

The Manor

Issue 7



The Manor

Issue 7

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Boltswitch's Mobile Potion Emporium by Boric G.	2 - 5
Skinwalker (Coyote) by Johua De Santo	6 - 7
Mirror, Mirror by Chris Coski	8 - 11
Trouble Down the Well by Simon Forster	12 - 13
Horrid Caves by Garrison J	14 - 23
Mind Flayer by Ken H.	24

COVER ARTIST

Jim Magnusson

PROOF READERS

Chris C

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Jim Magnusson

Jarrod Shaw

Garrison J

Boric G

CONTACT

elder_sensa@yahoo.com

gothridgemanor.blogspot.com



Copyright © Tim Shorts 2014

All Artwork, Maps and Articles are the

This issue is very different from the other issues of the Manor. I'm not in this one. Well, other than the gathering of articles, layout, printing and mailing. The main reason I stepped from writing and took on the role of editor is that I had so many great offers from folks, some I knew, some I didn't. But all wanted to contribute to this issue. In addition to the new writers I have new artists. Here's the all-star list of writers in this issue.

Boric Glanduum of The Dwarven Stronghold

Johua DeSanto of Genius Loci

Chris C. of The Clash of Spear on Shield

Simon Forster of The Sky Full of Dust

J Garrison of Hereticwerks

Ken "Rusty" H of The Rusty Battle Axe

And here are the incredible artists that contributed to this issue.

Jim Magnusson of Aenglum

Jarrold Shaw of Tales of Asteriis

J Garrison of Hereticwerks

So I am kicking back in my chair, checking out this issue. I'm amazed by how much content fit into 24 pages. There is only a small section left of the introduction to suffer through before I throw back the curtain.

I plan to develop guidelines for The Manor. And depending on how my Patreon page does, along with sales of the zine, I plan on making The Manor a paying zine. So here I go again, each time I get comfortable with something I'm doing, I have the need to push it into new territory where I have little, to no idea what I'm doing. Still, I want to see how it goes.

That's all from me this issue. Thanks for supporting The Manor.

Enjoy!

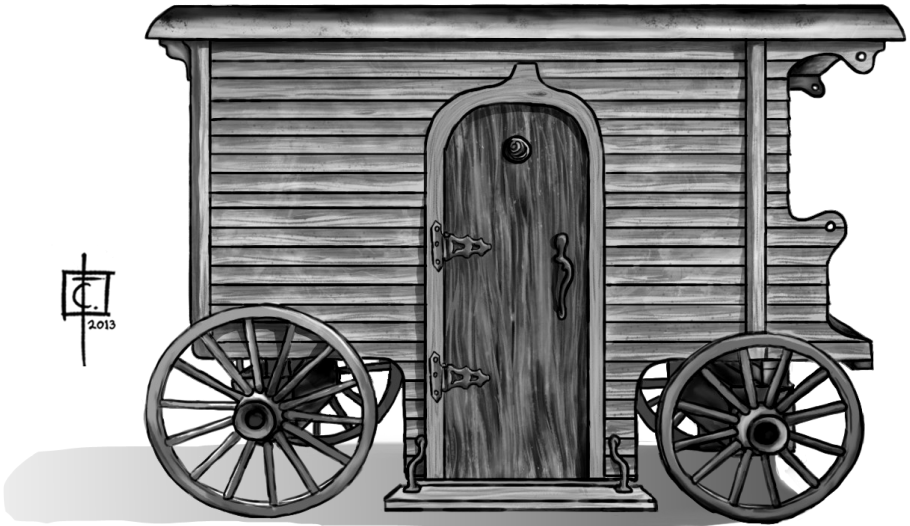
Tim Shorts

August 15th, 2014

Boltswitch's Mobile

POTION EMPORIUM

By BORIC GLANDUUM



The cart rolled to a stop, the pony nickering, directly in front of a group comprised of a dwarf, a dozen or more humans, and an elf. As they watched, the sides of the cart opened with a loud “thunk,” and slid down to the ground to create a wooden skirt around the wheels. Rows and rows of bottles, flasks, and containers of every size, shape, material, and description were revealed.

Another “click” and a “whirr” and a shelf unfolded around the wagon, level with the bottom row of containers. Onto this shelf stepped a diminutive figure wearing a red velvet long coat, a forest green waistcoat, and walking with a stout cane. One of the humans in the crowd muttered, “Gnome,” and wandered away, shaking his head.

This gnome limped around the shelf looking out at the slowly growing crowd. “Friends!” he shouted. “Gather ‘round! I am Boltswitch. Mikklun Boltswitch, and I am at your service!” A deep bow followed, one hand flourishing at his side.

“Here before you today is the widest array of potions, tonics, and liquid refreshment you will find east of the Wallfang Mountains! And every single one of them is for sale...at fairly reasonable prices....” Half of the crowd wandered away before he finished his opening spiel. The others were already reaching for their purses. The gnome singled out one human of the crowd to be his first mark.

“Hello, tall one. How do you fare today? Ah... that is good. What do you seek? Perhaps a love tincture? A salve, balm, or ointment of some sort? Well, whatever you may want, you’ve come to the right place. Or, rather, the right place has come to you, hasn’t it?”

“While you’re deciding, let me show you a bit of what I have on stock. I can make you a fair price on these today; I guarantee you won’t find them for a cheaper price anywhere. In fact, I have things here that you WILL NOT find anywhere else, not at any price.

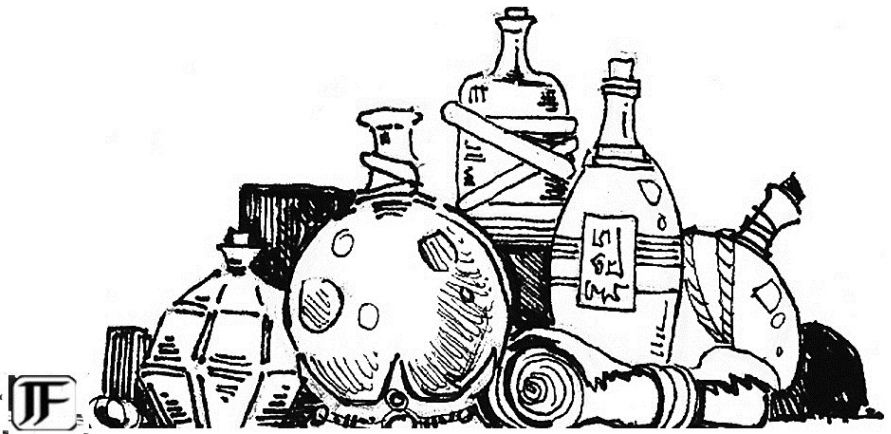
“First, let me share with you this wondrous mixture. You’ll note the exquisite glass vial, with no label, so there’s no worry about a nosy neighbor seeing what you have on your shelf. Stopped with the finest cork, this sparkling blue liquid will enchant you. It carries a very strong scent of apples, to make it all the more palatable. Now, I’ll admit: it tastes of menthol, and is a bit watery, in truth. And never mind the hallucinations; the visions of floating cheeses will quickly pass from your eyes. Consider the benefits, though. Immediately after you drink it, you can move twice as fast as you normally do; in fact, anything you do is at twice the speed. But only for a short time per dose; you don’t want to use up all your years in an instant, do you? I call it *Adak’s Eternal Essence of Age*. How much is it, you ask? Well, let’s just say...it’s cheaper than having someone cast a similar spell on you. Granted, it’s not as strong as a similar spell, but there’s no chance of going insane. Well, not much of one. Besides the hallucinations, that is.

