

Secret Santicore 2012



**THE LOST YEAR**

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# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### CONTRIBUTORS

Bill A., Bennet Akkerman, Peter B., Stuart B., hudson bell, Barry Blatt, S. Brewer, William Broom, Courtney Campbell, Chris Carpenter, Reece Carter, Chapman, Kiel Chenier, Justin D., Stacy Dellorfano, Jeremy Deram, Patrick Henry Downs, Jeremy Duncan, Anthony F., Jen F., Mike Fernandez, Forke, Simon Foster, Frank, Boric G., Paolo Greco, Sam Greene, Gus, Ash Haji, Christopher Helton, Florian Hubner, Tom Hudson, Lain J., James, Claytonian JP, Matt Jackson, Erik Jensen, Ian Johnson, Humza Kazmi, Jason Kielbasa, Tim Knight, Jeremy Kostiew, Gus L., Jackie L., Josie L., Janis Lilly, Jeremy M., Jonas M., Joshua M., Reynaldo Madrian, Tim Maki, Annah Madriñan, Mikah McCabe, Legion McRae, Thomas Molyes, Kreg Mosier, Isaac Murphy, Mark P., Stuart P., Tony Pace, Kirin Robinson, Jason Roe, Rolang, Tina Rowand, Adrian M Ryan, Jeff S., Rob S., Paul Schafer, Secret DM, Andrew Shields, Stefan Shirley, Shoe the Pixie, Jason Sholtis, Shortymonster, Steve Sigety, Roger S.G. Sorolla, Adam T., Joe T., Trey, Connor Uber, Jason Utz, Emily Vitori, Martijn Vos, Adam W., Dave W., Jim White, Edward Wilson, Andy Wise, Duncan Young, Zzarchov, and “several secretive folk who have asked to remain nameless.”

### EXECUTION

Jez Gordon

### ORIGINAL WRANGLERS AND COMPILERS

Trey Causey, Mike Evans, Erik Jensen, Dallas McNally, Chris “Rolang” Weller

### MANY THANKS

Mike Evans, Erik Jensen, John Walshe

### WHY

When I first started bringing this pdf together, someone understandably asked me, “Why...?” After all, 4-5 years have passed since the individual submissions were posted across five blogs, and the project/everyone working on it likely moved on to greater things. Well, originally, this was just going to be for me - simply to grab some excellent gaming material. Nothing fancy, just a pile of cut/pasted WP documents to put up beside the completed Santicore pdfs.

Things changed after I found out what happened, way back in 2012. It occurred to me that, in the spirit of the Santicore, maybe some payback or pay it forward was due to all those who did such great work, especially Jez. A more finished compilation was in order. Erik and Mike were kind enough to give me a hand, get me up to speed with things, and answer my many questions - because I didn’t know what Santicore really was before starting this.

So, while it’s a little late, this one’s for you.

Greg

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*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a set of small random tables that tell me what happens to the characters if the adventure has to end before everyone gets back to civilization. Some sort of "fleeing from the dungeon/out of the wilderness tables" to wrap things up quickly if people have to go home.*

*Florian*

# SO YOU FLEE" TABLES

By Stefan Shirley

Sometimes, you're lucky to make it back alive. These tables (mostly) assume that you have been so lucky and burden your character with certain troubles that will be more or less severe depending on your edition of choice. I added the Faerie table since it would be applicable to any location one

might need to escape in a fantasy RPG, and I added the city table since that's the next game I intend to run!

The moral of this story - if it has one - is that time is a resource; if you don't use it wisely, anything can happen!

## 1. Roll on The First Table of Escape...

1d6	RESULT
1	Roll on a Wandering Monster table. You must survive a solo encounter with the result, then roll on this table again, but add 1 to the roll.
2	You become hopelessly lost. If you lack food or some method of acquiring it, you lose a point of Constitution, then roll on the next appropriate table.
3	A strange creature of mist stalks you. It will drain you of prepared spells, drain a magic item, or take a level from you. As if things couldn't get any worse, then roll on the next appropriate table.
4	Captured! Imprisoned, and there is no escape! Whoever captured you is probably related to the quest you had to abandon and hopefully they send ransom demands to your companions! Do not roll again.
5	Whatever other misadventures you find yourself on, you have attracted a minstrel. For better or for worse this traveling entertainer wishes to accompany you wherever you go and will not take no for an answer. Roll on the next appropriate table.
6	Roll twice more on this table. Do not ignore further results of 6! You certainly do live an unexpectedly eventful life!
7	Disintegration Trap? How did you miss that before? Save and lose a random limb, or... die... sorry. Your next roll shall be 3d6, my friend. Roll a new character. If you made the save, you stumble back to base dazed and confused.

## 2. ...then, roll on one of the following tables, for Dungeon, Wilderness, or City as appropriate...

### While fleeing from the Dungeon you...

2d6	RESULT
2	...
3/11	...are set upon by humanoids bigger and more numerous than you. They take your stuff, but somehow, you managed to escape! Time to get your stuff back!
4/10	... are jumped by bandits when you reach the surface! They take only your cash and trade goods. They let you go as an example to the villagers. If they can rob a big briches adventurer and get away with it, what chance do a bunch of peasants have? Of course, they got you alone. They won't be so lucky next time.
5/9	...run afoul of a powerful wandering wizard who polymorphs you into a small dog, but you are able follow your own scent home! Now... You need to get yourself turned back.
6/8	... hid from foul humanoids and bandits in the foulest ditches, sewers, and trash heaps. You are in quite a state by the time you get back. You sick, filthy, and miserable. Lose a point from each of your physical stats until you can make a saving throw. Make these saves daily for a month. Each successful save restores one of the lost points. At the end of the month you recover fully. A cure disease spell will also work. Damn. You feel miserable.
7	...nothing happens! Well, you evade capture and death and only suffer minor battering for your efforts (lose a non-lethal number of HP). You make it back to the tavern/base/headquarters more or less none the worse for wear. Nothing a round of drinks and a good night's sleep won't fix!
12	...are captured by creatures of the faerie courts! (see following table) Or, roll again on this table twice!

**While making your way out of wilderness back to civilization you...**

2d6	RESULT
2	...
3/11	... are hopelessly lost for 1d6 days. Eventually you make it back to camp, but if it weren't for the kindness of that wandering werebear you would have never made it! He did only agree to help you if you surrendered all your steel and your tinder box. Something about protecting the wilderness.
4/10	... are jumped by the local law's tax collectors. They take only your cash and trade goods. They let you go as an example to the villagers. If they can tax a big britches adventurer and get away with it, what chance to a bunch of peasants have? Of course, they got you alone. They won't be so lucky next time. Wait... Does this sound eerily familiar?
5/9	...run afoul of a powerful wandering witch who polymorphs you into a pigeon, but lucky for you, a homing pigeon! Now... You need to get yourself turned back. But, first who do you want to humble from on high?
6/8	... are never sure how you got back. You wandered out there for days? Hours? You don't know, but you came upon paths you had never seen before and wandered and wandered. You ate what you thought were edible mushrooms and berries, but well... The folks in the logging/mining camp that took you in said you were raving about tiny blue people in white hats and hose. It was never entirely clear whether you ate them, or their homes, or perhaps you thought you could somehow turn them to gold? Whatever it was, it made no sense at all. Lose a point from each of your mental stats until you can make a saving throw. Make these saves daily for a month. Each successful save restores one of the lost points. At the end of the month you recover fully. A neutralize poison spell will also work. Damn. You feel miserable. And, your "friends" keep telling you there are spiders all over you. Bastards.
7	..nothing happens! Well, you evade capture and death and only suffer minor battering for your efforts (lose a non-lethal number of HP). You make it back to the tavern/base/headquarters more or less none the worse for wear. Nothing a round of drinks and a good night's sleep won't fix!
12	...are captured by creatures of the faerie courts! (see following table) Or, roll again on this table twice!

**While escaping the terrible neighborhood you...**

2d6	RESULT
2	...
3/11	... are caught up in an ecstatic pilgrimage or religious festival and compelled to donate all your worldly goods to their cause! However, you now have burlap sack robes and this fabulous holy symbol.... Damn it!
4/10	... are confronted by Bandits? Tax collectors? Nooo... You should be so lucky! Money lenders. They helped you out of a rough spot, but now you owe them 1d6 thousand gold, and they said something about troll prison and soap....
5/9	...run afoul of the local wererat mafia. They've infected you with a very special version of their "disease." You have until the next full moon to pony up 1d6 thousand gold, or join their guilds. However, they get you "home" safe-ish and at least as sound as when you left.
6/8	...nothing happens! Well, you evade capture and death and only suffer minor battering for your efforts (lose a non-lethal number of HP). You make it back to the tavern/base/headquarters more or less none the worse for wear. Nothing a round of drinks and a good night's sleep won't fix!
7	...as 6 & 8, but you found 1d6 coins! Determine value randomly according to the setting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A new shop or tavern that will give you a 10% discount! And, sacred dice of the trickster gods, A TAB! Gods be praised!</li> <li>2. A new church! They don't know you very well there yet.</li> <li>3. A lead on your next (mis)adventure!</li> <li>4. A park where a bunch of pacifists and rebellious nobles all hang out around strange stones and smoke exotic weeds. You lose a couple wisdom points temporarily when you hang out there too long, but double normal healing rates when you do!</li> <li>5. A pet! A small dog, cat, or lizard as is appropriate to the setting.</li> <li>6. A waif who claims to be a beggar prince and seems to know a very great deal about what goes on in the city's underworld!</li> </ol>
12	...are captured by creatures of the faerie courts! (see following table) Or, <b>roll again on this table twice!</b>

**Captured by Faerie Creatures!**

1d20	RESULT
1	You find have no memory of what happened, but you are plagued by strange dreams for the rest of your days. Lose a point of Wisdom.
2	Man, what did you drink? The hangover never quite ends, and you are never again as sharp as you once were. Lose a point of Intelligence.
3	You experienced such beauty that everything in the world pales by comparison. You become somewhat cynical and over critical. Lose a point of Charisma.
4	“Holy Crap! But, I was at that party for years! What do you mean only a day has passed here!” Lose a point of Strength on account of aging ten years.
5	You think you may have caught something unpleasant from those nymphs/satyrs.... Lose a point of Constitution.
6	You won a dancing contest with a leprechaun, and in a fit of pique he stole some of your moves. Lose a point of Dexterity.
7	What is this thing, and where did I get it from? You gain a random magic item!
8	You have gained nudity and poverty! Congratulations! Beats martyrdom! Also, you have a new birthmark... Wonder where you got that? And... Is that villager who wouldn't give you the time of day last time you were in town, leering at you? Gain a point of Charisma (your gear and cash are around somewhere; pixies hid it).
9	You wake in the local school house or perhaps chapel wearing a dunce cap. The local children laugh at you as you spend the rest of the day trying to get the thing off. However, when you do, you find that you suddenly feel more clever than ever! Gain a point of Intelligence.
10	You sat at tea parties and smoked with caterpillars. You discussed at great length, many things, with a wizard in an emerald city, and monkeys taught you how to fly. You think. You don't remember how to fly, but you do retain some of your insight into the functioning of the universe. Gain a point of Wisdom.
11	Man! Working out with those mountain trolls really paid off! Gain a point of Strength! On the other hand, it is going to take weeks to wash the troll stank off.
12	You have more endurance than you ever had before. I leave it to your imagination what sort of training you received. Gain a point of Constitution. You're going to be sore for a few days and you'll probably have to endure a couple weeks of ribald jests from your compatriots.
13	You danced with the dryads under the trees and they taught you so, so much. Gain a point of Dexterity. However, you desperately need a hair brush to get all the lilac blossoms and twigs out of your hair.
14	You got in deep gambling with an efreet and barely escaped with your life, fortunately they took your random magic item as collateral. If you didn't have one to take, well, you owe somebody something exotic and difficult to come by, and they know where to find you....
15	A few pleasant memories and a nightmare or two are all you have to show for your misadventures amongst the faerie folk, but at least you are whole and sound.
16	This is NOT the body you left in! You have been returned to this world in the wrong body! ARGH! (Delusion. A generous DM might give you extra XP for RP.)
17	This is NOT the body you left in! You have been returned to this world in the wrong body! ARGH! (Really. Re-roll Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. At least you are the same species! Also, roll a d6. On a 1-2 lose a point of Charisma. On a 5-6 add one!)
18	You're blue. OK. You know, we won't ask.
19	You're invisible. Not your clothes or gear, just you. Well, hopefully this will pass? Maybe?
20	Invigorating! You've never felt better! Max your HP! Of course, the next couple of days everyone seems to mistake you for someone else and want to pick a fight with you.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a super simple but wonderfully engaging Alchemy system compatible with (at least) any oldish school D&D system. I'm talking maybe D3-1 small tables and D6 accompanying sentences.*

# ALCHEMY ENGINE

by Mike Fernandez

Use this subsystem with whatever rules you normally use to add alchemy into your campaign. Discovering alchemical components is the super simple part of this system, while experimenting with formulas and preparing custom alchemical items from acquired components is where things get wonderfully engaging.

## PART 1 ACQUIRING ALCHEMICAL COMPONENTS

Use these rules when collecting the ingredients needed to prepare formulas and produce alchemical items.

### 1. IDENTIFYING ALCHEMICAL COMPONENTS

Alchemists have a 1 in 6 chance of identifying any unusual or extraordinary creature, plant, or mineral encountered as a potential source of alchemical components. The component's actual form is determined by the DM, because this is a very campaign specific sort of thing. Components are measured in units of drams. The DM determines how large a dram is or how much one weighs.

### 2. ACQUIRING ALCHEMICAL COMPONENTS

To see if the alchemist is able to successfully harvest a component, roll a d% and consult the component type below. If the item is familiar to the character, roll d% twice and use the best result:

- **Plants:** Base chance is 30%; up to double this chance if the source is abundant. If successful, gain 1 dram, +1 additional dram for every 20% the roll succeeded by.
- **Creatures:** Base chance is 20%. Add 5% for every 3 HD the creature possessed; subtract 1% for every 3 points of lethal damage the creature took. If successful, gain 1 dram, +1 additional dram for every 15% the roll succeeded by.
- **Minerals:** Base chance is 15%; up to double this chance if the source is abundant. If successful, gain 1 dram, +1 additional dram for every 10% the roll succeeded by.

### 3. DETERMINING PROPERTY GROUPS AND PROPERTIES

When the alchemist acquires a new component assume he can easily identify whatever properties are inherent by running simple tests in the lab. Each component has 1d4 properties; to determine the property group/property, roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

d12	GROUP/PROPERTY
1	Altering/Masking
2	Altering/Disguising
3	Altering/Mutating
4	Harmful/Damaging
5	Harmful/Poisoning
6	Harmful/Disabling
7	Protective/Resisting
8	Protective/Fortifying
9	Protective/Shielding
10	Protective/Repelling
11	Restorative/Healing
12	Restorative/Removing

Combining two components with complementary properties creates a unique effect. The cost of determining this depends on how closely the two items are related. If they share the same property (e.g., both are "Harmful/Poisoning"), the process costs 5gp and does not use up the components being tested. If the combination only shares the same property group (e.g., both are "Harmful"), this costs 10gp, and each component has a 1/6 chance of being destroyed in the process. Also, the alchemist may choose which of the two properties are used to determine the final effect.

## PART 2 PRODUCING ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Alchemists need labs to study and process their raw components and to prepare alchemical items. For every 1,000gp spent on building a lab, the alchemist can produce items worth 50gp (e.g., a 3,000gp lab can produce items worth up to 150gp). For every 50gp that an item costs, the alchemist must put in one day of constant work to create it; so, a 150gp item takes three days to make.

One alchemical item can have up to 3 different effects. For each effect, the base cost is 10gp and requires a dram of 2 different components with matching properties. The monetary costs cover acquiring common ingredients, maintaining equipment, and melting down coins for raw metals.

### THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

Each effect usually has three common stats: **Duration**, **Intensity**, and **Range**. But, not all effects have all three stats.

Base stats and the costs to increase each are outlined in the tables on the following page. Costs are given in gp, with increases only applied to specific effects. An alchemical item's final price is determined by adding together the individual costs of each effect. Both Duration and Intensity dice are rolled when the alchemical item is used.

## DURATION

The base Duration of an effect is 1 round. Alternatively, some effects (notably poisons) have a **Countdown Time** that starts at 4d6 hours as the base Duration. The costs to increase a Duration length, or decrease a Countdown Time are below:

DURATION	COUNTDOWN TIME	EXTRA COST
1d6 rounds	3d6 hours	+10gp
1d6 minutes	1d6 hours	+25gp
1 turn	1d6 turns	+45gp
1d6 turns	1 turn	+70gp
1d6 hours	1d6 minutes	+100gp
3d6 hours	1d6 rounds	+135gp
4d6 hours	1 round	+175gp

## INTENSITY

The base Intensity of an effect is a d4. The costs to increase an Intensity die type are given below:

DIE TYPE	EXTRA COST
d6	+10gp
d8	+30gp
d10	+60gp
d12	+100gp
d20	+150gp

## RANGE

Base range is ingested. The costs to increase an item's Range are given below:

RANGE	EXTRA COST
Applied	+10gp
Thrown 10' Blast	+25gp
Thrown, 15' blast	+45gp
Thrown, 20' blast	+70gp

## FORM

An alchemical item is categorized by how it is used, not by the form it takes:

**Ingested:** You eat, drink, inhale, inject, or snort it.

**Applied:** You rub, pour, splash, or spray it on or into something.

**Thrown:** You throw it so its container breaks, expelling fumes, gas, liquids, or blasts.

## ADDITIONAL COSTS

Each property group resists being manipulated or processed in certain ways, so increasing specific stats requires more time, money and/or effort. The costs are outlined below:

**Altering:** an effect's Duration cost is doubled.

**Harmful:** an effect's Intensity cost is doubled.

**Protective:** an effect's Duration cost is doubled.

**Restorative:** an effect's Range cost is doubled.

## PART 3 DETERMINING ALCHEMICAL EFFECTS

The DM uses this section to design alchemical components. Each of these may have up to 4 properties, either randomly determined or chosen by design.

On the following pages are tables for the 12 properties:

Masking	Disguising	Mutating
Damaging	Poisoning	Disabling
Fortifying	Resisting	Shielding
Repelling	Healing	Removing

These are split among 4 property groups:

Altering	Harmful
Protective	Restorative

When preparing an alchemical item, components sharing the same properties are combined to unlock effects.

To determine an alchemical item's final effects, the DM rolls on an appropriate table for each of the component ingredients' shared properties. As mentioned previously, finished item may have up to 3 effects.

## THE PROPERTY TABLES

### 1. ALTERING/MASKING PROPERTIES

**Sense Masked:** Target becomes invisible to the resulting sense.

d10	SENSE MASKED
1	Taste
2	Echolocation
3	Thermal vision
4	Smell
5	Sound
6	Darkvision (works in the light)
7	Sight
8	Tremorsense (steps have no weight)
9	Touch (incorporeal form)
10	Thoughts (can't be targeted by mental based effects)

## 2. ALTERING/DISGUIISING PROPERTIES

**Something Is Different About You:** Changes the user's appearance. A 5% chance the effects are permanent.

d10	ALTERED FEATURE
1	Hair (length and color)
2	Eyes (shape and color)
3	Face structure
4	Voice
5	Body Part (grow or shrink in mass by 10%)
6	Height or Weight (increase/decrease by 10%)
7	Scent changes
8	Skin condition or color
9	Roll 1d8: that feature resembles component source
10	Nails or teeth (color and length).

## 3. ALTERING/MUTATING PROPERTIES

**That's New:** Changes the targets capabilities and appearance. There is a 5% chance that the effects are permanent.

d10	ALTERED FEATURE
1	Hold breath indefinitely
2	Grow functional gills (can't breathe air)
3	No need to sleep (but must rest to regain hp and ability damage)
4	Always acts during the surprise round
5	Not need to breathe
6	Treats water as if stone
7	Stretch your limbs, each at 1' per point of CON.
8	Grow functional wings (fly as fast as you can move)
9	Grow a natural weapon (horns, claws, bite, etc.. does dX damage)
10	Burrow through stone as fast as you can move.

## 4. HARMFUL/DAMAGING PROPERTIES

**Damage Types:** Lowers the target's current HP. Different types can combine. No duration, instantaneously does dX damage.

d6	DAMAGE TYPE
1	Freezing
2	Shocking
3	Burning
4	Stabbing
5	Choking
6	Shaking

## 5. HARMFUL/POISONING PROPERTIES

**How This Poison Will Mess You Up:** Continuous effects, save vs. poison at the end of the duration, or the effect starts over again.

d6	HOW THIS POISON MESSES YOU UP
1	Sudden Death (countdown). Failing a save vs. poison instantly kills.
2	Slowly Kills You (countdown). Take dX damage when effect ends.
3	Sickens You (countdown). All ability scores are at -1, increase penalty by 1 for every failed save vs. poison.
4	Hallucination. Roll twice for any roll, taking the worst result representing the weird things you're tripping out on.
5	Dulls your Senses. Move at half speed, always surprised, and act last.
6	Painfully. Save vs. poison for each round of movement or activity, take 1 damage on a fail.

## 6. HARMFUL/DISABLING PROPERTIES

**Debilitating Effects:** Lowers the targets Ability score. At end of effect, damage cause heals at the normal rate.

d6	DEBILITATING EFFECT
1	Enfeebles Strength by dX
2	Numbs Dexterity by dX
3	Weakens Constitution by dX
4	Saps Intelligence by dX
5	Clouds Wisdom by dX
6	Mars Charisma by dX

## 7. PROTECTIVE/FORTIFYING

**Nothing Can Stop You Now:** Raises HP or Ability Score of the target for Duration of the effect. Intensity and Duration are increased at double the normal cost. At the end of the effect lose the exact amount of points gained.

d8	CHARACTERISTIC RAISED
1	Bufs Strength by dX
2	Focuses Dexterity by dX
3	Builds Constitution by dX
4	Expands Intelligence by dX
5	Sharpens Wisdom by dX
6	Amplifies Charisma by dX
7-8	Boosts morale (current hp temporarily increases by 2dX)

## 8. PROTECTIVE/RESISTING PROPERTIES

**Tis But A Scratch:** Reduces specific Damage Types against target during the effect. No Intensity.

d8	DAMAGE TYPE REDUCED
1	Skin becomes like stone, half damage against edged and piercing attacks.
2	Skin becomes like blubbery rubber, half damage from shocking and crushing attacks.
3	Skin becomes nearly burning to the touch, half damage from freezing cold attacks
4	Skin becomes incredibly dense and smooth, half damage from burning attacks
5	Lungs are like steel, half damage from poisonous gases and choking attacks
6	Stance becomes like a rock, half damage from shaking and force attacks
7	Mind becomes like iron, half damage from mental and mind affecting attacks
8	Blood becomes troll like, regenerate 1 hit point for every turn that passes.

## 9. PROTECTIVE/SHIELDING PROPERTIES

**Weird Defenses:** dX times 5% chance for the target to avoid something during the effect.

d8	DEFENSE
1	against falling damage
2	against drowning
3	against death
4	against fire
5	against detection
6	against fisticuffs
7	against mind affecting attacks
8	against iron weapons

## 10. PROTECTIVE/REPELLING PROPERTIES

**Get Back Foul Creature!:** A specific type of creature cannot pass within 5' of the effects range. No intensity.

d8	CREATURE REPELLED
1	A specific type of Animal or Beast
2	Devils and Demons
3	Ghosts and the Undead
4	Angels and Godlings
5	Faeries and Elves
6	Insects
7	A specific type of Humanoid
8	Elementals and Oozes

## 11. RESTORATIVE/HEALING PROPERTIES

**You Feel Well Rested:** Removes Damage to the targets current HP or Ability Score up to it's max. No duration, effects are all instantaneous and permanent.

d4	HEALING TYPE
1	Regain dX hp
2	Regrow a missing limb
3	Regain dX to a damaged ability bringing it back up to its original score
4	Gain the benefit of one night of sleep instantly, and make a CON check, on a fail -1 to all rolls for every full day without sleep that has passed. The penalty is removed by a point for every 8 hours spent resting.

## 12. RESTORATIVE/REMOVING PROPERTIES

**Miracle Medicines:** Cancels effects of a specific Condition on the target. Along with the two components used to create this effect, the formula may require additional alchemical components as described in each effect. Instantaneous. No duration or intensity.

d4	MEDICINE EFFECT
1	Anti-venoms, this is specific to a poison and needs either a dram each of all of the components used for the original poison if synthesized; or a dram from whatever poisonous creature or plant the original poison was derived from.
2	De-mutators, devolves a specific kind of mutation, requires acquiring a dram of a component either from or similar to the affected thing
3	Dispels, cancels out a magical effect, and requires that a spell with a similar magical effect is cast on the finished alchemical item
4	Cures, removes all negative effects of a specific disease, and requires a dram of a component acquired from a thing afflicted by the disease.

## PART 4 HOW DO I USE THE ALCHEMY ENGINE?

I'd recommend DMs come up with a half dozen or so alchemical components before using this system, with component sources being monsters, wildlife, or strange elements the PCs are likely to encounter during play. The properties of these items can be either generated randomly or chosen by design.

The components can be used as the basis of simple rumors and hooks. For example, if the PCs are looking for an alchemical component with a specific type of property, an

NPC could know the existence of such a component if it were on the list. The DM could even create formulas ahead of time, placing them in treasure hoards in the form of scrolls, journals, or whatever.

Where the system shines is when an alchemist identifies a new alchemical component during play. This turns any sort of encounter with something non-mundane as having the potential for discovering a kind of new treasure. Because new alchemical components will be created all the time, the DM should keep a list of established alchemical components and their effects. Producing alchemical items depends on acquiring components, so the DM has a good tool to adjust how often certain items can be made.

## AN EXAMPLE OF THE PROCESS

Let's say Forji'i, an aspiring alchemist, acquired a decent collection of alchemical components during his last expedition:

- 3 x *Adrenal Gland of Ruinsbeast* [Altering/Mutation]  
[Harmful/Poisoning] [Restorative/Healing][Restorative/Removing]
- 2 x *Tentacle of Radfish* [Harmful/Damaging]
- 3 x *Tongue of Winged Snake* [Harmful/Disabling]  
[Protective/Shielding]
- 2 x *Eyes of Sludgefeeder* [Harmful/Poisoning]  
[Protective/Resisting][Protective/Shielding]
- 7 x *Root of Glowflower* [Altering/Masking]
- 4 x *Salt of Oozing Reef* [Altering/Mutating]

He decides to spend his downtime brewing something useful in his lab, which cost 6,000gp to build and equip. Both the

*Tongue of Winged Snake* and *Eyes of Sludgefeeders* shares the [Protective/Shielding] properties. Forji'i spends 5gp running tests and determines that combining these two ingredients can protect the user from mind affecting attacks.

He next examines *The Root of Glowflower* and *Salt of Oozing Reef*, which share the Altering property group. Forji'i spends 10gp to run tests focused on the Mutating property. He discovers that combining these items produces a compound capable of growing functional gills for the person using it. In the process, however, one dram of the *Salt of Oozing Reef* is destroyed.

With the formula for these two effects Forji'i begins work on an *Elixir of Flowing Thoughts*.

The mind shielding effect's base cost is 10gp, with an Intensity of d4, and Duration of 1 round. Forji'i decides to increase the Duration to 1 turn (+90gp, because increasing the Durations of Protective effects costs double), and the Intensity die type to a d8 (+30gp). This brings the cost for this effect to 130gp and requires 2 drams each of *Eyes of Sludgefeeder* and *Tongue of Winged Snake*.

Base cost for the gillgrowing effect is 10gp, with a Duration of 1 round. Forji'i decides to increase the Duration to 1 turn (+90gp, because of doubled cost to increase the Duration of Altering effects). This brings the cost for this effect to 100gp and requires 2 drams each of *Roots of Glowflower*, and *Salt of Oozing Reef*. The total gp cost for the *Elixir of Flowing Thoughts* is 230gp, and takes 5 days to prepare.

*Elixir of Flowing Thoughts*: Drink it down, instantly grow gills (can't breathe air), and any mind-affecting attacks have a d4x5% chance of being ineffective (roll 1d4 upon using the formula). The effects last for 1 turn.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me some notes for running, or an adventure outline for, a heist scenario. Could be in a medieval fantasy world, modern-day, or far future space — your choice. Thanks!*

# HEIST SCENARIO NOTES

By Dave W.

## (VAGUE) HEIST SCENARIO GUIDELINES

Let me first begin by stating that I've never before contemplated a heist scenario, so the advice below should be taken as highly speculative.

As no details were given as to the genre of the heist, I will assume a classic bank robbery. The bank would be protected by passive security systems (electronic, mechanical, or magical depending on the setting) and by armed guards in any case. Bank employees would be schooled in how to react to robbery attempts. These things should be assumed, and as they are predictable and mundane, should largely remain in the background of the scenario, unless the characters deliberately interact with them.

Based upon examples of heist films I have seen, a heist doesn't become interesting until something goes terribly wrong. Given this fact, elaborate plans by the players should be mildly discouraged, as those plans are destined to fail by the requirements of the plot. If everything goes as planned, the heist is successful, but the game is boring. So, the first thing to consider is what will go wrong. In lieu of having the characters script their heist plans, ask the players the following questions:

- (1) What props are required for the successful heist? Perhaps, they plan on tunneling in from the basement of an adjacent building, and consequently require digging equipment.
- (2) Who do they have on the inside (past or present) who might have provided insight into the inner workings of the bank? Perhaps the lover of one of the characters is a bank teller.
- (3) What NPCs outside the stable group of player characters are required to make their plan work? Perhaps, they need to hire a safecracker, or a skilled getaway driver.

- (4) What is going on outside the bank at the planned time of the heist? Perhaps it's Christmas time, and carolers abound. Perhaps a nearby building site is swarming with construction workers.

Choose which of the elements above will complicate the lives of the characters. As they've helped construct the scenario, they can't strongly object to the logical consequences of their choices. Perhaps...

- (1) The required props fail at a critical time, requiring the characters to improvise;
- (2) That lover has been cheating on the pc all along, and has his/her own plans for the heist, getting away with the money and laying the blame fully on the pc;
- (3) Those NPCs are disloyal (cliché) or become injured or sick. Perhaps they encounter a loved in in the bank during the heist, and are conflicted as to how they should proceed;
- (4) A holiday means drunks, and drunks attract cops. There might be an accident at the construction site that attracts an ambulance. While these forces might be entirely ignorant of the heist, their proximity will heighten tension.

Another common theme of the heist genre is the twist. Heist films often portray a dire situation, only to reveal that the characters have had an ace in the hole all along. Things may have looked bleak, but everything was going according to plan all along. When things look most bleak, allow the players to suggest how it's all actually going according to plan. For every fact they introduce, introduce an additional complication they must overcome. This should lead to an escalation of revelations and complications until the final reveal is sufficiently satisfying.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table or tables for generating remote Gothic noble households and their decadent inhabitants. Something along the lines of the House of Usher or Wuthering Heights, but with a bit more of a fantastical bent so it's usable for D&D.*

# REMOTE GOTHIC NOBLE HOUSE GENERATORS!

By Jeremy M.

The [Abulafia](#) site hosts a companion generator.

Below are random tables for your Gothic noble house and its environs, its dungeons and secrets, its master and mistress, their heirs and staff, and even the family's hounds.

## THE HOUSE

d8	RESULT
1	Is a huge, squat keep, built in an ancient style, now crumbling and enveloped by ivy. It is filled with empty rooms, rotting furniture and dusty wall hangings. If examined closely, the tapestries depict ancient crimes – murders, rapes and much worse – all the perpetrators and victims appear to be members of the same family.
2	Is a timber hunting lodge filled with stuffed, skinned and mounted trophies of animals and monsters, hanging alongside weapons, rusty traps and paintings of prized hounds and horses. Everywhere you go within the hall, dozens of glittering eyes seem to track you from the mounted heads that cover every wall. Occasionally, the faint sounds of a baying pack of hounds seem to echo through the rooms.
3	Is a shining pleasure-palace, with high white walls, turreted towers and carefully landscaped ponds and gardens. Its placid tranquility and languid calm are restful, but the gardens are full of unnaturally vital blood-red roses, the ponds are bottomless and are bitterly cold, and the high, ornate windows seem to glare menacingly when seen out of the corner of the eye.
4	Is a tall manor on a point overlooking an isolated cove. Built of the local white chalk, it has patios and stairwells that extend down the cliffs below it. Seen from the day, it is an attractive structure, but the light of the moon bleaches the white walls to the color of unburied bone, and cause the building to shine with unnatural brightness. The cove below constantly washes up old bones and the corpses of the drowned.
5	Is a square, multi-floored brick house with a central courtyard that can be accessed by 4 arched entrances, one in each wall. Walkways lined by arched windows face the interior courtyard on all floors. At the center of the courtyard is a deep well with a rusted iron cover and a stout, new padlock. When the wind blows through the house (which it frequently does) the arches of the courtyard seem to howl with unearthly voices, and the doors fly open and slam closed unpredictably.
6	Is a fortified manor house with a solid gate, paved courtyard and solidly-build hall. The courtyard is dominated by a stone statue of a seated man leaning on a great sword. Time has eroded away most of his features, but the carved eyes remain intact, and glare down fiercely at anyone entering the yard. The base of the statue is ringed by disturbing engravings in an unknown language.
7	Is an old trading stockade that has been converted into a makeshift manor. The log palisade is rotting, and weeds grow around the neglected stables and storage sheds. Half-feral dogs wander about and the surrounding forest presses ominously close. The place smells of mildew, dogshit and fear – all door are barred and lights doused as soon as night falls.
8	Is a tall, moated round-house set on the edge of a deep swamp. The interior of the keep is a deep shaft with a circular stair that goes all the way to the roof. The place is infested with frogs, toad, newt and other, less pleasant things. At night, the strange lights in the swamp are mirrored in the black water at the base of the central shaft, and the odd piping of the swamp inhabitants almost seems to form chattering voices.

# REMOTE GOTHIC NOBLE HOUSE GENERATORS

## THE MASTER

d8	RESULT
1	Is long dead. His remaining family seem reluctant to mention his name or speak about him, especially in the presence of one of the many painted portraits of him that hang about the place. Closer examination of the portraits reveals them all to be the exact same image of the man, a robed, grey-haired human with odd whitish eyes – save that all the backgrounds are different.
2	Is a fit and charismatic middle-aged man with a distinctive strip of white hair. He is charming, welcoming and invites the party to stay as long as they desire. Occasionally, you might notice him staring at one of you with an expression of awful hunger on his face, but that might be your imagination.
3	Is a grim and powerful aging warrior with a black beard and fierce disposition. He is given to drinking binges of epic scale, followed by black rages, intense weeping and insane ranting. He is liable to attack anyone who interferes with him during these episodes, including family members.
4	Is a corpulent and florid drunkard who wallows in food and drink. He is an avid hunter, but uses it as excuse for depraved cruelty towards animals, his retainers and his family. His drunken feasting and gluttonous feedings occupy the main hall at all hours, except when he disappears into the kennels and basements for long periods of time.
5	Is grey and colorless, gaunt and grim. His seemingly emotionless glare and leaden features are off-putting, but he welcomes everyone and asks probing questions about the parties experiences. He seems extremely knowledgeable in certain esoteric areas, although his habit of standing atop the keep and staring, unmoving, into the distance for many hours at a time is somewhat off-putting.
6	Is a reckless dandy who loves fine food, beautiful women, wine and music. He is attended by bards, courtiers and obvious mistresses, living life in a swirling, debauched party. For all that, he is lean with solid muscle and obvious duelling scars, and the finely-crafted weapons he displays all about have marks of hard use. Each day he spends several hours on weapon drills, his movements unnaturally swift and precise.
7	Is an enormous, shambling wreck of a man, clad in worn and stained clothing and with a massive, shaggy beard. He communicates mostly in grunts and scowls, seeming to stare at nothing and mutter to himself constantly. Occasionally, glimpses of his limbs and torso reveal horrible, barely-healed scars and oddly precise tattoos in what appear to be arcane designs.
8	Is ancient and decrepit, having to be fed and cleaned by members of his staff and family. He wanders in and out of lucidity, raving about ancient battles, betrayals and intrigues. Anyone knowledgeable about local history will quickly realize that his ranting reveal secret details of many of the major events of the past hundred years. In the odd times that he is coherent, he displays a razor-sharp wit and seeks to draw newcomers into convoluted plots.

## THE STAFF

d8	RESULT
1	Are an unshaven crew of slovenly ruffians who are oddly respectful and subservient around the family, but cruel and bullying to all others.
2	Are squat and clad in mud-colored smocks, with oddly misshapen bodies and strangely shaped turbans.
3	Are barely-visible, performing their duties as quickly and quietly as possible, then disappearing into other parts of the house, visibly terrified.
4	Are oddly uniform in appearance, dress and features, moving about their duties with silent, mechanical precision.
5	Are wracked with deformities, twisted limbs and misshapen faces are common, but they appear to be happy and competent, running things with smooth skill.
6	Are regimented and tightly trained – all of them bear weapons and appear to belong to an elite military unit, but perform domestic chores and labour about the manor.
7	Have bestial features, oddly enlarged teeth and smell of wet dog. They seem loyal, though, and travel about in groups whenever possible.
8	Are oddly servile humanoids from surrounding tribes. They obey the family without question, but occasional flashes of resentment are visible on occasion.

# REMOTE GOTHIC NOBLE HOUSE GENERATORS

## THE MISTRESS

d8	RESULT
1	Is dead, but the staff whisper that they hear voices in the night, and a female voice seems to whisper and titter in empty rooms as you pass by.
2	Is pale, distant and ethereally beautiful. She walks silently about the house at all hours, even appearing in places that seem impossible to get to. Her skin is oddly chilly, but perhaps that's just because she walks around barely clothed all the time.
3	Is attractive, with raven-black hair and full red lips, but her horrendous temper makes her beauty perilous. She's given to psychotic rages, and nobody is safe from her when her anger is triggered. Too bad the Master of the house dotes on her every whim...
4	Is enormous and toad-like, croaking commands and running the staff ragged. She clearly runs the manor; anyone who interferes with her suffers debilitating stomach ailments shortly afterwards. Her control of the kitchens is particularly suspect, as are the many "exotic" ingredients found in the pantries and stores.
5	Is locked in a tower and rarely spoken of. Something seems to scabble at the inside of the barred doors and windows, though, and faint shrieking and odd chanting can be heard echoing down in the night.
6	Is ancient but unnaturally spry, seems aware of all happening in the manor. Her hunched, black-clad form bustles around at all hours. In fact, she sometimes seems to be in several places at once.
7	Is a terrified mistress desperately trying to maintain the Master's attention and affection. She is young, beautiful and growing desperate enough to do something really rash to get out of the Manor.
8	Is pampered and demanding, but oddly skilled at getting what she wants. Something about her just seems to encourage compliance, perhaps it's the odd sibilance in her voice, or her sinuous, swaying walk.

## THE DUNGEONS

d8	RESULT
1	Are a network of limestone caverns that extend far beneath the manor. The upper areas are worked and used for storage and security, but the lower reaches are unexplored.
2	Are a dank series of half-flooded galleries, dripping oubliettes and muddy sewers. The place is infested with snakes and toads of unwholesome size, along with other, even less pleasant lurkers.
3	Are an extensive and crumbling series of basements and storage rooms. They link to a set of much older, deeper tunnels that have odd proportions, and are seemingly not built for human traffic.
4	Are clearly dwarven stonework, carefully fitted and lovingly carved. All coated in a layer of dust and grime now, though, save the occasional prints of a pair of heavy boots going here and there.
5	Are dug into the raw earth and full of twisted roots, hanging vines, moss, and mold that often seem to be the only thing keeping the tunnels from collapsing. In some areas, they haven't even managed that.
6	Are beautifully carved and clearly much older than the manor. The flowing, fluted columns and ornate balconies appear to be elvish design, but the prevalent spider motifs make you wonder which elves, exactly?
7	Are a seemingly endless labyrinth of rough-piled stone, dotted with small alcoves that hold unnerving pieces of statuary or small oddly-stained altars. The sounds of footsteps seem to echo throughout the halls, making it seem like people are always moving around down there.
8	Are built around a single shaft with a circular stairwell that drops straight into the earth. The occasional archway leads to a network of old mining tunnels scattered with ancient, rusted equipment.

## THE SECRET Is that...

d8	RESULT
1	The tunnels under the Manor are the center of a demon-worshipping cult that sacrifices humans.
2	The manor is the old lair of a necromancer and a warren of the undead.
3	The area is infested with doppelgangers, although not everyone has been replaced yet.
4	Guests are sometimes snatched for magical experimentation.
5	Hateful alien entities have thinned the barriers between realities and are pressing through.
6	Cannibalistic orgies are regularly held at the manor, and guests of honor are usually the main course.
7	The area is haunted by a variety of ghosts and spirits, making moving about after nightfall very dangerous.
8	The Master has a secret alliance with surrounding humanoid tribes for some nefarious purpose of his own.

# REMOTE GOTHIC NOBLE HOUSE GENERATORS

## THE HEIR(S)

d8	RESULT
1	Are an indistinct horde of grubby, wild and violent children. It's impossible to distinguish gender or age under the grime, scabs and snot, but they seem to be everywhere within the keep, and see everything that happens.
2	Are twins, with identical appearance and clothing. They are rarely out of each other's company and often speak in unison or finish each other's sentences.
3	Is a single daughter who is dour and severe, with an intense stare that seems to cast a chill on its target. The smallest lapse in decorum or etiquette seems to invoke her silent ire.
4	Is a huge and simple son. He is persistent in his affections for attractive women, and mindlessly cruel to animals, staff or those smaller than himself.
5	Are a son and daughter in their teens who spend much of their time in the wilds outside the manor. They are fit, tanned, and occasionally seen sneaking inside in the middle of the night, naked and splattered in mud and less wholesome things.
6	Are numerous bastards that make up much of the staff. They seem resentful of their position as servants. Their resemblance to the master and mistress is obvious, but not commented on.
7	Is hidden away and not discussed, but whispered rumors are that the infant has been hidden since birth and is somehow terribly unnatural.
8	Are several adult men and women, who come and go frequently and constantly plot against each other and their parents.

## THE HUNT

d8	RESULT
1	Is a huge pack of shaggy, feral dogs led by a shambling bear-like fellow with a rusty halberd.
2	Are lean, reddish hounds that work with a crew of silent red-coated huntsmen and seem to feed only on blood.
3	Is a pit full of half-starved wild boars, used for baiting animals and men alike.
4	Is a mixed pack of vicious mongrels, kept roughly in line by several surly, cursing huntsmen.
5	Is a wolf-pack that seems to form instantly from the surrounding woods when the Master rides out to hunt.
6	Are a swarm of lumpish, malformed pit-dogs that savage anything unlucky enough to cross their path.
7	Are a hyaena-like, humped and cackling pack with a hunched and hooded keeper.
8	Are a pale and silent pack of long-haired hounds with several slender, silver-clad attendants.

## THE DEMESNE

d8	RESULT
1	Are a cluster of muddy, reeking huts surrounded by animal pens and tended fields.
2	Are a scattering of strongly-built farmsteads, all barred and defended night and day.
3	Are small villages built at the junctions of rivers and valleys, connected by rough trails.
4	Are mostly savage wilderness – all the inhabitants cluster around the manor itself in a sprawling slum.
5	Are fenland villages with stilted huts, where the inhabitants move on flat-bottomed boats over deep mires and marshes.
6	Are rough rock houses built among the ruins of older, larger cities.
7	Are semi-permanent herding camps, linked by animal trails and log roads.
8	Are towers built on hills, manned and alert at all times.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me ten rumors that would be intriguing enough to complete D&D noobs for them to want to go check them out in a brand new sand box campaign.*

# INTRIGUING RUMORS FOR D&D NOOBS!

By Mark P.

1. Roll a d10 to see which rumor the PCs hear. Give them the information from the first column.
2. If they bite, have them make a suitable Gather Info check to hear what's in the second column.

3. If they roll particularly well, are persistent enough in their enquiries, or you just want to reel them in, tell them what's in the third column.

d10	SOMEONE TOLD ME...	WELL, I HEARD...	AND THAT'S NOT ALL...
1	There's a mining camp up in the mountains; it's a miserable little place and nobody much goes there except miners. Once a month, they send carts of ore down to a nearby town for smelting, but this is the third month in a row nobody's heard from them. Local smiths are grumbling at having to procure their metals from further afield.	Last time the ore wagons came, the miners were excited about something. They had struck some "interesting" stone that they thought might be good for building. They were looking for stonemasons to examine some samples they had brought. Those who have seen the samples say that they were quite beautiful, but are unable to remember exactly what they looked like.	The miners showed the samples to a local dwarven stonemason, who quickly said the stone was useless. The dwarf tried to convince them to shut down their mine, but the miners clearly believed they were onto something and refused. They convinced another stonemason to go back to the mine with them. As soon as they left, the dwarf and his family shut up shop and left town without saying a word. They seemed afraid of something.
2	Travelers and traders passing along the forest road are being harassed by mobs of kobolds. They have been laying traps along the road to disrupt passing wagons and distract or disarm any guards. Then, they swarm in and steal whatever treasure they can take from the traders in the confusion.	The attacks seem desperate and uncoordinated. Kobolds are known for ambushes and cunning traps, but these seem hastily cobbled-together. The kobolds only seem interested in taking metals and gems. When the victims had none, the kobolds made off with weapons, bits of armor or anything else metallic. None of the stolen metals seem to have been made use of in building the traps.	One of the traders who survived the kobold attacks happened to understand a little of their language. The trader said they were barking something about "more food for the earth-dragon". While kobolds are often found in the service of dragons, and many dragons are known to covet precious metals and jewels, they are certainly not known for eating such things. The name "earth-dragon" doesn't seem to relate to kobold religion either.
3	A renowned adventuring scholar, touring the local area with an exhibition of treasures found on various expeditions, is setting up nearby. In addition to the fabulous artifacts, there will be displays of athletic and martial prowess, magic and bardic performances.	The scholar's most recent acquisitions come from an old tomb uncovered not far from here. It is said that there are curses laid on such tombs, but the scholar laughs at such superstitious nonsense. During the last exhibition, one of the magic displays went wrong and a bard was nearly incinerated.	One item in particular is a carved gem of tremendous value, depicting an old heathen god. Besides the unwanted attention of thieves and rogues, there is at least one religious group who would want to burn such a heretical icon. One or two of those carvings do not show their god in a favorable light.
4	Wolf attacks are normally scarce in the area, but lately they are on the increase. Not only are the attacks more frequent, but the wolves are becoming more brazen. First it was chickens, then sheep, but now people are being attacked too.	One of those bitten was the eldest child of a local blacksmith. The victim has since gone missing, after returning to the attack site to retrieve some lost belongings. The smith is offering a reward for the safe return of the child.	The local druids may be able to shed some light on why the wolves are so active. The nearest known druid is a hermit who lives in the woods outside of town. Most people say the hermit is a bit crazy, so nobody wants to go out there.

## INTRIGUING RUMORS FOR D&D NOOBS!

d10	SOMEONE TOLD ME...	WELL, I HEARD...	AND THAT'S NOT ALL...
5	The druidic Rite of the Unbroken Circle was disrupted by reveling fey who came out of the woods. Local folk say it's a bad omen. Petty theft and arson are on the rise in the area, and the fey are being blamed for this too.	The rite is supposed to ensure that the sun continues to rise after the winter solstice. There is a symbolic sun amulet essential to the rite, which the fey have stolen. The rite must be completed before the solstice.	The druids have recently given extended logging rights to local lumberers, which may have angered the fey. It is said that some of the trees are sacred to the fey (but apparently not the druids), but most people can't tell one tree from another.
6	A local lordling is calling for "the aid of adventurers, in a quest of utmost importance." Further details can be made available by appointment at the castle.	The lordling is known to dislike adventurers, regarding them as a nuisance. At least one group of adventurers has headed up to the castle, but nothing else has been heard from them since they left.	Screams echo around the castle in the night. Although it is thought that the castle has extensive dungeons, it is not known who might be imprisoned there or why. Is it the adventurers?
7	One local temple had a break-in last weekend. The library was ransacked, but the only thing missing seems to be a book of prayers for the dead. The book is important to the clerics as they use it almost daily, but it is not of particular monetary value. Nobody was seen entering or leaving the temple.	Another break-in happened at a scholar's home a few days before. The bookshelves were turned over, and a couple rare texts about astrology and the undead were taken. The scholar found the mess in his study the following morning, but remembers hearing nothing during the night. A guard recalled seeing mist around the building on an otherwise clear night.	The night before the first break-in, somebody overheard the scholar conversing with a cloaked stranger. The scholar seemed to decline some sort of offer and tried to leave. The stranger grew agitated, hissing "I said I will pay you! Why will you not take my gold?" The voice was well spoken, as if of noble blood. Then, aware of unwanted attention, the stranger quickly withdrew.
8	A trader at a local market had a particularly fine sword for sale. A passing elf recognized the blade as that of an elven knight, who would likely only relinquish such a blade in death. The trader claimed it had been acquired by legitimate means. The elf was unconvinced. Some say there's going to be a duel.	The elf has indeed challenged the trader to a duel for the sword. The trader accepted, naming a battle-scarred half-orc as champion. The trader has retreated to the estate of a local noble, and the duel is to be fought on the grounds. The sword is to be kept in the noble's dungeons until the duel in three days' time.	The half-orc is well-known in local circles for brutality and shady dealings with unsavory characters. However, it's also been said that the elf has been keeping some bad company lately. Some say the noble runs the local thieves' guild. Bets are being taken as to who is double-crossing who.
9	The so-called "unbreakable vault" of a local noble has been breached! It is reported that the only thing taken was a single gold piece. The noble dismisses this rumor as nonsense, but there are mutterings amongst his serving staff that say otherwise. Rumors persist of a secret tunnel down by the river, leading into the vault.	Everyone says that the masked rogue known only as "The Whistler" is responsible, and that a note was left in the vault. There is much speculation about what was written – some say a death threat, others a poem. They say the Whistler lives up on the rooftops among the birds. Also, the secret tunnel is a trap. It leads to a fake vault designed to incarcerate potential thieves.	A servant reports that the note contained magic runes, and the noble has been ensorcelled by its contents. This has been kept secret. The noble is physically restrained, but continually yells "The meeting! I must attend the meeting!" The noble's heir is currently running the estate, until a cure for the enchantment can be found discreetly.
10	A ship thought lost at sea last year has recently sailed back into port. The ship has been searched from stem to stern, but there is no sign of crew. Whispers speak of a horrible vanishing curse inflicted by the sea gods upon those who turn to piracy in desperation.	Unlike the rest of the ship, the captain's cabin is clean and dry. Wet footprints have been sighted leading to and from the ship, but nobody has been seen coming or going. One sailor claims to have seen a light coming from the captain's cabin, but the old sot is clearly very drunk.	The local authorities are considering putting the ship to the torch. Ever since it sailed into port, there have been all manner of misfortunes in town, and the curse is being blamed. Those who know of the ship say it holds secret treasure compartments, but none have been found.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table of random places to have come from, described in generic terms (e.g. "A run-down farm far off the beaten path" or "A bustling port city").*

# RANDOM ORIGIN LOCATIONS!

By Lain J.

## PLACES WE'VE BEEN, PLACES WE'RE GOING

d4	PLACE
1	Village
2	Town or City
3	Farm or Camp
4	Castle or Fortress

d6	DESCRIPTION
1	Bustling
2	Prosperous
3	Poor
4	Quiet, uneventful
5	Ordinary
6	Tightly-rule

d8	LOCATION
1	Isolated
2	Coast/river
3	Forest
4	Hills/Mountains
5	Plains
6	Crossroads
7	Swamp
8	Foreign country

d40	LOCATION
1	A quiet farm
2	A border fortress run by a strict duke
3	A small town slowly starving to death
4	A rich farm in the Sultanate of Ghubari
5	A prosperous cross-roads trading town
6	A busy traveller's town on the edge of the forest
7	A river-boat caravan
8	A lord's castle overlooking the forest
9	A camp of nomads with a terrifying chieftain
10	An isolated farm that manages a good trade
11	A quiet town
12	A mountainside village with a firm mayor
13	A run-down farm far off the beaten path
14	A castle in the middle of nowhere
15	A busy city
16	A small palace overlooking the sea, often used as a port
17	A bustling port city
18	A decaying castle far up-river
19	A rich farm with many servants
20	A small farm on the other side of the mountains

d40	LOCATION
21	A foreign city which has seen better days
22	A quiet cross-roads town
23	A small river port town
24	A slave farm on the edge of the mountains
25	A tiny hamlet in the moors
26	A woodcutter's camp
27	An isolated village that only rarely saw traders
28	A dull town sitting in a mountain pass
29	A large farm, rich from being near trade roads
30	A small fort, home to an exiled baron
31	A village, wealthy from harvesting swamp herbs
32	A farm scraping a living in the foothills
33	A decaying castle, deep in the heart of the forest
34	A city in the moors, always attacked by bandits
35	A fortress overlooking a major cross-roads
36	A castle controlling the only pass through the mountains
37	A small lakeside town
38	A poor village, hiding in the foothills
39	A tired city on the grasslands
40	A port town constantly plagued by storms

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a fantasy myth generator. When you travel through a village or town, the locals will know stories and myths you may not have heard before.*

*Could I please have a table to generate these local myths and legends?*

# FANTASY MYTH GENERATOR

By Shortymonster

Here are some basic myths and lore for quick use. These can be true or not depending on the needs of your game, but people within a settlement may disagree with each on interpretation.

d6	MYTHS OF THE WORLD AT LARGE	LOCAL MYTHS AND LEGENDS	THIS INFORMATION COMES TO YOU...
1	Elves are the offspring of Human druids and ancient tree folk.	The crossroads at the centre of the town/village lie over the resting place of a powerful vampire, and must never be disturbed.	A hushed conversation with the local innkeeper.
2	The end times will be preceded by seven days of night.	The Elderman's chain of office is forged from stardust fell to earth, and cannot be broken, but will fall apart if he ever tells a lie.	Shouted in the street by a raving madman.
3	The world rests on the tongue of a dragon of unimaginable size. Day and night are caused by it opening its mouth to feed on the smaller flying species that pass through our realm.	Mead from the honey of local bees has properties to cure madness, but if drunk by the sane, can cause all manner of mental instabilities.	Overheard two young children talking about it.
4	Those born with eyes of different colors are favored children of the trickster god and cannot be trusted.	The mine behind the hill was closed after the workers dug too deep and saw light coming from below, light from the other side of the world.	Overheard two old spinsters talking about it.
5	When the full moon falls on the first day of winter, the dead can be heard by those they left behind.	The lady in the creepy old house has lived for centuries, and although she doesn't leave her house, people who visit come back with white hair and have lost the power of speech.	Another traveller, passing the other way out of the town/village.
6	Changeling beasts and the Fae can be befriended with a song that no one has heard before.	Blonde haired children are destined for greatness. If they choose to remain in the town/village they are shunned for angering the fates.	In ancient documents in the Elderman's residence.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me 20 obscure saints; their names, appearance, symbols, and one or more outstanding miracles or martyrdoms\* attributed to each.

A few of the saints should be thinly disguised syncretizations of obviously pagan gods, or dubious apocryphal folk-legends like the bearded lady St. Uncumber or dog-headed St. Christopher. (consider the folk saints here: [rosarules.blogspot.fr](http://rosarules.blogspot.fr))

\* Thanks to the intercession of the Increate, saints can have more than one martyrdom; for example, St. Sebastian survived being shot with arrows and was actually done to death by stones.

Thanks Keger S.

# RANDOM SAINT GENERATOR

By Joe T.

Roll 1d20 for each desired trait, or read across for a quick saint

d20	NAME	TRAIT	PHYSICAL FEATURE	SYMBOL	MIRACLE	MARTYRDOM
1	Lourdes	Grizzly	Scar	Mug	Turned wine into water during drought	Tortured with leeches by local townsfolk
2	K'kkrellen	Introverted	Unblemished skin	Circle	Raised their dead parents	Swept away by a desert sand storm
3	Crucious	Pious	Blind	Feather	Friendly to wild animals	Starved to death
4	Owlsing	Passive	Stunted leg	Heart	Spoke in tongues	Eaten by wolves
5	Harcourt	Wise	Large Ears	Mace	Ripened crops in the winter	While saving a small animal from a snare
6	G'brush	Extroverted	Facial tattoo	Fish	Could not lie, or be lied to	Killed by cultists; resurrected and killed again
7	Beatty	Simple	Weird runes	Oak Leaf	Perfect empathy with everyone	Burned at the stake
8	Isabelle	Dreary	Luxurious Hair	Sword	Saw true visions	Called home by their gods
9	Tamara	Dour	Long beard	Star	As a child, kept alive by birds in the fields	Beheaded by the order of a local lord
10	Arvald	Fastidious	Oddly shaped mole	Foxglove	Blood had healing properties	Frostbite during a freak snowstorm
11	V'drakol	Coarse	Too man/few digits	Mushroom	Healed small cuts and bruises with their touch	Stoned by the village harlots

# RANDOM SAINT GENERATOR

d20	NAME	TRAIT	PHYSICAL FEATURE	SYMBOL	MIRACLE	MARTYRDOM
12	Elsinore	Smart	Lazy Eye	Holly Leaf	Purified the village well with their tears	During peace talks with opposing army
13	Nestor	Amiable	Different color eyes	Moon	Cured a plague	Stretched on a rack
14	Jacinth	Slovenly	Lock of odd-colored hair	Hexagon	Always in the right place at the right time	In the mines, doing hard labor
15	Montague	Opportunistic	Horns	Egg	Can heal anything, but only by taking the wounds themselves	Fell down a well, now holy
16	Fontaine	Cautious	Well endowed	Magic Wand	Turned stones into soup	Shot with a silver crossbow bolt
17	Richmond	Aggressive	Big Nose	Diamond	Walked through fire to save a dying child	By a disease they helped cure
18	Prurient	Daring	Mute	Three Triangles	Made statues weep holy water	Hung from a nearby fruit tree
19	D'freja	Humorous	Bald	Fork	Increased fertility of the fields	Accidentally poisoned
20	Stuart	Fashionable	Deaf	Wolf Paw	Flowers grew where they walked	Strangled by a madman



Give me all your cookies!!

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a game that can be played by the characters in the game world. Could be dice, cards, or board, as long as it reaches a conclusion quickly. If Santicore is feeling generous, perhaps he could provide a gambling game for taverns and flesh-pets, and an abstract board game played by sages and courtiers. [Some variation on Yahtzee or Mornington Crescent will be totally acceptable]*

# GAMES OF CHANCE AND SKILL

## FOR DRUNKARDS, DILETTANTES, AND COURTLY LAYABOUTS

By Anon

### TAVERN GAMES

#### PIT FIGHT

Each player has a distinct set of dice: d4 through d20. These are their gladiators. Players decide secretly which die to throw into the pit each round. All players roll dice at once. Highest roll wins. Gladiators can't be re-used. So, you might sacrifice your lowly d4 early on or try to out roll everyone else with your d20. Winner is the player that wins the most rounds. Ties are immediately rolled again. A final tie is resolved by a sudden death roll of each player's d20.

#### BRAGGARTS

Trusty seconds or neutral third parties familiar with all involved are agreed upon before starting. Each round consists of players making boasts about something they've done. Other players can call boasters out as a "Liar," but two wrong accusations and the guilty player will be dubbed "Doubter" and have to pay for everyone else. If you manage to get three lies past the rest of the players you can claim yourself "Beautiful Liar" and have your bill paid by them. Play continues until a Doubter is found, all players but one are Beautiful Liars, or a brawl breaks out.

#### LORD'S LAW / WHIM

Popular in both taverns and polite society this starts as a simple trick-taking card game that assumes higher cards take lower with no set trumps. Seven cards dealt to each player. Before the first hand, the player to the dealer's left adds a rule. The rule-adder rotates clockwise for following hands. First player to run out of cards wins. In tavern games, house rules are often set before play, such as: no rules that cause the rule-maker to immediately win, no rules based on seating position, etc. Courtiers trying to pass the time generally smile on rules that are amusing and extend play.

### COURTIER GAMES

#### TRYST

A story-making game with two teams. It traditionally involves the tale of a couple deeply in love but forbidden to meet. To start, each player on the first team names an item or object. Each member of the second team must then describe how the hero uses one of these items to successfully overcome an obstacle to a romantic rendezvous. The items are used in the order they are named. There is no winner or loser, but absurdly comical and surprising items and uses are the goal.

Artistry often comes in the form of subtle mockery of other characters. The first team will often pick items related to social gaffes or objects of ridicule for members of team two. Team two will try to arrange situations that are allude to gossip and past embarrassments of team one.

#### MILLET TRADERS

All players receive chips worth 30. A non-playing dealer called the Guild Master shakes a set of dominoes, draws one, and reads the highest number without showing the domino. This is the price being asked for. The other number is the number that the seller will settle for. Each player gets to bid a number of chips for the cargo. First bid starts to the dealer's left and rotates on following rounds. Bids below the minimum are labeled "Cheap" by the dealer. Cargo goes to the highest bid. The double blank is called "Moldy Millet" and the dealer treats it as a double six but it doesn't count as a cargo for the player that wins it. Cargo with no winning bid (all Cheap) are removed from play. Play continues until cargoes or all player money runs out. Game goes to the player that takes the most cargoes.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table or system or something that helps me decide what all the not so innocent bystanders are doing when trouble erupts. It might want to take into consideration how violent the trouble is and how they feel generally about the people making trouble, but that's optional.*

# INNOCENT BYSTANDER TABLE

By William Broom

## WHAT ARE THE BYSTANDERS DOING?

This system can be used when you jack Santa. 'Jacking Santa' is defined as physical violence, theft, breaking and entering, foot chases, or any other piece of obvious lawbreaking or conflict. Lesser offenses like arguing in the street, emptying chamberpots onto heads, etc. don't draw a reaction unless/ until it evolves into something more serious. 'Santa' always refers to the PCs' enemy in the encounter.

At first I thought of doing a general reaction table, with progressively better or worse results from top to bottom. However, it seems like the reactions of the bystanders depends a lot on the character of the community. Giving each community a different set of reactions should give players more interesting choices to work with. "We can't jack Santa here, this is Selena Scorpionheart's territory! Let's lure him into the Narrows and then jump him," etc. If your campaign incorporates many villages and towns, then each such polity is its own separate community. However, if you're running a game based around one big city, then each district or area could be one community.

## COMMUNITIES

There are three general types of community:

**AUTHORITARIAN** communities are under the command of a firm leadership and an efficient law enforcement service. Citizens know there is a centralized authority keeping them in check. Examples may include a well-ordered city, a town built around a keep, a district ruled by a powerful thieves' guild, or a prison complex.

**COMMUNITARIAN** communities have less centralized authority, but order is still maintained by the general will of the populace. Examples may include a small village, an elven commune, or a ghetto.

**ANARCHIC** communities have no law enforcement, or only ineffective law enforcement. Generally citizens must protect their own rights with blood and steel. Examples may include a city of thieves and villains, an interdimensional bazaar, or the fringes of an army encampment.

These three categories should broadly cover almost any community, but you can give an area more personality by making it a unique type. For example:



**VOYEURISTIC** areas care little for law and order, but they do like a show. They welcome Santa jackers as entertainment, so long as the jacking doesn't involve them. Examples may include a barbarian tribe that prizes strength and honor over pissweak city morality.

**MEEK** communities have no taste for violence of any sort. When outsiders start jacking Santa, they prefer to simply hide until it's all over. Examples may include a colony of gnomes who peer furtively from their dark burrows. Or, create your own unique tables to give a special flavor to your more exotic urban locations.

## BYSTANDER REACTION TABLE

To determine the bystanders' reaction to a Santa jack, roll 2d6: 2-4 is negative, 5-9 is neutral, and 10-12 is positive. A minimum or maximum roll will have a special effect. Apply the following modifiers:

- +1 if the PCs didn't start the fight with Santa, -1 if they did.
- +1 if the PCs show some evidence they're the justified party, and -1 if Santa has shown such evidence.
- Add the Charisma bonus of one PC who is trying to get the crowd on their side (note that doing this will probably occupy that PC for the first round of combat.) Santa could try to do the same thing, of course.
- Other modifiers at your discretion if the PCs or Santa have previously interacted with the crowd, or are famous in this community, etc.

Most of the following reactions assume bystanders have enough people to enforce their will upon the PCs and/or Santa. This may not always be the case (*see table following*).

# INNOCENT BYSTANDER TABLE

**BYSTANDER REACTION TABLE**

REACTION	AUTHORITY	COMMUNITY	ANARCHIC	VOYEURISTIC	MEEK
Negative Special (2)	One bystander is a ranking guardsman (Fighter, 2-4th level), who is pissed the PCs are fighting in his streets.	A frenzied mob forms and attempts to lynch the PCs.	An old enemy lurks in the crowd and takes the opportunity to shank the PCs. If no old enemies are around, it's a new enemy who hates the PCs for something they've done or wants something they have.	The PCs are seen as highly entertaining. After they defeat or escape the current encounter, the crowd captures them and carries them to the gladiatorial arena or trap gauntlet to further prove their mettle.	Jacking Santa so scares the meek citizens that they abandon their town entirely. Within one day it's completely deserted and the people have relocated elsewhere.
Negative (3-4)	Flee to alert the local authorities and accuse the PCs of jacking Santa.	Swarm in to arrest the PCs by force, or flee to get more help if they seem too much to handle.	Watch the row for an opportunity – to stab the PCs in the back, ambush them later, or just go through their pockets after they're dead.	Curse and jeer at the PCs, mock their fighting abilities and place bets on Santa. If the PCs win, those who bet against them will be furious.	Flee and bar their doors against the PCs thereafter until some service has been done to rectify the situation.
Neutral (5-9)	Run for local authorities but don't make any particular statements about the incident.	Band together and chase both parties out of town.	Go on about their business. "Oh, you got stabbed in the guts? Around here we call that 'Monday.'"	Attempt to surround the incident and make sure it is an honourable fight to the death.	Flee and hide.
Positive (10-11)	Run for local authorities and accuse Santa of jacking the PCs.	Swarm in to arrest Santa, or flee to get help if he seems too much to handle.	Offer the PCs assistance or an escape route, but only for a price.	Watch, egg the PCs on to greater violence, and place bets. If the PCs win, those who bet on them will be glad and generous.	Flee and hide, but first give what help they can to the PCs: items, info, or merely encouragement.
Positive Special (12)	The PCs' enemies are already wanted for crimes, or have a political enemy. A bounty will be paid to the PCs if they defeat the enemy.	After the PCs' victory, an old lady invites them back to her house for tea. This house will be a safe place for the party thereafter.	The bystanders take this fight as an opportunity to settle their own scores and/or let off some steam. Within a few minutes the PCs are at the epicentre of a riot.	The PCs are regarded as sacred champions after their victory. The community now relies on them to slay the local monster that's terrorizing the countryside.	One formerly meek bystander suddenly gains courage and joins in the fray for the PCs. If they survive, they will go on to transform this cowardly town into a Spartan war-society over the course of several months.

# INNOCENT BYSTANDER TABLE

## HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AROUND, ANYWAY?

For a while I've been considering the idea that the density of crowds in the vicinity should be an integral part of the 'landscape' of an urban location. There's a big difference in atmosphere and opportunities between a deserted street at midnight and a bustling marketplace. This sort of thing is largely going to be up to the individual GM to determine, but here's a simple outline to get you going (*table, right*).

The important thing isn't the exact numbers, but the general feeling. The more bystanders there are, the more likely they will be to enforce their desires upon the PCs and others who are disrupting the social order. If the PCs outnumber the bystanders, then regardless of the reaction table the bystanders will probably have to flee and get backup, which may be a long way away especially in an 'Anarchic' society. However, bear in mind that most bystanders don't necessarily expect the PCs to escalate the conflict directly to mortal violence.

The overall purpose of these tables is to give the players a wider range of choices and to make them feel the 'texture' or 'landscape' of each urban environment differently. If you want to shut down their Santa-jacking activities altogether, you can just say "If you fuck with the law, you're going to get it, so don't do that." However if you want to give them a chance to jack Santa without making it trivial, that's when you want to put an Anarchic community next door to an Authoritarian one, or a backstreet with low crowd density next to a bustling festival plaza.

CROWD DENSITY	NUMBER OF BYSTANDERS
Nil – no people are within sight or earshot. A sleepy village at siesta time, a crossroads at midnight, a city block abandoned due to haunting.	0
Few – at least one or two people in view at any given time. A road outside town, a dark avenue before dawn, a church in the afternoon.	1d6-1
Regular – at least half a dozen people in view. A normal street, a village common, a bar in the evening.	3d6 + 3
Thick – dozens of people in view at all times. A bar at happy hour, a village market, a town street during the morning traffic.	Scores; but only 4d6 are likely to interact with the PCs' troublemaking.
Bustling – so many people that they become a part of the terrain and make fast movement difficult. A city bazaar, a festival parade, a public execution.	Hundreds; but only 6d6 are likely to interact with the PCs.



For I'm a jolly good fellow... For I'm a jolly good fellow.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table of random spell misfires. At least ten, but as many as you'd like (preferably keyed to a standard die type like a d10, d12, d20, d30, etc., but if you don't, I can deal). They can be as weird or screwy as your warped mind can imagine.*

# MAGICAL MISFIRE!

By Tony Pace

Sometimes you shoot out the magic and it comes out all wrong. Roll on the following tables to see just how wrong it is. If your system has all these spell categories, you could use them to decide on a table, or you could just eyeball it, or roll one randomly. Whatever works.

The effects mentioned usually last as long as the spell would. Assume 1 round/caster level if you're not sure, though this might feel a little short for low level characters.

## SUMMONING

d10	RESULTS
1	You summon a plague of frogs which moves randomly and makes movement difficult.
2	You summon a succubus, which promptly nets you, binds you, and tries to take you home.
3	You summon something small in a bad place. If it can't fly, then 30 ft in the air. If it can, maybe in your backpack or your pants.
4	You summon yourself to the home of the creature you wanted to summon.
5	You switch places with the summoned creature. If you summoned a devil, you go to hell and it comes to earth.
6	You summon possibly the most useless creature imaginable. If in doubt, go with flumphs.
7	You summon a monkey on top of your head, which proceeds to open your backpack and toss the contents far and wide.
8	You summon the ghost of a dear departed family member who loudly berates you about the poor life choices you have made for d4 rounds. You must save vs. spells to act during this time.
9	You summon an enormous swarm of tiny flying jellyfish. The clouds starts at 5' on you and gets 5' bigger each round until the spell ends. Anyone in the cloud must save vs. poison or take d4 damage and is paralyzed for a round.
10	Roll on the <b>Divination</b> table.

## DIVINATION

d10	RESULTS
1	The gods are laughing at you. Reroll your next successful roll.
2	Your divination seems to work great, but it lies to you like hell.
3	All enemies or failing that NPCs can see you for the next minute as if they were affected by a clairvoyance spell targeted on you.
4	Whoever you would least want to see what you are up to right now is affected by a scrying spell targeted on you for the next turn.
5	You foresee your own doom. Think up a doom and a circumstance. (or roll them in <i>Vornheim</i> if you have it). When the circumstance passes, so will your doom.
6	Your hearing is heightened to an ungodly level. You automatically make all hearing checks, but you suffer a point of damage every time you hear an attack or shouting within 60'.
7	You are tormented by visions. At any stressful time during the next week, the GM may ask you to roll a save. If you fail, you are unable to act for an action as visions of the future pass through your head.
8	You make contact with an alien entity. Make a save or develop a permanent insanity. If you do make the save, the GM may tell you some interesting or useless fact about the setting.
9	All metal objects begin speaking to the caster. They cherish this rare opportunity to speak to the living world and talk over one another. Make a save to act each round. Also, if the caster fails to reply to them, they become unruly and try to convince their owners to attack the caster.
10	Roll on the <b>Illusion</b> table and think up an appropriate illusion if needed.

## ILLUSION

d10	RESULTS
1	Everyone except you disbelieves your illusions. You cannot be convinced that this has occurred for the duration of the spell.
2	You are concentrating wrong and maybe a little distracted. A bad scene of the kind that comes unbidden to your mind occasionally appears in full view of everyone and plays out. You can't stop it as it is straight from your unconscious.
3	A finger of darkness clouds your mind and a shadowy nightmare creature steps out of the shadows and attacks you. Consider it a shadowy undead with one more HD than you. Nobody else can touch it. Normal weapons can't hurt it, but your fists and spells can.
4	You are feeling a little bright and cheerful and so is your illusion. People can see what you are illusing and might even believe in it but it is laughable. The monster is a Disney cute monster and dances. The wall has a big happy face and is made of little cheery goblins. If you are invisible you look Hollywood invisible and people always notice the weird little distortions you are making. Also, you have theme music.
5	Your illusion has a little glow around it and is semitransparent. There is a little glowing trail leading from the illusion back to your index finger.
6	You illuse yourself to look like an opponent and your opponent to look like you.
7	You are convinced that your most recently claimed mundane item is an artifact in disguise. You will talk to it constantly and attempt to awaken its power. Others may or may not believe you.
8	All creatures in melee are made to look like their melee opponents.
9	You create an illusion of the most frightening creature you have ever seen, centered on yourself. You are also struck silent.
10	Roll on the <b>Transmutation</b> table.

## TRANSMUTATION

d10	RESULTS
1	Your nails all grow to 2 ft long and they hurt like heck when you cut them – 1pt per level damage.
2	You transmute your appendix into a homunculus. It doesn't hate you but it wants out of your body <now>.
3	All inanimate objects within reasonable line of sight animate and begin fighting against each other in teams divided by material. This includes clothing and personal weapons.
4	You eyeballs begin to bulge out of your eye sockets, transforming into eyestalks over the course of the next turn. They are tremendously attractive to birds of all kinds who will relentlessly attempt to eat these tempting snacks. The victim will quickly grow new eyestalks when this occurs. The effect is permanent.
5	You become hermaphroditic, and are fully capable of both conceiving and carrying children.
6	The next time you go to sleep, you chew on your blankets and form a chrysalis around your body. In one week you will awaken with a new body of a randomly determined type.
7	You weigh as much as a feather does for the next 2d4 turns. Any attack against you knocks you back d4x5 feet. Wind sends you flying. You do no damage with physical attacks.
8	The caster's most precious item (spellbook likely) animates and flees from the caster. This effect is permanent until dispelled, but restraints are an option.
9	A random object in the possession of the caster becomes the center of gravity for all objects in the area. Everything within line of sight falls towards this object. Since it is probably a soft landing, falling damage is split between the falling object and the person they fall on to.
10	Roll on the <b>Healing</b> table.

## HEALING

d10	RESULTS
1	Target grows a vestigial hand on the site of the wound.
2	Target grows a conjoined twin from the site of the wound.
3	Target slowly begins to gain a bit of your essence. Over time, their face will come to resemble yours exactly.
4	Target changes gender.
5	Target is healed, but you suffer their greatest wound.
6	Target's nose falls off and is replaced by a bird's beak.
7	You channel too much healing energy. The target is fully healed plus 1d4 temp HP, and blinded for d4 days.
8	The target's blood becomes a tiny blood ooze. Treat as a green slime.
9	The target develops a large number of skin tags which begin to grow faces and express hitherto unknown aspects of your personality. Their dialog is clearly audible to the victim, but only slightly so to others.
10	Roll on the <b>Necromancy</b> table and work with it.

## NECROMANCY

d10	RESULTS
1	Your dead skin comes alive and assembles into a skin dust ghost. It has telekinesis but it's totally visible. It wants more of your skin and might be bargained with.
2	You animate your own bones. You can think and speak normally but your bones behave as a skeleton ordered to guard. To control your body, you must first make an open door roll.
3	You lose a level for 1d4 hours. If you are level one, take a coma.
4	Your soul is trapped in the shiniest object you own. It may become an intelligent magic item.
5	All over your entire body, your hair rips free (d4 damage) and twists into a vile miniature undead creature that attacks you. This takes a round, then it climbs all over you and attacks for d2 damage and distraction. It may berate you for getting haircuts. Exceptionally hirsute characters might be able to negotiate but would take more damage from the original formation.
6	You catch a necrotic fever. In a few days, bits of your body are going to wither up and fall off.
7	You begin to wither and look like a lich.
8	You develop a frightful hunger for fresh sentient flesh. Every day you don't eat it, lose a hit point semi permanently until you get fed.
9	For the next day, anyone who touches your flesh absorbs one hit point from you.
10	Roll on the <b>Abjuration</b> table.

## PROTECTIVE/ABJURATION

d10	RESULTS
1	Scales sprout all over your body. You get +2 AC if not wearing armor, but look like a freak.
2	The spell turns the wrong way around. Everyone else gets the needed protection from you.
3	The spell makes you vulnerable in exactly the same way it was supposed to protect you.
4	All of your magic items are dispelled (temporarily), roll as though normal items.
5	You form a magic circle of protection vs. you and you are stuck in the middle of it. You have to save vs. magic to get through it. Lasts until you manage to save.
6	Roll a body part randomly (1 head, 2 torso, 3 right arm, 4 left arm, 5 right leg, 6 left leg). That location is immune to criticals and cannot touch anything for 1d4 hours. Anything held in or attached to that location falls to the ground.
7	There seems to be no effect. If you harm anyone over the next week, you'll suffer the same sort of harm yourself in a coincidental fashion.
8	Your protective spell is so effective that it constricts your movement, allowing you to move only 5' per round.
9	A shield of force manifests in front of you. You cannot attack or walk forwards, but instead must walk backwards with your head turned around. -2 to all attacks.
10	Roll on the <b>Transmutation</b> table.

## CONJURING

d10	RESULTS
1	You are teleported to switch places with your target.
2	You open a gateway to elemental air. You are caught in a small tornado and take 1d6 of wind damage. You are also thrown 20 feet in a random direction if you fail a save against breath. If you save your clothing is maimed in an embarrassing fashion.
3	You open a gateway to elemental fire beneath your feet. Save vs. breath weapon to avoid 4d6 of damage. If you do, your hair is gone and you are covered in soot. Either way, your footwear is destroyed.
4	You conjure a geyser of water that erupts from your mouth. If you close your mouth you tempt drowning, but if you open it you are propelled 30' backwards per round. Either way you won't be speaking.
5	You open a gateway to elemental earth. You and everything within a 10' radius of you are buried in loose soil. You cannot move or breathe.
6	Grease. Centered on you. Also, you are greased like a pig. Save vs. wands to stand up or do much of anything.
7	Bubbles erupt from your body. The cloud of bubbles starts as a 5' cloud on you and grows by 5' per round. Vision is limited to 5', and moving means you have to save to remain standing. On the plus side, you and anyone who was in the bubbles is now squeaky clean.
8	You open a gate to the demiplane of vomit. You and everything in a 20' radius around you is covered in it. Anyone who comes close to the vomit needs to make a morale check not to run away to the nearest source of fresh air and water.
9	You create copies of all the items on your person (nonmagical, of course). They fall on your head in a heap. Take 1d6 damage for every 10 pounds of items.
10	Roll on the <b>Summoning</b> table.

## EVOCATION

d10	RESULTS
1	The spell is awesome big. Way too big. It reaches big enough to affect a couple of your pals, including you if that's what it takes.
2	All objects within 10' or you, including those on your person, have a 50% chance of existing or not existing for each creature that interacts with them. It is perfectly possible for objects to exist for one person and not another. Floors, walls, and doors are all subject to this effect.
3	You are glowing with magical power and you know you are just fizzling to go off – but no one else does. Roll again in 1d4 turns and have the spell go off then. DMs are encouraged to cheat this roll.
4	The spell fails. You are left visibly crackling with electric power as rivulets of charged plasma curl and wriggle in the air. All small metal objects within 20' are drawn to you and stick on. Anyone who touches you during that time suffers 2d6 damage.
5	The spell fizzles. The next time you are in the same sort of environment, the spell goes off at the original range, targeted at the nearest group of sentient creatures.
6	Close your eyes and draw a squiggly line on the map, starting from you. There's a Wall of Force there now.
7	Every sentient creature within 60' of the target except you gets a magic missile to use as they wish.
8	A floating disc appears under your feet and lifts you to the ceiling, or 60' in the air. When it expires, you fall down.
9	You evoke ice in your underpants. Take d2 damage continuing each round until you remove said underpants.
10	Roll on the <b>Conjuring</b> table.

## ENCHANTMENT

d10	RESULTS
1	Your target becomes extremely amorous regarding you. No is not an acceptable option.
2	You are touched by the spirit of generosity and asceticism. Give away all your worldly goods to the poor. Join a religion and believe it.
3	You are affected by an aura of truth-telling. At the top of your lungs, exclaim your forbidden love for another PC, and all the many reasons that they should reject you.
4	You are touched by a magical aura of enchantment for d4 days. Children love you, birds and fluffy animals flock to you, and you are considered by all right-thinking cynical people to be a witch, a pederast or worse.
5	You are affected by a backlash of spell energy. You now hate everyone, violently.
6	You are deeply confused. Where were you again? Who are these dudes? Also, you forget your spells.
7	You are immediately affected by an irresistible compulsion to dance. Method acting is highly recommended.
8	You now have your target's voice and mannerisms permanently.
9	You manage to put yourself in a tremendously suggestible state. The next natural small animal you see will befriend you and take to perching on your shoulder or head. You will regard it as your closest friend and endeavor to assist it in all tasks including feeding, mating, and sleeping.
10	Roll on the <b>Necromancy</b> table.



I... am... your... father!

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a d100 table of off-the-wall transformations which might take place when drinking a polymorph potion which has spoiled or been made incorrectly.

# POTIONS MISFIRE TABLE

By Patrick Henry Downs

The word 'imbiber' always refers to the character who drank the potion. Unless otherwise stated, many of these effects can be removed with an appropriately powerful spell. The "Restore Life & Limb" spell from *Adventurer Conqueror King*, the "Regenerate" spell from *Labyrinth Lord*, the "Restoration" spell from *Swords & Wizardry*, or a "Divine Favor" with a DC of 20 from *Dungeon Crawl Classics* would all be acceptable methods of healing the unwanted physical effects of the **Potion Misfire Table**. By 'rules', this article assumes you are playing one of these four systems, or something similar. But

these games use both ascending and descending Armor Class mechanics, so adjustments to AC are described simply as bonuses and penalties. This table also features many effects that are purely cosmetic in terms of gameplay, but the GM should apply Charisma, Personality, or Reaction penalties (or bonuses) where appropriate for the imbiber's unsightly (or attractive) appearance. If a GM wants a very simple random polymorph effect then the **Random Universal Monster Table** in Supplemental C works well too.

## POTION MISFIRE TABLE

d%	EFFECT
1	The imbiber's teeth turn into sharp fangs and he suddenly craves raw meat and fresh blood.
2	The imbiber's gender changes. (Roll 1d6. 1-3, opposite gender, 4-6, asexual and sexless) This effect is permanent but can be magically reversed as described above.
3	Every part of the imbiber's body becomes sticky as if a strong adhesive is secreted from his skin. Touching any object sticks it to the skin; pulling it free can require a Strength check of some kind (GM's call), and causes 1d4 damage. If another person is stuck to the imbiber, then both take damage as they are pulled apart.
4	The imbiber becomes very famous. NPCs seeing the character believe they recognize her and may try to follow, talk to, or try to impress her. The effect does not confer any actual knowledge about the imbiber, only the illusion that she is very famous and renowned.
5	The imbiber's body becomes living wax, reducing damage from anything but fire or edged weapons. Looking with care, a wick can be seen on top of the imbiber's head and it can be lit.
6	The imbiber's body becomes covered in scars of various sizes, lengths, and widths. The character looks like he was mauled by several bears, fell into a spike pit, and was sliced up by manic butchers, then put back together. Depending on the disposition of the viewer this either looks scary and ugly, or intriguing and sexy.

d%	EFFECT
7	All the imbiber's limbs turn into octopus-like tentacles. This gives an overall +2 bonus to Strength but clothing around the legs and arms rips and becomes useless. The imbiber loses 1 hit point per turn until she submerges her limbs in water, as the new tentacle limbs do not react well to drying out.
8	The imbiber's body becomes felt and shrinks by 50%. She is essentially a puppet version of herself until the effect wears off. (The GM decides how this affects her stats.)
9	The bottom half of the imbiber's body turns into a snake, destroying any armor or clothing she was wearing on her bottom half. How this affects movement is up to the GM.
10	The imbiber's good arm turns into an elephant snout. He cannot use his weapons or cast spells properly. On the plus side, he gets an overall +1 to Strength due to the lifting power of the snout.
11	The imbiber's hair turns into flame, which is very noticeable and impossible to hide. This fire does not inflict damage to living creatures but ignites inanimate objects.
12	The imbiber turns into a homicidal maniac who kills without compunction. This motivation does not render the character an idiot and he may still behave in a calculating and intelligent manner if he wishes to avoid prison or repercussions, but murder for the sake of murder is now his primary motivation. (The author strongly recommends that this be a permanent effect. Until "healed" of course.)

## POTIONS MISFIRE TABLE

d%	EFFECT	d%	EFFECT
13	The imbiber turns into a fish (or similar water breathing animal).		
14	The imbiber phases out of reality from all other creatures possessing more than animal intelligence. Effectively she is invisible, quiet, and phases through other intelligent creatures without obstruction of any kind. The imbiber can still see and hear everybody else. This “phased out” effect does not prevent mundane animals, or beings with animal intelligence or less, from interacting with the imbiber.	24	The imbiber turns into a giant chicken, goes through the process of laying an egg, then reverts back to normal. The egg continues to exist, what it is inside and whether or not it hatches or can be cooked and eaten is up to the GM.
15	The imbiber’s feet and hands switch positions.	25	The imbiber’s body turns into a 2-year old version of herself. She retains her senses and faculties, but her body is hard to control. (Players should get an XP award for talking in a ‘childlike’ voice while the effect lasts.)
16	The imbiber’s body appears to be wrapped in bloody bandages and gauze. The bandages are actually part of his skin, so removing them causes damage.	26	The imbiber’s tongue swells to twice normal size and even protrudes from the mouth a little. While the effect lasts, speech is indecipherable, verbal spellcasting is impossible, and breathing is laborious.
17	The imbiber’s nerves pop out to the outside of her body. Every movement is excruciating, and even her clothing is uncomfortable to wear. On the plus side, the imbiber should be able to avoid ambushes, detect traps, and spot secret doors just by breathing.	27	The imbiber’s entire body is covered with eyes, all of which they can see through effectively giving them all around vision.
18	One of the imbiber’s limbs petrifies into glass and shatters the next time they engage in combat or strenuous activity. This effect is permanent until healed.	28	The imbiber’s body, as well as all of the equipment and clothing they are wearing, turns translucent and green.
19	The imbiber’s skin begins to shed, like a molting reptile. The shedding is rapid, completely exfoliating the body every 3 rounds. There is always a fresh layer of skin underneath the dead skin that is shed, which quickly dries out and then begins to peel all over again.	29	The imbiber’s skin becomes soft and fragile like thin paper, with an acute sensitivity to any pain inflicted or rough movements. They suffer a 4 point penalty to AC and any damage incurred is increased by +1.
20	One of the imbiber’s limbs turns into living electricity. Anyone they touch, directly or through a conducting charge, takes 1d6 damage. The imbiber has no control over who takes damage, anybody touching the limb or a conducting material between the two receives damage.	30	A lit 8-inch long candle grows out of one of the imbiber’s ears. Removing it inflicts 2d10 damage. It cannot be extinguished, burning even underwater. If the imbiber wears headgear over the ear, the candle only grows 1” and the flame burns him until he takes off the head covering.
21	The imbiber’s body turns into water. She cannot speak. Those who missed the change or can’t communicate with the imbiber may not know who she really is. Use the stats for a water elemental where appropriate.	31	Every living creature within 1 mile, friend and foe alike, falls into a magical sleep. Nothing will wake them up until the imbiber goes to sleep and wakes up herself.
22	The imbiber’s head becomes a flagpole with his face on the flag. The imbiber can see and hear through the flag, so removing it renders him blind and deaf. The face is a static image, so communication is impossible via the flag, but the imbiber still has full use and control of his body.	32	Steam shoots from the imbiber’s ears.
23	Special result! The duration of the potion is set to 1d10 rounds and during every round the GM should roll a new result on the table and apply it to the imbiber for that round. If a 23 is rolled again during this time the effect resets for another 1d10 rounds.	33	The imbiber’s body becomes insubstantial and can pass through solid matter. During this effect, nothing can harm him, but he cannot affect the world around him, either.
		34	The imbiber’s body turns into an inanimate but finely crafted wooden barrel. All of their equipment and money is stored inside of the barrel and can be stolen easily.
		35	One of the imbiber’s limbs begins smoking as if a fire were recently extinguished off of it.
		36	One of the imbiber’s limbs turns into an exposed beating heart and her actual heart is replaced with muscle tissue. If the limb suffers either a direct strike or too much damage the character might die (GM’s call).

## POTIONS MISFIRE TABLE

d%	EFFECT
37	A cat's mouth opens up on one of the imbiber's limbs. This mouth howls and meows incessantly as if it were in pain.
38	The imbiber's entire body sweats profusely for an hour. He stinks very badly and, if he doesn't bathe properly within a day, he might contract a fungal infection.
39	The flesh of one of the imbiber's limbs becomes invisible except for the bones. This disconcerting effect can repulse some NPCs, but otherwise the effect is only visual.
40	The imbiber's body turns into living rock. They receive a natural 6 point bonus to AC but movement is cut in half.
41	The imbiber's body fills with helium, and she floats up at a speed of the GM's discretion, until the potion wears off. The imbiber's body can either drift back down at the same rate, or plummet (determined randomly).
42	One of the imbiber's limbs begins dripping a black slimy substance that magically just appears whenever the limb is moved (either as a footprint when the imbiber walks or a dripping trail left behind by the head or one of the arms).
43	The imbiber's vision is heightened, allowing her to see microscopic organisms, the cause of death on a corpse, the movement of heat, electrical discharges in the sky, the effects of gravity and electromagnetism, the existence of magic on an item or in a creature, the existence of life, the existence of intelligence, and even the passage of time. The sheer volume of information is overwhelming and the character might go catatonic, or become crazed and try to lock themselves away, or they may sit down, cross their legs, and start humming "Om."
44	Skin takes on a greenish hue and hair becomes mossy or grass-like. Trimming the "hair" results in excruciating pain and 1d2 HP damage. On the plus side, if the character stays in sunlight they can regenerate 2 HP per hour.
45	The imbiber's body takes on the appearance of a painting. He still appears three dimensional, but his skin, hair, eyes and any clothing or gear he wears looks like brightly colored acrylic paint.
46	The imbiber grows a gigantic scorpion tail out of the back of her head. She has no control over the tail and it will strike at anything or anyone that comes near the imbiber, but never stings the imbiber's body unless she tries to cover the tail. Removing the tail from the imbiber's head causes 8d8 damage.

d%	EFFECT
47	Random limb permanently turns necrotic, if the head is rolled the character dies.
48	A raised fleshy triangle appears on the imbiber's forehead. It looks and feels like scar tissue.
49	The imbiber's body takes on a shiny and smooth texture. Wounds do not bleed and normal physical reactions are no longer felt, such as starvation, exhaustion, suffocation, etc. Any damage inflicted upon the imbiber is reduced to half rounded down, but healing is impossible. (The imbiber has turned into solid plastic! The GM is encouraged to avoid using the word 'plastic' when describing this effect to the players since their characters would not know what plastic is.)
50	"I've got PIPES OF STEEL!" The imbiber's neck, throat, and vocal chords turn into metal. All his vocalizations sound warped and echo like a synthesizer with heavy reverb. Whether this adjusts Charisma/Personality is up to the GM, but players should be encouraged to role-play the altered voice for the effect's duration. The character gets a 1-point bonus to AC, and magical weapons with decapitation effects do not function against the imbiber.)
51	The imbiber's body becomes a sphere of flesh. She can generally control her movement (moving at minimum speed), but can quickly lose control of her speed on sloped surfaces. The imbiber can sensing her surroundings but cannot speak. Any clothing or gear becomes part of the "body sphere" and reappears when the effect wears off.
52	One of the imbiber's limbs sprouts a dog's nose which sniffs everything that comes near it.
53	The air around the imbiber's body flashes with bright white light every other round. The light is painfully bright and blinding, to both observers and the imbiber. The blinding effect causes a -4 penalty to attack rolls as well as any other physical action attempted, but can also be nauseating since the effect is essentially a slow strobe effect (how this might come into play is up to the GM).
54	The imbiber's body gives off pheromones that attract animals. Stray dogs, feral cats, wild horses, and even farm animals of every kind will follow the character and try to mate with them if given the opportunity.
55	The imbiber's body turns into living wood. Fire inflicts double damage, but damage from cold is halved.
56	The imbiber's skin turns into insect-like chitin. The imbiber receives a natural 3 point bonus to Armor Class but their movement rate is cut in half.

## POTIONS MISFIRE TABLE

d%	EFFECT
57	The imbiber bloats and warps, filling with air. She cannot move without assistance. If she were in a small space before drinking the potion, her body expands to fill the space. She cannot be freed until the potion wears off, or the structure around her is destroyed.
58	The imbiber turns into a gigantic dragon (the largest possible according to the rules you are using). The imbiber has none of the powers of a dragon; only the size, strength and wings, flying may be difficult but not impossible.
59	The imbiber's entire body becomes bruised and purple as if they were recently beaten by a gang of thugs. The "damage" is only cosmetic and no actual HP are lost.
60	A giant 10 lb. cancerous tumor grows out of one of the imbiber's limbs.
61	The imbiber turns into a miniature version of themselves, no taller than one foot high.
62	One of the imbiber's limbs turns into a void, a pitch blackness that hurts the eyes to look at and absorbs light and energy. The imbiber cannot take damage from this limb (it is simply negated) but they can still interact with the world using the limb.
63	A face appears on one of the imbiber's limbs. This face has it's own mind, voice, and personality, and it will communicate as if it has always been there, ignoring any questions about where it came from or why it suddenly appeared along the imbiber's body.
64	The imbiber's eyes become bright balls of white light. They can close their eyelids to hide the effect, but while their eyes are open they illuminate wherever they look like a beacon lantern and can see invisible objects and creatures.
65	Random limb becomes zombified and attacks any who approach, even possibly attacking the imbiber. The limb will return to normal when the effect ends. Clerics who attempt to Turn the limb might unintentionally maim or decapitate the character.
66	A loud popping noise announces the appearance of the imbiber's alter ego, who should be an appropriately dream persona that the character wishes they were. The player and GM should work together to write up the character's alter ego, but for simplicity you could simply reverse the character's class (warriors become wizards, clerics become thieves, and vice versa) and switch ability scores around to adjust to the new class.
67	Strikingly blue fur instantly grows from the imbiber's skin, and falls out when the potion wears off.

d%	EFFECT
68	The flesh and skin around the imbiber's mouth grows over and seals up the imbiber's mouth. They can't speak or eat until the effect wears off or is cured.
69	The imbiber turns into a common frog. The effect is permanent and cannot be healed, but is considered a curse for the purpose of reversing. Alternately, the kiss from an unattached noble of the opposite gender instantly restores the imbiber to normal.
70	Roll a d4 along with this result. A third arm and hand grows out of the imbiber's back (1), head (2), chest (3), or buttocks (4). The hand is usable and the imbiber has complete control over it, but it doesn't confer any extra strength or bonus attacks.
71	The imbiber instantly falls in love with the next living thing he sees after drinking. If the object of affection dies, the imbiber becomes despondent. This emotional side effect is a feeling of genuine loss and is not magical so it cannot be "healed."
72	The imbiber sprouts feathers over every inch of their body. Plucking them is painful, but they will also lose feathers during strenuous activity like combat or running from scared villagers.
73	The imbiber is petrified. The effect is temporary as determined by the Supplemental A table, but the PCs don't need to know this as the effect can still be reversed with the proper healing.
74	Flesh on one of the imbiber's limbs begins to bubble and drip a thin gruel of flesh-colored bile. This stays on the ground, the imbiber's clothes, or on anything she touches. This is not damaging, nor does the imbiber lose any mass, but it is nauseating. She suffers a -5 penalty to Charisma/Personality until the potion expires.
75	The imbiber begins to glow with radiant yellow light. How much this illuminates is up to the GM but it does make the character clearly visible and confers a +1 to hit bonus by opponents with ranged weapons.
76	The imbiber becomes incredibly magnetic, pulling small metallic objects or flying toward large ones.
77	An aura of bubbles follows the imbiber, seeming to form from the hair and shoulders.
78	The imbiber's complexion turns pale and they are out of breath as if they just finished running for a long period of time. In fact, running, sprinting an heavy exertion of any kind are impossible while the effect lasts.
79	Both the imbiber's legs become huge and muscular. She can jump 15' straight up, 30' across from a standing jump, or 60' with a running leap.

## POTIONS MISFIRE TABLE

d%	EFFECT
80	The imbiber turns into a swarm of locusts (or other insect chosen randomly or suitable for the current environment). The swarm act as a hive mind and the imbiber has complete control over the entire swarm. If the imbiber chose to "split" the swarm they might suffer a loss of intelligence, or possibly develop into two separate personalities (GM's decision).
81	The imbiber ages incredibly fast until they are 90 years old (or the racial equivalent). This effect is permanent but can be reversed with the proper healing magic. (If the GM thinks it appropriate, secretly roll 2d4 to determine how many weeks or months the character until dying of "old age.")
82	The imbiber's hair turns into snakes and his eyes become red, slitted, and cat-like. These changes are cosmetic; there is nothing significantly different about imbiber.
83	One of the imbiber's limbs turns into a gigantic crab claw. If the head is rolled then it turns into a claw and the imbiber's body falls prone. Anyone approaching the body is attacked by the giant crab claw.
84	Nothing appears to happen, but after one hour the imbiber begins vomiting and does not stop for a random duration. The vomiting is painful and debilitating and the imbiber's stomach never seems to empty of "half-digested potion."
85	The imbiber turns into living porcelain. Until the effect ends, any blow inflicted upon them causes double damage and leaves a cracked and jagged opening into their hollow interior.
86	Half of the muscles and skin of the imbiber's body (roll twice on the limb table) droops and hangs off of their body like dead weight. Their Strength and Dexterity are reduced by -2 for each arm or hand affected, and their movement is possibly slowed (no more than half) if either of their legs are affected.
87	The imbiber transforms into an 18' tall version of the last creature she killed (or helped kill). This could be trouble if that creature was a noble, a popular local, or the village's prize goat. Doubly problematic if the imbiber transforms into a giant goblin since most people just assume she's a giant goblin come to wreck the town and eat babies ("It's not under a curse! Don't listen to that monster's tricks!").
88	A limb grows to 4x regular size, breaking through clothes or armor. The muscles and veins underneath bulge through the raw and reddened skin. The limb weighs no less than 100 lbs. for purposes of movement and encumbrance.
89	The imbiber's face and genitals switch positions.

d%	EFFECT
90	Huge bat-like wings grow out of the imbiber's back destroying any shirt, robe or armor they might have been wearing. They act independent of the imbiber's wishes and flap randomly, knocking over nearby objects and sometimes slamming nearby people (or 1d4 damage) and so they cannot be used to fly.
91	The imbiber transforms into a human-sized capybara (or similar rodent). They retain their intelligence, but physical abilities are limited by their new form.
92	The imbiber has a magical aura of music that plays around them and is pleasing to the imbiber, but others may be annoyed by the music's presence. The music is not loud but sneaking is impossible while it plays.
93	The imbiber now urinates perfume and defecates pearls. This effect is permanent until healed (and anybody discovering what the imbiber can do might have a real incentive to kidnap then force feed them).
94	The imbiber's body farts uncontrollably and continuously, the emanations are both foul and noisy.
95	Every time the imbiber does anything or performs any action (striking an opponent, opening a door, eating, etc.) two six-sided dice magically fly out of their body. The dice exist for a few seconds and then disappear, but the effect lasts for a long time (roll 1d6 and consult the Supplemental A table).
96	The imbiber's body is covered with fungus, moss, and mushrooms. These are painful to remove and grow back within a minute or two. Although slimy and gross, they do not really affect combat or hamper spellcasting abilities. Sneaking is difficult (-2 or -10% penalty) since the imbiber makes squeaking and sucking noises as he moves.
97	One of the imbiber's limbs turns into a dog the size of the affected limb. The dog's anus connects to the character's body where the limb normally would. Depending on the limb, this can hamper movement, combat rolls, or casting spells. If the imbiber's head is replaced, the dog controls the imbiber's body. (Creative GMs will replace the word 'dog' in this description with 'random mundane animal'.)
98	A random body part turns into living metal. The character gains 20 pounds for the effect duration, but can reduce the damage from any physical nonmagical attacks by 2 points.
99	The imbiber turns into a random monster. Consult Supplemental C: Universal Monsters.
100	Re-roll twice and combine the effects. Every time 100 is rolled again re-roll and combine the result with the previous results.

## SUPPLEMENTAL A: RANDOM AMOUNT OF TIME

When not specified by a result from the table, roll 1d20 and refer to the table below. If the GM wants to keep the effects relatively short but still debilitating, simply roll 3d6 to determine how many rounds the effect lasts.

**RANDOM AMOUNT OF TIME TABLE**

d20	AMOUNT OF TIME
1	1d8 days
2-3	2d12 hours
4-6	1d3 hours
7-10	4d6 rounds
11-16	2d6 rounds
17-19	1d10 rounds
20	1d4 rounds

## SUPPLEMENTAL B: RANDOM LIMB

For results that ask to randomly select a limb, apply an additional roll of 1d20 on the table below. When appropriate, roll 1d6 to determine the limb side (1-3 left, 4-6 right):

**RANDOM LIMB TABLE**

d20	LIMB
1-5	Foot
6-9	Leg
10-14	Hand
15-18	Arm
19-20	Head

## SUPPLEMENTAL C: UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

This final table lists every monster described in the basic rulebook for the four games mentioned above: *Adventurer Conqueror King*, *Labyrinth Lord*, *Swords & Wizardry*, and *Dungeon Crawl Classics*. If you roll a random monster from this table, the stats are readily available in those systems. Dragons, elementals, and undead were the only monsters omitted. To get a result on this table, roll 1d30. If you do not have a d30, roll 1d10 for a result and then modify it by a 1d6 roll: if the result is 3-4 apply a +10 to the d10 roll, if the result is 5-6 apply a +20 to the d10 roll.

