

FIGHT ON!

ISSUE #9

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Andy J.

A FANZINE FOR THE OLD SCHOOL RENAISSANCE

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



dedicated to Paul Jaquays,
Master of Dungeons



Nothing seems to scare someone who knows the rules like something totally unknown.

- *Caverns of Thracia*

Two archmagi gazed into the palantir: a four-armed bug-man with red-and-black checkerboard chitin and a human greybeard with burning eyes, bedecked in a golden cloak. Beneath their gaze, worlds whirled within worlds.

“So many dead, these past few years.” whirred the insect. “Gygax. Arneson. Bledsaw. Moldvay. Holmes. Wujcik. Frazetta. Dio. Sutherland. I wonder. Is it our time, too, to pass on to the other side? This world has a new magic now, and no more time for dreams.”

The elder smiled and shook his head. “I am surprised at you, Hazmat. Your kind lives two hundred years without sorcery; I would have expected more perspective.

“Things ebb and flow. It is true that man’s private soul is under siege, and greater magics than ours will be required to change that. But for us, it is enough that there is a new thing in the world, birthed strange and wondrous from these and those who came before them, and those who yet live. Nothing ever really dies so long as it is cultivated by memory. There will always be those who seek stranger vistas of the imagination, those for whom tales of battle, risk, and sorcery over the hills and far away are the sustaining visions of their idle hours. Nor will all of these have or want the simulacrum of the machines.

“It is for them we keep watch.”

Our ninth issue is here, returning to *Fight On!* behalf of the eldritch traditions of fantasy roleplaying. We would like to thank M.A.R. Barker, David “Grubman” Bezio, Geoffrey McKinney, and Dan Proctor for their various permissions and blessings to publish supplemental material for their house rules and worlds. Please look out for our first fantasy fiction anthology, *Weird Enclaves & Black Pits*, due to hit the stands this fall! Our abbreviations should be broadly recognizable to lovers of old-school fantasy games; we use DC for Defense Class.

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 if you know how): contact us at iggyumlaut@gmail.com or at 1122 Pearl Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. *Fight On!* is a journal of shared fantasy. We who read and write for this magazine are a community of role-playing enthusiasts unified by our love of the freewheeling, do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970’s. We game. And you’re welcome to join us.

-Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

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Top of the Class

Character tweaks and suggestions by Dan Collins, Mátyás Hartyándi, Eric Minton, Paolo Greco, and Clovis Cithog

Warrior Boons (Collins): Here's a lightweight system for giving warrior characters some variety and/or choice in their abilities as they advance. Roll d12 (or just choose) at 4th, 8th, 12th level and so on to see what you get. Some GMs may wish to allow a roll at first level as well, or even a roll at first level and every even-numbered level thereafter; this should be tailored to your own campaign:

1. Ambidextrous: Character can fight with a second (smaller, dealing up to 1d6) melee weapon in the off hand. Each round the character can opt for either an extra attack or a parry (+1 AC) with the off-hand weapon.

2. Cavalier: Attacks made from horseback (or by this character's mount) are at +1. Also, the character can urge their mount to +50% speed up to 6 turns/day.

3. Follow Through: Whenever the character drops an enemy in melee combat, he gets an immediate extra attack. This may recursively provide other extra attacks.

4. Great Heart: The character gains a +4 bonus to all saves against poison, disease, and death magic.

5. Iron Will: The character gains a +4 bonus to all saves against mental attacks (charm, fear, illusions, etc.).

6. Marathon Man: The character can add +50% speed when running, and can maintain this rate up to 8 hours.

7. Mighty Thews: The character adds +2 to Strength.

8. Quick Shot: The character may make one extra attack per round with any ranged weapon. (Restrict this to a very specific weapon type or roll again if your rules already permit Warriors multiple attacks.)

9. Snake Strike: The character can get one extra attack per round with any melee weapon. (Restricted as with Quick Shot above.)

10. Strider: Character has a 4 in 6 chance of tracking prey. Add +1 for soft ground and for each 10 creatures trailed. Subtract -1 for hard ground and for each day elapsed or hour of rain. Subtract -2 if the target covers its tracks.

11. Tough as an Anvil: Character gains +1 hp per level.

12. Weapon Master: The character picks one weapon type, and gains +1 to hit and +2 damage with that weapon.



Filled To The Brim (Hartyándi): This houserule (inspired by Trent Foster) gives mages the option to memorize more spells than normally allowed, with the disadvantage of possible failures and mishaps. It also adds a little bit of complexity to the basic casting operation. Mages may memorize up to their character level in extra spell levels (so a 5th level mage might go for an extra 3rd level spell and two extra 1st level spells, for a total of five extra spell levels – or anything less than that). When a spell is cast, roll 1d6 on the mishap table below, cross-referencing the number rolled with the number of extra spell levels *currently* memorized. (This does mean that as the PC casts spells, the risk of trouble gradually decreases.)

d6	extra spell levels memorized					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
1	Extra Time	Vanish	Vacuum	Swoon	Stroke	Boom!
2		Extra Time	Vanish	Vacuum	Swoon	Stroke
3			Extra Time	Vanish	Vacuum	Swoon
4				Extra Time	Vanish	Vacuum
5					Extra Time	Vanish
6	Retention					Extra Time

Extra Time: The spell takes twice as long as usual to cast, meaning that if this is rolled for a normal combat spell it does not go off until the next melee round (and the mage can do nothing else but continue to cast or lose the spell).

Retention: The spell is not lost after casting.

Vanish: The chosen spell disappears from the caster's mind without taking effect.

Vacuum: The spell is cast successfully, but the caster loses 1d6 other random memorized spells as a result.

Swoon: Spell fails and PC faints dead away (no save). Can be roused with 1d3 rounds of persistent effort, or will awaken naturally in 2d12 hours.

Stroke: As per Swoon, but the PC cannot be roused in any effective way for 1d20 days afterwards. In addition, a save vs. death must be made to avoid losing d6-1 points each from Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity, permanently.

Boom! Character must save or die from their head exploding. If this save is made, treat as Stroke above. If the character dies, generous GMs may consider having their spell work after all, as a kind of 'final strike'. Ω

Pimping Your Priest (Minton): Old-school games have a freewheeling attitude toward creating new character classes. Customized priests are particularly popular, as the basic "cleric's" idiosyncracies – blunt weapons, heavy armor, a vaguely Judeo-Christian spell list, and the ability to turn undead – are a poor fit for the servants of the typical campaign's heathen pantheons. This article provides simple guidelines for customizing priests in your campaign.

The basic idea is to start with your core game's priest rules as a baseline and then to tweak them to reflect the type of priest you want to represent. When in doubt, make your variant priest slightly weaker than the baseline. (It's less aggravating for the player to beef up an underpowered version later than to weaken an overpowered one.) Here are the elements you'll want to tinker with:

1. **Weapons:** Providing access to a deity's preferred weapons, such as Apollo's bow or Odin's spear, is a good way to individualize a priest. If you are playing a game in which swords (normal or magical) are better than other weapons these should probably be restricted or come at a big price. This may also be true for missile weapons, but non-blunt melee weapons only represent a modest improvement.

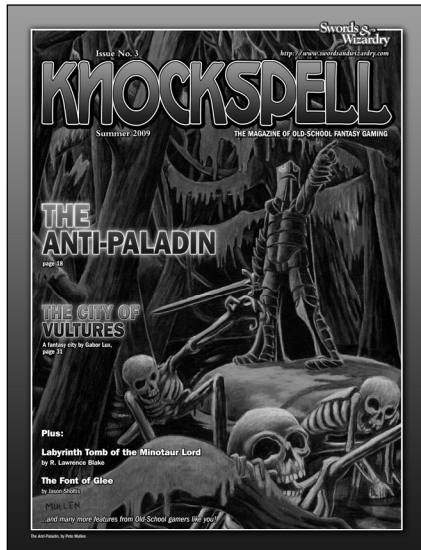
2. **Armor:** The ability to wear heavy armor is a major advantage of the priest, and removing that ability is an easy way to balance out bonuses elsewhere. Gods of hunting or travel may limit priests to leather armor, while gods of a peaceable or scholarly bent may not allow their clerics to use armor at all.

3. **Spell List:** Fiddling with spell lists is the quickest and easiest way to add flavor to a cleric variant. Remove a few inappropriate spells from the standard list while adding a few deity-appropriate spells from mage or other lists – and voila! Potency and flexibility, especially in areas like damage-dealing and illusion where priests are not normally strong, are things to watch out for when assessing the value of the changed list. Also, if you do give your variant priest canonical mage or other spells, consider making them a level higher than the mage's equivalents.

4. **Special Powers:** This is the meat of the variant priest. Many deities focus on matters other than the undead, and you can replace their servants' ability to turn or control undead with some other power. This can include permanent abilities like the paladin's immunity to disease or a ladder of powers like the ones that some martial arts characters acquire as they rise in level.

Minimum attribute scores, such as a minimum Dexterity for a cleric of a god of thievery, are always appropriate. You should also figure out the basic tenets of the new priest's religion. As a rule, these aren't meaningful balancing factors, though.

Swords & Wizardry

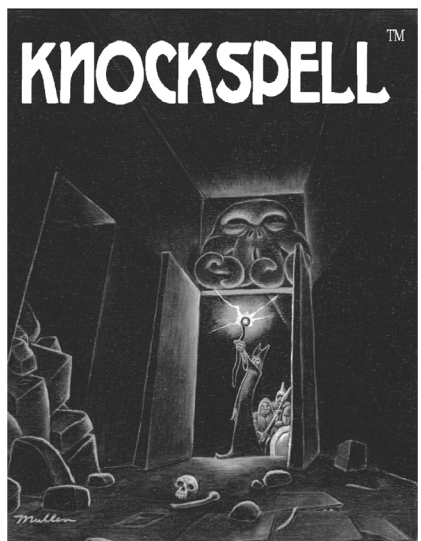


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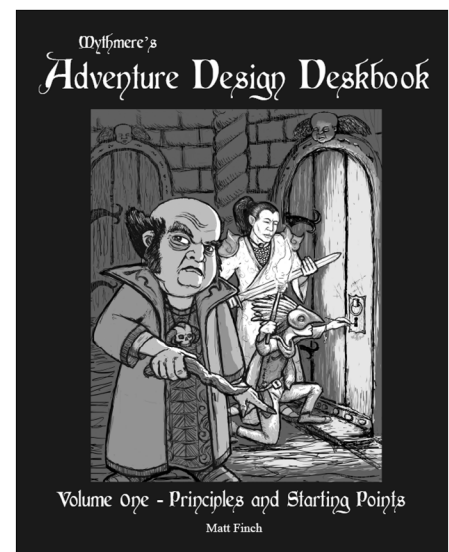
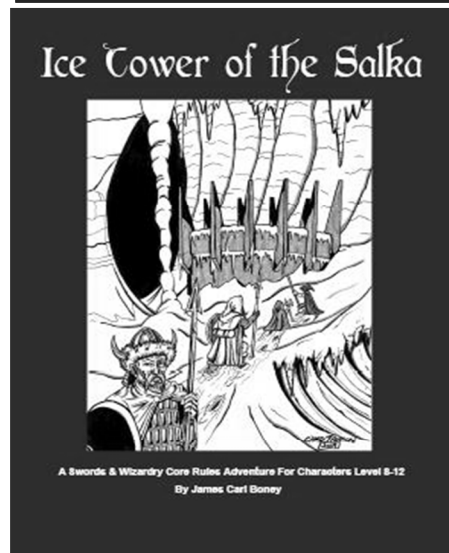
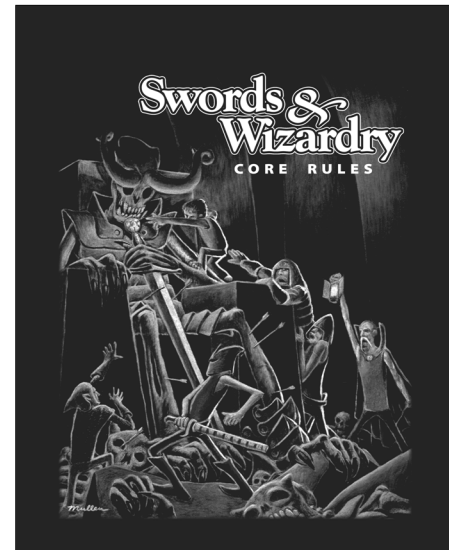
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- 
- A stylized, grayscale illustration of a troll face serves as the background. The troll has large, rounded ears, a prominent nose, and a wide, toothy grin. The face is composed of various shades of gray, with the eyes and nose area being darker. The overall style is reminiscent of early computer graphics or pixel art.
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The following examples of variant priests are loosely based on real-world mythology. Different GMs may have their own interpretations of these priesthoods. A god may even have multiple priestly orders in one's campaign, each with its own distinct set of abilities!

Priest of Odin: Odin's weapon is the spear, and his priests are trained in its use instead of the hammer or mace. Through his wolves Geri and Freki, he grants the spell *Stones to Wolves* in place of *Sticks to Snakes*; this transforms 2d4 rocks into normal wolves but is otherwise identical in effect. (Neither of these changes has much mechanical impact; they mostly provide flavor.)

Priest of Poseidon: Like their patron, Poseidon's priests may wield a trident (treat as pole arm if no separate trident rules in play) instead of hammer or mace. They may not turn undead while on dry land, nor do they have access to fire-creating magics such as *Fiery Strike*. However, they may swim in armor without penalty and add water-based mage spells such as *Breathe Water* to their spell repertoire. They cast *School of Voracious Fish* instead of *Swarm of Insects*.

Priest of Hermes: Hermes is a messenger, not a warrior; his priesthood is not trained in the use of chain mail or plate. In addition to the power over undead, granted by their god's role as psychopomp, priests of Hermes gain travel-related special abilities. Their movement rate is 10' faster than normal, and they add a range of movement-facilitating spells to their repertoire, such as *Opening Charm*, *Levitation*, *Hasten*, *Fly*, *Dimension Portal*, and *Teleportation*. Ω

Once More, Into The Thief (Greco & Cithog):

The basic old-school task resolution roll grants success on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. You can think of this as a roll under system with a 'target number' of 2, if you like. Here are some standard bonuses and penalties many GMs apply to the target number in play:

Ability Score Low for Task.....	-1
Ability Score High for Task.....	+1
Character is Rushed, Hurried or Careless.....	-1
Character is Encumbered.....	-1
Task is Highly Appropriate to Character's Race.....	+1
Player Claims (s)he can do it "Because I'm an Elf".....	-1
Player Gives Detailed, Plausible Explanation of how Character Attempts Task.....	+1
Player's Explanation Makes GM Laugh.....	+1
Task is Really Easy/Routine.....	+3
Task Presents Some Difficulty but Seems Doable.....	+1
Task is Really Hard.....	-1
Task is Impossible.....	-3 or more, or don't even roll

To complete a task successfully, roll your target number or less on 1d6. For example, a highly dextrous warrior attempting a basically doable climb down from the innkeeper's

daughter's window, rushing to avoid the innkeeper's crossbow, would need to roll 1-3 for success. Failure might mean falling, or getting caught hanging out the window, or not organizing the climb before the innkeeper gets his shot off; as always the GM must adjudicate. In some cases a race or class may give a bonus greater than the +1 for "Highly Appropriate"; Paolo gives a +3 to hobbits hiding outside, for instance. This will be handled game by game.

If your target number is 6 or greater, rolls of 6 do not guarantee automatic success; you should roll again at -5 and see if you make it. (For example, a character with abilities and magic items giving her a target number of 11 for sneaking would have two chances to roll 1-5 for success (at target numbers 11 and 6) and, if both failed, a third chance to roll a 1 for success (this is the -10 modifier). Likewise, GMs may allow characters with target numbers below 1 to try to roll a 1 and, if successful, re-roll with a positive modifier between 1 and 5 to the subsequent roll. In this way there can always be some chance for doing anything, if the PC rolls well enough.

Which brings us to the Thief. Given this task resolution system as a baseline, handle thieves as follows. At first level they get 10 points to split between the following skills: pick locks, locate traps, disable traps, climb, silent movement, hide, legerdemain, listen, locate secret doors, and read languages. (In some games locate traps and disable traps advance as a single 'trap' skill.) Some GMs may wish to limit 1st level thieves to no more than +2 or +3 in any one ability, and possibly to establish level minimums for higher single abilities. Then, at each subsequent level, they get an additional 2 points to allocate as they choose. Other unusual skills can be learnt at GM option as well, such as appraisal, reading scrolls or using other magical items, using poison, and so on. Thieves should progress with back-stabbing, coshing, and other attack abilities independently of these rules, according to whatever system you prefer.

With this system in play you have a simple, manageable task resolution system that allows characters to develop skills through 'skill classes' or world exploration while still giving everyone their usual decent chances to do things. And you never need to go beyond the good old-fashioned d6, the hardest working die in the gaming business, to figure out whether things get done. (Thanks to Jeff Rients for some of the inspiration for this article.) Ω

FIGHT ON!



Bird-Men of Hyperborea

by Jeffrey P. Talanian, for use with *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea* and other fantasy role-playing games

In Hyperborea there prevails a race of semi-intelligent, vaguely humanoid avians known as bird-men. Their origins can be traced to the Spiral Mountain Array, an impossible range of glaciated peaks in central Hyperborea, where gods and monsters dwell.

Physical Attributes: Bird-men average seven feet in height, two or more of which is accounted for by their thin, featherless necks. However, their full stature is scarcely realized, as they typically droop. Bird-men have small, featherless heads, duck bills, inquisitive black eyes, and long, scaly legs that end in three-toed talons. Their narrow upper bodies are feathered black, and their powerful wings span eight or more feet, jauntily plumed black and white with brown tips for the females and red for the males.

Behaviour and Idiosyncrasies: Bird-men rarely dwell in genonomous communities; primarily they thrive in a state of servility to other intelligent beings, most notably men. This suits them, so long as they are properly fed (grains and small amphibians, fish, or lizards) and sheltered. Bird-men are notorious for both cowardice and incessant garrulity. With shrill, nasal voices they speak the common tongue of mankind, typically phrasing sentences in the form of questions, rhetorical or otherwise. Despite their servility, bird-men are notoriously recalcitrant; they will often refuse to complete tasks, claiming to be insulted or offended by the order or request. Also, they are lazy, argumentative, and belittling (to one another as well), but when properly motivated they can convey a basket of passengers and/or other cargo weighing up to 150 lbs. per bird-man. The basket is usually constructed of wicker and

is affixed with hoops or looped thongs of cord, rope, or leather, which they grip with their strong-taloned feet. Bird-men are of poor morale. They almost always flee violence, yet the threat of violence from their masters rarely inspires them to cooperation; instead, they will complain that they are underappreciated and abused. If they are physically abused, they will either flee their master or become quietly servile for a brief period; this might end poorly for the abuser, however, for bird-men have been known to unexpectedly drop their fares from high elevations. Bird-men refuse to cross large bodies of water, and rain inspires them to their most vociferous protestations. Also, they will ground their cargo, perhaps indefinitely, if frightened by the presence of aerial predators such as griffins, giant eagles, or pterodactyls. In short, bird-men are a quirky, intractable species that must be bribed, coaxed, threatened, or tricked into cooperation; to do otherwise will avail their masters nothing.

Frequency: Typically, groups of 3-12 bird-men will serve a single master, and these might include a mating pair. Pairs mate for life, such creatures reserving the bulk of their bickering, complaining, and henpecking for one another. Females will lay 1-4 ostrich-sized eggs, which are warmed by both male and female over a period of 6 weeks before hatching. Bird-man eggs have been known to fetch up to 500 gp. A solitary bird-man scarcely survives for long; they cease to feed, dying of either starvation or madness; in latter cases they often argue with their own reflections as seen on the surface of a mirror or glassy water. Bird-men are unable to carry on without the companionship and unrelenting cantankerousness of the flock.

Statistics: Alignment Neutral; Speed 15/30 (flying); DC 9; HD 1; Attacks 1 (peck); Dam 1-4; Morale 3. Note: When pulling cargo up to their maximum weight allowance, their flying movement is reduced to 24".

Seeding Bird-Men in Your Campaign: Referees should not use bird-men as enemies to be combated, because this would not be consistent with their species behaviour; rather, they should be utilised in other creative and challenging ways. Consider some of the following uses of bird-men in your campaign:

- **Transportation.** Bird-men might serve as a temporary means of transportation to a remote or otherwise inaccessible adventure site. They will convey their fare via wicker basket; whether they remain to provide round trip transportation is a dubious proposition.
- **Material Possession.** Bird-men might be purchased as property from an owner who can no longer tolerate their eccentricities. Such bird-men will at first present as accommodating, conciliatory, and servile, but their true nature will reveal itself short order.
- **Discovery.** Bird-men might be discovered in the wild, and if so they will offer their service to a new master,

Editor's Note: Although JT doesn't do it in Hyperborea, GMs adapting bird-men to their own world might consider allowing them as PCs. Suggested mods: +2 Dexterity, -1 Constitution, -2 Charisma, -2 saving throws against fear and mind control, may advance as Thieves (max. level 8) or Priests (max. level 4). Note that bird-men as written don't have hands, so GMs wishing to allow them as PCs might grant small claws at their wing-tips to make them viable, although even then they would probably be limited in weaponry to daggers and darts (d4 small javelins).

boasting of their superior utility over other "lesser" transportation means.

- *Eggs Obtained.* A clutch of bird-man eggs might be purchased, or perhaps taken from a bird-man aerie. The hatchlings mature within a year. Even raised in captivity, their eccentric nature is no less pronounced.

Whichever method is used, the referee should consider bird-men a temporary boon to the character party, this due to the quirkiness and unrelenting unreasonableness of the species. Bird-men allow the referee to infuse the campaign with new challenges, opportunities, and no small amount of humour, if used to their potential. *Bird-men inspired by the works of Jack Vance; visit swordsmen-and-sorcerers.com to find out more about Hyperborea and AS&SoH.* Ω



Knights & Knaves

testy tavern tenants by SilverFish

Thrym Twice Grim, son of Thryor Giantsbane

7th Level Lawful Good Dwarven Paladin

S 18/31 I 10 W 13 C 12 D 10 Ch 17; hp 38, DC 1

Abilities: Cure Disease 2x/weekk, Detect Evil, Protection from Evil, Healing Touch 14 hp/day, Turn Undead

Spells: Blessing, Conjure Water

Possessions: +2 Plate Mail, +4 Hammer of Defending, Potion of Polymorph, Holy Symbol, 59gp

The Good: At a table in the center of a crowded bar, a dwarf warrior seemingly hewn from a block of granite sits ramrod sraight. He's fully armored in polished plate and wears a weatherstained traveler's cloak of faded crimson. He wears no helm to conceal his black hair and slate eyes. His heavy black beard entirely covers his neck, and he spends his time staring directly into the eyes of other inhabitants of the inn, generally in open disdain. His glare is cold, merciless, and unflinching. Usually, the recipient of his stare averts his eyes, at which point the dwarf snorts loudly and upends his clay pint, often draining the mug at a single pull. Sometimes, the person stared at will come to remonstrate or pick a fight with the dwarf, in which case he will usually happily oblige – although he never swings his own hammer first. Said plainly, Thrym Twice Grim is a stout paladin of some renown. He tends towards law, and can be cruel, though he always keeps the greater good in mind in his actions. Tomorrow he intends to leave on a great quest in service to his goddess, and he will allow nothing to divert him from that goal. He is a perfect zealot, and never wavers from his duty.

Thrym has several functions. He might come to PCs' aid against assassins or other evil enemies in the inn, for he loves a fight. He might be an interesting source of conversation or information. More problematically, good or neutrally aligned PCs who pride themselves on badassery may decide to fight Thrym without talking first, in which case they may well either be slain or be guilty of slaying a paladin, creating an object lesson in thinking before you act. Finally, Thrym's quest may be of interest to the PCs. They might accompany him, though dealing with him may prove difficult due to his relentless single-mindedness. Alternately, if they have other business with the dwarf, the quest may interrupt it or create time pressure to complete it before he departs, because nothing but death will divert him from parting on the morrow.



Bluebird, Guild Mistress Harlot to the Demon Frog

5th Level Neutral Evil Human Assassin

S 14 I 11 W 10 C 12 D 13 Ch 15; hp 24, DC 8

Abilities: Assassinate, Backstab, Disguise, Poison, Thief Abilities, Speak Common & Orcish

Possessions: Poisoned orange, small glass vial of sleep toxin, 1114 cp, pewter mug (15 gp), freshly cut human head

Wicked Thimble, Assassin of the Demon Frog

3rd/3rd Level Neutral Evil Hobbit Assassin/Mage

S 9 I 10 W 11 C 10 D 19 Ch 15; hp 9, DC 3

Abilities: Assassinate, Backstab, Disguise, Poison, Thief Abilities, Speak Common, Halfling, Dwarvish, Gnome, Goblin, and Orcish, Infravision, Halfling Abilities

Spells: 1 – Charm, Mystic Bolt, Sleep (also knows Floating Disc); 2 – Web, Opening Charm (also knows Darkness, Invisibility)

Possessions: +1 Dagger of Piercing (*Hole Punch* – does an extra 1d4 damage for 2d4+1 base), silver thimble worth 9 sp, three black candles, 4pp, 44gp, 10sp, 15cp, two red garnets worth 32gp and 142gp, and a pearl worth 55gp.

The Ugly & The Bad: At a table off to the side in a popular if shady night spot, a grotesque and bloated woman lies collapsed on the tabletop. A tattered but brightly hued rainbow frock drapes over her swollen form, providing uncertain concealment. Further down over the side of the table, her bare feet, dirty and swollen, splay out heel down. The woman's great chestnut-maned head rests in a humongous clay bowl filled with cold rabbit stew, which occasionally bubbles with her gale-force snore. Her cheeks

are gaudily painted. On the table-top and toppled before her rests a grand pewter mug, finely engraved with seven mighty steeds charging across a field. There is no vomit. An awesomely garish hobbit of sullen mien reclines next to her against a table leg. His shocking violet hair is harpooned into feral spikes. His face is pasted with black, covered over with a huge frown and grotesque crying eyes made up in thick white. Diminutive even for his own kind, his short legs are bent sharply at the knees. His loose cotton trousers are of checkered oyster and he wears a padded jack of charcoal suede. Only his furry feet are unadorned. On the tip of his index finger, which is armored by a silver thimble, he twirls with great adroitness a wicked dirk of milky white steel. Bluebird is a singer of some renown, but her joy in poison, blackmail, and killing transcends even her joy in art. Some consider her the soul of the city, in that the unholy beauty of her voice and the depravity of her soul match perfectly express the duality of the metropolis in which she dwells. Her service to T'sathoggua is genuine, and she spreads corruption wherever she goes. Even the exquisite beauty of her singing never fails to remind people of the darkness and sorrow of life. Wicked Thimble is Bluebird's heavy. Incredibly agile and socially competent, he is never taken by surprise, and is an adept manipulator as well as a skilled assassin.

If a party needs to hire assassins, or make contacts with the local guild, these two might provide them the means to do so at a price. They can also function as simple adversaries, or they might know something that the party needs to learn – but again, what might they exact in exchange? Perhaps the party sees the pair hired out and must react. Or perhaps a patron of the arts hires them to protect Bluebird, or the party needs her beautiful voice for some noble purpose – but how then to ensure her cooperation? Ω



Spellslingers for Hire

by James A. Smith

If your party needs a truculent thaumaturge to extract exorbitant payment, hog the lion's share of the magical treasure, and use the rest of the party as human meat shields, roll d10 or choose from the following. Roll 2d4 to determine the mage's level, or assign appropriately.

1. Grugathar: A wizened shaman from some uncouth, barbarous tribe. Wears a loincloth, tattered cloak, and numerous decorative skulls. Wheezes, a lot. Has an otherworldly patron that occasionally whisks him away at inopportune moments, but is good for one *Contact Higher Power* spell per week. Likes to cook. Cackles, quite a bit.

2. Byzimar of the Toad: Young, dashing, handsome, and deeply in debt with the local underworld. Needs to get out of town, fast! Spendthrift. Womanizer. Familiar is a Purple Toad, and Byzimar must partake of its intoxicating excretions on a nightly basis, learning his spells from the phantasmagoric visions he enjoys. Loves gossip. Knows the dish about movers and shakers from all over the region and beyond. Entertaining conversationalist. Snappy dresser. Expert forger.

3. Oscar of the Seven Sins: A mercenary mage who'll do almost anything for gold. Oscar has a price on his head in seven lands. Bald and snaggle-toothed, he wears a heavy beard. Bears a *Silver Scroll*, which will populate itself with a new random 1st level spell each day. Knows livestock. The man to take with you on a bartering trip.

4. Wellem: A brave, righteous Mage of the Light, Wellem will offer his services to any party who battles the forces of darkness, asking only for the occasional magical item. Rich. Will spend his money on a good cause. Preachy, but not too obnoxious about it. Has a secret vice. Wears *Silver Robes*, which provide +1 to his DC and Saves. Wields a *Staff* +1, which can store five levels of spells. Well connected. He also has a LOT of enemies.

5. Beauregard the Mad: Will not advertise his sobriquet, given by his former master. Down on his luck, he's desperately seeking knowledge to enable him to make an Infernal Pact. Rash. Unstable. Beautiful singing voice. Likes head games. Will pick one member of the party to befriend and work assiduously to turn him against everyone else.

6. Hammon: Specialist in Summoning magics. Boisterous. Likes strong drink. Easily offended. Enjoys games. Has a familiar named Fitz, which looks like a miniature version of the Cookie-Crisp Wizard. Fitz cast spells as a 5th level mage, but there is a 10% chance per spell level that its magic will backfire, disastrously.

7. Laera: Nondescript. Shy. Capable of great bravery. Wanted to be a Druid but couldn't cut it. Knows enough nature lore to qualify as a minor sage. Has horrible flatulence. Spellbook is kinda sparse, but what's there is choice.

8. Hizzar: Compulsive Liar. Very, very good at it, but will always eventually trip himself up, due to the sheer volume of his lies. Plans to become an "Evil Overlord" and "Rule the World." Flat broke. He's never committed anything close to what might be considered a Major Sin, but is trying to work up the nerve to do so. A Virgin. Cowardly. Will probably do something very, very foolish once he gets higher level spells.

9. Sharron: Young, cynical, mischievous. Witty. Wields a *Combat Stone* (+1 to all damage dice.) Takes crap from no one. Anarchist. Ambitious. Likes plays. Talented painter.

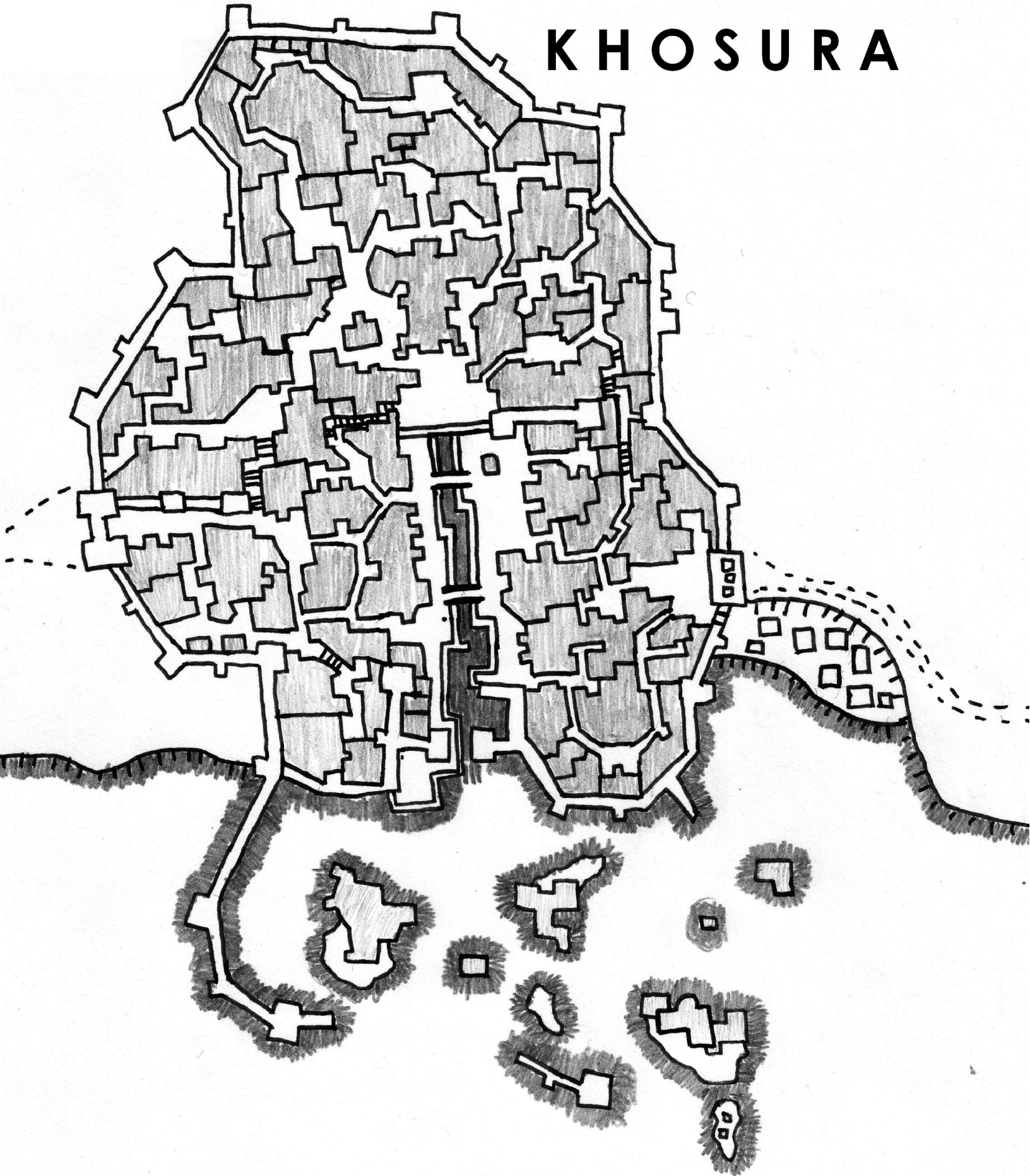
10. Graevis: Works very hard, to appear as the wise, mysterious mage. Sometimes pulls it off. A severe perfectionist. Will obsessively seek out new magic. Would give his life if he had to do so to live up to his ideal of what a Magus should be. Has a Green Serpent familiar, which grants him one extra 3rd level spell and 10% magic resistance or +2 to withstand spell effects. Ω

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KHOSURA





Background: In the Desert of Regulator, three days from Famful and overlooking a lake of salt water stands Khosura, City State of the Four Mysteries. Khosura is sacred to the cults of Ishtar, Uthummaos and Derceto; the Kamnic Mysteries, its fourth spiritual foundation, is concerned with matters outside religion and is less known. Two other ideologies, Fedafuce and Mung, have purchased the right to operate within the city, but their presence is seen as blasphemous by many traditionalists.

In the dim past some 2200 years ago, Khosura had seen its greatest glories as the seat of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells; twelve cities fell to rubble and ash beneath his heel, and his sons were left an empire that had no one to rule over. Then came the girl Vashanka, born the daughter of a slave: and it is told how she escaped the riders, went into KROAX to wage war on the bird-men, unified the amazon tribes of Ookant, and returned at last to find a city wasted by hunger and disease. So passed the blood of Srabmar from Khosura and came the gentler laws of Ishtar, Goddess of Love and War. In the years since, the city has seen many masters and mistresses; there came other gods and the Palace went from Ishtar to the grim

priests of Uthummaos, who rule still. For seventy years, the master of Khosura has been the ageless priest-king Panthozar, who is also the supreme high priest of Uthummaos on the world of Fomalhaut.

The main product of the barren city-state is salt. Salty waters emerging from springs beneath Khosura have flooded the ancient Lower City once populated by the less prosperous classes, but enriched the merchants: in addition to common salt, more valuable encrustations are collected and exported. Presently, only two tiers of the city are inhabited: the Middle City of the craftsmen and an increasing number of the beggared, and the Upper City of the merchant class, generally north of Vashanka's Market. The Upper City rises a level above the rest; at a lower height are the catacombs to the southwest (3–5), one level above the Middle City. The submerged Lower City lies two levels below the Middle and the surrounding escarpment: the place is now interdicted, for the former inhabitants, not allowed to escape the rising waves, are restless behind apparent calm.

All three mystery religions of Khosura maintain holy sites under the city, and the Kamnic Mysteries are entirely located



underground. The Undercity can be divided into four levels following the city's aboveground topography, and encompasses a total of eight known sectors distributed among them. (*These regions will be described in FO! #10 – Ig.*) References to the Undercity include level and region designations; hence, **UCIII/A-12** refers to Undercity Level III, Sector A, area 12. Most entrances to the Undercity are unknown to the general populace, and those that are, are either sealed or heavily guarded. These latter include the Plaza of Wailing (**3**, heavily undead-inhabited) and the gates in the northern walls of Vashanka's Market (**7**, barred and guarded; the secret door used by the men of Klaides the Merchant is unknown).

List of Entrances to the Underworld:

2. Bengazar's Columns, to **UCIII/C-2**.
3. The Plaza of Wailing, to **UCII/C-B-1**.
7. Vashanka's Market, to **UCII/A-9** (two entrances).
8. Row of Huts, **UCII/C-B-2**.
12. The Curved Sabre Caravanserai, to **UCIII/B-15**.
18. Beshket's Well, to **UCIII/A-5**.
19. Ostek's Plaza, to **UCI/A-1**.
21. Panthozar's Palace, to **UCI/A**.
22. The Shrine of Uthummaos, to **UCI/A-15**.
26. Ennoikos—Memfer Court, to **UCI/A-14**.

The Army: The regular forces of Khosura consist of 200 reserve Militias (War 1), 100 Footmen regulars (War 2), 80 Bowmen (War 2), 120 Light Cavalry (War 3, out on patrol), 100 Veterans (War 3) and 50 Elite palace guards (War 4). Patrols in the city and on the walls consist of 1d4*5 men, double if reinforced. 1 in 3 patrols are with bowmen. Secret agents of the Palace are commonplace and attentive, although corrupt.

Militia Reserves (200): Warrior 1; DC 7 (leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or sling 1d4+1.

Footmen (100): Warrior 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or spear 1d6.

Bowmen (80): Warrior 2; DC 7 (studded leather); Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d8.

Light Cavalry (120): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8, longsword 1d8, lance 1d10 or 2*shortbow 1d6.

Veterans (100): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or longsword 1d8.

Elites (50): Warrior 4; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk halberd 1d10+1.

The Gods and Ideologies

Uthummaos (LE): symbol is faintly glowing chasm in a dark field; weapons include priestal range and short swords. God of Empty Darkness; the cold breath speaking from dark chasms in a vaporous and gloomy voice. His mystery-religion is made up of a web of rituals, superstition and obscure, seemingly self-contradictory commandments, which believers must carry out exactly as prescribed. Priests of Uthummaos are strict, joyless men who dress in sombre shades. They make human sacrifices in complete secrecy and according to precise guidelines. High Priest Panthozar (Pr 11). Aboveground shrine at **22**. Undercity sanctum spans **UCI/A-15**, **UCII/A-16-18**, **UCIII/A-15-19**.

Ishtar (N): symbol is crossed bow and arrow; weapons are of any type, bows and one-handed swords favoured. The goddess of Love and War, as are her followers, is both gentle and merciless; always possessing a hidden edge when presenting as Love and an indecipherable gentleness and attractiveness as War. Priests are of either sex, but men may only advance to fifth level, and are not found in Khosura. High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars (Pr 6), recently succeeded Marcella Vil Amnir after her disappearance. They rule Vashanka's Market and an adjacent complex (**7**, **11**); the old Undercity shrine at **UCIII/B-1-3** is now abandoned.

Derceto (CE): symbol is night-black disk surrounded with swirling tentacular protrusions; weapons include nets, crooked knives and swords. The Dark Mother dwells in the lightless hollows of the Underworld, but also appears in her fane in person or through progeny. This occasion is not always a pleasant one, as Derceto has been known to devour her callers after bizarre fertility rites. There are no female followers allowed, and both goddess and cult are characterised by definite misogynic tendencies. High Priest Bengazar has been left crippled after an underground orgy, and is cared for by her daughter Ivkin. No aboveground temple exists, but Bengazar's Columns (**2**) is their centre of activity. Undercity temple at **UCIII/C-5-14**.

The Kamnic Mysteries are non-affiliated, and have neither a formal organisation nor many followers, who are typically mages or illusionists. Their site of pilgrimage spans **UCIII/B-5** and **UCIV/B-4**. Those who have found the place and been initiated are allowed an indigo stripe in their turban. Imitators are identified and rooted out with unexpected vehemence, and this serves as the only common bond between the initiates.

Fedafuce (N): symbol is merchant's scales; all priestly weapons are allowed. Although the majority of religions are inherently inclined to simony, Fedafuce's priests have made it an art form, providing information, religious services, magical devices, and various fiscal transactions

regardless of the moral inclinations or even the declaration of religious devotion by their supplicants. Prices somewhat exceed the usual level, but various instalment plans, loans and other constructions balance out the inconvenience. Fedafuce's temples are also involved in usury and money-changing, as well as other monetary transactions. Bursar Caius ben Caius (Pr 5) is a recent arrival, with instructions to recover the costs of their operating licence and temple's establishment by any means necessary. Temple at 6.

Mung (LE): symbol is golden sun in purple field. The state ideology of Imperial Mungor City, which has assumed some religious trappings for the sake of convenience, has set up its mission (13) in the slums to provide shelter and sustenance for the needy and downtrodden. Archdeacon Valsket (Thf 8) and two men.

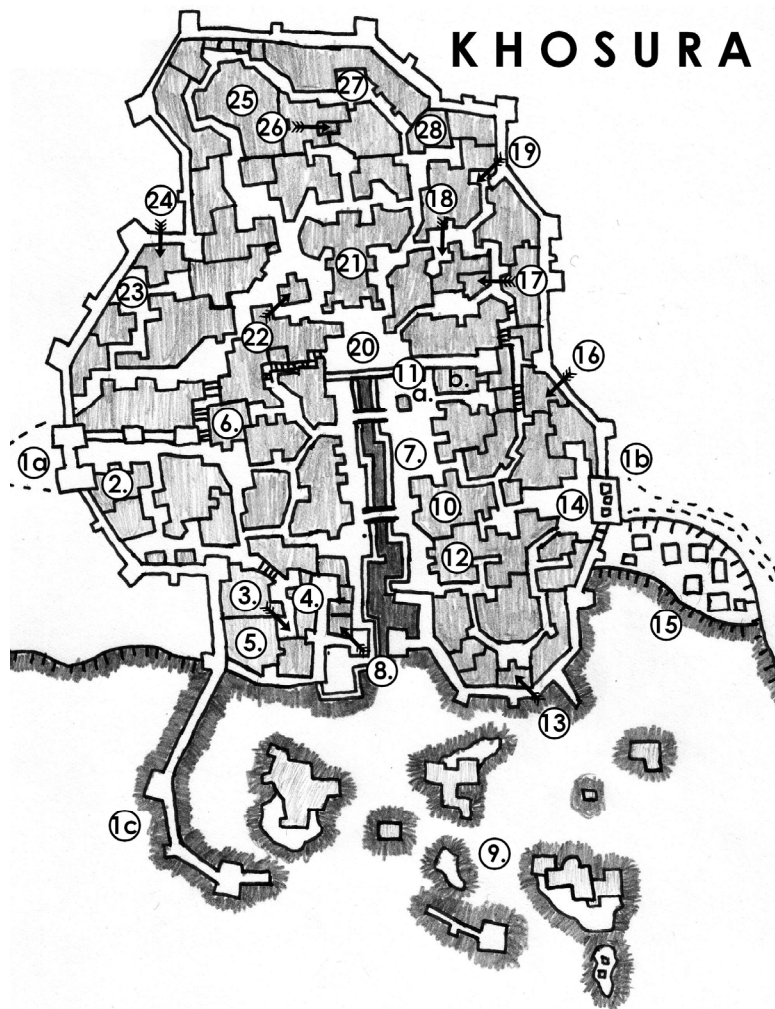
Ishab-Lambar (LN): symbol is cobra; weapons are any but poisonous daggers are preferred. The followers of the new god of the southern nomads are restricted to members and servants of the Kheldzi trading family, all immigrants from Thasan. Leader is Patriarch Dedimos (Pr 8); they maintain their unlicensed, illicit temple in their fortified compound at 4 and shun contact with outsiders beyond that required by commerce.



Within the Walls

1. City Walls: Massive old fortifications with foundations dating back to Overking Srabmar, topped by the odd bastion and constantly patrolled. Toll at the gates is 1 gp per person + a 2 gp deposit, 1 gp per horse, 5 gp per loaded beast of burden and 2 gp per loaded slave. Travellers are recited the laws of Khosura when they enter, and are required to heed them while in the city:

- All must accept the jurisdiction of the Priest-King Panthozar and the god Uthummaos. The price for all crimes in the city is whipping followed by either enslavement in the salt evaporators [see 15], imprisonment in the Pits of Lamentation [UCHI/A-10], or exile into the Lower City [see 1c].
- None are allowed to break the religious monopolies of Uthummaos, Ishtar, Derceto, Fedafuce and Mung. Proselytism, open worship and even the display of non-licensed religious symbols is interdicted.
- Outlanders may not harm or lay hands on the animate or inanimate property of citizens, and may not do business with merchants who are not licensed by the city.
- Outlanders must openly wear a distinguishing mark during their stay, and return it upon leaving or as required by law. This sign is a small copper wafer imprinted with complex markings, and is provided in exchange for the 2 gp deposit.



Although there is no law preventing someone from taking the road around the city, any caught trying are apprehended by horsemen and charged with espionage. Citizenship in Khosura may be obtained in the Palace for an administrative fee of 100 gp and a sacrifice to one of the licensed religions. A trade license, allowing independent commercial activity costs 600 gp and requires the consent of the council of merchants (25), and a sacrifice before the statue of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells (20).

1a. Western Gate: 20 guards under **Watch Captain Khejan**, who is obsessed with the paranoid conviction that enemies plotting against him intend to sell him into slavery. There is a 40% probability that if armed strangers enter through his gate he will blackmail them with the accusation of smuggling in symbols of forbidden gods (if needed, by implanting evidence), then demand that they serve him if they wish to be cleared. Their first mission will be to observe whom they see talking in the evening by the Temple of Ishtar (11); the second is to assassinate Atar Ibash, innocent lantern-merchant. He then reports them as spies to Panthozar. Khejan is controlled by the charm of Ishab-Lambar's devotees, who use him to monitor unlicensed faiths attempting to infiltrate Khosura, looking especially for stray worshippers of Ellinger or the Red God. In his quarters Khejan

has 3d10 holy symbols of various deities. **Watch Captain Khejan:** War 6; hp 42; DC 3 (chainmail, shield, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d8+1; S 15, D 16, C 15, I 12, W 10, Ch 13.

1b. Eastern Gate: 30 guards under **Watch Captain Aikamtar**. The captain wears a closed full helmet with a bearded male head on both front and back, and tight clothes to mask features melted after an encounter with a bonesucker. He is a desperate follower of Derceto hoping for eventual healing. **Watch Captain Aikamtar:** War 4; hp 20; DC 1 (full plate, shield); Atk halberd 1d10; S 13, D 6, C 6, I 9, W 12, Ch 2.

1c. Lake Wall: A half-ruined stretch of wall reaching into the salt lake, used for executions. Sinners are whipped until they bleed, and then “exiled into the Lower City” – lowered into the salt waters until the coming of the dead, who claim the victim as one of their own. The middle bastion is used by city embalmers, eight swarthy men. **Ong the Mummifier**, the dark-faced overseer, is responsible for the preparation process through which the deceased are infused with salts before burial; he sells the mummified members and organs of the poor and childless as a side venture (5–15 gp as a talisman or incense; full body 50 gp). “Burial insurance” 25 gp (ostensibly to have someone watch the corpse and prevent the dead from “taking a few bites”); full salt infusion 100 gp, alchemic salt infusion 250 gp or 50 gp to go (a luxury in death for that beautiful sealwax-red complexion, “filtered through mummies for extra purity”). **Ong the Mummifier:** War 3; hp 17; DC 10; Atk poisoned dagger 1d4+poison; S 11, D 8, C 11, I 14, W 12, Ch 12. **Embalmers (8):** HD 1; hp 9, 6, 6, 5, 7, 6, 3, 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4.

2. Bengazar’s Columns: Fortified house decorated with yellow ceramics, the major aboveground centre of Derceto’s worship. In place of the invalid Bengazar, his daughter **Ivkin** runs the store: as a woman, she is considered inferior by the faith, but as the only child of the high priest, she is required to carry on certain duties, a conflict leaving her with a rather distorted personality. There is a 60% chance she tries to arrange an accident for women who visit the place. The store is a place of testing, used to see if outsiders not born into the faith are worthy of admission to the mysteries. Such volunteers are required to stand in a narrow circular pit, into which naked slaves gradually lower heavy stone weights with a system of ropes and pullies. Those who can support a “column” with their shoulders (open doors rolls) may gain extraordinary insight in the form of one-use spells or other benefits; to become a full member of the mystery, all five columns must be endured in succession (no break or recovery allowed, but retries are possible and after each column, the volunteer is allowed to leave the ordeal and try another day).

- 1st column, white alabaster: 2 rolls, failure 2d6 damage, success roll 1d6: 1 read magic, 2 create [black] water, 3 blessing, 4 cure lighter wounds (8+level hp, 25% morphs flesh into lumpy blackness), 5-6 nothing.
- 2nd column, red granite: 1 roll, failure 2d6 damage, success roll 1d4: 1 create unholy water, 2 create green slime, 3 augur (but 25% chance of hypnotic obsession when used), 4 nothing.
- 3rd column, grey porphyry: 2 rolls, failure 3d6 damage, success roll 1d6: 1 cure medium wounds (16+level hp, but see above), 2 slow poison, 3 augur (see above), 4 spiritual forces (conjures jingling sounds that attack as a warrior of user’s level for 4d4 damage, duration 1 round/level), 5 bestow curse, 6 nothing.
- 4th column, white salt: 2 rolls, failure 3d6 damage and black water rushes in – save vs. polymorph or turn into a zombie, success roll 1d3: 1 turn victim into green slime on touch, 2 cause serious wounds, 3 nothing.
- 5th column, dark basalt: merely a test of faith; as the column is lowered, a secret door slides open to reveal the shaft to the Temple of Derceto, **UCIII/C-2**.

Ivkin: Illusionist 4; hp 14; DC 8 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4; S 10, D 16, C 7, I 15, W 14, Ch 12; 200 electrum, 650 gp ring. Spells: 1 – *auditory illusion*, *hypnotize*, *phantasmic forces*, *shimmering spray*; 2 – *improved phantasmic forces*, *mirror images*. **Slave Cultists of Derceto (8):** War 2; hp 16, 6, 4, 9, 11, 6, 7, 14; DC 9 (buckler), Atk scimitar 1d8 or net (entanglement, save vs. petrification).

3. The Plaza of Wailing: In this dark plaza surrounded by high buildings and narrow terraces, mourners take their farewells from the dead, who, after being wrapped in linen strips and mummified with salt (c.f. **1c**), are lowered into a well leading to the catacombs (**UCII/C-B-1**) by means of a pulley mechanism. Wailing beggars 5 per gp, self-flagellants 2 gp each, self-mutilators 20 gp and up each, executions in honour of the deceased 50 gp each (30% probability; if there are none, they will get some for about 80 gp each...). At night, eight guards stand watch over the well lest something escape

4. Kheldzi Trading House: Khosura branch of the merchant family from Thasan, a bare and uninviting building with tall, fortified walls and narrow arrow-slits. The family mainly exports salts and sulphites to Thasan and imports grain and other foodstuffs into Khosura. The men are all outlander followers of Ishab-Lambar from servants to family, and basically spies, with a mission to uproot and destroy members of religions proscribed by their deity, primarily Ellinger and the Red God. In organisation and demeanour, they most resemble Fred Phelps and followers. The head of the family is the **Patriach Dedimos**, followed in rank by his sons **Trasymakhos** and **Mene-laion**. A mage in their service, **Ishmas Tereas**, has placed charms on multiple notable citizens, including Watch

Captain Khejan (**1a**) and Ujef, keeper of the Curved Sabre (**12**). The illicit temple of Ishab-Lambar is a window-less brick-walled room opening from the warehouse, behind an old, empty crate; the Chest of Sanctities lies before a black cobra symbol flanked by braziers. Touching it brings forth two **fire crows**. The chest contains a proph-ecy (fatwah) by Ishab-Lambar against Khosura, a poisoned *dagger* +1 used for ritual purposes, a *plate mail* +1 with an engraved cobra, a *potion of cure disease* and 9 doses of snake venom.

Patriarch Dedimos: Pr 8; hp 43; DC 10; Atk poisoned dagger 1d4+poison; S 15, D 13, C 16, I 12, W 15, Ch 14. Spells: 1 – *commanding word*, *cure lighter wounds*, *detect magic*; 2 – *augur*, *chant*, *paralyze person*; 3 – *curse*, *dispel magic*, *pray*; 4 – *divine*, *sticks to snakes*.

Trasymakhos: War 3; hp 19; DC -2 (plate mail, shield, Dexterity); Atk trident 1d6+1 or throwing dagger 1d4+poison; S 12, D 18, C 7, I 15, W 10, Ch 12.

Menelaion: War 1; hp 4; DC 3 (banded, shield); Atk trident 1d6+1 or throwing dagger 1d4+poison; S 9, D 13, C 14, I 11, W 11, Ch 7; *healing potion*.

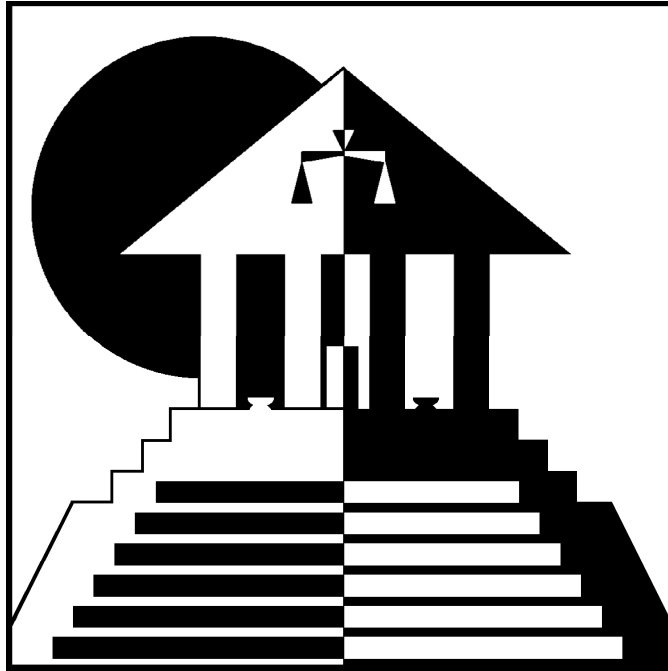
Ishmas Tereas: Mag 3; hp 8; DC 7 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 11, D 17, C 12, I 13, W 10, Ch 11; *dust of black widows* (deadly poison). Spells: 1 – *charm person* *2, *identify object*, *shielding*; 2 – *forget*.

Guards (12): War 2; hp 4, 12, 11, 14, 9, 7, 17, 9, 20, 12, 12; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk trident 1d6+1.

Fire Crows (2): HD 4; hp 20, 14; DC 6; Atk beak 1d3; Spec *fireball* 3/day (4d6), immune to fire.

5. The Bronze Colossus: The last remains of an ancient bronze statue serve as a sign for this exclusive caravan-serai, the most expensive in Khosura. As listed in *The Proclamations of Eidark the Gastronome*, "...offering four-person rooms for a rejuvenating night of rest 3 to 10 gp; suite with splendid view of the Lake Wall 15 gp; ask for schedule of whippings and subaqueations from proprietor Kummom Kmetri. Enjoy zither play in charmingly refurbished common room, zither girls 5 gp and up, some priestesses of Ishtar; or try the local intoxicants of favor, opium 20 gp, thag (a Khosuran specialty served in slender copper tubes) 45 gp, occasional availability of Blue-22, 100 gp. Cook serves avant-garde interpretation of geometric cuisine; 90 gp tasting menu includes a salad of reed buds,

needlebeak confit served up in a salt crust, the pyramidals we all know and enjoy with a subtle Khosura savoir, as well as complimentary thag. Enjoy a casual stroll over the Lake Wall and chat with the mummifiers, or mingle with the locals on Vashanka's Market. 🍷 🍷 (Note: while this information is omitted in the *Proclamations*, there is always a 75% chance of 1d3 secret agents among the guests or staff. **Kummom Kmetri** [Thief 1, 1 Hp], a reed-thin, urbane man, is a follower of Mung and heavily in debt with them.)



6. The Temple of Fedafuce:

Opened five years ago in the former Mnakkim Dor Trading House, riotous banners announce the deals and opportunities of the week, and **Bursar Caius ben Caius** is always happy to see you! The most popular financial service is perhaps the sale of certificates in the form of silk strips which may be easily carried in clothes or perhaps a turban without detection. The certificates are redeemable at any of the god's temples and of course many other locations; available in values of 20, 50 and 100 gp at a surcharge of 10%, they are absolutely secure from dupli-

cation or counterfeiting.

Special sales every week! Roll d6:

1. Divinations 10% off!
2. Healing and potions 10% off!
3. Potion lottery: for every purchase over 250 gp, we add in an extra (d12)...
1-6: vial of holy water!
7-8: healing potion!
9: balm of relieving paralysis!
10-11: 4 doses of opium essence!
12: super healing potion!
4. Holy water 25% off, unholy water 50%! (Or the reverse.)
5. Seasonal incense sale, all must go! 5 sp per stick (50% off, but 25% mouldy).
6. One-use priest spells 25% off!

There is also a 1% probability of a "You are our 1000th customer!" extravaganza each buying visit.

Over the altar hang gemstones in pans of golden scale (1000 + 500 gp). The treasury holds 900 gp, 7 gems (6*50 gp, 1*5000 gp ruby), 8 *healing potions*, 3 *super-healing potions*, *potion of polymorph*, *scroll with mage mouth*, *lightning bolt*, *vampire touch*, a two-handed *Sword* +1, 340 sticks of incense, and 8

doses of opium. **Bursar Caius ben Caius:** Pr 5; hp 29; DC 10; Atk flail 1d6+2; S 16, D 10, C 9, I 12, W 11, Ch 15; 2*holy water, *potion of haste*, *potion of fire breath*, *medallion of ESP*. Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *cure lighter wounds*, *command word*; 2 – *augur**2, *paralyze person*; 3 – *cure disease*; Bonus one-use: *command word*, *cure lighter wounds*, *cause critical wounds*. **Lesser Priests (2):** Pr 3; hp 16, 17; DC 10; Atk flail 1d6+1. Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *cure lighter wounds*; 2 – *augur/paralyze person*. **Temple Guards (6):** War 2; hp 10, 6, 15, 17, 17, 7; DC 6 (studded leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8.

7. Vashanka's Market: The market at the foot of the Upper City, bisected by the channel of salt water that emerges from barred gates in the northern wall, enjoys the special blessing of Ishtar and is under her protection. One fifth of the taxes taken from the market go to Ishtar's coffers, and the priestesses may take from the wares as they please – considered a special honour by most. In place of the city guards stand amazons (mostly next to Vashanka's Mausoleum to the north, so the southern parts are less safe); usually 10 spearwomen and 10 archers by day and 10 spearwomen by night (not including the guard at the Temple of Ishtar or the inner guardians of the Mausoleum); see **11a** for statistics. 20% chance of pick-pocket attempt, 20% of priestess encounter. Each visit to the city there is also a 20% chance for 1d6*10 amazon pilgrims to be present. At nighttime, the channel is hazardous to probe as there are always 2d4*5 **giant rats**; in the deserted square and the slum area to the south, 10% of 2d8 **cultists** hunting for sacrifices (1-4 Uthummaos, 5-6 Derceto). There are two entrances to the Undercity at **UCII/A-9**: the gates in the wall (these are covered by thick grilles and do not open; there are always at least four amazons guarding them), and a less known secret door opening by the bastion to the east – used by the men of Klaides the Merchant (**10**). **Giant Rats (2d4*5):** HD 1-1; hp 2, 4, 6, 4, 3, 1, 3, 4, 3, 6, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 4, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 3, 6, 3, 4, 7, 2, 5, 4, 2, 2, 5, 6, 7, 5, 4, 1, 2, 3, 7; DC 5; Atk bite 1d6+disease. **Cultists (2d8):** War 2; hp 13, 2, 9, 15, 16, 15, 4, 15, 19, 11, 12, 9, 9, 17, 20, 15; DC 9 (shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or net entanglement (save vs. petrification).

8. Row of Huts: A row of squalid huts, some multi-story, clinging to a stretch of the city wall. A slum area mostly populated by beggars and other human trash; they don't accept anyone who can't demonstrate a few dirty tricks. A secret door from the second floor of one of the shack leads to **UCII/C-B-2. Riff-Raff (30):** HD 1-1; hp 2, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 2, 1, 3, 7, 4, 3, 1, 1, 3, 2, 6, 5, 5, 1, 2, 3, 7, 6, 1, 3, 4, 6, 3; DC 9; Atk club 1d6 or dagger 1d4.

9. Lake: The salt-water lake covers an area of approximately 180 by 120 stadion (18*12 km) ringed by high escarpments. Its smooth surface is a dirty grey; at the site of the Lower City, there are islets with ruined structures and remains of walls, formerly looming above the ancient slums. Against all official efforts to keep the place off

limits (even owning a skiff is a punishable offence), these places remain inhabited by men and monsters. The waters are populated by the dead. On every travel by skiff, there is a 1:3 probability of an encounter with zombies and a further 1:6 of running into shoals. **Zombies (3d8):** HD 2; hp 11, 9, 12, 11, 10, 6, 12, 11, 10, 12, 14, 16, 9, 10, 6, 13, 17, 15, 13, 13, 11, 13, 4, 11, 13, 9, 14, 8, 15, 14; DC 8; Atk claws 1d8.

10. The Trading House of Klaides the Merchant: A labyrinthine building complex of warehouses used by a number of parties from the authorities to lesser merchants; constant bustle of activity in and out during the day, guard of 20 men at the gates during the night. Warehouse space from 40 to 350 gp a month depending on size and access. The single owner of storage space is **Klaides the Merchant**: as a follower of Pragmatic Incrementalism, he takes money where he sees it. In addition to letting storage, he sponsors a robber band based in the Undercity (**UCII/A-7**); stolen goods are stored in disused warehouse branches (some extremely hard to get to due to inter-level navigation challenges), treasure hoard in secret abandoned room: 2000 electrum, 400 gold, 50 platinum, silver ewer 200 gp, holy symbol of Ishtar 350 gp, *potion of slow poison*, *wand of mystic missiles* (16 charges), *bracers* DC 6. **Klaides the Merchant:** War 7; hp 66; DC 3 (*chainmail* +1, shield); Atk *scimitar* +2 1d8+2; S 13, D 10, C 17, I 11, W 15, Ch 10. **Guards (20):** War 2; hp 19, 5, 6, 19, 11, 14, 6, 19, 14, 17, 15, 13, 8, 4, 10, 18, 6, 12, 10; DC 9 (shield); scimitar 1d8.

