

ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE FANTASY RPG

CLOUD EMRESS



PIT'S PEAK



FOR USE WITH THE
MOTHERSHIP™
SCI-FI HORROR RPG

1E

ALFRED VALLEY



PIT'S PEAK

LOCATION: [W43] Cloud Empress: Land of Cicadas

CONTENT WARNING:

Pit's Peak contains bugs, nausea, cult-like behavior, ritual group suicide, loss of hearing, and confinement.

A great piece of nothing lies somewhere in the Weeds—a huge, mysterious hole in the ground known as the Lecktoorn. Some are sent here on pilgrimages, others are drawn here on quests urgent and secretive. Many simply stumble upon the place. And yet, after lumbering days, weeks, through dirt that lacks the decency of sand, just to gaze upon this colossal pit and down into its humbling depths, all inevitably feel the terrible bliss of fate linking arms behind their backs, as if the Lektoorn has been waiting for their arrival all this time.

TIMELINE IF THE PCs DO NOTHING

The PCs start at the edge of the pit, in the middle of nowhere. Unless they significantly interrupt the flow of events, the following events happen, in this order:

When the PCs begin to descend from Interra One: Vas-Vaticate pilgrims start to throw themselves into the pit in the 'Ceremony.'

When the PCs begin to descend from Interra Two: A full-grown Imago arrives and blocks the pit, causing the entranceway to collapse and upsetting the Plosians who struggle to complete their pilgrimage to the bottom.

RUMORS ABOUT THE LECKTOORN

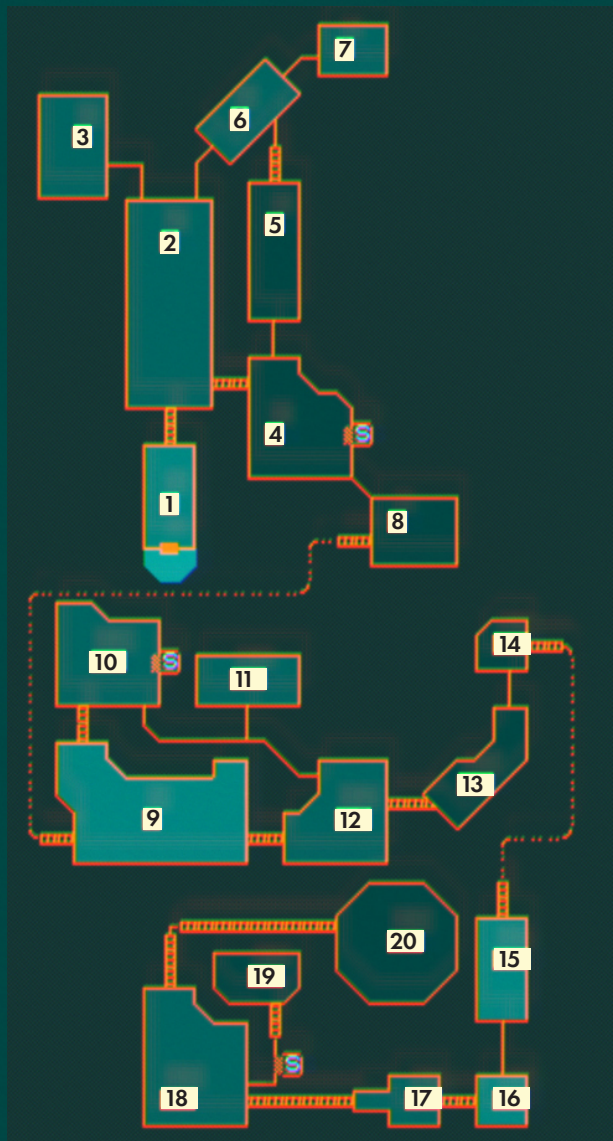
A forgotten people with the gift of foresight reside here.

It is an ancient beacon for Imago.

The tower below is an object of epic destruction.

A great tool of violence waits at the bottom guarded by a demon.

A valuable substance is hidden within the walls.



- INTERRA 1**
- 1 ENTRANCE WAY
 - 2 OCCASION HALL
 - 3 JUG ROOM
 - 4 SHRINE 1
 - 5 PASSAGE 1A
 - 6 PASSAGE 1B
 - 7 PASSAGE 1C
 - 8 PASSAGE 1D

- WALKWAY
- STAIRS
- HIDDEN SHAFT

- INTERRA 2**
- 9 SORTING LEVEL
 - 10 SHRINE 2
 - 11 PASSAGE 2A
 - 12 PASSAGE 2B
 - 13 PASSAGE 2C
 - 14 PASSAGE 2D

- INTERRA 3**
- 15 PASSAGE 3A
 - 16 PASSAGE 3B
 - 17 PASSAGE 3C
 - 18 SHRINE 3
 - 19 OPERATIONS
 - 20 PIT BOTTOM

The Lecktoorn looks like it would take most of a day's walk to circumnavigate. The floor of the pit is a few hundred meters deep, littered with bright red shapes. The apex of a tower is just about visible at the bottom.

