index). Face up on the adhesive strands, Fletcher couldn't reach the weapons attached to the back of his plate armor. Before he succumbed to the spider's venom, he lit his last *Cigar of Synthetic Smoke*, which won't stop smoldering for another sixteen years. The vapor trail will lead adventurers to his body, and the next generation of Marbled Cyclosa (HD 8; hp 40; DC 5; DMG 2d6; Special: lethal poison). Fletcher is wearing a suit of plate armor made from a dull alloy and light-warping "space spinel" gems (treat as *Plate Mail +1 of Invisibility*). The strength of the armor prevented the spiders from eating him; it will also be impossible to fit on anyone not close to his measurements. If the PCs can extract the body from the web, without burning or sundering the silk structure, they will also find his *Maser Rifle* and *Polychromatic Shiv* (see Magic Appendix).

**10. Gallery of the Dark Troll:** The only door showing significant damage in the Fane is this one; a close look reveals popped rivets and deep scratches. Residing on the other side is "Coal-Hide" Heikkwid, a Dark Troll commander relieved from service. Unless summoned by the Abbess, "CH" will be found crouched over a long table, delicately scraping grooves into the top of a hobgoblin skull. Heikkwid suffers from brain trauma inflicted when he and another troll officer brawled in an unstable part of the Deep Caves. The regenerative ability of his race saved him from an avalanche of rock, but his mind never returned to normal. He could no longer be interested in troll conflicts or fighting for any other reason than to collect skulls. Heikkwid considers their ivory surface the perfect canvas for his unfathomable etchings. Abashed by this loss, the Dark Troll leaders issued an order to the Abbess, instructing her to keep CH under observation in her dark temple. The Abbess, in no position to decline, placates her dangerous patient by letting him decapitate anyone he pleases. When Heikkwid (HD 6+3; hp 55; DC 4; DMG 3-6x2 claws; Special: regeneration) fights intruders or anyone that disturbs his finished works, there is a 50% chance he will ignore a foe if an opportunity to remove a head occurs. He will not care if the body was an ally or not. His gallery of macabre art is situated on shelves lining the entire east wall of his room. Twenty-two of the "best" skulls are propped up on blocks of jade worth 75 gp each.

**11. Vile Kennel of the Wererat Eunuchs:** These abhorrent man-vermin were guilty of an assault upon an Elven Duchess traveling to a congress of merchant guilds. The outrage over the crime led to disfiguring torture and a judgement stating that all of them would be executed by burning. However, the prisoners never made it to their appointment at the stake; the eight still living escaped from their confines with the help of a Lamia masquerading as the dead Duchess' sister. The Abbess needed replacement footsoldiers for the Duergar, wicked men that wouldn't be

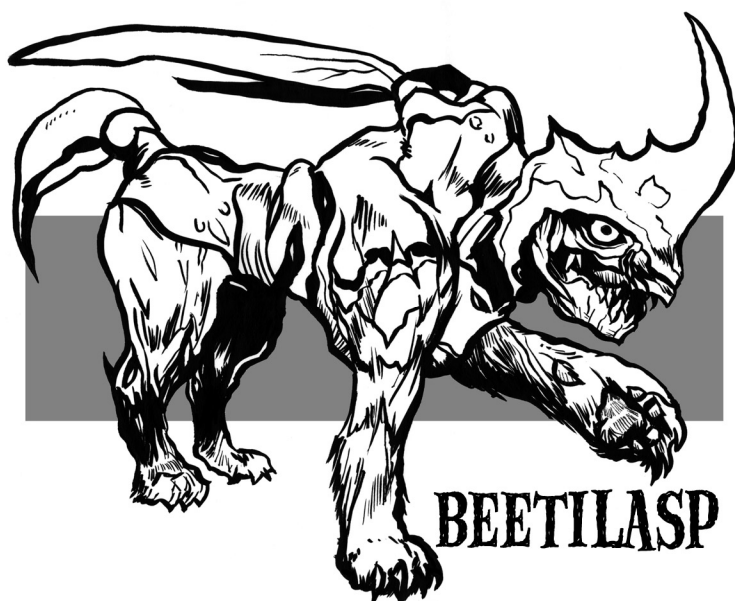
tempted to despoil her new harem. The lycanthropes are positive about their new employment, merrily raising Myxod's mutated moles and perfecting their kidnapping tactics. Guests are never allowed into this hub of rooms, and the iron double doors are trapped with a Warding Glyph (2d6 damage - acid) that sprays forth if a password isn't uttered. The nest of Musqoads and their young is the rock-strewn corridor leading to 7. For exercise, the creatures have been boring through the walls, and could easily tear an opening into 6. There are 3 adult creatures (HD 3; hp 18,20,21, DC 7; DMG 1d8+1 bite) here, with one baby (hp 2) and another offspring in 11b. A wererat will be nearby spreading fresh straw from large basket. A second wererat is poised near the secret door to 2, listening to any conversations by guests. All the wererats (HD 3; hp 14,16; DC 7; DMG 1d6) wield a metal baton with a fang spike and quirt-like top. In the center of the room is a wooden scarecrow that can spin on reinforced base; it is a dummy the 'rats use to condition the attack reflexes of the Musqoads.

**11a. Wererat Study:** The villainous creatures sleep in bunks cobbled together in a square room just before the study. Continuing west past the compact domicile, players will discover the meeting chamber were raids upon trade routes are plotted. If the documents and maps present are studied, the location of the teleportation gate and the next human quarry will be revealed. Unless asleep outside, three wererats (HD 3; hp 15,15,16; DC 7; DMG 1d6) will be encountered here, waiting to shoot trespassers with cross-



-bow bolts tipped in points made from diamond-strong Musqoad teeth (+1 piercing). There are arrow slits in the north and south corners of the room, so they can see and hear anything transpiring in those zones. The equipment stashed here includes 5 more tooth-capped bolts, a dozen throwing daggers, four jars of oil, two heater shields displaying the local militia's coat of arms, a small scarecrow dressed in child clothes, a javelin of Orc design, and a gold hourglass (44 gp).

**11b. Little Shop of Torture:** Should a party be able to approach the door to this tiny vault undetected, they will hear a feminine voice cry out from within. Oddly, the pained moans will be interspersed with the worst of Elven epithets! Once the door is opened, one snickering wererat with a twig from the Passion Mallow Bloom will be seen attending to his seated victim, a naked Elf woman. Beneath her bound legs is a wooden contraption with a back of reinforced posts and a miniature "water wheel" affixed to one side. The wheel isn't being spun by a running stream, but a running Musqoad (HD 2; hp 9; DC 7; DMG 1d6 bite) on the inside of the spoked circuit. The torturer (HD 3; hp 15; DC 7; DMG 1d4+1 hot poker) will snatch a poker from a burning brazier and attack intruders not accompanied by the Abbess. The maiden will scream for help in Elvish, although with arms also manacled to the strange chair, she can do naught but shiver. The copper-haired Elf is the first of her race to be captured by the Lamia's raiders, and is in the process of subjugation. As a hardy ranger (Elf 2; hp 8) though, she has resisted the *Scar of Temptation* and plied drugs. However, unless rescued by the party, the application of the Bloom oil will defeat her. Once unshackled, she will not move unless offered a cloak or such. The wererat wears a platinum ring with a budding rose design, worth 210 gp. The elf can explain the Abbess' plans much more clearly than Malvin if her curse is lifted.



**12. Adept Dormitory:** To the Abbess, her slave girls are the most valuable commodity in the Fane. Hence, she keeps them safe behind two locked iron doors shielded with Warding Glyphs (2d6 damage each - cold blast). The apartment is truly luxurious, with upholstered silk beds, rows of costly mirrors with damascene frames, two alcoves brimming with costume finery, and laquered bureaus stocked with only the best cosmetics and personal treatments. The only uncomfortable looking furnishing is a lounge strung with rough leather strips that belongs to Ophira. A single suit of shortened scale armor amid the dresses is hers too. A search will reveal no currency, but the jewelry, perfume, and rich furniture would be worth at least 8000gp if sold in a city. Any rest the Abbess requires is taken in the ritual bed of 7.

**13. The Shrine of Salicia:** A pair of bronze doors, lightly corroded to appear bright green, block the way inside the evil shrine. The Abbess has warded these locked doors with two different effects: the first is a 2d6 electrical shock and the second is paralytic. The hall is austere, with only a dozen black pillows and a pitcher filled with a greasy liquid that smells like eucalyptus. At the far end, a life-like statue of a lamia rising from a coiled posture is nestled into a half-domed reliquary. Upon the extended arms of the statue is where the Abbess will store her cursed guzheng. The sculpture has a strong similarity to her, as the Duergar craftsmen that made it only had her for a model. The smooth, exposed abdomen and bosom of the piece was formed from a thick plate of solid gold, and then attached to the stone body. The serpent eyes are also gold. These precious metal components are worth 1700 gp. Players defiling the unholy image of Salicia must Save versus Magic or be cursed with livid crotch warts. The secret door to Area 14 will have a bonus to detection, due to the large monster breathing nearby.

