

# The Gongfarmer's Almanac



# **The 2019 Gongfarmer's Almanac:**

## **A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine**

**Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by  
the DCC RPG Communities**



### **THIRD PARTY SPECIAL (BRONX BEASTS AND TRENCH CRAWL CLASSICS) VOLUME 7 OF FOURTEEN BOOKLETS**

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# THE HANDOFF

ZERO-LEVEL FUNNEL FOR **Bronx Beasts**

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Learn more at [dansteeby.com/bronx-beasts/](http://dansteeby.com/bronx-beasts/)



“The Handoff” is intended as an introduction to the Bronx Beasts rules and campaign setting. Each player should make enough characters to have a group of 12 or so PCs (hereafter referred to as “Beasts”) using the character generation rules found in Bronx Beasts Volume 1, the Manimal rules found in Mutant Crawl Classics, or appropriate bestial homebrew rules of your choice. Bronx Beasts uses Fleeting Luck rules, and free quickstart rules can be found at <http://dansteeby.com/bronx-beasts/>. Vehicle chases are likely in this adventure and can be resolved using rules from Jason Snodgrass’ Vehicular Mayhem, Reid San Fillipo’s Umerican Survival Guide, or homebrewed rules as you see fit. A New York City street map is very useful for this and other Bronx Beasts adventures.

## SIZE RULES

One aspect of Bronx Beasts is the vastly different sizes a Beast can be, from a mere pound or two up to a few tons! Bronx Beasts uses five basic sizes, which is best determined by the Beast’s weight in gameplay mechanics. This adventure doesn’t require a full knowledge of these rules, but it does make basic use of these sizes in some of the situations in the adventure, so they are included in brief here:

Size	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge
Typical weight in lbs.	< 12	13-80	80-350	350-1000	> 1000

This adventure is designed to be a “chase” adventure in which the Beasts escape from a botched handoff between two shadowy entities and flee across the city, pursued by both their creators and their would-be new masters. The adventure works well with about 12 Beasts in play, and players can double or triple up on Beasts they are playing to attain this number.

Read the following introductory text to the players: “Each of your Beasts have memories of what seems like about a month of horrifying medical tests and experiments with no other prior memories to work from. You all know each other from the communal horrors you have each endured, and desperate bonds

have been made between miserable lab experiments. An oath has been made to escape this torture together.”

“A cruel and bizarre biotech engineer referred to as ‘Nurse Pang’ by her victims and assistants, has overseen your agony with detached precision, and is the focus of terror within your shallow lives. Her cruel knife and reptilian gaze has haunted your brief memories and nightmares, and she is quick to employ her narcotic and hallucinogenic poisons. Her orderlies revel in their rough treatment of their experimental charges, and particularly clever monitor lizards act as guards in her facilities, and seem able to understand verbal commands given by Pang.”

“Today, you have all been saved from the monotony and horrors of medical testing for some new and unknown doom: you were each tranquilized, crated, and secured in the back of a windowless van. You regained consciousness to hear muffled sounds of traffic and a city, but have not had an opportunity to see outside until now. Jangling chords occasionally echo from far away, with halting stops and starts of the current hits by Fleetwood Mac. The van has come to a stop, and the back door has opened to reveal Nurse Pang, some of her orderlies, and a full two dozen of her monitor lizard minions.”

Not long after, two matte black 4x4 Toyota Vans arrive, and a group of about 20 ninjas pours out to form an orderly line of menace, facing Nurse Pang and her reptiles. A massive ninja who is clearly in command of the others steps forward and formally introduces herself as Himeda Kanako to Nurse Pang, then peers into the van at the Beasts, surveying them like so much cannon fodder. The two groups begin discussing the exchange of the Beasts within earshot.

Next to arrive is a yellow Honda CRX filled with other Beasts that the PCs have never seen before, followed by a grizzly bear on a red Suzuki Katana. Both ninja and reptile parties are clearly surprised by these newcomers, and they scramble for cover as they are pelted with molotov cocktails and bullets from the windows of the car, scattering both ninja and reptiles alike. In the chaos, the bear guns the motorcycle up to the back of the van, screeches to a halt in a well-executed power slide, and clambers into the back of the van with a loud grunt.



The grizzly hastily introduces herself as the captain of the “Bronx Chapter of the Unique Animals Club” as she rips the doors from their hinges of all the cages except for ones housing Large- or Huge-sized beasts. She then announces them liberated, flings sheets of “Unique Animal Club” stickers into the back of the van, and instructs them to follow the stickers to safety before leaping back out of the van and tearing off on her motorcycle. The CRX likewise speeds away after tossing a smoke bomb near the back of the van, covering the PC’s actions for 1 round.

The Beasts are still groggy, disoriented, and suffering from mild hallucinations as a side effect of the drugs used to transport them. Also, they now face immediate overwhelming odds between the small army of ninjas, the swarming monitor lizards, and these groups’ leaders. Hopefully this will be enough to convince them to flee rather than directly assault both factions. The Beasts have one round of cover from the smoke grenade, then one round of surprise to act before the two factions recover from the assault and move to secure them. The Beasts are valuable to both parties, so orders are given not to kill, but it is not clear whether the monitor lizards are capable of understanding such instructions.

Any Beasts still caged can attempt to break free or pick the locks on the cages, or other Beasts may assist to free them. Cages holding Huge or Large Beasts can be struck without an attack roll needed (they won’t dodge) and have the following stats:

**Large Cage:** HP 5, Damage Resistance 3

**Huge Cage:** HP 10, Damage Resistance 5

The relatively simple locks can be picked with a DC 10 Intelligence check, rolling on a d10 if attempting to do this with no tools, or a d14 if using crude tools to pick the lock (paperclips, twigs, etc.) Beasts can make a Luck check to find something laying in the back of the van for this purpose as long as they think to look for it. Finally, Tiny Beasts may pick the locks with a d16 by sticking their entire forepaws/forearms into the lock mechanism, but must make a DC 12 Ref save to avoid getting their appendage painfully pinched in the lock mechanism for 1 point of damage.

