

The Flying Bird Cage

A #dungeon23 thingy by Arnold Kemp.

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A circular cottage, three stories tall, with a bent tin chimney. The circular door is 4' in diameter, and is located 1' off the floor. The windows are circular as well.

It is contained inside a bird cage, three-and-a-half stories tall. The bars are brass, and are about 10" apart. An adult couldn't squeeze between them, but a child could.

The birdhouse has a visible hook at the top, as if it were made to hang from a gigantic hook. The hook is made from a different metal than the rest of the bird house.

The Hook

If you climb up to the top of the hook, you will hear the flapping of wings.

Anyone looking at the bird cage with *see invisible* or *wizard vision* will see that the spirits of thousands of birds are tied to the hook by their sutratmas (silver cords). They roost on the bars and the hook, a miserable flock of mismatched birds.

Anyone able to speak to the dead can speak to the birds, if they think to address them.

The birds want to be free, and they hate the Light Collector for imprisoning them here. (He purchased them from Bird Hell, but they want to be free.) They will beg you to break the hook and set them free.

This is doable, and requires only a hammer, a chisel, and about 4 hours of labor.

If freed, the birds will promise eternal friendship. The party may then call on the ghost birds to assist you, essentially gaining the ability to request 1 MD versions of the *fly* or *feather fall* spells as needed. *Feather fall* can be “cast” instantly, but if the PCs “cast” *fly* it takes 1 round for enough birds to amass to pick someone up.

Each time the ghost birds are summoned, there is a X-in-12 chance that this will be their last visit, where X is the number of people requested. The birds will tell you that they are much too busy now and must be on about their Business. They will not return if called again, except for an especially dull flamingo ghost who still shows up, but performs no action except to ask what he is supposed to eat now, and what he is supposed to do as a ghost.

However note that if the birds are freed, the bird cage becomes immobile, and the party loses a valuable (but non-essential) method of travel.

1 FIRST FLOOR

It’s a weird little lounge.

Torn pages and trampled books line the floor. Time and moisture have rendered them illegible. The room has **three weird chairs, a busted bookshelf, and a central bird cage** on a plinth. **Spiral stairs** go up.

Three weird lounge chairs:

- A black dragon tail, bent into a question mark, with the severed base on the ground. The tail tip curls overhead, and has a place to hang a reading lantern.
- A titanic humanoid skull (3’ tall) with a sumptuous pillow on top. The skull is intelligent and capable of communication, but will only ever chuckle, and only under when it is trying to spook the party.
- A sort of lobotomized, mutilated treant. It functions as an easy chair, capable of leaning back, providing lumbar support, and holding drinks.

A bookshelf with only three remaining books. Each one is worth 50s.

- *The Eye of the Oversky*, by Rasbulla. A list of stars, astrological signs, and how to determine the sexual/romantic compatibility based on astrology. If the party is interested, have everyone roll a d12. People who share a number are incompatible. People who are of adjacent numbers are compatible. Anyone who gets a 12 is supposed to be the leader of any group that they are in.
- *Delicron's Digestive Delights*. A list of cocktails. Anyone who reads it cover to cover (requires 4 hours) will notice that one page is highly unusual, and actually contains the spell *mutate potion*.
- *Methods of Scaling Telescope Construction*. Author unknown. It is clear that the author is trying to simplify, but it is still relatively technical. Anyone perusing the book gains a basic understanding of optics and telescope construction. Anyone reading the book for more than 4 hours, realizes that the author is proposing a telescope of absolutely incredible scope:
 - An atmospheric prism created by bound air elementals created hot layers of low pressure, thousands of feet in the air, which direct light down to. . .
 - A primary lens made from from a parabolic caldera, built from smoothened obsidian by bound lava elementals, which bounces light to. . .
 - A secondary reflector, which hangs suspended above the caldera, which then bounces light down through. . .
 - A vertical shaft, at the center of the parabolic caldera, where it contacts a mirror that deflects the light into. . .
 - A 1.5 mile-long diagonal tunnel, filled with diffractors and splitters that use long-wavelength condensation to reify the light into a new exotic form of matter, where it is then redirected to different chromatic laboratories, in chromatic order. At the very bottom of the assembly are the invisible forms of light, now distilled into impossible colors with unknown properties.