11. Temple Complex: Two buildings, a mausoleum and a temple, form the Temple Complex of Ishtar; by ancient right guarded by amazons instead of city authorities.

11a. Vashanka's Mausoleum: The rectangular mausoleum of the legendary amazon queen who had given the city its laws was constructed when the original tomb was moved here from the Undercity (**UCIII/B-3**). The walls are brass latticework through which visitors may peer into the dark interior (although not the inner shrine, which is only open to the eyes of women); the steps are a favourite resting place for pilgrims and beggars. The outer perimeter is guarded by 10 spearwomen and 10 archers by day and 10 spearwomen by night. The inner shrine is decorated by a sum total of 14,000 gp worth of gemstones and gold jewelry. If an Ishtar-worshipper comes here in pilgrimage for the first time in her life, she gains one one-use spell of Ishtar's choosing per character level (however, these may not be more powerful than she would be able to cast as a priest of equivalent power). Vashanka's coffin holds the scant remains of the warrior queen, an *amazon spear* +3 (only usable by women), a *chain shirt* +3, a *shield* +2 and an *amulet of life* (5 charges remaining). However, if the inner shrine is violated in any way, five otherworldly **amazon guardians** appear to defend it from harm. **Amazon Spearwomen (10):** Amazon 3; hp 25, 23, 20, 16, 15, 16, 18, 20, 27, 14;

DC 1 (chain shirt, shield, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6+1 or javelin 1d6+1. **Amazon Archers (10):** Amazon 3; hp 14, 26, 29, 23, 24, 8, 29, 24, 16, 11; DC 3 (studded leather, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk 2*longbow 1d6+1 or scimitar 1d8+1. **Guardians of the Shrine (5):** Amazon 6; hp 50, 52, 51, 42, 42, 57; DC -5 (chain shirt +1, shield, Amazon, collective psionic, Dexterity); Atk 2*longsword +1 1d8+3; S 18, D 18, C 18, I 18, W 18, Ch 18.

11b. The Temple of Ishtar: A squat building painted red and gold, guarded by day by 15 spearwomen and 15 archers, and by night by 15 spearwomen. Supplicants are only allowed to approach the idol on their knees. The flames of the brazier burning before the simple form have the power to dissolve all magical or mundane bonds if the petitioner's feelings are heartfelt. Women undergoing this rite may receive the protection of the priestesses from attempts to reinstate these ties. Otherwise, the most typical rites concern marriage or lovers' bond, whether to be confirmed or cancelled. The head of the temple is **High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars**, who succeeded her more experienced predecessor **Marcella Vil Amnir** after her unusual disappearance (Marcella was slain by cultists

of Uthummaos on an errand to the Undercity: her spirit haunts **UCIV/B-2**). The sudden advancement in rank has brought little happiness to the new High Priestess, but it has brought the weight of responsibilities: she is especially concerned that the holy relics may be stolen from the Mausoleum, an idea which makes her see every stranger, especially strange men, as a potential thief. As she has learned via divinations that "Marcella Vil Amnir walks the depths below the city, but may never return to the surface without help", she spends much time exploring the passages of the Undercity with her entourage.

High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars: Pr 6; hp 26; DC 1 [-1] (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity, [collective psionic]); Atk scimitar 1d8; S 9, D 18, C 13, I 13, W 12, Ch 17; Spells: 1 – *blessing, light, detect magic, cure lighter wounds*; 2 – *augur, detect charming, paralyze person*; 3 – *heal blindness, remove curse*; Bonus one-use: *cure lighter wounds*2, command word, cure heavy wounds, divine*.

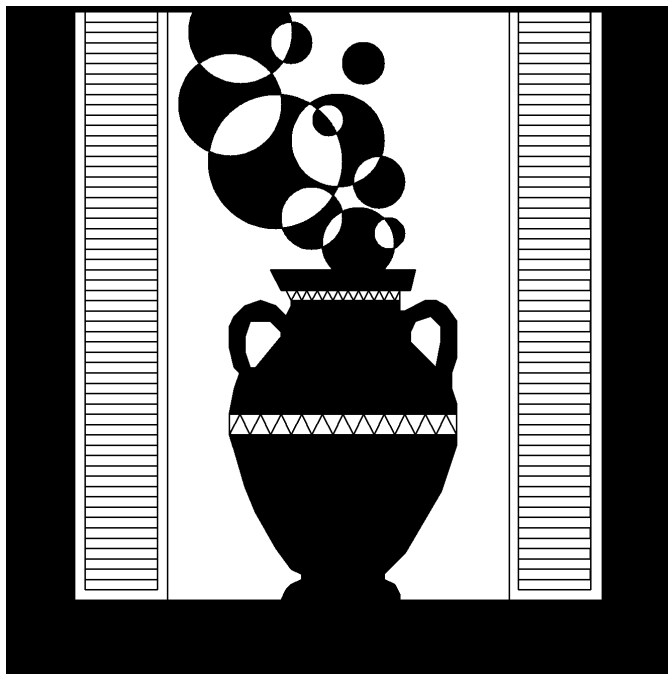
Second Priestess Annai Delsadora: Pr 3; hp 19; DC 9 [7] (collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; S 11, D 10, C 10, I

12, W 14, Ch 15; Spells: 1 – *blessing, command word, cure lighter wounds, detect evil*; 2 – *augur*.

Priestesses (7): Pr 2; hp 10, 3, 8, 9, 3, 11, 7; DC 9 [7] (collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; Spells: *blessing, cure lighter wounds*.

Amazon Spearwomen (15): hp 18, 26, 20, 24, 18, 12, 9, 24, 16, 21, 14, 13, 26, 27 and **Amazon Archers (15):** hp 19, 21, 16, 15, 17, 18, 22, 23, 9, 12, 18, 17, 13, 24, 18 as at 11a.

12. The Curved Sabre Caravanserai: The Curved Sabre is located in a bad neighbourhood, but it is cheap and



(inside, at least) a safe establishment. Proprietor **Ujef**, a dark, thick man, has fallen under the magical charm of Ishab-Lambar's worshippers, and reports everything of interest to them. From the cellars, stairs lead down to the Undercity and a small arena (**UCIII/B-14-15**) where bets are placed on gladiators by the cream of society. An entire wing of the caravanserai had been walled off on Panthozar's orders fifteen years ago in memory of the traveller who had slept there and attempted to take his life. The assassin still survives as a **wraith**, and every year, he takes four of the Caravanserai's guests as eternal

punishment for the four wounds he inflicted on the priest-king (2% a PC will be next). If the wraith is defeated, Panthozar will raze the Cara-vanserai and all adjacent houses to the ground, and have every single inhabitant or traveller in them tortured to death and reanimated as zombies. **Ujef:** War 2; hp 15; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+2; S 16, D 7, C 18, I 13, W 11, Ch 10. **Wraith:** HD 5+3; hp 18; DC 4; Atk touch 1d6+LVL; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, powerless in sunlight.

13. The Temple of Mung: In the slums stands a former warehouse, only one step better than the stinking insulae that surround it. **Archdeacon Valsket** has acted as a representative and patron for the poor, forging them into an army of spies and warriors that would eventually gain Khosura for the sinister purposes of his progressive ideology. At all times, the "orphans of Mung" – beggars, never-do-wells and ragged idealists – are in evidence; there are only two guards, both taciturn foreigners. Valsket, a soft-handed, rosy-faced Scientologist type, always finds time to preach the doctrines – the Empire's civilising mission to lift the poor into humanity, end poverty and

create a new type of man. However, he is currently occupied by more immediate concerns, which may be interesting to mercenary types:

- He has received ambiguous hints that another proselytising religion may be present in the city without license: he would pay handsomely to have them found and destroyed.
- He knows of the Undercity but not its exact layout and entrances; he will pay 3-500 gp per level for maps and 50 gp each for the location of entrances (he already knows of **19**, Ostek's Plaza, as well as **3**, The Plaza of Wailing).

The temple's funds are found in a compartment behind the symbol over the main altar, a radiant golden sun in a purple field: this location is widely known and contains 600 sp, 250 electrum and 120 gp. The real treasures are behind this false front in another space, 1400 gp and 1d3 reports from foreign lands. **Archdeacon Valsket**: Thf 8; hp 36; DC 7 (leather, Dexterity); Atk *snake tongue shortsword* +1 1d6+1+poison (double damage on rolls of 1 and 20) or thrown dagger 1d4+poison; *ring of spell containment* (with *detect evil*, *charm person* and *paralyze person* loaded), 6**healing potion*. **Tolvel and Flink, Guards**: War 4; hp 23, 28; DC 2 (plate mail, shield); Atk battleaxe 1d8+1.

14. Slave Market: A small market composed of several corners, arcades and odd overhangs. Merchants typically lie in the shades and announce their products to passersby, although some slaves, especially the more educated, are selling themselves. Children and old people 30-50 gp, men and women 40-70 gp, strong men 70-80 gp, fighting men 70-180 gp, in each case 20% probability of receiving a special slave (teacher, philosopher, princess etc.).

15. Salt Evaporators: The evaporators operate as a closed-off slave colony encircled by sheer cliffs, and may only be approached from a side gate in the city wall. Salt is produced by dipping coarse cloth into the waters, drying them under the sun, and then scraping off the salt. The work is filthy and hot, the salt dust stings hellishly, and sometimes the dead in the lake will yank in a slave pulling at a heavier cloth. There are some 200 slaves and 50 guards; the punishment for escape attempts is execution for the culprit [see **1c**. but the sentence is carried out here] and whipping for his entire barracks – although snitches may be spared this fate. Those who are useful spies for the guards may be accepted as overseers. The guards are lead by **Bahlul ibn Ish**; he and his toadies are deeply involved in salt embezzlement, and have the slaves make up for the missing quotas. Bahlul is a member of Derceto's cult and provides them with a steady supply of slaves. **Bahlul ibn Ish**: War 3; hp 24; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk flail 1d6+2; S 16, D 13, C 15, I 13, W 13, Ch 12.

16. The Palace of Anvin Ishambarg: The septagonal minarets and terraces forming this palace complex belong

to **Anvin Ishambarg**, the priest-king's closest confidant. As a powerful magic-user, he can trace back an unbroken chain of apprenticeship to Lankwiler the Great; in his younger days, he wandered the lands of Thasan and the southern jungles in pursuit of knowledge that ultimately made him wealthy beyond measure, and returned a three-fold wasted youth. In addition to human guards, his quarters are defended by a **shadow guardian**; moreover, he can call a **vulture demon** to come to his bidding. When Anvin Ishambarg is available (1:3), he can read from the stars or sell magic items. His current goal is to acquire the burial shroud of Ymmu M'Kursa, said to be hidden somewhere in the Undercity: this quest has recently been announced by Uthummaos, and the opportunities of benefiting from the dark god's benevolence has drawn the attention of many – Ishambarg and Taramis, Daughter of Zafar (**17**) the most prominent among them.

Items for sale:

- alchemical salts (magnetic, mummy, southern star, harmonic, sulphurous etc.): 1d12*10 gp
- potion of hasten: 440 gp
- potion of fire breath: 440 gp
- Mage scroll (lightning bolt): 600 gp
- Mage scroll (reanimate dead, flame charm, summon monster C): 2400 gp
- illusionist scroll (shadow conjuration): 1100 gp
- longsword +1: 2000 gp
- chain shirt+2: 2200 gp

Anvin Ishambarg, Kettoni Ei: Mag 9; hp 23; DC 6 (*bracers* DC 6); Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 9, D 13, C 11, I 15, W 15, Ch 11; *wand of lightning* (22 charges), *ring of wizarding IV*, *potion of soul entrapment*, symbol of Uthummaos; Spells: 1 – *charm person*, *detect magic*, *identify object*, *mystic missile**2, *read magic*, *shielding*, *floating disk*; 2 – *ESP*, *hypnotizing pattern*, *invisibility*, *levitation*, *mirror images*, *locate object*, *strength*; 3 – *clairvoyance*, *reanimate dead*, *ball of fire*, *gaseous form*, *hasten*, *paralyze person*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *suggest*; 4 – *dimension door*, *flame charm*, *flame shield*, *less puissant globular field of invulnerability*, *curse removal*, *wall of ice*; 5 – *contact distant plane*, *dreamsending*, *quest*; Bonus one-use: *flame shield*, *mirror images*.

Vulture Demon: HD 8; hp 49; DC 0; Atk 2*claws 1d6+1 and beak 1d8+1; Spec immune to mind-affecting and electricity, 1/2 damage from acid, cold and fire, MR 50%, summon vulture demon 20%; Spells: *mystic missile**3, *detect good*.

Shadow Guardian: HD 7; hp 28; DC 2; Atk touch 1d6 Str and paralysis; Spec +1 to hit, lifesteal once per day (save vs. death or drop unconscious at 0 hp and roll system shock to survive), *silence* 3/day, turned as spectre.

Guards (30): War 2; hp 19, 13, 14, 14, 5, 8, 7, 11, 13, 13, 17, 10, 14, 12, 9, 7, 10, 10, 11, 7, 14, 12, 8, 4, 3, 10, 17, 6, 3, 10; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8.

17. The House of Taramis: A gaudy palace with a multi-level interior garden: after several decades of abandonment, it has become the home of **Taramis, Daughter of Zafar**, or, as less charitably mentioned, 'The Whore of Khosura. A proud, hawk-nosed and black-eyed beauty, Taramis is a new face in the city and the mysteries of Uthummaos: a rising star with ambitions, it is said, to become second in the hierarchy. Only the oldest among the living may recall another palace and another Taramis, a girl just as beautiful and just as bound to sin: she who had loved the priest-king Panthozar in his younger days, but was entombed in the Undercity when she took another lover (c.f. **UCIII/B-3**). In any case, Taramis will not foment open rebellion: ideally, she plans to regain favour with god and high-priest as well as to remove those who stand in her way. The rumours about the burial shroud of Ymmu M'Kursa and its significance to Uthummaos may become instrumental in fulfilling these ambitions; her wealth, wiles and youthful body are stepping stones in their pursuit. As Taramis does not trust locals for fear of treachery, outlanders would become ideal accomplices in her schemes, used and rewarded as appropriate. Taramis is guarded by 9 black slaves and a **mechanical servant**. **Taramis, Daughter of Zafar:** Mag 7; hp 22; DC -1 (*bracers DC 6, cloak +1, powers of Uthummaos*); Atk throwing dagger 1d4+poison (2*4d6 Hp); S 8, D 13, C 11, I 17, W 14, Ch 16; *dust of sneezing and choking*; Spells: 1 – *charm person**2, *detect magic, mystic missile, slumber, unoculated servant*; 2 – *ESP, invisibility, knockspell, indomitable hideous laughter*; 3 – *reanimate dead, clairaudience, clairvoyance, paralyze person*; 4 – *charm monster*. **Mechanical Servant:** HD 5 MAX; hp 40; DC 2; Atk two-handed sword 1d10+2; Spec ½ damage from fire, cold and electricity, S 18. **Black Slaves (9):** War 2; hp 13, 14, 13, 18, 12, 12, 8, 14, 13; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk morning star 2d4+1; S 16.

18. Beshket's Well: This deep well of clean water is fed by an underground lake, courtesy of a lesser-known demon lord. In thanks for the waters, a sacrifice of strong youths and rare spices is performed six times a year. The well leads to **UCI/A-7** and eventually to **UCIII/A-5**. An ancient beggar missing his left hand, **Naram-men-Khemtri** will tell the well's legend for 2 gp; for 15, he will *angur* from it and for 80, *divine*; however, while he has a 100% chance for an answer, he likes to distort truth into falsehood. In the evening, he often descends through the secret passages of the Undercity to Beshket's Lake, there casting his treasures into the waters. Naram-men-Khemtri is a powerful efreet, bound by his lord to guard the well and deliver the sacrifices; out of 333, he has so far managed to obtain 212. Since death to him means six years of torment on his home world, he will offer a wish if close to defeat. **Naram-men-Khemtri, Efreet:** HD 10; hp 45; DC 2; Atk huge scimitar 3d8; Spec immune to normal fires, -1 per die for magical; Spells: 3/day: *flame sphere, invisibility, lesser creation, wall of fire*; 1/day: *flame shield, gaseous form, greater creation, spectral forces*.

19. Ostek's Plaza: Dusty and usually abandoned square surrounded by derelict buildings. A row of defaced statues standing in old alcoves hide a secret door, one of the better-known entrances to the Undercity, **UCI/A-1**. Street urchin **Kefar Sami** (Thf 1, hp 4) is often found playing here among the rubble; shaking trespassers down for some coins ("My daddy has told me it is fitting to give to beggars") and, if threatened, remarking that his disappearance would be noted and investigated. An abandoned octagonal tower looming over the plaza has an open gallery at the top; at night, a horned human skull sits on a stone pedestal, surrounded by braziers holding dust and ashes. Whispering of demonic power in exchange for evil deeds, the skull is also an oracle, but its prophecy is only one, of Khosura the Cyclical. If harmed in any way, the skull shrieks, calling from their dark niches the membrane-winged, deformed **ulyuleng** (and potentially alerting the city watch on the walls). **Ulyuleng (5):** HD 5; hp 23, 17, 21, 17, 27; DC 3; Atk 3*tentacles 1d6 nonlethal damage; Special immune to cold and mind-affecting, melts in sunlight. **Demon-Skull:** HD 5; hp 30; DC 0; Atk telekinesis (save vs. wands); immune to cold and mind-affecting.

Khosura the Cyclical: "In changeless change Khosura dreams of itself: of its men and gods, palaces and markets, gate to gate and plaza to plaza. Those in the dream greet you and you greet them, passing by and leaving. Yet you are gone but they remain; walking, merrymaking, loving, falling and ever returning. In years, they will all return, as they already have. For they are: the dead."

20. Parapets: The plaza before Panthozar's palace overlooks Vashanka's market and the Middle City. The palace guard and the secret police are always watchful here, and there are frequent military drills. A short flight of steps ascends to a platform before a stone face: the haughty gaze, the cruel lips and the carefully curled beard lend an air of severity to this image of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells, the last remains of a great colossus. The platform is used to perform sacrifices to the benefit of the city: only citizens are allowed to do so, and then only over a value of 500 gp total and in the presence of at least three representatives of the four mysteries (in practice, this almost always means Uthummaos, Ishtar and Derceto).

21. Panthozar's Palace: A compact collection of cupolas and minarets supported by walls of porphyry and alabaster. The interior spaces are a maze of antechambers, zigzagging halls, prayer rooms and small offices. Locations of renown include the Font of Delights, the Portal of Enlightenment and the Conventicle of Judges. Among the cupolas, on a flat roof, is a small, overgrown garden, diligently watered

but never visited. By day, there is a constant bustle of slaves, officials, scribes and petitioners; by night, the place feels curiously deserted, although there are constant patrols throughout. Storage, cells for all but the most important prisoners, and various other rooms are located underground, in the south-western quadrant of **UCI-III/A**. The Palace is the seat of the **Priest-King Panthozar, High Priest of Uthummaos** on Fomalhaut. Panthozar, savant of occult mysteries, stands straight and tall, his habit a severe black, gaze burning with sinister intensity. Although appearing middle-aged, he has ruled Khosura for 70 years, first with uncompromising terror, then with a subtle network of balances and counterbalances among the powerful and influential. In his throne room, he is inscrutable; outside it, reclusive. The towering western wing of the palace is set aside for his personal use and alchemical experiments, and interdicted to all others. Here are the reinvigorative salt mixtures and other components which, through frequent application, have given the priest-king his strange vigour and certain extraordinary capabilities. Panthozar is an initiate of the Kamnic Mysteries. **Panthozar, Priest-King and High Priest of Uthummaos:** Pr 11, mummified; hp 72; DC 2 [-2] (mummification, *bracers* DC 16, [*ring of force shield* 10 r/day]); Atk *shortsword* -1 1d6-1 or 2*claws 1d12+rot; Spec fear, mummy rot, +1 to hit and ½ damage, immune to mind-affecting spells, +1 damage per dice from magical fire; S 15, D 11, C 18, I 15, W 17, Ch 15; *flask of spirits* (1d6 ghosts), *priest scroll (reanimate dead, commune, travel to other planes)*, *tripod of conjuration (summon monster A*3 and summon monster C stored)*; Spells: 1 – *detect magic**2, *detect good*, *command word**2, *create unholy water*, *protection from good*; 2 – *augur**2, *enthrall*, *paralyze person*, *silence*, *godhammer*; 3 – *reanimate dead**2, *bestow curse* (worms and beetles), *dispel magic*, *speak with dead*; 4 – *divination*, *protection from good* 10' radius, *sticks to snakes* (11 snakes, 55% poisonous); 5 – *death ray**2.

22. The Shrine of Uthummaos: The aboveground shrine is a simple rectangular slab of dark stone with the air of a mausoleum. The single gate is closed by heavy iron bars. The uninitiated may not enter, and sacrifices are taken by the priests through the bars with the remark that it will be up to Uthummaos to reward the donator or not. The shrine is overseen by the crafty **Armentak**, a wizened old priest with 6 pale novices. Within the shrine, there are black-silver decorations to a value of 10,000 gp: candlesticks, round pitchers, faded and dusty mirrors etc. If a melee develops within the shrine, every intruder must roll a save vs. charm or turn weapons against him- or herself. After every casualty, there is a 10% chance that Uthummaos fills the body with his power, animating it at the 10th level of fighting ability and 18 in all ability scores: this warrior is unnaturally swift and his eyes burn with golden fire. **Armentak:** Pr 4; hp 24; DC 10; Atk scimitar 1d8+1+poison; S 16, D 14, C 16, I 10, W 11, Ch 4; Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *command word*, *create unholy water*; 2 – *augur*, *paralyze person*. **Novices (6):** War 2; hp 17, 4, 12, 16, 8, 8; DC 4

(breastplate, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8. **The Champion of Uthummaos:** War 10; hp 95; DC as previously -3; Atk 2*previous weapon+2; Spec MR 30%; S 18, D 18, C 18, I 18, W 18, Ch 18.

23. Ulwar's Plaza: This plaza is where caravans passing through Khosura can saddle down and rest. The entire area falls outside city jurisdiction (and is legally not a part of it); the city guard do not interfere in outlanders' affairs and therefore, justice is customarily served by the collective judgement of the caravan leaders who are present at a given time (1d4-1). Brawls and knifings are commonplace; enslavement and robbery occur with regularity.

24. The Caravanserai of Balbinus the Accursed: An abandoned three-story warehouse converted into a caravanserai, with a huge common room spanning all levels, galleries for drink and discussion, and only a small number of luxury rooms at the top – most guests sleep with their animals on Ulwar's Plaza. **Balbinus the Accursed** is a non-citizen; he has fled here after he was afflicted by The Stalking Curse in the ruined city of Skandalais: periodically, bands of invisible fighters come to slay him. So far, surrounding himself with crowds has offered respite; nonetheless, Balbinus sleeps most uneasily and has spent a small fortune on exorcisms, so far to no effect. **Balbinus the Accursed:** War 3; hp 10; DC 9; Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or shortsword 1d6.

25. The Council of Merchants: A consortium of the six most powerful trading houses in Khosura, responsible for directing the salt trade as well as levies. Five members of the council come from Khosura's oldest families, and live in the surrounding buildings; the sixth, the Kheldzi family (4) are nominal members, but do not participate and are shunned by the council as they shun them. Thus, the five families and their heads are as follows:

- Memfer: **Kathaggosh Memfer** (Thf 3; collects mirrors in vain attempt to find the one that shows him in the most perfect light)
- Olyani: **Ruhani ibn Olyani** (War 5; connections to several nomad khans from the west)
- Zosimos: **Arthragos Zosimos** (Thf 7; a fascination with death has resulted in a curious affliction that has turned him almost reptilian)
- Tastaxares: **Metromaxos Tastaxares** (Illusionist 6; loses himself in his own illusions after work)
- Ennoikos: **Wos Ennoikos** (Thf 4; hairy, corpulent man masking the stench of his sweat with abundant oils and perfumes)

The rotating leadership is currently held by Wos Ennoikos. The council's mentality is traditionalist to the extreme, and views all new religions as a severe threat. They would pay generously for dirt on them, and maybe even for the demonstrative harassment or murder of a few adherents

(although there is a 35% they will turn on the assassins afterwards). Their communal chest holds funds for joint action: poison pin trap, 1000 electrum, 5000 gp, 4*400 gp gems. This also contains their symbol, a 900 gp sceptre. The council building is guarded by 20 men, but more are nearby and patrols in the Upper City are also frequent.

Kathaggosh Memfer: Thf 3; hp 21; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8; S 15, D 8, C 17, I 15, W 16, Ch 10.

Ruhani ibn Olyani: War 5; hp 35; DC 5 (*chain shirt +1*); Atk *flail +1* 1d6+1 or 2*shortbow 1d6; S 12, D 9, C 9, I 12, W 16, Ch 16.

Arthragos Zosimos: Thf 7; hp 25; DC 5 (leather, *cloak +3*); Atk longsword 1d8; S 15; D 14, C 7, I 16, W 10, Ch 4; *potion of super-healing*.

Metromaxos Tastaxares: Illusionist 6; hp 17; DC 8; Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 14, D 16, C 8, I 13, W 8, Ch 15; *illusionist scroll (misdirection, hallucinatory terrain, IOUN stones, Ylam-Ylam's red spell), illusionist scroll (spectral forces, rainbow)*; Spells: 1 – *auditory glamor, colour spray, hypnotize, phantasmic force*3*; 2 – *fog cloud, improved phantasmic forces*2, mirror images*; 3 – *spectral forces*.

Wos Ennoikos: Thf 4; hp 25; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8+1; S 16, D 10, C 16, I 16, W 9, Ch 11.

Guards (20): War 2; hp 6, 11, 10, 12, 10, 8, 9, 12, 16, 10, 17, 15, 15, 8, 15, 15, 12, 12, 9, 9; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8.

26. Ennoikos–Memfer Court: A courtyard between the Ennoikos and Memfer trading houses. From the pedestal of a king's great statue opens an entrance to the Undercity, **UCI/A-14** (The Crypt of Tellamek Than). The entryway has been walled off, and the iron door beyond it has a *fire trap* on it (1d4+12 Hp).

27. Plaza of the Nameless King: The much smaller statue of another king, whose name and deeds have been long forgotten. An altar has been fashioned in a barred niche; it is customary for merchants to come here and pray, casting treasures through the bars. While the statue is magical, it has no discernible effect. There are altogether 4000 cp, 3000 sp, 500 electrum and 70 gp in the niche. Anyone who steals from the hoard will be pursued by 1d4 **breathstealers**, phosphorescent undead in tattered rags and emanating a cold aura. **Breathstealers (1d4):** HD 4; hp 17, 9, 19, 21; DC 6; Atk claws 1d6; Spec breathstealing (save vs. death magic or begin to suffocate; only by defeating the elusive undead can one's breath be regained), immune to cold, silver or +1 to hit.

28. The House of Bagavami the Sage: A rare altruist in a sinful city, **Bagavami the Sage** lives here in modest but not destitute circumstances. He has dedicated his life to

healing the sick; prices are set in consideration for wealth and need. He can cure diseases up to and including mummy rot. Bagavami's speciality, however, is slimes; in one year, he is expected to progress enough in this field to find an antidote to the protoplasmic deity Yoi: a reason for which he is sought by agents all over Fomalhaut. Bagavami is guarded by **Tolen**, a black bodyguard who protects him in gratitude for saving him. He stores his notes in an invisible chest masked by *obscure object* in a dusty corner of the attic; the only clue is his dusty robes, and his sole confidants have been Tolen and Ishtar's former high priestess. The chest also contains 250 electrum and a 350 gp gem. **Bagavami the Sage:** Mag 6; hp 17; DC 9; Atk staff 1d6+1; S 16, D 6, C 10, I 15, W 11, Ch 14; Spells: 1 – *detect magic, floating disk, identify object, mystic missile, read magic, shielding, slumber, uncolated servant*; 2 – *hypnotizing pattern, locate object, mirror images*; 3 – *slow, suggest*. **Tolen:** War 4; hp 25; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8+2; S 18, D 7, C 12, I 13, W 15, Ch 9. Ω

Congratulations Winners! The

EROL OTUS

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, J. Poag, A. Stiller, and J. Weigel*

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants! As of this issue, all the B&W images have been published, and many of the color images as well. (Italicized winners in this issue.) Keep an eye out for the others!

Inter-Session Events

campaign management rules by J.E. Badelaire

Some fantasy campaigns use a rolling timeline, where each session and adventure begins right where the previous one left off. But other campaigns are episodic, meaning that each adventure exists on its own and the time frame between adventures is very elastic: it might be a few days, weeks, or even a month or more. If this time is accounted for at all, it is usually spent on “research” or “training”, or on “ale and whores”.

As an alternative to the above method, I wrote a set of rules to determine the outcome of a PC's activities during this inter-session period. These rules do not have to be used every time there is a break between adventures, nor should they replace the ability of a character to spend time “doing research” or what have you. They do, however, presume that one's character can and will get into hijinks without the player's supervision, and that this can often be (nay - should be!) the cause of peril as well as profit. Roll on the following table at the beginning of any new adventure where there has been an indeterminate span of time since the last one. (The roll is optional, but players who don't have some sort of story about what their PC has been doing since the last adventure might find the GM making up an embarrassing one for them instead.)

Inter-Session Events Table

2d6	Result
2	Ally
3	Information
4	Renown
5	Marvel
6	Windfall
7	Proficiency
8	Bauble
9	Pauper
10	Infamy
11	Injury
12	Nemesis

Ally: The PC begins the adventure with a stalwart henchman (or henchwoman), drawn up by the GM. Perhaps this person is a comrade traveling with the PC, or a recently acquired apprentice or squire, or someone who feels they owe the PC a debt to be repaid through service. Their companionship won't last beyond the current adventure – either fate and circumstance will draw the PC and their ally apart, or the ally's debt will be repaid, or he or she will die randomly in combat, etc. If the campaign uses rules for retainers that set limits to the number of henchmen a PC can have, this result does not count against that limit.

Information: PC starts the adventure with an interesting piece of information - a mysterious letter, a map, a strange book or scroll, an assassin's rumor, etc. The GM will provide the information, but it's up to the player to decide what to do with it. It might be beneficial or hazardous to the PC's health, but it won't necessarily be apparent which is the case – until the PC acts on it.

Renown: The PC has recently performed a noble (or seemingly noble) deed, which has won him or her some temporary fame in the area. Any time the PC visits a populated area (tavern, marketplace, noble court, etc.) during the adventure, there is a 1 in 6 chance he or she will be noticed and approached by some well-wishing individual. This person's motives are entirely up to the GM.

Marvel: Some minor, one-use magical item (potion, scroll, token, dust packet, etc.) has fallen into the hands of the character. There is no guarantee that the PC can actually use the item – only that they now possess it.

Windfall: Before this adventure the PC acquired some extra spending money. Perhaps fortune favored a hand of cards or a throw of the dice, or a fat purse was cut by a thief PC, or a reward was acquired for some heroic deed. Character gains d6x50 gp (or sp in silver standard games).

Proficiency: The character has not been idle, and their adventures have netted them some experience. The PC gains d6x100 xp for their activities during the inter-session period. What has he or she been up to?

Bauble: The PC has acquired some item of great value, be it a gem or piece of jewelry, finely crafted ornamental weapon, rare artifact, or some other “treasure object”, the nature of which is entirely up to the GM, as is the manner in which it was acquired. The player is free to do what they like with the bauble, but there can be consequences depending on how it was acquired and who it once belonged to.

Pauper: Misfortune strikes the PC just before the adventure, and the PC has nothing but the clothes on his or her back and some light weapon (dagger, club, sling, etc.). If the other PCs are feeling generous they can provide the pauper with some money, but otherwise he or she must make do with scrounging, theft, charity, or some other method of acquiring funds (if they feel the need – sometimes traveling light can be very freeing). Benevolent GMs can provide the player means to re-acquire their possessions; less benevolent GMs can do as they please.

Infamy: The flip-side of *Renown*. PC has just recently performed some dastardly (or seemingly dastardly) deed, which has burdened him or her with a temporary measure of infamy in the area. Any time the PC visits a populated area (tavern, marketplace, noble court, etc.), there is a 1 in

6 chance they will be noticed and accosted (perhaps arrested?) by some individual.

Injury: The PC’s life must have taken a turn for the dangerous before the current adventure, because he or she is still nursing a minor injury – either an older wound that’s not quite healed yet, or a newly acquired injury suffered just before the adventure starts. Either way, the PC is down 1d6 hit points at the start of the adventure.

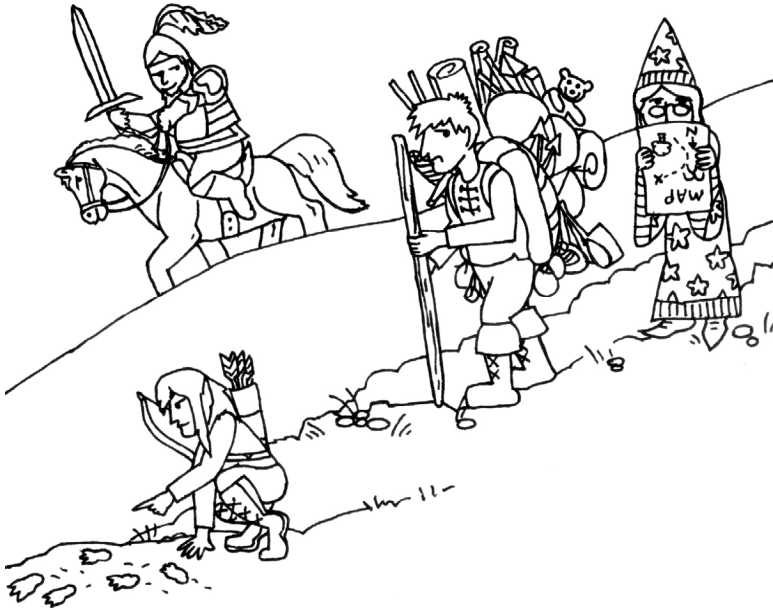
Nemesis: The PC starts the adventure with a hateful enemy close on his or her tail. This person could be pursuing the PC for a good reason or could be completely misguided (perhaps the PC was framed?), but the result is the same – the nemesis is after the PC and looking to either capture and “bring them to justice” (whatever that might entail) or simply to kill the PC outright (“Dead or alive, you’re coming with me!”). The nemesis will usually be pretty competent – at least as capable as the PC, if not more so in some areas – and might have a small retinue of henchmen (usually a band of hired brutes, thugs, etc.). The motives behind this are entirely up to the GM, just as the solution is entirely up to the PC.

Optional Rule – Inter-Session Period Rolls: By default, the inter-session period between adventures is left purposely vague - it could be days, weeks, months, or longer. The GM doesn’t need to define it if he or she doesn’t want to, but some GMs and some players might want to have an idea of how much time has passed in order to better determine seasons, character aging, or perhaps to synchronize with a campaign timeline the GM has running in the background. In any event, if the GM wants to keep the Inter-Session Period random but have some idea of its actual length, the chart below has been provided. At the beginning of each new adventure, the GM rolls 2d6 and determines the period of time that has passed since the last adventure. (This table can also be used by itself as a random timekeeping device for GMs looking for such.)

Inter-Session Time Lapse Table

2d6	Result
2	1d6 days
3-4	2d6 days
5-6	1d6 weeks
7	2d6 weeks
8-9	1d6 months
10-11	2d6 months
12	1 year or longer

It goes without saying that GMs are free to adjust these rules to better suit their campaigns and GMing styles. These rules are also generic enough that, with a little tweaking, they can be employed for a variety of different RPG systems – they come from my homebrew. Ω



Purchasing Potions

by Eric Minton

Players love potions. GMs should love them as well: as single-use items they don’t have a permanent impact on the campaign. More importantly, allowing PCs to buy potions in town allows you to drain their coffers! And potions are among the easiest magic items to justify selling; they’re relatively quick and easy to make as enchanted devices go, and their expendability guarantees continued demand. Mages, priests, alchemists and the like are sometimes willing to sell their stock to adventurers. Vendors only sell potions of a sort they can create; thus, mages won’t sell *potions of healing*, and the Temple of Truth is unlikely to have *potions of invisibility* in stock. Characters may not simply go door-to-door and check each potential vendor for potion availability: that way lies madness! Instead, the types of potions available may be randomly determined, based on the size of the local community. The following numbers are suited to a magic-rich society like Greyhawk’s Wild Coast, the Wilderlands’ Valon or CSWE, Mystara’s Principalities of Glantri or most anywhere in Arduin or the Forgotten Realms. Areas of lower magic should have correspondingly lower chances and amounts.

- Village:** 25% chance, 1 type of potion (1-2 vials).
- Town:** 50% chance, 1-3 types of potion (1-4 vials each).
- City:** 100% chance, 2-8 types of potion (2-8 vials each).

The GM may choose what potion types are available, roll randomly on the game’s potion tables, or some combination thereof. As a general rule, I recommend choosing available potions based on the nature of the vendors. E.g., the Temple of Truth would likely brew up *potions of ESP*, while a sorceress renowned for forging magical swords probably keeps a supply of *potions of resisting fire*. Vendors

will typically restock their potion supply once a month, at which point you'll roll again for the number and type in stock. You'll need a list of prices for potions – some games provide this, or you can make up your own. For each purchase roll on the following table and apply the purchaser's Charisma modifier:

Potion Acquisition Table

2d6	Result
2	Offended vendor! No more potions can be purchased here for rest of the session.
3	High demand – prices 10%-100% above norm.
4	Feeble batch – half normal duration/effect, or roll twice and take lower of the two.
5	Mishap! Roll 1d4: 1. Tainted batch yields poisoned potion. 2. Tainted batch yields potion of deluding. 3. Thieves learn of your purchase and set out to rob you. 4. Rival adventurers learn of your purchase and decide to ambush you in the dungeon.
6-8	Normal transaction, nothing special.
9	Vendor missing crucial component (usually body part/secretion of dangerous monster) to make desired potion; if party retrieves can buy at ½ price.
10	Superior batch – double normal duration/effect, or roll twice and take higher of the two.
11	Low demand – prices 5%-20% below norm.
12	Vendor likes you! Prices 25%-40% below norm, and may be an entrée to future association.



The Hobgoblin God's Crown

contest-winning adventure for levels 3-5 by James Quigley

The Legend of the Crown: *We had not known of Theer, God of Fire in the days before Great Khan Bhaṣ Ridhor, but the god's fall heralded a new age for our people. At the time our leader was simply known as Bhaṣ, son of Thrabn, the fifth child of a minor chieftain's guard. As such, the expectation was that he would be a warrior whose future would be found on either end of a spear. But Bhaṣ was a natural and courageous leader who earned local fame by the time fate came to change all of our destinies; the day when the sky rained fire and we discovered Theer.*

Theer's chariot appeared above the ten tribes, spitting fire in every direction as he fought his last against Ern the Iron Lord. The conflict caused the sky behind them to darken with foul clouds, the forests of the tribes to light aflame, and the ground to be torn asunder where the two fell locked together. Ern's arm was ripped from his body, but Theer suffered a mortal wound as Ern's spear pierced his chest.

It was Bhaṣ who sensed the suffering of Theer. And it was Bhaṣ who had the courage to take his warrior band with him to the site where Ern still stood. The warrior tried talking to Ern first, for he was young still, and not yet wise in the way of the world. Ern forced a battle, and slew many of Bhaṣ's companions before Bhaṣ drove his spear into its head and slew the monstrosity. While recovering from this great battle, Bhaṣ looked into Theer's chariot and found the dead god, with a wondrous crown upon his head. Bhaṣ ignored his fear and reached out to take the crown, taking the first step in changing the destiny of both himself and his people...

- Translated excerpt from the Chronicles of Great Khan Bhaṣ Ridhor, written by Jhitton Lavhor, advisor to Chief Fordid Ridhor

A Call For Heroes: Every human resident of the borderlands knows the tales of Bhaṣ Ridhor because of the continued threat from the hobgoblin tribes. It was Bhaṣ Ridhor who ascended to the leadership of the goblinoid clans and created a short-lived empire based on conquest and exploitive control of vital trade routes. The hobgoblin-controlled lands tripled in size during his fifteen year reign, but at the bloody end of his life his sons and generals tore their hard-won empire apart. His crown was brought back to Hazzar Tuk, a fortress built on top of Theer's chariot and corpse. There the crown, corpse, and chariot of Theer were watched over by the cult dedicated to the Fire God. The hobgoblins consider this place neutral ground, a place where the future Great Khan will one day come to reestablish their once wide-flung empire.

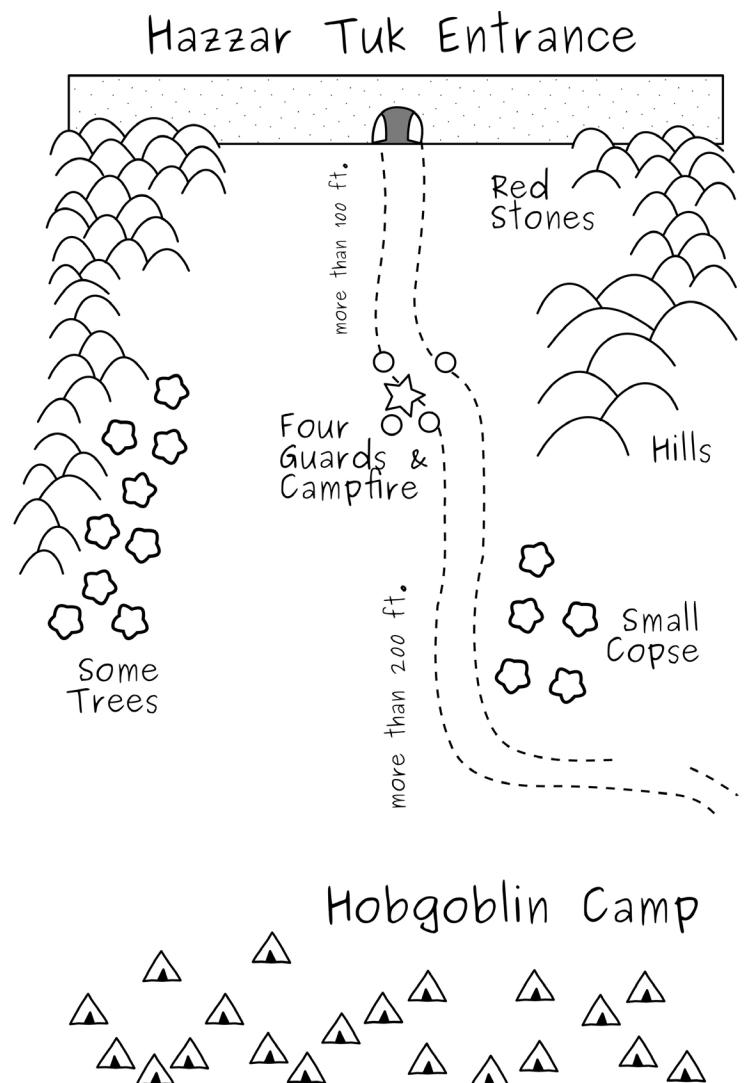


That time seems to be now. Khan Kor Ridhor, descendant of Bhaz, has moved quickly from chief to khan, gathering many of the surrounding tribes to his banner by threats or charm. Now captured warriors from the increasingly aggressive hobgoblins report that Kor rides to Hazzar Tuk on the invitation of the Cult of Theer to discuss his suitability to wear the Crown. If his negotiations are successful, he will unite the hobgoblin clans once more and wipe out the borderland kingdoms. However, this danger also brings an opportunity, for now that the doors to Hazzar Tuk have opened there is a chance for a small group of heroes to slip inside, kill the influential Khan, and destroy the Crown forever.

Introduction: If you are a player, please stop reading. There are three sections of the adventure: the infiltration from the hobgoblin camp and into Hazzar Tuk, the exploration of Hazzar Tuk in the effort to find the Crown, and the temple below the fortress that holds Theer's Crown. The infiltration of Hazzar Tuk is less difficult than one might think. The hobgoblins under Khan Kor Ridhor have to follow certain rules while Kor negotiates for the right to wear the Crown. The doors to Hazzar Tuk will be left open as a sign of trust during the talks, but in a skewed twist of this tradition the army of the hopeful khan must camp a few hundred feet from the entrance. By decree of the High Priest, only three hobgoblins that are not members of the Cult of Theer may move into or out of the fortress property at any given time, or else the negotiations will be cancelled. Kor has moved inside with two of his bodyguards, sent four to loiter nearby in a show of subtle defiance, while his other men are forbidden to enter the building and interrupt unless there is a severe crisis. There also have been some unexplained disappearances among the cultists before Kor's arrival, which adds a certain twist to the otherwise charged environment (see details of this under Underfather Khesh's description later in the adven-

ture). The cultists are extremely wary and paranoid, and if they sense any kind of serious threat they will close the entrance to Hazzar Tuk while trying to assess the danger. For the players this means that their getting into the fortress will likely cause enough panic that the doors will be closed, trapping the adventurers inside. The inside of the fortress is well-lit by lanterns hung up at intervals throughout the structure, allowing the party to explore without a light source. If the players play well but run into a string of bad luck the GM may decide to have the hobgoblins capture them instead of kill them. An imaginative GM could keep the game running from there with all the factional politics going on inside the fortress.

Sneaking Inside: A strong breeze ripples your clothes as you come into the sight of the mountain fortress of Hazzar Tuk. The structure is built into the center of a large, convex mesa of red rock. Two fifteen foot high stone doors lie wide open, each of their surfaces decorated with a single vertical spear. The western and eastern sides of the convex mesa slope downwards into a field of tall red stones. Several hobgoblins stand around a campfire more than a hundred feet south of the fortress doors and



glance often in Hazzar Tuk's direction. A small army encampment lies more than two hundred feet south of them.

Show the players the map on page 27 and have them start either behind the eastern hills or among the trees and rocks along the western part of the mesa. The GM should run this portion of the module with fewer dice rolls that count in order to keep the action moving while maintaining a narrative that keeps the PCs on the edge. There are four hobgoblins loyal to the khan standing guard more than a hundred feet away from the entrance to the fortress although they do not expect trouble and are not alert. If the characters are tempted to neutralize these four guards they might be dissuaded from such an action by the several hundred other hobgoblins encamped to the south. If the

Two years past, an adventure contest was sponsored by



and your friends here at

FIGHT ON!

Judges included gaming legends Frank Menzer, James M. Ward, and S. John Ross, as well as Richard Scott of Otherworld Miniatures and Ignatius. This is the final adventure to be published from that contest in the magazine; look out for another new contest (following up our art and fiction competitions) from us shortly! Our winners:

Honorable Mention: **Arcane Vault of the Magic Goddess**, by Matthew Riedel; **The Haunted Chateau**, by James Maliszewski; **Badlands of the Bandit Kingdoms**, by Robert Lionheart; **Beware the Lord of Eyes**, by Allan Grohe; and **A Giant Dilemma**, by Frank Farris

First Honorable Mention:

The Hobgoblin God's Crown, by James Quigley
Khas Fara, by Jason Morningstar

3rd Prize: **The Blocks of Quox**, by Tony Rosten

2nd Prize: **The Tomb of Ixtandraz**, by Lee Barber

1st Prize: **Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men**, by David "Sham" Bowman

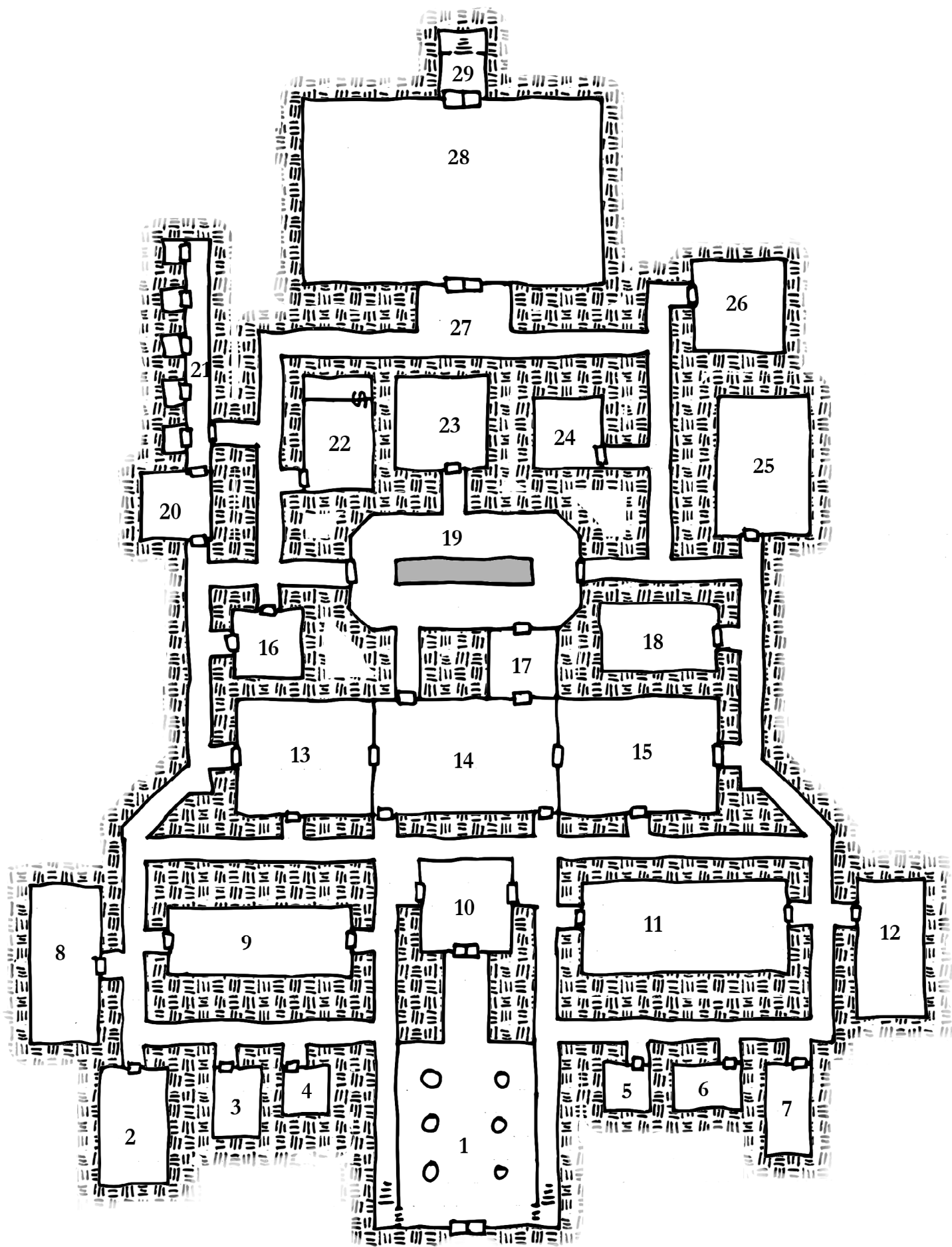
PCs decide to sneak into the fortress make several rolls in secret while throwing in the occasional smirk. Have the hobgoblins glance in their direction every so often, or even walk towards them. Allow them to enter the fortress otherwise unmolested but try to keep the tense atmosphere. If at anytime the characters try to eliminate the four hobgoblins they should find the battle simple enough, but they will have exposed themselves to the encampment to the south. Even the most combat-oriented party should realize that their chances of winning against a small army of hobgoblins are nil. They begin to approach the party two rounds after the group becoming detected...

Inside the Fortress, Hazzar Tuk

1. The Main Hall. At this point the characters will likely be discovered. If they were not seen by those outside, then they will probably be seen by the two vigilant guards on either side of the main hall's entrance, or the posted guards standing between the far columns. These hobgoblins are at the top of raised 2' high staircases just beyond a wall with a slit that allows viewing and firing into the main hall. These staircases are twenty feet away from either side of the double doors in Hazzar Tuk. If the player characters somehow enter the fortress invisibly or there are other special circumstances, adjust the description accordingly:

You have entered the main hall of the fortress, beyond the main double stone doors. This sixty-foot wide by eighty-foot long hall is quite impressive, with a ceiling twenty feet in height. There are six columns lining the hall, three on either side, and a corridor that leads to additional double doors to the north. The columns, walls, and ceiling are all decorated with scenes of hobgoblins combating animals and various humanoids. Four hobgoblins wearing chain mail over black tunics and wielding tall spears stand guard between the two farthest columns. As you take in your surroundings a horn is sounded to your left, seemingly from inside the wall, followed by another from inside the right wall. The hobgoblins by the columns ready their weapons and turn towards the entrance.

The four hobgoblins by the columns charge the characters once they notice them, otherwise they investigate the entrance once the horns are blown. They are dedicated to the defense of the fortress and will fight savagely and to the death. These hobgoblin cultists and many others inside Hazzar Tuk attack with a bonus to their attack and damage but a penalty to their armor class due to their zeal. **4 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6 each, DC 6, Dam (by long spear) 1d8+1. After blowing horns in alarm, the two cultists inside the walls will pull levers next to them which cause the double doors to the fortress to close and lock into place. They will then take a round to unscrew the levers from the wall and pocket them. These cultists will then fire crossbow bolts until their comrades are all killed or until the characters move out of their firing cone. At that point they will flee to join the forces in **28** (read **28** – this sets off ghouls to hunt the party). They warn hobgoblins in the fortress of the attack as they make



their way. Each of the two is armed with a crossbow and 15 bolts for ammunition. The arrow slits in the wall give them cover that adds +8 to their DC. Both levers will be needed in order to reopen the double doors, although since there will be an alerted hobgoblin army still outside this may not be the smartest move until later in the adventure. **2 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 5 each, DC 6, Dam (by light crossbow) 1d6 or (by short sword) 1d6+1. Each hobgoblin has d4 gp and d8 sp.

2. Cultist Quarters. This thirty-foot wide by fifty-foot long room has four plain beds with accompanying desks and chairs. On the desks are various documents filled out in the goblins' language, historical treatises on the fallen hobgoblin empire and analyses of the current regional political situation. If the players are able to read these, give them whatever tidbits you want. Inside the first mattress to the left has been hidden a fire agate worth 75gp. Each desk has a locked drawer that holds 2d6 gp. The locked drawer in the desk farthest to the right is trapped with a poison needle. A character affected by the needle must make a saving throw at a -1 penalty or suffer 2d6 points of damage after 6 rounds. Four of the more promising cultists reside here and have been given this room in reward for their service. They wear red tunics, unlike many of the other hobgoblins, are dressed in black and are both stronger and more intelligent (and willing to retreat for tactical advantage). If the horn has been blown they try to gather the black robed cultists in **9** and lead them to make a stand in **10**. Otherwise, 1d3+1 of these cultists can be found here without their armor while the others will be in **11**. **4 Elite Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1+1 (fights as HD 2), hp 9 each, DC 4 or 10 (depending on armor), Dam 2d4+1 (morningstar), 3d6 gp each.

3. Meditation Room. This twenty-foot wide by thirty-foot long room is plain and empty except for a coal-filled, fiery brazier lit in the center and three armored hobgoblins in black tunics sitting cross-legged and humming a mantra. These three hobgoblins are in deep meditation and will not be aware of their surroundings, even if the characters have caused the alert horns to be blown. If one hobgoblin is touched, the trio is disrupted from their trance and will attack. If instead the characters surround the cultists and attack simultaneously, the three worshippers will fall dead in eerie silence. **3 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6 each, DC 6, Dam (heavy mace) 1d8+1, 4d10 sp each.

4. Mundane Equipment Room. This twenty-foot square room is filled with barrels and shelves of equipment. The odor of mildew fills one's nose. The hobgoblins store many of their supplies here. The barrels contain cheap trail rations and low-quality ale, while the shelves hold equipment such as rope, sacks, candles, and unused kitchen pots. If the players insist on a detailed description, feel free to use the following inventory: 10 coils of rope, two bar-

rels consisting of 200 days worth of trail rations, 8 barrels of ale and grog, 12 small sacks, 6 large sacks, 3 baskets, 2 bedrolls, 2 blankets, 12 empty bottles, 2 brooms, 3 buckets, 24 candle sticks, 1 canteen, 3 chisels, 4 coils of cord, 1 crowbar, 2 sets of flint and steel, 1 grappling hook, 4 hammers, 1 sledge hammer, 3 open lamps, 1 small mirror, 200 nails, 1 small tent, and a whetstone.

5. Armory. This twenty-foot square room holds several stands of chain mail, and various weapons lie across tables that rest against the wall. There are eight stands in the room holding up eight suits of chain shirts and matching coifs. On top of four long tables rest two medium wooden shields, three morning stars, two broad swords, 2 light crossbows, 40 crossbow bolts, 3 short swords, 4 long spears, and 8 heavy maces. The weapons appear to be plain in appearance, but if they are picked up and checked for balance and quality one of the broad swords will be found to be of exceptional quality and gives a +1 to attack and damage, though it is non-magical.

6. Food Store. Upon entering this room, PCs are assailed by the stench of meat and blood. This 30 foot-wide by 20 foot-long room is filled with various sacks of grain, wheat, and dried vegetables while several animal carcasses hang upside down on hooks. Each carcass has a bucket underneath of it stained with dried, sticky fluids. A cabinet with two drawers stands in the corner of the room. The meat has not yet been prepared to the point that it can be made into rations or a hot meal. The drawer in the corner of the room has several skewers, knives, and hooks. If a character wanted to take ten minutes to do so he can cut out enough good meat to make a meal, although he would still need to find a way to cook it. Several hobgoblins recently went hunting and brought the animal carcasses inside, but they did not realize that some of the animals were infected with parasites. Every time a character cuts into the meat to gather enough for a meal, roll a d6. On a '1' a giant tick erupts from the carcass and gets an automatic surprise attack on the cutting character. There are a total of six ticks that can be found randomly in the various carcasses. On a '2', however, the character cutting will find a small 150 gp sapphire stuck within an intestine. There is only one sapphire. **6 Giant Ticks:** HD 2, hp 12 each, DC 5, Dam 1d4 + blood drain (bite).

7. Goblin Chefs' Quarters. This door is always locked, although the first goblin has the key if encountered outside of this room. Otherwise, the lock is of normal difficulty. This 20-foot wide by 40-foot long room holds three beds against the eastern wall. Two tall wooden closets rest against the southern wall, while several piles of rubbish lay strewn about the western side. There is also a chest in between the two closets. The goblins here are lazy and will lay their belongings wherever they feel like, unlike their more regimented hobgoblin cousins. The closets have several clothes on hangers but most have just fallen to the

bottom or are tossed in the rubbish pile. The pile of rubbish consists of discarded clothes, broken pots, several utensils, and other worthless personal items. The chest is not locked, but does contain several questionable jars and bottles filled with spices and ingredients that only goblinoids would find tasty from the parts of animals, like a jar of pickled deer eyes or ground squirrel tail. The jars are labeled in goblin, and the GM should feel free to make up other ‘delicious’ treats. One small jar is labeled as “Aunt Granick’s Special Recipe” and has several moveable hooks that lock in the top of the jar and keep it from opening. Inside is a strange yellow mold. If the mold is inhaled or ingested, the character will begin choking and will have to make a Constitution-based saving throw at a -2 penalty or suffer 3d4 points of damage. A successful save still results in 1d4 points of damage. If the contents are carefully removed and boiled or fried with food, the ingredients do act as delicious spices. The jar’s contents are worth 50 gp to either a cook or an assassin. There is a 2 in 3 chance that the fortress’ three goblin chefs can be found here in their quarters, otherwise they will be found preparing meals in **17**. Each goblin has three knives that are long enough to be considered daggers and can be thrown or used to fight in melee. These hang on equipment belts that they wear. In addition, each has 1d12 sp and 1d20 cp. **3 Goblin Chefs:** HD 1, hp 4, DC 5, Dam (dagger) 1d4.

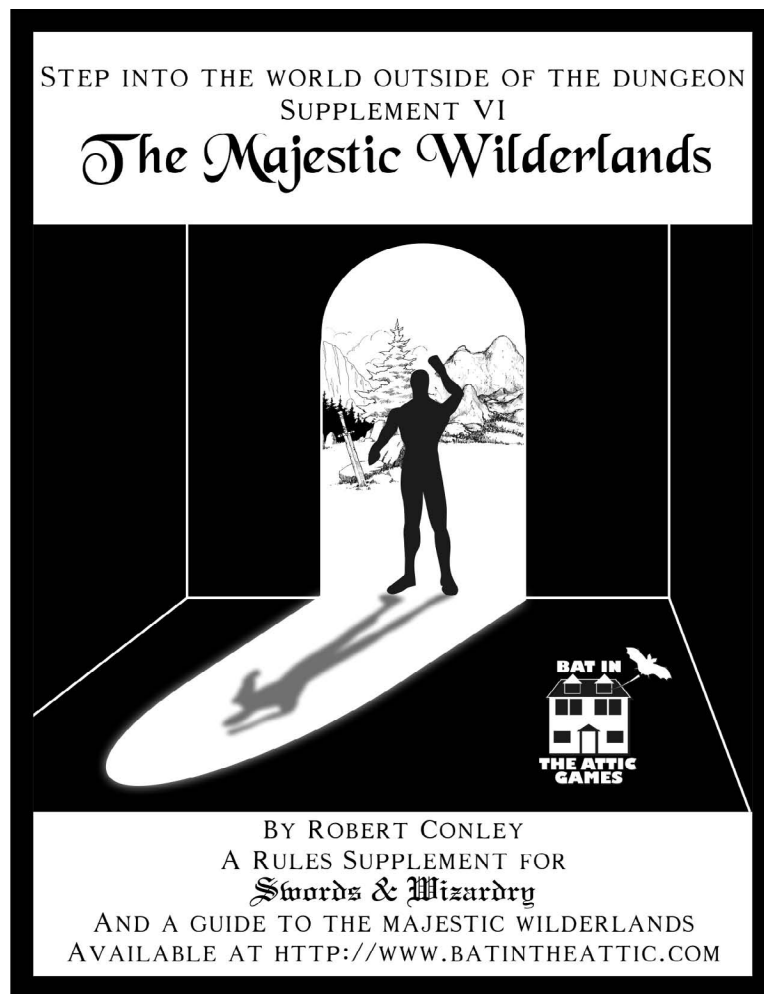
8. Sparring Room. This 30’ by 70’ room has several wood and cloth target dummies. The room smells of sweat. Six hobgoblins wearing armor practice against one another and against the dummies. The hobgoblins are fixated on their exercise and did not hear the alarms if sounded. Each has 5d8 sp. **6 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6 each, DC 6, Dam (heavy mace) 1d8+1.

