



THE VAST IN THE DARK

A ZINE ABOUT EXPLORING DARK
AND ALIEN MEGASTRUCTURES
OF AN INFINITE REALM.

CHARLIE FERGUSON-AVERY

REACHING THE VAST

seek the empty, the broken and forgotten;

IT IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.

search for the uncanny, the hidden and wrong;

THEY ARE UNSETTLING TO YOU.

observe this spot with your eyes, your hands and breath;

LET IT INSIDE YOU

whisper so that only you may hear:

"I wish to see the vast in the dark"

And fall backwards without fear

YOU ARE ALREADY THERE-



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A FERAL INDIE PROJECT
FERAL-INDIE-STUDIOS.ITCH.IO
 FOLLOW AND SUPPORT ON:

CHARLES FERGUSON-AVERY

- INSTAGRAM: @charlie_fergusonavery
- TWITTER: @charliefergaves



THE VAST IN THE DARK

The sky is black as night, a tectonic rumbling can be heard overhead; the ruins sprawl out with a fractal madness, their shapes incoherent and puzzling; a vast sea of colorless sand stretches out into the darkness, broken only by the titanic pillars that disappear impossibly into the lightless sky.

This is The Vast, a liminal realm hidden far away from our own. Always waning and on the verge of collapse, it is host to countless lost souls and alien treasures hidden within its crumbling ruins.

The Vast in the Dark is an exploration setting for the world's most popular role-playing game and takes place in a crumbling alien wasteland filled with brutalist mega-structure ruins. It includes tools for generating massive areas to explore as well as unique player options and gameplay changes to keep the focus on player choice and ingenuity over dice-rolling and chance.

USING THIS ZINE

While The Vast in the Dark can be used as a setting location and an interesting place to explore, the focus of this zine is to provide a framework for Referees to quickly generate massive amounts of area to explore with little to no set up. This is done by giving tools for generating maps and areas in regional, local, and small scale, as well as populating them with various features.

In addition to these tools there is a series of setting specific content to use including: player options to choose, hazards to overcome, societies and factions to interact with, and terrifying mysteries to explore. The Vast in the Dark was made with the intention of being modular and easily adapted into any game.

RECOMMENDED SYSTEMS

- DCC
- OSE
- Pathfinder
- Knave
- White Hack
- Black Hack

FEATURES OF THE VAST

No Light: There is no light to speak, only a dim ambient illumination, as if illuminated by a half moon. Attempting to see further than 30ft is difficult at best and only vague shapes can be picked out at a distance more than 60ft.

Sea of Sandy Wastes: A wind battered wasteland made of dust and bits of rubble. Dunes rise and fall as extreme weather strikes without warning. The remains of hastily built shelters pepper the more popular routes, sometimes still occupied by a desperate few.

Titanic Pillars: Enormous lodestone structures that hold up an unseen sky. They show signs of wear and decay from the wastes, threatening to topple in cataclysmic fashion. Caverns pepper their bases, homes to threatening forms of life...

Alien Ruins: Sprawling cities of crumbling buildings. Their shapes are strange, rigid and geometric, they appear as edifices at first, but their insides are wrong and unnerving. Much can be found within their darkened depths; food, water and strange treasures may be plucked, but only if you make it out safely...

Food And Water: Sustenance in The Vast is scarce at best. The most common sources of food and water are-

Pemmican Blocks, usually made from the small insectile lifeforms that scurry in the dark. These creature are strange in shape, the largest growing to the size of snakes, and have sucking mouths for gathering nutrients.

Ruin Wells, stagnant pools of unspoiled water that are occasionally found within the ruins. Settlements spring up around these spots and move once the water is depleted.

Travelers and Society: Mortals trapped, surviving best they can. Traders barter supplies and information for lodestone, prospectors establish settlements and camps near precious resources, and some fervently search for a way out of The Vast. Many have forgotten how they came to this place, many more have even forgotten their names.

Lodestone Currency: Coin is traded freely and fairly, along with the smaller pieces of lodestone that make up the Pillars. Many risk their lives to mine and scavenge the lodestone from the titanic structures, while others are more than happy to kill for it.

The Harrowing: Decay and erosion are accelerated here, even the soul and mind is not safe. Mortals and sentient beings who find themselves spending too much time within The Vast begin to lose traits of their personality, memory, and eventually their drive to escape.

Dangers: Ruins collapse, dust-storms rise, and food runs scarce; the common dangers within The Vast are innumerable. Yet rumors speak of something more. Things that crawl and stalk in the dark, shapes that skitter out from the pillars when no one is watching, monsters that hide within the ruins, waiting for their chance to strike...

YOU ARE A TRAVELER...

You are a *Traveler*, one of the unlucky few who, through action or accident, has found their way into The Vast. Quickly adapting to life among the wastes and ruins, with only your wits and memories to keep you sane. For now, you are not alone; banding together with other Travelers to shoulder the hardships, pool resources, and work together to survive this crumbling purgatory.

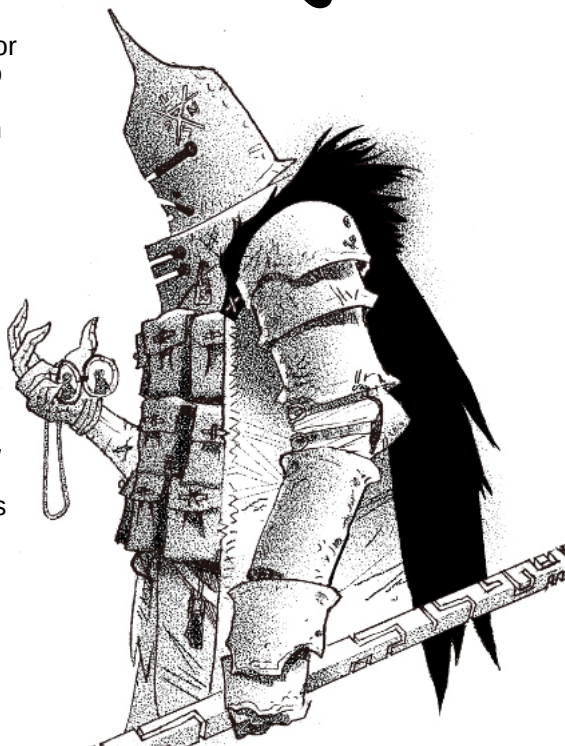
Time will tell if it is enough...

TRAVELER QUIRKS

"Stare into The Vast long enough, and The Vast stares back."

Those who spend enough time as Travelers tend to pick up odd quirks and abilities.

During character creation or advancement, you may randomly select one of the quirks listed below.



ID6 QUIRKS

- 1 **Ruin Plucker** - You gain an extra inventory slot, always loathe to leave things behind. This can be taken multiple times.
- 2 **Enigmatic Paranoia** - You can sense when you are being followed and tracked, you whisper it out loud without realizing it.
- 3 **Hollow Fortitude** - There is a 3-in-6 chance you do not suffer exhaustion when you normally would, your body detaching from its needs.
- 4 **Labyrinthosis** - While in a structure, if you meditate for 10 minutes, you can reliably predict what the next 1d6 rooms will contain; the fractal language of the ruins beginning to make sense.
- 5 **Magnetoception** - If you meditate in a location for 1 hour, you are capable of locating and navigating to it again no matter the distance. Using this ability in a new place removes the old location from your memory.
- 6 **Vacant Amygdala** - You are incapable of feeling fear, supernatural or otherwise.

INVENTORY

Each Traveler can carry a number of items equal to their **Constitution bonus** (referred to as "slots"), with some items requiring more than one inventory slot. *This represents an abstract way of tracking space and weight.*

Additionally, rather than buy and equip items, anytime you arrive safely in a settlement you may assign a number of inventory slots to a specific purpose (First Aid, Navigation, Self-Defense, etc.) and pay 10 coins per slot filled.