“Let me show you something else, then. Look how beautiful this draught is in the sunshine, all white and sparkling. You’ll notice how this glass bottle is spherical? Well, that’s important because this potion...what’s that? The label? Yes, it’s faded, but still quite legible, see? That’s long enough. No, the coupon on the label is long expired, but don’t worry, you’ll still get a bargain. Plus, it’s only one dose, you know. Let me just unscrew this glass cap here...now, smell. Smell the maple syrup? It’s quite a nice scent. Of course, it actually tastes like mustard, but that’s all due to the ingredients, you know. Oh, don’t slosh it around too much, and yes, the lumps are supposed to be in there. Again, the ingredients. Now...I can’t guarantee you complete freshness on this one.



Maybe just better than half-fresh, eh?” But it’ll still work, I’m sure. What does it do? Well, as I was telling you, you’ll notice how much the bottle looks like an eyeball? That’s intentional. This is a **Sight Potion**; for three minutes per dose you will be able to see all things as they truly are. Yes, I see you’ve heard of that spell. Well, this one is a bargain. Seeing as you’re worried about the freshness, I’ll let you....

“What? That bottle? That egg-shaped one? I think you’ll agree that the tinted glass bottle itself is quite a work of art, especially with the matching colored glass top, no? The string of beads also compliment the bottle, you’ll note. There’s no label on this one; privacy, after all. I call this one my **Spatial Brandy**. After you drink this dose, you...well, you appear to be about two feet away from your actual location. Quite useful in a fight, I’m sure you’d agree. Not that I think you’re prone to fighting. No. Not at all; let’s not be hasty. I didn’t say that at all, so please put your dagger away. Thank you. Now, let me show you a bit more about this: you’ll note the bright brass color it has? You’re right, it *does* smell like curry, doesn’t it? It’s quite tasty, with a hint of corn. Its effects will last about a minute or so, but during that time you’ll be quite hard to target.



“But I can tell you’re not the fighting type. Not a bit. Instead, let’s suppose you’re kidnaped and tied up somewhere. Well, if you’ve had a dose of this within the previous four hours, you’ll slip right out of those ropes. Yes, I know, I have some of that salve here too. This is for the more budget-minded, though. And those who don’t want to wait a full eight hours for the effects to wear off. For only half the price of that other stuff, you can have this. You’ll note the leather pouch? It’s actually made from the toe of a displacer beast and sealed with wax. There’s no label and no decoration to give a hint as to what’s inside; only you will know that. It’s called a **Formula of Endless Force Negation**. Yes, I agree; it’s quite fancy-sounding, isn’t it? I’ll admit, when you first crack this one open, it’s a little off-putting. It’s a plain, brown liquid that smells of oil paints. But it has a rich taste—oranges—and a subtle aftertaste of pepper. Now, this one’s a bit older, so I can only guarantee *near*-freshness, but I’m sure it’ll work just fine. I’m discounting it just for you.

“I can see that I shouldn’t have told you about the displacer beast, you’ve gone a bit green. I’m sorry. Your tastes are a bit more upper-class I suppose. Look at this shining golden sphere. What’s that? Yes, again with the eyeball, you’re absolutely right. This one is what I call *Oralav’s Lager of Invisibility*, after the brewer down south who makes it for me. Just let me wrench out the leather plug here...Ah! That’s got it. Whew! I should warn you, it tastes worse than it smells. That wet dog smell is much, much stronger when it’s first brewed and the vinegary taste doesn’t linger long. At least it’s smooth going down, you know? But this is not one you drink for the taste...no, this one you drink *for the power*. Come closer so I can whisper: this one will make you invisible to the naked eye. I know, you’ve seen these kind of potions before. But *this* one? It may not last as long as your normal invisibility draught—about a minute and a half, is all—but it heals you, ever so slightly, when you drink it. It’s a nice side effect, isn’t it? Here. You hang on to this one while you browse.

“Think about this one: in this little, plain glass vial—beneath this simple iron stopper—is a dose of what I call my *Tonic of Earth Activation*. You seem to me to be pretty knowledgeable about potions; after all, you’ve understood all of my arcane references today haven’t you, my friend? Well, this one...this one has an effect that is quite close to one that people call “barkskin.” It’s a tonic of protection, of safety. This innocent-looking indigo-colored liquid will grant the drinker a protective layer of dirt and rock, just like “barkskin” does with wood and fibers. There’s a hint of roses to this little wonder, and it’s flavored with vanilla. It’s one of my favorites, truly. Now...it takes a moment or two to become completely active; it is not instantaneous, by any means. This one here I’ve had for a while. I can’t guarantee more than mostly effective on this one. I can get more, though, if you want some.

“I have one more to show you. This one here I usually sell up north, to the inns and taverns and whatnot. But if you’re interested, it’s yours. The tin jar and push-on cap aren’t attractive; the ridges on the jar help you hold on to it and that’s it. The label covers up most of the tin, even if it is blank. You’ll see, though, it’s a creamy brown color; it smells strongly of burnt toast, but that’s from the roasting process. This is *Rabstuk’s Delightful Coffee of Protection* and you’ll be hard pressed to find its like around here. The name is a bit misleading; that’s there to get a few more sales by word of mouth. It’s not going to protect you, really. Each dose gives you more of a *resistance* to cold weather. It’s a thick, rich coffee and it’s always warm; see? Hold the tin a moment or two. Isn’t that nice? When you drink a dose, you feel really warm for a couple minutes. But it’s going to shield you from cold weather for about half an hour per dose. And there’s sixteen full doses in this tin. Normally I’d ask...well, forget “normally”.... I can tell you like it. I’ll let you have it for what 12 doses of the regular cold-resisting potions would cost you.

“Well, if that’s all you’re interested in, I’ll wrap up that one flask for you. But I’ll be back around soon...and my stock’s always revolving. Always on the move, is Boltswitch. And I’m always going to have something new for you!”