**RANDOM UNIVERSAL MONSTER TABLE**

d30	MONSTER
1	Giant Ant
2	Basilisk
3	Giant Bat
4	Giant Beetle
5	Bugbear
6	Centaur
7	Giant Centipede
8	Chimera
9	Cockatrice
10	Gargoyle
11	Giant Roll 1d6 for type: 1: Hill 2: Stone 3: Frost 4: Fire 5: Cloud 6: Storm
12	Gnoll
13	Goblin
14	Griffon
15	Harpy
16	Hell Hound
17	Hobgoblin
18	Horse
19	Hydra
20	Kobold
21	Giant Leech
22	Lizardman
23	Manticore
24	Minotaur
25	Ogre
26	Orc
27	Owlbear
28	Shadow
29	Troll
30	Wolf

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a Reality Shift flowchart/table,  
for dreamscapes/characters travelling through other  
entities thoughts/areas destroyed by insane magic/  
quantum effect time distortions/etc.*

# DREAMSCAPE FLOW TABLE

By Tim Maki

## USING THE TABLE

- Roll 1d12 once per column. Combine for great justice.
- When the duration ends, roll again for next 'warp'. The cycle ends when the GM says it does.

## DREAMSCAPE FLOW TABLE

ROLL d12	LOCATION	THEME	FOCUS	DURATION
1	Vast Plain	Great Loss	Ancient Relic	A few seconds
2	Cozy Cabin	Endless Torment	Long-Dead King	A few minutes
3	Shallow Grave	Best. Day. Ever.	War	Endless
4	Underground Catacomb	Greatest Mistake	Finding Mom	When it's done
5	Stone Fortress	Pursuit	Escape	Someone dies
6	Schoolhouse	Discovery	Survival	IT dies
7	Cloudy Void	Fighting for Independence	Being Number One	You hit the ground
8	Gut of a Great Beast	Conformity	The Hunt	IT hits YOU
9	Endless Battlefield	Illusion	Immortal Beast	Someone wants it to end
10	Inky Blackness	Backstabbing	Love	Everyone's dead
11	Cyclopean Cityscape	Family	Harmless Child	IT's found
12	Endless Corridor	Power	The Players	IT wakes up

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a die list of the legends behind epic dwarven inter-clan feuds.*

*Thank you,*

*Edward Wilson*

# DWARF CLAN FEUDS

By Thomas Molyes

## LEGENDS BEHIND THE FEUDS

d10	RESULT
1	The Anvillbreakers and the Bronzegauntlet clans come from the same geographic area and have been feuding longer than anybody can remember. Only four dwarves in the world, each clan's leader and chief advisor, know both clans came from a schism in the Greatforge clan. A series of deaths (seen as unfortunate or assassinations, depending on who you ask) created a succession crisis. The resulting civil war created two clans, each unwilling to acknowledge their shared history. After a few generations, the truth was only whispered in conclave rooms after the death of a previous leader/adviser.
2	To pass long nights in the cavern halls, many dwarven clans developed a game involving the younger dwarves and a decapitated goblin head. The sport became popular, teams formed, and the betting and drinking increased. At some point, fans of the Red and the White teams became great rivals; their violence split the clan in two, with the new clans opposing each other in all ways, not just on the stone playing field.
3	The Halls of Light were a sacred dwarven site. After their destruction in a fiery eruption, blame focused mainly on the Shalehall clan, the shrine's guardians. Fingers also pointed at the Goodpick clan, rumored to have been engaging in a secret ceremony at the time of the eruption.
4	Both clans claim to have been the first to discover a particularly rich vein of gold. After some minor skirmishes, the area has been blocked off and all entrances guarded by one clan or the other. Clues as to which clan was first can be found within the tunnels, should a third party convince both clan chiefs that they should be allowed to enter.
5	When splitting the treasure from a joint expedition, dwarves from Clan Dragonbellows hid an artifact of great value and power from the other dwarves involved. All clans believe that the artifact rightfully belongs to them and are constantly scheming either to get it back or to keep its location hidden.
6	Various dwarven clans have had important items stolen by a single mysterious dwarf. Each clan suspects one of the other clans of harboring the thief and the items. The person in question is actually a female human magic-user who is very good at passing as a charismatic dwarf.
7	The Doomcairn clan fought the Blackwood Goblins at the Battle of Ash Ford, expecting the Veinfinder clan to show up as well. The Veinfinders never did, claiming the call to battle never came. Both clans have bad blood over it to this day.
8	One fine day, Knorri and Giliden were boasting to each other of their drinking abilities. Each made stronger and stronger claims until the only possible result was a drinking contest. Midway through the contest, Knorri accused Giliden of watering down his ale. Giliden, in his wrath, slew Knorri.
9	King Bolli of the Honorlode clan repeatedly met with representatives of the Bronze Hill clan with his beard unbraided. After a series of these affronts, they could not bear it any longer and attacked him in his own throne room.
10	When Vahari and Gim strode forth to defeat the Bog Hag, only Vahari came back. Gim's clan accused Vahari of cowardice that caused Gim's death. Gim's body has never been recovered.

## RANDOM CLAN FEUD GENERATOR

If the above feuds are too specific, unsuitable for your needs, or dangit you just need a lot more dwarven clan feuds, roll a d10 on each table below to get a random Dwarf feud. As an example, rolling a 8, 6, and 1 would get you: a *Vicious Feud*

based on *Forbidden Love* where *one clan has been infiltrated by doppelgangers*. Cross out and replace The Flavor entries with something else each time they're rolled in order to avoid repetition.

### LEVEL OF ANIMOSITY

d10	RESULT
1	<b>Amicable Disagreement</b> - Both clans are aware that the feud is mainly for pride, although most reasonable dwarves will put up a front of being angry or upset; eventually they can be persuaded to cooperate or talk to one another, especially if a third party is involved.
2-3	<b>Rivalry</b> - Although both clans dislike each other intensely, the feud tends toward competition/verbal disputes rather than actual armed conflict - if two dwarves of each clan met in a bar, it's a given that they would at least argue, fairly likely that they might have a fistfight and fairly unlikely that they would actually draw weapons.
4-7	<b>Feud</b> - The clans involved hate each other and are engaged in a series of reprisals for real or perceived misdeeds by the other clan. Although both clans might be convinced to meet under the auspices of a third party, any chance meeting will likely lead to blood being spill.
8-9	<b>Vicious</b> - Any meeting between representatives of the clans will eventually result in violence unless a third party mediates somehow. Both clans are actively scheming to attacking/weaken the other clan, with multiple dwarves having lost their lives recently.
10	<b>Blood Feud</b> - Dwarves who meet a dwarf from the other clan will attack on sight with intent to kill unless forcibly restrained. Dwarven honor goes out the window, such is the level of enmity.

### REASON FOR FEUD

d10	RESULT
1	Conflicting claims over a rich mining area.
2	Breach of dwarven etiquette/affront, often relating to facial hair.
3	Schism of a single clan resulting in multiple warring clans.
4	Betrayal/cowardice in battle.
5	Argument turned deadly -- i.e. there was a minor altercation between clan members that led to the death of a dwarf, with resulting reprisals.
6	Forbidden love -- a dwarf from one clan married a dwarf who was already betrothed to another. Murders ensue.
7	One of the clans allied with humans and elves in order to fight a common enemy. The other clans view them as sellouts.
8	Differing (and often trivial) interpretations of one section in the extremely lengthy and boring dwarven legal codes, often relating to dwarven brewing laws.
9	One clan is either extremely thrifty or has outright cheated the other clans when engaging in trade.
10	Historical conflict between dwarven heroes from each clan.

### FLAVOR

d10	RESULT
1	Doppelgangers infiltrate one clan and replace important members for their own nefarious goals.
2	The local dwarven king (or poobah, or deity) is secretly favoring one of the clans, providing support in an attempt to undermine the other.
3	The disturbance causing the initial rift between the two clans was caused by a third clan; neither of the warring clans are aware of this.
4	One of the clans has a powerful ally in a human trading syndicate.
5	One clan is suspiciously tall for dwarves.
6	There is an upcoming every-other-millennia dwarf-moot that both clans are expected to attend.
7	Both clans engage in kidnapping and then raising the children as members of their own clan. Double-agents feature prominently.
8	Sound-based weaponry is used to collapse rival clan's mining tunnels.
9	The feud is mainly carried on by vengeful dwarven ghosts. Most of the living dwarves don't give a fig.
10	The feuding clans both occupy the same ancient dwarven fort, creating an intense tunnel-to-tunnel subterranean urban warfare.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a d20 list of horrible sexually transmitted diseases for a dark and gritty fantasy game. My characters want to hit up whores and street urchins, so it's about time something turned green, belched puss, and fell off!

Thank you,

wrathofzombie

# HORRIBLE STD D20 TABLE

By Josie L.

## NOTES ON USING THE TABLE:

- Rolls on the table have a +1 for every time the character has rolled on the chart previously.
- For every condition on the table the character has that is currently untreated, the roll is at +4.
- This table assumes the DM has accounted for the fact that organized prostitutes operating profitably for any length of time regulate internally to prevent the spread of disease. The chart also assumes the DM has already determined that the character has contracted... *something*.



## HORRIBLE SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE TABLE

d20	CONDITION
1-2	Bacterial Infection. No visible symptoms. 50% daily chance to smell strangely for 24 hours, easily detectable by animals and sensitive creatures.
3-4	After 1d12 hours, irritating sores break out on the infected character's genitals for one week. Infected persons move at half speed and cannot sit or stand quickly during outbreaks (losing most surprise rounds they would have won). Every week thereafter, there is a 30% chance for the sores to reappear for a week.
5	Same as 3-4, but the sores continue spreading until they cover the infected's entire body. All rolls are at -1 during outbreaks, CHA rolls at -3.
6-8	After 1d12 hours, a green discharge* comes from the genitals. It smells, and will soak through normal clothes and cause the infected to be shunned. They must walk and sit tenderly. If untreated after 1d6+1 days, the infected falls into a painful, incapacitating fever. The fever will kill the infected 30% of the time, increasing 10% per day.
9-10	As 6-8 but green discharge* from the anus and mouth as well. *At the DM's discretion, this discharge may be acidic. Either way, if a sufficient amount of the green discharge is collected in one place (about 1.5 days' worth) it will form a <i>Disease Elemental</i> and attack.
11-12	The infected's genitals turn a random color. If untreated, the genitals fall off in 1d6 hours. The infected permanently loses 2 from total HP and CON score.
13	As 11-12, but the infected's genitals follow them around after falling off, making cooing noises and attempting to rub against and snuggle the infected and their companions as if it were a pet. Those in this condition often find that it makes high-pitched cooing noises in especially unfortunate circumstances, such as when the subject is trying to be stealthy or during sensitive political negotiations. The severed genitalia is nearly indestructible and terribly persistent at following its "friends." Perhaps it is also rotting.
14	The infected's genitals swell to massive proportions. Movement is cut by 1/4 per day, until the 4th day, when the infected is incapacitated. If left untreated, the infected's genitals separate and form a new being 1d12 hours after incapacitation. The infected loses 2 total HP and CON. The being is a <i>Wrinkled Sac Homunculus</i> . The new being will try to nourish the incapacitated infected character on flesh and blood from captives and/or freshly murdered victims, using superior stealth to find victims and deliver the "food". This <i>Homunculus</i> secretes a <i>Sleep</i> poison naturally, which it coats weapons with (daggers are preferred). The infected can be returned to normal with a <i>Remove Curse</i> after the <i>Homunculus</i> is slain.

# HORRIBLE STD D20 TABLE

d20	CONDITION
15	As 5, but each sore has a mouth that ridicules and shouts abuse at the infected. Rolls are at -2 and the character fails all stealth and perception checks during outbreaks.
16	In 1d12 hours, the infected's genitals turn into an angry, poisonous snake. If killed/cut off, see 11-12. If tamed and left attached, one of the infected's hands or feet may (15% chance) turn into an angry snake every week.
17	Every time the infected enters battle or any other dangerous situation, their skeleton tries to leap from their mouth and escape, one time per battle (or situation). This can be prevented with a contested STR roll vs the skeleton's STR of 8, but requires a full round. The skeleton's STR increases every time it fails. If the skeleton is successful, the infected is left a pile of immobile viscera, but fully intelligent and aware. The <i>Skeleton</i> is not evil, but wants to remain free of its former body. If it can be tricked into jumping back into the infected's mouth, the condition will be cured.
18	The infected will slowly fall under the mental influence of the other sex partner. In 1d6 days, the other partner will have total mental control. The infected will be following silent telepathic commands and leading his or her unaware companions towards mishap and misfortune to the benefit of the other partner, who is probably a disguised Devil. At the DM's discretion, 1d6+2 days after this begins, the infected's skin begins turning blue.
19	When in the presence of someone of the gender and species the infected is attracted to, he or she will uncontrollably writhe and leer in a parody of seduction, especially in inappropriate situations.
20	1d6 angry green bees emerge from the infected's genitals in stressful situations and sting him/her and any nearby creatures. The stings cause 1 point of damage and a green bruise. 12 hours later, the bruises explode open, causing 1d12 damage per sting. At the DM's discretion, more bees emerge from the wounds.
21	The infected's body turns to stone, one piece every 1d4 days. This starts with the genitals and spreads randomly. The infected's encumbrance increases, movement decreases, and AC improves, as the DM deems appropriate. After a number of body parts equal to the infected's CON score, the infected is an immobile statue, but is intelligent and fully aware of its surroundings. Infected in this stage of the disease can only communicate with telepaths.
22	The infected's whole body turns green and becomes less and less substantial, eventually becoming a <i>Stinking Cloud</i> in 1d4 weeks. (as per the spell, but the consciousness of the infected is within and controls the cloud). The infected retains his or her intelligence, but cannot touch or be touched by physical beings. Verbal communication is still possible. There is a 30% chance anyone within the cloud will contract a disease from this chart.
23	The infected's face ripples and shimmers, like a sea churning with blood or the air over a corpse in the desert. Those who see it are unsettled, but fascinated, and moved to remark upon it. Some say one can discern the future from the faces of those so afflicted. Should the infected ever look upon their own face, however, they immediately cease to exist. Reflective surfaces of all kinds are best avoided. This affliction can only be removed by a deity.
24	The newly infected and the infecting sexual partner physically switch places every 24 hours, as if under a <i>Teleport</i> spell. If one of them dies, the other is <i>Teleported</i> to a horrible hell for 24 hours and the dead person is alive in their place. Can be removed by <i>Remove Curse</i> , <i>Wish</i> , or the destruction of a valuable magic item in a complicated ritual.
25+	Neat, even squares of the infected's body disappear at a rate of one 4" square every 1d20 days. The infected does not suffer pain or damage, but STR, CON, and total HP are reduced by 1 and AC improves by 1 every time a piece disappears. When STR or CON reach 0, the infected's entire being has transitioned to some other plane of existence or simply ceased to be. Only a deity may remove this disease once contracted, although <i>Cure Disease</i> cast by a priest 10 levels higher than the infected (or a <i>Wish</i> ) can delay it for 1d12+8 days.

## NEW CREATURES

### DISEASE ELEMENTAL

AC: 3 or 17

HD: 5 + 5

MV: 180'(60')

ATTACKS: +2 to Hit, 1d8+2 Damage, roll 1d12 and consult the **Horrible Sexually Transmitted Disease Table**

NOTES: takes +4 Damage from fire, acid, magic; takes half damage from everything else; Healing spells damage this creature double the amount they would heal; *Cure Disease* removes half this creature's HP.

### WRINKLED SAC HOMUNCULUS

AC: 4 or 16

HD: 2 + 2

MV: 120'(40')

ATTACKS: Dagger +4 to hit from behind or unaware, 1d4 Damage (+2 from behind, double if target unaware), SAVE VS POISON or SLEEP for 1d4 rounds

NOTES: 75% Hide in Shadows and Move Silently

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me something that would get a simple, straight-up combat oriented group involved and interested in some deep intrigue or mystery. Doesn't matter what: an encounter, adventure outline, maybe even an item, but it should get even the most hardened hack & slasher interested in finding out more.*

# THE PLOT THICKENS

## USING CLASSIC MYSTERY AND CONSPIRACY GIMMICKS

By Erik Jensen

This morning I figured I'd share one of my own Santicore contributions before we run out the door to a family party on the other side of the Chesapeake. Some blathering about conspiracy and mystery plots and techniques for weaving them into your game.

### THE PLOT THICKENS

There's no one-size-fits all way to get players (or characters) who aren't into grand mysteries to fall in love with that sort of campaign, but thankfully there are myriad ways to try to hook their interest. When PCs come across a grand conspiracy or weird mystery, it's evidence of a larger world beyond their own in-game actions. They may choose to ignore it or address it, but the mystery chugs along regardless; and in fact sometimes the best intriguing mysteries are those which aren't real at all - constructed in the characters' heads out of fear and coincidence. The central trick is to strike a balance between the characters learning more and more about the mystery, and the characters realizing that the mystery is broader and deeper than they had imagined. A good large-scale mystery is just another kind of labyrinth to be navigated by curious adventurers.

### THE PRINCIPLES OF HOOKING 'EM

#### MAKE IT PERSONAL

Tying the mystery to the characters' allies, relatives, or the PCs themselves may be the surest way to engage their interest. It doesn't guarantee they won't try to stab the problem, but at least they'll be addressing it. In some cases, the goal can be personalized in a more mercenary fashion - solving the mystery is the key to getting what the protagonists want in a material sense. You have to know the PCs goals and "care-about's" before you can threaten them properly.

#### ACTUAL IMPORTANCE

The grand mystery has to matter enough that if the PCs don't investigate to some degree, bad things could happen. This doesn't have to be world-shattering stuff - and perhaps shouldn't be - but the mystery has to exist for a reason, and the reason must hook the characters. "Oh, a multi-generational shark cult that's been pulling the strings in this city for a century? Yawn." For a mystery to be engaging as an adventure hook or the understructure of a campaign, it has to be more than just set dressing.

#### BALANCE THE DEEPENING MYSTERY WITH REAL PROGRESS

As PCs go down the rabbit-hole of mysterious conspiracy, they must be both impelled forward by a desire to see what's next but also confident that they are, in fact, making actual progress. The illusion of progress isn't enough - most players will not put up with endless sleight-of-hand, nor should they. If the mystery is a labyrinth, they should be constantly finding new levels and rooms, not just wandering the corridors aimlessly.

#### DON'T BAIT-AND-SWITCH THE TONE

If your campaign began as one of heroic fantasy and action, don't switch horses midstream and start running a completely dark, on-the-run conspiracy thing. If you change campaign tone before you have (explicit or implicit) buy-in, you will alienate players. If you're mashing tones together, you have to blend them so you don't abandon the original vibe of the game. Players who aren't super-intrigued by the mystery will better ride along for the story arc if there are still strong features of the stuff they came for - action, adventure, combat. Try to balance the unknown with the familiar.

#### PARANOIA AND CLAUSTROPHOBIA

If you're going for a conspiracy-theory vibe, then at some point the PCs need to feel like their invisible adversaries really are everywhere, even if they're not. The sensation of being watched; little things askew ("I thought I left my keys on the other table, but --"). Pairing this with a sense of claustrophobia - metaphorical or literal - will have the characters (and maybe the players) feeling trapped. And if you're running a conspiracy/intrigue scenario, that's a good thing.

#### INTRIGUING MYSTERY GIMMICKS

Below are some examples of classic gimmicks you can use to try to hook players (and their characters) deeper into an overarching mystery plot. I refer to them as gimmicks because they are just that - easy techniques or cheap narrative trickery which, combined and layered, can help in presenting a grand conspiracy, or making a minor mystery feel much larger.

## THE MYSTERIOUS SYMBOL

“Wait, didn’t those other guys have scorpion tattoos as well? What does it all mean?” A mark on a fallen foe, a strange symbol pressed into the wax seal of a menacing missive - introducing a mysterious symbol is a great first revelation of a wider mystery, as it not only ties things together visually as the symbol shows up in different places, but it also characterizes the nature of the mystery through the connotations of the symbol.

## IMPROBABLE REPETITION

“I see it everywhere - on clock-faces, street addresses. Yesterday it was in my lottery ticket.” Whether it’s the number 22 or the phrase ‘Naughty Coyote’, when the same words or images just keep turning up, inexplicably, characters will likely begin to draw connections between the appearances. Are they reading too much into it, or is there really a cosmic puppet-master behind the messages? A more mundane version of this is “they’re everywhere” - the townsfolk turn out to be secret cultists, the villain really owns the megacorporation you’ve been working for, all manifestations of sinister synchronicity which can make the characters feel like reality itself is out to get them.

## THE NOT-A-MAP TREASURE HUNT

When characters are following clues hidden in something which is not-quite-a-map - encoded in an old book, following the movements of a strange pocketwatch, etc - there’s automatically an extra layer of secrecy added to the quest. Not only is the “treasure” hidden, but the “map” is also obscured in one or more ways - how much more fantastic must the goal be with all of this secrecy? Bonus points if special or secret knowledge is required to understand the map in the first place.

## THE MULTI-PART CODED MESSAGE

You can get some good mileage out of an encrypted message, especially if it’s multi-part; like an A-B-C quest, but to unlock a single message. The characters must accomplish various things in order to break each part of the code, or there’s a code within a code. Imagine the PCs having to find and assemble the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, only to find that they now must extract coded meaning from the picture revealed.

## THE RACE AGAINST TIME

A deadline adds tension if the characters care about the results. Running to stop something from happening, or guarantee it, cranks up the excitement if done sparingly and meaningfully.

## STOLEN FACES

Nothing freaks characters out like learning their companion or trusted friend was a doppelganger or simuloid all along. When were they replaced? For what purpose? Or perhaps someone is masquerading as the PCs! Related to this is the

mistaken-identity or face-swapping problem; maybe the PCs get dragged into the conspiracy by accident, or have to abandon their old identities while on the lam.

## THE DARK MIRROR

Having a professional (or romantic) rival involved on the other side of the mystery is a classic means to increasing character investment. Indy would’ve tried to stop the Nazis anyway, but having Belloq involved made it personal and put it over the top. The more alike the PC and rival are, the sweeter the hatred; it’s the Spider-man vs Venom angle.

## I KNOW YOUR SECRETS

Being faced with a foe who somehow knows things about you which nobody else knows is disconcerting at best. Who is she, and how does she know that? Why didn’t they kill us when they had the chance? Even better is the foe or wild-card who claims to know things even the PC didn’t know - the identity of their real father, or the key to clearing someone’s name. This sort of thing is a massive tease, and if you use it, make sure you remember that it is a tease and shouldn’t go on forever.

## GOING LEGENDARY

Sometimes an effective reveal involves upping the stakes mid-mystery as the protagonists discover that what they thought was a small-scale problem is potentially a much larger-scale problem. That bandit king they’ve been working against just so happens to match the characteristics of the prophesied Doom Messiah; or the amnesiac girl they rescued bears a birthmark which just might suggest she’s the lost Venusian princess everyone’s talking about. Escalation is a window to bringing in new factions who care not only about the mystery, but about the PCs, as well.

## WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

There’s nothing wrong with retcon if it’s done well - by which I mean, plausibly and in a way that doesn’t invalidate anything established so far. Perhaps an ally betrays the PCs, revealing not only that they were working for the conspiracy all along, but that everything the protagonists have been through has all been a part of this same scheme, even their seemingly-unrelated early adventures. The pinnacle of this technique is the “everything you know is wrong” reversal, which potentially flips everybody’s motivation upside-down.

## FRIEND FROM THE FUTURE-PAST

Want to really mess with characters’ minds? If your game’s genre allows, introduce an NPC version of one of the PCs, from the future. How and why did he come back in time? What does he want with us? What happens if he kills his younger self? Did he come back to stop us from succeeding, because he’s seen the world that results from our success?

This also works with a mysterious past version of a PC showing up, but as you can imagine it’s a bit trickier to

explain away without doing memory-wipes or parallel timestreams. Imagine a scene where the younger version gets wounded, and a scar appears on the older version immediately; even better, the PC asks his older self where he got that bullet scar, and the older version replies “You gave it to me” and shoots the PC in that exact spot! Not to mention the potential Heinlein hijinks and assorted classic paradoxes.

## REFUGEES FROM CHOICES UNTAKEN

similar to ‘the time-travel thing’, you could also introduce an NPC who was a PC or PC ally, but from a parallel universe or alternate timestream where things occurred differently and other choices were made. “Admit it, you guys are starting to like Nazi me better than actual me, aren’t you. What is it, the cool leather trenchcoat?”

## FLASHBACK

Everybody’s seen flashbacks in movies and on TV, but not everyone uses them in their campaigns, especially traditional-style games. But when you’re pursuing a grand mystery, a flashback sequence can be a good way to reveal extra details (especially if you’ve just added them in hindsight!) or remind the players of something they’re discounting. In fantasy and sci-fi games, you have added ‘flashback’ potential in the form of speaking with the dead, reading people’s minds, and the like. And don’t forget dream sequences have their place as well, especially in a mystery - the subconscious mind may very well assemble clues in a very different manner than the waking PC. Or even “past life” shenanigans! These techniques can be something the GM narrates to provide detail, or in some cases it might be appropriate to actually play out the scene in some way.

## FLASH-FORWARD, OR “SPLASH PAGE”

The flash-forward is a narrative technique that doesn’t always work at the table - there, you’ve been warned. Basically the gimmick is thus: you open the session (or the entire campaign) with a drastic cut-scene; an example would be the villain standing triumphant atop the corpses of the PCs. Then you announce “Five hours earlier...” or “Two years ago...” and start your regular campaign action. Some players will eagerly work to get themselves in a position to “see” the flash-forward actually happen, although it may turn out the ‘splash page’ image wasn’t telling the whole truth; other players just plain won’t bite (this is why it doesn’t always work without player buy-in).

Regardless, the idea is to sort of set an extra goal for the players to head for, to keep them moving forward even if they’re not sure what they want to do next. You can use this technique to snap a particular player to attention, as well - imagine if you started a session with “Bruthark the Reaver stands, bloody and beaten, in the driving rain, one eye nearly swollen shut; his grip on his famous axe is slack. Then the voiceover: ‘I am Bruthark the Reaver, most feared warrior

in all the five realms. And this is the story of the day I died.” You’d get Bruthark’s player’s attention right quick. Keep in mind I’m not advocating railroading any particular results here other than generating an eventual scene that looks similar to the flash-forward. Maybe Bruthark “dies” for an instant before being resuscitated, perhaps we’re just seeing him during a moment of self-doubt; maybe they end up faking his death for some scheme, or he dies metaphorically by starting a new life as Bruthark the God-King - anything’s possible.

On the following page is a random table with bits of mystery and conspiracy tropes and gimmicks, which may prove useful for brainstorming or - if you’re brave - rapid plot-turns at the table.

d30	MYSTERY DEVICE
1	Mistaken identity - the target isn't the target
2	Mysterious symbol - villain wears a strange mark linked to the mystery
3	I know your secrets - villain or wildcard has unusual info about a PC; blackmail?
4	Dark mirror - a PC's despised rival plays a role
5	More than they seem - PCs uncover new info about an NPC which changes the whole picture
6	Mistaken identity - a PC is thought to be someone else
7	Break-in - PC HQ is ransacked, either searching for something or for intimidation
8	Pack your bags - fresh info suggests the PCs are completely in the wrong location, and time is short
9	You're off the case - any authority the PCs had is taken from them
10	For your own good - an NPC screws over a PC, but in the long-term it's helpful
11	Claustrophobia - opportunity to get locked up or otherwise trapped, ramping up tension
12	Paranoia - sense of being watched or followed, or tangential evidence of same
13	Right in front of us the whole time - an important clue is hidden in plain sight
14	One of us - allies are actually in league with villains, try to 'convert' one or more PCs
15	Dying messenger - information is passed, but what does it mean?
16	Mysterious symbol - a location is marked
17	Vanishing village - a massive cover-up erases the PCs best evidence
18	The game is afoot - a spectacular chase or race-against-time
19	Stolen faces - someone is masquerading as a PC
20	We have your sister - villains threaten PC dependents or allies
21	Wheels within wheels - ally betrays the PCs
22	This goes all the way to the top - an authority figure is corrupt and involved
23	This is not a proper map - good information is encoded in something unusual
24	More than they seem - a legendary revelation (new info) raises the stakes dramatically
25	Narrative revelation - a flashback or cut-scene adds details previously unknown
26	Infiltrator - a PC or ally is actually a villain/monster
27	Paranoia - the PCs risk ending up on the wrong side of the law or hunted by authorities
28	Wildcard - an NPC arrives on the scene, but which side is she on?
29	Hello again - someone from a PCs past shows up
30	Duck! - they've sent someone to kill you

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me an 'Ouchies & Boo-boos Table' - a G-Rated or Disney-fied version of a Death & Dismemberment table.*

# OUCHIES AND BOO-BOOS

## G-RATED DISNEY DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT TABLES

By Kiel Chenier

Death and dismemberment can be scary stuff. One bum roll and you've lost a limb, had your eye poked out, or maybe you're standing there holding your own entrails, looking flabbergasted. It's serious business...

...or maybe not so serious. If your campaign isn't the right tone for these tables, perhaps consider introducing a magic weapon which has these effects? A giant hammer, perhaps.

### MAGIC

d12	RESULT
1-2	Magically discharged. The spell winks you into a pocket dimension. Your HP is reduced to zero. You're now just a memory.
3	Transformed. Magical after effects turn you into a toad. You're knocked unconscious and must make saving throws vs. toad.
4	Encased in crystal. The spell spreads over your body, trapping you. You're knocked unconscious and must save vs. being trapped.
5	Slimed. Residuum residue lingers from the spell, covering you like molasses. You're slowed and grossed out for 2d4 rounds.
6-8	Magical overload. You're knocked prone. If you're wielding/wearing a magical item, it is disenchanting for 2d4 rounds.
9	Big butt. The spell enlarges your butt, weighing you down. You're knocked prone, UNLESS wearing light armor. Then, you get to save vs. being knocked prone. The effect lasts 1d4 rounds.
10	Wreathed in sparklies. The magic explodes around you, looking cool like fireworks. Save vs. being blinded for a round.
11	No effect. Allons-y.
12	Turning point! You take the full effects of the spell, but rebound it back against the caster. They take half damage from it, but all of its effects.

### MELEE

d12	RESULT
1-2	X's for eyes. Your HP is reduced to zero. Your tongue sticks out. You pine for the fjords.
3	Clonk on the head. Birdies or stars circle your head. You're knocked unconscious and must save vs. death.
4	One lump or two. Lumps on your head push out from your hair. You're knocked unconscious and must save vs. death.
5	Dramatic cut/bruise. You're wounded in a way that looks serious and dramatic. You're slowed and inspire sympathy for 2d4 rounds.
6-8	Brutish strike. You lose 1d4 teeth, falling out like piano keys, UNLESS wearing some kind of helm. Then, you're just stunned for 1d4 rounds.
9	Bruised butt. You're knocked prone, UNLESS wearing light armor. Then, you get to save vs. being knocked prone.
10	Black eye/cut cheek. You end up looking kind of cool and badass, actually. Save vs. being knocked prone.
11	No effect. Everything's coming up Milhouse.
12	Turning point! The music swells and you have an awesome comeback line, along with 1d6+ your level hit points (or other system-based healing).

# OUCHIES AND BOO-BOOS

## MISSILE

d12	RESULT
1-2	Pincushioned. Your HP is reduced to zero. You're covered in arrows/bolts/needles. Your eyes are overwhelmed swirls.
3	Arrow to the knee. Your adventuring days are over. You have a permanent limp. You're knocked unconscious and must make saving throws vs. death.
4	Scary miss. You dodge a volley of missiles, ducking below and leaving your hair behind to hang in the air cartoonishly. The shock of it knocks you unconscious and you must make saving throws vs. death.
5	Boromir'd. You get struck with arrows/missiles in slow motion, making you look like you're in a dramatic death scene. You're slowed for 2d4 rounds.
6-8	Glancing Strike. Your forehead's grazed, making your vision fuzzy. You're blinded for 1d4 rounds, UNLESS wearing some kind of helm. Then you're just stunned for 1d4 rounds.
9	Bruised butt. The missile strike knocks you prone, UNLESS wearing light armor. Then, you get to save vs. being knocked prone.
10	Arrow to the toe. You hop around comically. Save vs. being knocked prone.
11	No effect. A winner is you.
12	Turning point! The music swells and you have an awesome comeback line, along with 1d6+ your level hit points (or other system-based healing).



I hunger for blood... And donuts....

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a food chain table for a dungeon. Include some new monsters if you like.*

# DUNGEON FOOD CHAIN GENERATOR

By Christopher Helton

While underground, an adventuring party can run into a number of predatory creatures. Tables 2, 3, and 4 rank them by “toughness,” while Table 1 allows GMs to randomly pick a table, if so desired.

These are a combination of random monster and wandering monster tables. There might not be a great deal of logic to why the creatures appear to adventurers (that is probably the source of another set of tables), but this will give you some creatures that you might not normally think to have as an encounter. All of these creatures can be found in the original edition retroclones.

I have also taken the liberty of creating one new creature for each “level,” with write-ups following the tables.

**TABLE 1: RANDOM TABLE DETERMINATION**

d6	TABLE
1-2	Table 2
3-4	Table 3
5-6	Table 4

**TABLE 2: WEAKER CREATURES**

d12	CREATURE
1	Giant Crab, 1d8 encountered
2	Scarlet Strangler, 2d6 encountered
3	Skeleton, 3d6 encountered
4	Fire Beetle, 1d4 encountered
5	Hobgoblin, 2d4 encountered
6	Lizardmen, 2d6 encountered
7	Giant Centipede, 1d8 encountered
8	Goblin, 3d6 encountered
9	Wererat, 2d4 encountered
10	Orc, 2d6 encountered
11	Roll twice on this table, ignoring 11 or 12.
12	Roll on Table 1.c

**TABLE 3 MIDDLING CREATURES**

d12	CREATURE
1	Grey Ooze, 1 encountered
2	Cocaktrice, 2d4 encountered
3	Werebear, 2d6 encountered
4	Gorgon, 1d4 encountered
5	Giant Lizard, 1d4 encountered
6	Ogre, 1d6 encountered
7	Rust Monster, 2d4 encountered
8	Redcap, 2d8 encountered
9	Owl Bear, 1d6 encountered
10	Troll, 2d6 encountered
11	Roll twice on this table, ignoring 11 or 12.
12	Roll on Table 1.d

**TABLE 4: TOUGHER CREATURES**

d12	CREATURE
1	Purple Worm, 1d4 encountered
2	Efreet, 1d3 encountered
3	Dragon Turtle, 1 encountered
4	Bronze Golem, 1d2 encountered
5	Vampire, 2d4 encountered
6	Hydra, 2d4 encountered
7	Frost Salamander, 1d6 encountered
8	Cyclopes, 1d4 encountered
9	Ettin, 1d8 encountered
10	Giant Python, 1d8 encountered
11	Crimson Fiend, 1d3 encountered
12	Roll once on all three tables.

## NEW CREATURES

### CRIMSON FIEND

**Hit Dice:** 10

**Armor Class:** 2

**Attack:** 2 claws (1d8+2) hands, 2 claws (1d6+2) feet

**Saving Throw:** 5

**Special:** Immune to non-magical weapons,  
Magic Resistance 50%

**Move:** 10, fly 15

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 14/2600

Terrors from the deepest, darkest depths of hell, fiends are feared by even the most evil and chaotic of creatures. They have bat-like faces, leathery skin (the color of fresh, wet blood), glowing green eyes and talon-like hands and feet. They have large bat-like wings that allow them the ability to fly.

### REDCAP

**Hit Dice:** 4

**Armor Class:** 4

**Attack:** by weapon, usually short sword

**Saving Throw:** 13

**Special:** Immune to sleep, charm and hold

**Move:** 10

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 6/400

Red Caps are despicable fae creatures that delight in causing pain, and murder. Short and ugly, with evil, wizened faces, their fingers end in claws. They dye their hats in the blood of their victims, which never quite dries and typically drips onto their faces and clothing. They are fierce creatures, who will not back down from causing harm to their chosen victim.

### SCARLET STRANGLER

**Hit Dice:** 1

**Armor Class:** 9

**Attack:** choke (special, see description)

**Saving Throw:** 17

**Special:** see description

**Move:** 0

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 2/30

This snake-like creature looks and feels like a red velvet ribbon with a tiny clasp (the mouth). Once put on, the wearer must make a saving throw or the creature clamps down and begins constricting, suffocating the wearing in 1d4 rounds. If the strangler can be destroyed before this time is up, the wearer will not die.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me something unusual or interesting to spice up or add to underwater adventures.

Thank you,

Erik Jensen

# UNUSUAL THINGS UNDER THE SEA

By Forke

Mother nature has spawned a lot of strange creatures under the waves. Here is a quick way to add some more, but frankly, every documentary about sea life is gold in that respect.

## RANDOM STRANGE FISH GENERATOR

d12	SIZE	MOUTH
1	Tiny	Alien!
2	Tiny	Bulldog snout
3	Tiny	Expandable with foldable jaws
4	Very small	Facing upwards
5	Very small	Kissing lips
6	Very small	Long, toothed jaws
7	Small	No mouth
8	Small	Really big
9	Medium	Round and lamprey-like
10	Large	Under the body
11	Huge	Very small
12	Gigantic	With prominent teeth

d12	COLOR	FEATURE	ABILITIES
1	Grey	Alter skin color at will	Regeneration
2	Silver	Inflates if threatened	Fly
3	Green	Poisonous barb	Breathe air
4	Beige	Poisonous bite	Move over land
5	Gold	Slimy	Jumping
6	Brown	Very fast acceleration	Burrowing
7	Black	Horn plated	Swallow whole (same size or smaller)
8	Purple	Giant eyes	Mimicry
9	White	Stalk eyes	Electric shock
10	Red	Can change skin texture at will	Sonic detection
11	Blue	No eyes	Explodes if at 0 HP
12	Yellow	External gills	Sickening smell

d12	BODY	FINS	TAILFIN
1	Ball-like	Gigantic	No tailfin
2	Flat	Smallish	Longer upper part
3	Longish	Very long and narrow	Longer lower part
4	Needle-like	Stream-lined and shark-like	Long and trailing
5	Normal	Have different color	Feathery
6	Pyramidal, head is base	With prominent rays	With prominent rays
7	Round	Feathery	Has different color
8	Short and plump	Armlike, with joints	Horizontal
9	Shortish	Jagged	Round
10	Sleek	Round	Jagged
11	Snake-like	Flipper-like	Forked
12	Very narrow	Ribbon-like around the body	Like a crescent moon

d12	PATTERN
1	Striped vertically (roll twice on colors)
2	Dotted (roll twice on features)
3	Partly striped. Roll 3x on colors, 1st is the general color, last two are the stripes. Determine stripe location on the body with a d8 (1 means upper part 2 means upper part at the back, 3 means tail etc.)
4	Partly dotted (as #3, only with dots)
5	One color
6	Lighter underside
7	Striped horizontally (roll twice on colors)
8	Camouflage
9	Front color changes gradually to back color
10	Fluorescent
11	Reflective
12	Transparent

## 101 ATLANTEAN RELICS

As each and every campaign should have an Atlantis, I created the table of Atlantean relics, below. The artifacts share a style that makes it easy for the learned to identify them. I omitted gold coin values, as the worth of an Atlantean spork, for example, varies greatly with the buyer.

In my campaign I decided the Atlantis equivalent was an elfin kingdom at the dawn of time, extremely prejudiced against all other intelligent life, and with a kinda steampunkish ancient Greek vibe to it. When the gods finally doomed the island

to sink between the waves, the Atlanteans split into three factions. The first changed themselves by magical-genetic engineering into ancestors of sea elves and became creatures of the deep. The second flew into the dark tunnels under the seafloor, becoming the first dark elves. The third faction tried to maintain their empire by creating mechanical and magical aids to live on as before in air filled underwater domes. The third faction is thought to be extinct, as the domes all fell to disasters, outside attacks, or internal strife shortly afterwards.

d%+	RELIC
1	An egg, hold in stasis in a transparent box without lid. If the box is shattered (which can be as easy or as complicated, as the DM wishes), the egg hatches with magical enhanced speed to an adult Atlantean in three days. He or she has implanted memories and is a font of sometimes really sketchy, sometimes very specific knowledge about Atlantean tech and philosophy, but speaks only the long lost tongue of his or her forebears.
2	A rifle, that emits a cone of sleeping rays – but only works under water, and ceases to function if ever allowed to dry completely.
3	A beautifully crafted statuette of a naked goddess – probably Venus – with gills.
4	A magical +3 trident, which places a geas unto the wielder to bring it to the highest mountain on Atlantis, into the temple of Poseidon crowning it's peak.
5	A small torpedo for a diver to hold onto – it's rotted controls are stuck to maximum speed (and that is quite fast!) and it will go unerringly for 6 hours, until it's power runs out, if somehow activated.
6	A toga made from (almost) indestructible, very light silk-like cloth, stitched with dolphins and tridents. Does not protect from weapon damage, it just goes in with the weapon. Probably helps getting that arrow out of the wound and against bleeding, though.
7	A magical map, consisting of a flat screen with a lot of buttons at it's side, that can show the way to a lost outpost, but only if someone is able to operate it.
8	A set of strangely formed underwater drinking utensils.
9	A small model of an Atlantean pyramid. If observed closely, a secret door can be found, that, maybe, could be found in a ruined original (or even in a similar place in one of the pyramids built in the successor states after the fall of the empire, if the DM so desires).

d%+	RELIC
10	Octopus suit. This magical garment allows the wielder to change into OR out of an octopus once a day (so he has to stay at least 24 hours in that form). In addition, as long the suit is worn, it slowly regenerates lost limbs of the original form of the wielder (1-4 weeks for an arm or leg, less for smaller parts), but if prematurely ended the user is stuck with a half formed appendage, that won't regenerate any further (of course, cutting off and starting anew is an option). Every day, the wielder has a chance of 1% to develop the desire to stay an octopus forever..
11	An electric cattle prod, able to operate underwater. Because of age, its charges are just mildly annoying and without any game effects.
12	A two feet long and one foot high and wide magical terrarium, always filled with breathable air, even though it has no lid. It could be used as a rather unwieldy breathing mask, but it is as breakable as normal glass.
13	A spork.
14	3d20 seemingly normal gold coins, minted with the head of a long dead emperor or empress on one side and the symbol of a random (maybe lost) god on the other. They magnetically stick together, up to 10 in a stack.
15	A magical cushion made out of soft water. It is invisible and will keep it's form, but cannot be lifted out of water, it'll just flow back and form again.
16	An amulet, gives the wearer control over a specific Atlantean golem. Only a 1% chance that it is found near the amulet...
17	Glowing lightstone, adorned with runes. Sleepers up to 100' from the stone have nightmares of impending doom.
18	A shell decorated sword. Upper part of the blade is broken and the tip is missing.
19	A bottle with magically heated warm water inside.
20	One crude ivory carving of a man in a flying ship...

# UNUSUAL THINGS UNDER THE SEA

d%+	RELIC
21	A 10ft. long pole out of some very light metal.
22	A clockwork steam engine. If the key is turned till the end (needs 1 minute), it will heat water and release a cloud of hot steam.
23	A carefully sealed magical vase filled with (d6): 1 salt; 2 olive oil; 3 meat; 4 scrolls (magical or mundane); 5 gears and other clockwork parts; 6 4d20 gold coins, see #14.
24	A small toy-horse, with a lid. Inside are some even smaller toy soldiers...
25	A small statuette of a bare chested priestess
26	A clustered mass of clockworks and gears, fused by corrosion and/or coral growths
27	A mechanical astrolabe. Shows the movements of a second moon.
28	A spherical mechanism with a lot of buttons and levers. It seems to be broken, as nothing seems to happen, if it is operated.
29	A clockwork dolphin toy, swims for 1 minute if key is turned.
30	A breathing apparatus. A breathing tube connected to a small cylinder. Speaking (and spell casting) is not possible as long as it is used. Has a 5% chance per hour of use to stop working.
31	The dead body of an Atlantean, somehow preserved through the ages, and with some steampunkish body enhancements – e.g. a clockwork eye, spring heeled metal legs, an arm out of brass etc..
32	A magical dagger that gives no bonus to attack or damage, but confers water breathing and freedom of movement underwater, as long as it is hold between the teeth of its wielder.
33	A sacrificial altar
34	A sacrificial dagger
35	A sign, warning of “Atlantean contamination.” It is written in (d6): 1, Common; 2, Triton; 3, Aquan; 4 Loacathan; 5, Sea Elven; 6, Sahuaginese
36	A hand engraved world map, on a very thin sheet of brass, terribly outdated
37	A small flask of serum. Injected into an animal, the fluid increases the animal’s Intelligence by 2d6 points
38	A metal rod with a lot of different gears. It is the missing part of an Atlantean war-machine.
39	A small bottle filled with blue fire. The fire won’t leave the bottle (and goes out if the bottle is broken or damaged), but will burn underwater or in a vacuum.

d%+	RELIC
40	A mechanical horse with fins instead of legs. It can swim slowly, but steadily, and transport up to 1000 pounds.
41	A small, levitating, glowing (as a light spell) sphere, that follows it’s designated owner around. To become its owner, some blood has to be spilled into a small opening on the underside.
42	As #41, but this one speaks in a high pitched voice and has knowledge of a random field of science. Once it has a new owner, it tries applying this knowledge to every problem or situation, so it chatters constantly....
43	A pound of a translucent modeling clay. As soon as it is hit with electricity, it will keep it’s current form. If it comes into contact with electricity again, it will return to its formable state.
44	A golden magical harp, that can play by itself. All the tunes, that are known by it, are of Atlantean origin and sound quite strange to modern ears.
45	A crystal, that, when shattered, explodes to do 9d6 damage in a 30ft. radius.
46	A crystal, that, when shattered, shows all beings in a 30ft. radius the location of a big treasure as a mental picture.
47	An instruction manual on how to vivisect a human
48	A strange little mechanical bird, that explodes when exposed to harmful gases. It reassembles after 24 hours.
49	A colony of magical corals, that will attach to a willing being as some kind of shell armor (exactly like plate armor, but usable without problem by every class). Will die after 1-6 weeks or immediately if taken out of the water.
50	A colony of magical corals, that will attach to a willing being as some kind of fins and flippers, allowing a swim speed of 90ft. Will die after 1-6 weeks or immediately if taken out of the water.
51	A small, heart-like amulet. It confers it’s wielder twelve random spells as powers to be used once per day, but only if it accepts the wielder (Save vs. Spells/Will save DC 20). If the wielder ever dies, wearing the amulet, or if it does not accept him, he will be transformed into an aboleth.
52	A flask of magical olive oil. If it is put on as a lotion, it gives the wearer an +4 bonus to it’s armor class if no armor and no more clothing than a loincloth is worn. It lasts for 1d6 turns.
53	An assorted set of alchemical glassware - very breakable.

## UNUSUAL THINGS UNDER THE SEA

d%+	RELIC
54	A singing tuna, immortal and immune to all normal weapons. He wears a harness made out of brazen shells.
55	A drill made out of some unknown, extreme hard substance. It can drill through almost everything, but very, very slow.
56	A magical slave chain out of gold. If it is placed onto an intelligent being, this being will experience eternal bliss.
57	A small comb
58	A small magical comb without teeth. If it is used like a normal comb, teeth out of magical force appear and entangle even really bad hair almost without pain.
59	A wine decanter
60	A magical wine carafe. Once per day, if turned upside down, it will fill again (and it's needs a little experience to turn it just so that no wine will spill out of it).
61	A tablet depicting humanoids bowing before an Atlantean lord, standing at the top of a pyramid.
62	A breastplate made out of gold.
63	A magical gladiatorial outfit made of black leather and rivets. It increases a wearer's Charisma by 2 points (up to racial maximum), but has no protective value at all.
64	A magical mirror that shows the viewer as stunningly beautiful or very ugly (rolled randomly every time).
65	A magical mirror that shows random scenery reflecting the current mood of whoever looks into it.
66	A humming pyramid of power (1 ft. per side). If a magic item is placed under it, it will be supercharged for 24 hours and have twice it's effects or charges. Items, that have a set number of charges and then are useless, like wands, effectively half their cost for the next 24 hours.
67	A death mask of an Atlantean lord.
68	A mace with an electrical generator in its head. Every miss builds up the charge so it does additional damage of 1 point (electricity) per miss, up to 5 points of damage.
69	A short sword, intended for a very big wielder and not really effectively usable by humans.
70	A piece of hand-painted pottery, with floral patterns surrounding scenes of mutilation of babies.
71	A disc of black metal with a small spike. If it is spun like a spinning top it will go on forever.

d%+	RELIC
72	A rusted, primitive copy of a weapon in Atlantean style
73	A golden plate, depicting the capital city of Atlantis
74	A polished statuette of an ancient god, its face having been brutally chopped off.
75	A backpack. Pressing a red button on one of its shoulder straps starts it rising 100' straight up, no matter if the wearer is in water or not. The button can be pressed as often as liked, but after that, the item never again sinks below its gained altitude.
76	A cursed magical buoy, made to attract fish. If activated, all fish within 200' come to circle, mesmerized the buoy. But, disturbing even one of them starts a suicidal feeding frenzy (e.g., a piranha swarm that eats itself and all near).
77	A small pistol-like healing apparatus. If used, a beam hits the intended target healing 3d6 hit points. Any over the hit point maximum remain as temporary hit points for up to an hour. It has 1-50 uses when found. If depleted, it explodes in a ball of negative energy that drains a level from every living being within 10' (no save).
78	A magical buoy, made to attract fish. If activated, all fish within 200' come to circle, mesmerized the buoy.
79	Two magical iron boots that let a wearer sink at will without harm to the deepest sea chasms, ignoring the pressure. They do not give the ability to breath water.
80	An everglowing lamp, with a headstrap.
81	A cruel, barbed slave whip.
82	A mechanical clock, that counts 25 hours per day, each with 72 minutes.
83	A set of goggles in a lead box. A wearer can see into mechanisms. Prolonged use, or even placement on the head, can trigger a fast growing brain tumor (1 save vs. Poison every hour) in the wearer's head. After 1 day of splitting headaches, his or her head explodes.
84	A magical key, that is able to change itself to match almost every lock.
85	A set of magical sandals with small wings. The magic is just to protect the leather straps from the ravages of time, and they otherwise have no powers.
86	A golden random body part of a broken statue of Helios. Residual magic allow once per day to light it up and shine as daylight in a 30ft. radius for 1d6 turns.

## UNUSUAL THINGS UNDER THE SEA

d%+	RELIC
87	A pair of green marble eyes, in the rotten remains of an ivory statue.
88	A magical brazen shield emblazoned with the head of a medusa. Once per day, the head can be willed to open its eyes, and make a gaze attack just as an actual medusa.
89	A magical compass that always points toward a second compass, which shows the direction of the 1st (1-2) or even a 3rd compass (3-4), or is a regular compass (5-6).
90	A magical bowsprit, adorned with two great, bright eyes at the sides. If fixed unto a seagoing vessel, all not-intelligent marine life will avoid it.
91	A mechanical butler in the form (and size) of a halfling, broken beyond repair.
92	A brooch, with a gem carved in the form of a beautiful face.
93	A golden magical piggybank. If a gold piece is inserted, it will be doubled. If this is tried a second time within a given day, it will explode for 3d6 damage in a 30ft. radius (save for half).
94	A magical flute made from reed. If it is played, everyone in a 30ft. radius is overcome with great sadness.
95	A helmet with a horse-hair crest. If a button pressed at the chinguard, its straps adjust automatically to a perfect fit.
96	A helmet with a horse-hair crest. If a button pressed at the chinguard, bolts are driven into the head of the wearer, reducing him or her into a permanent state of rage. Removal of helmet leads to messy death.
97	A disintegrating dustbin, with a hole 5" in diameter, unopenable and indestructible.
98	A strange, somehow distorted miniature stairway under a glassglobe, where a very small robot is going downstairs all the time and nevertheless goes in a circle.
99	An always wet and pleasantly scented cloth for personal hygiene, self-cleaning.
100	The crown of Atlantis, cut out of one massive diamond. Or maybe a fake.
101	The dagger that ended it all. Should it wound a noble, earthquakes are triggered, with strength corresponding to the might and title of the one injured. If a reigning king is killed, Atlantis' fate will be repeated.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a table or list of ideas for under-the-table jobs, risky mercantile opportunities, and unfortunate plots to become entangled in that's appropriate for a group of mid-level PCs with a ship and well-armed crew in a sandbox/player-requishness-driven campaign, in a swords-and-sorcery setting.

Some ideas that have positive or problematic repercussions when the game reaches the domain-conquering/thieves'-guild-managing/wizard's-tower-building stage of the game would be great. Also, one entry should deal with a Pirate Queen (whoever that is.)

— Wrangler

And here's a fine table of hooks from Adrian Ryan, from [spectology](#). (The original file is [here](#)).

This submission is particularly of interest to me, since Mrs. Wampus gave me pirate-viking hooks for Christmas, with the admonition that "Wampus needs boats". And of course, she's right. Flying boats.

# SO YOU HAVE A SHIP NOW

By Adrian M Ryan



## METHODS OF USING THE TABLE

- 1) OLD SKOOL: Roll a d20, read left to right.
- 2) PLAYER CHOICE: Ask the party which adventure type they'd like, roll a d4 in that section, read left to right.
- 3) GONZO: Roll 3d20, pick one from each column, mash up as best as you can.

d20	JOB DESCRIPTION	WHAT'S BEING OFFERED	WHAT'S BEING HIDDEN
THE INTRIGUE SECTION			
1	"So, my cousin Vinny, he's not the brightest kid. Sometimes gets himself into trouble. What ya gonna do? Family. Problem is, he sometimes brings that trouble my way. Sometimes that goes to far, you know what I'm sayin'? So something gotta be done. You gonna do it. Do it clean, do it right, do it nice. But do it. And don't ever let anyone know I asked ya, because if you do, I'll be coming for you with all I got."	"I owe you one. You come to me, any time, and I got your back that time. Make sure it ain't nothin' bigger 'en this, but I got you."	Nothing.
2	There's a masquerade party! The party is invited!	Free booze (= free roll on carousing table—all booze-related monetary penalties ignored)! Also, that one guy who they need to talk to will be there.	Remember that one time the party screwed over that other guy? Well, he's here with his entourage, and definitely notices the party before they notice him.

d20	Job Description	What's being offered	What's being hidden
3	A minor noble needs help rescuing his abducted bride from a higher-born noble man.	Introductions to a secretive magic items dealer.	He's mistaken about the situation. His "bride" never loved him and ran off to the higher born noble of her own volition.
4	A nobless's young lover has spurned her love, and has threatened to go to her husband with the affair. She could not bear to see the boy hurt, and surely her husband would do so in his wrath. Please, fine gentlemen, will you stop him on his way and talk sense into him? Don't hurt him, she prays, but show him that his plan could only bring pain to them both.	This nobless has access to certain tomes in her husband's library which might be of interest to those in the party.	This nobless has a weak spot for wizards—her young lover is actually a magic-user, level +2 of highest in party, with a full suite of attack and defensive skills ready. However, he's also willing to listen and doesn't particularly want to go up against Mlle's husband, who is an even more powerful caster.
<b>THE BOAT SECTION</b>			
5	A castle lays besieged nearby, and needs good smugglers to bring it food and weapons, or break the siege.	Knighthood and lands.	Not really hidden, but the knighthood and lands will only come available if the castle survives the siege and wins its current war.
6	How would you like to become a privateer? The local navy needs help ridding themselves of their neighbor's navy.	Party can keep any ship they capture, provided they turn over all cargo and prisoners. Party are made minor nobles with a letter of marque. If they are captured, they will be ransomed.	There's no way the party would get ransomed. Even the titles are bogus. They can keep the ships, although good luck selling them to any but the most sketchy of figures as that navy isn't going to be too happy.
7	A group of foreign rare demi-human dignitaries (e.g. Leopardmen or whatever fits best) need passage to their homeland.	Some rare item of trade associated with that demi-human. (Leopardmen capes of the finest quality made from captured royalty from the last Leopardman war.)	The demihumans have stolen a viewing stone from the rulers of the city and plan to start a war using it to get information from the enemy. (Potential long-term effects on campaign world + short-term if party discovers the viewing stone).
8	A noble needs immediate transport for as many of his household court as the party's boat can carry + all his worldly possessions + 20%. Must happen within the next two days, and without anyone knowing. And he needs the party to help out with moving his stuff.	Enough to buy another boat. Will be let fewer people on board, but for less money.	Plans on fucking the party. Household are more or less all level 1 fighters, and his port of call isn't the nearby town he first mentioned but the floating pirate city.
<b>THE FLOATING PIRATE CITY: THE PIRATE QUEEN SECTION</b>			
9	The Pirate Queen has declared a state of war and all ships must either be permanently lashed onto the island to become a part of it, or fight on the side of the floating pirate city.	Not having your ship permanently taken.	The Pirate Queen does this whenever overpopulation threatens the city to grow is boundaries and cut the population by a bit. Fighting will be pretty mild.

d20	JOB DESCRIPTION	WHAT'S BEING OFFERED	WHAT'S BEING HIDDEN
10	The Pirate Queen has asked the Party to regale her with tales of the lands beyond the sea.	Her favor for stories that are fantastic but believable, told of lands far away from coasts or large rivers.	The Pirate Queen has never set foot on land, and her experience of it comes only from seeing the coast and boating part-way up several very very large rivers. Any tales that do not explain to her their context (what a desert is, how a dungeon works, why land travel is dangerous, etc) will provoke her anger.
11	The Pirate Queen has decided that her libraries are unacceptably small, and needs books to fill them.	Double the normal worth of any book. Triple the worth of any book that will hold up well to water damage. Quadruple for coastal maps.	Any books of great power or knowledge will be used by the Pirate Queen within the next year to wreak some sort of havoc.
12	The Pirate Queen's subjects are running out of water as one of the fresh water pumps has broken. The pumps were made by an inventive wizard who now lives far inland. She needs the party to either bring back more pumps or the secret of making/repairing them.	The Pirate Queen will owe one favor to the party. Anything that she can grant, and it is theirs. Anything.	The Pirate Queen's two weaknesses are her subjects and her honor, and so she will keep her word unless is threatens her subjects in some way. However, this is also a potential way to escape the floating city, to destroy the other pumps and thus the city, etc etc etc
<b>THE FLOATING PIRATE CITY: OTHER SECTION</b>			
13	A drunken captain lost his ship, and worries that it might be subsumed into the ever-expanding radius of city if he does not find it and prevent other boats from lashing to it.	A treasure map on a deserted island.	The map doesn't say how to get to that island, but is legit.
14	A sea monster is attacking the city's smithy boats! Come help us defend them.	Level-appropriate gold pieces per furnace left un-destroyed.	The beast. To the party, this seems mostly a number of giant tentacles (treat each as a 4HD monster) coming from below the boats and feeling their way around deck. It flees if half its tentacles are cut or someone spears its soft, fleshy body just below water. It seems to be after the shields and armor in the smithy ships (which are mostly there to be melted down into more usable objects). Tentacles can hear and feel, but not see.
15	Ah, new able-bodied and -minded youngsters! How would you like to make a couple of easy golden galleons fighting in our arena?	A couple of gold pieces per fight won, but more importantly notoriety amongst the city itself as fine fighters, magic users, and tacticians.	Group fights end at the first death, and all the other groups are much more experienced at arena fighting (average +1 level above party average). Better hope it's not a party death that ends it, or PCs make zip!
16	One of the city's largest merchants has surplus wool and grain.	He'll sell them at a much lower price than the party would be able to get for them at the nearest city.	Yeah, those are obviously stolen goods. It's the FLOATING PIRATE CITY, remember? Where would wool and grain even come from? Best not go to the port of call for the ship this was taken from.

d20	JOB DESCRIPTION	WHAT'S BEING OFFERED	WHAT'S BEING HIDDEN
<b>THE DUNGEON SECTION</b>			
17	There's rats in them there cellars! I need 'em done with.	Free room and board for life.	Did I mention they're giant rats? Oh, and if you break anything I'm making you pay for it. (Also unbeknownst to innkeeper, secret door to rats' nest also leads to larger dungeon.)
18	Magic user and fighter (both +1 level above highest party member) seek party to help with dungeon delve.	Even split of all the treasure between party and MU+F. Except for any mushrooms they find: those belong to the magic user. Will consider themselves in the party's debt if all goes perfectly (but won't tell the party that).	Mushrooms which grow in this cave are ingredient for nasty evil ritual, but otherwise MU and F are on the up and up.
19	The furnace owned by the best blacksmith in the city has just gone out, and he doesn't know why—it's always just been there, on fire. Maybe the party wouldn't mind taking a look down that hole in the bottom of the now-defunct furnace?	Each party member can have a single item made for them. Not magic, but of highest quality, offering some bonus (super-strong, super- sharp, super-pretty, super-intricate, super-duper, whatever). Armor, weapons, horseshoes, that missing piece from your mom's music box that no one can fix. Up to each PC.	There's a dragon down there supplying the flame, and he's just taking a quick hundred-year nap. Rather kindly chap, but also rather tired, don't you see?
20	Under the torturer guild's black tower, amongst the racks, blades, and occupied cells, lies a political prisoner of the highest caliber. The party is asked by his brother to help the prisoner escape without his absence being noticed, and to bring him to a town down the coast.	The prisoner's brother's mansion and all items within it.	Unless the party came up with some fool-proof, long-term way of fooling the guild about the escaped prisoner, when the prisoner's brother goes missing and a bunch of dirty vagrants (PCs) move in, the guild's going to find out quickly and be pissed. And no one wants the torturer's guild after them.

# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### PART 2

## ADVENTURES, ENCOUNTERS, & EVENTS

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*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a small (runnable in a single session of no more than six hours) location-based adventure built around a ship which has sunk in fairly shallow waters, and which is rumored to contain excellent treasure.*

One sunken ship, coming up! This adventure features a shipwreck, a vampire, disgusting worms, and the witch Maggoty Meg and her grotesque brood.

What's not to love? The worms. The worms are not to love....

# WRECK OF THE FENRIC SITS-HEAVY

AN ADVENTURE FOR 4-8  
CHARACTERS OF LEVEL 3-5

By Roger S.G. Sorolla

*of Roles, Rules, and Rolls*

## TIMELINE

**Ten days ago:** The merchant ship *Fenric Sits-Heavy* (named after a famously fat shipping baron) set sail from the port of Chandler's Bay en route to the Free City of Harvender. Hired at great cost to travel day and night, its cargo includes a special load: the coffin of the vampire Kerneguinn, who was exposed by vampire hunters in his old haunts, with his hoard of centuries-old treasure. Fearing salt water, a bath of which is toxic to vampires, Kerneguinn has taken pains to seal his coffins and chests watertight with lacquer.

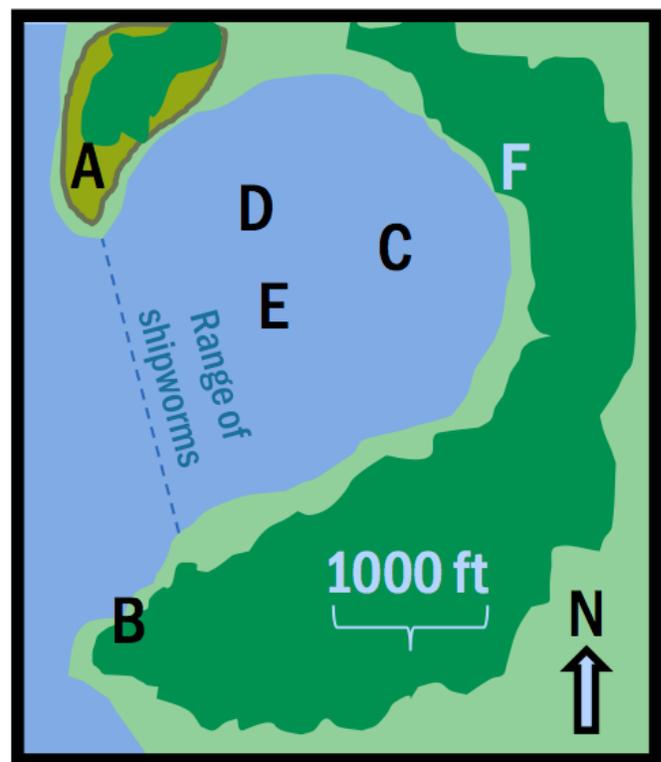
**Seven days ago:** The *Fenric's* crew began muttering among themselves. Kerneguinn attracted an unusual number of ship's rats on board, who started behaving oddly. The sealed casket and the two additional caskets bearing Kerneguinn's grave earth are likewise food for speculation. Some of the more suggestible crew members awakened from indelible nightmares.

**Three days ago:** Thinking he had sighted the lighthouse at the mouth of Harvender's harbor, the pilot of the *Fenric* turned landward under heavy mist. But the light was a trap laid by shipwreckers, the family of Maggoty Meg. It lured the ship into Split Pine Cove, a small bay two miles from the city, infested by giant shipworms. Their gnawing breached the hull and the *Fenric* sank in shallow water. Most of the crew were killed by voracious shipworms. One of them – Lucky Helstrom, the bosun's mate – escaped with a maimed leg, and made landfall on a beach at the mouth of the bay.

**Two days ago:** The wreckers prepared to loot the wreck using their normal, dangerous procedure – dragging a log through the water to distract the shipworms. But they were interrupted by a delegation of the ship's rats, bringing a purse of gold coins. Through an elaborate pantomime, the rats – controlled by Kerneguinn – convinced the wreckers that they would see to driving off the shipworms, leaving it safe to loot the ship.

**One day ago:** Viciously, the swimming rats drove away the shipworms long enough so that three of Meg's sons could get to the wreck, dive, and recover about half of the chests.

## SPLIT PINE COVE



A: Wreckers' light

B: Lucky Helstrom

C: The *Fenric*

D: Wrecked sloop

E: Wrecked ketch

F: Maggoty clan's shacks

Something about the coffins warned them off, though, to the dismay of the rats. A bad dream from Meg's psychically sensitive fourth son, Eggwhite, further gave them the jitters. Meg slowly sought auguries on whether to open the rest.

Meanwhile, the adventurers were hired in Harvender to investigate the missing ship. Their patron could be the legitimate owners of the ship, a rogue company of treasure retrieval specialists, or an ally of Kerneguinn who will caution

# WRECK OF THE FENRIC SITS-HEAVY

most strongly against opening any of the chests. They are provided with a small sailboat and six *water breathing* potions that each last three hours. Their initial instructions are to search the coast near the Free City itself, then cross open water to Chandler's Bay and investigate there.

Split Pine Cove may call their attention for any number of reasons. Most obviously, the mast and crow's nest of the *Fenric* are sticking out above the waves at location C. Careful observation of point B will show something red behind a log on the beach – Helstrom's red jacket. And there is the platform built high up the pine tree at point A.

## KEY TO SPLIT PINE COVE MAP

If the adventurers are in a wooden boat, as soon as they enter the range of the **giant shipworms** on the map, its hull will come under attack from 1d4+1 of them. When the boat sinks the worms will give a tougher fight than usual; they can come from all sides and have the advantage fighting underwater.

*If your system has no underwater fighting rules, inexperienced underwater fighters have an effective -4 DEX. They also suffer -2 to hit and damage if using swung weapons and -1 if using piercing weapons. Most missile weapons won't work at all.*

Swimming through the bay, there is a 2 in 6 chance every 10 minutes of encountering 1d6 more shipworms.

**A:** Barely visible from the sea, some 40 feet up a 50 foot tall pine tree is a small wooden platform. Slung behind the tree is a large lantern with 4 flasks of oil. A series of slats nailed to the back of the tree forms a crude ladder up. This is the wreckers' light.

**B:** Lucky Helstrom, a 0 level sailor with a serious worm bite in his leg, has washed up here, lone survivor of the wreck. He is hiding behind a log, has drunk nothing but last night's rainfall, and has eaten nothing but an overly bold seagull, raw. He will tell everything about the strange doings upon the ship, and has also seen Meg's boys from afar as they launched their first salvage attempt.

**C:** The *Fenric* sits in about 20 feet of water, listing to port. The cross section on page 66 shows the rooms and holds of the ship. The shipworms have been gnawing on it, leaving holes in the hull, and access can also be had from the deck where hatches and ladders lead down. On the sea floor, the gnawed corpses of the ship's 30 odd crew are scattered around.

**D, E:** These are respectively the mostly-eaten hulls of a sloop and a ketch previously lured into the bay. Nothing of value remains, and the months-old corpses of a few crew can be found nearby.

**F:** Screened from view behind a row of pines is the wrecker's camp: three 10'x10' shacks thrown together from ship's timbers, pine logs and branches.

Mother Maggoty and Egg White's shack holds a cauldron, useless charms, and potions of *poison*, *flying*, *extra-healing*

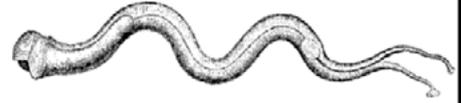
## GIANT SHIPWORM (TEREDO)

HD: 2

MV: swim 90'

AC: 8 [11]

ATK: bite d4+1



Shipworms are a bad enough threat to hulls, but the giant variety, five feet long, do their nasty work in seconds instead of days. Technically, they are not worms, but a species of clam whose shell exists only vestigially as a pair of sharp teeth. They gnaw wood by preference, and living creatures if those are nearby. They hit a small boat hull in the water automatically, and hole it the round they have scored a total of 5 damage or more in that spot; the boat sinks if there are 2 more holes than persons bailing, and comes apart if there are more holes than its length in feet.

and *strength*. In a sack are rare herbs, total value 150\$ (standard coins). Also here is a **treasure chest**. Like all others from the wreck, its seams are sealed in lacquer which must be chipped off. Its hasp is trapped with a spike (save or 1d8+1 damage) with 300\$ in gold and 500\$ in silver coins.

Widemouth and Chicken Toes' shack has only a spade, crowbars, 10 days' supply of food and water, and the gnawed log and rope for distracting the shipworms.

Bristly Beard lives in the third shack, with four life-sized marble statues of nymphs from an earlier wreck (300\$ each if you can move them), and 2 small brass boxes. One has 2 gold rings (200\$ each) and a pack of painted playing cards (100\$). The other, trapped with a poison needle, has 4 garnet and 3 jet gems wrapped in velvet, each worth 50\$. He has a hide coracle (round boat) leaning against the wall.

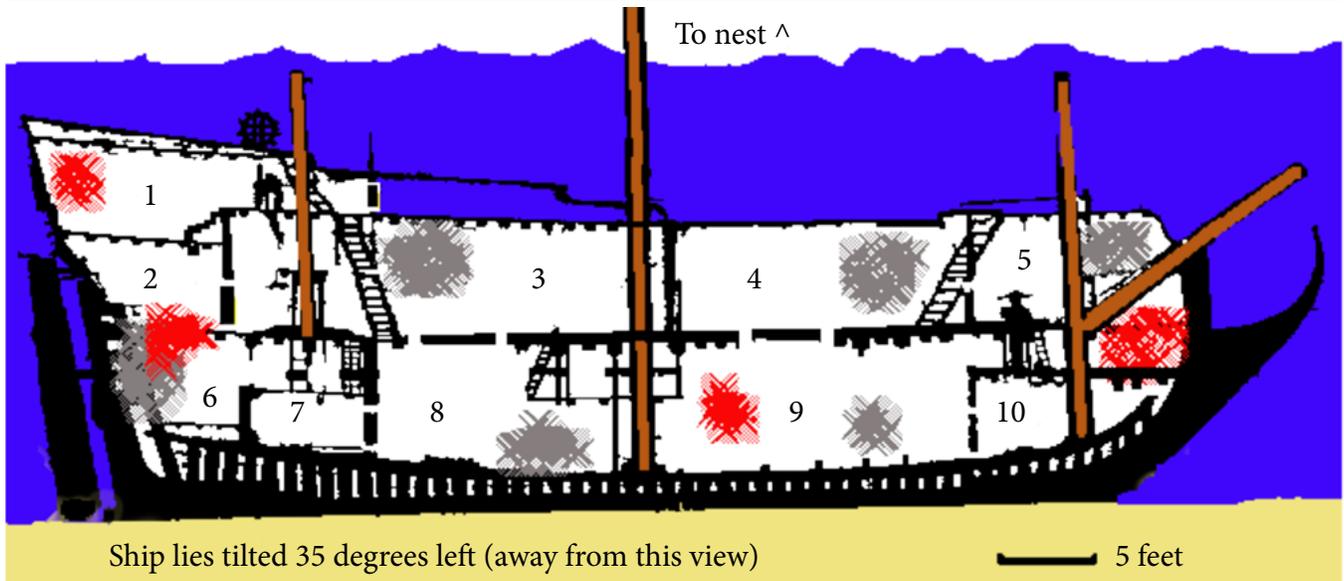
The family buried the remaining salvage in the woods some 300 feet from camp. This trove consists of 5 chests, one with only a swarm of zombie rats (as the rat swarm on the *Fenric*, but undead, and 40% chance of disease if bitten); two locked, one with 6 flasks of *unholy water* and 2000\$ in silver, another with 2 broken and 10 intact rare wine bottles (100\$ each), and 1600\$ in gold; and two unlocked, with Kerneguin's spare clothes and boots, worth a total of 500\$ per chest.

## THE WRECK

The hull of the *Fenric* has been breached in several places by the shipworms, but would certainly be less intact if it weren't for the vigilance of the rats in ...

**The Nest:** The only unbroken mast, the main (middle) one, sticks out from the sea at a 30 degree angle, broken arms and tattered sails visible. It runs for some nine feet, ending

# WRECK OF THE FENRIGSITS-HEAVY



Ship lies tilted 35 degrees left (away from this view)

5 feet

## MAP KEY:

**Black line:** bulkhead (complete wall)  
**Broken black line:** hatch (door)

**Brown line:** mast  
**Gray marks:** hull breach in starboard (right)  
**Red marks:** hull breach in port (left)

in a crow's nest of some four feet diameter that is completely covered in a pulsing swarm of about 40 **ship's rats** (AC 9 [10], HD 2, attack as 1/2 HD, 4 bites at 1 hp each with 5% disease chance, MV 12, weapons do only 1 hp; see my [Varlets and Vermin](#) pdf for details). These rats move as one, can dive holding their breath for up to a minute, and will jump in the water to attack if they feel anything disturbing the ship's timbers.

All rooms are filled with water unless stated otherwise.

**1. Captain's cabin.** Fine furnishings ruined. Under the bed is the paychest, locked, key with dead captain on sea floor, 350\$ in mixed silver, copper, and gold.

**2. First mate and bosun's cabin.** Bunk beds, minor personal effects including: horn knife, stuffed lizard, a silver tankard worth 40\$.

**3. Crew quarters.** Hammocks and footlockers in disarray. About 10 small red crabs have moved in. A thorough search reveals scrimshaw porn, a spare gold earring, and a narwhal peg leg, each worth 50\$.

**4. Ironic fate of dry goods.** Onions, garlic, flour, salt fish. Mess kettle and ship's stove.

**5. Passenger cabin.** Two dead sailors embracing float here... Hmm. Save or be diseased from foul water.

**6. Drink stores.** 10 saleable barrels of beer still here, 10 bottles of fine wine (20\$ each) for the captain, enough pewter mugs for 30 crew members.

**7. War room.** Locked door, key with dead bosun on sea floor. In racks, 20 cutlasses, 20 crossbows with 50 quarrels each, 15

pikes, 10 grappling hooks. About 6 inches of air in top corner of room.

**8. Cargo hold.** Nearly full with timber logs, bricks, sacks of grain. 12 inches of air in top corner.

**9. Stores hold.** Large barrels of water, salt beef and pork (now with extra salt), soggy ship's biscuit. Would have held more cargo but had to sail in a hurry. 12 inches of air in top corner.

**10. Special cargo room.** 12 inches of air in top corner. About 6 lacquered chests, 2' long, remain of Kerneguinn's treasure. One, trapped with a lightning glyph, is the magic store: *chain mail* +2, *magic sword* +2, pan pipes that cast *sleep*, *oil of disappearance*. The other 5 hold cash, each about 1000\$ in mixed silver and gold. There are 3 coffins disguised as sets of 3 treasure chests stuck together. Two are filled with grave earth; Kerneguinn is in the other.

If the party opens the chest underwater, they have the vampire where they want him. Salt water is as bad as running water to a vampire; Kerneguinn takes 2d6 damage per round from exposure to it, more than he can regenerate. If it is day above he will be in a bad way, but will use a combination of gaseous and bat form to find the closest air-filled hiding space.

If they open the chest out of the water, Kerneguinn will rise and charm one party member, intimidating the rest to serve him; he would rather bend wills than bite necks. He will enjoy forcing a conflict between the party and the wreckers, believing this the best way to determine who is strong enough to serve him.

# WRECK OF THE FENRIGSITS-HEAVY

## MOTHER MEG AND HER CHILDREN

Maggotty Meg, the wrecker, is a witch who relies in her advancing age on her four grown sons. In earlier years she enjoyed many naked Walpurgis dances, accounting for the diverse appearances and powers of each brat.

### MAGGOTTY MEG

Evil Cleric 5, can substitute spells of a Magic-user 3

AC: 9[10]

AT: Sickle (1d6)

MV: 120'

**Spells:** *Bestow Curse, Stinking Cloud, Hold Person, Cause Light Wounds, Sleep, Disguise.*



### CHICKEN TOES

Long nose and face, feathery hair on a skinny body.

**Likely father:** Vulture demon.

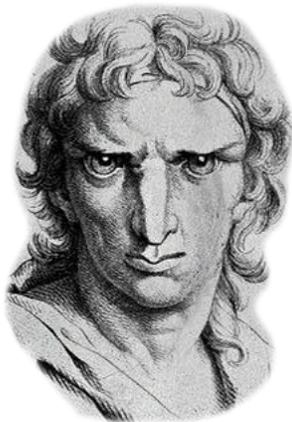
HD: 4

AC: 6[13] including shield

AT: Pick (stick with giant eagle beak: 1d6+1)

MV: 90' walking, can leap up to 20'

**Special power:** *Cause darkness in 5' radius once/day; climbs and hides as an 8th level thief.*



### WIDEMOUTH

Short and powerfully squat, played legs, broad face.

**Likely father:** Toad demon.

HD: 4+1

AC: 6[13] from tough warty skin

AT: Wrestle (STR 17), bite: 1d4+1

MV: 90' walking, 150' swimming

**Special power:** Can breathe underwater for up to 1 hour at a time.



### BRISTLE BEARD

Hairy, tall and fat, thick brow, impulsive.

**Likely father:** Boar demon.

HD: 5+1

AC: 5[14]

AT: Two-handed axe  
1d8+1+bonus (STR 18)

MV: 120'

**Special power:** Roar for *fear* (as spell), 1x/day



### EGG WHITE

Plump, childlike body, huge head, face of a happy idiot.

**Likely father:** you tell me

HD: 1

AC: 9[10]

AT: None

MV: 60'

**Special powers:** ESP within 60', can send telepathic messages to a known person within one mile, can make victim in sight range save vs. spell or attack self once per round.



Meg and Egg White mostly keep to the camp. The others may be located at any given time using the table below:

d6	Location
1-2	In camp, occupied or sleeping
3	In Bristle's coracle, patrolling the cove
4	On the beach, looking fondly at the wreck
5	Hunting snakes and wild onions in the woods
6	At location A, keeping lookout

There is conflict in the family on how to proceed given their misgivings about the wreck. Bristle Beard is all for going ahead and looting, while Egg White has bad dreams about the scary man (Kerneguin), and Widemouth and Chicken Toes think the rats are creepy.

If the party approaches by land, the family takes the chance to use them as cats' paws to bring the salvage up. They try to strike a deal, which they'll betray at the earliest opportunity, and use the party to open the dangerous chests they retrieve.

If the party approaches the wreck underwater, they may get away without being seen, but are vulnerable on the beach. Spotting PCs taking chests away from the wreck will infuriate the three active sons.

The rats will pursue their interest of getting Kerneguin's casket intact on land in the dark, threatening and biting if necessary.

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a Carcosa adventure that  
includes at least one new monster and some  
nonstandard treasure and magic items.*

# ULFIRESTEIN & THE NAZI ROCKET TROOPERS

By Paolo Greco

**PREMISE:** Nazis are not necessary for this adventure. You can replace them with any other imperialist country hellbent on invasion and plunder and no respect whatsoever for natives like the British Empire, Imperial France or Japan, the Kingdom of Italy or the United States of America. If you want to keep the cool-sounding fake German names, pick Prussia. Or Switzerland.

I believe that what happens in the typical Carcosa game or metaplot (snake-men performing eugenics and selective breeding on apes to have color-coded victims to rape and sacrifice) is not worse than what the SS were up to in Europe.

Plus, killing Nazis is fun. And you can take their cool uniforms, rifles, and jetpacks.

**SECOND PREMISE:** the adventure is statted up per Carcosa. It requires the Carcosa handbook and a healthy dose of seat-of-the-pants-wrangling.

The adventure is a bit atypical: the gist is that the Nazis want to learn a monster summoning ritual and use it back in Europe. The PCs are caught in the crossfire and might decide to run away, side with the Nazis or with Mr Brilliance (the locals sorcerer). Or try to kill everybody.

Remember that the Germans speak *German* and Carcosan as a second language, with a really profound Teutonic accent. All their equipment, including an Enigma machine and the rocketship, comes with instructions, but the instructions are in German. Because I love messing with your players.

The adventure starts with PCs in the village in hex 1902 noticing, just after sunset, a very bright light in the sky descending in the hex north of hex 2201. Shenanigans start the next day.

## WHAT ARE THE NAZIS UP TO?

The Nazis arrived in Carcosa with a rocketship a few years ago led by the dreams of a mad Terran sorcerer. They immediately began looking for summoning rituals and, mostly through violence and torture, uncovered the existence of the Violet Mist and the *The Haunter of the Phosphorescent Vault*, the ritual to summon it. They tortured more people and learned that **Unpeerable Brilliance** (a LVL 7 neutral sorcerer) knows the ritual. Mr Brilliance lives in **Ulfirestein**, an ulfire-coloured tower in hex 1902, a mile south of a village numbering 85 purple people. That's where the PCs are at the beginning of the adventure.

## DAY 0

The Nazis land the **Rocketship Wernher Von Braun** one hex north of hex 2201 at about 7 PM and start unloading and preparing material immediately after. It carries a crew of 10, plus 20 **RaketFallschirmjägers** and a disassembled **Säbelzahnkat Tank** with its crew of 10 tankers/mechanics.

**RaketFallschirmjägers (Rocket Paratroopers):** LVL 3 fighting-men. Light armor (steel helmet, goggles, flak jacket), no shield. Weapon: dagger, steel-capped boots, Green Laser Rifle (2 dice, 50 charges), additional batteries for laser rifle, 3 frag grenades (3d6 damage, save to halve), rocket-jetpack (1 hour of fuel, max speed 200mph, takes 1d3 rounds to start properly). One soldier has a portable radio that takes 1d6 rounds to activate plus 1 round to extend the antenna.

**Säbelzahnkat (Sabertooth) Tank:** The vehicle has two turrets, each of which holds a neon laser cannon (5 dice, 10+10 charges) and a laser auto-rifle (3 dice, 30+30 charges). Naturally PCs will melee with the tank, so consider it to have *very very heavy armor* (-4). Treads have 5 hit dice each and "killing" one stops the tank from moving. 100 damage to the glacis or 50 to any other specific area penetrates the armor. Inside are 5 really pissed off Nazi tankers equipped with red laser pistols. Cruise speed 30 mph, 200 miles range.

## DAY 1

At 10AM, ten **RaketFallschirmjägers** leave the *Von Braun*, zooming off on rocket-powered jetpacks toward Ulfirestein. Since the jetpacks have a cruise speed of 200mph the Nazis arrive in five minutes. Unless stopped, they immediately start asking villagers about *The Haunter* but, as the villagers can't answer, some are rounded up in the village square and executed. After the execution, some villagers tell of Mr Brilliance and offer to guide the soldiers there.

Arriving at the tower they knock at the door. But nobody opens it, because **Mr Brilliance** (LVL 6, coat of mail (5), two helium pistols) is waiting in the tower (it's a single room with a spiral stair going up, no handrail) for someone to open the double door before riding out laser guns ablazing on his **Cyber-Palaeoscincus** (LVL 9, very heavy armor (-2), attacks with bite and tail swing, radiation breath 1/day for 6 dice, save for half). A radioactive grenade is attached to the bottom of the trapdoor at the top of the tower. When the trapdoor is opened, the grenade explodes upwards.

If the Nazis are reduced to 5 or fewer, they activate their jetpacks and leave. They return the next day riding the tank.

Should the Nazis win the fight they find a badly concealed door in the tower opening over a wall cavity and, from there, a ladder leads down in the basement. Before going downstairs the soldiers establish radio contact with the *Von Braun*, report, and ask for reinforcements to bring their numbers up to 12. Reinforcement rocket-troopers arrive in 6 minutes.

## DAY 2

The tank is operational by noon and leaves unless the *Von Braun* is in danger or the RaketFallschirmjäger return with the books or an unconscious/tied up Mr Brilliance. It reaches the village or Ulfirestein if the paratroopers managed to report its presence. The trip to either place takes about one hour unless the tank is intercepted, stopped, or slowed down; it carries all remaining paratroopers plus its crew.

At the village, Nazis demolish a building or two and then ask information. At the tower they annihilate any resistance and then use all the remaining personnel (except the tank commander that will have to drive back) to try to extract valuables and arcane paraphernalia from the tower and, especially, its basement.

## AND THEN?

At this point the possibilities are so many that giving more than guidelines is useless. The *Von Braun* has orders to retrieve all possible arcane material from Carcosa and then fly back to the dark side of the Moon.

## WHAT'S IN THE BASEMENT?

The basement is divided into three parts: the **cellar**, the **study**, and the **reactor room**.

**Cellar:** holds many barrels of water, terran wine, alien dried fruit, dinosaur jerky, ~~human~~ "longpig" scratchings, and a box with 3d6 doses of all the lotus types of your Carcosa campaign. A small wooden door leads to the study, while a big metal bank-vault-like door leads to the reactor room.

**Study:** This small room is filled with astronomical devices, charts, notes, and random body parts pickled in glass jars. In the mess are three distinct pieces of furniture: 1) a bookshelf with several books, collectively holding the rituals *The Mad Ensorcelled Inscriptions*, *Susurrations of the Purple Cavern*, and *The Haunter of the Phosphorescent Vault*; 2) an *Ottoman of Profound Acedia* (whoever sits on the low seat/footstool won't want to leave for the next 5d6 hours, unless a save is made); and, 3) a white, lacquered bathtub filled with thick opaque green liquid. The bathtub origin and original name are unknown but it sometimes is referred to as the *Tank of the Saucy Sauce*.

**Reactor Room:** The big metal vault is opened by pressing the password (123456) into a numeric pad next to the door. When the vault door opens, a bright yellowy-green

light floods the cellar. Inside the small room is a glowing, green, barrel-shaped metal sealed object: it's a **Quantum Radionuclide Battery Charger Reactor**. Any battery-powered object left within a meter of the reactor will be fully powered in 1d6 hours. There's still 2 cubic meters of space left in the room. For each *turn* the vault is open any character in the Basement or within 90' of the reactor will accrue 1 radiation dose. 1d6 hours later ask each irradiated character to make two poison saves with a negative modifier equal to the number of doses taken. If both are failed the character dies, if one is failed the character acquires a mutation (roll something on the Spawn of Shub-Niggurath or on the Random Robot Generator if you need ideas).

## TANK OF THE SAUCY SAUCE

The *Tank* resembles a white, lacquered bathtub. It might be found filled with a thick opaque green liquid. An empty *tank* can accept a small specimen of green slime and will then proceed to prime its behavior. The slime will not have any particular behavior unless it's fed with at least a pound of organic matter, possibly from a single source called *donor*. If any creature with genetic material close to any donor's (same Family [taxonomic, not nuclear]) arrives within 10' of the full tank the **green ooze** (LVL 4, slow movement, no armor, immunity as a **green slime**) will form a genderless shape close to the donor and start moving toward the creature. Any creature of the same Genus must roll a saving throw or be overwhelmed by the ooze-sequenced pheromones and try to mate with the humanoid ooze, which results in consequences easy to imagine (green slime is very very nasty stuff). The ooze will go back to the tank after having eaten anything from the same Family as the donor, and its list of donors will grow if it consumes more than a pound of material from a single being. 24 hours after eating a pound of organic matter from a given donor it will *not* react in any way to the donor's presence, or even cause them any harm. Mr Brilliance fed his ooze with his own blood and hair, then immediately left Ulfirestein for a couple of days. Now it's fed with kitchen refuse and the occasional colored corpse. Before feeding the ooze Mr Brilliance often bathes in the ooze and, since he's a donor, the ooze keeps him clean and perfectly scrubbed. The ooze has eaten terrans, ducks, penguins, apes, greys, elves and Carcosan humans of all colors.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I NEED TO KNOW, BY THE WAY?

Mr Brilliance realized horrible things were happening. After the landing he peered from the top of his tower with a telescope in the direction of the light and saw the rocket, then set up the traps.

Everybody in the village noticed the landing: if Mr Brilliance is not around they will be very submissive to the Nazis, because while Mr Brilliance defends them from aggression sometimes he pretends he needs virgins as tribute.

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me an adventure involving goblins that are very comical but still effective for a weaker group of characters, perhaps the goblins can serve someone who is a capable villain.*

# THE GRIFFIN STREET ANGELS

## A COMEDIC GOBLIN ADVENTURE

By Erik Jensen

Illustration by Gus from *Dungeon of Signs*

One of the most exhilarating parts of being a Santicore's Helper is that there are sometimes requests which need help, so you're first in line to pitch in - sometimes on a short deadline. I love that kind of pressure sometimes. Here's one I ended up taking.

### THE GRIFFIN STREET ANGELS

Five young, mischievous goblins have taken up residence in the attics, eaves, sewers, and barrels of Griffin Street. Having lived here nearly a year now, they have become an acknowledged part of the community, despite being rarely seen. The goblins have christened themselves the Griffin Street Angels, and they fancy themselves a sort of street gang which protects the residents and lives off of their largesse. Local residents and merchants sometimes put out milk or table scraps for the goblins, but the Angels could get by on trash alone if necessary. There is no 'protection racket' involved; the relationship is more akin to that of the traditional brownie, where the locals curry favor with the goblins and in exchange are not only unmolested by the dirty critters, but the Angels sometimes help out in unseen ways. The goblins have become fairly protective of their 'turf' and the people who live there, and at one point a few months ago drove off a rival (human) street gang. So, too, have many of the locals grown fond of their little helpers.

The ideas herein do not constitute an adventure on their own, but rather a short toolkit to create one, especially on the fly. Add a reason for the PCs to be on Griffin Street, or seeking the goblins, and perhaps a map of a steep and winding road, and improvise away! You may also want a handful of local merchants and residents handy, or ready for improv. Although written for use in a medieval or faux-Victorian fantasy city, a quick reskinning could make the Angels into escaped lab rats of extreme intelligence (for a modern or supers game), gremlins of some sort (horror), or even fluffy kawaii aliens (sci-fi).

### RUNNING IT AS A COMEDY

The Griffin Street Angels should be a bit difficult to locate, then very difficult to pursue. The goblins themselves are no match for even novice adventurers in a straight fight; they are "just goblins" after all. However, dealing with the Griffin Street Angels may prove quite a challenge for any party seeking to avoid collateral damage or angering the local city-folk, who have come to appreciate the hidden goblins.

### WHAT DO THE PCs NEED FROM THE GOBLINS?

d6	Reason
1	<b>Information.</b> These goblins know something the PCs need to know.
2	<b>Their stuff back!</b> The Griffin Street gang has pickpocketed (or blatantly stolen) money or an item the characters care about (perhaps a magic item, badge of office, or MacGuffin).
3	<b>Someone else's stuff back!</b> A non-Griffin Street resident claims "those blasted goblins" stole something of his...
4	<b>Directions.</b> The Angels possibly know a secret way into some building to which the PCs need discreet access; could be sewer, secret door, etc.
5	<b>Something hidden.</b> A treasure map or will sewn into an old coat donated to the goblins, for example.
6	<b>Mistaken Identity.</b> These are not the goblins you're looking for. Move along.

To create this effect, the encounter is best run as comedy, and as broad as you care to make it, within the context of your game. Tussling with the Angels should be a bit cartoony, whether it's comical combat or a hot pursuit through the streets. Below, the goblins and their unusual powers are described; several tables are provided to assist you in generating a madcap goblin encounter mid-game (and heaven help the party if they split up). You may also wish to employ the "*Ouchies & Boo-boos*" table, elsewhere in the 2012 collection of Santicore, to amp up the cartoon feel.

### THE GOBLINS THEMSELVES

All of the Griffin Street Angels are plain old goblins, with all the requisite statistics; however, each of them has a comical quirk which may come into play (typically non-lethal in nature). The Angels can all speak Goblin and a smattering of Common (especially Hamburger Soup, who is near-fluent in Common). They can be Neutral or Evil or Chaotic (or a mix) as suits your game.

**HAMBURGER SOUP** - the self-proclaimed leader of the gang, Hamburger Soup galavants about in a busted top hat and torn suit-jacket, constantly coming up with new schemes. He is quite selfish and vain, but also the cleverest

# THE GRIFFIN STREET ANGELS

of the goblins, and quite skilled at both trap-setting and the navigation of Griffin Street (optional: when Hamburger Soup is pursued, roll twice on the **Pursuit & Mayhem** table below and choose the “better” result for the situation).

**CRYBABY** - although his fellows often tease him for his childish ways, Crybaby is perhaps the most ‘angelic’ of the Griffin Street Angels. He is the goblin who leaves gifts or candy for children, or sneaks into their rooms to tell them stories late at night (often he is just a voice from the closet, or under the bed). Whether there is any real philanthropy in these acts is subject to debate - Crybaby loves positive attention, and he doesn’t get any from the other goblins very often. If cornered or wounded, Crybaby is certain to emit an ear-splitting wail which could daze or deafen those standing too close.

**POOT** - a rather tubby goblin in a dirty shirt, Poot enjoys eating, snacking, trying new ingredients, and eating. He has a bad habit of filling his constantly-empty stomach with chalk from the chalk processing facility at the low end of Griffin Street. This practice combines explosively with his eponymous flatulence; when he is frightened or under duress (for example, when in combat or held aloft by an angry adventurer) he may release a noxious cloud of gas and copious tiny chalk-particles which destroy visibility within a five foot radius of his position for 1d3 rounds.

**CLOWN-SHOES** - despite wearing an oversized pair of human boots (and large ones at that), Clown-Shoes is just as stealthy and sneaky as his fellows. He is the enforcer of the gang, and easily the most belligerent of the bunch, always willing to bring his massive clodhoppers to bear in a ruckus. Assume most attacks from Clown-Shoes are either foot-stomps or crotch-kicks, either of which may cause a

temporary stun effect (and possibly loss of movement rate for a few rounds) to his victim.

**HOOCH** - so enamored of drink is Hooch that he’s practically pickled; some spells (including *sleep* and most mind-affecting or fear-causing sorceries) may just plain not work on him, or have altered effects. Hooch generally has some sort of bottle, wineskin, or stein in his hand as he stumbles about, and one might think this would make him an easy target and less stealthy than his companions, but it just isn’t so. Hooch is like a tiny, burping drunken master. Should he release an immense belch directly into the face of a melee opponent (an act which inevitably solicits a unison “Good one!” from any other goblins about), the victim must save vs poison or be nauseated (50%) or even become temporarily intoxicated themselves (50%; lasts 1d4 rounds).

## GRIFFIN STREET LOCALS’ REACTIONS

(when it’s obvious the PCs seek or pursue the goblins)

d6	Reaction
1	Belligerent (tough guy). <i>“Oi! What you doin’ over there? You mess wif dem gobs, you mess wif alla Griffin Street, boyo!”</i>
2	Belligerent (matronly). <i>“You cad! How dare you! What have those poor wee goblins ever done to you!”</i>
3	Subtle assistance (pro-goblin). <i>“Ooh, so sorry, how clumsy of me! Am I in your way?”</i>
4	Neutral. <i>“Meh. Goblins.”</i>
5	Subtle assistance (anti-goblin). NPC says nothing, but points furtively to a cabinet, then leaves the room...
6	Hater (anti-goblin). <i>“Too right! Get ‘em gobs up outta here! Little blighters...”</i>



*Left to right:  
Poot,  
Crybaby,  
Hamburger Soup,  
Hooch, and  
Clown-Shoes*

## GOBLIN MAYHEM AND PURSUIT

DMs should improvise results and add stat checks or saves as necessary for various implied effects. Be sure to describe the environment of the street in a way that incorporates people, places, and things that just beg to be exploited by your players during a chase. Roll 1d20 and consult the list below.

### d20 Event

- 1) Goblin effortlessly scoops up a road-apple and flings it - rather accurately - toward the pursuer; alternately, a banana peel is tossed underfoot.
- 2) While you were looking at one goblin, another one tied your shoes together. No laces on your boots? That's fine; he tied fishing line from your belt to something heavy.
- 3) Goblin makes a sharp turn, causing pursuer to nearly barrel into a (small child, elderly lady) at top speed (a save or DEX check might be valuable here; neither Little Sally nor Granny Knickerbocker react well to plate mail collisions)
- 4) Goblin upsets a cart full of oranges or other pretty-spherical fruit, with predictable results as the death-trap fruits cover a large area (time for DEX checks).
- 5) Bouncing around, goblin knocks over (or pulls down) something heavy or awkward - a gargoyle, a rain gutter, etc.
- 6) Goblin shoves a pram (complete with baby). It rolls out of control down the street, picking up speed.
- 7) Goblin grabs fish from a cart and flings it like a boomerang; if it misses, make another attack roll as the fish boomerangs back at the target
- 8) Goblin whistles, calling over a rather mean dog on a chain; whether the dog or the outstretched chain is the more serious issue is a matter for debate
- 9) Is that a procession ahead? Oh, crap, it's a funeral. The goblin weaves in and out of wailing mourners and even hops on (or in!) the coffin/bier if the opportunity presents itself. This is an opportunity for the PCs to be "those jerks who ruined that funeral" for years to come.
- 10) Goblin scrambles up a rooftop, knocking ceramic shingles down upon you
- 11) A pair of workers carrying (1-2 long ladder, 3-5 pane of glass, 6 something ridiculous like a piano or Christmas tree) between them steps between you and the goblin.
- 12) Goblin hides in a barrel, giant wicker basket, or large clay pot, one of several. Somehow he can stick his head out of a different pot while you're checking the first one; you know how this goes.
- 13) Goblin scurries up under the eaves of a building and disappears, ending pursuit.
- 14) Goblin slithers into a manhole in such a way that the heavy metal cover spins about noisily then slams down again just as you get there.

15) The goblin nonchalantly grabs a stray cat and flings it right at your face. Being a cat, it adheres nicely and wails and claws nonstop.

16) Goblin sneaks under the skirts of (1-2 attractive young lady, 3-4 tremendously round lady, 5-6 nun).

17) Goblin kicks the rickety wheel of a dung-cart, causing a nasty spill (and potentially a Biff Tannen incident if you're not careful).

18) Goblin grabs a bag of spices (1-4 black pepper, 5-6 crazy-hot pepper powder) and hurls it into the air, in someone's face, or against a building as necessary to produce the desired sneezing or OH SWEET ODIN IT BURNS

19) Goblin climbs up the beard of a passing wizard who was reading half-aloud from a book and not paying attention to where he walked; the book drops, spell components scatter everywhere from pouches, a bunny leaps out of a comical hat, and the old wizard blurts out random words of power. If you have a Wand of Wonder table handy, go for it.

20) Goblin hurls fruit or a dead duck (hanging in a stall) at a hulking thug, then ducks behind something so when the brute turns, it appears as though a PC threw the food. Trouble ensues.

## THE GOBLINS' SECRET

The Griffin Street Angels might be more than they seem; here are some ideas.

*Mysterious 'benefactor'.* Hamburger Soup has been enlisted (and plied with wine and silver) to be on the lookout for a particular person (man dressed a certain way, child with a strange birthmark); if spotted, he has magical or mundane means of communicating with his patron - who may have evil designs.

*Accursed.* The goblins are actually people (knights? adventurers?) who were transformed and memory-wiped by a witch or other villain. If they manage to perform enough small good deeds (or one big one!) their bodies and minds will revert to normal.

*Undercover.* The Angels - all of whom are Lawful or Neutral in reality - are special agents of the monarch, a secret police, or are associated with one of the local churches, and are on a top secret mission...

*Kid Brother.* One of the Angels has an older brother who is a guildmaster, assassin, warlord, crazy shaman, or similar Person Who Would Be Very Cross You Killed His Kid Brother.

*Wannabe.* One or more of the goblins would desperately love to be the sidekick to an adventurer, or becomes obsessed with the idea of apprenticing under the party mage or cleric.

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me something involving time travel.  
Nothing fancy, but think creepy and strange ala  
Twilight Zone, not smarmy and cute like Doctor Who.*

*Thanks,  
P. H. Downs*

# THE TEMPLE OF RE

## A SINGLE SESSION ADVENTURE SCENARIO FOR A PARTY OF INTREPID TOMB RAIDERS

By S. Brewer

This adventure is setting agnostic: The characters can be any group of inquisitive, greedy, brave, or foolhardy souls:

- Fighter, cleric, mage, and rogue with sword and spell at the ready
- Lara Croft style modern desperadoes wielding automatics and geiger counters
- Steamy pith-helmet wearing colonialists
- Stargate-esque Space Marines

Whatever the setting, the PCs have come to an ancient land, with its magnificent civilization of antiquity long lost beneath the desert sands. And while most of the obvious tombs and temples have long since been discovered and pilfered or preserved for posterity, they happen to have come across a thus far un-disturbed one. (Please feel free to alter the names of gods, nations, and cultures to fit into your campaign and setting.)

### PREAMBLE

*Four day's journey across the slow moving sea of sands and fields and stones that march along the course of the great river; a week and a half's surveying, and taking bearings, and checking the stars and the point on the horizon where the sun rose and set; and then another day and a half's picking through scraps of ruined stone buildings, have led to this.*

### THE SITE

*Halfway up the side of the hillside stands a small shelf of stones with a commanding view back up the valley, south over the remnants of the early dynasty towns you have spent the last days picking through. From any distance, this place would look like little more than a tumble of stones - perhaps a shade more regular than the rest of the slope. But now your party and the half dozen native bearers who have hauled your gear up here stand in what was once clearly a fore-court of some kind. A series of tumbled-down stones in complete disarray are all that remain of a series of columns and what possibly might have been an obelisk - although most have been carried away over the years. Around the back of the stage, carved into the hillside are a series of square columns, framing what seem to be a flat topped portal. The structure appears to have all the hallmarks of a First Dynasty hill temple, of the kind that was dug or part buried inside the hill behind it.*

*Over the years, the collapse of the fore-court and subsidence from the hillside above has thrown up piles of rubble before each of the stone doors, more on the left. The easiest way to enter the temple appears to be through the right-most door.*

Players can use whatever means they have to gain access to the Temple. There is no advantage to entering through one door or another, and if no more favorable option exists, then the characters and the bearers can clear the rubble by nightfall, and break open the left stone door early the next morning.