After assigned, at a given point during a journey, you may draw any relevant common item from these dedicated slots (Referee's discretion), record it in your inventory, and fill in the appropriate amount of slots.

Unique and magical items must be recorded in their own slots.

While abstract, this allows play to move quickly, cut down on inventory micromanagement, and allow players to make broad strategic choices about their supplies on the journey.

ADDITIONAL SLOTS

Packs

Packs provide extra slots but must be purchased from a settlement.

Bindle - +2 slots, 20 coin

Sack - +6 slots, 80 coin

Backpack - +10 slots, 120 coin

Cargo Transports

Larger supply transports exist, but require a team effort to move.

Pulk - 10 slots, overland speed reduced to 12 miles a day if being pulled alone.

Sleigh - 20 slots, overland speed reduced to 12 miles a day if being pulled by two or fewer people.

CON 1

Defense ({ Longsword })

4 Exploration (Helmet)

5 Exploration (Torch)

7 Survival (Rations)

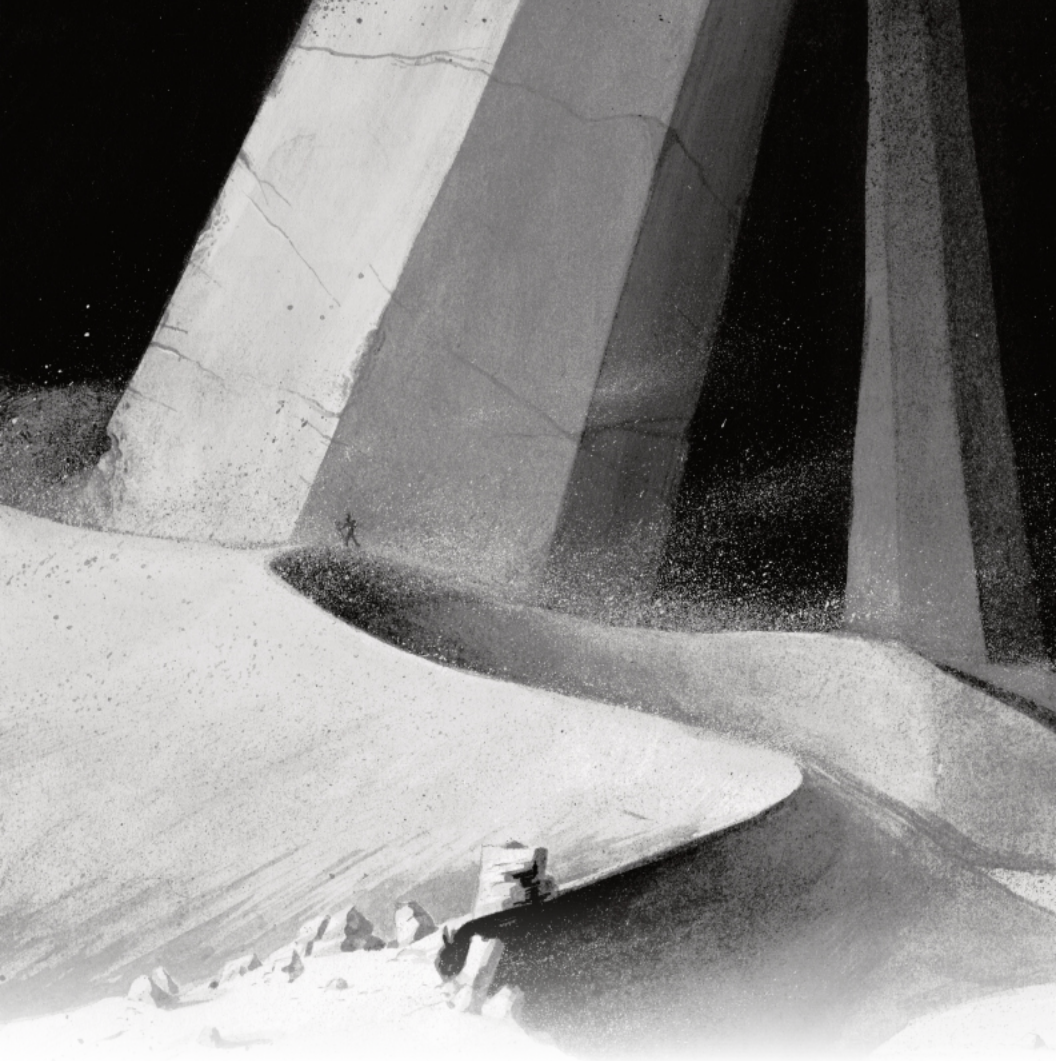
9 Survival (Rations)

9 Shovel

10

EXAMPLE ITEMS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ball Bearings | <input type="checkbox"/> Soapstone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear Trap | <input type="checkbox"/> Spyglass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bottle, Glass | <input type="checkbox"/> Tent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boots, Spiked | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterskin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bucket | Lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrops | <input type="checkbox"/> Candle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chain, 10 ft | <input type="checkbox"/> Lantern |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chest | <input type="checkbox"/> Oil, Flammable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chisel | <input type="checkbox"/> Tinderbox |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crowbar | <input type="checkbox"/> Torch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drill | Armor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grappling Hook | <input type="checkbox"/> Shield, +1 Armor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammer | <input type="checkbox"/> Helmet, +1 Armor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Tongs | <input type="checkbox"/> Leathers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kettle | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Piecemeal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ladder (10 ft) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Chain Mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lockpicks | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Splint Mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magnet | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Plate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manacles | Weapons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metal File | <input type="checkbox"/> Brass Knuckle, Club, Knife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mirror | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Axe, Mace, Spear, Sword |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nails, Iron | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Claymore, Great Axe, Maul |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Net | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Bow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pick | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Crossbow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pole, 10ft | <input type="checkbox"/> Arrows or Bolts, 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rope, 50ft | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sack, Waterproof | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel | |



EXPLORING THE VAST

A majority of the players time in The Vast will be spent traveling the wastes and exploring the ruins that pepper the impossible landscape. Mechanically, traversing The Vast follows these guidelines:

- Travelers on foot can average 18 miles a day/24 hours before needing rest.
- Travelers can move an extra 6 miles a day for a level of exhaustion.
- 1 ration must be consumed per day or suffer a level of exhaustion.
- Encounters and weather occur based on the terrain (pg. 10).
- Compasses don't work normally, only pointing towards the nearest Pillar.

| | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| 3 | STR Injury | Broken Arm |
| 0 | DEX | |
| 4 | CON | Sickened |
| 4 | WIS | |
| 1 | INT | Delirious |
| 2 | CHA | |

EXHAUSTION

The true harm Travelers face within The Vast is rarely of the flesh & blood variety. More common is the slow erosion of their faculties from starvation, insomnia, and infection.

Exhaustion is a form of damage that represents the Traveler's sustained injuries and harm.

A Traveler gains a level of exhaustion when they:

- Lose a night of sleep
- Are severely wounded
- Go a day without food
- Push themselves too hard

When this happens, the Traveler selects one random stat and records a pertinent injury next to it. **So long as this injury exists, all rolls made with that stat are at disadvantage.**

Each full day of rest without travel removes one level of exhaustion.

NAVIGATING THE VAST

Without celestial bodies, compasses, or even light to navigate with, Travelers in the Vast must use a primitive form of orienteering based on landmarks, spoken directions, and lodestones.

Anytime Travelers blindly strike out into the Vast there is a 4-in-6 chance they become lost. Roll this every day they spend traveling. You can decrease your chances of becoming lost by preparing certain navigational "items."