SKINWALKER (COYOTE)

BY JOHUA DE SANTO

Legend has it that long ago the Trickster god was banished from the heavens and forced to walk among the mortal races. Instead of sulking in his punishment the Trickster moved through the land playing games, acting out the role of the hero, the villain, and the wise sage. These were just a few of his masks. While his time on the mortal plane was short the Trickster had a lasting effect: his heirs.

The Skinwalkers appear as normal mortals of their race (typically the nomadic humans of the Western Reaches) until they change. Unlike lycanthropes whose transformation is a multi-staged (and often painful) process, the Skinwalkers simply go from being one to another in the blink of the eye. It is this ability that makes them outcasts among their peoples who fear that the Trickster will look upon his children and visit them ... bringing his trickery with him.

Prime Attribute: Dexterity 13+, Wisdom 13+ (5% experience bonus)

Hit Dice: 1d4/level (Gains 2 hp/level after 10th)

Weapon/Armor Restrictions: Skinwalkers are limited to leather or chain armor and have no proficiency with shields. They may only use daggers or longbows.

Alignment Restrictions: Neutral only

SKINWALKER RACIAL ABILITIES

Low Light Vision - Skinwalkers can see up to 60' in low light as if it were daylight.

Skin Shifting - At 1st level the Skinwalker can change to and from coyote form once a day, at 3rd level this increases to twice and continues to increase by one every three levels hence.

Thief Skills - A Skinwalker can use thief skills like a thief one level below him.

Lie Detector - At 2nd level the Skinwalker can sense whether a person or intelligent creature is lying to him. Skinwalkers get a+2 bonuses on all rolls to gain such insight.

Mild Glamor - At 6th level the Skinwalker can produce mild glamors such as changing hair or eye color on herself or her target. The extent and limitation of this ability are up to of the Referee.



Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice	Saving Throw
1	2,500	1d4	16
2	5,000	2d4	15
3	10,000	3d4	14
4	20,000	4d4	13
5	40,000	5d4	12
6	60,000	6d4	11
7	80,000	7d4	10
8	100,000	8d4	09
9	150,000	9d4	08
10+	+50,000	+2hp	07

Mirror, Mirror

by
Chris Coski

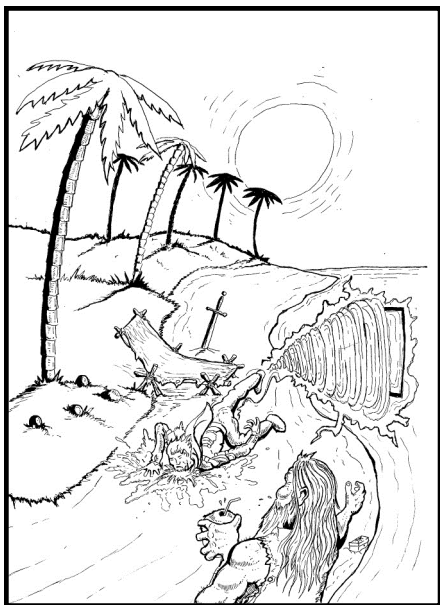
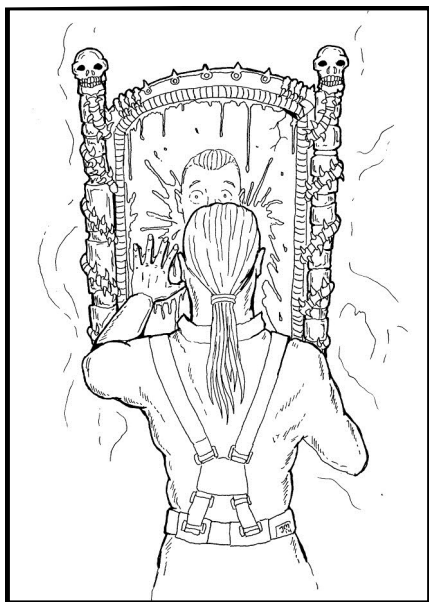


Before you are nine enchanted looking glasses, crafted by Miraboth the Mercurial, Mirror Master of Meezan-Abeem. Once in the employ of that city's prince, all that remains are Miraboth's mirrors and a few scattered excerpts from his letters.

THE MIRROR OF MADNESS

Do you dare regard within and without? We are all but dust in a vast, uncaring cosmos. Perhaps you will grow in wisdom. Perhaps this knowledge will collapse your spirit.

The viewer must make a save, adding his WIS bonus. Failure results in 2d6 hp damage from psychological trauma. Success results in the gain of 1d6 WIS.



THE MIRROR OF MYSTIC MOBILITY

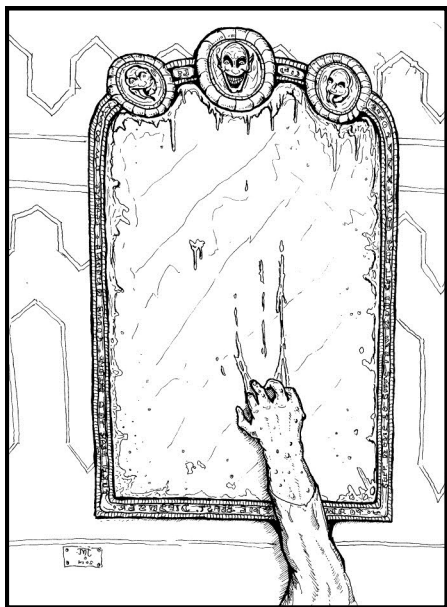
Space is but an illusion! Look into the glass and envision unimaginable places. Touch the reflection, and suddenly there is here.

This mirror shows various places in the world, changing at different intervals. The observer sees himself in each location as it appears. When the surface of the mirror is touched, the viewer instantly teleports to the site currently shown in the mirror.

THE MIRROR OF MORPHING

Do you know your true self? Not the one you show to others, but the real one, in the deepest recesses of your soul. Strip all pretense from your inner being!

This mirror shows the viewer as if he were some other creature or individual – and immediately polymorphs him into that shape. The change is temporary, with the duration at the GM's discretion.



THE MIRROR OF MORBIDITY

Do not forsake cleanliness, for the body, as they say, is a temple. In filth there is malady. Those soiled within must die. The unpolluted will be fortified.

This mirror shows the viewer as he would appear if infected with a horrid disease such as leprosy or the plague. The observer must make a save. A failed save causes the viewer to become afflicted with that disease, and start presenting symptoms in 1d6+6 days. A successful save results in a gain of 1d6 CON.

THE MIRROR OF MISCONCEPTION

Things are seldom what they appear. This lesson, which I tried to impart to my children, is one that all should take to heart.

The viewer sees an image of something he would very much like, that has finally come within his grasp (e.g. a valuable treasure in the next room, a nearby object that will give him great magical power, etc.). When he comes to the location pictured in the mirror, however, the sought after item will not be there.