### UPON ENTERING THE DOORS

*Clambering over the ruin of the two great slabs of stone, at first nothing can be seen through the haze of dust in the light that streams in through this portal for the first time in many thousands of years. When at last the rock dust begins to settle, and your eyes adjust, you begin to see that you are standing at the bottom of a rectangular hall, approximately six yards wide, down which march two rows of six square columns. Ten yards deep, you cannot see any further into the gloom.*

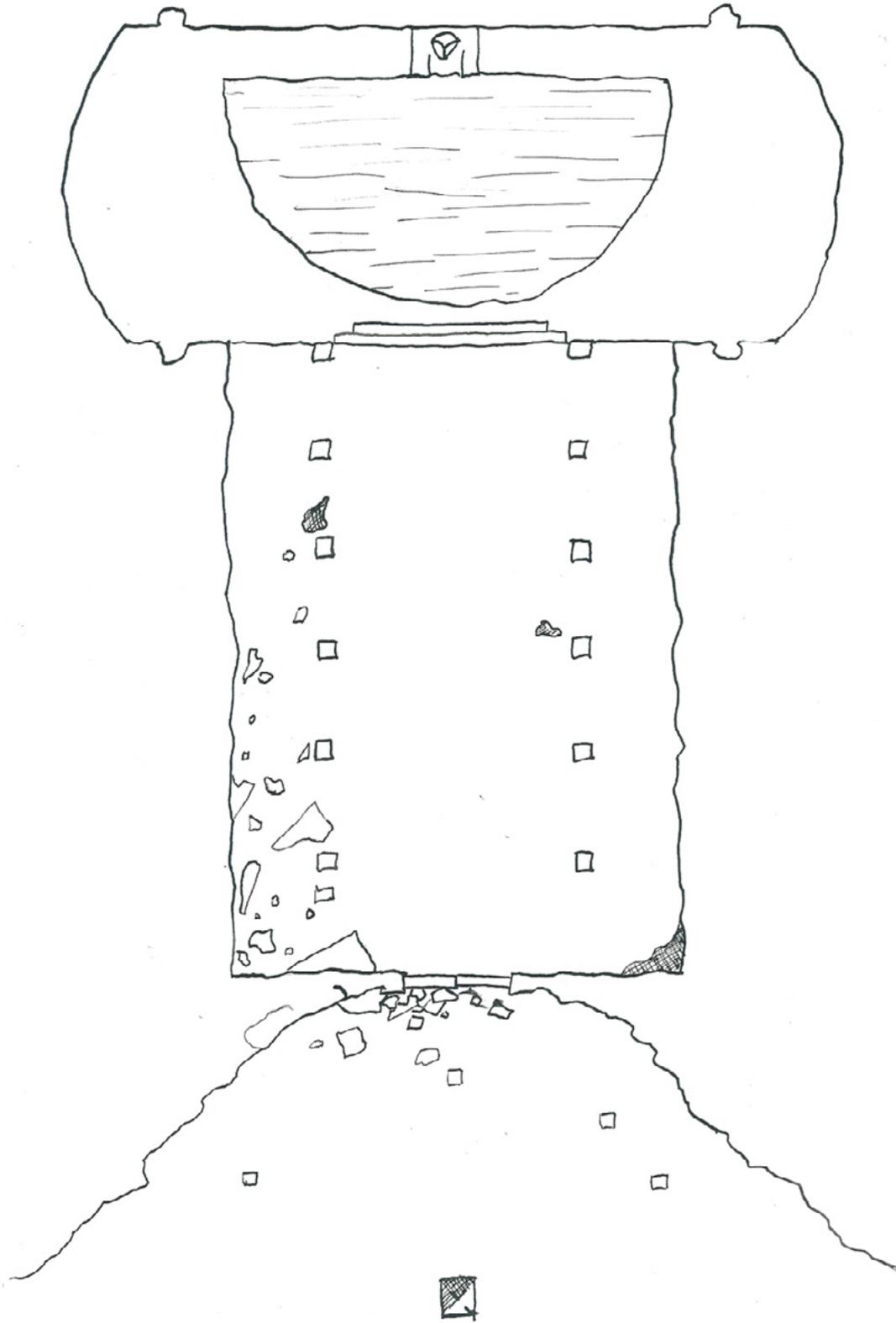
*The ruin appears to be a temple of some sort, from the very first Dynasty of the Ancients. The primitive nature of the pillars: square and with no capitals is clearly very early architectural work. And the limited size of the place would also seem to indicate a civilization that was still learning to construct great monuments in stone. The entire interior is hewn directly from the stone of the hill, and no exact right angles or perpendicular lines exist anywhere within the place. This, along with the uncertain light, makes it difficult to understand the exact size or shape of the place, and leaves everyone with a certain hesitancy.*

Characters may explore this early section of the temple with impunity.

### MAIN HALL/CELLA

*The occasional fallen stone within this hall attests to similar wearing of time as the collapses on the outside. Scattered there and abouts are the occasional pile of refuse: more dust and compost than anything else. The left hand walls appear to have suffered more from the aeons of slow movement of*

The Temple of Re



*the hillside than the right. Only a few bare pictograms, and some almost unrecognizable hieroglyphs remain: not enough to form coherent sentences from had you the time to spend on translation.*

*The right hand wall of the temple is more intact, and while faded and grimed over almost to opacity, seems to have both readable hieroglyphs, and a traditional pictographic frieze of some sort. Much work to clean and reveal, or light and properly study the area would need to be undertaken to pull out any details from this wall though. It appears at first impression to be a traditional illustration involving a journey to a holy place. The images nearest your entrance show travelers guided by the heavens: stars and the sun and moon. In all likelihood it is the founding myth of this very temple.*

*The double row of pillars have similar grimed, faded and dusty friezes of some of the earliest versions of the Egyptian pantheon.*

If Players express any desire to investigate either the piles of rubbish or the story on the right hand wall, tease them with some further details, but let their investigations draw them deeper into the temple. Then, when they reach the half-way point, interrupt them with this happening:

*As you advance further down the hall, deeper into the hillside, the thin light from the broken doorway behind you is all but lost. Your torches and lanterns guide your way now, and it is by their dancing, wavering light that you first perceive some movement from up ahead. Some dancing ripple of reflected light comes back to you, along with a continuous sound which is eery in its familiarity, while being at the same time utterly wrong.*

*Then, as you squint up to this disturbance in the gloom, with a scrape and shuffle a shape of blackness interrupts the reflection and all at once you are aware of a figure moving toward you. In the half-second it takes you all to take this in, you realize that it has the form of a person, lurching toward you with a kind of desperate intensity. From the shuffling form comes the scent of an ancient tomb, and with a rasping moan it reaches out to you a hand with fingernails like curled talons. The sound from his throat sounds like:*

*“Please... mesneh... shebi... rek!”*

Then the only sense that any Character will be able to make of this speech follows. However, we would suggest that it would take a native speaker of ancient Egyptian, who was also a great linguist, with a recording device running for the few seconds that is spoken for and time to review the recording afterward to get as far as this:

“Please... turn back... change... this time!”

Let the Players have one action only, at the end of which, whatever they have done, the shambling figure crumbles to dust before their very eyes.

*Stepping forward onto a leg that shatters with a muffled crunching sound, the figure collapses suddenly forward. It's lurch to catch itself sees the other leg snap and crumble right up to the thigh, and the arm it throws forward in an instinct to stop its fall disappears in a mess of dust bone and rags up to the elbow. Unable now to arrest its fall, or right its balance, the whole being subsides over onto its shattered limbs - still desperately mouthing its speech over and over - at last collapsing bodily onto the stone floor with a crumpling crack. As its torso breaks, and its head plunges shattering to the floor, the entreating hand remains outstretched before falling loose at the last and dissolving into a dry rotten pile at the very feet of the nearest of you.*

Once the players have recovered from the shock of this, allow them to move forward and investigate the tantalizing shimmer of light up ahead.

## SHRINE/ADYTUM

*Immediately after the sixth pillar on each side of the central chamber come two shallow steps down to the Adytum area of the temple: it's holy place of mysteries.*

*Here the space opens out to be around ten yards wide, and might be a further three yards deep. In the centre of this space lay what must have been a pool of clear cold water, curving out in a half moon to lap at the foot of the lowest stair.*

*But as you step closer your mind rebels at what it sees before it; it refuses to make a coherent picture in your mind for you of what your senses report.*

*The area of the pool is fractured, but not in any natural way. It is as though the stone, water, and even air of the space before you had been some artwork, crafted immaculately out of a perfect piece of crystal or glass. But then at some point a force of unimaginable violence has struck the edifice, at the very centre of the back wall of the temple. A dozen cracks have radiated out through reality from there, and their shimmering, wickedly sharp edges can be seen glittering through the stone above, water below, and air in-between.*

*More than that, the fracturing has broken something else. For somehow the border between each segment of shattered reality reveals little differences between each shard of space. They sit at slightly different levels, but the water does not flow down from one to another. Or it does so, but only at the pace of almost frozen honey. In once place the ripples travel backward from the direction that all the other segments around it do, and in another the entire shard seems utterly motionless altogether. One shard is an impenetrable black. Along another's edge, water flows backward up into the section above it, but the ripples of it entering appear on the far side of its neighbor than where they should. Behind all this, in the centre of the back wall of the shrine, sits a carved edifice: a square stone throne, with the crudely shaped form of a man sitting in it. Through the crystal distortion of*

*reality can be seen the form of a man that bears the head of a mighty falcon. Carved into the wall behind him is a clean circle, which can be vaguely discerned to retain some of the bright yellow coloring it was originally pigmented with.*

Even the most basic success at a knowledge check (if needed) would confirm this as the god of sun and seasons: Ra - or possibly Re this early in the Ancient's development. It is probably from a time when he was a simple individual entity, before later generations combined him with Horus to form Ra-Horakhty.

Players cannot pass their hands into any of the shattered reality areas: their limbs are resisted, or start convulsing, or suffer from severe searing pain and withdraw involuntarily, rimed with frost. Inanimate objects can, however be passed in.

Should the players continue to experiment, the best thing to do will be to construct some sort of Jerry-built chronometer, for it is of course time that has been shattered in the shrine of this temple.

Such a device can be cobbled together from almost anything: a long pole, preferable of some imperishable material would work best, possibly with several items attached to the head of it: a half-wound pocket watch, a silver spoon that would tarnish black over time, a mirror, to observe themselves in, and understand the passage of time within the segments by watching the pace and direction of their movements (backward or forwards). A laser pointer, a candle, a glob of dripping honey, or a hunk of uncooked meat would all give information: so long as the items can be affected by the passage of time in some way.

The results from this experimentation on the objects may be quite wide and varied, but will follow the manifestations listed on the following page, in **Figure 2**.

## SEPULCHERS

*In each corner of the Shrine, on the front and back walls are small shelf-recesses: four in total. Within these stand a variety of decorated ceramic bowls, or jars. On closer examination, each one has a small hole in the bottom of it. Several can be examined and declared to have some sort of level markings on the insides.*

These bowls are Ancient Water Clocks. Again, a success at a simple knowledge check will prompt the recognition that these were purported to have been invented by a priest Amenemhat. They are used by placing the bowl gently into a body of water, and letting the water slowly fill it through the hole. As it reached the markings, that would indicate the passage of hours. Eventually the bowl would submerge entirely. Then it would need to be fished out, emptied and used again.

There are several of these bowls: not all are intact, and many are grimed and have suffered with age. However, there are enough for the Characters to perform several experiments with.

Set the number of bowls based on the number of players:

- For a high stakes game of roulette - 1 less bowl than there are Characters.
- For a fun, one night gaming session: two or three more bowls than the number of Characters.

**1 hour:** the bowl takes one hour to sink below the surface, and its effect occurs for that length of time. Once sunk, the effect ceases.

**2 hour:** as above, but for twice the duration. Once sunk, the effect ceases.

**3 hour:** as the 1 hour bowl, but for three times the duration. Once sunk, the effect ceases.

**The Wobbler:** This bowl has some piece of detritus in its base hole, which swells up, and blocks the hole, but not before some water has entered, and made the bowl unstable. It now bobs and wobbles around in the pool, sometimes taking on water, at others stabilizing, letting some water evaporate. This may continue for several days, or even weeks, as will the effects that it creates. At first, the fluctuations will be rapid, but will settle down to a dip or plunge every few hours, till eventually after several days it finally sinks below the water and its effect becomes complete. Once sunk, the effect ceases.

**The Cork:** This bowl seemed to have a clear base hole, but not so. The bowl simply bobs in the water, and never sinks. Its effect does not occur immediately, but is delayed till the blockage of the hole finally dissolves, and it fills. There is a 1 in 12 chance each day that it will suddenly begin to manifest, no matter where the Character is.

**The Tall Boy:** This bowl has quite high sides, and before it fills entirely, its base strikes the bottom of the pool. At this point, the effect ceases halfway through, without completing. The effect remains in place and becomes permanent.

**Party Bowl:** This large bowl is decorated around the edges with a series of simple human figures. The effect that is determined for this bowl is applied to all Characters who entered the temple together - no matter how far away they all are from each other, in time or space.

**FIGURE 1: THE BOWLS**

FIGURE 2: TIME EFFECTS

Segment	Test Manifestation	Result
1. False Dawn	Item vanishes.	Sends the PC back to the time before construction of the Temple.
2. Dawn	Item gets younger.	Regresses the PC to a 1 month old child.
3. Birdsong	No noticeable change.	The player sees a vision of the past.
4. Morning	A predecessor item appears.	Summons one of the PC immediate ancestors.
5. Rising	Item vanishes.	Turns back time within the temple to one year previously, taking all PCs inside with it.
6. Fore-noon	Item speeds up to 12 times normal pace.	Slows time around the PC, who experiences 1 hour over the course of five minutes.
7. Noon	Item and the arm they were on vanish.	Freezes all time for the PC, who can wander around, taking as many actions as they like, amidst their frozen companions, for as long as the effect lasts.
8. Post-noon	Item slows down to 1/12 normal pace.	Slows time for the PC. They see their fellows move at incredible pace around them. for every five minutes that they experience, one hour passes in the real world.
9. Lowering	No noticeable change.	The PC sees a vision of the future.
10. Sunset	An antecedent item is summoned beside the item inserted.	With a burst of light and a searing pain in their loins, the PC collapses. All other PCs are forced to look away, and when they look back they see a character very like their former companion. It's the first child of that PC, brought backward in time. The player rolls up a new PC, and must play them from that point on. Players should feel free to endow the PC with some knowledge of their parent's former companions, in the form of misconstrued stories their parent told them.
11. Dusk	Item ages to the end of its useful life.	Ages the character to a 90 year old.
12. Evening	Item vanishes.	Sends the character to the end of the world, and eventually all time.

- For a long term campaign episode, with repeated visits to the temple, perhaps twice the number of bowls as there are Characters (with a rival bunch of adventurers or an antagonist also using the time effects available to cause mayhem and complications for your heroes).

As each of the bowls is set into the water, the rate at which it fills, and sometimes the manner in which it does, dictate the extent of and the pattern of the effect that takes place. These are outlined in **Figure 1** (above).

When you populate the shelves with your bowls, make sure to include some straight timed ones, as well as some more charismatic water clocks, to mix up the effects.

The Characters can place these bowls into the time-shattered pool, and watch them sink. The result of this is to initiate the effect listed in **Figure 2** (below), for the Duration listed in Figure 1. The water is still, so a carefully placed bowl will not tend to wander from segment to segment.

Whichever Character has placed the bowl in the water, the effect determined is applied only to them, unless stated otherwise in the descriptions below.

**Note:** Rather than making this interaction with the pool predictable, and scientific (although many Players will

attempt to force you to be concrete with cause and effect, rather than interpretive), make it a thing of mystery.

Don't specify exactly which section of the pool is being interacted with exactly: instead roll a dice to figure out the results. If need be, tell the players that:

*The area is hard to keep a steady eye on: it hurts the mind to do so. It is inherently confusing, and seems to keep shifting before their eyes, so that one can never be sure from one moment to the next whether you are looking at the same section that you were a moment ago. Like the refractions through a broken piece of crystal, it is difficult to gauge where one starts, and where one ends. In fact, you are not even sure that all the shards are staying in the same places all the time.*

That should keep them from trying to control the magic too much, and allow you to have some fun and interpret the results to match your needs, and the drama of the situation.

### MYSTERIES, HINTS, AND RESOLUTIONS

The Temple was carved out of the hillside during the reign of Rameses II, under the direction of a charismatic and unusual religious leader. They were a visionary, with a greater understanding of every article of society, and especially of

the worship of the god of sun and time, and the influence he has over the world. They commissioned the construction, and guided every aspect of its founding, including the dedication of the pool within to the god Re, and the crafting of the Water Clock Bowls. Pushing further and further along their obsessive path, rituals were designed and performed, incantations and enchantments cast, and sacrifices made. At last, one fateful evening the High Priest attempted to summon Re himself, and was unlucky enough to be successful.

A god is not a mortal spirit, to be summoned and tamed, to be reasoned with, or even understood. They are the personification through human will of the wild forces of chaos, entropy, fusion, power, and creation. When summoned, the god Re manifested in the throned statue at the head of the temple, let out one piercing falcon scream, and shattered the very nature of space and time around the sacred moon-pool at its heart.

In doing so, the High Priest was evicted forward in time, to the day our adventurers entered the temple for the first time.

## THE CRUMBLING PERSON

This is of course the high priest of the Temple, thrown forward via the cry of Re. If at all possible, however, ensure that one of the Characters throughout the course of the session, lowers a bowl into the False Dawn shard of the pool. That character is sent back to the time 10 years before the Temple was built here, and faces a lifetime of toil. They will learn the language, use their future knowledge and skills to gain a respected place in the society of the valley, and rise to the position of High Priest of Re. They will commission the temple, and form the pool, and cause the summoning of Re, all in the desperate attempt to return to the preset they were lost from.

Ironically, it is their drive and desperation to return that causes the rift in time that allows them to be lost in the past in the first place. This knowledge thunders home to them, as they are hurled into the future, to the very moment when the party first broke down the doors of the Temple. The priest struggles forward, their body aging preternaturally with the sudden passage of thousands of years, moaning out an incoherent warning in what is now their native tongue: the language of the Ancient civilization that they were lost in for most of their life.

## HAPPY ENDING VERSION

If the players can contrive a way to use one of the bowls to dip out water from the Dawn segment of the pool, and pour it over the crumbled corpse of the High Priest, then their companion will be restored to life, and to the exact age they were when they first entered the Temple. They will retain all their memories of the decades long ordeal they have endured - but they speak fluent Egyptian now!

## THE PICTOGRAMS

This is of course, the story of the very expedition that they are on, represented in the wall art of the time of the Ancient's civilization. The High Priest character has commissioned the best artists of the time, and instructed them, but of course their representation of modern artifacts and contrivances are completely off beam or inadequate.

Throw in references that can be gleaned from them of the physical traits of the party members, of their clothing, or of their equipment - just don't make them too obvious at first.

## PILES OF REFUSE

These do not need to be used, but if the party is likely to come up with the chronometer idea, and there is an obvious piece of equipment that they would use (a metal tent-pole, and a pocket watch, candle or hourglass, being the most likely kind of candidates) then when the Characters investigate the piles of rubbish, have them discover the remnants of these items. Of course, the rest of the pile would be made up of furry mould, a large dark stain, and one or two long bones that on examination appear to be human....

If you can plant this hint before the party gets to the SHRINE, and there is then any way that you can engineer a nasty accident happen to whomever is holding the chronometer, that would obviously be blissful. Don't discount using an NPC for this role, although it obviously is devastatingly effective if you can kill a Player-Character with this foreshadowing technique.

## READABLE HIEROGLYPHS

There is one section of the wall that is unusual for a Temple of the Ancients, in that it is a dense section of hieroglyphs that seem to spell out a distinct story.

If one of the Characters spends long enough examining them, has the necessary language skills, and makes the appropriate checks, then you can have them determine the following:

- They are phonetic hieroglyphs of the early dynasties.
- The language is NOT that of the Ancients: it is like someone has used the script to write down a tale in another language.
- That language is of course the modern tongue of the adventurers. The High Priest has instructed this to be written out, and left on the wall as a message to his long future companions, should they discover and heed it.

A neat and immersive way to get the Players involved in this is to make them do the actual work of transliteration. Give them a key to the language, and then make them decipher it letter by letter. It doesn't actually take that long, so a really good way to enable it is to present them with a slip of paper with the below on it, and tell them to figure out their Egyptian Alphabet:

The line below is a pangram: a sentence containing all the letters of the Roman Script.

SPHINX OF BLACK QUARTZ

SPHIN X OF BL ACK QUARTZ

JUDGE MY VOW

J UDGE MY V OW

This is the text on the walls:

TWO SCORE YEARS I HAV E L ABOURED AT THIS TASK

I AM AN OL D MAN NOW AND HAV E BUT THIS TO ASK

SHOUL D MY F R I E N D S OF OL D NEV ER SEE ME AGAIN

REMEMBER AL WAYS THEIR PAST AND FUTURE F R I E N D

|I NAMI HIGH P R I E S T OF RE CAUSED THIS TO BE BUIL T AND

WRITTEN

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a one page dungeon based off  
Hansel & Gretel.*

# EATING

## AN ADVENTURE BASED ON HANSEL AND GRETTEL

By...?

### BACKGROUND:

This evil hag lured two stupid children into her WICKED COTTAGE with the sweet smell of sin smoke!

She put them in cages and fed them her WITCHY COOKING, to plump them up for her CANNIBAL LUSTS.

But they were WILY BRATS and they shoved her into her OWN EVIL OVEN.

But she had HELLA MAGIC and her half burning carcass scuttled into the chimney and MADE WITH THE CURSES.

The children fled into the woods, but in the days to come, the witches curses was revealed. No food but that cooked in that oven will sate their horrible hungers.

Now Hansel and Gretel have grown into horrible OGRE BABYS, Gretel capturing people in her SACK OF STUPEFYING and Hansel guiltily tending house and making dolls out of the hair of PEOPLE COOKED AND EATEN.

### INGREDIENTS:

Ogre stats for Hansel and Gretel, Gretel should have more hit points than Hansel. She has a sack infused with a Unconsciousing herb so anyone she successfully grabs and shoves in the sack must make a Con save each round or be asleeped. She has a necklace of 6 finger bones around her neck. When inserted into the bone hands holding the cages shut, these make the hands open the cage.

The Witch, aka the SMOKED HAG, uses the stats for a Ghast. But, instead of paralyzation claws once every 3 rounds, she can do a burning stare. The victim must make a Will save to avoid being paralyzed for a 1d4 rounds (then you get a another chance to make the save). On the 2nd round, the victim starts cooking, taking 1d6 fire damage per round until dying or making that Will save. The witch is immune to fire as well.

She lives up the chimney and will lurk there. Anyone looking up the chimney will see nothing, then smell cooked meat, then her eyes glow in the darkness and they are attacked with her gaze attack. Also if anyone tampers with the shrine in the basement or the treasure sack, she WILL KNOW and come'a scuttling down. She wouldn't really care if Hansel and Gretel are killed unless the prepared food is tipped out, then she will try and kill you.

The Treasure sack in the basement needs stats as well, a trapper or an executioner's hood would be ideal. It's soft black and fuzzy and warm and if anyone puts anything into it will lunge over there head and torso, wrapping tightly and suffocating them. Put whatever treasure is appropriate for you campaign in it.

There are UNDEAD CHICKENS on the roof. They attack with gaze attacks, which have the effects of (randomly chosen) *slow*, *confusion*, *sleep*, or *enfeeblement*. If attacked, they fly out of reach and come back later to harass the attacker. Hansel, Gretel, and the witch are instantly aware of what they know. Use the stats for a chicken for them, but like undead. They remain out of sight for anyone entering the hut, but attack with their gaze attacks anyone leaving.

The FOUL COTTAGE is made from packed mud and wicker. There is always delicious smells coming from it, and occasional wispy smoke from the chimney (via THE SMOKED HAG'S UNDEAD FLESH). There is big pot of "pork" soup in front of the oven.

Eating any of the soup or food here means you will be unable to digest any other food (barring a high level remove curse). You begin to crave the witch's cooking in the days to come. If you eat the SMOKED HAG in one sitting (can be shared between people) this breaks the curse too.

### WHERE ARE THE OGRE BABIES?

#### HANSEL

d12	Location
1-2	Asleep
3-5	Picking flowers, herbs etc out in the woods somewhere
6-8	Making hair dolls, absorbed in it , upstairs
9-10	preparing food, potions or preserves
11	Tidying up, changing the floor rushes or mucking out the prisoners with a rag on a stick
12	Taking a shit in the woods

## GRETEL

d12	Location
1	Asleep in the second story
2-7	Out hunting
8	Lolling about indolently
9	Rummaging in the larder, about to prepare food
10-11	Eating
12	Taking a shit nearby, outside

## HEY THIS CAGE, WHAT IS IN IT?

(Insert Macguffin NPCs here as needed)

d12	Contents
1	Goblin, kobold, or other small humanoid
2	Stray orphan or mostly unwanted peasant child
3	Child of someone who has stuff, like a noble or a dwarven Boozelord
4	A busting fat piggy!
5	Halfling Minstrel
6	Sheep in a Dress
7-12	Empty!

## LARDER

The larder is poorly organized with no indication of what's a potion, a poison, or a tasty jam.

Picking something at random results in... (also everything is really bizarrely flavored like a giant cannibal child has been morosely combining unlabeled ingredients at random)

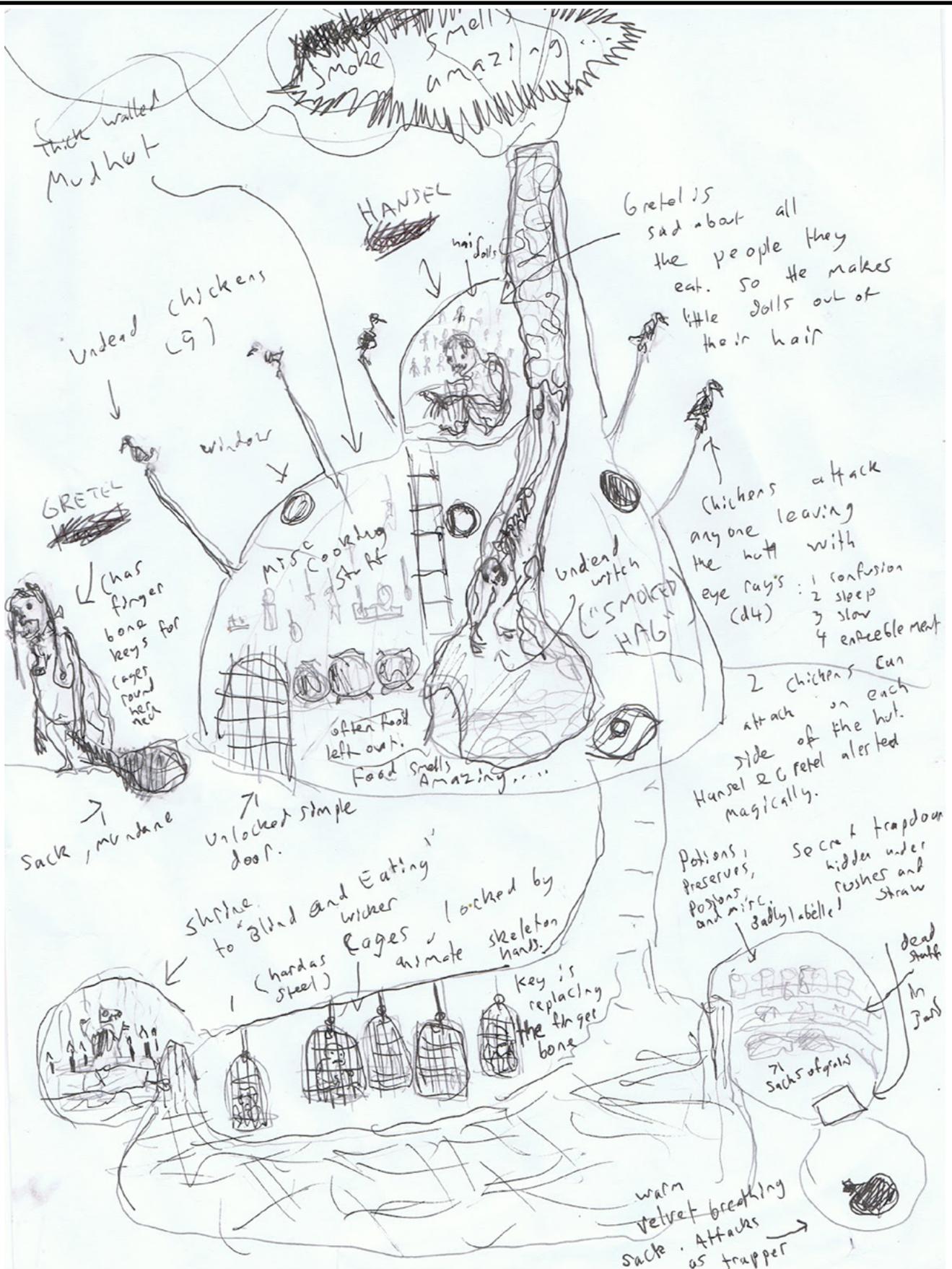
d12	Random Larder Item
1	Jam
2	Vinegar
3	Chutney
4	Abortive agent
5	Mild Poison
6	Poison that destroys a random sense
7	Potion of cure light wounds
8	Potion of fire breathing
9	Potion of Tongues
10	Soup stock
11	Stupefying agent (the stuff the sacks been treated with)
12	Homebrew booze plus roll again for its side effect

## DOES GRETEL HAVE SOMETHING IN HER SACK?

Roll a d8 and consult the table above.



Pardon me. Do you have any Grey Poupon?



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a dungeon or adventure for low-to-middle level characters that uses only monsters and characters that can be exactly represented by miniatures from the Reaper Bones Kickstarter. Anything from the Vampire level is fair game except the non-fantasy (Chronoscope) stuff and Sophie. I'm looking for something nice and fun that anyone who got in on the Kickstarter could drop into their campaign (so probably not too gonzo, but a bit is fine if you want), and the more miniatures used, within reason, the better.*

# REVENON

## AN ADVENTURE LOCATION FOR USE WITH REAPER MINIATURES

By the Secret DM

**Note:** This is intended as a starting point to encourage your creativity. To help make this adaptable as possible to the specific needs of you and your players, I've left out full stats and pre-defined encounters. Instead, I give you a map and room descriptions, and suggestions as to what kinds of encounters would work best in each environment, relying specifically on the minis that are available to people who backed the Reapers Miniature Kickstarter at the Vampire Level.

Revenon is a place where various religious sites converge, pressed together within an enclosed space and linked by a number of intersecting tunnels. The origins of this strange realm are left for you to decide; perhaps these disparate ideologies were "borrowed" from places in the real world, and brought here by some kind of "collector" entity. Perhaps it's a little deeper than that; maybe the tunnels represent madness and each "religion" a path to reason and enlightenment. Or maybe it's WHO CARES LETS KILL STUFF!!!

How Revenon fits into your campaign world is entirely up to you, but here are some suggestions:

1. **Extra-planar.** The easiest way to include Revenon is to make it a place that exists outside your normal campaign, accessible through some kind of magic. For example, I use a magical stairwell that never ends.
2. **Post TPK One-Shot.** If your players have just experienced a "total party kill", you can immediately follow that up with a visit to Revenon, treating this space as a sort of purgatory for their PCs, giving them one last chance to adventure.
3. **Just another dungeon.** Maybe this place really does exist in your campaign setting, because your world is just that awesome. Why are so many different religions all co-existing in a tiny dungeon space? Perhaps this is a safe haven, established by the heads of various religious organizations, to preserve each ideology in some fashion.

Why are the PCs here? Did they end up here by accident? Or were they sent here with a specific purpose? Perhaps to gather rare Mook Vine leaves (see **room #4**)?

### 1 THE ENTRY

Regardless of how your PCs reach Revenon or why, place your entry point (magical portal, trap door in ceiling, endless staircase, etc.) in **room #1**.

### 2 EGYPTIAN TEMPLE

A series of tunnels leads to a vast, golden-hued chamber full of pillars. And hieroglyphs. And mummies.

On the way there, use the vermin minis from the Reaper collection: beetle swarm, giant beetle, spider swarm, and either the giant spiders or scorpions (personally I'd go scorpion for its deadly poison attack and to mix things up a bit from beetle/spider appearances). Start subtle; describe the noise of "scuttling" in the walls, then unleash the beetles. Follow this with a small chamber with a sealed door; breaking the seal unleashes the spider swarms (deals 1d4 points of damage, save vs. paralysis) and exposes a passageway, the lair of either giant spiders or scorpions. After these encounters, the PCs can move on to the main room.

If you're a fan of campy horror films, now is a good time to build and then break the tension. Use a description that builds suspense; mention hieroglyphs that depict death, and describe a musty scent permeating the chamber, mixed with a hint of pine and saffron (scents used in the mummification process).

At the far end of the chamber are several sarcophagi, their lids ajar. As the players creep forward, something pops out from behind one of the pillars...

Put out the cat familiar mini. Allow players a sigh of relief, or their standard, overly-paranoid 'the cat is a mimic/illusion and should be stabbed to death' reaction, whichever is more likely.

Then unleash the actual encounter.

**(Note:** Since there are no "priest" type minis, we'll focus instead on the undead that reside here. Depending on the level of the PCs, they may be able to go toe to toe with a mummy (or mummies, as the case may be) or they might

have to retreat; in that case, the mummy(ies) will not follow.)

Inside the main chamber, place a batch of skeletons (I'd say the four with shields) and, depending on what level your players are, toss in a mummy (or four; ). You can set their HD anywhere from 3 on up, but even for a low-level party, keep the mummy's powers the same (i.e. still capable of inflicting "mummy rot").

As for treasure, this is probably the best place in the dungeon for them to acquire anything gold or jewel related; other areas may yield magical items, but the concentration of valuables within the Egyptian temple are befitting of a pharaoh.

### **3 FIRE ELEMENTAL WORSHIPPING CAULDRON**

Drawing closer to this circular room, the tunnels fill with noticeable heat, along with the smells of charcoal and smoke. At the room's center is a massive black cauldron, surrounded by eight smaller cauldrons. There are no noticeable fires underneath any of the cauldrons, although their bottoms glow with a dark orange hue and they are extremely hot to the touch (2d4+1 points of damage). Beyond this, they are completely empty.

Allow the players some time to explore this room, increasing their physical discomfort the longer they stay.

The large cauldron in the middle is engraved with the following saying:

"The Path is Illuminated with a Gift of That Which Burns"

If the players toss anything combustible into the large cauldron, there is a burst of heat and light as the large Fire Elemental appears, writhing out of the cauldron and eager to destroy anyone that disrupted it.

In addition, the two lesser fire elementals also appear, each in a random small cauldron. They are like standard fire elementals, only they have the ability to teleport from one cauldron to another.

If the players are able to defeat the elementals and apply some kind of magical means to cool off the cauldrons, they can search the interiors of the cauldrons to collect random treasure. Feel free to go nuts with as much mundane or exotic stuff as you feel like giving out; assume that, whatever fire elemental worshipping cultists used this temple, they probably tossed human (or humanoid) sacrifices into the cauldrons. Possibly with their possessions.

### **4 ORC BONE GARDEN**

Crudely carved steps twist and curve deep into the bowels of this cavernous realm. The air is cool, and filled with the sound of chanting. Those with a keen ear can make out some orcish words about "death" and "battle", but the total chant is either too difficult to discern clearly or includes foreign words or phrases that the party has never heard before.

The narrow, twisting passages then open up into a vast,

natural cave, filled with scattered piles of various sized skulls. There are also several (at least 7) orcs here, who although are sitting with individual skull mounds, chant in unison, while each offers some kind of crude, stone object to the pile before them.

Rarely seen in the known world, orc bone gardens serve as both burial grounds and worshipping centers for the more religious-minded clans. Scattered around the cave are piles of collected skulls, both orc and non-orc alike. Each pile varies in size, and represents one specific battle an orc clan fought in. Orcs collect the skulls of their clan members and the enemies they faced in battle, and these mounds honor the dead and tell their story as well.

Growing through the cracks and crevices and openings of each skull is a rarely seen plant known as Mook Vine; this vine twists and wraps through each skull, binding them together into one solid, impenetrable lump of bone. Every now and then, the vines move and tighten, causing the piles of skulls to sway and chatter.

Mook vine has a bitter taste, but if harvested properly, it can be used in the creation of potions of regeneration.

The bone piles have another unique property as well; if they are disturbed in any way, they all begin to chatter in unison. The cacophony of sound is disturbing to listen to, inflicting a -2 penalty to hit on all attacks made by non-orc characters.

The exact number of orcs appearing depends on several factors, mainly how many orcs are in the Reaper Miniature Collection. I count 7 orc or orc-like creatures in the Vampire Level, but I could be mistaken, because some of the images aren't clear.

That being said, it's wholly possible you picked up the \$25 "Orcpocalypse" option, which adds an additional 20 orc minis to the collection.

Regardless, beef up (or weaken) these orcs as needed to accommodate the level of your players. You could even make all the orcs present into warrior-shamans, granting them a set of spells each to use in battle.

What are the crude stone objects the orcs were offering? Probably nothing, but feel free to assign them some mystical property.

### **5 DEMONIC SUMMONING VAULT**

A massive, square chamber built from demonic blood stone, the Summoning Vault features diabolical paintings of horrific and perverted scenes on every surface; in addition, there are infernal runes carved into the floor, walls and ceiling. The ceiling itself is very high up, and held in place by several pillars built from an evil, black stone that is so black in color, its glossy surface reveals reflections that expose the darkness inside any onlooker's own heart.

Seeing this imagery calls for a save vs. paralysis, or else the

on-looker is held in place as the madness-inducing imagery fills their mind with dread thoughts of what evil they themselves are capable of. Blocking someone's line of sight to the pillar will free them from this trance-like state.

Attacking the pillars themselves is possible, but runs the risk of bringing the ceiling collapsing down.

There are two pentagrams drawn in white chalk on the floor, and drawn with apparent disregard for whatever runes or paintings are featured on those sections of the floor.

This area offers a few possibilities for building encounters. Here are some suggestions, depending on which minis you have, if any, from the add-ons to the Vampire reward level:

**Cultists:** First and foremost, before any actual demons show up, you need cultists. While the Reaper minis don't have any specific 'cultists', there are a few minis that work great for this purpose. Any minis with hoods should work; under the "+30 New Bones" grouping alone, I see 5 potential 'hooded cultists', plus the wizard type with a scroll and the wide brim. I wouldn't use him though, because I'd reserve that role for the Bearded Cultist from the Dark Heroes group, whose look features chains, and a long scroll unraveled but whose top is wrapped around a bone.

**Necromancers and Dark Heroes:** Any of the minis featured in the Reaper Minis categories titled "Necromancers" or "Dark Heroes" would work for encounters transpiring in this vault. Just assign appropriate Hit Dice, attack powers, and abilities to match the capabilities of your player's characters.

For example, the two evil-looking, fully-armored knights in the "Dark Heroes" category? I'd make them at least 7 HD, wearing ill-metal armor that gives them an appropriately difficult to hit AC and causes sickness on each miss against the dark hero (save vs. poison to avoid, -1 to attacks for the remainder of combat, non-cumulative). They also wield *horrorswords* that scream as they cut through the air, just for the added effect of having these knights be the kind of things nightmares are made of.

That may or may not work for whatever level your PCs are; I wouldn't use those minis to represent warriors with HD less than 5, because then their full body armor doesn't fit with their power level. Instead, if you're running this for say a group of players with 2nd to 4th level characters, skip the armored guys and focus on just cultists.

If the PCs are between 5th and 8th level, have the lead cultist guy begin a summoning ritual while the lesser cultists and warriors keep the PCs from interrupting. If they don't get through and stop the summoning, a portal opens up and something comes through.

If the PCs are 9th level or higher, you might have that something already in the chamber...maybe invisible or hiding on the ceiling or something.

Alternatively, you could have the room empty of any living

souls, with just the bodies of dead cultists strewn about and blood smeared everywhere. Then, as the players cross into the room, one or more demons appear and attack the party.

What kind of demon or demons? Let's see what the options are in the Vampire Level:

In addition to the 4 minis in the "Bedevilled" grouping, there are two other "winged demon" models in the collection, and the Owlbear could be used as well.

It's also possible you opted for the "Demons" add-on, which gives you two large demon minis. There's also the "Mythos Monsters", the frost wyrm, the "Deep Dwellers", and big ol' C'thulhu himself.

## 6 MONOTHEISTIC WORSHIPPING HALL

A long rectangular room with a very simple decor; A couple of candle stands along the walls, two rows of benches, and a relatively unassuming altar built from wood. There are several large, stained-glass windows, depicting scenes of a holy knight dedicated to serving their god.

Which God this church is built in honor of is entirely up to you, so be sure to add in that detail.

Of course, no light comes in through the windows, as they are pressed up against rock. The same is true of the large double doors at the far end of the chamber, which open up to reveal a stone wall.

Start this encounter with up to 5 townsfolk minis placed in the pews. These people appear to be waiting for a sermon to begin, though there is no priest. They hang their heads in sadness, and seem at first to ignore the PCs.

If the PCs press them with any kinds of questions, they'll mutter something about how cold it is here; they don't know how they got here, and have no desire to leave the church and explore their surroundings; instead they wait for the priest to arrive so that the daily sermon can begin.

If they are asked how long they've been waiting, they'll respond that they just arrived at church a little while ago.

In fact, they've been here for more than a few centuries; now they are ghosts, unbeknownst to themselves, and will eternally wait for the sermon to begin.

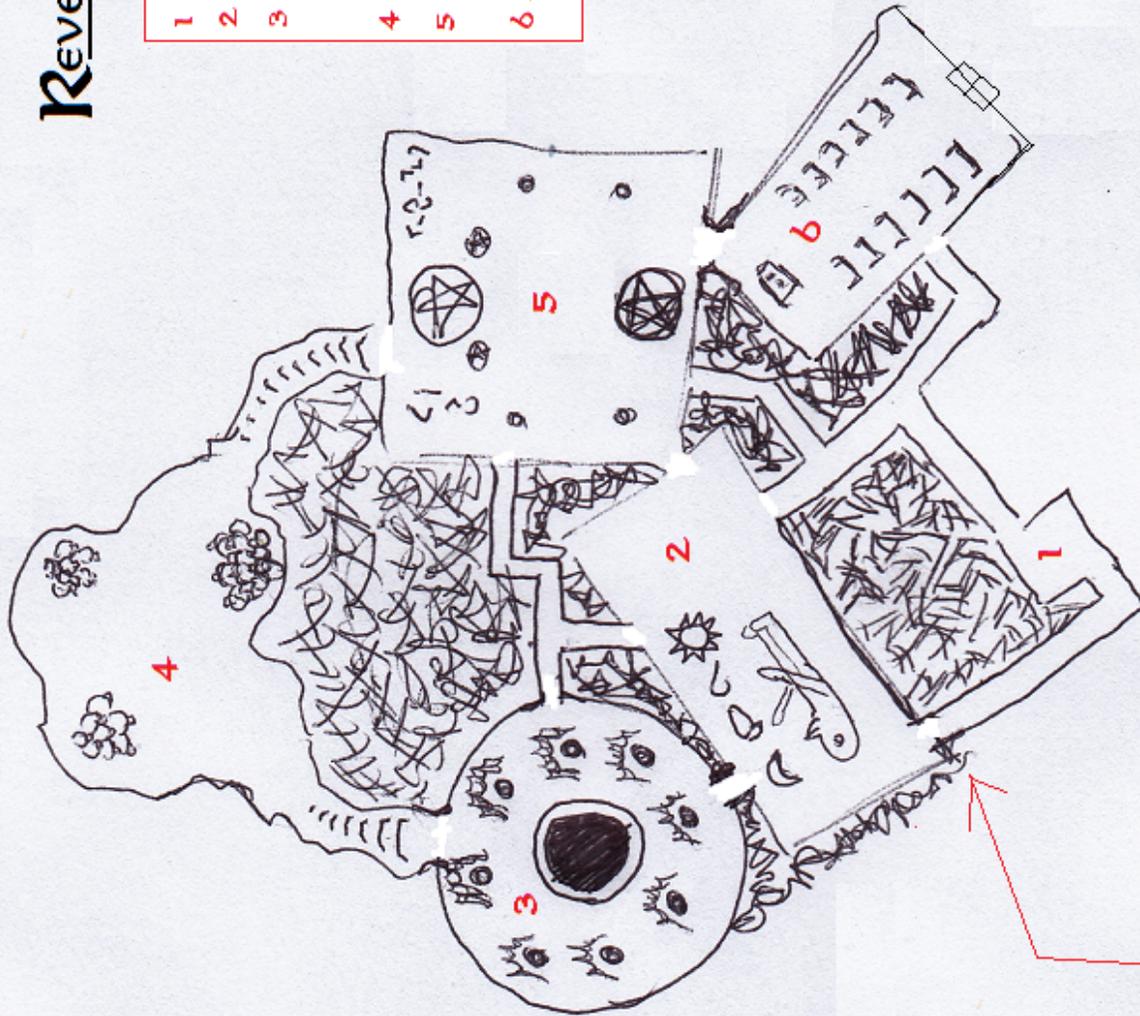
If the players can figure out a way to make the townsfolk understand how much time has passed and that they are in fact ghosts, they could free the townsfolk of their burden and allow their spirits to depart.

Doing so is the equivalent of completing a combat encounter of moderate difficulty.

If instead the players attack or provoke the spirits in some fashion, they will reveal their true form; swap out the townsfolk for the set of green "Haunts" minis and have at it with the death and mayhem.

**REVENON**

- 1 **ENTRY**
- 2 **EGYPTION TEMPLE**
- 3 **FIRE ELEMENTAL**  
WORSHIPPING  
CAULDRON
- 4 **ORC BONE GARDEN**
- 5 **DEMONIC SUMMONING**  
VAULT
- 6 **MONOTHEISTIC**  
WORSHIPPING HALL



Add in a couple of small rooms here (see description for area #2).  
Also, if possible, add in some more tunnels and passageways between each area.

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a heist/diplomatic adventure  
that takes place at a bizarre festival or holiday  
celebration, Or relevant tables to help me build  
that adventure (die-drop? multi-column?).*

# ROBBING THE RELIQUARY

## A TABLE-GENERATED ADVENTURE OUTLINE

By Zzarchov

To use, roll a d8, d6, and d4. Note the results of each die, what the total number is, and whether that is an odd or even number. You should never need to roll dice more than that single throw. There is a chance for some real cash, because some oddball cult in this village is celebrating the:

d8	The What:
1	<b>Feast of</b> - There are 4 great halls and many market stalls providing free food and (if applicable) drink! Each hall is visited by the item in question.
2	<b>Fast of</b> - No food or drink, the item will be placed on a tall tower or spire overlooking the town for the duration of the fast.
3	<b>Festival of</b> - Its a party, no liquor laws, games and contests, the item is a trophy to the winner of the games (who gets to hang around with it for a day before returning it)
4	<b>Dance for</b> - Its a masquerade with the object on display in a large enclosed building with minimal easy to extinguish lighting, rafters and a few exits.
5	<b>Running for</b> - There is a mass stampede as angry livestock are released and devotees run with the item ahead of the herd. Weird eh?
6	<b>Parade to honor</b> - There will be floats, and onlookers, and it will turn down narrow streets and winding alleys as it circuits the town.
7	<b>Sacrifice to the glory of</b> - Drownings, hangings, wicker man burnings, someone dies in a manner dictated by the deity or patron. The item in question is at the sacrifice.
8	<b>Orgy in the name of</b> - Yep, just what it sounds like. Probably in a large opiate smoke filled building, the item is passed around the seething mass of flesh to touch for luck.

d6	Of Who?
1	<b>Norn the all consuming</b> - An ornate golden bowl. Anything eaten from it is edible.
2	<b>St. Aldritch the muted</b> - A silver holy symbol stained with blood of St. Aldritch that counts as a +(1d4) item.
3	<b>Krampus</b> - A leather sack full of donations and coins (Total# x 1000 gold coins in value).
4	<b>Azael'bub the maggot king</b> - A jewel encrusted gold idol worth 10,000 gold.
5	<b>The Sun!</b> - A solid gold dagger. It counts as +(1d4-1) item (if 0 its not magical, just gold).
6	<b>Hyrda the wrathful</b> - A carved stone amulet with gold inlay. +1d8 to AC if worn on odd; -1d8 to AC on even.

d4	Which is Dangerous because?
1	Outsiders are forbidden. (The angry mob has hundreds of devout townsfolk.)
2	Zealous Pilgrims (Total# of armed level 1 warriors guard the item at all times.)
3	A summoned being. (Related to the deity, 5 hit dice with two special powers.)
4	A wee little curse. (If you don't have a random curse generator, the first non-follower to touch the island suffers a permanent curse as if from a cleric, but really, get a random curse generator or make something cool.)

## SPECIAL RESULTS

Consult the appropriate table below when your die roll produces an unusual combination.

### If You Rolled Triples (Use in addition to other results)

Trip #	Result
1's	Well, that isn't entirely true, there are several outsiders present. Most with an apple in their mouth.
2's	Anyone who makes a sound during the full day ritual is to be killed immediately, no matter what they are doing.
3's	Krampus himself is here, and he can detect naughty, such as trying to rip off his festival. Prepare for sack beating.
4's	Once the idol is unleashed, anyone who stops dancing until it is placed back in its box will melt into maggots. The person to put the maggot back in its box also melts.

### If You Rolled Doubles (Use in addition to other results)

Dub #	Result
5's	That dagger? The thing is, it's kind of in use, its recipients soon won't have the heart to stop this event.
6's	The parade marches out into the surf where the float carrying the amulet is burned. How do they get it back?

### If You Rolled A Run (Use in addition to other results)

Run Sequence	Result
1-2-3	The high priest is a level 5 cleric as well.
2-3-4	A competing party is also out to steal the same thing
3-4-5	The local ruler is planning a military raid on this cult and its activities mid-ceremony
4-5-6	After entering the village, it becomes obvious that everyone here is undead.

### Max Result (Use in addition to other results)

Rolling 4-6-8	Result
18	It is time to take a fishwife or fish husband and publicly consummate. Doing so puts you under the mental control of your new "spouse."

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a series of 1d24 wilderness encounters. Monsters are fine, but I'd rather not see stereotypical monsters unless they are doing something more interesting than seeking for prey. Kobold traders seeking to trade their wares for metals, etc.*

# AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS!!

By Duncan Young

When you roll for a random wilderness encounter, there is a 10% chance of it being 'unusual'. Roll 1d24 and consult the large list below.

Various options for variations and interpretations of each encounter are included - use as much or as little as you need.

Good luck! Where a random humanoid or player/civilized race is required, use the two tables immediately below for inspiration, adjusting as appropriate for your game.

d10 roll	Humanoid
1	Goblin
2	Kobold
3	Hobgoblin
4	Orc
5	Gnoll
6	Bugbear
7	Ogre
8	Troglodyte
9	Lizardfolk
10	Centaur

d6 roll	Civilized Race
1	Human
2	Elf
3	Dwarf
4	Halfling
5	Gnome
6	Human

## ENCOUNTER #1:

### Adventurer Slayer - And Proud of It!

A large tree is visible atop a hill near a road. A green dragon stands rampant next to the tree admiring its handiwork - the clawed and burnt corpses of band of adventurers strung up by nooses in its branches. The bodies are those of a female elven ranger, a male cleric, a male barbarian warrior, a female warrior and a red-robed male wizard. The adventurers' possessions are grouped in a small crate near the base of the

tree. A nervous artist, with easel and palette, is attempting to paint a portrait of the dragon next to its prize.

Roll a reaction check appropriate for your system

- **If positive**, the dragon will proudly and jovially, with much hyperbole, boast of his conquests, and how he fought off the vicious adventurers that attack it and acquired several valuable trinkets for its hoard. A polite audience may be rewarded with an item from the adventurers' former possessions.
- **If indifferent**, the dragon will be mildly irritated by the intrusion and ask to be left alone, or even demand a suitable offering by way of apology.
- **If negative**, the dragon will be determined to add more adventurers to its collection, unless it can be offered a valuable bribe.
- **If the dragon is slain**, the artist will be out of pocket for his commission, and may take this up with the PCs, and indeed may become a persistent pest as unflattering caricatures of the PCs appear in local cities.

## ENCOUNTER #2:

### Undead Womb

There is a rustling in the undergrowth, and a large putrescent muscular sac flops out in front of the PCs. This is the undead womb of a creature that has been slain and eviscerated by a wight, released from its host with a sentience and hunger of its own. Roll twice on the regular wilderness encounter table for the current terrain.

- The first random encounter result is the source creature to which the womb once belonged. This will be bloated and stretched beyond its normal size.
- There is a 50% chance that the womb is occupied; if so there is a 25% chance it is occupied by an undead fetal form of the host creature (see below), and a 75% chance it is occupied by another random creature as determined by the second roll on the random encounter table.
- The womb attacks as a large undead of equivalent HD to the original creature. An empty womb will attempt to engulf any target it hits. Once it has captured a target, the womb will flee and hide to gestate the victim over 1d4 days to be 'reborn' as a wight. Full wombs can release

- their contents to aid them in battle, or aid their escape. Partially gestated creatures that are released will have been drained of 1d4 levels (if this takes the victim below 0 levels, they are released as a wight), and be under the control of the womb until the womb is slain.

### ENCOUNTER #3:

#### Water Seller

A trader appears in the distance, alone and carrying on his back an oversized barrel that would appear far too heavy for one man to lift, yet he strides towards the party with ease. Various trinkets and empty vials jingle at his belt, as does a nozzle connected to the barrel at his back by a flexible hose. He greets the party cheerily, and calls out "Care to buy any water? This stuff is the best - pure as can be, and safer than any of that magically purified nonsense!"

- The seller will provide a pint of water for 3 silver pieces, and has a seemingly unlimited supply. The water is pure, clean and refreshing, and will recover fatigue.
- As he pours it from the nozzle he will mutter to himself "C'mon Wesley, just a drop!, A little more! That's right! Good lad!" If questioned, he denies speaking, and doesn't realize he was.
- **Option 1:** The barrel is a weightless magical item that can capture and contain a water elemental. If broken, or the nozzle is opened fully, the elemental is released and will attack all in range. An empty barrel can capture any water spirit by turning the nozzle to reverse.
- **Option 2:** The barrel is a weightless magical item that can capture and contain young children, and collect and desalinate their tears. If broken, 1d4 children are released, and will be from randomly determined races (one of them will be a young boy called Wesley). The barrel can contain up to 4 small young creatures, which are captured by reversing the nozzle.

### ENCOUNTER #4:

#### Loquacious Locations

A creature of a random civilized race stands in the middle of the wilderness, looking puzzled and lost. Their clothing and equipment is exotic and from a distant faraway (randomly chosen) culture. They will beckon the PCs towards them to engage them in conversation and try to make themselves understood if the languages are very different.

- Take a deep breath, and surreptitiously check your watch or start a timer...
- The traveller will proceed to explain in an excited voice, talking nineteen-to-the-dozen, that he is a visitor from his distant homeland and has no idea where he is and could the PCs help him uncover where he is because he is ever so desperate to return home which is a wonderful place and the PCs should really visit if they

have the chance as he would be glad to entertain them and introduce them to his family, and did they know his sister is betrothed to the prince of his country and oh the wedding really will be fabulous, so... continue for as long as you can until you run out of words, or are interrupted by one of the players *in character*.

- Check your watch and/or stop the timer. The traveller has been cursed to travel randomly whenever he talks, and when the PCs next pay attention to their surroundings rather than him, they will find that they have changed. Check how many seconds you were able to speak for before being interrupted - count each second over 60 as '10' and each over 120 for 133 seconds the result would be 1930 (movement factor).
- **Option 1: Travel in Space** - Roll a d8 or scatter die to determine direction; the PCs and the traveller have been translocated a number of miles determined by the movement factor above in that corresponding direction. This may mean randomly generating new areas of your world map. If the destination indicates the centre of an ocean, the PCs will find themselves on a small uncharted island.
- **Option 2: Travel in Time** - if you're brave enough and the game can take it, the movement factor determined above relates to the number of days/years the PCs travel forward (1-3) or backwards (4-6) in time. Good luck!

### ENCOUNTER #5:

#### Limb Garden

Up ahead, several limbs belonging to various different creatures are visible sticking up from the ground. The limbs are twisted and reach to the sky, but display no signs of decay or of having been eaten by local wildlife. If examined, each limb will have a pulse and bleed if cut, reacting to touch and pain as normal. However, no body is attached if the limbs are dug up; they have all been severed cleanly above the shoulder or knee joint.

- This site could just be a curiosity for the PCs to happen upon, and provide no further encounters.
- Alternatively, if you want to have something develop from this, perhaps the location is close to a portal or planar node to the Positive Energy Plane and any dead body or body part left here is preserved indefinitely. PCs carrying open wounds will notice them close after 1d4 minutes in the area.
- **Option 1: The Larder** - roll on the standard wilderness encounter table; the resulting creature is using this strange effect to store food for later eating, and will happen upon any PCs that stay here after 2d6 minutes.

## AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

- **Option 2: Emergency Ice Box** - the preservative effect is used by a local army, mercenary company or militia to keep limbs lost in battle for later reattachment by clerics or battlefield surgeons. Non-humanoid limbs are kept for food or trophies. After entering the site for 2d6 minutes, representatives of this force will arrive to confront the PCs.

### ENCOUNTER #6:

#### Sinkhole!

A sinkhole 2d6 x 10 ft in diameter, 3d6 x 10 ft deep, is visible up ahead in the terrain, or alternatively forms beneath the PCs feet. The sinkhole might be enough of an encounter in itself, an excuse to throw in a dungeon or spelunking adventure, or use one of the options below.

- **Option 1: Burrowing creature** - roll on the standard wilderness encounter table; the sinkhole is caused by a burrowing variant of the resulting creature. Burrowing variants can move through loose earth at a third their normal speed, and claw attacks do an additional die of damage.
- **Option 2: Mining** - a random humanoid tribe is mining the area, and have caused the sinkhole. The PCs fall in on their operations, and have to talk or fight their way out.
- **Option 3: Treasure from the sky** - a glowing object (roll on random treasure table, ignoring potions) is visible in the centre of the sinkhole, at ground level. How it got there, and how the PCs might recover it, is up to you.
- **Option 4: Circular cult** - the sinkhole is caused by a group of random humanoid cultists that link hands in a circle in a ritual to magically create the hole in the earth. To determine the number of cultists present, take the diameter determined above, multiply by 3 and divide by 5 e.g. 80 ft diameter corresponds to 48 cultists. The cultists will try and encircle the PCs and conjure a sinkhole to capture them.

### ENCOUNTER #7:

#### Bing the Hobbit

A halfling in a disheveled tuxedo, bow tie hanging loose about his neck, lies groaning on the ground. A half empty bottle of liquor is clutched in his hand. He has little memory of who he is or how he got there, but is pleasant and amiable. He remembers being a famous crooner, and is keen to get back to civilization.

- With a successful reaction check appropriate for your system, he will agree to follow the PCs, and act as a henchman. His friendly nature grants a bonus to any reaction checks with further NPCs the PCs meet, although his propensity for humming and singing to himself will impose a penalty to any stealthy actions.

- **Option 1:** Bing is wanted by a group of mercenaries for gambling debts that he accrued in a local city. The PCs will encounter these thugs in 1d6 days.
- **Option 2:** Bing is being hunted by a wealthy noble who is the angry father or jealous fiancé of a past romantic liaison. Men hired to find Bing will find the PCs in 1d6 days.
- **Option 3:** Bing is or was due to perform at a local important event (coronation, ambassadorial visit, etc) and skipped town. Those desperate for his return or to punish him for the embarrassment will find the PCs in 1d6 days.

### ENCOUNTER #8:

#### Invisible Wall

An invisible wall, 1d6 x 5 ft long and 1 ft high, crosses the PCs path. There is a 50% chance an unaware PC trips over the wall. The wall is made from invisible bricks of (roll 1d6) **1:** Clay, **2:** Granite, **3:** Iron, **4:** Limestone, **5:** Wood, **6:** Precious metal. This may be enough of an encounter in itself, or can be embellished by the following.

- **Option 1:** Fey builders have left the bricks here for some other construction they are planning, and will be upset at any damage or theft wrought by the PCs.
- **Option 2:** Tiny sprites and pixies wait either side of the wall with raised spears to attack any that fall over their trap. PCs that are tripped by the wall must also save against a magical poison atop the spears that will send them into a deep slumber.

### ENCOUNTER #9:

#### Haunted Gallows

At a crossroads, or overgrown in the ruins of a settlement, stands a gallows, its aged wooden frame bloated with damp. The spirits of the criminals it once saw to their deaths have instilled their unearthly venom into the frame, and given it a malevolent sentience of its own. The gallows will remain stationary to catch the PCs unaware when they get close.

- The gallows attacks as an animated object or golem, but due to its possession by undead spirits is subject to clerical magic and abilities. The multiple spirits in control mean that it can only be turned if subjected to 2d4 successful turning attempts (equivalent to a spectre).
- The gallows has several options to attack, including bludgeoning or trampling its foes. On a critical hit, the target PC is caught in one of its 4 nooses, and will be drained one level per round whilst held. As a ranged attack, the nooses can be detached and sent off to ensnare a target at a distance.
- **Option 1:** The possessing spirits are of evil villainous criminals who will possess the bodies of any PCs it slays.

## AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

- The only mark of this possession is a red welt around the neck.
- **Option 2:** The possessing spirits are of those unjustly killed by a local tyrant, and the only way to truly put the spirits to rest will be to exact justice or revenge upon the evil ruler.

### ENCOUNTER #10:

#### Corpse Carrion

The putrefying bloated corpse of a (roll 1d4) 1: purple worm, 2: kraken, 3: diplodocus, 4: roc lies in an undignified heap.

A tribe of random humanoids dances around the corpse, seemingly celebrating their victory in slaying the giant beast. On seeing the PCs, the tribe will be emboldened by their recent display of prowess, and will stand tall in the face of any attempts to threaten them. Roll a reaction check to see how the humanoids react. Regardless of whether combat or dialogue ensues, after 1d4 minutes, a swarm of vermin and carrion will descend upon the area, lured by the decay. This swarm will consist of 5d10 beetles, rats, vultures etc, with a 10% chance of also including a larger predator (use the standard wilderness encounter table).

### ENCOUNTER #11:

#### Mimic Slaver

A wagon pulled by two mangy ponies appears in the distance. The wagon carries a large cage, in which 1d4 slaves of random races are visible, held in a stupor and unresponsive to their surroundings. The slave master sits atop one of the ponies, nudging it forward with his knees, and does not respond to any questions.

- The wagon, ponies and slaver are in fact all parts of the same creature - and advanced form of mimic (+4 HD) that can adopt the shape of a slaver wagon. This will only be apparent on close inspection (the metal looks dull, the slaver is joined to his saddle and pony, etc).
- A PC that attacks the pony, slaver or wagon in melee risks being stuck fast, as with a normal mimic. A successful appropriate check allows the mimic to deposit any adhered creatures into the 'cage' in its rear, where they must save vs. poison each round or fall into an unresponsive stupor. Every 1d4 rounds they will also take 1d4 points of damage as they are slowly digested.
- On death, the mimic falls apart and releases any captured slaves/PCs. Freed slaves will be very grateful, but need help returning to civilization.

### ENCOUNTER #12:

#### Visions of Undeath

A 10 ft square patch of wilderness has a strange effect on any who pass through it - whilst in the area, they appear as though they are skeleton or zombie versions of themselves. There is a 20% chance if this encounter is rolled of there

being another creature within this area when the PCs arrive. Roll on the standard wilderness encounter chart to determine the type of creature. If there is no such creature, there is a 33% chance per PC that one of them happens to pass through the area as they travel.

- **Option 1:** the effect is illusionary and only visual. Why a mage created this effect is up to you.
- **Option 2:** the effect is real, and whilst in the area any living creature actually becomes undead. Their sentience is unaffected. This could be due to proximity to a planar node or gate to an entropic plane.

### ENCOUNTER #13:

#### One-armed Bandit

Stood in the middle of the wilderness is a metallic golem with only one arm, raised as though in a salute. There are few other features on the golem, save for a closed panel on its chest, and a small slot for a mouth. There are no markings of ownership on the golem, and it appears to have been stood here for a long time.

- The golem is a form of fruit machine. When a gold piece is placed in the mouth, the chest panel opens to reveal three tumblers covered in various arcane symbols. If the arm is pulled down, the tumblers spin for a few moments, before drawing to a halt, lining the symbols up horizontally across its chest.
- Roll 3d10 and read the results from the dice as they fall from left to right. This represents the symbols on the tumblers. If the numbers read from left to right run up or down in numerical order (i.e. 3, 4, 5 or 8, 7, 6 etc), the golem will reward the PC with 1,000gp. There is a 10% chance of an internal misfire when ejecting the reward from its mouth, causing the coins to fly out at great speed, doing 5d6 damage to all in front of the golem.
- If the three numbers rolled above all match, consult the following table to determine the reward.
  - All 1's:** A large cherry appears in the PC's hand, and they will instinctively know that if thrown, the cherry will explode as a 5d6 fireball.
  - All 2's:** A large lemon appears in the PC's hand, and they will instinctively know that juicing the lemon will cause the mouths of all other than the PC to pucker and water uncontrollably for 2d6 rounds.
  - All 3's:** The golem will intone "Hold your plums" and kick the PC in the groin for 1d6 damage, before vanishing.
  - All 4's:** The image of a glowing bell will appear above the PC's head, and persist for 1 week. If the PC is ever subject to surprise, ambush, or traps, the bell will ring to give warning.
  - All 5's:** A large watermelon appears in the PC's

## AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

hands and they will instinctively know that smashing the melon with a hammer will cause all watching other than the PC to laugh uncontrollably for 2d6 rounds.

**f. All 6's:** A large pear appears in the PC's hands and they will instinctively know that eating the pair will conjure a duplicate of themselves which will follow instructions for 2d6 rounds before disappearing.

**g. All 7's:** The PC has the ability to immediately swap any two of his characteristics. The decision must be made immediately, or the chance is lost.

**h. All 8's:** The PC gains the ability to stop time for all but himself for 2d6 rounds. This ability can only be used one, but can be activated at any time.

**i. All 9's:** The PC becomes paranoid about gambling and taking risks, and will err on the side of caution where possible. Whenever the PC attempts something risky and out of the ordinary, they must roll for the result twice and take the worse outcome. This curse can be dispelled.

**j. All 0's:** JACKPOT! The golem dispenses 10,000 gp., As above, for each 1,000 gp dispensed, there is a 10% chance of the misfire occurring. The golem will collapse in on itself and vanish after this result.

- Roll for a random encounter for every second go the PCs have whilst playing with the one-armed bandit.

### ENCOUNTER #14:

#### Stone-to-Flesh

The PCs notice an unpleasant smell in the air, and find small lumps of flesh, scattered over the terrain and slowly rotting amidst a swarm of maggots and flies. Small vermin and scavengers are also visible but scatter at the PCs approach. Travelling further, some larger lumps of flesh become visible.

- This effect is caused by a variant strain of (roll 1d3) 1: basilisk, 2: gorgon, or 3: medusa that rather than turning flesh to stone, turns any stone to flesh. As well as natural stone, this includes gemstones. All other abilities are as described.
- Depending on the terrain, this might make travel quite difficult for the PCs. On rocky ground that is transformed, movement is halved with a risk of falling prone, and on pebbly or cobbled ground movement rate is quartered. The chance of further random encounters in flesh-strewn terrain is increased significantly depending on the amount of transformed stone.

### ENCOUNTER #15:

#### Word Thief

A neatly dressed traveller of random race greets the PCs. As he speaks, be sure never to use the same word twice in his dialogue - unless a PC has since used that word. The traveller will try and get the PCs to speak with him for as long as

possible, especially those that speak new languages, and if any are spell-casters will encourage or provoke them to cast spells (through subterfuge if necessary).

- The traveller has the supernatural ability to steal words from PCs vocabulary. Whenever a PC talks in character, any time that attempt to use the same word for a second time in dialogue with the traveller, they must make a Save vs. Spells to retain the use of that word. Do not tell the player immediately what the effect is - see if they can work out what triggers the saving throw. This might work well with a buzzer or bleep sound effect from your phone - so that any words that are stolen from their vocabulary can be bleeped out by the DM.
- Spells cast in earshot of the traveller have a 50% chance of success and, whether successful or not, can be stolen and used by the traveller. Stolen spells may not be relearned or cast by the PC.
- The traveller will engage the PCs in dialogue for as long as he feels safe, and then attempt to flee - using any stolen spell effects as necessary. The death of the traveller will return all stolen vocabulary and spells to their rightful mouths.

### ENCOUNTER #16:

#### Potion Tree

The PCs come across a strangely out-of-place tree, uncommon in the terrain or climate. Within its branches sit 2d4 potion vials, suspended from the tree like fruit. Each potion has a random effect, determined from the relevant treasure table. There are no obvious seeds to be taken from the tree, although knowledgeable PCs may be able to take cuttings, with varying success.

- **Option 1:** The tree may be frequented by other adventurers, who guards its potions jealously and will confront any PCs that take fruit or damage the plant.
- **Option 2:** The tree is cultivated and tended by a powerful druid or mage, who will punish any they find taking its fruit.

### ENCOUNTER #17:

#### No Bodies Home!

A pile of clothing and equipment belonging to (roll 1d4) 1: adventurers, 2: militia, 3: traders or 4: humanoids, lies on the ground in a heap - as though the owners just vanished from within their outfits. Roll on an equipment table to determine what the PCs might find within their belongings. Tracks belonging to the previous owners lead up to the site, but there is no sign of tracks heading away.

- **Option 1:** The vanishing - these people just disappeared! Play on the players' paranoia - be sure to ask who touches or takes what items, even though none are cursed in any way.

## AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

- **Option 2:** The previous owners were shrunk or disintegrated by an insane magic-user. Emblems on the equipment mark any PC that takes it as a target for the magic-user to hunt at a later date.

### ENCOUNTER #18:

#### Bacchanalia

The sounds of laughter, dancing and merriment are carried on the wind the ears of the PCs. A satyr is leading a tribe of humanoids in drunken revelry, and will attempt to get any PC they meet to join in.

- Anyone drinking or eating what the satyr or his humanoids offers must save against spells to avoid being drawn into the bacchanalia, and loose all concern for any activity other than merriment and debauchery. PCs swept along with the revelry will awake in 2d4 days with little memory of intervening events - they will have lost all coins they carried, and have lost a level due to the drunkenness.
- Allies can prevent those that fail their save from being taken by pinning them down (although the fellow revellers will attempt to stop this) or bartering with the satyr.

### ENCOUNTER #19:

#### Rugby Ruckus

The sound of cheering and chanting can be heard from some distance, coming from a group of 15 random humanoids, all dressed to play one of the following sports (roll 1d6) **1:** soccer, **2:** shinty/hockey, **3:** rugby/football, **4:** lacrosse, **5:** cricket/baseball, **6:** curling/bowling. Roll a reaction check appropriate for your system

- **If positive**, the humanoids are in good spirits and will challenge the PCs to a game. The humanoids will be rough but fair, although this may change depending on the score.
- **If indifferent**, the humanoids will ignore the PCs and keep training and playing, unless interrupted.
- **If negative**, the humanoids will riot and attack the PCs. They will be highly proficient in the use of their sporting equipment, and using balls as ranged weapons will do 1d6 damage with a chance of knocking the wind out of the target (save vs. stun).

### ENCOUNTER #20:

#### Tattoo Artist

A gaily colored tent is set up in the wilderness, bunting fluttering in the breeze. A sign written in calligraphy reads 'Tattoo Parlor'. This is the workshop of a gentleman named Biff Byford, an experienced tattoo artist. He will happily create tattoos for the PCs for a modest fee, and can even embed certain spells into his art, although this costs significantly more.

- There is a 50% chance that when the PCs arrive, Biff is in an argument with an irate customer (random race or humanoid) over the art or non-payment of fees. The PCs may have to come to the artists aid.

### ENCOUNTER #21:

#### Pilgrimage

The PCs cross paths with a group of random humanoid cultists carrying a litter or palanquin, in which sits a religious icon or totem. Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine the nature of the deity depicted by the icon. This will also determine how the humanoids react to the PCs, and any bonuses they may gain for that encounter.

d6	Diety
1	<b>Goddess of Decay</b> - the litter is laden with detritus, rotting vegetation and putrefaction. All attacks made by the humanoids in defense of their icon will inflict disease in their targets. The humanoids themselves are immune to all disease, poisons and afflictions in the presence of the icon.
2	<b>Goddess of Fertility</b> - the humanoid tribe is suffering from a lack of new offspring and will not look to risk any of their number in combat. If provoked, the icon will be activated to cause an orgy of passion, rutting and raw sexual prowess amongst all within 60 ft, regardless of species.
3	<b>Goddess of Agriculture</b> - the humanoids are making a pilgrimage to pray for a better harvest. They will not instigate an attack, but if threatened will activate the icon which will cause plant life to sprout from the ground and entangle their foes.
4	<b>God of Hedonism</b> - the palanquin and icon itself will be very valuable and made from precious metals, inlaid with jewels and laden with fruit and sweetmeats. The humanoids will not seek a fight, but will guard this pilgrimage fiercely, and due to their relaxed hedonistic ways all have an extra hit dice above normal.
5	<b>God of the Night</b> - the litter is extremely dark in nature, and the humanoids all wear black robes. They will happily slay any who cross them, attempting to keep some alive long enough to sacrifice by impaling on the totem. The icon has the power to blind one target a round, at the directions of a cultist.
6	<b>God of War</b> - the humanoids will seek to bathe the totem in the blood of their enemies. They gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage whilst the icon is intact.

# AWESOME WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

## ENCOUNTER #22:

### Call the Midwife!

The PCs come across a large creature in the midst of a difficult labour. Its cries can be heard at a distance, and it seems clear that without aid the creature and its child will likely bleed to death. Roll on the standard wilderness encounter table to determine which creature is met, or use the following chart (roll 1d6) **1:** Mammoth, **2:** Pegasus, **3:** Giant, **4:** Manticore, **5:** Griffon, **6:** Rust Monster.

- Depending on the nature and intelligence of the creature, it may be able to thank the PCs for help. Alternatively, the young may imprint on the PC that delivers it and become a loyal follower.
- To determine how successful the PCs are as midwives if they do decide to help, roll some dice.

## ENCOUNTER #23:

### Trebuchet Tribulations

The PCs come across a group of random humanoids in the midst of building a trebuchet. The humanoids will defend their creation to the death, and use it to attack any that approach. The trebuchet can fire once every other round. Depending on the nature and ingenuity of the humanoid, the effectiveness and projectiles used will vary - for examples, kobolds will build a more reliable machine to fling pebbles at the PCs, whereas ogres will create a less accurate trebuchet but that can launch a heavier payload.

## ENCOUNTER #24:

### Humanoid Traders

The PCs come across a band of random humanoids looking to trade their wares. Determine the type of humanoid on the table above right, and the wares and markup/attitude of the traders on the table below right (roll 2d10).

## TRADE GOODS AND TRADER RACE

d10	Trade good	High quality if trader is of race...
1	Spices	Troglodyte
2	Metal ore	Hobgoblin
3	Lumber	Centaur
4	Ivory	Bugbear
5	Monster Parts	Ogre
6	Salt	Gnoll
7	Ice	Lizardfolk
8	Weapons	Kobold
9	Oil	Orc
10	Tobacco	Goblin

## TRADER ATTITUDE/GOODS MARK-UP

d10	Attitude/Markup/Provenance
1	Goods spoilt or tainted
2	Goods will decay in 1d4 days
3	Hard negotiator
4	Fair price offered
5	Low demand for good in area
6	Goods hide smuggled cargo
7	Exceptional quality goods
8	Good quality, at a low price
9	Goods are stolen and marked
10	Desperate to do trade

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a low-mid level Underdark encounter table, focused on D&D. It would be great if it was edition-agnostic.*

# ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNDERDARK

By Stuart B.

## A SET OF TABLES FOR GENERATING ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNDERDARK

The Underdark is a huge set of caverns, tunnels spanning the entire world. The following tables detail some of the encounters you may have in this frightening place.

The first table is an optional modifier table, used to spice up the other three tables, if necessary. The remaining three detail the upper, middle, and deeper levels of the Underdark.

If using the tables in an existing adventure, select the level which most appropriately describes your current location and begin. If you are just starting your adventure in the Underdark, begin from the Upper Levels table, and continue from there.

If your encounter takes place a little deeper in the Underdark, use the middle levels modifier table before rolling. This makes things a little tougher, a little more dangerous. If you go even further, you will need to roll on the deeper darks table. This table stands alone, as those encounters are very deadly.

Adventures in the deeper darks will likely involve a lot of running away. You will use a D10 to find your deeper dark encounter as you may not combine elements of this table.

To use the table, roll a D20. Find the matching encounter element and roll a further D3 (D6/2) to add a detail. If you wish, you may, at this stage, add up to 2 optional modifiers from the table below which match one or both of the dice on the left hand side of the table.

Does your encounter feel complete yet? If so, hurray! You can throw this element at your players to give them an Encounter in the Underdark!

If not, repeat the process above, adding another encounter element in addition to the first. Repeat until your encounter feels right. Around 2-3 elements per encounter should be enough. As stated above, deeper dark encounters do not allow extra elements to be added, they are dangerous enough alone. Note that the outcomes listed are suggested examples only, your party may produce other outcomes in play.

### OPTIONAL MODIFIER TABLE

d6	Social 	Item 	Location 	Trap 	Combat 
1	Friendly	High Quality	Sparse	Magical	Tactical
2	Sleeping	Hidden	Vast	Obvious	Weak
3	Trickster	Hard to reach	Pokey	Invisible	Finesse
4	Secrets	Embedded	Pitch black	Fiendish	Cowardly
5	Manipulative	Magical	Lush (fungus/roots)	Deadly	Powerful
6	Distrustful	Cursed	Stifling	Pre-sprung	Masterful

# ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNDERDARK

## UPPER LEVELS

d20	Encounter elements			Potential Outcomes		
No.	Example encounter element			Positive outcome	Neutral outcome	Negative outcome
Type	d6 roll 1-2	d6 roll 3-4	d6 roll 5-6			
1	<b>A well provisioned pack pony</b>			Food, water, map to surface. A pony	Map to surface, pony meat, glue making supplies	Poisoned food, glue making supplies
	With 3 days food + water	Abandoned, half starved	3-4 elvish owners nearby			
2	<b>A trading post manned by a dwarf</b>			Supplies, weapons and armor. Local rumors	Angry words and barred doors	Alerts hostile customers to your presence
	Links to the surface	Preparing a caravan	Recovering from assault			
3	<b>A dark elf "damsel in distress"</b>			Food/water, map to city. Nice bows and armor	Escape unharmed	Captured by slavers and taken to deeper levels for sale
	Pit traps with spikes near	2d6 archers hide above	Spiders and webs			
4	<b>A tragic deep gnome</b>			Ally/information. Will travel with for d6 days	Shared meal around campfire (local info)	A battle. Gnome will always escape if losing
	Wields 2 sml scimitars	Very lost, confused	A lot tougher than they look			
5	<b>A strange, multi-faceted device</b>			Item/inhabitant provides useful advice	You break the item after the first use	Item hurts and wounds user when used
	Sentient and knowledgeable	Teleport to pocket home	Trapped soul within			
6	<b>A floating platform over an abyss</b>			Platform works as described	Platform gets stuck in mid air over pit	Platform plummets into abyss
	Can be used to cross pit	Will slowly descend	Powered by magical weapon			
7	<b>A lever</b>			Trap avoided or disabled	Trap springs, but only affects 1 party member	Trap springs and catches all party members
	Pull for pit trap	Pull for gas trap	Actual trap is monster			
8	<b>A suit of armor</b>			Foe defeated, you gain a suit of magical armor	You defeat foe but the armor is damaged badly	You are badly wounded/killed
	Magically animated	Removed to climb wall	Angry wearer still inside			
9	<b>A hermit in a cave</b>			The hermit assists you in some way	The hermit is of no help whatsoever	Dealing with the hermit is tiring, exasperating
	Teacher of arcane tricks	Vow of silence	Idiot savant			
10	<b>A subterranean lake, small boat</b>			You cross successfully and advance	You fall into the water and need to swim back/onwards	You drown, suffocate or are eaten by zombies
	Zombies lie beneath	The water is drinkable!	Poisonous vapors			
11	<b>A nondescript tunnel</b>			Traps avoided	Trap hurts you, but reveals passage onward	Trap hurts you and collapses tunnel ahead or behind
	Floor falls away	Spikes from floor/walls	Rocks from the ceiling			
12	<b>A narrow stone bridge over chasm</b>			Cross the bridge successfully, and defeat foe	Driven away and cannot cross	Pushed or driven into the chasm, falling deeper
	One Duergar stands	Dark elf archers lurk	A golem guarding			
13	<b>A lost child</b>			Defeat enemies who spring the trap	Trap is a surprise, but you win in the end	Captured and taken deeper into the dark
	Really a deep gnome, trap	Real child, Duergar trap	A derro in disguise			

# ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNDERDARK

d20	Encounter elements			Potential Outcomes		
No.	Example encounter element			Positive outcome	Neutral outcome	Negative outcome
Type	d6 roll 1-2	d6 roll 3-4	d6 roll 5-6			
14	<b>A cart crashed into a wall</b>			Trap avoided or disabled	Trap springs, but only affects 1 party member	Trap springs and catches all party members
	Deadly gas surrounds	A swarm of insects erupts	Explosives set to blow!			
15	<b>A poisonous lake</b>			You avoid the trap, and bypass the lake	The trap springs, but does minimal damage	You are severely poisoned /killed by trap
	Kuo-toa lurk nearby	It looks clear and clean	Slippery lead up, gases			
16	<b>A very narrow tunnel</b>			Defeat enemies who spring the trap	Trap is a surprise, but you win in the end	Captured and taken deeper into the dark
	Vicious dark elves wait	Deep Gnome spearmen	Dead end, rear attack!			
17	<b>Spider centaurs hunting</b>			Hunters are not interested in fighting	You defeat foes but the armor is damaged badly	Captured and taken deeper
	Looking for an escapee	Hunting for prey	Resting after hunt success			
18	<b>A well equipped paladin's corpse</b>			Decent armor, weapons, and some provisions	Corpse/equipment left as party retreats/advances	Adventurers are wounded or killed
	Reanimated! Attacks!	Killers lurk nearby	Fresh wounds eerie silence			
19	<b>A maze of tunnels</b>			Maze navigated/ foes defeated	Lost in maze for d3 days, ambushed/ trapped	Lost for 2d6 days, hurt badly by traps/ ambush
	Hook horror hides within	Built to lead to waiting cult	Mechanical traps inside			
20	<b>Giant spiders, a large web</b>			Spiders vanquished!	Trapped in web for d3 days, but spiders dead	Trapped and eaten
	Invisible strands trap	Trap door spiders	Swarms of tiny ones			

## MIDDLE LEVELS (roll once and continue on the lower levels table)

d6	Encounter elements			Notes
No.	Example encounter element			Rough notes on how this affects the further elements rolled
	d6 roll 1-2	d6 roll 3-4	d6 roll 5-6	
1	<b>A large city</b>			Encounter may be outside or within city. May lead to further social encounters, shops, etc or just lots of angry residents. Elements may be from city, or outside elements interacting with city in some way.
	Dark elves	Deep gnomes	Grey dwarves	
2	<b>Large area of magical darkness</b>			Elements are within an area of magical darkness. Traps take advantage of this, as to combats. Social may be lost or hiding and items may be hidden.
	Impenetrable	Caused by a magic gem	Moving/ may follow you	
3	<b>After 2d6 days of travel</b>			You may have to travel for days without water or food unless you brought it. You may face danger undernourished and fatigued.
	Without any sign of food	Without any sign of water	Without any food/water	
4	<b>Rumbling/earthquake</b>			Underdark is constantly changing. Earthquake may block off where you came from, or change an uninteresting cavern into a razor edged forest of rock splinters.
	Due to thermal vents	Surrounds with fissures	A roar from the deep	
5	<b>Numbers/value/power of elements</b>			The encounters you meet are more dangerous, but more rewarding the deeper you go.
	Double	Triple	Quadruple	
6	<b>Roll twice on this table</b>			This only applies once, so you could roll a 2 and a 5, but not a 2 and a 6 for two more rolls. Reroll any 6's until another number is found.

# ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNDERDARK

## DEEPER LEVELS

d10	Encounter elements			Potential Outcomes		
Ex.	Example encounter element			Positive outcome	Neutral outcome	Negative outcome
Type	d6 roll 1-2	d6 roll 3-4	d6 roll 5-6			
1	<b>Ilithids conducting experiments</b>			You escape to the upper levels.	You escape deeper into the dark...	You die horribly
	Breeding troll monstrosities	Waiting for you	On someone you know			
2	<b>A vast nest of spiders with queen</b>			You escape to the upper levels.	You escape, pursued by the arachnids	You die horribly
	Swarms at you	Small ones cover you	The web has you caught			
3	<b>An undead overlord and retinue</b>			You avoid detection entirely and escape	You escape to the upper levels.	You die horribly
	Powerful lich sorcerer	Skeleton army follows behind	Elder vampire of a dead race			
4	<b>A rumbling ahead, a red glow...</b>			You escape to the upper levels	You escape deeper into the dark...	You die horribly
	Thermal vents! Lava! Run!	A horrifying demon!	Hallucination, deadly fungus			
5	<b>Shadow dragon!</b>			You escape to the upper levels	You escape deeper into the dark...	You die horribly
	A family of them!	An ancient and powerful one!	Sensing your presence			
6	<b>A sinister subterranean sea</b>			You turn back down another tunnel	You set sail upon the vast sea. 10d6 miles across.	You die horribly
	Touch water for deadly gas	Tentacled titanic terrors	Entrance below floods			
7	<b>The tunnel behind you collapses</b>			You move the blockage	You press on deeper, your air is running out	You die horribly
	Where did all the air go?	Trapping you with (reroll)	And the floor begins to crack			
8	<b>A twisted cathedral, a dark ritual</b>			You escape, watched by an unknown evil	You escape deeper into the dark, after being cursed	You die horribly
	An ancient race of the dead	Watchful eye of a dark god	Adventurers names on altar			
9	<b>A fluffy bunny</b>			You escape to the upper levels	You escape deeper into the dark...	You die horribly
	Legends speak of its power	Insatiable bloodlust	Homicidal fury & aura of fear			
10	<b>A creature time forgot</b>			You escape deeper into the dark...	You escape, pursued by the beast	You die horribly
	Bound by failing wards	Ia! Ia! Cthulhu fhntagn!	All teeth and eyes and scales			

*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me either an encounter (monster or group of monsters) or a random encounter table for bronze-age astronauts travelling through space in some kind of primitive vessel.*

# MONSTER ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE!!!

By Justin D.

1d12	Encounter
1	Maze-steroid infested with mechano-minotaurs
2	Funerary rocket-barge carrying spirits of demolished robots
3	Star-sphinx singing "Riddles Of The Spheres"
4	Comets pushed by massive sky-scarabs
5	Constellation golems
6	Convoy of automated mining-chariots shuttling moon-copper into black hole
7	Laser-ziggurat of the gas giant, Vituprex The Vaporous
8	Saucer-viking raiding party
9	Debauched revel of the quasar-druids at Space-Henge
10	Pulsar-sirens and nebula-nymphs luring astronomical explorers to their doom
11	Contagious, infectious sunspots
12	Freshly hatched larval planets seeking sustenance

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table of traps, either with different qualities so I can mix-n-match, or, say, 20 quirky traps that players won't be expecting.*

*Thanks,*

*Elber of Torou*

# THE SANTICORE TRAPS!!

By Joshua M.

Being a set of tables for generating concepts for traps for any system, with examples and discussion.

## 1 TRAP PURPOSE

d8	Purpose
1	Capture
2	Impede
3	Injure/Kill
4	Resource Sink
5	Hazard
6	Practical Joke
7	Lock/Barrier
8	Alarm

**CAPTURE TRAPS** attempt to hold victims until they can be dealt with later; in some cases the trap is meant to hold them until they expire from natural causes or injuries suffered. A pit trap is the classic capture trap, though others might throw a net or sticky substance, or simply lock adventurers in a room with no way out.

**IMPEDE TRAPS** slow down victims, either making them easier to catch or increase the likelihood of patrols running into them. Classic impedance traps include mazes, caltrops, sticky or slippery floors, magically darkened areas, or cryptic messages that adventurer's may waste time trying to decipher.

**INJURE/KILL TRAPS** harm victims, perhaps killing them outright. Classic examples include pit traps (if deep enough or with spikes), spear or arrow traps, swinging blades, falling blocks, crushing walls, poison darts, and the like. Some can be dodged or defended against (particularly ones that poke or slice with a regular weapon), or depending on damage rolled might not injure you that much. Others, such as being dumped into lava or having cockatrice feathers poured down over you, are meant to be lethal so they have to be avoided, whether through noticing the trigger or making a saving throw.

**RESOURCE SINK TRAPS** deplete the intruder's stock of available resources, softening them up for later, or perhaps stranding them if they turn out not to be carrying enough torches or rope to get through the area. Resource traps might

be stretches that require a lot of technical climbing (with spikes and ropes, or use of fly spells), or passage through long underwater sections, or strong magnets that make the party abandon iron gear (a rust monster is the animate version of this), or contain things like slimes or oozes that eat away at wooden or leather gear.

**HAZARD "TRAPS"** are simply dangerous areas, not threats purposely designed by any creatures in the game world. Narrow mountain passes prone to avalanches, or areas with volcanic fumaroles, or treacherous ice don't have a specific design goal, they are simply there and hazardous if you try to traverse them.

**PRACTICAL JOKE TRAPS** are designed to amuse the trap placer, and often do no more than inconvenience or embarrass the victim. These may also serve as alarms or to discourage intrusion in places where it would be unwise to put a trap that can actually injure or kill. For example, a wealthy merchant probably won't have a pit-trap with poison spikes in his town-home to keep his servants out of the liquor, but might put lampblack on the knobs of the cabinet to stain their hands.

Real-world examples include a bucket over the door or a whoopee cushion. Magical traps of this sort planted by a whimsical wizard or fairy might curse somebody with an animal's head, or change their sex.

**LOCKS/BARRIERS** prevent access by unauthorized people. The simplest is just a locked door or gate. Elaborate or magical ones may involve puzzles, perhaps an entire room that forms a puzzle. There might be consequences, including lethal ones, for making a wrong move in the puzzle, the essence is to actually to provide a means of ingress to somebody who knows the secret, not to keep everybody out permanently (as might a rolling boulder or falling block trap in a tomb).

Note that some locks or barriers aren't there to prevent adventurers from getting in, but to keep something dangerous from getting out....

**ALARMS** don't usually directly harm those triggering them, but alert others to the intrusion. Guardians might respond by arranging an ambush, or by running away with the treasure.

## 2 TRIGGER TYPE

d12	Trigger Type
1	Pressure Plate
2	Tripwire
3	Opening a container/door
4	Removing pressure
5	Occlusion
6	Heat/Light
7	Magnetic
8	Guard-activated
9	Permanent
10	Sound
11	Unusual Sense
12	Timed

**PRESSURE PLATES** are any sort of pressure sensitive mechanical trigger. One is usually activated by a character stepping on it, and typically has some threshold weight that is too small to trigger it (whether that's a coin, a mouse, or a hobbit).

The plate can typically be detected by carefully examining the area for discrepancies. These could be a mismatch in material heights, seams at the edge of the plate, or a slight wobbliness or give if the plate is moved. Also, because of the mechanism beneath the plate, sand or water may flow through the seams where it wouldn't if the floor were solid. Pressure plates can often be jammed by wedges in the seams or levered beneath the plate, or can be bypassed by not stepping on them.

High tech or magical pressure plates may be nearly impossible to detect, except by detecting the presence of magic or electricity itself, though a fair trap may still be triggered by dropping a sufficient weight on it.

**TRIPWIRES** are any sort of physical wire, rope, or cord that triggers a trap when somebody steps on or through the wire. The wires can often be spotted by visual inspection; but if they are camouflaged, very fine, or in bad lighting conditions they can be extremely hard to spot without unusual senses. Adventurers of unusual size (small enough to pass beneath) or having the right kind of locomotion (always flying) may bypass these traps without even noticing. Tripwires may also be detected, or at least triggered, by poking ahead with a pole. They can be bypassed by stepping over or under them, or jammed by preventing the wire from moving or breaking.

**OPENING A CONTAINER/DOOR** can trigger a trap by the mechanical action of the hinges, by the lid or door pushing or pulling something as it changes position, or releasing pressure on a spring, by the twisting or pulling of a knob or handle attached to the catch that holds it closed, by

poison on the handle or on something sharp that someone manipulating the handle is likely to cut himself on or simply because the container or room has something dangerous in it.

Spotting such traps can be difficult unless you have unusual senses allowing you to see inside the container, since all the mechanical parts of the trap may be on the inside. It might be possible to detect the trap by a slightly higher resistance to opening than expected (particularly if the hinges are well-oiled first) or the sound/feel of something scraping or being pulled.

Such traps can be bypassed by creating a new opening in the container, by breaking a wire or flange that would be pulled out of position by opening the lid, by applying pressure to a spring that would otherwise release, by manipulating the knob or handle remotely or through protective gear.

**REMOVING PRESSURE TRAPS** can be set off when something is removed from where it should be, such as when a heavy gold idol is taken off an altar - allowing a spring to uncoil, the other end of a counterweighted lever to descend, or weight held in place by a cord beneath the idol to fall....

Spotting such triggers can sometimes be done by seeing the cord or noticing the seams where the trigger mechanism will move once the weight is gone.

Disarming the trap can be done by swapping the weight for a similar one (be careful that the replacement weight is close enough... particularly if the builders took extra care so that if too much extra pressure was applied to the balance the trap would trigger anyway), or by jamming the balance platform so that it can't move even if the pressure is removed.

**OCCCLUSION TRIGGERS** are set off when something blocks the sensor, as with an "electric eye." These usually require magic or high technology, though a goblin with a peephole would do in a pinch.

They can be spotted by noticing the opening for the sensor, or if the sensor requires a visible beam of light (or one that can be made visible, say with smoke) the beam.

They can be bypassed by avoiding breaking the beam or passing in front of the sensor, or by arranging mirrors to divert the light in a path that reaches the sensor but leaves space to pass.

**HEAT/LIGHT TRIGGERS** are set off by the presence of extra heat or light, such as generated by torches or just by warm-blooded creatures. The trigger might be an exotic material that melts easily, releasing a spring or a weighted cord, or perhaps the material itself is poisonous once it's heated enough to form a vapor, or perhaps phototropic plant that pulls or pushes the trigger as it turns toward the light. Or it could just be magic or tech.

Spotting such traps will be very difficult without some way to observe the trapped area remotely or in perfect darkness.

Bypassing the trap might involve nothing more than being able to pass through the area in darkness, or by interfering with whatever mechanical part is connected to the sensor.

**MAGNETIC TRIGGERS** usually have some catch that is pulled out of place by magnetic attraction, generally to the armor to the adventurers wear..., though if the magnet is powerful enough it might itself be the trap, pulling the adventurers off a ledge or just immobilizing them unless they abandon their armor.

If it's not obvious, a magnetic trigger might be detected by its effect on compasses, or by the very subtle pressure it exerts (a realistic magnet would have to be quite powerful if the metal isn't going to come within a few inches of it, unless it was suspended in something to reduce friction. Otherwise the trap might as well be magical for all the adventurers can do to detect it).

Magnetic triggers can usually be bypassed by being careful not to bring metal near them, or by the usual mechanical jamming methods depending on what they're attached to.

**GUARD-ACTIVATED TRAPS** are simply activated manually by a guard from an observation post. Spotting the trap usually means spotting the guard, or at least the peephole or camera (or magical equivalent) the guard is using to observe the area.

Such traps can be bypassed by avoiding the field of vision of the guard, presenting the guard with a fake or illusory view of the area, taking out the guard, distracting or tricking the guard, or waiting for the guard's attention to lapse (e.g. fall asleep, or leave the observation post to make rounds or relieve himself).

**PERMANENT TRAPS** don't have a trigger, the area is simply dangerous (or dangerous to unprotected/unprepared people) all the time. A room might be full of poison gas, so the only safe way to enter it would be if you were immune to the poison, took an antidote, or wore protective gear.

Depending on the nature of the danger it might be obvious to any observer, or it might only be revealed if you see somebody aware of the danger taking precautions. Bypassing the trap usually requires ascertaining what precautions are necessary and taking them, since by definition there's no way to avoid the trigger.

**SOUND TRIGGERS** are set off by sounds or vibrations; they might be carefully balanced stones or snow (as in an avalanche), or a cavern or other structure that amplifies sound until it's sufficient to dislodge a lever or weight.

Sound traps might be spotted by the area being unusually quiet or having peculiar echoes, or by observation of whatever pile of rocks or lever/pulley structure that's the mechanical part of the trap before you get close enough for the sound to dislodge it.

Bypassing the trap could be done by being unusually quiet, by somehow stabilizing the delicately balanced trigger, or by jamming the mechanics if there is an accessible mechanical part of the trap and not just tons of stone that will fall from the ceiling if disturbed by loud sounds.

**UNUSUAL SENSE TRAPS** are available in worlds with magic or high tech, where many bizarre or nearly arbitrary phenomena might serve as a trigger (e.g. the presence of "good alignment"). These usually can't be spotted or bypassed unless you have appropriate magic or tech of your own, though you might still be able to infer the presence of the trap by observing the behavior of those "in the know" about it.

**TIMED TRAPS** activate periodically, regardless of what's going on. A simple example would be a cavern that filled with water at high tide, but more complex ones might be something like pendulums that constantly swing, or walls that crash inward every few minutes.

Detecting timed traps can be done by noticing the remains of previous victims (since such traps are often unattended and automatically reset, so nobody ever takes the bodies away) or by observing the trap going off (since it activates whether or not there's reason to do so).

Bypassing the trap usually consists of figuring out the timing of the activation and passing through the area during the quiescent period.

### 3 LOCATION (roll separately for trigger/trap locations)

d6	Location
1	Floor
2	Wall
3	Ceiling
4	Container
5	Entrance
6	Other

Obviously, some effort is required to make the trap coherent; if a pressure-plate on the ceiling triggers a trap on the floor, it should be something like a place the door will brush as it's opening, or be part of a feature on the ceiling like a mosaic or chandelier that the players will be tempted to explore.

## 4 MECHANISM

d10	Mechanism
1	Gravity (pit trap, falling block, tilting floor, sharpened pendulum)
2	Spring-loaded (arrow or spear)
3	Clockwork (crushing walls, retracting catwalk, portcullis releasing beast)
4	Hydraulic (liquid filling area, rising floor)
5	Chemical (gunpowder, chemicals combining to form noxious fumes, acid)
6	Physical Properties (flammable material, radioactive, poisonous)
7	Magical (known magical effects and spells, such as magic mouth, or fireball)
8	Electronic (electrifying areas, as well as hi-tech substitutes for clockwork)
9	Biological (spores, parasites, released critters)
10	Arbitrary (magic not using known/documented spells)

## 5 COMPLICATIONS

Nastier traps often involve traps with precautions, failsafe mechanisms, extra concealment, or misdirection.

### PRECAUTIONS

Extra care might be taken to build the mechanism in such a way that it's hard to interfere with. For instance a trap where opening the lid of a box pulls a cord that activates a poison blade on a spring might make the cord out of wire so that it's hard to cut even if spotted, or include extra metal baffles that extend downward from the lid so that you can't poke a knife in until the lid is lifted enough for the cord to do its work.

### FAILSAFES

Traps may have extra mechanisms to thwart attempts to disarm them; this can be an entirely separate trap that guards the mechanism of the original trap, or just extra precautions so that obvious ways of trying to disarm the trap trigger it anyway. For instance, using the example of a box and cord again, the trap could have an additional spring mechanism that puts tension on the cord so that if it's cut the spring contracts and releases the poison blade regardless. Or a trap that is triggered by a balance arm might be rigged so that it goes off if the balance goes in either direction (the idol is removed from the altar or the idol is replaced by something heavier).

### EXTRA CONCEALMENT

Any trap can be made more dangerous by spending extra effort on concealing its mechanism. This can range from the completely simple (painting the tripwire black, removing the debris from when the trap was activated previously) to the cunning (trompe l'oeil painting to deceive the eye as to the actual dimensions of the room or make the exposed parts of the trap completely blend in) to making the trap magically undetectable to all intents and purposes (illusions and invisibility fall into this category unless the characters have magic to deploy against it).

### MISDIRECTION

Some traps are concealed by the presence of obvious other traps or suspicious things. For example, an obvious pit-trap with an illusory floor trap just beyond it so that if the characters vault the first they land right in the second. These are usually more amusing for the GM to contemplate than for the players to encounter, unless they are explicitly attempting to beat a "deathtrap" dungeon and are prepared to spend hours trying to out-paranoid a mad wizard with arbitrary resources in order to cross a 30' corridor.

Still, in the real world there are such things as fake safes and dummy security cameras, so a certain amount of misdirection is probably allowable without being a complete bastard.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me something involving hierogamy. It could be a scenario, a random table, a few NPCs, or anything else.*

*Thanks,*

*Dan Vincze*

# THE SACRED MARRIAGE

By Mikah McCabe

## SUGGESTED SCENARIO:

Our heroes are trying to win the friendship of an influential chieftain who has access to the [tastiest plot biscuits] in the land. When asked what he wants in return, the chieftain says, "A sacrifice must be given to the Goddess - she demands a husband each year as payment for the harvest. Provide us with a husband, and we will give you what you seek. Refuse, and...well, it is horrible luck to refuse the goddess. If you did, well, I'll have to water the crops with your blood, I s'pose; the Goddess loves that sort of thing."

Should an adventurer agree to the bargain, it's time for him (her? The Goddess is open-minded) to roll a d6 to see what he must copulate with in order to perform symbolic marriage to the Goddess. Otherwise, I highly suggest having nearby villagers attack the party in anger.

d6	Outcome
1	A small bear kept in a cage at the center of the village. Looks like you'll have to fight it until it submits to, uh, "marriage." (Fight bear until it is down to 2 HP.)
2	A goat. A very loud, foul-smelling goat that will follow her new "husband" absolutely everywhere, even when the party leaves town.
3	A massive rock with a hole in it - a piece of the Goddess herself! Looks a bit rough, though...(take 1d4 damage).
4	A massive apple tree with a hole in it; a not-so-symbolic contribution of seed for the harvest.
5	The innkeep's daughter, Poppy. She's fairly pretty, but rumor has it she sleeps with a knife under her pillow.
6	The chieftain's own beautiful daughter, Reona. Mind you, this is only a symbolic marriage to the Goddess, but the marriage to Reona herself is lifelong and binding; she'll be wanting a sizable house.