**14. Stable of the Beetilasp:** Watching over the arcane escape route from the Fane is Myxod's former steed (see Monster Appendix). The chimerical horror is a prehistoric tiger modified with giant wasp and rhinoceros beetle anatomies. The monster will pounce upon anyone entering the room, unless halted by a command from the Abbess or someone wielding the *Wand of Calcars* (from 16). The Beetilasp (HD 8; hp 66; DC 3; DMG 1d8x2 claws/1d4 tail stinger; Special - poison) can automatically strike a foe with its stinger if both claws hit first. The poison causes hemorrhaging, which increases physical damage received in battle. A niche for the Abbess' traveling gear is along the south wall; it contains her scale armor, *Mace of Ferity* (see Magic Index), 2 pairs of branks to restrain victims, a pouch with 100 silver pieces, six thick planks of oak, and a magic lantern attached to a long pole. The door to 15 is a bronze grille with a simple latch.

**15. Teleportation Grotto:** Icy water of unknown depth rises nearly to the mouth of the grotto entrance. Three flat

boulders form a short trail to Myxod's active teleporter, which looks like two floating scrolls linked by a violet bolt of lightning. Jumping between the rocks is possible, but the priestesses use the oak planks in **14** to secure the route. All the residents of the Fane keep away from the water, as it is defended by a wrathful Water Spirit (HD 3+3; hp 15; DC 4; DMG per drowning; Special - damage reduction from weapons). The angry entity is fighting the spread of white slime from **16**, which the grotto was connected to by a long duct. The levitating scrolls are seven feet off the ground, with the unfurled paper revealing glowing calligraphy. Stepping into the space between the scrolls teleports the individual to a gap between two large trees on the surface. A return ride must be activated by an incantation that only the Abbess and Myxod know. The scrolls are part of a permanent spell and cannot be moved.

**16. Myxod's Abandoned Laboratory:** Centuries ago, this hall was a Duergar throne room. Now it festers with rotting junk and a pond of malodorous slime. The focus of the laboratory was the creation and control of unique monsters. Myxod's undead master was obsessed with having the perfect dungeon, so any new monster stock an underling could bring to the Lich's lair was greatly valued. Myxod had successfully extracted the Gorlangterus species from this locale, and was hoping to find a host creature that could survive a slime infection long enough to be shipped across hundreds of miles. Guarding his remaining possessions here is the result of the reckless experiment. The bronze doors to the hall are wedged shut with a mine cart, and the gaps filled with wax. The Abbess had tricked Fletcher Shaystorm into an extermination attempt, hoping that his magical "maser" could rid the area of its protectors. He only managed to scorch the tableware and kill the undead Stomatopods, which she wasn't fearful of. Next were the old adventurers from **8**, who retreated when the surviving monster made itself known. To convince a new lot of guests that the task is important, she will say that all her travails could be cured if she has the treasure chest found on the slime-surrounded pillar inside. Indeed, there is a box there as described, with a "moat" of slime at least 12 feet wide all around it. The top of the pillar is another six feet above the jellied water, and has no protrusion that a rope could be anchored to. The white slime is not sentient, but it does retreat from sunlight. To destroy the entire pool of slime, the damage dealt by frost or fire would have to total 180 points, given that the outlet to the grotto was also sealed. White Slime shares properties with the general family of slime, in that it eats almost anything and metamorphoses its victim after time. The scum-like infestation here feeds off the water, and the body of a twenty foot Giant Moray. **The Moray of Myxod** (HD 7+4; hp 53; DC 5; DMG 2d4 bite; Special - slime mucus, locking jaw) will surface if anyone clambers atop the pillar. The mindless monster will never check morale in its attempt to feed. Engaging the enormous eel in melee is precarious, since any blow to its slimy skin will splatter the

## GOLDEN COFFER OF ZICG'UD



parasitic mucus. A player bitten by the creature will be "locked" in its maw, held by its sectioned jaws with curved teeth. The recurring damage is only 1d6, but wrestling free has a -2 Strength penalty. The bronze treasure chest has a false lock on the front (5% chance of discovery per level) that will sever tools or fingers with a serrated blade if tampered with (3d6+3 damage). The real, untrapped keyhole is on the bottom, requiring the 90 pound object to be lifted.

Within the bronze strongbox is a gold box, the golden coffer of the Lich ZICG'UD. The top of the case features an embossed wolf head with a six-fingered arm instead of a tongue. Inside are the following treasures: ZICG'UD's *Wand of Calcars*, *Myxod's Murky Medallion*, a *Potion of Groll Control*, a fibula with a huge chrysoberl worth 800 gp, and Myxod's laboratory journal. The coffer itself is worth 1000 gp, but not to anyone who knows of the Lich. Details on the magic items are in the appendix; the journal reveals that Myxod was partly responsible for another wizard named Jhimyn being transformed into a bug. The other magician refused to help Myxod during a fight with the Stone Wretch (**28B** in *FO! #6*), which started a short feud. Another important note describes a bomb made from a Blood Thump egg and Salamander Flake, hidden near the Dark Troll Citadel. The last entry states that he chose a flying carpet instead of his Beetilasp to expedite his trip to the Hall of Mirrors.

### Magic Appendix:

**The Widow's Betrothed:** The story of the Lamia's musical artifact begins with the cursed family of Ruvan and their eternally lonely daughter, "Silver Ocean Sprite". Her betrothed was from a rival family, the Bao, and had to leave for war on the day of their wedding. The inexperienced Bao son was killed, and the only procession that day was for his funeral. When the Ruvan girl was told what happened, a gale arose from the seashore as she cried, and her hair



turned white. Shockingly, the young widow demanded that a magical guzheng be made, one with string bridges made from the twenty finger and toe bones of her mate. Through the haunting music played on the black lyre, the widow communed with the spirits of the dead, and learned that her own family had plotted to kill her husband to be. Opening her shuttered abode to the sea, the vengeful woman played a forbidden etude that could animate the dead. Later that night, the entire house of Ruvan was slain by corpses risen from shipwrecks. The Sprite is pictured on one end of the guzheng, with an elongated neck and demonic eyes. By itself, the item has the following powers: *Converse with Dead* (at will) and *Animate Dead* (1 HD per string). The cursed item can only be destroyed at dawn, while a chorus of blessed children sing and the twenty strings are cut at once with a Holy Sword.

**Torc of Spiritual Tablature:** This heavy gold necklace allows priests to express spells as a musical composition, without any vocalization.

**Dolorous Hymn** (Spell, Priest 2): An evil chant normally, which spreads a languor upon the Cleric's targets. Enemy attack, damage, and saving throws rolls suffer a -1 penalty, and the memory of the sound disturbs any attempt to sleep for a number of hours equal to the Cleric's level.

**The Scar of Temptation** (Spell, Priest 3): This lecherous curse is only known by Lamias that worship Salicia. A female affected by the curse will have a black sore appear on the back of her neck, and she will feel a strong compulsion to indulge in anything pleasurable.

**Crook of Carrion Beasts:** A blackened cane made from the wood of a coffin left exposed for 100 days, this magic wand has three minor powers. First, the user is made immune to all non-magical stench effects. Second, the crook can summon 1d6 fiendish crows (HD 1; hp 1; DC 5; Special - only damaged by silver, holy water, or magic), which will attack a single target for 1 point of damage per round until dispelled or slain. The last power, called *Foul Gustation*, creates the illusion of a horrible-tasting bile in the victim's mouth, reducing attack rolls by -2. This effect lasts for 2 rounds per charge expended.

**Xurian Maser Rifle:** This weapon resembles a smooth bazooka capped with a chromed parabolic dish. The rifle fires a cone of microwave energy that inflicts 3d8 points of searing damage. Targets wearing metal armor will take an additional 1d8 damage on the following round. The 16 ounce battery at the butt of the weapon provides enough power for 60 beams.

**Polychromatic Shiv:** A glowing plasma blade that is somewhat unstable in this dimension, the Shiv does 1d4+3 damage and has a 10% chance to create an elemental micro-explosion at its tip, adding another 1d20 damage.

**Mace Of Ferity:** The wielder of this +1 mace, capped with a bronze bear's head, gains the power of animal reflexes. The magic increases the initiative adjustment from Dexterity to the maximum bonus under your rules.

**Wand of Calcars:** Players of Good alignment that handle this bumpy arm bone will take 4 points of damage unless they save versus magic at -6. The wand was made from a severed arm, and shows the effects of a terrible bone disease. Like the crook (also designed by ZICG'UD), this wand has three dangerous powers. A *Ray of Suffering Sinew* can be cast for one charge; a target that fails his save will feel terrible pain in his joints, taking 6 points of damage and losing all attack bonuses for the round. For two charges, the caster can launch an *Explosive Pustule Patch*. If the blob is targeted at a living opponent, it immediately bursts for 1d10 damage. However, if the blob lands on a surface, it undergoes binary fission during the following round, exploding then for 6d8 damage in a 15 foot radius. Expending all the remaining charges (at least 8) can open a *Corpse Door*. With this power, a wizard can touch a fresh corpse and teleport to a prepared magic circle in his lair.