9. Cultist Barracks. This 80-foot wide by 30-foot long room has sixteen racks for bunk beds. Each bunk bed has a chest and closet associated with it. There are doors to the east and west. There are a total of 32 beds, sixteen chests, and sixteen closets. Each hobgoblin cultist that sleeps here uses either a chest or closet to stow their equipment. The chests and closets have boots, clothes, unequipped chain shirts, and other personal effects. The third of the eight closets against the southern wall has a loose board in the bottom with some long-forgotten treasure, a silver necklace worth 150 gp. If the party has somehow still avoided detection, 2d4+4 cultists can be found here at any given time. If the horn has been blown they ready themselves for battle and head to **10** in order to make a fighting stand. Otherwise, the cultists can be found here without their armor. In this case 12 less the number present will be in **11** and will have to flee here to armor themselves. **12 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6 each, DC 6 or 10, Dam (by heavy mace) 1d8+1, 4d10 sp each.

10. Foyer. This 40-foot square room has double doors to the south and single doors to the east and west. The room

is otherwise plain except for a tapestry depicting a hobgoblin fighting a large humanoid fully covered in metallic armor. If the alarm has been sounded, the cultists in **2** and **9** move to make a defense here, while those in **11** pass through to get back to their quarters and armor themselves. All hobgoblins take three rounds to don their armor before running to this position. The tapestry is of decent quality and is worth 200 gp, but weighs 200 lbs and takes two people to carry once rolled up.

11. Library and Study. This room is 90 feet wide and 40 feet long with single doors to the east and to the west. The room is filled with bookcases, tables, and chairs; books, scrolls, and tablets haphazardly fill the cases. The writings in the bookcases are in goblin, most of which date back to the time of Bhaz Ridhor and consist of a variety of topics from the favorite dishes of the ruling elite to commentary on their military accomplishments. If more than a turn is spent rummaging through the shelves, a character rolling a ‘1’ on a d6 will discover a scroll with the spells *slumber* and *webs*. This room doubles as both library and study. If the alarm has not been sounded, there are several cultists here from **2** and **9**. Otherwise, once the characters enter this room the cultists here retreat back to their quarters in an effort to don their armor. See descriptions for **2** and **9** to determine which cultists are here reading.





12. Infirmary. This 30' wide by 60' long room has ten stone tables. One of the tables has a wolf strapped to it with its insides cut open and spread out. A hobgoblin in a black tunic works over two moaning orcs with a jagged knife. The orcs are strapped to the tables and their bodies reveal several deep cuts along their abdomens and arms. The hobgoblin is the fortress' medic, and the orcs are actually two undead zombies that he is experimenting upon. When he sees the party he takes a round to cut the straps on both zombies before retreating to the far corner of the room. Once freed, the zombies will attack the nearest living creature. The medic will try to flank the party once they are engaged, but will retreat to **28** if able.

Hobgoblin Medic: HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6, DC 10, Dam (dagger) 1d4+1. **2 Orc Zombies:** HD 2, hp 10 each, DC 8, Dam (slam) 1d8. There are several trays underneath the tables, holding several bandages, vials of liquid, and blades. Among the various vials of foul-smelling liquid are two with a sweeter scent, potions of *heal lighter wounds*. One of the blades has a keener edge and is equivalent to a dirk, but does an additional point of damage.

13. Forum. This room is 60' x 50', with doors to the west, east, and south. The center of the room slopes downward into a circular ring. Twelve wooden chairs are placed around the circle. The forum is sometimes used to have meetings, hear arguments, make judgments, and, on occasion, conduct trials by combat in order to break stalemates.

14. Dining Room. This 80-foot wide by 50-foot long room possesses six doors: one each to the northeast,

northwest, west, southwest, southeast, and east. Two long tables run parallel from east to west, each surrounded by simple wooden chairs. This room functions as the mess for the fortress, and besides several mostly finished plates of food there is nothing of interest here.

15. Map Room. This 70' wide and 50' long room has a door to the east, to the west, and a third to the south. A pathway stretches to the doors and forms a 'T'. A colored clay model of the region surrounding the fortress covers the rest of the floor, forming a crude, three-dimensional map with goblin script. The map is not completely accurate, but is a good enough depiction of the surrounding land that the characters will recognize landmarks for a few hundred miles in every direction (the fortress is shown in the center of the room's floor). The fortress' location is highlighted by its name in goblin and with a ruby inset into the floor. The ruby is worth 450 gp but is trapped. Anyone prying the ruby loose and standing less than five feet away will have to make a dexterity-based saving throw at -2 or suffer 2d6 points of electrical damage. The trap can be found normally, but not disarmed. If it can be tripped while the heroes are more than five feet away then it is harmless. The map uses the old names of territory claimed by the hobgoblins during the height of their empire, serving as a stark reminder to the cultists as to what was lost and what they desire to reclaim.

16. Guest Room. This 30' square room has a door to the north and a door to the west. Four beds have been placed in the chamber, one in each corner of the room, with a small dresser alongside each. On top of three of the beds lies a leather backpack. Four large wolves lie in the center of the room; one growls at your approach, alerting the others to your presence. This room was given to Kor Ridhor and his bodyguards to use. The drawers have several articles of clothing of little worth. The backpacks are each filled with three days of iron rations, one waterskin, 4d6 gp, and 2d20 sp. In addition to that, one backpack has a silver statuette of a hobgoblin in plate mail preparing to throw a large spear. The statuette is of Bhaz Ridhor and is worth 250 gp. The four wolves are trained pets of the bodyguards that followed Kor into the fortress. They attack the first non-hobgoblin that they see immediately. **4 Wolves:** HD 2, hp 13 each, DC 7, Dam 1d8.

17. Kitchen. This 30' square room has a door to the north and another to the south. A large cauldron rests in the center of the room, and over a fire pit. Six tables stand near the sides of the room filled with pots, pans, buckets of water, and cooking and cutting utensils. There is a 1/3 chance that three goblin chefs will be here boiling meat inside the cauldron (see 7). If so, when the party enters the room, one will throw a kitchen knife and the other two will overturn the boiling cauldron and try to burn the lead party members. Anyone within a 10-foot cone in front of the cauldron when it is overturned will have to make a

Dexterity-based save or suffer 1d6 points of heat damage. Otherwise, the room has many other weapons that can be utilized. The goblins will try to run around the tables and toss the blades that they have on them. Afterwards, they will grab utensils from the tables, and toss these weapons while using the tables as cover. There are 12 makeshift knives and 9 cleavers that function well enough as throwing weapons. The goblins will flee through the closest exit if they are clearly losing the fight.

18. Artifact Storage. This door is locked. The key is held by one of the two bugbear metal smiths in **25**. The room is 40' wide by 30' long and is cluttered with warped and broken pieces of metallic armor and weapons, making it difficult to walk around. Two oak chests rest against the western wall. This room is used to store discarded metal, usually tools of war damaged during battle or intense sparring. The bugbears in **25** use the metal here as materials for their craft. Although most of the equipment is not worth salvaging, there is a gravely damaged suit of full plate mail that could be restored to use if a character were willing to pay 150 gp to a capable smith and wait a week for the job to be completed.

19. Disposal Room. This 100' by 50' room has a single door each to the north, east, and west and two to the south. In the center of the room, running east to west, is a trench that runs sixty feet long, ten feet wide and deep. The light from the lanterns hanging from the walls is too poor for anyone to see clearly inside the pit. If the characters move closer to investigate the trench and carry a lit object, they see several objects at the bottom glinting from the party's light source. This is a thin pile of miscellaneous junk, such as broken plates and cracked pottery. However, there are a few items of worth: a dozen platinum pieces, a bracelet of jade worth 80 gp, and a gold ring that appears to be worth 100 gp to an appraiser but is actually a ring of



befriend animal. If anyone reaches into the trench for these items he will find the fortress' waste disposal unit: a gelatinous cube that lies five feet under the lip of the trench. The monster gets a free attack which automatically hits on the character who reaches inside of it and attempts to pull the character in. Otherwise, the cube stays motionless if not disturbed as it is used to being fed a constant diet of hobgoblin trash. **Gelatinous Cube:** HD 4, hp 31, DC 7, Dam 1d4 + paralysis.

20. Beastmaster Droll's Quarters. If the characters take time to listen at the door before opening it, they hear the sounds of loud laughing and occasional barking. This does not require a listen check. This 30' square room smells of sweat and animal musk. A large, unkempt bed with tanned hides is in the northwest corner while a small chest lies besides it. There are doors to the north and to the south. An ogre is wrestling playfully with a worg in the southwestern corner of the room, but the duo stops as the party enters. The worg begins to growl, and the ogre turns and scowls while hefting a spiked club. "You think to slay Master Droll, do you? Attack, Aggru!" The worg then leaps to the attack. **Master Droll the Ogre:** HD 4, hp 24, DC 4, Dam (large spiked club, too heavy for human-sized characters to lift) 2d6. **Aggru the Worg:** HD 4, hp 23, DC 6, Dam (bite) 2d4. Droll has a key for the nearby chest and



also for the doors to **21**. The chest next to the bed is locked and holds a sack with 2,927 cp, 134 sp, and 18 ep. Also inside is small-sized leather armor +1 that the ogre keeps as a trophy from a previous act of violence. Master Droll isn't very bright and believes that more coins are better to have. However, Master Droll did once acquire a large diamond that he greatly admired, now placed as a 1,750 gp inset into Aggru's collar. It will only be noticed if PCs specifically search the worg's corpse or examine the collar. During combat, Droll will attempt to fight his way to **21** with the intention of freeing the creatures there.

21. Animal Pens. The eastern door to this room is locked, and Master Droll has the key. This is a long room, only 10 feet wide and running 100 feet from south to north. The smell of animal sweat is strong here. There are normal doors to the east and south, but against the west wall are five metal cell doors each with a wooden, horizontal board serving to bar them close. Beyond the five cell doors are small, 10-foot square cells. Normally this room holds five different animals for Master Droll to train, but currently only three survive. The shadows in **22** have been coming here for nourishment and have killed an ape and a lion. Because of this the remaining animals are high-strung and will attack anyone in this room that they can reach besides Master Droll and Aggru. If Master Droll retreats to this room, he frees the nearest animal and then continues to free the others. The cell closest to the entrance is empty, the next holds a great ape, the third is empty, the fourth has a great lynx, and the last a black bear. **Great Ape:** HD 3, hp 15, DC 6, Dam (2 claws) 1d3 and (bite) 1d6. **Great Lynx:** HD 2, hp 9, DC 5, Dam (2 claws) 1d4 and (bite) 1d6. **Black Bear:** HD 3, hp 12, DC 7, Dam (2 claws) 1d6 and (bite) 1d8. If the characters reach this room before Master Droll, they can either feed the animals or have a druid treat with them in order to soothe them and remove their aggressiveness.

22. Underfather Khesh's Room. This room is cleaner than the others and is 30 feet wide by 40 feet long. A simple bed and dresser lie in the far southern corner. There are numerous charcoal etchings of hobgoblins, animals, and even an ogre hanging from the walls. A desk rests in the far northeastern corner, while the room's only light source, a lantern, rests on a high shelf. A hobgoblin sits at the desk, ripping pages from a book and setting them alight by poking them through an open hatch on the side of the lantern. As he sees the PCs he smirks and snuffs the light from the lantern, casting the room into darkness before he leaps out of the chair to get a better position. Underfather Khesh was an able hobgoblin who possessed a variety of talents in literacy, oratory, and art. He was good friends with Master Droll, and the two often went adventuring together to capture exotic beasts. It was during their last foray into a cave complex that Underfather Khesh fell victim to a doppelganger. This creature replaced him, and although Droll admits that his friend

seems different and cold, he is not sure why. The doppelganger has found the fortress to be the perfect playground for his more sadistic desires, and returned to his cave complex to bring back two equally cruel killers, shadows known to him from the dismal depths. The trio has been responsible for several murders inside the fortress as well as the slaying of several of Droll's pets. This has caused the cultists to be extraordinarily paranoid of late. The shadows wait until the lantern is blown out before crawling from underneath the bed and attacking the party. The doppelganger will take the form of the lead party member and attack him while the shadows attack from the rear, looking for spellcasters or the least-armored target. **Doppelganger:** HD 4, hp 25, DC 5, Dam (slam) 1d12. **2 Shadows:** HD 3, hp 19 each, DC 7, Dam (touch) 1d4+special. The dresser has several pieces of worthless junk that were once well-crafted artworks until the doppelganger disassembled them. He has also damaged or destroyed the books in the desk, except for a rare scientific manual on local husbandry written in goblin. The book is worth 300 gp if an appropriate collector can be found. Unknown to the doppelganger, there is a secret door in the northern corner of the room behind the desk that hides a chamber untouched for decades. The party would have to move the desk aside to have a chance of finding the secret door. Inside is a storage room housing a suit of chain mail +1, a suit of plate mail, two large, steel shields, a spear +1, and an exquisite non-magical two-handed sword with Bhaz Ridhor's name engraved along the blade. The sword gives a +1 to hit and damage and is worth 2,000 gp to a collector because of the implications of the engraving. A locked chest in the western corner holds 4 potions of *heal lighter wounds*, a potion of *neutralize poison*, and 250 pp. It is, however, trapped with a blade that slices from a slit in front of the chest (2d4 damage).

23. Animal Training Room. This 40' square room seems empty except for the carcass of a lamb tied to a tether in its center and a large bathhouse with multiple holes nailed to the far end of the room so that it hangs near the ceiling. Eight stirgebats have drained the lamb that Master Droll tethered here recently. There used to be twenty of them, but the shadows in **22** have come here often to feast. Because of this, the stirgebats are in a high state of anxiety and will attack the first creature that either disturbs their bathhouse or enters the room. **8 Stirgebats:** HD 1, hp 3 each, DC 4, Dam (touch) 1d3 plus attach for blood drain.

24. Religious Equipment Room. This 30' square room has several racks of black and red tunics similar to the ones worn by the encountered cultists. Several open crates also lie here, revealing candles of all sizes and packets of incense. This is the storeroom for the hobgoblin cult. The candles here are of the normal variety, though they range greatly in width and length. There are literally hundreds of candles lying in the open crates. The dozens of incense bars are cheap and smelly, except for one packet of red

incense which gives off an extremely pleasant cinnamon smell and can be sold for 50 gp. If the characters do go through all the crates, they will eventually come upon a small silver box with a tiny ebony spear inlaid on the lid. The box is worth 75 gp and is neither trapped nor locked. Inside are two dozen brown pellets one inch in diameter. If one is ingested the character must make a Constitution save. If he succeeds, there is no effect except for a slightly upset stomach. Failure means that the character feels temperamental, yet stronger. The referee should tell the player that he now has a +1 to strength. In actuality, the character suffers a -1 to strength. The referee should secretly modify the character's rolls whenever this comes into play (i.e. to hit and damage rolls). The result of the pill lasts for one hour. Multiple pills do stack, so that the character will continue to grow weaker, eventually becoming unable to take the weight of armor or hold a weapon. Through-out this, the character will still believe he is growing stronger, though others may notice signs of weakness. Any character reaching a strength score of 0 will die. The hobgoblin cultists use these pills during their ceremonies for the feelings of strength and rage they bring.

25. Tinker's Room. This is a spacious 40-foot wide by 60-foot long room, with two long workbenches on either side, and two beds with accompanying chests on the far corners. In the center of the room is a crude smithy. Two large, hairy goblins work diligently upon an unfinished blade, but look up at the PCs in anger when interrupted. These two bugbears, Rez and Nok, were hired by the hobgoblins a few months back. They are satisfied with their work, but are disturbed by the strange beliefs and practices of the cultists. The bugbears will attack the party if they look weak, but otherwise they are willing to talk about looking the other way while the characters leave the chamber. If combat becomes inevitable, both bugbears grab nearby weapons. The chests are not locked, and hold some personal effects along with 53 gp in the leftmost chest and 32 gp in the right. The rest of the equipment inside the room is of little worth since much of it is broken and needs repair. Still, if the piles of metal are on the workbenches are searched the characters will find a chain mail shirt, two normal spears, and three knives that the bugbears have neglected to take back to **5. Rez and Nok:** HD 3, hp 18 and 16, DC 3, Dam (halberd) 1d10 or (hand-axe) 1d6 and (dagger) 1d4.

26. High Priest's Chamber. The High Priest has the key to this locked and trapped door. The lock is intricate – -2 to pick. If a character fails to pick the lock, uses the wrong key, or attempts to break down the door, a compartment opens above the entrance and drops a yellow jelly into the hallway and possibly onto a PC (roll/save to avoid). **Yellow Jelly:** HD: 6, hp 33, DC 6, Dam (acid) 2d4. The 40' x 40' room itself has a large, comfortable-looking bed in the far corner, a closet to the south, and a large desk against the northern wall. Papers are strewn along the desk along

with an ink bottle and several quills. The High Priest is not here, but instead can be found somewhere between **28** and **31** depending on the situation in the fortress. He lives simply, although 20 pp can be found inside a small sack at the bottom of his closet. Also hanging inside is an expensive set of plain black robes, made of silk from a far off land. The robes are worth 150 gp and are suitable for most high-status social gatherings. The papers inside the desk are expense reports showing that the fortress is beginning to fall onto hard times. There are circles around the pay required for help, like the goblin cooks and bugbear smiths. Because of this the High Priest is seriously considering endorsing Kor Ridhor in exchange for a princely donation to the fortress. An ivory-handled letter opener lies on top of the desk and can be sold for 200 gp due to its fine craftsmanship. The notes on the desk reveal that there have been recent unsolved murders inside the fortress, about which the High Priest has few answers. He writes prayers underneath the reports, hoping that the killer will make a mistake and be discovered. A list of suspects follows, but the evidence that is available goes nowhere. Ironically, Underfather Khesh is not among the written names. Everything written here is in the goblin tongue.


27. Foyer. The passageway leads to an open foyer that is 40' in diameter and 30' in length, with two double doors to the north. The doors depict a muscular and bloodied hobgoblin holding a thin crown over his head in one tight fist. If the characters have somehow gotten to this room with-

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An Adventure for Character Levels 1-7

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out alerting the fortress, or are sneaking down the passage, they have a chance to take the guards by surprise. Otherwise, four hobgoblin guards in red tunics ready themselves outside as the PCs approach, each grim-faced and carrying a heavy mace. **4 Hobgoblin Cultists:** HD 1 (attacks as HD 2), hp 6 each, DC 6, Dam (heavy mace) 1d8+1. If the characters have gotten this far, the cultists are under no illusions concerning their chances. They only hope to bloody the characters enough so that they leave Kor Ridhor and the High Priest in peace. If the ghosts from **28** have been tracking the party, but have not yet attacked, they will join this battle.

28. Throne Room. If the characters have managed to make it all the way to this room undetected, then Kor Ridhor and the High Priest are here in discussion. Also here will be Kor Ridhor's two bodyguards, the High Priest's three mercenary gnoll guards, and two ghosts. Also, the writer of this module would like to know how the characters managed such a feat. If the fortress is on alert, then only Kor Ridhor and his two bodyguards are here. The High Priest and his gnoll mercenaries have left Kor to make a defense and have retreated to **31** after barring the double doors. Kor Ridhor removed the obstruction once the High Priest fled the room. The would-be ruler wishes to show his prowess by bringing the heads of the invaders to the High Priest. Also here are any of the cultists that managed to retreat and give a report, such as

the two crossbowmen from **1**. When the alarm was sounded, the two ghosts left the room and began to hunt the party. They took their time, however, looking for a chance to ambush the group and for clues to their abilities from the destruction they left behind. Roll a d6 every 3 turns of game time. On a '1' the ghosts finally encounter the party. If the referee judges that they find the location of the party before the characters see them (very possible if the party is making loud noise), then the ghosts will follow the group from a distance and wait for an opportune time to attack. **2 Ghosts:** HD 4, hp 20 each, DC 3, Dam (2 claws) 1d4+special and (bite) 1d8+special.

When the characters open the door read the following description, adjusting as needed: *This is a magnificent room, 120' wide by 70' long with a tall ceiling that stands more than 25 feet high. Along the walls are carved images of a hobgoblin with a crown receiving kneeling vassals, riding a horse at the fore of an army, and wading into scenes of slaughter. A large golden throne rests in the center of the room, while beyond that can be seen two double doors on the northern wall. You see several figures in front of you, the most prominent being three hobgoblins in polished plate mail armor. The leader wields a great scimitar and says in common, "Come invaders! Let Kor Ridhor send you to greet your ancestors in the sunless lands!"*

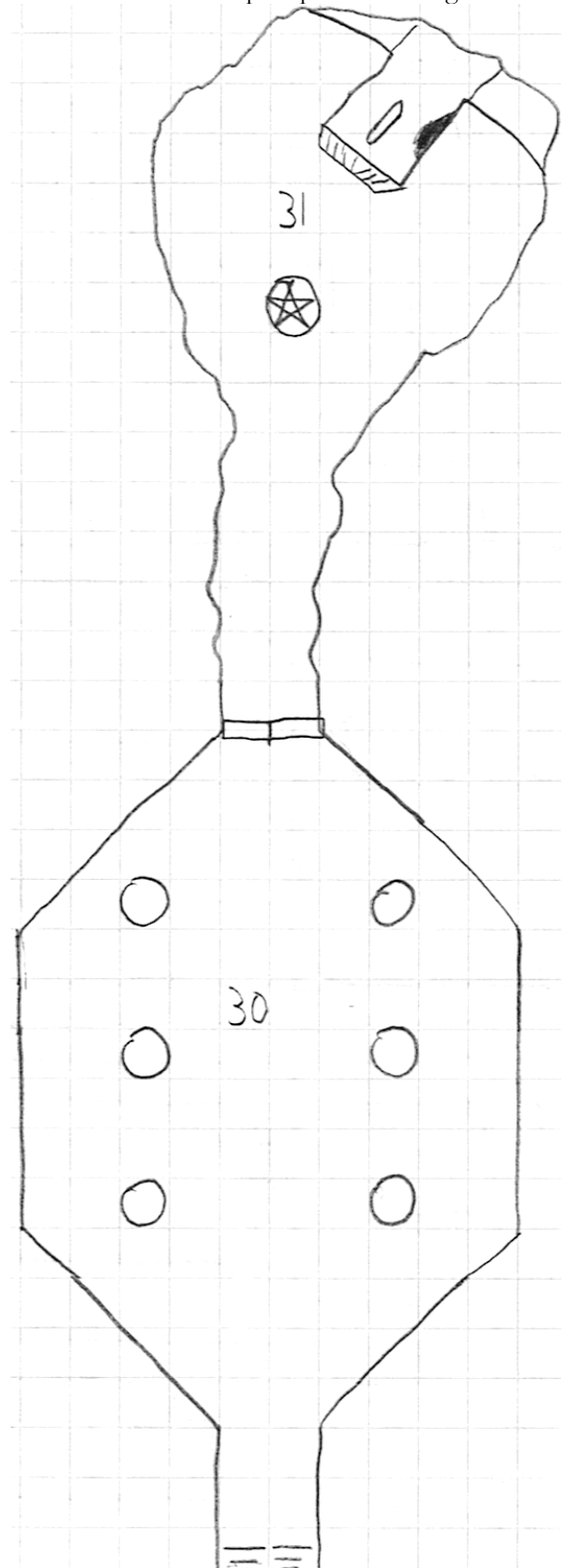
Kor is confident in his abilities, though no fool. If the fight goes against him he will attempt to retreat downstairs with whatever followers remain or flee the area entirely. This

will result in a loss of respect among the tribes, but he can always rebuild his reputation by force of arms. Kor and his men wear plate mail and are of exceptional strength. Each has a potion of *heal lighter wounds*. Kor himself has a golden necklace depicting a wolf with two rubies for eyes. The necklace is worth 1,200 gp. **Kor Ridhor:** HD 4 (d8+2, attacks as 6HD), hp 35, DC 1, Dam (great scimitar) 2d6+2. **Kor's Guard #1:** HD 3 (attacks as 4HD), hp 19, DC 2, Dam (maul) 1d10+1. **Kor's Guard #2:** HD 3 (attacks as 4HD), hp 17, DC 2, Dam (two-handed axe) 1d12+1. If the party investigates the throne they will find that Bhaz was truly frugal. It is made of strong oak and coated with a thin layer of golden paint.

29. Stairwell. This 20-foot wide by 30-foot long room leads to a wide set of granite stairs that descends into the darkness below. Strangely the passage down seems to have a man-made lower half and a natural top half. The top half is blackened with ancient soot and looks as if something bore its way through the floor. This room has nothing else of note. If the High Priest has retreated this way with his guards, the party will hear panicked discussions in goblin from somewhere past the bottom of the stairs.

30. Temple of Theer. If no forces have retreated here, there will be an inanimate statue of Bhaz Ridhor in the center of the room. If any of the cultists come down, they may whisper the command to activate the statue, which (spoken in goblin) is "Master, use Theer's power and come fight alongside your people one last time!" The irregularly-shaped room is 100' across at its widest point and 170'

from the bottom of the stairs. Six thick granite columns hold up the 30' high ceiling, three along each side of the chamber. Nearly three dozen flaming braziers illuminate the room, casting strange flickering shadows. The walls are decorated with interesting scenes where hobgoblins fight a metallic-looking giant while a dead, tendrill-faced humanoid lies on a chair with a spear pierced through his chest.



By following the scenes you see that the hobgoblin leader is eventually victorious and claims a crown from the humanoid, but at the cost of his comrades who die in the battle. Two twenty-foot tall granite doors lie closed in the northern wall, their surface showing the hobgoblin and the strange giant locked in combat, spear against metal fist. If, as is likely, the High Priest is here, he is surrounded by three growling gnolls while issuing the whispered command to activate the statue – which suddenly jerks to life, points its sword in the PCs' direction, and steps off its small platform! The High Priest has been in his comfortable position for too long, but he will fight now that he is cornered. He uses a torch and attempts to not only do damage but to cause an opponent's clothes to light aflame.

High Priest: HD 2, hp 9, DC 5, Dam (torch) 1d4. **3 Gnolls:** HD 2; hp 11, 10, 9; DC 5; Dam (morningstar) 2d4 or (military fork) 1d8 or (scimitar) 1d6. **Iron Bhaz Statue:** HD 6, hp 40, DC 1, Dam (two-handed sword) 1d10. The sword and crown are attached to the statue, and

are worthless if removed. The double doors at the far end of the room are heavy, although there are rungs on the surface of the door for pulling them open, which requires a combined strength of 30.

31. Chamber of the Dead God. A light source is needed to see in this room. It appears that both the tunnel and cavern here were created by something that bore through and left scorched, blackened rock. As PCs enter, they look upon a metallic giant suspended a few feet from the ceiling by heavy chains and some kind of metal structure partially buried in the northern wall. On the right side of structure is a burned out hole, just large enough to fit a single man. This is the final resting place of Theer, God of Fire, and his chariot. Hanging from the chains are the seven-foot tall remains of Ern the Iron Lord. The remains weigh nearly 2,000 lbs, although if the characters can somehow bring them back to a large town or city they will find that they can sell them for 5,000 gp. The 150lb head is worth 1,000 gp. The heavy chains hold up the remains and are attached to pulleys and the floor; Ern can be taken down with a few minutes' work.

If the characters walk inside the structure, read the following: *The inside of the structure is cramped, though you realize it is metallic as your footsteps ring dully. Down the narrow passage, you see a thin yet tall corpse lying slumped in an odd, metal chair. His face is purple and hairless, though his mouth is surrounded by a mass of tendrils. This is the dead god Theer, and he is as horrible to look at in death as he must have been in life. On his head rests a thin, copper-colored crown with tiny emeralds and rubies that strangely do not twinkle in the light. A broken rod seems to have lanced through the metal chair, then through Theer, and finally through a portion of the chariot, itself.*

If the characters investigate the chair, they find a series of buttons that they may wish to manipulate. Also, they will realize (with an intelligence check?) that the spear actually seems to have pierced the strange being from inside the chariot. Theer was killed by a piece of the chariot upon impact, and not by Ern. If a character places the crown on his head and possesses an intelligence score over 16, the emeralds will glow green while the rubies will flicker on and off with red light. Such a character will be able to cast *ESP* three times a day at a caster level equal to his level. The importance of this item makes it worth up to 10,000 gp to a brave and wealthy enough buyer. This may prove very difficult, as the hobgoblin clans will desire to reclaim the artifact. Alternatively the characters can completely demoralize the hobgoblin clans by destroying the crown. This is easy enough to do as a strike with a weapon will shatter it and render the remaining pieces worthless.

Endgame: The characters have (hopefully) prevailed, and now they seek to find a way out. There are two suggested ways to finish the adventure. First, the characters can locate both rods from the crossbowmen in 1 and reopen



the front door. If they open the front door within the first few hours of being discovered, this could end badly for them as the hobgoblin army begins to swarm the entrance in anxiety over Kor Ridhor's safety. The characters could become prisoners or worse. However, after the first few hours, strains will start to develop between the various tribal leaders. Some try to usurp authority from Kor's inner circle, and this causes the army to withdraw and split into various distrustful factions. During the confusion and distrust, the party might find their path of flight unblocked

and be able to flee. The second means of escape is inside Theer's chariot. If the characters manipulate the buttons on Theer's chair, they hear a whir and feel a vibration as something inside the chariot blasts a hole into the rock in front of it to reveal a small, underground stream. The characters might follow the stream to the outside and away from the fortress (or deeper into heretofore unchronicled depths?). Or they might find some other adventure awaiting them underground in a desperate bid to find the surface once more... Ω



In My World...

ruminations on setting creation by Calithena

You, as the Dungeon Master, are about to embark on a new career, that of universe maker...What lies ahead will require the use of all your skill, put a strain on your imagination, bring your creativity to the fore, test your patience, and exhaust your free time. Being a DM is no matter to be taken lightly! ...Eventually, as player characters develop and grow powerful, they will explore and adventure all over the area of the continent. When such activity begins, you must then broaden your general map still farther so as to encompass the whole globe. More still! You must begin to consider seriously the makeup of your entire multiverse – space, planets and their satellites, parallel worlds, the dimensions and planes. What is there? why? can participants in the campaign get there? how? will they? Never fear! By the time your campaign has grown to such a state of sophistication, you will be ready to handle the new demands.

- E. Gary Gygax, Dungeon Masters Guide, 86-7

The easiest, and arguably best, way to start running a fantasy roleplaying game is just to put the PCs into a situation and let things go from there. An old mage approaches you in a bar, with a map to goblin treasure; soldiers from the Barony of the Moors have sacked your village, leaving you homeless and destitute; a spaceship crashes in the mountains – what do you do? In the passage quoted from above, Gygax advised prospective GMs to develop small local areas and work out from there – so that you might first build the outlines of your town and dungeon, then your broader kingdom, then neighboring kingdoms, and so on into the broader world and universe. This is good advice, even if you start with a pre-packaged world; let the setting grow with the probing of the characters. (*And, if you are developing your own world's wilderness areas from scratch, Victor Raymond's excellent "The Wilderness Architect", in FO! #2 & #3, can give you some ideas and procedures to help with this.* - Ig)

And yet, one thing that has drawn many of us to the fine art of Game Mastering is the thought of developing our own world from scratch, to create a fantastic vision and let our players discover it and help shape it over time. There are many different skills which make for good GMing and many styles of GM, but one thing that has attracted many of us to fantasy roleplaying is the joy of creating our own world as an environment for us and others to imagine. GMs are not always or even usually good writers, but one

"Then, one day, an image came to him. A man is taking a boy to witness a beheading. They encounter a dead direwolf who has just given birth to a litter and they rescue the pups. 'To this day, I don't know where it came from', George R. R. Martin said. 'But I knew that I had to write it.' That image became the opening for A Game of Thrones..."

- New York Times, December 12, 2005

thing that joins many great GMs with many great fantasy authors is a world-creating vision. When pulled off in a game, a well-thought-out world serves to draw players in and keep them coming back. It's not a substitute for keeping the action moving and presenting players with interesting situations, but it is something that players seek out and enjoy, and something that presents a GM with an opportunity to put her own creative stamp on her game.

I'd hazard a guess that there are actually (at least) three kinds of 'setting prep' that a GM has to do successfully to run a fantasy world that feels like a living, breathing place to the players: situation preparation (what is going on right now, in this play session?), sandbox creation (where are we now, where can we go, and what is going on around us?), and world design (what is this fantasy world like, what is it 'about', in the broadest sense?). Each of these ties into the others at the edges, and in a more fully fleshed-out game world they all support each other, but they are also importantly separate in certain ways. In *Fight On!* #1 I gave my thoughts on the middle, sandbox creation level of building your fantasy campaign; in this article I am going to try to give some pointers on the broader art of world design.

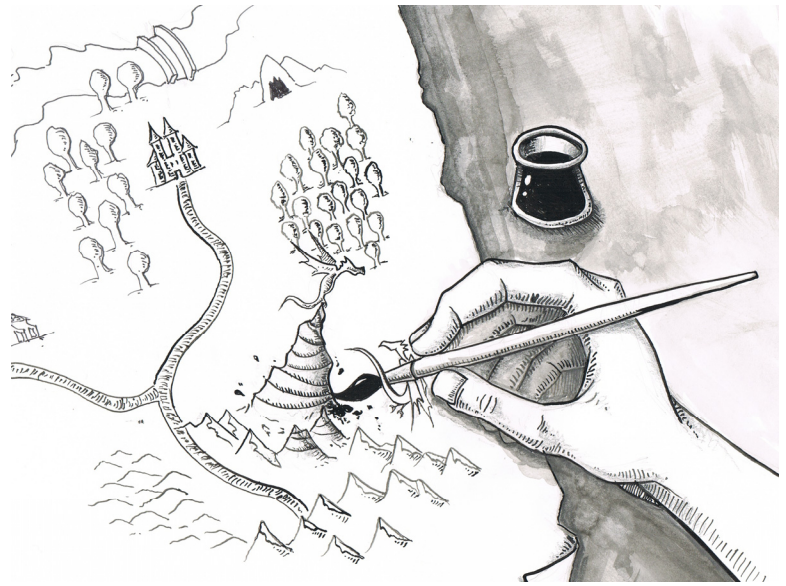
Fantasy settings grow like plants out of our dreams and visions, often beginning with a very concrete image or series of images. One might start, for instance, with a mental picture of a warrior-knight flying on a giant bird between small planetoids, riotously overgrown with verdant flora. What's going on here? Perhaps these green havens are under threat from a group of extrawordly sorcerers summoning planet-eating space-wurms. This picture might be used to flesh out locations at the sandbox level – a particular planetoid whose devourer has been seen in the mages' telescopes, for instance, and which needs champions to rescue it – and from there to help craft adventures and opportunities for the PCs to work towards this goal, assuming it interests them. Or, one might go on to ask other macro-level questions about religion – would each of these small worlds have its own local gods, or is there an overarching pantheon, and how do the extrawordly sorcerers figure in to this? – culture – are these knights always heroes, or are they also oppressors, or both? Are any in league with the enemy? – and so on. Some of these questions should be answered while others are left open: the GM should know enough to give the world a feeling of verisimilitude and provide the players secrets of the setting to discover in play, as another kind of reward. But the GM should also leave some things open, so that the world can respond to the creative ideas of the players and to the kinds of creative transformations that happen with the infusion of new ideas in play.

Let's do a couple more examples. For our second world, the initial vision is Mars, endless swirling deserts of red sand, punctuated by ancient cities built around ever-diminishing pockets of water. What's going on here? Each

city has limited and unique resources, so trader-heroes who travel between them can become fantastically wealthy. But there are terrible monsters in the desert, as well as ancient ruined cities, and the tombs of the B'rekh, which dwelt in this place before the coming of humankind. The traders carry swords and crossbows and ancient weapons and load their wares onto giant armadillo-like pack-beasts. The desert is bounded at its northern edge by giant cliffs and ridges, beyond which lies an ancient glassy plain. There is also a hilly region in the southeast where dry but livable peaks rise above the desert, populated by a fierce and ethnically quite distinct group of semi-human nomads. Beyond that, all that is known is desert. Another: the graveyard of the dragons. Who lives there now? It is a human kingdom, great city-states at high altitude loosely united under a weak king and separated by barely-settled regions somewhere near to wilderness. The ghosts of the dragons and the reptilian priests who once served them are still active in the countryside.

More Sample Visions (d12):

1. The world is the gargantuan skull of an elder titan. Demons and sorcerers mine the cracks to gain supernatural power by devouring the remnants of his brain.
2. Here the people live in symbiosis with giant insects: their societies are organized like hives, and they fly on giant wasps and use giant beetles to plow their fields.
3. The ancient war between elves and trolls has spilled over the border of faerie, transforming and devastating the lands of men.
4. In the East, the Tower of the Crane; in the West, the Tower of the Leopard.
5. In the endless shanty slums of Custenstan, thieves and prostitutes and outland vagabonds connive to secure a future in the glorious palaces at the city's heart.
6. The Eaters of Memory have remade your world in their image, its sensory surfaces a crazy patchwork of madness and dream and traces of what once was.
7. A bear, a puma, and a great golden hawk travel the lands of men, agents of the Lord of the Wild, bent on turning back the human destruction of their forests.
8. The dead have risen to make war on the lands of the living: whole cities do their business in pantomime, zombie merchants hawking rotten fruit to ghouls.
9. The world is a vast forest of intertwined trees hundreds of miles tall, with cities built into crotches of branches.
10. On the slopes of a vast mountain range towering over a primeval wilderness, villagers ride the wind on gossamer wings of spider silk and moonlight.
11. Long ago our forebears built vast automated steamships, shuttling inexorably and unpredictably from port to port across the far-flung isles of our ancient world.
12. For uncountable centuries, humankind has huddled in fear before the thousand Hellgates of the ancient serpentine Sstheniss. One by one, they must be closed.



It doesn't take much: start with a daydream, an image, something which sparks your imagination, and then develop it by asking questions. Infect your group with the original vision – perhaps by making a map, or writing a short tale, or even just describing what you imagined – and share it around. The original vision is not a static thing: it's just a seed, which you grow and nourish by exploring it. And a lot of this exploring and creating can be done over time, in and in response to play. Campaigns can also contain multiple seeds as they develop over time: the Martian desert setting might eventually lead on, through exploration, into a moister region set on the partially evaporated bottom of a vast and ancient seabed.

Some GMs and players like adventuring in fictional worlds invented by great fantasy authors, created for other games, or made earlier on by a single member of the group. This is fine! Here are some things to consider if you're thinking about adopting a pre-existing world. The setting you adopt should still have opportunities for meaningful, world-transforming conflict that involve PCs. Many popular fictional worlds are ones in which the core story of that world has already been told. What is there to do in Middle Earth after Sauron has been defeated? What is there to do in the Young Kingdoms given that Elric is going to destroy them in just a few years? You should have some ideas about how to answer questions like these before you decide to play in someone else's world. One trick you can sometimes use to solve this problem is to use a fictional world with the heroes taken out. For example, if there is no Arthur or Lancelot or Gawain present in your early medieval Britain, then it's up to the players to decide how they want to deal with the Saxons: they become the kings and hero-knights of the setting instead.

Also, you and your fellow players can choose to overturn what's written in the books. If you're playing in, say, the Third Age of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, and a player character decides they want to conquer Rohan, then their

character replaces the fictional one on the throne in the game-world if he is successful. (Or you can go to even more extreme lengths, as the *Midnight* setting did in a way by wondering what a Middle Earth-like place would be like if Sauron won.) The printed books become wrong from that point forward. The same goes for game products: if you're playing in M.A.R. Barker's world of *Tékumel*, and a PC successfully marshals Livyánu against the Mu'ugalav-yáni invasion, then the redhats lost that war, regardless of what happened in Barker's game. From the time the PCs enter the setting forwards, nothing is necessarily going to be like it is in the books, movies, or games the setting is drawn from. If the world you're playing in was made by a single player in the group prior to play, make sure that player is OK with his creation getting changed in a variety of ways during the course of the game.

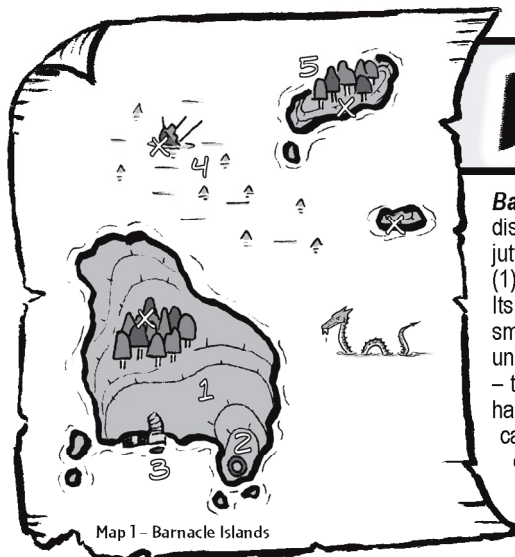
Even when you use someone else's fully fleshed out setting, there are a lot of details you'll need to fill in to make it useful in play. Sparing yourself work isn't a good reason to choose someone else's setting: if you do this, it should be because you want to explore and elaborate on their fantastic vision for yourself. The main advantage of playing in someone else's world is that it's sometimes easier for a group to get on the same page imagining the things that happen in it, by dint of a shared familiarity with the sources. If a pre-existing setting is to be used, the group should generally agree to this before play begins.

What if you're developing your world after several sessions of play? Most rules have a kind of implicit setting – if you've already got elf and dwarf, phraint and saurig PCs then you know that these kinds of beings exist in the world. Likewise, you've probably detailed at least a few dungeons and towns. These choices provide a few constraints, but also likely some ideas. It is still possible to introduce new, broad-scale metaphysical conceits into your game world if you have already been running in it. You can subtly change things in various ways – elves might have been portrayed as cruel immortals in the context of some adventure, for example, and so gradually switch to something more like Melnibonéans or Drow as a standard. In my long-running, shared-GM Advent campaign, a decision was made after several years of play that everything functioned in a more materialist fashion than had previously been specified. The Gods were physical beings of great power who lived on the moons, under the earth, or under the sea, and voyages to 'outer planes' became understood as travels to these Godsrealms or else, more occasionally, literal voyages into outer space and the farther moons and planets that dwelt there. This brought about a reconceptualization of certain aspects of Advent's magic and history, but the effect on mechanics and play was generally enabling rather than restricting: PCs could still do everything they could do before, but the search for pseudo-rationalizations in physical terms made new tricks and creativity possible as well. If you really want to change

things up dramatically, you can always magically or divinely 'nuke' your setting in some way, keeping the old stuff around while transforming it in ways that reflect what you are trying to do with it now. Players will sometimes get annoyed if you do too much of this, and there are times when you are better off just creating a new world rather than fundamentally transforming an old one (see Ursula LeGuin's fourth and fifth *Earthsea* novels for a literary example, or don't), but if you need to do something like this to make your game-world something that really excites you, then you probably should.

You should be prepared and excited not only to make up your own setting material, but to invent alternate mechanics for your game to help better reflect the world your group is imagining. One great advantage of old-style fantasy games is that they are modular, allowing world-creating GMs to take out and put in pieces that reflect their or their group's idiosyncratic vision. Very often your world will suggest new races, classes, spells, magic systems, and even alternate rules that better reflect your vision. Slap them in there! If a game is going to provide a framework for different groups and GMs to make their own worlds, it has to be modular and customizable in this way. This can be done with a great many games, of course, but highly complex or 'balance'-obsessed rulesets will make this harder and more of a chore, unless they happen to line up very closely with what you've come up with on your own. Play a game that lets you do your own thing with it!

In conclusion, a word about maps. It's tempting to look at the maps of fully developed fantasy worlds like *Glorantha*, *Middle Earth*, *Tékumel*, or the *Young Kingdoms* and think 'wow, I need something like that for my setting'. Some world-creators actually work this way, but it's not necessary. It was years before I had anything like a 'world map' for Advent. Maps are cool, and having something rough with broad outlines of continents, oceans, mountain ranges, forests, deserts, lakes, and cities can be a good way to start, but it's easy to overburden yourself with detail if you think you have to have all of that right away. I think usually a GM is better served to make a map of a local area, say the kingdom or even village where play starts and the surrounding areas, and gradually branch out from there. Filled-in maps are cool, yes, but the more blank space you have, the more room there is to explore and grow. As I see it, maps are best used to flesh out local areas of play at the sandbox level, where the questions they pose and sometimes answer are more local and more directly tied in to character adventuring. What lies beyond that forest? Who fishes on the shores of this lake? Why is this desert filled with craters of prismatic glass? What sort of village lies in the shade of this giant metal bridge? If you know what your world looks like, go ahead and draw it, but don't feel like you have to do this first just to have a 'world'. Most of the great fantasy worlds have grown over time in play into what they are, and yours can too. Ω



Map 1 - Barnacle Islands

DEN OF VILLAINY!

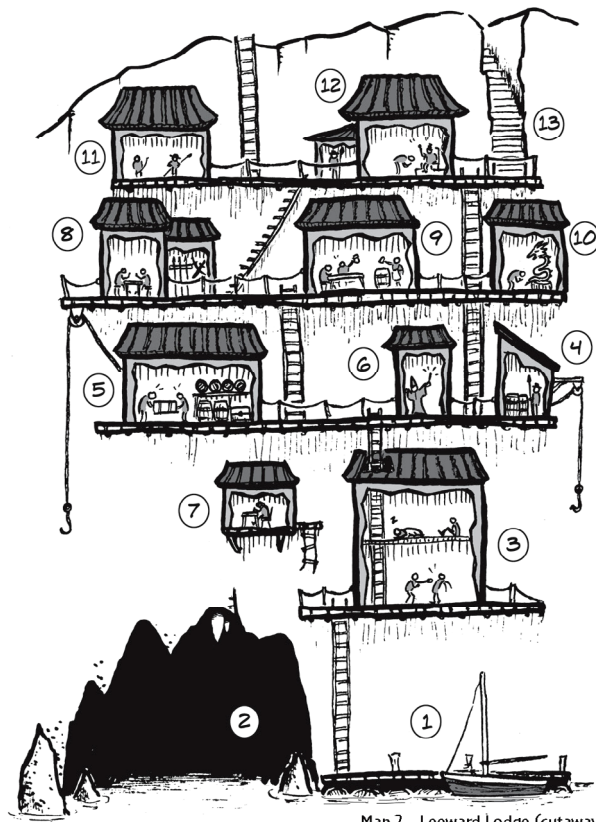
or 'Five Go Missing' - by Antti Hulkkonen

Dedicated to
Milton Caniff
& Enid Blyton.

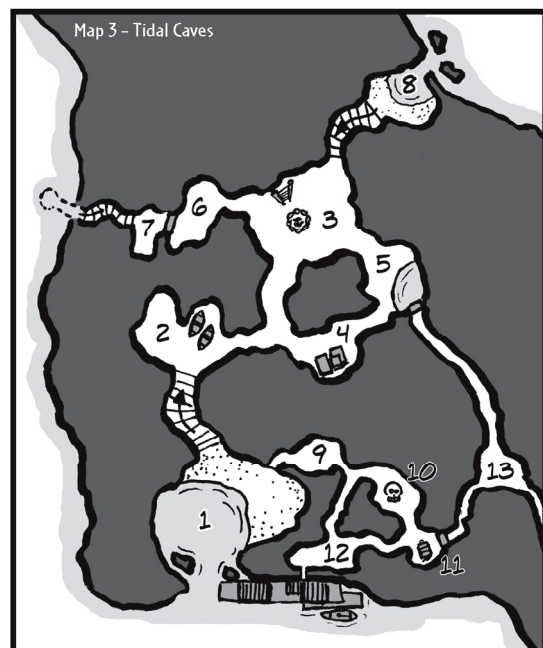
Barnacle Islands, just off the coast, have served as a haven and hideout for all sorts of disreputable types; rebels, outlaws and wreckers have operated from these barren slivers of rock jutting from the stormy waters of the Great Eastern Ocean. The largest of these, **Bootheel Rock** (1), rises sharply towards the south, and even boasts a **ruined lighthouse** (2) at its highest point. Its current inhabitants are a rugged band of smugglers who live in **Leeward Lodge**, a collection of small huts clinging precariously to the sheer southern cliff (3). It is said that they sometimes lure unsuspecting ships to the dangerous **reef** (4) between Bootheel and **Whalehump Islands** (5) - there certainly are plenty of wrecks there. It has long been the wish of mainland authorities to have these shady dealers ousted from the islands, but they know the passages, straits and tidal caves better than anyone alive, and have stashed weapons, boats and emergency **supplies** (X) everywhere. For years, port authorities have been dragging their feet regarding the smugglers, but now things seem to be changing. Maybe it was the rumours about corrupt harbour officials... or the fact that four plucky young treasure hunters (and their dog) went missing shortly after being seen perusing a map of the islands and talking about pirate gold.

Leeward Lodge - Just how the adventurers get to this fantastic shantytown is totally up to them. They may come as raiders, traders, recruits, stowaways... have them come up with a plan and let the smugglers react accordingly. Should things come to a head, note that a) the smugglers are motivated but not suicidal, b) they are experts at close-quarter fighting, either on boats or on the narrow walkways between the huts, and c) the said walkways are rickety and prone to breaking underfoot (either by design or due to shoddy workmanship). This should lead to interesting fights!

1. A floating pontoon platform where boats are moored. It rises and falls with the tide.
2. Entry into the tidal caves (see below). This area is strictly forbidden to outsiders.
3. The largest of the huts serves as the living quarters for both locals and guests.
4. The smaller warehouse is always guarded. It contains the Dragon Lady's personal goods (3 barrels of roasted *kurá* beans*, used in brewing an addictive beverage).
5. The larger warehouse contains crates of silk, barrels of wine, exotic spices etc.
6. Lo Kang the mystic lives here. He is the gang's spiritual leader and soothsayer.
7. Sabatini, an author of popular adventure novels, has taken residence in this unusually rickety (even by local standards) hut. The smugglers don't have any idea why he's here, but they don't mind him (as he's always good for a drink).
8. Wufei and Tsung, Dragon Lady's lieutenants, live here. They are locked in a struggle for primacy - which takes the form of an unending game of Fan-Tan, the winner of which will be considered 'supreme lieutenant'. The adjoining storage shed contains the gang's larger weapons - bows, spears, cutlasses and boathooks.
9. 'Drinking hall' may be a grand name for this dim hovel, but that's what it's called. Barnard, harbourmaster from a nearby port, is often here, drinking and gambling.
10. This small shrine contains a large, exquisite jade statue of a great sea serpent.
11. The lookout post is always manned. There's an ornate brass gong for signalling.
12. The Dragon Lady, leader of the smugglers, holds court here. She is generally immaculately cool and elegant, but becomes ruthless and unforgiving if slighted. She rules her gang with an iron fist, but is well respected by her minions. One of her trusted personal guards is always stationed in the adjoining guardroom.
13. Stairs to the top of the island have been carved into a narrow fissure.



Map 2 - Leeward Lodge (cutaway)



Map 3 - Tidal Caves

Tidal Caves - At high tide, the two entry caves (1 and 8) are under water. The smugglers have a secret entry hatch in the woods at the top (over cave 3), and an underwater tunnel leads to the chief's treasure vault (7), but they are well-guarded secrets. The gang uses the caves to store their more illicit goods... but there are secrets down there even for them.

1. The large entry cave fills with water at high tide. Carved stairs lead up to drier chambers. Unbeknown to the smugglers, behind a ledge close to the ceiling is a crawlway to cave 9. The lost hobbits were caught in the cave when the tide began to rise and discovered the tunnel by accident. It is located just above the high water mark.
2. The upper caves stay dry even at high tide. The smugglers store their boats here.
3. This large cave is the gang's common living area during a crisis. A ladder leads up top.
4. Valuable goods - currently crates of rare chemicals - are stored in this small alcove.
5. Rainwater from the top trickles into this cave. A loose boulder covers a secret tunnel.
6. This small cave is always guarded, as it leads to the Dragon Lady's treasure vault.
7. Dragon Lady's vault contains a king's ransom in gold, silver and art. The key to the rusty but sturdy door is always with her. Slimy stairs lead to an underwater exit tunnel.
8. The smaller entry cave is hidden behind large rocks. It is used only in emergencies.
9. This cave is the final resting place of four plucky young hobbits and their dog. The five snuck here following rumours of pirate gold and were attacked by ghosts. Remains of their substantial picnic lunch (sandwiches, cake and ginger beer) molder in a smashed hamper.
10. The restless souls of three pirates - Bo'sun, Spike and Stinky Bo - guard this cave.
11. Pirate captain Burr hid his treasure here 400 years ago. He did not spot the secret door.
12. The ghost of Burr's scullion has been scribbling his memoirs to the wall. A peep hole on the opposite wall opens to Sabatini's hut - and he's making a fortune on those tales!
13. The tunnels lead to the ruined lighthouse. Look out for cave-ins and giant rats!

* For more on the invigorating effects of *kurá* beans, see *Arendt's Old Peculiar*, to which this is a sequel of sorts (http://www.4shared.com/file/116475612/8113c31c/Arendts_Old_Peculiar.html)

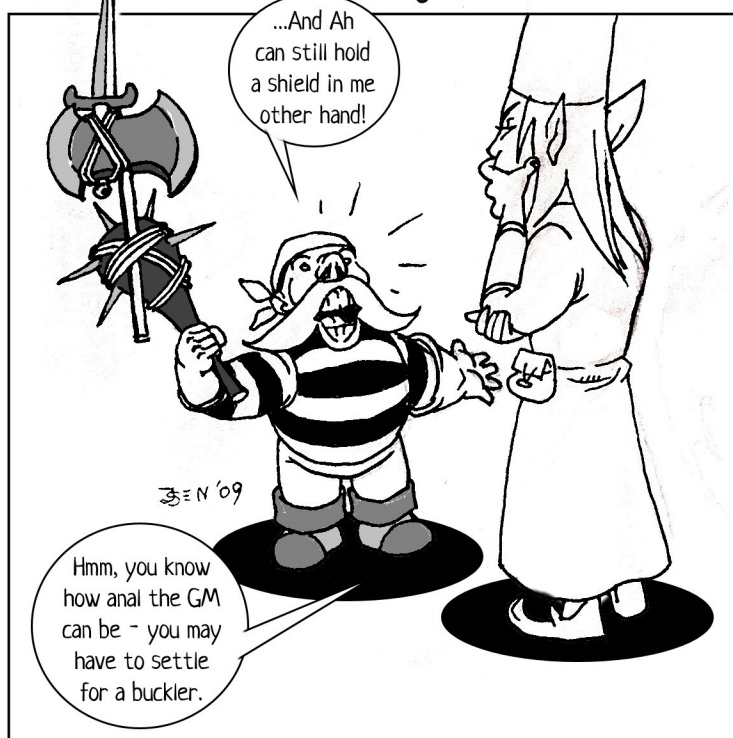
Education of a Magic-User

Part the Seventh: Contacting Other Planes



GBH

-by Jensen



Character Concepts That Sound Really Cool When You've Had a Few Beers. But Suck Tremendously During Actual Play # 14:

THE DWARF VAMPIRE SLAYER

One day, in the year of the fox
Came a time remembered well,
When the strong young man of the rising sun
Heard the tolling of the great black bell –

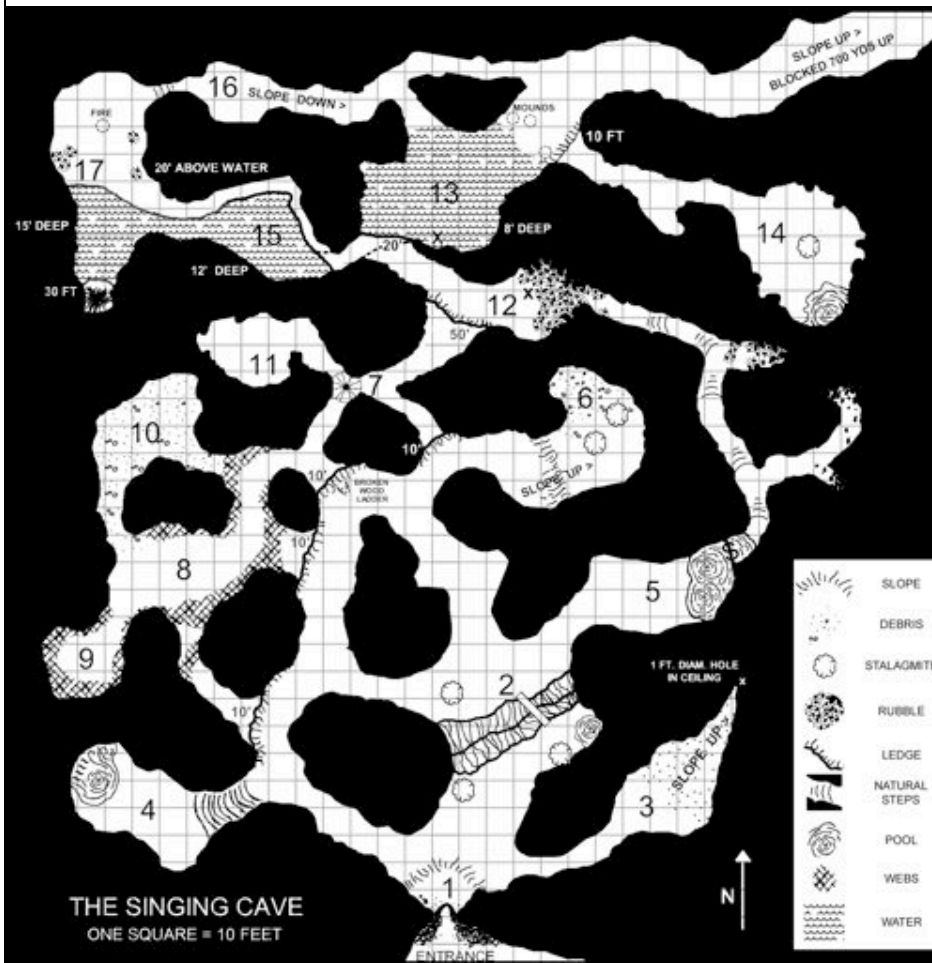
Circles and rings, dragons and kings
Weaving a charm and a spell
Blessed by the night, holy and bright
Called by the toll of the bell –

Do your demons - do they ever let you go?
When you've tried - do they hide - deep inside
Is it someone that you know?
You're a picture - just an image caught in time
We're a lie - you and I
We're words without a rhyme –

Something's taken a child
And it all must end
Time to be killing the dragon again.

- Ronnie James Dio (1942 – 2010), who joined Frank Frazetta in Valhalla this past May.

THE SINGING CAVE For 3 or more PCs, Levels 2-3 – by Mark J Allen



ABOUT: Cave expedition. Location: A hillside. All natural cave (dark, stalagmites, stalactites, stone walls, silt floor, damp air, musty odor, molds, cobwebs, puddles, echoes, dripping water).

DM'S NOTES: Lair for a pair of troublesome Harpies that terrorize nearby settlements and travelers. Their song does not affect a group of bandit Lizard Men who pay tribute to the Harpies with treasure items (on an altar) from raids, and sometimes captives (in shackles), for co-habitation of the caves. For the background story, your PCs may know about the Lizard Men, but should know nothing about the Harpies. The Harpies should be a surprise. The waylaying Lizard Men keep their stash of stolen loot in the flooded cave, near their mound encampment (which sits on the edge of the water). All other monsters are cave vermin that have set up nests. Lots of ledges, holes, pools, hurdles, cliffs, slopes, some rubble, things to climb. Areas 1 and 3 are the only ways in and out of the caves. Passage at Area 13 is gradual incline up (heading north) and is blocked with rubble 700 yards down the tunnel. 50% chance small edible mushrooms are nearby, anywhere in the caves (% chance of stigma? Not all food is just free like that).

MONSTERS IN CAVE:

Giant Killer Bees, Giant Centipedes, Giant Toads, Giant Rats, Giant Black Widow Spiders, Normal Bats, Carrion Crawler, Lizard Men, Harpies

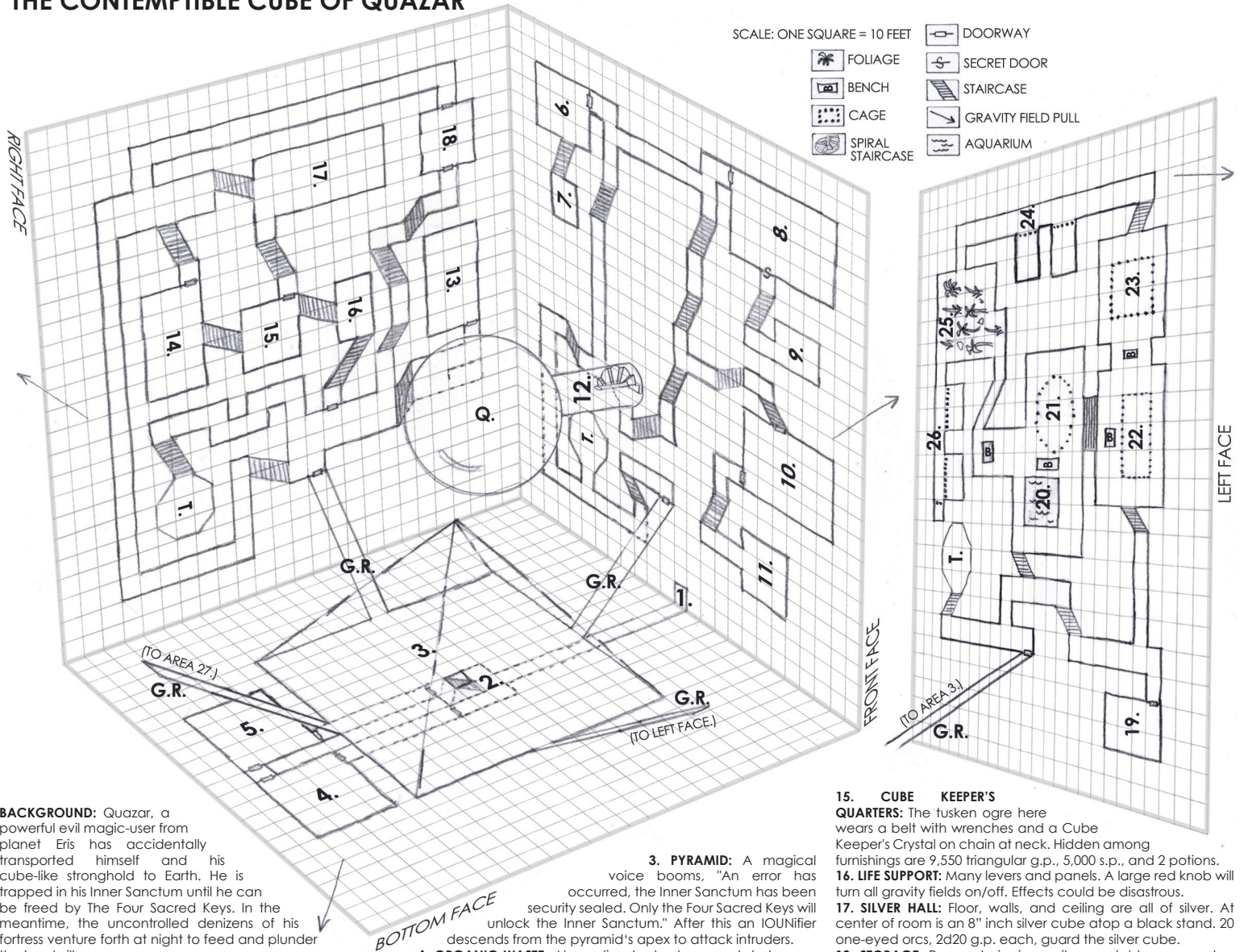
WANDERING MONSTERS (1d8)

1-2 **Giant Centipedes** (1d4)
3-4 **Norm. Bats** (2d10) (warns/brings nearby creatures)
5-6 **Giant Rats** (2d6)
7-8 **Stirges** (1d10)

At least **3737 possible XPs** in adventure (excluding bats). 786 in monsters. 2951 in treasure. 6 magic items.

