

Old-School Gazette

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This Old-School Gazette gives you three brand-new tricks to test your player's wits. Are they ready for the ceiling of clouds, the chasm painting, and the stone dog? But before that, 3 new plant monsters will test their abilities to the utmost. The addlevetch, the deadwood, and the suicide plant await discovery! So enjoy this sixth Old-School Gazette and look forward to many more!

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Some of you may be unaware of OSRIC™. Go and download the product from the above link and then come back. As you can see from the above, OSRIC™ is a freely available, OGL role-playing system that pays homage to the style of role-playing games we grew up playing. The Old-School Gazette is designed to support the OSRIC™ system by releasing compatible material, not only to players and Game Masters, but to other publishers as well.

We're very excited to start the Old-School Gazette. We plan on featuring monsters, magic items, spells, and anything else you can think of relating to old-school gaming via the OSRIC system. Have any ideas? Send an e-mail to josephbrowning@gmail.com and let us know your thoughts! And yes, it's a paying gig. *smile*

ADDLEVETCH

SIZE: Small
MOVE: 10 ft.
ARMOR CLASS: 6
HIT DICE: 2
ATTACKS: Special
DAMAGE: Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Eye rays
SPECIAL DEFENSES: All-around vision
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 15%
RARITY: Uncommon
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-2
LAIR PROBABILITY: 0%
TREASURE: None
INTELLIGENCE: Low
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
LEVEL/X.P.: 2 / 50 + 1/hp



General information: Addlevetch are mobile, carnivorous plants found in desert regions. They prefer to lie in wait along pools of water, usually wedged between rocks (improving AC to 4) or at the base of a palm tree. When an animal or other prey comes

near, an addlevetch uses its rays to disable and kill the creature. Once any threats have passed, the plant nestles into the corpse to consume and grow. A few desert tribes hunt and kill addlevetch to create a fiery tequila beloved by the brave, daring or foolhardy.

Every addlevetch possesses three "eyes." These are at the tips of curved stems growing from the center of the plant and each eye has a different magical ability. Each eye must succeed on a to hit roll to successfully target a victim. The yellow eye shoots a ray of yellow that acts as a *confusion* spell against the target only. The red eye shoots a red ray that causes a massive itching sensation throughout the target's body resulting in a -2 to all to hit and damage rolls with a failed save against spells. The smallest eye, the blue eye, shoots a blue ray that acts like an *inflict light wounds* spell. The addlevetch can use two eye rays per round in combat. The eye stems are very quick and flexible (AC -5) but can be severed by dealing 1 hit point of damage with a slashing weapon. An addlevetch that suffers a severed eye usually makes a fighting withdrawal from the combat to regrow the eye. Regrowth takes a minimum of two weeks.

Addlevetch possess all-around vision and cannot be surprised. They are automatically aware of any creature of small size or larger within 30 feet, including invisible creatures of such size or larger. Oddly enough, they sometimes hunt in pairs, sharing in kills.

Physical description: Addlevetch look similar to a small agave cactus common in some desert regions. They have a rosette of thick, fleshy leaves spanning up to three feet in diameter. Where the tall flowering stem would grow during the flowering phase of a true agave, the addlevetch possesses three long and curving stems. Each of these stems sports a colorful and shiny sphere at its tip, looking like a closed flower. Typically there are several dead leaves at the base of the plant which help insulate it from the cold desert nights and hide the web of shallow roots used for mobility. These dead leaves are more common in winter and are sometimes completely absent during high summer.

Variants: There are reports of different types of addlevetch possessing different eye abilities, such as *fear*, *slow*, and *sleep*. However, all these variants possess the *cause light wounds* eye. It is rumored that there are addlevetch adapted to subterranean life, but such has not been confirmed nor has the rumor of a greater addlevetch possessing 6 eyes.

DEADWOOD

SIZE: Large (100 ft. tall)

MOVE: 0 ft.