**Myxod's Murky Medallion:** This single-use item features a large, smoky opal on an electrum necklace. The gemstone will emit a magical smoke upon command; the vapors block infravision and damage the nose and throat tissue of any opponent within 10 feet. The necrotizing effect does multiplying damage: 2 points on the first round, 4 on the second, and 8 on the third and last.

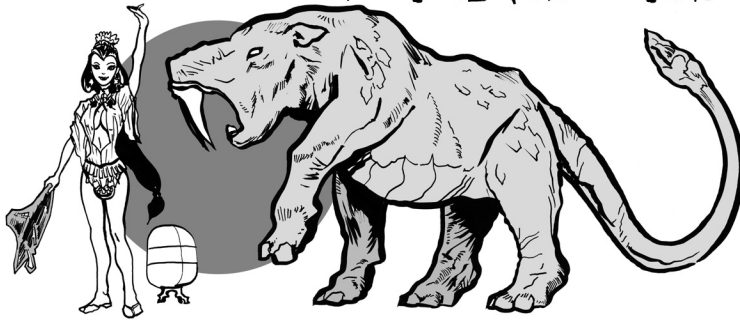
### Monster Appendix

**Asparan Genie:** HD 4; DC 2; DMG none; Special - illusion spells, can only be hit by magic weapons. These sexy wind sylphs are almost always found within a wizard's residence. The genies promise their masters that they will tell them a secret spell, one that will allow physical contact between them. In return, the wizard must crusade against evil elementals. The genies can stray up to 400 feet from their bottle, and cast minor illusions.

**Myxod's Musqoads:** HD 3 full grown; DC 7 DMG 1d8+1 bite; Special - tunneling. Musqoads are vicious multiplied mutants the size of a hog. Musqoad skin has a number of wrinkles, and their oversized gums sport large chisel-like teeth. Originally, Myxod had hoped to grow them large enough to pit against trolls, but the mole stock had limitations in scale and birth rate. The creatures can burrow through nearly any natural material, forming nests and routes to food sources. The wererats have trained the Musqoads to attack male humanoids, which is why they stay rat-like in the Fane.

**Gorlangterus:** HD 6; DC 6; DMG 4d4 tusks, 1d6 tail club. The last of these beasts was removed from the Deep Caves and given to Myxod's master. These rhino-like animals with walrus tusks and long, clubbed tail were the

# GORLANGTERUS



natural enemies of the raptor species living near the Dark Trolls. After the lizards started to receive food and care from the trolls, the Gorlangterus were nearly hunted to extinction. Ironically, these beasts would have made much better steeds, but the trolls wanted more fearsome-looking animal companions.

**Yeren Beast:** HD 4; DC 6; DMG 1d6x2 claws on hands or feet; Special - climbing ability. The Yeren Beast is a relative of the mountain Yeti. Standing taller than a man, it has clawed hands and quadrumanous feet. Shaggy orangutan-like hair covers its agile body, only exposing the face of a yellow-eyed oni. Yeren Beasts can climb any rough surface at full speed, and even move while upside down. The creatures love to steal food and are attracted to women's voices.

**Monstrous Marbled Cyclosa:** HD 8 full grown; DC 5; DMG 2d6 bite; Special - lethal poison. Certainly one of the more unpleasant giant arachnids a party can stumble across. The Cyclosa has eight foot legs and a bloated abdomen that looks like a stretched seed pod. They build webs over deep pits and chasms, letting debris collect along the strands. Nothing is wrapped like a cocoon, so their homes are relatively easy to loot. The Cyclosa has strong venom which spoils quickly if extracted from the chelicerae.

**Beetilasp:** HD 8; DC 3; DMG 1d8x2 claws, 1d4 stinger; Special - poison. The Lich ZICG'UD is a bit of a showman. In addition to residing in a dungeon with rare creatures and pricey traps, the Lich insisted on having a steed that no other villain might have. Regrettably, his combination of tiger, beetle, and wasp couldn't fly well at all. At best, the monster can glide after jumping from higher ground. Displeased, the Lich gave the Beetilasp to his apprentice. The monster will only use its stinger if it has struck a foe with both front or hind claws. An oddly shaped mouth and skull prevents it from also having a bite attack. A taxidermic display of this rare chimera would be worth much to a collector. Ω

– Thus Ends the Expedition to the Fane of Salicia –

# The Four M's

initiative/combat system by Calithena

I have not been rolling initiative for some time. Instead I process actions by type, with everyone going once during a round in the appropriate phase. Everyone declares actions at the top of the round in a free-for-all. When I need to know who goes first during a phase or resolve tit-for-tat in the free declaration, I usually just give it to the PCs, have people act in DEX order, or roll off, but only the latter if it increases tension and enjoyability. I do use surprise rules. One advantage of this system is that I don't need to keep track of engagement; since melee happens first every round, if you want to withdraw from someone you're next to they automatically get their shot in first. The order:

**1. Melee:** Everyone gets to strike at an enemy within reach with a melee weapon they already have in hand. Warriors and monsters with multiple attacks may split those attacks between different targets if available and allowed.

**2. Missiles:** Now characters with missile weapons in hand may fire them as appropriate. Characters acting in this phase who only fire one missile may move 1/3 of their normal movement in the movement phase of the game.

**3. Magic:** Now spells declared at the beginning of the round go off, in order from lowest level to highest. (Counterspells automatically go at the same time as the spell they are cast against.) Mages who took damage in phase one or two must roll the amount of damage taken or higher on 1d6+level or their spell misfires.

**4. Movement:** I let characters move 5' per "inch" of movement on the character sheet – this is half the speed many GMs use, and I actually think 1/3 might be better. Actions such as unstoppering and drinking a potion or dropping a backpack take up 5' per – for example, dropping a pack, finding a potion, getting it, unstoppering it, and drinking it would take 25' worth of movement, or possibly more if the pack was hopelessly cluttered. I don't allow characters to move through friends or foes except on a charge. Drawing or sheathing weapons takes 5'.

It's very important to let PCs and monsters use the movement phase to set up the next combat round. Set spears and charge attacks are the most obvious uses of the phase in this regard, but PCs especially should try to use the phase to plan their next actions in advance. Someone needs to block for the mage, the thief needs to find a hole in the goblin line to climb the wall and steal the idol, and the hobbit needs to get around the ogre's back and kneel over so that Ragnar of Rhadamanthia can try to bowl him over into the pit during the attack phase. Ω

# Critical Misfortune

ways to tear things up by Clovis Cithog

Consult these tables when there is a natural 20 on an attack roll but a 20 is not needed to hit, or a natural 1 on a saving throw when 1 is not needed to save (if it is it should just be a failure). Once per combat I allow a PC (only) with weapon or shield in hand to sacrifice that weapon or shield to negate a critical before it is rolled. Once per game session I will allow a PC, NPC, or monster to sacrifice the above or a magical protective item such as ring or bracers

2d6	Critical Hit: Bludgeoning	+Dam
2	Stunning blow (1d6 rounds)	1d6
3	Nose shattered (1 round stun, CHA -2)	1d6
4	Hand crushed (drop item in hand, STR -1)	1d6
5	Jaw shattered (2d6 wks to relearn speech)	1d6
6	Ribs broken (Atk -2 until healed)	2d6
7	Arm broken (no use d6 months, STR -2, DEX -1 until arm fully heals)	2d6
8	Ruptured spleen (1d6 rd stun, CON -2)	3d6
9	Concussion (KOed 1d6 min, INT -2)	3d6
10	Kneecap shattered (2d6 rd stun, STR -2, DEX -3, SPD reduced to 2)	4d6
11	Neck broken (partially paralyzed, STR -3, DEX -4, CON -2, CHA -2)	5d6
12	Depressed skull fracture (1d6 hour stun, -1d6 DEX, -1d6 INT, -1d6 CON)	6d6

On the 2d6, reroll all 1's if attacker has 15+ Constitution; reroll all 6's if defender has leather/padded armor or animal/plant hide.