As the larger beasts escape from their cages over the next couple of rounds, the rest of the party can act to assist the larger Beasts in their attempts to escape, scavenge the back of the van for useful items, or make their way out of the van and into the smoke and chaos. There is a small window between the back and the front of the van that can be used by Small or Tiny beasts to enter the cab of the truck from the back; otherwise the only way out is through the currently open back doors. Beasts attempting to use the small window can make a Luck check to find the window unlocked. If it is locked, it can be broken with 2 points of damage. A driver is in the parked vehicle's cab, and is surprised by any entry into the cab unless the window is broken first. He will attempt to escape as soon as he is overwhelmed (leaving the keys in the ignition), but will stand his ground against a single Small or Tiny Beast that enters the cab.

If the Beasts get a clear view of their immediate surroundings, they find themselves in the parking lot of a park in the dead of night. Water lies to the north and east, and a large stadium can be seen about a half mile to the south, which also seems to be the source of the halting music echoing across the park. A large raised highway runs north to south nearby, with an interchange going across the water to the east. The single road out of the parking lot runs toward a ramp onto this highway. City lights can be seen in virtually every direction except for east, which leads further into the park, with skyscrapers rising into the distance to the southwest.

The Beasts are in a park on the northwest side of Randall's Island, near the Harlem River. They can flee in virtually any direction of the compass, and it is your job as the Judge to give them a wild chase while the bio-tech firm and the ninja clan give pursuit. Some players will choose to stand their ground in the park and fight, but be sure to make it clear that they are unarmed and outnumbered 4 to 1. As the casualties mount, give the Beasts a chance to change their minds and escape with a few of their number intact to complete the adventure. If a player loses all their Beasts, it's suggested that any other players at the table who have not lost any of their Beasts give one over to the player to continue on in the game. If the Beasts do manage to overcome all their antagonists in a fiery blaze of carnage right there in the park, the rest of the adventure can proceed as planned, just at a more leisurely pace as the Beasts will not be chased as they make their way across the city. Make use of those

random encounters to fill out the remainder of your session!

At this point, the adventure becomes a free-for-all, and it may behoove the Judge to remind the players of their Beasts' desperate oaths to escape together and the provided sheet of stickers to keep the party together.

The sheets of stickers have cute animals cut out of a background image showing a stylized city map with a dotted line drawn from Randall Island to a subway station near the Bronx Zoo, further instructions to go to the right down the subway tube and look for the marker, and a sketch of what looks to be an angry rabbit circled next to the instructions.

From this point, players will probably choose to get into a vehicle and follow the map toward the Bronx Zoo, but if they do not do this, let the players run loose through the city in whatever direction they choose to go. See if they eventually decide to follow the map after a couple of random encounters and further pursuit by the antagonists, but if they don't, think of a probable "safe house" for the Beasts in their current location as you get toward the end of the session and want to wind the adventure to an end. Or TPK them.

If the Beasts head south, Icahn Stadium is the nearest large structure. There are no events at the stadium tonight, but roadies and security are on scene as Fleetwood Mac is setting up for a concert at the stadium the following night. Should the Beasts make their way to the stadium, they will encounter rabid fans, surly roadies and stadium security, and may even meet the members of Fleetwood Mac during a moment of crisis. The band is currently in turmoil as guitarist Lindsey Buckingham has just left the band and they are struggling to bring their new guitarists up to speed while also dealing with intra-band relationship and substance abuse issues. Tracks from the album "Tango in the Night" are heavily encouraged. The highway continues south past the stadium and across the East River into Astoria.

If the Beasts head west, either by simply swimming across the Harlem River or by getting on the highway and taking the interchange, they will find themselves in Harlem.

If the Beasts head east, they will make their way across the park to several baseball fields before coming to the edge of the island. Minor league and little league practice is going on at several of these fields, and the area is well lit and well manicured.

If the Beasts head north, they will make their way across the Bronx Kill (river) and into the Bronx, and they can continue to navigate along the highway toward the Bronx Zoo, but heavy pressure should be put on them to encourage taking some side streets to keep the adventure from being a straight shot. Both groups of antagonists will easily pursue the Beasts if they stick to the highways, however they can shake one or the other on the side streets, allowing the Beasts to avoid getting swarmed quite so badly.

Don't expect the Beasts to drive! Some players may choose to make this adventure a street crawl, which encourages all sorts of random encounters as they plod through town, block by block. Spectacular vehicular crashes can also turn what was a cruise down the highway into street crawl as well, changing the pace of the adventure.

If the Beasts succeed at following the map to the "Safe House," they will arrive at a subway station at the south end of the Bronx Zoo, where they can enter a subway station and head to the right down the tunnel. About ¼ mile in, they find the image of the angry rabbit spray painted near a storm drain in the tunnel, which when explored opens into a sealed and unused subway station that appears to have



been built in the 1920s. This is now the lair of the “Bronx Chapter of the Unique Animals Club,” and the Beasts have reached the end of the adventure. Be sure to harry them with ninjas and reptiles, and throw a few random encounters at them before they get here!

## THE ANTAGONISTS



### TAKAHATA NINJA CLAN

Takahata is a quintessential ninja clan, complete with hundreds of years of history in Japan, and a now global criminal syndicate with its hands deep into the criminal underworld and assassination-for-hire circuit. The clan has recently come to an arrangement with

CelGen Biolabs to obtain mutant animals for a number of tasks, including suicide missions, housekeeping, and target practice.