Each item lessens your chances of becoming lost by 1 (down to 0-in-6)

Landmark - Visual point of reference, typically pillars

Directions - Written maps or spoken words.

Tool - Lodestone pendants, spyglasses or divining

Light - Torches, lanterns or magic

BECOMING LOST

Anytime the Travelers fail to navigate The Vast they are considered Lost. The effects are determined by their original chances of becoming lost (4-in-6 if they struck out blindly)

Chance and Lost Effect

- 1-in-6 Late** - 6 miles short of destination
- 2-in-6 Off course** - 6 miles away from destination in a random direction.
- 3-in-6 Dangerously off course** - As above but 12 miles away.
- 4-in-6 Utterly lost** - Continue to roll until you are successful, this is how many days you travel before finally returning to where you started.

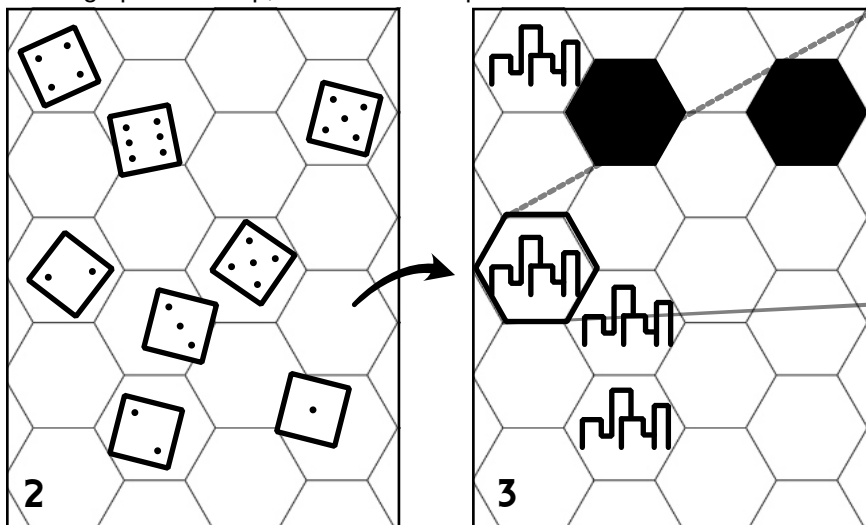
GENERATING THE VAST

The following section details methods for quickly generating a hexcrawl map and dungeon with little to no prep. This is done by generating areas at a **regional scale** (landscape and terrain features), a **local scale** (a 6 mile environment), and **ruin scale** (floor plans and point crawl) as the travelers interact and explore the world.

REGIONAL SCALE

Landscape and Terrain features

1. Bring up a hex map, each hex will represent 6 miles of distance.



2. Drop a handful of dice onto the map.

3. Record the terrain based on the face-up number.

D6

TERRAIN

1



Wastes - Barren swaths of grey dust and sand, prone to sandstorms and filled with little.

2-4



Ruins - Enormous towers of stone that stretch miles across and reach up to an unseen ceiling.

5-6



Pillars - Hives of erratic and crumbling architecture, sometimes populated with life...

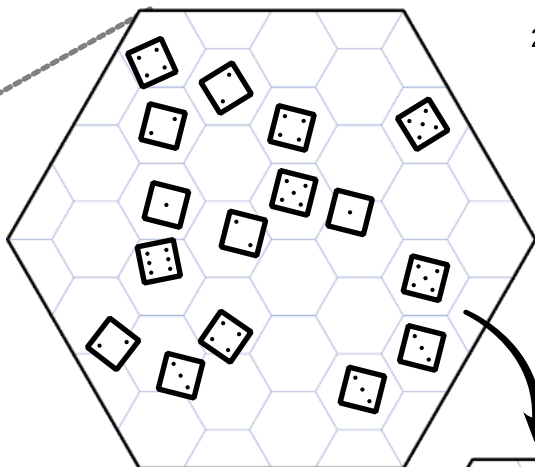
4. All remaining hexes are wastes.

Each one of the hexes within the Regional Scale can be subdivided into 1 mile hexes and populated in a similar fashion. To do so follow the steps for the **Local Scale** (next page)

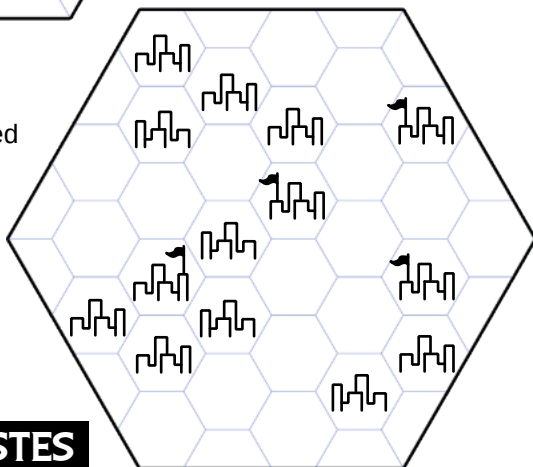
LOCAL SCALE

A six mile environment

1. Select one of the hexes at a regional scale.



2. Create a six mile hex (example shown) and drop a handful of dice into it, each one of these hexes represents 1 mile.



3. Record the terrain based on the face-up number and regional hex.

All remaining hexes are wastes

(Example - Ruin hex)

| D6 | RUINS | WASTES |
|-----|----------------|--------|
| 1 | Wastes | Wastes |
| 2-4 | Ruins | |
| 5 | Occupied Ruins | Ruins |
| 6 | Ruins | |

PILLARS See pg. 10

Pillar hexes are considered to be filled entirely with the massive cyclopean columns. However, that does not mean they are beyond exploring...

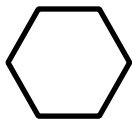
AMOUNT OF DICE

More dice means more ruins and more locations. As a suggestion:

1 die per 6 hexes - Barren, little can be found within this wasteland

1 dice per 3 hexes - Sparse, yet enough worth exploring.

1 die per hex - Plentiful, a labyrinth of ruins to delve and lose yourself in.



WASTES

Vast swathes of dust and sand, punctuated by crumbling foundation and collapsed ceiling. Travelers are quick to leave it behind as they are prone to freak, dangerous storms.

Roll for weather every day spent in the wastes and once on the encounter table.

2d6 Effect

1-6 Calm - *Chill gusts of wind at most.* No effect.

7 Dust Storm - *Dust is whipped into a blinding frenzy.* Your travel is reduced by 6 miles and it is impossible to make out landmarks.

8 Wind Blast - *Vicious wind strikes at the unsuspecting.* Unprotected lights and fires are blown out and any Traveler caught in the open risks being blown away for 3d6 damage.

9 Stone Hail - *The ceiling rumbles and stone rains down.* Unprotected Travelers must Save versus Breath or suffer 3d6 damage.

10 Pillar fog - *The caverns belch a chill and ominous mist.* Add +5 to the encounter roll for the day and it is impossible to make out landmarks.

11 Grit Slide - *The dunes shift and collapse like avalanches.* Save versus breath or suffer 3d6 damage and lose 6 miles of progress.

12 Collapse - *An earsplitting crack and tremendous roar from above.* A mile wide chunk of ceiling falls from above, every Traveler must gain a level of exhaustion running or be crushed.



P!LLARS

The titanic decaying columns of lodestone that stand like lonely crumbling gods. The fissures and caves that ring their foundation appear as horrid black scars.