THE MIRROR OF MUGGING

I was not always the successful mirror-crafter I am today. Once I was a pauper, and every artisan must make a living as he can.

The viewer sees the reflection of a dark figure who sneaks up behind him and picks his pocket. When he checks, he will find that a magic item, treasure, or other important object is suddenly gone.



THE MIRROR OF MEDIOCRITY

That arrogant fop! The prince believes he can order my execution? The fool! The full extent of his plainness will be made manifest! Then who will follow him?

The viewer's attribute stats all drop or rise to the most ordinary, average number possible (e.g. 10's or 11's).



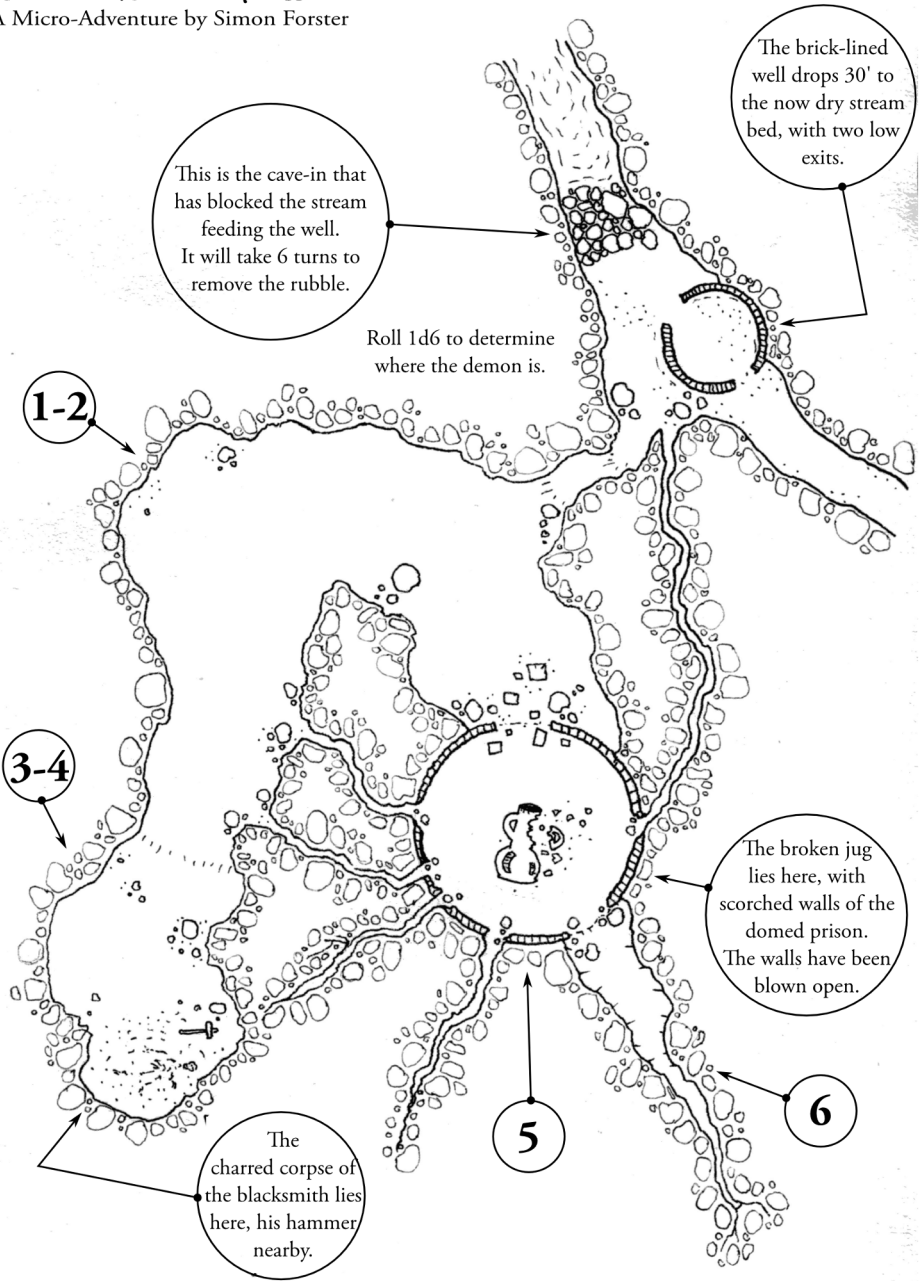
THE MIRROR OF MORTIS

It takes courage to stare into the eyes of death. Forewarned is forearmed! However, you must know that not all futures come to pass.

This mirror shows the viewer one possible, gruesome manner in which he may one day die.

Trouble Down the Well

A Micro-Adventure by Simon Forster



A Micro-Adventure by

Simon Forster

Trouble Down the Well

What?

The village well has dried up and a cloud of foul-smelling smoke wafted from below. The local blacksmith went down to investigate, but has not returned. The villagers turn to the heroes for help.

Where?

Any village with a well.

Why?

In a domed cell beneath the ground a **Fire Demon** was imprisoned. The village was settled centuries later, a well dug down to an underground stream. Over the years the water has eroded the rock and soil, and a minor quake as the earth gave way caused the demon's prison— a rune-etched jar— to fall and crack, releasing the demon in an explosion of fire and smoke: the domed cell broke open, the earth quaked, and there was a cave-in. The stream feeding the well has been blocked, and the remaining water has been turned to steam by the demon's release. Thankfully for the villagers above, the demon was weak and other than evaporate the water, couldn't gather the strength to climb the well. Unfortunately, the blacksmith stumbled upon the demon, which has fed upon him and grown stronger. It now waits for more hapless victims to come looking, eager to feed on their flesh. When it has grown strong enough it will climb out of the well to feed on the villagers above.

Below the Well

The air down here reeks of sulphur and a haze of heat shimmers across the stone. The **fire demon** is restless, moving around the limited space (roll 1d6 for its location), hungry and ready to pounce on a fresh source of fuel. Its prison is a copper-tiled dome, now cracked and bent out of shape, the tiles scorched and marred. A ceramic jar etched with runes of protection lies shattered on the ground: the shards hold runes that act as a *Scroll of Protection from Evil*, and a *Scroll of Dispel Evil*. The blacksmith's charred corpse lies in the cave, little more than ash and bones, only his hammer still intact (albeit warped by the heat and still warm to the touch).

The Demon of the Jar

A demon of fire, its own name forgotten even by itself. It looks like a featureless parody of a man, small as a child at the moment. With each extra Hit Die it gains it grows larger, doubling in size. The jar glows from within, as if a fire rages inside (which it does).

Hit Dice: 1 per hero, plus 1 HD per 8 hps absorbed

Attacks: 1 fiery touch (1d6 damage)

AC: as chain

Special: absorbs hit points equal to damage dealt, can exceed current maximum; immune to fire; vulnerable to water (treat as Holy Water).