The Clan's ranks are filled with fanatically loyal men and women who do their best to assume the role of faceless, mysterious ninjas in their service to the Clan. Every ninja other than their leader should be treated as generic, unless the Beasts wind up in some sort of social interaction with one of them rather than bloody combat. Once the Beasts have escaped, they will try to use non-lethal means to recover the Beasts, employing ropes, sasumatas, and clubs toward those ends, and relying on their katanas as a last resort if their lives are threatened.

**Ninja**: Init +1; Atk rope +1 melee (entangles, can choke on next action), sasumatas +1 melee (1d3 damage OR knock prone and entangle), or katana +1 melee (1d6 damage); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; Equipment: smoke bombs, climbing claws, rope and grappling hook; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0.

Climbing claws assist with climbing (+1d to any climbing rolls) and do 1d4 damage if used in combat. Smoke bombs cover a 10' space with thick smoke for 1d3 rounds, obscuring those within it.

Himeda Kanako leads the ninjas present tonight, and has achieved her status by tooth and nail in spite of the political pressures, family affiliations, and gender issues at play within the Clan. She is large for a Japanese woman and powerfully built, having used powerlifting and bodybuilding as outlets for her anger management issues, which has further bolstered her impressive physique. Her black hair is cropped short, and she has a rectangular black tattoo across her eyes, allowing her to hide even her skin color when garbed in her ninja gear. She has a short temper and can be easily goaded into a lethal rage, at which point she will ignore orders to capture the escaped Beasts unharmed and will instead go on a frenzied killing spree. The Judge should keep track of any slights a Beast has made against her, including any insults or successful attacks made against her, foiling her ninja henchmen in her presence, or other incidents as the Judge warrants. Be sure to play up Himeda's anger response to these, and reward players who pick up on it and intentionally provoke her with Fleeting Luck-- a rewarding but potentially deadly strategy.

**Himeda Kanako**: Init +3; Atk +3 melee manriki-kusari (chain) (1d4+2 damage or entangle, 10' reach) or Otsuchi (warhammer) (1d8+2 damage) or shuriken +2 ranged (1d4 damage); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP Utsusemi no Jutsu (vanishing), Hijutsu (leaping), Kakuremi no Jutsu (hiding); Equipment: smoke bombs, rope, climbing claws; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2.

Utsusemi no Jutsu (vanishing) - Himeda can hold her action and then “vanish” when attacked in a puff of smoke, replacing herself with some other nearby thing (a medium-sized animal, person, or person-sized object) in the process, and the attack is made against that target instead. Nearby Beasts are fair game. This can be done once per encounter.

Kakuremi no Jutsu (hiding) - Himeda hides and spots hidden with a d30 rather than d20.

Hijutsu (leaping) - Himeda can leap 10' up and 20' across with a running jump.

## **CELGEN BIOLABS**

CelGen Biolabs is an amoral corporate conglomerate possessing the trade secrets of creating mutant animals. This scientific leap has been funded by shadowy interests including the Takahata Ninja Clan, who are in partnership with CelGen and receives mutant animals as payment for their protection. The CelGen faction in this adventure includes a few orderlies, which are human assistants, around 20 semi-intelligent 6' long monitor lizards, and Nurse Pang herself.

Nurse Pang, as she insists her patients call her, is a Chinese-American in the employ of CelGen Biotech as a genetics expert within an off-the-books biotech project working in tandem with the Takahata Ninja Clan. She has undergone extensive genetic mutations, some accidental and some of her own design, enhancing herself after the fashion of the reptiles that she studies.

To this end, Pang's hair hangs limply around her palid, green-tinted features. Her left eye is an unsettling orange and reptilian



in appearance, including the eyelid and skin immediately around it. Her left arm is covered in fine green scales up to the elbow, and her digits on that hand are padded with setae, allowing it to stick to shear surfaces, and small but sharp claws.

Pang hides her unusual appearance with long black gloves and sunglasses when in public, and is otherwise usually in medical

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attire typical to her position within CelGen. She relies on a custom-developed nebulizer gun as her primary weapon, and relies on trained monitor lizards rather than human lackies for protection.

**Nurse Pang:** Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d4) or Nebulizer Gun +2 ranged; AC 13; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20 + 1d14; SP chameleon skin, frog tongue, limb dropping, nebulizer gun, beast stims; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2.

Chameleon skin - Nurse Pang can change her skin color. This takes one round to accomplish and adds 2 die shifts to any hiding/sneaking attempts while the camouflage continues to be useful.

Alternately, attempts to spot Pang when she is camouflaged are done at -2 die shifts while she is camouflaged and not moving.

Frog tongue - Nurse Pang has a sticky, prehensile tongue that she can use to strike and grab small items within a 10' radius.

Limb dropping - Nurse Pang can drop a limb if she chooses to. This costs her 1 hp, and the dropped limb will regrow in 1d3 weeks. The dropped limb writhes unnaturally on the floor for 1d3 turns after it has dropped, then dissolves into a foul pile of black muck within minutes of cessation.

Nebulizer gun - This custom weapon delivers mentally and physically devastating toxins to targets, either by filling a nearby area with a mist of toxins directed in a cone with a 20' range, or by firing toxins in pellets that burst upon contact at range of 20'/40'/60' into a cloud roughly 10' in diameter. The following toxins and their effects are available:

1. Phobia - Will save vs. 13 or develop a phobia toward a current stimulus for 1 turn.
2. Hallucination - Will save vs. 13 or see and/or hearing things that are not there, disturbing the victim's perception of the current situation for 1 turn.
3. Rage - Will save vs. 13 or fly into a sudden rage and attack anything nearby for 1d3 rounds.
4. Catatonia - Will save vs. 13 or do nothing but rock gently and mumble to yourself for 1 turn.
5. Stat reduction - (No save available) Temporarily reduce one randomly determined physical attribute by 1d6. This loss recovers at a normal rate.
6. Blindness - Fort save vs. 13 or victim is completely blinded for 1 turn.
7. Pepper spray - Fort save or be repelled from affected area.