2d6	Critical Hit: Energy	+Dam
2	Ear drums burst (regain d100% hearing in 5-10 weeks, CON -1)	1d6
3	Brain injury (epileptic seizures on natural 1 attack rolls, INT -1)	1d6
4	Bilateral shoulder dislocation (d12 attack rolls until healed)	2d6
5	Femur shattered (2d6 minutes stunned, STR -1, DEX -2, SPD -3)	2d6
6	Internal bleeding (1 hp/rd bloodloss)	3d6
7	Stroke (-10-60% memory/levels, WIS -2)	3d6
8	3" hole through torso (-1d4 STR, -1d4 DEX, -1d4 CON)	4d6
9	Burst into flames (-2 DEX, -3 CHA)	5d6
10	Heart attack (will die if not resuscitated)	all
11	Brain fried	death
12	Disintegrated (possessions must save or also be disintegrated)	death

On the 2d6, reroll all 1's if attacker has 15+ Charisma; reroll all 6's if defender weighs over 400 pounds.

to negate a crit as well. Magic items get a saving throw of 1d6 per die of plus or equivalent; at least one of those dice must come up 1 for it to survive. Determine side for hand/arm/leg/foot injuries randomly. Stunned beings use d12 for attacks and saves; opponents are at +4 to hit them and their movement is halved. Blood loss continues until magic healing or first aid is received. Bonus damage from crits may be healed in the usual manner, but attribute points lost may only be restored by experience, *heal critical*, regeneration, reincarnation and/or wishes unless noted. Ω

2d6	Critical Hit: Piercing	+Dam
2	Achilles tendon cut (fall prone, -1 DEX, -2 SPD when healed (recover as attribute))	1 hp
3	Eye poked out (stunned 1d6 rounds, DEX -2, CHA -1)	1d6
4	Bladder punctured (system shock to survive infection, CON -1)	1d6
5	Artery cut in arm (1 hp/rd bloodloss)	1d6
6	Bowel Perforated (system shock to survive infection, CHA -2)	2d6
7	Skull fracture (KOed 1d6 minutes, WIS -1)	2d6
8	Artery cut in leg (2 hp/rd bloodloss)	3d6
9	Impaled (STR/open door to remove wpn)	4d6
10	Lung punctured (-2 CON, <i>slow</i> 2d4 wks)	4d6
11	Kidney ruptured (3 hp/rd bloodloss, STR -2, CON -1)	5d6
12	Heart pierced	death

On the 2d6, reroll all 1's if attacker has 15+ Charisma; reroll all 6's if defender wears plate/banded mail or is insectoid or crustacean.

2d6	Critical Hit: Slashing	+Dam
2	Ear severed (-1 CHA)	1 hp
3	1d4 fingers severed (drop item in hand, STR -1)	1d4
4	Throat cut (1 hp/rd bloodloss)	1d6
5	Clavicle hacked (arm out 2d6 wks, STR -1)	1d6
6	Hand/tail severed (1 hp/rd bloodloss, STR -1, DEX -2)	2d6
7	Foot/claw severed (2 hp/rd bloodloss, STR -2, DEX -3, SPD -2)	3d6
8	Skull cleaved (KOed 1d6 hours; -1d4 DEX, -1d4 WIS, -1d4 CHA)	4d6
9	Eviscerated (2d6 rounds stunned, 5 hp/rd bloodloss, -2 STR, -3 CON)	5d6
10	Decapitated (some monsters and constructs take 6d6 instead of dying)	death
11	Leg chopped off (3 hp/rd bloodloss, STR -3, DEX -4, SPD -4)	6d6
12	Body split in twain (demons and other beings from outer planes banished)	death

On the 2d6, reroll all 1's if attacker has 15+ Wisdom; reroll all 6's if defender wears chain/ring mail or is reptilian, avian, or draconic.

# One Charge Left!





# One Time at D&D Camp...

by M.J. Harnish and Ben Robbins

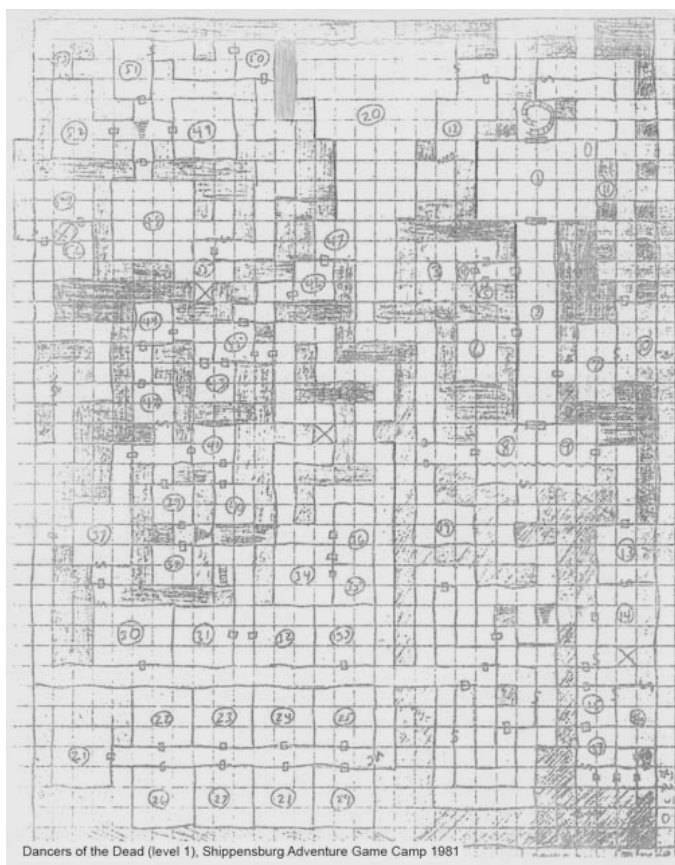
A picture is worth a thousand words, so take a look at this photo. It was taken in 1982 at the Shippensburg College *Dungeons & Dragons* summer camp. Yes, you read that correctly: a summer camp run by a college for D&D. What follows are the details about the camp, how it ran, and some of the experiences various attendees he had. Most of these experiences were Ben's, although I've included anecdotes from other attendees (Todd Goldman and Christopher Weeks) as well. Shippensburg *Dungeons & Dragons* Camp ran in the summers of 1981 through 1985 as two one-week sessions, running Sunday evening through Friday afternoon. The program was only one of many summer activities officially run by the university, although it certainly was the most unusual. Although it involved more than a dozen employees, the actual heart and soul behind the game camp were James Forest ('81-'83) and Larry Whitsel ('84-'85), who managed the camp, gave most of the lectures, and wrote the adventures. The camp was officially open to boys and girls, aged 10 to 17 with most attendees falling in the 13-14 year range. Counselors were older, most in high school or even college. On average, there were about 50 participants per week, and everyone I talked to recalls that many of the attendees came back repeatedly during the camp's years.

Campers were divided into different gaming groups at the beginning of the week, with counselors doubling as GMs. The day's activities were heavily scheduled: Each morning there was a series of game-related lectures with topics like

"Being a good player" and "How to DM." The focus, as Ben remembers it, was largely on gaming concepts rather than rules mastery. One of Ben's favorite topics, which was repeated each year due to popular demand, was audience-driven improv - the audience would come up with situations and characters for the counselors to roleplay through. An important point of the lecture was that there was no fighting nor set rules. If the situation started to devolve into combat the actors stopped and moved on a new one. While these types of ideas and techniques might be pretty common nowadays, it was less common approach back in the early 80's, especially amongst teenaged players. Todd remembers the lectures fondly as well since they helped show him, even at the age of 12, that the game could be more than just moving pieces around and picking up treasure.

Afternoons were dedicated to gaming, with attendees assigned to a specific group for the week based on age. All the groups played the same adventure, written specifically for the camp by the camp's directors (Forest & Whitsel). While the groups weren't actually competing against each other, each group did try to get as far as possible before the end of the week for the bragging rights associated with the feat - a slightly rigged process, Ben would discover in later years when he became a counselor. The adventures evolved over the years. The first year's adventure, "Dancers of the Dead," was a monstrous, five-level dungeon crawl so old school it was prehistoric - the kind of dungeon where every square of the graph paper has a room or hallways covering it, right to the edge of the page. On the next page is an actual map of the first level. The follow-up years' adventures were an explore-each-hex wilderness crawl ("Raiders of the Bandit's Lair"), a high concept dungeon with an overland intro and visual puzzles ("Curse of the Temple of Set"), a city intrigue plot with NPCs taking the initiative against the group ("Throne-





Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end, and the Adventure Game camp's came in the fall of 1985. Unfortunately the reasons were never fully explained, so everyone was left guessing, even to this day. While it could have been influenced by the “D&D = Satan Worship” scare, other evidence suggests that the summer program director, Dr. Kraus, didn't think very highly of the kids attending and caused quite a stink when he said as much in a newspaper interview. Whatever the reasons, it was a pretty anti-climactic ending to what sounds like a very well-run and interesting summer activity.

So aside from a trip down memory lane, what does the tale have to offer? First off, I find it fascinating that what many gamers nowadays joke about (“I wish there was a RPG summer camp when I was growing up!”) actually did exist and could happen again. The 1980's were not good to role-playing, but in today's climate RPGs are much more mainstream. Okay, so that may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the overall market is bigger and far more diverse today. Whether you like them or not, CRPGs and online MMORPGs have introduced a far wider audience to the concept of roleplaying. In addition, the stigma attached to, and general hysteria surrounding, RPGs is far less intense nowadays. There also is a far wider selection of RPGs available, capable of appealing to a lot of different tastes. In other words, the idea of a modern day RPG summer camp is not that far-fetched.

