

# Beyond the Black Gate Compendium

2011



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( Much respect to the immeasurable imagination and talent of Sidney Sime, whose art graces these pages  
without his posthumous permission )

## **Magic Items for 1st level characters**

Occasionally I'm tempted to throw those squishy 1st level characters a bone (I know, I'm a big softy), so here are some magic items appropriate for a 1st level character to be gifted as "starting equipment".

### **Magic User: Staff of the Apprentice**

This staff is typically made of sturdy wood reinforced with brass caps at either end and engraved with arcane runes from top to bottom. They are usually distinct in appearance from one school or master to the next, and are typically given to a young Magic User upon "graduating" to a full-fledged 1st level apprentice. The staff allows the magic user to cast each of the following, once per day: *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, and *read magic*.

### **Cleric: Amulet of the Acolyte**

This is an ornate amulet or holy symbol, bearing the device of the cleric's patron, given to young clerics upon achieving the status of a full-fledged 1st level acolyte. It is typically made of brass or iron with a thin plating of silver or gold, and sometimes inlaid with gems. When brandished, it allows clerics to turn undead as if they were 1 level higher, and also allows the cleric to cast, once per day, *protection from evil*.

### **Fighter: Sword of my Ancestor**

Not necessarily a sword, this is a weapon, sometimes ornate, sometimes plain, that has typically been hanging over a mantelpiece for most of the young fighter's life, and is given to him or her when they first set off in search of adventure, along with the tale of that brave ancestor's adventures (perhaps with a legacy which may come back to haunt and/or favor the character later in the campaign). While the weapon is not magical (most of the time), once per day the character can draw upon the small amount of magic remaining in it, or perhaps spirit haunting it, to make an attack as if it were a +3 magical weapon. Unfortunately, this is stressful to the old thing, and any "natural 1" rolled during such an attack results in the weapon being irreparably broken.

### **Thief: Such Clever, Cunning Instruments**

This is a set of small tools, picks, and other devices crafted by the thief's master and gifted to him or her upon "graduating". They are typically carried in a small, waterproof leather pouch that may be easily concealed beneath the thief's outer clothing. So cunningly are the tools crafted, that the thief's minimum chance to *open locks* or *remove traps* is 40%. Of course, once the thief's own abilities surpass 40% in those skills, the tools are of no more use to him or her and they typically pass them along to the next neophyte burglar.



## Omega - The Suppurating Hive

One day the demon Peshwigaruk'k (who infamously swallowed the puissant Jewels of Car Cule) came to lands of Trallus, the Golden King. He was greatly enamored of the rich crimson wine of the folk of the high mountain valleys of Frol, and wished to see its source. After a walk of twenty-four days through civilized lands, he came at last to the vinyards of the Golden King, and there gorged himself on the swollen purple grapes, as well as several of the King's servants who were unfortunate enough to get in his way.

Hearing of this violation, the Golden King took up the Raven Lance, mustered his knights, and rode out to challenge Peshwigaruk'k. Mighty as he was, and despite slaying several of the more novice knights, the demon could not stand against the ancient energies of the Lance, and was forced to flee. As one last act of defiance against the Golden King, and within view of both the monarch and his pursuing knights, the black demon squatted upon the border of Frol, and defecated out a mountain of filth, bones, and undigested grape seeds. Disgusted, the King gave up pursuit and let the demon escape.

Over the years, the foul mound would harden and the lands around it grew clotted with evil-looking vines and weird vegetation bearing evil-looking fruit. Creatures unwise enough to consume the dark grapes were quickly corrupted, and dug out of the mound a great hive of tunnels and lairs, choked with seeping slimes and the bones of whatever victims the denizens are able to drag into the lightless tunnels and consume.

Today, rumors abound in the alehouses and lotus dens of Frol that the legendary Jewels of Car Cule lie, still, somewhere within the Suppurating Hive, awaiting some adventurer brave enough to challenge the hive's guardians. There are at least five (and possibly more) distinct varieties of creature known to lurk within the hive and its surrounding, vine-choked territory:

**Hengis:** The hengis appears to be a vile, red-feathered combination of goose and scorpion. Its tail is highly poisonous (save or suffer 2d6 dmg), and its bite diseased (10% chance). If near death, it will choke out a spray of noxious vomit (save or be rendered helplessly nauseated for 1d4 rounds) and flee. HD1+1; AC5[14]; dmg1d6; Save:F1, No. Appearing 2d4.

**Tokus:** The tokus, from a distance at least, appears to be manlike in form and stature, but is in fact a sexless insectlike creature with gray, leathery skin and a face consisting entirely of snapping mandibles and waving chelae. The tokus are ravenous, and love to drag prey into the halls to consume alive at their leisure. HD2+2; AC7[12]; dmg1d8; Save:F2; No. Appearing 3d4.

**Gargenai:** The gargenai is a hulking shaggy creature with tiny black eyes, a bloated, pink underbelly and fourteen reptilian, clawed feet. Its maw is easily four feet wide and can swallow a man whole (natural 20). When attacking, it typically rises up on its back ten legs and slashes with the other four. HD6+6; AC3[16]; dmg2d4x4 or 2d8/rnd(swallow); Save:F6; No. Appearing 1d3.

**Beoshe:** The Beoshe appears as a beautiful maiden with ivory skin, long black hair, black eyes and unusually full, red lips. They are typically garbed in diaphanous gowns of white spider-silk, and carry silver carafes filled with wine made from the dark grapes of the Hive's vineyards. They typically use seduction and wine (save or be drunk as *slow* and *charm person* after only a sip) to secure their meals, but their nails are razor-sharp, rusty iron, and they can defend themselves more than adequately when necessary. HD3; AC7[12]; dmg1d4x2; SaveC3; No. Appearing 1d4.

**Toaleb:** Perhaps the most horrific of the Hive's denizens, the toaleb appear to be hairless, pink, swollen infants with razor-sharp iron teeth, glowing yellow eyes, and grasping hands. They travel in hordes, easily overwhelming all but the strongest prey, and move surprisingly fast and quietly. When their appetite takes hold they emit a wailing cry that turns even the bravest man's blood to ice, but when slain they emit a pitiable scream that sounds heartbreakingly human. HD1d4; AC9[11]; dmg1d3; Save:F1; No. Appearing 10d4.

**The Puissant Jewels of Car Cule:** There are, in fact, five of the legendary Jewels scattered here and there deep within the mound, though whether they have been corrupted by the demon's taint is unknown. Treat as Ioun Stones, randomly determined for your campaign.