Roll on the encounter table for every hour spent gathering lodestone

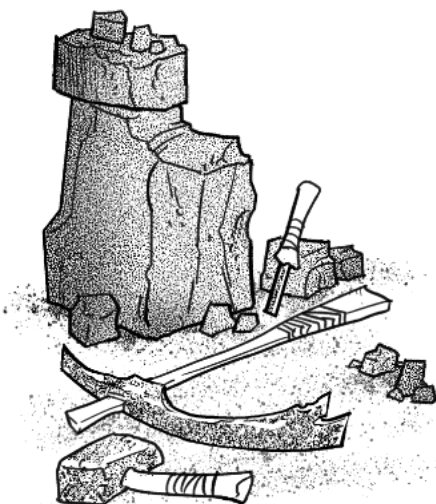
You may choose to gather the precious lodestone of the pillars or mine it directly (if you brought the proper tools). However doing so risks unwanted attention...

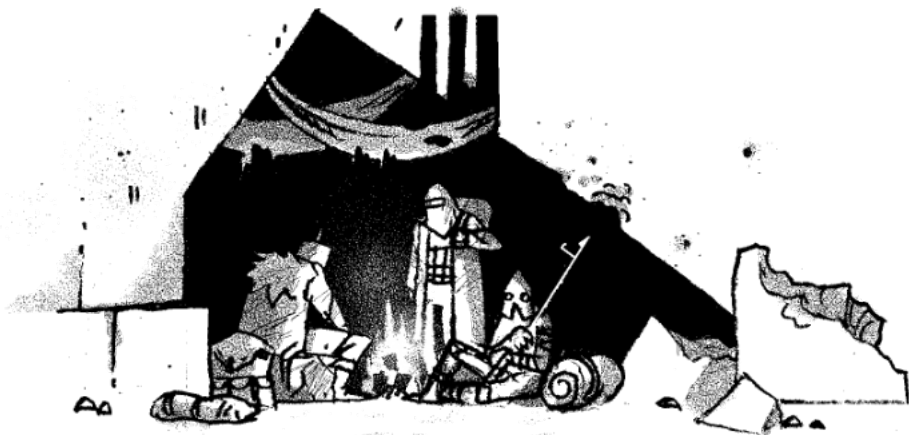
For each hour spent:

Gathering - 1d2 Raw Lodestone and +1d6 to the encounter roll.

Mining - *Requires tools.* 1d6 Raw Lodestone and +10 to the encounter roll.

Each Raw Lodestone takes up 1 slot of inventory and must be broken down and refined at a settlement. Each one yields 1d10x10 value in coins.





OCCUPIED RUINS

Tucked away among the alien structures are the occasional camps and settlements. Here wayward souls gather to re-cooperate and survive to the best of their ability.

Some find peace and purpose in their new life, others struggle and remain plagued by their vanishing memories.

Travelers may rest, recover exhaustion, and resupply while here.

SETTLEMENT

d4 Mood

- 1 Peaceful but Sullen
- 2 Quiet but Anxious
- 3 Active but Desperate
- 4 Mirthful but Pained

1d6 Who They Are

- 1 Merchants and brokers
- 2 Storytellers and singers
- 3 Warriors and cutthroats
- 4 Artisans and craftsmen
- 5 Prophets and philosophers
- 6 Explorers and cartographers

1d8 They Have...

- 1 A working smithy
- 2 Collections of maps
- 3 A reservoir of water
- 4 Hunting grounds of insects
- 5 Stores of lodestone
- 6 A well-known bazaar
- 7 Armory of tools and weapons
- 8 A dangerous artifact

1d10 Prominent Locals

- 1 Magus, with books for sale
- 2 Dervish, with a coat of blades
- 3 Masque, whispers secrets
- 4 Boot seller, none are pairs
- 5 Pyromancer, jars fire for use
- 6 Scrollmeister, deals in spells
- 7 Black Helm, dangerous rogue
- 8 Wastecrier, delivers news
- 9 Nod, smiles and never speaks
- 10 Flutist, songs return memories

1d12 Problem

- 1 Food will soon run out.
- 2 Water has been vanishing.
- 3 Locals are disappearing.
- 4 Metal is scarce.
- 5 Tools are rusting away.
- 6 A political schism.
- 7 The complex is collapsing.
- 8 A great death has occurred.
- 9 Someone is a murderer.
- 10 An artifact in the ruins stirs.
- 11 Dangerous beliefs arise.
- 12 Crawl have moved in.



RUINS

The enormous and decaying megastructures that pepper the wastes and seem to draw Travelers to them. Their insides are mazes of strange geometry and hostile architecture.

They are the only reliable sources of food and water, in addition to the strange and dark treasures that lie waiting in their depths...

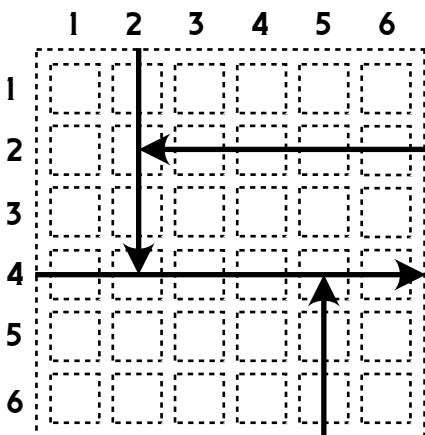
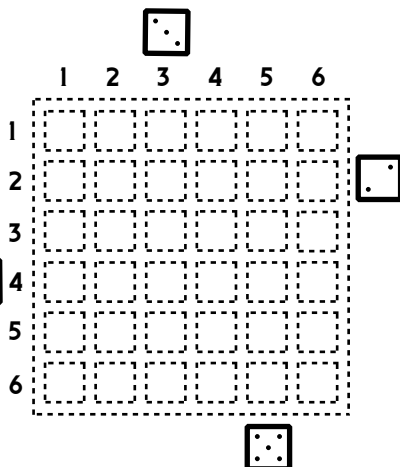
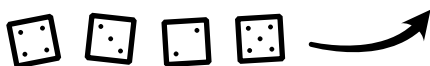


1. Select one of the Ruin hexes at a local scale.



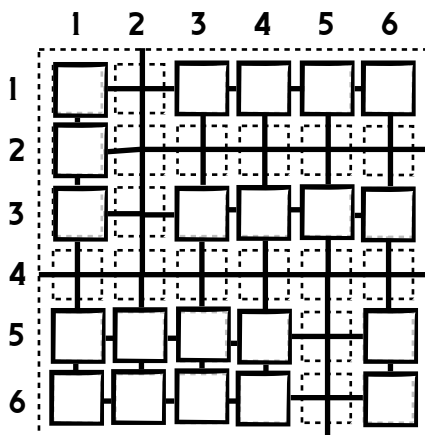
2. Create a 6x6 grid (as shown below). This will be a point-crawl style map with each "room" being somewhat nebulous in size.

3. Roll 4d6 and assign each one to a side of the grid.



4. Starting at one side draw a row across the grid based on the number of the dice, this will be a hallway.

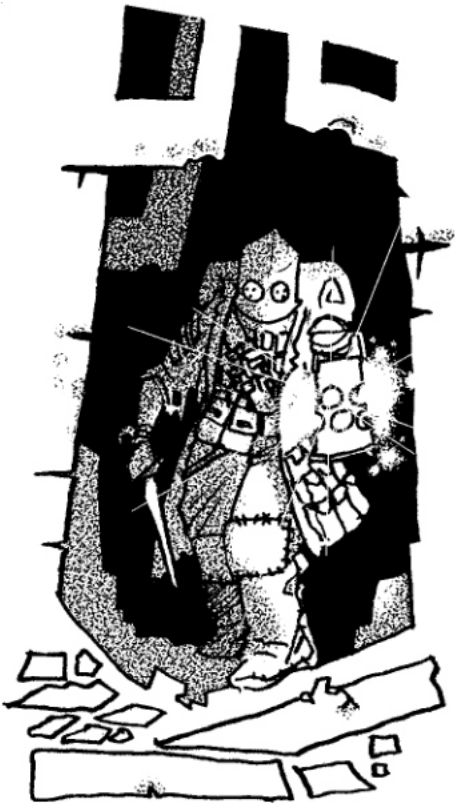
5. Repeat the same for the three remaining dice, stopping whenever they collide with another hallway.