- 1. ENTRANCE:** 5' x 10' cave opening draped with dead vines. Slope downward into cave (silt floor 10' lower than entrance). Red writing on wall, inside, to left of opening ("**Silence this cursed song of death!**"). On floor under writing is human skull, black "X" painted on forehead. Half-melted black candle by skull.
- 2. BEE CHASM:** 20' ceiling. Chasm: 50' deep (filled to the brim with ice cream if you wanted to be funny). Wood plank: 1.5" thick, 12' long, 1' wide. Bee hive on wall of chasm, 20' down. **5 Giant Killer Bees** attack any who cross plank. **6 more bees** attack any who mess with hive, along with **4 more bees** (1 HD each), plus **Queen Bee** (2 HD + stings repeatedly without dying). Hive: honey (cures 1d4 hps, limit 1 person). **Ring of water walking** in bottom of chasm. Melee on plank = 80% chance of falling. Muddy pool nearby with old compass lying in it (waterlogged – 2 days to dry out and use – works good).
- 3. CENTIPEDE NEST:** 30' ceiling. Steep silt incline (erosion), conical, up to a 1' diameter hole in ceiling (characters can see light, lets out in a field, "X" on map). **8 Giant Centipedes** nest against south wall in dead leaves. No treasure. Possible cave-in if PCs try to widen hole??
- 4. FOUNTAIN OF WEIRDNESS:** 20' ceiling. Pool of cold clear spring water, 2' deep, sinkhole. Waterfall from thin horizontal fissure 4' up wall. Pool maintains level. Drinking causes hallucination: walls turn pink & membranous, pool vanishes, entrance shrinks to size of coin, pink tentacles rise from floor and attack drinker. Same effect for anyone who drinks. PCs must think this is real. Non-drinkers = no hallucination, no melee. Treat hallucination as a HD 3+1 monster, (AC 2, 4 poison attacks/round). When characters reach "0" hps, PC falls to ground, hallucination stops. No damage to PC. 2 turn recovery.
- 5. HIDDEN TUNNEL:** 20' ceiling. **2 Giant Toads** in 2' deep pool. Stone secret door should be hard to find (roll of 1? Lizard Men use it.). 6' high tunnel descending. End of tunnel (at 12) is 4' rubble but is passable by climbing over (2' space, half speed). A broken shovel & broken pick in tunnel.
- 6. RATS NEST:** 6' ceiling. **14 Giant Rats**. Foul smell. 6" dung. Con. check: fail = vomit 2 rounds w/ -2 "to hit", rats gets +2 bonus. **Crystal Ball** in dung.
- 7. SINK HOLE:** 40' deep, 8' diameter. No ledge around. Light haze in tunnel. Smoky odor. 2 human skeletons and **+1 sword (+3 against undead)** at bottom. Hatch marks on wall in chasm, like counting days.
- 8. HALL OF WEBS:** 10' ceiling. Webs from floor to ceiling. A few cocoons, high up. A few dead bats caught in webs. Web destruction: treat as web spell. Noise or PC caught in web will attract spider from 9. Touch webs = 40% chance stuck, treat as web spell. No treasure.
- 9. SPIDER LAIR:** 15' ceiling. **2 Giant Black Widows Spiders**. Webs, cocoons, bones, dead bats, scraps of armor. Leather pouch w/ **85 gps**. **Wand of Paralyzation** camouflaged in some bones on the floor.
- 10. HALL OF BONES:** 10' ceiling. Entire floor is bones, husks, and remains. 50% chance trip on bones = attract spider from 9. **Rope of Climbing** in bones.
- 11. BAT COLONY:** 50' ceiling. **80 Normal Bats**. 70% chance of disturbance on entering. Disturbance will cause bat swarm and attract spider from area 9 (in 3 rounds). Attacks rolls against spider in this room at -2 with bats swarming. Bats do not attack PCs – only cause confusion. No treasure.
- 12. RUBBLE:** 60' ceiling. 4' high rock rubble. Hear faint melodic tone (non-discernable). Climb over (half speed) to east tunnel. **Carrion Crawler** feeds on Lizard Man below rocks ("X"). Combat on rocks at -2 "to hit". Pouch w/ **2 rubies (100 gps each)**, and **250 gps** are on Lizard Man carcass. Club on ground.
- 13. FLOODED CAVERN:** 80' ceiling. **6 Lizard Men** w/tridents. Water 8' deep at south wall, cold, murky. 3 mud/clay mounds (shelters). Leather sack, weighted down underwater ("X") - contains **400 gps**, and **3 rubies (100 gp each)**. Water goes under "bridge" in south of chamber, into 15. No clearance.
- 14. GLOW CONE:** 20' ceiling. Entrance 10' up ledge from #13. 9' tall stalagmite center of room. Gives off faint hum and green pulsing glow. **Permanent -2 to CHA** to any who touch it. That's all it does. **Gold ring (10 gps)** in 1' deep pool.
- 15. NARROW LEDGE:** 30' ceiling. 2' wide ledge. Hazy. Smoke Odor. Water 20' below, 12' deep. Bones and rusty arms & armor at bottom. Hear ghostly song. Save vs. Spells or Harpies song lures PCs to 17. 50% chance of walking off ledge under Harpies' spell. Fall in water will attract Lizard Men from 13.
- 16. HARPIES' ALTAR:** 10' ceiling. Hazy. Smoky Odor. 3' sq. stone block in middle of cavern. Dried blood and empty pouch on block, **6 gps** on ground. Pair of bloodstained shackles bolted to north and south walls. Hear ghostly song. Save vs. Spells or Harpies song lures PCs to 17.
- 17. HARPIES' LAIR:** 40' ceiling. Smoky, inhibited vision. Blazing fire pit in middle of north floor, bones all around it. North ledge 20' above water. Water 15' deep, cold, murky. Large nest on south cliff (dry brush). Nest 30' above water. **2 Harpies** use nest. Rubble piles 4' high. Bones & rusty armor underwater. Bones, wood, metal scattered about ground. Some skulls neatly stacked on a pile of rubble. Iron box in nest: locked, poison trap, **2000 sps**, **silver & diamond necklace (350gps)**, **gold headband w/ small rubies (250 gps)**, **ring of sapphires (300 gps)**, **amulet of bloodstone (400 gps)**. **Gauntlets of Ogre Power** in nest.

THE CONTEMPTIBLE CUBE OF QUAZAR



BACKGROUND: Quazar, a powerful evil magic-user from planet Eris has accidentally transported himself and his cube-like stronghold to Earth. He is trapped in his Inner Sanctum until he can be freed by The Four Sacred Keys. In the meantime, the uncontrolled denizens of his fortress venture forth at night to feed and plunder the local villages.

NOTES: Designed for 5 or more characters of 4th-6th level. The Four Sacred Keys are 8" metallic cubes in areas 4, 7, 17, & 23. Cube Keeper's Crystals work teleporters and open most locked areas and cages. One-eyed orcs are standard orcs with a single eye in the center of their foreheads. Most walls/floors/ceilings/doors are dark green marbled stone.

WANDERING MONSTERS

- Check for 1 on d6 every 2 turns.
1. d6+1 One-Eyed Orcs
 2. 1 Tusken Ogre with a Cube Keeper's Crystal
 3. 1 Large Adult Vapor Crane
 4. d2 IOUNifiers
 5. d4 Worker Amorphons
 6. 1 Thelidu

LETTERED AREAS

G.R. GRAVITY RAMPS: These ramps are used to transition from the gravity field of one Cube-face to another. When a ramp is entered, travelers feel as if walking uphill. At center of ramp it feels like walking on a flat surface. At ramp end it feels like one is walking downward.

T. TELEPORTER ROOMS: With a Cube Keeper's Crystal these rooms will teleport a party to any desired area except area Q. Without a crystal, teleport is to a random numbered area.

Q. QUAZAR'S INNER SANCTUM: Large hollow sphere where Quazar is trapped. Gravity pulls outward so that one walks upon the sphere's inner surface. Inner surface is black with slow-shifting constellations & galaxies. Quazar is an 8th level magic-user. (REF select spells.) He has a staff of wizardry and Cube Master's Crystal that can access and control all areas.

NUMBERED AREAS

1. **ENTRANCE TUNNEL:** A portal at the base of the Cube is open to this tunnel.
2. **STAIRWAY:** Stairs ascend to area 3. Doors to either side of stairs are magically locked, can only be opened with Cube Keeper's Crystal. Clerical healing scroll hidden under 6th step.

3. **PYRAMID:** A magical voice booms, "An error has occurred, the Inner Sanctum has been security sealed. Only the Four Sacred Keys will unlock the Inner Sanctum." After this an IOUNifier descends from the pyramid's apex to attack intruders.

4. **ORGANIC WASTE:** Abounding trash, dung, and sludge are absorbed by a gelatinous cube. Inside gelatinous cube is an 8" cube of decorated bronze. A 4' circular opening is in ceiling.

5. **METALLIC WASTE:** Scrap metal and wire are being devoured by 2 rust monsters. d6 x 1000 g.p. worth of scrap gold is here. There is a 4' circular opening in the ceiling.

6. **WIZARD'S CHAMBER:** Door is trapped, delivers 2d6 electrical damage on touch. Room has bed, desk, etc. Three worker amorphons are here. Bracers of defense are hidden in desk.

7. **WIZARD'S STUDY:** There is a bas relief on one wall of four stacked cubes. Cubes are labelled "AU," "AG," "AE," and "Q." Near one wall is a black stand holding an 8" cube of ornate gold. Opposite wall is shimmery portal that teleports to area 12.

8. **LIBRARY:** Many shelves of large books in foreign/alien languages. 3 one-eyed orcs wander here, 2d20 g.p. each.

9. **SECRET LIBRARY:** Two magic-user spell books sit atop ornate pedestals. One of the spell books is inhabited by an Inaed. A Tsalakian has just arrived to steal these books.

10. **LABORATORY:** This room is filled with strange machines, computers, and laboratory devices. Four potions of healing are hidden about and one potion of poison. A clerical scroll, locate object, is tucked under a computer. Two 4' circular openings in the far corner are chutes to areas 4 & 5.

11. **CONJURING ROOM:** Three evil clerics (3 HD each, REF determine spells, 66 triangular g.p. each) are conducting a summoning ceremony. Six one-eyed orcs are assisting, 2d20 g.p. each. One cleric has a mace +3.

12. **SPIRAL STAIRCASE:** Atop the staircase is a stand with fittings for the Four Sacred Keys. If the Keys are placed in the proper sequence (gold, silver, bronze, black), a magic portal in the ceiling will open. Beyond is Quazar's Inner Sanctum.

13. **ARMORY:** Weapons racks. Many are empty. A few contain one-eyed orc weapons and armor. One rack holds 4 Civil War era rifles. A sword +2 is hidden in a panel behind this rack.

14. **CONTROL ROOM:** Many levers and panels. Controls for transporting entire Cube are here. They are malfunctioning. If activated roll d4: 1 = electrical shock (2d6 dam.), 2 = explosion (4d6 dam.), 3 = no effect, 4 = Cube moves 100 yds. in random direction. A 4' circular opening on wall is a chute to area 5.

15. CUBE KEEPER'S

QUARTERS: The tusken ogre here wears a belt with wrenches and a Cube Keeper's Crystal on chain at neck. Hidden among furnishings are 9,550 triangular g.p., 5,000 s.p., and 2 potions.

16. **LIFE SUPPORT:** Many levers and panels. A large red knob will turn all gravity fields on/off. Effects could be disastrous.

17. **SILVER HALL:** Floor, walls, and ceiling are all of silver. At center of room is an 8" inch silver cube atop a black stand. 20 one-eyed orcs, 2d20 g.p. each, guard the silver cube.

18. **STORAGE:** Rope, chain, iron spikes, metal beams, crates, barrels and many unidentifiable items. A pouch of dust of disappearance is hidden at the bottom of a cask of pipeleaf.

19. **ZOO KEEPER'S QUARTERS:** A tusken ogre with a Cube Keeper's Crystal is here. (NOTE: Cube Keeper's Crystals can open cages.) He wears boots of flying.

20. **AQUARIUM:** The force field across the top of the aquarium is malfunctioning. A giant squid within will reach out and attack. 75,000 g.p. of gold, gems, and treasure line bottom of tank.

21. **BROKEN CAGE:** Something has escaped. The floor of this cage is a shallow boiling pool with large boulders. Several vapor cranes were here, but are now wandering the cube. A 4' circular opening on wall behind cage is a chute to area 4.

22. **MONKEY CAGE:** Three angry Flying Apes occupy this cage.

23. **DRAGON CAGE:** An 8" black cube is guarded by a sleeping (immature) black dragon. If the cube is removed from its stand, the dragon awakens.

24. **CAPTURED SOLDIERS:** Each of these cages houses 2 captured Confederate soldiers.

25. **ARBORETUM:** Scattered among strange foliage are 1 tangle weed and 2 strangle vines. A bronze horn of Valhalla is hidden in the tangled brush.

26. **CAPTURED VILLAGERS:** Each of these three cages holds a number of local villagers.

27. **DIMENSION ENGINE ROOM:** The door to this room is magically locked. If entrance is gained, a room of limitless size is revealed. It contains endless strange conduits and devices that surge with power. If anything is touched, the offending character must save or blink out of existence.

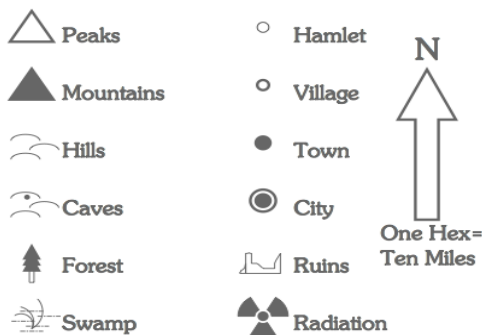
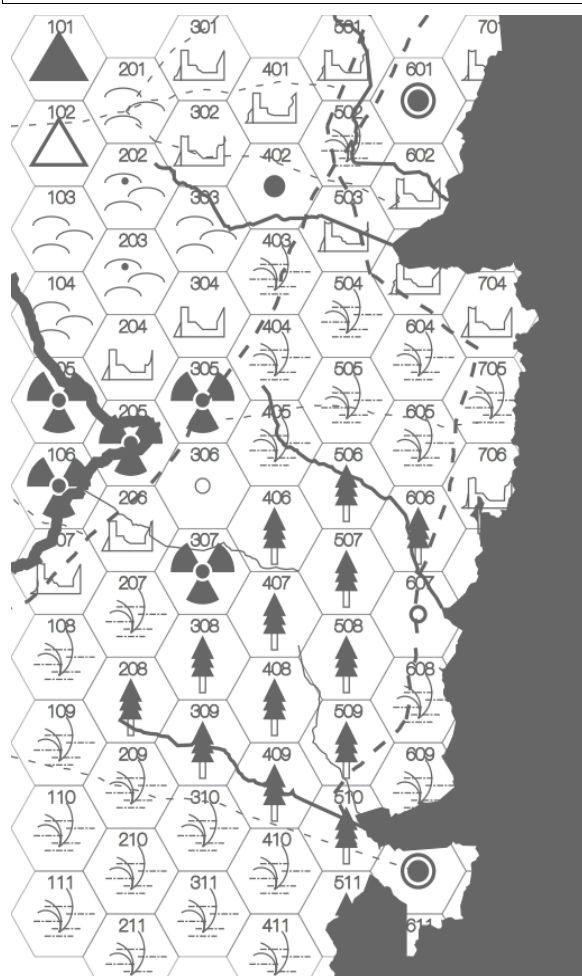
END NOTE

Once Quazar is freed, he will be able to work the magic and mechanisms that will return the Cube to his own world... Unless he has decided not to leave!

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Central New Jersey After the "Big Whoops"



Solid lines are rivers; dashed lines are roads

Meadowlands Mad Hermit Rumors

d8	Rumor
1	Want some rye? 'Course ya do! (F) (save vs. poison or take damage and pass out)
2	If you get lost, beware the eater of men!
3	Beware the mad hermit of the north lands.
4	Tribes of subhuman pig-men inhabit the Pine Barrens, but they're not the problem: it's strictly bush league down there.
5	Wearing an amulet of bacon around your neck will keep the Jersey Devil away. (F)
6	Strange Magic of the Old Times provides a quick way to get from Acey to Vega\$
7	Drinking the Meadowlands water will give you superpowers (probably F; it's radioactive, so if you got lucky enough with your die rolls, then <i>maybe</i> ...)
8	My cat's breath smells like cat food.

Wandering Monsters

Well, *duh*. They're ubiquitous.

Frequency: Whenever the action slows down, 1 in 8.

Ruins: CHUDs, scavenging tribes, pig-men
Hills/Caves: scavenging tribes, pig-men
Radioactive Zones: CHUDs, tentacle beasts
Swamp: tentacle beasts, Bush League, pig-men
Forest: mutant bears (porridge optional), Jersey Devil, pig-men
Shore: Guidos, Landsharks, pig-men
Mountains: mutant bears, inbred hicks, pig-men

You get the idea.

Noteworthy Sites

Hex **601:** *Hoboken* – Population 30,000. Ruled by the **Witch-Queen** (imagine Glenn Close as Cruella De Vil), who wants to have the head of hometown hero Frank Sinatra enshrined in the city. The head is believed to be in Vega\$, which has some mystical connection to Acey (Hex 610).

Hex **610:** *Acey* – Population 50,000. A wretched hive of scum and villainy full of loaded dice and rigged card games, it also houses (in the airport ruins to the south) a cult that worships **The Flying Dutch Schultz**, which is a Boeing 707 with a sentient but deeply delusional autopilot that still might be able to get a party of adventurers to Vega\$ in return for the right sacrifice. If a party hasn't yet encountered the Jersey Devil, he will come to investigate when they cross the last causeway into Acey.

Hex **502:** *Meadowlands* – home to the Mad Hermit and his puma Whiskers. Looks and smells just like the guy from *B2*. Has some rumors to communicate.

Trenton and Environs (Hex **205** and surroundings): Trenton made, the world took, and then they nuked the hell out of it. Deadly radiation.

Hex **307:** *Fort Dix*. Thoroughly nuked. Probably some pre-Whoops military gear in there, if you could get through the radiation.

Hex **402:** *New Brunswick* – population 4,000. The closest thing to a normal town New Jersey has these days. Kind of wary about adventuring parties.

Hex **607:** *Toms River* – Population 600. Home to a sect that's fond of sacrificing outsiders to the Jersey Devil, who protects the village in exchange for the occasional snack. Has excellent second-hand clothing, weapons, and armor stores, though.

Hex **306:** *Bordentown* – Population 80. Home to the Mastoris Diner, finest restaurant in the state. Just don't ask too many questions about where they get their meat.

Hex **204:** *Princeton* – Plenty of pre-Whoops Mad Science tech in ruined labs, but also home to **The Princeton University Band**, a horrifying giant amoeba, colored orange and black in a plaid pattern (tends to cause *nausea* in viewers), with bits of brass instruments poking out of it. The Band attacks with a cacophonous (and *nauseating*) sonic attack and will eat (and especially drink) *anything*, singing filthy (and *nauseating*) limericks off-key and lurching around erratically all the while.

Pine Barrens (forests east and south of Fort Dix, Hex **407** and surroundings): Stomping grounds of the **Jersey Devil**, who looks exactly like Tenniel's Jabberwock illustration, down to the waistcoat. Speaks with an incongruously high and squeaky British voice. Excruciatingly well-mannered, right up until he eats you. Lack of Vorpal Swords in post-apocalyptic New Jersey makes him a very dangerous opponent.

Bogs (swamps north of Pine Barrens, Hex **505** and surroundings): The fetid depths of the cranberry bogs are home to pig-men and the radical Vegetable Separatists known as the Bush League:

- **Rovin' Karl the Turd Blossom** – Baby face with little white petals, throws feces, *nauseates* opponents by emitting vile stench, speech causes *berserk* rage.
- **The Decider** – Human-sized W-shaped saguaro cactus with cowboy hat and nickel-plated six-shooter; claims to be in charge but tends to hide behind Big Dick if things get violent; speech causes *confusion*.
- **Big Dick** – smaller, more evil, better dressed, less Appalachian Hillbilly Tree from <http://www.somethingpositive.net/sp05042002.shtml>; in addition to his Horrific Cornhole Attack, he carries a shotgun, with which he loves to shoot "meatbags" in the face.

Southern Swamps (Hex **210** and surroundings): home to tribes of subhuman pig-men. Referee's choice whether they're pig-faced orcs, Kallikaks, or just Phillies fans.

Garden State Parkway (road along eastern side of state): has a tollbooth approximately every two hundred yards, each manned by a surly troll demanding a few silver pieces. Trolls are in fact fully licensed and bonded representatives of the New Jersey Highway Authority. Turnpike (center-west to northeast) has higher tolls but many fewer of them.

New York City: The map is correct. It no longer exists, period.

"Central New Jersey after the 'Big Whoops'" © 2010, Adam Thornton <athornton@gmail.com>

This 2010 One-page Dungeon Contest entry (and winner in the "Best Post-Apocalyptic Goodness" category) is adapted from *Bring Me The Head Of Frank Sinatra!*, an adventure for *Mutant Future* and similar systems, projected for release in 2010.

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weird wild woolies from Zak S.

Eye of Dread

Number: 1-4

Size: Small

HD: 1-3

Speed: 6

DC: 6

Attacks: Grab/Strangle (Strength 18)

Damage: 1-3, or 2-8 if strangling a neck

Special: Gaze Attack: Blindness (50%) or Madness (50%)

Alignment: Neutral (Evil Natured)

Description: The unnatural union of a thief's hand, a snake's body, and the eye of either a blind child or a lunatic, the Eye of Dread is a kind of evil humunculus created by witches of the northern wastes, who employ them to spy on their foes and, occasionally, to suffocate them in their sleep. Though possessing a rudimentary intelligence, an Eye of Dread is little more than a tool of its mistress, and cannot breed. If slain, the creature turns into a glove. The glove will fit no-one except the witch who sent the Eye, and will fit her in whatever guise she may adopt. The eye set into the withered palm acts as both a scrying device for the witch and a weapon. If the creature was made using a blind eye, then anyone gazing into the eye must save or be blinded for 1-4 rounds. If the creature was made using a maniac's eye then the victim must save or roll on the Insanities That Are Actually Interesting In Combat Table (the effect will last 1-4 rounds).

d12	Insanity That Is Actually Interesting In Combat
1	Target becomes a kleptomaniac
2	Target PC does exactly the opposite of whatever player wants him/her to do
3	Target needs a strong drink before taking any action
4	Target attacks nearest friendly PC
5	Target believes s/he is nearest friendly PC
6	Target is paralysed with indecision
7	Target is <i>confused</i>
8	Target thinks s/he is dead
9	Target thinks s/he is nearest foe
10	Target becomes obsessed with nearby irrelevant object
11	Target moves toward highest point within his/her ordinary move range, and jumps off
12	Target drops his/her weapon and begins to cry for help in any and all languages known to him/her



Moat Dragon

Number: 1-4

Size: Large

HD: 4+1

Speed: 9 (Swim 15)

DC: 4

Attacks: Bite

Damage: 1-10

Special: about 30% of moat dragons have a special feature – horns, chameleon skin, exceptional smell, poison, etc.

Alignment: Neutral

Description: This semi-domesticated aquatic offshoot of the black dragon is a product of selective breeding. While their breath weapons, wings, and legs were bred out of them centuries ago and they are generally too isolated from their own kind to learn magic, they grow to enormous and peasant-intimidating size at a ridiculously young age. There are dozens of known strains, and subspecies with unusual features such as venom sacs, goat horns, tentacles, and chameleon-like skin have all been reported. The powerful lords who own and trade moat dragons generally house them in palisaded pools or moats far too deep to escape, and have the animals killed when they outgrow their enclo-

tures. On rare occasions, however, they escape into the sea, where they grow bitter, ancient and coarse-scaled in the deep water, develop algae-filled beards and vast, flowing fins like tattered warship sails, and learn strange magics from the cold and cryptic things that sleep far beneath the waves. (And grow to six or more times this size.)



Skrath

Number: 1

Size: Small

HD: See below

Speed: 3

DC: 8, 2, 0, or -12

Attacks: None

Special: See below

Description: The Skrath is indeed horrible, and feared in every corner of every land, more even than the dread Tarrasque. His body is the loathsome body of a hideous crawling thing, and his face is a grotesque mockery of the faces of men. He creeps along the undersides of carriages, whispering foully to coach-horses and exposes his horrific tongue to lone fishwives on the wharves in the night. It is said that the coming of The Skrath makes doves abandon their eggs, causes gourds to grow in unclean shapes, makes good men weep and wail and gnash their teeth and clean their knives until his coming is ended, and bodes ill for the education of children (though it is also said that he teaches them the secrets of the Moon and the White Star).

Basically, The Skrath is a unique three-foot-long greyish-green monster that shows up one day in a town or city and is usually found just lying there doing nothing (25% chance with its tongue hanging out). Treat The Skrath like an artifact or relic – what exactly The Skrath can do is left entirely up to the GM, but the main thing is that the villagers, townsfolk, nobility, and other excitable 0-level types see The Skrath as the worst possible omen and have copious legends built up around it that may or may not be true and are terrified of it. In imagining possible properties of The Skrath, remember that The Skrath may be powerful but it is not flashy: it won't just shoot fireballs at people, but maybe anyone who points at it will slowly melt over the course of a day, or maybe The Skrath just makes everyone roll at -15 all the time, or maybe it eats kindness and so removes all tender feelings from people, or maybe it is impossible to kill not because it has a million hit points but merely because anyone wanting to kill it immediately loses all motivation, or maybe it makes everyone's wishes at the exact moment it appears come true – so if some-one's thinking "I wish I could find my shoe" then s/he'll see The Skrath and find a shoe, and if someone's thinking "I wish I'd never had a child" then their child disappears, or maybe The Skrath is a benevolent wizard doomed to crawl the earth in a detestable guise, or maybe The Skrath is a magical rorschach test that responds to people in whatever way they treat it, or maybe The Skrath is a philosopher that says disturbing things like the Earth revolves around the Sun and monarchy is not the ideal form of government and women should have the same legal rights as men, or maybe The Skrath is just a one hit-die greyish-green animal that lies there looking horrible and not doing anything and people think it's evil even though it's actually just ugly.

Thog (a.k.a. Chiron Crawler, Digitaur)

Number: 1-12, or 4-40 in lair

Size: Large

HD: 5

Speed: 9

DC: by armor

Attacks: Poleaxe

Damage: 1-10

Special: Wild specimens have scratch attack

Alignment: Neutral (varies by individual)

Description: None know the true origin of the thogs, but sages feel safe in assuming it involved sorcery, lunacy, and strong drink. They have the head, arms, and upper torso of ordinary men, while their lower bodies are shaped like gigantic human hands. There are two major subraces, known as "tall" and "long". Tall thogs (with the fingers emerging forward from the torso) are generally given to intellectual pursuits, including bureaucracy, politics, magic, and playing the violin. These fearsome hybrids are often found in the employ of sea hags, misanthropic alchemists, and power-mad magi, though some have been known to betray their masters in order to pillage eldritch secrets from their librar-



ies and labs. Long thogs (with the thumb characteristically emerging from the front of the torso and the fingers facing backward) are fierce warriors. In the gladiatorial pits of Cors-Edeth and lower Vornheim thogs are pitted against driders and centaurs, and few who wager on the misshapen abominations are disappointed. Their weapon of choice is the poleaxe, with which they strike ordinary foes from above. Although they make excellent guards, “right” crawlers will only allow them-selves to be partnered with “left” crawlers, and vice versa. In wilderness areas, both subspecies have been observed to grow their leg-nails long and use them to scratch or claw as they move toward opponents, though this tactic is impractical in urban areas or stone-floored dungeons. Such thogs receive one extra scratch attack against up to five adjacent foes, doing 1d4.

Tower Golem

Number: 1

Size: It's a friggin' animated tower

HD: 10 per story tall (2d4+2 stories)

Speed: 9

DC: -2

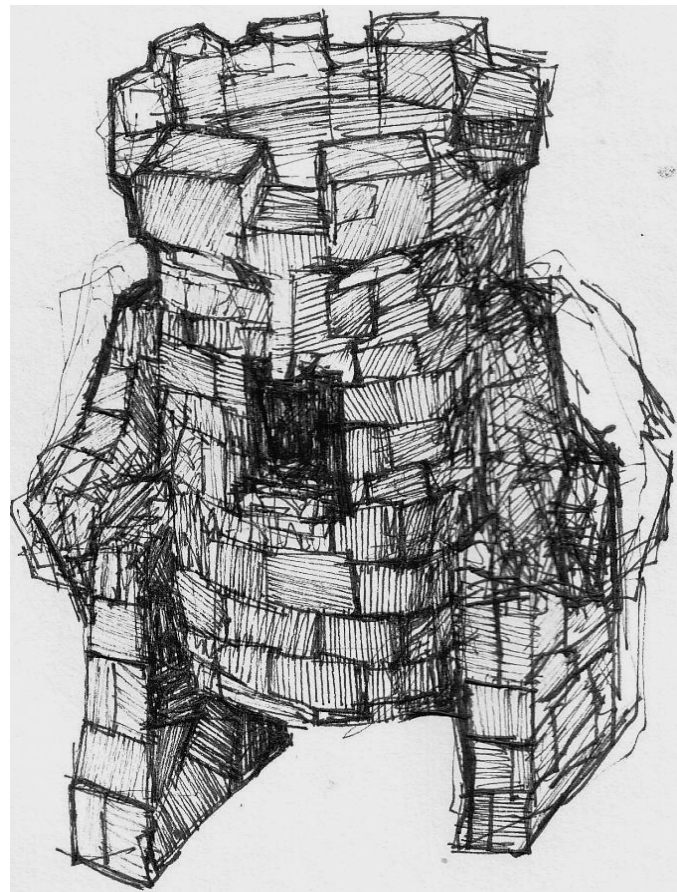
Attacks: Tower Golem Smash!

Damage: 1d10 per story tall

Special: Half damage from everything other than picks, catapults, and spells which would damage a big tower; immune to all non-physical magical effects, poison, etc.

Alignment: Neutral

Description: These enormous magical stone constructs – allegedly a hybrid of goblin alchemy and dwarvish engineering – are as tall as castles and feared in every civilized nation. In siege warfare, these juggernauts are employed to crush battlements, stomp infantry, carry archers in their stony crowns, and act as living bridges across moats and parapets. In order to control a tower golem, one must during the battle employ a specially-prepared and highly-accurate scale model of the battlefield upon which it is to be deployed, including a model of the golem itself quarried from the same stone as the golem. The golem's hulking bodies burn magic quickly, and few remain animated more than four or five hours. When the energies that power them dissipate, they slump over, immobile, and are often converted into fortified residences. Occasionally, depending on where they come to rest, their “corpses” become integrated into the strongholds they once were employed to destroy. On rare occasions, it has proven possible for clever wizards to re-animate these living siege engines after their “retirement”, and on rarer occasions, the creatures have been known to live on in strange and subtle ways long after their original purpose has been served. Tower Golems have -10 to hit due to their size and (lack of) speed. Generally PCs will take them out through guile, clever use of terrain, catapult barrages, and the like rather than mano-a-mano.



Ten Dooms of the Icy Wastes

cryonic Carcosan contacts by Chris Robert

These ten encounters can be assigned to specific locations in the Icy Wastes or rolled for (d10) as random encounters to be stumbled upon by PCs during exploration. Some adjustments may need to be made to account for availability of specified terrain. Some details are purposely left vague: GMs are encouraged to elaborate where necessary.

I. Fungoid Abomination from the Realms of Frost. A foul excrescence of the Old Ones haunts the wind-blasted snow fields in this area. If surprised, it is encountered resting in a shallow burrow dug from the ice. Otherwise, the creature has caught the party's scent and will stalk them for several miles, attacking whenever it can. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath** (DC 7, Spd 12, HD 6, Chaotic). This specimen is a jale-furred fungoid creature with three eyes that attacks with a gaping, suckered feeding orifice. It radiates intense cold (1 die damage per round to all within 20'), and it is surprised only on a 1. The pelt of this beast can be crafted into a pair of human-sized suits that offer superb protection from freezing conditions and cold-based attacks: anytime the wearer suffers cold-based damage or disability, a successful saving throw (with a +4 bonus) vs. dragon breath negates all adverse effects.

II. Field of Icy Bones. A narrow, winding pass opens into a hidden vale harboring a sinister sight: thousands of human bones and partial skeletons, composed entirely of ice. These bones are the remains of an army devoured by I'thaqua millennia ago, and are not eroded by the weather – they are as eternal as the chill winds that scathe the Icy Wastes. Any who tamper with the bones attracts the wrath of I'thaqua: within 1-4 turns, the trespassers will be set upon by a monstrous guardian, a foul Tundra Wyrms bursting from the frosty ground (surprise on 1-5) to attack the transgressors. **Tundra Wyrms** (DC 2, Spd 15, HD 17, Chaotic). Looks very much like a white Purple Worm sheathed in a brittle icy crust, with a jagged icicle in place of the stinger. It is immune to normal missile weapons, and attacks with either a bite (2D damage, to-hit roll of 20 means bitten in half and killed instantly) or a tail strike (1D damage, save v. poison or frozen in place for 2-8 rounds). As it takes damage, its icy shroud is battered and ablated: for each full HD it loses in combat, adjust its AC upward by 1 (to a max of 9; the shroud is fully renewed each day).

III. Lair of the Frozen Pudding. At the foot of a steep hill, an icy cave mouth offers the promise of shelter from

the elements. A 75' tunnel opens into a natural chamber approximately 30' by 50' across, with a ceiling 40' above. This chamber appears empty, and only an exactly diligent examination will reveal the danger: a frozen Black Pudding clings to the rocky ceiling. If a fire is lit in this chamber, the heat will begin to thaw the pudding: after 2-8 hours, it will be sufficiently warmed to drop down and attack a randomly-determined victim (surprise is automatic). **Black Pudding** (DC 6, Spd 3, HD 10, Neutral [unintelligent]). Lodged within the greasy mass of the pudding is a single intact *Elder Sign*.

IV. The Fate of the Witch. A low, snowy hill marks the site of a long-extinct volcano. Within the shallow crater is a place of punishment and sacrifice, held sacred by the tribes of White Primitives that roam the Icy Wastes. A ceremony is underway at this very moment: a dozen White Primitives form a ring around a Jale Woman, who is naked, gagged, and bound to a thick totem pole. She is an accused witch, and they await her death (in 7-12 hours) from exposure. She is beautiful, and struggles and cries piteously while the tribesmen kick snow at her and hoot derisively. If outsiders appear, the woman will redouble her struggles in an attempt to gain assistance. The primitives are aggressive toward interlopers, and defy attempts to communicate: they speak a debased and guttural language that is unintelligible to outsiders. They will respond violently to any attempts to free the woman. This woman is, in fact, a witch, and a very dangerous one at that. If her gag is removed, she will throw back her head and shriek a long, ululating cry: 1-3 B'yakhee will immediately teleport to her side and attack anyone in the vicinity. If allowed, she will utter another cry every third round, until at least 9 B'yakhee have been summoned. She and her minions will attack everyone present until she suffers 3 HD or more damage, at which point she and the B'yakhee will teleport away for good. **12 White Primitives** (DC 7, Spd 9, HD 1+2, Lawful). They are dressed in heavy furs and wield javelins and brutal-looking spiked clubs (+1 damage). Each wears random ivory trinkets worth 1Dgp, and one carries jewelry seized from the witch: a necklace of linked bronze plates (20gp), bronze bracers set with small rubies (80gp each), gold hoop earrings (35gp each), and a half-dozen engraved gold rings (20gp each). **Jale Witch** (DC 9, Spd 12, HD 6, Chaotic). She will snatch a weapon from any nearby fallen combatant and attack the nearest person. If seriously wounded, she will escape in the arms of one of her B'yakhee minions. If you are playing a more mainstream ruleset than Carcosa's, she should have appropriate Mage spells for 6th level. **B'yakhee** (DC 9, Spd 9/24, HD 4, Chaotic). These creatures can teleport at will anywhere in the universe, and use this power in combat to tactical advantage, or to escape.

IV. The Crippled Machine. In a shallow vale marked by strewn rocky debris and tumbled icy rubble, a savage hun-



ter lies in wait. This area is home to an aggressive robot and the recharging station that sustains it. Originally a large (7' tall by 12' long) and robust model, the intervening centuries have seen several of this robot's appendages damaged or destroyed, and it is now forced to drag itself fitfully along with only three working legs. The only programming remaining intact instructs this robot to annihilate all non-Space Alien life, save Brown Men (whom it will refuse to attack even if attacked first). It prefers to snipe enemies at maximum range, then seek cover to await close combat with tractor beam/tentacle attacks. If the robot is destroyed, the recharging station will be found if the PCs search the area. This unit is a small terminal that extends far into the ground (the power is drawn from geothermal sources deep within the planet), and the couplings are unique to this model of robot – a successful check vs. INT is required to jury-rig the unit to recharge any items of technology the PCs may be carrying. A new check must be made for each item the PCs wish to recharge. Two consecutive failures will result in an electrical discharge that does 1D damage to anyone within 10'. A third consecutive failure will result in an explosion that deals 3D damage to anyone within 30' (those who take damage must also save vs. dragon breath or be rendered unconscious for 1D rounds) and destroys the unit. A discharge or explosion also provoke an immediate check on the Wandering Monster Table. Over the centuries, loose treasures have accumulated from the robot's numerous kills. The robot has carefully gathered these treasures and heaped them about the dessicated corpses of five Brown Men that it guards. Each turn of diligent searching reveals the location of a corpse and allows the party to roll for Treasure Type A; following five turns, further searching will yield nothing.

Robot Form 109Δ41 (DC 4, Spd 6, HD 12 [54hp], Lawful). This machine is of arachnid morphology, mounts a thulium pulse pistol, tractor beam, tentacles [2D damage], repulsor beam, and a full suite of special detection systems. It cannot be surprised. Centuries of combat and neglect have left vital circuitry vulnerable to attack – any to hit roll of a natural 20 is a critical hit that does double damage (or triple if you already play with that rule). Also, its color receptors are degraded and there is a 50% chance each time it tries to attack a Black or Purple Man that it will become confused (thinking the opponent Brown), and its attack for the round will be forfeit.

VI. The Lost Fane. This area radiates an intense evil that can be felt by anyone who approaches. Within a shallow, bowl-shaped depression some one thousand yards across is a shattered fane to I'thaqua. No matter the prevailing weather, an icy gale will ceaselessly whip the snow here into whirling sheets that tatter clothing, chill armor, and rend flesh (save vs. dragon breath each hour or suffer 1D damage; at GM's discretion, special clothing or precautions may allow a bonus to this saving throw). At the center, all that remains of the fane are two jagged columns that jut like broken ribs from a pile of snow-crusting rubble. This

rubble contains nothing of value, but anyone actively searching through it will incite the wrath of I'thaqua: within 4-16 hours, the interloper(s) will be attacked by a revolting minion of the enraged Old One. Cultists of I'thaqua still visit this unholy site on occasion, though it is not known why they refuse to restore the fane to its former stature. There is a 5% chance per day that 3-18 Yellow Men clad in distinctive light gray wrappings will arrive to worship and perform unclean rites (typically brief due to the hazardous weather). **Obscenity of I'thaqua** (DC 5, Spd 18, HD 6, Chaotic). This detestable abomination is a massive, rotting polar bear carcass animated by the malice of I'thaqua. Hits from this beast have a 5% chance of inflicting *The Creeping Freeze* upon the victim (see p. 57). This creature will track and hunt fleeing quarry to the boundaries of the Icy Wastes. **3-18 Yellow Cultists** (DC 9, Spd 12, HD 1, Chaotic). They typically bear knives and clubs, and there is a 50% chance that half will carry 1-6 javelins. Each has 1-10 sp. Their unique light gray wrappings are quite warm, and allow a +4 bonus to any cold-related saving throws.

VII. The Fallen Saucer. Partially concealed by a berm of drifting snow is the mostly-intact wreckage of a Space Alien flying saucer. It is a small saucer, only ten feet tall and a dozen yards in circumference; of the original crew of five, only a single Space Alien remains alive. The lone Space Alien is interested only in surviving long enough to be rescued by its kind. The saucer's sensors are partially functioning: radar and night vision systems provide coverage out to 100", and an automatic warning will alert the Space Alien to any intruders detected. A 360° turret with two weapons provides defense: a microwave pulse bazooka (9 shots remaining) and an insanity beam (17 shots remaining). Local terrain and a damaged elevator in the turret conspire to limit these weapons to targets between 30' and 150' distant. The Space Alien will open the main door and engage enemies that come within 30' with small arms fire. At night, the saucer is stalked by a Spawn of Shub-Niggurath. It yearns to destroy the saucer, but will attack any prey found in the vicinity first. It is wary of the turreted weapons, and is smart enough to avoid lingering in their field of fire. The Space Alien High Command has written this wreck off as unworthy of salvage; there is no rescue forthcoming. **Space Alien** (DC 2, Spd 12, HD 1-1, Lawful). It wields a terbium beam rifle (32 shots left) and a wrench-like tool that counts as a club, and wears unpowered hi-tech armor that provides a low defense class but nothing else. It also wears a niobium-mesh choker that is worth 600gp if a sophisticated buyer can be found. It is crazed with fear, and will not listen to reason, offers of parley/surrender, etc. **Spawn of Shub-Niggurath** (DC 5, Spd 18, HD 6, Chaotic). This creature is a white-furred insectoid with one eye and a beaked trunk; it drains blood and is immune to cold. Its chitinous exoskeleton is pierced with a half-dozen decorative titanium skull ornaments, each worth 1Dx5gp. Additionally, it bears a curious rod in one of its fore-claws: a human femur, crudely notched and

featuring a rounded lump of obsidian at the top. It serves no purpose, but can fetch up to 200gp from a buyer of unsavory character.

VIII. Ice Garden of the Old One. Where two steep mountains meet, an icy defile stretches back into chilly darkness. Varying in width from a few feet to the span of a single hand (heavy armor and/or bulky clothing must be removed to pass), the steep sides almost come together to form a roof, and no sunlight ever strikes the path here. After a half mile, the defile opens into a broad gorge a thousand feet long and a hundred feet wide. The atmosphere is one of intense, palpable evil. The walls curve inward as they rise, nearly closing at the top; on the brightest days above, the light here is never more than a dim twilight glow, while a sparkling haze of blown ice and snow ceaselessly floats down from above. Visibility may abruptly drop to zero, as frosty gales periodically arise that whip the ice into razoring sheets of white, cold death. This gorge is one of the many lairs of I'thaqua, to which are brought and brooded over by the Old One numerous sacrifices of men and material. At any time, D20+100 icy pillars jut from the snowy floor like stumpy teeth; a vague darkness within each betrays the presence of the sacrifice entombed inside. Recovering the contents of a single ice pillar requires 2D6 man/hours of grueling labor, and this assumes useful excavating tools are at hand: picks, axes, mattocks, hammers, and the like. Roll a D12, and note that halfway through the digging and chopping the type of sacrifice will be revealed, though not the exact amounts/contents:

1-6: Worthless Goods. Mangy furs, spoiled foodstuffs, broken tools, loose items of no value or use.

7: Weapons. D6-1 hand axes, D4 clubs, 3D6 javelins, D6 stone knives, 25% chance that one weapon provides +1 bonus to hit due to obviously superior craftsmanship, all in serviceable condition and secured in an oilskin wraps.

8: Armor. D6 sets hide armor, D4-1 sets leather armor, D3-1 helmets, D3-1 small wooden shields. Additionally, all sets provide good protection from cold weather, and there is a 25% chance that one set of armor provides +1 bonus to AC due to obviously superior craftsmanship; all are in serviceable condition and secured in oilskin wrap.

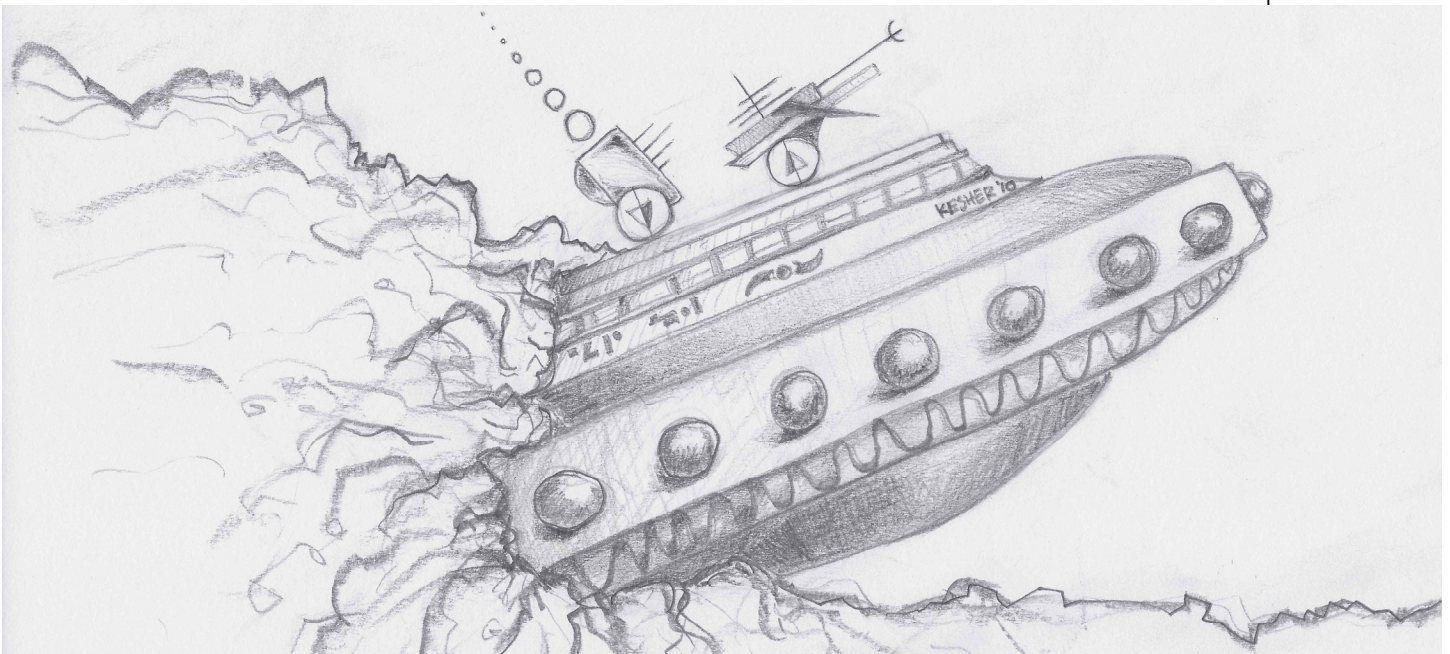
9: Minor Treasure. Mixed coins of 1D10x100gp value, secured in earthenware pots.

10: Major Treasure. Mixed coins, gems, and jewelry of D10x1000gp in value, secured in heavy stone canisters.

11: Human Corpse. Frozen body of random race. The body is intact, and the manner of death is unclear. Carries Treasure Type B in a pouch shoved in its mouth. 80% chance that such a corpse will animate as a *Frozen Minion* 2-16 rounds after being fully excavated.

12: Animal Corpse. Frozen carcass of random common animal type, typically with heart and entrails crudely removed. 25% chance that it is decorated with sacrificial baubles of 2-20gp in value. There is a 50% chance that such a corpse will animate as an *Ice Beast* 2-16 rounds after being fully excavated.

I'thaqua guards its sacrifices jealously, though to what purpose it keeps them is known by no man. Excavating the contents of an ice pillar has a 9% chance of instantly summoning the Old One; it will attack all transgressors furiously while they remain in the gorge, but will not pursue them into the narrow defile. **Frozen Minion** (DC 7, Spd 3, HD 3, Neutral [unintelligent], surprise on 1-4 when they come alive). These animate corpses have a relentless drive to annihilate the living. Though deadly when striking with surprise, they are rather easily avoided due to their ponderous, lurching movement. They suffer only 1hp damage from stabbing/puncturing hits, but take double damage from heat/energy attacks. Additionally, weapons that hit them have a 20% chance of breaking due to the unnatural cold of their bodies. If corpses are dis-





-membered or burned prior to animation, a severed hand or charred head will still come alive and strike to limited, though unnerving, effect. **Ice Beast** (DC 6, Spd 3, HD 5, Neutral [unintelligent], surprise on 1-4 when they come alive). Statistics are identical no matter the original species. Also implacable in their desire to destroy the living. They too suffer only 1hp damage from stabbing/puncturing hits, but take double damage from heat/energy attacks. Additionally, weapons that hit them have a 20% chance of breaking due to the unnatural cold of their bodies. Successful hits have a 20% chance of transmitting *Creeping Freeze*. If carcasses are dismembered or burned prior to animation, a tattered claw or charred maw will still come alive and strike to limited, though unnerving, effect. **I'thaqua** (DC 2, Spd 36, HD 55, Chaotic). All within 100' suffer 3D cold damage per round. Delivers 8D damage per hit. Can control the weather and will create blinding snowstorms of unmatched ferocity. Psionics: 2-4 powers up to four times per day.

IX. The Ice Giants. A clan of 8 White Mutants roams the length and breadth of the Icy Wastes, hunting man and beast alike to satisfy their insatiable lust for blood and violence. Each is over 9' tall, and they all wear only knee-high boots and ragged pants, clumsily crafted from the pelts of various local animals. They each wield a massive stone-headed mattock, and have one or more huge stone knives tucked into their breeches. They may be encountered on the move (75% chance), or in a camp (25%) comprised of several makeshift shelters and igloos. They are prone to savagery but cagey, and may feign friendliness in order to lure victims into ambush. They are masters of trap-making in the tundra, and will attempt to lure victims into snares, concealed crevasses, avalanches, and the like. They are motivated far more by the thrill of the hunt than the by the potential spoils, and live captures are preferred to immediately fatal encounters. Captured opponents will be held for 2-8 days and then cooked and eaten. Locals are terrified of these marauders and will flee them on sight. Anyone who flourishes the severed head of one of these brutes at a group of the native primitives will be feted as a mighty hero. **8 White Mutants** (DC 6, Spd 15, HD 7, Lawful). They are immune to cold and are never surprised. Hits from their huge mattocks deal 2D damage due to

their unmatched strength; these weapons are too large and unwieldy to be used by anyone else. Each one wears a mix of polished bone, ivory, and obsidian trinkets worth 5Dgp.

X. The Crawling Caves. For several miles, the icy tundra is a seething cauldron of geologic activity. Roiling clouds of steam and stinking vapors smother the landscape, hiding boiling pools of mineral-rich water that erupt into explosive geysers. A line of low hills is pierced by the entrance to a cave that descends deep into the bowels of the earth. The air within is generally warm and humid, and reeks of sulfur and organic decay. The passage varies from 5' to 10' wide unless otherwise noted. Most surfaces are coated with an extremely thick layer of damp purple mold, and growths of weird fungi and iridescent slime undulate and drip in the darkness. These growths are usually harmless; however anyone who sleeps among them without clearing out a bare, relatively dry spot must save vs. poison or contract *Mycetic Smut* (see next page). The caves are quite extensive, with numerous forking passages and snaking side-tunnels, and they meander steadily downward for tens of miles. In many places, the passage will broaden into a larger chamber or cavern, narrowing again at the far end and continuing on. Explores are certain to encounter many curiosities, both benign and deadly. For every 200' explored, roll D100 on the following table:

01-09: Unremarkable Passage. Move along.

10: Mud Baths. Abundant steam and several pools of warm, gently bubbling mud make footing tricky in this small natural cavern. A soothing mud bath followed by a full period of rest heals one full hit die of damage.

11-14: D100 Giant Jungle Ants (DC 6, Spd 15, HD 1, 2D damage [sting], Neutral [unintelligent]). The moist heat has attracted a small colony of these vicious insects to a medium-sized cavern with numerous stalactites and stalagmites. This area is scoured clean of organic material.

15-16: Iron Nodules. Small nodules of iron litter the floor, and several larger ones protrude from the walls. They are exceptionally pure and valuable: each pound of this iron gathered can be sold to a blacksmith for 20 gp.

17-24: Tight Fit. For several dozen feet, the passage narrows uncomfortably. Armor and bulky equipment will have to be removed to continue, and large items (chests, pack animals, etc.) will be unable to pass.

25-26: Spawn of Shub-Niggurath(?). The passage opens into a large natural chamber, where a loathsome Spawn lurks; generate randomly as normal. It has gathered a small cache of treasure: 10Dx10gp in coins, gems and jewelry. This chamber has 1D2 additional exits.

27-30: 1D Shriekers (DC 9, Spd 0, HD 3, deafening wail, Neutral [unintelligent]). These fungi are sprinkled throughout a large natural cavern that is half as wide as it is long, and will begin wailing if they sense light within 60', or movement within 30': roll three times on this chart, any results of a mobile creature will arrive in 4D4 rounds.

Creeping Freeze: This terrible disease causes the victim to slowly freeze to death. Each day following exposure, the victim must save vs. spells – failure indicates that their movement rate is reduced by 1, as their limbs stiffen and vitality is drained. Those afflicted may remove armor and shed encumbrance in order to remain mobile. When failed saves cause unencumbered movement to reach 0, the victim perishes, frozen solid in a grim example of the frigid potency of the Icy Wastes. It is rumored that some shamans of the local tribes have developed a cure for this disease that involves imbibing potent brewed spirits and repeated soakings in sacred hot water springs.

Mycetic Smut: Though not fatal, this disease is debilitating and loathsome. After a gestation period of one week, fungal growths and oozing seepage plague the victim and are impossible to eradicate: discomfort reduces movement to 6, armor cannot be worn, all saving throws and to-hit rolls incur a penalty of -3, and ability scores are halved. Disgusting and highly contagious, victims of this disease will be shunned and denied entry to all communities.

31-40: Cold Area. A small cavern, no more than 50'x50'. The air here is chilly and dry, and there is no purple mold or fungus in this area.

41: Shoggoth (DC 6, Spd 9, HD 18, surprise 1-4, Chaotic). Will generally cling to the ceiling or take the shape of a curious-looking stalagmite and attack with surprise.

42-62: Fork. The passage splits into D3+1 passages that branch away from one another. Diligent mapping is recommended.

63-64: Gold Rush. A substantial vein of gold is plainly visible. Total value is 2Dx100gp, and can be removed at the rate of 10gp/turn. Mining is extremely noisy: roll three times on this chart each turn, any results of a mobile creature will arrive in 4D4 rounds.

65-67: 1D Deep Ones (DC 5, Spd 9/24, HD 1+1, Chaotic). A wandering group just passing through. They carry Treasure Type K between them.

68-75: Precipitous Drop. The passage abruptly drops 1Dx10' before continuing on normally. Poor lighting and/or incautious exploration will result in a fall.

76-80: Signs of Life. In a small natural chamber, trampled and cleared fungus give evidence of recent habitation.

81-82: Fungus-Men. The reflective eyes of a dozen or more of these curious, small creatures peek out from among a wild tangle of fungi. They flee into small openings in the walls before they can be captured or killed.

83-84: Radioactive Ore. A section of passage 2Dx10' long is damp and warm, but devoid of organic growth due to the presence of highly radioactive ore within the rock. Any who linger here for more than 12 hours must save v. poison or immediately roll on a Mutation Chart.

85-90: 2D4 Velociraptors (DC 6, Spd 21, HD 3, 1D damage [claws or bite], Neutral [unintelligent]). A small pack of these quick, cunning dinosaurs prowls the caves looking for a meal.

91-92: Snake-Men Artifact. A small totem, artfully crafted container, or decorative tile is a relic of the long-lost Snake-Men. Such things are shunned by most, but may be sold for 1Dx50gp if the right buyer can be found.

93-99: Abrupt Rise. The passage rises vertically to a height of 1Dx10' before continuing on normally. Thieves may attempt to climb as normal, others will need climbing tools to make the ascent.

00: Explosive Gas Pocket. A sour smell reveals that natural vapors have built up in a 1Dx10' section of the caves, forming a pocket of explosive gas. Open flame (as from a torch or candle) has an 85% chance of igniting the gas; a shielded flame (lantern) has a 25% chance. An explosion deals 2D damage to any within the affected area (save vs. dragon breath for half damage) and will destroy flammable items. Ω

Is your coin pouch a little light?



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The Yellow Forest

dinosaur jungle encounters by Jerry Stratton

The yellow forest is filled with creatures from all eras of bad dinosaur movies. The first encounter might be a jaguar at the jungle's edge. Later, a herd of tiny deer run through the underbrush, chased by a flock of archaeopteryxes. Then, as they get used to tiny creatures, the earth shakes – they're about to get their first glimpse of an apatosaur! Later, they'll see the Angkor-like ruins of ancient Saurians, whose abandoned castles resemble Bayon, carved with the jaws of ferocious tyrannosaurs.

The jungle is a fetid, miasmic swamp-filled forest, stagnant and still. A canopy two hundred feet high hides the sky. The air is thick with moisture. Noise is muted. Days are quiet, broken by the steps of dinosaurs. Nights are filled with strange calls and chittering. Huge spiders weave webs to capture man-sized morsels, and snakes thick as a man slither leisurely through the brush. Yellow-green ferns, cycads, and horsetails – the tallest of which tower over men – grow here. There are broad-leafed bushes, and long vines twist around everything. There is no grass; in the decaying plants on the ground, fungi grow abundantly. Short trees with tough leaves appear almost fern-like. On others, feather-like leaves radiate from a central trunk. Tall ginkgos bear fan-shaped, veined leaves on erratic branches and broad crowns. Over them all, brownish-green mosses cover stone and trunk. On tall conifers, thick, tough, triangular leaves spiral out around the branches. There is a 30% encounter chance every eight hours:

d100	Encounter Type
01-28	Animals
29-48	Dinosaurs
49-67	Insects
68-81	Saurians (d20)
82-91	Plants
92-97	Terrain/Weather
98-00	Dead dinosaur (1 fresh; 6 decaying skeleton)

Animal Subtable:

01-22	Jaguar (d2)
23-39	Horned gophers (d100)
40-54	Deer, dwarf (d20)
55-66	Archaeopteryxes (d20)
67-77	Ground sloths, giant (d6)
78-87	Capybara, giant (d12)
88-92	Toads, killer (2d6)
93-96	Leeches, giant (2d10)
97-99	Snakes, large (d6)
00	Snakes, giant (d2)

Dinosaur Subtable:

01-27	Triceratops (d8)
28-46	Tyrannosaur (d2)
47-60	Ankylosauri (d12)
61-73	Stegosauri (d10)
74-84	Apatosauri (d6)
85-94	Crocodile, giant (1)
95-00	Pterodactyls (d4)

Insect Subtable:

01-18	Beetles, giant (d100)
19-33	Moths, giant (d100)
34-45	Butterflies, giant (d100)
46-56	Mosquitos, giant (d100)
57-66	Dragonflies, giant (d40)
67-75	Wetas, giant (d20)
76-83	Spiders, large (d20)
84-89	Spiders, huge (d10)
90-94	Centipede, giant (d8)
95-98	Buzzflies (2d20)
99-00	Spiders, giant (d12)

Plant Subtable:

01-28	Venus flytraps, giant (d10)
29-54	Swinging chain cacti (d20)
55-78	Hanging vines (d20)
79-00	Burrweeds, giant (4d20)

Terrain and Weather Subtable:

01-24	Rain
25-46	River
47-65	Open meadow
66-83	Quicksand
84-00	Gas swamp

ANKYLOSAUR: In a world of predators, the ankylosaur survives by being difficult to eat. They attack as they flee, swinging a large lump of tailbone at pursuers. Their backs are covered in a shell of fused bone and spikes. Their heads form a beak almost like a bird's.

APATOSAUR: One of the largest land animals ever, an apatosaur can weigh 64,000 pounds. They eat constantly, preferring wide fields or plant-choked waters. They whip their long tails to ward off predators; the sound alone deafens anyone in 20 yards for d10 rounds on a failed save. Leisurely flicking their tail makes a whip-like crack that sends smaller creatures fleeing. Their feet can attack up to two targets within 18', doing 2d12 points to each target hit. They walk on all fours, but their young run partially upright. Their heads are remarkably small, like a large horse's, and their eyes sit atop their head like an amphibian's.



ARCHAEOPTERYX: Often encountered in a flock, the archaeopteryx is at home above and below the canopy. Its mouth has teeth, which helps it eat small rodents, smaller birds, and fish in shallow water.

BEETLE, GIANT: These bugs eat plants, fungi, and dead things. Giant corpses deserve giant beetles to clean them!

BURRWEED, GIANT: A musty odor permeates burrweed patches. Their giant reed-like leaves are covered in a sharp, stiff fuzz that digs deeply into hair, fibers, and fur. Anyone caught in a burrweed patch must make an evasion roll or the number failed by is the number of reeds attached to them; that number is a penalty to all actions. If victims thrash trying to escape, they'll gain d4 more reeds each round, and the burrweeds will emit a special odor to attract carnivores. The more a victim struggles, the more carnivores appear. The best way to escape a burrweed is to remain still and carefully remove the fabric (or hair) the reeds are attached to. If victims cut or tear the reeds, the reeds will release their odor and the victim will gain d4 more reeds on a failed evasion roll. After a minute of thrashing, the reed and all nearby reeds soften their unused hooks. Victims remain caught, but the patch will be temporarily safe for anyone who needs to pass through it – such as carnivores arriving for a tasty snack.

BUTTERFLY, GIANT: There's nothing like climbing above the canopy or entering an open field to see a flock of these

colorful creatures flitting about. They flee at the slightest threat. (See Queen Alexandra Birdwing.)