ARMOR CLASS: -1, -3, -5

HIT DICE: 18, 27, or 36

ATTACKS: None

DAMAGE: None

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%, 85%, 85%

RARITY: Very Rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

LAIR PROBABILITY: 100%

TREASURE: 18HD: 5-30k cp (25%), 1-100k sp (40%), 10-40k ep (40%), 10-60k gp (55%), 500-5,000 pp (25%), 1-100 gems (50%), 10-40 Jewelry (50%), 4 magic items or maps + 1 potion and 1 scroll (15%), 2-8 potions (40%), 1-4 scrolls (50%); 27 HD: 110% of 18 HD; 36 HD: 120% of 18 HD

INTELLIGENCE: High

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

LEVEL/X.P.: 18HD: 9 / 7,650 + 28/hp

27HD: 10 / 12,800 + 35/hp

36HD: 10 / 12,800 + 35/hp

General information: The deadwood is a nightmarish tree that feeds on decomposing corpses and raises others to protect it. A deadwood's power over the undead is awe-inspiring. Its influence over a forest can be so strong that the body of any animal or person who falls dead within a mile of a deadwood rises as undead creatures, which will most likely spend the rest of their existence guarding the tree. Besides a tendency to sway in non-existent breezes, deadwood trees are immobile. However, their abilities to animate and control undead guardians and to exude waves of incapacitating stench leave them far from defenseless.

A low mound of pulpy, glistening, decomposing animal matter extends in a 20-foot radius from the deadwood's base for a typical adult tree. Any creature lying prone within this area is quickly enveloped in the muddy, festering earth around the tree's roots; a character may avoid this fate with a save against paralysis, but helpless creatures get no save. Complete envelopment takes 2 full rounds, during which time the victim may attempt to bend bars to break free. Once fully enveloped, a victim begins to suffocate and takes 1-6 points of acid damage each round. The victim may be freed only by another character who makes a successful bend bars test. A dead creature has its flesh and other bodily tissues sloughed away from its bones after 3 turns, and the bones are ejected back onto the ground's surface while the rest of the body is slowly drawn into the tree over the course of several weeks.

Once every 3 rounds, a deadwood can expels a horrid wave of carrion stench. Several ulcers in the tree's bark open and vent their putrid contents forcing all living creatures within 30 feet to make a save against poison or fall unconscious for 2-8 rounds. Even those who save are terribly affected: fighting at -2 on all to hit and attack rolls for 2-8 rounds.

Every deadwood projects a zone of foul influence to a radius of 150 feet for every HD of the tree. Thusly, an 18 HD deadwood has a foul influence to 900 yards, a 27 HD deadwood to 1,350 yards, and the mighty 36 HD deadwood has a foul influence out to 1,800 yards (just over 1 mile radius). Within this foul zone several different

things occur. The deadwood can telepathically communicate with any undead within its foul influence radius and it is constantly aware of the location and actions of all undead within this radius. Any undead within the foul influence radius are considered to be 1 rank higher for any turning attempts as the entire radius qualifies as an evil area.

Any animal, giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid corpse within this range that remains in contact with the ground for 1 full turn is animated into a zombie or skeleton. Corpses of humanoids with 1 or 2 levels are turned into ghouls, while those with 3 or more class levels are instead turned into ghouls (50%), wights (35%), or wraiths (15%). These undead creatures are the deadwood's primary defense. In addition to the undead it accumulates with its subjugate undead ability, it may animate the circle of bones that surrounds it. Every round, it may cause 1d6 skeletons to assemble themselves, moving to attack any opponents of the tree in the next round. Enough bones are normally present for the tree to create up to five times its own HD worth of skeletons in this way.

Any undead within the area of the deadwood's foul influence must make a save against spells every hour or be subjugated by the tree. Weak corporeal undead are usually brought to the tree to be absorbed as food, but those undead without physical bodies or with more than 3 HD are spared this final fate and instead linger near the tree, subjugated to protect the deadwood from attackers. At least 6-36 undead of more than 3 HD (mostly ghouls, wights, and wraiths) typically roam near a fully grown deadwood, but more powerful undead (mummies, specters, ghosts and vampires) are not uncommon with a 75% chance of there being 1-4 more powerful undead roaming near the deadwood. These subjugated undead obey every command of the tree. A deadwood can subjugate up to 3 times its HD in undead at any single time.

Subjugated undead cannot cast magic when under the control of the deadwood, so it prefers to bargain with truly powerful undead, such as liches, creating mutual protection pacts. In exchange for leaving them with their freewill and providing them the turn benefits of its foul influence, the deadwood expects the undead to protect it from harm with their powerful magics.