6. Connect points to all adjacent points or the hallways.

Hallways that terminate on the edge of the grid are entrances to the ruins.

Each point [box] is a room or area, while lines represent halls or entryways.



TIME

Traveling from point to point in a hallway takes 10 minutes, the halls are sometimes wide with odd geometric features, other times so tight that Travelers must squeeze through to move ahead.

Traveling from room to room - takes 10 minutes, sometimes the transition is a gradual change in architecture, other times it is clearly divided with an entryway.

Searching a room takes 30 minutes since the rooms are massive and oddly shaped.

These speeds are assuming the characters are moving slowly and carefully.

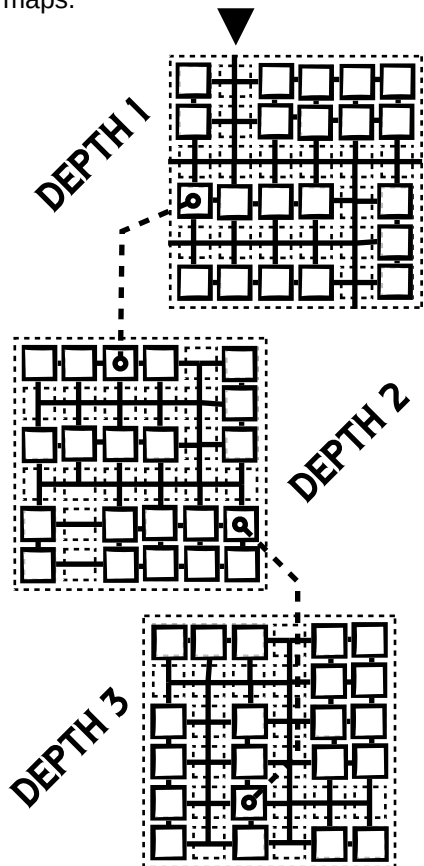
EXPLORING THE RUINS

Depth

Depth is a measure of how far into the ruins Traveler's have gone and affects the treasures and dangers they encounter.

Occasionally a room will feature a passage that leads to a deeper level.

Each time this occurs the Traveler's have gone one level of Depth. Create a new layout when this occurs and mark where the point of descent leads to on the maps.



ROOMS AND FEATURES

Each time a room is entered:

Roll a d20 for the room

1d10+current depth for the feature

1d10+current depth for encounter

The "Room"

The "rooms" within the Ruins are puzzling and seemingly designed without mortal intent, Traveler's therefore describe them with the closest architectural object they resemble.

(D20) YOU ENTER A...

- 1 Plaza** - *A wide expanse of tiled floor stretches out into the dark. If there is a ceiling above it is too high to be seen.*

Occasionally populated with strange "sculptures" these open spaces also tend to be ambush spots for more conniving individuals.

- 1 Statue Garden** - Odd geometric stones crowd this area, making direct travel difficult and unnerving. There is a 2-in-6 chance Ambushers prowl here. **As Bandit**
- 2 Obelisk** - towering and foreboding, a single obelisk rests in the center of the plaza. Seen as an object of worship, some have left offerings behind. (2d10 coins and 1d6 random tools)
- 3 Eerily Empty** - It is uncannily barren. Voices travel far and echoes return as whispers.

- 2 Graveyard** - *Countless identical plinths sit arranged in dozens of ordered rows. A solemn atmosphere permeates this area.*

Those with more macabre sensibilities see the grave-like similarities right away. Some go so far as to turn the place into a makeshift cemetery.

- 1 Hollow Coffers** - The plinths are hollow and crack open with a blow from a sledge. Doing so draws attention, roll on the encounter table. Inside each coffer is a single silver "coin."
- 2 Charnel House** - Skulls and remains have been carefully stacked on the plinths, names and epitaphs scratched into them. Some are ancient...
- 3 Quiet** - The air is still here and demands reverence of some form.

- 3 Archive** - *Row after row of towering structures are arranged like the shelves of some massive library. They stand dozens of feet tall and stretch thrice that in length.*

The structures here appear imposing, but time has taken their toll and some are close to collapse.

- 1 Carved** - The sides of these shelves are patterned with geometric forms like some alien mural, they are quite easy to climb.
- 2 Teetering** - the shelves stand precariously and could be toppled with a strong push or two. Doing so causes them to domino in catastrophic fashion, dealing 10d6 to anyone caught underneath and alerting all in earshot, roll on the encounter table.

4 Kennel - *Small claustrophobic rooms are arranged like cabinets along a massive shear wall. Skittering can be heard far above.*

The kennels tend to attract life, both mortal and not. Climbing up to the rooms reveals remains of refugees and hideouts, along with more dangerous life...

d6 You Find...

1-3 Nothing

4 A random tool

5 A terrified traveler

6 One of the Crawl (pg. 23)

5 Oubliette - *The floor of this room is a steep and sleek funnel that leads to a single hole just large enough for a mortal to slip into.*

Walking across this room is difficult, save versus Breath or slide into the hole and drop 1d6x10 feet. The pit is never empty...

1 *Corpse Pile* - The crumbling remains of previous victims. There are 1d10 random tools if you dig them out.

2 *Hidden Treasure* - Buried among the pile of dust and dried bone at the bottom is something of value. (roll on the treasure table pg. 21)

3 *Someone Trapped* - They cry out weakly to be rescued from the pit. Close to death, they will perish without immediate assistance. They will be a helpful companion if saved.

6 Temple - A gateway leads into a lengthy room with a vaulted ceiling and terminates into a sanctum. The sanctum ceiling spirals up into the dark, defying your eyes.

This place has an odd effect on the minds of pious travelers. Drawn like moths to the flame to worship this space.

1 Altar - An enormous geometric sculpture of strange and wicked shape sits as some grim centerpiece. It is engraved with veins of precious metal worth 1d6x50 coins if stripped.

2 Throne - A singular pedestal sits upon a wide and regal base. Akin to some seat for a massive being, an object of importance has been left upon it. (Roll on the treasure table)

3 Worshipers - 1d20 penitent and troubled souls gather here in the dark. They feverishly worship with desperate whispers. Attack if disturbed.
As Bandit.

7 Pit - The floor gives way, in its place lies a cavernous pit that drops into the dizzying dark. There is no bottom in sight.

A vertical descent that leads deeper into the ruins.

1 Tiered - Series of stair-like tiers descend into to dark. Descent and ascent is easy. **Depth +1.**

2 Distressed - It appears as a collapsed sinkhole at first, yet the walls of the pit are strange geometric patterns. It can be climbed, albeit with some difficulty. **Depth +1.**

3 Shear - A smooth square pit descends down into the dark. It will require climbing gear to rappel... **Depth +1d6.**

8 Vault - A short room terminates with an enormous gate of some kind. A wall of rusted iron acts as a featureless and imposing door. A gentle hum can be heard on the other side.

There is treasure here, for those forceful or cunning enough to pilfer it.

The "door" of rusted iron is as thick as a fist and will be difficult to break into. Those who find a way in will be rewarded with blocks of identical lodestone worth 1d10x100 coins and 1d3 treasures.

9 Atrium - A massive open space lies below an imposing ceiling of crumbling structural supports. Ahead is a grand entryway further into the ruins, as if this is some transitional area.