## Random Table: What's in the hole?

Dungeons seem to be full of holes. You know the ones: just big enough to reach your hand into, and usually deep enough that you have to squeeze your whole arm in there to feel around for any goodies. Behind loose bricks, up chimneys, in crumbling walls, in slimy floors, at the bottoms of wells, under sarcophagi, beneath flower jars, the mouths of gargoyles, etc, etc.

So what's in the hole? Reach in there and find out...

### Random Table: What's in the hole?(d100)

01. A clump of glowing green moss. Will illuminate a 20' radius for 1d6 turns after removal from the whole.
02. A poisonous centipede! (HD1hp; AC7[12], dmg1; Save:F1; Poison:2d6dmg[save for half]).
03. 1d6 copper pieces, about 200 years old.
04. A rotten leather bag full of elven finger bones.
05. Green Slime! (Save or hand and arm consumed by the slime).
06. A yellow garnet worth 2d4x10gp.
07. A gold disc with strange gears, on a gold chain. (A pocketwatch).
08. A frightened kitten.
09. A recently severed hand.
10. A *wand of fear* with three charges remaining.
11. A poisonous spider! (HD1d4; AC8[11]; dmg1d2; Save:F1; Poison:Paralysis2d6 turns).
12. A harmless, but squishy, frog.
13. A cleverly made, but easily broken, compass.
14. An unlit torch.
15. A stiff leather gauntlet.
16. A lion's paw.
17. Three tiny rubies, worth 1d6x10gp each.
18. A clump of poisoned bamboo shards (2d6 damage, save for half).
19. A religious pamphlet.
20. A hibernating imp.
21. A poisonous asp! (HD1d4; AC6[13]; dmg1d2; Save:F1; Poison:3d6, Save for 1d4).
22. A clump of cotton containing a scintillating diamond, worth 1d4x1000gp.
23. A toy knight.
24. Soiled underwear.
25. A black iron ball. Will detect as weak magic - if laid on the floor will slowly roll in the direction leading towards the nearest source of fresh water.
26. Clever, Cunning Instruments (see **Magic Items for 1<sup>st</sup> lvl Characters**).
27. A scything blade! Save or lose the hand.
28. A tiny box containing a neat stack of 20pp.
29. A giant lizard egg.
30. A bottle of fine chardonnay.

31. A rolled up map of a nearby valley with several interesting sites marked for treasure hunting.
32. A crumpled love letter to a prominent campaign NPC from a notorious villain.
33. A filthy handkerchief.
34. A lump of coal.
35. A small lamp covered in arcane runes.
36. A blue ceramic egg, something jingles inside (its the key to a locked door somewhere in the dungeon).
37. Nothing in the hole, but the back/bottom is inexplicably covered in ice.
38. A shrunken head.
39. Three gold bars, worth 100gp each.
40. Hole leads to the sealed lair of a *shadow*, save or lose a point of strength!
41. A crumpled hat, with phoenix feather still attached.
42. A statuette of Modron, the goddess of rivers.
43. Back of hole constricts when it is reached into - Save or hand is crushed (2d6 dmg).
44. A carved, wooden dog.
45. A beautiful basilisk-skin sheath containing a curvy-bladed dagger +1.
46. An ivory scroll-tube containing three clerical scrolls (1 1st, 1 2nd, 1 3rd).
47. Hole is empty, but individual who reached into it feels inexplicably nauseous for 1d6 rounds.
48. A small board fashioned of some flexible green material covered in weird metal wires, studs, and small flashing lights.
49. A red ceramic bottle with a sealed opening and a flame-rune on the side. If thrown, will explode as per *fireball* for 6d6 dmg.
50. A folded parchment containing a series of codes.
51. A chain-mail pouch containing 36gp.
52. A small crystal orb that can cast *light* once per day.
53. Back of the hole is covered in stone teeth that attack as a 6HD monster for 1d6 dmg.
54. A lever in the back of the hole opens a secret/locked door somewhere in the dungeon.
55. The person reaching into the hole is assaulted by a series of powerful visions.
56. A 20' ball of twine.
57. Six pieces of multi-colored chalk.
58. An angry scorpion! (HD1hp; AC7[13]; dmg1; Save:F1; Poison:2d6[save for half]).
59. A small stone pipe and a lump of opium wrapped in wax-paper.
60. A tiny bedroom with all furnishings, home to an angry pixie which will return in 1d6 rounds.
61. A rag and a whetstone.
62. A piece of red quartz worth 55gp.
63. Feces.
64. A statuette of a male figure with weirdly elongated features and dark mien.
65. Seven bloody human teeth wrapped in a rag.
66. A worn teddy-bear.
67. A silver bracelet with obsidian bangles worth 1d6x100gp.
68. A mummified owl.
69. A crystal egg.

70. The deed and title to 1000 acres of land near the dungeon.
71. A lever which opens a stairway in the floor leading to a new sublevel of the dungeon.
72. The back of the hole is sheathed in metal and electrified - save or take 2d6 points electrical damage.
73. A keyring with 2d4 keys.
74. A vial of holy water.
75. A vial of unholy water.
76. A carved wooden bracelet. If worn under the stars at night, will enable the wearer to see perfectly as if in daytime.
77. A pair of royal blue silk slippers.
78. A large marble phallus.
79. A pewter flask of powerful liquor.
80. Hole lined with angled razor blades, removing hand/arm from whole causes 2d6 dmg.
81. Hole opens into a mysterious large open space at arm's length.
82. Nest of angry wasps! 1d4x20 wasps, each stings for 1hp damage.
83. Fist-sized golden scarab beetle worth 250gp.
84. A bone *earring of invisibility*.
85. A small sack of dragon's teeth.
86. A glass flask containing a *potion of heroism*.
87. A jar containing human eyes floating in vinegar.
88. A crusty wall at the back is easily broken through, releases the flow of icy cold water held back behind it. Will flood room in 1d6 turns if there are no open exits.
89. A brass kaleidoscope.
90. A small bag of intoxicating incense.
91. A tinderbox.
92. An amulet to a dark Cthulhuoid god.
93. A lever at the back of the hole causes the room outside the hole to collapse - everyone in the room takes 2d6 points of damage (save for half).
94. A dead fish.
95. Six large emeralds worth 2d4x100gp each.
96. A leather pouch full of stainless steel ball bearings.
97. A stoppered ceramic jar containing a dark, sulfurous substance (gunpowder).
98. An iron ring set with a single cats-eye gem worth 1100gp.
99. Fifty copper coins coated in contact-poison (1d6 dmg, save for half).
00. Hole feels inexplicably large within (this is actually a *portable hole*).