BUZZFLY: Buzzflies shine a shimmering green. In a swarm they appear as an iridescent cloud from a distance. Their buzzing back wings are sharp and constantly cut whatever they fly near. A swarm of buzzflies will leave a trail of flying leaves and cut foliage behind them. They're not normally aggressive but will attack if threatened and don't go out of their way to avoid obstacles, even living ones.

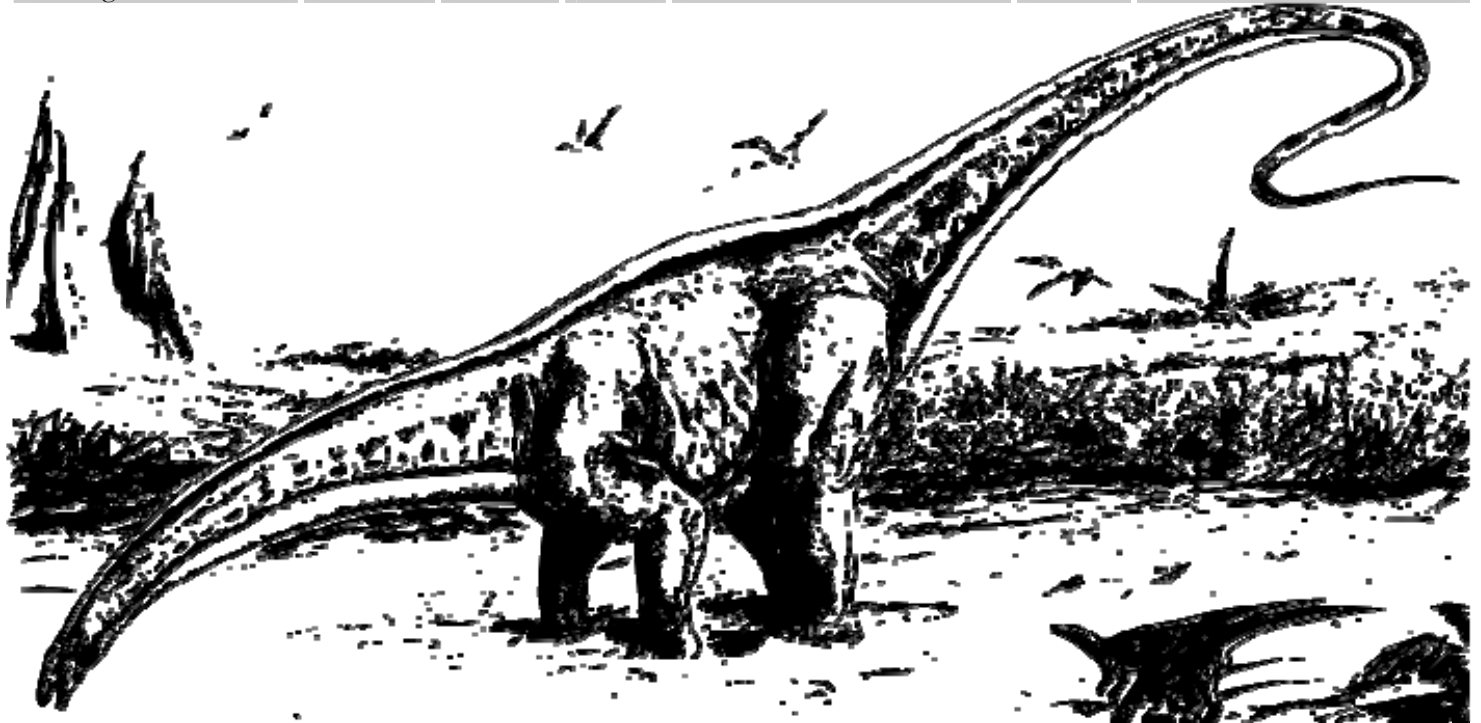
CAPYBARA, GIANT: The largest rodent known, its skull is 20 inches long and it weighs 2,000 pounds. It lives in marshy areas, and its slightly webbed feet allow it to swim quickly. It eats plants and fruit. Outside its home environment, the giant capybara is easy prey for predators. (See *Josephoartigasia monesi* and *Phoberomys pattersoni*.)

CENTIPEDE, GIANT: It moves quickly across the jungle floor and can also go underwater. Its tough crustacean-like shell protects it from predators. It is vulnerable underwater when it molts. Its low profile lets it survive even apatosaur stomps. Powerful jaws allow it to eat any vegetation and many tiny creatures. It has 30 pairs of legs and skitters through the underbrush. In a hurry its body stretches and twists like an accordion. (See *Arthropleura*.)

CROCODILE, GIANT: The giant crocodile's skull is as long as a man. It can make a called attack against any large or

Master Monster Table:

Creature	HD	#	DC	Attacks	Speed	Size
Ankylosaur	7+14	d12	-1	bite d8, tail 2d8	12	20-30 feet
Apatosaur	14+70	d6	2	tail d20, feet 2d12, bite d6	18	25 yards
Archaeopteryx	1	d20	6	bite d2, claw d3	32/6	1-2 feet
Beetle, giant	1	d100	7	bite d2	8	6 inches
Burrweed, giant	2	4d20	8	reeds	0	3-8 feet
Butterfly, giant	½	d100	6	none	13	2 foot wingspan
Buzzfly	½	2d20	5	wing d4	14	6 inches
Capybara, giant	4+4	d12	7	bite d6	14/9	8-10 feet
Centipede, giant	3	d8	-1	bite d12	15	9 feet
Crocodile, giant	9+18	1	4	bite 2d10	15	38 feet
Deer, dwarf	1	d20	7	antlers d3	12	2 feet tall
Dragonfly, giant	1	d40	7	bite 1	14	3 foot wingspan
Ground sloth, giant	5+5	d4	4	claws d8x2, tail d4	11	3 yards
Hanging vine	2	d20	5	strangle d3	0	20-30 yards
Horned gopher	½	d100	7	horn 1	9	6 inches
Jaguar	4+12	1	5	claws 2d6, bite 2d8	18	5-6 feet
Leech, giant	1	2d10	7	bite 1	4	1 foot
Mosquito, giant	1 pt	d100	6	bite ½	12	2-3 inches long
Moth, giant	½	d100	6	none	13	2 foot wingspan
Pterodactyl	6	d4	6	bite d10, claw 2d8	40/14	40 foot wingspan
Saurian	4 to 5	3d8	5	claw d6+2	12/15	7-9 feet
Stegosaur	8+16	d10	4	bite d8, tail 2d10	12	30 feet
Swinging chain cactus	2	d20	6	chain 2d6, fruit d6	0	8-20 feet
Triceratops	10+20	d8	2	horns 2d12	16	30 feet
Tyrannosaur	15+45	d2	4	jaws 3d10, claws d12	24	42 feet
Venus flytrap, giant	2	d12	9	snap d3	0	5-7 feet
Weta, giant	1	d20	8	bite d3	8	8 inches



smaller creature to grab it in its jaws. (Victims are allowed an evasion roll.) Victims take 2d6 damage per round as the croc drags them to its watery lair. Crocs often lie submerged, only their eyes visible. (See *Sarcosuchus*.)

DEER, DWARF: These tiny reddish brown or mottled white deer sport long two-pronged antlers for defense. They hide in the underbrush to avoid prey.

DRAGONFLY, GIANT: Found skimming the surface of marshes and lakes hunting smaller insects and young amphibians, dragonflies have two pairs of wings, large, bulbous, multi-faceted eyes, and a long, thick, segmented body. (See *Meganeura monyi*.)

GAS SWAMP: Huge pockets of flammable air continually bubble up and float several yards before dissipating. Anyone carrying a torch or other flame must make a perception roll each minute or ignite a gas pocket. Exploding pockets do 2d6 damage to the flame-bearer. Anyone within two yards also takes 2d6 damage, though they can make an evasion roll for half. Anyone within three yards takes d6 points if they fail an evasion roll. Gas swamps are 10 to 100 (d10 times 10) yards across.

GROUND SLOTH, GIANT: Shaped vaguely like a bear with a long camel-like face, thick red skin and a long spiked tail, the giant ground sloth is a fearsome predator. It can stand and fight upright, but usually moves on all fours. It is known for its stunningly loud scream. Its thick skin is difficult to penetrate and provides its high defense.

HANGING VINE: These vines hang from the high canopy. They can flail with their thorny vines for d3 points, but usually attack from surprise and with a called shot to the neck: victims must make an evasion roll or be caught. The vine will then tighten for d6 damage per round. While strangling a victim, a vine has a penalty of two to defense.

HORNED GOPHER: This ancient gopher burrows underground and eats roots and seeds. They sport two horns a centimeter long between their eyes and nose.

JAGUAR: The jaguar's fur is yellow or orangish yellow, with dark patterned spots. They prefer dense jungle, but also live near mountains or water. They enjoy swimming. They prefer large prey and will even attack armored creatures, their powerful bite piercing through armor. Its preferred attack is to bite through the top of skulls.

LEECH, GIANT: Purplish black bloated slugs a foot long and half as wide attach to creatures to drink blood.

MEADOW: The open meadows of the jungle are exposed, hot, and loved by dinosaurs. They are 2d20 times 10 yards across, and the encounter chance within a meadow is 20%;

encounters are always a dinosaur. Camping in a meadow, the chance is rolled each hour. So don't do that.

MOSQUITO, GIANT: Compared to the other insects of the jungle, this three inch long bug might not seem like a threat. But it's a three inch long *mosquito*. Imagine and cringe. They prefer larger creatures such as triceratops, capybara, and ground sloths but will also suck the blood of smaller creatures such as humans if the need arises. Because the bite only does ½ point damage, victims take no damage unless hit by a swarm. It still hurts like hell.

MOTH, GIANT: The giant moth's wings are a dull brownish red mottled with white spots and yellow lines. This nocturnal creature doesn't eat; it survives on fat reserves from its larval life. Larvae eat leaves. Moths are eaten by birds (such as the *archaeopteryx*), by capybara, and by saurians. They will congregate around light sources, flying randomly around and into lanterns and flames like a drunken tornado of wings. (See *Atlas Moth*.)

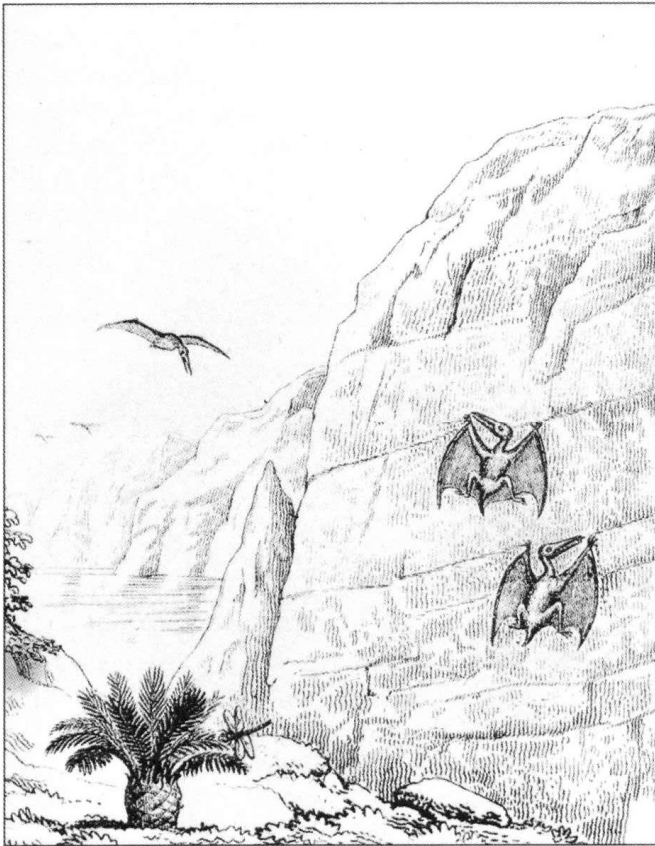
PTERODACTYL: The pterodactyl's head is three yards long. A long crest extends above it into the air. They walk quickly on all fours. They can take off from the ground but soar where possible. They bury their eggs, and live in lagoon-like lakes and marshes. They eat fish and giant insects. (See *Hatzegopteryx* and *Quetzalcoatlus*.)

QUICKSAND: Quicksand embodies the philosophical paradox of life. The worst thing to do is try to get out. A person stuck in quicksand will only sink halfway in (a bit further if weighed down, such as by armor), unless they use the part of their body in the quicksand (usually their feet) to try to get out. Any strenuous effort pulls them further under. There are two ways to get out of deep quicksand (all quicksand in this jungle is deep). If there is a vine or rope to grab onto, the character can make a strength roll at +8 to pull themselves out. Otherwise, the character can move very slowly to "swim" out over a period of two minutes. This requires an agility roll at +8.

RAIN: Rain in the jungle filters through the canopy in huge warm drops that almost sting as they land. Every once in a while buckets of water, held aloft by the dense foliage far above, break through and fall in a great gush.

RIVER: The rivers of the jungle are shallow, wide, and warm, choked with water lilies, reeds, and rotting wood. Giant insects such as dragonflies and mosquitos thrive.

SAURIAN: Saurians are bipedal lizards with long forking tongues, bulbous eyes, and ears behind eye-lid-like membranes. Their iridescent scales shine green and blue in sunlight, making them appear wet or slimy even when dry. They eat plants and animals, but insects are a delicacy. They farm them in their swampy lairs or hunt giant ones.



They can see in the dark, regrow lost arms, legs, and tails, and can move on all fours at movement 15.

STEGOSAUR: Easily recognized by two rows of backplates and its odd cat-like walk, the stegosaur's main defense is the four powerful bone spikes in its tail. Fourteen feet tall, it has shortened forelimbs and an arched back, and walks with its head close to the ground and its tail in the air. It eats green plants and the fruit and seeds from trees and bushes. It can walk partially up trees, leaving its hindlimbs on the ground, to eat fruits, seeds, and leaves.

SWINGING CHAIN CACTI: These large, tree-like cacti have spiny, oblong, fuzzy fruit hanging down in long chains, fruit growing out of other fruit. The spines are sharp. When any medium-sized creature comes within ten yards without being careful, the cacti swing their chains, hurling spiny fruit towards the intruder(s). Half will hurl fruit the first round, and the other half (if there is still movement towards the cacti) the second round. Victims will, if hit, be covered with bits of the fruit, and if they fail an evasion roll they'll have a fruit stuck on them. When a cactus is touched, it will swing the full chain at the disturbance.

TRICERATOPS: Among the most iconic of dinosaurs, the triceratops is recognized by three horns in front of a flared shield-like bone on its head. They stand ten feet tall and weigh over 20,000 pounds. Their head is six-feet long. They eat large plants low to the ground. They will charge creatures smaller than them, and stand their ground against creatures larger than them if they can't easily run.

TYRANNOSAUR: The tyrannosaur's head is five feet long, its jaws incredibly powerful. Its small but strong forelimbs hold prey in place for eating. A called shot captures man-sized creatures in its mouth and hands (an evasion roll avoids capture), doing 2d12 damage each round. They run with their tail thrust behind and their head forward, 13 feet tall at the hips. Their feet are three feet long and two feet wide. They have a strong sense of smell and are difficult to surprise: the smell of prey even wakes them from sleep. Unless odors are masked, tyrannosaurs gain a bonus of four to sense hidden creatures; there is a penalty of four on attempts to hide or surprise them.

VENUS FLYTRAP, GIANT: The white clustering flowers of the flytrap stand on a long stalk high above the flytrap's billowy, spiked, reddish, vaguely heart-shaped leaves, which lay close to the ground and have a slightly sour smell reminiscent of peaches. Some leaves point upwards to attract flying creatures; others point sideways and down to attract crawling creatures. Normally the soft leaves of the flytrap are wide open, but if anything touches the sensitive hairs inside the leaves, the spikes immediately stiffen and the leaves snap shut. One day after killing its prey, the leaves will open and let the bones or shells fall.

WETA, GIANT: The weta looks like a cross between a grasshopper and cricket. Its long back legs propel it four feet into the air. They eat plants and other insects smaller than them, and will usually flee if threatened by larger creatures. They can also play dead, and suddenly bite if a creature nears (at +4 to attack) then flee. A minor poison in their bite causes discomforting pain giving a penalty of 1 to any action for d4 hours. The weta must make a called shot, and victims are allowed an evasion roll. Ω





Time Spent In A Dungeon (d6):

1	PCs leave the dungeon a few hours before they enter. If they realise and decide to wait for themselves, roll again: 1-2 Their past selves can't see or touch them and enter the dungeon; 3 Their past selves see them as dim shadows, like ghosts – if the past characters are frightened off, the PCs are 'reset' to how they were before they entered the dungeon, losing all treasure and with a 50% chance of dead characters returning to life – treasure is gone but memories and xp are intact; 4 Their past selves see them as monsters and either flee or fight – if earlier selves are slain in a fight, the later self PC dies as well; 5 Their past selves see them, and might be convinced not to enter the dungeon, with results as above; 6 As for 5, but if a character touches its past self an explosion will result, killing both.
2	Only a few seconds have passed.
3	Time has passed normally. However the players have exited in an alternative universe. Roll again: 1-2 Good people in the PCs' universe are evil here and vice-versa; 3-4 The universe is based on another genre, e.g. SF or horror; 5-6 The universe is populated by a different set of species from the PCs' universe (e.g. if the PCs are humans, elves and dwarves, the alternate universe might be populated by intelligent insects). In all cases, the new universe will have equivalent countries and individuals to the PCs' universe, including equivalents to the PCs themselves. If the PCs go back in the dungeon and wait a while before coming back out, roll again: they're back home unless this result is rolled.
4	3d6 weeks have passed.
5	2d6 months have passed.
6	One year has passed for each dungeon level reached (for example, 3 years if they got 3 levels down).

Combat Behaviour (d20):

1	Fights to the death. Pursues any who retreat.
2-3	Fights to the death. Will pursue anyone who retreats unless it's down to one quarter strength or less.
4	Fights to the death, but will not pursue enemies.
5	Fights until down to half strength* and then tries to run away. If there's no escape, will surrender. Will pursue enemies if it has at least half strength.
6	Fights until it's down to half strength and then tries to run. If no escape, will surrender. Will not pursue.
7-8	Fights until it's down to ½ strength or less, then tries to run away. If no escape, fights to the death. Will pursue enemies if it has at least half its strength.
9	Fights until it's down to half strength or less, and will then try to run away. If there's no escape, will fight to the death. Will not pursue enemies.
10	Fights until it's down to half strength or less, then will surrender. Will pursue enemies if it has at least three-quarters of its strength.
11	Fights until it's down to half strength or less, then will surrender. Will not pursue enemies.
12	Fights until wounded, then tries to run away. If no escape, fights to the death. Will not pursue enemies.
13-14	Fights only until wounded, then tries to run. If no escape, fights to death. Only pursues if unwounded.
15	Fights until wounded, then runs away. If no escape, will fight until it's down to half strength or less, and will then surrender. Will not pursue enemies.
16	Fights until wounded, then tries to run. If no escape, fights until half strength or less, and will then surrender. Will only pursue enemies if unwounded.
17	Always attempts to run away. If there's no escape, will surrender. Will not pursue enemies.
18	Always attempt to run away. If there's no escape, will fight to the death. Will not pursue enemies.
19	Always attempts to run away. If no escape, fights until wounded and then surrenders. Will not pursue.
20	Always attempts to run. If no escape, will fight until half strength, then surrenders. Will not pursue.

*'half strength' here means half hp for individuals or half of group remaining for groups. Quarter, etc. similarly.

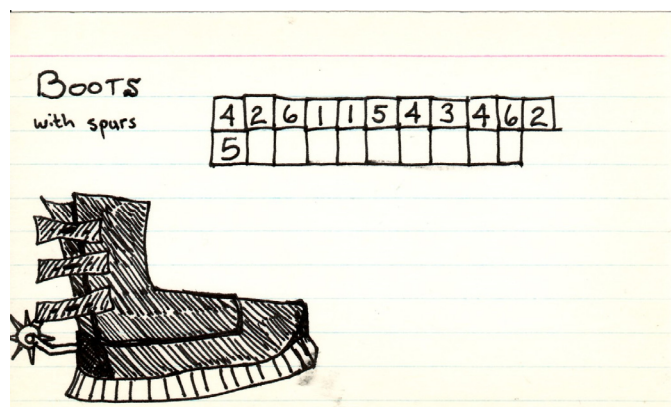
Post-Apocalyptic Crafting

by Lawson Reilly

Our Post Apocalypse games are all about scavenging and salvaging, especially the good stuff like hidden caches of slug-throwers and scout armor. But how do characters make use of the more mundane stuff lying around after the Bomb? In their free time between fighting carnivorous cacti and intelligent badgers, can characters macramé a scabbard, sew a pair of jeans, or make a backpack from salvaged fabric, straps, buckles and zippers? One way to handle this is to assume characters are crafting in their free time and to talk through it. But we've made it part of our system. In our game, a character can be simultaneously crafting a number of items equal to their INT/5 (round up). The player should write the name of each item being crafted on its own index card. Using the table on the next page, assign the appropriate number of slots to the item's index card. Each time the GM determines a character has a chance to craft/scavenge/collect, the player rolls a d6 and writes the number rolled in an unused slot on the index card. Add INT or heightened intelligence bonuses or penalties, as well as any bonus for heightened manual dexterity (e.g. extra arms). Examples of when a player might be allowed to make a craft roll include:

- Exploring a room in a ruined building
- Exploring a ruined vehicle
- Looting vanquished enemies
- Spending part of the day hunting and gathering (for leather, horn, bone, wood, plant fiber, etc.)
- Spending half a day working on crafts

After each roll, the player can total the numbers written in the slots. This total represents the progress made toward successfully crafting the item represented on the card. Progress can be one of five levels: Non-functional, Barely functional and crude, Functional and unembarrassing, Artisan quality, or an example of Superior craftsmanship.



Master Crafting Table:

Item	Slots	Total Craft Points			
		Crude	Func tions	Artisan	Superior
arrows/ bolts (10)	10	27-34	35-41	42-46	47+
axe/ tomahawk	9	25-31	32-37	38-41	42+
backpack	11	30-38	39-45	46-50	51+
belt	5	14-17	18-20	21-23	24+
blank	3	9-10	11-12	13	14+
boots	21	57-73	74-87	88-97	98+
bow/ crossbow	13	35-45	46-54	55-60	61+
bracelet	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
cart, small	10	27-34	35-41	42-46	47+
coat, heavy	15	41-52	53-62	63-69	70+
dice	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
first aid kit	11	30-38	39+	--	--
Flashlight (n/batteries)	10	27-34	35-41	42-46	47+
grappling hook	9	25-31	32-37	38-41	42+
hat	3	9-10	11-12	13	14+
helmet	21	57-73	74-87	88-97	98+
jacket	11	30-38	39-45	46-50	51+
knife	9	25-31	32-37	38-41	42+
leather armor	25	68-87	88- 104	105- 115	116+
mace	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
necklace	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
pants	9	25-31	32-37	38-41	42+
partial plate armor	29	79-101	102- 121	122- 134	135+
pouch	3	9-10	11-12	13	14+
quiver	5	14-17	18-20	21-23	24+
saddle	25	68-87	88- 104	105- 115	116+
sandals	10	27-34	35-41	42-46	47+
shield	6	17-20	21-25	26-27	28+
shirt	9	25-31	32-37	38-41	42+
simple tool (hammer, prybar, screwdriver)	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
sling	2	6	7-8	9	10+
spear	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+
sword	25	68-87	88- 104	105- 115	116+
tent	10	27-34	35-41	42-46	47+

Dungeon Modules: Riverwalk

plug-in location from Geoffrey O. Dale

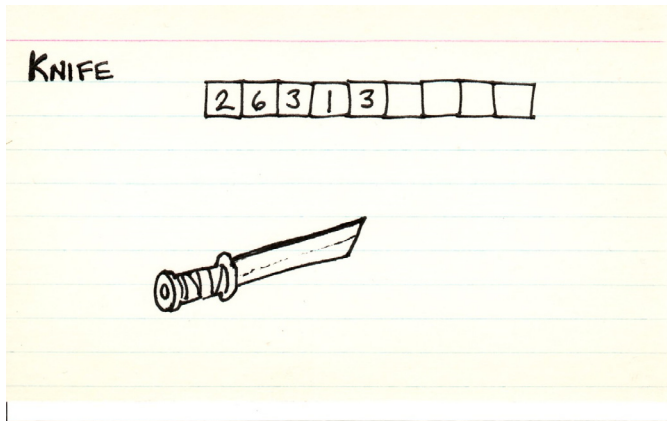
A dusty dungeon hallway has been gently sloping down for 1000 feet, ending in a wide stone stair leading downward. The stairs are covered in slippery green lichens (roll may be required to keep footing). The babbling sound of running water is softly heard, and the scent here is dank.

A. A flat level area 35' long by 16' wide along a fast-flowing river, the ceiling is 13' high. The river is 30' wide here and more than 10' deep. A moss-covered red stone statue of a warrior leaning on their sword stands here, its eye sockets empty where gems once were set. If adventurers follow the path upstream, it ends after 700' at a 12' diameter metal pipe (metal grating across the end) sticking 6' out from the sheer vertical wall, with a flow of ten thousand gallons/minute. The river water is dark in color and exudes a faint whiff of sulfur; it has a bitter taste. A worn 8' wide stone sidewalk parallels the river on the left side, from 2 to 3' above the water level, with a 2' high stone wall along the river side. Empty iron torch brackets are found every 125', an unlit torch present on 1 in 8. The river width is variable, 2d20+20' wide, 2d20+10' deep, with a ceiling height of 1d12+6'. Persons swimming in the water become numbed after 3*Constitution rounds; once a person is numb they must exit the water or become unconscious and drown. The water is poisonous when imbibed by Halflings or Gnomes (save or paralyzed 1d20 minutes after ingesting, second save or die after 1d20+30 minutes paralyzed). Heavy, rusted, iron chains stretch across the river every 500 yards, 4 inches above the waterline.

B. A 20' wide river segment comes in from the left; it goes back 2000' and ends at a 25' high waterfall. The main path crosses the junction on a curved stone bridge (spiked floor, 1d8 damage, can be disarmed). A Medusa statue is in an ornate wall niche on the far side of the bridge.

C. Thick dusty webs cross the river and path. The exoskeletons of three Huge Spiders are found here along with 3 arrowheads, 2 broken arrows, a broken clay flask, a ripped black leather belt (gold sunburst buckle, 5 gp), a dented bulls-eye lantern, 10 sp in a cloth bag, a bent lock pick, and a single right-hand leather glove.

D. The river tumbles over a 50' vertical waterfall, with a rusty metal spiral staircase connecting the sidewalk at the bottom and top of the falls. Six **Gargoyles** (HD 6, hp 36 each, DC 4, short sword and spiked clubs) live in a 40' by 22' cave in the ceiling about halfway down the falls; they have 12 trail rations, 5 torches, flint/steel, a half-gallon

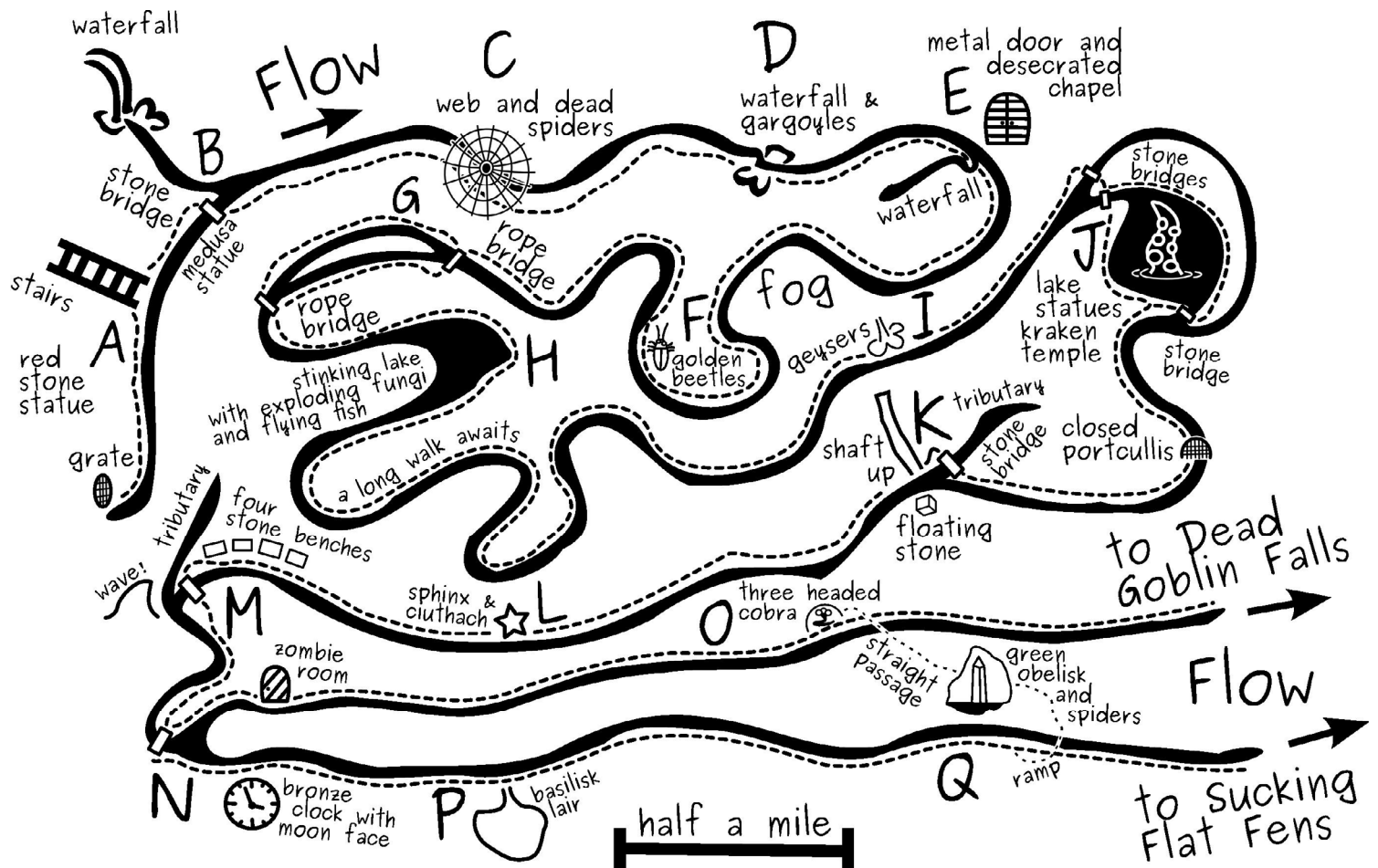


unicycle	23	63-80	81-96	97-106	107+
vest	6	17-20	21-25	26-27	28+
water bottle or canteen	2	6	7-8	9	10+
weapon harness	4	11-13	14-16	17-18	19+

A player can stop crafting an item at any point and begin to use it (or sell it) as soon as it is functional or barely functional. In this system, crafting may not mean making something as much as completing a collection or getting lucky and finding just the right component. Use imagination. Let players expand on this list.

Skill Advancement: If a character successfully builds an artisan quality item, give a +1 bonus on subsequent craft rolls for similar items. ♫





canteen, a silver dirk in scabbard, a gold pendant (1520 gp), 3 silver rings (28, 55, 103 gp), a visored +2 Helm, a leather backpack, 10 iron spikes and mallet, 2 flasks of oil, 30' of elven rope, 2 doses of giant insect repellent, a dose of poison antidote, and a Serpent's Bane Flail (+2).

E. A short (1100') river branch joins the main river from the right, coming in 8' above river level, creating a 15' wide waterfall. Opposite the waterfall is an arch in the wall opening to a ramp leading to a lower dungeon level. Behind a sturdy metal door (no lock) is a desecrated Chapel (aura of evil), 22' wide by 35' deep; inside are eight **Skeletons** (HD 2, hp 12 each, DC 6, 1 pt. damage from piercing weapons) pinned to the floor by spikes through their ribs. In a secret compartment under the floor are 420 gp, three diamonds (8535, 10549, 11537 gp), a Tome of Amnesia, a pair of blue leather Gloves of No Magic Items, a Heat Stone, and a Charm versus Efreet. The section of tunnel between **E** and **F** is filled with thick fog (-3 to hit).

F. An oval cave, 30' deep by 18' at its widest. The cave is the lair of three **Golden Beetles** (HD 5, hp 30 each, DC 1, hallucinogenic/hypnotic powder saps Will unless saved against). A backpack holds a folding spade, small Lyre, a whetstone, 2 chisels, a religious amulet, a pot of burn salve, a vial of ammonia, a vial of snake repellent, and a steel grappling hook.

G. Here the river splits into two sections and rejoins after a quarter-mile; a rope bridge crosses the water and a section of sidewalk follows each branch. Grotesque stone faces are sculpted on the wall along both branches and weird cackling sounds are heard echoing over the river. A 30' section of sidewalk along the right fork has a 3 in 4 chance of collapsing (make a save/roll or into the drink).

H. A 40' deep underground lake; the sidewalk follows along the outer curve, 15' above the water line. The wall is covered in red algae, shelf fungi, phosphor fungi, toadstools, and ceiling fungi; the entire area stinks (save to avoid retching and -2 on everything for d6 turns after leaving the area). An **Exploding Fungus** (range 15', 3d4 damage) is found every 3d20+10'. **Flying Carnivorous Cave Fish** (1d100 per school, attack as W 3, 1 hp each, DC 5, fly 1d12 rounds) live in the lake.

I. A 200' long section of river with many scalding geysers shooting through vents and holes in the walls and ceiling, including eruptions of sulfur gas from the river floor. Each person is sprayed with hot water every d20' unless a dodge/save is made (1d6). Persons affected by the gasses must save against unconsciousness (1d100 minutes).

J. An 80' deep underground lake, the sidewalk going around both sides is 15' wide and 2 inches from the water

Random Encounters on River Path (d20, ea. 200 yds.):

1	1d4+2 Adventurers
2	1d6 Evil Warriors and Evil Priest
3	1d6 Evil Warriors, Woodsman/Archer, and Mage
4	1d12+2 Dwarven Miners
5	Poison Mold
6	1d3 Recluse Spiders
7	1d8 Tiger Salamanders
8	1d20 Ant Lions
9	1d3 Death Beetles
10	1d10 Giant Cave Crickets
11	1d3 Rhino Beetles
12	1d3 Fungus Beetles
13	1d100 Tiny Bats
14	1d20 Vampire Bats
15	Water Elemental
16	Earth Elemental
17	1d4 Siren Salamanders
18	1d6 Ogres
19	1d6 Trolls
20	1d8 Basilisk Lizards

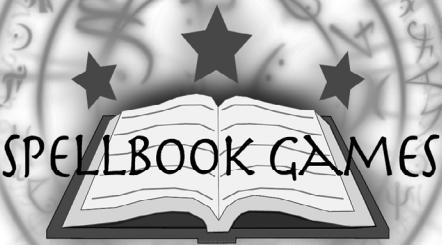
line. Statues of naked nymphs are found 50' apart. Floor-to-ceiling vines grow on the walls. Along the south wall are **Trance Gourd** vines (save versus mesmerization). A ten-armed **Cave Kraken** (HD 9, hp 54, AC 5, ten attacks for 1 point plus save or 1d6 poison) lives in the lake. In a one-room underwater temple to Neptune are found 15 pearls (each 1d100*1d100 gp), 2 water breath potions, 20 golden goblets (each 150 gp), a mastodon-horn Bow of Speed, a Perception Stone, a Tonic of Disease Reversal, 4 vials of Holy Water, a +2 Cutlass wrapped in oilskin, and a metal box (locked, 600 gp). A follower of any sea deity is healed 20 hp by touching or praying at the temple altar.

K. A 1500' river tributary comes in from the right side. A floating stone block 7' by 4' by 4' tries to crush passersby against the wall (dodge/save or 3d6 damage). A 12' wide shaft in the ceiling over the river leads upward – at the top (80 vertical feet) is a pit trap. Half way to **L** a closed (down) iron portcullis completely blocks the sidewalk.

Random Encounters in River (d20, every 200 yards):

1	1d10 Giant Water Rats
2	1d8 Water Boatman Bugs
3	1d8 Giant Cave Crabs
4	1d6 Spider Crabs
5	1d6 Diving Predator Beetles
6	1d6 Alligator Turtles
7	1d10 Water Spiders
8	1d8 Moray Eels
9	1d6 Dragonet Fishes
10	1d8 Stinging Mantas
11	1d6 Cetas
12	1d8 Lionfish
13	1d3 Poison Octopus
14	1d8 Scorpion Fish
15	1d20 Poison Sponges
16	1d12 Needle Fish
17	1d6 Viper Fish
18	1d8 Giant Cave Squid
19	3d20 Giant Sea Leeches
20	Water Elemental

L. The sidewalk widens to a space 20' wide by 90' long. A **Sphinx** (HD 12, hp 72, AC -3, Earth Mage Level 6) and a **Ciuthach** (HD 6, hp 36, DC 2, bite 1d8/gore 2d8/tail club 1d6, +6 to saves against electricity/lightning and +8 against earth magic) lounge on an expensive carpet (20' by 12', 7503 gp); each is asleep on 8+ on 1d12. The Sphinx demands the adventurers answer a riddle or pay a personal toll of a gem valued 5000 or more gp to allow passage (summons a **Flying Monkey** [HD 4, hp 13, DC 8, whip] to collect the gems). The Sphinx transports (teleportation) persons who tell him a belly whopper-quality joke to either **O** or **Q**, and gives them 100 gp. The Ciuthach is a large four-footed bovine with small curved horns, 8' long by 4 1/2' tall, with a thick hide resembling irregularly-shaped grey stones hanging on dark brown leather. It has three large green-ivory tusks growing above its heavy jaw and three pale blue eyes (excellent underground and infrared vision, excellent scent ability), as well as a club tail. Ciuthach tusks are worth 3d100 gp and hides are 2d20+60 gp.



Featuring the Inferno line, a reimagining of
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M. A 1700' river tributary enters from the right. Four stone benches are against the wall (all glowing yellow). A *permanent illusion* depicts a group of six Dwarfs in chainmail (3 axe men and 3 slingers). While watching this, there is a 1 in 4 chance that a large wave develops on the river which knocks everyone into it unless a save/roll is made. The section of tunnel between **M** and **N** is a *zone of silence*.

N. The river permanently splits into two streams at this location, which do not come together again; the left stream leads to Dead Goblin Falls, three miles away, while the right stream leads to the Sucking Flat Fens (a swamp-filled cave, one mile long by a half mile wide) five miles away. Stone bridges allow access to the sidewalk paralleling either stream. A sturdy wood door (brass keyhole, locked, -15% to pick) along the left stream leads to a circular room 25' across built around a decrepit shack – when the shack's door is open, a **Zombie** (HD 2, hp 12, DC 8, rusty pick) emerges every 3 minutes (active when mortals are within 200'); if the shack is burned it produces a poisonous smoke (save or die in 1d8 rounds). Along the right stream a 6' bronze clock with a moon face is set into the wall.

O. A 20' half circle room covered in blue tiles, with a statue of a three-headed cobra against the back wall. Each head spits poison every round (15' range, save or die in 1d20 rounds). In a wall niche (covered with an illusion) is a

horned statue with an emerald necklace (15,250 gp); under the statue is hidden a Damage Absorbing Cloak. A hidden door (2' by 3') gives access to a 3' by 3' passage to **Q**.

P. A 40' by 12' cave in the wall (ramp down, below sidewalk level) is the lair of four **Lesser Basilisks** (HD 4, hp 24 each, DC 4, save or petrified if touched). In the cave are 1d8 Lesser Basilisk eggs in a nest (a **Giant Toad** sits on the eggs, HD 2, hp 12, DC 9, tongue 1d8, won't move) as well as a +1 Rapier (*elf bane*), a quiver of ten +1 arrows, a Dart of Hornets, a pair of Sandals of Water Walking, a 100' dwarven rope, a bullwhip, a gold platter (1038 gp), a loaf of Eternal Elven Bread, and a Flying Potion.

Q. A 12' wide ramp leads 65' up into the wall, leading to an irregularly-shaped cave 25' high with a bowl-shaped floor 20' across; eight streams of water fall into the cave from near the top of the walls, splashing into the bowl and draining out. A green stone obelisk stands in the pool – good persons touching the obelisk regain 1d10 hp (once/day) while evil persons suffer 1d8 damage. There is a 3 in 4 chance for six **Recluse Spiders** (HD 5, hp 27, DC 8, bite 1d6 plus poison [save or die]) are found the passage. 30' further along the path from the ramp a wide spiral stone stair set into the wall leads upward (250 vertical feet) into a Blinding Crystal Cave. A hidden door (2' by 3') gives access to a 3' by 3' straight passage to **O**. Ω



Two Tribes

an *X-Plorers*/generic sci-fi scenario by Kelvin Green

Getting Started: This scenario assumes that the PCs control a starship. They need not be the sole owners, or indeed have any stake in the ship whatsoever, but they should be in a position to influence or dictate the ship's course of action. How and why they get to the system is up to you, although the good old accidental misjump is always a favourite approach.

The Leone System: Many years ago, an explorer named Akira Leone discovered a trinary star system with little potential for human habitation, but an abundance of mineral wealth. Naming it after himself, he set up the first of many mining colonies, digging up valuable ores for transport back to the core worlds. The system thrived, and more mines sprung up across the many rocky worlds, all under the auspices of the increasingly powerful Leone dynasty. Then disaster struck.¹ The coordinates of the system were lost, the big trading ships stopped coming, and the citizens of Leone found themselves cut off from humanity. Then the infighting began, as branches of the dynasty carved up the diminishing resources and retreated to their strongholds, eventually cannibalising each other to survive until only two families remained. Now, decades or even centuries later, the system has been rediscovered by the PCs.

A Rough Welcome: The PCs' ship appears in the void of space, buffeted by gravitational tides, and with every alarm on the ship going off. They will have just enough time to determine that they have jumped into a trinary system, hence the strange gravitational energies, and that furthermore, they have blundered into a space battle! Two distinct sides are evident, locked in a brutal combat involving perhaps a dozen small system ships. One side (choose or determine randomly) sends a couple of ships to intercept the newcomer; a Technician or Scout will be able to tell that these are not combat vessels, but are in fact converted mining ships. This should not be a difficult fight for the PCs, but if things start to go against them, it might be worth having the surviving ships from the other side of the conflict come in to help, forcing the attackers to retreat. On the other hand, the players may be able to negotiate with one or both sides, and thus avoid any combat whatsoever. Survivors will head back to Leone AB3b or Leone C (see below), depending on allegiance. However the battle ends, the PCs should now be involved in the curious politics of the Leone system. **Leone System Ships:** Class 1, Type Mining, Crew 1-2, Hull 5, Weapons 1/1d3, AC8, Skill 15+, XP 10

Things to See and Do in the Leone System: Since the disaster, most of the mining colonies throughout the systems have been abandoned as the inhabitants have fled to more populous and secure areas. The mining facilities themselves, while undoubtedly victims of a lack of maintenance, are quite able to be restored to function given enough time and resources. The unusual layout of the system, with its three stars and numerous gas giants, means that it suffers unpredictable gravitational tides, which apply a -2 penalty to all Pilot skill throws. At the referee's discretion, native pilots may be more used to the tides, and may not suffer this penalty. The three small red stars provide little in the way of light and warmth, so the planets of the Leone system are cold and dark places, and the people have become withdrawn and insular as a result.

Leone AB: A pair of M class red stars, around this binary orbits a host of planetary bodies.

Leone AB1 (Ross): A large reddish-brown hydrogen gas giant, with its attending moons, all barren rocky planetary spheres, most with the remains of mining facilities, in various states of disrepair and abandonment.

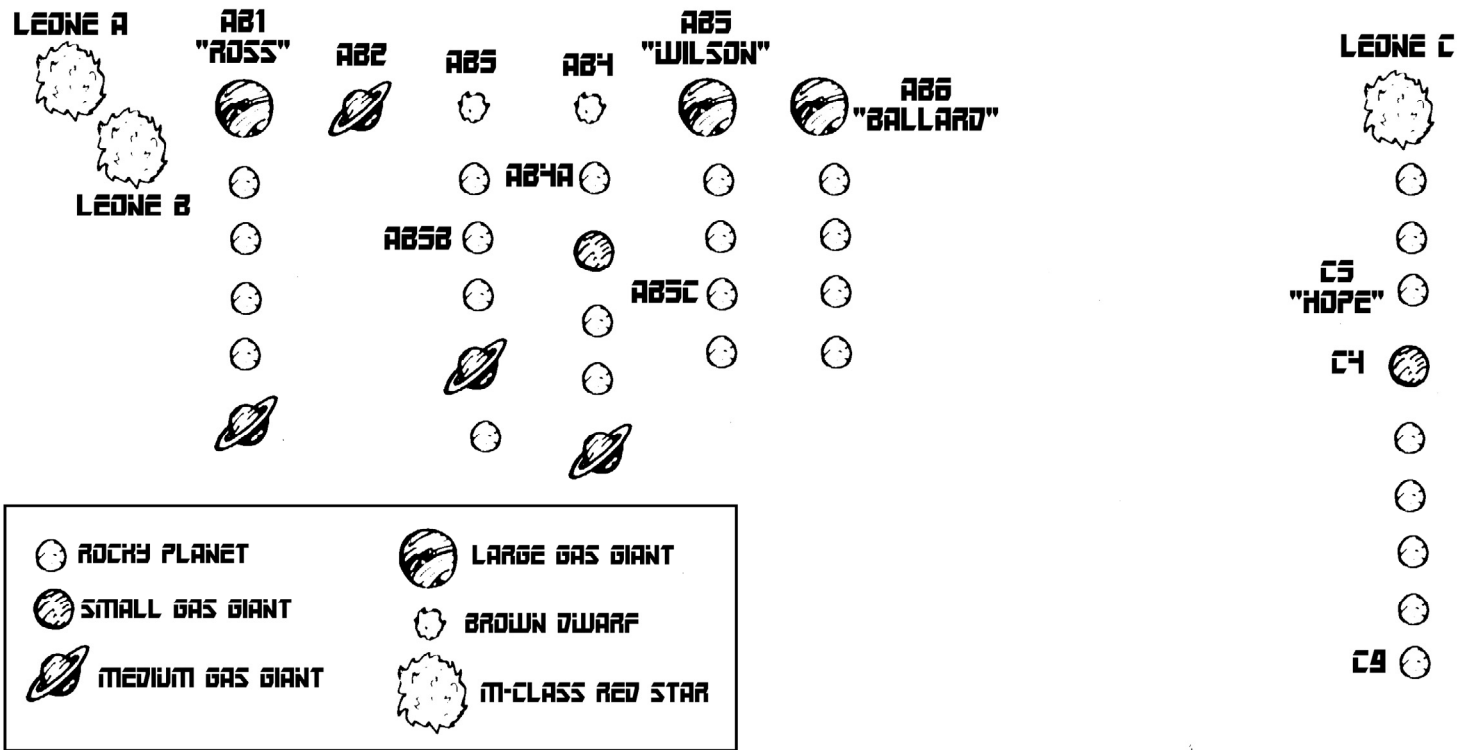
Leone AB2: A medium gas giant with an extensive system of icy rings. The water from the rings is harvested by the inhabitants of Leone.

Leone AB3: A sub-stellar brown dwarf, around which orbit more mining worlds. Since the capital of the system is one of these, nearby planets are more densely populated and in better repair than those elsewhere in the system.

Leone AB3b (Manzanares): A cold and rocky world with a thin atmosphere, requiring environmental suits for any kind of strenuous outdoors activity. This is the seat of Leone's ruling government, housed in an ostentatious palace right in the centre of the planet's only city. Scattered mining settlements dot the planetary landscape, but almost all are abandoned, with the populace having long since moved within the city for protection and the remaining mining operations having moved to other worlds. The palace is heavily guarded, and it is clear that many extra walls and gates have been added to the structure, giving it the equivalent of an AC 10 should it be attacked by starship weaponry. The palace is equipped with four defence lasers (1d6 ship damage) with enough range to attack vessels in near orbit. The people of this world go about their daily business as well as they can on meagre resources, and always with one fearful eye on the palace and its unpredictable occupant and the other keeping a lookout for attacks from the "resistance". While few of the inhabitants have any respect for, let alone true loyalty to, their lord Flavion, they do in general believe that he is the rightful if unsuitable, heir and that Kaltos is little more than a terrorist.

¹ Perhaps the governments of the core worlds collapsed into a new Dark Age, or perhaps the location of the Leone system was misplaced as a result of clerical error; decide what fits your game.

DISTANCES AND SIZES NOT TO SCALE.



Leone AB4: Another brown dwarf with a number of rocky satellites, most given over to mining.

Leone AB4a: This rocky world has a thick methane atmosphere which obscures sensors and makes a planetary survey difficult. As a result, it has not been properly explored. As such, some civilians call it the “Ghost World”, and a number of superstitions have sprung up around it, although most adults will claim these are just stories to frighten children. Some of them even believe it.

Leone AB5 (Wilson): One of AB1's twin gas giants, with a similar set of orbiting rocky worlds.

Leone AB5c: For reasons unknown, the gravity on this small rocky planetoid is three or four times higher than normal, making mining operations too difficult for the original colonists, although newer technology and processes may succeed where they failed.

Leone AB6 (Ballard): Another twin to AB1. The opening space battle occurs within this planetary sub-system, as Kaltos’ forces attempt to loot the abandoned facilities on Leone AB6c.

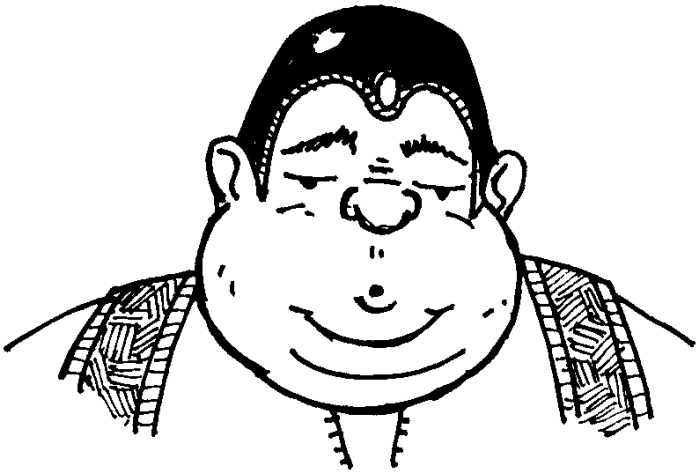
Leone C: This unstable class M red star is prone to solar flares, making the surfaces of its attendant worlds barren and dangerous locales. Like the planets of the twin stars, most are rocky and inhospitable places, showing evidence of previous mining.

Leone C3 (Hope): A very small rocky planet with a fast spin and a thin atmosphere. Sensors are hidden on the surface, and tunnels and caves below the surface house the base of the resistance, part colony, part military camp, with enough space for smaller starships to dock in concealed bays. The people here live in poor conditions, which has made them hard and determined, weak in physical terms but with a strong conviction that their way is the right way. Normal life is a misnomer here, although Soldiers and Scouts may find themselves fitting right in. Two or three system ships maintain a constant guard around the planet, with occasional breaks as crews switch and refresh.

Leone C4: A medium greenish-yellow gas giant with a high ammonia content and a small rocky core. The resistance hides most of its ships just below the surface of the planet, using the atmosphere to shield them from sensors.

Leone C9: The resistance once used this planet as a base, but moved on to Leone C6 in order to make themselves more difficult to find. Close detection will reveal that there is encrypted radio chatter emanating from within this planet, perhaps from the deep mining tunnels. Long-term analysis will show that the signals not only repeat in a loop, but are also nonsense, and exploration of the mines confirms that there are no inhabitants. However, a number of security drones have been left behind by the previous occupants; their programming prevents them from harming humans, but they have been instructed to make life difficult for invaders, by closing doors, turning off lights, etc. **Guardian Drones:** AC 10, HP 10, ST 14+, MV 4.

Personalities of the Leone System



Flavion Leone, "Imperator of the Seven Systems": A vast, corpulent man who rules from his bedroom, passing orders through his put-upon subordinates, most notably his castellan Falcone. He is a paranoid type, always expecting an assassination attempt, although his gluttony means that he is not as reliant on food-tasters as he perhaps should be. He is surrounded by walls, gates and guards, and maintains a network of informants. His paranoia extends to the populace over which he rules, and many a citizen of Manzanares has been dragged out of their bed at night never to be seen again based on some perceived slight. He also has a bizarre and irrational hatred of women, one reason why he has yet to produce an heir. Flavion lives well by the standards of the Leone system, eating the finest foods and wearing the most comfortable clothes, while his people live in drudgery. Flavion is at first very pleased to see the PCs, even if they fired upon his ships, recognising them immediately as emissaries from human society, and is keen to get on their good side, while at the same time maintaining his air of authority and nobility. He will want them to legitimise his government and help eliminate the resistance, and its leader, the "terrorist" Kaltos. If they agree to this, he will be enthusiastic and friendly, although the longer they take to act against his enemy, the more he will be convinced that they are working for the resistance. **Flavion Leone:** AC 9, HD 5d6 (19hp), THB +5, Concealed Laser (2d6; single shot), ST 14+, MV 0, XP 240 Flavion is too fat to fight, and is easy to kill, although he does have a single shot laser pistol concealed in an elaborate ring. He is attended at all times by at least four hand-picked guards. **Flavion's Imperial Guard:** AC 14, HD 3d6, THB +3, Mace (1d6) and Automatic Pistol (2d6), ST 16+, MV 4, XP 60.

Augustus Falcone, Stressed Assistant: A tall, thin man who always appears on the verge of a nervous breakdown, heart attack, or both. Truth be told, however, on some level he enjoys the unpredictable pace of running Flavion's government. He is a recent addition, having replaced the previous castellan mere months before, after the man was



publicly executed for alleged disobedience. Falcone has no love for Flavion, but is too clever to make this known, and is content to do his job well rather than carve out power for himself. That said, Falcone knows all the right people in Manzanares society and has more influence than he realises. In combat Falcone is liable to surrender immediately, more out of pragmatism than cowardice, but treat him as a colonist if he gets into a fight, amending HD to 2d6 (9 hp) and XP to 30 to reflect his station.

Reynard Octus, Bitter Revolutionary: Working from the shadows, this jaded old soldier is responsible for the



terrorist attacks on the ground on Manzanares, happy to let Flavion's forces pin the blame on Kaltos. He hates both of the princes, calling them "children fighting over rocks", and is a little delusional, thinking that the deaths of both Flavion and Kaltos will solve everything and usher in a new golden age. If the PCs make themselves known to the general public, Octus will attempt to organise a meeting, although for obvious reasons he cannot go through official channels. For the most part, his insurgency tactics involve the destruction of services and infrastructure, such as the bombing of bridges and ration stores, rather than attacks on people, although his control over his soldiers is not as strong as he thinks. **Reynard Octus:** AC 12, HD 2d6 (10 hp), THB +1, Dagger (1d6-1) and Automatic Rifle (2d6), ST 17+, MV 4, XP 30. **Insurgents:** AC 10, HD 1d6+1, THB +0, Club (1d6) and Frag grenade (5d6), ST 18+, MV 4, XP 15.



Kaltos Leone, Driven Guerilla: A grizzled and scarred combat veteran, with a crude bionic replacement for an arm lost in a previous engagement. He is practical and focused on his righteous task, and is impatient, unapologetically so, when asked to deal with anything not directly connected to the downfall of Flavion. If met with other practical minds, he treats them with measured respect, but he is not a warm man. He considers himself the rightful heir to the Leone dynasty, and that any civilians killed on the way to the throne are acceptable losses. So determined on the task at hand is he that he seems to place no importance on the PCs' status as visitors from outside the Leone system, and will not apologise if his ships attacked theirs. However, he does recognise that they likely have access to better equipment and training than his people, and while he will not ask for help, he will listen if the PCs can give him practical aid and advice. Lest the PCs think that they have discovered a noble and downtrodden hero, a diamond in the rough, Kaltos makes it clear that when he takes power, there will be a purging of all those associated

with Flavion's corrupt power. Including families, if that is what is necessary. **Kaltos Leone:** AC 12 (mesh armour), HD 5d6 (21 hp), THB +5, Sword (1d6) and Automatic Pistol (2d6), ST 14+ MV 4 XP 240.

Ancient History: The players may want to research the system's past. If so, they will discover that the city of Manzanares has a fine library, containing the histories of the system as well as any other useful information the referee deems appropriate. However, it has all been carefully edited to remove any mention of other branches of the Leone family, asserting that Flavion is the latest in a direct and unbroken line of succession from Akira Leone himself. It is possible that the missing records exist in some forgotten vault in the main palace or on one of the system's many abandoned worlds.

What My Players Did: To give prospective referees an idea of how the Leone system works in play, let me share what happened when I ran the scenario. The players negotiated a ceasefire in the initial space combat, sending Kaltos' ships back to base and promising that as representatives of the core worlds (which they were, sort of) they would not take sides and would visit Kaltos for discussion later on. In the meantime, they accompanied Flavion's small fleet back to Manzanares and met with the "Imperator". Through careful observation of the paranoid defences and nervous staff, they surmised that he was not a popular ruler, an impression confirmed in an informal and secretive chat with Falcone. They set about a plan to win Flavion's trust, plying him with fine wines from their starship's hold and promising to go over to Kaltos' base as soon as possible to drag him out kicking and screaming.

Sure enough, they visited Kaltos, but instead of assaulting him they gave him a counter-offer: they would take care of Flavion, leaving the way clear for him to take the throne. All they asked in return was for him to be lenient on Flavion's people, to which he agreed. Of course, they played both sides, telling Flavion that they had vapourised Kaltos' ship, and celebrating the victory with more wine, this time poisoned. With Flavion dead and his loyal bodyguards in hiding, Kaltos arrived to take his place as ruler, and was assassinated in his room by said loyal bodyguards, who had been tracked down by the players and told that Kaltos was behind the poisoning. The players then stepped in, telling the people of Leone that Kaltos had poisoned Flavion, that Flavion's guards had in return killed Kaltos, and that the players would track down the assassins and have them punished.

With this done, the players then took advantage of the populace's relief over the end of Flavion's reign to announce the end of the Leone dynasty's rule and to claim the system in the name of their masters back home. Ω

The Temple of Thek

non-canon locale for Tékumel or your world by Baz Blatt

Kilalammu lies northeast of Tsolyanu on the northern continent of Tekumel. Much of it is a mountainous land, comparable in landscape to Tibet or Afghanistan, with dry agricultural valleys and arid plateaux separated by soaring mountain peaks. Kilalammu was conquered by the ancient Engsvanyali Empire, but its culture has evolved along very different lines from other lands influenced by Engsvan Hla Ganga. There is a plethora of petty states and, in the mountains, unaffiliated tribes allied in ever-changing groups, with clan councils led by a variety of kings, matriarchs, elders or senators. Its natives speak various rustic dialects of Jannuyani, and Kilalammu and Jannu share many deities and cultural mores. But while Jannu is green and fertile and its people civilised and relaxed, Kilalammu is wild and its people hard and stern. In religion too, Kilalammu is chaotic and disorganised. When the old empire fell each individual temple went its own way, and all unity in ritual and doctrine was lost. Kilalammu now has scores of deities each recognised only in a small area, even where, to Tsolyani eyes, they are obviously merely aspects of a greater god. In Kilalammu there is also no concordat preventing inter-temple strife, and religious wars are far from uncommon. It would appear from ancient legends that the entire set of 'change'-aligned deities have been eliminated or forced underground by such wars. The Kilalammu recognise 'avatars', living men and women (and the odd animal) which are embodiments of the gods on our mundane plane and worshipped as such, an impossibility in the view of the Tsolyani, and they also regard all traffic with demons as inherently dangerous, even such benign creatures as the Entities of Light and the Watchers of the High Tower. They are also notably devout in their belief, making long pilgrimages to shrines in the harsh mountains during which it is taboo to speak. Uttering any word means the whole trip has to be begun again.

The Temple of Thek: Master of the White Mountains, Watcher against Evil, Reciter of Lore.

Theology: Thek is the honoured elder of the Gods, husband of Uchsvun and father of many other deities. He was a mighty warrior, fighting against his rebellious son Jrakka who sought to become king of the gods, but is now considered an elder who dwells apart, looking for portents of the final battle to come and watching over all with the aid of his great lamp, the sun. He is the Respected Elder, rewarding those who follow tradition and the rule of the clan chiefs, advising the rulers of the people about ancient lore and precedents and individuals about their fate and about how best they can serve the good of the clan. When supernatural and spiritual threats arise it is the priests of Thek who take the lead in combating them rather than the martial deities who wield spears rather than secrets. His

priests live as hermits among the crags and at isolated shrines contemplating the movement of the sun and the planets and enduring the freezing mountain winds, though there are also lowland monasteries housing up to a dozen priests in relative comfort and warmth.

Geographical Spread: Thek is worshipped throughout the Chayéngar Range, the Kákri Midállu peaks, and the northern side of the High Peaks of Kilalammu and along the valleys of the He'eka from Hekéllu east to Sirsúm and north-east along the Pagu and Llanu rivers to Alasum.

Tsolyáni Interpretations: Thek is considered by the Tsolyáni to be an aspect of Thúmis due to his association with wisdom and good advice, but some comparative theologians say he is equally related to Hnálla and Drá.

The Outer Doctrines

Astrology: Thek's planet is Tuléng, the Sun, especially while it rises in the morning above the harsh mountain peaks. Thek also rules the bright sides of all the other planets, which are illuminated by his glorious Lantern, the Sun. *Note: The followers of Thek subscribe to the heliocentric theory of the solar system and are well aware that the sun can illuminate the planets even when it is not visible on Tékumel. One lowland temple owns an Engsvanyáli orrery and takes it as a true model of the universe. The subtleties of this approach are lost on most of their followers, but one of the reasons the Tsolyáni regard the Chaigári as ignorant yokels is their dogged insistence that the world is a sphere, not flat.*

Noble Action: A follower of Thek must be loyal to his clan chief, following his word and rule at all times, must pay due respect to the village head-woman, must provide for himself and his clan through hard work and diligence, and when he gives his word it is his bond. Followers of Thek are stoic, steadfast, serious, and upright, complaining little and reflecting much. Ignoble action is to disobey one's chief and elders, to be lazy and expect others to provide for you, to be dishonest to others within your clan and to break your word once given, to be weak and complain about one's fate and to refuse to do what should be done, and to boast about one's deeds when one knows that it is expected of all that they benefit the clan.