*Faintly are the screams heard,  
Yet all quake in fear,  
Uttering not a word.  
A blight has descended on the land,  
And all cower on the floor,  
For they know their end is at hand.  
By the great SANTICORE!!*

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me an encounter based  
around a paradox.*

*Thanks,*

*Dallas M.*

# PARADOXICAL DAEMONS

By Gus L.

from *Dungeon of Signs*

It's a fact known to devotees of the forbidden arts, cultists of the Church of Starry Wisdom, Psychonauts and others that have congress with entities and powers from beyond the realms of normal space and time; that the mundane world (despite its seeming absurdity) is an ordered realm amongst a vast sea of chaos. The entities from the other worlds (especially those devoted to chaos and strife) despise the orderly nature of the commonplace universe. Often when these creatures find their way through the veil of worlds they simply rampage, but others are more subtle and fond of paradox as the paradoxical reveals the universe's ultimate disorder and the futility of logical categorization. Below are a few potential encounters with these paradoxical daemons and their handiwork:

## BOX

Some Daemons prefer traps and signs to direct intervention in the mundane world. A common form that such paradoxical artifacts take is the twenty-two clasp box. A chest of about 3' square and made of polished, engraved and detailed steel, with twenty-two locks on its front. Each lock may be picked as a normal lock, but for every second failed picking attempt all previously picked locks will close and a blade, spike razor wire whip or saw will flash outward from the box inflicting minor injury to the thief attempting to pick it. These traps are so numerous and cunningly laid that it is impossible to detect them all and a new one will be triggered with each failed picking attempt. The box may also be smashed open, though doing so will require a blacksmith's shop and several days as the walls of the chest are almost a foot thick and lightly magically warded against direct attack. Opening the box by force will destroy it completely. Beyond picking all the locks or forcing it open the box of twenty-two clasps can be opened only with its bejeweled, solid gold key (which is valuable but certainly not worth the trouble of the box). This key is always the only item within the box when it is discovered. Magical attempts to bypass the locks (such as *Knock* or *Dimension Door* spells) will transport the caster and anyone within 20' of the box into a chaotic labyrinth guarded by the daemons who created the box, with the box key (and a portal back to the mundane world) at its center.

Should a character open the box without destroying it they will undoubtedly be frustrated to discover that the box's key is the only thing within; however, the box itself is a valuable extra-planar artifact and extraordinarily secure.



## BRIDGE

A stupid and malicious fiend by the name of Buri guards a narrow bridge over a torrent and asks the question "Answer me! Will I fling you from this bridge or let you pass? If you tell the truth you will go unmolested and if you lie I will dash you into the torrent below." Of course Buri has no interest in letting anyone pass unmolested. If the characters answer his question saying he will allow them to pass the fiend will laugh, call them liars and fling them into the water preventing passage again even when they survive the torrent. When he is in the right Buri is filled with supernatural strength and extremely powerful. However, should the characters tell the "truth" that Buri will not allow them to pass, his power will be drained, as he can neither fling them into the torrent due to the truth of their statement, or allow them to pass as failure to hurl down the characters will transform their truthful statement into a lie. Buri may be easily passed while he writhes in confusion, but will eventually figure out that to make the paradox work he can simply fling the characters into the water after they pass, though of course his power will be much lessened and they will have bypassed Buri at this point.

Sometimes a related, and even less intelligent, crocodile headed demon kidnaps children, damsels, youths or party members and offers to return them to someone who tells the truth to the question: "Will I refrain from eating my captive, and return him?"



## BEAST

Taxidermy of *Animalia Paradoxa* or contradictory animals, are sometimes created by daemons of paradox, or animated from taxidermy chimera created by mortals. These creatures tend to be found in the back rooms of dingy museums, as part of the *wunderkammer* of dissolute nobles, decorating mad kings' treasure hoards or in the dusty laboratories of powerful sorcerers. Each *Animalia Paradoxa* is unique (though several similar ones have been reported), but all appear and react generally the same. An *Animalia* is a taxidermy, and usually a poor one, an assemblage of several quotidian beast masquerading as a magical one, or more rarely the remains of magical beasts stitched and stuffed into the shape of an unremarkable creature. In every case the farcically bad taxidermy sits inanimate collecting dust until anyone within its ear shot (50' or so) remarks that the taxidermy is "fake" or was never a real animal. Doubt of the *Animalia's* authenticity animates it into a violent frenzy

where it rips and maims all life it can find for several hours, even after the original doubter is deceased or fled. *Animalia* vary greatly in size and level danger, but all are immune to non-magical weapons, cold, electricity, poison and negative energies.

One of the most famous *Animalia Paxadoxia*, which has so far escaped destruction and left a wake of death behind it, is the four headed "weasel hydra." This monstrosity appears to be made of the stitched together skins and bones of several giant weasels, standing about 5' tall. When aroused it attacks with its four malformed weasel heads and numerous claws, biting and tearing with all the ferocity the weasel displays during life. Worse still, the interior of the creature is infected with a mold that produces hallucinogenic spores and the weasel hydra will blast a toxic cloud from its mouths while it attacks, driving its attackers into madness and confusion.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me some random table/  
procedure about special terrain in  
ordinary/wilderness encounters.*

# TERRAIN COMPLICATIONS TABLE

By Andy Wise

Here are three options on how to use the table to complicate your PCs' lives:

1. Use it as a **Critical fumble table**: when someone rolls a fumble, roll a d20. On an unassigned number, nothing extra nasty happens.
2. It's a **movement hardship table**: whenever a character moves during combat, roll d20 to see what befalls them. Unassigned numbers mean nothing nasty happens. (May want to trim it down to 10 nasty 10 nothing)
3. Lastly, use it as a **near miss table**: when a character misses, count by how many points (needed a 17, rolled a 16? that's a 1, needed 17 rolled a 4, that's a 13) and explain their miss with some added nasty!

Die Roll or Missed Amount	Complication
1	Stepped on a spored mushroom, contemplate the universe for 1d4 rounds.
2	Unseen slope! Move 1d4 spaces in random direction.
3	Something slippery, fall prone.
4	Boot stuck in mud, either use an action to free it, or lose it.
5	Twist your ankle on a wonky root, -1 movement until combat ends or healed.
6	Falling branch, dodge (saving throw?) or take 1d8 damage.
7	Muddy patch, -3 movement until you have moved 1d4 spaces.
8	Caught clothing on branch, either use an action to free it or ruin it.
9	Scat! -2 CHR until bath/laundry.
10	ANGRY BEES! 1d4 damage per turn until you have moved 1d10 spaces.
11	Muddy boots, -1 to hit, 1 in 6 chance to fall prone each subsequent movement.
12	Fall in pit to waist, can still fight, just not move. Take a full action to climb out.
13	Stepped through rotten log, -1 to everything until end of turn.
14	Weapon caught in shrubbery, next attack at -3 to hit.
15	You woke the bears. Run.



*This will end in tears.*

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a series of moonlight pathways throughout the multiverse.*

# MOONLIGHT PATHWAYS

By Florian Hubner

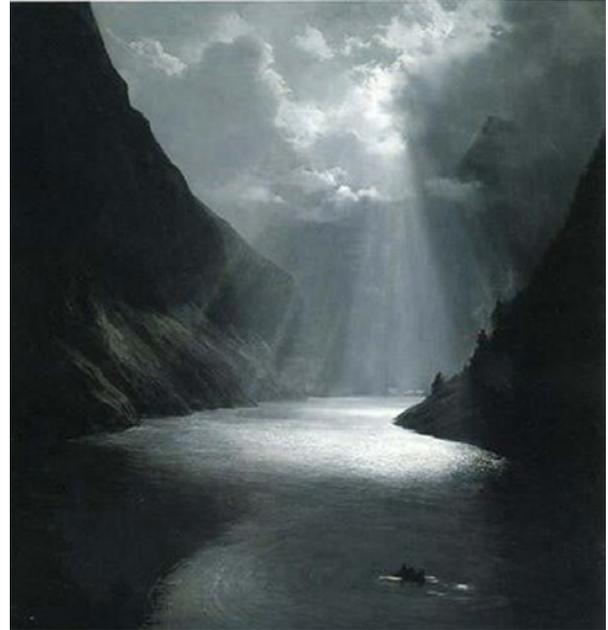
**Editor's note:** I could totally see replacing bog-standard planar travel (portals, "poof") with something requiring a short journey like one of these: "I can get us to the Abyss, but...the path I know takes us through a pretty strange place..."

## THE TEMPLE WAY TO FATHER MOUNTAIN'S PEAK

Hundreds of little shrines, sepulchers and imposing temples seam the way up this treacherous mountain, the way going around, under and sometimes even over some of the buildings. Gods new and long forgotten are worshiped here but there are also countless temples that have fallen into disrepair, posing quite a hazard for pilgrims and other visitors.

### Random Events (d6)

1	An inscribed golden gong of unusual size comes crashing down the mountain.
2	A rickety bridge between two temples collapses
3	The wind rotates ancient prayer wheels and the ancient prayers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• curse the ones who dared to defile the temple with a withering curse</li><li>• bless the visiting pilgrims, granting them a longer life by making them younger</li><li>• make the wheels rotate faster and faster till they break apart into hundreds of whirling pieces.</li><li>• have no noticeable effects but disorient the travelers, making them to go back to the previous temple.</li><li>• make the trees and other plant life grow with an unbelievable speed before granting them a will of their own for a short while.</li><li>• try to put the trespassers into a century-long sleep.</li></ul>
4	The long dead priests of the temple rise again to continue to serve their deity
5	The current temple seals itself, forcing the trespassers to find a way out
6	An ongoing schism is about to turn violent. two factions in the temple are ready to fight for the true beliefs



### Random Encounters (d6)

1	Wind wraith
2	The crazed monk
3	Animated pages of a holy book
4	The false Avatar
5	A group of frightened pilgrims
6	The stone guardian, covered with moss and lichens

### Random Temples (d6)

1	An abandoned mausoleum dedicated to an obscure death god who was worshiped by sentient undead
2	The sun temple dedicated to the golden one, the only inhabitants are bald priests trying who try to eradicate every last shadow in the temple with candles.
3	A wooden tower where the wild hunt was worshiped before it fell into disrepair. Lots of taxidermists must have toiled for ages to put all these animals into the tower.
4	Water temple dedicated to the god of frogs and eels.
5	Creepy old temple dedicated to the nameless one..
6	Bathhouse of a thousand gods, countless little shrines between the hot tubs.

## THE WAY OVER THE CITY OF DREAMS

*Walking on top of the clouds above the city of dreams, every cloud a different dream. The peaks of the houses poke through the clouds and weird little fish swim through them, brushing past the legs of those that walk above.*

### Random Events (d6)

1	The awakening: The cloud starts to fall apart as piece by piece it gets replaced with the reality of the dreamer.
2	The nightmare, an enormous black horse with burning hooves races over the heads of the dreamwalkers. In its wake, creatures sprung from horrible dreams.
3	A building or part of a building springs to life and attacks the dreamwalkers
4	A cold whispering mist creeps out of the ground, trying to eradicate every source of heat.
5	Two dreams collide and merge, roll again on the random dream table.
6	Dream shuffle: The roles of the dreamwalkers in the current dream get shuffled around or reversed.

### Random Encounters (d6)

1	Floating dream stuff dissolves everything in its path
2	The red warlord of the kingdom of Aum
3	The child witch Yrsa with her murder of raven
4	The dream-stealer, a huge purple spider
5	A swarm of rats, agitated by the Piper
6	Snagbar the goblin alchemist with his floating gondola of wonders.

### Random Dreams (d6)

1	Help the dark emperor raze the white King's citadel.
2	Search for the lost child in the witch wood
3	Climb the endless tower, using long hooked staves
4	Race atop big wild boars through a mushroom forest
5	Repair the rampaging clockwork tower of the dwarven Machinist
6	Escape the Fire Giant prison that was built in the crater of an active volcano

## THROUGH THE SHIPS' GRAVEYARD IN THE SARGASSO SEA

*Within the bowels of a deep sea canyon lies the ship graveyard of the Sargasso Sea. Blue moonlight filters through the water above where a strong current makes travel impossible.*

### Random Events (d6)

1	A freshly sunken ship comes down, some of the crew still alive
2	An earthquake shakes the canyon, huge cracks appear on the ground letting out gas and scalding go water while large chunks of rock fall down from above
3	The massive swarm. Countless little silvery fishes swim through, obscuring the vision of all divers. From what are they trying to escape and what are the darker shadows that hide within it?
4	The Kraken floats over the canyon, making all sea life hide as quick as possible.
5	Dark clouds obscure the little bit of moonlight that was filtering through, plunging the canyon into the blackest pitch.
6	A strong current catches the swimmers at a bad moment.

### Random Encounters (d6)

1	The one eyed barracuda
2	a huddle of small skeletal Hammerhead Sharks
3	A huge but slow Anglerfish
4	Ghost of a drowned pirate still seeking treasure
5	The Sea Dragon on his way back from plundering the galleon of the king.
6	A group of merman and mermaids

### Random Places (d6)

1	The carrion fields: an open space between the ships where the current collected floating corpses.
2	A gigantic sunken Man-o-War from the Kingdom of Latem
3	A coral reef full of sentient plants
4	The sunken remains of a pirate fleet
5	An old underwater ziggurat
6	The lair of the water spider queen

# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### PART 3

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Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a few maps of interesting smallish lairs that could be used as the home of some monsters for wilderness encounters. No stocking needed, just the maps. Ruined bunker, old monastery, fort, giant hollow tree; those are just some ideas. Whatever you come up with is good.

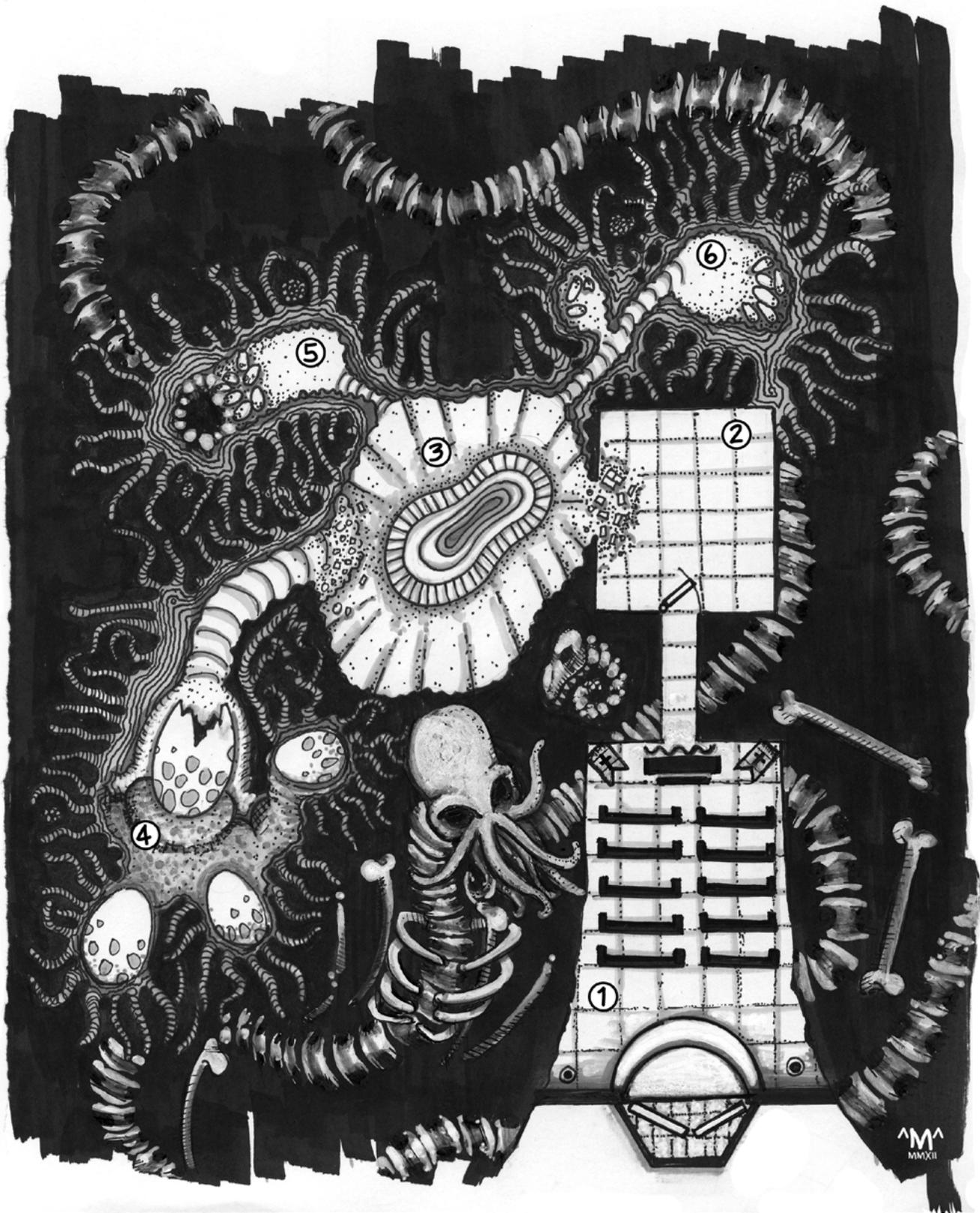
# TOWN & LAIR MAPS

(PLUS BONUS MONSTER ART)

By Kreg Mosier



TOWNVILLE



INFECTION



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a write-up of that old store down the dark alley, the one with the books filled with apocrypha and the elixirs of mysterious makes. And of course a halfling should run the place*

# MARLBOROUGH'S HOUSE OF ENIGMAS

By Erik Jensen

## TABLES FOR STOCKING THE SHOP ON THE FLY

1. The Wampus Country [d100 potions table](#), or any other potion-description table you like.
2. This shiny new [Big Elixir Table](#) generates components (of the “eye of newt” variety), diseases to be cured, and methods of preparation.
3. I strongly suggest you supplement the above liberally with [Ian McDougall's Snake Oil Table](#). Ian blogs over at [Benign Brown Beast](#) and you should check out his stuff.
4. If you need tomes and other written materials, consult [d100 Arcane Books](#) and [d100 Treasure Maps](#).

## MARLBOROUGH'S HOUSE OF ENIGMAS

At the end of the street in a ramshackle neighborhood sits the plain and fading storefront; only a small scrawled sign in the smoky window - *House of Enigmas Closed At Mealtimes* - betrays the nature of what lies within.

The interior of the shop is cramped and dark, with scattered lonely candles sitting here and there upon dusty stacks of books which seem to cover every horizontal surface, as though they sprung up there organically like some kind of moss. Upon myriad shelves sit phials and beakers, repurposed hatboxes, small coffers, and rusty tins labelled with titles like *Doctor Orpheon's Tell-Tale Witch-Burning Powder*.

The proprietor and sole employee will gladly let visitors poke about before he approaches them, typically startling customers by stepping out from behind a tall stack of books on the floor. He is the self-titled “Maestro of the Bizarre,” Marlborough Fenwater - a portly halfling with slicked-back hair and a probably-fake goatee who minces about in black clothing and natters on about “protecting oneself from invasion of the nethers” (although whether he’s talking about aliens from a grotesque nightmare realm, or venereal diseases, one can never surely say). He sometimes smokes a meerschaum pipe carved to look like a devil’s head, and his clothing often smells of the clove-and-vanilla pipeweed blend he favors.

Marlborough is gregarious enough and will happily banter with customers and attempt to lead them to just what they need, even if it always seems that what they really need is conveniently the same thing of which Marlborough has an

entire box full. He is quick to diagnose seeming maladies and prescribe powders, elixirs, and marginally-occult self-help books which will “clear that up in a right jiffy”, whether the issue is baldness, excessive flatulence, or possession by pain demons. Marlborough claims to have occasional contact with “evil spirits” and the like, and enjoys pretending to be edgy, transgressive, and possibly in league with diabolic forces. The halfling himself is not a spellcaster of any sort, but he does claim to “know people” of any given specialty; he will name-drop wizards and witches from whom he received a rare product or a choice piece of advice. Mostly he’s full of crap, but there’s a reasonable chance he has had dealings with some of the other local movers and shakers - he may even owe them money...

He does have a ridiculous amount of stock, however, and there is a 1% chance that should customers be looking for something specific - a given book on magic, a certain kind of potion - that he will indeed have just the thing somewhere in the shop. How long it will take him to locate the item in question is a rather separate matter. Marlborough keeps a wide variety of books and scrolls, elixirs and potions, and occasional other trinkets. Some of them are even genuinely magical. Marlborough will buy and sell strange items, and may prove a useful contact when it comes to monetizing less-obvious treasure. (“The severed hand of a ghou, you say? I’ll give you ten gold for it!”) Also living in the shop is a mangy old tomcat, usually asleep - the sort of cat that just hates people and refuses to be petted. Marlborough likes people to think that this cat is his hell-infused familiar.

(I’m thinking *Black Books* mixed with Sir Simon from “Pit of Ultimate Darkness” on *Kids In The Hall*, honestly...with some *Oddities* mixed in)

## RUMORS & FACTOIDS REGARDING THE HOUSE OF ENIGMAS

1. Marlborough keeps his shop money in a cigar box on one of the shelves; it has a pretty red label on the outside, and a poisonous centipede-thing on the inside...
2. When tipsy, Marlborough claims his surname isn’t really Fenwater. Depending on his mood, he either claims kinship with the Duckworths (a fairly well-known clan of halfling merchants and explorers) or the Brackenboroughs (halfling royalty!).
3. The House of Enigmas used to be run by a kindly

## MARLBOROUGH'S HOUSE OF ENIGMAS

---

old woman everyone knew as Aunt Edna. One day she disappeared, and Marlborough was the new proprietor.

4. That halfling is a demon in disguise, I'm telling you!

5. Don't trust anything he says. I bought a potion that was supposed to give me long, luxurious hair. Boy, did it ever - by turning me into a woman...

6. The "Maestro of the Bizarre" owes a significant amount of money to the local crime syndicate; several months ago, Marlborough got his hands on a talking-board that he really thought could predict the outcome of horse-races, if he could just figure out which race it was telling him to bet on. To this day he swears the planchette was giving good advice, but not for that day's races...maybe races ten or twenty years in the future.



Do you have any floss? I have a femur stuck in my teeth!

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a mini 'dungeon' (could be an abandoned mine, a crumbling ancient villa on a hilltop, an ancient tomb, or a half-sunk war-hulk off a rocky headland. . .) taken over by a Master Thief, and used to stash backup magical items and loot (and possibly the makings of an alternate identity) should things ever go pear shaped in their adventures.*

*Of course, they protect the lair with a series of fiendishly clever traps! Only a thief of great prowess could get in there and liberate the goods. It would be nice if the process of getting through the dungeon was more than a simple series of 'detect traps' rolls. The players should have to \*think\* like a Master*

# AKKIMEDES' LOCK DUNGEON

By Peter B.

*Thief to get through. So, less munchkin dice rolling, and more Gconies figure-cut-the-traps gameplay. The dungeon can be presented as a series of room descriptions, or as a map and set of diagrams, or anything.*

*Thank you, oh my dear unknown Santicore!*

## BACKGROUND

The famous safe-breaker Alzayeen "the Crow" considered himself to be a connoisseur of locks. So when he learnt that a lock built by the great sage AkkimeDES was now on the vault of a foppish Caliph, he thought it deserved an owner who appreciated its qualities rather more fully than the Caliph did, and so he extracted the entire brass door from its hinges and carried it away.

For what the Caliph had failed to recognize (despite the attempts of his viziers to investigate the lock for themselves) was that the lock was itself a vault. The door is a minor artifact that can shrink people to tiny size, and within that locking mechanism is a hidden room that could secrete its owner's most prized treasures, and there Alzayeen hid several choice items. But, for all his pride at finding that chamber, the lock still conceals one secret from even him.

The interior of the lock is a small "clockwork" dungeon, moving through the workings should feel a little like picking a lock. The scenario has a slightly mathematical flavor to it: some groups might find it a little trivial while others might find it frustrating and boring. Those groups may need to make trips back to consult a sage who can give some clues (and fair enough for a thief to case the joint), but if Alzayeen should see signs that someone has been poking around he's unlikely to ignore them.

## THE GROTTO

Alzayeen's hideaway is located a full day's hard riding away from the city; it would take several days on foot, and that supposing that you knew where it was and weren't having to search for it. It is likely that the party will need some kind of clue to its location, perhaps by learning the general location and staking it out to see the thief visiting it. Hidden among a nondescript rocky outcrop is a hole a couple of feet wide leading into a large natural grotto, the sandy floor some 80' below (for a visual reference, search for images of "Majlis al Jinn").

A cursory examination of the area will find a stout wooden rod, somewhat wider than the hole, worn in the middle as if by rope rubbing against it. If the rod is wedged between the rocks, those wear marks are positioned over the centre of the hole, ready for someone to be lowered down to the floor. A closer examination would reveal that the rod has been ever so slightly sawn through and is far weaker than it appears. It will break under one of the character's weight - DM's choice as to which one.

Directly underneath the hole is a large pit (the remains of an ancient well) covered in a tarpaulin with a thin layer of sand on top. The pegs holding the tarpaulin are strong enough to support the end of a coil of rope, but not much more.

The sand at the floor of the cave hides a pair of **Sand Serpents**, the desert's equivalent of the Water Weird [AC 4, HP 18, 12, HD 3+3, MV 12", XP 442, 418; Attacks as 6 HD monster (THAC0 13), on a successful attack target must save vs paralyzation or be dragged under the sand and start suffocating; Takes only 1 hp damage from sharp weapons, normal damage from blunt weapons; when it loses all its hit points it is only disrupted and reforms after 2 rounds, killed by *Purify Food*, dispelled by *Dispel Evil*]. The serpents particularly target any characters who are either in the pit or near its edge (knocking them in); characters in the pit will then have a -2 penalty against their suffocating attacks as the sand pours down on top of them. The remains of several other victims are scattered through the sand on the cave floor; a thorough search, sifting through all of the sand, could turn up 3,500gp worth of coin and gems (Alzayeen has an agreement with the serpents and allows them to keep this treasure as part of the deal).

## THE NARROW PASSAGE

Leading out of the grotto is a narrow natural passage, almost a slot canyon, between 2-4' wide and 12' tall. At a bend in the passage, about 20' along, the sand on the floor has been mixed with a quantity of *Dust of Sneezing and Choking* (save

vs poison or die, disabled with coughing and sneezing fit for 5-20 rounds regardless). Spread through so much sand, the dust is less effective (+4 to save, only affects a 5' radius), and probing ahead with a pole would stir up enough to cause some sneezing and give a little warning, but if enough of the sand is stirred up at once the dust acts at full strength.

Around the bend, a wooden pole stands from the floor to the roof, where it holds up one end of a hinged shelf filled with rocks. If the pole is dislodged and the rocks fall, they will cause 2d6 points of damage themselves and they will release the full cloud of dust. There is a second of the poles on the floor at the back of the first grotto.

## THE GREAT DOOR

The passage widens out again to 8', and a short flight of crude rock steps lead up to a great bronze and iron door with many symbols carved into it.

The third step up is false, made of lacquered skin from a "lurker above." It looks perfectly normal, but sounds a little odd when it's tapped; a successful check for traps on the steps from a thief would also indicate that there's something odd about it, but not what. The step can't support any weight, and underneath is a pair of bear-traps (1d8 points of damage, needs a successful "bend bars/lift gates" check to release them) and a pod of **4 large scorpions** (AC 5, MV 3", HD 2+2, HP 14, 11, 10, 9, XP 132, 123, 120, 117; Attacks 3 - 1d4 / 1d4 / 1+poison, save at +2 or die).

The door itself is neither trapped nor locked - a thief or dwarf can see that the door doesn't really belong on this wall at all. There are dials and controls for several locks along the edge, and the centre is covered in symbols from an ancient language; scholarly characters would recognize it as such, even if they can't read it. *Comprehend Languages* or *read magic* reveals the message "Name the greatest king and behold the majesty of Iskander Makedon" around a pictogram of a hand, an hourglass, and a tiny human figure; next to the pictogram is a dial and a small pencil-width hole. Placing a hand on the pictogram and saying "Iskander Makedon" causes the characters to shrink to a tiny size and appear at location A inside the lock. The hourglass indicates that the shrinking is temporary: typically it will last an hour, and it would be unwise to remain inside the lock when you expand again.

A particularly thorough examination of the door will spot the mark of the sage Akkimesdes - three shapes, a cone, a circle, and a cylinder (see the entry to Akkimesdes' Tomb).

## THE STORE ROOM

Beyond the great door is an unassuming 15' wide cavern that holds a chair, a low bed, a table and stool, an unlit brazier and charcoal, a couple of barrels in the corner, a lamp, clay jar, and wineskins lie on the table, and a broad chest at the foot of the bed. At the back of the cave a small cleft leads to a water

seep - a clay bowl collects fresh water from the spring.

The chest has a simple lock and contains a few sets of clothes (some are disguises - a caravanner, a servant, a merchant) some simple tools and utensils, and a small bag of coins (250gp value, mostly silver and copper with some gold). The barrels contain salted meat and some dried fruits, the wineskins have good wine, the clay jar holds lamp oil.

Behind the table, a large rock on the wall conceals a strong box, one foot cube. It seems to be made of iron with bands of some other metal around the middle and a dial made of crystal on top. It's really a glass bell-jar with a *Permanent Illusion* cast on it, coated with *Tanzar's Ointment of Ape-like Gription* (which instantly adheres to the touch), and filled with ordure and **6 Rot Grubs**. An incautious movement lifts the jar off its base and releases the grubs. This variety of grub is quite capable of burrowing through the sand on the floor to seek flesh. The salted meat could be used as a lure.

The lamp and the oil are both perfectly normal, but the lamp's wick contains hallucinogens (there are ordinary wicks in the chest). After the lamp has burnt for a turn, make a secret saving throw vs poison for each character; anyone who fails sees shapes moving in the shadows. If the lamp is not extinguished they must make a second saving throw vs spells or their vision blurs to the point that they can't distinguish between other people and menacing shadow shapes. The hallucinations end 1 hour after the lamp is extinguished, they can be cured with *Neutralize Poison* or *Cure Blindness*.

## THE LOCK

The lock is made of brass with some details added in other metals. The lock mechanism consists of three interlocking cogs - one with 8 teeth, one with 7 teeth, and one with 3; the spaces between the teeth are large enough for a character to stand in and push the cog in either direction. Where the cogs meet, the teeth fit so closely that a character trying to fit between them would be crushed. To keep track of how the cogs are oriented as the characters move through them, print the map twice, cut out the circles from one, and pin them to the other copy so they can rotate; remember they turn in *opposite* directions.

The spaces on the cogs are marked on the map by a letter - those letters are carved into the side of the respective space, in the same ancient script as on the door. While any character can see that they're the same script, only the character who was able to read the message on the door can translate them. The meaning of the letters is explained at location 8.

The mechanism has an upper and lower level, accessible only at certain points with ladders. The areas on the map marked in white are on the upper level, the lower level is in grey. The seven-toothed cog has a single tunnel leading across its lower level. The eight-toothed cog has a second set of teeth on the lower level. The lower and upper levels rotate at the same time, they aren't independent.

The lower level of the cogs has leaked some of its lubricant onto the floor - on the metal surface it acts like *Oil of Slipperiness*, making it almost impossible to keep your footing. Climbing the ladders with slick hands will likewise be difficult, but the oil can be wiped off with a clean cloth.

## LOCK AREAS

1. The "hallway" leading to the keyhole is decorated by carvings showing a king leading armies in conquest, fighting great battles, and sitting on a throne with what appear to be other kings prostrating themselves before him.
2. The walls are carved with scenes of the king travelling through many countries. They show temples, cities, mountains, rivers, animals - some familiar to PCs, some not.
3. A ladder leads down to the lower level. When the cog is aligned correctly, the tunnel joins this to location 4. The floor is covered in slippery oil.
4. Another ladder leads back to the upper level.
5. Wall carvings show cities and buildings. A large disk on the wall is carved with four symbols: S, M, A, P - which represent four states. The wheel must be turned so the 'M' is at the top (representing 'Makedon' over all others).
6. Wall carvings show four people, one clearly the king from the other carvings, the others seem to be a philosopher, an old statesman, and a defeated king. Another large disk on the wall is carved with the symbols D, A, I, and P. It must be turned so 'I' is at the top ('Iskander' over the others).
7. A ladder leads down to the lower level. There a character can use the gaps in the lower level of this cog to travel around to location 8 (the two cogs don't join on the lower level, so they can travel in either direction). Because of the slippery floor, it's likely that the cogs will have to be turned by someone on the upper level and a character down here just holds on and slides with the cogs movement.
8. A couple steps up lead to a pair of doors, the lubricant ends at the stairs. The doors are locked unless the disk at location 5 is set to 'M', the disk at location 6 is set to 'I', and the two cogs are aligned so the symbols read: "ISKANDER\*MAKEDON" (the 'I' on the top cog lines up with location 3, the 'D' on the other cog is at the 12 o'clock position, read from the 'I' in a figure-8 pattern using the 'D' twice).

Attempting to open the door without those settings will lock the cogs in place - they will not turn until the entire mechanism is reset from the outside, using the dial by the keyhole that the characters entered through. Turning that dial makes the cogs spin - characters in the cog spaces take 1d6 damage from being thrown about, and must make a save vs paralyzation to jump to safety rather than being crushed between the gears. The lock can't be picked from here, but a *find traps* roll will warn about this locking mechanism.

Inside this chamber is Alzayeen's "special collection". On the

walls are several shelves with several small boxes and bags containing 4,500gp worth of coins sorted into separate bags by origin (it helps disguises to use the correct currency), various gems and jewelry totaling 12,000gp (a *Periapt of Foul Rotting* is mixed among them), a set of four *Figurines of Wondrous Power* (three Ivory Goats and a Marble African Elephant) in a box with a **poison needle trap**, and a set with 3 pots of *Nolzur's Marvelous Pigments* and a brush.

There are tapestries on the walls and rugs and furs on the floor which could fetch a further 1,000gp. In the centre is a simple rosewood divan lounge, it is clearly old, rather plain, and seems a little out of place; this was Iskander Makedon's lounge, it could be very valuable to a suitable buyer.

One wall has shelves with all manner of locks and a book filled with diagrams, notes, and information on how they work and how they may be picked. A thief who spends a month studying the notes and practicing with the collection of locks will gain 4,000 XP and be able to pick locks as if they were 2 levels higher; assassins can gain 2,000 XP by studying the notes for a week, but don't gain the extra skill with locks.

On the floor, obscured by the rugs, are a set of magical symbols (see **Symbol Handout**). By touching the cone on the first row, the circle on the third row, and the cylinder in the bottom right corner, a section of the floor disappears revealing an entrance to the final room. (Those symbols can be found among the great door's carving; they are AkkimeDES' "maker's mark.")

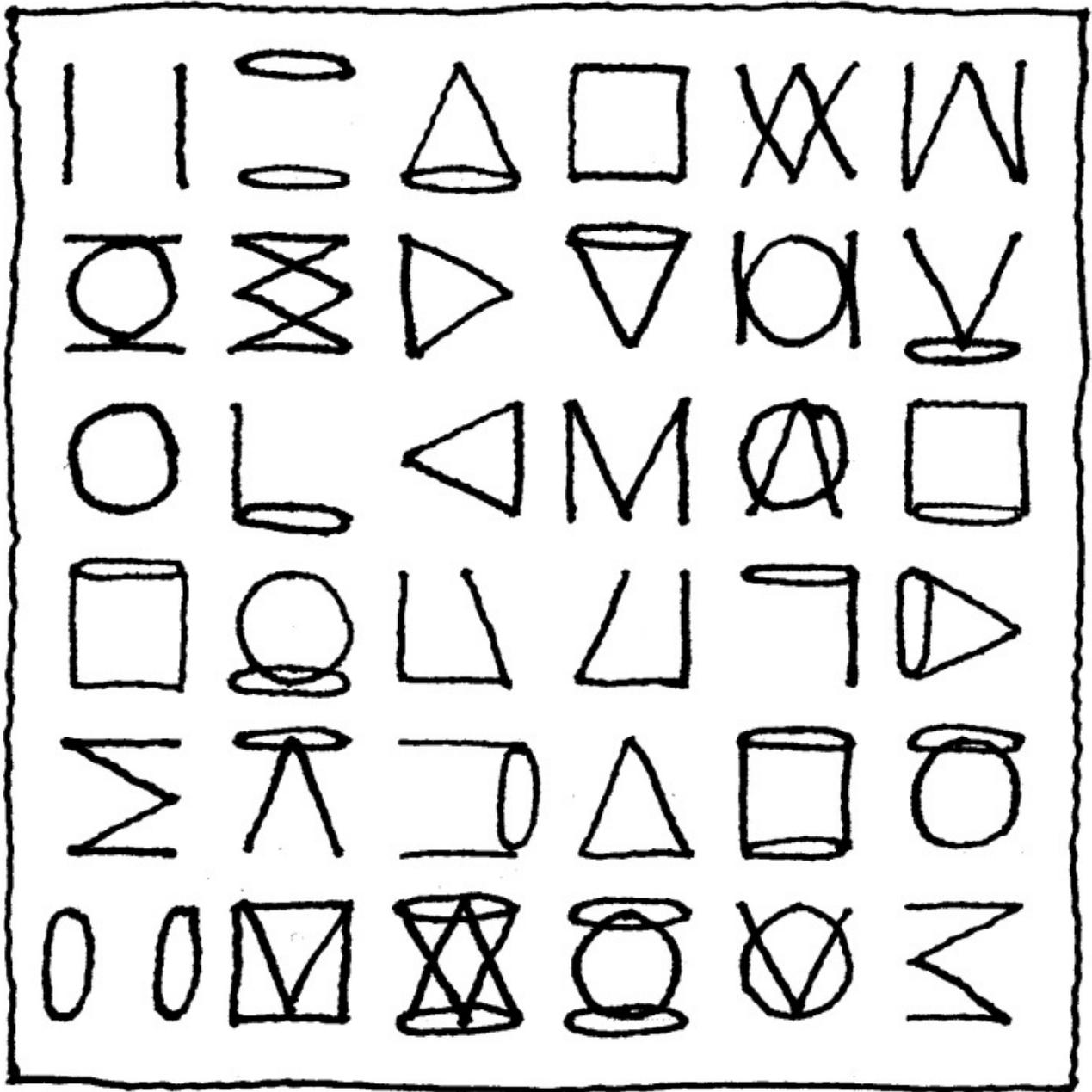
## AKKIMEDES' TOMB

There is a 10' drop to the room below, which is a simple 10' x 20' rectangle. At the other end of the room there is a sealed tomb; the tomb is carved with a cylinder containing a sphere and a cylinder - the mark of AkkimeDES. In the far corner a skeleton in tattered rags is slouched on a stool.

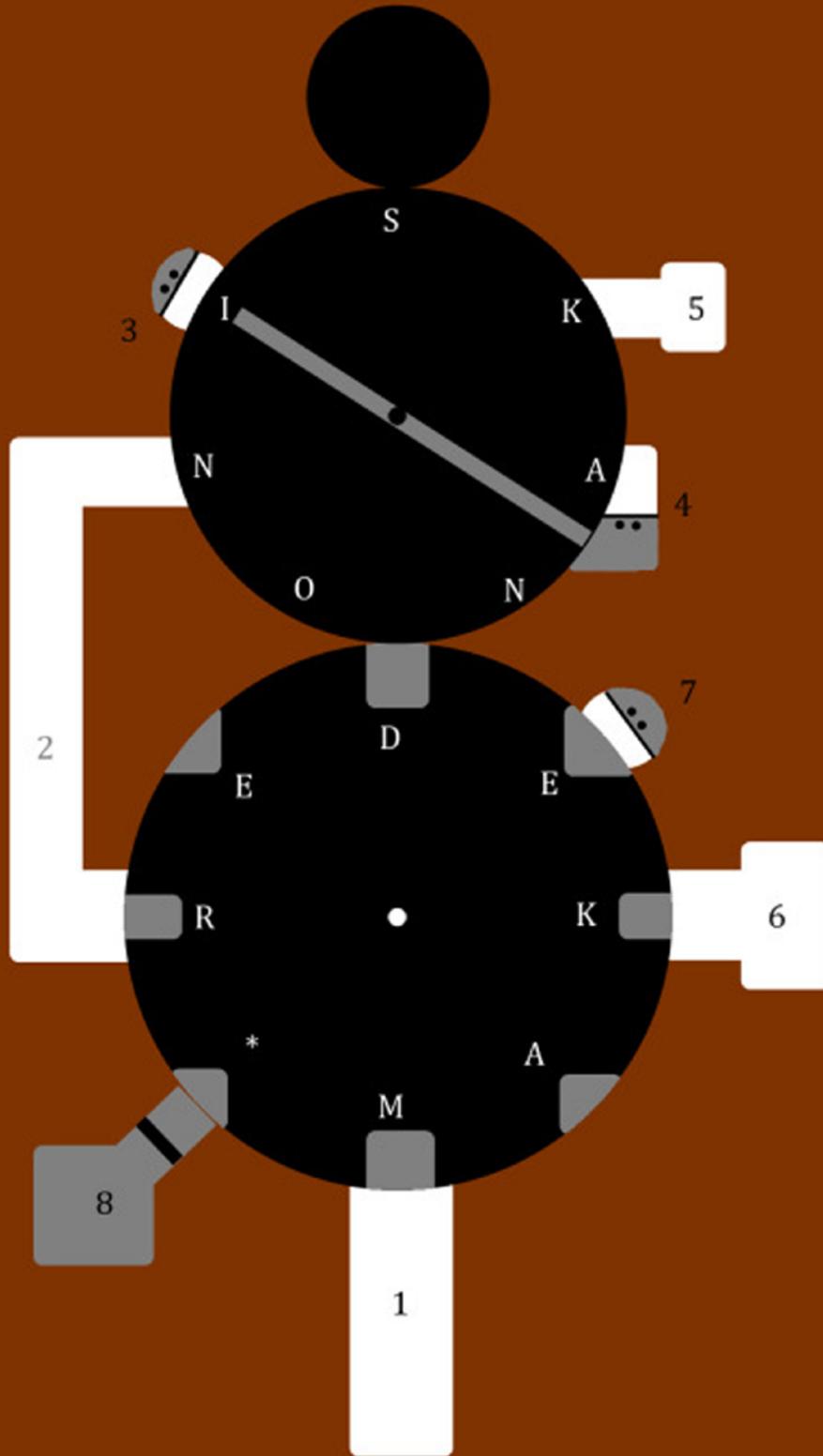
The skeleton was a disciple of AkkimeDES who took the dead sage's body to its tomb and then sat in the corner to accept his fate and watch over him. His devotion has transformed his spirit into something akin to a **wraith** [AC 4, MV 12", HD 5+3, HP 24; Attacks 1 / 1d6 damage and level drain; only silver or magic weapons can damage it], but it is Lawful Neutral and not Evil. His incorporeal spirit is not attached to his skeleton, which stays on the stool, and will not attack unless the tomb is interfered with. He will try to attack with surprise.

The tomb contains the remains of AkkimeDES and at his feet is a cedar box. Inside the box is the only copy of the *Palimpsest of AkkimeDES* - a collection of his thoughts, theories and discoveries that acts like a *Tome of Clear Thought*, but is written in that ancient language. It also contains a set of scales, the *Reckoner of AkkimeDES*- this device can count a large number of objects by simply weighing them, or can tell the amount of gold or other precious metals in an object.

Symbol Handout



Map of the Lock



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me an elven tomb for adventurers to loot:  
map, room details, monsters, and some treasure.*

# THE ELVEN TOMB!

By Adam T.

## FUNERARY PRACTICES OF THE WOOD ELVES

from *A Gazetteer of the Free Peoples*

Of the burial customs of the many races of the world, few are more curious than those of the Wood Elves of the Western Forests.

The Elves, as is well-known, spend their lives in the canopy of the enormous temperate rainforests of the slopes west of the World's Spine. Indeed, it is not uncommon for an elf to pass his or her entire (tremendously lengthy by human standards) lifetime without setting foot on the ground: only the hunting caste and some traders do so regularly.

The traditional elf village is, of course, a series of platforms in the tree-tops; clearly, such a mode of life makes traditional burial, as humans or dwarves understand it, impractical.

When an elf dies, the first order of business is to cut open a vein--usually the jugular--and to drain the corpse of blood before it can coagulate. The blood is retained in a funerary vessel. The corpse is washed, clad in a white death-robe, and placed in a bower at the pinnacle of a high tree.

For the next forty days, the corpse is left aloft in the bower to be eaten by birds and insects. Its blood is mixed with sacred soil--typically, loam from near the root of the village's central tree, blessed by a priest. The temples maintain a stock of sacred soil which is generally replenished yearly at the end of the rainy season (q.v. "Religions of the Elvish Races"). Into this mixture of blood and soil is planted one of the seeds of the central tree, and the seedling is nurtured within the funerary vessel until the forty days of mourning have passed.

At this point, a party is assembled to transport the remains, any grave goods, and seedling to the burial grounds, a vast expanse, comprising hundreds of square miles. Most tribes must journey many days to reach the grounds, which are held in common by all the elvish nations.

The burial party descends from the canopy to the ground by means of rope ladders they have brought. A glade where sunlight reaches the forest floor is found, and the seedling is planted. The remains are laid on the ground nearby, but not so near that scavengers are likely to inadvertently damage the seedling. A barrow is constructed--either a mound of earth, a cairn of stones, or a handy cave--and the grave goods are laid within. Then it is sealed again; very often the priest will place runes of warding on the cairn, or, insidiously, work a bladder full of a typical elf-potion of rage or sleep into the construction so that a tomb robber will break the container and be exposed to the potion's effect.

Elves believe the spirit of the departed binds to the seedling while the tree lives, and acts as a jealous--and nearly mindless--guardian of its burial site. When the tree finally dies and topples, the spirit does not depart. But just as the tree is reborn, in a sense, in the form of a circle of seedlings around the fallen plant, the spirit of the elf becomes more diffuse. As the enormous spruces and firs that form the pillars of a village live two or three hundred years, after a thousand years or so, the guardian spirit of the locale has none of its original individuality and has become a vague sort of impersonal forest guardian, infusing an area of a few hundred yards around the site of the original tree.

Not infrequently, bands of adventurers decide that Elvish tombs will be easy pickings. They could not be more wrong. For starters, the terrain in which the burial grounds are found is often terrifically inaccessible on foot: creek-riddled mountainsides; the low, flat parts are miserable bogs of devil's club and slide alder, the steep parts are both slippery and sheer, and ravines and cliffs often make finding a route between two close-as-the-crow-flies places very difficult. Needless to say, there are not widely available maps to elven burial grounds, and any map purporting to be such is very likely false.

The difficulty of the terrain, though, pales in comparison to the threats posed by the various inhabitants of the grounds. In addition to the spirits of the trees themselves, the burial grounds are home to animals natural (grizzly bear, dire wolf, mountain lion) and supernatural (shambling mound, dryad [see below]). Further, it is quite common for treants to take up residence in a burial ground; they have no objection to the occasional elven burial, and are quite happy to help the forest spirits defend their homes against interlopers. Any elven hunting or burial party that encounters tomb robbers will neither ask for, nor give, quarter, and will fight savagely and lethally.

Even once the animal and plant threats are dealt with, the problem of frequent fiendish traps on elf-barrows remains, as well as the disappointing fact that few of the barrows contain anything of any real value: most elves are buried with a few pieces of jewelry, and, if warriors, their weapons and armor (which may or may not be magical or impervious to the ravages of time). Elves do not typically bury coinage with their dead, and since they employ little metal, weapons and armor tend to be unusable within just a few years.

All of these factors combine to make looting elven tombs a high-risk, low-reward, usually quite-unpleasantly-but-swiftly fatal, occupation.

## SAMPLE ELVEN TOMB:

### THE TOMB OF SILENOR THE DREAMER

The Tomb of Silenor is in a high mountain valley near the northern end of the Burial Grounds. A map of the area is included below.

The valley is a little over a kilometer long and a little less than a kilometer wide. The main valley floor, where A and B are, is at about 1500m elevation. D is at about 1350m. The rock just upstream of D is therefore a waterfall, which falls about 120m in three plunges before hitting the small splash pool and then cascading another 30m down to the larger lake east of D. Likewise, the inflow to the large lake at the top of the page (northwest) is a series of cascades and waterfalls.

The valley itself is thickly forested in spruce and fir; it is typical climax forest, with some underbrush, then nothing but large branchless tree trunks until the canopy is reached some 25M up. Dotted throughout it are several glades, usually caused by lightning-strike fires or the collapse of large trees, which pulled others down with them.

The valley floor slopes up to the mountain peaks and ridges which surround it; the forest gives way to meadow and scrub as one climbs the sides of the bowl, and then the scrub turns to scree, which slopes steeply up to basalt cliffs. The peaks which surround the valley are about 2500m, and can be reached by experienced climbers without technical equipment.

Near the Tomb are four areas of particular interest:

**A)** is the **Barrow** itself, which is detailed below and has an accompanying map, following. The barrow rests within a glade created by the collapse of the tree planted for Silenor some 400 years ago. The tree itself can be seen, slowly decaying into the meadow floor, having cracked from a massive stump which still stands some 15 feet high, and fallen to the west.

**B)** is the circle in which the **Banshee**--the vengeful ghost of Silenor--roams. Once inside the circle, there is a 10% chance per turn that the banshee will appear and attack. If the tomb at A is disturbed, the banshee will rush from wherever it is (it can move 60 feet per round, and is undeterred by solid objects) to attack. The banshee has no memory of being Silenor, and no spell-casting ability.

**C)** is a cave that is home to a **Grizzly Bear** and her two cubs. They can often be found foraging near the stream. Their stats are below.

**D)** is a **Dryad** (see below). It is placed in such a way that a party attempting to find a route up the gorge by the side of the waterfall (and such a route does exist, and is the obvious path for a party that is not travelling in the treetops) will almost certainly encounter it.

### BARROW OF SILENOR THE DREAMER

The entrance to the barrow can be found by a careful examination of the southern end of the barrow-mound; it is clearly a dry-stone wall, although overgrown with vines. When it is breached, a DC 18 Reflex save must be made to avoid rupturing the bladder of *Rage Potion* held within. The potion quickly disperses; each round its effects work one more small hex outwards, to a maximum radius of 500 yards (which is to say, yes, it will just barely reach the grizzly cave). Any creature inhaling the potion must make a Will save at DC 15, with its Fortitude save bonus applied \*as a penalty\*, or go berserk and be compelled to rush at top speed to the source of the smell and kill whatever it finds there. Even normally peaceful animals, such as elk, fishers, and marmots, are affected. The effects last for 1d6 turns.

If the players choose to dig directly into the barrow, bypassing the wall, the thickness of the earth that surrounds it ranges from 3 feet (near the door) to ten feet (at the center).

Inside the outer chamber, at the bottom of a flight of steps, are funerary offerings: dried flowers, jugs of wine (some, perhaps, still drinkable, and worth something to collectors), long-returned-to-dust baked goods.

There is an interior stone wall with an obvious doorway, filled with a stone slab, in it. When the slab is touched, the rune inscribed on it activates: it causes 3d6 damage to the person who touched the door (DC 18 Will save halves) (a bloody stab wound appears on the person, per the *Runic Alphabet*, Fey spell), and 2d6 to anyone in the outer chamber (DC 15 Will save halves).

Within the inner chamber are Silenor's grave goods:

*Bone Armor*: this armor is made from intricately-carved bones of large ungulates (moose and caribou, mostly). It is useless as found, as the leather thongs that bind it together have rotted, but if they are replaced, it protects with AC Bonus +4, Check Penalty -2, no speed penalty, Fumble Die d8. It is worth 400 gp to a collector of elven antiquities.

*Exquisitely-carved bow*: Unfortunately, the bow has dry-rotted, and an attempt to string it will result in its shattering. It is worth 35 gp as a curio to a collector.

*Mithril Rapier*: Incredibly light, yet sturdy. This mithril rapier hasn't corroded at all. It does 1d6+1 damage, weighs two pounds, and is worth 80 gp to a collector.

*Fly rod*: Silenor liked to fly fish. This rod is unbelievably light, and beautiful in a minimalist way. It is enchanted to resist the effects of age. It confers a +5 on any effort to catch a fish with a fly, assuming that the wielder is skilled in the first place. A serious angler would pay 100 gp for it.

*Staff*: This is a beech-wood staff topped with a small deer antler. Once it is bonded to a new owner, it becomes a +1 magical weapon that inflicts 1d4+CL, and can emit light in a

20' radius ranging from nothing up to full daylight. It grants a +1 to spell checks on all Sleep spells and a +1 bonus to all saves. Once it is bonded to an owner, the owner takes 1d4 hit points per caster level if the staff is destroyed. It is worth 300 gp in its unbonded state. Its primary value, in its bonded state, is to threaten the wizard to whom it is bonded, and it is worth whatever he or she is willing to ransom it back for.

*Spell Book:* time, damp, and insects ruined Silenor's spell book; this pulpy mass of pages has no value whatsoever.

*Turquoise Necklace:* This is a silver necklace with large polished pieces of turquoise. It's worth 50 gp, and has no enchantment or function besides being pretty. The tarnished silver needs a good polishing before its value is apparent.

## MONSTERS (DCC statistics given)

**BANSHEE:** Init +3; Atk: Claw +2 melee (1d4); AC 16; HD 4d12 (28 HP); MV 60; Action 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5. Special Powers: **Fear:** anyone viewing the banshee must make a DC 13 Will save or flee in terror for 1d6 rounds, there is a 50% chance that a fleeing character will drop any held items. **Wail:** once per day, the banshee can Wail, all creatures within a 30' radius of it must make a DC 15 Will save or die. **Incorporeal:** immune to non-magical weapons (+1 or better required to hit). **Undead** and subject to turning. AL C.

This banshee appears as a transparent, floating, rotting elf corpse, dressed in the rags of wizard's robes and carrying a wizard's staff.

**GRIZZLY BEAR:** Init +1; Atk: bite +4 melee (1d6), 2 claws +2 melee (1d4); AC 14; HD 3d8 (14 HP); MV 30; Action 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

This grizzly sow becomes enraged if her cubs are threatened, and gains an additional +2 to hit and damage with each attack, and an additional +4 to Fortitude and Will saves.

**GRIZZLY CUBS:** Init -1; Atk: bite +1 melee (1d4), 2 claws +0 melee (1d2); AC 13; HD 1d8 (5 HP); MV 20; Action 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

**DRYAD:** Init +0; Atk: Tentacles +2 melee (1d4 + grab), Digest auto (1), **Charm** (DC 12); AC 19 (trunk exterior), 10 (dryad-fruit), 8 (interior); HP: 5 per tentacle, 20 (fruit), HD 15d8 trunk (must kill trunk to kill creature); MV 0; Action 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref n/a, Will n/a; AL N.

The Dryad is basically a giant pitcher plant. It's about 70 feet tall; the trunk is 20 feet in diameter. Branches start about 20 feet up. In form it resembles a very fat weeping willow with a platform of broad, flat leaves atop it. On top of those leaves is what appears to be (from a distance) a beautiful, naked woman. When the tree hears/feels large creatures approaching, it dangles the woman atop the leaves and makes her dance. Viewers must make a DC12 save or be charmed; if charmed, they are compelled to get to the woman.

The woman-thing is actually bait-fruit. It is kind of mushy on the inside, about like a mango, and smells of orange flowers and cloves. It probably tastes awesome.

The willow-frond-like appendages hang down in a ring about ten feet outside the trunk; they can grasp anything from five to fifteen feet from the trunk. There are hundreds of these tentacles, but only one will attack a creature at any one time. If a creature is grabbed by a tentacle, it does 1d4 damage initially, and then the creature must make a contested strength check against the tentacle's strength of 17 (+2) to avoid being grabbed. A grabbed creature takes no further damage, but is lifted thirty feet into the air after one round (standard falling damage applies). After two rounds the creature is over the leafy platform (no damage, but see below); after three rounds it is partially lowered into the dryad's digestive cavity. On the fourth round the dryad drops the creature into the cavity, causing 1d6 of falling damage, and see below for digestion damage.

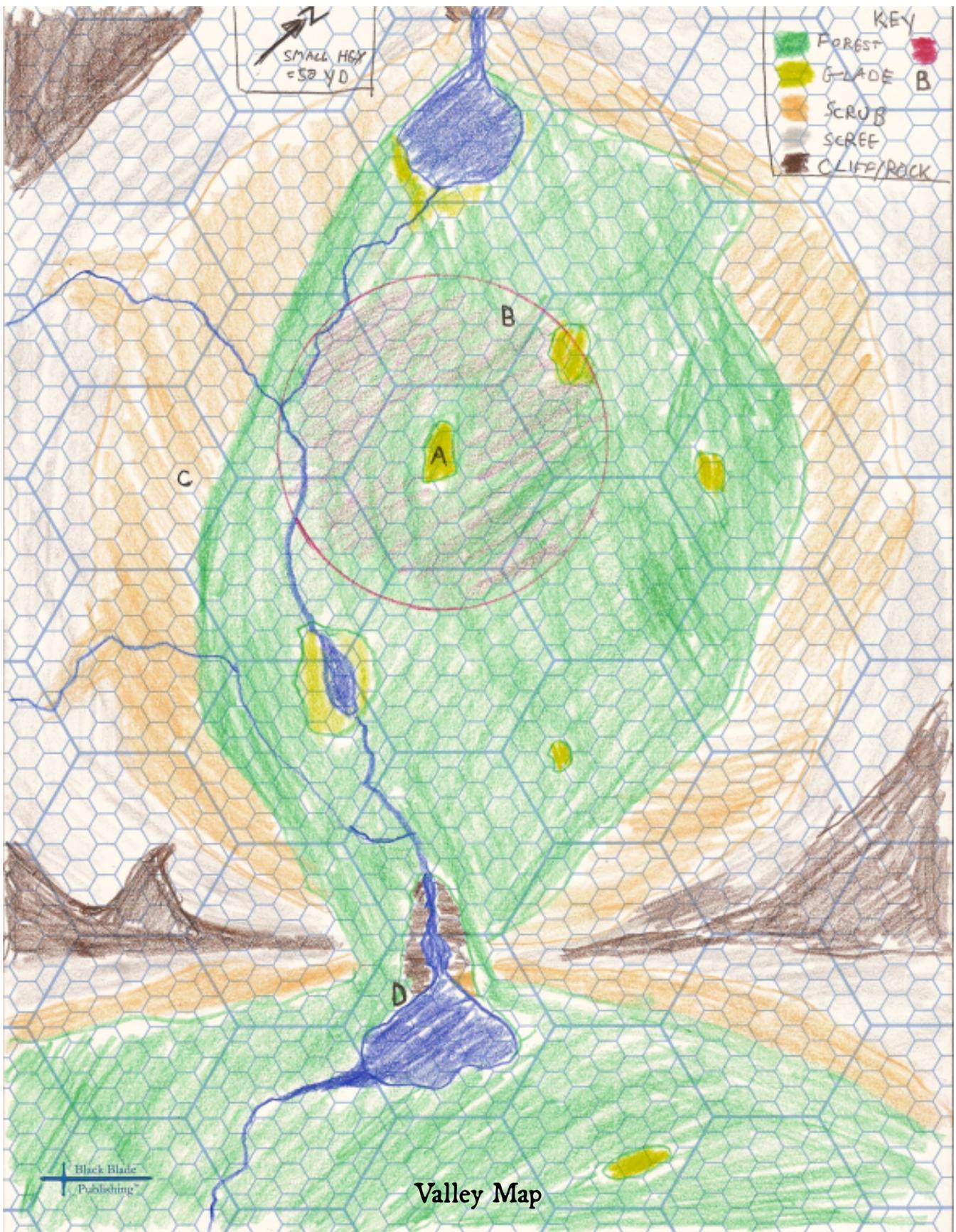
The base of the tree is ringed by six large knotty sphincter-like openings. Anyone really determined can push a hand, spear, or whatever into one. See below for digestion damage. There is a notable smell of vinegar around the base of the trunk (this is actually digestive acid), and a conscientious search will turn up 1d6 gold pieces, as well as small bone fragments, outside the sphincters. The trunk is easily climbed (DC 5), as it is very knobby and burlled. It takes four rounds to get to the lowest branches, and from there only two more rounds to get to the platform.

Once on the platform, anyone who approaches the woman will trigger the big, flat leaves to collapse inwards. Anyone on the leaves must make a DC14 reflex save, or fall into the digestive pit, taking 2d6 damage (plus digestion damage below). Once the pit has collapsed, the bait-fruit will be pulled upwards, and the charm DC is reduced by two. If the fruit takes damage, anyone who sees it happen will realize that there can be no bones or organs inside the "woman," and rather than spurting red blood, she oozes green sap; that is good for another two points of charm DC reduction.

Anyone in the pit takes one point of damage from the digestive acid per round. However, the acid will eat armor first; it reduces armor protection by one point per round, and only when the armor is no longer protective does the acid begin to eat the character. A character can cut his way through the side with a piercing or slashing weapon; it takes 25 points of damage to cut a hole large enough for a human, dwarf, or elf to squeeze through; 15 for a halfling.

If the creature is killed and cut down, or if it is somehow persuaded to void the contents of its digestive pit (perhaps through a timely *acid cloud* spell), a further 2d12 gold pieces will be found in the (acidic) sludge. Anything that is not gold or glass is dissolved over time; every few weeks, the tree will spit out a mass of (white, polished) bone shards.

# THE ELVEN TOMB



Barrow Map

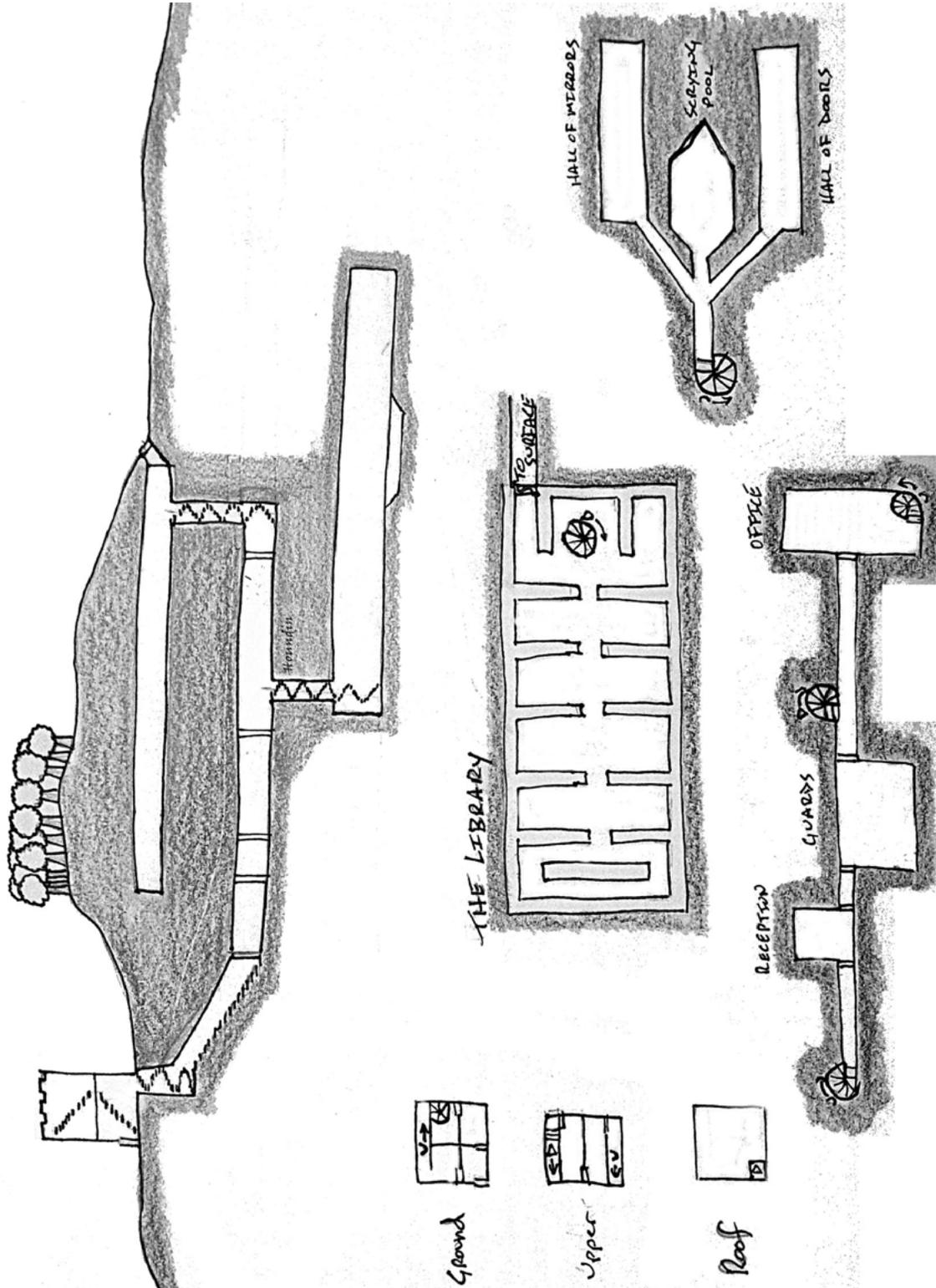


Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a map of a lair (or just an inner sanctum) that would best suit the needs of a Collector of Secrets...

# COLLECTOR OF SECRETS MAP

By Anthony F.



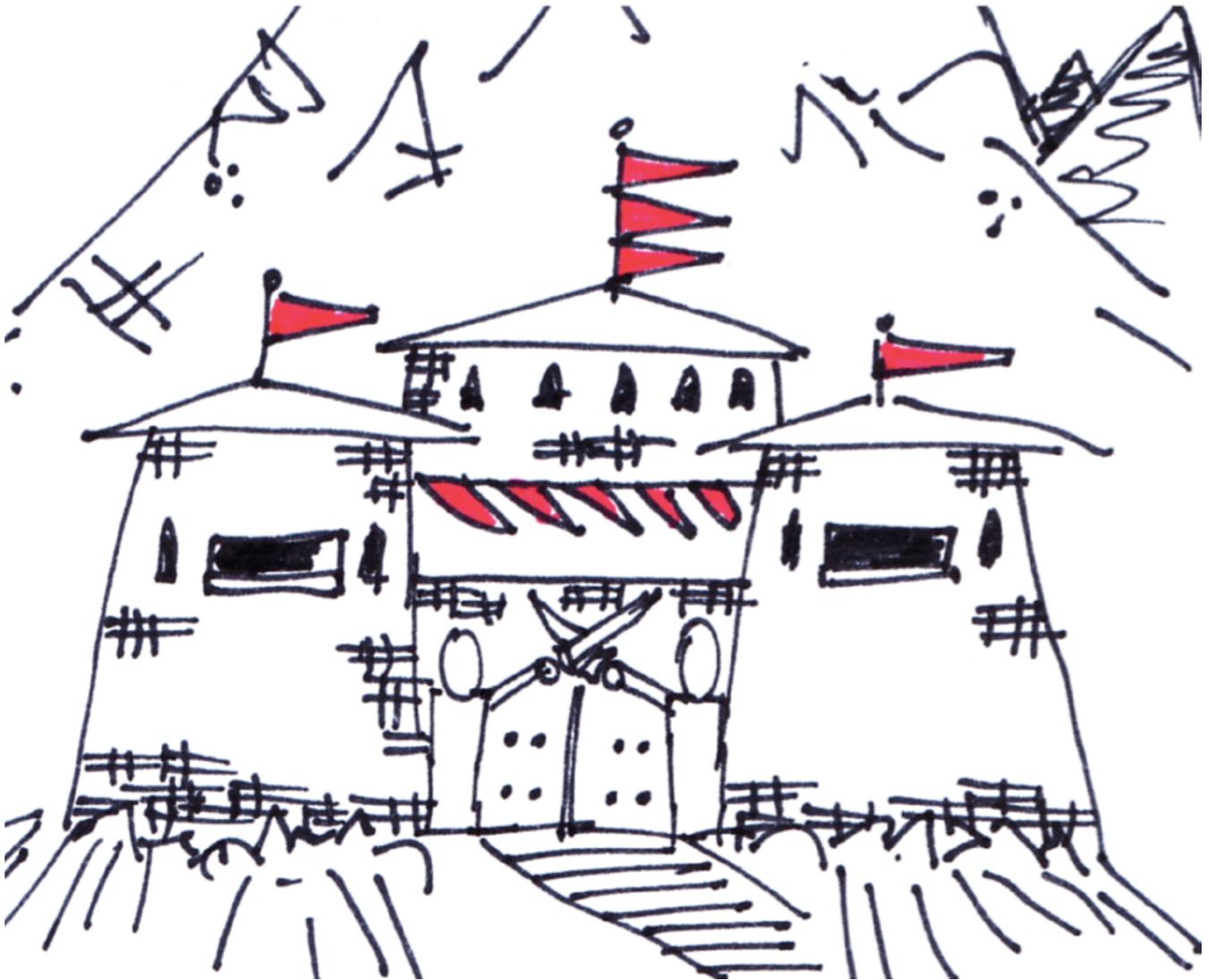
*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a Tibetan-themed or  
-flavored site for a fantasy game.*

# TROUBLE AT TANGKOR

A TIBETAN THEMED SITE

By Rob S.



A frantic monk novice (lvl 0) of the Yellow Hat Sect tells of a hobgoblin raid on Tangkor Temple during the night and how he escaped thanks to a controlled fall from a terrace. Fleeing he heard the screams of his brothers.

**What's happened?** A Spirit Naga seeks to free the trapped spirit bound in the earth beneath the temple. To do so she has charmed a yeti and a tribe of man-flaying hobgoblins. The

Spirit Naga's potent spells overwhelmed the temple guards. The raiders are now looting the temple and conducting a ritual. 10 minutes from when the PCs arrive the raiders break into the armory, in 30 minutes they burn the library, in 45 minutes the Abbot is sacrificed and the trapped Spirit Naga is released. Finally in 50 minutes the temple is set alight and the raiders leave with their loot.

# TROUBLE AT TANGKOR

d6	What do you know about Tangkor Temple? (Intelligence bonus number or facts)
1	Spinning the temples prayer wheels counter clockwise attracts wrathful spirits.
2	The Abbot is old and infirm but much loved by the people. He is descended from the oldest of noble families.
3	A past Abbot trapped an evil arcane spirit within the earth at the site.
4	The treasury contains a gold ring, jeweled statue and a horrific black stone head. Each is displayed for short periods during the year.
5	The Guardian King is the patron deity of the temple. He is guardian of the underworld.
6	The temple is a pilgrimage site for many who come to hear the whispers of the deceased.

**1. GATES** - A high wall extends around a temple built into the side of a mountain. Prayer flags, mounted on a copper gilded roof whip about in the breeze. 1,000 steps carved into the steep mountainside lead to the temple gates. The temple gates are carved with images of the Four Guardian Kings. They have been closed but not barred by the raiders. Two great statues of Guardian Spirits flank the gate. From the front they appear ferocious but when viewed from the back they seem to smile. The sound of a ram and the screams of tortured monks can be heard.

**2a. COURTYARD** - The flagstones are worn smooth from the many pilgrims the site has seen. There is a simple well. Flanking the entrance are ranks of prayer wheels hung vertically from poles. If PC's read the short prayer on the wheels and spin them they receive a one-time boon. Boons last while PC's are in the temple and depending on their success may become permanent.

d6	Spin wheel clockwise	Spin wheel anti-clockwise
1-2	Precognition - AC improves by 1	Call upon Guardian King. Gain fearsome aspect once a day: acts as <i>command</i> spell.
3-5	Immune to mind effecting spells	Gain extra pair of arms (second attack)
6	+ 1 Wisdom (permanent)	+1 Strength (to racial max)

**2b. FLAYED MONKS AND DEMON TRAP** - In the right corner of the courtyard is a 1.5m stone column with a hole in the top. Pilgrims listen to hear the whispers of underworld deep within the earth. Around the stone column **8 hobgoblins** go about the gruesome task of flaying live monks. Once they are through with their fun they cast the eyes, lungs and heart into the hole at the top of the column. Their work makes so much noise that only it's absence will

raise suspicion amongst the remaining raiders. It will mask the sound of much violence. A **hobgoblin black shaman** rocks back and forth muttering dark prayers while all this goes on. There are **6 bound monks** (C1) who are being flayed / sacrificed one at a time. In an hour the Abbot will be sacrificed which will release a legendary Spirit Naga from the stone column. 4 monks have been sacrifices, their skins piled near the library entrance.

**2c. YAKS AND SERVANTS** - **2 goblin slaves** are meant to be watching over **4 yaks** but are instead getting drunk and joking around with the yellow hats of the local monks. The yaks are loaded with loot. So far it's important looking scrolls and texts, a few swords, some hand prayer wheels, a pair of inlaid horns, some religious silk paintings, a number of statues and plenty of Chang (a potent barley beer). Strapped to the back of a yak is an odd howdah made of silver. Inscriptions on the howdah indicate it as the throne of a Naga. Black shaman prayer flags on poles are attached to the yak's saddles. If taken down the raiders take -1 to all rolls.

**3. LATRINES, BATHHOUSE, AND FUEL** - The terrace provides hazardous access point if required to the cliffs 15' below. It was the point from which the monk novice escaped. A great sunken stone bath heated from below. Adjoining dressing chamber. Stores contain urns, large tubs for hot water and blocks of dried yak droppings used as fuel to heat the baths as cook and heat rooms.

**4. MONKS HOUSE** - Already looted. Each sparse room is separated by a yak hair curtain and contain a straw mat, bowl and lamps. There is a communal eating room with a low table, bowls and utensils. There is also an adjoining kitchen with a large hearth fireplace and various cooking pots. The pantry contains roots, herbs, salt, hard cheese, barley meal and butter. There are a number ceremonial butter tea churns worth.

**5. TRAINING AND ARMORY** - **4 hobgoblins** attempt to ram the armory gate down. In racks and hung on the walls are 10 Scale mail shirts, 15 spears, 10 shields, 20 swords, 10 bows and 200 arrows. Also stored in the armory are prayer flags for various events on the calendar. The training room contains various educational texts on medicine, astrology and divination. There is a chest full of herbs and skeletons for teaching medicine and anatomy. There are also several low tables.

**6. LIBRARY** - **2 hobgoblins** and **6 goblin slaves** looting the library with arms full of books and scrolls. A lit lantern lies at the entrance. Lose papers are scattered all about the floor. Block printing press. A cupboard contains stores of blank parchment, inks, brushes and paints. A small shrine at the entrance displays the Six Sages of the Six Realms, illuminated scrolls, and cloth painted scrolls.

**7a. MAIN TEMPLE FOYER** - Mural tells the tales of the 16 Abbots of the temple. The legend of entrapping the Spirit

# TROUBLE AT TANGKOR

Naga in the earth at this site is amongst a number of stories. The **hobgoblin chief**, his **hobhound (wolf)**, and **two elite guards** are being entertained by a chained monkey trained to spin the prayer wheel at the temple's entrance. Their armor is made from cured flayed human skin. They have recently looted some silver statues from the Main temple.

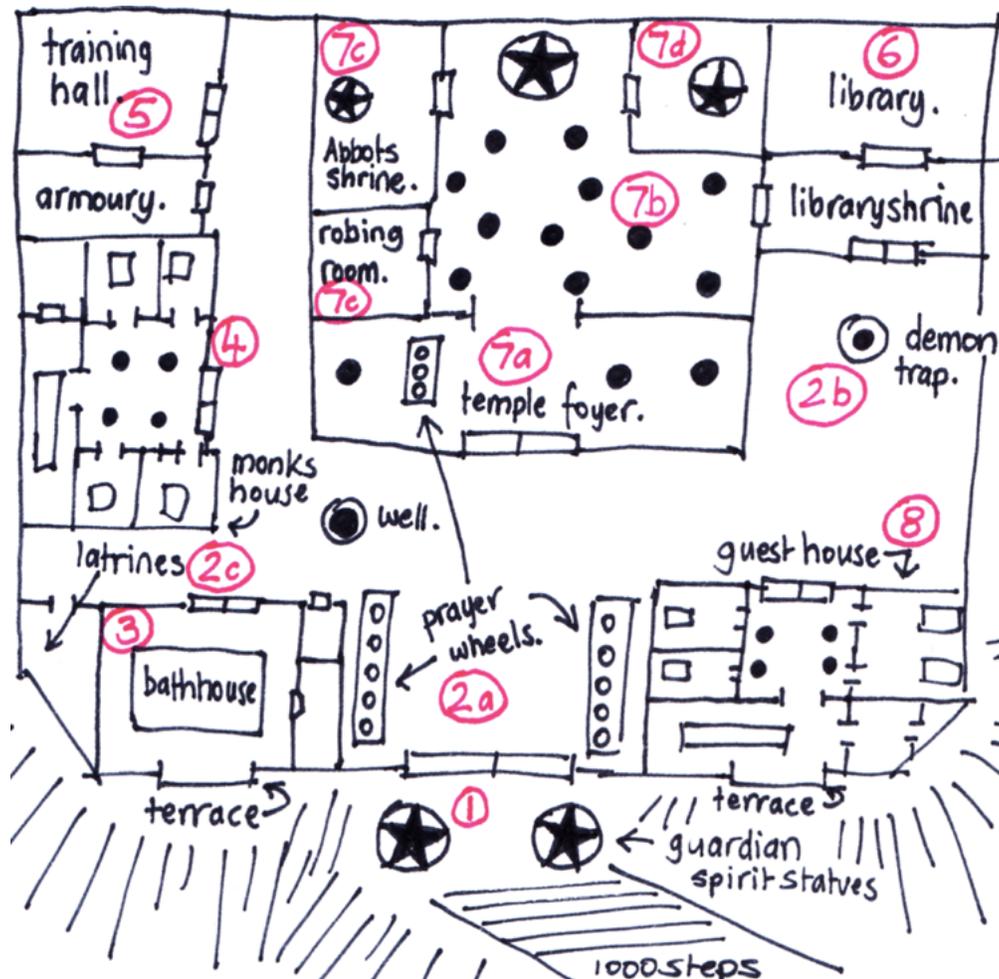
**7b. MAIN TEMPLE** – High roof, painted columns, smoke filled from burning censers. Murals around the walls depict the 6 realms and have a meditative focus. A **Yeti** lurks amongst the smoke filled room using the columns for cover. It will try and attack with surprise. A gold gilt statue of the Guardian King stands at the far end of the temple. Before it rest 7 bowls filled with water and 2 skull caps; one filled with blood and the other nectar. If a player leaves a suitable offering roll on the prayer wheel table above. The **Abbot**, old and frail, sits with eyes closed meditating and clutching his prayer beads. He is charmed and has been convinced by the Spirit Naga that demons are trying to lure him from the main temple, thus he ignores all distractions. His heart could break if he sees what has happened outside or he could go on a bloody rampage (C6).

**7c. ROBING CHAMBER** – contains red robes and the signature yellow hats of the sect.

**7d. BLACK STONE HEAD – SPIRIT NAGA** prays before the Black Stone head. It has already cast several spells assaulting the temple and seeks to replenish them through prayer. The black stone head is of the wrathful god Ramati. The head is brought down to the village on occasion by the monks and placated with offerings of wine that is poured into its open mouth. An incense burner fills the room with pungent smoke that masks the smell of stale wine. The murals on the walls of the chamber depict the pantheon of spirits. One of the painted pillars in the room contains a secret drawer. Within is the ring of the first queen (*protection +2*) and a jeweled statue.

**7e. ABBOTS SHRINE** – antipathy zone repels evil. A sacred guardian spirit mask adorns a wooden mannequin garbed in the robes of the temple's first Abbot. Resting at its side is the *Sword of the North Wind*. Only usable by good. A +2 weapon that provides an aura of *protection from evil 10'* that hedges out charms. Murals on the wall depict the founding and construction of the temple.

**8. GUEST HOUSE** – 3 **hobgoblins** and 4 **goblin slaves** loot the guest house. For contents see the monk house above. The difference is a terrace 15' up from the cliffs outside that provides an alternative access point.



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a room of magical paintings that can be dropped into the lower levels of my tomb-themed megadungeon. Genzo is good, but no instant death traps please... otherwise let your imagination run free.*

# ROOM OF MAGICAL PAINTINGS!

By Sam Greene

## ROOM X: THE ETERNAL THAUMAESTHETIC CHAMBER OF CRESSIL UNTHWAIP

This room, of (whatever dimensions fit in your dungeon, but not too small, alright?) contains five paintings, a mural upon its high ceiling, and at the far end, a raised dais with a covered sarcophagus. The walls are streaked from water damage that goes down far enough to have reached all of the paintings, and dwarves or others skilled in engineering and/or subterranean navigation should receive a chance to figure out that the room is below a magical pool or fountain on a higher floor (your megadungeon has those, right?). Next to the door is a (golem or whatever is suitable for your dungeon level and ruleset. Think tough but not impossible) called the **Caretaker**. It is dressed as a gentleman's servant from the Golden Age [or whatever era the tomb is from], and also exhibits some sign of having been splashed by magically-active water.

The Caretaker, stiff but sweeping in movement like low-quality animatronics, greets any who enter the Chamber, identifies itself, and indicates that it can give tours: payment is taken through slots on its hands, framed in the appropriate metal: silver on its left hand and gold on its right. In addition, it makes a unobtrusively veiled offer to let the guests do whatever they like, including touching the art, loitering (even for hours to regain spells or heal) or even theft, if offered a coin of greater value. The Caretaker will answer questions posed to it, but has a tendency to repeat itself as if it only has so many phrases at its disposal. Its voice, especially when saying irreverent things about Cressil, sounds wet and slightly garbled.

If the Caretaker is offered a silver or gold coin, it guides the guests through the room with the appropriate commentary; if it is given a platinum or other valuable coin (which it takes by swallowing), it laboriously winks, then looks pointedly at the entryway and becomes unresponsive, although if paid it will provide the appropriate tour and return to its corrupt non-vigil; if the guests attempt to enter without paying, attack the Caretaker, squabble overlong about payment, provide a false or low value coin, or other nonsense, the Caretaker attacks until the offender/s leave. If broken open, the Caretaker has (d6: 1-4 an anticlimactically small number of coins in it, 5 a quite healthy haul inside, 6 is more stuffed than a lucky child's piñata).

The items of interest are numbered below in the sequence the Caretaker follows during its tour. Silver Tour commentary is careless and contradictory, and reveals Cressil's old relations' genuine opinion of him (but has one useful comment that the Gold Tour lacks), whereas the Gold Tour is somewhat more respectable.

### PAINTING 1: *Portrait of the Mage as an Old Man*

This portrait is of poor quality, unless Cressil was uncommonly ugly. It shows Cressil through a mirror, painting, and the clutter in the room around him. Cressil seems to have tried to color things realistically, but didn't do a particularly good job, and so the piece has an uncanny sense of unreality and sickness to it.

**Magic:** If the Portrait is removed from the wall, the image of the artist reflected in the mirror changes to the true form of any creature obscured by magic or shapeshifting that the painting is held in front of. Good luck finding a way to do it inconspicuously.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** "Cressil was a terrible relative. This painting is of him. He hated dogs, and his favorite food was cherry pie with sausage."

**Gold Tour Commentary:** "A Portrait of the Mage as an Old Man. This self-portrait was the first that Former Master Mage Cressil Unthwaip decided to show after renouncing spellcraft in favor of painting. Cressil, after much study, believed that only artists could achieve any lasting and worthwhile immortality, for magic could only either turn a man undead, which Cressil believed would drive him mad and to evil, or keep a man alive for longer with spells of longevity, that would all eventually fail."

### PAINTING 2: *Anfriela, in Repose*

This painting depicts a beautiful woman gazing out of a window, and is of far better quality than the first painting. The woman appears to be doing something with her hands and pondering something, but it's not obvious what.

**Magic:** If a viewer takes an interest in the woman in the painting (asking about what she is thinking of, what she is looking at in particular, what her hands are doing, etc.) or gazes at it overlong, they must make a saving throw or

be cursed to find little beauty in the world aside from that woman – and as Anfriela appears here as only a painting, even it cannot soothe their melancholy. (The viewer’s sexual orientation does not matter, although for those cursed who might find themselves attracted to the woman, other potential lovers now seem particularly uninteresting to them.) As a result, the viewer is cursed, until either the effect is removed by magic or the sufferer throws him or herself into freezing water. In addition to melancholy, the curse lowers the character’s charisma (at least of sufficient value to lower the modifier by one in whatever system you use), as any can see that his or her dissatisfaction has made him or her disconnected from the world.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** “When Cressil went mad, he stopped doing magic and started wasting everyone’s time. But he was weird before, even when he was a powerful mage, so no wonder he never married her.”

**Gold Tour Commentary:** “Anfriela, in Repose. Anfriela was Cressil’s lover at a young age, though she spurned him for another man. Cressil never took another lover and found solace only by studying, or, when particularly moved, by throwing himself into freezing water, a common constitutional in some barbaric cultures.”

### PAINTING 3: *Apples on a Table*

This painting is not of Apples on a Table. Due to the magic leakages that have changed all of the room’s paintings, it now depicts the wall it hangs on, but upside down (thus making it appear to be right side up in that image). See the description of the **Fresco**, below, for more, and where the apples and table are.

**Magic:** Apples on a Table, when grasped, orients the holder’s subjective gravity toward its own down; so holding it upright would feel normal, and turning it such that the top was oriented at the holder would send the holder falling into the wall in front of him or her. Taking it off of the wall would likely give the holder a strange sensation, and quickly readjusting it to be right side up should be hilarious. About four (or a number that at least contains the number of players at your session, plus a hapless torchbearer if you like) can hold the painting at one time. Any falling damage taken may result in a passenger losing his or her grip, which may result in more falling damage as real gravity reasserts itself. The painting is normal when not held, and the image does not change.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** “Cressil painted still life paintings when he wanted to be even more useless than usual. He hated the thought of death but everyone wanted him to die. He loved cats.”

**Gold Tour Commentary:** “Apples on a Table. Cressil spent time experimenting with still life, as evidenced in this painting of a table with apples. It is not one of his more well known works.”

### PAINTING 4: *The Siege*

This painting lies on the floor away from the wall where it should hang; the wall where it would sit normally has been chipped as if struck with great force. The Siege is the smallest painting in the room, about the size of a sheet of paper. It depicts soldiers holding a battering ram from the perspective of the door they’re about to charge into.

**Magic:** The Siege’s magic is activated when it’s placed against something such that the art can’t be observed. When it is, after three rounds the force of a battering ram comes out of the painting (this explains why it’s on the floor — someone turned it around when it was hanging on the wall, and it flew off). The Siege can be used to smash doors open but might also go off if, say, it’s placed in a backpack.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** “Cressil’s favorite color was blue, and his favorite food was blood sausage and cherries! His tower at (note: insert some description here that gives just enough information to lead to his land, which could now be a ruined adventure location or filled with wealthy descendents willing to pay for some of an ancestor’s keepsakes) was drafty and always smelled of guano. Isn’t this painting terrible?”

**Gold Tour Commentary:** “The Siege. When he was a great wizard, Cressil was enlisted to aid at a great siege and was trapped there for the duration. After seeing the deaths of so many, Cressil became a milksop of a coward and became so fearful of capture that he came to find being in any room without multiple exits excruciating.”

### THE DAIS

The Dais at the far side of the room is the least remarkable part (unless Cressil’s Muse escapes: see **Fresco**, below). Cressil’s sarcophagus, conspicuously free of decoration, sits here. If opened, Cressil’s skeleton is the sole content.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** “Here’s Cressil’s body. We all wish he’d died sooner. Why couldn’t he have made his paintings magical? They might have been worth something, then.”

**Gold Tour Commentary:** “Here lies Cressil. Death claimed him at last. We now keep his name alive.”

### FRESCO: *Mausoleum, From Above*

The fresco on the ceiling is, indeed, a small mausoleum as depicted from above, surrounded by waving grass, and thus the ceiling is mostly green aside from stones, dirt patches, and the marble of the tomb. The only unusual item is a broken table and a few apples, which lie in the painting directly above *Apples on a Table* (painting 3.)

**Magic:** The fresco can be entered as if a portal, and gravity reorients itself toward the field it depicts as the world broadens outward. The sky, however, still appears to be the Chamber, as would be seen from the ceiling. The table and apples are entirely normal. You may chose to have the world in this painting continue past the small area depicted, but no details are provided here.

The mausoleum in the fresco can be either one room or, if you like, as large as an dungeon or sublevel you place or of your own design; regardless, somewhere within is the *Spectral Muse of Cressil*, who appears as Cressil' does in his self portrait (painting 1), poor anatomy, coloration and all. The Muse knows all that Cressil did, and is essentially his ghost, but animated by his bitterness over his inevitable death made real. Nevertheless, he is cowardly and mean-spirited, and may be provoked into a fight (in which case, give it statistics as incorporeal undead). If a conversation is maintained, the Muse is found to be irrationally unaware of any exit from the painting despite its great desire to leave. It can be brought to the real world by active, handholding-level guidance, and if it is, it immediately merges with Cressil's skeleton, becoming a paint-spattered, skeletal, undead mage bent on creating art and clinging to its half-alive state by any means necessary. In addition, if this new Cressil learns of what the Caretaker says about him, he'll hunt down and kill his descendants (who at this point may not even know who he was). Assuming your players don't destroy him quickly, this new Cressil can stir up all sorts of shit in your campaign.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** "Up there is his mural. Or fresco or whatever you call it. He spent weeks down here before he died! At least we can charge admission to see the room. Do you think anyone will pay to hear about him?"

**Gold Tour Commentary:** "If you look up, you can see this room's largest piece of art, The Mausoleum. When Cressil came to believe his death was imminent, he ordered this chamber built, and died here painting this fresco. Although he was motivated to create art to deal with his fear of death, Cressil was a passionate painter, and despite the uncommon subject he was most passionate about this piece."

### PAINTING 5: *The Cylinder*

This painting is of a cylinder, silvery on top and half white and half red on the body, with writing on it in an unknown script. Oddly, the paint appears wet to the touch. Magic: If The Cylinder is touched, the touching creature changes in the following ways for the next turn and a half (fifteen minutes):

- 1) Gains a temporary boost of three levels, and temporarily learns new spells of any new spell levels;
- 2) Treats any d20 roll of 1 as a 20 instead;
- 3) Seems a bit more vivid, more interesting, and naturally draws the eye, and is treated as the party leader for purposes of reaction rolls and the like;
- 4) Becomes so supernaturally interesting that any action it takes during the time is easily remembered by any who witness it.

Only one creature can benefit from the painting at a time. As touching the painting smears it a bit, its magic only holds up for 2d4+3 uses.

**Silver Tour Commentary:** "Boring."

**Gold Tour Commentary:** "The Cylinder. This painting was completed long after Cressil had gone mad with grief at the prospect of death, and as a result no one has found out what it is supposed to represent. Despite this, it is the favorite of most who knew of Cressil's work."

### ADDITIONAL FUN!

Lines you can add to your Dungeon Rumor Table, or that could be discovered by Diligent Research or Consultations with Sages:

It is said that within the tomb is the burial chamber of a forgotten wizard. They say he gave up magic in his old age, but what wizard could have resisted enchanting paintings he made? (**T and F**; the paintings were originally nonmagical, but water from another floor's magical pool or fountain enchanted them, making this mistaken belief actually true.)

Some of the looters who have been within the tomb tell of a golem that speaks in riddles if given coins, but woe to those who try to cheat it! (**T**, mostly, except it's a tour, not riddles.)

Did you hear of the great wizard who desired immortality and became a painter instead? What sort of muse could lead him so astray? (**Neither T nor F**: Cressil did exist, but his Muse is an animate representation of his bitterness about death, not an outside force, as this rumor seems to hold.)

Did you hear the tale of Cressil Unthwaip? He was a great and wealthy wizard, but gave up magic in his dotage to become a painter instead. He required his heirs to complete a gallery for him with his money before they could receive the remainder, and they were terribly bitter about it. (**T**)

I heard the tomb has a room full of magical paintings that are all portals to other worlds, and open only if you touch them. (**F**)

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a city.*

*Thanks,*

*Ian St. Lawrence*

Ian also specifies that the city should be in a volcano or by one and gathers its power or a natural resource from the volcano's lava!

# WELCOME TO HEXOPOLIX

By Legion McRae

There is a vast desolation of arid badlands. Life is limited to hardy scrub brush and cacti, jackalopes and harpies. Few people live here by choice and they are nomads of necessity. Fewer still travel here who don't belong. The ruins that dot the land speak of a prosperous past long gone. Water is scarce, rain rare.

In the heart of this unmapp'd waste is a wonder of wonders. Having never seen it one can't imagine its like; once beheld it cannot be forgot. Its name: The Black Lamp.

## HISTORY

Since time immemorial the fire-topped mountain known as The Black Lamp has been a resting place and watering hole for tribesmen, traders and travelers. The fires at its peak and the waters at its base have ordered and preserved people's lives for millennia.

Then the hermit-guru Chrannak learned of the Brazen Spike and made first contact with the Azer. With the discovery of the brass citadel the mountain became a point of trade. In exchange for rubies and amethysts, the Azer provided foreign merchants with finely crafted tools, weapons and armor. The city of Heliopolix grew out of this exchange.

## THE BLACK LAMP

The Black Lamp is a volcanic cone thousands of feet high. From the rim of its crater it spreads out and down in a cascade of tumbled hexagonal basalt columns. It looks like an enormous heap of flagstones shaped by the design and stacked by the desire of the gods. The principal geological formations of the mountain are:

**THE SPRINGS AND GEYSERS:** Surrounding the base of the mountain are a number of warm and hot water springs and geysers. In the dim past they were visited freely by people traveling across the land. But they were all capped generations ago, at the time of the city's founding. Now the water is pumped to the top of the mountain, de-mineralized in huge distillation vats and piped down to cisterns and taps throughout the city.

**THE SULPHUR PITS:** At the foot of the mountain near the East Gate, between the Base Circular and the city walls, are a number of small holes crusted with yellow powder. The smell is awful. Not much goes on here except Flad's alchemical

research at the Sulphur Works he built nearby. Other than that minor activity the city has not found a use for the pits, or a safe way to get rid of them.

**THE BAT CAVES:** A pair of caverns yawn from the face of a small cliff jutting out of the foot of the mountain near the South Gate. The city walls march over this precipice and in the caves beneath lair thousands of bats. The guano harvested here is spread as fertilizer on the city's hanging gardens, fields, orchards and fuel forest.

**THE VENTS:** Halfway up the north face of the mountain are a cluster of cracks in the basalt mass. The Cult of Orsis built its oracular temple over the site.

**THE MAGMA LAKE:** Inside the mountain's crater, hundreds of yards below the crest, is a vast lake of iron-rich magma which flows never-ending in a counter-clockwise direction. It is set – and kept – in this motion by an array of enormous magically augmented lodestones. The lodestones also cause the noxious and volatile gases venting off the magma to form a flaming pillar hundreds of yards high, higher even than the peaks and vanes of the crest-top tower mansions that line the rim of the crater. Thus does the mountain get its name, for this flickering light can be seen for miles through even the thickest dark of storm and torrent. Many a lost and exhausted traveler's life has been saved in the night by the beacon of the Black Lamp.

## HEXOPOLIX

There are four terms for direction – other than compass points – used in Hexopolix. **Inside** refers to the crater of The Black Lamp. **Outside** means the face or outer slope of the mountain, where the bulk of the city is built. **Upside** describes the higher elevations. And **Down** is the lower slopes and foot of the mount; there is only a **Down** on the **Outside**.

Stones cut from the hexagonal basalt columns of the mountain itself are the source of the city's name. Almost all structures are completely black, if weathered. There are few buildings in the city which are other colors and they are typically built of the mountain rock and then faced with imported wood, stone or metal. Notable examples are the Alabaster Palace and the Vermilion Dome, both homes of wealthy merchant families located on the Upside Outside ring road.

**INSIDE:** There are only two activities that take place Inside: 1) Trade with the Azer of the Brazen Spike, and 2) Cremations of the dead.

There is a ring road around the upper reaches of the Inside. Along it are built the offices, banks and warehouses of the dozen or so mercantile concerns that conduct regular business with the Azer of the crater. There are also a couple of taverns here that cater to the workers and travelers associated with this trade.

At the point opposite the Brazen Spike is the Funeral Chute from the Upside Inside ring road down the face of the crater to the surface of the magma lake. Processions walk through the city from the temple of the deceased to the top of this tube. Here the body is laid on a tipping plate and, in a ceremony akin to a burial at sea according to the few in the city who've seen such a thing, slid into the molten rock to be incinerated, "Shot down the Chute" as the locals say.

**OUTSIDE:** The bulk of the city lies Outside, on the slopes of The Black Lamp. This includes everything from the tower mansions of the Recluses on the crater rim crest down to Hexopolix's walls and the Base Circular.

**UPSIDE:** The narrow band around the top third of the mountain is Upside. From here the wealthy and powerful look down – and askance – upon the scrabbling masses. The inns and taverns are upscale, the mansions huge.

**DOWN:** The lower parts of the mountain – and the bulk of the city – are Down, from the bottom of Upside through markets and neighborhoods to the city walls and the Base Circular.

All of the offerings and goings-on one would expect to find in a city of thousands are here. Below are some of the more important and unique features:

**THE BASE CIRCULAR and UPPER RING ROADS:** The Base Circular road loops round the foot of the mountain. It marks the limit of the hexagonal basalt that rises uninterrupted to the crest of the mountain. Connected to this route are the roads leading to neighboring lands and distant cities. There are four water taps near the city gates on the Base Circular for use by those wishing to pass the city by without entering.

Some hundred yards below the crater's crest Outside is a ring road. It circles the mountain beneath the looming tower mansions of the Recluses. Cut through the mountain, off the terrace at the top of the Spiral, far above the West Gate, is a tunnel leading to a similar ring road around the Inside of the crater.

**THE SPIRAL:** The city's main thoroughfare begins at the West Gate and corkscrews around the Black Lamp to the Upside Outside ring road. Decades ago the Recluses had it illumined with gaslight lamps fueled by the mountain.

**THE SWITCHBACKS:** The rounds of the Spiral are interconnected by dozens of reverse switchbacks. Some of these streets are wide and well lit, suitable for carts and rat wagons. Others are more narrow, or steep, or stepped. They have all kinds of names, like Clagnar's Way, Rapier Road and Shin Splint Alley.

**THE TERRACES:** The structures and public spaces of Hexopolix are built on hundreds of terraces that ascend the mountain like cyclopean stairs from base to crater.

**THE HANGING GARDENS:** After the flame of the Black Lamp itself, the thing Hexopolix is most known for is its hanging gardens. The railings along the Spiral and switchbacks, the balconies of inns and mansions, and the rims of the city's terraces are abloom with succulents, shrubs, flowers and vines. For two weeks at the peak of the green season the whole mountain is a verdant marvel. Visitors come from far and away to witness the blossoming.

**THE CISTERNS:** Near the crest of the Black Lamp – but below the tower mansions of the Recluses – is a tank farm of huge distillation vats and catchment cisterns. Here water from the springs and geysers at the base of the mountain is made potable before distribution throughout Hexopolix.

**FUNICULAR:** Designed and built by the Recluse Darnell, this three rail cable train leads from the Inside ring road down the slope of the Black Lamp's crater to the Brazen Spike. At the mid-point is the meeting place where heat-protected merchants do business with Azer smiths and jewelers.

**THE FUNERAL CHUTE:** The construction of the Funeral Chute required a great deal of diplomacy. Many Azer were angered by what they called, "Humans turning our home into a crematorium." Some Azer malcontents still rail against it.

**THE TEMPLE OF PHAROS:** Many religions and cults are practiced in Hexton but by far the largest and most influential is that dedicated to Pharos, the God of Journeys. The temple has a staff of ministers and functionaries – both clergy and laity – but its spiritual leader is the hermit-guru, the Recluse Chrannak.

**THE SHRINE OF ORSIS:** Built over the Vents, this covent houses the Mutable, the priestesses of Orsis, the Goddess of Possibilities. Upon completion of training and devotions a novitiate is sealed inside the Chamber of Changes for a tri-night. If she survives she will be mutated by the arcane vapours of the Vents and inducted into the priesthood. Many do not survive.

Once per day the high priestess Sahrah will answer a request for prophecy from any one person who will pay what the oracle demands. This Orsis Price, as it's called, is the sacrifice of a beloved material object; said object is dropped by the petitioner into the largest of the vents where it is consumed by the Black Lamp. [GMs are encouraged to enforce the intent of The Orsis Price. The object a PC pays should be

dear to him; magic items, family heirlooms, one-of-a-kind belongings, expensive accoutrements, &c. are appropriate. Money, gems and jewelry, while valuable, are not the kind of sacrifice the oracle desires.]

**RIDING AND PACK RATS:** The people of Hexopolix raise rats of enormous size for riding and pack animals. There are a number of stables, each specializing in a particular breed. Their livestock and reputations are sources of much pride and great wealth to these houses. The annual Rodentia Derby is the high point of the social calendar. Less prestigious races happen each season.

About half of the city's collected kitchen trash goes to the stables throughout the city to feed these animals. In turn, the animals' droppings are carted away for fertilizer.

**THE PILE:** A mess of narrow, stair-jagged, crooked-walled, overwalk-shadowed alleys and lanes covers a sordid sprawl inside the East Gate. The inns and taverns here are, well, there aren't any. Accommodations are more along the lines of down that nasty smelling hallway, into the mouldy basement, through the trapdoor onto the flea-ridden heap of rat pelts. And rats. The Pile is a good place to disappear; some do so on purpose, others not so much.

**THE CHARCOAL BURNER:** Situated between the Sulphur Works and the Bat Caves. Its smoldering stacks produce fuel and material for water treatment, soil improvement and metallurgy.

**FIELDS, ORCHARDS AND THE BURNING WOOD:** Hexopolix is ringed for miles around with carefully irrigated crops, fruit trees and a forest. The latter – the Burning Wood – supplies fuel for use throughout the city. These farms, trees and the hanging gardens benefit from the rest of the city's collected kitchen waste.

## THE RECLUSES

Hexopolix was planned out centuries ago and continues to be governed by a council of powerful individuals called The High and Mighty. It isn't known how many there are. Some haven't been seen in decades, others in living memory. Because of their absence from public view they're called the Recluses. The city employs a staff of gofers and go-betweens to promulgate their plans. The handful of known Recluses include:

The hermit-guru **Chrannak**, the first of the Recluses. Blessed by his god with an unnaturally long life, this ancient priest guides the most powerful religious sect in the city, the cult of Pharos. He is the most often seen of the High and Mighty. He still officiates over the annual celebrations commemorating the foundation of Hexopolix.