## **Random Table: Things you find in an Abandoned Post-Apocalyptic Outpost**

Travel the radioactive, horror-filled wastelands of the post-apocalyptic world for very long, and you may stumble across abandoned outposts, shattered cities, mysterious domes, sand-covered military bases, burnt-out homesteads, dusty bunkers, and ominous basements.

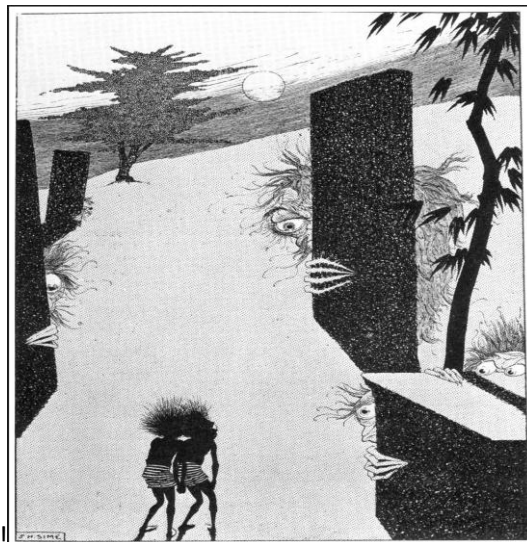
What lies within them?

### **Random Table: Things you find in an Abandoned Post-Apocalyptic Outpost (d100)**

1. A charred book of solar water-pumping engine diagrams.
2. A pull-string, talking doll that recites a message of warning.
3. An infra-red flashlight with a little over an hour remaining in its battery.
4. A dubious package of foil-sealed sandwiches.
5. A water-damaged oil painting of a horse. Tear it from the frame to reveal a map.
6. A black metal box with no adornment or apparatus save a slowly blinking red light.
7. A metal sign depicting a fat, smiling, white-bearded man in a red snowsuit holding a voluptuous bottle of some dark fluid.
8. A yellow bottle of some elixir labeled "Sunny Days Insta-Tan".
9. A gray carrying-case with metal bars on one end containing a tiny canine skeleton.
10. A tattered metal arm that lashes out at anyone who tries to touch it.
11. A case containing thirty-three bizarre and unsettling carnival masks.
12. A silvery body suit with an attachable fishbowl-shaped glass helmet.
13. The diary of a madman obsessed with exotic, radioactively mutated flowers.
14. A living room with formally dressed mannequins arranged as if at a dinner party.
15. Some sort of control chair surrounded by shattered video screens and hanging wires.
16. A small ceramic jar filled with a powerful numbing agent.
17. A battered, solar-charged walkie-talkie. If activated, someone answers!
18. A small framed picture of three smiling children, smeared with fingerprints and dried tears.
19. A ridiculously ugly stuffed cat, crawling with lice.
20. A locked, faintly buzzing safe, filled with angry bees!
21. A dark room with all the necessary fluids and implements for developing pictures.
22. A case full of maps depicting the underwater topography of a now-dried-up seabed.
23. The scale model of a military base.
24. A small, radio controlled, toy helicopter. Needs some repair.
25. A 9' tall, writhing potted plant with glowing purple fronds.
26. A jar of human eyeballs suspended in some sort of fluid.
27. A sealed locker containing a magnificent wedding dress.
28. A case of fine, single-malt whiskey, the labels bleached away by time.
29. A hideous voo-doo doll.
30. A fortune-telling machine with a sinister robotic assassin in place of the normal turbaned fellow.
31. A row of slot machines that periodically light up and whirl before falling ominously silent again.
32. A normal-looking closet door that opens into a tiny elevator leading down to a secret bunker.

33. A carved stone idol of a grinning, six-armed demoness.
34. A velvet-lined case containing six long hypodermic needles containing fluids of various colors.
35. A brass hookah inscribed with fanciful characters.
36. An oil-filled lantern that explodes when lit.
37. A tattered suitcase containing a human skull.
38. A metal beverage-dispensing machine that still works if coins can be found to put inside it.
39. An electric camera high in one corner tracks your every movement.
40. Seven fashion mannequins come to life late at night to kill, kill, kill!
41. Every time a certain door is opened, an angry dog can be heard barking somewhere in the distance.
42. An elaborate candle-lit shrine has been erected around the fading photograph of a silver-eyed woman.
43. A small garage contains a four-wheeler in working condition.
44. A working set of drums.
45. A set of books filled with hateful and racist dogma.
46. Webs hang here and there. In them, strange yellow spiders sing high-pitched wordless songs.
47. A smashed jewelry box still contains one charm bracelet with obscene charms.
48. A locked blue police box contains only dust and a long, tattered macrame scarf.
49. A battered television cuts on loudly and unexpectedly.
50. Giant poisonous sand-lobsters attack from below!
51. A silvery metal book of poetry recites the poems within it as the pages are turned.
52. A curious mummified hand with six fingers.
53. A fresh corpse lies curled, foetally, under a table, covered in tiny cuts and slices.
54. A pot of water boils merrily on a lit stove.
55. A threatening and vaguely horrific sex toy.
56. A set of nine, intricately painted, eggs.
57. A tin of lozenges that impart a temporary resistance to radioactivity.
58. A set of "Life" magazines with moving pictures depicting the apocalypse.
59. An inflatable punching clown.
60. The mold and ooze in a broken-down refrigerator lashes out with paralytic tentacles!
61. A bloodstained barber's chair and shears.
62. A set of reflective disks containing sensitive data if a computer can be found to read them.
63. Pigeon shit, everywhere, ankle-deep.
64. A stack of religious pamphlets warning the end of the world is near.
65. The room is overgrown with weirdly beautiful, pungent smelling fungi.
66. Coffin-sized tanks of water fill the room. Something moves within them.
67. The mildew stains on the walls here forms vaguely humanoid shapes.
68. A set of gleaming razor-sharp scalpels in a small leather case.
69. A toy truck stops and goes unexpectedly.
70. A ghastly white hand punches through the wall near your face as you walk past!
71. Farmer's Almanac 2134.
72. A package of spicy crackers.
73. A snuff box filled with strange white powder.