Unfortunately, the number of actual kids playing RPGs, based on my anecdotal observations and general consensus, is shrinking – the RPG market seems to be graying and I'm not sure there would be enough teenaged attendees in a particular region to really support a camp. The very same MMOs and video games that have made the concept of “role” playing widespread also compete for kids' attention. When I got started in the hobby in 1982, there weren't a lot of alternatives for a boy interested in warriors, dragons, and rings of invisibility. Nowadays, though, it's tough to sell a kid on the idea of “pretending to be a wizard” when they can just log in to WoW. Obviously, if you're reading this, you obviously know there's a big difference between WoW and a RPG like D&D, but expecting kids to pick up a series of books they spot in a local shop is probably being either terribly optimistic or downright naïve. All is not lost though: As the proverb says, *If the mountain won't come to Muhammad, Muhammad must go to the mountain.* In other words, perhaps it's time we all start making a more concerted, proactive effort to introduce kids to roleplaying. The best place to start is schools, libraries, and youth programs where role-playing can be taught and imaginations fostered. Thus, if you have the time and inclination, consider running a game day event, an after-school club, or even just a single kid-friendly session at a con. Doing so not only will help revitalize the hobby by bringing in some fresh blood, but might just bring back D&D summer camp once more. Ω

(“Throne-Fight at Giltham”), and finally a world-spanning quest (“Odyssey of the Rings”). Throughout the week the GM/counselors had regular meetings to compare notes about the adventure, discuss what spots were too easy or hard, and to invent minor twists to avoid meta-gaming between the groups. If particular groups were flailing or looking like they had no chance to actually finish by the end of the week, the GMs cut corners to at least give them a chance to get to the climax, even if that fight might wipe them out. Another twist to the whole approach was the existence of a floating “specialist” GM, who didn't have a group but who instead ran one particular encounter for each group. In the first year it was the dreaded “chess-board” trap and in the last year it was a wandering pirate ghost ship. The guest GM intentionally made those encounters brutal, which put all the groups through the same wringer regardless of what their normal GM was like.

If you're any sort of D&D-phile, you're probably wondering what system the camp used. AD&D was the one and only. While Moldvay Basic was out, “Basic” was considered kiddy D&D and looked down on by the camp's attendees. TSR was well aware of the existence of the camp since Frank Mentzer attended as guest lecturer in both 1981 and 1984. He even offered to run the pre-release version of *Temple of Elemental Evil* for Ben and a friend in '84, which they turned down! As Ben says, “we were stupid back then.” The camp was also advertised in *Dragon Magazine*.

# Finding Players

by James Edward Raggi IV ([www.lotfp.com/RPG](http://www.lotfp.com/RPG))

It is amazing how many people complain that they only would be role-playing if they had some people to role-play with. And it seems they aren't doing anything about it, because finding a gaming group isn't difficult. If you are a referee and you want to start running a game, it is easy. It doesn't matter if the game is obscure or long out of print. All it takes is a little bit of effort. Yes, it is a bit more difficult if you just want to play a game and not run, but the best way to create new referees is to get people playing and make them excited about trying to run it themselves.

**1. Decide what game you will play, and when you will be playing.** Don't be wishy-washy. You will get nowhere if you are thinking about getting an RPG group together and then deciding what to play and when. It won't work. If you're going to run a game, you need to make these decisions up front, before searching for players. The referee is the most important member of the group. If a player doesn't show up, the game can go on. If the referee doesn't show up, the players are out of luck. The game to be played should be decided by the referee. He's the guy that has to come up with all the ideas and create adventures after all. The referee knows what he likes, what he feels comfortable running, and what he can sustain creatively for a period of time. When deciding when to play, remember that running a game is a serious time commitment. If you're doing this as a lark or know that you'll be blowing off gaming at every opportunity to do something else, just don't bother. Don't waste other people's time that way. Regularity is the best way to keep people coming back to the table. If players know that a game is happening every Sunday, they know not to make other plans on Sunday. If the game doesn't happen every Sunday people are going to stop thinking of Sunday as "game day" and then good luck keeping a regular group together on an erratic schedule. Choose a time and be prepared to game at that time, every time. Emergencies will happen, but if they happen all the time then I suspect they aren't really emergencies at all.

**2. Contact gamers that you know, and ask your non-gamer friends if they'd like to play.** This should be easy enough. A lot of gamers know other gamers already. A lot of gamers even have friends. Present the game and time you've decided to them. Some of them might say "Well, I'd love to play, but I'm free on this day, not that one." Well, if several people say the same thing, and that other day is good for you, consider changing it. Some of them might say, "Well, I'd play if you ran this other game instead." Tell them you're sorry, and that they're welcome to the table if they change their mind. Don't bend on that one. At all. If

you want to run *OD&D*, then don't be talked out of it by people who probably don't even really know what it's like. If you want to run *FATAL*, well, you're weird, but you're not going to get to do that if you listen to players whine about the games they'd like to play. When you stay firm in your decision to run the game you want to, these same people will still be the ones complaining on the internet that they don't understand why they can't find a game while you're enjoying gaming with your new group. Ask your friends to join your game. ALL of them. Even people you don't know all that well. Co-workers. Classmates. One of the lamest things I see on the internet is that people say they only game with friends, and none of their current friends game, so that's that. GET NEW FRIENDS. Don't drop old friends over gaming (did that even need to be said?), but if they are getting in the way of your gaming, you need new gaming friends. It's a funny definition of friend that keeps you from doing things you enjoy because they don't enjoy it too. But when asking the acquaintances, don't act ashamed of gaming by doing things like cornering "certain" people away from everyone else. Don't feel the need to ask a lot of leading questions ("So, how bout them Lord of the Rings movies, eh?"). Be plain and don't do anything to suggest that what you're asking is odd or socially awkward. Gamers get all self-conscious about their gaming when in the presence of non-gamers. Why? People don't act like they're doing something silly when they ask people to join them for Friday night poker, do they? Or to come over and watch the game? No, they don't! So just ask. Chances are, you're not going to get very many bites from this. But you shouldn't get any funny reactions if you don't act like it's something unusual to ask. And if someone is rude, such as asking if you're too old to be playing games like that, then that should tell you what you need to know about them. And if someone says "I might be able to show up now and again," don't count on him at all. So maybe you've got some people that want to play. Maybe you don't. Maybe you just moved to a new area and don't know anyone, much less gamers. Not a problem. In fact, it may be preferable. It's always good to meet new people that have something in common with you.

**3. Make a flyer.** It's time to start advertising for players. Flyers need to have a few vital pieces of information on them: The game to be played, when and where, contact information, and most importantly, a flashy picture. Now, at one time I didn't realize the importance of listing the time to be played on the flyer. This resulted in a lot of wasted time dealing with people that wanted to play but were only available at times I had classes, and an infuriating amount of time coordinating with the load of people that did end up playing before we figured out a good meeting time. I put my flyers together in Photoshop, but it doesn't require high-tech know-how. Just cut and paste something together. Use some image from the internet that fits the atmosphere you want your game to have. The image must stand out! Make little tear-away tabs

with your contact information. Don't forget to cut the tabs before placing the flyer, and always tear a tab or two off before hanging them up, as that looks like there is interest. Now print a bunch at home or run down to your local copy shop and get 20 copies run off.

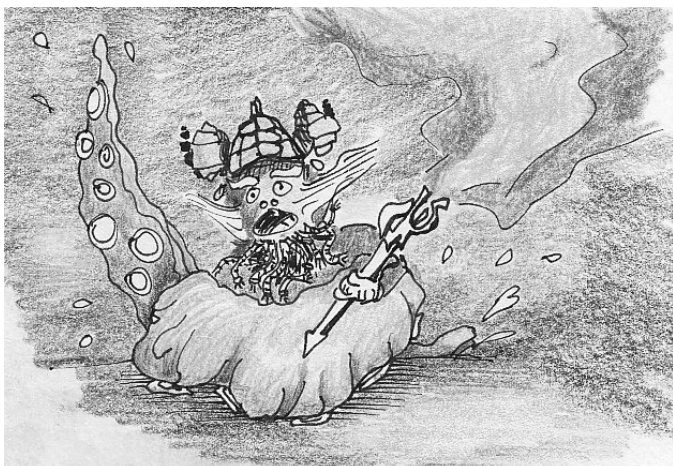
**4. Getting the flyer out there.** Now you've got the flyer. Where to put them? Everywhere! Do you have a local game store? Put a flyer there, of course. Comic book shops might be a good place for the fantasy-inclined. General hobby shops, especially those that carry *Warhammer* products, even if they have no other gaming material, are excellent for finding people. In my experience book stores often have bulletin boards, and that's always a good bet. Libraries! Here in Finland all of the grocery stores and many convenience stores have bulletin boards so I just canvas the town and make sure as many stores as possible have my flyer up. I also hang flyers in those areas where people post flyers and posters for upcoming concerts, and on the school or office community board. If there's a bulletin board that you know about, get a flyer up on it. Note that while some places may be better for snagging gamer-types (bookstores and comics stores), you're not looking specifically for gamers. You're looking for people who might be interested in playing in your game. That's going to be rough if you're trying to play a very complicated game (half the people I recruited for a *HERO* game using a flyer never came back after the first session... why go through all that trouble to create a character if you're not going to actually play the game?), but what are you going to do? Unless you live in a tiny village with nobody in it, you're going to get responses. I lived in a crappy small town of about 55,000 people, and I didn't speak the native languages AT ALL (as opposed to speaking them VERY LITTLE now) when I first flyer'd, and I got plenty of responses. This works.