This book is written by the Light Collector, of course, and describes the general layout of the areas of Mount Smaggaroth.

The central birdcage is the mechanism by which the Flying Birdcage is controlled. This is the **navigation birdcage**.

Scattered throughout Mt. Smaggaroth are mechanical birds. Each bird has a different appearance, and plays a different song. When one of these birds is placed inside the central bird cage, it begins singing, and the Flying Birdcage will fly to the appointed location.

Bird	Song	Destination
Trembling Snowbird	<i>Tendo's Song of the Stars</i>	Teardrop Reflector
Red Blackerol	<i>Cup of Wine, Cup of Dreams</i>	Obsidian Caldera (Annex)
Black-Billed Magpie*	<i>[Garbled Song]</i>	<i>[See Below]</i>
Silver Raven	<i>She Changes Like the Sea</i>	Quicksilver Hall
Broken-Wing Rooster**	<i>[Garbled Song]</i>	<i>[See Below]</i>
Black Eagle	<i>My Pride, My Home</i>	Trophy Road
Glass Owl	<i>Stranger in the Mirror</i>	The Glassworks
Wooden Cuckoo***	<i>The Fox and the Fool</i>	<i>[Trap]</i>

***Black-billed Magpie** – This obviously broken magpie sings a mangled song. If placed in the navigation birdcage, the Flying Birdcage will begin revolving wildly, smashing itself against the walls of wherever it is. The Flying Birdcage takes 1d20 damage every round (it has 100 HP) and objects inside take 1d4 damage each round, until someone removes the magpie from the navigation cage, or destroys the navigation cage.

Once repaired, the Black-billed Magpie will sing *Me and My Shadow*, and will direct the Flying Birdhouse to the Shadow Lab Landing.

Broken birds can be repaired by the brass men of Harmonium, the brass elementals of the Glassworks, or by anyone who specializes in golemetry (possibly a player).

****Broken-wing Rooster** – This obviously broken rooster sings a mangled song. If it is placed in the navigation birdcage, the Flying Birdcage will smoothly fly to the Lower Falls Lake, where

it will crash-land into the Lower Falls Pool and sink. The pool is only 15' deep, but this is deep enough to prevent use of the navigation birdcage until the Flying Birdcage is removed. (The party will probably need allies for this effort.)

Once repaired, the Broken-wing Rooster sings *Brave Soldier Boys* and navigates to the Lost Fort.

*****Wooden Cuckoo** – This is a trap bird, meant to be given to the Light Collector's enemies. If placed inside the navigation birdcage, the Flying birdcage enters lockdown mode.

- All of the doors slam shut and *lock*. (Including the door to the navigation cage.)
- The wooden cuckoo begins whistling an alarm klaxon.
- All the ghost birds start screaming. 1d2 random encounters will arrive in ~1 minute.
- The giant skull chair attacks while roaring with laughter. Lvl 3, leather, 1d8.
- Sazerac attacks with his tiny crossbow. (See 2 SECOND FLOOR)

Lockdown ends when the cuckoo is removed from the navigation cage. (This is difficult to do without damaging it, since it grips down onto the tiny pedestal.)

2 SECOND FLOOR

Two windows, four stools, and a **cocktail bar** staffed by a **brass man**. **Spiral stairs** go up and down.

The brass man is named Sazerac. Like all brass men, he is slow-thinking, polite, logical, and utterly pacifistic. He wears a costume crown, a fabric trumpet-mouth, aping the kings of Abasinia. He only prepares cocktails, and doesn't want to talk about much. If you ask him about notable denizens of mountain, he will only tell you how long it's been since he's seen them, along with their favorite drink. (And in fact, he is incapable of remembering anything else. His limited memory is packed with mixology knowledge.) He's also slightly sarcastic, rare among the brass men.