Rituals and Pilgrimages: All men must make pilgrimage to the shrine of Thek when they father a child to place a stone upon his altar stating the child's name and lineage. Without this stone being placed there Thek will not know who the person is and will not allow the soul into the paradise beyond the clouds. Images bearing Thek's Eye occur all over the valleys, carved into cliff faces, on menhirs and especially beside roads and pathways. It is the duty of every priest to make at least one of these images in his lifetime and to make sure that no such image has been desecrated by vandalism or being removed and used for building stone. Some of these images are very simple, just

a low relief on a flat stone depicting an eye, while others are elaborate statues. Up among the high peaks of Kilalammu there is a whole mountain that the priests of Thek have been carving bit by bit into an image of their god for millennia and being martyred by freezing to death and falling to their doom in the process. It is usual for a worshipper of Thek to greet the sun at dawn or when one rises with a silent prayer, to give thanks to the god for one's food at meal times (usually along with several other deities) and especially to invoke the deity when men meet to discuss clan activities and policy. There is one major Pilgrimage each year, timed to arrive at the appropriate shrine on 25th of Pardán or the 8th Moon as the Jannuyáni call it. This pilgrimage usually delivers food stuffs and supplies to the hermits serving the deity to keep them over winter. A lesser pilgrimage is made to arrive on New Year's Day. The priests in the monasteries and at the shrines have a more elaborate series of rituals to perform, starting by waking before dawn and going out to observe the sun rising, or at least the lightening of the sky if it should be overcast. On clear days they will often sit cross legged contemplating the patterns in the clouds for hours, and there is a set passage from the Litanies and Legends of Thek (see later) to be recited at the altar each day, and if the temple has a calendar stone the markers must be advanced with the appropriate prayer.

Death Rituals: Followers of Thek are buried according to whatever their local practice may be; usually burial in the valleys, though some clans burn their dead and in the mountains a form of sky-burial is practiced. Priests are sewn into cloth or leather bundles in the foetal position and interred in stone cairns on the slopes near the shrine. In the valleys these cairns are arranged along the road pilgrims use to approach the temple, and embalming, sweet herbs and flowers and incense are used to cover the smell of decomposition.

Sacrifice: Followers of Thek usually sacrifice foodstuffs, garments, and tools to their god, essentially providing directly for the upkeep of the hermits and monks. In the valleys the garments can be especially elaborate, as it is a matter of pride to provide the expensive vestments for the most elaborate rituals, and here the 'sacrifices' have more of the character of customary tithes. *Note: The Tsolyáni practice of sacrificing flowers is regarded by the people of Chaigari and Kilalammu with some disdain; what possible use are flowers to the god and his priests?*

Sexual Taboos: The overwhelming majority of Thek's priests and hermits are male. In the valleys the odd female might join a monastery and study there for a while, but this is considered odd and unbecoming. Priests can never marry, and since the Kilalammu and Jannuyáni have quite strict ideas about sex outside marriage this means they are pretty much celibate. Any priest of Thek found violating this (and it does sometimes happen that a monk will sneak off

to a Tsolyáni village to meet followers of Dlamélish) will be expected to expiate his sin by making some very long pilgrimages or permanent transfer to far-off shrines and/or carving lots of images of Thek to guard the local area.

Food Taboos: Thek's priests are expected to be able to fast for long periods. In the high mountains this is forced on them by the scarcity of winter, but in the richer agricultural lands of the valleys fasting is deemed meritorious and suitable preparation for one of the prodigious tasks of memorisation of lore the sect is famous for.

The Afterlife: Thek is the judge of his followers in death. If a person who followed him in life dies, their soul goes to meet him on his mighty mountain top and he decides whether they can pass beyond the clouds to dwell in paradise (envisaged as much like one's home but better), or to go back to earth and be born again. This doctrine of metempsychosis is not much developed; it was not part of Engsvanyáli teaching and seems to be a native tradition that re-emerged after the old empire collapsed. The priests of Thek often warn acolytes that they might come back as a Hmélu if they do not buck their ideas up and use their brains, say that great tyrants have the spirit of a Zrné and say of good and noble people that Thek will take them as one of his own, 'to soar above us in heaven, as far above the Küni as the Küni soar above us.'

The Inner Doctrines

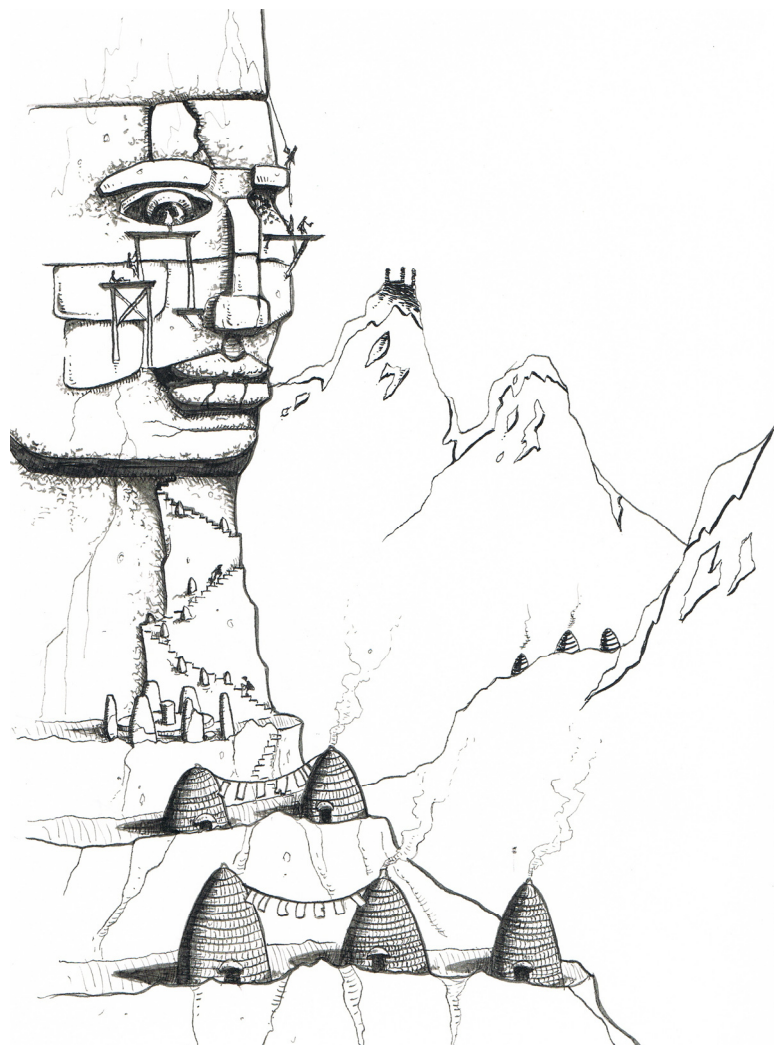
Literacy: Many priests and hermits are as illiterate as their congregations. Among the mountain hermits and the smaller hill shrines a 'runic' script is sometimes used, reminiscent of Thu'úsa, thin lines carved on tally sticks and upon the corners of stones in the manner of ancient Celtic Ogham. This is not a true alphabet: each sign represents one word or a name, and it is used only for very minor inscriptions and never to record any of the lore of the temple. In the lowlands the large monasteries have small libraries where the lore is written down, and where scribes record annals and keep a few records on behalf of the mightier clan chiefs. They write in a form of the Tsolyáni alphabet for the consonantal sounds, but they use a myriad of diacritical marks to communicate vowels and tone. They prefer wooden tablets for recording most day to day matters, but make fine vellum scrolls from the skins of Hmélu lambs for longer compositions.

The Litanies, Legends and Histories: Despite being mostly illiterate, the hermits of Thek and their lowland colleagues are far from unlearned. They memorise vast poetic 'litanies' which record lore of all kinds, such as the 'Litany of Beasts', a description of every bird and animal known to the temple, their relationships to each other and salient legends; the 'Litany of Herbs', an equally involved list of medicinal herbs; and the 'Litany of Reading the Heavens', which explains all the different astrological relationships between the planets. Some of this lore does not even relate

to local conditions, being abridged verse versions of ancient and long-lost Engsvanyáli books committed to memory after the collapse of the Empire, and some of it is no longer understood as it includes distorted Engsvanyáli words, obscure poetic kennings and references to works now lost. Equally important are the histories and legends. These too are memorised word for word. The distinction between the two is that the histories are known to have actually happened and the legends are thought to have probably happened. The priest of Thek are sanguine enough about the nature of belief to consign most of the tales of their god to the latter category, saying that no-one can now be sure the truth of such ancient matters and admitting that oral transmission is never perfect. One such legend is very similar to the 'Lament to the Wheel in Black', but recast with the gods depicted as chieftains in a typical Kilalammi clan and all being closely related. Jrakka, their name for Ksáru, is Thek's youngest son for example, who falls under the influence of Hrakma (Hrü'ü), Thek's jealous younger brother, then betrays him and set out to become chief of the gods himself. Acolytes are expected to learn these poems by heart (a task made easier by magic), and among the hermits it is recommended that an acolyte learn everything twice from two different masters. If versions differ then he should consult a third master and go with the majority opinion as to the true text. In the valleys the litanies are written down, but acolytes are not considered to have learned the lore properly until they can recite the lot without reference to the text. A frequent test of their knowledge is to write another copy of the text from memory, and then check it against the original. If the acolyte's version is different the whole copy is burned and they start again. By these methods the lore of Thek is reasonably consistent between temples and hermits, and preserves many nuggets of Engsvanyáli learning that the literate cultures of the Five Empires have lost.

Magic: The priests of Thek use many magic spells, the techniques of which are memorised like their litanies, but no one master knows them all. A sorcerer must sometimes make many pilgrimages and visit many shrines to learn the spells he wishes to know. Thek's priests preserve knowledge of all the common spells known to the Tsolyáni, and many of their special temple spells are all but identical to those of Hnálla and Thúmis. In addition they have some magic lore unique to themselves.

Temple Layout: The mountain shrines of Thek consist of a high altar open to the elements, a disc of rock about a meter thick and three meters across. A few are made from one huge slab, but most are constructed from closely fitted dry stones and paved on the top with flat slabs. In the centre of this altar is a smaller cylinder of rock carved all over with the representations of Thek. These are always placed on high hills or on prominences of mountains that give a good view of the surrounding country. They are always high enough that snow falls on them at least once



during the year. Downslope from the altar the hermit – usually one, but sometimes up to four – will live in beehive stone huts or a cave. Most have at least one acolyte, often two or three, a storehouse for keeping sacrificed goods, and a small pen for Hmélu. The most elaborate shrines have a series of rings of smaller stones arranged around them. These form a calendar and the moving of the stone markers from stone to stone around the circle is accompanied by special prayers. In the valleys the setup is more elaborate, with whole hilltops carved into stepped terraces, carved flagpoles bearing white flags moved from post-hole to post-hole around the temple to denote the date, and little slips of parchment bearing requests of the god hanging from bits of string tied between the central posts of the circular huts housing the monks. The central altar is of the same form as those of the high shrines, and is set apart by a low wall. Pilgrims must walk round the altar a given number of times reciting prayers to be granted different blessings. The hills are often very steep and the path up to the monastery winds round it in a clockwise spiral, marked with the tomb-cairns of deceased monks.

Secular Activities: The temple of Thek, as with all Kilalammi and Jannuyani temples, owns neither lands nor

businesses, and does not take part in trade on its own account. The most it will have is a few fields or a herd of Hmélu kept by the clergy but lent by the neighbouring clans. In return for sacrifices the clergy will advise anyone, from telling the fortune of a peasant-child to advising a clan chief on the wisdom of investing in a merchant caravan. The lowland temples provide a few of the greatest chiefs with acolytes to serve as personal scribes and to help administer tax and tribute systems and record legal judgments. They will keep archives for these great chiefs at the hilltop temples if they so wish it. They sell small amulets and the blessed white headbands required for pilgrims. The hostels for pilgrims at the base of the monastery hills pay some money toward the temple upkeep, but are not owned or managed directly by the temple.

The snow fell faster and faster, and Hurkun began to despair of ever seeing home again. 'Here, Poki,' he called, his words lost in the gale. No good, the Tlékku was gone. He couldn't get through this snow and Hurkun couldn't carry him. Shame, he was a good hunter.

He probed the snow in front of him. The old herders but should be here someplace, buried in snowdrifts maybe, but if he could dig out the doorway he could crawl inside and hope the thatched roof would keep the worst of the cold off him. Might even be some firewood left, or even, Thek willing, some parched grain and dried meat.

He was a fool. But as the Chief had said food stocks were low and some hardy souls digging out a hibernating jakkhol or two was all that stood between the clan and ruin, they had to try something before eating any of the hmélu-ewes needed for the spring. Hurkun had said he would do it, not expecting this storm to blow up.

And do it he would. A man's word was given under the gaze of Thek, and could not be abandoned. He had a jakkhol slung under his coat, warming his empty belly, and he would see the beast roasted back home yet.

Locations of Interest

Thek's Great Mountain: This is not one of the highest peaks in this great range, but is high enough to require those visiting it to acclimatise to avoid altitude sickness. The monastery on the slopes is a sprawling collection of beehive huts, barely distinguishable from the cairns of the priests who have died here. The great sculpture of Thek is currently 200m high from the visible eyebrow down to the tip of the nose, and consists of the right eye, right cheekbone, and the right side of the nose. Much work is being done on the left eye, hollowing out the socket. The pupil is already made and serves as a shelter for the priests working on the project. It certainly looms very impressively, and there is a permanent frost on the top of the cheekbone and on the contours above the nostril. Few pilgrims come here but many priests and acolytes. The death rate from falls and from cold is huge, but there is no shortage of acolytes willing to do the job.

The Monastery of Yaksum: This is the largest of the monasteries with fifty monks and acolytes. It is built within the ruins of a huge Engsvanyáli monastery/temple complex. Little of this remains visible on the surface except a series of very fragmentary walls. The modern temple has a large library, including a stock of Engsvanyáli inscriptions; this is the only place in Kilálammu where one may learn the Engsvanyáli language and script.

Politics

Internal Factions: The main division within the temple is between the literate and comparatively wealthy monks of the larger valley temples and the illiterate hermits of the mountains. The two groups are not organised into sects as such, but there are always doctrinal differences and arguments when they meet. The lower classes tend to favour the mountain 'Hmélu-herd' priests; their wild and woolly appearance, their obviously frugal and challenging lifestyle and the very fact that they live up mountains and are therefore 'closer to god' makes them more fit to be holy men in the eyes of the great unwashed. The upper classes favour the large temples; these are genuinely useful members of society who know many useful things and provide much needed advice, while quite what those smelly cave dwellers do all day in the middle of nowhere is anybody's guess. There is also some rivalry between the temple at Yaksum and the temples near Sirsúm which reflects the rivalry of their patron clans. The Clan of the Citadel of Tears in the north are supporters of the Yaksum temple and pretenders to the title King of Alasum, in the south the consortium of clans that make up the Council of Righteous Elders that controls Sirsúm and its environs challenge this. The priests of Thek join the fray on either side. Certain genealogies and histories do suggest the Clan of the Citadel of Tears are descendants of the Kings of Pagu, others suggest this lineage were all wiped out centuries ago by the Iron Fist of the Peaks.

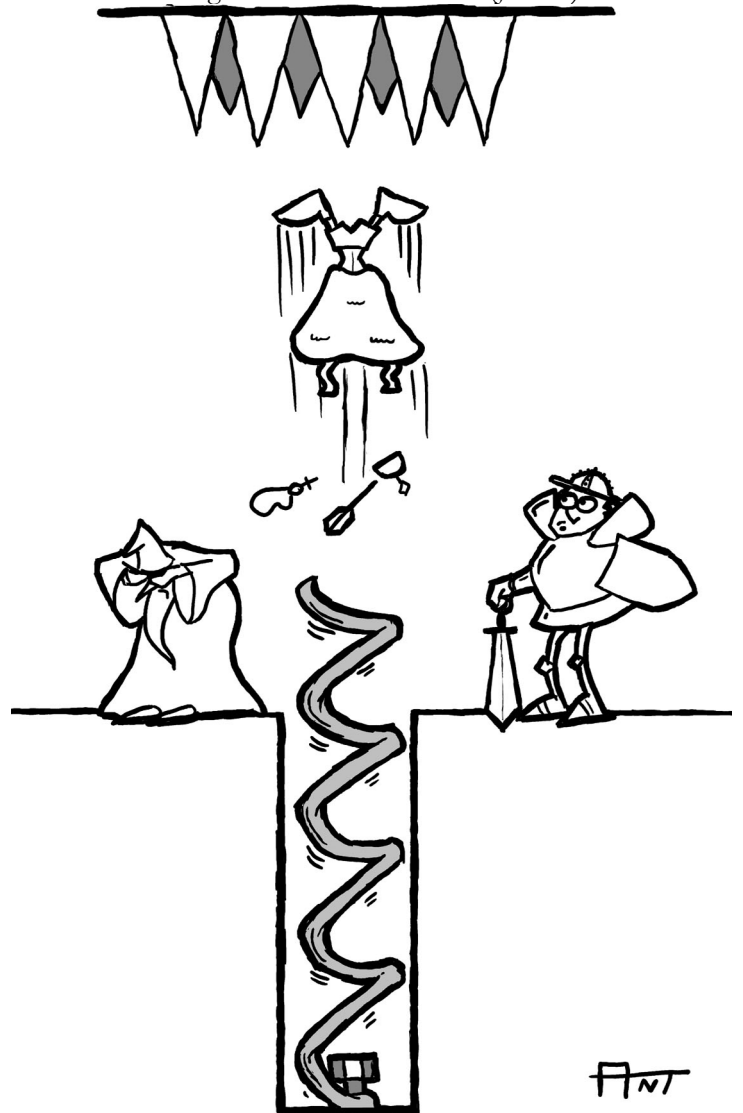
Temple Alliances and Enmities: The temple of Thek has very good relations with most of the other Kilalammi gods in the area in which he is worshipped. The relation with the Temple of Uchsvun is extremely close, as one would expect given that mythologically the deities are man and wife. There is a deep enmity with the god Jrakka. The Concordat is not usually considered to run between the 'alignments' in Kilálammu and religious conflict is far from unknown. The worshippers of Jrakka were, it is said, driven away millennia ago to live in the land of the Ssú and in the Lakam Mnellekma range, a magical blackspot where their demon conjuring will not work. The followers of Thek do not like the followers of the god Hrakma much either, not that they ever met any but suspect that there might be underground covens of such somewhere. In some areas in the lowland valleys of the Chaigari Protectorate and in southern Jannu, Thek is worshipped as a minor deity, father of Hurgmak and Dumuggak, the locally far more important war gods. Tribes favouring Hurgmak,

Random's Assortment

tricks and traps by Random and Peter Schmidt Jensen

Spikes & Bones: A chamber's ceiling is decorated with spikes. One of them can be pulled to operate a secret trap-door. Pulling any other causes the spikes to fall, possibly harming those below, while simultaneously several sliding walls open and release 3d12 skeletons to pick up the spikes to use as stabbers and attack intruders. (Random)

The Pogo Pit Trap: One of the party members plummets into a pit trap, but is just as suddenly hurled out again! His fellow spelunkers look on in disbelief as he bounces repeatedly up and down, alternately smashing into ceiling and pit floor for multiple dice of damage! By upgrading with our easy-to-install *StumblDoom™* spring made of a durable mithril alloy, you can put the 'OW!' back in power-gaming! Call NOW and get a set of our patented *Slize Hurley* brand of barbed spikes absolutely FREE! Call 1-800-POGOPIT, and make a lasting change in your players' lives! Offer not valid for orders of less than 10,000 gp, or for vendors of alignment Good or better. (Jensen)



Prince of Swords, say he is husband of Uchsvun and father of the tribes, others ascribe this role to Dumuggak, Lord of Spears. Relations with Tsolyáni gods are more distant. The priests of Thek recognise a common interest with Thúmis but resent the Tsolyáni attempts to organise and dominate them, and rarely visit the alleged shrine of Thek at Hekéllu. They are even less trusting of Hnálla, who claims Thek's sun as his own, and have a deep antipathy toward Hrü'ü, Dlamélish and Ksárul which take pride in dealing with demons. These rumors are unconfirmed, but Thek-following clansmen may be ambushing and slaying Tsolyáni merchants displaying the tokens of Ksárul.

Avatars: There is just one living avatar of Thek, Gharuk'un Raisk'u, a shy and retiring man who has an uncanny ability to foresee the future. Gharuk'un denies that he is a true avatar, but only one possessed by Thek could possibly be so accurate. His current location is unknown. Besieged by petitioners, he ran away from his monastery in the dead of night and is believed to be on extended pilgrimage to the highest and loneliest shrines. Rumours that he predicted the return of Jrakka and a rematch of the battle of the Peak at the Heart of the World for the end of this century are being quashed by Thek's priests wherever they arise.

Spells and Items for OEPT: A priest or sorcerer of Thek usually substitutes his or her level 1 professional skill for knowledge of one of the Litanies, giving him a scholar skill in botany, zoology, geology, cosmology and astrology, meteorology, history or alchemy. Priests can also learn the 'Control of Self' ability at level 2, and a follower of Thek can use this skill to resist extremely low temperatures. They can also learn the following special bonus spells:

Group I

Hibernation – the priest can enter a state of suspended animation requiring no food or water for up to 1 month/level, and he will gain +4 saves vs. cold while in this state.

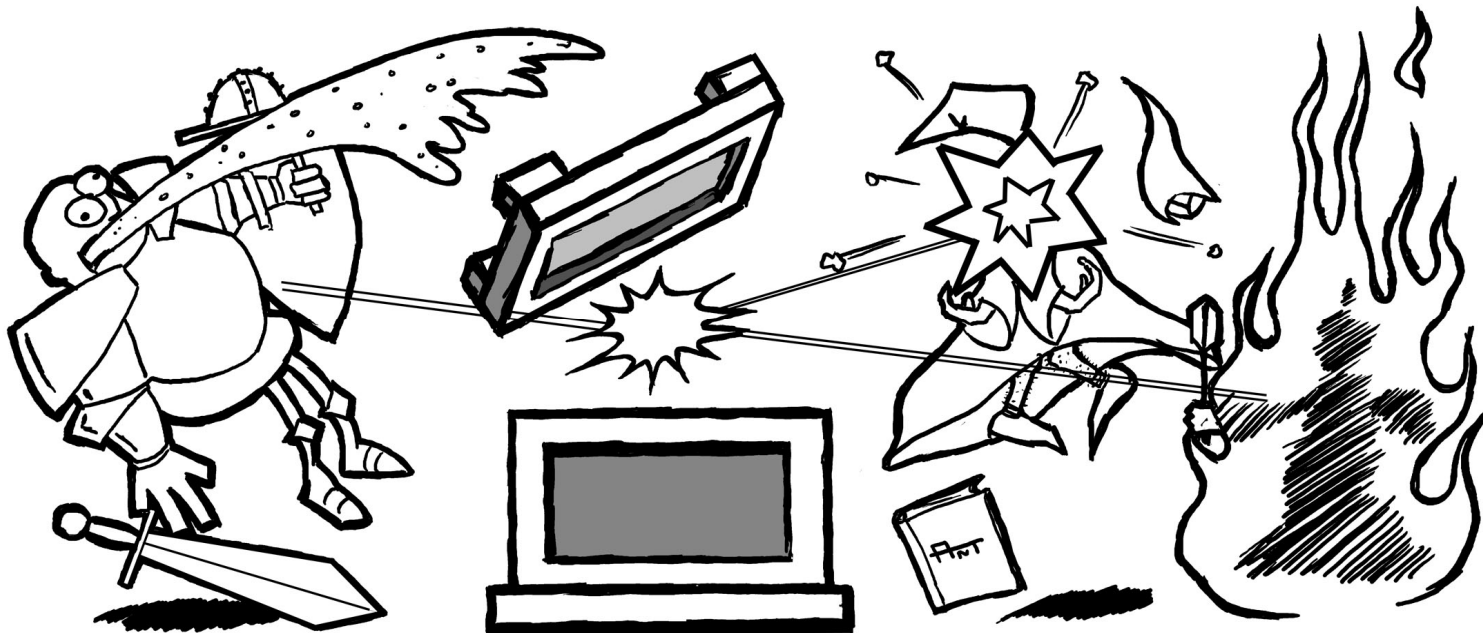
Thek's Finger – as per the Healing spell, but enables the regrowth of fingers, toes etc. lost to frostbite and gives +1d3 healing if an injury was caused by cold.

Hearth Glow – as per the Light spell, but the light emanates warmth equivalent to a camp fire.

Group II

The Eye of Thek – a priest of Thek can see through any carved Eye of Thek monument within 10 tsan of his current location, and can cast spells on any targets within range of such an eye.

Priests of Thek will not use the 'Creatures' spell of any level, and will be very wary of anyone who does. Summoning demons is the work of Jrakka the Accursed. Ω



Cursed Box: The heavy lid of a large chest requires a combined 60 points of Strength to lift. Upon opening, all lifting must roll on the following table (d6): 1 Head explodes; 2 Face melts; 3 Burned alive; 4 Hurlled away, taking 3d6 damage; 5 Vomits profusely and falls unconscious; 6 Runs away screaming. The lid of the chest then snaps back into its former place. (Random)

Knock and Key: A locked door is decorated by a single terrifying skull with piercing pinpoint eyes. Using the jaw as a knocker will make the door swing open. (Random)

Wild Gate: A dungeon portal opens to what appears to be a grassy and pleasant fantasy land, overlooked by a cloud castle in the distance. In reality, it is a magical trap, and any traveling through the portal will be stranded. Within the

fantasy land, a wandering monster appears once each turn *without exception*, determined as follows (d12): 1 Carrion Crawler, 2 Centaur, 3 Red Dragon, 4 Goblin (or whatever those guys are), 5 Griffon, 6 Manticore, 7 Owlbear, 8 Pixie, 9 Purple Worm, 10 Roper, 11 Troll, 12 Unicorn. Escape is possible by subduing a flying creature and riding it to the cloud castle, where a portal will take adventurers back to the dungeon from whence they came. (Random)

PCs Abhor a Vacuum: A *sphere of annihilation* is located at the center of a large sphere of magical darkness. (Random)

Slime Bag: A bag is discovered to be filled with strange green powder. Be careful not to get it wet, as that will transform it into deadly green slime! (Random) Ω



Caverns of the Beast Mistress

tribute dungeon level by Tavis Allison

At the beginning of the current age of creation, rain ate stone and left a hollow behind when the land rose. In these limestone caves was born a great kingdom of lizard men. Their shaman dowsed where the rain had gone and found a spring. When men conquered the caves, they consecrated the shrine they built around the spring to Demeter. As the empire grew, word of her Water of Life’s healing powers brought pilgrims from far and wide. The strangest of these was a slime entity, come from a distant sphere in search of the crash-landed ship of its predecessor. Imperial wizards intercepted this visitor in the upper air, shooting down its craft and bringing the mortally wounded pilot to the caves. The warlock Hortensius nursed the slime entity back to health with the shrine’s waters and led the effort to communicate with the alien. He fell prey to one of the extraplanar entities he summoned in the search for a common language. After his demise, the slime escaped its confinement and spread through the caves. Efforts to retake the shrine failed after troops were called away to deal with the ultimate uprising of the empire’s half-man, half-beast servants.

The patriarchy formed by the former slaves has ruled the caves for centuries and is now facing a rebellion of its own. The maze-mage Sharna and her minotrice huntresses are female counterparts to the Beast Lord and his minotaur lieutenants. Refusing to submit to the will of a dull-witted male, Sharna led her coven to the caves above the spring. She developed an herbal toxin to drive back the slime and dug a secret network of tunnels with the aid of her sisters’ bull-like offspring, the taurons. For years, an uneasy détente has existed between the forces of the Beast Lord and Sharna. What new era in the caves’ history will be inaugurated by the coming of the adventurers?

Caverns of the Beast Mistress is a modular sub-level inspired by Paul Jaquays’ great *Caverns of Thracia* and *Night of the Walking Wet*. In my own campaign, it connects with the “garden level” of the former. This adventure is written in memory of Sang Lee, and features his remarkable illustrations of the minotrice, maze mage, and tauron. These monsters, and the character of Sharna, were created by Brian Stith in *Masters and Minions: Maze of the Minotaur*, and are used here with his blessing.

Friction Points: The minotrice are intelligent opponents who have carefully set up guards, alarms, and observation posts to defend their territory. Referees who wish to pre-

determine the defenders’ contingency plan for intruders and play out each step of their reaction as the adventure proceeds have the information necessary to do so. The friction point system is provided for those who prefer to handle the organized minotrice response at a higher level of abstraction. Each time the adventurers potentially draw attention to themselves through their actions, they accumulate friction points as per the guidelines below. Increasing levels of friction increase the frequency and possible outcome of wandering monster checks as the minotrice respond to evidence that invaders are afoot.

Action	Friction Points
Visible light in caves	1
Lengthy discussion in open area	1
Leave door open or plank down	1
Noise of battle	1+
Shouting to be heard at a distance	2
Smoke (e.g. flaming oil)*	2
Corpses not covered up	3
Tracks left in guano*	4
Taurons or dogs escape combat	5
Metallophobe mushrooms shriek*	6
Minotaurs or minotrice escape	7

* Repeating this action will usually yield half as many friction points; for example, if the mushrooms shriek four times, the party’s friction point total would increase by 6, 3, 2, and 1.

The party’s accumulated friction point total will be reduced by 3 for each day that passes since they last generated friction. The referee should also reduce friction points in response to clever actions: e.g. having a charmed minotrice report a false alarm to her sisters might earn a six point reduction. Effects of Friction Points are as follows:

Friction Points	Encounters		Likely Coven Activities At This Friction Level
	Chance	Die	
0-5	1 in 6	d4	Gather lichen, tend mushrooms, herd tauron, raise young, argue
6-10	1 in 6	d6	Rouse sleepers, send out patrols, pull up pit rope ladders
11-15	2 in 6	d8	Set ambushes, contemplate negotiation, herd taurons into staircase, seal garderobes against flyers, draw curtains and scatter dust to detect invisible, use tactile sign language to thwart scrying
16+	2 in 6	d12	Prepare for evacuation by gathering valuables and shepherding dogs, tauron, and young to river; direct vine nexus to drop slime barrels into caverns

Wandering Monsters:

Roll	Encounter
1	Pursuit from the party's past (a longstanding enemy, a monster from the area passed through en route, a rival adventuring party)
2	A bat slime-zombie has flown into the area: 1-3 still mobile (leather, 1 HD, fly 15"), 4-6 battered against walls and collapsed, now encountered as ooze full of bat bones (unarmored, 1 HD, 1")
3	1d3 minotaurs, either a delegation to negotiate with the Mistress (speaks Common, may bear gifts) or juveniles sneaking into the minotrice caves
4	1d4 minotrice (leather, 3 javelins and 3 lit bane-torches, 4 HD, 12", mob attack), either gardening (carrying lichen and vineberries) or slime patrolling (barrel with ooze 1-2, mash 3-6)
5	4 minotrice (leather, 6 javelins, bronze maces, 1 unlit bane-torch, 4 HD, 12", mob attack) plus 6 dogs (unarmored, 1 HD, 12"), hunting for tracks or scent of possible intruders
6	3 minotrice (leather, 6 javelins, maces, 1 unlit bane-torch, 4 HD, 12", mob attack) plus 3 young minotaurs (leather, bronze axes, 3 HD, 12", perfect morale), seeking to melee invaders
7	7 minotrice (leather, short bows, maces, 4 HD, 12", mob attack), planning missile ambush
8	Sharna (leather, sickle, 6 HD, 12", spells) with 6 minotrice (leather, 6 javelins, 4 HD, 12", mob attack) and 6 taurons (leather, 3 HD, 12", horns 1d8 damage), seeking to parlay with invaders
9	The vine drops 1d6+2 barrels filled with naked slime (unarmored, 6 HD, 1") from the ceiling
10	The vine drops 1d6+2 barrels filled with rock-covered slime from the ceiling (chain, 4 HD, 1")
11	The vine drops 1d6+2 barrels filled with slime zombies from the ceiling (plate, 2 HD, 12")
12	The vine drops a volley of 1d6 of each type of slime barrel listed above

Key: For some areas an evocative event is provided. This may occur on a 1 in 6 or when desired.

1. Tunnel through the Great Barrier. A massive wall of masonry marks the entry to this sub-level. Halfway up the crumbling face of the wall is carved the profile of a handsome human male and an inscription in the language of an ancient empire: "Sealed by the proclamation of King Agamemnon." The 7' wide tunnel burrowed through the wall seems a mouse-hole in comparison. **Event:** A cloud of bats flies into or out of the tunnel.

2. Upper Cave and Roadway. At its highest the roof of this limestone cave rises 80 feet from its guano-spattered floor. Skilled trackers may read the prints of hooves and

paws, which attest that minotaurs, minotrice, and their hunting dogs have passed this way at infrequent intervals for some time. A very old but intact roadway has been cleared through the stalagmites and paved with cobblestones. Vines climb down the cave walls. Their leaves are glossy green despite the utter absence of light, they bear small bitter-tasting fruit, and their thick and muscular vine runners imply motility. Botanists may recognize some of the strains of this hybrid vine, including grape and assassin. **Event:** Splattering echoes through the cave as the vine dumps a bucket of excreta onto the mushrooms.

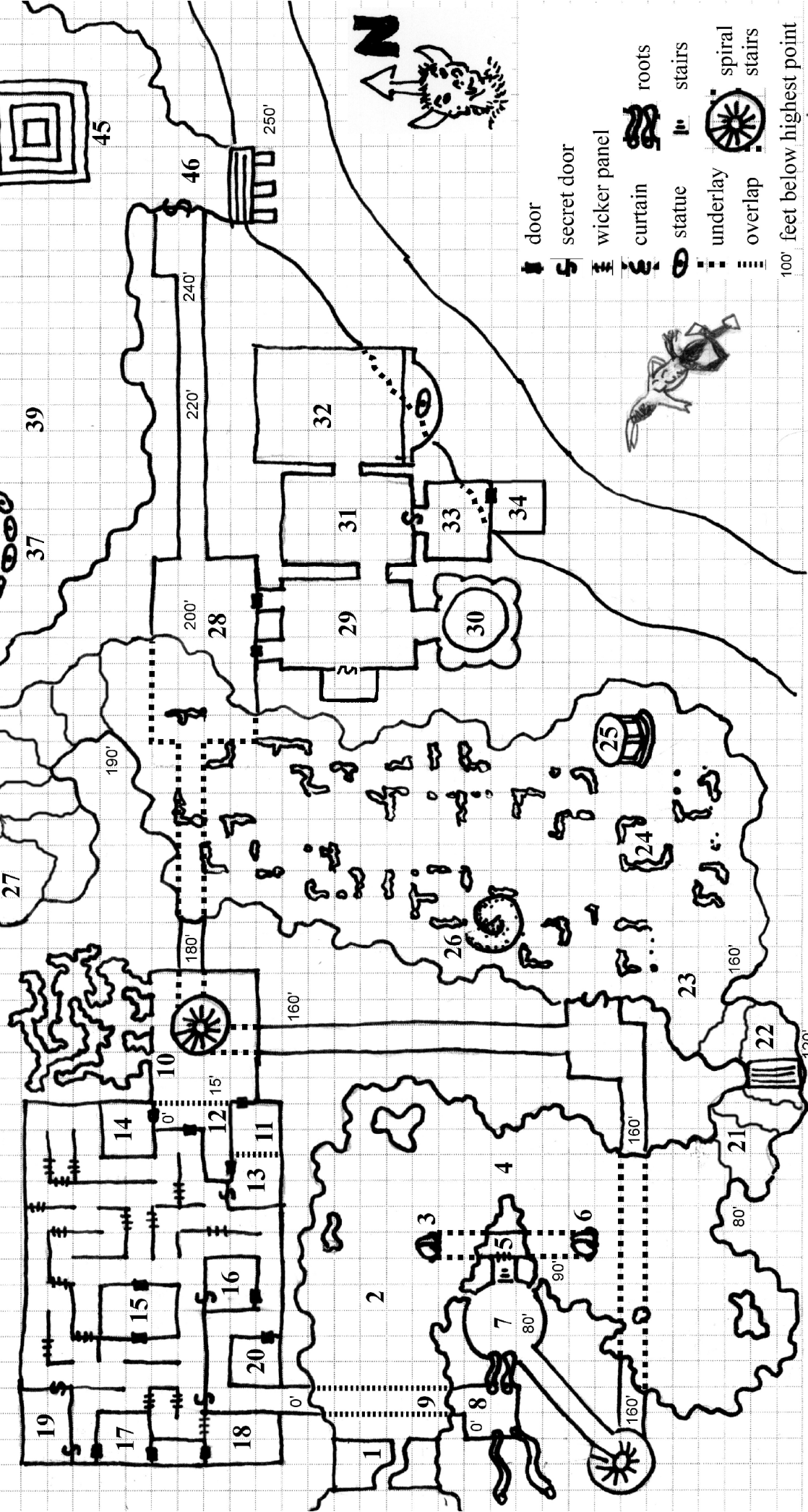
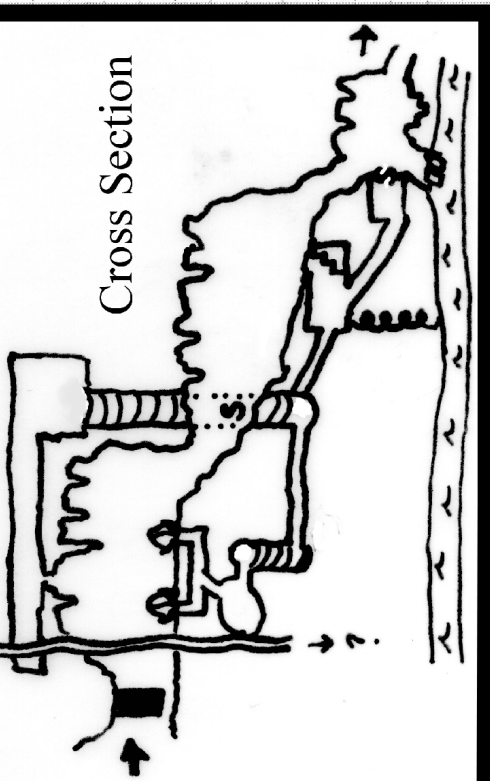
3. Floral Hatchway. A hemispherical yellow flower 6' in diameter grows from the cave floor. Touching its fleshy petals will cause them to slowly open, revealing a dark maw leading 10' down. Thick tendrils inside this maw are knotted into a rope ladder to facilitate climbing into and out of **5**. Tracks of hooves, but not paws, lead from the north to this flower and from here to the north again. **Event:** The petals part like lips to snatch one of the flies buzzing around the flowers.

4. Mushroom Strip. A low mound of dirt bisects the cave, from which giant purple fungi grow. The tops of the mushrooms are spattered with manure (dropped by the vine above), attracting flies. The tallest fungi are metallophobe mushrooms: phallic, pitted, sprouting fan-like fronds, and possibly recognizable as hybrids of shriekers, violet fungi, and rust monsters. The shrooms will shriek if ferrous metals come within 5', and rust any such metals they touch. In the soft dirt of the mound, it is easy to see prints of hooves and dogs passing back and forth (as the coven typically uses bronze instead of iron). **Event:** One of the mushrooms emits a cloud of lavender spores.

5. Passage Below. Gray lichen grows over the walls and low ceiling of this short corridor, concealing a wicker panel on the south wall. **Event:** Faint sound from behind the panel, an inhabitant scratching her fur or distant barking.

The Climbing Vine: This unique plant runs through the *Caves of the Beast Mistress*. It is sustained by a taproot that drinks from the Spring of Life and was bred and controlled by Sharna to perform three functions:

- The garderobes from the minotrice's den empty into buckets, which the vine's motile tendrils carry across the ceiling of the upper cave and empty them to feed the metallophobe mushrooms below.
- Flower-buds on the ceiling hold barrels in which slime organisms are sealed. Altering the light in the leaf-room can cause these buds to open, dropping the barrels to form a scorched-earth defense.
- The vine trunks serve as pipes to bring water from the Spring of Life and ladders for subterranean travel to wherever roots grow. In my campaign, some roots lead to adventure locations 30 miles away.



Lichen and Wicker Panels: The minotrice cover their walls with gray lichen that they grow in the vats of **14**. They enjoy the lichen's appearance and earthy, cumin-like scent, and use the inch-thick exfoliation of the lichen to disguise the wicker panels they use as breakable walls. Like secret doors, these panels give the minotrice hidden ways to burst into or escape from an area, but the fact that the panels are not doors, have no opening mechanism, and are used only once before being replaced makes them more difficult to detect. The base chance to bash down one of these panels is 5 in 6, modified by any relevant modifiers for opening doors.

Vine Roots: The vine roots are tubes five or more feet in diameter. The sound produced by knocking on a root will identify which type it is: ladder or pipe. Cuts in either – even slashes big enough to permit a minotaur to enter a ladder – will close up without leaving a mark within 3 turns. Piercing a pipe root will cause sap to burst forth; drinking it heals 1d6 hit points (it is diluted water from the Spring of Life, carried by a living vessel) but counts as that day's use of the spring. Cutting into a ladder root reveals a hollow space criss-crossed with woody filaments. In roots which the minotaurs and minotrice regularly use as ladders, all filaments are cleared away but the thickest, which are used as rungs. (Stairs are for taurons and dogs.)



6. Flower Up. Identical to **3**, except that tracks on the cave floor lead here from the south and back. **Event:** The petals pucker like lips blowing a kiss.

7. Wardroom Below. This small chamber smells of musk and fur. The stairs to the southwest are unusually broad and shallow, making it easier to herd taurons up or down to dig new passages. Well-concealed arrow slits look out into **2**. The 5' diameter vine roots to the west run from floor to ceiling. One is a ladder, one is a pipe. (See sidebar.) The space inside the ladder is clear above as far as **8**; filaments grow unchecked elsewhere. **Monster:** Two minotrice are assigned to guard this post. If they hear noise in the passage beyond the panel or the shrieking of the mushrooms above, they will slit the ladder root and climb up to alert the coven (represented by friction points). They are only likely to be encountered here if caught by surprise.

8. Tube Station. A number of ladder roots converge in this chamber, including the one leading to the wardroom. If the minotrice have left that area (e.g. friction points 11+), they stand guard here instead. **Event:** Muffled sounds echoing from some distant event can be heard from inside one of the roots.

9. Garderobe. The stone seats of these toilets face view ports cut into the ceiling of the upper cave, such that lights below might be seen by those using the facilities (reflected by friction points). Although the garderobe shafts are only wide enough to admit an unfastidious gnome, the paranoid minotrice will nevertheless pin shut the wooden covers over each toilet once they reach a state of alarm. **Event:** A bucket beneath the toilet shaft scrapes on stone as the vine takes it to feed the mushrooms.

Young Minotaur: Leather, 3 HD, 12", perfect morale. These immature males defend as if wearing leather armor due to their thick coats of shaggy, blood-caked hair. A young minotaur begins combat by goring, dealing 2d6 damage on a successful charge, and then fights with his bronze axe (1d6 damage). Full of hormonal aggression, these creatures need never check for morale, and are so eager to fight to the death that any accompanying minotrice will be hard-pressed to keep them from charging at the first sight of an enemy. The presence of these young males, and their instinct to challenge the herd's leader for dominance, poses a long-term threat to the existence of the coven; currently Sharna is clearly physically and mentally superior, but the former will be called into question when they reach their full growth.

Bloodhounds: Unarmored, 1 HD, 15", keen noses. These dogs are bred by the minotrice, who value their ability to track prey and sense invisible foes by scent, but especially beloved of the minotaurs, with whom they share bestial cunning and stubbornness.

10. Beast Pit. This chamber is at the top of the minotrice's network of tunnels and stairways. The passages leading to the south-east lead to smelly warrens dug from a seam of friable rock by the coven's 12 dogs, where they live with 7 young minotaurs. There is enough loose rock in the warrens to build a ramp up to the balcony. The wall to the west is composed of wicker panels. **Monster:** Five young minotaurs (leather, 3 HD, 12", perfect morale) will usually be romping with seven bloodhounds (unarmored, 1 HD, 15", keen noses) in the central chamber.

11. Butcher & Tannery. The coven's food animals, including members past their prime, are slaughtered here. The offal on which the dogs feed and the vats where the hides are made into leather contribute to a foul odor. A hoist can be swung out to lift a carcass the 15' up to **13**. Although it will be swung out of the way in the event of an alarm, the hoist could be snagged with a 10' pole or grappling hook to provide a way out of the pit. **Trap:** Opening the lids on the tanning vats releases acrid fumes; all within 5' must save vs. poison or suffer a 10% penalty for one turn on any task impaired by stinging eyes and offended sinuses.

12. Balcony. This stone ledge overlooks the central pit from an elevation of 15 feet. Two knotted ropes attached to the columns let minotrice climb up from the pit, unless they have been pulled up for defense. The stone secret doors revolve around a central pillar, and are opened by pushing on one side or the other. **Monster:** Within a minute after a disturbance below, minotrice will appear to throw javelins at intruders.

13. Pantry. This storeroom contains both the coven's food and their corpses; the cannibal minotrice make no distinction apart from the way they say grace before a meal. Barrels hold enough meat to feed the coven for two weeks (i.e. 48 units of iron rations), and enough brine and spices that they could survive for another three by slaughtering their tauron herd and preserving the meat. **Monster:** Each turn spent here risks a 1 in 6 chance that a coven member will come looking for a snack.

14. Wicker Workshop. A musty room with wicker strips and vine-wood frameworks in various stages of construction and lichen-growth, and stone basins for dipping them into the rank lichen starter culture. **Treasure:** A wineskin-full of the culture is worth 10 g.p. to the right buyer; there is enough to fill 100 skins.

15. Barracks. The minotrice regularly rearrange the wicker partitions within this maze-like space, both to reflect shifting social dynamics and from an instinct to confuse mappers. **Monsters:** Fifteen minotrice (leather, 4 HD, 12", perfect morale) dwell here. **Treasure:** A leather backpack contains 10 lbs. of gems and antique household valuables worth 5,000 g.p., scavenged from the ruins of the middle caves and kept to be traded for to salt, ingots, and herbs.



Minotrice: Leather, 4 HD, 12", perfect morale. These fierce huntresses are the female counterparts of the minotaur, expert at tracking prey and driving it to its doom. A minotrice defends as if wearing leather armor due to her agility and shaggy hide. Knowing that their strength is in numbers, a minotrice avoids solitude except when she is giving birth to the young that she suckles with her six udders. Minotrice prefer to strike at a distance with their bronze-tipped javelins and arrows. When fighting in melee with her bronze sickle and powerful hooves (1d6 damage) a minotrice receives a +1 bonus to hit for each of her sisters who are engaging the same foe.

16. Cooper & Blacksmith. One side of this chamber holds barrel-making tools, the other a forge and anvil. A human could climb through the forge chimney to the surface, but not in armor. **Treasure:** The tools and metal ingots in this room are worth 300 g.p. and weigh 150 lbs.

17. Herbal Workshop. Here, Sharna mixes various herbal preparations, most notably the tarry substance used in making bane-torches and the rollers designed to keep slimes out of the upper caves. Its raw materials – vine fruit, cave lichen, and rare herbs traded from the surface world –



fill most of the room. **Treasure:** There are 40 bane-torches here, plus apocethary supplies worth 400 g.p. and weighing 40 lbs.

18. Vine Nexus. The stone ceiling of this room is enchanted to produce continual sunlight. Vine stems, runners, and roots emerge from the walls and twine throughout, culminating in a dozen orchid-like flowers that resemble eyes and brains. Wicker panels are set up on movable wood arms to provide each flower with variable amounts

Bane-Torches: Sharna's reclamation of these caves depends on her development of a compound that is toxic to slime creatures. While one of the bane-torches dipped in this substance is burning, no slime will willingly come within 5' of its bearer. If the bearer of a lit torch engages a slime in melee, its attacks on the wielder are at -2. Bane-torches make effective weapons against slimes, dealing 2d6 on a successful hit. However, the torch will go out if either damage die rolls a 6. Because of their alchemical nature, bane-torches burn twice as quickly as the regular variety. Minotrice always bring bane-torches when visiting the main caves, but leave them unlit if they suspect intruders.

Sharna, the Maze Mage: Leather, 8 HD, 12", spells. As minotrice are hybrid creatures of Chaos, they often give birth to mutants. Most such infants suffer a cruel fate, but when a baby minotrice is born with pale, hairless skin there is great celebration, for a maze mage has been added to the herd. Sharna received the tattoos that mark her mastery of nature magic at an unusually young age, by which time she had already realized that she was better suited to lead the minotaur herd than the reckless and short-sighted Beast Lord. Her bid for power failed, but Sharna is never without a backup plan and had already established a fall-back where her coven of faithful minotrice could live independently. Relations with the Beast Lord are tense; he values her magical talents, and the breeding capacity of her sisters, as much as he is enraged by her disloyalty. Sharna can use each of the following spells once per day: **Lung Seeker Swarm:** flying vermin fill a 20' radius area within 12" and persist for six rounds. Those within take 1 point of damage each round, plus a further 1d6 if they open their mouth (e.g. to cast spells); **Plant Command:** grants motility to a plant in earshot for one round. Sharna uses this on the vine, which can pick up a victim as large as an ogre (if its saving throw fails) and drop it from the ceiling 80' above; **Wood Body:** caster gains protection equal to plate armor for 6 turns, and takes half damage from non-chopping weapons, but is vulnerable to spells that affect plants and is reduced to a move of 3"; **Sculpt Stone:** during each round of concentration, the caster's will reshapes a cubic yard of rock up to 12" away. Maximum duration is 1 turn. Foes may save to avoid being crushed or trapped by this spell; **Sequester Potion:** caster delays the effect of a magical liquid (and prevents further doses of the same from taking effect) until a trigger is spoken. Sharna has sequestered the Spring of Life (heal 4d6).

of sunlight: this is how Sharna controls the vine. **Magic Item:** Chunks broken from the ceiling will retain their enchantment, useful against vampires etc. **Treasure:** A carefully nurtured planter holds a seedling of the vine, worth 7,000 g.p. to the right buyer. **Trap:** Touching the planter or seedling triggers a fire trap, dealing 3d6 damage (save half) within 5'.

19. Beast Mistress's Lair. The furniture in Sharna's boudoir is made of the bones of dwarves, her hated racial enemy. Other than that this is just what you'd expect from the bedroom of a powerful beast-lady. A ladder root leading to the docks of the underground river provides her with an escape route. Another leads to the Temple of Demeter, where she sometimes studies the statues (armed with bane-torches). **Monster:** Sharna (leather, 8 HD, 12", spells) is often here alone or with her two maze mage apprentices (HD 6), Raven and Garmel. **Treasure:** Gifts delivered by the Beast Lord's emissaries are scattered about, including platinum jewelry (2,000 g.p., 10 lbs) and a +1 dwarven war hammer (Lawful, Intelligence & Ego 8, detects secret doors).

20. Barrel Armory. The minotrice put slimes they capture from the caves into barrels, seal the lid while they grow on the slops placed in each barrel, and store them here. Vine runners wait to drop these last-ditch weapons at Sharna's command (generally when friction points reach 16 or above). **Monsters:** Some barrels contain entire slime zombies, formed from the ancient imperial legionnaires and still in armor (plate, 2 HD, 6"). Others contain only slime (unarmored, 6 HD, 1"), or slime and rocks for protection (chain, 4 HD, 1"). There are 15 barrels of each type here.

21. Flowstone Terraces. The cavern slopes downward, descending 80' in a series of irregular limestone ledges and shelves. The old road keeps a constant grade by a series of switchbacks and built-up ramps. Ceilings in this area are lower (20'), allowing the vines and nesting bats on the roof to be seen clearly. **Event:** Air currents bring the odors of dung (cow or dog), musklike wet fur, or bane-torch smoke.

22. Cattle Rollers. A shallow trench has been excavated from one side of the cavern to the other, cutting through the stone road. Four wooden cylinders smeared with a pungent herbal tar are set into the trench. This tar is toxic to slimes, who will suffer 2d6 damage if struck by one of these cylinders used as a club or staff. The taurons will not step onto these rollers, and because the minotrice dislike it as well they have left planks propped against the cavern wall on either side of the trench. Each plank has a rope passed through a loop in the wall: pulling the knotted end will return the plank to its place. **Event:** The chime of a cowbell can be heard in the cave below.

23. The Middle Caves. The vine-covered ceiling of this cave is 100' at the highest and has many stalactites, but the herd of taurons here has munched on the stalagmites. The floor is covered in sandy cow patties; close examination indicates that they contain flecks of mica and fine gravel. The edible mushrooms growing in the manure are harvested by minotrice; their hoof prints are easy to see in the soft ground but hard to distinguish from the tauron's broader, deeper impressions. The herd has 26 taurons, typically formed in bands of 1d6+2 individuals (a bull and cows). Because the walls still standing limit visibility, each turn spent in this cave entails a 1 in 6 chance of unexpectedly crossing paths with such a band (in addition to the wandering monster check). **Monster:** Taurons (leather, 4 HD, 12", horns 1d8) roam the area unless friction points are 16 or above. **Magic Item:** Harvesting a tauron's stomachs yields acid capable of dissolving one cubic foot of stone. **Event:** Two tauron bulls loudly prepare to lock horns: "I am the best, I eat the best stone." "You are nothing, you eat my droppings. The cows all call to me."

24. Village Leftovers. This area is the ruins of an ancient complex that once served and housed visitors. Few buildings are still intact, as the different kinds of stone used in their construction make interesting grazing for the taurons

roaming this area. Many statues litter the rubble, chewed by taurons. **Event:** A relatively intact statue confirms the suspicion that at least some are petrified adventurers.

25. Nativity Scene. Supported by marble columns, the domed roof of this structure is miraculously still standing. Clerics may identify it as a Temple of Hera by the painted peacocks and sculpted pomegranates on the roof. Inside, a tauron cow watches her four calves teething on the toppled statue of the goddess. The calves resemble hairy, burly human toddlers. As the bestial element of their psyche is not predominant, it is possible that they might be raised to live in harmony with a Lawful civilization or sold on a slave market for as much as 2,400 g.p. apiece. Approaching within 10' of the calves will cause their mother to bellow in distress, bringing eight angry taurons in 1d3 rounds. **Event:** The sound of collapsing masonry as a tauron munches through a wall elsewhere in the caves.

Tauron: Leather, 3 HD, 12", horns 1d8. When their territory needs to expand, minotrice are likely to give birth to more bullish creatures than minotaurs. These are taurons, who excavate the famous mazes with the aid of the stone-dissolving digestive acids of a four stomachs. A tauron's most human qualities are its eyes and its speech. Because a tauron's vocabulary far exceeds its intellect, most of its conversation is parroted, stupid, or both. While belligerent and territorial, these taurons are also nearsighted and accustomed to torch-bearing minotrice passing through this cave. Roll reactions on 2d6: 2-5 attack, 6-8 observe warily, 9-12 mistake for minotrice and ignore.



26. Iron Bull's Pasture. A spiral path winds into the ground like a pit mine. The limestone here is particularly tasty, and has been claimed as the personal feeding trough of a gorgon. Sharna summoned this fearsome bull from the Elemental Plane of Earth in order to give her minotrice a symbol of masculinity to replace the Beast Lord. Although she sees this cult as foolish, she does hope to someday make cross-breeds with the gorgon. The taurons' diet of stone gives them resistance to the gorgon's breath (although they still avoid its ill temper). Lacking such protection, the minotrice's bravest huntress put a bell around the gorgon's neck while it slept so that they can hear it coming and get out of the way. **Monster:** Gorgon (plate, 8 HD, 12", petrifying breath with 6' range).

27. Another Down Slope. The cavern descends 60' via flowstone terraces and switchbacks of the old road, with cattle rollers identical to 20) halfway down. A few hoof prints can be seen coming and going. **Event:** The distant sound of unseen water dripping from a stalactite.

28. Foyer. In digging their tunnel to the underground river, the coven came across subterranean baths built below the visitor complex in the middle caves and then hidden when their stairs were buried by a collapse. This area is where visitors of both genders would mingle before one sex entered the baths. Each of the brass doors to the south has been enchanted by an 8th level warlock to open only for a male or female human: an inscription in the ancient imperial script reads "Lords" on the west door and "Ladies" on the east. Once a human of either sex passes through a door, it will quickly shut if any creature of the opposite sex attempts to enter (strongly enough to resist even an ogre, although not enough to overcome being spiked open). The opposite door will not open until all visitors of the other sex have left. Both doors are warm to the touch; hoof prints approach the door but do not enter. **Event:** Dust sifts out of a crack in the ceiling, although a dwarf can gauge that further cave-in is unlikely.

29. Apodyterium. This steam-filled changing room has mosaic walls with stone benches and niches for clothes and cloak pegs. All are empty, and the pegs are covered with a furry black rot that likes the humidity. The door to the west leads to a latrine, kept private by an intact grey curtain. **Treasure:** The curtain is woven of magical thread which blocks scrying and resists harm. If worn as a cloak, the next time the wearer would take damage the curtain is destroyed instead. **Event:** The salamander Emir Yunus calls out from the hypocaust: "Welcome, gentlefolk!"

30. Frigidarium. Emir normally keeps this bath cool, making the room slightly less steamy than the rest. If the salamander decides to start heating this water, those immersed will feel it grow uncomfortably hot on the first round, suffer 1d6 damage on the second, 2d6 on the third, etc. to a maximum of 6d6. **Treasure:** An emerald hairpin

(1,200 g.p.) sparkles at the bottom of the bath. **Event:** Emir calls out "Did you come back to claim your lost possessions, forgotten for so long?"

31. Tepidarium. The steam is thickest at the eastern end of this room. The walls are plastered and painted red, and elegant caryatids are carved of marble beneath the cornice roof. The hypocaust floor is made of marble slabs five feet square and four inches thick. Lifting up one of these slabs will reveal that the floor is resting on three foot tall brick pillars. The space underneath is designed to convey heat from the furnace beyond the secret door to the south. Emir waits beneath the floor until visitors are above, and then smashes the slab beneath one of them. His target must save vs. death or fall below, which causes no damage but knocks the target prone and brings them tumbling down where Emir can attack from hiding. **Monster:** Emir Yunus, salamander (plate, 7 HD, 9", fire damage 2d6/4d6, must save to attack in melee.)

32. Caldarium. This boiling pool is the source of the steam that fills the baths. Emir dreams of pushing the humans who bound him here into the pool, which will cause 6d6 damage for each round of immersion. If he enters the pool, he is able to splash the water 10', dealing 3d6 damage to all in the arc (save vs. breath for half). Once he ceases heating the pool, it will take 12 hours for it to cool to tolerable levels. **Treasure:** A golden statue of a nymph stands at the south end of the pool: climbing, flight, etc. will be required to reach her without entering the water. She is gold-plated rather than solid gold, but her emerald eyes can be quickly pried loose (200 g.p. each); see Looting the Bath sidebar for the gold.

33. Furnace. The copper boilers, pipes, and braziers in this room were rendered superfluous by Emir, who heats the hypocaust and baths simply by his presence. Hidden behind a secret door, this is his habitual sanctum. He passes the time by squeezing charcoal from the braziers into diamonds. **Treasure:** Fifteen examples of his handiwork are arranged in geometric patterns. As large as eggs but flawed and impure, each diamond is worth 100 g.p.

Thoroughly Looting the Baths: Dedicated adventurers may ransack the baths as follows. Divide time required by the number of looters.

Stripping the gold plating from the caldarium statue: 2,000 g.p., 200 lbs, 10 turns to complete.

Prying loose the apodyterium mosaic tiles: 500 g.p., 20 lbs, 20 turns to complete.

Pulling down the tepidarium's finely carved caryatids: 1,500 g.p., 2,000 lbs, 10 turns to complete.

Converting the furnace boilers to scrap copper: 250 g.p., 1,000 lbs, 20 turns to complete.

Salamander: Plate, 7 HD, 9", fire damage 2d6, assailants must save to attack in melee. Emir Yunus, a former functionary of the Elemental Plane of Fire, radiates intense heat. Creatures vulnerable to fire take 2d6 damage if struck by Emir, and must successfully save vs. dragon breath each time they wish to draw close enough to attack him in melee. (This does not apply to the creature attacked by Emir in the previous round). If Emir is able to attack with both front and hind legs – for example, against a prone target or in a pool – his attack deals 4d6. To pay off a gambling debt, Emir was bound to serve Hortensius by heating these baths. He did not mind this duty as long as he could eavesdrop on its visitors, but long solitude has warped his mind. Although he passes the time with elaborate fantasies of revenge, the habit of obedience is ingrained and he may reflexively obey if addressed in an imperious manner. The terms of his bondage prevent him from leaving the baths.

34. Water Supply. A steam-driven Archimedes screw brings up water from the underground river below, while drains in the floor allow it to return. Stopcocks beneath each bath, accessible from the hypocaust, allow them to be emptied down the drain. Prying up a drain offers possible escape from the baths; the drop is 50 feet, but the river may break one's fall (save for no damage, otherwise 2d6). **Event:** War-chanties can be heard from longboats rowing up the river in search of the Spring of Life.

35. The Lower Caves. The cavern roof is lower here, no more than 20', and lacks the vines that grow elsewhere. The floor is regularly scoured clear of organic material and footprints by the slimes that roam the lower caves. The ancient road runs through the center of the cavern to the Temple of Demeter. **Monster:** Roll for wandering monsters as normal, including the increased chance of an encounter at 11 or more friction points. (The slime entity is mysteriously aware of disturbances in the caves above and becomes more alert in response). However, because creatures from above rarely venture this deep roll a d6 for the type of slime encountered here:

1-2	1d6 naked slimes (unarmored, 6 HD, 1") drop from hiding among stalactites on the ceiling
3-4	1d6 rock-covered slimes (chain, 4 HD, 1") are camouflaged on the rubble-strewn cavern floor
5-6	2d6 imperial slime zombies (plate, 2 HD, 6") approach under cover of darkness

36. The Temple of Demeter. The Temple was built around a sacred subterranean spring with life-giving powers. The columns and porticos of the Temple are now overgrown with the roots of the minotrice's climbing vine, which draw sustenance from the spring before disappearing into cracks in the wall nearby. Most of these roots are pipes, but one is a ladder leading to the Beast Mistress's Lair. **Magic:** Any creature drinking from the pool of water

at the temple's heart immediately heals 3d6 of damage and is cured of all minor afflictions. This healing can only be received once per day, and to be effective the water must be drunk by placing one's mouth directly into the pool or lifting its water up in cupped hands. Worn places at the edge of the ledge past the final step down to the pool attest that visitors have been kneeling to drink from the pool in this fashion for many years.