Languages: Deadwood can telepathically communicate with any undead in their foul influence, but cannot communicate with any other creatures.

Physical description: A deadwood can grow to a height of nearly 100 feet with some ancient specimens reaching even higher. The deadwood's bark looks

like cracked and burned flesh. The stench of rotting flesh rises from the surrounding ground upon which lie scattered bones and partly rotted limbs. Several thick lumps, like tumors or boils, constantly move a few feet up the tree's trunk and slimy masses of tissue periodically fall from its branches, landing with a squishy thud. It bears a few crooked and terrible bare branches asymmetrically along its trunk. A single bloated, purple fruit, about the size of a muskmelon, ripens on the strongest of the branches.

Deadwood Fruit: The mottled, semi-transparent skin of this sickly growth is a deep, unhealthy purple in color, straining in uneven bulges over the fruit's ropy innards. At its core is a large, woody kernel. When the deadwood tree has absorbed ten thousand HD worth of corpses (typically taking a dozen years or more), a new fruit ripens and falls to the ground. Nearby corporeal undead immediately attempt to devour it, kernel and all. Any undead that eats the fruit immediately gains 1 HD for every 4 HD of the deadwood that produced the fruit. The creature then wanders away from the parent tree and searches for, or attempts to create, a place of great carnage. When the deadwood seed within it senses a large supply of fresh corpses, it immediately slays its undead host and takes root in the earth. A new deadwood tree usually grows at the unnatural rate of 5 feet (and 1 HD) per month, and perhaps even more quickly if a particularly large supply of bodies is nearby. A deadwood will reproduce a maximum of 3 times during its life.

A living creature consuming a single bite of ripe deadwood fruit dies instantly unless it makes save against poison at -6. Even on a successful save, the eater loses 1 point of Constitution. If the creature survives, this single bite grants it a small measure of the deadwood's power— it may thereafter rebuke/command undead as an evil cleric of 2nd level, or is considered 1 level higher if already an evil cleric. Surviving multiple bites might provide other benefits or carry certain penalties, at the GM's discretion. Any creature immune to poison gains no benefits from consuming the foul fruit.

Few mortal creatures have ever attempted to eat an entire deadwood fruit, and none who has is known to have survived. Tales of what might happen to those who "live" through such an attempt vary — some believe they would gain permanent command over the dead, and others that they would be transformed into strange, powerful, and unique undead themselves.

Variants: Some scholars speculate that deadwood were originally created from the stolen seeds of the original elven tree of life. Just exactly how they were perverted is unknown, but a seedling forced to grow out of the skull of an immobilized lich is the predominant theory.

SUICIDE PLANT

SIZE: Large (10 feet wide)

MOVE: 0 ft.