The four-faced wizard **Blue**. Unknown to anyone he has turned himself into a lich. He still influences events in the city, but nobody has seen him for more than a century.

The inventor **Darnell** – over a decades-long process – transferred his mind into a mechanical body. He's now a steam-driven clockwork robot run by a brain in a jar. Lightning strikes his tower mansion with alarming frequency.

The sage **Algor** is the only one of the Recluses who is ever seen walking the streets of the city, though he does so very rarely.

Most believe the Recluses are a united oligarchy. In fact they are as broken by differing interests and factionalism as any other class or group in Hexopolix.

The two to most recently join their ranks, **Rufus** the merchant prince and the alchemist **Flad**, formed a secret combination to seize power. They planned to use sulphur from the Works, guano from the Bat Caves and charcoal from the Burner to mix barrels of black powder; with it they intended to destroy the other Recluses and take control of the city. But yesterday Flad's tower mansion blew up. Rufus is now weighing and considering, pondering and scheming.

**THE TOWER MANSIONS:** Over a dozen of these crest-top keeps loom over the Upside ring roads. Some have fallen into disrepair. A few look uninhabited. And yesterday one exploded and rained debris all across the city.

One of the deserted spires is secretly occupied by a party of adventurers – The Silent Knives – who are casing buildings throughout the city for future looting. They observe strict noise and light discipline and have so far evaded detection.

## THE AGITATORS

There have always been troublemakers in Hexopolix as there are in every city. But a year ago organized dissent began to appear. These Agitators rail against the Recluses, against everything about them. The paint and posters that appear on nights of the new moon question the Recluse's authority, methods, motivations, benevolence, wisdom and identities. Their favored graffiti is: *WHO ARE THEY?*

## THE AZER

The steel implements the Azer craft in their furnaces and smithies are all of superior material; the magically and magnetically affected iron from the magma gives all weapons and armor they make a permanent benefit (+1 to hit or AC, respectively). Strangely, these items are neither magical nor magnetically charged. The benefit comes from the residual effects of the magic and the lodestones on the raw materials (therefore, none of these weapons or armor are considered magical for "hit only by magic weapons" and like purposes).

**THE BRAZEN SPIKE:** Built centuries ago by the Azer colony in the Black Lamp. It is constructed of hexagonal basalt stonework faced with polished sheets of beaten bronze and brass.

**GUARDIANS OF THE GATE:** Known to none in the city but the Recluses is that the arcane lodestones turning the

magma lake are a ward sealing a Gate to the Elemental Plane of Fire. What is unknown even to the Recluses is that the Azer did not build it; they found it when they arrived. They don't know who built it and if their Lord Amaimon knows, he does not say.

## THE LAVA CHILDREN

The Lava Children only recently arrived in the crater of the Black Lamp. They speak to no one and nobody knows how or why they came; rumors abound. They and the Azer are locked in a belligerent stalemate, neither side able to harm the other.

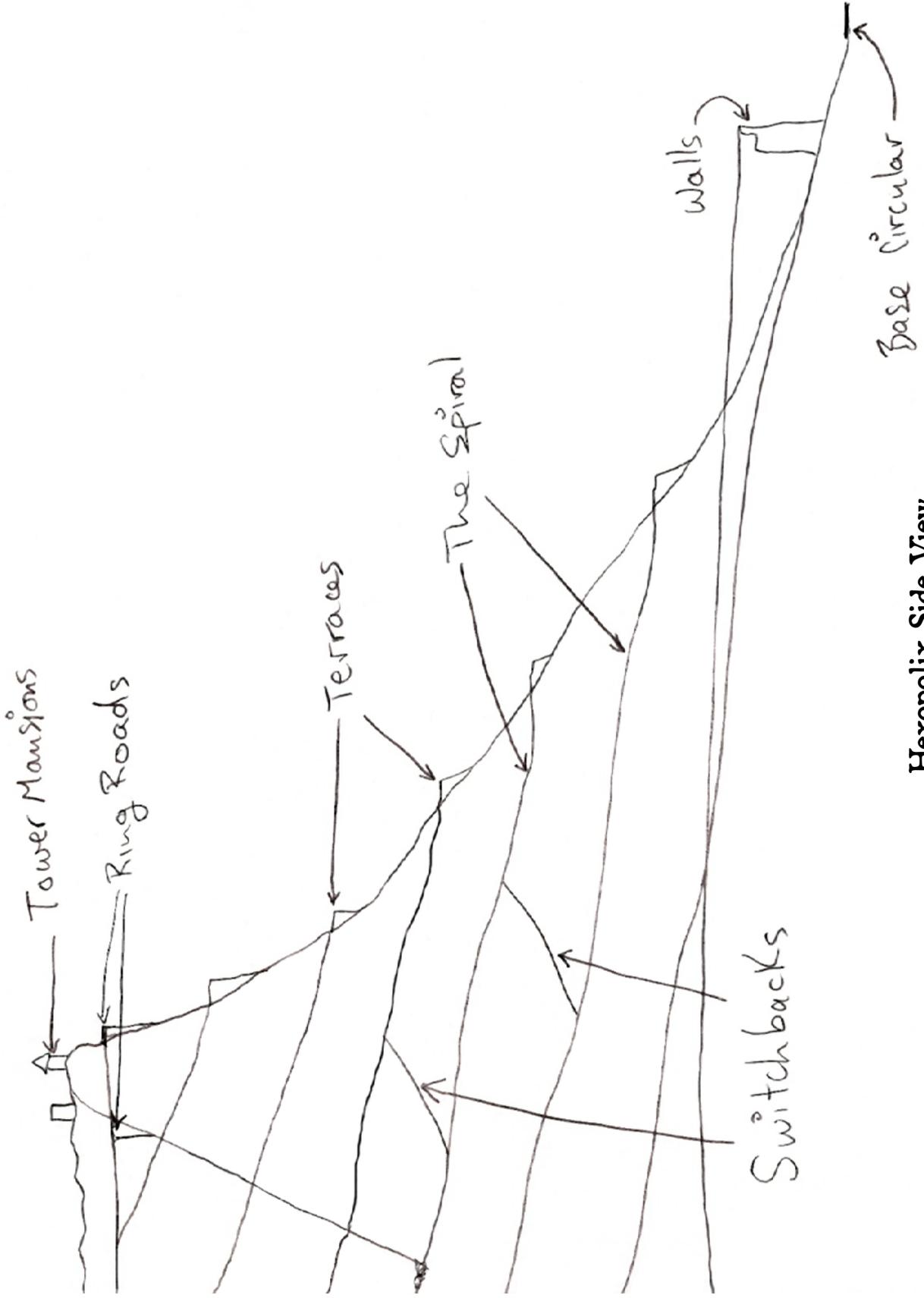
They've dug a chamber complex across the magma lake from The Brazen Spike. Their excavations have already disrupted a dozen funeral shots. This hasn't made them any friends among the humans either.

## RUMORS

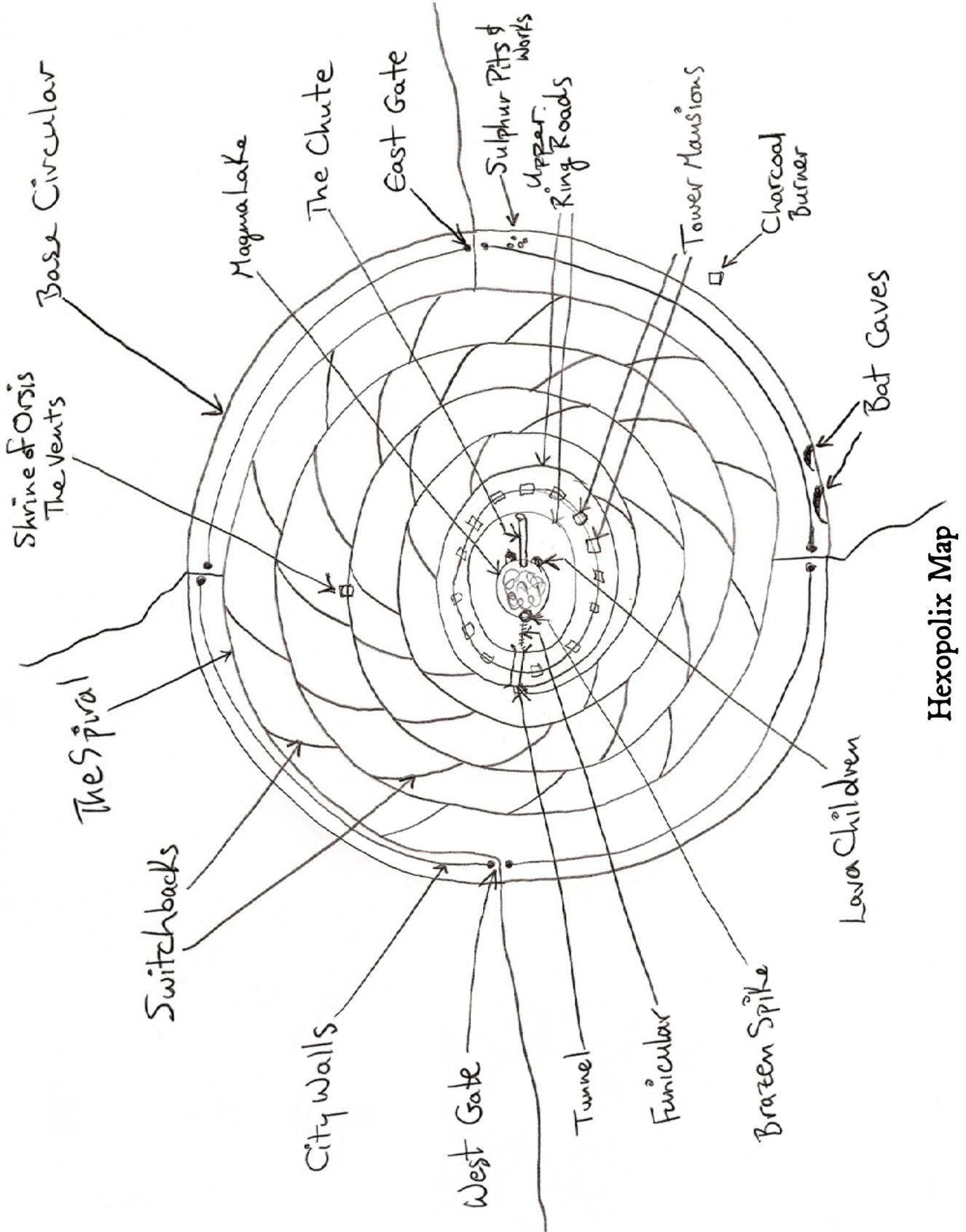
d10	Rumor
1	The Recluses meet in tunnels beneath the tower mansions.
2	The Lava Children are destabilizing the lodestones in the crater.
3	The Black Lamp is honeycombed with lava tubes.
4	Flad's death was punishment for offending the gods.
5	Orsis Price sacrifices aren't destroyed, they're hoarded in a vault.
6	Magmen have been seen dancing in the crater.
7	The bats will swarm you if they catch you alone in the dark.
8	The rat races are fixed.
9	The House of Plarf stable is a wererat front.
10	Harpies nest in the broken-roofed attic of Blue's tower mansion.

## HOOKS

d6	Hook
1	Chrannak wants to know how the Lava Children came here.
2	Rufus is in need of new conspiracy cohorts.
3	Darnell chases the riddle of Azer steel.
4	Blue wants to know who the Agitators are.
5	The Agitators want to know who the Recluses are.
6	Rat breeder Lorlac is hiring jockeys for the big race next month.



Hexopolix Side View



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me some caverns underneath the town  
brewery where other types of things are going on.*

# BENEATH THE BREWERY

By Edward Wilson

## INTRODUCTION

It's a rough and tumble sort of place, but Brewmaster Norgus of the *Torch and Tankard* knows his craft. Well, until last week when he was found dead in the cellar with wounds and burns and cobwebs all about his body. In his hand he held a bit of old parchment with four poetic mottoes written on it.

His wife, Nellie Norgus, couldn't care less about all that, but business dropped off once word got out--and besides, there's no way she's going down into the ale cellar until she's sure it's safe. She hands the party the parchment with the mottoes on it and wishes them good luck:

### THE OLD POETIC MOTTOES:

*With Humility, One Knows One's True Place*  
*With Bravery, One Stands When They Fly*  
*With Honesty, One Will Not Lose Face*  
*With Loyalty, One Draws The Last Breath*

## THE BREWERY

The *Torch and Tankard* actually used to be the brewery of a larger monastery which stood here a long time back. It burned down in a huge fire and all they could save was the brewery. But before it was a brewery it was a mausoleum for a small paladin order, with three crypts for heroes of the order. The brewmaster accidentally let a huge hogshead get loose and it smashed through the crumbly old brick wall and revealed a passage beyond.

There are two ways into the cellar: a flight of sturdy wooden stairs or the big trap door they use to hoist the kegs, barrels, and hogsheads into the cool cellar. The cellar is filled with the aromas of the many lovely beverages stored therein. The large opening in the north wall beckons.

### 1. ENTRANCE HALL

This marble-lined hallway is 30' long, 10' high, and 5' wide. At the end is an open doorway. On either side of it is a niche with a life-sized statue of an angel. The angel on the left is holding a two-handed sword reverently in front of it; the one on the right is holding a shield and longsword at the ready.

**Trap 1:** The phrase "*With Humility, One Knows One's True Place*" is carved into the marble over the doorway. It is a clue that one must pass through the doorway bowed doubled over or kneeling or set off the trap. A spell to reveal magic will show the doorway is divinely enchanted. The first

person through the doorway will trigger the divine magical punishment which will reduce their Strength by half for 24 hours.

### 2. CEREMONIAL CHAMBER

This grand chamber is also lined with beautiful marble. It is 40' square with an arched ceiling 40' high in the center. In the middle of the room is a low basin set in the floor. It is apparently designed to hold liquid and is 2' deep at the center [water poured into this basin and prayed over by a good cleric will yield one flask of *Holy Water* per day.] A large ornate bronze lantern about 5' tall and 2' around hangs from a heavy bronze chain set in the center of the ceiling. There is an open doorway in the center of each side of the room. One has no wording over it and leads to the cellar of the *Torch and Tankard*. Each of the other three has one of the other mottoes carved into the lintel above it.

### 3. HALL OF THE BRAVE BROTHER

On the east side of the Ceremonial Chamber is an open doorway and above the doorway to this hall is the motto "*With Bravery, One Stands When They Fly*". From the doorway a set of steps leads down 5' to a straight hallway 30' long, 10' high, and 5' wide which slopes gently down towards a bronze-bound marble door with a very realistic carving of a medusa on it.

**Trap 3:** Once all of the party has entered, a scary illusion of a spectral medusa will fly towards the party forcing each member to save against *fear*. Those who save (are Brave) will see that it is an illusion and receive an *Ancient Blessing* lasting 24 hours which gives them +1 to all rolls during that time. Those who fail will be forced to flee and the illusion will rake them with spectral claws, the wounds on their backs marking them as cowards who ran away; even if the wounds are healed a set of scars (*Marks of the Coward*) will remain on their backs for 24 hours.

### 3a. CRYPT OF THE BRAVE BROTHER

The door to the crypt is unlocked. Inside is a 20' square room with an arched ceiling. The walls are carved with scenes of the warrior brother paladins bravely facing all manner of dangers. In the center is a plain marble sarcophagus with a massive bronze lid and the name "*Holy Brother Lurien*" engraved on the end facing the door. The lid has three long steel handles along each side with which to lift the lid. It takes

at least two persons to lift the heavy lid.

**Trap 3a:** As soon as anyone gets within 5' of the sarcophagus, the handles heat up red hot (it will take bravery to grip those handles, won't it?). At least two of the people lifting the lid will need to pass a tough Will or Constitution save to hold the hot handles long enough to remove the lid entirely. Those failing the save will lose half their dexterity (for tasks requiring their hands) for 24 hours.

#### 4. HALL OF THE HONEST BROTHER

Above the doorway to this hall is the motto "*With Honesty, One Will Not Lose Face.*" From the open doorway a level hallway 30' long, 10' high, and 5' wide leads towards a bronze-bound marble door with a very realistic carving of a locked treasure chest.

**Trap 4:** Once all of the party has entered they will each simultaneously experience a vision (the DM should take each player apart from the group to play out this scene). A voice, apparently the deceased brother, asks: "Has one finally come to take out my treasures? Are you the one who will remove them? Answer me that I may know if the day has finally come." A player who says no (an Honest person who would not rob a grave) will hear "Then may your prayers received favor"; they receive an *Ancient Blessing* lasting 24 hours which gives them +1 to all rolls during that time. A player who says yes (a dishonest person who would rob a grave) will be sprayed in the face with acid from holes in the walls and ceiling, thus being visually defiled ("losing face") as one who would defile.

#### 4a. CRYPT OF THE HONEST BROTHER

The door to the crypt is unlocked. Inside is a 20' square room with an arched ceiling. The walls are carved with scenes of the warrior brother paladins doing all manner of works of charity. In the center is a plain marble sarcophagus with a massive bronze lid and the name "*Holy Brother Maronius*" engraved on the end facing the door. The party will quickly discover that the sarcophagus can only be opened if the lid is swiveled--but a thief may detect that turning it one way unlocks it, the other way sets off a trap.

**Trap 4a:** If they swivel it clockwise, the trap goes off. A blast of holy flame rips through the chamber. A save is allowed to dive out the door (if close enough). Damage should be about one third of health.

#### 5. HALL OF THE LOYAL BROTHER

Above the doorway to this hall is the motto "*With Loyalty, One Draws The Last Breath.*" From the open doorway a set of steps leads up to a hallway 30' long, 10' high, and 5' wide straight towards a bronze-bound marble door with a very realistic carving of a two fully armored brothers of the order shaking hands.

**Trap 5:** Once all of the party has entered they will each

simultaneously experience a vision (the DM should take each player apart from the group to play out this scene). A suave and seductive voice enters their head and says "You know, there's a secret hiding place down here where the old brotherhood kept all their treasure. I know where it is. Gold is of no use to me where I am but sacrificed souls are; likewise souls are of no use to you there but gold is, isn't it? Let us make a pact: their souls for the gold--I can show you how to kill them easily with one of the deadly traps here." Characters who refuse receive an *Ancient Blessing* lasting 24 hours which gives them +1 to all rolls during that time. If the character agrees, a blast of poison gas shoots out from the walls and envelopes their head, causing them to lose half their Constitution for 24 hours.

#### 5a. CRYPT OF THE LOYAL BROTHER

The door to the crypt is unlocked. Inside is a 20' square room with an arched ceiling. The walls are carved with scenes of the warrior brother paladins suffering martyrdom through all manner of cruel tortures. In the center is a plain marble sarcophagus with a massive bronze lid and the name "*Holy Brother Culwen*" engraved on the end facing the door. The party will soon discover that the massive bronze lid of the sarcophagus has spring-loaded catches on each corner which require one person on each corner working together to get it open (or if a party of less than four players, then just one person on each end).

**Trap 5a:** If they attempt to open it any other way than the correct way, then the entire floor slides back into the walls. A save is allowed to jump up onto the sarcophagus or out the door, if close enough. Anyone left where the floor was will fall 10' into a pit full of spikes which now surrounds the sarcophagus. [The damage should be about one third of the health of the character.]

#### DM NOTES

- The traps outside the crypt chambers are meant to chastise unworthy intruders and give them a chance to leave alive and reconsider the choices they've made in life.
- The traps inside the crypts are meant to kill any intruders so determined to do evil that they would persevere to rob the resting places of the hero brothers.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me 30 new interesting inner planes.  
20 new interesting outer planes.*

*Thanks,*

*Courtney Campbell*

# NEW PLANES REVEALED!

By Barry Blatt

## INNER PLANES

Roll a d25 and consult the first list of Planes below.

### 1 ZODIACA

Inhabited by 12 races with characteristics related to Zodiac signs. Thus Arieans have goat horns and are impetuous and competitive, Scorpios have scorpion tails and are forceful and obsessive, Geminis have two bodies in telepathic communication and so on.

### 2 LAVALAMP WORLD

World is entirely liquid all the way to the core and has two immiscible fluids in its sea, a light blue one and a dark red one. The inhabitants of the blue one live in vast floating jellyfish settlements and fight a never ending war with the barbed arthropods from the second medium. At any time storms and swells from some unknown inner core can mix bubbles of the two up.

### 3 CYLAND

The world is on the inside of vast torus, along the middle of which a great shining palace inhabited by immortals floats giving light and heat, while lesser floaters are inhabited by various other powerful wizards. Flying ships can cross the miles of air to the opposite surface of the torus and attempts have been made to build towers from one side to the other (curved do as to avoid the 'sun' and 'planets').

### 4 ROACHWORLD

Conquered long ago by high tech creatures hundreds of meters high, humanity hides behind the wainscoting and under the fridge, scavenging a primitive living from the detritus of their colossal overlords and enduring regular attempts to wipe them out.

### 5 IT'S COMPLICATED WORLD

This world has seventeen different sexes all of whom must participate in order to create a new child, who are born in clusters of three to ten. Domestic arguments are common, but an overmighty religion prohibits divorce and cohabitation by groups of less than seventeen, despite the race dying out.

### 6 NEBBISH WORLD

Inhabited by skinny six inch high pygmies who regard big visitors as war gods and try and get them to obliterate their neighbors.

### 7 EGG WORLD

All species lay eggs and fertilize them externally. People who hear tales from visitors of reproductive habits back home are disgusted and appalled.

### 8 PHRENOLOGICA

Entire plane is one vast brain, with rounded mountain ranges and deep valleys. Inhabitants make mines to penetrate to the depths of the brain and towers to broadcast the thoughts they find there. People at the back of the brain have good vision and love bright colors, others good memories, the left side are logical and straightforward the right side are dreamers and emotional. A disaster happened when someone dug down far enough to reach the limbic system and allowed instinct to rule.

### 9 TENTACULA

Inhabitants are cephalopods with many tentacles that divide into subtentacles. These regrow easily and they use them as currency, snipping them off with scissors and so high value items require more pain to acquire than cheap ones. Mugging is a pretty brutal process. Will thoughtfully provide scissors to fingered visitors.

### 10 ZOMBOLICA

An evil necromancer took over this world a long time ago with a zombie army and then didn't quite know what to do with it. People are all zombified after death as a matter of course and have to look after the zombies of their deceased family members. Overpopulation means there are dozens of unemployed zombies fighting in the street, while the living ruling class occupy high towers while their deceased relatives sweep floors, man 7-eleven counters, collect shopping trolleys and labour in the fields.

### 11 RISING DAMP WORLD

Overenthusiastic bureaucrats from the department of irrigation have been so successful that the entire world is covered in six feet of water. The dictatorial government has decided that everyone is going to evolve into a fish and encourages people to practice underwater breathing, have their legs sewn together to form fishy tails, tattoo themselves with scales etc. Complaints of rheumatism are not accepted, and dissidents forced to sculpt statues of fish. (Thanks to Stanislaw Lem).

**12 THE GREAT GLACIER**

A once civilized world has been reduced to savagery by an encroaching ice age, people hunt each other down not as food, there is a cold loving algae that provides all the nutrition they need in the form of green ice, but for heat. Igloos made from the living bodies of defeated enemies trussed up and fed green ice are common dwelling and as a special treat they will run a few slaves round the iceberg a few times and sit on their exhausted and sweaty bodies luxuriating in the warmth.

**13 EQUALITAINIA**

Everyone here is equal. Those with higher intelligence than anyone else have headphones that pour inane 70's pop music into their ears to make them stupid, the wise are required to watch a certain number of hours of reality TV every day, those with higher strength are required to lumber around with heavy weights chained to them, fast runners have lead balls to drag, the beautiful wear horrible make up and masks. Everything is done in a mediocre fashion so not as to embarrass people by showing off how competent you are at a task, and the only people who show any zeal are the Handicapper General and her police. (Thank you Kurt Vonnegut).

**14 POLYGENETICA**

Everything here can viably mate with just about everything else via spores and the place abounds with crazy crossbreeds of every imaginable type, with very little breeding true. Groves of half giraffe, half geranium trees are grazed by semi-arthropodal pachyderms, and as their shedding skin cells are integrated into the local ecosystem adventurers will find hordes of their half-breed offspring popping out of pods, emerging from chrysalises and spontaneously erupting from bodily orifices all around them. Shub-Niggurath holidays here regularly.

**15 THE TRANSFINITE VATICAN**

Which Pope persuaded which eldritch deity to allow him to send colonists to a vacant plane we will never know (bet it was a Borgia), but now a back door in the Vatican of various prime material variants of Earth opens onto this strange paradise. Every belief of the Catholic Church over the centuries is true here, wine does turn into real blood at the Mass, virgin births are the only type allowed, you can't walk down a street without running into half a dozen stigmatics speaking in tongues, the air is thick with incense and weeping statues of the Virgin Mary work as shopkeepers and housemaids. Rumor has it that Hasan-i Sabbah has a similar set up someplace on the same plane for his fanatical sect of Ismailis and the Buddha has been spotted flying about on a golden cloud. St Brendan has been floating about randomly in a coracle hoping the grace of God will show him the hiding places of these heathens, and when he does there will literally

be Hell to pay. Denizens of other planes fervently hope the fighting will be limited to this one corner of the Multiverse.

**16 COLONICUS**

This wet, dark and stinky world is inhabited by highly cultured and intelligent tapeworms, who speculate idly about the nature of the beast whose bowel they have colonized, and occasionally worry about the spasms that shake their cities and the coming of the Great Purgative.

**17 TITANICA**

A pleasant planetoid with a temperate climate drifts serenely through space with whole kingdoms of idle citizens having endless cocktail parties and balls, while in the caves inside overcrowded peasants farm and labour to serve their every need. No one remembers the worlds name or where it is going or why, and are very excited about passing through the cometary Oort Cloud of a great star system visible beyond the planetoids pointed tip in a few years time.

**18 STROMATALITICA**

A plane with many shallow tropical seas and no visible sentient life. The may huge coral reefs and stromatalites are actually intelligent and telepathic and use mobile visitors to pass messages in the form of sentient sponges and sea anemones. Occasionally they ask them to pass coral fronds and rocks and transplant them in other reefs, actually a form of reef sex.

**19 EGGWORLD**

A small egg shaped world with one freezing cold end that projects nearly out of the atmosphere and another that is a large flat swampy jungle full of giant insects. The inhabitants mine 'liquid gold', a wonderful life giving substance that acts as a healing potion. Visitors to the mines will notice red pulsing veins running through the yellow goo and in fact the whole planet is the huge egg of some monstrous cosmic chicken, and its about to hatch.

**20 DIY WORLD**

This plane has endless lumps of ice, rock and scrap metal floating in an airy void, the shattered remains of the planet Mondos. The inhabitants assemble floating islands out of this wreckage, and guide them through many ingenious methods of propulsion from sails to flatulent cattle lined up along great rickety metal gantries, seeking out clumps of useful salvage to bolt onto their existing real estate. Megalomaniac warlords dream of savaging all the bits and rebuilding the planet.

**21 THE TEMPORAL PLANE**

Time moves in a strange way on this world, going slower the closer you get to the Eternal Frontier, where it just plain stops, creating an Einsteinian temporal paradox every time you pop down to the shops for a pint of milk.

## 22 THE LONELY PLANET

Devastated by a stropo adolescent kid with a ring of wishes, this planet has only one inhabitant, the kid himself, who decided one day that he hated everybody and wanted to be left alone. The whole place is a vast windy ruin, with abandoned streets, overgrown parks and the distant sound of goth rock played as loud as he damn well likes.

## 23 DUOTONICA

A peculiar mutation affects the people of this world, they only have one type of cone cell in their retinas. A race of red skinned people who can only see red live among a green skinned people who can only see green. The red skinned types have crimson buildings, scarlet clothes, rose madder cats and magenta food, while the green skinned have viridian buildings, olive green dogs, racing green clothes etc. Neither can see the other and is convinced that much of their world is populated by evil ghosts. The demons in charge thoughtfully confiscate any paint from visitors. (Yeah, I know Jack Vance did this one as well).

## 24 IT'S A MAD WORLD

The lunatics have taken over the asylum and have set up cities and countries based on their most congenial company, people of the same clinical diagnosis. Manic city is exhausting, the Land of Paranoia consists mainly of bunkers and minefields, Depression Dale is a lot like Wolverhampton in the UK, Schizophrenia city is utterly unnerving and the suburban sprawl of OCD is very neat. Visitors soon find themselves developing interesting psychoses of their very own and may find it hard to leave. (Thanks again the Philip K Dick)

## 25 HAPPY VALLEY

People in Happy Valley are extremely pleased with jocular King Smyle IX and only ever say positive and affirming things about him, their homes, the skin-rejuvenating damp climate, the tastiness of their bland grey government rations, the bubbly feeling of their rumbling stomachs, being struck by lightning and so on. And they are especially complimentary about the squads of cute ogre sized Everbabies that take anyone expressing a negative thought, uttering a tiny complaint or cursing fate over stubbed toe away to be used as teething rings and rattles.

## OUTER PLANES

Roll a d12 and consult the following list of Planes.

### 1 THE HILLS OF SLAIN

Everyone who ever dies in a war anywhere in the multiverse ends up deposited here, in colossal heaps and mountain ranges of corpses. The lowers levels have become a kind of coal and their metallic weapons a rusty iron ore. This is mined by the slaves of demonic industrialist Githyanki and made into hell forged weapons for export back to the planes where the wars started in the first place.

### 2 THE PLANE OF SILICON

Inhabited by a race of computerized warbots who pride themselves on their logic and who have conquered the planes of Germanium and Tellurium already. Not sure what to do about the Planes of Carbon – of which most prime material planes are a subset – but the decadent and whorish behavior of Carbon, bonding with any element that offers a hint of covalency, cries out for incineration. Live in fear of attack by the Chromium Giants.

### 3 THE PLANE OF MONEY

Money talks, well on this plane it does, the demons of coinage have possessed every scrap of precious metal or printed bill and the inhabitants, and lost souls from all over the multiverse seduced by their love of lucre get to live in a world where the law of the market is the only law. Cost efficiency is all, vast projects useless to living beings are started in order to create more money, speculative bubbles rise and burst in a matter of hours and no one seems to notice the grinning little faces on the local coinage snickering at them as they defraud, extort and rip each other off in the most outrageous fashion.

### 4 HOBBIT HEAVEN

All plants are edible and/or smokable, the animals grow with joint cutting patterns on their hides for butchers and the pie crust and jam butty mines produce a huge surplus. The major deity presides over a never ending feast and can make it rain fitches of bacon like hail, with a shower of doughnuts for dessert. Very little here to upset the digestion except the pie golems.

### 5 THE PLANE OF ODOR

A grey void inhabited by stench elementals, invisible wafts of any smell possible and several that aren't. Visitors may be perceived as friendly or malicious, powerful or weak, entirely dependent on how strong they smell; unwashed barbarians and punctilious fops with lavender hankies beware! Inhabitants communicate by smell as well, which will at least initially baffle the tourist; old hands come with a chest full of nebulizers and essential oils. Having a war with plane 6...

### 6 THE PLANE OF NOISES

A slightly different shade of grey void inhabited by sound elementals, disembodied noises of all pitches and volumes. Can be deafening and decidedly creepy when the sound of footsteps on a gravel path wanders by, but though non-verbal the elementals are easier to communicate with, at least if you have a drum-kit a bassoon and some nice rusty cellophane to crumple. Their war with the Plane of Odour is inexplicable and unnerving to witness, as the sound of barking dogs and marching regiments take on the smell of fresh cut grass and baking bread, leaving whimpering groans and the taint of putrid corpses in their wake. Expert fartars with the talent of *Le Petomaine* might be able to negotiate a truce.

## 7 THE REPOSITORY OF LOST THINGS

Anything mislaid by anyone ever ends up here. The heaps of keyrings match the Himalayas in size, the dropped change forms a tinkling sea washing gently up and down beaches of broken spectacles. And as for the City of Lost Virginity...

## 8 THE PLANE OF DEVOLUTION

Everything here is gradually reduced to articles of the same general purpose but of lower technological complexity and craftsmanship. A laser gun becomes a gauss pistol which becomes an automatic, then a six gun, then a musketoon, a crossbow, a bow and arrow, a javelin then a throwing club and finally a rock. Everything ends up as rocks eventually, and this place has lots of them, and lots of apes beating each other round the head with them. Visitors will also devolve biologically, with elves ending up as trees, dwarves as rocks (again), and halflings as rats. (See Philip K. Dick's novel, *Ubik*).

## 9 THE PLANE PLANE

A two dimensional plane where three dimensional visitors will be met with horror and incredulity as they easily pass through locked squares, poke about in people's internal organs and become ever changing and transforming cross sections etc.

## 10 IT'S A HARD WORLD

Matter here has an exaggerated tendency to form crystals, everything becoming hard and shiny and usually solid, though liquid crystals do exist. Sentient quartzes do a good trade with The Plane of Silicon in raw materials and with various Prime Material Planes in the unusual statuary that most visitors become after a few days sojourn.

## 11 SUDDENLY, ELEPHANTS!

Also called the Plane of Spontaneous Generation, this plane has a strange relationship with quantum fluctuation. At any time and in any place energy may fluctuate to the point where entire elephants may wink into existence and out again in a matter of whole seconds and minutes rather than the Prime Material smidgens of subatomic particles for femtoseconds. It's all a bit unnerving, especially when visitors realize that they could be caught up in one and wink out of existence at any point. Why elephants? Ask Heisenberg. He's the white elephant who appears one time in  $10 \times 10^{16}$  fluctuations.

## 12 THE GARDEN BETWEEN DAWN AND SUNRISE

A dim and numinous realm wherein a person is more than likely to meet their first love as they fondly imagined them to be way back when, not the rather ordinary and dull being they turned out after the hormonal rush began to die down. Of course visitors appear as prosaic they really are and will not impress these beautiful and fascinating creatures one bit, especially when their own doppelgangers, the figments of their first love's imagined image of them, are wandering about as well. An entirely disheartening and depressing place visited only by bad poets and the glummost and most self-hating emos. (Nicked from *Jurgen* by James Branch Cabell, and why not?).

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a list of ideas or a table for my player-agency-driven sandbox campaign that will provide me with under the table jobs, plots to get entangled in, and adventuring opportunities appropriate for a mid-level party with at least one ship and a well-armed crew. Should be stylistically appropriate for a swords & sorcery setting full of decadent, decaying, or outlandish societies, and can range from Western European to Mediterranean to African to Indian in style. Some entries that might have ramifications, beneficial or problematic, for the domain-conquering/thieves-guild-controlling/mage-tower-building/militant-temple-establishing stage of the game would be fantastic.*

# GHALIDELL ISLES

By Andrew Shields

The Ghalidell Isles are an intersection of cultures and traditions. They are rife with monsters and anarchists. Centralized authorities are weak. Several hundred local rulers keep the peace in their own territories as best they can, letting bounties cover what is outside their borders. They make alliances as needed to handle bigger problems. These islands have many great opportunities for a smart captain with a fast ship and a good crew.

## HISTORY

**Up to 1500 years ago.** The first known rulers of the Ghalidell Isles were the Mothreks Wizards. A wizard ruled each isle from a dark tower, allowing apprentices and allies permission to build on that island. They built monsters to guard the seas, and had grand tournaments where they pitted their foul creations against each other. They broke the rules of mortality and morality, and lived as they pleased in their twisted meshes of politics and sorcery. Towards the end, the goal of their sorceries was creating monsters that could breed true without further tinkering.

**1500 - 1300 years ago.** The Dzanti Empire drove them from their islands, razed their towers (as best they could), and set about assuring they could never come back. The Empire was provoked to action by ceaseless monster attacks and annoyance at the arrogance of wizards.

**1300 - 600 years ago.** The Ghalidell Isles covered the flank of the Dzanti Empire at its height. The islands were known as the Desert Gate. As the political might of the Dzanti faded, their cultural influence did not. The Ghalidell province managed to maintain its military and economic power through trade with the Palieri to the north and the Zurath to the south.

**600 - 400 years ago.** The Indarzi conquered the continental Desert Gate including its port city Akariu, but they stopped short of claiming the Ghalidell Isles for themselves as they were not prepared for all-out naval warfare. Still, as they controlled the land trade to the port, they became a political factor.

**400 - 200 years ago.** A series of brutal wars known as the Great Redrawing savaged the geopolitical balance of the Palieri nations to the north. Veterans and displaced military leaders, disgraced clerics, and banned arcanists drifted south

to find friendlier climes. Monsters and disease here were safer than certain death back home.

The primary authority in the Ghalidell Isles was cultural rather than political. An infusion of skilled warriors was something the Ghalideli handled carefully, neither embracing nor rejecting them. The good news was that the newcomers assaulted monsters and danger with gusto. The bad news was that they tended to keep what they cleared out, creating new neighbors.

**200 - 100 years ago. Valsakru Accord (150 years ago).** The Dzanti of the Ghalidell Isles gathered and selected a Grand Vizier to speak for them collectively. They offered the Palieri adventurers the most dangerous islands in the northwest to rule as they liked. Adventurers operating elsewhere would understand the lands to be appropriately annexed to local Dzanti rule. The Palieri had a council to elect a High King from the “kings” that set up territories, who could speak for them. He accepted terms gladly.

Then the Zurath made an unexpected claim, asking the Dzanti for the same courtesy. They made a show of force, and the Dzanti offered them a number of southern islands. The Zurath accepted, installing the Emperor of the Northern Sea. Their territory halved by these arrangements, the Dzanti felt vulnerable and for the first time in a millennia faced the prospect of being pushed from their ancestral home.

Civilization and trade intensified with the three cultures in close quarters, trading and pushing back the chaos.

**100 years ago to present.** At the **Hurvalis Alliance** meeting, the Grand Vizier met with the High King and the Emperor of the Northern Sea to talk about trade relations. A vast monster assaulted the island fortress of Khalves that was hosting the meeting, and though it cost many viziers and kings, the monster and its kin were driven off. Subsequent investigation revealed the descendents of the Mothreks Wizards had resurfaced, intent on reclaiming the islands and rearing their

black towers once more. The three leaders agreed to join forces to protect their domains from the descendants of the corrupt wizards.

Since then, the Ghalidell Isles have been locked in a constant struggle. Cultural differences and suspicion lead to increasing tension, which is then allayed by relationships and diplomacy. The key to keeping the peace in the Isles is to keep the relationships and diplomacy growing faster than the differences and suspicion. With the Mothreks Wizards and other miscreants working to undermine the peace of the Isles, that is not easy.

## FACTIONS

The islands have four main cultural groups. None of them are at war, but they are not always comfortable neighbors either.

### DZANTI

The oldest faction “owns” about half the islands. The Dzanti Empire once ruled these islands, but has since receded, leaving viziers united by culture but not by geopolitics managing their own small territories. At the Valsakru Accord 150 years ago, they selected a Grand Vizier to speak for all of them. They lost about half their territory in a year, and they are now wary and strained in their relations with each other and outsiders.

- Their native tongue is Dzantiir, it is the common tongue of the Isles. Their small, thin coinage dominates trade.
- *Stylistically, they are based on Middle Eastern Persian cultures. They use light armor, light horses, and light ships. They love ornamentation and perfume, and they are graceful in politics, philosophy, and combat. They do everything artfully and lack bluntness. Hospitality is culturally important.*

### PALIERI

When war tore apart the northlands, many experts trained in violence left their homeland, adventuring for wealth and settlements to rule with their friends. They settled some of the most dangerous northern Ghalidell Isles. To make peace, the Dzanti offered them almost a quarter of those islands. The Palieri accepted, and therefore (theoretically) control islands with the most lootable ruins. The Palieri kings chose a High King to speak for them at the Valsakru Accord.

- Their native tongue is Whiari. They use big crude coins that are generally exchanged for the Dzanti currency or traded among Palieri settlements still communicating with the continent.
- *Based on pale Europeans with heavy metal and armor, they are default fantasy adventurers. They have war wizards and temples that train clerics who use divine energy for violence. Much of their idealism has been ground out of them; they only feel safe when they rule, or trust those who do.*

### ZURATH

Unexpectedly, the Zurath demanded the same respect the Valsakru Accord gave the Palieri. They were given almost a quarter of the islands to the south. The islands draw nobles who do not stand to inherit, restless energetic warriors who do not have the opportunity to prove themselves and receive fame and reward at home. Their familial connections open corridors of trade to the southern continent. They chose an Emperor of the Northern Sea to speak for them.

- Their native tongue is Rathir. Their homeland has so many currency systems most business is barter.
- *They are based on sub-Saharan Africans. They put trust in flesh and blood, not equipment or magic. Their world teems with spirits, of the land and of the dead. Their culture focuses on trusting the spoken word, so oral histories and agreements are backed up by a person where things written have no authority. Their enthusiasm makes for big anger, big mirth, big depression, and big cunning.*

### INDARZI

About 500 years ago, they conquered the continental port city Akariu to the east. As the Dzanti Empire retreated, they filled in behind, but did not have the resources to try to take the Ghalidell Isles. They are good trading partners. They are reluctant to deal overmuch with the politics of the Ghalidell Isles because the chaos there intimidates them.

- Their native tongue is Dzanti. They use the Dzanti currency.
- *They are based on the culture and style of India. They are friendly, with a god for every occasion and a much-diminished fear of death as they expect to come back. They focus on the inner life. Storytelling is important culturally. Their food is very spicy.*

### ANARCHISTS

The anarchists are not a cultural group so much as an unpleasant reminder of the past. The isles were once ruled by the decadent Mokthres Wizards, driven off by the Dyzanti Empire. Their descendants now encourage revolt and sabotage relations wherever they can. The Mokthres Wizards created monsters, and the anarchists are doing their best to follow that horrible tradition. Many flavors of arcane abominations lurk in the seas, the caverns, and the jungles of the islands.

Once, each island was ruled by a dominant Mokthres wizard, who reared a sorcerous tower. Others could build on the island with permission. Now, these towers are almost all broken and knocked down, as are the settlements that grew up around them. Some rulers have built their forts on the ruined foundations. Others declare the tower foundations off limits. Trying to destroy the towers invites curses, disease, bad luck, and monster attack. Ignoring the towers risks monsters moving in and lairing in them. Some towers locked

away valuable secrets, others locked away deadly dangers, many locked away both.

## THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE

**Trade, Security, and Hunting.** This intersection of cultures has many rich trading opportunities. There are few sizable armies; most rulers have a small military force focused on their territory and their neighbors. Significant monster threats are best handled by small groups looking for glory and earning bounties. Reputation opens doors to choice assignments, and bounties are the default law enforcement and monster deterrent outside the boundaries of kingdoms. Monsters sometimes collect loot, and they can be profitable to those with connections to harvest and sell physical parts for alchemists, scholars, and wizards. Most rulers supplement their security with mercenaries.

The following tables can be used to generate missions for player characters: those the PCs stumble into, those they are hired to thwart, or both.

Roll 1d5 (1d10 /2) to get results on the **Honest Work** table. You may need to roll again, and again if there are subtables. For those looking for less honest work, other tables are provided, after.

## HONEST WORK

d5 / Table #	Work Offered
1	Escort Duty
2	Messenger Jobs
3	Diplomatic Missions
4	Moving Trade Goods
5	Surveying Missions

In general, charge 50 gold a day for standard work, agreed-upon amounts for sea lanes. If you are late, lose 50 gold a day. If you are early, gain 50 gold a day. Amounts can be doubled or tripled for more dangerous work.

### 1. ESCORT DUTY

Roll 1d5 to determine the Ward.

d5	Ward
1	The prison ship is slow, but tough. It has a number of anarchist wizards aboard. Your ship is one of several hired on to make sure they get to Vanti, the spire prison with anti-magic defenses built in. Monster attack is a very real possibility.
2	Wizards are experimenting with a new mystic communication network system. They will be moving to seemingly random points to set up their apparatus and test it. Make sure they are undisturbed by attack, distress call, monster, weather, or whatever.

3	<p>Family member of a powerful ruler traveling to a responsibility elsewhere. Roll 1d5 on each of the two following subtables.</p> <p><b>Relationship (d5)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spouse</li> <li>2. Child</li> <li>3. Nephew/Niece</li> <li>4. Parent</li> <li>5. Brother/Sister</li> </ol> <p><b>Reason (d5)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rule a fief</li> <li>2. Investigate a problem</li> <li>3. Disgraced, distant post out of the way</li> <li>4. Guardian of family treasure headed somewhere safe</li> <li>5. Possible competition given distracting responsibilities.</li> </ol>
4	<p>Defend an aerie ship. It has stables for flying mounts that surveyors are using to get fast, accurate maps of the local area as you sail through it. If something happens to the aerie ship, then the mounts will be stabled on your ship.</p> <p><b>Mounts (d5)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pegasus</li> <li>2. Pterodactyl</li> <li>3. Young wyvern</li> <li>4. Flying ostrich</li> <li>5. Winged panther</li> </ol>
5	<p>Nobles have lashed barges together and staged a vast party on the open sea with a constant traffic of staff and supplies to keep it going for a couple months. Provide security and help make sure no undesirable elements get to the party island. (This was one noble's rebellion against his father, who ordered him to stop partying and sail home at once. He is sailing home—but he will not stop partying.)</p> <p><b>Greatest threat (d5)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Angry parents hire kidnapers to drag him home NOW.</li> <li>2. An assassin burning down the party conceals the true target in a mass of death.</li> <li>3. A spurned lover uses a monster to tow the party barges to a private island for prolonged punishment.</li> <li>4. Currents make the barge stray into another ruler's waters, he will impound it and charge ransom.</li> <li>5. The barges sink and the party piles on the ship(s), overloading them so getting to shore will be difficult—is that a storm?</li> </ol>

## 2. MESSENGER JOBS

Roll 1d5 to determine the **Job**.

d5	Job
1	Standard run with messages between two allied rulers, also including mail between the two cities. Must always be careful for rogues scheming heists or brewing espionage. Keep it unread and tamper-proof.
2	The messenger is high-ranking secret service for a ruler, and hired four ships (one of which is yours, the others have body-doubles.) Some crucial message needs to get through, and all the resources of several enemies will be dedicated to stopping it. Nothing is written down.
3	A group of messengers embark, bringing with them many cages of homing lizards who can fly between the islands with messages. They are messy, noisy, and irritable, but good at what they do and able to defend themselves from airborne predators. You sail in a long loop, and get a big payday.
4	You are given masses of correspondence, and shown the three messages that need to be delivered. The rest are decoys, and everything is coded; by the time anyone figured out what the messages were, it would be too late. Lives depend on your success.
5	Carry the signed treaties back while the diplomats cement the formal and informal alliances they just made. Without these signed treaties making it back, there is no deal, and war would be the most likely result.

## 3. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

Roll 1d5 to determine the **Mission**.

d5	Mission
1	A colony has rebelled and killed the previous 2 diplomats; this is the last chance for peace.
2	A family patriarch sent a respected family member to talk some sense into a young noble whose marital difficulties put a trade network at risk.
3	If the diplomats from both factions can reach an accord on trade agreements, commerce will stabilize in the area and grow more profitable for everyone.
4	This is transportation to a hush-hush summit for local militaries to discuss tactics for dealing with the growing pirate problem.
5	A powerful local ruler is receiving suitors for his daughter, and the lucky man's family gets a preferential relationship with a powerful neighbor. The young man and his handlers are under a lot of pressure to seal the deal.

## 4. MOVING TRADE GOODS

Roll 1d5 to determine the **Situation**.

d5	Situation
1	Everything is legal and ethical. This trade run is standard and practiced. Supply and demand dynamic well explored with this cargo.
2	Goods are rare and high quality; trouble is expected. <b>Goods (roll d5)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mothreks artifacts uncovered by adventures in surprisingly good condition</li> <li>Ivory from the wilds of the continental Zurath</li> <li>Enchanted spices from Indarzi traders.</li> <li>Family heirlooms from a Palieri line now extinct</li> <li>Luxury textiles woven by Dzanti mystics a thousand years ago</li> </ol>
3	Speculative venture to an island not yet opened to trade, populated by out-of-touch natives. <b>Native Type (roll d5 twice)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prefer eating sentient</li> <li>Worship a local monster</li> <li>Master tattoo artists, can make mystic tattoos</li> <li>Beastmasters training monsters for hunting and war</li> <li>Inhuman</li> </ol>
4	Passengers. Roll d5 to determine the who and their destination: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colonists to a newly semi-cleared island</li> <li>Political fugitives headed out of unfriendly waters with their families</li> <li>Refugees escaping a disaster, your ship was pressed into service</li> <li>A wealthy noble family headed to a wedding party, intriguing and bored and spoiled</li> <li>Mercenaries headed for an employer, the contract already signed</li> </ol>
5	A master trader with samples piqued the interest of a local ruler, and his wellbeing depends on you getting the shipload of supplies to him so he can make good on his promises with the suspicious and violent locals.

## 5. SURVEYING MISSIONS

Roll 1d5 to determine the **Mission**.

d5	Mission
1	A maelstrom whirlpool has appeared several times near a well-traveled sea-lane. Go storm-chasing to see if you can find it and chart its course, or pattern.
2	The ruler of a new settlement wants sea lanes to her nearest neighbors mapped out, and dangers noted where possible.
3	One of the Mokthres Wizards experimented with enchanted reefs around his island. Chart them out, and find a reliable way in, so it can be opened for looting, clearing, and settlement.
4	A local ruler hires your ship for a stable base. You will carry a few diving bells, some enchanted submersibles, and a mapping team that wants to study an abandoned fish-folk citadel of some kind discovered nearby.
5	Once every three years a weird island fortress appears in the mists where there is no island, somewhere in a bay. The local ruler has hired a dozen ships to wait out in the bay, spread out. Yours may be the lucky ship close enough to check out the ghost island before it disappears at dawn, and find out what's going on there.

## LESS THAN HONEST WORK

Some job opportunities require a little more secrecy, or discretion, or “moral flexibility.”

### ESPIONAGE

d5	Mission/Target
1	Father Iriu will lose his standing with the local ruler and with his people if they learn of his indiscretion with a spy who stole information from him. He is being blackmailed for more information, and he cannot bear it. He will work with the blackmailer, but you find out who it is, get at the evidence, and silence the rogue.
2	A girl you know only as Chammy Stee must get be as a lady-in-waiting at the Domoru household. The butler and the lady make the decision. Disappear the current lady-in-waiting, and influence the situation so the butler and the lady choose your candidate. Continue the pressure until they do. Why? You don't need to know.
3	A mail ship had a mishap at sea and is at drydock right now in the port of Filswy. Get to where the mail is kept in the stockade, switch three bags with fakes you're given (of the dozens there), and get out. No one must know you were ever there.

4	Hurry! Someone hired an assassin to kill the local lord's wife. Find the assassin, subdue and replace, and meet at the appointed time. Take the job, and uncover what you can about your “employer” instead of killing the target.
5	Infiltrate the crew of the <i>Lodestone</i> . Captain Barklen handles dirty work for the local crime syndicate, and he knows where their treasure stash is. Find it, then lead Barklin and the <i>Lodestone</i> into a trap.

### BOUNTIES

d5	Target
1	Gavris Strider was an advisor to the Emperor. During an assassination attempt, he was outed as an anarchist. He is on the run, because a massive bounty of 20,000 gold is on his head—alive. Dead, he is only worth 500 gold. The Emperor of the Northern Sea has unpleasant plans for him... And the entire bounty hunting population of the Ghalidell Isles is after him.
2	Something flies down from the peaks of Indara Isle to eat sheep. King Velwhen, a Paliari warrior, is tired of it. He offers 700 gold for the thing's head, and duty-free possession of whatever might be in the lair. Also, if the lair is habitable, the victor can establish a fief there or sell it to the King for an additional negotiable sum.
3	Commodore Bilsin's ego is now too big for his enormous fancy hat, as he commands the <i>Ravenwinger</i> , the <i>Bilgesucker</i> , and the <i>Skyfire</i> ; a fleet of three pirate ships is far more obnoxious than his previous efforts with the <i>Skyfire</i> alone. A group of local rulers offers 10,000 per ship burned (or 20,000 for each intact). Each of the Commodore's pirates is worth 10 gold, his officers are worth 50 gold, and the grand personage himself is worth 10,000 gold.
4	Prince Agiri staged a coup and failed, fleeing with a small cadre of loyalists. Return him home for a 5,000 gold reward. Give him to his furious Dzanti allies, the reward is 10,000 gold. He offers his captors 15,000 gold to take him to Paliari waters and release him. Money is an issue, but so is the chance to make friends...
5	Someone stole the Jade Mind, a jade statue of an outsized human brain. The Vizier considered it the prize piece of her art collection, and will pay 8,000 gold for its return. She will add 10,000 gold for the head of the thief, and another 5,000 gold for an explanation of how the masterful theft was done. She is also looking for a new captain of the guard, as hers was executed for failure.

## HEISTS

d5	Job/Target
1	King Orandi looted the Tower of Prinosk and built his castle on its broken foundations. His treasure room is down where he first found his treasure. Surely he weakened the original defenses rather than improving on them; take those treasures from his basement and sell them as far away as possible.
2	Vizier Cheeran doesn't trust his government or his advisors, so he secretes his spare loot around the city in caches. Only his niece, Arianne, is trusted with this information. She is heavily protected, but bored and lonely. Seduce her, convince her to run away with you, and you may be able to get at the Vizier's "nonexistent" treasure. This will require coordinated effort to separate her from her security often enough to build a relationship and secure her trust. She is very wary and suspicious. Alternatively, capture her if you've got a way to get her to talk. Her one soft spot seems to be for her beautiful collection of fire lizards. (You wouldn't!)
3	You learn your enemies negotiate with an assassin guild to end you. If the guild takes the deal, but your enemies can't pay, then the assassins and your rivals may sort each other out. Find your enemy's payment, steal it, and possibly leave a decoy to cement the impression that your rivals tried to double-cross the assassins. That extra 100,000 gold will allow you to celebrate in style.
4	A legendary pirate ship, <i>The High Watermark</i> , was most recently led by Captain Tresses. She was hanged last week, and the local ruler is planning to refit her ship to join his armada. No pirate ship deserves this, especially one so sturdy, fast, and famous. If you can forge the paperwork, get some uniforms, grease the right palms, and bluff well, maybe you could sail it out "to the drydock at Antwelm" or maybe a bit further... Freeing her crew from the stockade would establish your reputation in the Isles.
5	The <i>Swift Gale</i> , captained by Alistaire Trotter, managed to bring down a huge monster out in the deep. His galleon is currently at the port, while he rages against the bureaucracy about what tariffs and port fees are most appropriate for a hold full of monster parts—and they are not getting any fresher. A local alchemist approached you with an offer. He can identify what is most portable and valuable, you all could steal it, and sell it at a neighboring island. How can you get him into the hold to see what they've got? How can you then get it out of the hold, or steal the <i>Swift Gale</i> itself? Hopefully the fence will hold up on the other end. Still, if this works out, it could be worth 1d5 x 1,000 gold.



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a micro-setting based on a culture that's been underused or ignored in gaming. You can work in example monsters, races, classes, tech/magic items, whatever-- as detailed or sketchy as you like.*

# THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

## A MINI-CAMPAIGN SETTING

By Rolang

### A ROUGHLY SPUN, NOT REAL, VERY FAKE TIBET

**DM's note:** *This is a rudimentary setting description based EXTREMELY loosely on Tibet in the 9th or 10th century or so. It's not meant to be any more detailed than most RPG settings and of course there are elements that are inaccurate or grossly simplified because gaming.*

*I think this would work best as a place for a party of outsiders to venture. That way, the characters themselves (and the players) will experience the fun of exploration, not having little or no 'common knowledge' of how things work there.*

### THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

The Roof of the World lies between the grand empires of the south and the horsemen of the north. The humans are mostly nomadic yak herders, distant cousins of the northern horsemen. Because the climate is so cold, the geography treacherous and the air thin, life here is harsh and generally short.

Why would a party of adventurers venture to an isolated wasteland so hard to get to? There have been persistent rumors that the god of wealth lives in the mountains. The locals themselves tell of a hidden paradise where men live as for centuries and never get sick. Sorcerers have been known to return from trips to the mountains with great and terrible new powers. Dwarves have an old legend about the largest vein of gold being under the world's tallest mountain. Clerics may have heard that the priests of the southern beliefs have had success subduing demons and taming the wild folk. A thief might find sanctuary from the long arm of the law or the longer arm of the thieves' guild here.

Getting to the plateau is difficult and dangerous. Not only are the paths from the south guarded by xenophobic clans of horsemen; there are monsters on the trails and demons in the mountains.

Adventurers will be extremely conspicuous here. They will look different, sound different and most will have a fortune in steel and armor with them. Ordinary arms and armor are rare here and very valuable. Men have been killed in their sleep for their armor. The best approach is to keep one's best weapons hidden and wear the local leather armor (which is more comfortable in such cold climates anyway). Demihumans are almost non-existent, so cover those pointy ears with a knit cap.

Adventures must take care to not offend the representatives of The Way (see below). Locals respect and revere these men and women. Most lamas, monks and yogis are dedicated pacifists, but if they need to resort to force to protect others, they will. After all, they are also protecting the wayward from earning bad karma and coming to a worse rebirth. Horsemen and mercenaries act first and attempt to purify their karma later.

The air here is thinner. All party members suffer a -1 to Constitution while in this climate and dwarves suffer -2.

Every mountain, every river, lake and forest has a spirit or demonic inhabitant. Small features such as ponds, small crags and streams are home to small elemental spirits who make only minor trouble for men and can be appeased by offerings of food and drink left at dusk (*torma*). Larger features such as mountains are the home of demons and gods, the original inhabitants of this land. Everyone knows what demon lives on the closest mountain and they take great care to avoid its notice and failing that, stay in its good graces. Caravans have been known to leave a great deal of wealth at one end of a bridge, hoping that will distract the spirits of a gorge while they rush across to the other side.

### HISTORY

For millennia the people of the plateau have scraped by as nomads and traders of furs, butter and salt. Kingdoms are small here, as the weather makes widespread warfare and continued control difficult. Most of the 'action' takes place in the form of clan and family squabbles, which were generally resolved by marriages, contests or payoffs. In every clan or village, there were families that maintained the equestrian traditions of the north. This meant every small dispute could potentially become an extended, bloody feud. Petty kings employed these horsemen in their wars.

Legends tell of a great time of unification, when the people rode from the north and drove out the previous inhabitants, who are described as savage and demonic.

If there is great treasure to be had here, it is certainly not in the hands of the people.

## THE WAY

A hundred years ago, a great caravan from southern kingdoms climbed the paths to the plateau. They brought with them great scholars and meditators who had been sent north at the behest of the gods, it is said, to tame the wild peoples of the north and to turn the demons of the sky toward the path of kindness. These Great Gurus, as they are called, defeated the demons of several high peaks in contests of logic and displays of miracles. These mountains became safe for people again, so long as they respected the newly reformed protectors living there. Despite these miracles, they taught the people a simple, pacifistic way of life called "The Way". It combined meditation with a monastic tradition and quasi-magical utterances (*mantras*) meant to turn the mind away from evil karma, which they said was the cause of the plateau's troubles.

Villages and cities were established around monasteries in the southern and central provinces. Much of the male population destined to become warriors, bandits or merchants instead took on robes at the monasteries and put their energies to good use, crafting items of protection, performing healing rituals and studying and copying the *Thousand Scrolls of The Way*. Because the missionaries were so successful at taming the demons and spirits of the wild and reducing strife in the community, The Way has become influential. With that has come of course the corruption and strife that comes with human institutions, and of course the demons and spirits are capable of subterfuge.

The average home has a small shrine to the Enlightened One, the Great Gurus or to a local protector deity. They leave offerings outside their tents and sing mantras as they go about their day. This focus on protection and good deeds has enabled the family to live longer and feel safer. They believe their bad deeds could lead to rebirth in the hells, or as animals or hungry ghosts. Their good deeds could lead them to rebirth in the heavens, but if they devote themselves to the Great Guru or one of his servants, they will be reborn in a secret land where one may meditate and work toward enlightenment for many eons.

## NPC CLASSES

There are four main NPC classes here. **Horsemen** replace fighters, **Monks** are clerics and cleric/illusionists, **Lamas** are cleric/rangers and **Yogis** are Illusionists (with psionic powers if applicable in your game).

### HORSEMEN

If your rules have a barbarian class, this is an excellent fit for the plateau. Take the class, add riding and archery skills and apply no penalty to attacks when shooting from horseback. Their horses are able to travel a quarter further than common warhorses without tiring. In mountainous terrain that would normally slow a mounted party, native horsemen suffer no penalty.

While some clans have specific traditions and codes, just as many serve as mercenaries to local lords, demons and wizards. In lands of the peaceful way, warriors have either become bandits or anointed themselves protectors of holy men and pilgrims. These last can be found on the paths leading up from the south, sometimes turning away foreigners and adventurers while allowing pilgrims and monks through.

### MONKS

Monks are not the AD&D masters of the martial arts. A few of them are low level clerics, capable of casting various spells protecting, blessing, healing, curing and clairvoyance. While individuals might live up to their code and vows to varying degrees, all monks follow a lawful good path. Even those who have previously been thieves and murderers are allowed to follow The Way (albeit with careful supervision).

Treat most monks as simply 0 level humans of Lawful Good alignment. They have renounced the world and joined a monastery where their energies are turned towards copying books, building holy sites hard labor to improve their karma. They follow a strict code of pacifism and renunciation. There are literally hundreds of vows of renunciation they must take.

Monks are easily recognized by their maroon and yellow robes and shaved heads. They always have rosaries called *malas* with them. They have taken vows of celibacy, non-killing and will not take intoxicants or steal. (In extreme situations, they would if it prevented harm to a living being). All monks can cast a *protection from evil* spell ritually. The power of this spell should 'stack' if cast by multiple monks.

### Monasteries

Monasteries serve many functions. The spiritual had often acts as a magistrate if no local warlord exists. Monasteries buy many blankets and consume great quantities of firewood, butter, milk, and salt. Well-respected monks travel the countryside performing protective ceremonies, pacifying ghosts and teaching practices meant to pacify the spirit and generate positive karma. There are a few nunneries, but are rare, and their locations are kept secret to protect their inhabitants.

Monasteries serve as stand-ins for keeps. Use them as sources of shelter, quests, or mysteries. A haunted or abandoned monastery works well.

Monasteries are headed by an abbot, who is the spiritual head of the community. Treat NPC abbots as cleric/illusionists with no combat ability. They can cast spells simply by concentrating, without the need for speech or gestures. They usually have healing, curing, protection, clairvoyance and illusionist spells prepared. They emanate a *bless* spell and *protection from evil* spell at all times with a radius of 10 feet/cleric level. Abbots typically have one level in both classes for every 50 monks in their charge. High-level abbots are revered as avatars of saints and Buddhas.

## LAMAS

Lamas are trained in ritual practices. They are capable meditators, healers and lore masters. In some cases they are also monastics, but they are usually part of the lay populace. Some even have families and homes. Many travel between villages. Depending on your rule system, treat them as non-combatative ranger/clerics. In addition to their normal spell allotment, they can perform ritual versions of any healing, curing or protective spell. These require material components (hallucinatory herbs, pure water, rice, gold, etc.) and take one hour per spell level to perform. Lamas are sitting ducks to physical attacks during these, but magical protection circles are a standard beginning for all rituals.

Lamas who have taken monastic vows are still part of this class, although they are also 0 level monks.

## YOGIS

Yogis and yoginis are men and women who have abandoned their homes (or monasteries) to pursue meditation in remote places. Most of them are normal 0-level people, but once in awhile one of them will attain a level of realization that immediately puts them at the level of an illusionist of fifth or higher level. These accomplished yogis and yoginis usually want to be left alone, but are often hounded by jealous demons or eager students. They will use their powers of illusion to avoid detection or to educate these eager passersby.

### *A Note on Morality*

Monks, lamas, and yogis, are prohibited from taking life or causing harm in all but the direst circumstances. In fact, a monk, lama or yogi would not kill in self-defense. For this reason, they make poor player character classes. In no circumstances would they associate with “murder hobos” who kill monsters and loot them. They would, however, do harm if it were necessary to prevent a great tragedy (harm of a child or of many innocents) and it were clearly the only option. Morality in this land is not what the law or tradition or a king says, but what causes harm. Also note: don’t play these NPCs as hippies or wimps. They are also not vegetarian as there are no vegetables here. Adventurers should not assume, however, that everyone they meet in a robe is trustworthy. There are charlatans, thieves, spies, doppelgangers, and weak-willed individuals as well.

## OTHER BEINGS

### DEMONS

Demons here can mean genuinely evil-minded demons of most RPGs, elementals, or semi-spirit creatures such as dryads or sirens. Many have a reputation with the locals who know them by name. They feed on ignorance, fear, and conflict. They resist the monasteries by killing wandering monks, caravans bringing goods to monasteries, and in some cases hiring mercenaries or infiltrating the monks.

Many demons have a sorcerer apprentice who does their bidding.

Demons are the main Bosses of this setting and while are spoken of a great deal, they shouldn’t be over-used.

Some demons are converted to The Way by powerful lamas and gurus. Lower-level demons might become *dakinis* or helper spirits. Medium-level demons convert to guardians of locales or protectors of sacred treasures. The most powerful become wrathful deities who use their horrific appearance in the service of The Way.

Demons do not suddenly lose their powers or become sweetness and light after conversion. A demon might continue to protect his mountain, for example, from those whose greed has lead them to try to steal treasures. Instead of actually killing adventurers, he might enslave them for a few centuries, polymorph them into animals, or make them experience death only to awake in a remote village.

If killed, demons are banished to another plane. In this case, we’ll say the hells of the Buddhist cosmology.

### DAKINIS

These powerful female spirits might manifest as old crones, young demon girls or as giant dancing goddesses half-dressed in bone garlands. Their appearance and energy is always feminine. Treat them as efreet or djinn. They travel between planes, see the past and future. They absolutely might kill someone and then immediately resurrect them to show the illusory nature of the world. They are pure mischief and generally mean trouble. They are excellent for giving quests to parties.

### NAGAS

These Monster Manual staples are human-headed snake demons. They are usually dangerous and untrustworthy, but a few employed as guardians of great treasures of The Way.

### UNDEAD

Most bodies are ground up and fed to vultures, so undead are not so common here. A sorcerer might animate a corpse to do his bidding. These are called *rolangs*. They are mid-to-high level undead and should not be treated as zombies. Rolangs, it is said, can kill by casting their shadow upon someone. Those dead become a rolang at the next sunset unless burned and there is a ninety percent chance they will not be under the control of any master at all. Rolang walk stiffly, with their arms out. Every house has a low door to keep them from entering at night.

*Lamas, monks, and yogis know rituals to dispel the undead. If a DM wanted to have PC monks, lamas, and yogis, a party of rolang-hunters would be appropriate.*

## GHOSTS

There are lost-spirit ghost and there are hungry ghosts, or *pretas*. Lost spirit ghosts are the same as in your game-- undead spirits and/or plot movers. Pretas are spirits with giant stomachs and small mouths, who are always hungry. For gaming's sake, you can make them hungry for human flesh, brains, blood...

## ANIMALS

There are animals that speak human languages here. They are rare. Most will not be helpful unless bribed or caught. Treat them as the animals behave in fairy tales.

## WITCHES, SORCERERS, DOPPLEGANGERS, PENENGALENS, GIANT ANIMALS, and BANDITS

The plateau should be just rife with these.

## DRAGONS

Use Chinese dragons, not western wyrms.

## TREASURE

Many of the world's most powerful artifacts and magical items can be found on the plateau, often on the world's highest peaks. These are usually items that cannot be destroyed but also cannot be allowed fall into human or demi human hands.

There is almost no gold, silver or diamonds on the plateau, but lapis, turquoise and other precious stones serve as currency in the larger markets. Salt, meat, butter and livestock are the most important items of barter. Iron, steel, tin and precious metals are brought in via caravan.

Relics are considered great treasures. Any body parts of holy people such as bones, hair, skull cups, femur horns and so forth are considered sacred and valuable. You can use these as the Macguffin for many adventures.

## HIDDEN LANDS

Even the locals will tell you there are places that fold and twist between the mountains, cities that can only be found during the worst snowstorms and valleys from which travellers never return yet are never found frozen.

Some of these are secret lands occupied by saints and yogis of centuries past. Others hide entire communities hidden from the ravages of time, war and disease. Some conceal doors to other planes. Shambhala, or Shangri-La, is one such hidden land.

## DEATH

If you want, replace resurrection in your game with some form of reincarnation. Coming back from the dead was not an option in the Way. Moving forward is, however. Have a PC roll a new character but with the same memories. How did he get old enough to adventure? You figure out a way. One tradition is the magical transference of consciousness at

death into another being. But whatever you do, don't make it a respawn. Make it something that has to be worked through.

A TPK is an opportunity to take the party through the bardo, a place between lives. Here they could encounter tests, traps, and peaceful and wrathful demigods within a mandala-shaped palace. Google it and have fun.

## CULTURAL FLAVOR

Clockwise is good. It keeps the clean hand toward the center. Many pilgrimages and rituals involve circling a holy object or structure in a clockwise direction. Counter-clockwise is bad.

Prayer wheels, cylinders with mantras printed on them, are ubiquitous in civilized areas and common in the nomad's camps. They can be small and handheld or giant and part of the architecture. They are always rotated clockwise. They can be used for designing puzzles where specific syllables or letters must be matched.

Wheels used for transportation or work are considered tasteless. The wheel is a symbol of The Way.

Flags with prayers printed on them provide protection from evil in windy places. Count them as minor protection spells whenever the wind blows.

Tea is served with butter and salt. Butter is also used in lamps.

Hospitality is a paramount virtue. Even an enemy would not dishonor his name by harming a guest or turning away someone in need of shelter if anyone might know about it. Guests are expected to behave themselves and accept any and all food and drink offered until full. One does not refuse a meal because it displeases, only when one has already had enough to reasonably claim to be stuffed.

The dead are fed to vultures. If the vultures do not eat the body, this is seen as a sign of bad deeds.

It is a great honor for a family when a son is accepted as a monk or lama in training.

## THE WAY

I have taken care not to tie this setting to closely to Buddhism, but it is a natural fit. If you want to add realistic flourishes, research specific historical figures such as Padmasambhava, Milarepa and Gesar of Ling. Real meditative deities and art can be used. In most cases, it is the trappings that matter in the game, not the actual beliefs. Using made-up names and ideas is perhaps more respectful.

At its core, the Way, which is the stand-in for Buddhism in this setting, should be about non-harming. This sets the stage for tension with the violence-loving demons and the warriors who have ruled for millennia. This also prevents high-level locals from becoming a *deus ex machina*.

I have left out some important aspects in the name of simplicity: tantric aspects of Buddhism are very misunderstood in the west and I think better to leave out.

There is also a long tradition of reincarnated teachers who take over their predecessor's role (the Dalai Lamas are the most famous of these). I have left this out as well, but you can do a little research if you want to use these elements.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

- For foreigners, just making your way up the paths to this part of the world is dangerous. Sprinkle steep paths with classic giant animal monsters (a vulture-like roc) and of course a (or the, your choice) Yeti. Mounted warriors seek to turn away anyone they don't deem a holy man, scholar or genuine pilgrim.
- A hidden terma (treasure scroll) has a spell that repels the rolang. You are given a few clues and must escort a lama to find it. She is, however, a demon in disguise.
- A prominent abbot has passed, and a stupa (tomb) is being prepared for his interment. Protect the body from relic-seekers and the stupa from demons that would ruin it before it is finished. A single drop of blood on the unfinished stupa defiles it completely.
- There is a monastery that has abandoned the belief of non-violence and is training its monks in destructive sorcery. You must bring as many of them back into the fold as you can, but cannot trust them all. You have been given a bound rolang to help you sniff out deceivers. Be careful not to break that leash.
- A dakini has tasked you with hiding the path into and out of Shangri La. Will the party be able to resist the temptation to stay? Why would they need to obscure the way out?

## GEOGRAPHY

The high plateau sits about 5000 meters above sea level. It should be the highest or nearly the highest region in your gaming world. To the north and far below are vast grassy plains. To the east and northeast, a desert. To the west are lower mountains and hills and to the south there is a large, rainy subcontinent. This geography assumes the wind and moisture comes from the south, hits the side of the mountains and returns down as mighty rivers. The rain shadows are north and east. If the winds come from another direction, adjust the rain shadow accordingly.

The southern part of the plateau is warmer and more humid, but never getting warmer than 16 degrees C (60 F) during the rainy season (May to September). In winters, it gets to -16 C (3 F). In the north, it ranges from a high of 10 degrees C (50 F) in the rainy season to far below freezing depending on altitude and wind.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a minimalist micro-scenario for first level characters for me to run on g+ in a single two-hour session!*

# MORDIROT'S LAIR

By Jason Roe

A narrow underground passage opens into a small cavern roughly 10' by 15' on the opposite end of the cavern lies a hallway with worked stone. The stonework appears to be of human make. a layer of dust coats the floor and walls, small spots of soot stains the ceiling where torches once were held in rusted sconces.

1. The worked stone hall bends slightly to the east here, and bears a plaque hanging from one of the support beams. The plaque reads "Green Dragon Tavern".

2. The hall opens into a huge room 30' by 40' with towering 15' high ceilings. The floor is painted with a spiral pattern in green and red.

3. This room stinks, a small pool of refuse lies in one corner. A skeleton rises to attack any who enter.

#### **Skeleton**

HD: 1, AC: 8[11], Atk: 1d6, Save: 17, Move: 12, XP: 15

4. This room is filled with mold, it grows thickly on every wall and gives off a faint pulsating glow.

5. This door is locked with a dead bolt and must be broken down to gain entry. Behind the door is a room 10' by 10' with 10' ceiling a door is on the far wall also closed. The floor is a sea of refuse and is home to 6 giant rats who, while not aggressive will see anyone wading through the knee high filth as food.

#### **Giant Rats**

HD: 1d4, AC: 7[12], Atk: 1d3, Save: 18, Move: 12, XP: 5

6. A pool of water sits here nearly 2' deep by 15' diameter, standing on the edge of the pool is a rabbit, standing on its hind legs and dressed in loose-fitting pants, boots, and a white shirt. At its side rests a wand and a rapier. When he sees the PCs, he demands payment of 10 gp each in order to cross his room. If they try to force their way he attacks.

#### **Sir Weebert**

HD: 1, AC: 7[12], Atk: 1d4, Save: 16, Move: 12, XP: 35, Equip: *Wand of fire bolt* (1d4 damage, 5 charges)

7. Behind this door sits a lush bedroom, most of the corners are filled with crates, inspecting these confirms that is Sir Weebert's food stores. The bedroom is empty. A loose stone in one wall hides Sir Weebert's treasure: 100gp, a ruby pendant (150gp), a *potion of animal control*, a *scroll of protection from drowning*, and a *longsword +1, +2 vs. Undead*.

8. A dark room filled with books, they are haphazardly scattered around the room in stacks, on shelves, on tables and some on the floor. Books cover a variety of subjects including a journal detailing the rise and fall of the cleric Mordirot the Dark.

9. The door has a plaque on it that reads "The master's Chambers." The door itself opens easily. Inside is a lavishly decorated bedroom, from silk bedding to a plush rug on the floor covering the bare stone. There are several rich garments in a wardrobe beside the bed (each one is worth 10-60gp). The rug, however, is an animated object that attacks when a PC steps on it.

#### **Animated Rug**

HD 1, AC 9[10], Atk 1 (no damage), Move 6, Save 17, XP 15, Special: Grab.

10. The door to this chamber swings open easily inside is a dark temple filled with several unmentionable objects. Standing over a dark alter is a large Rabbit, dressed in long robes and carrying a mace at his side. One side of his face is missing, rotted away into undeath.

#### **Mordirot the Dark**

HD: 2, AC 4[15], Atk 1 (1d6 dmg), Move 12, Save 16, XP 135, Special: immune to *sleep* and *charm*

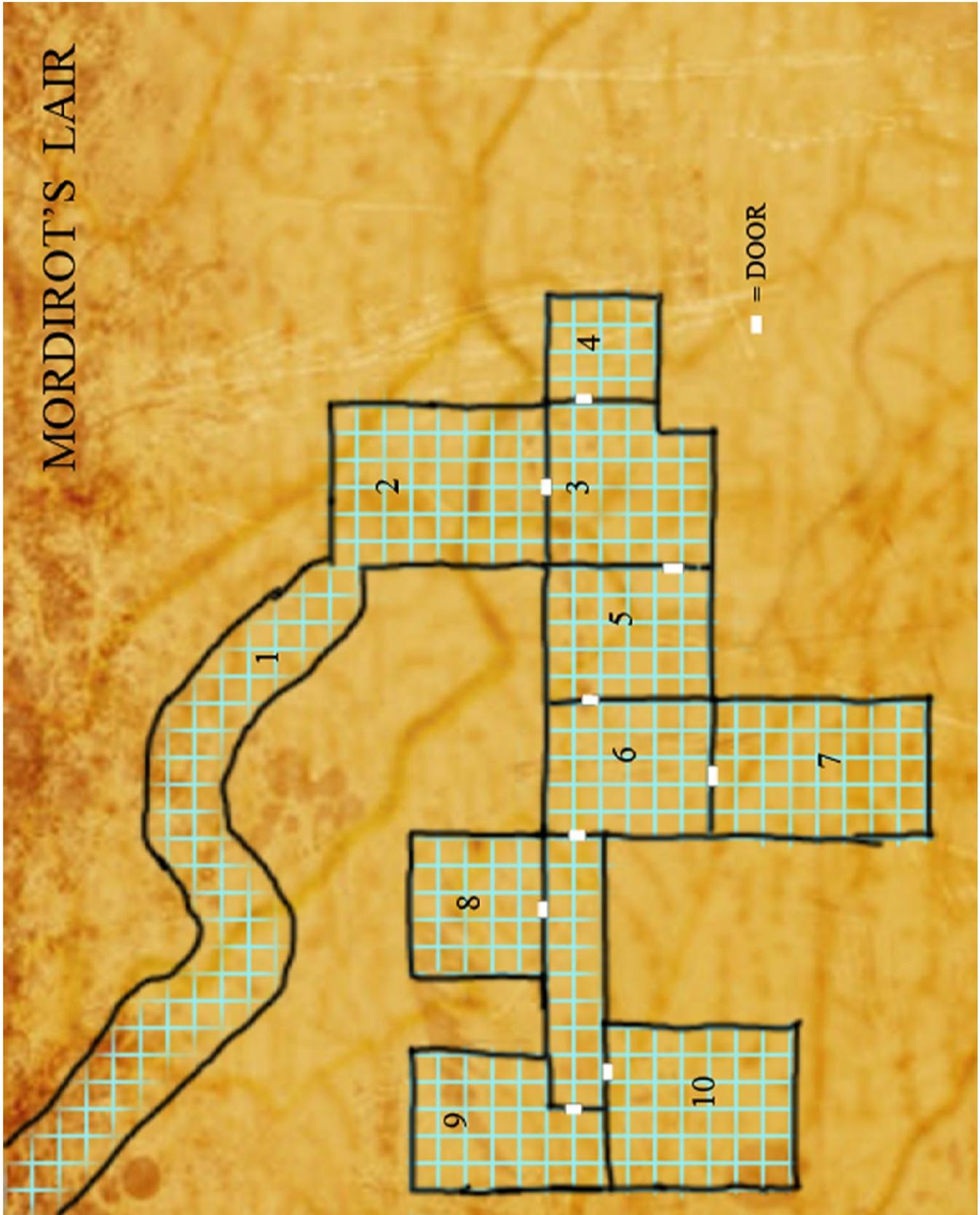
## ADVENTURE HOOKS

#### **THE NOBLE DEED**

A nearby noble's child has been taken by a rakish humanoid rabbit and he is willing to pay the PCs 100gp each to retrieve her. In this use of the adventure, add a small noble child to encounter 10.

#### **STOLEN HEIRLOOM**

A poor woman who wears clothes of a commoner but the bearing of someone raised among court has had her mother's pendant stolen. She knows the general direction in which the thief ran off in. This use of the scenario just make the pendant in encounter 7 be her stolen pendant.



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a page of troll jokes, either as told by trolls or featuring the abuse of trolls, illustrated or written. If a page is too much, maybe fill them out with orc, elf, halfling jokes as well.*

# THE DINNER THEATER

## By Jason Kielbasa and Janis Lilly

*of The Only Successful One*

**GARGLE-GUH, the DESTROYER of DREAMS**  
proudly presents  
**CHARISMA!**  
a musical dinner theater experience

### **The Menu**

If the PCs are interested in dinner options, these are listed below, and a menu handout is provided at the end.

### **Main Dishes**

Peasant under glass  
Serf and Turf  
Human Veal  
Halfling Dumplings  
Flumph in a delicate beurre blanc

### **Sides**

Horn potatoes  
Shrieker Mushroom sautéed in EVOO  
Gelatinous Cube salad  
Black Pudding

### **Desserts**

Anna Paplova  
Gag Beasley's Bananas Foster

### **Soups**

Blood of the fallen foe of the day  
Soup of the day

Drinks at the bar are bog standard for your setting. Although, Gargle-guh is known to make fine Manhattans, 7 and 7s, and high balls.

## **DENIZENS OF THE THEATER**

### **GARGLE-GUH THE DESTROYER**

Proprietor and Barkeep  
Orc, 1st level Fighter

Str 14, Dex 7, Con 13, Wis 16, Cha 13, Int 10  
Black-and-white striped shirt, red and gold paisley vest, gold pocket watch (that he checks often to make sure the show is running on time), tiny top hat w/ a single red feather plume. Ratty black tuxedo pants. +2 *crook*.

### **SHECKY**

House Comedian  
Troll, 1st level Thief

Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Wis 8, Cha 7, Int 16  
Shecky wears a ratty pastel blue polyester tuxedo. Looks like a combination of Tony Orlando and a 2nd edition AD&D Troll.

### **HERMAN**

Lighting Guy  
Halfling, 3rd level Illusionist

Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Wis 8, Cha 8, Int 12  
A lumpy gray potato of a Halfling. Forever clad in tattered blue workman's overalls and a ridiculous deer stalker hat leftover from a raucous production of *The Hellhounds of Baskerville*. Often heard muttering incantations in lieu of mechanical tinkering. He seems to radiate an unstable energy that keeps the show going.

### **IDA & ENA**

Dancers  
Ida and Ena Serowyn were once beautiful flaxen haired elven women with delicate porcelain features that gave them the appearance of being constructed of living milk glass. Their hair was so luminous it was said that a single strand could light even the darkest corners of the Thurgen Forest. However, time and despair have not been kind to the sisters. Their once effulgent blue eyes are covered in smoky cataracts and their alabaster skin is creped and marred by liver spots giving the sisters the look of molting albino crows. Their once graceful movements have been stiffened by arthritis giving the once-harrowing rhythmic display of the dance of death an inflexible mechanical lumber. However, they still perform 2 shows a night and 3 on Sundays.

### **IDA SEROWYN**

Elf, 3rd level fighter  
Str 6, Dex 9, Con 15, Wis 7, Cha 12, Int 15  
Special equipment: +1 *Sword of Grace*, +1 Dex

### **ENA SEROWYN**

Elf, 3rd level fighter  
Str 6, Dex 13, Con 10, Wis 8, Cha 5, Int 14  
Special equipment: +1 *Sword of Striking Beauty*, +1 Cha

## BEE

Ticket-vendor  
Hobgoblin, 0-level  
Bee is a female Hobgoblin with pink beehive hairdo who obsessively chain-smokes. She speaks to no one if it does not involve their ticket or anything theater-related and even then, does so with disdain. Will be staring at a tiny magical box w/ pictures on it that she has sitting in her lap.

## THE SERVERS

The waitstaff is a family of acrobatic Russian imps who were abandoned at the theater when their manager had a heart attack. Only 3 feet tall with skin that's brown and creased like an old leather satchel. They balance the tarnished silver trays over their heads. They serve your food with a professional flourish before disappearing down the dumb waiter-shaft.

## THE THEATER ITSELF

A rundown 2 story theater with a broken and chipped marquee out front. There is a ticket window which is staffed by a small froglike creature (Bee, above).

## LOBBY

Long mahogany bar in front with brass railings. Alcohol available. Sign over bar reads "The more you drink the prettier we get." The owner is regularly seen holding court here. To the left and right of the bar are archways leading to the theater. Dinner menus are prominently displayed on the bar.

## THEATER

Entering you see a proscenium style stage with decrepit red velvet main rag and matching legs. Backdrop is a faded and peeling battle scene. In front of the stage an orchestra pit that once held a house band, but is now stacked with piles of rubble and theatrical ephemera. On the walls there is peeling red and gold-flocked wallpaper and gaudy gold sconces w/ flickering illusory light. Above you are balconies holding stage lights, ladders, and rolls of backdrop oil cloth left over from the theater's heyday. Directly above the stage is a giant ornate wrought iron chandelier that once held 50 nubile Elven dancers in tableau but now lurks menacingly above the performers like a guillotine blade. All of the seats have been removed and replaced with four-top café tables and chairs. Everything is covered with a fine powder of dust and regret.

Through the stage left leg you can see a **dressing room** door and beyond, a wall of mirrors rimmed with globed lights. The mirror is covered with lips stick prints and smudges. On the wall above the lights you can see a torn and faded poster for the twin elven sister act "*The Splendid Serowyn Sisters and their Seductive Saber Dance of Death*".

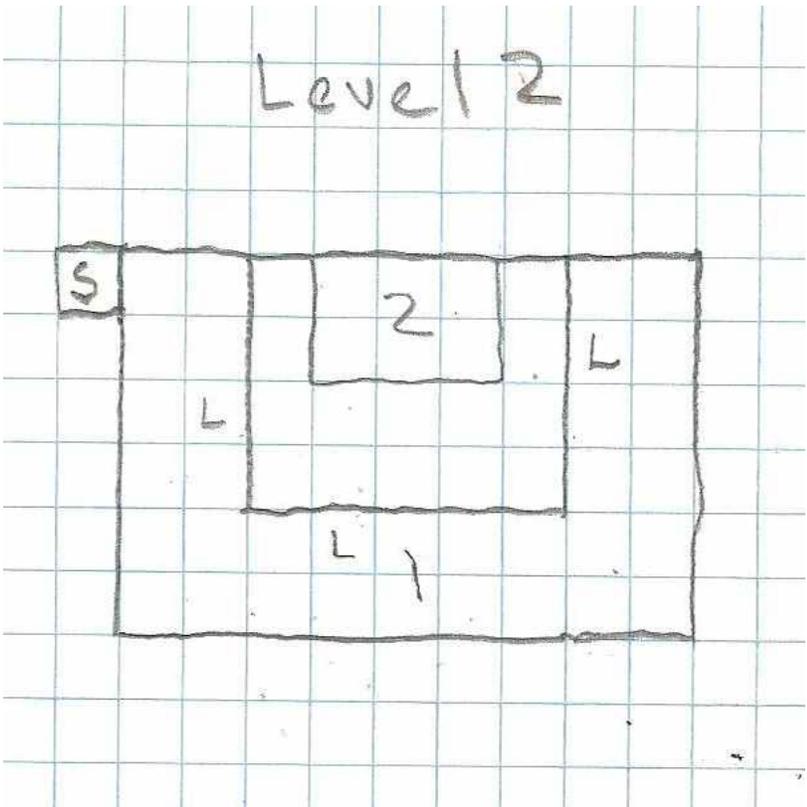
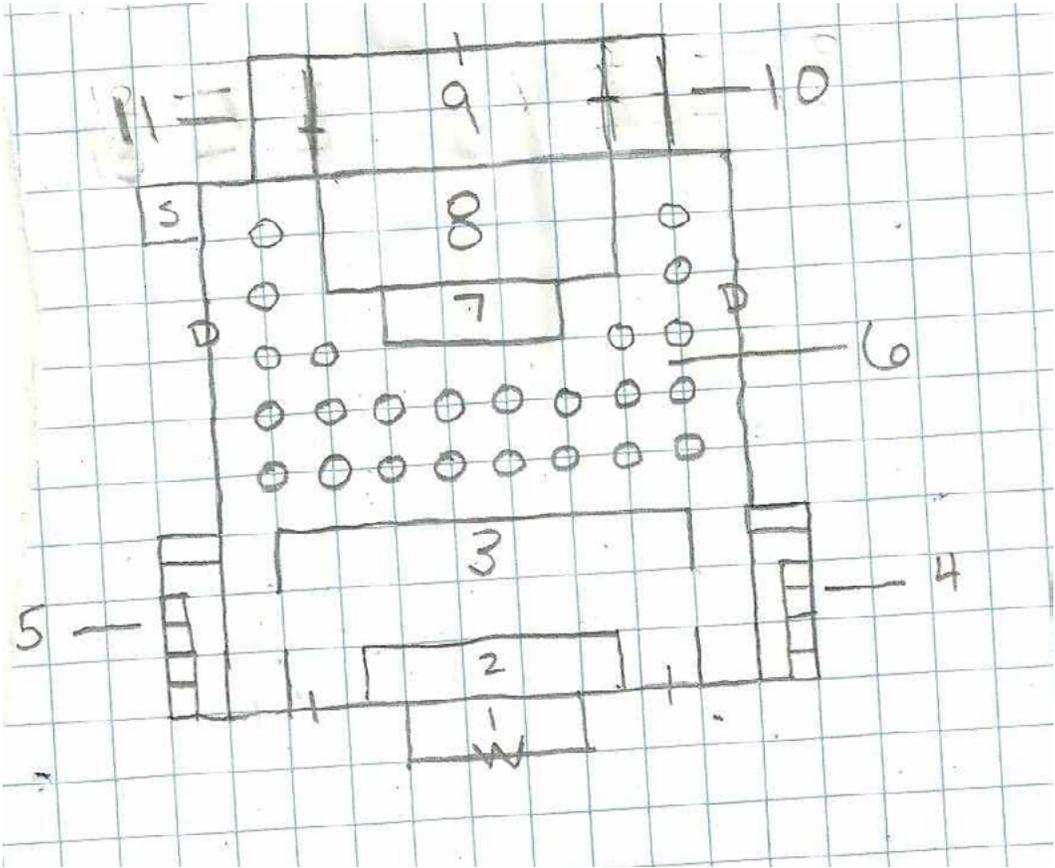
The **bathrooms** have been given over to decay. The once-elegant marble sinks are now weathered and beaten. The water has a 1 in 6 chance of running and a 2 in 6 chance of

clogging when it does. It smells of rotten eggs. The toilets have a 3 in 6 chance of flushing; the management tries to keep them up as best as they can, not that you'd notice. Toiletries are kept up to snuff.

## AND NOW, SOME TROLL JOKES

1. A Cleric says to a Troll, You want to improve your love life? You need to get some exercise. Run 10 miles a day." 2 weeks later the Troll called the cleric and the cleric says "How is your love life since you have been running?" The Troll says "I don't know, I am 140 miles away."
2. Take my wife who I gained as spoil of war. Please!
3. I was so beautiful when I was born my mother slapped the Cleric.
4. Why did the chicken cross the road? To avoid becoming the spoils of war!
5. How many Dwarves does it take to screw in a light bulb? 5, 1 to screw in the light bulb and 4 to hold the ladder.
6. What does a Troll call second breakfast? Halfling.
7. Where do Troll vampires live? Trollsylvania.
8. What's a Troll's favorite book? For Whom the Bell Trolls.
9. A Fighting man, a Cleric, and Magic User walk into a dungeon. The Troll kills them and uses their skin as hat.
10. Knock spell, who's there? Stupid other Magic User negating my Wizard Lock.

# THE DINNER THEATER



## Map Key

- Level 1**
- 1 Ticket office
  - 2 Bar
  - 3 Bar area
  - 4 Men's Bathroom
  - 5 Women's Bathroom
  - 6 Dining area
  - 7 Orchestra Pit
  - 8 Stage
  - 9 Backstage
  - 10 Dressing Room, stage left
  - 11 Dressing Room, stage right

S. Stairs, going upwards  
 D. Dumbwaiter chutes for waiters

- Level 2**
- 1 Lighting and prop area  
(L = spotlight/fresnel)
  - 2 Wrought iron chandelier

# Gargle-Guh, the Destroyer of Dreams

proudly presents

## *Charisma!*

*a musical dinner theater experience*

### The Menu

#### **MAIN DISHES**

*Peasant under glass*

*Serf and Turf*

*Human Veal*

*Halfling Dumplings*

*Flumph in a delicate beurre blanc*

#### **SIDES**

*Harn potatoes*

*Shrieker Mushroom sautéed in EVOO*

*Gelatinous Cube salad*

*Black Pudding*

#### **DESSERTS**

*Anna Paplova*

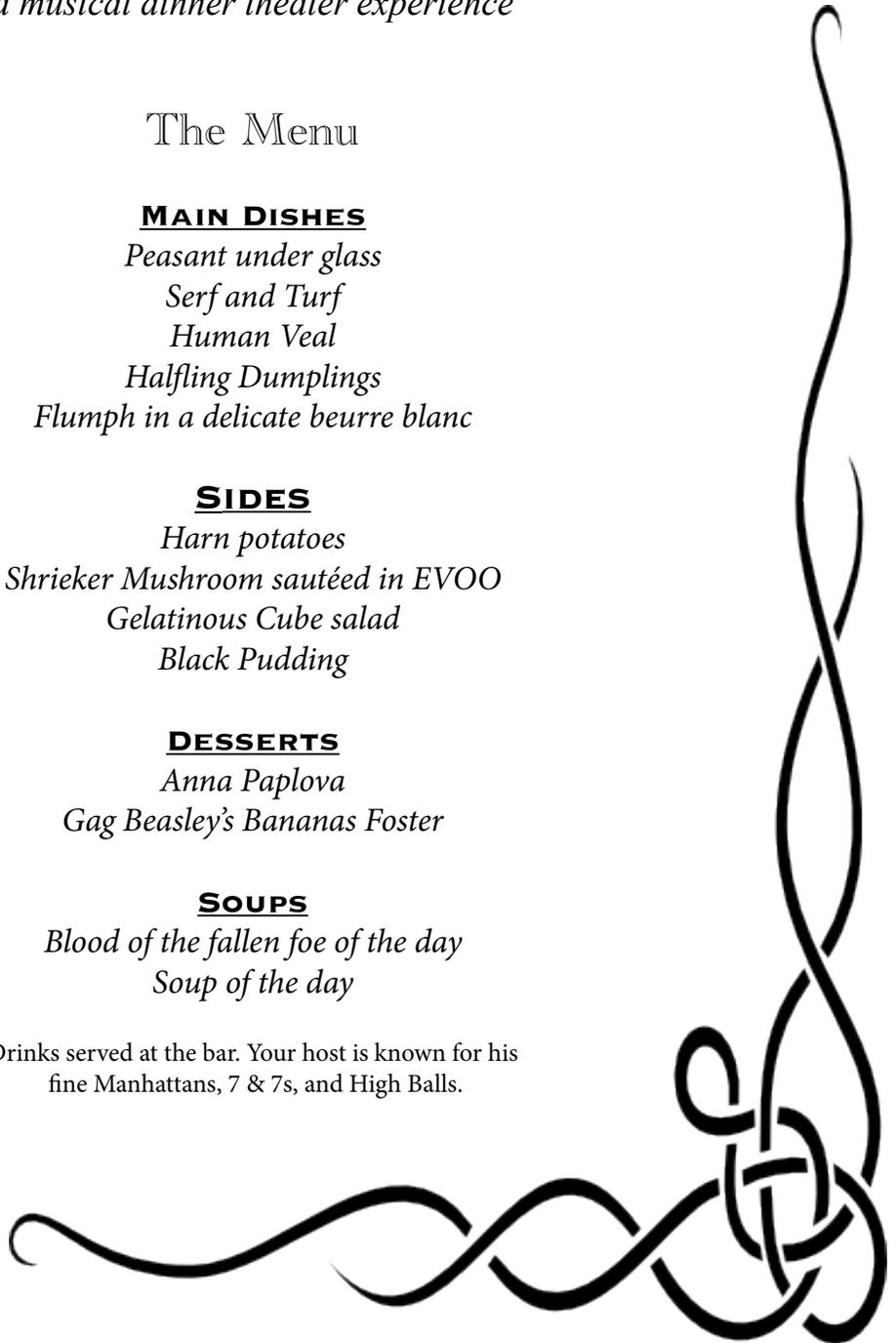
*Gag Beasley's Bananas Foster*

#### **SOUPS**

*Blood of the fallen foe of the day*

*Soup of the day*

Drinks served at the bar. Your host is known for his  
fine Manhattans, 7 & 7s, and High Balls.



# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### PART 4

## CHARACTERS & MONSTERS

#### CHARACTERS

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*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a centaur-like race.*

*Either Dungeon World or D&D  
please.*

# A CENTAUR-LIKE RACE!

By Chris Carpenter, with help from  
Bennet Akkerman and Jim White

## HA'VASS (for 4E D&D)

*Strength earned and debts paid from a lineage of pain.*

### RACIAL TRAITS

**Average Height:** 5'6" – 6'3"

**Average Weight:** 275 – 350

**Ability scores:** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution

**Size:** Medium

**Speed:** 6 squares

**Vision:** Normal

**Languages:** Common, Draconic

**Skill Bonuses:** +2 Endurance, +2 Perception

**Ha'vass Weapon Proficiency:** You gain proficiency with the greatclub and the javelin.

**Hardened Flesh:** The skin of a ha'vass is a natural armor, and can slough off specific attacks based on the lineage of the ha'vass. At character creation, choose which punishing environment the ha'vass family line hails from. Benefit: You gain resist 3 fire, lightning, or poison depending on ha'vass lineage. This resistance increases to 6 at 11th level and 9 at 21st level.

Environment	Damage Type
Volcanic	Fire
Desert	Lightning
Swamp	Poison

**Claws Out:** When an effect forces you to move – through a push, pull, or slide – You can move 2 squares less than the effect specifies. This means an effect that normally pulls pushes, or slides a target 1 or 2 squares does not force you to move unless you want to.

**Rear Kick:** Flanking a ha'vass is a dangerous prospect. When an enemy gets a flanking bonus against you, you may make a single, unarmed attack against them using your powerful hind legs in addition to your normal attacks.

## REAR KICK (HA'VASS RACIAL ATTACK)

At-Will

**Opportunity Action / Melee:** 1

**Trigger:** A flanking enemy hits you with an attack

**Target:** The triggering enemy

**Effect:** You make the following attack against the target:

**Attack:** Strength vs. AC

**Hit:** 1d6 + Strength modifier damage. Increase damage to 2d6 + Strength modifier damage at 21st level.

## PHYSICAL QUALITIES

The ha'vass are a quadrupedal (4-legged) race somewhat akin to a centaur in shape, but completely reptilian and hairless. They are tall and muscular in the torso with a low and wide body and the stump of a tail. Their rough skin appears in a range of natural colors: from the tans and browns of the desert dwellers, to the grays and blacks of the volcanic regions, all the way to the yellows and greens of the wetlands.

Life for the ha'vass is a struggle, and material goods are often seen more as an encumbrance than a boon. Totems and symbols worn about the neck are common, as is face painting or ritual scarification. Clothes are rarely worn, except for ceremonial garb or armor for those who choose to wear it. The few material goods a ha'vass might have usually fit in a pouch worn at his side.

Ha'vass hatch from eggs but receive little in the way of upbringing. Ha'vass surviving long enough to reach maturity are generally welcomed into the tribe after proving themselves competent hunters. A naming ceremony is the final step towards adulthood, shedding themselves of the "hatchling" moniker all unnamed ha'vass youth bear. Without the rigors of a normal ha'vass lifestyle, they would live 80-100 years, but few "uncivilized" ha'vass reach that age.

## PLAYING A HA'VASS

Little is known about the origin of the ha'vass since they have no written language. They pray to many gods but primarily to Melora, goddess of the wilderness and the sea. Legend holds that they were once a mighty race with castles and vast wealth built through abundant slave labor. Avarice eventually led them down the path of decline. With their riches gone and their castles taken from them or destroyed, the ha'vass wandered to the only places they could find solitude and safety from persecution – the most inhospitable regions in the world. Over time they adapted to their harsh

environment and grew to think of their new life as a form of redemption. Today's ha'vass simply assumes that they need to struggle against the harsh elements to harden them into the very best warriors.

The ha'vass are natural hunters, traditionally employing javelins and bows for smaller prey, but preferring two-handed weapons for most other combat. Magic is not unknown among them, but it is a rare gift usually discovered by accident. With little need for material goods, few ha'vass have mastered crafting anything other than the simple weapons they bear. Metal is often scarce in the wild, so weapons reinforced with bone and teeth are common.

Other intelligent creatures sometimes steal ha'vass eggs, and the young are used as pit fighters, slave labor, or worse. They are rarely found in the cities, except the more adventurous or enlightened ha'vass who have escaped bondage or found value in the shiny coins earned in hard labor or as frontier guards.

Outsiders view the ha'vass as strange, particularly for their self-imposed hardships and lack of gender roles. Largely raising themselves, the ha'vass see no difference in gender when it comes to survival, only individual strengths. With little in the way of exterior genitalia, only the ha'vass can determine male from female (by smell, mostly). Mating is infrequent, and based on proximity more than extended courtship.

**Ha'vass Characteristics:** Quiet, attentive, hardworking, introspective, faithful, proud.

**Ha'vass Names (both genders):** A'shosh, Be'yush, Bosh, Da'teerus, Es'goss, Foss, Go'nesh, Jon'tay, Suss.

### HA'VASS ADVENTURERS

**Bosh** is a ha'vass fighter who earned her name after single-handedly stopping a goblin incursion. With leather armor and her war club "Ho'gok" she patrols her swamp home, insuring no foul creatures are able to get a foothold there. Once she found a traveling band of merchants, hopelessly lost in her swamp. Curious to learn more of the outsiders, she offered to help guide them back to the roads north of her wetland home. Finding she had a taste for adventure and coin, she now offers her services to merchants traveling through dangerous areas.

**Es'goss** is a ha'vass cleric. Stolen as an egg and named "Spathrax" by his eventual owner, he was raised to be a pit slave. Eventually he made contact with other, older ha'vass who taught him the traditions of their people and gave him a proper name. A wise elven cleric helped Es'goss and his fellow captives escape, but he could not forget the help he received and the power of the gods wielded by the two-legs. Seeking guidance and admission at a temple of Melora, he now goes from tribe to tribe preaching the gospel of his god and helping those in need.