37. Strange Statues. Overlooking the Temple are six 10' tall statues carved from white marble, on which flecks of its original paint still remain. These statues are the material component of a powerful spell Hortensius devised to communicate with the slime creature. A gold torc is set into each statue's head (or top, for those that lack defined heads), and a similar torc, sized and shaped for a human head, rests on a stand built into its pedestal. Each torc is worth 1,000 g.p. if melted down, perhaps more if intact and sold to a collector. The base torcs at the base can be taken freely. The statue torcs would have to be extracted with a chisel, and the first character to do so (or otherwise damage the statue or its torc) must roll on the Effects of the Torcs table (next page), always taking the second outcome. If a sentient being wears one of the torcs and is within 30' of the statue wearing its twin, roll 3d6 and compare it to the wearer's Intelligence score. If none of the dice roll the number corresponding to the torc's statue, the wearer has strange interplanetary visions, alien and confusing but promising tantalizing hints of some cosmic understanding. Further attempts to decipher these visions may be made by continuing to wear the torc and concentrating for one turn before each subsequent roll. If one or more dice roll the statue's number, roll once on Effects of the Torcs for each such die, choosing the outcome before the slash if the 3d6 total was equal to or below Intelligence and the result after the slash if the total was higher. *Example:* Ookla the Mok tries on the torc of the human statue. He makes his first roll after one round near the statue: 3,4,5. He experiences the vast gulfs of space, but nothing else. Ookla makes his second roll one turn later: 1,6,2. The total is less than his Intelligence, and the 1 matches the number of the statue, so he rolls one die for the effect and takes the better outcome.

Appearances of the Statues

- 1: A detailed human in a toga, paunchy and balding, with a quill stuck behind his ear.
- 2: A stylized humanoid hermaphrodite, unclothed, with heads where its hands and feet should be.
- 3: A grizzled tomcat with a notched ear.
- 4: A man-like form assembled from spheres and cubes of various sizes.
- 5: A barrel-shaped horror whose torso and appendages are star-shaped in cross-section.
- 6: A corpuscular conglomeration of pustules shaped like a branching coral.

Effects of the Torcs (d6)

1	Gain/lose 1 point of Intelligence.
2	Gain/lose the ability to speak 1 randomly determined language.
3	Gain/lose 1 point of Charisma.
4	True/delusional insight into the nature of sentience. (When rolling reactions for NPCs, the referee should give this character either an accurate report or a cruel distortion of the likely result of parley attempts or negotiations before they are underway).
5	Gain / lose 1 point of Wisdom.
6	Become permanently immune to charm spells/value gravel as if it were gold and vice versa, with a compulsion to build a gravel stockpile and light huge geometric signal bonfires nearby every night.

After a character has made one or more rolls on this table, any further attempts to use the same torc produce only splitting headaches. Attempts using other torcs are possible, but at a cumulative -2 penalty to the Intelligence roll.

38. Empty Egg. Copper pipes lead from the Spring of Life into this broken 1" diameter sphere, made of crystal and silver machinery. Built to contain the slime entity, after Hortensius's death the cessation of regular maintenance allowed a crack in the crystal to form and the entity to escape. **Treasure:** The sphere could be melted down to make 1,000 silver pieces, or sold for more to a collector. **Magic Item:** The crystal blocks psychic emanations; if made into a shield it gives +4 on appropriate saves.

39. Bridges to Nowhere. This expanse of cavern floor is littered with arched bridges. Some are large and steep, others small and gently rising, but all are big enough for a human to walk across and none span anything in particular. These were hastily built out of crude blocks of limestone (quarried from **44**) at the order of Hortensius after he was nearly slain by a Haunter of the Archways. The underside of each arch is densely layered with writing. **Monster:** Hortensius (chain, 8 HD, special) will materialize if any non-slimy life passes beneath a bridge. **Event:** Guided by no visible hand, a scrap of metal scratches symbols into the keystone of an archway.

40. Who's There? This iron door has been magelocked by an 8th level warlock. If touched, a mouth forms in the door and says, in Ancient Imperial, "Speak your name and business." Hortensius is eager for company, and has instructed the door to open as long as anything at all is spoken in response. **Event:** To keep its lips flexible, the magic mouth appears and practices silently delivering its message.

41. Foyer. The walls of this antechamber are inlaid with tiles of jet and ivory; it holds a washbasin, coat rack, and foot-scraper. A tracker may use the hoofprints in the dusty floor to ascertain that months or years ago, several minotrice cautiously passed through the curtain, and then

returned at a run. **Event:** The sound of a chisel scraping stone comes from the study beyond the red curtain.

42. Hortensius's Study. At the peak of its arch, the ceiling of this barrel vault is 12 feet high. Bookshelves fill the lower six feet, and gilt-illuminated, leather-bound tomes lie open on table, chairs, and floor. Hortensius has obsessively covered everything with miniscule script, over-writing the original contents of his library with ink and etching every surface with laborious scratches. When outsiders enter, he hides within the ceiling in hopes that they will proclaim the genius of his labor and make arrangements to publish his manuscript to the wider world. As soon as it seems this will not happen, he attacks. **Monster:** Hortensius, Haunter of the Archway (chain, 8 HD, telekinesis, Con drain, only hit by magic). **Treasure:** In plain sight and weighing less than a pound apiece are a rose quartz inkwell (350 g.p.), a lapis lazuli and turquoise globe depicting unknown continents (1000 g.p.), and a platinum athame (600 g.p. as metal, as much as three times as much to a buyer interested in the history of magic).

43. Hortensius's Quarters. Because of their flat ceiling, the bedroom and gilded lavatory were spared Hortensius's scribbling. The stone walls are covered with tapestries, while carpets cover the floor. **Event:** A drop of water falls from the inch-long stalactite growing from a seam in the ceiling. **Treasure:** A quick search will reveal a gold hairbrush (300 g.p.), a silver mirror in a petrified wood frame (1,250 g.p., 20 lbs), and a tooled leather pack full of aged spell components (600 g.p. to the right buyer).

Haunter of the Archway: Chain, 8 HD, telekinesis, Constitution drain, only hit by magic. The insubstantial nature of this horror means that it can only be struck by magic weapons, and is hard to hit even so as it ducks into solid matter to avoid blows. A Haunter's touch attack ignores the protection of non-magical armor and shields. Any living creature so struck suffers 1d6 damage and loses a similar number of points of Constitution. Those who die of damage, or have Constitution reduced below 0, rise as a Haunter of the Archway in 1d6 rounds; those reduced exactly to 0 will linger in a half-alive state for 1d6 days before succumbing to this fate. No cure for this condition was known to the ancients, although daily drinks from the Spring of Life did postpone Hortensius's transformation until he died of old age. Due to the alien geometry of the plane in which they originated, Haunters are able to manifest only in arched or parabolic surfaces. They can use telekinesis to interact with matter within the space contained by such an arch. A Haunter can exert enough force to lift a fully armored human off his or her feet. Victims may grab onto something to avoid being lifted with a save vs. magic, or break free if they do nothing else on their round.

Slime Entity: Unarmored, 6 HD + 25 hp, 1", mental blast, telepathy, immune to missile weapons and 80% of blows in melee. Roughly globular in form and eight feet in diameter, this alien is comprised of a teeming mass of ropy, oozing elements. Ordinary sentients find its constant writhing nauseating and horrific; on first sight of the entity, they must roll 4d6. Reduce the result by 1 for every three levels of ability, and another 1 for Chaotic alignment. If the modified total is greater than the viewer's Constitution score they lose one round, and the contents of their stomach, to retching. Its communal nature means that missile weapons do no harm, and 80% of blows in melee will prove ineffective. Only fire and cold are certain to harm it. The slime entity is highly intelligent and communicates by telepathy; Hortensius's many efforts to establish contact with it failed simply because it refused to speak to him. Its goals are to discover what happened to the colony ship that it believes crash-landed nearby and carry out its work of turning all native life into slime if possible, and returning to its home world if not. It has multiple attack modes with which to pursue these goals. It prefers to attack the closest foes first.

Up to 10 feet: Extend a whip-like pseudopod as a melee attack for 1d4 damage and infection with slime.

Up to 30 feet: Use telepathy to compel as many as four victims in range to walk into its mass and be infected. Each target must save vs. spells, at a penalty equal to 4 minus the number of other targets.

Up to 60 feet: Assault the mind of one creature, who must save vs. magic at a -2 penalty. On a successful save, they are stunned for 3 rounds. If they fail, they subsequently remain unconscious until roused. Additional effects may apply depending on how far the saving throw fell below the required number: 1d6 damage if more than 3; 2d6 damage if more than 6; insanity and 2d6 damage if more than 9 below, or if a natural 1 was rolled. The slime entity can only make this attack three times per day.

44. Pit of Suppurating Horror. This three-level quarry was dug to provide the limestone blocks for Hortensius's bridges, and has now been chosen by the slime entity for its lair. **Monster:** The slime entity (unarmored, 6+25 HD, 1", mental blast, telepathy, immune to missile weapons and 80% of blows in melee) rests at the bottom of the pit. Long ago it infected the legionnaires of the ancient empire who were sent to contain it following Hortensius's death and its escape from captivity. It always keeps an honor guard of 12 of these slime zombies (plate, 2 HD, 6"), still in their rusty but distinctive high-collared armor, standing on the second level of the quarry where they can remain in cover while watching for life to infect and protecting their parent from harm. **Treasure:** The main benefit to destroying the slime entity is that breaking its mental control over the lesser slimes will cause them to disperse, making it safe (or safer) to lay claim to the Spring of Life.

Thoroughly Looting Hortensius's Chambers: Value can be extracted from the chambers as follows. Divide time required by the number of looters.

Bundling up the quarters' furniture, tapestries, and carpets: 2,000 g.p., 1,200 lbs, 2 turns to complete

Prising loose the foyer jet and ivory tiles: 1,200 g.p., 10 lbs, 20 turns to complete

Recovering the resuable bindings of the study's ruined books: 500 g.p., 50 lbs, 10 turns to complete

Stripping the gilt from the lavatory fixtures and foyer basin: 150 g.p., 1 lbs, 20 turns to complete.

45. Sail Away. This stone dock was originally built for the convenience of visitors traveling to the Temple of Demeter along the river. Planning to use this as an escape route, the minotrice dug a tunnel to the dock and constructed a secret chamber (into which the tauron herd will be driven if the situation seems dire (FP 16+)), stocked with enough rafts to carry the coven, herd, and two days worth of meat, mushrooms, and water in barrels. *The author wishes to thank the players of Arnold Littleworth, Caswyn of Apollo, Fostra, John Fighter, Chrystos Salamander-Slayer, Lotur the Scurrilous Cur, Lucky the Hobbit, Lydio the Spider-Dwarf, Maldoor Twice-Born, Merselon the Magnificent, Myrtle, Obscura, Ookla the Mok, Thales the Faun, Thistlyn, and Theos and to everyone in the New York Red Box group for showing me how it's done.* Ω



Interview with Paul Jaquays

by Ciro Sacco and Allen Varney

Paul Jaquays wrote or co-wrote many of the greatest dungeons produced in the early days of gaming. Dark Tower is my personal favorite, although Caverns of Thracia or Griffin Mountain may receive the most accolades, and Paul's own favorite is The Enchanted Wood. He has followed this up by helping design some of the greatest computer game dungeons out there, including some of those found in Quake, Age of Empires, and Halo Wars. In addition to these and many other tabletop and computer RPG classics, Paul is also a talented and prolific fantasy artist. His work should be familiar to every fantasy gamer, and we are proud to honor him as this issue's dedicatee. - Ignatius

CS: Let's start talking a bit about you: where are you from, how old you are, what your studies were, your hobbies, and of course how you discovered gaming.

PJ: I currently live in Atlanta, Georgia, but I was born in the north, in the state of Michigan (the state shaped like a mitten) and spent my childhood and teen years in various towns and cities in Indiana and Michigan. Although I'm one of the pioneers of the role-play game industry, I was a young pioneer, only 19 when my first art was published. So after 34 years of making games, I'm still only 53 years old. My degree is in art, focusing on two-dimensional coursework such as painting, drawing and print-making. Some of my personal game-related projects actually ended up contributing towards my major and awards I received upon graduation. I had always been interested in playing games and even making them. Like most kids of my generation, we grew up with the sort of outdoor role playing games that children play like army man, cops and robbers, cowboys and indians. No rules, just fun. Indoors, my younger brother and I used to make our own simple board games as children and as teens, developed some simple (VERY simple) miniatures rules for fighting massive battles with armies of plastic soldiers. He was much more the gamer than I and was particularly interested in games produced by Avalon Hill, even subscribing to AH's magazine *The General*. Because of that subscription, a Texas game company called Metagaming sent him a sample copy of *The Space Gamer* ...which contained two reviews of a new game called...*Dungeons & Dragons*. My brother read the reviews to me over the phone while I worked my evening shift at the college radio station. It was an event that changed my life.

CS: Reading in your bibliography, I notice you started very early to 'work' in gaming, launching your own magazine,

The Dungeoneer. You were involved in that publication for over three years. *The Dungeoneer* is still a publication with some following among collectors. Can you tell us something about the fanzine, its history and its demise?

PJ: The first thing I did upon discovering hobby gaming was to contribute art to *The Space Gamer*. I wanted to become an illustrator, and saw games as a way to achieve that goal. I had already spent part of the previous summer doing much of the pre-press production work on my small college's newspaper, so I had experience prepping a periodical for publication. Inspired by *Dungeons & Dragons*, it was a natural extension of my interest in publishing to fulfil a need that my friends and I saw in this new hobby. We designed adventures, created new monsters, and wrote articles on gaming, and fiction. I did all the art for the first issue. My friend Mark Hendricks and I paid for the printing and we mailed it to about a hundred or so gamers whose names and addresses we collected from other game publications. We soon had contributions of art and writing that came from subscribers. For the next year and a half we tried to put out an issue every 2 to 3 months on top of being full time students, having part time jobs, and trying to play games. We continued to expand our subscription base through word of mouth and promotional notes in other magazines. Very quickly, in addition to subscriptions, we were selling the magazine to hobby shops in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, and Germany. In late 1977, I had to make a choice between completing my degree and continuing to publish the magazine. I sold the magazine and its subscription list to (the late) Chuck Anshell to be published by his Chicago-based company, Anshell Miniatures. Chuck produced two copies of the magazine before he in turn, went to work for Judges Guild. Judges Guild published *The Dungeoneer* for a number of issues before rolling it in with their house organ, *The Judges Guild Journal*. *The Dungeoneer Journal* later became *Pegasus* magazine.

CS: Did you ever think to make *Dungeoneer* a professional magazine such as *The Dragon* or *Space Gamer*?

PJ: No. We sold some local advertising for the magazine, but not enough to support printing it or paying contributors for work. We were happy to keep it an amateur publication.

AV: Any fun/nostalgic memories of *The Dungeoneer* you'd like to share?

PJ: My friend (and co-publisher) Mark Hendricks and I did research to come up with about a hundred names to be recipients of comp copies of the first issue. I still remember getting an angry letter from one of the people to whom we sent a FREE copy of the magazine. He wanted to make sure that we never sent anything like that to him again. Apparently an early non-fan of adventure gaming. Jim Ward was the magazine's first subscriber and an early

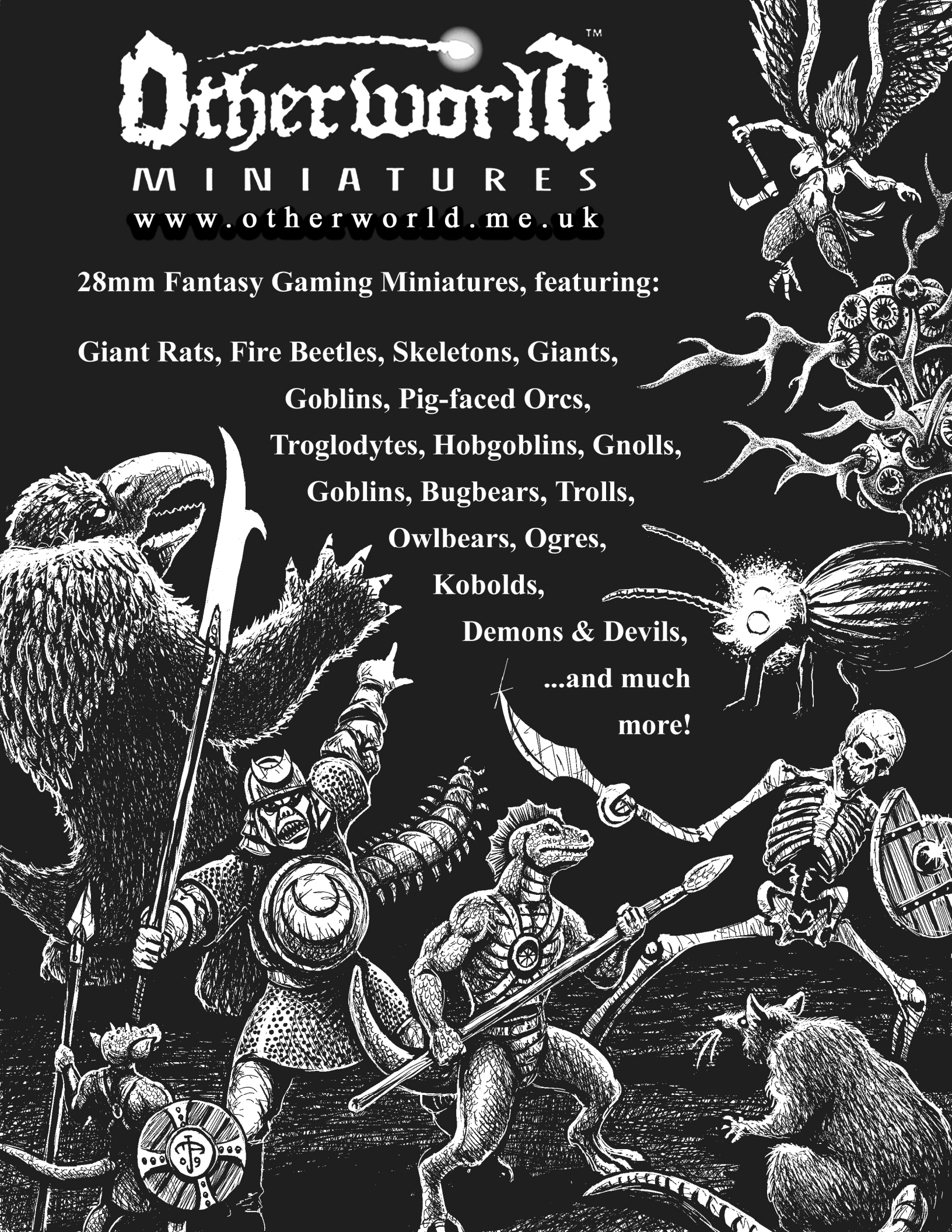
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outside contributor. Since the 'zine was produced long before the days of desktop publishing, we "typeset" the final edited copy by first typing out the pages in flush left columns. We then marked up those galleys to note where extra spaces would be added to set the column in fully justified type. The entire article was then retyped on Mark's Smith Corona typewriter with its Mylar-carbon ribbon. The pages were set up at 200% of their final printed size.

CS: After working on *Dungeoneer* you joined Judges Guild, one of the most important publishers of RPG aids at the time, as artist/designer and stayed there for one year. What kind of company was Judges Guild? How was working there? Did you have regular contacts with Bob Bledsaw?

PJ: While I worked as an employee of Judges Guild, I worked off site, from my home studio in another state. I didn't want to move to central Illinois then and didn't really want to work in the smoke-filled JG offices. Judges Guild was a small, family run company with both the good and bad that comes with that. The folks there were very enthusiastic about gaming and dedicated to what they did. But looking back on things, it was a fan company. None of the production people with the possible exception of the typesetter were "pros" at what they did and the production values of their products showed that. Being a kid just out of college, I probably wasn't much better. I had some interaction with Bob, but not a lot. He and I didn't always see eye to eye on things. Some of that was him. A good deal of it was me. I was talented and creative and a hard worker, but didn't always want to work on what the company wanted me to do. After a year of that I gave notice. After that, Judges Guild didn't want to pay me what I felt I was worth for freelance work, so other than projects I did for the *Dungeoneer* (more for love than money), I never worked on a Guild product again. I left at least two projects unfinished, *Dark Tower* and a Dwarven mine adventure for *Runequest*.

AV: What do you think today's Old School Revival players might still find attractive and interesting about the Judges Guild line? What should players today understand about Judges Guild and the earliest days of non-TSR *D&D*/*AD&D* design and publishing?

PJ: It's actually not surprising to me that there is an interest in Old School gaming. Tastes in play style may have come back around to their origins. In the earliest years, there were essentially two types of fantasy role play gaming: dungeon crawls and tournament play. The former focused on providing a setting for players (and GMs) to explore a game world and create their own story (something we now refer to as a form of "sandbox" play). The latter was all about following a pre-determined path successfully to a pre-determined conclusion using pre-determined characters. Judges Guild's early adventures (and in fact, most of their catalog) followed that freeform

path. TSR eventually championed the more or less pre-determined route. Someone I was interviewing for a design position on my staff at Coleco made a rather insightful comment about the designers working for me (most of whom were ex-RPG, particularly ex-TSR designers). She noted that they seemed to be a lot of wannabe novelists. When I returned to adventure writing in the late 80s, scenario design seemed to have moved away from free-form settings. More published adventures were about adventurers finding their way through an author's story and successfully reaching a predefined ending. The stories were often robust, but they were still someone else's stories. This combined with the other trend of pre-made gaming worlds (TSR being particularly addicted to these with at least three concurrent semi-generic *AD&D* fantasy game worlds available from them in the early 90s, plus their host of more exotic worlds). When I went to work for TSR as a staff illustrator in the mid 90s, most of the company's in-house design staff (and recent former designers) were all writing game novels for the company. Players new to Judges Guild content (particularly in the original form, as opposed to the current adaptations) should be aware of the unpolished and spare nature of the content. The earliest published adventures were little more than monster hotels. They were designed similar to the way typical gamer-created content was written and played. The focus was on providing interesting or challenging (and quite often random) encounter situations that let the players build their own story, rather than on extensive back story, cultural history, or an attempt to guide the players into carrying through the author's story line.

AV: Your 1979 *Dark Tower* module was among the most popular Judges Guild adventures. What, if anything, did you try to do in *Dark Tower* differently from previous modules?

PJ: *Dark Tower* was my first commercial game project. Prior to this I had written adventures for *The Dungeoneer* gaming fan magazine and for my own enjoyment. What I remember of the early Judges Guild adventures was that they were not substantially different from home grown adventures. Light on theme. Light on characterization. Mostly just monsters and treasure stats. It may be telling that even though I was an early Judges Guild subscriber, I never actually used their game adventure material in my games. When I started writing adventures for Judges Guild, I focused on the special rooms where special things happened or where unusual characters lived, the things that made the game world exotic, magical and mysterious. I put a little more effort into backstory for the dungeon and its contents than most of my contemporary adventure designers (with the possible exception of the TSR convention tournament modules starting to appear). My intent was to create a rich, detailed setting for adventure, not a storyline with an outcome, which was the goal of tournament adventures. I raided my personal campaign

and dungeons to flesh out the dungeons of *Dark Tower*, using those ideas to inspire the theme, setting and characters that would populate the dungeon. The final thing I did with *Dark Tower*, and even more so with *Caverns of Thracia* later on, was to think of them as 3D world-spaces built by people (or monsters) for a purpose, not just a random set of rooms and halls occupying all available space on a letter-sized sheet of graph paper.

AV: You dedicated *Dark Tower* to Howard Thompson, “who gave me my first break.” Tell us more...

PJ: This stems from how I actually got into games. *The Space Gamer*, published by Howard Thompson's company Metagaming Concepts, was my first real exposure to FRP games. It was where I learned about the existence of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1975. Metagaming became my first client in games (creating art for *The Space Gamer* and micro-games like *Chitin: I* and *Olympica*), and they were my first job interview (I was about to graduate from college and was looking for work). The job interview didn't pan out (they hired a secretary instead), but it set me on the path of working in games professionally.

AV: *Griffin Mountain* (and later *Island*) was a monumental production, one of the earliest efforts to establish a quasi-realistic campaign ecology. What, if anything, would you like to say about that book and your other *RuneQuest* work?

PJ: *RuneQuest* became my game of choice not long after its release in the summer of 1978, and I sort of pushed Judges Guild in the direction of supporting it with content for their Gateway license. My first adventure for them, *Hellpits of Nightfang*, used an adventure title I had brainstormed for *Book of Treasure Maps*, but not used. When I parted company with Judges Guild in late 1979, I left *Duck Tower* (my randomly-keyed ruins adventure) and a dwarven mine adventure (also intended for *RuneQuest*) in an unfinished state. Rudy Kraft finished out *Duck Tower* and made a similar product called *Duck Pond* some time later. Rudy contacted me in the summer of 1979 about a freelance *RuneQuest* project for Judges Guild that he was writing called “Adventures Beyond the Pass.” Rudy was exceptionally good at setting up reasonable character stats for *RuneQuest* characters, but not quite so adept at really making them come alive as characters. That's where I came in. I gave life and purpose to the barbarians and humanoids in the place. I also did a black and white book cover based on one of the encounters I created, did some map work, and created a nifty artistic logo for the book. Greg Stafford got wind of our efforts and wanted to see it. We gave him a copy of our unfinished draft and he loved it. He wanted the characters and settings we had fleshed out to be a part of his world of Glorantha, and not a generic setting. Becoming part of “canon” was too tempting an offer to refuse, so we shifted publishers and included Greg as a co-author. Rudy and I had essentially been done with

the Gateway adventure. I remember doing an extensive amount of additional writing (and mapmaking) to flesh out the world, particularly the Balazaring citadels and their occupants. About the only major content change that Greg initiated was the Giant encampment. Rudy and I had fleshed out a primitive giants' castle more in keeping with *D&D* giants, and Greg's giants weren't really builders. I had done a nice detailed illustration of the giant's home that didn't make it into the book. *Griffin Island* gave me the opportunity to flesh out some of the encounter areas in the game world, particularly with some new maps, but I can't say I liked it as much. Freed from Glorantha. I had written up some fairly detailed re-imaginings of the Balazaring clans, but Chaosium took a pass on them. Several years later, those descriptions required just a little rewrite to become the Uthgardt barbarians of the *Forgotten Realms Savage Frontier*.

AV: Among the many other tabletop gaming works you designed, which ones are you particularly proud or think haven't gotten appropriate attention?

PJ: I am personally proudest of *The Enchanted Wood*, which I created for SPI's *Dragonquest* RPG way back in 1981. It has a lot of the sandbox elements people liked in *Griffin Island*. It's a bit more “fantastical” than the RQ world, inspired in some ways by Piers Anthony's *Xanth* novels. I converted portions of it for use with my own *RuneQuest* campaign back in the day and even moved chunks of it into TSR's *Forgotten Realms* when I put together FR5 *The Savage Frontier* for them (for the record, TSR owned the copyright on *Enchanted Wood* at that point). I also liked some of things I did for M5: *Talons of Night*, for Master Level *D&D*, one of the first full-on adventure designs (as opposed to edits) that I did for TSR in the late 80s. Finally, there's the *Campaign Sourcebook and Catacomb Guide* for TSR. The material was supposed to go into the 2nd Edition DM's book, but was eventually cut for space reasons. It was my take on how to be a good game master and create an interesting campaign world. One of the humorous play vignettes I included in the book was a loose telling of an encounter my *RuneQuest* players went through in my converted *Dragonquest* setting of *The Enchanted Wood*.

CS: After working for Coleco in the early-mid eighties, you managed the Jaquays Design Studio from May 1987 to September 1993 and you worked for a lot of companies. What were the most interesting products you worked on? How was the freelancing experience in this period, after the one from 1979 to 1981?

PJ: Jaquays Design Studio was a name I created to give my relaunched freelancing career a sense of stability and presence. For the most part, it was just me doing the work. It allowed me to work on any type of project that came along that interested me and could provide proper compensation (I had a young family to support). I wrote and edited game

adventure product for TSR's *De&D* and *AD&D* product lines. I created the sometimes controversial character creation series *Central Casting* for Task Force Games and put out three *CityBooks* for Flying Buffalo. I also stayed in the computer gaming world, designing for Interplay's *Lord of the Rings Volume 1* PC game and *Bards Tale IV* (which was killed before completion). Though I did a huge amount of game and fiction illustration during that time, my cover for TSR's *Dragon Mountain* boxed set is the piece by which most fans will know my art work. Coincidentally, that's also artist Tony DiTerlizzi's first game project...fans may know his work from *The Spidermyck Chronicles*. I enjoyed freelancing. I had a good reputation, made a lot of friends with other professionals, and worked on a variety of projects. I quit designing game adventures because I found I was starting to imitate my earlier work, and frankly it didn't pay as well as the same amount of time spent on artwork. For those who remember, the early 90s were also financial hard times, and I found that the work I could get didn't go far enough to pay the bills.

CS: You joined TSR in 1993 to work as a full time illustrator. How was working at TSR at the time? What were the most important projects you were involved with?

PJ: I joined TSR to paint book and game covers, full time, which was actually one of my early career goals (not to work for TSR, but to paint book covers). I started as the line artist for *Mystara* and the new juvenile book line. Eventually, I became the line artist for *Dragon Dice* and replaced Jeff Easley as the line artist of core *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. Although it wasn't TSR's finest hour as a product line, I'm very pleased with my work on *Dragon Dice*, both as a cover artist and as an icon designer.

AV: Who were your influences as an artist and illustrator? Which artists from the early days of tabletop RPGs did/do you admire? What were the virtues and pitfalls of illustrating those early products? How has your career been helped by your wide versatility?

PJ: My earliest influences included comic-book artists in the early '70s like Mike Kaluta, Barry Windsor-Smith, and John Buscema (Conan the Barbarian artists). As I started painting, Michael Whelan, Don Maitz, the Hildebrandt brothers, and Kelly Freas all had profound influences on my personal style and development as an illustrator. Over the years I met every one of those painters except Greg Hildebrandt. Of my illustration peers in those days, I was particularly impressed by Liz Danforth for her work on a variety of fantasy games, Dave Trampier for his work in the original *AD&D* monster manual, and Denis Loubet for his work on the original *Cardboard Heroes*. Liz has always had an elegance to her work. Trampier had so many unique ways of handling ink. And when I did my own set of 15mm *Cardboard Heroes* heroes for *Traveller*, I came to

appreciate (and be jealous of) the clean, powerful work that Denis did on the 25mm characters.

Virtues? Back then, one could be an artist of, at best, fair talent and still have one's work be in demand for inclusion in game products. It was a way to get started as an illustrator without having to compete against pros far more talented. It was how I got my start and probably where my professional reputation is based. For years afterwards, doors opened for me in my career because of that early amateur, semi-pro, and pro work.

Pitfalls? No one had money to spend on art in those days. It was next to impossible for me to work fast enough to make even a poor living at doing game illustration then. Bob Bledsaw, the founder of Judges Guild, based his pay scale for artists around what he would have been willing to pay fantasy art legend Frank Frazetta for a piece art (which was laughably low). For everyone else, he had a sliding scale downwards that barely paid for the supplies needed to make the art. The other downside was that there were a number of publishers who didn't return original art. I really appreciated publishers like Chaosium and Flying Buffalo who made a point of doing so. Judges Guild, Metagaming, Steve Jackson Games, GDW and even TSR were all bad about returning originals done for their magazines and games during the early years. Recently I saw one of my early illustrations for a publisher come up for auction on eBay ... that illustration numbered among a batch that had never been returned to me. I might not have been so peeved about it had the publisher not gone under owing me money for an illustration commissioned during a time years later when THEY knew they were going under, but failed to share that info with the hired help. I got that painting back, but was never paid for either of the uses they made of it, and they had the further gall to offer copies of their unsold/unsellable games at full cover price in lieu of payment.

Having a varied professional skill set has allowed me to stay in the game industry long-term, change when it changed, and be ready for new opportunities. As a freelancer, I wasn't limited by the type of work I could accept. When opportunities dried up or clients' needs changed, I could be there with a skill set they needed: Game illustration this month. Adventure writing or editing the next. Computer game design projects as needed. Art for children's magazines and publications. Even turnkey book production. In the computer game industry, having art and design skill sets allowed me to either be the artist who understood design, or the designer who could bring an artist's perspective to his work.

CS: I have heard a lot of horror stories about Lorraine Dille Williams, TSR's owner and president. Did you have any contact with her? What kind of person was she? And,

in your opinion, does she deserve the scorn and sometime hate she gets from a lot of fans?

PJ: Everyone in TSR's R&D departments had some sort of interaction with Lorraine. My first came when I interviewed at TSR and she ruled out my being able to freelance for non-game industry clients. But I didn't actually work with her directly until I became director of graphics. A business owner doesn't necessarily need to work in the business to make it successful. That's why one has employees who are good at what they do. From my perspective, she never really seemed to "get" what TSR and the hobby game business was about, yet ran it like she did. Fans have a love/hate relationship with EVERYONE, so who is to say whether she deserves it? Perhaps folks need to ask themselves what decisions they would have made in the same situations, and would the outcomes have been better for their choices.

CS: Did you stay with TSR till the end, when the company was sold to Wizards of the Coast? When did employees realize something was wrong?

PJ: I voluntarily parted ways with TSR in early 1997, several months before the company was sold. TSR laid off about 20% of the staff in December of 1996. I was part of the 15 or so staff members who were asked to sit watch in the executive conference room with Lorraine as the layoffs occurred and watched friends be escorted out of the company, carrying small boxes of personal effects. That was when the company's condition finally became apparent to me. Even so, I would likely have stayed through to end. Some managers did know about what was going on and departed early. I'm certain quite a few employees had a good idea where things were at long before the first layoff. About a month after the '96 layoff, I was presented an opportunity to work in the computer game industry and left TSR for Texas and id Software.

CS: Were you offered to work for Wizards of the Coast and so moving to Seattle?

PJ: As I noted, I was gone well before that took place. I sometimes wonder if I would have made the cut that took some folks out to Seattle and left others behind. Wizards invited me to participate in a game festival in southern Germany a couple years later as the guest *Dungeons & Dragons* artist. It was a great opportunity. I took my 15-year-old son with me and we both had a lot of fun.

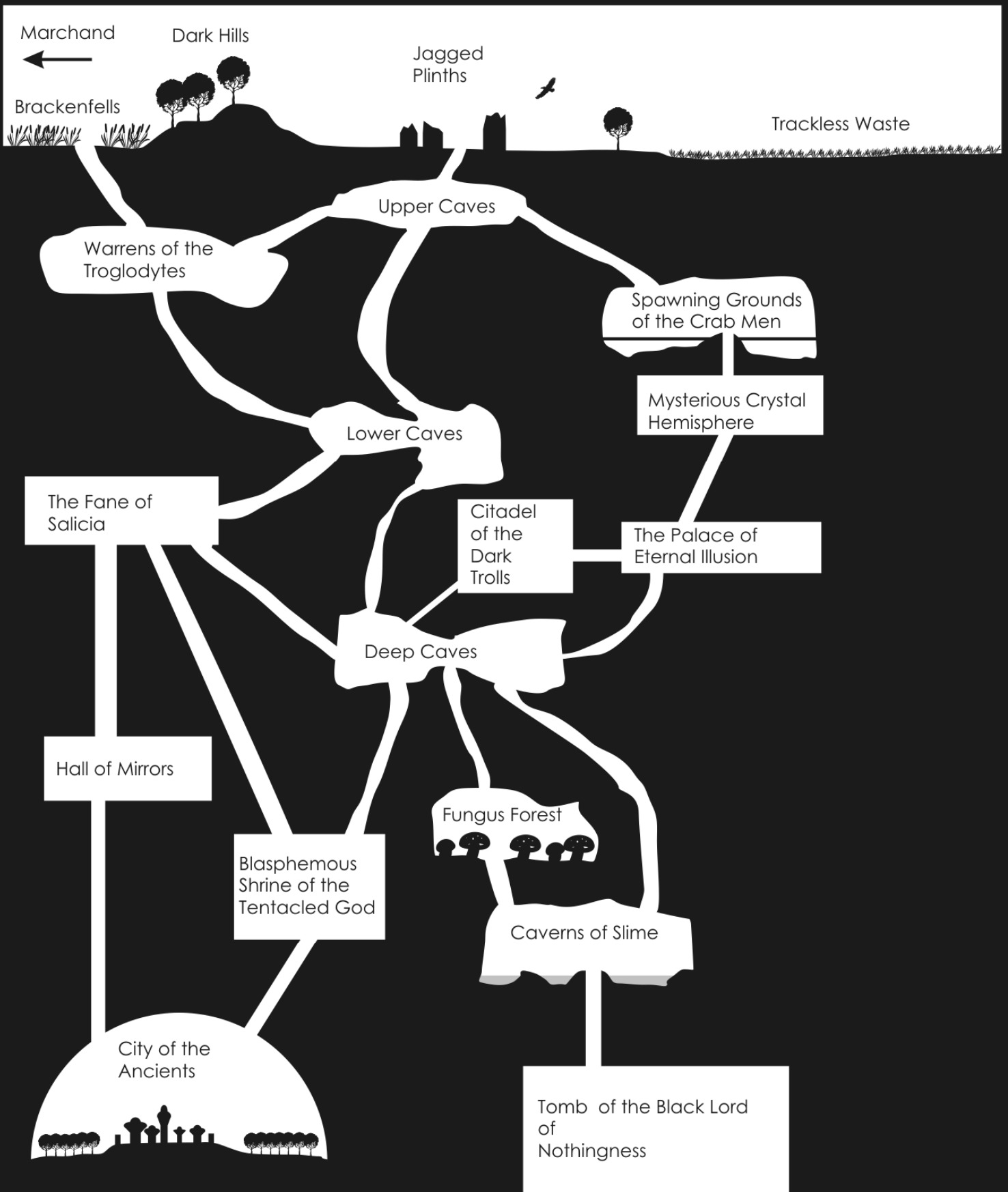
AV: How did your early tabletop game design and illustration experience help you or hinder you as you moved into electronic gaming? What do you like better or less about electronic game design versus tabletop?

PJ: For me, it helped. Contacts I made in the tabletop world (in this case, Rick Loomis and Mike Stackpole, then of

Flying Buffalo) opened a door into Coleco for me, in 1980. Sandy Petersen of Chaosium, who was a co-contributor to *Griffin Island* (the non-Gloranthan Avalon Hill remake of *Griffin Mountain*) was the contact who led me back into computer game development at id in 1997 (I had tried to get him to work for me at Coleco back in 1984). Even today, as level designer, I still use the adventure writing and editing skills picked up during my RPG days. The illustration skills have been mostly converted into 3D modeling skills to block out game worlds, and I've had to come to terms with the fact that everything I build in the computer as a designer has to be touched again by an artist who will make the final game assets. One of the things I both like and hate about electronic game design is that with every project, you have to learn new technology. For me, these days, that comes at the cost of forgetting the old. The design and development principles remain constant, but I couldn't go back and build a *Quake 3* map without having to relearn the tools again and probably would even have problems making a *Halo Wars* map from scratch.

CS: After leaving TSR, you started working with id software from 1997 to 2002 and for Ensemble Studios from 2002 until the beginning of 2009. You worked on very important games such as *Quake 2* and *3*, *Age of Empires* and *Halo Wars*. They are all very successful games, *Halo Wars* I guess wildly successful. What is your opinion about the videogame and the game industries today?

PJ: *Halo Wars* did very well for Microsoft. I think almost everyone knew it would. Unfortunately, that "almost" didn't include the folks who made the decisions about Ensemble Studios' future. Years ago, I realized that video games would replace role play games as the rite-of-passage entertainment for many game players. I wasn't the first TSR staffer to leave for the video game industry. The experience the video games provide is not the same as that provided by RPGs, but it is more accessible. Buy a game. Install it into your computer. Connect online. Play. The game walks you through the process of playing. And you can do it without having to go somewhere, or negotiate complex personal schedules, or read through volumes of rule books to resolve a point of play. It's not the same thing or the same experience as true role playing. But it's easier to manage. From my point of view, video games are finishing the job that collectible card games did on the hobby game industry, diverting both players and game developers away from role playing. I think the hobby game industry has almost returned to its roots of over 30 years ago. Small companies run by dedicated hobbyists providing entertainment to other hobbyists. There is still a diversity of role play gaming opportunities, but the "bigness" that the industry had in the 80s and early 90s is gone. I think that's a good thing...unless you want to make a career out of it. Most of my friends still "working" on hobby games have day jobs, either in video games, or in "the real world." Ω



THE DARKNESS BENEATH

The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God

The Darkness Beneath level 12, by Jeff Rients

1. Chamber of Too Many Damn Doors. Each door in this chamber has a number painted on it in vibrant yellow. From north to south the numbers are labeled 23, 13, 52, Six and 12b. The meaning of these numbers is long lost.

1.a. Corpse Closet. This niche is the storage area of a flesh golem who always attacks when the door is opened. The flesh golem will avoid attacking anyone carrying open flame if other targets are available.

1.b. Broom Closet of Lurking Evil. The brooms, mops, buckets and cleaning supplies in this room all radiate a bright aura of absolute wickedness should *detect evil* be cast upon them. Under *animate object* or similar magics these items will always attack the caster.

2. Smelly Room. This room is empty save for a thick layer of dust on the floor and cobwebs near the ceiling. For reasons unknown, it smells vaguely of paprika and sweat socks.

3. Triangular Room. Each wall of this room has a pair of bronze sconces sit at roughly eye level for a dwarf. If all six sconces are filled with torches and lit, a phantom dwarfess will appear in the center of the room. She is dressed as one of the long gone Warrior Queens of the Floating Mountain and holds a sword in one hand and a hammer in the other. She will silently offer one weapon or the other to any dwarf present. The hammer is a warhammer +3, 6" throwing range with return. The blade is a sword -2, aligned to Law but with no additional powers. After the selection has been made, the dwarf queen vanishes never to return, taking the other weapon with her. If no dwarf is present or the ghost is threatened she will fight as a double strength wraith (8 hit dice, 2 attacks per round with sword and hammer but also draining a level with each strike). If turned or slain the weapons disappear with the phantom.

4. Workout Room. This room is equipped with a set of iron weights and a heavy punching bag. Anyone stripping to their undergarments and training for at least 2 turns receives +1 to their Strength score. Anyone who watches and does not participate loses a point of Constitution. Wandering monsters rolled during a workout are 50% likely to simply desire to get some exercise.

5. Lair of the Loneliest Elemental. Here resides Rupert, the last living Electroweak Elemental (DC 2, HD 16, damage 3d6, immune to electromagnetic and weak force attacks, double damage from gravitic and strong force attacks). None of his elemental kindred survived the cooling of the universe 10^{-12} seconds after the Big Bang and he's been in a deep depression ever since, mostly staying in bed and rarely going out. Rupert's only treasure is a nearly complete run of the recently defunct *Modern Elemental* magazine. All but the last seven issues are poly bagged and boarded in six clearly labeled boxes. Due to the avid collectors' market for the earliest issues the box containing issues 1-14 is worth 250 gp, but all the others are valued at only 75 gp each. The seven issues strewn about the lair are too new and too badly damaged to have any resale value. As a result of the evil radiation from the idol in **30**, NO CLERIC SPELLS WILL FUNCTION IN THIS ROOM.

6. Chamber of Holy Graffiti. The walls of this chamber are covered with dozens of political slogans and rude suggestions rendered in numerous different languages from many species and cultures past, present and future. A piece



of chalk lies upon the floor. Any party member adding a message will earn a blessing of +1 on all saves from Cylroi, God of Presence in Absence. Erasing so much as part of a single character results in Cylroi dispatching an invisible stalker to slay the offender when he or she next sleeps. Note that the purple/indigo glow of the prismatic barrier in **28** is visible from here.

7. The Horrid in Abstraction. Behold, if you dare, the soul-crushing masterpiece of some eons-dead sculptor of preternatural ability. Here carved in black-flecked granite lies the perfect abstract representation of the concept of evil. So pure is the artistry that merely attempting to follow the stony curves and textures with mortal eye induces headache and nausea. Actively contemplating the totality of this ultimate offense to the very concept of art can lead to madness, despair, or alignment change as the referee adjudicates. Smashing the abominable sculpture nets 6,666 experience points split evenly between all who participate in the desecration of this desecration.

8. Lair of the Space Ogres. The four space ogres here are pretty much like regular ogres, except for their oversized laser rifles (4d8 damage, 20 charges, 17 Str to wield), posh accents, and shiny pants.

8.a. Supply Room. This shelved closet holds the space ogres' supplies (mostly Tang and dehydrated peanut butter sandwiches), a crucifix made of silver kryptonite (allows priests to turn undead, lycanthropes and Superman) and the clearly marked "Secret Emergency Exit" (which is a secret door from the other side).

9. Empty Room. Except for a few wisps of smoke lingering in the air. 2 in 6 chance that a party member hears the tinkling of chimes in an indeterminate direction.

10. The Freezer. Sitting near the center of this room is a large chunk of ice with sufficient clarity to show the silhouette of some sort of man-shaped creature inside. The room is not colder than the rest of the dungeon, but the ice shows no signs of melting. The trapped creature can be freed with fire magic and/or brute force. If the party has sustained losses a kindly ref may allow a replacement PC to be frozen in the ice. Otherwise roll 1d6 for the prisoner: 1-3 cave man or woman, 4-6 Captain America.

10.a. False Door Trap. Attempting to open this door releases a jolt of electricity, shocking the opener for 4d6. A faint odor of ozone may warn cautious explorers.

11. Transporter Room. Atop of the control panel of this six-person teleportation grid is a small handwritten sign warning the party "DO NOT USE - M. Scott". Attempting to use the controls with no one on the transporter pad with summon d6 demons of random type (d6). If anyone

stands on the pad while the controls are activated roll 1d6 on the **Transporter Malfunction Chart**:

1	Atoms scattered across time and space
2	Replaced with duplicate from evil parallel universe.
3	Sent to random location on campaign wilderness map.
4	Turned inside out (97% fatal).
5	Random demon type 1d6 arrives in every unoccupied space on pad.
6	Explosion, all in room take 8d6 damage (save for half), transporter mechanism destroyed.

12. Disturbing Dolls. Suspended from the ceiling of this room are 10,000 dolls of various types, all hung by the neck from tiny nooses, dangling at heights from 2' to 7' from the floor. Visibility is highly limited as a result of these macabre decorations. Paranoid visitors are likely to feel the sensation that they are being watched.

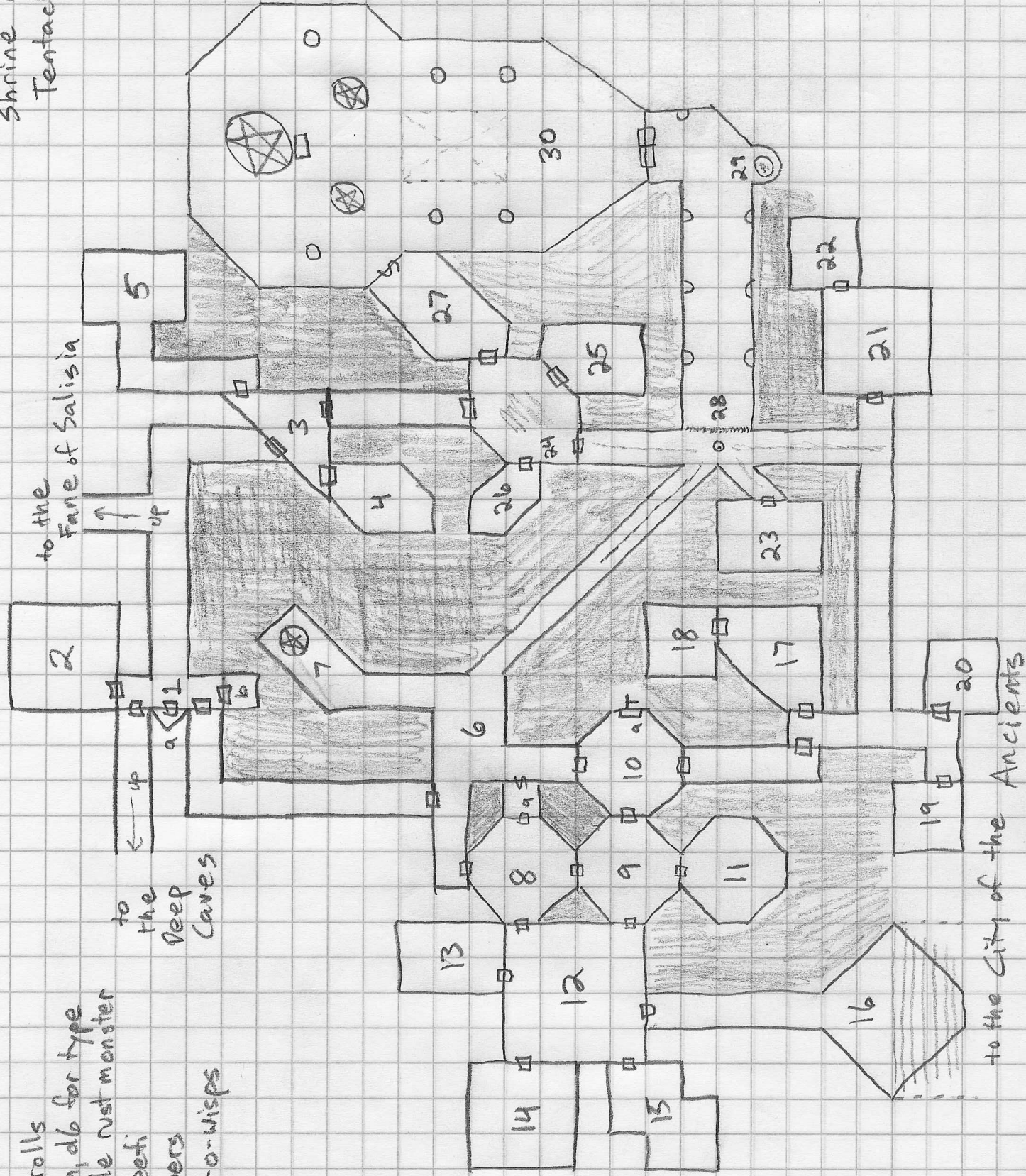
13. Computer Room. The central feature of this room is a large (2' x 4' x 8' tall) elaborate wood and brass cabinet. Several odd-shaped and knob-bedecked cabinet doors are open, revealing shelves of coruscating crystals of myriad colors. Anyone with infravision must save or be blinded for 1d6 turns as their eyes adjust to the alien spectra overloading their senses. The computer has not been operational for the past several centuries and its function will not be obvious to most adventurers. Twenty of the 66 crystals still glow. They are worth 500gp each, but the three infra-blue crystals are deadly (lethal dose of radiation in d6 days). The remaining 46 crystals are cracked, colorless and worthless.

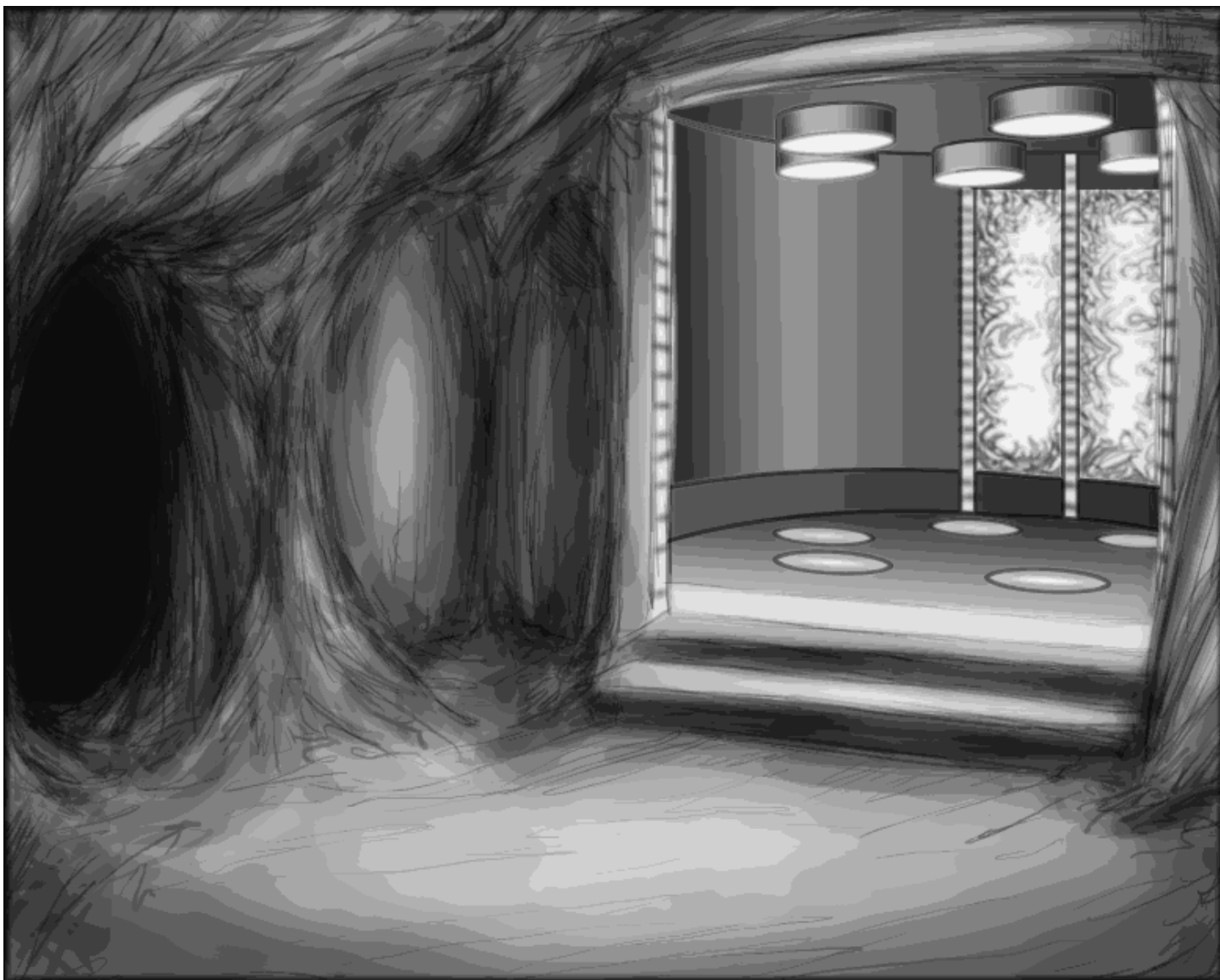
14. The Imp Machine. Occupying most of this room is a strange device that looks like something Dr. Frankenstein would use if he were a dentist. Anyone sitting in the reclining chair will automatically activate the Imp Machine. The victim will be physically restrained for 2-7 rounds. On the first round all clothing, equipment, armor, etc. will be neatly removed from the victim without harm to either. Every round thereafter a tiny imp will be welded to a random location on the body of the poor wretch, causing d6 damage and making the imp scream like you wouldn't believe. The victim's and imp's circulatory and nervous systems become commingled, and nothing short of death or divine intervention can remove an attached imp. Anyone with two or more attached imps has their charisma score effectively halved. The only way to deactivate the Imp Machine is with brute force; treat it as wearing plate armor and any hit points of damage inflicted become a cumulative percentage score to disable it (i.e. it automatically stops at 100 hit points of damage but may peter out before then). The imp storage tank only has 20 imps in it. After those are used up the machine will no longer function. Any spellcaster who survives sitting in the Imp Machine will find that the imps enhance their arcano-cogitation such that they will be able to memorize one

Wandering Monsters

- 1) 2d6 trolls
- 2) 1 demon, d6 for type
- 3) invisible rust monster
- 4) d4 efreeti
- 5) d4 ropers
- 6) d6 will-o-wisps

The Darkness Beneath: Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God





extra spell level per imp attached. Note that sitting in the Imp Machine multiple times is dangerous: at the seventh imp attached the victim explodes fatally (and messily), doing 2d6 damage to anyone else in the room.

15. Sealed Room. The iron door to this room has been sealed shut with a leaden solder and marked with an ancient rune of danger. Any fool opening this door releases a vast quantity of purple gas, flowing through any open doors and potentially filling all rooms and corridors on the level. Every turn of exposure to this vile vapor calls for a save versus poison to avoid the loss of a Wisdom point. At only 2 points of Wisdom party members will fight among themselves at the slightest provocation. At 1 point of Wisdom basic precautions and procedures will be forgotten, such as a character in platemail attempting to wrestle a rust monster. At zero Wisdom actions beyond flight or fight are impossible. The gas will disperse over 2-12 months, leaving a purple stain on the walls and floors. Inside the room is a large black cauldron of an unknown adamantine alloy worth 5,000gp with a strange residue in

the bottom. An alchemist given a sample of the residue may be able to recreate the purple gas.

16. Stairway to the Unknown. Strange sounds intermittently issue up from the dark void below, at times including whirrings, clickings, buzzings and inhuman laughter. No magical form of illumination will penetrate the darkness shrouding these broad steps; only good old-fashioned all-cleansing fire will show the way down.

17. See No Weevil. A trio of Giant Boll Weevils (DC 4, HD 5, Spd 12, damage 2d6 from proboscis, take double damage from cold attacks) claim this room as their office. The Giant Boll Weevils are presently typing up a manuscript using a trio of oversized typewriters. Their literary project is a treatise on methods for eliminating large populations of humans without damaging the cotton crop. A large map of the campaign world is tacked to one wall, colored with areas amenable to cotton cultivation and areas of human habitation. The regions where the two overlap are marked "infestation". Their only other treasure is a giant-

sized tea service worth 1,200gp, a barrel of potable water, and a crate half-full of Earl Grey.

18. Last Refuge of the College Dropout. This room is empty save for a filthy cot against one wall and a mini-fridge in the corner. This device hums with power even though a casual inspection reveals that the three-pronged power hook-up is not plugged into anything. Inside the fridge is a partial wheel of moldy cheese (yellow mold, which attacks immediately upon the door opening) and a six pack of Soylent Green brand cola. One of the cans of cola serves as the prison of Hepzubaal, Princess of Djinn-ettes, and whoever pulls the tab on that can will be granted one wish. Drinking the cola in the other five cans violates the cannibalism prohibition of most Lawful faiths, putting the religious powers of priests and paladins in jeopardy.

19. Don't Look, Dude! In the center of this room is a table with a corpse (obvious from the smell) under a white sheet. Lifting the sheet reveals the supine remains of a medusa and all present will need to save or be petrified, with whoever lifted the sheet getting a -2 on the roll. The only way to avoid possible petrification is for a player to specifically state their character is not looking in the direction of the table as the corpse is revealed. The corpse has been stripped bare (except for 100 gp gemstone earrings hidden by snake-hair), revealing that this particular medusa was a hermaphrodite.

20. Hot Door. The door to this room is hot to the touch, as 4 salamanders reside here. In addition to their usual spears, one salamander has a banjo that can be used three times per day to force the nearest d4 hearing it to save versus magic or dance the Charleston for 3 turns. The room contains several pieces of bronze furniture, including a bronze treasure chest that holds 8,000 sp, 5 gems (750 gp each), a cleric scroll (*heal*), a magic-user scroll (*ice storm*), a ring of weakness, and a potion of gaseous form.

21. Lair of the High Priest. This humble apartment serves as the home of the Murbag the Wretched, last priest of the Shrine of Blasphemy. Murbag will be found here fully half the time. If he is not home he will normally be found in the Shrine Proper (30). Although his mind is riddled with madness and his body is bent with age, Murbag remains a dangerous foe. He is a 13th level Evil High Priest with 35 hit points. Over his platemail +2 (DC 0) he wears the legendary Disco Robe, a wide-sleeved, high-collared robe decorated with over two thousand individual mirrors. No ray, beam, laser, etc. can effect him while so dressed. Murbag wields a Mace of Sharpness and a disintegration pistol (12 charges, as per mage spell). In addition to the spells normally allowed to an Evil High Priest of his level, Murbag may memorize 6 additional spell levels due to the six imps attached to his legs and torso (see 14), whose presence is initially concealed by the Disco Robe. If the referee has access to any non-standard spells appro-

priate to an anti-cleric they should be assigned to Murbag. Murbag is capable of great cunning and will readily surrender if he thinks the situation can be thereby better played to his advantage. He may try revealing the imps under his robe and spinning a tale of how it is they and not he that are evil. Note that any trolls on the level will generally obey Murbag's commands.

22. Treasury of the High Priest. The door to this room is marked with an invisible glyph that will drain d4 levels from the first character touching it. *Detect magic* and similar spells will reveal the existence of the protection. It can be removed automatically with an erasing spell or dispelled if the magic of a 13th level caster can be overcome. Beyond the door are seven giant skulls inlaid with silver and converted to bowls. Each skull is worth 500 gp and six of them contain 250 gp. The seventh contains 205 pp and 10 gems worth 250 gp each.



23. Match of the Millennium. Two robed skeletons sit here in the lotus position, facing each other across the room, the remains of a pair of mystics engaged in astral combat. They were so equally matched the duel continues to this day, but the titanic combat will only be visible to those who can view objects in the astral spectrum. The two robes are in phenomenal shape and composed of the finest silks (value 2,500 gp each), but disturbing the corpses will cause the astral forms to cease their centuries-old incorporeal wrestling match. They will precipitate out of the astral dimension and attack as spectres.