ARMOR CLASS: 20

HIT DICE: 4

ATTACKS: None

DAMAGE: None

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Pollen

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 95%

RARITY: Rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4

LAIR PROBABILITY: 100%

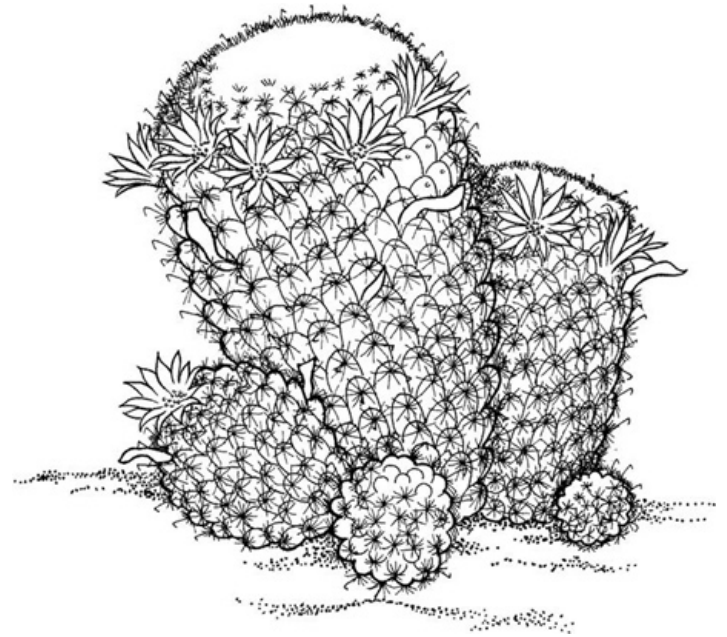
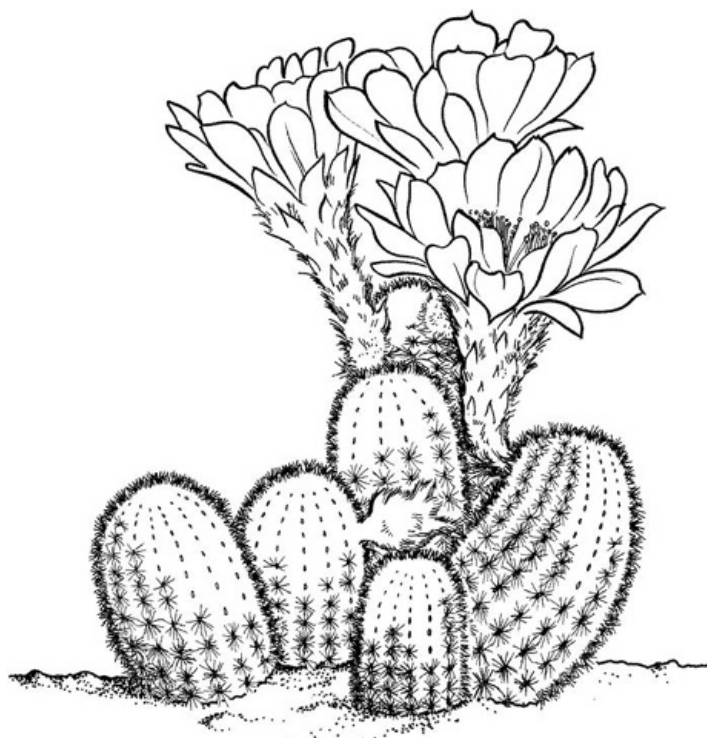
TREASURE: In Lair 6-48 cp (80%), 6-26 sp (80%), 4-24 ep (60%), 4-16 gp (50%), 2-12 pp (40%), 2-8 gems (30%), 2-5 Jewelry (20%), 2 magic items or maps (10%), 200-800 gp worth of mundane equipment (armor, weapons, etc).

INTELLIGENCE: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

LEVEL/X.P.: 4 / 190 + 3/hp

General information: A suicide plant (also known as brainweed) is a large flowering plant growing in arid deserts, plains and hills. Strapped for water in their arid environments, suicide plants survive on the blood of living creatures. Although they have no means of mobility (once their tap root is in place they cannot uproot themselves), the suicide plant has one exceptional feature: the pollen of a suicide plant has strong psychoactive properties, compelling anyone inhaling it to spill their blood onto the brainweed's soil. The plant hides its tainted soil and past victims from viewers with small stone mounds and dirt and sand



thrown up by its extensive root network. In times of scarcity, brainweeds will uncover their past victims in hopes of attracting scavengers who will shed their blood for the hungry plant. Covering and uncovering a victim takes several days as the root network is extremely slow. In this manner, the terrain around suicide plants is often very rocky or covered with mounds that decrease in size as the bodies underneath naturally decompose.

Three times per day, a suicide plant can release a 30-foot-radius cloud of pollen. Any living creature possessing blood (generally only mammals) must succeed in a save against poison or be overcome by hallucinations. Those who succumb are compelled to lie prone next to the base of the suicide plant and cut open their veins, be that with dagger, sword, tooth or claw. The victim inflicts 1-6 points of damage per round, but feels no pain, only a tremendous sense of peace and happiness as their blood goes to feed their newly discovered kind and loving god. The effects of the pollen last for 2-8 rounds, after which the victim is unaffected by the same plant's pollen.

Suicide plants possess a large network of sensitive and slowly mobile roots close to the surface of the ground and can detect any creatures moving upon the earth out to 40 feet. They are often revered by the desert tribes and it is not unusual for the tribe's elderly, tired of the pains of age, to voluntarily submit to the plants for these people consider the plants holy. Other tribes use suicide plants as a form of defense, planting them in bottleneck locations or around their villages in general. Some brave tribes actually harvest the deadly pollen using giant insects. The pollen is then collected and hurled as brainweed grenades (effects like above except victims simply drop to the ground and start bleeding themselves). Suicide pollen is also favored by intelligent undead such as mummies and vampires.