HORRID

CAVES

BY

GARRISON JAMES

AN ADVENTURE FOR 106 CHARACTERS OF FIRST OR SECOND LEVEL

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is intended to be dropped into a game as a previously unsuspected sub-level or spontaneous side-trek. It all begins once the player characters discover a mysterious hole in the wall, floor or ceiling...

BACKGROUND

Once upon a time these caves served as an underworld palace for an inhuman warlord from another plane of existence. Something unexpected happened and the warlord and his marauding band of crustacean-soldiers were cut off from their distant homeland. Knowing they were doomed, that they would never return to the spawning-pools ever again, they sealed off the caves and arrayed themselves for death as they would any other battle. They have waited long for someone to discover them...

PLAYERS' BACKGROUND

You've just discovered a hidden passage leading into the unknown. The air is dry and musty; the area behind this opening has been closed off from the rest of the world for a long, long time.

AREA ONE

A humanoid figure lies prone on the floor under a coating of dust nearly three inches deep. Initial impressions are of some sort of insect or crustacean being with one large eye, an elongated, tapering head, and a strangely jointed outer integument. Disturbing the body physically releases a *Stinking Cloud* that quickly fills the chamber, spilling out through the hole by which the group entered. Once the cloud disperses, the body will have collapsed into a mess of dry, flaky bits resembling a jumble of dusty fingernail clippings.

AREA TWO

A sort of trench cuts across the floor of this chamber. There are dozens upon dozens of small skeletons, mostly rats and lizards, covering the bottom of the trench.

A small ledge toward the back of the chamber holds a levitating severed head from one of the chitinous humanoids. It quietly--but intently--watches you from across the chamber. Ignoring or leaving the head undisturbed will cause it to become intrigued with the intruders and it will follow silently and observe them at a discrete distance.

Approaching the head or attacking it will cause the thing to use spells to defend itself.

Levitating Severed Head.

HD 4; HP 15; AC 7[12]; Atk (by spell); Move 6 (fly); Save I; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Casts spells as a 5th Level Magic-User (4.2.1), Level One: Light/Darkness, Magic Missile, Protection from Mammals, Shield. Level Two: Invisibility, Phlegmic-Mesh (as Web). Level Three: Fireball, Monster Summoning I. The head takes double damage from fire-based attacks. If destroyed, there is a small blue-green dodecahedron of hand-carved stone embedded within the head that radiates strong magic. If inserted into the flesh of an undead being, the stone grants continual use of Levitation (worth 120gp to a necromancer). It does not function within living flesh.

If the party is too strong for a quick ambush with Fireball, the head will instead use Monster Summoning after catching as many of them as possible in its Phlegmic-Mesh, following up with Magic Missile. If that fails, it will use Invisibility to attempt to escape and/or Protection from Mammals to defend itself if cornered. It cannot speak—its mouth is sealed with aromatic gums and resins as part of the mummification process that has kept it so well-preserved.

Should the Severed Head escape the party, it will go to Area 13. If it spends 4 turns in Area 13 it will fully regain all hit points and spells, and then renew its personal vendetta against the intruders.

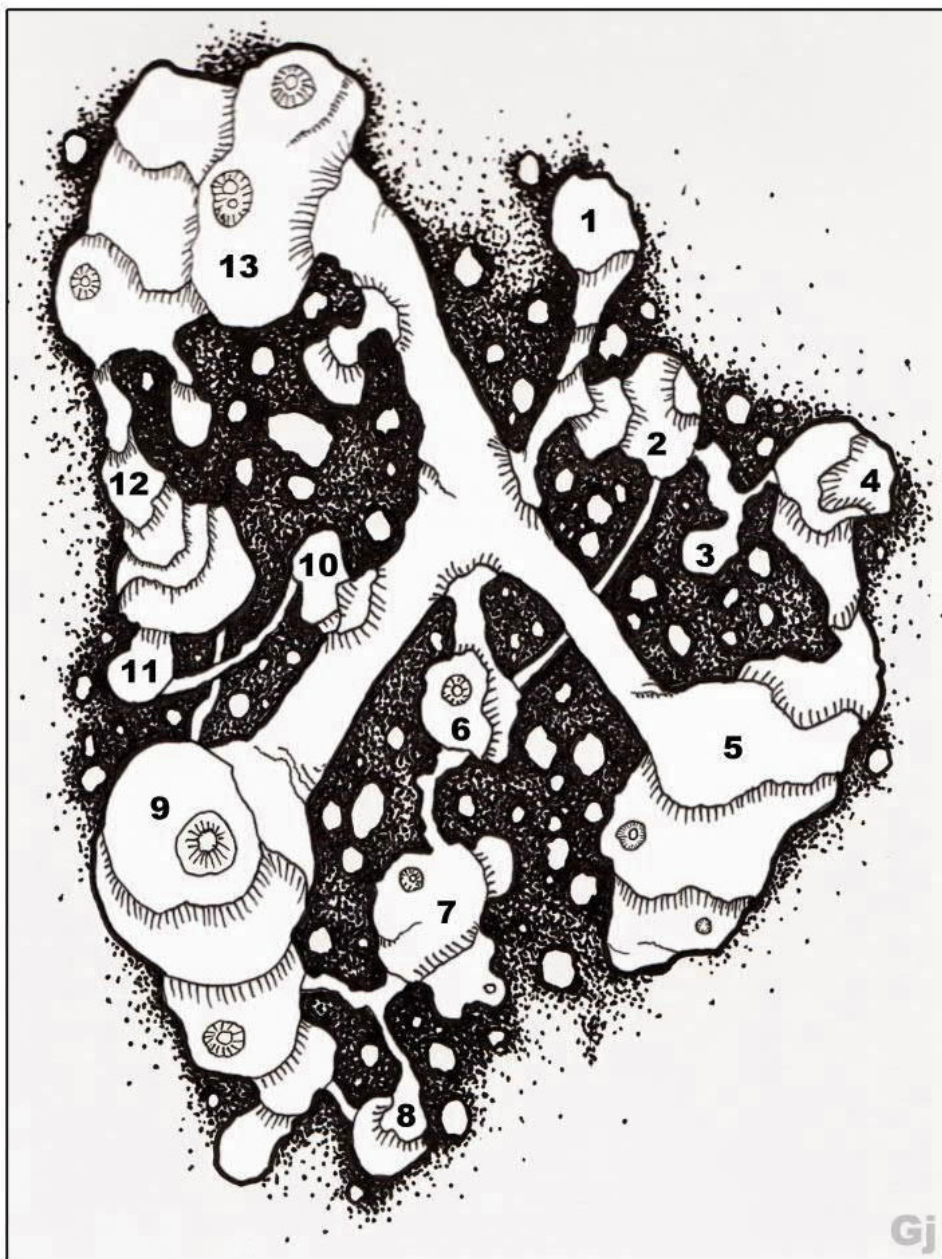
d6	MONSTERS SUMMONED
1	(1d4) Chitin-Husks HD 1; HP 6; AC 7[12] (hexagonal chitin-shields); Atk (1d4+1) cycad root-wood clubs; Move 10; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: release a 10'x10' <i>Stinking Cloud</i> when killed, cloud disperses in 3d4 rounds. Shields collapse into brittle flakes and clubs sprout tiny ferns, becoming useless upon destruction of husk.
2	(1d6) Red-Striped Centipedes HD 1; HP 1-4 each; AC 9[10]; Atk Bite (1 hp damage + Poison); Move 16; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15. Special: Poison victims gain +2 to Save in order to avoid uncontrollable vomiting for next 4 rounds during which time they are incapacitated and unable to defend themselves.
3	(1d4) Glish Glish, HD 1; HP 6; AC 7[12]; Atk Bite (1d4); Move 14 (fly); Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: strange tadpole-like squiggly things that squirm through the air. They explode for 2d4 damage when they die.
4	(1d4) Lime Spiders HD 1+1; HP 7; AC 8[11]; Atk Bite (1hp+Poison); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 3/60. Special: Cast Web three times per day. Poison permanently renders affected flesh vivid lime green, but has no other effect on mammals. Upon death these spiders melt into puddles of Green Slime that remain inert for 3d6 rounds.
5	(1d10) Blue-Banded Millipedes HD 1; HP 1-4 each; AC 9[10]; Atk Bite (1 hp damage + Poison); Move 14; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15. Special: Poison causes 1d4 rotting damage per round, Save for half effect. Damage suffered from this toxin requires magical healing. These creatures are extremely flammable, taking triple damage from all fire-based attacks, but once set on fire, they move at triple normal speed and attack at +2 to hit for 1d4 rounds, then collapse into a smoldering mess.
6	(1d6) Tubular Slugs HD 1; HP 3 each; AC 9[10]; Atk Spew Fumes; Move 10; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15. Special: These things spew heavy, black fumes that act as a <i>Darkness</i> spell and require a Save to avoid incurring a -2 penalty to all attacks for the next 1d6 Turns.