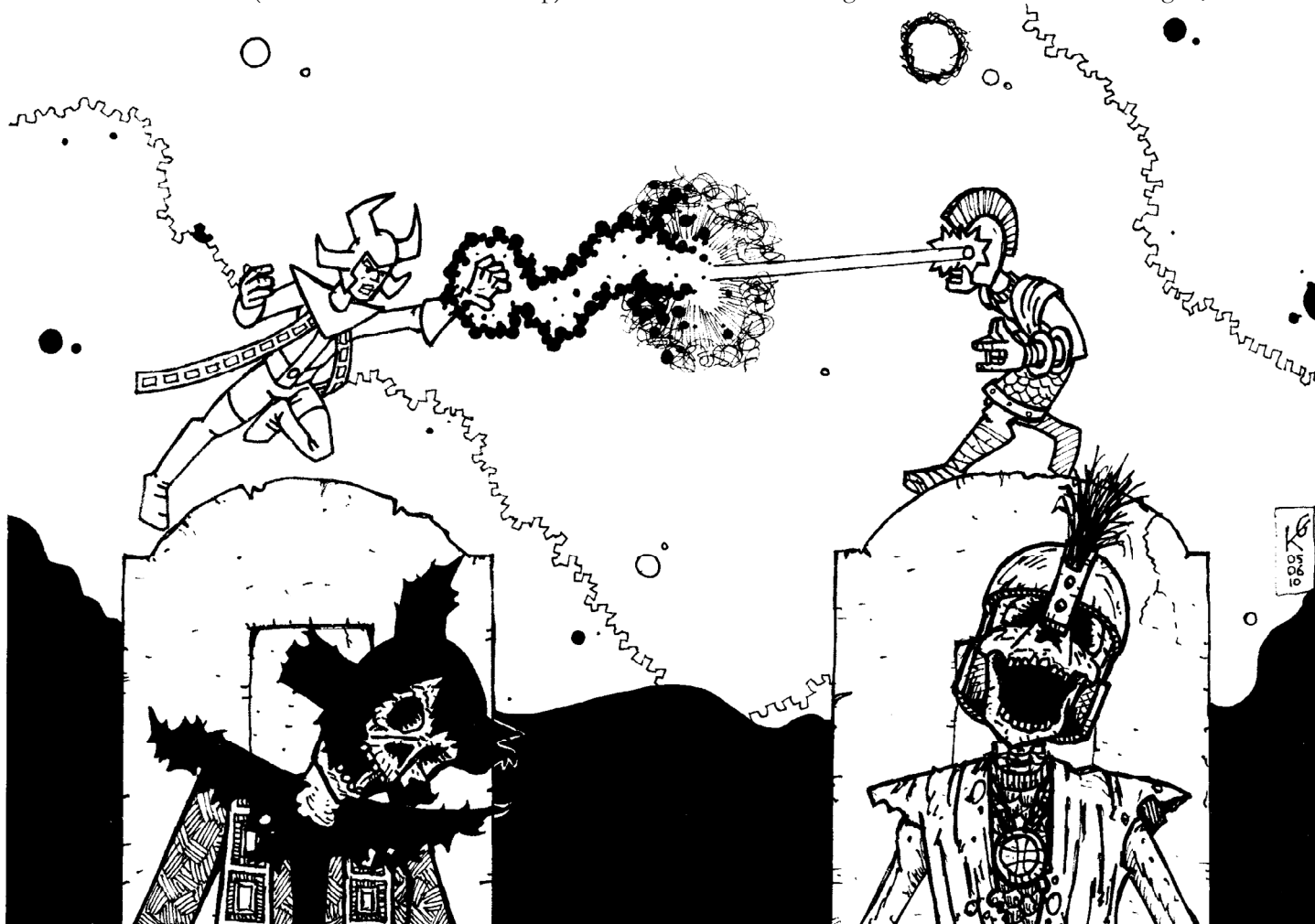
24. Malodorous and Noisy Room. The funk of forty thousand years reverberates through this room, both the music kind of funk and the smell kind of funk. Nothing can be done about the smell without a goodly selection of cleaning supplies, mops, etc., but the music and accompanying lightshow can be deactivated by smashing the glowing dodecahedron hanging from a chain attached to the ceiling. Turning off the music will incite the inhabitants of **25**, **26**, and **27** to violence. Any wandering monsters here will be d6 trolls looking to shake their groove thing.

25. Troll Lair Southeast. 2-7 trolls will be found here playing dice to decide how they will divide the corpse of a two-headed circus bear (still in costume and makeup) with

which they plan on making their supper. A favorable reaction roll indicates that the trolls will invite the party to play dice with them, with stakes of any and all sorts including the tastier-looking limbs of party members, their souls, sexual congress, etc. For their stakes in the game the trolls will offer information, assistance in clearing out the level, servitude for a year and/or some of their treasure: a large jug of wine worth 25gp, 3 gems worth 500gp each, \$600 in Confederate bills and a slightly banged-up unicycle.

26. Troll Lair West. 1-6 trolls lurk here, the wimpiest and most dejected of the local tribe (none possessing more than 25 hit points). These wretches have no treasure save for a few rats roasting over a small fire and do not particularly want to fight, unless aroused to anger by the destruction of the Funky Dodecahedron of **24** or ordered to do so by higher status trolls in **25** or **27**.

27. Troll Lair Northeast. 2-12 trolls can normally be found here, smoking long-necked clay pipes and playing draughts. They'll pay top dollar (out of their stone jug containing 2,000 gp and 4 gems worth 1,000 gp each) for any wine or pipeweed in the party's possession. Should the party insist on combat with these mellow fellows, the leader will target the rudest foe with his net-gun, a device



capable of entrapping/disabling a target unless a save versus petrification is made. The net-gun only fires once and it takes a full turn to reload the net after each use. None of the trolls are aware of the secret door to **30**. As a result of the evil radiation from the idol in **30**, NO CLERIC SPELLS WILL FUNCTION IN THIS ROOM.

28. Eye of Doom and Prismatic Wall. Two protective devices guard the Blasphemous Shrine beyond. The Eye of Doom is a palantir-like sphere that fires a death ray every other round at any intruders coming down the corridor. Its ray can strike up to 3 adjacent targets at once, all of whom must save versus death ray or take 9d6 damage from anti-electricity, a crackling purple energy that acts as the inverse of electricity (magical metal armor protects, bonuses to save against lightning act as penalties, etc.) A successful use of *dispel magic* against a twentieth level caster will render the Eye inert. Smashing it with a magic weapon of at least +2 bonus destroys both the Eye and the weapon. Blindness or darkness effects will cause the eye to fire randomly down the four corridors it guards, targeting no more than one victim per attack. Otherwise the Eye is immune to anything short of *disintegration* or *wish* magic. The prismatic wall pulses eerily in alternating indigos and purples. Attempting to pass through the wall or even touch it results in 6d12 prismatic damage, no save allowed. The wall can be brought down with a combination *passwall* (which eliminates the indigo portion of the wall) and at least 8 dice of magical fire damage (which brings down the purple part). Bringing down one color or the other reduces the damage to 3d12, but the barrier remains impassable. Anyone wearing the Disco Robe (see **21**) will be ignored by the Eye and able to safely pass the prismatic barrier.

29. Ablution Pool. The murky water in this small pool does 2d6 damage to any paladin or Lawful priest coming into contact with it. Furthermore, any holy object placed in the pool will be utterly destroyed. Neutrals drinking from the pool must save versus poison or join the forces of Chaos. At the bottom of the pool (only 8 inches down, but difficult to see) is a platinum bracelet set with a large diamond worth 7,500 gp.

30. The Shrine Proper. Only those who have washed themselves in the Ablution Pool (**29**) will have any success in opening the doors to Shrine, whether they are using magic or muscle power. The room is lit with a shadowy, flickering *continual light* effect and the sounds of tinkling chimes can be heard often. Should more than one person cross the space between the four columns there is a 1 in 6 chance per extra person of opening the concealed pit trap, dropping all down a 60' shaft into a pile of (non-animated) skeletons. The pit door closes 3 rounds after the trap is triggered. At the far end of the the room are statues depicting the two Lesser and one Greater Lords of Blasphemy. Each of these bronze statues is depicted with a multiplicity of heads and limbs as in the fashion of some

As with the rest of The Darkness Beneath, this Blasphemous Shrine is modular and may be placed on its own or in other underground locales. It has three links to other dungeon levels (6, 8, & 14) which may be removed or adjusted for your game. – Ig

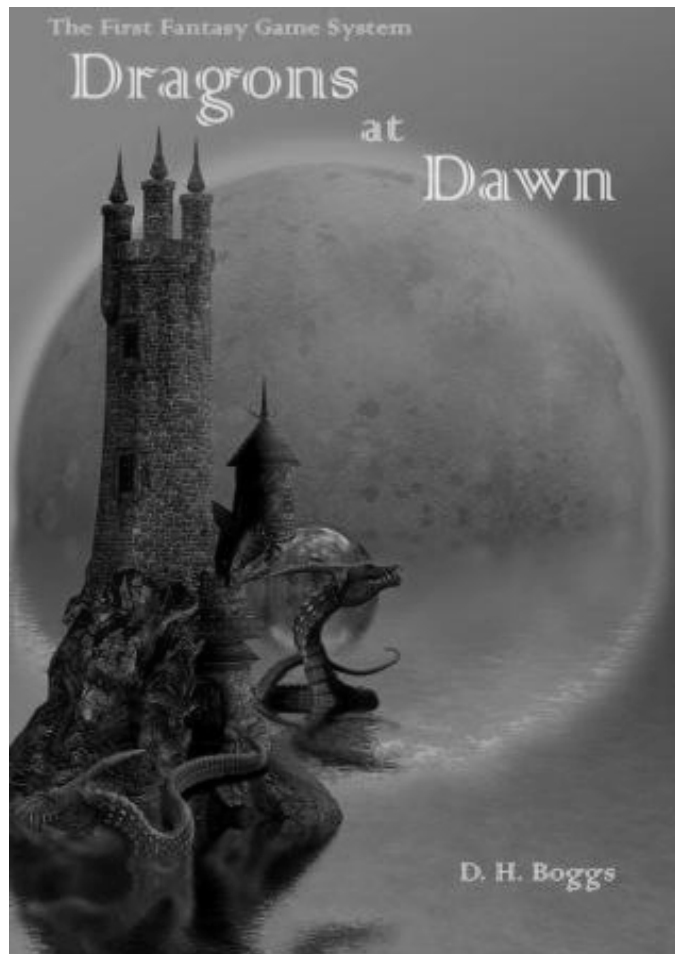
Hindu images. Some of heads of the Greater Lord will bear faces resembling the party, and that head will be depicted as committing the most impious or abominable act ever accomplished by the PC in question. One hand of each of the Lesser Lords holds a silver windchime. As long as the windchimes are free to sound no mage spell will function in the shrine. Similarly, the Greater Lord holds a glowing stone that cancels clerical (but not anti-clerical) magic in a 50' radius. At any given time the shrine will contain 2-7 trolls worshipping these strange deities, with a 50% additional chance each of 1-2 demons of random type (d6), 1-3 salamanders, and/or Murbag the Wretched (see **21**). If Murbag is present and things are going poorly he will escape through the secret door to **27**, either to flee or to rally the trolls therein at the referee's discretion. In addition to the windchimes and stone, each of the Lords has an additional item of treasure. The largest head of the Greater Lord wears the Lost Crown of the Storm Giant Kings, an oversized circlet of gold worth 25,000 gp with 15,000 gp worth of gems attached. One of the hands of the Lesser Lord to the east holds a Staff of Withering with 87 charges remaining. The western Lesser Lord wears a Girdle of Giant Strength. Ω



Merlyn's Mystical Mirror

reviews you can use by Geoffrey McKinney and Pookie

Dragons at Dawn: Back in 1981 when I was 11 years old, one of my friends bought *Best of The Dragon*. Therein, reprinted from *The Dragon* #7 (June 1977), is an article entitled, "Gary Gygax on Dungeons & Dragons: Origins of the Game". Therein Gary wrote, "Although *De&D* was not Dave [Arneson]'s game system by any form or measure, he was given co-billing as author for his valuable idea kernels. He complained bitterly that the game wasn't right..." Ever since reading that, I wondered what Dave's game was like. Over the last several years, I often wondered why someone didn't pick the brains of Dave and of the Blackmoor players who go back to 1970-71. After all, they were active on message boards. Why not collate everything they said, ask them clarifying questions, and re-create "*De&D*" the way it was played before Gary got involved in 1972? Voila! Dan H. Boggs has done precisely that, and the result is a 60-page game with the appropriate title of *Dragons at Dawn*.



I don't think Dan would mind me saying that *Dragons at Dawn* tries to be Dave Arneson's game rather than Dan's game, and that's as it should be. (Let me note that Dan is even now working on a supplement to this game, entitled *Dragons at Twilight*, which will build upon *Dragons at Dawn* and consist of Dan's [rather than Dave's] ideas.) To quote Dan's introduction: "My goal in writing *Dragons at Dawn* was to produce a gaming system that, unlike the rules originally published in 1974, is entirely consistent with Arneson's original, largely forgotten methods of play developed roughly in the period 1970-1973; an imaginative foray into what might have been if Dave Arneson had published his game as he played it...the oldest of the old school." Now let's walk through the rulebook together.

Vocabulary and Dice: We start with vocabulary. Please keep firmly in mind that, while the vocabulary of *DaD* is very similar to that of *De&D*, some meanings are considerably different. For example, hit points have nothing to do with hit dice! Hit dice in *DaD* measure how much damage you do with an attack. If, for example, you have 5 hit dice, then when you hit a monster with your sword, you do 5 dice of damage. Ah, yes. "Dice". *DaD* basically requires only six-sided dice. The only exception is when rolling percentile dice for spell failure.

Characters: Next is a note explaining that *DaD* contains two games, the Basic and the Expanded. The Basic game recreates Dave's rules in the summer of 1971. The Expanded rules recreate Dave's rules from 1971-1975 (with emphasis on 1972). The two games are not hermetically sealed; one can mix and match quite easily. The biggest differences are that all Basic characters are warriors (of three levels: Flunky, Hero, and Superhero) or wizards (of five levels: Seer, Magi, Spellbinder, Sorcerer, and High Wizard). Expanded characters have ten levels each, and several character classes are added: elf mage, merchant, priest/monk, sage, and thief assassin. Here's where things get interesting. Many old-schoolers argue that *De&D* first took a wrong turn in 1975 with the introduction of the thief character class. Ha! It can be argued that the wrong turn occurred three years earlier in 1972 with the introduction of the priest/monk (or cleric). Look at R. E. Howard's Conan stories. There is no proof therein that the gods are real. People worship all kinds of deities, but none of their worshippers have cleric spells or can turn undead. For all we know, there are no real gods in Conan's milieu. But as soon as clerics got added into the mix of *De&D*, a big decision was already made for your campaign: Divine forces exist, and they grant special powers to their special followers. But isn't it odd that radically different gods grant basically the same spells to their followers? The spell-list of a cleric of the demon-god Juiblex is pretty much the same as the spell-list of a cleric of Kuan Yin, goddess of mercy and child bearing. And many of the clerical spells

are something that Moses (sticks to snakes and part water, I'm looking at you) or Jesus did in the Bible. Juiblex, Kuan Yin, Moses, and Jesus? Ummm... So I'll let someone else review the 5 pages of the Expanded game's "new" character classes. While these classes belong in the rulebook, I have to admit that these 5 pages don't excite me as do the other 55 pages. We need some enthusiasm here! Simple rules are given for multi-classing. Basically you can use the abilities of both classes, but you are subject to the limitations of both classes. Thus I'm looking at an Arnesonian campaign with three types of PCs: warriors, wizards, and wizard-warriors. (I should mention here that plain ol' wizards can wear any armor and use any weapon, just as can warriors. No penalties.) Character races are the typical human, elf, dwarf, and halfling, with a note saying that anything is fair game as a PC race. Vampire, balrog, dragon, ochre jelly? Go for it!

Ability Scores: The six ability scores (appearance, brains, constitution, dexterity, strength, and wisdom) are rolled 2d6-2, thus generating numbers between 1 and 10 (re-roll snake eyes). Most saving throws are based on these abilities. If you need to make, for example, a dexterity saving throw, you roll 2d6-2 and compare that to your dexterity. If you roll less than your dexterity, you saved. If the roll is equal or higher, then you failed.

Class Progression Tables: Now we get into the class progression tables. I prefer the Expanded game's 10-level tables. At each level is listed a set number of hit points (called HPV, for Hit Point Value). In this game, nothing has more than a 100 HPV. The biggest, baddest monster imaginable will have a 100 HPV. With that in mind, we see that a 1st-level warrior has a 7 HPV, while a 1st-level wizard has a 4 HPV. A 10th-level (highest level attainable, remember?) warrior has a 28 HPV, and a 10th-level wizard has a 21 HPV. That's right. You don't roll for your hit points. You have an unvarying number at each level. Fourth edition *De&D* didn't start this! Dave Arneson started it back in 1970-71.

Alignment: Three alignments: Lawful, chaotic, and selfish. Lawful is basically good, chaotic is basically evil, and selfish is whimsically evil. In *AD&D* terms, I'd classify them thus: Lawful = lawful good, Chaotic = lawful evil, Selfish = chaotic evil. Selfish beings are so bad that both lawfuls and chaotics tend to exterminate them on sight.

Armor Class: There are eight basic armor classes. It is an ascending armor class system. Third edition *De&D* didn't invent that! Dave Arneson did back in 1970-71. No armor is AC 1. Leather is AC 2. Plate and shield are AC 8. An armor class of 9 or 10 is barely possible, but only for materials that are stronger than plate and shield! (Hard to think of any, isn't it?) Then there are the negative AC ratings. These are for creatures that can be hit only by magic weapons. It takes a +1 or better weapon to hit AC -

1. It takes a +4 or better weapon to hit AC -4. Etc. Such armor classes are typically for non-corporeal entities.

Combat: Combat makes significant use of morale, which determines who strikes first in a round, with the side with better morale going first. To hit rolls are made with 2d6 (and you want to roll low), and then a consultation of the single Combat Matrix. You cross reference the attacker's Attack Value against the defender's Defense Value to see what you need to roll to hit. Both Attack Value and Defense Value are typically equal to Hit Dice (plus optional modifiers). If a hit is scored, the target gets to roll a saving throw on 2d6-2. If he rolls under his own AC, then the hit harmlessly bounces off his armor. If he fails the throw, then he takes damage according to the attacker's HD. If, for example, the attacker has 7 HD, then the defender takes 7d6 points of damage. A warrior can be pretty fearsome. If his attack kills an opponent, he gets another free attack. If that attack kills an opponent, he gets yet another free attack, etc. Conceivably, a warrior could slay 20 opponents in a single round that way. This really gives the feel of some of the Conan stories in which Conan slays scores of men before being captured by an entire army.

Magic: The magic system is quite different than what we're used to. All wizards (even neophyte 1st-level ones) can cast an unlimited number of fireballs, lightning bolts, and light spells. Fourth edition *De&D* didn't make that up. Dave Arneson did back in 1970-71. "But, but, but... No way! That would make wizards too powerful!" Ah, but there are some serious restrictions in place. First, each time they cast one of these three spells, they have to make a saving throw or fall unconscious for 2d6 turns (with each turn lasting 10 minutes). Second, we must remember that the target gets TWO saving throws vs. the spell. He gets to make a saving throw to see if he dodges the spell. Then he gets to make an armor saving throw to see if his armor deflects the spell. He doesn't need to make both saving throws. He only needs to make one. If he makes it, then he takes no HPV damage. Then there is a list of 47 spells, divided into six levels. *DaD* makes it easy. A 3rd-level spell can be cast by a 3rd-level wizard. A 5th-level spell can be cast by a 5th-level wizard. Spells are NOT cast by waving your arms and chanting. Instead, to quote from the book, "spells are tied to physical things made of special ingredients, not magic energy or enchanted words. Spells are often found in the form of potions in bottles or vials, gasses trapped in delicate glass balls, powders in paper tubes, and the like, including spell scrolls written with magical ink made from distilled superberries." This is yet another way that *DaD* is like Howard's Conan stories. The wizards of the Hyborian Age typically cast spells in precisely that way. The Hyborian sorcerers were armed with powders, potions, vials, etc. There is no limit to the number of spells a wizard can cast in a day. "Wha...?" The catch is that spells are expensive and time-consuming to concoct. A spell costs 100 g.p. per level of the spell. Thus a

3rd-level spell will cost the wizard 300 g.p. for the ingredients to brew the spell. Second, it takes forever and a day to brew spells. First level spells take one week. Second level spells take a month. Third and higher level spells take a year! Sure you can summon an elemental. Just spend the next year in your laboratory making the spell. And even then the spell might not work. It might be a dud! (Just think of fireworks.) A 1st-level spell has a base 35% chance of being a dud, a 2nd-level spell has a 45% chance, a 3rd-level spell has a 55% chance, etc. This chance is reduced by 5% for each level of the wizard preparing the spell. And, just like fireworks, you don't know if any given one is a dud or not until you light it. So your bad-ass 10th-level wizard who spent the last year brewing an elemental conjuration spell has to carry the thing (powder, potion, or whatnot) around. Careful you don't drop it! Careful you don't get it wet! You just got hit by a fireball spell? I wonder what that did to your precious spell? Anyway, our hypothetical wizard's elemental spell has a 35% chance of being inert junk. There's no way to test it. You just have to wait until your fat's in the fire and you cast the spell. Cross your fingers! Hope that you didn't spend an entire year making a spell that has all the powers of a Snickers bar. "Hey, I know! I'll kill an evil wizard and steal all his spells!" Think again. Each brewed spell has the alignment of its creator. If you try to cast a spell made by someone of a different alignment than yourself, it could kill you. There is also another system of magic for priests (powers acquired as the priest rises in level, rather like a paladin), and another for elf mages (a spell point system). I'll let someone else review those. I'm sure they are fine systems, but (since they are not what I'm looking for in a game right now) I'm not excited about them, and all parts of this game deserve an engaged review.

Magic Items: Sixteen sample magic items are briefly described, as well as rules for intelligent magic swords. These are more by way of example than anything. As the rulebook says, "Various and sundry magical items and artifacts can exist and the limit is really the imagination of the players." I'm thankful for this. I really don't need a big laundry list of magic items. If I'm going to include magic items in my campaign, I'll make them up myself, thank you very much. (I must hasten to add that I'm glad for the inclusion of these 16 items, as they give us a glimpse of the type of magic item used by Arneson.)

Monsters: Then we are given nine sample monsters. These, too, are given as samples of the type of monster that Arneson used in his campaign. Included are balrogs, robots, and Gorean tarns. Each has only AC, HPV, HD, and movement listed for stats. Again, I'm glad that we're not given a huge catalog of monsters. I prefer to throw unique, unknown beasts against the PCs rather than using old standbys. A quote from Arneson is given: "I had a big argument way back when about dragons because they came out with all these different color dragons and to me

they are just cookie cutter dragons. I always thought that dragons should be huge blusterous things that, each of them, are unique. Too often you sit there and the player says, "well, we'll just assume that its 2 hit dice and armor class 8 etc."

Gaining Experience: Wizards gain experience points only from brewing spells. Priests gain experience points only from donating treasure to their religion. All other characters gain experience from spending treasure in accordance with their nature. Three pages are devoted to standard equipment lists with prices.

Spells: The last nine pages of the book describe the 47 spells. Each has a duration and range listed in addition to a paragraph describing what the spell does. The spells are much more oriented towards detection and concealment than are *D&D's* spell lists. Of the 47 spells, only 3 do hit point damage. And of these, the decay spell causes a slow decay of HPV rather than a blast of damage. That leaves fireball and lightning bolt, and that makes sense to me. How many spells do we need that basically say, "This spell causes a ball/beam/ray/arrow/streak/bolt/shock that causes X amount of damage"? I also like that the illusion spell does not cause real damage or pain. It looks, sounds, and smells real, but your hand will pass right through it. The only spell I don't like is Evil Detection. I've long hated all spells that detect alignment. But I like the other 46 spells. 46 out of 47 isn't bad at all.

Summary: This is a very cool, VERY old-school game. It's as close as you can come to playing the game the way it was played when NOBODY in the whole world played it except for Dave Arneson and his buddies back in 1970-72. To my way of thinking, this game is 38 years overdue. We owe Dan Boggs a great debt of gratitude for all the hard work and research he devoted to re-creating the original role-playing game. – GM

Backwords & Bucklers: I have already opined that the genre focus of the Old School Renaissance is perhaps a little too tight, upon iterations of the *Dungeons & Dragons* of anywhen from 1974 to 1981 and on the relatively few genres that appeared in roleplaying during that period over the limitless possibilities that we have been available since. So what this means is that we have fantasy in the form of Goblinoid Games' *Labyrinth Lord* and *Swords & Wizardry* from Mythmere Games, and many others, whilst Science Fiction is covered by Grey Area Games' *Xplorers: The role playing adventures of Galactic Troubleshooters!* and the forthcoming revised *Starships & Spacemen* from GG, leaving *Mutant Future* – also from Goblinoid Games – to do the weird post-apocalyptic setting we remember from *Metamorphosis Alpha* and *Gamma World*, both from TSR. All right, so this is a generalisation, but it does leave an awfully large and diverse number of genres yet to be explored in

the retro fashion of the Old School Renaissance. So *Backswords & Bucklers: Adventuring in Gloriana's Britain* from the amusingly named British publisher, Tied to a Kite (tiedtoakite.com), is something of a curiosity as far as the Old School Renaissance is concerned. Powered by the same rules as to be found in *Swords & Wizardry: Whitebox* and as its subtitle suggests, *Backswords & Bucklers* is a game set in Elizabethan England that is slightly more fantastic than our own. Not fantastic enough that it trips off into the faerie realms and back again – at least not in *Book One: Basic Rules*, the first book to be published, which only hints at the dangers of dark magic, with supplements to come set to cover the alchemical, the sorcerous, and the demonological arts in actual detail.

So the first question in any RPG is, “What can I play?” *Backswords & Bucklers* offers three classes, the Fighting Man, the Scoundrel, and the Cunning Man or Wise Woman. The first of these can be anything from hired muscle to professional soldier, whilst the second is more of a rogue, making his living any way other than what others would call honest toil. The last of the three classes is a country bred cross between an apothecary and a private eye, able to heal with his knowledge of herbs and chirurgy, but also able to find things through dowsing. The effects of both herbalism and chirurgy will vary from one Cunning Man to another, as a player is free to select from various choices as he gains levels. Of let us not forget the dangers of playing a Wise Woman – “And how do you know she’s a witch?” The sample character is Edmond Treves, a ne’er do well who resides in Southwark. By night he is an actor, part of the company at the Globe theatre, but by day, he does odd jobs for Sidney Moulson, a local smuggler. This is always in the company of a strong arm called Harry Pleasance. Of the two, Harry is the brighter, but likes to keep this fact hidden. So when the two are together, Harry never speaks, except to whisper his thoughts into Edmond’s ear.

Edmond Treves

1st Level Scoundrel

S: 10 **D:** 13 **C:** 9 **I:** 12 **W:** 14 **Ch:** 15

Defence Rating: 10 **Saving Throw:** 14 **Hit Points:** 3

Class Abilities: Information Gathering, Picking Locks, Moving Silently

Equipment: cloak, clothing (inc. boots and hat), satchel, eating knife, dagger, lock picks, broadsword; 1 Shilling

Harry Pleasance

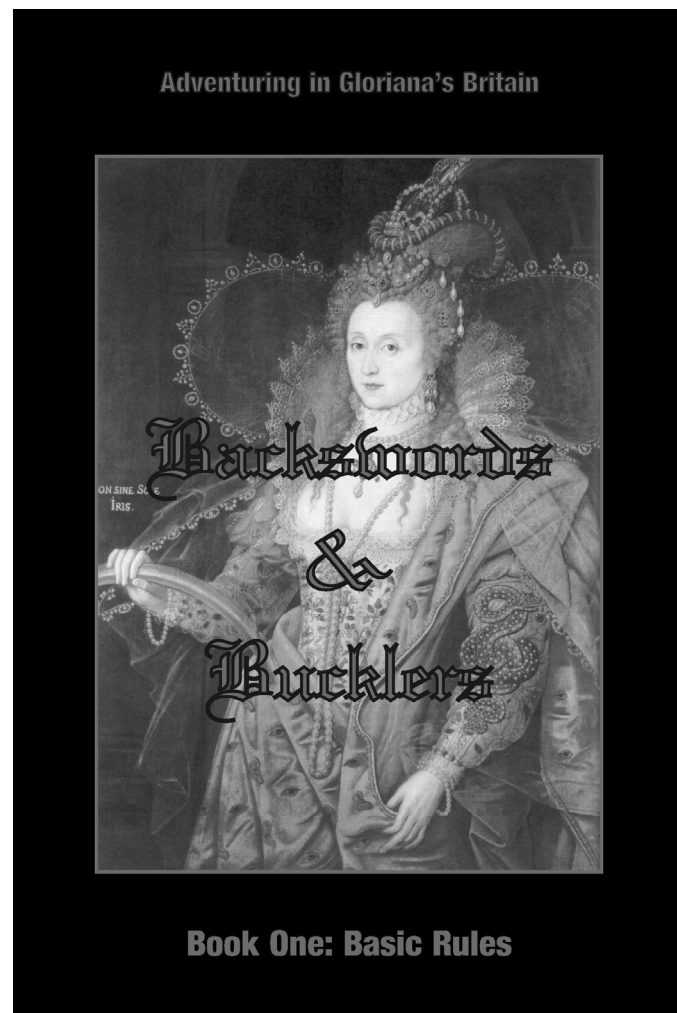
1st Level Fighting Man

S: 16 **D:** 12 **C:** 12 **I:** 16 **W:** 12 **Ch:** 10

Defence Rating: 11 **Saving Throw:** 15 **Hit Points:** 5

Class Abilities: Cool Under Pressure, Saving Throw (+1 vs. Death & Poison), Experienced Eye

Equipment: cloak, clothing (including boots and hat), backpack, whetstone, eating knife, dagger, leather jack (Armour Rating 1), falchion, buckler; 3 Shillings



Most of the time, a character can carry out such abilities without problem, but where it does matter, the referee decides on the chances of success to be rolled on a six-sided die. Combat of course, uses the standard twenty-sided die, but is slightly more complex than that of most “Edition Zero” RPGs in that it takes into account the type of damage, especially when “downright” blows are inflicted, which happens when someone runs out of Hit Points. Armour reduces damage whilst shields make an opponent more difficult to hit. As written, most weapons do just one six-sided die’s worth of damage per hit, but whether that is a straight die’s worth per hit or a number of dice equal to the success roll is unclear. It is probably the former as the latter seems like an awful lot, but even then, just rolling one die for each weapon’s damage is uninteresting, and this only looks all the more odd given that missile weapons do damage equal to a single six-sided die per level of the bowman, the pistoleer, or the musketeer. So as everyone gains levels, they become deadlier shots, but not deadlier swordsmen, except for the Fighting Man who gains extra attacks per turn as he gains levels. The reason for this is that attacks by missile weapons are one time, skill based attacks, whereas a melee presents multiple opportunities to successfully strike an opponent and inflict damage. This is reasonable enough I suppose, but if every weapon inflicts

just one die's worth of damage, it not only makes them all a bit flavourless, with the only reasons for a player to choose one weapon over another is cost and the type of damage it does for "Downright Blows," which are inflicted when an opponent is reduced to zero Hit Points.

The other odd issue is how the classes gain Experience Points. The Fighting Man gains his by fighting others. He does not have to defeat his foe, but if he wins, a Fighting Man gains double the Experience Points. In contrast, the Scoundrel gains them by expending money at a rate of five Experience Points per Penny spent, and the Cunning Man for helping others. These are a means by which the rules encourage or enforce roleplaying within the setting. The last issue with the classes is the lack of choice within them. The Cunning Man does not suffer from this to the same extent, but the differences between one Scoundrel and another or one Fighting Man and another will entirely be down to the players rather than any mechanical element built into the rules. To be fair, this is an issue with any "Edition Zero," but it would have been nice to have some means to differentiate between characters of the same class. One means for example, might have been to make the game's weaponry more individual and more flavour-some, and were I to run *Backswords & Bucklers* this is something that I might do.

The "Edition Zero" game has any number of clichés, one of which is having a party assemble at "ye humble olde tavern" for a drink and a rumour prior to the start of their next dungeon delve. *Backswords & Bucklers* cuts out the delve and instead of the "Dungeon Bash," has the "Tavern Trawl." Actually, the rules for "Tavern Trawling" are a means by which a referee can create a base of operations for the player characters and using that generate rumours and employment for them. To that end, *Basic Rules: Book One* comes with a sample tavern, The Duck & Drake complete with clientele and rumours. The given sample adventure, "The Unfortunate Spaniard," is more of a thumbnail than a full adventure.

Aside from the issues already raised, *Backswords & Bucklers* as seen in *Basic Rules: Book One*, suffers from several problems. The first of these is that the book lacks background. It needs to have more historical information than it does, necessary because not everyone is going to be familiar with the late Tudor period. Second, there is no referee or campaign advice on running the game beyond particular situations, such as combat. One combined effect of both of these is to leave the referee wondering what sort of tone the game should have. Should the tone be the tragic farce of *Blackadder II*? The romantic comedy of *Shakespeare in Love*? Or the high drama of *Elizabeth*? It does not help that the lack of a spellcasting class in the game also means that the magic is barely touched upon beyond listing some sample magic items that might be the subject of possible jobs to be found in the "Tavern Trawling" tables.

Physically, *Book One: Basic Rules for Backswords & Bucklers: Adventuring in Gloriana's Britain* is reasonably laid out with suitable public domain artwork used well to break up the text. A slight edit is needed in places, but this a readable and easily used little book. Ultimately and as given in *Book One: Basic Rules*, the real issue with *Backswords & Bucklers* is that it is too basic and does not really have enough information – it needs more of the Gloriana. There are issues with the rules too, mostly in terms of balance, between the classes and in the combat mechanics. Nevertheless, all of these issues can be fixed and the game is playable as is, should you so desire, especially when coupled with a knowledge of the period. It might not be perfect, but *Backswords & Bucklers: Adventuring in Gloriana's Britain* is certainly playable and it shows promise aplenty. If Tied to a Kite can deliver on that promise with future supplements, it will have given the Old School Renaissance a solid little addition. – P



The End of the World, Considered as Prelude

fiction by Del Beaudry

I. The end of the world lacked nothing for fanfare. For once the cosmos laid aside its usual armature of misdirection. God – that is the customary word – performed no sleights of hand. The end was neither quiet nor subtle. There was no recourse to anticlimax. Events described the full course of *sturm und drang*. Every catastrophic vision came true; nothing was left out.

Yet – and here is the problem – still men paid no heed. Not to say that the particulars caused no excitement. Hardly. It is rather to remark that despite the onslaught of pyrotechnics, despite the forests of smoldering dead and continents sowed to ash, despite the rampage of pure atrocity which commenced almost immediately thereafter, despite the axiomatic symmetry of every sign, the simplest and most straightforward possible explanation – annihilation *per se* – went altogether unthought.

Why was this so? Tender your explanations freely. It may be that – as a race – humans lack the capacity to comprehend doom. Or perhaps it was just ordinary impatience: for instance, in the course of a symphony, there are always those who easily mistake any early crescendo for the finale.

II. There came an age without rain. Green went yellow; yellow, brown; brown, gray. The gray was ash and dust. It choked the land and fouled the sea. People abandoned the cities to look for water. The soil itself became a kind of tinder.

An age of fire followed. Vermilion grew fat and swollen and cancerous and drove blue Azurella from the vault. From the sea rose mountains still draped in ribbons of kelp that belched smoke and burning rock. Balefire devoured countryside. Whole continents burned.

Yet the holocaust was not total. Even on land, certain creatures survived, and more in the deep lakes and oceans. So much resides there – it may prove impossible to kill it all. Men lived, too. In mountain caves. On remote islands. Hard by the poles where the ice-locked land could not burn.

At length, the fires receded. Rain fell once more. Green shoots broke the charcoal landscape. Men crept from their caves and burrows and walked in wonder under clear skies. Matters proceeded as they will. Once more humanity took up the business of living.

These new tribes who left their caves and holes and settled far across the world in the aftermath of fire conceived themselves a race apart. And that was true, so far as it goes. Whereas their forebears had been scavengers – content to pry whatever useful things they could from the blackened landscape – their sons learned to farm. The ash-rich soil yielded ample crops. Their numbers multiplied. Soon there were cities.

These new men raised mounds to honor their new gods, who had intervened to spare their forefathers. Gods who, sickened by the reek of human evil, had by their awful might called down from the heavens a rain of fire so ferocious that it all but consumed the world yet, also (and for reasons inexact) had extended unto their lineage alone a kind of special dispensation, one which licensed to them an era of greatness and plenty.

So went the tradition. And the new men held to it longer and more dearly than cynics might admit. Their faith outlasted nations and empires, survived a miscellany of revolutions, reformations and purges more or less intact. But over centuries one must expect a certain degree of slippage. Here it took the form of creeping laxity.

By the end, the old religion was brittle as an egg emptied of yolk. Exegesis had supplanted Scripture, tithes stood in for prayer. Myths, once sharp enough to draw blood, had gone blunt from disuse.

All in all, a certain nastiness was lost. In the sermons you would hear no talk of further punishment...

III. The capital of the final empire was the city of Krysar. It spanned a wide but tranquil river whose water-logged flanks debouched by stages into the vast expanse of the delta, to become mudflats and tide pools and glades before widening into the trackless and virulent swamp that ran all the way to the salt-clogged sea.

It had two seasons: hot and dry; and cool and wet. When it was hot, when the fat red sun spread out across the sky, Krysar fell into a kind of torpor. Come noon, even the central boulevards saw no traffic. Cityfolk slept away the daylight in cool cellars or groveled beneath shady bridges or languished under makeshift tents or in pitiful jacals of dung and mud. In that season you could perhaps be excused if you mistook the imperial capital for any well-appointed provincial town, despite the telltale signs: the high garrets overhung in jasmine that the cluster below the prospect, favored by opium eaters and poets; the Court of Seers with its mazes of arabesque tile which mark the circuit of the Zodiac, the coruscated pastel windows of the citadel.

Yet by night you would have no doubt – you would know it for Krysar and none other. Where the esplanades

echo with laughter from the passing gondolas as the handsome youth are poled from one gala to the next; where submerged obelisks shimmer with fluorescent glamour; and in whose secondary culverts – off the main boulevards, but still too close for comfort, so the monied classes would say – other agents, less comely but more determined, conduct their variegated complex of pleasures and enterprises, all of which must be done before the sun comes up.

Yet, even allowing for the night's diversions, Krysar's summers were judged at best a trial – this was the common view. So when the monsoon arrived early, most everyone was pleased to have the rain. Especially the vetch-farmer who worked the mudflats south of the city proper, for the prior season had been dry.

IV. It rained day and night. New rivers ran down the hillsides to fill a series of lowland lakes, which soon gave birth to squalid islands of alluvia and wreckage and drowned livestock and human corpses. Yet the city's petty nobles expressed no alarm. Floods were all too common – an expensive nuisance, nothing more. Thus it was not until the enormous sewers draining the imperial residence had backed up – and a jet of filth from the had ambushed a favorite concubine at her toilette – that the emperor became personally involved. He was displeased.

There would be a conclave, to consist of the wisest men of the empire and its possessions. The messengers went by boat, since by now the highways were flooded. Many drowned, or lost their way. Others could find no one who, in their judgment, could reasonably be deemed wise. Some few of this group were undeterred and seized anyone handy. But the larger portion maintained that it was only logical that they should have failed – wise men being scarce, even in the best of times. Therefore, they reckoned, they had acted in good faith and done well by the emperor and thus had nothing to fear. Whether he accepted their judgment is not recorded.

Therefore, on the appointed day, in a great audience chamber in the palace's north wing which had (thus far) remained above water, the conclave came to order.

Its composition was heterodox. To his credit, the emperor had the foresight to look outside the usual stable of cronies and yes-men for counsel, though such views were by no means excluded. The high priest, for instance (he stood now beside his allies among the cardinals) could be counted on to express conventional wisdom. Likewise the placatory court magicians: if even once they had contradicted him, the emperor could not recall it, and he had known each since before he could walk. The chief astrologer, too, must be considered pliable. Old beyond memory, he was now too feeble to walk under his own

power, and had to be carried to the assembly in a litter set upon the shoulders of fodder men

What of the others? None inspired particular confidence. To his left stood a delegation of rishi renunciates from the bog lands, along with several itinerant sages and self-styled prophets. To the right assorted sorcerers, illusionists, jugglers and conjurers of mixed reputation. A little apart slouched a strand witch. Local account claimed that she lived alone in a cave by the sea and ate only shellfish and kelp, and this raw, for her order forbade cooked food. Indeed, the use of fire.

Last to be admitted was the black adept, his hands and feet fettered in iron, a dozen centurions for his guard. (Only weeks before, an ecclesiastical judge had sentenced him to die for diabolism. When the summons came he had been only days from execution in the High Tower.)

Once the demands of courtesy and protocol were finally discharged, the emperor spoke. "It is written that the monsoon is the gods' sweetest blessing, for by its waters the rivers are filled and the land made fertile and the people fed.

"But what befalls us now seems less a boon than a curse. Already the streets overflow. Even now, water floods the cellars of our palace. Soon, its foundations will be undermined. All our works stand now in peril. "Who among you has power enough to avert this tragedy? Whose magic can call off the rain? To such a one I will grant whatsoever prize he may wish, to the extent of half my empire!"

At once the wizards set to work. Some mumbled incantations. Others drew sigils on the flagstones or on their bodies. Two court magicians assisted the chief astrologer in preparing a horoscope. The rishis meditated or cast bones.

All this went on for some time and the emperor – who could do nothing himself – grew impatient. The matter should have been resolved quickly! To slacken a storm is easy magic – every country weather-worker knows a charm to turn aside raindrops. Yet, as he watched the wizards work, he detected only growing consternation. Also, perhaps, an undercurrent of fear.

(Meanwhile, the chamber's vaulted ceiling began to leak. Water gathered and pooled in the swales.)

The emperor could stand no more. "What say you?" he growled to the high priest. "Why do your spells not avail us?"

The high priest, always keen for profit, took note of the opening.

“Such craft is unreliable,” he replied smoothly. “Success depends upon the favor of the gods, which may be secured by ample donations. Consider the new temple I have proposed, whose design your majesty has inspected but recently...”

The emperor nodded thoughtfully.

“Your words merit action,” he said. Then, seizing a sword, he sliced the priest open from chin to navel; the lifeless body sprawled to the floor in a tangle of entrails.

The emperor raised the bloody sword and shouted. “Mighty gods! I present to you a gift whose value runs beyond reckoning – the life of this holy man! Accept it, Great Ones, and grant us your favor in our labors.”

He nodded to one of the guards, who set about excising the vital organs from the chest cavity. (Tradition dictates that these must be presented to the gods separately. A petitioner will place them in a brazier and set it alight. The ritual ends only when the organs are wholly consumed.)

Laughter rang across the hall: big lusty laughs, the sort you might hear from a gang of drunken stevedores in a

dockside tavern on payday, who had been treated to the performance of a truly epic fart.

No one spoke. All eyes were on the black magician. On and on he laughed; he could barely keep his feet. Tears rolled down into his beard until it was wet. Still he kept laughing.

At last, one of the centurions came to his senses and rammed a sword-butt into his belly. The adept doubled over, teetering momentarily before he was pulled to the floor by the weight of his shackles. There he lay, hands over knees, the wind knocked out of him, still heaving with mirth.

The emperor’s face went white with fury. The centurion raised his sword.

“Not much point to that, your majesty.” It was the strand witch.

“Why?” asked the emperor. His voice held a deadly edge.

“It’ll no more good than it done for the priest, which is to say none at all, much as I’d like to claim otherwise.”



Everyone stared.

“What do you mean?” asked the emperor.

She didn’t even pretend to answer the question. She just went on as if he hadn’t said a thing.

“No, not at all what I’d prefer, all things considered. It would be a merry thing if I could say ‘why yes, your majesty, if you could just see clear to do such and such – like for instance guttin’ every last priest in all Krysar just like you done with this one here – well then that should clear all yer troubles up! Poof! Problem over! Sure as sunrise!’

“But I can’t, so I won’t, and that’s that. Because it don’t matter nohow – there’s nothing for it. Might as well both of us save our breath.”

“Get to the point!” the emperor roared.

“The point is: yer fucked. If you’ll pardon my language, yer majesty.”

She said it with evident good humor.

It took the emperor a moment to recover his composure. It had been a long time since he had been at a loss for words.

“Why?” he managed at last.

“Because your gods are dead. Long dead. And that’s allowing that were alive in the first place, for which I won’t vouch. In either case, there’s no one up there none of ‘em left to answer yer prayers. None at all.”

Sacrilege, yes. But the emperor did not care. He believed her. The witch’s voice conveyed absolute certainty.

The emperor spoke: “Say you that is so – what then?” His gaze searched the crowd. “Those assembled are mighty sorcerers. Surely one of you knows some craft that will avail us.”

(Outside the rain battered the shutters. Water lapped about the feet of the silent wizards.)

Murmurs. At length one of the rishis spoke up.

“It is better you hear the truth now, your majesty. Your empire is doomed, as are we all. Azurella is no more; Vermillion rules alone. Rain is just the beginning. Already, the seas rise. In time, the ocean will overflow its basin and engulf the land. In the end there will only be sea.”

Others nodded their agreement. How long had they known, he wondered. Many years, perhaps. Who would dare to bring the emperor such dreadful news? He glanced at the dead priest and felt a certain disgust. Not regret, though. His father had schooled him too well on its perils: regret was poison to a monarch.

Water rushed into the hall. Men stood on tables or climbed onto statues and sat on their marble shoulders. The effect was both comic and pathetic.

The emperor addressed them: “You say the world is doomed. So it may be. I will not argue the case because it does not matter. There is nothing new in all of this: every man is doomed from birth.”

He looked from one to the other, inviting someone to defy him “Who among you will not die? Has anyone here discovered such a sleight? No?”

No one answered. The emperor nodded. “Essentials remain unchanged. We live, and therefore we will do our utmost to go on living. Likewise, you remain my subjects and I your emperor.

“What matters now is our course of action. How can we forestall our fate?”

From above, a sound like thunder; the room hawed like a ship broadside to a storm. Water poured from a gash in the vaulted ceiling. The assembly was drenched.

“My advice,” said the witch “is to stow the speech-making and head for higher ground.” She steered a mocking glance in his direction.

“That is, if it *please* your majesty. It may be awhile yet before the mountain country is overrun.”

The emperor nodded assent. He issued commands; guards and slaves rushed to comply: some gathered provisions, others prepared the imperial barge, rounded up his choicest treasures and favorite concubines, salvaged what else they could. Yet even as he watched his subjects scuttle here and there to satisfy his will the emperor could not help but observe subtle deviations.

Did Khel swagger when he should have slouched? And Zola – what had become of her delicious indolence? Was that a smirk?

He had been wrong, he decided. From now on things would be very different indeed. Ω

Witches of N'Kai

by Caleb Jensen

Dedication

Witches of N'kai was written as a tribute to Geoffrey McKinney's CARCOSA, and Nicolas Dessaux's Searchers of the Unknown.

Setting

Beneath the forgotten ruins of Yoth lies the endless caverns of N'Kai, home to the Great Old Ones, and their unspeakable spawn. Although lost for centuries Witches and Warlocks have long sought the forbidden place in their mad search for blasphemous lore, and occult power.

Character Creation

1) Choose Equipment: Choose one armor, and either two weapons or a weapon and shield on the chart below. Armor gives your PC an Defense Class (**DC**) and a movement rate (**MV**), while Weapons tell what damage a character will do in combat (**D**) Shields reduce AC and MV by 1, and may not be used with Heavy Weapons. Ranged Weapons Deal Damage as though they were one category lower

	Armor		Weapons (D)
	DC	MV	
None	9	12	1D2
Light	7	9	1D4
Medium	5	6	1D6
Heavy	3	3	1D8

2) Level (LVL): LVL measures the degree of initiation into the dark arts, and the ability to defend one's self against unspeakable horrors. Character's learn a new Ritual whenever they gain a **LVL**.
3) # of Attacks (AT): At level 1 characters get one Attack a round, and gain an additional attack every four levels.

4) Save (SV): A Character's **SV** is equal to their **LVL** +4. A Save roll may be called for actions that are not covered by the Stealth and Stunts Rules, such as picking locks, or discovering a spawn's name. To succeed roll 1d20 under **SV**.

5) Wound (W): Characters start with 0 **W**. If **W** ever equals a character's **LVL** the character has died. After an extended rest reduce the wound value by one (min 0.)

6) Name and Describe the Character: Name and describe the character and equipment appropriate to setting.

Example Character: Rothgar the Blue Sorcerer (**DC** 7 **MV** 9 **SV** 5 **LVL** 1 **#AT** 1 **W** 0 **D** 1D6 with short sword or bow).

Combat

0 - Pre-Combat Before Combat begins each combatant must determine their HP and Initiative score. HP is determined by adding rolling a number of d8 equal to the combatant's **LVL** minus their **W**, and adding the results (optionally the previous combats HP may be used if they have not rested.) Initiative is 1D20 +AC for each attack possessed. Round proceed in initiative order (highest first) until all combatants have acted.

1 - Attack: Characters may attack on heir imitative by roll 1d20. If the score is *under* your opponent **DC** + your own **LVL**, it's a hit.

2 - Damage: On a Hit roll the damage dice (**D**) and reduce the opponents **HP** by the result. Should **HP** is reduced to 0 or below the opponent is rendered unconscious and the attacker may give them 1 **W**. Unconscious victims are often taken as Sacrifices.

3 - Morale: If a Spawn's is outnumbered and **HP** is less than their **LVL** X 2 they must check for morale. The DM rolls 1d10, if the result is higher than the spawn's **LVL** they will attempt to escape. PC's may attempt to escape willingly at this step. If there are any combatants left at the end of this step repeat steps 1-3..

Adventure

1 - Stealth & stunts: Actions such as swimming, climbing a rope, or sneaking past a spawn are hindered by armor. To preform such actions roll 1D20 under the character's AC +LVL. The DM add modifiers to the number needed before the dice is rolled to reflect difficulty.

2 - Dangers: Hazards and traps add 1 to 4 **W** to characters, and may normally be avoided by succeeding at a stunt.

3 - Witch Craft: Whenever a Character gains a level they may learn a Ritual. Most rituals are self descriptive, and usually summon, bind, banish, or contact a particular type of spawn. All Rituals require form of sacrifice, and have a duration of one day. Starting characters know no rituals.

3 - Lore: PC's starts at initiate Level one. When ever a Spawn is defeated in combat, or studied (without being seen) a number of **Lore Points (LP)** equal to the spawn's Level X 100 is split amongst the party. If a character's **LP** exceeds their current **LVL** X 2500 they gain a level (increasing their **SV**, and learning a New ritual, and possibly their **AT**.)

4) Artifacts: Alien and arcane technology can be found within the caverns. A Save is required to discover a Relic's workings. Examples A cylinder that allows brains to survive indefinitely with out the body, and gives telepathic abilities to it's occupant.

Creating Spawn

Spawn are treated as normal characters

1 - Level (LVL): Spawn may start at any level

2) Roll Stats: Roll 2D4 to determine the Spawn's **DC**, and 2D6 for their **MV**. You may add or subtract one from any of these rolls for every three levels the spawn has. A Spawns **D** is 1D8.

5 - Name and Describe the Character: Roll 3d4 to determine the number of letters in a spawn's name. Roll 1D4 per letter. On a result of 1 to 3 roll 1D20 on the consonant table (**CT**). On a 4 roll 1D8 roll on the vowel table. Descriptions should always invoke disgust or horror.

6 - Powers (PW): Roll 1D20 if the result is under the **LVL** of the spawn roll on the power table and repeat this step

#	CT	Power
1	B	Movement ; Can Fly, Swim, or burrow at it's full MV
2	D	Frightful Aura: Opponents must check for moral each round
3	F	Slick Ooze: Lowers AC and MV by one
4	G	Pseudopod: On a successful hit, the Spawn may hold an opponent (Roll under AC to escape)
5	H	Poison: When hit an opponent must save or be reduced to 0 HP
6	J	Madness: When first encountered an opponent must save or go mad
7	K	Paralysis: When hit an opponent must save or be unable to act for a # of rounds = spawn's LVL
8	L	Possess: When hit an opponent must save or have mind taken over by the Spawn for # of rounds = Spawn's level
9	P	Blood Drain: After a hit an opponent must Save or Spawn can automatically Hit on the next round of combat
10	Q	Summon: Each round the spawn summons a LVL one spawn into combat
11	R	Ethereal: Does not take damage except from artifacts and rituals
12	S	Regeneration: gains 1 HP per level per round (max 8 X LVL)
13	ST	Acidic/ Quills: When hit by an opponent, that opponent takes Damage = to spawn's LVL
14	TH	Explode: When reduced to 0HP dies dealing damage = to LVL to all with in 3 meters
15	V	Bulbous: Rolls D12 for HD
16	X	Armored: AC -1
17	Y	Skitter: + 3 MV, and initiative
18	Z	Wicked: Add LVL to all Damage dealt
19	'	Devour: Can consume an opponent at 0HP to gain 1d8 HP per LVL
20	'	Relic: Uses an Artifact in Combat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	E	I	O	U	Y	'	'

Sample Spawn

Ghul: Dog Faced Humanoids with rubbery skin. (AC9 MV 12, **LVL** 4 # AT 2, D 1d8, PW 15)

Grogard's Grimoire

illusion magic from Eric Minton

The following spells broaden the portfolio of practitioners of illusory magics. For games that do not use an illusionist sub-class, treat them as ordinary mage spells. For games that employ a dedicated illusionist sub-class, you may add them directly to the illusionist's spell list – perhaps, in some cases, at one level lower – while adding only a few appropriate ones to the magic-user's spell list.

Legerdemain (Level 1, Range 0): An object worn or held by the caster becomes invisible, as per the invisibility spell. Simply touching the item is not enough; the caster must support its weight while casting the spell. When the caster is no longer in physical contact with the affected item, the item becomes visible and the spell ends.

Mirror Mask (Level 1, Range 60', Duration 1-6 turns): This spell cloaks the caster with an illusion that perfectly mimics the voice and appearance of a chosen target. The target must be humanoid in shape, no smaller than a kobold and no larger than an ogre, and must be within the spell's range and the caster's line of sight. Clothing and equipment likewise change appearance to match the target's gear, but this effect only applies while they remain in the caster's possession.

Secret Speech (Level 1, Range 60', Duration 6 turns): This spell empowers its targets to employ a magical language incomprehensible to unwanted listeners. Up to a dozen creatures, all of whom must be within 60' when the spell is cast, will speak and understand the secret speech perfectly (in addition to their other known languages). All others will hear only gibberish. Multiple castings of secret speech use the same language and are mutually intelligible. Spells and magical effects that translate mundane languages are effective at translating secret speech.

Shadow Semblance (Level 1, Range 0, Duration 6 turns): The caster takes on the appearance of a living shadow, like the creature of the same name. This effectively disguises the caster's identity from visual observation. In addition, the caster may hide in shadows as a thief of the same level.

Deathveil (Level 2, Range 0, Duration 12 turns): The target of this spell takes on the semblance of a corpse. The illusion affects all senses, so that the target's flesh looks, feels and smells rotten and is cold to the touch. This is useful for feigning death or imitating a zombie or other corporeal undead. The deathveil also conceals the target's life force from detection; sensory spells that detect living creatures will not spot the target, nor will the undead have any special way to recognize that the target is alive.

Doppelgang (Level 2, Range 240', Duration 4-24 turns): This spell functions as mirror mask, but it disguises a number of recipients up to the level of the caster. The caster need not be among those affected. Unwilling recipients may avoid being disguised with a successful saving throw.

Omen (Level 2): This spell creates the illusion (within sight of the caster) of something regarded as very ominous bad luck by those perceiving it (a red meteor, the face of a dead loved one in the mirror, etc.) If superstitions vary among the Omen's observers, it will be the most effective illusion overall for the group. Assuming it is not detected, roleplaying determines the Omen's consequences.

Phantasmagorical Blade (Level 2, Range 0, Duration 1 turn): An illusory weapon appears in the caster's hands. This weapon moves with uncanny swiftness, twisting like a serpent to strike past even the most masterful defense. The caster does not make an attack roll when wielding the phantasmagorical blade. Instead, the target must save vs. spells. On a failed save, the target suffers 2d6 damage. This is not real damage; those "killed" by the weapon fall unconscious rather than dying. These effects wear off in 1d4 turns.

Conceal Portal (Level 3, Range 10', Permanent): This spell camouflages a closed door or gate, a shuttered window or some other sealed portal. The enspelled portal disappears, leaving a seemingly unbroken surface. The portal remains visible to the caster and to characters with the ability to detect illusions. Magic-using characters 3 or more levels above the caster may see through the illusion if they save vs. spells. The portal is invisible to all other creatures; it is undetectable by all senses, even touch. Characters that perceive the door may open it; it also opens if a knock spell is aimed at its general location. Opening the portal restores it to visibility until it is closed again.

Deathveil 10' Radius (Level 3, Range 120', Duration 24 turns): This spell drapes an illusion of death over all living creatures within a 10' radius at the time of casting. It otherwise functions exactly as deathveil, except that the illusion drops away from any affected creature that moves farther than 10' from the target of the spell.

Hallucinatory Army (Level 4, Range 240'): This spell conjures up the illusion of a military force whose numbers do not exceed (caster level x 100). The entire army must lie within the range of the spell. The army's phantasmal soldiers move and act convincingly, staging patrols and lighting campfires and so forth, but these are programmed activities that are decided upon when the spell is cast; the soldiers do not react to outside events. The spell lasts until any part of the army or its accouterments is touched by an intelligent creature. Ω

Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments

homunculons by R. D. Reed and rayguns by Lee Barber

Recycling Human Heads Into Magic Items: Centuries ago it was common, even fashionable, for magicians to recycle unused or unneeded brains into handy little fellows known variously as “*chi-chi friends*”, “*scholars’ helpers*”, or “*homunculons*”. These homunculons, as we will call them, typically consist of a human head with a few extra appendages or features added – fingers, eyes, ears, toes, etc. One can realize a great deal of pleasure and utility from owning and caring for a homunculon. One of these little guys can truly be a magician’s best friend!

Care and feeding of homunculons is fairly simple. Because they can go into a hibernation-like torpor between moments of activity, they do not require much in the way of food or drink. After each use, just make sure your homunculon gets a bite or two of grub and a sip of something to wet its tongue. A dormant homunculon can sit for centuries between uses. Be sure to keep your homunculon clean! Because they lack gastrointestinal tracts, they tend to relieve themselves rather quickly after meals. They have little buttocks at their napes, you see. Some homunculons may tend to have strong appetites, which can lead to a bit of a mess. There are six main types of homunculons (d6):

1. **Reciter:** Can read, memorize, and verbally recite up to 50,000 words of normal text.
2. **Transcriber:** Always in the form of a hand/head fusion. Can read, memorize, and transcribe up to 50,000 words of normal text.
3. **Reader:** Can read and verbally translate normal text. Knows 2d6 languages.
4. **Translator:** Can verbally translate up to 2d6 spoken languages.
5. **Reminder:** Once per day can read and memorize a single mage spell of level 1-3 and “remind”, or recharge, a mage’s memory of that spell. This assumes the mage has the ability and a memory slot available, either through having recently cast a spell or by not having previously filled the memory slot for that day.
6. **Analyzer:** Once per week can observe a spell being cast and has chance of learning the spell, which it can then transcribe into writing. Analyzers always have a hand and/or several fingers attached to aid in transcription. To learn a spell, the Analyzer must be able to clearly see and hear the spell being cast from no more than 15’ away. To determine if the attempted spell learning is successful you must roll the spell’s level or higher on a 1d4 (for example, for the homunculon to learn a 3rd level spell you must roll a 3 or 4 on a 1d4). Some rare

and valuable Analyzers, fashioned from the brains of once-powerful magicians, can roll 1d6 or even 1d8 for this purpose.

Extra Characteristics (1d6 twice):

1	1d8 extra fingers
2	1d4 extra eyes
3	1d4 extra ears
4	1d4 toes
5	Head attached to a foot
6	Head attached to a hand (required for Transcribers and Analyzers)

Size: 2d4 pounds

Intelligence Level (1d4):

1	Animal
2	Toddler
3	Average
4	Genius



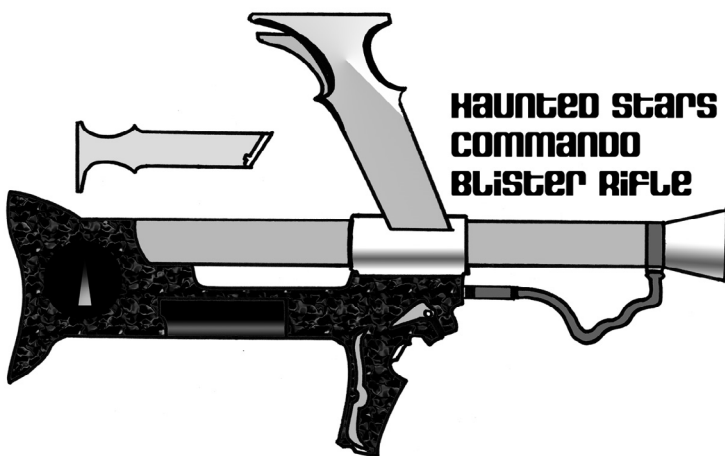
Distinguishing Trait (1d20):

1	Giggly	11	Hiccups/farts/burps
2	Surly	12	Overly hirsute
3	Enthusiastically helpful	13	A beautiful face
4	Snobby	14	Desires fine clothing
5	Poetic	15	Dope addict
6	Manic-depressive	16	Amorous
7	Codependent	17	Loves fine wine
8	Cowardly	18	Awesome moustache
9	Pretentious	19	Charming personality
10	Likes to sing	20	Only a child

Elegant Weapons for a Mutated Age: File that generic code off your blaster – introduce these weapons into your *Mutant Future* or Space Opera and have heroes with style!

TAMIYO “Super Heater” Laser Weapon Kit: This device shipped from its factory unassembled and was available in a myriad of housing colors. The kit swiftly became the customizer’s favorite, as it could use any grip or common coupling. Super Heaters were often seen mounted on gauntlets, helmets, robots, and vehicles. The weapon’s unique feature was a goblet-like front bell that slipped over the inner barrel. Inside the clear plastic were 4 common energy capacitors, providing a total of twelve full firings before requiring replacement. Clearly, this format had a combat advantage over slimmer, ten shot laser pistols. However, due to the widespread use of low grade capacitors, the damage inflicted by these guns is only 4d6. Unless discovered in an original box, a TAMIYO laser will have a random d6 modification:

1	Weapon was assembled poorly and has a 50% chance of failing to fire when used.
2	Features a 20 th century revolver grip with inlays.
3	Weapon features a crude plastic carbine stock and electronic scope.
4	Weapon features a refined muzzle focuser that boosts damage by +2 at ranges less than 100 ft.
5	Weapon features a self-destruct setting.
6	Rebuilt to use five capacitors for a total of 15 shots.



Hubley Atomic Disintegrator: Noticeably oversized and heavy, this shielded metal pistol was meant for use by soldiers encased in armor. The Hubley can only be powered by cable connection at the back of the block; no clips can be used with this weapon. Once energized, a large dial displays remaining pack power. Popular among rim world and moon base mercenaries, the gun was affectionately called the "Sparkler", since everything from dust to hostile aliens would be blasted into incandescent plasma by the invisible beam. A hit with the radiation ray deals 5d8 damage. Attempts to fire the Hubley without exoskeletal stabilization or low gravity will incur a targeting penalty (penalty does not apply to wielders that are larger than man sized). No stock of this weapon remains planet-side, they can only be found on interstellar bases or in the wrecked hulls of ships.

Commando Blister Rifle: These rare rifles were carried into combat by Commandos from the Haunted Stars. Sporting what resemble jet fins, this mixed energy spectrum weapon inflicts 7d6 damage per shot. The rifle’s “wings” function as heat sinks, and can be detached from the assembly to scorch melee opponents like a fire poker (1d6 damage). The cybernetic fighters from that malevolent quadrant of space would fight to the death, attacking with the pair of molten bars once their rifles emptied. After terrorizing multiple planets, the Commando’s space station was obliterated by iron asteroids catapulted from a huge rail gun. Blueprints for the Blister Rifle have recently appeared on the galactic black market, and could be utilized at any production facility familiar with spectrum beamers. Ω