74. Each room mysteriously lights up as you enter, then darkens as you leave.
75. A ghostly voice from hidden speakers above chants "failure... failure... failure..."
76. A stack of photographs depicting women with bizarre mutations.
77. A pair of white boots with strong magnetic soles.
78. A flare gun with six cartridges of varying colors.
79. A fancy, pearl-handled umbrella.
80. A swarm of ravenous beetles that emit a nauseating sonic disturbance.
81. A matchbox containing an immortal, intelligent cockroach that recites Plato.
82. A gleaming, fresh-smelling lavatory with a nice assortment of soaps and body fragrances.
83. A 1979 JP Penney toy catalog.
84. A desk calendar with a new torture device depicted on each page.
85. A polished glass egg that lights up when held.
86. A small statue of Buddha with fresh flowers and a small bowl of rice laid in front of it.
87. A set of multi-colored permanent markers.
88. A treatise on various fish-drying methods.
89. A package of water purification tablets.
90. Robbie the Robot has gone mad and wants to decorate himself with your entrails!
91. A laminated chart of the local subway system.
92. The owner's manual from a 1989 Ford Tempo.
93. An inflatable yellow raft with lightweight plastic oars.
94. A backpack containing dried biscuits, a water bottle, and a human leg.
95. A warm, full-length fur coat.
96. A gleaming bowie knife with a compass in the handle.
97. A scented candle.
98. A 1st edition Dungeon Masters Guide signed by Gary Gygax.
99. A brain with tentacles suspended in a liquid-filled green jar.
00. Radioactive zombies arise



## Megadungeon Monsters

### Grede

A grede is a foul spirit that lurks in the deep, dusty halls where the lines between Megadungeon and Mythic Underworld are the most blurred. Near-invisible save for a slight wavy texture in the air, like the air over bricks on a hot day, the grede lies in wait for a passing party of adventurers, and then picks the weakest-looking member to try and possess (typically a torch-bearer or some-such). Over the following days, the grede will use its possessed victim to steal from one party member or another when the opportunity arises. The stolen goods are then placed among the possessions of another party member. The grede feeds off emotions of anger, passion, and conflict over material wealth, and will do its best to procure such a meal, tending the ever-more-hostile emotions of the party as a gardener tends his garden.

A bodiless grede is harmless, and cannot be harmed, but may possess an individual in 1 round that fails its saving throw. A grede-possessed victim is unnaturally strong, and will radiate both magic and evil if detections are used. A grede may be forced out of a victim with *remove curse* or other such magic.

**Grede (in possessed body) HD6+6; AC6[13]; dmg1d6+3; Save: F6; Special: Possession.**

### Gray Gorger

The Gray Gorger appears, at first, as a slim grey humanoid with joint-less, flexible arms and legs, an eyeless white face with flaring nostrils and gaping mouth, and a single glowing tentacle sprouting from its forehead. Anyone looking at the tentacle must save or be hypnotized, and stand still staring at it. The Gorger feeds on any carrion or meat it can find, including hypnotized victims, and shoves them, whole, into its jawless mouth. Each meal makes the Gorger bigger and bigger. If seriously threatened, it will vomit out the contents of its swollen guts in a 30' cone, causing anyone struck by the noxious mess to save or be rendered helpless and reeling by nausea. Victims swallowed by the Gorger take 2d8hp dmg per round.

**Gray Gorger HD8; AC4[15]; dmg 1d6/1d6; Save F8; Special: hypnotism, swallow, vomit.**

### Blind Tinker

The Blind Tinker appears as a milky-eyed, frail-looking, gollum-like creature that carries around a massive pack of debris and bric-a-brac on its back. The Tinker collects whatever castoff junk it can find around the dungeon, repairs it, and sells it. It has a 35% chance of carrying around items lost by deceased player characters. It has a 25% chance of having any item on the standard equipment list in the PHB, and the Tinker charges 2x the normal cost. It will also repair items for 10% of their worth. If threatened, the Tinker possesses 3 or 4 bottles that, if broken, release poisonous fumes into the air that act as *Stinking Cloud* and *Sleep* (save vs. each), and will flee while the party is incapacitated.

**Blind Tinker HD3+3; AC9[10]; dmg 1d4; Save C3; Special: gas bottles.**



## **The Old-school Gamer Zodiac**

For centuries, old-school gamers have been born under certain astrological signs that may dictate their nature and affect their fortunes. What sign are you?

### **Beholder**

1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999

Able to see many possibilities at once, you are fascinated by the world around you. You tend to be a bit controlling at times, and seldom have lasting friendships. You are a natural businessman! Try a little gentle humor to save those disintegrating friendships. You are most compatible with Green Slimes and Ettins, and should avoid Wyverns at all costs.

### **Displacer Beast**

1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000

You are quick witted and physically active, and never seem to stay in one place for long. Versatile under stress, you nonetheless resent intrusion into your private space. You may form long lasting friendships with Froghemoths, but relationships with Blink Dogs are doomed to failure.

### **Green Slime**

1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001

Despite a tendency to blend into the background during social occasions, you are nonetheless able to command the rapt attention of your audience when you drop in unexpectedly. You can be clingy and acerbic, but you have more than enough personality to go around. Flumphs will be devoted to you for life, but Beholders will only break your heart.

### **Slithering Tracker**

1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002

You are known as a faithful friend and follower, and will never give up on your heart's desire. While sometimes you may feel unappreciated, it is only because you have a tendency to avoid drawing attention to yourself. Gelatinous Cubes may attract you, but avoid them: they are jealous! Stick with Wyverns, they are flighty, but fun.

### **Gelatinous Cube**

1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003

You are determined and focused, but tend to carry around a lot of baggage. Somewhat of a neat freak, you take pride in keeping a tidy home, and woe to anyone who crosses you! You love Slithering Trackers, but Ropers are nothing but trouble.

### **Ettin**

1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004

Cheerful and proud, you nonetheless have a somewhat bi-polar disposition. Despite that, your will is strong, and you batter away at obstacles with unusual strength! You can be warm and cuddly when the mood strikes, but seldom let that get in the way of your appetites. Ropers fascinate you, but Displacer Beasts are better companions.

**Froghemoth**

1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005

You have a big personality and capacity for fun that leaves others in awe. When sunk in a depression, the arrival of unexpected friends will find you ready and waiting to greet them with a big smile! You form long-lasting relationships with Ropers and Green Slimes, but Flumphs set you on edge.

**Flail Snail**

1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006

You're no fool, and even the strongest personality is unlikely to get you out of your shell. Resilient and resistant, you are willing to try the same thing many times until you get them right. You despise inactivity, and are always in motion. You are hopelessly enamored with Ettins, but Gelatinous Cubes will never let you down.

**Blink Dog**

1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007

You have a reputation for being capricious, here one day and gone the next, but are always surrounded by friends despite this. You are always able to get out of a bind, and have no problem getting others to listen to you. Avoid Displacer Beasts, their nice words are only lip service. Choose Ettins instead: they are more likely to throw you a bone!