AREA THREE

A small, cramped passage leads back to a small chamber where every surface is covered with layer upon layer of dead, dried-out beetles. The floor is covered in dead beetle husks to a depth of nearly nine inches. The slightest contact will cause dozens of dead beetle husks to fall from the walls and ceiling. Buried under all the dead beetles are a few small coins and gems, but nothing particularly valuable, unless someone takes a full hour to dig through all the dried husks to find a blue-green hexagonal glazed-clay tile that is tightly clutched in the pincer-digits of a dried-out chitinous humanoid. The tile is meant to be wielded as a sort of wand-thing and it allows the user to *Command* as many HD of scuttling beetles as they have levels as a spell-caster. It works just as well on dead husks as it does live specimens, so they can assume command of an appropriate mass of dried-out beetle-husks, if they so desire.

Summoned Black Chitin-Husks

HD 1 per level of spell; AC 7[12] (hexagonal chitin-shields); Atk pincer-claws (1d6+1); Move 8; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60. Special: release a 10'x10' *Stinking Cloud* when killed, cloud disperses in 3d4 rounds. Shields collapse into brittle flakes becoming useless upon destruction of husk. There is a base 30% chance that the husk will collapse back into a re-usable blackened 'seed' when reduced to 0 hit points.



AREA FOUR

Twenty-nine urns. All of them fashioned from a blue-green glazed clay. They are sealed with a grayish wax-like substance that crumbles apart easily. Each urn contains ashes. Contact with the ashes causes 1d4 damage due to the caustic chemistry of the stuff. At the bottom of each urn is a hardened lump of compacted and blackened chitin that causes 1d6+1 damage on contact that can be used as a missile weapon in a sling, or a magic-user can use these things as 'seeds' to replace one monster summoned by any Monster Summoning spell with one undead chitinous humanoid-husk of equal HD to the usual monster.

AREA FIVE

A collapsed tripod of deep green bronze lies broken on the floor. The overturned brazier juts up from a mound of curlicue-spiral black shells that apparently were burned like coal. The shells can be crushed and molded to coat a torch-like stick and will burn with a green flame that gives off no smoke and does not interfere with infra-red or dark vision. On contact with flesh the burning shells only do 1 point of damage, then go out.

Two small idols hover in the air three feet from the floor. They are vaguely feminine-seeming blob-things without discernible heads or faces and exaggerated genitalia. Touching them confers the blessing of *Egregious Fecundity* for the next 72 hours, during which time the blessed one may successfully impregnate any female (including any animals) they touch, even if the blessed one is also female. All children born of this union will be born in half the normal gestation period, with no pain, and they will appear perfect...except for having the facial features of a crayfish-thing.

Newborn Crayface

HD 1+1; HP 5; AC 7[12]; Atk Bite+Poison (1d4+Poison); Move 4; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Poison causes paralysis for 1d4 rounds, cumulative. The Newborns all share a form of mutual ESP and are ready to run away within a few moments after being born.

AREA SIX

The walls and ceiling are heavily encrusted with mottled hive-paper from what once must have been a massive hive complex. The hive-paper is extremely dry and very, very flammable. Carrying any sort of open flame within ten feet of this stuff will cause it to flash into a raging firestorm causing 2d4 damage to everyone within the chamber. The hive-paper will be reduced to wispy black ashes within 2 rounds.

Examination of the hive-paper before setting it ablaze will reveal 3d4 intact wasps lodged in the hive-paper. These wasps are huge, striped with vivid vermilion bands and their stings are equal to +1 daggers if properly removed and prepared. When the wasps were still alive, the stings were able to retain their poison-sacs, but they're too far gone for that now. Anyone taking at least an hour can collect 1d4 serviceable stabby-sting daggers, each worth 30-60gp depending on where one tries to sell them.

AREA SEVEN

Three chitinous humanoid cadavers sprawled in the dust. Each one holds a wickedly barbed stabbing weapon that is rudely jammed through one of the others. There won't be any *Stinking Cloud* released from these husks because of the damage caused by each others' weapons.

If examined closely, one of the dead humanoids is wearing a bronze torc around its neck. The torc is a **Torc of Protection +2** versus bronze weapons. The torc does nothing against iron-based weapons and is worth 80gp as a curiosity.