**Da'teerus** is a ha'vass ranger. Entering his tribe in a traditional manner, he eventually learned to craft the finest of bows from the scarce wood of his desert home. With armor made from the scales of felled beasts and sharpened blades crafted from their bones, Da'teerus patrols the eastern desert. Stumbling into an ancient ruin exposed by the shifting desert sands, he eventually pieced together that it had been built many years ago by the ha'vass! With this revelation, he now knows that he his part of something much larger and travels the land to uncover his lost lineage.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a class designed specifically for characters with mediocre to extremely low ability scores.*

# SO YOU ROLLED A DUD

TWO CLASSES FOR CHARACTERS WITH MEDIOCRE TO TERRIBLE ABILITIES

By Jen F. and Jeff S.

from [tabletopshoptalk.tumblr.com](http://tabletopshoptalk.tumblr.com)

## THE BALDRICK

Torchbearers. Trap puppets. Distractions. The Baldrick is the person you hire with the promise of a potato and a turnip if they come back alive—and you only added a turnip to the deal because you know you'll never have to pay.

**Requirements:** Total ability score bonus of -1 or worse. If you were decent in any way, you wouldn't be a Baldrick.

**Prime Requisite:** None.

**HD:** d12 (Baldricks are almost peculiarly hard to kill.)

**Fights:** As Magic-Users

**Saves:** As Thieves

**Maximum level:** None

**Level progression:** As Clerics

**Sack:** All Baldricks keep an oversized sack slung over their shoulder, for purposes of dragging loot, keeping supplies, and whatever other demeaning tasks are put upon them. This sack is constantly heavy, loud, and inconvenient (providing a -4 penalty to all stealth checks), but also seemingly bottomless while in your possession. However, should you put the bag down it appears to be a giant, mundane sack full of garbage until you pick it back up.

So, other party members should pray you aren't killed while their *Vorpal sword* is inside.

Once per turn, you may reach into your bag and pull out some random supply, rolled on table 1 below ("**Random Sack of Crap**"). Tools pulled from the sack may be used as simple weapons in combat by a Baldrick, but to anyone else, they are worth only what they're worth as trade goods.

**Sack-Fu:** You are well-versed in fighting whilst carrying a large, heavy sack, and suffer no penalties when doing so. Indeed, you're so used to it, in fact, that while not carrying it, you may attack two small weapons in a round with only a -2 penalty to each.

**Weighed Down By Crap:** Sometimes figuratively, sometimes literally. Because you are forced to carry so much around all the time, you may only move 20 feet in a round, and cannot run.

**Yes Sir, Right Away Sir:** You may be the bottom of the barrel (again, sometimes figuratively, sometimes literally), but you care about your job and you do it well. That means following orders, and following them well. You may add your level+2 to all skill and ability checks made while following the orders of another PC.

**Torchbearer:** Fire is helpful, right? When fighting with a

TABLE 1: RANDOM SACK OF CRAP (1d66)

	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6
1x	11. Handful of Mud (You Hope)	12. Turnip	13. Pot of Coffee (You Hope)	14. Cleaver	15. Change of Socks	16. Frying Pan
2x	21. Flint & Steel	22. Rock	23. Lute	24. Dozen fleas, give or take	25. Mallet	26. Very Angry Cat
3x	31. Egg	32. 1d4 Chicks	33. Live Chicken	34. Dead Chicken	35. Roast Chicken	36. Giant Chicken Bone (Club)
4x	41. 1d4 Doves	42. String of handkerchiefs tied together	43. Your Card	44. Rabbit	45. 2d4 razor-tipped playing cards	46. Tindertwig
5x	51. Dictionary	52. Berries	53. Poisoned Berries	54. 2x4 block of wood	55. Bullwhip	56. Torch
6x	61. Dagger	62. Vial of Acid	63. Bedroll	64. Bouquet of Roses	65. Crossbow with 20 bolts	66. Alchemist's Fire

torch, you may add 1d4 damage on a success. This amount increases by 1d4 every 4 levels.

**Cunning Plan:** You may be a dullard, but every dullard has his day. When you have adequate planning time, you can attempt a cunning scheme. After devising your plan, make an Intelligence roll at DC 15. On a success, you and your allies may add +1 to all actions related to that plan for one round per two levels, rounded up, plus an additional +1 bonus for every 5 points by which you exceeded the DC. On a failure, you and your allies suffer a -1 penalty to all actions related to the plan for one round per two levels, rounded up, with an additional -1 penalty for every 5 points by which you missed the DC.

## THE JACK

You're not gifted with the best training, the blessings of the gods, or an affinity for the dark arts. And yet, somehow, you get by with a combination of charm, cunning, and almost supernatural dumb luck.

**Requirements:** Total ability score bonus of +1 or worse. Jacks come from humble backgrounds, without noteworthy talents which might give them particular direction. Additionally, one does not become a Jack--one simply IS one. The Jack class may only be chosen at first level.

**Prime Requisite:** DEX and CHA

**HD:** d10

**Fights:** As Thieves

**Saves:** As Thieves

**Maximum Level:** None

**Level Progression:** As Thieves

**Blackjack:** Jacks are masters of strategically getting lucky in combat. Each round in combat, a Jack receives 1d6 to add to a single attack or damage roll, or to add to his defense against

a single attack. If the Jack chooses not to spend this dice, he may set it aside and use it on any future attack, damage, or defense roll in the combat. Dice accrued in this way can be used in any combination, provided they are used in the same combat. At the end of combat, the dice pool expires to 0.

At 5th level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the Blackjack dice increases in size (to 1d8 at 5th level, 1d10 at 10th, 1d12 at 15th, 1d12+1d4 at 20th, and so on).

**Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick:** Jacks have a natural talent at hiding from enemies. When receiving cover, a Jack adds his level+2 to his Armor Class.

**Jack of Hearts:** No one knows why, but people just find Jacks... charming. A Jack may charm a number of people and creatures per day equal to 1HD per level, as though casting a "Charm Person" or "Charm Monster" spell.

**Jack of All Trades:** A Jack's lack of natural talent--and his propensity for being at the center of bizarre circumstance--means he has trouble holding down a job. However, having gone from job to job to job allows him to recall skills and proficiencies at random to help him as an adventurer.

At the start of each day, roll on **Table 2** below ("Former Jack Professions"). A Jack may add one half of his level, rounded down, to all skill checks directly related to that profession.

At 4th, 12th, and 16th levels, the true breadth of the Jack's skills emerges, and he may re-roll on the table one additional time throughout the day.

At 8th and 20th levels, the Jack learns to apply himself to a degree, and may, instead of rolling on the table, choose one of his career choices directly.

**TABLE 2: FORMER JACK PROFESSIONS**

d20	Profession
1	Dung Farmer
2	Ditch Digger
3	Miller
4	Jester
5	Pickpocket
6	Woodcutter
7	Clown
8	Circus Strongman
9	Bull-tamer
10	Dairy Farmer

d20	Profession
11	Bean farmer
12	Ratcatcher
13	Boatman
14	Open-air Merchant
15	Witch-hunter
16	Squire
17	Butler
18	Stable boy
19	Pilgrim
20	Giant Killer

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a new class or system to invent steampunk type inventions, possibly based on existing spells or something entirely new.*

# THE COGSMITH

By Jason Utz

**Author's Note:** Given the class-based nature of the pre-feat era, and the possible power of this, I elected to go with a class. This is specifically designed for AD&D 2nd Ed (because it's what I'm most familiar with) but should be minimally annoying to convert to an earlier edition.

## COGSMITH (Class)

**Ability Requirements:** Dex: 13 Int: 14

**Prime Requisite:** Dexterity, Intelligence

**Races Allowed:** Human, Gnome, Dwarf

**Hit Die:** d6

Cogsmiths are seemingly part wizard and part rogue, using their deft hands and minds to construct intricate mechanisms. They go far beyond mere tinkering with traps and locks (though they are perfectly adept at doing both), creating devices that must appear magical to the less creative minds around them. While they may be using new methods for the constructions of these devices, these ideas are often built upon the teachings of many great minds. As such, they are often very adept at reading a variety of languages.

Cogsmiths with a 16 in both Dexterity and Intelligence gain a 10% bonus to the experience points they earn.

Cogsmiths use the Rogue entry on the THAC0 table and Saving Throws table.

## STARTING EQUIPMENT

Cogsmiths start play with an assortment of standard tools (hammer, wrench, screwdrivers, misc others), some manner of small workshop (though the cost/rent of this workshop, if applicable, will be something that the DM and player should hash out), and a wearable power-source (See Power Source, below).

Other than this, the Cogsmith will start with a smallish amount of money, as the money they bring in by being town tinker is generally offset by their starting equipment: 3d4 x 10gp.

## PROFICIENCIES

While not the most combat-tested class, cogsmiths start with an automatic proficiency in "Tools." A Cogsmith can use heavy wrenches and similar tools as clubs, standard hammers as warhammers, and screwdrivers as daggers, all with no penalties for "improvised weapons" or the like. These tools are like extensions of their body, and cost no weapon

proficiencies to learn. They start with no other weapon proficiencies (although they will be proficient in the use of devices created from their blueprints and their Power Source, see below).

Weapon Proficiencies			Non-Weapon Proficiencies	
Initial	# Levels	Penalty	Initial	# Levels
Tools	4	-3	4	3

Cogsmiths begin with the Engineering and Reading/Writing non-weapon proficiencies for free, as these are very relevant to their interests. The Cogsmiths Non-Weapon Proficiency group includes: Engineering, Languages, Ancient, Reading/Writing, Armorer, Charioteering, Navigation, Weaponsmithing, Gem Cutting.

## COGSMITHS HAVE THE FOLLOWING ROGUE-LIKE ABILITIES

### Cogsmith Skill Base Scores

Open Locks	5%
Find/Remove Traps	5%
Read Languages	10%

To determine the initial value of each skill, start with the base scores listed above. Add or subtract any appropriate modifiers for race, Dexterity, and armor worn. (See tables 27 – 29 in the PHB for these modifiers.)

At 1st level, the Cogsmith has 40 points to put into these scores, with no more than 20 being put into each score. Each time the Cogsmith gains a level, the player receives another 20 points to assign amongst these skills, with no more than 10 being put into each score. Each score has an operational maximum of 95%, including bonuses from Dexterity or Race. However, a player with a DM who gives penalties to these scores may raise their skill higher to counteract these penalties, noting that any roll of 96+ on D100 always fails.

## NEW ABILITIES

### POWER SOURCE

Depending on the flavor of your campaign, this item may be a large backpack-sized boiler that constantly belches smoke, a clacking backpack full of gears and springs, some kind of mysterious "charged ether," standard mad-scientist electricity arcing between metal forks, or simply a miniature giant space hamster running in a wheel. Perhaps some combination of these. The bottom line: only the Cogsmith REALLY knows how it works.

The power source is wearable, but bulky, weighing about 30 pounds. Between fuel and maintenance, it costs about 1 silver/day to operate. Generally, the materials needed to keep the power source running would be figured into the weight and bulk of the thing, but if you're the kind that really likes to keep track of stuff, go for it.

The power source gains charges at the same rate a Cogsmith gains blueprints (Wizard spell progression). These charges are used to add power to devices or for other uses (see below). These charges are tiered much like a Wizard's spells: 2nd level charges are gained at level 3, 3rd level charges at level 5, etc. These charges may be traded up or down at a 2/1 ratio: two 1st level charges can be used in place of a 2nd level charge, or a 2nd level charge can be used as two 1st level charges.

The power source follows the rules for worn magic items, should share the wearer's saves (when applicable), has HP equal to the Cogsmith's, and has DR (adamantine) of ½ the Cogsmith's level (round down). The Cogsmith can repair damage done to this power source at a rate of 2 HP/hour per level, needing nothing other than standard tools and clear workspace to do these repairs. If the power source is reduced to 0 HP, it breaks, dealing any damage stored in it (see Blast, below) in a 10' radius (Save vs. Breath Weapon for ½ dmg).

Should the power source be destroyed, it takes 1 week of devoted working time to create a new one (finding the perfect hamster is difficult), with a cost of 100 gp in parts. At the end of this period, make an Engineering roll – if it is successful, the new power source is created. If not, half of the materials are wasted and the Cogsmith must begin again. The Cogsmith may attempt to hurry this process by subtracting 1 from his Engineering non-weapon proficiency number for each day he would like to finish early (minimum 1). In this way, higher-level Cogsmiths with higher Engineering skills may rebuild a broken power-source in only 1 day.

## DEVICES

Cogsmiths can create astonishing devices. At first, many of their devices seem fairly innocuous, but, in time, they become amazing to behold. Given a standard tool-belt, access to some metal bits and bladders, and sufficient time, a Cogsmith can work wonders. Unlike Wizards and Priests, Cogsmiths need a good deal of time to work on their devices. Also, Cogsmiths require a place to use as a workshop. Traveling Cogsmiths often have a wooden covered wagon to house their necessary parts and workspace. Without a protected workspace and standard tools of the trade, a Cogsmith's devices are more likely to fail than normal (see failure rules below). All Cogsmiths start play with a tool belt holding standard tools, and the equipment for a small workshop.

To create a device, a Cogsmith must first have a blueprint for this device. A blueprint is a finalized representation of theory – this device WILL work (within an acceptable margin of

error, of course). Blueprints are generally kept in scroll tubes, books, and whatnot. To anyone not a Cogsmith, these may look like complete gibberish, as they are full of shorthand notes, things NOT to do, various arcane measurements in a variety of languages and systems, and are all-around confusing. Characters with a variety of proficiencies (Engineering, for instance) may be able to understand some of the basics and genius of the design, but, much like a stage magician coming across the unreadable tome of a mage, won't be able to use them.

If a Cogsmith has previously made a blueprint for an item, but doesn't have the plans at hand, he may still attempt to create a device. However, he must make an Engineering roll or waste half of the materials used in a failed attempt.

*Cogsmiths start with 3 spell-like blueprints of their choice plus one (see below). Cogsmiths gain spell-like blueprints at the same rate as Wizards gain spells, including the bonuses for intelligence. They have one each of these devices at start of play. Cogsmiths gain one automaton blueprint per level.*

The types of devices created by a Cogsmith (and documented in their blueprints), come in two varieties: Spell-like and Automaton.

**SPELL-LIKE DEVICES** are just what they sound like: they mimic spells of a level available to the Cogsmith. When choosing to know a blueprint of this type, pick a spell of a level equal to or below those a Cogsmith would know (use the wizard progression table). These devices are fairly portable, but still heavy by most standards, weighing 5 lbs x spell level.

Spell-like devices are prepared each day by charging them from the Cogsmith's power source. Cogsmiths may prepare a number of spell-like device uses equal to the number of spells a wizard may use per day by hooking these to their portable power source for five minutes per charge. This does NOT need to be done at the beginning of the day, but once all the charges are put into devices, the power source cannot be used to power devices again until the following day (it needs to build up sufficient steam, build an electrical charge, allow the springs to rewind, etc).

Spell-like devices function just like their spell counterpart in regard to the Cogsmith's level, representing small adjustments made over time to make devices more efficient and effective. Thus, a "Magic Missile" device used by a 3rd level Cogsmith would produce 2 magic missiles.

## DEVICE MALFUNCTIONS

If the spell cast involves a d20 roll, a roll of a 1 is a catastrophic failure of the device. If there is no combat roll but it is being used in a stressful situation, roll a d20 for possible malfunction anyway. Something has jammed, fallen apart, broken... the device is unusable until fixed. The Cogsmith must spend 5 minutes to successfully repair

this malfunction. Roll an Engineering roll: If it is successful, the item retains the charges it had before it malfunctioned, otherwise that charge is lost.

These devices CAN be used by those other than the Cogsmith if 5 minutes per level of spell is allowed for instruction. Even with this, there is a high chance of misuse. These devices fail on a 1 or 2 similarly to the rules above.

Spell-like devices take 100gp of materials and 2 weeks per spell level to build. A Cogsmith may have any number of spell-like devices, limited only by carrying capacity, but still only has as many charges as is allotted to him via his level. Fixing a broken spell-like device can be done using only 1/3 these materials and 5 days if a successful Engineering roll is made minus the level of the spell to the skill. Otherwise, the device will have to be re-built as per normal creation rules.

## INVENTING NEW SPELL-LIKE DEVICES

A Cogsmith may create a new blueprint (not gained by leveling up) of a spell-like device in several ways. It should be noted that these blueprints cannot be “traded in” to become automaton blueprints. The easiest way is to copy another Cogsmith’s blueprint, which takes a similar amount of time and cost to copying a wizard’s spell into a spellbook. The Cogsmith may copy a blueprint which is too high for him to build, but will not be able to understand it sufficiently to create the device until he is the appropriate level.

If a Cogsmith wishes to create a particular spell-like effect, he may begin the research process. This is similar to spell research for a Wizard. There is no cost to the initial research: merely a two-week period devoid of adventuring and with access to books and materials. At the end of this period, the DM should make a secret Engineering roll for the player with -2 to the proficiency per level of the spell effect being attempted. If it succeeds, this blueprint is good to go, and will build a device as the spell describes! If not, the DM should note how much the roll failed by: More than 3 indicates a major flaw. When built, this item will not function as intended. Any roll of 10 or below on the malfunction roll creates a malfunction per the malfunction rules below, any roll of 5 or below applies the effect in a negative way (injuring the Cogsmith or companion, reverse of intended effect, or roll on that awesome Wild Magic table from Tome of Magic!). A 1 always results in an explosion, dealing 1d6/level or the damage the spell would have done to all creatures in 10 feet (save vs. breath weapon for all but wielder, who gets no save).

If the Engineering roll is failed by 3 or less, the device should work as normal with one quirk per point failed when the device is used. These should be fairly stable effects which are annoying or amusing, but not game-breaking. Again, see the Wild Magic table for some amusing effects which might be possible.

In either of the above cases, these problems can be corrected by 1 week and 20 gp of materials per point the roll was failed

by. Since the Cogsmith doesn’t know the original roll, only trial and error or a ridiculous amount of time will ensure a blueprint for a properly functioning device, leading to a lot of fun effects.

**AUTOMATON DEVICES** are creations which are able to move of their own accord and react to pre-programmed situations. These may range from a very small clockwork man to a large wagon which drives itself. Automatons require one charge of the appropriate level from the Cogsmith’s power pack to operate for the day. Automatons may store additional charges to power them for multiple days. So a Cogsmith with a 3-blueprint automaton might choose to expend a 2nd level charge to power the automaton for one day, two 2nd level charges to power it for two days, and so on.

All automatons start with 10 points to distribute between Strength and Dexterity (1 minimum), no constitution or mental stats. All automatons have 5 hp per blueprint. Automatons are sized based upon number of blueprints. Automatons use their creator’s THAC0, may have one mode of attack (melee or ranged with noted range increment, piercing, slashing, blunt, fire, whatever is appropriate) per blueprint:

**Tiny** (*fits in a pocket*)

1d2 dmg, 10 ft range increment – 1-2 blueprints

**Small** (*cat to kid sized*)

1d4 dmg, 15 ft range increment – 3-4 blueprints (Requires at least level 3 to build and takes one 2nd level charge to power)

**Medium** (*person-sized*)

1d6 dmg, 20 ft range increment – 5-6 blueprints (Requires at least level 5 to build and takes one 3rd level charge to power)

**Large** (*cart-sized*)

1d8 dmg, 25 ft range increment – 7-8 blueprints (must be level 7 to build and takes one 4th level charge to power)

**Very Large** (*wagon-sized*)

1d10 dmg, 30 ft range increment – 9+ blueprints (must be level 9 to build and takes one 5th level charge to power)

For each blueprint dedicated to an automaton, it will have an additional 3 points which can be allocated. In addition, up to three tasks or tricks may be specified that the automaton can do, similar to the Animal Training Rules in the Non-Weapon Proficiencies. Multiple blueprints may be used for each automaton, adding tasks it is capable of, improving its stats, and making it more able to act on its own. Automatons may be modified to change the tasks they are capable of by spending one day tinkering.

**EXAMPLE:** Syd the Gnome decides to create an automaton. It’s an adorable little pocketwatch-sized guy (it even looks like one!) and tends to hang out in Syd’s vest pocket. Because this automaton, Watchbert, we’ll call him, has one blueprint allotted to him, he gets 5 HP, 13 total points for stats (10

base and 3 additional stat points for 1 blueprint) for Syd to allocate, and three tricks he can do. Syd decides to bump Watchbert's Str up to 7 and his Dex up to 6. So that he can help out in the shop, Syd teaches Watchbert how to fetch things he points to, tidying up the workshop (where all the tools go when he's done), and to guard the workshop (he will let out a loud chiming and attack if anyone other than Syd enters the workshop when set to guard). He decides to give Watchbert a ranged attack so that he can stay out of harm's way, and makes this piercing damage, as Watchbert fires small bits of sharpened metal he cleans up from around the shop at interlopers.

Talk to your DM if you would like some fiddling with this. For instance, you may want to make an automaton which powers a cart, but isn't necessarily the size of a cart. For one blueprint, you could have a STR 12, DEX 1 automaton which is tiny and attaches to the axle of a small cart and can pull it as well as an above-average strength human. It could be taught to drive under ordinary conditions, navigate the streets of a particular town, and cause the cart do an impressive 360-degree spin (which might have a chance to fling off those not prepared for such a thing). You may also want an automaton which can do something unique such as fly or burrow or pick pockets. These could be amongst the tricks taught, though the DM may rule that something so powerful as flight or useful as an automated pickpocket may take up multiple tricks to learn, requiring multiple blueprints to be useful for doing much more than going up and down or only picking a pocket that it's placed into (requiring the placer to be a great pickpocket in the first place!).

Automatons require 100gp and 2 weeks per blueprint to build. Upon creating a specific automaton, the player should talk to the DM and solidify what it looks like, how it attacks, and what tricks it knows. Fixing a broken automaton can be done using only 1/3 these materials and 5 days if a successful Engineering roll is made minus the number of blueprints used in its constructions to the skill. Otherwise, the device will have to be re-built as per normal creation rules.

There is no limit to the number of Automatons that a Cogsmith may have in play, only a limit to the number of charges which a Cogsmith has. DMs, of course, may choose to limit this to a reasonable number to preserve their sanity.

## CANTRIP-LIKE DEVICES

All Cogsmiths begin play with 1d4 tiny devices capable of creating the effects of the cantrip spell. These run under their own power (though they may need rewinding or charging after running for a few minutes). The Cogsmith gets the blueprint (a smattering of notes, really) to make these devices for free.

## TINKER

The Cogsmith is a great scavenger. After disarming any mechanical trap or dismantling any device not his own, the

Cogsmith can find enough parts to count for 2d6gp toward building any of his own devices. Dismantling his own devices provides the full gp value in parts, and generally takes 1 day per week originally used during construction.

In addition, the Cogsmith can make devices which mimic cantrip which are usable by just about anyone. These cost 10gp in materials to create and can often sell for 15-20 gp in well-to-do towns. The DM may allow the Cogsmith to create other amusing or minor items for this cost.

The Cogsmith also gains the ability to create items which function much like wizard scrolls, potions, rods, wands, etc. Follow the wizard item creation rules for level, cost, time, etc needed to create these items. These items, however, will not be magical in nature and thus will not be stymied by any anti-magic effects. They will, however, still have the failure failure rolls of the Cogsmith's spell-like items. The Cogsmith must have a blueprint for a spell-like device in order to create an item in this way.

## BLAST

The Cogsmith's power source does more than provide his devices with a way to function. The Cogsmith may vent excess steam, release an over-taut spring, unleash a bevy of electrical bolts, or the like from his power source to damage an opponent or do fantastic leaps. The power source gets 1d4 + 1d4/ every other level (Magic Missile style, 1, 3, 5, etc) that it may unleash each day. This may be used all at once or one die at a time. This attack is made in a cone similar in size and shape to Burning Hands, and does not require a to-hit roll. Each creature in the blast may make a save vs. breath weapon for half damage. If the save is failed, the creature is hurled backward 5 feet per die if man-sized, 5 feet per 2 dice if double man-sized, and falls prone. The type of damage should be determined by the type of power source the Cogsmith uses (lightning, fire, blunt, hamster poo).

In addition, if a Cogsmith has unused charges which might normally be put into items, these may be used as extra dice for blast, but are then used up for the day.

Alternately, the Cogsmith may choose to use this blast to propel him into amazing jumps, allowing him to jump up to 10 feet into the air per die spent this way (landing safely) and moving up to ten feet horizontally during this jump. In this case the blast does ½ damage to the area directly below the Cogsmith (save for no damage). The Cogsmith may use this to negate falling damage, releasing the blast during a fall to take the appropriate amount of distance off of the fall.

## BLOCK

At 3rd level, the Cogsmith may choose to block an attack made on him with his power source. He must decide upon this after the hit is declared but before damage is declared. Initially, this is a 1/day ability, but increases to 2/day at 8th level, 3/day at 13th level, and 4/day at 18th level. This MAY

be used to block an area effect that comes from a particular direction, such as a fireball (which bursts from a central point) or dragon's breath.

## VEHICLE

At 5th level, the Cogsmith has gained sufficient mastery over mechanisms that his power source can transform into a small personal vehicle. This vehicle can move at the speed of a horse along roads or reasonably flat ground, or ½ this over bumpy ground. It can carry up to one more medium creature and generally should be treated as having the stats of a normal horse, save that it does not startle in combat. The Charioteering non-weapon proficiency may be used for any type of riding/piloting tricks or rolls the DM may call for. It continues to have the hit points and other properties of the Cogsmith's power source.

At 10th level this vehicle gains the ability to move along all but the most sheer surfaces, moving at full speed over any terrain and climbing mountainous terrain at 1/3 speed.

At 15th level this vehicle gains limited flight capability, able to fly as per the spell 3 times/day.



I know you think I'm beautiful!

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a PC race of Mole-Men. Ideally compatible with either MicroLite20 or Dungeon Crawl Classics, but I will be more than happy with any OSR friendly system.*

# MOLE MEN

A PC RACE FOR DCC AND OSR GAMES

By Jeremy Deram

## MOLE-MEN

The mole-men are a degenerate race of humanoids that have spent untold generations underground. They have very small eyes and ears – sometimes so small that they appear to be altogether absent. They have very long, clawed digits including a pair of “thumbs” on each hand which make them excellent diggers. Adventuring mole-men generally walk upright in order to fit in with their non-mole companions, but they are more comfortable moving on their bellies and propelling themselves with their forelimbs due to their somewhat atrophied legs.

**Hit Dice:** d10

**Weapon training:** Mole-men prefer to battle with their claws, but they may utilize weapons as well. A mole-man is trained in the use of the club, crossbow, dagger, handaxe, javelin, shortbow, short sword, sling, and staff. Mole-men can wear any armor.

**Alignment:** Any, but usually neutral.

**Claw Fighting:** When a mole-man attacks with his claws, he is treated as fighting with two weapons and having 16 agility (unless his agility is actually higher). Thus he can make two attacks, both at -1D, and only the primary claw may score a crit. The claw attacks deal damage as shown in the mole-man advancement table below. (See DCC pages 94-95 for more detail on two-weapon fighting.)

**Burrow:** Mole-men may burrow through the ground, but it should be understood that some judges may consider it game-breaking in certain situations, and it is ultimately up to the judge to decide when and where this ability can be used.

It might not be any good for burrowing through a dungeon corridor made of thick stone blocks, for example. In any case, such burrowing does not create a tunnel that other characters can traverse. It is intended solely for the mole-man.

Walking or burrowing, mole-men move 20' per round. They may move at 30' per round when traveling on their bellies and propelling themselves with their forelimbs, but this form of locomotion is generally considered abhorrent by most civilized surface-dwellers, and can cause the mole-man to be treated as if he had a very low personality score.

**Underground Skills:** Mole-men have underground skills identical to those of the dwarves. (See DCC page 52.)

**Blind Luck:** Mole-men are effectively blind, but they can detect vibrations in the earth so well that it usually does not hinder them. They are immune to visual illusions and anything else dependent on sight.

Mole-men notice smells, vibrations, and sounds to a much higher degree than other character types. Once per session, a mole-man may make a luck check to automatically dodge an incoming surprise attack, notice an important clue, avoid a trap, or anything else the player can think of and the judge accepts.

Finally, mole-men are generally twice as difficult to catch by surprise in underground environments.

**Languages:** At 1st level, mole-men automatically know common and undercommon, plus one additional randomly selected language per point of Int bonus (if any).

**Action dice:** A mole-man's action dice can be used for attacks or skill checks.

## MOLE-MAN ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Crit Die/Table	Claw Damage	Action Dice	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+1	1d6/III	1d3	1d20	+1	+1	+0
2	+2	1d7/III	1d4	1d20	+1	+1	+0
3	+2	1d8/III	1d4	1d20	+1	+2	+1
4	+3	1d10/III	1d6	1d20	+2	+2	+1
5	+4	1d12/III	1d6	1d20	+2	+3	+1
6	+5	1d14/III	1d8	1d20+1d14	+2	+4	+2
7	+5	1d16/III	1d8	1d20+1d16	+3	+4	+2
8	+6	1d20/III	1d10	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+2
9	+7	1d24/III	1d10	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
10	+8	1d30/III	1d12	1d20+1d20	+4	+6	+3

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a fight between rival parties of 5th-7th Level/H.D characters and creatures, one Law/Good, the other Chaos/Evil.

A Dungeons & Dragons vs. Monsters! GM'd by Knights and Magick sort of thing. Who, what, where, why and when?

# PARTIES AT WAR

TWO GROUPS CLASH AGAIN AND AGAIN,  
IN PURSUIT OF THE ANCIENT SOL KEY

Text and Illustrations by  
Courtney Campbell



**ALOISIUS** (Human Alchemist, Level 7, HP 26, AC 2 [18],  
AL: NE, Staff Sling (varies) Thac0 16/+4)

*Formulas Known* Alchemist Fire, Alchemist's Befuddlement Grenade, Pyrotechnic Dazzler Grenade, Frozen Prison Grenade, Potion of Cloaking Shadows, Potion of Dragon Attractant, Potion of Invisibility

*Spells known* **1st:** Affect Normal Fires, Protection From Evil, Purify Water; **2nd:** Burning Blood, Stinking Cloud

*Magic Items* Staff Sling of Distance (+1 to hit, double range increment. Throws Grenades), Chain of Silvered Mail (+1 to AC)



**MARCUS** (Dwarf Warlord, Level 5, HP 24, AC 0[20],  
AL LE, Mace [1d8 + Save vs. Paralyzation or Stun], Thac0 16/+4)

*Commands known (5/day)* Invigorating Command (+1d6 HP), Tactical Command (+1 action to ally), Analysing Command (+2 to hit and damage for 1 ally attack)

*Magic Items* Ivory Mace (glows, can be wielded with one hand, stuns on a successful attack, +1 to hit), Plate Mail Dwarf Sized +1, Non-Magical Shield



**FRANK (Human Cultist, Level 6, HP 18 AC 9 [11] AL: CE, Dagger [1d4 + Magic] Thac0 16/+4)**

*Spells known* **1st:** Cause Fear Charm Person, Inflict Wounds, Burning Hands, Detect Magic **2nd:** Darkness, Death Knell, Hold Person, Scare, Desecrate, **3rd:** Bestow Curse, Inflict Serious Wounds

*Magic Items* Dagger of Pain +2 (take 1d4 damage each round until a successful save versus Death [Fortitude DC 13] save is made), Robe of Protection +1, Slippers of quiet movement (25% chance to Move Silently [+5 Stealth])

**PHAEDRUS (Human Paladin, Level 5, HP 43, AC 2[18], AL LG, Sword [1d8+7, 1d8+12 versus evil, 2d8+24 versus Chaotic Evil Outsiders, Undead and Dragons], Thac0 [10/+10])**

*Paladin Abilities* Detect Evil 60' (+2 to all saves), Immune to Disease, Lay on hands (10 points healing), Cure Disease, Protection from Evil (5' radius), Turn undead as 3rd level cleric

*Magic Items* Plate Mail, Holy Avenger +5 (Magic Resistance 50% [SR 10] in 5' Radius, Dispel Magic within 5' at 5th level of ability)



**MANTID** (Barbarian/Druid, Level 1/4, HP 29, AC 7 [13] (Dexterity), AL TN; Battle Axe (2d4+8) Thaco 11/+10; SpAtt: *Rage*, gives +10 hit points, +2 to hit and +2 on damage; SpD: *Shapechange* 3x a day)

*Spells Known* 1st: *Entangle*, *Obscuring Mist* 2nd: *Barkskin*

*Magic Items* Battle Axe +2 of Speed (2 attacks a round)

**HORACE** (Wolf Companion): HP 15, AC 5 [15], AL TN; Bite: (1d8+1+Trip); SA: Trip - On a hit, the target must save versus paralyzation or fall prone)



**THOMAS** (Psionicist, Level 4, HP 32 AC 7 [13], AL LN, Staff (1d6) Thac0 18/+2, SA: Psionics, 119 Psionic Ability

*Attack Modes Known* Psionic Wave, Mind Knife

*Defense Modes Known* Empty Mind, Shield Thoughts, Spire of Iron Will

*Disciplines* Dominate, ESP, Premonition, Pyrokinesis, Telekinesis

*Magic Items* Crystal of Containment (In staff, Absorbs Energy Damage 90 points), Grounding anchor (When planted, prevents the use of Teleportation, Dominate, Body Weaponry, and Telekinesis within 15')



*The enigmatic witch Swale has been known to help and hinder both sides to her own nefarious ends. Who knows what infernal power she serves?*

**SWALE** (Witch, Level 5, HP 12, AC 10[10], AL NE, None

*Spells Known* **1st:** Cause Fear, Burning Hands, Charm Person, Armor, Sleep **2nd:** Augury, Hold Person, Fog Cloud, Enthrall, Invisibility **3rd:** Fly, Speak with Dead, Suggestion

*Hexes Known* Agony (Save versus Paralyzation [Fortitude DC 15] or target is in intense pain (take no actions but movement) for 5 rounds. Save each round to end). Cackle (Extend the duration of the hex by 1 round)

*Magic Items* Crystal Ball with ESP

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a low- or no-magic healer class for  
Lot F.P.*

# THE SHIP'S DOCTOR

By Connor Uber

## THE SHIP'S DOCTOR

**HD:** 1d6/level

**Saves:** as Cleric

**Experience:** as Fighter

Whether through some malfunction with a teleporter, wormholes, encounters with strange monoliths or other space-time anomalies the ship's doctor has somehow found his way to a time where man is still bound to the earth that spawned him.

A Ship's Doctor (SD for short) typically begins play with some sort of technological gizmo that aids in medical practices. The size of such item determines its effectiveness, as well as how easy it is to repair and refuel or recharge.

### CHARACTER CREATION

When creating a Ship's Doctor, roll on the table below for his medical device's size:

d4	Medical Device Size
1	<b>Minor</b> (non-encumbering; Ex. Glove of flesh restoration)
2	<b>Small</b> (normal encumbrance; Ex. Medical "Flashlight" raygun)
3	<b>Medium</b> (normal encumbrance; Ex. One-handed Medi-gun)
4	<b>Great</b> (oversized; Ex. Large Medi-gun with backpack battery)

**Minor** Medical Devices heal base 1d4 HP per application.

**Small** Medical Devices heal base 1d6 HP per application.

**Medium** Medical Devices heal base 1d8 HP per application.

**Great** Medical Devices heal base 1d10 HP per application.

The Medical Device requires recharging/refueling based on its size, and the cost is shown below:

**Minor:** 5sp per charge, 2 base charge limit

**Small:** 10sp per charge, 2 base charge limit

**Medium:** 20sp per charge, 1 base charge limit

**Great:** 40sp per charge, 1 base charge limit

**NOTE:** This is the cost of materials sufficient to be used as fuel. It generally would not be "buying extra batteries" or whatnot, unless the Referee deems such possible.

### UPGRADES

As the Ship's Doctor gains levels, he can upgrade his medical device. Starting at level 3, and every other level afterward, the character can choose one ability for that level. Each time an upgrade is applied, it costs the Ship's Doctor 200sp per upgrade level. Each effect other than normal healing must be separately applied, and takes 1 charge.

Ship's Doctor Level	Upgrade Level
3	1
5	2
6	3
9	4
11	5

#### LEVEL 1 UPGRADE

+1d6 Hit point recovery

+1 charge

##### Options:

- Duplicate cleric spell *remove fear*
- Duplicate cleric spell *heroism*
- Duplicate cleric spell *delay poison*

#### LEVEL 2 UPGRADE

+1 charge

##### Options:

- Duplicate cleric spell *cure disease*.
- Duplicate magic-user spell *army of one*
- Duplicate magic user spell *protection from normal missiles*.
- Give target a +1 AC bonus for 1d4 rounds (always in effect, no extra charges needed)

#### LEVEL 3 UPGRADE

+1d6 Hit Point Recovery

+1 Charge

##### Options:

- Split Healing: split amount healed between two targets
- Duplicate cleric spell *neutralize poison*
- Duplicate magic user spell *haste*

## LEVEL 4 UPGRADE

+1 Charge

### Options:

- Duplicate magic-user spell *protection from normal missiles*
- Duplicate negative condition removal of cleric spell *cure serious wounds*
- Give target a +1 AC bonus for 1d4 rounds (stacks with level 2 upgrade, always in effect, no extra charges needed)

## LEVEL 5 UPGRADE

+1d6 Hit Point Recovery

+1 Charge

### Options:

- Add level to hit points recovered. (Always in effect, no extra charges needed)
- Duplicate negative condition removal of cleric spell *cure serious wounds* (stacks with level 4 upgrade; if both are taken, 2 conditions are removed for 1 charge)
- *Regenerate Limb or Organs* (takes 2 charges, and 1d4 turns per use)

## SHIP'S DOCTOR ACTIVITIES

Should the character's medical device be lost, destroyed, or stolen, he can create another such device - of the same type he previously had - with a sufficiently stocked place to work and custom tools equating to at least 1000sp, plus an additional 500sp per upgrade level. He may change his upgrades for an additional 500sp per level of each upgrade swapped out. Though such materials used a said device are 'futuristic' they are actually common materials put through strange mathematics and reality-warping processes that are virtually indistinguishable from magic. Creating such materials without the aid of advanced machinery is taxing for the Ship's Doctor, and he must pull all-nighters frequently during the process. He cannot go on adventures or do little more than walk, eat, and take occasional naps while creating, repairing, or upgrading his device.

Due to lack of scientific and medical reference points to compare to in your typical medieval world, it is extremely difficult - but not impossible - for the character to teach others how to use his device. At a minimum it would take 2d6 months for the Ship's Doctor to gather enough information and books to even know where to start teaching, with a cost of 1500sp per month spent consulting sages, travel expenses, paying for the temporary use of libraries, and so on. This must only be done once, after which he may begin teaching.

Teaching a student the requisite knowledge for operation of any single medical device the ship's doctor can use takes a minimum of 4d4 months and 400sp per year in teaching supplies and books per student. However, teaching a person how to build such a device is beyond his ability, as -stated above- it involves processes that are utterly alien concepts to a medieval world (though the Referee may ignore this restriction if he truly wishes.)

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a series of hideous Carcosa-style dark necromantic rituals designed for a female necromancer.*

# HIDEOUS CARCOSA- STYLE RITUALS!!

Text and Illustrations  
by Claytonian JP

from [killitwithfirerpg.blogspot.com](http://killitwithfirerpg.blogspot.com) and [plus.google.com](http://plus.google.com)

## CARCOSAN SORCERESS RITUALS

The serpent-men, originators of sorcery on Carcosa, learned many ways to use human females in their dark rituals. Eventually these rituals were somehow learned by and perverted to the use of human females themselves, who hold a unique appeal to many entities for their ever-so-slight symbolic relevance to fecundity. The following rituals are, for the most part, only available to those of biologically female physiology and body functions. Like nearly all rituals, they are distasteful, dangerous, and powerful.

### THE BASKET OF THE HAG

#### *Invocation*

The Hag, an aggregate entity that represents a possible future of all women, will leave information on the future if properly invoked with this ritual. In a dead temple of the serpent-men is a basket of ancient wicker. If a silver dagger, a valuable crystal vial, a ball of golden yarn, the finger-bone of a walking skeleton, and the blood of men from three separate races are put into the basket, and the sorceress spends the night

sleeping in the temple, in the morning she wakes to find in the basket, etched on vellum, clues to any one course of action she has been contemplating. Be warned that The Hag has her own agenda, and she will lie to you if she thinks it will benefit her.

### PINKING SHEERS OF THE HAG

**Number:** Unique

**AC:** As plate

**HP:** 45

**Move:** 60'

**AL:** Neutral

**Spec:** No Psionics

Those who dare to enter the temples to the inscrutable female deities of the serpent-men sometimes run into these animate sheers. The *sheers* fly about on their own accord and can cut through any substance. They will kill any humanoids that enter their territory but if anyone falls to them, they will stop pursuit of other creatures and proceed to cut off strips of flesh from the slain creature. These strips are carried off into the dark realm of The Hag to be turned into vellum.



## RLIM SHAIKORTH, THE WHITE WORM

**Number:** Unique

**AC:** 15

**HD:** 34

**Move:** 30'

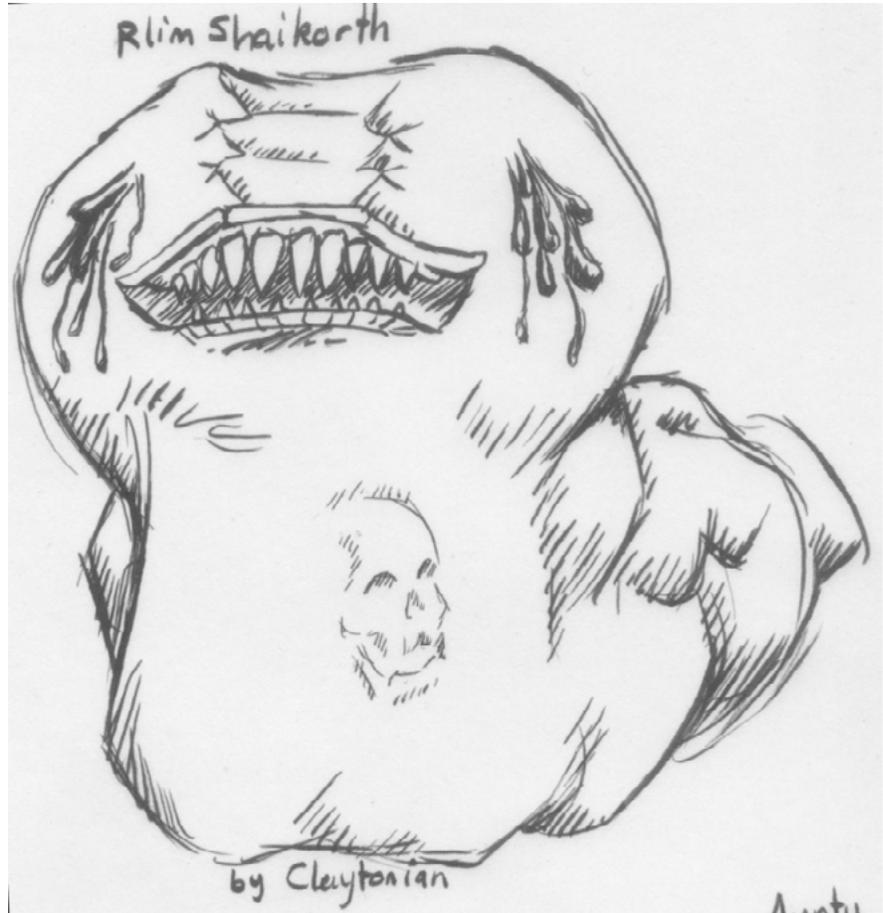
**AL:** Neutral

**Spec:** No Psionics

Rlim Shaikorth, who makes its dwelling upon a mobile iceberg known as Yikilth, comes from a dead empire near the Arctic region of Carcosa. It collects powerful sorcerers of all descriptions as its terrible berg floats throughout the world, but its dwelling can be summoned directly by any sorceress capable of lactating as per the Milk for The White Worm ritual. Rlim itself seeds this ritual and other insane whispers into the dreams of new mothers suffering from post-partum depression.

Rlim offers immortality and ineffable arcane knowledge to those that are taken into the icy embrace of the Yikilth berg, and he is attended by a small group of sorcerers that have been deemed worthy of his gifts, as well as other horrors that inhabit the labyrinthine halls of his floating fortress as it makes its way through the coast-land of countless worlds, bringing eternal winter to them all.

Rlim is nigh invulnerable when conscious, as exhibited by its hit dice, but it is vulnerable when in repose, digesting the souls of those it has consumed. A strike by a good weapon while it is in such a state will bring its death at a terrible price: a near-endless torrent of boiling hot, black blood will rush from it and melt the facility which houses it. Yes folks, this is a load-bearing boss.



## MILK FOR THE WHITE WORM

*To conjure The White Worm*

This ritual needs to be performed in the proximity of an ocean or a body of water with connections to one. The sorcerer must spend two weeks nursing a dozen people of any age or race, who are wrapped in white bindings in such a fashion as to make them look like giant, white worms (eyes, ears, and nose covered, arms bound to body and legs bound together).

Each morning, they must be covered liberally in a mix of human blood and the slime from any of Carcosa's varied ooze-like beings. The ritual will mummify them at this point,

but the sorceress will use strange necromantic chants and symbols to make sure they can keep suckling.

After the two weeks have elapsed, if the sorcery was performed correctly the mummies will burst their bonds and wander off into the cold night, and the body of water this was performed by will become preternaturally cold and foggy.

Within 1d4 months, Yikilth, the iceberg that houses the White Worm will make its way to the area. It will then take up the sorceress to add to its retinue of great sorcerers.

## FEMALEGANGER

(doppelganger)

**Number:** 15 to 30

**AC:** As human

**HP:** 113

**Move:** As human

**AL:** Neutral

**Spec:** 1 to 5 powers

Such doppelgangers are emotionless and efficient beings that strive to be the ideal of perfection, but woe be to the sorceress that lets one out of her sight, for it will surely seduce any partners of the sorceress into killing her so that the femaleganger can take her place.

A sorceress killed by her lover cannot direct her soul into a doppelganger as usual. Other femalegangers have been known to imprison the original sorceress and take their place.



## PARTHENOGENIC TECHNIQUES OF THE STEP DYNASTY

*To conjure a doppelganger*

To reproduce herself, the sorceress creates a perfect, flesh-and-blood simulacra that is animated by the soul of an ancestor.

A skeleton from a female of the same race as the sorceress must be wrapped in a shroud soaked in human blood and in the dust from a serpent-man tomb. The Sorceress then provides a fingernail, a pint of blood, and no less than thirty hairs pulled out by their roots.

At this point, The Doctor, an ancient entity that travels the multiverse performing scientific abominations, will appear and finalize the process, creating a copy of the sorceress out of these parts.

Only half of all descriptions of this ritual

include a very important part, though:

The Doctor will kill the original sorceress and start a program of replacing all female members of the local community this way.

Fortunately, however, a symbol that can drive him away after he does the desired work can be gleaned by communing with the proper entities. It is said the shades of the dreaming tombs of Step may be enticed to give up such information, for instance.

In any case, sorceresses that perform this ritual take steps to insure that their soul gets transported to their doppelgangers upon death. One common way to do this is to imprison the doppelganger in a room protected with arcane sigils.

## MOTHER OF MONSTERS

*To conjure The Childer of Shub-Niggurath*

The sorceress who would cast this ritual must first consult with the spirits of Nug and Yeb, the undead offspring of Shub-Niggurath.

If their shades are properly placated with sacrifices of livestock, nine months later the sorceress will carry a child to term. Upon the night of its birth (and

it will be born at night, during a storm) if the sorceress has properly located a wooded area and posted the symbols of The Black Goat, he will appear himself to help deliver and take the child off to an unknown fate. In return, 1d20 trees will reveal their true nature as Childer of Shub-Niggurath.



## CHILDER OF SHUB-NIGGURATH

**Number:** 1 to 20

**AC:** Varies

**HD:** Varies

**Move:** 30'

**AL:** Chaotic

**Spec:** 1 to 10 powers

Childer of Shub-niggurath are like the Spawn of Shub-Niggurath in most every way, and the characteristics of each one should be determined randomly, though any one group of them will have the same AC, HD, and psionic powers.

All Childer are aboreoids that move by walking on land. They can pass for normal trees during the day, when they stop and lie dormant. They will refuse to harm the sorceress that conjured them, but will destroy any other sentient life on sight. If the sorceress has posted a sign of the Black Goat somewhere, they will head towards it each night. Otherwise they will lie dormant until sentient life provokes their hunger.



## AUNTY SCARVEN

**Number:** Unique\*

**AC:** As human

**HD:** 3

**Move:** 30'

**AL:** Neutral

**Spec:** No Psionics

\*While there is only one original Aunty, there is more than one in this world. They do not work together and each is a unique individual. Aunties are quite resistant to damage (1-in-3 chance that a weapon doesn't hurt them in any real sense), but vain about flesh wounds. They attack with claws and teeth as sharp as steel; men without a helm or a gorget have a 50/50 chance of being blinded or having their throats slit if hit by an Aunty's claws.

## SCARVEN'S TERRIBLE TECHNIQUES OF IMMORTALITY

*To bind one's own soul*

This secret ritual is passed on only from one Necromantress to another. Initiates must agree to consume the remains of aborted fetuses, which are cooked into discreet-looking meat pies. The process is addictive, but while these pies are regularly consumed, the woman eating them remains young. Furthermore, she will de-age into a beautiful and vital young woman. Even rituals will not age the sorceress. After a month of this, the sorceress is no longer a human, but now an immortal creature: forever young and beautiful, but sporting a forked tongue and inhuman appetites.



## THE UNDYING FAMILIAR OF HEXATRESE THE FOUL

**Number:** Unique  
**AC:** As chain  
**HD:** 3  
**Move:** 35'  
**AL:** Neutral  
**Spec:** No Psionics

The undying familiar is a foul mockery of life: a diminutive homunculus that is made from the flesh of several men and sporting a mask that conceals a face made of dried blood and twigs.

Those who wish to call upon the ghost of The Whore must first find the undying familiar. It is said that if one asks the spirit of an old witch, they will be pointed in the right direction. The creature often spends its time in dead civilizations and deep dungeons, searching for ingredients for its long-dead mistress.

If found and beaten until it can no longer move (and that is the most one can hope to do to a thing that will never die), the chants inscribed upon its flesh can be read and memorized.

The familiar is quite quick with a blade. Anybody who is in melee range during a fight will get cut at the start of their turn unless they make a good save. People fumbling such a save lose an eye to the blade. If defeated, the undying familiar will regenerate 1 HD a week.

## SIGN OF THE WHORE

*To curse a domicile*

Using the chants inscribed upon the hide of the undying familiar of Hexatrese the Foul, a necromantess must call upon the ghost of The Whore, an entity that gives up the secrets of the sign to women in return for a sacrifice of three goats and 5 rubies of great value.

A ghost so placated will provide the sign and further ritual steps to be taken, which are:

- 1) slay a dolm pudding and squeeze the juice from its corpse into a winesack made from human skin etched with runes that prevent its dissolution;
- 2) wait until the night of a new moon and choose

the domicile of an enemy; on the place's southern side, paint the sign using the foul juices of a Bone Man applied with a brush made from his transparent hairs.

After the sign is painted properly, the curse it brings grows in strength with the waxing of the moon. Each night, there is a chance, equal to the percentage of the illumination of the moon's surface, that a Spawn of Shub-Niggurath will be drawn to the house. Such spawn aim to reproduce via fowl methods that use the bodies of humanoids for incubation and genetic donations.

## HOUND OF XAVROTHIS

**Number:** 15 to 30

**AC:** As Plate

**HD:** 6

**Move:** 40'

**AL:** Chaotic

**Spec:** Telepathic

A Hound is a fearsome sight: Each limb, canine in form though it may be, ends in a hand with two opposite, opposable thumbs; their gray skin is punctuated by spiky wires in a mockery of hair; their face a leering skull.

Once a hound has the scent of prey they can track it, even across dimensions, the barriers of which don't impede a hound. Hounds delight in death and terror. Often, they travel as packs through small towns, terrorizing the citizens for weeks on end and chasing escapees until everyone is dead.

## ENTICE THE HOUNDS OF XAVROTHIS

*To conjure the Hounds of Xavrothis*

The sorceress who would cast this first needs to call up the spirits of the area, and exhort each one to tell of tales of its own fear and sorrow from the days it was alive.

At this point, she must ring the bells of Xavrothis, the dead city. Such bells can be found only in the ruins of Xavrothis, which is a fearsome task in its own right.

If the ritual has been done properly thus far, she will hear the howling of the Hounds of Xavrothis in the distance. At this point, the hounds are coming to stalk the streets of the area where the ritual is being cast.

The sorceress can protect herself by smearing an unguent made out of ashes, salt-peter, and the sorceress' own fresh menstrual blood upon her skin.

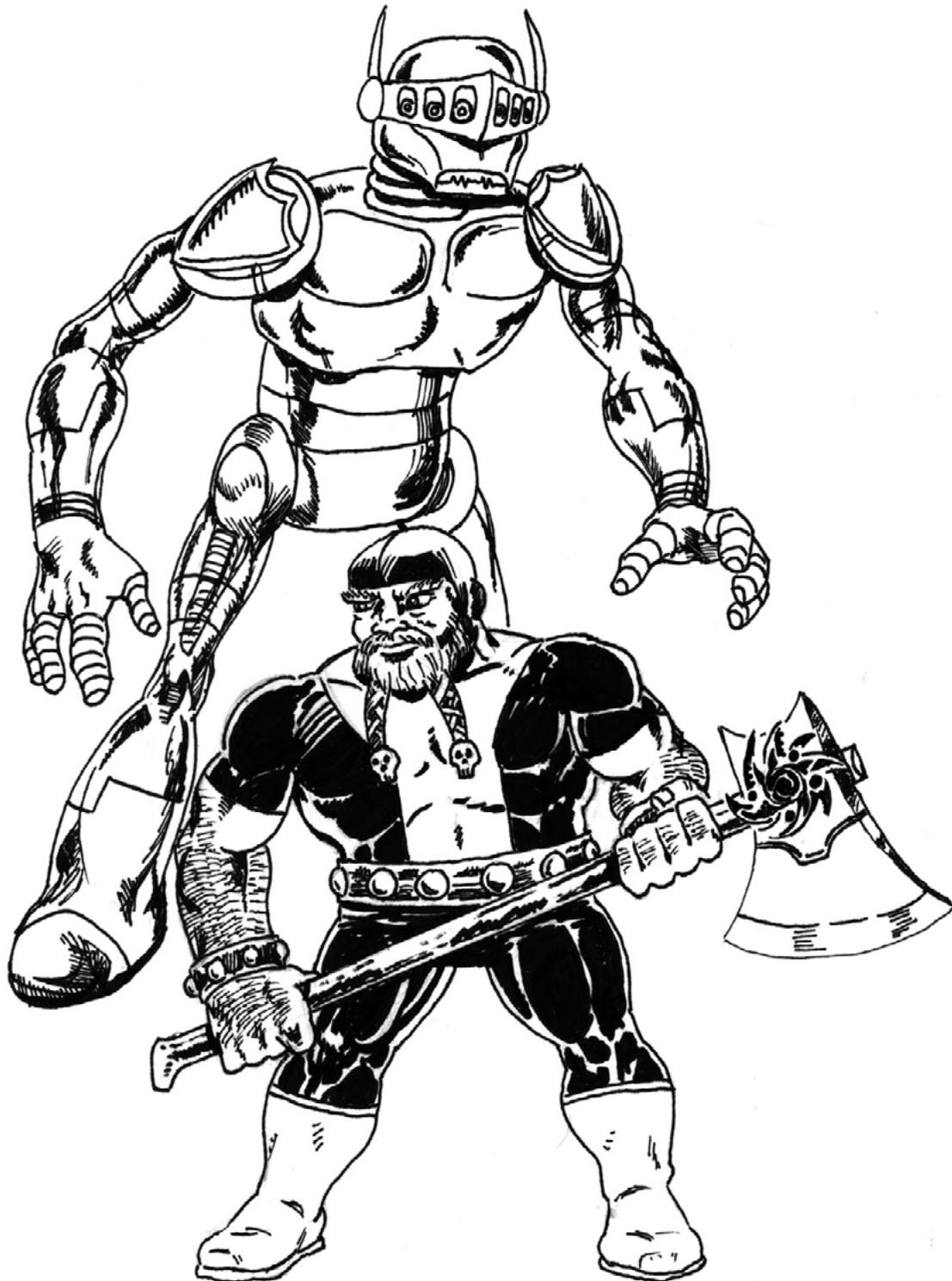


*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a piece of art to advertise  
an Encounter Critical campaign with.  
Please include 'Titanius Anglesmith', a  
dwarf, and a Black Hole Metal Axe.*

# BLACK HOLE METAL AXE

Illustration by Paul Schafer



Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a table to roll up quick starting equipment for early edition characters. It would be cool if it had a nice spread of things from the mundane yet useful through to the odd and inventive - from 50' of hemp rope through to a live goat. Class specific please.

Thanks,

Reg S

# STARTING EQUIPMENT CHARTS

By Stuart P.

This is a random starting equipment chart made for starting-level characters. Each character starts with a backpack, bedroll, dagger, flint and steel, water skin, one week of trail rations, and 3d6 gold pieces.

Additionally, each character gains items by class, referencing

the appropriate class column on the following charts: the character rolls once on the **Melee Weapons** chart, once on the **Ranged Weapons** chart, and once on the **Armor** chart.

Finally, each character rolls 1d6+1 times on the **Equipment Reference** chart, and then refers to the **Equipment** chart.

## MELEE WEAPONS

1d6	Cleric	Fighter	Magic-User	Thief	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling
1	Light Hammer	Spear	none	none	Light Hammer	Quarterstaff	none
2	Club	Short Sword	none	Short Sword	Hand Axe	Short Sword	Light Hammer
3	Club	Long Sword	none	Short Sword	Light Pick	Short Sword	Light Pick
4	Mace	Long Sword	none	Short Sword	Light Pick	Long Sword	Short Sword
5	Mace	Pole Arm	none	Long Sword	Light Pick	Long Sword	Short Sword
6	Mace	Two-Handed Sword	Silver Dagger	Long Sword	Long Sword	Two-Handed Sword	Short Sword

## RANGED WEAPONS

1d6	Cleric	Fighter	Magic-User	Thief	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling
1	none	none	none	Dagger	Hand Axe	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Darts (5)
2	none	none	none	Darts (5)	Hand Axe	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Darts (5)
3	none	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Dagger	Darts (5)	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Sling w/ 10 bullets
4	none	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Darts (5)	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Sling w/ 10 bullets
5	Sling w/ 10 bullets	Light Crossbow w/ case and 10 bolts	Darts (5)	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Light Crossbow w/ case and 10 bolts	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Sling w/ 10 bullets
6	Sling w/ 10 bullets	Heavy Crossbow w/ case and 10 bolts	Darts (5)	Light Crossbow w/ case and 10 bolts	Heavy Crossbow w/ case and 10 bolts	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Shortbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows

# STARTING EQUIPMENT CHARTS

## ARMOR

1d6	Cleric	Fighter	Magic-User	Thief	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling
1	Leather	Leather and Shield	none	none	Leather and Shield	Leather	none
2	Leather and Shield	Chain	none	Padded	Chain	Leather and Shield	Leather
3	Chain	Chain and Shield	none	Leather	Chain and Shield	Chain	Leather and Shield
4	Chain and Shield	Splint	none	Leather	Splint	Chain and Shield	Leather and Shield
5	Splint	Splint and Shield	none	Leather	Splint and Shield	Splint	Chain
6	Splint and Shield	Splint and Shield	none	Studded Leather	Splint and Shield	Splint and Shield	Chain and Shield

## EQUIPMENT REFERENCE

(for the following table)

Roll 1d12	Roll 1d20 on the...
1-5	Generic Column
6-8	Special Column
9-12	Class Column

## EQUIPMENT TABLE

1d20	Generic	Special	Cleric	Fighter	Magic-User	Thief	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling
1	10' pole	1 donkey	12 iron spikes	1 week trail rations	5 sheets paper	10' pole	10' pole	10' pole	1 week trail rations
2	12 iron spikes	1 ox	3 cloves garlic	10' pole	5 sheets parchment	10' pole	10' pole	12 iron spikes	12 iron spikes
3	12 iron spikes	1 riding horse with saddle	3 wooden stakes	10' pole	5 sheets parchment	12 iron spikes	12 iron spikes	5 sheets paper	8 torches
4	8 torches	10 chickens	Crowbar	12 iron spikes	Darts (5)	12 iron spikes	12 iron spikes	5 sheets parchment	Dog
5	8 torches	2 pigs	Flask of holy water	12 iron spikes	Darts (5)	8 torches	8 torches	8 torches	Donkey
6	8 torches	2 sheep	Hammer	8 torches	Donkey	Crowbar	8 torches	8 torches	Hammer
7	Crowbar	3 cloves garlic	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	8 torches	Donkey	Crowbar	8 torches	Ink vial	Hammer
8	Crowbar	3 wooden stakes	Map/scroll case	Crowbar	Ink vial	Grappling hook and hemp rope (50')	Crowbar	Large sack	Hemp rope (50')
9	Grappling hook and hemp rope (50')	5 goats	Prayerbook	Crowbar	Ink vial	Grappling hook and hemp rope (50')	Crowbar	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Jug of ale

# STARTING EQUIPMENT CHARTS

1d20	Generic	Special	Cleric	Fighter	Magic-User	Thief	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling
10	Hammer	Animal Feed (10 days)	Quill pen, ink vial, 5 sheets parchment	Hemp rope (50')	Quill pen	Hammer	Crowbar	Longbow w/ quiver and 20 arrows	Jug of ale
11	Hemp rope (50')	Carcosan Ray Pistol (1d12 damage; 2d6 charges remaining)	Silver Holy Symbol	Hemp rope (50')	Quill pen	Hemp rope (50')	Hammer	Quill pen	Lantern and 5 oil flasks
12	Hemp rope (50')	Cart	Silver Holy Symbol	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Quill pen, ink vial, 5 sheets parchment	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Hammer	Quill pen, ink vial, 5 sheets parchment	Lantern and 5 oil flasks
13	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Chain (10')	Small steel mirror	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Riding horse with saddle	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Hammer	Short sword	Miner's pick
14	Lantern and 5 oil flasks	Cinnamon (1 lb.)	Winter blanket	Large sack	Scroll case	Shovel	Large sack	Silk rope (50')	Sling w/10 bullets
15	Large sack	Dog	Wolfsbane (1 fistful)	Large sack	Scroll case	Silk rope (50')	Large sack	Small sack	Sling w/ 10 bullets
16	Shovel	Dog	Wooden Holy Symbol	Manacles	Spellbook	Thieves' tools	Miner's pick	Spellbook	Small sack
17	Silk rope (50')	Fine bottle of wine	Wooden Holy Symbol	Manacles	Spellbook	Thieves' tools	Miner's pick	Spellbook	Small sack
18	Small sack	Flask of Greek fire	Wooden Holy Symbol	Short sword	Spellbook	Thieves' tools	Miner's pick	Spellbook	Tobacco (1 lb.)
19	Small sack	Guard Dog	Wooden Holy Symbol	Short sword	Spellbook	Thieves' tools	Shovel	Spellbook	Winter blanket
20	Small steel mirror	Tobacco (1 lb.)	Wooden Holy Symbol	Silk rope (50')	Spellbook	Thieves' tools	Shovel	Spellbook	Winter blanket

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table of previous occupations or family trades that might offer a new character a bonus toward a **SAVE/SKILL CHECK** when doing something related to the proficiency. I would prefer it for more dark & grimy fantasy than vanilla fantasy. (more Warhammer, less Tolkien)*

# A TABLE OF PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS AND FAMILY TRADES

By Chapman

## A TABLE OF PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS AND FAMILY TRADES

Profession	Bonuses
Accountant	+2 to price negotiation
Animal Tamer/ Trainer	+2 to handle animal
Apothecary	+2 to create/cure/use poison
Archivist	+2 to gather information
Barrister (Lawyer)	+2 to contract negotiation and obscure laws
Bartender	+2 to listen
Blacksmith	+2 to bypass metal doors and portcullis
Brewer (beer/ wine maker)	+2 to detect poison
Butcher	+2 to knife use
Carpenter	+2 to bypass wooden doors
Cartographer	+2 to geographical knowledge
Charity Volunteer	+2 to pan handling
Constable	+2 to subdue from knowledge of criminal apprehension
Cultist	+2 to knowledge religion
Doctor	+2 to lethal strike due to knowledge of anatomy
Dominatrix	+2 to ensnare
Farmer	+2 to weapon: scythe, pitchfork, hoe, spade (class)
Fisherman	+2 to nets, mending, escape, etc.

Profession	Bonuses
Fortune teller (Palmist/ tarot)	+2 to deception (hot reading)
Glass Blower	+2 to crystalline structure use and identification
Gravedigger	+2 to cadaver handling and weapon: shovel
Locksmith	+2 to open lock and disable trap
Masseuse	+2 to grapple/ hand to hand
Metallurgist	+2 attack armored opponents
Paranormal Investigator	+2 to knowledge occult/demonic/ outsiders/etc.
Phlebotomist	+2 to blood storage and preservation
Poet	+2 to diplomacy
Sailor	+2 to use of ropes
Scribe	+2 to forgery
Servant	+2 to sneak/quiet movement
Soldier	+2 to battle formation identification/ counter movement and attack
Spinster	+2 to detect lie/ see truth
Tailor	+2 to conceal with fabric
Tinkerer	+2 to use and knowledge of mechanical devices
Wagon driver	+2 to ride horses
Whore	+2 to sense motive

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a sweet as d20  
(at least) table of slaine style  
warp spasms.*

# STRANGE GIFTS, WARP SPASMS, CHAOTIC BOONS

By ?

Inspired by *The Riastrad of Cú Chulainn*, *Sláine the Barbarian's Warp-Spasm*, and the horribleness of *Chaos and Cthulhu*.

Whether or not a character is susceptible to Strange Gifts should be determined in consultation with your GM. I would suggest it is best that it be a rare thing... Alternatively you can just use this list for a random mutation.

## IF IT DOESN'T KILL YOU

If a character has strange gifts, they tend to manifest unbeckoned when s/he is under duress. There is a 1 in 6 chance of an incident for each of the following:

- Bodily damage suffered (e.g. a wounding or critical hit)
- Psychological trauma (e.g. some failed will saves? Check with GM)
- Hit for a full Hit-Dice in a single attack (e.g. If your HD are d10's and you suffer 10+ damage) If an incident occurs roll 1d6 times on the manifestation table, to a maximum of ½ your character's level (e.g., a level 2 character may only have two manifestations at a time).

## MINDLESS DESTRUCTION

A character gains 0 XP from combat in which more than one (1) Manifestation occurs, and has no recollection of events during or just prior to the incident.

## RESISTING

A character may resist the incident before rolling for number of manifestations, by making a Will/Wisdom/Magic save.

## DURATION

The effects last as long as there are hostile entities present. Once clear, the character must make a Will/Wisdom/Magic save to recover. If the save is failed the effects persist for another 1d6 rounds before checking again.

## MANIFESTATIONS

To determine the nature of your character's power/affliction, roll 1d20 and consult the following list.

### 1. Terrible Maw

Your head stretches and grossly elongates, splitting somewhere odd to reveal long, cruel teeth...

**Effect:** Additional bite attack for ~1d8 damage. On a critical hit, target is seized in the horrible jaws, automatically suffering bite damage each round (STR to escape).

### 2. Lashing Sinew

Your muscles and tendons twist and contract beneath tortured flesh. Limbs wrench and flex with inhuman ferocity...

**Effect:** Re-roll one attack OR damage, per round (choose each round).

### 3. Insatiable Thirst

You know nothing but despair and rage. The bodies you carve, the blood you spill, these things bring hints of an ecstasy beyond words...

**Effect:** Cumulative +1 to hit & damage per round in which you cause damage, to a Maximum of +3. Resets to 0 if a round passes without damage. Will save must be passed in order to do anything except attack a living target.

### 4. Squamous Hide

Your pelt bubbles and hardens, forming strange, irregular scales. You can feel them, talking to one another, trying to make you into something...

**Effect:** +/-2 AC, Regenerate 2HP per round.

### 5. Leaking Horror

Filthy shades of blackness leak from aching pores, stretching out from between worlds and taking things from this one...

**Effect:** Automatically cause 1d6 damage, allocated as you wish to targets within 10 yards. If you roll a 1, instead allocate 1d6 damage to allies/neutrals. (does not interrupt spells etc.)

# STRANGE GIFTS, WARP SPASMS, CHAOTIC BOONS

## 6. Immolating Flesh

Raging fires take root in your veins. The elemental heat of existence radiates from somewhere deep within you...

**Effect:** Inflict 1d6 fire damage per round to anything in physical contact.

## 7. Writhing Bones

Repulsive twitches and creaking cartilage accompany every motion. Curious energies tug at your skeleton, folding and twisting in inscrutable patterns...

**Effect:** Modify any one of your rolls by +/- 1d6, once per round.

## 8. Murderheart

The means justify the means. Killing is its own pleasure...

**Effect:** May re-roll any attack or damage rolls. If the re-roll is <= the original, immediately attack the nearest ally/neutral.

## 9. The Night's Shadow

Inky darkness fills you, flowing beneath your skin and mind. You are vaguely aware of a place, and know that you mustn't go there...

**Effect:** Re-roll all saves.

## 10. The Black Pillar

The black blood of something you hate erupts from the crown of your skull in an endless torrent. The thing's bedlam floods those around you...

**Effect:** Force a re-roll of any one dice per round. (Yours, GM's or another player's).

## 11. Chaosborne

Your bones and tissue separate and tear open. One arm becomes two, or a mass of prehensile sinew, your chaotic body squirming and changing incessantly...

**Effect:** Additional attack per round OR +2 to hit with double damage.

## 12. Unreasonable Strength

Your muscles bulge, tearing at your skin and swelling monstrously...

**Effect:** Double Damage, Double Strength.

## 13. Extraordinary Hatred

You are made of disdain, raw hatred and intolerable disgust. Temporary solace is gained through destruction...

**Effect:** Randomly select an enemy target. Receive a cumulative +1 to hit & damage per round attacking that target. Once slain, determine a new target. If any of your attacks fumble, effect target switches to a random ally.

## 14. Tremendous Girth

Incomprehensible chaos energies fill the spaces between your flesh. You are swollen and fat with inhuman substances...

**Effect:** Ignore 1d6 of the damage from each physical attack you receive (inc. fire etc.). Roll per attack.

## 15. Coiled Skull

Your skull warps and bones deviate. Organs are misplaced and strange new ones take their place. You are repulsive and confusing to behold...

**Effect:** Focus on a single target. Target must save vs magic per round or act as if afflicted by a confusion spell.

## 16. Annihilating Aggression

Your body seethes with intolerable aggression. When you strike, your limbs snap forth with annihilating force...

**Effect:** +4 to hit and damage.

## 17. Unknowable

Otherness reaches through you from somewhere foul, trickling into your surroundings..

**Effect:** Everything within 10 yards suffers 1HP of magic damage per round (does not interrupt spells etc.)

## 18. Fury Made Flesh

You are driven by unendurable fury. It insists that you crush those who stand against you...

**Effect:** Once per round, when hit by an opponent, immediately make a normal melee attack against it. If an ally/neutral fumbles nearby, immediately make a melee attack against it.

## 19. Earth Pact

Your meat thickens and becomes as hard as earth...

**Effect:** Gain temporary HP equal to your normal maximum.

## 20. Skulls Of Everything

Your mind is marbled with memories from all the dead things of history. They flood your brain with their joy at your slaughter...

**Effect:** Earn Level\*10 XP per point of damage done. (Note: This ignores the 'Mindless' rule from above.)

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*If the stars are right, I'll be running a campaign with evil, or at least very selfish, PCs. They will be some kind of criminal organization starting out in the big city. I would like some kind of game aid in running such a campaign.*

Check out this guide to criminal behavior from Jeremy Duncan, and enjoy the following sound advice for PCs considering a walk on the other side of the law.

# THE SCOFFLAW'S ALPHABET

By Jeremy Duncan

*Being in the Main, Twenty-Six short segments of advice, observations, useful color, and points to consider when running and playing a Criminal campaign.*

## THE SCOFFLAW'S ABC

### ASSASSINATION

Murder-for-hire, while it has the potential to be vastly lucrative, offers unique challenges to the independent contractor which are seldom considered by those resorting to such methods for political or ideological ends. Conflicts between clients are bound to arise, and, unless clear bylaws and guidelines are set, the whole affair can collapse into internecine chaos and confusion. In one notable example, an agency of some repute was assigned the task of eliminating its own Chairman. Technically, this order did nothing to conflict with the agency's bylaws in this regard, and as the client's credit was impeccable, the agency was professionally bound to carry out the contract, against the protestations of some of the senior members. Today, that august body of trained killers lies in ruins, to serve as an example to like-minded entrepreneurs.

### BURGLARY

Even adventurers outside the criminal classes have dabbled in burglary from time to time, and there are few escapades more satisfying than a well-planned heist, successfully executed. Specialists such as **Yeggs** and Second-Story Men will demand a larger cut for their services, but this is to be preferred to dealing with amateurs who will drop lanterns, fail to staunch their nervous laughter, and bring the whole delicate operation crashing down upon your heads. When targeting a wealthy home, keep an eye out for disgruntled servants, their livery indifferently worn and a curse for their masters on their lips.

### THE COMPETITION

The PCs, of course will not be the only game in town. Whatever **the Racket**, odds are someone in the City is already hard at work to the same purpose and will resent the intrusions of upstarts and newcomers. Perhaps there will be an offer extended to Join or Die, or perhaps this established

concern will lash out at once in full vigor, the better to maintain its reputation. If the PCs are indeed newcomers, they will be vulnerable from the very beginning, and their arrival on the scene will disrupt the delicate web of alliances, feuds, etc., as each faction and concern scrambles to work this new situation to its advantage. It may be advisable to join such an organization from the beginning, only to play on the cupidity, ambition, or grievances of its members, and arrange a coup from within. While this has the benefit of providing the PCs with an existing infrastructure, the loyalties of your co-conspirators will forever in doubt. How long, after all, before some other brash young upstart makes a similar attempt?

### DOXIES

Trollops, jades, and *filles de joie*, as well as the gigolos, catamites, and rent-boys who call them sister, are an invaluable resource for the criminally ambitious. Like their cousins on the stage, they mingle and co-mingle with all classes of society, and for a small consideration may be relied upon to provide all sorts of carelessly-provided gossip or relate events to which they were an unnoticed or unremarked witness. They may sometimes be privy to even weightier matters, as their clients may often let slip some secret in a moment of unguarded candor. This last phenomenon, often the cause of great sorrow to the employers, superiors, and co-conspirators of such blabbermouths, has given rise to the occasional practice of deliberate misrepresentation, in which an agent will seek to confound or discover his enemies by passing false information along this network.

A few other means by which they may be employed:

**1. The obvious.** While the office of bawd, as has been noted, is far from easy, the burdens of generalship are seldom appreciated by those unfortunates serving on the front lines.

**2. Theft.** Depending on the specifics of their arrangement with a client, a quick-fingered jade may be given ample opportunity to pick pockets, search saddlebags, steal or make impressions of loose keys or signet rings, etc. If given clandestine access to the client's apartments, so much the better. These items may be procured for their own sake, in service of a larger scheme, or as a means to....

**3. Blackmail.** If the client stands to lose favor, position, reputation, marital harmony, etc.; if their indiscretions become known, the theft of a distinguishing possession, piece of clothing or jewelry, or simply the recitation of certain physical characteristics visible only in a state of undress may well provide the necessary leverage. If the act of patronage itself offers no opportunity for shame and entrapment, the loss of some object vouchsafed to them by a third party can be quite efficacious in holding such an agent in thrall, particularly if the third party is not known to be of a forgiving disposition.

## EXPLOSIVES

Volatile, expensive, and dangerous to operate and procure, explosives should be employed as frequently as possible.

## FENCES

Often glossed over, the difficulty of disposing of obviously stolen loot should be brought to the fore in a Criminal campaign. Sumptuary laws may be enforced with more vigor, creating a black market for what could previously be sold openly, driving up the risk and the fence's cut along with the potential reward. Some items are of little value to all but serious collectors, and the PCs must decide whether the payoff is worth the time, trouble, and expense of arranging such a buyer. The arrest, murder, or disappearance of a fence, particularly one with an established relationship to the PCs, invites new complications and difficulties to be overcome.

## GRAVE ROBBING

This venerable industry has two distinct branches, and its practitioners will generally stick to one or the other by virtue of opportunity and inclination. The first involves theft of grave goods – everything from jewelry, ceremonies of costly stuff, weapons, and other personal effects of the deceased, as well as the furnishings of the grave or tomb itself. Grave-mounds, mausoleums, the barrows of barbarian chieftains, and the half-submerged necropolises of antediluvian kings are generally held to be most fruitful for this kind of work, though not without their attendant dangers. When not engaged with lantern, sack, and pickaxe, they may be found seeking out and poring over ancient histories and crumbling maps. They will have developed contacts with established **Fences**, and may count academics, antiquarians, and wealthy eccentrics among their acquaintance, though neither would acknowledge the association openly.

The second branch is the domain of body-snatchers and resurrection men. Here, speed and opportunity are the watchwords, and intelligence is to be gained by loitering in gin-shops and execution yards. The cadavers themselves are the prize, though a gold tooth, locket, or finger ring is always a pleasant bonus. Their efforts supply the needs of a clandestine clientele of anatomists, surgeons, artists, necromancers, alchemists, and necrophiles, many of whom are known to the resurrection man only through a

third party. Some enterprising scamps in this trade are so scrupulous in their desire to provide fresh and unblemished product to their clients that they will readily employ a pair of strong arms and a pillow rather than trust in the vicissitudes of Fortune.

## HELL

The Final Reward of all those who make their living by vicious and dishonest means. Sages, savants, and theologians imagine this abode of the forsaken as anything from a sort of double-sided griddle or waffle iron in the hands of a vengeful Deity, to the state of a soul for whom the absence of said deity is felt with severe and unexpected keenness, to a chaotic, formless nightmare realm of pure thought and sensation existing parallel to our world, to an inverted and exaggerated representation of the Metropolis itself. Such metaphysical considerations and barely-disguised Social Commentary is beyond the scope of this primer. We concern ourselves here with Hell's Native Denizens—in particular those grotesque and fantastic worthies who serve as Courtiers, Impresarios, and Middle Management in that Sorrowful Country. Many of these are said to take an interest in the affairs of mortals, and to aid and inspire acts of malice, cupidity, and vice among Men, for such is their delight and pastime. The rascal who attracts the attention of one such may aspire to outrages that will keep the moritat-printers and snatch-singers in capons and gin for months, though he may in consequence grow careless, and find himself face-to-face with his Patron earlier than he had anticipated, following an appointment with the Noose or Flensing-Spoon. There is a prolific and cut-throat trade in the criminal demimonde for scraps of lore, rituals of summoning, rites of appeasement, etc., that will secure even the fleeting attentions of these entities.

## INCARCERATION

Is little employed, except a perfunctory stint prior to flogging, placement in the stocks, branding, mutilation, execution, or in some societies, sale (see **Just Desserts**, below). Someone suspected of possessing valuable information may well be detained for a considerable time, during which their only respite from the lonely gloom of the cell lies in their captor's periodic attempts to Persuade and Extract. Princes and other individuals of high estate will often find themselves held captive – in varying degrees of comfort—by their enemies, who weigh the expense of their lodging against the expectation of ransom. If there is a significant public-minded spirit of reform, lesser offenders (especially minors) may be set to some improving task, instructed in an honest profession and in the precepts of religion. All too often, the proximity to other young people of like disposition proves too great a temptation for mischief, so that likely boys and girls become apprentices, and apprentices become journeymen in some loathsome trade or other. Persons in search of eager young recruits, already well-schooled in the ways of petty evil, will find plenty of newly-idle applicants

on the steps of such institutions, tossing prayer-books in the gutter and pawning their tools for gin.

## JUST DESSERTS

As few malefactors merit prolonged *Incarceration*, their punishments will most often be meted out soon after arrest, on the spot, or after a perfunctory and largely symbolic trial. These may consist of time in the stocks or pillory, branding, flogging, mutilation, amputation (hands, fingers, ears and noses are popular), or execution, with or without preceding torture. Most of these will take place as a public spectacle for the edification and entertainment of the citizenry. Executions afford characters an opportunity for gallow speeches of pleading oratory or vulgar contempt, and the planning and carrying out of daring escapes. If a PC is not the star attraction, or if their associates are of a particularly practical or vindictive cast of mind, there are additional opportunities for profit and diversion. Souvenirs of personal effects may be sold, along with tickets to balconies, roofs, etc. (whether or not the characters own the building in question) refreshments, impromptu skits or puppet shows depicting the prisoner's career of sin, ballad-sheets and replica gallows, flensing spoons, etc., for the children. In addition, opportunities for purse-snatching and pick pocketing are legion, and the PCs may wish to take the opportunity of such a city-wide distraction to commit some new outrage in another part of the metropolis when vigilance will be relaxed.

## KIDNAPPING

A venerable and storied pursuit among brigands of all nations since time immemorial. It is not an enterprise to be entered into lightly, and each aspect of the scheme – choosing a target, contacting the family or guardian, the amount of ransom demanded, selecting and securing a safehouse, and the transfer of ransom and hostage itself must be considered in great detail. Even then, fresh complications may arise at any point, and the unfortunate kidnapper may find themselves saddled with a burden too valuable to dispose of safely and too unpleasant for company. By all means, avoid becoming entangled in the schemes of husbands to squeeze money from wealthy but recalcitrant fathers-in-law by kidnapping their wives and splitting the ransom. It seldom ends profitably for anyone.

## LOOT

At once a driving motive and a logistical nightmare. A few points to consider after counting that sweet, sweet lucre.

**1. What form is it in?** Coins and jewelry, while cumbersome in bulk, will be much easier to get rid of than an exquisite antique chest of drawers. Those bottles of excellent wine will be worthless unless stored properly. Kidnapping the duchess' lapdog seemed like such a good idea at the time, but now it's yapping its head off at all hours and you'll have to move safehouses again, or risk discovery. And you can't stay at Vassik the Eel's place again after that incident with his rug.

**2. How are you going to spend it?** Conspicuous consumption sure is fun, but each new purchase makes it harder and harder to act in secrecy, which is how you were able to acquire it in the first place. Perhaps a some changes are in order...

**3. Protection.** The more you acquire, the more time, money, and energy you have to devote to guarding all that loot from everyone else.

## MAGISTRATES

Eventually, a PC or associated NPC will find themselves dragged before one of these. It should soon become apparent whether you are dealing with a pinch-faced censorious type whose sentences favor the Draconian, and who may or may not carry on a double life of utter depravity in private, or the usual ruddy faced drunk from a Hogarth etching with a gouty leg, a terrifying social disease, and whose wig is conspicuously askew. Either way, courtroom drama should be indulged in shamelessly and with indifferent regard for the niceties of the law. Your players probably don't have an intimate grasp of your campaign world's legal system, you may not have considered the problem in great detail yourself, and there's a good chance their legal representation is a bit shaky on the subject as well so theatrics and bombast are your friends.

## NARCOTICS

When dealing with wacky fantasy drugs in your campaign, ask yourself the following:

**1. Why is it illegal?** There must have been pressure at some point from some political, social, religious, medical, or philosophical concern for there to be an all-out ban on it. Is it purely a matter of economics? A moral panic? A combination of these factors?

**2. How is it manufactured?** Are the raw materials readily available, or must they be imported? Is the process of its manufacture a closely-guarded secret, known only to a particular group or faction?

**3. Has the substance been legal** (or at least unofficially tolerated) within living memory? Until very recently? This will have a huge impact in how its manufacturers, users, and purveyors are seen in society at large, and the respect or contempt in which efforts to enforce its ban are regarded.

## THE OCCULT

Even when not attempting to enlist the aid of the dignitaries of *Hell* in their pursuits, superstition is rampant in the underworld, and the use of amulets, talismans, "lucky" tools of the trade is widespread. Spells and charms of dubious efficacy are sold and traded, strange rituals are observed before heists and murderous rendezvous, cobbled together from half-remembered childhood observances, bits of stray gossip, popular music-hall routines, and desperate, muttered blasphemies.

## PEACHING

While those partial to romantic novels may hold some notion of “honor among thieves,” and this fiction may be of use when practicing on the inexperience of the young and foolish, it is best dispensed with by those who wish to get about the business of lining their pockets with backs unpierced. Informers, finks, rats, stool pigeons, snitches and squealers riddle the underworld like maggots in meat. Though held in the strongest loathing and contempt by their peers, greed and self-preservation will out, and it is a rare scofflaw who will hesitate to inform on his fellows if the reward is large enough or the hangman beckons. The fear and suspicion that an associate has turned informant is a powerful motivator, and may send the campaign spiraling off in any number of entertaining directions.

## QUIS CUSTODIET IPSOS CUSTODIES?

Some thought should be given to the size, quality, and disposition of the Police, Night Watch, etc, which are in turn informed by the character of the City itself. Does the City even retain such a force, and how common are outbreaks of lawlessness? In Republican Rome, for example, there was no police force to speak of, and no one of sufficient means braved the streets after dark without an armed escort of slaves, clients, and retainers. Is the force large or small—well-funded, or shabby and struggling against a vastly superior force of thieves and cutthroats? How are they viewed by citizens? More to the point for committed criminal types, how corrupt are they? Is there a level of “honest graft” that any officer can be expected to more-or-less adhere to? Public outcry against laxity or corruption on their part may trigger sudden brutal crackdowns and shows of force, and your malefactor will find themselves made an example of for behavior that last week was pardonable with a wink and a small consideration.

## THE RACKET

The chief means by which the PCs' organization makes its dishonest living. At first, this may be confined to one particular activity in one particular area – running a protection racket in the Plaza of Drowned Men, for example, or supplying Purple Lotus Powder to a string of brothels, gambling houses, and cabarets along the Waterfront. There may be an initial struggle with *The Competition*, but once secure in their position, they can begin to expand geographically and/or in the scope of their influence as they grow in wealth and power. It's up to the players whether to “diversify their portfolio” or focus more narrowly on a particular activity over a broader area, but either choice is sure to invite conflict as the PC's sphere of influence threatens to encroach on those of the existing factions.

## THE SPORTING LIFE

Whatever sports, games, and public spectacles are available in the City, there should be plenty of opportunity for the PCs to

claim a piece of the action for themselves. Murdered bookies, crooked fight promoters, Halfing-doping scandals, sabotage in the hippodrome – something for everyone!

## THUGS

Of great necessity when kneecaps need breaking, protection money paid on time, and interlopers discouraged, the PCs will want to acquire the services of a few of these at the earliest opportunity. If at all possible, try to find a short, verbose, almost offensively polite guy and partner him with a hulking brute with fists like Parma hams and a tendency to speak in monosyllables. I love those two.

## UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS

1. **War!** Martial Law is declared, sudden influxes of refugees, once common items become incredibly scarce as rationing goes into effect.

2. **Plague!** Families shut up in their homes, the dead are stacked up like cordwood, and no one's allowed in or out. If only some altruistic soul could be found to smuggle people and goods past the guard patrols...

3. **The City is hosting a great exhibition!** The population will swell by tens of thousands, fantastic inventions and creatures are on display, and a countryside's worth of well-scrubbed rubes is steadily trickling in to see what all the fuss is about.

4. **An important foreign personage** and their sizable entourage is visiting the City. New suppliers, new customers?

## VICE

What's seen as a vice in a particular campaign setting might be wholly innocuous in our world, and vice-versa. Perhaps there is no taboo attached to imbibing any substances, but certain fabrics are considered indecent when worn against the skin. Prostitution might be a wholly legal, and without any stigma of impropriety, but eating meat is regarded as decadent and depraved. Novels, plays, vocal or instrumental music, the display of certain colors or subjects in works of art – anything that gives pleasure could potentially be regarded as a vice and be subject to laws and restrictions which will be the PCs' business to exploit. Watch as the PCs claw their way up through the vicious cutthroat world of trafficking in purple dye, or rise to become chocolate kingpin of Waterdeep, or whatever.

## SOME WEIRD CRIMES

1. Stealing the sense of worth from money.

2. Performing the office of Psychopomp without a valid license

3. Grimoire forgery/boobytrapping

4. Creating a Tulpa

5. Distilling nostalgia-moonshine from memories with all unpleasant facts boiled away.

## **XENOPHOBIA**

Many criminal organizations in the City are divided along ethnic and cultural lines, holding sway in certain neighborhoods and providing protection and a sense of continuity for recent immigrants, in exchange for support, acquiescence, and noncompliance with the Law. PCs blundering into these spheres of influence may unwittingly re-ignite centuries-old feuds and grievances between historically opposed groups, which may in turn bring reprisals as representatives from the Old Country arrive to sort out the affairs of their soft semi-assimilated cousins. Fear, mistrust, tragic misunderstandings, and plain old fashioned bigotry erupt as the City's melting pot boils over. Or not. You may ignore this side of things all together. X was a tricky one. Is it time for Y yet?

## **YEGG, OR YEGGMAN**

A species of **Burglar** that specializes in cracking safes and strongboxes. They tend to be lanky and long-fingered or short and plump, with small, supple hands unadorned by rings. They take little care with their appearance, often going about their work in greasy shirtsleeves and stained trousers, though their leather satchels, glittering with the tools of their trade, will be well-worn but scrupulously maintained. They affect an air of lofty indolence and will demand exorbitant prices for their services. They will be insulted if you do not dicker at least a minute or two over this fee, but once agreed upon, always pay in full. A Yeggman will never forgive a slight, and will spend months or years constructing an elaborate and frightful revenge.

## **ZEAL**

Inexplicable and unpredictable, this is perhaps the quality the PCs should fear the most. As cynical, selfish entrepreneurs, they will be accustomed to dealing with other cynical, selfish entrepreneurs. Everyone can be relied upon to look out for number one, everything's for sale, and everyone has a price. The Zealot throws all of this out the window, then lights himself on fire and leaps after it. Zealots are what remains when the acolytes throw off their purple robes and flee. They are the steely-eyed vigilantes who will not be paid off, will not see reason, and will gladly die before compromising an inch. They are the ambitious Watch Captains whose promising careers are over if they ignores their superiors but have dedicated their lives to seeing you hang and will bring you in anyway.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me an anti-PC/anti-party concept. Why do these evil adventurer NPCs want to undo or ruin everything the PCs do? What sort of people are they?*

# RIVAL ADVENTURING PARTY

By Martijn Vos

Of course the PCs aren't the only adventurers in the world. Other adventuring parties with their own goals, their own motivations and their own patrons may end up in conflict with our heroes. So who are these people, and why are they in our way?

Choose one or roll a d20 and consult the following list. The lower numbers are more generic and the higher numbers more specific and detailed, so you could also roll d12 or d8+12 depending on your needs.

## 1. FRIENDLY RIVALS

The anti-party has the same goal as our heroes. They want the same treasure, the same McGuffin, reach the same place, talk to the same people; and they don't want to share. They're not particularly hostile, they just want to get there first. They might try to misdirect the heroes, but they won't be the first to attack. They just hope to be smarter, better and faster.

## 2. NASTY RIVALS

The anti-party has the same goal as our heroes. They want the same treasure, the same McGuffin, reach the same place, talk to the same people; and they don't want to share. They want to get there first, and they don't like having competition. If they're ahead, they might set traps or ambushes. If they're behind, they'll follow the heroes' trail and do everything they can to catch up, including ambushing them when the heroes return from achieving some (sub)goal.

## 3. RIVALS FOR THE SAME BOSS

As 1 or 2, but they've been hired by the same patron as the PCs. He may be hedging his bets or doing this for entertainment. In any case, the rivals never intended to be rivals, but now they're after the same thing. Fight? Cooperate? Or team up to pay the double-crossing patron a visit?

## 4. SECRET RIVALS

The anti-party has the same goal as our heroes, but they're a lot more devious about it, and the heroes aren't aware of them being rivals. They'll try to befriend the PCs or act as temporary allies, but inevitably, the betrayal will come. If the losing side survives, you can bet they'll be out for revenge.

## 5. UNWITTING RIVALS

The anti-party has the same goal as our heroes, but both parties are unaware of this. They just keep running into each other in various places, and neither wants to explain why they're there. If the anti-party figures this out first, they might turn into Secret Rivals (4).

## 6. DEFENDERS

The anti-party has something the heroes need or want. They have the McGuffin, the key to the next adventure, or vital information, and while they're not using it themselves, they don't want to share it either.

## 7. HIRED DEFENDERS

The anti-party has been hired to defend a place against intruders, and the heroes insist on going there. Sure, you could use monsters or undead for this job, but sometimes a party of highly trained adventurers will do the job better.

## 8. THIEVES

The heroes have something the anti-party wants. They'll first try to figure out if it's really our heroes that have the thing they want, and then they'll try to steal it. If successful, and the heroes want it back, they'll turn into Defenders (6).

## 9. ROBBERS

The heroes have something the anti-party wants. Lacking the subtlety to steal it, the anti-party will try to rob them, ambush them, harass them, until they get what they want, and until they do, they'll keep coming back.

## 10. CHALLENGERS

The heroes are top-dog (or perceived as such), and the anti-party wants to boost their reputation by defeating the heroes. Preferably in a fair fight.

## 11. NASTY CHALLENGERS

The heroes are top-dog (or perceived as such), and the anti-party wants to boost their reputation by defeating the heroes. But they're not sure they'll actually win in a fair fight, and don't want to take that risk, so they'll try every trick in the book to gain an advantage.

## 12. REVENGE

The heroes wronged the anti-party somehow (possibly as the result of any of the other results of this table), and now they're out for blood, or at least a very sincere apology.

## 13. THUGS

The anti-party has been hired to harass and intimidate the heroes in order to scare them away from their quest. The BBEG (or a lieutenant) behind this quest is aware of them, and doesn't want them interfering with his plans, so he hopes to scare them off early, and take them out if they don't back off.

## 14. MISTAKEN THUGS

The anti-party has been hired (or has taken it upon themselves) to harass and intimidate the heroes in order to scare them away from what they appear to be doing. Someone unrelated to the heroes' actual quest mistakenly thinks they're about to interfere with their plans (which might be nefarious or benevolent). Of course their attempts to stop the heroes may eventually lead to the discovery of those plans.

## 15. PAWNS

The anti-party has noble intentions, but has been duped to believe that the heroes are evil. Someone else wants to see the heroes fail, and has manipulated the anti-party to believe that the heroes are up to no good, and shrewd liars to boot. How are you going to prove they've been misled? And who is the real culprit behind this?

## 16. AVENGING MONSTERS

The anti-party are relatives of creatures that the heroes assumed were okay to kill. Turns out even goblins, kobolds and gnolls have relatives who love them, and who will avenge their deaths. They might even be reasonable enough to accept repayment for their loss, or to bring them to trial. Or maybe they just want them death. But they certainly won't sit there waiting while the heroes wreak genocide on their species.

## 17. PURE COINCIDENCE

The anti-party is not remotely interested in the heroes or what they're after. They have their own goals which are completely unrelated. It's pure coincidence that makes them constantly cross paths at inopportune moments. They were expecting to fight someone else, and so were the heroes, and yet here they both are.

## 18. SAVING THE WORLD

The anti-party is trying to save the world from terrible disaster. A child has been prophesied to doom the world, or it has been discovered that the child is developing weird powers that will ultimately allow it to threaten the fabric of reality. The child has to be captured or killed. The anti-party will explain this to the heroes, but they're not very patient; they've got a world to save! If the heroes try to rescue the child, then they are also indirectly a threat to the world, and will be dealt with appropriately.

## 19. DESTROYING THE WORLD

The anti-party is hatching an evil plot to take over or destroy the world. A child has been prophesied to play a vital role in this, or the child has unique powers, and the anti-party has to capture it in order to bring their evil plans to fruition. They will tell the heroes they're doing this to save the world (see 18: Saving the World), and that they will have to kill the child if the heroes interfere, but they will go to extreme lengths to prevent the child's death.

## 20. KEEPING TABS

The anti-party are just keeping tabs on a child that has developed unique powers. Possibly a powerful dragon or similar powerful entity has hired the anti-party to do this. The child is not to be harmed, but keeping it safe might require abduction. The anti-party won't explain why they need the child, and would prefer to keep everything secret. They might agree to have the child raised in a suitably safe environment. Or they might decide the heroes know too much. If any party messes up, terrible retribution looms.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table of legendary monsters unwritten by the ancients.*

*Thanks,*

*Jan Burns*

# LEGENDARY MONSTERS

By Annah Madriñan

d12	Legendary Monster
1	<b>Gwydion the Great Horse</b> - Normally appearing as a riderless red warhorse, when transformed the Great Horse becomes a terrifying beast with withers the height of a spear length.
2	<b>Miniature Centaur</b> - Whereas centaurs are traditionally known as fierce-some and mighty creatures, this dwarven specimen had been rejected by his kind. Embittered, he plagues the local community with tricks and stolen items.
3	<b>Weeping Woman</b> - The guardian of all mothers of lost children, she manifests as a heart-wrenching sound of longing of no direction or origin.
4	<b>Dishonored Hero</b> - Born into a lineage of betrayal, greed, and murder, he never had a chance to redeem his name. He wandered the land seeking out good deeds to perform in attempt to make a new name for himself. No wrong, regardless of how small, will go unpunished.
5	<b>Insatiable Wench</b> - Manifesting as a beautiful women with violet eyes and voracious appetite. If her lovers cannot satisfy her all consuming lust, they are then consumed themselves via the fanged maw her belly turns into.
6	<b>Mask of Temperament</b> - Long hidden safe from the world, legend tells of the sentient mask that gives the wearer power over languages and manipulation. If treated unjustly, it takes over the wearer who then becomes overcome by one all encompassing emotion.
7	<b>Half-Demon Goddess</b> - An abomination of birth she walks the earth exiled from both realms. Which half will she show when met?
8	<b>Mirror Mimic</b> - Which reflection is real and which is deadly? She sometimes gives herself away by her frequent inability to hide a smile.
9	<b>Succulent de Fleur</b> - Found in deserts, this flower supposedly wastes precious water to blow bubbles above it's petals. But when touched, these bubbles instantly liquifies anything organic which then rains down upon the plant.
10	<b>Abarimon</b> - Despite a pair of backwards feet, this completely hairless humanoid is capable of traveling at incredible and terrifying speeds.
11	<b>Maiden of Moonbeams and Snow</b> - Denied her beau she was thrown out into the night to die. Her soulful lament was heard by the gods, who in turn granted her the power to punish those who forsook lovers.
12	<b>Rulevine</b> - A bipedal reptile with 3 foot long tusks and a love of old cadavers.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me some better draculas.*

*Thanks,*

*Jan (from [monstreutelevision.blogspot.com](http://monstreutelevision.blogspot.com))*

# TOME OF DRACULAS!

By Trey

**Author's Note:** I interpret this cryptic request as referring to D&D's propensity of turning unique creatures from mythology or fiction into a class of creatures. A dracula then is pretty much like the standard D&D vampire--except that they have a whole "urbane foreign noble fallen on hard times" thing going for them. For a standard dracula, simply use your vampire stats of choice: give him (it's going to be a him, most of the time) a foreign accent, a stylish cape, and a dilapidated castle.



## DRACULA, ANIMAL

Merely vampiric animals (besides bats) are impossible, but the power of a dracula's curse is such that even beasts must succumb. Dracula dogs are the most common variety, but even cows have been known. Dracula animals have HD 7 and all the usual vampiric powers and weaknesses, plus whatever innate abilities they possessed in life. Magical animals may not be dracula-ized. (An alternate version of the hellcow appears [here](#).)

## DRACULA, AQUATIC

Aquatic draculas haunt sunken funeral ships or castles submerged by some natural or manmade upheaval. Draculas are restrained by running water, but relatively still lakes, inlets or lagoons provide a place where they may be active at least some of the time. Aquatic draculas are unable to summon rats, bats, or wolves, but crabs, sentient seaweed, piranhas, and unsavory otters are an option.

## DRACULA, LOVELORN

Some draculas ache for a love lost and often mistake some woman or another for this long dead inamorata. The charm ability of the lovelorn dracula often convinces the woman in question that she is indeed a reincarnation. Lovelorn draculas are mechanically identical to the standard version, but they are often hunkier and have flowing locks and a pendant for

going shirtless. They seldom bother with summoning vermin, though they probably can.

## DRACULA, NOSFERATU

These draculas are hideous and vaguely rodent-like in appearance. They lack the suave demeanor other draculas affect: they are either testy and animalistic, or creep- pathetic and lonely. They have a special affinity for vermin and can summon twice the usual number of rats. They also tend to bring plagues where they go and can cause disease. When exposed to sunlight they fade away rather than turn to dust.



## DRACULA, OTHERWORLDLY

This dracula violates the "mostly male" rule. These draculas are mostly female and their foreignness comes from being from another world or plane where blood flows like water. They have none of the shapeshifting or animal summoning powers of usual draculas, but make up for it with HD 9.

## DUST OF DRACULA

After a dracula dies, they turn to a reddish powder. This dust can be collected and made into a beverage when mixed with wine and human blood. When this potion is consumed, the imbiber must save vs. polymorph or painfully transform into a duplicate of the dracula whose dust was used.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me some mummies too.*

# MO' MUMMIES

By Trey

As one of the most neglected of classic monsters, the mummy deserves a similar treatment to the vampires above. Here are several variants.

## MUMMY, BOG

These mummies were naturally created but are instead products of being buried in peat bogs. They aren't wrapped in bandages, their skin in tanned black, and they are more flexible than their fellows due to calcium phosphate in the bones being dissolved by bog acid. They only do 1d8 damage and have one less hit dice, but they can vomit acid for 1d4 damage.



## MUMMY, GIANT

Humans weren't the only ones to be mummified, or to rise as fearsome undead monsters. Giant mummies have hit dice one better than what ever giant humanoid their size resembles or one better than standard mummy hit dice, whichever is better. They have all the standard mummy abilities, except (in some cases) mummy rot. (Check out Gomdulla, above, statted at [greenskeletongamingguild.blogspot.com](http://greenskeletongamingguild.blogspot.com).)

## MUMMY, LOVELORN

These mummies got caught in a forbidden romance and were mummified as punishment. When first revived, they look like regular mummies and have all the pertinent abilities, but within 1d4 days, they shed their wraps (and most of their powers) in favor of a brooding, exotic charm. They typically become convinced someone is the reincarnation of a long dead love, and will go about trying to woo the lost lover, killing those that get in the way. They are able to *charm* (as per spell).