Physical description: Suicide plants are almost indistinguishable from a multitude of desert succulents. The most common varieties are similar to the mammillaria and famatimensis types of catci with many two-foot tall thick trunks, almost feathery sharp spines and either a crown of pollen-rich flowers or large showy flowers. However, these are not the only types.

Variants: There are some suicide plants that provide visions of terror, as opposed to ones of peace and happiness. The few survivors report feeling like their blood was boiling while under the effects of the suicide plant's pollen. These plants are feared and sometimes viewed as the result of a god's wrath.

Three Tricks and Traps to Test your Players by Matthew Finch!

The Ceiling of Clouds

A room within the dungeon has a high ceiling with clouds painted upon it. The detail of the painted sky above is unbelievably precise, and it is almost difficult to believe that the ceiling is not actually an exit from the dungeon to the surface. Anyone spending an entire turn inside the room, especially anyone staring at the ceiling, will begin to feel lightheaded. If the party does not immediately leave the room, in the next round one randomly determined party member will be hurled upward into the painting itself, as if falling skyward (this does not cause any damage to the character). The character will remain floating in the picture, looking like a well-painted part of the fresco, and will be trapped for 2d6 rounds in this condition. At the end of the 2d6 rounds, the character will fall back out of the painting, as if from a height of 60ft. It is possible to cast a feather fall or fly spell upon a character while he is within the painting, thereby negating the effect of the fall when it happens. Other solutions, such as piling soft materials underneath the character, will work as well.

The ceiling does radiate magic, and the party may get some warning if they use a spell or an item that reveals such things. For purposes of detection spells, the ceiling should be considered a trap, although a thief could not ordinarily detect it.

The Chasm Painting

This trick is similar to the Ceiling of Clouds trick, in that the trick itself is a magical painting.

In one of the rooms or passages of the dungeon, a highly detailed picture of a deep chasm has been painted upon the floor. In the middle of the chasm a small gem lies on the floor (it lies on the actual floor, appearing to be floating in space over the yawning fissure). Although the party might initially mistake the painting for a real chasm by torchlight, clues that it is only a picture will be noticed after only a moment's inspection of the room. However, if the magical gem (50 gp value) is removed from the painting, the picture suddenly takes on a different property. From the moment the gem is removed, anyone standing

upon the painting will fall into it, a "distance" of 40ft. The fallen character(s) will be visible as painted figures down in the chasm. They can be rescued by normal means, although anything descending into the picture will also take on the appearance of a painting while inside. If the fall kills a character, and no rescue of the body is attempted, the character will remain in the painting as a corpse, and the painted representation will slowly become a skeleton (5 days) and then disappear entirely after 10 days.

The Stone Dog

The stone dog is a statue that might be found in any room of its home dungeon, for it moves about from time to time as described below. It is not a very good sculpture, having a roughly-hewn and stylized face much like that of a gargoyle, though it is recognizable as a dog. After a party of adventurers enters the stone dog's room, the statue will animate and walk after them, its mouth open and tongue hanging out. It has no facial expressions, and it is clearly still made of stone. The statue can move as fast as 180ft, but will choose to lag behind the party by 20ft or so. It is capable of walking through walls if this is necessary to follow the party: it simply melds into the stone and then steps out from the other side of the wall. The dog will continue to follow the party until it is either frightened away or fed, as described below. If water is splashed on the statue, it will immediately race away from the party until it reaches the nearest room, where it will resume existence as a normal statue until it finds new adventurers to follow. If it is fed, however, it will become the party's ally for a short period of time. Either rock or normal food can be used to feed the stone dog, and since it eats rocks it will treat a hurled rock or sling stone as food. Once it is fed, the statue will continue to follow the party as before, but if the party is threatened it will fight on their behalf until "killed." Weapons do not normally harm the statue itself: its hit points represent the point at which it departs from a combat. Once "killed," it will run to a new room and become a normal statue again, waiting for a new party of adventurers. Stone Dog: HD 3, HP 10, AC3, Atk bite (1d10).

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