Set directly in the middle of all three dead humanoids is an impressive helm/mask crafted from the head and face of some unnameable crayfish-thing. The mask-helm radiates a strong magic. It is a +2 helm, grants the wearer *Water Breathing* as a free action whenever they so desire. Once worn, the helmet imprints the wearer with the click-hum speech of the cray-things and they permanently lose the ability to speak, read or understand Common. The mask can cast *Cure Serious Wounds* on the wearer once per day...however doing so requires them to make a Save or begin to grow small patches of chitinous material around their neck and shoulders. Each failed Save allows the gradual transformation to progress a little farther toward their becoming a chitinous humanoid. *Remove Curse* and *Cure Disease* will reverse the process, but will not restore the lost language skills.

AREA EIGHT

Four hexagonal blue-green glazed tiles slowly rotate in the darkness. Each one has a different symbol pressed into the clay. All spell-casters who get within 10' of the floating tiles must Save or have one of the First Level spells in their current repertoire revised or replaced by one of the following spells (selected at random):

Break Shells

Spell Level: 1st

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

The caster's bare hands take on a lurid green glow that causes all chitinous exoskeletons they touch to suffer 1d4 damage per level/HD of the caster. Each use of this spell carries a cumulative 1% chance that the caster can no longer eat shellfish without becoming violently ill.

Corrosive Breath

Spell Level: 1st

Range: Close/Touch (must breathe on target)

Duration: Instant

Caster spews forth a stream of green fumes that instantly corrode all bronze items that fail a Save at a -2 penalty to become pitted, brittle and no longer able to hold any enchantment.

Deflect Bronze

Spell Level: 1st

Range: 10'

Duration: Instant

Places a -4 penalty on one attacker's To Hit roll for the next 1d4 attacks against the caster, so long as the attacker is using bronze weapons.

Diaphanous Membrane

Spell Level: 1st

Range: Touch

Duration: 3d6 turns

A shimmering, sheer membrane of living tissue closes off a 10' wide passage, only allowing those designated by the caster to pass freely. The membrane has 1 HD per level of the caster, but can be reinforced by 1d4 hit points per point of blood invested into the thing by either the caster or their allies. At the end of the spell's duration, the membrane sloughs off of the walls into a mass of decaying flesh that reeks terribly for 3d6 Turns, provoking double the normal chances of Wandering Monster checks within a 360' radius.

Gill Fire

Spell Level: 1st

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

On a successful touch attack the caster forces their victim to Save or suffer 1d6 fire damage to their gills. After the first time this spell is cast, the user gains the ability to inflict 1 additional hit point of damage per Level or HD. This spell does not affect lungs, only gills.

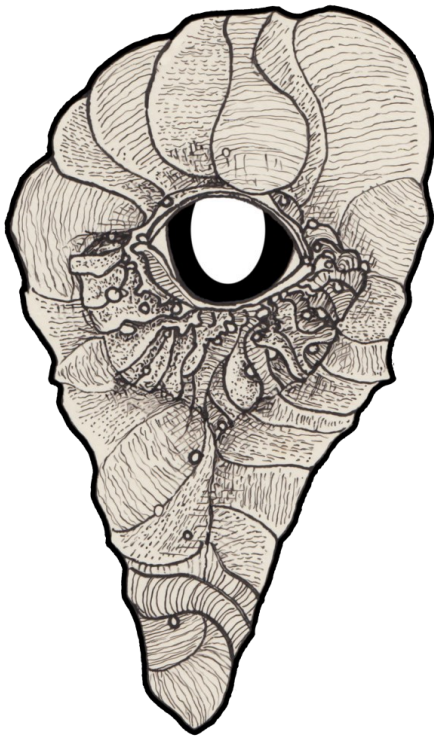
Horrid Pincers

Spell Level: 1st

Range: Touch

Duration: 3d6 turns

Upon touching a surface, the caster causes a pair of grotesquely distorted pincers to extrude from the wall, floor or ceiling and attack anything that moves within a 10' radius. The pincers have 1d4 hit points per Level/HD of the caster and are AC 6 (13) and inflict 1d4+1 point per level/HD of caster.



AREA NINE

Scores of chitinous humanoid figures have been set into the walls by the simple expedient of troweling copious amounts of blue-green clay all around them, forming organic-looking niches for each one. They are all dried out, empty husks that will collapse with the slightest touch, releasing a *Stinking Cloud* that will persist for about an hour. Each one of the figures is armed with crude javelins (brittle and unusable), clusters of wasp-stingers attached to some sort of plant stalk (no longer effective), stout cycad root-wood clubs set with jagged shards of obsidian (inflict 2d4 damage, +1 to hit), or wickedly barbed jabbing-stabbing weapons of deep green bronze (unwieldy, -1 to hit, does 2d4+2 damage). The clay-ensconced figures are stacked up to the peak of the ceiling.

If the heavy coating of dust is disturbed or deliberately removed, explorers will notice that there are shiny bits embedded in the clay. A closer look will reveal that these 'shiny bits' are blue-green lumps of pincer-polished amber. One person working with a dagger can pry out 3d6 bits of amber worth 2d8gp each in about an hour. Every hour spent in doing so provokes a Wandering Monster check (See Wandering Monster Matrix).

The farthest back area of this chamber is a small cul-de-sac where an ancient idol lies toppled in the dust. The idol resembles one of the chitinous humanoids with six arms, twelve legs, and the face/head of a lobster or crayfish. It is crafted from fish bones that have been somehow rendered pliable, formed into position with unknown tools, then solidified by some forgotten process. The idol is very durable, fairly light for its size (500 pounds), and easily dragged out of here, but will melt away into a pile of bone-slag if exposed to direct sunlight. If a Paladin, Cleric or similar character examines the idol closely, they will definitely *Detect Evil*. They will also sense the presence of some malevolent spark of consciousness embedded deep within the idol.

AREA TEN

A pool of black oil glistens wetly in the darkest recesses of this small niche. The stuff moves slowly, but implacably after any intruders that disturb its liquid repose.

Black Oil

HD 4; HP 24; AC 6[13]; Atk Acid (3d8); Move 4; Save 5; AL C; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: Immune to Cold, Heals damage from Electrical attacks. Acid only affects organic materials. Black Oil will burn for 1d4 rounds if set on fire, during which time it causes double damage to anyone it strikes. However, is immune to fire attacks. This stuff is a primordial ancestor of modern day Black Pudding. Once it senses intruders within the caves, it will continue to follow and attack them at every opportunity until destroyed.

AREA ELEVEN

The floor is covered up to a depth of three feet or more with broken shards of gargantuan snail shells. Walking over or through this stuff requires a DEX Check to avoid slipping, falling and incurring 1 point of damage. Should

anyone spend 1d4 hours rummaging around in these heaps of broken shells, they will discover a necklace of shell shards strung on a length of translucent chitin. This necklace grants the wearer the ability to cast *Wall of Shell Shards* once per week.