Actions are at -4 die shifts while affected by pepper spray, and actions are at -2 die shifts on the next round after leaving an affected area. If egress is not possible, the victim is reduced to a snotty, grovelling, mewling mess and is effectively helpless until removed from the affected area and given 1d3 turns to recover.

8. Mustard gas - The kid gloves are off now! 1d6 damage, ignoring armor unless it is airtight.

Finally, the nebulizer gun has a biometric recognition feature attuned to Nurse Pang. It will not fire if operated by someone else, and will enter a self-destruct sequence on a failed Luck check. This may be bypassed with a DC 17 science/disable traps check, or by cleverly using one of Nurse Pang's dropped limbs.

The orderlies will try their best to stay out of the way of combat and will only willingly engage the Beasts if they look like they have overwhelming odds or if Nurse Pang is directly pressuring them to do so. The lizards don't seem to listen to anyone other than Nurse Pang, but when she commands them they respond with an uncanny appearance of comprehension. They do not speak or otherwise show signs of intelligence beyond listening to Pang and working together to carry out orders, and it should be left as a mystery as to how smart these lizards really are.

**Orderly:** Init +0; Atk punch (1d3) or butterfly net (entangle); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0.

**Monitor Lizard:** Init +1; Atk claw or bite +2 melee (1d5); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0.

Should the adventure quickly turn toward a car chase, the lizards are not out of the running yet! Transportation is available nearby and can be summoned by Pang to the location if the Beasts take flight in the form of Rpto-cycles, which are essentially monitor lizards that have been altered into living motorcycles, large enough for other monitor lizards to ride on them. Each Rpto-cycle can comfortably fit one lizard rider and can steer itself without a driver. Their front and rear legs are encased in metal fittings that act as the vehicle's frame, and a pad on their back provides a grip for their rider lizards to hold onto.

**Rapto-cycle**: Init +1; Atk bite +2 melee (1d5); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 8 each; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0.

Random Tables

## **RANDOM PEOPLE ENCOUNTERS**

1. Breakin' crew poppin' and lockin', complete with cardboard
2. Old lady on the stoop, sees everything on her block, knows everyone in the hood
3. Homeless old man full of wine and conspiracy theories
4. Tagging crew working the alleys
5. Local gang policing their turf
6. Socially conscious rappers working on their flow and their know
7. Homeless kids, next-gens of the local turf's gang
8. Punk Rockers / New Wavers fresh out of a show, sweaty and screaming, and apparently not done slam dancing for the night
9. Glam Metal Rockers straight out of the night's Ratt and Bon Jovi concert
10. Late night joggers / Dog Walkers, because 2 AM is the only time of day that Puddles can handle the social pressures
11. Animal Control with poor vision, will automatically assume any Beast he sees is a feral animal to be caught
12. Dope dealer pushing crack and low-grade ditch weed smuggled in from Mexico
13. Car thief / Cat burglar, come upon in the middle of their act
14. Vietnam vets panhandling and garrulously railing against society and "The Man" to any willing to listen
15. Soviet terrorists, trying desperately to pass as a sleeper cell
16. Roll twice and the two results are currently engaged in conflict with each other as the Beasts come upon them

## **RANDOM NYC STOREFRONTS**

- |                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Army Navy Surplus  | 11. Bookstore                 |
| 2. Gun Shop           | 12. Radio Shack / Tandy Corp. |
| 3. Pawn Shop          | 13. 7-11                      |
| 4. Liquor Store       | 14. Pet Shop                  |
| 5. Clothing Boutique  | 15. Bar                       |
| 6. Porn Shop          | 16. Laundromat                |
| 7. Video Rental Store | 17. Bowling Alley             |
| 8. Restaurant         | 18. Video Arcade              |
| 9. Bank               | 19. Toy Store                 |
| 10. Record Store      | 20. Walk-in Clinic            |

# Wrath of a Dead God

## A 0-level Funnel for World War One using the DCC Rules (and Trench Crawl Classics from 2018 GFA)

by Eric Betts

Artwork by Danny P

On the night of 19–20 January 1915, two German zeppelins (the L3 and L4) targeted Humberside, UK but were diverted by strong winds, and dropped their bombs on Great Yarmouth, Sheringham, King's Lynn and the surrounding villages. Four people were killed and 16 injured. The raid represented the first of many strategic bombing raids that England would suffer over the next 30 years. The two zeppelins were lost within a month to violent storms while patrolling the North Sea.