Travelers gather at this precipice. Perhaps a subconscious will of the ruins or some long forgotten tradition.

A makeshift camp with 1d6 Travelers, willing to trade goods and information.

10 Tower - A vertical chimney travels up to frightful heights, the ceiling of which is beyond sight. Echoes seem to linger in the dark space far above.

This room leads to the surface if it appears at a Depth greater than 1, otherwise it leads to nowhere except a ceiling hundreds of feet up.

There is a 2-in-6 chance the tower has something akin to stairs, otherwise it must be scaled with some difficulty.

- 11 Ossuary** - A long and winding tunnel with smooth cracked walls is peppered with small hand-sized holes. The holes burrow deep and seem to go on forever.

The holes here are not empty. Filled with curious trinkets as well as curious dangers. Roll 1d6 anytime a Traveler searches a hole.

d6 You Find...

- 1 *Bone* - Broken bits or teeth.
- 2 *Oil* - Flammable, burns 1 hour.
- 3 *Coin* - A flat silver disk.
- 4 *Lodestone* - A perfect sphere.
- 5 *Bite* - Suffer 1d6 damage.
- 6 *Keepsake* - Something small from home...

- 12 Great Hall** - Identical sequoia-sized pillars stand in perfect rows, holding up the ceiling of this titanic room. Rumbling can be heard above as the pillars creak with the impossible weight they bear.

Noise travels quickly here, sometimes alerting unwanted attention...

Roll twice for the encounter.

- 13 Maze** - The walls close tightly here, twisting and turning in uncomfortable directions both vertical and horizontal. The path splits in places, a hellish fractal maze.

With no pattern or sensible layout, it is far too easy to get lost in this maze...

Travelers must roll 3 successful Intelligence checks in a row to make it through this area. **Failure:** 1d6 hours of time have been lost and **roll an encounter.**

- 14 Bathhouse** - Deep circular basins are carved into the floor of this room. Each is filled with water and sediment including chunks of stone from the fractured ceiling.

The filthy water replenishes here from the countless cracks and fractures after a day. It is drinkable but only after being distilled or sanitized. There is a 1-in-20 chance of treasure hidden in the detritus at the bottom of one of the basins.

- 15 Amphitheater** - A massive semicircular room, the floor is nothing but rows of concentric steps that lead to a singular small stage against a flat decaying wall.

1 *False whispers* - The acoustics are strange here. Whispers are heard from all angles...

2 *Observers* - There are 2d6 mortals diligently watching the "stage." They are enthralled by "the show" and demand silence, growing violent if the Travelers cause a scene.

3 *The Thespian* - A tall jet-black figure stands silently in the center of the "stage." They speak only when spoken to and answers with elegant, theatrical flourishes of their body.

They know more about the Vast than anyone else, and are more dangerous than the oldest of the Crawl...

- 16 Cellar** - Angled channels lead into tight, claustrophobic rooms. They are cold, like a graveyard in winter.

The cold is unbearable after several hours, yet the rooms have an odd quirk: Nothing rots, decays or ages so long as they stay in one of the rooms.

17 Planetarium - *A titanic domed room, large enough to house a castle, echos with every step. Strange coiling cosmic designs cover the ceiling, the detail impossibly intricate.*

This room has odd effects on the psyche of mortals. Those who dare to meditate or to dream within this room are visited by its power...

Roll 1d20+WIS, INT, or CHA

- 1 You dream of the Crawl, their pain, their anguish, their hate. *Lose a Memory (pg. 22).*
- 2-10 Senseless visions, dream-mazes of impossible geometry. *Gain a level of exhaustion*
- 11-15 A vision of things yet to pass. *You may make one roll at advantage the next day.*
- 16-18 The fractal geometry spreads before you. *You know what the next 1d6 rooms will contain.*
- 19-20 You dream of home, of the life before the Vast. *You regain one memory (pg. 22).*
- 21+ You dream of the Schema. *The Wyrm will arrive shortly, defeat it and you will be rewarded with a great treasure.*

18 Dormitory - *Slabs of oblong stone lie in perfect rows like mortuary tables. The air is still, breathing seems difficult.*

This place has not earned its name for just looks. Travelers who rest upon the slabs fall into a deep, unbreakable sleep. They remain unchanged in a form of stasis until they are awoken by an outside source.

There is a 1-in-6 chance that someone is asleep upon one of the slabs. Their age is uncertain as are their motives.

19 Dump - *Channels from the walls and ceiling rhythmically dump mounds of detritus into the recessed floor of this room. Broken architecture, soiled water, graveled sand, it all ends in the floor of this room.*

Many things find their way into this great dump, some are even useful.

For every hour spent searching the mounds of garbage in this room there is a 3-in-6 chance of finding:

- 1 A random tool
 - 2 1d6x10 lodestone.
 - 3 1d3 unspoiled rations.
- However, there is also a 3-in-6 chance of suffering:
- 1 Cuts and cruises, 1d6 damage.
 - 2 A serious injury, 1 exhaustion.
 - 3 A hidden enemy, roll encounter.

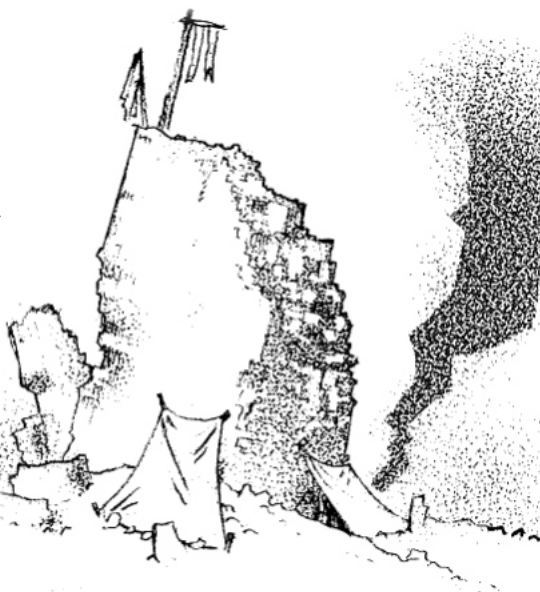
20 Pyramid - *Gargantuan and imposing, a massive multi-faceted pyramid sits like some terrible beast. Closer inspection reveals it is crafted from a singular piece of stone...*

- 1 Glimmering Capstone - Made of lodestone and engraved with fractal veins of gold. Weighing 500 lbs. it is worth 1d6x200 coins if safely transported.
- 2 Maddening hum - Every hour spent here requires a Save versus Charm or gain a level of exhaustion.
- 3 Crumbling - The sides if the pyramid are unstable, like a mountain before an avalanche. Disturbing the pyramid causes a landslide of rubble to come rolling down, dealing 5d6 to all caught in its path.

FEATURES

1d10+current depth for the feature.