**5. Screening potential players.** Once people start contacting you, you'll want to start arranging meetings. Go out for a drink, or something. Kind of like a date. In fact, the goal is the same as a date, but perhaps with less at stake. You're attempting to see if this person is compatible with your ideas for a fun time. Gathering a group of complete strangers together and expecting everything to go smoothly is rather optimistic. Be sure to do this screening somewhere other than your home. Neutral territory is always good for meeting new people, especially when the entire point is to figure out if you want to be around them at all. No, this isn't perfect, and no, you won't screen out all the complete freaks. In fact, your house may be full of weird people if everything works out. Role-players tend to be a creative, idiosyncratic bunch. Putting aside your personal prejudices would be recommended. You're not looking for people that you want to be "friends" with - that's nice if it happens, but what you're looking for here are people that you can game with, and this screening is just a way to make a basic effort to find out if these people



*(inspired by Gabor Lux's Fomalhaut setting - Ig)*

are idiots. What you're basically looking for is a person that can be respectful around strangers. Who cares what religion they are, as long as they aren't going to go all Biblical (or blasphemous) at the game table. If someone doesn't bathe (yeah, you know, that stereotype), best to find out before gathering your players. Come up with a few conversational cues that will bring up a few sensitive things. If someone is homophobic or racist or sexist, you want to find that out before exposing a group of strangers (who may include women, gays, or ethnic minorities) to them - that will kill a group before it gets started. Also talk about your gaming goals - a completely reasonable, pleasant, respectful person could still be a complete disaster and drain on your game if he's showing up with one thing in mind and you're presenting quite a different thing in your game. Do talk about what games you've played, what problems you've had at the game table in the past and how you've resolved them. See what experiences like that this other person has had. Find out how committed they're willing to be about the game and what potential responsibilities they would have that could pop up from time to time on game day. This step is a fair bit of work and can be a pain in the ass, but you'll be seeing a lot of this person if they join your group, and if you're shy about meeting and talking to them, I wonder what kind of



GM you're going to be. It's a job that really doesn't work with shy people with no people skills. Hell, I'm about as anti-social and odd as they come, and I can get this done. It's not an issue. (I know I'm playing to gamer stereotypes with a rather condescending attitude, but those people are out there. It doesn't mean you have to be one of them, or include them. That's why you're screening in the first place.) Do not have a strict idea of who you want to be answering your ads. You might get the unemployed, the underage, and the disabled. You might get people that have never role-played before and have no real idea what it is. Be patient with them all, and don't immediately dismiss people without actually talking to them. A note about some things. I'm in my 30s, and my group here has always included teenagers. I remember when I was a teenager and me and a friend found this group of way-older guys that let us play with them. We did some *D&D*, but that's also where we got introduced to *Justifiers* and *Bureau 13*. Holy cow did they scare the crap out of us with *Bureau 13*. And now it's my turn to groom the next generation of gamers. (Scary, isn't it?) I'm not saying that babysitting little kids is your job, but a lot of these kids are the bookwormy types that are quite capable of contributing in a game environment. Their outbursts are going to seem childish (let me tell you about the one player who actually said "LOL" when he thought something was funny, instead of, you know, actually laughing), but it's my experience that adults do the same thing in the same way, only using more dated expressions. It's the same damn thing. Not saying you must include anyone that wants to sign up (and certainly if you're the type to enjoy a beer or fifteen at the gaming table, kids shouldn't be there...no sense in getting in trouble with the law over a game) but don't dismiss out of hand. I guarantee that with enough responses, you're going to get a completely unsuitable freak or two, but you'll also have a good pool of promising players to work with. And because you were up-front about game-day on your flyer, it's even a pool that can show up to game with you. If the number of appropriate people are equal to or less than the maximum size you've decided for your group, then great! You can go to the next step! If you have attracted more interested people than you want to have in your group, you're going to have to make decisions of who to not

invite to the game. Do contact the people that you do not select, very important, don't just ignore them or not let them know. If it's someone you'd be interested in gaming with if not for group capacity issues, do let them know and do be ready to contact them when there's a chair becomes free at your table. Reasonable people will understand, unreasonable people you don't want around anyway, and if you connect up to a larger gamer community around you, you can get a bit of a good reputation if you have a "waiting list" of people wanting to get into your game.

**6. Start Playing.** This is all a fair amount of work, but then so is conducting a role-playing campaign. If you want to play and there's no obvious pool of players, you are going to have to make an effort. Everything in this world requires effort, but few things pay off in the end like making that effort for something you do for no reason other than enjoying it. The important thing to do is never cancel the game if you can help it. There will be weeks when people don't show up, or too few people to continue the regular game. Have a variety of card and board games (gamer related rather than mass-market stuff if you can find it) just to help establish that "This day is game day" to establish attendance habits from the people that can be there every week. Those people are the core of your group and you do not want to give them a reason to think they should always have other plans in case the game is canceled again. Make the game area as pleasant as possible. Be a good host. Clean the place up. Bake fresh bread or rolls for the group. It's a simple and inexpensive thing to do and if your group is filled with younger people or single guys, home-cooked anything will impress them to no end. When I had 9 people showing up every week, I'd make the bread while we gamed. Perhaps a tad disruptive to the game, but fun and bond-forming all the same, especially when asking some of the players to make my rolls because my hands were covered in dough. Yeah, I'm assuming the game location will be at your house because that's how it usually works for me - the game is played at the home of the person organizing and running the game. Even if you're playing elsewhere, the referee is still the group leader and he should act as a host wherever the game is played.