## MUMMY, WELL-PRESERVED

These mummies have several unusual traits--most obvious of which is they are as attractive as the day they died, instead of being desiccated corpses. They don't have *mummy rot* or the *fearful* reaction, but do possess a charm ability (as per the spell). Typically, some sort of ritual is needed to fully resurrect one (involving some sort of item important to them in life and several blood sacrifices) of these mummies, but until then they are able to exert their will by control of others.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a picture of a kobold in fantasy armor with sword and shield; feel free to draw as many kobolds as you like in separate poses.*

# VICIOUS KOBOLDS

By Emily Vitori



*Dear Secret Santicore,  
Please grant me a random  
chimera generator.*

# RANDOM CHIMERA GENERATOR

by Isaac Murphy

## WHAT SHAPE IS IT?

d6	Shape
1	Head, Torso, and Hindquarters from different creatures
2	Bizarre compromise between two creatures
3	As 1, but torso and hindquarters each sprout a matching head
4	Serpentine, divided into d6 sections, each having the enormous head of a different animal growing from it (may or may not have legs)
5	Frankensteinian patchwork of three different creatures
6	One head and mouth, three different faces

## DOES IT HAVE ANY SPECIAL ABILITIES?

d12	Special Ability
1	Excellent climber
2	Soul storage (e.g. Koschei)
3	Moves very quickly
4	Perfect smell tracking
5	Spellcasting ability
6	Breath weapon
7	Poison
8	Flight
9	Deafening roar
10	Petrifying gaze
11	Jaws capable of biting through iron
12	Moves silently

## WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

d10	Purpose
1	Monstrous battle-mount
2	Work of art
3	Exotic pet
4	Guard
5	Challenge for heroes
6	Teleportation (or other) accident
7	Monstrous breeding stock
8	Monstrous consort
9	Delicious meal
10	Terror of the countryside

## WHAT ABOUT WEAKNESSES?

d12	Weakness
1	Prone to arguing with itself
2	If it eats lead, it will die
3	It can't stand the sound of string instruments
4	Water is inimical to it
5	It can't attack any person that has not yet told it an untruth
6	Unable to resist attacking clergymen on sight
7	Lives under a bridge
8	Scared of mice and rats
9	Can only attack if the victim is wearing no brown cloth
10	Trapped in a labyrinth
11	Obsessive compulsive hoarder
12	If its name is written down, it will obey any command given to it by the owner of the writing

## WHAT WILL IT WANT TO DO WITH THE PCS?

d8	Motivation
1	Have a friendly drink and swap stories
2	Make outrageous wagers
3	Kill them in their sleep
4	Eat one of their pets/hirelings/prisoners etc.
5	Eat brains of the most powerful magic-using PC
6	Kill them outright
7	Make them look ridiculous
8	Steal their valuables

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me stats and background for the towering terror that is **KONGTHULHU**!!!! He should be able to beat a Tarrasque round the park and wears Orcus and Demigorgon as slippers. Basically a campaign-ending big bad, with info on his goals, his worshippers, and anything else you wanna chuck in there. Here's a pic for inspiration, though really he's fifty times the size of what I've drawn: [gibletblizzard.blogspot](#) If you want to incorporate Scrap Princess' rules on taking down gargantuan creatures all the better:

[monstermanualsewnfrompants.blogspot](#)

Bewdy!

## KONGTHULHU

**Frequency:** Unique

**No. Appearing:** 1

**Move:** You can't track this bitch. Where he wants to move is where he is.

**Hit Dice:** 700 hp (norm); 350hp (C.T.S.T.T.S.F.M)

**Treasure Type:** Those that slay KONGTHULHU are granted 1 *wish* each. Also see random treasure chart below.

**No. of Attacks:** 8

**Damage/Attack:** See below

**Armor Class:** 30 (norm); 25 (C.T.S.T.T.S.F.M)

**Special Attacks:** See Below

**Special Defenses:** See Below

**Magic Resistance:** Roll 1d20- if 10 or less, spell has no effect. Also see **Magical Consternation** below.

**Intelligence:** Super Intelligent

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Size:** Super Massive (200ft tall)

**Psionic Ability:** None

**Level/X.P. Value:** X/37,500

**Climb On Things And Stabbing Them In Their Stupid**

**Face Mechanic (C.T.S.T.T.S.F.M):** Massively Gargantuanally Titanic- 35 points of Damage reduction. Kongthulhu has 7 climbing points. But, he has a weakness on his belly which counts as Point 6 instead of Point 4

+15 to all rolls and Saves

**Normal Attacks**

**Slam:** 2d12 damage

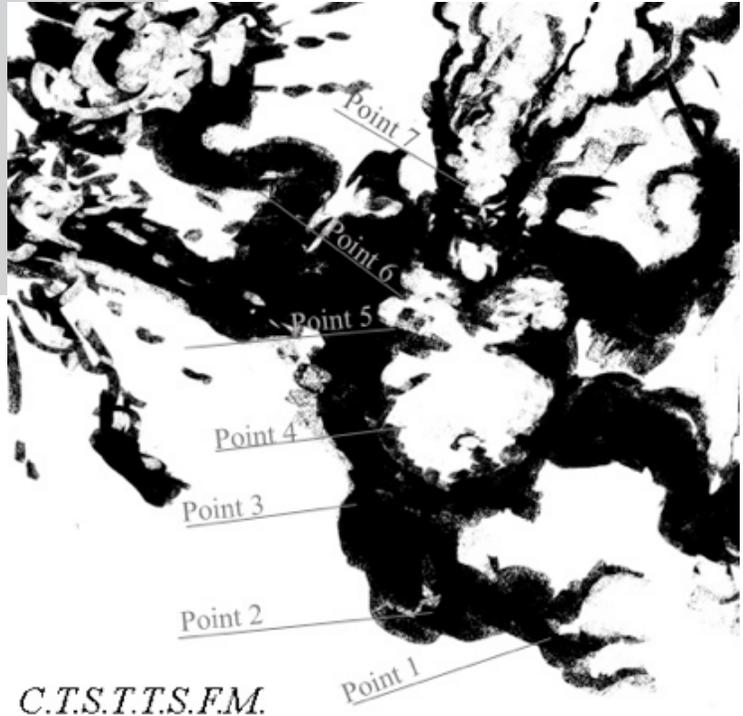
**Squish:** 2d20 damage

**Special Attacks**

**Mind Warp:** Kongthulhu can affect the minds of all creatures in a 1,500 ft radius and pervert them to his will (this includes Gods, Devils, Demons, Dragons, even the dreaded Tarrasque!!). All targets in area must make a Wisdom based save or suffer 2d6 Temporary Wisdom

# KONGTHULHU

By ?



drain (each 6 rolled is actually two permanent points of drain). Successful saves cannot be affected by this again for 24 hours.

**Temper Tantrum:** Kongthulhu flies into a blind rage and gains 100 temp HP and roll 4 of damage dice and take higher of the two.

**Non-Existence:** Once per day Kongthulhu can simply choose to not believe in something. If it fails a save vs Death it ceases to be.

**Kongthulhu's Red Eye of Fury:** He can cast *Disintegrate* 3x/day.

**Special Defenses**

**Regeneration:** 2d6 HP regenerates per round.

**Magical Consternation:** All spells have a 2-6 chance to be reflected back at the caster and do no damage to Kongthulhu.

**Teleport:** Kongthulhu can *teleport* at will because he's that bad ass.

**Weapon Immunity:** Non-magical weapons or weapons not made of silver do no damage to Kongthulhu. He laughs with impunity at your puny attempts to harm him, and then he hurts you.



## KONGTHULHU

*Lo, in the darkness of night,  
Where imagination creates blackened fright,  
There lurks a creature of terror,  
Yet it brings out man's zealous fervor.*

*The Gods fear to say its name,  
For their impotence brings them naught but shame.  
Yet to man the name is well known,  
And through them its power has grown...*

*The end has come!  
Weak mortals, tremble in fear!  
Madness has taken shape!  
Kongthulhu is here!*

It is said that when the Gods shed their undesired emotions and traits they congealed into a vile primordial goo. Almost as if it was some karmic retribution against the deities for their own hubris, a spark of life ignited in the goo and slowly; ever so slowly, the smoky visage of Kongthulhu emerged.

Kongthulhu revels in chaos, sexual depravity, lunacy, and violence. He does not seek to destroy the world, but corrupt and alter it to his desires of an orgy filled madhouse. However Kongthulhu is rash and filled with a confused sense of self-righteousness and hatred, and will destroy all that which he feels he cannot obtain.

Ages ago, Kongthulhu disappeared from the world and from the minds of civilization. However, the power of Kongthulhu is ever present as he exists in the subconscious of all, even the gods. As they act, as they do, and as they fear, Kongthulhu gains strength. Eventually his pull contaminates and twists the minds of individuals, giving rise to a new sect of the Cult of Kongthulhu. Through dreams, visions, and prophecy from the reforming Primordial Kongthulhu they spread his word, doing as he requests, and recruiting more followers, gaining him more power. Here lies one of the true strengths of Kongthulhu; he transcends boundaries, planes, and time. So long as there is thought, so long as there is emotion, and

so long as there are Gods, Kongthulhu will exist. Kongthulhu is dangerous because he becomes even more powerful as people acknowledge his existence, thus when he is rampaging through a kingdom his power continues to rise, giving him the power of the gods.

When Kongthulhu arises from the earth, his power and terror shall rip society asunder as madness and depravity reshape the lands.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS FOR KONGTHULHU

### THE CULT OF KONGTHULHU

The Cult of Kongthulhu is a strange and depraved lot that seeks to spread the belief of Kongthulhu far and wide. Many are quite mad and engage in strange violent orgies and rituals that usually result in the death of another member or innocent that strayed across their path.

There are those in the cult that are quite cunning and sane and use their influence and intellect to further the cults goals, even if it does mean sacrificing a few members to the law or church. Doing so furthers the cults aims of proving that Kongthulhu exists, thus giving their depraved God more power.

The head of the cult, usually a strong spell caster, is referred to as the *Mighty Silverback*.

## TREASURE FROM THE DEAD HUSK THAT WAS KONGTHULHU

(Roll 2d6 for treasure found. Then roll d20 for treasure [re-roll duplicates].)

d20	Item	Effect
1	Kong Fang	+2/+2 (1d10 damage)- Targets save vs madness or run around as if <i>feared</i> .
2	Shriveled Kong Green Eyeball	Allows wielder to <i>Scry</i> (as spell) but with +10 to roll. Can see in the dark.
3	Shriveled Kong Red Eyeball	Casts <i>Disintegrate</i> 3x/day.
4	Thick Braid of Kong Hair	When target hit, save vs death or develop 1d10 painful pustules. One pops per round for 2d4 damage.
5	Kong Finger Nail	Shove it in your hand, now a punching dagger. Target makes Save vs Poison or gets a nasty infection and suffers -2d6 permanent Con. loss.
6	Vial of Kong Blood	Smear on self. Become Ethereal for as long as you want.
7	Vial of Kong Spit	Drink. +1 perm Con.
8	Vial of Kong Mucus	Drink. +1 perm Str.
9	Vial of Kong Urine	Poison. Save vs Death or die horribly.
10	Swirling Mass of Kong Essence	Take into self. Gain permanent +1d6 Int. However, lose 1d6 Wis.
11	Giant Kong Bladder	Large <i>Bag of Holding</i> .
12	Kong Palm Lifeline	Extend your life by 200 years.
13	Vial of Congealed Kong Blood	Acid. Save vs Death or die and melt. The victim turns into Ooze in 1d6 rounds.
14	Vial of Kong Fat	Drink. Never be hungry again. However gain 2d100 pounds.
15	Ears of Kong	While wearing immune to any type of sonic damage. Also +10 to listen checks.
16	Chest Piece of Kong	Gives damage reduction of 15 while wearing. Also +4 to AC. When put on wearer chooses what material it is.
17	Hide Cloak of Kong	Gives wearer protection from magic. Spell resistance of 10. Also 1 in 6 chance that spells are reflected back at caster (this includes helpful spells).
18	Plaque Encrusted Molars Of Kong	1d10 Molars. Can be thrown and act as <i>Fireball</i> spells and do 10d6 damage.
19	Molars of Kong	1d10 Molars. Each one can be eaten and heals for 5d8 damage.
20	Authentic Kong Mask	This trademarked wooden Kongthulhu mask allows the wearer to cast <i>Mind Warp</i> (see above) 1x/day and also fly into a mini-Temper Tantrum 1x/day and gain 50 temp HP and roll 2 damage dice and keep higher of the two. Lasts 1d10 rounds.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS FOR KONGTHULHU

- The guests at a noble banquet suddenly engaged in weird acts of depravity. Many of the people began eating to the point of vomiting, others began fornicating with random people, and others became violently disturbed. Several people were injured and 3 were murdered. What could have caused this?
- The top of a Cathedral suddenly crumpled and toppled to the ground. Upon inspection a gigantic human-like handprint can be seen on the ruined metal top. What could have made something like this?
- One of the numerous religions has recently crumbled. The clerics have lost the ability to communicate and seek guidance from their god. None are able to cast spells or use their special abilities. All the God's statues have crumbled to bloody dust and all books containing his passages have spontaneously combusted.
- In the gutter district of a city several people have gone missing. Bloody murals of a strange figure have been discovered on walls. It looks like a giant gorilla made of smoke.
- A new organization has recently set up shop in town. It is gaining members alarmingly quick with promises of eternal pleasures and acceptance of hedonistic vices. Many of the other religions are holding meeting on how to combat this new religion.
- Strange and gruesome murders have been occurring all over the city. People are terrified and there seems to be a strange energy in the air. The City Watch is on edge and the nobles have retreated to their safe and secure homes. People have been visited with strange visions and several people have been, for whatever reason, driven to suicide. The wind seems to whisper "*Kongthulhu commeth*."

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a Labyrinth Lord or B/X compatible price table for exotic and fanciful mounts like flightless birds, giant lizards, war bears, domesticated yetis, riding bears, rhinos and giant beetles. I would also appreciate adding maybe a dozen more of cool riding beasts to the list in addition to those mentioned.*

# A HANDSOME HOARD OF SPECTACULAR STEEDS

By Reynaldo Madrian

## CAVALIER CECIL'S GLORIOUS GAGGLE: A HANDSOME HOARD OF SPECTACULAR STEEDS!

Mount Name	HD (d8)	Movement	AC	Natural Attack	Price	Notes
Rokko-Do	2	180' (60')	7	1d8 (Beak)	300 Gp	Can make impressive leaps (60') with a running start
Largzard	4	90' (30')	6	1d4/1d6 (Rake/Bite) Or 1d8 (Tail Swipe)	375 Gp	Cold-Blooded, Unhindered by most terrain
War Pig	4	150' (50')	7	2d4 (Tusk)	300 Gp	Can go wild (+2 Hit, -2 AC Penalty)
Battle Ursine	5	120' (40')	6	1d4/1d4/1d6 (Claw, Claw, Bite)	515 Gp	Grabs foe in a bear hug if both claw attacks hit in one round (2d8 Damage) Rider may attack held opponent as if they were prone
Scuttler	2	90' (30') 60' (20') (Flight)	5	1d6 (Mandibles)	320 Gp	Can tuck in most of its extremities beneath its wings for a +2 AC Bonus, but movement becomes impossible.
Blitzhorn	6	120' (40')	5	2d4 (Horn/Trample)	600 Gp	Does double damage on a charge
Boonta	5	90' (30')	4	1d6/1d6 (Fists)	600 Gp	Bipedal, clumsy but serviceable hands with thumbs, nearly as intelligent as a man
Unicorned	4	210' (70')	4	1d8/1d8 (Hooves)	1200 Gp	Dreadful weeping prompts good (lawful) and neutral creatures to make a saving throw versus spell to keep from crying uncontrollably, can teleport once per day by taking 2d8 damage
Junji	5	180' (60') 60' (20')	5	1d10 + 2 (Bite)	800 Gp	Can spend a round to emit a stinking cloud once a day, smashes down doors with alarming proficiency (50%)
Prismad	2	90' (30') (Flight)	7	1d4/1d4 (Crystal shards, range of 20')	450 Gp	Takes double damage from bludgeoning weapons due to brittleness, emits a soft glow equal to a torch
Nobrain	3	90' (30')	8	1d4/1d4 (Fists)	375 Gp	Bipedal, extremely Strong (Str 18) with hands capable of delicate tasks, mount will not operate independently
Handapotomus	2	60' (20')	8	1d4/1d4 (Grab/Pummel)	275 Gp	Grabs opponents and pins them if it hits with both attacks, has a climb wall chance of 65%
Verdantoid	3	90' (30')	7	1d6/1d6 (Vine Whip, Range 15')	325 Gp	Vine Whips can lash out to grab or entangle objects or creatures
Oozemount	2	60' (20')	8	1d6 (Engulf/crush)	325 Gp	Rider completely protected within the Oozemount, Oozemount can shape itself as the whims of its master's decree

# A HANDSOME HOARD OF SPECTACULAR STEEDS

Mount Name	HD (d8)	Movement	AC	Natural Attack	Price	Notes
Ragamound	3	90' (30')	6	1d8 (Stab/Slash/Slam)	450 Gp	25% chance of pulling a functioning mundane item from creatures body, must absorb discarded items to continue to "live"
Vassal-Orb	3	90' (30')	7	1d4 + 1 (Eye-beam, 30' Range)	425 Gp	Can levitate in place, even while resting or asleep
Jumbug	3	180' (60') (Small Leaps)	6	1d6 (slam)	425 Gp	Can make great leaps (300') but the rider must make a saving throw versus paralysis or fall off mid-jump.
Tetraslither	4	90' (30')	6	1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4 (Bite x4)	525 Gp	Cold-Blooded, each bite prompts a save versus poison, failure indicates an additional 1d6 points of damage
Diglum	3	90' (30') 180' (60') (Burrows)	7	1d6/1d6 (Claw/Claw)	?	Rider sits in a marsupial pouch on the belly of the beast and require no saddle, can tuck themselves inside for safe transport while Diglum is burrowing (Oxygen may be an issue)

## FURTHER ELABORATION FOR THE DISCERNING CUSTOMER ROKKO-DO

This long-limbed, flightless fowl can run across the landscape at an impressive land speed, and can even make great leaps if given the proper distance for a running start. The creature comes in multiple hues, and its said that one is very lucky indeed if he manages to collect one of each color.

## LARGZARD

A prodigiously sized reptilian quadruped may be literally cold-blooded, but I assure you that they make loyal companions in spite of it. With its strange feet, durable scales and tail for balance, the Largzard will pay back its cost in spades on treks through difficult terrain.

## WAR-PIG

The more daring among us deserve a fitting mount, do they not? This once wild boar can be yours for a modest sum, with all its ferocity at your beck and call. You can even let it go wild if you like, but trust me: its not for the faint of heart.

## BATTLE URSINE

Nothing quite says "I'm a madman and I will end you" quite like riding a massive war bear into battle. Once bonded to a Battle Ursine, it'll guard you like one of its cubs. For added fun, jab your opponents in the eye when they find themselves caught in your mount's deadly bear hug!

## SCUTTLE

Beetles are some of nature's most well defended insects and its only right sapient creatures should have an opportunity to make use of such an advantage. On top of being able to tuck itself into its own armored carapace for added defense, the Scuttler also flies and lives off a diet of fresh carrion. The

corpses of your fallen enemies will provide more than just bragging rights from here on out.

## BLITZHORN

Often mistaken for the mystical unicorn (Don't worry, we're getting to that one) the mighty rhinoceros is a rather fearsome creature, magical or not! Thanks to our special breeding and training program, our Blitzhorn provides you with that same power without the risk of being skewered yourself.

## BOONTA

Once a secluded race of yeti living in a mountain paradise, now a cowering mount ready to obey your every command. One of Cavalier Cecil's only bipedal offerings, the Boonta is just smart enough to understand you, but not clever enough even consider rebelling. Get one while supplies last!

## UNISCORNED

While normally unwilling to allow anyone but virtuous young maidens to ride them, our patented coercion techniques have made it so that anyone can ride the creature of their dreams. Re-dubbed the Uniscorned for trademarking purposes, this creature weeps with joy\* at the chance of being used as a steed. Its famed teleportation technique remains intact, though it it requires some prodding.

(\**Note: Tears or Pitiabie Weeping may or may not actually be brought on by joy.*)

## JUNJI

Waste not, want not! When a strange gas filled shark with spider legs comes rampaging through one's dealership, it'd be poor form not to try and benefit from the experience. Having dissected the original creature and discerned the cause of

## A HANDSOME HOARD OF SPECTACULAR STEEDS

its particular condition, we've managed to duplicate the experience that created it as to provide you, our customers with yet another fine steed. The Junji (named after the poor handler that died trying to subdue the original beast) are best for those warriors with strong stomachs, as it is as odorous as it is mighty.

### PRISMAD

As little bits of pure Order given shape, the crystal growths known as Prismad's were literally born to follow orders. They respond perfectly to any and all orders, though I'd be remiss not to remind you to be as clear and specific as possible. Fly along at reasonable speed! Rain crystal shards upon your foes! Avoid mace blows at all cost! (no seriously)

### NOBRAIN

Finding some did not enjoy the gentle glimmer of intelligence provided by the Boonta, we at Cavalier Cecil's decided to take a step further and magically engineer a strain of them with no actual head! The Nobrain is simply a hairless, genderless, well muscled body that you can ride around anywhere by directing it via its control stump, located conveniently between its shoulders. Please note that due to its lack of a brain, this mount will not act without a rider.

### HANDAPOTOMUS

Practiced Fleshwarpers tend to have lots of spare parts lying about and disposing of any potential resource is against our nature. So when hard work provided us with a pile of hands, you can guess what we did with them! Our Handapotomus is made of 100% authentic manos, and boy are those digits dexterous. Best of all, you don't need a saddle; this crazy critter holds on to you!

### VERDANTOID

But what about the vegetarians among us? No worries my green minded friend, we have something for you that is free of cruelty (to animals at least). The Verdantoid is a stylish assemblage of vines, leaves and other plant-stuff which is provided locomotion via a spare brain and some liberal application of magic. We use extra-long vines during its construction to provide maximum reach and versatility.

### OOZEMOUNT

Long ago, a competitor of mine told me that we'd never perfect a riding slime. He'd be eating his hat right now if a mysterious bear related incident hadn't cut his life so tragically short. Anyway, the Oozemount is a special breed of gelatinous goo that's not corrosive; in fact, a potential rider actually immerses themselves inside the slime which then responds to its master's very will. While odd even by our standards, this is easily one of the most popular and useful steeds we've ever offered. A snorkel is provided free of charge, but its recommended one purchases Cavalier Cecil's patented re-breather for maximum utility.

### RAGAMOUND

We talk a lot about recycling at our business and we mean it dammit. Originally the result of a magical misfire, we've since perfected a spell that permanently animates a pile of discarded trash into a functional mount! Shapes vary of course, and any non-broken material contained within the Ragamound is yours to keep after purchase (You'll have to fish it out on your own, of course). Be sure to remember to feed it new trash whenever possible, of course.

### VASSAL-ORB

If the mighty beholder is an Eye Tyrant, this one is his submissive second cousin. Bad for its place on the totem pole, good for all your flying beast of burden needs! While usually somewhat wishy-washy, Vassal-Orbs recognize their betters and can be easily cajoled into going wherever needed. Their single eye can fire an "Ouch-Ray" and their flight is fairly versatile even if accompanied by relentless whining.

### JUMBUG

What more to say about this fine specimen other than its an enormous Grasshopper that specializes in jumping, both for long and short distances. While very useful in any number of situations, one best be careful to not fall off the creature during one of its longer leaps.

### TETRASLITHER

If the Tetraslither looks like someone melted four snakes together and made them act in unison, that's because someone did. While not as fast as most of our inventory, this one does boast a rather blinding amount of attacks and a respectable poison dosage. Also, who doesn't loves snakes?

### DIGLUM

A strange, burrowing marsupial, the Diglum is another member of our proud "Saddle-less" line. Instead, one simply seats himself in the armored pouch located on the front of the creatures body. The Diglum is a powerful combatant and a strong digger. Pulling oneself entirely within the pouch will protect them from any harm while the creature is burrowing, but once again one of Cavalier Cecil's patented re-breathers is recommended if one wants to preform such a maneuver.

## ALSO FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

### CAVALIER CECIL'S PIGGY-BACK SADDLE

For those odd, bipedal mounts, we provide an alternative to the standard saddle and bridle. Easily attachable to the back of any such creature, its also provided with full stirrups to ensure safety and control for the user. (Cost: 65 GP)

### RE-BREATHER

Using esoteric vapor refurbishing technology, the Re-Breather allows you to continue breathing the same air for up to an hour before needing to go for a fresh gulp. Guaranteed to last in even the most dangerous conditions or your money back! (Cost: 275 Gp)

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a list of ten, twelve, or twenty creatures that hostile, ancient nature gods would use to defend their cultists and their territory from the advance of stone-based civilization. This is for dark urban fantasy, in a time of medieval sliding toward Renaissance, with a hefty dash of Gothic. Please make it system-neutral but evocative and creepy and primordial - thanks!*

# SERVANTS OF THE OLD NATURE GODS

By Humza Kazmi

## TWELVE NATURE-GOD CREATURES

### BAELR

A squat being, rippling with muscle. Hideously deformed and twisted features, with the majority of his head taken up by a single eye glowing red. Armed with wooden armor and a spear. Those that gaze into the single eye of Baelr may well perish, as the black rays of hatred emerging from it slay enemies of the woods. Baelr's eye also devastates croplands and farms; animals that look into it become feral, and can never be tamed again. Can call up towers of crystal from the earth. Baelr is vulnerable to mistletoe, as its powers of healing and growth counteract his eye of woe.

### THE BLEEDING HART

Wounded, injured... this beast limps around as easy prey for hunters. It dies quickly, with the nourishing meat feeding an entire family. It is so delicious that all other food, save the flesh of man, tastes and nourishes as ash in the mouth. Eaters quickly turn to cannibalism, fueled by nightmarish dreams of delicious mortal flesh. Eventually, when those who ate the Hart have been killed by their mortified fellows, the creature reforms. The tribes of men feared to eat easy prey and would often starve rather than risk the chance. Only being eaten by animals can harm the animal, but no wild animals would dream of harming it. At least until dogs were domesticated and loved their masters more than the call of the wild itself. Few Bleeding Harts remain.

### THE ELDEST

At the bottom of bogs, it slumbered through the ages. Preserved from the doom that befell its siblings solely by the malevolent wills of the wood gods, the Eldest still sleeps. It stretches to the length of a large rowboat, its chitinous shell serving as armor and skin both. The body is not dissimilar to a lobster's, save for the fact that the tail is tipped with an envenomed stinger. The eight eyes cluster about a fanged mouth, with an equal number of legs emerging from the sides of the "head", giving the Eldest the appearance of a crab grafted onto the body of a lobster. It has grown through the eons, and when it wakes its hunger will be tremendous indeed. When it awakens, the Eldest will prey upon fishers

and riverfolk, but will ultimately extend its search to the land and the plentiful prey there. (See the Wikipedia article on [Eurypterids](#), particularly *Megarachne*.)

### GREEN MEN

Pale figures standing seven feet tall or so, Green Men are humanoid figures covered in and composed entirely of leaves – with the exception of their piercing blue eyes. They go through four phases of life. The first is the youthful "foliate," or spring phase, where they roam forests and hills. At some time, each Green Man feels a sudden urge to head to a given location, given to them by their dark gods. Once they have reached their destination, they enter the "disgorging," or summer phase. They stand still, begin to set down roots, and spread their arms wide. At noon, they spew forth a stream of ivy and vines from their mouths, nurturing the plants as they dig into the rocks, or farmer's fields, or castle wall. As the given area becomes coated in foliage, the Green Man shifts to its autumn phase: the "bloodsucker." The vines extend further and further, growing thorns. New vines emerge from each of the Green Man's orifices, spreading and writhing, while the foliage inside the Green Man continues to spread out and colonize the area. As the Green Man weakens, the vines grow stronger, seeking out new nutrients, namely blood. Finally, once the Green Man's energy has been drained, it enters its winter phase and lies there, quiet, while the vines continue to grow and feed. Any humanoid victim stuck by the thorns may be implanted with a seed, which transforms them into a new Green Man. Green Men are vulnerable to the oak and its powers of protection.

### OTHCRAHB, EAGLE OF DISCORD

One of the ways that the Old Gods seek to strike at their foes of stone is to destroy their cohesion and unity. For this, they created the Eagle of Discord, a giant eagle with brilliant red and gold plumage. Any town that the Eagle of Discord flies over will have all babies born within the next year delivered to the wrong parents. So the butcher's red-headed child will be delivered to the dark-haired princess, and vice versa... even if the princess's child is born after the butcher's child. Othcrabh is vulnerable to hazel wood, for its properties of knowledge rend the eagle's confusion.

## SEED JANIZAR EARLY REINCARNATION FORMS

d8	Creature	ID-ing Mark	Mod. 1	Mod. 2	Special
1	Rat	Rat Tail	Improved AC (dodge)	Decreased size	Can cause disease (15% chance)
2	Badger	Badger Stripe	Improved AC (tough hide)	Big claws	Burrowing
3	Boar	Big tusks	Improved damage	Increased size	Charge attacks
4	Wolf	Wolf Muzzle	Improved Accuracy	Improved Dodge	Pack hunting
5	Wildcat	Tufts near jaw, cat ears	Improved Speed	Excellent climbing	Pounce Attacks
6	Bear	Brown fur	Improved damage	Big claws	Bear hugs
7	Fox	Fox tail	Improved AC (dodge)	Improved Speed	Can cast a 1st-level spell (15% chance)
8	Weasel	Elongated body	Improved AC (dodge)	More attacks	Can drain blood of enemies

### SEED JANIZARS

Warriors who have been captured and ritually slain; their spirits are reincarnated into other creatures, who are then made to fight until they die. The warrior's spirit grows to know only pain and hate. After three or four lifetimes of pain, they are reincarnated into:

d6	Final Reincarnated Form
1-2	Wooden bodies that have been carved for them
3-4	Half-plant bodies that have been grown like fruit in the center of sacred groves
5-6	Bodies of stone and dirt that shear off from nearby cliff faces

The Janizars are sent out to attack and harry foes of the cult, their souls housed in one of the bodies described in the following table. If they die, they are promptly reincarnated in a new, randomly selected body, but with a marker of their old one; so you might, for example, see a gigantic rat with a wolf's muzzle and boar's tusks coming to attack you, after you slew a boar and a wolf-boar. Seed Janizars are vulnerable to yew wood, because of its connections to vitality and long life.

### THE STONE SERPENT

Occasionally, masses of snakes huddled together, their saliva and venom mixing as they speak of their travels and foul deeds over the past year. As more serpents join the writhing mass, the venom and saliva solidifies, forming an adder stone. Normally, when a stone is discovered, the snakes have separated from the tangle and gone their separate ways; the remaining stone considered merely a beautiful precious stone. Yet if the wood gods desire a champion, the serpents remain in their convocation incubating this "egg" for two weeks. A serpent of white marble emerges from the stone. Its fangs carry the deadliest venom. At night, it glides among the forest trees, hunting, growing until it can swallow a man in one bite. Then, it sets forth on a mission of the wood gods. Rumor has it that the stone serpent may be induced to come forth from any adder stone, given the proper ritual.

### TREE OF SERPENTS

When an oak, apple, or other large tree grows near farmland, a town, or city, members of the cult sometimes turn it into a Tree of Serpents. A paste of apples, snake venom, birch wood, blood, and the powdered remains of a standing stone is applied to the tree at the dead of night, and dark runes carved into the bark. A Tree of Serpents is so named because its roots turn into venomous snakes. As they grow and spread, their poison blights land nearby. Crops wither and die. The roots sometimes emerge from the earth and drag unsuspecting victims underneath. As the tree feeds, its trunk grows a large mouth with the fangs of a great wyrm; the roots eventually drag victims to the tree's mouth to be devoured. If the tree would normally bear fruit, these resemble its victims' heads.

### THE WHITE BOUGH

Deep in the forest's heart, stands a tree like no other. It bears a bough of oak to the north, a bough of ash to the south, and a bough of thorn to the west. The eastern bough is white and stretches toward the heavens. Upon it are two lips; should a postulant come seeking guidance or information, the lips may move and provide guidance and aid, for the tree knows many things. Yet the supplicants do not see the tree hates folk of stone and steel, and seeks their undoing. With each answer it provides, the tree quietly pits sibling against sibling, parent against child, farmer against townsman. Anyone receiving advice three times shall serve the tree in all of its desires and stratagems. Being a tree itself, the White Bough is not vulnerable to any woods.

### WICKER MAN

Constructed during traditional festivals, these flaming effigies bring ruin to civilized realms, but they only animate if given a human sacrifice. The chosen victim must suffer the threefold death at the foot of the wicker man: at an equinox, the victim must be hung, poisoned, and dying from a wound. At the victim's last breath, the wicker man is ignited. With a successful ritual, the sacrifice's spirit is bound into the

wicker man and must obey the commands of the one who set it afire. The wicker man remains active for 2d6 days, until its sustaining, unholy fires finally consumes the soul and its energy fades. A burning wicker man is vulnerable to ash wood, with its connections to flame and the equinox.

### THE WOOD BOY

A nut-brown boy carved of wood, with gleaming blue eyes. Likes playing with other children: tag, hide and seek, etc. When other children lose a game or want to stop playing, he scratches and bites them, then devours them – either in part or whole. Then he skips off and starts playing with another group of children. As he devours more, he grows larger. Soon he starts playing with adults, laughing in a high-pitched voice as he rips off arms. The wood boy is vulnerable to elder wood, for its connections to the Otherworld sever the Wood Boy's wicked nature.

### WOSES

Hunters and woodsmen who wandered dark paths too many times saw things city dwellers had forgotten. Unable to cope with these glimpses of primal nature, they abandoned their past lives and began living within the woods, preying upon other humans. They travel the forests tirelessly, protecting vistas and standing stones that drove them mad. Woses strip off their clothes as remnants of decadent civilization and wander naked through the woods. They generally bear stone weapons. If a wose encounters another traveller, there is a 60% chance that they try to drive them towards the standing stones and open their mind to the dark glories of the wood gods.

*Thanks to Zzarchov Kowolski for the creepy and punful Bleeding Hart, eKate Kuznetsova for her awesomely horrifying suggestions, particularly on the Wooden Boy and the Seed Janizars, and to Erik "Pigeonpunchin' Man" Jensen for being an awesome Santicore Wrangler. - Humza*

**Inspirations and Sources:** Jack Shear's *Tales of the Grotesque and Dungeonesque*, particularly its "Pagan Outskirts" chapter; *The Wicker Man* (both film and novel); Corrinne Zemmour's "Tolkien in the Land of Arthur: the Old Forest episode from The Lord of the Rings" (for its analysis of why Tolkien's description of the Old Forest is creepy); Lucan's *Pharsalia* describing the sacred grove.

# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### PART 5

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*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a well detailed grimoire  
full of spells and a dark history.*

# THE HUNGRY GRIMOIRE

By Adam W.

**Author's Note:** Do not throw this book into a campaign without thought, as it may completely change the tone. If you're cool with the game slowly becoming filled with horror, then by all means, go ahead.

## THE HUNGRY GRIMOIRE

This thick, heavy book is bound in surprisingly soft leather of a pleasant light brown. On the front cover is the stylized image of an open mouth, stamped deep into the material, edged in the words "To Feast on Gods and Kings." The cover and pages are warm to the touch, but those handling it for any length of time find their hands cold and clammy as the tome draws the heat from their blood. When possessed by a new owner, the Grimoire initially appears full of blank pages, except for the first, which bears the line "It Writes In Blood."

Any time a large amount of fresh blood is spilled on the Grimoire, or within two feet, the liquid vanishes and a new spell appears on a page. This amount may be gained by killing and draining a rabbit-sized or larger creature. The effect only works with blood, so trying to get new spells by sacrificing a creature that runs on ichor or oil or some other weird substance will fail. If less blood than is required for a full spell is sacrificed, then faint, unreadable lines appear on the pages where words might be if given more ink. This effect fades after about a day.

Up to eight spells appear in the book through the above method. As each spell is gained by sacrificing blood to it, the Grimoire's owner discovers certain things changing about their own past. The following changes occur as each spell is added.

1. People whisper about unknown atrocities committed by the character in a distant land. Unfounded rumors spread that the character is a murderer who evaded justice. In a society where murder of a citizen is not really a big deal (Viking halls, barbarian wilds) then they murdered someone important. Never anyone specific, just "Killed her own chief" or something like that.
2. Substantiated rumors spread that the character killed a specific important person. Minor bounties may be posted for information.
3. Someone shows up and hunts the character mercilessly for killing their father/mother/brother/lover/crush/whatever. The character does not remember ever killing this person.

4. Two or three deluded people follow the character, believing one of the character's past actions to be a holy act, and that she is a god. They have been offering human sacrifice, and try to get the character to accept the sacrifices personally. If the character tries to make them stop, they declare her an imposter or false prophet and attack. This is the first level where there might be any sign of the Grimoire affecting events—the cultists call themselves "Children of the Hungry Book."

5. Character bears a strange resemblance to a terrifying serial killer who evaded justice in the area 5-6 years ago. If locals are pressed for further details, it becomes evident that this serial killer matches the character perfectly in every detail except murdering and ritually dismembering people. The killer is wanted dead, and the bounty is sizable. The serial killer's real name is unknown, but the title given to him is "The Feast."

6. Solid evidence links the character to heinous crimes—mass murders, ritual killings, creepy stuff like that. The locals recognize him/her and want blood. The local name for the character is the Man/Woman of the Book.

7. Character shares a strikingly similar name to a demon of madness and death worshipped by an infamous degenerate cult. Children of the Hungry Book again. The cult is now relatively few in number, but that is only a very recent development, after a purge led by noted local paladins several months back. The appearance, mannerisms, and some deeds attributed to the demon worshipped by the cult are identical to the character.

8. As 7, but the cult was never wiped out. The character's name/title is well known as one of the most feared and hated figures in this land. Every day, killings are done in her name. Paladins hunt her, to make her pay for her crimes. The Grimoire can only be destroyed by a blade forged in a single night under a moonless sky. Stabbed with such a blade, the book bursts into flame, likely severely burning the blade's wielder.

The following spells may be written in the tome, in the order they appear. These are written D&D 3.5 form.

*Vampiric Bite* (level 1): As part of this spell, the character bites exposed flesh on an enemy, draining 1d4 hit points and gaining 1d4 hit points. To do this, the character must make a successful touch attack.

*Barbed Flesh* (level 2): Caster's skin becomes tough and grows barbs. AC is increased by 4 for the duration of the spell, and anyone grappling with them takes 1d4 damage. Duration is a round per caster level.

*Animate Dead* (level 4): As in the Player's Handbook. Quick summary: create skeletons and/or zombies.

*Magic Jar* (level 5): As in the Player's Handbook. Quick summary: Lets you possess another creature.

*Burst* (level 6): Single target bursts open, throwing blood and entrails everywhere. Deals 1d6 damage per caster level as the body ruptures. Even if this spell does not kill them, the target loses their next turn as they recover.

*Finger of Death* (level 7): As in the Player's Handbook. Quick summary: Kills one creature by poking them.

*All Friends Fade* (level 8): All allies of single target make a Will save, DC 25. Failure means that all of the target's allies view them as hostile, and will try to kill them without remorse or hesitation. Range is line-of-sight.

*Kill Self* (level 0): Character dies in a way that instantly destroys his body. He is forever enshrined in the mythos of the world as a terrible demon, with human sacrifice made every day by the cult that spreads across the land, blotting out all that is good and just. *The Hungry Grimoire* becomes empty once more.



May the Core be With You....

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me 1d? Magical Keys (preferably, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, or 20... but, I would take more, or a table for a weird die like a 24... 30 would be like mana from heaven).*

*If any of them involved the following themes, that would be extra awesome: An Unnaturally Long Winter, A Great Old Wyrms of a White Dragon, Body-Snatching Were-Rats, Ryges.*

*And, at least one should be an ancient artifact of great power.*

# 30 MAGICAL KEYS!

By Jonas M.

Sir,

I here present catalogue of the 30 lost magical keys as researched by your most humble and obedient servant and sage of renown

Üsarbat the Learned.

## 30 MAGICAL KEYS

### 1. WOLFSHEAD

This silver key decorated with wolf's head motif hangs on belt of oldest dwarven king who is guarded by fanatic berserker guard thousand strong and dozen ancestral spirits. It unlocks a chain binding an entity that if unleashed would threaten to devour the sun. Wolfshead key is a terrible burden to bear and it gnaws on very soul of it's owner through bitter centuries of dwarven life.

### 2. TAIL OF THE WHITE WORM

Scale of a great old wyrm of the north carved with rune of hunt, its holder always knows where the dragon is, and if concentrating for a minute its holder can see through the dragon's eyes for as long as she can hold breath, though side-effect is that the dragon can of that moment forward see through her eyes and even use certain powers of its terrible gaze that only require it to see its victim. Woe to those who open themselves to the dragon.

### 3. BLUE CHALK

Prince of Rats and his seven sons own each a piece of blue chalk stolen out vaults of gods. The chalk can be used to trace a shape of door and a secret rune of opening on any wall and she who draws the door can step through it like there is no wall at all.

### 4. FIRST KEY OF SPRING

This ancient bronze dagger must be used before others to unlock a heart of white stag on altar of stone. The dagger shines with blue flame if any evil creature approaches within 50' of the wielder.

### 5. SECOND KEY OF SPRING

Second key of spring is a sacrificial pyre made of wood collected from branches of the World Tree that lightning has severed and the sacrificial stag must be placed on it. These branches are connected to World Tree, a druid can use them to move through any tree to any other tree in the world on nights of full moon.

### 6. THIRD KEY OF SPRING

In a hidden temple of the Sun, deep beneath the dark earth, lies the 3rd Key, a fire kept burning continually since dawn of time. It's an actual piece of the Sun the Sun God left during his journey through the Underworld. This primordial flame can light fires that burn absolutely anything to ash, even such things that do not burn. A priest of Sun God can use this flame to safely move through to any other fire.

### 7. FOURTH KEY OF SPRING

This ancient elven vial is filled with drops of water from the first rain of creation. Sprinkled on ashes of the sacrificial fire prepared by other keys, it ends any winter and restarts turning of seasons and the white stag is reborn out of ashes. A drop of these waters can restore life to anything else burned to ashes.

### 8. TONGUE OF FROST

This wand-like magically preserved object looks like a bifurcated serpent tongue of great proportion, which has been enchanted to the hardness and rigidity of a steel bar. It's very cold to touch and cannot be handled comfortably without thick gloves. If a secret command word (lost to history of man) is known and spoken in draconic, the holder gains access to spells and breath weapon abilities of a white dragon in the age category of great old wyrm.

When these powers are used, a mute great old wyrm awakens from a deep slumber under the polar glaciers and immediately starts its long journey south - to reclaim its tongue and powers. According to legend, the tongue was originally snatched from the dragon's mouth by Prince of All Rats. After any power is used the dragon knows where the wand is. The wand's powers stop working when the dragon gets within one mile. If the dragon gets hold of the wand it can simply press the wand back to its mouth, restoring its tongue, speech, and powers taken from it. The wyrm will then utter words that darken the sky, blot out sun, and plunge the world into winter ended by Four Keys of Spring.

## 9. KEY OF LIFE

To bring one back from the dead requires a journey to the underworld. Using this black iron key on any locked door opens a gateway to Underworld. If one dares to walk down the dusty gray stairs spiraling down in to darkness, she may fetch anyone lost to death. There are two risks: of not coming back, and that some one or thing else slips into world of living while the gateway is open.

## 10. KEY OF ICE

This magical rune of power has been taught only to disciples of the White Wyrms, by etching to its surface of any icy obstruction like wall of glacier or ice over frozen lake it enables passing through the ice as it cracks open as far as the rune scribe wishes.

## 11. RABBIT'S FOOT KEY

This simple skeleton key is part of old and dusty set of thieves tools, it has rabbit's foot attached to it by chain. Possessing the key gives the owner forewarning if he has not succeeded in disarming a trap. The rabbit's foot is irrelevant and just something its first owner Magnus the Gnome attached to it on a fancy.

## 12. TRUSTY KEY

This enchanted key comes paired with a lock and cannot be picked by mundane means, once locked it can only be opened by the enchanted key or magic.

## 13. SECRET TUNNEL ACCESS KEYS

Magical keys of the rat people come in many shapes and sizes, and all grant access to rat holes and tunnels. Using one shrinks the key holder to the size of ordinary rat when entering and running around in rat holes, but not anywhere else. Every were-rat thief knows what the markings outside of rat holes mean; what might look like teeth marks to others are actually old runes of the rats, conveying information like "Beware cats!" "Food cellar well stocked," "Wizard with aggressive familiar," etc.

## 14. MASTER SKELETON KEY

This simple iron key was stolen from the gods; using or even possessing it risks divine wrath. It can open any lock and bypass every magical ward. Those with sufficient esoteric knowledge can use it in place of other magical keys and do things that will certainly get attention of at least divine servants or petty deities.

## 15. KEYS TO PEARLY GATES

Many believe burying these keys with a dead sinner allows her to slip undetected into heaven. Most are items crafted according to folk belief, but actual keys do exist and might enable a master thief to pull off one final, audacious crime. Or, even better if one has access to resurrection magic, to do the deadly deed and return to tell the tale. According

to his boasts, Jisakar the Bold has done just this: stealing peaches of immortality and wooing angels.

## 16. MASTER KEY OF ESCAPE

This simple copper key is engraved with seven runes and glyph of the rat. It can never be detected by bare eyes, even if the owner were naked with the key from his neck. Merely possessing it allows the owner to open any chains that hold him.

## 17. KEY TO HAPPINESS

This plain, worn-looking key carries a great boon, given to the finder if she chooses to forever end her adventuring days, in favor of leading a more fulfilling life somewhere else. This is an actual magic item, not a metaphor on dungeoneering lifestyle. Some dungeon crawlers are immune to the key's promise.

## 18. STONEROAD KEYS

Shaped like a miniature millstone with dwarven runes, this amulet is a key to stoneroads: enchanted pathways through mountains. Those holding the key can pass through solid rock, walking these paths as though they were actual tunnels. Some stoneroads are in bad shape, while xorn and earth elementals are found on others.

## 19. QUIVERING KEY

This key of tarnished silver trembles when magic is near. It may be used to break magical wards but the key's owner must be a wizard of comparable power to the ward caster; the key will snap and lose its enchantment in the process.

## 20. KEY TO SUCCESS

When spun, this golden key has a 50-50 chance of pointing at the largest amount of gold or most dangerous monster within 100 yards. The special power can be used 3x/day; with the proper command words an owner can choose what it points toward.

## 21. WARDROPE KEY

This plain iron key opens through any lockable container to extra-dimensional space through which any non-magical clothes desired can be pulled. Unknown wizard who built the extra-dimensional pocket universe of the closet unfortunately was shoddy craftsman among many other things and left it's back open so it actually opens to rather strange alternate world of evil witches, wise children and talking lions where time flows differently, going to the closet is ill-advised.

## 22. BONE KEY

This necromantic item can be used only on moonless nights and in open air. It is pushed into the ear of the corpse and turned to unlock its jaws, forcing the dead person to answer one question. There is a 50-50 chance that the actual dead person answers or that a minor demon intercepts the question and answers according to its own wishes.

### 23. RATSTOOTH

The teeth of this weird, filthy bone key are actual rat teeth. How many of these vile magic items actually exist is not known. Once per night, an owner can touch it to a sleeping victim and polymorph him into a rat and then assume his form.

### 24. TRUE FORM KEY

Touching a polymorphed or shapechanged person, animal, or object with this electrum key returns the target to its original shape. A lycanthrope immediately resumes its man or beast shape.

### 25. TWIN KEYS

These simple copper keys are magically connected, and can link spaces over vast distances, space, or time. When one key opens a door (it fits any lock), it does not access space usually beyond the door, but to any door opened with a second key at the same time.

### 26. WINDUP KEY

This simple golden key can be inserted into any statue or carved image of people or animals, and wound, like a clock. The statue animates like a golem and does the holder's bidding. Duration depends on the key's remaining enchantment. There is a chance the golem goes berserk.

### 27. STORAGE KEY

A simple carved wooden key tied by enchantment to one particular wooden chest. Opening any other storage container with this key accesses the original wooden chest, at any distance.

### 28. KEY OF TIME

By peering into this four-dimensional, apparently cubical, crystal object, the user can see random runic alphabets displayed on the multi-faceted inner surfaces. These can tell the future. Powerful mages can use the key to travel through time; there are no limits, but the mage ages in reverse and remembers things that haven't yet happened (or might happen). His memories of past events are uncertain - like the future once was. In effect, he travels through time directly opposite way to everyone else.

### 29. KEY OF THOUGHT

This black feather unlocks understanding not available to mere mortals; when placed behind the ear, the owner gets truthful answers on the likely outcome of any course of action.

### 30. KEY OF MEMORY

Placing this black feather behind the ear allows the owner access to collective memory; he can remember any one thing that any living being still remembers. A crafty wizard can use it in reverse, replacing one memory of one event with a false one of his own making - that will be remembered by everyone. Those abusing this power risk a horrible death: being pecked to death by two unstoppable magical ravens.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a weird magic item, preferably one which isn't a typical treasure, armor or weapon, and one which has some off the beaten path use.*

# THE TREMBLING YEWHEART

By Jeremy Kostiew

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## MAGIC ITEM: THE TREMBLING YEWHEART

A small, warm, almost perfectly spherical burl of unnaturally sleek wood, marked with a single knot at its center. Seemingly benign, the Yewheart thrums with its signature beat when in the presence of affection. The stronger and nearer the adulation, the more ferocious the wooden thump.

But there is a murkier aspect of the vascular knot. Not easy wounded, it takes a great effort to mar the oaken organ, and for good reason. Should the Yewheart crack or sunder in the presence of love in any of its forms, the beating will perish and bring with it that devotion. Love will evaporate like rainwater in the summer sun.

But all is not lost. That infatuation will live on should the Yewheart be mended, and if sufficient a craftsman cannot be found, passion can be born again through the usual methods: song and sweets and sweetness. Though it will be a new love, and nothing like the old.

What's more, the Yewheart can only be grown in the tree where a dryad sleeps, and to take it insures that forest nymph will never find her own heart's delight.



Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me some new ideas for ways of using music in the game: spells that use music, traps that use music or are integrated into music, objects that react to music, or even musical races--surprise me!

Thanks,

Duncan Young

# THE INSTRUMENTS OF TINTINABULA

By Ash Haji

"Listen, Peggio. We have visitors. Tidy the shop! Can't you hear their leitmotifs? They seek help!"

## NEW BARDIC ABILITY: *Hear Leitmotif*

High level users of magical music can listen to the themes and background musics that accompany folk of high destiny. These tones, timbres, and tempo, which only the maestri can hear, can give clues as to the urgency, danger, or other qualities of fate that surround them.

"Welcome to the Hidden Realm of Tintinnabula! I am Maestro Day-of-Pleasant-Breezes." The bird-headed figure gestured welcomingly.

"Adventurers, yes? Seeking song-spells, or instruments of magical power, perchance? Please come into the shop, I have several new arrivals!"

## THE STRANGE INSTRUMENTS OF TINTINNABULA

(Roll once for each column)

1d6	Instrument Type	Condition	Unusual Features
1	Struck: Drum, Chime, Bell...	New / Excellent	Size
2	Plucked: Harp, Lute, Guitar ...	Well Looked After	Behavior
3	Bowed: Fiddle, Violin ...	Worn, But Usable	Materials
4	Puffed: Trumpet, Horn ...	Needs Work	Magics
5	Blown: Flute, Pipes ...	Minor Damage	History
6	Keyboard: Accordion, Harpsichord ....	Major Damage	Roll Twice More

## INSTRUMENT FEATURES

(Roll for each column)

1d6	Size	Behavior	Materials	Magics	History
1	Pixie	Self-Playing	Precious Metals	Trapped	Legendary
2	Halfling	Anyone Can Play As Expert	Organic: Bones, Skulls, Sinews...	Combo: Roll Again Twice	Hunted By Previous Owner
3	Elf	Hypnotic / Addictive	Elemental: Fire, Ice, Mist...	Summoning	Named
4	Human	Vampiric / Possessed	Fragile: Glass, Ivory, Flowers	Affects Minds	Unique And Collectable
5	Ogre	Sentient	Decorated With Runes	Changes Reality	From Exotic Land / Plane
6	Giant	Mission / Purpose	Glowing / Vibrating	Life, Death And Healing	Mysterious

# THE INSTRUMENTS OF TINTINABULA

*“Of course, mostly you have to provide the spellsongs yourselves. Nay, you don’t need to be a bard - here, let me test you... oh, by my beak and feathers! You’re suffering from Ohrwurms!”*

## NEW MONSTER: *Ohrwurm, or Piper’s Maggot*

A mind-affecting magical parasite, these semi-corporeal entities use catchy fragments of music to infect musically susceptible hosts. There, they feed on the innate musical talent to create new offspring, effectively “composing” new jingles to insert themselves into the brains of the unwary. Those listeners who fail to resist are distracted, confused and unable to use any music-based skills or abilities, and in the worst cases, suffer permanent loss of musical ability or even death.

3d6	Musical Aptitude	Bardic Potential	Instrument Use	Ohrwurm Duration
3	Tone-Deaf	No Potential	Unusable	Immune
4-5	Dull	Can Learn One Spellsong	Halved	1D6 Rounds
6-8	Basic	Can Learn Two Spellsongs	Reduced	1D6 Hours
9-12	Average	Can Learn One Spellsong Per Level	Standard	1D6 Days
13-15	Musical	Can Learn Many Spellsongs	Enhanced	Ongoing Recurrence
16-17	Talented	Can Compose Spellsongs In Spare Time	Doubled	Permanent
18	Perfect Pitch	Can Improvise New Spellsongs As Needed	Tripled	Escalating And Deadly

*“Quick, bring the poor afflicted one into the Cacophony Room! I hope you have brought much gold, or original tunes, or performances to store in the Tintinnabulan crystal library? The treatment is expensive.”*

## NEW SPELL: *Cacophony*

This spell varies by level. High level versions create areas filled with strange and discordant noises which prevent, nullify, and dispel any musical magic effect, or spellsong. Lower level versions create temporary areas where this Cacophony reigns.

*“Relax, brave adventurers. Here is your recovered companion. My trained tone-deaf colleagues have extracted the Ohrwurm and imprisoned it in this music-box. You were lucky, a few more days and it would have spawned! Farewell, and remember to bring back any magical artifacts you find on your travels!”*

*“Peggio, they are gone. Find the messaging zither. Lord Grimclaw needs a new trap for his Museum of Death, I recall. A pretty little music box... what thief could resist?”*

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a selection of 10-30 potent potables found at the local tavern, along with their effect on the imbiber.*

# POTENT POTABLES

By James

*from Pilgrim's Guide to Zeitgeist*

## POTENT POTABLES, or "Give me the good stuff, Barkeep!"

Sometimes you need that special bottle in your game, whether it's that expensive bottle on the top shelf of the local adventurers' watering-hole or the dusty bottle found in a long abandoned cellar, so I have compiled a list of 24 "special bottles."

In some instances the duration of the beneficial and harmful effects are listed in the description, for the others I suggest a potency rolled on 1d4:

### VARIABLE POTENCY TABLE

d4	Potency
1	Weak brew; primary effects last just a few rounds
2	Moderate brew; effects last 3d20 minutes until cleared from the system
3	Strong brew; primary effects last 1d6+1 hours
4	Finest vintage; 2d6 Hours of the brew coursing through your system

\***Please note:** in some cases, the after-effects will be delayed and/or lengthy.

### WHITE WINES

#### RIESLING OF THE NORTH WIND

This cool Riesling comes in a fragile thin blue bottle that seems cold to the touch at all times. While under the effects of this wine a person can "breathe" (cone effect) a gust of the north wind every third round; this strong, cold wind has the ability to knock people prone (save) and can do 1d12 points of cold damage. While under its effects the imbiber gives off a cold vapor-like effect and his hair turns blue. There is also a (10-25%) chance that any metal he uses becomes brittle and breaks if damaged.

#### BUMBLER'S BANE CHARDONNAY

This full-flavored chardonnay is bottled in a nondescript gallon jug. It has both an invigorating and numbing effect; upon finishing the bottle, the drinker can spot hidden, detect secret doors, and find traps on a 5 in 6 roll. While intoxicated by this chardonnay, the imbiber's Dexterity/Agility is halved and she always acts last in combat due to her distraction.



This wine is often given to henchmen, who are then set loose to flush out the dungeon of its dangers while the rest of the party follows at a safe distance, tracking the drinker by the loud noises of their stumbling around.

#### KATZENJAMMER GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Favored by rakasta assassins, this spicy summer wine is bottled in sleek opaque tubes and lets off the loud wail of an angry cat when opened. It gives the drinker improved initiative, night vision, and excellent grace and balance while climbing, sprinting, or leaping, but only works at night. For 1d8 days, the imbiber has the strong urge to nap in bright sunshine (save) at inopportune times and will crave salmon and warm cream.

#### SOLITUDES PINOT GRIGIO

This light crisp pinot grigio demands to be consumed alone and savored. After drinking, the imbiber "blinks" away from any close contact (5 feet) of a person or attack, appearing up to 60 feet away in a random safe location. The bottle itself requires a Dexterity/Agility check to grasp and always appears in a different location each round unless held firmly, especially if placed inside of something like a backpack. It will never be in the same place twice. There is a chance (10-45%) that the drinker wakes after the effects have worn off 10-30 miles away in an awkward position or place with the empty bottle in hand, and the strong smell of wildflowers about them.

**BONE SEEKERS BLANC**

Often consumed by mortuary clerics looking for a graveyard to defile or sanctify, this sauvignon blanc in a stoppered bone bottle allows the drinker to see an aura around any bones, graves, or undead, seeing them with a bright white light even buried in the ground or behind stone walls. Unfortunately, the undead also see the drinker like a beacon in the night and target the person over any other target, often traveling for days and miles even after the effects have worn off. Sometimes a sanctuary spell or cleansing ritual will negate this later effect.

**VOICE OF SILENCE CHENIN BLANC**

This simple chenin blanc bottled in a waxed paper tube inscribed with musical notes and gibberish scribbles allows the drinker to communicate telepathically over great distances of time and space, comprehend most tongues, and detect motive and falsehoods. After any communication of this nature for 1d6 days the Imbiber suffers from a mind-robbing madness if not in an area of complete silence, as well as -3 Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma (save lessens effects).

**RED WINES**

**RAT CATCHERS' LAMENT MERLOT**

This muddy merlot in a grey fur wineskin repels vermin and swarms away from the drinker for 1d4 days after drinking but attracts sludges, slimes, and fungal creatures wishing to parlay with and aid the imbiber until the effects wear off-- then they become hostile. Drinker may spit up the odd rat tail or beetle if engaged in any important diplomacy (save vs Charisma).

**SPIRIT OF NOIR '42**

This bottle of spicy pinot noir requires a fear save to even open the bottle and drink due to the shifting faces visible in the haziness of the clear bottle; it is normally found in a red velvet bag.

Upon drinking the imbiber will enter into a trance-like state and be able to see and communicate with the spirit world around them. This trance will last 3d20 minutes; upon exiting the trance for 1d8 days they will be visited by mischievous but benign spirits whispering rumors in their ear (false and true) and will suffer terror on any failed saves they might need to make.

**STARRY NIGHT SHIRAZ**

This round blue bottle has no stopper and will require breaking to open and drink; it is filled with a bubbling shiraz and the chopped-off end of a strange tentacle (+1 Wisdom or Intelligence permanently if tentacle eaten) and allows the drinker to read the thoughts of others for 2d12 hours, but they will be subject to hourly random quirks during the effects (save negates):

**RANDOM QUIRK TABLE**

d6	Quirks
1	Maniacal Laughter
2	Uncontrollable Sobs And Tears
3	Unstoppable Rage And Bloodlust
4	Darkness Spell Centered On Drinker For 250 Feet
5	Continual Light Centered On Drinker
6	Otherworldly Possession

**HARLOT'S DELIGHT TEMPRANILLO**

This fruity tempranillo in a stoppered square bottle is favored by Female Orc Courtesans and grants its imbiber +5 charisma/seduction and offers a paralyzing unarmed attack (save), but after its effects wear off the imbiber's Constitution and Strength are halved for 1d4 days (*cure poison* negates).

**CHIANTI VITAE**

This straw-covered bottle of chianti can be used to view the life essence of those around the imbiber, showing a green glow aura for healthy life forms and a red glow aura for the dead and undead. Any damage dealt to lifeforms being viewed in this way within 50 feet gives temporary hit points to the imbiber via a visible-to-all hazy purple tendril of smoke that moves slowly to the drinker from the wounded party members (receives next round). While under the effects the imbiber takes double damage from any attacks but cannot be surprised by animate objects or humanoids. This potent wine will only last 3d6 minutes in a drinker's system before it wears off and any temporary hit points are lost. Intelligence save to not "follow" a lifeform aura.

**BEER AND ALES**

**SANCTUM WEIZEN**

This weiss with a burnt orange and coriander aftertaste is often found in a chipped stone crock stoppered with a plug of waxed leather. Any successful ranged attacks at the drinker will force a re-roll (second hit will hit). Any missed ranged attacks at imbiber have a 50 to 70% of striking someone else--a friend or foe that is nearby. Any ranged attacks made by drinker will be treated as a fumble.

**IMPERIAL MUSHROOM STOUT**

This heady full-flavored mushroom stout in a mushroom shaped stone bottle negates the need to eat or drink for 1d8 days and gives the imbiber full protection from cold or poison for a full day.

During the next 1d8 days, the drinker will give-off a strong aroma that will penalize sneaking and Charisma and attract randomly:

**CREATURES ATTRACTED BY THE STOUT**

d6	Creatures
1	A tribe of 1-6 friendly flying monkeys that will pickpocket the party when they leave after a few hours
2	A group of 1d4 dryads wishing to kill the drinker and submerge their roots in his corpse to gain the drinker's powers
3	A group of 1-6 fat halflings looking for the secret of the "recipe" to the stout
4	A medusa looking for a lover
5	1d20 zombies
6	A party of mushroom men 1d8 wanting to know why the imbiber drank their relative's sarcophagus

**DREAMERS GRUIT**

This heavily herbed gruit ale is enclosed in a map decorated skull-shaped bottle enclosed inside of a puzzle box (pick locks to open, 35% chance of breaking). Upon drinking, when next the imbiber sleeps they will dream of maps and have an uncanny knowledge of a single level of any nearby dungeon or labyrinth until they sleep again (let them see an unkeyed map). Any maps drawn of these dreams will only be 75% accurate. Unknown to the drinker at this time, a large tribe of minotaurs will seek revenge and begin to hunt the drinker's blood relatives relentlessly (unending groups) for 1d4 years. They may be appeased by the drinker building them a maze.

**LUCKY LAMBIC**

The drinker of this dust-covered bottle of framboise lambic will receive 1d6 (random each time) to all attacks, saves, and luck rolls for 3d4 days; the rest of the party takes -1 to all rolls for the same amount of time (individuals may "shake off" the bad luck with a save, but it will transfer to another party member and stack.) Any henchmen will try to take and drink this, as they just know it's tasty and in their best interests. The bottle is permanently unbreakable if reused.

**HIVE KEEPS DRAUGHT HONEY BLACK ALE**

This curious small golden bottle in the shape of an insect contains a sweet dark ale that allows the imbiber to communicate and locate insects of all types; during its effects all ranged attacks give a bonus of 1d4 poisoned attacks (save) for several 1d12 days after drinking. Insects will buzz and crawl around the drinker giving minuses to Charisma if applicable and making sneaking hard due to noise from the insects. The empty bottle is considered fine art to collector.

**HATTRICKS KVASS**

This kvass prepared from a magically molded black rye infuses the imbiber with the knowledge to cast 1d8 first-level

illusionist spells once for each spell; they may attempt to scribe the spells on a scroll or in a book, but whatever they do write on a scroll will be another random first-level illusionist spell. These spells can be held in their head until they are cast or scribed, but once they have cast or scribed all the spells in their head they will polymorph into a mundane non-talking or casting animal:

1d8	Animal
1	white rabbit
2	blue pig
3	orange frog
4	purple dove
5	green sheep
6	pink pony
7	yellow dog
8	black flamingo for 1d6 x 1d12 days (remove curse negates)

**CORDIALS, FORTIFIED WINES AND DISTILLED SPIRITS**

**TEARS OF THE MOON**

Rustically-bottled in a silver-lidded canning jar, this high-proof spirit allows the drinker to see a faint aura around any lycanthropes that grows brighter until the next full moon. After drinking there is a 1 in 6 chance of becoming an exotic lycanthrope yourself (something like penguin, monkey, zebra, elephant, lobster, porcupine, hyena, parrot) to be discovered on the full moon. If used as a flaming molotov, it burns with a green blue flame for 3d8 points of damage for 10 seconds before going out and will cause anything damaged by it to become undead 1d6 rounds after death. They will only come back to life for 1d4 hours (bottle highly volatile to carry around).

**THE JWELED DROP METHEGLIN**

Glittering gems (5d10 of 1d10 value) swirl around in this clear bottle of sticky-sweet metheglin. Upon drinking, the imbiber will be able to see the bright aura of gems and magical items through up to 15 feet of solid rock, walls, and dirt. After the effects wear off, the imbiber will be blind for 1d4 hours and they will have the knowledge that any gems from the bottle will cure 1d3 damage each if swallowed for up 6 days after the bottle is drained.

**THE TWO LOVERS KRUPNIKA**

Hot green and red peppers float around in this spicy, sweet krupnika in a sticky, clear cylinder with a twist-off wooden top decorated with a carving of embraced two lovers. Opening will summon either a green friendly/charismatic or red angry/spiteful (50% either) ghost/ectoplasmic entity ((male or female); upon drinking it will summon the other

spirit. If both spirits manifest at the same time they will loudly argue with each other until compelled otherwise by the party. If convinced they will reveal the location of a secret place and or the location of some special treasure. After 1d4 hours drinker will be able to belch up (1) 6d6 *fireball* over the course of the next day. Before they have released the *fireball*, any damage to them will cause it to go off from the wound causing no damage to them but to all around within 30 feet

#### *VINTNERS LAUGHTER FORTIFIED MADEIRA*

This is a large wooden cask of madeira (100 pounds or more) with a serving for 2d20 people. The drinkers will *mass polymorph* (save negates) as per the spell into random revelling beasts or creatures (all random); once opened the cask contents will revert to a normal madeira spoiled with age within an hour. The polymorph will only last 1d6 hours and drinkers will take 1 HD of damage per level when the effects wear off (save halves). Cask is marked with the face of Bacchus in green ink and the words "NUNC EST BIBENDUM" in large letters.

#### *MELOMEL OF THE WILD HUNT*

Bottled in gourds and usually found in groups of 1d6 gourds, this red glowing mead-like drink allows the imbiber to see light trails behind animals and humanoids and track them at night as easy as a ranger. Effects will last until daybreak. This has no effect during the day. While intoxicated by the melomel, the drinker's eyes will give-off a red, flickering glow that will frighten children and domestic livestock. There is a chance that the real wild hunt will join in any tracking the party has planned while drinking this melomel 20-35%. Weak willed characters might be swept up in the wild hunt if they do appear and be lost for weeks, but will return with random ranger skills.

#### *DARKVINE PORT*

A port wine in a amber glass bottle that seems to give off a small candle flame of light from inside. The imbiber immediately assumes a shadow form for 3d20 minutes, but any light source over a candle will burn them for 1d8 a round and temporarily blind them. The shadow form is insubstantial and can not grasp objects, make sounds, cast spells, or do physical damage. The shadow form gives off the strong smell of garlic or onions, but is completely silent while moving.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a Spelljammer ship design based upon felines.*

*Thanks,*

*Emily Vitori*

# THE OCELOT!

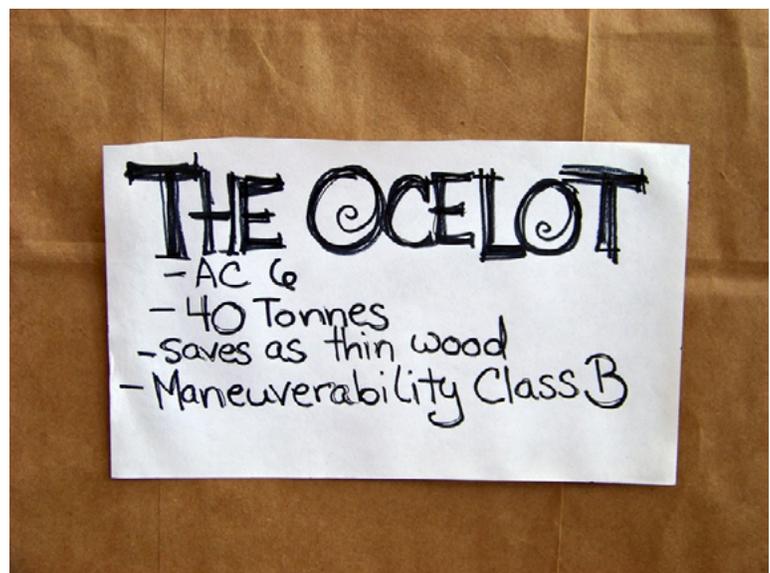
By Shoe the Pixie

## THE OCELOT



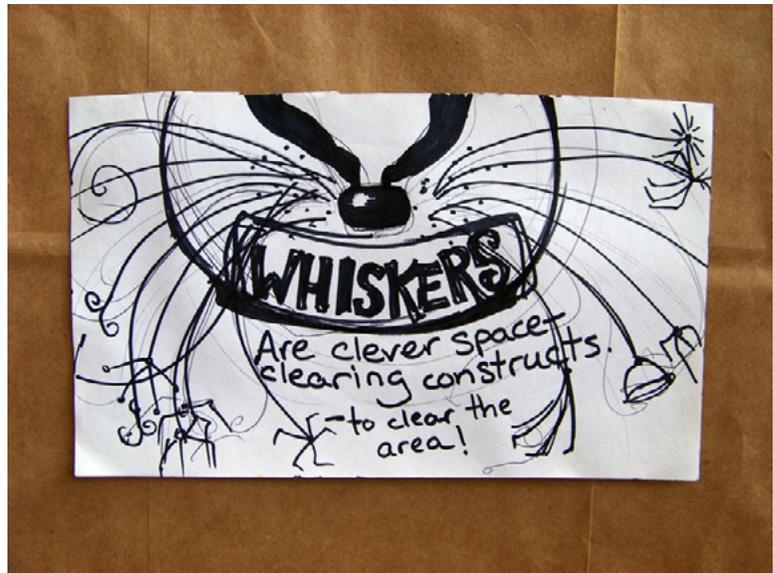
### VITAL STATISTICS

- AC 4
- 40 Tonnes
- Saves as Thin Wood
- Maneuverability Class B
- Crew 5-14



The *Ocelot* is a scavenging ship! It is used to hover over various sites and pick over the place for useful parts, and salvage those things. It can also be used as a Search & Rescue ship, if need be. It is a closed ship, with many useful additions for the clever scavenger or pirate.

The **Whiskers** are long, delicate arms, that feel about and test conditions and take measurements. They can also handle things, and pick up smaller pieces of salvage.



## THERE ARE THREE DECKS

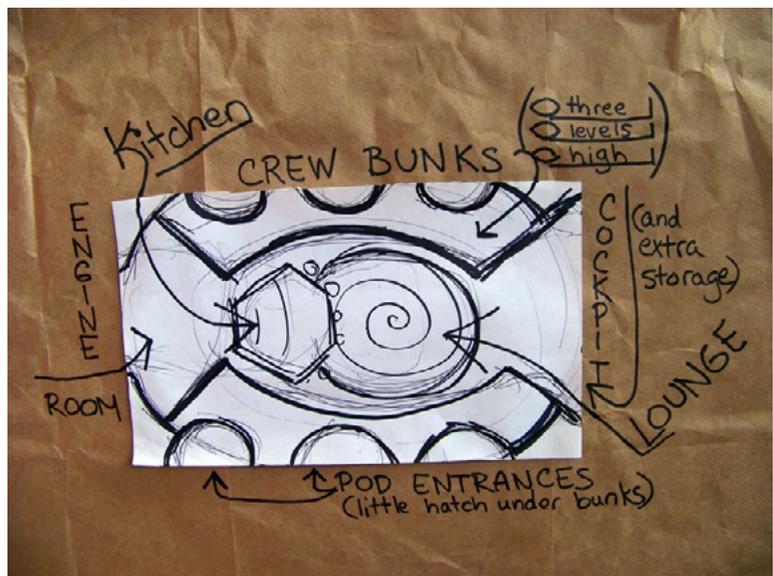
The **Top Deck** is a room for small salvage, lined with dozens of shelves, some holding drawers or other containers.

The **Middle Deck** holds the engine room and other controls toward the back, living quarters in the middle, and connects in front to the head: that is, the cockpit. The cockpit has all the steering and comms equipment, all the controls, and passages to the other parts of the ship.

The **Living Quarters** are quite simple: there is a tiny kitchen, and a wide-open lounge area with hooks on the floor for bolting in furniture, if so desired. There are bunks along the sides of the ship that curve along with the walls; these are three layers deep. Under the bunks are little hatches, where the crew can slide into the Feet (see below).

The bottom floor of the cockpit lowers down, creating the **Mouth** - a huge, wide hatch for loading big things. It has rollers and a powered ramp, for helping to get things into the lower cargo hold.

Big things go on the **Lower Deck**! This is just a huge wide area for storing shipping containers, vehicles, scrap metal, and other large salvage. It has reversed gravity, so things can be stored on the flat 'floor' and be piled high into the huge, round belly of the catship.



The **Ears** are communication dishes, with all the antennae and sensors inside them.



The **Eyes** are huge searchlights, and are very very bright.



The **Feet** are little observation pods! They are round globes made of very very strong glass-like material, and some can be built with lenses to enlarge the viewing area. It's a good way to get up close and personal, but be protected from the elements as well.



Finally, the **Tail**. The Ocelot's tail is a mag-grapple sort of thing, two parts that can be switched. One is a huge grappling hook, the other is a very powerful magnet. Either end is for grasping large salvage, and has sophisticated controls so it can swing things right up into the Mouth.



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a table or descriptions of new inherently magical materials used in the production of magical items. A slightly science fantasy feel would be nice but is not necessary. Some idea of the properties of each material and how it is used would make it far more interesting.*

*Thanks,*

*Gus L. (from [dungeonofsigns.blogspot.com](http://dungeonofsigns.blogspot.com))*

# MAGICAL MATERIALS

By Bill A.

from [the.crown.and.the.ring.blogspot.com](http://the.crown.and.the.ring.blogspot.com)

When I think of materials used in the production of magic items, my first thought is “magical weapons and armor.” As such, this list is weighted towards magical weapons and armor, though I have tried to provide some other interesting substances as well.

This list may be used as a random table, by rolling a d12, or by picking a material that seems most suitable for your needs.

## 1. TARNWYRM CHRYSALIS

Every year, the giant Tarnwyrn grubs metamorphose into adult Tarnmoths, leaving behind the dried husks of their chrysalis. The spent chrysalis are said to retain something of their original transformative element, and that armor created from the chrysalis renders a wearer more resistant to mutative or polymorphic effects.

## 2. DUPLICATING REAGENT

This colorless, odorless, flavorless liquid is capable of mimicking most potions and other alchemical liquids. Mix a flask of Duplicating Reagent with a flask of acid, and you now have two flasks of acid, both with the same potency as the original. Mix a vial of Duplicating Reagent with one of *Potion of Cure Light Wounds*, and you now have two vials of *Cure Light Wounds*. The user is advised not to try and use Duplicating Reagent as a “binder” to combine two other substances; trying to mix *Alchemist’s Fire* with a *Potion of Inflict Light Wounds* leaves everyone unhappy.

## 3. PSIPUTTY

This pink, rubbery, moldable substance picks up psychic impressions, and is commonly used to create “decoy” golems of prominent figures in danger of being assassinated. Unless great care is taken not to stretch the putty during the imprinting process, the golems end up with bizarrely-distorted versions of the original’s personality.

## 4. ACCELEREX

Despite producing no heat, this vibrant yellow-green substance creates a mirage effect similar to a “heat shimmer” around it, which quickly becomes uncomfortable to view. It’s often used to create edged weapons or projectiles as it creates a field of temporal instability around itself. Wounds inflicted

with these weapons develop weeks’ worth of gangrene in seconds, or age (or perhaps de-age!) the victim drastically.

## 5. MERCURIAL SCARLET

This alchemical substance resembles red glass. When exposed to heat, even human body heat, Mercurial Scarlet swiftly liquefies and evaporates, making it very popular with assassins for use in “vanishing” blades. Also, anyone exposed to Mercurial Scarlet – such as holding a piece in one’s unprotected hand, or being stabbed with it – experiences first a “bleaching” as all color seems to fade from their flesh, followed by a slow, and painful, “phasing” from the physical universe.

## 6. NULL

When explaining to laypeople the properties of this slate-gray metallic mineral, it is often described as “totally inert, full stop.” It does not conduct heat, electricity, cold, radiation, or even kinetic energy. Null is the proverbial immovable object, naturally forming cubic shapes that are profoundly difficult and expensive to forge or reshape. Cubes of it are prized by alchemists for crucibles and anti-mutagenic amulets.

## 7. DEALKAHESTINE STEEL

Alchemists prefer storage vessels made of this glossy black metal because it cannot be burned by even the strongest acids. It is also commonly used to forge weapons and armor for use in corrosive environments.

## 8. “TUNNEL VISION”

Those who craft magical items either burn and inhale this tarry yellow-orange substance, or shape it into a lozenge and hold it under their tongue. While under the influence of Tunnel Vision, a craftsman can look at raw materials and “see” the construction process (resembling time-lapse film) before it happens. This reduces the time to craft a magical item by 20%, though at an increased cost (representing the amount of the drug used). Users are advised not to look at people while taking Tunnel Vision.

## 9. ZANTHRYL

This silvery, gelatinous substance is commonly used to make armor, with a thin layer typically sandwiched between two layers of metal. Zanthryl absorbs a great amount of kinetic energy, reducing damage taken from melee combat, falls, etc. Though illegal in many places, extreme-sports enthusiasts persist in “Z-Jumping” – leaping from high cliffs while wearing full-body membranous suits filled with Zanthryl, and bouncing unharmed.

## 10. CHILLUMINUM

This metallic blue-black substance is non-conductive and thermal-invisible; maintaining a constant temperature equivalent to the surrounding air, it is invisible to infravision or equivalent; armor made from Chilluminum reduces the wearer’s chance of being detected via infravision, though it does not alter the ability to hide under any other circumstances. It’s quite popular with science-fantasy ninjas. You’ll never see them coming.

## 11. DEPLETED CECILIUM

This purple-blue metal features an unusual sonic resonance which renders it extremely popular in the creation of projectiles. Arrowheads, crossbow bolts, sling stones or bullets made from Depleted Cecilium create a sonic dissonance upon striking a hard surface such as a wall or an armored foe, turning the substance into a sort of “tuning fork” for several seconds. A few shots of Depleted Cecilium bullets against a load-bearing column can collapse a building. An individual shot with a Depleted Cecilium round continues to take 1 point of damage per combat round for 1d4+1 combat rounds after being shot, as the Depleted Cecilium vibrates inside them. A critical hit (or “exploding” hit, or what have you) is liable to cause internal organs to rupture.

## 12. METAMORPHIC GAMMARADIUM

This green-glowing teratophilic material is very rare and highly prized. Armor forged from Metamorphic Gammaradium bonds with its wearer’s nervous system over a period of weeks. Once bound, exposure to mutagenic substances and radiation allows the wearer two rolls on the relevant random mutation chart, with the wearer choosing which to take. The armor reshapes itself to reflect physical mutations. However, this comes with a price; every mutation knocks 1d6 years off the wearer’s natural lifespan. Upon dying (of any cause), the wearer’s body swiftly breaks down into “primordial soup” which the armor then absorbs.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a post-apocalyptic-stone-age-era-fantasy-world customizable cance generator. It doesn't need stats, but descriptions on what the different things are about would be awesome.

Thanks,

Mike F.

# POST APOCALYPTIC FANTASY SMALL WATERCRAFT

By Jackie L.

## POST APOCALYPTIC FANTASY SMALL WATERCRAFT



### TYPES OF WATERCRAFT (1d6)

For all odd rolled results (\*), flip a coin for the option of sails. On a heads (or odd, for a die roll) roll for a sail made from the cloth subtable.

1	<b>Raft*</b> - no sides, generally flat and square ( <i>skip hull/covering table</i> )
2	<b>Canoe</b> - small boat with single-bladed paddle and option of a few oarsmen
3	<b>Catamaran*</b> - multi-hull canoe ( <i>can roll twice for hull/covering if time and interest permit</i> )
4	<b>Kayak</b> - long, pointed and narrow boat sealed with double-bladed paddle and single rower
5	<b>Rowboat*</b> - a square hulled boat that has multiple oarsmen with some facing backward
6	<b>Dragon ship</b> - very long and narrow racing boat with many rowers and a figurehead on prow

### TO GENERATE

Roll 1d6 for *type of watercraft*, 1d4 for *frame*, 1d8 for *hull armor or covering*, 1d10 for *oars*, and 1d12 for *material details*. At your option, roll 0-2 *special accessories* and 0-2 *problems* that your boat might have.

### FRAME (1d4)

\*For more details, roll 1d12 on the appropriate material component table, found on the following pages.

1-3	wood
4	bone

### HULL ARMOR / COVERING (1d8)

\*For more details, roll 1d12 on the appropriate material component table, found on the following pages.

1-2	Salvaged wood
3-4	Pre-apocalypse metal
5-6	Remnants of cloth
7-8	Hide scraps and stretched organs

### OARS (1d10)

1	Worn down wizard staff with unrecognizable runes, long since expended of magic charges
2	Flagpoles, with scraps of flags or regiment standards still attached
3	Chiseled bones from commonly encountered monsters or giant animal tusks
4	Small uprooted trees
5	Tower shields with handholds
6	Giant, hollow metal hands looted from statues -- much more efficient than using your own hands to paddle
7	A variety of absurd weapons (dire lances, double maces, bladed chains) haphazardly nailed together
8	Rusty pots and pans, ladles, and knife handles tied together with tarred tablecloth
9	Water stained but once-elegant end tables, legs broken off and reattached for ergonomics
10	Actual old oars, oddly enough

## MATERIAL COMPONENT TYPES AND ORIGIN DETAILS (1d12)

### \*I. WOOD

1	<p>An unearthed set of coffins from a deceased couple who... (roll 1d6):</p> <p>1-2 swore to haunt whoever disturbed their bodies from resting forever side by side</p> <p>3-4 haunt the boat only to bicker</p> <p>5-6 haunt your crew members through macabre flirtation, hoping to make the other jealous</p>	7	<p>Abandoned mule cart that was once used by an ancient adventuring party from dungeons that were long-forgotten back then. If cart is searched further a crack in the cart has a small... (roll 1d6)... lost by that party:</p> <p>1-2 gemstone</p> <p>3-4 treasure map</p> <p>5-6 magic ring)</p>
2	<p>Plundered ornate furniture with clawed feet, delicate elven carvings, or intricate floral patterns; fortunately three feathered pillows can be reused as comfortable bench cushions.</p>	8	<p>Colorful and crude signs from taverns, potion and item shops, brothels, blacksmiths, town posts, and guilds; three signs (a thieves guild warning, brothel rates, and merchant motto) are intact and can be hammered as messages on the stern and bow.</p>
3	<p>Temple beams from deity... (roll 1d6):</p> <p>1-2 believed to be benevolent and charitable with blasphemy like this</p> <p>3-4 hated by all right-thinking people</p> <p>5-6 now forgotten and thought to be uncaring); because the planks are arranged to fit rather than as they were, the prayers and psalms merge unnaturally.</p>	9	<p>Ransacked merchant's carriage that retains faint aroma of foreign herbs and spices, perfumes and potions; a thorough inspection reveals a packet of... (roll 1d6):</p> <p>1-2 salt, suitable for preservation</p> <p>3-4 still-potent healing herbs</p> <p>5-6 bills of sale hinting at old port-city locations</p>
4	<p>Sweetly scented wine casks that remind thirsty crew of their poor state; has lettering on the boards indicating what was once high quality alongside vastly outdated shipping dates.</p>	10	<p>Damaged yet salvageable doors with intact knockers and peepholes; loose hinges can be used to brace the boat more, peepholes allow a crew to glimpse below at the sea.</p>
5	<p>Dark worn in benches with graffiti and profanities carved everywhere, which... (roll 1d6):</p> <p>1-3 has some useful information about notables from where the benches were looted from</p> <p>4-6 has enough funny insults on it to entertain dimwitted crew members for months</p>	11	<p>Strong yet supple rare tree, treated and hollowed out, with... (roll 1d6)</p> <p>1-2 branches, perfect for making more oars or bracing</p> <p>3-4 delicious sap that can feed a small crew for few days</p> <p>5-6 three small unhatched hawk eggs</p>
6	<p>Scarred, scorched, discarded shields with painted symbols strewn across their frame, faded burgundy crest of a griffon, blackened skull with arrows pierced through the shield, a greenish gray set with symbols of distorted trees, goblins, lizardfolk, and strange mountainous beasts.</p>	12	<p>Planks from a ruined ship, still reeking of the sea and its last voyage; soaked in blood, smeared with fish guts, littered with coral (<i>50% coral is still alive and growing, otherwise has tiny, luminescent but harmless coral creature ghosts</i>)</p>

# POST APOCALYPTIC FANTASY SMALL WATERCRAFT

## \*II. BONES AND ORGANS AND HIDE (Oh My!) (d12)

1	Mysterious scale that is hypothesized to belong to a dragon, medusa, or giant reptile; whatever the case the scale has... (roll 1d6): 1-2 the ability to withstand heavy flame for a decent period of time 3-4 the strength to endure a monster's acidic attack 5-6 the spell to charm/mesmerize another reptile monster for 1 day	7	Hammerhead shark stomach, liver, and skeleton; several rows of teeth can be used as serrated daggers and throwing knives.
2	Buffalo (every part of it)	8	Huntsmen's finest collection of exotic beast furs/hides and well preserved taxidermy; naturally there is also a surprising bunch of... (roll 1d6): 1-2 longbows with peacock feathered arrows 3-4 hunting blades with jewel encrusted animal motifs 5-6 diaries about setting traps for large game and tactics for hunting medium level monsters
3	Great white whale that was harpooned, gutted, and stripped of meat... (roll 1d6): 1-2 has enough blubber left to use for a week's worth of lamp oil 3-4 with one reusable harpoon lodged in it 5-6 holds the bones of a human leg	9	Some strange hybrid parts from a predatory bird-beast that shares some resemblance to an owl and a bear, an eagle and a lion, or a duck and a beaver.
4	Human skin and/or flesh with heavily inked tattoos and small decorated piercings... (roll 1d6): 1-2 enemies of a barbarian village 3-4 hanged pirates 5-6 executed thieves	10	Abandoned barbarian tents with a collection of teeth, claws, and bone fragments sewn into the canvas and skeletal frames with totem carvings.
5	Mountain goat skins or bone with a few skulls and large curling horns perfect for decorating an already eclectic boat of scraps; the collection includes a dwarven carved horn flask and a blow horn.	11	Tanned brownish green troll skin that seems to slowly repair rips or tears.
6	The skin and/or flesh of an enemy humanoid group with battle scars and dried blackish paint.	12	Stockpile of miscellaneous bones and parts found originally upon a charred nomadic ship, if searched thoroughly then crewmen find... (roll 1d6): 1-2 a braided geometric necklace with an ancient symbol 3-4 an iron plated helmet with sharp spikes 5-6 a blue stone that glows and swirls according to the moon and rhythm of the tide

## \*III. METAL (d12)

1	A number of paladins' plate mail with golden flame crests and faces of gods... (roll 1d6): 1-2 one set is jewel encrusted 3-4 blessed with protection against one flame attack 5-6 a holy symbol that heals a crew member's wounds once when in great need	7	Iron golem parts, which are... (roll 1d6): 1-2 pitted and rusted 3-4 aside from battle damage from a fight from long ago, as good as new 5-6 still seem animate, but it's not clear if the opening and shutting jaw and clenching fingers intend harm
2	Gladiator chariot accessorized with black leather straps, reins, and whips, if studied further the crew discovers a compartment with six gladiator helmets.	8	Broken, tangled, tarnished jewelry; a few bright gems and vibrant stones make your boat look so amazing that schools of delicious fish follow your route and get caught in some of the bracelet and necklace clasps.
3	Rusted agricultural equipment, including pitchforks and a plow as a prow.	9	Dwarven mining equipment, including picks, shovels, the minecart wheels and a lonesome, empty canary cage.
4	Sundered magical weapons that still glow when goblins, orcs, undead, or chaotic evil creatures roam nearby.	10	Thousands upon thousands of outdated coins, nailed on as makeshift scaled armor.
5	Melted deity statue busts that are oddly missing their arms.	11	Jail bars and chains taken from a sunken prison.
6	Trumpets and horns used by heralds, with banners still attached, and a single town crier's bell.	12	Thousands of nails as armor, if facing in, or tiny spines, if facing out.

## \*IV. CLOTH AND SAILS (d12)

1	Undergarments of men and women of all classes and sizes and in various conditions (need I say more?)	7	Tapestries of Amazonian women wrestling deer in the moonlight, sharpening double-headed battle axes, and dueling swordsmen while wearing practical chainmail.
2	Finely woven silk noble attire with brilliant blues, glistening greens, and/or regal reds, if pockets or collars are examined they find... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> a tarnished silver brooch of a goddess <b>3-4</b> a small silver pocket mirror with initials engraved on the case <b>5-6</b> a signet ring that also unlocks a secret chamber	8	Hemp sacks with exotic labels and advertisements that swear their grain or coffee outshines, outweighs, and outsells the rest. A search reveals... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> one sack with a few cups of rice <b>3-4</b> a half pound of coffee beans <b>5-6</b> a smuggled pouch holding poisonous herbs
3	Torn and frayed flags that hold no more meaning and no territorial pride, their rips and stains give them surreal and somber appearances, bloodstains across the face of a white stag, shreds through a dire wolf, torched edges of a rising sun, and a heavily mildewed kraken.	9	Dignified fur coats of women stitched together in undignified ways; fortunately there are some pieces that can be worn now as barbaric fur capes for one entire crew.
4	Ripped peasant blouses, pants, vests and caps that were discarded in desperation and superstition that their cloth carried the looming plague of death and fits of terror.	10	Giant's handkerchief made from a gypsy's caravan cover.
5	Giant's map that is large enough for a sail or a stretched boat covering; it charts lands and bodies of water but their labels are unfamiliar, however it does show... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> routes to other giant lairs <b>3-4</b> migration patterns of giant squid, geese, and dire monsters <b>5-6</b> stone wells where beansprouts lay dormant, unless heated	11	Exterior "skin" of stuffed toys, emptied and sewn together. One of a small sea dragon still feels intact and, when opened, out falls... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> crudely painted pirate miniatures <b>3-4</b> a tinderbox <b>5-6</b> a giant pearl and tiny fishbones
6	Soft linen burial shroud of a merchant's lover whose gown was already claimed by another party; the scent of honey and cinnamon remain pungent even when wafting at sea.	12	Canvas paintings pulled from frames and stretched again for another surface, the artworks evoke nostalgia and lost serenity, especially an image of... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> an adventuring crew surrounded by fireflies <b>3-4</b> a bright and sunny valley that has a town full of cemeteries <b>5-6</b> farmhands singing around a dark spirited horse

## SPECIAL, SUCH AS A FLAMETHROWER (d20)

*(Note: if you roll a sail and you already have a mundane one, either replace it or you have a spare; if your boat type normally wouldn't have a sail, you are particularly industrious and have a mast on your weird little boat, or reroll)*

1	Ragged, leather-bound bard's journal of sea shanties; when sung out loud... (roll 1d6): <b>1-2</b> merrily singing images of the bard and pirates appear <b>3-4</b> the ship moves faster and rocks to the rhythm <b>5-6</b> the weather clears up and water calms for awhile and can be lengthened by singing more	4	Pulled by a half-wild hippocampus that has the potential to be tamed (roll daily for bucking or attempted escape until tamed or use existing tame mount rules).
2	Pulled by a golem with mystic instructions on its forehead that must be overwritten manually to change course.	5	Pulled by enslaved undead that begrudgingly follow the directional guidance of whoever wears their master's cursed ring.
3	Small ballista that can easily attach to a bow or stern without disrupting balance aboard the watercraft, along with some ammunition.	6	A curious metal device that, when operated, purifies liquid into water.
		7	Elven cloaks of camouflage stretched into a patchwork blanket. They are still magical enough to obscure objects under it - and it is large enough to cover the boat.

# POST APOCALYPTIC FANTASY SMALL WATERCRAFT

8	Treant prow, frame, or mast that has become weary of destroyed lands and uprooted forests and took to the sea to... (roll 1d6): 1-2 help humans search for promising lands 3-4 search for treants of the other gender in order to cross pollinate a new forest 5-6 gather fabled ocean driftwood treants to wage war	14	Very sturdy wizard staff with recognizable runes with charges, but that has been nailed into the body of the boat in a structurally important way; however, it can still be used to... (roll 1d6): 1-2 put a target to sleep 3-4 shoot a flaming ball 5 charm a monster 6 all of the above, plus, if broken, it blows up, breaking the canoe in a spectacular fashion and dealing damage to all within a large radius corresponding to the number of charges left, plus canoe shrapnel
9	"The Windcatcher" sail that is always full in the direction you need.	15	Murdered orc king's abandoned throne carved with images of slaughtered human troops, stabbed boars, disemboweled spies, and impaled warring humanoid tribes all at his hands; if a crew member reads the name of the king aloud... (roll 1d6): 1-2 loud drumming noises fill the boat 3-4 screams of boars and fighters echo around 5-6 chants in many languages praise his everlasting rule but, all noises cease after a while.
10	Glamoured sail that changes conveniently to images of... (roll 1d6): 1-2 ancient heraldries 3-4 recognizable merchants or allies 5-6 flickering tales that keep you entertained	16	A flamethrower! (Magical, of course)
11	Some pieces of your watercraft are fragments from a mythical king's ship, and for some reason you are not sure if that means it is your ship or his; if you take time to ponder this you discover the pieces have the ability to shield you from harsh weather as if blessed by a sea god.	17	A "sack of containing," which still works despite being nailed down.
12	The boat is followed by a... (roll 1d6): 1-2 shark 3-4 sorcerous jellyfish 5-6 baby kraken) that... (roll 1d6): 1-2 is mainly in it for the scraps of detritus you leave behind 3-4 loves the boat and by extension will help to protect it and by extension its users 5-6 is waiting for the perfect moment to eat you	18	<i>Flaherty the Fantastic's Expanding Canoe</i> spell has clung to your boat underneath a board, crack or knothole in your stern; it gives you and any crew... (roll 1d6): 1-2 more space to store any treasure or goods 3-4 large enough space for two people to sleep below deck 5-6 enough room for five people or seven barrels of rum
13	An old yet remarkably sturdy fishnet that has been looped in a foreign manner, has small silver bells and copper dangling fish and bizarrely cannot be fully detached from your boat; you will quickly discover that it is very lucky and every so often attracts... (roll 1d6): 1-2 one large fish or other edible animal 3-4 a dolphin or squid 5-6 a small magical sea creature	19	<b>Enchanted compass</b> (roll on the appropriate d6 mini table, on the following page).
		20	Sentient figurehead on prow... (roll 1d6): 1-2 bitterly remembers time on larger ship 3-4 enthusiastically attacks with its trident 5-6 is a cryptic storehouse of lore and is a non-cryptic storehouse of navigational experience

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR RAMSHACKLE BOAT? (d10)

1	Nothing, until an albatross decides to die on your watercraft and curse your boat so it is dragging heavily in the water and moving off course when you rest; sleeping shifts must be planned with at least one person awake.
2	It's made from materials that are not holding together as well as you thought; your boat can only do a week's worth of trips before needing new scraps.
3	Your boat is rockier than a granite stone giant munching on pebbles in a cave; it splashes water inside and doesn't have the best buoyancy.
4	Your boat is lighter than magical leather armor with feathers attached on an elf in a forest; it lifts up out of the water during heavy storms and can buck a person off the boat.
5	It looks like a wonderful delicacy for... (roll 1d6): 1-2 an octopus 3-4 sharks 5-6 a whale or something worse nearby!
6	Too cramped to carry any large goods other than a bedroll and backpack kit (for larger boats it is one bedroll and backpack every other person).
7	Unfortunately it is made from the finest weather jinxing goods that attract thunder and lightning.
8	It's a lemon that keeps breaking down in a variety of ways when you least expect it... (roll 1d6): 1-2 sometimes just stops moving due to its odd construction 3-4 will occasionally only be able to turn left, even though, given that you have oars, this really shouldn't be mechanically possible 5-6 overheats, somehow?
9	Although you thought only bigger ships were supposed to have this problem, somehow you have an infestation of rats on board, and until you figure out a way to deal with these apparently half-fish rats, they eat at your rations.
10	Turns out that really great piece of scrap metal used to plug a hole is a pre-fall magic bomb. It starts counting down, and then goes off... (roll 1d6): 1-2 a few hours after you next drag the ship ashore to disembark 3-4 the next time the ship rocks wildly 5-6 after the command word to activate it is said, which happens to be "fire"

## \* ENCHANTED COMPASS (d6)

For "nearest \_\_\_\_," the compass finds the most relevant result within one map hex, a day or so of travel, or whatever other short-but-useful metric works for your campaign.

1	Points toward long-forgotten pilgrimage/trade route.
2	Nearest massive man-eating sea beast.
3	Nowhere really (roll direction randomly each time consulted).
4	Nearest, largest stockpile of alcohol.
5	Nearest sexiest being (will also consider those on boat, may lead to sudden ego deflation if another sexier being enters range).
6	Nearest other compass (it's lonely).

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Lack of interesting rules for trading with ships or caravans makes me cry myself to sleep every night. So I'd like them. If you're out of them I could use with some quirky villages, or a village generator.*

# CARAVANS AND MERCHANT SHIPS

By ?

This turned out to be quite the challenge, mostly because of my lack of medieval maritime customs. Caravans are easy, we still have caravans today and wikipedia is eager to tell you all about them.

Items carried by caravans and merchant ships are always considered exotic, and thus cost 100% more than similar local items, even when no actual benefits are given. However, most items come from an area specialized in the making or growing of the merchandise, and thus some give a mechanical bonus compared to local items (so an exotic sword might add +1 to hit OR damage, but no both). These exceptional items cost up to 400% more, but haggling is encouraged.

Roll 1d12 once and read the buys/sells pair, or roll twice. Add up to 4 for each country (or equivalent distance) the caravan travelled.

If you have the same result for buys, sells or both, specify two different types of the same thing. For example, one of the lumber could be mahogany, the other ebony. They might be selling swords and buying crossbows.

Each roll is about 50 tons.

## CARAVANS

Caravans moved at the speed of people. For each cargo load (the amount one camel carries), add 30% as camel fodder (so 100 loads of cargo will mean an additional 30 load of fodder).

## LOAD

Roll once for each 10 files.

## PEOPLE

About 18 camels in one file, with a handler leading each file. An elder handler in charge of the camels. A cook or two, and the caravan master. Caravan owners not present will send a representative to unload and sell the cargo at the destination, but had no authority on the trip.

Passengers will only travel on top of a camel for half of the day, the other half they must walk like the rest.

## PAY

Handlers earned 2 silver a month, free room and food on the trip and a camel's load of space to fill as they pleased. Some rich handlers own all the camels in their file and would pay 20 silver for joining the caravan, but not get paid.

## MERCHANT SHIPS

Wikipedia failed me on this topic. Most info is from the Beyond the Black Gate blog. Speed is about 4 mph.

## LOAD

Roll once for each mast or every 2 tons of cargo.

## PEOPLE

Most rpg books have this info. In a pinch, count 10 crewmembers per mast. Captain and first mate lead the ship, an experienced seaman was in charge of daily operations and a navigator read the maps and stars.

## PAY

Pirate ships had an equal share in profits. Hired seamen will cost about 10gp monthly. High ranking professionals will cost much more.

## MERCHANDISE CHART

Roll	Sells	Buy
1	animal parts	common items
2	art	lumber
3	alcohol	clothes
4	drugs	textiles
5	plant parts	combat gear
6	spices	ores, metals
7	animals	jewelry
8	slaves	precious stones
9	jewelry	slaves
10	precious stones	animals
11	combat gear	spices
12	ores, metals	plant parts
13	clothes	drugs
14	textiles	alcohol
15	common items	art
16	lumber	animal parts

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a selection of magitech devices that might be sold or built by the rogue artificer or his friends back in the crazy land of magic and steampunk.*

# CORNELIUS RATTLEBAG'S MAGIC EMPORIUM

By Stacy Dellorfano

## CORNELIUS RATTLEBAG'S MAGIC EMPORIUM A ROGUE ARTIFICER'S CATALOG OF STEAMPUNK GOODS

### OPTIONAL RULE: RANDOM ITEMS

**Optional:** Roll on the table below to give out a random magical item from this article. Many items have additional rolls for their specific features.

#### RANDOM ITEMS

1d10	Category
1	Spare Parts Jewelry
2	Clockwork Insect
3	EagleEye Monocle
4	Neverbreak Long Chain of Egress
5	Mimic Tome
6	Everlight Lantern
7	The Timetaker 1900
8	LiquidBuffered Intensity Transducing Vision Enhancers
9	Mr. Parsnip's BuildYourOwn Accessories
10	Clockwork Insects



## ACCESSORIES

### MR. PARSNIP'S BUILD YOUR OWN ACCESSORIES

The most ubiquitous of personal accessories the parasol or the cane is also the most modifiable of accessories. At Mr. Parsnip's, we value your continued patronage and work to exceed your every wish. Canes, parasol, staffs, and the like can be filled with any number of gadgets or accessories. The higher quality the accessory, the more options are available for modifying. See tables below for the whole list.

**Optional:** To randomly pick a magical item, first roll 1d10 on the first table to randomly determine the implement, then roll 1d10 on the second table to determine the item's modification or effect. If an effect takes more capacity than is available on the item, reroll the d10.

#### IMPLEMENT TABLE

1d10	Type	Capacity
1	Common Walking Cane	2
2	Common Parasol	2
3	Umbrella	2
4	Walking Stick	2
5	Fine Walking Cane	3
6	Fine Parasol	3
7	Scepter	3
8	Deluxe Parasol	4
9	Deluxe Walking Cane	4
10	Staff	5

## MODIFICATION/EFFECT

1d10	Effect	Capacity
1	Single-Shot Derringer	[2]
2	Spring-Loaded Stake in Handle	[1]
3	Lockpick Kit	[1]
4	Speyeball	[1]
5	Hypodermic Needle	[1]
6	Sword	[2]
7	Storage	[1]
8	Torch	[1]
9	Shotgun	[4]
10	Timetaker 1900	[2]

## NEVERBREAK LONG CHAIN OF EGRESS

These chains can be fastened into bracelets, anklets, watch chains, monocle chains, and eyeglass chains. Ordinarily, they look like finelycrafted round snake chains made from gold. Activated with a tug, the chain grows in length, up to 50' long. It can hold up to 600 pounds of weight without breaking, and may be tied into knots if necessary. When a Neverbreak chain is cut, the piece cut off becomes an ordinary jewelry chain, but the larger, remaining piece grows back the lost chain to once again become 50' long.