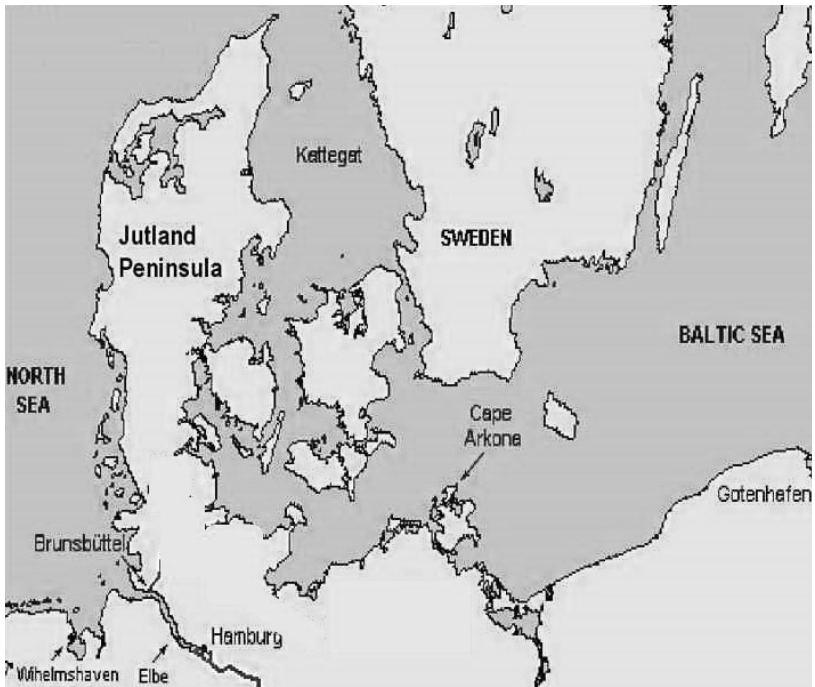
**That was the official story.**

**GM Summary/The Real Story:** During the bombing raid, one of the bombs struck an undiscovered burial mound of the last High Priest of Taranis, the Cyclopean Celtic God of Storms. Resurrected by both the sacrificed dead (bombing victims) and enraged at the desecration of his last holy site, the newly resurrected Taranis follows the zeppelins, still too feeble to accomplish much, but slowly gathering power and making unholy pacts.

Taranis's chance comes when the next patrol of the both the L3 and L4 takes them over the North Sea looking for British ships to bomb. The North Sea is known for its terrible storms, and all Taranis needs is to give a little nudge...and to send some elemental minions and he will have his revenge.

The adventure begins with a black lightning storm separating the two zeppelins. In poor weather the zeppelins are to make for the nearest land (in this case Jutland, see Map 1: L4 Operations Area). With the two zeppelins separated, this adventure concentrates on L4 and its crews struggle to survive; the storm (get to land), the storm elementals (harpies) that Taranis sends, and the resurrected dead

## Map 1: L4 Operations Area



crewmembers now serving Taranis. Taranis' goal is to kill the crew and destroy the L4.

There are 16 crewmembers on the L4 (See Zeppelin Crewmen section). I recommend that each player have at least one of the “officer” characters (Commander, Wireless Operator, Engineer, Pilot, Navigator and Engineer) and a mix of Machinists and Rudder Operators, with a player's characters distributed in the ship locations (Crow's Nest, Pilot and Engineer Gondolas). This will keep the player engaged as the action moves between locations.

**Atmosphere:** Survival Horror. Emphasize the storm; lashing rain, lightening, gusting wind pushing the aluminum covered airship around. Keep reminding the players that their characters are in the open (cupolas or the Nest on top of the zeppelin) or in the incredibly closed space of the crawlway, or in the vast openness of the frame. Feel free that if the players begin to feel complacent to call for a Reflex save to avoid being knocked over in the rain and wind, and a Luck save to keep a character from falling to the angry black sea



below (unless they have an attached Monkey Tail.

Oh, and NO PARACHUTES were issued to Zeppelin crews.

Background/Character Creation: Zeppelin crews were a military elite. All had to be highly skilled, exceptionally fit and resilient, and possessed of great courage and steady nerves. Half were machinists who worked and maintained the engines. They would be on duty for up to 24 hours in a confined space filled with ear-splitting noise and noxious fumes. Many routinely developed splitting headaches.

The commander, the navigator, and the operators of rudders, elevators, and wireless were stationed in the forward control gondola. Here, as well as noise, there was bitter cold, with temperatures sometimes sinking as low as -25°. Clothing included wool underwear, naval uniform, leather overalls, fur overcoats, leather helmets, gloves of leather and wool, boots covered by large felt overshoes, and scarves and goggles (aka Z-uniform). Bread, sausage, stew, chocolate, and strong coffee provided sustenance. When moving around on and in the L4 the men have a Monkey Tail Harness – a harness and an attachment strap that can hook to available wires and rings in case they slip.

One or two men would also be stationed on top of the airship, occupying a combined observation and machine-gun post call The Crow's Nest, standing fully exposed to the bitter draft as their vessel cruised the upper skies.

## Special 0-Level Characters: Zeppelin Crewmen

Abilities: Roll 4d6 take the high three

Hit Points: 1d4, reroll 1s

Occupation (number allowed) – equipment, weapon; extra ability modifiers (Rank) {Special}

**Note:** Rank indicates who is “in charge” and generally, age.

**Commander (1)** – binoculars, Mauser “Broomhandle”: pistol (1d10), 3 magazines/clips of 20 bullets each (one action dice to reload), Z-Uniform (AC+3); +2 Personality, +1 Intelligence (Naval Rank: Commander) {Special: In charge of the Zeppelin, all crew should follow orders or face Courts Martial, or in extreme

circumstances, summary execution}

**Chief Engineer (1)** – Tool set, hand ax (1d6), Lugar pistol (1d8), 3 magazines of 8 bullets each, Z-Uniform (AC+3), Monkey Tail; +3 Intelligence, +1 Strength, -1 Personality (Naval Rank: Lieutenant Commander) {Special: “technically” Second in Command, should the Commander be killed or incapacitated, but if that happens in flight he’ll be too busy keeping L4 aloft to bother...so he defers to the Navigator, see below}

**Navigator (1)** – compass and sextant, Lugar pistol (1d8), 3 magazines of 8 bullets each, Z-Uniform (AC+3); +1 Intelligence, +1 Strength (Naval Rank: Lieutenant) {Special: Second in Command, should the Commander be killed or incapacitated}

**Bombardier/Assistant Navigator (1)** – binoculars, Lugar pistol (1d8), 3 magazines of 8 bullets each (lose movement one turn to reload), Z-Uniform (AC+3); +1 Intelligence, +1 Strength (Naval Rank: Lieutenant, Junior Grade)

**Wireless Operator (1)** – headset, Morris code set and code book, Lugar pistol (1d8), 3 magazines of 8 bullets each (lose movement one turn to reload), Z-Uniform (AC+3); +2 Intelligence (Naval Rank: Ensign)