He hasn't seen anyone in 90 years (when the mountain was sealed), except for the light collector himself, who last stopped by around 85 years ago.

His liquor cabinet is sadly depleted. He will ask your help in restocking it. Each bottle is worth 50s, or less if the PCs have been drinking them.

- Shamberly Brandy
- Cordial Forsooth
- Fig Honey Fontessa
- Meltherian Winterwine
- Jar of Cordial Cherries

He has a trick he performs when he makes a cocktail: he throws a cherry in the air, then shoots it with a miniature crossbow. When struck by the miniature crossbow bolt, the cherry is teleported into the cocktail glass.

Sazerac is an utter pacifist, but he will attack if the Cuckoo is triggered (see 1 FIRST FLOOR).

Sazerac: Lvl 3, chain, punch 1d6. He will use his tiny crossbow to shoot his enemies, dealing 1 damage and requiring a Charisma save vs magic. If the target fails, they are teleported into an empty bottle behind him. The spell ends when the bottle is inverted or taken out of the Flying Birdcage. A person trapped inside a bottle can shake themselves off the shelf with 2 rounds of effort (1 round with a successful Str check) where they will fall, take 1d6+1 fall damage, and then resume their normal size. The tiny crossbow only works within the Flying Birdhouse.

3 THIRD FLOOR

A green-painted attic. **Eight empty birdcages**, a **wooden chest**, and a **small stove**.

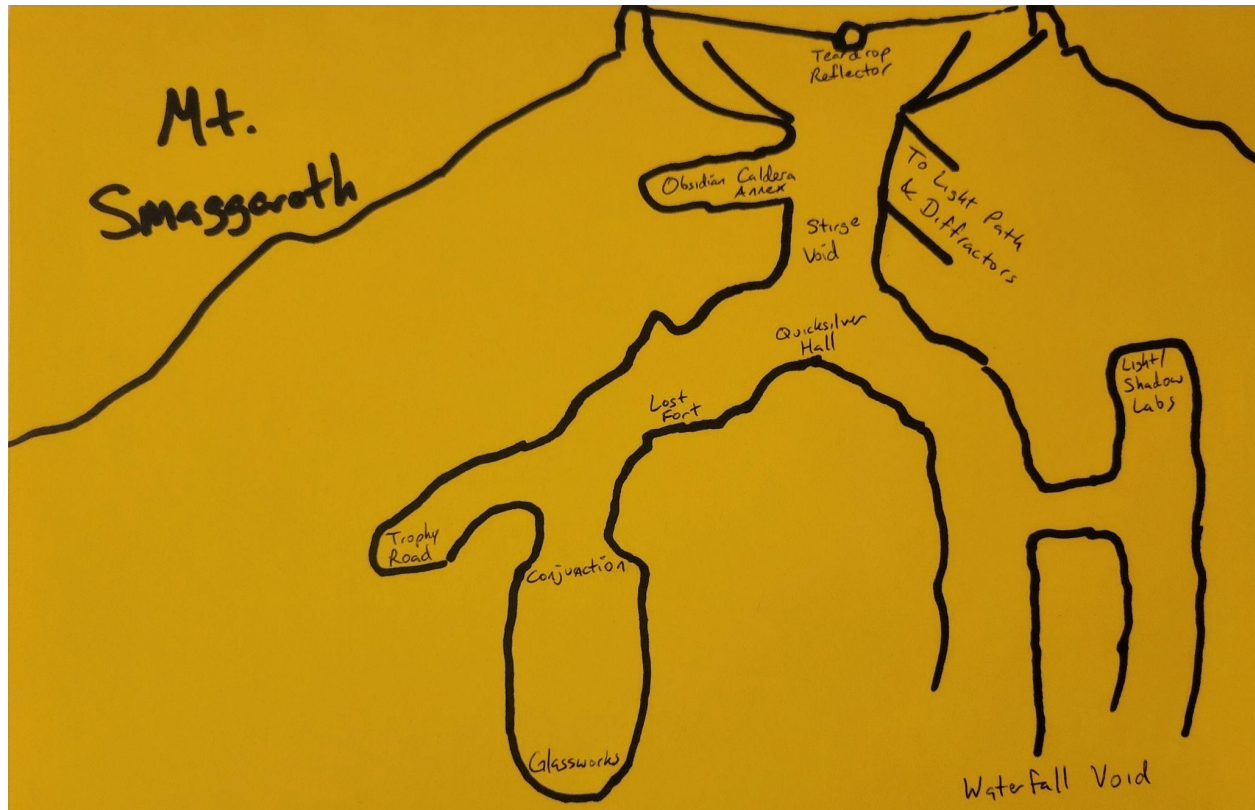
Graffiti on the wall reads:

Hide the birds until the mountain is safe again. We're regrouping at the Condenser. -C

Inside the wooden chest is a crumbling set of boots, a nice woolen cloak, a cloakpin shaped like a black eagle (worth 20s), and a water dancer's dress lined with bells. (The dress is actually Atma, a vestige, see below.)

Navigating the Voids

There's a few voids in Mount Smaggeroth. They are huge empty spaces that are mostly vertical and not easily traversable. The Flying Bird Cage traverses them relatively easily.



There's a few ways into the mountain, but most of them funnel into Quicksilver Hall at some point (where the Flying Bird Cage is initially located). It takes about 18 hours to fly from the Teardrop Reflector (at the top) down to the Glassworks (at the bottom).

The Teardrop Reflector is a bit like the suspended secondary reflector of the Arecibo telescope, except it's also a wizard tower.

The Stirge Void is full of stirges. Not too bad, as long as you didn't break all your windows after putting the magpie into the navigation cage.

The horizontal traverse to the Trophy Road is full of spiders. You'll have to get out of the Flying Birdcage and cut them free.

The horizontal traverse to the Light/Shadow Labs is guarded by 6 curse men, who will drop onto the Flying Bird Cage, wriggle through the bars, and lay siege. Although the Light/Shadow Labs can be accessed from Bangle Canyon or the Witch House, the Flying Bird Cage deposits the party in a unique portion of the Labs.

The Lost Fort is an interesting case, since the players won't get the broken rooster until much later, and won't be able to fly the Flying Birdcage to the Lost Fort until very late in the mountain (if they ever find the rooster). However, they will fly over the Lost Fort landing often. Each time they do, the undead down there will pelt the Flying Birdcage with a few arrows. Players that drop a torch can see it's only a 10' or 20' drop in some places, if they want to jump off the Birdcage. However, this is a one-way trip, as the Birdcage will fly to its destination without them. (Although all methods of accessing the Lost Fort are horrible, so this may actually be the best way in.)

Magic Items

Vestiges

A vestige is an item that holds the ghost of a person. When worn or wielded, the ghost is invited into the body of the person who wears it. You (and only you) will see them as a confused image in the world. The ghost will see you (and only you). You can speak to each other.

This is something that everyone has been warned about since childhood. It is common knowledge that “two spirits cannot share a body”, and remind the players that this is something they’ve all heard since they were children. (Note: there is a significant risk associated with using vestiges—players should be aware.)

If you remove the object promptly, and without any significant interaction, you are safe.

If you retain the object, you can talk to the ghost that now shares your head. Most ghosts are panicked, scared, or angry, and will need to be calmed down before you can have a free conversation. Ghosts never remember the exact circumstances of their deaths, although they are happy to speak of their life story (which has already faded into blurs—so many memories are stored in the flesh).

If you reach an accord, you can share your head peacefully with the ghost.