Now go game! Ω

# Oceania

## Swords, Sorcery & Seafaring

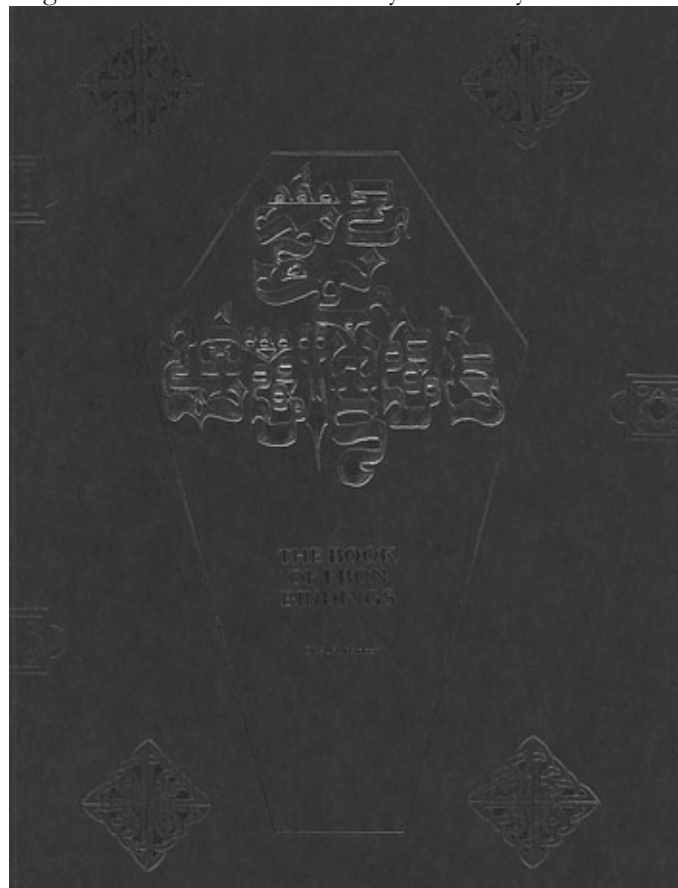
### Coming 2010

# Merlyn's Mystical Mirror

reviews by Baz Blatt, Zach Houghton, & J. Maliszewski

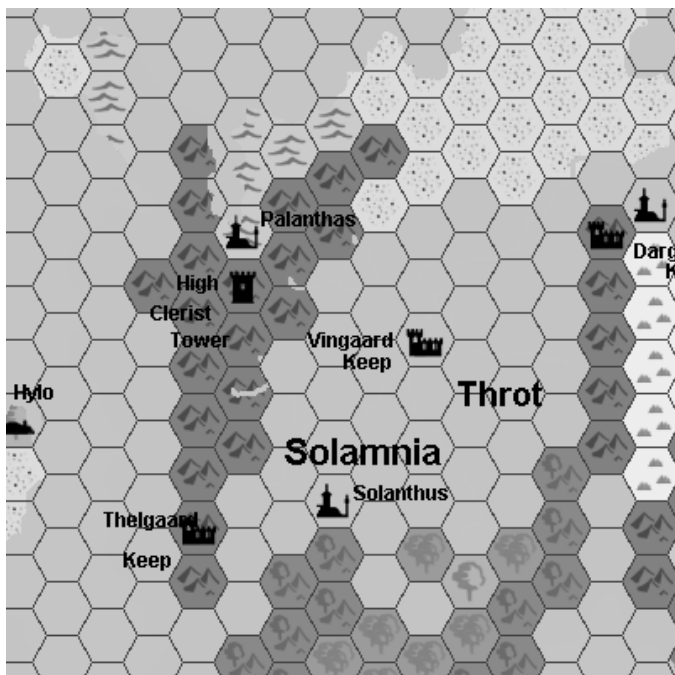
**The Book of Ebon Bindings** tells you how to summon demons. It is not a book of RPG rules about demons; it has no quirky little notations and abbreviations, it has no numbers and no dice rolls – it is the real deal. Whether or not you are potty enough to take it at face value – and rumour has it that at least one person on an occult internet discussion page has done so – the essential charm of this book is the effort its author, Professor Muhammad Abdul Rahman Barker, has put into making it as realistic and plausible as possible. Published in 1978, way before RPG books included bits of (usually pretty lame) fiction, this book is ostensibly the product of a collaboration between the Professor and his mentor in Tekumeláni magic, Tsémel Qurén hiKétkolel of the Temple of Ksárul in Béy Sú. The Preface, by Barker himself, could come from any of the scholarly treatises he no doubt read regularly in his professional work as a linguist, except that rather than discussing some ancient fragment of the Baghavad Gita and the shreds of worm-eaten Sanskrit parchment it can be gleaned from, it discusses a book of demonology written in one of the lost languages of a far-future planet. The Introduction adds to the flavour; written by the Tsémel, it explains to us ignorami the whys and wherefores of Tékumel's gods and such theory behind its magic as the author takes seriously. And lastly we have the

*Book of Ebon Bindings* itself, written by an unknown author a prodigiously long time ago, a partial treatise covering ten major Demons and their summoning in detail, and a paragraph or two about 49 more. As one would expect from a text by professional linguist, it reads beautifully. It is full of words in Barker's mellifluous made-up languages, but none seems jarring or out of place and none hinders the sense so naturally do they fit, and the erudite professor knows plenty of English words that are pretty unusual into the bargain. The authorial voice changes subtly from section to section. Barker as himself speaks as an objective modern academic, Tsémel Qurén hiKétkolel is a crotchety old so and so whose patience with windy theorising (especially from priests of his rival Temple or Thúmis) wears thin from time to time, while the unknown demonologist is a braggart full of his own importance and amusing little anecdotes about how the foolish come unstuck when practicing his art and find themselves reduced to tiny bloody bits or whisked off to eternal torment and damnation. It is in the accumulation of details that the sense of real, living, breathing alternate reality is built up. The utterly plausible tale of multiple versions and hidden archives in the preface, quotes from the scriptures of Pavár in the Introduction hinting at the depth of underlying history, the fictitious place names misspelled in the Book itself as languages have changed with the millennia, the very order of the demons is presented in is in the order of the Engsvanyáli alphabet, not our own, and many, many more little touches make this a work of the fantasist's art. And some of those details are not for the faint hearted. My edition, published by Theatre of the Mind Enterprises in 1991, has warning on the back – 'This publication contains sorcerously explicit material and is not meant for children. Discretion is advised.' What H.P. Lovecraft glossed over as indescribable and unspeakable, Barker describes and speaks of in abundance. Disembowelment, mutilation, necrophilia (and its opposite, committed by the undead) all appear in the *Book of Ebon Bindings* as a commonplace part of the demonologist's work. You do not need this book to play *Empire of the Petal Throne*, nor will it add much to any other RPG, but it is an inspiration to anyone looking for ideas on how to make a fantasy world come alive and a very entertaining read for any fan of fantasy fiction. - BB



**Hexographer** is a mapping program with plenty of "hex appeal." Many gamers remember fondly the beautiful hex maps of Greyhawk and Mystara. This same type of map can be found today in products from such companies as Adventure Games Publishing and in Rob Conley's *Points of Light* setting. Overland/world hex maps have an appeal all their own; there's something about quantifying the wilderness to be explored in an attractive, digestible design. As much as these maps are part of the history of the gaming hobby, they also still can be wonderful game aids for today's campaigns. For those of us without much skill at mapping of any kind, let alone hexmapping, there have





been several products aimed at assisting with making a hexmap for RPG campaign usage. Each of these products have their plusses and minuses, but the best of the lot is clearly Inkwell Ideas' *Hexographer*. Created by Joe Wetzel, *Hexographer* sets out to make hexmapping not only simple, but enjoyable. It accomplishes this goal smartly – an accomplishment all the more impressive when you consider the basic version of this product is available for free. The map tiles are largely reminiscent of Mystara, and manage not to be too loud or garish. They present a classical-looking feel for your tiles. Multiple tile options for different settlements and features help add to the diversity. Freehand tools for coastlines, rivers, and roads ensure that you're able to make a more naturally-appearing world than many hexmappers allow for. It's nice to be able to fill in just a part of a hex with an inlet or island, and really brings forth a less blocky-looking terrain when your map is all finished. The customization options are splendid as well. You can turn hex numbers on and off, show or hide various overlays and names, and customize the text used. In addition, you can decide if you want your hexes staggered or neatly stacked. I'll be honest: there are map programs which cost much, much more than *Hexmapper* that I haven't used to a tenth of the effect. The only thing that keeps this tool from a near-flawless rating is a bit of difficulty in erasing coastlines and the lack of a legend/map feature. The legend/map feature appears to be on Inkwell Ideas' to-do list, so hopefully that's something that will be available soon enough. The free version of *Hexmapper* is available at [www.inkwellideas.com/roleplaying\\_tools/hexographer/](http://www.inkwellideas.com/roleplaying_tools/hexographer/). The paid version includes the ability to run the program offline, customize your terrain hexes, add hex notes, and expand your map. For \$7 for a yearly license or a lifetime license for \$25, this product will be worth every penny if you're looking to make a professional-looking hexmap for your own

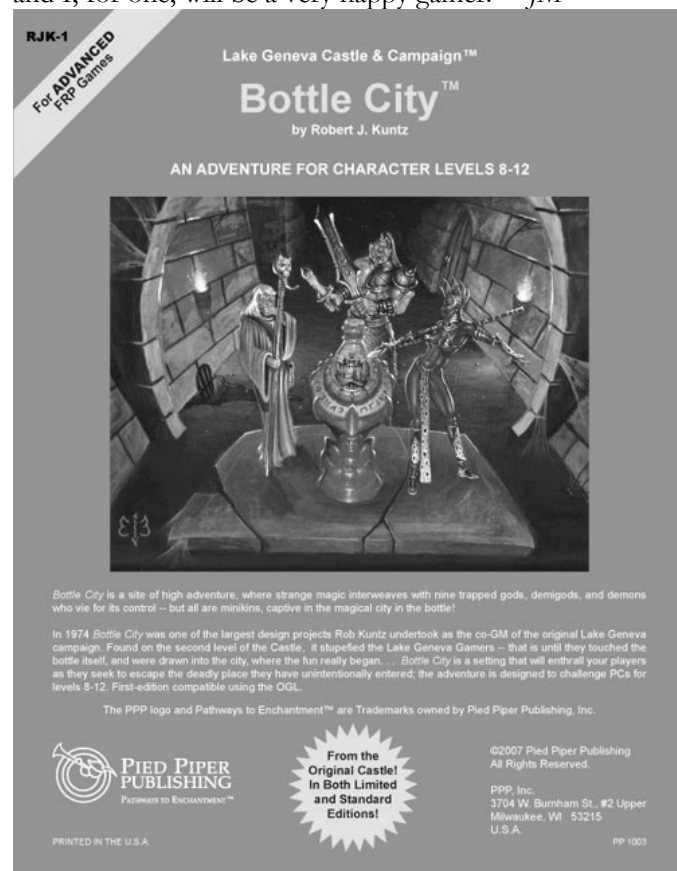
campaign without much hassle. I happily give this product 4.5 out of 5 stars. If you fall under this product's spell as well, don't worry—you've probably just been Hexed. - ZH