Large, dark, wiry forms scuttle up and down the inside of the pit. These are Ulks—necrobatic amalgams constructed from the legs of Imago, held together with crude metalwork and given life by strange magic. They are in a ceaseless battle with the dirt,

constantly digging it out of the pit at the same rate it slides in.

The pit is divided roughly into three sections, from Interra One near the top, to Interra Three at the bottom.

ULK

INSTINCT: 40 AP: 5 WOUNDS: 4
Grappling legs (1d10 Damage, Body Save or become ensnared).

A trail into the Lecktoorn is marked with red-pink pennants and leads to a system of tunnels that wind around the pit and descend at irregular intervals. Generally, the interior is made of roughly hewn, gray earth. Some passages are open to the vast hole, some are enclosed, dark.

INTERRA ONE

1. ENTRANCE WAY

Enclosed and dust-dry. Low, empty wooden shelves sit on a well-trodden dirt floor. A driftwood door is carved with the words "THE LECKTOORN" and below, in smaller hand, "ALL AS ONE."

2. OCCASION HALL

Open air floods in on one side. Deserted, save for a Wanderling near the edge, peering down, clutching a trinket. If disturbed it vanishes over the edge.

Rows of long, bare tables and benches fill the space. One exit at the far end leads further down, another is hung with strings of colorful beads.

An almost never-ending stream of pilgrims enters after the PCs. Most are dressed in flowing red-pink garments and identify as members of the Vas-Vaticate. The rest are Plosians, hairy and dressed in plain, threadbare clothes with a vague bioluminescence about them. All make themselves at home in the hall and neighboring passages.

VAS-VATICATE

INSTINCT: 20 ARMOR: 0 WOUNDS: 1
Ornate, pompous, empty-handed, fasting. The pilgrims invariably move conversation onto the majesty of the 'Peak' at the bottom of the pit and their enthusiasm for coming into contact with it in the 'Ceremony'. They are vague on the details.

PLOSIAN

INSTINCT: 20 ARMOR: 0 WOUNDS: 1
Ascetic, furrowed by sun and wind, lugging full packs. The Plosians wear mistrust like a keepsake. Conversation is an inconvenient trickle. They are quick to anger and all are armed with heavy mattocks (1d10 Damage).

3. JUG ROOM

A small room behind the beaded curtain hosts neat shelves packed with earthen jugs sculpted to look like faces. A wizened, deaf Pitling woman sits behind a desk. She leads entrants to a jug bearing an uncanny likeness of their own face. A hand-drawn ideogram on a wooden sign seems to indicate the price of sale is one's soul.

4. SHRINE 1

A large Shrine in the shape of an ornate door inscribed with tower iconography. A handful of pilgrims sit in silence.

Each level contains an almost identical shrine. Behind the seemingly artificial door is a shaft that leads close to the bottom of the pit where Operator Onslow sits in a hidden room [19].

PASSAGES

1A. An open-air pass blocked by a struggling Ulk, stuck on its back.

1B. Two Vas-Vacitate pilgrims confront a Plosian at the edge of a cliff.

1C. A heavily bandaged body, non-responsive, lies on a makeshift bed. Various trinkets litter the bedside.

1D. This foul smelling chamber contains 1d5 bone crickets (1:40 AP:0 W:1). Their strange chirps can leave a character deaf for 6d10 minutes.

CHITTURAT

INSTINCT: 30 ARMOR: 4 WOUNDS: 2
Obsidian sludge limbs (2d10 Damage, Reality Save or throw up from Pitsick). Abhorrent beings grafted from the remains of once-living creatures, human or otherwise. Their strange joints, melding multiple limbs and misplaced features, are corrupted with an obsidian sludge that can harden at will.

INTERRA TWO

After descending to Intertra Two, anyone who can hear invariably finds it hard to ascend again. There is an imperceptible noise that draws one deeper. Attempts to go back create a debilitating nausea. Pitlings know this phenomenon as 'Pitsick'. In dreams the noise comes close to perception. It sounds like many hushed voices calling one deeper.

At any point from Intertra Two downwards PCs may encounter The Earm. Until The Earm is encountered, roll 1d10 when the PCs move between rooms. On a result of 1 or 2, it is encountered. Trigger this encounter in Passage 2 of Intertra Three if the PCs arrive there and it hasn't already triggered.

9. SORTING LEVEL

A dim cavern containing tables covered with chunks of minerals. A bloodstained prospector, Lapper, sits on the dirt clearing her nails with the tip of a knife. Her Ulk, Chiseller, crawls beside her.

The minerals are gray with a milky iridescence. Lapper may tell the PCs that it's 'dirty' chalk, compacted by time and corrupted by bloodshed. It leaves the fingers numb. Generally, it is much less potent than its regular form, but some samples of the dirty chalk can occasionally be phenomenally powerful, far exceeding normal spell capabilities and consequences. It is highly valued by power hungry Lordlings.

Lapper warns the PCs that Intertra Two is plagued by Chitturats and that other prospectors are scattered all about the level.



LAPPER

Mineral Prospector (she/her)

INSTINCT: 50 AP: 0 WOUNDS: 3

Belongings: Mineral knife (1d10 Damage, adjacent), Miner's pick (2d10 Damage, adjacent, ignores armor).