- You can use their skills (if any).
- You can use their abilities (if any).

You must make a Cha test whenever you

- Attempt to remove the vestige.
- Go against the ghost’s values, or work against their unfinished business.

If you fail, the ghost gains control of your body for 7 hours. It will probably flee as soon as possible. If this happens three times, your weakened spirit passes from this world. You die, and the vestige assumes permanent control of your body.

If you ever sustain a life-threatening injury (e.g. a 9 on high on the current Death and Dismemberment table), your weakened spirit passes from this world. You die, and the vestige assumes permanent control of your body.

If the vestige takes control of your body, reroll their mental stats and treat them like a new NPC. If they are aligned with the party, they may become a henchman. If the player wishes, they may even assume control of this new character.

Atma, the Water Dancer

Atma is contained inside a water dancer's dress. The dress is white and flowing, with purple accents. Its hems are lined with bells.

Skills

Dancing +3

Fishing +1

Life Story

Atma was once a priestess of the Leviathan. She was summoned from Balalang to assist in training a dragon (or something similar, it was hinted). She lived in the Ice House for six weeks, being entertained by Marvelously and the Automatic Ape while awaiting her summons by the Light Collector. After six weeks, she was summoned down to Quicksilver Hall by a young mage named Tassilar (who was second-in-command to Master Orlock, who ran Quicksilver Hall), and rode a bamblopod for the first time. She lived at Quicksilver Hall for only two days before some sort of emergency occurred. She was told to wait in the Flying Birdcage. She doesn't remember anything else, but she knows the rough layout of the places she's been (including the Bamblopod Ranch).

Goals and Unfinished Business

To honor her oath to the Light Collector, and help him kill his dragon.

Skills

Atma is currently only level 1, and only has access to Template A.

A - leviathan hunter

B - purple magic I

C - water dance

D - purple magic II

Leviathan Hunter - You get +X Attack and Damage against things that are bigger than a large human or orc. X is equal to the number of templates you have in Water Dancer.

Purple Magic - You gain 1 MD that you can use for casting spells. You only have a single spell slot, and it is filled with whatever your last successful Cha save was against. (If this is not a spell, make it into a spell.) If you have all four templates, you gain another +1 MD and your spell list is limited to the last two things that you made successful Cha saves against. You can only cast spells when your face is obscured. You must eat a piece of everything that you kill after killing it, or else you lose all of your MD until you atone by drowning a large animal.

Water Dance - You can dance on water and denser substances. You can ignore floor contact stuff (caltrops, electrified floors, etc). Dancing doesn't limit your ability to move quickly or fight.

Monsters

Curse Man

Lvl 2 Def chain Curse Sword 1d6+curse

Move as squirrel-ape Int as human Dis malevolent

They are men and women with the narrow face of borzois, and the staring eyes of birds. They wear black leathers. When they fight, they pant and stick their tongues out. If dissected, they will be discovered to possess no heart, lungs, or liver, these organs having instead been replaced with a bellows, three black stones, and an octopus.

A curse man's blade resembles a fleshy stone that extrudes a slick blade when squeezed. The blade looks a bit like wet black hair. The harder the "stone" is squeezed, the longer the blade stretches. (This allows them to perform some unique tactics in combat, such as pulsing the length of their blade to avoid a block.)

The first time that you are struck by a curse man's blade, you will hear a voice say "two". Your pupils will shift into the shape of the numeral "2".

The second time, the numeral is "1".

The third time you are struck by a curse man's blade, you are seized by demons and dismembered. Your head, lungs, heart, and liver are all dragged bodily down to hell. No save. Cursed blades lose their magic after 24 hours.

You can free yourself of this curse by making a sacrifice of a sentient creature in a shrine of the Cursed Blood Bat. There is one in the Shadow Labs, and another in the Sunken Ziggurat. You can also reconsecrate a cursed blade. (The Church can also free you of this curse, but they are a lot further away.)