**Rudder and Elevator Operators (4)** - Z-Uniform (AC+3); +2 Agility +1 Strength (Naval Rank: Sailor) {two operators will man the two machineguns in the forward copula if under attack by enemy biplanes. One is detailed in the Upper Observation Nest at the start of the adventure – this man has a Monkey Tail on}

**Machinists (7)** – cast iron tool (1d6 + 2 to elves and elementals), Monkey Tail Harness, Z-Uniform (AC+3); +2 Agility +1 Strength (Naval Rank: Sailor) {3 will man the three machineguns in the rear copula if under attack by enemy biplanes. One of the four is detailed in the Upper Observation Nest at the start of the adventure}

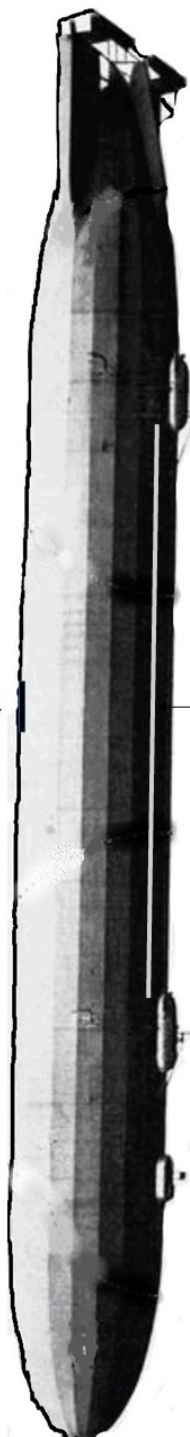
**Adventure Summary:** This adventure is a reverse dungeon in that the player characters know their airship (the L4) intimately and begin play at their duty stations. The challenge is surviving the attacks of the minions of Taranis, keeping the L4 aloft, and guiding

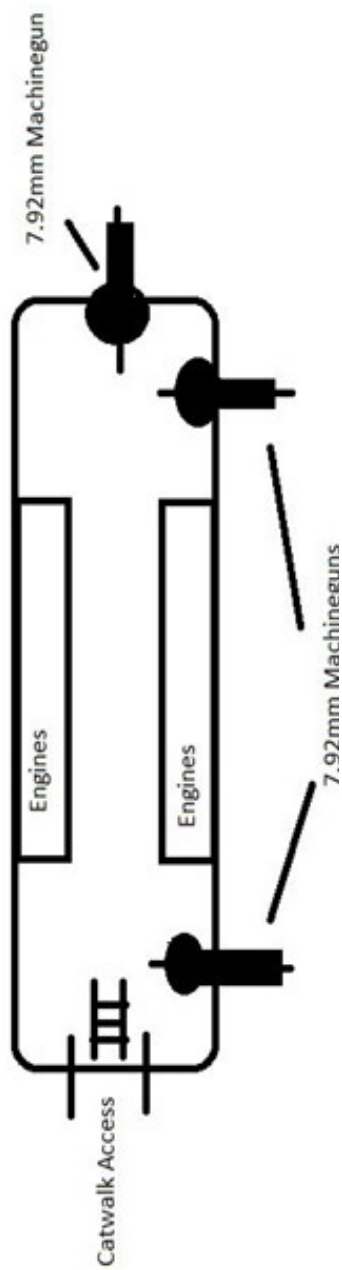
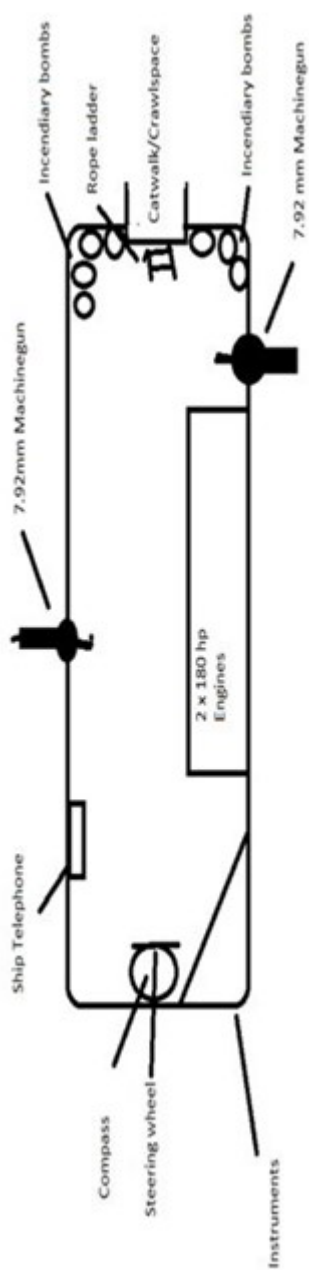
Observation/Machinegun Nest

Catwalk/Access Tube

Engineering Gondola

Pilot Gondola





the L4 to the nearest land (the Jutland coast).

## Starting Positions

**Pilot (Forward) Gondola:** Commander, Navigator, Bombardier, Wireless Operator and (3) Rudder and Elevator Operators (Total: 7 crew)

**Engineering (rear) Gondola:** Chief Engineer and (4) Machinists (Total: 5 crew)

**In the Hull:** (2) Machinists (Total: 2 crew)

**Crow's Nest:** Rudder and Elevator Operator and Machinist (Total: 2 crew)

## Character Introduction

You are the elite crew of the German Imperial Navy Airship (Zeppelin) L4. A month ago, the L4 (and sister ship L3) were diverted from your patrol duties over the North Sea for a special mission – the first bombing of Great Britain! Afterwards, with congratulations from the Imperial High Command, you returned to the cold air over the North Sea to continue looking for British naval ships (to bomb).