- 1 **Dead Traveler** - Petrified and desiccated, a mournful look on their face. There is a 2-in-6 chance they have a random tool.
- 2 **Map** - Scratched and carved with ragged haste. You can see what the next 1d6 rooms will be.
- 3 **Shaft** - A small vertical descent into the dark. +1 Depth.
- 4 **Stairs Down** - Unsteady, geometric protrusions lead down. +1 Depth.
- 5 **Crevasse** - A cracked scar runs the length of the room. 3-in-6 chance of +1d3 Depth
- 6 **Devastation** - Broken, collapsed and crumbling. This room takes twice as long to cross.
- 7 **Excavation** - Someone or something has been digging.
 - 1 A hollow cavern.
 - 2 A lodestone deposit
 - 3 Deeper, +1 Depth
- 8 **Pool, Spoiled** - Deep puddles of foul-smelling water
- 9 **Pool, Stagnant** - A basin of clear, tasteless water. One week's worth.
- 10 **Stash of Loot** - Tucked away by someone for later use. 1d6 random tools and 1d6 rations.
- 11 **Warning** - Cryptic and foreboding, scratched hastily into a surface.
- 12 **Bone pile** - Like gravel across a trail, the floor is littered with countless broken bones.
- 13 **Bug Nest** - Buzzing diminutive life gathers in the dark. Can be harvested for 1d3x1d3 rations.
- 14 **Vein of Metal** - Vast sections of rusted iron or corroded copper. It can be mined and sold as raw lodestone (pg. 10)
- 15 **Vein of Precious Metal** - Streaks and accents of shimmering metal. Can be mined and sold as raw lodestone but twice the value.
- 16 **Abandoned Camp** - Scattered remains and supplies. 1d3 tools and 1d6 rations.
- 17 **Ration Stockpile** - Enormous, neatly stacked blocks of pemmican, enough to feed a settlement for months.
- 18 **Treasure** - Hidden among the corners and recesses is something of value. Roll on the Treasure Table
- 19 **Caved-in** - A collapse has rendered this room impassable. There is no way forward, remove additional entryways and exits.
- 20 **A Familiar Room** - This place is calm and strangely familiar. Do you know what it is?



TREASURE

There is a reason mortals seek The Vast and risk everything to delve deep into its ruins. ...

1d20+current depth for treasure.

I-10 SOMETHING USEFUL

- 1 Seer Stone** - *A beautiful orb of cut glass. Reveals fissures of light on the ceiling if looked through. Allows for navigation even when landmarks are invisible.*
- 2 Spell Eater** - *A octagonal plate of hardened green metal. Once per day, the plate may absorb one spell that targets you, growing painfully hot when it does so.*
- 3 Dowsing Charm** - *A small tri-pointed star made of pearl-stone. Points to the nearest source of water.*
- 4 Bleeder** - *Jagged sharpened stone the color of coal. Can be wielded as a blade, wounds made with it do not heal quickly and weep black ooze ichor for 1d6 damage every day.*
- 5 Torch Stone** - *A luminescent cylinder that is warm to the touch. Glows like a lantern when fed blood, 1 HP for 1 Hour of light.*
- 6 Alarm Band** - *A circlet that seems made of woven bone. Vibrates intensely when Crawl are near.*

II-19 SOMETHING SPECIAL

- 1 Dreamless** - *A bead that seems to swirl with color. You no longer need to sleep, your appearance grows haggard with time.*
- 2 Stone Dance** - *Grey powder that feels like needles to the touch. Anything coated in this powder passes through stone like water.*

3 Weigh No More - *A stone crescent, weightless and azure. As long as it is held in hand, the wielder is weightless.*

4 Unmoved - *A cube of iron with tarnished gold lines. When held in place and struck with force the cube will be immovable until verbally released by the wielder.*

5 Lying Coin - *An octagonal lead disk, painfully cold to the touch. The coin hums when lies are told.*

6 Melder - *Fused and broken jade, sticky like scabs. Touching the fresh dead heals you for 1d6 HP a minute as they are absorbed.*

SOMETHING GREAT AND TERRIBLE 20+

- 1 Transference** - *Two plates of tarnished gold. Can bring back the dead, but only if another life is taken and placed in one plate.*
- 2 Forgotten** - *A tablet of soapstone and a stylus of iron. Thoughts and ideas carved into this tablet are forgotten, spreading like a virus from mortal to mortal.*
- 3 Annihilation** - *A heavy staff of chipped and broken obsidian. When something is slain by this staff, it is utterly annihilated, stricken from the memory of the world and mortals.*
- 4 Incineration** - *A single pale flame, utterly colorless. It burns and spreads like any other flame, but can never be put out.*
- 5 Transmutation** - *A simple sphere of polished lead. Anything this orb directly touches turns to lead.*
- 6 Command** - *A tiara-sized ring of glittering bismuth. All who can hear and understand this wielder will follow their commands without question.*

THE HARROWING

Metal rusts, stone crumbles and food petrifies at an accelerated rate within the Vast, as if the place itself is cursed with decay and erosion in all forms.

Most troubling is that this is not just reserved for the physical, as mortals who spend too long in The Vast and suffer great hardships begin to have their spirits and psyches ebb like dust in the wind. This is called **The Harrowing** and it is an erosion of memory, drive, and desire.

When a Traveler first enters The Vast they select 5 memories or drives that guide them.

Memories

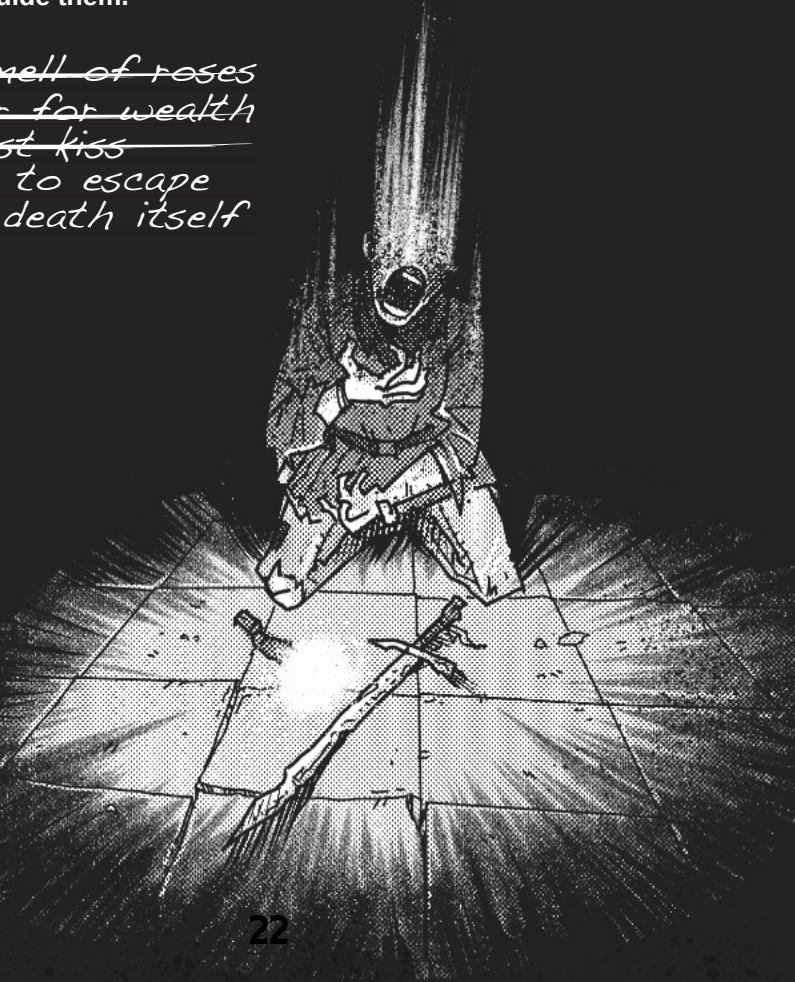
- ~~1 The smell of roses~~
- ~~2 Hunger for wealth~~
- ~~3 My first kiss~~
- ~~4 A need to escape~~
- ~~☠ Cheat death itself~~

Each time they suffer some terrible hardship, there is a chance that they lose one of these pieces of their personality.

Possible hardships include:

- Dropping to 0 hit points.
- Gain a 7th level of exhaustion.
- Effect of an object or place.
- Experiencing a great tragedy.

When the 5th and final memory is lost, they are either killed, become and NPC or wander aimlessly towards the caverns that line the pillars...