**Flumph**

1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008

Light-hearted and touchy-feely, you are a committed social butterfly. Pay no attention to those who consider you useless, they are only envious of your capacity to give and receive affection. Ropers are warm friends and Slithering Trackers will never let you out of their sight, but Wyverns may leave you feeling deflated.

**Wyvern**

1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009

Tough and thick-skinned, you have a tendency for getting right to the point. Don't let your natural emotional coldness get in the way of meeting new friends - together you can achieve greater heights! You have a strong nesting instinct, and love to bring new acquaintances home to meet the kids. Slithering Trackers may seem into you, but they are seldom looking for commitment; stick with Green Slimes, and they will stick with you.

**Roper**

1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010

You love to multi-task, but have a tendency to grow roots too easily. Let your friends come to you - you have a reputation for trying too hard, so give prospective mates a little breathing room, they'll appreciate you for it. Your emotional needs have gotten you into some sticky situations in the past - try welcoming new experience with open arms and you will be rewarded. Flumphs and Froghemoths will stay true, but Beholders will only use you and throw you away.

## New Ability: Morality

Now and then, I enjoy adding new abilities to the standard roster of Str, Int, Wis, etc. Comeliness was used for a long time, and, after a long stint of MERP, another ability called Perception. Thinking along the lines of Alignment as Allegiance, I thought it would be interesting, from a role-playing perspective, to add an ability called **Morality**.

Stay with me for a moment: What if your *allegiance* to Law or Chaos could be chosen, but not your overall natural disposition toward good or evil? Its an interesting, and not unrealistic, idea. Some people seem to have just been born "bad seeds", while others are just goodhearted to a fault. There is even some compelling evidence out there that criminal or sociopathic tendencies are genetic predispositions, as opposed to wholly being environmental conditioning.

So roll 3d6, and see what your character's **Morality** score is:

### Morality

**3 or less:** You are a hopeless sociopath, everything you do is aimed at harming humanity.\*

**4-5:** Bad to the bone, you can't help yourself - even with the best intentions you still end up hurting people.\*

**6-8:** While not wholly evil, you *are* wholly selfish. Your own interests always win any moral debate.\*

**9-12:** You tend to make moral decisions based on your mood, whim, or what sort of day you're having. While you see evil acts as extremely distasteful, you have also never believed that honesty is always the best policy.

**13-15:** You are decent person, and like to keep the best interests of others in mind, but you're not giving everything away to charity either.\*\*

**16-17:** You are honest, upstanding and reliable. Helping others gives you more pleasure than helping yourself.\*\*

**18:** You are a paragon of virtue. You couldn't tell a lie to save your own life. You give as much to charity as you can, and would take a knife for the lowliest criminal.\*\*

\*Able to use "evil" aligned items and spells without harm.

\*\* Able to use "good" aligned items and spells without harm.

## Megadungeon Equipment

### More Megadungeon Equipment

While plenty of adventurers make do with the mundane equipment available at the general stores common in most towns and villages, some enterprising entrepreneurs have made a cottage industry of providing and designing items specifically targeted at explorers and adventurers. While not available in every small village and hamlet, most larger settlements will have at least one merchant specializing in gear like the items detailed below.

#### **Owl (15gp)**

An Owl is a strange contraption consisting of a glass bowl filled with about a half pint of oil, a waxed wick, and a balsa and gossamer set of wings and levers. When lit, the heat from the lamp causes the wings to beat, and the Owl hovers at the end of a string (tied to an explorer's backpack, for example) and illuminates an area of about 30' across until the fuel is consumed. While useful for hands-free illumination, Owls are fragile, and should be stowed securely when not in use.

#### **Troll's Blanket (5gp)**

The so-called "Troll's Blanket" is a wool blanket that has had random patterns of stiffening resins and natural stone coloring added to it. If thrown over an individual or object it can camouflage them to appear as part of the natural surrounding stone.

#### **Bladder Pack (15gp)**

This is an otherwise normal backpack that has been oiled and sealed to make it airtight and waterproof. When necessary, it can be emptied of gear and inflated via a thin leather tube to make a handy flotation device.

#### **Explorer's Belt (20gp)**

This is a double-looped belt (typically 5'-7' long) of extremely sturdy, fireproofed, leather with a hook and ring instead of a buckle. It can support the weight of two grown men, and makes a handy tool for climbing and swing short distances, pulling heavy objects, hooking and pulling things out of holes, binding captives, and so on. Several of them can even be linked together to form a strong rope.

#### **Prayers of Hwyl (5gp)**

These are small rectangles of white papyrus with a single black rune inscribed on them. If placed upon an object or creature that is evil, or a container that contains something evil, the papyrus slowly curls into char and crumbles away. The albino hermit, Conspectuous, is known to sell these more cheaply (2gp), but his are not so reliable.

#### **Phoenix Eggs (5gp)**

These are small white marbles that, if thrown forcefully to the ground, explode into ten cubic feet of white smoke that dissipates after 1d4 rounds. The possession of Phoenix Eggs is illegal in the local capitol,



where they are known as Cuckold's Eggs, due to reasons that are entirely unrelated to Megadungeons.

#### **Iron Sentry (10gp)**

This is a foot-long wedge of two pieces of iron with a spring-loaded mechanism between them. It can be rapidly shoved under a door, where it will spring open and effectively jam the door until its broken free.

#### **Thumper (30gp)**

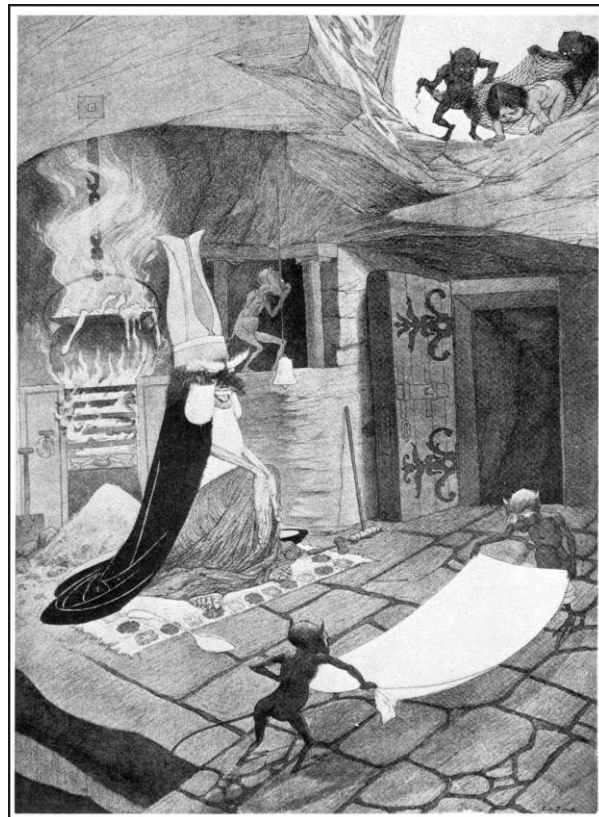
Rumored to have come from a far-off desert place, this metal-and-membrane tripod contraption may be set upon a solid floor. A plunger in the middle is raised and released, and will then thump onto the floor repeatedly, making vibrations similar to heavy footsteps. This is useful when it is necessary to summon or distract denizens of the Underworld.