It is mid-February and the North Sea is exceeding its reputation for bad weather...you have never seen it this bad! It came on so suddenly, like nothing you have seen before. The sun blotted out by black clouds, high winds pushing the mighty zeppelin like a toy, driving rain lashes the crew, exposed in open gondolas and the high observation nest, like whips, and lightning has struck the aluminum hull. After losing contact with your sister ship, the L3, the Captain decided to abandon the patrol and head for the nearest land - in this case the tip of the Jutland Peninsula. Once over land, you are confident that your elite crew and mighty ship will safely navigate south and back home to Germany. However, even as the massive lighter than air ship changes course, you see “things” flying through the black sky and you feel in your gut that this race for land may be the worse, and possibly last, moments of your life.

**I recommend copying and sharing the below ‘zeppelin guide’ and a zeppelin map with the players.**

## **L4 Zeppelin (See Map 2: L4 Schematic)**

The L4 is 318’ long from nose to tail, externally shaped like a tapered cigar.

**Hull:** The ‘hull’ is an aluminum covered frame with five massive barrel-shaped hydrogen bladders within (providing the lift). Rope ladders and guide ropes are used to help the crew move around the interior, but due to the heights, it is very dangerous in the best of conditions...during a storm it is deadly (frequent Reflex saves of recommended DC 12-14). The crewmen’s one safety feature is the Monkey Tail harness which they attach to a rope with a “D-ring” clip as a precaution. While the Monkey harness will prevent a deadly fall, the frequent clipping and unclipping limits movement to 10’ per turn.

**Crow’s Nest:** On top of the hull, at the center of the ship, is an open sandbagged Crow’s Nest. The Crow’s Nest usually has two crewmen on observation detail, looking for bad weather and enemy planes. The Crow’s Nest has a telephone (see below) for calling reports down to the gondolas. The two crewmen also have two mounted machineguns on either side of the Nest for fending off attacking aircraft. There is a hatch in the bottom of the Crow’s Nest that opens to a rope ladder leading down into the Hull.

(2) 7.92mm Hotchkiss Machinegun, 3d12 damage, range 120/240/360, fixed in swivel mounts on the airship (cannot be removed and fired by hand)

**Gondolas:** Two Gondolas extend below the hull, one in the front (the Pilot Gondola which has the steering, navigation and incendiary bombs) and one in the rear (the Engineering Gondola). The Pilot Gondola has two machineguns mounted in swivel mounts on either side. The Engineering Gondola has two machineguns on either side and another facing the rear of the airship.

**Pilot Gondola (2):** 7.92mm Hotchkiss Machinegun, 3d12 damage, range 120/240/360, fixed in swivel mounts on the airship (cannot be removed and fired by hand)

**Incendiary bombs (12):** very heavy, high explosive bombs meant for dropping on warships. Fixed in a rack and released directly below the Pilot Gondola by pulling a lever. {explosive damage is up to the Judge)

**Engineering Gondola (3):** 7.92mm Hotchkiss Machinegun, 3d12 damage, range 120/240/360, fixed in swivel mounts on the airship (cannot be removed and fired by hand)

**Crawlspace:** Inside of the hull, above and between the two gondolas, is an internal crawlspace tunnel about a yard wide and a yard high that has openings to access the interior of the hull. This is mainly used for inflight access to the engines and the lift bladders for repairs.

**Engines:** Each gondola has a powerful Propeller engine. There are four engines extending from the hull; two (one on each side) forward of the Pilot Gondola and two (one to each side) in the rear of the Engineering Gondola). The hull engines are part of the internal frame and can be accessed by exiting the hull on the attaching pylon by a machinist (hopefully using a Monkey Tail) for repairs.

**Zeppelin Telephone:** The L4 has a telephone system rigged with tactical telephones in the Pilot Gondola, the Engineer Gondola, and the Crow's Nest. A small handle must be cranked, which causes both other phones to ring.



**GM Note: If one of the locations is evacuated (most likely the Crow's Nest) and the players use the phone, insert the following in a creepy, inhuman voice (or make up your own ... ).**

You are all going to die...horribly...for your sacrilege...and serve me in the abyss...

## **Encounters**

### **1. Face in the Storm**

The storm clouds surrounding the zeppelin have turned a deep purple, and before your eyes you see what appears to be the head of a long haired and bearded man forming within the clouds. In the center of the face is a single eye, burning with inhuman hatred! The enraged face's mouth opens wide and a gust of gale wind and accompanying lightning and thunder strikes your airship.

All crewmen must make a Willpower Save (DC14) and a Reflex Save (DC12). A pass to both carries on as normal. Characters who: Fail Willpower: Are stunned and unable to act in the first round of Attack of the Harpies

Fail Reflex: Are knocked down, either prone on the floor of a gondola, or fallen from a perch elsewhere on the zeppelin. If wearing a 'monkey tail' the character could be dangling in space. Either way, the character will need to use an action die to return to their feet.

### **2. Attack of the Storm Harpies**

Unable to explain the face that you have seen in the storm, you turn back to work, only to hear a warning from one of the lookouts, "Incoming aircraft!" Although that last may have been yelled as a question. You turn to look and see blue tinged winged women out of myth and legend diving at your airship!

The Storm Harpies will attack in three groups, four attacking the Forward (pilot) gondola, four attacking the Rear (engineering) gondola, and three attacking the Crow's Nest. The harpies are



new to this enemy and will not fight to the end, rather they seek to; slay a few crewman (so that Taranis can animate the corpses later – see *Raise the Dead*, below) and determine the weaknesses of this strange vessel. As a result, the Harpies will only use their law attack, either to maul a crewmember or to grab a crewman and pull them off the zeppelin (dropping the victim in the ocean below). In the *Crow's Nest*, they will try to kill both sailors to be reanimated as zombies. The harpies will retreat once one of their group (one of the four attacking the gondolas, or one of the three attacking the *Crow's Nest*) is killed. The remaining harpies in that group will turn and fly away into the black clouds. The crew members with ranged weapons will get a free attack against the retreating harpies.