10. SHRINE 2

A large Shrine in the shape of an ornate door inscribed with tower iconography, encrusted with a bounty of dirty chalk.

An old storage space underneath the shrine contains a dead prospector and mining equipment, including 1d5 glow sticks, a flash canister, a climbing hook and some rope.

PASSAGES

2A. Dead-end containing 1d5 Plosians with chalk stuffed in their ears, being attacked by 1d5 Chitturats.

2B. One huge, moaning Chitturat (I:30 AP:8 W:4) in a pitch-black chamber. A mystic coin depicting an Ulk lies in the dirt.

2C. A damaged Ulk grapples with 1d5 Chitturats on the edge of a cliff.

A rough-knuckled, dirt-smudged perseverance of a person with a retinue of tools and as many straps to hold them. Lapper is inscrutable though the shine in her eyes reveals a weakness for the material she harvests. She speaks with the voice of all the prospectors who have pitched in at the Lecktoorn.

She commands an Ulk which she has named Chiseller.

INTERRA THREE

The air is cold and damp. Pitlings make their home here, scavengers attired in a faded patchwork of Vas-Vaticate fabric. They each have a personal face jug attached to their person. All are deaf, some bearing obvious scars around their ears. The Pitsick effect is most intense close to the buried tower. PCs will hear many hushed voices, as though someone were entreating them to join them in singularity and realize true power. Hearing PCs must make regular Reality Saves to avoid Panic Checks.

The Pitlings are inclined to betray the PCs if they do not possess face jugs of their own. They will slowly gather in greater numbers around the PCs and look for an opportunity to attack when their targets are unaware. If the opportunity presents itself, they may lead them to their demise at the jaws of the buried Imago. If the PCs do have face jugs, the Pitlings will lead them enthusiastically to a deafening ritual.

PASSAGES

3A. A vaulted chamber containing a juvenile Imago and a sense-recorder.

3B. Water store with a tied-up, Pitsick prospector. The Earm is here, if the PCs haven't already encountered it.

3C. Vertical shaft with 1d5 Chitturats climbing down.

18. SHRINE 3

A large Shrine in the shape of an ornate door inscribed with tower iconography, surrounded by many Imago eggs.



OPERATOR ONSLOW

Left-behind Guardian (he/him)

INSTINCT: 60 AP: 0 WOUNDS: 2

Belongings: Tracking beacon, pep pills, faded cameo pendant with the silhouette of a feminine face, marriage blade (2d10 Damage).

19. OPERATIONS

Operator Onslow sits in a carved wooden chair facing the door to his chamber.

20. PIT BOTTOM

The bottom of the pit, littered with the stripped remains of Vas-Vaticate pilgrims and dominated by the newly-arrived Imago. The top of the buried tower is covered in vicious spikes. A half-hidden trap door leads to another realm.

His skin is nacreous, shifting hues in the wicklight, blush to buff to blood.

A crown sits atop his head, constructed from barbed wire and colorful beads. He wears a leather bodysuit stained silver-gray, and stuffed with wadding that leaves his outline lumpy. His lips, tongue, teeth and chin are also stained gray. Balanced on one of his legs is the brass hilt of a priceless, scallop-edged blade. The marriage blade spiritually links all of its victims; whenever it inflicts an injury, it deals the same injuries to everyone who has ever been harmed by it, regardless of where they now are.

The crown is designed to prevent him from falling to sleep. He has been awake for roughly 100 years. He can confirm the partial truth of two of the rumors. Though he is hesitant to fight, he will defend himself bitterly, dying with a rare smile across his lips.

PITLINGS

INSTINCT: 50 ARMOR: 2 WOUNDS: 1

Belongings: Climbing hook, shovel, repair kit, makeshift weapons (1 d5 damage).



THE EARM

Way Ward (it)

INSTINCT: 30 AP: 0 WOUNDS: 999,999

Belongings: A forgotten crown, pocketfuls of ash, memories of an executioner's block, sepulchral fingers (1 Wound).

The barefoot figure stoops, towering in a tattered black gabardine. The robes leak long, sap-white fingers that pierce the air. There is a smell of tempered tar.

It is slow to acknowledge being attacked, but when it does it doesn't hesitate to swipe an adversary with one of its fingers, wounding with even the slightest touch. The Earm grows bored if a foe becomes gravely injured, and will disintegrate into the nearest wall.

Gentle in manner, The Earm hangs on words. Hearing accounts of personal histories, troubles or other particulars draws it closer. If its interest is sufficiently piqued, it will decide to wear its target, as long as they do not possess a face jug. The process is instant. The one worn will feel crowded within their own skull as the essence of the Earm contorts around synapses to make itself at home. The target's fingers change to match The Earm's in appearance and power. The creature's previous robed form remains, a husk that will dutifully follow the one worn, gliding across the floor with its feet dragging.

In this state The Earm is capricious and will make petty demands. If sufficiently bored or antagonized, it will rend itself from its chosen vessel, returning to its previous body and inflicting 1 Wound, before wandering away. Its memories, however, stay behind; hot, heartbreaking things that reveal cursed secrets.

Credits

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