#### **Water of Ylalla (150gp)**

This small vial of spring water has been blessed by the Goddess of Fertility. If poured upon seeds, they will achieve a year's worth of growth in just ten minutes.

#### **Scrimm's Bottle (100gp)**

This is a bottle of heavy green glass that has been etched with holy epitaphs and comes with a silver stopper. If presented in the presence of a ghost, phantom, shadow, or other such incorporeal undead, the spirit must save or be drawn into the bottle. The spirit will remain trapped in the bottle until such time as the stopper is removed. Each bottle may hold one spirit.



## An alternate way to generate magic weapons

This is a fun way to pillage all those pesky "new edition" Feats for use in your old-school game. Simply roll first on the weapon table, then roll on the corresponding Feat table (checking the online SRD for specifics if you're not generally familiar with what the Feat does, and modifying it for your system of choice), and presto, you've got a near-endless supply of interesting magic weapons, such as the Halberd of Cleaving, or the Mace of Toughness. Generate your own tables for wands or clothing, etc, and Feats that mesh well with them!

### Table 1 Weapon\* (3d12)

3. Long Sword
4. Axe
5. Crossbow, light (table 3)
6. Halberd
7. Spear (table 2 50%, table 3 50%)
8. Pike
9. Knife (table 2 75%, Table 3 25%)
10. Mace
11. Sling (table 3)
12. Scimitar
13. Short Sword
14. Flail
15. Hammer
16. Greatsword
17. Scythe
18. Battle Axe
19. Long Bow (table 3)
20. Short Bow (table 3)
21. Dart (table 3)
22. Stone Axe
23. Flint Knife
24. Dagger (table 2 50%, table 3 50%)
25. Javelin (table 3)
26. Lance
27. Pick
28. Club
29. Kopesch Sword
30. Trident
31. Crossbow, heavy (table 3)
32. Broad Sword
33. Morning Star
34. Glaive

- 35. Guisarme
- 36. Shield

**Table 2 Feats (2d10)**

- 2. Tripping
- 3. Dodge
- 4. Toughness
- 5. Alertness
- 6. Iron Will
- 7. Lightning Reflexes
- 8. Arcane Strike
- 9. Blind Fighting
- 10. Bull rush
- 11. Cleave
- 12. Power Attack
- 13. Weapon Finesse
- 14. Sunder
- 15. Critical, Stunning
- 16. Critical, Bleeding
- 17. Disarming
- 18. Spellbreaker
- 19. Improved Initiative
- 20. Quick Draw

**Table 3 ranged weapon Feats (1d8)**

- 1. Rapid Reload
- 2. Point Blank Shot
- 3. Far Shot
- 4. Many Shot
- 5. Quick Draw
- 6. Improved Initiative
- 7. Critical, Crippling
- 8. Deadly Aim

**\*Roll Percentiles for item strength**

- 01-24 - no plus, but magical
- 25-68 - +1
- 69-84 - +2
- 84-94- +3
- 95-99 - +1, roll two Feats
- 00 - +2, roll two Feats

## The Isle of Green Stones

Don't bother looking for this mysterious isle on your map - it is rumored to be somewhere near Midbay in the Nyr Dyv - no one who has gone looking for it has been able to accurately pinpoint its location. This is, in part, due to the thick, moving fogs which usually enshroud the isle. There is also the issue of the questionable sanity of those who claim to have visited the isle.

The isle itself is only ten miles end-to-end from its northernmost point to its southernmost, and roughly three miles across at its widest point east-to-west. It is choked with gnarled, ancient trees, vines, and heavy undergrowth. The isle's moniker comes from the tumbled green stones found all across it. The stones are worked, and seem to have once been part of some ancient city or temple complex. Some stones still bear weather-faded runes and reliefs depicting savage humans, often engaged in salacious acts, lorded over by a race of vulture-headed humanoids. Whether these inhuman beings are an actual race or meant to depict some sort of gods is ambiguous.

What is tempting about the isle to treasure hunters is the rumor of great wealth to be found on the isle. Old legends around the Nyr Dyv, particularly found among the old tribes of Flan descent, place the isle at the center of a lost empire, millennia old. According to these legends, this decadent empire fell into ruin not through the actions of some outer agency or slow decline, but due to a horrible curse that brought them to a sudden, apocalyptic end. A further rumor insists that the broken city sometimes appears as if it had never fallen, on nights when the moon is full.

Visitors to the isle, obviously, risk falling prey to that very same curse.

### Random Encounters (d12)

1. Bat, Mobat (2d3)
2. Bird, Dire (1d4)
3. Coatl
4. Vulchling (2d4)
5. Jackal (2d6)
6. Ape, Carnivorous (2d3)
7. Lizard, Giant Monitor (1d4)
8. Amber Creeping Vine (1d3)
9. Basilisk
10. Zombies, JuJu (1d4)
11. Toad, Giant (2d6)
12. Spider, Giant (1d3)

### Vulture Helms

These ancient helms may sometimes still be found on the Isle of Green Stones. They are powerful, but convey a great curse. They appear as a gem-encrusted full helm of light, steel mesh in the shape of a vultures head. When worn, they impart a +1 bonus to armor class, infravision, and allow the use of



*charm person* up to three times daily. Due to their curse, however, each use of the Vulture helm's *charm* ability carries a (cumulative) 5% chance of the wearer transforming into a Vulchling of CE alignment. Only a *wish* or *remove curse* may reverse this transformation, and the Helm is lost in the process. Each helm is worth 4500 gp for its value in gems alone.

### Spider Knives

These odd weapons may also be found on the Isle of Green Stones. They feature a 9" curved blade with a hilt shaped like a spider. It is held by entwining one's finger among the spider's legs. It functions as a Knife +1, and on a natural roll to-hit of "20" injects a powerful poison into the victim's wound (Save at -1 or die). Unfortunately, these weapons have been influenced by the Isle's curse as well, and on a natural roll of "1" inject the same poison into the wielder.