## THE TIMETAKER 1900

This elegant timepiece is a little more than just an extraordinarily elegant pocket watch. The inside clockworks actually spin and weave the very strands that make up the fabric of time and space. By setting the timepiece back to up to twelve hours back in time, the user can see what happened in the place where they are standing. This seeing is similar to clairvoyance. The user sees in his or her mind a series of events that occurred in that space at that time. The device may be used only once per day, and it only allows the user to see into the past, not the future.

## CHARMS & BAUBLES

### SPARE PARTS CHARMS

These tiny charms can be worked into a piece of jewelry (such as being set into a ring or a pendant), or used as charms on a bracelet or necklace. Earrings, necklaces, charm bracelets, watch chains, rings, etc., can all include Spare Parts Charms. Each charm resembles a tiny versions of various types of sprockets, cogs, springs, spindles, and the like. They make eclectic pieces of jewelry that can be dressed up with the addition of additional charms such as gemstones or pearls.

Their true power comes in their magical properties. When placed alongside a broken part, or in the space of a destroyed part, the charm changes, becoming the exact size necessary for the part.

Each charm corresponds to a specific type of part. Once a charm is used, it cannot return to being a charm again, but charms can be replaced individually. Note that a charm can replace -one- individual part. It cannot work miracles and fix a machine that's been completely destroyed or suffered a catastrophic failure.

**Optional:** To randomly choose a piece of jewelry, roll on the table below, then start it with the number of charms indicated.

## JEWELRY SETTING

1d10	Type	# of Charms
1	Necklace	1d10
2	Earrings	1d10 (Divide by 2 for number on each earring)
3	Bracelet	1d10+2
4	Watch Chain	1d10+2
5	Keychain	1d10
6	Ring	1d10/2
7	Brooch	1d10/2
8	Haircomb	1d10/2
9	Cravat Pin	1d10
10	Monocle Chain	1d10/2

## SPEYEBALLS

Created to spy on things, these items are enchanted by preserving a creature's eye in resin while performing a very specific magical ritual. Rumors persist about particularly gothic artificers using human eyes, but most prefer animal organs. To work, the eyeball is simply left in a place with a clear view of the target area. Later, the owner retrieves the nearly indestructible eyeball, winds up a clockwork mechanism on the back, and looks into it to see what visions were soaked up while it was left out. Speyeballs can be put into nearly any setting, and can also be found as part of everything from rings to the handles of parasols.

## CLOCKWORK AUTOMATONS

### CLOCKWORK INSECTS

Made of clockwork materials and gemstones, these little bugs resemble the real thing, and can take slightly more than simple telepathic commands. Emeraldgreen beetles, bright yellow wasps, blackasnight spiders... each one can hold a certain number of modules to help it complete its tasks. Anything from gas canisters to handguns can be mounted on these little insects.

**Optional:** To randomly pick an insect for treasure, roll on the table below to select the bug, then roll again as many times as required on the second table to fill the item's capacity. If a roll results in an effect that will not fit the insect's capacity, reroll until one comes up that does.

## INSECT TYPE

1d10	Insect	Module Slots
1	Emerald Scarab	2
2	Onyx Widow**	3
3	Citrine Hornet*	1
4	Peridot Mantis**	2
5	Ruby Ladybug*	1
6	Brass Dung Beetle	3
7	Jade Grasshopper	2
8	Sapphire Butterfly*	1
9	Garnet Bumblebee*	1
10	Cobalt Tarantula**	3

\* Capable of flight

\*\* Capable of wallwalking

## INSECT MODIFICATIONS

1d10	Effect	Slots Needed
1	Gas	[2]
2	Hypodermic Needle	[1]
3	Speyeball	[1]
4	4Shot Pistol	[3]
5	Lockpick	[1]
6	Skeleton Key	[1]
7	1 Charge Mancatcher Net	[2]
8	1 Claw Grip	[1]
9	Toolkit	[2]
10	Welding Torch	[3]

## MIMIC TOME

The Mimic Tome is truly our finest and most impressive piece of work. It represents years of testing with Magical Intelligent Instruction Code (MIIC) and Miniaturization Technologies (MT). Mimic Tomes are difficult to make and, as a result, are incredibly rare, highly coveted, and very expensive.

In order to create each tome, the artificer must FIRST create tens of thousands of tiny, clockwork automatons (called 'pixelbots'). These already small pixelbots are then imbued with magical intelligence and made *even smaller*, until they are only visible with the aid of a magnifying glass. The pixelbots then come together to form the fabric of the individual pages of the tome. The pixelbots have two main 'sides' capable of either being black or white.

The outer shell of the Mimic Tome contains the appropriately magicimbued clockwork designed to be the Main Controller

of the tome's MIIC. It is responsible for organizing all of the tiny pixelbots into pages.

When the Mimic Tome is placed on top of another tome, document, painting, or any reproducible piece of work, the Main Controller sends out the pixelbots to conform to the structure of the item. They form a sheet, each remember their particular 'state', then dissolve again to return to the Tome. This process is done relatively quickly, but can still take some time, particularly for larger or more complex works. The end result is a tome that perfectly mimics whatever it was set upon (within reason and in black and white), allowing the user to peruse the information at their convenience.

These tomes look like thick, heavy book. They are bound in metal with exposed clockwork on the front, spine, and back of the book. The clockwork actually functions as an inconspicuous combination lock. The tome will only function in 'Mimic' mode if the lock is set properly.

## MINIATURIZED CLOCKWORK AUTOMATON

These little devices are disguised as small jewelry (most often cufflinks or earrings), and are infused with just enough magical energy to receive a single instruction to perform one simple task. These little automatons could, for example, fly through a keyhole and push a button on the other side or inject someone with poison, but they could not open a safe with a combination or handle any sort of complex logic. When we've tested giving these automatons more complicated instructions, they most often ended up in a logic loop and shut down.

The design of the automatons are fairly simple. They operate by a single rotor and are wound up prior to use by the individual using it. Their range is approximately a 50' radius before they shut down. The magic in these automatons comes in their ability to take instruction. After the initial design, they are infused with magic as both a source of power and as a source of intelligence.

Exact decorative designs vary, but the miniature automatons are generally designed to be inconspicuous. Individual payloads (such as a poisoned pod, a syringe, or a tool) are often disguised as jewels and baubles. The only distinguishing factor that all of these tiny automatons maintains as the same is the rotor design. As such, the blades are often part of the earring or cufflink's design, most often as the post and backing.

*Either choose automaton payloads from the table below, or roll for a random loadout.*

## AUTOMATON PAYLOADS

1d10	Payload
1	1 Dose Paralyzing Poison
2	1 Dose Lethal Poison
3	1 Shot Derringer
4	1 Claw
5	1 Speyeball
6	1 Mini Screwdriver
7	1 Spanner
8	1 Dose Truth Serum
9	1 Dose Tear Gas
10	1 Dose Pepper Spray

## VISION ENHANCER SETTING

1d10	Setting	# Lenses
1	Goggles	2
2	Glasses	2
3	Chain Monocle	1
4	ClipOn Monocle	1
5	Pincenez	2
6	Reading Glasses	2
7	Spectacles	2
8	Bifocals	2 (+ Magnification)
9	Jeweler's Glasses	3 (1 FlipDown Monocle)
10	Trifocals	2 (+ Magnification x2)

## EYEWEAR

### EAGLE-EYE MONOCLE

The best way to not get caught doing something is to make sure you do it as far away as possible. The EagleEye Monocle makes this dream a reality with style. When collapsed, the monocle looks like an ordinary, fine gentleman's monocle. When expanded, the monocle becomes a telescope capable of seeing up to 500 yards away. A magical enchantment then allows the user to use any effect as if they were standing at the position the telescope is focused, thereby increasing the range of many spells or spelllike effects to 500 yards.

### LIQUID-BUFFERED INTENSITY TRANSDUCING VISION ENHANCERS

Goggles, monocles, blinkers, pince-nez, rims, specs, they're all over the place these days, and now you can get yours especially enhanced for various tasks. The lenses themselves are made up of two thin pieces of glass that are filled with a liquid enchanted to give the viewer a particular type of sight. Only one effect can exist per lens. Some airship pirates have been known to make shutters for their goggles so that they can have two different lenses, but only use them one at a time.

**Optional:** To randomly choose a set of vision enhancers, roll first on the first table below to choose a setting, then on the second table to choose a lens color.

## LENS COLOR

1d10	Lens Color	Effect
1	Red	Read Language Sight
2	Green	Ghost Sight
3	Yellow	Thermal Vision
4	Clear	Magnification x5
5	Purple	Aura Viewing
6	Blue	Magic Item Aura Vision
7	Light Green	LowLight Vision
8	Orange	Read Magic Sight
9	Magenta	Astral Viewing
10	Light Blue	XRy Vision

## SURVIVAL GEAR

### EVERLIGHT LANTERN

One of the bare necessities of working as an artificer is conjuring up enough light to work well into the wee hours of the night. That is why the Everlight Lantern is one of our most common and most plentiful of creations. Built with a flame that is kept in magical stasis, this lantern sheds light and heat without ever expending oil or blowing out. It looks like a brass, hooded lantern, and can only be 'put out' by closing off the shutters.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a list of magical items that seem useless but aren't (or have very situational uses).*

# LESS-THAN-MARVELOUS MAGIC

By Tom Hudson

**Editor's Note:** Throughout their careers, adventurers wield and encounter lots of strange and powerful enchanted items. Tom Hudson reminds us that not all magical items need be the stuff of legend.

## LESS-THAN-MARVELOUS MAGIC

### SANDSTONE BACTRIAN

The possessor of this friable statuette of a camel will not be attacked by wild camels, and can spit prodigiously twice per day. The figurine itself - being made of sandstone - degrades over time with rough handling.

### WITHERED BRANCH

This gnarled wand, covered with near-dead lichen, will infallibly lead the wielder to the nearest source of nonpotable, contaminated, or poisoned water.

### SPECKLED CLOAK

Once an unjeweled brooch is used to close this cloak, the wearer will have +4/+20% to conceal their movement through sandstorms. They also leave a thin trail of sand which makes them easy to track over wood or stone floors and similar surfaces.

### CROSS-STAFF OF INESTIMABLE BRILLIANCE

A hardwood navigator's tool with thin inlaid gold bands near the ends of each arm, the subtle enchantments on this item give a navigator who can see the sun certain knowledge of their location but leave them blind for 2-5 hours. With multiple uses in the same day, save vs. permanent blindness.

### CARNELIAN WHISTLE

If this loud whistle is sounded between dusk and midnight, 40-240 crickets will show up before dawn.

### SHANGARF POWDER

Anyone who eats this cinnamon-scented powder risks having their internal organs turned to stone, but scattering a handful of it over sand will create a medium-sized patch of quicksand in 1-4 minutes.

### TARIQ'S STAFF

This flimsy, ivory-tipped 8' wooden pole will dry any fabric hung from it in seconds.

### THRESHER

This oversized magical flail does double damage to plants but half damage to all other targets.

### THATCHER

A small bronze sickle bearing the same enchantment as Thresher.

### HOMEKNIFE

The foot-long serrated blade of this knife never dulls; when used while cooking food, it increases the number of servings produced by 10%. Any missed attack against a target who is fighting back requires a save or the wielder nicks themselves for 1-3 hp of damage.

### EBONY WHISK

Most flying insects will not willingly approach within 10' of the wielder of this item's densely-engraved black handle or two-foot-long bundle of white horsehair. Its powers are only active while it is held.

### MOTTLED WAFER

Whomsoever eats this red- and green-marbled biscuit fails all saves vs disease for the next week.

### PORTAL CHARM

When nailed to a door or a doorframe, the door is mundanely unopenable so long as somebody is touching the charm and reciting an appropriate passage of scripture or myth. Magic will open the door, but also cause a backlash harming both the charm's invoker and the opener.

### WHITESPIKE

So long as this unique scrimshaw dagger is driven into the ground, snowfall within 120 yards increases significantly (at least double, often more)

### NOOR'S DOOMCALLER

While this huge horn of an unknown beast is blown into, the user finds themselves unable to move their legs; if there is any overhanging or unstable mass of snow nearby that could avalanche towards the horn, it will, and in such case the user must save to be able to stop blowing before the slide settles.

### FROST QUEEN'S ORNAMENT

This shimmering opal-carved locket, meant to be braided into a fall of hair, causes the wearer to suffer double any effects from cold environments. Staring into the opal hints at snowglobe-like visions of faerie.

### SUREFOOT BOON

A simple wooden prod, warm to the touch; if used by the rider of a yak or other shaggy mount to guide their beast, the beast slows down 15%, but becomes stolid (+2 morale) and steady (+4 appropriate saves).

### ARVICOLINE BELT

Made of pleasingly supple, tawny fur, this belt has a less than pleasing influence on their wearer: every dawn, he must save or feel compelled find a high place to throw himself from or a wide body of water to swim across, as appropriate to the local terrain. The wearer does gain a +2 reaction adjustment from rodents.

### IRTHUQ'S PICK

This small, one-handed climbing pick has a wooden handle and a blade made of blue-green ice; if taken into warm climes, the blade will melt and the enchantment dissipate. As long as it stays in the high mountains, it isn't much good at digging into rocks or ice, but it easily finds purchase in ethereal surfaces.

### ESSENCE OF THE FINAL SEASON

Three drops of this potion cause any evergreen tree to drop all its needles; six to drop its branches and stand as a bare trunk; nine to slough off its bark in a single joined sheet; twelve to explode in a fatal storm of splinters.

### THE LAST BLUE RIBBON

Throwing one end of this 30' thin silk ribbon across a snow crevasse will cause an ice bridge to form - obviously too thin to bear human weight.

### SOMNAMBULIST'S EASE

The wearer of this heavy wrought armband of a curious silver metal takes -4 to all saves against sleep and similar enchantments, but is completely protected from nightmares.

### POLYNISCENT STOOL

A folding wooden camp stool with silver inlay in the seat. Touching the inlay produces a mildly disturbing shock. A spellcaster who meditates or studies while sitting on it only gets half benefit (8 hours of time pass to learn 4 hours of spells), but cannot be surprised by visible, audible creatures.

*Terrible Whispers,  
Death cold shivers,  
Bring forth this piece of meat.  
Horrible Moaning,  
The maimed are groaning,  
Yet make such a tasty treat.  
It is here we all shall die.  
Consumed until there is nothing more...  
For we were killed by the hatred...  
Of the Great SANTICORE...*

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a set of 12 magical mists and fumes that affect you by breathing them in...*

# MAGICAL MISTS

## By Tim Knight

**Editor's Note:** *This Santicore request is a fun one; we often think about magical stuff you wear, read, or even eat. What about stuff you smell and inhale?*

### PRIMARY EFFECT (Roll 1d12, consult the list below)

1. On a failed save versus magic, the inhaler collapses unconscious, but simultaneously his invisible, astral form is released from its fleshy shell to wander its environment. During this time the "sleeper" cannot be woken and his comrades are unaware of what's going on. The astral form can move up to 120ft in 10 minutes, but is free to pass through all physical obstacles. This effect lasts for  $(1d6+3) \times 10$  minutes, after which the astral projection is forcibly dragged back into the "sleeper's" body. He wakes able to recount what he has seen.
2. A sudden rush of images bombards the inhaler's mind, causing her 1d8 points of migraine damage (save versus poison for half). The next time the character encounters a puzzle or problem she suddenly realizes the images provide her with the solution.
3. The inhaler's body inflates like a balloon. If wearing armor, he takes 1d6 damage for leather, 1d8 for chain, 1d10 for plate as it rips off. Magical armor adds its magical bonus to the damage, but falls off and can be reused – unlike mundane armor which is ruined. The inhaler floats up to the ceiling, bouncing along if there is a breeze. The only way to bring him down is to "pop" him. A hit from any edged missile works and he floats back down to the ground. However, if maximum damage is rolled, part of him "bursts" (showing those below with blood, guts, muscle, etc.) for an additional 2d6 damage. The character also takes falling damage appropriate to the height.
4. The inhaler believes she has been gifted with 'second sight' and that a random member of her party is actually a doppelgänger – what she does with this information is up to the player. This is actually a gas-induced delusion and only when presented with evidence that contradicts her beliefs is the inhaler allowed to make a saving throw versus magic to shake off the effect. If she fails the save she becomes even more convinced and begins to suspect that other members of the party are also doppelgängers (or in league with them).
5. The inhaler's body turns to gaseous form. His body becomes mist but all his clothes and equipment fall to the floor. If he is already within a cloud, his compatriots will believe he has disintegrated. After 1d10 minutes, he will learn how to communicate in this form – by creating words out of his misty body (useless still within the original cloud, of course). The gaseous adventurer will remain in this form until a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* spell is cast upon him.
6. A sudden rush of images bombards the inhaler's mind causing her 1d8 points of migraine damage (save versus poison to halve damage) and that appears to be that. However, the next time the character falls (down a pit, off a ledge or cliff etc), she will suddenly have the image of a bird flash into her mind's eye and find herself floating to the ground (instead of plummeting to certain injury or death). He will land softly on whatever surface is at the bottom of her fall and suffer no damage.
7. The inhaler becomes possessed by a "smoke demon", but is totally oblivious to the fact, believing nothing happened). This creature takes control of the inhaler's body whenever it wants (his eye balls turn black when this happens) to perpetrate evil deeds for its own ends (whatever the DM desires). The creature can only be exorcised with a *remove curse* spell, which drives the creature back to its particular hell. Of course, it might be some time before the character even realizes he has been possessed... and he might have a lot of explaining to do by then.
8. For the briefest moment (although it's a lifetime for him) the inhaler's mind opens to the cosmic infinite, granting him an insight into everything, tearing the mask off Nature, and showing him the face of God. He must then make a Wisdom save. If he passes the roll, his Intelligence gains +1d6 points. He also becomes totally insufferable and smug as the ultimate 'know-it-all' (although he has actually forgotten 99.999999% of what he saw and learned). If he fails the save, he is struck permanently insane. The GM can roll on an insanity table of choice to determine the particular illness, which is curable by whatever methods are normal for your campaign.
9. The inhaler becomes incredibly calm and relaxed. Any wounds she suffered are completely healed. Her chilled nature remains for 1d6 hours. During this time, all rolls (including initiative, saving rolls, to hit rolls, damage rolls, etc.) are made with a -2 penalty.
10. The inhaler sees red and goes berserk (+2 to hit/+2 damage, but -2 penalty on Armor Class). She must keep moving and/or fighting from then on or takes one hit point of damage for every combat round she is not (DM to determine whether the character's action in any round is enough to stave off the damage). Can be cured by either a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell. Afterwards she is totally exhausted, suffering a -2 penalty on all die rolls until she has rested for at least an hour.

11. A sudden rush of images bombards the inhaler's mind causing him 1d8 points of migraine damage (save versus poison to halve damage), but these then fade to single, prophetic image (the DM to decide how this plays out in his campaign, whether a metaphor or an exact representation of something that will occur). Roll 3d6 on **Sub-Table A** for the prophetic image. For every '6' rolled, the character gets a +1 luck bonus on his next saving throw or to hit roll (whichever happens first).

12. On a failed saving throw versus magic, the inhaler melts into a pool of goo, surrounded by all her weapons, armor and equipment, from which she rises – 1d3 combat rounds later – in an entirely new, naked body. Reroll the character's Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma, reduce Wisdom by one (as this taxes her sanity), but increase Intelligence by one. She retains all her memories and experience points, but looks completely different (if the saving throw was failed on the roll of a one, she has also changed sex).

**SUB-TABLE A: PROPHETIC IMAGES**

3d6	Prophetic Image
3	A one-armed man gesturing for the character to follow him.
4	(Random party member) hunched over and vomiting up a torrent of gold, silver and copper coins.
5	A gate of iron slamming shut.
6	The inhaler's god pointing at him.
7	A stone skimming across a flat, silent lake.
8	The funeral of (random party member). Others in the group stand around, heads hung low, weeping.
9	(Random party member), now aged, sits on a throne with a crown upon his/her head. He/she is pensive and leans forward to ask a question you cannot hear.
10	The land's capital city (or the nearest major city to the character's current location) in flames.
11	A white, riderless, horse galloping across a battlefield in the aftermath of a huge slaughter.
12	A sacred-looking tree falling over in an empty grove.
13	A distant, mist-enshrouded mountain.
14	All party on floor dead except for (random member) who is covered in blood and crying: "Why?"
15	The character's mother is trying to whisper something in his ear, but he can't quite make it out.
16	Seven geese flying backwards.
17	A creature with glowing red eyes and insect-like wings flying at the character.
18	A thin woman giving birth to a giant snail.

For added details roll on the following tables to get color and taste/smell of mist or fumes as well as minor, secondary effects caused by inhaling.

**COLOR AND SMELL/TASTE**

2d6	Color
2	Indigo
3	Amber
4	Green
5	Yellow
6	Blue
7	White
8	Roll again, but now it's filled with sparkling lights
9	Red
10	Orange
11	Black
12	Roll twice and combine

2d6	Smell/Taste
2	Roquefort Cheese
3	Pipe Tobacco
4	Vanilla
5	Hashish
6	Fudge
7	Sulphur
8	Strawberry
9	Wet Grass
10	Rotten Meat
11	Apple
12	Excrement

**SECONDARY EFFECT** (avoid with a save vs poison)

2d6	Effect
2	Hair falls out
3	Loss of bladder control
4	Hacking cough for 1d3 minutes, which brings up blood and causes 1d2 damage
5	Foul body odour, -2 Charisma for 2d12 weeks
6-8	None
9	Skin tingles pleasantly
10	Violent vomiting for 1d3 minutes, causes 1d2 damage
11	Extreme hunger – the inhaler must immediately eat a portion of rations, then make a Constitution save (roll under on a d20, or whatever system you use at your table) or need to eat another and so on. If he runs out or is refused, he becomes lethargic and sulky for 1d6 hours (until the craving passes). During this time he makes all rolls to hit, save etc at -2.
12	Hair turns white

# SECRET SANTICORE

## 2012

### PART 6

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*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me something--a random chart, some drawings, a stat block, anything at all!--about post-apocalyptic versions of classic movie monsters. Atomic draculas. Biker mummies. Cyber-gillmen. Amazonian frankensteins. Laser werewolves. Psychic hunchbacks. The wankier, the "gonzo-ier", the better. Go nuts!*

# POST-APOCALYPTIC CLASSIC MOVIE MONSTERS

By hudson bell

## CREATURE OF THE BUBBLING BOG

### THE CREATURE

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**AC:** 4 (15)

**HD:** 5+2

**Move:** 120' (40')

**Swim:** 240' (80')

**Attacks:** 2 (claws)

**Damage:** 1d8 / 1d8

**Save As:** Fighter: 5

**Morale:** 10

**Treasure:** X & Y in lair

Standing a bit over 7' and weighing 300 lbs, the Creature, polluted out of its once-loved swimming hole, lives nearby on land. Though it may jump into the bog if need be, and can stay under for quite some time (1d6 turns), it must breathe air to live.

If the Creature encounters a party with females, all its efforts will focus on sneakily obtaining the female with the highest Charisma (generally by first extinguishing all light sources). Also, when a female is within the fray, the Creature will gain +2 to all attacks. However, if any attack will possibly harm the female of its desire, it will not make that attack.

Lastly, if the Creature is captured, each evening, there is a 67% chance of its escape.



## CULTISTS OF THE CREATURE

**Alignment:** Neutral  
**AC:** 8 (11)  
**HD:** 2+1  
**Move:** 120' (40')  
**Attacks:** 1 weapon  
**Damage:** 1d6+2  
**Save As:** Fighter: 2  
**Morale:** 8  
**Treasure:** C

There are 1d4 x 10 humanesque cultists nearby that worship the Creature. They live as primitives and paint their bodies with scale-like drawings and tattoos leaning toward camouflage. If a party encounters one, or a number of them, and directly attempt to use them to get to the Creature, the cultist(s) will always lie, and try to trap, divert, ambush, ultimately do away with the party, before they ever see the Creature.

## GODZILLA+

The oceans fester with pollution and radioactivity, faint traces of worlds past, lost and forgotten... Though in a deep cave, a massive amphibian dinosaur awakens from slumber, earthshaking explosions across the water and lands, rising up in the lightning, the dinosaur walks onto land once again, to breathe air, and destroy anything in its way, if need be.

**Alignment:** Neutral  
**AC:** 2 (17)  
**HD:** 23  
**Move:** 150' (50')  
**Attacks:** 4 attacks (bite / 2 claws / tail)\*  
**Damage:** 2d8 / 2d6 / 2d6 / 3d6  
**Save As:** Fighter: 12  
**Morale:** 11  
**Treasure:** Nil

\*Each round, before Godzilla+ attacks, roll percentiles. There is a 25% chance the attack uses one of his special powers. If so, roll 1d4 to determine which:

1. **Atomic Breath:** Damage 5d8
2. **Nuclear Stomp:** All beings & structures within 100' take 1d20 damage
3. **Eye Lasers:** Damage 1d12 +?
4. **Regeneration:** No attack; Godzilla+ regains 1d10 HP

**Important:** Godzilla+ can only take damage from magic and/or magic weapons.



## HILLBILLY FRANKENSTEIN

**THE MONSTER**  
**Alignment:** Chaotic  
**AC:** 6 (13)  
**HD:** 6  
**Move:** 90' (30')  
**Attacks:** 2 (arms/hands)  
**Damage:** 1d8 / 1d8  
**Save As:** Thief: 5  
**Morale:** 10  
**Treasure:** Nil

A country doctor fleeing destruction, finds himself in forgotten hills, walking upon a house and barn with rotting remains of a sizable human family and their animals. Holed up in the ramshackle house, going nutty from the strange noises in the surrounding woods at night, during day, the doctor experiments with raw materials...

One night, during a terrific electrical storm, he channels a lightning bolt down a rod along a tree and into its hollow where a cursed monster sits, lifeless, stitched together with string. The monster rises. A face half-human/half-pig, moaning and oinking, arms reaching out...

If the monster hits the same target two rounds in a row, there is a 50% chance it will pick up that being (if possible) and/or attempt to strangle them.

## THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

**Alignment:** Chaotic  
**AC:** 9 (10)  
**HD:** 2  
**Move:** 120' (40')  
**Attacks:** 1 weapon  
**Damage:** 1d6  
**Save As:** Magic User: 2  
**Morale:** 7  
**Treasure:** 2d12 gp + see below

Though the doctor left his wealth behind, inside his Gladstone bag are 1d8+1 random potions (each has 13% chance of being *poison*). Also, if located, his notes on experiments with the monster can bring a pretty penny, or aid in creating a monster of one's own. He wields an ancient silver dagger and can cast both *ventriloquism* and *shield* spells.

## HUNCHBACK OF THE HIDDEN CHURCH

### THE HUNCHBACK

**Alignment:** Neutral  
**AC:** 7 (12)  
**HD:** 3+4  
**Move:** 90' (30')  
**Attacks:** 1 weapon  
**Damage:** 1d8  
**Save As:** Dwarf: 3  
**Morale:** 9  
**Treasure:** Q & S in lair

While most of the church is now rubble, covered with strange and glowing vegetation, the bell tower still stands... The unsightly hunchback, once a proponent for good, has been hardened by survival in these ravaged lands and now questions everything. Having fashioned a glider out of wood, paper and scraps, he will crash down on targets as a range weapon, attack with club, and scurry off into the brush. Also, with a kinship to surviving bats, the hunchback can summon 1d4 x10 Psionic Belfry Bats to his aid when needed.

### PSIONIC BELFRY BATS

**Alignment:** Neutral  
**AC:** 6 (13)  
**HD:** 2 hit points (0 level man)  
**Move:** 9' (3')  
 Fly: 120' (40')  
**Attacks:** Psychic Fear  
**Damage:** Nil  
**Save As:** Normal Man  
**Morale:** 7  
**Treasure:** Nil

When a group of belfry bats is summoned, they will circle and psychically emanate a vibration and aura that behaves as a *Wand of Fear* on all in the area below.



## TERMINATOR MUMMY

In the desert, an ancient civilization has risen up with the aid of mysterious machinery. Long dead bodies, preserved by ancient means, have been mined and altered into formidable soldiers. The pawns of the full-on Machine Lords, the Terminator Mummies have been sent forth with data on those to hunt and kill. It's likely, this data includes PCs, or key NPCs, in your game.

**Alignment:** Chaotic  
**AC:** 4 (15)  
**HD:** 6+2  
**Move:** 60' (20')  
**Attacks:** 1  
**Damage:** 1d12\*  
**Save As:** Fighter: 6  
**Morale:** 12  
**Treasure:** See below

TMs, like mummies, can only take damage from spells, fire, or magic weapons, and these only do half damage. *Sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells do not work on TMs. Animals, especially dogs, will sense their approach within 120', and react accordingly. If a TM appears to a party of less than five individuals, each must Save vs. Spells or be paralyzed with *fear* until the TM hits. Due to machination, unlike normal mummies, TMs have no *disease* effects when hitting an opponent. Lastly, as for treasure, if gone about the right way, there is a 60% chance that info can be gained from machinery for directions (map) to a TM's lair (Treasure: H).

\*There is a 33% chance that any TM will wear a ring that shoots a red laser that can do up to 16 damage, as well as leave inanimate targets aflame.

# POST-APOCALYPTIC CLASSIC MOVIE MONSTERS

## WOLF-MAN RIDER

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**AC:** 2 (17)

**HD:** 4+2

**Move:** 150' (50')

**Motorcycle:** 360' (120')

**Attacks:** 1

**Damage:** 2d4\*

**Save As:** Fighter: 4

**Morale:** 9

**Treasure:** Individuals, Q; In lair, C

*\*Each motorcycle is equipped with five explosive rockets that can be launched while the rider is aboard. The rocket launcher fires as a crossbow, and each rocket does 1d20 damage on a hit. Motorcycles can take up to 15 points of damage before they are destroyed, defending with AC 4 (16).*

Talbot Industries, one of the foremost machine companies of the Industrial Era, had a fallout shelter. While this seemed beneficial to many on that fateful day, it proved a curse when a few days in, one of the survivors transformed into a wolf. A few months later, a handful of wolf-men made their way to the surface and located an intact fleet of Talbot Military Motorcycles. Due to the new atmospheric conditions, they also realized they stay wolf-person most of the time, only forced to revert to human when basking in the rays of a full moon for at least ten minutes. Because of their highly advanced Kevlar vests, etc., the wolf-man riders have an AC of 2. Also, like all lycanthropes, they can only be damaged by silver or magic weapons.



*With eyes glimmering red,  
And mouth agape with gore,  
The great beast hungers,  
Craving Flesh... ever more..  
Which is why all children fear  
THE GREAT SANTICORE!!!*

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a hard sci-fi adventure taking place on a commercial space station located in an asteroid belt. I'd like it to have a touch of mystery or intrigue. A few unrelated 'people and places' would be cool too, but fall under the 'extra 900 miles' clause.*

# THE LOFTY FRONTIER:

## GAO JIE

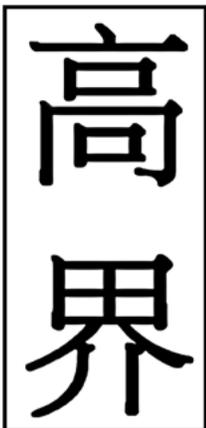
By Boric G.

The original document is hosted here: [Gao Jie](#).

## THE LOFTY FRONTIER

### THE PLACE

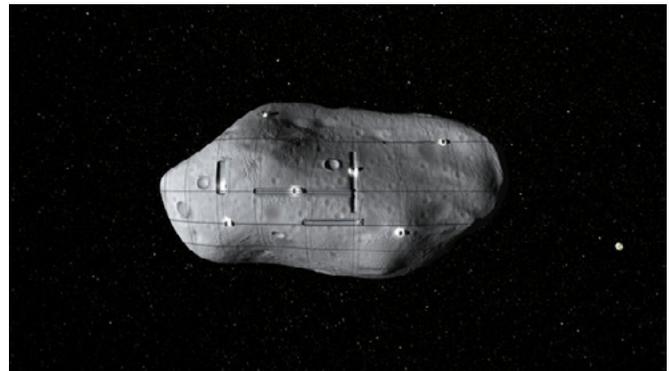
Gao Jie Xiaoxing was founded by the Peoples' Republic of Unified Asia in the year 2109. On October 10 of that year, the Taiwanese crew of the Beautiful Plum Odyssey Corvette made landfall on the centaur (minor planet) known only as C406. During their initial survey of the minor planet, they found a "recent" impact crater (less than 1,000 years old) that had penetrated the outer crust of the glorified asteroid to reveal a series of crude tunnels and rough-hewn caverns. The interior features were clearly artificial, but gave no evidence as the beings responsible for the construction.



The Beautiful Plum claimed the centaur in the name of the PRUA and christened it "Gao Jie." Subsequent teams cleaned up most of the passageways, installing di-crete and permaluminum walls and floors. These teams also expanded the scope of the interior through additional excavation and they enhanced the rooms by "humanizing" them. Gao Jie has since been nicknamed "The Rock" by its oldest residents, a crude name which has stuck, much to the disgust of the PRUA.

All this was 35 years ago. In that time, Gao Jie has become a hub of transit and trade in the Sol System. It is not a pretty place, or a happy place, but it is a place of convenience and subtle influence everywhere in the System.

The centaur is barely more than a large rock hurtling through the solar system on an erratic orbit that carries it outside of Saturn's orbit, weaving through the inner planets and back. The centaur is a little more than a mile long and one-third that measure in diameter. Generally speaking, there are an average of 70 floors of habitable space running along the full length of The Rock. In most places the crust is at least 100 feet thick, although there are places where the crust is considerably thinner. The 'recent' impact crater, for example, punctured through the crust to reach the outermost corridors. However, the PRUA converted the



*Side view of Gao Jie, Centaur, Sol System*

crater to become the central docking zone. Most, but not all, of the other "thin crust" areas are located at the various other airlock and docking sectors.

Rumors persist that there are vast lengths of rough-hewn corridors, winding maze-like through The Rock, that have seldom—if ever—been seen by a human. There are also rumors that say the original occupants of the centaur are either returning to reclaim their home or are already there, living in the unmapped areas, killing the population of Gao Jie as they can.

Docking, dining, and habitation is available and open to visitors of all races. Each "non-human" race, however, is responsible to provide its own life-support needs; for example, non-oxygen breathers do not have a specified living zone where their individual atmosphere needs are set up. As a result, it is common to see beings throughout Gao Jie using individual breathing apparatus; for convenience, most races have also set up their own restaurants as well.

Weapons are illegal in Gao Jie, although most are also generally accepted with a wink and a nod. Provided, of course, that the peace is kept and as long as Gao Jie security is not drawn into a conflict or forced to recognize the presence and/or use of a weapon. All beam and/or energy weapons, however, are strictly forbidden; their use is immediately and harshly punished. So too are slug weapons, especially explosive-slug weapons. These weapons obviously pose too great a risk of crust breach and depressurization.

Living and working in Gao Jie has never been easy. Money

is tight and life is cheap. Individuals vanish all the time without a trace. Some of these are never seen again; this of course helps support the rumors of an unknown alien race hiding in Gao Jie. Whether these beings have earned enough credits to travel elsewhere, have stowed away on a random, passing ship, or have been killed—these questions are seldom answered unless the individuals reappear. It is not unusual to find one's self in a less-traveled area of The Rock and to encounter small puddles of various races' vital fluids.

## BEINGS

### MU CALCAM

The PRUA still controls and governs Gao Jie, at least nominally. Mu Calcam is the PRUA's current appointed Governor. He was born and raised in the human colony on the planet Discate Minimus. His parents both toiled away in the jade mines found on that barren planet. As a teenager, Calcam joined with a neighborhood gang and used it as a gateway to a career as a petty criminal. His activities eventually gained the notice of the PRUA's governor on Discate Minimus, who took Calcam under his wing and groomed him for a life of politics.

Calcam is in his early thirties and is short and slim. He is Asian and has very plain features, with dirty blond hair and brown eyes. He is generous to a fault, which those around him use to their advantage. In part because of this fault, Calcam is a very ineffective governor; his staff completes most tasks for him. At best he is a figurehead, at worst, a puppet.

### MAJOR TAU SABERANT

As the Head of Security, Tau is the highest military authority in Gao Jie. Most know that he is the true governing force behind Gao Jie, although it is a fact kept as quiet as possible.

Tau is in his mid-forties and is career Army. He is tall and muscular with handsome, planed and chiseled features. In his youth, his image graced numerous versions of the Army's recruitment posters on his home planet of Iagor IX. He keeps his dark brown hair shorter even than regulations require and his piercing hazel eyes are constantly moving, looking for miscreants and mischief.

He supports temperance and proudly declares a life-long abstinence from alcohol and drugs. His three vices seem to be his vanity, the love of his and his unwavering loyalty to Army regulations. He justifies his "puppeteer governorship" by keeping a long, ever-growing list of violations committed by Governor Mu Calcam. After all, he reasons, someone with authority needs to govern and it should be someone with a government affiliation; because he's a member of the Government's Armed Forces and the second-highest governmental authority in Gao Jie, who better to govern in Calcam's stead? The fact is that nearly everyone knows he is the power behind the Governor, but no one wants to be

caught admitting or suggesting that he is truly in charge. Tau does not like trying to explain his reasoning to others. It's likely that he truly realizes he's on shaky ground and does not wish to examine his reasons too carefully. Instead, he turns a blind eye to the fact that everyone that matters already knows of his position.

### MURATROX

This "individual" (for lack of a better term) is a life-form from the planet Totamer Divexatus Delta. Muratrox's race are asexual and insist on being referred to with a pronoun sounding like "duh." Muratrox is a fount of wisdom and near-genius who is often overlooked or disregarded because of duh's looks. Muratrox most closely resembles a hemispherical gelatin mold made of green gelatin. Within duh's body are objects which appear to be pieces of shredded carrot. The function of these objects is unknown; they could be organs, brain cells, or partially-digested food. When not in his own quarters, Muratrox can be found traveling the corridors in his robotic exo-suit.

### THE RELEGAM OF EXTRICUM MINOR

This being considers himself to be a king-in-exile and a member of a Royal Family that has been in exile for 25 generations. Unfortunately for him, there is absolutely no proof of this claim; even genetic tests have been inconclusive. However, assassins from the ruling Royal Family of Extrinsic Minor are constantly hunting for him and attempting to "put an end" to his claims, so many believe that his claim does, in fact, have a basis in truth.

Beings from Extrinsic Minor, including the Relegam, are dog-sized arachnoids. They are skilled fighters and make excellent for-hire assassins because of their arachnid abilities, and their skilled attacks (strangling limbs, noxious fumes, poisonous fangs, as well as thrown weapons). They must rely on an omni-node translator device to speak in Sol Standard. The Relegam delights in "clothing" himself by with garish silk scarves.

### CAPTAIN SAXI

Saxi is second-in-command to Major Tau Saberant. Even though they hail from sister planets in the Iagor System—Tau from Iagor IX and Saxi from Iagor VII—the two Security officers are opposites in almost every way. No one would ever call Saxi handsome, due in part to his nose, which has been clearly broken numerous times. He is of average height and, although slender, still manages to convey a sense of flabbiness. This could be attributed either to his soft features or to his slovenly, unkempt appearance: his uniform, for example, has never seen the hot side of an iron or trouser press. His shocking red hair is rarely combed and always sports a cowlick. Saxi thrives on avarice and, if he has any virtue, it would be envy. He craves the power and position he believes Major Saberant enjoys. The only thing the two of

them share are their ever-vigilant hazel eyes. In contrast to Major Saberant, however, Saxi is always on the lookout for information or blackmail he can store up to gain power. Put bluntly, Saxi is not a nice person.

## SUSSUREO

One of the leading merchants in Gao Jie, Sussureo runs a small shop in which one can seemingly find anything they desire. Customers rarely find the same merchandise twice in the store, and are constantly amazed at the quantity of merchandise in such a small space. Those that believe in such things are confident that Sussureo has some form of arcane power that he uses in his trade.

Sussureo comes from the sole habitable planet in the Epsilon Mala System, a small forsaken wasteland of a planet and the only solid planet in the System amid three gas giants. He looks like a man-sized version of an Earth snake with arms. He is mostly brown mottled with green hues. Many humans have been known to flee from his shop in primal horror when they first meet him. He is, however, an affable sort; this is in itself surprising, considering his motivating principles are overwhelming greed, deep-seated pride, and a bit of paranoia. When angered, Sussureo has been known to rain crushing blows upon his foe; he disdains weapons of every kind, believing that if you can't kill with your hands, you shouldn't be fighting.

## FATHER PLAGETE VOLVAMERE

Like Major Tao Saberant, Father Volvamere, is career Army; the two of them have served closely throughout their careers. When the Major was transferred to Gao Jie, he requested that his close friend and spiritual adviser join him in the posting. The two are strong friends; although Father Volvamere would never admit it publicly, however, he has great pity for the extreme drive his friend shows as well as for the attempt to justify wresting control of Gao Jie from Governor Mu Calcam. His journals are filled with thoughts and questions on this topic; he would die with shame if Major Saberant ever learned of his pondering.

Father Volvamere is a short humanoid with distinctly draconic features, although both his tiny, useless wings and his floor-length tail are merely vestigial. He was forced out by the Holy Confederacy on Arcturit over 113 years ago from his family home for his "improper" desire to adventure and his "blasphemous" questioning about the nature and numbers of gods in the universe. He has not seen his family since that day and the rare contacts with others of his species have been short and tense, if not downright hostile. He joined the Army who trained him in religion and projectile weapons; they did both extremely well and he has never looked back.

## BENIO

This human trader is from the Greco-Italian colony on Solvi II. Little is known of Benio, other than his voracious appetite

and crazed piloting. He flies an ancient Magnawing he calls *The Steel Tramp*, which bears markings and registration from Innovative Maxitronics. However, any questions posed to him about his ship are answered with a simple blank stare... that suggests to the asker that he is seconds away from a painful death. Benio is friendly enough, but no one seems to call him friend. He stands roughly four feet tall, and is nearly as wide. He is completely hairless; even his ice-blue eyes lack eyelashes. His face reflects strength rather than softness and his mind and wit are quick. He will carry any cargo for a price and his favors never come free of charge.

## LAMBDA EXTRICES

A being of pure energy, Lambda Extrices appears as a small grey cloud; the peculiar interaction between the bodily energy and the atmosphere inside Gao Jie causes condensation and formation of a cloud. Were it not for this effect, Lambda Extrices would be nearly invisible to the naked eye; as it is, most electronic devices outside of a thermal kaegu sensor cannot register its presence. It is unknown what world spawned Lambda Extrices and whether there are other beings like it. An omni-node translator device is required for communication between Lambda Extrices and other beings. Attempts to make psychic or empathic contact with Lambda Extrices have consistently resulted in loss of sanity, dementia, and death.

## THE DOMINAR OF ZETA MAJORIS

This humanoid refugee has taken up residence in Gao Jie. His daunting, proud title afforded him great respect when he first arrived, but as soon as the omni-node translator got to work on his native tongue, it was learned that "Dominar" translated to "Custodial engineer." He has been largely unaffected by others learning this fact; the Dominar naturally perspires liquid Etherine which allows him to travel dirtside Gao Jie for maintenance and repairs for short periods without an atmosphere suit. He is paid handsomely for the work he does around Gao Jie; he is quick and efficient, and leaves spotlessness behind him. The Dominar is rumored to be the only being living in Gao Jie that has been to every corner of The Rock. The Dominar will not verify this rumor; when asked he becomes very quiet and withdrawn, remaining that way for days.

The Dominar (whose given name is unpronounceable in Sol Standard) is over seven feet tall and incredibly thin with skin the hue of a yellow earth squash. He has a small 2"-square patch of green hair on the back of his head where his skull meets his spine. The Dominar has three long multi-jointed fingers on each hand that are placed equidistant around his palm. Newcomers to Gao Jie are usually warned that he has little patience for foreign customs and is easily annoyed by laziness.

## FLAGRAE LABREX

An oddity in Gao Jie, no one seems to know her background or what world birthed her. She is humanoid; her head has two distinct faces that are set at angles on her head and which do everything in unison. Purple hair frames her head and a feather boa-like mane of hair circles her shoulders. Flagrae also has three arms and two legs. Nothing about her makes any sense in an evolutionary sense.

Flagrae is the owner and bartender at The Smiling Pirate. She has also become one of Gao Jie's "must see" sights for tourists and visitors. She doesn't mind the attention; in fact, she encourages it as it boosts business. After all, no one enters The Smiling Pirate without having to purchase a drink. No one sits at a table without ordering a snack. In return, however, Flagrae is exceptionally protective of her customers, especially her regulars. She will not give up a name or information on any of her customers, past or present, to anyone.

## ENASK TEPIUS

Enask is the resident Chief of Medicine in the Gao Jie medi-complex. He is also slightly insane. He was born and raised on Mercenis 3 and left home for the first time when he traveled to Mars Colony for medical school. He took up residence in Gao Jie fresh out of school and has worked his way up through the ranks to Chief of Medicine in the small medi-complex. He is in his early fifties with red eyes and wavy brown hair. Enask is of below-average height and has rough, weathered features. He has no left arm.

Dr. Tepius is a brilliant scientist and geneticist in his own right. Unfortunately, he has let that go to his head and performs secret experiments. He has a secret lab in a disused chamber he found in the basement of the medi-complex.

## MADAME CHOCO

Madame Choco is a freen from Solverant Fiducus VI. The freen are horse-sized, ursine beasts with random porcupine spines across their body. Madame Choco is covered from head to toe with a light beige fur. She is normally good-tempered, but viciously protects her girls and staff.

## PLACES

### NIGHTSIDE

The lower regions of Gao Jie. These are the older sections—run down and dimly lighted. Most residents of Nightside are poor and unable to legitimately and legally eke out a living. These are the down-trodden who made their way to Gao Jie and found themselves unable to pay for transit off The Rock. Hidden traps and dangerous beings abound here, nearly as far from civilized Gao Jie as one can get.

### BLOODPORT

This docking area was the site of a horrific accident shortly

after the founding of Gao Jie. Over forty beings of various species lost their lives in a shipping transport accident caused in part by an agreement between an unscrupulous transport Captain and a void butcher. Bloodport was immediately sealed off and is never used; rumor has it that the area is haunted. Strange lights and shapes are often seen and odd sounds are often heard; individuals have gone missing after venturing near Bloodport.

## THE VIOLET SLAYER

This establishment is an oddity of sorts, hearkening back to medieval earth. It is, essentially, a modern-day inn. Not a bed-and-breakfast, but an inn: restaurant, bar, and rooms. It promises good food, good drink, and a good night's sleep at a reasonable price. It is owned and operated by Nick Bates. Nick comes from earth and seems to be much older than he appears; for example, he knows much more about earth history than someone his apparent age should know. Beings who spend time talking to Nick become very uncomfortable and uneasy without knowing exactly why. Nick loves to talk about his mother; he clearly dotes on his mother, who is seldom seen.

## THE SMILING PIRATE

The Smiling Pirate is the seediest bar in Gao Jie. It is also the best place to find pilots and smugglers. It is said that, given time, everyone who is anyone has passed time in The Smiling Pirate. It's prices are ridiculously low which should be a clue that the drinks are watered down. No one seems to care.

## THE BAZAAR

The Bazaar is an open-air marketplace in the center of Gao Jie. There are 35 stalls selling everything from food to clothing to jewelry. Some of the more interesting stalls sell: idols and incense; live food animals; charms; toys; alchemical ingredients; and clothing, boots, and armor elements made from reptilian hide.

## MADAME CHOCO'S HOUSE OF PLEASURE

One of the most popular houses of ill repute in the Sol System, Madame Choco caters to all humanoid species and many of the more common non-humanoid species that frequent Gao Jie.

## CREATURES

### DURERAT

The lower, darker, and more run-down areas of Gao Jie known as "Nightside" are infested with a vermin known as the durerat. These tiny frog-like creatures are covered in protective scales and make their home in shadow. They are excellent at tracking prey, and will often group together to bring down prey many times their own size. They attack with a scorpion-like tail striker and a choking acidic smoke.

## VOID BUTCHER

Void butchers are vicious, hulking, insectoid beasts. They reputedly come from deep space and thrive on negative emotions such as fear, hate, and pain. They use various-sized spikes and paralyzing toxins against their prey, torturing the poor souls and extending the negative emotions as long as possible until death, at which point they lay eggs in the ruined corpse of their victim. Myths suggest that they are invulnerable after sundown. The absence of “sundown” in Gao Jie suggests a reason for the frequent appearance of void butchers in The Rock. There are those who have suggested that the void butchers are the original inhabitants of Gao Jie, but have offered no proof for their assertions.

## REACKRA

The reackra are a race of horrifying, decaying humanoids that closely resemble undead creatures. They first spawned in the frozen wastelands on the planet Beta Aedar where they are the dominant species. They have not reached the technological level to build their own spacecraft; they reached the stars by stowing away on the craft of a visiting science team. Their numbers throughout the known galaxies are few, but they are widespread. They rend flesh with their massive, powerful fangs after disabling their prey with the bitter cold which emanates from their bodies.

## X\*KLIMA

The x\*klima are a species of diminutive canine beasts. They are bad-tempered, always hungry, completely hairless, eat through a narrow proboscis, and have two foot-long tentacles which grow from their shoulders. At the merest provocation, they attack with these tentacles, which are covered with sharp needles. Each needle is coated with a near-instant paralytic acid that first paralyzes the prey and then begins to break down the flesh and tissue into a form easily consumed and digestible by the x\*klima. They tend to travel in packs usually numbering between five and twenty; when prey is brought down the packs swarm in a frenzy, ripping and tearing at the wounded creature with their tentacles. This behavior means that most pack attacks are almost instantly fatal for the victim.

## KRYSKAE

The Kryskae are a race of intelligent mobile fungus. These diminutive slimy creatures make their homes in sewers. In Gao Jie, they’ve taken up residence in the waste recycling system and venture out at quiet times to find prey. They use a hypnotic song and toxic spores to snare prey and reproduce. They will root in their prey and absorb nutrients and tissue, growing larger, and then dropping off to return to their lair. The victim is thus infected and is more susceptible to future attacks. At some point the victim can no longer recover from the Kryskaes’ feeding and will die, the spores within the corpse then giving rise to a new generation.

## ADOD

These tiny, furred arachnids are the intergalactic version of the cockroach. They bring filth and disease wherever they go. Their bite delivers a necrotic poison infused with pheromones; the pheromones cause any other adod within 25’ to swarm and attack the victim.

## MAXET

The Maxet are a bat-like species from Kappa Laetis. They are nearly as dextrous on the ground as they are in the air and use their ability to breathe fire to catch their prey. When a pair of maxet are mating, they become extremely aggressive and irrational, liable to attack without cause or warning.

## HOOKS

1. The holiday Anaif is a religious holiday in the Interficate Sigma System which is observed during the ten-day period surrounding their fall equinox. It is a holiday associated with divine love and innocence. Gao Jie security has received a tip that this year’s Anaif observance is going to be disrupted by a group calling themselves “The Hidden”: a group of self-proclaimed seers motivated by lust and greed. They have vast resources and a powerful influence within Gao Jie; Captain Saxi has asked one of his men to approach the Player Characters to intervene as unofficial deputies so that the Powers of Gao Jie can keep their hands clean and continue to profess neutrality.

2. The Player Characters are in transit toward Gao Jie and come into contact with members of the Crimson Serpent. They are assassins from Epsilon Mala heading to Gao Jie to carry out a contract on Sussureo. The Player Characters have been referred to Sussureo in order to procure a neutron cortex calibrator, which their employer(s) require. The PCs’ employer(s) are confident that Sussureo is the only source for a neutron cortex calibrator within light years of Sol System.

3. The human-sized bird-like Ambassador from Rho Defectus has arrived in Gao Jie as part of a conspiracy with the ruling family of Extricum Minor. This is part of their latest bid to do away with the Relegam once and for all. The Ambassador’s staff are, in actuality, master assassins. Unbeknownst to the Ambassador, however, The Relegam is an old friend to one of the Player Characters who has arrived in Gao Jie for a reunion, of sorts.

4. Enask Tepius has decided to take his genetic dabbling a step further. He has cultivated Captain Saxi’s trust; Saxi has confided in him the secret desire to supplant Major Tau Saberant and control Gao Jie by himself. He even confessed that he wished to find a way to convince the PRUA to appoint him as governor. Dr. Tepius has convinced Saxi that he has “scientific means” by which Saxi can accomplish these goals. In return for Dr. Tepius’ help, Saxi has agreed to give him free reign in his experiments and an unlimited budget.

Unbeknownst to Saxi, however, Dr. Tepius plans on cloning Saxi, programming the clone to be loyal only to Tepius, and then murder and supplant Captain Saxi when the time is right. Dr. Tepius has his own, insane goals, which include infiltrating the PRUA government with his clones, ruin the economy, and then instigate a quiet coup. He believes a new group of his clones would then be put into power and he would then be the puppet master of an interplanetary superpower. He plans on putting his scheme into action next weekend.

5. Saevant, a secretive smuggler from Gamma Meduso is attempting to bring aboard a crate of high-powered explosive-slug throwers. The porcine humanoid currently has the weapons hidden on his ship, the Lone Dagger; he is planning to conduct a Black Market auction in the Nightside. His contacts suggest that a group known only as The Silent Horde is planning to outbid all comers. The Silent Horde is a group of ex-military dissidents led by a former star-pilot named Paige Davis. Davis plans to arm The Silent Horde and lead them on an assault on the government building in the Mars Colony, using Gao Jie as a staging area. At least one or more of the Player Characters should have family or close friends who work in the government building in the Mars Colony.

6. The local thieves' union in Gao Jie is building an inverted disruption system that will allow them to shut down all security cameras and alarm systems in The Rock, as well as any docked vehicles (such as the Player Characters' vessel). They are missing one vital piece: a kod ring. Fortunately (for them) the Ignots—a canine species from the Jonsavo Sector—use a particle carapace generator as a vital part of their observance of Vaezoco, a solemn holiday commemorating strife and stability. The kod ring is an integral part of the particle carapace and Vaezoco begins next week. Both the thieves' union and the local Ignot population will stop at nothing for possession of the kod ring. Gao Jie security forces are insufficient to maintain control and are recruiting anyone available (such as the Player Characters), including a group of bounty hunters who are present to sow discord and play all sides against each other. The bounty hunters all carry and use powerful beam weapons.

7. Several family members of one of the Player Characters are currently living in Gao Jie. A group of religious zealots known as The Divine Gate are planning to release into Gao Jie a rare strain of Dream Pox, a deadly and incurable disease. Members of The Divine Gate are all slightly unstable and universally hated. They have made ridiculous and nonsensical demands which cannot possibly be met before the declared deadline.

8. Lambda Extrices, a resident of Gao Jie, has apparently gone insane, which poses potentially fatal risk to both Gao Jie and the Sol System. One function of his insanity has disabled the Player Characters' ship and all other ships currently docked at Gao Jie. The Player Characters are thus trapped in Gao Jie with everyone else.

9. Refit Lenens is a bumbling trader, well-known for his many gaffes and mistakes. People using his services can easily take advantage of him; his inherent clumsiness and klutziness add to the slapstick nature of his work. He has just docked his ship, the Hazard Shock, at Gao Jie carrying a load of "exotic pets." His payload includes several species of Earth animals as well as several x\*klima, a crate of adod, a mating pair of maxet, and even a reactra in suspended animation. During the unloading process there is a 50% chance with each crate that he will do something that will cause the crate to burst open and release the animals. As his airlock is adjacent to the Player Characters' airlock, there is a 95% chance that any animals released will make their way directly to the Player Characters' ship.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a small piece of map; maze-like, a handful of rooms, maybe no more than 35 squares. . . square. *FNŠJDE a HUGŁ spaceship. The whole ship is over 5 miles long, 700 feet tall, another 500 feet wide, a massive prison barge. Rooms should be themed to a high-tech society and to a prison setting (guard rooms, mess hall, cells), but the layout can be as twisty-turny as possible. Thanks in advance!*

# TSVARIK III PENAL SHIP!

By Matt Jackson

## THE TSVARIK III

The *Tsvarik III* is Charos Class penal ship. Once placed in orbit, the ship maintains its geo-spatial position using inertial dampeners and micro-thrusters. The III designation is due to this particular model being the third iteration of this blueprint. The first attempt to use this blueprint resulted in one-hundred and seventy-six prisoners and thirteen prison guards being killed by ebullism (gas bubbles in the blood) when the entire facility decompressed in less than seventeen seconds. The second ship of this line was struck by asteroids just seventeen days after the first prisoner boarded, resulting in five-hundred and seventy-nine prisoners and nineteen guards meeting their untimely end. Capital Ship Construction, Inc. and the Federated Cosmic Penal Institute (FCPI) have ensured the public that this latest model is safe and impervious to human or cosmic fault.

Needless to say, they were wrong.

Just thirty-six days after launch, communication with *Tsvarik III* was lost.

The Charos Class Penal Ship is shaped roughly like a large mushroom with a seven hundred foot round command and life support module (also known as the “dome”) that sits atop a nearly five mile long axis.

## THE DOME

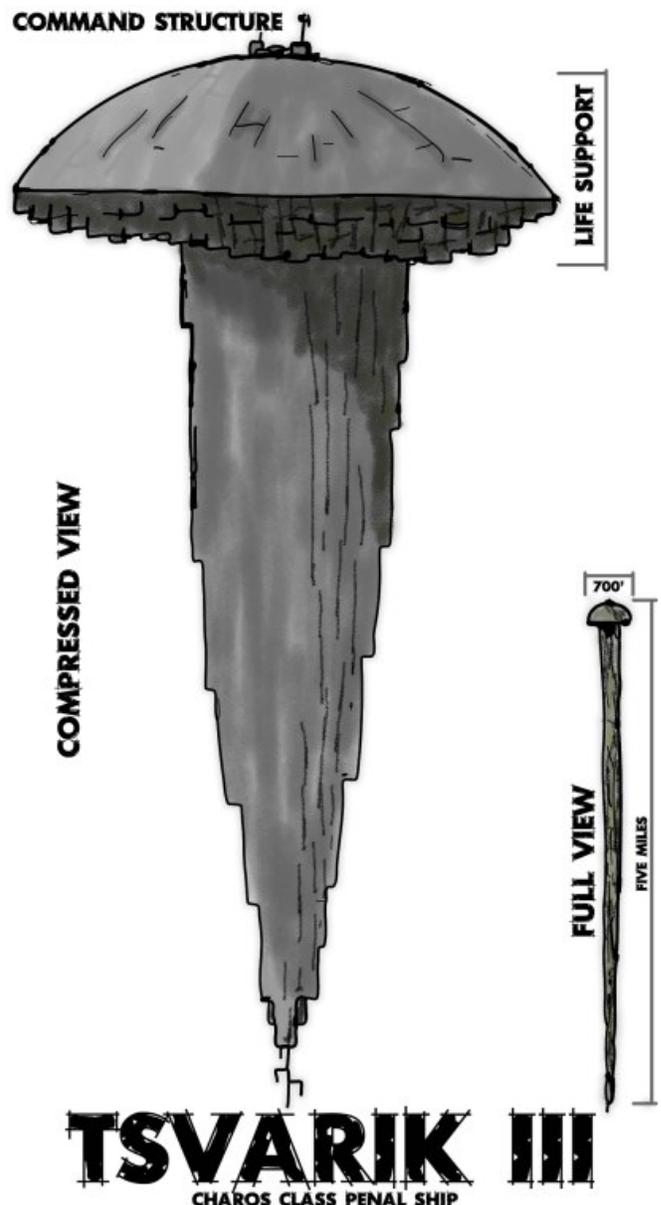
Command and Control is housed near the top of the dome along with a small docking bay and sensor array. Primary life support and power generation is housed in the lower portion of the dome, forming a massive and cavernous labyrinth of steel and wires. Persons daring to explore these levels (there are forty-seven) without a guard, or extensive knowledge of the craft’s design, will easily become twisted and turned around.

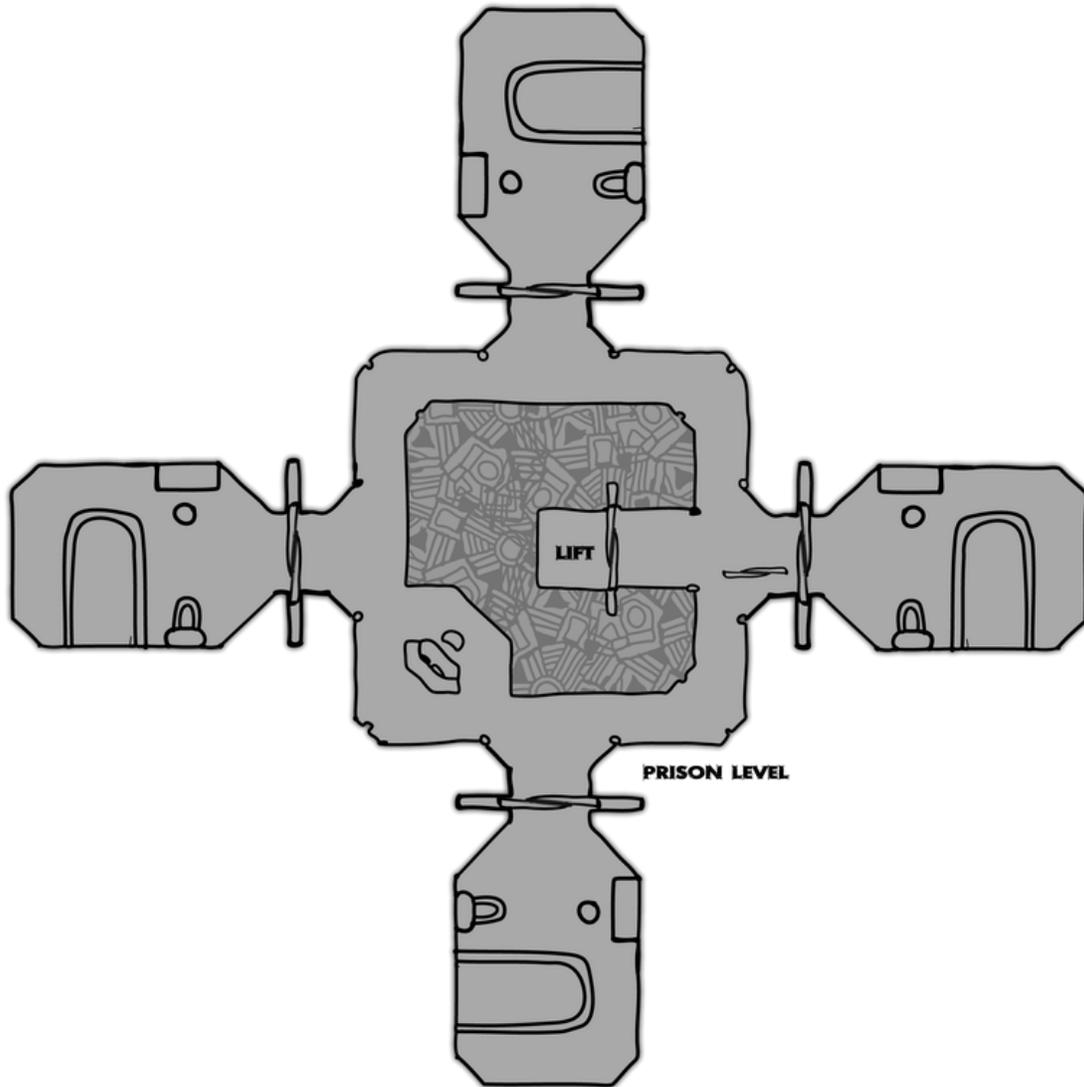
## THE AXIS

The axis serves as a massively long penal area cordoned off with a support section every one thousand feet. This support section has facilities for basic life support such as a first aid stations or mess facilities, the area between the support sections being the prisoners’ cells. Each prison level has

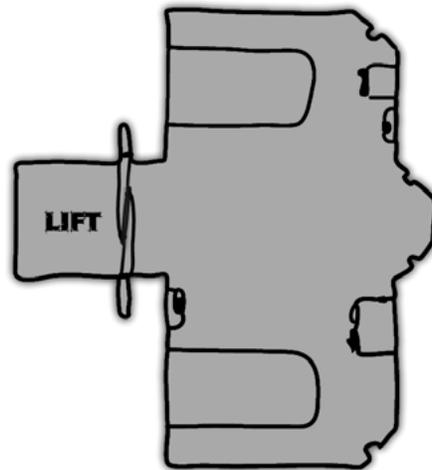
separate controls that will open the cells on it’s level with the correct passcode and badge scanner.

Matt Jackson’s full-size deck maps are hosted on [Wrath of zombie’s](#) blog.

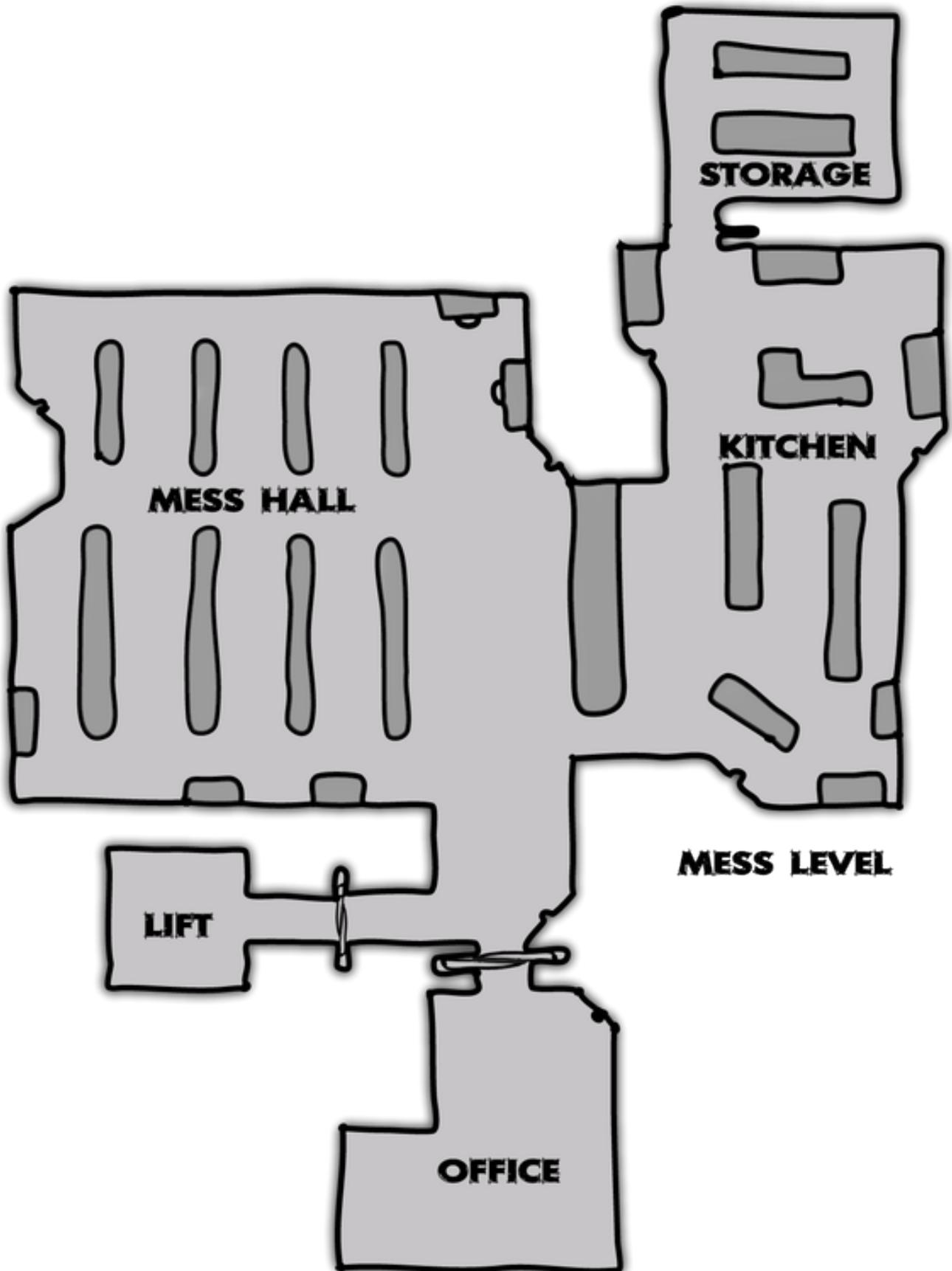


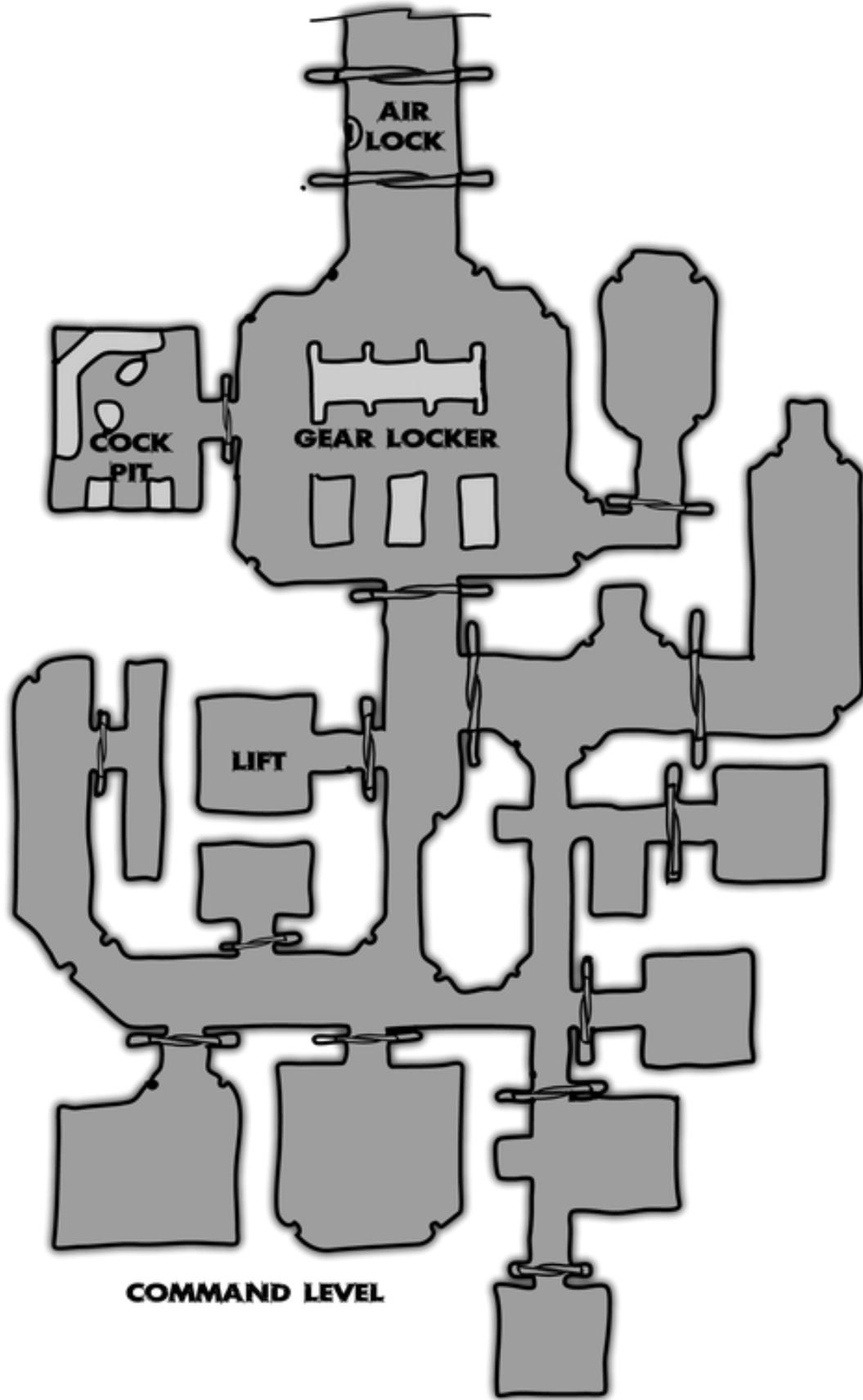


PRISON LEVEL



MEDICAL LEVEL





*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a ptential junksite.*

*Thanks,*

*Shoe Skogen*

Shoe Skogen is working on (and running) a game called Trash Planet, a sci-fi romp centered around dangerous junksites which must be pillaged by the PCs living in a society where everything must be scavenged.

# MAKING A TRASH PLANET

By Kirin Robinson

**Editor's Note:** This is compatible with space adventuring games of all types, but especially a cool game called **Trash Planet**.

## SUPER DUPER SECRET SANTICORE TRASH PLANET PROJECT

Some planets are just the junkheaps of the system, dead-end places layered mile-thick with nothing but the crap that other people don't want. These are therefore extremely interesting places to be, so let's figure out how to make them explorable and exciting.

### TO MAKE A TRASH PLANET

1) Pick a...

#### REASON YOUR PLAYERS ENDED UP ON A TRASH PLANET

d6	Reason
1	The Spaceman Spiff ("people just like to shoot at me till I crash I guess")
2	I Need A Part ("one person's trash is another person's treasure")
3	Intergalactic Dust Bowl of 30 aught 6 ("Times're tough, and that's when the nanoplague hit")
4	I Fought The STAR LAW and the STAR LAW Won ("No-one will recognize me with this holomoustache")
5	NO DISINTEGRATIONS: Bounty hunting for fun and profit ("Someone on this shithole fought the law, or at least fought someone that Pays Really Well")
6	Big Fat Mystery ("Alien Ruins, Ancient Technologies Lost to Time, Trash-covered Warphole to the Fabled World, The CryptoKey To All Knowledge, Where's My Other Damn Sock")

2) Then decide on a bunch of ...

TRASH PLANET STUFF THAT WILL KILL YOU (OR EAT YOU OR USE YOU FOR PARTS OR IMPERSONALLY SQUASH YOU OR MAYBE JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOU)

Pick or roll on the following table however many times you need to fill in your map.



# MAKING A TRASH PLANET

d20	Stuff That Will Kill You, Eat You, or...
1	Bandit Warlord with a corrugated fiefdom (barter-withable if you can get past the Strong Tendencies Towards Violence)
2	Trash Compacting and Incineration System (climb up from the glowing light as the trash crumbles toward it beneath you AKA The Toy Story 3 effect)
3	Claim Jumpers and a Rush Town (rumor sprang up of something valuable, head for the hills it's a Hidden Treasure Rush, goldernit)
4	Scavenger Monsters and other Radioactive Biological Surprises (Clearly the Intergalactic Pet Mart flushed too many Mantishsharks down the toilet)
5	Warning! Medical Waste and Biohazard Area (including failed experiments, nanosporin ooze gone wild, mutated diseases, protozombies, etc)
6	Rogue/Malfunctioning Satellite Targeting Zone (impersonal death from above, "Run? Why? Is it just me or are things suddenly getting very hot?")
7	Artificially Intelligent Recyclables Processing Unit (boxes, vats and cleansers in a factory of Rube Goldbergian conveyor belt glory), surrounded by meticulously organized and categorized waste intended for re-use (primary resource areas hotly competed for).
8	Insular Scavenger Cultures (nonhostile but still dangerous cleansuit tribes remarkably efficient at stripping everything down into parts with a Piranha-like frenzy)
9	Cargo Cultists (Gathered around an automated trash-sorting expulsion point, thoroughly convinced that the refuse heap they live on is Quite Obviously the Promised Land)
10	Scavenger-Proofing Defense Systems (laser-grids and anti-organic targeting drones, probably defending Valuable Left-behind Infrastructure Access Points)
11	Unstable Energy Fluctuation (Usually giant cast-off malfunctioning ship parts interacting with each other: electromagnetic grids, electroshock cores, leaking battery acid, etc)
12	Waste Spirits (either the paranormal resonations of forgotten discardings or perhaps the static discharge of nanotech colonies and old holograph data banks NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE)
13	Nervously Suspicious Scientific Outpost (Somewhat unhinged Trasharcologists studying Landfill Strata for Revealing Secrets)
14	CEIEs: Corporate Espionage and Information Extractors (high-tech assassin-trained dataminers searching for competitor or forgotten information, lethally prejudiced against being discovered)
15	Ominous Entrance Route to the Core (someone established this pipeline network to access the undertrash, "Spark Your Glowrods, Let's Find Out What's Down There"), usually leading to...
16	Biological Living Waste Processors (Genetically-engineered trash-eating Fungi-Slugs From The Deep sometimes have a hard time understanding you're not trash)
17	Tectonic Shifting and Translocation Effects (The most common way that You Are Suddenly and Somewhat Violently No Longer Where You Thought You Were), also evidence of Possibly Interesting Occurrences Beneath You
18	Acid Pits (Get your hazmat suit and oxygen tanks on, toxic liquids have seeped together in this treacherous environment of walkways and islands. Surely valuable things lie undiscovered in a place where nothing can survive)
19	Gladiatorial Thunderdome (congrats, you've found the only bored settlement on Trash Planet, and the locals want entertainment)
20	Alien Ruin (hinted at and considered myth or superstition, it might activate a nanotechnological reconstruction of all surrounding trash into a beautiful paradise, it might be a portal to the inky outer reaches of insanity space.

A sample Trash World map by Kirin Robinson



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a shiny new cyberpunk gizmo. Play around with that as much as you want really...*

# CYBERPUNK GIZMO!!

By Reece Carter

## 1) DRAGONS BREATH THROAT REPLICATOR

The jaw and front of the neck area is replaced with a heat-resistant metal which has a small compartment inside of it for a micro-tank (small air tank like thingy) which houses the combustible liquid. When the mouth is opened and the tongue is pressed downwards to the bottom of the jaw, a small nozzle is reviled out the front of the mouth with then sprays a very fine mist of liquid that is lit on fire with contact with the air. This looks very similar to a dragon breathing fire (where the name comes from). It does 6P –half AP (*Shadowrun* 4a damage) or Area: 20ft cone (45 degrees), Damage: the damage that this would put out would be a moderate-serious amount. This can also light misc stuff on fire in the area, and can also melt things with a low melt point.

## 2) NANO CAMERA CLOAKING FIELD

A series of nano-dot cameras and projectors are placed onto a skintight body suit, this works by projecting what the camera sees to the opposite sides screen, and because this is done at such a small scale and by heaps of different cameras, it effectively renders the user invisible. Any tests to find a person using this equipment are severely hampered as the user is render almost totally invisible. The amount of cameras and screens used to produce this and the sheer size of the garment and cameras cause this to be rather expensive.

## 3) GELL DROP

Prized by both special forces soldiers and specialized criminals alike - these relatively scarce gizmos are small, two-barrelled flare guns made to allow rapid insertion into enemy territory where a using a parachute would be too dangerous.

At about 300-500m off the ground the falling person fires both barrels at the ground, discharging flares that contain a special mixture of compressed gelatin crystals and two different gel-based liquids. The small flares detonate upon impact, with the compressed gelatin crystals and gels mixing to form a cushion-like material that slows down anything to an almost complete stop (nothing faster then a brisk walk).

The gel material expands so rapidly that within about 10 seconds, the cushion is large enough to be seen by almost anyone in the general area. To solve this visibility problem, designers included a small secondary explosive within the gel compound. This chemical mixes with the gel and causes it to dissipate like a puff of smoke.

## 4) ELECTRONIC STRENGTH AUGMENTER

A series of different wires are placed just under the skin, which are connected to a variety of different micro-gyroscopes which are located at the various joins around the body. These gyros create energy which is stored in a pack, which runs along the spine, the energy which is saved up is converted into a electrical impulse and then travels down the wires under the skin to a couple of different plates placed in various areas of the hand, these electrical impulses are then discharged into what ever is being held or hit by the person. The discharge is a very powerful one and can cause a serious amount of damage to anyone or anything. The discharge is given by a mental command (from a small wire in the brain) and happens instantaneously, this then goes onto continue saving the energy from the gyros up, until discharged. If the energy goes over the limit that the power pack can save it is discharged harmlessly into the body, all the user feels is a slight tingle. Damage output for this would be serious, the amount of kinetic energy that can be stored and then harnessed makes this very powerful. This can only be used on unarmed strikes, as the small metal plates under the skin needs to connect with what ever it is being struck.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a map of an abandoned insane asylum -  
medieval, or victorian/steampunk. Your choice! :)*

# ASYLUM MAP

By Simon Foster

from [theskyfullofdust.co.uk](http://theskyfullofdust.co.uk)

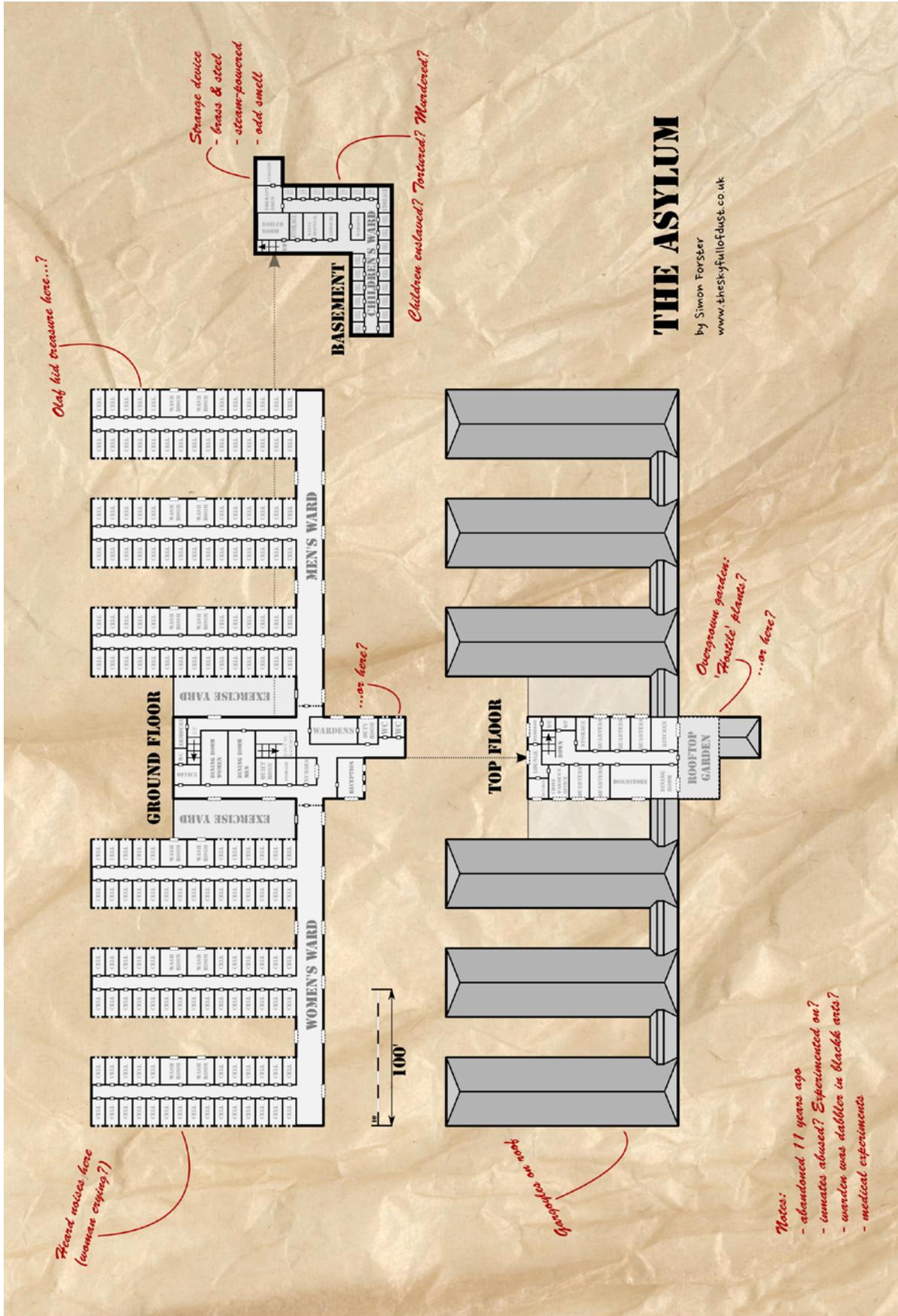
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[Most of this page intentionally left blank, to provide the largest possible picture size in this format. For a larger map, go to [wrathofzombie's blog page](http://wrathofzombie.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/asylum-jpg-format-by-simon-forester-by-stacy-dellorfano.jpg), here:

<http://wrathofzombie.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/asylum-jpg-format-by-simon-forester-by-stacy-dellorfano.jpg>]



**All Hail the Great Santicore!!!**



## THE ASYLUM

By Simon Forster  
www.thestyfulofaust.co.uk

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a kickeff for a zombie apocalypse campaign that doesn't begin with: 'That guy over there doesn't look well'; 'There's a chemical spill. Those guys in the hazmat suits seem a bit worried'; or 'Nanomachines are really neat, aren't they?'*

*Thanks,*

*David Williams*

# CHOOSE YOUR ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE(S)

By Tina Rowand

## ONE FOR A MODERN CAMPAIGN:

Thirty seconds. That's how long the Berkley Boys said the gamma ray burst lasted.

Thirty seconds to nuke half the globe. Thirty seconds to fry the ozone layer to nothin', thirty seconds to start big ol' brawl in the atmosphere that pitted global warmin' and cosmic winter against each other. They came out about even – about the only break we got. It's warm, and it's grey-brown, and it's like that all the time.

Those first couple years, couldn't nobody go outside without enough lead to poison a legion of Romans, and even then we lost a lot of folks to cancer. Those of us who survived went underground, far as we could go, and only went out to scrounge food. We shoulda been smart, shoulda brought more plants down with us before they mostly died. We ate a lot of mushrooms, and the canned stuff we could find. Those first couple years were hell.

Then the Berkley Boys showed up. They rolled up outta the wastes, no protective gear, skin all smooth and unblemished and not even fuckin' tanned from all the UV, and said they had some shots for us. Shots that'd let us walk the surface again. They said they'd pulled stuff outta some *bacteria* [*Deinococcus radiodurans*] that'd let us take the radiation, take the UV, and not sweat a bit. Oh, and they cured cancer. Took the world endin', but they cured fuckin' cancer.

Lotta folks said no, they were just crazies sent to poison us and steal our supplies, bring 'em back before they died. But I said yeah. I took the shot. And then the others did too. And the Berkley Boys, they talked about usin' this bacteria stuff on plants and animals, maybe let us rebuild. We saw hope for the first time in a long time.

The zombies showed up not long after. Rovin' in packs from the places that got the full blast, took 'em a while to walk here. And we could look at 'em and see that they'd gotten some of the settlements up the way. We found out not too long after that the shots didn't stop whatever was makin' the zombies walk, and gettin' bit by one made you real sick, then made you one of 'em. So we went from worryin' about the Big C to worryin' about the Big Z.

Least the Big Z you can fix with a shotgun.

## AND ONE FOR A FANTASY CAMPAIGN:

When Monsieur Delacouer declared he had written his masterpiece, His Majesty Himself came to the mad musician to partake of the promised exquisiteness. He came forth declaring that M. Delacouer had written a piece of such beauty the angels themselves would descend from Heaven and the dead would wake just to hear it.

His Majesty was more correct than he knew, and far more correct than any of us would have wished.

Now, we hear them singing outside the walls. They pierce their windpipes to imitate the mighty organ in the Church that awoke them from their eternal sleep, and they sing to us. Deep within the palace, the Song is not so loud; His Majesty sleeps soundly, haunted only by his first hearing of M. Delacouer's lifework. But here on the walls, the music pulses in our brains.

The temptation to join the dead below is growing, to fling myself into their embrace and emerge with my heart stilled, my throat gaping, my whole being vibrating with my own part of the Song. It's missing, I know it is. And the Song wants to be complete.

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a table or set of tables  
for generating spaceships and UFOs.  
Thank you Secret Santicore!

# RANDOM UFO GENERATOR

By Frank

d20	Ship Types	Size*/Description
1	Maximum Security Prisoner Transport	Massive, separable bridge and decks, heavily armored
2	Cargo Freighter	Considerable, bulky, lightly armored
3	War Galley	Colossal, spacecraft carrier-esque ,harbors various battleships
4	Short Range Shuttle	Smallish, economy accommodations
5	High Mobility Fighter	Smallish, collapsible wings for evasive maneuvers
6	Commercial Transport	Typical, merchandise and salesman carrier
7	Troop Transport/ Dropship	Typical-Considerable, troop or war beast launch capable
8	Long Range Explorer	Considerable, state of the art warp drive
9	Deep Space Terraforming Class	Colossal, shaped like hexagon, huge tanks, super-heating conductor pistons
10	Planet Colonizer	Massive, Triple stacked deployable colony saucers, light armor
11	Cruiser (1d4; 1-Light, 2-Heavy, 3-Luxury, 4-Battle)	Typical-massive, shapes vary
12	Scientific Observer/Probe (1d4; Even-Manned, Odd-Unmanned)	Smallish-typical, antennas,dishes, and sensors cover its surface
13	Medical Clinic Vessel	Typical or considerable, many shuttle docking bays for patient transport
14	Heavy Frigate	Considerable, heavy plating and advanced shield capabilities
15	High Velocity Mid-Range Speeder	Smallish, built with only speed in mind, no cargo space
16	Destroyer	Massive, multi-variable weapons capability
17	Bomber	Typical-massive, heavy artillery only
18	Fuel Tanker	Massive, liquid transport in large cylindrical tanks
19	Interceptor	Smallish, stocked with weaponry and high velocity warp drives
20	Communication/Command ship	Massive, laden with communication and sensory equipment

\*Size Range: Smallish < Typical < Considerable < Massive < Colossal

d10	Ship Shape
1	Four stacked up horseshoes with floating cylindrical core
2	Ship is shaped like head, modeled after ship's architect
3	Pointed tip obelisk shape
4	Dragonfly shaped: Thin quad-winged; long, round, banded body.
5	Shaped like the aromatic compound Naphalene
6	Large sphere covered with smaller bubbles and pimples
7	Two Empire State Building shaped sections linked with a large central bridge and several smaller secondary ones
8	Hollow turtle shell shape with engines on ventral side
9	Large circular top that flows down to a pinpoint at the bottom
10	Smooth and seamless in a sunflower seed shape that splits into four sections when firing main weaponry

# RANDOM UFO GENERATOR

d20	Weapon type
1	Roll 1d4 1-ion cannon 2-plasma cannon 3-plasma laser 4-synchrotron particle accelerator
2	Railgun that propels astroids
3	Cutting beams
4	Graviton well formation beam/singularity (black hole) generator
5	Torpedoes: photon, Sub-space, Chronotron (Causes instant hyper aging)
6	Deploys 100s of drones
7	Tachyon/Q beam (quark)
8	Dark matter cannon
9	Teleporter (can be used for personnel or sections of ship teleportation)
10	Phasers
11	Mechanical grappling arms
12	Solar sail (focuses irradiation from the sun to a pinpoint)
13	Magnetic field generator or disruptor
14	Front and side ship battering ram apparatus
15	EMP
16	Flash bang sensor disruptors
17	Orbital nuke
18	Metal eating Nano machines
19	Biological weaponry (virus, bacteria, etc)
20	Atmosphere evaporator

d10	Story Elements
1	Captain despises his ships engineer and will do next to anything to have him replaced.
2	Looking to dump precious stolen cargo, doesn't let on that the cargo is a rabid carnivorous life form.
3	Insists that there is a hidden stowaway aboard their ship, offers reward for capture.
4	Ship is fully functional and responsive to audio communications however is entirely crewed by a single android.
5	Ship is continuously leaking a highly charged gas that disrupts communications, sensors, and shields.
6	The ship is completely filled with water and operated by an advance aquatic life form.
7	A pirate crew looking only to steal all ships personal entertainment equipment.
8	On a diplomatic mission however the ambassador has fled the ship by an emergency escape vessel.
9	Vessel is severely damaged but operational, surviving crew is celebrating excessively and has started firing off weapons and sending out invitations to nearby ships to join in their victory.
10	Ship no longer functions as its original purpose but has been re-commissioned as a mobile restaurant featuring intergalactic food and theatrical performances.

*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*Please grant me a description/location map of The Holomescent District, a business sector around a space elevator where Bubblepunk Racers evade the law.*

# THE HOLOMESCENT DISTRICT

## WHERE BUBBLEPUNK RACERS EVADE THE LAW

By Ian Johnson

[This is first presented in two halves, as it was designed for print. A combined image follows.]

[The remains of this page intentionally left blank, to provide the largest possible picture size in this format. For a larger version, go to the Santicore home site, here:

<http://santicore.blogspot.com/2012/12/the-holomescent-district-where.html>]



**Bloodthirsty.... Angry... And oh. so. SEXY!**



8466  
ROBOT

There's a badass Luminescent Di out of geosync the outside of and race yo get th



Spunk

holoshow in the district tonight! Drop synchronous orbit on a space elevator our friends to here first!

Smogules

Rogue Construct-O-Bot

Nanoswarm

Electroshock Hazard

Occulaser Security System



*Dear Secret Santicore,*

*"The Gorgon from another planet" something sword and planet sci-fi: an adventure, a place, a table of randomness, an illustration, the sky's the limit as to what you want to do. my only request is that it have some reference to Medusa-esque or Gorgons, in space, pulpy space like those old dime store weird adventures. So let your imagination run wild with the snake haired sirens of yesteryear in the futuristic now of science fiction.*

# THE GORGON FROM ANOTHER PLANET

By Steve Sigety

from [kaijuville.blogspot.com](http://kaijuville.blogspot.com)

**Author's Note:** This adventure can be used for either "Rocket Patrol"-style pulp science-fiction or fantastic sword-and-planet RPGs. Change the level of technology along this spectrum to fit with the mood of your campaign.

## THE GORGON FROM ANOTHER PLANET

### ON A DISTANT PLANET, TURNING AROUND AN ALIEN STAR...

There is an area of the Salt Desert Wastes of Galvanis that travelers and merchants avoid. Old men whisper about it in the marketplace. Young bravos boast of who can get nearest to it before turning back. It is the Blasted Plateau of Pal'Shir. Legend speaks of a fierce creature, a gorgon, who dwells in the Fortress of Pal'Shir with the power to petrify anyone who meets her gaze.

The Fortress of Pal'Shir has existed long before anyone can remember, and its original purpose is unknown. From the massive stone walls of the imposing ziggurat, the gorgon known as Rolunava rules the Plateau with an iron fist. No one alive has seen her and lived to tell the tale, although the stories always speak of a woman with a scaly snake body in the place of legs, with snapping snakes instead of hair. The unlucky have seen her minions, the Thar'keeth: beastmen, twisted in limb and grotesque in appearance, said to be grown in giant vats within the ziggurat at the center of the Plateau. They are immune to her paralyzing visage, living only to serve their mistress as slaves.

The beastmen ride creatures with the head and claws of an insect and the body of a large lizard. These foul creatures have been seen from a distance on the Plateau, kicking up storms of dust, by those foolish enough to venture near.

#### POSSIBLE ADVENTURE SEEDS:

1. Two warring factions on the planet fought a running battle near the Wastes. One of the skyships was damaged and crashed near the ziggurat. It's a race by both sides to recover the ship before it is claimed by the beastmen and brought inside the ziggurat.

2. The "beastmen" and "beastwomen" are not grown in vats, and are capturing people as mates. Striking out beyond the expanse of the Plateau, the Thar'keeth now raid ever closer to the PCs' home base.

3. A wealthy merchant of dubious reputation places a call for adventurers to recover an important object taken by the beastmen. It has, no doubt, been brought back to the Fortress. If only some expert mercenaries could find their way in and recover the object, the reward would be enormous.

4. The PCs find themselves low on provisions and on the far side of the Blasted Plateau. The only way back to civilization is to sneak past the Fortress and avoid capture by the Thar'keeth. (Or, the PCs have been captured, and must find their way out without meeting the gorgon.)

5. A xenobiologist (or master of beast lore) charges the PCs with the task of traveling to the Fortress, finding the gorgon, and bringing it back alive.

6. The Thar'keeth have been defeated, and the gorgon Rolunava destroyed. Unfortunately, some of the PCs have been petrified in the process. A medical scan (or sage wisdom) informs the survivors that it is possible to return their paralyzed companions to life by using organs from the right side of the gorgon's body (organs on the left side and the creature's blood are deadly poison) to create a special curative elixir within 1d6+1 days.

#### WHAT IS ROLUNAVA'S PETRIFICATION POWER?

How the petrification power works is unclear without further research. Scans will reveal strange particles linked to Morphostatic radiation. The interior of the Fortress is littered with examples of petrified creatures, which may offer clues to anyone venturing inside.

To randomly determine the form of the petrification power, roll on the following table.

# THE GORGON FROM ANOTHER PLANET

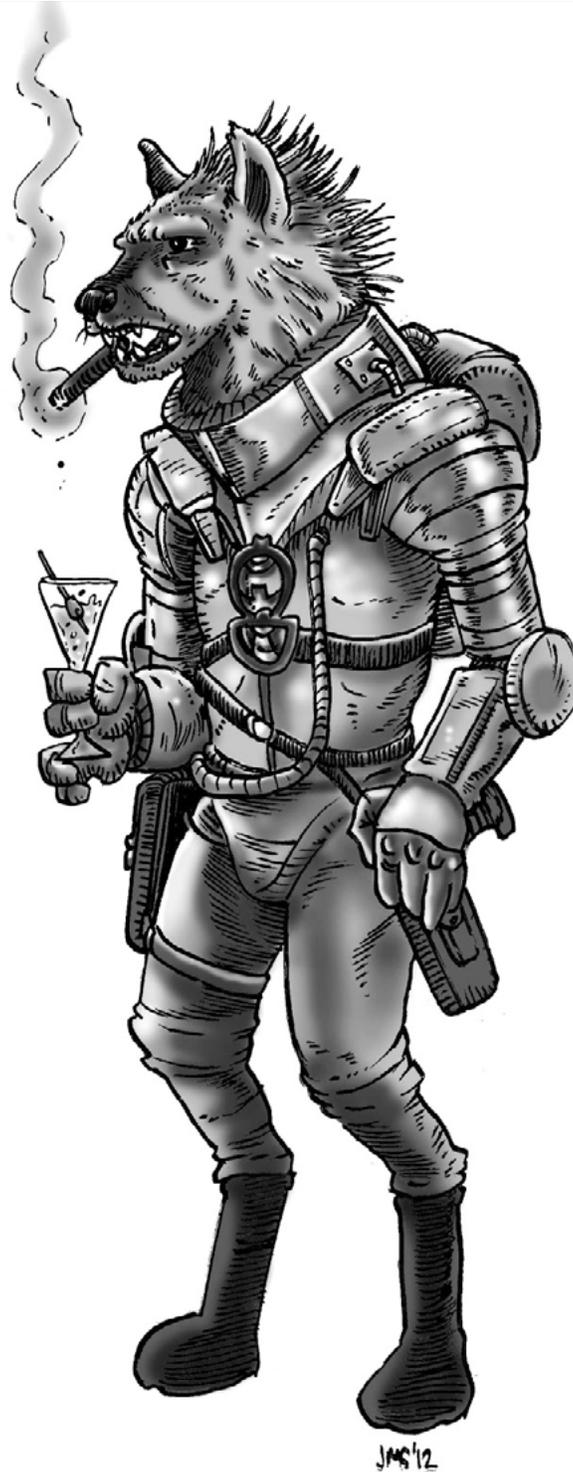
1d20	Petrification Material or Effect
1	<b>Gorgon poison:</b> The PC is poisoned (Treat as snake venom). Failing to recover from the venom will not result in death – the PC transforms into a gorgon.
2	<b>Liquid water:</b> A volume of water equal to the body of the PC falls to the floor and will pool, depending on the nature of the floor.
3	<b>Ilithium crystal:</b> The PC's body becomes a tangle of faceted shards of this fine and very brittle clear crystal native to the planet. Without proper precautions, there is a 75% chance of the crystal shattering when being moved.
4	<b>Diamond:</b> The PC becomes solid diamond in its natural, unpolished form. A skilled gemsmith could cut and polish diamonds of unimaginable worth and quality from this material.
5	<b>Plastic/Resin:</b> The PC's body becomes solid resin or hollow plastic. How brittle the material might be is up to the GM.
6	<b>Amorphous Graphite:</b> The PC's body transforms into a solid compact mass of grey flaky crystals.
7	<b>Plas-crete:</b> Used in creating temporary shelters, this material is as strong as concrete, but one-quarter the weight.
8	<b>Green Slime:</b> The PC is transformed into a Green Slime.
9	<b>Canvas:</b> The PC's body becomes voluminous folds of canvas. It immediately drops to the floor in a pile.
10	<b>Transparent carbon fiber resin:</b> This material is primarily used for viewports on spacecraft and airships. It has equal weight as normal glass and the strength of steel.
11	<b>Granite/basalt/sandstone/limestone:</b> The common base rock most prominent on the planet.
12	<b>Wood:</b> The PC appears in form as an exquisite wood carving of her normal self.
13	<b>Coal:</b> No matter what other exotic forms of technology are available, coal can still be used for fuel.
14	<b>Durasteel:</b> The most-often used material for spacecraft and skyships. It has greater tensile strength than steel with half the weight.
15	<b>Composite Mineral Components:</b> All of the water in the PC's body evaporates, leaving a small geometric crystalline form of mineral elements.
16	<b>Unstable Celestium:</b> The PC takes the form of this highly unstable element used in arcane -- and explosive -- experiments, which in appearance looks and feels like charcoal.
17	<b>High-density Phonoletol gas:</b> Heavier than air, this thick greenish gas will slowly sink to the ground and disperse. With the proper container(s) it can be gathered up in 1d6+6 rounds.
18	<b>Ice:</b> The PC's body becomes solid ice made of normal water. Inside the depths of the Fortress it will stay solid longer than in the desert temperatures outside.
19	<b>Virus:</b> The gaze of the gorgon transmits a deadly virus into living creatures. The virus begins to work within 1d4+2 rounds. A successful save grants an additional 1d4+4 rounds. The virus can only be cured by the appropriate antiviral medical technology or magical spell.
20	<b>Parasite:</b> Nano-creatures travel on light waves from the gorgon's eyes. The PC becomes the new host (Treat as Animate Dead or mind control).

Dear Secret Santicore,

Please grant me a picture of a futuristic Gnoll. All hyena-faced and spacefaring. Maybe, like, a loco? I don't know! Just a mostly hyena-looking beastman from the *MOTHER FUMBLING FUTURE*.

# SPACE HYENA

By Jason Sholtis



JMS'12