**Storm Harpies of Taranis (11):** Init +0; Atk claws +3 (1d4) or grab, ranged lightning strike +1 (1d8); AC 13; HD5d8; hp 25; MV 20' Fly 70' (unaffected by weather conditions); Act 2d20; SP Killed mortals become undead Servants of Taranis; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; AL N.

### **3. Escape from the Crow's Nest**

In the aftermath of the strange attack, and the increasing winds, the Captain calls on the telephone for the men in the Crow's Nest to get below (to the gondolas) and on the way down to inform the two men on the interior what is happening.

As the lighting and wind has increased, the crewmen in the Crow's Nest (if still alive) will enter the hull through a hatch in the floor of the Crow's Nest and descending an internal rope ladder finding the two crewmen in the hull. Judges should have a few Reflex saves required (DC 12 to DC 14) to prevent falling. If the characters are using the Monkey Tails a failure on one of these saves will only leave the PC dangling by their harness...if not using the harness, the several hundred foot fall will kill the character (for later use as a Taranis zombie).

### **4. Lightning Strikes on Hull and Engines**

From the cloud you see the winged 'creatures' that attacked you earlier return! But it becomes obvious that they are less interested in the gondolas now, but are attacking your forward and lead hull engines! Needing the power of those to fight the storm and push the L4 to safety is essential! These creatures must be killed or driven off again! Quick, to the machineguns!

The surviving harpies from the first attack will attack with half going after the two forward hull mounted engines, half going after the rear hull mounted engines.

At this distance from the gondolas and with the extreme movement of the airship caused by the storm and wind, the harpies can only be hit by the mounted machine guns.

The harpies tactics will be to use their lightning ranges attack to hit the engines.

Engines AC 16, 40 hp. Below 20 hp the engine will cease to work, but be repairable. At 0 hp the engine is destroyed in a fiery explosion.

The harpies will again flee, this time if they lose half of their total number. The PC's will again get a free parting shot at the fleeing creatures.

{Optional scene: A particularly cruel Judge may have the Harpies begin to shoot lightning at the incendiary bombs in the Pilot Gondola. The players should realize just how dangerous a hit would be ("Pilot Gondola vaporized" is a good way of putting it) and allow some brave soul to drop the bombs before that happens.}

## **5. Repair Engines and Check the (Hydrogen) Bladders**

This damned weather and those damned demons! They've damaged the L4 – who knows how badly! We need to keep those engines going or the storm will kill us all before we reach the mainland! Some of the crew will need to complete repairs while the rest of us keep watch. What are you waiting for? Get going!

The engines can be accessed from the hull, and only a madman would attempt the repairs without a Monkey Tail harness. Regular DC12 reflex saves to prevent falling down in the hull (not so bad, I recommend 1hp damage per slip) and especially when standing on the narrow pylon and repairing the engine (DC14 for moving on the pylon and DC 10 while repairing). Without a Monkey Tail harness, a missed save on the pylon means the character falls to his death in the North Sea.

## **6. Raise the Dead – Kill the Dead**

The repairs will have to do! Everyone, get back into the gondolas! We are heading for land!!!

This encounter assumes that the harpies have been able to kill at least a few crewmen in the course of the adventure. Unless the surviving PCs have decided to get rid of the "ballast" of their friends' corpses, they now come back to life as zombies in the service to Taranis!

The characters killed in the hull (now zombies) will be waiting for repair crews in the Crawlspace, while characters killed in the gondolas will raise as zombies and unless at least one of the

characters in the gondola pass an Intelligence check of DC12 (and spot the rising dead), the zombies will get a surprise a round!

**Undead Servants of Taranis (number of dead crew still on the L4):** Init -2; Atk bite +3 (1d4); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Undead; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +2; AL N.



## 7. A Last Chance at Wrath

There! Look! The rocky coast at last! With the L4 so damaged, we need to set down wherever that land is! We will deal with the local government afterwards! This is it lads, one final push! Damn it! Here they come again!

The surviving minions of Taranis (surviving harpies and zombies) will make a final attack on the crew.

{Judge Optional Last Encounter} If the players have had their way with the harpies and zombies and too few villains remain to make this encounter interesting, Taranis will summon his last servant; a ragged wyvern with a single, malevolent red eye!

With the last of the flying creatures slain or run off, you look ahead to see a jagged coastline! With shouts of joy, you prepare of land... but then something as large as a bomber wings besides the L4... ...is THAT a DRAGON???

**Taranis' pet Wyvern (1):** Init +6; Atk claw (x2) +5 melee (1d8); bite +5 melee (1d12); AC 16; HD 4d12 ( 28 hp); MV 40; Act attacks d20, lightning breath weapon +5 ranged (4d12); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AI N.

## 8. A Final Revenge

You leap from the gondola, grateful to have your feet on solid Earth again! Some of your comrades are actually kissing the ground!

Behind you, you hear a horrific cracking as a powerful gust tears loose the mooring of the L4! You watch, helpless as your airship is pulled out to sea. Fortunately the few remaining crewmen have leapt free. You race to help your surviving friends to the shore.

Gathering your wits, you realize you are unsure of exactly where you have landed. You'd assumed Denmark, but those mountains in the distance do not look familiar. Moments later, you hear horses approaching. Your first thought is mounted police, but since when did police wear chainmail and robes? And one of these riders seems to have pointed ears. Worse, a short fat one is riding a pig and another a dog!

WHERE are you?!

## This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color. There are no margins, text, or other markings present on the page.



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# A Free and Unofficial Zine for DCC RPG