### NPCs

Hrek Maluk (Thief 6, CN) - Maluk has been stranded on the Isle for 2 weeks now since he and his group of treasure hunters landed. He is the only surviving member, and has been without sleep for three days now as he is being stalked by a group of 3 carnivorous apes. He carries a bag of ancient jewelry worth 3000gp he will gladly offer in exchange for help driving off the apes, though he will, of course, try to steal it all back eventually.

Captain Shurc (F4, N) - Shurc has been living on the Isle for six years. He is quite mad, and claims he can speak to the "great spirits of the Isle". His motives are unclear, as is the veracity of his claims, but he will refuse to leave the Isle to the point of physical aggression. He knows the location of a deep sinkhole filled with bones and jewelry.



## Class: Musketeer

Ok, so I love Musketeer movies.

The Musketeer, in the most basic form, was an infantryman with a matchlock musket. The version detailed below, however, is more closely modeled on the version made popular by literature and film, the French Musketeer. This Musketeer, rather than a basic lineman of the infantry, was typically a member of some lower noble house who served as one of a unit whose mandate was the direct personal protection of the king. While known for their fighting skill, they were better known for their elan, personality, and panache. Eventually, they became popular enough to become a threat to the King's rivals, and the position would eventually be drummed out of existence under the guise of budgetary cuts.

For our purposes, the class is somewhat of a swashbuckler, a rogue, a bon vivant, and romantic sensualist, albeit with a heart of gold, and a code of honor.

### Musketeer

Primary Ability: Dex and Cha (13+ in both adds 5% xp)

HD: 1d6+2 hp / lvl

Armor / Shield: Special

Weapons: Any

Save as: Fighter of equivalent level

### LVL - XP

1 - 0

2 - 2250

3 - 4500

4 - 10000

5 - 20000

6 - 40000

7 - 75000

8 - 125000

9 - 250000

10 - 500000

### Special Abilities

**Nimble Fighter** - The Musketeer relies more on his agility than brute strength in combat. Consequently, the Musketeer uses his Dexterity modifier for to-hit and damage.

**Cutting Repartee** - Known for having a tongue equally sharp as his rapier, the Musketeer can goad enemies into reckless attacks. At the start of the round, the Musketeer taunts his enemies. If they fail

their save (negatively modified by the Musketeer's Charisma modifier), they automatically win initiative, but suffer a -3 penalty to Armor Class for the rest of the round. If they succeed at their save, the initiative order proceeds normally.

**Artful Dodger** - When lightly armored, or not armored at all, a Musketeer adds 1/2 his level (rounded down) to his armor class.

**Main-Gauche** - A Musketeer may wield a small light weapon, such as a dagger, in his off-hand in place of a shield, to receive the standard +1 bonus to armor class. At the referee's discretion, improvised items such as table legs and candelabra may be employed for this purpose as well.

### **Special Equipment**

**Rapier** (30gp) - This is a narrow-bladed long-sword with a protective basket-hilt that well-suits the Musketeer's agile combat style. It typically does 1d6 points of damage, but on a natural roll of 18-20, a hit on some vital spot has occurred, and damage increases to 2d6.

**Leather Doublet** (50gp) - This stiff doublet has not only been designed to offer a Musketeer the greatest range of mobility and arm movement, it is also made with the most desirable latest fashion trends in mind. It offers the same protection as Leather Armor.

**Steel Breastplate** (110gp) - This is an ornately etched breastplate of the lightest steel available, designed for both mobility and protection of the soft vital organs. It offers the same protection as Chain Mail.

**Musket** (35gp) - The musket is a match-lit projectile weapon. It is devastating at close range (060' or less), being +1 to hit, and doing 3d6 points of damage. At further ranges it is much less effective, being -3 to hit, and doing only 1d6 points of damage. Ammunition is expensive (5gp for 1 shot worth of ball, powder, and stuffing) and in some areas, hard to come by.

# The Apocalypse Riddle

An adventure for 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> level characters

## Introduction

Recently, due to a combination of drought and unusually cold weather in Valon (causing the glaciers to grow, rather than recede), the Estuary of Roglaroon has reached record low levels, leaving the bottom of the waterway bare in many places. This has revealed a heretofore unknown structure, a small step-pyramid constructed of native stone, with a low stone circle at the top surrounding a valve-like doorway leading straight down. This stone circle was actually known to local fisherman as Harr's Hook, an obstacle to be avoided, thinking it was an inconvenient submarine outcropping of rock, and never suspecting it was manmade.

The step pyramid may be reached by canoe, or some other small watercraft, or by slogging through the waist-high muck of the estuary floor. The structure has attracted the interest of more than just passing fisherman and merchant ships headed towards the City-State, it has also become an object of curiosity to the great serpent Maelstron, who patrols past it in the deeper center portions the estuary, and the river-goddess-worshipping tritons who live near Modron.

It has not, however, drawn the "official" attention of the City State, so it is still possible to try and loot the edifice for treasure if any should lie beyond the odd valve-like door atop it.

## The Entrance

In the floor of the top of the step pyramid, surrounded by five stones, is a valve-like door leading straight down. The door appears to be made of some sort of brass or bronze, and has already been cleared of mud and debris and cleaned by prior curious visitors, though no one has yet discovered how to open it. The door is decorated with ancient-looking depictions of strange insect-headed humanoids holding up their arms in supplication toward a winged disk in the sky. There are two ways of opening the door: by guessing one should press the four wings of the disk counter-clockwise, or by casting *detect magic* on the door, which causes the wings to light up in the order they should be touched. The wings don't move when pressed, but they do become warm and a faint chime sound is heard from somewhere deep within.

Once opened, a shaft, five feet wide, leading 150 feet straight down into the bedrock beneath the estuary is revealed. How adventurers must descend is entirely up to them; there are no clever magical crutches or tricks available here to ease the descent. The shaft ends in the ceiling of area 1, 20 feet above the floor of the chamber.

1. The Chamber of Clouds – In the absence of torchlight, the ceiling of this room glows faintly blue, save for several dark patches that give the illusion of ominous storm clouds. 170 copper tubes lie scattered across the floor (worth 1gp each) the remains of reinforcements for a rope ladder



that used to lead out of the chamber, and has long since decayed into dust. If the floor here is cleaned, it reveals a fresco depicting seventeen of the insect-headed humanoids accepting offerings from dozens of submissive humans. The four-winged disk hangs in the sky above them all, and storm clouds seem to gather around it. The doors in the northeast corner are both locked, and are stone balanced on metal pivots (as are all doors in the dungeon). Gelatinous cubes patrol and clean the winding corridors of this whole place (1 in 4 chance of encountering one), but never enter the chambers.