Wall of Shell Shards

Spell Level: Druid 1st; Magic-User 3rd Level

Range: 30'

Duration: Concentration

The caster conjures up a barrier composed of sharp-edged shell fragments that occupies a straight line 30' long and up to 20' high, or the barrier can be formed into a circular wall in a 15' radius extending up to 10' high. Anyone coming into contact with the wall takes 1d4 damage, +1 point per level of caster. All creatures of 3 HD or fewer must Save or take double damage.

AREA TWELVE

Six gargantuan snail shells lie where the snails died long ago. The shells are incredibly hard and durable and unlikely to be cut by anything the player characters have on them. The shells are also far too large to get through the nearby passageways. Careful examination of the remains will reveal a bluish pearl-like nodule that has formed within one of the carcasses. The Snail-Pearl will allow a spell-caster using *Monster Summoning* spells to conjure forth an equivalent number of giant Carnivorous Snails and is worth 300gp, possibly more to the right buyer.

There is a cumulative 10% chance per Turn that the Snail-Pearl will spontaneously cast *Monster Summoning I* all on its own, bringing forth 1d4 Giant Carnivorous Snails (2 HD, Atk 1d6+2). Once the Snail-Pearl is removed from the Horrid Caves it will cease and desist this bad habit.

Giant Carnivorous Snail

HD 1 per level of summoner; HP max; AC 4[15]; Atk Bite (1d6+1 per HD of caster); Move 6; Save 15; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: 1 in 4 chance to deflect incoming attack spells in random direction.

AREA THIRTEEN

Between two crudely carved stalagmites stands an impressive throne-like bench hewed from a block of basalt. The floor surrounding the basalt bench is covered with scores of hexagonal blue-green glazed clay tiles. The area behind the bench is a filthy mass of decayed fabrics, wood, fern fronds, fruit, nuts and other organic materials that once were considered very valuable and impressive.

The middle section behind the bench shows signs of having been subjected to intense supernatural heat that has transformed the stone into some sort of glass-like substance. No dust settles on this stuff. The floor lights up slightly as anyone walks upon it, growing brighter as they move to the center of the section, then fading again as they leave. There is powerful magic swirling within the glassy walls of this chamber, but it is an ancient, subtle and inhuman sort of magic. Bringing the Snail-Pearl from Area 12 in here will cause it to cast *Monster Summoning I* all over again (see Area 12 for details).

The farthest back section has been cleared of all ornaments and the walls have been covered with a series of three hastily scrawled paintings that depict the alien warlord who once claimed these caves as his primordial palace. Approaching the paintings will cause them to flicker with a cold blue light for 1d4 Turns after which time they will remain dark, the old magic having faded. Painting one shows the Warlord leading his people either in

war or on a hunt as they skewer dozens of ape-like creatures with their barbed stabbing weapons. Painting Two depicts the Warlord perched upon the bench-throne and receiving tribute from serpent-people and other beings. Painting Three shows the Warlord being dismembered in battle with strange spiral-shelled molluscs. The images are crude, but still retain a small measure of their former potency. Anyone touching one of the wall-paintings and failing a Save will go into a trance for an hour, during which time they will experience their consciousness being taken back to the long gone epoch of the Warlord as depicted on the wall. Each time one of the paintings is touched there is a cumulative +1 bonus to all subsequent Saves. Once a painting has been touched enough that there is a +4 bonus, the magic fails and the painting becomes inert.

Anyone that has touched the Third Painting is left with the nagging sensation that the nameless chitinous Warlord may not be entirely dead after all, but remains a prisoner of sorts among the mollusc-things. They will experience strange, disorienting dreams for a few days, but eventually that will all fade and easily be forgotten.

There is a small chamber back towards the passage to Area 12. Inside this chamber is a cache of copper nuggets, amber lumps, aromatic resins (long since dried into sludge), wicker baskets that collapse into dust on contact, rich fabrics that fall to shreds when touched, and a number of small bone sculptures molded into the grotesquely feminine likeness of the larger idols in Area 5. What can be recovered is bulky, fragile and awkward to transport, but will total around 800gp or so, depending on where one tries to sell it. Most buyers who take an interest in these items will very likely want to know more about where they were recovered and it may be possible to make some real money by selling the directions to the opening leading into the Horrid Caves for more than all the loot brought back. Of course, desecrating such an obviously sacred site might also attract the unwelcome attention of chaotic cultists dedicated to the crayfaced lords...



d6	WANDERING MONSTER MATRIX (each group is only encountered once)
1	<p>(1d6) Chitin-Husks HD 1; HP 6; AC 7[12] (hexagonal chitin-shields); Atk (1d4+) cycad root-wood clubs; Move 10; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: release a 10'x10' <i>Stinking Cloud</i> when killed, cloud disperses in 3d4 rounds. Shields collapse into brittle flakes and clubs sprout tiny ferns, becoming useless upon destruction of husk.</p>
2	<p>(1d4) More Chitinous Husks HD 1+1; HP 9; AC 9[10]; Atk (1d6) stone-headed spears; Move 14; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: release a 10'x10' <i>Stinking Cloud</i> when killed, cloud disperses in 1d4 rounds</p>
3	<p>(2d4) A Few More Chitinous Husks HD 2; HP 12; AC 9[10]; Atk barbed bronze stabbing-blade (1d6); Move 9; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: release a 10'x10' <i>Stinking Cloud</i> when killed, cloud disperses in 2d4 rounds. Wear Crayface helmet-masks that are falling apart. Blades do an additional 1d4 damage when yanked free of a target hit on a natural 19 or 20, but only when wielded by chitinous humanoids—the handles are too awkward for others to use properly.</p>
4	<p>(1d4) Still More Chitinous Husks HD 2; HP 12; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 molded fish-bone javelins (1d4+1); Move 10; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15. Special: release a 10'x10' <i>Stinking Cloud</i> when killed, cloud disperses in 1d6 rounds. Also carry light root-wood war clubs (1d4+1 damage).</p>
5	<p>(1) Scuttling Crab-Thing (undead husk) HD 2+1; HP 15; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 pincers 1d6+1 each); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 4/120. Special: Turned as 3 HD undead.</p>
6	<p>(1d4) Red-Striped Centipedes HD 1; HP 1-4 each; AC 9[10]; Atk Bite (1 hp damage + Poison); Move 16; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15. Special: Poison victim gains +2 to Save in order to avoid uncontrollable vomiting for next 4 rounds during which time they are incapacitated and unable to defend themselves. The centipedes will automatically attack any Giant Carnivorous Snails they detect within.</p>

MIND FLAYER HAIKU

BY RUSTY BATTLE AXE

THE DINNER BELL RINGS,
YUMMY ELVEN BRAINS TO EAT,
TENTACLES GRAB HOLD



75
14

TENKAR
8 & B THE **AADGER**
WOSR 74.0 TAVERN RADIO