**The Original Bottle City** is the second product in what Pied Piper Publishing is calling the Lake Geneva Castle & Campaign (LGC&C) series, the first being *The (Original) Living Room*. The LGC&C series comes close to being a Holy Grail for old school gamers. Rob Kuntz was the co-DM of the Greyhawk campaign that Gary Gygax ran in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin back in the 1970s. Despite the prominent role Gygax played in writing for and promoting *D&D*, he actually provided few details about his own campaign. Certainly we got snippets here and there, sometimes quite large ones, but few of them were ever presented in a way that would allow Joe Gamer to experience the same adventures as those players of yore. We never got, for example, a true Gygaxian treatment of Castle Greyhawk, instead having to content ourselves first with an unfunny parody module, several pastiches, and finally a still-incomplete reconstruction by The Man himself. The lack of such products now feels especially acute in the wake of Gary's death. The deaths of Bob Bledsaw and Dave Arneson are further reminders that the original generation of gamers is getting older and much of what they created and experienced in those bygone days may soon be lost. Consequently, Kuntz's LGC&C series fills a sizable void. He's in a unique position to fill gaps in our knowledge about Greyhawk and, at the same time, to produce products that evoke not an "old school feel," but rather are a window on a time when what we now call "old school" was simply "fantasy gaming." Indeed, the mere existence of the term "old school" only highlights the discontinuity modern gaming has with its past. Before that past is forever lost, we need more products like this; they provide a valuable service in preserving the hobby's collective memory of what it is and where it came from. *Bottle City* is a staple-bound 32-page module with a cover, complete with a color illustration by Eric Bergeron that is nicely evocative of 1970s-style gaming art. The dense interior text is laid out in the two-column style we used to see in TSR's old modules. Jason Braun provides several small pieces of art to break up the text, which remind me a bit of Dave Sutherland's pieces in the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide*. The text is clear, well-edited, and proofread. I noticed no glaring typos or other errors. For these qualities alone, *Bottle City* is a good value for its \$20.00 price tag, which is still probably higher than some would like, but I think justifiable given its small print run and audience.

The premise of *Bottle City* is that the adventure described within its pages takes place within a city in a magical bottle, hence the name. The bottle can be placed in any location, whether in a dungeon, as it was in Castle Greyhawk, or in some other place. Once again, this makes the product delightfully modular and easily adaptable to anyone's cam-

paign, regardless of setting details. The module details only a single "level" of the city, one that seems to be a sub-level of some sort, since there are references to undescribed "upper" levels that form the city proper. I presume that in the original campaign, these upper levels were seen and experienced by the PCs. Kuntz suggests he may detail these other levels at a later date and I certainly hope he does so, although, in true old school fashion, design lacunae like this serve as excellent opportunities for individual referees to make the material their own. The same principle applies to the map of the level itself, which includes many, many rooms that are not keyed. This was a common practice back in the day, both to allow the referee flexibility in adding new encounters on the fly and because old school dungeons were "alive," which is to say, they changed between adventures. Far from being static, isolated collections of rooms with monsters that didn't interact with one another or that served no purpose other than to wait for adventurers to enter them, old school dungeons were living, breathing ecologies, albeit fantastical ones. There was in fact a rhyme and reason to their internal workings and the presence of empty rooms helped facilitate them. Bottle City comes with a beautiful and inspiring reproduction of the original map Kuntz drew on graph paper. The map is charming, right down to its misspellings of words and lack of clarity in places. It reminds me very much of the maps I used to draw in my youth. I do wish Bottle City had also included a modern version of the map, simply for ease of use if nothing else, but that's a minor criticism. The meat of Bottle City are the descriptions of the many rooms, chambers, and other locations within the level detailed. These descriptions are all quite fascinating, since they nicely illustrate a lot of old school gaming principles. There are puzzles aplenty, as well as obstacles that can only be overcome through trial and error. Likewise, there are a goodly supply of new creatures, in this case three creatures originating in *The Empire of the Petal Throne* game and used by kind permission of M.A.R. Barker. There's a terrific amount of variety here that should appeal to players of all stripes, provided they enjoy these challenges in the spirit in which they were written. The specific content includes reams of trivia and insights into elements of the Greyhawk campaign. For example, there is a Hall of the Gods in which aspects of nine gods can be encountered. These gods have names that might seem vaguely familiar to those familiar with Greyhawk lore – Hyero, Arathnul, Trython, Rhalysh, Sestian, etc. – just as the idea of nine trapped gods echoes a famous incident involving Kuntz's own Lord Robilar character (a fact Kuntz himself readily admits). There is also an encounter with a witch named Ahsat, who rides a flying cauldron and perfected an "uncontrollable laughter" spell. Clever readers versed in Greyhawk lore should be able to connect quite a few dots here. And of course Kuntz includes lots of commentary throughout the product, both on his reasoning in creating a particular section of the level and on how these elements worked in

actual play. It's frankly an amazing package and I'm hard pressed to see how a fan of gaming history could pass it up. The Original Bottle City is written for character levels 8-12 and I think that's about right. Many of the encounters are difficult and even unforgiving of mistakes, which is exactly what one ought to expect from it. I think it would prove a fun and exciting challenge for players who appreciate the old school sensibilities Kuntz has so lovingly presented here. What strikes me most of all is how joyful a module it is. By that I mean that it's clear Kuntz has fond memories of his time as a GM and it shows. Likewise, his digressions into the theory and philosophy of refereeing are refreshingly positive and free from jargon or pretense. They come across as a bit "rough" at times, but they're also practical, which is the other thing that comes through -- this is a module to be played. Theorizing is all well and good, but gaming is about, well, playing together with your friends in an imaginary world and anything that doesn't serve that goal is beside the point. Would that more RPGs nowadays took that approach. In short, *The Original Bottle City* is a great product and I'm very proud to own it. As an adventure, it looks like a lot of fun and, as an artifact of the hobby's past, it's invaluable. I sincerely hope Mr. Kuntz will produce many more products of this sort in the near future. Lots of older gamers will appreciate being reminded of why they fell in love with this hobby in the first place, and many younger gamers may have no knowledge of what they're missing. If PPP can produce more products like this one, both goals could be served and I, for one, will be a very happy gamer. –JM



# Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments

magical mayhem by Kelvin Green & Calithena

**Mask of the Killer** (Green): Some have speculated that these cursed items are the result of a dark necromantic experiment, while others maintain that they have been left for the intelligent races to discover as a cruel prank played by some dastardly daemon prince. Whatever their true origin, whenever these hellish artefacts arise carnage and blood-letting are never far behind. The masks take many forms, from a simple white carnival type, to a grotesque yet elaborate patchwork affair made from skin, and even on one notable occasion a carved pumpkin. When the mask is placed over the head of a living humanoid being, it grips tightly, and the wearer immediately becomes mute and uncommunicative as their mind is completely overcome with a primal urge to kill every intelligent living thing in the immediate area. Any who survive the wearer's attacks become the object of a deadly fixation, as the Killer slowly but unerringly follows the survivor in order to finish the grisly job. The only way to truly halt the Masked Killer is to destroy the mask itself, a difficult task which could easily take up a number of adventures. The Masked Killer retains their normal combat scores, damage capacity, and so on, but also regenerates as a troll with resistance even to fire and acid, even surviving death and dismemberment in this manner. The Killer also gains the strength of an ogre. Magic designed to remove curses has no effect on the Mask in most instances. Individual Masks may have their own unique powers as the GM sees fit.



**Porcupine Cloak** (Calithena): This defensive charm normally functions as a *Cloak of Protecting* +1. However, if a secret command word is spoken, it becomes iron-hard and spikes cover its exterior. While activated the wearer's speed is halved and any but the most minimal physical activity causes 1d6 damage to the wearer. However, it will also raise the wearer's DC by or to 3, whichever is better, and anyone attempting to strike the wearer in melee automatically takes 1d6 for each attempted strike, whether it hits or not. Foes charging the spike-shrouded sanctuary take 2d6, and if the wearer had the presence of mind to wrap themselves fully before activation it will also effortlessly repulse any non-magical missiles which strike it. When its spikes are protruding it also adds +3 to saving throws against dragon's breath and any physically effecting spells.

**Portable Vortex** (Calithena): Usually encountered as a nearly weightless folded grey cloth, this item usually creates a vortex sucking target matter into extradimensional space when opened. Light mithril threads (roll to detect) indicate which side faces outward. If placed in water, it sinks rapidly to the bottom and creates a whirlpool 1' across for every 10' of depth. If placed on the ground, it acts much as a *Bag of Efficacious Containment* (no vortex). If placed in the air, it instantly sucks most air elemental and avian creatures into it, the very largest of those following a few rounds later along with ground creatures in its path. If placed in a large fire it will create a firestorm. This is an extremely dangerous item to fumble with or use in haste. Ω