2. The Chamber of Apocalypse – Frescoes adorn the walls here. They depict several insect-headed humanoids holding their arms over their heads, defensively, as the sky splits open above them. Elsewhere, mountains spit fire and tsunamis loom on the horizon. Words adorn the border near the floor, and are written in an odd, mechanical-looking dialect of Orichalan, “Gift ye fire unto fire and ye shall be gifted”. Anyone holding a torch or other flame up to one of the fiery mountains causes a three-foot rod of yellow glass to emerge from the wall (see area 11).
3. The Chamber of Slaves – What appear to be mummified humans are stacked like cordwood in this chamber (100 total). Each appears to wear a thick blue collar or torc of organic material. These are actually life-leaches (see area 7). The first time the party obtains a glass rod (area 2, etc) 10 of these, per turn, animate and go in search of the party. As the party are not Markab, they attempt to kill them and recover the rods. (Slave-Mummy HD2+2; AC5; dmg1d4x2; Save:F2; chance of disease 5%).
4. The Face of the Star-God – A massive stone face dominates the north wall of this chamber, The face is human and jowly, with an dark open mouth and faceted insect-eyes. When mortals enter the room, the eyes glitter like stars, and mortals feel a great pressure pressing down on them as if some unseen giant has placed its foot upon their souls. Kneeling causes the pressure to recede. Glowing, hairy green spiders crawl from the open mouth and accost any mortals who refuse to kneel for at least one turn (14 Large Spiders; HD1; AC7; dmg 1d3 + poison; Save:F1). There is a small emerald inside each spider that stops glowing 1d3 turns after being removed from the spider. Each is worth 100gp.
5. Tomb of the Glass Sarcophagi – Two large glass sarcophagi dominate this room, each containing an insect-headed, eight-foot-tall humanoid. The glass of the sarcophagi is frosty to the touch, as if they are freezing cold inside (they are, in fact, 0 degrees within until broken open). The Markab hibernating within the sarcophagi are impossibly old, and will spring to life if their sarcophagi are broken open. The long hibernation has not been kind to their minds, mentally they are little more than blood-thirsty beasts. Each wears 800gp worth of gold adornments, such as armlets, circlets, necklaces, etc. (Markab, Degenerate; HD6+6; AC2; dmg 1d10+3x2; Save:F6; if two successful hits, Markab gets free bite attack for 1d8 dmg).
6. The Gallery of Green Stone Giants – Seventeen thrones fill this chamber, fifteen of them are occupied by green stone statues depicting eight-foot-tall, insect-headed humanoids. A strange greenish mist hangs in the air here, and after one turn of breathing this, mortals will begin to suffer one point of damage per round. The two empty thrones each cover a secret hollow beneath them containing stacks of bronze discs covered in strange other-worldly runes. Anyone studying or even keeping these discs close for more than one week will begin to have strange dreams of other worlds and unfathomable beings. A fresco on the wall depicts seventeen insect-

headed humanoids gathered along the edge of a roiling sea. Writing in archaic Orichalan reads “when the waters rise on distant shore shall empires fall.” Pouring water onto the sea causes a twelve-inch long rod of blue glass to emerge from the wall.

7. The Pools of Eternal Life – The floor of this room is filled with five circular pools, ten feet across and five feet deep, filled with thick purplish fluid. The fluid is actually very beneficial, drinking it will heal up to 10 hit points of damage per day (at 2hp per sip), but its purpose is not so beneficial. These are the breeding tanks of the life-leaches: twelve-inch long, thick purple worms that enslave humanoids by encircling their neck and liquefying their victims brains with long filaments which then take over the victims’ nervous systems. The victims slowly mummify over a period of decades, but can never die (of natural causes). (Life Leaches; HD1d4hp; AC8; dmg1; Save:F0; if bitten, must save each round until leach removed; three failures means the victim’ brain is liquefied.)
8. Antechamber of the Kneeling Slaves – The ceiling of this chamber is only four feet high. It sports the fresco depicting seventeen insect-headed humanoids being worshipped or thanked by a multitude of humans. In the background lie the smoking corpses of several dragons, and above them hangs the four-winged disk. The two leading insect-headed humanoids hold their hands out with palms up. Writing in archaic Orichalan along the edges of the fresco reads: “Hast thou reached an agreement with thy betters? Let the deal be sealed with flesh.” If one places a hand atop the palms of the two leading Markab at once (shaking hands), a twelve-inch red glass rod emerges from the wall.
9. Doors of the Makers – The three doors to the south here depict three figures. (SW) depicts an insect-headed humanoid, and the passage beyond leads safely to area 3. (S center) depicts a dragon-headed humanoid, and leads to a trapped passage leading to area 3. (SE) depicts a hawk-headed humanoid, and leads to a trapped passage leading to nowhere. Traps are every 10 feet, and reset themselves in one hour. Roll 1d6 for the trap: 1-2 10’ pit; 3-4 1d6 arrows; 5-6 stone block falls for 2d6.
10. Vault of the Star-God – The door to the this chamber is sealed with no visible means of opening. Activating the Sun Calendar in Area 11 is the only way to open the door. Inside is contained the sum of over a century’s worth of offerings from the savage pre-historic Orichalans to the Markab. There is effectively 100,000gp worth of assorted gold cups, jewelry, cloth, statuettes, bars, and so on. Of course, how quickly one can get anything out of the vault and out of the dungeon is what really matters (see area 11). The door actually depicts three insect-headed humanoids each holding a colored glass rod, and speaking a riddle (in Orichalan script).
11. Chamber of the Sun Calendar – A five foot pedestal in the center of this room supports a five-foot-wide, 1-inch-thick gold sun calendar (as per the earthly Mayans) with three holes in the center. Placing the three glass rods from elsewhere in the dungeon into those holes causes a holographic figure to appear in mid-air above the calendar and recite in several languages at once (which is a pretty discordant sound), “the Vault is opened, the god is summoned, judgment shall be passed”. After which, the figure is replaced by a series of symbols depicting descending numbers (a countdown). What this means is that the abandoned, orbiting craft of these Markabs, an early exploratory mission to the planet, has been summoned to return to the pyramid, which will of course destroy everything for a one-mile radius around the step-pyramid.

If the players have a hard time getting this, feel free to have the holograms depict the scenario in no uncertain imagery. The characters basically have about an hour (1d2+4 turns) to grab as much loot from the vault as they can and get as far away from the pyramid with it as they can before the “four-winged disk” slams into them like a moderate-sized tactical nuke.