THE CRAWL

Don't look too closely, you might see something you recognize...

They are called the Crawl. Who gave them that name originally has long been forgotten. They creep out from the fissures and caves of the pillars and seek the deepest recesses of the ruins for some unknowable reason.

They are nightmare monstrosities, chimeras of mortal bodies warped and wrapped into each other. They hunt Travelers and the lost with reckless abandon, motivated by some dark and sadistic need.

No one truly knows how the Crawl are propagated, yet many swear they see the terrified likeness of their lost companions in their twisted forms...

CYCLOPS

Bodies twisted as if grappling, a single caved head that thrums with hollow notes. They are never alone...

HD 2 | HP 10

Move:

Defense: As Hide

Attack: Fist and Claw 1d4/1d4

Call in the Dark: *They cry for each other in the dark.* Every round they are aware of the Travelers, there is a 1-in-6 chance another Cyclops will appear.

THE WYRM

A draconian slithering monster that is seen only in the deepest pits of the ruins. Few ever escape it...

HD 15 | HP 150

Move: Fly Double Standard

Defense: As Scale

Attack: Claws 1d8/1d8 and Maw 2d10 or Howl

Mimicry: *It prefers to ambush, luring with its many tongues.* The Wyrms can perfectly imitate the voice of any mortal it has heard.

Howl: *Every one of its mouth bellows in a scream.* **As Attack,** all within sight must Save versus Breath. **Success:** Half damage **Fail:** 3d6 sonic damage and become deafened for 1d6 hours.

MEDUSA

Appears as a trio of screaming lovers, its head both terrible to behold and pulsing with frightening harmonic power...

HD 5 | HP 25

Move:

Defense: As Hide

Attack: Bite 1d8

Petrifying Scream: *Their shrieks tense muscle and freeze the mind.*

As Attack, all within sight must save versus charm. **Success:** No effect, advantage on subsequent saves. **Fail:** stunned for 1 minute.

GRIFFON

Dozens of hands writhe in the guise of wings and a face. Fingers twitch hungrily around drooling jaws...

HD 8 | HP 50

Move: Fly Standard

Defense: As Hide

Attack: Maw 1d8 and Devour

Devour: *The fingers snare and drag victims to its maw.* Save versus Hold or become trapped in its mouth and suffer 2d6 damage every turn. When a player suffers 15 damage in this fashion, Save versus Hold again or be swallowed whole.

FACTIONS OF THE VAST

Pacts bound with communal purpose and perhaps communal ends...

Bands of like-minded Travelers gather together for strength and shared purpose. Traditions and talents emerge from these factions, some of which they are eager to share.



LODESTONE BROKERS

Sled caravans of merchants and traders, loaded down with wares and wealth for the next settlement they visit.

They are cunning deal-makers, always fair but typically thinking far ahead to their next mark.

If you assist their caravans on a full trade route, they will teach you their ways.

What's Fair is Fair: A good deal is always respected. When trading you may freely barter common items for common items and magic items for magic items at no cost and no matter the value difference.

CANDLEKEEPERS

Servants of the flickering light, these nomadic warrior poets seek out those in need. To them there is no burden too great to bear.

Dour and crowned in candles, their words betray a hint of hope and their altruism is never in question.

If you join them on a call to action, they will show you how to bear the burdens of others.

A Burden Shared: A pain riposted. When an ally in arm's reach would gain a level of exhaustion or lose a memory you may instead take a level of exhaustion.

DEVOTEES OF THE WANING LODGE

Heavy tattered cloaks and bodies that betray a terrible change, the Devotees congregate in the dark of ruins and pillars.

They believe The Vast a "great lodge" that has been abandoned to ruin and seek to bring its collapse with haste and zeal.

If you assist their demolitions they will gift you with their unfettered devotion

Devotion of Ruin: There is peace in embracing the end. When taken you lose 1 memory. You do not suffer the effects of exhaustion or injury. You can still lose memories from too much exhaustion.

ENCOUNTERS

Ruins: Each room roll 1d10+current depth for encounter.

Wastes or Overland Travel: Each day roll 1d10

| | |
|-------|---|
| 1-5 | Nothing , all is calm |
| 6 | Lost Traveler , needs food and shelter. Helpful if assisted. |
| 7 | Lodestone Broker , carrying wares and supplies on a heavy pulk, willing to trade, buy, or sell. <i>Limit 100 coin.</i> |
| 8 | 1d6 Bandits , demand a ration for each of them or 100 lodestone. Willing to kill, but flees if the battle is lost. |
| 9 | 1d8 Lodestone Prospectors, 1d20 raw lodestone (pg. 10) on a sleigh, cautious of strangers, hostile if harassed. <i>As Traveler.</i> |
| 10-12 | 1d6 Cyclops, clustered together for warmth, smelling the air for unwary mortals. |
| 13 | 1d6 Cutthroats , demand all rations or lodestone. Willing to kill, and a 2-in-6 chance they fight to the death. <i>As Traveler.</i> |
| 14 | 1d8 Waning Lodge Initiates , currently pulling apart the walls and structures. Area will be collapsed within a day, hostile if stopped. <i>As Magus and Bandits.</i> |
| 15-16 | 1d3 Medusa , curled into the corners and hidden spots, listening for the sound of steps. |
| 17 | Griffon , resting on the highest point, the remains of its latest victim are nearby. |
| 18 | 1d8 Delvers , haven't seen the surface for a long time. Willing to trade, buy, or sell. <i>Limit 2000 coin. As Traveler and Magus.</i> |
| 19 | Lone Survivor , a hollow look in their face, warns of something terrible ahead... |
| 20 | The Wyrms arrive , in all its terrible splendor. |

Bandits

2HD | 10HP | Armor as Hide | Attack as Weapon | Retreats at half health.

Magus

3HD | 9HP | Armor as Hide | Attack: Chisel 1d6 |

Magic: Knows 1d3 random spells | Retreats at half health.

Traveler

3HD | 18HP | Armor as Scale | Attack as Weapon, *Prospector: Pick 1d8* |

Special: 1-in-6 chance of carrying a treasure (pg. 21) | 2-in-6 chance, fights to the death otherwise retreats at half health.

THE SKY IS BLACK AS NIGHT. A TECTONIC RUMBLING CAN BE HEARD OVERHEAD: THE RUINS SPRAWL OUT WITH A FRACTAL MADNESS. AND A VAST SEA OF COLORLESS SAND STRETCHES OUT INTO THE DARKNESS.

THIS IS THE VAST. A LIMINAL REALM HIDDEN FAR AWAY FROM OUR OWN. ALWAYS WANING AND ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE. IT IS HOST TO COUNTLESS LOST SOULS AND ALIEN TREASURES HIDDEN WITHIN ITS CRUMBLING RUINS.

The Vast in the Dark is a setting and toolbox for the world's most popular roleplaying game, it contains:

Brutalist Alien flavor: A lightless wasteland populated by brutalist megastructures. Small societies of and factions have cropped up and settled within the various ruins attempting to survive and remain sane.

No-Prep World Generation: A toolbox to build massive hexcrawl maps, a local area within each hex, and dungeon complexes within those smaller local areas quickly and easily enough that you can do on the fly.

Player Options of The Vast: feats and perks with flavor, from "Ruinplucker" to "Vacant Amygdala" designed to give "weird tools" for the player to use and exploit.

Navigation, Inventory, and exhaustion system: quick down-and-dirty rules for surviving the wastes and how to run these areas without worrying about micromanagement.

Optional Horror Elements: The Harrowing is a form of ego-decay. Linger too long and you will lose memories, joys, and even the drive to leave. It is only a matter of time before you become one of the Crawl...

"I wish to see the vast in the dark"



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